

# 2015 CHAPTER AWARDS PROGRAM

New York Upstate Chapter | American Society of Landscape Architects



## Merit Award of Achievement

*Planning & Analysis*

### Long Term Community Recovery Strategy Town of Union, New York

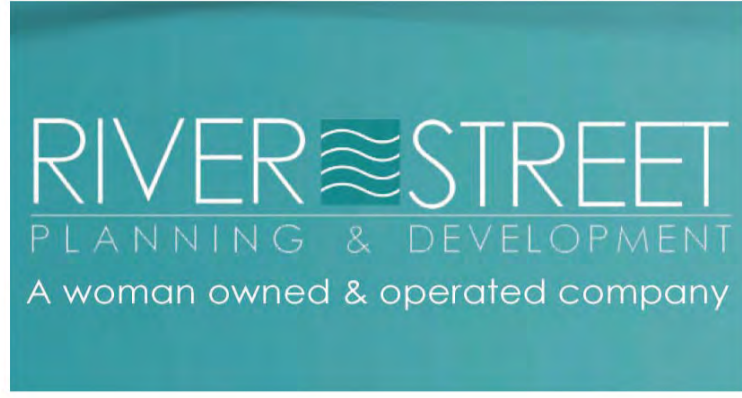
#### Project Description

Union is a community at risk.

The Town of Union is located along one of the most flood-prone watersheds in the nation, the Susquehanna River Basin in New York's Southern Tier. In 2011, Tropical Storm Lee dropped nine inches of rain in 24 hours with unprecedented flash flooding—causing overtopping of levees, failure of spillways, collapse of pavements, guidrails, culverts, and bridges, and combined sewer overflows that threatened public health. Lee broke all records for the Southern Tier of New York and portions of Northeast Pennsylvania. With a peak crest of 35.26 feet and an extraordinary flow rate of 129,000 cubic feet per second, Lee generated a volume greater than the flow going over Niagara Falls.

In an effort to improve the region's flood resiliency, the team looked at how to create additional flood storage for the Susquehanna River and its many tributaries that contribute to local flooding, recognizing there is no one simple solution that solves flooding on a regional level. Given the scale and magnitude of the watershed, the project team came to the realization that it was unrealistic to expect that any individual project could conceptually have a major impact to the base flood elevations of downstream communities. This sobering recognition forced the team to ask the questions: How can we make a regional impact? How can we make a dent? How can the communities of the Susquehanna River Watershed help each other, as they are clearly dependent on one another? How can we design something that amounts to more than a "drop-in-the-bucket", when we have an entire bucket to fill?

It is the communities' reliance on one another that is the key to the answer, which is quite simply, that many "drops-in-the-bucket" are needed. Building on this idea, the project became about designing flood mitigation at the neighborhood scale that would collectively work together in a larger context to create substantial, real flood resiliency at a regional scale for the Town of Union and beyond.



Proposed Redevelopment of Former Commercial Center



Proposed Flood Mitigation at the Cloverleaf Interchange



BAE Site Proposed Mixed-Use Redevelopment



BAE Site Proposed Mixed-Use Redevelopment