

Economic Profile of Ithaca's Cayuga Inlet Area

Ithaca is a boating destination. Because of its connection to the Erie Canal, an avid boater could sail from Ithaca to the Atlantic Ocean via the Saint Lawrence Seaway or to the Gulf of Mexico via Lake Erie and the Mississippi River.

The waterways affect the local economy in three primary ways; through flood protection, property tax revenues and tourism spending, particularly spending associated with recreational boating and water dependent businesses. Property values in the waterfront are high; although nearly 97% of waterfront properties are tax exempt, annual tax revenues from the remaining 3% is over \$2 million. Finally, water dependent businesses generated over \$2 million in sales (nearly \$700,000 of which came from docking fees) in 2008. Revenues from facilities specializing in non motorized boats are not included. The Inlet has four primary facilities catering to non motorized boaters: Cornell University and Ithaca College Crew facilities, a business that rents and sells canoes and kayaks, and the Cascadilla Boat Club with approximately 175 members with annual membership and training fees of \$60,000.

Landuse and Users of the Cayuga Inlet:

- 347 acres (84%) of waterfront properties within the City are publicly owned parkland and open space.
- 6 restaurants and bars, a spa and health club
- Ithaca Farmer's Market, with 125 vendors and over 5,000 visitors a day – by foot, bike, car and boat access (motorized and paddle boat docks/launches are on-site)
- Cornell University and Ithaca College crew teams – during their season 30+ boats share training space daily
- Ithaca Dragonboat Club
- Large Educational and Commercial touring vessels
- Allan H. Treman Marine State Park has 370 seasonal boat slips and an 8 lane boat launch ramp
- Two other boatyards and a sailing center
- Water Music, Rhiner Festival and other local events incorporate Inlet usage

The current Flood Control Channel capacity is only 38% of the ACOE design dimensions, based on 2008 bathymetric Data – this estimate does not account for aquatic vegetation impeding flows. Sedimentation and a lack of maintenance in the Inlet have caused this loss of capacity. The ACOE recently failed the flood control channel as a effective structure. Hydrilla's ability to clog flood control structures and impede water flow will only exacerbate the current situation.

The value of the waterways are derived from their function as flood mitigation and their role as a navigable waterway. The economic vitality of the waterfront evolved based partially on a navigable waterway. An impairment that reduces the use, enjoyment or function of the waterway can be assumed to diminish its current and future economic value

Above information is excerpted from:

Site Reconnaissance Report, Southern Tributaries to Cayuga Inlet Dredging Project, Ecologic LLC and City of Ithaca, June 2010.

The full document can be found at: <http://www.ecologicllc.com/ithacadredging.html>