



The Erie Boulevard Corridor and  
Martin Street Gateway

BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA II  
PRE-NOMINATION REPORT

Submitted by:  
Department of Community and Economic Development,  
City of Rome, NY

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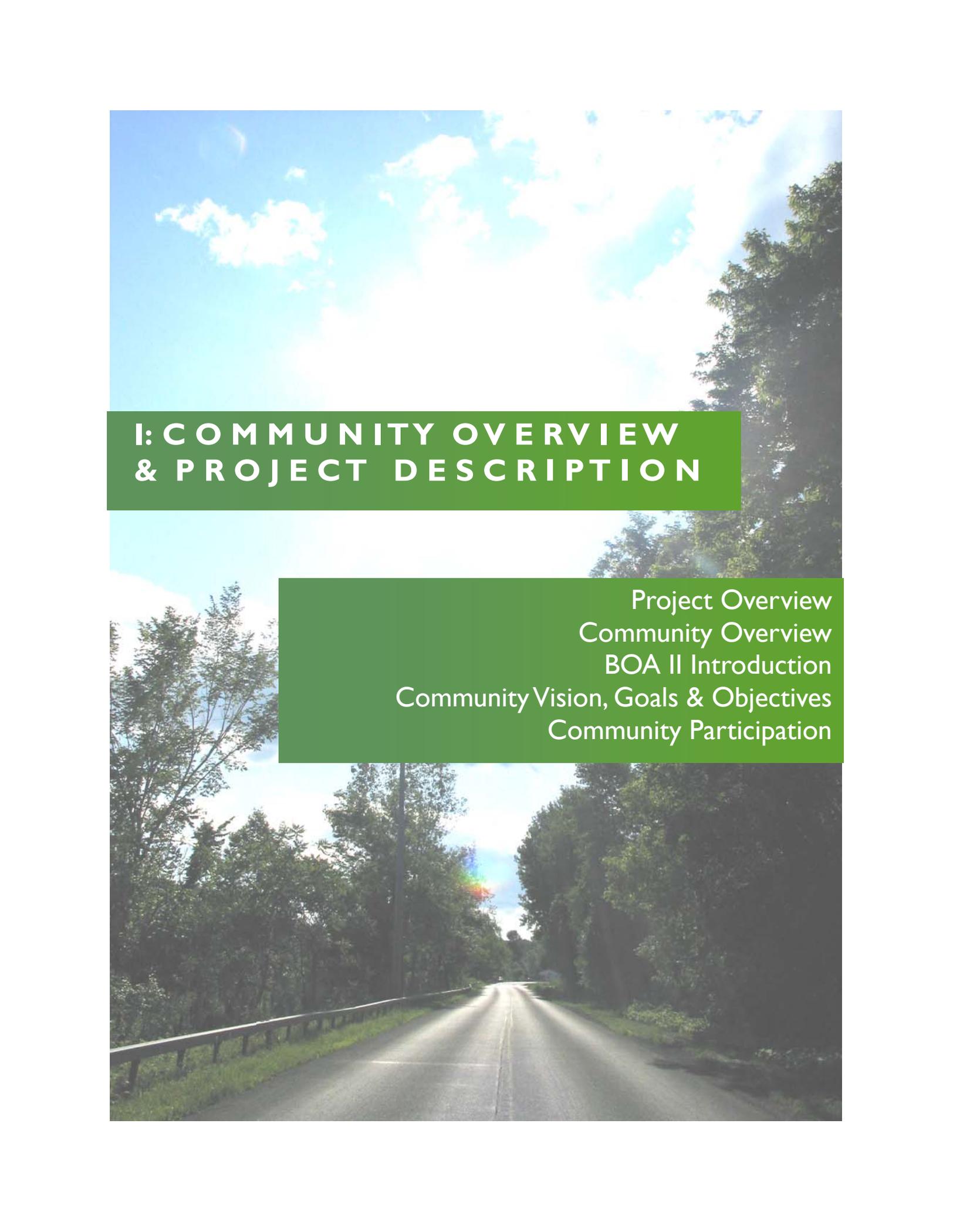
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# I: COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & PROJECT DESCRIPTION

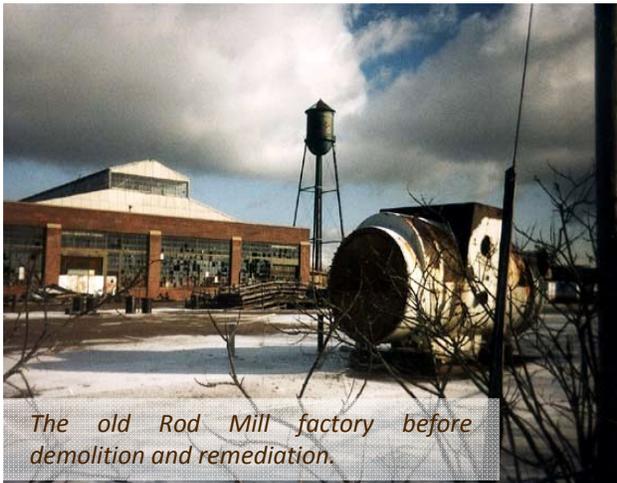
Project Overview  
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Community Vision, Goals & Objectives  
Community Participation

## PROJECT OVERVIEW



# WHAT IS A BROWNFIELD???

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a brownfield is **“any property whose expansion, redevelopment or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant”**. Examples include properties that were historically used for commercial and industrial operations such as old gas stations and factories.



*The old Rod Mill factory before demolition and remediation.*



*Woodrow Alley in BOA II*

## THE BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREAS PROGRAM

**(BOA)** provides local governments and organizations with the tools needed to develop a revitalization strategy for potential brownfields. **Through a thorough investigation into current conditions and the collaborative help of the local community, the municipality can locate underutilized and vacant properties and create a redevelopment strategy for the region.** At the completion of the program, communities designated as “Brownfield Opportunity Areas” increase their competitive position for federal and state grants, and funding.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

# THE BOA PROCESS...



The Brownfield Opportunity Area has three major steps: Pre-Nomination, Nomination and Implementation, all of which are described in further detail below.

## 1 PRE-NOMINATION

\*a basic analysis of the area affected by brownfields

- description and justification of study area and boundary
- understanding of land use and zoning
- delineation of existing brownfield sites and other underutilized properties
- potential for revitalization

## NOMINATION 2

\*a description and analysis of the Brownfield Opportunity Area

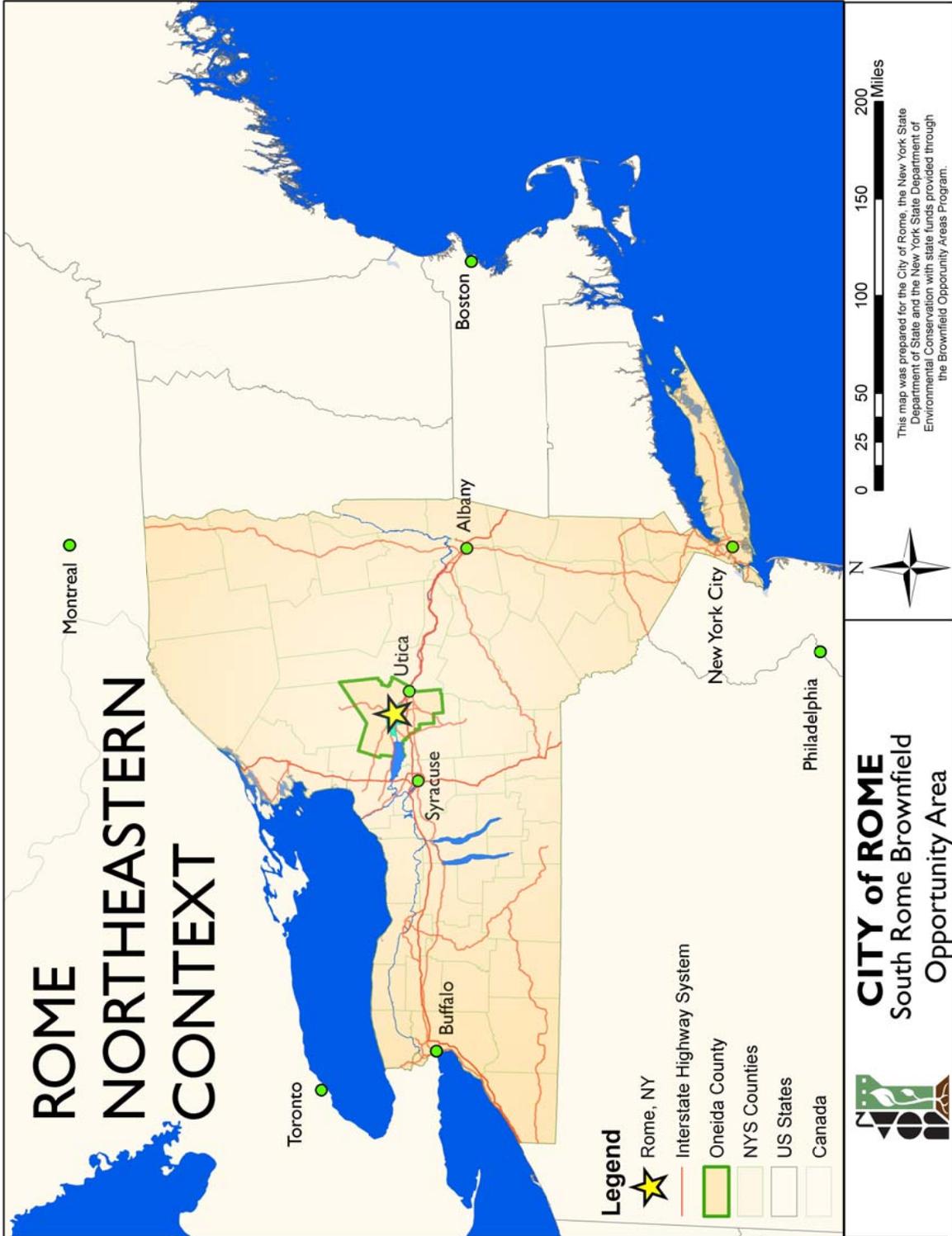
- economic and market trends analysis of existing conditions, opportunities, and reuse potential for properties located in the proposed BOA area
- description of key findings and recommendations to advance redevelopment of strategic sites and to revitalize the area.

## 3 IMPLEMENTATION

\*a description of actions, both immediate and long-term, that are necessary to implement the area-wide plan and to ensure that proposed uses and improvements materialize

# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## COMMUNITY & REGIONAL SETTING



## COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

# COMMUNITY & REGIONAL SETTING

Covering 72 square miles with 33,725 residents, Rome is one of two anchor cities in the Utica-Rome New York Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). With three interchanges on the NYS Thruway System (I-90) and convenient access to Interstate 81, the Rome is located within a day's drive of 25 percent of the US-Canadian population (less than five hours to New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, Toronto and Montreal - see Community Context Map). The County Airport at Griffiss Business and Technology Park features a 12,000-foot international runway providing commercial air service to Rome with potential for passenger service in the near future. Currently, passenger air service is available at the Syracuse Hancock International Airport (50 minutes) and Albany Airport (90 minutes). Amtrak provides passenger rail service from Rome to New York City, Niagara Falls, Boston, Chicago and Toronto via the City's newly-renovated historic train station. CSX and Susquehanna rail freight service is available to area businesses in Rome's downtown and at Griffiss Business and Technology Park.

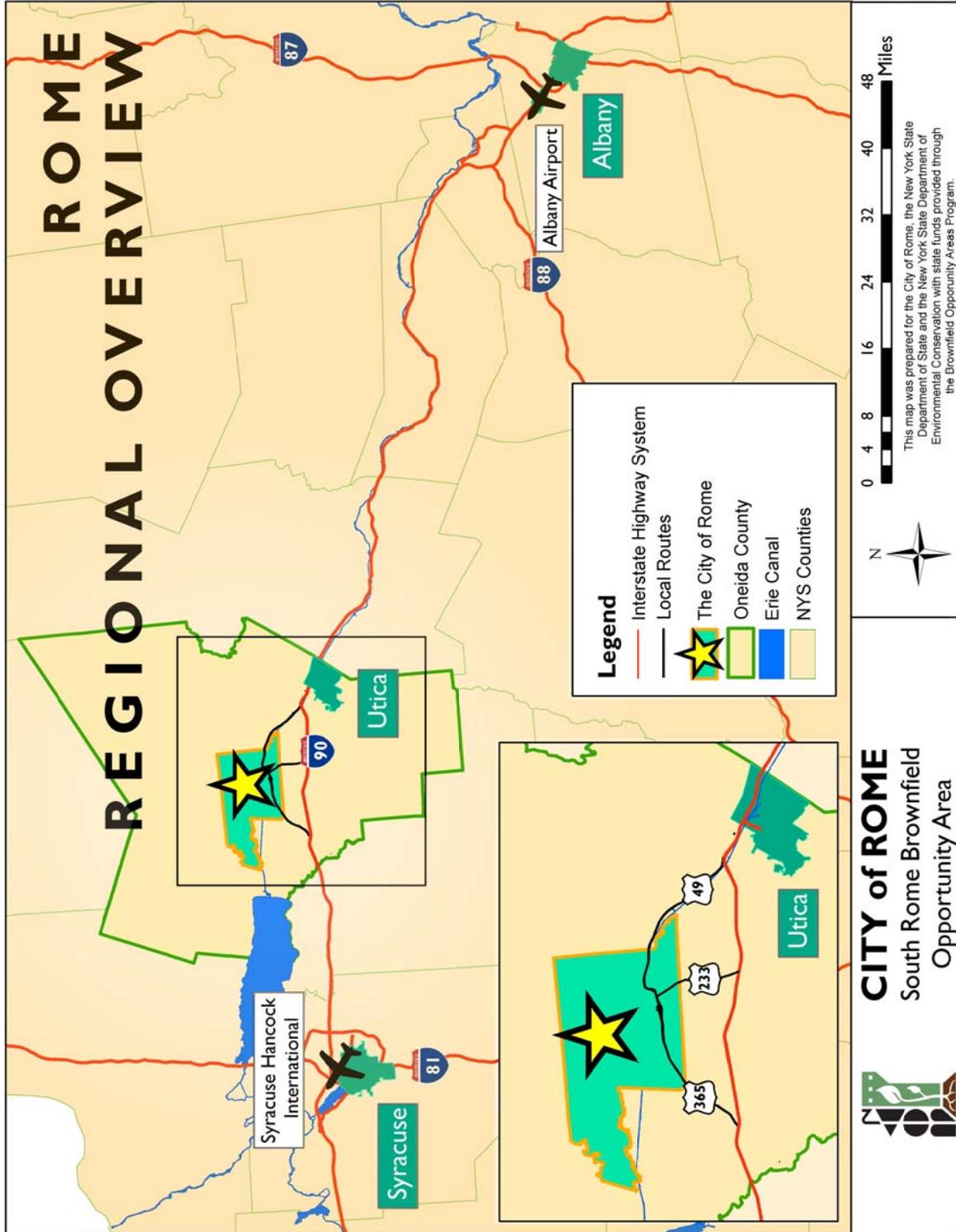
Rome's history is defined by geographic features, including the Mohawk River, the Erie Canal and its location in the "center" of New York State. Once known as the "Copper City," Rome was home to numerous metal industries including Rome Cable and General Cable. From 1950 -1995 Griffiss Air Force Base was a major contributor to the local and regional economy. When it was closed in 1995, Rome and the region suffered notable economic and demographic declines. However, the departure of the Air Force provided the City with an opportunity to rediscover and diversify itself for a new future.



*This picture, taken in the first half of the 20th Century, shows how densely developed West Dominick Street was before the decline of industry.*

# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## COMMUNITY & REGIONAL SETTING



# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## COMMUNITY & REGIONAL SETTING

### Demographic and Social Statistics

\*all statistics were retrieved from the 2010 Census & the 2005-2009 American Community Survey

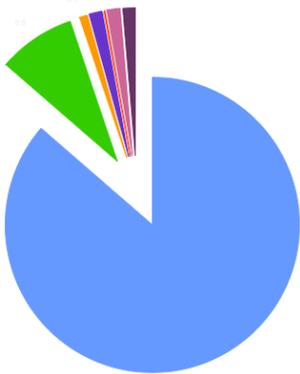
#### POPULATION

**ROME**  
POPULATION:  
**33,725**

**NATIONAL**  
POPULATION:  
**308,745,538**

#### RACIAL & ETHNIC MAKE-UP

- WHITE: 89.8%
- BLACK/AFRICAN-AMERICAN: 8.8%
- AMERICAN INDIAN: 0.5%
- ASIAN/ASIAN-AMERICAN: 1.5%
- PACIFIC ISLANDER: 0.1%
- LATINO/HISPANIC: 5.3%



**ROME**  
FOREIGN - BORN  
POPULATION :  
**5%**  
**NATIONAL**  
FOREIGN - BORN  
POPULATION :  
**12%**

#### POVERTY & INCOME

Rome: **17.4%** of the City is below the poverty line

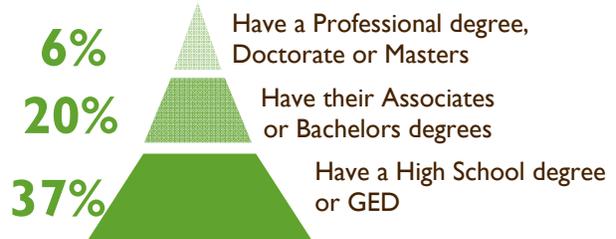
Nation: **13.5%** of the nation is below the poverty line

#### MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Rome: **\$39,007**

Nation: **\$51,425**

#### EDUCATION (2008-2010)



#### HOME OWNERSHIP

**58%** of Rome citizens own a home

Compared to **67%** nationally

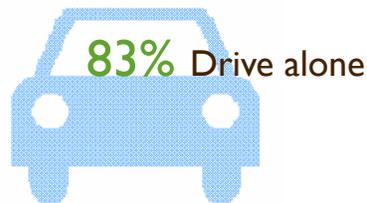


#### COMMUTE

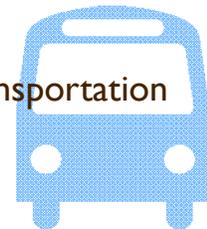
##### MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK

Rome: **17.3 minutes**

Nation: **25.2 minutes**



**2%** Use Public Transportation



# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## COMMUNITY & REGIONAL SETTING

### HOUSING STATISTICS (2010 American Census)

> **More than 57%** of Rome's parcels are classified as single-family residences, making it the predominant land use in the City.



> **Just over 10%** of all the housing units in the city are vacant.

> **Around 50%** of Rome's housing was built **before the year 1950**.

> The median house value in Rome is **\$83,600**. Nationally, it is **\$185,400**.

> Locally, the median rent is **\$430**. Nationally, it is **\$675**.

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### UNEMPLOYMENT (November 2011)

Rome: **7.9%**

Nation: **8.7%**

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### ECONOMIC INDICATORS\*

**The industries that contributed the greatest to the economic base of Oneida County (first period 2011):**

1. Government Services
2. Healthcare and Social Assistance
3. Manufacturing
4. Finance and Insurance

**The industries expected to employ the most people by 2018 in the Mohawk Valley:**

1. Healthcare & Social Assistance (15.6%),
2. Arts, Entertainment & Recreation\*\* (11.2%).

**The industries expected to lose the most employees by 2018 in the Mohawk Valley:**

1. Manufacturing (-22.7)
2. Mining, quarrying, oil and gas (-22.6)

\*Employment & Economic stats supplied by Department of Labor

\*\*includes performing arts, spectator sports, museums, historical sites, amusement, and gambling

# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## COMMUNITY & REGIONAL SETTING

### **Summary: Social, Housing & Demographic Statistics**

Compared to the rest of the country, Rome's population is fairly homogenous, with only a small proportion being of color or from a different country. In most economic poverty and income indicators, Rome is usually right below the national average. However, substantially lower rents and housing values indicate that the cost of living is much lower in Rome than it is nationally. This may be appealing for a younger workforce looking for a less expensive lifestyle.

Rome's vacancy rate of 10% is fairly similar to the national average of 11%. Sprawl and low-density housing generally defines the landscape, even in the busier parts of the urban core and in Rome downtown. Encouraging mixed-use and higher density development may encourage residents to walk, bike or use public transportation versus just driving alone.

Economic and employment statistics for the Mohawk Valley are promising, showing a growth in service industries such as arts and healthcare. Rome's unemployment rate has remained lower than the national average for a few months, well into November 2011. However, the predicted decline of manufacturing may hit the City harder than other communities in the region given the high presence of factories. BOA II contains a number of major manufacturers such as Rome Strip Steel, Owl Wire and Cable LLC, and Baum's Castorine Co. Fostering the healthy growth of existing manufacturing facilities as well as creating greater economic diversity will ensure Rome's citizens have employment opportunities well into the future. Large parcels of vacant land such as the Rome Cable Facility provide an opportunity for Rome to attract major developers and major employers to the Area.

## COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

# PREVIOUS PLANNING INITIATIVES

### City of Rome Comprehensive Plan (2005)

The Plan identified seven key goals:

- 1) Provide a stable, balanced and productive tax base.
- 2) Become the most business-friendly community in New York State.
- 3) Train and educate a modern workforce.
- 4) Offer higher quality, market-appropriate housing Choices.
- 5) Develop 21st Century infrastructure.
- 6) Support a healthy community and environment.
- 7) Build and protect rich urban amenities.



Specifically pertinent to BOA II are the improved quality of local infrastructure and urban amenities, the creation of a West Rome Connector, offering of higher quality housing choices and creation of a more business friendly environment by improving West Dominick Street. In addition, the extension of the NYS Canalway Trail will connect Rome to Syracuse through Brownfield Opportunity Area II.

### Rome Urban Design Plan (2006)

The Urban Design Plan was completed in response to recommendations from the National Main Street Center Downtown Assessment and the Comprehensive Plan. The West Dominick Street portion of the BOA, is slated to be developed into a downtown “Arts District” and proposed infrastructure improvements to West Dominick Street include landscaping and pedestrian-related changes. The plan also highlights the proposed NYS Canalway Trail.

### Main Streets Design Guidelines (2006)

As part of the Urban Design Plan development process, a series of design guidelines were prepared for the three designated Main Streets corridors. The Rome Main Streets Assessment (2002) helped identify Rome’s three Main Street Commercial corridors, including James Street, East Dominick Street and West Dominick Street. **The West Dominick Street Corridor is located directly in Brownfield Opportunity Area II.** The guidelines are intended to restore streets as civic places, improve quality, preserve character, improve pedestrian safety, encourage economic development, and retain the character of historic structures.

# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

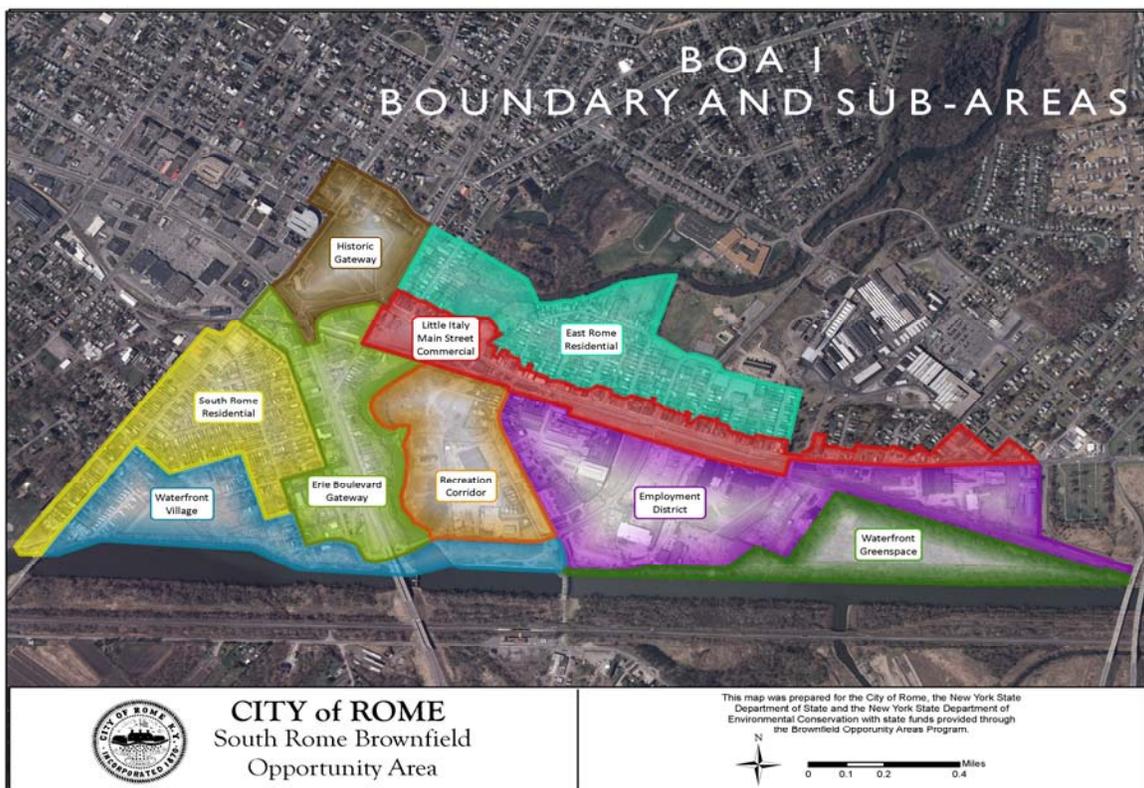
## PREVIOUS PLANNING INITIATIVES

### ONE BROWNFIELD AT A TIME...

Over the past decade, Rome has aggressively pursued funding from multiple agencies to advance the investigation, remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites. One by one, and in partnership with the State and Federal government, Rome has worked steadfastly to improve the health of residential neighborhoods and to revitalize its commercial and industrial corridors through brownfield redevelopment.

### From **BROWN** to **GREEN**: BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA I

This isn't the first time that Rome has tackled disinvestment and environment blight through the Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program. The government is currently in the works of completing the Implementation Phase of the first Brownfield Opportunity Area, which includes Downtown Rome and the East Rome Business Park. BOA I is divided into 9 distinct subareas, each with its own character and different potential for development. **Already Rome has seen vast improvements from the advancement of the program in these subareas, including the renovation of the Grand Hotel and creation of the new American Alloy Steel facility.** For more information, visit <http://www.rome-ny.gov/boa/>.



# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## PREVIOUS PLANNING INITIATIVES

### GRAND HOTEL

BEFORE



AFTER



When faced with the choice of demolition or renovation of the aging Grand, the City partnered with a team of developers, and using a BOA-created platform and financial incentives from the NYS Restore program, the building was restored. The Grand is now a sustainable, mixed-use facility and a prime example of a private/public partnership.

### AMERICAN ALLOY STEEL

BEFORE



AFTER



Described as one of the most involved and collaborative Brownfield restoration efforts in Rome's history, the revitalization of the former General Cable Site involved the sustained efforts of multiple agencies, administrations and individuals over a period of years. With incentive funding from Restore NY, Rome turned a vacant and abandoned brownfield into a \$6 million state-of-the-art manufacturing facility. Now the home of American Alloy Steel, it has become an anchor of the East Rome Business Park. **Since its opening, the company has created numerous jobs and plays a valuable role in keeping industry alive in Rome.**

# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## PREVIOUS PLANNING INITIATIVES



Before remediation, the Rome Cable Corporation Site contained the skeleton of a 240,000 square-foot industrial structure. Plagued with contamination, the parcel was in desperate need of a clean-up. After a successful demolition and remediation, the site was voted the 2010 Environmental Brownfield Project of the year by the Central New York Chapter of the American Public Work's Association. Green and clean, it is now ready for development. Given its accessibility and the amount of residential and commercial properties that are in its vicinity (the neighborhood surrounding the site is locally known as South Rome), the Rome Cable site has great potential to transform the community through the creation of more jobs and safer neighborhoods. The next step is to secure funding for the demolition of Building Complex 4, the last vacant building. The Rome Cable Tower overlooks the city as a reminder of the once historic manufacturing site - now the centerpiece of Brownfield Opportunity Area II.



## COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

# BOA II INTRODUCTION



BOA II is a continuation of BOA I (refer to Appendix A). It includes 721 acres of southwest Rome, an area which is rich in land uses, natural features, and regional landmarks. The current presence of vacant properties and brownfields in the Area presents an unsurpassed opportunity for the City to continue development along the waterfront, the Erie Boulevard commercial corridor and the Martin Street Gateway.

Census data for BOA II shows that while the percentage of vacancies is similar to the entire City, in all other demographic values the population is at a disadvantage. Most discerning is one fifth of the entire Area has been in poverty at some point in the past 12 months. The tract that is just north of Erie Boulevard had the highest percentage of poverty, hitting 30% (Appendix D). The average median household income for BOA II is nearly \$6,000 less than the rest of the City. Once again, regions just north of Erie Boulevard had the Area's lowest incomes, hitting recorded values as low as \$25,152 (Appendix E). This region is also a part of downtown Rome. Investing in its economic and aesthetic development may also have an impact on its future social make-up.

### BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA II STATISTICS

	<b>BOA II</b>	<b>Rome</b>	<b>State</b>
<b>Population</b>	2,026	33,725	19,378,102
<b>Race - % White</b>	89.3%	87.4%	65.7%
<b>% Below Poverty</b>	20%	14.4%	14.5%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$37,803	\$43,780	\$55,217
<b># of Housing Units</b>	1,036	13,943	8,089,555
<b>% Vacant Housing Units</b>	10%	11%	10.7%
<b>Housing Value</b>	\$68,300	\$89,400	\$304,100

*For detailed maps on BOA II Demographics, please refer to appendices C, D, E and F*

# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## BOA II INTRODUCTION

Housing values are also much lower in the BOA compared to the rest of the City and State. While the Census reported an average housing value of \$68,300, information attained from the Assessor's department shows that with vacant properties incorporated, the median total land value for properties classified as residential is below \$40,000. Although the residential neighborhoods north of Erie Boulevard has the highest instances of poverty, it is the residential neighborhoods closest to the Rome Cable site that have the lowest values.

Of all of the census tracts, the one that the Martin Street Gateway falls in has the lowest instances of poverty and the highest housing values. However, only a small percentage of the total tract is included in BOA II.

Although the overall vacancy rate in BOA II is similar to the rest of the City, the Study Area strategically includes the regions of downtown Rome that have the highest presence of vacant properties. Within the Area, there are over 175 vacant and underutilized parcels. Abundant natural wetlands, also played an important role in determining the boundary (refer to Appendix G).

Within the Erie Bouelvard Corridor is the West Dominick Street Main Street Corridor. West Dominick Street contains mixed zoning and land-use as well as a number of local landmarks and important services. Rome City Hall, Griffio Green, Capitol Theatre, Fort Stanwix National Monument, Marinus Willett Education and Visitors Center, and the proposed REACH Microenterprise Center. The REACH Center has been identified as a strategic site for continued development in BOA II. Rome Hospital Offices, Rome Chamber of Commerce, Berkshire Bank and a mix of retail occupy a variety of workspaces. County offices, recently located along the Corridor draw hundreds of workers and clients to the downtown area on a daily basis. The West Dominick Street commercial area is three long blocks incorporating mixed-use development, eventually turning into a residential neighborhood.

*The expansion of the REACH Center is happening at a rapid pace. To the right are the newest changes and planned developments.*



# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## BOA II INTRODUCTION

A high number of commercial and residential vacancies, as well as underutilized properties define the current landscape of the West Dominick Street. New urban design and business development incentives, focused on filling vacant spaces that are leftovers from urban renewal, are key to the continuing success of downtown Rome. The City continues to implement Urban Design Plan elements to improve the appearance of the street - adding trees to shade sidewalks, improving facades, and making changes to encourage creative and innovative cultural development. Vacant properties and empty storefronts in the downtown are providing Rome with a clean slate for economic restructuring and infrastructural improvements.



*West Dominick Street (Between George and Madison)  
Addition of Planted Median and Gateway Markers*

*An example of the planned urban design initiatives for West Dominick Street*

Erie Boulevard is one of the busiest streets in the City with thousands of cars passing through each day. Strip malls and big businesses absorb most of the streetscape, but there are a few residential properties on the northern side of the Boulevard. Major employers have settled along the thoroughfare, providing Rome's citizens with job opportunities as well as national commercial resources. However, the lack of an appropriate buffer between the residential and downtown neighborhoods on the north end and Erie Boulevard's streetscape have created development issues in the surrounding region, resulting in a number of vacant residential and commercial properties. In addition, high vehicle counts make the area very attractive to national chain stores but provide dangerous conditions for pedestrian traffic from the nearby neighborhoods. Therefore, reassessing zoning and existing land-use in this region is a priority.

# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## BOA II INTRODUCTION

The heart of BOA II features the Rome Cable Tower which was spared the wrecking ball in an effort to preserve a historical landmark signifying Rome's manufacturing history. Serviced by a rail line (Appendix B), the former Rome Cable site still has manufacturing and commercial potential. Yet again, the lack of buffer for this site and other neighboring manufacturing facilities decreases the quality of life of citizens in the residential neighborhood which surrounds the site. The community is densely packed with single and multiple family homes. Many of the houses in this area are older and remain vacant or uninhabited due to their poor condition. Nonetheless, it is a closely-knit community that has a local organizations operating within its vicinity, including Rome Polish Home and the South Rome Senior Center. Strong public participation and interest in change are important assets to the project.



*Examples of the dilapidated industrial structures in residential neighborhoods*

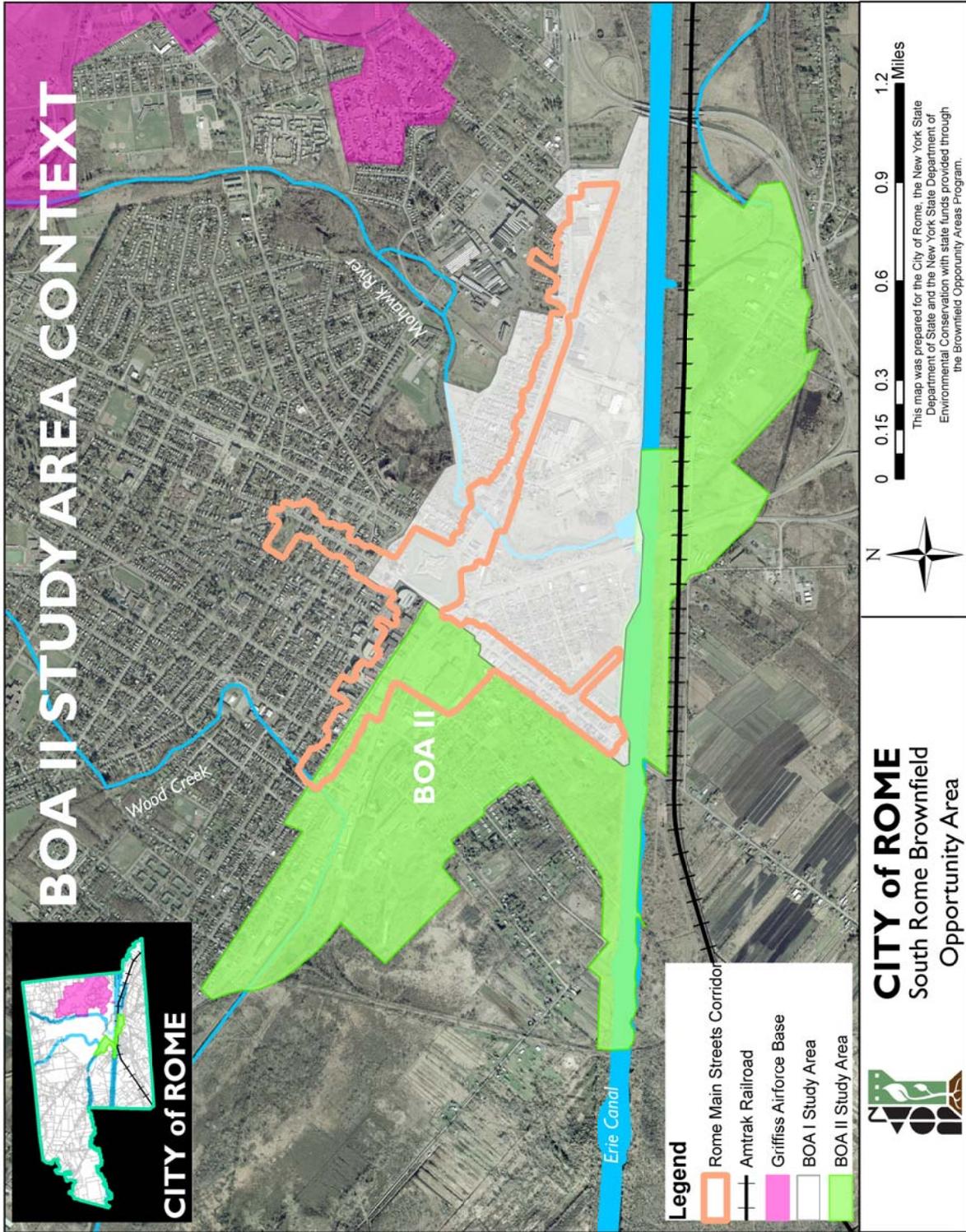


Through BOA II, Rome is also focusing on waterfront development along Muck Road and Martin Street. The poor drainage and lack of infrastructure along Muck Road has caused this part of the Erie Boulevard Corridor to be neglected in the past few decades. However, the completion of the off-road portion of the Canalway Trail along Muck Road will allow residents and visitors to take advantage of beautiful canal-front scenery.

Martin Street Gateway is in the south of BOA II. A number of auto-oriented businesses, light industrial parcels and storage facilities make up the thoroughfare. Preparing for business development on strategic sites along the street can increase employment opportunities and economic diversity. As an actively used gateway, Martin Street is often the first experience one has before entering Downtown Rome. People who take the train arrive in the City through Rome Train Station, while those who are biking along the Canalway Trail approach the Corridor alongside the Erie Canal. By car, one will arrive at the Gateway if they are coming from Oriskany, Westmoreland, Clinton and New Hartford NY - routes 69 and 233. The Gateway region also includes the Mill Street Bridge, a major connector to the East Rome BOA, where there are valuable waterfront connection projects underway. The lack of pedestrian friendly infrastructure and an aesthetically valuable streetscape are factors that define the initial impressions visitors have as they travel into the heart of the City.

# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## BOA II INTRODUCTION



# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## BOA II INTRODUCTION

### **BOA Boundary Description and Justification**

Based on historic and current land use, there are over 97 potential brownfield sites and countless dilapidated and vacant residential properties in the Brownfield Opportunity Area. The borders were based on the presence of larger vacant sites, such as the Rome Cable Facility and the presence of natural features such as state-protected wetlands and the Erie Canal. The multiple regions that are included in the Study Area are all impacted by the Erie Canal as well as BOA I and can see a tremendous growth from increased recreational and commercial activity and greater waterfront connections.

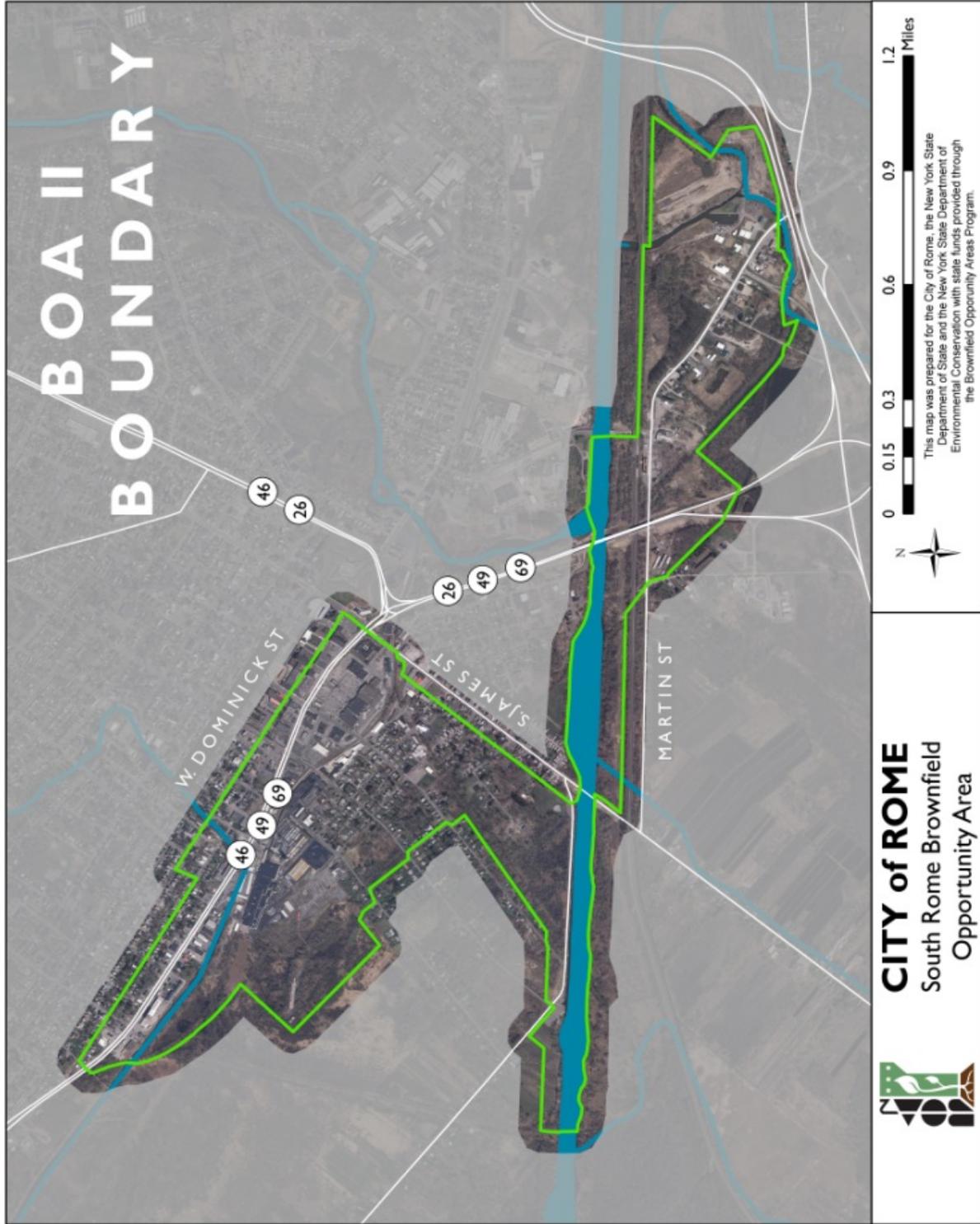


BOA II includes 437 acres of Rome’s defined “urban core”, including the West Dominick Region of downtown Rome, the Erie Boulevard and the Rome Cable Facility. The “Erie Boulevard Corridor” contains auto body shops, gas stations, laundromats, old factories and other commercial properties. Many of these sites are close or located within residential neighborhoods that lay at the border of Erie Boulevard and the Rome Cable Facility. The area whose clean-up and development could have the greatest impact on the future of Rome is the Rome Cable Facility, where there are still multiple dilapidated structures and over 40 acres of vacant land. The neighborhood surrounding the site suffers from a significant amount of blight and contains scores of underutilized, uninhabited housing, resulting from decades of neglect and imminence of operating manufacturing facilities.

The Martin Street Gateway, which connect to the rest of the Area at the South James St. Bridge, lies just south of the Erie Canal and runs to the Route 49 underpass. It presents an opportunity for the City to create a more inviting gateway into its downtown. The region has many of the same environmental problems seen in the urban core, including a high presence of underutilized sites and potential brownfield sites. Existing businesses are significantly more industrial, including auto shops, storage facilities, and lumber yards. However, the infrastructural make-up and high presence of flood plains creates additional strains on development. There are number of recreational facilities, including Scotty’s Funland, Riverside Marina and a planned car raceway for children. Given the recreational facilities and landmarks (Rome Train Station and the historic Great Carry Site), the vacant properties and potential brownfield sites that lie along Martin Street present an opportunity to improve the economic and aesthetic quality of the street.

# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## BOA II INTRODUCTION



# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

# COMMUNITY VISION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES



## COMMUNITY VISION

The Vision Statement for BOA II was tailored to incorporate the ideas and desires expressed by community members in surveys and meetings. It also includes the major goals and concerns of the steering committee.

*Aesthetically stimulating streets, vibrant waterfront recreational opportunities, and a downtown filled with inviting storefronts and cultural amenities draw visitors to Rome from all over the region. Rome's residents see the benefits of better quality downtown housing, residential neighborhoods free of environmental and structural blight, and innovative manufacturing and commercial facilities.*



# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## COMMUNITY VISION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

**GOAL I: Increase recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.**

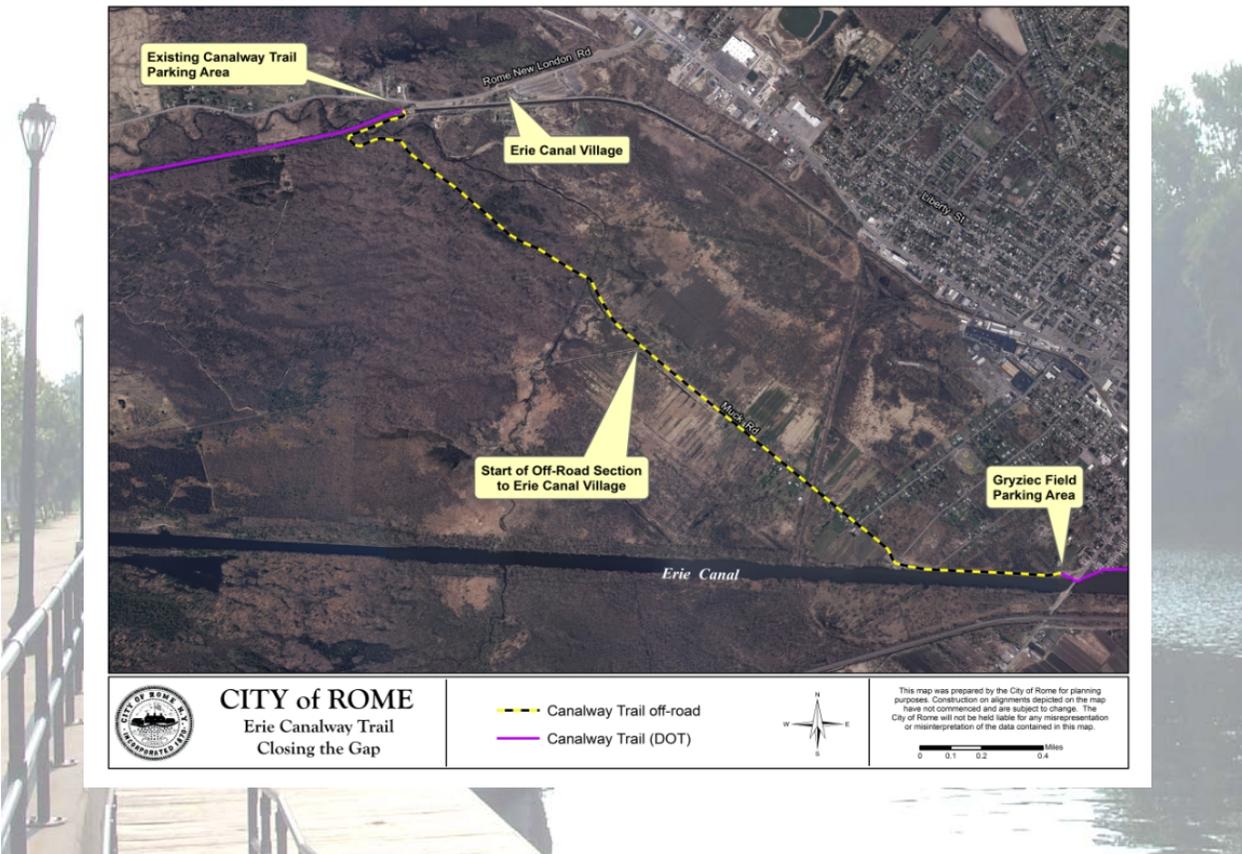
*Fostering more recreational activities both in Rome’s residential neighborhoods and along the Erie Canal will increase the quality of life for residents and youth who live in Rome while creating a more attractive waterfront for the Region to enjoy. More educational programs and opportunities for youth and adults alike to become involved in the growth of their community will invoke a sense of pride and ownership in local neighborhoods. Establishing more opportunities to take advantage of Rome’s historic location along the Erie Canal will draw more people into the Area, creating a more vibrant, exciting environment for all.*

**OBJECTIVE:** Complete off-road portion of the Canalway Trail. The Muck Road, Fort Bull Wetlands portion is mapped below.

**OBJECTIVE:** Increase canal front exposure and access along Martin Street.

**OBJECTIVE:** Increase environmental education opportunities for youth and public using Canal resources.

**OBJECTIVE:** Increase opportunities for youth and elderly to work together and enhance the quality of their own neighborhood, such as community gardens and public art projects.



# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

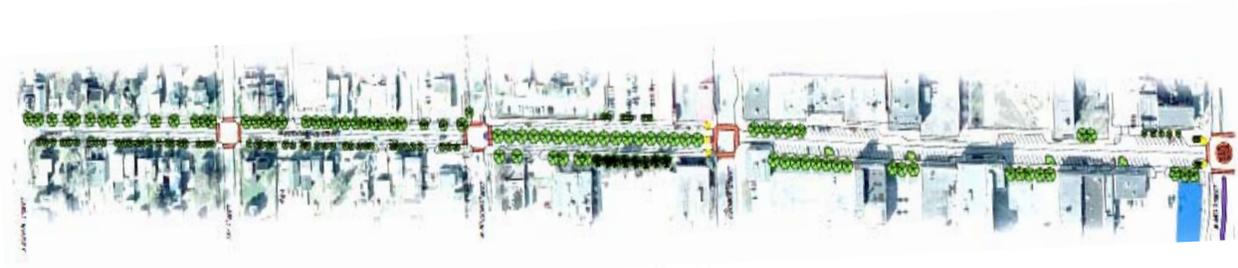
## COMMUNITY VISION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

### **GOAL 2: Improve infrastructure and aesthetic character of major thoroughfares and downtown corridors.**

*Improving the pedestrian infrastructure and aesthetic character of West Dominick Street and Martin Street will create a more attractive environment and invoke a greater sense of ownership and pride for business owners and residents alike. A more uplifting, quality downtown will also promote greater economic development and foster a sense of sustainability by encouraging people to walk instead of drive. Through improving public amenities such as sidewalks and lighting, residents will feel more comfortable exploring downtown Rome at all points of the day.*

**OBJECTIVE:** Examine and improve ailing pedestrian infrastructure along West Dominick Street, including curb cuts, sidewalks and crosswalks.

**OBJECTIVE:** Work with Rome Main Streets Alliance and other appropriate community and public organizations to improve quality of existing store fronts and commercial spaces along West Dominick Street.



*Changes outlined in the Urban Design Plan include more trees, defined curb cuts, gateway markers, period lighting crosswalks and new sidewalks.*



**OBJECTIVE:** As recommended by the City's Comprehensive Plan, explore the need for infrastructural improvements along Martin Street, such as sanitary mains and man holes.

**OBJECTIVE:** Create more pedestrian friendly infrastructure along Martin Street, including bike lanes, lighting and quality sidewalks.

**OBJECTIVE:** Create a more enticing gateway into the City of Rome via Martin Street that incorporates better street signage, more diverse commercial character, quality recreational opportunities, and the creation of a regional transportation hub centered around the Rome Train Station.

# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## COMMUNITY VISION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

### **GOAL 3: Enhance the quality of existing cultural amenities.**

*Rome's rich history and abundance of cultural amenities sets it apart from much of the surrounding region. Many of its cultural amenities, including its trails and regional landmarks remain under-appreciated. Enhancing the quality of these amenities will invoke a greater sense of pride for the entire City and allow Rome to develop into a regional and state-wide "destination" for tourists.*

**OBJECTIVE:** Create redevelopment strategy for vacant City-owned parcels across the street from Rome Train Station, incorporating Action Points in Rome's 2005 Comprehensive Plan which highlight the creation of a regional transportation hub on Martin Street and enhancing available travel resources at the Station.

**OBJECTIVE:** Complete and market regional trails that run through the BOA, including the Canalway Trail and the Great Carry Trail that ends at Rome Train Station. Open up the Train Station to the Erie Canal Waterfront to create an additional tourist attraction and increase value of location.

**OBJECTIVE:** Enhance support and marketing of the Capitol Theater as a regional resource and landmark through needed interior improvements and expanding services available to the public.

### **GOAL 4: Enhance the quality of housing in downtown Rome and in residential neighborhoods in the BOA.**

*Improving the quality of existing housing and expanding downtown residential development will undoubtedly create a better quality of life for Rome's citizens but also encourage those who work and visit the Area to make Rome their home. Especially in communities where there is a high turn-over rate and ownership is low, improvements may encourage residents to reside in their homes permanently and invest more in the vitality of their local neighborhoods.*

**OBJECTIVE:** Selectively rehabilitate homes and apartments with value or potential to improve quality of existing housing options and increase pride in local neighborhoods.

**OBJECTIVE:** Adjust City policy and resources to inspire more responsible landlord behavior, foster a better relationship between landlords and tenants as well as to encourage better quality care for properties.

**OBJECTIVE:** Enforce mixed-use zoning along West Dominick Street through developing more mixed residential-commercial developments and multi-story apartment complexes.

**OBJECTIVE:** Explore ways to decrease the impact of existing manufacturing facilities and major thoroughfares such as Erie Boulevard on surrounding residential neighborhoods through new development opportunities, improved landscaping, fostering communication between owners and local residents, and reevaluating existing zoning and land-use.

# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## COMMUNITY VISION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

### **GOAL 5: Provide and support existing commercial and industrial facilities while promoting new business and manufacturing development.**

*A majority of citizens have expressed a desire to see more businesses that cater to their needs and desires in downtown Rome. Creating a more nurturing environment for business development will invigorate Rome and potentially provide more employment opportunities in the Area. Supporting the development of innovative manufacturing facilities or other businesses on large parcels of vacant land within the BOA will also provide ample employment opportunities, increase economic vitality and diversity and Rome's status as a regional landmark in the Mohawk Valley.*

**OBJECTIVE:** Conduct site assessments and ultimately clean-up and market all potential brownfield and vacant sites in the City to provide valuable opportunities for future developers.

**OBJECTIVE:** Remediate the remaining contaminated parcel of the Rome Cable Site, including demolishing Complex #4. In addition, create a redevelopment strategy for the whole site that benefits the entire City (through economic revitalization and increased employment opportunities), doesn't compromise the environmental integrity of surrounding wetlands and the Erie Canal, and enhances the quality of surrounding residential neighborhoods and manufacturing facilities.

**OBJECTIVE:** Create and nurture the development of more programs that provide support for people interested in starting businesses. This includes helping Rome's REACH Micro enterprise Center reach its full potential.

**OBJECTIVE:** Foster the creation of more public-private partnerships with potential and existing stakeholders to enhance the quality and vitality of existing businesses while encouraging further development of vacant properties along Martin Street and in other underutilized regions of the BOA.



# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Throughout the course of the past six months, community involvement has been sought through a variety of different venues, including ward and community watch meetings in which the BOA Program was introduced and feedback was gathered, surveys, steering committee meetings, and finally through laying the groundwork for an interactive website, which launched in December 2011.

### PUBLIC MEETINGS & PRESENTATIONS

An Introduction to the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program was given and input was received at the following public meetings over the course of the past six months:

1. 3rd Ward meeting: August 8, 2011
2. South Rome Community Block Watch Meeting: August 9, 2011
3. South Rome Community Brainstorming Meeting: August 16, 2011
4. Steering Committee Bus Tour: October 17, 2011
5. 5th, 6th and 7th Ward meeting: October 19, 2011
6. Defense Accounting Presentation:
7. 3rd Ward meeting: November 15, 2011
8. Rome Free Academy Art Teacher's meeting: December 6th
9. South Rome Community Block Watch meeting: January 24, 2012

### AN INTERACTIVE FORUM

In December, the BOA II Website was launched, to help keep the public informed about the status of the program throughout the three step process. The website includes updates, interactive maps, and information and avenues to get residents and businesses involved in the process. The site also allows people to complete surveys online and to leave comments.

**WWW.HELPHYOURBOAGROW.COM**  
**OR**  
**WWW.ROMEBOA2.COM**

Marketing materials to publicize the BOA and its website were also printed and distributed, including a new BOA logo, stickers, fliers and business cards.

# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

### THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The 16-member Steering Committee for Brownfield Opportunity Area II met on several occasions throughout the completion of the Pre-Nomination Report. The committee consists of small and large business owners from the BOA, active residents, past BOA committee members, ward counselors, city residents and City officials, and engineers.



**The first Steering Committee meeting was held September 29, 2011.** The meeting was an informational session, introducing members to the BOA Program and the proposed study area. Throughout the course of the meeting, the BOA boundary as well as additional public outreach strategies were discussed.

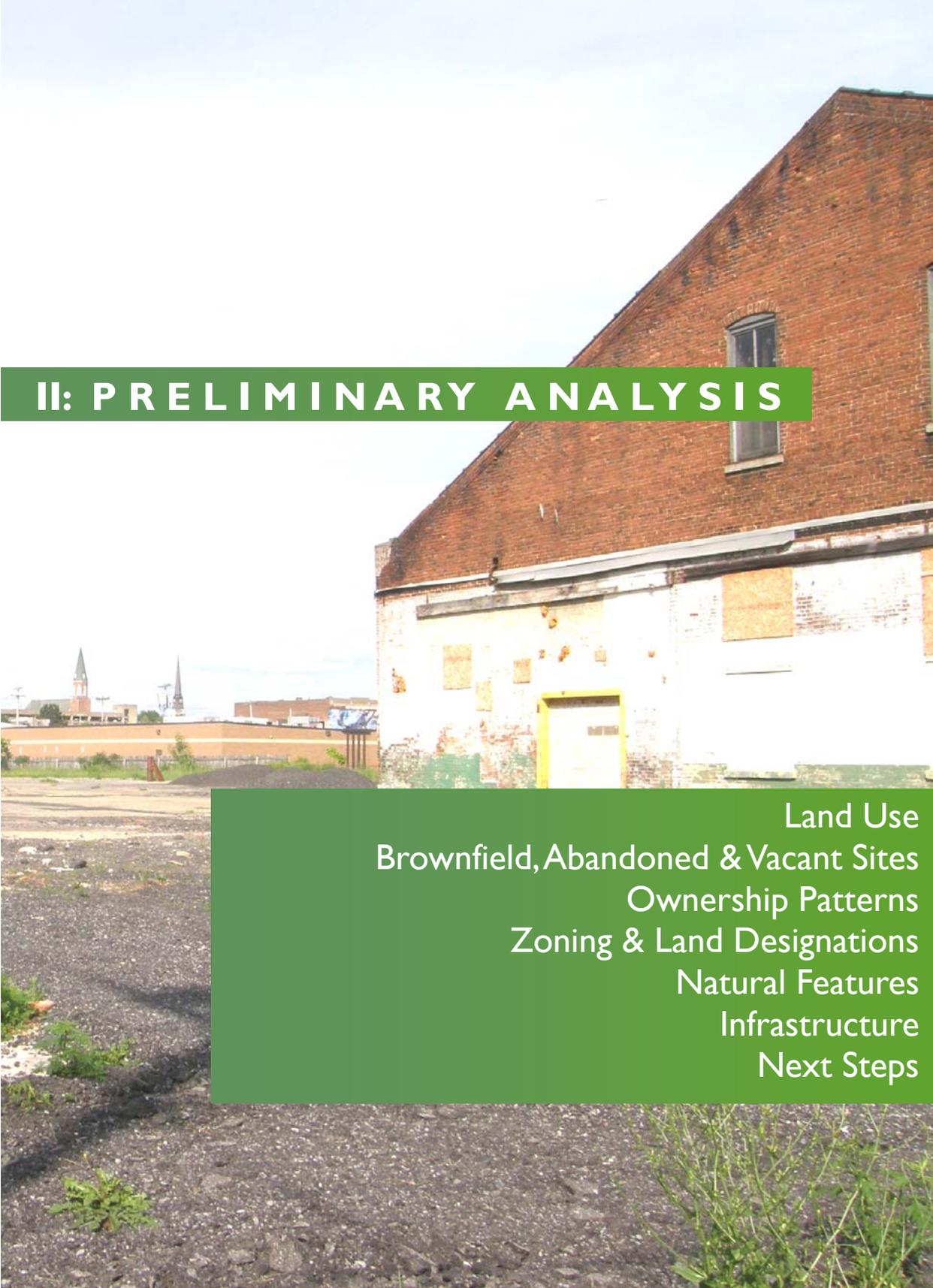


**On October 17th, 2011, the Steering Committee assembled for a bus tour of the both BOAs.** The tour familiarized them with the study boundary and suggested both opportunities and issues that will determine the implementation projects of BOA II. Additional residents participated and our NYS DOS representative also attended.



**On November 29, 2011 the Steering Committee met again to discuss specific sites, major concerns, and discuss their vision for the BOA.**

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## II: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

Land Use  
Brownfield, Abandoned & Vacant Sites  
Ownership Patterns  
Zoning & Land Designations  
Natural Features  
Infrastructure  
Next Steps

## PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

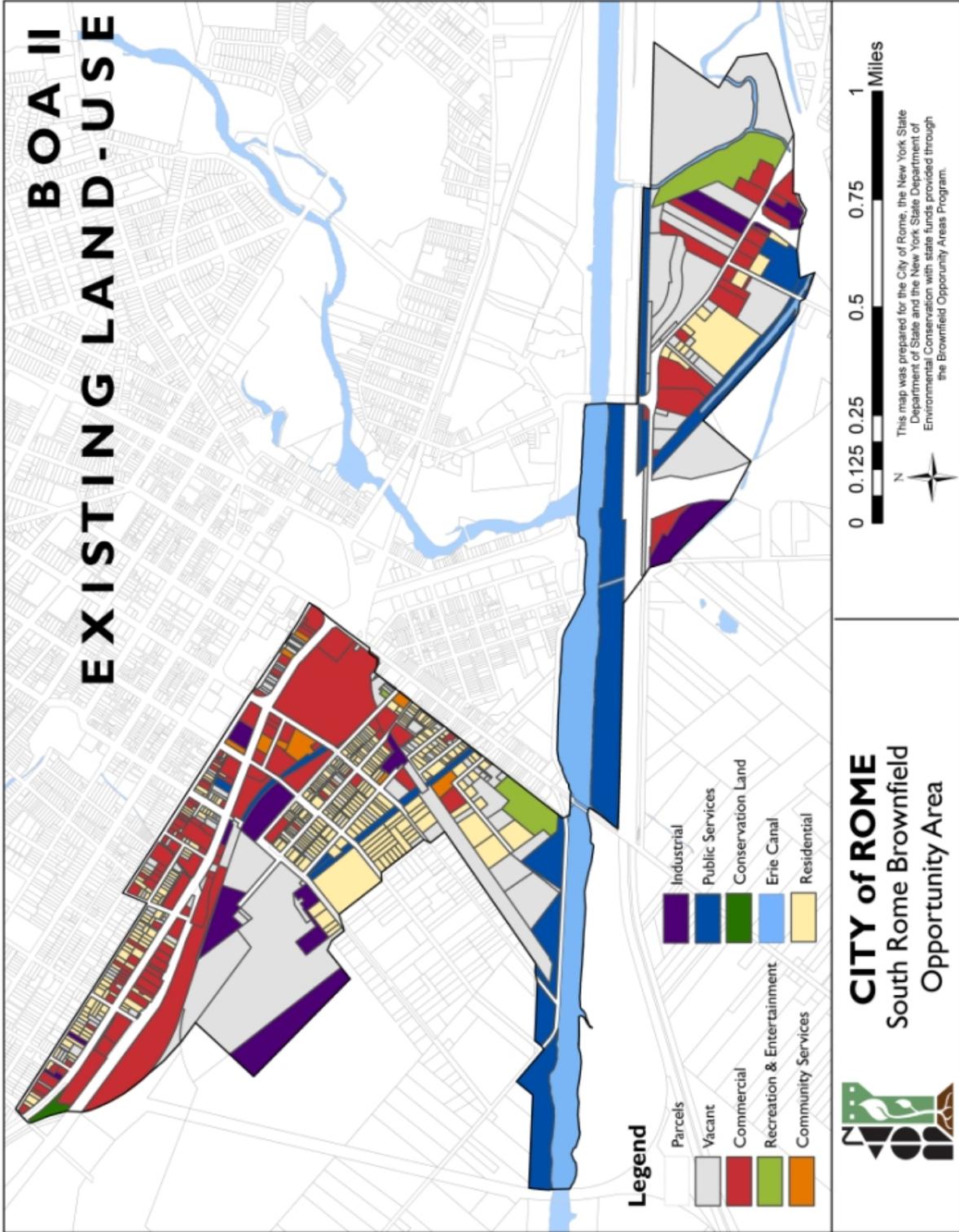


The table below shows the number of parcels per land use class, the total acreage of each, and the percentage of the BOA each parcel type consumes:

PARCEL TYPE	NUMBER OF PARCELS	TOTAL ACRES	% OF BOA
Residential	322	79.2	14.4
Commercial	125	120.4	22.1
Recreational & Entertainment	3	19.8	3.6
Community Services	9	6	1.2
Industrial	14	87.2	16
Public Services	24	83.6	15.3
Conservation	1	1.4	0.2
Vacant	173	148.4	27.1
Total	671	546	100.0

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## LAND USE



# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## LAND USE

### **Residential**

*“Property used for human habitation”*

A majority of the parcels in the Brownfield Opportunity Area are residential. While residential properties are scattered around the Study Area, most of the properties remain in the Erie Boulevard Corridor either in the vicinity of the Rome Cable Site or on the north end of Erie Boulevard. Most of the parcels are fairly small, occupying less than a tenth of an acre and are single family residences.

Existing residential land-use in regions just north of Erie Boulevard (along Calvert Street) and in regions of the neighborhood surrounding the Rome Cable facility are in very close proximity to busy thoroughfares or manufacturing facilities. High levels of traffic and noise as well as potential environmental contamination may have a major impact on vacancy statuses and the quality of such housing. Within the neighborhoods in South Rome, residents have cited excessive noise from trucks and other traffic, and in the case of Owl Wire, loud machinery and physical vibrations from factory operations. Given the amount of vacant and underutilized residential and commercial properties that surround the site, there are opportunities to create “buffer” areas between such facilities and the occupied units that are close by. Solutions can include landscaping and selectively demolishing surrounding underutilized properties to make way for public space or parking that could dually act as a buffer region. Many property owners have already expressed a willingness to work with the City to create a solution to the problem in the upcoming phase of the BOA program.

According to City Codes, most of the residential properties sporadically located along the Erie Boulevard are continuously occupied by renters and homeowners alike. However, research into existing land-use shows that there are a few residential properties that have been vacated. Reevaluating the current use of these properties and transforming them into commercial properties may be one solution to increasing occupancy rates of these specific parcels.



*Examples of housing that may be negatively impacted by the traffic and noise from Erie Boulevard, at the corner of South Doxtator and Erie Boulevard*

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## LAND USE



Housing on West Dominick Street is mostly single-family and contained to smaller plots. In addition, it is dispersed among small commercial parcels.

### **Commercial**

*“Property used for the sale of goods and/or services, including hotels, motels and apartments”*

While there are only 116 parcels that are used for commercial purposes, these properties occupy significantly more acreage than residential parcels within the Study Area. Larger apartment buildings (three families or more) within the BOA are mostly located along West Dominick Street and within the vicinity of the Rome General Cable Site. Larger commercial parcels, including shopping centers and national chain stores, are mainly located along Erie Boulevard. Department stores, restaurants, grocery stores and fast food chains are prominent. There is also one major hotel at the corner of Erie Boulevard and South James Street, which is classified as a type of “Living Accommodation” by the land-use code.

Martin Street also contains a number of larger parcels with commercial uses, mostly occupied by auto-bodies and storage facilities, or other auto-related and multi purpose businesses. Many of these parcels seem to be underutilized.

Smaller, locally-owned businesses are located along Dominick Street, where there is a decent mixture of residential and commercial land uses. Many of the commercial buildings are two or three story structures with retail or service space on the first floor and 3 or more apartments or office space on the upper floors (identified as “living accommodations” by the land-use code). Their close vicinity to landmarks and to residential properties encourage residents to walk rather than drive, and keep street activity at a high at most times of the day. However, a high proportion of vacant parcels subtract from dense development.

### **Public Service**

*“Property used to provide services to the general public”*

Parcels zoned as public service in the Study Area include everything from television antennas to transportation routes such as railroads or waterways, sewage treatment plants, water pollution control facilities and other easements. These facilities take up 16% of the BOA, most of which is occupied by the Erie Canal and the railroad that runs adjacent to it. In addition, a larger easement, which contains active power lines, is located just south of Matthew Street in South Rome and runs adjacent to South Madison and South George streets.

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## LAND USE

### **Community Services**

*“Property used for the well being of the community”*

BOA II includes nine facilities classified as “Community Services”. Three are located on West Dominick Street in downtown Rome, including the Neighborhood Center and a branch of Rome Memorial Hospital. Other properties, such as Transfiguration Church and the historic Rome Polish Home are located in the South Rome community, around Rome Cable.

*The Own Wire Facility, on the right and the PAR Technologies offices are location directly across the street and next to single and multi-family homes.*



### **Industrial**

*“Property used for the production and fabrication of durable and nondurable man-made goods”*

Although there are only 13 parcels of land classified as “industrial”, they make up more than 80 acres of BOA II. The largest properties are the vacant facilities of the Rome Cable Corporation, which lie in the heart of the study area. While some of the land has been remediated, the second parcel of the site, which makes up half of all of the industrial land in the BOA has already been classified as a brownfield. Located close to a residential neighborhood, the Erie Canal and state-protected wetlands (refer to Appendix G), special attention should be paid to creating an efficient buffer between future developments and the surrounding environment. Other industrial properties, such as Owl Wire and storage facilities scattered throughout the South Rome residential neighborhood, would benefit from a closer analysis. Especially concerning Owl Wire, many residents find industrial activity, including truck traffic and loud machinery to be a nuisance in the neighborhood. Establishing truck routes or even relocating surrounding households may be a solution to these problems. In addition, managers at Owl Wire have expressed a need to renovate the building they are currently working out of, as well as a need to expand. Working with stakeholders such as Owl Wire and helping them take advantage of surrounding strategic sites will ensure one of Rome’s most valuable businesses does not relocate.

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## LAND USE

### **Recreation and Entertainment**

*“Property used by groups for recreation, amusement, or entertainment”*

Given the number of residences in BOA II, the presence of recreational facilities is scarce. South Rome Senior Center (owned by Transfiguration Church), located at 112-114 Ridge Street (just off of South James), is designated as a social organization. Also, Gryzic Field, a playground just north of the Erie Canal, is actively used in the summer. Many of the families that live in the residential neighborhood to the east of Rome Cable Site use this facility, but at local meetings, many expressed a desire to see more recreational spaces closer to their houses. Finally, Riverside Marina, which is still active, is located on Martin Street. The Marina connects to the Mohawk River, and provides boat access to the Erie Canal. While the Marina seems to be actively used, further growth may be hindered by a vacant gas station that prevents prevalent street presence along Martin Street. Given the lack of infrastructure in this region of the BOA, developing more outdoor facilities such as soccer fields or basketball courts could be an inviting way to use underdeveloped properties. Creating an outdoor recreational plan for the Martin Street Gateway could be an option in the Nomination Phase.



### **Vacant Land**

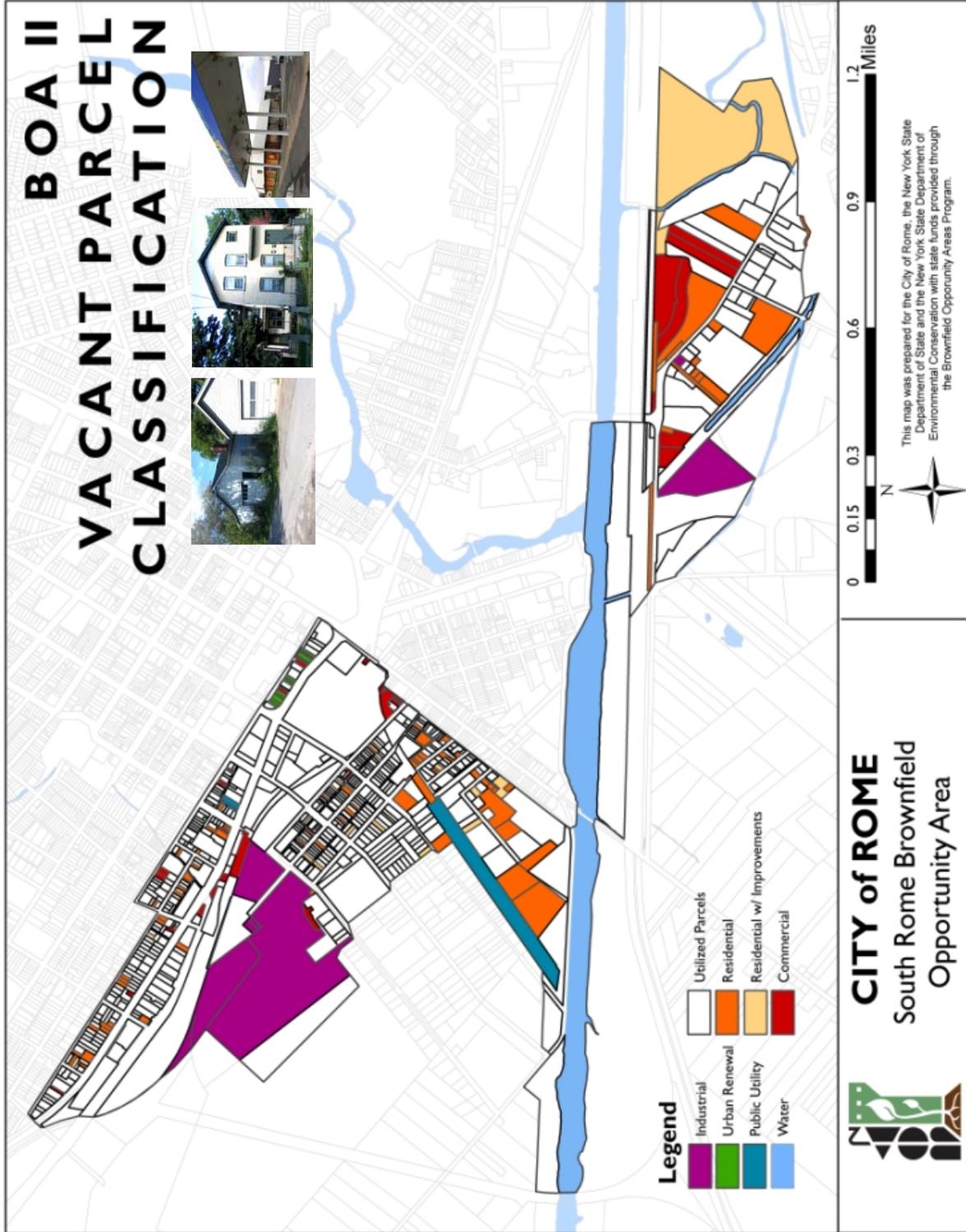
*“Property that is not in use, is in temporary use, or lacks permanent improvement”*

26.1% of the land in BOA II is classified as vacant - the highest proportion of the Study Area. The unoccupied properties present opportunities for development, therefore all vacant land class code properties were considered as potential sites. Many are smaller lots located in residential neighborhoods north of Erie Boulevard or in the South Rome neighborhood around Rome Cable Site. These parcels, mainly classified as “residential”, usually contain small garages or minor improvements. The high number of vacant residential properties in the northwestern region of the BOA signify a development issue in the neighborhood. According to local citizens and residents, the lack of a “buffer” between the homes on streets north of Erie Boulevard and the Boulevard itself is a problem. The Calvert Street region, just north of the Boulevard, is negatively affected by high traffic and noise pollution.

Larger, more accessible properties include vacant commercial properties and parking lots on West Dominick Street (classified in the “Vacant Land” map as “Urban Renewal”), parcels on Martin Street and the former Rome Cable properties.

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## LAND USE



## PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

# BROWNFIELD, ABANDONED, AND VACANT SITES

Based on preliminary field observations, parcel history and data, current site use and environmental impact information found in the DEC bulkstorage and active spill sites databases, over 100 parcels were identified as potential brownfield sites for the study (See page 41). Included are properties as well as other utilized parcels that contain businesses such as gas stations, auto bodies, Laundromats, or manufacturers. The sites in the table below are the 11 most strategic. Many consist of multiple parcels, and were singled out based on size, location, accessibility and community concern. For more information on additional properties that may be seen as strategic later on, refer to Appendix L.

Project/ Site ID	Tax ID Code	Street no.	Street name	Owner
1	242.050-2-27	163-187	W. Dominick Street	City of Rome (Urban Renewal)
	242.050-2-28			
	242.050-2-29			
	242.050-2-31			
	242.050-2-32			
2	242.049-1-29	213-217, 219, 221-223	W. Dominick Street	City of Rome (Urban Renewal)
	242.049-1-30			
	242.049-1-31			
3	242.049-1-34	239-241	W. Dominick Street	City of Rome (Urban Renewal)
	242.049-1-35	243-245		
	242.049-1-36	249		
	242.049-1-37	251-253		
	242.049-1-38	255		
	242.049-1-39	257		
4	242.049-1-008	337	W. Dominick Street	City of Rome
5	242.040-1-10	603	W. Dominick Street	Spencap Associates
	242.040-1-11	605		

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## BROWNFIELDS, ABANDONED & VACANT SITES

Project	Tax ID Code	Street no.	Street name	Owner
6	242.000-1-8	328	Ridge Street	Cityscape Property Services
7	242.000-1-7.2	220	South Madison	OCIDC*
8	242.000-1-7.1	710	Henry Street	OCIDC
9	258.002-1-008		Martin Street	Lamascolo, Ronald
10	258.002-2-4	6600	Martin Street	City of Rome
	258.002-2-5	6610	Martin Street	City of Rome
	258-002-2-7	6620	Martin Street	City of Rome
11	259.001-1-3.2	6787	Martin Street	City of Rome
12	242.048-1-012	410	Erie Blvd.	Polka Dot Village

\*Oneida County Industrial Development Corps

**Projects 1,2 & 3:** When put together, the separate parcels that comprise these three projects account for three parking lots sporadically located along West Dominick Street in Downtown Rome. The parking lots used to contain mixed commercial-residential buildings many decades ago, but were demolished at different times during Rome’s urban renewal movement. Previously owned by the Urban Renewal Agency, the City has since inherited them. Potential uses for all three include new residential-commercial buildings or parking lots with updated green infrastructure and curbing.

**Project 4:** The structure on this site was previously owned by Rome Moose Club, but has since been transferred to the City in the past year. While the land-use is currently “benevolent”, it could be transformed into a small office space or commercial structure.

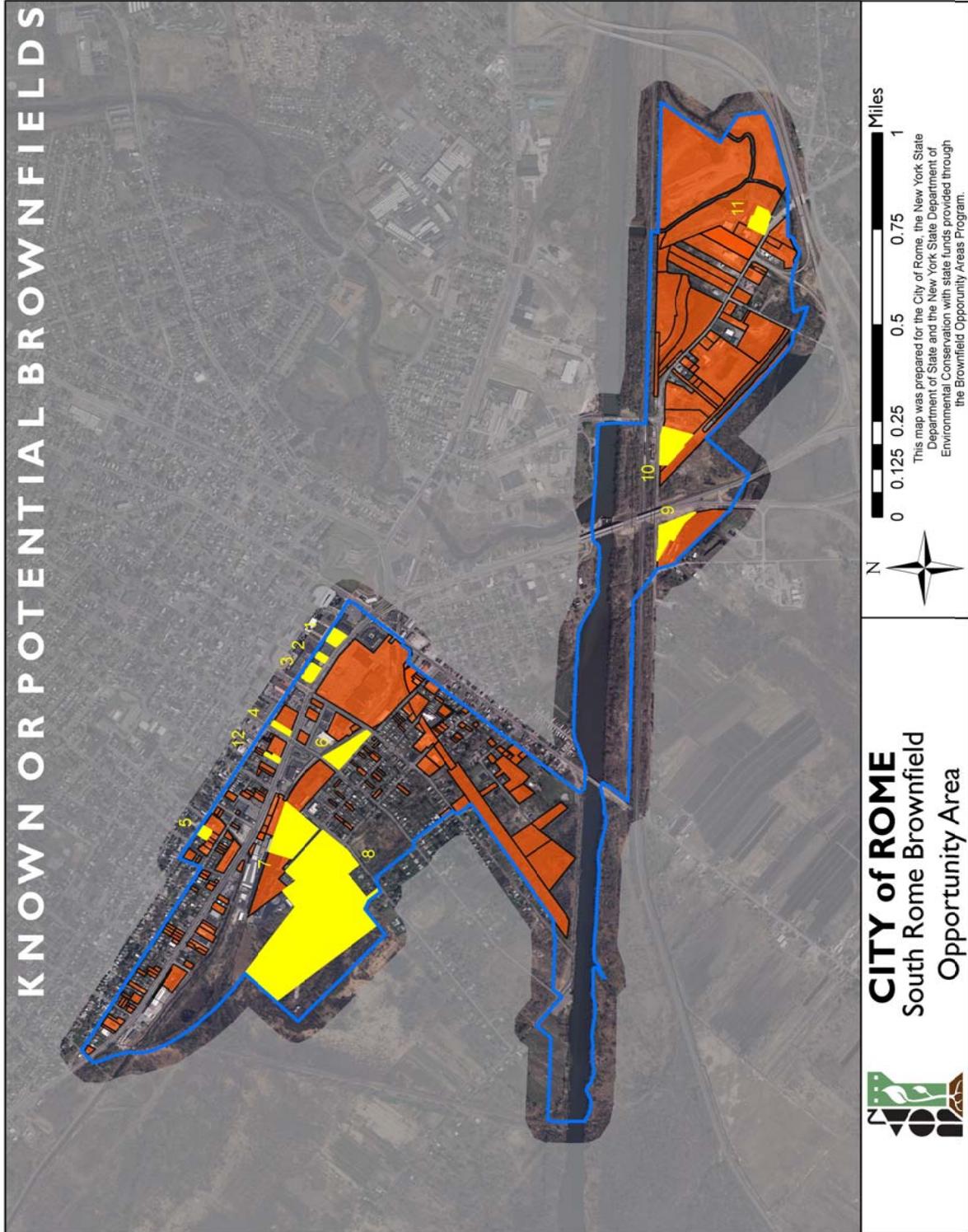
**Project 5:** The two parcels that comprise Project 5 are also used as a parking lot, but are privately-owned and in a more residential portion of West Dominick Street. Historic records indicate the presence of an old spill site, as well as a bulk storage facility in the region. Historic records indicate a house used to exist on the site, followed by an auto shop. Given the size and location of the site, it could potentially become another strategic location for a mixed commercial-residential multi-story structure.

**Project 6:** The Ridge Street properties are currently rented to multiple tenants, and are used as a storage facility as well as a workspace. According to the present owner, the dilapidated structures do not show any signs of extreme environmental contamination, but given their physical state, do lower the property values of the houses in the surrounding residential community. Their location close to an active railroad and manufacturing facility may hinder residential development opportunities, but do present an opportunity to create a meaningful buffer zone between Owl Wire and the surrounding community through the creation of green space.

**Project 7:** 220 South Madison contains the first remediated parcel of the Rome Cable Facility and the Owl Wire Manufacturing Plant. The vacant property is of a descent size, but would best serve as an additional buffer and gateway into the larger development which will occur on the rest of the Rome Cable land listed as “Project 8”.

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## BROWNFIELDS, ABANDONED & VACANT SITES



# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## BROWNFIELDS, ABANDONED & VACANT SITES

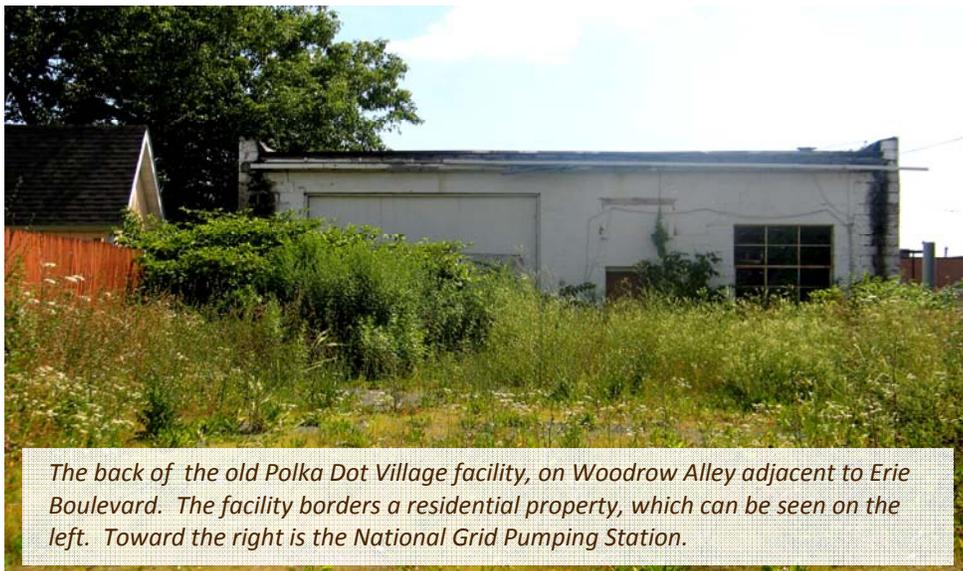
**Project 8:** Over 40 acres of underdeveloped land make up this one specific parcel. It includes a number of highly contaminated, dilapidated structures that interfere with the growth and operations of surrounding businesses such as Rome Strip Steel. Including an old office building located alongside the property (the old PAR Tech Building), once all of the buildings are safely demolished and the site is remediated, it could be divided into separate parcels, or could serve as the location for a major commercial space or business park.

**Project 9:** The first parcel on the western end of Martin Street is a dilapidated factory building which serves as a storage site for a local business. Given the location of the site near the Rome Train Station, it may be important to work with the business to improve the aesthetic quality of their facilities.

**Project 10:** The three vacant parcels of land that are currently across from Rome Train Station present a valuable opportunity for the City to act on their plan of creating a regional transportation hub. However, the parcels have a land-use history that includes a scrap yard and an auto body shop, and therefore require a Phase I environmental assessment. One of the parcels also contained a commercial building (a bar) that has since been demolished. Visual evidence that the site is contaminated includes the lack of vegetation.

**Project 11:** 6787 is a vacant gas station at the eastern border of the Martin Street Gateway. It is very prominent along the street, and lies in front of the Riverside Marina. A private developer plans on purchasing the property from the City of Rome and turning it into a private recreation facility for youth.

**Project 12:** Polka Dot Village, on Erie Boulevard, used to be a Laundromat and is still owned by a private entity. Contamination has been proven to exist on the site, and is further complicated by the neighboring National Grid pumping station, which is also contaminated. This highly complex history of environmental contamination warrants a Phase I environmental assessment. The building is now boarded up and out of use, but given its location could be a prime spot for



*The back of the old Polka Dot Village facility, on Woodrow Alley adjacent to Erie Boulevard. The facility borders a residential property, which can be seen on the left. Toward the right is the National Grid Pumping Station.*

## PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

# OWNERSHIP PATTERNS



Just over 33% of the BOA is owned by a state, county or local public entity (for map, see page 45). The City of Rome owns a number of vacant parcels in the West Dominick Street corridor, providing a valuable opportunity to control the future of mixed-used development in downtown. Many of these parcels were once owned by a separate authority called the Urban Renewal Agency, but since its demise, ownership has been transferred to the City. There are also Oneida County offices located in the West Dominick Street Corridor.

6600-6620 Martin Street is another City-owned property across from Rome Train Station. It is currently a large, vacant parcel, but given its location across from the station and along one of Rome's gateway streets, it can potentially become very valuable if developed.

The Oneida County Industrial Development Agency (OCIDA) and Jay Street Development Corps actually own the land on the Rome Cable Site, which comprises the highest acreage of all of the public entities. OCIDA has been one of the city's most valuable partners in the redevelopment of the site.

The State of New York, more specifically NYS Canal Corporation, owns all of the land along the Erie Canal, including the railway. As it has been in the past, the Canal Corporation will be a powerful partner of the City's during the development of the Canalway Trail. In the past, NYS Canal Corporation has worked with the City on all boat launches and other Canal-related projects.

Public-private partnerships have already begun to take shape between the City and some of the major stakeholders and property owners. This includes those in charge of the operations at Owl Wire, as well as Cityscape Property Services, a group that owns the ailing industrial structures along Ridge Street in the South Rome neighborhood. These two important property owners will play a key role in the revitalization of the neighborhood.

In addition to the property owners listed above, large parcels of underdeveloped land along the Martin Street Gateway are owned by other real estate companies or are part of private trusts. While much of the land in the region may be underdeveloped for infrastructural reasons or due to flood plains, working with these property owners will aid in investigating potential reuses.

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## PUBLIC & PRIVATE OWNERSHIP PATTERNS

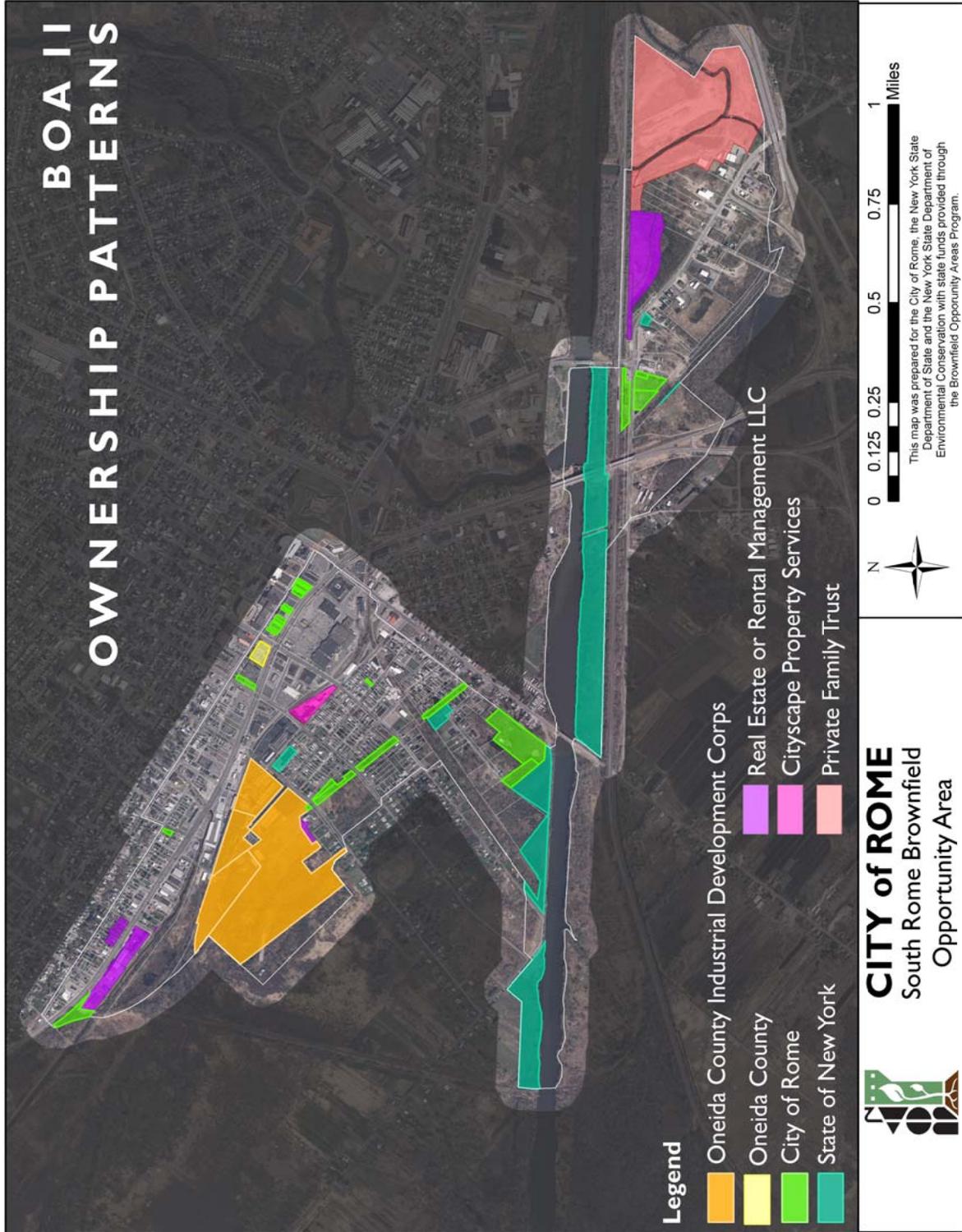
Housing in the South Rome neighborhood is not dominated by any specific property owners, but larger commercial parcels are owned by Joe Tahan's Furniture Warehouse, the Jay Street Development Corps and Owl Wire. Residential property owners that may need to be consulted are the Zandis, who rent properties directly across from Owl Wire and the Cityscape Property shown below. The in-depth inventory conducted under the Nomination Phase of the BOA program will shed light on absentee landlords and owners of properties that may not be classified as vacant by the property class code but are nevertheless uninhabited. Working with the Codes Department will be vital in identifying these individuals.

*The property owned by Cityscape Properties in South Rome is an old dilapidated structure that covers one long city block. Ailing manufacturing structures like this sporadically appear in residential neighborhoods in the BOA.*



# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## PUBLIC & PRIVATE OWNERSHIP



# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

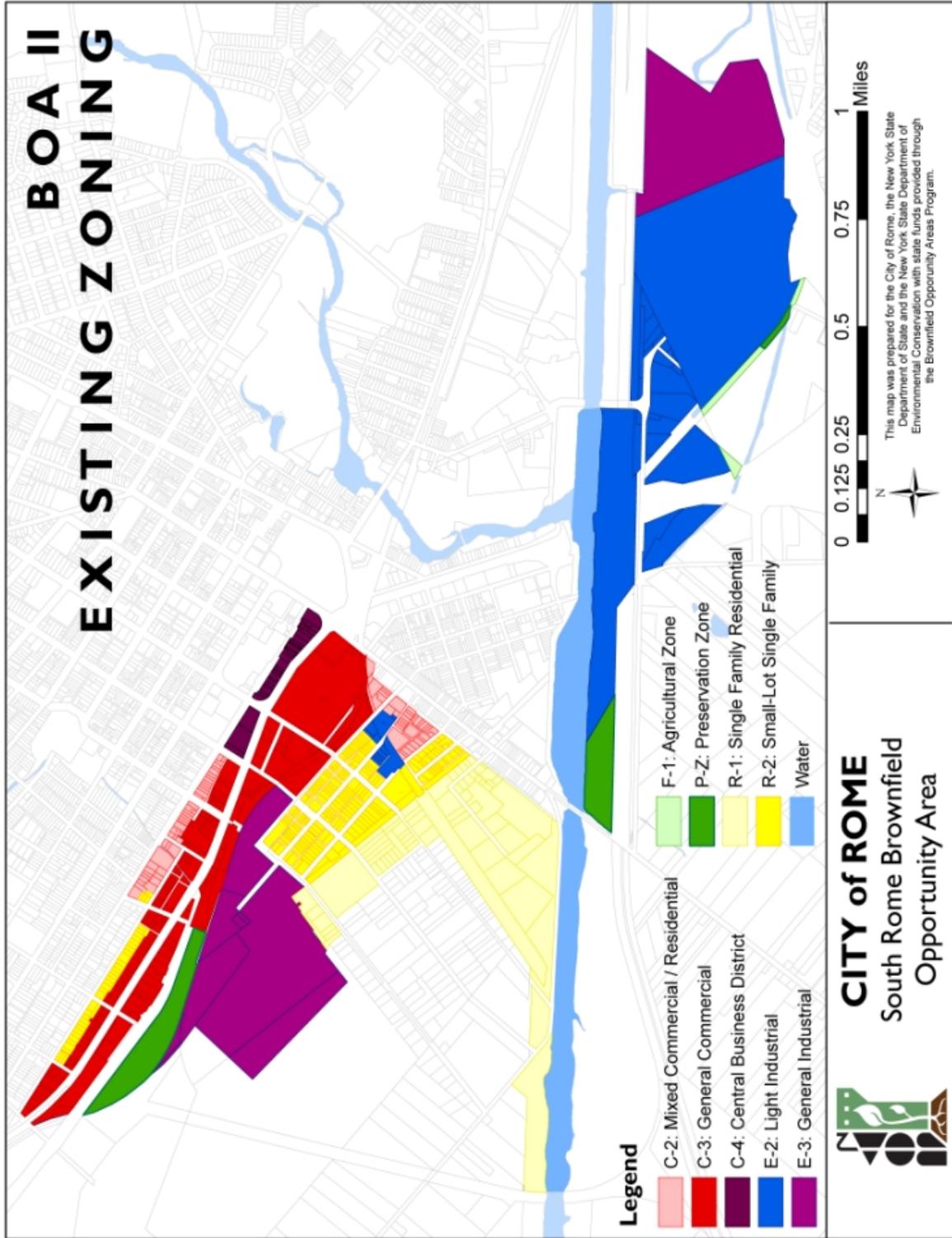
## EXISTING ZONING

Within the Brownfield Opportunity Area, there is a diversity of zoning classifications represented, ranging from single family residences to general industry. The table below shows the number of lots within each zone that are present, the total acreage, and finally the percentage of the overall BOA that each zoning class encompasses. In addition, a zoning map is located on the previous page.

Zone ID	Zone Type	Parcels	Total Acres	Percent of BOA
R-1	Single Family Residential	90	91.0	16.1
R-2	Small Lot Residential	230	38.9	6.9
C-2	Mixed Commercial/ Residential	88	15.4	2.7
C-3	General Commercial	175	80.8	14.3
C-4	Central Business District	34	8.1	1.4
E-2	Light Industrial	40	168.6	29.8
E-3	General Industrial	13	134.9	23.8
F-1	Farming District	2	3.0	.5
P-Z	Preservation	3	25.7	4.5
<b>Totals</b>		675	566.4	100

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## ZONING & LAND DESIGNATIONS



# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## ZONING & LAND DESIGNATIONS

Although there are five general types of zoning included in BOA II, a majority of parcels fall within Residential, Industrial and Commercial designations. There is a small parcel of land along Erie Boulevard which is part of the Fort Bull Wetlands as well as a small portion of the land along the Erie Canal, on the western end of Martin Street that is also preserved. In addition, the land just outside of the BOA on Martin Street is zoned as agricultural.

### **Residential**

Overall, most of the parcels in the Study Area are zoned as resident properties. Single family residential lots, or R-1, are usually larger parcels of land. While there are fewer of them included in the Study Area, they take up a larger proportion in terms of acres than any other type of residence. Most of these lots are just north of the Erie Canal, and are for the most part underdeveloped and hard to access. R-2 zoning takes up significantly less acreage than R-1, but it is more than double in total number of parcels. They are mostly located either around Erie Boulevard in close proximity to commercial properties, or in the South Rome neighborhood near Rome Cable alongside a number of small and large industrial-zoned parcels. Given the high number of vacant parcels along Calvert Street, re-evaluating zoning to create a better buffer between residential properties and the traffic, noise and environmental contamination of Erie Boulevard of these properties may be necessary to promote further commercial and residential development.



*Housing in BOA II is on smaller plots and is characteristic of that on the left. West Dominick Street housing is also important because it is zoned as mixed commercial. On the left, an example of the type of stores seen in "general commercial" (C-3) zoned areas*



### **Commercial**

All of the commercial-zoned lots in the northern BOA are either on West Dominick Street, Erie Boulevard, or South James Street. These are all major streets that receive a high amount of traffic. Erie Boulevard, which has the highest amount of traffic, is a four-lane road containing predominantly national chains.

There are three types of commercial classifications. The first, C-2, is mixed commercial and residential. This primarily includes properties along West Dominick Street. Street conditions are favorable for those who prefer to walk (wide, shaded sidewalks and non-threatening levels of traffic). C-2 zoning occupies only 2.7% of the entire BOA, but it is important because it promotes mixed-use development. C-3 zones, or general commercial lots, make up the largest proportion of commercial lots in the Brownfield Opportunity Area. Most of the 176 lots surround Erie Boulevard. The Boulevard, with a mixture of large national chain stores and shopping centers, auto body shops, and a few smaller, locally owned businesses, acts as a major commercial corridor. Finally, the eastern portion of West Dominick Street is zoned as a "Central Business District".

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## ZONING & LAND DESIGNATIONS

### ***Industrial***

Industrial lots take up the greatest amount of space in the Study Area, occupying more than half of the total land. The industrial zones represented are split into light industry (E-2) and general industry (E-3), and both are in close proximity to residential neighborhoods, showing the complexity of thought and innovation that must be displayed when thinking of redevelopment. All of these sites that are zoned as E-3 are vacant, including most of the parcels that make up the Rome Cable site.

All of the land along the Martin Street Gateway south of the Canal is zoned either as General or Light Industry, and many of these businesses are vacant. This may be because of a lack of infrastructure such as sanitary man holes. This zoning provides Rome with the opportunity to develop large businesses and industries that could provide a number of employment opportunities. This single type of zoning may impact the development of new businesses and recreational opportunities such as trails in the future.



*The back end of Complex #4 of the Rome Cable site.*

While the Martin Street Gateway is almost entirely composed of a single type of zoning, the Erie Boulevard Corridor has a vast diversity. These differences have led to two entirely varied sets of development issues in each sub-area. Development in the Erie Boulevard is hindered by a lack of buffer zones between various types of zoning while the Martin Street Gateway is too much uniformity. When conducting a more in-depth assessment, including commercial and residential inventories, market and economic assessments and creating redevelopment strategies, it may be necessary to continue with two separate Nomination Reports, one for the Erie Boulevard Corridor and another for the Martin Street Gateway.

## PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

# NATURAL FEATURES & ADVANTAGES



The second Brownfield Opportunity Area is rich in environmental features that need to be recognized in order to identify both opportunities and limitations of development. An expansive protected wetland, canal system, among other features can possibly compensate for the lack of parks and public space in a unique and interesting way. Nonetheless, major bodies of water, steep slopes, and poorly drained soil directly surrounding the canal (for more information on soils and drainage refer to Appendices J and K) and additional wetlands (Appendix G) are all environmental features that limit development opportunities.

### ***Existing and Planned Recreational Features***

Gryziek Park, at the corner of South James and Muck Road, is the only public park in the Study Area. In addition to a large green field, the park also has a baseball diamond, pool, and playground. At the edge of a residential neighborhood, the park is easily accessible. The park is actively used and residents in the South Rome neighborhood around the Rome Cable Site have identified a need for more spaces like this closer to their homes.

In addition, the City has received funding for the Canalway Trail, which continues alongside most of the Erie Canal. With new funding, the trail, whose construction is set to begin in 2013, would run along Muck Road and then veer north into the Fort Bull wetlands that border the BOA.

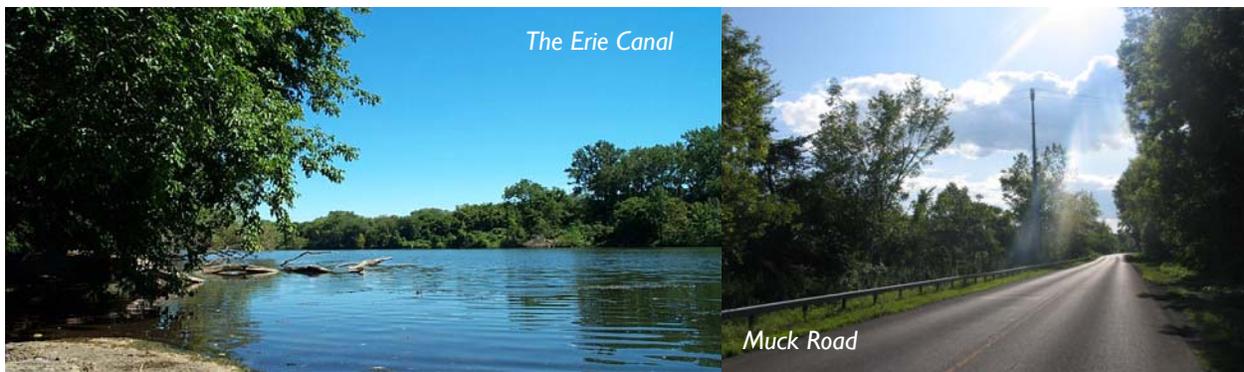
### ***Waterways: The Erie Canal***

Part of what gives BOA II such great potential is the great variety of waterways that serve the area. While previously waterways such as the Erie Canal were utilized for commercial purposes, they are being reinvented as scenic and recreational areas, their historic value being uncovered simultaneously. Rome is one of many communities in the Erie Canalway Heritage Corridor, which offers “works of architecture to see, history to be learned, and hundreds of miles of scenic and recreational waterway and trail to explore”. Opening the waterfront area, and therefore unlocking a large portion of Rome’s historic and cultural heritage was a major goal in the first Brownfield Opportunity Area, and it continues to be of utmost importance in this one.

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## NATURAL FEATURES & ADVANTAGES

Currently, Muck Road runs alongside the northern part of the Canal. While most of the street is surrounded by overgrown vegetation, Muck Road also contains a boat launch, which is extensively used by locals in the summer time for fishing and boating. Many residents have described the rapid rate at which the parking lot for the launch fills up on nice, warm days. Accessibility is limited and wetlands and floodplains and poor drainage prevents extensive development, but the City does have the opportunity to create a recreational corridor through the expansion of the Canalway Trail. This could provide more exposure and therefore development opportunities for the residential neighborhood that is just north of the Canal.



Any sort of further development along the Canal calls into question existing environmental contamination. Materials of buildings and landscaping can cause a greater runoff into water bodies, potentially impacting the integrity of the area and its ecosystems. The Erie Canal, along with its existing tributaries (including Wood Creek and Mohawk River - see Boundary Area Context Map, page 9), already suffer greatly from existing environmental contamination. According to the DEC, one of the major portions of the Erie Canal that runs through the BOA has known and potential environmental contaminants including pathogens, PCBs, nutrients, silt/sediments, oil and grease. The pollution of the Canal was caused by a series of events, including sewage overflow, landfill discharge, urban/storm and industrial runoff, agriculture, stream bank erosion, hydro mediation, and toxic sediment runoff. The lack of green and protective infrastructure along Martin Street and Muck Road ensures that the Canal continues to see a build up of contaminants. So far it has impacted fish consumption and hydrology the most, followed by aquatic life and recreation, and has even spread to following tributaries such as the Mohawk River. Future development, which would most likely be recreational in character, must incorporate sustainable infrastructure that will preserve and improve the environmental quality of the Canal and the surrounding environment through filtering storm water runoff and sewage. To prevent future pollution it may also be important for the City to introduce an educational facet, which introduces environmental issues to the public and youth.

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## NATURAL FEATURES & ADVANTAGES

Aquatic life support and recreation in Wood Creek, which also runs through the BOA, are also independently experiencing minor environmental impacts resulting from nutrient and silt/sediment loading, which is a consequence of urban runoff and agricultural activities.



*The Fort Bull Wetlands, surround BOA II on the Northern End. The Canalway Trail will soon cut through the land.*

### **Wetlands and flooding**

One factor that prevents further industrial or commercial development is the presence of wetlands. The wetlands in West Rome were a major factor in determining the boundaries for BOA II, and will greatly influence the extent of development that can occur. While a lot of the land is not directly in any wetlands, check-zones surround the Erie Canal and the borders of the area. Official check zones are areas around mapped wetlands in which actual wetland may occur. If a proposed project encroaches into this area, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation must be consulted. In some cases, a biologist may need to perform a field delineation to help the City avoid impacting the wetland or the 100-foot buffer zone. For a map of the wetlands that surround the BOA, refer to Appendix G.

Flood plains also have a major impact on the BOA. While none of the Erie Boulevard Corridor is located on any flood plains, many residents and business owners closer to the Canal's shores have experience regular flooding in their basements. The City's Codes department has indicated this is not only because of the close proximity of the neighborhood to the Erie Canal but the soil type. The two soil types prevalent in the neighborhood, Canandaigua and Wayland Silt Loam, both have very poor drainage capabilities (refer to maps in Appendices J and K). While flooding is manageable, it may hinder major development potential in the future, and could indicate a need for updated drainage infrastructure.

Relative to the Erie Boulevard Corridor, the Martin Street Gateway has a very different make-up in terms of documented flood plains and soil drainage. Towards its eastern border, a greater portion of the gateway is comprised of flood plains. This inhibits the types of development that could occur, and may be an explanation for the underutilization of land. While soil type along Martin Street will not hinder development, the land surrounding the street, which is still technically in the BOA, also has poor drainage. Opportunities for development will greatly differ along Martin Street versus north of the Erie Canal. A separate Nomination Study will allow the City to evaluate these options in more detail.

## PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

# INFRASTRUCTURE



Ailing infrastructure has become a nuisance for residents. Unkempt sidewalks and crumbling streets are cited as complaints in the South Rome residential neighborhood near the Rome Cable, along with other parts of the BOA such as on Calvert Street. Without public infrastructure and streetscape improvements along these streets, setting the stage for downtown development and higher-quality residential construction will be harder. Many of the residents who live around the Rome Cable site also have security concerns and would like to see better street lighting and security in the vicinity of the vacant parcels of land.

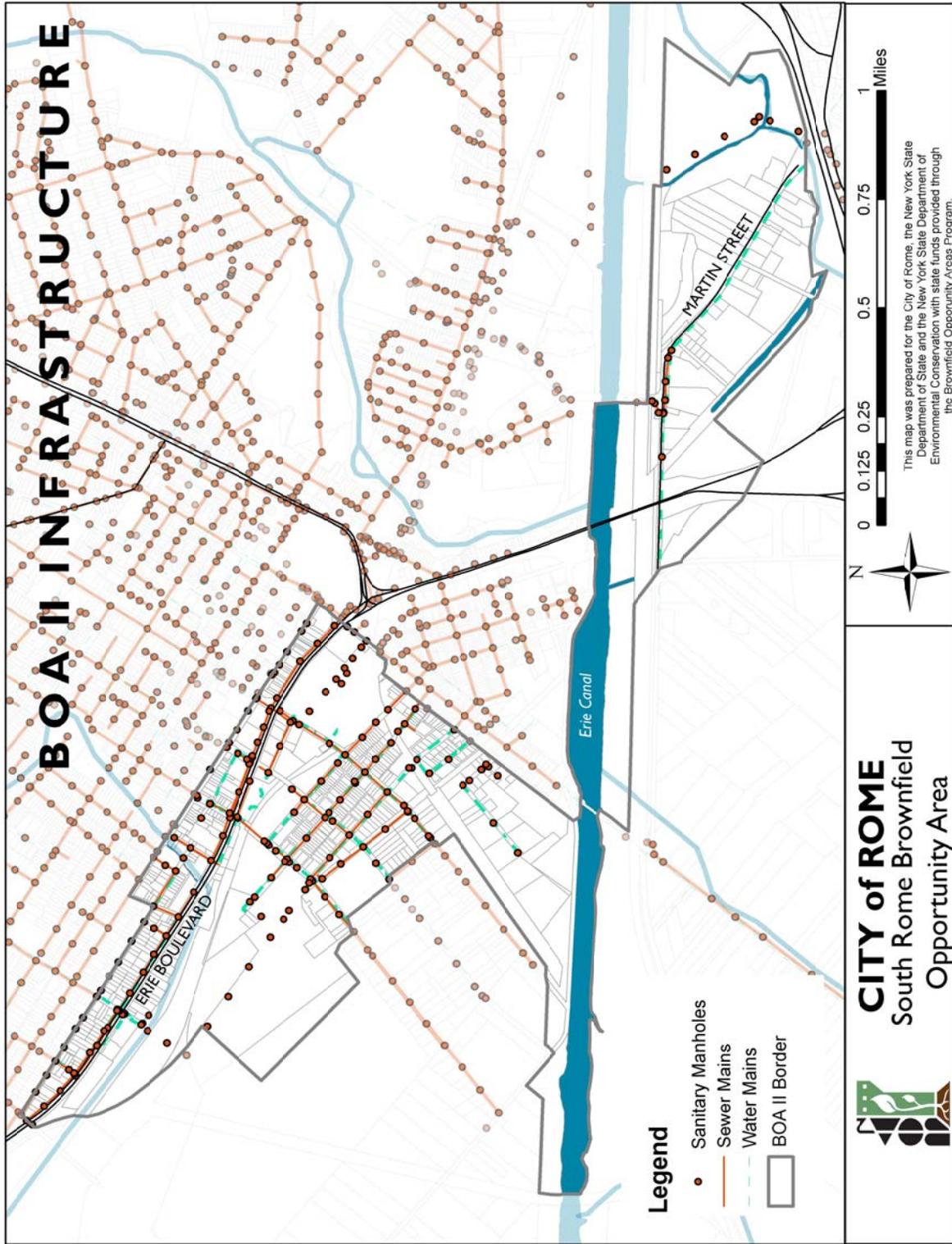
Public transportation in the City of Rome is lacking. While the Centro bus line is actively used, encouraging Rome's residents to rely on other modes of transportation such as biking should be a goal of the study. For a complete map of transportation options, refer to Appendix B. Areas of downtown Rome would see a great benefit from bike lanes and expanded pedestrian walk ways, especially as a way to avoid the dense traffic along Erie Boulevard. Residential neighborhoods and the downtown area are navigable by bike, and with the extension of amenities such as the Canalway Trail, improved public infrastructure would encourage visitors to venture into the City and explore Rome's Main Street corridors.

The overall infrastructure of the urban core is satisfactory, although there are areas that have experienced flooding, such as the houses and manufacturing facilities closer to the Erie Canal. This problem may require upgrades to the stormwater and drainage infrastructure in the area. This may be especially pertinent to the development of the Rome Cable site and the continuing success of Owl Wire.

In addition, because Martin Street is located outside of Rome's inner-district, it lacks the same level of basic infrastructure of the Erie Boulevard Corridor. This includes sanitary manholes and sewer mains. This limits certain types of development in the region and keeps many types of smaller businesses from locating along the street. Rome's 2005 Comprehensive Plan calls for reassessing the need for basic infrastructure along Martin Street to promote economic development. Muck Road also has a similar infrastructural challenges. Named justly after its swampy nature, Muck Road may not be the optimal setting for residential and commercial development because of the high instance of flooding and poor drainage. A map of this basic infrastructure is provided on the next page, and shows the drastic infrastructural differences between the Erie Boulevard Corridor and Martin Street Gateway.

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

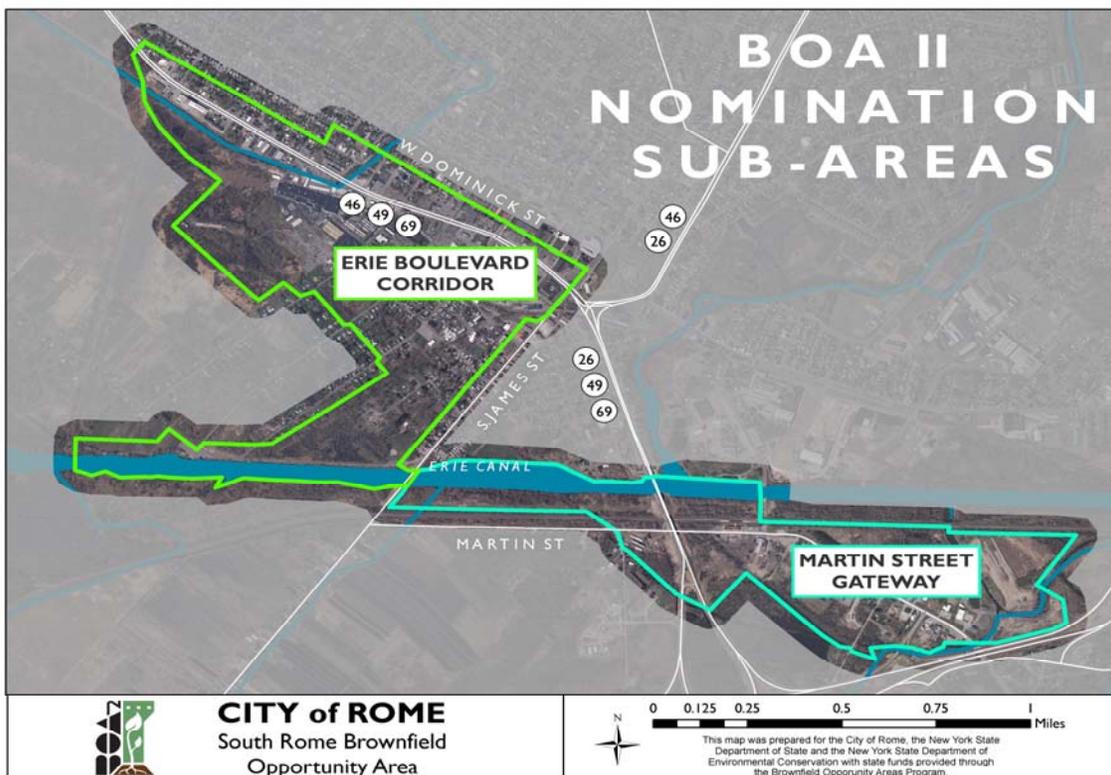
## INFRASTRUCTURE



# NEXT STEPS... NOMINATION REPORT

Both the Erie Boulevard Corridor and the Martin Street Gateway have potential to become dynamic regions of economic and recreational prosperity. The presence of underutilized and brownfield sites has the ability to spur a revitalization movement that can have permanent benefits in the City, instilling a greater sense of pride and empowerment overall while encouraging others to move to Rome.

The first step in creating a more dynamic residential, commercial and recreation atmosphere in Rome is addressing in more detail the constraints and potential of each sub-area of BOA II. The vast differences in existing land use, zoning, natural features and infrastructure warrant two separate detailed redevelopment strategies. **Many of the recommendations below depend on the completion of two separate Nomination Reports - one for the Erie Boulevard Corridor and another for the Martin Street Gateway.**



# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## NEXT STEPS...

### Recommendation 1: Conducting Assessments on Strategic Sites

Sites with the greatest strategic value include the Rome Cable Facility, vacant parking lots along the West Dominick Corridor in downtown Rome, and the vacant City-owned parcels across from Rome Train Station. Descriptive profiles for these properties and other can be found in Appendix L. Once remediated, larger plots of land and such as the Rome Cable Site have the potential to become large industrial or commercial complexes, potentially supplying jobs for the entire Mohawk Valley.

Various empty properties in downtown Rome have been vacated and left to be used as parking lots. However, these parcels have greater potential. State-of-the-art mixed commercial and residential structures would help to reinvigorate Downtown Rome aesthetically and economically while providing better quality housing for the younger constituents of the local workforce. **The first step is conducting environmental assessments where needed and creating a regional reuse strategy that addresses how their development can contribute to the advancement of the West Dominick Street Corridor.**

### Recommendation 2: Investigating infrastructure in and reuse potential for the Martin Street Gateway

Similar assessments and reuse strategies are needed for the vast tracts of open land that exist within the Martin Street Gateway. The infrastructural and natural restraints in the sub-area, including a lack of infrastructure and prevalence of flooding, warrant a more focused investigation of the Gateway. **The findings from such a study would play a significant role in the reuse and feasibility strategies for valued sites such as the City owned property across from Rome Train Station.**

### Recommendation 3: Conduct a detailed inventory of houses in residential neighborhoods in the Erie Boulevard Corridor

Dilapidated homes and vacant properties within residential neighborhoods of the City decrease land values and depress the overall quality of life for residents. **Once an inventory is complete, selectively demolishing and rehabilitating these properties would also help to improve Rome's residential neighborhoods.**



*Examples of vacant and dilapidated housing not only in the South Rome Residential Neighborhood (to the right), but also in Downtown Rome (left).*



# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## NEXT STEPS...

### **Recommendation 4: Reassess Land-Use and Zoning in both the Erie Boulevard Corridor and the Martin Street Gateway**

Both the Erie Boulevard Corridor and the Martin Street Gateway suffer from a disorganized and spontaneous mix of land-uses harking back to the early development of the City. It has plagued residential neighborhoods, stunted the everyday operations of some of Rome's major employers, and prevented meaningful commercial development along Rome's major thoroughfares and roads. **Innovative land-use and zoning solutions can advance development of areas that have infrastructural and natural impediments and create a more dynamic environment for residents and visitors alike.**

The Erie Boulevard Corridor's diversity of zoning and land-uses has many benefits. The current presence of mixed residential and commercial uses on West Dominick Street encourages residents to leave their cars in the driveway and explore by foot or bike. Many residents see the proximity of major grocery stores to their homes as a major advantage to living in the area. However, the sporadic existence of manufacturing facilities, environmentally blighted factories buildings in residential neighborhoods and the existence of residential properties along major commercial thoroughfares have also hindered development and hurt the quality of life in residential neighborhoods. Exploring solutions to these issues could have a major impact on the quality of housing in the Erie Boulevard Corridor in the upcoming decades.

The residential neighborhoods surrounding the Rome Cable Site have for decades experienced blight partially at the hand of previously poor attention paid to land use. While manufacturing facilities such as Owl Wire are flourishing, providing abundant employment opportunities, the residents in direct proximity of the site have suffered from poor housing values and uncomfortable living conditions due to vibrations and truck traffic. Facilitating a conversation with major stakeholders and the residents will help create a community-driven solution to the problem and invoke more pride in the neighborhood. In addition, re-evaluating the zoning and existing land-use in the surrounding residential parcels will help create a buffer area for the factory, potentially creating more public space and communal gardens in the process. **Other blighted environmental structures, such as the storage facilities along Ridge Street and Complex #4 of the Rome Cable site need a long-term redevelopment strategy that incorporates the well-being of the entire neighborhood.**

Along Calvert Street, existing zoning and land-use has served as an issue of contention. Residents categorize the area as a successful residential neighborhood, but the prevalence of vacant properties, both residential and commercial in nature, along Erie Boulevard and in the vicinity of Calvert Street is an indicator of major developmental issues. This is another area where a comprehensive redevelopment strategy is needed that buffers residential properties from the traffic and turmoil of Erie Boulevard while encouraging the development of commercial properties along that side of the street. Sporadic residential properties that are directly on Erie Boulevard may also hinder general commercial development.

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## NEXT STEPS...

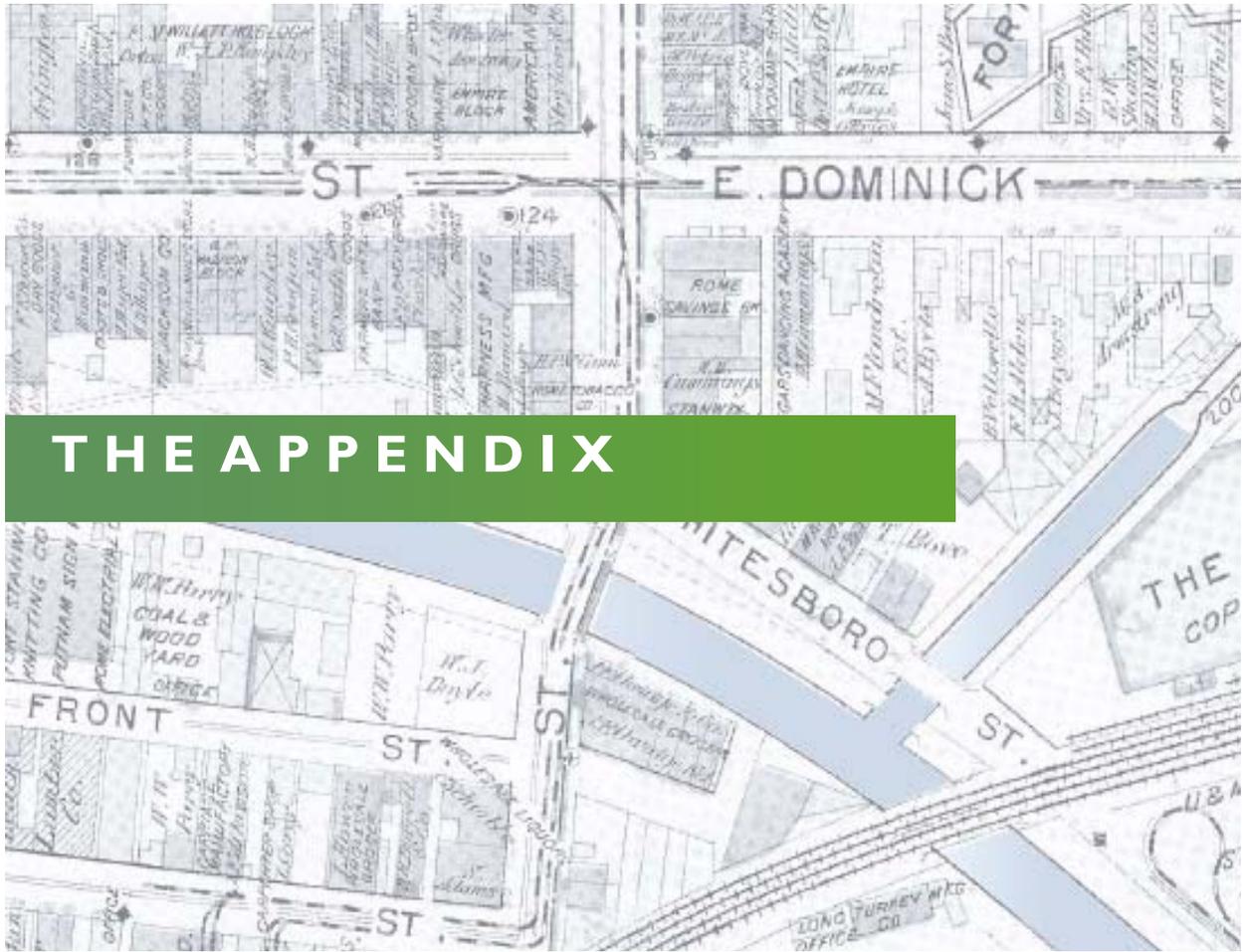
The Martin Street Gateway is currently completely zoned as light and general industrial land (E-2 and E-3). This suits the existing land use, which is comprised of mostly auto-related businesses and storage facilities. However, poor infrastructural connections and flood plains have hindered development, causing large parcels of land to remain underutilized along the street. Martin Street is not only the gateway into Rome by car, but by rail and by the Canalway Trail. The proximity of the street to the Erie Canal gives it potential as a major recreational thoroughfare. **Encouraging the development of more outdoor recreational facilities, may provide an interesting platform of redevelopment, and increase the stature of local historic landmarks such as the Rome Train Station, the Canalway Trail, and the site of the “Great Carry”.** Reuse strategies created under the Nomination Report will depend heavily on feasibility, market, economic studies, as well as an investigation into the need to improve infrastructure.

### **Recommendation 5: Introduce Innovative Community Involvement Techniques**

Members of the South Rome neighborhood in the Erie Boulevard corridor have expressed a desire to play a greater role in determining the direction of development of their local neighborhoods. **The Nomination Report will incorporate a neighborhood empowerment facet that establishes greater community programming for youth and adults and opportunities for public works projects that invoke a sense of ownership and pride in the community.** This programming can include educational workshops so people can learn more about fair housing and environmental justice, public arts projects, and community gardens.

### **Recommendation 6: Regular Stakeholder Meetings**

While a number of stakeholders in the Martin Street Gateway and the Erie Boulevard have already expressed a desire to participate in the BOA process, regular stakeholder meetings with small and large business owners will help to establish the commercial and industrial needs in the both the Erie Boulevard Corridor and Martin Street Gateway. **Regular meetings will also help to nurture a relationship between major stakeholders and the residents that are most greatly impacted by the everyday operations of their business.** This is an especially important part in creating a better business environment in downtown Rome and around Erie Boulevard.



**THE APPENDIX**

# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## APPENDIX A



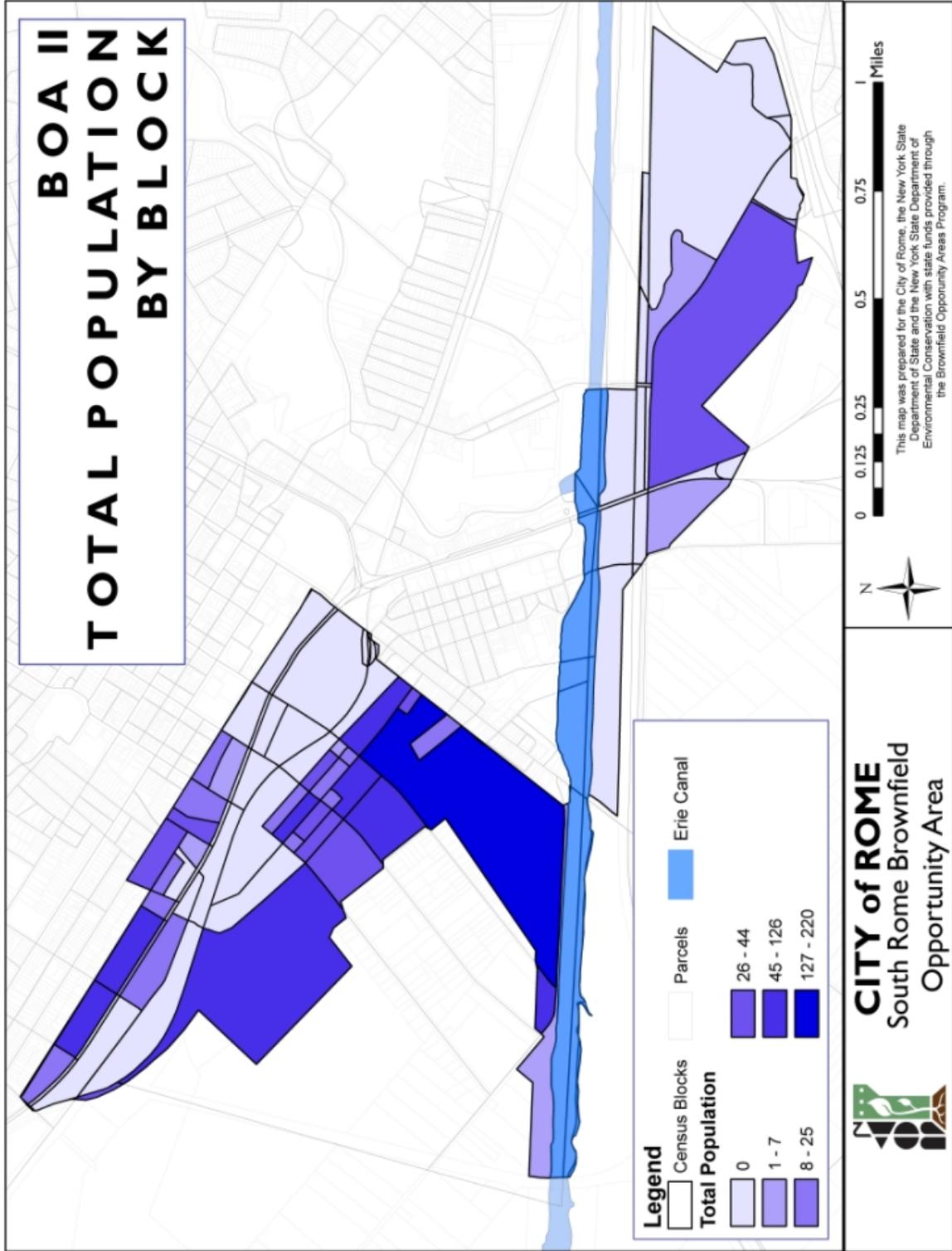
# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## APPENDIX B



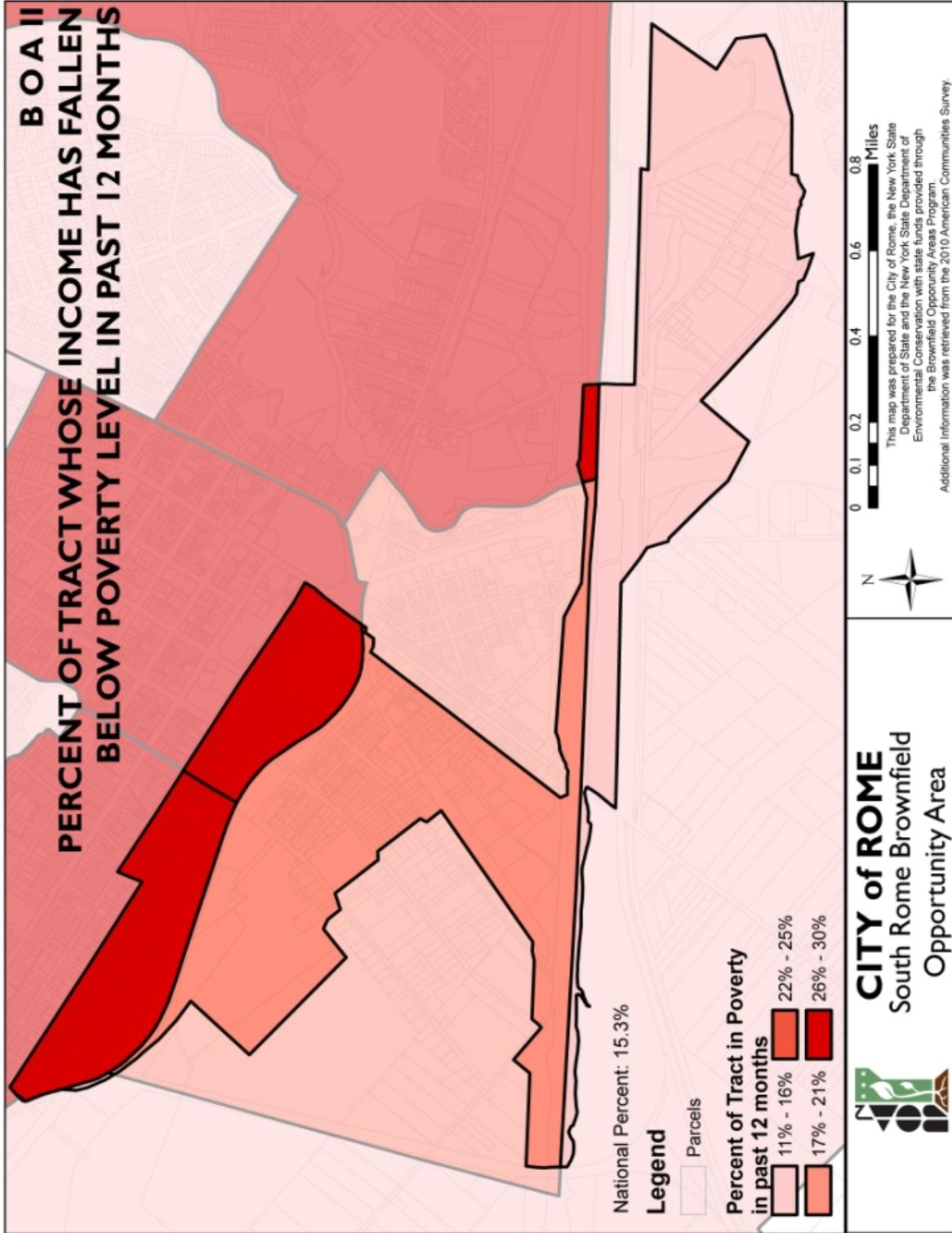
# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## APPENDIX C



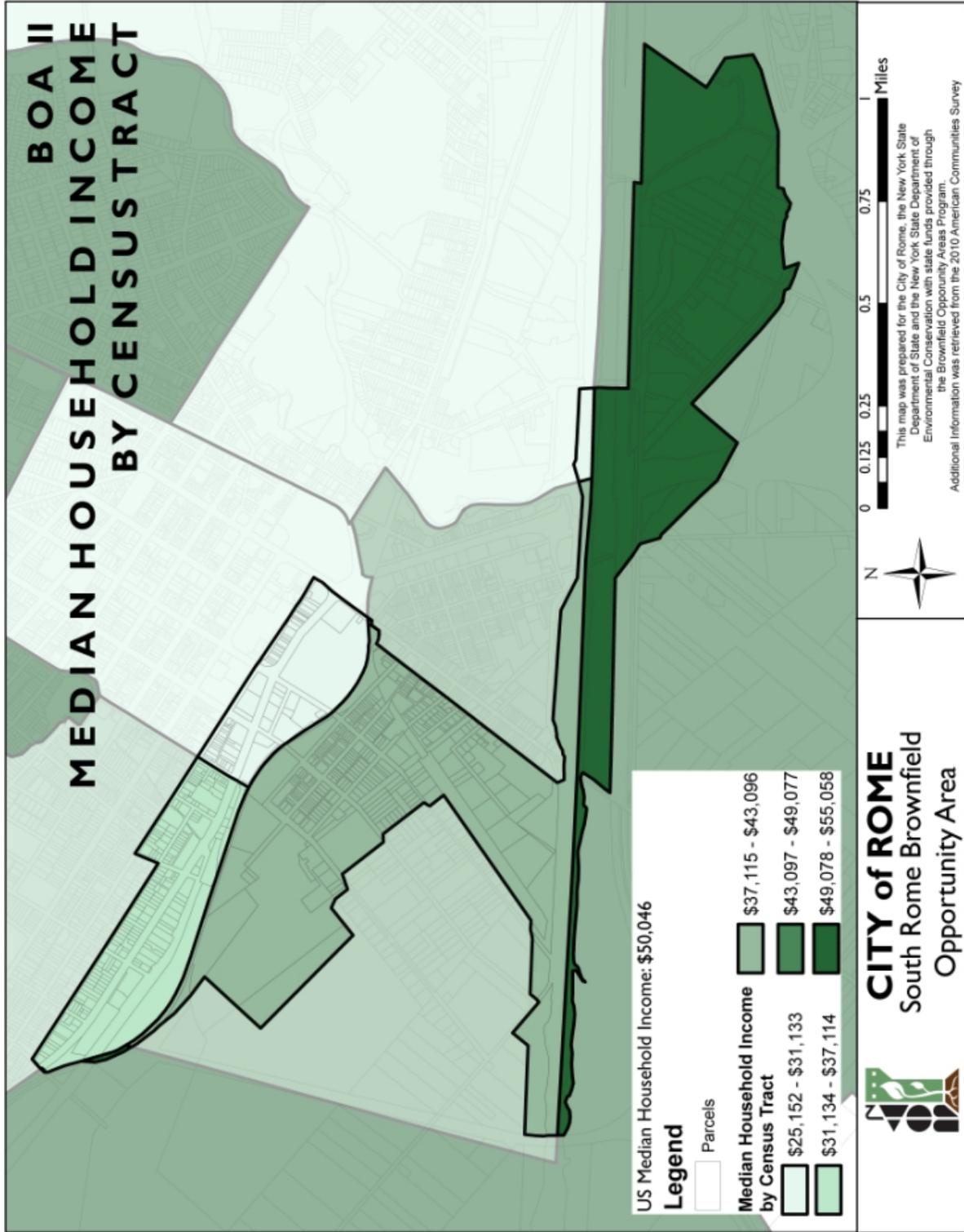
# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## APPENDIX D



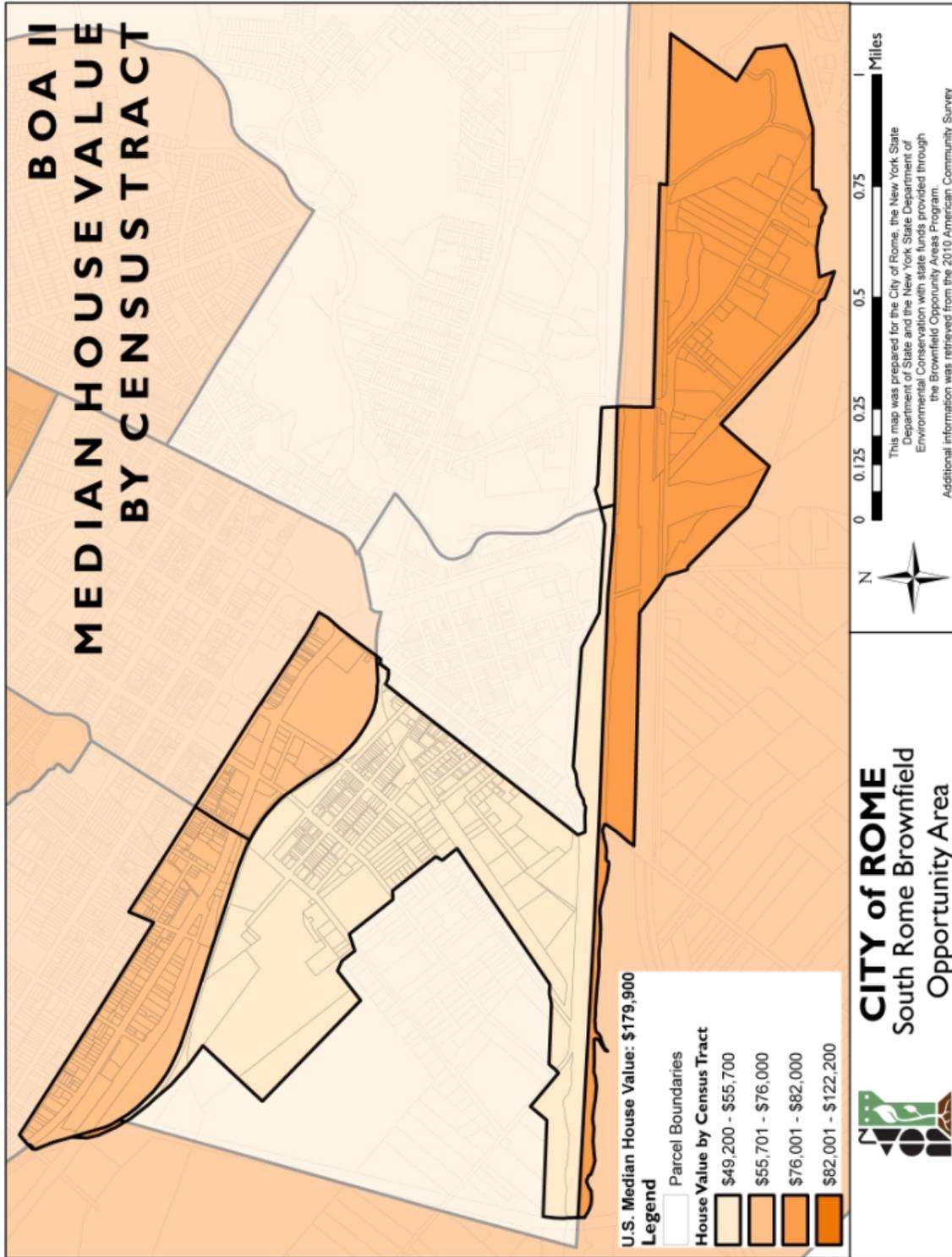
# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## APPENDIX E



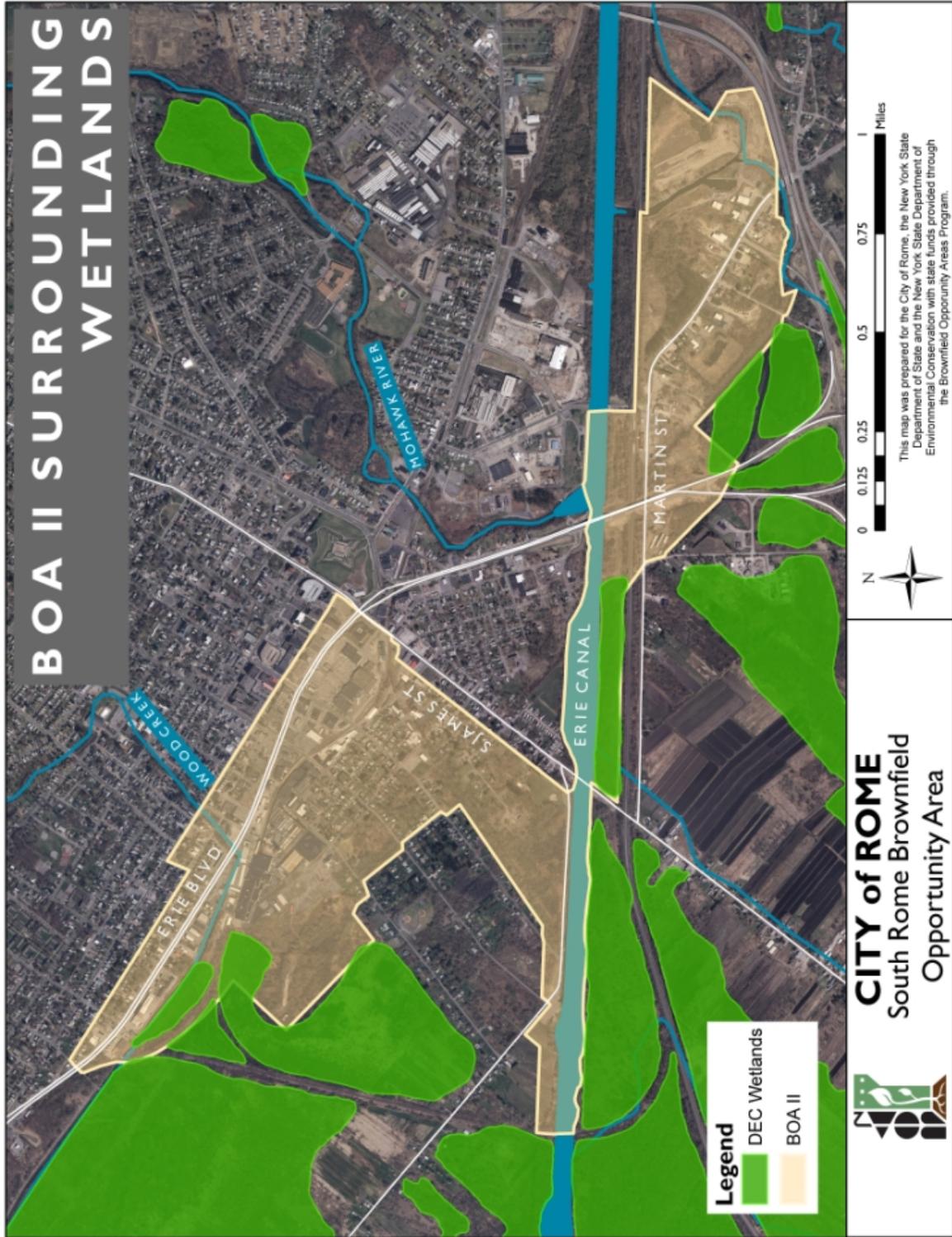
# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## APPENDIX F



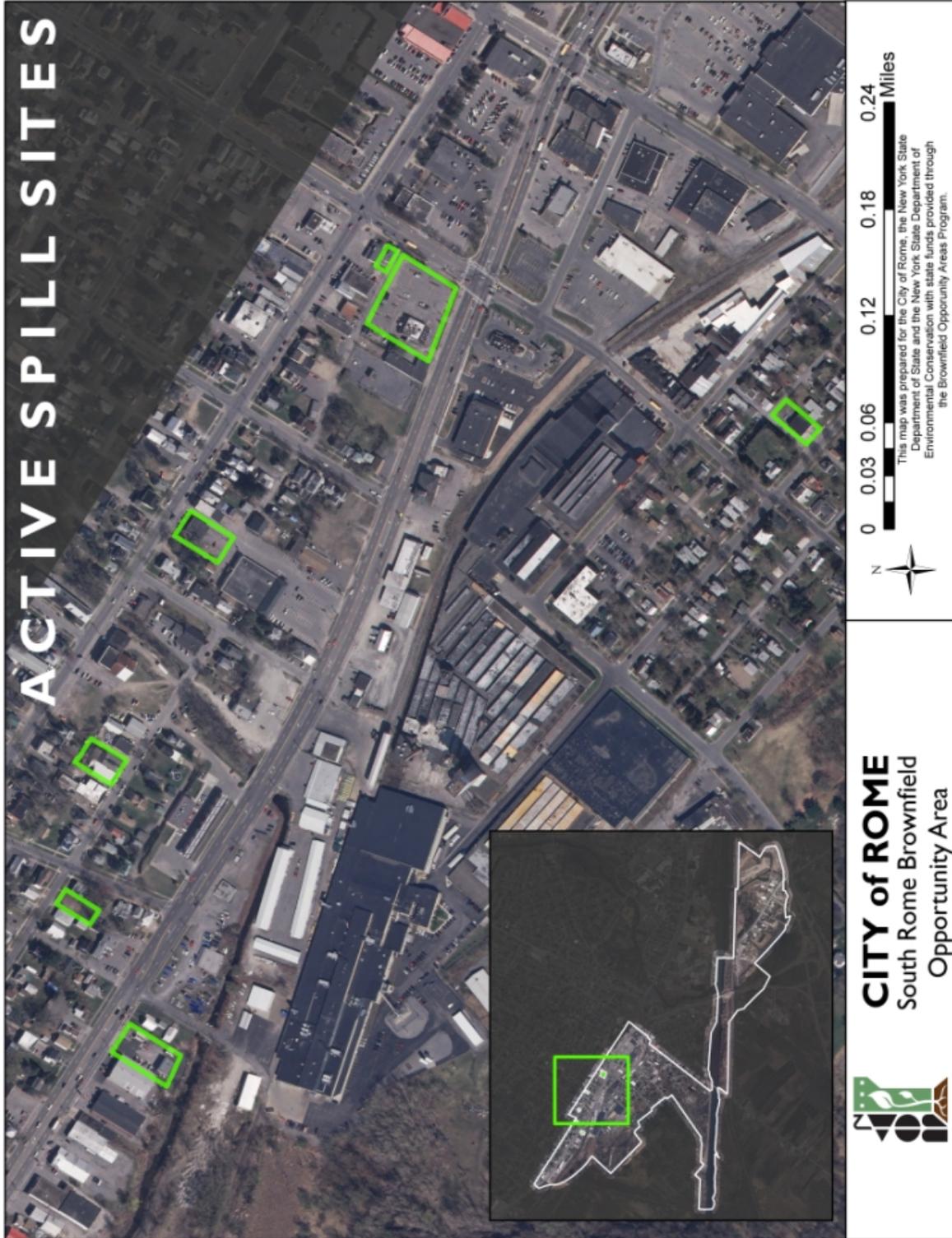
# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## APPENDIX G



# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## APPENDIX H



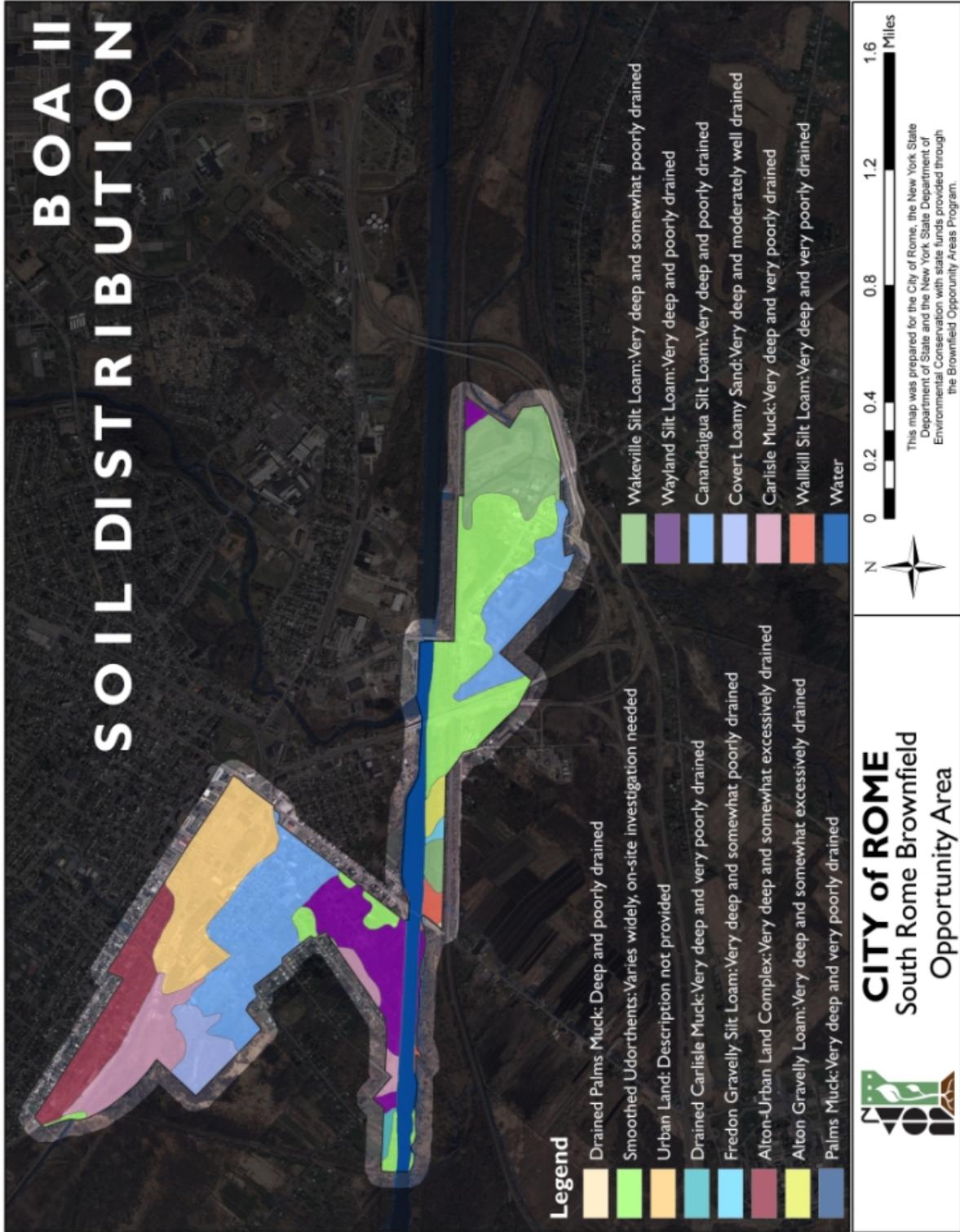
# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## APPENDIX I



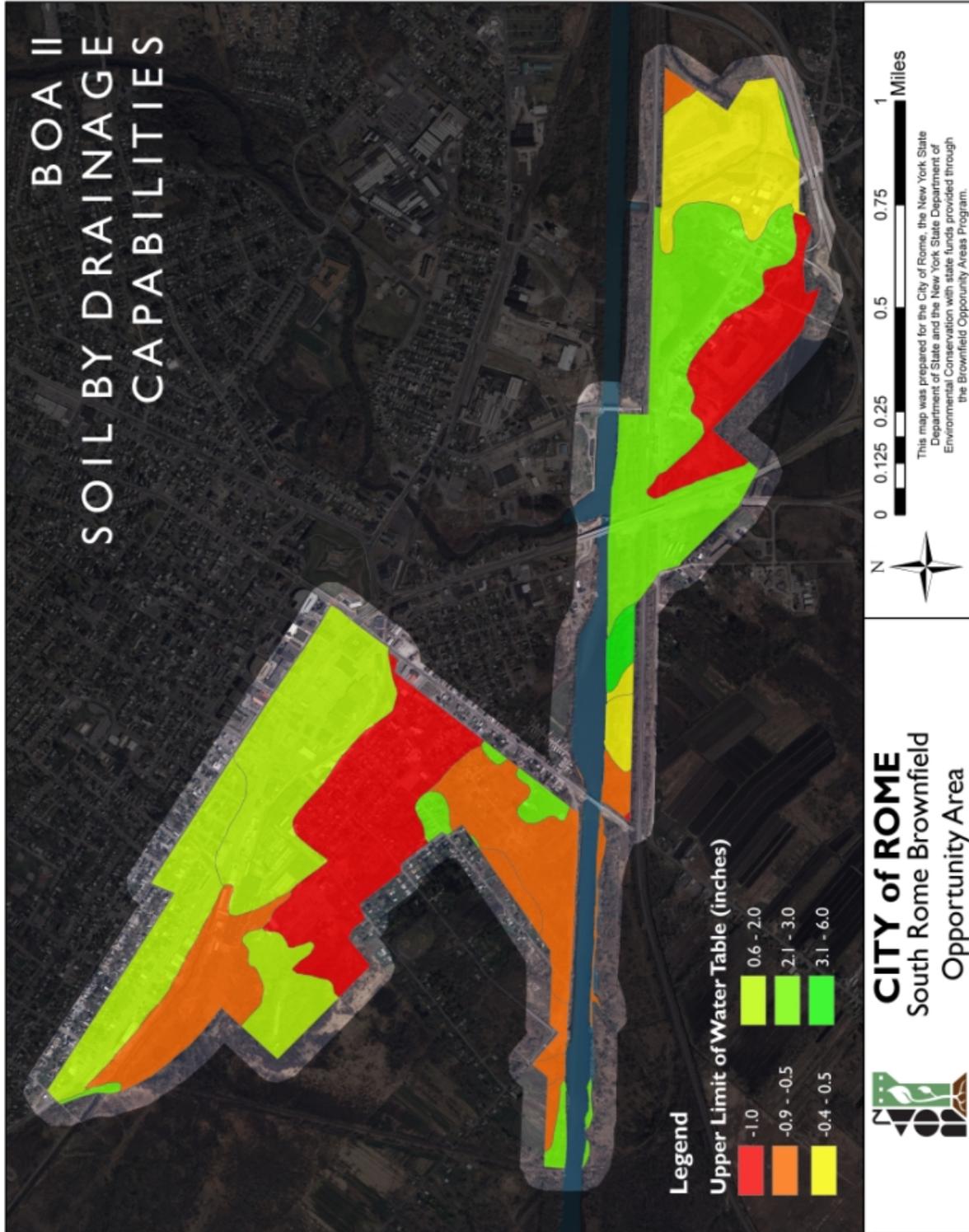
# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## APPENDIX I



# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## APPENDIX K



# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

## APPENDIX L

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POTENTIAL BROWNFIELD  
AND STRATEGIC SITES:

# DESCRIPTIVE PROFILES