REIMAGINE THE CANALS
COMPETITION INFORMATION SESSION

November 6, 2017
The New York State Canal System is a 524-mile network comprised of the Erie Canal, the Oswego Canal, the Cayuga-Seneca Canal, and the Champlain Canal.
The Canal System has 56 locks, 20 lock bridges, and 20 guard gates.
CONTEXT – WATERSHEDS
Major urban areas along the Canal System by population (2016):

- Albany City: 98,100
- Buffalo City: 256,900
- Rochester City: 208,900
- Syracuse City: 143,400
- Utica City: 61,700
CONTEXT – BRIEF HISTORY

1817
Construction of Erie Canal started

1862 & 1903
System enlarged to accommodate increased shipping needs

1910-1920
Three other branches of the canal opened (Oswego, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca)

1992
Ownership of the Canal System moved to the Thruway Authority

2014
The Canal System was listed as a national historic district on the National Register of Historic Places

2017
NYPA assumed control of the NYS Canal System

2017
The Canal System was designated as a National Historic Landmark
COMPETITION – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges

• Commercial shipping has declined since the 1950’s
• Recreational boating peaked in 1989, but has declined by over 50% since
• Enormous amounts of maintenance and investment in canal infrastructure are required

Opportunities

• Recreational uses along the canal have grown in popularity (hiking, bicycling, skiing, and ice fishing)
• The Empire State Trail from NYC to Canada and Albany to Buffalo is expected to be completed in 2020
• The Canal System’s potential to stimulate tourism and economic activity has not been fully explored
The **Empire State Trail** proposed by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo earlier this year will connect the Hudson River Valley Greenway and Erie Canalway trails, by 2020.

Altogether, it will include 750 miles of pathways for hiking and biking along scenic vistas and historic communities.
COMPETITION – GOALS

Proposals should aim to promote:

- the Canal System as a tourist destination and recreational asset
- sustainable economic development along the canals and beyond
- the heritage and historic values of the Canal System
- the long-term financial sustainability of the Canal System
COMPETITION – TWO TRACKS

Physical Projects or Concepts

• Involve a physical intervention to address the Competition goals
• Examples include
  • improving connectivity between communities and the Canals
  • creating a new tourist destination
  • transforming existing structures along the Canal System for other purposes

Programming Initiatives

• Involve interventions that would increase the use of the Canal System and/or the Canalway Trail
• Examples include
  • an event or series of events
  • the use of technology to enhance the visitor experience
  • other concepts designed to attract tourists

Proposals considering specific sections of the Canal System are encouraged, however submissions may also be site-specific or address the Canal System in its entirety.
**PHYSICAL CONCEPTS – EXAMPLES**

**The Kelpies, Scotland**
- a public art piece on the banks of the Forth & Clyde Canal by famous artist Andy Scott
- pay homage to the working horses of Scotland which used to pull barges along the canals
- project has helped transform 350 hectares of underused land into a vibrant parkland, a visitor attraction, and a marine hub

**Hamilton Canal Innovation District, Lowell, MA**
- an in progress, transit-oriented, waterfront development consisting of 17 parcels of land in the heart of Lowell
- aims to strengthen residential and commercial markets, expand the City's employment base, and broaden the population base of creative professionals
- sites around the canal walk will be developed that will make the waterfront more inviting and interesting
PHYSICAL CONCEPTS – EXAMPLES

Canalside Cottages, Scotland
- former lock-keeper and canal workers’ cottages have been restored into high quality self catering holiday accommodation
- third party funding was secured for the restoration
- cottages are available to rent for holidays through Natural Retreats

oTENTik accommodations, Saint-Ours Canal, Canada
- a cross between a tent and rustic cabins
- a unique outdoor experience for people wanting to visit the canals
- accommodations are strewn all across sites along the Canadian waterways
Lock ‘n Paddle, Canada
- a canoeing event in celebration of the National Canoe Day
- canoeists were invited to create a new record for the Peterborough Lift Lock
- 138 paddlers from all across Ontario, neighboring states, the UK and Australia took part in the experiment

Floating Cinema Barge, UK Canals
- an award-winning structure designed by Duggan Morris Architects
- some events take place inside the barge
- programming also involves outdoor screenings, canal tours, workshops and events along the waterways of East London and beyond
PROGRAMMING INITIATIVES – EXAMPLES

Winterfest, Lowell, MA
- a park by the canal is transformed into a winter beer-garden with food trucks, craft brewers, wine merchants and live music with the backdrop of illuminated canals

Open Days, UK
- each year free events are held that invite people to take a look at the inner workings of the canals’ infrastructure
- one of these events included ‘gig in a lock’ at which an international contemporary music composer and sonic artist, Kaffe Matthews, performed at the bottom of a 14-ft-deep brick lock chamber in London
COMPETITION – ELIGIBILITY

• The Competition is open to individuals, businesses, non-profits, and municipalities
• Respondents are encouraged to form multidisciplinary teams
• Teams may include, but are not limited to:
  • urban designers and architects
  • planning and community specialists
  • hydrologists and infrastructure engineers
  • artists, curators, recreation, and sport consultants
  • real estate developers and economic development specialists
  • local officials
  • financing partners
• Teams should include all the individuals/firms required for the implementation of the proposals
COMPETITION – PROCESS

Stage One
Applicants submit an idea

Jury
recommends a shortlist of up to eight finalists

Stage Two
Finalists submit proposals

Jury
recommends two or more winners
COMPETITION – STAGE ONE

Proposals
• Proposal needs to describe how it relates to the aims of the Competition and addresses specific challenges
• Partnering with a local jurisdiction or non-profit is not required, but it is encouraged

Finalists
• The jury will recommend up to eight finalists
• Finalists will receive feedback from NYPA and the Canal Corporation about their initial proposals
• They will receive an award of up to $50,000 each to develop their ideas for submission in Stage Two
COMPETITION – STAGE TWO

Guidelines

• Finalists will be asked to include information about the feasibility, cost, potential funding sources, economic impact, and projected financial impact on the Canal Corporation

• They may be asked to partner with a local jurisdiction or other canal-related non-profit organization

Awards

• The jury, taking into account a public vote on the finalists’ proposals, will recommend two or more winners to receive awards between $250,000 and $1,500,000 for project planning and implementation

• Actual award amounts will be based on the nature of the winning proposals

• NYPA expects to enter into contracts with the winners that will set forth, among other things, the terms for receiving the awards
The following site tours along the Canal System are being offered for interested participants:

• Monday, November 13: The Capital Region
• Tuesday, November 14: Mohawk Valley
• Wednesday, November 15: Central New York
• Thursday, November 16: Buffalo & Western New York
• Friday, November 17: Rochester & Finger Lakes Region

Attendance at one or more site tours is NOT a requirement to take part in the Competition.
COMPARITION – STAGE ONE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

For Stage One, applicants need to provide the following:

- **Proposal**: A brief narrative (approx. 5 pages) describing the overall vision of the proposal and how it relates to the Competition goals
- **Team qualifications**: Resumes of team members and a portfolio of prior projects that demonstrate the experience of the team as it relates to the purposes of the Competition
- **Support for implementation**: Local jurisdiction or non-profit partnership description (not a requirement for submission)

**Deadline**: 5:00 p.m. EST January 12, 2018
For Stage One, applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Competition goals**: the extent to which the idea addresses the goals of the Competition
- **Feasibility**: the extent to which the idea is implementable and financially sustainable
- **Economic/Financial impact**: the idea’s potential to stimulate economic growth in the surrounding communities or promote financial sustainability of the Canal System
- **Innovation**: the extent to which the idea is novel and brings new thinking to current challenges
- **Team qualifications**: the quality of the team, its experience, and its ability to implement
For general inquiries and questions about the competition and site tours, please email info@reimaginethecanals.com.

Answers to all questions asked via email and at this information session will be posted on a rolling basis on the Q&A section of the website. **Deadline for questions is 5:00 p.m. EST December 5, 2017.**
www.canals.ny.gov/reimaginethecanals