

REUSE FRAMEWORK

Jones & Laughlin Steel Site, Clifton, New York

FINAL
DECEMBER 2017



INTRODUCTION

EPA Region 2 and the Superfund Redevelopment Initiative sponsored a reuse assessment for the Jones & Laughlin Steel site (J&L site) located in the Town of Clifton, St. Lawrence County, New York. EPA Region 2 and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) have been conducting cleanup activities at the site. St. Lawrence County acquired the site property in 2014 and is leading a coalition of regional partners to coordinate cleanup activities and foster revitalization for the northwestern Adirondack communities of Clifton and Fine.

SITE OVERVIEW

The J&L site is located within New York State's Adirondack Park region along the border of the Towns of Clifton and Fine, NY. The 54-acre site was part of an iron ore mining operation beginning in 1889. In the 1940s, the U.S. Defense Plant Corporation constructed and operated an iron ore processing facility at the site until selling the property to the Jones and Laughlin Iron Ore Company (J&L Steel) in 1947. J&L Steel refined magnetic iron ore at the site until the 1970s.

REUSE GOALS

The J&L Redevelopment Group, a coalition of community leaders and regional partner agencies, includes St. Lawrence County, the Towns of Clifton and Fine, the Clifton-Fine Economic Development Corporation, St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency (IDA), the NYS Adirondack Park Agency, and the Development Authority of the North Country. Reuse goals identified by the group are outlined for both near-term restoration efforts and long-range planning.

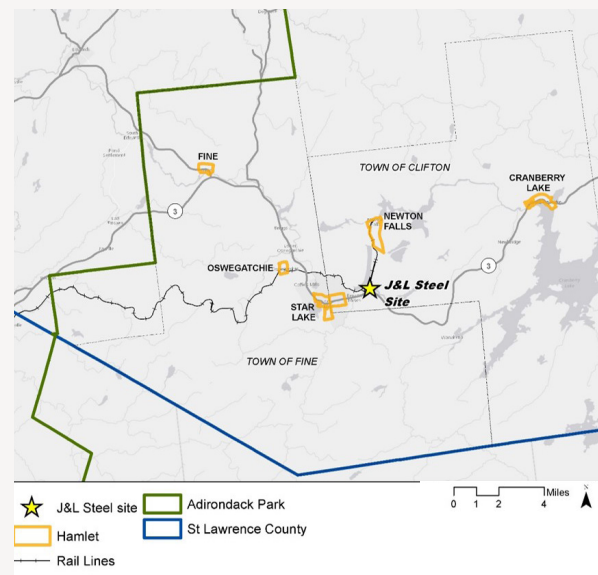
Near-term Priorities:

- Coordinate demolition and remediation activities to address contamination and remove dilapidated structures.
- Restore a blighted landscape and remove stigma of the site.

Long-term Reuse Goals:

- Develop a long-term plan for the restoration and reuse of the site.
- Re-position the site as a catalyst for revitalization in the Clifton-Fine region.
- Use site assets to promote sustainable industrial development.
- Consider future uses that create jobs, build on local assets and workforce, and reflect the local identity and Adirondack culture.
- Plan investments at the J&L site that complement local revitalization in Star Lake and Newton Falls.

Figure 1. Site Location Map



Aerial view of the J&L Steel Site (2016) showing State Highway 3, the upper facility and petroleum spill area.

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REMEDIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Processing operations at the site led to the contamination of site soils, structures and ground water. Site contaminants including a petroleum spill, friable asbestos used in many buildings, and Poly Chlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) have prompted response actions from EPA and the NYSDEC.

In 2004, St. Lawrence County applied to NYSDEC's Environmental Restoration Program (ERP) for funds to build upon prior assessments and complete site investigations to determine the contamination levels and remedial needs of the site. As an outcome of the ERP assessment, in 2013, NYSDEC issued a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD clarifies that no further cleanup actions are required for an approximately 14-acre portion of the site. Following completion of the ROD, the County, NYSDEC and EPA have worked cooperatively to address environmental conditions outside of the 14 acres.

Petroleum Spill

EPA's Emergency Response Team is completing a response action to prevent releases of petroleum contamination into the Little River. Petroleum contamination of the soils and groundwater remains in place throughout the western portions of the site. NYSDEC and EPA continue to discuss options for the long-term remediation of petroleum impacts to groundwater. In the near-term, portions of the site affected by petroleum contamination are not immediately suitable for reuse.

Plans are uncertain regarding the long-term remediation of petroleum impacts to groundwater. In the near-term, portions of the site affected by petroleum contamination are not likely suitable for reuse.

PCB Areas

NYSDEC's State Superfund program will be developing plans to address a limited number of PCB hotspots in site soils. Soil cleanup objectives differ between industrial and commercial uses.

NYSDEC anticipates that actions would address targeted PCB contaminated hotspots throughout the site creating areas suitable for commercial or industrial use, depending on the reasonably anticipated future land uses for the site.



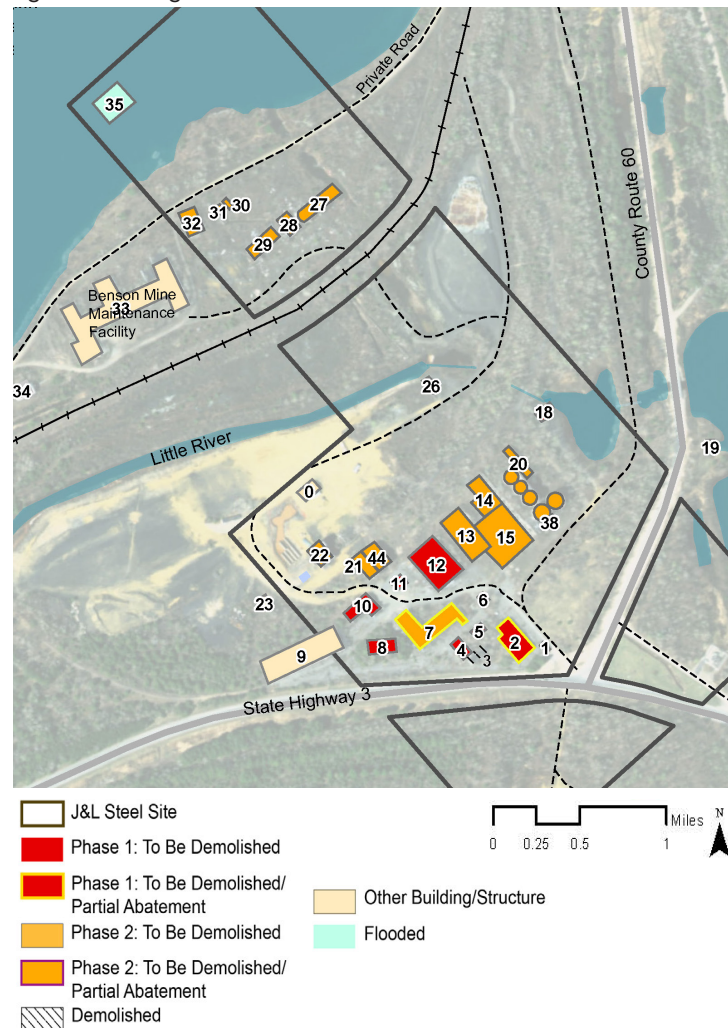
Building Demolition

Building demolition is a top priority for stakeholders — removal of the dilapidated structures will demonstrate progress, address visual blight and remove potential barriers to reuse. However, post-demolition site conditions will likely still have several constraints for reuse.

Demolition plans anticipate the complete removal of structures, slabs and foundations, plus an additional 2 feet of excavation below foundation depths. Within building footprints, foundations will likely be filled with crushed concrete. Some underground utility tunnels may remain in place after demolition is complete.

The phased approach to building demolition, and the timing of these phases may influence the sequence and timing of reuse options. The first phase, completed in the fall of 2017, eliminated 11 buildings. The second phase is anticipated to eliminate the majority of remaining buildings in 2018, with a third phase to address any remaining buildings, utility tunnels/pipe chases and ancillary structures.

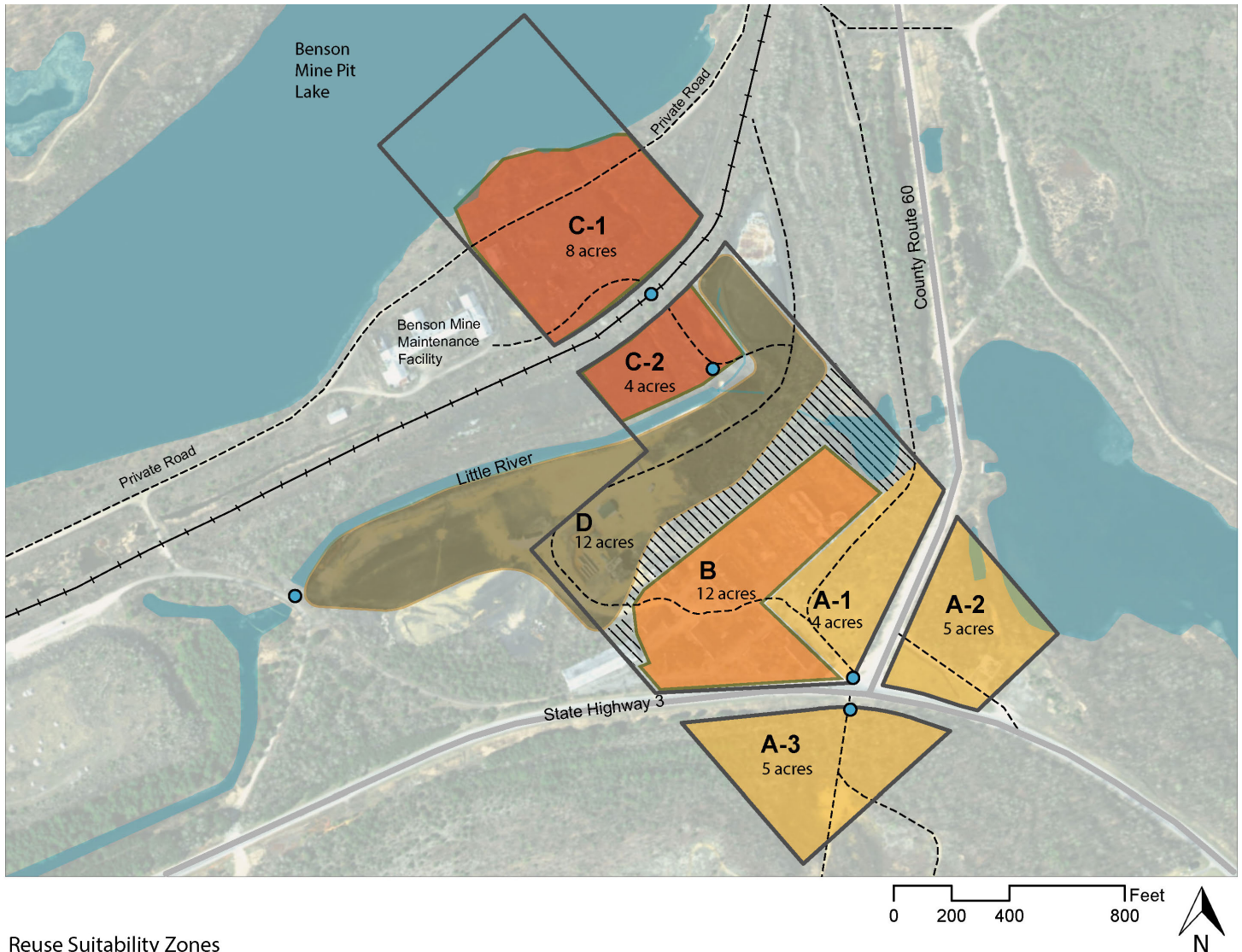
Figure 2. Building Demolition



REUSE SUITABILITY

The reuse suitability map highlights areas with different phasing and development considerations for local planning and redevelopment. Based on suitability factors, Zones A and B have the most potential for reuse due to the close and easy access to Route 3 and limited remedial limitations. Zone C has good rail and water access, but limited vehicular access due to the oil spill cleanup area, terrain and private roads owned by Benson Mines, Inc. Zone D presents the most limited potential for reuse, based on anticipated use limitations due to environmental conditions.

Figure 3. Reuse Suitability



Reuse Suitability Zones

- A Few Limitations - Current Reuse (14 acres)**
 - Remediation complete
 - Structural development
 - Highway access
 - Continued use in A-2: boat washing station and substation
- B Few Limitations - Future Reuse (12 acres)**
 - Demolition and remediation underway
 - Potential for structural development
 - Highway access
 - Building foot prints (post-demo) may present constraints for structural development)

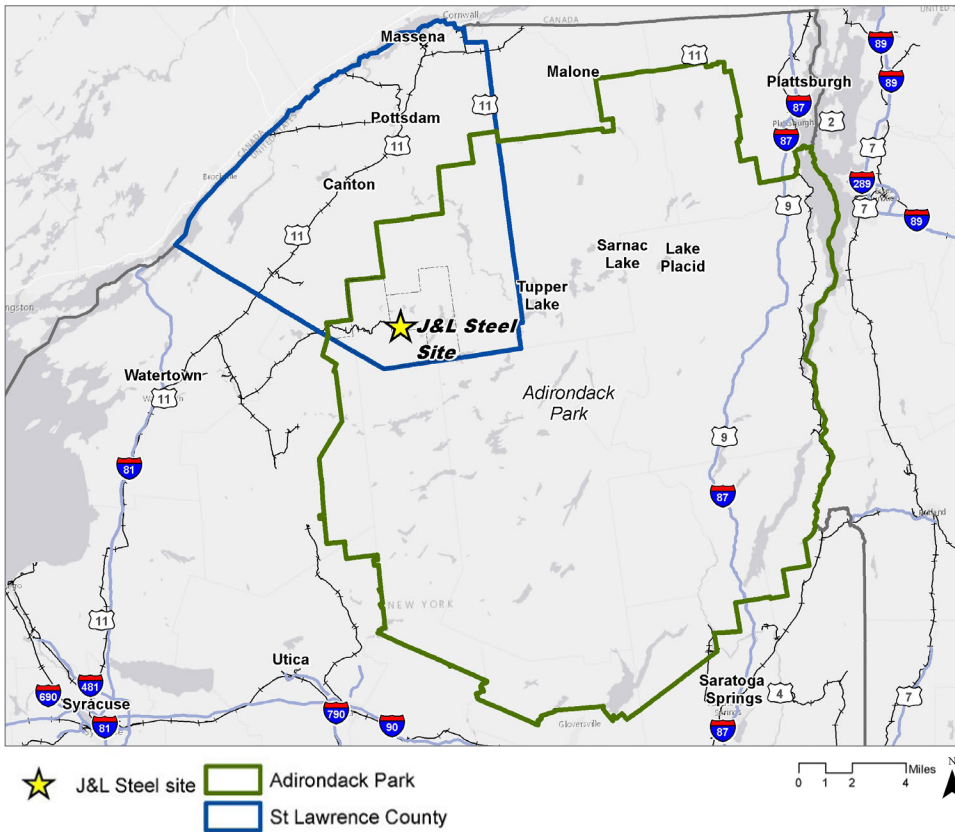
- C Access Limitations (12 acres)**
 - Demolition planned
 - Access limited due to river and rail crossings
- D Remedial Limitations (12 acres)**
 - Oil spill response underway to protect surface water
 - Potential soil impacts limit near-term use
 - Internal road access

Other Features

- J&L Steel Site
- Internal Roads
- Rail Line
- Access Point
- Physical Limitations (steep slopes)

Regional Context

Figure 4. Regional Context



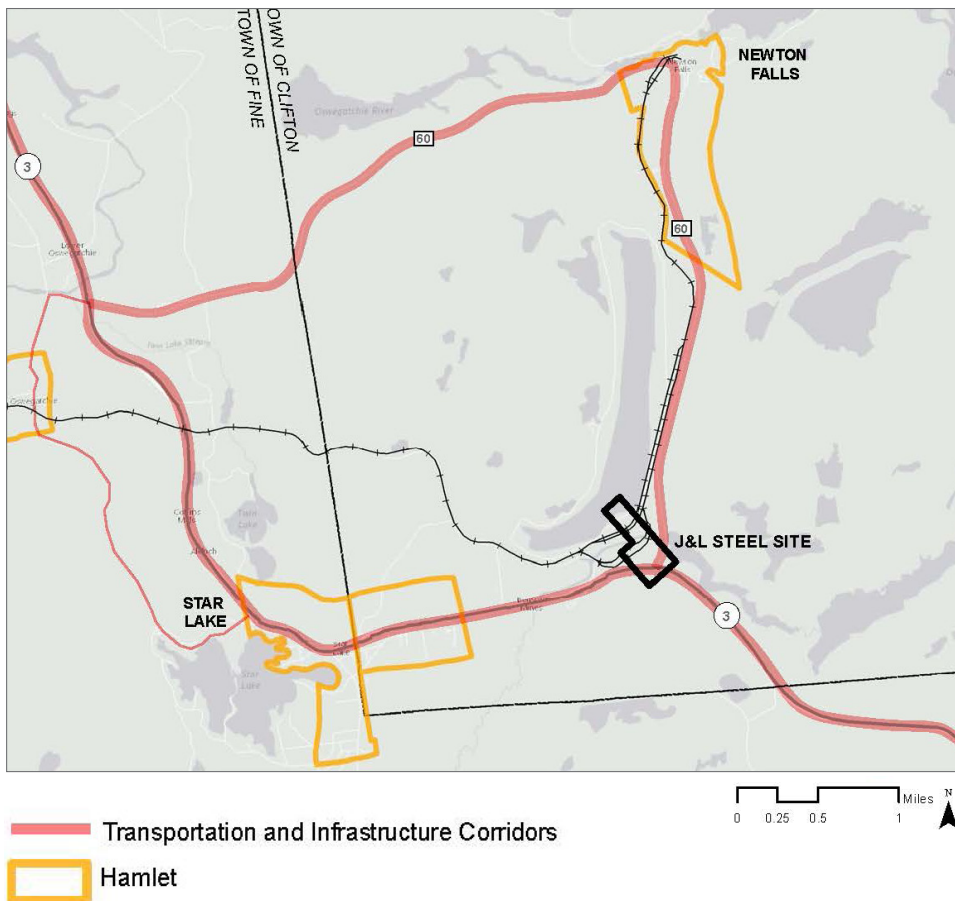
REGIONAL CONTEXT

Adirondack Region

New York State's Adirondack region encompasses the Adirondack Park Preserve — a 6.1 million acre portion of the northeastern part of the state defined by its forests and wildland habitats, high mountain peaks and more than 100 unique towns and villages. Unlike most parks, more than half of Adirondack Park land is privately-owned.

The site is located on the primary east-west corridor, State Highway 3. The highway presents opportunities to connect regional tourists and visitors to the area, but limited interstate access presents a challenge for industrial or manufacturing goods movement.

Figure 5. Community Context



COMMUNITY CONTEXT

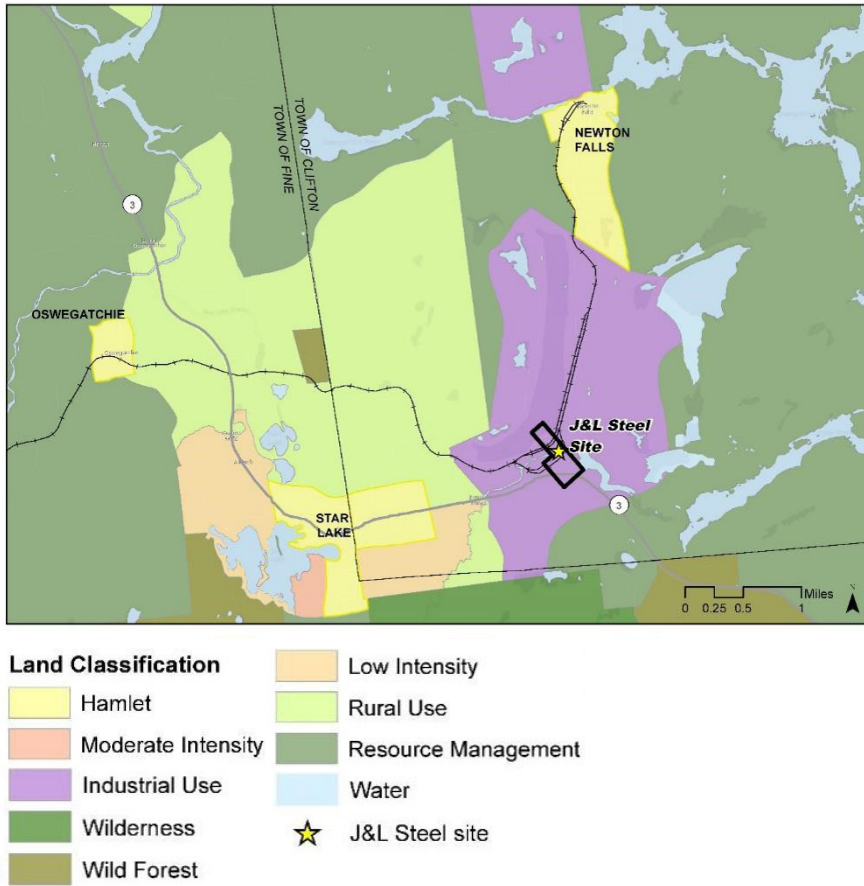
Clifton-Fine

The Towns of Clifton and Fine encompass small population centers in the hamlets of Star Lake, Oswegatchie, Newton Falls, Wanakena and Cranberry Lake. The J&L site occupies a strategic intersection connecting Star Lake and Newton Falls. The two communities have been linked together through the local economy, and there is an opportunity to advance complementary revitalization efforts at the J&L site, Star Lake and Newton Falls.

Infrastructure

State Highway 3 presents opportunities to connect regional tourists and passersby to the area, but limited interstate access presents a challenge for industrial or manufacturing goods movement. County Route 60, which intersects Highway 3 just east of the site, connects the site to Newton Falls and a former paper mill, which is currently vacant. County Route 60 provides an important connection between nearby hamlets and former industrial sites.

Figure 6. Adirondack Park Agency Land Use Classification



EXISTING LAND USE

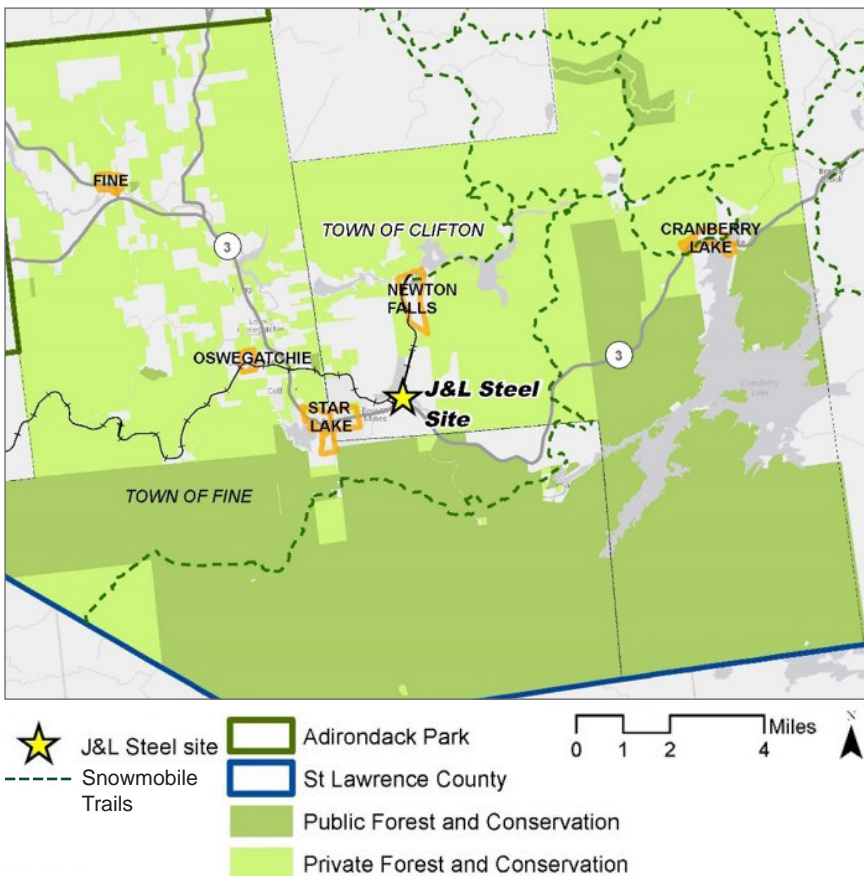
Land Use

The Adirondack Park Agency administers land use and development regulations for the Park. The site is located within one of the few industrial classifications within the Park. This large area includes the site, the adjacent Benson Mines property and pit lake, and former timber area east of the site. Other nearby land uses include hamlets (Star Lake and Newton Falls), low and moderate density residential, forest resource management areas and wild forestland.

Utilities

The site is one of the few industrial areas of the Park. It is served by a railroad and broadband services and adjacent to water, but lacks municipal wastewater and sewer access. The upgrades to the site's utilities and infrastructure made by St. Lawrence County, the local communities and the IDA have prepared it for future redevelopment.

Figure 7. Recreation Context



FORESTLANDS & RECREATION

The Clifton-Fine area is rich in natural resources and enjoys an abundance of public land that provides recreational opportunities, including the 24,111-acre Cranberry Lake Wild Forest and the 107,230-acre Five Ponds Wilderness Area. The Cranberry Lake Wild Forest supports a broad range of recreational uses, from hiking to snowmobiling; it also includes a NYSDEC-operated campground. The Five Ponds Wilderness Area is one of the more remote and wild areas of the Adirondack Park. Access to trails is limited; trails are primarily used for backpacking, primitive camping and seasonal hunting and fishing.

An extensive network of snowmobiling trails run through the area, primarily north of the site. These trail networks traverse both public and privately-owned Forest and Conservation Areas, with the majority in private forest lands. There is regional and local support for increasing connectivity of these motorized use trail networks. Timber resources are abundant in the region and could serve as a resource for future industrial or manufacturing uses at the site.

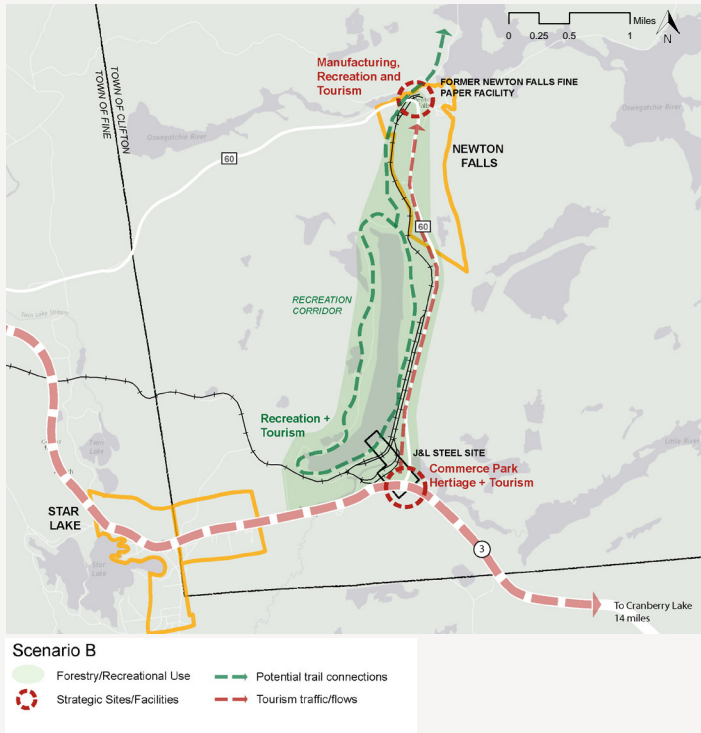
Local Revitalization Scenarios

Based on reuse goals, land use patterns and site suitability, the local revitalization scenarios presented below identify two potential economic development directions. The scenarios and site-specific strategies were developed through stakeholder working sessions with the J&L redevelopment group and the broader community in June 2017.

Figure 8. Industrial/Manufacturing Scenario (A)



Figure 9. Recreational Tourism Scenario (B)



SCENARIO A - INDUSTRIAL, MINERAL/TIMBER PROCESSING/ MANUFACTURING

Scenario A builds on the industrial and manufacturing history of J&L and a former paper mill in Newton Falls. A recently rehabilitated rail line connects the two sites to each other and to distant markets. The area's timber and mineral resources could attract manufacturers to the two nearby sites because of their close proximity and connectivity.

Re-establishing an industrial corridor could bring living wage jobs back to the region and could prompt new small businesses to bolster the local economy and attract visitors to stop.

Local and state stakeholders who are invested in the area have struggled to identify potential site developers because of the area's distance from regional markets and urban centers.

SCENARIO B - RECREATIONAL HERITAGE TOURISM

Scenario B celebrates the region's industrial heritage and complements other nearby recreational assets. The J&L site could host an industrial heritage museum and information center, along with a commercial park. Pending permission from adjacent landowners, there is an opportunity to connect regional snowmobile trails to Newton Falls, Star Lake and nearby Cranberry Lake. The existing tailings piles could be transformed into a mountain bike and ATV park.

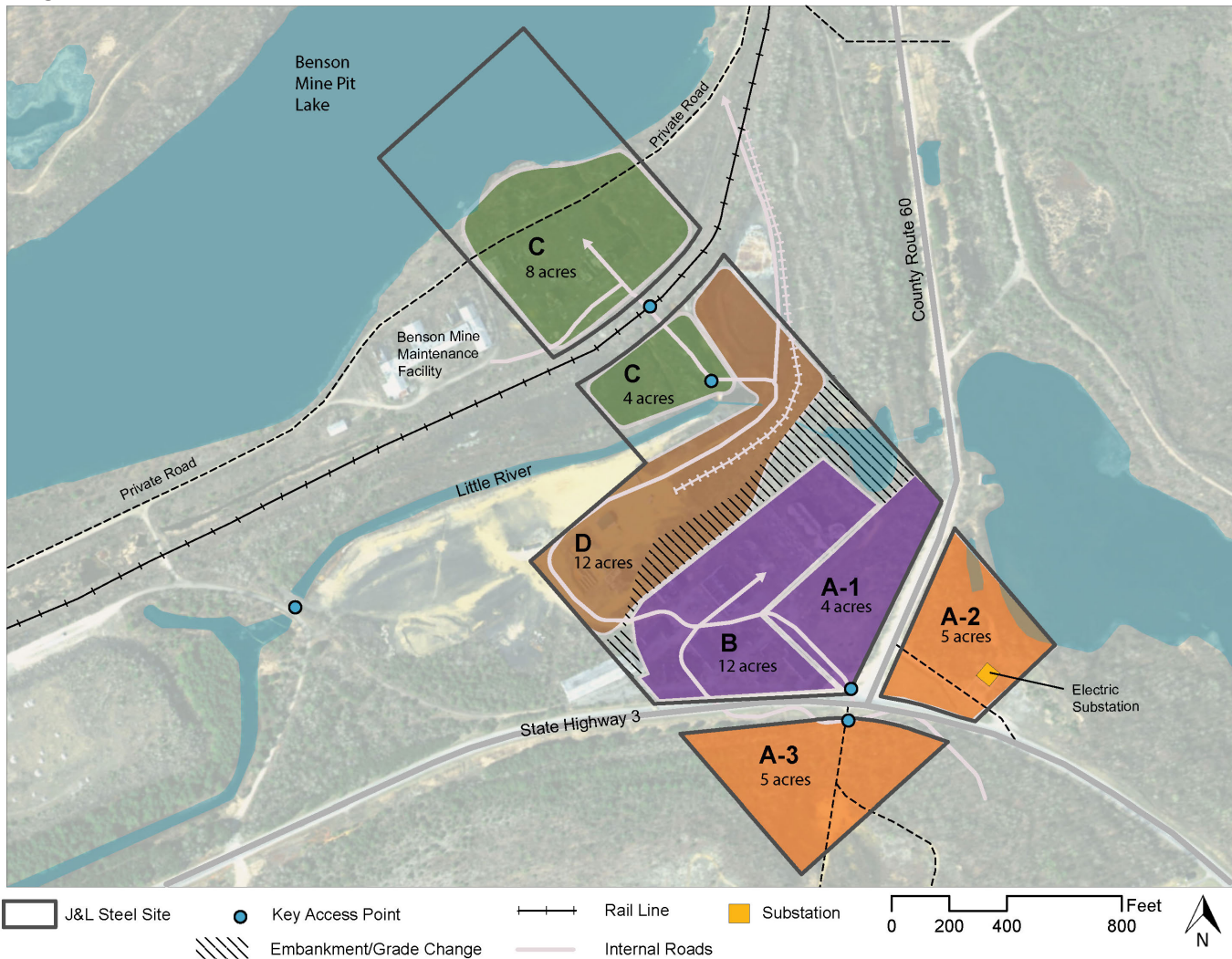
Promoting recreational tourism builds on the growing interest in outdoor activities such as mountain biking and ATV-trail riding that are otherwise subject to use limitation on nearby public lands. Enhanced opportunities for these activities could support retail storefronts for equipment and supplies, repair shops, lodging, restaurants and breweries.

The area will need to compete with the well-established eastern Adirondack tourism hubs of Saranac Lake and Lake Placid; however, proximity to the Fort Drum (Watertown, NY) population may present specific marketing opportunities. Community stakeholders seek a balance between service industry jobs and other job-creating activities to provide a broader range of income/ wage-earning potential for residents.

OPPORTUNITIES & NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

Based on stakeholder and community feedback, the reuse framework below aligns future land use and revitalization opportunities with the reuse zones across the site. Suitable uses along with specific actions to advance revitalization are identified for each zone on the map.

Figure 10. Reuse Framework



INDUSTRIAL PARK

Zones A-1 and B provide 16 acres of industrial-zoned property with highway frontage and access to an electric substation and planned municipal water service. In the near-term, the area will be ready for industrial or commercial use.

Opportunities

- Single or multi-tenant industrial park.
- Manufacturing, warehousing, transportation, or commercial tourism activities.

Actions to advance reuse

- County and DEC continue to prioritize building demolition and remediation in this area.
- Plan a flexible parcel and internal road configuration in coordination with demolition, former building foundations and final grading.
- Plan utility connections for water, electric and broadband.
- Coordinate business attraction activities to complement existing businesses and revitalization efforts in Clifton-Fine.

SUPPORT FACILITIES

Zones A-2 and A-3 are ready for industrial or commercial redevelopment and offer highway frontage at the junction of State Highway 3 and County Route 60.

Opportunities

- Existing electric substation and potential location for future water and broadband utility connections.
- Existing regional boat washing station.
- Potential location for Adirondack gateway kiosk, signage or information about Clifton-Fine communities, amenities and attractions.
- Recreational, renewable energy or beneficial reuse of iron ore tailings areas south of Route 3.

Actions to advance reuse

- Plan and coordinate future utility connections to the site.
- Develop signage with informational or regional branding for Route 3/60 intersection consistent with Clifton-Fine initiatives and scenic byway guidelines.

OPPORTUNITIES & NEAR-TERM ACTIONS (CONTINUED)

WATERFRONT TOURISM OR INDUSTRIAL PROCESSING

Zone C offers direct rail access and frontage on the Benson Mine pit lake. In the near-term, the area will be ready for industrial, commercial or recreational use.

Opportunities

- Mining ore from Benson Pit is unlikely in the near-term.
- Suitable for industrial activities such as aggregate and mineral processing, transportation-related uses such as rail car or aggregate storage.

Actions to advance reuse

- County and DEC to complete demolition and remediation activities for the lower facility area.
- Determine water access rights for county parcel including potential for surface water rights and water withdrawal rights.
- Work with Benson Mine Trust to determine if use of formal haul road right-of-way could be negotiated for site access or for lease as a recreation trail.
- Depending on potential recreational lease options, work with local and regional outdoors groups to identify recreational markets, trail development and long-term stewardship opportunities (i.e. mountain biking, ATV, snow mobile and other emerging outdoor sports).

TRANSITION ZONE

Zone D includes a 12-acre area accessible via internal roads only. The area is currently undergoing investigation and remediation to address an oil spill. Near-term use is limited to remediation and restoration.

Opportunities

Stakeholders highlighted the need to preserve the flexibility for industrial or recreational use in this transitional zone. When remediation is complete and reuse suitability determined, the area may have potential for:

- A rail spur, manufacturing, industrial processing, storage or transportation-related uses.
- A potential recreation trail connection linking the industrial park and potential trail amenities around the pit lake.

Action items for this area include:

- In the near-term, EPA cleanup actions will address potential surface water impacts; DEC anticipates evaluating additional cleanup needs prior to reuse.
- The area has potential for a rail loading area, industrial park or recreational trail use.

CONCLUSIONS

As St. Lawrence County, NYSDEC and EPA work to complete demolition, targeted soil remediation and petroleum cleanup, the opportunities and action items outlined above can inform efforts among key stakeholders and partners to advance revitalization priorities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following organizations and entities contributed to the development of the reuse framework and are working together to advance cleanup and redevelopment.

- St. Lawrence County
- Town of Clifton
- Town of Fine
- St. Lawrence County Planning Office
- St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency
- Development Authority of the North Country
- Clifton-Fine Economic Development Corporation
- Adirondack Park Agency
- New York State Department of Conservation
- EPA Region 2



Local stakeholders explain the history of the site and building demolition plans during a reuse planning site visit in Fall 2016.

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