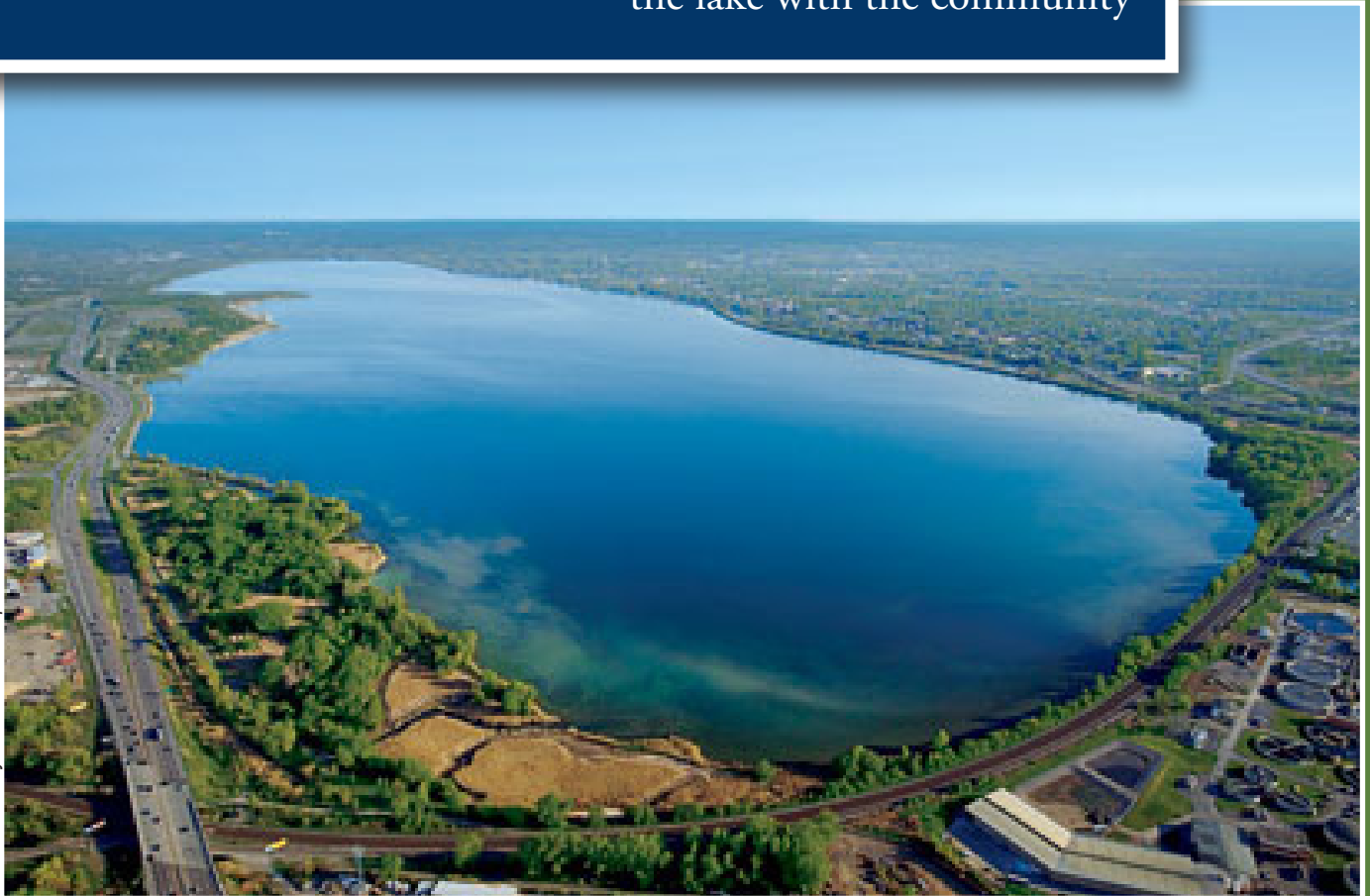


# F.O.C.U.S. ON ONONDAGA LAKE

A roadmap to facilitate reconnecting  
the lake with the community

*Photo courtesy of Parsons Corporation*



Prepared by  
F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse, Inc.

December 2012

**F · O · C · U · S**  
GREATER SYRACUSE



F.O.C.U.S. ON ONONDAGA LAKE:  
A ROADMAP TO FACILITATE RECONNECTING  
THE LAKE WITH THE COMMUNITY

DECEMBER 2012

Prepared by:

F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse, Inc.

City Hall Commons

201 E. Washington Street; Suite 704

Syracuse, New York 13202

[www.focussyracuse.org](http://www.focussyracuse.org)

[focus@ci.syracuse.ny.us](mailto:focus@ci.syracuse.ny.us)

**F · O · C · U · S**  
**G R E A T E R   S Y R A C U S E**

“... our beautiful lake, on all its beautiful shores and borders, will present a view of one continuous villa, ornamental with its shady groves and hanging gardens and connected by a wide and splendid avenue that should encircle its entire waters, and furnish a delightful drive to the gay and prosperous citizens of the town, who will, towards the close of each summer’s day, throng it for pleasure, relaxation, or the improvement of health ...”

— Harvey Baldwin, first mayor of Syracuse, 1847

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1928, one of the first proposals was produced for the future of Onondaga Lake. In that report, it stated that Onondaga Lake would never be cleaned until the “public demand is strong.” It has taken more than 84 years, but for the first time in several generations, residents of Onondaga County will have the opportunity to experience a clean and useable Onondaga Lake. Today, the public demand is strong and they want a clean and useable Onondaga Lake NOW.

Although for the most part of the last century, the community has made its desires clear on the restoration of Onondaga Lake, it has taken us a long time to get to this point. In 1997, F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse, Inc. conducted over 200 visioning sessions, resulting in more than 15,000 ideas, which were then distilled into 87 goals. At its 1998 Visions Fair, more than 5,000 attendees voted for the goals most important to them, ranking their preference. The No. 3 goal was to develop and clean Onondaga Lake.

F.O.C.U.S. followed up the community’s request for a clean Onondaga Lake in 2003, when it invited 90 organizations, government departments, developers and engineering firms to a meeting to discuss the existing benefits and challenges of our waterways. After 10 months of research, conversation and visual presentations, F.O.C.U.S. compiled the citizens’ findings into a report of ideas, actions and resources. In 2012, when County Executive Joanne Mahoney and the County Legislature approached F.O.C.U.S. with the opportunity to provide a roadmap to

reconnect Onondaga Lake with its community, F.O.C.U.S. felt it was obligated to deliver on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Onondaga County residents that have voiced their desire for a clean Onondaga Lake over the past century. This is why F.O.C.U.S. was honored to be selected by County Executive Joanne Mahoney and the Onondaga County Legislature to conduct a study of past ideas and present visions.

Among the past 84 years of reports, the residents of Onondaga County have put forth numerous ideas about how to best recreate on the lake and use its shoreline. In a strong show of support for the public’s desires, Onondaga County, Honeywell International, Inc. and the lakeside municipalities have adopted and implemented many of those ideas. Water quality of the lake has improved dramatically due to cleanup efforts. Trails have been constructed around half of the lake, with plans in place to extend the trail network and eventually complete the highly desired Loop-the-Lake Trail. Fish populations have increased dramatically, and the lake now boasts high-quality sport fishing.

The purpose of this report is to identify key concepts from past reports that are applicable and desired today and to provide a roadmap on how the county could proceed. In this report, F.O.C.U.S. presents its findings from reviewing 54 separate reports, presentations and proposals on the restoration of Onondaga Lake spanning 84 years, from 1928 to 2012. To determine which ideas identified within those reports are relevant

today and are part of the current citizens' vision for Onondaga Lake, F.O.C.U.S. conducted a five-month survey. The citizens are passionate about what will happen with Onondaga Lake and several groups made the effort to visit F.O.C.U.S. to partake in the survey.

This report will present the findings from the nearly 1,100 surveys collected. In addition to the reports and surveys, F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse sat down with 100 key stakeholders representing government, private business, nonprofits and community organizations to gain a clear, overall understanding of what the Central New York community wants from Onondaga Lake. This report will present key ideas that developed through those conversations. F.O.C.U.S.

included any citizen that wanted to participate in this study, from 8<sup>th</sup> graders to former U.S. Representative James Walsh.

Two overarching themes united the thousands of suggestions that appeared in the 54 reports published since 1928 and throughout the 1,100 surveys collected: the public wants to use Onondaga Lake and enjoy its offerings. The public has a strong desire for the Onondaga Lake shoreline to remain in public domain for all citizens to enjoy. Within this report, we have identified concepts that fall within the citizens' vision for the future of the lake for both recreation use and low-impact, focused development, which we believe to be viable and will reconnect Onondaga Lake with the community.

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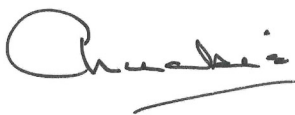
## LETTER OF THANKS

F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse, Inc. appreciates the opportunity afforded by the contract with Onondaga County to reach out again to the citizens of Onondaga County to ascertain their visions for reconnecting Onondaga Lake with the community. During the one-year process of collecting and reading reports spanning 84 years, holding in-depth conversations with 100 stakeholders and meeting with citizens, we made several meaningful positive observations that brought us great pleasure:

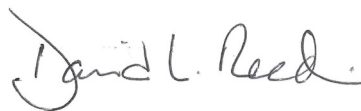
- People no longer use the word “polluted” when talking about Onondaga Lake. More often the comments speak of a cleaner, fishable, maybe swimmable lake.
- A frequent comment in the past was “not in my lifetime will I see a clean Onondaga Lake.” This has been replaced with “My kids are going to be able to swim in Onondaga Lake, and it could be soon.”
- Bicycling has become more than a recreational activity in CNY and we know bicyclists who use the connecting trails to bicycle to work — a new means of transportation for some.

We thank the County Executive and County Legislature for their support and confidence in the role

*Thank you,*



Charlotte (Chuckie) Holstein  
Executive Director



David Reed  
Director of New Initiatives

citizens play in building a sustainable community. We thank the 100 people who willingly and enthusiastically spent hours in conversation about what they would like to see on the shore around Onondaga Lake. We thank the 1,100 citizens who filled out surveys along with the volunteers who distributed the surveys in all areas of our county. We thank the 8<sup>th</sup> grade student who sought our responses to his questions as he wrote his paper for his Social Studies class. And, we thank the lady who walks her dog on the lake trail every day for her comments along with the man who wants to use the trail but is concerned about recharging his wheel chair if needed so he doesn't get stuck along the trail.

Some of the most difficult and time-consuming tasks were undertaken by student interns from Syracuse University, St. Bonaventure University and State University at Buffalo. To them and their professors, a deep sense of gratitude.

To all who shared their desires with us, to the special consultants from Onondaga County, City of Syracuse, Honeywell, NYSDEC, NYSDOT and nonprofit organizations from whom we learned a lot and who kept us on track, a hearty and warm thank you.

Jennifer Creighton  
Communications and  
Office Coordinator



# ABOUT F.O.C.U.S. GREATER SYRACUSE

## Mission Statement

*F.O.C.U.S. (Forging Our Community's United Strength) Greater Syracuse, Inc. is a citizen-driven organization that taps citizen creativity to impact change in Central New York by enabling citizens, organizations and government to work together to enhance the quality of our lives and our economic future.*

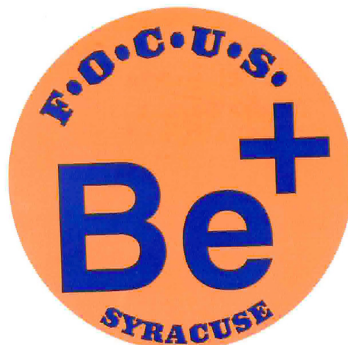
### What is F.O.C.U.S.?

F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse engages in research, public policy advocacy, public education and public outreach to promote intelligent, inclusive, sustainable decision making. It is a unique organization that values and solicits citizen's input in decision making. It is positive, inclusive and non-judgmental.

To foster change within Onondaga County and the City of Syracuse, F.O.C.U.S. brings individuals and groups together to collaborate on common agendas and common goals. F.O.C.U.S. regularly informs the community regarding the advances made on the citizens' goals and instills community pride that serves to unite us and strengthen us as a community.

F.O.C.U.S. works with citizens to identify and explore current community projects, measuring progress and preparing reports for the community, including Strategic Plans (Arts & Culture; Water and Waterways; Sustainability; CNY Pathways; Smart Growth); Patterns of Government; Civil Discourse Forums and CDC National Report on Pandemic Flu and Onondaga Lake.

F.O.C.U.S. hosts all-inclusive community events to showcase civic trustees, regional assets, new ideas and opportunities and communicates its findings in several ways. One is its monthly Core Group sessions focused on three themes: economic vitality, social equity/social justice and environmental stewardship. It also distributes plans to elected officials, nonprofits, government agencies, citizens, schools and colleges.



## SCOPE OF SERVICE

In January 2012, F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse was contracted by Onondaga County Legislature and the Onondaga County Executive to identify and review citizens visions for the Future of Onondaga Lake as follows:

### **Project Purpose and Objective**

Over the years various efforts have been aimed at acquiring people's thoughts, ideas and perspectives on how to reconnect with Onondaga Lake and its environs and to reintegrate the lake into the fabric of the community. This longing to reconnect with Onondaga Lake will only grow as on-going initiatives to remediate and restore the lake, its tributaries and the surrounding lakeshore are completed.

It is the goal of the County Executive Joanne Mahoney to capture all of the hopes and good ideas that have been identified through these

earlier exercises, distill them into an orderly suite of practical projects, programs and activities that can be systematically undertaken to ensure that the community's reconnection with Onondaga Lake is realized.

The charge to F.O.C.U.S. is to assist the county in this endeavor as follows:

- Identify and collaborate with key community stakeholders.
- Review the existing record of conceptual projects, programs and activities.
- Confirm today's citizens share/support those same projects, programs and activities.
- Determine what will be needed to turn viable concepts into reality.
- Provide a blueprint on how to proceed.

## RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCESS

F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse, Inc. identified three research approaches to fulfill its contractual obligations with Onondaga County.

### Past Reports on Lake Cleanup

The first approach involved identifying, locating and reviewing past reports on restoring Onondaga Lake. F.O.C.U.S. identified 54 separate reports spanning 84 years, from 1928 to 2012, of proposals and conceptual plans for Onondaga Lake cleanup and its development (see Appendix A).

F.O.C.U.S. enlisted a team of four Capstone graduate students from Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs to review the reports, presentations and proposals collected by F.O.C.U.S. (see Appendix B). Reports were gathered from a variety of sources including



**F.O.C.U.S. identified 54 separate reports spanning 84 years, from 1928 to 2012, of proposals and conceptual plans for Onondaga Lake cleanup and its development**

government agencies, libraries, planning agencies, engineering companies, nonprofit organizations, former County Executive Nicholas Pirro's personal files and F.O.C.U.S. Citizens Strategic Planning document as well as results from earlier Core Group meetings. F.O.C.U.S. supervised the students who spent eight hours a day, five days a week for four weeks examining the reports. The supervising professor was Tina Nabatchi and F.O.C.U.S. supervisor was Charlotte (Chuckie) Holstein assisted by David Reed.

The team summarized and synthesized ideas voiced by the public regarding the future of Onondaga Lake and its shoreline from 1928 to 2012. They then classified the ideas into six main categories for potential action: 1) Recreation; 2) Tourism, Culture, and Education; 3) Transportation; 4) Development; 5) Environment; and 6) Community Outreach and Engagement. While many ideas span two or more categories, this classification allows for a focus on ideas that best exemplify the community's amalgamated wishes.

The students used information from news reports, newspaper articles, research from websites and interviews to elaborate on each idea by explaining its historical context, as well as the challenges and considerations which must be taken into account to bring the ideas to fruition.

### Survey Design and Administration

The second research approach involved creating,

**Figure I: Survey demographics compared favorably to target population of Onondaga County using 2010 Census Data.**

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Onondaga County Target Population</b>	<b>Survey Sample</b>
<b>Race</b>		
White	81.1%	80%
Non-white	18.9%	20%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	51.9%	54%
Male	48.1%	43%
No response	-	3%
<b>Age</b>		
Between 15-34	33.7%	33%
Between 35 and 64	49.0%	53.3%
Older than 65	17.3%	13.1%
<b>Distance from home to the lake</b>		
5 miles or less	61%	62%
Greater than 5 miles	39%	38%

distributing and analyzing a survey questionnaire on citizens’ visions for the future of Onondaga Lake. Over the course of evaluating the reports, F.O.C.U.S. and the Capstone students identified 6 main categories from the 54 reports. From that, the students identified key questions that would verify if past ideas and proposals were relevant today and part of the current citizen vision. The students then designed a survey questionnaire from those key questions (see Appendix C), taking into account question wording and ordering.

F.O.C.U.S. conducted the survey over a 5-month period, reaching out to citizens of all ages, ethnicities, cultures, economic status and gender. With the help of two additional Summer interns (from the University of Buffalo and St. Bonaventure University), the survey was distributed at various venues in Onondaga County including Onondaga

County Planning Federation, Onondaga Lake Partnership/Onondaga Environmental Institute Forum, F.O.C.U.S. Core Group sessions, Multi-Cultural Block Party at Skiddy Park in Syracuse’s Near West Side, Blue Rain Eco-Fest (Hanover and Clinton Squares and City Hall Commons), 31 Onondaga County Public Libraries, Onondaga Lake Park, the Butanese and Sudanese communities, online, all visitors to the F.O.C.U.S. office, downtown weekly Farmers Market and volunteers soliciting in their own neighborhoods. The survey also was translated into Spanish to reach Onondaga County’s Spanish-speaking community.

In total, F.O.C.U.S. collected nearly 1,100 surveys. The demographics of surveys collected mirrors the recent census demographics for Onondaga County (see Figure I). F.O.C.U.S. engaged two Syracuse University Maxwell students to create a database

and to analyze the surveys that were distributed in the community (see Appendix D).

## Stakeholder Interviews

The third research approach involved identifying and collaborating with key community stakeholders. F.O.C.U.S. produced a master list of key community stakeholders (see Appendix E). It identified government agencies and officials, engaged citizens, private businesses, nonprofit organizations, community groups and student organizations. F.O.C.U.S. staff members Charlotte (Chuckie) Holstein and David Reed met with 100 key individuals to ascertain their visions and ideas for reconnecting Onondaga Lake to the community. They solicited advice on what might be accomplished now that the lake is getting cleaner and where and how we could identify other individuals who have played important roles in the restoration of the lake. These interviews took place at F.O.C.U.S. offices from March through August and lasted approximately 60 minutes each. Extensive notes were kept for each interview. A sampling of those who met with F.O.C.U.S. include former U.S. representative James Walsh,

Onondaga Nation Faith Keeper Oren Lyons and Tadadaho Sid Hill, NYS Fair Director Dan O’Hara, former Syracuse Mayor Matthew Driscoll, Onondaga Historical Association’s Director Gregg Tripoli and Historian Dennis Connor, architect David Ashley, NYS Regional Director DOT Carl Ford and others.

F.O.C.U.S. also held three major F.O.C.U.S. Core Group sessions for citizen engagement featuring updates from Honeywell and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Onondaga County (see Appendix F). These meetings were held at City Hall Commons and City Hall Common Council Chambers and were attended by more than 70 citizens at each session.

F.O.C.U.S. also met with Paul Riede, a reporter with The Post Standard, on numerous occasions which resulted in several newspaper articles written about the Onondaga Lake Cleanup and its shoreline.



◀ F.O.C.U.S. Core Group presented “Onondaga Lake shoreline” in March 2012 where representatives from the county, NYS DEC and Honeywell presented plans and progress on the lake cleanup. In November, F.O.C.U.S. held a second meeting, “Citizens Vision for Onondaga Lake” providing an overview of the 54 reports, from 1928 through 2012.



## FINDINGS >> PAST REPORTS: 1928 – 2012

F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse, Inc. identified 54 reports, spanning the past 84 years, presenting ideas, visions and proposals for Onondaga Lake. F.O.C.U.S. enlisted a team of four Capstone graduate students from Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs to review the reports, presentations and proposals collected by F.O.C.U.S.

The team summarized and synthesized ideas voiced by the public regarding the future of Onondaga Lake and its shoreline from 1928 to 2012. They then classified the ideas into six main categories for potential action: 1) Recreation; 2) Tourism, Culture and Education; 3) Transportation; 4) Development; 5) Environment and 6) Community Outreach and Engagement. While many ideas span two or more categories, this classification allows for a focus on ideas that



**Comments called for expanded and improved trails, with common suggestions to complete the so-called Loop-the-Lake trail, to connect it to downtown Syracuse via the Onondaga Creekwalk and to connect with other bike trails in the area.**

best exemplify the community's amalgamated wishes.

Part of the team's assignment included visiting the park, using its trails and amenities as well as taking a tour of Onondaga Lake by boat.

### Recreation

Numerous ideas for recreation were found in the reports, with swimming, trails and boating appearing most frequently. Other popular recreational ideas included picnic areas, better fishing opportunities and marathons and triathlons.

Swimming and beaches were called for by both citizens and government entities. In addition to clean water for swimming, people wanted improved public access for swimming sites and sandy beach areas. A desire for restrooms and changing areas at beaches was mentioned.

Since the 1970s, governments, citizens, engineers and nonprofits have called for an expansion of trails around Onondaga Lake. The suggestion has appeared in approximately 20 reports, meeting documents and personal emails. Comments called for expanded and improved trails, with common suggestions to complete the Loop-the-Lake trail, to connect to downtown Syracuse and to connect with other bike trails in the area.

Citizens and government actors have long called for ways to foster boating on Onondaga Lake.

Several ideas, including renting canoes and kayaks, have already been implemented. Easily-accessible boat launches represent an ideal way to achieve the goal of promoting the lake for boat use. Various reports included requests for boat tours or cruises on the lake, a topic covered in the Tourism, Culture, and Education section of this document. Many comments expressed a desire to have the lake once again host crew races.

Many comments in the reports called for picnic areas on the lakeshore.

Fishing was another popular idea for the lake. Particularly in the past five years, citizens, nonprofits and businesses expressed a desire to nurture fishing on Onondaga Lake. Ideas ranged from improving access to shoreline fishing spots, to building fishing piers, to hosting fishing derbies. Ice fishing was mentioned several times.

## **Tourism, Culture and Education**

The two most popular ideas related to tourism, culture, and education were an educational center on the shores of the lake and a desire for more informational and educational signs in the area. Suggestions for both ideas date back to the 1970s and persist into present day.

To a lesser, but not insignificant extent, the public has asked for boat tours and cruises, as well as cultural events and displays along the shoreline including concerts, an art park and an amphitheater.

These concepts would promote tourism around Onondaga Lake, an idea occasionally identified by citizens. Government agencies have supported tourism. Ideas from citizens and governments include development projects near the lake, such as restaurants, hotels and amusement parks. As detailed in the Recreation section of this paper, fishing tournaments and boat races are suggested events that could attract tourists to the area. An increase in tourism would require additional infrastructure, namely hotels, to support visitors. Hotels and other development ideas are covered in more depth in the Development section on the following page.

## **Transportation**

Transportation-related ideas from the reports can be categorized into three general groups: 1) Those that deal with connectivity to the lake; 2) Those that advocate for changes to the existing infrastructure and; 3) Those that are primarily concerned with nonmotorized transportation. In all cases, the public has emphasized the need for safe access to and around the lake. Viewed as a whole, the ideas indicate the public's desire to better connect with Onondaga Lake in a safe and enduring way.

The most popular set of ideas related to transportation call for increased connectivity. Broad suggestions simply indicate a desire to increase access to and from downtown Syracuse, while more specific proposals identify methods to draw people to the lake and the shoreline. Specific ideas include adding parking nodes and





connecting the City of Syracuse to the lake via Harbor Brook.

The public has also expressed strong interest in connecting the lake to national waterways via the Seneca River.

While most ideas tied to connecting the public to the lake show a desire for increased access, a handful of comments called for diminished access to the lake and shoreline. Suggestions to decrease access include removing roads adjacent to the lake and closing Route 370 / Onondaga Lake Parkway to vehicles.

Concerns about safety were also apparent in many of the reports, with recommendations to redesign existing infrastructure on Route 370 / Onondaga Parkway. The overall consensus that emerged was to reduce the volume and speed of traffic on the Parkway. Specific ideas included lowering the speed limit, adding a turning lane, encouraging commuters to use other routes to bypass the Parkway and adding safety signage.

While many of the comments pertaining to transportation dealt with motorized vehicles,

◀ The overall consensus from past reports was to reduce the volume and speed of traffic on Onondaga Lake Parkway/Route 370. Specific ideas include lowering the speed limit, adding a turning lane, encouraging commuters to use other routes to bypass the Parkway and adding safety signs. The public has ranked bike paths as an important and highly desirable alternative mode of transportation.

another broad set of ideas focuses on improving the trails and roads for non-motorized transportation. Citizens expressed a desire to link existing paths to a county-wide network of bike trails and to downtown Syracuse by way of the Onondaga Creekwalk. Another popular sentiment over the years was to see the completion of the Loop-the-Lake trail, which could be used by cyclists, inline skaters, runners, wheelchairs and walkers. A larger network of trails benefits not just recreationalists, but also commuters and local businesses, such as restaurants.

## Development

The ideas concerning the development of the shoreline for residential and commercial use represent a wide spectrum of ideas, ranging from no development to an ultra-developed area. Included in these concepts are concerns for the environment, such as appeals for the restoration of a cleaner, more natural shoreline. Regardless of the preferences for more or less development, the public has expressed a desire to retain the shoreline as public land.

Those who support limited development are

mostly concerned about maintaining public access to the lake and shoreline. Certain comments expressed apprehension that private homes will be built on the land surrounding the lake, thus limiting the citizens' ability to access public land. Though some comments adamantly opposed any shoreline development, others show a belief that sensible, carefully planned structures could benefit the lakeshore area. The great majority of the opinions found in this category emerged from the community outreach project, Onondaga Lake Rehabilitation Guidance: The 2020 Vision Project, published by EcoLogic, LLC., and highlight the value that so many county residents place on the lake.

Though the specific ideas for a more developed lakeshore varied, comments persistently stressed the importance of having a comprehensive development plan that incorporates input from Onondaga County residents. A wholistic development plan could balance the community's preferences for residential and commercial development with transportation and environmental improvements. Many of the comments regarding development indicated a concern for the natural environment, and the calls for limited development specifically identified a concern for native wetlands.

## Environment

The natural environment came up as a major concern throughout the reports, and with comments generally concerning cleanup and pollution, conservation, restoration and the

development of long-term management plans. Calls for the cleanup of Onondaga Lake as well as its shoreline were common; cleanup is currently being addressed through ongoing remediation projects, as well as the reduction of point and nonpoint pollution sources. After a long history of pollution on the lake, many comments in the reports involved conserving and restoring natural areas, with many people specifically wanting restoration of native plants, wildlife and their habitats. Also popular was the broad idea of having green spaces or open areas around the shoreline. Finally, there were many suggestions that a lakeshore land use management plan be developed, followed and consistently updated.

## Community Outreach and Engagement

Many citizens, particularly in the 2012 reports Onondaga Lake Watershed Community Forum, Final Report and Preliminary Existing Onondaga Lake Project List (draft), called for improved public outreach and engagement. Residents want to have meetings for updates on cleanup projects, including the ongoing dredging process and have asked for more information about the status of fishing, swimming, and other recreational activities at the lake. Ideas to improve outreach and engagement include a website that could serve as a clearinghouse for all lake information, improved communications with various community groups such as PTAs and churches and a newsletter.

# FINDINGS >> SURVEY RESULTS: DECEMBER 2012

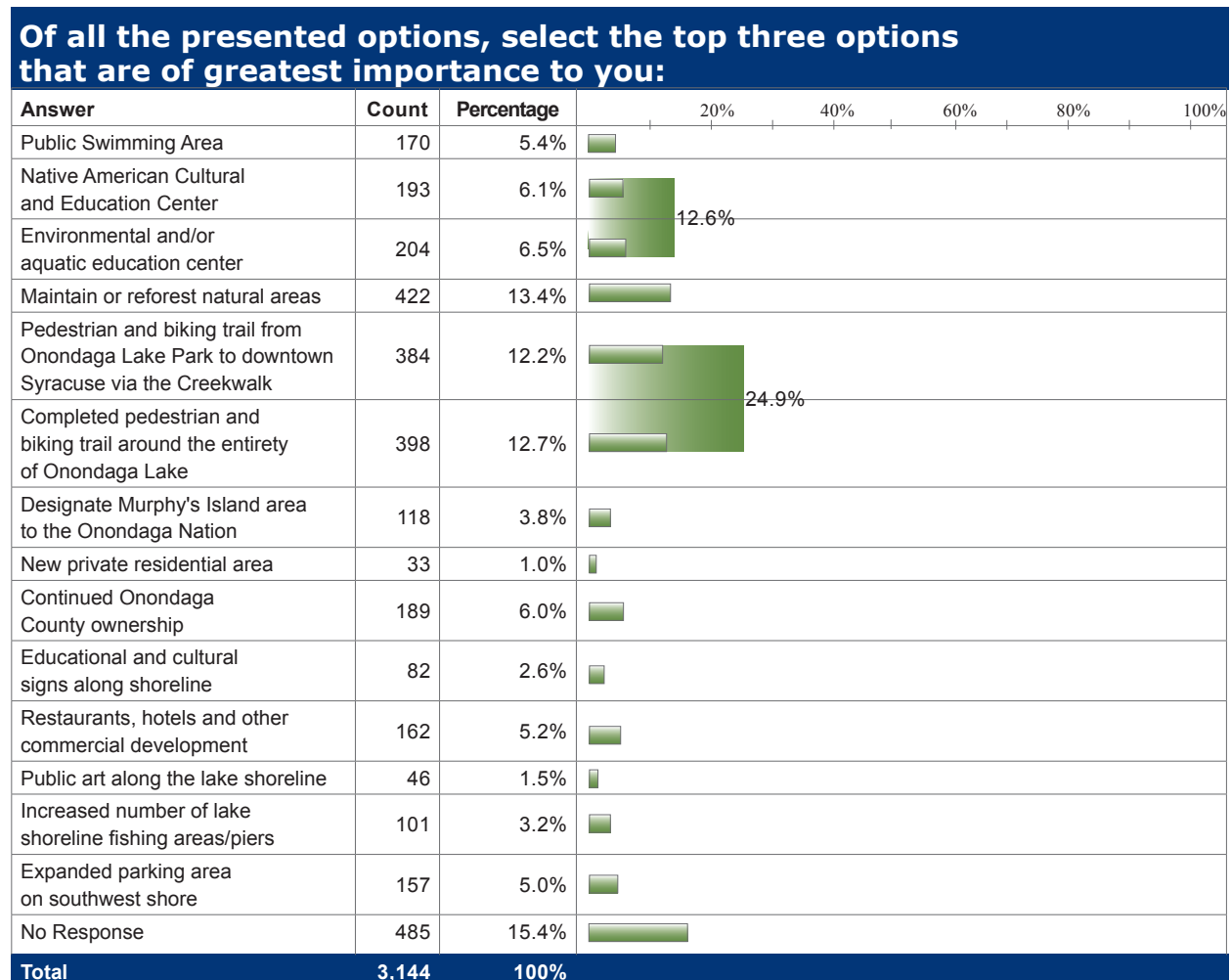
## Survey Design and Administration

The second research approach involved creating, distributing and analyzing a survey on citizens' visions for the future of Onondaga Lake. Over the course of evaluating the reports, F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse, Inc. and the Capstone students identified six main categories from the 54 reports. From that, the students identified key questions that would verify if past ideas and proposals were relevant today and part of the current citizen vision. The students then





designed a survey questionnaire from those key questions (see Appendix C).

F.O.C.U.S. conducted the survey over a 5-month period, reaching out to citizens of all ages, ethnicities, cultures, economic status and gender. F.O.C.U.S. collected nearly 1,100 surveys. The demographics of surveys collected mirrors the recent census demographics for Onondaga County (see Figure I on page 4).





What follows are tables showing the answers to the survey questions:





### Your gender:

Answer	Count	Percentage	
1. Male	457	42.6%	
2. Female	575	53.6%	
3. Other	4	0.4%	
4. No Response	37	3.4%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	




### Your age:

Answer	Count	Percentage	
1. 18-34	351	32.7%	
2. 35-64	555	51.7%	
3. 65+	136	12.7%	
4. No Response	31	2.9%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	






### Your ethnicity:

Answer	Count	Percentage	
1. White/Caucasian	855	79.7%	
2. Non-White	218	20.3%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	




### Your residence:

Answer	Count	Percentage	
1. Resident of Syracuse	549	51.2%	
2. Resides Outside of City Limits	467	43.5%	
3. No Response	57	5.3%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### How often have you been to Onondaga Lake or Onondaga Lake Park for any purpose in the last year?

Answer	Count	Percentage	
1. Never	129	12.0%	
2. 1 – 3 Visits	349	32.5%	
3. 4 – 7 visits	219	20.4%	
4. 8 or more visits	352	32.8%	
5. No Response	24	2.2%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### Top reasons for NOT visiting Onondaga Lake or Onondaga Lake Park:

Answer	Count	Percentage	
1. Distance/Limited Access	88	54.3%	
2. Pollution Reasons	56	34.6%	
3. Undesireable	18	11.1%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Top reasons for visiting Onondaga Lake or Onondaga Lake Park:**

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Exercise	678	41.9%	
2.	Recreation	426	26.3%	
3.	Events	144	8.9%	
4.	Environment	120	7.4%	
5.	Sports	100	6.2%	
6.	Social	51	3.2%	
7.	Work/Education	47	2.9%	
8.	Activities	53	3.3%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,619</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**How would you rank: Maintaining or reforesting natural areas around the lake?**

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Very Important	555	51.7%	
2.	Important	361	33.6%	
3.	Neutral	85	7.9%	
4.	Unimportant	15	1.4%	
5.	Very Unimportant	30	2.8%	
6.	No Response	27	2.5%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	

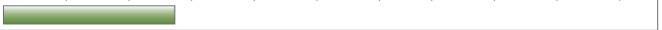





**How would you rank: Having a pedestrian and biking trail connecting Onondaga Lake Park to downtown Syracuse via the Creekwalk?**

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Very Important	539	50.2%	
2.	Important	357	33.3%	
3.	Neutral	112	10.4%	
4.	Unimportant	20	1.9%	
5.	Very Unimportant	34	3.2%	
6.	No Response	11	1.0%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	







**How would you rank: Completing a pedestrian and biking trail around the entirety of Onondaga Lake, "Loop-the-Lake" Trail?**

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Very Important	526	49.0%	
2.	Important	322	30.0%	
3.	Neutral	133	12.4%	
4.	Unimportant	32	3.0%	
5.	Very Unimportant	38	3.5%	
6.	No Response	22	2.1%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	







### How would you rank: Having a Native American education and cultural center?

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Very Important	294	27.4%	
2.	Important	371	34.6%	
3.	Neutral	273	25.4%	
4.	Unimportant	58	5.4%	
5.	Very Unimportant	64	6.0%	
6.	No Response	13	1.2%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	







### How would you rank: New private residential areas on the lake shoreline?

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Very Important	53	4.9%	
2.	Important	128	11.9%	
3.	Neutral	230	21.4%	
4.	Unimportant	226	21.1%	
5.	Very Unimportant	420	39.1%	
6.	No Response	16	1.5%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### How would you rank: Restaurants, hotels and other commercial development on the lake shoreline?

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Very Important	150	14.0%	
2.	Important	266	24.8%	
3.	Neutral	225	21.0%	
4.	Unimportant	164	15.3%	
5.	Very Unimportant	255	23.8%	
6.	No Response	13	1.2%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### How would you rank: Continued Onondaga County ownership of the majority of the lake shoreline?

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Very Important	329	30.7%	
2.	Important	341	31.8%	
3.	Neutral	253	23.6%	
4.	Unimportant	59	5.5%	
5.	Very Unimportant	61	5.7%	
6.	No Response	30	2.8%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### How would you rank: Having an environmental and/or aquatic education center?

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Very Important	311	29.0%	
2.	Important	457	42.6%	
3.	Neutral	202	18.8%	
4.	Unimportant	41	3.8%	
5.	Very Unimportant	40	3.7%	
6.	No Response	22	2.1%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### How would you rank: Increasing the number of fishing areas/piers around the lake?

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Very Important	164	15.3%	
2.	Important	410	38.2%	
3.	Neutral	328	30.6%	
4.	Unimportant	93	8.7%	
5.	Very Unimportant	61	5.7%	
6.	No Response	17	1.6%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	







### How would you rank: Having a public swimming area on Onondaga Lake?

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Very Important	253	23.6%	
2.	Important	298	27.8%	
3.	Neutral	294	27.4%	
4.	Unimportant	112	10.4%	
5.	Very Unimportant	96	8.9%	
6.	No Response	19	1.8%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	







### How would you rank: Expanded park area on the southwest shore of the Lake to include picnic and bbq areas?

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Very Important	269	25.1%	
2.	Important	449	41.8%	
3.	Neutral	239	22.3%	
4.	Unimportant	51	4.8%	
5.	Very Unimportant	52	4.8%	
6.	No Response	13	1.2%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### How would you rank: Having educational and cultural signs along the shoreline?

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Very Important	241	22.5%	
2.	Important	505	47.1%	
3.	Neutral	197	18.4%	
4.	Unimportant	51	4.8%	
5.	Very Unimportant	47	4.4%	
6.	No Response	32	3.0%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### How would you rank: Designating Murphy's Island area to the Onondaga Nation?

	Answer	Count	Percentage	
1.	Very Important	252	23.0%	
2.	Important	200	19.0%	
3.	Neutral	429	40.0%	
4.	Unimportant	76	7.0%	
5.	Very Unimportant	83	8.0%	
6.	No Response	33	3.0%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	



# FINDINGS >>

## INTERVIEW ASSESSMENTS: MARCH – AUGUST 2012

### Stakeholder Interviews

The third research approach was unique in that it involved identifying and interviewing key community stakeholders. F.O.C.U.S. produced a master list of key individuals representative of government agencies and officials, engaged citizens, private businesses, nonprofit organizations, community groups, Onondaga Nation residents and student organizations (see Appendix E). F.O.C.U.S. staff members Charlotte (Chuckie) Holstein and David Reed met with 100 individuals to ascertain their visions and ideas for reconnecting Onondaga Lake to the community.

The 100 conversations produced many ideas and visions along with advice on what might be accomplished now that the lake is getting cleaner. These interviews took place at the F.O.C.U.S. offices from March through August and lasted approximately 60 minutes each. Extensive notes were kept for each interview.

### Recreation

It should be recognized that everyone interviewed believes that a clean Onondaga Lake represents an opportunity to create/expand recreational activities on, in and around the lakeshore. Comments were made repeatedly that Onondaga Lake is unique in its proximity to the city of Syracuse and the urban core. The fact that approximately 90% of its shoreline is

currently publicly owned means maintenance of the shoreline for public access is essential and desired by almost all who were asked. There were suggestions about bringing back crew races, erecting more boat launches — especially on the western shore — making more access for motor boats, kayaks and canoes.

Citizens suggested several key ideas that will create a “buzz” that will cause a groundswell of support for additional recreational projects at Onondaga Lake. They are:

- **Completing the Loop-the-Lake Trail** around the lake.
- **Connecting the lake trail to the Onondaga Creekwalk.**
- Approval of a **safe, designated swimming area**, including changing rooms, restrooms, adequate parking, lavatories, and life guards.
- Additional places for **shoreline fishing** that includes parking nearby. Signs should be posted to ensure everyone who fishes knows the rules on what can be eaten and how often.
- **Bird watching observation towers** accessible to persons of all abilities.
- **Connections.** Connect the New York State Fairgrounds, the Inner Harbor, Destiny USA and Downtown Syracuse. Explore use of gondolas/small water taxis, ferries to connect

Destiny, the Fairgrounds and other lake features.

- **Winter sports.** The Loop-the-Lake Trail be winterized for snowmobiling and cross country skiing.
- Unusual suggestions:
  - Access to water planes as an established shuttle service to and from other areas.
  - Duck hunting on the cliffs.

## Tourism, Culture and Education

Recreating on Onondaga Lake as a tourism attraction is a sign of reaching into the glory days of the lake's past. Although no one interviewed even came close to suggesting that an amusement park be placed on the shoreline of Onondaga Lake, as it had in the early 1900's, almost everyone advocated for activities that once again make the lake a destination spot.

- **Boaters** on Onondaga Lake are able to travel to the Mississippi River, to Canada and points east and south.
- **Tourist destinations** that are on or near Onondaga Lake shoreline:
  - Destiny USA
  - The New York State Fair
  - Inner Harbor
- **Boat launches and mooring areas** on both western and eastern shores of the lake to

entice touring boaters.

- **Train from Downtown.** Attract tourists by reviving a shortline rail system using existing tracks that lead to the Fairgrounds and the lake.
- **Eagle observation platforms.** The ability to observe bald eagles up close in an urban setting is rare. Observation platforms encourages and attracts bird-watcher clubs and individuals.
- **Regattas.** Provide opportunities for regional rowing competitions of college, club and high school teams.
- **Fishing competitions and boat races.**
- **Museums and educational attractions.** There is a high demand for an educational center on the shore of Onondaga Lake, especially recommendations of a Native American Heritage, Environmental and Democracy Center, on the north shore of Onondaga Lake where it is said the establishment of the confederacy occurred.

## Transportation

Onondaga Lake is surrounded by interstates, a parkway and numerous railroad tracks that take people past the lake every day. The Loop-the-Lake trail brings people to the lake, instead of just past it. Comments and suggestions from the interviews focused on finding ways to leverage the existing transportation network and adding new components to it in order to bring more county residents to the lake and the trail.

- **Connecting trails.** Design and complete connections of CNY trails. See website [www.walkbikecny.org](http://www.walkbikecny.org).
- **Alternatives to automobiles.** Sixty-one percent of the county population lives within five miles of Onondaga Lake. This is a reason to make alternative modes of transportation to the lake easy and accessible by:
  - expanded routes.
  - kayak and canoes.
  - a railroad line to point(s) near the lake.
  - ferry boats, shuttle boats to Onondaga Creekwalk.
- **New Access Points.** Improve or create new entrances with adequate parking:
  - improve access to pedestrian bridges over 690 and build public parking at this site.
  - improve the western shore trail for accessibility between Long Branch Park and the pedestrian bridges.
- **Onondaga Lake Parkway.** A variety of recurring ideas are the following:
  - continue to close the Parkway to motor vehicle traffic on Sundays during Summer months.
  - increase the number of hours, days or months the Parkway is closed to motorized traffic.
  - reduce the Parkway to 2- or 3-lanes, allowing space for the installation of the Loop-the-Lake trail.
  - plant trees and other plants along the Parkway.

- reduce the speed limit throughout the year.
- close the Parkway completely in order to allow people easy access to the east side areas of the park.

## Development

Interviewees were almost unanimously opposed to private development along the lakeshore; some even opposed public development, preferring to have the shoreline restored to an ecologically pure state comparable to what existed before the European settlers arrived in the area. But over all, there was a recognition that each stage of development must be thematically consistent with all of the other component pieces.

- **Controls and Standards.** A comprehensive management team should be established that would have the responsibility to coordinate all development around the lake to ensure components contribute to the vision for the whole. The creation of standards will help ensure all approved projects are designed to maximize visual effects, utility and sustainability.
- **Preserve Public Access.** The interviewees' statements echoed the findings of our survey — preservation of public access to the lake and shoreline is paramount. Most favor limited development (bike repair shops, snack stands, rest rooms, etc.) that supports public rather than private use. As one person said, "This is the people's lake; they paid for its clean up. We can't allow a few to now step

in and benefit from the contributions of the many.”

- **Direct commercial development to the Inner Harbor**, not along lakeshore. References to development of the Inner Harbor going “commercial” influenced the opinion of many to defer all development efforts to the Inner Harbor.
- **Haudenosaunee Heritage, Environment and Democracy Center**. Almost all those interviewed agreed that a Native American Heritage, Environment and Democracy Center would represent a significant feature on the shoreline of Onondaga Lake to give recognition to our first people, their history, our history and the process of cleaning the lake. For a variety of reasons, the north shore of Onondaga Lake was mentioned as the most desirable location by most of those interviewed.

## Environment

Efforts to clean the lake and lakeshore need to continue. Government and citizen monitoring of progress continues to be vital as is funding coordination. Areas that still need improvements are:

- **Watershed**. Implement and enforce standards that minimize the pollution of surface waters from the Wastewater Treatment Plant, Onondaga Creek and all the tributaries that feed into Onondaga Lake.
- **National, statewide and local attitude and impressions**. Increase the use of language that reflects the positive nature of the lake cleanup and dispel the myth that Onondaga Lake is the most polluted lake in the country.
- **Fish and Wildlife Habitat**. Environmental organizations working together with the Management Team will assure habitat restoration wherever possible.

## Community Outreach and Engagement

All interviewees expressed an appreciation for the opportunity to discuss Onondaga Lake and to share their thoughts about its shoreline. One of the oldest Onondaga Lake reports stated that change would come about only through “the will of the people.” Interviewees echoed that sentiment when they said the community needs to be engaged in the development of the lake. Suggestions included:

- **Citizens living near the lake**. Public libraries in Liverpool and Solvay have become conduits for communicating to their communities about the lake, its history and the state of the current cleanup efforts. The Onondaga County Public Library provides citizens with reading lists pertaining to lake restorations and shoreline designs.
- **School Children**. Continue and even increase the summer programs and high school classes such as those offered at the MOST and CNY

Audubon, that focus on Onondaga Lake.

- **Immigrants and Refugees.** Increase awareness of the few risks still associated with eating fish caught in Onondaga Lake. Instructional signs should be prominently placed at fishing piers.
- **Native Americans.** The Onondaga Nation is connected, culturally, historically and spiritually with Onondaga Lake. Members of the Nation should be included in discussions on actions contemplated by the county regarding the lake.
- **Other Municipalities.** Village mayors and town supervisors want to be and should be consulted by the county before decisions impacting their residents are made.
- **Lake Activities.** A coordinated effort should be made to identify the many projects and activities regarding Onondaga Lake. A designated website would help to avoid

duplication or conflicts. A central clearing-house is effective for communication with all stakeholders and the community in general. Communication and education on the facts is essential.

- **Coordination.** There should be a comprehensive guidelines and a set of standards for development of the lake's shoreline, determined and implemented through the Management Team.
- **Baseline survey.** A baseline survey of data about how the lake is used, by how many people and what economic impact the county has seen as a result of the increase in activities around the lake to date would serve the county well, as it would allow the beneficial impact of new projects to be justified through the use of hard data.



## CONCLUSIONS >> NEXT STEPS: DECEMBER 2012

Our findings indicate that the public is ready and anxious to reconnect to a cleaner Onondaga Lake and it is invested in implementation of their visions and in continuous improvements. Our research has shown that the most important priorities to the residents of the Onondaga County are that the lake remain in the public domain (KEEP THE LAKE PUBLIC). We strongly believe the county needs a reaffirmation of its commitment to preserve the public nature and access to the land, whether that is in the form of a proclamation, legislation or memorandum of understanding. The citizens want to be reassured that this land will remain public.

The second most important feature that emerged from our research is that the shoreline maintain natural areas with minimal development and F.O.C.U.S. believes that does need to be a priority for the future of Onondaga Lake shoreline.

Currently, according to our research, the majority of visitors to Onondaga Lake Park visit the park for exercise, recreation and events. This desire for outdoor opportunities has carried forward with our survey results and interview findings with a large percentage wanting pedestrian and biking trails connecting Onondaga Lake Park with Downtown Syracuse and for the Loop-the-Lake trail to be completed, which is underway. Since outdoor recreation ranked highly, we believe that a trail system, traveling through various habitats, ecosystems and development create an excellent opportunity to include bird watching stations, fishing piers, additional picnic areas and educational opportunities.

A third aspect that the public has indicated is important is an education component. The public has made it clear they would like to see cultural, educational and nature centers as part of the overall vision for the shoreline. Many others also indicated they would like to see a substantial Native American heritage and democratic center, specifically on the north shore of the lake. These centers can complement and work well with the highly desired trail system by adding environmental education and cultural components. We see this as an opportunity to involve schools across Onondaga County by using Onondaga Lake and its variety of ecosystems for environmental educational opportunities. Students can use piers to gather water samples for testing. They could use bird blinds to observe and learn about nature. They can experience the shoreline to gain a deeper understanding of natural processes. They can learn the history of the first people and their role in shaping our democratic government.

While surveys showed that allowing swimming and a beach area was moderately important, this came up as a valued priority through interviews. The younger residents and those newer to our community are eager to dip their toes in; while the residents who have lived here for a longer amount of time are hesitant. A major benefit indicated during interviews is that by adding swimming, the county could effectively and quickly change the community's perception of Onondaga Lake from one of pollution and a liability to an asset. If swimming and a beach area are included, we would recommend an outreach program to re-educate the public about the safe and clean conditions of Onondaga Lake.

The least important aspects of Onondaga Lake shoreline to the citizens included residential development and commercial development. While many indicated focused, minimal-impact development is necessary (shelters, rest rooms, vending machines, charging stations, bike repair station, water fountains, etc.) and even desired, the majority of development should remain in nearby areas, such as Solvay, Liverpool and the Inner Harbor. We believe limiting development to these areas create opportunities to develop strong, community-based commercial districts, inline with the county's Sustainability Plan. Let the development be focused in nearby neighborhoods and visitors to the shoreline are more likely to extend their visits into

these communities, making an economic impact.

Ideas and visions for 84 years revealed that citizens want very similar objectives today as in the past. They want to be included, engaged and informed on the decisions, plans and progress for this project. Onondaga Lake is an asset to this community. A big asset. We believe the county needs to develop a set of guidelines and standard for design and development to give the shoreline a cohesive feel. We also believe the county should develop an interactive web site to gather ideas and visions from the public and inform them on decisions and progress made.



## NEXT STEPS >> ACTIONS

### Immediate Actions

- By legislative action or other means, assure the shoreline currently owned by Onondaga County remains in the public domain.
- To assure comprehensive implementation of improvements, a management team should be appointed to balance priorities should consider a set of design guidelines and standards, site locations, preservation of habitat and citizens' visions.

#### Management Team Recommendations

We believe the management team should be a collaboration and coordination effort between all Onondaga Lake stakeholders, including but not exclusive to:

#### Government representatives:

- Onondaga County Deputy Executive for Physical Services
- Onondaga County Environmental Director
- Onondaga County Legislature
- Onondaga County Deputy Commissioner of Water Environment Protection
- Onondaga County Commissioner for Parks and Recreation
- Director of Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency
- City of Syracuse Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Department of Transportation
- Onondaga Nation

#### Non-government representatives:

- Honeywell and others involved with lake cleanup
- Citizens, i.e. F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse

### Recommendations

- Maintain and reforest natural areas along the shoreline with only necessary commercial spaces, *i.e. places to buy water, refreshments, snacks, emergency bicycle repair, rest rooms, electrical outlets for wheelchair users.*
- Complete the Loop-the-Lake trail for hikers, bicyclers, walkers, people with disabilities and dog walkers and connect it to the Creekwalk. Also consider establishing connecting transportation routes (ferry, trams, etc.) between Inner Harbor, Destiny and Onondaga Lake shoreline.
- Establish an independent, interactive web site that will educate citizens on decisions made, plans and progress for the shoreline and continue to collect citizen visions and comments.
- Create learning opportunities through cultural, educational, historical and environmental centers and programming, including signs detailing the area's cultural, historical and natural context.
- Build safe fishing piers at several locations around the lake with additional ample parking accessibility.
- Build accessible bird-watching platforms with telescopes in several key locations around Onondaga Lake.
- Establish a swimming area and beach with a

community-outreach program to educate the community on the conditions of the lake.

- Start the conversation to build support for a Haudenosaunee Heritage, Environmental and Democracy Center on the north shores of Onondaga Lake. Include Honeywell, federal and state governments and other appropriate groups in that conversation.
- Identify public art opportunities.
- Include way-finding signs.

## F.O.C.U.S.'s CONTRIBUTIONS

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### **How F.O.C.U.S. can continue to contribute:**

- Include F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse as part of a management team. We feel we are an ideal, non-partisan group representing the public and could convene and work with the other members of the management team.
- Commission F.O.C.U.S. to hold open public participation meetings to inform and engage the community on progress of the clean up and the management team's progress and decisions and to gather further public input.
- Engage F.O.C.U.S. to reconvene the citizens involved in the citizens strategic action plan on water and waterways to update plan to incorporate new ideas, visions and monitor implementation.
- Engage F.O.C.U.S. to create and host interactive, citizen-engagement website.



# APPENDIX

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## List of Appendices

- Appendix A**..... Master List of 84 years of reports containing citizen preferences for the Onondaga Lake shoreline
- Appendix B** ..... Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs Capstone Student Final Report
- Appendix C** .....Citizen Survey: Shape the Future of CNY: Citizen Options for the Future of Onondaga Lake shoreline
- Appendix D** ..... Database of survey results
- Appendix E**..... Master list of interviews with 100 key community stakeholders
- Appendix F**..... F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse, Inc.’s Activities with Onondaga Lake: 1997 to 2012

**Appendix A: Master list of 84 years of reports containing citizen preferences for Onondaga Lake shoreline**

Document Name	Format	Date Published	Published by	on behalf of	Document Type	Digital Copy
	Month	Year				
Proposed Parkway around Onondaga Lake	Photocopied Report		Onondaga Park and Regional Planning Board		Project Proposal including various maps	
Report on Northwest Arterial Connection to the NYS Thruway and West Shore Development of Lake Onondaga (Lake Onondaga West Shore Development)	Document	1952	Madigan Hyland	B.D. Tallamy Superintendent, Department of Public Works	Report to Government Agency	
Onondaga Lake Environmental Action Plan	Document	1973	Schumm & Werle	Onondaga County Environmental Management Council	Action plan	
Bikeway System Plan for Onondaga County	Document	1976	Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council			
Status Report on Bikeways in Onondaga County	Document	Late 70's?	Unknown- Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council?		Project Update	
Onondaga Lake Development Plan	Document	1991	Reimann Buechner Partnership, Halcyon Ltd., Calcoerinos & Spina Engineers, P.C., The Winters Group, Inc., Knowledge Systems & Research, Inc.	Metropolitan Development Foundation of Central New York, New York State Urban Development Corporation, Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency, City of Syracuse	Development Plan	
Acquisition of Land and Development of Carousel Landing	Document	1993	O'Brien & Gere	Syracuse Industrial Development Agency	Draft Environmental Impact Statement	Yes
Onondaga Lake - A Plan for Action	Document	1993	Onondaga Lake Management Conference		Management plan	
Onondaga Lake Natural Resource Damage Assessment Plan	Document	1996	Normandeau Associates	NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation	Assessment Plan	
Message to the Legislature (pages 5, environment & parks/recreation)	Booklet	1997	County Executive Pirro		Annual Report	
Town Meeting Report for Onondaga County (page 6 - Environment)	Booklet	1997	County Executive Pirro	Onondaga County		
A Technical Report: 1997 Conrail/CSX Intermodal Terminal Access	Document	1997	Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council			
Syracuse Lakefront Area Map	Map	1997	American Institute of Architects		Map plan for Lakefront	
Vision Document	Document	1998	F.O.C.U.S.			
Vision Fair Results	Report of Results	1998	F.O.C.U.S.			
Liverpool Area - Onondaga Lake Parkway Transportation Study	Booklet	1999	The Sear-Brown Group	Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council	Transportation Study	

Continued — Appendix A: Master list of 84 years of reports containing citizen preferences for Onondaga Lake shoreline (page 2)

Document Name	Format	Date Published	Published by	on behalf of	Document Type	Digital Copy
City of Syracuse Local Waterfront Revitalization Program	Document	February 2000	Environmental Design & Research, Behan Planning Associates & Holmes, King, Kallquist & Assoc.	City of Syracuse	Draft Program, never adopted	
Liverpool Area - Onondaga Lake Parkway Transportation Study	Booklet	February 2000	The Sear-Brown Group	Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council	Transportation Study	
The State of Onondaga Lake 2001	Booklet	February 2001	Onondaga Lake Cleanup Corp.	Onondaga Lake Management Conference	Report on history, use, pollution of Lake	
Request for Proposal: Development of a Vision for the Onondaga Lake Watershed	Document	Early 2000's	Onondaga Lake Cleanup Corp.		Request for Proposal	
Onondaga Lake Partnering for Success Presentation	Document	July 2002	Onondaga Lake Partnership		Boat Tour Presentation	
F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse Water & Waterways "Conversation with the Experts"	Document	April 2004	F.O.C.U.S.		Meeting Report	
F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse Water & Waterways: Strategies Report	Document	July 2004	F.O.C.U.S.		Action plan	
Onondaga Lake Conceptual Model (Support for the Strategic Visioning Process)	Document	October 2004	Dr. John G. Ferrante		Conceptual Model	
Onondaga Lake Presentation to FOCUS, January 19, 2005	Power Point	January 2005	O'Brien & Gere	F.O.C.U.S.		
The Golden Age of Onondaga Lake Resorts	Book	June 2005	Donald H. Thompson		History Book	
Long Range Transportation Plan - 2004 Update	Document	July 2005	Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council		Transportation Plan Update	
Town of Geddes Waterfront Planning Strategy	Booklet	April 2006	Clough Harbour & Associates LLP	Town of Geddes	Planning and strategy document	
American Institute of Architects SDAT Program	Power Point	January 2007	AIA Center for Communities by Design		Presentation at a Conference	Yes
Reconnecting with Onondaga Lake The Community's Vision for the Future of a Revitalized Resource (Onondaga Lake Rehabilitation Guidance: The 2020 Vision Project)	Document	May 2007	EcoLogic LLC in Association with Dr. Thomas Vawter, Dr. Linda Wagenet QEA, LLC	Onondaga Lake Partnership and Onondaga Environmental Institute	Mostly citizen input with some administrators	Yes
Citizen Participation Plan for the Onondaga Lake Bottom Subsite Remedial Design Program	Document	December 2007	NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Region 7	United States Environmental Protection Agency	Conservation Plan	

Continued — Appendix A: Master list of 84 years of reports containing citizen preferences for Onondaga Lake shoreline (page 3)

Document Name	Format	Date Published	Published by	on behalf of	Document Type	Digital Copy
Old State Attorney General Opinion Addresses Onondaga Lake Duck Hunting Question	Blog	January 2009	Post Standard			
Onondaga Creek Revitalization Plan	CD	2009	Onondaga Environmental Institute		Action Plan	Yes
Bike Trail Human Health Risk Assessment: Wastebeds 1-8 Site; Geddes, New York	Document	2009	United States Environmental Protection Agency		Fact sheet: summary of a human health risk assessment conducted for apportionment of the proposed Onondaga Lake Canalways Trail "Loop the Lake" trail, section extension	
Cooperative Assessment and Funding Agreement Regarding the Assessment of Natural Resource Damages Related to the Onondaga Lake Superfund Site, New York		2009	U.S. Department of the Interior		Cooperative Assessment and Funding Agreement	
Onondaga Lake Watershed Progress Assessment and Action Strategies	Document	April 2010	CNY Regional Planning and Development Board			
The Onondaga Nation's Vision for a Clean Onondaga Lake	Booklet	April 2010	Onondaga Environmental Institute	Onondaga Nation	Plan and vision for the Lake	
The State of Onondaga Lake 2010	Document	2010	Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board	Onondaga Lake Partnership	Status of the Lake	
Transportation Project Report	Document	June 2011	New York State Department of Transportation Region 3		Design Report/Project Proposal	
Onondaga Lake Natural Resource Damage Assessment Plan Addendum	Document	November 2011	Industrial Economics, Inc.	Onondaga Lake Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Trustee Council		Yes
A Clean Canvas: The Future of Onondaga Lake's Shoreline Will Be Determined By the Syracuse Community	Document	2011	Eagle News		Newspaper Article	
Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2011 Update	Document	2011	Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council		Transportation Plan Update	
Onondaga Lake Watershed Community Forum, Final Report	Document	February 2012	Onondaga Environmental Institute	Onondaga Lake Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Trustee Council	Report of a Community Forum held November 2011	Yes
CNY Lawmakers looking at Onondaga Lake Park Trail	Online News	February 2012	9WSYR.com (ABC affiliate)		News article on Lake Trail	



Continued — Appendix A: Master list of 84 years of reports containing citizen preferences for Onondaga Lake shoreline (page 4)

Document Name	Format	Date Published	Published by	on behalf of	Document Type	Digital Copy
Fact Sheet: What is Natural Resource Damage Assessment?	Flyer	March 2012	Onondaga Lake Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Trustees Council		Flyer at Geddes Town Hall	
F.O.C.U.S. Core Group Minutes - Shape the Future of the Onondaga Lake Shore	Document	March 2012	F.O.C.U.S.		Meeting Minutes	
Syracuse 2040 Draft Land Use Plan	Document	2012	City of Syracuse		Draft Plan	



Appendix B: F.O.C.U.S. on Onondaga Lake — Capstone Report Reviewing 54 Reports Spanning 84 years, from 1928 through 2012

**F · O · C · U · S**  
**GREATER SYRACUSE**



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# F.O.C.U.S. on Onondaga Lake

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Facilitating  
Reconnection  
between Citizens and  
the Shoreline

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Capstone Students of Maxwell  
School of Citizenship and  
Public Affairs

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June 2012

Greg Duggan

Cat Foley

Joseph Ferrary Simon

Sara Turner

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Capstone Project is the final requirement for the Masters of Public Administration Program at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs of Syracuse University. Our team, made up of four graduate students, was selected to assist F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse in fulfilling its contractual obligations to the Onondaga County Legislature. Specifically, our team was charged with distilling ideas identified in earlier engagement exercises and reports into an orderly suite of practical projects, programs, and activities. The research presented in this report, as well as results from a survey, will contribute to the final report F.O.C.U.S. submits to the Onondaga County Legislature.

To conduct this research, we reviewed 54 reports, dating from 1928 to 2012, from F.O.C.U.S. archives. Appendix A provides the master list of these reports. After categorizing these reports and summarizing the main ideas presented in them, we compiled a master list of concepts concerning plans for Onondaga Lake and its shoreline, which is presented in Appendix B. The scope of the ideas ranged from personal desires to reconnect with the Lake to comprehensive strategic plans for development around the Lake.

After collating the ideas found in the reports, we identified the most popular and recurring concepts. We then conducted additional research to determine how the desires of Onondaga County citizens might best be achieved. We were pleased to find that many of the most popular ideas have already been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. In the main section of the report, we summarize and analyze six overall themes and the many ideas falling underneath those themes, detailing the history of each idea and suggesting steps to take to turn the ideas into reality.

In addition to producing a document to guide the community's reconnection with Onondaga Lake, we designed a survey to help identify which of the ideas we researched best represent the current preferences of citizens. The survey is meant to aid Onondaga County in deciding which projects to pursue in the near future. The survey is available in Appendix C.

We also compiled a contact list of all stakeholders relevant to ongoing and future projects around the Onondaga Lake shoreline, with the expectation that F.O.C.U.S. and the County will be able to use the list to strengthen public ties and continue to engage the community in decisions about the Lake. The contact list is in Appendix D.

In addition to the detailed findings contained in this report, we presented a summary of key ideas at the Onondaga County Planning Federation Symposium on Thursday, June 7, 2012. A copy of that presentation is in Appendix E.

## METHODS

This report summarizes and synthesizes ideas voiced by the public regarding the future of Onondaga Lake and its shoreline from 1928 to 2012. To identify these ideas, our team reviewed 54 separate reports, presentations, and proposals collected by F.O.C.U.S. through its continued program of citizen engagement. We then classified the ideas presented in these documents into six main categories for potential action: 1) Recreation; 2) Tourism, Culture, and Education; 3) Transportation; 4) Development; 5) Environment; and 6) Community Outreach and Engagement. While many ideas span two or more categories, this classification allows for a focus on ideas that best exemplify the community's amalgamated wishes.

In the body of the report, we summarize and analyze these ideas, detailing the history of each idea and suggesting steps to take to turn the ideas into reality.

We used information from news reports, newspaper articles, research from websites, and interviews to elaborate on each idea by explaining its historical context, as well as the challenges and considerations which must be taken into account to bring the idea to fruition. Principal contacts are provided, and some potential models are listed to support projects and programs we believe to be best suited to the will of the people of Onondaga County.

While we present possible projects for various authorities to undertake, this paper neither prescribes the mobilization of resources nor the initiation of such projects. Instead, we present the projects that best exemplify the stated desires of a large cross-section of citizens concerned with the continued relationship with the Onondaga Shoreline.

## INTRODUCTION

The Capstone Project is the final requirement for the Masters of Public Administration Program at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs of Syracuse University. Our team, made up of four graduate students, was selected to assist Forging Our Unified Community's Strength Greater Syracuse (F.O.C.U.S.) to distill ideas identified in earlier engagement exercises and reports into an orderly suite of practical projects, programs, and activities. We studied various types of documents to identify common, recurring general visions for the Onondaga Lake Shoreline. We then selected and analyzed the ideas that best exemplified the most popular visions. We hope F.O.C.U.S. and Onondaga County will be able to use our work to strengthen the ties that connect the community to the Lake, and that the community's vision will continue to shape the future of the Lake.



## A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & ANALYSIS OF IDEAS

### Recreation

Numerous ideas for recreation were found in the reports, with swimming, trails, and boating appearing most frequently. Other popular recreational ideas included picnic areas, better fishing opportunities, and marathons and triathlons.

Swimming and beaches were called for by both citizens and government entities. In addition to clean water for swimming, people wanted improved public access for swimming sites and sandy beach areas. A desire for restrooms and changing areas at beaches was also mentioned.

Since the 1970s, governments, citizens, engineers and nonprofits have called for an expansion of trails around Onondaga Lake. The suggestion has appeared in approximately 20 reports, meeting documents, and personal emails. Comments called for expanded and improved trails, with common suggestions to complete the so-called “Loop the Lake” trail, to connect to downtown Syracuse, and to connect with other bike trails in the area.

Citizens and government actors have long called for ways to foster boating on Onondaga Lake. Several ideas, including the possibility of renting canoes and kayaks, have already been implemented. Easily-accessible boat launches represent an ideal way to achieve the goal of promoting the Lake for boat use. Various reports also included requests for boat tours or cruises on the Lake, a topic covered in the Tourism, Culture, and Education section of this document. Many comments also expressed a desire to have the Lake once again host crew races.

Many comments in the reports called for picnic areas on the Lakeshore.

Fishing was another popular idea for the Lake. Particularly in the past five years, citizens, nonprofits and businesses expressed a desire to nurture fishing on Onondaga Lake. Ideas ranged from improving access to shoreline fishing spots, to building fishing piers, to hosting fishing derbies. Ice fishing was also mentioned several times.

Information about each of these recreation topics is discussed below, including the historical context, current plans, challenges and considerations, contacts, and potential models.

### Swimming and Beaches

Citizens, governments, and nonprofits often reported a desire to swim in Onondaga Lake and have called for shoreline amenities to support swimming, such as beaches and changing facilities. While the calls for swimming date back to the late 1970s, two recent reports on citizen visions for Onondaga Lake are most relevant: the 2012 *Onondaga Lake Watershed Community*

*Forum Final Report* and the 2007 report *Reconnecting with Onondaga Lake: The Community's Vision for the Future of a Revitalized Resource* provide evidence for the community's existing desire to swim in Onondaga Lake. The Lake had supported swimming until the 1940s when pollution made the water unsafe. Although many areas of the Lake now meet water quality standards for swimming on most days, there are no current plans to establish a swimming area or beach on the shoreline (Onondaga County Parks, 2009). The creation of a swimming area poses many challenges including a widely-held perception that the Lake waters remain too polluted for swimming.

## Historical Context

The Lake was open to swimming until the 1940s, when swimming was banned due to pollution from industrial processes and bacterial contamination from sewage (Ferrante, 2005).

## Current Plans

Despite the common perception of Onondaga Lake as a heavily polluted body of water, parts of the Lake do meet water quality standards for swimming on most days (Onondaga County Parks, 2009). Although swimming from the shore is prohibited by laws that restrict swimming to a designated bathing beach, which does not currently exist at Onondaga Lake, anyone choosing to swim from a boat, scuba dive, or waterski faces no regulations. Currently, there are no existing plans to develop a swimming beach on the shores of Onondaga Lake.

## Challenges and Considerations

Challenges to allowing swimming on Onondaga Lake include the costs of maintaining a beach and beach facilities, overcoming negative perceptions of water quality, the continued bacterial pollution of the Lake, and effectively communicating swimming suitability status to the public.

For shoreline swimming on any body of water, the New York State Department of Health requires a designated beach area, qualified supervision, safety equipment, protection from alternative water recreation users such as motorized boaters, and regular water quality monitoring (Onondaga County Parks, 2009). Depending on the cost of implementing those recommendations, as well how much of its budget Onondaga County Parks is able to commit, the creation of a swimming area at the Lake may prove cost prohibitive.

The public perception of the water quality in the Lake poses another challenge to a swimming beach; if citizens believe the water is too polluted, they will not want to swim in the Lake. Without public education about the cleanliness of the Lake, a public beach will be underused. The very presence of a public swimming beach could be one of the most significant and obvious messages to the public that the Lake is clean. In this case, building a swimming facility is tantamount to creating a demand for swimming.

Regardless of the success of cleaning up industrial pollution, bacterial pollution continues to plague Onondaga Lake. Storm events increase the amount of bacterial pollution in the Lake. Run-off from the land combines with water in sewers, overloading the sewage system and

causing untreated sewage to empty into the Lake (News Channel 9, 2011). This problem is most prevalent at the southern end of the Lake near the outflow from Onondaga Creek. The county's ongoing Save the Rain program addresses the sewage overflow problem and will continue to reduce bacterial pollution and improve water quality in Onondaga Lake (County Executive, 2009).

Frequent on-site testing of the water at the beach is needed to determine whether the water is safe for swimming on a daily basis. Even with improvements to reduce the amount of sewage overflows into the Lake, levels of bacteria could still prohibit swimming on some days. On those days, County officials would need to communicate the threat to the public.

Communication with news channels, updates to the park website, and postings at the beach are all methods that beach administrators would have to use to effectively convey important water quality messages to the public. Onondaga County Parks has experience in informing the public about beach closures; for example, Oneida Shores Park was closed in August 2011 due to high fecal coliform levels (Moriarty, 2011).

## Contacts

1. Onondaga County Parks
2. New York State Department of Public Health
3. Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection
4. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
5. Onondaga Nation

## Potential Models

- **Willow Bay Beach Site** – The 1991 *Long Term Onondaga Lake Land Use Plan* outlines a proposal for a beach in the northeast corner of the Lake.

## Trails

Governments, citizens, engineers and nonprofits have all called for the expansion of recreational trails around Onondaga Lake for decades. An improved and expanded trail system is mentioned in approximately 20 reports since the 1970s. Specifically, people have expressed a desire to see the completion of a trail circumnavigating the Lake, commonly known as the "Loop the Lake" Trail. Other comments indicated a desire for the trail network to connect to the City of Syracuse and to other bike trails in the area. Suggested improvements to existing and new trails ranged from improving signage to adding resting spots and restrooms. Other comments requested that trails support winter activities, including cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

## Historical Context

More than 5 miles of trail run along the shoreline of Onondaga Lake, departing from Onondaga Lake Park and following the northwest and southwest shores. The paved East Shore Recreation Trail begins at the Salt Museum at Onondaga Lake Park and runs 2.5 miles northwest, beyond

the Lake to Wegman's Good Dog Park. The trail is ideal for cyclists and inline skaters. The Shoreline Walking Trail runs parallel to the East Shore Recreation trail for 2 miles, and is designated for walkers, runners, strollers and wheelchairs. The West Shore Trail, also known as John Haley Memorial Trail, connects with the East Shore Recreational Trail at the northwest end of the Lake and then winds through more than 2 miles of wooded shoreline on the southwest side of the Lake. The paved trail is ideal for bicyclists and pedestrians, though the pavement is not as smooth as the trails on the northern shore. The Lakeland Trail is an unpaved nature trail located between the West Shore Trail and Interstate 690.

Access points to the trails exist at several locations. The park entrance off of Onondaga Lake Parkway contains ample parking and direct access to the start of the East Shore Recreation Trail and Shoreline Walking Trail. Additional parking at Willow Bay is located at the northwest end of the Lake. Finally, a footbridge connects the trail to a residential neighborhood in Geddes on the southwest shore of the Lake.

The City of Syracuse in 2011 completed Phase I of the Creekwalk, a trail that runs from Armory Square in downtown Syracuse to the Inner Harbor and the Lake shoreline. The Creekwalk does not connect to any county-maintained trails, but plans call for a future connection to a trail circumnavigating the Lake.

## Current Plans

Plans are in progress to extend the trail network around the Lake. A 12-mile loop around the entire Lake has been incorporated into the proposed Syracuse Canalway Trail, (Onondaga Lake Park, "Welcome to Onondaga Lake Park"). Moreover, according to William Lansley, Commissioner of Parks for Onondaga County, Onondaga County Parks is conducting a study this year to gauge the feasibility of a Loop the Lake Trail, and the Onondaga County Department of Transportation will oversee the construction of the Trail.

The next step in the trail extension process is to expand the West Shore Trail by 2 miles at Fairground Bluffs, located on the southern shore of the Lake. The project has an expected completion date of November 2013 (Lansley, personal interview, 2012)(Onondaga Lake Park, 2012).

Plans call for the Loop the Lake Trail to eventually connect to the Creekwalk in the City of Syracuse (Syracuse, "Creekwalk").

## Challenges and Considerations

As the trail expands, particularly along the eastern end of the Lake in Syracuse, it will travel through properties owned by a number of entities. The Onondaga County Department of Transportation will need to coordinate and work with the various property owners to build the trail.

Siting the trail will prove difficult, particularly on the southern edge of the Lake, where the trail will run in close proximity to the CSX railroad line and Route 370/Onondaga Parkway. In fact, the recreational trail would likely need to cross the railroad, the Parkway, or both.

Other design considerations should factor in citizen desires to have the trail be low enough grade for strollers, wheelchairs and inline skates. Plans should also recognize that any new trails may suffer from frost heaves, which occur on existing trails (Lansley).

Once designs for the trail (or sections of the trail) are finalized, the Onondaga County Department of Transportation will need to obtain funding for the project. Potential funding sources include state and federal transportation grants.

## Contacts

1. Onondaga County Parks
2. Onondaga County Department of Transportation
3. City of Syracuse Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
4. Village of Geddes: Parks and Recreation Department; Highway Department
5. Village of Liverpool: Department of Public Works
6. Village of Solvay: Highway Department; Department Parks and Recreation
7. Town of Salina: Highway Department; Parks and Recreation Department; Department of Planning and Development
8. New York State Department of Transportation
9. New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets
10. Carousel Center
11. CSX
12. Honeywell International, Inc.
13. Onondaga Nation

## Potential Models

- **Lake Champlain Bikeways** ([www.champlainbikeways.org](http://www.champlainbikeways.org)) – The Lake Champlain Bikeways is a network of more than 1,100 miles of bike routes in New York, Vermont, and Quebec. The network includes 35 loops and tours, which range from 10 to 60 miles in length. The routes have natural, cultural, and historic themes.
- **Lake Tahoe** ([www.tahoebest.com/biking/bikepath.htm](http://www.tahoebest.com/biking/bikepath.htm)) – Bike trails on the shores of Lake Tahoe in California are maintained by the Tahoe City Department of Parks and Recreation.

## Boating, Boat Launches and Crew Regattas

The reports indicate that increased access to boating and boat launches has been a frequent and persistent citizen desire since the 1950s. Currently, the Lake hosts kayaking, canoeing, rowing, sailing, and motorized boating. Citizens wish to see the variety of boating opportunities continue, and although boating takes place on the Lake itself, the infrastructure to support

boating is located on the shoreline. Existing plans to expand boating access and infrastructure for rowing facilities will help meet citizen demands for more boating opportunities on the Lake.

## Historical Context

A marina built in 1935 on the east shore of the Lake is part of Onondaga Lake Park and is operated by Onondaga County Parks (Thompson, 2002; Onondaga County Parks, 2012). The marina supports motorized boats and sailboats. Updated with new facilities in 2009, the marina has 45 slips available for rent and a pay-per-launch boat launch (Onondaga County Parks, 2012). The Inner Harbor area of Onondaga Lake on the south shore also accommodates boats: Onondaga County Parks oversees the Inner Harbor marina and leases land to a private yacht club in the Inner Harbor (Lansley, personal interview, 2012).

Boaters can access Onondaga Lake via waterways connecting to the Seneca River, which flows out of the northern end of the Lake. Via water navigation, Onondaga Lake connects to the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River and eventually the Gulf of Mexico.

In reports from 1991, 2007, and 2012, citizens expressed the desire to have educational or dining boat tours of the Lake. More detailed information about boat tours appears in the Tourism, Culture, and Education section of this report.

The desire for large-scale crew regattas and better infrastructure for the viewing of regatta events was regularly expressed in the reports. Crew racing has a long history on Onondaga Lake. Syracuse University has used the Lake for rowing purposes since the 1870s and continues to host annual regattas (Syracuse University, 2011). High school, collegiate, and club level rowing also occurs on the Lake. The Intercollegiate Rowing Association (IRA) Regatta, a national level crew competition, was held on Onondaga Lake from 1952 to 1994 (Syracuse University, 2012). Additionally, the U.S. Rowing Club National Championships were held on Onondaga Lake from 1995 to 2000 (Syracuse Chargers Rowing Club, 2012).

## Current Plans

Plans exist to add a New York State owned and operated boat launch on the west shore of Onondaga Lake. The plans include the creation of a two-bay boat launch: one for large trailered boats and a second for smaller, car-top boats such as kayaks and canoes. The launch will replace a previously existing, unofficial launch located near an exit ramp of Interstate 690 westbound. The site is currently owned by the NYS Department of Transportation but will be given to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation when the launch is constructed. The plans cannot be implemented, however, until Honeywell completes dredging at and near the site; the cleanup project is scheduled for completion in 2016 (Figura, 2012). The plans to add a boat launch on the west shore help respond to the citizen requests for more boating access to the Lake.

The non-profit organization Syracuse Chargers Rowing Club is raising funds to update and expand a boathouse that currently sits on the north end of the Lake on the Seneca River

(Poliquin, 2012). Since the boathouse and proposed expansion is on County Parks land, the County and New York State will be involved in the expansion process (Lansley, personal interview, 2012). The expansion will create more accessibility to rowing on the Lake and provide more infrastructure for crew regattas. The USRowing Club has also encouraged the Syracuse Chargers Rowing Club to host more regattas in the future. Thus, there is the possibility of regional or national level rowing competitions occurring on the Lake.

## Challenges and Considerations

Since the NYS boat launch plan will not be available until the completion of the Honeywell dredging in 2016, boaters continue to have limited shoreline access to the Lake. Moreover, the dredging process has limited or prevented access to the previously existing, although unofficial boat launch. To further increase boating access, marinas could be developed in addition to the proposed plan off Interstate 690. The 1991 Onondaga Development Plan provides an extensive plan for what could happen with the Lake shoreline, and includes a proposed site for a marina, pier, and restaurant in the northwest corner of the Lake. This multi-purpose development site would appeal to boaters, fisherman, and diners, but might conflict with the wishes of citizens preferring limited development along the shoreline.

Cost is the primary challenge facing the expansion of the Syracuse Chargers boathouse. The club has so far acquired about \$150,000 for the boathouse, which remains far below the total goal of approximately \$550,000.

Although citizens hope for a return of the national intercollegiate regattas, that desire faces a significant challenge. According to former Syracuse University Rowing Coach William Sanford, strong winds affect the rowing course and prevent Onondaga Lake from meeting the standards for national level intercollegiate regattas (Sanford, personal communication, June 4, 2012). Because of the standards for the national competition, Mr. Sanford does not believe that the national IRA regatta will return to Onondaga Lake.

## Contacts

1. New York State Department of Transportation
2. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
3. Onondaga County Department of Parks and Recreation
4. Onondaga Yacht Club
5. Syracuse Chargers Rowing Club
6. Marina and boat launch users
7. Onondaga Nation

## Picnic spots

Picnic areas were often mentioned in reports as a feature to accompany other park and natural areas. The idea was most often cited in the 2007 Onondaga Lake Rehabilitation Guidance, but also appeared in other reports.

### Historical Context

Onondaga Lake Park offers many picnic areas on the north side of the Lake, with tables and grills available to the public. Willow Bay, located on the northwest corner of the Lake, is the most popular picnic spot. The area features views of Syracuse, shade from large trees, a small playground, and a shelter.

Including the structure at Willow Bay, Onondaga Lake Park and Long Branch Park (located at the northwest end of the Lake) have seven shelters available for rent. Each shelter offers picnic tables, grills, restrooms, and nearby parking.

### Current Plans

No current plans exist to add picnic spots on the south shore of the Lake, though Onondaga County Parks Commissioner Bill Lansley said picnic tables and benches could be installed along the trail extension through Fairground Bluffs.

### Challenges and Considerations

Lack of available parking presents the main challenge to adding picnic spots. Most of the existing locations have nearby parking, but the state, not Onondaga County Parks, owns the land best-suited for parking on the south shore of the Lake.

### Contacts

1. Onondaga County Parks
2. Honeywell International, Inc.
3. New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets
4. Onondaga Nation

### Models to Emulate

- Other sites within Onondaga Lake Park could serve as examples for picnic site offerings.

## Fishing Access and Competitions

Fishing on Onondaga Lake was another popular and frequent request from citizens. In the instances where fishing occurs from a boat, the demands of fisherman are similar to those of boaters. Shoreline fishing, however, is also a common activity on Onondaga Lake, and it demands different shoreline amenities than fishing from boats. These include fishing piers, treeless fishing areas, and access to those spots.



The recent popularity of fishing on the Lake has also bolstered interest in fishing derbies.

## Historical Context

Sport fishing has seen an increase in popularity as the health of the Lake has improved and the number of fish – in terms of species as well as total population – has risen (OnondagaLakeFishing.com). In reports since 2000, citizens have called for better fishing access. As the health of the Lake continues to improve, demands for better fishing will continue to increase.

Shoreline fishing is permitted on Onondaga Lake Park land. Additionally, a fishing pier sits just south of the marina on the east shore.

Fishing tournaments are becoming more popular on Onondaga Lake. The Salt City Bassmasters held an international fishing tournament in 2007, attracting top anglers from around the world (Onondaga Lake Partnership, 2010). For seven years, Onondaga Lake Partnership has held an annual “Free Fishing Weekend” with two days of catch and release, where no fishing license is required. There are prizes and giveaways for a carp fishing tournament and family fishing derby at Willow Bay.

## Current Plans

There are no known existing plans to increase shoreline fishing accessibility on Onondaga Lake. The Onondaga Lake partnership Free Fishing Weekend is scheduled to occur again on June 23 and 24, 2012.

## Challenges and Considerations

The main concern about increasing fishing accessibility is that fish from the Lake remain contaminated with pollutants and are not safe for human consumption. As fishing becomes more accessible and more people begin fishing, it becomes increasingly important to spread information about the dangers of consuming the fish. Current guidelines recommend that people eat no more than one fish (smaller than 15 inches) per month from the Lake. If access to fishing improves for residents of Syracuse, there could be a language barrier, particularly among the immigrant and refugee populations, that prevents regulatory agencies from successfully conveying consumption guidelines to the public. Agencies must therefore anticipate which non-English languages are spoken within Syracuse and post signs in multiple languages about the dangers of fish consumption. The Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc. recently received a \$5,000 grant to determine how to best educate the area’s immigrant population about consuming fish from Onondaga Lake.

## Contacts

1. Onondaga County Parks Department
2. Onondaga County Health Department
3. Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection
4. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

5. OnondagaLakeFishing.com
6. Onondaga Lake Partnership
7. FishingCNY.com
8. Salt City Bassmasters
9. Onondaga County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs
10. Trout Unlimited
11. Onondaga Nation

## Marathons and Triathlons

Marathons and triathlons are two types of events that citizens occasionally proposed for Onondaga Lake and its shoreline.

### Historical Context

The East Shore Recreation Trail on Onondaga Lake Park has been used in other races, including the Six-Legged 5K and the Empire State Marathon (Poliquin, Fleet Feet, 2012; [empirestatemarathon.com](http://empirestatemarathon.com)).

### Challenges and Considerations

Marathons and triathlons have the potential to increase tourist revenue in the County, since many of these events draw participants from outside the area. Significant limitations, however, prevent the athletic events from easily becoming reality. The current Lake trail only covers approximately 5 miles, a distance far shorter than the 26.2 miles needed for a marathon. While a trail circling the entire Lake would increase the feasibility of a shoreline marathon, the Loop the Lake concept faces its own set of challenges (detailed in the Trails section of the report).

Triathlons can only occur on the Lake if a swimming area is developed (more information about beaches appears in the Swimming and Beaches section).

## Tourism, Culture, and Education

The two most popular ideas related to tourism, culture, and education were an Educational Center on the shores of the Lake and a desire for more informational and educational signage in the area. Suggestions for both ideas date back to the 1970s and persist into present day.

To a lesser, but not insignificant extent, the public has asked for boat tours and cruises, as well as cultural events and displays along the shoreline including concerts, an art park, and an amphitheater.

The concepts mentioned above would promote tourism around Onondaga Lake, an idea occasionally identified by citizens. Government agencies have also supported tourism. Ideas from citizens and governments include development projects near the Lake, such as restaurants, hotels, and amusement parks. As detailed in the Recreation section of this paper, fishing tournaments and boat races are suggested events that could attract tourists to the area. An increase in tourism would require additional infrastructure, namely hotels, to support visitors. Hotels and other development ideas are covered in more depth in the Development section of this document.

Information about these tourism, culture, and education topics is discussed below, including the historical context, current plans, challenges and considerations, contacts, and potential models.

### Culture and Education Center

One of the more popular ideas for the Lakeshore is the creation of an educational center to highlight the culture and environment in the region. The idea dates back to the 1970s, and has been mentioned in nine reports. Specific ideas vary, and include everything from an aquarium, to a scientific research center, to an Onondaga Nation educational center. Generally speaking, however, the public has expressed a desire for a center that acknowledges the ecological and cultural history of Onondaga Lake and the surrounding region.

#### Historical Context

Onondaga Lake Park already hosts three facilities highlighting various facets of the region's history.

Sainte Marie among the Iroquois (<http://onondagacountyparks.com/sainte-marie-among-the-iroquois/>) offers insight into one portion of the Lake's history. Located east of Onondaga Lake Park on Onondaga Lake Parkway, the museum reopened in 2004 and recreates the French mission on the Lake shores from 1656 to 1658. The museum contains information about the 17th

century culture of the Haudenosaunee people and the French Jesuit missionaries in the area. Costumed interpreters at the museum offer insight about daily life in the 1650s, with demonstrations in carpentry, blacksmithing, and cooking.

Griffin Visitor Center, located at the entrance of Onondaga Lake Park in Liverpool, provides additional information about the Lake area. As noted at the Visitor Center website (<http://onondagacountyparks.com/griffin-visitor-center/>), “the evolution of recreation and local history is ... detailed at the Visitor Center and interpretive displays along the park trails.”

The Salt Museum (<http://onondagacountyparks.com/salt-museum/>), also located near the entrance of Onondaga Lake Park, provides additional history about the area. The museum relates the history of the salt industry, which drove much of the development of Syracuse. The museum features exhibits and contains kettles, barrels, and other equipment used to extract salt from salt water.

## Current Plans

While discussions about a cultural and educational center have occurred, no formal plans exist to construct such a facility. An ESF student wrote a thesis detailing a comprehensive plan for one visitor center option.

## Challenges and Considerations

If a new educational center were to be built on the shoreline, the first challenge would be determining a thematic focus and scope for the center, as well as possible locations. Suggestions have included a floating center or a land-based center, an aquarium or a museum highlighting the Lake and surrounding ecosystem, an Onondaga Nation cultural and educational center (either as its own structure or combined with a larger center), and a facility with research functions. Determining the purpose of the center would help dictate who would be responsible for its construction and operations.

Suggested locations for a cultural and educational center have included the south pier freight house, the Fairgrounds parking lot, Honeywell property, an expansion of the Salt Museum, and the Inner Harbor.

Sources of funding are also a major concern, both for construction and for ongoing maintenance and staffing once the center opens. Once a more detailed plan is developed, whichever entity has oversight of the center should investigate funding sources such as grants, private investment, and admissions fees.

## Contacts

1. Onondaga Nation
2. Onondaga County Parks
3. New York State Department of Environment and Conservation
4. Honeywell International, Inc.

## Potential Models

- **Norrie Point Environmental Center** (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4915.html>) – The Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve is headquartered at Norrie Point Environmental Center in Staatsburgh, NY. The center features “conference and classroom space, interpretive exhibits, a research lab, and a weather station” (NYS DEC, “Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve”).
- **Finger Lakes Museum** (<http://fingerLakesmuseum.org/>) – The Finger Lakes Museum is a project scheduled to open over the next three years. A Discovery Campus, in Branchport, NY, will open in 2013, while the exhibit-based museum facility and aquarium will open at Keuka State Park in 2014-2015. The nonprofit organization aims to create “the premier natural and cultural resource dedicated to the enjoyment, education and stewardship of the Finger Lakes region – and to fresh water conservation” (The Finger Lakes Museum, “About Us”).
- **The Wild Center** (<http://www.wildcenter.org/>) – The nonprofit natural history museum is located in Tupper Lake, NY, and uses science-based exhibits and programs “designed to open new ways to look into the latest discoveries made by natural scientists” (The Wild Center, “About Us”). The museum features walking trails, naturalist guides, movies, and live animal exhibits.
- **ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center / Leahy Center for Lake Champlain** (<http://www.echovermont.org/>) – The Leahy Center in Burlington, VT features the ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center as well as “a consortium of organizations working for public and academic engagement in science, environmental education, research, and cultural history” (Echo, “Our Mission”). The Aquarium and Science Center features interactive exhibits and science education programs, and includes fish, amphibians and reptiles.

## Cruise and Boat Tour

Suggestions for boat tours or cruises were mentioned a number of times since 2007, primarily in the “Onondaga Lake Rehabilitation Guidance: The 2020 Vision Project” and “*Onondaga Lake Watershed Community Forum, Final Report.*”

## Historical Context

Mid-Lakes Navigation Company, which is based out of Skaneateles, NY, offers two types of boat tours on Onondaga Lake. A 50-minute sightseeing cruise provides views of the Syracuse skyline. The second option includes a tour of Onondaga Lake as part of a seven-hour cruise that also travels on the Erie Canal to Oneida Lake.

## Current Plans

No plans currently exist to expand boat tours beyond what Mid-Lakes Navigation already offers. The Onondaga Lake Partnership (OLP) occasionally uses boats to give tours of the Lake, but OLP does not formally provide tours or cruises (Harrington, personal interview, 2012).

## Challenges and Considerations

The water of Onondaga Lake is State property, and a new cruise boat venture could be a private enterprise or a collaboration between private and government entities (Lansley, personal interview, 2012). Onondaga County Parks Commissioner Bill Lansley said his department would be happy to cooperate if approached with a strong proposal for a tour or cruise boat. Any new venture would need to determine the scope and purpose of a tour boat, and decide if it is worth competing with tours from Mid-Lakes Navigation.

Regarding the scope and purpose of a cruise, some have suggested that a boat serve in partnership with a cultural and educational center, while others have suggested the cruise boat as a standalone offering. Uses for the boat include historic tours and cruises for functions such as corporate dinners, high school dances, and other events.

## Contacts

1. Onondaga County Parks
2. Friends of Historic Onondaga Lake
3. Onondaga Lake Partnership
4. Mid-Lakes Navigation Company
5. Onondaga Nation
6. New York State Department of Transportation
7. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

## Potential Models

The Finger Lakes region features several tour boat operations that could serve as models for a similar offering on Onondaga Lake, including the two following operations:

- **Skaneateles Lake and the Erie Canal** ([www.midLakesnav.com](http://www.midLakesnav.com)) – The Mid-Lakes Navigation Company provides daily cruises on Lake Skaneateles and the Erie Canal, and also gives tours on Onondaga Lake. The offerings range from 50-minute sightseeing tours to dinner cruises, with opportunities to learn about the history of the area and see wildlife.
- **Cayuga Lake Cruises** ([www.cayugaLakecruises.com](http://www.cayugaLakecruises.com)) – Cayuga Lake Cruises operates out of Ithaca, and features dinner, luncheon, brunch, cocktail, and happy hours cruises. The cruises last from one-and-a-half hours to three hours.

## Informational Signage

Since the 1970s, citizens, government entities and engineering firms have all called for informational signage along the Lakeshore.

## Historical Context

Many signs already exist, particularly along the northwest portions of the Onondaga Lake Park trail system. Certain ideas mentioned in past reports have been implemented: kiosks and signs

have been updated throughout the years, and existing signage displays information about the history of the region (Lansley, personal interview, 2012).

### Current Plans

The trail extension on the south side of the Lake will include signs about educational aspects of the trail and the area (Lansley, personal interview, 2012). Furthermore, the Atlantic States Legal Foundation recently received a \$5,000 grant from the Onondaga Lake Partnership to conduct research among the area's immigrant populations. The Atlantic States Legal Foundation will determine the best way to inform that segment of the community about eating fish from the Lake (Onondaga Lake Partnership, "Onondaga Lake Partnership Further Invests ...").

### Challenges and Considerations

With growing immigrant and refugee populations, some of which use the Lake for subsistence fishing, it becomes important to use signs to educate non-English speakers about health concerns about the Lake. As noted above, the Atlantic States Legal Foundation is embarking on such a project.

Additional challenges are more straightforward, and include determining where to install signs, which information to include on the signs, and how to update existing signage.

### Contacts

1. Onondaga County Parks
2. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
3. Onondaga Lake Partnership
4. Atlantic Legal Foundations
5. Onondaga Nation

### Potential Models

- Onondaga Lake Park already has many historical and informative signs in place; new signs could easily share a similar design.

## Transportation

Transportation-related ideas from the reports can be categorized into three general groups: those that deal with connectivity to the Lake, those that advocate for changes to the existing infrastructure, and those that are primarily concerned with non-motorized transportation. In all cases, the public has emphasized the need for safe access to and around the Lake. Viewed as a whole, the ideas indicate the public's desire to better connect with Lake Onondaga in a safe and enduring way.

The most popular set of ideas related to transportation call for increased connectivity. Broad suggestions simply indicate a desire to increase access to and from downtown Syracuse, while more specific proposals identify methods to draw people to the Lake and the shoreline. Specific ideas include adding parking nodes, establishing the lighthouse at Seneca River as the terminus to the Onondaga Parkway, and connecting the City of Syracuse to the Lake via Harbor Brook.

The public has also expressed strong interest in connecting the Lake to national waterways via the Seneca River.

While most ideas tied to connecting the public to the Lake show a desire for increased access, a handful of comments called for diminished access to the Lake and shoreline. Suggestions to decrease access include removing roads adjacent to the Lake and closing Route 370 / Onondaga Parkway to vehicles.

Concerns about safety were also apparent in many of the reports, with recommendations to redesign existing infrastructure on Route 370 / Onondaga Parkway. The overall consensus that emerged was to reduce the volume and speed of traffic on the Parkway. Specific ideas included lowering the speed limit, adding a turning lane, encouraging commuters to use other routes to bypass the Parkway, and adding safety signage.

While many of the comments pertaining to transportation dealt with motorized vehicles, another broad set of ideas focuses on improving the trails and roads for non-motorized transportation. Citizens expressed a desire to link existing paths to a county-wide network of bike trails and to downtown Syracuse by way of the Onondaga Creekwalk. Another popular sentiment over the years was to see the completion of the Loop the Lake trail, which could be used by cyclists, inline skaters, runners, and walkers. A larger network of trails benefits not just recreationalists, but also commuters.

Information about these transportation topics is discussed below, including the historical context, current plans, challenges and considerations, contacts, and potential models.



## The Creekwalk and the Loop the Lake Trail

Connecting the Creekwalk to the existing pedestrian pathways around the Lake is a prevalent and important desire for County residents. For decades, cyclists, rollerbladers, and others have advocated for connecting downtown Syracuse to the Lake as an alternative commuter route and for recreational uses. Forging that connection is seen as vital for promoting recreational opportunities on the shoreline and for providing access to Syracuse residents.

To create a non-motorized transportation link between downtown Syracuse and the other Lakeside communities of Solway, Geddes, Liverpool, and Salina, the Creekwalk must connect to the Lake's existing pathways, located along the northern half of the Lake. Ideally, Onondaga County will finish building the Loop the Lake trail, thereby providing non-motorized access to all parts of the Lake and surrounding municipalities. Planning for the Loop the Lake Trail is an ongoing process for the County.

### Historical Context

The City of Syracuse's Creekwalk Plan is consistent with public desires to improve access to the shoreline of Onondaga Lake. Thematically, planning and construction of the first phase of the Creekwalk provides public access to the Lake via a pathway intended for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles. To best meet the goal of increased access from the City of Syracuse, however, the construction of the Creekwalk needs to continue.

After years of preparation and planning, Phase I of the Creekwalk was completed in 2011. Construction of the initial stage took 22 months and cost the City of Syracuse more than \$11 million dollars. One stated goal of the project was to provide an efficient transportation alternative to automobiles within the City center (Creekwalk, City of Syracuse).

Onondaga County Parks has installed and maintained several trails designated for non-motorized vehicles along the Shoreline. The East Shore Recreation Trail and The Shoreline Walking Trail run adjacent to each other for 2 miles from the Salt Museum to the Willow Bay Picnic Area. The Recreation Trail is reserved for in-line skaters and cyclists during the peak season of April to October. The West Shore Trail links with the Recreation Trail and continues down the Western Shore before ending at the overpass of Interstate 690.

### Current Plans

While Phase I of the Creekwalk Plan has been completed, Phases II and III lack the funding to even enter the design stages. A feasibility study was completed in 2008 on Phase II, which will connect Armory Square to South Kirk Park. Phase III, an idea still in its infancy, would extend to the southern border of the City at Dorwin Avenue.

The Onondaga County Department of Transportation is spearheading the construction of the 2-mile extension of the West Shore Trail at Fairground Bluffs. This project will extend the trail further south along the west shore of the Lake before ending at the peninsula owned by New

York State. The construction phase of this project is scheduled to be completed in November 2013. (Lansley, personal interview, 2012)

Upon completion of the 2-mile extension, Onondaga County Parks will sponsor a request for proposals for designs to complete the circuit around the Lake. Any feasible plan will involve cooperation with Honeywell, as the recreation path would traverse the remediation site. Community outreach is anticipated to be led by F.O.C.U.S., in conjunction with the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County.

## Challenges and Considerations

To satisfy public desires to reconnect with Onondaga Lake by improving access, both the pathway circling the Lake and Phases II and III of the Creekwalk should be completed. While the Creekwalk does connect the City of Syracuse with the Lake, pedestrians, cyclists and others arrive at a dead end where the Creekwalk hits its northern terminus at the Lake. To truly improve access to the Lake in a way that will significantly benefit a greater number of citizens, the Loop the Lake trail must provide a route along the entire shoreline. Furthermore, completing the Creekwalk's Phase II and III extensions will provide access to residents living in the south of the City, including many of the less prosperous neighborhoods in Syracuse.

Completion of Phase I of the Creekwalk was a long and difficult undertaking. The City spent more than \$11 million dollars on 15 subcontractor agreements over the course of 22 months to complete the construction. The planning of the project spanned decades and several mayoral administrations. State funding that made Phase I possible is no longer available, as priorities for multimodal transportation have shifted. While City officials may seek out funding from other sources, setting aside money from the City's general funds to build new projects is not feasible at this time, as maintaining the existing infrastructure takes precedence. (Maxwell, personal interview, 2012)

The Loop the Lake trail is outside of the City's jurisdiction, and therefore must be funded and constructed by Onondaga County. Syracuse City Hall recognizes the public benefit that would result from a completion of the route gives to City residents, and would encourage County efforts to finish the project.

## Contacts

1. Syracuse Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
2. Onondaga County Parks
3. Onondaga County Department of Transportation
4. Onondaga Nation

## Potential Models

- **Central Iowa Running Club** - The Central Iowa Running Club has been hosting annual footraces around Blue Heron Lake since 1990. As a non-profit organization, the Club is able to raise money, which it can reinvest in the community by donating to track clubs

and granting scholarships. The size of Onondaga Lake makes community footraces around the Lake a viable fund-raising opportunity.

- **Palm Beach County, Florida** – The County’s Loop the Lake for Literacy event raises money for children and adults to gain reading and literacy skills.

## Improving Parkway Safety

A recurring theme found in reports from the F.O.C.U.S. archives is the concern about safe travel on The Onondaga Parkway. Public concern has flared around this topic following recurring accidents, the most recent of which occurred on September 11, 2010 when a two-level Megabus crashed into the railroad bridge causing four people to lose their lives.

### Historical Context

Following the Megabus accident in 2010, the NYS Department of Transportation (DoT) has made many improvements and large investments to make the parkway safer. Visibility of the bridge itself was improved by cutting back tree branches and adding a large reflective safety strip on the overhang. Signage notifying drivers of the danger of the low bridge was augmented with the addition of variable message signs, pavement warnings reading “low bridge”, and signs on 81 approaching the bus and train station clarifying that it is a center specifically meant for busses and trains. The NYS DoT created a seasonal speed reduction from 55 mph to 30 mph from November to April. They also banned through trips from Interstate 81 to Liverpool for commercial vehicles.

The most substantial investment made by the DoT to improve safety, however, was made as precautionary measures to alert drivers when they find themselves in dangerous situations. In addition to installing rumble strips that prevent drivers from inciting crossover accidents, the Transportation Department installed an over-height detection system for vehicles over 10-feet, 9-inches. The system deploys lasers three quarters of a mile away on each side of the bridge and relies on a pavement loop backup, which detects vehicles ensuring that rain, snow, and vandals cannot set off the warning system. When a vehicle taller than 10-feet, 9-inches activates the system, the variable signs flash “Stop Now!”

### Current Plans

Many citizens expressed the desire to divert traffic away from Onondaga Parkway to make it more like a scenic route for motorists to enjoy the Lake. Others went further in opining that the Parkway should be set apart for pedestrians and bicycles. Although the Department has a long-term plan to install a median, the DoT is focusing more on monitoring the effects their efforts will have on the safety of the route and less on making changes to the existing structure and uses of the Parkway.

## Challenges and Considerations

The Parkway itself is the property of New York State; the railroad and the bridge are property of CSX; all of the surrounding land is owned by Onondaga County. To connect the Lake Trail with the Creekwalk, these stakeholders must cooperate in the planning stage of the project.

## Contacts

1. NYS DoT
2. Onondaga County Parks
3. CSX

## Development

The ideas concerning the development of the shoreline for residential and commercial use represent a wide spectrum of ideas, ranging from no development to an ultra-developed area. Included in these concepts are concerns for the environment, such as appeals for the restoration of a cleaner, more natural shoreline. Regardless of the preferences for more or less development, the public has expressed a desire to retain the shoreline as public land.

Those who support limited development are mostly concerned about maintaining public access to the Lake and shoreline. Certain comments expressed apprehension that private homes will be built on the land surrounding the Lake, thus limiting the citizens' ability to access public land. Though some comments adamantly opposed any shoreline development, others show a belief that sensible, carefully planned structures could benefit the lakeshore area. The great majority of the opinions found in this category emerged from the community outreach project, Onondaga Lake Rehabilitation Guidance: The 2020 Vision Project, and highlight the value that so many County residents place on the Lake.

Though the specific ideas for a more developed lakeshore varied, comments persistently stressed the importance of having a comprehensive development plan that incorporates input from Onondaga County residents. A holistic development plan could balance the community's preferences for residential and commercial development with transportation and environmental improvements. Many of the comments regarding development also indicated a concern for the natural environment, and the calls for limited development specifically identified a concern for native wetlands.

## Residential and Commercial Development

There were overwhelming calls for more development in the reports analyzed, especially more recent reports; the caveat is that there is a wide range of variation in the ideas mentioned. These calls for increased development were prominent from the 1990s through present. One common suggestion was for commercial development, with a decrease in industrial businesses and an increase in retail and entertainment businesses. Another recurring theme was interest in better landscaping and pedestrian access from downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. Utilization of existing infrastructure was mentioned by a few individuals as well. Maintaining public access to the Lake was consistently mentioned as important, and was prominent throughout most ideas regarding development.

The other prevailing idea concerning development was that it be limited or prevented. Again, public access to the Lake was one of the primary interests supporting this. Protection of the natural environment was the prevalent interest supporting control of development along the Lake.

## Historical Context

In the early 20th century, Onondaga Lake was a tourist destination with hotels and even an amusement park along the shoreline. As time went on, industrial development expanded and the Lake was used for waste disposal; this led to decreased water quality and shoreline degradation.

## Current Plans

Cleanup efforts are currently underway, and water quality has already improved dramatically. The only new development planned near the Lake is the expansion of the Carousel Mall, known as the DestiNY project. The only existing land use management plan regarding development is the Syracuse 2040 Draft Land Use Plan.

## Challenges and Considerations

Land availability for development is very limited, as most of the Lakeshore is owned by the Onondaga County Department of Parks and Recreation. There is the potential for development beyond this area. Another challenge is minimizing the environmental impacts associated with development, since mitigation from the last developmental boom has just begun. The other major challenge to development is that there was a wide range of ideas on what kind and how much development should occur, ranging from no development to fully developing the shoreline. Moreover, some individuals wanted to see commercial development, while others expressed interest in seeing residential development, and still others wanted both types of development.

## Contacts

1. CNY Regional Planning and Development Board
2. American Institute of Architects
3. Syracuse Center of Excellence
4. Onondaga Nation

## Possible Models

- Paradise Lake, Michigan is an example of a Lake that has found a balance of development, with cabins and resorts, shops, and restaurants along the shore; trails and natural areas; fishing and boating; and strong community involvement (<http://www.paradiseLakeassociation-mi.org/8.html>).

## Environment

The natural environment came up as a major concern throughout the reports, and with comments generally concerning cleanup and pollution, conservation, restoration, and the development of long-term management plans. Calls for the cleanup of Onondaga Lake as well as its shoreline were common; cleanup is currently being addressed through ongoing remediation projects, as well as the reduction of point and nonpoint pollution sources. After a long history of pollution on the Lake, many comments in the reports involved conserving and restoring natural areas, with many people specifically wanting restoration of native plants, wildlife and their habitats. Also popular was the broad idea of having green spaces or open areas around the shoreline. Finally, there were many suggestions that a Lakeshore land use management plan be developed, followed, and consistently updated.

### Cleanup and Pollution Mitigation

Likely influenced by Onondaga Lake's long history of pollution and environmental degradation, many people have expressed concerns for the protection and restoration of the Lake's natural environment. The environmental idea that appears most often since the 1990s involves a desire to see the Lake and shoreline cleaned up. Specific suggestions on what should be done include the following: removing the wastebeds and cleaning up trash; forming working groups to identify and evaluate potential restoration options, and integrating restoration with site remediation efforts; ensuring public participation in all parts of the process; removing or marking underwater debris; long-term maintenance and monitoring of restoration projects; and eliminating or mitigating the unpleasant odor at the Lake. A couple of individuals wanted to see the mudboils eliminated.

Many comments also called for a prevention or reduction of point and nonpoint source pollution. Ideas included making improvements at the Metropolitan Syracuse Wastewater Treatment Plant (Metro) to reduce phosphorus and ammonia outputs and upgrading wastewater infrastructure to prevent combined sewerage overflows (CSOs) during storm events. A few comments suggested developing and implementing a nonpoint source management strategy to reduce inputs from rural and urban sources throughout the Lake's watershed. One idea involved stabilization of sediment sources throughout the watershed.

### Historical Context

Onondaga Lake, along with its tributaries and upland hazardous waste sites that contribute to contamination, were placed on the National Priorities List (NPL) in the mid-1990s. As a result of this listing, remedial investigations occurred throughout most of the 1990s and into the early 2000s. Feasibility studies followed the investigations. An underground barrier has been

constructed to prevent the primary source of contaminated groundwater from reaching the Lake.

Metro has updated its facilities to reduce phosphorus and ammonia loading, and pollution levels are on track to meet final goals. New facilities and infrastructure improvements have been made to reduce CSOs, while other steps have been taken to remove larger pieces of debris from the Lake surface.

## Current Plans

Dredging and capping near the Honeywell site began this spring; dredged material will be piped to a containment area and water generated by the dredging and sediment handling processes will be treated to meet NYS Department of Environmental Conservation discharge limits (Exec Sum 2004). The most highly contaminated sediments will be treated or disposed of at an off-site facility.

## Challenges and Considerations

Potential challenges of remediation include preventing accidental spills and contamination of other areas during the dredging process, predicting the environmental response to remediation and restoration efforts, and monitoring and maintenance upon completion of the initial cleanup effort.

## Contacts

1. Onondaga Lake Partnership
2. Atlantic States Legal Foundation
3. United States Environmental Protection Agency
4. Honeywell International, Inc.
5. Onondaga County Parks
6. Onondaga Nation
7. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

## Green Space and Conservation of Natural Areas

The idea of conserving and restoring natural areas frequently appeared in reports since the 1990s. A number of comments, particularly from the past five years, broadly mentioned a desire for “greenspace” or open space. More specific ideas also came up, including a suggestion to designate Murphy’s Island for the Onondaga Nation. A few individuals proposed establishing “forever wild” areas and often identified the west shore as an ideal location for natural space. Some citizens expressed interest in removing non-native plants and trees and restoring native species. The restoration of the wetlands also mentioned a few times.

## Historical Context

The northwest shore is the least developed part of the Onondaga Lake shoreline. The trails on the eastern shore are well maintained, but run adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Onondaga



County Parks oversees the trails and surrounding land, which contains a playground, a skate park, picnic areas, and a marina.

Greenspace is a term that is widely used, but its meaning can greatly vary. Along the Onondaga Lake shoreline, greenspace could include anything from the urban parks along the Inner Harbor to Onondaga Lake Park to the undeveloped, forested West shore trail area.

## Current Plans

Conservation of natural areas will depend on the outcome of dredging, capping, and restoration efforts. When these efforts are completed, an effective land use management plan will be critical to conserving these newly restored habitats, as well as for the protection of existing areas.

## Challenges and Considerations

The opportunity to restore more natural areas exists on the west side of the Lake, following the completion of the dredging and remediation efforts. Habitat restoration projects are included in plans for the dredging project. Desires to allow residential and commercial development could present challenges to conservation and restoration projects.

## Contacts

1. Onondaga Lake Partnership
2. Onondaga Lake Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Trustee Council
3. Onondaga Nation
4. Honeywell International, Inc.

## Wildlife Habitat Restoration

Many ideas involving the restoration of wildlife, fish, and bird habitat have appeared in reports since the 1990s. Comments expressed a particularly strong desire to restore native species, including whitefish, Atlantic salmon, horned dace, brook trout, sturgeon, and eels, with one specific comment to install walleye fingerling rearing ponds on the shoreline. Several comments appeared about the importance of controlling invasive species. Other ideas brought up the possibility of seasonal closures to parts of the Lake to support bird nesting, waterfowl hunting, or fish spawning. Several other comments expressed a desire to have wildlife viewing areas.

## Historical Context

The Natural Resources Damage Assessment and Restoration complements hazardous waste site cleanups, and a Damage Assessment Plan was produced by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in 1996. The Trustee Council published an addendum in 2011 that further outlined the approach for conducting scientific studies, evaluating data and information, and planning and scaling restoration projects to address past, present, and future injuries to natural resources (Onondaga Lake Natural Resource Damage Assessment Plan Addendum Draft, November 2011).

## Current Plans

Habitat restoration for wildlife, fish, and bird habitat is being planned in conjunction with the dredging and capping project. The top layer of the cap will have a habitat layer optimized for fish and aquatic vegetation typically found in the Lake. Along the shore, wetlands, marshes, and native trees and plants will be restored.

## Challenges and Considerations

One of the major challenges of the remediation effort is to minimize disturbances to existing biological communities.

## Contacts

1. The Trustee Council (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Region 7, Onondaga Nation)
2. Honeywell International, Inc.

## Land Use Management and the Lakeshore Plan

The idea of developing a land use or management plan dates back as far back as the 1970s. One idea suggested that the plan encompass development, Lake access, transportation, and recreation improvement and maintenance. A different idea suggested working with surrounding communities to develop a holistic access plan. Another suggestion called for a watershed management group to evaluate draft plans compiled by project teams. A couple of citizens called for enhanced views both from the shore to the Lake and from the Lake to the shore, with specific concerns about the visual appeal of the east shore and its riprap and metro commuter lines. Other management ideas included grassland in the proposed restoration area on the wastebeds and the conservation of riparian buffers.

## Historical Context

The Onondaga Lake Management Conference released the Onondaga Lake Management Plan in December 1993. The plan outlines the major environmental problems facing the Lake and makes restoration recommendations. Former Congressman Dan Maffei in 2010 introduced a bill, the Onondaga Lake Restoration Act, for the restoration, conservation, and management of the Lake; the bill died and was referred to Committee (H.R. 6360).

## Current Plans

The Syracuse 2040 Draft Land Use Plan serves as a guide for future development. In April 2010, the Onondaga Lake Watershed Progress Assessment and Action Strategies report was published, and included the Onondaga Lake Partnership's strategic plan for meeting Lake management objectives. The detailed remediation plans are set in the Draft Onondaga Lake Capping, Dredging, and Habitat Final Design (dated August 2011).

## Challenges and Considerations

The apparent challenges with establishing a management or land use plan stem from complicated interagency collaborations, balancing all community interests, and following through with plans. Financial challenges also exist for following through with all the improvements and maintenance required by the management plan.

## Contacts

1. Onondaga Lake Partners
2. City of Syracuse
3. Town of Camillus
4. Town of Geddes
5. Town of Liverpool
6. Town of Salina
7. Town of Solvay
8. Onondaga County
9. Onondaga Nation

## Possible Models

- **Watershed management** - According to the Local Government Commission, watershed management “is a proactive approach that coordinates land use and water management decisions to protect water resources and help communities define and prioritize local needs in relation to regional issues and goals” (<http://water.lgc.org/>). The Local Government Commission gives suggestions for the planning process and project oversight, regional assessment of best management practices and policy recommendations, and the watershed plan.

## Community Outreach and Engagement

Many citizens, particularly in the 2012 reports *Onondaga Lake Watershed Community Forum, Final Report* and *Preliminary Existing Onondaga Lake Project List (draft)*, called for improved public outreach and engagement. Residents want to have meetings for updates on cleanup projects, including the ongoing dredging process, and have asked for more information about the status of fishing, swimming, and other recreational activities at the Lake. Ideas to improve outreach and engagement include a website that could serve as a clearinghouse for all Lake information, improved communications with various community groups such as PTAs and churches, and a newsletter.

### Historical Context

Whether through surveys or community meetings, residents have had vast input on how to use the Lake; the majority of reports dating back to 1928 feature some sort citizen input. The most recent report, *Onondaga Lake Watershed Community Forum, Final Report* was released in February 2012 and based on a community forum held in November 2011. The latest step in the public outreach and engagement process includes this report, which consolidates the many ideas that have been presented over the decades.

### Current plans

The next step in public outreach and community engagement involves the distribution and collection of a survey (Appendix IV) meant to gauge citizen preferences for ways to engage with the Lake. The results of the survey can be used to help authorities decide which projects to pursue in the near and long term.

Onondaga Lake Partnership, a collaboration between NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, U.S. EPA, the Army Corps of Engineers, NYS Attorney General's Office, Onondaga County, and the City of Syracuse, has a strong community outreach program, with newsletters, a website (<http://onLakepartners.org>), brochures and more. The organization also provides grants for Lake-related projects, some of which have been tied to community outreach. Grants announced in April 2012, for instance, include \$5,000 for the Atlantic States Legal Foundation to research the Syracuse immigrant communities to determine which groups and languages would be best served by messages about consuming fish from the Lake (Onondaga Lake Partnership, "Onondaga Lake Partnership Further Invests ..."). The project will also determine how to best convey the message to the immigrant community. Two other grants, one for Syracuse University/Project Engage and one for SU/Science Horizons, provide funding aimed at connecting middle school students with the Lake and educating them about Lake history and pollution (Onondaga Lake Partnership, "Onondaga Lake Partnership Further Invests ...").

In addition to the Onondaga Lake Partnership website, various outlets offer information about the Lake, including the Onondaga County Parks website (<http://onondagacountyparks.com/>) and The Post-Standard ([www.syracuse.com](http://www.syracuse.com)).

Onondaga Lake Park takes advantage of its popularity – it draws more than 1 million people each year – to solicit input via comment cards from visitors (Lansley, personal interview, 2012). The park also sends out press releases about events and festivals at the Lake (Lansley, personal interview, 2012).

Jeanne Shenandoah of Onondaga Nation said communications to the Nation have been “pretty good,” but the Nation would appreciate more timely notification of upcoming decision items, particularly for technical projects (Shenandoah, personal interview, 2012). Shenandoah noted that face-to-face meetings between members of Onondaga Nation and other stakeholders have typically been the most successful means of communication.

## Challenges and Considerations

The hardest part of maintaining and improving public outreach likely comes down to determining a sole entity to lead communication efforts. One central clearinghouse for Lake-related information could present itself as the primary source of information for the public (perhaps through a dedicated website), and also work to coordinate communications from the many stakeholders involved in Lake recreation, cleanup, water quality, and other related issues. Strategies may include newsletters, email listservs, and press releases to local media outlets. Of course, such an effort would require money and manpower.

Other challenges for public outreach and engagement involve connecting with populations that have not traditionally had much input in Lake activities, such as the immigrant and refugee populations and low-income populations that may not have easy access to the Lake. As noted above, the Atlantic States Legal Foundation has received funding to reach out to the immigrant populations. Bringing students to the Lake through field trips, an idea which also has grant funding from the Onondaga Lake Partnership, could connect schoolchildren from underserved populations with the Lake.

## Contacts

1. Onondaga Nation
2. Onondaga Lake Partnership
3. Onondaga County Parks
4. City of Syracuse
5. Liverpool
6. Geddes
7. Solvay
8. F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse
9. Atlantic States Legal Foundation

## Possible Models

- **Teacher education programs** ([www.Lakecleanup.com/news/news2011/enews085.cfm](http://www.Lakecleanup.com/news/news2011/enews085.cfm))  
- In August 2011, 14 middle school science teachers from throughout Onondaga County “completed a five-day ... exploration of the Onondaga Creek watershed” (Syracuse Area Remediation Process, “Fourteen Top Middle School Science Teachers ...”). The teachers learned how to teach outdoors and encourage students to preserve the natural world.
- **Onondaga Creek Conceptual Revitalization Plan**  
([www.esf.edu/onondagacreek/default.htm](http://www.esf.edu/onondagacreek/default.htm)) - The Revitalization Plan featured a working group, solicitation of community goals, a public education program, and informative reports.
- **Many Plans, One Community** ([www.1-community.org](http://www.1-community.org)) - The website serves as a clearinghouse for planning-related information in Albemarle County, VA, and provides “updates to Charlottesville and Albemarle County’s comprehensive plans, the Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO’s Long Range Transportation Plan, and the creation of a Livability Implementation Plan for (the) area” (Many Plans, “Welcome”). As described on its homepage, the “site is intended to provide access to information about each plan and to provide a forum for public input throughout the planning process” (Many Plans, “Welcome”).

## CONCLUSION

One overarching theme united the thousands of suggestions that appeared in more than 50 reports published since 1928: the public wants to use Onondaga Lake and enjoy its offerings.

For much of the past century, the residents of Onondaga County have put forth numerous ideas about how to best recreate on the Lake and use its shoreline. In a strong show of support for the public's desires, Onondaga County, Honeywell, and the Lakeside municipalities have adopted and implemented many of those ideas. Water quality of the Lake has improved dramatically due to cleanup efforts. Trails have been constructed around half of the Lake, with plans in place to extend the trail network and eventually complete the highly-desired Loop the Lake Trail. Fish populations have increased dramatically, and the Lake now boasts high quality sport fishing.

Despite all the positive changes occurring at Onondaga Lake, the public remains invested in continued improvements. Many people hope to one day swim in the Lake from the shoreline; with water quality often meeting standards for swimming, a beach area makes sense in the near future. People also want to see better, safer access to the Lake from downtown Syracuse and the Lakeside communities. The public also cares deeply about development along the Lakeshore, though authorities will need to work with citizens to develop a land use management plan that balances habitat preservation with commercial and retail development.

Perhaps most importantly, the public wants to be made aware of everything happening at the Lake, from the recreational offerings to environmental restoration projects to development plans. As the County moves forward with future plans for the Lake, it and other stakeholders should strive to keep the public informed about the various projects.

Onondaga Lake is a treasured community resource and, particularly as the environmental quality of the Lake improves, its value to the community will only grow.

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**Appendix C: Shape the Future of CNY Survey — Citizen options for the future of the Onondaga Lake shoreline**

**SHAPE THE FUTURE OF CNY: F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse, Inc**

Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Citizen options for the future of the Onondaga Lake shoreline**

This survey is designed to identify citizen preferences for the future of the Onondaga Lake shoreline. The ideas below were mentioned frequently in 52 reports about the shoreline produced between 1928 and 2012. Your responses to this survey will help us determine which ideas are most important to the members of our community. A report on the results of this survey will be given to the Onondaga County Legislature and be made public. We appreciate your participation, and the information you provide is confidential.

**Please answer the following questions with an “X” or a written response in the appropriate box**

How often have you been to Onondaga Lake or the Onondaga Lake Park for any purpose in the last year?

- Never                       1-3 times                       4-7 times                       8 or more times

What are the reasons you go (or do not go) to Onondaga Lake or the Onondaga Lake Park?

**Please mark with an “X” the importance of each of the following Onondaga Lake shoreline options (Use the attached map of the Lake and surrounding area as a reference to the areas described below):**

		Very Unimportant (1)	Unimportant (2)	Neutral (3)	Important (4)	Very Important (5)
A.	Public swimming area					
B.	Onondaga Nation education center					
C.	Environmental and/or aquatic education center					
D.	Maintain or reforest natural areas around the Lake					
E.	Pedestrian and biking trail from Onondaga Lake Park to downtown Syracuse via the Creekwalk					
F.	Completed pedestrian and biking trail around the entirety of Onondaga Lake					
G.	Designate Murphy’s Island area to the Onondaga Nation					
H.	New private residential areas on the Lake shoreline					
I.	Continued Onondaga County ownership of the majority of the Lake shoreline					
J.	Educational and cultural signs along the Lake shoreline					
K.	Restaurants, hotels and other commercial development on the Lake shoreline					
L.	Public art along shoreline					
M.	Increased number of shoreline fishing areas/piers					
N.	Expanded park area on the south west shore of the Lake including picnic and BBQ areas					

**SHAPE THE FUTURE OF CNY: F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse, Inc**

Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

Of the options on the previous page, select the top three options that are of greatest importance to you (write the letter associated with the option: A-N)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following demographic questions with a written response or an "X" in the appropriate box

What is your age?

- 18 or Younger    
  19 to 24    
  25 to 34    
  35 to 44    
  45 to 54    
  55 to 64    
  65 or Older

What is the zip code for your primary residence?

What is your gender?

- Male                     
  Female                     
  Other \_\_\_\_\_

What is your ethnicity?

- American Indian or Alaskan native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino (a)
- White/Caucasian
- Multiethnic (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation in this survey. If you have any questions or comments about the ideas in this survey or *new ideas* for Onondaga lake shoreline please feel free to add them in the box below

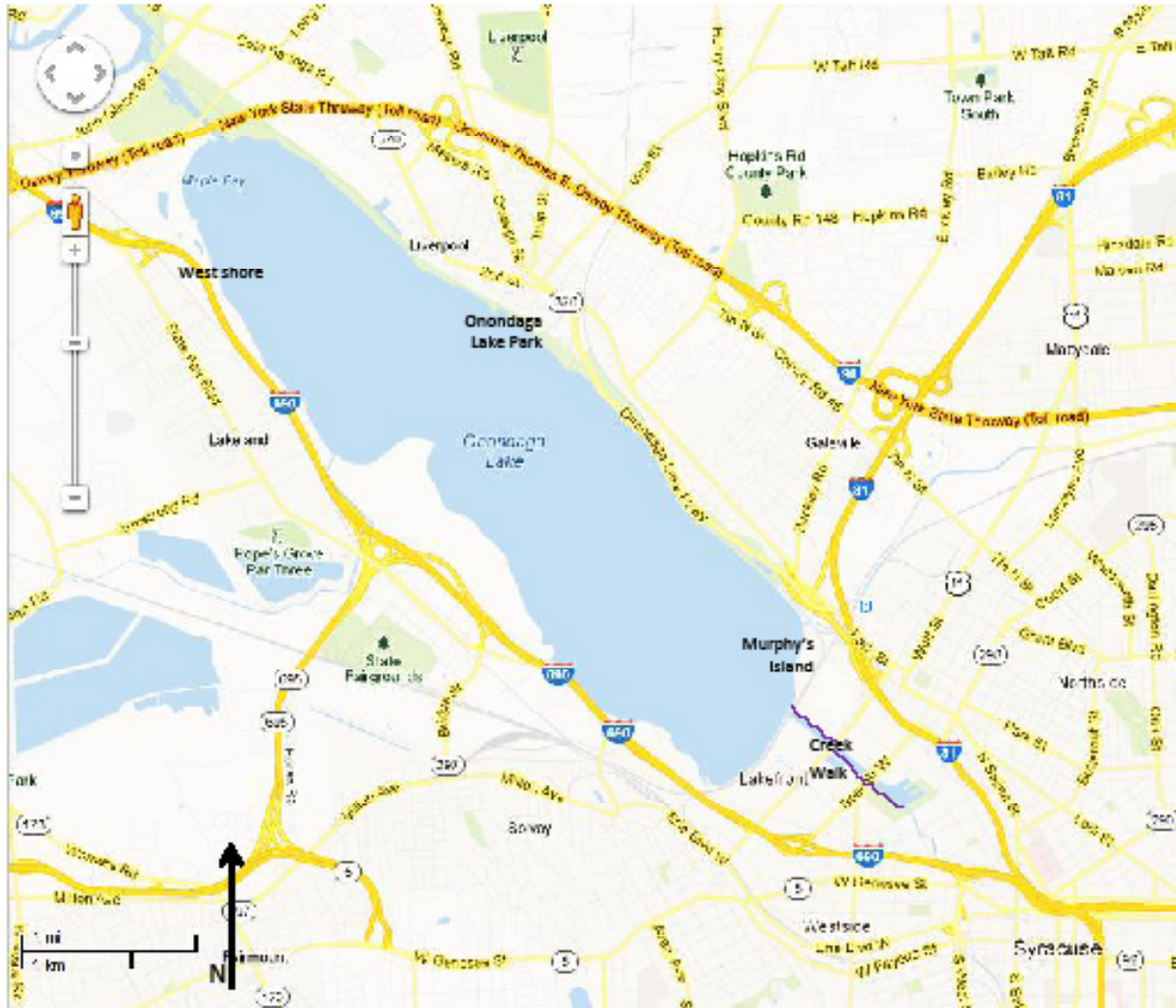
Interested in keeping touch with us? Contact F.O.C.U.S. at our website <http://www.focusyracuse.org/> or

Like us on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/focusgreatersyracuse>

201 E. Washington St.  
 Syracuse, NY 13202  
 315-448-8732

**SHAPE THE FUTURE OF CNY: F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse, Inc**

**Survey #** \_\_\_\_\_



Map data © Google

----- **Detach from Survey** -----

**Many of the proposed shoreline plans will need help from citizens like you! Please provide your contact information below and your topic of interest (s) if you would like to participate in a shoreline project.**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number** \_\_\_\_\_

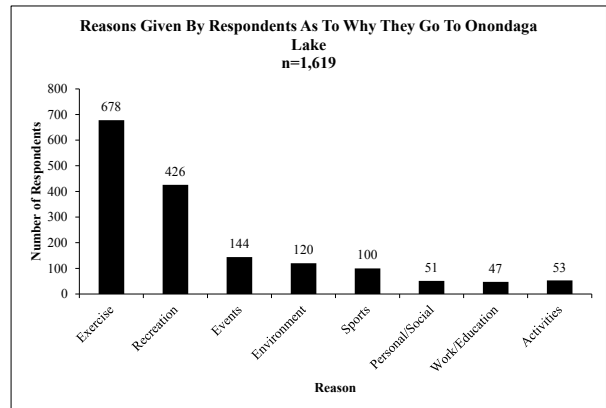
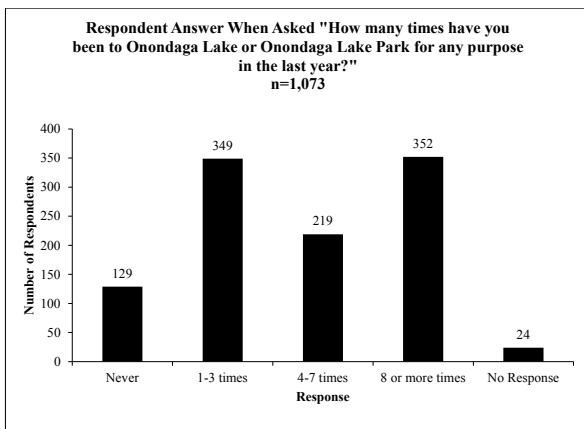
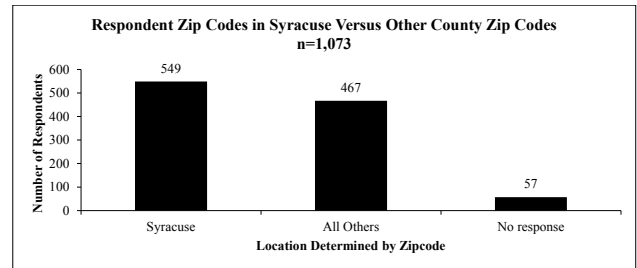
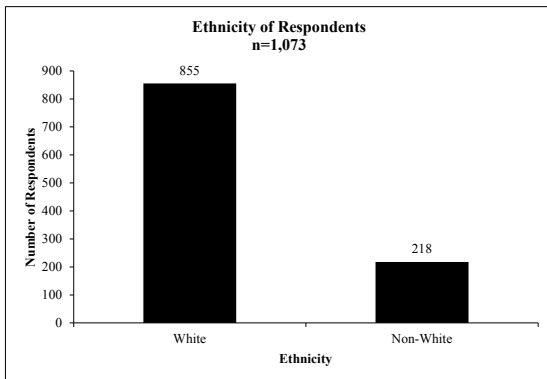
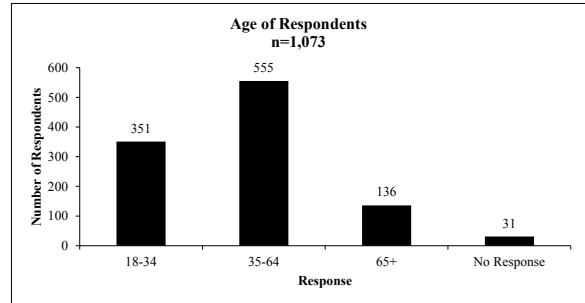
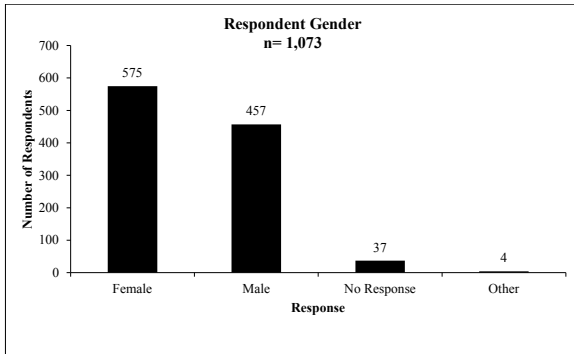
**Topic of interest(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D: Database of Survey Results

Survey results are based on 1,073 surveys distributed and collected.



Appendix D: Database of Survey Results (continued)

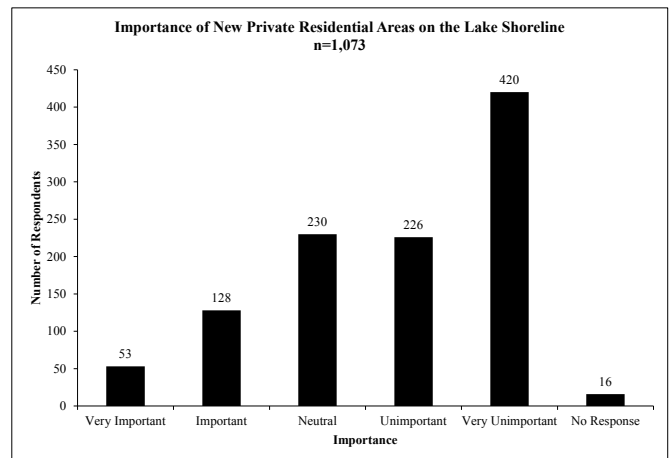
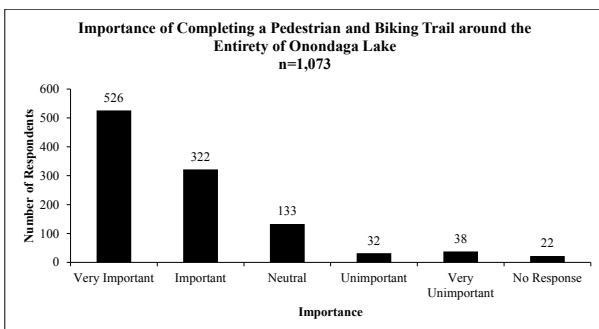
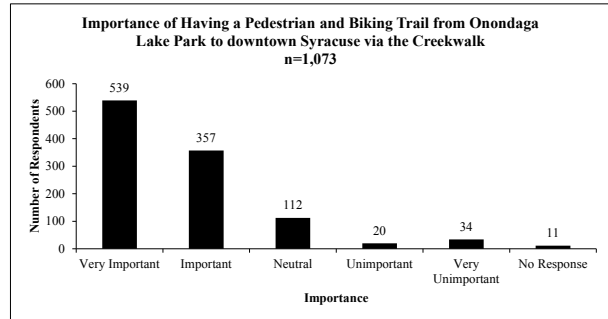
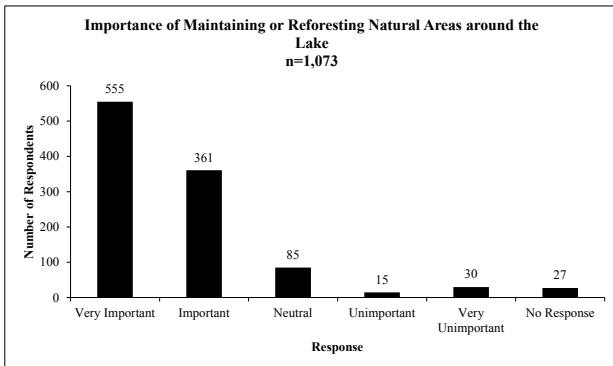
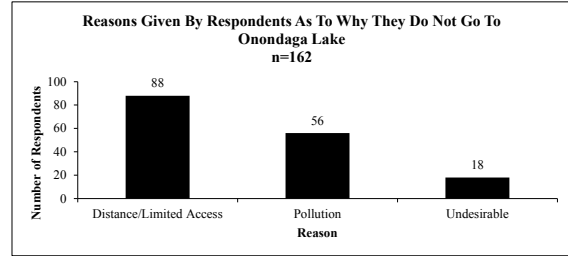
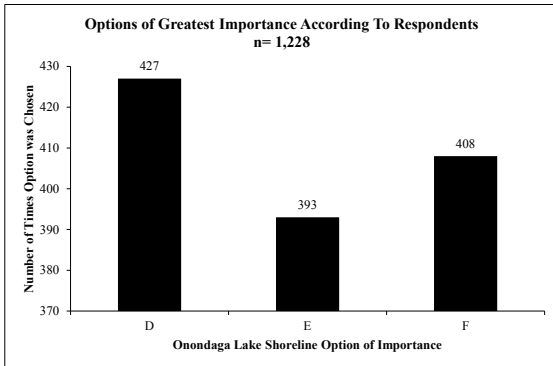
3. The three options chosen most by respondents when asked "Of the options on the previous page, selected the top three options that are of greatest importance to you."

**Onondaga Lake Shoreline Option**

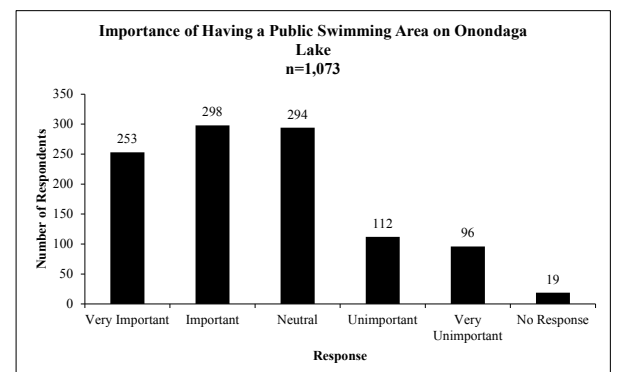
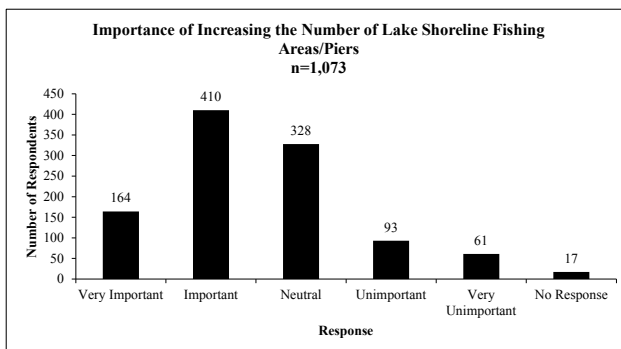
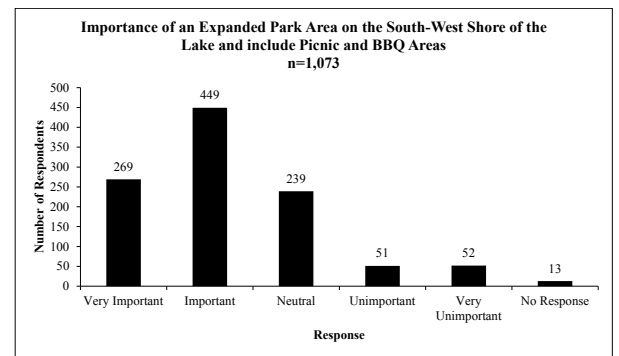
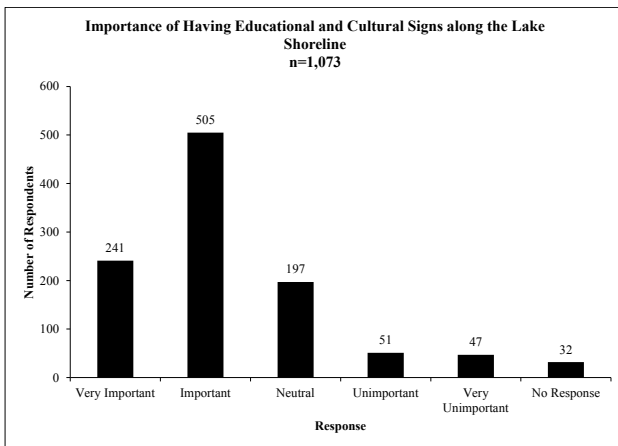
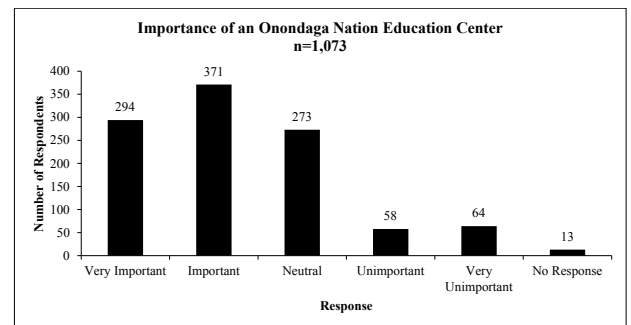
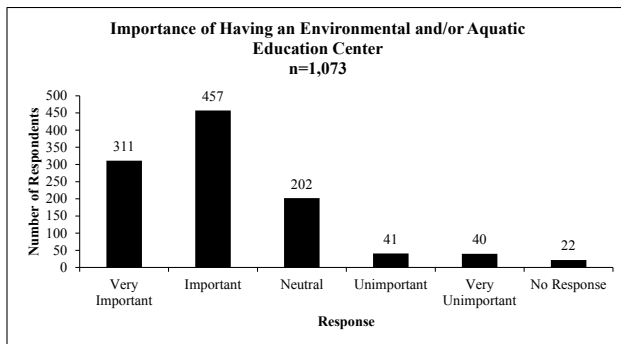
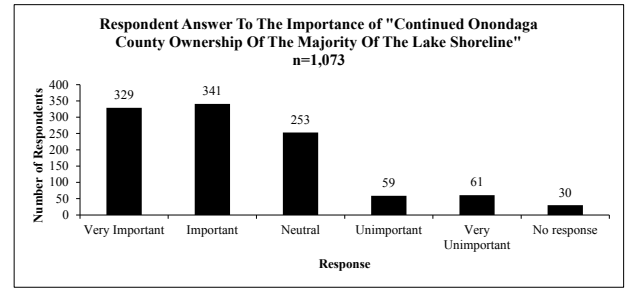
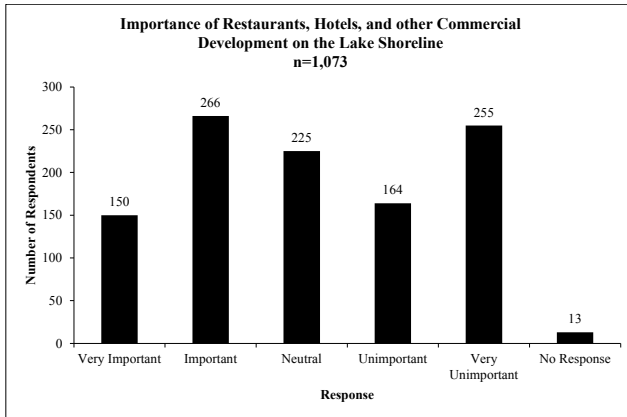
**D** = Maintain or reforest natural areas around the Lake

**E** = Pedestrian and biking trail from Onondaga Lake Park to downtown Syracuse via the Creekwalk

**F** = Completed pedestrian and biking trail around the entirety of Onondaga Lake

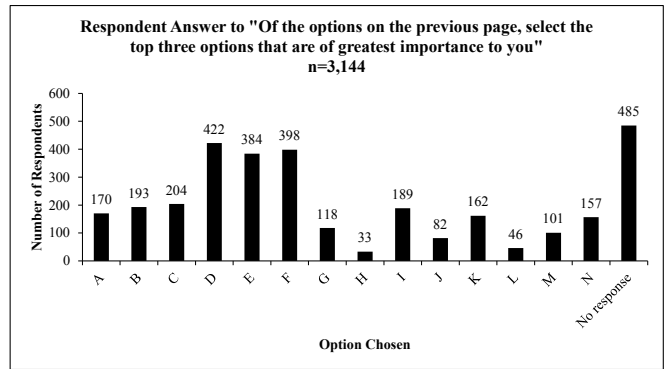
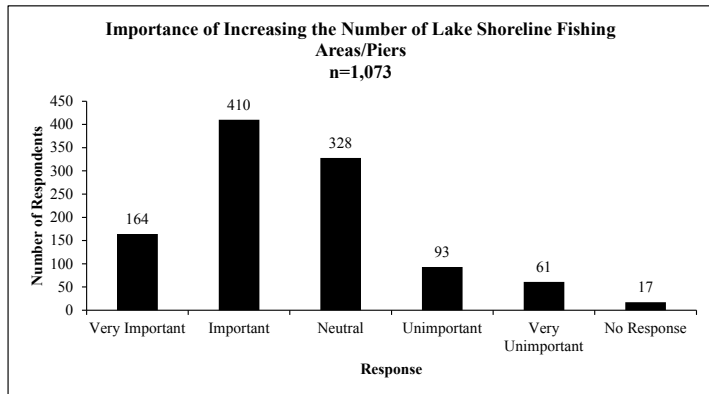
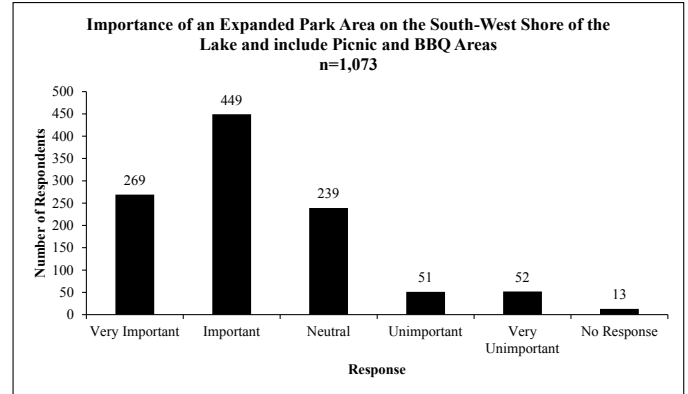
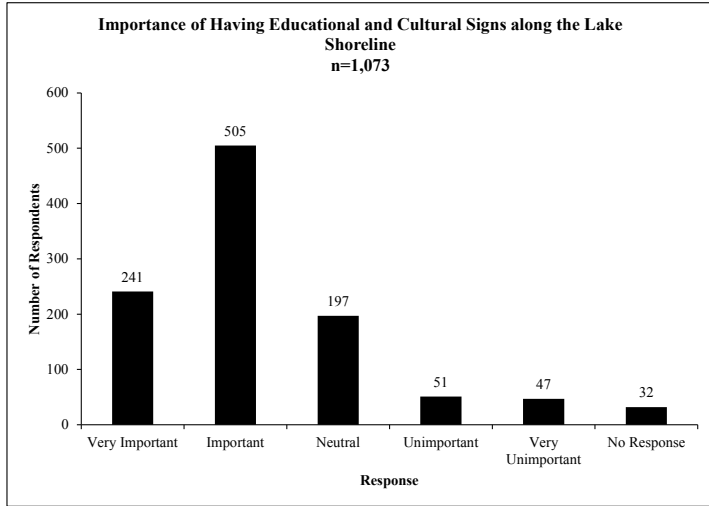


Appendix D: Database of Survey Results (continued)

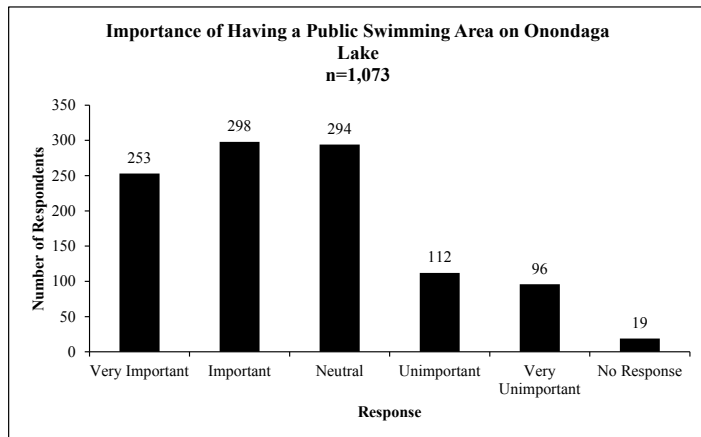




Appendix D: Database of Survey Results (continued)



Source: Data collected from surveys distributed by F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse.



**Onondaga Lake Shoreline option**

- A = Public swimming area
- B = Onondaga Nation education center
- C = Environmental and/or aquatic education center
- D = Maintain or reforest natural areas around the Lake
- E = Pedestrian and biking trail from Onondaga Lake Park to downtown Syracuse via the Creekwalk
- F = Completed pedestrian and biking trail around the entirety of Onondaga Lake
- G = Designate Murphy's Island area to the Onondaga Nation
- H = New private residential areas on the Lake Shoreline
- I = Continued Onondaga County ownership of the majority of the Lake Shoreline
- J = Educational and cultural signs along the Lake Shoreline
- K = Restaurants, hotels and other commercial development on the Lake Shoreline
- L = Public art along the Lake Shoreline
- M = Increased number of Lake Shoreline fishing areas/piers
- N = Expanded park area on the south west shore of the Lake including picnic and BBQ areas

Appendix D: Database of Survey Results (continued)

2. Respondents' zip codes.

Zip Code	# of resp.
No Response	57
10514	1
12018	1
12066	1
12077	1
12209	1
12309	1
12603	1
12846	1
13008	1
13021	6
13027	48
13029	5
13030	2
13031	38
13032	1
13033	2
13035	8
13036	1
13037	5
13039	25
13041	8
13045	1
13049	1
13057	18
13060	1
13061	1
13063	2
13064	1
13066	18
13069	4
13076	4
13077	2
13078	16
13080	1
13082	1
13084	10

13088	58
13090	48
13104	20
13108	7
13110	2
13112	1
13116	4
13120	8
13126	1
13131	3
13135	1
13142	1
13152	16
13159	11
13164	6
13166	1
13167	1
13202	17
13203	47
13204	52
13205	33
13206	42
13207	40
13208	47
13209	30
13210	101
13211	5
13212	24
13213	1
13214	23
13215	20
13218	1
13219	25
13224	40
13235	1
13244	1
13290	1
13346	1
13361	1

13421	1
13492	1
13601	1
13655	1
13656	1
13676	1
13909	1
14091	1
14201	1
14424	1
14450	1
14613	1
14850	2
14867	1
14886	1
15022	1
15658	1
15923	1
16801	1
18436	2
18914	1
18966	1
19038	1
19050	1
21117	1
22602	1
24199	1
24332	1
24335	1
26505	1
77399	2
80020	1

3. Most prominent zip codes of respondents

Town/City/Village	# of resp.
Syracuse	549
Liverpool	106
Baldwinsville	48
Camillus	37
Cicero	25
Manlius	20
East Syracuse	18
Fayetteville	18
Jamesville	16
Skaneateles	16
Tully	11
La Fayette	10

Appendix D: Database of Survey Results (continued)

4. Breakdown of reasons why respondents go to Onondaga Lake or Onondaga Lake Shoreline.

Reasons To Go To Lake	# of resp.
<b>Exercise</b>	<b>678</b>
<b>Recreation</b>	<b>426</b>
<b>Events</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Environment</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>Sports</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Personal/Social</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Work/Education</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,619</b>

<u>Exercise</u>	
walk	364
bike	155
run	80
exercise general	57
jog	14
creekwalk	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>678</b>

<u>Recreation</u>	
picnic	66
recreation general	64
playground	62
fishing	40
boating	38
walk dog	33
park	33
family activities	20
hang out/socialize	20
dog park	17
bird watching	14
cookout	6
fun	5
hike	4
fly kite	2
games for kids	1
hunt waterfowl	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>426</b>

<u>Personal/Social</u>	
relax	34
restaurants	3
culture	3
aesthetic value	2
read	2
see new people	2
meditate	2

leisure	2
alone time	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>

<u>Work/Education</u>	
work-related general	20
corporate challenge	10
field trip	6
Project Engage	6
project	2
orientation	1
social work	1
superfund site	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>

<u>Activities</u>	
activities general	13
ride tram	11
pictures/photography	7
museums	6
field trip	5
entertainment	3
music	2
research	2
camp field trip	1
campus org. picnic	1
ceremony	1
have lunch	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>

<u>Events</u>	
Lights on the Lake	66
events general	43
Charity Walks	7
festivals	7
Thanksgiving Ceremony	5
Antique Show	4
car show	3
fundraiser	3
church gatherings	2
gatherings	1
Cultural events	1
Irish bowling	1
Fireworks	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>

<u>Environment</u>	
scenery	71
nature	21
peaceful	8
wildlife	7
clean-up of lake	6
environmental general	4
Onondaga Earth Corp	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>

<u>Sports</u>	
roller blade	31
kayak	14
kickball	7
skateboard/skate park	6
sports general	5
cross-country skiing	5
cycling	5
volleyball	4
canoe	4
archery	3
races	3
Syracuse Chargers Crew	2
crew	2
padding	2
baseball	1
dance team	1
frisbee	1
HS cross country	1
yoga	1
softball	1
snowshoe	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Appendix D: Database of Survey Results (continued)

5. Breakdown of reasons why respondents do not go to Onondaga Lake or Onondaga Lake Park.

<b>Reasons Resp. Do Not Go</b>	<b># of resp.</b>
Distance/Limited Access	88
Pollution	56
Undesirable	18

**Distance/Limited Access**

too far	42
no time	17
limited/no transportation	13
don't live in area	10
no access	3
limited mobility	1
too old	1
use different lake	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>

**Pollution**

smells	18
pollution	16
dirty	14
can't swim	7
Lake health is poor	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>

**Undesirable**

no interest	5
too crowded	3
lack of restaurants	2
not appealing	2
too noisy	1
bad reputation	1
construction	1
too muddy	1
debris	1
goose poop	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

**Appendix E: Master list of interviews with 100 key community stakeholders**

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
David Ashley	Architect; Ashley McGraw Architects - Founder
Robert Haley	Architect; Syracuse Historic Preservation Commission - Member
Beata Karpinska	ARISE - Manager of Advocacy
Brian Isreal	Arnold & Porter - Attorney for Honeywell to the National Resources Defense Council
Kathleen McGrath, Ph.D.	Atlantic States Legal Foundation - Project Scientist
Craig Milburn	Brown and Sanford, P.E. - Honeywell Program Manager Communications
Andrew Fish	Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce - President
Benjamin Sio	CenterState CEO - Director of Sustainable Infrastructure & Policy Development
Sara Eckel	Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Van Robinson	City of Syracuse - Common Council President
Khalid Bey	City of Syracuse - Common Councilor, 4th District
Jake Barrett	City of Syracuse - Common Councilor, First District
Lee Macbeth	City of Syracuse - Department of Water
Andrew Maxwell	City of Syracuse - Director of Planning and Sustainability
Jeanie Gleisner	CNY Regional Planning and Development Board - Principal Planner
Kathy Bertuch	CNY Regional Planning and Development Board - Program Manager, Environmental Management
David V. Bottar	CNY Regional Planning and Development Board - Executive Director
Jesse Ryan	Cornell Cooperative Extension
David Aitken	Destiny
Seth Ausubel	Environmental Protection Agency - Chief, New York Watershed Management Section (by phone)
Daniel Honyoust	Haudenosaunee - Urban
Barbara Rivette	Historian
John McAuliffe	Honeywell - Syracuse Project Director
Tom Thoren	Honeywell - Community Affairs Specialist
Vicki Streitfeld	Honeywell - Director of Communications
Frank Moses	Montezuma Audobon Center - Director
Jack Ramsden	Neighbors of Onondaga Nation (NOON)
Lloyd Withers	Neighbors of Onondaga Nation (NOON)
Benjamin Klein	Newhouse School of Journalism - Student
Donna Hamlin	Nine Mile Creek Conservation
Samuel Roberts	NY State Assemblyman
Kenneth Lynch	NY State Department of Environmental Conservation - Regional Director
Richard Steele	NY State Department of Transportation
Daniel O'Hara	NY State Department of Agriculture and Markets - State Fair Director
Christopher Anderson	NY State Department of Transportation - Environmental Specialist
Carl Ford	NY State Department of Transportation - Regional Director
Matthew Driscoll	NY State Environmental Facilities Corporation - President and CEO; City of Syracuse - Mayor (retired)
Les Monostory	Onondaga County Federation of Sportmen's Clubs
Gene Huggins	Onondaga Audobon Society - President
Don Jordan	Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency - Director
Matthew J. Millea	Onondaga County - Deputy County Executive for Physical Services
David Coburn	Onondaga County Office of the Environment - Director
Nick Pirro	Onondaga County Executive (retired)
Russell Nemecek	Onondaga County Council on Environmental Health
Judy Tassone	Onondaga County Legislature - 4th District
Kathleen Rapp	Onondaga County Legislature - 5th District
Linda Ervin	Onondaga County Legislature - 17th District
Mike Plochocki	Onondaga County Legislature - 6th District
Greg Chaphe	Onondaga County Resident; Long-time Lake User
William Lansley	Onondaga County Parks Department - Commissioner

Interviewee	Affiliation
Cara Burton	Onondaga County Public Library - Director Solvay Branch
Meredith Perreault	Onondaga Environmental Institute
Stephanie Harrington	Onondaga Environmental Institute
Tyler Andres	Onondaga Environmental Institute
Ed Michelanko	Onondaga Environmental Institute - Executive Director; Town of Dewitt - Supervisor
Gregg A. Tripoli	Onondaga Historical Association - Executive Director
Dennis Connors	Onondaga Historical Association - Curator of History
Joseph Heath	Onondaga Nation - Attorney
Thane Joyal	Onondaga Nation - Attorney
Betty Lyons	Onondaga Nation - Resident; Secretary for Tribal Council
Oren Lyons	Onondaga Nation - Faith Keeper
Sid Hill	Onondaga Nation - Taddedaoh
Jeff Freedman	Onondaga Yacht Club
Tess Freedman	Onondaga Yacht Club
Mark Rupprecht	Onondaga Yacht Club - President
Paul Riede	Post-Standard - Reporter
Jody Manning	Solvay Union Free School District - Superintendent
Ryan DeOrdio	St. Bonaventure University - Student
Neil Murphy	State University of NY, College of Environmental Science and Forestry - President
William McGarry	State University of NY, College of Environmental Science and Forestry - Board of Trustees
Robert Bryant	Stockbroker
Michael Alexander	Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council
Stephen Klimek	Syracuse University Adjunct Faculty - Assistant Director; Syracuse University Center for Engagement & Economic Development
William Sanford	Syracuse University - Crew Coach (retired); Onondaga County - Legislator (retired); NY State - Assemblyman (retired); Engineer
Joseph Simon	Syracuse University Maxwell School - Capstone student
Sarah Turner	Syracuse University Maxwell School - Capstone student
Tina Nabatchi	Syracuse University Maxwell School - Professor
Cat Foley	Syracuse University, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs - Capstone student
Gregory Duggan	Syracuse University, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs - Capstone student
Ilana Kanfer	Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency - Planner II
Hugh Kimball	Town Planning Board - Lysander
Mary Ann Coogan	Town Supervisor - Camillus
Kenneth L. Bush	Town Supervisor - Elbridge
Edmund Theobald	Town Supervisor - Manlius
Daniel J. Ross	Town Supervisor - Marcellus
Thomas P. Andino, Jr.	Town Supervisor - Onondaga
Wayne S. Amato	Town Supervisor - Otisco
Terri Roney	Town Supervisor - Skaneateles
Webb Stevens	Town Supervisor - Spafford Town
Kerry Mannion	Town Supervisor Assistant - DeWitt
James Walsh	U.S. Representative (retired); Lobbyist
Joseph Fugalsang	U.S. Representative Buerkle - Staff
Nancy Lowery	U.S. Representative Buerkle - Staff
Earl N. Fontenot	U.S. Representative Buerkle - Staff
Coleen Deacon	U.S. Senator Gillibrand - Regional Director
Minda C. Conroe	U.S. Senator Schumer
Angelo Roefaro	U.S. Senator Schumer - Regional Representative
Pat Tobin	Village of Fayetteville - Tree Commission
Janet Allen	Resident; Edible Gardening CNY; Butterfly enthusiast
John Allen	Resident; Edible Gardening CNY; Bicycling enthusiast

## Appendix F: F.O.C.U.S. Activities with Onondaga Lake: 1997 to 2012

### 1997-1998

F.O.C.U.S. conducted over 200 visioning sessions in Onondaga County involving approximately 5,000 citizens from diverse economic, ethnic, and age backgrounds resulting in over 15,000 ideas, synthesized into 87 community goals.

### 1998

F.O.C.U.S. Goal (PREFERRED GOAL NO. 3 OUT OF 87): “Develop and clean Onondaga Lake

And other streams and waterways; To develop them for recreation and as tourist attractions

Also, for education, e.g. groups of school children in glass bottom boats

Beginning with completion of the Inner Harbor, marina, and other projects that are part of proposed Onondaga lakefront improvements”

F.O.C.U.S. Goal (PREFERRED GOAL NO. 6 OUT OF 87): “Build a Native American Cultural Center to honor the culture that was here before any other and as a tourist attraction.”

### May 1998

F.O.C.U.S. held a Vision Fair at the County Convention Center where almost 5,000 attendees from every zip code in the county voted on the goals most important to them. Of the 87 goals, the third most preferred goal was, “Develop and Clean Onondaga Lake”.

### September 2003

F.O.C.U.S. invited county-wide non-profit organizations, government agencies, developers, architects, engineers and citizen advocates with an interest in cleaning and developing the land around Onondaga Lake. As a result, F.O.C.U.S. featured “Water and Waterways in Onondaga County” at its annual “I Love CNY” luncheon (over 500 attendees), conducted eight monthly Core Group sessions devoted to waterways and especially Onondaga Lake, and the formation of a citizens strategic action planning group to identify what citizens want to see around Onondaga Lake.

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## **April 2004**

“I Love CNY...F.O.C.U.S. on Water and Waterways” luncheon featured a video on the Eire Canal and conversation about Onondaga Lake. Members of the panel included Congressman James Walsh, County Executive Nick Pirro, Mayor Matthew Driscoll. Respondents were citizens representing various sectors of the community

## **July 2004**

F.O.C.U.S. launched the Citizens Strategic Action Report on Water and Waterways in Onondaga County, a 12 month effort by a group of citizens. The plan is a work in progress, a roadmap for action. The report identifies strategies, current and potential champions, and human and financial resources and was widely distributed to elected officials, government agencies, not for profit organizations, and the public.

## **2005 – 2010**

F.O.C.U.S. held several Core Group sessions related to Onondaga Lake:

- Several updates from Honeywell, DEC, ESF on progress made to clean the lake
- Presentations from Onondaga Environmental Institute
- Presentation on the Onondaga Nation’s Vision for a Clean Onondaga Lake
- Onondaga County’s program on “Save the Rain”

## **January 2010**

F.O.C.U.S. released the results of a 9 month survey asking citizens to report on how they measure the progress made on the original 87 community goals and to name the goals most important to them. Cleaning Onondaga lake continued to be a high priority especially with the age group of 15 to 21 year old residents.

## **March 2011**

F.O.C.U.S. featured “Re-Imagining the Future of Onondaga Lake” with a presentation by Sarah Waight and co presenters from OEI.



## **April 2011**

F.O.C.U.S. featured Khris Dodson and Bj Adigun to discuss Onondaga County's save the Rain Program; Project 50.

## **October 2011**

F.O.C.U.S. Core Group presented "Future Plans for Onondaga Lake – Share Your Ideas". The Honeywell team showed slides on land use plans for the 7 acre site where much of the work is in operation. Deputy County Executive Matt Millea announced the high interest in the restoration of land use around the lake by County Executive Mahoney. He also announced that F.O.C.U.S. would be assisting the county to gather citizen voices on their ideas and visions. Citizen ideas were generated and collected.

## **December 2011**

F.O.C.U.S. prepared preliminary document collating all citizen ideas for Onondaga Lake land use from 1971 to present.

## **February 2012**

F.O.C.U.S. is awarded the contract from Onondaga County Legislature to prepare a report on the citizen's visions for the future of the Onondaga Lake shoreline and reconnecting the lake to the community.

## **March 2012**

F.O.C.U.S. Core Group presented "Onondaga Lake Shoreline." Commissioner of County Parks Bill Lansley reported on Onondaga Lake Park and what is currently developed, future plans, challenges and opportunities. NYSDEC Regional Director Ken Lynch identified NYS-owned properties, current status, future use and NYSDEC oversight on the shoreline development. Craig Milburn, Honeywell Communications Director, presented an update on Honeywell's progress. Also included an open discussion with experts David Coburn, director of the Onondaga County Office of the Environment; Bill Lansley; Ken Lynch and Craig Milburn. .

## **June 2012**

F.O.C.U.S. presented the Citizens Visions of Onondaga Lake at the Onondaga County

Planning Federation to about 100 Planning Symposium attendees. The Onondaga County Planning Federation is an organization that includes zoning and planning officials from all the towns and villages in Onondaga County. F.O.C.U.S. was invited to conduct a workshop on citizens plans for the shoreline of Onondaga Lake as a result of the contract with Onondaga County which called for F.O.C.U.S. to work with the citizens of the county to validate citizen ideas generated in reports for over 84 years (dating 1928 to 2012) for improving the area around Onondaga Lake. The F.O.C.U.S. workshop program included Deputy County Executive Matt Millea, Commissioner of County Parks Bill Lansley, Region 7 NYSDEC Regional Director Ken Lynch and Honeywell Communications Director Craig Milburn.

## **November 2012**

F.O.C.U.S. Core Group presented “Citizens Vision for Onondaga Lake” providing an overview of the 54 reports from 1928 through 2012 reviewed. Speakers included Cat Foley, capstone student for Syracuse University’s Maxwell School and Craig Milburn, a partner with Brown & Sanford and has been working with Honeywell on the lake project since 2004. Milburn report on Lake cleanup progress, Honeywell dredging and Visitors Center.

F.O.C.U.S. presented “Citizens Vision for Onondaga Lake” to the Solvay Citizens Group at the Honeywell Visitor’s Center.

## **December 2012**

F.O.C.U.S. gave an updated report on the status of citizens’ preferences for the shoreline of Onondaga Lake to the Honeywell Strategic Planning Team that includes corporate members, partner engineering and environmental groups, and F.O.C.U.S. The Power Point presentation showed the earlier findings from the 54 reports spanning 84 years, research conducted by the Capstone students from Syracuse University. A lively discussion followed with assurances Honeywell will continue to work with citizen groups as the clean up process continues.