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THE ROCHESTER HIGH FALLS DISTRICT

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Prepared for:
City of Rochester Economic Development Department

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SUMMARY

The Center for Governmental Research Inc. (CGR) was engaged by the City of Rochester's Economic Development Department in fall 2006 for a study of the High Falls District. The study was not designed to result in a development plan or a feasibility study for a new thematic direction, but instead had the following major goals:

- ❖ Define the High Falls “journey” since the project’s inception in the 1980s.
- ❖ Identify the appropriate role for the City as it looks to the future of this historic area.

Major Recommendations

CGR’s study of the High Falls District led to six major recommendations. The City should:

- 1) Assert High Falls’ success as an “office park.” Future food, retail, and other establishments should be designed to serve the primary clientele—office tenants, and hopefully, over time, residents.
- 2) End the City’s operating expense subsidies for the Center at High Falls/Brown’s Race Market complex. Begin a conversation with the State regarding covenants on these properties, including the interpretive center (museum). After addressing legal issues with the state, issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to sell the buildings with requirements for preservation of public space.
- 3) Hold the Cordish Company of Baltimore responsible for all aspects of their current contract and explore early termination if the results are unsatisfactory.¹ Cordish’s primary duties are to manage the complex; operate/maintain the museum; clean the adjacent small open park (Granite Mills Commons); and be in

¹ The existing five-year contract ending June 30, 2008 lists payments to Cordish totaling \$2,350,000. Contract terms indicate \$220,000 remains to be paid in the current fiscal year (2006-2007), with the final \$415,000 for 2007-2008 due in quarterly installments during 2007-08.

charge of mechanical maintenance of Brown's Raceway² (e.g., weekly cleanings, monthly draining and semi-annual startups/shutdowns).

- 4) Take responsibility for City-owned property not included in the current Cordish contract, including the remains of the Triphammer Forge on the southern end of Brown's Race Market, the waterwheel, historical signage, other aspects of the raceway, and the public space leading to the pedestrian bridge spanning the High Falls gorge (Pont de Rennes bridge).
- 5) Start a long-term conversation with RG&E regarding its properties in and around the High Falls District, specifically addressing the Beebe plant, the land below the falls, smaller RG&E buildings in and around the gorge area, and land along the Genesee River just outside the historic area (behind what is commonly referred to as the IBM building).
- 6) Develop a long-term plan for public spaces in and around the High Falls District. As will be detailed in a later section of this report, creative ideas abound, and the City could play a key role in improving the family-friendly nature of the district.

This report outlines our major recommendations for next steps for the City of Rochester, provides an overview of key events in the district's development since the 1980s; and identifies achievements, failures and shortcomings over the years. Four appendices provide a summary of key High Falls studies, a list of individuals interviewed for this study, a summary of public and private investment in High Falls, a summary of leased office space and vacancy rates in the district, and a list of creative ideas for High Falls based on focus group input.

Contributing Staff

Vicki Brown managed all aspects of the project and was primary author of this report. Sarah Boyce assisted with various aspects of the project and contributed significantly to this report. Susanne Morton provided valuable research assistance.

² Brown's Raceway is the partial simulation of the raceway that tapped the 96-foot falls and powered Rochester's first industries.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We sincerely thank the many individuals who participated in our focus groups or in separate interviews with CGR staff. Their extensive knowledge about the High Falls District is invaluable and contributed substantially to this report.

INTRODUCTION

The Center for Governmental Research Inc. (CGR) was engaged by the City of Rochester's Economic Development Department in fall 2006 for a study of the High Falls District. The study had the following major goals:

1. Define the High Falls “journey” since the project’s inception in the 1980s.
2. Identify the appropriate role for the City as it looks to the future of this historic area.

CGR’s work was not intended to create a new development plan or a feasibility study for a new thematic direction.

CGR was specifically asked to:

- ❖ Review the paper record of High Falls’ initiatives and draft a brief summary document.
- ❖ Interview key leaders in the community involved in the High Falls project.
- ❖ Reach out to members of the development and design community in Rochester for their observations and recommendations.
- ❖ Compile our findings into a final report to include a review of the area’s history, a focus on what successes, failures and investments to date can teach the community about the future potential of the area, and identify “next steps” for the management and development of the High Falls area.

This document, which constitutes our final report, begins with our major recommendations for next steps for the City of Rochester. We then provide an overview of key events in the district’s development since the 1980s; and identify achievements, failures and shortcomings over the years. The final section of our report consists of the following appendices:

Appendix A: Summary of key High Falls studies, based on the paper documents made available to CGR for this study.

Appendix B: List of individuals interviewed for this study, either in focus groups, small groups, or individually.

Appendix C: Public and private investment in High Falls; leased office space and vacancy rates.

Appendix D: Creative ideas for High Falls from focus group input.

CGR'S MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

CGR's study of the High Falls District led to six major recommendations. The City should:

1. Assert High Falls' success as an "office park." Future food, retail, and other establishments should be designed to serve the primary clientele—office tenants, and hopefully, over time, residents.
2. End the City's operating expense subsidies for the Center at High Falls/Brown's Race Market complex. Begin a conversation with the State regarding covenants on these properties, including the interpretive center (museum). After addressing legal issues with the state, issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to sell the buildings with requirements for preservation of public space.
3. Hold the Cordish Company of Baltimore responsible for all aspects of their current contract and explore early termination if the results are unsatisfactory.³ Cordish's primary duties are to manage the complex; operate/maintain the museum; clean the adjacent small open park (Granite Mills Commons); and be in charge of mechanical maintenance of Brown's Raceway⁴ (e.g., weekly cleanings, monthly draining and semi-annual startups/shutdowns).
4. Take responsibility for City-owned property not included in the current Cordish contract, including the remains of the Triphammer Forge on the southern end of Brown's Race Market, the waterwheel, historical signage, other aspects of the raceway, and the public space leading to the pedestrian bridge spanning the High Falls gorge (Pont de Rennes bridge).

³ The existing five-year contract ending June 30, 2008 lists payments to Cordish totaling \$2,350,000. Contract terms indicate \$220,000 remains to be paid in the current fiscal year (2006-2007), with the final \$415,000 for 2007-2008 due in quarterly installments during 2007-08.

⁴ Brown's Raceway is the partial simulation of the raceway that tapped the 96-foot falls and powered Rochester's first industries.

5. Start a long-term conversation with RG&E regarding its properties in and around the High Falls District, specifically addressing the Beebee plant, the land below the falls, smaller RG&E buildings in and around the gorge area, and land along the Genesee River just outside the historic area (behind what is commonly referred to as the IBM building).
6. Develop a long-term plan for public spaces in and around the High Falls District. As will be detailed in a later section of this report, creative ideas abound, and the City could play a key role in improving the family-friendly nature of the district.

KEY HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND EVENTS

The early development of the High Falls District can be traced to a series of four unrelated events in the 1980s. Three of these events involved major public policy decisions—two by the state and one by the City—that ultimately converged to define the initial character of the High Falls area and fund its early development. The fourth grew out of a desire by the City and Eastman Kodak to keep WXXI on State Street.

1980s... Determine Initial Character of the District

- ❖ In the mid-1980s, inspired by the success of the Lowell (Massachusetts) Urban Industrial Park as the birthplace of the American factory system, a state assemblyman persuaded NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to initiate plans for a statewide urban cultural park system. Rochester was later named one of 14 partners statewide and the City committed to spending \$2 million for an interpretive center.
- ❖ In 1986 state voters approved a \$2.5 billion Environmental Quality Bond Act (EQBA), which included some funds for urban cultural parks.
- ❖ By the late 1980s the City was concerned, given the amount of resources available in its capital budget, about a multitude of development proposals⁵ for the urban span of the Genesee River. Worried that if the City's limited funds were to be sprinkled along the entire riverfront the result would be meager, top City staff decided to concentrate investment in a single riverfront segment.

⁵ Not part of a comprehensive master plan, but resulting from largely independent, localized initiatives from the South River Corridor to the Port of Charlotte.

High Falls was selected because there were no delays to proceeding, and EQBA grant and private incentive potential existed.

- ❖ In the late 1980s, the City and Eastman Kodak reached an agreement to build a public ramp garage⁶ in order to keep WXXI on State Street. The garage, though initially unrelated to the High Falls District, would become integral to its later development.

RG&E's Need for City Support Triggers Expansion Plans

In the late 1980s RG&E faced renewal of its federal hydroelectric licenses and sought City support of its applications. This, in large part, provided the impetus for the City to greatly expand its plans for the Rochester Urban Cultural Park from a proposed \$2 million stand-alone interpretive center to what would become, by 1992, a \$25 million project. Financing came from RG&E funds, EQBA grants, and the City's strategy to focus priority on one segment of the riverfront. Key developments in those years include the following

- ❖ RG&E spent \$3.2 million for the sound/light/laser show and funded the first year's operating costs⁷.
- ❖ In response to a need for viewing locations, the City accepted an RG&E proposal for a no-cash property swap and acquired RG&E maintenance facilities adjacent to what is now the Center at High Falls. The City's redevelopment plans grew to include renovation and new construction at this location, the addition of Granite Mills Commons, refurbishment of the remains of the Triphammer Forge and waterwheel, reconstruction of Brown's Race Street with a simulated recreation of a portion of the original raceway, and rebuilding of Platt and Commercial Streets to provide access and egress to the area.
- ❖ RG&E spent \$2 million for an environmental clean-up of Beebee Park at the bottom of High Falls gorge.⁸

⁶ Kodak donated the land and the City paid the \$9.4 million construction cost.

⁷ Anticipated support from other businesses never materialized.

⁸ The expectation at the time, and for years afterward, was that this land would be donated to the City, but this never occurred.

First Study Calls for Office, Retail and Residential Development

In 1990 the first development, market and financial study⁹ of the High Falls area was completed by an outside firm and concluded that there was an economic basis for development of residential and commercial space in the area. The study projected office, retail and residential (190-255 rental units) as key development options through the year 2000. The study team recommended necessary public improvements (e.g., visitors' center, street and utility improvements) and suggested other potential uses that would "fit" with the area (e.g., work space/living space for artists, gallery/artist display space, community ethnic festivals).

On May 19, 1992 the City signed a Preservation Covenant with the state for 74-78 Brown's Race (location of the interpretive center) and on May 28, 1992 another such covenant for the 48-72 Brown's Race rehabilitation, agreeing to hold the leases and maintain the properties for no less than 23 years. The City received \$1,705,000 from the state for the interpretive center and \$500,000 for rehabilitation of 60 Brown's Race. All of these state dollars were from EQBA funding.

The same year the City hired the Convention Center to manage the properties at the Center at High Falls and Brown's Race Market. This management arrangement, which included using part of the space for auxiliary convention and meeting space, lasted until 1996. In the final three full years of the contract the City paid the Convention Center between \$912,000 and \$972,000 annually.

By Early 1990s Focus Shifts to Festival-Food-Retail-Entertainment Theme

In October 1992 the City celebrated the opening of the interpretive center and the Brown's Race Market, recreation of the raceway, and the new light/sound/laser show. As part of the High Falls inauguration the City, Eastman Kodak, and RG&E jointly sponsored a day-long development symposium. Subsequently these three entities agreed to sponsor a community-wide citizens' planning committee charged with developing 10-year development goals for Brown's Race and key adjacent areas.

In 1993, the same year the High Falls Garage opened, the Brown's Race Planning Group presented its vision to the mayor. The group proposed the following as its central organizing theme:

⁹ Report developed by ZHA Inc., today an Annapolis, Maryland-based firm specializing in all types of real estate development, was the result of a three-year effort and was designed to set the foundation (action plan) for revitalization.

Brown's Race Historic District should be developed as the region's community, festival, entertainment, and celebration center. Further, the district should highlight Rochester's diverse industrial heritage. Supporting retail and food services will complement the district's rich natural and historic resources.

The group said residential and office development were desirable and complementary to the area, but should not be the primary focus.

As part of its extensive work, the group also pointed out issues that needed to be overcome if High Falls were to develop into a successful area. For example, the district needed definition; the "critical mass" in the area needed to be increased; and the district had to overcome "linkage" problems with surrounding areas. The group specifically noted a need for a commission or district authority that could be a driving force toward further development. One statement from Planning Group documents stands out when viewed from today's vantage point:

"If it continues to simply be a section of the City which the City cares about and property owners own real estate in, it's never going to have the impetus and the needed champions who are going to drive forward the plan....Additionally, the lack of an aggressive marketing plan will kill this area....The properties, the plan, and the opportunities need to be collectively marketed in a comprehensive plan."

Mid-1990s, Entertainment Becomes Theme for District

The year 1996 saw numerous developments in the High Falls area, especially developments that contributed to the future adoption by the City of an Entertainment District theme:

- ❖ Frontier Field opened
- ❖ Empire Brewery restaurant/brew pub opened
- ❖ The City sought a developer for the 200-year-old Gorsline Building¹⁰
- ❖ Rochester Downtown Development Corp. (RDDC) proposed the concept of an "entertainment district." RDDC had been hired by the City to help determine a way to reduce the level of public

¹⁰ Developer Ben Kendig (High Falls Development Corporation) and the City subsequently reached a complex agreement that intermingles public/private property and responsibilities at what is now known as the High Falls Building. For example, the office building's parking lot is currently the district's festival site.

sector operating costs and generate and stimulate the flow of private sector investment and development in High Falls.¹¹

In 1997, the City hired Flaum Development as its property manager at High Falls. This arrangement, which lasted until 2002, sparked further development of entertainment venues at Brown's Race Market, and festivals in the district. During these years City payments to Flaum generally were between \$700,000 and \$800,000 annually.

By 2003 the City decided to try to boost the success of the Entertainment District while reducing its subsidy costs for property management. It turned to the well-known Cordish Company of Baltimore, and signed a five-year contract with the firm. The contract with Cordish did involve a lower subsidy amount, but the responsibilities in the contract were also reduced as compared to those under the Flaum contract. As a result, some costs were shifted to the City's Parks, Recreation and Human Services (PRHS) Department. In the first three years of the Cordish contract, City documents indicate that additional expenses ranged from about \$165,000 to \$272,000 a year. Combining the Cordish payments required by the contract with the costs shifted to PRHS would indicate that the City paid the following for High Falls expenses in the most recent three fiscal years¹²:

2003-04: \$675,472

2004-05: \$727,430

2005-06: \$736,715

Today many of the entertainment venues are struggling and clearly the dominant theme in the district is office development. Currently more than 255,000 square feet of leaseable space exists in the district, with 78% of it occupied¹³

¹¹ At the time the East End and St. Paul entertainment areas of the City did not exist.

¹² The City's PRHS Department provided a document ("High Falls Three-Year History") that lists somewhat different payouts to Cordish than what the contract required. CGR believes, based on its research, however, that Cordish received the contract amounts, thus we have added additional costs to the Cordish contract amounts to calculate what was spent by the City for High Falls.

¹³ Mid-2006, based on information from RDDC.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The City of Rochester and other stakeholders should recognize that the series of events and developments outlined above resulted in several key achievements in the High Falls District. While it is time for a shift in focus and resources, these accomplishments are tangible and ought to be asserted.

Resurrected Historical Area

The High Falls District was essentially in ruins 25 years ago. The area's buildings have nearly all been refurbished over time, many are at or near capacity with commercial or residential use, and remaining space is either available for lease or has active plans for remodeling.

While the district still faces challenges outlined in more detail below, it nonetheless is a viable neighborhood with great potential. With new infrastructure, a parking garage, and a rich history, the public realm has been preserved and has potential to provide even greater public opportunities.

New Investment and Increased Tax Revenues

The public has invested nearly \$40 million over twenty years¹⁴, and private investment totals an additional \$40 million or more. Without the street improvements, the parking garage and other city investments, the private dollars might not have flowed into the High Falls District.

In addition, while some of the newly remodeled properties are currently under tax abatement incentives, eventually a number of these buildings will be permanently back on the City's property tax rolls and will generate new revenues.

New Office Space

As a result of the City's pioneering efforts, the High Falls District now provides 200,000 square feet of occupied office space which provides unique space for hundreds of workers in accounting, law, engineering, graphic design and many other fields.

¹⁴ It is not possible, based on the documents available, to determine how much of the total is the City's, and how much state or federal expenses. However, the bulk of the expenses have been borne by the City.

KEY DISAPPOINTMENTS

Entertainment Focus Unproductive

Despite many successes, the High Falls journey has also seen its share of failures and shortcomings, which are easy to identify in hindsight.

While the marketplace supported newly remodeled and unique office space for the High Falls District, the City's effort to "force" an entertainment district brand was not successful over the longer term. Continued branding was especially unwise in recent years, given the shrinking population, struggling local economy, and competition from newer entertainment areas in Rochester.

Further, over the years marketing became increasingly venue-focused, rather than district-focused, and the City failed to create marketing linkages to nearby events such as the Drum Corps at Frontier Field, the Rochester marathon, and events for visiting spouses at local conventions. As a result, High Falls has always functioned as a stand-alone district, and community programming efforts have become virtually non-existent.

Residential Development Received Little Focus

Despite early concerns outlined in the 1990 ZHA study about the need for "critical mass" including residential development to help generate a round the clock "24/7" feel to the district, residential development was not, until recently, a focus of the City.

Wider Definition of High Falls Needed

The High Falls District footprint is too narrowly defined because of the lack of linkages. For example, while the bridge provides a link to the other side of the river, pedestrians and cyclists crossing the bridge feel as if they've been stranded once they reach the other side. Even Frontier Field, just a block away, has no viable connection with the district today. In addition, other linkages are needed to connect High Falls to Paetec Park, Corn Hill, Main Street (by the river), and the grassy area below the falls.

Remaining Key Property in City and RG&E Hands

As mentioned earlier, all of the developable property in the High Falls District has either been remodeled or is in progress. The remaining developable land and buildings are under ownership of Energy East (RG&E) and includes the Beebee plant and other smaller adjacent buildings, as well as the large grassy area near the

bottom of the falls. Further, the City owns two key buildings on the waterfront, the Center at High Falls and Brown's Race Market.

The City's ownership of key property presents a management problem and a cost problem for the city that has resulted in the sizeable operating subsidies since 1992, at a total cost of \$10.8 million, with an additional \$635,000 still owed to Cordish for the remainder of the current year, and for one additional year under the contract.¹⁵ In addition, while previous contracts with the Convention Center and Flaum provided a local landlord, the current Cordish contract provides no local management, and has resulted in problems typical of an "absentee landlord."

As the City attempted to reduce its subsidy over the years, the contract with the Convention Center, then Flaum, then Cordish was increasingly narrowed in scope. While the responsibilities of the management companies have dropped, the City has failed to live up to its role—the waterwheel and streets have trash and debris problems, the informational kiosks are sadly outdated, and historical signs and information panels are in disrepair.

Neither the laser show nor the interpretive museum have undergone any significant updating since they were opened in 1992. And some key historical elements of the district have simply been left to languish.

Lack of District Champion

The High Falls district has suffered for a lack of a district champion, and no single point of accountability in the City, to the frustration of current occupants of the district. The district is not lacking for creative ideas, which are described throughout this report as well as in Appendix D. While not all ideas are necessarily appropriate for the district at this time, they show the level of creativity and commitment to the area on the part of many local developers, designers, businesses, and residents.

¹⁵ City of Rochester Department of Parks, Recreation, and Human Services.

CONCLUSION

Rochester's High Falls district captured the imagination of the City's leaders two decades ago and spurred a successful revitalization of an important part of Rochester history. High Falls has been successful both as an office development and as an historic preservation initiative. The district's promise as an entertainment destination has largely remained unfulfilled, however. With the City Administration's sights set on entertainment, little attention was paid to potential residential development.

CGR believes that the time has come to refocus resources and energy on High Falls' most promising elements, continued office development and possible residential development.

APPENDIX A

Summary of Key High Falls Studies and Planning Documents

1. Development, Market and Financial Study of Brown's Race Area; ZHA Associates; 1990
2. Rochester Heritage Center Request for Proposals; City of Rochester; 1991
3. Brown's Race Historic District: Vision for the Future, Brown's Race Planning Committee, 1993
4. Feasibility Study for The Trolley Barn Renovation and Festival Site Relocation; Bergmann Associates, CSL International, Dajon Associates, Inc., 1996
5. High Falls Entertainment District: Economic Development Plan; Rochester Downtown Development Corporation, 1996
6. Request for Qualifications: 60-74 Brown's Race Street; City of Rochester, Economic Development Department; 1996
7. Request for Proposals: Gorsline Building South Wing 4-18 Commercial Street; City of Rochester Economic Development Department, 1996

1. Development, Market and Financial Study of the Brown's Race Area *Prepared by ZHA, Inc., under contract with City of Rochester* **June 1990**

ZHA, Inc. evaluated development potential in the Brown's Race area, and prepared an action plan for revitalization. The study team concluded that an economic basis for development of 190 to 255 residential units, 128,500 square feet of office space, and 112,000 square feet of retail space existed.

The study found that economic and design factors indicated that the total value of private development opportunities totaled \$45.4 million. Needed public improvements were also identified, including parking garages, street and utility improvements, parks, a visitors center, and others.

Office space—downtown office space had a low vacancy rate. New demand for office space was estimated at 215,000 to 260,000 square feet annually through the 1990s.

Retail space—Overall retail sales increased at a brisk pace in the 1970s and early 1980s. Additional demand for retail space for Monroe County residents was anticipated to be significant through the 1990s.

Residential space—In the Brown's Race area, the rental apartment segment of the residential market is likely to be the strength. The rental market in Rochester is generally strong, and there has been little new construction of residential units in recent years. Newly renovated apartments in the downtown area were well received in the market.

Other uses for the Brown's Race area—Interpretive Center, display space for local corporation, work space/living space for artists, gallery/artist display space, arts groups, community/ethnic festivals, WXXI auction, small urban inn or B&B.

The study report outlined a three step urban design process, including identification of "opportunity buildings", "opportunity sites", and a variety of schematic design concepts. ZHA also evaluated development feasibility for all design plan elements, including cost estimates, cash flow analyses, financial/investment returns, and recommended financing mechanisms.

Finally, the report states that the City should be prepared to meet three financial obligations:

1. Commit all net property tax and parking revenues generated by projects in the Brown's Race Area for a 20-year period;
2. Commit annually between \$1M to \$2M of other City revenue to subsidize general obligation bonding requirements of the project; and
3. Commit additional funds as needed for implementation and operation of the program.

2. Rochester Heritage Center Request for Proposals

City of Rochester

July 1991

This RFP was designed to identify an operator for the Rochester Heritage Center who would:

- Operate and manage the resources provided in the RHC efficiently.
- Market historic and educational resources provided in the RHC.
- Maximize the revenues from the commercial activities provided in Brown's Race Market.

The City hoped to use the portion of the High Falls district designated as a local preservation area to transform the "under-utilized" and "deteriorated" area into a "lively, mixed-use center with a 'heritage' theme." The transformation was to exemplify the linkage between heritage development, historic preservation, tourism and economic development.

The RFP noted private developments that had already taken place, including:

- Rehabilitation of the Eastman Technology Building
- The Upper Falls Office Building
- The Button Works Building
- 81 Brown's Race
- The Phoenix Mill
- 234 Mill Street
- WXXI's earlier investment in Brown's Race was being expanded with a five-story addition under construction

In addition to the private developments, the City planned to spend \$16,000,000 for public developments including:

- 1) **Brown's Race Street Project**- restore portion of old raceway in Brown's Race Street and provide new pavement and streetscape improvements to Brown's Race Street, Furnace Street and a section of Platt Street
- 2) **Center at High Falls**- Renovate old Waterworks Building into an interpretive Center about Rochester's industrial history; a new two-story building to be built on a portion of the former RG&E site currently owned by the City to be linked to the renovated Old Waterworks Building. The two-story building will be used as an entrance to the building.
- 3) **Triphammer Site**- restoration and rehabilitation of an historic ruin. "As an archeological site, it will offer excellent education and historical resources."
- 4) **High Falls Commons**- existing parking lot north of the Old Waterworks Building will be developed as an informal people-gathering place.
- 5) **Brown's Race Market**- will be converted into a place which will provide a public viewing area for the laser, light and sound shows on the river gorge wall, and commercial supporting facilities for food court, pushcart vending, banquet and reception activities
- 6) **High Falls Parking Garage**- a 900 space parking garage to support the Brown's Race redevelopment effort is planned. Plans called for completion no later than early 1994.

- 7) **Commercial Street Alignment and Bridge Replacement-** Commercial Street will be realigned creating a development parcel south of Commercial Street and east of Brown's Race Street. It is expected to be the future site of a private parking garage. The Commercial Street Bridge over Brown's Race will be reconstructed.

The City also included its long-term development plans in the RFP, based on Brown's Area Development Study. The City did note that the "implementation of all of these long-term development projects is dependent upon market conditions and private investment." (p. 12). These projects included:

- 1) **Gorsline Building-** could be rehabilitated to accommodate a mixed-use development including 80 apartments, and 32,000 square feet of retail space
- 2) **River Gorge Development-** 18,000 square feet of retail space, 27 residential units and parking for 55 cars could be accommodated in an infill development south of the Triphammer Site along the river gorge
- 3) **Trolley Barn-** could be converted into 28,000 square feet of specialty or festival retail use
- 4) **Canfield and Tack Building-** plan calls for converting the building into 7,900 square feet of retail space and 45 residential units, or 40,000 square feet of office space
- 5) **Parazin Building and Adjacent Site-** could be developed as a mixed-use project to accommodate 6,000 square feet of retail space, 76 residential units, and 116 on-site parking spaces
- 6) **Parry Machine Site-** project calls for rehabilitation of the existing Parry Machine Building and new in-fill construction resulting in 7,500 square feet of retail space, 23,700 square feet of office space, and parking for 30 cars

The City presented its Parking Management Plan which included the City's construction of a parking garage containing approximately 900 parking spaces on the parcel north of Commercial Street between State and Mill Streets. The City noted that it had received permission to use Eastman Kodak lots west of State Street during evening and weekend shows. Lots could accommodate approximately 1,500 cars.

3. Brown's Race Historic District: Vision for the Future

Brown's Race Planning Committee

October, 1993

The committee reported that "Brown's Race Historic District should be developed as the region's community, festival, entertainment and celebration center. Further, the district should highlight Rochester's diverse industrial heritage. Supporting retail and food services will complement the district's rich natural and historic resources." The committee explicitly stated that while residential development could exist in the area, it should not be a primary theme, because a focus on residential could lead to diminishing returns on other development opportunities.

The committee identified five key elements that the District needed in order to succeed:

1. Buildings and land uses— Brown's Race Street needs to be a focal point with irresistible activities and shops on both sides of the street. Needs include development of Gorsline building; craft shops, specialty shops, antique shops; open air gathering space; stage/theater entertainment; and a food court/urban grocer.
2. Natural resources—Year round access to the falls; development and public use of Beebee Park; improvements to High Falls Terrace Park.
3. District-wide elements—Need a perception of safety; planned events spanning four seasons; development of entrances and linkages; an implementation plan and marketing strategy; viewing points; casual seating and relaxation spaces, signage and maps.
4. Contributing and surrounding elements—Connection with and development of district magnets; Genesee Brewery interpretive center; Center for Technology and Science; Engineering Center; new use for State St, former IBM building, Front Street.
5. Complementary elements—Housing and office space development.

Other key issues that influence the vision:

1. The District has to have visually strong entrances and edges.
2. There is a need to develop additional magnets in the surrounding areas to increase critical mass.
3. Need Year round activities to attract visitors all year long.
4. Need to overcome linkage problems that exist between this area and other parts of the City, particularly toward the south.
5. Need development of a Commission or District Authority which will be a driving force toward further development.
6. Need an aggressive marketing plan to package and sell Brown's Race.

4. Feasibility Study for The Trolley Barn Renovation and Festival Site Relocation

Prepared by Bergmann Associates, CSL International, Dajon Associates, Inc.
February 1996

This study focused on the aspects of moving the entertainment venues and events associated with the Downtown Festival Tent to a renovated Trolley Barn building and adjacent Gorsline property. Major findings include the following:

1. The large L-shape space on the first floor lends itself to serve as a multi-purpose area that could hold small concerts, banquets, meetings, and would be integrated into festival events. The total number of potential festivals at the renovated building and redeveloped Gorsline property could total seven annual events.
2. A renovated Trolley Barn could hold events year round, including a projected 130 annual events.
3. The area in the northeast corner of the Trolley Barn building, because of existing internal walls, is best suited to house a permanent tenant such as a bar/restaurant or other use with an entertainment theme. Remaining space in the building could be renovated as support space such as a kitchen, rest rooms, dressing rooms, mechanical rooms, and storage.

The study also outlined five key features of the Trolley Barn as a potential successful festival/entertainment site:

1. Capacity to accommodate up to 7,000 people
2. Improved amenities for festival site including rest rooms, open green space, river gorge view
3. Minimal constraints with respect to noise
4. Easy accessibility and a well-known location
5. Synergy with other entertainment options including Frontier Field

5. High Falls Entertainment District: Economic Development Plan *Rochester Downtown Development Corporation* March 1996

RDDC was asked in September 1995 to develop a plan for High Falls to reduce the level of public sector operating costs and to generate/stimulate the flow of private sector investment and development in the district. RDDC noted that the lack of substantial private investment has hindered the revitalization of High Falls, despite a high level of City investment and commitment. To increase private investment, the RDDC recommended that an entertainment zone/district be created and the district be divided in two zones: Event Business and Year-Round Uses. It also recommended that a non-profit long-term management entity be established to drive the development process and that an aggressive marketing and promotion program be initiated. Details of the plan are included below.

RDDC suggests a Four-Point Strategy to achieve the vision for an economically viable and vital High Falls area.

- An economic development plan that supports the vision for High Falls must be developed
- A High Falls entertainment zone/district must be created
- A long-term management entity must be established to drive the development process
- An aggressive marketing and promotion program must be initiated aimed at three target groups- local developers and operators, the community at large, and the tourism industry

The plan focuses priority attention on the core of High Falls and calls for the creation of an “entertainment district” similar to those in Orlando, Syracuse, Cleveland, Dallas and Seattle.

High Falls would be subdivided into two activity zones:

- “Event business” in the area south of Commercial Street and the Gorsline site
- “Year-round/everyday uses” in the area bounded by Platt Street, the river, Commercial Street and State Street.

RDDC then gives recommendations for the plan that conform to the two activity zone scenario.

1) **Annual Planned Program of Festivals and Events**

- Carry out the proposed 1996 program of new festivals and events at High Falls, in addition to the continuation of the previous summer’s “Takin’ it to the Streets” events
- Move the Festival Tent operation from its current location next to GeVa Theatre to the Gorsline site
- Explore both expansion of the numbers and kinds of festivals, events and concerts, and creative tie-ins with Frontier Field, East End, Alexander Street, Park Avenue and Monroe Avenue businesses

2) Gorsline Site

- Demolish the northern portion of the Gorsline Building and prepare the site for open area festivals, concerts and special events
- Move the City's current Festival Tent operations to the reconfigured Gorsline site, and augment the number and types of entertainment festivals and events and enter into a private management contract for its operation
- Rehabilitation of the remaining portion of the Gorsline Building by a local developer for retail and office use, with possible public use on first level (public restrooms, information center)

3) Center at High Falls

- Convert the majority of this facility to income-producing space
- Revamp the operation of the existing museum entity
- Close the current gift shop operation
- Lease out all of the space on the second floor

4) Brown's Race Market Building (60 Brown's Race)

- Increase the proportion of income-producing space in this facility
- Retain the existing Triphammer Grill Restaurant
- Convert the existing private party/banquet on the first floor to income-producing spaces for: (1) a revived "Rattlesnake Pete's" restaurant and music venue (200 seats); and (2) an associated nightclub (200 seats). An additional 150 seats would be available seasonally on the outside deck for both operations
- The second floor space in the west portion of the building to be used by the not-for-profit High Falls management entity
- Locate a comedy club in the space above the present Triphammer Grill location
- Utilize off-peak hours to generate meeting space for corporate meeting functions, private parties, and convention business overflow

5) Laser Show

- Select new shows that represent the most potential for sponsorships, and implement changes in 1996
- Create an income approach using groups sales, hospitality packages and special viewing arrangements for the 1996 season

6) Establish a Not-for-Profit Corporation

- Early creation of a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation (High Falls Development Corp.) to drive the Economic Development Plan by directing and managing the realization of a successful entertainment district as well as activating site-specific development activity (e.g., Trolley Barn)
- The Board of Directors would include representation from the City of Rochester, Rochester Downtown Development Corporation, Eastman Kodak Company, Genesee Brewery, Rochester Gas & Electric, WXXI, Frontier Field, and four additional property owners
- The Corporation would serve as a "broker" and a catalyst, and would provide a professional interface between existing property owners, potential developers and investors, media, City administration and City Council

The Public Investment Proposal Summary was \$1,700,000 for the first year (1996-97), \$275,000 in the second year, and \$25,000. The expected return on investment was 5.1 years (19.5%).

RDDC summarizes the situation at High Falls:

- The Urban Cultural Park approach is not working, and did not result in the hoped for level of private investment
- Continuing excessive public subsidy is a key issue with the Mayor and City Council
- A significant number of undeveloped and underdeveloped buildings and sites exist (represent a tremendous development opportunity)
- The natural resources of the falls and the river gorge are underutilized
- The parking garage is built. Need to maximize infrastructure investment (cash drain today, but available parking represents resource for development)
- Private/public investment to date must be protected
- Effective magnets to draw people to the city and to downtown are lacking
- Critical mass to drive economic development from the public to the private sector is desirable
- The move from single site-driven development to district-driven development concept is necessary (need a development plan/framework)
- A management entity to provide leadership and focus is needed

RDDC describes the primary focus of its plan as generating the flow of private investment, and to minimize future public sector infrastructure and improvement expenditures. Where City-owned property owned property is involved, the idea is to achieve some near-term shift in funding from public to private, both on the development capital and operating costs sides.

The RDDC notes that Rochester offers neither enough population base nor tourism business to support an area focused entirely on entertainment.

6. Request for Qualifications: 60-74 Brown's Race Street *Issued by City of Rochester, Economic Development Department* August 1996

Executive Summary:

Echoing the RDDC's recommendations in its March 1996 plan, the City states two goals to be achieved in the very near future: to reduce the level of public sector operating costs and to generate/stimulate the flow of private sector investment and development in the district. Towards that end and with continuing commitment to a High Falls Entertainment District, the City is seeking a development team to renovate, maintain, and secure tenants for the Brown's Race Market and the Center at High Falls properties. The developer will implement a comprehensive management, operation, and marketing strategy for the High Falls Center complex, laser show, and festival activities. As incentives for the developer, the City offers subsidies for certain projects, as well as to pay for costs related to the transformation of the properties to accommodate new uses.

Summary:

The City-owned multi-use facility (currently consisting of an interpretive museum, small art gallery, meeting space, event and banquet area, terrace, and retail space) is underutilized in terms of its revenue generating potential.

The City will hire a developer to:

- Enter into a long-term master lease with the City of Rochester for the properties.
- Secure tenants and enter into lease agreements with the tenants.
- Renovate portions of the facility for office, bars/restaurants, and other entertainment related uses.
- Secure an operator for the Interpretive Center (Museum).
- Enter into an agreement with an operator for the laser, light and sound show.
- Secure an operator for all festival activities in the district, including the new Gorsline festival site.
- Maintain the Triphammer site, simulated raceway, Granite Mills Commons (open space), and the laser facilities.
- Implement a comprehensive management, operation, and marketing strategy for the High Falls Center complex, laser show, and festival activities.

The EDD writes, "This area will become the center-point for entertainment in the Rochester MSA. In a recent visit to Rochester, Betheny L. Reid, President of West End Association of Dallas, Texas, commented that High Falls is at the same development point that the Dallas West End was over a decade ago. A formerly abandoned warehouse district, the West End is now a regional entertainment center of restaurants, clubs, shops, museums and office space. It is apparent by the current developments within High Falls that the area is already being transformed into Rochester's entertainment 'district'."

The four main project components that are to be the responsibility of the qualified developer are Brown's Race, the Center at High Falls, the laser show, and High Falls festival activities.

Brown's Race- The market had been operated by the Rochester Riverside Convention Center, under contract with the City, since the facility opened in 1992. The Convention Center had maintained and operated the facility to the expectations of the City, yet it decided to terminate the current operation. Over the previous four years, the City had been subsidizing the facility's operation.

The City would provide funds for renovation of the property into leaseable space. In addition to Economic Development Zone benefits available to the developer and future tenants, the City will provide low interest loan funds to eligible future tenants. Although details will be negotiated regarding the specifics of the City-Developer relationship, it is expected that the developer will maintain, lease, and collect revenues that are generated through the property.

Brown's Race Market Project Objectives:

- Secure tenants for the leaseable areas.
- Renovate portions of the Brown's Race Market for income producing uses, consistent with those found in Entertainment Districts, such as bars, restaurants, and nightclubs.
- If possible, other areas of the Brown's Race Market, not accommodating for entertainment uses, should be developed for other income producing functions such as office space.
- It is the City's preference that the Triphammer Restaurant will remain. However, the development team can elect to replace the Triphammer with other restaurants if proven economically beneficial.

Center at High Falls- The RFQ notes that the museum hasn't been updated since it was opened. While it is the objective of the City to decrease the operating costs of the facility, it is also important to transform the interpretive center into an exhibit that can be visited time after time. The RFQ notes that presently there is no reason to visit more than once. It is expected that the continuing operation of the interpretive center will be subsidized by the City. The first-floor gift shop, which the City currently subsidizes by \$50,000, is planning to close when the Rochester Riverside Convention Center vacates the properties by January 1, 1996.

Center at High Falls Project Objectives

- Rejuvenate the Interpretive Center. Increase operating efficiency by securing a new operator for the interpretive center.
- Renovate the second floor space for an income-producing use, such as office space, and secure tenants.
- The gift shop, currently located on the first floor, may close. The development team may prefer to reconfigure this space to better serve the building tenants and Interpretive Center, or may prefer to lease the space to generate additional revenue.

Laser, Light and Sound Show- The laser show is currently the marketing focus of the High Falls area. It cannot, however, be viewed as the single source of entertainment. The shows attract between 60,000 and 75,000 visitors annually. Over the 1996 4th of July holiday, some 22,000 people attended the Independence Day shows (five evenings). The City currently provides over \$240,000 annually to subsidize the laser show operation. It is expected that the City will continue to subsidize the laser show operation, although the details will be negotiated with the developer.

Laser, Light and Sound Show Project Objectives

- Increase operating efficiency by entering into a new agreement with the current operator, or secure a new operator for the show.
- Reduce operating costs through new shows that represent the most potential for sponsorships.
- Generate income through group sales, hospitality packages and special viewing arrangements, and other promotional venues.

Festival Activities- Since the initial improvements in High Falls were completed, the area has been a center of activities, expanding greatly during the past year. The “Takin’ It to the Streets” series was introduced in 1995 and is planned to continue and be expanded. Held on Wednesday evenings in August, thousands of visitors attended and enjoyed food, drink and live music. Other numerous events are planned for the 1996 summer season (the Jazz & Wine Festival, etc). Once the new festival site is completed, events and festivals in the District will significantly increase. Although the details will be negotiated with the developer, some subsidy is expected to be paid by the City to the developer for a festival operator.

Festival Project Objectives

- Secure an operator for festival activities in the High Falls area.

High Falls Maintenance Project Objectives

- Complete general maintenance (snow removal, trash clean-up, etc) of the Triphammer site, simulated raceway, laser show facilities, and Granite Mills Commons.

7. Request for Proposals: Gorsline Building South Wing 4-18 Commercial Street

***Issued by City of Rochester Economic Development Department
October 1996***

The City is seeking a qualified developer to purchase the south building wing of the Gorsline property and to renovate the building for leaseable space, based on the development program established by the City. The City offers financial assistance and a list of benefits possibly available to the developer. The City believes that the High Falls district will become a center-point for entertainment in the Rochester MSA, and that the Gorsline building will be its focal point.

The development program proposed for the south wing of the building is as follows:

- 1) The building will be renovated for professional office and/or retail space, or other uses accessory to the festival activities.
- 2) The first floor will be renovated for bathroom facilities (handicapped accessible) with the City retaining the right to use the facilities during the festival season.
- 3) A wall area on the first floor interior will be reserved for a pictorial and narrative display of the history of the site.
- 4) The first floor, or portion thereof, may be used (terms to be negotiated) by the City for an information center, "City Store," or other public use if proven economically feasible.

The Gorsline property is located within the:

- Brown's Race Historic District (National Register of Historic Places)
- New York State Urban Cultural Park
- New York State Economic Development Zone
- Federal Enterprise Community Zone

Understanding that the building will require a major investment for renovation, the City will offer financial assistance to the developer, details to be negotiated with the chosen developer. The City does have a number of loan programs that the developer may be able to utilize. The developer may also be eligible for benefits through the State of New York Economic Development Zone. Concluding the RFP are: a list of the specific benefits available to a developer renovating for commercial and office uses; a delineation of developer responsibilities and City responsibilities; and submission requirements.

APPENDIX B

Participants in CGR Focus Groups and Interviews

Name	Affiliation
David Dworkin	Asset One LLC (High Falls Button Factory)
Larry Glazer	Buckingham Properties
Stu Chait	Chait Studios
Carlos Carballada	City of Rochester
Charles Reaves	City of Rochester
David DelMonte	City of Rochester
Joanne Beck	City of Rochester
Lorie Barnum	City of Rochester
Steve Golding	City of Rochester
Tom Hack	City of Rochester
Chris Lindley	formerly City of Rochester
Fashun Ku	formerly City of Rochester
Linda Luxenberg	formerly City of Rochester
Tom Argust	formerly City of Rochester
Tony Hubbard	formerly City of Rochester
Brian Curran	formerly Rochester City Council
Tim Mains	formerly Rochester City Council
Reed Cordish	Cordish Companies
Zed Smith	Cordish Companies
Carleen Willenius	Creator's Hands
Arnold Gray	Gray CPA
John Cake	Hunt Engineers
Jeff Saeger	JADD Mgmt (High Falls Button Factory)
Shari DeSimone	Keys/McFadden's
Sal LaBella	LaBella Associates
Greg Winter	Laser Light Show
David Luxenberg	LeCesse Construction
Tom Mancuso	Mancuso Business Development Group
Rich Rosen	Mark IV
Mark Ballerstein	Monroe County
Sally Winslow	Museum Coordinator
Rachel Rosen	Norry Management

Name	Affiliation
Mimi Tilton	High Falls property owner (Parry Building)
Heidi Zimmer-Meyer	RDDC
Sean Phelan	RDDC
Will Rumbold	Rochester Red Wings
Pat Maier	RG&E
Ben Kendig	Richlock LLC check this
Bill Pritchard	Rochester City Council
Dana Miller	Rochester City Council
Lois Giess	Rochester City Council President
Joni Monroe	Rochester Regional Community Design Center
Roger Brown	Rochester Regional Community Design Center
Roger Brandt	Rochester's Cornerstone Group
David Bennetti	SWBR Architects
Jason Foley	Tiki Bob's
Jennifer Moran	Triphammer Grill
Kenneth Moran	Triphammer Grill
Girard Fisher	Up All Night Productions
Jon Haliniak	WXXI

**APPENDIX C
HIGH FALLS INVESTMENTS**

Address	Building/Business	Investment Year	Public Imp.	Public Assistance	Public Assistance Type	Private Investment	Total Property Investment	Jobs Created	Jobs Retained
312 State Street	High Falls Sign	1998				\$32,000	\$32,000		
4 Browns Race	RG&E Rackhouse	1997				\$250,000	\$250,000		
34 Browns Race	Storage - Kendig Kendig Office	1999 2005		\$30,000	Renovation Grant	\$100,000 \$134,700	\$100,000 \$164,700	1	7
60 Browns Race	Center/Streets/Open Space * Centers at High Falls (renovation 1) ** High Falls Live (renovation 2)	1992 1997 2003	\$16,000,000 \$1,200,000			\$650,000 \$600,000	\$18,450,000	30	30
81 Browns Race	**** Durfee Bridges *** Creator's Hands Too Creator's Hand	1986 1994 2005		\$11,000	Matching Grant	\$250,000 \$19,000	\$280,000	5	5
4-18 Commercial St.	High Falls Building (Gorsline)	1997 & 99, 2001-04	\$575,800	\$700,000	Loan	\$2,052,500	\$3,328,300	160	47
40 Commercial St.	Fest. Site inc. lease area below ter.	1999	\$3,159,000	\$250,000	Loan	\$500,000	\$3,909,000		35
60 Commercial St.	Iron Works Bldg. - Roberts	1996				\$950,000	\$950,000	20	62
61 Commercial St.	*** Trolley Barn - Jillian's Saddle Ridge	1999 2005 & 2006		\$430,000	Loan/JGCP/CBRG	\$7,000,000 \$700,000	\$7,000,000 \$1,130,000	180 40	
250 State Street	High Falls Garage	1993	\$9,400,000				\$9,400,000	3	
280 State Street	WXXI	1988, 2001-2004				\$7,033,180	\$7,033,180		
298 State Street	*** Chrome - Mill Street frontage Keys Martini and Piano Bar *** Zodiac Coffee - Mill St. frontage Spot Caffe	2001 2003 2001 2003		\$10,000 \$85,000	Matching Grant Loan	\$150,000 \$100,000 \$237,000 \$40,000	\$622,000	15 20 2	8
300 State Street	*** Empire Brewing Co. (1st floor) Upper Floor Office (LaBella) Upper Floor Office	1997 2000 88, 97-98, 01-02		\$447,000	Loan & Grant+	\$906,000 \$1,000,000 \$1,675,000	\$4,028,000	100 20	100 50
192 Mill Street	Partners Bldg-Partners+Napier (floors 4 - Entercom (floors 1-2)	2000 & 2006 2002				\$7,250,000 \$1,000,000	\$8,250,000	55	80
194 Mill Street	Gray Accounting	2004		\$213,000	Loan	\$835,000	\$1,048,000	3	7
208 Mill Street	Parazin Building Kendig Renovation	1997 2006				\$350,000 \$570,000	\$350,000 \$600,000		
222 Mill Street	Parry Machine Co. - Underway	2006		\$30,000	Grant	\$1,615,000	\$1,645,000		
234 Mill Street	Parrett Building								
250 Mill Street	Upper Falls Office Building	2004				\$430,000	\$430,000		
104 Platt Street	*** Phoenix Publick House Rest. *** Fuel Pizza Cafe (open 5/99) Jimmy Macs Bar & Grill	1991 & 1995 1999 2000		\$86,975 \$100,000	Loan & Grant++ Loan	\$800,000 \$200,000 \$100,000	\$1,286,975	18	
Total			\$30,334,800	\$2,422,975		\$37,529,380	\$70,287,155	672	431

Source: City of Rochester, August 2006. Note: Some state funds are included in the public figures. Also, some private investment is missing.

- * Browns Race Market Renovated for leasable restaurant/entertainment use, and renamed "The Centers"
 - ** Renovated by the Cordish Company for national chain entertainment/restaurants and renamed "High Falls Live"
 - *** Closed
 - **** Relocated Business to outside High Falls District
 - + \$417,000 ECZ Loan and \$30,000 Facade Grant
 - ++ \$74,475 in loans (1995) and \$12,500 in Matching Grants (1991)
- Business Association Assistance or High Falls facilities operating subsidies not included in the table

HIGH FALLS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION ASSISTANCE

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2000	\$20,000
2001	\$20,000
2002	\$19,997
2003	\$20,000
2004	\$6,000
Total	\$85,997.05

HIGH FALLS OPERATING EXPENSE HISTORY (MANAGEMENT OF FACILITIES, FESTIVALS, LASER, ETC.)

FISCAL YEAR	AMOUNT	VENDOR
1992-1993	\$687,500	Rochester Riverside Convention Center
1993-1994	\$972,000	Rochester Riverside Convention Center
1994-1995	\$949,600	Rochester Riverside Convention Center
1995-1996	\$911,900	Rochester Riverside Convention Center
1996-1997	\$424,700 \$324,200 \$37,500 \$200,000	Rochester Riverside Convention Center Flaum Management RDDC Festivals
1997-1998	\$793,500 \$25,000 \$75,000	Flaum Management RDDC Festivals
1998-1999	\$814,350	Flaum Management
1999-2000	\$735,800 \$1,488	Flaum Management Dell Marketing
2000-2001	\$700,500	Flaum Management
2001-2002	\$710,510	Flaum Management
2002-2003	\$711,900	Flaum Management
2003-2004	\$515,000 \$10,000	Cordish RBTL (Festival Management)
2004-2005	\$515,000 \$10,000	Cordish RBTL (Festival Management)
2005-2006	\$465,000	Cordish
2006-2007	\$220,000	Cordish (\$220,000 remains to be paid for '06-'07)
Total	\$10,810,448	

Source: City of Rochester.

Downtown Office Space
HIGH FALLS DISTRICT
May 2002 - 2006

<i>Building</i>	<i>2006</i>		<i>2005</i>		<i>2004</i>		<i>2003</i>		<i>2002</i>	
	<i>NLOS</i>	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>NLOS</i>	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>NLOS</i>	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>NLOS</i>	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>NLOS</i>	<i>Vacant</i>
194 Mill Street Building	6,800	3,645	6,800	3,645	6,800	3,645	6,800	6,800	6,800	6,800
298 State Street Building	23,244	15,000	23,244	10,000	23,244	12,500	23,244	17,000	23,244	12,900
300 State Street Building	94,565	17,425	94,565	11,200	94,565	9,500	94,565	10,000	94,565	11,500
High Falls Building	39,800	4,202	39,800	3,500	39,800	7,600	39,800	8,400	39,800	13,000
High Falls Business Center	13,000	1,900	13,000	3,000	13,000	6,000	13,000	1,400	13,000	1,400
Ironworks Building	31,800	0	31,800	0	31,800	0	31,800	0	31,800	0
Partners Building	45,000	15,000	45,000	15,000	45,000	15,000	45,000	15,000	45,000	15,000
TOTALS	254,209	57,172	254,209	46,345	254,209	54,245	254,209	58,600	254,209	60,600
PERCENT		22.5%		18.2%		21.3%		23.1%		23.8%

("NLOS" - Net leasable office space in square feet.)

Source: Rochester Downtown Development Corporation

Note: current occupied space is believed to be higher today than reported in May, based on focus group comments.

APPENDIX D

Creative Ideas for High Falls District from Focus Group Input

1. Consider shrinking and/or moving the interpretive center/museum. While it plays an important role and has an average of 75 daily visitors, it has not been a priority of the City and has not been maintained. Perhaps a linkage to the Genesee Country Museum or another local organization could be explored.
2. Programming should focus in large part on families—these have been most successful according to our focus group participants. The 2005 Christmas/holiday celebration was named as a particular success. The City should also consider bring back the street vendors so that visitors can get a hot dog and soda when they come down for the laser show or other events.
3. Focus group participants nearly unanimously argued that Party in the Park should remain at High Falls. However, with this event scheduled to move back to Manhattan Square Park, the City should plan to host other festivals and music events at the High Falls festival site.
4. The High Falls film festival does not actively engage the High Falls district. Consider including a Children’s Film Festival as part of the larger even and hold it at High Falls.
5. Develop the walk along the river. Build on the existing “stroll” along the falls.
6. Put Mayor Duffy in front of waterfall at every opportunity. Make the waterfall a key part of the City’s marketing efforts.
7. Establish a Rochester Visitor’s Bureau at High Falls.
8. Bring in a “big-draw” restaurant like the Spaghetti Warehouse or the Cheesecake Factory; or establish a brewery-related restaurant across river
9. Establish an IMAX theater at High Falls.
10. Explore the Hydrogen Village concept—Senator Clinton has an interest in this idea.