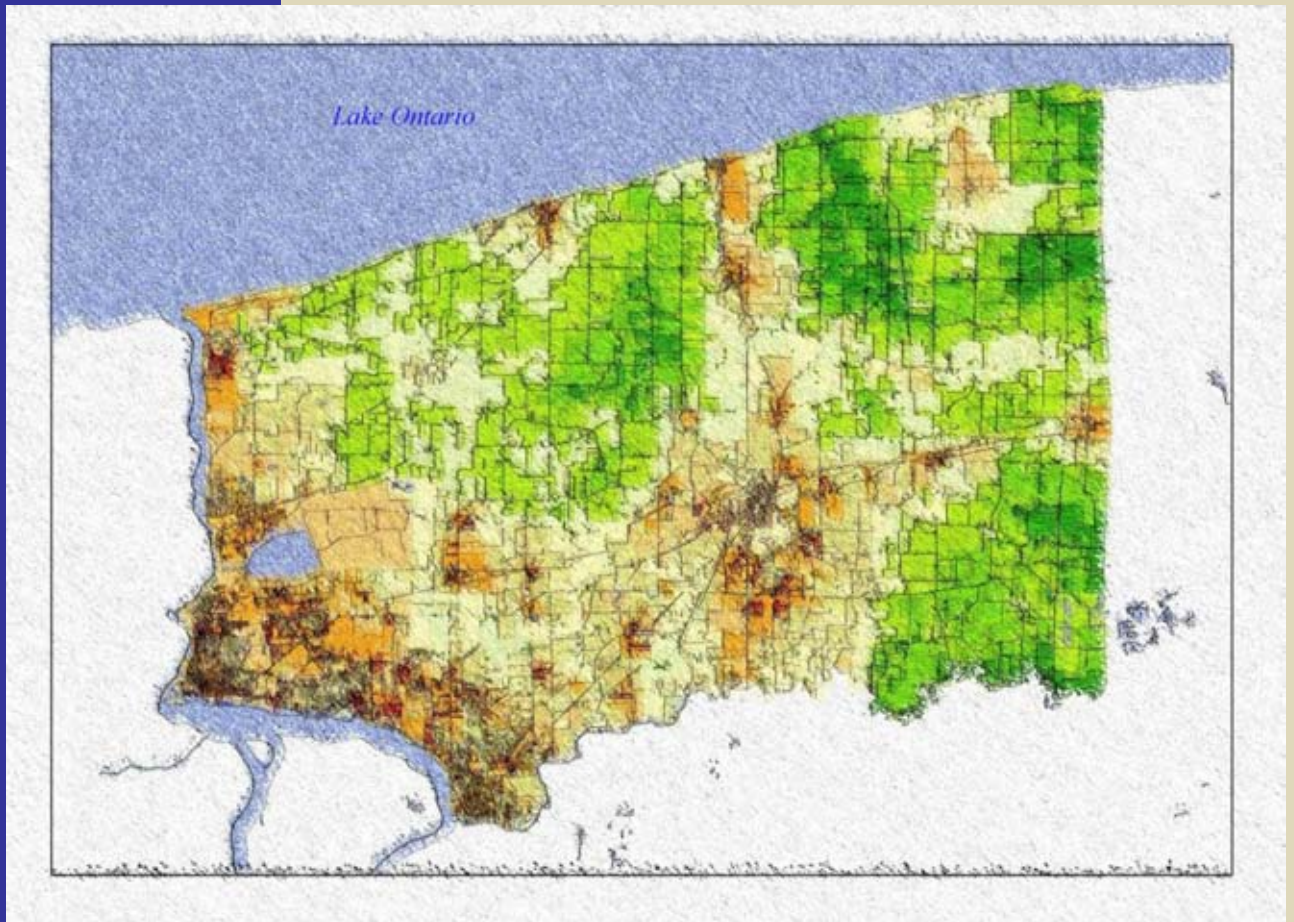




Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030



*A Plan to Communicate,
Collaborate & Connect
Niagara County, New York*

July 2009



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Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary

Overview

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030 is Niagara County's first-ever comprehensive planning document that is dedicated solely to the entire County and its twenty municipalities. Although the County and many communities within Niagara County have been actively involved in numerous local and regional planning initiatives in recent years, the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is countywide in perspective and emphasizes a multi-municipal approach to planning and informed decision-making. This countywide perspective is sometimes lacking in other plans and initiatives that are rightfully focused on addressing specific needs, projects, locations or particular opportunities within the Niagara region.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a framework for achieving five high priority goals:

- Encouraging desirable and appropriate growth and development
- Strengthening the local economy
- Improving the delivery of services
- Prioritizing and coordinating capital improvements
- Improving the quality of life for County residents

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to unify existing countywide planning efforts under a single umbrella document, while recognizing the important planning initiatives undertaken at other levels of government as well as by community organizations and agencies. The Plan is a guidepost to assist decision-making over the next 20 years by providing direction to County policies and the allocation of resources. It also provides further direction into ongoing and future planning efforts, including interdepartmental coordination within County government, furthering intermunicipal cooperation and public-private partnerships. The Plan also recommends various strategies and potential projects and will help in securing funding to undertake these initiatives.

Information on the Comprehensive Plan is available on the County's website at www.niagaracounty.com/comprehensiveplan.asp.

*Information on the
Comprehensive Plan
and the planning
process is available on
the County's website at
[www.
niagaracounty.com/
comprehensiveplan.asp](http://www.niagaracounty.com/comprehensiveplan.asp)*

Previous Planning Initiatives

The intent of the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is to build upon previous initiatives undertaken by stakeholders at different levels of municipal government as well as local and regional agencies, groups and organizations in Niagara County. It is not the intent of the Plan to duplicate or contradict these earlier efforts or the results of a lot of hard work by many dedicated individuals and organizations. Rather the Comprehensive Plan addresses certain issues and opportunities in greater detail, such as countywide land use. Previous initiatives, such as the Erie-Niagara Counties Framework for Regional Growth, the Niagara River Greenway Plan, and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Plan are among several initiatives referenced and summarized within the Comprehensive Plan. These initiatives are potential starting points for further countywide dialogue and actions.

Vision Statement

The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is the result of more than two years of stakeholder participation through formal and informal meetings, email correspondence, website information sharing, community surveys and other public forums. The planning process has focused on current countywide issues and discovering opportunities for fulfilling the County's Vision Statement, the complete text of which is expressed at the beginning of Chapter One of the Plan. It is a vision that strives for better recognition of the unique assets and the attractive diversity of natural, cultural and social resources of Niagara County communities.

Simply stated the Niagara County Vision Statement seeks the recognition of Niagara County as:

- A world class destination
- A center of national and international commerce
- A community that values its rich natural, heritage and cultural resources
- A great place to live and raise a family

The Comprehensive Plan represents the beginning of what needs to become an ongoing dialogue among communities, governments and stakeholders working collaboratively towards fulfillment of the vision for the County. The vision includes establishing Niagara County as a model for sustainable communities and environments. In order to achieve a sustainable future a shift from short-term to long-term thinking needs to occur. The valuable resources that contribute to Niagara County's present quality of life need to be better acknowledged, locally at first and then on a national, international and global scale. As the value of what the County has to offer is more fully recognized, especially by residents and decision-makers, then sound long-term planning principles will need to be implemented to protect and enhance the County's assets and resources for present and future generations.

Plan Review and Future Updates

Too often ambivalence and negative attitudes about the ability or reluctance to change can cause inaction. The inability to act on key issues of importance to the County could result in the eventual loss of unique assets and resources that should never be taken for granted. For example, the County's prime farmlands, unique natural features like the

The intent of the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is to build upon previous initiatives undertaken by stakeholders at different levels of municipal government as well as local and regional agencies, groups and organizations in Niagara County.

Niagara Escarpment, and the quality of life in the County's urban, suburban and rural areas need to be better understood and appreciated through public education. The Plan emphasizes increased communication, collaboration and connection among all the communities of Niagara County to foster a greater sense of understanding and appreciation of local assets and resources as identified within the Plan.

The information presented in the Plan is part of an evolutionary planning and decision-making process that needs to be maintained as an up-to-date source of data on the County. Stated goals and objectives found throughout the Plan need to be flexible in order to adjust to the changing needs and conditions of Niagara County. As such, the contents of the Plan are not intended to be static. Information has been added, for example, due to the recent global economic crisis. This added information includes potential funding opportunities to implement capital improvement projects within the County utilizing Federal Stimulus monies appropriated by Congress through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The Plan is an evolving guide that provides a foundation for a long term approach to problem solving, decision-making and for facilitating informed dialogue with the intent of resolving current issues and anticipating future countywide needs and opportunities. Good planning has no defined beginning nor should it have a defined endpoint. It simply needs to be an ongoing process to be most effective.

The content of the Niagara Communities' Comprehensive Plan is extensive and its value will be realized over time from its routine use. The Plan contains three distinct sections, but additional information can be added to it anytime in the future. Each section needs to be reviewed and updated as necessary by the County to make sure the document stays current. Periodic reviews should occur at no more than two-year intervals to identify and update information that becomes available. More substantive reviews and updates, including GIS mapping and analysis should occur at no greater than five year intervals.

Phase One – Chapters I through IV - Existing Conditions

Phase one of the planning process, which consists of Chapters I through IV of the Plan contains countywide, subregional and community-based information. For planning purposes each of the 20 municipalities within Niagara County were placed into one of five planning subregions based on location and other common characteristics such as existing land use and degree of development. Subregions include:

- The Upper River Communities
- The Lower River Communities
- The Central Communities
- The Lakefront Communities
- The Eastern Communities

Phase one provides a “snapshot” of existing conditions and current trends across Niagara County as of 2008. The first two chapters begin with a general introduction of the planning process, followed by a summary of previous planning initiatives undertaken within the County or specific communities. Chapters III and IV include detailed descriptions of existing conditions on a Countywide level and a community basis, respectively.

Chapter III provides extensive mapping that describes in detail various land uses, environmental features, demographics, public services and facilities throughout Niagara County. This is the first time that such complete mapping of existing conditions in the County

The information presented in the Plan is part of an evolutionary planning and decision-making process that needs to be maintained as an up-to-date source of data on the County.

The planning process included three distinct phases. Phase one focused on existing conditions throughout the County.

The second phase focused on existing issues and opportunities followed by strategies, goals, objectives and recommendations for each of the five topic areas.

The third phase is the implementation phase of the process and begins with public review and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

is available in one document. Chapter III introduces the concept of “Benchmarks” which are identified as values or conditions that presently exist in the County. These benchmarks are possible starting points from which measurements can be made, for example, in tracking changes in various land use categories across the County over time.

Chapter IV includes community profiles prepared for each of the 20 municipalities in the County consisting of land use maps, demographic, and employment information. These community profiles contain significant issues and opportunities identified by the communities during the planning process and can be used to supplement existing local plans or become the basis for preparing new plans. Chapter IV also includes subregional profiles that compile information according to the five planning subregions.

Phase one results provide a readily available source of information including detailed mapping of current physical features, socioeconomics and environmental resources within the County. This information is considered as baseline conditions from which future needs of the County can be determined and by which progress on resolving current issues can be monitored. Phase one chapters should be consulted frequently for important input into County and community decision-making processes.

Phase Two – Chapters V through IX - Issues, Opportunities and Recommendations

The second phase of the planning process is contained within Chapters V through IX. Each chapter addresses in some detail existing issues and opportunities identified by stakeholders during the planning process that relate to the five focus topics, also known as the five planning elements, of the Plan. These topics are listed below. The information contained within these five chapters includes issues and opportunities identified by planning subregion; strategies for dealing with issues identified in each chapter by a “Guidepost” symbol; goals and objectives for addressing specific issues and opportunities; and recommended actions to undertake for achieving those goals and objectives. Key recommendations are identified in the margins of each chapter by a “Milemarker” symbol.

The information provided under phase two provides guidance into tackling important issues and capitalizing on local and regional opportunities. It also allows for more informed decision-making by all levels of government as well as the general citizenry of the County relative to the following planning elements:

- Land Use, Transportation and Environmental Resources
- Economic Development
- County Services, Facilities and Infrastructure
- Education
- Public Health and Safety

Phase Three – Chapter X - Priorities and Plan Implementation

The third and final phase of the planning process is contained within Chapter X. This is the implementation section of the Plan. This section summarizes a series of key actions that should be undertaken to begin to “implement” the primary recommendations of the Plan identified in previous chapters. This section provides direction to responsible parties for carrying out actions.

Chapter X is an important section of the Plan because it lays out defined actions for implementing the Plan. This section of the Plan in particular requires periodic review

and updating as priorities change and actions are accomplished. This is especially important because it is the type of information that can be used to seek and secure possible funding to carry out important projects. For example, preparing a Countywide Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Plan is considered a high priority item for which funding should be sought. Once prepared, that plan in turn can be used to seek additional funding from State and Federal sources to implement recreation-related projects.

Current County Trends

Population trends indicate that the population of Niagara County as a whole has been declining for several decades, yet land use development, particularly residential use continues to spread northward and eastward from the older, more established urban centers of the County into rural areas. This type of an expanding development pattern without actual growth in population often results in fragmented and “leapfrog” land use patterns that consume valuable farmlands, and jeopardizing open spaces and important natural resources such as wetlands, floodplains and woodlands. Concerns over undesirable development patterns like these that result from redistribution of population are being expressed throughout the County.

The conversion of land from one use to another is reflected in apparent changes in community character. Changes in community character from relatively undeveloped forms of use to more developed uses are most noticeable in rural areas. In urban areas, shifting population to suburban and rural towns results in disinvestment, blighted neighborhoods and increases in vacant and underutilized properties.

If not managed correctly, subtle changes in land use over time can add cumulative pressures for converting agriculture and other rural uses to other uses that may place significant strain on local infrastructure and increased demand for public services. Increased demand in turn puts added stress on the financial resources of the County and local governments which are expected to provide support infrastructure and services. The financing of new or expanded infrastructure (roads, sewer, water, etc.) and services (fire and police protection, schools, etc.) generally comes from increased property and special district taxes.

Stakeholders with varied interests and levels of expertise in wide ranging topics expressed interest and concern over the effects of sprawl in Niagara County. Early in the planning process it became readily apparent that stakeholders, regardless of their backgrounds and interests, were overwhelmingly concerned about the physical, environmental, social and fiscal implications of sprawl on the overall character and economic health of communities in Niagara County. These concerns were repeatedly voiced throughout the planning process. Although communities may be addressing these issues at local levels through their own municipal planning efforts and land use regulations, there is significant added value in looking at these issues from multi-municipal and countywide perspectives which is accomplished in this Plan.

The potential for sprawl and land use conflicts caused by incompatibilities in zoning along municipal boundaries can often be a point of contention, especially where communities may be developing at different rates and competition for development varies. Conflicts may present themselves for example, at village/town boundaries or along town/city boundaries. Added value to local planning can be derived from taking a larger perspective that encompasses multiple municipalities to identify common issues, visions for the future, and land use goals among communities. Value is also derived from a better understanding of the unique attributes and opportunities that each community contributes to the overall diversity and quality of life in the County.

An expanding development pattern without actual growth in population often results in fragmented and “leapfrog” land use patterns, otherwise known as sprawl that consumes valuable land and natural resources.

Added value to local planning can be derived from taking a larger perspective that encompasses multiple municipalities to identify common issues, visions for the future, and land use goals among communities.

Identification and an increased understanding of the many unique characteristics and commonalities among communities in Niagara County is a primary focus of this Plan. A multi-jurisdictional and subregional perspective among neighboring municipalities adds to an appreciation for the things municipalities have in common and for the uniqueness assets and attributes of individual communities. This appreciation can result in greater collaboration towards more consistency in land use patterns, economic development practices, and the provision of services across municipal boundaries that will ultimately benefit all residents within the County.

Land Use, Transportation and Environment Element

Under the topic of land use, transportation and environment, several key issues and opportunities emerged during the planning process. Regardless of location in the County the issue of future land use and sprawl with its implications on farmlands, community character, transportation corridors, and the natural environment has been expressed as an important concern to communities. Managing sprawl to protect viable agriculture and existing farmlands in addition to maintaining rural character and open space resources is a considerable challenge facing communities today throughout the country as they attempt to preserve their uniqueness and identity. The issue is not limited to rural portions of Niagara County, but urban and suburban communities as well as they seek to enhance quality of life and local identity.

Environmental issues and related opportunities focused on the importance of cleaning up previously contaminated lands and redeveloping brownfields and other underutilized properties. The County has also been host to numerous waste disposal sites in the past, hazardous and non-hazardous and the County should consider formulating policies and procedures for dealing with these issues in the future.

Management of water resources, air quality, wildlife habitats, unique natural features such as the Niagara Escarpment, and important scenic resources is also on the list of priority issues in the County. There is widespread recognition that future economic development opportunities are afforded through protection of the County's rich natural resources, waterfronts, parklands and cultural resources including the Erie Canal corridor.

Transportation issues have centered on the need for improvements and maintenance of existing roads and bridges and planning for the future needs of the County in terms of alternative means of travel and movement of agricultural goods and materials. There appears to be widespread support for multi-modal projects in urban areas and enhanced pedestrian and non-motorized trail networks throughout the County.

Addressing and analyzing the issue of sprawl and identifying the future infrastructure and service needs of the County have been a major focus of the planning process and a topic of much discussion among project stakeholders. The Comprehensive Plan recommends several strategies for dealing with sprawl and its implications relative to the future of Niagara County. Mitigating sprawl will provide enhanced quality of life benefits for County residents as well as afford opportunities for economic development and the provision of County services and public infrastructure in a cost effective manner.

The analysis of existing land use development trends and patterns on a countywide basis is an important component of the Comprehensive Plan. The analysis is presented

in Chapter Five. This information provides a countywide land use perspective that has been unavailable up to now. The overall result of the analysis is the conceptual identification of areas across the County that can be considered most suited for development and/or redevelopment at appropriate densities based on local municipal plans and land use regulations. The analysis also identifies areas that may be considered less suited to development and more suited for management, protection and conservation of important natural resources.

Chapter Five can be utilized by local municipalities as a source of information for their own detailed land use planning needs. Because the analysis is done at a countywide scale municipalities may choose to use this information as a starting point for more detailed study of land use and environmental resources at the local level. Communities may utilize the information as they see appropriate according to their land use planning needs and goals.

Strategies for managing land use emphasize the importance of directing future growth and development as well as infill redevelopment to areas within or adjacent to established centers of population in the County's 3 cities, 5 villages, and town centers where infrastructure and public services already exist. Each of the 20 municipalities in the County has areas suited for future development and redevelopment. By directing and encouraging development into these areas valuable farmlands, unique natural features, aquatic and terrestrial natural resources and local community character can be protected and enhanced for a more sustainable future.

Additional strategies beyond sustainable land use management practices include promoting concepts of enhanced "connectivity" among communities and recognition of the importance of maintaining "green infrastructure" countywide. Connectivity encourages physically connecting communities via road, trail and waterway networks that can accommodate alternative means of transportation such as walking, hiking, biking, canoeing, horseback riding, and vehicle use. Connectivity encourages less reliance on motorized transportation in favor of a healthier alternative to travel between destinations.

Maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure which includes existing natural systems and ecological functions such as wetlands, floodplains, and woodlands is a way to lessen the physical stress and associated costs of maintaining "gray" infrastructure that typically consists of traditionally engineered stormwater management, piping and drainage systems. The benefits of maintaining green infrastructure include:

- Enhanced wildlife habitats
- Water conservation and groundwater recharge
- Reduced flooding, erosion and pollutant loads on waterways
- Reduced stormwater management construction and maintenance costs
- Reduced sewer overflows in urban areas
- Improved air quality and reduced heat island effects
- Lower energy consumption
- Recreational and open space opportunities
- Enhanced property value
- Improved human health

Three overarching land use, transportation and environmental strategies need to be considered in decision-making processes in Niagara County. Implementation of these strategies along with other related principles and practices of sustainability promoted by the Plan can put Niagara County and its communities in a leadership position among New York State municipalities. These include:

Strategies for managing land use emphasize the importance of directing future growth and development as well as infill redevelopment to areas within or adjacent to established centers of population in the County's 3 cities, 5 villages, and town centers where infrastructure and public services already exist.

- 1.) Encouraging land use policies and related decision-making at County levels that are based on the principles and practices of environmental sustainability and smart growth. This includes practices designed to promote green infrastructure across the County as a way of better integrating natural systems and natural resource conservation into land use planning, project reviews and decision-making processes.
- 2.) Promoting transportation policies which are interwoven with land use decision-making that consider sustainable practices consistent with Federal and State agencies, as well as the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization, the GBNRTC, all of which encourage smart growth practices.
- 3.) Encouraging greater communication, collaboration, and connectivity among communities with physical linkages to areas both within and beyond Niagara County borders as a means of enhancing transportation choices for the movement of people and goods by creating interconnected systems served by both motorized and non-motorized alternatives.

Economic Development Element

Niagara County's ability to guide development in towns, villages and cities is very limited because land use decisions are largely a local municipality's responsibility under the provisions of New York State Municipal "Home Rule" Law. The County's primary land use planning function is to provide guidance and recommendations to communities about future land use as provided in the Comprehensive Plan.

The County however, does have the ability to influence land use and transportation through its project permitting decisions under Section 239 of Municipal Law when State and County facilities are affected. When it comes to economic development decisions County officials, working in collaboration with local municipalities, can also play a much more direct role in steering projects toward suitable development and redevelopment areas. The County can also encourage compact, mixed-use and transit-oriented forms of development that are interwoven with its transportation and environmental goals and policies. Similarly, the County can encourage initiatives in parts of the County considered to be environmentally sensitive.

Development and redevelopment projects typically need access to existing road, water, drainage and sewer infrastructure systems along with necessary support services to facilitate economic growth and development. System improvements and upgrades may also be necessary. Development and redevelopment should be steered to areas within the County's cities and villages, as well as appropriate fringe areas of cities and villages, suburban town centers, and existing hamlets/rural crossroads. The redevelopment and reuse of brownfields and infill development of vacant and other underutilized properties can have significant positive impact on communities and further protect rural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and should be encouraged.

Locations identified in the Plan as being poorly suited for development and redevelopment from a land use or environmental perspective may be attractive at first glance to develop for financial reasons. Land values and property acquisition costs may be substantially lower in rural areas and therefore, attractive to develop. The value to the community of developing resource areas may not be reflected in a property's market value and the true cost of development may not be realized for some time. The

The redevelopment and reuse of brownfields and infill development of vacant and other underutilized properties can have significant positive impact on communities and further protect rural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and should be encouraged.

cumulative effect of development of valuable resources such as prime farmlands, wetlands and riparian corridors, may not be fully realized at first until these areas become increasingly fragmented and ultimately lose their inherent value.

In economic terms, the cumulative effect of typical forms of “leapfrog” development and conventional subdivision is an increased cost to municipal and County government for new or expanded infrastructure, added support services, such as roads, sewer, drainage systems, schools, fire districts, and increased demands on current transportation systems. These added costs translate into higher taxes on residents and property owners.

Inter-governmental cooperation and collaboration are critical to directing and encouraging development, preferably mixed-use development, into those areas of each community that are considered suitable for development/redevelopment. This will also make it easier to preserve important community characteristics, such as scenic open spaces, environmentally sensitive lands, and working farmlands that contribute to a community’s sense of identity and character.

Inter-municipal cooperation is also important in attracting and recruiting those businesses and industries that best complement the unique character of each community, whether they are urban centers, suburban communities, waterfront communities or farming communities. Economic development needs to be appropriate to the existing infrastructure and regional location of communities relative to the rest of Niagara County. For example, large industrial uses and businesses that rely on extensive infrastructure and support services should first consider locations in areas that are appropriately zoned for such uses and served by existing infrastructure; tourism-based businesses along the area’s many beautiful waterfronts should be located consistent with the Niagara River Greenway and Erie Canalway initiatives; and agriculturally-based businesses and home-based enterprises are suited to rural communities.

There must be a concerted countywide collaborative effort to prioritize improvements and upgrades to existing infrastructure, especially with regards to water, sewer and transportation systems, before consideration is given to creating new infrastructure. Obviously in cases where public health and safety are at risk, priorities must be different based on those needs.

Giving top priority to the maintenance and improvement of existing infrastructure over the creation of new systems, and directing development/redevelopment to where it already exists, is consistent with national planning principles and with New York State and regional planning initiatives. Agencies like the NYS Department of State, the NYS Department of Transportation, the Greater Buffalo Niagara Region Transportation Council, and many others have expressed their support of sustainable principles and smart growth initiatives. By focusing on improving the infrastructure that is already in place, communities can inhibit and prevent sprawling development patterns and possibly reverse the continuing migration of businesses and populations from traditional centers of commerce in the County.

When businesses decide where to locate their operations, they consider numerous factors, such as the availability of a prepared workforce, proximity to major transportation routes and markets, and other strategic advantages of a location. Quality of life factors, such as diverse housing, education, transportation alternatives, walkability and recreational opportunities can tip the scales in a given community’s favor. The ability to attract and retain employment and economic activity can be enhanced by preservation of the County’s natural and cultural assets. The recommendations contained within the Comprehensive Plan can help ensure that Niagara County’s communities can continue to both attract business opportunity and protect important quality of life factors.

Priority given to the maintenance and improvement of existing infrastructure over the creation of new systems, and directing development and redevelopment to where it already exists, is consistent with national planning principles and State planning initiatives.

The task of providing financially-effective and fiscally responsible services are increasingly complicated by changing demographics and aging infrastructure throughout Niagara County.

County Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Element

Niagara County provides a wide range of services, facilities and public infrastructure that contributes to the area's present standard of living. Niagara County remains committed to meeting its responsibilities to its residents, businesses and taxpayers by providing the most efficient and cost-effective services possible. It is imperative that existing services, facilities and infrastructure are maintained in a manner that retains their public investment value as well as keeping pace with the changing needs of County residents, businesses, property owners, and visitors.

The task of providing financially-effective and fiscally responsible services are increasingly complicated by changing demographics and aging infrastructure throughout Niagara County. An aging population requires new and expanded services at a time when budgets are under increased strain themselves. A growing senior population will require increased health care, affordable housing, accessible transportation and a host of other services and facilities. Aging public facilities and infrastructure also add to stress on local budgets because of increased costs for maintenance and upgrades.

In lieu of new infrastructure, continuing prioritized maintenance and replacement programs and strategically upgrading existing water, sewer, drainage, road and bridge systems needs to be a countywide priority as part of an effective management strategy. Emphasis on directing limited resources to maintain and upgrade existing systems is particularly important when such actions will help facilitate and direct development and redevelopment to appropriate areas of the County.

Opportunities for enhanced sharing of services, joint facilities, and possible consolidation of services and facilities through inter-municipal agreements between the County and local municipalities and among municipalities themselves need to be investigated further acknowledging that such arrangements already exist in some communities. Feasibility studies should be encouraged which are often supported at State levels under shared services incentive grant programs. Although some of the more obvious studies often include police, fire, shared court systems, and emergency services, some less obvious alternatives need to be explored such as inter-municipal stormwater management, joint parks and recreation facilities, shared school facilities, joint training programs, and inter-municipal subregional planning initiatives.

Education Element

During the comprehensive planning process stakeholders, including local residents, educators and service providers acknowledged that there are some significant issues related to the provision of educational services in Niagara County. Many, but not all, issues center on some common themes, including:

- Increasing school taxes on property owners at a time of decreasing population in the County;
- A need to identify additional funding sources to support education;
- A perception, and perhaps a reality, that there are redundancies and inefficiencies in services within and among school districts;
- Concerns over the escalating cost of fuel, especially in transporting students to and from dispersed locations;
- A possible time lag between the needs of employers for particular skill sets in the workforce and job training programs; and

- A need for improved educational facilities, resources and infrastructure, such as high-tech computer software and hardware.

These issues are complex and will not be resolved quickly or easily by a single action on the County's part. It is important to remember that the Comprehensive Plan is intended to prompt discussion on these issues, and identify possible ways to resolve them, among multiple school districts, educators, and residents. It is critical that these stakeholders create and sustain an ongoing dialogue, perhaps through a joint action committee that involves all school districts in the County, including administrators, teachers, transportation officials, educators from institutions of higher learning such as NCCC, BOCES and student representatives. This dialogue needs to identify where efficiencies and cost cutting measures can be established without adversely affecting the quality of services.

It is also important to recognize that land use and development decisions can have significant effects on the need for public services and infrastructure, including educational services. Sprawling development resulting in dispersed populations particularly in rural areas tend to translate into higher transportation costs and the need to site school facilities in multiple locations according to residential development patterns. The land use and development principles recommended in the Plan provide opportunities to manage costs to taxpayers and school districts by encouraging redevelopment in areas where school facilities may already exist. Managed growth and concentrated forms of development can control the cost of providing services and related infrastructure at dispersed locations and result in smaller taxpayer burdens.

Public Health & Safety Element

One of the key recommendations coming out of the planning process with regard to public health and safety is to increase public education opportunities and communication among communities to expand citizen awareness of countywide and local efforts in preparing for potential emergencies and large-scale disasters. The lack of awareness and community input into local and County planning for emergencies was cited as an issue by residents of several communities.

Although the County has made great strides in emergency preparedness in recent years, additional collaboration and information sharing with local officials and the public may be warranted, perhaps through local public education and information sessions, community meetings, and via County and local websites. With regard to public health, safety and emergency preparedness, Niagara County needs to enhance communication and collaboration with local municipalities and other jurisdictional agencies involved in public health and safety in educating citizens, assisting in developing detailed local emergency plans, planning for disaster prevention through local land use policies to prevent occurrences like flooding, and establishing policies that facilitate recovery and redevelopment.

Land use management policies are key to preventing or mitigating the effects of natural and man-made emergencies. The County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan cites several examples, including:

- Adopting a land use management policy to promote the control of private development in floodplains at local levels of government, and to assure that County construction activities comply with State floodplain regulations
- Encouraging lending institutions to withhold funding of projects in areas prone to disasters

Land use and development decisions can have significant effects on the need for public services and infrastructure, including educational services.

Land use management policies are key to preventing or mitigating the effects of natural and man-made emergencies.

- Promoting underground utility lines in new subdivisions to prevent power outages due to destruction of lines during storms
- Promoting the development of building regulations at local levels of government
- Developing compliance and enforcement programs, including designation of officials to implement policies

Implementation Plan

Implementation of the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan begins with its formal acceptance by each municipality in the County and adoption by the County Legislature. This formal process also includes public review and comment under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) as required by State Municipal Law. This information is provided in detail in Chapter II of the Plan and summarized as necessary administrative actions in Chapter X.

Once adopted the Plan becomes a guide for decision-making by all levels of government including the State, regional entities, County and local municipalities. Decisions on a variety of actions by both the public and private sector should consider the contents of the Plan and determine the consistency of proposed actions with the Plan's goals and recommendations. The Plan cannot anticipate all issues and opportunities that may present themselves in the future. Therefore, the Plan should undergo periodic reviews and updates at approximately two year intervals with more extensive review and updates at five year intervals to ensure that it remains current and meets the needs of the County and its communities.

Chapter X which is the Implementation section of the Plan highlights about two dozen recommended actions to begin the process of implementing the Plan. These actions are considered high priority items for various reasons that are identified throughout the Plan. However, chapters V through IX contain detailed strategies, goals, objectives and numerous recommendations that should be considered for implementation in the future. These chapters also identify critical projects throughout the County that could be funded by the availability of recent Federal Stimulus monies and/or leveraged with other grant and funding opportunities at Federal, State, and local levels.

As projects are identified and undertaken and as funding mechanisms become known this information should be updated to maintain the usefulness and up-to-date status of the Comprehensive Plan. This is critical to an ongoing and successful planning process.

Implementation of the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan begins with its formal acceptance by each municipality in the County and adoption by the County Legislature.

Chapter I

Introduction

Vision Statement

Niagara County is a world class destination; home to natural wonders including Niagara Falls, the Niagara River, the Niagara Escarpment and Gorge, and Lake Ontario; a community steeped in the celebration of its beauty, culture, and man-made heritage like the Erie Canalway; and a place to see and share with others.

Niagara County is a center of national and international commerce; a place to locate and grow your business, find high quality employment, attend fine institutions of learning, learn a trade or hone your skills, and be part of a well-prepared and productive workforce.

Niagara County is a community that values its rich natural resources; a community working together to protect and restore natural resources, conserve important wildlife habitat, clean up contaminated lands, and ensure that our gift to future generations is a sustainable environment.

Niagara County is a great place to live and raise a family; a diverse community of historic cities, towns, and villages; from the uniqueness and vibrancy of our waterfront communities to the pastoral beauty and gentle lifestyles of our farming communities, Niagara County is a safe and healthy place to live, work, and play; a place of diverse housing choices, excellent schools, abundant recreation opportunities, and affordable living; and a community offering a high quality of life for all.

Niagara County Communities 2008

Introduction

The Vision Statement expressed at the beginning of this Plan summarizes the great diversity and uniqueness of the natural and cultural resources that exist within Niagara County and that contribute so significantly to the quality of life of its communities. Just as important, the Vision Statement points to a number of overarching goals that are intended to enhance Niagara County's role as **a world class destination, a center of commerce, a model for sustainable environments, and a premier place to live.** These important themes were discussed throughout the planning process and form the foundation for many of the stated goals, objectives, strategies and recommendations of this Plan.

This Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030 is Niagara County's first comprehensive plan. The Plan is the result of nearly two years of stakeholder participation and public dialogue focused on identifying current issues and discovering opportunities to fulfill the Vision of the County. In recent years, Niagara County and many of its twenty municipalities have taken a proactive approach to planning for the future and a great deal of work has been accomplished by a variety of agencies, organizations, groups and individuals. However, additional work is needed in order to make the Vision for Niagara County a reality.

Like all planning tools this Comprehensive Plan is focused on the future of Niagara County. However, its value in providing countywide information as a snapshot of current conditions and trends across Niagara County in 2008 cannot be overstated. This document provides a compilation of information that is exclusive to Niagara County and its communities.

This information constitutes baseline data from which future progress on resolving issues can be measured.

Information contained within this Plan is provided in written and graphic formats. Much of this information has not been previously available to County residents, property owners, developers and public officials. For example, this Plan contains more than 100 countywide and topic-specific maps and supporting graphics utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data, analysis and mapping techniques. Information available in this comprehensive document can be referenced to facilitate dialogue and allow for more informed decision-making about future land use, public services and infrastructure needs within the County.

Background

The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan has been created to provide a frame of reference for more informed decision-making at County levels based upon a more thorough knowledge of the existing conditions and future needs of Niagara County. This is particularly important as the County celebrates its Bicentennial in 2008. As its name implies, this Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is considered unique because it includes a considerable amount of information and input from local communities. County officials decided very early in the planning process that the Plan needs to reflect what is on the minds of residents living in communities throughout Niagara County.

This Plan reveals and documents some of the most pressing issues and concerns of County residents and other stakeholders. More importantly, however, this Plan represents the beginning of what needs to become an ongoing dialogue among communities, governments and stakeholders working collaboratively towards fulfillment of the vision for the County.

Niagara County

A World Class Destination

A Center of National and International Commerce

A Community that Values its Rich Natural Resources

A Great Place to Live and Raise a Family

Preparation of this Plan began in 2006 when Niagara County officials sought funding assistance from New York State for its preparation. Funding assistance was secured in early 2007 from two State agencies: The New York State Department of State through the Quality Communities Grant Program, and the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation, Office of Community Renewal.

Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP was selected in mid-2007 as the County's planning consultant for the project. The County formed a Coordination Committee to oversee preparation of the Plan during the second half of 2007. The Coordination Committee included representatives of the County Legislature, County Manager, Commissioner of Economic Development, and County Planning. A Plan Steering Committee was also formed, which included representatives from each of the 20 municipalities of the County and the County's three Native American communities. Documentation of meetings held with the Plan Steering Committee, stakeholders and the public are provided in Plan Appendix A.

Recently, Niagara County and Erie County collaborated with numerous stakeholders in preparing the Erie-Niagara Counties Framework for Regional Growth to address regional issues and opportunities. The Framework was adopted in 2006 and laid the foundation for future planning initiatives by both counties including this Comprehensive Plan.

Niagara County has also been significantly involved in the Niagara River Greenway Plan and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Plan among other initiatives of regional importance. These and other initiatives are briefly summarized in Chapter II. These initiatives have regionwide perspectives that cross County boundaries in addressing specific issues, opportunities and resources. By contrast, up to now Niagara County has lacked a comprehensive approach to decision-making at the County level that explicitly addresses the interests and opportunities of all of the communities within its borders.

The need for a countywide comprehensive plan became increasingly evident over the years especially as these regional planning initiatives moved forward. Many issues and opportunities of countywide significance were identified by those initiatives, but as regional studies they could not address more locally specific topics regarding existing conditions, trends and the future needs of the communities in the County. Nevertheless, these initiatives helped to establish a need and build momentum for community-based dialogue supporting a more comprehensive approach to growth and development, County services, public infrastructure needs, resource protection and advancing opportunities for greater economic benefits derived from the area's rich natural and cultural resources.

This Plan builds upon other regional and local community planning initiatives, plans and studies. It provides discussion aimed at better understanding the complex role and interrelationships that land use, transportation, infrastructure, services and development decisions play in the County's overall quality of life. The planning process has brought stakeholders together to discuss and reach a better understanding of specific issues and important opportunities that exist in the County's urban, suburban and rural communities.

The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan identifies key issues on the minds of County residents and other stakeholders. As the planning process moved forward,

This Plan represents the beginning of what needs to become an ongoing dialogue among communities, governments and stakeholders working collaboratively towards fulfillment of the vision for the County.

“Sprawl is defined as uncontrolled, low-density, fragmented, automobile-dependent development that rapidly spreads on the fringes of existing communities, often consuming agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands.”

the complexity and interrelationships of many issues became increasingly obvious to those involved in the process. Issues and opportunities surfaced as a result of discussions that occurred during the process and many can potentially have a significant bearing on Niagara County’s future and the overall quality of life of its residents.

Population trends indicate that the population of Niagara County has been declining for some time, yet development patterns have been spreading northward and eastward farther and farther into the rural areas of the County. The continuation of these “sprawling” development patterns frequently results in the suburbanization of what were once completely rural areas. Sprawl has been identified as an important countywide issue. “Sprawl is defined as uncontrolled, low-density, fragmented, automobile-dependent development that rapidly spreads on the fringes of existing communities, often consuming agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands.” (League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara. 2006).

Nationwide the consequences of haphazard development or sprawl have shown to include: the loss of prime farmland, unique farm soils, and the decline of widespread agriculture; encroachment and ultimate degradation or loss of natural systems that otherwise provide natural flood control, wildlife habitat, and protection of water quality and quantity; adverse effects on community aesthetics such as increased noise levels, visual impacts and loss of community character; and increased costs to taxpayers for providing expanded services such as new schools, fire protection and public infrastructure such as new roads, sewer and water systems. A multitude of studies, reports and publications are available that provide information on sprawl and the costs associated with it.

The Brookings Institution is among the many organizations that have studied the fiscal implications of sprawl as well as the benefits of Smart Growth development patterns on communities and regions. One such Brookings study summarizes these relationships between land use and fiscal welfare:

...rational use of more compact development patterns from 2000 to 2025 promise the following sorts of savings for governments nationwide: 11.8 percent, or \$110 billion, from 25-year road building costs; 6 percent, or \$12.6 billion, from 25-year water and sewer costs; and 3.7 percent, \$4 billion, for annual operations and service delivery. (The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy. 2004)

Brookings (2004) also found that regional economic performance is enhanced and that suburbs benefit from Smart Growth development patterns and investment in “healthy urban cores”. Research by Brookings and others suggests that adoption of smart growth policies and practices could reduce capital expenditures for some state’s and localities in the range of 10 to 20 percent at a minimum.

As documented within this Plan, significant concerns have been expressed about the adverse effects of sprawl and unmanaged growth and development in Niagara County. Because these issues are complex and often cross municipal boundaries, the County is uniquely qualified to bring communities together to address these issues from a countywide perspective.

Focus of this Plan

– Communication, Collaboration and Connection

The planning process is focused on enhancing communication and collaboration within and among various communities and stakeholders across Niagara County in identifying and addressing topics of concern and interest. As such, this Plan serves as a tool to facilitate an ongoing communication process and collaborative efforts among all Niagara communities. The Plan also emphasizes the need to enhance connections among communities, physically as well as figuratively in order to promote a better understanding of countywide issues and opportunities.

The need for enhanced communication, collaboration and connection is emphasized throughout this document. By bringing stakeholders from communities across the County together to sit down and discuss their needs and those of their neighbors, the Niagara communities may be able to view short and long-term needs and goals from different perspectives.

This Plan also focuses on utilization of sound land use policies, such as implementation of “Smart Growth” principles on a countywide basis. Existing and future land use issues are discussed throughout the Plan accompanied by considerable mapped information, particularly in Chapters III, IV and V. These chapters also include information relative to present planning within Niagara County communities, some of which have up-to-date comprehensive plans that incorporate Smart Growth principles.

Each chapter of this Comprehensive Plan, whether devoted to economic development, County services and infrastructure, education, or public health and safety is tied in some way to the influences that past and future land use decisions have on residents and taxpayers in Niagara County. As land use evolves it affects virtually all other aspects of community life. In New York State land use decisions are largely the sole responsibility of local municipalities under the State’s Municipal Law, also referred to as “Home Rule”.

Municipal responsibility under “Home Rule” is discussed in Chapter II. It is important to note however, that what one municipality decides relative to land use, transportation and public infrastructure within its boundaries, through local comprehensive plans, zoning and other land use regulations, can have profound effects on determining land use patterns and the provision of infrastructure and services in adjoining municipalities and throughout the County. The County itself also influences land use by making decisions on where public infrastructure is developed and where services are provided.

As part of the planning process the County was divided into five planning subregions to facilitate discussion and the identification of commonalities and differences among the various areas of the County. Utilizing this subregional approach enabled discussion and analysis that considered future land use and how development patterns and trends may be altered to concentrate development to areas where it is most appropriate, thereby reducing the adverse effects of sprawl. In many cases these areas already have important infrastructure in place as well as the services needed to support future growth and development. The concentration of large-scale development in potentially suitable development and redevelopment areas in turn

In New York State land use decisions are largely the sole responsibility of local municipalities under the State’s Municipal Law, also referred to as “Home Rule”.

will help protect irreplaceable resources, such as prime farmlands, and control the cost to taxpayers related to the provision of public services and infrastructure by County and local governments.

Decisions relative to land use, although often made with the best of intentions, can sometimes result in unforeseen adverse cumulative impacts on the environment. For example, approvals of small scale projects that by themselves may seem relatively safe, but when considered as part of a larger development scenario can result in “leap frog” development patterns that fragment prime farmlands and adversely affect naturally functioning systems such as wetland complexes and floodplains. Therefore, this Plan considers future land use from a more countywide and subregional perspective to help guide future decisions and reduce the potential for adverse and cumulative impacts on communities and the environment.

Organization of the Plan

This Comprehensive Plan (Plan) is organized into ten chapters and several appendices. Each chapter has been set up to address a particular area of interest and intended to function independent or nearly independent of other chapters. This format will allow information to be updated and revised as necessary in the future without the need to revise the entire Plan at any one time. The format also provides the user the ability to focus on those elements that may be of most interest.

Phase I - Existing Conditions

This chapter, Chapter I, provides a brief introduction to the comprehensive planning process and general contents of the Plan. It is followed by three chapters prepared during Phase One of the planning process that focused on existing conditions within the County. This phase also identified previous planning initiatives and studies conducted within the general Niagara region, the County and its 20 municipalities.

Chapter II describes the overall planning process and justification for preparing the Comprehensive Plan. This chapter also provides discussion relative to the Plan’s purpose, need and the authority given to the County Legislature under provisions of NYS Municipal Law to undertake preparation of a comprehensive plan. State law allows counties to undertake comprehensive planning as a service to their residents and communities. Chapter II also summarizes numerous noteworthy planning initiatives and studies that have been undertaken in recent years by State, regional and local agencies, groups and organizations that have particular relevance to Niagara County and its communities.

Chapter III describes existing conditions within Niagara County as of 2008. This chapter provides a wealth of important information for use as benchmarks, so that future updates of the Comprehensive Plan can reflect back on these conditions in order to measure progress being made towards achieving stated goals and objectives under the five elements of the Plan.

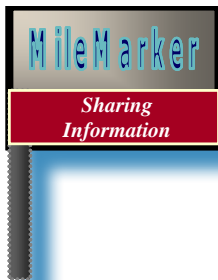
Chapter III introduces the several concepts as measurement tools to track progress of the Plan as it is implemented. These include the use of benchmarks, guideposts, milemarkers and milestones. Symbols representing these concepts have been placed in the sidebars throughout the document, to indicate that corresponding content is important to the Plan’s implementation.



Benchmark – This term and its associated symbol denote a specific situation, characteristic or condition that presently exists as a starting point from which measurements can be made much like a surveyor begins with a known benchmark from which all further measurements are taken. As an example, the percentage of a specific category of land use that currently exists within the County as identified in Chapter III is a benchmark value. These percentages, such as total farmland acreage in the County can be tracked to determine changes in agriculture over time.



Guidepost – This term and its associated symbol denote specific strategies that can be implemented to achieve certain outcomes. As a guidepost the strategy sets a direction for achieving a desired outcome, just as one might follow a guidepost to reach a destination. Using farmland protection as an example, one strategy to enhance agriculture includes adopting sustainable land use practices such as directing new development and public infrastructure to existing population centers in order to reduce pressure on rural agricultural lands.



MileMarker - This term and its associated symbol denote a measurement of progress in completing significant recommended actions relative to achieving stated goals and objectives. The milemarker may be an interim, but important accomplishment and may be emphasized as one among many recommendations. For example, a milemarker may be the completion of a revised and up-to-date County Farmland Protection Plan that is part of the goal and objectives that seeks the reversal in the trend of farmland conversion across the County. The MileMarker can become a new benchmark for measuring further progress on an issue.



Milestone – This term and its associated symbol identifies a significant event that can be achieved as a result of implementing a specific course of action. For example, using the farmland protection example, a milestone may be the adoption by municipalities of a revised, up-to-date County Farmland Protection Plan. A milestone event may also be the reversal in the trend of farmland conversion as stated in the example above. Another milestone event will be the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter III includes a considerable amount of mapped information using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data provided by State and County sources. These maps illustrate existing conditions related to land use, transportation, natural

resources, man-made facilities, cultural resources, public infrastructure, public facilities, demographics and socioeconomic conditions throughout the County. Many benchmarks are noted in the chapter to underscore the importance of this information in monitoring future progress towards stated goals.

Chapter IV provides summary profiles of key existing conditions within specific Niagara County communities. Each of the 20 municipalities in the County has a Community Profile that summarizes important local data and information related to land use, demographics and socioeconomic conditions. Each profile also provides summaries gathered from participating communities on significant issues, opportunities, goals and objectives categorized under each of the five Plan elements. Profile information was provided by community representatives that participated as Plan Steering Committee members. Local comprehensive plans and similar community-based documents were reviewed and information selected from these documents has been included in the Community Profiles.

Phase II - Plan Elements

Phase II of the planning process focused on each of five primary Plan elements:

Chapter V – Land Use and Environment;

Chapter VI – Economic Development;

Chapter VII – County Services, Facilities and Infrastructure;

Chapter VIII – Education; and

Chapter IX – Public Health and Safety.

Chapter V discusses land use, related transportation issues, and environmental information. This chapter builds upon information provided in previous chapters, and focuses on some of the most important issues and challenges presently confronting local communities and the County as a whole with regards to land development and natural resource protection. Chapter V provides analyses and recommendations on future land use and environmental resources under a Smart Growth countywide scenario. The analyses is focused on identifying those areas of the County that are most suited to development and redevelopment as well as areas considered to be most important for resource protection. This chapter outlines recommended actions for developed, developing and undeveloped areas of the County. Concern over the continued exodus of population and businesses from urban areas in the County, the loss of viable farmlands, changes in rural character, sprawling development, and the potential loss of natural assets are addressed in Chapter V.

Chapter VI provides information relative to economic development within Niagara County. This chapter identifies issues and concerns expressed during the planning process as well as future economic development initiatives and opportunities. Much of the information contained in this chapter has been summarized from Niagara County's annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report which discusses current and future economic development initiatives and opportunities in detail.

Chapter VII discusses the provision of County services, facilities and public infrastructure. This chapter contains specific information on the types of services provided to residents by various departments within Niagara County government. Information is also provided on County-owned facilities, including parklands, and other County-owned and maintained infrastructure such as roads and bridges.

Issues and opportunities discussed during the planning process focused on the lack of infrastructure and services in some areas of the County and the need for improvements to existing public infrastructure such as roads, sewer and water systems.

Chapter VIII focuses on local education and the various educational institutions and systems available within the County. Baseline information is provided on the County's ten school districts, the public library system and related facilities. Summary information on institutions of higher learning and continuing education is also provided including Niagara University, Niagara County Community College and Niagara County BOCES.

Chapter IX provides information on public health and safety, including current issues of importance expressed by stakeholders. Information relative to police, fire and emergency services, and emergency preparedness is addressed on a countywide level. Opportunities for enhanced public health and safety in the County are also addressed.

Phase III - Plan Implementation

The final chapter, Chapter X is the implementation portion of the comprehensive planning process. Chapter X provides action items for implementing the various strategies and recommendations of the Plan that are discussed in previous chapters. This chapter general timeframes and prioritization of key recommendations and identifies those entities which are responsible for implementing specific actions. Chapter X provides information on possible funding sources where appropriate for specific public capital improvement projects and for undertaking other countywide initiatives, including opportunities for shared services and inter-municipal agreements.

Chapter X also emphasizes the need for review and update of the Comprehensive Plan on a regular basis. As the County's first Comprehensive Plan it is not intended to be a static document. In order for this Plan to remain relevant to County conditions, trends and needs, and to remain a viable planning and decision-making tool, it must be reviewed regularly, revised as changing conditions warrant, and allowed to evolve as part of an ongoing countywide participatory process among all communities as they adapt to new opportunities and future challenges.

Appendices accompany the Comprehensive Plan as supporting information. Appendix A includes documentation of stakeholder and public meetings held during the Plan's preparation. Additional technical information is provided in other appendices as listed in the Table of Contents. As the document evolves new information should be included as additional appendices.

To remain relevant and useful, the Comprehensive Plan must be reviewed regularly, revised as changing conditions warrant, and allowed to evolve as part of an ongoing countywide participatory process.

References

The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy. 2004. *Investing in a Better Future: A Review of the Fiscal and Competitive Advantages of Smarter Growth Development Patterns*. Mark Muro and Robert Puentes. The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.

The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara. 2006. *At Taxpayers' Expense – How Government Policies Encourage Sprawl in Erie and Niagara Counties*. The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara, Buffalo, New York.

Chapter II

The Planning Process and Previous Initiatives

Preparation of this Comprehensive Plan

The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030 is the result of a planning process that began in early 2007 with the awarding of a New York State Qualities Communities Grant. This grant was combined with other grant monies and funds to prepare this Comprehensive Plan.

Upon notification of the Quality Communities Grant award, the Niagara County Legislature subsequently sought the services of a qualified planning consultant through a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) in May 2007. In response to the RFP, Clough Harbour & Associates LLP (CHA) was awarded the contract to assist the County and its communities in developing the first countywide comprehensive plan dedicated exclusively to Niagara County.

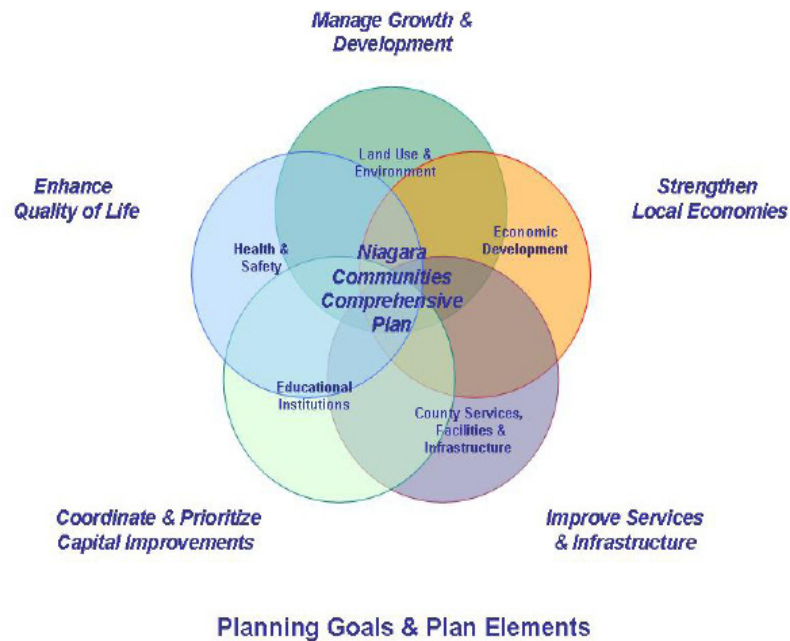
The Comprehensive Plan addresses five core planning topics or elements. These five elements are considered and discussed throughout the Plan in terms of planning goals and objectives; issues and opportunities; existing conditions and future needs; and strategies and recommendations. These five elements include:

1. Land Use and Environment
2. Economic Development
3. County Services, Facilities and Infrastructure
4. Education
5. Public Health and Safety

The planning process was also guided by five overall goals that were established early in the Plan's development. These goals were used as the basis for establishing further goals and objectives described throughout the Plan. These overarching goals include:

1. Manage Growth and Development
2. Strengthen Local Economies
3. Improve Services and Infrastructure
4. Coordinate & Prioritize Capital Improvements
5. Enhance Quality of Life

The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan addresses five core planning elements and five overall goals.



Comprehensive Plan - Definition, Content & Authority

Definition

A County Comprehensive Plan – Defined under Article 12-B, Section 239-b of New York State General Municipal Law as “the materials, written and/or graphic including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the county, as may be prepared pursuant to section two hundred thirty-nine-d of this article.”

Content

Section 239-d of the NYS General Municipal Law describes the findings and intent for the content of a County Comprehensive Plan which “*may include, but shall not be limited to the following topics at the level of detail adapted to the special requirements of the county:*”

- *General statements of goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards upon which proposals for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the county are based;*
- *Consideration of regional needs and the official plans of other governmental units and agencies within the county;*
- *The existing and proposed location and intensity of land uses;*

Section 239-d of NYS General Municipal Law describes the intent for the content of a County Comprehensive Plan.

- *Consideration of agricultural uses, historic and cultural resources, coastal and natural and scenic resources and sensitive environmental areas;*
- *Consideration of population, demographic and socio-economic trends and future projections;*
- *The location and types of transportation facilities, including the reuse of abandoned transportation facilities;*
- *Existing and proposed general location of public and private utilities and infrastructure;*
- *Existing housing resources and future housing needs, including affordable housing;*
- *The present and future general location of educational and cultural facilities, historic sites, health facilities, and facilities for emergency services;*
- *Existing and proposed recreation facilities and parkland;*
- *The present and potential future general location of commercial and industrial facilities;*
- *Specific policies and strategies for improving the county economy in coordination with other plan topics;*
- *Proposed measures, programs, devices, and instruments to implement the goals and objectives of the various topics within the county comprehensive plan;*
- *All or part of the plan of another public agency;*
- *Any and all other items which are consistent with the protection, enhancement, orderly growth and development of the county; and*
- *Consideration of cumulative impacts of development, and other issues which promote compliance with the state environmental quality review act under article eight of the environmental conservation law and its implementing regulations.”*

Legislative Authority

Under the State’s General Municipal Law, the County Legislature is given the authority to determine who prepares the plan or any amendments thereto, including by its resolution, directing a county planning board or a special board to prepare such a plan.

SEQRA Compliance

A county comprehensive plan is also subject to the provisions of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and its implementing procedures. A county plan can also be designed to serve as, or be accompanied by, a generic environmental impact statement (GEIS). No further compliance with such law is required for subsequent site specific county actions that are in conformance with thresholds established for such county actions in the GEIS and its Findings Statement.

The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030, its first version dated 2009, is accompanied by a Full Environmental Assessment Form with attachments included in the SEQRA Appendix to this Plan. The Plan at this time does not establish specific County policies or commit the County or any communities within Niagara County

to a specific course of action, permitting approvals, funding, or the undertaking of site specific projects that might require a Generic Environmental Impact Statement or other further SEQRA action at this time. However, as acknowledged in the Environmental Assessment Form further specific policies, approvals, funding or site specific projects by the County in the future may require additional SEQRA review, including the possibility of preparing an environmental impact statement at the time specific actions and/or projects are being considered.

Agricultural Review and Coordination

A county comprehensive plan and any amendments for a county containing all or part of an agricultural district or lands receiving agricultural assessments within its jurisdiction, shall continue to be subject to the provisions of Article 25-AA of the State's Agriculture and Market Law. A newly adopted or amended plan must take into consideration applicable county agricultural and farmland protection plans as created under Article 25-AA of the Agriculture and Market Law.

Referrals

The County Legislature, prior to adoption, must refer a proposed county comprehensive plan or any amendment thereto to the county and regional planning boards as well as the legislative bodies and the planning boards of each municipality within the county for review and recommendation.

Public Hearings

Prior to its adoption or any amendments to a comprehensive plan, the county legislative body must hold one or more public hearings of the proposal and publish a notice of a public hearing in a general circulation newspaper in the county at least ten days in advance of the hearing.

Adoption and Filing

The county legislative body may adopt a county comprehensive plan or any amendments thereto by resolution and then must have the plan filed in the County Clerk's office or register and a copy with the county planning board, the Secretary of State, as well as the clerk of each municipality within the county.

Effect of Adoption

All county land acquisitions and public improvements, including those identified in the county official map adopted or amended pursuant to Article 12-B of the General Municipal Law, shall be in accordance with the county comprehensive plan. All plans for capital projects of a municipality or state governmental agency on land included in the county comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to Section 239-d of the General Municipal Law shall take the comprehensive plan into consideration.

Periodic Review

The county legislative body shall provide, as a component of a proposed county comprehensive plan, the maximum intervals at which the adopted plan shall be reviewed.

Comprehensive vs. Strategic

A comprehensive plan differs in content and purpose from a strategic plan. A comprehensive plan is more general in terms of describing existing conditions, future visions for an area, goals and objectives, and recommended actions. By its very nature, a comprehensive plan typically considers a wide range of topics, but may selectively delve into greater detail and strategies for specific issues and topics known to be important to a community. A strategic plan by comparison typically considers a specific topic, reflects a more focused approach, and provides specific recommendations and ways to measure progress in meeting future goals and objectives.

Document Features

Most comprehensive plans consist of several common document features. The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan includes each of the following features and more. These include:

- A statement giving the governing body the authority to prepare and adopt a plan
- Identification of planning participants (stakeholders) and an outline of the public participation process used in preparing the plan
- A review of previous planning initiatives, reports, studies, and plans
- Baseline data and information on existing conditions in the area influenced by the plan
- A vision statement supported by goals and objectives
- Analyses of trends and future needs
- Recommended actions and alternatives
- An assessment of the potential impacts of the plan
- A future land use plan showing where growth and development is most suitable
- Plan implementation
- Plan adoption and periodic review and updating

Purpose, Value & Intent of the Plan

The **purpose** of a comprehensive plan is to provide a “blueprint” so to speak, for the residents and property owners of communities within the county, decision-makers in those communities, as well as elected and appointed officials at all levels of government including the County, State and Federal governments.

As such, the purpose of the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is to set a direct course of action that guides local officials in their day-to-day administration of government in an effort to meet the local community’s immediate and long-term needs. To remain effective, the Plan must be reviewed on a regular basis and updated periodically. The Plan is flexible enough to meet the ever-changing needs, issues and opportunities of County residents, businesses, governments and visitors to the area.

The real **value** of the Comprehensive Plan, however, will be derived from its day-to-day usefulness and relevancy towards achieving the stated vision, goals and objectives expressed throughout the planning process and reiterated in this Plan. It is often said

To remain effective, the Plan must be reviewed on a regular basis and updated periodically.

that the true and lasting value of a comprehensive plan or any sound planning initiative for that matter is with the process that leads to the creation of the planning document(s). That certainly holds true for this Comprehensive Plan as well.

It is the **intent** of the many participants in the planning process that the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan be the basis for making the day-to-day decisions that directly and indirectly affect the residents, taxpayers and communities of Niagara County. This document is intended to be the cornerstone for enhancing quality of life by providing a mechanism by which rationale decisions can be made about short and long-term priorities and identifying the means that will result in measurable progress towards a true and realistic Vision for Niagara County.

This Comprehensive Plan is a valuable source of information for the Niagara County Planning Board in fulfillment of its responsibilities in reviewing projects and providing planning guidance and assistance to community officials. The Niagara County Planning Board was established under NYS General Municipal Law. As stated under Municipal Law Section 239-c - "The development of a county comprehensive plan can foster cooperation among governmental agencies in the planning and implementation of capital projects. Similarly, county comprehensive plans can promote intermunicipal cooperation in the provision of public services."

Powers and duties of the County Planning Board by which this Plan can be utilized include the review of certain municipal planning and zoning actions and certain subdivision plats per sections 239-l, 239-m and 239-n of Article 12-B of Municipal Law. Also, the County Planning Board can use the information contained in this Plan as allowed by Municipal Law to assist with local studies, conduct countywide studies, prepare a county official map, provide information to local boards, provide technical assistance to local governments and comment on state and county highway reconstruction.

Among its many responsibilities the Niagara County Planning Board members and staff maintain a planning and zoning library of countywide plans and regulations, conducts an annual planning and zoning census of municipalities, develops custom GIS applications to track County Planning Board referrals, and assist local officials in identifying properties that need to be sent to the County Planning Board for review. Planning Board members and staff, and the communities they serve, will benefit greatly from the contents and maintenance of this Plan as an up-to-date source of countywide information.

Needs and Benefits

A variety of important public needs and benefits will be derived from this Comprehensive Plan. Benefits from creating an up-to-date countywide comprehensive plan as a source of information will be realized by the public and private sectors, agencies, organizations, groups and individuals alike. The following points are some of the significant day-to-day types of needs that will be met and benefits that will be derived from this Comprehensive Plan.

Up-to-date Source of Information

- Changes in local population growth/decline and distribution, demographic characteristics (age, education, employment, income), housing conditions,

transportation and infrastructure, social services, education, and economic trends all need to be reviewed on a regular basis to reflect the changing conditions and needs of citizens. For example, a 10-year old plan may be based on data that are 10 to 20 years old or more. The comprehensive planning process is a means to identify what changes are occurring at a specific point in time and address how changing needs can be met using the most recent information available.

- An up-to-date comprehensive plan is a substantial source of community-based information and pride. Information may be used to forecast needs, revenues and costs. This is a valuable source of information to elected officials, administrators, planning boards and commissions, police and fire departments, schools, real estate and development interests, state and regional agencies, local institutions, civic groups, citizens and adjacent communities.
- A comprehensive plan allows for consideration and incorporation into one document, either directly or by reference other plans, regulations, and planning initiatives conducted by municipalities in the region.
- New York State SEQRA and Federal NEPA environmental review processes require local data collection, review and consideration of proposed projects relative to consistency with local, county and regional plans. An updated plan facilitates these processes as a source of current information about local resources, capital improvement needs and priorities.

Zoning Credibility and Defensibility in Litigation

- Frequent rezoning requests and variances at the local municipal level may indicate that zoning ordinances are no longer meeting the needs of the real estate market, economic development trends and/or resident priorities within a community. An updated county comprehensive plan can provide land use guidance to local communities to identify these changing trends, forecast future growth patterns and provide recommendations to modify local zoning regulations and anticipate where future public infrastructure is most needed.
- When project-related decisions are challenged in court, communities and public officials are in a much stronger position to defend municipal actions and decisions if they have current, recently adopted plans supported by community input and based upon up-to-date information and knowledge of local conditions.

Community Involvement

- The comprehensive planning process allows for consensus-building opportunities, citizen involvement in decision-making, mechanisms to formulate the County's Vision, and focuses planning efforts and resources on critical issues and priorities. A municipality that is not proactive in its planning initiatives may lead to local decisions being made reactively, on the spur of the moment, and/or by other involved institutions, such as the court system that may result in decisions that may not be in the best interest of a community.
- The comprehensive planning process is an opportunity to educate everyone on the importance of planning in resolving local issues and making informed decisions that enhance quality of life. The development and completion of an up-to-date comprehensive plan can be a milestone event generating enthusiasm, future interest and further involvement by the next generation of residents

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be the cornerstone for enhancing quality of life in Niagara County.

and officials as they move forward in determining the future of their communities.

Legal Framework and Responsibilities

- Land use regulations, and local zoning ordinances in particular, must be in conformance with a “comprehensive” or “well considered” plan. However, no clear definition of such a plan is stated in NY State statutes. Although courts have held that zoning can be legal even in the absence of a written plan, zoning and land use decisions are best supported by adopted plans. In New York State, the legal bases for communities to prepare such plans include: General City Law, Sections 25 and 28; Town Law, Sections 263 and 272; Village Law, Article 7 Section 7; and General Municipal Law, Article 12 Section 239.

Public Infrastructure and Capital Improvements Planning

- The comprehensive planning process identifies deficiencies and future needs for public services and infrastructure. The provision of infrastructure can be costly and if not properly considered at a regional level can lead to unnecessary sprawl, undesirable land uses, conflicts among adjacent municipalities and increased costs in providing municipal services. A comprehensive plan is an effective land use management tool designed to guide future land use and capital improvement decisions.

Natural Resource Protection

- An updated comprehensive plan identifies and addresses current natural and environmental resource issues in a community. Issues may relate to changing land use patterns and development activity that may pose concerns over the protection and management of valuable natural assets including open space, floodplains, aquifers, wetlands, surface waters, steep slopes, prime and unique soils, woodlands, endangered and threatened species habitats, and critical environmental areas.

Community Character and Heritage Preservation

- An updated comprehensive plan also addresses implementation techniques for maintaining and enhancing community character by protecting and preserving significant landmarks, community character, scenic features, recreation areas, historic sites, and cultural resources.

Comparisons to Other Regions

- An up-to-date comprehensive plan facilitates comparison of one region to another in terms of quality of life issues, housing, schools, employment, recreation, economic development, tax base, services and public facilities. The ability to make these comparisons can be an effective marketing tool in attracting new and appropriate economic development into the area.

Grant Funding

- Funding agencies and private sector organizations are more likely to fund projects that are supported by an up-to-date plan based on consensus of local stakeholders and communities. The implementation section of a comprehensive plan typically identifies projects to be undertaken, project timeframes and potential sources of funding all of which facilitate successful project funding requests.

Community & Stakeholder Participation

The Niagara County Legislature took the following position very early in the comprehensive planning process: To be truly meaningful and achievable the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan would involve the participation and input from all stakeholder communities in the County. Rather than a top-down approach to the planning process, it was agreed that this approach would use the knowledge, experiences and information gathered from each stakeholder community to prepare the comprehensive plan.

New York State is a “home rule” state in which decisions on land use and other significant issues are under the jurisdiction and responsibility of individual municipalities, such as towns, cities and villages. Because so many of the goals and objectives outlined in this Plan are best achieved at and by the local municipal levels of government, for example through municipal zoning and land use planning initiatives, under “home rule” the ultimate vision, goals and objectives identified at the County level will only be achievable through the input and consensus of each stakeholder community in Niagara County.

Stakeholder communities include the three cities, twelve towns, five villages and three Native American tribes that comprise Niagara County. Each of these communities has been afforded the opportunity to participate and guide the process for preparing this Comprehensive Plan. Stakeholder communities include:

- City of Lockport
- City of Niagara Falls
- City of North Tonawanda
- Town of Cambria
- Town of Hartland
- Town of Lewiston
- Town of Lockport
- Town of Newfane
- Town of Niagara
- Town of Pendleton
- Town of Porter
- Town of Royalton
- Town of Somerset
- Town of Wheatfield
- Town of Wilson
- Village of Barker
- Village of Lewiston
- Village of Middleport
- Village of Wilson
- Village of Youngstown
- Tuscarora Indian Reservation
- Tonawanda Indian Reservation
- Seneca Nation of Indians

New York State is a “Home Rule” state. Decisions on land use issues are under the jurisdiction and responsibility of individual municipalities - cities, towns and villages.

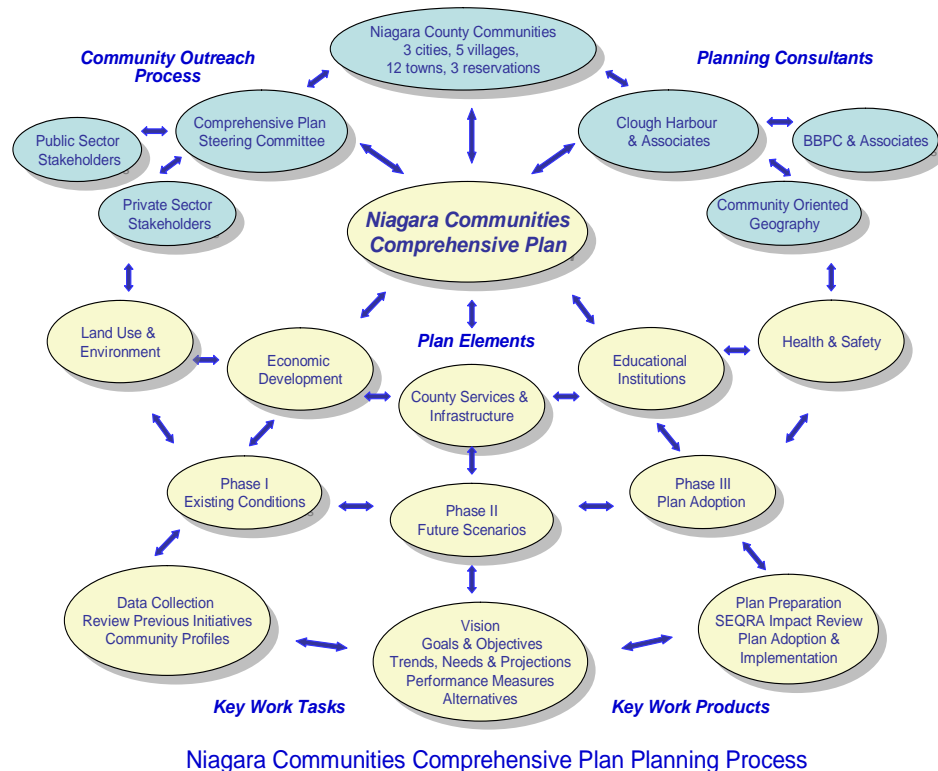
Stakeholder communities include the 3 cities, 12 towns, 5 villages and 3 Native American tribes in Niagara County.

Each stakeholder community delegated a community representative and an alternate(s) to participate in the planning process as a member of the Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee. Members were asked to provide input and guidance on the preparation of the comprehensive plan as well as assist in the collection and dissemination of information and contribute to its content. Scheduled Plan Steering Committee meetings were held throughout the spring and summer of 2008. Minutes of those meetings are provided in Appendix A.

The planning process reached out to other stakeholder participants throughout the Plan's development and preparation. A listing of stakeholders invited to participate in the planning process is included in Appendix A with meeting documentation provided, including notices and minutes. Public participation occurred in many ways via the stakeholder community meetings, general public meetings, focus group discussions, interviews and through website links and other public media.

An important result of the community and public participation process was the identification and subsequent review and discussion of previous planning initiatives conducted at some local and regional levels. Important information gleaned from this information follows in this chapter and much of the information was used in the analysis and recommendation phases of the comprehensive planning process.

The overall comprehensive planning process is illustrated below. This illustration describes how the community outreach stakeholder participants (shown in blue) served as the basis for feeding information into each step of the planning process ranging from the various plan elements and phases of plan development to the key work tasks and work products that comprise the comprehensive plan.



Review of Previous Planning Initiatives

As part of the preparation of this Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan it was important to review previous planning initiatives that have been undertaken in recent years that have particular relevance to Niagara County, to the communities that comprise the County, and the Niagara region in general. The following documents were reviewed and are summarized because each contains information that is relevant to the preparation and ultimately the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan. Important initiatives are listed under the five plan elements considered throughout the planning process. Where available, website links are provided so that direct access can be gained to these documents.

Land Use and Environment

Framework for Regional Growth (October 2006)

The Framework establishes basic policies and principles to guide the future growth and development of the Erie County - Niagara County Region. The Framework identifies the major challenge facing the region as follows. “The combined effects of disinvestment and sprawling development has reduced the livability of older neighborhoods, eroded the competitive position of traditional centers of commerce and industry; increased fiscal stress; isolated low income, minority and elderly residents; and threatened the resources that make the region an attractive place to live – river and lake fronts, historic city, town and village centers, and rural landscapes.” These are issues that need to be addressed at the local and county levels of government.

This document is a regionwide vision for conservation, development, and public investment, providing direction for decisions regarding the location and pace of development, investments in economic development, the extension of sewer and water service, improvements to parks and major public facilities, and investments in transportation infrastructure.

The document is divided into three sections: *Context and Challenges*, *Guiding Growth and Investment*, and *Taking Action*.

Context and Challenges provides an overview of the regulatory and organizational context for regional planning, a review of the region’s context, a development history and demographics, and summaries of the counties’ challenges (e.g. declining population density and disinvestment, sprawl, limited development-ready sites, loss of agricultural lands, traffic congestion, threats to natural systems and strain on public infrastructure).

Guiding Growth and Investment establishes the principles for the region’s growth, development, and conservation. Policy and strategy statements are articulated that form the basis for county action agendas. This section establishes seven framework principles (A Vital Economy, Strong Rural Communities, Sustainable Neighborhoods, Improved Access and Mobility, Efficient Systems and Services, Conserved Natural and Cultural Assets, Effective Regional Stewardship) and distinguishes types and patterns of development for three broad geographic areas (development, developing, and rural) as well as three types of sub areas (centers,

The Framework points out that with traditional planning authority granted to municipal governments (home rule), including the regulation of land use through zoning and land subdivision, the counties’ direct influence on the region’s development pattern is limited.

corridors, and conservation overlays)

Taking Action outlines County actions to implement the Framework Plan. Early actions (Years 1 to 5) and longer term actions (Years 5 to 10) are identified. Early actions include initiating a planning assistance program for local municipalities, developing capital project review policies and procedures, developing New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) Type 1 Action lists, and strengthening reinvestment policies. Longer term actions include developing planning area specific standards for County roads, adjusting sewer and water district limits consistent with the Framework and expanding assistance for agricultural conservation efforts.

The report points out that with traditional planning authority granted to municipal governments (home rule), including the regulation of land use through zoning and land subdivision, the counties' direct influence on the region's development pattern is limited. "The Framework is not intended to serve as a conventional zoning or land use plan or capital improvement program – recommendations regarding future residential or commercial zoning districts are not part of the Framework nor are detailed recommendations concerning the extension of public utilities or investments in the transportation network."

The Framework provides policy and strategy statements organized by policy area. Some of the most relevant policies and strategies are summarized below. These strategies are categorized in the Framework for Developed Areas, Developing Areas, and Rural Areas.

Economic Development & Public Investment Strategies

- Develop a regional inventory and marketing strategies for vacant, underutilized and Brownfield properties
- Preserve and properly zone larger scale vacant and underutilized sites that can support large scale uses
- Encourage major government and educational facilities, sport and entertainment venues, and cultural facilities and attractions to locate in regional population centers
- Encourage public investments in existing infrastructure and public facilities and services
- Limit capacity improvements to roads and sewer infrastructure
- Support protection of future rights-of-way for future infrastructure
- Expand efforts to strengthen the region's rural economy

Development Guidance Strategies

- Support local comprehensive planning policies that designate areas appropriate for development and conservation, minimizes conversion of agricultural lands and natural areas, and avoids leap-frog development patterns
- Work with localities to identify and minimize regulatory and planning barriers to mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development
- Support mixed-use land development and minimize conversion of significant open space, agricultural lands and natural systems
- Support local planning and zoning to protect sites deemed most suitable to employment intensive uses
- Identify and conserve agriculture and forested lands designated in local

- plans for rural or agricultural use
- Work with localities to resolve planning barriers to infill development and the preservation and adaptive reuse of older, historic buildings

Mobility & Accessibility Strategies

- Support GBNRTC's "maintenance first" policies regarding existing transportation infrastructure
- Review criteria for curb-cut approvals on county roads to encourage access management and parcel to parcel connectivity
- Work with localities to restrict "strip" commercial and industrial development along highways in developing areas
- Explore feasibility of providing public transportation service between rural centers and developed area destinations

Public System & Service Strategies

- Assist localities in the assessment of economic, fiscal and environmental costs and benefits of extending sewer and water services
- Support local policies that channel growth where sewer and water exist
- Encourage authorities to evaluate the feasibility of contracting sewer district boundaries where they extend into areas designated for conservation or agricultural use
- Continue support for intermunicipal agreements that increase cost savings in the delivery of services
- Establish priorities for conservation of regionally, nationally and internationally significant natural and cultural heritage resources

Bi-National Transportation Strategy for the Niagara Frontier (December 2005)

This report was prepared to address existing and future transportation needs of the region's border crossings and approach corridors. This was a joint effort by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and the NYS Department of Transportation with participation by other government agencies and industry stakeholders.

The four highway bridges and two railway bridges across the Niagara River make the Niagara Frontier the second busiest commercial border along the U.S. Canadian border carrying about 16% of all trade between the two countries. Over 15 million vehicles, including 2.3 million trucks crossed the border in 2004, carrying \$70 billion in goods by truck and \$14 billion by rail. An estimated 480,000 jobs in Ontario and 348,000 jobs in New York State rely on this trade.

The Niagara Region is served by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), the Canadian National (CN) Railway and U.S. freight carriers Norfolk Southern and CSX Transportation, Inc. Amtrak provides passenger service between New York City and Niagara Falls, NY, connecting to Toronto by VIA Rail.

Marine transportation contributes \$6 billion annually to the U.S. Canadian economies along the Great Lakes Seaway System, of which the Welland Canal is the major component in the Niagara Region. Air transportation is primarily

The four highway bridges and two railway bridges across the Niagara River make the Niagara Frontier the second busiest commercial border along the U.S. Canadian border.

handled out of the Buffalo Niagara International Airport (BNIA) which handled over 4 million passengers in 2002 as well as providing air cargo and general aviation services.

The Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA) operates in joint agreement with the U.S. military and provides charter and cargo services as well as acting as a reliever airport.

Six strategy elements are identified in the report including:

- Improving cross border coordination between agencies and stakeholders
- Ensuring adequacy of highway approach capacity and connectivity to economic centers
- Improving enforcement and processing to enhance efficiency, security and safety at the borders
- Providing sufficient river crossing capacity
- Optimizing use of all transportation modes to improve efficiency
- Realizing unique opportunities for overall border network management including innovative Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

Niagara County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (August 1999)

This Plan identifies the importance of agriculture as an economic contributor to the rural communities of Niagara County with an annual impact of \$87 to \$230 million. The primary objective of the Plan is to help make farming viable in the County, otherwise as stated in the Plan, what agriculture brings to the County in positive economic impact and social value may be lost in the next twenty years as a result of residential build-out and sprawl forms of development.

The document points out that due to its rich soil and geographic location Niagara County ranked (in 1997) 22nd out of the State's 61 counties. The Plan refers to numerous studies that support the fact that agricultural land generates a positive tax base advantage to local towns because it consistently generates more in tax revenues than it requires in service expenditures, including schools.

The American Farmland Trust identifies the Ontario Plains and Finger Lakes Region of western NY, including Niagara County, as being ranked 11th of the top 20 most threatened Major Land Resource Areas (MLRA) in the U.S. due to the development pressures on the region's farmlands. Of the County's 20 municipalities, 12 have land located within six established agricultural districts encompassing approximately 52% of the County's land area or about 176,000 acres.

The Niagara County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board recommends a number of strategies in the Plan concluding, "that economically strengthening agricultural enterprises, increasing the level of public awareness about farming and gaining supportive local public policies provides the most effective and affordable means to achieve the goals of both state and local agriculture and farmland protection." Strategies and recommended action items fall under three primary categories including:

- Agricultural Economic Development
- Education, Promotion and Public Relations
- Government Policies and Farmland Protection Strategies

"...agricultural land generates a positive tax base advantage to local towns because it consistently generates more in tax revenues than it requires in service expenditures, including schools."

A key conclusion of the Plan is that “land use controls to preserve farmland will not provide an effective mechanism to maintain a farmland base nor force an industry to exist that is not economically viable.” Key government policy strategies provided in the document include:

- Review of town comprehensive plans by the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board prior to their formal adoption
- Encouraging creative developments utilizing Planned Unit Developments (PUD) and cluster development
- Establishing mechanisms for the Transfer and/or Purchase of Development Rights
- Encouraging infill development where existing infrastructure is in place
- Passing right to farm laws in all towns and the County
- Increasing quantity and quality of wildlife habitat
- Utilizing a land evaluation-site analysis (LESA) using GIS technology

Niagara River Greenway Plan and FEIS (April 2007)

The Greenway Plan identifies priorities and a plan of action for improvements to the Niagara River corridor in Erie and Niagara counties, with the objective of promoting projects that address connectivity, environmental factors, redevelopment and opportunities for economic development/tourism. The plan focuses on the municipalities bordering the Niagara River (with the addition of the Town of Niagara in Niagara County and the Village of Kenmore in Erie County). Part of the impetus for the plan is the fact that the region has a dedicated funding source as a result of the NY Power Authority Relicensing Agreement, providing \$9 million per year for the next 50 years.

This plan provides an inventory of parks and public lands, ecological resources, trails and heritage sites. It also includes an extensive “Action Plan” that provides sketch-level project plans targeting specific improvements.

Economic Development

“Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy” (June 2007 and 2008)

These documents represent Niagara County’s annual reporting on its strategy to address opportunities as well as challenges that have prevented growth, capitalizing on recent signs of economic potential and the County’s competitive strengths.

The reports begin with an overview of the County’s demographic and economic conditions as well as existing physical conditions (environmental and natural resources, infrastructure, water and sewer, utilities). The next section presents an overview of the Niagara County economy, including leading industry sectors, the County’s economy within the regional context, factors directly affecting

The Greenway Plan identifies priorities and a plan with the objective of promoting projects that address connectivity, environmental factors, redevelopment and opportunities for economic development/tourism.

“...the County’s strategy is to address challenges that have prevented growth, capitalizing on recent signs of economic potential and the County’s competitive strengths.”

economic performance, and the Industrial Development Authority. Economic development issues are presented in the next section, summarizing the County’s economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. The final sections present the County’s economic development goals and anticipated successes, followed by an implementation agenda providing an overview of economic development projects by category and by priority level.

Niagara County Economic Development Fact Sheets

This document was produced by the Niagara County Center for Economic Development and presents economic development “facts” about Niagara County. Topics covered include available financial incentives, transportation access, workforce unionization, labor force skills, industry sectors, building availability and location of industrial parks, home values, the Niagara Falls Empire Zone, educational opportunities, and tourism/recreation assets.

Niagara County Economic Development Market Facts

This document was produced by the Niagara County Department of Economic Development and presents Niagara County market facts. Topics covered include agricultural facts (e.g. crops harvested, cattle and milk production, farmland acreage, cash receipts from farm marketing), banks, climate, the construction sector (permits, building inspector contact information, median home values), economic development agencies, educational institutions, the Foreign Trade Zone adjacent to the Niagara International Airport, health care institutions, the housing sector and utilities, incentive programs, location of industrial parks, largest employers and data on the County’s manufacturing sector, labor force statistics, population statistics, tourism/recreation assets, retail sector data, tax rates, transportation infrastructure, utilities and water, and industrial zoning.

“Revisioning Brownfields: A Regional Strategic Approach”

This document was prepared for the New York State Department of State Division of Coastal Resources with funds provided under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund. The plan provides a framework from which brownfield redevelopment projects in the Niagara region should be approached. The plan also establishes a prioritized approach for regional investment and identifies roles and responsibilities for local and regional leaders.

The plan is divided into five sections. It begins with an introduction to brownfields planning, providing and understanding of the regional context, opportunities and challenges, and the role of local and regional government. The next section addresses the community involvement process. The third section prioritizes brownfield sites and presents design concepts for redevelopment. The fourth section outlines brownfield funding and financing resources. The last section presents an implementation strategy. There are also several appendices, including site rankings, a financial analysis users guide, case studies, and demographic and socioeconomic data.

“Niagara County Business Development and Commercial Revitalization Study: Villages of Lewiston, Youngstown, and Wilson”

This study provides direction for business development and revitalization in three Niagara County villages – Lewiston, Youngstown, and Wilson. The projects include a market analysis, an inventory of downtown properties, a business survey, and recommendations for business development, marketing, and commercial revitalization.

General recommendations include incentives to encourage development/renovation of lodging facilities, partnerships with local educational institutions, installation of wireless internet service, and continued promotion of Niagara County Microenterprise Assistance Program. Village-specific recommendations address development of the tourism industry, selection of priority redevelopment sites, development of promotional/special events, streetscape improvements and landscaping, and public investments such as public bathrooms, ferry service, and other transportation improvements.

The following research reports are from the New York State Office of the State Comptroller.

“Property Taxes in New York State”

This report provides an overview of the property tax trends across New York State and gives insight into some of the salient issues arising from this tax.

The property tax is the largest tax imposed by local governments in the State, accounting for 79 percent of all local taxes outside of New York City. This results in a per capita property tax burden that is 49 percent higher than the national average and as a share of personal income is 28 percent higher. The increase in local property tax levies outstripped the rate of inflation from 1995 to 2005 (60 percent versus 28 percent).

In Niagara County, the property tax levy per household and per \$1,000 of personal income is relatively low. However, the property tax rate in relation to full property values is relatively high in the County, which is likely due, in part, to the relatively low property values characteristic of Niagara County.

Although the property tax is stable and easy to use, it has been noted for some serious flaws and has been the subject of much controversy, particularly in New York State. Some issues relayed in the article include:

- Property taxes are based on a fairly subjective property values assessment system
- Home values (upon which property taxes are assessed) may not accurately reflect ability to pay
- Property tax “rebates” commonly used to relieve tax burden are essentially a transfer of tax burden and not a tax cut
- Property taxes are often considered regressive – the burden falls more heavily on lower-income tax payers as a percentage of their income

Counties that share sales taxes with municipalities within their borders retain anywhere from 31 percent to 98 percent of taxes levied. Niagara County falls roughly in the middle, retaining 58 percent of collected sales taxes for solely County purposes.

There are currently 6,927 special districts across the State, 92 of which are located in Niagara County. By comparison, Onondaga County has the second highest number of special districts in the State at 941 behind Erie County.

The majority of special districts in the County provide water, sewer, garbage, and lighting services.

“Local Government Sales Taxes in New York State”

This report provides an overview of the use and trends in sales tax in New York counties and cities. Sales taxes are a significant source of revenue for local governments in the State, making up 8.6 percent of total local government revenues in 2004. These taxes are an even more significant component of Niagara County’s total revenues, representing 17.5 percent. Generally, the sales tax is levied at the county level and sales tax proceeds are distributed to other units of government within county boundaries, according to a sales tax sharing arrangement.

New York State has one of the highest combined state/local sales tax rates in the nation, with an average combined state-local sales tax of 8.25 percent, compared to the national average of 5.93 percent. The majority of counties in the State have sales tax rates exceeding 3 percent (Niagara County’s rate is 4 percent). Overall, 85 percent of New York’s population resides in areas where the combined tax rate is 8 percent or higher.

Counties that share sales taxes with municipalities within their borders retain anywhere from 31 percent to 98 percent of taxes levied. Niagara County falls roughly in the middle, retaining 58 percent of collected sales taxes for solely County purposes. In addition to sharing sales taxes with localities, some counties also share a portion of these taxes with school districts (Niagara not included). Some cities reserve the right to collect their own sales tax independent of counties (not the case for Niagara’s three cities).

“Town Special Districts”

This report provides the background information on New York State’s town special districts and discusses trends and current issues with these districts. A town special district is a designated geographic area within a town established to address specific service needs of property owners within that area (i.e. garbage, sewer, water, fire protection, parks, lighting and drainage). These districts utilize charges, mainly through property taxes, and user fees paid by taxpayers within the district to finance these services.

There are currently 6,927 special districts across the State, 92 of which are located in Niagara County. The majority of the County’s special districts provide water, sewer, garbage, and lighting services. Revenues for town special service districts account for 41 percent of all town revenues in Niagara County (second highest percentage of all NY counties); 77 percent of all property tax revenues in the County go to fund these special districts (highest percentage of all NY counties).

Due to the rapidly-growing populations of some towns in New York, and therefore the rapidly-increasing use of town special service districts, concerns have arisen regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of using this mechanism to fund certain town services. There has been a general lack of transparency in the specific use of special district revenues and the actual cost of providing services within these districts. Additionally, the ad-hoc use of the districts has raised questions about the efficiency of the mechanism and the potential for district consolidation. The report discusses some potential actions to address these issues, specifically unit cost analysis, consolidation thresholds, and expansion of the State’s Shared Municipal Services Incentive.

“Revenue Sharing in New York State”

Revenue sharing is unrestricted State aid to local governments that can be used for any local governmental purpose. This unrestricted aid has been distributed to localities through a number of categories, such as General Purpose for Local Government Aid (GPLGA), Emergency Aid to Certain Cities, Emergency Aid to Eligible Municipalities, Supplemental Municipal Aid (SMA), and Local Government Aid to Counties. This report gives an overview of revenue sharing practices in New York State, and explores trends and current issues with the State’s allocation of unrestricted aid.

Revenue sharing in New York currently totals about \$800 million, with the vast majority of these funds (over 90 percent) going to cities. From FY-88 to FY-05, revenue sharing has been reduced by more than 26 percent, while cumulatively State funds have increased by 93 percent. In addition, revenue sharing funds have been outpaced by inflation, which has increased 65 percent over this 17-year period.

Several of the categories through which unrestricted aid was distributed have been eliminated. Since FY-01 cities have predominantly received funding through SMA (which make up over 50 percent of unrestricted aid payments) and GPLGA. The SMA was established in 1996 to help support cities receiving Emergency Financial Assistance, like Niagara Falls, who face fiscal difficulties due to constitutional tax limitations.

Many issues have arisen over the amount of revenue sharing provided by New York State and the mechanism for determining how much aid is distributed to each locality. Original statutory formulas based on population, per capita property valuation, and personal incomes were established to guide fair, equitable and flexible aid distributions. However, these formulas have been unused for decades, as unrestricted aid amounts have been frozen. The report suggests reinstating these formulas and assigning higher State budget priority to revenue sharing as a means of reestablishing sufficient levels of this funding to localities in need.

“Fiscal Challenges Ahead for New York’s Cities”

This report gives an overview of the recent fiscal challenges faced by cities in New York State, and certain measures the State is taking to help cities deal with these challenges. Specifically, the State is helping cities focus on long-range planning as a tool for coping with rising expenditures and budget gaps. To promote this long-range planning, cities must certify that they have completed multiyear (at least three fiscal years) financial plans in order to receive additional State funds through the Aid and Incentives to Municipalities (AIM) program.

The report also analyzed the results of the financial plans submitted in 2006. Most cities reported budget gaps projected to increase over the next three years, averaging 5.2 percent of total revenues in 2007 and 9.8 percent by 2009. Ten cities projected gaps exceeding 10 percent of their total revenues, which generally indicates severe fiscal stress. Soaring service costs and expenditures appear to drive these expected budget gaps in the cities of the Hudson Valley and Long Island, while stagnant property values, population decline and thus

reduced revenues were likely the cause for projected gaps in upstate cities, such as those in Niagara County.

The City of Niagara Falls' financial plan was highlighted in the report. Flat property values, aging infrastructure and population losses have put a burden on generating tax revenues and caused budget gaps in recent years. In addition, the City has been constrained in its ability to raise property tax rates to close these gaps, due to being very close to its constitutional tax limits. Meager assessed value increases in Niagara Falls have further complicated this situation.

Achieving Niagara Falls' Future (April 2002)

The report is essentially a catalog of 46 projects/initiatives estimated to cost \$145 million, to be implemented on the Niagara Falls waterfront, including both short-term (\$11 million) and long-term recommendations. As the report says it "has taken the best ideas from nearly a dozen different plans, reports, studies and proposals" and combined them. There are three strategies at work in the selection of projects: 1.) reconnect the City to the waterfront, 2.) repair the urban and natural environments, and 3.) build the visitor industry by developing "the means to tell the compelling stories of the city and region..."

Big ticket items (with estimated costs as provided in this report) include: the new Amtrak station proposal (\$20M), reconfiguring the Robert Moses Parkway (\$40M), gorge trail system and trailhead improvements (\$10M), redeveloping buildings adjacent to the Niagara Greenway (\$50 - \$100M), the Family Museum (\$13M), and the Discovery Center (\$22M). The report's appendices include a brief summary of several of the reports from which proposed projects were selected.

Rethinking Niagara – Heritage Tourism on the Bi-National Regional Agenda (October 2001)

Information on Heritage Tourism initiatives, developed in collaboration with the Ontario Heritage Foundation, presented in newsletter format and summarizing progress made at a bi-national meeting held in October 2001. This initiative is bi-national, capitalizing on the common aspects of Ontario, Canada and Niagara County. Marketing and capital investments will be geared around several "themes" common to both sides of the river: the landscape, the bounty of nature (agriculture, vineyards), stories of war, peace and freedom, the wealth of a region (focusing on industrial history), and enterprise in the arts. Part of the effort is development of a single map that will highlight attractions on both the U.S. and Canadian sides corresponding to these themes.

Revealing Niagara – A Citizen Vision for Heritage and Cultural Tourism in the Bi-National Niagara Region (September 2002)

"Two nations, many stories, one destination" is the over-arching message of this cultural tourism strategy. This report elaborates on the ideas in "Rethinking Niagara", providing summaries of each of the themes of this heritage tourism strategy, as well as mapping of the locations of heritage sites by theme. The report

also provides mapping of wetlands, agricultural districts and parks on the U.S. and Canadian sides of the border.

Cultural Tourism in the Buffalo-Niagara Region – Plan and Policy Briefs (2002)

This document was commissioned by the John R. Oishei foundation and prepared by the University of Buffalo's Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth. It includes an extensive inventory of previously completed cultural tourism planning work for Erie and Niagara Counties, as well as regionally, statewide and bi-nationally. This plan notes that previous cultural tourism efforts appear to have been inefficient and poorly coordinated. This plan outlines an approach that would remedy this deficiency by creating a new coordinating committee with a project manager, a timeline and goals and quantifiable results.

The bulk of the report is the inventory of previous work which was meant to lay the foundation for further studies, including an inventory of the Erie-Niagara region's resources for arts and culture-based tourism. This document includes an appendix of mailing addresses for the initiative's stakeholders.

Preservation and Management Plan for the Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor

The Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor encompasses lands surrounding the Erie Canal between Albany to the east and Lake Erie to the west, including the stretch of the canal passing through Niagara County. The Preservation and Management Plan's stated objective is as follows:

"The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, working through a wide range of partnerships, is preserving and interpreting our nation's past, providing world class recreational and educational opportunities, fostering economic revitalization, improving the quality of life in corridor communities, and guiding the reemergence of the Erie Canalway as a 21st century "River of Commerce and Culture."

The National Heritage Corridor Plan provides a framework to help enable Corridor communities statewide to harness the potential benefits provided by the historic canal. According to the Plan, development along the canal itself should be mindful of its historic significance, and uses capitalizing on the canal as an amenity are encouraged. Trail systems following the banks of the canal provide recreational and educational opportunities; by (1) making trailways suitable for pedestrian and bicycle uses and (2) providing connections among existing and future trail systems, these features will enhance public enjoyment of the canal and boost its appeal to tourists.

The Plan emphasizes preservation of natural and manmade features throughout the Corridor. Niagara County's natural features, such as Lake Ontario, the Niagara Escarpment, Niagara Falls and the Niagara River, and the many streams running through the area, are among the important Corridor features to be protected for residents and tourists to enjoy. Many villages along the canal feature buildings with unique Canal Era architecture, and the preservation

of these properties is important to creating and maintaining a charming and harmonious experience for travelers of the National Heritage Corridor.

Community Services

“The Demand for Local Services and Infrastructure Created by an Aging Population” (2007)

This report, prepared by the Buffalo Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank, identifies concerns that local governments and institutions will be facing in providing services and infrastructure to the expanding segment of the population that is aging. The concerns are heightened by the fact that local economies are slow growing and being stressed fiscally by the need to provide increased services. The report indicates that between 2005 and 2030 Upstate New York is expected to experience a 40% increase in the number of older people, more than twice the rate of the previous 25 years and far above the rate expected for people under sixty-five years old.

By 2030, nearly 20% of the U.S. population will be 65 years old or older. This segment of the population heavily relies on age-related services and infrastructure including health care and accessible housing, services provided by local governments, community-based organizations and local institutions. Counties fund portions of in-home personal care and other related health services through Medicaid. Social services range from nutrition programs, such as Meals on Wheels and adult day care, to transportation for non-driving adults.

The report indicates that the greatest demand for services and infrastructure tends to be in areas already experiencing fiscal stress due to rising expenditures and eroding tax base, such as larger cities, inner ring suburbs and large counties that contain these areas – areas often experiencing slow economic and population growth as a result. These local governments that face the increased demand for services and infrastructure also face difficult decisions in where to allocate stressed resources, financial and otherwise. This also has a ripple effect on community-based groups that serve older populations as they may face difficulties in meeting demands because these groups often rely on local governments for resources.

2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan for the Erie and Niagara Counties Region (June 2007)

This is the multimodal blueprint for transportation systems and services in this two-county region. It serves as a guide for development of the Transportation Improvement Program, which lays out funding priorities over a five-year period.

It also has an important land-use planning function, in that it provides forecasts for population and employment locations in 2030 based on a set of assumptions. This plan assumes that most new households will locate in existing developed areas of the region with modest increases in developing and rural areas. It also provides a forecast for the region based on existing (1990 – 2000) trends, demonstrating the more dispersed land use pattern that would result under these circumstances.

...between 2005 and 2030 Upstate New York is expected to experience a 40% increase in the number of older people, more than twice the rate of the previous 25 years and far above the rate expected for people under sixty-five years old. By 2030, nearly 20% of the U.S. population will be 65 years old or older.

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The plan devotes 70% of funds to maintenance, leaving \$1.8 billion for other projects. Congestion is identified as a fairly minor problem, with the greatest need for spot improvements on I-90 between Exits 50 & 53 (Buffalo). Also, the South Grand Island Bridge is identified as seriously deficient and in need of congestion management.

Niagara Frontier Urban Area Freight Transportation Study, Technical Memo 1 – “Air Cargo Sector Preliminary Traffic Flow Analysis” (April 2007)

This study provides background information on freight flows in the Erie-Niagara Region, with an emphasis on air cargo facilities. Existing freight flows at the region’s two airports, Buffalo Niagara International and Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA) are provided in detail.

Twelve airlines offer combined cargo and passenger service from Buffalo Niagara International, with 48,000 tons of air cargo shipped through this airport in 2006. Buffalo Niagara ranks 75th in the nation in terms of total cargo tonnage. This airport also has a “cargo complex” in which Fed Ex, UPS, DHL, the US Postal Service and Superior Cargo Services have facilities totaling 305,000 square feet.

Niagara Falls International shipped 12,000 tons of freight in 2006, making it 113th in the nation in terms of tonnage. There are no dedicated air cargo facilities at this airport: Kitty Hawk Air Cargo is the only scheduled freight provider at this facility. It is part of a nationwide air cargo network, with its hub in Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

The report identifies Niagara Falls International as having opportunities for freight service expansion, due to proximity to Canadian markets. At the same time, it faces challenges in the form of competition with Canada’s Hamilton International Airport, competition from freight trucking and the fact that there are no express freight carriers sited there.

Niagara Frontier Urban Area Freight Transportation Study, Technical Memo 2 – “Transportation Infrastructure Profiles” (June 2007)

This memo is part of a larger freight transportation study and is a detailed look at the Erie-Niagara Region’s freight transportation infrastructure, including air cargo, highways, rail, waterways and cross-border facilities. It includes little in the way of recommendations or analysis but provides extensive information on both domestic and Canadian infrastructure.

Highlights include a profile of key industrial highway routes in Niagara County, including the facilities served, a summary of a study examining the feasibility of a freight ferry on Lake Ontario, some recommendations for tying the AE Somerset facility into the Port of Buffalo’s terminal system and a summary of traffic volumes on the international bridges in the region.

The TIP allocates approximately \$800 million in Federal funding and over \$300 million in other transportation funds to a variety of projects; one-half of this funding is allocated to bridge and highway maintenance.

Olcott Harbor is located at the mouth of Eighteen Mile Creek and is the only deep-water port along the southern shore of Lake Ontario between the Niagara River and Rochester.

Transportation Improvement Program, 2008 – 2012 (June 2007)

This document is the transportation funding plan for the region through 2012, with priorities based on the 2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) provides a brief recap of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), including the performance measures developed for the LRTP's goals. The document then provides information on the project development and selection process, a summary of the TIP's compatibility with the goals of Federal SAFETEA-LU policy and changes (by project) to the TIP since adoption of the 2006-2010 TIP. This is followed by the list of the nearly 300 programmed projects in the region.

The TIP allocates approximately \$800 million in Federal funding and over \$300 million in other transportation funds to a variety of projects; one-half of this funding is allocated to bridge and highway maintenance. One-fifth is dedicated to congestion relief projects. Thirteen percent (\$150 million) is programmed for transit projects. The remainder goes to economic development, implementation of new technologies, bicycle/pedestrian facilities, and quality of life projects.

Major projects identified in Niagara County include maintenance work on 10th Street in Niagara Falls, between Niagara Street and Cedar Avenue, extension of the John B. Daly Boulevard from Niagara Street to Pine Avenue in Niagara Falls, the Niagara USA Visitor Center, restoration of the Flight of Five Locks in Lockport, funding for the Historic Lewiston Tourist Center and for the Lewiston Scenic Pathway.

Olcott Harbor Breakwater Project Summary

This report summarizes a proposed project to construct a new breakwater and/or wave absorbers at Olcott Harbor located in the Town of Newfane, in order to improve the harbor's safety and protect its piers and marinas from storm surge and heightened wave action on Lake Ontario. Beyond protecting existing resources, the project is needed in order to expand the Port's docking facilities. Currently, demand for boat slips and other docking facilities exceeds supply, pushing boaters to use slips at other harbors. In addition to anticipated secondary effects (such as a boost in the number of boaters attending seasonal events in Olcott), the project would provide direct improvements in safety, benefitting a variety of current users. The report provides a summary of the services this harbor currently provides.

Olcott Harbor is located at the mouth of Eighteen Mile Creek and is the only deep-water port along the southern shore of Lake Ontario between the Niagara River and Rochester. The port is a critical safe harbor for vessels. The U.S. Coast Guard and NYS Police Marine Detail conduct boating patrols at the harbor. U.S. Customs and Border Protection maintains a videophone check-in point for boaters from Canada/international waters. The Niagara County Sheriff's Department Marine Division and the Olcott Volunteer Fire Department maintain boating stations here as well.

Niagara Falls International Railway Station (January 2007)

This project overview report provides an introduction to the proposal to move the

existing Amtrak station from its location on the eastern edge of Niagara Falls' downtown area to the City's heart: the Whirlpool Bridge crossing of the U.S.-Canada Border. The project's cost is estimated at upwards of \$30 million and includes three phases: preserving the historic "Old U.S. Customs House" structure (a National Register-listed site) around which the new station would be built, re-constructing the CSX railroad bridge over the Niagara River and rehabilitating the CN bridge over Whirlpool Street, and station construction. The project would upgrade security screening operations, tie together multiple modes of transportation, and improve the experience of using rail to cross the border. Project completion is currently scheduled for 2011.

Niagara Falls International Airport (2006)

This study looks at the possibilities of expanding Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA) cargo-carrying capacity and charter flight service. The study looks at trends in the air cargo industry, NFIA's assets, constraints and competition, potential benefits, case studies of similar projects and what would be required to implement an expansion.

The dual themes running throughout this study are that air cargo is going to increase in importance in the future and that NFIA is uniquely well suited to increased air cargo traffic: there is room for expansion, there's very little congestion (for either planes or land-side freight haulers) and the airport's runway can accommodate planes of any size, unlike Buffalo Niagara International Airport (BNIA).

NFIA is identified as being within the "Greater Golden Horseshoe," a region that is generally identified with Toronto and the Canadian side of Lake Ontario, but which includes Niagara Falls. Within this region, airports with cargo-carrying capacity include Pearson International in Toronto and BNIA, both of which are characterized by congestion. Hamilton International in Ontario also provides air cargo services.

This report provides a description of Foreign Trade Zone 34; NFIA is located within this zone. The report states that "A Foreign Trade Zone/Free Trade Zone (FTZ) allows foreign goods to enter free of customs duties and taxes, pending their eventual processing, trans-shipment or re-exportation." This allows manufacturers to piece together components of a product without paying a duty on individual parts. Duty is paid on products to U.S. markets only on the final product; there are no taxes on exports. Most importantly, the report states that FTZ 34 "is currently dormant."

The report points to numerous potential benefits of increased air cargo activity at NFIA including making the area more attractive to high-tech or advanced manufacturing industries that may need access to specialized air freight facilities. At the same time, air freight is not a "silver bullet" for all of the issues confronting this area. This report recommends further cooperation with Canadian interests and residents of Niagara County to explore this concept.

NFIA is uniquely well suited to increased air cargo traffic: there is room for expansion, there's very little congestion and the airport's runway can accommodate planes of any size.

The National Heritage Area Study identifies four “heritage themes”: Natural Phenomenon, Tourism and Recreation, Power and Industry and Borderland / Border Crossing. The study also identifies three National Historic Landmarks in the study area:

Niagara National Heritage Area Study (2005)

This study looks primarily at Niagara Falls and the City of Niagara Falls as the heart of a potential National Heritage Area (NHA) that would include the municipalities along the River in Niagara County (from North Tonawanda to Youngstown/Town of Porter). The study itself was authorized by Congress and is organized around Federal requirements for an NHA, specifically that the area meets certain criteria. Management of this NHA would be either through a State agency, a regional nonprofit, or a Federal commission.

Goals of a Niagara National Heritage Area would include:

- Improving visitor experience,
- Strengthening the region’s identity,
- Increasing public awareness of local history and the need for preservation,
- Encouraging research on local history, and
- Improving the local economy

The study identifies four “heritage themes”: Natural Phenomenon, Tourism and Recreation, Power and Industry and Borderland / Border Crossing. The study also identifies three National Historic Landmarks in the study area:

- Adams Power Transformer House, Niagara Falls, the home of hydroelectric power
- Niagara Reservation (Niagara Falls State Park), designed by Frederick Law Olmstead
- Colonial Niagara District in Lewiston and Youngstown, including Old Fort Niagara

An Environmental Assessment was conducted to evaluate the potential effects of establishing an NHA in this region. It concludes that the potential impacts of this designation would not be significant. Additional visitors staying over longer periods of time would contribute to the tourism economy and specific sites might receive increased visitation as a result of this designation.

The study provides an inventory of conditions in the study area, including ongoing planning efforts, natural resources, cultural resources, recreational resources and socioeconomic resources. Items of interest in this inventory are summarized below.

- Niagara Falls State Park: Established in 1885 and formerly known as “the Niagara Reservation,” this park is currently listed “threatened / damaged by the National Park Service’s National Historic Landmark program” because of adjacent commercial development.
- Other State Parks in the area include:
 - Devil’s Hole State Park
 - Whirlpool State Park
 - Reservoir State Park
 - DeVeaux Woods State Park
- Robert Moses Parkway: this multi-lane, limited-access highway extends from Grand Island Bridge in Niagara Falls to Youngstown. It is managed by the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, with some components owned by the NY Power Authority (NYPA) and the NYS Department of Transportation. It was built in conjunction with

the Niagara Power Project, circa 1960, “and originally cut through Niagara Falls State Park.” Since its development, direct public access to Niagara River/Gorge has been restricted. Several citizens’ groups have continually lobbied for the Parkway’s removal and restoration of open space, while others see it as an important route for commuters. Two lanes of the Parkway in Niagara Falls have been closed in recent years.

- Niagara Falls economic conditions: the report lists the major employers that have left Niagara Falls in recent years, including a number of industrial plants and a Nabisco plant. The report states, however that “Despite these closings, 28% of the jobs in Niagara Falls remain in the industrial sector (1997).”

Health and Safety

Niagara County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

This plan is intended to enhance Niagara County’s ability to manage emergency situations, with the focus on rapidly and adequately responding in order to minimize injury and speed recovery. It consists of three components: disaster prevention and mitigation, disaster response and disaster recovery. The CEMP defines roles and responsibilities in prevention, response and recovery, including a detailed chain of command during an emergency. This plan places an emphasis on the role of local jurisdictions as first-line responders, but identifies the key role that County departments play in the process. The CEMP points out the importance of land use controls and development regulations in hazard-prone areas (e.g., floodplain development) in hazard avoidance and minimization.

The Niagara County Emergency Management Office is identified as the coordinating office for all emergency management activities. It is “responsible for assisting individual towns and villages within Niagara County. The CEMP contains few specifics on hazards peculiar to Niagara County (e.g., sites using hazardous chemicals). This information is in Annexes on file with the Niagara County Emergency Management Office. Examples of incidents by their hazard level include: “High-hazard” incidents

- Terrorism
- Utility failure
- Severe winter storm
- Hazardous materials incident in transit

“Moderately high hazard” incidents

- Transportation accident
- Explosion
- Severe storm, ice storm or tornado
- Fixed site HAZMAT incident
- Cyber failure
- Earthquake
- Oil spill
- Ice jam
- Dam failure
- Air contamination

The CEMP places an emphasis on the role of local jurisdictions as first-line responders, but identifies the key role that County departments play in the process. The CEMP points out the importance of land use controls and development regulations in hazard-prone areas (e.g., floodplain development) in hazard avoidance and minimization.

Chapter III

Environmental Setting & Overview

of Existing Conditions

Setting and History

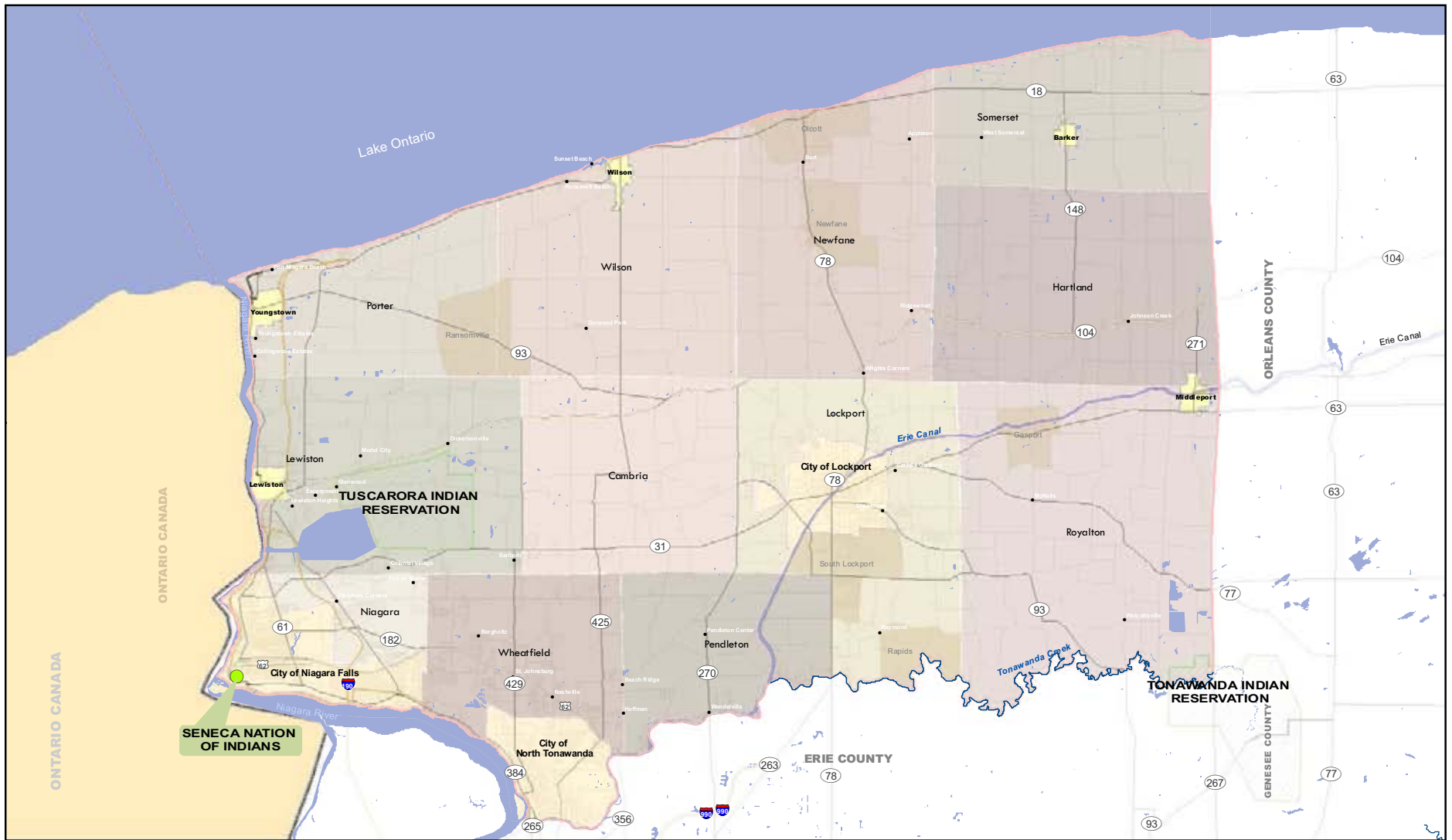
A. Geographic Setting

Niagara County is located in the northwestern corner of New York State along the southern shore of Lake Ontario. Erie County and the Buffalo metropolitan area borders Niagara County to the south and southwest. Orleans County and Genesee County are located to the east and southeast, respectively. The Niagara River and the Province of Ontario Canada form the western border of Niagara County as well as the international border between the U. S. and Canada (see Figure III.A.1 Regional Context). Tonawanda Creek forms the southern boundary of the County with Erie County.

Niagara County encompasses a total land area of approximately 527 square miles. The County is located within the Huron and Ontario Lake Plain. The Ontario Plain extends from the shore of Lake Ontario southward to the Niagara Escarpment; the Huron Plain starts at the Niagara Escarpment and continues southward into Erie County. The Escarpment divides Niagara County roughly in half in an east-west direction.

The primary natural features which make Niagara County geographically and geologically unique are the Niagara Escarpment, the Niagara Gorge and Niagara Falls all of which are on the western edge of the County. The Niagara River, which creates Niagara Falls as a result of its waters flowing over the gorge, is the primary drainage passage for the four upper Great Lakes of the Midwestern part of the U.S., the largest supply of freshwater in the world.





The Niagara River is a significant international waterway forming the boundary between the U.S. and Canada. The River is divided into its upper 22.5 mile stretch and its lower 14.5 mile reach below, or north of Niagara Falls. The Niagara River drains the upper Great Lakes and flows into Lake Ontario which ultimately flows into the Atlantic Ocean through the St. Lawrence River.

Although the Niagara River is only 37 miles in total length its impact on the growth and development of the County has been enormous. Most of the early urban and industrial growth took place in the southwestern portion of the County along the Niagara River contributing to the development of the cities of Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda. The Niagara River cascades over the gorge forming the Niagara Cataracts and Falls one of the most spectacular natural wonders of the world. This natural setting led to the development of relatively inexpensive hydroelectric power that historically fueled industrial expansion and the economic base of the region that continues to this day.

The geographic setting of Niagara County significantly contributes to the importance and success of agriculture in the region. Areas of Niagara County have been and continue to be very significant fruit-growing areas largely due to the combined effects of productive soils for farming, relatively flat agricultural lands and a climate that is tempered and moderated by the presence of Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment.

B. History of Niagara County



Niagara County celebrated its Bicentennial in 2008. The County was created on March 11, 1808 from what was then Genesee County, NY. Prior to its establishment, the area that was to become Niagara County was once part of a much larger region then known as Albany County that stretched across all of New York State. As originally established, Niagara County was much larger than it is today, but comprised of only the Town of Cambria.

Niagara County gets its name from the Indian word *Ongiara*, which means “thunder of water” referring, of course to Niagara Falls. Erie County, its neighbor to the south was created from Niagara County on April 2, 1821.

The history of Niagara County dates back hundreds of years when the lands were originally occupied by the Neuter Indians, then followed by what became the tribes of the Haudenosaunee, the “People of the Longhouse” who settled the area in the early 1700’s. The French and European settlers arrived during the later half of the 1600’s and into the 1700’s. The County, particularly along the Niagara River and the international border with Canada has been the setting for battles fought during the French and Indian Wars, the War of 1812 and the Patriot War.

In the early years of the 19th century the eastern portion of Niagara County was more settled and populated than the western portion as settlement moved westward across the State. The area was primarily agricultural with overland supply routes to western areas of the County. As expansion moved westward military forts were positioned at both ends of the Niagara River to protect trading posts and strategic

transportation routes. Small concentrated areas of growth included rural market places at Ransomville, Barker, and the waterfront villages of Youngstown and Lewiston (Niagara County Planning Board 1961).

Fort Niagara, in the Town of Porter, is a National Historic Site dating back to the time of LaSalle in 1679. The Fort was also known as Fort Conti and Fort Denonville and had been at one time under the control of the French, British and Americans. The French Castle built in 1726 is the oldest standing structure at the site (Niagara Historic Trail 1993).

The construction of the Erie Canal in the 1820's resulted in the first period of major growth and development in the County. Niagara County is located at the westernmost end of the 363 mile long State Erie Canal System. The five locks along the canal in the City of Lockport know as the "Flight of Five" were completed in 1825. These locks were necessary to overcome the changes in elevation along the canal due to Niagara Escarpment. Lockport became the grain milling and shipping center of the County as a result of the construction of the Canal.

Just like other areas of Upstate New York the advance of the railroads by the mid-1800's spurred additional expansion throughout the region, particularly as settlement moved outward from Buffalo. The important combination of opportunities for shipping raw materials and goods by both rail and ships through ports along the Great Lakes from the Midwest U.S. gave rise to the manufacturing of steel and the chemical industry throughout the region. The region continued its growth during the mid to late 1800's and well into the 20th century, particularly due to the advent of relatively inexpensive hydroelectric power generated by Niagara Falls.

With few exceptions much of the growth in population and expansion of urban and suburban development during the first half on the 20th century was concentrated in the southwestern portions of Niagara County adjacent to the Niagara River in the City of Niagara Falls and the City of North Tonawanda. Farther inland the City of Lockport continued to develop along the Erie/Barge Canal system during the early part of the century.

The widespread availability of automobiles to many families and the construction of paved roadways, then highways, and eventually the interstate system during the 1940's through the 1970's accelerated an outward expansion of urban and suburban development into other areas of the County. Populations from the industrialized cities in the southwestern portion of the County migrated to the east, northeast and northward into the rural and agricultural towns and villages of the County.

This same pattern of outward expansion from the traditional population centers in the southwestern portion of the County continues to this day, but at a much slower pace. However, the biggest difference in recent decades has been expansion of suburban forms of development into rural areas without any actual growth in population. In fact the County's overall population continues to decline. The issue of sprawl into the rural areas of the County which results from this expansion without true growth in population is an important issue and a growing topic of concern in many communities in the County as expressed in later chapters and throughout the development of this Plan.

Interestingly, the issue of sprawl is not just a present day concern as many might think.

The history of Niagara County is rich dating back hundreds of years, details of which are beyond the ability to provide in this Plan. Readers are encouraged to contact the Niagara County Historian for more information.

New York State includes 62 counties, including the five boroughs of New York City, a combined total of 1,544 cities, towns and villages, and 14 Native American reservations.

Niagara County is comprised of 20 municipalities including 3 cities, 12 towns, 5 villages and 3 Native American reservations.

The County is divided into 19 legislative districts.

Concerns over sprawl were acknowledged several decades ago in the Erie-Niagara Regional Plan that was prepared by the Erie County Planning Department and the Niagara County Planning Board in 1961. This same overall concerns expressed in that plan nearly five decades ago are still relevant today. The plan stated: *“Urban blight and urban sprawl are twin problems, essentially interrelated and interacting. Devising effective means of coping with each of these problems requires that they be approached in the total concept of the regional urban structure so that comprehensive planning efforts by the local municipalities mesh together rather than conflict with each other.”*

C. Political and Administrative Structure

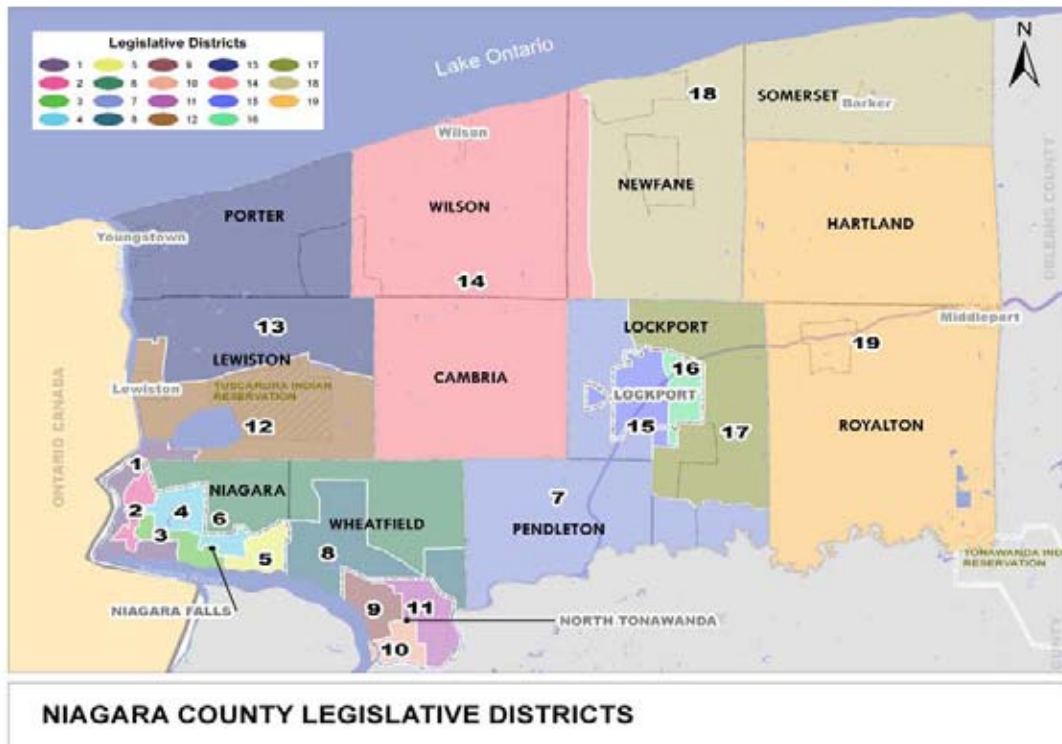
Niagara County is a non-charter county under New York State law which means it has not adopted its own charter. As a result, Niagara County operates under New York’s County Law. Thirty-seven of New York’s 57 counties (not including the five borough’s of New York City) operate under this non-charter form of county government. Nineteen of those 37 counties, including Niagara County, have replaced their original board of supervisors, as prescribed by County Law, with an elected county legislature as their law-making body. These counties provide for a county administrator or county manager to run the day-to-day operations of the county. Niagara County is one of only five counties in the State that employ a county manager.

Attempts at adopting a charter for Niagara County have not succeeded in the past when brought before the voters. Most recently, a referendum to replace the current form of government with a chartered form was defeated in 2001. The referendum passed in the County’s cities, but was defeated in the towns by an almost two-to-one margin. The result is that Niagara County remains New York State’s most populous county to not have an adopted charter (Western New York Coalition for Progress 2006).

Niagara County operates through an elected county legislature as its legislative or law-making body. As a non-charter county all laws created by the legislature must be consistent with the general laws of New York State. The county seat for Niagara County is the City of Lockport where many, but no all, County services are provided.

The Niagara County Legislature, as the legislative body includes a chairman, vice chairman, majority leader and a minority leader. Legislators filling each of these positions also serve the constituents of one of the 19 legislative districts in the County. County Legislators serve two year terms and the entire Legislature is elected at the same time.

As the chief governing body of Niagara County the responsibilities of the Legislature include establishing the County budget and tax levy, establishing policies for the provision of County services, approving contracts and appointing key staff to serve in County agencies.



The County Legislature includes six legislative work committees designed to address issues related to important County services and functions including:

1. Administration
2. Community Services
3. Community Safety and Security
4. Public Works
5. Economic Development
6. Refuse

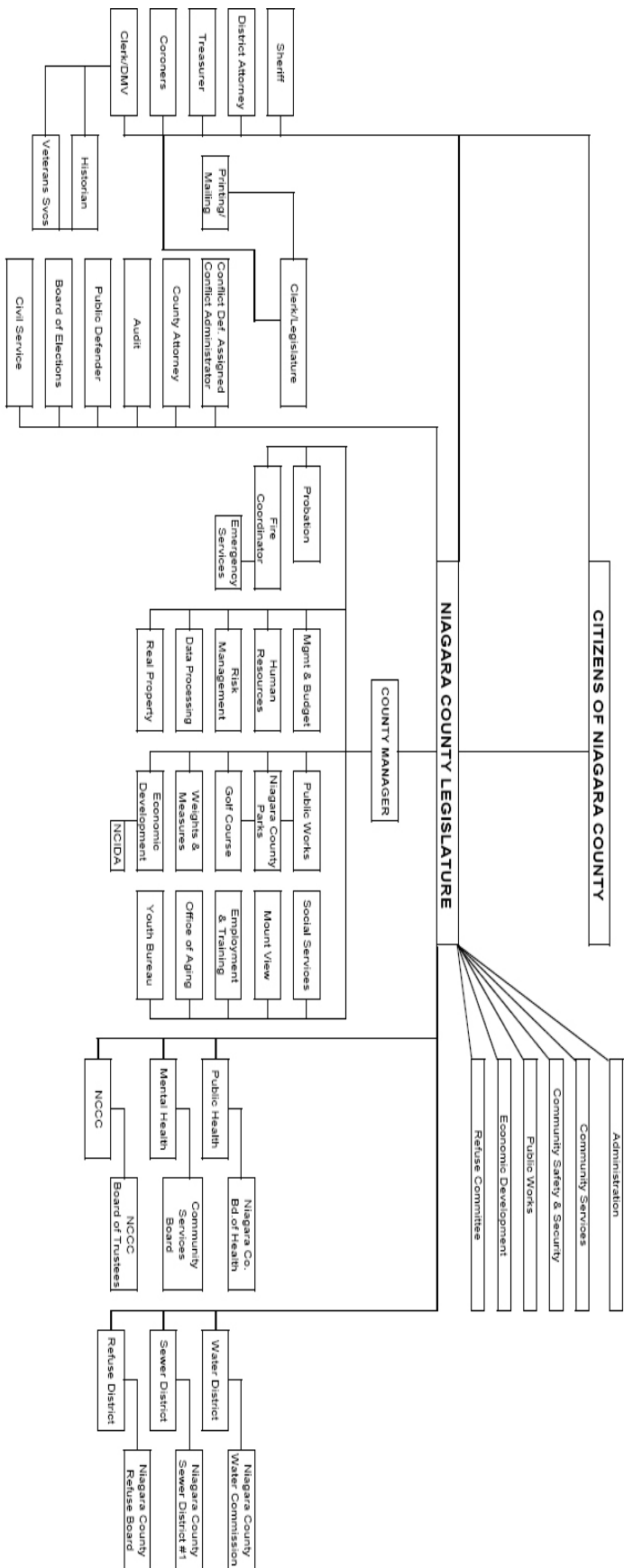
The County Manager is responsible for the day-to-day administration and management of operations by the County. The Niagara County Manager is an appointed position of the County Legislature under a four year contract.

Responsibilities of the County Manager per the Administrative Code include overseeing the operations and management of all county departments, county-owned facilities and county staff. The Manager is responsible for preparing a draft county budget and submitting it to the Legislature for its approval or/and modification. The Manager also appoints county department heads, which are also subject to the approval of the Legislature.

The organizational chart of the County that follows illustrates the various departments, boards and commissions that function within County government. The chart also identifies the general types of services provided by Niagara County. Information on County Departments and services is provided in more detail in Chapter VII. of this Plan.

Information about the County Legislature including district representatives, meeting schedules and standing committees can be found on the County's website at www.niagaracounty.com and the County Board of Elections website at www.elections.niagara.ny.us.

NIAGARA COUNTY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



2/5/2008

D. Environmental Features

1. Climate

The climate of Niagara County is northern temperate and considered to be relatively mild compared to other locations at similar northern latitudes in the U.S. Climatic conditions are tempered due to the County's location in the westernmost part of New York State along the shore of Lake Ontario and proximity to Lake Erie and the other Great Lakes. Niagara County's general climate and daily weather conditions are greatly influenced throughout each of the four seasons of the year by the presence of these two Great Lakes.

The County has relatively humid, warm summers and fairly long, cold winters. Lake Ontario, in particular, has a significant impact on local climate and daily fluctuations in weather conditions. Lake Ontario and the topography of the region contribute to the moderation of temperatures during each season of the year, cooling the area in the summer, and moderating the severe cold that flows southward from Canada during the winter. Snowfall in this part of New York State is enhanced in winter by the westerly and southwesterly winds flowing over the relatively warmer lake waters.

It takes water longer to heat up and cool down than land. As a result, Lake Ontario is a source of heat during the fall which provides for a longer frost-free growing season in Niagara County than surrounding areas. The modification of local temperature conditions are very conducive to growing grapes and other temperature-sensitive fruits and farming in the County. There is also a noticeable delay of plant growth and to the warming of the air during the spring due to the relatively cold lake waters.

The following yearly averages are experienced in Niagara County based on most recent weather data collected from late 2007:

Annual Average Daily High Temperature:	57.2 degrees F
Annual Average Daily Low Temperature:	38.2 degrees F
Number of Days 90 degrees F or more:	5
Number of Nights of 32 degrees F or less:	143
Liquid precipitation:	35.7 inches annually
Annual Average Snowfall:	82 inches

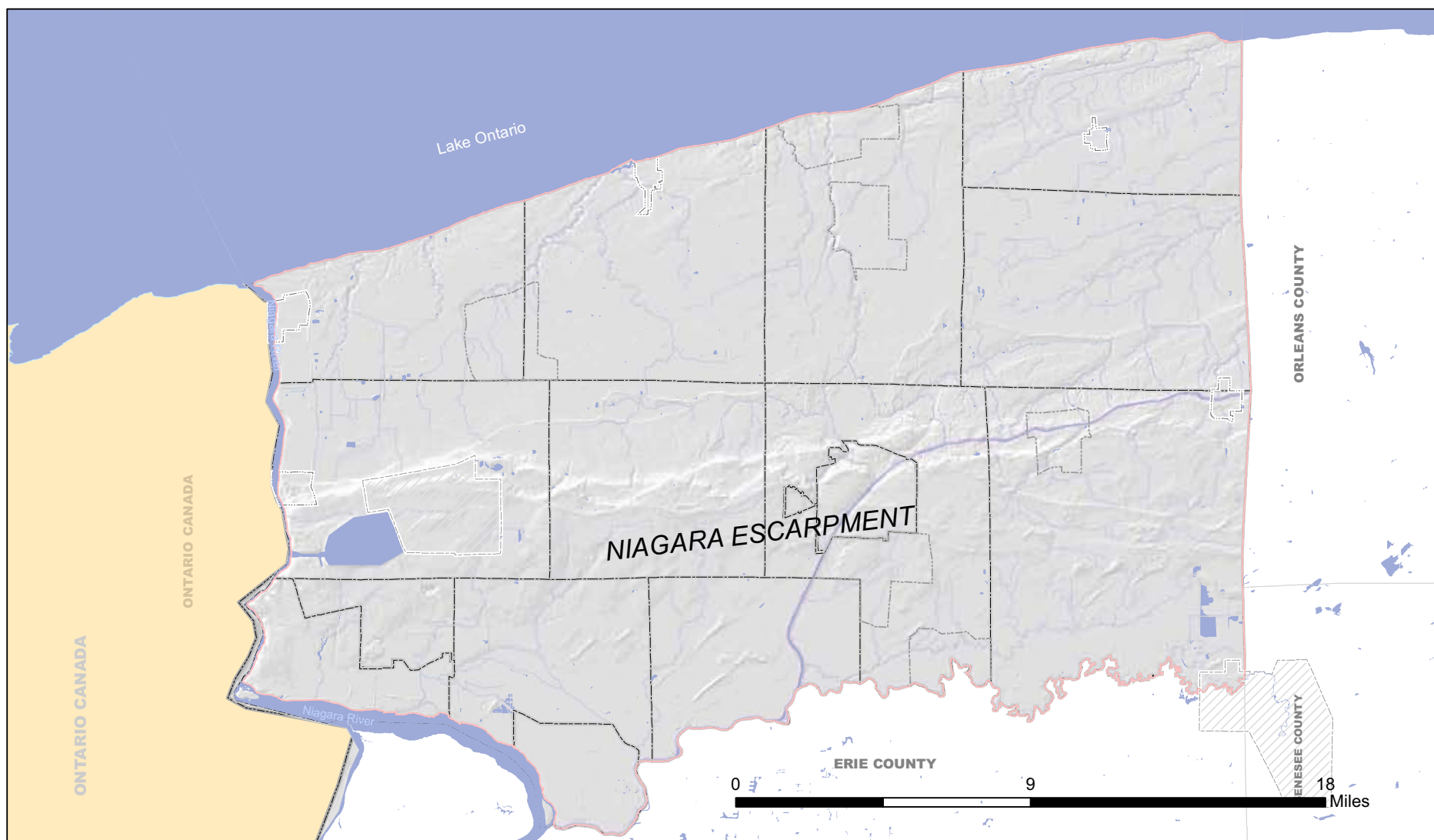
Weather conditions are moderated in the County by the Great Lakes and local landforms making the area a significant fruit and wine-growing region.

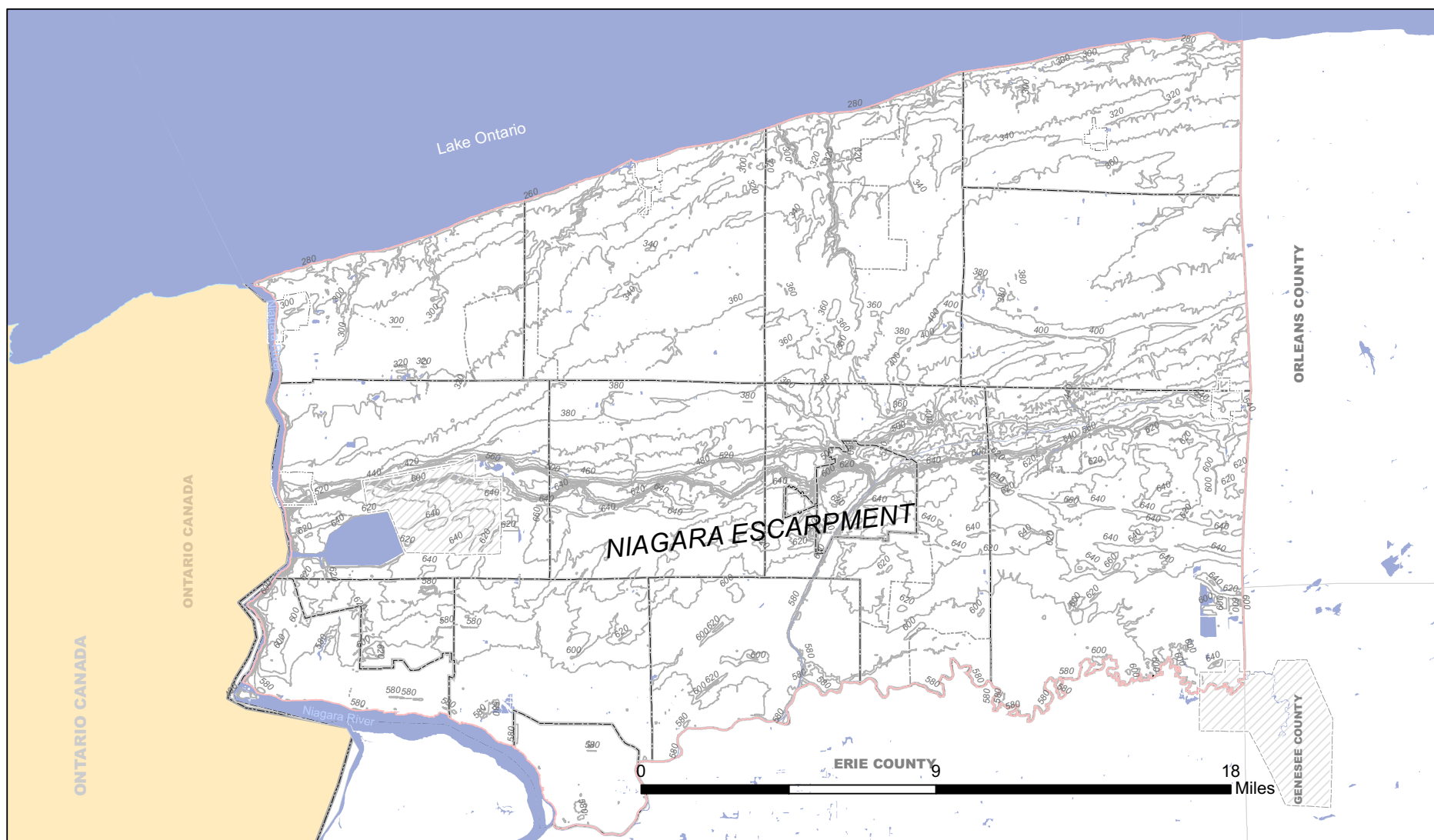
2. Topography

Niagara County is located within the Huron and Ontario Lake Plain. The Ontario Plain extends from the shore of Lake Ontario approximately 8 miles southward to the Niagara Escarpment (see Figure III.D.1a. Relief Map).

The Huron Plain begins at the Niagara Escarpment and continues southward where it terminates in Erie County. The Ontario Plain is relatively flat with broad valleys and small streams that flow northward into Lake Ontario. Topography of both the Huron and Ontario Plain is relatively flat with slopes of less than 20 feet in elevation per mile.

The shoreline of Lake Ontario contains vertical bluffs that range in elevation between 15 to 60 feet high. These bluffs are unique and continuously being eroded by the wind and wave action along the Lake's shoreline (see Figure III.D.1b. Elevations). The ordinary high water elevation of Lake Ontario is 247.3 feet (International Great Lakes Datum or





The American Falls are 184 feet high and 1,060 feet wide containing approximately 10% of the flow of the Niagara River.

The Horseshoe Falls in Canada are 176 feet high and 2,200 feet wide containing about 90% of the flow of the River.



Ninety percent of New York State bedrock is covered by surface deposits that are more than three feet thick.

IGLD), the lowest of the five Great Lakes. By contrast the elevation of Lake Erie is 573.4 feet IGLD (*Niagara River Greenway Commission 2007*). That significant difference in elevation contributes to the beauty and uniqueness of Niagara Falls.

The Niagara Escarpment is a visually prominent natural feature in the County rising more than 600 feet in elevation, crossing the County in an east/west direction (*Niagara County Planning Board 1961*). Niagara Falls is the result of where the Niagara River crosses the Escarpment. At the Falls, the Niagara River plummets approximately 212 feet from its upper reach into its lower reach.

The Escarpment is steepest in the western portion of the County. It is a spectacular geologic feature that is visually distinct from the rest of the County ranging in slope from 106 to 317 feet in elevation per mile. The Escarpment is also a unique area providing a diversity of wildlife and vegetation habitats.

The Huron Plain is also characterized by relatively flat uniform topography, broken up occasionally by low-lying ridges. Overland drainage south of the Niagara Escarpment is channeled to the west to feed into the Niagara River. The primary drainage way to the Niagara River is Tonawanda Creek which flows more than 90 miles westward from its headwaters in Genesee County east of Niagara County.

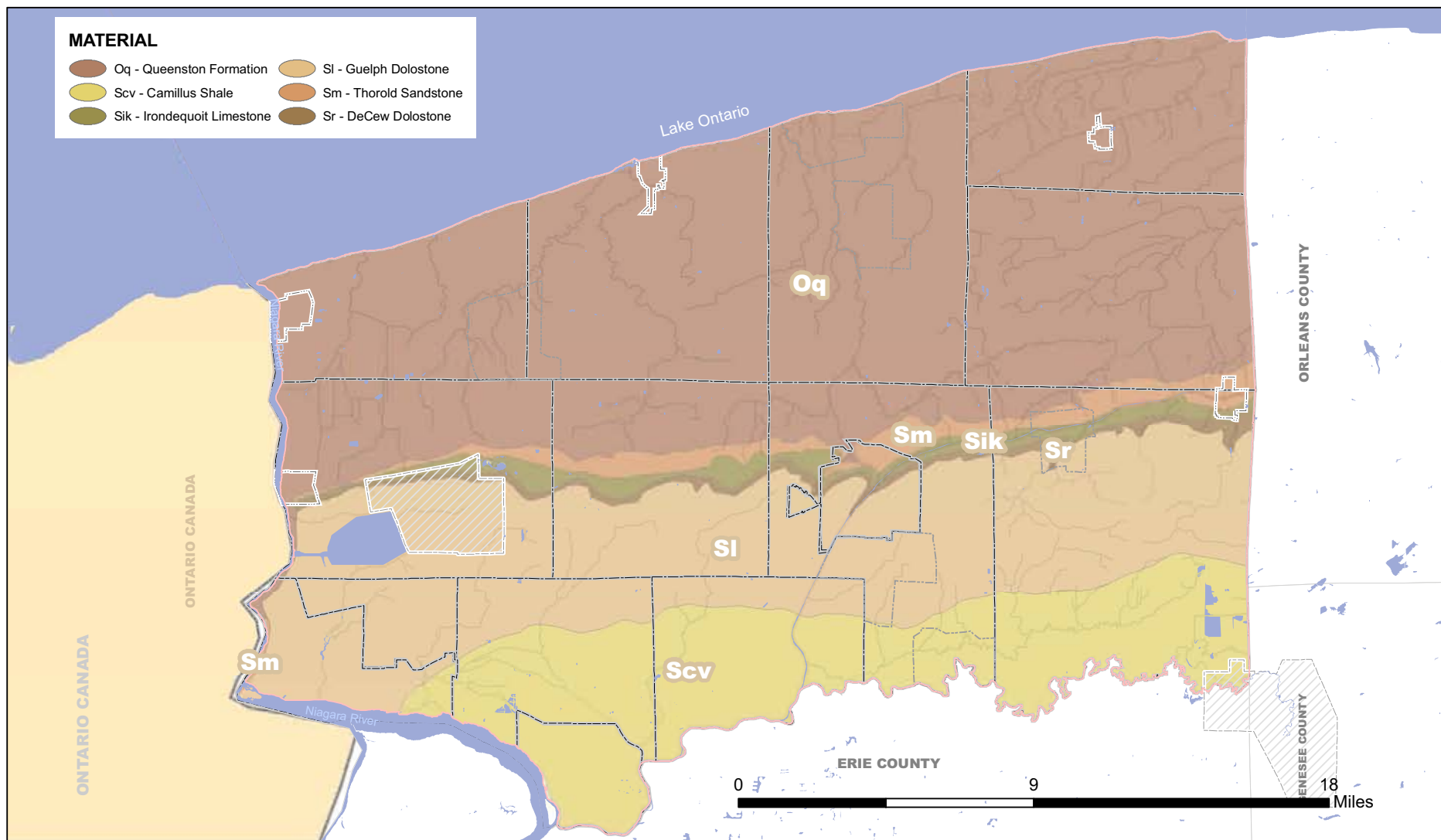
3. Geology

a. Bedrock

Geological conditions that contribute to the spectacular natural features and landscape of Niagara County are described as either bedrock or surficial geology. Bedrock is the rocky layer or the “crust” of the earth’s surface which has a thickness of several miles. In some places of the County bedrock is exposed at or near the surface, but in most cases bedrock is unseen and lies beneath layers of inorganic geologic materials and the organic components of surface soils.

The primary bedrock formations of Niagara County are Queenston shale, Lockport dolomitic limestone and Rochester shale (see Figure III.D.2a. Bedrock Geology). Lairdsville and Lockport soils found in the County come from parent material that is eroded away from the Queenston shale formation. Brockport soils come from eroded material in the Rochester shale formation. Queenston shale can be found around the banks of the Niagara River Gorge. Lockport dolomitic limestone is exposed along the Niagara Escarpment and can be seen along the Erie/Barge Canal in the County.

Bedrock is an important consideration in land use development and construction projects. Depending on its stability, hardness and depth from the surface, bedrock could be a significant constraint to development and quite costly to overcome.



b. Surficial Deposits

Bedrock is usually covered by a relatively shallow layer of soil and other loose granular material, mostly sands and gravel. The product of erosion and the “weathering” of materials by wind and water over long periods of time breaks down parent materials found in bedrock into these smaller loose granular materials. These materials are then transported by wind, water and ice. Over the course of centuries these loose materials are deposited in concentrations and form many of the features that contribute to the natural landscapes seen in the County.

Niagara County soils are largely composed of materials deposited during the most recent ice age, which ended approximately 12,000 years ago. The glacially deposited material, called glacial till, was scoured by receding ice sheets and deposited in the form of hills, ridges and plains. The different types of surficial deposits found in Niagara County are identified in Figure III.D.2b. Surficial Geology.

Four types of glacial till deposits exist in the County. These are ground moraines, drumlins, elongated till ridges and terminal moraines. Glacial till underlies most areas and consist of lake sediments. These sediments are the remnants of glacial lakes that were once present in the region.

Deltas were formed in Niagara County when one large glacial lake overflowed into another. These lakes would occasionally remain for long periods of time forming distinct shorelines. The gravel bed along NYS Route 104 which traverses Niagara County in an east-west direction is a good example of where a distinct shoreline was created from what was once Lake Iroquois that existed during glacial times.

The Lake Ontario shoreline exhibits thick layers of lake sediments as a remnant of Lake Iroquois. Lake Iroquois was the last large glacial lake in the region. This glacial lake covered the area north of NYS Route 104. The deepest parts of the lake surrounded what is now the shore of Lake Ontario. Thick lake sediments were deposited as silt and clay. These thick sediments around the shoreline of Lake Ontario consist of lacustrine soils such as Collamer, Niagara, Hudson and Rhinebeck (USDA Soil Conservation Service 1972).

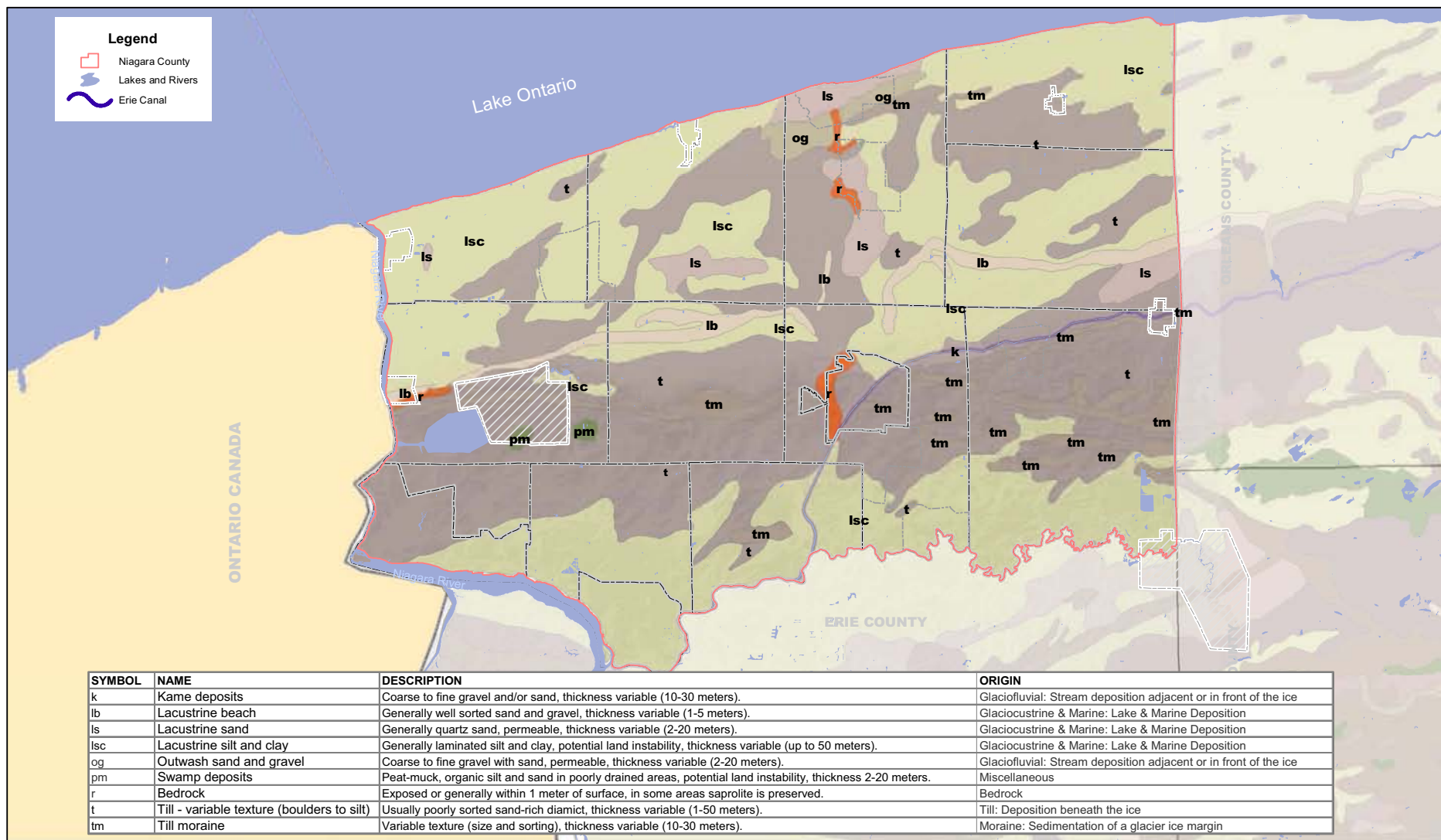
Other glacial lakes were present in the Niagara region. Lake Lundy contributed to the reddish-colored lake sediments that form Odessa, Lakemont and Schoharie soils. Lake Tonawanda contributed to olive and brown colored sediments that form Raynham, Rhinebeck and Canandaigua soils. Lockport, Lairdsville, Hilton, Appleton, Cazenovia and Ovid soils were all formed from shallow portions of Lake Iroquois. Collamer, Niagara and Hudson soils were formed in the deeper parts of Lake Iroquois. Rhinebeck soils, although formed in Lake Tonawanda, are also believed to have been formed in the deeper parts of Lake Iroquois.

4. Soils

There are 11 soil associations that exist in Niagara County. These soil associations are briefly described below summarized from the Niagara County Soil Survey. The Soil Survey should be consulted for detailed soils information and locations of the

Four types of glacial till deposits exist in the County. These are ground moraines, drumlins, elongated till ridges and terminal moraines.

Important details on soils found in Niagara County and elsewhere can be found at the Natural Resources Conservation Service website at www.websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app



A soil association is made up of adjacent soils that are large enough to be mapped individually, but are not due to the time and effort required to do so. Rather these soils are considered as one unit because of uniformity in the pattern of their characteristics and the extent of dominant soils, although individual soils may differ greatly from one another.

soils in Niagara County.

Areas Dominated by Soils Formed in Glacial Till

These soil associations cover approximately 33 percent of Niagara County. The primary use of these soils has historically been for dairy farming.

Appleton-Hilton-Sun association

These soils are deep, moderately well-drained to very poorly drained soils having medium textured subsoil. This association is mainly located in parts of Newfane and Wilson, the southern part of Somerset and the northern part of Hartland. The Appleton-Hilton-Sun association occupies approximately 14 percent of the County.

Hilton-Ovid-Ontario association

These soils are deep, well-drained to somewhat poorly drained soils having medium textured or moderately fine textured subsoil. There is one continuous area that occupies the central region of Niagara County in an east to west direction. This area includes a limestone escarpment and a sandy delta near the City of Lockport. The Hilton-Ovid-Ontario association occupies approximately 15 percent of the County.

Lockport-Ovid association

These soils are moderately deep, somewhat poorly drained soils having fine textured or moderately fine textured subsoil. There are six separate areas in the County where these soils can be found. This association exists in the area north of NYS Route 104. The Lockport-Ovid association occupies approximately four percent of the County.

Areas Dominated by Soils Formed in Gravelly Glacial Outwash or in Beach or Bar Deposits

These soil associations cover approximately six percent of Niagara County and are located in the northern half of the County. Fruit and vegetable growing is the major use for these soils. Sand and gravel can be obtained from these associations as well.

Howard-Arkport-Phelps association

These soils are deep, somewhat excessively drained to moderately well drained soils having a medium textured to moderately coarse textured subsoil located over gravel and sand deposits. This association is found extending from east to west in the hamlet of Olcott. The northern boundary is formed by Lake Ontario. The Howard-Arkport-Phelps association occupies approximately two percent of the County.

Otisville-Altmar-Fredon-Stafford association

These soils are deep, excessively drained to poorly drained soils having medium textured to coarse textured subsoil over gravel and sand deposits. Areas include a large area near Wrights Corners and Ridgewood, and its northern extension along Hess Road and a separate large and a small area near Ewings Road and Chestnut Street. The Otisville-Altmar-Fredon-Stafford association occupies approximately four percent of the County.

Areas Dominated by Soils Formed in Lake Laid Sands

These soil associations cover approximately eight percent of Niagara County. Fruit and vegetable growing is the major use for these soils.

Minoa-Galen-Elnora association

These soils are deep, somewhat poorly drained and moderately well-drained soils having a medium-textured, moderately coarse textured, or coarse textured subsoil, located over fine or very fine sand. The largest areas of this association occur near Chapman Road in the Town of Hartland and near Hatter Road in the Town of Newfane. The Minoa-Galen-Elnora association occupies approximately four percent of the County.

Claverack-Cosad-Elnora association

These soils are deep, well drained to somewhat poorly drained soils having coarse textured subsoil, located over clay or fine sand. There are 4 separate areas that occur in Niagara County. All four occur north of NYS Route 104 with the largest single area being near Ransomville. The Claverack-Cosad-Elnora association occupies approximately four percent of the County.

Areas Dominated by Soils Formed in Lake-laid Silts and Very Fine Sands

These soil associations cover approximately 17 percent of Niagara County. These soils are limited for farm use because of the natural drainage issues that occur with these soils. Vegetable growing is feasible on these soils.

Niagara- Collamer association

These soils are deep, poorly drained to moderately well drained soils having a medium textured to moderately fine textured subsoil. There are 4 major areas that are found in the County. More than one-half of the association's total acreage is found near Slayton Settlement and Wheeler Roads. The Niagara-Collamer association occupies about six percent of the County.

Canandaigua-Raynham-Rhinebeck association

These soils are deep, somewhat poorly drained to very poorly drained soils having dominant medium-textured to fine textured subsoil. This association is found in the City of North Tonawanda and part of the Tonawanda Reservation. The Canandaigua-Raynham-Rhinebeck association occupies approximately 11 percent of the County.

Areas Dominated by Soils Formed in Lake-laid Clays and Silts

These soil associations cover approximately 36 percent of Niagara County. There is little to no farming value derived from these soils due to drainage constraints.

Rhinebeck-Ovid-Madalin association

These soils are deep, somewhat poorly drained to very poorly drained soils having fine textured or moderately fine textured subsoil that is dominantly brown or olive in color. The majority of this association can be found near the Village of

Niagara County has two primary watersheds, the Oak Orchard-Twelve mile watershed that drains into Lake Ontario and the Niagara watershed that drains into the Niagara River.

Youngstown. The Rhinebeck-Ovid-Madalin association occupies approximately 15 percent of the County.

Odessa-Lakemont-Ovid association

These soils are deep, somewhat poorly drained to very poorly drained soils having fine textured or moderately fine textured subsoil that is dominantly reddish in color. The larger of two areas is found west of the Erie/Barge Canal. The other area is found east of the Erie/Barge Canal. The Odessa-Lakemont-Ovid association occupies approximately 21 percent of the County.

Hydric Soils

There are 14 different hydric soils listed for Niagara County (USDA NRCS website). As hydric soils these are generally poorly drained, and may be strong indicators of the presence of other important wetland characteristics including areas of important groundwater recharge.

Figure III.D.3. Hydric Soils illustrates the mapped locations of hydric soils known to exist in Niagara County. The map indicates important surface waters features, including streams that may be associated with these soils and their drainage characteristics. The Niagara County Soils Survey contains detailed characteristics about these and other specific soils found in Niagara County and should be consulted for more information on possible development uses and constraints.

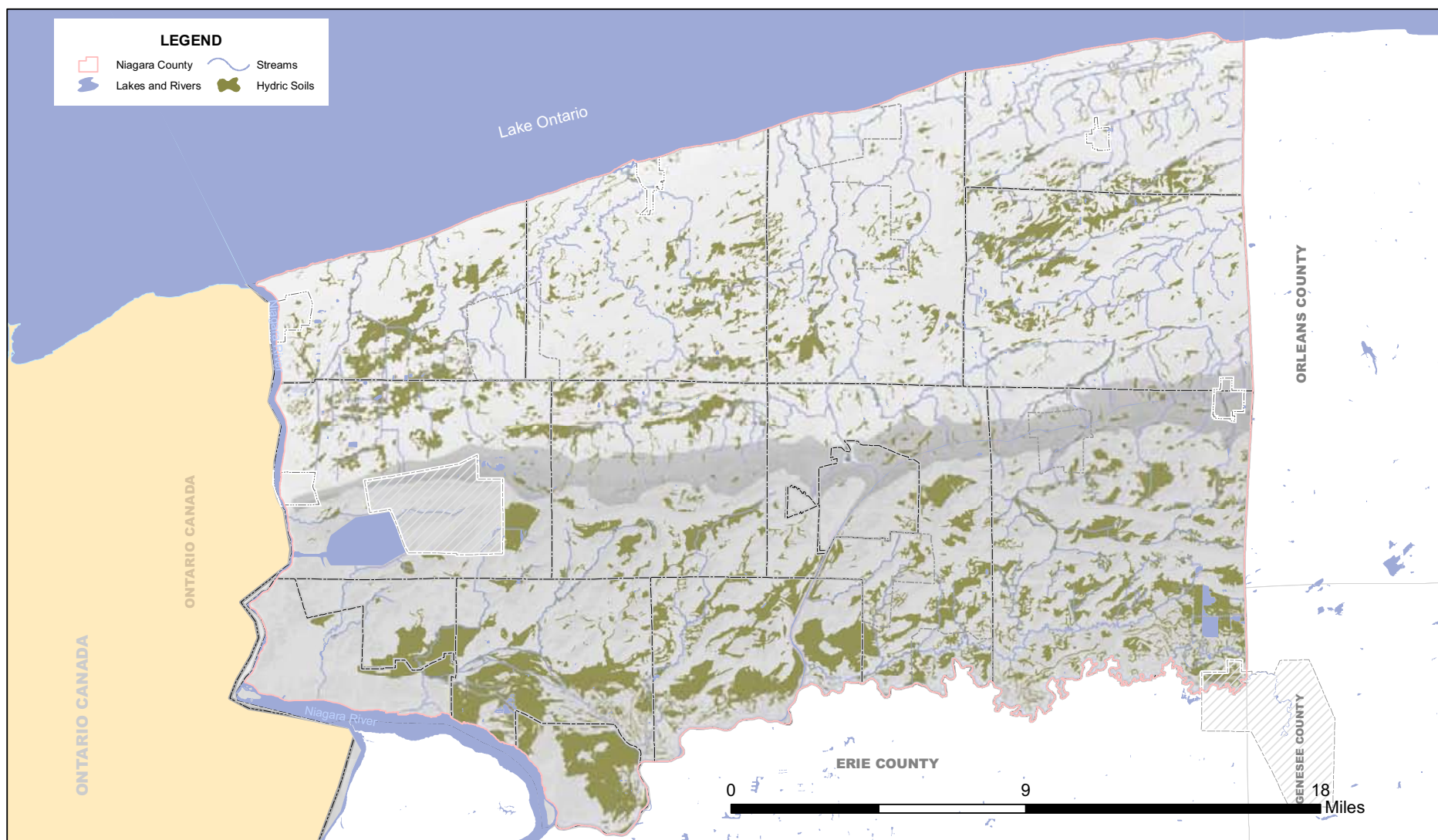
5. Water Resources

Niagara County is bordered by three significant bodies of water and numerous smaller creeks and streams that drain both the Lake Ontario and Niagara River watersheds. Lake Ontario borders the northern part of the County, Tonawanda Creek borders the south, and the Niagara River borders the County to the west. The abundance of freshwater resources in Niagara County have had a tremendous influence on the unique history of the County and provides similar opportunities for the County's future. The extent of the County's two primary watersheds, the Oak Orchard-Twelve mile watershed that drains the northern half of the County into Lake Ontario and the Niagara watershed that drains into the Niagara River are illustrated in Figure III.D.4. Hydrology.

Tonawanda Creek, a primary inland stream, flows east-west through five counties, including Niagara County, for a distance of approximately 90 miles. Tonawanda Creek drains an area of about 650 square miles as a primary tributary of the Niagara River. The creek is classified as Class C by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and is best suited for fishing and similar uses.

Niagara County is a true gateway location providing access to other significant water resources in the northeastern U.S. and southern Ontario, Canada. Local waterways are important destinations that offer passage for boaters traveling Lake Ontario and other waterways such as the St. Lawrence River and the Atlantic Ocean.

The Erie/Barge Canal is a man made waterway and an important part of the history of Niagara County. The Canal significantly contributes to the uniqueness of many communities in the County. The Canal enters the County near the Village



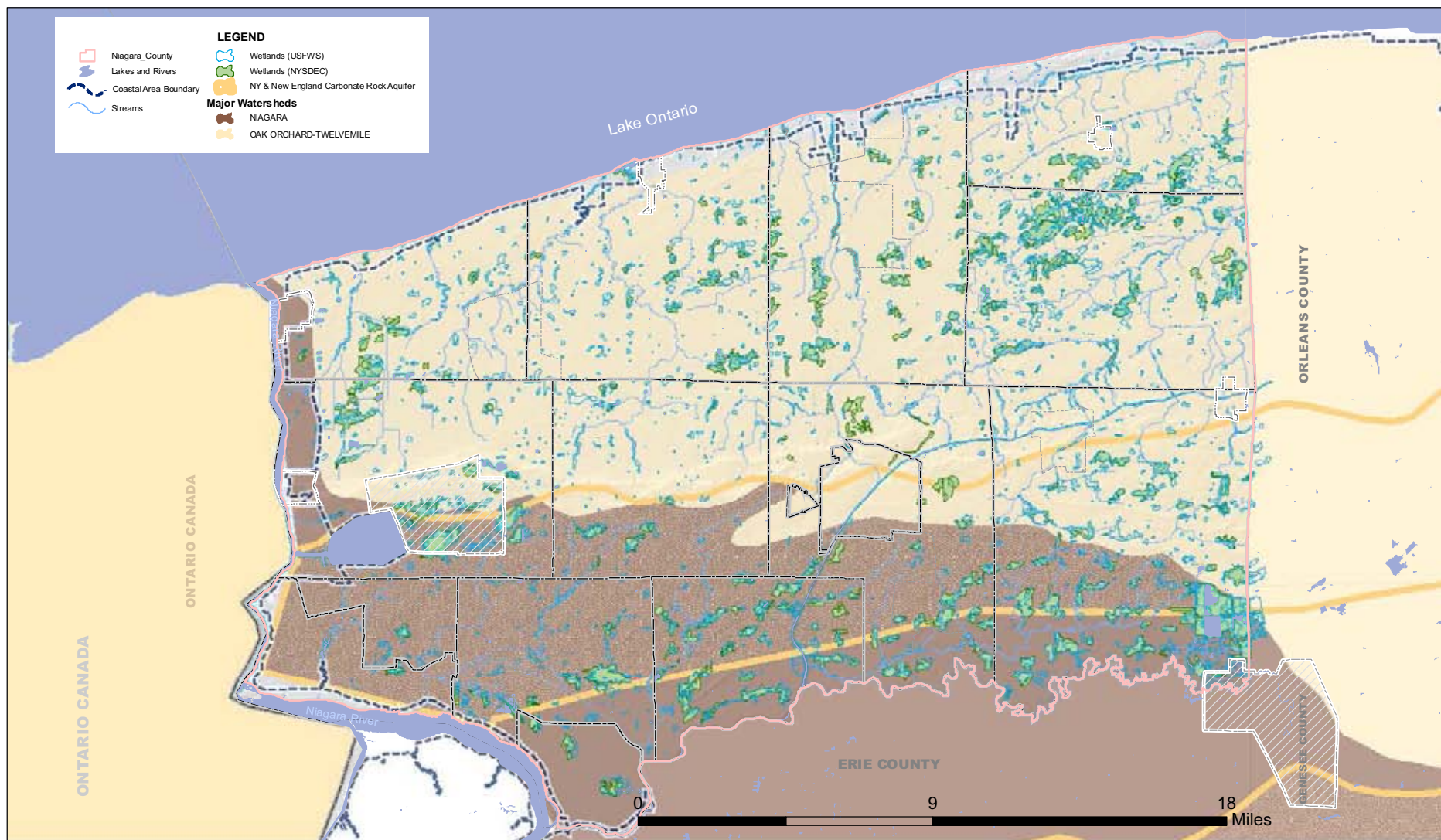
Project Number: 17256



Niagara Communities
Comprehensive Plan

Hydric Soils

Figure
III.D.3



of Middleport in the northernmost part of the Town of Royalton then traversing westward through the Town and City of Lockport, then southward into the Town of Pendleton where it joins Tonawanda Creek.

Another significant man-made water body is the Lewiston Power Reservoir located in the southwestern portion of the Town of Lewiston. The water that is pooled in the reservoir is used to generate power at the Robert Moses Niagara Power Project.

The natural and man-made water resources of Niagara County are unique to the County and its communities. Their individual or combined importance to the culture and heritage of the area is well beyond the scope of detail of this Plan and interested persons are encouraged to contact the County's Historian for further information. There is an extensive body of work done by others especially in recent years that detail the history of these resources as well as the many future opportunities associated with these resources.

6. Aquifers

The New York and New England Carbonate Rock Aquifer is a principal aquifer that underlies a considerable portion of the southern half of Niagara County. The location of this aquifer and other significant hydrologic features within the County are identified in Figure III.D.4. Hydrology.

Three bedrock aquifers are contained within this principal aquifer. These include the limestone aquifer occurring in the Onondaga Limestone, Akron Dolomite and the Bertie Limestone formations; the Camillus aquifer occurring in the Camillus Shale formation, the Syracuse formation and the Vernon Shale formation; and the Lockport aquifer occurring in the Lockport Dolomite formation. All three bedrock aquifers yield small to moderate quantities of water and are not used for significant public withdrawals of water (Niagara River Greenway Commission 2007). Public water supplies provided by the County's Water District are obtained from the Niagara River.

7. Wetlands

Freshwater wetlands are a valuable natural resource and provide a variety of important functions to maintain a healthy, well-balanced natural environment. Among the many functions provided, wetlands serve as a flood control mechanism by temporarily storing and gradually releasing large amounts of stormwater runoff to surface and groundwater resources. Wetland benefits include filtration of contaminants and aquifer recharge. Wetlands also control the erosion of soils by supporting the presence of vegetation that are adapted to living in wet environments. They also provide valuable habitat and food sources for indigent and transient wildlife. Wetlands and wetland complexes that hydraulically link wetlands provide humans with passive forms of recreation and educational opportunities such as nature study, bird watching and wildlife conservation.

Wetlands are identified by three different parameters or criteria: vegetation, hydrology and soils. In order for a wetland to exist, all three parameters must be present. Generally speaking, wetlands fall under the jurisdiction of two regulating agencies. Wetlands are regulated by either the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under



Niagara County contains approximately 29,795 acres of potential Federally-regulated wetlands and approximately 17,813 acres of potential State-regulated wetlands.

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which are considered Federally regulated wetlands, or by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) under Article 24 of the New York State Conservation Law. The Corps of Engineers has no size requirement for regulating Federal wetlands as long as they meet wetland criteria and considered hydraulically connected to waters of the United States. The NYSDEC regulates and designates wetlands as State regulated if they meet the criteria and are greater than 12.4 acres in size.

Wetlands exist and are fairly evenly distributed throughout much of Niagara County. Known wetlands are identified in Figure III.D.4 Hydrology. These wetland areas are categorized as either National Wetland Inventory (NWI) wetlands, that typically may be under the jurisdiction of the Corps of Engineers, and NYSDEC wetlands that may be under the jurisdiction of New York State.

Approximately 29,795 acres of potential Federal wetlands exist in Niagara County; and approximately 17,813 acres of potential State-regulated wetlands exist based on current GIS mapping data. Although Figure III.D.4 shows the general locations of known or suspected wetlands based on soils data or other information, field reconnaissance and boundary delineations by wetland specialists are necessary to adequately determine the presence and extent of wetland boundaries in specific areas. Mapped wetlands presented in this Plan are intended to provide general information on location and type of wetland characteristics that may be present for planning purposes only. This limited information should not be the basis for making site specific decisions regarding development potential or opportunities for wetland preservation, conservation or management.

8. Wildlife Management Areas

The Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area is located in the extreme southeast portion of Niagara County in the Town of Royalton (see Figure III.D.5. Parks, Recreation and Open Space). The Wildlife Management Area mostly consists of wetlands and is within the floodplain of Tonawanda Creek. In addition to providing significant and diversified floral (vegetation) and faunal (wildlife) habitats, this area offers a variety of recreational opportunities for hiking, hunting, fishing, trapping, bird watching, nature study, and other similar pursuits.

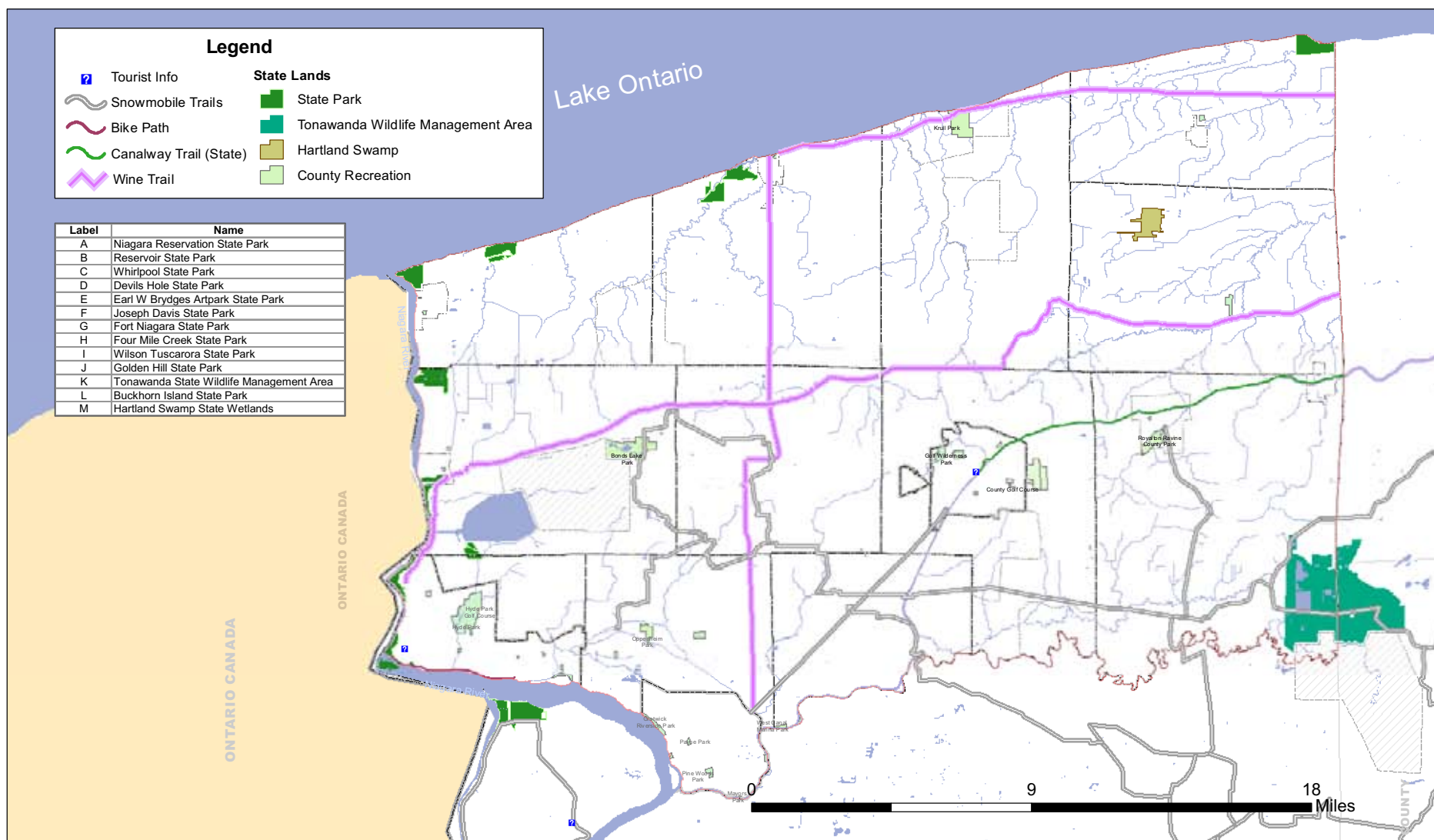
9. Critical Environmental Areas

Presently, no officially designated Critical Environmental Areas (CEA) exists in Niagara County pursuant to New York State standards for such designation.

However, the Niagara River corridor has been designated as a bi-national Important Bird Area (IBA) by the provincial government in Canada and the U.S. National Audubon Society (Niagara River Greenway Commission 2007). This designation is due to the large and varied numbers of waterfowl that migrate and winter in the area. The river corridor is also known to be occupied or visited by several State and Federally listed threatened and/or endangered species including Peregrine falcons and Bald eagles.



*Presently,
no officially
designated Critical
Environmental
Areas (CEA) exists
in Niagara County
pursuant to New York
State standards*



E. Land Use Characteristics

1. Land Use Classifications

Land use parcel data for all properties located within Niagara County are provided by the New York State Office of Real Property Services. These data have been utilized for GIS mapping purposes throughout this Plan to illustrate existing land use categories and patterns of land use development throughout the County.

New York State uses a system of classifying land use utilizing numeric codes in nine different land use categories. The nine categories of land use and a brief general description of the primary land use associated with each category are provided below.

<u>Code</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Description</u>
100	Agricultural	Property used for the production of crops and livestock.
200	Residential	Property used for human habitation.
300	Vacant Land	Property that is not in use, is in temporary use, or lacks permanent improvement.
400	Commercial	Property used for the sale of goods and/or services.
500	Recreation & Entertainment	Property used by groups for recreation, amusement, or entertainment.
600	Community Services	Property used for the well-being of the community.
700	Industrial	Property used for the production and fabrication of durable and nondurable man-made goods.
800	Public Services	Property used to provide services to the general public.
900	Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands & Public Parks	Reforested lands, preserves, and private hunting and fishing clubs.



Approximately 158 square miles, or about 31% of Niagara County is categorized as Agricultural.

The Niagara Wine Trail is the fastest growing wine trail in the State and has grown from three wineries in the past few years to twelve that are in operation in 2008.

An overview of existing land use within Niagara County follows using the nine land use categories. Each land use is accompanied by a detailed parcel based map (see Figures III.E.1 through III.E.9) showing the extent and location of each category in communities throughout the County. Detailed land use information is also provided in other sections of this Plan including Chapter IV. Community Profiles and Chapter V. Existing Land Use which describes current issues and trends relative to land use in the County.

2. Agricultural Land

Lands classified as agricultural may include the following uses: agricultural vacant land (may be designated as vacant, but considered productive); livestock and products; field crops; truck crops grown in muckland and non-mucklands; orchard crops; nursery and greenhouses; specialty farms; and fish, game and wildlife preserves. Figure III.E.1 illustrates agricultural land uses that are distributed throughout the County.

It is interesting to note the concentrations of specific types of agricultural lands across Niagara County, noting for example, the concentration of orchards near Lake Ontario in the northern towns primarily in Newfane and Porter; vineyards concentrated primarily in the towns of Lewiston and Cambria along NYS Route 104; and the concentrations of dairy farms in the towns of Wheatfield, Lewiston and Cambria in the southern part of the County as well as the towns of Royalton, Hartland and Somerset in the eastern part of the County.

Based on GIS mapping of current (2007) parcel data, approximately 158 square miles, or about 31 percent of the County is categorized as agricultural. Farming has historically been and remains a viable business in the County and considered one of the area's most important industries and sector of the local and regional economy.

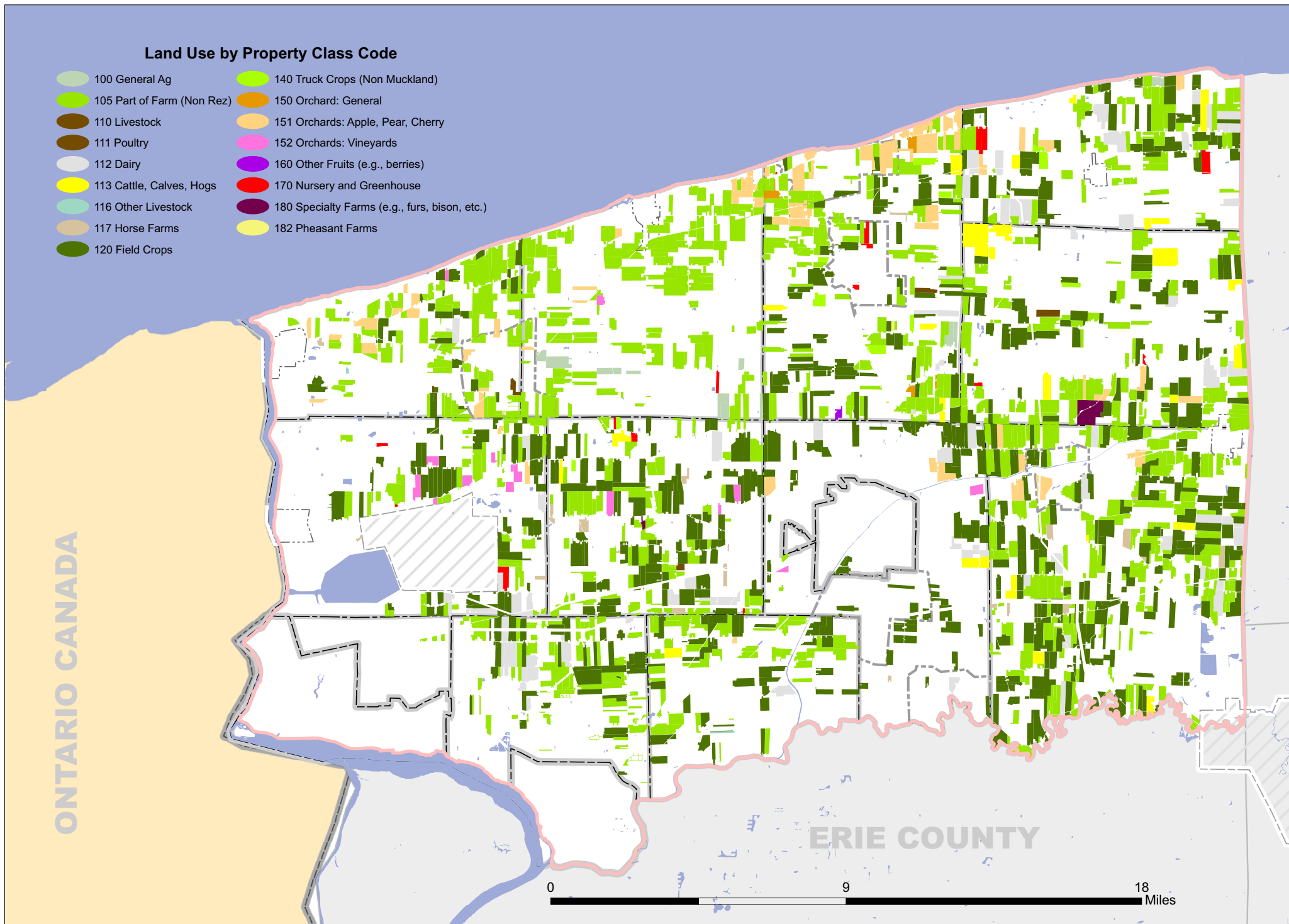
Due to the combination of rich farmland and ideal weather conditions tempered in large part by the presence of Lake Ontario, the County is one of the State's most important fruit growing regions. Niagara County ranks 4th in NYS in fruit growing. The combination of favorable climatic conditions and rich farmland in combination with local topographic conditions, such as the Niagara Escarpment, has given rise to the success of a number of local vineyards in recent years. The Niagara Wine Trail is the fastest growing wine trail in the State and has grown from three wineries in the past few years to twelve that are in operation today.

United States Department of Agriculture's Census of Agriculture for 2007 indicates that Niagara County ranks 17th among the 62 counties in New York State in total value of agricultural products sold. Agricultural land is primarily used for grains, vegetables, fruit and nursery production. The County ranks high in the production of pears, peaches, plums, prunes, grapes and sweet cherries.

The number and size of farms in Niagara County have fluctuated over the past 20 years. The number of farms dropped 6% in 5 years between 1997 and 2002, then increased 8% between 2002 and 2007. However, during the same period the average acreage per farm increased 13% between 1997 and 2002, then decreased 11% between 2002 and 2007. The most recent Census of Agriculture in 2007 indicated the average farmer in the County was almost 57 years old.

Land Use by Property Class Code

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 100 General Ag | 140 Truck Crops (Non Muckland) |
| 105 Part of Farm (Non Rez) | 150 Orchard: General |
| 110 Livestock | 151 Orchards: Apple, Pear, Cherry |
| 111 Poultry | 152 Orchards: Vineyards |
| 112 Dairy | 160 Other Fruits (e.g., berries) |
| 113 Cattle, Calves, Hogs | 170 Nursery and Greenhouse |
| 116 Other Livestock | 180 Specialty Farms (e.g., furs, bison, etc.) |
| 117 Horse Farms | 182 Pheasant Farms |
| 120 Field Crops | |



Niagara County Agriculture

<i>Census Year</i>	<i>1987</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2007</i>
Number of farms	923	749	855	801	865
Land (acres) in farms	146,537	135,494	139,031	148,041	142,041
Average farm size (acres)	159	181	163	185	165

Ag District	Towns	Acres	
		1999*	2006**
District 2	Hartland, Royalton, Somerset	37,381	40,454
District 4	Hartland, Lockport, Newfane, Royalton	34,828	34,663
District 6	Cambria, Lewiston, Niagara, Pendleton, Wheatfield	22,283	24,076
District 7	Cambria, Lockport, Pendleton, Wheatfield, Wilson	17,449	18,067
District 8	Porter, Wilson	38,979	40,726
District 9	Royalton	25,186	30,667
TOTAL		176,106	188,654

*Niagara County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2006)

**Cornell University Geospatial Information Repository (CUGIR, 2006)

3. Residential land

Residential land consists of a variety of dwelling types. This category of land use includes: one family year-round residences; two family year-round residences; three family year-round residences; rural residences with acreage of 10 or more acres; estates of not less than 5 acres; seasonal residences; mobile homes; residential - multi-purpose/multi-structure (may include multiple dwellings on one parcel/partial conversion to commercial use).

Residential land uses are illustrated in Figure III.E.2. Several characteristics of residential land use are noteworthy. Among these is the concentration of single family homes primarily in the southern and western towns as well as in the central areas of the County. The lack of what is categorized as rural residential acreage of ten acres or more in the western and southern communities and the concentration of rural residential uses in the northern towns is apparent as an indication of the suburbanization of southwestern portions of the County.

Rural residential uses with acreage is defined as year-round residences with 10 or more acres of land with the possibility of up to three year-round dwelling units. This acreage can be characterized as primarily residential, but also in use for agricultural production (NYS numeric code 240) or for more large lot recreational residential use (NYS numeric code 242).

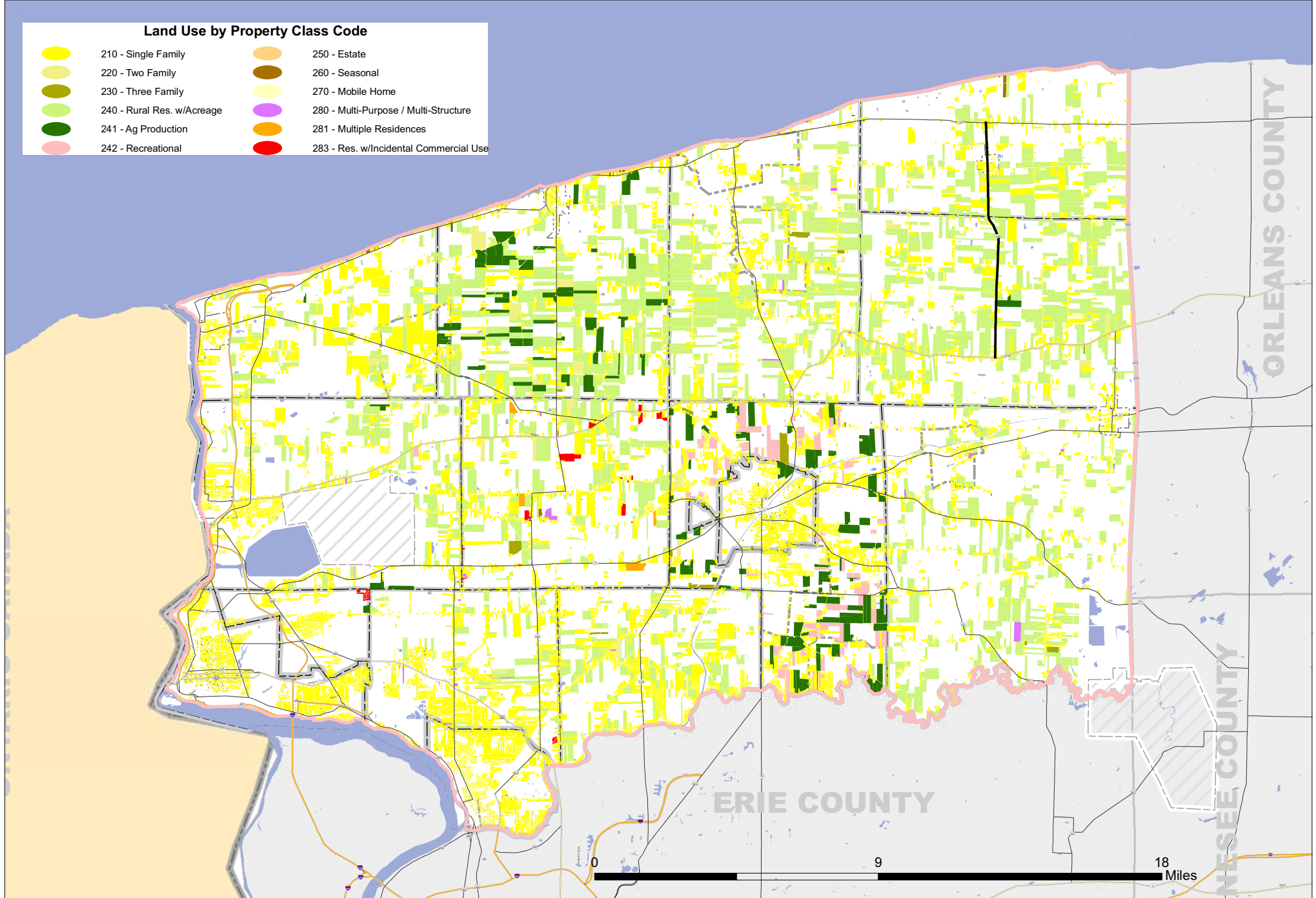
Residential uses account for approximately 180 square miles or about 34 percent of the total land area of Niagara County. The acreage of residential land use now exceeds the acreage of active agricultural uses and all other uses in the County as



Approximately 180 square miles or about 34% of Niagara County is categorized as Residential.

Land Use by Property Class Code

210 - Single Family	250 - Estate
220 - Two Family	260 - Seasonal
230 - Three Family	270 - Mobile Home
240 - Rural Res. w/Acreage	280 - Multi-Purpose / Multi-Structure
241 - Ag Production	281 - Multiple Residences
242 - Recreational	283 - Res. w/Incidental Commercial Use



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Existing Land Use: RESIDENTIAL

Property Class Code 200 Series

Figure
III.E.2

shown below.

<i><u>Land Use</u></i>	<i><u>% of Total</u></i>	<i><u>Total Acres</u></i>	<i><u>Total Sq. Miles</u></i>
Residential	34	115,606	180
Agriculture	30	101,280	158
Vacant Land	16	54,150	85
Commercial	< 3	8,462	13
Recreation	< 2	5,026	8
Community Services	2	6,726	11
Industrial	< 2	5,525	9
Public Services	< 2	5,438	9
Conservation and Parks	2	6,684	10
Lakes, Reservations, etc.	4	14,908	23
Other – Roads, ROW's, etc.	< 4	13,448	21

4. Vacant land

Vacant lands include the following possible uses: residential vacant land (vacant lots in residential areas); residential land including small improvement; rural vacant lots of 10 acres or less in rural residential areas; underwater vacant land; rural (abandoned agricultural land, residential vacant land over 10 acres, waste lands, sand dunes, marshes, swamps, rocky areas, and woods and brush of non-commercial trees species); vacant land in commercial areas; vacant land in industrial areas; urban renewal or slum clearance; and public utility vacant land.

Vacant lands are mapped in Figure III.E.3. It is interesting to note that lands identified as vacant are distributed throughout each of the municipalities in the County with few patterns or concentrations of these uses that might distinguish one region of the County from another. Approximately 17 percent of the total land area within the County is classified as vacant, the third largest category of land use in the County.

5. Commercial land

This is one of the most all-encompassing categories of land uses and accounts for a variety of business types including: living accommodations (apartments, hotel, motel, mobile home parks, camps, cottages, inns, lodges, boarding houses); dining establishments (restaurants, diners, snack bars, night clubs, bar, fast food franchises); motor vehicle services (auto dealers, auto sales and services, service and gas stations, body and tire shops, car washes, parking lot and garage; storage warehouse and distribution facilities; retail services (regional shopping centers, neighborhood shopping centers, large retail outlets, food stores, dealerships); banks and office buildings; miscellaneous services (funeral homes, dog kennels, vet clinics, junk yards); and multiple use or multipurpose (downtown row type, converted residence, one-story small structure, minimart).

Commercial parcels account for only three percent of all the land area within the











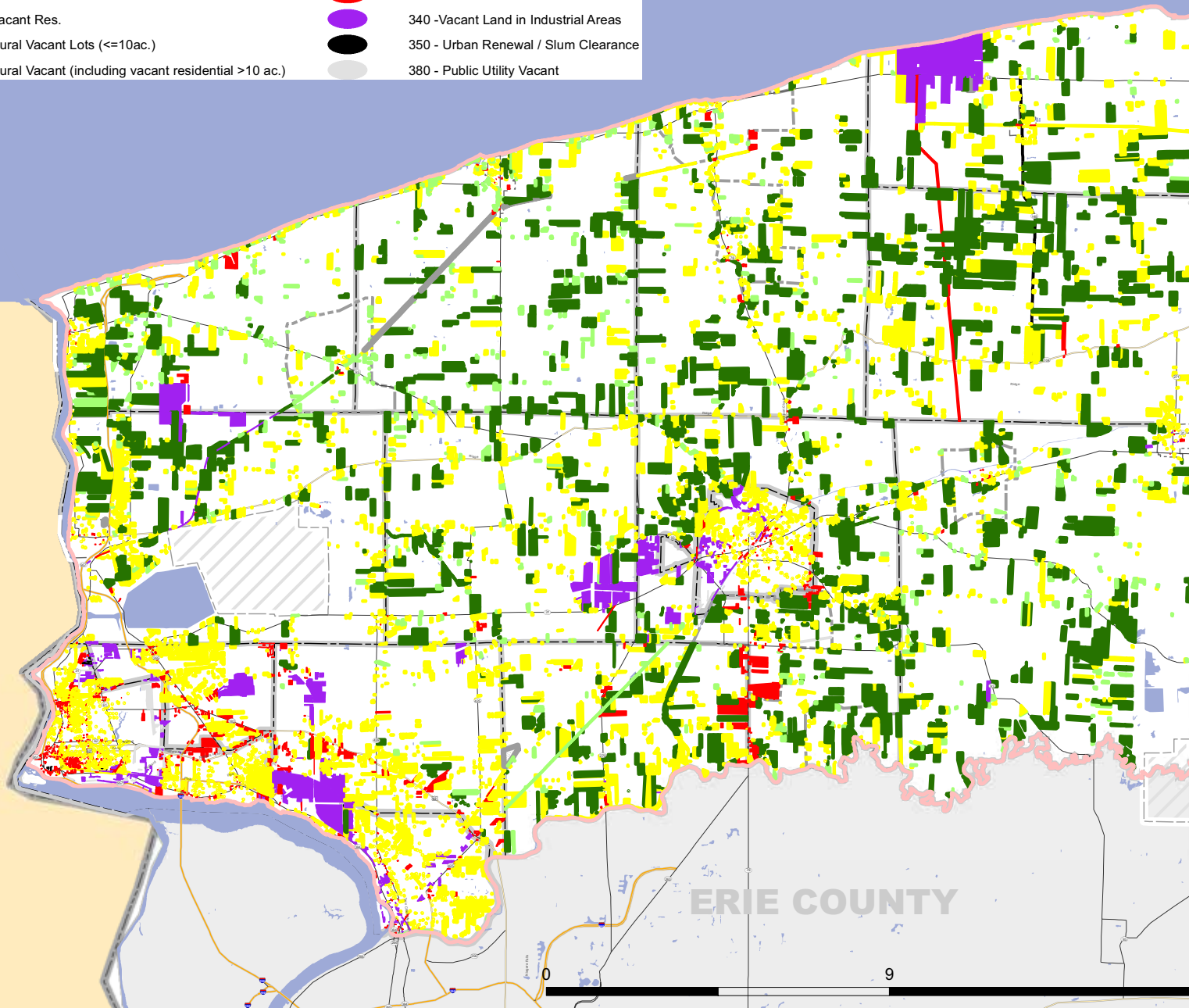
Approximately 85 square miles or about 16% of Niagara County is categorized as Vacant.



Commercial parcels account for approximately 3% of all of the land area in Niagara County.

Land Use by Property Class Code

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|
|  | 300 - Vacant |  | 330 - Vacant Land in Commercial Areas |
|  | 310 - Vacant Res. |  | 340 - Vacant Land in Industrial Areas |
|  | 314 - Rural Vacant Lots (<=10ac.) |  | 350 - Urban Renewal / Slum Clearance |
|  | 320 - Rural Vacant (including vacant residential >10 ac.) |  | 380 - Public Utility Vacant |



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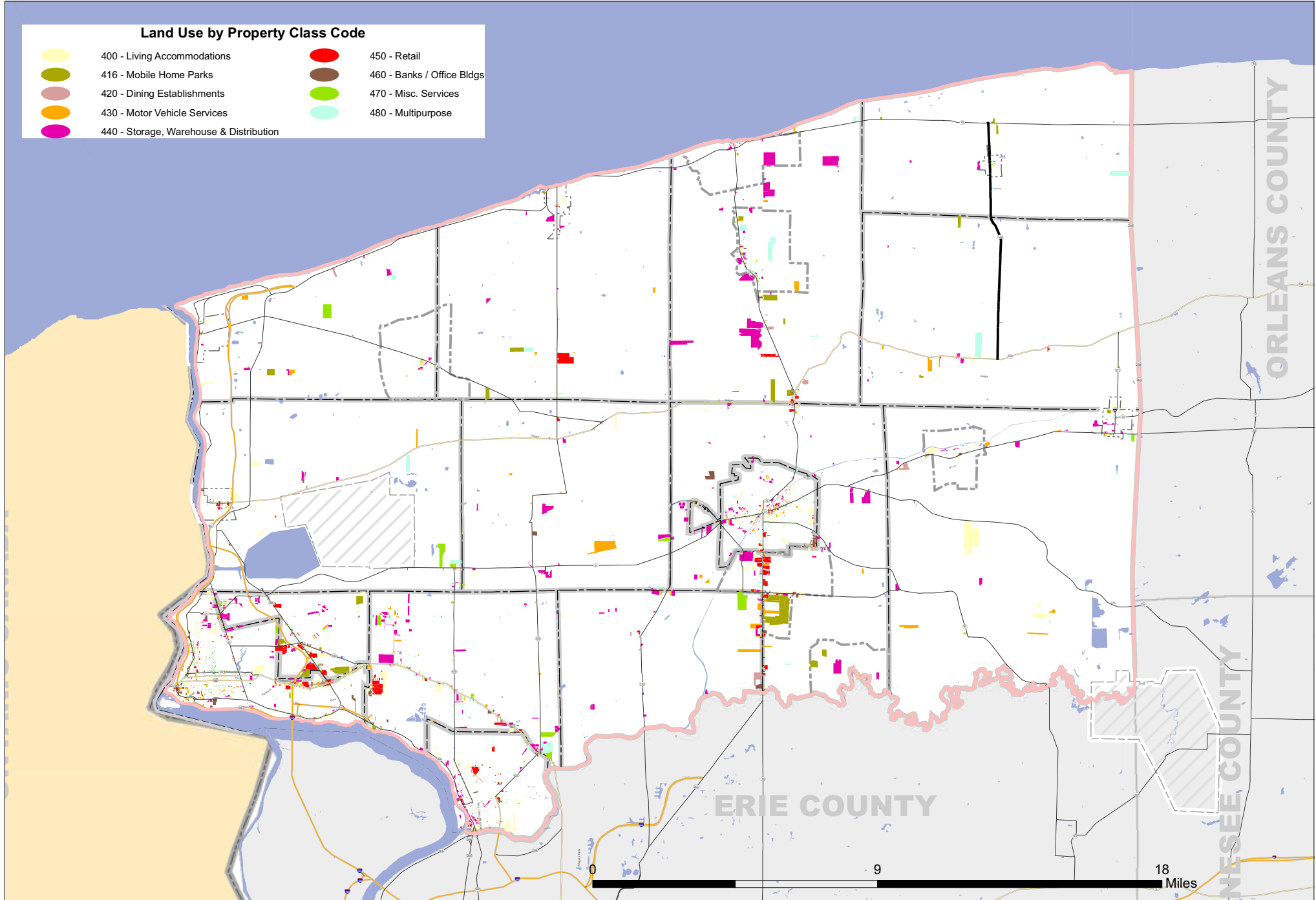
Existing Land Use: VACANT

Property Class Code 300 Series

Figure
III.E.3

Land Use by Property Class Code

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|
|  | 400 - Living Accommodations |  | 450 - Retail |
|  | 416 - Mobile Home Parks |  | 460 - Banks / Office Bldgs |
|  | 420 - Dining Establishments |  | 470 - Misc. Services |
|  | 430 - Motor Vehicle Services |  | 480 - Multipurpose |
|  | 440 - Storage, Warehouse & Distribution | | |



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Existing Land Use: COMMERCIAL

Property Class Code 400 Series

Figure
III.E.4

County. Most commercial properties as illustrated on Figure III.E. 4 are located in the older developed municipalities such as the cities of Niagara Falls, Lockport and North Tonawanda, the Town of Niagara Falls and the primary highway corridors leading to and from these communities including NYS Routes 62, 78 and 31.

6. Recreation and Entertainment

This category includes: entertainment assembly (theaters, drive-in theaters, auditoriums, exhibition halls, radio, tv and motion picture studios); sports assembly (stadiums, arenas, racetracks); amusement facilities (fairgrounds, parks, game farms, social organizations); indoor sports facilities (bowling, skating rinks, pools, spas, courts, etc.); outdoor sports activities (skiing, public golf, private country clubs, outdoor swimming pools, riding stables, rinks); improved beaches; marinas; camps, camping facilities and resorts; and parks (playgrounds, athletic fields and picnic grounds).

This category of land use makes up about two percent of the County's total land area or just over a total of approximately 5,000 acres. These uses are shown in Figure III.E.5. Many of the uses associated with this category are typically located near population centers and as such are found in or near the cities of Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda and Lockport.

7. Community Services

This category of land use includes: education (libraries, schools, colleges, universities, special schools and institutions); religious; welfare (orphanages, benevolent and moral associations, homes for the aged); health (hospitals and other related facilities); government (highway garage, office building, parking lots); protection (armed services, police and fire, civil defense); correctional; cultural and recreational (museums, art galleries, nature trails, bike paths); miscellaneous (professional associations, roads, streets, highways and parkways, expressways and adjoining lands, Indian reservations, animal welfare shelters, cemeteries).

Community services comprise approximately two percent of the County. The locations of these uses are shown in Figure III.E.6. Most services are concentrated in the southwestern, central and western portions of the County near the well established population centers of cities and suburban towns.

8. Industrial

These uses include: manufacturing and processing (high tech, light industrial and heavy manufacturing); mining and quarrying; production wells (oil, gas, water for oil production, gas and oil storage); industrial product pipelines (gas, water, brine, petroleum products).

Industrial uses are found primarily in the southwestern communities in the



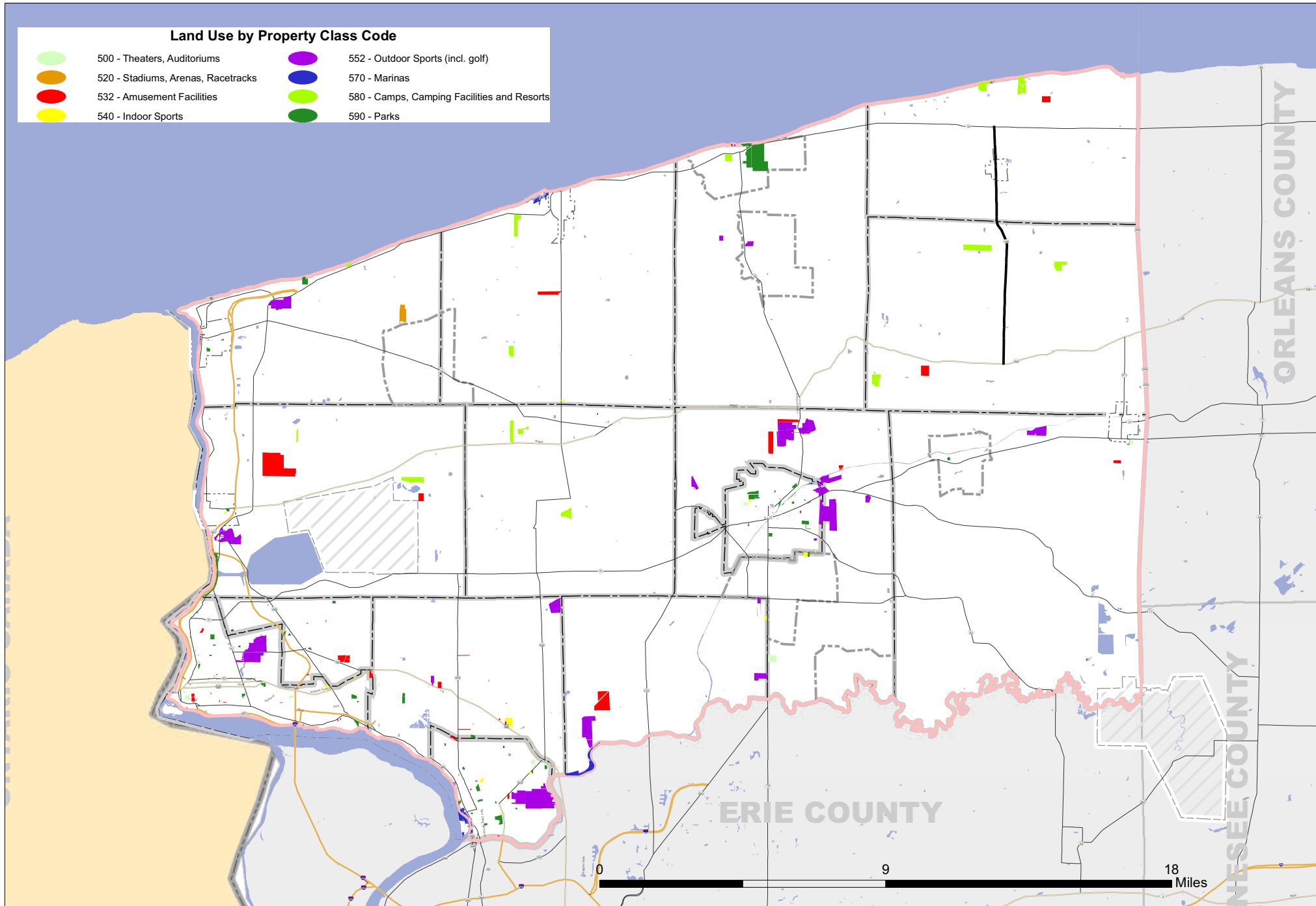
Recreation and Entertainment parcels account for approximately 2% or about 5,000 acres of all of the land area in Niagara County.



Community Services, Industrial, and Public Services each account for approximately 2% of all of the land area in Niagara County.

Land Use by Property Class Code

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---|---|
|  | 500 - Theaters, Auditoriums |  | 552 - Outdoor Sports (incl. golf) |
|  | 520 - Stadiums, Arenas, Racetracks |  | 570 - Marinas |
|  | 532 - Amusement Facilities |  | 580 - Camps, Camping Facilities and Resorts |
|  | 540 - Indoor Sports |  | 590 - Parks |



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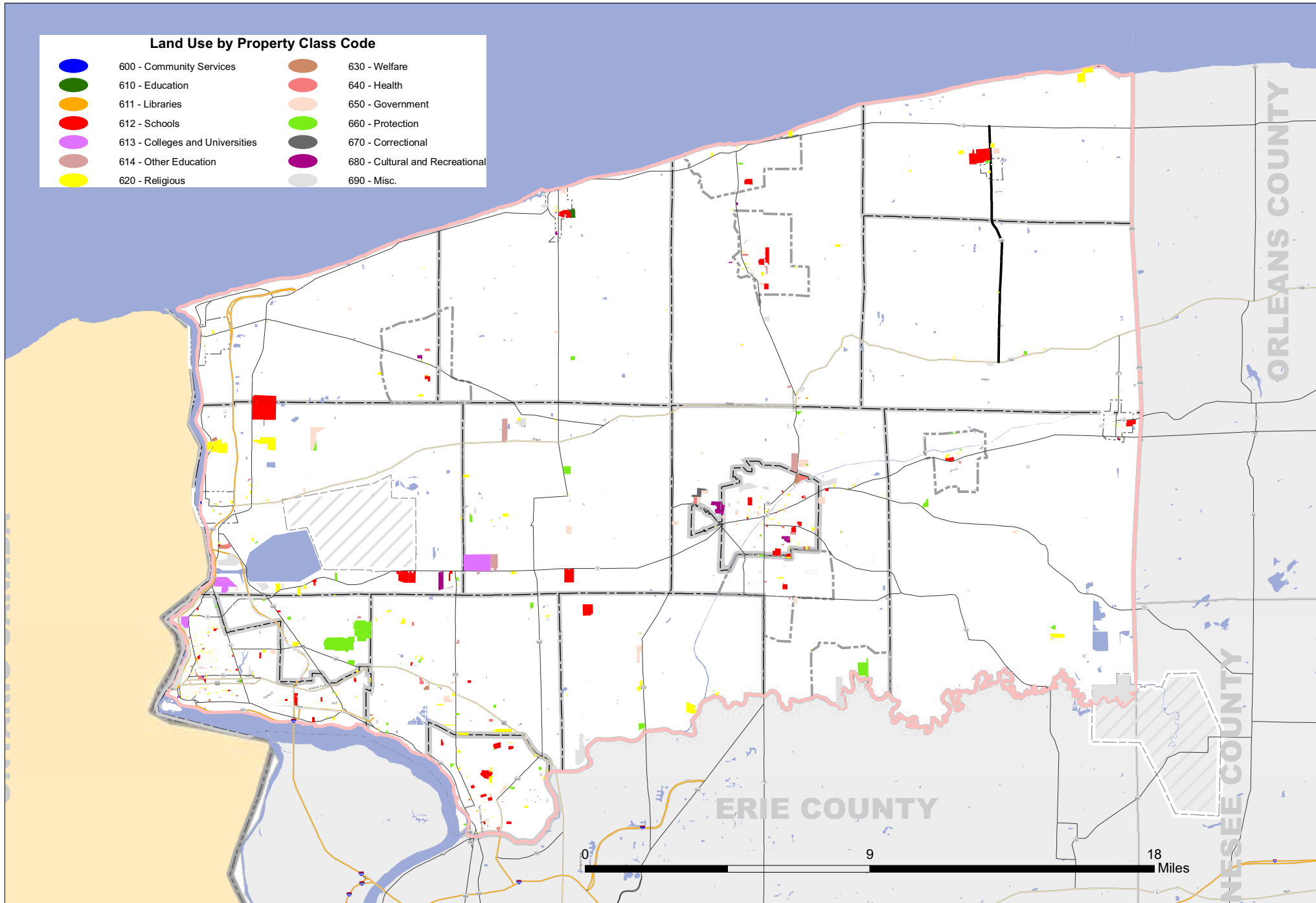
Existing Land Use: RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

Property Class Code 500 Series

Figure
III.E.5

Land Use by Property Class Code

600 - Community Services	630 - Welfare
610 - Education	640 - Health
611 - Libraries	650 - Government
612 - Schools	660 - Protection
613 - Colleges and Universities	670 - Correctional
614 - Other Education	680 - Cultural and Recreational
620 - Religious	690 - Misc.



Project Number: 17256

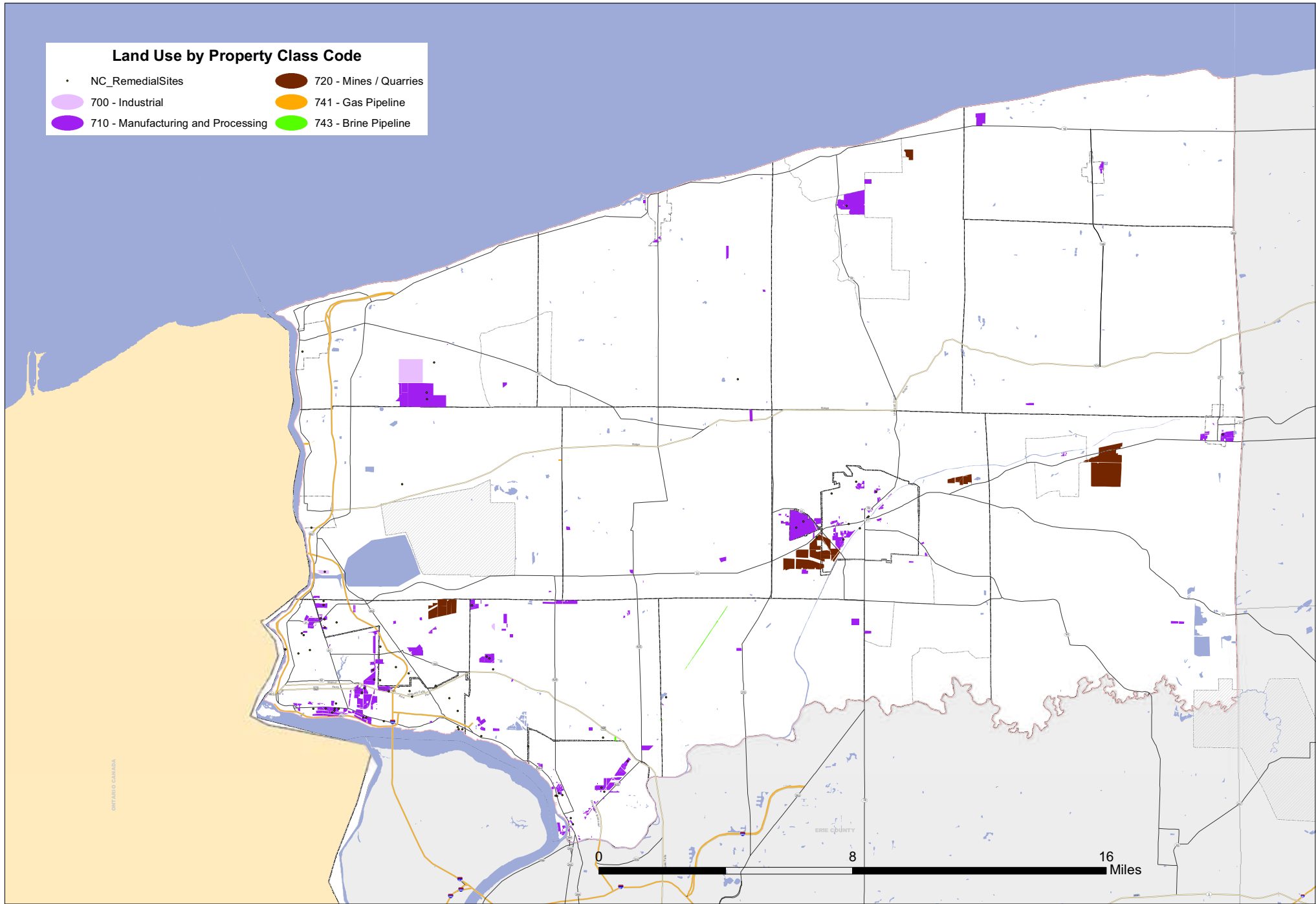


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Existing Land Use: COMMUNITY SERVICES

Property Class Code 600 Series

Figure
III.E.6



County including the cities of Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda as well as towns of Niagara and Wheatfield as shown in Figure III.E.7. Industrial lands (vacant and in use) are also located in the City and Town of Lockport, eastern Cambria, southern Porter and northern Somerset. Industrial uses account for approximately two percent of the total County or about 5500 acres.

9. Public Services

These are lands used for the provision of public services including: water (flood control, water supply, water treatment and transmission); communication (telephone, telegraph, radio, CATV, cellular phone towers); transportation (motor vehicle, railroad, air, bridges, tunnels, subways and pipelines; waste disposal (solid waste, landfills and dumps, sewage treatment and water pollution control, air pollution; special franchise property (electric, gas, water pipelines and television); electric and gas (generation, transmission and distribution).

This category of land use accounts for approximately 2 percent or less than 5500 acres of the County's total land area as shown in Figure III.E.8. These uses are found primarily in the southwestern and southeastern portions of the County.



Conservation Lands account for more than 2% or about 6,700 acres of all of the land area in Niagara County.

10. Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands and Public Parks

This category includes: private wild and forest lands; private hunting and fishing clubs; state owned forest lands, reforested land and related conservation lands; public parks; other wild or conservation lands; taxable state owned conservation easements; and other taxable state lands.

This category includes parklands and wildlife management area scattered throughout the County as shown in Figure III.E.9. These uses account for approximately 6,700 acres or about two percent of the County.

F. Population and Housing

This section provides an overview of Niagara County's demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and some of the trends in municipalities within the County. Additional population, housing and income data are available for each municipality in the County in Chapter IV. Community Profiles.








1. Current County Demographics

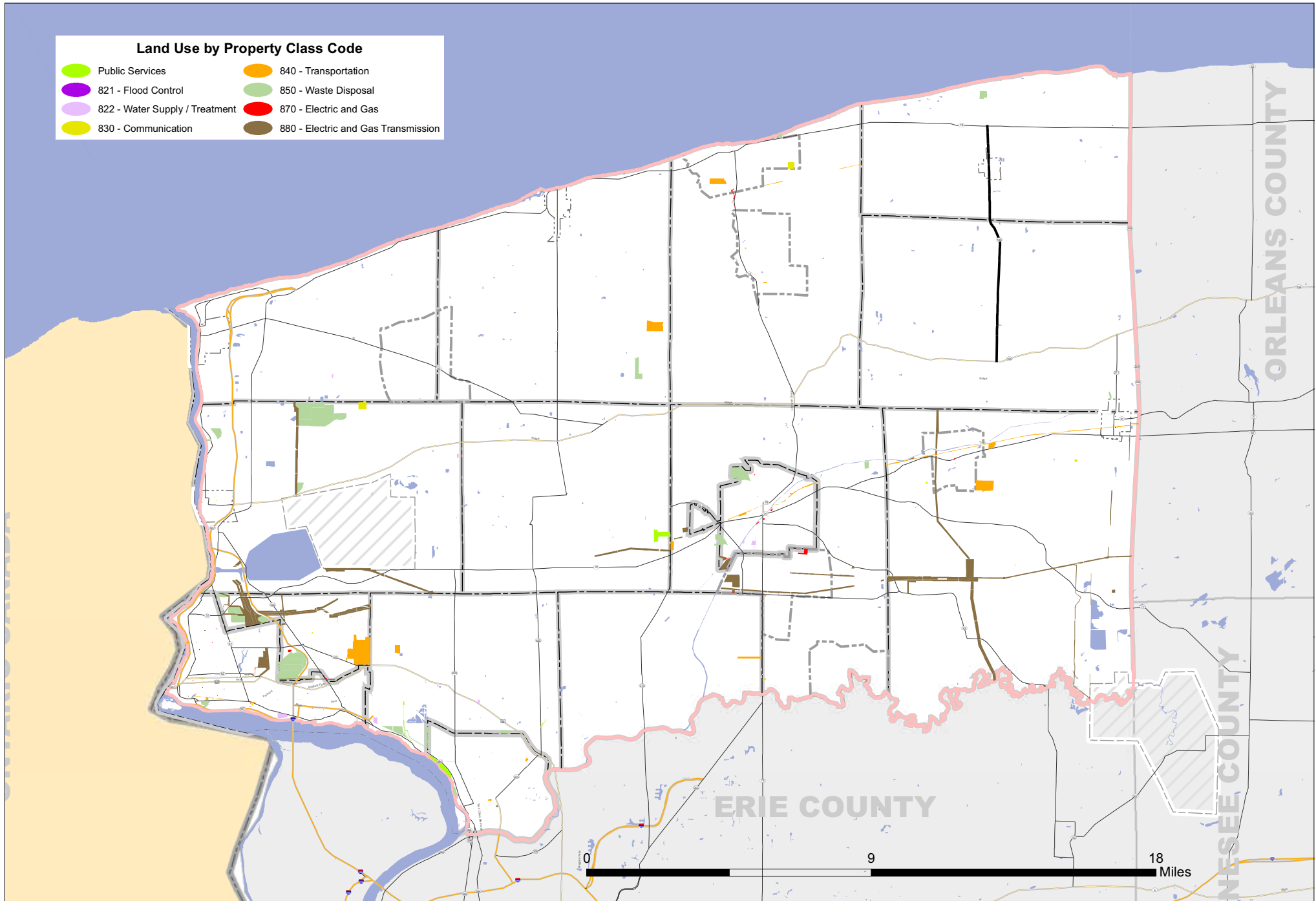
The following population and demographic data were obtained from 2000 U.S. Census data, unless otherwise noted.

a. Population & Race

Population density (people per square mile) is illustrated in Figure III.F.1. The highest population densities in Niagara County are found in the City of Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda and Lockport and in and around the villages along the Niagara River.

Land Use by Property Class Code

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Public Services |  840 - Transportation |
|  821 - Flood Control |  850 - Waste Disposal |
|  822 - Water Supply / Treatment |  870 - Electric and Gas |
|  830 - Communication |  880 - Electric and Gas Transmission |



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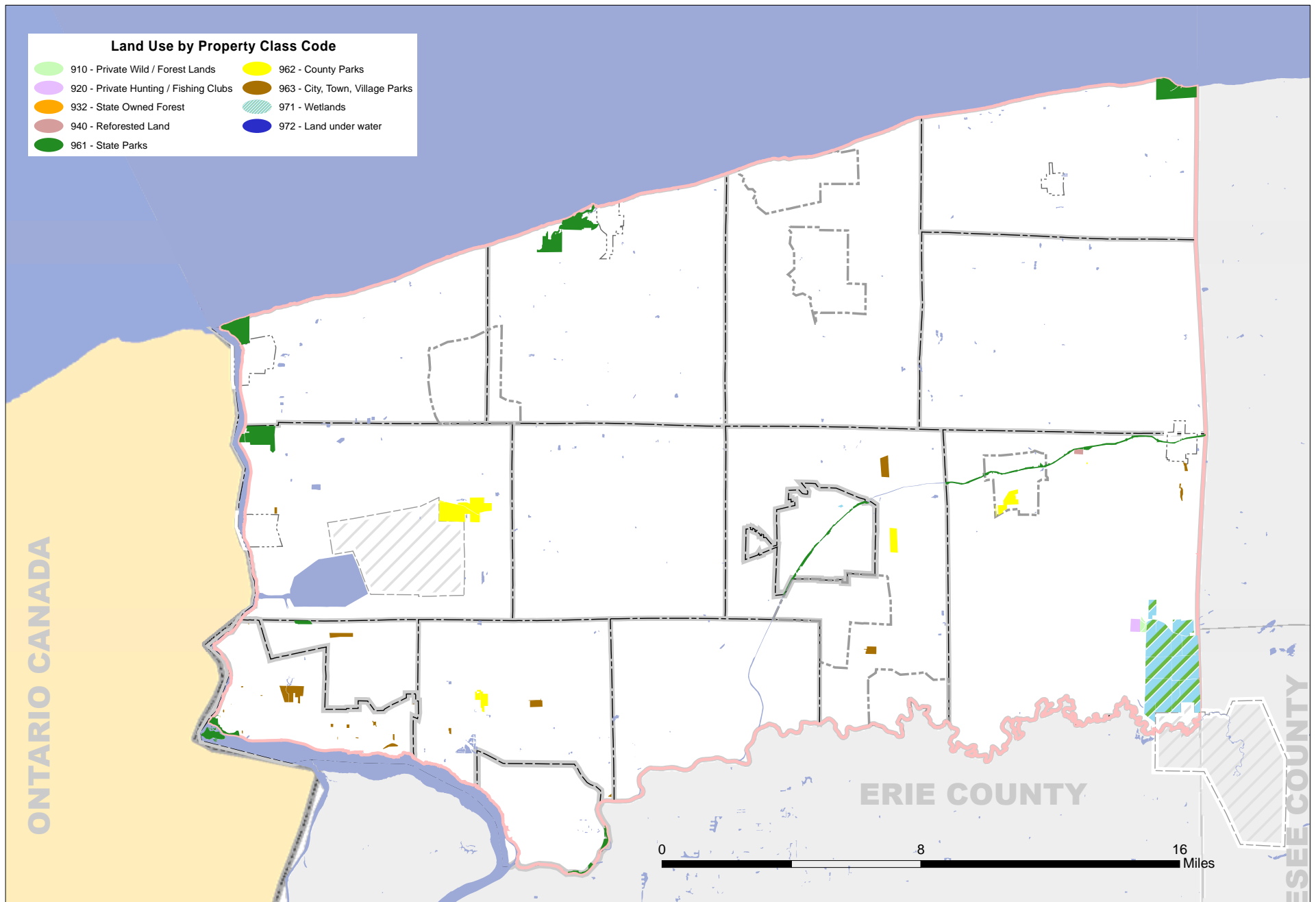


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Existing Land Use: PUBLIC SERVICES

Property Class Code 800 Series

Figure
III.E.8



- Year 2000 U.S. Census population – 219,846
- Year 2005 U.S. Census estimate – 217,008 (1.3% decrease from 2000)
- Year 2006 U.S. Census estimate – 216,130 (1.7% decrease from 2000)
- Year 2007 U.S. Census estimate – 214,845 (2.3% decrease from 2000)
- Niagara County is predominantly White (90.7%), with the largest minorities African Americans (6.1%); and 1.3% Hispanic

b. Housing & Income

Housing density (units per square mile) is illustrated in Figure III.F.2. The greatest concentration of housing units is, as expected in the three cities in the County. Per capita income, median household income, and the percentage of the population below the poverty level are illustrated in Figures III.F.3, 4 and 5, respectively.

- Percent of individuals below poverty line in 2000 – 10.6

Information on vacant housing units, median housing unit value, median-year built, and median year moved into, is provided in Figures III.F. 6, 7, 8 and 9, respectively.

As of 2000, the median home value in Niagara County was \$82,700, 55 percent of the State's median home value of \$148,700. All of the cities had median home values below the County median. The towns of Cambria, Lewiston, Lockport, Pendleton, Wheatfield, and Wilson as well as the villages of Lewiston, Wilson, and Youngstown had median home values above the County median.

The number of permits issued for residential construction remained relatively steady from 1999 through 2007, based on data collected through the County Economic Development Department's annual building permit survey. An average of 620 residential units were permitted annually, ranging from a low of 456 units in 1999 to highs of 772 and 764 in 2003 and 2007, respectively.

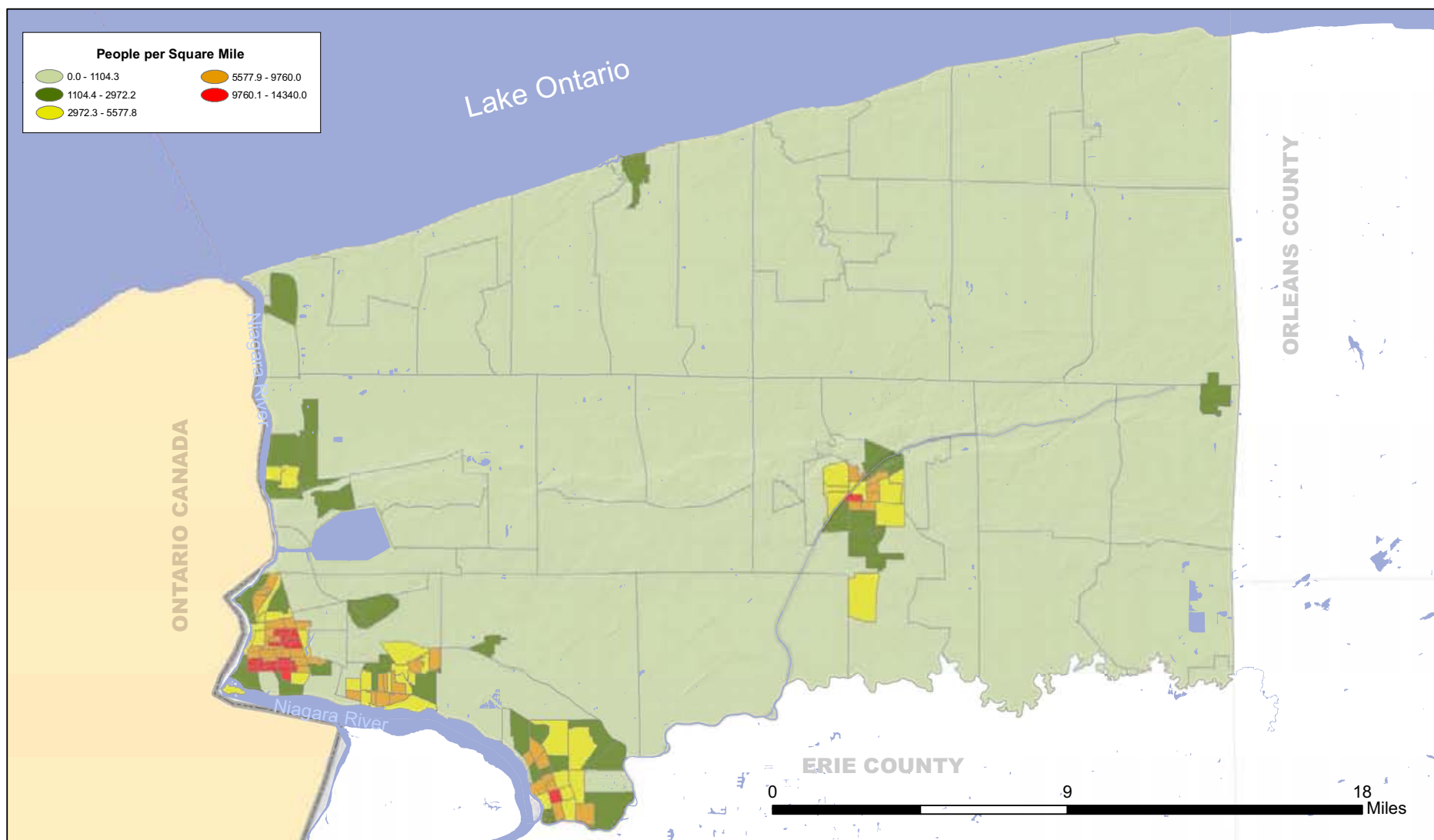
- In 2000, 65.4% of County residents lived in single-family residential units
- In 2000, 44.6% of County residents lived in multi-family residential units
- 2000 median home value (owner-occupied) was \$82,700
- 2000 median monthly rent was \$479

c. Age, Education & Labor Force

Information on median age by census block group in the County is provided in Figure III.F.10. Information on the percentage of residents in age groups 65 and over, 18 to 21, and 5 to 17 is provided in Figures III.F. 10, 11, 12 and 13, respectively.

As of 2000, the Niagara County labor force consisted of 107,560 civilian employees with average weekly wages of \$576.47. The labor force is employed in industries including mining, construction, manufacturing, transportation, wholesale trade, retail trade, finance and real estate, accommodation and food service. The largest portions of the labor force are employed in manufacturing (26%), retail trade (16%), and accommodation and food services (10%).

- In 2000 the median age of residents in the County was 38.2 years
- 83.3% of County residents 25 years or older have high school diplomas or higher; 47.1% of County residents have bachelor's degrees or higher



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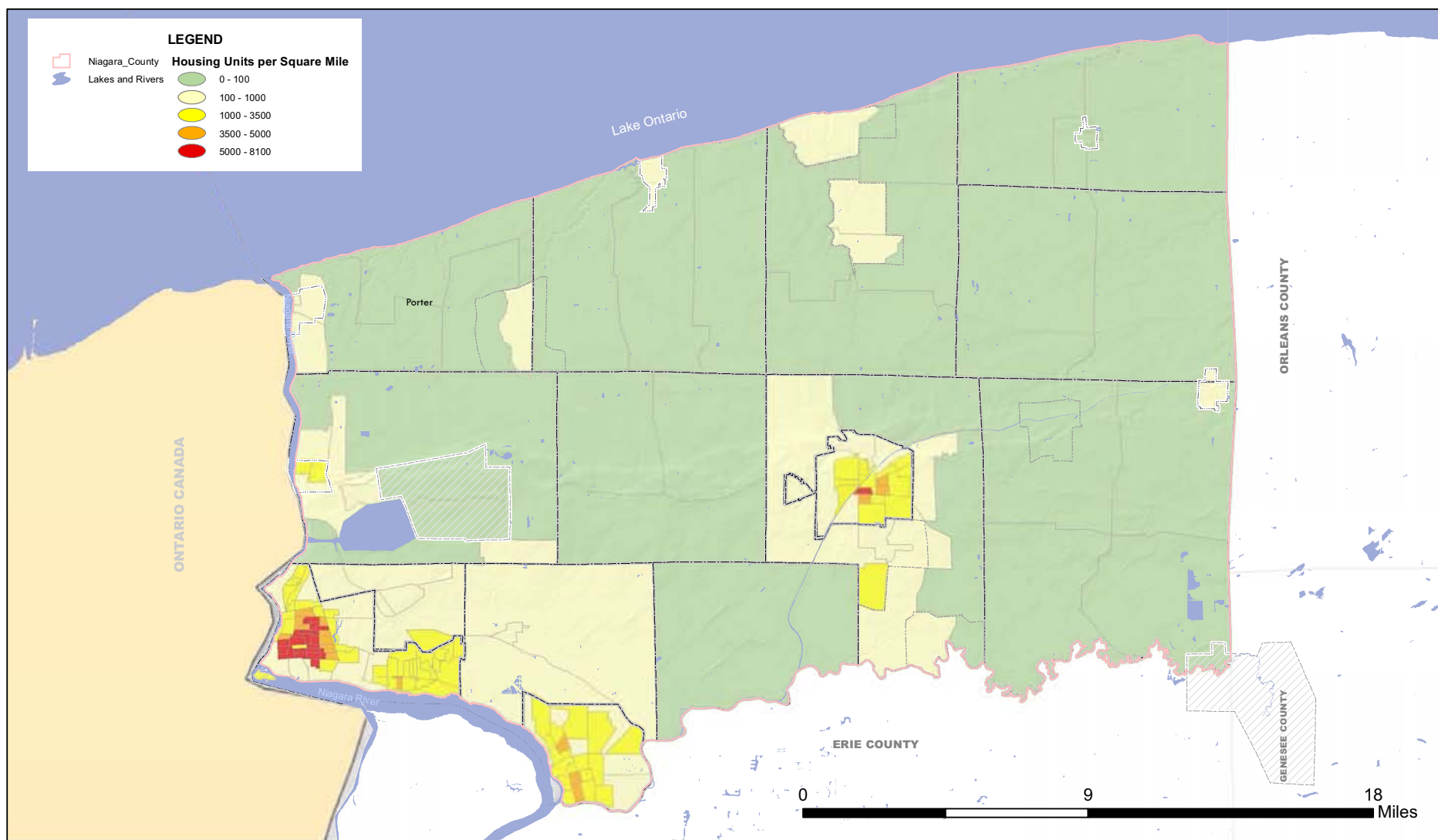


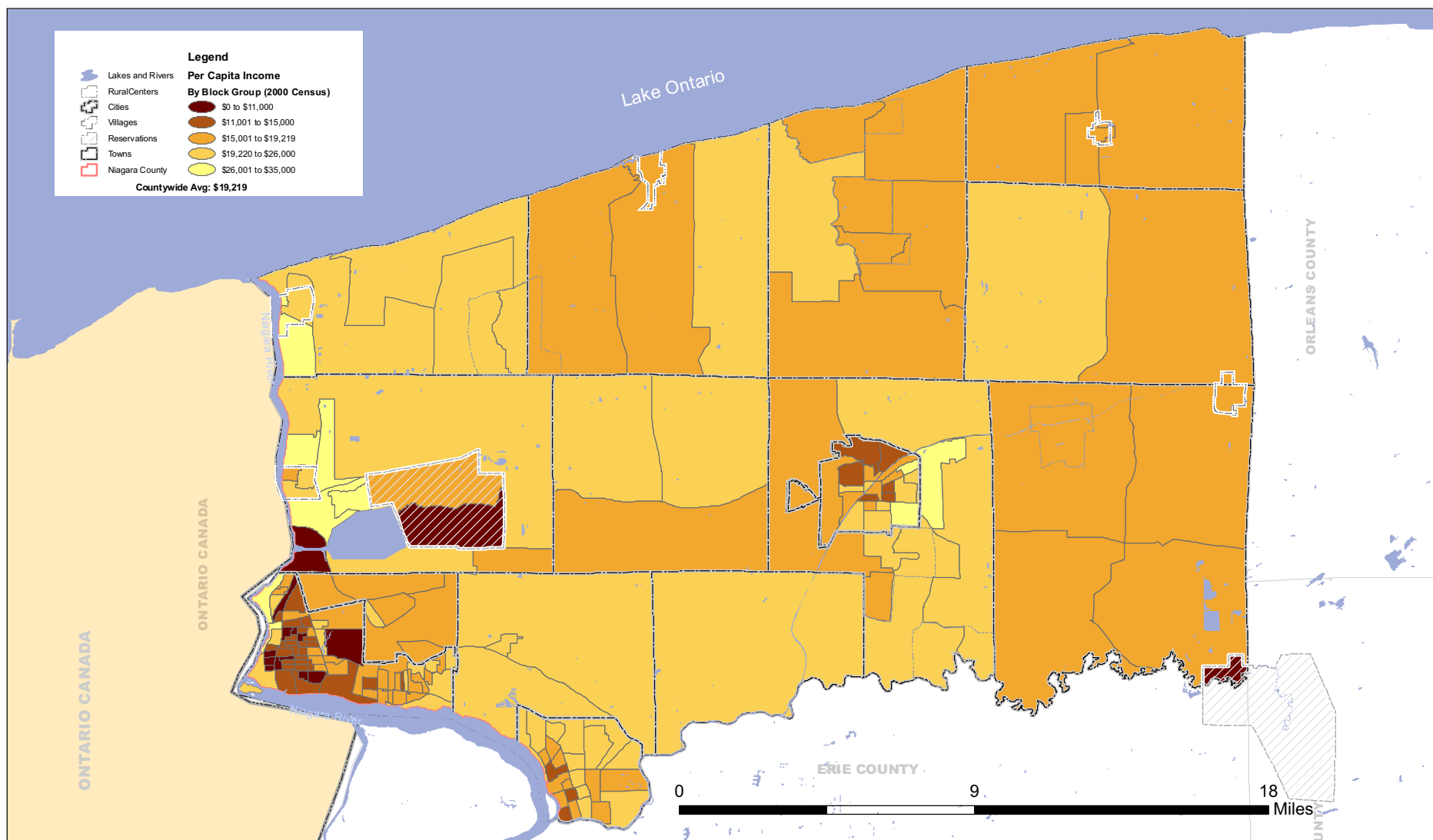
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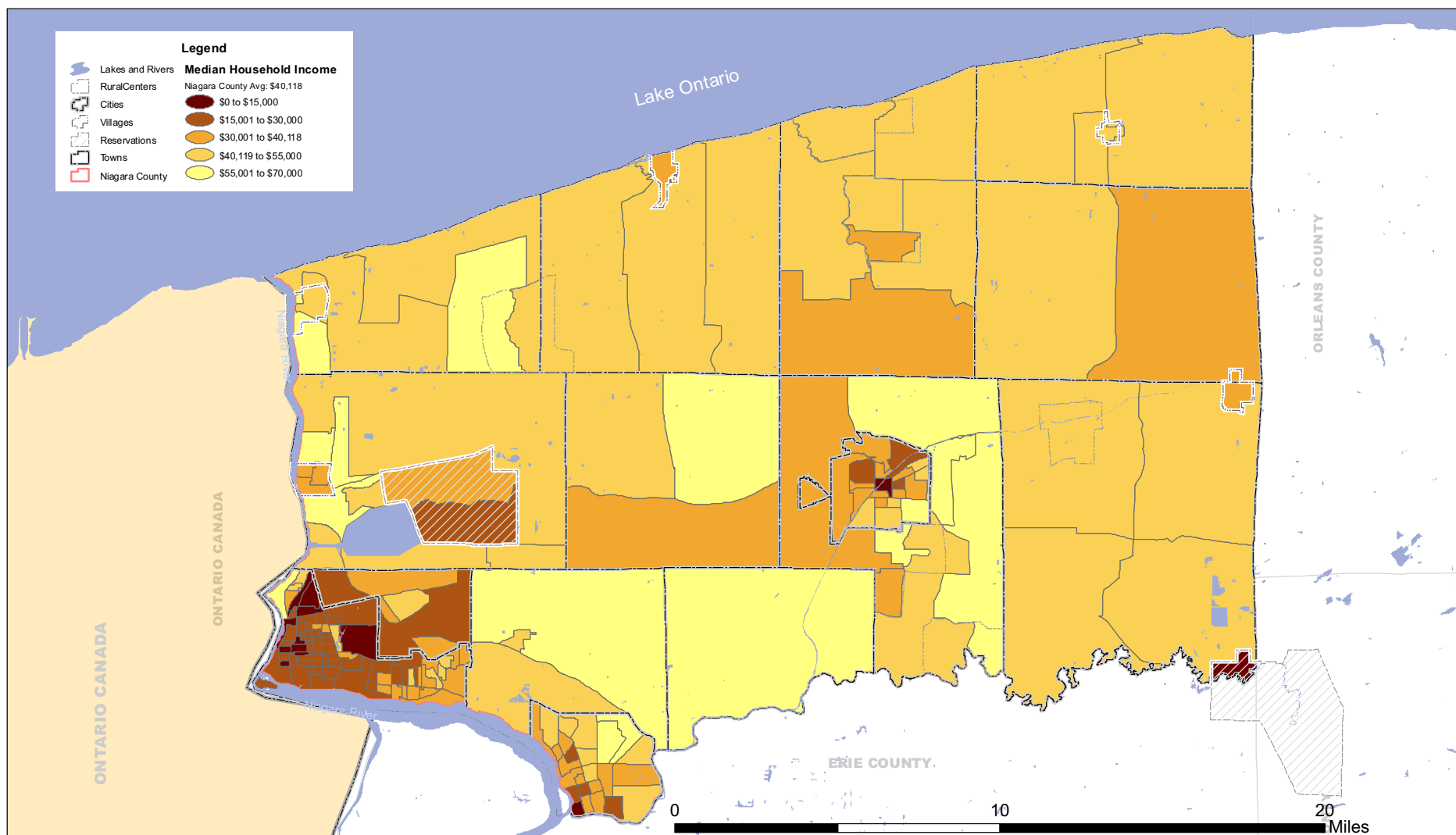
Population Density

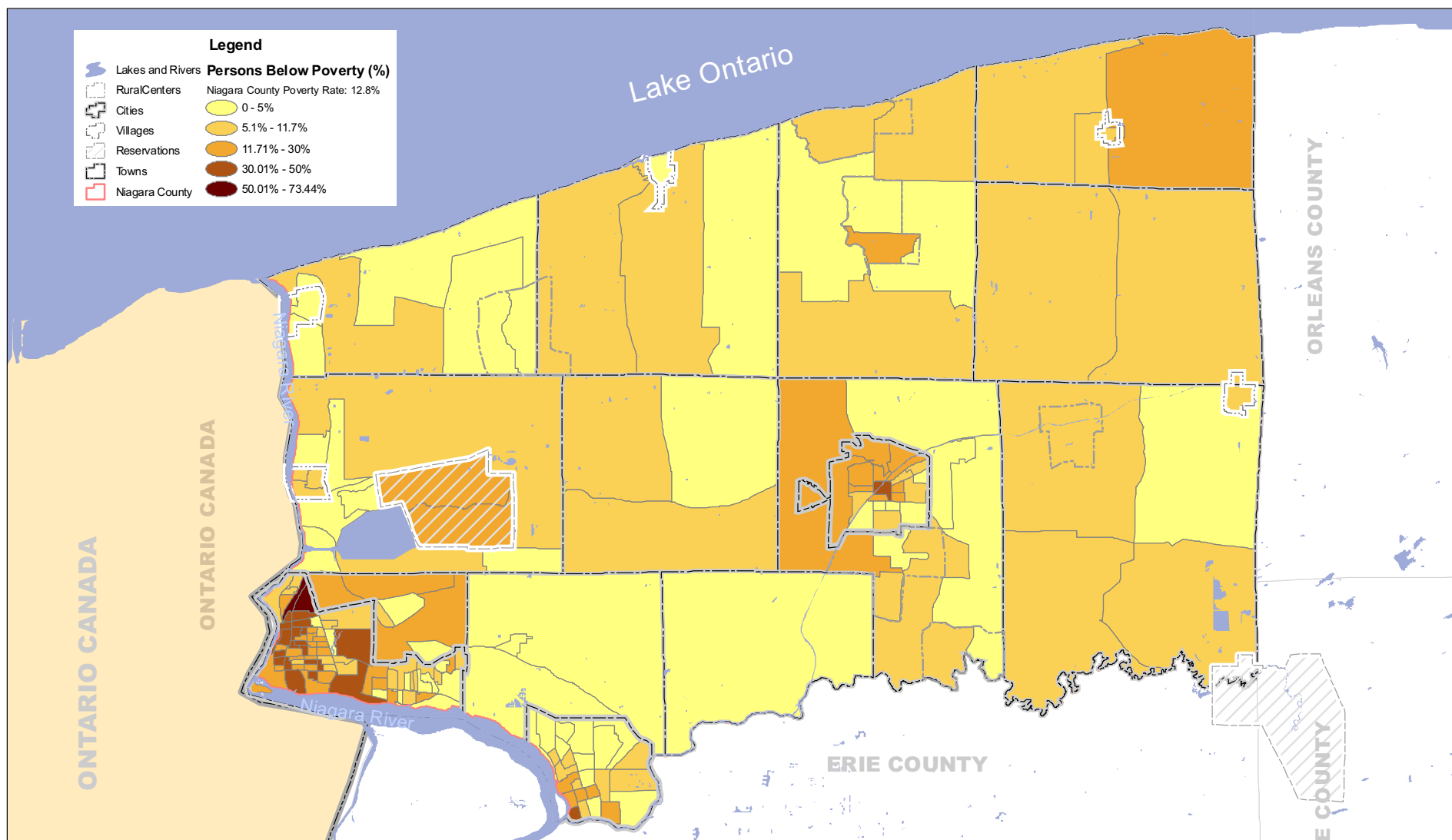
Source: 2000 US Census - Census Block Groups

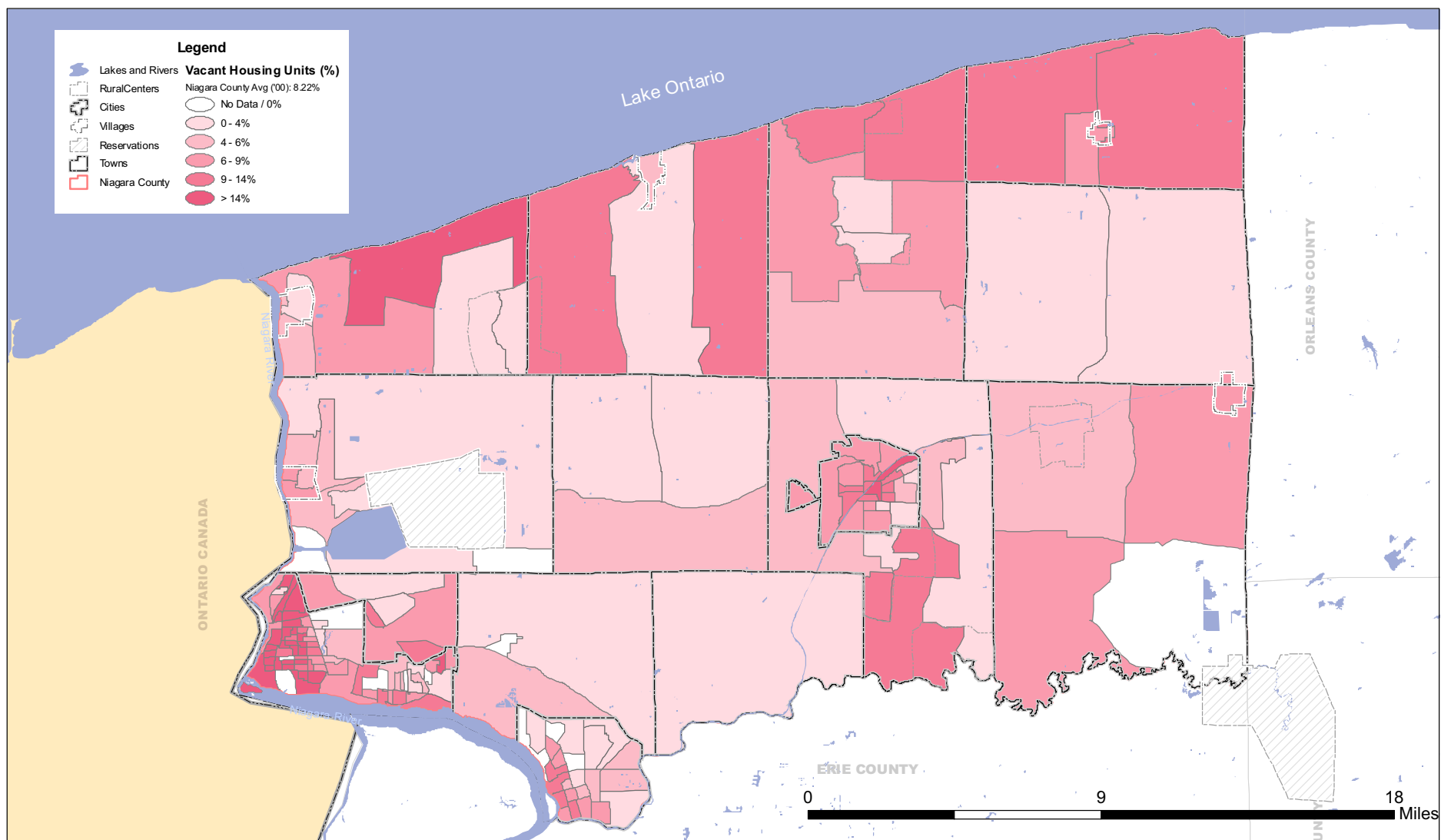
Figure
III.F.1

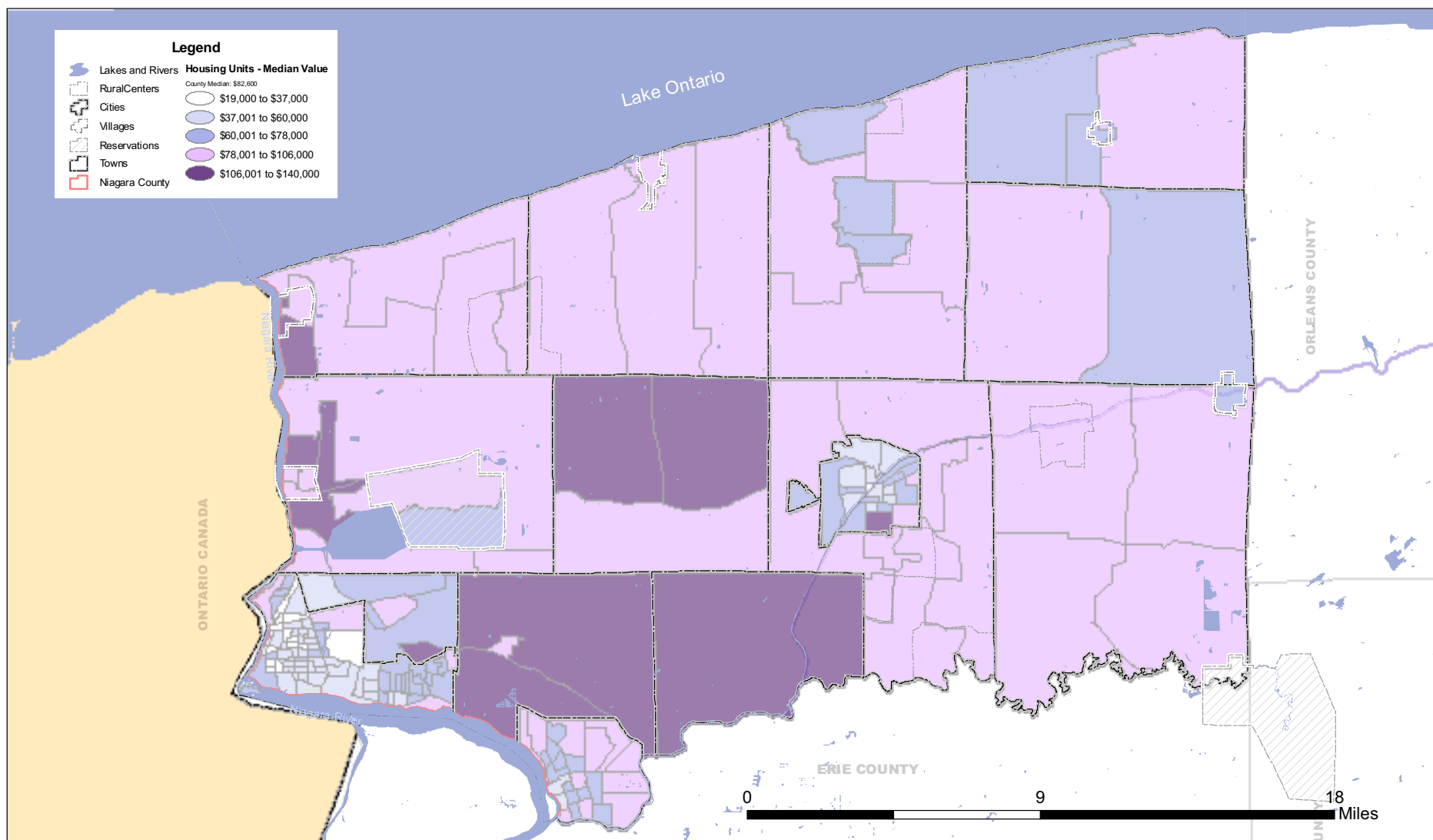


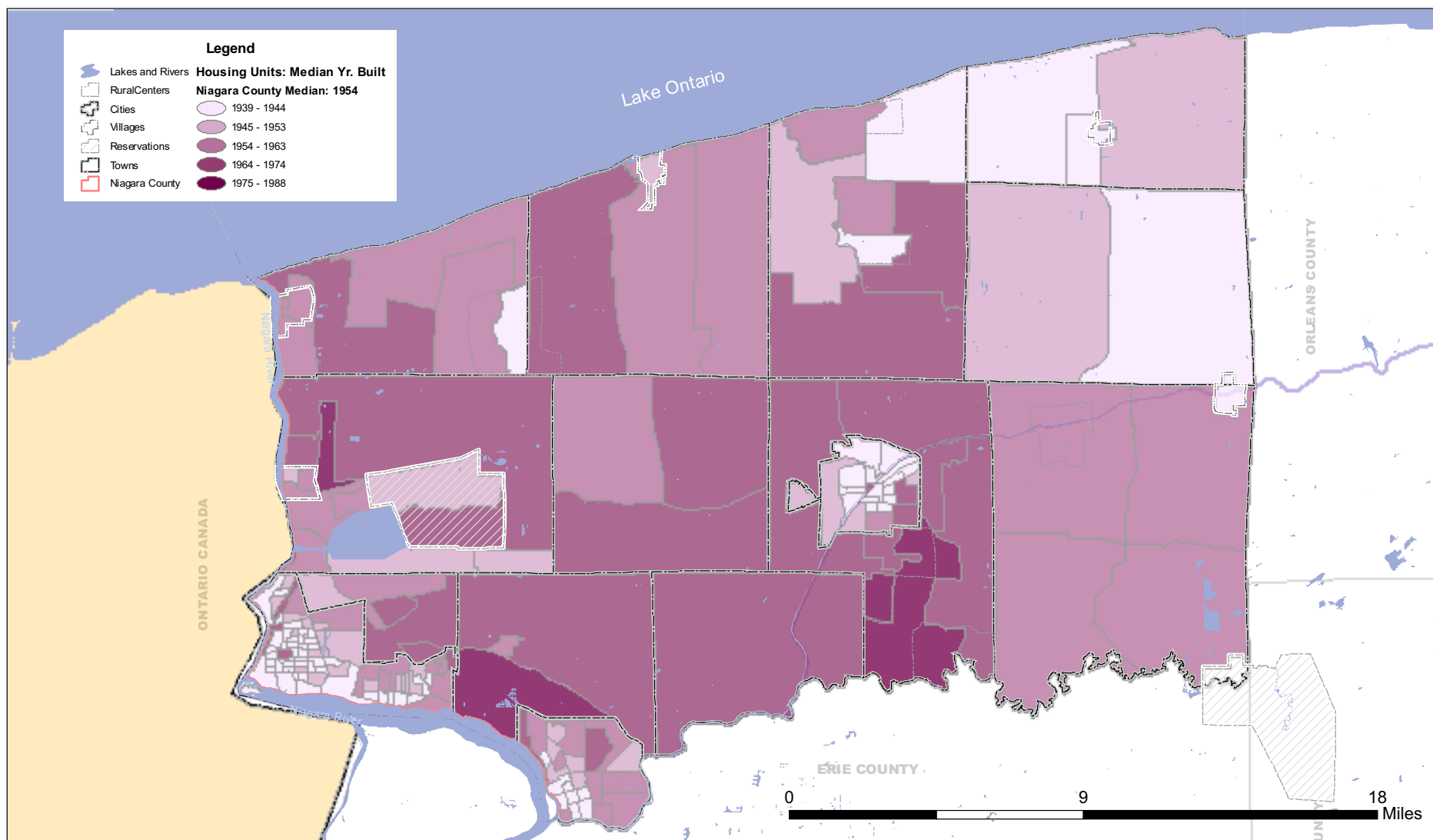


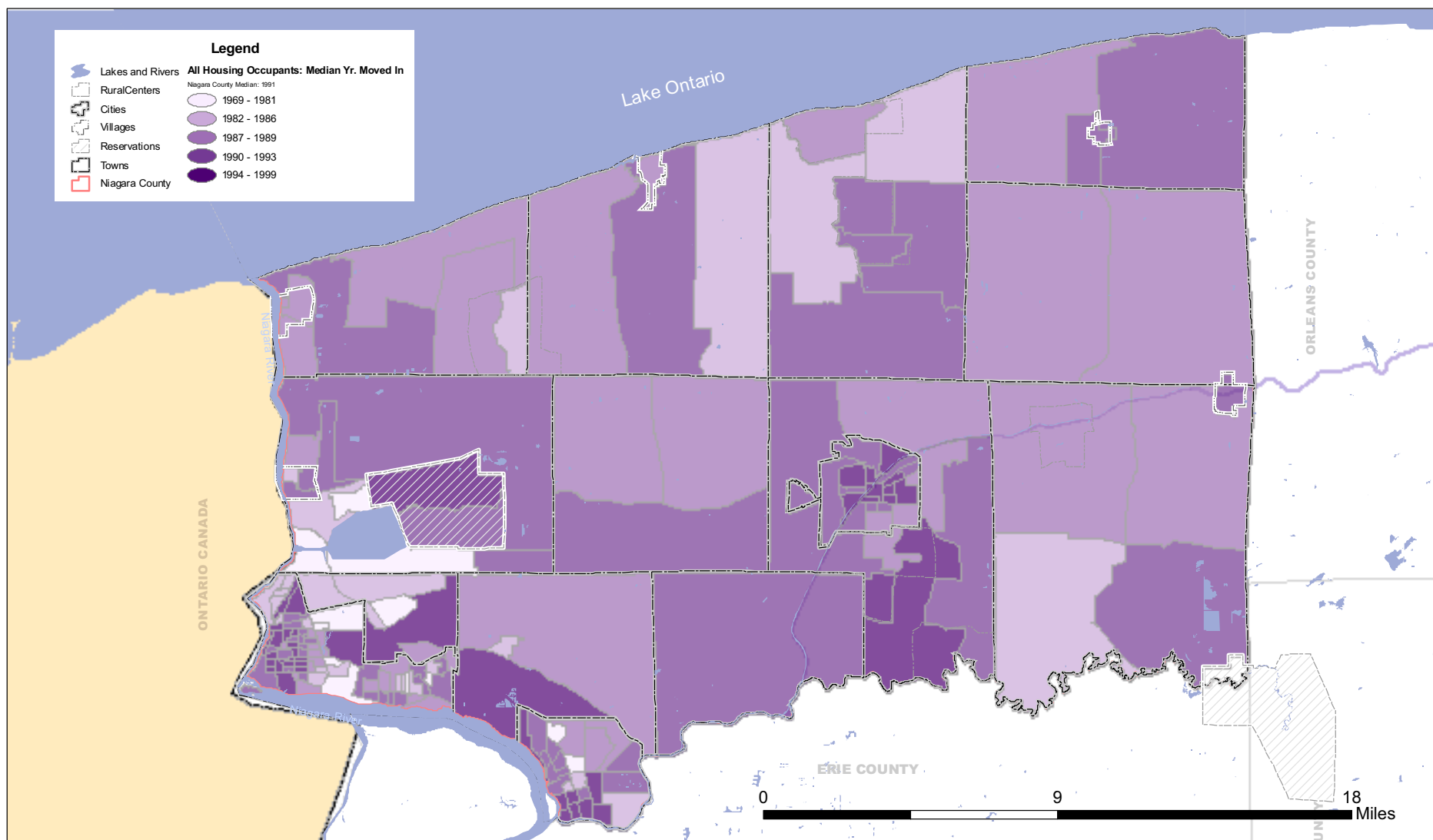


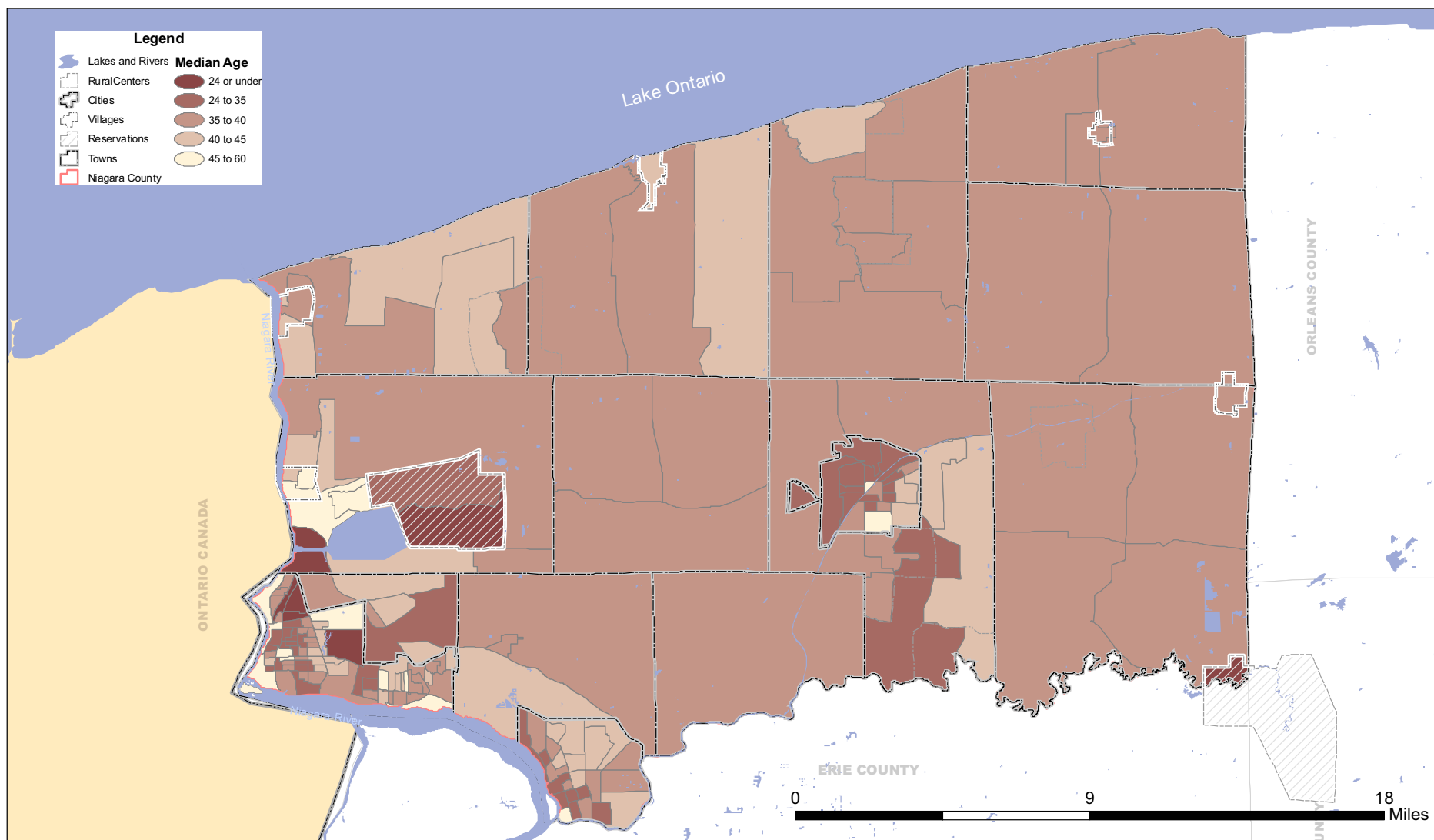


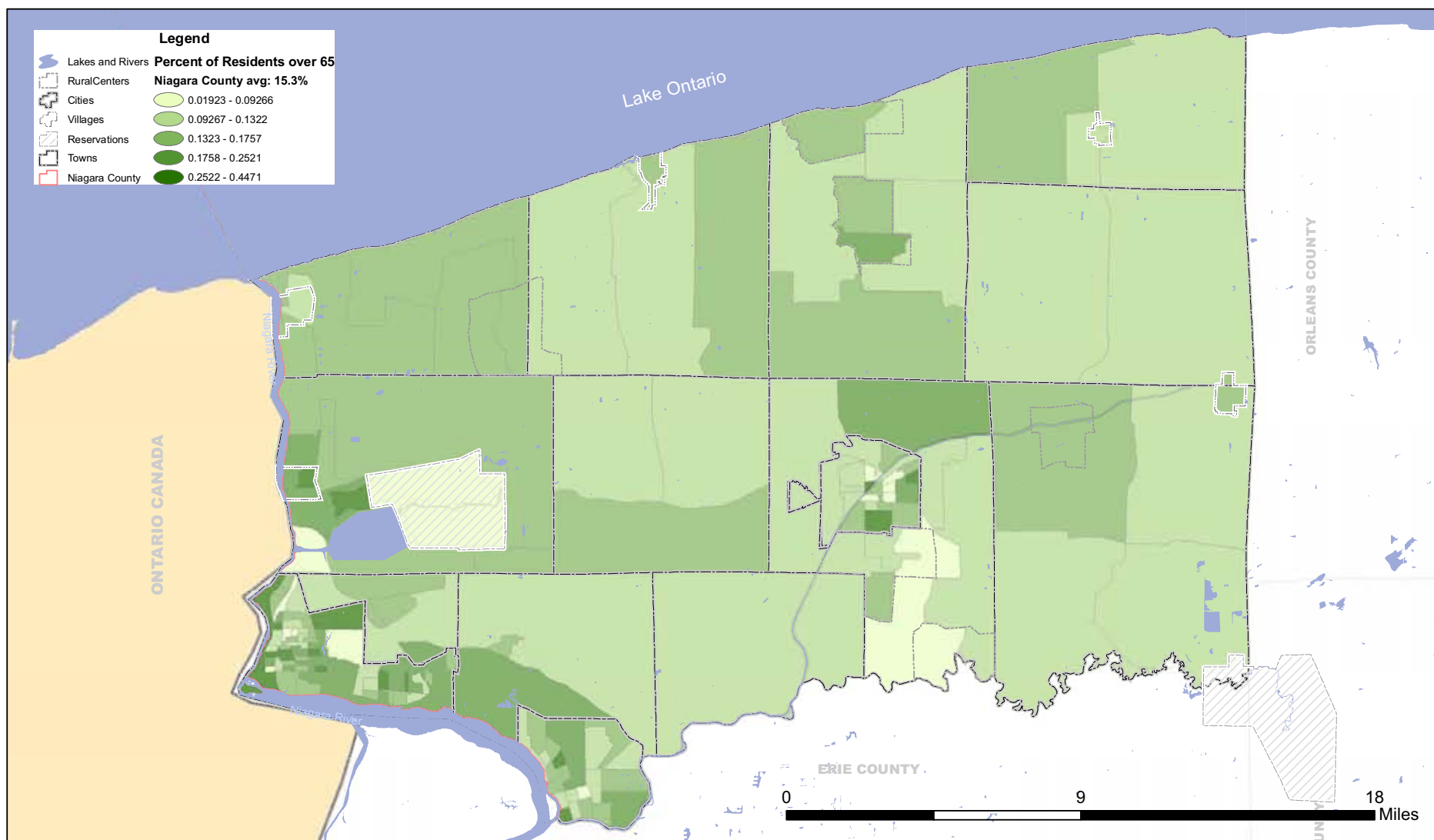


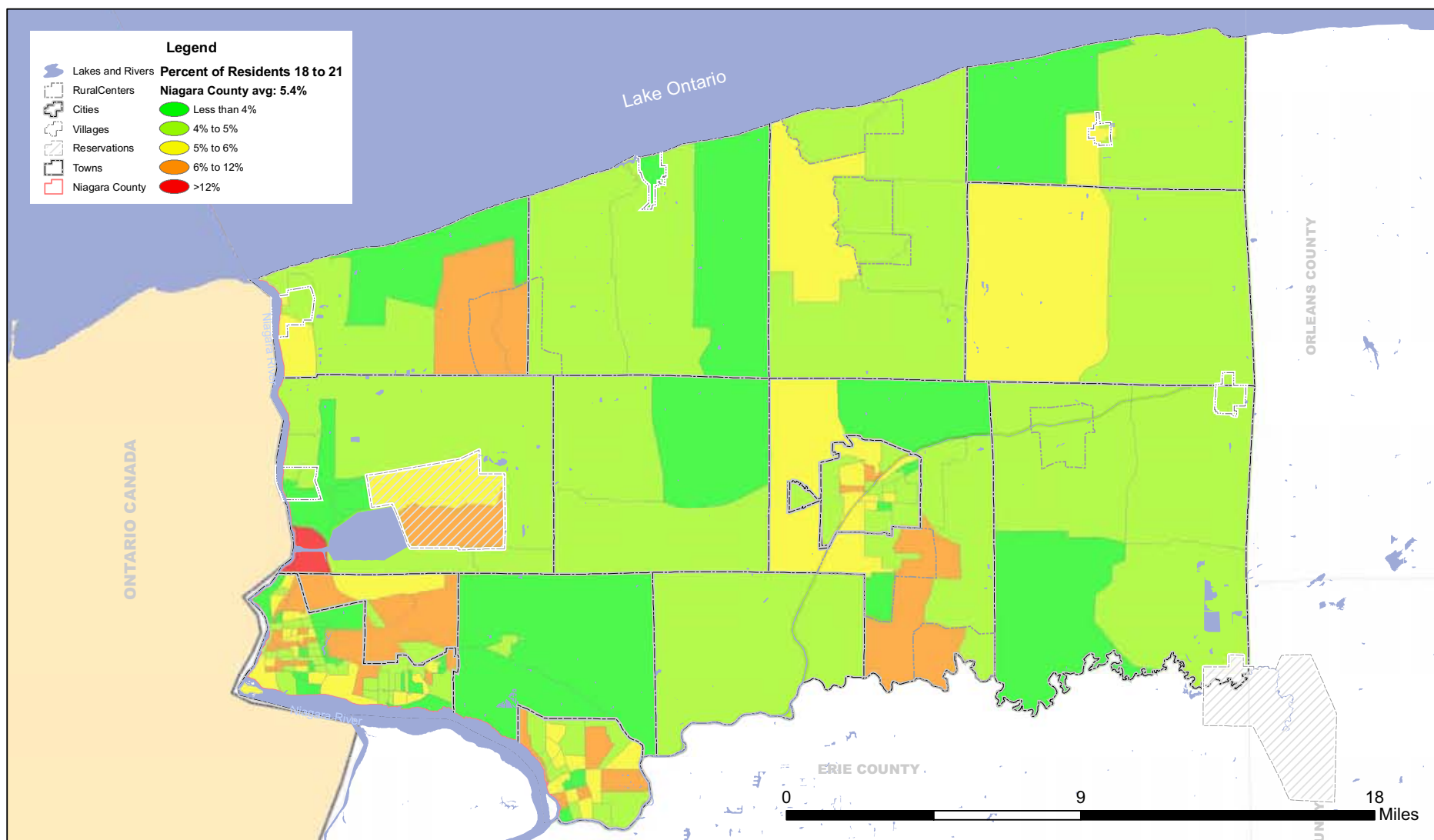


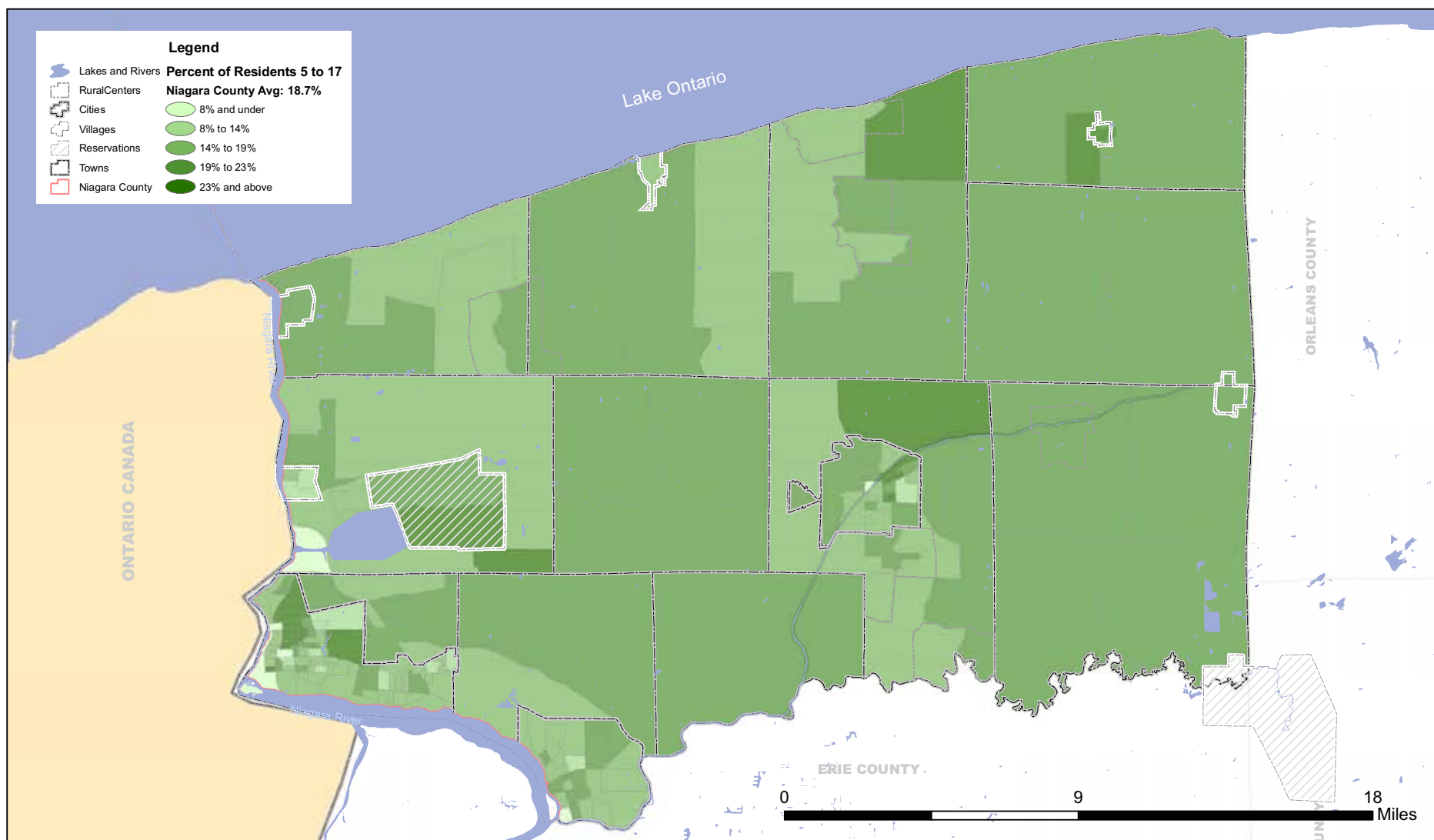












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Percent Residents Ages 5 to 17

Source: 2000 US Census - Census Block Groups

Figure
III.F.13

- Total labor force (16 years and older) was 171,806 individuals
- Civilian labor force was 107,560 individuals

2. County Demographic Trends

Niagara County's population has decreased steadily in recent decades from its peak of 242,269 in 1960. The County lost population each decade between 1960 and 2000, with a population decrease of 22,423 (or 9.3 percent) over this 40-year period (an annual average decrease of 561 individuals). According to 2007 population estimates, the County has lost approximately 5,000 residents since 2000 (2.2 percent decrease). This rate of population decline is consistent to that experienced over the 40 year period between 1960 and 2000.

The County's unemployment rate dropped from just over 6 percent in 2002 to 5.3% in 2006. There has been a steady decrease in unemployment over the past few years however this rate was above the New York State rate (4.5 percent) and national rate (4.6 percent) for the same period. Unemployment has increased somewhat during 2007-2008 consistent with other areas of the country as the economy continues to slow down. The County recently ranked tenth in highest unemployment rate of New York's 62 counties, and second of the Western New York region's eight counties (behind Orleans and tied with Allegany).

The population of Niagara County indicates sprawling growth patterns over the last few decades, with almost all household growth concentrated in rural areas outside of or on the fringes of its three cities. The number of households in rural areas increased by 33.4 percent, while the number of households in developed areas grew by only 1 percent between 1980 and 2000. This general trend is likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

3. Subarea Demographic Profiles

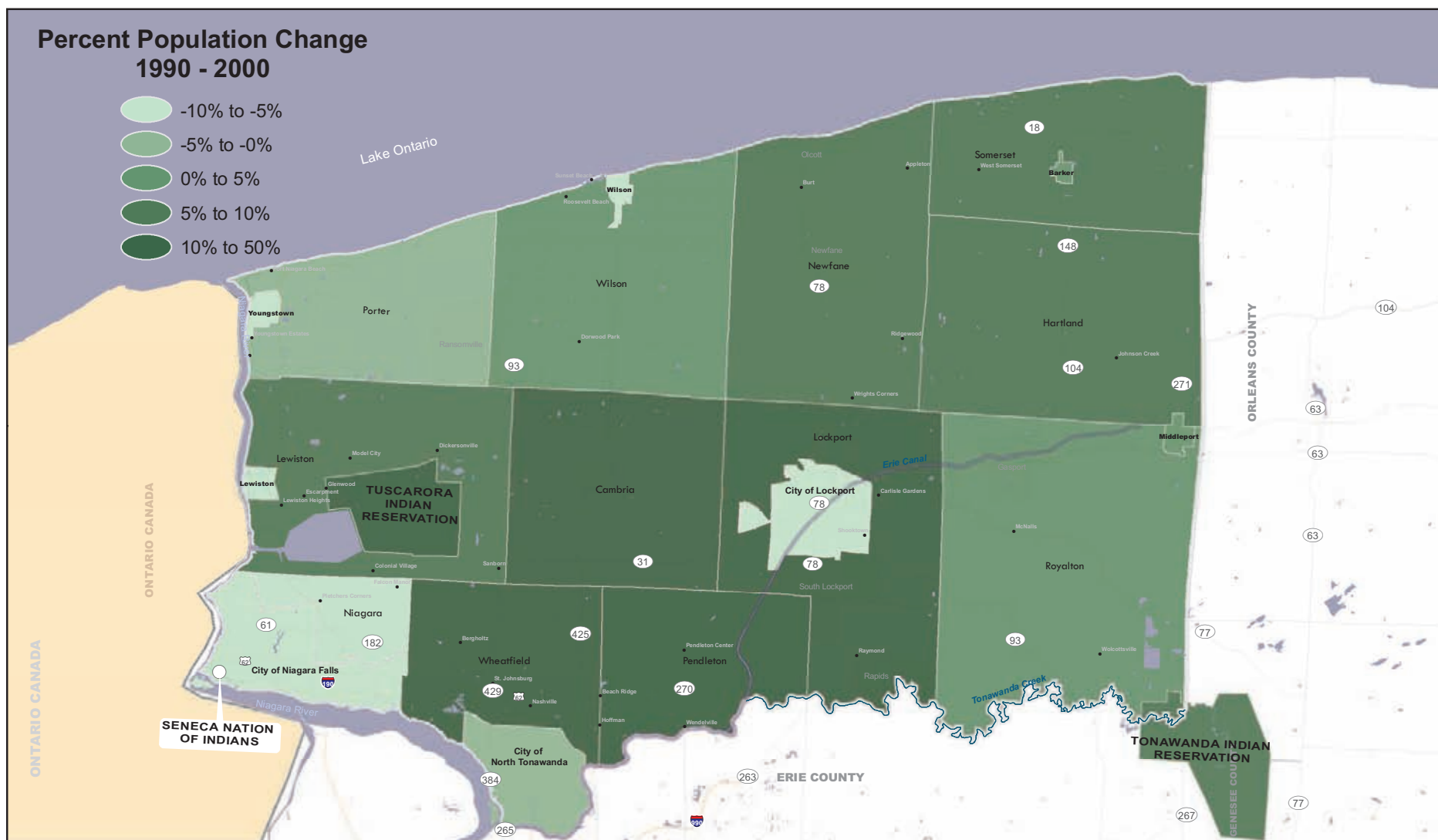
Detailed demographic data for each of the twenty municipalities of Niagara County are provided in Chapter IV. Community Profiles. Below are some notable characteristics and trends regarding these municipalities based on 2000 Census information. Due to their unique characteristics, demographic information from the three Native American reservations in the County is not provided.

Niagara Falls is Niagara County's largest city. It has experienced greater population loss than the County overall. From 1960 to 2000, the City's population decreased more than 45 percent from 102,394 to 55,593, almost five times the population decrease experienced by the entire County over the same period. Niagara Falls is clearly the most diverse locality in the County. Its population comprises 23.8 percent minority races, including 18.7 percent African American residents. Outside of Niagara Falls, most other municipalities (cities, towns and villages) tended to have similar racial and ethnic compositions. These other municipalities were predominantly White, with their populations usually being less than 10 percent minority.

Educational attainment levels were generally similar for residents 25 years and older among Niagara County's municipalities, with the exception of Niagara Falls. Most municipalities had over 80 percent of their populations attaining a high school



The estimated population of Niagara County in 2007 was 214,845, a decrease of 2.3% from the year 2000 Census.



diploma or higher, while only 76.6 percent of Niagara Falls' population had achieved that level of education. Almost half of the populations of most County municipalities had bachelor degrees or higher, while only 38.7 percent of Niagara Falls residents had attained a bachelor degree or higher.

Median age was similar across all municipalities in the County, ranging from the mid-30s to the early-40s. Median household incomes tended to be lower in Niagara County's 3 cities compared to its towns and villages. All three cities had median incomes below \$40,000, while most towns and villages had incomes above \$40,000 with some surpassing \$50,000. Of the major cities and towns, Niagara Falls had the lowest median household income at \$26,800.

Individual poverty rates in the County in 2000 were highest in the cities, with all three cities having poverty rates below 10 percent. Niagara Falls had the highest poverty rate at 19.5 percent. Most towns and villages had poverty rates below 10 percent, with some below 5 percent.

Median home values varied greatly across the County in 2000, ranging from just over \$60,000 to over \$100,000. Towns and villages tended to have higher home values. Median monthly rents primarily ranged between \$400 and \$500. All major localities' housing stock was predominantly single-family units. The cities tended to have the most multi-family units (between 33 and 46 percent), while these units generally made up less than a quarter of housing units in the County's towns and villages.

G. Economic Data

The following information is intended as a summary of existing fiscal and economic conditions within Niagara County. This information provides a "snapshot" of conditions based upon the information available at the time of this Plan's preparation.

1. Fiscal Conditions

a. Major Sources of Revenue

The predominant source of revenue for localities in New York State varies based on the level of government. For most counties and cities, including Niagara County and the three cities within its boundaries, property taxes contribute most to total revenues.

Sales taxes also make up a significant portion of these localities' revenue streams. Revenue sharing also plays an important role in supporting revenues and addressing rising costs, especially for cities. Towns have historically made use of special districts to fund the major services provided to residents in certain areas outside of cities and villages where enhanced support for services is required. These different sources of revenue utilized in Niagara County and its municipalities are described in more detail below.

Property Tax Revenue



The median home value in Niagara County in the year 2000 was \$82,700, or about 55% of New York State's median home value of \$148,700.



Property taxes represented approximately 26% of Niagara County's total revenues in 2007. The percentage of total revenues that property taxes represent in the County's 3 cities was somewhat greater ranging between 31% and 36%.

Property tax accounts for 79 percent of all local taxes and makes up 43 percent of all local government revenue sources in jurisdictions in the State outside of New York City. Specifically in 2007, property taxes represented 26.4 percent of Niagara County's total revenues; 35.6 percent of the City of Niagara Falls' total revenues; 32.7 percent of the City of Lockport's total revenues; and 31 percent of the City of North Tonawanda's total revenues.

The property tax is a relatively stable, locally-controlled revenue source, mainly used to pay for services like schools, roads and libraries. They are also the predominant source of revenue for independent fire districts in the State, representing over 90 percent of these districts' revenues. Property taxes are generally used to balance municipal budgets after accounting for all other sources of revenue, which often leads to more abrupt increases if other revenues stagnate or decline.

Compared to the State as a whole, Western New York had fairly moderate property tax levies in 2005, around \$3,000 per household, lower than the State's 2005 median of \$3,977 per household. Niagara County had 2005 household property tax levies of \$3,784, higher than Western New York, but lower than the State median for that year. However, the property tax rate, in dollars per \$1,000 of full assessed property value, was higher than the State median in 2005 (\$41.96 compared to \$30.81).

Sales Tax Revenue

Sales taxes also make up a significant portion of local government revenues in New York State, representing 8.6 percent of total local government revenues in 2004. These taxes are a significant component of Niagara County's total revenues, representing about 17.5 percent.

Generally, the sales tax is levied at the county level and then proceeds are distributed to other jurisdictions within county boundaries (primarily cities), according to local sharing agreements. Counties that share sales taxes with municipalities within their borders retain anywhere from 31 percent to 98 percent of taxes levied. Niagara County falls roughly in the middle, retaining 58 percent of collected sales taxes, while distributing the remaining 42 percent to localities within County borders.

The vast majority of counties (49 of 57, excluding the five boroughs of New York City) had 2006 sales tax rates exceeding 3 percent, with 5.5 percent being the maximum. Niagara County currently levies sales tax at 4 percent. Combined with the State's 4 percent rate, this creates a state-local sales tax of 8 percent for those residing within the County.

The Western New York region has recently experienced more modest annual average sales tax distribution increases than other regions of the State. The region showed an average increase of 3.9 percent from 1999 to 2005, ranking 8th of 10 regions (ranging from average annual increases of 3.1 percent to 9.2 percent).

A small number of counties have agreements to share portions of their sales tax revenues with school districts within county boundaries. Although Niagara County does not directly share sales tax revenues with any school districts, the City of

Niagara Falls' school districts impose a sales tax known as the Consumer Utility Tax.

Town Special Districts

Town special districts are designated geographic areas within a town established to address specific service needs of the property owners within that area. These districts utilize charges, mainly through property taxes and user fees paid by taxpayers within the district to finance these services.

Niagara County contains 92 town special districts. This total is higher than the median number of districts for New York counties which is 78, but is modest compared to the number of districts in more active special district counties. Seven counties in New York State have 200 or more town special districts. Erie County has the most at 939 closely followed by Onondaga County. In Niagara County these districts serve the following purposes:

- Water - 26 districts
- Sewer - 18 districts
- Refuse & garbage - 13 districts
- Lighting - 13 districts
- Fire protection - 12 districts
- Drainage - 7 districts
- Other - 3 districts

Towns within Niagara County are highly dependent on town special district funds to support local services. Revenues from special districts account for 41 percent of all town revenues in the County (the second highest percentage of all New York counties). Furthermore, 77 percent of all town property tax revenues in the County go to fund these districts (highest percentage of all New York counties).

Revenue Sharing

Revenue sharing is unrestricted State aid to local governments that can be used for any local governmental purpose. Over 90 percent of revenue sharing funds go to cities, which have historically been more dependent on unrestricted. Revenue sharing represents over 18 percent of total city revenues in New York State, while only accounting for one percent of town and village revenues. Over the last decade, unrestricted aid to towns and villages has been cut substantially, and completely withheld from counties.

Currently, unrestricted aid is available for distribution to localities through the following categories:

- *General Purpose for Local Government Aid (GPLGA)* - available to cities, towns and villages. This is the largest revenue sharing category, making up between 74 and 92 percent of unrestricted aid allocations from 1989 to 2005.
- *Emergency Aid to Eligible Municipalities* - this category of aid has been distributed since 1979 to assist localities demonstrating fiscal need and facing fiscal difficulties due to constitutional tax limitations. This category has been used to fund 6 localities: the City of Niagara Falls, Erie County, and New York's "Big Four" cities – Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers.



Niagara County contains 92 town special districts. Revenues from these special districts account for 41% of all town revenues in the County.

- *Supplemental Municipal Aid (SMA)* - established in 1996 to further support cities receiving Emergency Financial Assistance (e.g. Niagara Falls). This has become the dominant category of revenue sharing funds for cities in the State, representing over one-half of their unrestricted aid distributions. These funds are currently not available to towns, villages or counties.
- *Emergency Aid to Certain Cities* - designed to support New York's larger cities (excluding New York City) that are at or close to their constitutional taxing limits. Only Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers are eligible for this category of unrestricted aid.

Despite their importance to cities with rising costs, flat property values and revenue constraints, revenue sharing distributions have been significantly limited by the State over the past 17 plus years. From FY-88 to FY-05, unrestricted aid has been reduced by more than 26 percent, while cumulatively State funds have increased by 93 percent. In addition, revenue sharing funds have been outpaced by inflation, which has increased 65 percent over this same 17-year period.

Revenue sharing distributions to municipalities within Niagara County have been reduced by almost 15 percent from 1988 to 2005 (\$18.9 million to \$16.1 million). This has been one of the lowest decreases in unrestricted aid to localities within counties, but the County still lags behind 6 counties that have either experienced nominal decreases or increases. For comparison, Erie County's revenue sharing distributions increased almost 16 percent from 1988 to 2005.

b. Major Expenditures

Many municipalities across New York State are experiencing rising expenditures due to the increasing cost of services, need for infrastructure maintenance, and other related costs. These expenditures have caused strains in the budgets of many localities across the State, but have hit Upstate areas, including Western New York, particularly hard. This section provides an overview of general trends in expenditures across the State, some specific expenditure trends within Niagara County, and some budget implications of these expenditures.

Expenditure Trends

Cities providing fiscal projections (as a requirement of the new Aid and Incentives for Municipalities [AIM] program that requires cities to develop financial plans in order to receive certain types of State aid) over the coming years have all predicted expenditure increases from 2006 through 2009, with an average expected increase in total city expenditures of 4.1 percent. Below are the projected expenditure increases broken down by major expenditure category. These estimates were also made prior to recent economic downturns.

- Personal service costs represent that largest portion of city expenditures, accounting for 48 percent of expenditures on current operations (NOTE – not including debt service or capital outlay) in 2004. These costs were projected to increase between 3.3 and 3.7 percent from 2006 to 2009.
- Employee benefit costs increased 12 percent between 1999 and 2004, but are expected to exhibit more moderate growth between 2006 and 2009, with

projected increases between 7.4 and 9.5 percent. Still, this is the highest projected expenditure increase of any of the major categories.

- Non-personal services (NPS) include contracts for services and supplies, as well as equipment and capital expenditures. Growth in this category for 2006-2009 is expected between 3.4 and 4 percent.

-- Expenditures and Budget Implications for Niagara Falls

Flat property values, aging infrastructure and population losses have put a burden on tax revenue generation in the City of Niagara Falls, the largest population center in the County. Although the population has decreased, the cost of services has risen and the need to repair its aging infrastructure has caused annual expenditure increases of approximately 5 percent over the last several years.

Modest increases in assessed value were projected for 2007 and 2008 (2 percent), which was expected to increase existing budget gaps over the next couple of years. In addition, the City has been constrained in its ability to raise property tax rates to close these gaps, due to being very close to its constitutional tax limits. The City cannot simply increase property tax levies, as an increase over the limit would mandate the New York State Comptroller to withhold certain State aid revenues. This would obviously further Niagara Falls' budget gap problems.

-- General Budget Implications for Cities in New York State

Expanding budget gaps are expected in cities besides Niagara Falls over the next few years. Projected budget gap increases average 5.2 percent of total revenues in 2007 and 9.8 percent by 2009. These estimates were made before recent downturns in the national economy. Ten cities projected gaps exceeding 10 percent of their total revenues, which generally indicates severe fiscal stress. Soaring service costs and expenditures appear to be driving these expected gaps in the cities of the Hudson Valley and Long Island, while stagnant property values, population decline and thus, reduced revenues were likely the cause for projected gaps in other Upstate cities, such as those in Niagara County.

c. General State of Affairs

Rising expenditures, constrained revenues, and widening budget gaps have characterized the fiscal state of many municipalities in New York State, like those of Niagara County. In light of these conditions, many governmental issues, fiscal concerns and policy questions have arisen, demanding re-examination of local government practices, State and local policies, and State and local funding mechanisms.

-- Local Tax Burden

- New York taxpayers have the highest combined State and local tax burden in the nation, with a total tax bill of \$131 for every \$1,000 of personal income in 2002, nearly 26 percent higher than the national average.
- New York's high tax burden is entirely driven by high local taxes – State taxes are about average, at \$64 per \$1,000 of personal income, versus \$62 for the nation as a whole.

- Local taxes are the highest in the country, at \$67 per \$1,000 of personal income, 60 percent higher than the national average of \$42. Maine is the next highest state at \$55 – nearly 20 percent lower than New York.
- Although New York does not rank first in any individual major local tax, it is among the top seven states for the three major taxes: local property, sales and personal income. It is the combination of high local taxes across the board that causes the State’s overall local tax ranking to rise to the top.

-- Property Tax Burden

- Outside of New York City, property taxes per capita are \$1,634 – 73 percent above the national average.
- Over the last 10 years, property tax levies have grown by 60 percent, more than twice the rate of inflation during that period (28 percent). Most of this growth occurred in the last 5 or so years – when property tax levies increased by 42 percent, compared to inflation of 13 percent.
- In Niagara County the property tax levy per household and per \$1,000 of personal income is relatively low. However, the property tax rate in relation to full property values is relatively high, which is likely due, in part, to the relatively low property values characteristic of Niagara County.

-- Property Tax Issues

Although the property tax is stable and easy to use, it has been noted for some flaws and has been the subject of much controversy, particularly in New York State. Some major property tax issues include:

- Property taxes are based on a fairly subjective property values assessment system.
- Home values (upon which property taxes are assessed) may not accurately reflect an ability to pay.
- Property tax “rebates” commonly used to relieve tax burden are essentially a transfer of tax burden and not a tax cut.
- Property taxes are often considered regressive – the burden falls more heavily on lower-income tax payers as a percentage of their income.

-- Sales Tax Burden

- New York State has one of the highest combined state/local sales tax rates in the nation, with only Tennessee, Louisiana and Washington being higher. The State’s average combined state-local sales tax rate of 8.25 percent for New York compares to a national average rate of 5.93 percent.
- Sales tax revenues grew by nearly 45 percent from 1993 to 2001, more than double the rate of growth of property taxes, which grew by 20 percent during this period.

-- Sales Tax Issues

- New York has one of the highest combined state/local sales tax rates, and it is the local portion that drives up New York's overall rate. However, local sales taxes in New York State have long been linked to the existence of a large county share of Medicaid costs, whereas most states do not require significant local contributions toward Medicaid.
- Competition from adjacent states, and from internet sales, is a serious tax policy issue in New York State. Each year, State and local sales tax revenues are lost to the growing popularity of e-commerce transactions (i.e., internet purchases), where sales tax is often not collected. As this form of commerce continues to grow, so will the amount of uncollected sales tax revenue.
- Because many sales tax sharing agreements are based on population, cities which have lost population, like Niagara Falls, are particularly vulnerable to sales tax revenue losses.

-- Town Special District Issues

- Due to the rapidly-growing/redistribution of populations of towns in New York, and therefore the rapidly-increasing use of town special service districts, concerns have arisen regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of using this mechanism to fund certain town services.
- There has been a general lack of transparency in the specific use of special district revenues and the actual cost of providing services within these districts.
- The ad-hoc use of districts has raised questions about the efficiency of this mechanism and the potential for district consolidation.
- Town special districts generate revenues only from residents living within the district boundaries, yet residents outside of these boundaries sometimes benefit from the services funded by district revenues.
- Towns in New York State are growing rapidly in terms of increased populations – ten towns now exceed 100,000 in population (compared to only 5 cities in the State). This increase due in large part by redistribution of population from urban to rural areas has caused many towns to look and act more like traditional cities, yet because towns are so diverse in their composition and operation it is difficult to develop standardized models for specific service delivery, as is generally done for cities.

-- Revenue Sharing Issues

Many issues have arisen over the amount of revenue sharing provided by New York State and the mechanism for determining how much aid is distributed to each locality.

-- Revenue Sharing Amounts

- Revenue sharing in New York State peaked at nearly \$1.1 billion in FY-89

and currently totals about \$800 million. From FY-88 to FY-05, revenue sharing has been reduced by more than 26 percent, while cumulatively State funds have increased by 93 percent.

- Revenue sharing represented about 3 percent of the State budget in FY-89, but in FY-05 presented only 1 percent of the budget. This makes apparent a lowered priority for revenue sharing at the State level.

-- Unrestricted Aid Allocation Mechanisms

- Original statutory formulas based on population, per capita property valuation, and personal income were established to guide fair, equitable and flexible aid distributions. However, these formulas have been unused for decades, as unrestricted aid amounts have been essentially frozen.
- The Governor established a new Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) as part of the 2005-06 Executive Budget that would consolidate several revenue sharing categories and allowed almost all municipalities a 2.5 percent to 12.5 percent increase in unrestricted aid funds in 2005-06 and a 5 percent to 25 percent increase in 2006-07.
- The Governor also established a Shared Municipal Services Incentives Awards program that supports municipalities with mergers, consolidations, cooperative agreements and shared services. This program encourages increased efficiency in local services, thereby reducing costs and the need for unrestricted aid.

H. Economic Development

Niagara County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), last completed in mid-2008, sets forth several goals for economic development. Detailed information regarding economic development issues and opportunities in Niagara County are provided in the County's annual Economic Development Strategy, Chapter VI of this Plan, and on the County's websites.

Goals established in the CEDS address the following general issues and opportunities:

- Implementation of sustainable development practices, both in terms of recruiting high paying jobs and broadening the tax base as well as protecting natural resources
- Expansion of key economic sectors (industry, tourism, agriculture, and commercial activity)
- Enhancement of the County's competitive position
- Diversification of the County's economic base
- Development of a comprehensive education and training program to enhance workforce development

1. Market Facts

Niagara County's prior planning initiatives and studies as summarized in Chapter II and Chapter VI of this Plan, as well as the annual CEDS report include a wealth of

economic development information, market facts and statistics. This information includes leading industry sectors, labor force information, the availability of land and building space, home values and housing statistics, locations of recent development projects, and retail data. This information is briefly summarized below because it can further economic development opportunities within the County and directly relates to the economic health and quality of life of communities within Niagara County.

a. Leading Industry Sectors

Niagara County's leading industry sectors are presented below in descending order, by total payroll:

- Manufacturing
- Health care, social services
- Retail trade
- Construction
- Arts, entertainment, recreation
- Accommodations, food services
- Administration, support, waste management, remediation services
- Wholesale trade
- Transportation/warehousing
- Finance and insurance

While the trend is these sectors are gradually declining as in the nation as a whole, manufacturing is still a leading industry in the County. Heavy industry continues to benefit from low cost hydroelectric power made available by the Niagara Power Project.

The services industry is increasing in importance, particularly health care and social services as well as jobs and economic activity related to the tourism sectors. Agriculture also continues to be important, generating nearly \$60 million in product sales in the local economy. Farmland preservation continues to be a major issue and a goal of the region in general as the County's population redistributes itself, for the most part, into outer ring suburbs and rural towns.

b. Major Employers

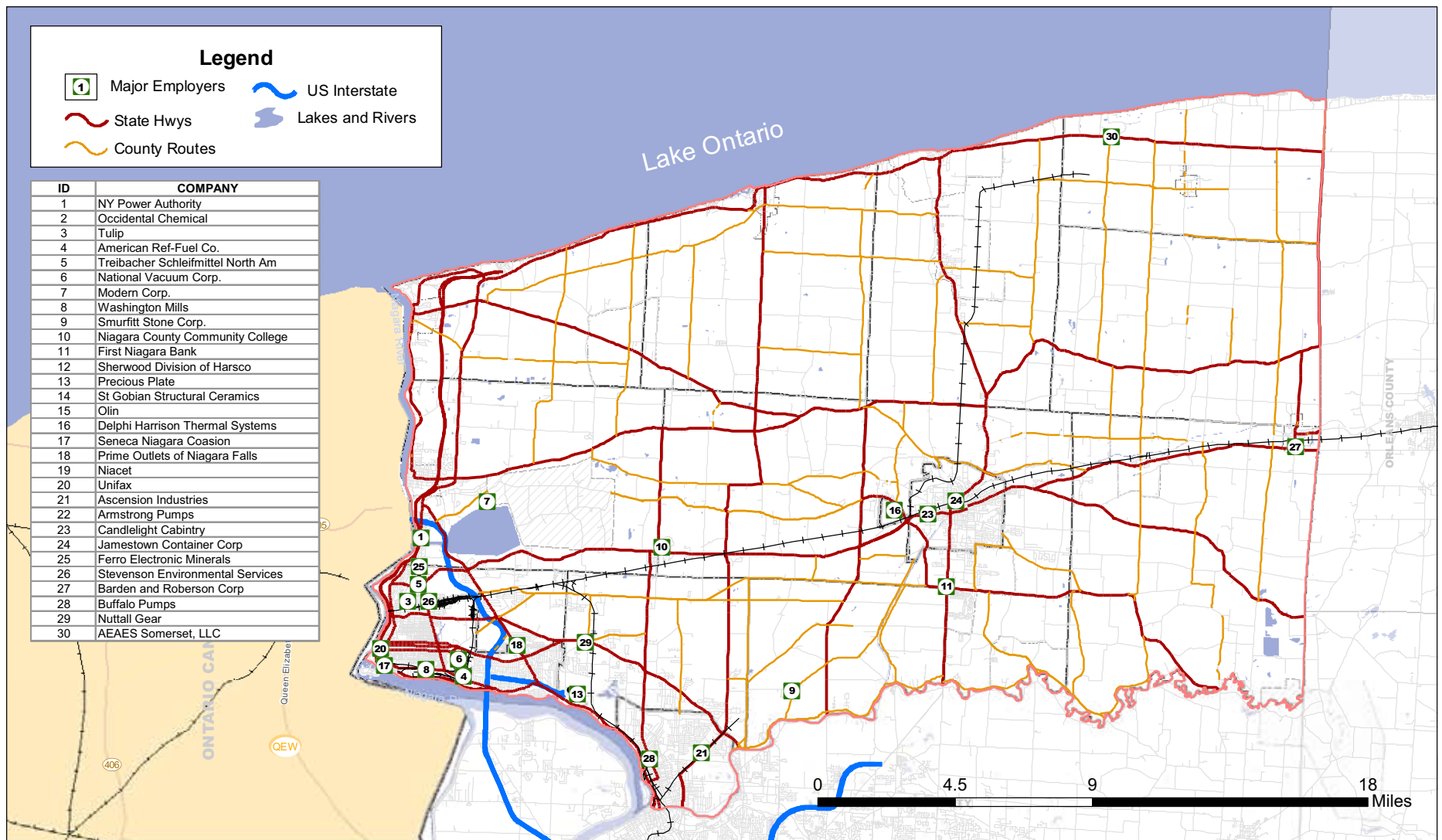
Consistent with the data on leading industry sectors, Niagara County's top employers include manufacturers, entertainment/recreation facilities, retail centers, school districts, and hospitals. The list of top employers by number of employees follows. Major employers are also identified in Figure III.H.1.

Private Sector

Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel	2,861
Delphi Thermal	2,600
Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center	1,200
Fashion Outlets of Niagara Falls	1,000
Mount St. Mary's Hospital	700

Public Sector

Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station	2,936
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Niagara County	1,550 (1427 FTE's)
Niagara Falls City School District	1,325
North Tonawanda City School District	765
Lockport City School District	730
Niagara County Community College	713

c. Industry Targets and Projections

The County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy identifies the following sectors as leading growth industries:

- Tourism
- Agriculture/food processing
- Automotive
- Telecommunications/call centers
- Medical products
- Medical technology research and development
- Chemical/plastics
- Metal fabricating/machining
- High tech/emerging industries
- Forest and wood products
- Printing
- Trade/distribution, logistics, and warehousing
- Aerospace and defense

d. Availability of Land and Building Space

Niagara County is host to several corporate and industrial parks, located primarily in the Town of Niagara, the Town of Wheatfield, the Town of Lockport, and Niagara Falls. These include:

- Niagara Industrial Airport adjacent to the Niagara Falls International Airport (217 acres)
- Town of Lockport Industrial Park (203 acres)
- Woodlands Corporate Center in the Town of Wheatfield (150 acres)
- Vantage International Pointe adjacent to the Niagara Falls International Airport (158 acres)
- Summit Business Park in the Town of Wheatfield (225 acres)

Throughout the County, land is currently available in a range of locations, in addition to existing corporate and business parks. Clusters of available land are found in the Town of Lockport, Town of Niagara and Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda. Available acreage ranges from less than one acre to 285 acres at the Town of Lockport IDA Park.

Available office and industrial space within existing buildings is also clustered in the Town of Lockport, Town of Niagara and Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda. Available space ranges from 1,000 square feet to 625,000 square feet.

-- Retail

Niagara County has several retail clusters. Shopping malls include the Fashion Outlets of Niagara in Niagara Falls and the Summit. There are major shopping areas located throughout the County. These include:

- Little Italy, Niagara Falls Blvd./Route 62, and Niagara Falls City Market in

the Falls Region

- Historic Lewiston and Historic Youngstown in the River Region
- Lakeview Village Shoppes and Wilson Harborfront Shops in the Lake Region
- The Historic Bewley Building, Lockport Farmers Market, North Tonawanda City Market, Transit Road/Route 78, Ulrich City Center, and Payne Avenue in the Canal region.

e. Utilities

Niagara County is well served by three of the State's largest utilities - New York Power Authority (NYPA), National Grid, and New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG). Several smaller suppliers provide electric and gas to residents and businesses throughout the County. National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation also provides natural gas to the western portion of the County and NYSEG supplies natural gas to the eastern portion of the County. National Grid supplies electricity to most of the County with the exception of the Town and City of Lockport that is serviced by NYSEG.

The NYPA generates electricity through the Niagara Power Project, one of the world's largest hydroelectric facilities. Other large producers include: COVANTA Company of Niagara, which operates a large waste to energy facility in Niagara Falls; Niagara Generation, LLC which operates a coal-fired and bio-mass plant; Lockport Energy Associates, L.P. which provides electricity from its co-generation facility to Delphi Thermal; and AES Somerset, LLC which owns and operates a coal-fired plant in Somerset (Niagara County Center for Economic Development 2008).

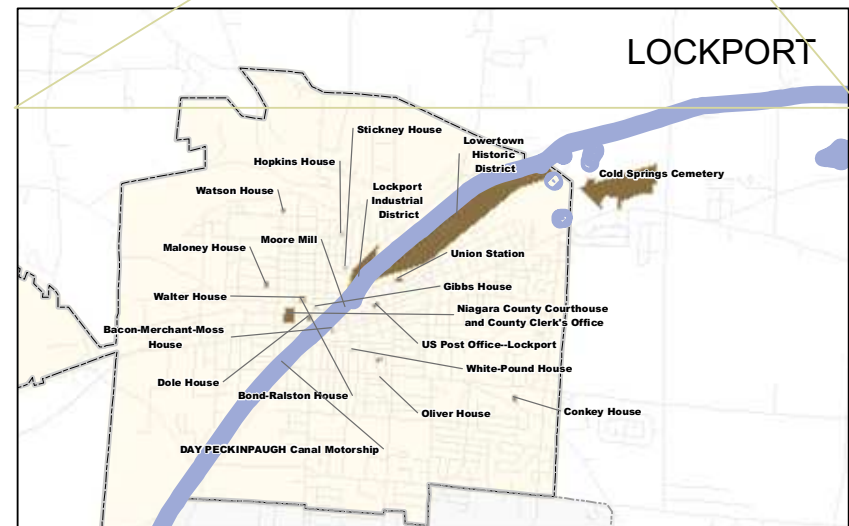
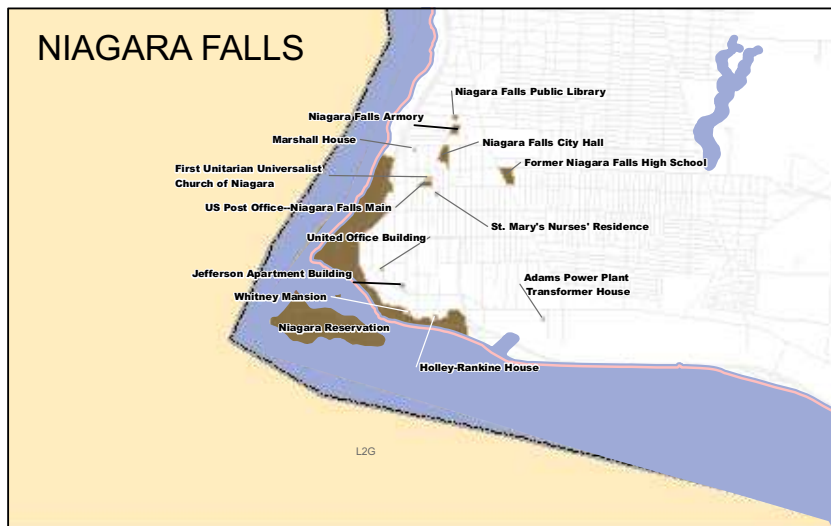
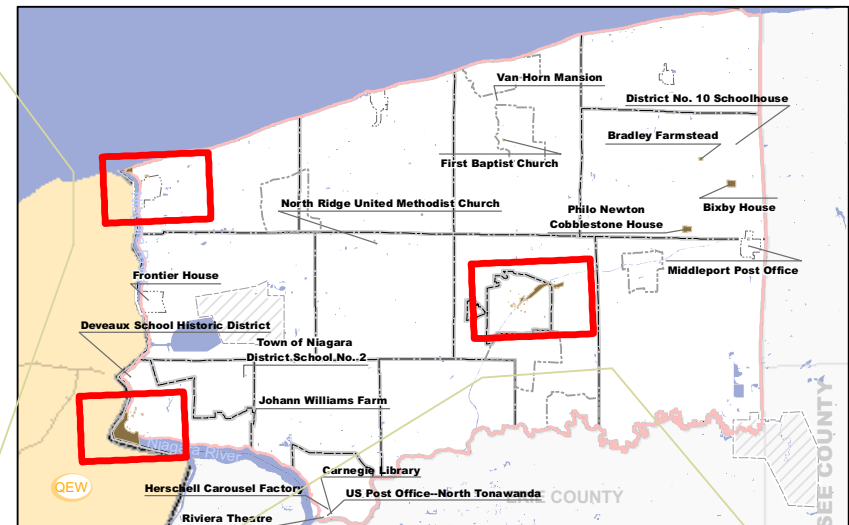
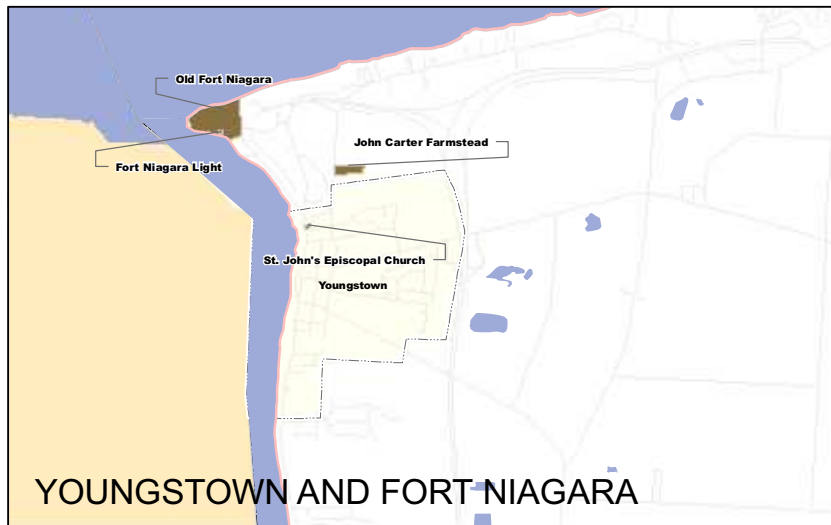
Verizon is the major provider of telecommunication services in the County. More than 5,600 miles of high speed fiber optic cables exist for transmission of voice, video and data to residential and business customers. Wireless communications are provided by Verizon, Sprint, Cingular and others. Cable television is also available from Time Warner.

I. Cultural and Historic Resources

1. Cultural and Historic Resources

The Niagara River waterfront area and the Erie/Barge Canal region have both significantly contributed to the rich cultural heritage and each area contains many of the most significant cultural and historic resources of Niagara County. As early settlement of the County progressed from east to west, trade centers and transportation routes became increasingly important. In order to protect these early trade routes Old Fort Niagara, located north of the Village of Youngstown at the point where the Niagara River flows into Lake Ontario, became a critical military outpost to maintain early trade in western New York. Old Fort Niagara, as perhaps one of the better known and earliest of the historic resources of the area, like many of the other cultural and historic resources of communities throughout Niagara County, are identified in Figure III.I.1 Cultural Resources.

The Erie/Barge Canal is a tremendously important resource and a major part of



Niagara County history, contributing particularly to the early development of the central portion of the interior parts of Niagara County in and around the City of Lockport. The Erie Canal opened in 1825 and created a vital trade link between Lake Erie on the west and the Hudson River in the eastern part of the State.

The Canal provided a means of transportation over the Niagara Escarpment which had proven to be a significant physical impediment to commercial activity across the County. Today, the Canal not unlike many of the important historic and cultural resources in the County, is crucial to the health of local economies and significantly contributes to the community character of the region. The Canal corridor itself and adjacent lands provides future opportunities for recreation and community development.

A complete listing of National and State Register resources found in Niagara County is provided in the Cultural Resources Appendix. Interested individuals are also encouraged to contact the County Historian Office.

J. Recreation and Tourism

1. Recreation

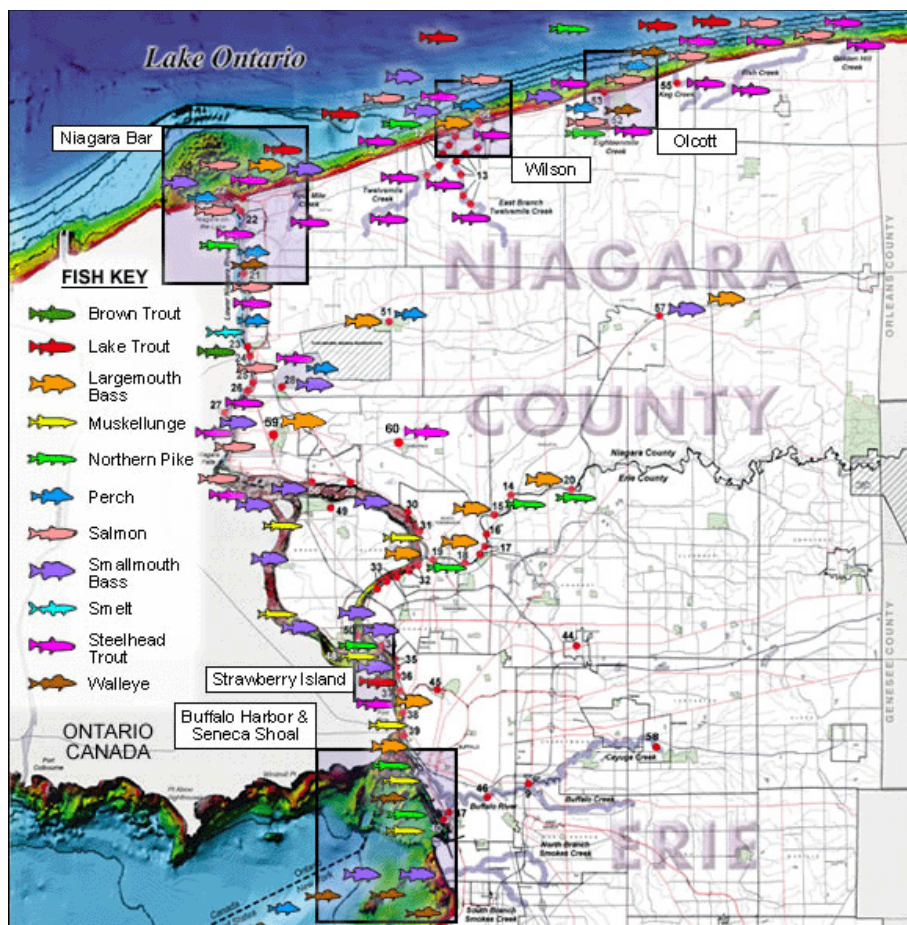
Niagara County is a center for all types of year-round recreational opportunities and tourist destinations. No destination is better known or contributes more to the tourism industry of the region than Niagara Falls. In addition to this natural wonder of the world, Niagara County affords a diversity of waterways and water-oriented recreational opportunities along Lake Ontario, the Niagara River, Tonawanda Creek and the Erie/Barge Canal that runs through the City of Lockport as well as the towns of Royalton, Lockport and Pendleton.

Figures III.D.5. and III.E.5. identify the locations of important recreation and tourism destinations in the County including major waterways, major park locations and waterfront public access points throughout the County.

The rich water resources and the shorelines of Niagara County make the area a top destination for sport fishing. Anglers from all over the United States enjoy the County's beautiful scenery as well as the opportunity to catch trophy fish. Brown trout, lake trout, largemouth bass, muskellunge, northern pike, perch, salmon, walleye, steelhead trout are some of the variety of species of fish that can be caught year round in the region. Charter boats can be taken out of marinas in Wilson, Olcott and the Niagara Bar.

The upper and lower reaches of the Niagara River and some of its tributaries support both warm water and cool water fisheries. A total of 92 different species of fish have been recorded in the Niagara River (Niagara River Greenway Commission 2007). Salmon fishing is one of the most popular types of fishing because of the intense effort involved in landing these fish. Fish can be caught all over the County including many of the area's smaller streams and creeks. The map above illustrates the many types of fish that are available in the Niagara County region.

*Information on recreation
and tourism opportunities
in Niagara County can be
found at
www.niagara-usa.com*



Feasibility studies are underway to locate and construct a Lower Great Lakes Fisheries Research Center and Fish Hatchery to raise sport fish, primarily lake trout for stocking in Lake Ontario and Lake Erie a part of an effort to enhance New York's recreational fishing industry. The estimated \$40 million facility would be a center for research, education and a tourist destination. A study completed in 2008 recommended Joseph Davis State Park as a potential location (Niagara County Center for Economic Development 2008).

Hunting is also a very popular recreational activity in the region. Niagara County contains two Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), the Tonawanda WMA and the Hartland Swamp WMA. Both are open to the public for hunting. Popular species include white-tailed deer, turkey, duck, pheasant and rabbit.

Snowmobiling, hiking and biking are popular outdoor pursuits enjoyed around the County. There are numerous miles of snowmobile trails where riders can travel from the center of the County south to Erie County and elsewhere. Individuals that enjoy hiking and biking make use of these trails during the spring and summer months. Hikers and bikers use the trails in both the Hartland Swamp WMA and the Tonawanda WMA as well as some State Parks. There is also a scenic bike trail which runs along the Niagara River. The different trails designated for snowmobilers, hikers and bikers are identified on Figure III.D.5.

The County owns and maintains five parks plus the County Golf Course. Detailed information on these County facilities is provided in Chapter VII of this Plan. County Parks include:

- Bond Lake Park

- West Canal Marina
- Krull Park
- Oppenheim Park
- Royalton Ravine Conservation Park

State Parks are also prevalent around Niagara County because of the many diversified types of water resources in the County. The majority of the State Parks are found on either the shore of Lake Ontario or the Niagara River. The State Parks offer access to these waterways from nearby boat launches and beaches. Opportunities for fishing from the shore also exist. New York State Parks in Niagara County include:

- Buckhorn Island State Park
- Devils Hole State Park
- Earl W. Brydges Artpark State Park
- Fort Niagara State Park
- Four Mile Creek State Park
- Golden Hill State Park
- Joseph Davis State Park
- Niagara Reservation State Park
- Reservoir State Park
- Wilson Tuscarora State Park

Recreational activities abound in the County for golfing, boating, hiking, biking, bird watching and nature study among many other active and passive pursuits. Numerous public and private golf courses exist throughout the County as well.

2. Tourism

In addition to the area's many local, County and State parks and recreation facilities there are a variety of tourist destinations throughout Niagara County. Tourists have the opportunity to visit Niagara Falls, enjoy wines at different wineries along the Niagara Wine Trail and Niagara Escarpment Trail, visit the Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel in Niagara Falls and the Niagara Aquarium, enjoy the scenic Niagara River and Lake Ontario, or explore local history and the many retail shops found in local villages.

Niagara Falls is one of the greatest natural wonders of the world and remains the region's top tourist destination. Niagara Falls consists of two separate waterfalls. The Canadian Horseshoe Falls plunges 170 feet into its large pool. The American Falls plunges from 70 to 110 feet to the base of the falls. Boat tours to the base of the falls are offered through much of the year. This adventure is particularly impressive when you consider that approximately 6 million cubic feet of water cascades over the falls into the Niagara River every minute.

The Niagara Wine Trail runs along the shore of Lake Ontario from Orleans County. The trail enters the Town of Wilson and then turns south until it exits Niagara County at the border with Erie County. The majority of wineries are located in central Niagara County with a few along the shore of Lake Ontario. There are 12 award winning wineries along the Niagara Wine Trail. Each winery offers its own locally grown specialty wines.

Running along the Niagara Escarpment is the Niagara Escarpment Wine Trail. This trail is smaller than the Niagara Wine Trail. Just like the Niagara Wine Trail, the Escarpment Trail offers different wines from grapes grown in Niagara County. There are various destinations provided for wine tasters along the Escarpment Trail.

The Seneca Niagara Casino and Hotel is a major tourist destination located in the City of Niagara Falls. This is a 147,000 square foot casino with the largest hotel in New York State outside of Manhattan. The gaming floor at the casino offers over 4,200 slot machines and 100 table games. The Casino offers numerous shopping, dining and entertainment opportunities.

Among the area's historic resources is Old Fort Niagara which is an historic site just north of the Village of Youngstown. The Fort features numerous battle re-enactments, hosts educational programs for students, and has a museum shop and a new visitor's center. The Fort includes some of the oldest buildings on the Great Lakes based on its 300 year history. Adjacent to the Fort is the 500 acre Fort Niagara State Park which offers boat launches, nature trails and other facilities. Old Fort Niagara hosts approximately 100,000 visitors annually while the State Park hosts approximately 500,000 annual visitors.

Other attractions in Niagara County include fall and spring festivals, the Niagara Aquarium, local concerts in area parks, boat races, farmers markets, as well as bed and breakfast type inns along Lake Ontario and the Niagara River for overnight stays.

A full detailed list of tourist destinations in Niagara County is provided at www.niagaracounty.com. However, some other notable destinations include the Artpark in Lewiston, a State Park located along the Niagara Gorge. The Artpark hosts a variety of summertime art festivals and performing arts.

The Inn at Barton Hill in Lewiston recently opened and provides a full-service boutique style hotel. This new destination is expected to draw about one-half million visitors annually to the Lower River region who may also be visiting major events such as the Porter Cup Golf Tournament, the Artpark, Lewiston Jazz Festival, Lewiston Art Festival, Ransomville Cabbage Festival and others (Niagara County Center for Economic Development 2008).

Several noteworthy projects are also underway in the County. Efforts to develop ferry service between the Village of Youngstown and Niagara-On-The-Lake in Ontario, Canada continue. The Niagara County Legislature and the Niagara County Center for Economic Development are working with Youngstown and the Town of Niagara-On-The-Lake to develop such service to link both areas as unique tourist destinations.

The following significant projects are also in various stages of progress. Among these, USA Niagara is pursuing development of a Niagara Experience Center in the City of Niagara Falls as a high-end cultural tourism and entertainment destination complex. The City of Lockport is pursuing the restoration of the mid-19th century Erie Canal Locks 67-71, also known as the “Flight of Five” as its primary tourism initiative. The “Magic Lands of Oz” project is progressing by Oz Central, LLC on an 800 acre site in the Town of Wheatfield.

Perhaps one of the most important initiatives is the Niagara River Greenway Plan which was approved by involved municipalities along the Niagara River in 2007. The Plan incorporates and is intended to complement Local Waterfront Redevelopment Plans (LWRP) of local communities as well as other State, National and regional initiatives such as the Seaway Trail, Niagara Wine Trail, Erie Canal Heritage Corridor and the National Park Service’s proposed National Heritage Area. These initiatives and other local plans and projects are anticipated to have a significant positive impact on the tourism industry of Niagara County in the near future.

K. Transportation

1. Roads and Highways

A well developed network of local roads, highways and bridges exists throughout the 20 municipalities that comprise Niagara County. In total, more than 1650 miles of roads and highways exist within the County. Of this total about 65 percent are considered local roads and streets under the jurisdiction of the various towns, cities and villages as shown in the accompanying table. Approximately 610 miles are town roads, 33 miles are village roads and 434 miles are city streets.

An additional 283 miles are County-owned roadways, 97 percent of which are distributed throughout the 12 towns in the County. The remaining three percent are within villages and cities. In addition, the County has jurisdiction and responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of 89 bridges and over 1100 drainage culverts. Additional information about the County’s roads and bridges including mapped locations is provided in Chapter VII. County Services, Facilities and Infrastructure.

State highways account for approximately 251 miles of roadway in the County. These roads and highways fall under the jurisdiction of the NYS Department of Transportation Region 5. About 87 percent of these are within the towns, 10 percent are within cities, and three percent are in villages.

Roads and highways are identified by agency jurisdiction in Figure III.K.1. The southwestern portion of the County is served by interstate highway directly linking the County to other interstates and the highway system in Canada via the three international bridge crossings identified in Figure III.K.1.

2008 NIAGARA COUNTY REGION 5 COUNTY 4										
MINOR CIVIL DIVISION		GEO- CODE	POP. 2000	TOTAL STATE TOURING ROUTE	CENTERLINE HIGHWAY MILEAGE BY JURISDICTION					
TYPE	Name of Town, Village or City				TOWN VILLAGE or CITY	COUNTY	TOTAL LOCAL	D.O.T. OWNED	OTHER	TOTAL STATE & LOCAL
TOWNS	Cambria	0112	5,390	28.1	31.4	18.3	49.7	28.1	0.0	77.8
	Hartland	0379	3,670	18.0	56.5	28.7	85.2	12.4	0.0	97.6
	Lewiston	0464	14,610	30.8	64.5	13.8	78.3	28.3	26.1	132.6
	Lookport	0481	19,650	23.0	85.1	33.9	119.0	34.3	0.0	143.2
	Newfane	0572	9,660	17.6	69.5	21.4	91.0	17.9	0.0	108.9
	Niagara	0584	8,980	11.7	30.0	5.9	35.9	11.7	0.0	47.6
	Pendleton	0648	6,050	7.8	26.6	30.4	57.0	7.8	0.0	64.8
	Porter	0681	4,960	20.2	27.1	23.6	50.7	16.0	6.5	73.1
	Royalton	0728	6,290	24.4	82.1	35.9	118.0	25.2	0.0	143.2
	Somerset	0786	2,290	13.6	33.4	19.1	52.5	11.5	0.0	64.1
	Wheatfield	0903	14,090	17.7	63.0	17.8	80.8	19.9	0.0	100.7
	Wilson	0916	4,630	14.8	41.2	26.1	67.3	14.8	0.0	82.1
SUBTOTAL			100,270	228.9	610.4	275.0	885.4	217.8	32.6	1135.7
VILLAGES	Barker	1035	580	1.0	1.8	1.7	3.5	0.0	0.0	3.6
	Lewiston	1268	2,780	2.6	13.8	0.6	14.4	2.0	0.8	17.1
	Middleport	1308	1,920	2.4	6.4	1.1	7.5	1.8	0.0	9.2
	Wilson	1540	1,210	2.7	4.2	0.8	4.9	2.7	0.0	7.6
	Youngstown	1549	1,960	2.4	6.6	2.2	8.8	1.0	0.0	9.8
SUBTOTAL			8,450	10.9	32.7	6.4	39.0	7.4	0.8	47.2
CITIES	Lookport	2027	22,280	8.0	90.1	1.6	91.7	4.7	0.1	96.8
	Niagara Falls	2035	55,590	28.8	228.5	0.0	228.5	15.7	7.8	262.0
	North Tonawanda	2036	33,260	10.8	115.0	0.0	115.0	5.4	0.0	120.3
SUBTOTAL			111,130	47.4	433.6	1.6	435.2	25.7	7.9	468.8
COUNTY TOTAL		----	219,850	287.2	1076.6	282.9	1359.6	250.9	41.3	1651.7

2. Aviation, Rail and Marine Facilities

The Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA) is located four miles east of the City of Niagara Falls. The NFIA is a commercial service airport that provides aviation facilities for business and corporate flights, recreational flights, police and law enforcement, and traffic/news flights. The NFIA operates under a joint agreement with the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station. International charter and cargo flights are accommodated due to the airport's long runway, the fourth longest in New York State.

The airport also provides U.S. Customs and Immigration facilities to process international passengers. The airport has the capacity to accommodate large passenger and cargo aircraft. Niagara County is working on airport development plans with the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) to facilitate development of the airport as an air cargo hub in support of identified growth potential in logistics/distribution/warehousing types of uses in the area. A new state-of-the-art passenger terminal building was under construction at the airport in 2008.

On the opposite side of the NFIA grounds from the public cargo and passenger area is the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Base. The Base employs nearly 3,000 employees and is one of the County's largest employers. The County supports the Base in efforts to "Grow the Base" through the Niagara Military Affairs Council (NIMAC) formed by the Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce in 1996. The combined initiatives to development both the military and private sector

sides of the airport and base are designed to create the facility as a true multi-modal transportation hub.

Several small general aviation airports also serve the Niagara County area. The locations of these facilities are shown in Figure III.K.2 Air, Rail and Marine Facilities.

Rail service in Niagara County is provided by CSX and by Falls Road Railroad Company, which is a GTV Rail subsidiary. The Somerset Railroad traverses Niagara County between Niagara Falls and the Town of Somerset to supply the fossil fuel electrical generation plant in northern Somerset. With regards to rail service the Town of Wheatfield has advocated for passenger rail service to link the community with the Niagara Falls Airport (Niagara County Center for Economic Development 2008).

The City of Niagara Falls is progressing on plans to construct a new border crossing facility between New York and Ontario, Canada with a new International Train Station. This project is intended to create a rail centered multi-modal, multi-functional transportation facility at the Whirlpool-Rapids bridgehead. The facility would provide U.S. Customs and Border Protection processing in conjunction with passenger rail service. The project is intended to respond to the need to improve moving goods and people by rail safely across the border.

Niagara County is afforded a variety of significant marine resources and facilities along the shore of Lake Ontario, the Niagara River, the New York State Erie/Barge Canal and numerous creeks and streams. Significant project planning and project implementation continues at various stages in communities located along waterfronts throughout the County. These initiatives are summarized below from information provided by the Niagara County Center for Economic Development.

The City of Niagara Falls has significant plans to reconnect the City's Downtown and neighborhoods with the Niagara River waterfront. Plans include new trails as part of the Niagara River Trail to eventually link Griffon Park with Artpark in Lewiston and new links to access points all along the riverfront. Other initiatives call for the reconfiguration of the Robert Moses Parkway to afford better riverfront access to the public, and cultural interpretive destinations and other projects related to establishing the entire Niagara River Corridor as a National and World Heritage Area.

The Olcott Harbor Breakwater project in the Town of Newfane proposes construction of a 600 foot offshore breakwater in Lake Ontario, perpendicular to existing Federally-owned piers to improve safety in the harbor and provide an increasing demand for boat slips in the Town of Newfane and Niagara County.

Restoration of Cayuga Creek in the County to mitigate erosion and other problems along the creek continue between Niagara County and its partners on the project, which include the City of Niagara Falls, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), Buffalo Niagara Riverkeepers and several other public and private organizations. The project is intended to be modeled after the award winning restoration project for Eighteenmile Creek. The COE is working on a watershed restoration plan and the County continues to seek funding to progress the project. Funding has been secured through the Niagara County Environmental Fund to establish the LaSalle

Canoe Trail along the Creek.

Revitalization efforts also continue in communities along the Erie Canal in Niagara County. These include the Western Canal Gateway Initiative which includes various revitalization and public access projects along the waterfront which is now largely complete at the confluence of the Niagara River and Erie Canal in the cities of North Tonawanda and Tonawanda, also known as the “Twin Cities”. The project is considered key to long-term revitalization in North Tonawanda by serving as a major link from the Western Gateway to the State’s 524-mile Heritage Canal System.

L. Health and Safety

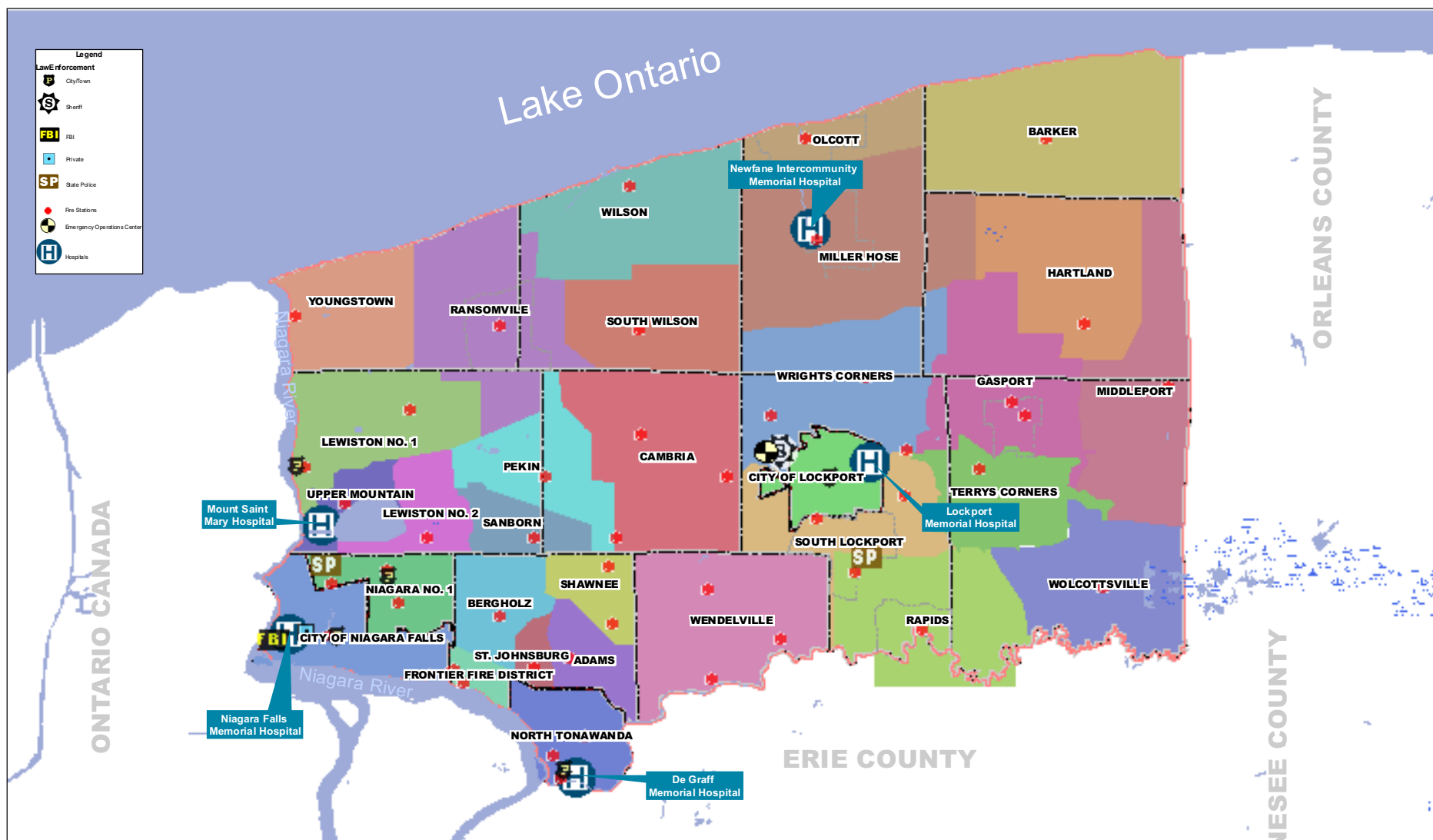
Residents of communities in Niagara County are provided a variety of public and private sector health and safety services by local hospitals, law enforcement agencies, skilled nursing facilities, nursing homes, American Red Cross shelters and other service providers.

The locations of public health and safety facilities are identified in Figure III.L.1. Many health and safety facilities are located in the urbanized centers of the southern half of the County primarily in and around the cities of Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda and Lockport. Fewer facilities are located in the less densely populated rural areas in the northern half of the County. American Red Cross shelters are provided in numerous locations around the County.

1. Hospitals

Five primary care hospitals are located in Niagara County as follows.

- ***Degraff Memorial Hospital***
445 Tremont Street
North Tonawanda, NY 14120
- ***Inter-Community Memorial Hospital at Newfane Inc.***
2600 William Street
Newfane, NY 14108
- ***Lockport Memorial Hospital***
521 East Avenue
Lockport, NY 14094
- ***Mount St. Mary’s Hospital and Health Center***
5300 Military Road
Lewiston, NY 14092
- ***Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center***
621 Tenth Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14302



2. Law Enforcement

Niagara County residents are served by both the New York State Police and the Niagara County Sheriff's Office. NY State Police barracks are located along Witmer Road in the Town of Niagara, just north of the City of Niagara Falls and along Dysinger Road, just south of the City of Lockport as shown in Figure III.L.1.

In addition, the cities of Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda and Lockport have municipal police departments, as do the the villages of Youngstown, Barker and Middleport. The Town of Niagara also has its own police department. There is a combined police department for the Town and Village of Lewiston.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office is located in the City of Lockport.

- **Niagara County Sheriff's Office**
5526 Niagara Street Ext., P.O. Box 496
Lockport, New York 14095-0496

All wireless 911 calls are received at the Sheriff Office in Lockport. However, all land line 911 emergency calls go to respective centers in each of the three cities in the County and the County Sheriff handles the remaining municipalities of the County.

3. Fire/Rescue Departments

Fire Departments are located throughout Niagara County. In all there are 31 fire/rescue department locations as listed below and shown in Figure III.L.1. In addition to local fire/rescue, a U.S. Coast Guard Station is located at the mouth of the Niagara River along the shoreline of Lake Ontario in the Town of Porter. The County is also served by the Tri-Town Ambulance Service, Rural Metro, and the Tri- Community Ambulance Service. Existing departments include:

Adams Fire Co. 7113 Nash Road N. Tonawanda, NY 14120 Phone 692-3212	Barker Fire Co. 1660 Quaker Road Barker, NY 14012 Phone 795-3011	Bergholz Fire Co. 2470 Niagara Road Niagara Falls NY 14304 Phone 731-4848
Cambria Fire Co. 4631 Cambria-Wilson Road Lockport, NY 14094 Phone 434-8948	Frontier Fire Co. 2176 Liberty Drive Niagara Falls, NY 14304 Phone 283-5700	Gasport Fire Co. 8412 State Street Gasport, NY 14067 Phone 772-7751
Hartland Fire Co. 8945 Ridge Road Gasport, NY 14067 Phone 735-3283	Lewiston #1 Fire Co. 145 N. 6th Street Lewiston, NY 14092 Phone 754-2180	Lewiston #2 Fire Co. 1705 Saunders-Settlement Niagara Falls, NY 14304 Phone 297-0050

Lockport Fire Dept.
Municipal Building
Lockport, NY 14094
Phone 439-6611

Middleport Fire Co.
Main St. PO Box 94
Middleport, NY 14105
Phone 735-7872

Miller Hose Fire Co.
6161 McKee Street
Newfane, NY 14108
Phone 778-7544

Niagara Active Fire Co.
3995 Lockport Road
Niagara Falls, NY 14305
Phone 282-1776

Niagara Falls Fire Dept.
3115 Walnut Ave. PO Box 69
Niagara Falls, NY 14305
Phone 286-4725

North Tonawanda Fire
495 Zimmerman Street
N. Tonawanda, NY 14120
Phone 693-2201

Olcott Fire Co.
1573 Lockport-Olcott Rd.
Olcott, NY 14126
Phone 778-9252

Pekin Fire Co.
3024 Upper Mountain Road
Sanborn, NY 14132
Phone 731-4777

Ransomville Fire Co.
2525 Youngstown-Lockport
Ransomville, NY 14131
Phone 791-4411

Rapids Fire Co.
7195 Plank Road
Lockport, NY 14094
Phone 434-4502

Johnsburg Fire Co.
7165 Ward Road
N. Tonawanda, NY 14120
Phone 693-3131

Sanborn Fire Co.
5811 Buffalo St. Box 362
Sanborn, NY 14132
Phone 731-4616

Shawnee Fire Co.
3747 Lockport Road
Sanborn, NY 14132
Phone 731-3666

South Lockport Fire Co.
5666 S. Transit Road
Lockport, NY 14094
Phone 434-4626

South Wilson Fire Co.
4194 Chestnut St.
Wilson, NY 14172
Phone 751-6079

Terry's Corners Fire Co.
7801 Chestnut Ridge Road
Gasport, NY 14067
Phone 434-4800

Upper Mountain Fire Co.
839 Moyer Road
Lewiston, NY 14092
Phone 297-0330

Wendelville Fire Co.
7340 Campbell Blvd.
N. Tonawanda, NY 14120
Phone 693-4747

Wilson Fire Co.
250 Young Street
Wilson, NY 14172
Phone 751-6038

Wolcottsville Fire Co.
Wolcottsville Road
Akron, NY 14001
Phone 542-4422

Wrights Corners Fire Co.
4043 Lake Ave.
Lockport, NY 14094
Phone 433-2759

Youngstown Fire Co.
PO Box 387
Youngstown, NY 14174
Phone 745-3324

M. Education

Niagara County offers a variety of high quality educational institutions within its borders including Niagara University, Niagara County Community College (NCCC), and SUNY Empire State College. These institutions offer Associate, Bachelor and advanced university degrees on full-time and part-time bases. In addition, Niagara County is within a one-half hour drive or less from the State University of New York in Buffalo, Buffalo State College and Canisius College. These insitutions of higher education afford diverse degree programs to their student populations with similar diverse career and life interests.

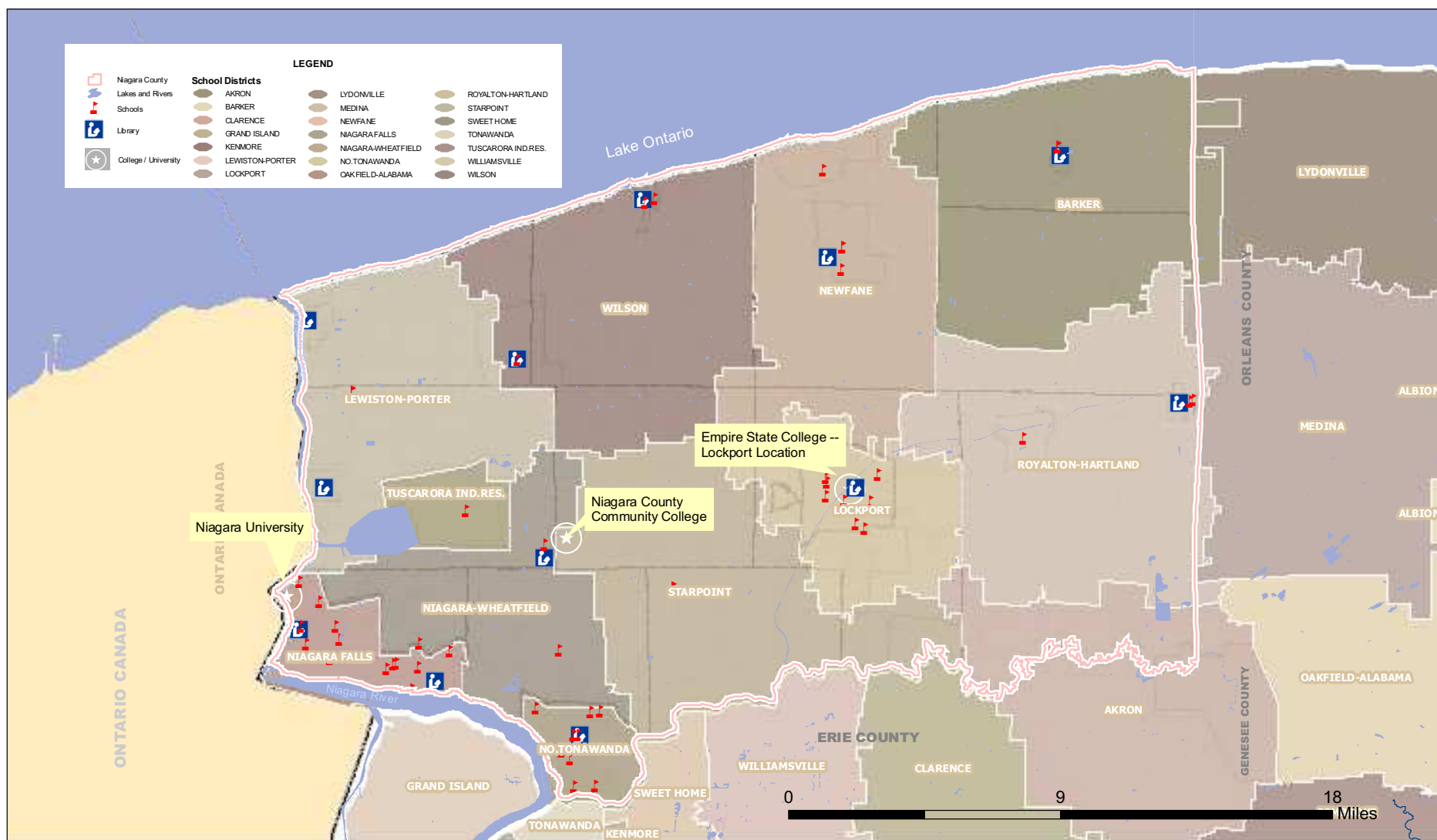
Niagara University was founded in 1856 by the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) and first chartered in 1861 as a seminary, then rechartered as a university in 1883. The 160 acre Niagara University campus is located on Route 104 along the northern limits of the City of Niagara Falls. The campus setting is along the top of the Monteagle Ridge overlooking the Niagara River Gorge just four miles north of Niagara Falls near the U.S. and Canadian border. Niagara Univesity is a mid-size school with an enrollment of approximately 2,600 undergraduates, 800 graduate students and another 750 students enrolled in continuing and community education. More information is available at www.niagara.edu.

Niagara County Community College was established in 1962 as a locally sponsored college supervised by the State University of New York. The College was constructed in 1973 on a 287 acre campus located in Sanborn along Saunders Settlement Road (NYS Route 31) in the Town of Cambria. The College includes nine centrally located buildings including administration, a student center, a library, two gyms and several academic buildings including a science center, fine arts, humanities and social sciences, and business classrooms. In 2008 on-campus housing, called the Village College Suites, was constructed for the 2008-2009 academic year with housing for approximately 300 students. Total enrollment at the College varies around 6,000 students as a combination of full and part-time students.

Public libraries in Niagara County are part of the NIOGA Library System, a non-profit cooperative library system serving public libraries in three counties - Niagara, Orleans and Genesee. The system consists of 21 public libraries and receives most of its financial support from the New York State Department of Education.

Ten school districts exist within Niagara County. The locations of these districts as well as other educational institutions in the County are identified in Figure III.M.1. As indicated many of the elementary, junior and senior high schools are located in the developed urban areas of the County in the cities of Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda and Lockport. Fewer schools are located in the rural towns of the County. Information on school districts and education in general, including current issues and trends is provided in Chapter VIII. School Districts in Niagara County include:

- Barker Central
- Lewiston Porter Central
- Lockport City
- Newfane Central Schools
- Niagara Falls City
- Niagara Wheatfield Central



- North Tonawanda City
- Royalton Hartland Central
- Starpoint Central
- Wilson Centra5

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Chapter IV

Community Profiles

Community Profiles

The 20 municipalities and three Native American Indian Nations that comprise the 23 communities of Niagara County were invited to participate as key stakeholders in the planning process leading up to preparation of this Comprehensive Plan and the Community Profiles presented in this chapter. Active participation in the process included attendance by stakeholder community representative(s) during eight Plan Steering Committee meetings in 2008 and subsequent review and modification of information by the communities via a written survey in late 2008 and early 2009.

Information received from all stakeholder communities was incorporated into each respective community profile. In addition to the input provided by community representatives, data were obtained from a review of municipal comprehensive plans and other sources of information including U.S. Census Bureau data and countywide employment and socioeconomic information.

The community profiles, including one for Niagara County itself as presented in this chapter are intended to be a “snapshot” summary of current conditions in each community. They are not a detailed analysis of current needs and conditions, nor are they intended to be a substitute for local comprehensive planning initiatives. Rather, the profiles serve as a possible starting point for some communities that may need to update their comprehensive plans or other local data. The profiles also provide a unique opportunity for Niagara County communities to benchmark themselves in comparison to neighboring communities and to the rest of Niagara County. A summary profile for Niagara County is included among the other profiles.

The community profiles are also useful for identifying commonalities among communities in different areas such as the five subregions of the County that are defined in this Plan. For this purpose this chapter also contains a set of subregional profiles that combine information from the communities within those subregions.

The community profiles presented in this chapter are intended to be a “snapshot” summary of current conditions in each community.

Both the community and subregional profiles are useful for monitoring progress on the effectiveness of addressing important local and regional issues.

Each community profile includes an existing land use map of the municipality using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) property class data. These maps identify the locations of major land uses in each community with some overlap mapping of adjoining communities which is provided for more context.

Side one of each profile generally includes: land use percentages; population, housing and income statistics; recent information on building permit activity, major local employers, school districts, and agricultural districts; and planning information on local plans and land use regulations. The second side of each community profile contains important information on issues, opportunities, goals and objectives that have been identified by the communities during the planning process. Information is provided according to the five major subject areas or elements of the Plan.

Each of the 3 cities, 12 towns and 5 villages of Niagara County has a community profile. Similar information is not readily available for the three Native American Tribes or for their respective sovereign lands that are located in the County. Available information is summarized below, but although limited, the lack of information should not preclude consideration of each of the tribes as important stakeholders in the present and future of the County.

Indian Nations

Three Native American Indian Nations exist within Niagara County. These include the Seneca Nation of Indians, the Tuscarora Nation, and the Tonawanda Band of Senecas. The three tribes are part of the Iroquois Confederacy and refer to themselves as the Haudenosaunee, the “People of the Longhouse”.

Seneca Nation of Indians

The Seneca are known as the “People of the Great Hill”. Their tribal lands were set aside in three reservations by the Canandaigua Treaty of 1794, all of which were located outside of Niagara County. These include:

- The Cattaraugus Indian Reservation in Cattaraugus, Erie and Chautauqua counties containing 21,618 acres
- The Allegany Indian Reservation in Cattaraugus County, originally 30,469 acres, but 10,000 acres were inundated by construction of the Kinzua Dam & Reservoir in 1964
- The Oil Springs Reservation, containing about one square mile (640 acres) along the Allegany/Cattaraugus counties border

Tribal membership in the Nation is approximately 6,400 with about 3,000 members living on reservation lands. The Seneca Nation follows an elective, constitutional form of government with Executive, Legislative (16 member Tribal Council) and Judicial branches, as first established in 1848.

Most recently, in 2002 the Nation and New York State entered into the Nation-State Gaming Compact that granted the Nation the exclusive right to build and operate three

Class III gaming facilities in Western NY. The Seneca Gaming Corporation, chartered in 2002, is a wholly owned tribally chartered corporation of the Seneca Nation of Indians. The Corporation, through its subsidiaries operates the Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel in Niagara Falls, NY as well as the Seneca Allegany Casino and Hotel in Salamanca, NY and the Seneca Buffalo Creek Casino in Buffalo, NY, scheduled for completion 2010. The 26-story Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel in Niagara Falls, NY has become Niagara County's largest private sector employer and is an important contributor to the economic base of the region.

Tuscarora Nation

The Tuscarora Nation encompasses an area of approximately 5,700 acres of land located about nine miles northeast of Niagara Falls, located external to the south central portion of the Town of Lewiston in western Niagara County. The New York State Power Authority's Niagara Power Project Reservoir, located just west of the Nation's Reservation was once part of the Nation's tribal lands.

Approximately 1200 members of the Tuscarora Nation reside within its Territory. The Tuscarora Nation governs under the traditional Council of Chiefs and Clan Mothers form of government. The Tuscarora Chiefs sit on the Haudenosaunee Grand Council. Chiefs from each of the Six (Iroquois) Nations meet regularly with the Onondaga, near Syracuse, New York with other members of the Haudenosaunee.

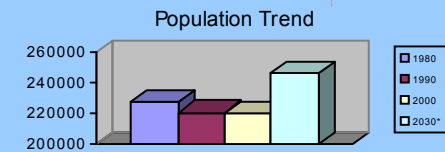
Tonawanda Band of Senecas

The Tonawanda Seneca territory consists of approximately 7,550 acres of land mostly located within Genesee County. Only a relative small portion of the Nation's Territory is within the extreme southeastern corner of Niagara County, just north of Tonawanda Creek.

The Nation has a population of about 1200 members, approximately 700 of which live within its Territory. The Tonawanda follow the traditional form of government in which Clan Mothers select the Chiefs, which sit on the Council of Chiefs as well as on the Haudenosaunee Grand Council. Chiefs from each of the Six Nations also meet regularly with the Onondaga with other members of the Haudenosaunee.

overview

population	219,846	New York State:
percent of State:	1.16 %	18.9 mill.
avg household size:	2.45	2.61
pop/sq mi:	417.2	346.4
median age	38	35.9
pct school age (5-17):	18.7 %	13%
pct 65 and older:	15.4 %	12.9%



*2025 Projection from GBNRTC; Data not available for villages, Reservations or hamlets.

housing and income

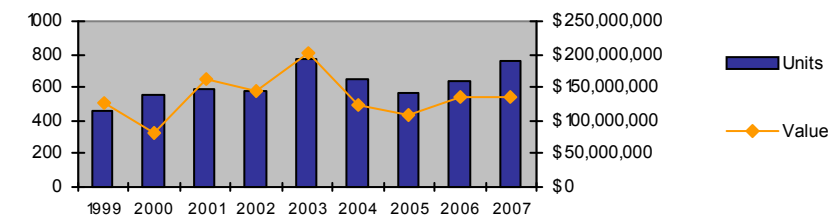
		New York State:
median HH income:	\$38,136	\$43,393
per capita income:	\$19,219	\$23,389
poverty rate:	10.59%	14.6%
percent of households with income from...		
<i>Social Security:</i>	31.7%	26.0%
<i>public assistance:</i>	4.0%	4.9%
<i>retirement:</i>	23.2%	16.9%
Housing units:	95,715	7.68 mill.
Percent Owner-Occ:	69.9	53%
Median year built:	1954	1954
Median home value:	\$80,900	\$148,700

Source: 2000 US Census

building permits

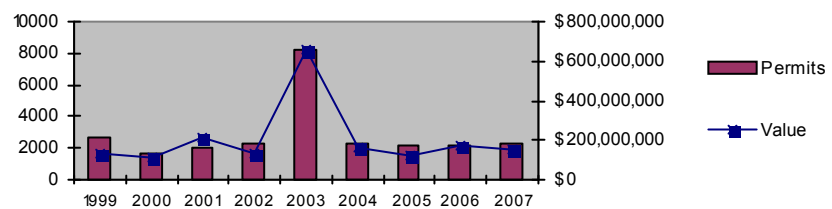
RESIDENTIAL

Units and Total Value of Permits



NON-RESIDENTIAL

Building Permits and Total Value



Source: Niagara County Dept. of Economic Development; data not available for villages or hamlets.

major employers

Employer	Employees
Niagara Falls Joint Air Reserve Station	2936
Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel	2861
Delphi Thermal	2600
Niagara County	1550
Niagara Falls City School District	1325
Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center	1200
North Tonawanda City School District	765
Fashion Outlets of Niagara Falls	1000
Lockport City School District	730
Niagara County Community College	713
Mount St. Mary's Hospital	700
Mount St. Mary's Hospital/Our Lady of Peace Nursing Home	700
First Niagara Bank	677
Niagara University	635

Source: Niaara County Center for Economic Development's "Industrial and Business Directory 2008".

land use

Use	Acres	Pct of Total
Agricultural	101280	43.00%
Commercial	8462	4.00%
Community Service	6726	3.00%
Industrial	5525	2.00%
Parks & Conservation	6684	3.00%
Public Service	5438	2.00%
Recreation	5026	2.00%
Residential	15606	7.00%
Unknown	28356	12.00%
Vacant Land	54150	23.00%

school districts

School District	Enrollment ('06-'07)	School District	Enrollment ('06-'07)
Niagara Falls City	7,551	Lewiston Porter Central	2,338
Lockport City	5,169	Newfane Central Schools	2,036
North Tonawanda City	4,353	Royalton Hartland Central	1,553
Niagara-Wheatfield Central	4,074	Wilson Central	1,428
Starpoint Central	2,822	Barker Central	1,097
		TOTAL	32,421

agricultural districts

Percent of County in Ag Districts: **55.7%**

District	Towns	Acres	
		1999*	2006**
<i>District 2</i>	Hartland, Roylton, Somerset	37,381	40,454
<i>District 4</i>	Hartland, Lockport, Newfane, Roylton	34,828	34,663
<i>District 6</i>	Cambria, Lewiston, Niagara, Pendleton, Wheatfield	22,283	24,076
<i>District 7</i>	Cambria, Lockport, Pendleton, Wheatfield, Wilson	17,449	18,067
<i>District 8</i>	Porter, Wilson	38,979	40,726
<i>District 9</i>	Roylton	25,186	30,667
	TOTAL	176,106	188,654

*Niagara County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2006)

****Cornell University Geospatial Information Respository (CUGIR, 2006)**

special districts

There are 92 special districts in Niagara County providing critical health, safety, and other services. Three of the largest are:

Niagara County Water District Serves 150,000+ residents

Niagara County Sewer District	Avg daily flow of 5 million gallons per day (MGD) with capacity for 14 MGD.
--------------------------------------	---

Niagara County Refuse Disposal District	Recycling and reuse rate of 5,000 tons/year since 1998; District includes 120 acres of landfills.
--	---

■ Agricultural

☒ Residential

☐ Vacant Land

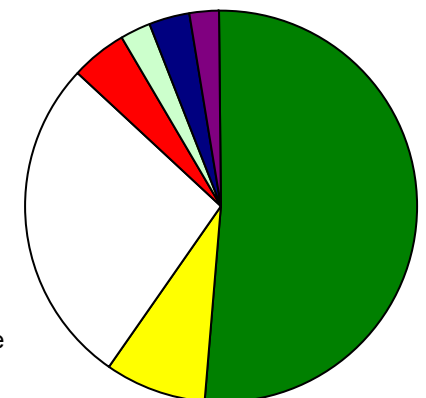
■ Commercial

Recreation

■ Community Service

■ Industrial

Land use at a glance



Note: Chart does not include "Unknown" or "Conservation" land uses.

land use and environment

economic development

county services and facilities

educational institutions

public health and safety

issues

LAND USE
•Preservation of farmland, agriculture and the character of rural communities
•Sprawl and the loss of open space and natural resources
•Preservation of the Niagara Escarpment and other natural habitats
•Lack of public transportation in rural areas
ENVIRONMENT
•Area's underutilized, vacant and contaminated lands
•Protection of water quality from pollution and sedimentation
•Drainage and erosion issues along streams and other waterways

•Need to encourage and expand rural businesses and agri-tourism and opportunities related to agricultural resources
•Must upgrade aging infrastructure and services to support economic development, including roads and utilities
•High taxes are a disincentive to economic development

•Sense of isolation in rural areas from the rest of the County and the need to be more involved in County-level decision-making
•General lack of services in rural areas, including bus service, and the distance to services in the cities
•General condition of County facilities including buildings, parks, and the need to maintain infrastructure

•Need more training in the latest technologies to include all segments of the County's population in educational programs such as Future Farmers of America
•Increasing school taxes even as the population of the County is declining
•Schools and job training need to stay ahead of local workforce needs and changes in technology

•Lack of coverage and response times in some areas by County Sheriff patrols
•Increasing demands on volunteers and emergency service providers
•Concern over needing more information at local levels in the event of an emergency situation that may alter transportation or evacuation routes
•Servicing the needs of a dispersed and aging population

assets and opportunities

LAND USE
•Local farming and the agricultural heritage of the area
•Local network of roads and highways
•Existing historic and natural assets such as the Erie Canal and the Niagara Escarpment
ENVIRONMENT
•Local natural areas, parklands, trails and water resources
•Lake Ontario, Erie Canal, and Niagara River waterfronts for recreation and tourism
•Wetlands, streams, floodplains and wildlife areas

•Cultural assets like the Erie Canal, local schools and local agriculture are vital to the local economy
•Low cost of living, including housing, can be a major factor in marketing the area's quality of life
•Local farming and tourism are key economic generators

•Need to identify opportunities for shared services and greater efficiencies in providing County and municipal services
•Great development potential of the Niagara Falls Airport and surrounding areas
•Present work being done with the County's brownfield redevelopment staff

•Explore more opportunities to link job training to local tourism, agriculture and wineries
•The quality of local education is good and improving with an abundance of professional educators
•BOCES is a major local asset in job training

•The abundance and professionalism of existing emergency providers and health care facilities in the County and their ability to work well with each other
•The abundance of fresh water
•Safety and security of communities due to the levels of protection from local police, sheriff, State police, Coast Guard and Border Patrol

Vision for Niagara County

Niagara County is a world class destination; home to natural wonders including Niagara Falls, the Niagara River, the Niagara Escarpment and Gorge, and Lake Ontario; a community steeped in the celebration of its beauty, culture, and man-made heritage like the Erie Canalway; and a place to see and share with others.

Niagara County is a center of national and international commerce; a place to locate and grow your business, find high quality employment, attend fine institutions of learning, learn a trade or hone your skills, and be part of a well-prepared and productive workforce.

Niagara County is a community that values its rich natural resources; a community working together to protect and restore natural resources, conserve important wildlife habitat, clean up contaminated lands, and ensure that our gift to future generations is a sustainable environment.

Niagara County is a great place to live and raise a family; a diverse community of historic cities, towns, and villages; from the uniqueness and vibrancy of our waterfront communities to the pastoral beauty and gentle lifestyles of our farming communities, Niagara County is a safe and healthy place to live, work, and play; a place of diverse housing choices, excellent schools, abundant recreation opportunities, and affordable living; and a community offering a high quality of life for all.

POPULATION

Municipality	1990	2000	2006	2030*
City of Niagara Falls	61,840	55,563	52,328	57,373
City of North Tonawanda	34,989	33,262	31,770	34,730
Town of Niagara	9,880	8,978	8,570	9,887
Town of Wheatfield	11,123	14,089	16,100	20,507
SUB-REGION	117,834	111,919	108,768	122,507

*2030 Projections from GBNRTC; only available for Cities and Towns.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Agricultural Districts by Town		
Town Name	Acreage	Percent of Town
Niagara	592	10%
Wheatfield	6012	33%
TOTAL	6,604	27%



EDUCATION

Lewiston Porter Central	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007
Avg. Class Size	19	20	n/a
K-12 Teachers	246	270	206
K-12 Capacity	3320	3320	2650
K-12 Enrollment	2884	2625	2338
Expenditures / Pupil	\$ 14,380.00		
Niagara Wheatfield SD	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007
Avg. Class Size	19	18	n/a
K-12 Teachers	390	380	321
K-12 Capacity	6725	6725	3950
K-12 Enrollment	4037	4106	4074
Expenditures / Pupil	\$ 13,496.00		
Wilson Central	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007
Avg. Class Size	20	21	n/a
K-12 Teachers	127	129	143
K-12 Capacity	n/a	1800	3538
K-12 Enrollment	1481	1498	1428
Expenditures / Pupil	\$ 13,370.00		

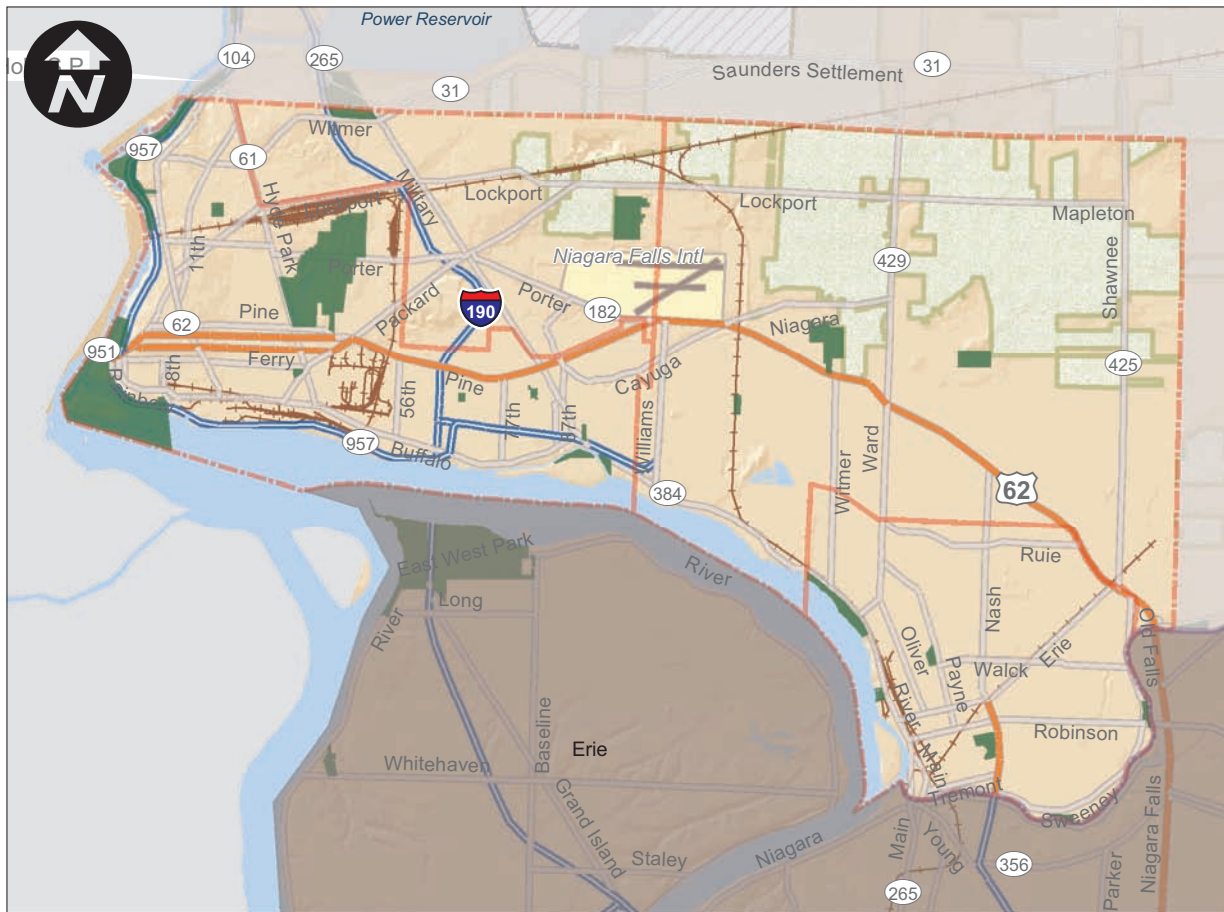
LARGEST EMPLOYERS

Employer	# of Employees (Range)
DuPont Company	451 - 750
Washington Mills Electro Minerals Corporation	451 - 750
Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company	251 - 450
Occidental Chemical Corporation	251 - 450
Saint Gobain Structural Ceramics	251 - 450
Smurfit - Stone Container Corp.	251 - 450
Unifrax Corporation	251 - 450
Unifrax Corporation	251 - 450
Moore North America	101 - 250
National Vacuum	101 - 250
Niagara Sample Books	101 - 250
Norampac Industries, Inc.	101 - 250
Nuttall Gear/DeLroyd	101 - 250
Praxair, Inc.	101 - 250
Sherwood Valve	101 - 250
Treibacher Schleifmittel North America, Inc.	101 - 250
Vishay Thin Films	101 - 250

Source: Niagara County Center for Economic Development, Industrial and Business Directory 2008

NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPPER RIVER COMMUNITIES

...Cities of Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda, Towns of Niagara and Wheatfield.



Legend

Hospital

Community Boundaries

- Niagara
- Niagara Falls
- North Tonawanda
- Wheatfield
- Public Lands
- Agricultural Districts
- Villages

NORTH TONAWANDA



This subregion includes the two well-established urban centers of Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda, as well as the suburban towns of Niagara and Wheatfield. Niagara Falls International Airport is a center of military, public and private-sector reinvestment and redevelopment. Infill development and brownfield redevelopment are supported by established public infrastructure (roads, sewer, water) and services (government, education, medical). Emphasis should be placed on public transit and multi-modal transportation facilities, mixed-use development, public access to waterfronts and housing diversity. New development and redevelopment should be redirected to these established centers.



building permits

RESIDENTIAL

Units and Total Value of Permits

NON-RESIDENTIAL

Building Permits and Total Value

120

100

80

60

40

20

0

1999

2000

2001

2002

2003

2004

2005

2006

2007

Units

Value

2500

2000

1500

1000

500

0

1999

2000

2001

2002

2003

2004

2005

2006

2007

Permits

Value

Source: Niagara County Dept. of Economic Development; data not available for villages or hamlets.

school districts

Lewiston-Porter Central School District

Niagara Wheatfield Central School District

Niagara Falls City School District

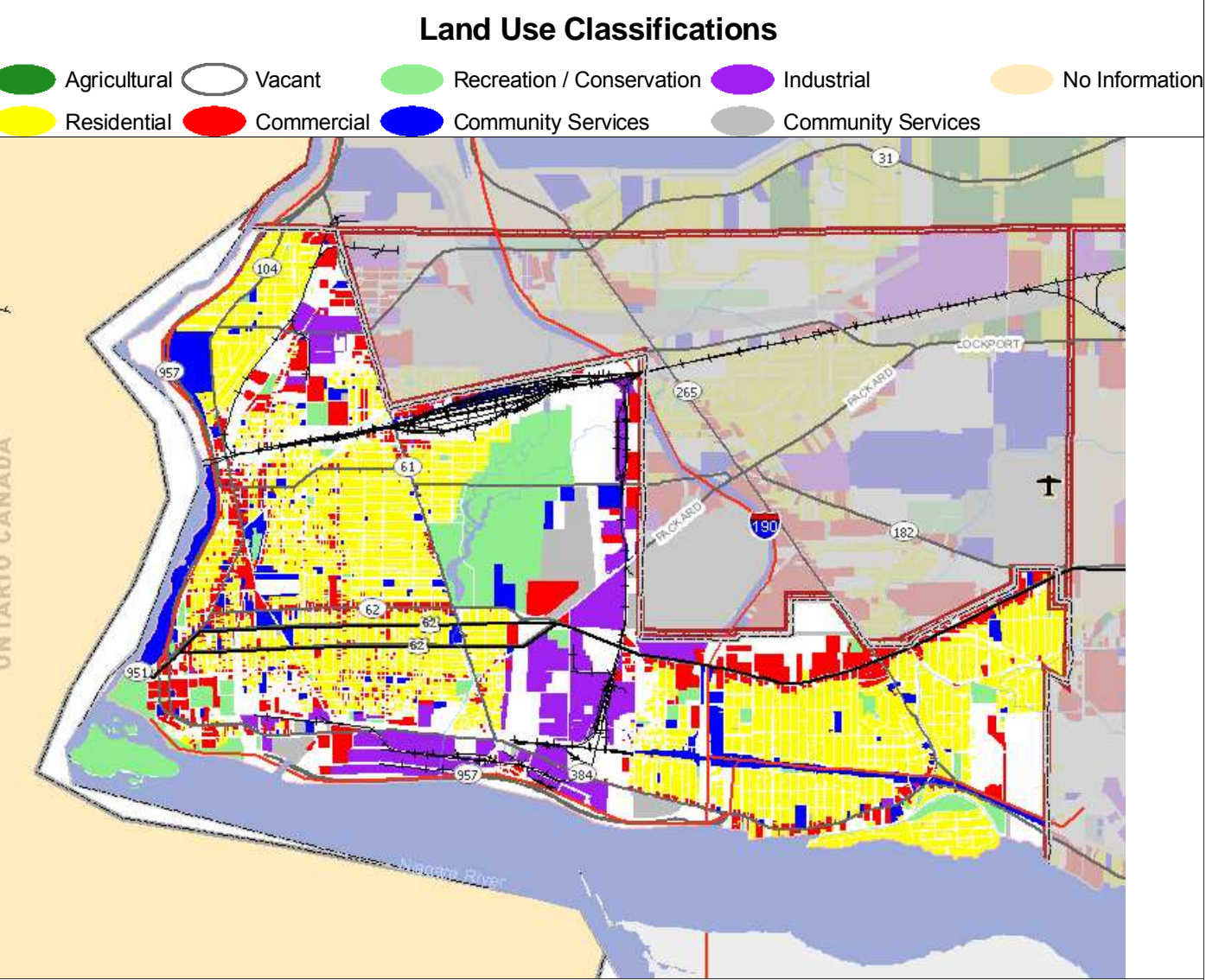
agricultural districts

Percent of Municipality in Ag Districts:

0%

planning context

	Adopted?	Date (Orig.)	Date (Update)
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:	Y	1992	Draft - 2004
ZONING TEXT:	Y	No info. provided	1998
ZONING MAP:	Y	No info. provided	No info. provid
LWRP:	Y	Not adopted	2004
SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS:	N	N/A	N/A
CELL TOWER REGULATIONS ON FILE WITH COUNTY?	Y		
CELL TOWER REGS DATE:	2007		
geographic information systems (GIS)			
USING GIS FOR ZONING / PLANNING? (Y/N)	Y		
ELECTRONIC ZONING? (Y/N)		Y	



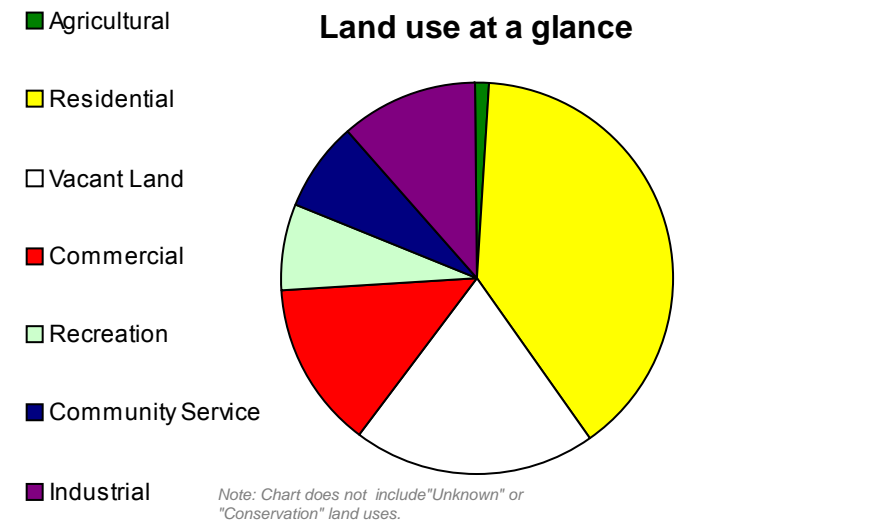
major employers

Employer	Employees
Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel	2861
Niagara Falls City School District	1325
Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center	1200
DuPont Company	451 - 750
Washington Mills Electro Minerals Corporation	451 - 750
Occidental Chemical Corporation	275
Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company	251 - 450
Saint Gobain Structural Ceramics	251 - 450
St Gobian Structural Ceramics	186
Olin Corporation	170
Ferro Electronic Minerals	160
Stevenson Environmental Services	150
Moore North America	101 - 250

Source: Niaara County Center for Economic Development's "Industrial and Business Directory 2008".

land use

Use	Acres	Pct of Total
Commercial	799.53	11.78%
Community Service	440.19	6.48%
Industrial	655.41	9.65%
Parks & Conservation	400.3	5.90%
Public Service	222.18	3.27%
Recreation	410.94	6.05%
Residential	2251.49	33.16%
Unknown	465.82	6.86%
Vacant Land	1143.600	16.84%



Niagara Communities Survey

Following are this community's responses to a survey of Niagara County communities. The complete results of this survey are available from Niagara County. Additional background on each subject area is included below the survey results (in italics). This additional information was provided by the members of the Stakeholders Steering Committee during the planning process.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use

Over the past four decades, the City of Niagara Falls has suffered from economic and industrial decline, and serious employment and population loss. As well, a number of misguided renewal initiatives that removed residential and commercial stock in the heart of the city have fragmented the downtown core and the communities that traditionally supported it. Today, many urban neighborhoods are in decay, large areas of the city's industrial corridors are abandoned, and many residents, community and business leaders have lost their sense of pride in their city. In fact, many former residents have chosen to move out of Niagara Falls.

STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):

- Absentee landlords
- LaSalle Expressway bike path - across communities
- Need discussion over LaSalle Expressway and future development
- All transportation-related issues, including condition of streets and sidewalks and clearing snow from streets for senior citizens
- Brownfields that span municipal lines
- Brownfields Opportunity Area adjacent to Niagara Falls boundary
- Wal-Mart relocation to Niagara Falls High School site
- Robert Moses Parkway Project in Downtown Niagara Falls

environment

The City of Niagara Falls is a fully developed city. It was nearly so over fifty years ago. Most of the physical environmental changes to the natural environment were well established by the first quarter of the last century. Not withstanding the major natural features of the City are the Niagara River and its tributaries, Niagara Falls, and the Niagara Gorge, including as defined by the State Parkland and lands in immediate proximity thereto. There is accessibility to these resources but these are very limited. There is no doubt that these resources are important to the life of the City—these are important icons of nature to the nation and to the world.

economic development

1. Decline of industry and manufacturing
2. High unemployment
3. Declining and aging population
4. Competitive suburban growth and decline of the core city

county services and facilities

1. County cuts in social services and programs effecting the largest number and concentration of low-income residents, particularly in the areas of housing and job training.

2. Lack of cooperation in consolidating service infrastructure and facilities, including utilities

3. The lack of restraint in allowing the expansion of water and sewer utilities, and service areas.

educational institutions

1. Increased student achievement beginning in Universal PreKindergarten and sustained through Senior year is the single most important issue for the District.
2. Many families in Niagara Falls are unable to provide a quality of life for their children such that they are well-fed, adequately clothed, suitably sheltered, and cared for medically. Students living in poverty sometimes bring greater needs to the classroom and struggle academically as a result.
3. Financial stability is a key concern. The tax base in Niagara Falls continues to diminish while students' needs increase. Remaining residents have no ability to pay greater taxes.

public health and safety

1. Dealing with a lack of proper funding, having the latest technology and crime fighting/crime solving equipment available for our personnel is always a problem.
2. With a higher than normal number of either vacant or dilapidated housing units. The lack of sufficient locks, doors, motion detectors and burglar alarms tend to increase our number of burglaries and larcenies.
3. Staffing
4. Equipment age and reliability
5. Interoperable communications

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

land use

While any of the following listed 'opportunities and economic drivers' have significant potential to improve the quality of life within Niagara Falls, it is the creation of employment and training opportunities that will have the most immediate impact on the lives of residents now and in the future. Opportunities and economic drivers: Green-Economy Commerce, Tourism, Arts and Culture, Regional Health Care, Education / Employment Training, Primary Commercial Nodes and Corridors, Heritage Resource Protection.

STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):

- Niagara Falls
- Upper & Lower River
- Cayuga Creek restoration – public access

environment

The most significant opportunities would be the transformation of the Niagara River waterfront into the Niagara River Greenway and National Heritage Corridor and its physical connections to existing park assets as well as its programmatic integration into the fabric of the community. (See the Niagara River Greenway Vision.)

economic development

1. Promote and support locally owned and controlled small businesses.
2. Coordinate the City's land use and zoning policies with the City's economic development vision.
3. Pursue and support programs, institutions and activities aimed at the promotion and development of retraining programs, facilities and satellite facilities within key growth sectors.
4. Retain and attract a broader population to Niagara Falls, including young families and young adults.

county services and facilities

Social services and programs being provided at the neighborhood level effecting the largest number and concentration of low-income residents.

educational institutions

1. The Niagara Falls City School District is committed to excellence and equity for all students, regardless of socioeconomic strata or any other consideration. Also, we work to provide access to 21st Century technology.
2. In our community, students are safest when they are in school, and many receive their best or only meal at school. Also, adult supervision in a caring environment.
3. The Niagara Falls City School District is committed to providing access to school as much as possible, and to keep the doors open after school and through summer programming.

public health and safety

1. Economic development helps turn stagnant streets into vibrant neighborhoods.
2. Intelligence gathering and analytical study of crime.
3. Since the inception of the Seneca Niagara Casinc and the disbursement of the City's share of those funds, the N.F.P.D. has been able to improve our equipment and infrastructure.
4. Cooperation between LE and the FD
5. Community support
6. Lack of significant events (could also be a detriment as the odds will catch up with us)

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use

It is the City's policy to ensure that the City's vision for development is supported by appropriate land use policies and regulations, and that the City pursue a fine-grained, mixed use approach to land use that respects the existing character of healthy, stable neighborhoods, while allowing the City to grow and revitalize.

environment

t is the City's policy to preserve, conserve, and recognize the environmental and natural resources of the City in a manner that contributes to the City's overall quality of life, enhances public health, and fosters appropriate development.

economic development

It is the City's policy to ensure that the City's economy is comprised of and supported by a diverse mixture of businesses and that the City's land use, zoning and development policies are supportive of economic growth, including the development and expansion of the tourism industry, cultural resources and the health care sector.

county services and facilities

Provide resources in the area of housing assistance, and job training for residents.

educational institutions

Provide additional resources to NCCC generally and for job training programs specifically

public health

Juvenile drop-out and drug avoidance programs focusing on at-risk populations, and/or a Youth Conservation Program, for low-income youth

public safety

There are 7 strategic goals for the N.F.P.D. in 2009. They are too lengthy to repeat here but cover everything from crime reduction and prevention, arrests and investigations, traffic management, working with the community, and finally homeland security and emergency disaster plans.

Niagara Communities Survey

Following are this community's responses to a survey of Niagara County communities. The complete results of this survey are available from Niagara County. Additional background on each subject area is included below the survey results (in italics). This additional information was provided by the members of the Stakeholders Steering Committee during the planning process.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div><div>1. The reuse and remediation of brownfields.</div><div>2. Greater involvement in regional transportation systems, from trails to public transportation corridors</div><div>3. Best and highest use for our waterfront, that is compatible with the uses of neighboring communities.</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</div><div>•Gratwick - Riverside Park: now municipally owned</div><div>•Public-Private Partnerships and Relationships (Marina)</div><div>•Defined Gateways to City and Downtown</div><div>•Walkability and Connectivity: Rail beds as options</div><div>•Wetlands delineation is an issue</div><div>•Water quality / sediment contamination / contamination from industrial dumps, sewers, stormwater</div><div>•Out of date LWRP: Waterfront and Niagara River / Tonawanda Creek – restoration areas needed</div><div>•Brownfields – huge challenge</div><div>-Redevelopment and cleanup, accurate info.</div><div>-Transition from waterfront areas</div><div>-Landfills in general “Mt. Garbage”</div><div>•Air quality related to new development – potential biofuels plant proposed for Wheatfield</div><div>-Smokestack concerns</div></div>	<div><div>1. Making the waterfront more accessible and friendly to all ages</div><div>2. Improving the trail systems and connectivity for pedestrians and other recreational travelers</div><div>3. Cleanup of former industrial sites</div></div>	<div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>Downtown revitalization</div><div>-Preservation based</div><div>-Mixed-use</div><div>Need to harness and combine efforts of cultural resources as tourist draw and economic drivers</div><div>Brownfields! Need incentives like BOA/BCP to leverage investment</div><div>Lower Tax Base</div><div>Maximize waterfront as economic draw & driver</div></div>	<div><div>1. Aging infrastructure (roads)</div></div>	<div><div>1. Maximizing the use of job training resources available</div><div>2. Increasing partnerships between the City and the School District</div><div>3. Planning for the highest and best use of school district lands and properties.</div></div>	<div><div>1. DeGraff's future!</div><div>2. Keeping DeGraff as a full service health care facility.</div></div>	

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

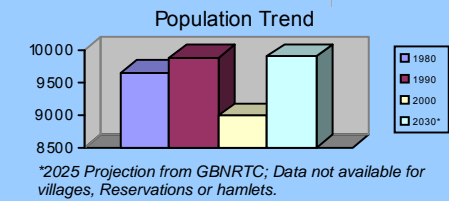
land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div><div>1. Regional location</div><div>2. Downtown revitalization</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</div><div>•Redevelop brownfields</div><div>•Improve pedestrian connections and access to waterfront</div><div>•Cluster commercial activities in appropriate areas, NOT machine shops in residential areas</div><div>•Waterfront</div><div>•Preservation of open space – wildlife habitat</div><div>•Gratwick Park future use</div><div>•Archeological resources</div><div>•Wetlands preservation for better flood control</div></div>	<div><div>1. Waterfront</div></div>	<div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>Redevelop brownfields</div><div>Increase critical mass in downtown</div><div>Cluster commercial and industrial activities in appropriate areas.</div></div>	<div><div>1. County economic development is a great coordinator for local and regional efforts.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Working with the County to bring in job training opportunities and continuing education to an aging and evolving population.</div></div>	<div><div>1. DeGraff</div></div>	

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div><div>Encourage (re)development in former industrial areas:</div><div>Remediation</div><div>Re-zoning (where appropriate)</div><div>Local and regional incentives</div></div>				<div><div>Public safety is currently confidence inspiring and efficient.</div></div>		

overview

population	8,978	219,846
percent of County:	4.1 %	
avg household size:	2.49	2.45
pop/sq mi:	988.2	417.2
median age	39	38.2
pct school age (5-17):	18.3 %	18.7%
pct 65 and older:	14.6 %	15.4%



housing and income

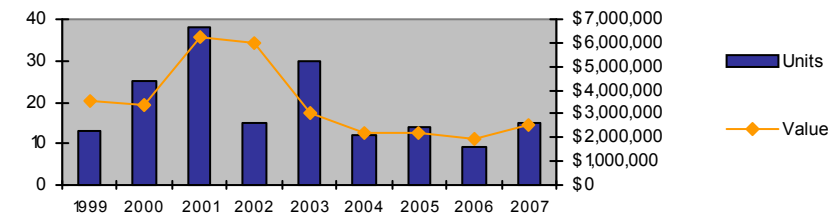
median HH income:	\$37,327	\$38,136
per capita income:	\$17,500	\$19,219
poverty rate:	9.31%	10.59%
percent of households with income from...		
<i>Social Security:</i>	35.5%	31.75%
<i>public assistance:</i>	4.4%	3.98%
<i>retirement:</i>	26.4%	23.2%
Housing units:	3,880	95,715
Percent Owner-Occ:	75.6	69.9%
Median year built:	1964	1954
Median home value:	\$74,500	\$80,900

Source: 2000 US Census

building permits

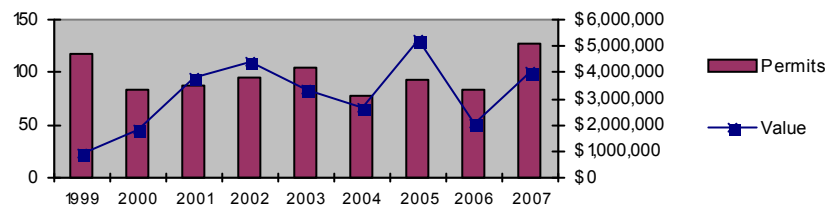
RESIDENTIAL

Units and Total Value of Permits



NON-RESIDENTIAL

Building Permits and Total Value



Source: Niagara County Dept. of Economic Development; data not available for villages or hamlets.

major employers

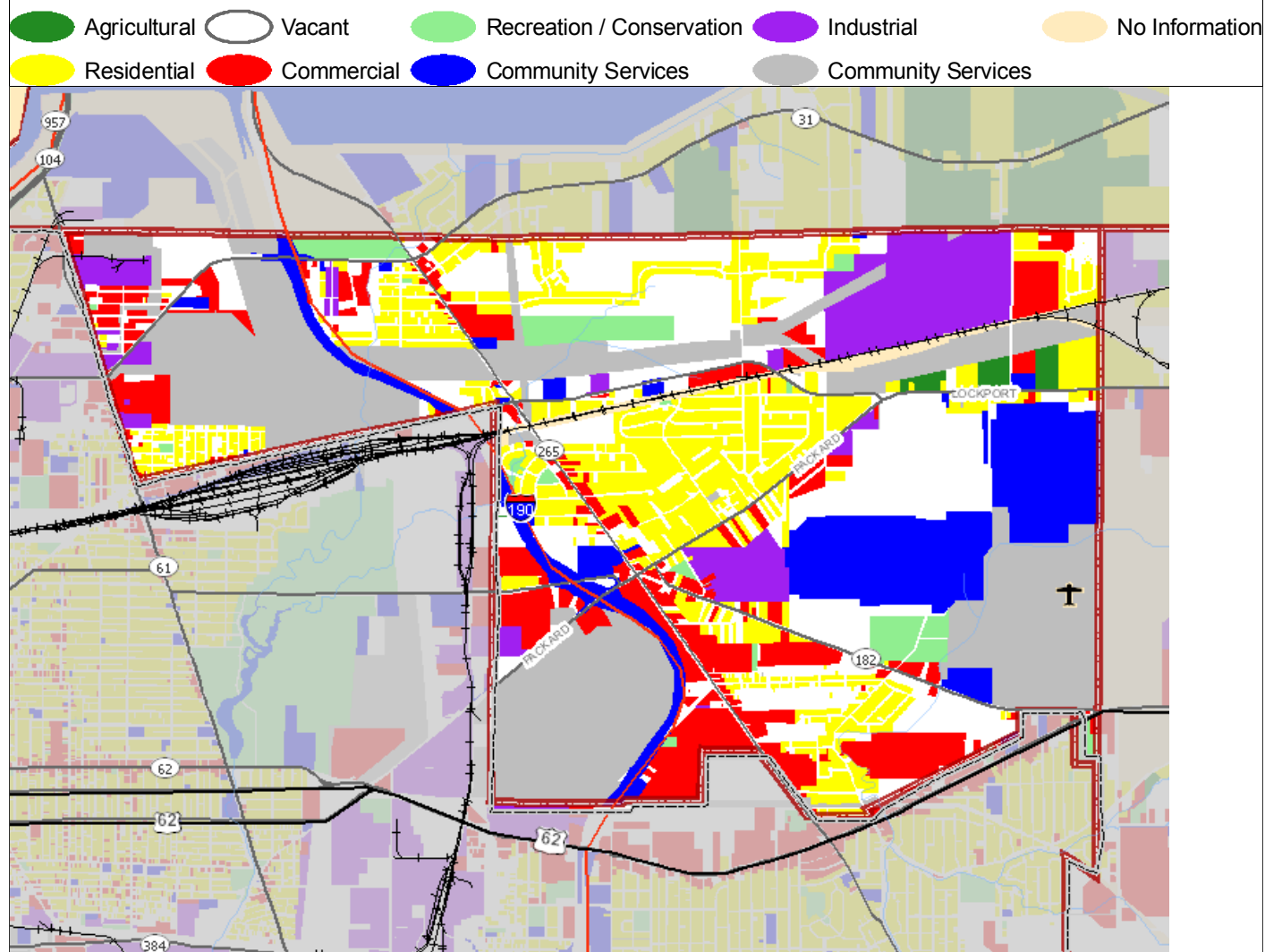
Employer	Employees
Niagara Falls Joint Air Reserve Station	2936
Fashion Outlets of Niagara Falls	1000
Ferro Electronic Minerals	160
Stevenson Environmental Services	151
Electro Mech Systems Group, Inc	51 - 100
Stollberg, Inc.	51 - 100
Tam Ceramics Inc.	51 - 100
Calato, J.D. Manufacturing Co., Inc.	26 - 50
Cooper Sign Company, Inc	26 - 50
Helmel Engineering Products	26 - 50
Niagara Thermal Products, LLC	26 - 50
North American Hoganas, Inc.	26 - 50
Airport Auto Wrecking	1 - 25
American Glass & Mirror Co., Inc.	1 - 25

Source: Niaara County Center for Economic Development's "Industrial and Business Directory 2008".

land use

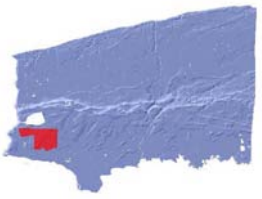
Use	Acres	Pct of Total
Agricultural	38.79	1.01%
Commercial	573.67	14.93%
Community Service	356.35	9.28%
Industrial	336.9	8.77%
Public Service	571.79	14.88%
Recreation	74.59	1.94%
Residential	856.4700	22.29%
Unknown	3.44	0.09%
Vacant Land	971.37	25.28%

Land Use Classifications



school districts

Lewiston-Porter Central School District
Niagara Wheatfield Central School District
Niagara Falls City School District



agricultural districts

Percent of Municipality in Ag Districts: **10%**

planning context

	Adopted?	Date (Orig.)	Date (Update)
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:	Y	1939	1972
ZONING TEXT:	Y	2001	2008
ZONING MAP:	Y	No info. provided	2006
LWRP:	N/A	N/A	N/A
SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS:	Y	1999	2000

CELL TOWER REGULATIONS ON FILE WITH COUNTY? Y

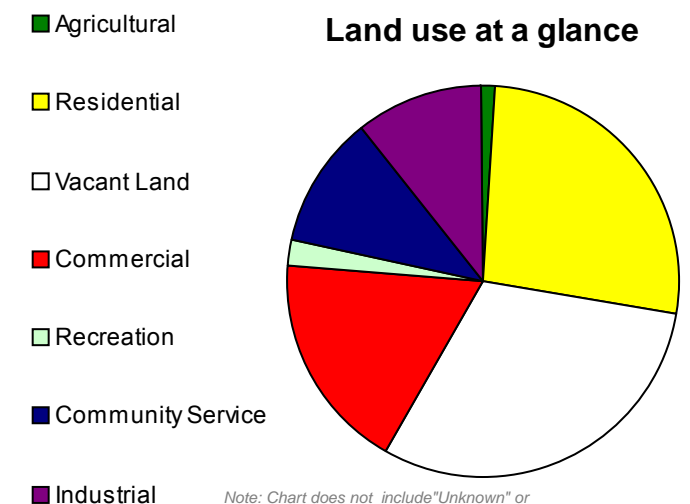
CELL TOWER REGS DATE:	N/A
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geographic information systems (GIS)

USING GIS FOR ZONING / PLANNING? (Y/N)	N
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ELECTRONIC ZONING? (Y/N)	N/A
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Land use at a glance



Note: Chart does not include "Unknown" or "Conservation" land uses.

Niagara Communities Survey

Following are this community's responses to a survey of Niagara County communities. The complete results of this survey are available from Niagara County. Additional background on each subject area is included below the survey results (in italics). This additional information was provided by the members of the Stakeholders Steering Committee during the planning process.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. RESIDENTIAL: Less residential area available for new construction. Try to determine best use of current vacant land that would benefit community.</div> <div>2. BUSINESS: Seek different developers for business area. Excellent access to interstate and rail transportation.</div> <div>3. INDUSTRY: Transportation feature can be developed to expand local industry.</div>	<div>1. RESIDENTIAL: Continue to preserve natural environment as much as possible (i.e., Town Park).</div> <div>2. BUSINESS: Encourage developers to maintain green spaces and bring into the area businesses that will not harm our environment.</div> <div>3. INDUSTRY: Develop more industrial area/parks for better concentration and encourage maintaining as much green space as possible.</div>	<div>1. Town is limited to development of green space.</div> <div>2. Military Road has been the main development emphasis, shaping areas as well as medical offices and business/agencies.</div> <div>3. Important to find proper tenants for Reserve Base when military leaves.</div>	<div>1. Improvement and/or repair of any county roads and bridges.</div> <div>2. Making County services more available to Town residents (young and old residents)</div>	<div>1. Maintaining the quality of education in the N-W School District without a substantial increase in taxes.</div> <div>2. Lack of a satellite educational opportunity that could be established in one of the vacant storefronts in the Town.</div> <div>3. Provide better access to workplace development programs fro residents. Schedule outreach services on a weekly basis in Town area.</div>	<div>1. A program for seniors of the Town to become better informed of available County and not-for-profit services</div> <div>2. A better system to provide ambulatory services for all areas of the Town</div> <div>3. Ability to expand nutrition program provided currently at the Town Community Center. Transportation for seniors is an ongoing issues. Seniors need good nutrition and socialization on a regular basis.</div>	<div>1. The potential of a hazardous incident that requires a hazard response procedure.</div> <div>2. The potential of an air/aviation incident.</div>

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. RESIDENTIAL: Highly regarded school district is an asset to the Town. Community Center/Park current and future development is aspiration.</div> <div>2. BUSINESS: Ease of public transportation; NFTA location, bring shoppers to Outlet. Easy access for shoppers and Canadians. New businesses will benefit.</div> <div>3. INDUSTRY: Easy access for transporting goods to area industrial parks, etc.</div>	<div>1. RESIDENTIAL: Town of Niagara Community Park - protecting and enhancing a large green space for use by community. Plans to provide all-year-round (12 mo) recreation for residents.</div>	<div>1. Military Road business district and access to I-90</div> <div>2. "Medical corridor" developing on northern part of Military Road.</div> <div>3. Tenants for US Reserve Base can bring employment to area.</div>	<div>1. Close proximity to opportunities offered at County parks.</div> <div>2. Availability of County water and sewer systems.</div>	<div>1. A highly regarded school district that is a draw for residential development</div> <div>2. Potential for satellite educational opportunity.</div>	<div>1. A Town Park Activity building capable of hosting county presentations for available services to residents.</div> <div>2. A good road network to access healthcare facilities.</div>	<div>1. Cooperation of local industries that manufacture hazardous material, transported through the Town, works with Town to establish a hazardous response procedure.</div> <div>2. Cooperation with the air base that allows their special response equipment to be used during an appropriate emergency.</div> <div>3. Cooperation of neighboring fire districts to share equipment during an emergency.</div>

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
	<div>Complete plans for Town Park and maintain Maintain BF landfill and stone quarry when all excavation has been completed and both are closed.</div>					

Page 13
Chapter IV

	Adopted?	Date (Orig.)	Date (Update)
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:	Y	No info. provided	2004
ZONING TEXT:	Y	1988	2003
ZONING MAP:	Y	No info. provided	2004
LWRP:	N	N/A	N/A
SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS:	Y	1995	2004
CELL TOWER REGULATIONS ON FILE WITH COUNTY? Y			
CELL TOWER REGS DATE:		2004	
geographic information systems (GIS)			
USING GIS FOR ZONING / PLANNING? (Y/N) Y			
ELECTRONIC ZONING? (Y/N)		Y	

Niagara Communities Survey

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What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<p>1. We have a shortage of East/West roads. There is also a possible issue facing North/South roads => waiting time at intersections.</p> <p>2. Major economic impact (Oz project) may have significant impact on local roads. Setbacks should be increased to plan for future expansion of Niagara Falls Blvd.</p> <p>3. Increasing commercial uses along commercial corridor.</p> <p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•102nd Street Landfill - covers waterfront•Change of open space to suburban and resulting increase in infrastructure (sewer, etc.)•House construction•Oz Park - Potential; RVs & Campers•Water Quality•Transition dense to less dense development has effects on character•Need for mixed-use development in hamlets•Buffers needed along streams and floodplains to restrict the encroachment of development•Water quality issues related to stormwater drainage / sewer infrastructure from new development•Bus service expansion	<p>1. Preservation of NYS and Federal wetlands.</p> <p>2. Revisiting berm requirements.</p> <p>3. Preventing government entities expansion of floodplains.</p> <p>4. Improving Town drainage, the town is flat.</p>	<p>1. Commercial development to revisit zoning along major routes coming into the Town, especially along Niagara Falls Blvd.</p> <p>2. Attracting commercial and industrial parks => need regional economic development coordinated effort.</p> <p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Oz Park•Very little diversity in housing•Transportation•Bringing in / attracting new businesses	<p>1. Oppenheim park should be better maintained. The park could also be upgraded.</p> <p>2. Emergency communication system.</p> <p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Aging populationUtilizing Sheriff's Dept.County park <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">County roadsMore Sheriff's DeputiesCounty Park - on Niagara Falls Boulevard	<p>Niagara Wheatfield Central School is almost at capacity.</p> <p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <p>Niagara-Wheatfield elementary schools are almost at capacity. The Junior/Senior High has passed capacity. People are still coming into the area and more classrooms are needed, especially at the elementary school level.</p> <p>Wheatfield could use a library.</p>	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Public Health & Safety):</p> <p>SAFETY ISSUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Police presence: Constables & one Sheriff's Deputy patrol area.-Fire Dept.: winter weather and accessibility issues (specifically, the prevalence of cul-de-sacs and dead end streets in residential areas) present fire-fighting challenges.-Snow removal-Crime rate is low, but the population is growing-There is some talk about rats-Insufficient north-south roads-Development of land around the airport - the military may use the land, curtailing Town planning in this area.-Preserve farmland <p>HEALTH ISSUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-large percentage of older adults. The Town has no hospital but there are many medical offices.-No guidance in creating an emergency plan for the Town.	

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. If Oz project comes to fruition, the project will alter the Town of Wheatfield forever.</div> <div>2. Commercial Development contiguous to the Airport.</div>	<div>1. Niagara River</div> <div>2. Bull Creek, Cayuga Creek</div> <div>3. Bergholz Creek, Sawyer Creek</div>	<div>1. Airport, waterfront, railroads</div> <div>2. Industrial parks</div> <div>3. Proximity to thruways</div>	<div>If Oppenheim were maintained, the park could be a major asset.</div> <div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT: Development of recreation areas - both active and passive Preserve and improve green space Implementation of Homeland Security measures Improvement of State/County communication support</div>	<div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT: Senior citizens educational programs Strengthen relationship between local school districts Merge region's school districts</div>	<div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Public Health & Safety): -Crime rate has been low, historically - sufficient for constables and one Sheriff's Deputy. -Many medical offices, including physical therapists, dentists, etc. -Emergency planning Commission re: Homeland Security -ID emergency housing facilities -Protection of water supply -People movers for seniors</div>	

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>Preserving farmland => Comprehensive Plan Task Force is working toward, possibly, PDRs and TDRs.</div> <div>Oz => the Task force is beginning to plan for the possibility of a large scale theme park.</div>	<div>Preserving greenspace and recreation space</div>	<div>Get organized.</div> <div>Have some goals and objectives.</div>				

POPULATION

Community	Population			
	1990	2000	2006	2030*
Lewiston Town	15453	16257	16712	19429
Porter Town	7110	6920	6797	7417
Tuscarora Reservation	772	1138	1088	n/a
Lewiston Village	3048	2781	2662	n/a
Youngstown Village	2075	1957	1891	n/a
Ransomville Hamlet	1542	1488	n/a	n/a

*2030 Projections from GBNRTC; only available for Towns.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Agricultural Districts by Town			
Name	Acreage	Percent of Town	
Porter	12,586	59%	
Lewiston	9,865	31%	
TOTAL	22,451	42%	



EDUCATION

Lewiston Porter Central			
	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007
Avg. Class Size	19	20	n/a
K-12 Teachers	248	270	269
K-12 Capacity	3320	3320	285
K-12 Enrollment	2884	2825	233
Expenditures / Pupil	\$ 14,380.00		
Niagara Wheatfield Central			
	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007
Avg. Class Size	19	18	n/a
K-12 Teachers	380	380	32
K-12 Capacity	6725	6725	395
K-12 Enrollment	4631	4108	407
Expenditures / Pupil	\$ 13,496.00		

LARGEST EMPLOYERS

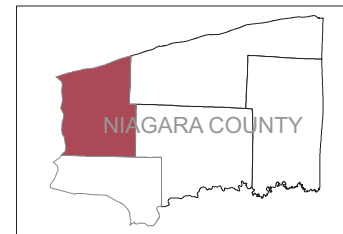
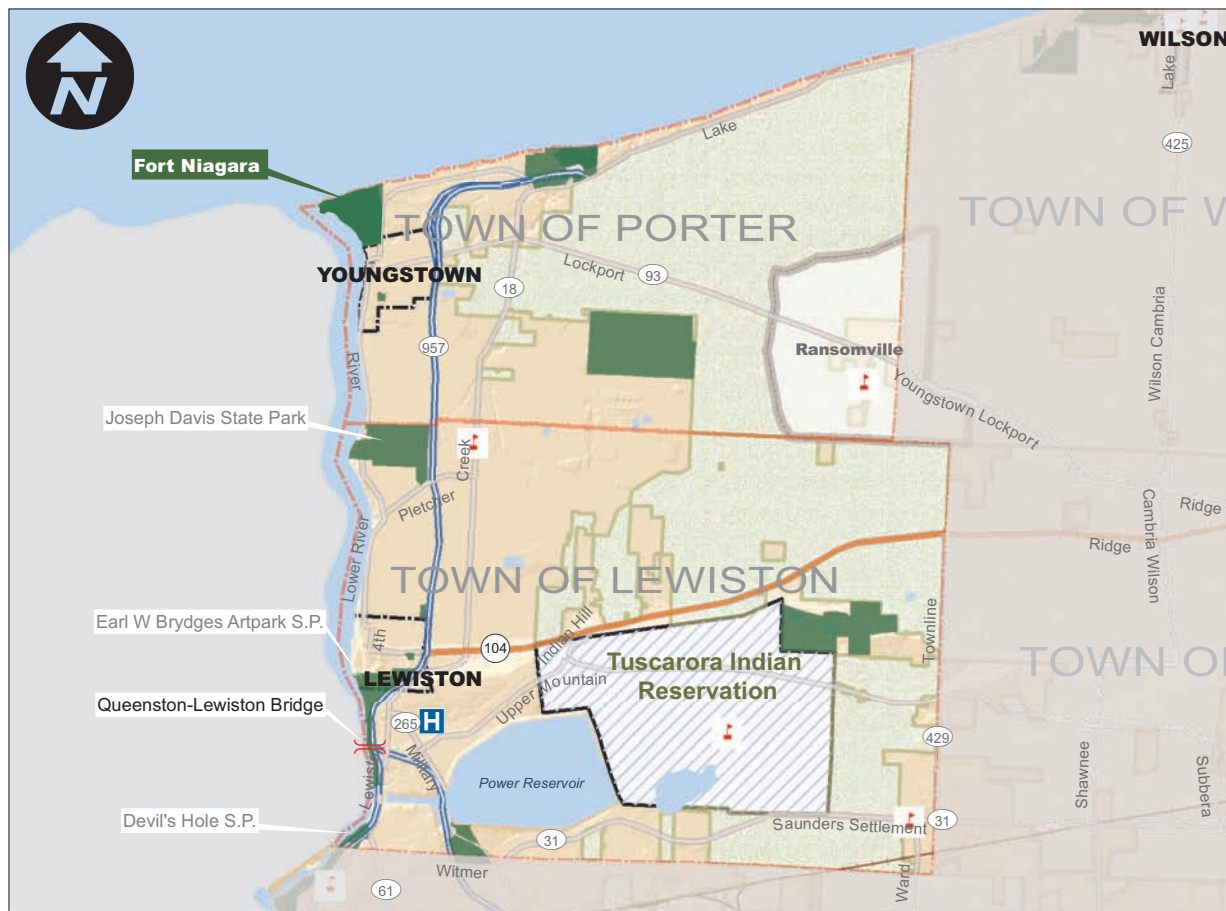
Employer	# of Employees (Range)
Tuskegee Krafts	451 - 750
Waste Management, Inc.	101 - 250
Modern Disposal Services, Inc. Modern Landfill, Inc.	26 - 50
Waste Technology Services	26 - 50
D. F. Collins Lumber, Inc.	1 - 25
Edwin Mellen Press	1 - 25
H2 Gro, LLC	1 - 25
J.F. Machining Co., Inc.	1 - 25
Ken Wendt's Propane Gas Service, Inc.	1 - 25
Lewny Tools	1 - 25
Unit Step, Gamble, Inc.	1 - 25

Source: Niagara County Center for Economic Development, Industrial and Business Directory 2008



NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LOWER RIVER COMMUNITIES

...Hamlet of Ransomville, Villages of Youngstown and Lewiston, Tuscarora Reservation, Towns of Porter and Lewiston.



Legend

- Hospital
- International Crossing
- Schools
- Public Lands

Community Boundaries

- Lewiston
- Porter
- Ransomville
- Agricultural Districts
- Villages
- Tuscarora Reservation



The communities within this sub-region are transitional areas between the urban centers to the south and the rural and lakefront communities to the east. Centers of Riverfront tourism and business exist within and near the villages of Lewiston and Youngstown. The uniqueness of these communities must be protected as valuable centers of cultural resources and small-scale commerce and business. Residential development should be encouraged within the mixed-use centers and their peripheries. Conservation subdivisions and development around Ransomville should be encouraged, as opposed to linear forms of low-density development along local roads.

Niagara Communities Survey

Following are this community's responses to a survey of Niagara County communities. The complete results of this survey are available from Niagara County. Additional background on each subject area is included below the survey results (in italics). This additional information was provided by the members of the Stakeholders Steering Committee during the planning process.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div><div>1. Current Master Plan consistent with Town Code.</div><div>2. Attract & encourage commercial tax base within existing business zones.</div><div>3. Continue to encourage use of designated bike paths and walking trails.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Protect open areas, woodland, wildlife habitats & water courses from encroachment of development.</div><div>2. Controlled development riverfront & gorge & escarpment areas.</div><div>3. Insure that mining within the Town is controlled for the safety of the Town and aesthetics of our community.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Distance from an airport maybe a challenge to economic development.</div><div>2. Existing transportation costs, fees, taxes.</div><div>3. Limited economic prosperity during seasonal conditions.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Underdevelopment of the County & State Parks.</div><div>2. Areas of Lewiston that are part of the Niagara County Sewer District are not sewered but continue to pay fees to the plant.</div><div>3. Ongoing problems in the Town with drainage issues.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Population growth would enable school districts to improve and better utilize their current facilities.</div><div>2. STAR programs which alleviate burden for all residents would be continued.</div></div>	<div><div>1. LOOW Site.</div><div>2. Out of town hazardous waste being trucked through the Town of Lewiston.</div><div>3. Agricultural spraying poses a threat to our water and air quality.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Challenges to illegal activities along Niagara River and the international bridge. (Lewiston Queenston Bridge)</div><div>2. Increase in crime and having to deal with less personnel. (i.e., Illegal drug use and sales.)</div><div>3. Current traffic to CWM (hazardous waste facility) by chemical trucks poses a potential danger to the Town. Large volumes of trucks carrying refuse to Modern Disposal site has major concerns to the Town on the highways.</div></div>
<div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</div><div><div>•Residents suggest that there has not been much recent change in land use patterns.</div><div>-The Town of Lewiston has experienced some growth, including residential and golf course development.</div><div>•Communities in the Subregion are very similar in terms of land use.</div><div>•Plans are in place to extend an existing bike/pedestrian path; a cross-river ferry will be introduced in the future, and the marina in Youngstown has new owners.</div><div>•Lewiston holds lots of residential potential, and has experienced some new development.</div><div>•Lands are available for residential development in Youngstown and Porter; much of the Subregion is rural.</div><div>•Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Project</div><div>•CWM [hazardous waste]</div><div>•Modern Corporation solid waste - cleanup, control & oversight</div></div></div>						

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

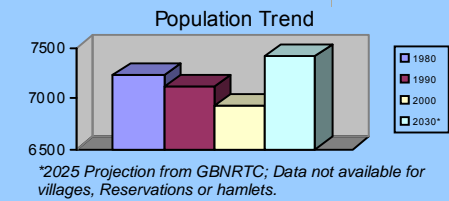
land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div><div>1. Escarpment, river access & park land. (i.e., Picturesque views)</div><div>2. Promotion of country like setting.</div><div>3. Senior Citizen Center and transportation availability.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Park land/waterfront & ways.</div><div>2. Escarpment</div><div>3. Bike paths/walking trails</div></div>	<div><div>1. Closeness to the NYS Thruway & International Bridge; the Falls/tourists.</div><div>2. Hospital facilities & nursing home availability.</div><div>3. Freshwater fishing facilities and an agricultural area. (i.e., NYS Wine Trail)</div></div>	<div><div>1. Current parks maintained by the County could be better utilized if maintained aggressively.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Our current school districts can accommodate growth.</div><div>2. Recent capital improvements to our school systems are an asset to the entire community.</div><div>3. Greenway Commission's allocated funds will enhance our entire educational facilities without placing a burden on taxpayers and residents.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Hospital and nursing facilities are available.</div><div>2. Provide transportation for our senior citizens to get our medical corridor.</div><div>3. Provide a facility for seniors to partake in "Meals on Wheels" availability and other seniors activates in the Town of Lewiston.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Lewiston has its own Police Department that works in conjunction with the Niagara County Sheriffs and the NYS Police.</div><div>2. Active U.S. Border Patrol Agency presence at the Niagara River access and bridge areas.</div><div>3. Trained volunteer firemen and HAZMAT teams provide protection and safety when an incident occurs.</div></div>

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>Promote continued stability in established neighborhoods.</div>	<div>Preserve the Niagara Escarpment and the Niagara Gorge. Town Environmental Commission established to protect our environmental concerns.</div>	<div>Continue to encourage economic vitality of the Town & Village of Lewiston including the Hamlet of Sanborn.</div>	<div>County parks should be maintained to meet standards of county residents. Near term goals for upgrades and repairs on stationary sewer infrastructure.</div>	<div>To utilize any and all available funding sources. Safe and reliable transportation. Maintain the high standard of quality education.</div>	<div>Insure that our drinking water is free of pharmaceutical contaminants. Continue efforts to cease having hazardous wastes being trucked into our community.</div>	<div>Having the New York Power Authority located in the Town of Lewiston brings potential terrorism threats to our community and a need to encourage an open communication and preparedness with all agencies involved. To keep our community safe with the budget afforded to us and the current laws that we have.</div>

overview

population	6,920	219,846
percent of County:	3.1 %	
avg household size:	2.6	2.45
pop/sq mi:	203.5	417.2
median age	41	38.2
pct school age (5-17):	19.6 %	18.7%
pct 65 and older:	14.6 %	15.4%



housing and income

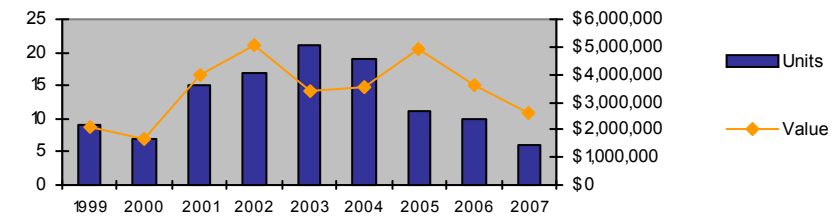
		Countywide
median HH income:	\$50,425	\$38,136
per capita income:	\$23,951	\$19,219
poverty rate:	4.07%	10.59%
percent of households with income from...		
<i>Social Security:</i>	30.3%	31.75%
<i>public assistance:</i>	2.0%	3.98%
<i>retirement:</i>	26.4%	23.2%
Housing units:	2,846	95,715
Percent Owner-Occ:	81.3	69.9%
Median year built:	1958	1954
Median home value:	\$96,300	\$80,900

Source: 2000 US Census

building permits

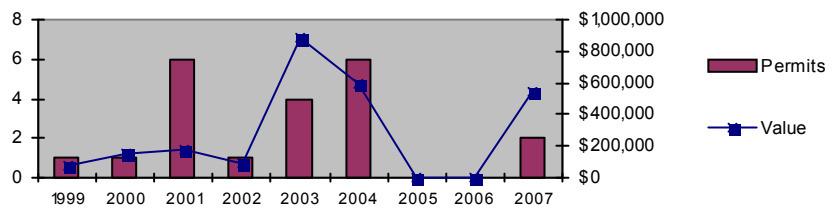
RESIDENTIAL

Units and Total Value of Permits



NON-RESIDENTIAL

Building Permits and Total Value



Source: Niagara County Dept. of Economic Development; data not available for villages or hamlets.

major employers

Employer	Employees
Waste Management, Inc.	101 - 250
J.F. Machining Co., Inc.	1 - 25

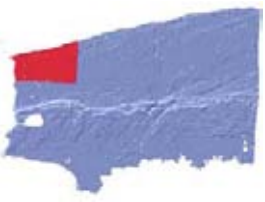
Source: Niaara County Center for Economic Development's "Industrial and Business Directory 2008".

land use

Use	Acres	Pct of Total
Agricultural	5917.02	34.43%
Commercial	298.82	1.74%
Community Service	83.39	0.49%
Industrial	425.71	2.48%
Public Service	5.24	0.03%
Recreation	225.81	1.31%
Residential	6908.84	40.20%
Unknown	546.38	3.18%
Vacant Land	2773.74	16.14%

school districts

Lewiston-Porter Central School District
Wilson Central School District



agricultural districts

Percent of Municipality in Ag Districts: **59%**

planning context

	Adopted?	Date (Orig.)	Date (Update)
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:	Y	1981	2004
ZONING TEXT:	Y	1968	1995 (In proce
ZONING MAP:	Y	1968	2005 (In proce
LWRP:	N/A	N/A	In process
SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS:	Y	1963	1975 (In process)

CELL TOWER REGULATIONS ON FILE WITH COUNTY?	Y
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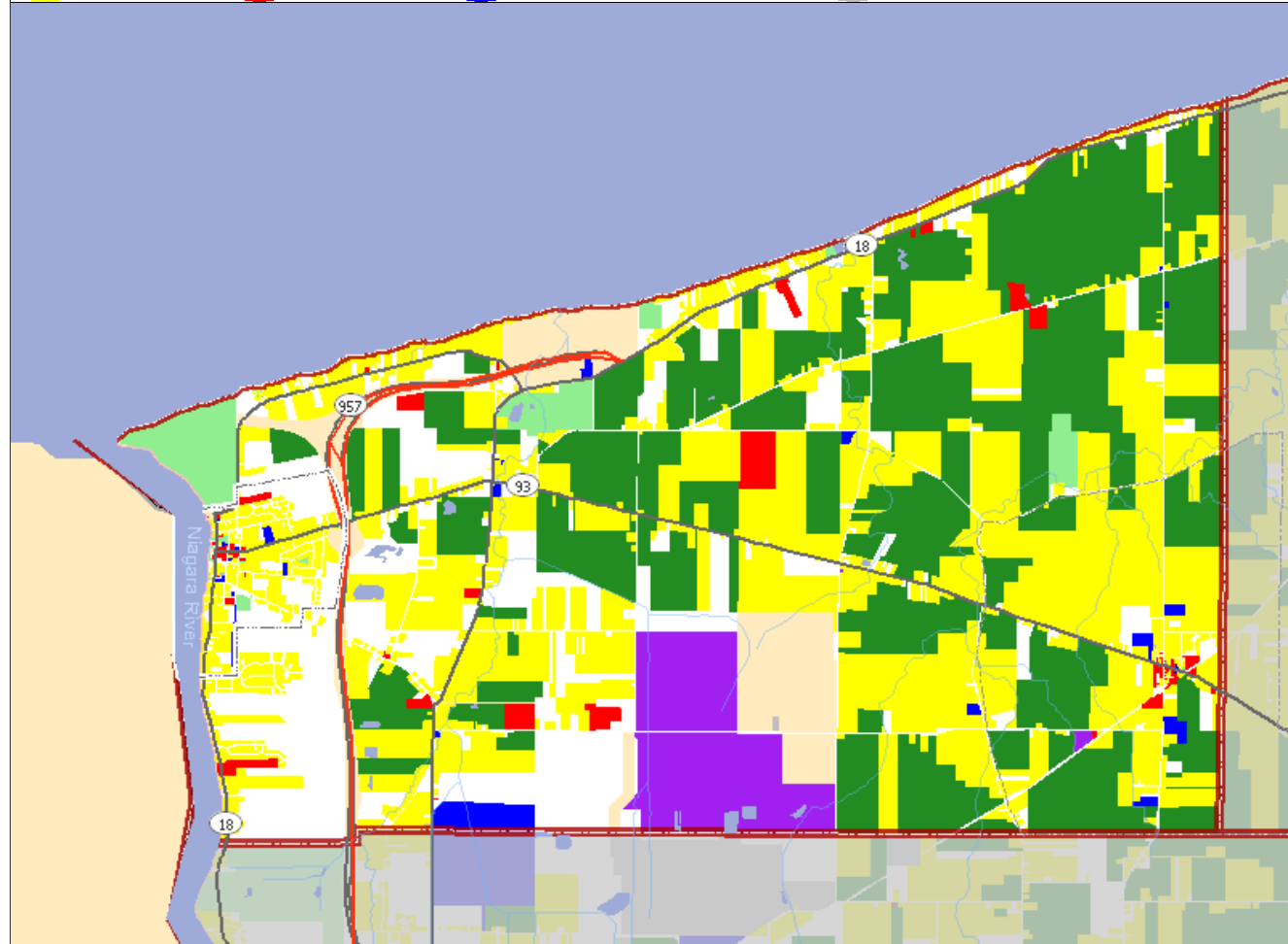
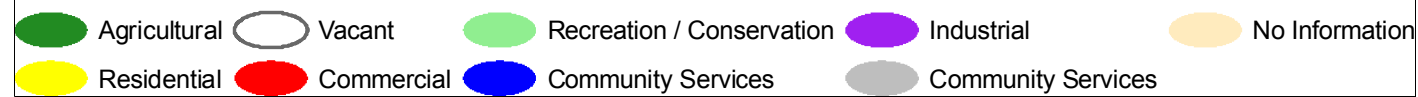
CELL TOWER REGS DATE: N/A

geographic information systems (GIS)

USING GIS FOR ZONING / PLANNING? (Y/N)	No info. provided
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ELECTRONIC ZONING? (Y/N)	No info. provided
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Land Use Classifications



Land use at a glance

■ Agricultural

☒ Residential

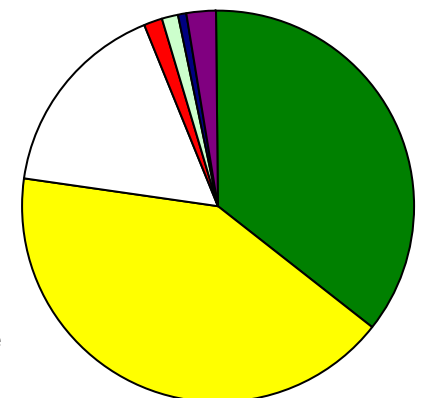
☐ Vacant Land

■ Commercial

Recreation

■ Community Service

■ Industrial



Note: Chart does not include "Unknown" or "Conservation" land uses.

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What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div><div>1. A need for senior citizen housing with a potential for transportation needs to be met.</div><div>2. We should plan for the commercial development of lands associated with Lake Ontario Ordinance Works (LOOW), which is about 1500 acres, after it is made available.</div><div>3. Land use should be about 70% agriculture, 20% residential and 10% commercial/industrial.</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</div><div>Land Use:</div><div>Golf course</div><div>No public transportation</div><div>Bike path</div><div>Cross border travel</div><div>Room for residential growth</div><div>Farming</div><div>Environment</div><div>Lake Ontario Ordinance Works</div><div>Chemical Waste Management (CWM) - Limit future impacts</div></div>		<div><div>1. The cost of electricity is disproportionate for the fact that it is generated in our area. Locally generated energy should assist our business development.</div><div>2. We are not centrally located.</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>The Town must continue to work collaboratively with CWM. The Town will promote agriculture and minimize land use conflicts between agricultural land and other uses.</div><div>Tourism</div><div>Obstacles: bureaucracy</div><div>Regional employment (keeping brain power / residents)</div><div>Aging population</div><div>Geography - we're not centrally located</div><div>Cost of living - very reasonable; Energy cost - an asset; State properties - may be an asset</div><div>CWM & Modern (Hydroponics)</div></div>	<div><div>1. Serious consolidation of all aspects of government services to reduce the cost of government, hence taxes.</div><div>2. Reduce the size of the legislature, merge towns and villages, school districts.</div><div>3. Put welfare and social services recipients on infrastructure improvement. Use BOCES as a training ground for the people using the system.</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>Promote cooperation between NY State Troopers, the Sheriff's Dept., Lewiston & Village of Youngstown Police Depts., the Border Patrol and the NY State Parks Police.</div><div>Promote historical organizations within the Town.</div></div>	<div><div>1. We should look at a consolidated Lewiston-Porter-Wilson School District with state of the art educational opportunities.</div><div>2. Expand the libraries to serve multiple purposes, such as a latchkey service, and to service the younger generation.</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>Need high-quality education that utilizes the latest computer and teaching technology.</div><div>WiFi needed.</div></div>	<div><div>1. The sewer and water infrastructure must allow for future development. (a) Adequately repair the existing system and (b) ensure expansion potential, this would include the Hamlet of Ransomville.</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Public Health & Safety):</div><div>We need access to the Town of Porter to remain unencumbered.</div><div>Ensure general maintenance of roadways, including safety.</div><div>We need to monitor changes in transportation systems throughout the community and region.</div><div>Sewers needed in Ransomville.</div></div>	

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div><div>1. We need to revitalize agriculture by increasing the demand for local agricultural products.</div><div>2. Growth in single family housing will slow down over the next 10 years.</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</div><div>Coordinate the growth in the Town of Porter so that it complements the Town's existing agricultural character and capitalizes on its unique waterfront location.</div><div>The State Parks are an asset for the Town.</div><div>The Town strives to develop a systemof open space that includes a network of parks and trails.</div><div>Control clean-up</div><div>Protect natural resources</div><div>Assets:</div><div>Lake Ontario</div><div>Niagara River</div><div>Festivals, year-round</div><div>Art Park</div><div>Fort Niagara</div></div>		<div><div>1. We need to entice people to this area for the months of April-October. Our housing is very reasonable, but the taxes are a detriment.</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>To recognize the Town of Porter as a bedroom community and promote appropriate businesses within the Town.</div><div>Tourism is supported to diversify the economy and promote economic growth.</div><div>Create a business-friendly community.</div><div>Encourage new businesses that improve the quality of life for all residents.</div><div>Promote agriculture</div><div>Promote development</div><div>Increase sewer plant capacity</div><div>Cross-river ferry</div></div>	<div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>To deliver community services to all residents and improve the quality of life within Porter.</div><div>Promote and respect the historical and cultural resources in the Town of Porter.</div><div>Provide cost-effective emergency services.</div><div>High-quality education.</div></div>	<div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>Work with the Lewiston-Porter and Wilson School Districts to identify and implement programs that benefit the entire community.</div><div>Maintain the school in Ransomville that is part of the Wilson School District.</div><div>Support the William J. McLaughlin Free Library and the Youngstown Free Library.</div></div>	<div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Public Health & Safety):</div><div>To ensure adequate housing choices for all residents in the Town of Porter.</div><div>Improving the condition of water quality, including streams and creeks, is essential.</div><div>To coordinate the delivery of infrastructure and utilities in Porter while protecting the rural character of the community (Limit to specific development nodes).</div></div>	

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety

Niagara Communities Survey

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What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. Continuation of the Robert Moses Parkway between Niagara Falls and Lewiston.</div> <div>2. Introduction of a Visitor's Trolley from Niagara Falls to Lewiston to Youngstown, Old Fort Niagara.</div> <div>3. Create additional parking and improve outgoing traffic from Artpark.</div>	<div>1. Plant management to prevent erosion at Lewiston Landing hill.</div> <div>2. Advance recreation and habitat areas at Lewiston Plateau.</div> <div>3. Close Chemical Waste Management Hazardous Landfill located in the Town of Porter.</div>	<div>1. Transportation - Countywide and regional.</div> <div>2. Improve and enhance the Niagara Parkway.</div> <div>3. Winter activities to make our community a twelve-month destination.</div>	<div>1. Do we need a County government?</div> <div>2. Do we need a County Legislation and Town Supervisor?</div>	<div>1. Consolidation of school systems.</div> <div>2. School taxes.</div> <div>3. Tie in Lewiston-Porter Schools with the Niagara River Greenway.</div>	<div>1. We encourage good health since we are a walkable community.</div> <div>2.Citizens' groups and elected leaders must be determined to remove Chemical Waste Management from the Town of Porter.</div> <div>3. Too much smoking outside of local restaurants.</div>	<div>1. Eliminate Transportation of Hazardous Waste to Chemical Waste Management sites.</div> <div>2. Overall cost for Public Safety.</div> <div>3. Establish a walkable community.</div>

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. We are a walkable community.</div> <div>2. A visitor-friendly and scenic Parkway along the gorge between Lewiston and Niagara Falls.</div> <div>3. World class fishing and charter fishing destination.</div>	<div>1. Lower Niagara River and Lewiston Landing.</div> <div>2. Lewiston Plateau.</div> <div>3. Parks in and around the Village of Lewiston.</div>	<div>1. Consolidation of governments.</div> <div>2. Support of Artpark.</div> <div>3. Good location: safe community to visit, live and work.</div>	<div>1. Better use of Bond Lake Park.</div> <div>2. Shrinkage of County Government.</div> <div>3. Reduction in County Taxes.</div>	<div>1. Niagara University.</div> <div>2. Niagara County Community College.</div> <div>3. Historic Landmarks.</div>	<div>1. Mt. St. Mary's Hospital</div> <div>2. Two nursing homes</div> <div>3. Removal of Chemical Waste Management which will reduce heavy truck traffic.</div>	<div>1. Excellent local Police Department.</div> <div>2. Excellent Volunteer Fire Company.</div> <div>3. Cooperation between Local Police Department, Boarder Patrol, State Police and County Sheriff Department.</div>

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>First-class maintenance of Center Street, Lewiston Landing and Village Parks.</div>	<div>Maintain the Niagara River shoreline. Beautification of Center Street, Hennepin Park, Academy Park, and Seneca Park. The Lewiston Plateau Recreation and Habitat continued development.</div>	<div>Always strive to be better, with a clean village and a multitude of Activities and Festivals.</div>	<div>Improve the Village of Lewiston's sewer system.</div>	<div>Offer adult education courses in the Village. Attract Board members with common sense values and business backgrounds. Board harmony.</div>	<div>Closer relationships with Mt. St. Mary's Hospital. Better understanding of County Health Services.</div>	<div>Continue with high skilled and personable Police and Fire departments.</div>

housing and income

median HH income:\$48,333

per capita income:\$23,705

poverty rate:3.95%

percent of households with income from...

Social Security:33.7%

public assistance:2.3%

retirement:25.2%

Housing units:869

Percent Owner-Occ:73.9

Median year built:1958

Median home value:\$97,000

Countywide:\$38,136

\$19,219

10.59%

31.75%

3.98%

23.2%

95,715

69.9%

1954

\$80,900

Source: 2000 US Census

building permits

RESIDENTIAL

Units and Total Value of Permits

NON-RESIDENTIAL

Building Permits and Total Value

Source: Niagara County Dept. of Economic Development; data not available for villages or hamlets.

school districts

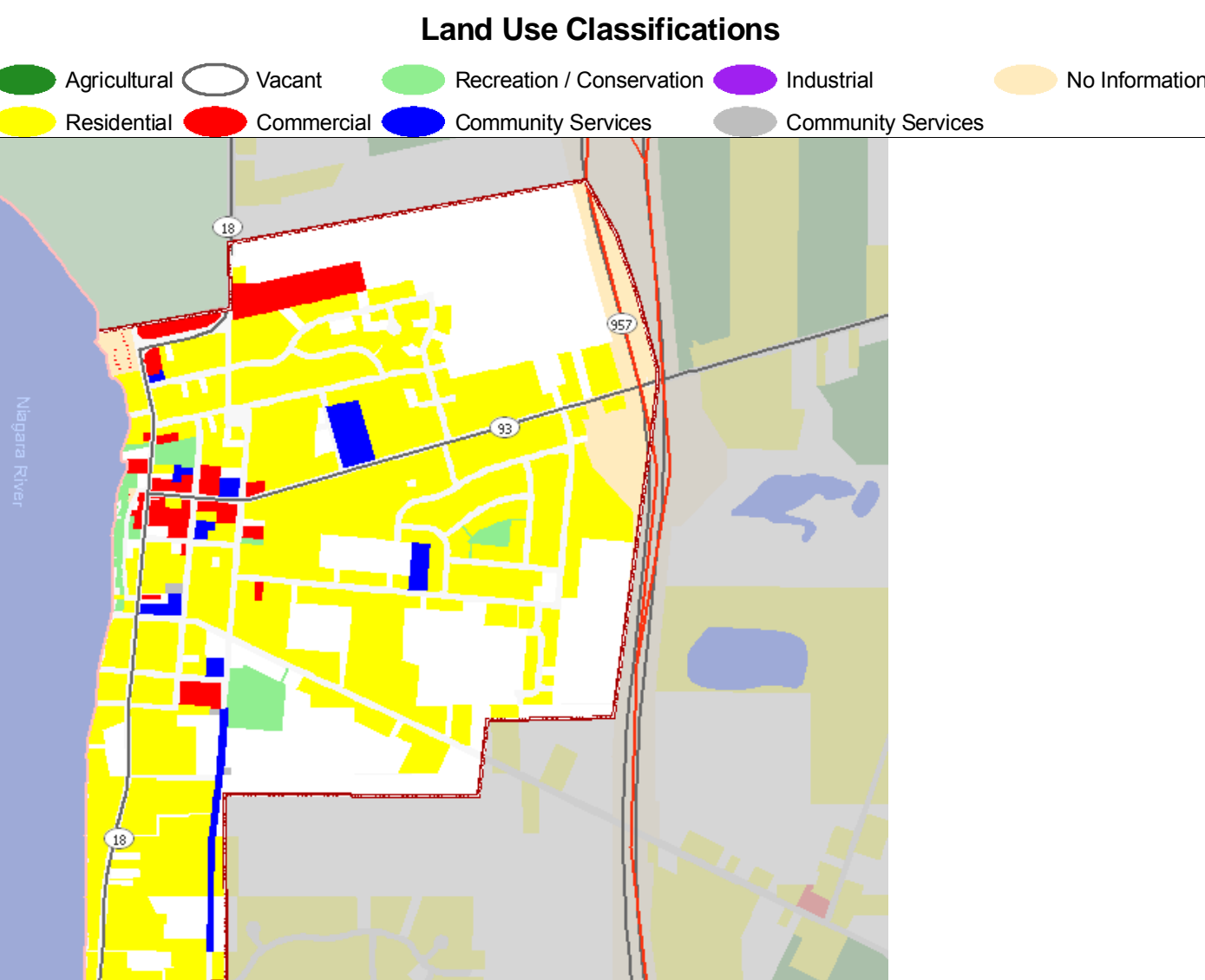
Lewiston-Porter Central School District

agricultural districts

Percent of Municipality in Ag Districts:0%

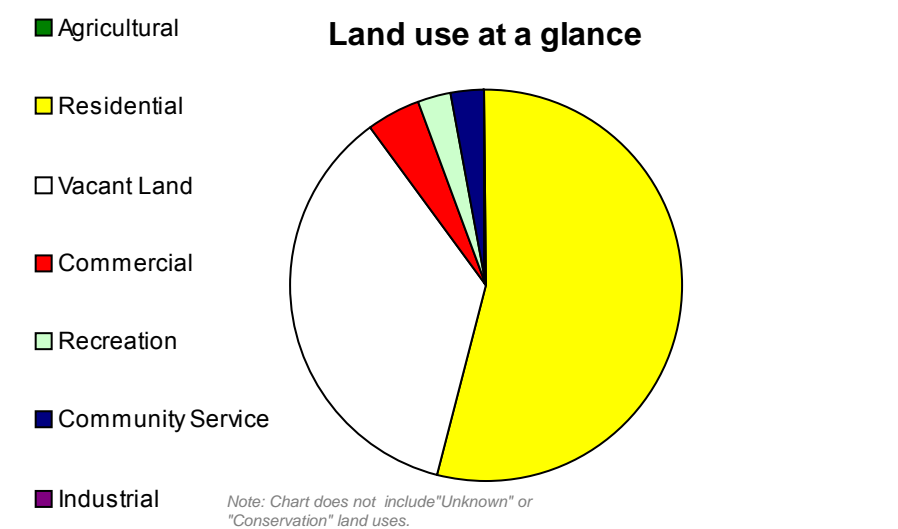
planning context

	Adopted?	Date (Orig.)	Date (Update)
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:	No info. Provided	1974	N/A
ZONING TEXT:	Y	1962	2004
ZONING MAP:	Y	1976	2004
LWRP:	Y	1989	1989
SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS:	Y	1977	1998
CELL TOWER REGULATIONS ON FILE WITH COUNTY?			
CELL TOWER REGS DATE:			
geographic information systems (GIS)			
USING GIS FOR ZONING / PLANNING? (Y/N)	Y		
ELECTRONIC ZONING? (Y/N)		Y	



land use

Use	Acres	Pct of Total
Commercial	26.86	4.40%
Community Service	15.86	2.60%
Public Service	0.64	0.10%
Recreation	15.92	2.61%
Residential	314.99	51.55%
Unknown	26.75	4.38%
Vacant Land	209.98	34.37%



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What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. Redevelopment and environmental clean-up of our Youngstown Cold Storage site an abandoned farmers cooperative on Elliott Street.</div> <div>2. Preservation and enhancement of all Village owned Waterfront Parks and potential additional acquisition to facilitate fishing, recreational boating and across river ferry service.</div> <div>3. Restoration of regional bus transportation to the Village and Fort Niagara to energize tourism business and accommodate senior population access south.</div>	<div>1. Commercial Condo Development of Green Space entry to South Waterfront entry eliminating spectacular vista and Main Street Business Theme - - a major challenge.</div> <div>2. Beyond highly successful South Waterfront re-development to improve Water Street and embankment, infrastructures approximately a \$2 million project.</div> <div>3. All Village Parks have been successfully redeveloped for family and Village visitor recreational use and further resource expansion and maintenance cost a major issue.</div>	<div>1. Re-energizing the Business Community: Diversity, quality of services, special niches on feature products, and unifying the Business Association.</div> <div>2. Attracting new and unique businesses that can succeed year round in this seasonal and distant north community.</div> <div>3. Engaging the area residents to support their local businesses, not just enjoy the quality of life here but spend and buy locally.</div>	<div>1. \$.36 County Tax increase to Porter/Youngstown because we complied with NYS mandated full assessment is an unfair community burden, especially in this pressing economic cycle.</div> <div>2. Niagara County IDA services need to be more aggressively marketed and services to smaller rural community businesses enterprise initiatives.</div> <div>3. Niagara County Road Route signage needs update and replacement in many areas due to wear, weather and plowing/collision damage.</div>	<div>1. Requirement for additional after school education, training and supportive or supplemental activities: computer literacy, trade skills, etc.</div> <div>2. Need for more corporate involvement in community to define WNY potential employee opportunities, needed skill sets, course requirements, etc.</div> <div>3. Area summer and part-time student job opportunities are severely limited for students to aid college expenses and to apprentice for professions.</div>	<div>1. Proximity of Chemical Waste Management Facility and DEC in-action on low site facilitator agency to investigate site threats.</div> <div>2. Expansion of CWM facility and constant transport of hazardous chemicals adjacent to Lewiston Porter Central School.</div> <div>3. Severe winter cold weather and rising fuel costs especially for senior citizens.</div>	<div>1. Very Limited Niagara County Sheriffs support due to distance, time and short staff.</div> <div>2. Rarely receive incident reports from Niagara County Sheriff's Department no Village calls.</div> <div>3. Due to proximity to border, limited access to vitally needed Homeland Security Funds as Police and Fire Agencies often first responders.</div>

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. Waterfront Park development completion north and south for vista enjoyment, fishing, sailing and recreational boating and access for potential cross river ferry return.</div> <div>2. Route 18 River Road completed reconstruction plus pedestrian and bike path, as one of WNY's most scenic drives and walkways along the Seaway Trail.</div> <div>3. "Imagine Youngstown" Project with Niagara University Tourism Department to promote Village Waterfront, Fort Niagara and Business Community and create expanded business opportunities.</div>	<div>1. Spectacular Waterfront vistas, celebrated Level Sailing Regattas, Jet Boat and recreational boating resource sites in Western NY.</div> <div>2. One of Western NY's most prolific fishing areas - - nearly 50% of all fishing tournament fish caught off the "bar" by Fort Niagara.</div> <div>3. Three beautiful and accessible parks (i.e. 2 in Village) and Fort Niagara State Park plus the world famous Fort Niagara Historical site and visitors center.</div>	<div>1. Certainly Fort Niagara, a must significant historical site attracting 100,000+ visitors annually; challenging these visitors into rather than around the village is a challenge</div> <div>2. The Waterfront: Fast River Ferry initiative, year round fishing, more efficient customs processing, more than one museum, marina service expansion.</div> <div>3. Recreational sports tournament, concert and festival use of in village parks and Fort Niagara State Park.</div>	<div>1. Niagara County Public Words Management is responsive to drainage and road and bridge issues reported.</div> <div>2. Niagara County tub chipper rental facilitates our DPW brush chipping and recycling program and resident services.</div> <div>3. Emergency response preparedness training is excellent as is emergency response agency coordination for storm, severe weather or environmental incidents.</div>	<div>1. Lewiston Porter School Academic rating is high and excellent resource for advanced education.</div> <div>2. Solid network of area Library facilities with strong emphasis on youth reading programs coordinated with Lewiston Porter.</div> <div>3. Niagara County Community College and Niagara BOCES facilities in near by communities excellent resource for special workshop training If advantages better advertised.</div>	<div>1. Excellent Parks system and area to facilitate walking, jogging, biking, and recreational family activities.</div> <div>2. Very accessible to in Village Health Club, Medical Offices and near by Clinic and Hospital Facilities.</div> <div>3. Police driving and Yacht Club and Coast Guard optional safety courses accessible and well thought and attended.</div>	<div>1. Part-Time, affordable and very accessible Police Department Staff, continued communication, special patrol assignments, bike and foot patrols.</div> <div>2. Excellent Volunteer Fire Company, Fire and ambulance response, deeply involved with community as a partner.</div> <div>3. Very responsive to Village declared emergency disasters: i.e. gas leaks, storm ice and wind, snow, etc.</div>

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>Continue initiative to successfully implement cross river ferry, network all area Commerce Chambers to promote Youngstown; engage local residents to support existing businesses; expand agriculture and historical site and tour promotion and exhibit sites.</div>	<div>Complete Water Street reconstruction and deteriorating retaining walls: Greenway and NYS grant funding; ecological restoration of Village and resident owned waterfront properties and habitats; support Niagara River Keeper Riparian Restoration Greenway Grant Project.</div>	<div>Village and Niagara River chamber promotion of Village assets, resources and businesses; Niagara University/Village "Imagine Youngstown" tourism project, TV, Radio, cable and newsletter promotions and ads, meet with key business franchise and expanded WIFI services.</div>	<div>More open and specific communications recording homeland security, volunteer fir company state mandate expense, community development funding (i.e. fast ferry) vital service needs.</div>	<div>New Community Room for Computer training and skill sharpening, special education and speakers, workshops, etc. \$10,000 funding to date, construction next quarter.</div>	<div>Major issue here of course is preventing further volume import of hazardous chemicals to CWM and the facility expansion. More Professional Environmental Agency involvement in the site monitoring and violations critical.</div>	<div>Part-time Police force in increasing crime and vandalism era: need much tighter and more communicative relationship with Niagara County Sheriffs for response, Coordinator and incident reporting</div>

POPULATION

Municipality	1990	2000	2006	2030*
Town of Newfane	8,996	9,657	9,488	10,791
Town of Somerset	2,655	2,865	2,783	3,060
Town of Wilson	5,761	5,849	5,771	6,091
Village of Barker	569	577	551	n/a
Village of Wilson	1,307	1,213	1,160	n/a
Hamlet of Olcott	1,435	1,156	n/a	n/a
Newfane CDP	3,001	3,129	n/a	n/a
SUB-REGION	17,412	18,582	18,240	19,948

*2030 Projections from GHPRC; only available for Towns

NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAKEFRONT COMMUNITIES

...Hamlets of Olcott and Newfane, Villages of Wilson and Barker, Towns of Newfane, Somerset and Wilson.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Agricultural Districts by Town		
Town Name	Acreage	Percent of Town
Newfane	34,900	77%
Somerset	13,957	59%
Wilson	28,888	91%
TOTAL	77,745	77%



WILSON HARBOR

EDUCATION

Barker Central S.D.	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Avg. Class Size	17	18	n/a
K-12 Teachers	100	n/a	99
K-12 Capacity	n/a	n/a	1066
K-12 Enrollment	1064	n/a	1097
Expenditures / Pupil	\$ 18,833.00		
Newfane Central	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007
Avg. Class Size	22	21	n/a
K-12 Teachers	52	56	182
K-12 Capacity	800	800	n/a
K-12 Enrollment	627	645	2036
Expenditures / Pupil	\$ 12,610.00		
Wilson Central	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007
Avg. Class Size	20	21	n/a
K-12 Teachers	127	129	143
K-12 Capacity	n/a	1800	3538
K-12 Enrollment	1481	1496	1428
Expenditures / Pupil	\$ 13,370.00		

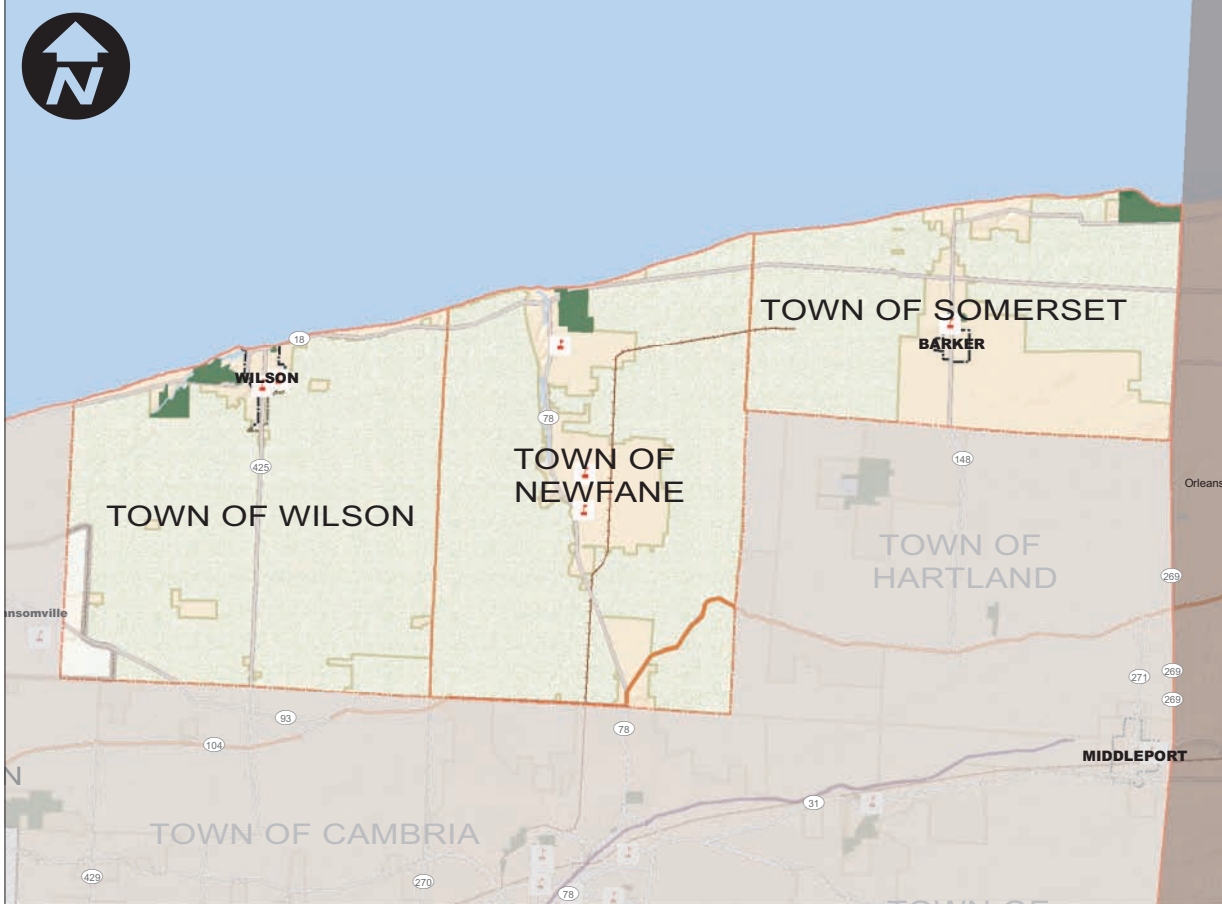
LARGEST EMPLOYERS

Employer	# of Employees (Range)
AES Somerset, LLC	101 - 250
Atlantic Transformers	101 - 250
Mayer Brothers Apple Products, Inc.	101 - 250
Russell Fruit Farms	51 - 100
S.O.P.S. Inc.	51 - 100
Pfeiffer Foods, Inc.	51 - 100

Source: Niagara County Center for Economic Development; Industrial and Business Directory 2008



GOLDEN HILL STATE PARK, TOWN OF SOMERSET



NIAGARA COUNTY

Legend

- Hospital
- Erie Canal

Community Boundaries

- Newfane
- Somerset
- Wilson
- Schools
- Public Lands
- Agricultural Districts
- Villages



VILLAGE OF BARKER

The Lakefront Communities possess significant opportunities for mixed-use, waterfront and tourism-based small-scale development along the NYS Route 18 and Route 78 corridors. Nodal development should be encouraged along these two corridors, with further nodal development centered on the villages of Wilson and Barker as well as Olcott, Newfane, Wright's Corners and Somerset. Interior areas within this subregion afford additional opportunities for rural resource protection, rural businesses, trail and bikeway development and rural residential uses appropriately sited among working farmlands.

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What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. Lack of sufficient public transportation!! Our population is aging.</div> <div>2. No major highway – north to south- Route. NYS Route 78 for all intense purposes ends in Lockport, NY</div>	<div>1. Harbor Breakwall at Olcott Harbor – this has long history of study & NO ACTION.</div> <div>2. The beach at Krull Park has remained a problem for years – County of Niagara only recently has made public swimming possible.</div> <div>3. Assisting towns to remediate Brownfields ie: old gas stations with contaminated areas.</div>	<div>1. Eliminating & Redevelopment of aging structures & properties ie: Brownfields (old gas stations)</div> <div>2. Lack of light industry – Very few jobs</div> <div>3. Constant struggle to maintain successful small businesses.</div>	<div>1. No major North/South highway</div> <div>2. Struggle to maintain present water, sewer, etc. Expensive and constant.</div>	<div>1. The school system is the largest taxing entity in the town. School tax levies are higher than the county's.</div> <div>2. More transportation to get citizens to NCCC or any other higher educational venues.</div>	<div>1. Pollution in area streams. Reducing mercury levels etc.</div> <div>2. Residue from agricultural spraying.</div> <div>3. Eliminate contaminated properties in the community especially old gas stations.</div>	<div>1. More road patrols – either county or state</div> <div>2. Curfew enforcement</div> <div>3. Waterfront – International Harbor – Need video camera in Olcott Marina</div>

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. The Harbor at Olcott beach at the mouth of 18 Mile Creek. Our lakefront has enormous potential for recreational, industrial & agricultural development.</div> <div>2. The fishery in 18 Mile Creek, the fish stocking program attracts sportsmen from all states, Canada – from the Lake to the Burt Dam is a world class attraction.</div> <div>3. We host the best fruit growing lands in North America – Strong agricultural base.</div>	<div>1. The harbor at Olcott and all lakeshore areas.</div> <div>2. The Fishery – Lake Ontario – 18 Mile Creek – Fisherman's Park at Burt Dam – World class.</div> <div>3. Agricultural acreage – The Ontario plain presents finest acreage in North America – finest fruit orchards period!</div>	<div>1. Excellent community hospital & local school system. Great environment for families and light industry</div> <div>2. Harbor – Fishery – Waterfront</div> <div>3. Excellent geography & lake effect that supports the best fruit farms in the world</div>	<div>1. Krull Park is the only County presence in our town – Any enhancement would be appreciated.</div> <div>2. No County offices in our town – Town Hall project on Main St. will make information more available.</div>	<div>1. The local school system is excellent. Our local community hospital is profitable and extremely efficient.</div> <div>2. NCCC provides opportunities for all ages. Inexpensive first step for higher education pursuits.</div>	<div>1. Local hospital very active in local events and media.</div> <div>2. Response of first responders – fire, ambulance etc. Volunteer fire companies more effective than paid city units.</div> <div>3. Public education from fire units & County Health Dept is very good.</div>	<div>1. Response time for 1st responders, especially fire and EMS is unparallel. Miller Hose, has only paramedics in Western Niagara County.</div> <div>2. Neighbor watch groups with Niagara County support are now effective in our town.</div> <div>3. Town drafting an emergency plan document</div>

STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):

- Agriculture
- Waterfront industry
- Wind resources

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>Maximize our natural resources by revitalizing historic Olcott Beach attractions, town village shops, carousel project, Krull Park and swimming enhancement.</div>	<div>Town of Newfane has enacted a Wind Ordinance to protect agricultural areas and also promote wind energy plans. Applying for all grants to enhance agriculture, fishery and recreation opportunities</div>	<div>Town of Newfane has a master plan & zoning and planning mechanisms to assist progress.</div>	<div>Improve Krull Park!</div>	<div>Cooperate with school organizations and groups. Local churches are quite active and need support. Also volunteer fire companies to give educational instruction.</div>	<div>Support all efforts of our hospitals and volunteer fire companies to continue their excellent efforts.</div>	<div>State Police negotiating for office space (satellite) in old town hall on Transit Rd. We encourage any increase in Police patrols in Town of Newfane.</div>

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What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. Preservation of rural character and associated agricultural areas while developing our base with clean commercial and industrial development.</div> <div>2. Highlight the need for county transportation amenities that our residents pay for that currently do not service this part of the county. The associated cost of fuel when no other transportation resource is offered is a heavy burden on the residents of Somerset.</div> <div>3. County bridge and road repair seem to be lagging the need.</div>	<div>1. Development of a waterfront public recreational park for our residents.</div> <div>2. Drainage that crosses municipal boundaries must be coordinated to meet the needs of each community. State and County drainage ditches must be kept clean to insure proper drainage of properties and roadways.</div> <div>3. Shoreline erosion promises to increase if the International Joint Commission chooses to raise the lake levels in opposition to the wishes of the coastal residents.</div>	<div>1. Declining stable tax base from commerce and industry. Too much dependence on one taxing entity (AES Somerset).</div> <div>2. Not enough of the necessary promotion from outside of the Town of Somerset, eg. IDA, NCCED, Empire State Development Corporation.</div> <div>3. The need to bring the small portion of the residents who are strongly against any development in our town into the mindset that it is necessary to survive.</div>	<div>1. The Water district is the only county service available in the Town of Somerset.</div> <div>2. The county does not recognize the need in Somerset as being significant enough to be worth the additional cost associated with a community far from the county services centers.</div> <div>3. We do not have accessible public transportation to get to the county services.</div>	<div>1. Excessive educational taxation.</div> <div>2. Opening the school grounds to the community when available.</div> <div>3. AES Pilot and State tax losses and the additional cuts needed at the school.</div>	<div>1. Too far away from major medical centers.</div> <div>2. No local fitness centers.</div> <div>3. No local major grocery shopping center</div>	<div>Evening police coverage.</div>

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. Large availability of open land and wind resource for wind plant development.</div> <div>2. Waterfront access for both residential and industrial uses with the additional possibility of a port facility associated with AES Somerset.</div> <div>3. Access to the Somerset Railroad rail system.</div>	<div>1. The Lake Ontario shoreline and all of the benefits that come along with it.</div> <div>2. Large amounts of green space.</div> <div>3. The close proximity to the waterfront creates steady winds that are beneficial for harvesting the power of that wind.</div>	<div>1. Available large acreage property on the Lake Ontario shoreline for companies that need waterfront access or cool clean water for their processes.</div> <div>2. The Possibility of low cost power and steam access through an industrial partnership with AES for potential industrial applications.</div> <div>3. Low taxes, good schools, and cheap housing and property.</div>	<div>There are none.</div>	<div>1. Good school system at Barker Central School.</div> <div>2. Many good colleges within driving distance.</div>	<div>1. Farming community with fresh fruits and vegetables during the harvest months.</div> <div>2. Clean air and water</div>	<div>1. Local police force.</div> <div>2. Large, well equipped fire and rescue department.</div>

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>Development while in keeping with our rural character. This can be accomplished by pursuing the types of businesses that are in keeping with our community characteristics. Companies such as microchip assembly or other clean businesses can coexist with the rural farming land use that we currently have here in Somerset.</div>	<div>Insure that we pursue the proper size wind plant for our area that can both utilize our wind assets as well as not obstructing our natural beauty.</div> <div>Create a community park on the waterfront property that has been agreed upon to be turned over to the Town from AES Somerset.</div>	<div>Pursue business that can locate in our town and utilize the many assets we have. We need to meet with the different economic development groups in NYS to insure we are being properly represented to those companies who are looking to locate in our state.</div>	<div>Encourage the County to establish a mobile services unit to bring county services out to the Town of Somerset, as well as other towns, so the residents would not have to travel the 60 – 100 mile round trip to access most community services.</div>	<div>Reduce cost at Barker Central School. Bring in additional and diverse revenue for the district. Consolidate duplicate services of the Town, Village and District.</div>		

Niagara Communities Survey

Following are this community's responses to a survey of Niagara County communities. The complete results of this survey are available from Niagara County. Additional background on each subject area is included below the survey results (in italics). This additional information was provided by the members of the Stakeholders Steering Committee during the planning process.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. Road and bridge maintenance needs to be a priority</div> <div>2. We also need to maintain our image as an agricultural community</div> <div>3. It will also be important to develop a link through public transportation with the region's cities (especially important for seniors).</div>	<div>1. Waterfront shore erosion with high water levels as well as water quality</div> <div>2. Development of regulations with regard to the use of windpower</div> <div>3. Development of a countywide ditching program</div>	<div>1. Our proximity to cities can be a challenge - especially for seniors.</div> <div>2. The distance can make it difficult to draw industrial development.</div> <div>3. Another issue is the lack of public transportation.</div>		<div>1. Financial issues are the biggest challenges with regards to education. Schools rely heavily on state aid.</div> <div>2. State mandates, declining enrollment make costs difficult on school districts.</div> <div>3. Cost of higher education (college) and the lack of local employment is creating challenges for our youth.</div>	<div>1. The transportation of hazardous waste through the area.</div> <div>2. Water quality, including runoff and our shoreline.</div>	<div>1. The lack of programs and care for an elderly population.</div> <div>2. Lack of a county emergency management plan.</div> <div>3. With the increased time obligations and training required, it becomes difficult to maintain a volunteer fire company.</div>

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. Our biggest asset is our waterfront and the opportunities to develop tourism. We have a large State park with the Seaway and Niagara Wine Trails.</div> <div>2. We also have significant amount of land still available for development.</div> <div>3. We also have an industrial corridor south of the Village on Route 425. This area lends itself to smaller industry with access to a state route.</div>	<div>1. Our community is blessed by having the waterfront access provided by a State park adjacent to a picturesque harbor.</div> <div>2. Because of the significant abundance of undeveloped land, we can properly plan for development that can preserve the peaceful community we now enjoy.</div>	<div>1. The development of the Seaway and Niagara Wine Trails can significantly affect tourism</div> <div>2. The New York State Tuscarora Park property around both the east and west branch of Twelve-Mile Creek</div> <div>3. Maintaining the Agriculture District</div>	<div>1. We get excellent coverage from the Sheriff's Dept. and other law enforcement agencies.</div> <div>2. We have two well-trained and equipped volunteer fire companies.</div>	<div>1. A strong academic program ranked highly on a regular basis at a good cost per student.</div> <div>2. Plenty of activities for our youth to participate in.</div> <div>3. Our buildings and grounds are in very good condition.</div>	<div>1. Our clean rural environment is a huge asset.</div> <div>2. Active fire company programs and developing community training and health services (i.e., blood pressure testing).</div> <div>3. Fitness equipment in school buildings is open and accessible to the public</div> <div>4. Proximity to local hospitals.</div>	<div>1. Complete a County Emergency Management Plan.</div>

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. The development of a workable Master Plan/</div> <div>2. Upgrading and updating of zoning laws.</div> <div>3. Development of sufficient sewer and water systems.</div>	<div>Development of a Town Plan and zoning laws to preserve these natural features.</div>	<div>1. Maintenance of roads, bridges, sewer and water distribution systems</div> <div>2. Development of more service and public transportation for an aging population</div> <div>3. We feel it would be beneficial to everyone if the County would get rid of properties and business that would be better in the private sector.</div>	<div>Smaller and more efficient government services.</div>	<div>Maintain our high standards and expand technical programs.</div>		

Following are this community's responses to a survey of Niagara County communities. The complete results of this survey are available from Niagara County. Additional background on each subject area is included below the survey results (in italics). This additional information was provided by the members of the Stakeholders Steering Committee during the planning process.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

public safety

1. We are fortunate to have our local Police. We don't seem to have much coverage from the Sheriffs department. Our department is part time. If no one is on duty, we may have a long wait.
2. We are always in need of more volunteer firemen. Especially that are available during daytime hours.
3. Lack of funding to increase police hours, purchase better equipment. Especially with the proximity of the AES plant.

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

public safety

1. Local Barker Police Department provides coverage and "small town" service.
2. Volunteer Fire and Ambulance service with several EMT's
3. Working with entire county on Emergency Response and Disaster Mitigation.

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

public safety

Continue to work together with all county agencies and municipalities to share resources to provide the safest environment for our residents. To encourage better participation in these endeavors.

Issues and Assets

	land use	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health and safety
issues and challenges	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outside (Town uses) influencing Village. 2. The village's primary commercial corridor is not being used to its full potential. 3. Inattention to building and zoning codes: properties in violation hurt the community. 4. Fractured commercial districts. 5. Infrastructure and streetscape. 6. Creek access. 7. Sewage treatment plant sited at harbor gateway. 	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Location, Location, Location: Village is perceived as too far away from major cities. 2. Accessibility: commercial traffic cannot use the Robert Moses Parkway or Lake Ontario State Parkway. 3. High taxes 4. Fractured development: three centers for development - Harbor, Central, Station 5. Beautiful harbor, but only public ownership is State Park area. 6. No village "center" - no public park area in the central commercial district that the business community can get around and use for events. 7. Conversion of homes to rental units leading to reduction in owner investments and loss of property value. 8. Parking: landscaping / renovations to parking lots. 	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •County facilities are minimal, other than roads. •Young Street is a County road, making it harder to implement the Village's ideas for improvements to the road. •Lack of County services is a definite problem: transportation, aging, distance to County offices are all issues. 	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tax levy is a problem: the community is basically poor, but taxes are high. School district has been building/remodeling facilities for 12 years. School system is up-to-date, but costs weigh on property owners. •Administrative functions have multiplied in recent decades, while population shrinks. •School facilities include elementary and middle/high schools. Three gymnasiums, improved auditorium, exercise facility, athletic fields and facilities. Facilities are geared for school use - missing opportunities for cross-use. •Library is a strong community asset. Relies on on-street parking. 	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Health & Safety):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •ne volunteer fire company in village, one in town. •Ambulance services is busy. •Two boats for water rescue. •Mandated training and equipment requirements cause serious problems for volunteers. •Support for fire protection comes from contracts with town and village, but greater transparency is needed in budgeting process. •Police coverage (Sheriff / State Police) is poor, w/lack of consistent personnel. Leads to lack of community policing.
assets and opportunities	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Future planning should continue creating a walkable community. •We need some form of Historic Preservation commission tied in with the Planning Board, which needs to have a greater ability to assist with design and aesthetics. •Park access along creek for fishing / low-impact recreation. •Update Master Plan •Do not dissolve Village. •Consider annexing additional Town land into Village. 	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Economic incentive zone for retail core •Return commercial/retail use to Central Commercial District •Provide easy access to "Main Street" façade improvement grants and other programs. •Build on historic heritage in development/rehabilitation projects. •Greater commercial/retail activity. 	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Joint County/Village/Town plan for Young Street, including streetscape design, aesthetics and drainage. •Improve/add County services. Satellite office? 	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Town Historian - full-time, paid position •Add hours to Historical Society Museum •Intermunicipal partnership to develop an indoor pool for year-round school/public use. 	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Health & Safety):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Improve connections between residents and State / County police •Redesign parking lots with pedestrian safety and accessibility in mind. •Enforce health and safety code for housing

POPULATION

Municipality	1990	2000	2008	2030*
City of Lockport	24,426	22,279	21,035	22,518
Town of Cambria	4,773	5,383	5,462	6,084
Town of Lockport	16,696	19,653	20,240	26,874
Town of Pendleton	6,010	6,561	6,332	6,552
South Lockport CDP	7,112	6,552		
Hamlet of Rapids	1,152	1,356		
SUB-REGION	50,811	53,375	53,069	63,725

*2030 Projections from GHRTTC; only available for Cities and Towns

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Agricultural Districts by Town			
Town Name	Acreage	Percent of Town	
Cambria	21861	86.00%	
Lockport	3516	12.00%	
Pendleton	2474	14.00%	
TOTAL	27,851	38%	

RAILS-TO-TRAILS IN PENDLETON



EDUCATION

Lockport City	04 - '05	05 - '06	06 - '07
Avg. Class Size	18	18	n/a
K-12 Teachers	459	452	471
K-12 Capacity	6800	6800	5469
K-12 Enrollment	5225	5225	5169
Expenditures / Pupil	\$ 12,486.00		
Starpoint Central	04 - '05	05 - '06	06 - '07
Avg. Class Size	23	22	n/a
K-12 Teachers	212	219.4	221
K-12 Capacity	3845	1795	n/a
K-12 Enrollment	2859	2884	2822
Expenditures / Pupil	\$ 12,000.00		
Niagara County Community College	04 - '05	05 - '06	06 - '07
Enrollment	6587	6538	6100
Full-Time Faculty	135	132	117
Part-Time Faculty	164	201	222

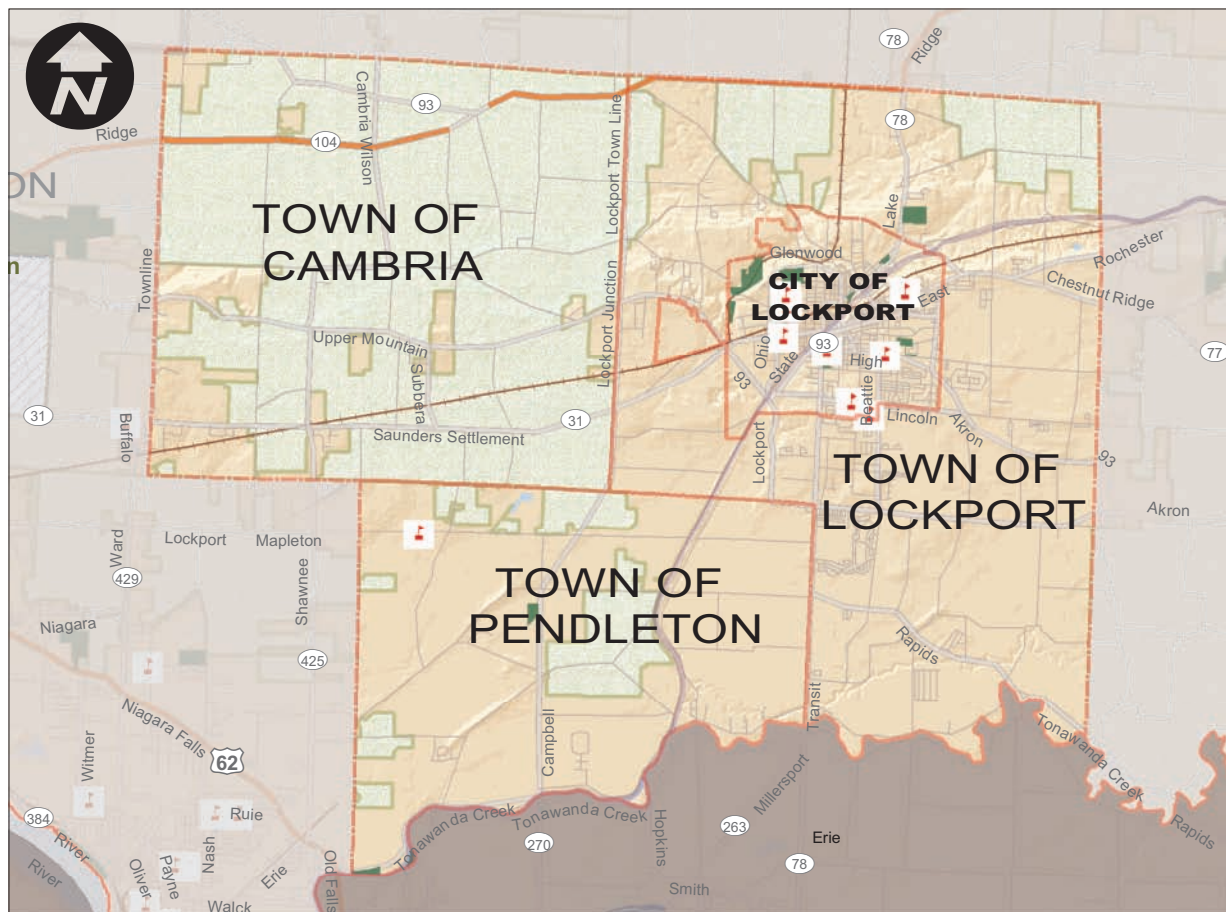
LARGEST EMPLOYERS

Employer	# of Employees (Range)
Delphi Thermal	2251 - 2850
Allvac, An Allegheny Technologies Company	101 - 250
Candlelight Cabinetry	101 - 250
LaFarge North America	101 - 250
Metal Cladding	101 - 250
Pivot Punch Corporation	101 - 250
Diversified Manufacturing Company, Inc.	51 - 100
Gooding Company, Inc.	51 - 100
Jamestown Container Corporation	51 - 100
Mac's Antique Auto Parts, Inc.	51 - 100
Milward Alloys, Inc.	51 - 100
Philpac Corp.	51 - 100
Vanchlor Company, Inc.	51 - 100
Barry Steel Fabrication, Inc.	26 - 50
Bison Bag, Inc.	26 - 50
E & R Machine, Inc.	26 - 50
Excel Logistics	26 - 50
Kistner Concrete Products, Inc.	26 - 50
Niagara Fiberboard	26 - 50
Van DeMark Chemical, Inc.	26 - 50

Source: Niagara County Center for Economic Development; Industrial and Business Directory 2008

NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CENTRAL COMMUNITIES

...Hamlets of Rapids and South Lockport, City of Lockport, Towns of Cambria, Lockport and Pendleton.



Legend

- Hospital
- Erie Canal
- Schools
- Public Lands
- Agricultural Districts

Community Boundaries

- Cambria
- Lockport
- Pendleton
- Villages



The Central subregion is characterized by a central urban center within the City of Lockport that offers a mix of government, office, small business, commercial, residential and services. Surrounding towns are experiencing varying degrees of development, ranging from Lockport, the most developed, to Cambria and Pendleton, with less development and more intact open space resources. The City of Lockport should be encouraged as the government seat for the County, with adjacent support facilities and support services in the Town of Lockport. Concentrated nodal development should be encouraged along the NYS Route 31 corridor in Cambria and the Campbell Road and Transit Road corridors in Pendleton, with conservation of surrounding open space resources, especially in northern portions of Cambria and Lockport along the Niagara Escarpment.



Niagara Communities
Comprehensive Plan



Niagara Communities Survey

Following are this community's responses to a survey of Niagara County communities. The complete results of this survey are available from Niagara County. Additional background on each subject area is included below the survey results (in italics). This additional information was provided by the members of the Stakeholders Steering Committee during the planning process.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. Loss of Industrial Tax Base and industrial jobs</div> <div>2. Aging Infrastructure</div> <div>3. Lack of developable land</div>	<div>1. Contaminated property</div> <div>2. Potential upgrade of 18 Mile Creek from Class D, which will require upgrade of Wastewater Treatment facilities</div> <div>3. Tightening of Federal & State regulations of the elimination of combined sewer outfalls</div>	<div>1. State of Economy</div> <div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div> <div>•Taxes are a disincentive to development – property tax rate is too high</div> <div>•The overabundance of education related taxes (schools taxes) – Town of Cambria, for example, has 5 school districts, 5 in Town of Lockport</div> <div>•Municipalities paying other municipalities for services, i.e., water treatment</div> <div>•An aging infrastructure: gas, water, sewer, etc.</div> <div>•The challenges faced due to the loss of people in the County</div> <div>•The need for “shovel ready sites” vs. the red tape, bureaucracy and delays in getting projects done in New York State, especially compared to other states</div>	<div>1. County does very little in the way of providing services to City versus towns</div>	<div>1. Rising cost of college tuition</div> <div>2. School Taxes</div>	<div>1. Rising Costs of providing medical care to employees</div> <div>2. Lack of medical insurance for working poor</div> <div>3. Aging Population</div>	<div>1. Cost of Providing Public Safety services</div> <div>2. Cost of NOT providing Public safety Services</div> <div>3. declining Tax Base</div>

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>1. Location (proximity to Buffalo, Niagara Falls & Toronto)</div> <div>2. Affordable Housing</div> <div>3. Established Industrial Facilities</div>	<div>1. Niagara Escarpment</div> <div>2. Waterways – 18 Mile Creek and the Erie Barge Canal</div> <div>3. Network of Municipal Parkland</div>	<div>1. Affordable Housing</div> <div>2. Greater Lockport Development Corporation</div> <div>3. Community Development Programs -- 1st time homebuyers -- Home Improvement program</div>	<div>1 . Niagara County Community College – Corporate Training Center</div>	<div>1. Niagara County Community College – Corporate Training Center</div>	<div>1. City owned and operated Water and Wastewater Treatment Facilities and Compost Facility</div> <div>2. Lockport Memorial Hospital</div> <div>3. Lockport Fire Department - EMS</div>	<div>1. Police Departments</div> <div>2. Paid Fire Department with EMS</div> <div>3. Increased Staff in Building Inspection Department</div>

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
					<div>Maintain a cooperative relationship with the County for emergency water service versus the county installing more water lines</div>	

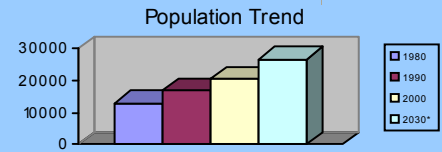
Issues and Assets

	land use	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health and safety
issues and challenges	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Agriculture shall be emphasized as the primary land use, available for conversion into other uses; these uses should be sympathetic to the remaining agricultural interests and practices.•The areas that have the most potential for higher density residential development are those within reach of the sanitary sewers south of Route 31. This area also features some retail and service commercial activity complementary to residential growth.•The escarpment area has the greatest potential for supporting the most expensive and most desirable residential properties. Views to the north, variations in topography, large trees and cliff edge position make this area especially unique and attractive for high end residential development.•Commercial development has the most chance of success if it can be located near existing commercial uses, is closest to the largest populated areas and can take advantage of public resources: roads, sewers, water gas and communications. Portions of Route 31 from Sanborn to Campbell Blvd. meet this criteria and it has the strongest potential for supporting successful commercial development.•Industrial development is a minor activity in the town. Some lands have been planned for industrial uses as evidenced by lands currently zoned Industrial use along the Conrail railroad in the southeast part of the Town. The Town does not have an Industrial Park with infrastructure in place.	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•There are several new businesses opening and existing businesses expanding in Town•The Niagara Wine Trail offers opportunities for the growth and expansion of existing wineries, and the potential for new businesses.•The presence of Educational Facilities in Town, Niagara County Community College and Erie Niagara BOCES not only offer employment opportunities, they also work closely with local employers to provide educational programs and advanced technical training that meet the needs of the workforce.•There are several vacant parcels in Town that are zoned for business development.	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <p>Generally satisfied with County provided services</p>	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Increase shared services between the five (5) school districts and the Town for providing recreational programs.-Encourage joint use of Town and School facilities for Community events and programs.-Niagara County Community College and Orleans/Niagara BOCES are major employers in Town, and continued growth and expansion will provide employment opportunities.-Encourage continued cooperation between local businesses and Niagara County Community College to provide programs that meet the technical training required by future and existing employees.-Encourage continued support and cooperation between the Town and Niagara County Community College.	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Health & Safety):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-The Town is generally satisfied with law enforcement support provided by the Sheriff and State Police.-Other departments within the County government have provided adequate support as needed.-Funding of volunteer fire companies and ambulance services is becoming increasingly difficult due primarily to state mandated requirements.-Enhanced mutual aid between neighboring volunteer fire companies could possibly reduce the need for duplicate equipment.
assets and opportunities	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•The Town has developed and is implementing land conservation methodology which permits agriculture to continue but does not completely prohibit the development of residential uses.•Overlay districts may be created to guide the development of non-agricultural (residential) uses in the most unique agricultural areas. The purpose would be to safeguard the most agriculturally productive and unique soils from consumption by non-agricultural uses which could just as well locate elsewhere in the Town.•The Town has adopted an updated zoning ordinance to regulate nine different land use classifications as recommended in the Town's Comprehensive Plan.•An escarpment district was created to specifically establish regulations that will allow for the orderly development of this unique area while at the same time strive to minimize the environmental impacts and preserve the natural beauty for all to enjoy.•Commercial land uses were primarily established along portions of the Route 31 corridor from Sanborn to Campbell Boulevard and an area along Lockport Road in the southeast corner of Town. The Town continues to support and encourage further commercial development in this area.•Access to sanitary sewers from the interior portions of industrial zoned area will be possible with the construction of service laterals to the main line at Comstock Road. Construction may be coordinated with concurrent Industrial development when service is required.	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Continue to promote and encourage the development and expansion of existing and new businesses in Town.•Promote and foster the enhancement of the Niagara Wine Trail•Expand and promote the educational opportunities at Niagara County Community College and Erie Niagara BOCES.•Continue to expand the infrastructure required to support commercial development	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <p>Generally satisfied with County provided services</p>	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-All school districts have outstanding performance scores, and quality educational facilities enhance community growth and quality of life issues.-Promote and encourage additional shared services between the five (5) school districts.-As evidenced by the successful Bi-Centennial Celebration, the Town would like to continue the strong relationship it has developed with Niagara County Community College.	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Health & Safety):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Evaluate and study the cost/benefit ratio of the state mandated training requirements and the impact on the local tax rate.-Work to improve better communication between neighboring volunteer fire companies in an effort to enhance mutual aid and possibly reduce the need to duplicate specialized equipment.

overview

population	20,240	219,846
percent of County:	8.9 %	
avg household size:	2.52	2.45
pop/sq mi:	436.7	417.2
median age	37	38.2
pct school age (5-17):	18.7 %	18.7%
pct 65 and older:	11.9 %	15.4%

Countywide:
219,846



*2025 Projection from GBNRTC; Data not available for villages, Reservations or hamlets.

housing and income

median HH income:	\$45,977	\$38,136
per capita income:	\$22,194	\$19,219
poverty rate:	7.70%	10.59%
percent of households with income from...		
<i>Social Security:</i>	25.4%	31.75%
<i>public assistance:</i>	2.4%	3.98%
<i>retirement:</i>	21.5%	23.2%
Housing units:	8,059	95,715
Percent Owner-Occ:	77.8	69.9%
Median year built:	1980	1954
Median home value:	\$85,300	\$80,900

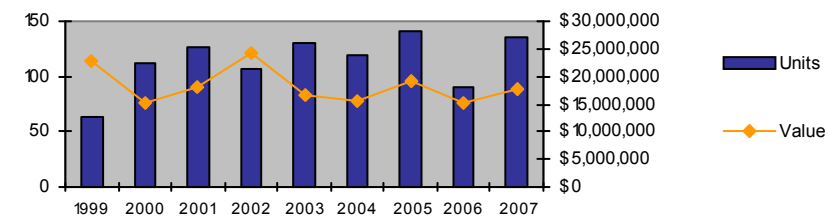
Countywide:

Source: 2000 US Census

building permits

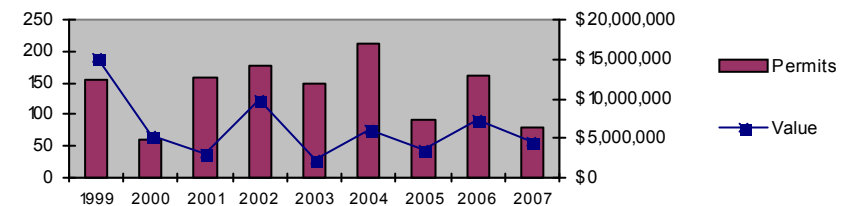
RESIDENTIAL

Units and Total Value of Permits



NON-RESIDENTIAL

Building Permits and Total Value



Source: Niagara County Dept. of Economic Development; data not available for villages or hamlets.

major employers

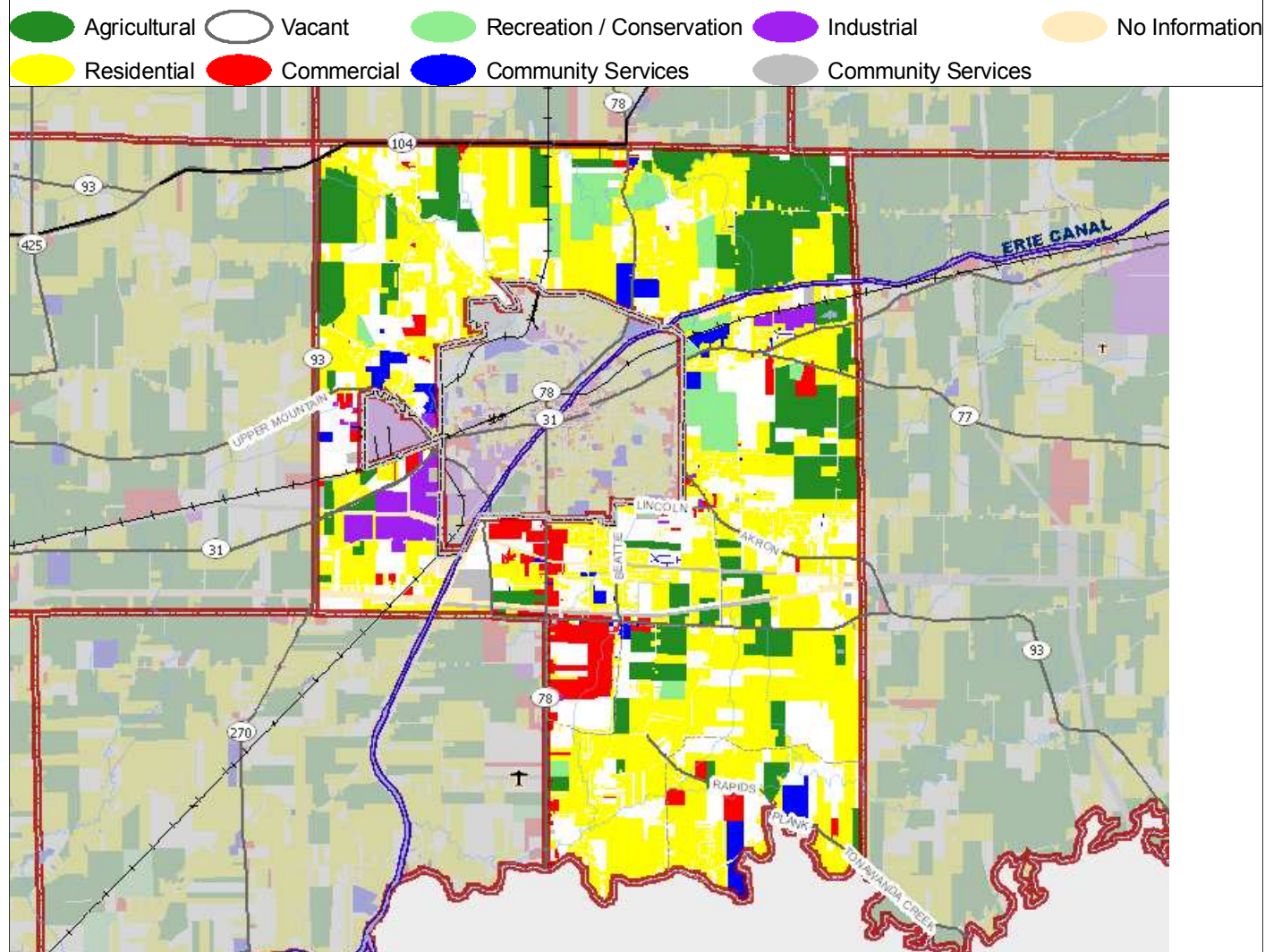
Employer	Employees
Lockport City School District	730
First Niagara Bank	677
Wal-Mart	365
Tops Market	225
Home Depot	124
NYS DOT	71
Bison Bag, Inc.	65
Excel Logistics	64
Cornerstone FCU	100
Gooding Company, Inc.	51 - 100
NYSEG	50
Kistner Concrete Products, Inc.	26 - 50

Source: Niaara County Center for Economic Development's "Industrial and Business Directory 2008".

land use

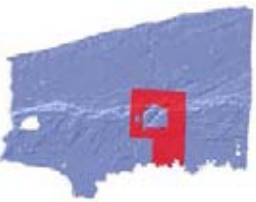
Use	Acres	Pct of Total
Agricultural	3624.84	14.27%
Commercial	1155.81	4.55%
Community Service	624.4	2.46%
Industrial	546.6	2.15%
Parks & Conservation	253.36	1.00%
Public Service	369.39	1.45%
Recreation	863.48	3.40%
Residential	11292.45	44.44%
Unknown	586.11	2.31%
Vacant Land	6093.250	23.98%

Land Use Classifications



school districts

Newfane Central School District
 Royalton-Hartland Central School District
 Lockport City School District
 Starpoint Central School District
 Akron Central School District



agricultural districts

Percent of Municipality in Ag Districts: **12%**

planning context

	Adopted?	Date (Orig.)	Date (Update)
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:	Y	1963	1997
ZONING TEXT:	Y	1961	2005
ZONING MAP:	Y	1961	2008
LWRP:	N	N/A	N/A
SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS:	Y	1965	2003

CELL TOWER REGULATIONS ON FILE WITH COUNTY? **Included within Zoning Code**

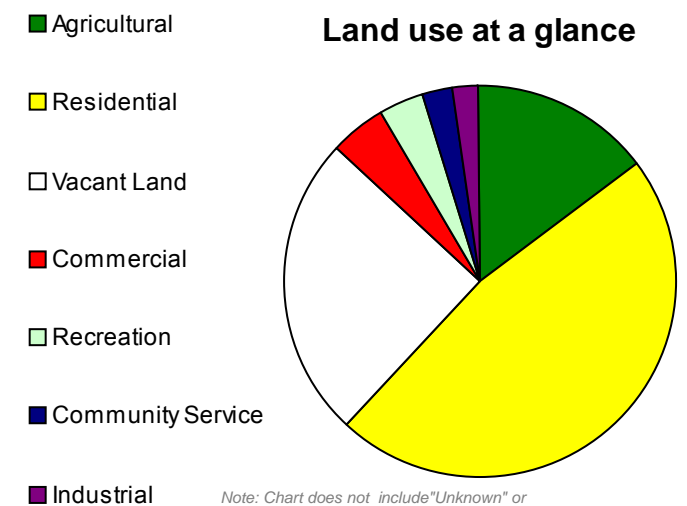
CELL TOWER REGS DATE: 2005

geographic information systems (GIS)

USING GIS FOR ZONING / PLANNING? (Y/N)	Y
--	---

ELECTRONIC ZONING? (Y/N)	Y
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Land use at a glance



Note: Chart does not include "Unknown" or "Conservation" land uses.

Niagara Communities Survey

Following are this community's responses to a survey of Niagara County communities. The complete results of this survey are available from Niagara County. Additional background on each subject area is included below the survey results (in italics). This additional information was provided by the members of the Stakeholders Steering Committee during the planning process.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div><div>1. Maintaining infrastructure, fix aging infrastructure and expand infrastructure as community grows. (Water/sewer)</div><div>2. Bridge maintenance and repair.</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</div><div>Vision of growth since 1962 when first Comprehensive Plan put in place.</div><div>•Denser development occurring in the SE sector of Town – subdivision development pressure.</div><div>•Impacts to wetlands and floodplains</div><div>•Agricultural lands remaining in some areas of the Town.</div><div>•Re-development and new development occurring in Transit Road corridor.</div><div>•Strong infrastructure system.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Unfunded state/federal mandates.</div></div>	<div><div>1. National economy</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>•Transit North Initiative – involving communities of Lockport (City), Lockport (Town) and Pendleton</div><div>•Retail development</div><div>•Town of Lockport IDA established in 1983. Assists in job creation and retention, which currently totals 340 jobs.</div></div>	<div><div>1. The perception that consolidation will make government more efficient.</div><div>2. Poor communications between legislators - supervisors.</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>•Sheriff Dept / Jail</div><div>•Highway Dept.</div><div>•Niagara County Water</div><div>•Transportation</div><div>•Service sharing</div></div>	<div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>•Pedestrian connections to schools</div><div>•Coordination of Town growth initiatives with changing needs of the schools: families, programs, number of classrooms, etc.</div><div>•Brain drain</div></div>		<div><div>1. County emergency services are not ready for an emergency.</div><div>2. We need to hold a live drill at least 1 time per year. Turn off power and see what works.</div></div>

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

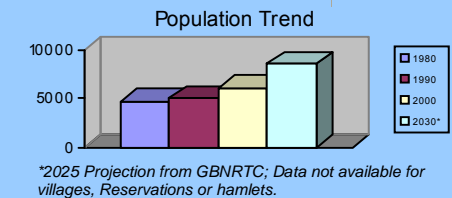
land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div><div>1. Inexpensive land for development.</div><div>2. Infrastructure growth capacity.</div><div>3. Government willing to work with developers to encourage quality growth.</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</div><div>•To guide the growth and development of the Town</div><div>•To ensure land uses in accordance with the character of the District</div><div>•Provide for orderly and beneficial growth and provide public facilities and services, with parks and greenspace planning</div><div>•Assistance with farmland protection</div></div>	<div><div>1. Canal</div><div>2. Niagara Escarpment</div><div>3. Agriculture/farming - more agri-tourism</div></div>	<div><div>1. WNY stigmatism as rust belt - poor - snowbound</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>•Transit North Historic (Heritage) Corridor – market / promote and develop similar design guidelines and objectives by the three participating communities</div><div>•Destination gateway to Niagara County, and recognize this marketing area</div><div>•Have a robust Town of Lockport IDA to promote job growth in the manufacturing sector.</div></div>	<div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>•Coordinate efforts with a regional approach</div><div>•County bus service/van service (better use of NFTA)</div><div>•Balance of urban, suburban and rural vitality</div></div>	<div><div>1. Cut school property taxes in half.</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</div><div>•Generation planning</div><div>•Utilization of information technology</div></div>		<div><div>1. NYS Police</div></div> <div><div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Public Health & Safety):</div><div>•Develop facilities for all age groups</div><div>•Trails, pathways and connectivity implementations</div><div>•Day Road Park improvements / soccer fields</div><div>•John Austin Nature Park Trail improvements</div></div>

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div><div>1. Transit North: Themed historic retail shopping district</div><div>2. New IDA Director with Supervisor leading development.</div></div>	<div><div>Expanding parks</div><div>Building bikepaths/walkways</div></div>	<div><div>Securing money for commercial corridor infrastructure. 25 million needed.</div></div>				

overview

population	6,050	219,846
percent of County:	2.8 %	
avg household size:	2.85	2.45
pop/sq mi:	224.1	417.2
median age	39	38.2
pct school age (5-17):	21.7 %	18.7%
pct 65 and older:	11.4 %	15.4%



housing and income

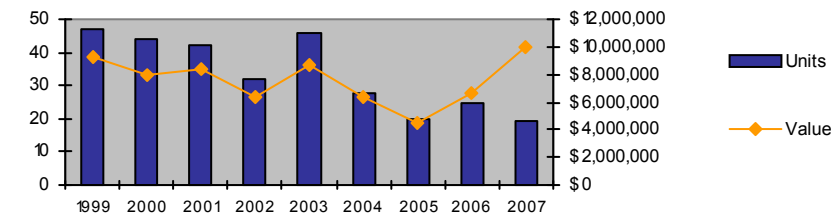
median HH income:	\$60,625	\$38,136
per capita income:	\$23,651	\$19,219
poverty rate:	4.67%	10.59%
percent of households with income from...		
<i>Social Security:</i>	25.6%	31.75%
<i>public assistance:</i>	1.7%	3.98%
<i>retirement:</i>	22.9%	23.2%
Housing units:	2,162	95,715
Percent Owner-Occ:	91.8	69.9%
Median year built:	1970	1954
Median home value:	\$127,200	\$80,900

Source: 2000 US Census

building permits

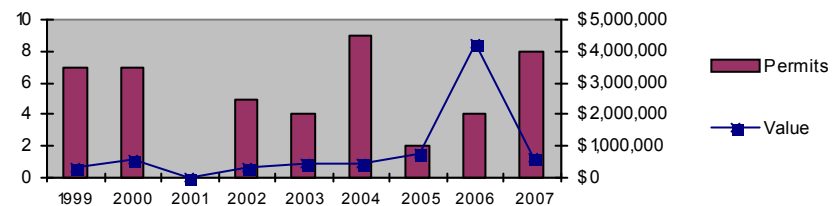
RESIDENTIAL

Units and Total Value of Permits



NON-RESIDENTIAL

Building Permits and Total Value



Source: Niagara County Dept. of Economic Development; data not available for villages or hamlets.

major employers

Employer	Employees
First Niagara	162
Pivot Punch Corporation	100
Philpac Corp.	51 - 100
Mac's Antique Auto Parts, Inc.	51 - 100
Boka Farms	1 - 25
Brauer Restaurant	1 - 25
Brenon Topsoil	1 - 25
Chameleon Color Cards, Ltd.	1 - 25
Country Cottage	1 - 25
Dore Landscaping	1 - 25
Enterprise Car Rental	1 - 25
Fred's Pizza	1 - 25
Hebeler Sales	1 - 25
Heritage Fireplace	1 - 25

Source: Niaara County Center for Economic Development's "Industrial and Business Directory 2008".

land use

Use	Acres	Pct of Total
Agricultural	4860.36	29.29%
Commercial	402.73	2.43%
Community Service	354.25	2.14%
Industrial	64.82	0.39%
Recreation	390.98	2.36%
Residential	6886.19	41.50%
Unknown	160.93	0.97%
Vacant Land	3443.23	20.75%

school districts

Lockport City School District
Starpont Central School District



agricultural districts

Percent of Municipality in Ag Districts: **14%**

planning context

	Adopted?	Date (Orig.)	Date (Update)
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:	Y	Aug. 2008	In process
ZONING TEXT:	Y	No info. provided	2005
ZONING MAP:	Y	No info. provided	2004
LWRP:	N/A	N/A	N/A
SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS:	Y	No info. provided	2001

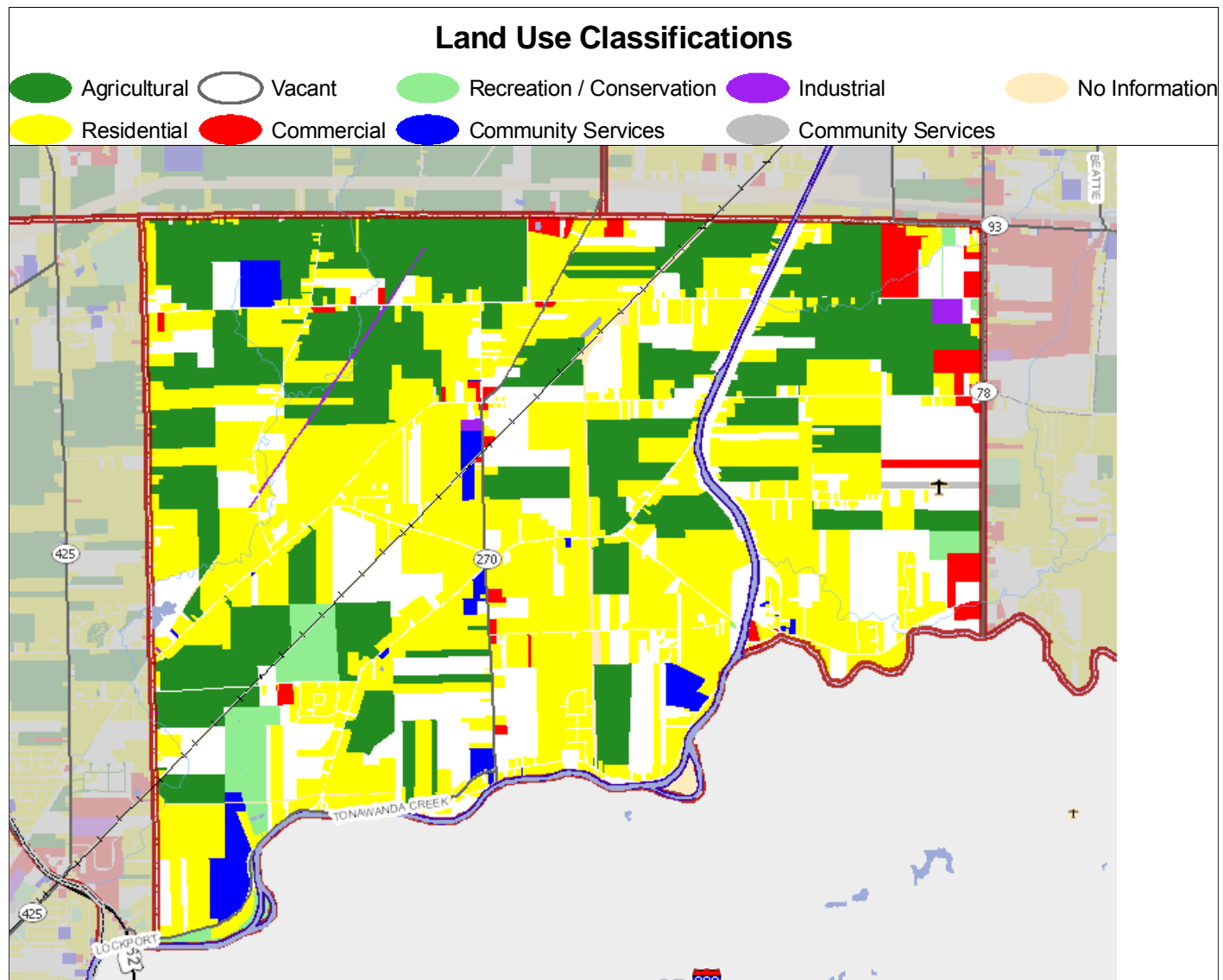
CELL TOWER REGULATIONS ON FILE WITH COUNTY? Y

CELL TOWER REGS DATE:	1997
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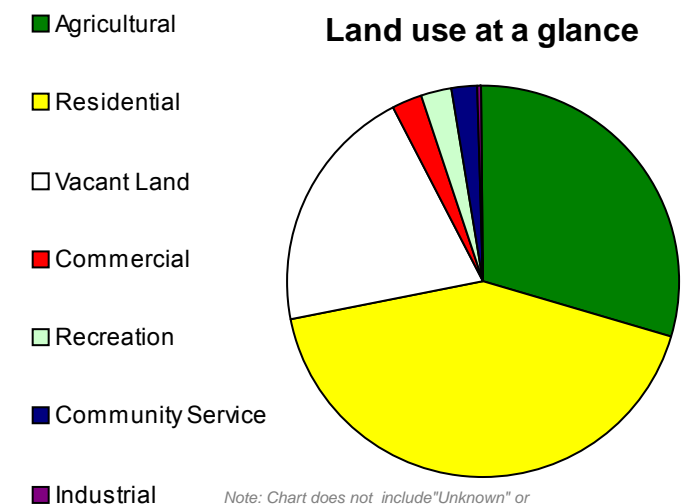
geographic information systems (GIS)

USING GIS FOR ZONING / PLANNING? (Y/N)	Y
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ELECTRONIC ZONING? (Y/N)	Y
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Land use at a glance



Note: Chart does not include "Unknown" or "Conservation" land uses.

Issues and Assets

	land use	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health and safety
issues and challenges	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lockport & Pendleton are developing, plans in place •Highway corridors: economic development vs. farmland preservation -Inter municipal agreements -Outlets needed as secondary access – ex.) Campbell Blvd. -Need to plan ahead •Need to balance agricultural lands and development (loss of wildlife habitat) •Creeks & Streams – floodplain encroachment •Large percentage of land use is residential: less than 10% is industrial and commercial •Most of the residential use is single-family homes •Over one quarter of land use acreage is agricultural •Approximately 10% of the land is mapped wetlands •Large percentage of the land is open space due to lot configuration. 	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Small percentage of commercially and industrially zoned land. •Creation of a Business Development Committee 	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Utilities: •Transportation: Need County assistance in assessing traffic volumes on Tonawanda Creek Road, Bear Ridge Road, Fiegle Road and Lockport/Robinson Road. Past studies suggest these roads are being heavily used for traffic between Lockport and Buffalo. 	<p>(Central Communities Subregion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •School consolidation as a way to increase efficiency is a major issue. •Teacher salaries should be uniform; there should be a level playing field from one school district to another. •There should be other funding sources than taxes. 	<p>(Countywide)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •As communities changes, the County seems slow to change w/publi health and safety services •Social services – large part of County budgets •Abundance of older adults require services •Heart disease and obesity higher in the County than downstate •Police – lack of quality coverage in the area •Multiple fire and ambulance districts
assets and opportunities	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continue to provide high quality environment for single-family homes •Extend Light Industrial districts in appropriate areas of the Town •Protect and encourage more agricultural activities in the Town •Farmland •Plans that are in place 	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increase industrial and commercial land use and development •Encourage a balanced tax base 	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Utilities:Encourage development only where public water and wastewater supplies are already available. •Transportation: Close coordination between the Town, County, GBNRTC, and State DOT will ensure the future effectiveness of the transportation system. 	<p>(Central Communities Subregion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •There are more than enough school buildings in this part of the County. •Tie education and job training programs to tourism, the Erie Canal & wine trails. •Educational programs, especially at the Community College level, can be tied to the County's marketing / business development (e.g., if you want to attract employers in a specialized industry, take time to discuss how NCCC can help develop a workforce in that industry). 	<p>(Countywide)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Array of medical facilities •Fresh water is an important asset •Disaster prep seems pretty good •Strong volunteer fire forces •Safe community – low crime

POPULATION

Municipality	1990	2000	2006	2030*
Town of Hartland	3,911	4,189	4,093	4,488
Town of Royalton	7,453	7,710	7,609	8,421
Village of Middleport	1,876	1,912	1,816	n/a
Tonawanda Indian Reservation	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hamlet of Gasport	1,336	1,248	n/a	n/a
SUB-REGION	11,364	11,875	11,658	12,959

*2030 Projections from GHNTC; only available for Towns.

NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EASTERN COMMUNITIES

...Hamlet of Gasport, Village of Middleport, Towns of Hartland and Royalton

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Agricultural Districts by Town			
Town Name	Acreage	Percent of Town	
Hartland	27,754	83.00%	
Royalton	34,900	77.00%	
TOTAL	62,654	80%	

VILLAGE OF MIDDLEPORT



EDUCATION

Barker Central S.D.	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Avg. Class Size	17	18	n/a
K-12 Teachers	100	n/a	99
K-12 Capacity	n/a	n/a	1066
K-12 Enrollment	1064	n/a	1097
Expenditures / Pupil	\$ 18,833.00		
Royalton-Hartland S.D.	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Avg. Class Size	20	23	n/a
K-12 Teachers	134	124	115
K-12 Capacity	n/a	n/a	n/a
K-12 Enrollment	1614	1573	1553
Expenditures / Pupil	\$ 12,291.00		

LARGEST EMPLOYERS

Employer	# of Employees (Range)
Barden and Robeson Corporation	101 - 250
FMC Corporation	26 - 50
Entertion Industries, Inc.	1 - 25
European Meats & Deli, Inc.	1 - 25
Harris Farms	1 - 25
New England Seafood of Barker	1 - 25
Suburban Propane	1 - 25
Vizzarra Vineyards at Becker Farms	1 - 25
Wolfe Lumber Mill, Inc.	1 - 25
AG-PAK, Inc.	1 - 25
C.J. Niagara County Plastics, Inc.	1 - 25
Cosmicco of Western New York	1 - 25
Gasport Welding & Fabricating, Inc.	1 - 25
Gasport Wood Products, Inc.	1 - 25
Hydro Silica Corporation	1 - 25
J. & D. Enterprises	1 - 25
LaFarge	1 - 25
Lubee Pump & Machinery Company	1 - 25
Martin Aircraft Supply	1 - 25
Route 31 Enterprises, Inc.	1 - 25
Vince's Auto Wrecking & Sales, Inc.	1 - 25
W.H.R. Services, Inc.	1 - 25
Wallace Design Service	1 - 25
Hydro Fabrication	1 - 25
Maedi's Woodcrafts	1 - 25
Niagara Foods	1 - 25
Performance Manufacturing Corp.	1 - 25
Sigma Motor, Inc.	1 - 25
Specialty Grinding	1 - 25

Source: Niagara County Center for Economic Development, Industrial and Business Directory 2008

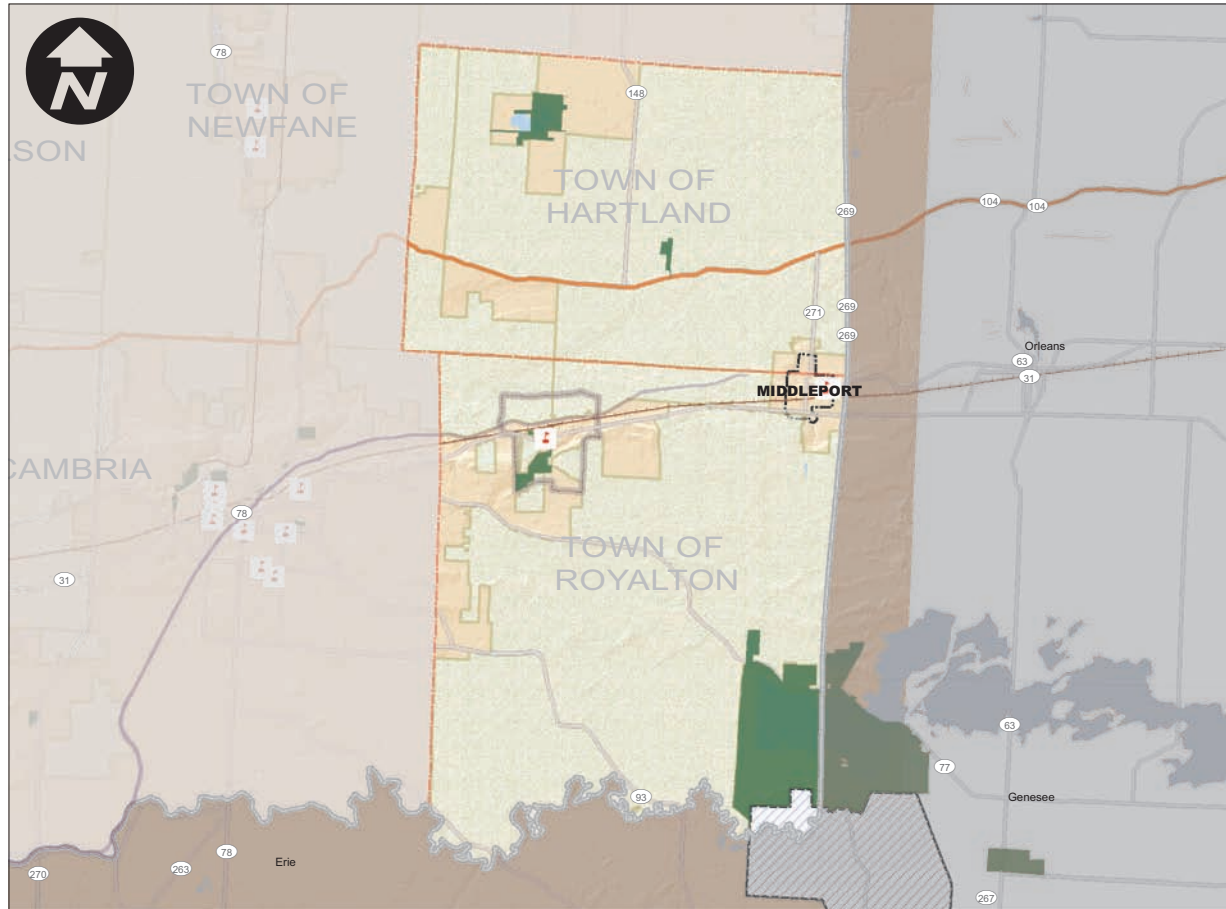


Legend

- Hospital
- Erie Canal
- Schools

Community Boundaries

- Hartland
- Royalton
- Public Lands
- Agricultural Districts
- Villages



The Eastern Communities subregion contains irreplaceable natural and cultural/heritage resources, including the Erie Canalway corridor, population centers in Middleport and Gasport and the important NYS Route 104 and 31 highway corridors. This subregion lends itself to enhanced rural business opportunities, including agri-tourism and, in particular, equestrian and nature-based recreation. Linear sprawl along rural roadway frontages should be discouraged in favor of development around existing village and hamlet centers. Infrastructure (roads, sewer, water) should be mostly limited to upgrades of existing facilities with little, if any, increase in carrying capacities outside of developed centers. New, large-scale development should be directed to these centers and avoid interior sections of both towns to preserve rural resources.



Niagara Communities Survey

Following are this community's responses to a survey of Niagara County communities. The complete results of this survey are available from Niagara County. Additional background on each subject area is included below the survey results (in italics). This additional information was provided by the members of the Stakeholders Steering Committee during the planning process.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing ISSUES OR CHALLENGES facing your community relative to...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div><div>1. Desperation of development</div><div>2. Keeping Agricultural Characteristics</div><div>3. Re-opening Bridge (Wruck Road) for corridors to Erie Canal and alternate routes.</div></div> <div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment): •Farms •Town recreation use - lighting and expansion of park</div>	<div><div>1. Old buildings in need of repair.</div><div>2. Constant battle to clean up.</div><div>3. Making room for more people to enjoy the park.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Lack of building.</div><div>2. Jobs</div><div>3. Taxes</div></div> <div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT: •Agritourism, Wine Trail</div>	<div><div>1. Lack of Police Protection; contract with another municipality for protection</div><div>2. Distance to health provider</div><div>3. Road maintenance</div></div>	<div><div>1. Three school districts - one district is for another county</div></div> <div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT: •Boundaries (Districts) •Part of Orleans County SD is in Hartland</div>	<div><div>1. Distance to health providers</div></div>	<div><div>1. Lack of police enforcement.</div></div>

What do you consider to be the three most significant ASSETS or OPPORTUNITIES in your community relative to....

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div><div>1. Location of Emergency Services</div><div>2. Agri-tourism</div><div>3. People</div></div> <div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment): •Rural - agriculture •Small business - small developments</div>	<div><div>1. Opportunity for Park Expansion - This could be one of the nicest parks in Niagara County - excluding state parks.</div><div>2. 104 Corridor - Wine trail brings people right through Hartland</div><div>3. Agricultural land.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Land to build</div><div>2. Increase in total Town value to bring tax rates down.</div></div> <div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT: •Farm stands •Would like Wine Trail to go through on 104 Corridor</div>		<div><div>1. Two school districts - change all residents to Niagara County</div></div> <div>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT: •Two school districts instead of 3</div>		

Describe your community's GOALS and OBJECTIVES for...

land use	environment	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health	public safety
<div>Re-development of the Township - New face for buildings - expansion of recreation park for more tourism. We are on the wine trail would like to see these people passing through to stop and smell our roses.</div>	<div>Currently investigation types of grants to help with park expansion.</div>	<div>Building lots have been made larger to promote greenspace. Also, smaller lots grandfathered for building. Town feels that more tourism from wine trail will help economical stature - resulting in more development</div>				<div>Contract with other municipality for protection.</div>

Issues and Assets

	land use	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health and safety
issues and challenges	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agricultural conservation	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Agri-tourism•Canal•Conservation Areas•Royalton Ravine Park•Aging infrastructure - roads, sewer gas•Vacant buildings•Enticing small business	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Royalton Ravine Park•Shared highway services•Need for greater police presence <p>Be included in more County projects</p>	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <p>Royalton-Hartland Gasport Elementary Middleport Elementary High School - Middleport</p> <p>Missing key components of working population:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ag class - FFA2. Tech classes3. Computer classes <p>Taxes are increasing and population is decreasing Need additional Wi-Fi / resource center NCCC satellite needed</p>	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Health & Safety):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Village of Middleport Police - excellent police presence. Contracted to the Town of Royalton.2. Tri-Town Ambulance Service3. Five fire companies in the Town.
assets and opportunities	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Land Use & Environment):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Preserve agriculture2. Preserve wildlife and conservation areas3. Create bike, walking-type trails	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Business & Industrial Development along Route 31 Corridor•Improve Infrastructure•Closer facilities for agricultural food - from the farm right to a LOCAL processor.•Wildlife & Conservation areas•Need for community center•Promote 4th of July celebration•Expand our celebrations and incorporate local businesses.	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Improve Roadways•To expand shared services (for example, highway maintenance)•Expand NFTA services•Mobile county services - DMV, social services, voter registration	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT:</p> <p>Roy-Hart has plenty of room for expansion w/o construction School grounds are environmentally clean!!</p>	<p>STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT (Health & Safety):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Health outreach to the Community.2. More police presence from the State / Sheriff.

Issues and Assets

	land use	economic development	county services and facilities	educational institutions	public health and safety
issues and challenges	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Perception of poor quality of life due to contaminated soil - FMC2. No end in sight for remediation of soils / areas effected.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Vacant storefronts.2. Buildings falling apart.3. Multi-use buildings not being used to potential.4. Factory complex falling down. Too much owed on property/legal issues to do anything with it.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Seems like we are too far east in Niagara County to receive much county services - feels like forgotten in County planning.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Royalton-Hartland Central Schools - Middle school & high school	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Poor sidewalks in parts of Village2. Great police force and low crime rate3. Old, failing infrastructure (sewer & water, storm sewers)
assets and opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. After cleanup complete - turn negative press and mindset to positive.2. Fill vacant buildings and homes.3. Bring small business back to downtown.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Continue work on grants for downtown renovations.2. Fill vacant buildings.3. Demo buildings when needed.4. Help existing local businesses to prosper in the future.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. More attention from County services and programs.		<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Obtain grant funding for Safe Routes to School for sidewalk renovations.2. Obtain grant money to repair aging infrastructure, update/new sewer treatment plant modifications and storm sewer projects.

Chapter V

Land Use & Environment

Land Use Planning

Niagara County occupies a total land area of about 527 square miles (approximately 337,000 acres) comprised of 20 municipalities that includes 3 cities, 12 towns and 5 villages, plus three Native American reservations/lands. Land use decisions and regulations in Niagara County and New York State are primarily the jurisdiction of these 20 municipalities under New York State's City, Town, Village and General Municipal laws (www.dos.state.ny.us). This responsibility of local municipalities to govern land use within their borders is known as "Home Rule".

Powers given to local municipalities by the State include not only the ability to regulate land use, but also to prepare municipal comprehensive plans and enter into intermunicipal agreements to prepare joint plans. A NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources in 2008 found that an increasing number of municipalities in New York continue to prepare and adopt written comprehensive plans, increasing from 64% of the State's approximately 1500 municipalities in 2004 to 69% in 2008.

Niagara County annually surveys municipalities within the County as a Planning Census to gather up-to-date information on the status of local land use plans and regulations. Information is collected on comprehensive plans, zoning, local waterfront revitalization plans, subdivision regulations, cell tower regulations and GIS mapping capabilities.

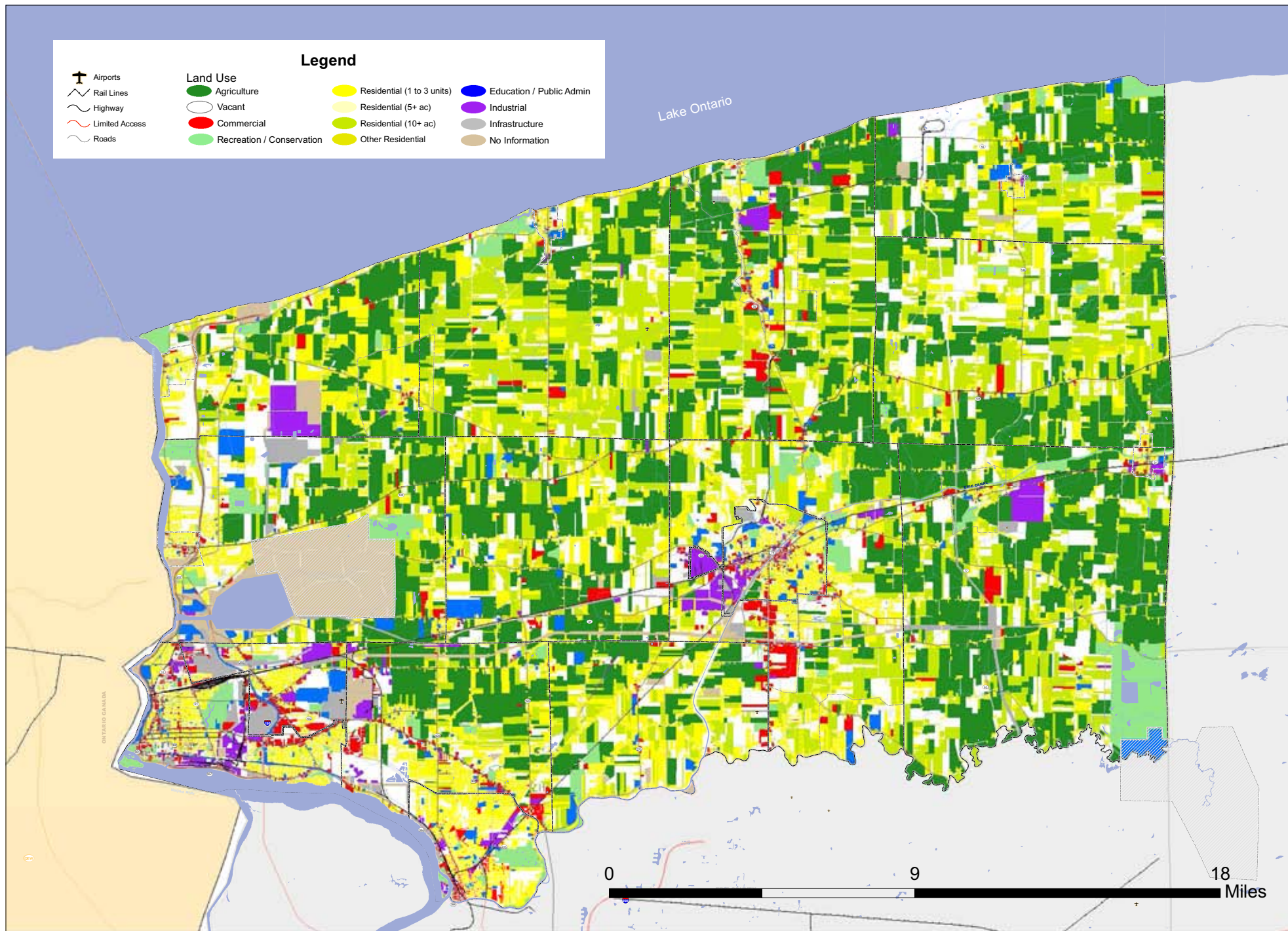
The County's Planning Census is an important benchmarking tool when comparing communities within the County as well as from outside County borders. The Niagara County Planning Census is summarized in Appendix B. The 2007 census indicates that of the County's 20 municipalities all have zoning regulations, all but one village and one town have comprehensive master plans, and 16 have subdivision regulations.

A New York State Legislative Commission Survey for 2008 indicates that

An increasing number of municipalities in New York continue to prepare and adopt written comprehensive plans, increasing from 64% of the State's approximately 1500 municipalities in 2004 to 69% in 2008.



*County Planning Census
see Appendix B*





Eighty-one percent of all counties in NYS have planning boards, 95% have farmland protection boards, 89% have farmland protection plans, 53% have comprehensive plans, and 42% have right-to-farm laws.

With completion of this comprehensive plan Niagara County now has all five of these important planning tools in place.



The percentage of parcels categorized as residential land use in Niagara County now exceeds that of active agriculture.

about 53% of the counties in New York State (about 30 of the 57 counties outside of New York City) have written comprehensive plans. Prior to this comprehensive plan Niagara County was among those counties that did not have a written comprehensive plan.

As the State's survey points out, county comprehensive plans are an important guidance tool for both county and local decision-makers in considering actions on related planning and land use development matters. This is particularly true in county reviews of local planning and zoning actions under Article 239-L and 239-M reviews under NYS General Municipal Law as well as county and town agricultural and farmland protection plans.

Eighty-one percent of all counties in New York have Planning Boards according to the 2008 Legislative Commission Survey, 95% have farmland protection boards, 89% have farmland protection plans and 42% have right-to-farm laws. With completion of this comprehensive plan Niagara County now has all five of these very important planning tools in place.

Land Use Trends and Conditions

Although still largely considered a mostly rural county, the percentage of parcels categorized as residential land use in Niagara County now exceeds that of active agriculture. This recent trend in land use is also discussed in Chapter III and resummarized below in Table V-1. Figure V-1 is a composite map of existing land use within Niagara County illustrating overall land use patterns. This composite was created as a compilation of individual land use category maps provided in Chapter III.

Based on the most recent landowner and property assessment data collected by the State, more land is now in various forms of residential use within the County than in agricultural or other uses. Vacant parcels, many of which are likely past agricultural lands, represent the third largest category of land use in the County.

Table V-1 Existing Land Use Categories in Niagara County

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	<i>Total Acres</i>	<i>Total Sq. Miles</i>
Residential	34	115,606	180
Agriculture	30	101,280	158
Vacant Land	16	54,150	85
Commercial	< 3	8,462	13
Recreation	< 2	5,026	8
Community Services	2	6,726	11
Industrial	< 2	5,525	9
Public Services	< 2	5,438	9
Conservation and Parks	2	6,684	10
Lakes, Reservations, etc.	4	14,908	23
Other – Roads, ROW's	< 4	13,448	21

New York State contains a total of approximately 7.6 million acres of farmland. Farmland loss continues to accelerate in New York State with almost 26,000 acres being developed each year – more than twice the amount of farmland that is being protected. This loss of farmland is largely due to decentralization of populations from traditional urban centers and inner suburbs into outer suburbs and rural areas as is the case within Niagara County.

In 1992, New York instituted the State's Farmland Protection Program. As of late 2006 the program had granted over \$116 million in funds to protect approximately 50,429 acres on 241 farms in 26 counties (American Farmland Trust 2007). Much of this funding has gone towards the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR's).

"Purchase of development rights is a voluntary approach that pays farmland owners to permanently extinguish the development rights on their property. The land remains privately owned and on the tax rolls. However, a permanent restriction, commonly called a conservation easement, is placed on the deed preventing any future non-agricultural development of the property. Participating farmers are eligible to receive the difference between the agricultural value of the land and the fair market value of the land.

This technique allows farmers to access equity held in the land, while protecting it for future agricultural use. Farmers have used the funding to reinvest in their farm businesses as well as to retire or transfer the farm to a new generation of farmers." (American Farmland Trust 2007).

The use of PDR's and similar Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's) in rural communities of Niagara County is a recommended action proposed in Niagara County's 1999 Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. The use of these programs should be explored as a potentially viable tool to direct future large-scale development to appropriate regions of each municipality.

Despite encroachment by development and the trend for conversion of farmlands to other uses, agriculture remains one of the County's most important industries. The combination of rich farmland and weather conditions tempered by the presence of Lake Ontario and natural features like the Niagara Escarpment make Niagara County one of the State's most important fruit growing regions. The County ranks 4th in NYS in fruit growing agriculture.

Vineyards and viticulture are also a major component of the County's agricultural base, with the combination of rich soils and relatively mild winters providing excellent conditions for growing wine grapes. The Niagara Wine Trail is the fastest growing wine trail in the State and has grown from three wineries in the past few years to twelve that are in operation in 2008.

United States Department of Agriculture's Census of Agriculture for 2007 indicates that Niagara County ranks 17th among the 62 counties in New York State in total value of agricultural products sold. Agricultural land is primarily used for grains, vegetables, fruit and nursery production. The County continues to rank high in the production of pears, peaches, plums, prunes, grapes and sweet cherries.

The number and size of farms in Niagara County have fluctuated over the past



Niagara County contains approximately 189,000 acres of farmland within six designated Agricultural Districts distributed among the County's 12 towns.



The number of farms in the County dropped 6% in 5 years between 1997 and 2002, then increased 8% between 2002 and 2007.

20 years. The number of farms dropped 6% in 5 years between 1997 and 2002, then increased 8% between 2002 and 2007. However, during the same period the average acreage per farm increased 13% between 1997 and 2002, then decreased 11% between 2002 and 2007.

An analysis of the conversion of farmland within the County to uses other than agriculture was completed as part of the preparation of this Plan. The results of the analysis confirm that this conversion in recent years was moving northeasterly across the County into rural towns, including Cambria, Newfane and Somerset. This trend in conversion of farmland to other forms of land use is illustrated in Figures V-2 and V-3.

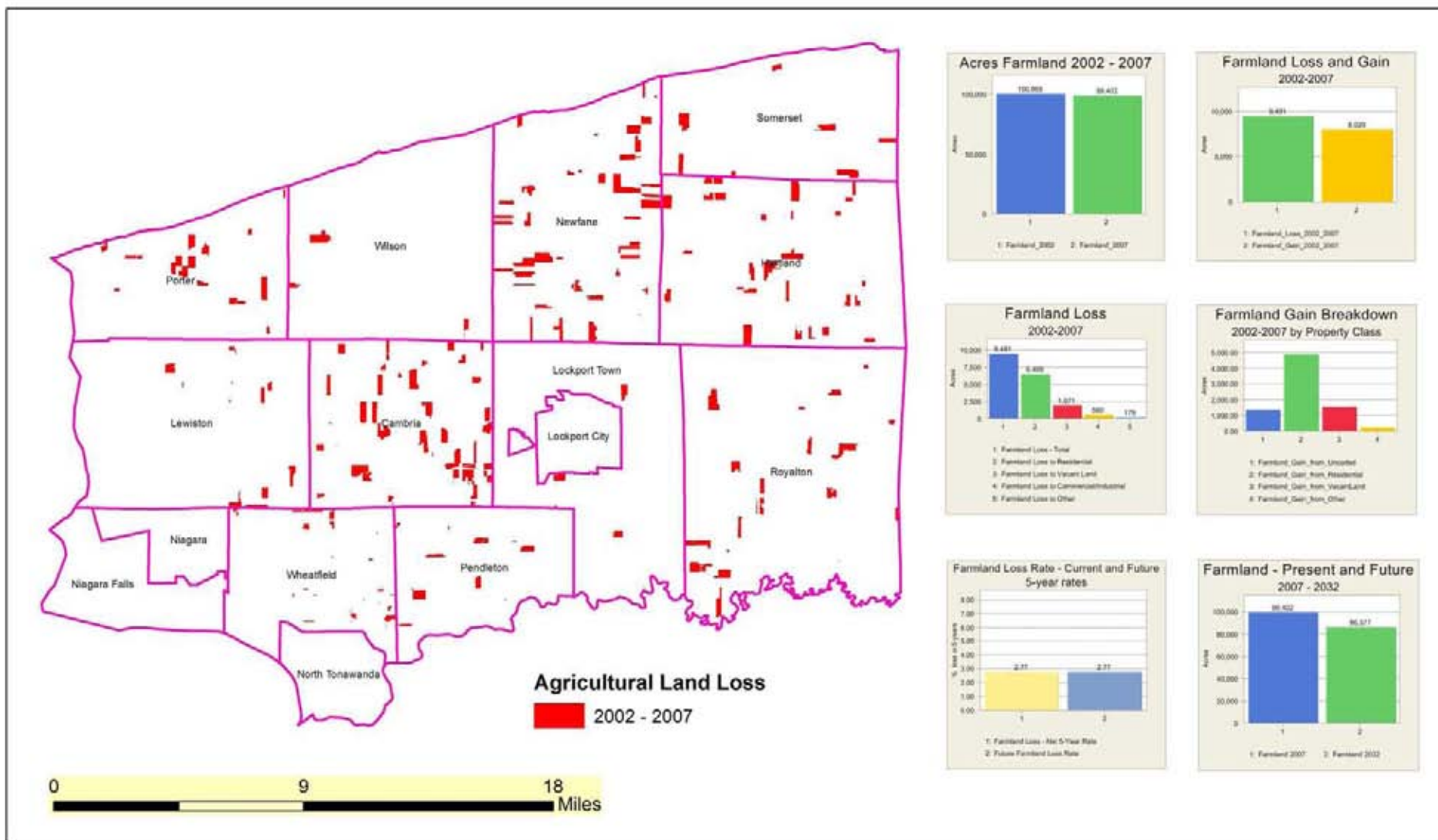
As noted previously in Chapter III, the County's population has been declining from a peak of 242,269 in 1960 to an estimated 214,845 in 2007, an overall 11.3% decrease. Niagara Falls remains the County's largest city, but its population fell by 45% between 1960 and 2000, from 102,400 to 55,600.

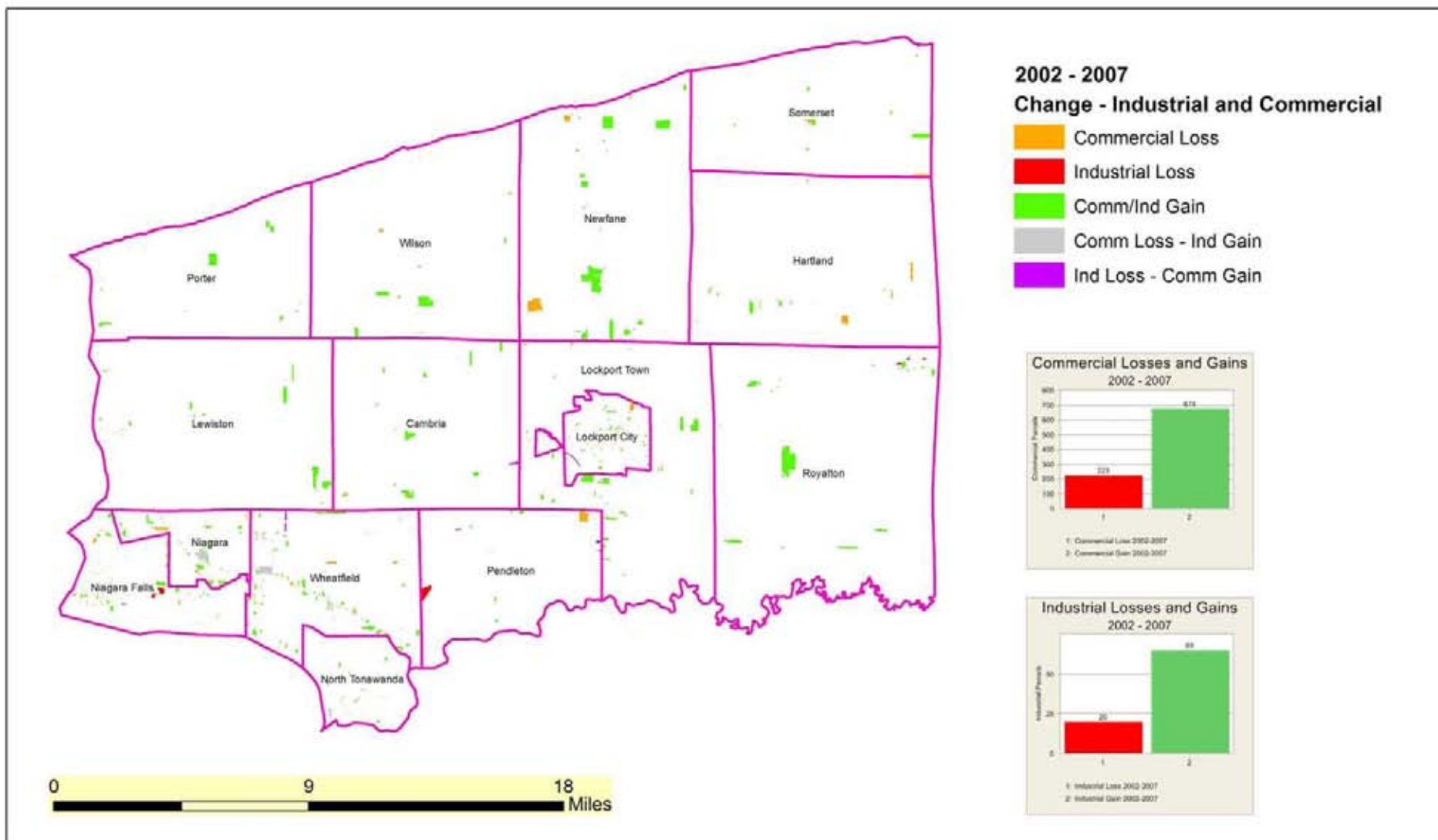
The distribution of population in Niagara County has been characterized by sprawling growth patterns over the last few decades, with almost all household growth concentrated in rural areas outside of, or on the fringes of its three cities. The number of households in rural areas of the County increased 33.4% between 1980 and 2000, while the number of households in developed areas increased by only one percent during the same period.

The Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth prepared in 2006 stated with regards to regional land use trends: "In the last half of the 20th Century, the [Erie-Niagara] region's urbanized area ... nearly tripled in size, expanding from 123 square miles in 1950 to 367 square miles in 2000. Despite only a modest increase in population over the same 50 year period, a little over 7 percent, residential, commercial, and institutional uses spread outward from the region's traditional centers to occupy large areas of the Towns of Niagara, Lockport and Wheatfield in Niagara County...."

Between 1980 and 2000, population increased dramatically in the southern half of the Town of Lockport, the westernmost part of the Town of Lewiston and the southern parts of the Towns of Wheatfield, Pendleton and Cambria. Housing permit data for the eight year period from 1999 to 2006 show a consistent pattern of investment in the Towns of Wheatfield and Lockport, where the average number of housing units permitted annually was 196 and 111, respectively.

This expansion of urbanized and developed areas, coupled with declining population in Niagara County, has meant population loss and disinvestment in both the most densely settled, inner city neighborhoods and in the less densely settled rural village and town centers. As stated in the Regional Framework, Niagara Falls, Lockport, and North Tonawanda have been seeing declining populations, as have the northernmost towns. Disinvestment results in considerable vacant and underutilized properties throughout the County. Many of these vacant and underutilized properties are identified as brownfields due to environmental contamination from past land uses. The presence of these brownfields in most communities presents serious potential effects on the environment and public health.





While substantial progress has been made, several hundred Niagara County brownfield sites remain in need of environmental assessments, notably Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, which are used to inform prospective owners of the environmental history of a site and to determine the potential need for further environmental investigation. According to Niagara County's 2006 brownfields inventory, 41 hazardous waste sites are still in need of Phase I investigations, as are approximately 200 petroleum-contaminated sites. Niagara County will continue to seek State and Federal funding to complete the necessary investigations required to advance the redevelopment of brownfield sites throughout the County. The redevelopment of these sites into useful properties is both an opportunity to benefit the environment and public health as well as providing increased economic development in communities. More information on the County's Brownfields program is provided in Chapter VI.

Natural Environment Trends and Conditions

Niagara County communities are rich in natural resources and natural features, many of which are unique to the County. The two features that quite literally stand out above all others in defining the natural and cultural heritage of the region are the Niagara Escarpment and Niagara Falls.

The Niagara Escarpment and Niagara Falls, which natural erosion of the escarpment created over eons of time, are geologic landforms unique to Niagara County. The Western New York Land Conservancy describes the Niagara Escarpment as "...a ridge of rock 100 – 150 feet high in some locations throughout the County. The Escarpment contains some of the best exposures of 405 to 500 million year old rocks and fossils of the Silurian and Ordovician periods to be found anywhere in the world."

Concerted efforts are underway to protect and preserve the Niagara Escarpment and its valuable ecosystems consisting of unique floral and faunal habitats. The Escarpment contributes significantly to the visual character of many communities in Niagara County, and to the region's economy as well. The combination of the Escarpment and proximity to Lake Ontario create microclimate conditions that, in combination with relatively flat, fertile farmlands, have supported generations of farmers.

The existing environmental conditions of Niagara County contribute to the success of wineries along the Niagara Wine Trail and other fruit growing areas in the County. The 2008 Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy indicates that Niagara County ranks 1st of all NY counties in production of pears, peaches, plums, prunes and sweet cherries and 4th in acreage of fruit grown statewide. Because of the important ties to local economies the natural resources that contribute to the success of agriculture in the County need to be maintained and protected especially in light of the conversion of farmlands that is taking place within the County.

The Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth described a number of "Heritage Assets" unique to Niagara County communities. These heritage

areas are based on the natural assets of the County. In addition to the Niagara Escarpment these heritage assets include: the Seaway Trail; the Erie Canal National Heritage Area; the Niagara National Heritage Area; the Niagara Wine Trail; and local waterfront areas in communities along the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and significant streams and tributaries in the County such as Tonawanda Creek and Eighteen Mile Creek. Along with the heritage areas, the County's rich natural environment includes prime farmland soils, diverse wetland complexes, floodplains and relatively intact riparian (stream) corridors which all contribute to local character and significant open space resources.

A composite map of Niagara County's natural resources is provided as Figure V-4. Individual maps of the resources that when compiled produced this composite map are provided in Chapter III.

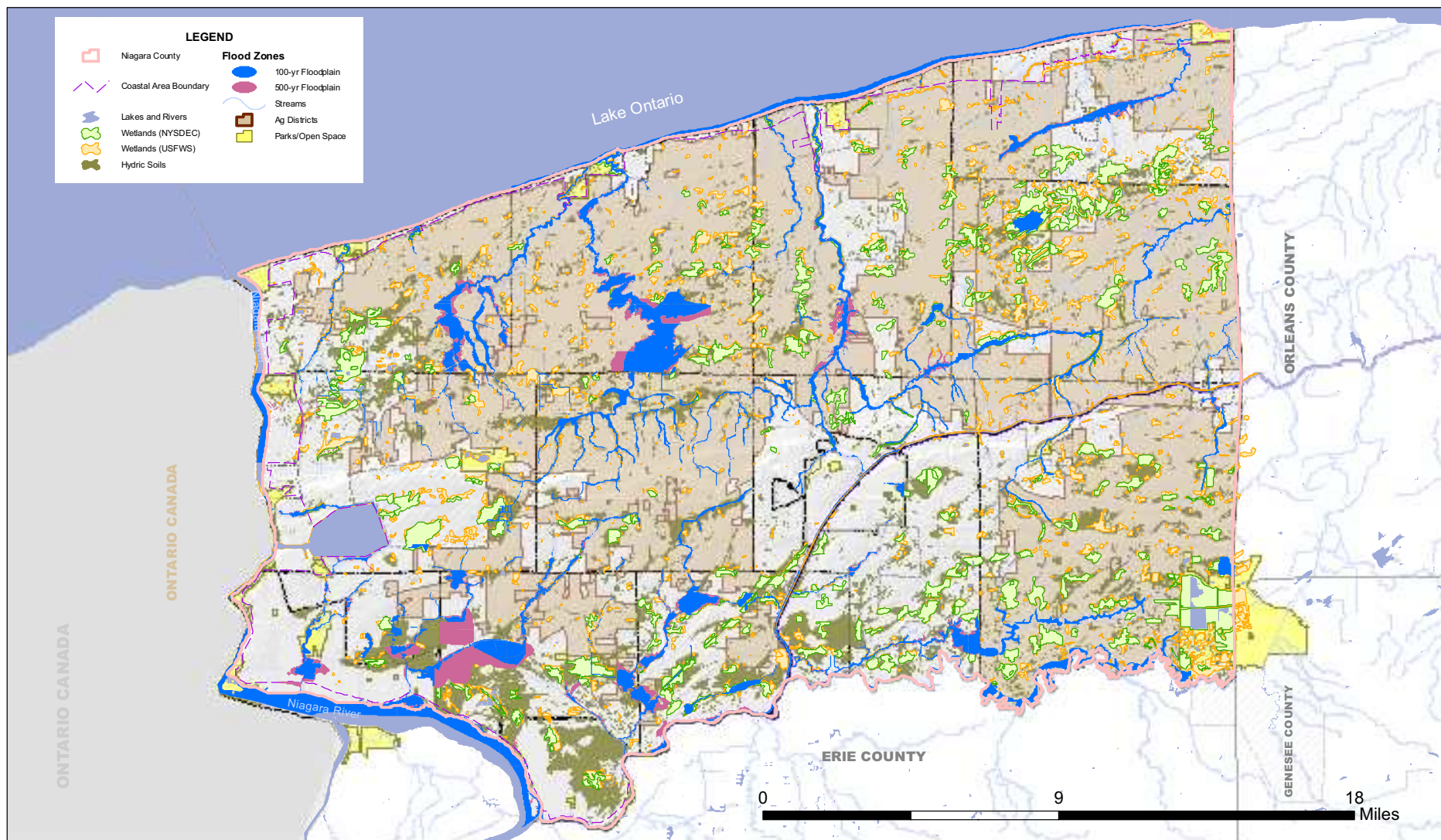
The Niagara River, Lake Ontario, the Erie/Barge Canal, Tonawanda Creek, Eighteen Mile Creek, Twelvemile Creek, the Niagara Power Project Reservoir and the many other water resources in the County all significantly contribute to the overall quality of life of Niagara County communities. These resources provide valuable aquatic and terrestrial habitats and ecosystems (there are 92 species of fish in the Niagara River alone), tourism and recreational opportunities and economic development opportunities. These natural assets contribute to each community's unique identity and character.

Numerous streams and small tributaries drain the two primary watersheds in the County. The Oak Orchard-Twelvemile Creek watershed drains the northern half of the County into Lake Ontario. The Niagara watershed drains the southern half of the County into the Niagara River.

Many streams and tributaries in the watersheds have large 100-year and 500-year floodplains associated with them, for example as in south-central portions of the Town of Wilson along the East Branch of Twelvemile Creek. These floodplains provide additional natural benefits in terms of wildlife habitats, and stormwater recharge into aquifers and groundwater resources.

Existing environmental features within the two watersheds include wetlands, streams, forest cover and other open spaces which help filter pollutants and limit adverse effects from erosion, stormwater runoff and other processes that may impact water quality of local waterways and ultimately Lake Ontario. As these natural systems become increasingly degraded and fragmented by sprawling development patterns their effectiveness in protecting the quality and quantity of local water resources is compromised.

Niagara County lies within the Great Lakes Basin which contains about one fifth of the world's freshwater supply. Although the Great Lakes are considered a source of a nearly inexhaustible supply of freshwater, only about one-percent of the water within the entire Basin is replenished each year and so the Great Lakes and the ecosystems supported by them are far more vulnerable to adverse impacts than many think (Ecojustice 2008).



Niagara County contains numerous areas of environmental sensitivity that support diverse wildlife habitats and functions as open space resources. In many cases, these areas provide additional benefits as opportunities for nature study and passive forms of recreation on public lands. An estimated 48,000 acres of potential Federal and State-regulated wetlands (approximately 14 percent of the County) are distributed throughout the County as shown in Figure V-4. The Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area in Royalton and the Hartland Swamp in Hartland are two of the County's most valuable open space resources.

State, County and local parklands also contribute to maintaining environmental quality and protecting environmental resources. There are ten State Parks in Niagara County, accounting for nearly 3,000 acres of public lands, and six County Parks with a total of more than 1500 acres and a multitude of local parks in municipalities across the County. Most public parklands are located along the waterfronts of Lake Ontario and the Niagara River, although a few are located in interior sections of the County. These parkland resources are also supplemented by the many beaches along the shoreline of Lake Ontario.

Issues & Opportunities

The status of land use, transportation and environmental conditions in Niagara County was discussed throughout the comprehensive planning process. The process sought information from Niagara County communities, the public and other stakeholders on what they considered to be the most important issues and opportunities specifically related to these topics. Information gathered from meetings, group discussions and other input received from stakeholders is summarized below by planning subregion.

Eastern Communities Subregion

Town of Hartland, Town of Royalton & Village of Middleport

Primary land use and transportation issues and challenges include:

- The preservation of farmland and viable agriculture is important to the character of rural communities.
- Sprawl should be controlled.
- Business and growth areas should be concentrated along main transportation corridors.
- Preserve historic buildings and neighborhoods.
- Open space is important to help sustain wildlife and to maintain the area's character.
- Emergency transportation plans need to be in place in the event of a train or rail crossing problem, for example in Middleport or in Gasport.
- It is important to find uses for vacant properties.
- Environmental problems and contamination issues hinder the development of many properties.
- The general condition of roads has deteriorated, and many are in need of significant maintenance.
- Dangerous intersections that need to be studied include:
 - o Slayton Settlement / Hartland
 - o Mountain Road/Royalton Center Road



*The County contains
10 State Parks with
about 3,000 acres and
6 County Parks with
another 1500 acres.*

- o Checker Tavern /Rt. 104
- o State / Main – Village, Rt. 104 – Hartland

Key land use and transportation assets and opportunities include:

- The Erie Canal corridor provides opportunities to expand tourism in the area. More visitors may be drawn to the Canal if water and electric facilities are provided for boats.
- The existing railroad in the area is an asset.
- Agriculture and productive farmlands are assets in the region.
- The rural corridor to Becker Farms may present agri-tourism more opportunities. Becker Farms is an important asset as a 340-acre working farm in Gasport.
- Need to expand maple sugar production.

Top 3 issues and challenges - land use & transportation

- Preservation of agricultural land & greenspace - protect against sprawl
- Concern over rail accident/derailing with railroad cars to the ethanol plant in Medina
- Vacancies along Canal corridor and negative effects this has on tourism

Top 3 assets and opportunities - land use & transportation

- Erie Canal corridor
- Becker Farms (agri-tourism)
- Railroad

Environmental issues include:

- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) facility – FMC present tire recycling and its related environmental quality concerns.
- FMC – creates potential water, soil, airborne issues with this facility. FMC – Middleport is a CAMU – (Corrective Action Management Unit).
- Natural gas wells – in Hartland – testing in farm areas raises concerns.
- There are pollution concerns regarding the dump on Griswold & Mountain Road.
- Several brownfields exist in the Village of Middleport.
- The Cold Storage property in Royalton is a brownfield site.

Environmental assets and opportunities

- Royalton Ravine and trails
- Vet's Park in Gasport
- Trails - want to expand in Hartland
- Parks, playground, and nature trails in Middleport
- Reservoir – Middleport to Royalton
- Improvements are needed on the trail network along Erie Canal.
- The Escarpment – has a positive effect on weather patterns
- Right-to-Farm laws – local law exists in Royalton
- Agri-tourism and open space lands are present opportunities
- Stone quarry
- Drainage – permanent easements are needed for maintenance in Hartland

Top 3 issues and challenges – environmental

- FMC/arsenic concerns
- Tire recycling and other “dumps” in the area

- Natural gas wells & testing

Top 3 assets and opportunities – Environmental

- Royalton Ravine
- Canal corridor
- Existing nature trails

Central Communities Subregion

Town of Cambria, Town of Lockport, City of Lockport, Town of Pendleton

Land use & transportation issues and challenges include:

- More parks & open space resources are needed
- The Niagara Escarpment district in Cambria and future development
- Preserving farmland – 80% of existing land in Cambria is farmland – per Cambria Comp Plan
- Pendleton at about a 22% existing agricultural land
- Residents consider development pressure low at this point.
- Residents would like communities to retain their small town character.
- Pendleton – has many new single-family homes
- Impacts to the road network need to be considered as the area develops:
 - o Must consider a corridor's capacity to handle large traffic volumes.
 - o Create 2nd outlets to developments to prevent overuse of roads.
 - o Campbell Boulevard has potential to serve as an economic development corridor.
 - o Bypass corridor near Lockport presents development opportunities.
 - o Plan streets as through streets, not dead ends.
 - o Need to plan ahead and consider alternative routes.
- Pendleton has a small percentage of commercial land use at present.

Land use & transportation opportunities

- The region has a rich agricultural heritage.
- Cambria presents a prime location for wineries.
- Pendleton and Lockport have town plans in place, and these should be incorporated in the countywide plan.

Top 3 issues and challenges - land use & transportation

- Lockport and Pendleton are developing, and plans are in place to help manage growth.
- Agricultural preservation in Cambria is an important issue.
- There is a conflict between economic development vs. farmland preservation, particularly along highway corridors.

Top 3 assets and opportunities – land use & transportation

- Existing farmland
- Existing and new wine trails
- Lockport and Pendleton plans are in place.

Environmental issues and challenges include:

- Preserve the Niagara Escarpment.
- Maintain an appropriate balance between farmland for agriculture and wildlife habitat.
- Floodplain locations need to be studied in the context of future climate change issues.
- Preserve and protect Eighteen-Mile Creek and open spaces.
- Several brownfield sites

Environmental opportunities

- Capitalize on recreational opportunities provided by creeks and streams.
- Encourage growth of wine industry and grape production.

Top 3 issues & challenges, opportunities & assets

- Preserve the Niagara Escarpment.
- Need to better balance agricultural lands and development needs that result in the loss of wildlife habitat.
- Floodplain encroachment along creeks and streams needs to be resolved, notably along 18 Mile Creek.

Lakefront Communities Subregion

Town of Somerset, Village of Barker, Town of Newfane, Town of Wilson, Village of Wilson

Key land use & transportation issues and challenges

- Maintain our vision (our visual character) as an agricultural community.
- Drainage issues are occurring and need to be resolved due to growing residential use and retracting agriculture
- Most residential development is along road fronts, creating difficulty for agricultural uses in behind parcels
- It would be advantageous to cluster residential areas
- How do we promote cluster developments and agricultural regions?
- What kind of incentives do we need to create this situation?
- We don't believe we have huge issues with regard to transportation
 - o One possible answer to one of the lesser transportation issues is the development of truck routes with proper maintenance of bridges and roads.
 - o A small issue is transportation needs for seniors
- The impediment created by the Army Corps of Engineers permitting for waterfront development is an issue.
- Raising lake levels may also hinder residential and waterfront development.
- Distance from NYS Thruway is a hindrance to development.

Land use & transportation opportunities include:

- We have two good main east-west routes (routes 18 & 104)
- An asset on the eastern end is the railway from/to Somerset area
- Olcott Harbor and Wilson Harbor have tremendous potential with regard to increased tourism.
- Stable/predictable weather patterns help opportunities in agriculture (grapes / wineries), industry (shipping), and energy (windmills)

Top 3 issues and challenges - land use & transportation

- Maintaining the visual character as an agricultural community
- Transportation; truck routes along the Lake – servicing industry and providing access to markets
- Army Corps permit requirements and regulations are impediments to development along the Lake and water levels in Lake Ontario

Top 3 assets and opportunities – land use & transportation

- Routes 18 and 104 access
- Olcott and Wilson harbors for tourism and commerce
- Rail access, stable climate/weather and wind power resources

Assets and opportunities by area

Somerset:

1. Agriculture
2. Waterfront – industry
3. Wind resources

Newfane

1. Agri-tourism
2. Olcott Harbor – a deep harbor
3. Medical facility

Wilson

1. Agri-tourism
2. Wilson Harbor
3. Tuscarora State Park

Key environmental issues and challenges include:

- Agriculture waste is a concern and a problem with regards to the large corporate farms
- Brownfield locations need to be redeveloped.
- 18-mile Creek has its environmental issues that need to be resolved
 - Reflects the industrial origins of the communities
- Old service stations have fuel tanks that make the sale of these properties difficult and keeps them off the tax rolls
- Drainage and ditching programs must be consistent throughout the towns with a coordinated countywide program.

Environmental assets and opportunities include:

- Lake Ontario – for tourism
- Lake Ontario – for industry
- Lake Ontario – for recreation

Top 3 environmental issues and challenges

- Agricultural waste and runoff
- Brownfield locations need to be remediated and redeveloped
- Water quality and drainage, 18 Mile Creek, drainage ditches along roads a need for countywide consistency with stormwater

Top 3 environmental assets and opportunities

- Lake Ontario
- Agriculture and Agri-tourism
- Existing harbors and State Parks

Lower River Communities Subregion

Town of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Village of Lewiston,
Village of Youngstown

Key land use and transportation issues include:

- There doesn't seem to be much that is changing or happening in this area
 - o There is some residential growth and the golf course in the Town of Lewiston
- Not much public transportation is available in this area
 - o Plans to extend an existing bike / pedestrian path
 - o Possible future cross-river ferry being considered
 - o Marina in Youngstown has new owners
- All these communities are very similar
- Some development, mostly in the Town of Lewiston, but there is a lot of residential potential
- Available lands for residential development also exist in Youngstown and Porter

Land use and transportation opportunities include:

- River & lakefronts
- River & lake festivals
- Fort Niagara
- The ArtPark
- Residential development potential

Top 3 land use and transportation issues and challenges

- Not much change is occurring
- Lewiston has – bike path, golf course, ferry, marina opportunities
- Development opportunities also exist in Youngstown and Porter

Top 3 land use and transportation assets and opportunities

- River & lakefronts development
- ArtPark
- Fort Niagara

Environmental issues and challenges

- Lake Ontario Ordinance Works (LOOW) Project
- CWM (hazardous wastes)
- Modern Corporation solid wastes
- Cleanup, control & oversight needed on contaminated lands

Environmental opportunities

- Lake & riverfronts
- Agri-business

Top 3 environmental issues and challenges

- Ordinance works – cleanup, control and oversight needed

Top 3 environmental assets and opportunities

- Agriculture
- Lakefront
- Riverfront

Upper River Communities Subregion

City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Town of Wheatfield,
City of North Tonawanda

City of Niagara Falls

Key land use, transportation and environmental issues and challenges include:

- Absentee landlords is a real problem in the City.
- LaSalle Expressway needs a bike path across communities
- Need more discussion over the LaSalle Expressway and future development
- The City has all transportation-related issues, including existing condition of streets and sidewalks and clearing snow from streets – these present problems especially for senior citizens
- Brownfields that span across municipal lines
 - Brownfield Opportunity Area lie adjacent to Niagara Falls boundary
- The Wal-Mart relocation to the Niagara Falls High School site
- Robert Moses Parkway redevelopment project creates issues in Downtown Niagara Falls

Land use, transportation and environmental assets and opportunities include:

- Niagara Falls
- Upper & Lower River and riverfronts
- Cayuga Creek restoration – provides public access

Town of Wheatfield

Key land use, transportation and environmental issues and challenges include:

- 102nd Street landfill covers local waterfront
- Issues with the transition from dense to less dense developments is affecting community character
- Changes from open space to suburban uses
- Residential trends, we are becoming more suburban in character
- Need for mixed-use development in hamlets
- Buffers needed along streams and floodplains to restrict development
- Oz project presents concerns regarding dealing with RVs, traffic and campers
- Water quality issues related to stormwater drainage and sewer infrastructure from new development
- Bus services needed for northern towns.

Land use, transportation and environmental assets and opportunities include:

- Riverfront – new park
- Farmers are a major asset, we need to keep agriculture viable, and protect farmland – using PDR's
- Niagara Falls Airbase

City of North Tonawanda

Key land use, transportation and environmental issues and challenges include:

- Water quality issues
- Waterfront and Niagara River / Tonawanda Creek – restoration areas are needed
- Brownfields present huge challenges involving:
 - o Redevelopment and cleanup
 - o Transition from waterfront areas
 - o Landfills in general like “Mt. Garbage”
 - o Need accurate information on brownfields, conditions, etc.
- Concerns with air quality issues related to new projects, for example potential biofuels plant proposed for Wheatfield
 - o Smokestack concerns with projects and impacts on air quality
- Water quality / sediment contamination / contamination from industrial dumps, sewers, stormwater

Land use, transportation and environmental assets and opportunities include:

- Existing waterfront
- Preservation of open space and wildlife habitat
- Gratwick Park future uses
- Archeological resources of the area
- Wetlands preservation is needed for better flood control

Land Use Suitability Analysis

Land use within Niagara County in its most general sense is an umbrella topic under which many other topics, issues and opportunities need to be considered. This is reflected in the information provided as stakeholder input presented above. Topics related to land use include transportation; the natural environment; economic development; County services, facilities, infrastructure; education; and public health and safety. Because it is so all encompassing, special emphasis is placed on land use in this chapter and elsewhere in this Plan.

A focus on land use is typical for traditional comprehensive plans. This focus is also consistent with State Municipal Law that places local responsibility for land use decisions under “Home Rule” with cities, towns and villages. The countywide focus on land use as provided in this Plan is intended to guide County and regional decisions that may affect land use and provide background information to local communities for their own land use planning initiatives.

This Comprehensive Plan considers land use from different perspectives including more regional initiatives that are summarized in Chapter II. Existing land use patterns and trends identified in Chapter III can also be considered in addressing potential future land use conditions from a countywide perspective. Local land use planning initiatives are also discussed in Chapter IV. Information in this Chapter is countywide in its perspective and intended to fill in the gap in information between more regionally-oriented initiatives, such as the Erie/Niagara Regional Framework, the Niagara River Greenway Plan and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Plan, among others and local municipal plans.

In order to understand and appreciate the complexity of land use and related issues, an analysis was performed to provide information on possible future land use trends and scenarios in the County. A land use suitability analysis was undertaken in response to the identification of issues and concerns expressed throughout the planning process by the public and other stakeholders over uncontrolled sprawl and the potential implications it is having, or may have in the future, on communities throughout the County.

The suitability analysis included the use of GIS parcel data obtained as baseline data from County and State sources. GIS mapping techniques and scenario planning software were used to identify areas in the County that, based upon available data and information, appear to be most suitable for future growth, development, and redevelopment. Conversely, the analysis described below also identifies those areas of the County that appear to be most suitable for resource management, protection and/or conservation.

Methodology

Using *CommunityViz* as a scenario planning GIS software, a series of future development and resource suitability maps of Niagara County were produced. These maps provide significant value as a guide in making land use and related decisions on transportation, infrastructure and public services that cross municipal boundaries. The maps presented in this chapter graphically illustrate where investment in infrastructure and public services should be made at County, regional and local levels. The analysis can serve as a decision-making guide to help direct development/redevelopment to appropriate areas while at the same time managing and protecting the County's irreplaceable resources such as prime farmland, natural habitats, open spaces and rural character.

An interactive suitability analysis using *CommunityViz* was prepared to identify areas and clusters of parcels in Niagara County that appear to be well-suited for development or redevelopment based on available data. These areas are referred to as ***Potential Development/Redevelopment Areas***.

Conversely, the analysis provides valuable insight into areas of the County that are not well suited for development because they provide important value to Niagara County communities in other ways as potentially irreplaceable natural resources. These areas are referred to in the analysis as ***Natural Resource Areas***.

The results of the land use suitability analysis should be considered as a possible starting point for further discussions and decision-making at County, regional and local levels relative to land use, transportation, public infrastructure and service needs.

Potential Development/Redevelopment Areas – Areas considered potentially the most appropriate and/or most suitable for further growth and development, infill development, redevelopment and public investment. In general these areas exhibit:

- Consistency with local plans and zoning
- In-place or nearby infrastructure (water, sewer, road networks)

necessary to support development and redevelopment

- In-place or nearby facilities/services to support and facilitate growth and development such as emergency services (police and fire), schools and shopping areas

Natural Resource Areas – Areas considered the most appropriate for natural resource protection, conservation, management and/or resource enhancement/restoration emphasizing sustainable management practices. These areas exhibit:

- Large or contiguous environmentally sensitive lands such as 100-year floodplains, NYS DEC wetlands, Federal (NWI) wetlands greater than 10 acres, riparian corridors, significant woodlands, and wildlife habitats
- Farmlands in NYS agricultural districts containing prime, unique, and/or soils of Statewide importance
- Significant natural and geologic features

The suitability analysis includes 11 measures that can each be weighted dynamically using “slider bars” provided in the *CommunityViz* software. These measures are briefly summarized below.

1. ENVIRONMENT - Overlap with combined environmental constraints data -- a higher percentage of a parcel’s area overlapping environmentally sensitive areas results in a lower development suitability score. A lower score represents less suitability for development, but greater importance for resource protection. Environmentally sensitive areas considered include 100-year floodplains, agricultural district areas with prime agricultural soils, stream/riparian corridors, and wetlands including all State-designated (NYS DEC) wetlands and potential Federal (NWI) wetlands mapped as larger than 20 acres in size.

2. SMART GROWTH - Proximity to the currently defined potential development or redevelopment areas -- closer distances from individual parcels to identified growth center boundaries results in a higher development suitability score. These centers of existing, planned growth or future development areas (see Figure V-27) were obtained from local plans and/or discussions with community representatives. The use of these centers in the analysis is consistent with smart growth practices and principles of sustainability that emphasize the importance of directing development to existing locations where infrastructure and services are available.

3. INFRASTRUCTURE - Overlap with sewer districts (Yes/No) -- parcels get the highest score (100) if in a sewer district or the lowest score (0) if they are not.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE - Proximity to major roads -- parcels get a higher score if it is near a major road primarily defined as State roadways.

5. CURRENT SOCIAL FABRIC - Proximity to existing community anchors – defined as parcels with NYS property class codes of 452 (Neighborhood Shopping Centers), 454 (Large Retail Food), 460-469 (Banks and Office Buildings), 480-489 (Multi-Use), 540-549 (Indoor Sports), 611 (Libraries), 640-642 (Health), 652 (Government Offices), 681 (Cultural Facilities), 710-714 (Manufacturing except for 715). These uses provide existing local daily forms of services and by their presence may encourage further growth or development.

6. AVAILABLE SPACE - Vacant (Yes/No) -- parcels get the highest score (100) if

they have a “vacant” NYS property class code (300 - 399). Otherwise, they get the lowest score (0). Vacant parcels have development/redevelopment potential.

7. PUBLIC SERVICE - Available School Capacity -- parcels get higher scores if they are located in school districts with higher percentages of available school capacity. Three school districts did not have recent capacity data for 2006-2007. A 2004-2005 value was used for the Star Point district. A value of 80.65% was calculated for the Newfane district based on 2005-2006 Middle School/High School data. A placeholder “best guess” value was used for the Royalton/Hartland district. The assumption is that available school capacity may facilitate or not hinder development.

8. PUBLIC SERVICE - Proximity to Fire Stations -- parcels get higher scores if they are near existing fire stations. Often fire stations are near other important public services that may facilitate development.

9. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS - Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ) - TAZ based population projections -- parcels get higher scores if located in TAZ’s with higher percentages of projected population growth (see Figures V-20, 21 and 22). This measure uses the TAZ-based population projection data from the Niagara County MPO (GBNRTC).

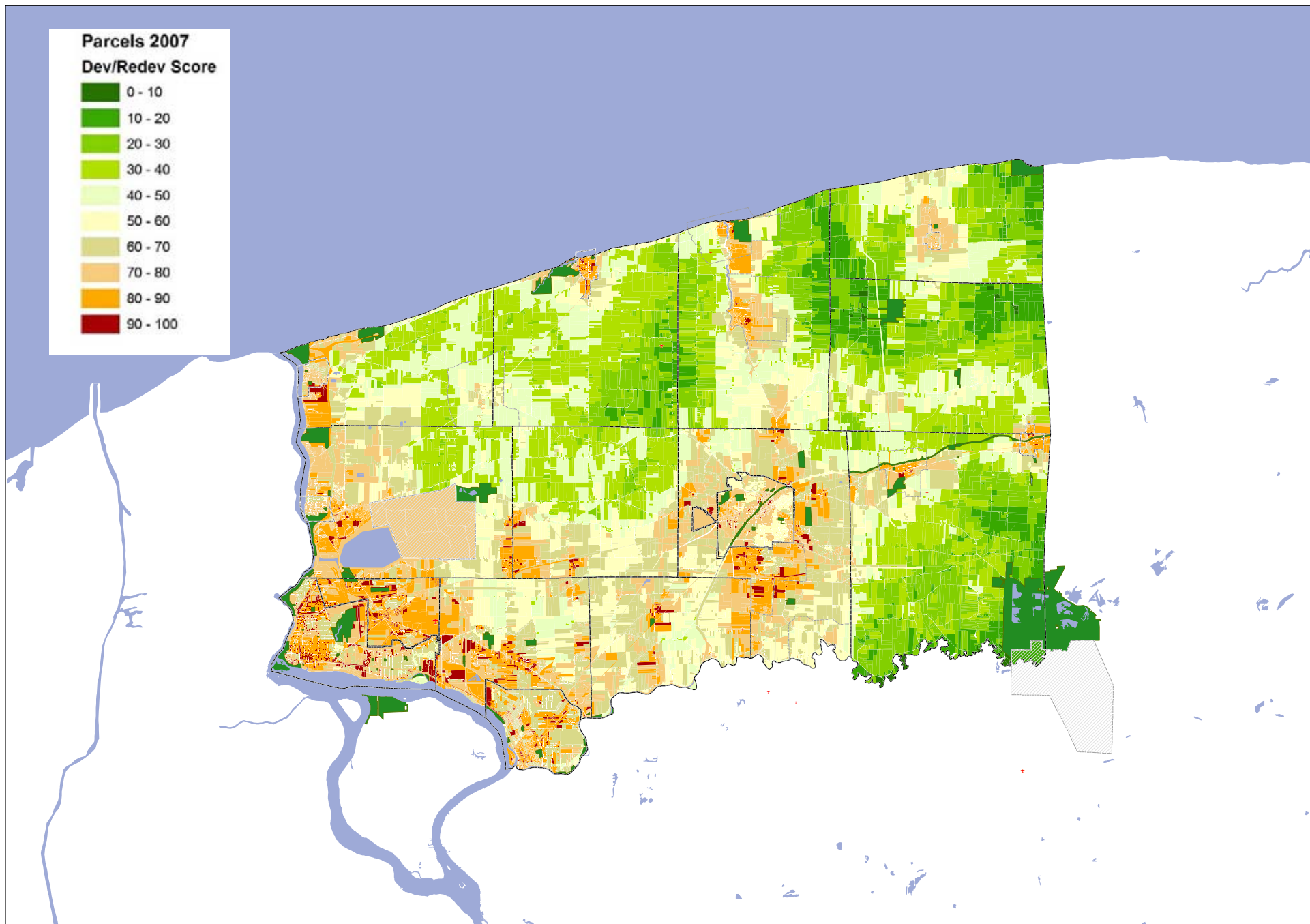
10. AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION - (Yes/No) Parcels get the lowest score (0) if they are located in an agricultural district. Otherwise they get the highest score (100). The assumption is that agricultural districts exist because of the value provided by existing agriculture and the recognized need to protect these areas from fragmented development.

11. CURRENT ZONING - Appropriate zoning designation (Yes/No) -- parcels get the highest score (100) if zoned or “near” commercial (not highway commercial), business, light industrial (LI in urban/suburban areas, LI and General I in rural areas), mixed use, multi-family residential, or PUD (except Somerset). Parcels with environmental remediation sites are excluded from the subset of appropriately zoned parcels. However, these locations have been mapped as provided in the countywide suitability maps. “Near” is defined as parcels overlapping the following buffer distances of appropriately zoned parcels: 1/16-mile in urban areas, 1/8-mile in suburban areas, and 1/4-mile in rural areas as defined by the countywide community type matrix provided in this chapter. All parcels not zoned or near appropriate zoning are given the lowest score (0).

Suitability Results

The results of the *CommunityViz* analysis are presented as a series of suitability maps beginning with Figure V-5. Figure V-5 is a composite map of the entire County that conceptually illustrates areas considered to be most suitable for development based upon the analysis of the weighted measures identified above. The analysis also identified those areas that may be most suitable for some form of resource protection depending on suitability scores.

Parcels are scored on a basis of 1 to 100 points and divided into ten levels of conceptual development suitability as identified in Figure V-5. Scores at the lowest end of a scale, for example from 1 to 30 are considered the least suitable



or appropriate for development/redevelopment primarily due to the presence of environmentally sensitive resources. These resources may include floodplains, wetlands or agriculturally important soils among others. The lower the suitability score, the more important these resources may need to be considered for some form of protection, management, restoration and/or enhancement. These decisions may be most appropriately done by and among local municipalities, perhaps as intermunicipal agreements, and implemented through municipal comprehensive planning processes, zoning ordinances and other land use regulations.

Parcels receiving the highest scores are considered to be the most suitable for development possibly due to the lack of environmentally sensitive resources or the presence of other factors considered capable of facilitating development such as the presence of infrastructure or proximity to existing services. Scores in the range of, for example, 70 to 100 are considered most suitable for development and redevelopment. In most cases the highest scores are in and around already developed areas consistent with smart growth principles.

Using the Suitability Maps

As stated previously, the suitability maps are intended to be a starting point for more advanced planning and discussions at local, subregional and regional levels. This information is also intended to provide guidance for decision makers and can be used by County Planners to assist in local resource protection efforts and by others including the County Planning Board as part of its review of private sector projects. This information will also be useful at the County level, for example as updates are made to the County's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan and as decisions are made with regards to where capital improvements in public infrastructure or services should occur.

The analysis is not intended to indicate where or how individual parcels or properties should be developed. Local zoning should dictate those uses, but the maps may be used by local municipalities in updating their plans and ordinances. The suitability maps are most useful to illustrate where larger scale development, for example residential subdivisions may be suitable. The maps may also be useful in determining the cumulative effects of development.

Large scale development often requires new or expanded support infrastructure (roads, sewer, water) and services (education, fire, police, retail). Initially developers may cover the cost for installation of infrastructure, but long term maintenance and upgrades often fall upon local and County governments. By directing and encouraging development to those areas most suitable to it these costs can be contained or reduced to the benefit of taxpayers. Likewise potentially adverse cumulative effects on the environment from development can be mitigated.

Consistent with sustainable development and resource protection principles, development and redevelopment should be directed to locations within or adjacent to existing developed urban, suburban and rural areas where infrastructure and services are already in place or relatively easy to access or upgrade. The suitability maps illustrate these locations nicely as locations that rank higher in suitability score and trend in colors ranging from tan to red. Areas illustrated on the suitability maps in various shades of green are considered less suitable for large-scale development involving multiple acres than those areas shown in various shades of

tan, orange and red. The darker the shade of green the less suitable that area may be for development, but more important for resource protection.

Greenfield locations for example, tracts of vacant farmland in rural areas, should not be prioritized for development until other alternatives, such as redevelopment of existing vacant areas or underutilized areas, including brownfields have been considered. Leapfrog development patterns, including linear development along highway frontage should be discouraged in favor of more concentrated and concentric forms of development around existing communities where access to highways and services can be provided from fewer curb cuts and access points. Concentrated development will also protect the capacity levels and safety of existing roadways from being compromised.

Figures V-5a, 5b and 5c conceptually show the suitability for development/ redevelopment of rural, suburban and urban communities. As part of the planning process and to determine how different planning principles and techniques could possibly be applied to various development conditions and scenarios, existing communities in the County were each placed into one of six categories for planning purposes only as shown in Table V-2. These categories identify the overall character of each of the 20 municipalities in the County as being either urban, suburban or rural in nature.

The relative stage of development that each community may be experiencing is also categorized in table V-2 in very general terms ranging from being mostly developed, to communities experiencing development, and those that are relatively undeveloped. These categories are generally consistent with similar categories in the Framework for Regional Growth. Figures V-6 through V-16 provide additional background mapping specific to each of the 11 measures factored into the suitability analysis. Figures V-17 through V-19 summarize the results of the suitability analysis in terms of vacant and agricultural lands. Figures 20, 21 and 22 identify different population projection scenarios for the County based on no growth, some growth (Cornell University) and moderate growth (MPO), respectively.

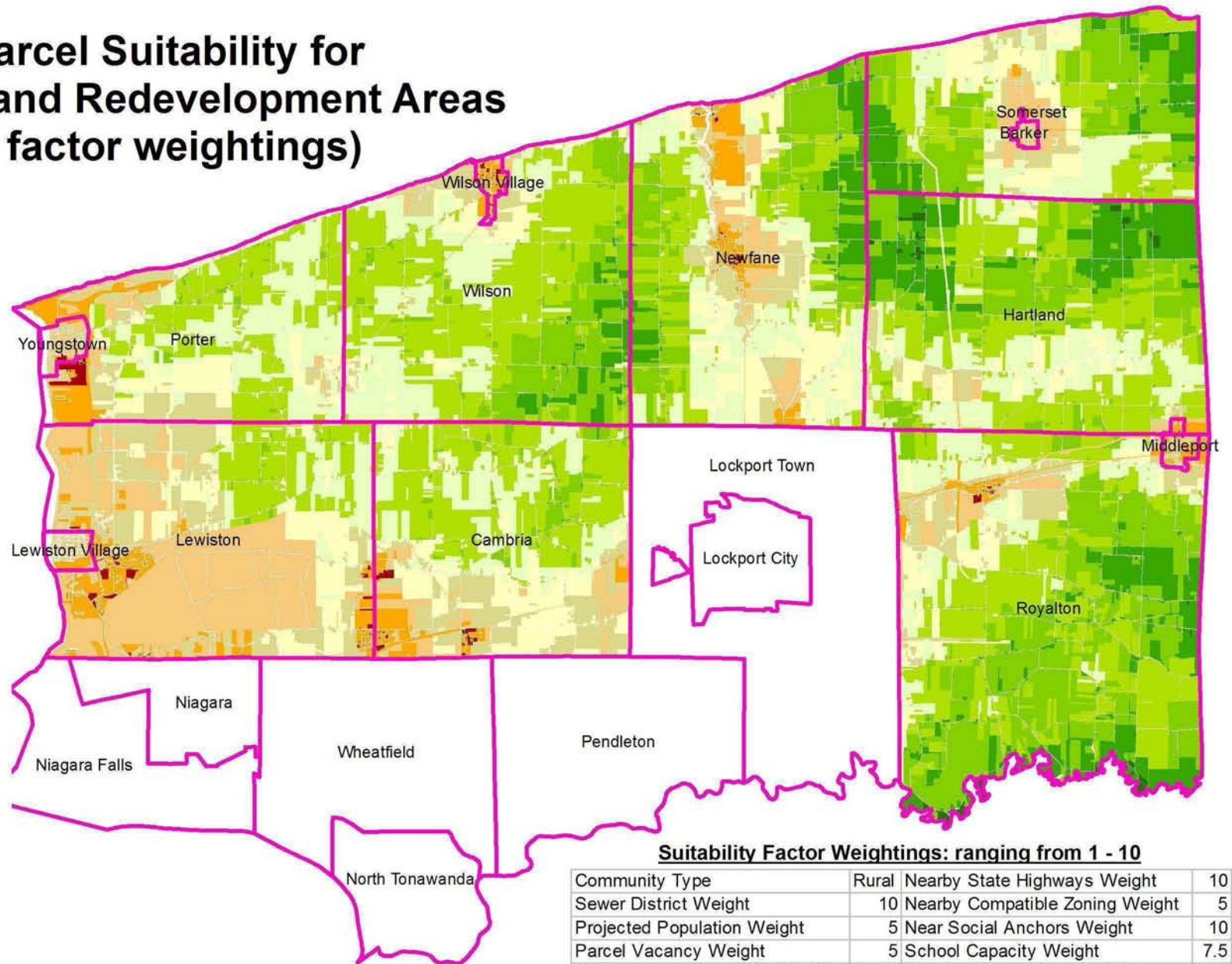
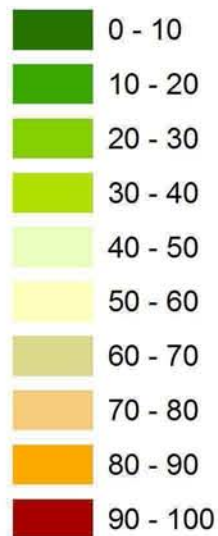
Table V-2 Land Use & Development Matrix

	<i>Developed</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Undeveloped</i>
<i>Urban</i>	C. Lockport C. Niagara Falls C. N. Tonawanda	N/A	N/A
<i>Suburban</i>	T. Niagara V. Lewiston V. Youngstown	T. Lockport T. Wheatfield T. Pendleton	N/A
<i>Rural</i>	V. Barker V. Middleport V. Wilson	T. Cambria T. Lewiston T. Newfane T. Porter T. Wilson	T. Hartland T. Royalton T. Somerset

C = City, V = Village, T = Town

Rural Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas (mixed factor weightings)

Parcels 2007 Dev/Redev Score



Suitability Factor Weightings: ranging from 1 - 10

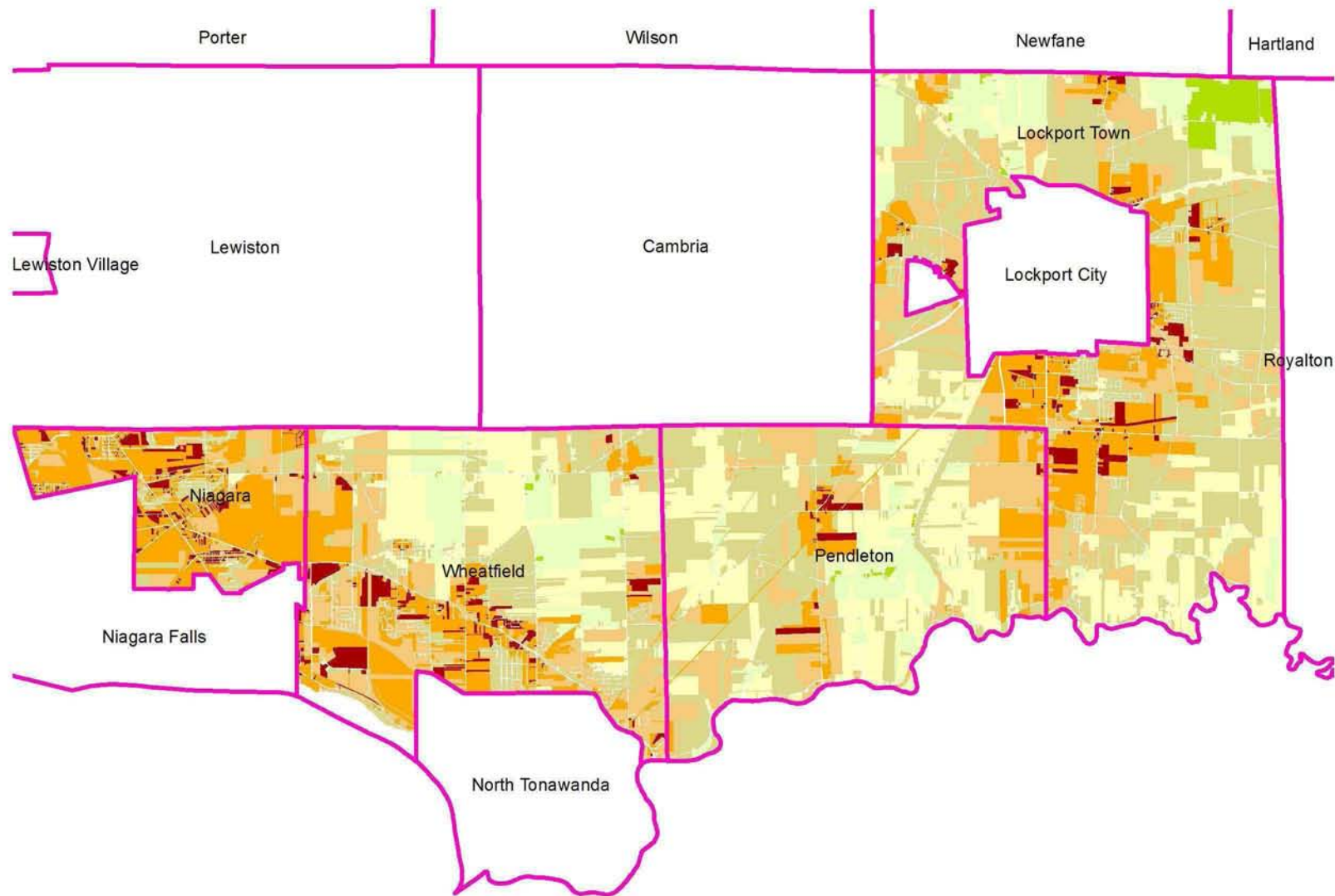
Community Type	Rural	Nearby State Highways Weight	10
Sewer District Weight	10	Nearby Compatible Zoning Weight	5
Projected Population Weight	5	Near Social Anchors Weight	10
Parcel Vacancy Weight	5	School Capacity Weight	7.5
Environmental Protection Weight	10	Nearby Fire Stations Weight	10
Near Sketch Areas Weight	10	Ag Protection Weight	10



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**Rural Parcel Suitability for
Development and Redevelopment Areas**

**Figure
V.5a**



Parcels 2007 Dev/Redev Score



Suburban Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas (mixed factor weightings)

Suitability Factor Weightings: ranging from 1 - 10

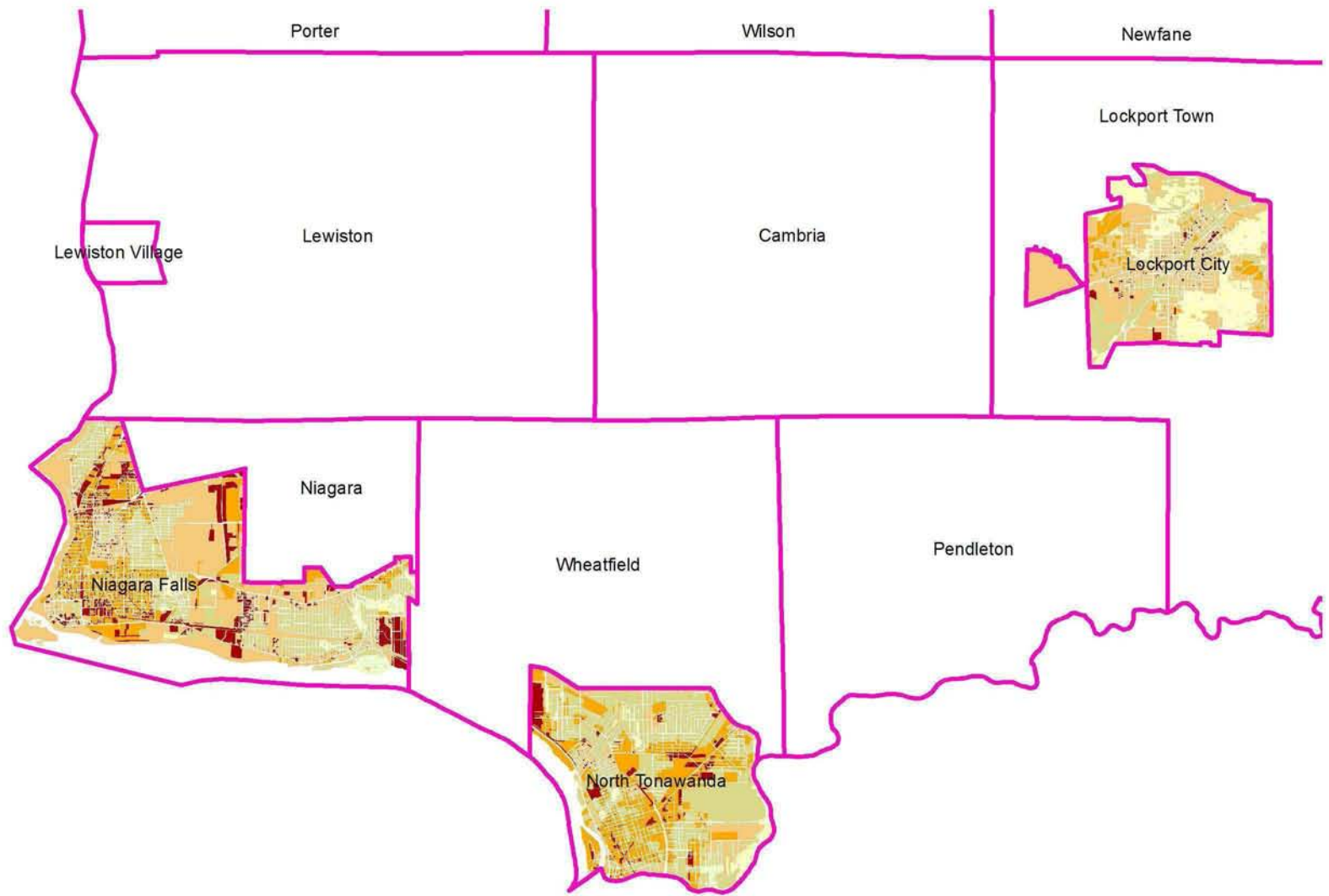
Community Type	Suburban	Nearby State Highways Weight	7.5
Sewer District Weight	10	Nearby Compatible Zoning Weight	10
Projected Population Weight	5	Near Social Anchors Weight	7.5
Parcel Vacancy Weight	7.5	School Capacity Weight	7.5
Environmental Protection Weight	10	Nearby Fire Stations Weight	7.5
Near Sketch Areas Weight	7.5	Ag Protection Weight	7.5



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**Suburban Parcel Suitability for
Development and Redevelopment Areas**

**Figure
V.5b**



Urban Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas (mixed factor weightings)

Suitability Factor Weightings: ranging from 1 - 10

Community Type	Urban	Nearby State Highways Weight	5
Sewer District Weight	10	Nearby Compatible Zoning Weight	10
Projected Population Weight	5	Near Social Anchors Weight	5
Parcel Vacancy Weight	10	School Capacity Weight	7.5
Environmental Protection Weight	10	Nearby Fire Stations Weight	5
Near Sketch Areas Weight	5	Ag Protection Weight	5



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Urban Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas

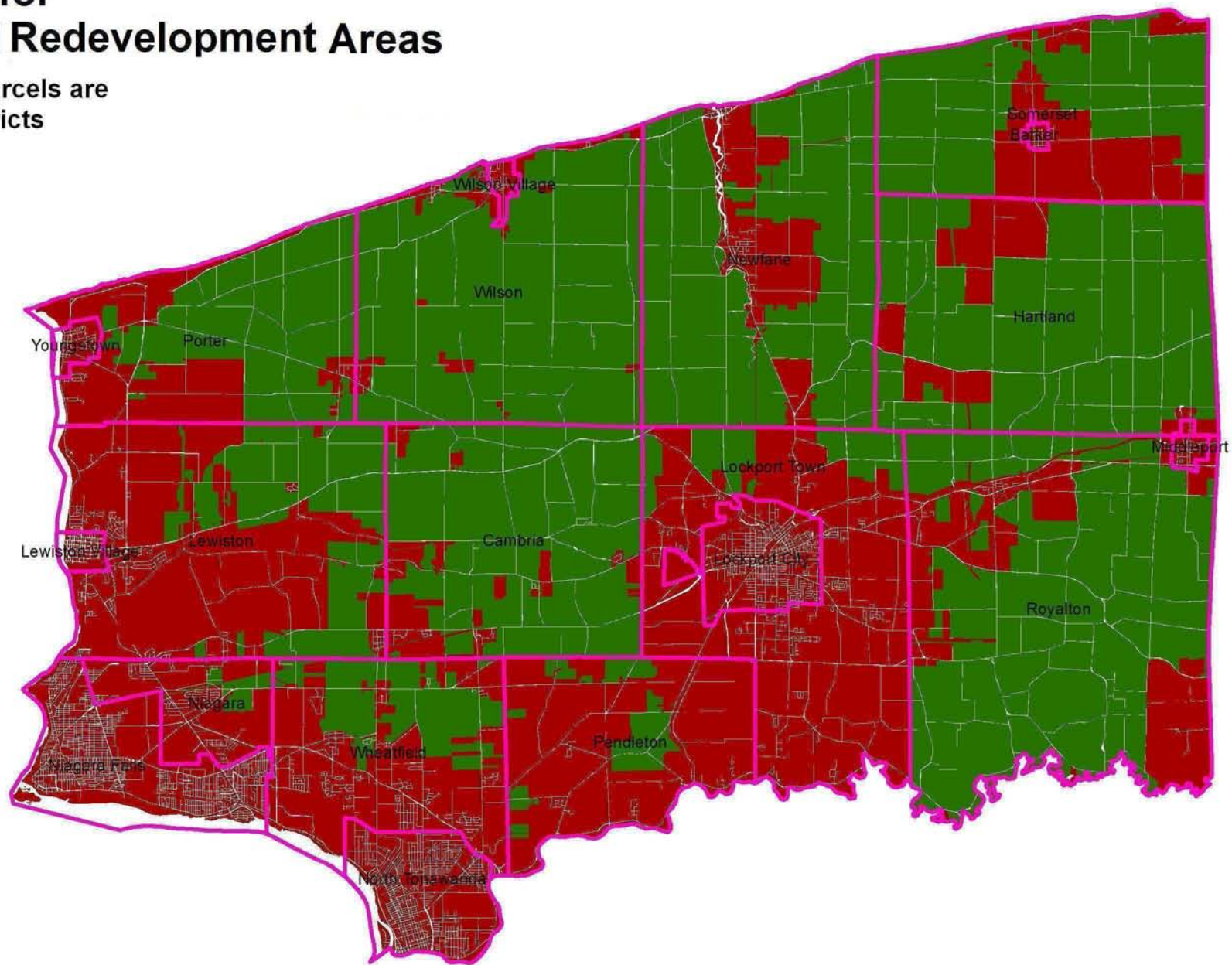
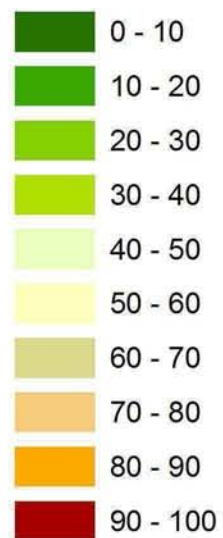
Figure V.5c

Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas

Based on whether or not parcels are located in Agricultural Districts

Parcels 2007

Dev/Redev Score



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Parcel Suitability for
Development and Redevelopment Areas
Based on Location of Agricultural Districts

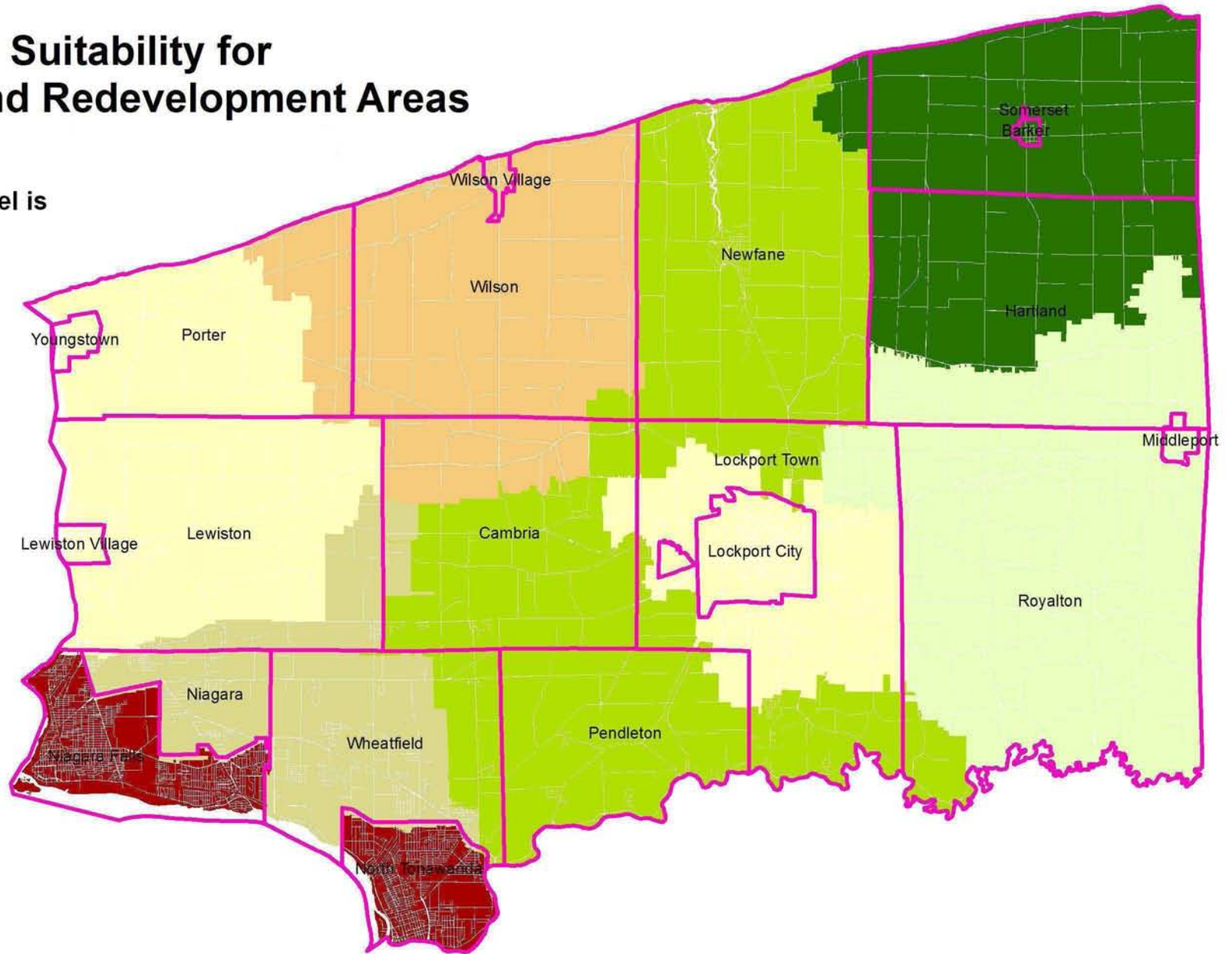
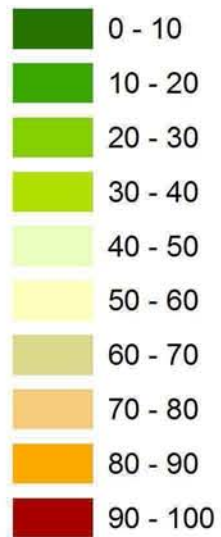
Figure
V.6

Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas

Based on the available capacity of the school district in which the parcel is located

Parcels 2007

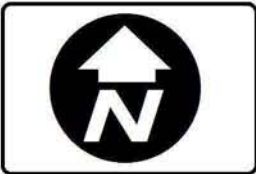
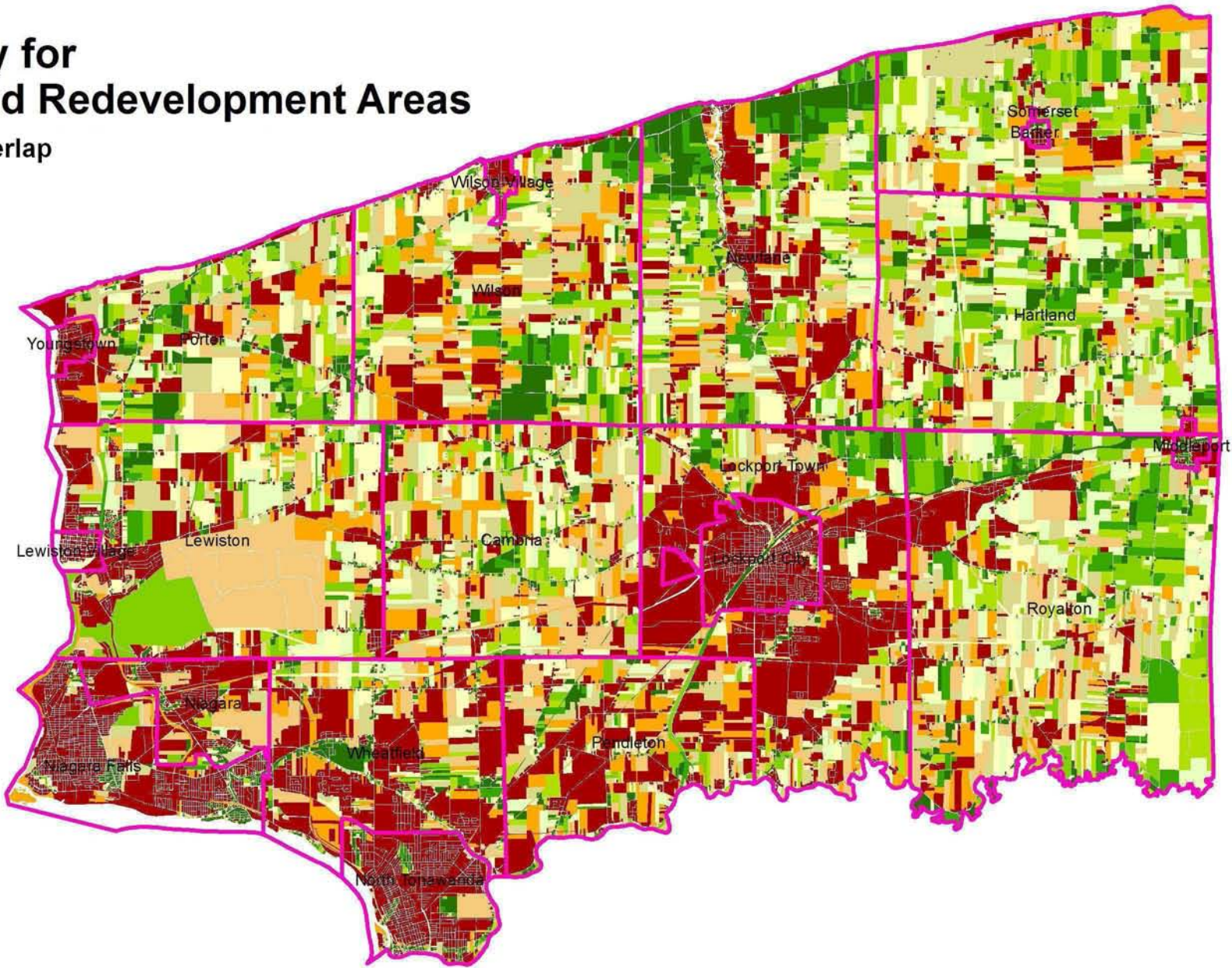
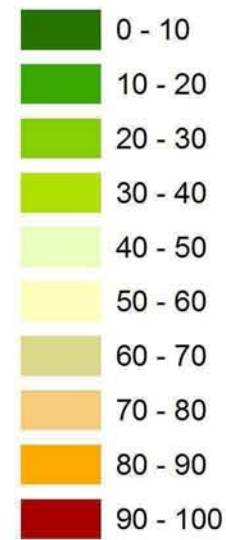
Dev/Redev Score



Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas

Based on the parcel's overlap with important natural resources

Parcels 2007
Dev/Redev Score



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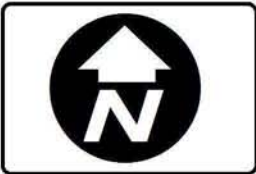
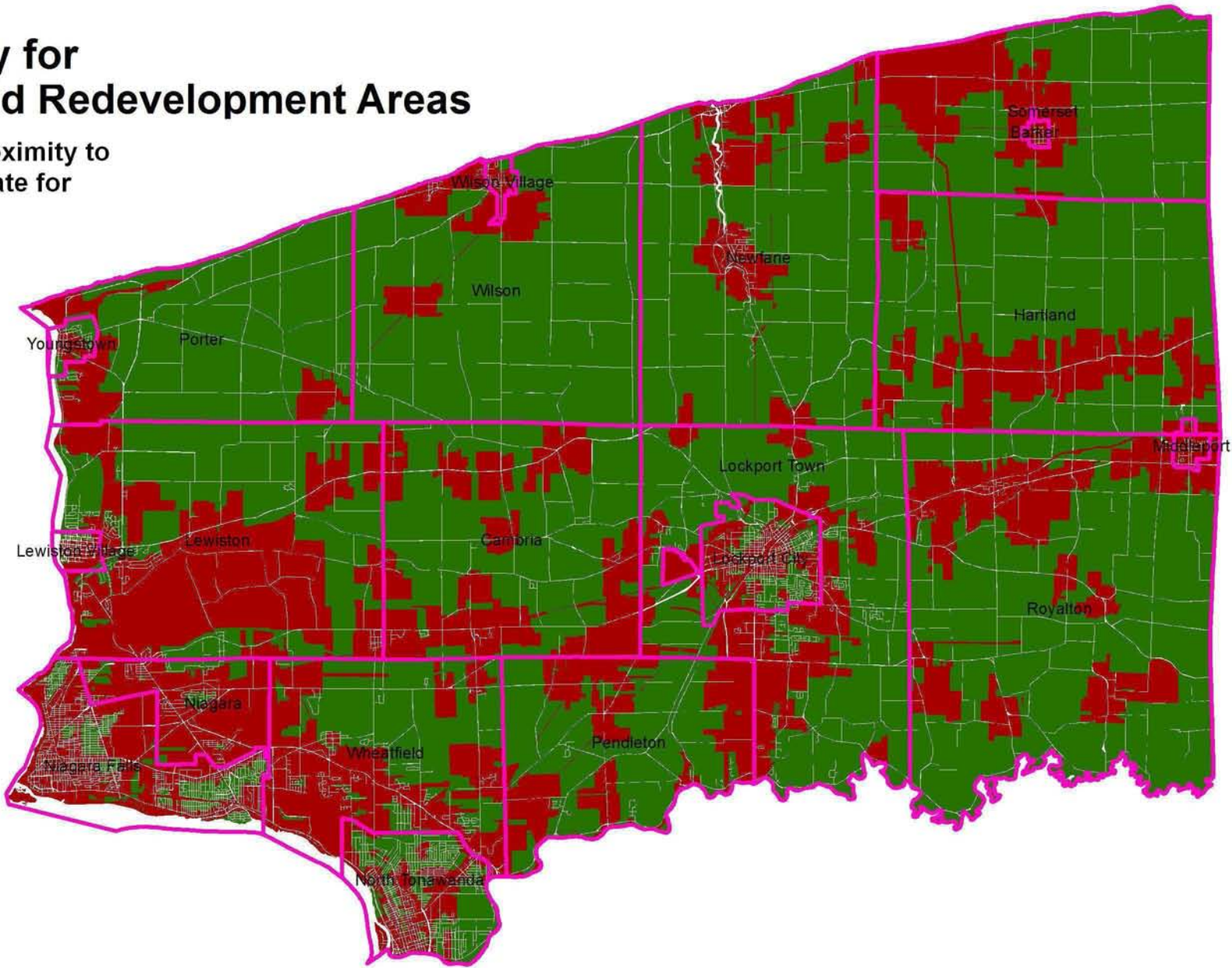
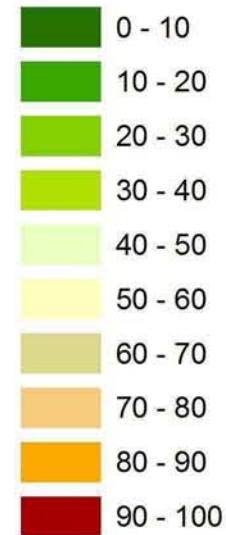
Parcel Suitability for
Development and Redevelopment Areas
Based on Proximity to Natural Resources

Figure
V.8

Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas

Based on the parcel's proximity to zoning districts appropriate for further development

Parcels 2007
Dev/Redev Score



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Parcel Suitability for
Development and Redevelopment Areas
Based on Compatible Zoning

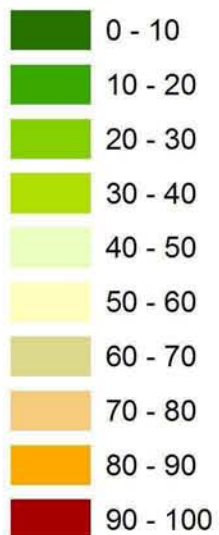
Figure
V.9

Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas

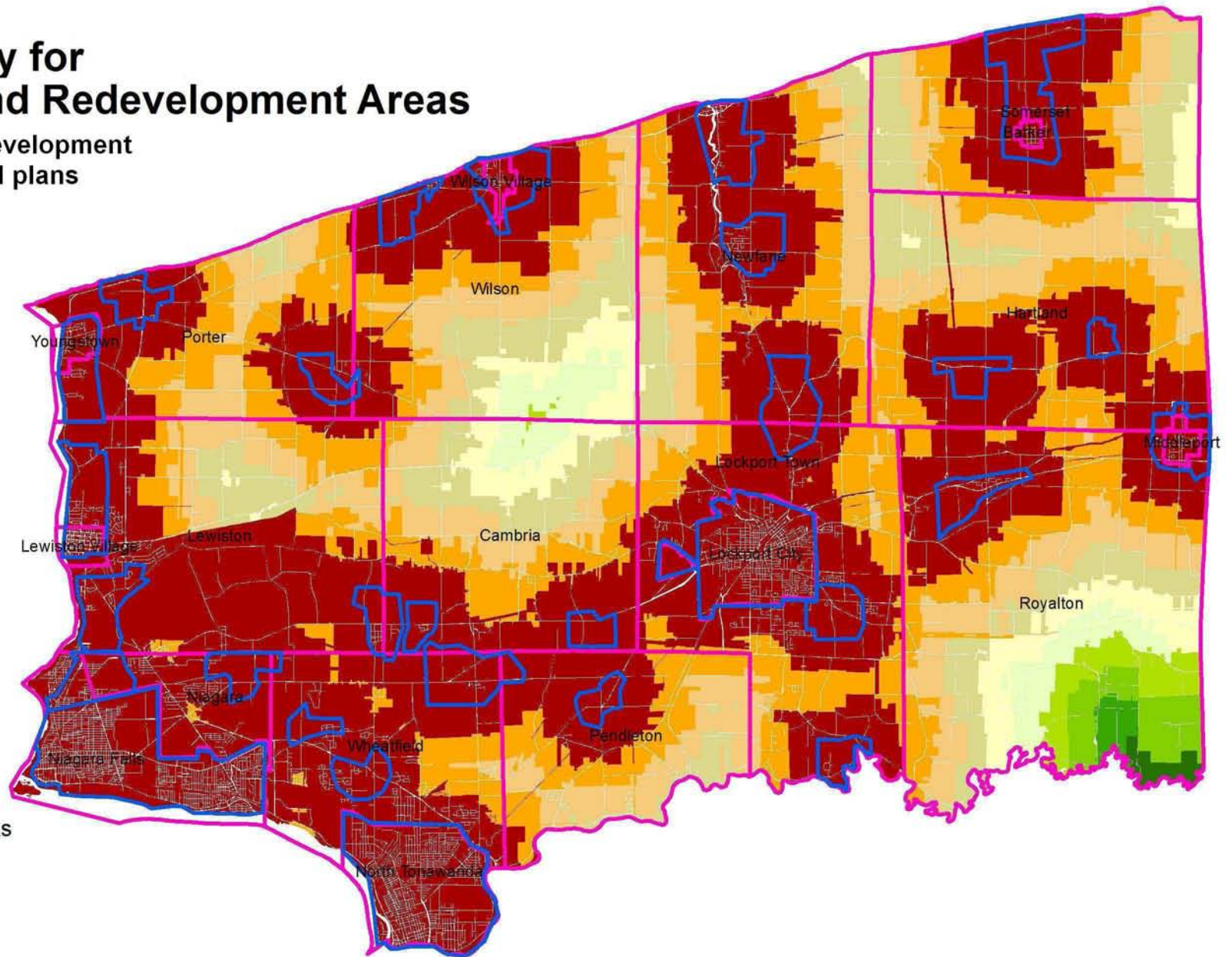
Based on proximity to development centers identified in local plans

Parcels 2007

Dev/Redev Score



Sketch Dev/Redev Areas



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Parcel Suitability for
Development and Redevelopment Areas
Based on Currently Planned Centers

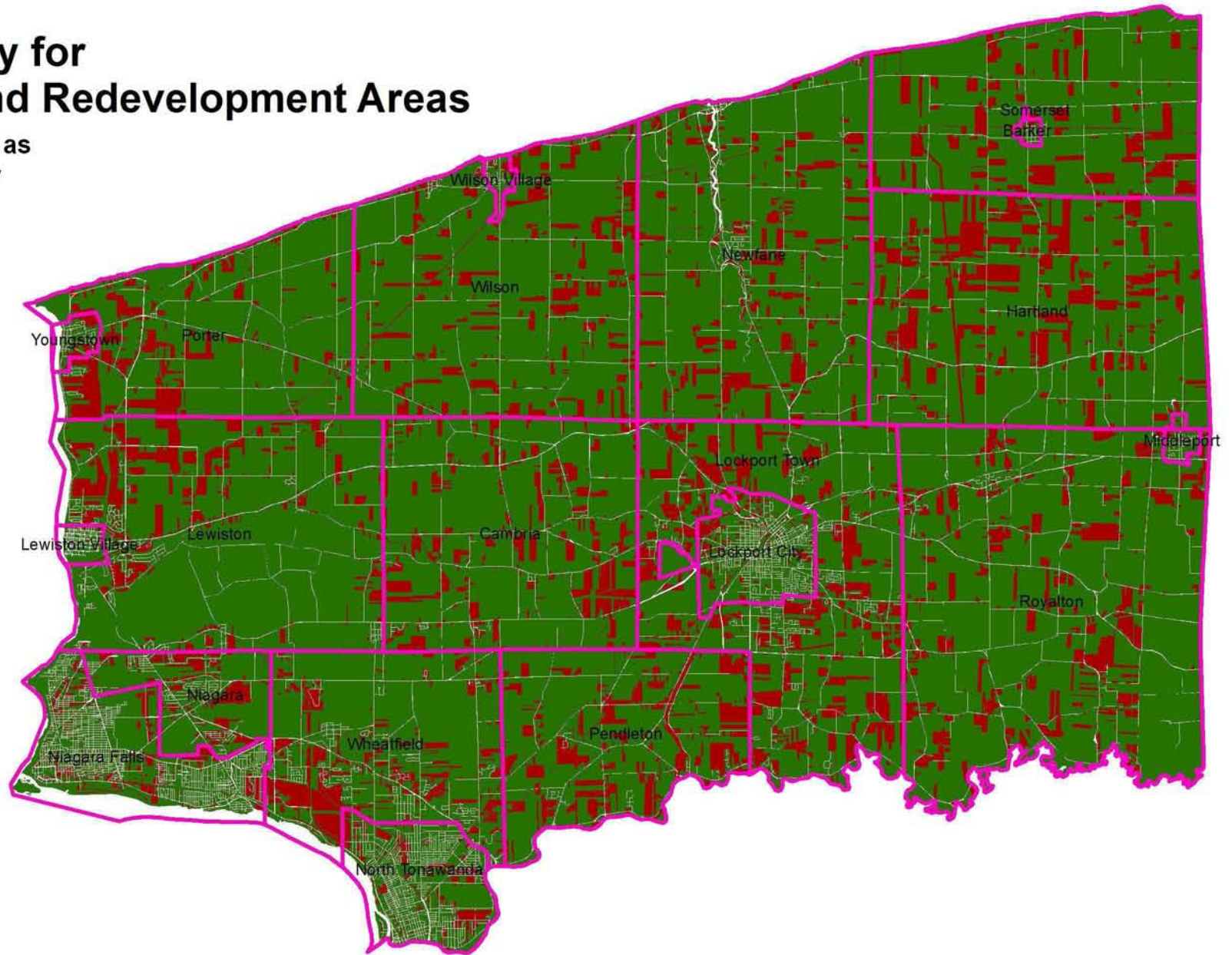
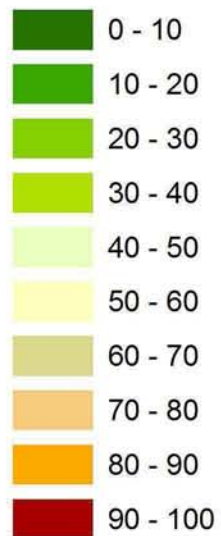
Figure
V.10

Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas

Based on parcel's status as "vacant", as identified by Property Class Code

Parcels 2007

Dev/Redev Score



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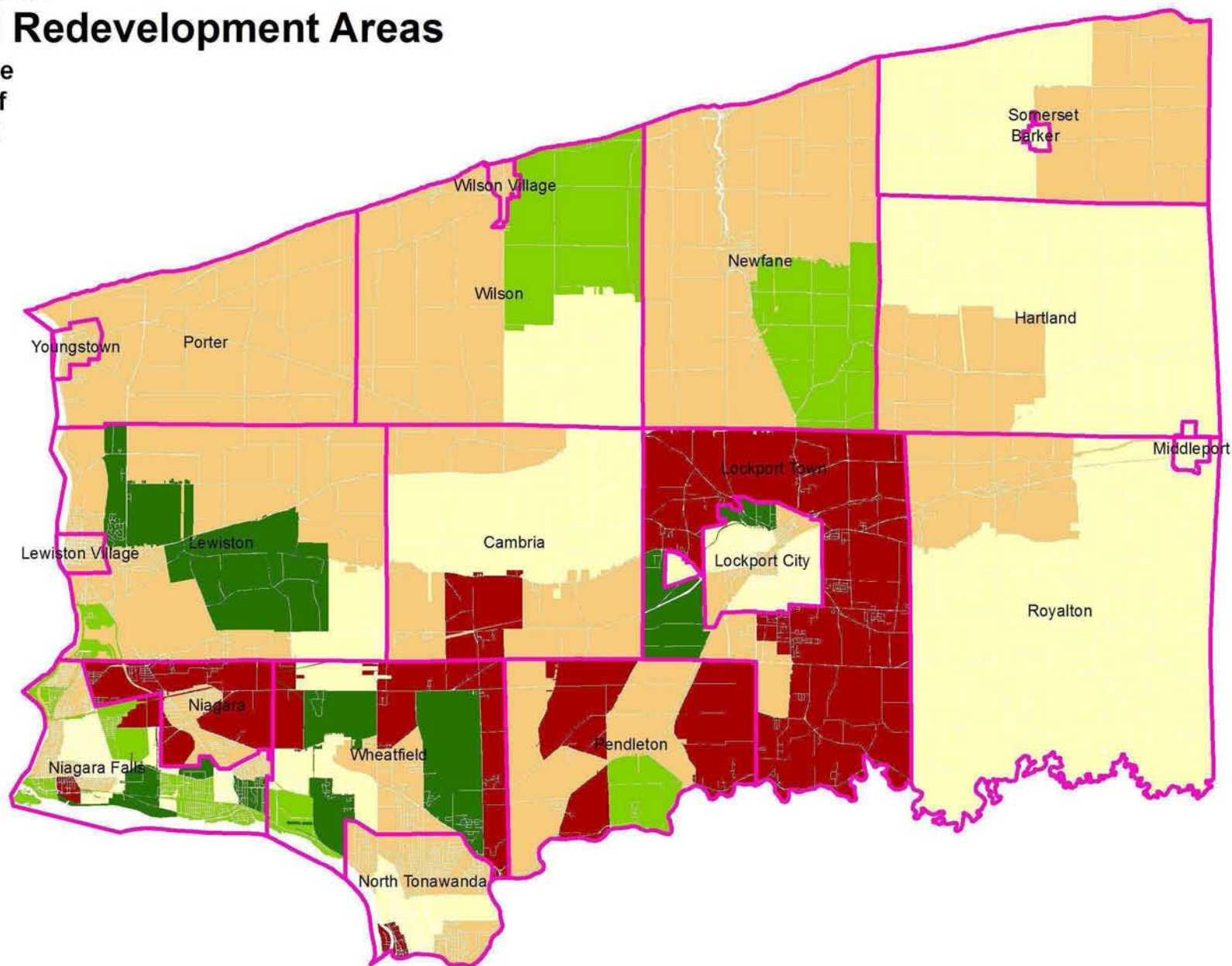
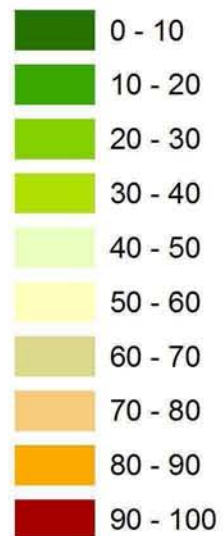
Parcel Suitability for
Development and Redevelopment Areas
Based on Vacant status

Figure
V.11

Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas

Based on whether or not the parcel is located in a part of the County that is expected to see population growth
(Using GBNRTC's 2025 projections)

Parcels 2007 Dev/Redev Score



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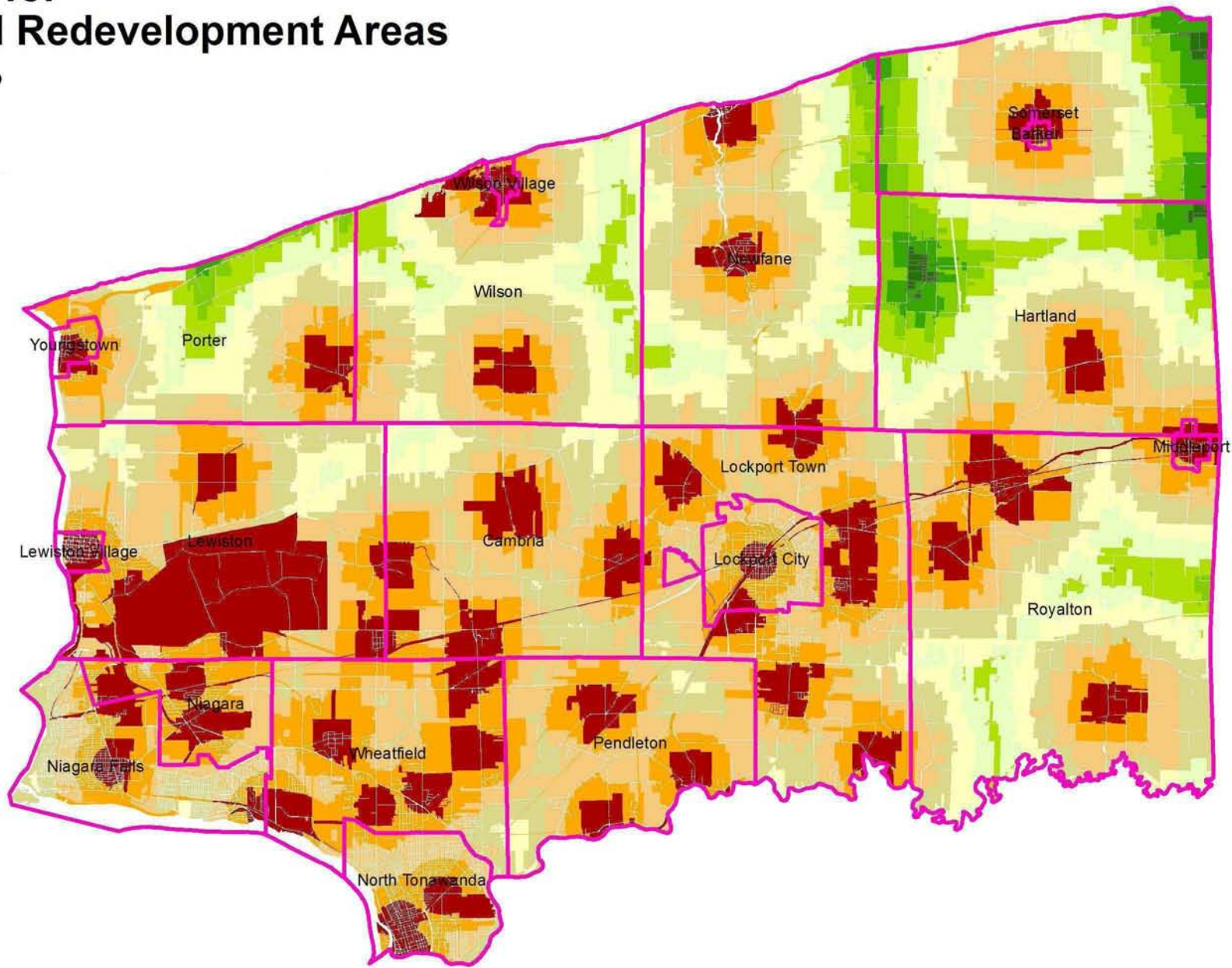
Parcel Suitability for
Development and Redevelopment Areas
Based on Projected Population Growth

Figure
V.12

Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas

Based on parcels' proximity to fire stations

Parcels 2007
Dev/Redev Score



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**Parcel Suitability for
Development and Redevelopment Areas
Based on Proximity to Fire Stations**

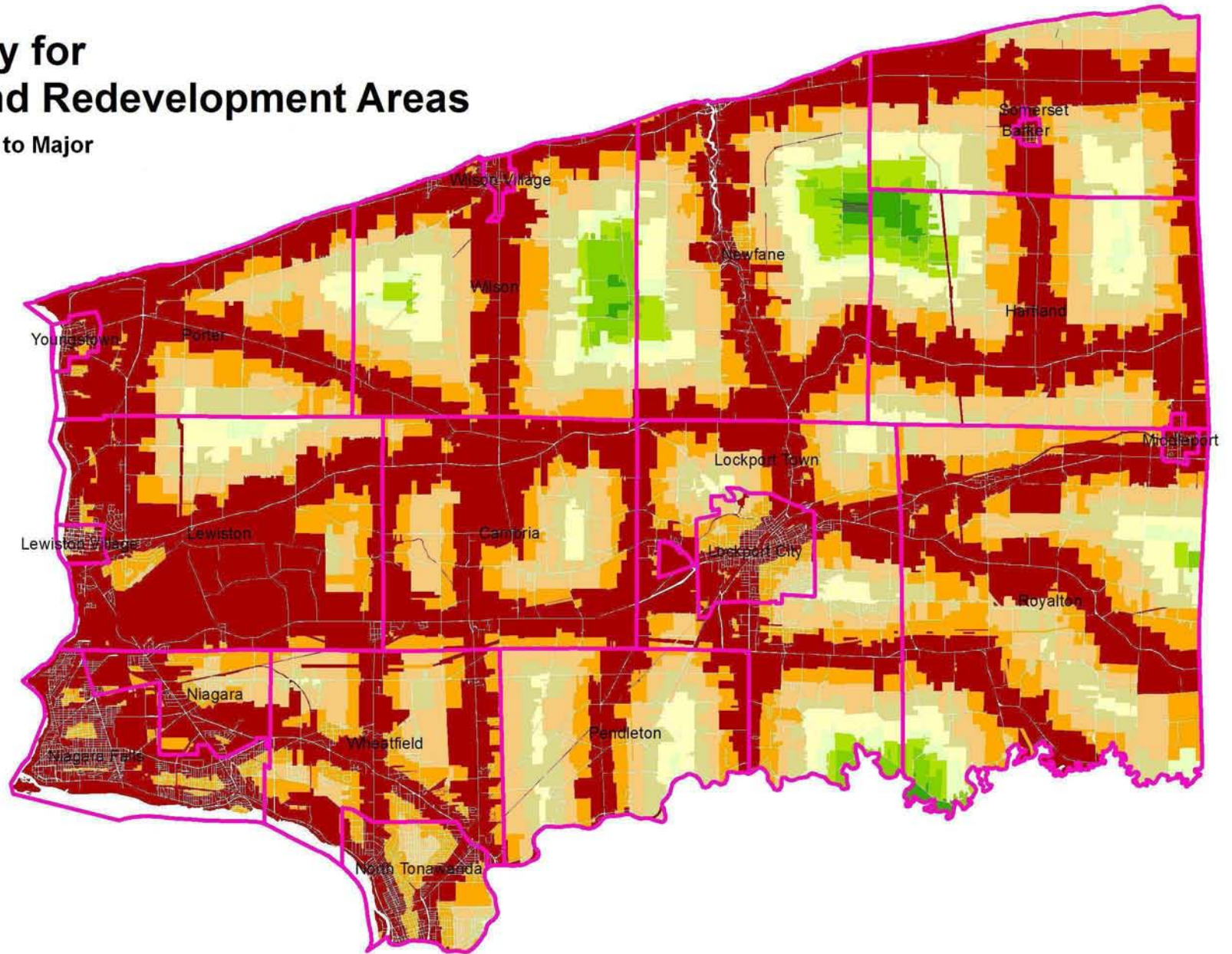
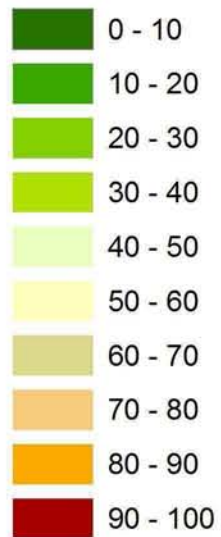
**Figure
V.13**

Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas

Based on parcels' proximity to Major Roads

Parcels 2007

Dev/Redev Score



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Parcel Suitability for
Development and Redevelopment Areas
Based on Proximity to Major Roads

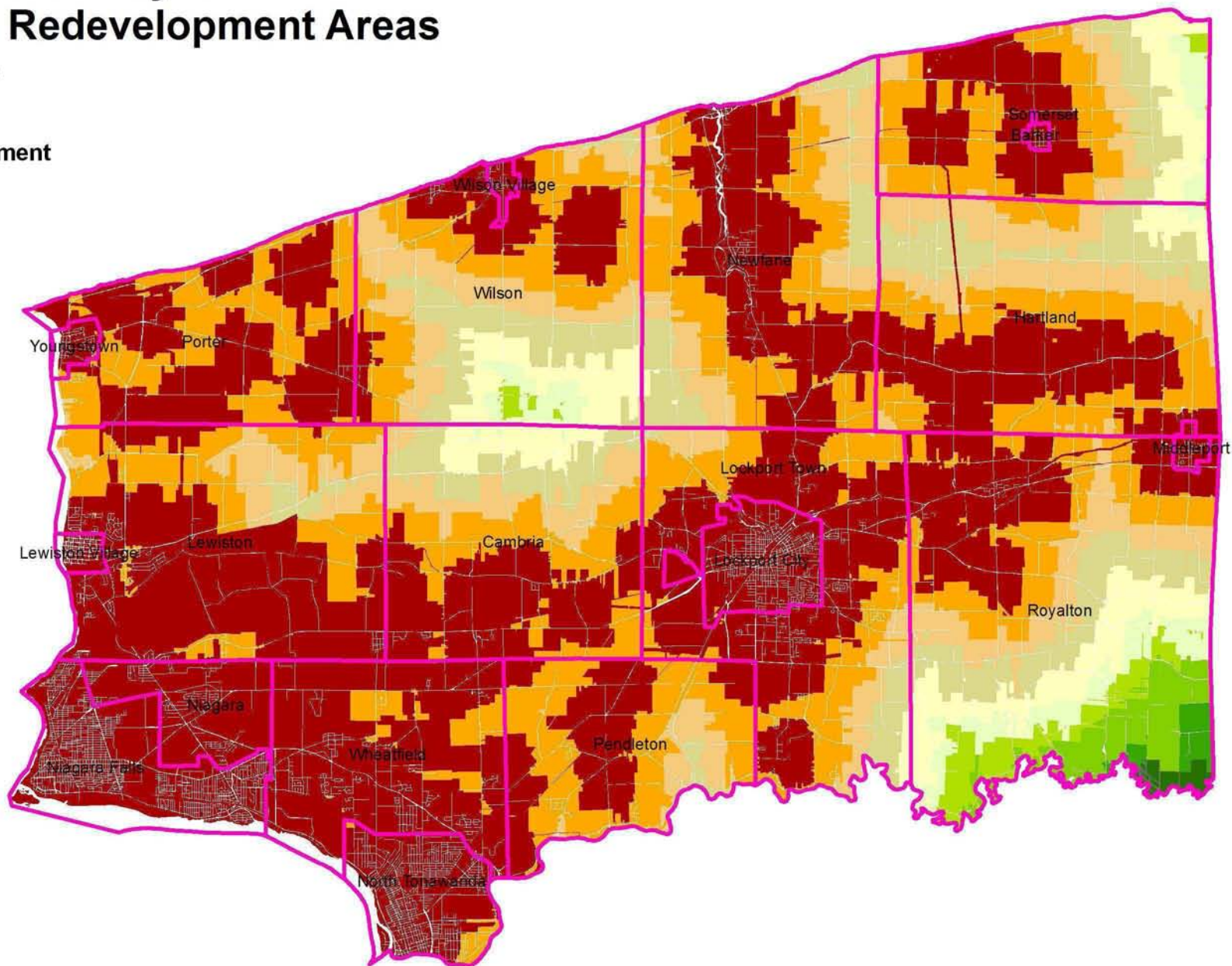
Figure
V.14

Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas

Based on parcels' proximity to existing social anchors (for example, shopping centers, hospitals, libraries and government offices)

Parcels 2007

Dev/Redev Score



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Parcel Suitability for
Development and Redevelopment Areas
Based on Existing Social Fabric

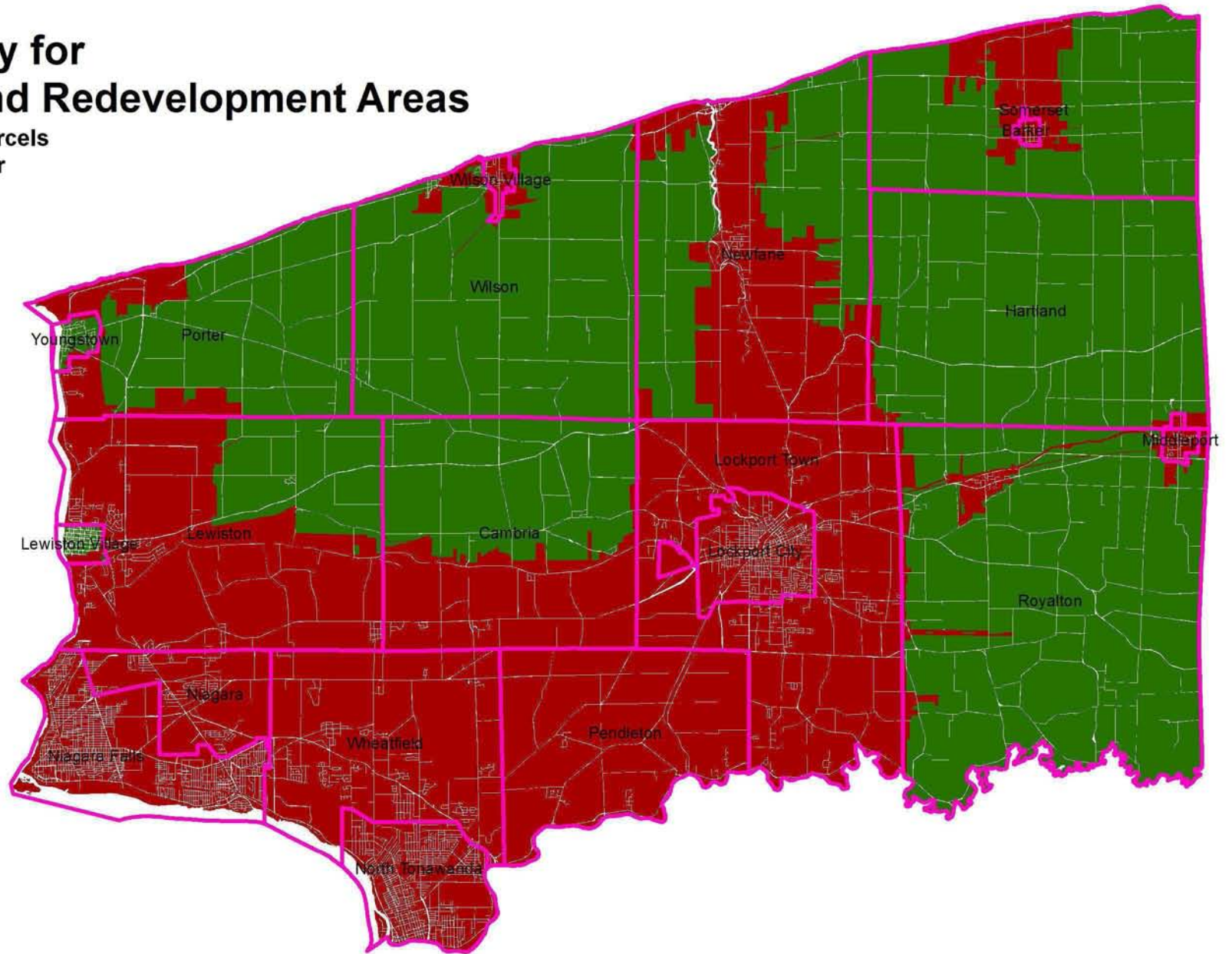
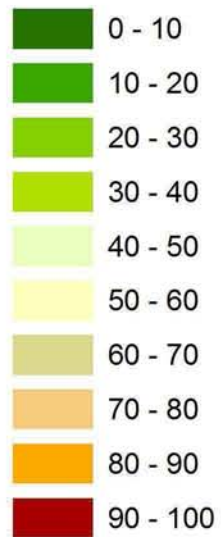
Figure
V.15

Parcel Suitability for Development and Redevelopment Areas

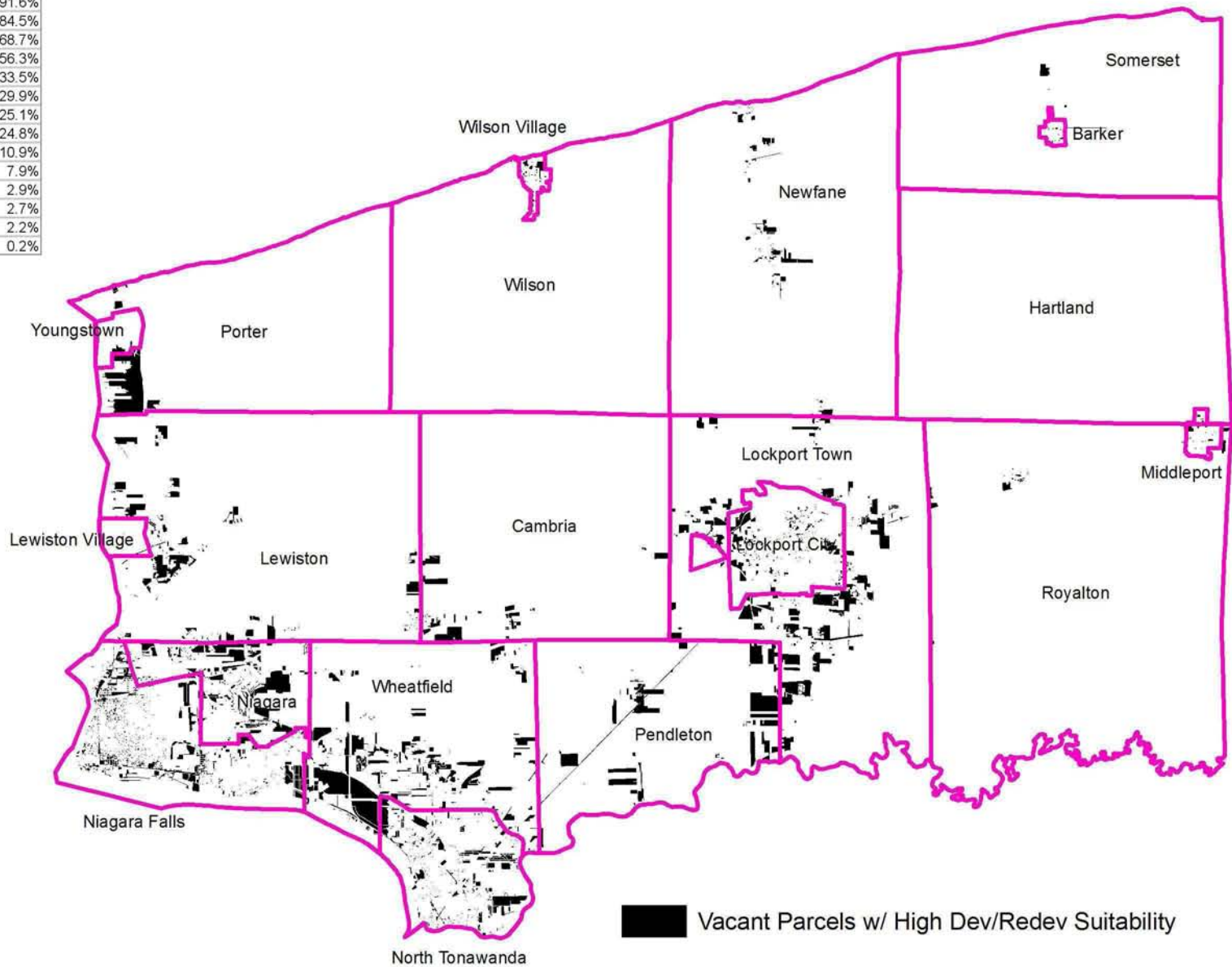
Based on whether or not parcels are located in existing sewer districts

Parcels 2007

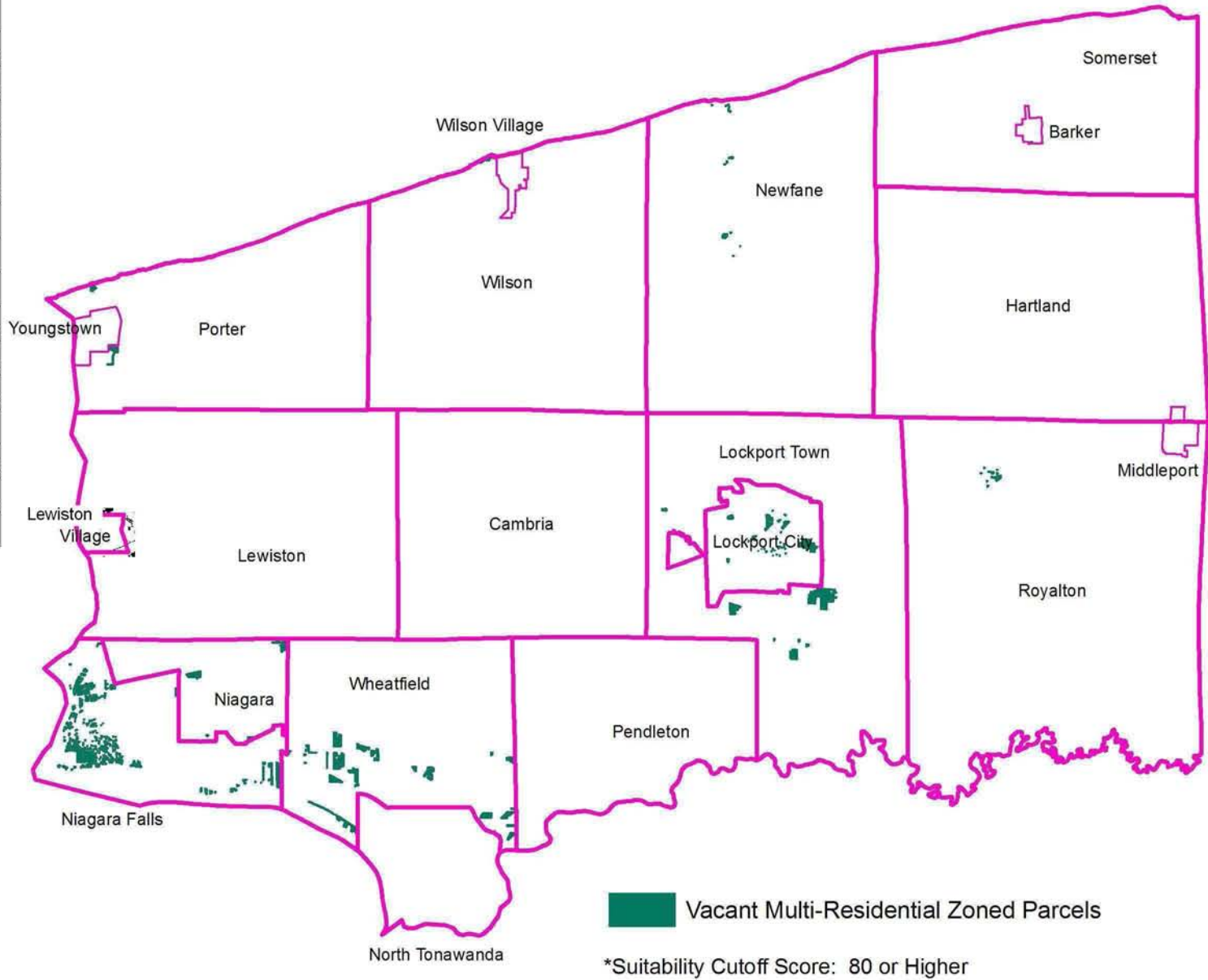
Dev/Redev Score

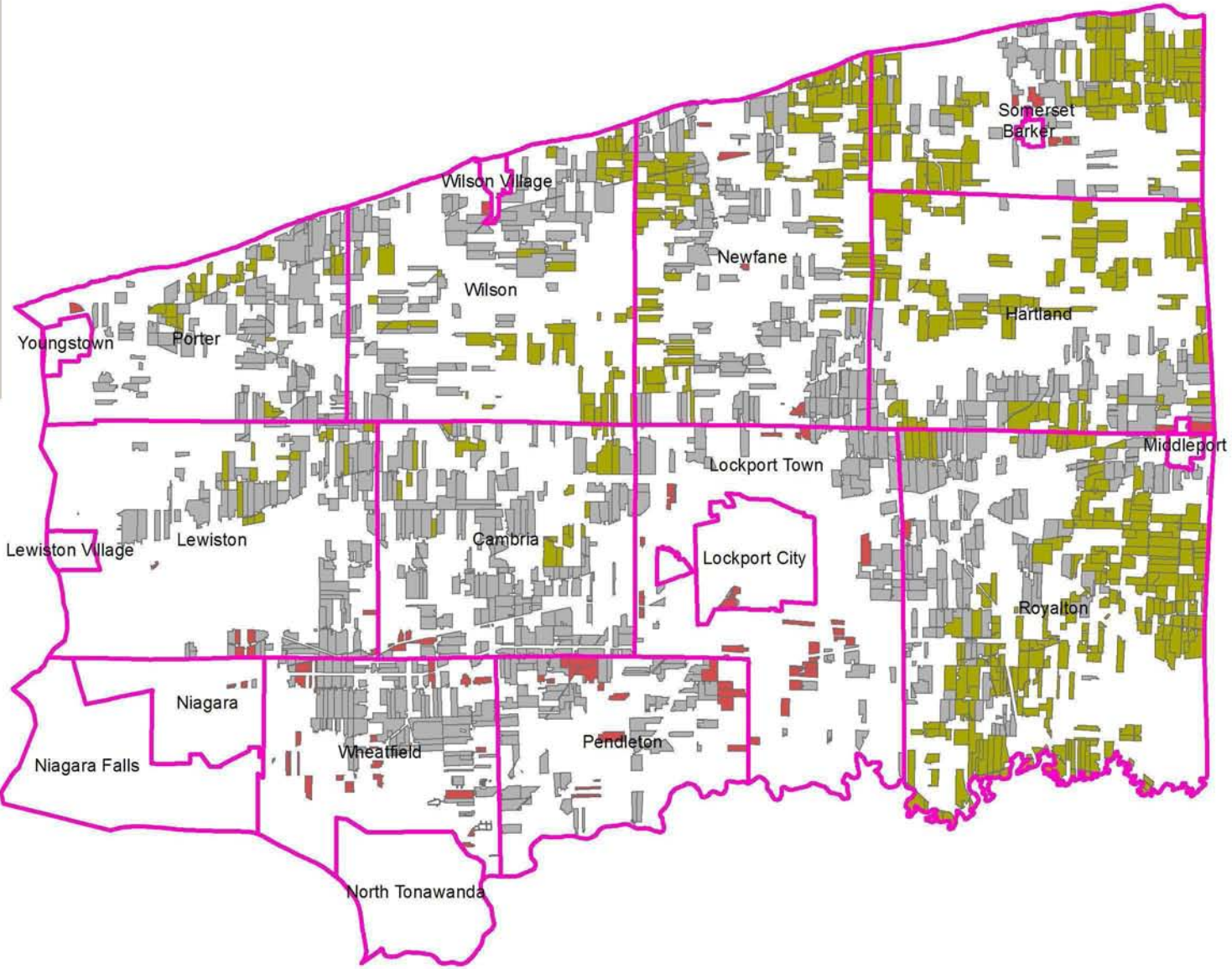
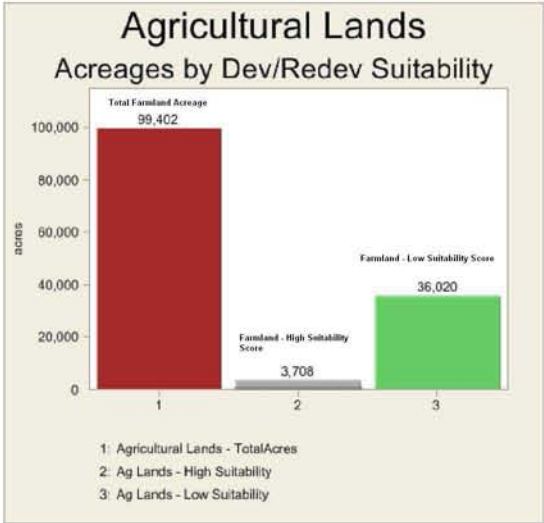


Community	Vacant Acres Total	Vacant Acres Suitable	Suitable Pct
Niagara	1,137	1,096	96.4%
Niagara Falls	1,482	1,357	91.6%
North Tonawanda	965	815	84.5%
Wheatfield	3,095	2,127	68.7%
Lockport City	716	403	56.3%
Pendleton	3,828	1,284	33.5%
Lockport Town	6,468	1,937	29.9%
Porter	3,235	813	25.1%
Lewiston	4,039	1,000	24.8%
Cambria	3,912	425	10.9%
Newfane	3,899	308	7.9%
Royalton	5,776	168	2.9%
Wilson	4,345	116	2.7%
Somerset	3,659	79	2.2%
Hartland	6,669	11	0.2%



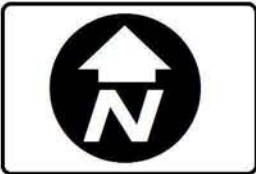
Community	Community Type	Total Vacant Multi-Family Residential Acres	Vacant Acres Suitable	Suitable Pct
Porter	Rural	35	35	100.0%
Newfane	Rural	12	10	83.3%
Royalton	Rural	13	9	69.2%
Somerset	Rural	17	2	11.8%
Wilson	Rural	62	5	8.1%
Cambria	Rural	-	-	N/A
Hartland	Rural	-	-	N/A
Lewiston	Rural	-	-	N/A
Niagara	Suburban	48	45	93.8%
Lockport Town	Suburban	202	179	88.6%
Wheatfield	Suburban	424	261	61.6%
Pendleton	Suburban	-	-	N/A
Lockport City	Urban	74	74	100.0%
Niagara Falls	Urban	321	306	95.3%
North Tonawanda	Urban	-	-	N/A





**Development / Redevelopment
Suitability of Agricultural Lands**

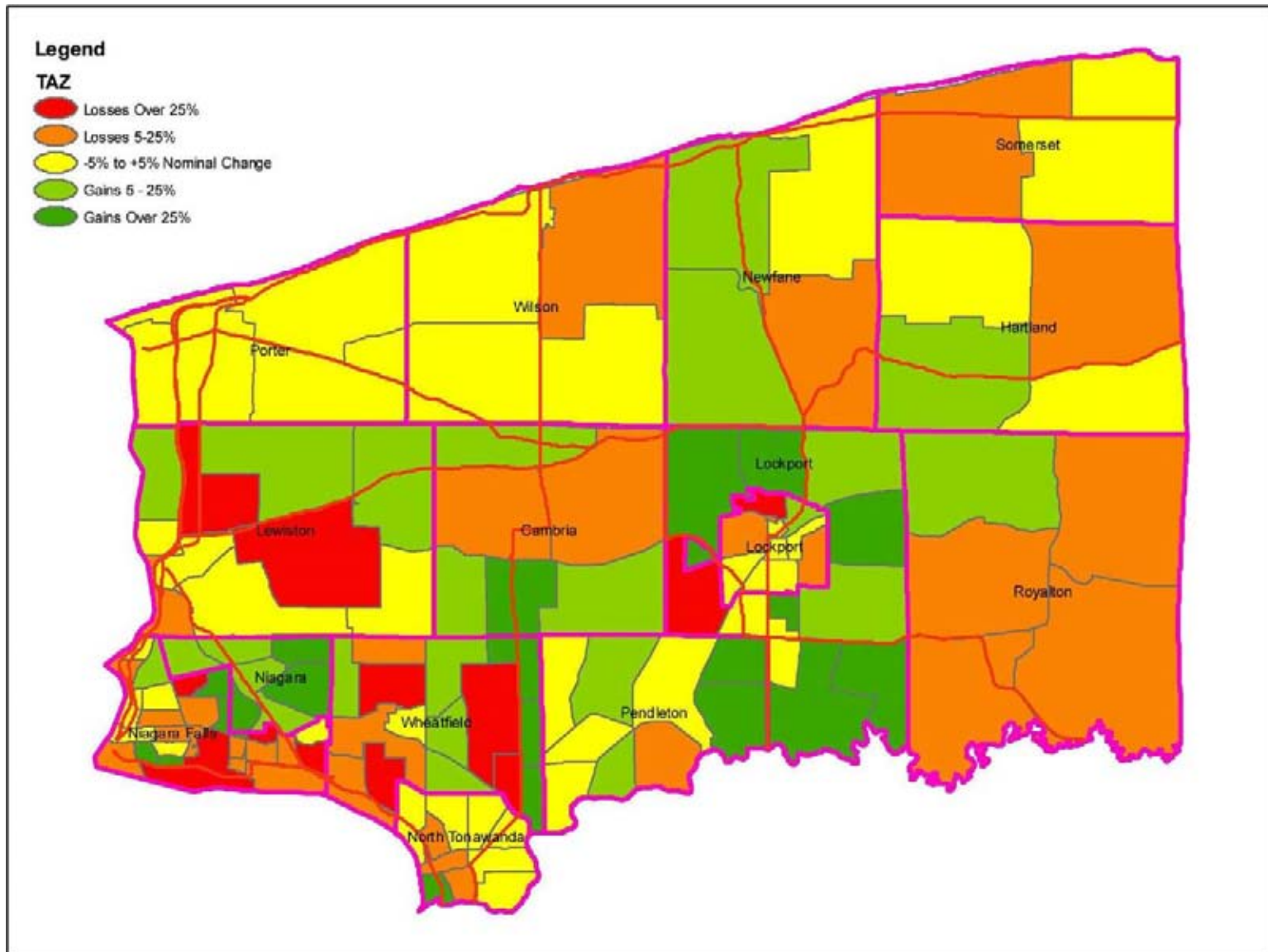
- Ag Lands - High Suitability
- Ag Lands - Low Suitability
- Ag Lands - Fair Suitability

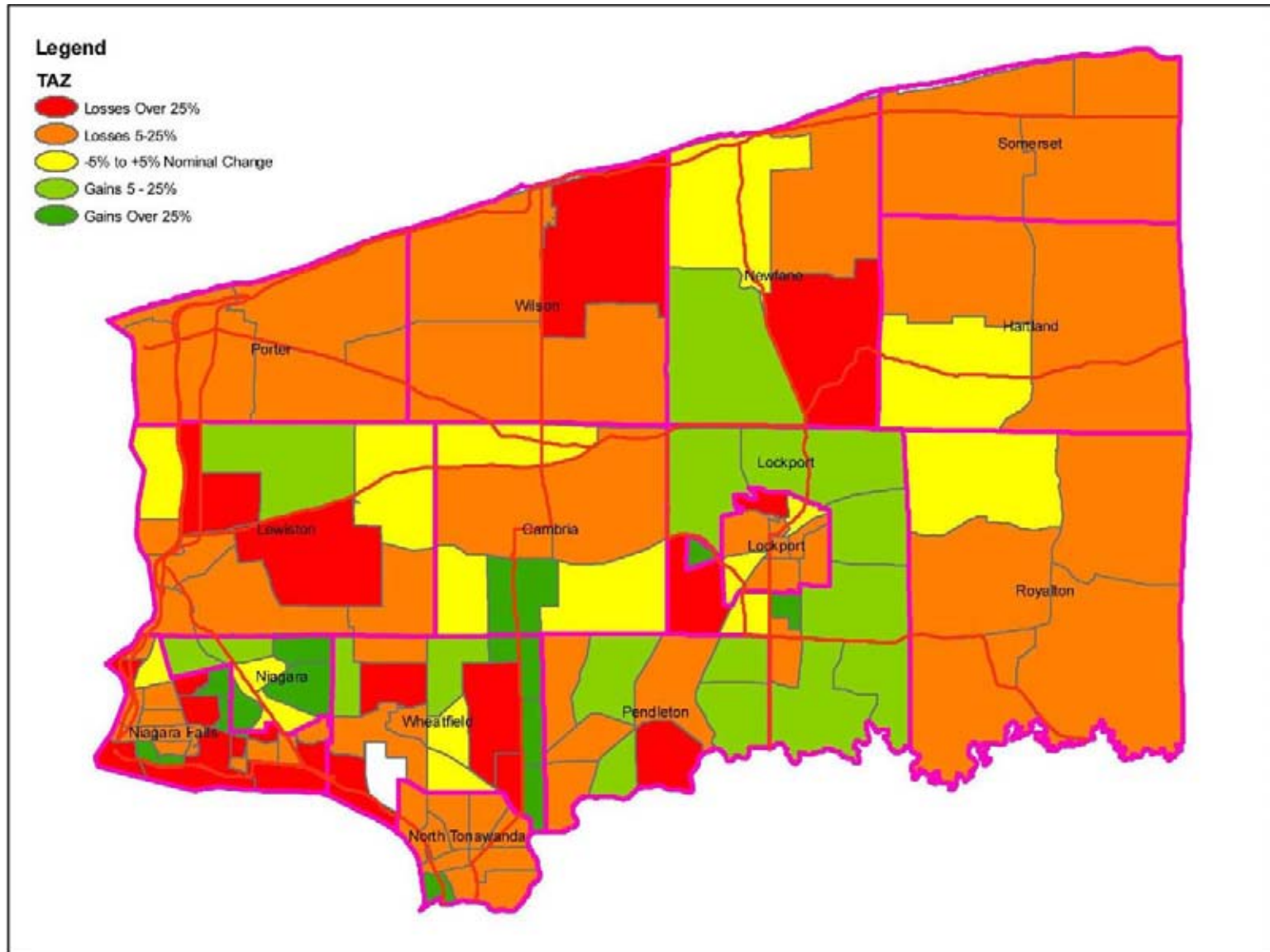


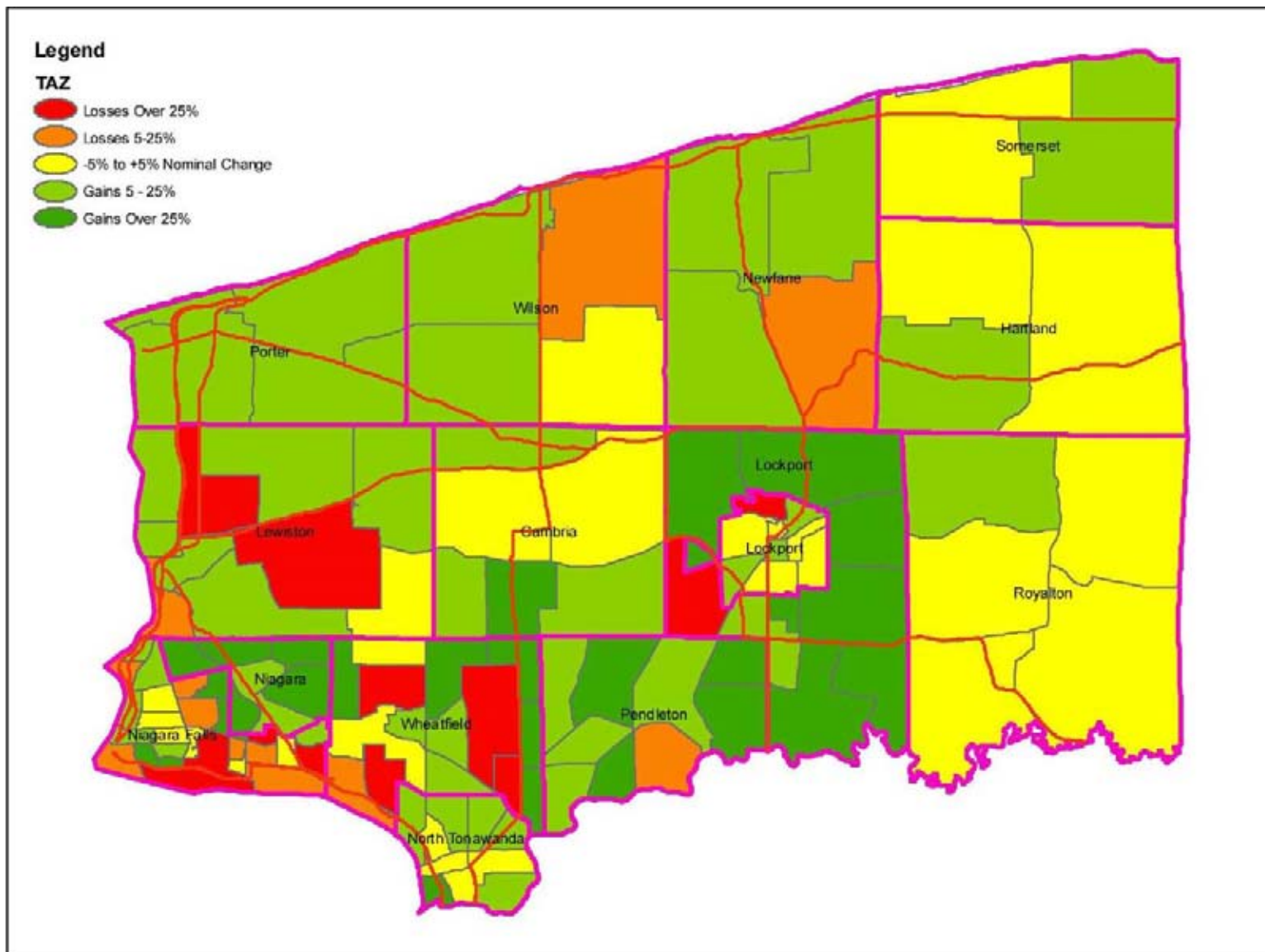
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**Agricultural Lands by Suitability for
Potential Development /
Redevelopment Areas**

**Figure
V.19**







Strategies

Three overarching strategies are discussed below with regards to land use, transportation and environmental resources within Niagara County. These include:

- 1.) Land use policies and decision-making at County levels need to be based on the principles and practices promoted under sustainability and smart growth.
- 2.) Transportation policies and decision-making likewise need to consider sustainable practices consistent with Federal and State agencies, including the New York State Department of Transportation as well as the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) which is the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) that promote smart growth practices.
- 3.) In addition, this Plan also encourages greater physical connectivity among communities throughout the County with linkages to areas beyond its borders as a means of enhancing transportation choices by creating interconnected systems served by transportation alternatives, both motorized and non-motorized. The concept of improved connectivity also relates to the protection and management of green infrastructure across the County as a way of better integrating natural systems and natural resources into decision-making processes and land use planning.

Each of these strategies is discussed in more detail as follows and illustrated in a series of maps beginning with Figure V-23 which locates ongoing initiatives within the County that are directly related to the Niagara River and Erie Canal corridor initiatives. Figure V-24 illustrates existing connections among communities via roads, trails and transit opportunities. Figure V-25 illustrates important corridors in the County and existing destinations of interest. Figures V-26 and V-27 are provided to illustrate existing and potential connections among various points of origin and destination in and around communities throughout Niagara County and between areas of potential growth, development and resource protection.

Sustainable Principles and Practices

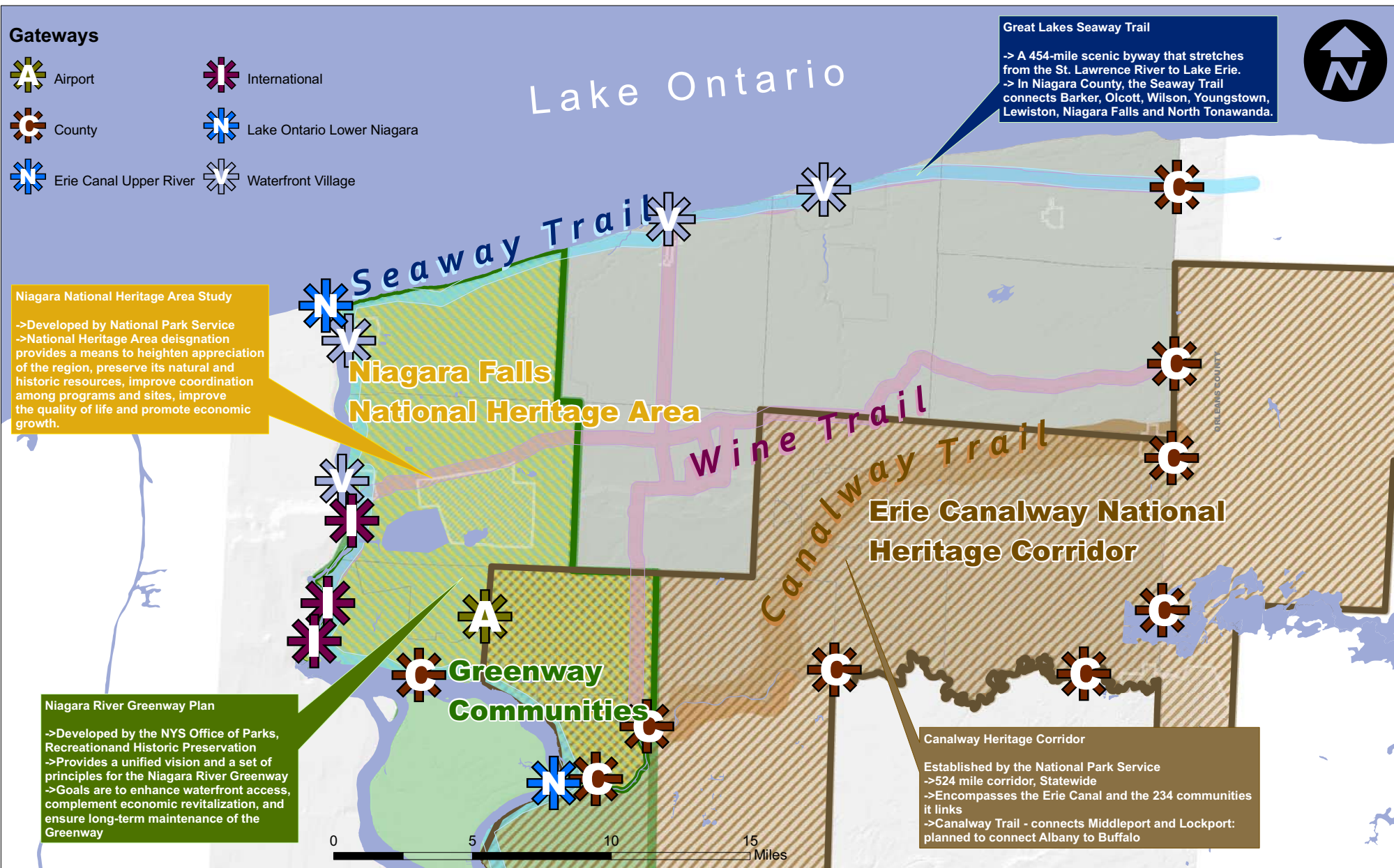
Sustainability and smart growth are defined in many different ways, but regardless of how each is defined, the concepts are based on sound and, in most cases, traditional principles of community planning and design. These principles focus on enhancing the quality of life of communities by achieving a more sustainable balance between human needs and the integrity of natural systems.

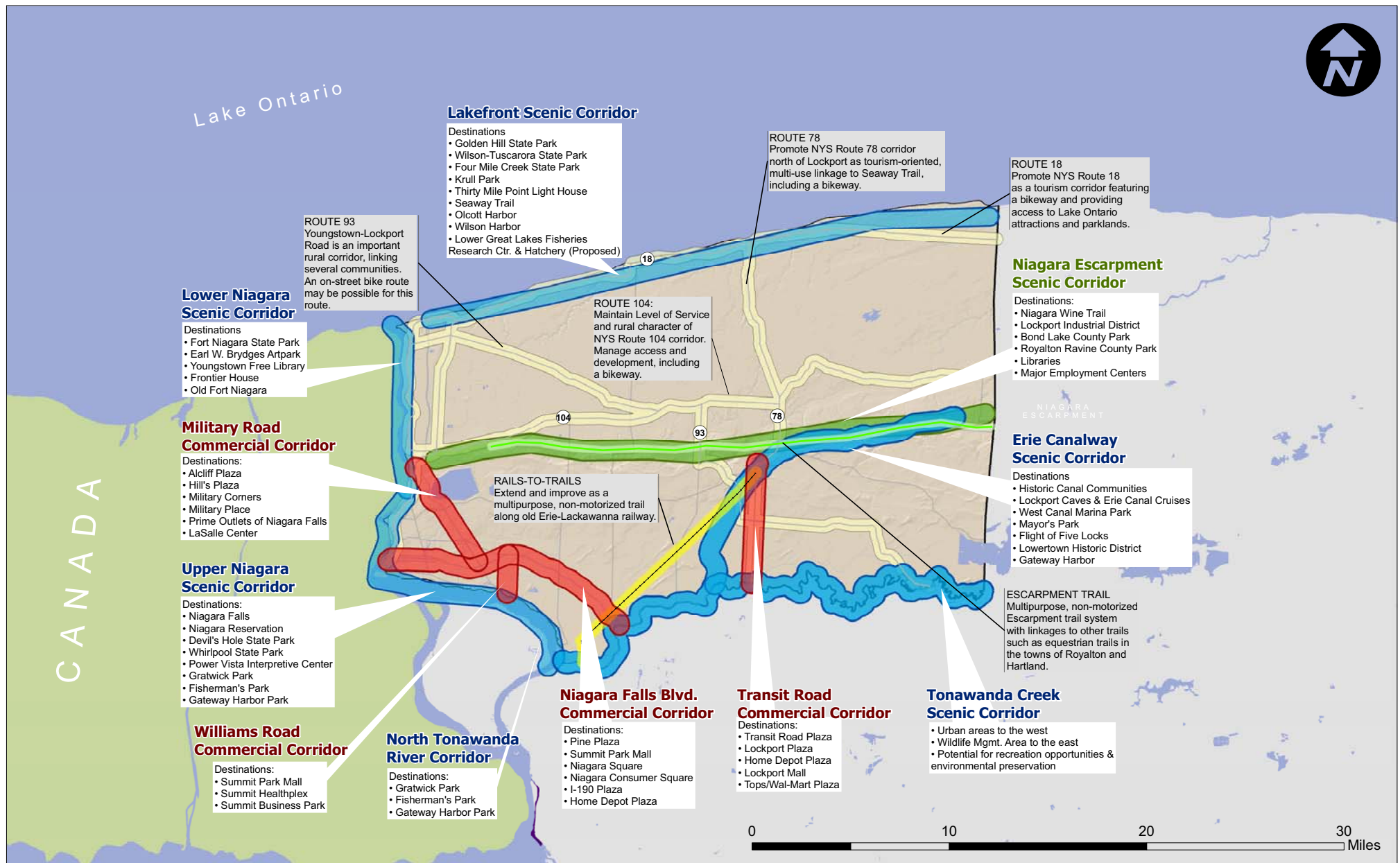
Principles of sustainability are becoming widely known and have been adopted in recent years by states, counties and local communities throughout the U.S., Canada and elsewhere. These principles support an emphasis on development and redevelopment in recognized existing centers of population over greenfield or undeveloped locations whenever and wherever possible.

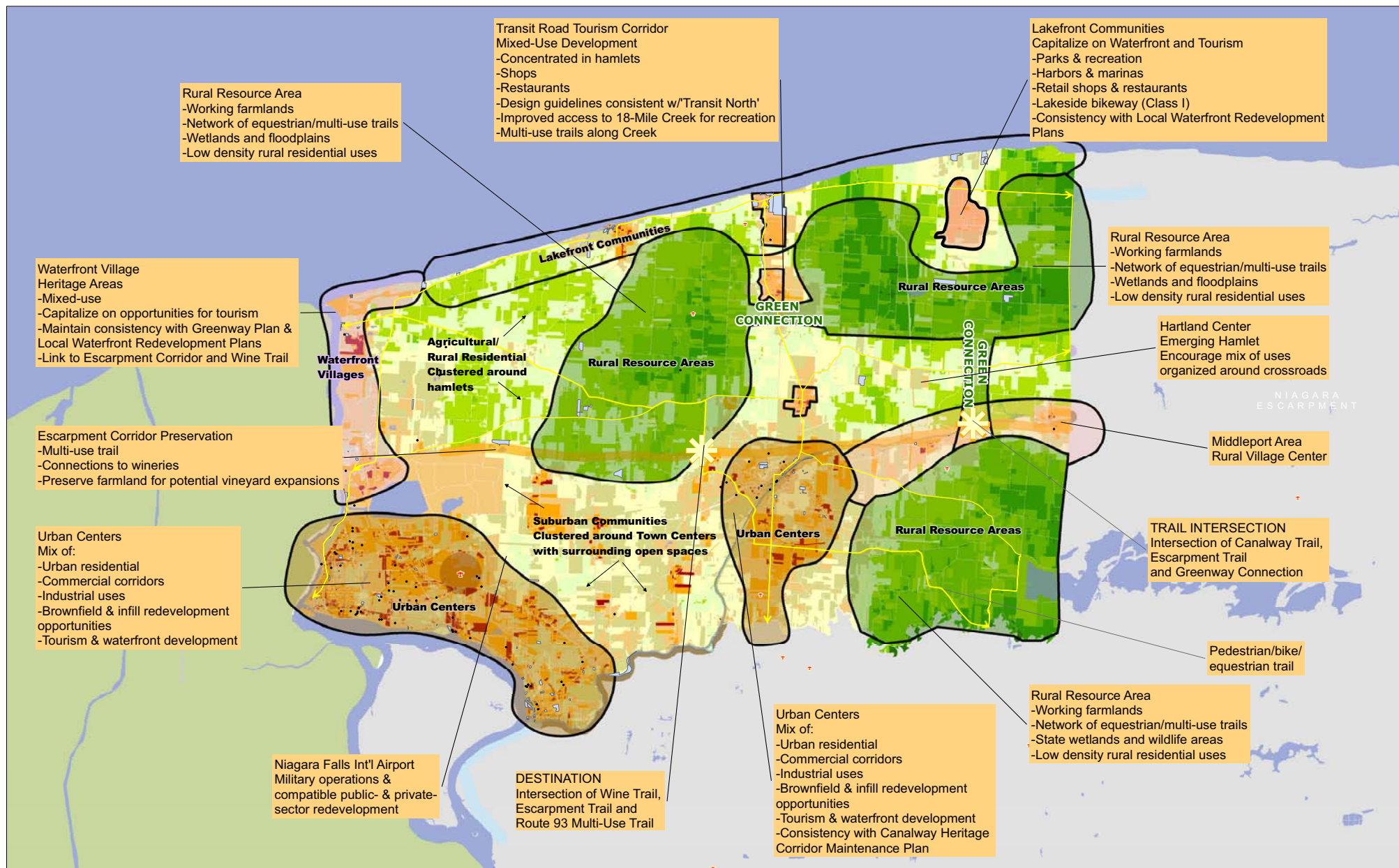
This Comprehensive Plan supports and encourages the principles and practices of sustainability and smart growth. In general, the 10 points that follow briefly summarize the basic tenets of smart growth. Over the years these have evolved

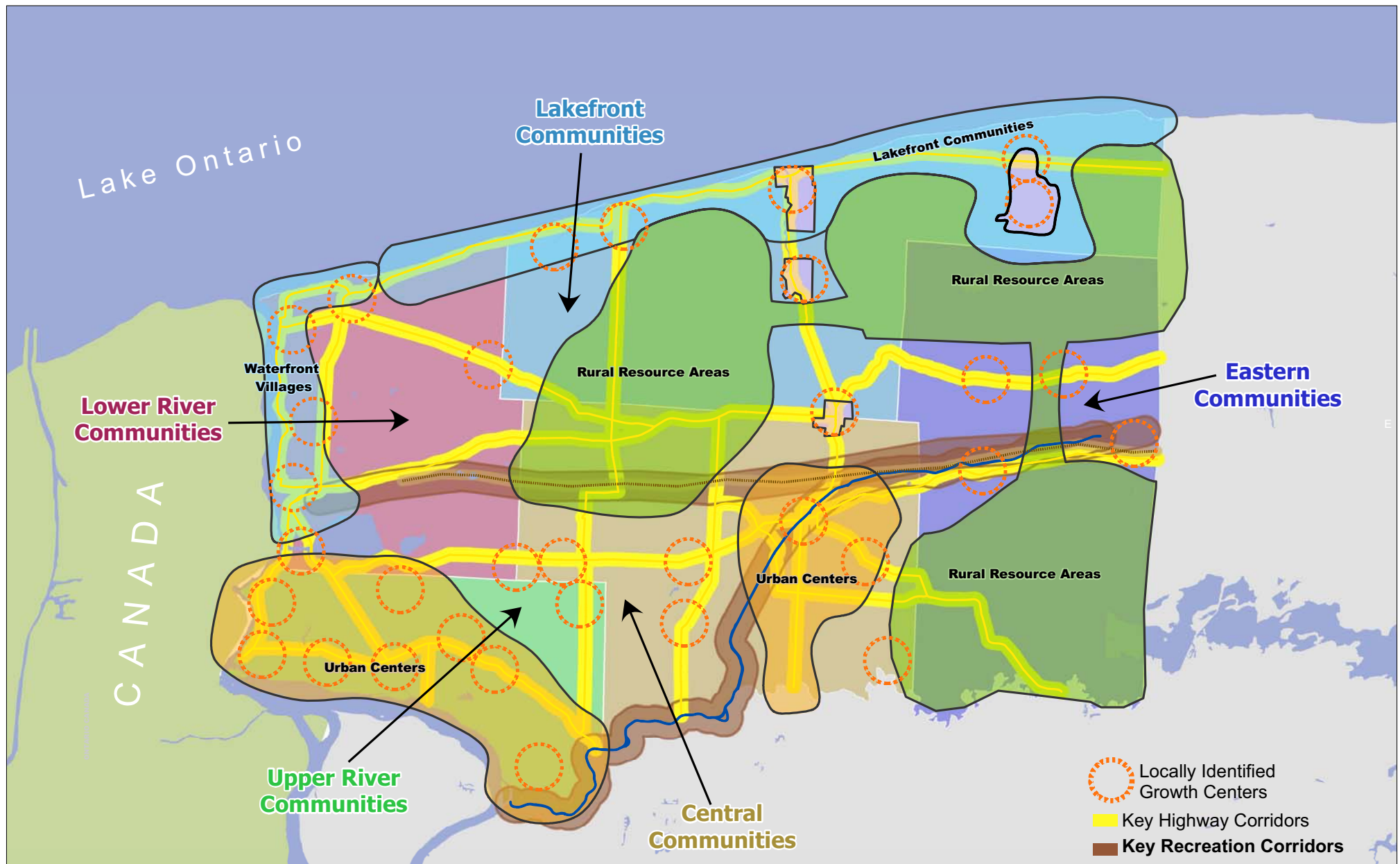


**Encourage
Sustainable
Principles**









into much more detailed planning, design and development practices intended to foster more sustainable land use patterns and uses. The 10 principles that follow are the basis for many of the recommendations provided throughout this Plan.

Briefly stated these principles include:

1. Creating a range of housing opportunities and choices by providing quality housing diversity for people of all ages, lifestyles, mobility and income levels.
2. Creating “walkable” neighborhoods, that are pedestrian-friendly, where less reliance on automotive travel is possible, and where daily services are readily available in proximity to housing and employment resulting in desirable places to live, work, learn and play.
3. Encouraging increased community and stakeholder collaboration to respond to a community’s sense of identity and vision of how and where it wants to grow.
4. Fostering distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place by setting standards for design, development, construction and maintenance which responds to community values expressed through architecture and public places.
5. Making development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective by sending clear signals to developers and the private sector in making sound development decisions.
6. Mixing land uses by integrating compatible forms of land uses and multiple uses into the community, rather than the more conventional segregation of uses.
7. Preserving open space, scenic resources and environmentally sensitive areas which supports local economies, provides jobs, preserves critical environmental areas, and improves the overall quality of life of a region by guiding new growth into existing communities.
8. Providing a variety of transportation choices to people with more alternatives to move people and goods and with greater emphasis on connections to housing, employment, shopping and transportation.
9. Strengthening and directing development towards existing communities and developed areas that are already served by infrastructure and seeking to utilize the resources that existing neighborhoods offer, while conserving open space and irreplaceable natural resources.
10. Encouraging compact forms of development, site and building design as an alternative to conventional, land consumptive and sprawling development patterns.

Some communities within Niagara County have adopted many of these or similar principles. Many communities are also working towards their implementation through their local comprehensive plans and zoning regulations. Opportunities exist, however, to expand the implementation of more sustainable practices at County and local levels. Niagara County is in a leadership position to facilitate

these efforts through County planning assistance to municipalities and guidance on modifying land use regulations that focus on sustainable practices.

Government agencies at Federal, State, regional and local levels have also adopted these principles in advancing sustainability. Three agencies that have particular relevance to Niagara County communities, for example include, but are by no means limited to the NYS Department of Transportation, NYS Department of State and the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council. At the State level these principles are encouraged through Department of State funding programs such as Quality Communities and Restore New York. Grant funds for projects may well hinge on the ability to show consistency with these principles.

Connectivity

Enhanced connectivity among communities and places is another important concept encouraged by smart growth and sustainability principles. Connectivity is necessary for creating more pedestrian-friendly “walkable” communities and fostering less reliance on automotive travel. Connectivity requires collaboration and coordination among many different agencies, jurisdictions and municipalities to be effective in establishing interconnected networks of pedestrian, non-motorized and motorized pathways, trails, facilities and corridors.

Physically linking various types and intensities of local and regional land uses with points of origin and destinations of interest enhances travel alternatives. This concept of improving linkages between places is a key recommendation of this Plan. Connectivity encourages social interaction among neighborhoods and communities, provides environmental and health benefits, and promotes a greater sense of place, improved quality of life and community identity.

Niagara County along with its partner agencies such as the GBNRTC and State agencies has the ability to encourage and promote enhanced connectivity among communities. This can be achieved within Niagara County through ongoing support for intermunicipal planning initiatives, support for funding and technical assistance to communities, expedited project review and approvals, and through infrastructure development decisions that consider creating interconnected transportation networks that afford multi-modal means of travel.

Opportunities for improved interconnections of transportation systems also need to be identified and supported where people have the ability to shift from one means of travel to another through multi-use trails and facilities that provide for walking, hiking, biking, boating, canoeing, horseback riding and other non-motorized methods. Similar interconnections can be made between motorized and non-motorized systems that can provide the ability to shift from bus to bike travel or from one motorized means to another such as train to bus travel.

Large-scale development projects such as the planned Oz project in Wheatfield or continued development in the vicinity of the Niagara Falls International Airport may also afford new and innovative opportunities for enhanced public transit through people mover systems, perhaps in combination with other transit-oriented development. Niagara County and its many economic development partners need to promote and facilitate the development of enhanced physical connections and



***Increase
Connectivity***

multi-modal opportunities throughout the County. Future projects may range from relatively easy to implement projects, such as trails and bikeway corridors to much more complex mass transit projects.

Green Infrastructure

“Green infrastructure is our nation’s natural life support system – an interconnected network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats, and other natural areas; greenways, parks and other conservation lands, working farms, ranches and forests; and wilderness and other open spaces that support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources and contribute to the health and quality of life for America’s communities and people.” (The Conservation Fund. n.d.).

Niagara County communities, through implementation of this Comprehensive Plan, are in position at the present time to proactively take steps to plan for, protect and manage the County’s green infrastructure network over the long-term. Initiatives presently underway within the County such as the Greenway Plan, the Erie Canalway Heritage Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Legacy Project and others are setting the stage for Niagara County to take an even greater leadership role in green infrastructure issues and opportunities. This is especially true if strategies to implement smart growth and sustainable principles are implemented as discussed in this Chapter. Many of the land use and environmental issues identified in this Plan can be effectively addressed through a proactive approach among communities for maintaining, enhancing and protecting Niagara County’s green infrastructure.

As described above by the Conservation Fund, Niagara County presently has the natural and man-made resources that form the basis for a viable, functioning green infrastructure network. These include the County’s waterways, greenways, parks, woodlands, working farms, and open spaces. The Conservation Fund also describes green infrastructure as a combination of “hubs and links” and that is precisely what this Chapter encourages through its land use, transportation and environmental goals, objectives and recommendations.

Hubs are defined by the Conservation Fund as the anchors of a green infrastructure network. These hubs may include:

- Reserves – large protected areas such as the County’s State Parks and wildlife management refuges
- Managed Native Landscapes – large publicly-owned lands such as those set aside as forest areas
- Working Lands – private farms, forests and mineral extraction areas
- Regional Parks and Preserves – regionally significant County park lands
- Community Parks and Natural Areas – smaller sites that are protected and/or restored

Links are defined as the connections that link the system including hubs together. These links may include:

- Landscape Linkages – serving as large corridors, they are protected natural areas that link parks and preserves and allow plants and animals to flourish, and may include protection of historic sites and recreational



***Promote Green
Infrastructure***

uses

- Conservation Corridors – less extensive linear areas, including rivers and streams that provide corridors for wildlife movement and perhaps public recreation as well
- Greenways – protected corridors managed for resource conservation and perhaps recreational use
- Greenbelts – protected natural lands or working lands that serve as a framework for development patterns while preserving native ecosystems and/or farms
- Ecobelts – linear wooded buffers between urban and rural uses that provide ecological and social benefits to urban and rural residents

The land use analysis discussed in this Chapter is a starting point for better integration of land use and environmental planning with a focus on green infrastructure. This integration of land use and environmental policies and practices creates greater efficiency in resource management, from both a physical and fiscal perspective. This integration also promotes sustainability. The analysis and resultant mapping suggest areas of the County where development and redevelopment may be most suitable resulting in potential costs savings to taxpayers by limiting the need for new or expanded “gray” infrastructure (roads, sewers, water) and services (police, fire, school, health).

Green infrastructure also addresses another component of community planning and design that considers the application of specific sustainable practices at a much smaller scale that may be appropriate for local municipalities and individual landowners. At County levels these practices could be implemented at County-owned and operated facilities. These practices include the use of pervious pavement materials for public infrastructure such as sidewalks, parking areas and roads; rain and rooftop gardens; collected roof runoff stored in cisterns and barrels; downspout disconnections to stormwater systems; natural vegetated drainage swales; and similar practices and technologies that focus on managing stormwater at the source by capturing and retaining it before it enters drainageways and stormsewer systems.

Green infrastructure practices have both environmental and fiscal benefits to communities and property owners by reducing dependence on traditional engineering approaches to stormwater management. The benefit of these practices is enhanced groundwater and surface water quality and quantity; less reliance on the use of piping and drainage systems resulting in potential cost savings; improved biological diversity; energy conservation; erosion control; and improved visual and community aesthetics. These practices are also encouraged as part of a comprehensive approach to protect and maintain the green infrastructure of Niagara County.

Goals, Objectives & Recommendations

Key Definitions

The following definitions are provided to clarify terminology used in the goals, objectives and recommendations that follow in this and other chapters. These definitions are taken from NYS General Municipal Law including Section 119-u; City Law Section 20-f; Town Law Section 261-a; and Village Law Section 7-701.

Municipality – means a city, village or that portion of a town located outside the limits of any city or village.

Land Use Regulation – means an ordinance or local law enacted by a municipality for the regulation of any aspect of land use and community resource protection and includes zoning, subdivision, special use permit or site plan regulation or any other regulations which prescribe the appropriate use of property or the scale, location, and intensity of development.

Community Resource – means a specific public facility, infrastructure system, or geographic area of special economic development, environmental, scenic, cultural, historic, recreational, parkland, open space, natural resource, or other unique significance, located wholly or partially within the boundaries of one or more given municipalities.

Intermunicipal Overlay District - means a special land use district which encompasses all or a portion of one or more municipalities for the purpose of protecting, enhancing, or developing one or more community resources.

Development Rights – mean the rights permitted to a lot, parcel, or area of land under a zoning ordinance or local law respecting permissible use, area, density, bulk or height of improvements executed thereon. Development rights may be calculated and allocated in accordance with such factors as area, floor area, floor area ratios, density, height limitations, or any other criteria that will effectively quantify a value for the development right in a reasonable and uniform manner.

Receiving District – means one or more designated districts or areas of land to which development rights generated from one or more sending districts may be transferred and in which increased development is permitted to occur by reason of such transfer.

Sending District – means one or more designated districts or areas of land in which development rights may be designated for use in one or more receiving districts.

Transfer of Development Rights – means the process by which development rights are transferred from one lot, parcel, or area of land in any sending district to another lot, parcel or area of land in one or more receiving districts.

Goal – Farmland and Open Space Protection

To preserve and protect the long-term viability and sustainability of prime, unique and important farmlands and open spaces as well as related rural characteristics and evidence of the agricultural heritage, amenities and aesthetics of the County's farming areas.

Objectives

- Encourage the concentration of appropriate types, scale and intensity of land uses and development in and around existing population centers, including those potential development/redevelopment areas identified in this Comprehensive Plan, and those growth areas identified in local municipal comprehensive plans, master plans, and zoning districts through County planning assistance to local municipalities.
- Preserve the amount of viable countywide agricultural acreage from further conversion to other land uses, reduce development pressures on existing farming practices, and maintain open space resources.

Recommendations

For Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities

- ☐ Promote and prioritize nodal centers and patterns of compact development with higher density residential and commercial development located in areas where physical infrastructure and community services are available or can be readily accessed.
- ☐ Discourage the conversion of agricultural lands in developing and undeveloped rural and suburban locations (see Table V-3) to other uses where the provision of new infrastructure or extension of services is not warranted or desired by local communities.
- ☐ Encourage smaller minimum lot size requirements in local ordinances in developing and undeveloped rural and suburban communities to reduce development pressure on farmlands and open space resources.
- ☐ Promote the creation of mixed-use and multiple-use development districts in local zoning ordinances, rather than the more typical single-use districts and encourage communities to establish floating zones such as Planned Unit Development (PUD) districts or mixed-use development overlay districts along important corridors.
- ☐ Encourage implementation and use of local incentive zoning, right-to-farm laws where they do not exist, land transfers, conservation easements and land trusts to protect open space resources.
- ☐ Encourage infill forms of development on vacant parcels and redevelopment of brownfields and grayfields in lieu of development on previously undeveloped properties.

For Rural Communities

- ☐ Provide County assistance to encourage local municipalities to direct development to appropriate locations away from prime and unique farmlands and protect the viability of large, contiguous agricultural parcels and the integrity of existing Agricultural Districts through their recertification.
- ☐ Encourage nodes of concentrated development in hamlets and crossroad locations with increased density and mixed uses with access to major



roadways and where other forms of services are available. Such areas should be priority locations for development and redevelopment over greenfield locations in rural communities where new infrastructure and services may need to be developed or expanded.

- ☐ Investigate means to more uniformly assess agricultural lands based on farming value, not the development potential of farmlands.
- ☐ Provide County assistance to communities as part of their comprehensive planning efforts in anticipation of potentially large scale agricultural uses or energy-related projects, such as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) or windfarms, through the establishment of local ordinances to ensure proper planning steps are taken to reduce the potential for adverse impacts on communities and adjacent land uses. Ordinances should focus on protecting natural (air, water, land) resources, scenic resources, and compatibility with nearby land use possibly through requirements for the establishment of effective natural buffer areas.
- ☐ Encourage the establishment of local Transfer and/or Purchase of Development Rights programs as allowed under State Municipal Law and similar land use initiatives consistent with the recommendations of Niagara County's 1999 Agricultural Farmland Protection Plan that focuses on reducing the conversion of viable farmland.
- ☐ Support the complete update of Niagara County's 1999 Agricultural Farmland Protection Plan within two years (by 2011) in collaboration with the Farmland Protection Board, Cornell Cooperative Extension Service and the Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District and other stakeholders.
- ☐ Encourage the expanded use of E-commerce opportunities among local farms and agricultural goods producers utilizing existing websites and links such as the Niagara Farm Markets (www.niagarafarmmarkets.org) and other sources of information available from Cornell Cooperative Extension and other agencies and organizations.
- ☐ Expand equestrian businesses as a locally important economic generator via increased marketing and small business incentives related to horse boarding, farriers, veterinarian services, hauling and trailer services, grain and hay production, fencing and tourism services that can be linked to County destinations and services. Niagara County currently ranks 20th among 58 counties in New York in number of horses with approximately 3000 horses valued at about \$12 million. Existing farms and stables feature western, English, dressage, draft, rodeo and trail riding opportunities.
- ☐ Provide for multi purpose/multi-use trail systems offering equestrian riding opportunities to encourage business and tourism opportunities that link with other trail networks throughout the County. Rural areas that may be most suited to expanded equestrian opportunities and trail systems include the towns of Royalton and Hartland followed by Somerset, Newfane, Wilson and northern Cambria with potential to link into other



existing and future trail networks, perhaps along the Wine Trail and future trails along the Niagara Escarpment.

Goal – Increased Connectivity among Communities

To increase the physical connections among Niagara County communities and between natural resources and cultural features within the County by providing opportunities for a variety of motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation along alternative transportation corridors and routes.

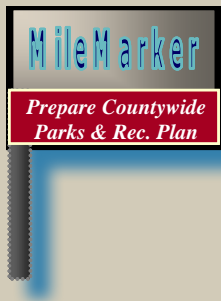
Objectives

- Support and encourage local communities' ongoing and new initiatives for physically connecting communities across Niagara County via a system of interconnected highways, bikeways, pedestrian trail systems, multi-use and equestrian trails, waterways and contiguous wildlife corridors consistent with, but not limited to the initiatives of the Niagara Greenway communities, Seaway Trail communities, Niagara Escarpment communities, Wine Trail communities, the Erie Canal Heritage Corridor communities, and the Transit North Historic Canalway Corridor communities.
- Facilitate alternative forms of transportation across the County through public/private investment opportunities and partnerships to maintain and create acceptable commuting times, the timely transport of goods and services, and convenient access to employment centers, open space and recreational resources and tourist/business/retail destinations.

Recommendations

For Urban, Suburban, Rural Communities

- ☐ Prepare a countywide Parks, Trails & Recreation Master Plan to determine critical park, trail, recreation and open space issues, opportunities and needs by identifying existing gaps in trail systems, park facilities and potential linkages to future specialized trails and multi-use trail networks.
- ☐ Develop a continuous network of trails, pedestrian paths, bikeways and multi-use trails throughout the County connecting population centers in urban, suburban and rural areas to neighborhoods, employment centers, business/retail destinations, open space resources, recreational facilities, schools and significant natural and cultural features.
- ☐ Support the Niagara Escarpment Legacy Project initiative of the Western New York Land Conservancy and other organizations to protect the ecological, open space and scenic value of the Escarpment, encourage the public acquisition and set aside of undeveloped parcels through private donation or purchase and investigate the potential of establishing public access trails and nature areas along the length of the Escarpment with linkages to other trail systems.
- ☐ Work with service providers and local communities to increase public transit opportunities through expanded transit bus routes, convenient work/school bus schedules and improved access to residential and business areas in rural communities.



- Support redevelopment strategies of cities, towns and villages along the Erie Canal corridor and waterfronts and reserve, restore and protect waterfront areas for public access, water-based recreation, open space and tourism-related businesses and amenities.
- Support the Transit North Historic Canalway Corridor initiative and similar initiatives focused on increased connectivity and redevelopment opportunities.

Goal – Maintain Existing Infrastructure

To maintain and enhance existing public infrastructure as a countywide capital improvement priority over the construction of new infrastructure and public facilities in order to support more compact, mixed-use infill development, transit-oriented neighborhoods, and redevelopment of brownfields and grayfield sites located in existing urban centers and underutilized areas.

Objectives

- Encourage infill forms of mixed-use and multiple use development and the redevelopment of vacant, underutilized and brownfield and/or grayfield sites thereby discouraging development of undeveloped greenfield locations especially where extensions of public infrastructure (sewer, water and roads) and services might be required.
- Encourage an increase in the location of jobs and job creating opportunities in mixed-use and multiple-use areas, in order to minimize commuting and travel times, thereby making jobs more accessible and convenient to residential neighborhoods and public services.
- Encourage an increase in mixed use development through planning assistance to communities with greater housing diversity and affordability for all segments of the population in urban centers and those suburban areas where infrastructure is already in place.

Recommendations

For Urban, Suburban, Rural Communities

- The County should continue to provide timely maintenance and required upgrades to its existing road, sewer, drainage and water infrastructure as a way to encourage development and redevelopment in areas where infrastructure is already in place.
- Planned increases in the capacities of existing County infrastructure need to consider the potential implications of increased capacity of roads, sewer and water systems on development patterns, sprawl and community character by coordinating decisions with local communities and consulting local comprehensive and master plans prior to making decisions on infrastructure projects.
- Limit or restrict the construction and/or extension of new County

infrastructure in developing suburban and rural areas to prevent sprawling development patterns unless issues of public health and safety are a concern or the basis for new projects.

- ☐ Continue to market brownfield sites to developers where infrastructure already exists and encourage infill development of these sites over development of greenfield sites.
- ☐ The County Planning Board should consider and emphasize in their review of development projects the need to encourage concentrated and compact forms of development over linear road frontage and leap frog development patterns that may result from project approvals requiring new or expanded infrastructure and services in communities.

Goal – Improve Intergovernmental Communication

To foster greater intergovernmental communication, coordination and collaboration in decision-making that affects short and long-term land use patterns, transportation systems and natural environments.

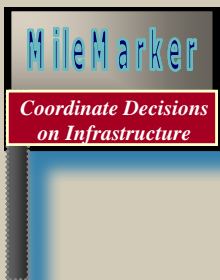
Objectives

- Provide continuing technical support, advice and information sharing to Niagara communities working to update their local comprehensive plans, zoning, subdivision regulations and project review procedures to encourage the implementation of sustainable principles and practices.
- Assist communities in identifying and accessing state-of-the-art information and database technologies through the County's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) that can facilitate local land use decision-making processes and in identifying and avoiding spot zoning and/or approval of use variances in areas where such uses are incompatible with existing or planned uses or with desirable community land use goals.
- Continue to provide training and technical advice to municipal planning boards and zoning boards of appeals members as required by New York State Law under Chapter 662 of the Laws of 2006.

Recommendations

For Urban, Suburban, Rural Communities

- ☐ Integrate and consider local comprehensive plans and their recommendations into County and regional planning and decision-making processes for significant capital improvement projects, including infrastructure, transportation projects, County services and public facilities.
- ☐ Support communities' efforts to identify and pre-list SEQRA Type I projects and proposed actions that require referral to the Niagara County Planning Board, pursuant to Article 12-B, Section 239-m of the New York State General Municipal Law.
- ☐ Instruct all County departments and agencies authorized to review

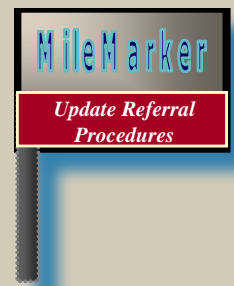


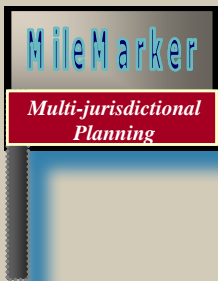
proposed development projects and issue permits to consider the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan and mapped information contained within it relative to the suitability of development in areas and the protection of environmentally sensitive resources.

- Increase the availability and sharing with communities of up-to-date GIS mapping, aerial photography and other planning tools necessary to make informed local decisions perhaps through website links to planning-related databases.
- Maintain a countywide GIS database of vacant and potentially developable parcels in suitable development areas that can support and facilitate local economic development initiatives and goals.
- Encourage and assist communities in developing and conducting community sustainability surveys to determine the effectiveness of local plans and regulations in identifying and protecting important local resources and managing large-scale development. These sustainability surveys should address housing, transportation, agriculture, cultural resources, natural resources, economic development, utilities, community services, open space and other issues that may be of local significance and concern.
- The County, working in coordination with local communities and the County Planning Board, should update its minimum information requirements, uniform project review checklists and written procedures that can be given to project applicants regarding the types of information expected from them. Local municipalities should be encouraged to utilize these documents when reviewing projects.
- Consideration of potentially significant upgrades in infrastructure capacities or extensions of County infrastructure must undergo increased scrutiny under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). This includes opportunities for public input prior to any decision-making that may affect land use and development patterns particularly anything related to the need for new infrastructure and services that will increase costs to taxpayers.
- Exactions and impact fees imposed on project developers are not legal options in New York State at the present time in order to cover the costs of new or upgraded infrastructure, so incentives for cost-sharing need to be established that are both fair and equitable to all parties so the burden of financing new or significant upgrading of infrastructure is not entirely assumed by the County, local governments or taxpayers.

Goal – Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas

To promote open space preservation and enhanced management/protection/restoration of environmentally sensitive areas of the County including 100 year floodplains, riparian corridors, wetlands, woodlands, watersheds, significant flora and fauna habitats, and scenic resources.





Objectives

- Encourage the establishment and use of planning practices at the local municipal level designed to protect open space and rural characteristics, for example cluster development and conservation subdivisions, and direct higher density growth to villages, cities, town centers and hamlet areas identified by local communities as potential or preferred growth areas.
- Discourage development in areas that have unique natural features and significant environmental sensitivity such as floodplains, wetland complexes, contiguous wildlife corridors and habitats, as well as critical scenic viewsheds.
- Support the principles of protecting, managing and restoring “green infrastructure” throughout Niagara County and encourage communities through planning assistance and education to implement local measures to protect and enhance green infrastructure.

Recommendations

For Urban, Suburban, Rural Communities

- ☐ Encourage development of an up-to-date countywide watershed protection plan as an important part of protecting the Great Lakes Basin and identify specific measures, including model ordinances for local communities to protect local surface waters and groundwater quality and quantity.
- ☐ Map environmentally significant and sensitive features at the local municipal level for integration into local plans beyond the more regional scale provided in this Comprehensive Plan in order to provide greater insight and guidance to local government decision-makers and developers on future land use development opportunities, constraints and options.
- ☐ Support multi-jurisdictional planning initiatives to address land use and environmental issues and opportunities that cross municipal boundaries through the use of intermunicipal overlay districts, for example along stream corridors to protect waterways and associated habitats. These overlay districts may include natural buffers and setback standards from streamside ranging in width from as narrow as 20 feet from an embankment in urban locations to perhaps as much as 300 feet in rural locations intended to protect wildlife habitat and other stream functions such as erosion control, filtration, and aquatic habitat.
- ☐ Identify the potential for creating wetland mitigation bank areas within the County to restore wetland complexes and wetland function in critical areas and provide developers and landowners a means for developing in more suitable areas.
- ☐ Given past and ongoing environmental problems faced by Niagara County and its communities resulting from the operations of former and existing industrial hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities, as defined in New York Environmental Conservation Law Section 27-

1101(5), and consistent with an equitable distribution of such facilities throughout New York State, Niagara County should continue to work with local communities as well as State and Federal agencies to establish prohibitions to the future development and/or expansion of any industrial hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facility within the County consistent with the policies established by the Niagara County Legislature via numerous resolutions passed in recent decades. Niagara County should also work with these and other stakeholders to ascertain liability for existing negative environmental impacts resulting from past and ongoing industrial hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities, including but not limited to adverse impacts on natural resources, public health, property values, public perception and quality of life. Niagara County should also continue to work with these stakeholders to ensure that sites contaminated with hazardous industrial waste are remediated for future use, or at a minimum, stabilized to prevent further adverse environmental impact.

Goal – Integrate Land Use and Transportation Decisions

To identify and consider the complex interrelationships between land use and transportation decisions in Niagara County that have implications on each other. In planning for the future these interrelationships need to be thoroughly explored to identify the cumulative beneficial and adverse effects at both local community levels and from a more regional or countywide perspective.

Objective

- Consider the implications of development decisions on growth patterns and the need for new or upgraded transportation services and facilities with established priorities to maintain and enhance existing transportation infrastructure.

Recommendations

For Urban, Suburban, Rural Communities

- ☐ The County and local municipalities should avail themselves of important information on land use decision-making and transportation planning principles provided by the New York State Department of Transportation on its Smart Growth website – www.nysdot.gov/smartplanning - as an important source of information in making future land use and transportation decisions.
- ☐ The County should expand its GIS based inventory and mapping to include all County roads and highways, bridges and drainage facilities by location, functional classification, traffic volume, conditions and capacities, scheduled improvements and maintenance records.
- ☐ The County Planning Board should review project site plans and referrals under Section 239 of Municipal Law based on consistency and compatibility with existing land use, local community plans, road access, road capacity, traffic safety, and roadway function.
- ☐ The County should encourage municipal land use plans to be



consistent with highway function and designs as well as desired community character, planning goals and objectives.

- ☐ The County should collaborate with local and regional jurisdictional agencies, for example the GBNRTC, the NYSDOT and local communities in developing corridor-long master planning for principal arterials within Niagara County, including NYS Routes 31, 78 and 104 to identify opportunities to support and link development/redevelopment centers, concentrate density in suitable commercial areas, foster economic growth, prevent linear road frontage sprawl, promote access management to preserve highway capacity and levels of service, and protect local community character.
- ☐ Collaborate and coordinate land use and transportation decisions among County, GBNRTC, State and local municipalities consistent with the goals, objectives and performance measures of the GBNRTC's 2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan (www.gbnrtc.org) that emphasizes the following:
 1. Preservation of Existing Transportation Infrastructure
 2. Improve Regional Mobility and Accessibility
 3. Improve the Region's Economic Competitiveness
 4. Enhance and Protect the Region's Natural Environmental Quality, Cultural and Historic Resources, and Communities
 5. Improve Inter-Jurisdictional Transportation and Land Use Planning
- ☐ Coordinate with NYSDOT, the GBNRTC and local municipalities on long-term planning and access management to maintain the characteristics of the NYS Route 104 as an important rural east-west highway corridor.
- ☐ Utilize the principles of Context Sensitive Design (CSD) as a collaborative approach to involve local communities in decision-making about new transportation systems and facilities at the County level.

Funding Opportunities

Projects and needs identified in this chapter and elsewhere within this Comprehensive Plan, as well as projects that may be identified in other plans and reports, including the annual Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, require funding assistance to be implemented due to the fiscal constraints, such as budget limitations, of Niagara County and its communities. A variety of funding opportunities exist at local, regional, State and Federal levels of government as well as potential sources of assistance from the private sector. Often the amount of funding needed to implement a project, however may be in excess of what may be available from one source so combinations of funding sources may be needed to finance a project. Funding mechanisms may include earmarks/appropriations/member items, bonding, direct grants, competitive grants, general fund items, foundation monies, corporate assistance and so forth.

Funding opportunities change as economic conditions change, particularly at State and Federal levels. Currently the nation is experiencing a deep economic downturn. Increased funding opportunities exist at this time through the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This Federal Stimulus Bill is

intended to stimulate the economy and employment by providing funding to undertake projects at local levels. In many cases the Federal Stimulus Bill appropriates funding above typical annual Federal spending levels, such as what may be authorized through the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009. Funding will be distributed through existing Federal programs and through new programs or may be passed through existing State programs.

The information provided below identifies Federal Stimulus funding opportunities and projects that have been identified to date at the time of preparing this document. The projects identified below are listed because they relate directly to this chapter and this particular focus area of the Comprehensive Plan. These projects are considered crucial to the health and well being of the communities in Niagara County and for improving the functioning of County government in providing services to the residents and businesses of Niagara County.

The following list of projects will be revised as projects are undertaken and new projects are identified and as local, State and Federal conditions change. Therefore this list of projects should not be considered to be inclusive of all potential projects that may be in need of funding assistance. Also, combined funding assistance for some of these projects may be available from other Federal, State, regional, local and private sector sources.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes funding provisions in Infrastructure Improvements and Transportation (see Chapter VI) and Housing that include, but not limited to:

- \$4 billion to public housing capital fund
- \$2 billion for full year payments to owners receiving Section 8 rental assistance
- \$2 billion for the redevelopment of abandoned and foreclosed homes
- \$1.5 billion for homeless prevention activities
- \$250 million for energy retrofitting and green investments

Niagara County Projects include:

Highway Infrastructure

Niagara County Public Works

<input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Street Bridge Reconstruction over Tonawanda Creek [Town of Royalton]	\$ 3,394,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Townline Road Reconstruction [Town of Pendleton / Town of Wheatfield]	\$ 1,780,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Ewings Road Bridge Replacement over Eighteenmile Creek [Town of Newfane]	\$ 1,243,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Mapleton Road Bridge Replacement over Bull Creek [Town of Pendleton]	\$ 954,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Drum Road / Seaman Road Bridge Replacements at Jeddo Creek [Town of Hartland]	\$ 2,073,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Beebe Road Reconstruction [Town of Wilson]	\$ 1,000,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Washing (78 bridges) [Countywide]	\$ 130,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Deck Sealing (27 bridges) [Countywide]	\$ 120,000

<input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Painting (4 bridges) [Countywide]	\$ 495,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Miller Road Bridge Reconstruction over Mud Creek [Town of Royalton]	\$ 650,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Lower River Road Drop Inlets Rehab/Replacement [Village of Lewiston]	\$ 60,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Packard Road Drop Inlets Rehab/Replacement [Town of Niagara]	\$ 40,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Carmen Road Bridge Repair over Johnson Creek [Town of Hartland]	\$ 40,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Youngstown Road Bridge Reconstruction over Sixmile Creek [Town of Porter]	\$ 1,000,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Scour Protection/Waterway Opening Clearance (10 bridges) [Countywide]	\$ 600,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Joint Replacement (6 bridges) [Countywide]	\$ 300,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Bearing Rehab/Replacement/Lubrication (10 bridges) [Countywide]	\$ 300,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Wearing Course Paving (41 bridges) [Countywide]	\$ 400,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Substructure Protective Coating (23 bridges) [Countywide]	\$ 150,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Plank Road Rehabilitation [Town of Royalton]	\$ 770,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Nash Road Resurfacing [Town of Wheatfield]	\$ 1,000,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Hartland Road Rehabilitation [Town of Somerset]	\$ 800,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Carmen and Quaker Road Box Culverts [Town of Somerset]	\$ 200,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Guide Rail End Replacement (approx. 350 locations) [Countywide]	\$ 500,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Tonawanda Creek Road Hot In-Place Recycling/Micro-Pave [Town of Pendleton]	\$ 400,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Bear Ridge Road Hot In-Place Recycling/Micro-Pave [Town of Pendleton]	\$ 650,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Mapleton Road Pavement Overlay [Town of Pendleton]	\$ 1,376,00
<input type="checkbox"/> Lockport Road Micro-Pave [Town of Wheatfield]	\$ 125,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Upper Mountain Road Pavement Overlay [Town of Cambria]	\$ 123,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Upgrade Bridge Rail and Guide Rail (5 bridges) [Countywide]	\$ 1,000,000
Transit Capital Assistance	
Niagara County Economic Development	
<input type="checkbox"/> Niagara County Trolley Bus Network [Countywide]	\$ 200,000
Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center	
<input type="checkbox"/> Helipad for Transfer of Emergency Patients	\$ 250,000

Border Ports of Entry

City of Niagara Falls

□ Intl. Railway Station/Intermodal Transportation Center \$ 16,500,000

Niagara County Economic Development

□ Niagara Falls World Trade Center Feasibility Study \$ 250,000
[Countywide]

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Chapter VI: Economic Development

Background

The Niagara County Department of Economic Development (NCDED) and the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency (NCIDA) have cooperated extensively to facilitate economic development within the County since 2003. Together, these two entities comprise the Niagara County Center for Economic Development (NCCED), located in the Vantage International Pointe (VIP) Industrial Park in the Town of Wheatfield.

The consolidation of a staff and resources at NCCED provides “one stop” economic development services under a single roof. The combined efforts of the NCCED has resulted in significant cost savings to County residents, enhanced responsiveness to business opportunities, and is considered a model for a team-centered management approach to providing economic development services to residents, businesses and prospective employers in Niagara County.

The NCCED is also the coordinative center of the Niagara County Economic Development Alliance (NCEDA) which was formed in 1993. The NCEDA is a working group of more than 30 agencies that provide support services and project coordination to the business community.

The NCCED is charged with the responsibility for economic development from a countywide perspective. The Center actively partners with many agencies and organizations in providing effective economic development services, and is somewhat unique among economic development agencies due to its focus on both job retention and job creation. Niagara County, led by the Niagara County Department of Economic Development, is one of only a few counties in New York State that emphasizes business and job retention and as part of the effort to facilitate job retention routinely surveys existing businesses in the County to better serve their needs.

The Niagara County Industrial Development Agency (NCIDA) is a public benefit corporation and represents the funding arm for economic development projects in

the County. The NCIDA utilizes a variety of financing mechanisms, tax incentives, site location assistance, and job training programs to facilitate economic growth and development. Funding mechanisms include: Industrial Revenue Bonds; Lease/Lease Transactions; Revolving Loan Funds; Economic Development Funds; and the Microenterprise Assistance Program.

In 2007, the NCIDA approved 26 projects, creating 511 new jobs and retaining over 1600 existing jobs. These projects represent over \$172 million in new private sector investment in Niagara County. In 2006, the Office of the New York State Comptroller issued a report on the performance of IDA's across New York State. The report identified the NCIDA as one of the highest ranking IDA's in the State. It ranked 9th out of the State's 62 counties in the creation of new jobs (a total of 2,486 jobs) and 6th in the State in the number of projects (91).

In 2008, the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency (NCIDA) assisted numerous projects in the manufacturing sector, as well as additional projects related to training and administration, financial services and senior housing.

The Niagara County Microenterprise Assistance Program was created in 1995 for the benefit of low-to-moderate income individuals and small businesses with 5 employees or less. Since that time, the NCIDA has provided 26 rounds of training to local entrepreneurs. The program has an excellent record of success, with over 1500 applications received since its inception and 550 individuals graduating from the educational portion to date. Over \$2.3 million in loans have been approved since 1995. For 2008, 8 loans were approved totaling \$250,000, creating 40 new jobs and retaining 27 jobs.

In 2008, the NCDC (the lending arm of the NCIDA) closed one loan for \$200,000. This project retained 19 jobs and will create 7 new jobs within 3 years. During the year, the NCIDA successfully closed on 11 lease and bond projects, projecting to create over 200 jobs within 3 years and retaining over 175 jobs, with a total investment of over \$83,000,000.

Key business development initiatives by the NCCED during 2008 included:

- Ongoing Business Retention and Growth Initiatives – In the past 8 years, 447 existing companies in Niagara County communities have been contacted. The NCCED averages about 50 to 60 calls on local companies per year. At least 51 business development projects resulted from these visits.
- Canadian Marketing Campaign – In 2007, a total of 2,093 Canadian companies were contacted and three parcels were sold to Canadian companies in the Vantage International Pointe (VIP) Industrial Park in Wheatfield. One Canadian firm has built a 24,000 sq. ft. building employing approximately 10 full-time employees. The Industrial Park's success continues toward full build-out of its 158 acres.
- Domestic Marketing Campaign to "Water Starved States" – In 2008, this campaign focused on marketing Niagara County's access to fresh water, targeting businesses in the south and southwestern U.S. that were facing severe water shortages. The water starved initiative targeted the power generation, energy, chemical, and food and beverage processing sectors in the southeast U.S. Staff conducted in-depth research, conducted focus groups with local industries, attended

the Metalform trade show in Alabama, and sent a direct mail marketing piece to 1,060 companies. By year's end, the drought situation in the southern U.S. had eased.

- Empower Niagara Program - Empower Niagara is a not-for-profit development corporation formed to provide low cost electricity for business growth and development throughout Niagara County. The Niagara County Center for Economic Development serves as the administrative organization to review and select applicants to receive this low cost power. The program is an important addition to the incentives that are currently available to businesses locating and expanding in Niagara County. Applicants must meet the following qualifying criteria:

- Business must be located in Niagara County
- Business must not already be a recipient of low cost power through existing State programs or receive a separate allocation during the term of the contract with Empower Niagara
- Business must be planning to acquire or expand an existing facility, or build a new one
- Project must create at least 75kW of new net load
- Project must result in the retention and/or creation of jobs and the applicant must be willing to commit in writing to create and maintain these jobs
- Proposed use of the power must result in an economic benefit for Niagara County
- Project must be completed within 2 years, with construction beginning within 1 year of application approval

Niagara County Economic Development Services

Detailed, up-to-date information regarding Niagara County Economic Development services, initiatives, partnerships, and on-going projects is provided on the County's website at www.niagaracounty.com and at the Department of Economic Development website at www.nccedev.com. The information that follows highlights additional information relative to recent economic development initiatives and services in Niagara County.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Niagara County Department of Economic Development is to provide high quality professional planning services to the municipalities, citizens and organizations of Niagara County; to promote orderly growth and development through the dissemination of information, preparation of plans, projects and programs and provision of technical services.

The Department will promote sustainable economic development in harmony with the natural environment, creating and retaining jobs, expanding the tax base, and improving the quality of life for Niagara County residents under the direction of the Niagara County Manager and policies of the Niagara County Legislature.

Planning and Technical Assistance

The Department provides planning/technical assistance to local levels of government. These include:

- Special project planning services
- Transportation planning services
- State of the art graphic and mapping services
- Staff support to over 30 boards and committees
- Public requests for census information and data
- Technical assistance and grant support

Niagara County Business Assistance

The Department of Economic Development heads an effort to strengthen and solidify Niagara County business and industry by setting up meetings with a team chosen by the Department to assess the needs of local businesses. The idea behind these meetings is to take a proactive approach to retention by addressing needs before a business decides to close or transfer to another area. In addition, the Department works in conjunction with the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency to search for possible new business enterprises and opportunities for Niagara County by initiating contact with prospects, providing them with marketing information, and follow up.

State Affiliate Data Center

The Department, in cooperation with New York's Empire State Development, participates in a program that provides access to statistics on Niagara County's economy, housing, and population. As an affiliate member of Empire State Development's New York State Data Center, Division of Policy & Research, the Department maintains an extensive library of U.S. Census and other publications. The data can be provided directly, upon request, to local governments, businesses, and individuals. Under this program the Department of Economic Development is a major source of data for firms conducting marketing studies and for companies and individuals interested in establishing businesses in Niagara County.

Niagara County Economic Development Alliance (NCEDA)

The Alliance is a consortium of economic development organizations, utilities, public entities and municipalities. The mission of the Niagara County Economic Development Alliance is to maintain the quality of life for Niagara County citizens by providing services necessary to keep business in the County and to attract new business into the area. The principal purpose of the NCEDA is to provide a wide range of supportive services to business and to coordinate and facilitate the provision of those services. The long-range goal is to provide a singular business-friendly referral service in which all business support services are linked and into which all business can link in order to resolve operational problems, which could endanger their continued operation in Niagara County. The Alliance members are listed, along with contact and program information, in the Connections for Business brochure available through the Niagara County Department of Economic Development.

Special Planning Efforts

The Department continues to work in conjunction with and expand special planning efforts in the following strategic areas:

- Farmland Protection in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Erie Canal Recreationway in conjunction with local communities, NYS Thruway, NYS Canal Corporation and the National Park Service

- Lake Ontario Shoreline in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Niagara River Greenway in conjunction with the Niagara River Greenway Commission
- Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station in conjunction with the Military Affairs Council
- Brownfields Development in conjunction with the Brownfields Working Group
- Cayuga Creek in conjunction with City of Niagara Falls, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeepers and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Homeland Security funding in conjunction with Niagara County Emergency Services and Niagara County Sheriff's Department

Transportation Assistance

The Department plays an active role in transportation issues, including:

- Participates with Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Committee on 2025 Long Range Transportation Plans
- Assists in the development of a 5-year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)
- Participates in special studies related to transportation issues
- Monitors and analyzes the activities of the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority in Niagara County, especially at the Niagara Falls International Airport
- Participates in efforts to stabilize railroad activities and lobby for rail infrastructure improvements
- Facilitates regular meetings between the Greater Niagara Manufacturers Association and CSX Railroad

Environmental Assistance

The Department maintains a library of environmental data that includes information on wetlands, floodplains, soils, hydrography, bedrock geology, land use characteristics, etc. The data can be provided directly, upon request, to local governments, businesses, individuals, and community organizations to assist with planning and development initiatives.

Brownfields

The Department also administers Niagara County's Brownfields Program. The purpose of the program is to collaborate with all levels of government and create public-private partnerships that lead to identification and remediation of brownfield sites so that they can be returned to productive use. The Brownfields Program covers assessment, end-use planning, and remediation. The Department maintains an extensive inventory of brownfields including sites identified by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as well as locally identified sites. The Department also participates in a regional brownfields consortium that includes the City of Niagara Falls, City of Buffalo, and Erie County.

Tourism Development

The Department works closely with the Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation (NTCC) and Niagara County Sportfishing to promote Niagara County as a world-class sportfishing destination through attendance at key sportfishing/outdoor trade shows, in strategic sportfishing/outdoor print and electronic media and through public relations programs such as hosting outdoor writers and fishing derbies and tournaments.

General Characteristics and Trends

Positive economic growth and development activity is the lifeblood that is so critical to sustaining healthy local and regional economies. Fiscal management, in combination with sound economic, land use and transportation policies can be the impetus to creating strong economies and a solid tax base in the County that in turn enhances the region's quality of life, attracts new investment, and retains existing businesses and residents. The information that follows highlights some additional economic development activities and trends in Niagara County.

Strategic partnerships and intergovernmental and inter-municipal cooperation are critical to building strong economies and successful business retention and recruitment programs. Niagara County, in collaboration with a long list of economic development partners that has formed over the years, is realizing significant success brought about through regional and local economic development collaboration. These partnerships and their collaborative efforts need to be expanded to continue and sustain recent economic development success. As the nation's economy declined in the latter half of 2008 these partnerships and collaborative efforts have become more important than ever.

This section provides a summary of important characteristics and recent trends in Niagara County with regards to economic development. Issues remain, however, and these issues and the many diverse opportunities for further growth have been identified by stakeholder groups and individuals through the comprehensive planning process.

Much of the background information in this chapter has been provided by the Niagara County Department of Economic Development, including information contained in its most recent 2008 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report. The CEDS report is submitted annually to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. Further information on economic development initiatives and projects in the County is available at www.nccedev.com and information on the 2008 CEDS Report is available at www.niagaracounty.com/docs/2008CEDSRpt.pdf.

As pointed out in the County's 2008 CEDS report, recent trends indicate Niagara County has been experiencing some very positive signs of its economic potential in spite of the recession that the United States is currently experiencing. Niagara County continues to be very active in promoting available low-cost hydropower from the New York Power Authority. In 2008, NYPA allocated nearly 60 megawatts of low-cost hydropower to five existing and three start-up companies in Niagara County. These allocations will support the creation of 763 new jobs and help retain 304 jobs in Niagara County, while seeing these companies invest over \$326 million in their facilities over the next three years. Niagara County will continue its efforts to promote low-cost hydropower from NYPA, an extremely important tool in its economic development toolkit.

The Niagara County Center for Economic Development also serves on the "Western New York Advisory Group" (WNYAG), which was created in 2004 by a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the process to coordinate the marketing and allocation of New York Power Authority hydropower known as Expansion Power (EP) and Replacement Power (RP). Other positive aspects of the economy of Niagara County are described below.

Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel

A major catalyst to the development of downtown Niagara Falls and Niagara County in general is the Seneca Niagara Casino and Hotel, which has emerged as a world-class casino and resort destination since its grand opening in 2002. The original casino opened on December 31, 2002 in the former Niagara Falls Convention and Civic Center. The Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel opened on December 31, 2005. The 26-story luxury hotel became fully operational in the spring of 2006, at a cost of about \$235 million. With the expansion, the employment level at the Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel increased to nearly 2,900 employees, making it the largest employer in Niagara County, surpassing the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station with 2,752 employees.

Niagara Wine Trail

Another example of recent positive economic trends is the success of the Niagara Wine Trail which runs through the heart of Niagara County. The Wine Trail grew to twelve wineries in 2008. The Wine Trail is host to seasonal wine tastings and community events including live music performances, an art show, jazz, blues and classic concerts, and a harvest festival. The Trail complements local communities' annual festivals, fairs and other popular local and tourist venues. Niagara Wine Trail brochures are available locally and detailed information including events is also available online at www.niagarawinetrail.org.

Artpark

Artpark, located in Lewiston, is also experiencing a much welcomed “renaissance” in recent years. The Lower Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce, the Lewiston Council of the Arts, and the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation (NTCC) have been actively involved in promoting this unique venue. Artpark is a New York State park in existence since 1974. The park plays host to local and national performing artists, plays, and its “Tuesdays in the Park” series.

Erie Canalway Heritage Corridor

The Erie Canal, which traverses several Niagara communities, is now widely recognized as a significant cultural, recreational and economic resource for Canal communities and the Niagara region in general. The Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor was established by the New York State Legislature in 1999 as part of the New York State Heritage Area System. This Heritage Area includes all the municipalities of Wayne, Monroe, Orleans, Niagara and Erie counties along with a 136-mile section of the Erie Canal.

In 2000, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor was established by the U.S. Congress as one of only 37 federally designated National Heritage Areas. This designation will help preserve and revitalize interest in the historical, natural, scenic, and recreational resources of the Canal, celebrate its national significance, and facilitate further revitalization of canal-side communities. Information on Western Erie Canal Management Plan can be found at www.eriecanalheritage.com/content/News and at www.eriecanalway.org/background.asp.

Niagara River Greenway

Similar to the recognition of the Erie Canal as a valuable resource, the Niagara River corridor is also being recognized as a tremendous resource for economic development and tourism. In 2004, the Niagara River Greenway Commission was established by State legislation and charged with the responsibility of creating the Niagara River

Greenway Plan.

Subsequently, the Niagara River Greenway Plan was adopted in 2007. The Greenway Plan establishes a common vision for the Greenway as well as setting forth a variety of principles for connecting communities and the many natural and cultural resources within Greenway boundaries. These resources include the Seaway Trail, the Niagara Wine Trail and the Erie Canalway. The Greenway Plan encompasses several river communities within Niagara County. These include: the Towns of Porter, Lewiston, Niagara and Wheatfield; the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown; and the cities of Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda.

Niagara Power Project

Another important milestone event occurred after five years of open and publicly inclusive efforts by the New York Power Authority (NYPA), State and Federal agencies, and over 100 stakeholders from across Western New York, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approved a new 50-year license for the Niagara Power Project on March 15, 2007. The project will continue to result in significant economic, environmental, and recreation-tourism benefits to the Niagara Frontier. The new 50-year license assures continued production of low-cost hydroelectricity, that is estimated to be tied to several tens of thousands of local jobs.

The Niagara Power Coalition (NPC), consisting of Niagara County, the Towns of Lewiston and Niagara, the City of Niagara Falls, and the Lewiston-Porter, Niagara Falls and Niagara-Wheatfield school districts signed a Host Communities agreement with NYPA in June 2005. This agreement provides that NYPA shall make available to the Host Communities 25 mw of power (of which Niagara County will receive 9 mw), establish a Host Community Fund of \$5 million per year for 50 years, and allocate \$3 million per year for 50 years for Greenway consistent recreation/tourism projects in Niagara County.



Niagara County, as a member of the Niagara Power Coalition, is involved in distributing Niagara County's 9 mw share of power to its County-owned sites and in assisting local businesses with low cost power.

Niagara County, as a member of the Niagara Power Coalition, is involved in distributing Niagara County's 9 mw share of power to its County-owned sites. Additionally, the Niagara County Department of Economic Development is assisting local businesses to retain and/or receive low cost power allocations for business expansion. The Niagara County Legislature has authorized the use of its hydropower allocation, received from the agreement, for economic development. As a result, "Empower Niagara" was established as a not-for-profit Development Corporation authorized to enter into agreements for the purposes of providing certain electric power benefits to those companies that meet eligibility criteria. In the meantime, the allocation is being used to lower the County's electric bills at County-owned sites.

Other important recent economic indicators that provide a snapshot of the local economy are provided below.

- The unemployment rate as measured by percentage of total workforce for Niagara County was 5.3% in 2007, down slightly from a rate of 5.4% in 2006. Although the County's unemployment rate improved slightly, the rate continued to exceed the non-seasonally adjusted 2007 rates of both New York State (4.5%) and the U.S. (4.6%). These unemployment rates were prior to the nationwide economic downturn experienced during the latter half of 2008. The rate for the first eleven months of 2008 was at 6.8% and rose significantly higher at the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009.

- Per-capita income in Niagara County in recent years has consistently trailed that of

New York State and the United States. Per capita personal income in Niagara County in 2005, the most recent year for which information is available, was \$27,923. This compares to \$39,967 in New York State, \$34,471 in the United States, and \$32,071 in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). In current dollar terms, not adjusted for inflation, personal income increased an average of 3.9% per year in Niagara County from 2004 to 2005. This compares to a 3.7% increase in per capita personal income for the Buffalo-Niagara Falls MSA, a 4.1% increase in the United States, and a 3.8% increase in New York State for the same time period. These numbers suggest that Niagara County has closed the gap slightly in per capita personal income growth from 2004 to 2005, but still lags behind when compared to the region and the nation.

- Growth sectors & clusters in the economy that show positive signs for the future include hospitality & tourism; advanced manufacturing (chemical/plastics, metal, fabricating/machining); agriculture/food processing; telecommunications/call centers; health care/social assistance; medical products; medical technology research and development; high tech/emerging industries; forest and wood products; printing; logistics, warehousing & distribution; and aerospace/defense have been identified as the region's top growth sectors and industry clusters.
- Major categories that continue to significantly contribute to the economy of Niagara County include manufacturing, services, public utilities, tourism and agriculture. Within these are various subcategories that can be considered on a stand-alone basis by virtue of the role they may play in the future prosperity of the County.

- Manufacturing remains a strong component of Niagara County's economy, with the greatest number of employees and the highest payroll, despite a relative smaller number of total establishments. The future of the manufacturing sector is uncertain, at best, but should not be totally discounted because of resources like low-cost hydropower, availability of fresh water, location, infrastructure and other advantages for which Niagara County has traditionally been known.

- The service industries are increasing in importance in Niagara County. Service industries include: Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services; Company and Enterprise Management Services; Administrative Support, Waste Management, Remediation Services; Education: Health Care & Social Services; Arts, Entertainment & Recreation; and Accommodation & Food Services. The Health Care and Social Services sector has seen continued growth and leads other service industries in total annual payroll, number of employees and number of establishments. The number of establishments in this sector grew from 462 in 1998 to 516 in 2005. Annual payroll in this sector also increased from \$191 million in 1998 to \$268.8 million in 2005. Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center (NFMMC) has become an economic engine in the sector in Niagara County and the region. In 2006, NFMMC opened a \$20 million ER One Facility and Heart Center of Niagara, significantly expanding its campus and employment opportunities. NFMMC is currently Niagara County's sixth largest employer, with 1,200 jobs. Over the past five years, NFMMC has invested \$26 million in capital projects and has an additional \$30 million in capital projects in various stages of development.

- The tourism and hospitality industry has benefitted greatly from growth in disposable income in the Country as a whole. This industry may be affected by the recent economic downturn. Though it has always been a significant part of the

local economy, many initiatives are underway across the County to cultivate tourism potential, including the Niagara River Greenway Plan and the Western Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. This sector continues to have great potential for Niagara County. Linking the conventional attractions, such as Niagara Falls and Fort Niagara, with the more contemporary visitor destinations like the Erie Canal is seen as critical to the future of the County's economy. Historic preservation is also an important element of the future development of the County. The Western Erie Canal Corridor, rural villages and hamlets and city centers are rife with historic amenities that tell the story of the Niagara Frontier. Several individuals and organizations have joined in the effort to retain and enhance these assets.

- Agriculture continues to be an important factor in the Niagara County economy. In 2007 agriculture injected nearly \$104 million in product sales into the economy according to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture. As the oldest and most steady sector of the economy, farming is seen as increasingly threatened by low commodity prices and sprawl from the regions urban centers. This is borne out by the fact that the average size of farms and total farm acreage in Niagara County declined between 2002 and 2007 from 185 acres per farm in 2002 to 165 acres in 2007. Total farmland acreage in 2002 of 148,041 acres fell to 142,636 acres in 2007. Efforts are underway to protect the valuable agricultural land in Niagara County and steps are being taken to identify opportunities to enhance the viability of existing farming operations and attract additional producers and value-added businesses. The future of agriculture in the County is seen as sustainable given certain circumstances. Many collateral quality of life and security benefits are also associated with future growth in this sector of the economy.

- Utilities are another of Niagara County's strengths. Three of the State's largest utilities, New York Power Authority (NYPA), National Grid, and New York State Electric & Gas (NYSEG), supply electricity to County businesses and residents. With the onset of deregulation, there are several smaller suppliers of electricity available to business and consumer alike. Natural gas service is supplied by NYSEG to the eastern portion of Niagara County and by National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation to the western portion of Niagara County. National Grid, NYSEG and National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation all have economic development staff able to assist new and existing businesses within the County. In addition, blocks of low cost hydro power are available to business and industry through the Empower Niagara program which offers hydroelectric power at some of the lowest rates in the U.S.

- Niagara County has been making a genuine effort to reduce the effects of property taxes on development. Sound fiscal policies including streamlining government and budget efficiencies has allowed the County Legislature to hold the amount raised by taxation to an average of 3.59% per year from 1997 through 2007.
- The Niagara County Industrial Development Agency concluded another strong year in 2007, completing projects in manufacturing, warehouse/distribution, tourism, health care, transportation, and educational sectors. The IDA successfully closed on 12 lease and bond projects projected to create over 130 jobs within 3 years and retain over 1,200 jobs. Total investment for these projects is over \$82 million. Nine additional projects were approved, but did not close by the end of the year. These projects are projected to create 300 jobs within 3 years and retain over 150 jobs with a total investment of \$87 million. In 2007 the IDA closed on 7 loans totaling \$1.9 million projected to create 49 jobs within 3 years and retain over 240 jobs.

- The Niagara County Microenterprise Assistance Program was created in 1995 for the benefit of low-to-moderate income individuals and small businesses with 5 employees or less. Since that time, the NCIDA has provided 24 rounds of training to local entrepreneurs. The program has an excellent record of success, with over 1400 applications received since its inception and 525 individuals graduating from the educational portion to date. Over \$2,000,000 in loans have been approved since 1995.

Brownfields Redevelopment

Niagara County is very active in brownfields redevelopment with its brownfields program to help spur the redevelopment of key properties that have been contaminated in the past. Most municipalities in the County contain at least one, if not many, brownfield sites. While contamination of these properties may present obstacles to their redevelopment, brownfield programs offer courses of action to clean these sites and attract productive uses to Niagara County's communities. There are few tracts of undeveloped, uncontaminated land remaining for development within the County's major urban centers, making brownfield cleanup imperative for economic growth. Redeveloped, brownfields can be catalysts for community revitalization and sustainable development.

Brownfields redevelopment will broaden the County's tax base, attract new industry and create thousands of new jobs. The benefits of brownfield development are numerous and include:

- Reuse of existing infrastructure.
- Protection of public health and the environment.
- Innovative reuse of sites can increase the sense of place and community in Niagara County.
- Positive effect on Niagara County's growth patterns by encouraging the redevelopment of abandoned properties within the urban core and discouraging development of green space in outlying areas.
- Several Federal and State initiatives offer significant financial incentives for brownfield remediation and redevelopment projects.

With the County Legislature's support, the Niagara County Department of Economic Development established a brownfields program in 1999 with the following goals:

- Identify and create a countywide inventory of brownfield sites
- Create collaboration between all levels of government and the private sector
- Engage the public in the brownfields identification and assessment process
- Identify funding sources and find innovative ways to finance brownfield redevelopment
- Develop creative reuses for brownfield sites

The County and many communities have been quite successful in implementing its brownfields program. To date, millions of dollars in funding have been awarded to Niagara County by State and Federal brownfield programs, and these funds have been used to investigate and clean-up many of the County's priority brownfield sites. By prioritizing sites for redevelopment, investigating the nature and degree of contamination present on these sites, applying remediation measures if necessary and feasible, and marketing them to encourage redevelopment, the County has successfully navigated a number of brownfield sites through the redevelopment process, resulting in the development of clean and productive uses on these once-contaminated properties.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency "Brownfields are real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties takes development pressures off of undeveloped, open land, and both improves and protects the environment."

While substantial progress has been made, several hundred Niagara County brownfield sites remain in need of environmental assessments, notably Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, which are used to inform prospective owners of the environmental history of a site and to determine the potential need for further environmental investigation. According to Niagara County's 2006 brownfields inventory, 41 hazardous waste sites are still in need of Phase I investigations, as are approximately 200 petroleum-contaminated sites. Niagara County will continue to seek State and Federal funding to complete the necessary investigations required to advance the redevelopment of brownfield sites throughout the County.

To facilitate brownfield redevelopment, Niagara County partnered with the City of Niagara Falls to jointly receive a \$1 million Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund from the U.S. EPA. The Fund will provide loans and subgrants to eligible borrowers and applicants in need of assistance in remediating brownfield sites in Niagara County. Funds provided can be leveraged to advance brownfield sites to the next level of redevelopment.

The County's Brownfields Program needs to be promoted to be most effective in identifying and remediating priority brownfields. Promotion can be accomplished through several different media including brochures, meetings, business workshops and public information campaigns. The County recently created the position of Public Information Officer. This position can facilitate the dissemination of information on brownfields and other economic development programs and incentives. In 2009 the Public Information Officer will be assisting in business workshops sponsored by the NCCED and its partners. Information on the County's Brownfields Program can be obtained at www.nccedev.com.

New York State, through the Department of Environmental Conservation, also provides significant brownfield remediation opportunities through programs for both the public and private sectors. Information is available at www.dec.state.ny.us. The Department of State also offers substantial assistance through its Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program to communities and community-based organizations. Information is available at www.nyswaterfronts.com/grantopps_BOA.asp.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also offers several Federal brownfield programs to assist the public and private sectors. Information on Federal programs is available at www.epa.gov/brownfields.

The State and Federal brownfields programs offer significant economic and financial incentives to identify, remediate and redevelop brownfield sites. The County's program in combination with these State and Federal programs are having a major positive economic impact on Niagara County since program incentives include tax credits and release from liability offered through the State program are the driving force behind the redevelopment of brownfield sites.

Some recent brownfield successes include:

- The Wurlitzer Site in North Tonawanda
- Niagara Falls Transportation Center in Niagara Falls
- The Wendy's Restaurant in Niagara Falls

Several brownfield projects are underway:

- Santarosa Holdings in Niagara Falls
- Northern Ethanol in Niagara Falls

- Globe Specialty Metals in Niagara Falls
- Remington Rand in North Tonawanda

Canadian Tourism

A number of forces, including tourism coming into the County from outside the U.S. are driving the local economy. The U.S. dollar continues to fluctuate relative to the value of the Canadian dollar. Niagara County realizes an economic increase in the local tourism sector based on any increased strength of Canadian currency, with a corresponding increase in the amount of retail sales and bed tax revenue being collected. Sales taxes are less in New York State compared to the Province of Ontario, Canada for example, further attracting Canadian buying power.

The growth of Canadian tourism is driving that sector throughout the Niagara region on both sides of the border. According to the Niagara Economic & Tourism Corporation, there are currently \$6 billion in tourism-related projects underway in the Niagara Region of Ontario, Canada. These can be viewed as both an opportunity and a challenge for Niagara County, NY. Canadian projects include:

- The Fallsview Casino Resort is Niagara Falls, Ontario's newest casino, joining Casino Niagara, which celebrated its 10th year in business in 2007. According to the operators of the Ontario casinos, a majority of their patrons come from U.S. markets; most of which drive through Niagara County, NY. Creating new attractions and venues that entice the casino patrons to stay on the U.S. side of the border is a real opportunity, and one that is being explored in earnest by County economic development officials.
- New hotels are being constructed in Niagara Falls, Ontario. Attractions like the Butterfly Conservatory have been built and there are plans to build a new convention center in Niagara Falls, Ontario within the next three to five years. This convention center would compete with Niagara Falls, NY for the very lucrative, but limited convention business.

Workforce Investment

Niagara County has developed and updated a comprehensive local plan under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. This plan was implemented July 1, 2000 and has developed a universally accessible workforce development system that serves the area's job-seeking customers as well as provides services to business. The plan's vision is to present a seamless service with rapid response to all of the community, and help to improve the economic well being of individuals and the local economy. The plan covers businesses, jobseekers, employed workers, and youth employment needs.

The Niagara County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) focuses its services in demand occupations to respond more quickly to businesses' needs, and to best utilize its resources to support local industries. It aligns with the western NY regional effort in working to transform the regional economy in supplying workforce needs in the areas of Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences. The local WIBs are taking a leadership role in addressing this need.

Businesses, as well as individuals seeking employment/upgrading, are served through the One-Stop Centers, which bring together the resources of WIA and Department of Employment & Training Services staff. Partner programs are also represented. Core services are made available to everyone, along with intensive training services for those who need additional assistance. Training is provided in demand occupations

based on local needs. Funding cuts over the past five years have decreased the level of funded training services that can be provided, but the programs' universal customer services and business connections will continue to be maintained.

Niagara County must focus on the retention of its remaining manufacturing base, while promoting brownfields redevelopment as a means of attracting new industry to the County's abundant spaces available to industry. Assisting Niagara County manufacturers in the transition to "advanced manufacturing" with techniques like lean manufacturing and other innovative practices is crucial in the retention of the manufacturing base.

Green industries involved in producing sustainable technologies represent a blossoming pool of new-age manufacturing companies promising to expand in the future, and Niagara County should focus on recruiting and meeting the needs of such these manufacturers. Promoting the expansion of low cost power availability for industry is essential. Currently, there are numerous opportunities for retaining and expanding businesses as a result of the relicensing of the Niagara Power Project.

Tourism Travel and the Niagara Falls International Airport

Niagara Falls is a world renowned travel destination. The Niagara Region is suitably positioned for increased tourism and to take advantage of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Niagara County's proximity to Canada and the majority of that nation's industry strategically positions Niagara County in the international marketplace. Niagara County is also within a days drive to such markets as Buffalo, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Toronto and Montreal. The proximity to the large, growing metropolitan area of Toronto creates a unique economic opportunity for the Niagara Region.

The underutilized Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA), and the relocation of the Amtrak station closer to the U.S./Canadian border, will expand the modal opportunities available in Niagara County, and will open doors to advance tourism and commerce in the Niagara region.

The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority is currently in the midst of a \$43.9 million improvement project at the Niagara Falls International Airport, featuring a new state-of-the-art terminal, with improvements to the apron and surrounding area. Designed to better accommodate modern passenger jets and improve passenger's security experience, the facility is scheduled to open September 2009 (information available at www.niagarafallsairport.com/newterminal.asp).

The new terminal at 69,430 square-feet will more than triple the size of the current one, with a second story to facilitate jet bridges. Security and processing operations will take full advantage of new technologies to make the airport efficient and user-friendly for passengers. The creative design of the new terminal will reflect the grandeur of the Niagara community, promoting a positive "Gateway Image" to the region. The two-gate facility will provide for efficient, customer friendly passenger processing, a two level layout for jet bridge boarding, food/beverage concessions, fully functional TSA inspection facilities, in-line baggage screening, eight stationary ticket counter stations, car rental and a multi-modal Metro transit center. Other improvements include access roads, a circulatory road, walkways and parking.

The terminal will provide the operational capability to simultaneously process

international and domestic flights and fully accommodate 747-400 and 757-300 aircraft. The innovative split-level holdrooms with initial seating for 280 (design provides for additional seating) will provide all passengers with an outstanding level of customer service regardless of aircraft size. Functionally, the design takes cues from the Federal Aviation Administration and International Air Transport Association guidelines.

NFIA is well positioned to take advantage of a new terminal. It is located within 500 miles of 55% of the U.S. population and 62% of Canada's population. It is just 15 minutes from Niagara Falls and 10 miles from two international border crossings. At 10,000 feet in length, the airport has one of the longest runways in the State, making it capable of accommodating the largest aircraft in the world..

Partners and Resources for Economic Development

As stated previously, present success of Niagara County and local economic development initiatives is attributable to strategic partnering with a variety of municipalities, groups and organizations. Facilitating these partnership opportunities is critical to future successes as well. The following list, although it may not be entirely inclusive of all partners working together towards increased economic growth and development, is representative of the diverse range of stakeholders needed to promote, facilitate and sustain healthy economic activity.

Partners and Resources for Economic Development include, but are not limited to:

- Niagara County Legislature
- Niagara County Department of Economic Development
- Niagara County Economic Development Alliance
- Niagara County Industrial Development Agency
- Buffalo Niagara Enterprise (BNE)
- Buffalo Niagara Partnership
- Chamber of Commerce of the Tonawandas
- City of Lockport Greater Lockport Development Corporation
- City of Niagara Falls Empire Zone
- City of Niagara Falls Renewal Community
- Empire State Development (USA Niagara)
- Insyte Consulting
- Local and Regional Chambers of Commerce
- Lower Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce
- Lumber City Development Corporation
- NCCC Small Business Development Center
- New York Power Authority
- New York State Department of State
- New York State Economic Development Council
- New York State Association of County Planning Directors
- Niagara County Department of Employment & Training
- Niagara County Workforce Investment Board (WIB)
- Niagara Falls Bridge Commission
- Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation (NTCC)
- Niagara USA Chamber
- Town of Lockport Industrial Development Agency
- Town of Niagara Industrial Development Agency
- University of Buffalo Regional Institute
- USA Niagara Development Corporation

- WNY Advisory Council
- WNY Regional Education Center for Economic Development

Niagara County also works closely with the following agencies and organizations in providing important resource information related to existing economic activity and potential economic opportunities. These include:

- Cornell University Cooperative Extension – Niagara County
- International Joint Commission (IJC)
- New York State Data Center
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- Niagara County Farm Bureau
- Niagara County Soil & Water Conservation District
- United States Department of Agriculture
- Various local and regional committees

Issues & Opportunities

Further indication of the status of economic development in Niagara County in 2008 was obtained through the comprehensive planning process that asked Niagara communities and stakeholders to identify what they saw as issues and opportunities specifically related to economic development in the County. The information gathered from these stakeholders is summarized below by planning subregion.

Eastern Communities Subregion

Town of Hartland, Town of Royalton & Village of Middleport

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- “From the farm to the factory – a need for keeping it local!” What is being produced locally should stay local and marketed locally (referring to a greater need for relying on more local food production, processing, packaging, shipping, marketing, etc.)
- Small businesses expansion of existing businesses and enticing new businesses is needed along with better marketing of existing small local businesses.
- Upgrade infrastructure facilities, including sewer services, to support economic development.
- Only NYS Routes 31 and 104 corridors have natural gas service - there is a need to expand gas service to support development.
- Roads need improvements for trucking and shipping farm products, etc.
- Need to expand public knowledge to a great community – come and stay – we need a marketing campaign to promote local communities.
- Need to address concerns with vacant buildings – either demolish and/or beautify these buildings to enhance the attractiveness and promotion of areas such as along the Canal

Key assets and opportunities of the communities in this subregion include:

- Agri-tourism offers a means to draw visitors to the area.
- The Erie Canal has historic significance and economic development potential.
- Existing parks and recreation facilities have a need to expand and improve some of their facilities.
- Schools and public parks share athletic facilities now - need to increase this

potential.

- Opportunities for beautification of the many older buildings that can still be restored and saved.
- Existing wildlife and conservation areas need to be protected.

Central Communities Subregion

Town of Cambria, Town of Lockport, City of Lockport, Town of Pendleton

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- Taxes are a disincentive to development – the property tax rate is too high
 - The overabundance of education related taxes (schools taxes) – Town of Cambria, for example, has 5 school districts, 5 also in the Town of Lockport - creates disincentive to live and work here.
 - Municipalities are paying other municipalities for services, i.e., water treatment
 - An aging infrastructure hinders development - gas, water, sewer, etc.
 - The challenges faced due to the loss of people in the County
 - The need for improving “shovel ready sites” vs. the red tape, bureaucracy and delays in getting projects done in New York State, especially compared to other states

Key assets and opportunities of the communities in this subregion include:

- The importance of the Niagara Wine Trails
- The availability of higher educational facilities like NCCC
- The historic canal locks in Lockport (a unique site on the Erie Canal)
- The Transit Road corridor and our historic (heritage) corridors

Lakefront Communities Subregion

Town of Somerset, Village of Barker, Town of Newfane, Town of Wilson, Village of Wilson

- Primary issues and challenges identified include:
 - A general attitude in the area of “Not In My Backyard” (NIMBY) and negative attitudes toward any development proposals and change in general.
 - The overall lack of sewers and natural gas in entire towns
 - Villages of Barker and Wilson have good infrastructure coverage, but coverage is poor in the towns of Wilson and Somerset
 - Newfane has good infrastructure coverage and it shows in more commercial use
 - Distance from main transportation systems is a hindrance to development
 - Employers are leaving the area
 - Parkways are for non-commercial use - hindering development: Robert Moses Parkway should allow commercial traffic
 - Excessive taxes

Key assets and opportunities of the communities in this subregion include:

- The existing harbors and the Ontario lakefront itself
- Opportunities to expand sportfishing and tourism based economies
- The existing road systems for transporting goods and services
- The potential for other uses at the AES facility in Somerset
- The large areas that are zoned industrial, but not being used as such

Lower River Communities Subregion

Town of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Village of Lewiston, Village of Youngstown

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- The need to facilitate tourism
- Obstacles to businesses – bureaucracy, high taxes, energy costs
- Cross-river Ferry is needed
- Connection to other areas is needed
- Cross-tourism (international – easier access across border needed)
- The need to maintain regional employment levels
- Keeping residents in the area
- Dealing with the needs of an aging population
- Youngstown – sewer plant capacity is an issue
- Town of Porter – more promotion of agriculture needed
- There are too many State properties that cannot be developed - Fort Niagara Joseph Davis Park, etc.
- Chemical Waste Management (CWM) / Modern Disposal concerns
- Need to facilitate new industries such as in the Town of Lewiston – hydroponics & greenhouses
- Need a “people mover” transportation system from Niagara Falls to Lewiston

Key assets and opportunities of the communities in this subregion include:

- The beautiful geography and nature of the area
- Farm Museum - Town of Lewiston (Sanborn)
- The Niagara River, lakes, streams, and waterways
- The low cost of living, including low housing costs
- The untapped potential for the area in general

Upper River Communities Subregion

City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Town of Wheatfield, City of North Tonawanda

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- The “Oz” Project and what challenges it may entail:
 - Schedule – largest project in the area that is now on the boards
 - 4 years to develop project
 - Project will be the largest private employer in the County with 3,000 – 5,000 year round employees estimated creating jobs, but also traffic, housing needs
- Other issues in this area include a need for more diversity of housing and better quality of existing housing stock
- More support for agriculture and related businesses is needed – market fresh food/guests accommodations/agri-tourism
- Support for the hospitality industry – need for additional training for workforce
- Need more technology providers and trained workforce
- Public transportation services needed in Wheatfield
- Niagara Falls (between Main Street and Whirlpool) - Important issues center on brownfield clean-up and dealing with bureaucratic red tape that hinders redevelopment – need to better leverage investments already made in cities
- River property needs more public access needed to waterfronts
- Niagara Falls Boulevard needs corridor enhancements
- Overlay districts are needed to enhance redevelopment and aesthetics
- Businesses are needed that bring in other businesses

- Need for working together
- Maintaining farming in the area
- Right-to-farm laws are needed
- Smart growth development is needed
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Educating the development community about what is needed in a community

Key assets and opportunities of the communities in this subregion include:

- The Air Base
- New terminal at NFI airport
- International heavy jets that can be accommodated at the airport
- Spinoff opportunities and surrounding redevelopment potential from the airport
- Environmental clean-up and services – technical support from County is available when needed
- Williams Road medical corridor is an asset
- Multi-modal transportation in the Niagara Falls area
- The high cost of fuel should promote greater city growth
- The U.S. Customs House and its history
- Niagara Falls Experience Center
- Existing road infrastructure
- The Culinary Institute
- Opportunities surrounding the new Niagara Falls Public Safety Complex – and Main Street potential of the cities

Strategies

Land use decisions and regulations are a local municipal responsibility under New York State Municipal Law (“Home Rule”), the County’s ability to guide development in towns, villages and cities is very limited. The County’s primary planning function is to provide guidance and recommendations to communities about future land use, as provided in this Comprehensive Plan.

However, when it comes to economic development decisions at the County level, County officials, working in collaboration with local municipalities, should continue to encourage projects toward suitable development/redevelopment areas including brownfields. The County can also encourage compact, mixed-use forms of development and transit-oriented projects by assisting communities in updating zoning provisions that allow for these uses.

Locations identified as being poorly suited for development/redevelopment typically are in rural areas and may be rich in natural resources. These areas may be attractive to development for financial reasons because land values and acquisition costs may be substantially lower than elsewhere, but these locations may also be far from existing community centers and services. Many of these lands should be retained for their natural resource value with limited hamlet forms of low density rural development.

Development/redevelopment areas will typically have access to existing road, water, drainage and sewer infrastructure along with the necessary support services to facilitate economic development, although system improvements and upgrades may be



***Collaborate
with
Municipalities***

necessary. These types of infrastructure improvements may be eligible for various State and federal funding mechanisms including economic stimulus packages.

Primary development/redevelopment areas are generally located in and directly adjacent to the County's 3 cities, 5 villages, the developed fringe areas of those cities and villages, suburban town centers and some hamlets/rural crossroads. Many of the targeted development/redevelopment locations identified in Chapter V of this Plan were identified from a review of local municipal plans, input provided by stakeholder communities and GIS mapping and land use analysis.

The cumulative effect of the development of valuable local resource and working lands, such as prime farmland, wetlands, and riparian corridors, may not be recognized until some time in the future after small developments on these lands are approved and constructed. By then the value of these lands from an environmental standpoint may already be diminished.

In economic terms, the cumulative fiscal effect of conventional forms of "leapfrog" development is ultimately increased by municipal and County costs for infrastructure extensions, added support services, such as roads, sewer, drainage systems, schools, fire districts, and increased demands on current transportation systems. These added costs translate into higher taxes on residents and property owners.

Inter-governmental cooperation and collaboration are critical to directing and encouraging development, preferably mixed-use forms of development, into those areas of each community that are considered most suitable for development/redevelopment. This will also make it easier to preserve important community characteristics, such as scenic open spaces in rural areas, environmentally sensitive lands, and working farmlands that can help make communities distinct from one another.

Inter-municipal collaboration is also important in attracting and recruiting those businesses and industries that best complement the unique character of each community, whether they are urban areas, suburban communities, waterfront communities or farming communities. Economic development needs to be appropriate to the existing infrastructure and regional location of communities relative to the rest of Niagara County. For example large industrial uses and businesses that rely on extensive infrastructure and support services should be located in areas appropriately zoned for such uses and adequately served by existing infrastructure; tourism-based businesses along the area's many beautiful waterfronts should be located consistent with the Niagara River Greenway and Erie Canalway initiatives; and agriculturally-based businesses and home-based enterprises are best suited for rural communities.

It should remain a priority to continue the countywide collaborative effort to prioritize improvements and upgrades to existing infrastructure first, especially with regards to water, sewer and transportation systems, before consideration of creating new infrastructure relative to economic development. This is being accomplished via the Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as well as the Greater Buffalo Niagara Region Transportation Council (GBNRTC) through its Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). Obviously in cases where public health and safety are at risk, priorities must be different based on those local needs.

Giving high priority to the maintenance and improvement of existing infrastructure over

the creation of new systems, and directing development/redevelopment to where it already exists, is consistent with national planning principles and with State and regional planning initiatives. Agencies like the NYS Department of State Quality Communities Initiatives, the NYS Department of Transportation, the Greater Buffalo Niagara Region Transportation Council and others encourage this approach. By focusing on improving the infrastructure that is already in place, communities can inhibit and prevent sprawling development patterns.

When businesses decide where to locate their operations, they consider numerous factors, such as the availability of a prepared workforce, proximity to major transportation routes and markets, and other strategic advantages of a location. Quality of life factors can tip the scales in a given community's favor. The recommendations in this Plan can help ensure that Niagara County's communities can continue to both attract business opportunity and protect these quality of life factors.

Goals, Objectives & Recommendations

Many of the goals and objectives in this chapter are also provided in the 2008 County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy report. Others have been developed in response to the issues and opportunities identified by stakeholders during the comprehensive planning process and others are provided based on planning research and best management practices. These goals and objectives should be considered "fluid" and need to be reviewed and updated periodically as economic development trends, needs and opportunities require their modification.

Goal – Attract and Retain Economic Activity by Preserving the County's Natural and Cultural Resources through Sustainable Practices

To attract and retain economic activity by implementing sustainable development practices to improve the overall quality of life in Niagara County which will in turn result in increased economic activity. Long-term economic development can be strengthened by ensuring that Niagara County continues to be a naturally beautiful, as well as geographically advantageous place to live and do business. By revitalizing developed areas and preserving natural and cultural resources, a commitment to a higher quality of life for future generations will be demonstrated. A commitment to sustainable development practices will help make Niagara County more attractive to both economic activity and retention of a skilled labor pool.

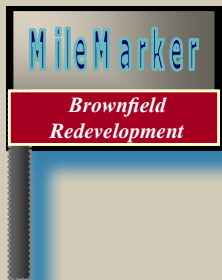
Objective

- Continue to protect natural and cultural resources and examine ways to improve countywide stewardship of the environment. Reduce the County's "ecological footprint" or impact on the environment; strive for greater self-sufficiency by conserving energy, water, air and other natural resources; reduce waste generation; increase reuse and recycling of materials; and use local products, materials, agricultural goods, and other wares.

Recommendations

- Encourage communities to conserve environmentally sensitive lands and resources by adopting sustainable economic development practices focused on protecting fish and wildlife resources, significant floral and faunal habitat areas, and bio-diversity. The County as well needs to consider implementing sustainable development practices in

An "ecological footprint" is a measure of demand on an ecosystem such as on the land, air and water resources of an area that is required to support and sustain a current lifestyle, economy, or the consumption patterns of a particular population. It includes the ability of that ecosystem to assimilate the waste that the population or economy produces.



County economic development projects.

- ☐ Encourage communities to establish minimum design standards, perhaps through LEED certification and use of “green” technologies for economic development projects that contribute positively to the natural environment, community character, neighborhood aesthetics, and local quality of life.
- ☐ Protect open space resources and encourage conservation of large contiguous natural corridors as designated greenways, blueways, and prime farmland resources of countywide importance through development of the Niagara River Greenway as well as through other local and regional initiatives.
- ☐ Encourage commercial and industrial development on vacant and underutilized lands including reuse of brownfield/greyfield sites as a countywide priority over “greenfield” development to protect open spaces and prime agricultural areas.
- ☐ Actively support the creation of local parklands and open spaces that are linked by greenways, blueways and multi-use trails.
- ☐ Support context sensitive design and redevelopment of areas appropriate to locations in proximity to cultural and historic resources and that are not detrimental to local community character or environmentally sensitive areas.
- ☐ Increase energy efficiency of County-owned facilities by considering the incorporation of green technologies, sustainable building and site design, and construction practices.

Goal – Increase Countywide Employment Opportunities

To increase overall employment opportunities by encouraging the expansion of key economic sectors including industrial, tourism and agricultural sectors of the County’s economy and support the entrepreneurial spirit and efforts in cutting edge industries such as clean energy alternatives, green building technologies, and clean manufacturing practices.

Objective

- Support local efforts at improving industrial sector expansion and employment opportunities

Recommendations

- ☐ Request New York State to designate additional Empire Zone designations in the County.
- ☐ Encourage spin-off enterprises from large companies
- ☐ Continue to market and attract Canadian and other international investment
- ☐ Provide infrastructure improvements in existing industrial parks
- ☐ Expand the availability of industrial incubators and multi-tenant facilities

- ☐ Aggressively market low cost power allocations through the New York Power Authority, and for smaller industrial projects, when NYPA power is not an alternative, through the Empower Niagara Program
- ☐ Market the availability of fresh water to companies currently in water-starved states
- ☐ Market County buildings and sites through the filtered versions of the NYS Site Finder, found on the NCIDA and County websites
- ☐ Monitor studies expanding hydro-electric generating facilities in Lewiston
- ☐ Focus on countywide brownfield redevelopment opportunities through promotion of the Niagara County Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund program.
- ☐ Encourage growth of clean manufacturing and green technology industries

Objective

- Improve tourism and tourism-based business opportunities throughout the County

Recommendations

- ☐ Increase tourism promotion of the County and its diverse communities and subregions through development of multi-media materials in collaboration with the Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation (NTCC) and local communities.
- ☐ Develop world class visitor attractions and tourist destinations in urban centers, to be premier centerpieces of natural and cultural heritage. (e.g. Niagara Experience Center, Erie Canal, Niagara Gorge, etc.).
- ☐ Continue to support the newly expanded Niagara County Wine Trail
- ☐ Support implementation of the Niagara County Greenway Plan and the Erie Canalway Plan.
- ☐ Develop the Niagara River Corridor as a National Heritage Area, and continue to encourage development and redevelopment of the Erie Canal Heritage Corridor as a premier tourist destination in the County.
- ☐ Work in collaboration with the City of Niagara Falls, USA Niagara Development Corporation, and other economic development agencies to lure four- and five-star hotels to the downtown Niagara Falls tourist district.
- ☐ Continue to support the Niagara County Community College's Hospitality & Tourism Center, the largest component of which will be the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute in downtown Niagara Falls.
- ☐ Support efforts to create physical linkages and link business information between Niagara County's communities that will help extend the stay of tourists, and thus spread economic wealth throughout the County.



Objective

- Improve and support retention of the agriculture sector of the economy.

Recommendations

- ☐ Pursue establishment of a Niagara County Agribusiness Fund through the proposed New York State Upstate Revitalization Fund.
- ☐ Cornell Cooperative Extension of Niagara County, in collaboration with the Farmland Protection Board should facilitate the update of the Niagara County Agricultural Farmland Protection Plan within the next two years by 2011.
- ☐ Strengthen the system for marketing fresh produce and value-added agricultural products in Niagara County, including activity with some city markets and high traffic tourism areas and corridors.
- ☐ Seek funding for a County agricultural economic development specialist.
- ☐ Seek grower assistance grants and assist individuals with rural business plans.
- ☐ Investigate branding opportunities for Niagara County agricultural products.
- ☐ Increase advertising in different media markets and via different media to promote greater consumption of locally grown foods and products.
- ☐ Support the efforts of organizations like Cornell Cooperative Extension to develop and implement a farm-to-institution program.

Goal – Strengthen the County’s Competitive Position

To strengthen the competitive position of countywide businesses involved in all sectors of the economy.

Objective

- Reduce the cost of doing business in Niagara County.

Recommendations

- ☐ Continue to provide financial assistance, such as revolving loan funds, bonds, guaranteed loans and other incentive programs to businesses through the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency.
- ☐ Retain low cost power “blocks” of hydro-power for large energy dependent companies and assist development of co-generation and alternative energy facilities
- ☐ Provide completely serviced sites and/or facilities for “just-in-time” suppliers to locate near existing manufacturing plants
- ☐ Re-certify agricultural districts as needed and investigate other potential farming incentive programs to allow for reduced tax rates on agricultural properties.



Goal – Diversify the Total Economic Base of Niagara County

To support waterfront and rural-based business opportunities and other economic development initiatives to diversify the economies that may be specific and appropriate to the character of particular areas, corridors and resources of communities throughout the County.

Objectives

- Facilitate greater public accessibility to waterfronts and natural features and support the development of water-oriented and rural-based businesses and uses.
- Enhance the diversification and sustainability of rural economies and small businesses through protection of natural and cultural resources, large contiguous working farms, woodlands, mineral resources and scenic (pastoral) landscapes.
- Implement actions designed to establish a countywide connections via inter-municipal multi-use trail systems that can be utilized year-round for diverse forms of recreation and transportation.

Recommendations

- ☐ Foster local entrepreneurship by recognizing and celebrating local success stories of new businesses, new business ideas and student enterprises that are based on local opportunities and resources through public recognition, media coverage and financial/scholarship award programs offered through local educational institutions.
- ☐ Continue to support efforts to develop sites at and around the Niagara Falls International Airport for logistics companies (i.e. air cargo, warehousing and distribution centers, etc.).
- ☐ Support efforts to assist manufacturing companies in making the transition to advanced manufacturing techniques that will allow them to become more productive and more competitive in the global marketplace.
- ☐ Expand marketing efforts to attract new renewable energy companies to Niagara County, and promote opportunities that this sector could present to existing Niagara County companies.
- ☐ Conduct countywide competitions for creative approaches to “branding” local community produced and manufactured products.
- ☐ Support entrepreneurship in the development of nature-based business, tourism and recreational opportunities as well as other agriculturally based business enterprises, such as equestrian business opportunities in rural and suburban communities.
- ☐ Support business opportunities through regional and out-of-state promotional activities, public awareness campaigns, construction of interconnected multi-use trails, and incubator business assistance in support of rural businesses and support services.
- ☐ Expand marketing programs to attract Canadian and other foreign manufacturing, service, distribution, and office/administrative activities.
- ☐ Attract suppliers producing products that are used by the local automobile, chemical



and ceramic industries.

- Expand incubator facilities and technical assistance programs to encourage the development of new types of sustainable businesses, particularly in rural areas of the County that rely on renewable resources.

Goal – Enhance Countywide Education and Training Opportunities

To develop comprehensive and integrated education and training programs to meet the near-term and long-term needs of businesses and industries.

Objectives

- Collaborate with local educators to develop educational policies and programs in local schools to provide enhanced employment and training opportunities based on local community assets and resources.
- Align education and training programs with key industry sectors and economic development priorities, especially new sustainable technologies and green-based businesses.
- Increase knowledge and awareness of sustainability planning and best practices including, but not limited to community planning principles such as New Urbanism, Transit-oriented Design and Traditional Neighborhood Development that can foster economic growth and community development.

Recommendations

- Involve local educators, primarily those involved with institutions of higher learning such as NCCC and Niagara University in business and talent recruitment activities and marketing visits to prospective businesses and employers who may be considering locating to Niagara County to ensure that local training programs are aligned with the workforce needs of new business.
- Collaborate with local educators to establish curricula and training programs at the high school and college level that increase awareness of opportunities for employment in “green technologies” and other potential high growth business and high technology sectors.
- Continue to market and expand the efforts of the Niagara County Workforce Investment Board (WIB), Niagara County Employment and Training, and other agencies involved in workforce training programs to help facilitate the regional expansion of targeted growth industries.
- Provide for broad-based training of County officials and local municipal elected officials, board members and the public in strategic land use and transportation planning consistent with NYS DOT and NYS Quality Communities sustainable development practices and other sound planning principles that affect decision-making in regional and local capital improvements in public infrastructure, transportation, land use, and environmental protection.
- Continue and expand the provision of educational and training opportunities for local planning and zoning board members to ensure that members keep up to date on best planning and land use management practices.



Goal – Market the Diversity and Unique Qualities of All Niagara County Communities

To aggressively market the diversity and amenities of all communities in Niagara County as offering something for everyone including prospective employers, employees and residents by emphasizing the different assets, resources, lifestyle and housing opportunities, low cost of living, and other quality of life attributes available in the County’s urban, suburban and rural communities.

Objectives

- Develop multi-media materials and web-accessible information for use by economic development agencies, educational institutions, tourism-based businesses and others that graphically highlight to areas outside of Western New York the diversity and character of communities in Niagara County.
- Highlight the excellent quality of life available throughout the County’s diverse regions via various media outlets and markets by emphasizing the County’s opportunities including its proximity to international population centers, excellent and reliable water supply, trained workforce, urban waterfront opportunities, conveniently located suburban neighborhoods, and quiet rural lifestyles.

Recommendations

- Encourage local communities to establish minimum development standards and design guidelines for public and private sector development projects to ensure that they contribute positively to community character, neighborhood aesthetics and local quality of life.
- Market developers in national markets to encourage their exploring the largely untapped redevelopment potential of existing developed urban centers and older inner ring suburban areas of the County where marketable populations are most dense and where public infrastructure and community services are already in place.

Goal - Link Economic Development to Multi-modal Transportation Alternatives

To ensure that the County’s transportation systems provide for efficient and effective alternative modes of moving people and goods throughout the County via interconnected road networks; public transit facilities; pedestrian and multi-use trail facilities; and aviation, rail and marine facilities to support and enhance economic development opportunities.

Objectives

- Establish measurable performance standards in collaboration with stakeholder agencies, such as the NYSDOT, GBNRTC, NFTA and transportation service providers to track the efficiency, use, short-term and long-term needs of the County’s overall transportation systems.
- Maximize flexibility and adaptability of the County’s transportation systems utilizing alternative modes to respond to emergency situations, such as natural disasters, or significant changes in supply or price of fuels in order to protect existing businesses and industries from unforeseen disruptions.

- Promote the creation and use of alternative modes of transportation of freight and passengers including greater accessibility to alternative forms of transportation, especially public transit for employees and residents.

Recommendations

- ☐ Work with local transportation agencies (GBNRTC, NYSDOT, NFTA and others) and service providers to conduct public opinion surveys on the potential use of increased availability of public transit services and other transportation alternatives throughout Niagara County.
- ☐ Develop incentives to encourage developers to link development and redevelopment opportunities in preferred development centers and corridors to alternative modes of transportation, particularly in mixed-use projects.
- ☐ Encourage GBNRTC to undertake countywide corridor management plans integrating an extensive public involvement process for long-term land use/transportation planning for major road corridors that link communities across Niagara County, particularly NYS Routes 31, 104, 62 and 78.
- ☐ Integrate countywide transportation planning with land use planning to implement sustainable development practices as encouraged by stakeholder agencies, such as the NYSDOT Smart Growth initiatives and similar planning principles. These principles should promote where appropriate compact, mixed-use, transit- and pedestrian-oriented development patterns that are complementary to each community's plans for enhancing its respective urban, suburban and rural characteristics in balance with economic development needs, as well as protection of natural environments and cultural heritage.
- ☐ Implement the recommendations of the GBNRTC *Niagara Frontier Urban Area Freight Transportation Study* to facilitate the safe and effective movement of freight by rail and highway throughout the region.
- ☐ Continue efforts to develop and implement Niagara County Planning Board project review guidelines based on the *Framework for Regional Growth*. Incorporate the strategies from this plan into the Planning Board guidelines.
- ☐ Examine the potential to encourage, through incentives or by other means, incorporation of multi-modal and transit-oriented components into public and private sector projects.
- ☐ Support the creation of a sustainable interconnected countywide transportation networks that include multi-modal transportation systems including highways, water-based modes, public transit, bikeways and multi-use trails that facilitate compact, nodal mixed-use development patterns in urban, suburban and rural communities. This interconnected system needs to physically link convenient public access via various modes to the region's major natural and cultural resources including, but not limited to the Niagara Greenway, Erie Canalway, Seaway Trail, Wine Trail, and Niagara Escarpment initiatives.
- ☐ Provide user accessibility for interconnections between different modes of transportation to encourage users to safely and conveniently transfer and utilize alternative modes such as through the provision of bike racks on public transit buses



and conveniently located transit stops at points of transfer from one mode, for example bus to rail, in centers of commerce and housing.

- ☐ Support tourism transportation needs and infrastructure (i.e. trolley system from Niagara Falls to Lewiston and cross-river ferry service from Youngstown, New York to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario.
- ☐ Support public transit and transit-oriented development in the developed neighborhoods of the cities and suburbs of the County to provide enhanced employee access between workplace and home.
- ☐ Connect employment centers with residential areas with multi-modal choices of commuting including public transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- ☐ Work with local communities to ensure that transportation systems support local economic development initiatives via aviation, rail, highway and marine modes of transport of people, goods and materials.
- ☐ Work with the NFTA and others to develop the opportunities for increased tourism and air cargo capacity, as well as warehouse and distribution facilities in and around the new Niagara Falls International Airport terminal, scheduled to open in July/August 2009.
- ☐ Balance development requirements with employee needs and support services, such as locating daycare facilities in proximity to employment centers.
- ☐ Connect employment centers with residential areas and provide choices of commuting including public transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- ☐ Support the Transit North Historic Canalway Corridor initiative currently underway.

Goal – To Increase the Number of Economic Development Projects Being Implemented in the County

Objective

- Leverage additional funding for projects

Recommendations

- ☐ Continue to appeal to the Federal government for direct funding via congressional appropriations, federal economic stimulus funds, etc.
- ☐ Continue to appeal to the State for direct funding via legislative earmarks.
- ☐ Appeal to the Federal and State governments for a greater share of available Federal and State funding.
- ☐ Establish stronger partnerships with Federal and State elected officials, especially members of the WNY delegation.
- ☐ Identify and apply for competitive Federal and State grants.

- ☐ Hire a full time grant writer/administrator for the County.
- ☐ Encourage New York State to create an Upstate Revitalization Fund.
- ☐ Identify foundations at the local, State and Federal levels, and appeal for funding as appropriate.

Objective

- Maintain up-to-date lists of economic development projects in the County.

Recommendations

- ☐ Maintain and periodically update lists of high priority and shovel ready economic development projects.
- ☐ Develop a priority ranking system for economic development projects.
- ☐ Continue to update the Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) annually and include lists of projects from local municipalities.
- ☐ As this Plan is updated, update the list of high priority economic development projects included in this Plan using the CEDS report.

Objective

- Continue to encourage implementation of high priority economic development projects and diversification of the economic base of the County.

Recommendations

- ☐ Assemble economic development teams to monitor projects, including funding levels, and meet regularly to discuss strategies for advancing projects.
- ☐ Enlist the support of the County Public Information Officer and increase public relation efforts in educating communities and the public on available economic development incentives and the importance of sustainable economic development projects and redevelopment of underutilized sites, such as brownfields, to the overall economic and environmental health and quality of life in Niagara County.
- ☐ Identify means to make greater use of the potential “synergy” afforded by the existing economic base of the County to foster increased diversity and spin-off business development opportunities through more partnerships and collaboration between and among public and private sectors of the economy.

Funding Opportunities

Projects and needs identified in this chapter and elsewhere within this Comprehensive Plan, as well as projects that may be identified in other plans and reports, including the annual Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, require funding assistance to be implemented due to the fiscal constraints, such as budget limitations, of Niagara County and its communities. A variety of funding opportunities exist at local, regional, State and Federal levels of government as well as potential sources of assistance

from the private sector. Often the amount of funding needed to implement a project, however may be in excess of what may be available from one source so combinations of funding sources may be needed to finance a project. Funding mechanisms may include earmarks/appropriations/member items, bonding, direct grants, competitive grants, general fund items, foundation monies, corporate assistance and so forth.

Funding opportunities change as economic conditions change, particularly at State and Federal levels. Currently the nation is experiencing a deep economic downturn. Increased funding opportunities exist at this time through the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This Federal Stimulus Bill is intended to stimulate the economy and employment by providing funding to undertake projects at local levels. In many cases the Federal Stimulus Bill appropriates funding above typical annual Federal spending levels, such as what may be authorized through the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009. Funding will be distributed through existing Federal programs and through new programs or may be passed through existing State programs.

The information provided below identifies Federal Stimulus funding opportunities and projects that have been identified to date at the time of preparing this document. The projects identified below are listed because they relate directly to this chapter and this particular focus area of the Comprehensive Plan. These projects are considered crucial to the health and well being of the communities in Niagara County and for improving the functioning of County government in providing services to the residents and businesses of Niagara County.

The following list of projects will be revised as projects are undertaken and new projects are identified and as local, State and Federal conditions change. Therefore this list of projects should not be considered to be inclusive of all potential projects that may be in need of funding assistance. Also, combined funding assistance for some of these projects may be available from other Federal, State, regional, local and private sector sources.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes funding provisions in Infrastructure Improvements and Transportation that include, but not limited to:

- \$7.2 billion for Broadband
- \$2.75 billion for the Department of Homeland Security
- \$4.6 billion for the Corps of Engineers
- \$1.2 billion for VA hospital and medical facility construction and improvements
- \$3.1 billion for repair, restoration and improvement of public facilities
- \$4.2 billion for Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization
- \$2.33 billion for Department of Defense
- \$2.25 billion through HOME and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program
- \$1 billion for the Community Development Block Grant program
- \$1 billion for the Bureau of Reclamation

- \$27.5 billion for highway investments
- \$8.4 billion for public transportation
- \$1.5 for competitive grants to state and local governments for transportation
- \$1.3 billion for air transportation system
- \$9.3 billion for rail transportation, including Amtrak, High Speed and Intercity Rail

Funding for economic development projects is available from a number of sources including Niagara County's share of casino revenue. Likewise, funding for recreation and tourism based projects is available from Niagara County's share of Niagara County River Greenway Funding such as through the New York Power Authority Re-licensing Agreement under the Recreation/tourism Fund.

Niagara County Projects include:

Broadband to Give Every Community Access to the Global Economy Wireless and Broadband Grants

Town of Lockport Industrial Development Agency

- ☐ Town of Lockport IDA Industrial Park Wi-Fi Network \$ 5,000

Niagara County Economic Development

- ☐ Broadband Access for Eastern Niagara County \$ 30,000
[Towns of Newfane, Royalton, and Somerset / Village of Barker]

Niagara County Data Processing

- ☐ Wi-Fi Hotspots for Niagara County Municipalities \$ 500,000

Creating Small Business Opportunity Economic Development Assistance

Niagara County Economic Development

- ☐ Niagara County IDA Industrial Park Electrical Service \$ 65,000
[Town of Wheatfield]
- ☐ Business Marketing Campaign \$ 300,000
[Countywide]
- ☐ Venture Capital Fund for High-Tech Startup Businesses \$ 1,500,000
[Countywide]
- ☐ Niagara County Agribusiness Fund \$ 1,000,000
[Countywide]

City of North Tonawanda

- ☐ Buffalo Bolt Business Park Infrastructure \$ 1,000,000
- ☐ Buffalo Bolt Business Park Spec Building \$ 1,500,000
- ☐ Durez/Oxy Site Spec Building \$ 2,000,000
- ☐ Gateway Harbor Inn \$ 500,000
- ☐ Riviera Theater Expansion \$ 500,000
- ☐ Historical Museum \$ 200,000

Town of Lockport Industrial Development Agency

- ☐ Town of Lockport IDA Industrial Park Infrastructure \$ 2,125,000
- ☐ Town of Lockport IDA Spec Building \$ 2,200,000

Town of Niagara Industrial Development Agency:

- ☐ Niagara Industrial Airpark Shovel-Ready Status \$ 20,000
- ☐ Town of Niagara Spec Building \$ 2,000,000

Niagara County Economic Development

- ☐ Transit North Corridor Infrastructure Improvements \$ 20,065,000
[City of Lockport / Towns of Lockport and Pendleton]
Funding request for portion of above project that can be
shovel-ready in 90 days \$ 4,175,000

Construction on Public Lands and Parks

Niagara County Economic Development

<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed Fish Hatchery at Joseph Davis State Park [Town of Porter]	\$ 13,500,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fisheries Projects for Niagara River and Lake Ontario [Countywide]	\$ 100,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prop. Boat Launch & Dock at Fort Niagara State Park [Town of Porter]	\$ 100,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Olcott East Pier Access [Town of Newfane]	\$ 75,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eighteenmile Creek Public Fishing Rights [Town of Newfane]	\$ 100,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Underground Railroad Interpretive Program [Countywide]	\$ 1,000,000

Water Resources

Corps of Engineers

Niagara County Economic Development

<input type="checkbox"/>	Olcott Harbor Breakwater Project [Town of Newfane]	\$ 1,800,000
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Bureau of Reclamation

Watershed Infrastructure

Niagara County Economic Development

<input type="checkbox"/>	Cayuga Creek Watershed Restoration Plan [City of Niagara Falls; Towns of Niagara, Wheatfield Lewiston, Cambria; Tuscarora Indian Reservation]	\$ 150,000
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Closed Military Bases

Town of Niagara Industrial Development Agency:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Reuse of U.S. Army Hangar and Buildings at Niagara Falls Army Reserve Center (Demolition/Rehab/Infrastructure)	\$ 2,500,000
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Economic Development Assistance

Niagara County Economic Development

<input type="checkbox"/>	Former Lockport Air Force Station/NIKE Site Asbestos Abatement and Demolition [Town of Cambria]	\$ 1,400,000
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NOAA Habitat Restoration

Niagara County Economic Development

<input type="checkbox"/>	Youngstown Cold Storage Site Remediation [Village of Youngstown]	\$ 275,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Niagara County Brownfields Program Coalition Environmental Site Assessments (30+ sites) [Countywide]	\$ 1,000,000

Community Development Block Grants

City of Niagara Falls

<input type="checkbox"/>	Niagara Experience Center Economic Development Assistance	\$ 20,000,000
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City of Lockport

<input type="checkbox"/>	Erie Canal “Flight of Five” Locks Restoration	\$ 4,000,000
	Economic Development Assistance	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Municipal Parking Ramp Demolition	\$ 1,000,000
	Economic Development Assistance	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ice Hockey Rink Construction	\$ 1,000,000
	Economic Development Assistance	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Palace Theatre Restoration	\$ 500,000
	Economic Development Assistance	

Reference

United States Congress. 2009. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 - Federal Stimulus Congressional Press Summary. Washington, D.C.

Chapter VII

County Services, Facilities & Infrastructure

Background and Trends

Niagara County Budget

Niagara County provides a multitude of services to County residents which fall under the jurisdiction of various County departments, offices and staff. The following information on County services is presented according to five tiers of County government. This tiered approach is used to organize departments and services for budgeting and other management purposes, including the allocation of funds under the County's annual budget. Each tier of County government generally identifies the types of services provided by that tier. These tiers are described below along with many of the services provided. Also provided are the 2008 County budget appropriations for each tier.

The provision of services and budgeting for those services is a complex process performed on an annual basis. The County operates on a fiscal year that runs concurrent with the calendar year from January 1st to December 31st. The budgeting process is well documented and the results are published each year as the County's Annual Budget. Details of the County's budget are beyond the scope of this Comprehensive Plan, so the budget is discussed in mostly general terms. Detailed information on the County's 2008 budget is available at www.niagaracounty.com/CountyBudget.asp.

Niagara County's 2008 adopted budget was \$262,945,025. This total does not include \$39,880,000 of revenue which is offset by corresponding appropriations of \$39,880,000 from sales tax revenue shared with other government entities. The County's 2008 budget represented a 2.74% decrease from the 2007 budget. The County's 2008 property tax levy of \$67,893,843 represented a 7.6% decrease from 2007.

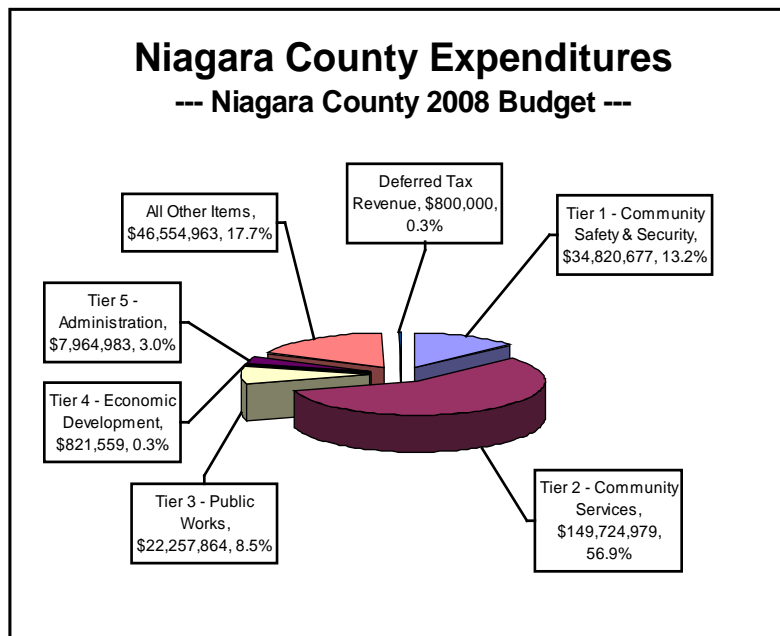
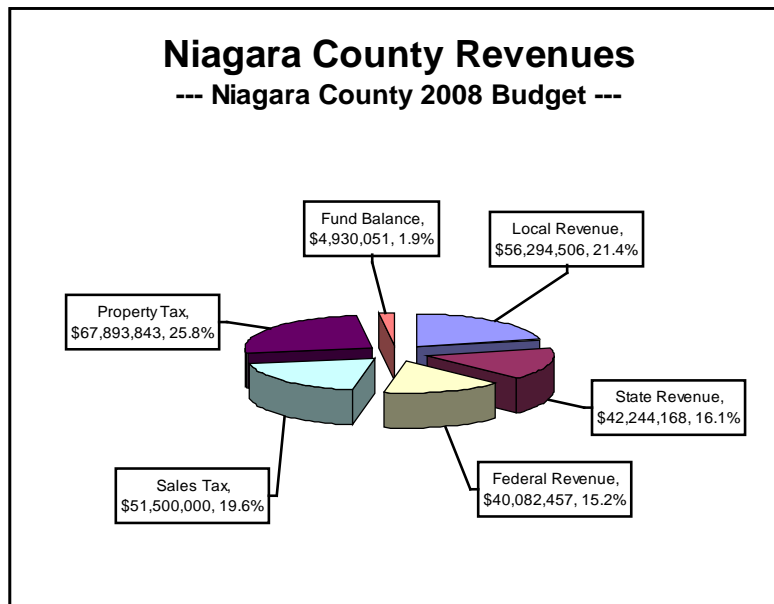
Detailed information on the County's 2008 budget is available at www.niagaracounty.com/CountyBudget.asp.

The County's 2008 property tax levy of \$67,893,843 represented a 7.6% decrease from 2007.

Niagara County receives revenues from the State and Federal government through direct allocations, competitive grants, and other public funding. The County's budget revenue sources are summarized as follows:

- 15% from Federal Government
- 16% from State Government
- 21% from Local Revenue
- 26% from Property Taxes
- 20% from Sales Taxes
- 02% from Appropriated Fund Balance

Revenues and expenditures under the County budget are illustrated in the following charts. The expenditures chart identifies allocated funds to each of the five tiers of County government as well as other items, including employee benefits, debt service, CD fund and special items.



Niagara County Services

Tier 1 - Community Safety & Security

Office of the Sheriff

The Niagara County Office of the Sheriff is one of the largest departments within Niagara County government, and is directly responsible for the safety and security of County residents. The Sheriff's Office is located in Lockport, NY. The Office of the County Sheriff is an elected position, and the Sheriff is supported by a staff of 348 professionals including deputy sheriffs, correction officers, dispatchers, and civilian support personnel.

The Corrections Division is the largest division of the Office of the Sheriff. It operates with a staff of approximately 145 correction officers and 40 civilian support personnel. The County Jail annually houses more than 6,000 inmates, and on a daily basis the Jail houses approximately 500 inmates. In 2006, the County Jail generated approximately \$2.7 million in revenue for the County, primarily from sources such as the housing of inmates from Federal and State law enforcement and corrections agencies.

The Civil Law Enforcement Division is the law enforcement arm of the courts and serves divorce and eviction notices, as well as warrants and other court appearance orders. The Law Enforcement Division provides the police services that may be best known to the public in general, including the County's Road Patrol, Crime Scene Identification Unit, the Communications Center, Criminal Investigation Bureau and others listed below. The Sheriff's Office includes a number of specialized support units and teams which are also identified below.

Dispatchers answered more than 98,731 calls for police, fire, and emergency services in 2007, and the number of calls for emergency service continues to trend upward each year. The County Communications Center dispatches appropriate emergency personnel from the Sheriff's Office, five local police agencies, twenty-eight volunteer fire companies, the North Tonawanda Fire Department, two ambulance services and other organizations as needed. The Communications Center averages over 250 calls per day. In recent years Deputies assigned to law enforcement duties have responded to more than 60,000 calls for service annually, which represents an increase of greater than 35% since 2002.

One of the newest divisions within the Sheriff's Office is the Field Intelligence Division, which collects data on crimes and other incidents and includes crime analysis as one of its primary functions. This division works to identify crime patterns, trends and problems throughout the County, and facilitates the dissemination of information and intelligence used to develop strategies and tactics to combat crime. The Sheriff's Office has begun using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data and mapping techniques to track reported incidents.

A number of the highly specialized services provided by divisions and support units of the Sheriff's Office are as follows.

Emergency 911 Communications

Field Intelligence Division

Civil Law Enforcement
Civil Division

Law Enforcement

Road Patrol
Crime Scene Identification Unit
Communications Center
Computer Operations Division
Criminal Investigation Bureau
Juvenile Investigation Bureau
Western NY Joint Terrorism Task Force
Welfare Fraud Bureau
Drug Task Force
Court/Building Security
Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy
Forensic Laboratory
Property/Evidence Office

Corrections/Jail

Corrections
Sheriff's Work Program
Inmate Education Program
Corrections Emergency Response Team (CERT)
Jail Medical Department
Facility Maintenance

Support Units/Teams

Marine Unit
Underwater Recovery Team
Aviation Unit
Emergency Response Team/Firearms Training
Office of Traffic Safety and Stop DWI
K-9 Unit
Warrants Division
Drug Awareness and Resistance (DARE) Unit
Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP)
Victim's Assistance Unit

District Attorney

The Niagara County District Attorney is the County's chief prosecutor. Staff includes 3 Deputy District Attorneys, 20 Assistant District Attorneys, 5 Criminal Investigators, 12 Support Staff, and 2 Crime Victim Advocates. The District Attorney's Office is responsible for investigating and prosecuting all criminal activity within Niagara County. In addition to prosecuting felony cases at the County Court level, the District Attorney prosecutes cases in all 3 of Niagara County's City Courts (Niagara Falls, Lockport & North Tonawanda) and all 12 of the County's Town Justice Courts.

The District Attorney's Office also argues appeals and post-conviction matters, institutes forfeiture proceedings, oversees the extradition of fugitives, and litigates habeas corpus petitions in both State and Federal courts.

The District Attorney's Office has specific bureaus which target areas of crime, including:

- Violent Crimes
- Narcotics
- White Collar Crime & Fraud
- Crimes Against the Elderly, Children & Special Victims
- Domestic Violence
- DWI & Vehicular Crimes

Homeland Security & Emergency Management Office

The Homeland Security & Emergency Management Office is responsible for maintaining and updating a Countywide Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) with input from the Niagara County Local Emergency Planning Committee, the County Manager, the County Attorney, County government officials, NY State Disaster Preparedness Commission, NY State Emergency Management Office, other appropriate departments and the citizenry of Niagara County. The CEMP is discussed in more detail in Chapter IX Public Health and Safety.

Niagara County and its cities, towns, and villages are part of a multi-jurisdictional emergency mitigation planning process, responsible for participating in risk reduction activities with the Niagara County Director of Emergency Management and the Niagara County Local Emergency Planning Committee. The office coordinates all emergency management activities and is responsible for assisting individual towns and villages within Niagara County that have fully committed their resources, but still unable to cope with a disaster of any type.

Probation Department

Services provided by the County's Probation Department include the preparation of pre-sentence investigations and reports for the criminal courts, and the supervision of criminals sentenced to probation. The Local Conditional Release Commission provides investigation and supervision functions for criminals released from jail. Intake, investigation and supervision services are provided for Family Court, and any discretionary services for pretrial and alternative sentencing are also available.

The Probation Department also administers the Intensive Supervision Program, which provides an alternative to incarceration. The Department provides eligibility assessments, court-ordered restrictions, monitoring, field supervision and intensive supervision services. Probation administers the Pre-Trial Services, Treatments Alternatives to Street Crime, and Community Services programs.

Public Defender

The County's Public Defender provides legal counsel to individuals unable to afford their own legal services. Unlike many other states, in New York the cost of providing this legal counsel is the responsibility of the County. The Public

Defender's Office is located in the County Courthouse in Lockport.

Tier 2 - Community Services

Department of Health

The Niagara County Department of Health (NCDOH) is responsible for providing a healthy, disease-free environment to the citizens of Niagara County. The NCDOH includes a staff of approximately 118 employees and operates from its offices located in the Shaw Building at the Mountview Campus in Lockport and in the Trott Building in Niagara Falls. Detailed information on the services provided by the County Department of Health is available at www.niagaracounty.com/Health/.

The NCDOH provides a variety of very important functions in protecting the health of residents and visitors in Niagara County. On an ongoing basis, Environmental staff monitors the quality of public water supplies, inspects septic systems, issues permits, inspects public pools and beaches for water quality, enforces no-smoking regulations in public places, and evaluates food service facilities. The Department's highly-skilled staff has been nationally recognized with awards for the "Healthy Neighborhoods Program" administered through the Environmental Health Division. This program offers the underserved of the County with home safety assessments, checks for lead-based paint and functioning smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and provides public health referrals when needed.

Under the Department's Nursing Program, Public Health Nurses provide skilled services to those recently discharged from the hospital or a directly referred from a physician's office. Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Audiology service, medical social work, respiratory therapy, home-delivered meals, nutritional counseling and social day care are also coordinated through the Nursing Division. Nursing staff operate immunization, flu, rabies, STD/HIV, Tuberculosis and outbreak vaccination clinics, and plan for potential disasters with other emergency providers. The Department's "Healthy Living Partnership" Program has been recognized as No. 1 in New York State for providing breast and cervical cancer screening and services to uninsured and under-insured women.

The Public Health & Emergency Preparedness Division coordinates local health disaster planning with the National Center for Disease Control Preparedness Strategic National Stockpile, the National Response Plan and the Great Lakes Cross Border Initiative. This Division also provides Public Health Alerts and trains local Health Emergency Response Teams to be able to respond to local emergencies.

Some of the key services provided, and programs administered by the Department of Health, are listed below. In general, the largest percentage (about 90%) of the Department's annual budget goes to services and programs mandated by the State and Federal governments.

Environmental Health

- Healthy Neighborhoods Program
- Disease Surveillance & Protection
- Community Environmental Health

Public Health Emergency Preparedness

Public Health Education

Public Health Nursing and Home Care Services

- Public Health Services
- Certified Home Health Agency
- Long Term Home Health Care Program

Children with Special Health Care Needs

- Early Intervention Program
- Preschool Special Education Program
- Physically Handicapped Children's Program

Children with Special Healthcare Needs Program

Department of Social Services

The Department of Social Services is the largest of all County departments. A staff of 424 employees works from offices in Lockport and Niagara Falls, and a satellite office is located in North Tonawanda. The primary purpose of the Department is to administer social service programs mandated by the State and Federal governments.

The Department consists of five Divisions: Administration, Services, Program Eligibility, Financial Recovery & Support, and Legal.

The Administration Division consists of personnel assigned to the internal management of the Department: Payroll, Accounting, Information Technology, and Staff Development.

The Services Division includes a number of specialized internal units and “case workers” that administer mandated programs and services to clients, including: Child Protection, Child Welfare, Adult Protection, Home Care, Day Care, Nursing Home Care, Medical Transport, and Managed Care.

The Program Eligibility Division includes specialized internal units and “eligibility workers” that administer mandated programs and services to clients, including: Employment, Transitional Opportunities Program, Temporary Assistance, Food Stamps, and Medicaid. At any given time throughout the year, each individual eligibility worker may be handling an average of 350 individual client cases. Assigned cases typically fall under one of three programs, and are distributed as follows: 54 % Medicaid; 32 % Food Stamps; and 14 % Temporary Assistance. All adults deemed work-eligible are scheduled to participate in employment-related activities until they achieve self-sufficiency.

The Financial Recovery and Support Division has specialized units, including: Child Support, Fraud, Resources, and Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). The Legal Division includes attorneys dedicated to legal services needed by clients in the administration of Department services and programs.

Office for the Aging

The Office for the Aging provides a number of services directly to the citizens

of the County, including not only seniors (defined as those 60 years and older), but also their caregivers. Services such as Congregate and Home Delivered meals have been provided for over 30 years, along with transportation to medical appointments and dining sites, information and assistance, non-medical homecare including housekeeping and chore assistance, help with Medicare and other insurance questions, caregiver training and education, help with HEAP applications and home weatherization issues, and legal advice and assistance using a local elder law attorney.

In addition to providing many services directly, the office also supports and serves as the central referral hub for services such as: Caregiver Respite and Support, Adult Day Care, the Long Term Care Ombudsman program, programs for the visually and hearing impaired, early intervention programs to help combat memory loss, and physical fitness and nutrition counseling and education.

Youth Bureau

The Youth Bureau contracts with not-for-profit agencies throughout the County to address the needs of young people under the age of 21. Funding for its programs comes from the NYS Office of Children & Family Services through several funding streams. Monies spent to support Youth Development is Delinquency Prevention (YDDP), Youth Initiatives (YI), YDDP Recreation, and YDDP Services require a 50% match from funding agencies. Runaway, Transitional Living, and Special Delinquency Prevention Program (SDPP) monies are 60 to 100% funded. The Youth Bureau and three United Way agencies have developed a unique joint funding process to distribute available funds. The cost to the County for these services was less than 1% of the Bureau's \$1.2 million budget in 2008, or approximately \$16,760. State and Federal grants provide 99 % of the Bureau's funds. Any program within the agency that is funded by the Bureau is offered free.

The Youth Bureau has three direct service programs that are Federally funded. These include:

- The Abstinence Commitment by Teenagers (ACT)
- The Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
- The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

The Youth Bureau is a grant-driven department and is subject to concerns regarding funding reductions for the programs offered. Some State and Federal grants are awarded to schools rather than these funding agencies, and practically speaking, it may be more cost efficient for funds to be granted directly to the agencies through the Youth Bureau system. This source of inefficiency is a concern to funding agencies. The Bureau provides high-quality youth programs through a variety of venues including recreation through resolution of high risk behaviors. In the long term, the Bureau would like to offer high-end programs that provide job training and community arts activities, modeled after programs of the Manchester Craftsman Guild in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.

Department of Mental Health

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) is the administrative division for Local Government and the Community Services Board responsible for the

execution of mental health, developmental disabilities, alcoholism and drug abuse service plans. DMH has operated under a business and professional service model since 1995, and emphasizes responsibility, accountability, and transparency in its work.

Services are provided through 10 different program categories in the direct services County-operated group, and through a system of 12 community agencies under contract management. Access to care and early intervention are emphasized, with a special emphasis on family involvement. The Department encourages patient treatment at the lowest level of appropriate care in the continuum of treatment. Community residents are encouraged to call Crisis Services, available 24/7, in critical situations. Crisis Services provides on-site response to emergencies. Single Point of Access (SPOA) provides streamlined entry to mental health case management and residential services for children and adults, and residents may call for assistance.

Since 1995, DMH has reduced its County funding by 67% by aggressively pursuing grant opportunities and other revenue sources, in combination with close management of expenses. Approximately 94% of the DMH revenues come from non-County sources, including Federal and State government funds. Additionally, DMH has been recognized by NYS Audit Division as being “exceptionally well operated in its direct services and overall administration.”

Employment and Training Department

The Employment and Training Department provides employment services for job seekers such as on-the-job training or vocational classroom training, and also provides business services to employers seeking workers. This program is 100% Federally funded under the Workforce Investment Act. Services include: job opening information, skills and aptitude testing, resume assistance, career counseling, interview coaching, vocational training, workshops, and meetings with employers. The Employment and Training Department provides services to approximately 10,000 residents each year. Additional information is available at www.worksource1.com.

Office of the County Clerk

County Clerk is an elected, four-year position. The County Clerk is a NYS Constitutional Office with a statutory responsibility to serve as Clerk of the New York State Supreme and County Courts. The office administers the County Recording Office which is responsible for the recording of deeds and other land-related documents, and also serves as the local agent for the NYS Commissioner of Motor Vehicles by managing three local DMV offices throughout Niagara County.

The Office of the County Clerk provides services to the general public. These include indexing and recording land records, filing business certificates, military discharges and court-related documents, issuing pistol permit licenses, passport acceptance and maintenance of judgment dockets. The County Clerk serves as Records Management Officer for the County, overseeing the proper retention, storage and disposition of the inactive, permanent & archival records of over 40 departments, and administers the Niagara County Veteran’s Service Agency and the Historian’s Office as County Clerk Partner Agencies.

Niagara County Veteran's Service Agency

Staff of the Niagara County Veteran's Service Agency counsel veterans and their dependents to ensure that they have access to any benefits to which they may be eligible as the result of the veteran's active duty military or naval service. Benefits due to Reservists and National Guardsmen are determined on an individual basis.

Topics most frequently counseled by the Niagara County Veterans Service Agency include:

- Service-Connected Disability Compensation
- Nonservice-Connected Disability Pension
- Widows Dependents Pension
- Montgomery G.I. Educational Bill
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Home Loan Guaranty
- Request for military records & service medals
- Recording of DD214/Separation papers w/County Clerk
- NYS Alternative Property Tax Exemption
- NYS Medals for Certain Active Duty Service
- Discharge Upgrade
- Burial Benefits

Niagara County Historian Office

The Niagara County Historian Office is housed in Niagara County's most historic government building, which is located in Lockport and dates to circa 1856. This office serves as part of New York State's network of officially appointed local municipal historians. The office is a resource to the community, offering research and writing on Niagara County history and interpreting community history through work with teachers, schools, and civic organizations.

The Historian's office organizes and delivers public programming, assists in commemorative events, advocates for historic preservation of the built environment, preservation of manuscripts and recordkeeping documenting Niagara County history. The office aids in the promotion of Niagara County tourism, especially heritage tourism, and allows the public to view historic public records for research purposes. The Historian's office houses a diverse collection of diaries, photos, letters, maps, blueprints, and scrapbooks of yesteryear.

Niagara County Community College

Niagara County Community College (NCCC), established in 1962, is a locally sponsored college supervised by the State University of New York (SUNY). Niagara County Community College is authorized by the Board of Regents of the SUNY to award the Associate in Arts Degree (AA), the Associate in Science Degree (AS), the Associate in Applied Science Degree (AAS) and the Associate in Occupational Science Degree (AOS) to regularly matriculated students upon successful completion of curriculum requirements. NCCC receives annual appropriations from the County for a variety of purposes.

Tier 3 - Public Works

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works is responsible for the operation, repair and maintenance of the County's highways, bridges, County-owned office buildings & grounds, 5 County parks, and the County's vehicle fleets. The Department is staffed by 140 full time employees plus 46 seasonal employees and one part time employee. The number of staff has declined considerably since 1998, when 237 individuals were employed by the Department.

The Department is divided into a number of divisions working out of five different locations. These divisions reflect the variety of services provided by the DPW, and include Administration, Engineering, Buildings & Grounds, Power Management, County Parks, Solid Waste (recycling), Highway Administration & Maintenance, Road Construction, Bridge Maintenance, Drainage, Snow Removal, Vehicle Maintenance, and County Golf Course.

The Highway Division has jurisdiction over the County's 283 miles of highway, 89 bridges and approximately 1,100 drainage culverts. Most of the County's bridges were built in the 1940's and 50's, and some wooden timber bridges remain intact under the Highway Division's purview. Due to age these require regular maintenance. Approximately 15 bridges have been replaced since 2001, and another 4 or 5 are scheduled for replacement before 2011.

The Highway Division is staffed by 29 full time maintenance personnel, 6 seasonal employees and 4 administrative staff. Responsibilities include highway maintenance, road construction under the State's Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) program, drainage improvements, snow removal, waste reduction and composting activities. Snow and ice removal and road maintenance responsibilities are shared through formal agreements with local municipalities. Approximately two-thirds of the County's roads are plowed on a reimbursement basis by local towns.

The Department participates in the County's "work fair program" in conjunction with the Department of Social Services. Under this program, able-bodied individuals receiving public assistance may work 10 days per month assisting Public Works crews in yard repair and clean-up activities at no additional cost to the County. The Department has also participated for the past 13 years in the "Safety Fair" with other agencies and utilities. The Safety Fair focuses on teaching youth about the dangers of driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

During the next few years, Public Works will consolidate its services under one roof in a modern facility replacing the current outdated buildings currently in use. It is anticipated that this new facility will be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified and built to energy efficient standards to reduce operating and maintenance costs. Department operations currently housed in five separate buildings will be consolidated into a single facility, resulting in substantial cost savings to County residents. Costs will be controlled internally through shared office space and centralized vehicle and parts storage, resulting in greater efficiency.

The DPW maintains nearly the entire County-owned fleet of vehicles. About one-third of the fleet of approximately 200 cars and trucks belongs to the Sheriff's Department, and

the fleet requires constant maintenance by the DPW due to extremely heavy use. Public Works also maintains the County's five public parks as well as the County Golf Course.

Weights & Measures

Wherever commodities are sold by some type of measure, County Weights and Measures staff members work to ensure the accuracy of what is measured and sold to the public. Services include inspecting supermarkets, convenience stores, specialty retailers like butcher and fish markets, hardware stores, drug stores, gas stations, feed mills, taxis and many other everyday service providers.

Tier 4 - Economic Development

Department of Economic Development

The Niagara County Department of Economic Development & the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency became the Niagara County Center for Economic Development (NCCED) in 2003, a one-stop center for comprehensive business services designed to help new and existing businesses become more successful in Niagara County.

It is the mission of the NCCED to actively retain, attract, and develop economically sound commerce and industry in order to foster job opportunities and economic prosperity for all residents of Niagara County. Detailed information about economic development services and activities is provided in Chapter VI.

The NCCED facilitates economic growth through financial incentives and support services such as providing information to businesses & the public including demographic, economic, land use, zoning, and environmental information, as well as providing technical assistance through project planning, site assessment, graphic design and mapping, grant support, etc.

Programs and services provided through the NCCED include:

Niagara County Department of Economic Development:

- Niagara County Business Growth and Retention Program Canadian Marketing program for attracting new businesses
- Marketing Campaign targeting "Water-Starved States "
- Empower Niagara low-cost power allocation incentive
- Local Affiliate Data Center for the U.S. Census Bureau
- Staff Coordinator for Niagara County Planning Board
- Coordinating Center for the Niagara County Economic Development Alliance (NCEDA)
- Administration of State and Federal Brownfields planning, assessment and remediation programs including the Niagara County Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) support
- Planning/technical assistance

Niagara County Industrial Development Agency:

- Industrial Revenue Bonds and Leaseback Transactions
- Revolving Loans through the Niagara County Development Corporation and Niagara Economic Development Fund
- Microenterprise Assistance Program

- Foreign Trade Zone #34 and other site location assistance
- Coordination of State and Federal economic development programs

Tier 5 – Administration

The services provided under the Administration tier of County government are diverse and include the policy-making, administrative support and staff services needed to manage the day-to-day operations of the County. Administration represents approximately 2.6 % of County spending and includes the following types of services:

- Licenses, public records, elections, and property tax administration
- Business services, including budgeting, information and communication
- Economic Development Fund
- Human Resources Management & Civil Service Administration and oversight
- Employee benefits, such as insurance and retirement programs
- Contingency funds for unanticipated expenses
- Debt service on the County's outstanding debts

Office of the County Manager

The County Manager is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of County government. The County Manager is a four-year contract position appointed by the County Legislature. The County Manager prepares the County's annual budget and appoints individuals as heads of the various County departments. The County Manager in Niagara County is one of only nine similar County Manager positions among the 57 counties of New York outside of New York City's five boroughs.

County Treasurer

The County Treasurer is one of four elected positions in Niagara County government. The other elected positions include the County Sheriff, the District Attorney and the County Clerk. The County Treasurer is the Chief Fiscal Officer of Niagara County and is responsible for managing and accounting for the County's financial resources. Among the services provided by the office are administering the County's payroll, implementing investment strategies, and directing the County's cash flow. The Treasurer office assists local municipalities in the collection of property and school tax payments. The office also collects delinquent tax payments from residents and may get involved in tax foreclosure procedures.

Clerk of the Legislature

The Clerk of the Legislature serves the support needs of the County Legislature and is staffed by three individuals. The Clerk and staff attend Legislative meetings, prepare agendas, prepare resolutions and correspondence, records proceedings, provide media releases and public notices, provide referrals to appropriate committees and coordinates on issues with various local, State and Federal agencies on matters that pertain to legislation affecting Niagara County.

In addition to being support staff to the 19 County Legislators the Clerk also provides daily assistance to the County's four Coroners. The office maintains the fiscal accounts and records, including payroll and expense accounts for the Legislators and Coroners. The Clerk also supervises and arranges for printing, binding of proceedings and other materials, including the meeting minutes for Yearly Journals. The County's mailroom and Print Shop are part of the Department under the supervision of the Clerk.

County Board of Elections

The Niagara County Board of Elections is responsible for executing and upholding the New York State Election Law within the County ensuring that the electoral process is conducted fairly and efficiently in a bipartisan manner. The Board maintains a website at www.elections.niagara.ny.us that identifies County Legislature representatives by district location as well as other election related information including polling locations and voter registration. The Board is responsible for registering eligible voters, maintaining necessary public records, assisting individuals seeking public or party office, and certifying the results of all elections within its jurisdiction.

Office of Management and Budget

The Office of Management and Budget provides a variety of services that basically fall under two primary functions that include budgeting and purchasing. Budget functions include: Financial Planning and Reporting; Capital Improvement Plans; creating the County's operating and capital budget; monitoring and managing budgets; providing financial analyses to all County service lines; and engaging in special projects as assigned by the County Manager.

The second primary function is purchasing. This function entails preparation, opening, analyzing and awarding sealed bids and requests for proposals; managing requisition processes; issuing purchase orders for goods and services; maintaining fixed inventory records; and coordinating surplus auctions, asset disposition and disposal, including innovative services such as online auctions to dispose of surplus inventory.

Real Property Tax Services

The Department of Real Property Tax Services responsibilities include tax mapping, real property tax administration, and assessment administration assistance. The Department includes a staff of seven individuals including the Director, Real Property Information Clerk, Senior Account Clerk, Computer Coordinator and three tax map technicians. The Department is responsible for the tax levy apportionment for the County's general tax and County special districts, including sewer and water district levies.

The Department also prepares the tax rolls and tax bills for Niagara County, all 12 towns including all special districts, County villages, all Central School Districts, the City of Lockport (school and City purposes), and the City of North Tonawanda (school and City purposes). Services provided include tax rate calculations and verification, NYS Real Property System assessment data file organization, printing tax rolls and tax billings, tax roll assembling and Tax Warrant preparation. Additional administrative assistance is provided to local governments and the public and includes technical support and computer program and data file maintenance under the State's Real Property System, property valuation, reassessment planning and public information, training assistance to the Board of Assessment Review and Assessor Orientation for all newly appointed assessors.

Additional services provided under this tier include:

- Human Resources & Civil Service
- Risk Management
- Central Printing & Mailing
- Central Data Processing
- GIS Mapping

County Facilities

Buildings and Grounds

Niagara County's operations and services are currently provided from a number of buildings and service facilities that are located in several communities across the County, including the City of Lockport which is the County Seat, City of Niagara Falls, City of North Tonawanda and the Town of Wheatfield. Following are the addresses of major County buildings and facilities. These locations are identified in Figure VII-1:

- *Niagara County Courthouse*

175 Hawley Street, Lockport NY 14094-2740

Houses Courtrooms; Legislative Office; County Clerk's Office; Pistol Permit Office; District Attorney's Office

- *Philo J. Brooks County Office Building*

59 Park Avenue, Lockport, NY 14094

Houses the Treasurer's Office; Budget and Management Office; Audit Office; County Manager; Public Works Office; Data Processing Office; Engineering Office; Purchasing Office

- *Civil Defense Building*

139 Niagara Street, Lockport, NY 14094

Houses County Historian's Office; Public Defender's Office

- *Mount View Campus*

5467 Upper Mountain Road, Lockport, NY 14094

Houses Mental Health Office; Speech & Hearing Office; Public Health Office; Print Shop; Housed Mount View Health Facility (no longer exists).

- *Davison Road Campus*

100 Davison Road, Lockport, NY 14094

Houses Parks Maintenance Office

- *Golden Triangle Building*

111 Main Street, Lockport, NY 14094

Houses Veteran's Office; Probation Office; Office for the Aging; Board of Elections; Department of Motor Vehicles; Risk Management Office; Human Resources; Civil Service Office

- *Civic Building*

775 Third Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14302

Houses courtrooms

- *Human Resources Building*

301 Tenth Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14302

Houses Social Services Office; Youth Bureau's Office

- *Trott Access Center*

1001 11th Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14301

Houses Social Services Office; Mental Health Office; Public Health Office; Employment & Training Office; Department of Labor; Probation Office

- *County Building*

500 Wheatfield Street, North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Houses Probation Office; Courtrooms; Department of Motor Vehicles

- *NCCED Vantage Pointe*

6311 Inducon Corporate Drive, Sanborn, NY 14132-9099

Houses Niagara County Center for Economic Development; Department of Economic Development; Niagara County Industrial Development Agency

Niagara County Parks

Niagara County owns and maintains five County Parks as well as the Niagara County Golf Course, which is a public facility. Information on each park is summarized below. More detailed information, including maps, is also available on the County's website at www.niagaracounty.com/Parks. Park locations are identified on Figure VII-1.

- *West Canal Marina*

4070 Tonawanda Creek Rd., North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Located in the Town of Pendleton, this marina includes more than 27 acres of land located along the Erie Canal. The marina is open from mid-May until the end of September. Facilities include two large shelters and three small shelters, all of which are rentable, playground and restrooms facilities, a boat dock and fishing pier, and boat launch access to the Erie Canal.

- *Bond Lake Park*

2571 Lower Mountain Rd., Ransomville, NY 14131

Located in the Town of Lewiston, this 532-plus acre park is located along the Niagara Escarpment and encompasses five small lakes. The park site was formerly an early 20th Century quarry. The park's natural features are available for enjoyment year-round. Facilities include two large shelters and picnic tables, 13 miles of cross-country ski trails also available for hiking, biking and bird watching, plus a Warming House available for rental from mid-March through mid-November, a tubing hill, a large skating rink, and a small ice hockey rink. The Bond Lake Nature Center is located in the Warming House and is staffed year-round on Sunday afternoons by members of the Bond Lake Environmental and Beautification Committee.

- *Royalton Ravine Park*

Gasport Road, Gasport, NY 14067

The Royalton Ravine Park is located along Gasport Road in the Town of Royalton. This 146-acre park accommodates both active and passive forms of recreation. Several miles of nature trails exist along both sides of the Royalton Ravine. The park also provides three rentable picnic shelters, a fishing pond, a baseball field and restrooms. The park is open from Memorial Day Weekend through September. Trails provide access to features including a wooden suspension bridge, a waterfall and the ruins of an historic homestead. The historic homestead was the 1830 birthplace of Belva Lockwood, the first woman to run for President of the United States and the first woman to practice law before the U.S. Supreme Court. More detailed information on the homestead and Belva Lockwood is

available on the County's website at www.niagaracounty.com/Parks/royaltonravine.asp.

- *Krull Park*

6108 Lake Road, Olcott, NY 14126

Krull Park is located along Olcott Beach in the Town of Newfane. This 325-acre park is used for a variety of year round activities. The park is open during the traditional summer season from Memorial Day weekend through September. The park includes a beach, four large rentable shelters, several smaller rentable shelters, a band shelter, five softball diamonds, soccer fields with shelters, a sprinkler pool, basketball courts, horseshoe pits, two playgrounds, tennis courts, two large skating rinks, a warming house, restrooms and a model airplane field.

Special events held at the park include:

- Pirates Festival
- Celtic Festival
- Independence Day celebrations and fireworks
- Labor Day Weekend Car Show
- Town of Newfane Sunday concerts
- Newfane Lions Club Swim for Sight - Polar Bear Plunge
- Dog shows

- *Oppenheim Park*

2713 Niagara Falls Boulevard, Niagara Falls, NY 14304

Oppenheim Park is a 92-acre park located in the Town of Wheatfield. Facilities include 3 large rentable picnic shelters, 14 small rentable shelters, a rentable band shelter, basketball courts, volleyball courts, tennis courts, a sprinkler pool, a small lake stocked for fishing, playgrounds and restrooms. The park is open from Memorial Day weekend through September.

- *Niagara County Golf Course*

314 Davison Road, Lockport, NY 14094

The Niagara County Golf Course is a 380-acre public golf course located in Lockport. This course is a par 72 totaling 6,400 yard course from the blue tees, and a par 73 course totaling 5,200 yards from the red tees. A driving range and full service pro shop are provided on site. The course also includes Caddy Jack's Restaurant. Although the facility receives funds appropriated by the County through the Department of Public Works, the facility generates a significant portion of its operating funds through greens fees, advertising revenues and profits made through its restaurant operations.

County Infrastructure

Roads, Highways & Bridges

Niagara County owns and maintains approximately 283 miles of County roadway, 89 bridges and approximately 1,100 drainage culverts along its road rights-of-way throughout the County. County roads are identified in Figure VII-1. The County Highway Department is responsible maintenance of County roads and for inventorying all local bridges over 20 feet in length and designating them for upgrades and repair. The County is also responsible for maintaining its drainageways and ditches along its rights-of-way.

County Water District

The Niagara County Water District (NCWD) supplies water to 12 towns and 5 villages in Niagara County as shown in Figure VII-2. Water is drawn from the West Branch of the Niagara River, and the water quality is rated as excellent. The water system serves over 150,000 residents through 108 service connections located in Niagara County as well as Erie and Orleans counties. In 2007, the NCWD completed upgrades at several of its facilities including the rehabilitation of the Filter Waste Valves at the Water Treatment Plant, rehabilitation of the Traveling Screen at the Raw Water Pump Station, and commencement of a filter controls upgrade at the Water Treatment Plant.

In 2007, the total amount of water delivered to customers by the Water District was 6.15 billion gallons; the daily average of water treated and pumped through the system was 16.50 million gallons per day. The highest usage was recorded on June 25, 2007 at 27.02 million gallons. In 2007, water customers were charged \$0.75 per 1,000 gallons of water.

County Sewer District

The Niagara County Sewer District No. 1 is responsible for the treatment and disposal of wastewater in the south-central portion of the County. Its service area completely covers the Towns of Wheatfield and Pendleton, and covers portions of the Towns of Niagara, Lockport, Cambria, and Lewiston as shown in Figure VII-3.

The Sewer District's wastewater treatment plant is located in the southwestern corner of the Town of Wheatfield, and has sufficient capacity for an average daily flow rate of 14 million gallons of water daily (MGD). The actual average daily flow rate is approximately 5 MGD, but heavy rains may increase the flow of water into storm sewers with peak flows on the order of 30 MGD.

The Niagara County Sewer District operates approximately 61 miles of sewer interceptor lines and six pump stations. Niagara Sewer District No. 1 is the largest, but not the only, sewer district in the County. Many of the areas not served by the District operate under local sewer districts. Each of the three cities in the County and many of the communities north of the Niagara Escarpment are served by local sewer districts. Niagara Sewer District No. 1's interceptor lines do not run north of the Escarpment.

County Refuse District

The Niagara County Refuse Disposal District, operating under the title of "Niagara County Landfill and Recycling", was established under a State Charter as a special district that covers all municipalities in Niagara County except Cambria, Newfane, Niagara and Wilson. The Refuse Disposal District is a special district with taxing powers, which are levied as a refuse tax within the municipalities that are part of the district. Tax revenues cover the cost of remedial activities related to State or Federally designated hazardous waste sites (Superfund sites). The purpose and intent of the district is to regionalize household hazardous waste disposal and municipal green waste disposal (composting), recycling and all other pertinent solid waste management activities.

The Niagara County Refuse Disposal District provides environmental services which are not readily conducted by private sector businesses due to the relatively low revenue generating capacity of these services. Funding assistance is provided in the form of grant monies from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Solid waste reduction, landfill remediation and household hazardous waste collection days are partially reimbursed by state grant funding. These County initiatives satisfy solid or hazardous waste mandates and the recommended waste recycling responsibilities

typically provided by New York State municipalities.

Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District

The Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District provides technical assistance, public education services and advice to local farmers, landowners and municipalities with regard to natural resources, particularly local information on soil and water best management practices, drainage assistance and conservation measures. The District is a partner agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The District has provided these services to Niagara County residents for more than 50 years. District offices are located at the Niagara County Fair Grounds. More information is available at www.niagaraswcd.com.

Some of the specific services offered by Niagara County Soil and Water include:

- Agricultural assistance provided to local farmers focused on controlling point and non-point sources of pollution.
- Partnering with local farmers, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Farm Service agency to deliver USDA Farm Bill Programs. The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) have been successful programs in Niagara County. The WRP provides landowners the opportunity to establish long-term conservation and wildlife habitat improvement on their property. The EQIP is a voluntary program that promotes agricultural production and environmental management practices including assistance, installation and implementation of structural and non-structural management practices.
- Assisting landowners with pond site analyses, including evaluation of pond locations, water sources, soils and drainage features. Ponds are important for fish production, fire protection, livestock water supply, and landscape enhancement.
- Providing annual pond stocking aquatic wildlife and trees seedling sales that total approximately 85,000 seedlings each year.
- Providing assistance with agricultural assessments and map information to landowners. Eligible landowners can receive reduction in property tax bills for land in agricultural production by obtaining a reassessment of their property based on the soils located on the property.
- Serving as a repository for County Flood Insurance Rate maps, NYS DEC and NWI wetland maps, soils surveys, topographic maps and Geographic Information System (GIS) maps and information.
- Providing assistance and technical expertise with regard to water quality monitoring and streambank stabilization. In 2003 the District teamed with County Planning, the Town of Newfane, the NYSDEC and the Army Corps of Engineers on the Eighteen Mile Creek Restoration Project to improve water quality, fish habitat and fishing enhancement. The NCSWCD is the lead agency for the Remedial Action Plan Coordination and Management program designed to delist Eighteen Mile Creek as an Area of Concern as designated by

Issues and Opportunities

During the comprehensive planning process, Niagara community representatives and other stakeholders identified a variety of issues and opportunities with regard to the County Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Plan Element. These issues/challenges and opportunities/assets that have been identified are summarized below by planning Subregion.

Eastern Communities Subregion

Town of Hartland, Town of Royalton, & Village of Middleport

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- A sense of isolation from the rest of the County
- A need for better emergency service, including improved response times and greater police visibility and presence
- A desire by some communities to be included in more projects and decision-making at the County level

Key opportunities that should be considered by the County include:

- The possibility of utilizing a mobile Department of Motor Vehicles unit, providing monthly visits to outlying communities. Similar mobile units could be made available for election/voter services [e.g., voter registration], social services, health and nutrition services, etc.
- Identifying opportunities for more shared services and improved efficiency among municipalities and the County, for example grass mowing of County properties could be done by local municipalities with reimbursement by the County
- Consideration of decentralizing other County services down to the towns and villages

Central Communities Subregion

Town of Cambria, Town of Lockport, City of Lockport, Town of Pendleton

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- A general need for consolidation of redundant services
- Recognition that being the County seat presents both pros and cons for the City of Lockport
 - Being County Seat provides great access to services
 - It also translates into a lot of non-taxable, public properties
- Evaluation of the present size of the County Legislature, with many districts/legislators as compared to other counties in New York State
- A need for greater efficiency in service delivery needs to be considered
 - For example, the Financial Recovery Division of County Social Services may be able to perform functions that are better left to State-level agencies
 - There may be other areas of the County and State where services overlap that need to be examined

Key opportunities that should be considered by the County include:

- Evaluation of the potential for service consolidation, specifically of local water districts

Lakefront Communities Subregion

Town of Somerset, Village of Barker, Town of Newfane, Town of Wilson, Village of Wilson

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- The general lack of County services in this subregion
- Some of the subregion's communities are geographically distant from various services in Lockport, Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda
 - o Given gas prices, driving distance becomes a more serious obstacle
 - o Everything is a half-hour drive away
- Police coverage is insufficient
 - o Improved coverage is needed for the towns
 - o Slow response times to emergencies have been noted in the past
- There seem to be "imaginary lines" running east-west along the escarpment, and north-south just east of the City of Lockport, which separate these communities from the rest of the County.

Key assets and opportunities that should be considered by the County include:

- There is a need for County bus service and/or van service for seniors in the area – more services are needed for the elderly and the rural population
- Service sharing exists now: Town of Somerset is served by the Village of Barker's police
- More service consolidation is possible
 - o Local water district consolidation is needed
 - o Tough decisions need to be made to use tax dollars wisely

Lower River Communities Subregion

Town of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Village of Lewiston, Village of Youngstown

Primary issues, challenges, assets and opportunities identified include:

- The County Sheriff's patrols are sparse in the area; Village of Youngstown has a part-time police force
- The general problems associated with this area's distance from County services in Lockport / Niagara Falls
- An asset of the area is that "We try to take care of ourselves" – Services are available locally when needed

Upper River Communities Subregion

City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Town of Wheatfield, City of North Tonawanda

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- The general condition of the area's road infrastructure is poor – not much County highways in this area; County roads are "just as bad" as town roads.
- Existing County buildings and facilities in this area need work
 - o Buildings are in poor condition
 - o County properties should be setting a higher positive standard for the area, but instead they reflect their negative surroundings
 - o More volunteer activity by the County is needed

- The County's Oppenheim Park is a "run-down" facility
 - o There was a proposal to sell this facility to the Town of Wheatfield; the Town may still be interested in the park,
 - o The park is accessible to tourists and visitors to the area given its location along Niagara Falls Boulevard, and could be a major attraction – this seems to be a missed opportunity right now
 - o County should consider selling the park or making a greater investment in it
- Water & sewer infrastructure
 - o Cities have their own water and sewer services
 - o Providing this type of infrastructure could become a model of "competitive cooperation" – from a more inter-regional perspective, without giving up local sovereignty
- Aging population
 - o There is a general need for more services & better access to existing services
 - o This seems to be a larger issue in Wheatfield
- Robert Moses Parkway
 - o Replacement is needed for this highway prior to its removal
 - o There is a need to improve commuting time from outlying areas and an opportunity to capture more commuter and tourist business traffic in the area
- LaSalle Parkway
 - o This is essentially a "parkway to nowhere"

Key assets and opportunities that should be considered by the County include:

- With regards to local roads
 - o Cities could use help from the County in maintaining and improving local roads
- Oppenheim Park
 - o The park could be a major asset, given its location on Niagara Falls Boulevard
 - o The park could be a possible site for a zoo
- There is a surplus of low-income housing in the area, especially the cities – and insufficient newer moderate or higher-income housing development that would make the area more competitive with the suburbs
- The Niagara Falls Airport holds a great deal of potential, especially because of its long runway and capability to handle large cargo loads
 - o There needs to be improved connectivity between Niagara Falls International Airport and Buffalo Niagara International Airport
- Multi-modal center/transportation alternatives are needed in Downtown Niagara Falls
- Old railroad rights-of-way present opportunities for trails and/or revival of the rail system in some areas
- Vantage Centre – the facility is filling up; could be marketed more effectively
- The County's current Brownfields coordinator has been a major asset to Niagara Falls and Wheatfield, and should be recognized as such
- The aging population in the subregion could be an asset and should be viewed from that perspective

Strategies

Niagara County provides a range of services, facilities and public infrastructure that contributes to the area's high standard of living and Niagara County remains committed to meeting its responsibilities by providing the most cost-effective services possible to its residents and taxpayers. It is imperative that existing services, facilities and infrastructure are maintained in a manner that retains their public investment value as well as keeping pace with the changing needs of County residents and businesses.

The task of providing financially-effective and fiscally responsible services are increasingly complicated by changing demographics, aging infrastructure and financial constraints throughout Niagara County. An aging population requires new and expanded services, including health care, affordable housing and transportation needs at a time when municipal budgets are under increased strain themselves. Aging public facilities and infrastructure also require consistent maintenance and upgrading.

Resolving the issues identified in this Plan relative to the provision of services and infrastructure will take a cooperative and collaborative approach between the County and local municipalities to find opportunities for cost savings and enhanced services. Among the key strategies Niagara County needs to consider are limitations on providing new or expanded infrastructure in areas of the County where the result may be further sprawl and undesirable development patterns.

In lieu of new infrastructure, continuing maintenance and upgrading existing water, sewer, drainage, road and bridge systems needs to be a high Countywide priority as a quality of life issue and as an important land use decision-making tool. This emphasis on directing limited resources to maintain and upgrade existing systems is particularly important when such actions will help facilitate and direct development and redevelopment to those areas of the County identified by this Plan as being most suited to further growth and development. These include the County's three urban municipalities, already developed suburban areas and highway corridors, and the existing developed centers of population in rural areas, including villages, town centers and hamlets. The County needs to identify infrastructure needs in the various subregions of the County and aggressively seek its share of State and Federal funding assistance to bring important public projects and services on line.

The County and local communities cannot control the aging process of its populations, but working in a cooperative fashion sprawling populations over wider and wider areas as opposed to concentrated areas inevitably increase demands on services, facilities and infrastructure as they age. The provision of cost efficient services, including social, health care and educational programs can be more effectively managed in existing population centers as outlined in this Plan.

Opportunities for the enhanced sharing of municipal services, joint facilities, and the possible consolidation of services and facilities through intermunicipal agreements between the County and local municipalities and among municipalities themselves need to be investigated further. Such arrangements already exist in some communities. Feasibility studies should be encouraged by the County. These studies are often supported at State levels under shared services incentive grant programs. Although some of the more obvious studies often include police, fire, shared court systems, and emergency services, other less obvious alternatives need to be explored such as intermunicipal



***Maintain
Existing
Infrastructure***

stormwater management, joint parks and recreation facilities, shared school facilities, joint training programs, and intermunicipal planning initiatives.

Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

Goal – Maintain and Upgrade Existing Infrastructure

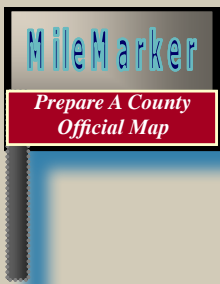
To prioritize the maintenance and upgrading of existing County-owned public infrastructure in developed urban areas and centers of population of the County as a high priority over the construction and/or expansion of new infrastructure in areas determined by the County and local communities as unsuited to future development.

Objectives

- Limit the construction of new County-owned road, water and sewer infrastructure in undeveloped areas of the County unless issues of public health and safety are involved.
- Maintain and upgrade existing County-owned road, water and sewer infrastructure in developed areas of the County to facilitate and direct new development and redevelopment of existing population centers where public infrastructure, services and facilities are already in place.

Recommendations

- ☐ Prepare an up-to-date County Official Map of Niagara County consistent with Sections 239-e and 239-f of NYS General Municipal Law for the purpose of facilitating the planning and development of roads and drainage systems; sites for public development; and the protection of rights-of-way that may be needed for future road and highway modifications, the upgrading of water, sewer and drainage systems, and sites that may be developed for future public use.
- ☐ Require the consultation and review of the County Official Map and elements contained within this Comprehensive Plan consistent with NYS General Municipal Law by project reviewing agencies which include the County Planning Board, County Department of Health, County Department of Public Works and others as necessary prior to any decisions affecting project approval to ensure that private and public sector projects are consistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan, the Official Map and local municipal comprehensive plans.
- ☐ Prioritize the continued maintenance and upgrade of existing road, sewer, water and drainage systems in developed urban communities and population centers over the construction and/or expansion of new infrastructure in undeveloped areas and areas determined by local communities as not suited to development, except in cases involving public health and safety.
- ☐ Partner with NYS DOT and GBNRTC on long-term planning initiatives of major highway corridors under their jurisdictions within Niagara County that provide linkage to existing and future centers of development and redevelopment to ensure the set aside of undeveloped lands as possible future rights-of-way for roads and utilities and potential parallel service roads to manage highway access in residential and commercially developing areas.



Goal – Enhance County Open Space, Parks and Recreation Resources

To encourage the preservation of open space resources, conservation of fish and wildlife habitats, increase public access to natural resources, and promote the development/enhancement of parks and recreational opportunities to serve the diverse needs of County residents and foster an environmentally sensitive approach to preservation, conservation and stewardship of natural resources.

Objectives

- Identify the County’s short and long-term parks, recreation and open space needs for the next 20-year planning horizon. Prepare a County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan as a blueprint for the provision of green infrastructure, recreational services, facilities and programs at the County level. The Plan would address necessary upgrades of existing facilities; potential acquisition/disposition of properties; development, construction and maintenance of parks, trails, bikeways, recreation facilities, historic resources and open space/environmentally sensitive resources. The process should also explore opportunities for green infrastructure and shared services relative to parks and recreation within Niagara County.
- Develop an interconnected network of trails, pedestrian paths and bikeways throughout the County with linkages to and among the existing and planned networks Countywide, such as the Niagara Greenway and the Erie Canal system. The trail network would connect County population centers, tourist destinations, community facilities, schools, employment centers, residential neighborhoods, recreational facilities, parks, and public open space resources.

Recommendations

- Identify and seek funding opportunities for preparation of a Countywide Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan founded upon inter-municipal cooperation and collaborative partnerships with other State, regional and local governmental agencies, as well as private sector entities. Potential partners in such a project include the Niagara River Greenway Commission, Niagara County Environmental Management Council, Erie Canal Heritage organizations among others.
- Prepare a County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan that includes the following tasks:
 - Perform an inventory and create a GIS database of parks, facilities, open space and historic resources including State, County, local, and school facilities within the County
 - Survey and assess public attitudes regarding demand, supply, needs and deficiencies of the County’s existing parks, recreation facilities and programs
 - Establish a public participation and stakeholder involvement process
 - Establish project priorities, capital improvement plans and design / development “green building” and “green infrastructure” standards for outdoor recreation facilities and grounds to include, but not be limited to: greenways, blueways, parklands, trails, bikeways, pedestrian networks, and special destination features
 - Identify projects and seek funding to connect existing trail networks to new multi-use trails, pedestrian paths, bikeways and green infrastructure to eliminate “gaps” in existing trail systems



- Design and construct recreation facilities and pursue recreational opportunities that ecologically benefit the County's riparian corridors, floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands

Goal – Enhance County-owned Public Facilities, Buildings and Grounds

To enhance the appearance and functionality of County-owned public facilities, buildings and grounds to achieve a higher standard of quality in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of properties, which are appropriate to – and consistent with – the setting and desired aesthetic character of surrounding neighborhoods and communities.

Objectives

- Examine the potential to establish architectural, engineering and site design guidelines and standards for County-owned facilities, buildings and grounds. These guidelines should address neighborhood aesthetics and site feature requirements to be considered and/or implemented in the design, construction and maintenance procedures for County facilities.
- Enhance the long-term environmental quality, sustainability and energy conservation of County facilities and buildings to decrease operating and maintenance costs and enhance the environment.

Recommendations

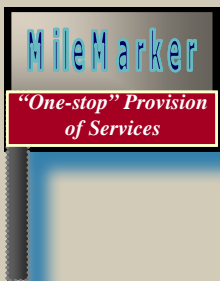
- ☐ The County should investigate and prioritize its long term service and facility needs to determine the potential for further consolidation of services and facilities “under one-roof” or at locations that can best meet the needs of County residents, but at the same time realizing cost savings and enhanced service delivery. Previous initiatives that can serve as models include the success of locating the services of the Niagara County Center of Economic Development under one roof and current plans to consolidate the facilities and services of County Public Works at one location.
- ☐ Establish best management practices for implementing context-sensitive site design, building construction and landscaping techniques for County development projects.
 - Encourage the use of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and techniques in County projects and other public sector projects in the County including schools, libraries, health facilities, etc.
 - Incorporate Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles and certification requirements into the design and construction process of new County projects and encourage the use of these principles in all public projects.

Goal – Improve Communication among County Departments

To improve communication among and between County Departments and related service providers and agencies in the provision of public services.

Objective

- Investigate ways to facilitate greater communication and increased efficiency through the sharing of information and the provision of services to the public among County Departments and other public service agencies and municipalities.
- ☐ Encourage more team-oriented approaches to the provision of County services based upon the experience and knowledge gained from the 2003 combination of



Niagara County's Economic Development Department and the County Industrial Development Agency into a "one-stop shop", the Niagara County Center for Economic Development. This model has increased operational efficiency and resulted in cost savings to the taxpayer through the sharing of staff, office space and other business resources.

- Investigate the feasibility and potential benefits and savings in the establishment of a customer service system such as a 311 or similar non-emergency telephone communication system, which would allow public access to local government information and services.
- Expand the sharing of current land use and other pertinent planning and service data, including community-oriented planning information, through the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) databases and mapping services. This includes, for example sharing recent aerial photographs and similar sources of data/information with local communities to facilitate updating of local comprehensive plans and land use regulations.
- Investigate the feasibility of utilizing creative approaches to bring County-provided services to residents who may otherwise find it difficult to access available services or transportation, such as seniors living in rural areas of the County.
 - Determine the need for providing various services via state-of-the-art information-sharing technologies via computer networks and linkages and explore the possible use of mobile service facilities, for example, mobile DMV units, mobile health clinics, or other social services to access greater numbers of residents.

Funding Opportunities

Projects and needs identified in this chapter and elsewhere within this Comprehensive Plan, as well as projects that may be identified in other plans and reports, including the annual Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, require funding assistance to be implemented due to the fiscal constraints, such as budget limitations, of Niagara County and its communities. A variety of funding opportunities exist at local, regional, State and Federal levels of government as well as potential sources of assistance from the private sector. Often the amount of funding needed to implement a project, however may be in excess of what may be available from one source so combinations of funding sources may be needed to finance a project. Funding mechanisms may include earmarks/appropriations/member items, bonding, direct grants, competitive grants, general fund items, foundation monies, corporate assistance and so forth.

Funding opportunities change as economic conditions change, particularly at State and Federal levels. Currently the nation is experiencing a deep economic downturn. Increased funding opportunities exist at this time through the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This Federal Stimulus Bill is intended to stimulate the economy and employment by providing funding to undertake projects at local levels. In many cases the Federal Stimulus Bill appropriates funding above typical annual Federal spending levels, such as what may

be authorized through the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009. Funding will be distributed through existing Federal programs and through new programs or may be passed through existing State programs.

The information provided below identifies Federal Stimulus funding opportunities and projects that have been identified to date at the time of preparing this document. The projects identified below are listed because they relate directly to this chapter and this particular focus area of the Comprehensive Plan. These projects are considered crucial to the health and well being of the communities in Niagara County and for improving the functioning of County government in providing services to the residents and businesses of Niagara County.

The following list of projects will be revised as projects are undertaken and new projects are identified and as local, State and Federal conditions change. Therefore this list of projects should not be considered to be inclusive of all potential projects that may be in need of funding assistance. Also, combined funding assistance for some of these projects may be available from other Federal, State, regional, local and private sector sources.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes funding provisions in Environmental Clean-up, Water and Waste Disposal; Help for Workers and Families Hardest Hit by the Economic Crisis; and Energy that include, but not limited to:

- \$6 billion towards environmental clean-up of former weapon production and energy research sites
- \$6 billion for local clean water and drinking water infrastructure improvements
- \$1.2 billion for EPA's nationwide environmental clean-up programs, including Superfund
- \$1.38 billion in loans and grants for needed water and waste disposal in rural areas
- \$19.9 billion for additional Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- \$2 billion for Child Care Development Block Grant
- \$2.1 billion for Head Start & Early Head Start
- \$4 billion for State and Local Law Enforcement
- \$555 million for Department of Defense Homeowners Assistance Program
- \$4.5 billion for repair of Federal buildings
- \$3.4 billion for Fossil Energy research and development
- \$11 billion for smart grid related activities
- \$6.3 billion for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Grants
- \$5 billion for Weatherization Assistance Program
- \$2.5 billion for energy efficiency and renewable energy research
- \$2 billion in grants for manufacturing advanced batteries systems
- \$6 billion for new loan guarantees
- \$1 billion for other energy efficiency projects

Niagara County Projects include:

Reliable, Efficient Electricity Grid

Mount Saint Mary's Hospital

<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated High Efficiency/Solar Panel-Lined Roof	\$ 750,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Replace 180 Windows with Energy-Efficient Windows	\$ 300,000

Local Government Energy Efficiency

Niagara County Sheriff's Office

<input type="checkbox"/>	Correctional Facility Appliance Efficiency Upgrade	\$ 430,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheriff's Building Energy Efficiency Upgrade	\$ 750,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Energy Efficiency Conservation Upgrade	\$ 140,000

Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center

<input type="checkbox"/>	Back-up Emergency Power Generators	\$ 740,000
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Niagara County County Clerk

<input type="checkbox"/>	Niagara County Inactive/Archival Records Storage Facility	\$ 5,152,000
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Home Weatherization

Niagara County Social Services

<input type="checkbox"/>	Weatherization Revitalization Assistance Program (WRAP)	\$ 100,000
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Modernization of public buildings:

Niagara County Public Works

<input type="checkbox"/>	Department of Public Works Facility - Town of Cambria	\$ 38,000,000
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Niagara County Data Processing

<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial and Payroll Systems for Niagara County	\$ 1,200,000
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Clean Water

Clean Water State Revolving Fund

Niagara County Sewer District No. 1

<input type="checkbox"/>	Upgrade Tonawanda Creek Forcemain	\$ 1,700,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wastewater Treatment Plant Modifications and Collection System Improvements	\$ 10,000,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extension of Cambria Interceptor	\$ 5,300,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extension of Pendleton Interceptor	\$ 3,500,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water Tower Rehabilitation	\$ 650,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tonawanda Creek Slope Stabilization	\$ 500,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clearing of Interceptor Right-of-Ways	\$ 600,000

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund

Niagara County Water District

<input type="checkbox"/>	Clearwell Upgrade	\$ 7,500,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transmission Line Upgrade	\$ 16,000,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Electrical Upgrade	\$ 200,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	High Service Pump Station VFD Upgrade	\$ 750,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sludge Lagoon Rehabilitation	\$ 325,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pump Coating Upgrade	\$ 50,000

Niagara County Public Health

<input type="checkbox"/>	Water Tank Removal	\$ 150,000
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Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Drinking Water and Wastewater Treatment System for Tuscarora Indian Health and Community Center	\$ 885,000
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Niagara County Refuse Disposal District

<input type="checkbox"/>	Niagara County Landfill Cap	\$ 9,000,000
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Construction of Three Household Hazardous Waste Collection and Storage Facilities	\$ 175,000
Niagara County Social Services		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Home Run Program	\$ 150,000
Employment		
Mount Saint Mary's Hospital:		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Certified Nursing Assistants Training for 60 Individuals with Guaranteed Job Placement	\$ 200,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Phlebotomist Training for 12 Individuals with Guaranteed Job Placement	\$ 27,600
Community Services Block Grant		
Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish Federally Qualified 330 Comm. Health Care Center	\$ 1,420,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Construct Tuscarora Nation Health and Community Center	\$ 2,200,000
Mount Saint Mary's Hospital		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Expand Services at Food Pantry/Soup Kitchen	\$ 500,000
Niagara County County Manager		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Smart Permitting Regional Online Permitting System	\$ 250,000
Emergency Food and Shelter		
Niagara County Social Services		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Food and Shelter Assistance	\$ 100,000
Centers for Independent Living		
Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center:		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Construct Assisted Living Facility in Niagara Falls	\$ 15,000,000
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families		
Niagara County Social Services		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Safe Dates Program	\$ 70,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Child Protective Services/Domestic Violence Collaboration	\$ 200,000
State and Local Law Enforcement		
Niagara County District Attorney		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Project Safe Childhood Program	\$ 85,000
Niagara County Sheriff's Office		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vehicle/Evidence Storage Facility	\$ 2,500,00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Computer Equipment Upgrade	\$ 222,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheriff's Office Facility Security Upgrade	\$ 1,090,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interoperable Communications Equipment	\$ 1,700,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mobile Command Center	\$ 150,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tactical Communication Vehicle	\$ 80,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Automated External Defibrillator	\$ 60,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Firearms Training Simulator	\$ 75,000

Niagara County County Attorney's Office

<input type="checkbox"/>	Niagara Falls Gang and Gun Prevention Program	\$	372,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	North Tonawanda/Lockport Sexual Abuse Prevention Program	\$	409,500

Reference

United States Congress. 2009. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
- Federal Stimulus Congressional Press Summary. Washington, D.C.

Chapter VIII

Education

General Characteristics & Trends

Educational resources in Niagara County include ten public school districts, Niagara University, Niagara County Community College (NCCC), the NIOGA Public Library system, the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) system, and 19 private schools, most of which are affiliated with religious institutions. These educational institutions are mapped and identified in Chapter III, Figure III.M.1.

Many schools are located in the historically developed urban areas of the County in and around the cities of Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda and Lockport. Fewer schools are located in the rural towns, but as the County population continues to shift northward, the potential need for additional schools and related educational facilities in suburban and rural areas exists as well. As a result of shifting populations, urban school districts like those in Niagara Falls have accommodated the reuse of school facilities that are no longer needed due to decreases in local population and enrollment.

Niagara County provides financial support to Niagara County Community College and the NIOGA Library System, and operates several job training programs, the County Youth Bureau, education programs in public schools for children with disabilities, and recreation programs.

A number of issues and opportunities related to the role of the County in education and educational initiatives in general have been identified during the planning process and are discussed in this chapter. Many issues and opportunities focus on the County's ability to function as a key coordinating body with other education stakeholders, particularly in its role in providing social services, economic development and job development. Following is a brief summary of current characteristics and trends related to education and educational institutions in Niagara County.

Public School System (K-12)

Based on an annual school enrollment survey conducted by the Niagara County Department of Economic Development, total enrollment in the County's public

schools was 32,421 during the 2006-2007 school year. The largest school districts are those in the County's urban centers. The four largest districts (Niagara Falls City School District, Lockport City School District, North Tonawanda City School District and Niagara-Wheatfield Central School District) account for approximately 65% of the County's public school enrollment. Table VIII-1 summarizes enrollment in the 10 public school districts within Niagara County.

**Table VIII-1 – Public School Enrollment,
2006-2007 School Year**

School District	School Buildings	Total Enrollment ('06-'07)
Niagara Falls City	13	7,551
Lockport City	10	5,169
North Tonawanda City	8	4,353
Niagara-Wheatfield Central	6	4,074
Starpoint Central	4	2,822
Lewiston Porter Central	4	2,338
Newfane Central Schools	5	2,036
Royalton Hartland Central	3	1,553
Wilson Central	3	1,428
Barker Central	3	1,097
TOTAL	59	32,421

**Table VIII-2 – Facilities and Capacity by School District,
2006-2007 School Year**

School District	Elementary Level		Middle / Junior / High School Level	
	Number of Schools	Student Enrollment / Student Capacity	Number of Schools	Student Enrollment / Student Capacity
Barker Central	1	102%	2	103%
Lewiston Porter Central	2	87%	2	89%
Lockport City	7	97%	3	93%
Newfane Central Schools	3	N/A	2	N/A
Niagara Falls City	9	61%	4	50%
Niagara Wheatfield Central	4	92%	2	113%
North Tonawanda City	6	58%	2	59%
Royalton Hartland Central	1	N/A	2	N/A
Starpoint Central	2	N/A	2	N/A
Wilson Central	2	37%	1	44%

Table VIII-2 summarizes school facilities and the percent of total capacity available in each of the 10 public school districts serving County residents. Three districts are nearing or have exceeded their enrollment capacity: Barker Central School District, Lockport City School District and Niagara-Wheatfield Central School District. Data for the 2006-2007 school year was unavailable where noted as “N/A.”

Private Schools

There are 19 private schools in Niagara County, most of which are affiliated with religious institutions or other organizations. The largest of these is DeSales Catholic School, which had an enrollment of 533 students in 2006-2007. Total reported private school enrollment for the 2006-2007 school year was 2,093 students, or about 6% of total school enrollment countywide. Enrollment numbers for private schools can be found in Table VIII-3. Data for the 2006-2007 school year was unavailable where noted as “N/A.” Data on school capacity for private schools is on file, but not presented here given the small share of total school enrollment countywide.

**Table VIII-3 – Private Schools in Niagara County
by Enrollment,
2006-2007 School Year**

Private Schools	Enrollment
DeSales Catholic School	533
Prince of Peace School	220
St. Peter's, Lewiston	212
Niagara Catholic	101
St. Matthew Lutheran	180
Stella Niagara Education Park	180
North Tonawanda Catholic	166
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel	124
St. Peter's Lutheran -Walmore Rd.	63
Holy Ghost Lutheran	100
St. John Lutheran	68
St. Peter's Lutheran - North Ridge	64
Sacred Heart Villa	53
St. Mark Lutheran	29
Henrietta G. Lewis Campus School	N/A
Niagara Christian Academy	N/A
St. Dominic Savio	N/A
St. John de LaSalle School	N/A
St. Joseph School	N/A
Total	2,093

Institutions of Higher Education

Niagara County offers three institutions of higher learning within its borders: Niagara University, Niagara County Community College (NCCC), and SUNY Empire State College. These institutions offer Associate, Bachelor and advanced university degrees on full-time and part-time bases. Niagara County is located within a very reasonable one-half hour drive or less from the State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo State College and Canisius College. These institutions of higher education afford diverse degree programs to their student populations, with similarly diverse career choices and life interests.

Niagara University

Niagara University was founded in 1856 by the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) and was first chartered in 1861 as a seminary. It was re-chartered as a university in 1883. The 160-acre Niagara University campus is located on NYS Route 104 near the northern limits of the City of Niagara Falls. The campus is situated along the top of Monteagle Ridge overlooking the Niagara River Gorge, approximately four miles north of Niagara Falls. Niagara University is a comprehensive university with an enrollment of approximately 2,600 undergraduates and 800 graduate students, with another 750 students enrolled in continuing and community education programs. In addition, Niagara University offers bachelor's and master's degree programs at sites in the Toronto and York regions of Ontario. All programs operate with written consent from the Ministry of Training and enroll more than 300 students annually. More information is available at: www.niagara.edu

Niagara County Community College

Niagara County Community College was established in the City of Niagara Falls in 1962 as a locally-sponsored college supervised by the State University of New York. The present campus in Sanborn was constructed in 1973 on 267 acres of land at Saunders Settlement Road (NYS Route 31) and Townline Road (NYS Route 429) in the Town of Cambria. The College offers over 60 programs of study and the campus includes nine buildings. In August 2008, Village College Suites was opened to provide on-campus housing for approximately 300 students. Total full-time and part-time enrollment at the College is approximately 7,000 students in credit programs with another 7,500 students enrolled in workforce and community education programs. More information is available at: www.niagaracc.suny.edu

Empire State College, State University of New York

Empire State College is a component of the State University of New York that is dedicated to providing educational opportunities to working adults. There are Empire State College locations in 34 cities in New York, including the Niagara County location in the City of Lockport.

Empire State College offers a wide array of online courses and specializes in distance learning. Its offices in Lockport function primarily as a place for students to meet with faculty advisors and to access the College's resources and student services.

Job Training / Adult Education

Employment and Training Department

The County's Employment and Training Department provides employment services for job seekers such as on-the-job training and vocational classroom training, as well as business services for employers seeking workers. The County provides these services to about 10,000 residents annually. Services include: job opening information, skills and aptitude testing, resume assistance, career counseling, interview coaching, vocational training, workshops and meetings with employers.

Niagara County Community College

NCCC's Division of Workforce and Community Development provides an umbrella of educational services for youth and adults in the Niagara region. Available in a variety of formats, programs include: foundational instruction, life skills, employment readiness, vocational training, career development, professional preparation, testing, and technology education.

Workshops, as well as short-term and long-term training sessions, assist students in developing computer skills and directs students to entry into a certificate or a college program; immediate employment; or immediate employment with continuing education to obtain a certificate or an academic degree. The focus is determined by student need and desire.

The department's case manager works closely with students to identify their interests and skill levels, appropriate options, and available resources for funding. As students become involved in programs, the case manager will continue to help students throughout their experience.

Collaboration with several government and neighborhood organizations means students get more resources to help achieve lifelong goals. The department is also one of the WorkSource One-Stop Partners, a cluster of more than 10 groups working together to provide coordinated delivery of employment services to businesses and job seekers.

At the Career Education and Counseling Center, based at the Trott ACCESS Center, staff members focus on foundational instruction and job-readiness training. Preparation and testing for TABE and COMPASS are also provided.

NCCC participates in the College Acceleration Program (CAP) which is an articulation between NCCC and area high schools that provides over 1,200 students with the opportunity to obtain college credit while still enrolled in high school. Seniors and highly qualified juniors are eligible to be part of the program. The college-level courses are taught at the high school. By taking advantage of this opportunity, students are able to gain college credit while in high school and provide for a smoother transition to college.

Workforce and Community Development programs and services are always being evaluated and updated to provide students with the current information and skills students need to discover and enjoy lifelong learning. In addition to the Sanborn campus, offices are located at NCCC's Niagara Falls Extension Site, and at the Corporate and Business Development Center in the City of Lockport.

Niagara University

Through the university's Family Literacy and Counseling Centers, job readiness programming and educational assistance in literacy and math skills are available. The Office of Continuing and Community Education at NU provides a number of workplace and professional development programs in areas such as computer applications, web graphics, personal enrichment and language. Professional certificates in Geographical Information Systems and Emergency Management are among program offerings. The Department of Nursing offers a bachelor of science nursing completion degree for registered nurses prepared in an accredited Associate Degree Program or Hospital School of Nursing as well as leadership workshops for nursing professionals.

Orleans/Niagara Board of Cooperative Educational Services (ONBOCES)

The Orleans/Niagara Board of Cooperative Educational Services (ONBOCES) provides a variety of vocational and alternative education programs to students in Niagara and Orleans counties. The ONBOCES district encompasses the ten public school districts in Niagara County and two school districts in Orleans County.

ONBOCES offers career and technical education training in over two dozen fields, including automotive repair, computer technology, law enforcement, and health occupations. ONBOCES also offers continuing education and special education programs.

During the 2006-2007 school year, ONBOCES served 1,021 general education students and 490 students with disabilities. According to the ONBOCES 2006-2007 Report Card, 71 percent of the previous year's graduates were either employed (35 percent) or continuing with post-secondary education (36 percent).

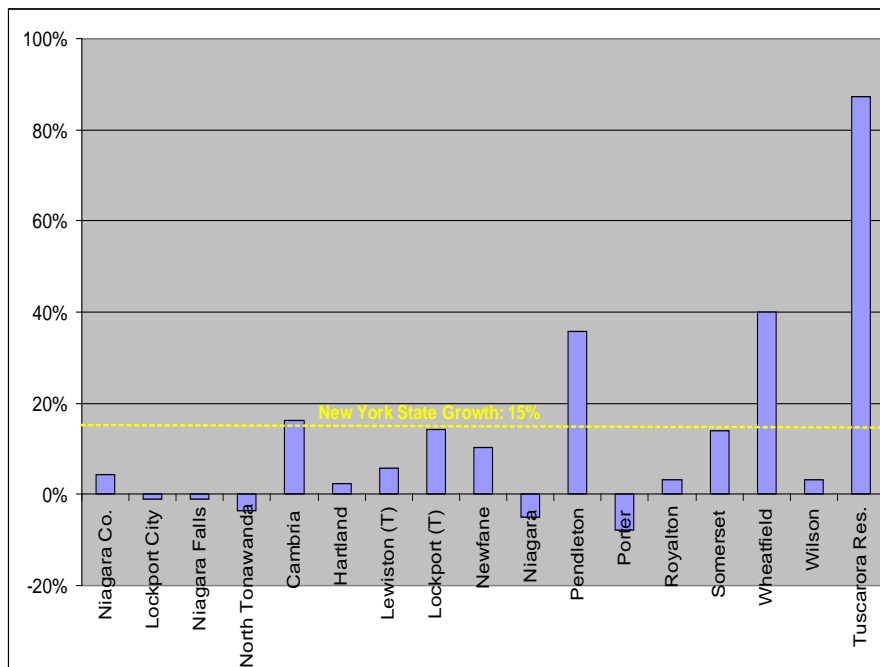
ONBOCES' Niagara County facilities are clustered in Sanborn in western part of Cambria, and include Niagara Academy and Niagara Career and Technical Educational Center and the Orleans / Niagara East Conference Center both located next to NCCC on Saunders Settlement Road.

Population and School Enrollment

Figure VIII-1 illustrates changes in school age population for municipalities in Niagara County between 1990 and 2000. At the time of the 2000 Census, 41,000 school-age children (ages 5 to 17) resided in Niagara County, a four percent increase over 1990. While the County's school-age population increased over this time period, it failed to keep pace with the rest of the State: Statewide, the school-age population increased by 15 percent.

The greatest proportional increase in school-age children was on the Tuscarora Reservation, which experienced an increase of 122 children, or an 87 percent increase over 1990 enrollment. The towns of Wheatfield and Pendleton experienced increases of 40 and 36 percent, respectively, and the Village of Barker experienced a 34 percent increase. Several communities had growth approximately on par with the Statewide rate: The towns of Cambria, Lockport, Newfane and Somerset gained school-age residents at rates between 10 and 16 percent between 1990 and 2000. The Village of Middleport also gained population in this age bracket.

Figure VIII- 1 Change in School-Age Population, 1990-2000



The towns of Porter and Niagara experienced the greatest declines in school-age population, with a total loss of nearly 200 school-age residents. The cities of Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda and Lockport lost population in this age cohort, at rates of about one percent in Niagara Falls and Lockport and 3.7 percent in North Tonawanda. In real numbers, these three cities lost a total of 368 school-age residents between 1990 and 2000. The villages of Youngstown, Lewiston and Wilson also experienced decreases in this age cohort.

Niagara County began conducting an annual school enrollment survey in 1999. Using information from this survey, Figure VIII-2 summarizes changes in public school enrollment countywide between 1999 and 2007. Public school enrollment in the 1998-1999 school year was nearly 36,000.

Figure VIII-2 Change in Public School Enrollment Countywide, '99 – '06

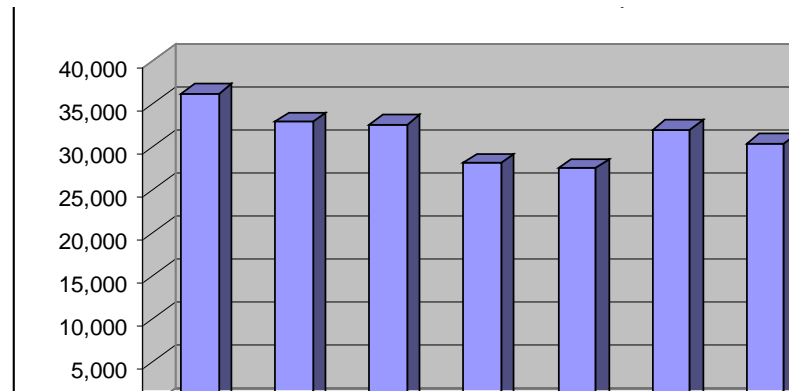


Table VIII-4 summarizes public school enrollment in the 1998-1999 and 2006-2007 school years. Public School enrollment declined between these two school years by approximately 3,500 students to its current level of approximately 32,400 students. Decline was greatest in the three city school districts: North Tonawanda (-18 percent), Niagara Falls (-17 percent) and Lockport City School Districts (-17 percent). Three school districts added to their enrollment in this period: Barker Central (+27 percent, Niagara Wheatfield (+5 percent) and Starpoint Central (+7 percent).

Table VIII-4 – Change in Public School Enrollment, 1998/'99 – 2006/'07

Public School District	Enrollment		Change	
	1998/99	2006/07	Number	Percent
Barker Central	863	1097	234	27%
Lewiston Porter Central	2504	2338	-166	-7%
Lockport City	6197	5169	-1028	-17%
Newfane	2068	2036	-32	-2%
Niagara Falls City	9108	7551	-1557	-17%
Niagara Wheatfield Central	3884	4074	190	5%
North Tonawanda City	5295	4353	-942	-18%
Royalton Hartland Central	1772	1553	-219	-12%
Starpoint Central	2636	2822	186	7%
Wilson Central	1556	1428	-128	-8%
TOTAL	35883	32421	-3462	-10%

Educational Attainment

Table VIII-5 summarizes educational attainment during the 1990 - 2000 school year. Between 1990 and 2000, educational attainment improved in Niagara County, with a seven percent increase in the proportion of residents attaining at least a high school diploma. This compares favorably to a five percent increase nationally, and a four percent increase statewide. In Niagara County, this measure of educational attainment improved in every town and city in the County and by 22 percent within the Tuscarora Indian Reservation.

Table VIII-5 – Change in Educational Attainment, 1990 - 2000

Town / City	Residents w/at least a HS Diploma		
	1990	2000	Change
Lewiston	87%	89%	1%
Somerset	81%	84%	3%
New York State	75%	79%	4%
Porter	85%	90%	4%
Niagara	74%	79%	5%
United States	75%	80%	5%
North Tonawanda	80%	85%	6%
Cambria	82%	88%	6%
Wilson	77%	83%	6%
Wheatfield	80%	87%	7%
Lockport (Town)	81%	88%	7%
Royalton	77%	84%	7%
Niagara County	76%	83%	7%
Lockport	74%	81%	8%
Pendleton	83%	91%	8%
Hartland	74%	83%	9%
Niagara Falls	68%	77%	9%
Newfane	76%	86%	10%
Tuscarora Reservation	64%	86%	22%

Fiscal Conditions

Following is a fiscal overview of the 10 Niagara County school districts from the 2001 - 2002 school year to the 2005 - 2006 school year, the most recent school year for which information is currently available. Information for Niagara County has been compared to statewide data whenever possible, in order to place County conditions in a suitable context for comparison.

This section summarizes data from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Chapter 655 Report and reports generated by NYSED's Fiscal Analysis Research Unit (FARU). Specific analyses conducted by NYSED and/or FARU were also utilized, as noted.

The FARU reports provide a comprehensive analysis of fiscal statistics and trends for each New York State school district, as well as aggregate data at the state level. In addition, the Chapter 655 Report provides specific per pupil revenue and expenditure data and data on enrollment trends and student performance. This overview focuses on the financial aspects of the Niagara County school districts.

Financial Data

Revenue and expenditure numbers for Niagara County's ten school districts, and for New York State as a whole, are provided below. Revenues and expenditures are broken down into subcategories and compared to statewide standards in order to provide a complete picture of where local schools' funds come from, how they are spent, and how local trends compare to the rest of the State.

Revenues

Revenues are broken down into three sources: State, local and Federal. Descriptions of these sources follow.

State Sources - State sources are divided into two categories:

STAR - Represents revenues from the State for school tax relief (STAR) payments. Under this program New York State provides revenues to school districts so that homeowners may receive an exemption (in whole or in part) from the district property tax. State Aid - represents revenues received by a district from New York State

Local Sources - Local sources include General Fund revenues, interfund transfers, and proceeds of long term debt.

Federal Sources - All revenues provided by the Federal government.

Expenditures

Board of Education - This item consists of expenditures related to the Board of Education, including the Board of Education members, the district clerk's office, auditing services, the treasurer's office, the tax collector's office, legal services, and the school census.

Central Administration - This item consists of expenditures for central administration, including the chief school officer (superintendent), the business office, the purchasing office, the personnel office, the records management officer, public information and services, and fees for fiscal agents.

Instructional Expenditures - This item consists of instruction-related expenses, such as teacher salaries, curriculum development and supervision.

Operation & Maintenance - This item consists of General Fund and Special Aid Fund expenditures for the operation and maintenance of physical facilities plus repair reserve expenditures.

Fringe Benefits & Other Undistributed Funds - This expenditure item consists of teacher related benefits such as retirement and health insurance. It also includes other undistributed funds mainly used for outside service fees.

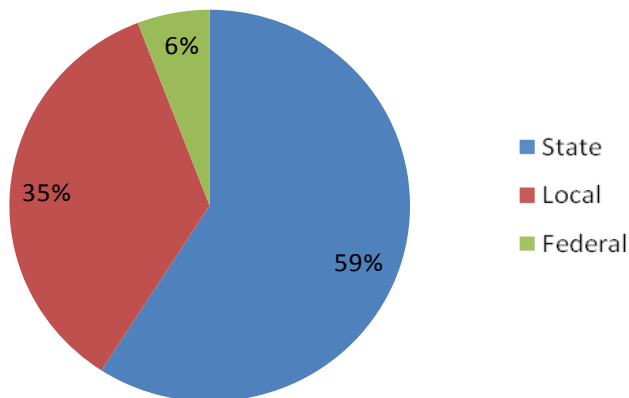
Other Expenditures - This expenditure category consists of all other expenditure items not included in the other categories. This consists primarily of intrafund transfers and community service program (i.e. recreation, youth, parent-teacher association) expenditures.

NOTE: Transportation and debt service (principal and interest) expenditures are considered separately from the above expenditures and are not included in this overview.

Summary of Fiscal Conditions and Trends

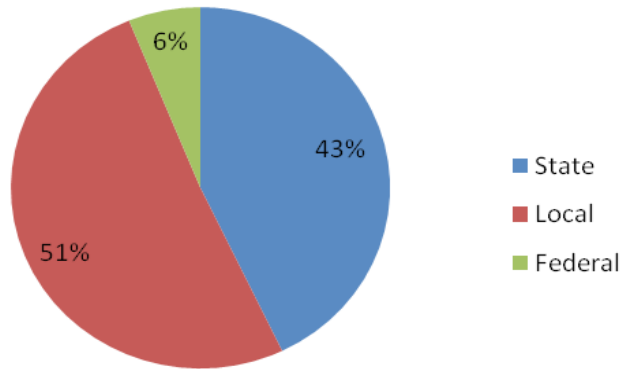
Revenues for the 10 Niagara County school districts totaled \$481.7 million for the 2005-06 school year. As illustrated in Figure VIII-3, State sources, which include the STAR and State Aid components, made up the majority of revenues (59.1 percent), totaling \$284.5 million. Local sources accounted for 35.1 percent of total revenues or \$169.1 million. Federal sources made up the smallest portion, representing only 5.8 percent of all revenues or \$28.1 million.

Figure VIII-3 Distribution of Niagara County School District Revenues by Source, 2005-06



Niagara County school district revenues represented just over 1 percent of all school revenues for the State of New York, which totaled \$46.2 billion for the 2005-06 school year. In contrast to Niagara County, local revenues were the majority source statewide, making up 50.9 percent of total revenues as illustrated in Figure VIII-4. State sources represented 42.9 percent of total statewide revenues. As in Niagara County, Federal sources represented approximately 6 percent of total revenues.

Figure VIII-4 Distribution of New York State School District Revenues by Source, 2005-06

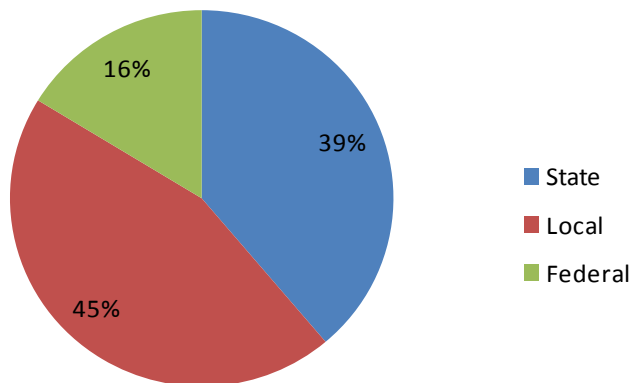


Revenue Growth Trends 2001-02 to 2005-06

Figure VIII-5 illustrates revenue growth for Niagara County schools during the 2001 – 2002 and 2005 – 2006 school years. Total revenues for Niagara County’s school districts grew by \$63.6 million or 15.2 percent during these periods (\$418.1 million to \$481.8 million). This was approximately half the growth rate of statewide revenues, which grew 31.7 percent over this four-year period.

The largest portion of the \$63 million growth in Niagara County school district revenues was in local sources, which accounted for 44.9 percent or \$28.6 million. State sources represented the second largest portion of revenue growth, making up 38.9 percent of total revenue growth (\$24.7 million). The proportion of growth attributed to Federal sources was the smallest, accounting for only 16.2 percent of all revenue growth in Niagara County (\$10.3 million).

Figure VIII-5 Distribution of Niagara County School District Revenue Growth by Source, 2001-‘02 to 2005-‘06



In comparison, as shown in Figure VIII-6, local sources also accounted for almost two-thirds of total statewide revenue growth (65.9 percent). State sources accounted for less than a quarter of the statewide revenue growth (24.6 percent), and Federal sources represented the smallest proportion at 9.6 percent.

Figure VIII-6 Distribution of New York State School District Revenue Growth by Source, 2001-'02 to 2005-'06

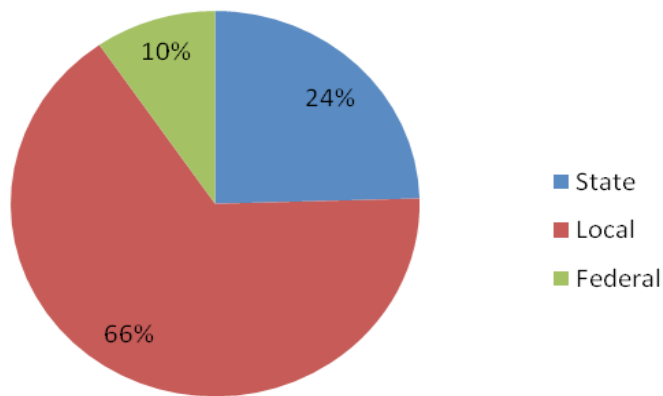
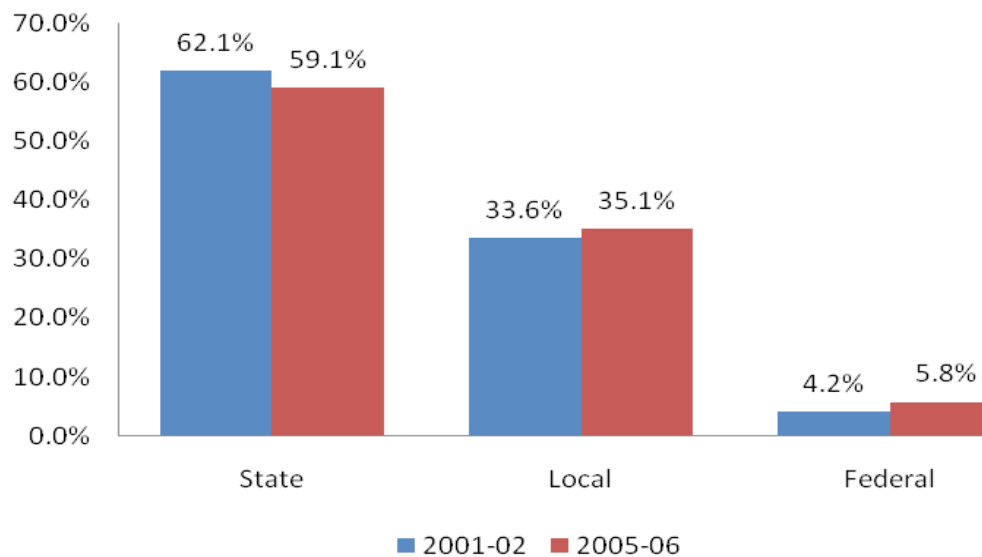


Figure VIII-7 Change in Share of Total Revenue – Niagara County School Districts, 2001-02 to 2005-06



As shown in Figure VIII-7, the respective share represented by the three main sources did not vary greatly for the Niagara County school districts from the 2001-02 to the 2005-06 school year. The share represented by State sources decreased slightly from 62.1 percent of total revenues to 59.1 percent. The proportion of total revenue from local sources increased slightly from 33.6 percent to 35.1 percent. Likewise, the proportion from Federal sources increased slightly, from 4.2 percent to 5.8 percent.

Statewide, changes in revenue sources' representative shares were slightly larger than at the local level in this four-year period as shown in Figure VIII-8. The most notable change was the decrease in State revenues as a proportion of all revenues, from 48.7 to 42.9 percent. Local sources became more prominent as a result, increasing to 50.9 percent of revenues, from 46.2 percent in 2001-02. Federal sources' share increased slightly from 5 percent to 6.1 percent.

Figure VIII-8 Change in Share of Total Revenue – New York State School Districts, 2001-02 to 2005-06

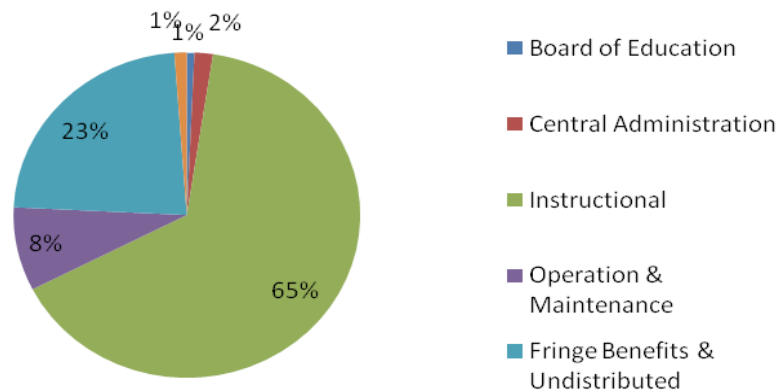


Total Expenditures

Expenditures for the Niagara County school districts totaled \$413.2 million for the 2005-06 school year. This total represented just over one percent of the total expenditures for school districts statewide, which was \$40.5 billion. This corresponds closely to Niagara County's proportion of statewide public school enrollment: 1.2 percent of the State's 2.7 million students are enrolled in Niagara County's districts.

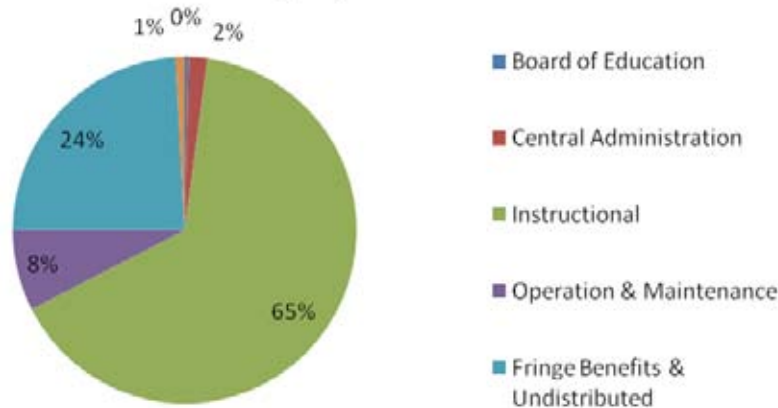
Instructional expenditures made up the largest portion of expenditures for school districts in Niagara County in 2005-06 as shown in Figure VIII-9, representing 65 percent of the total or \$268.7 million. Fringe benefits (and other undistributed funds) accounted for the second largest portion of total expenditures, making up 23.1 percent of the total or \$95.4 million. The next largest portion was operation and maintenance expenses, accounting for 8.3 percent of total expenditures, or \$34.4 million.

Figure VIII-9 Niagara County School District Expenditures by Category, 2005-06



Statewide, instructional expenditures (65.4 percent) accounted for the vast majority of total expenditures for the 2005-06 school year as shown in Figure VIII-10. Fringe benefits were the second highest expenditure, making up 24.1 percent of all expenses. Operations and maintenance expenses were the third highest component of total statewide expenditures, representing 7.5 percent of the total.

Figure VIII-10 New York State School District Expenditures by Category, 2005-06



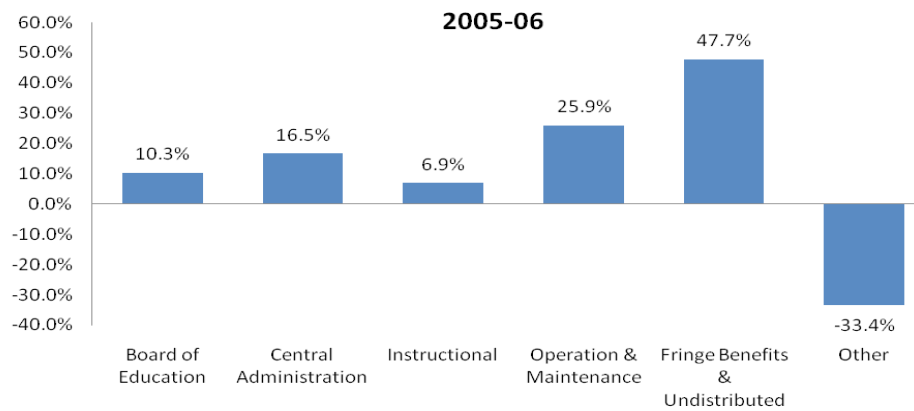
Expenditure Growth Trends 2001-02 to 2005-06

Total expenditures in the Niagara County school districts increased 15 percent from \$359.1 million in the 2001-02 school year to \$413.2 million in the 2005-06 school year (a \$54 million increase). By comparison, statewide school district expenditures increased by 27.1 percent.

The largest percent increase in Niagara County school district expenditures from 2001-02 to 2005-06 occurred in fringe benefits as shown in Figure VIII-11, which increased 47.7 percent from \$64.6 million to \$95.4 million over the four-year period.

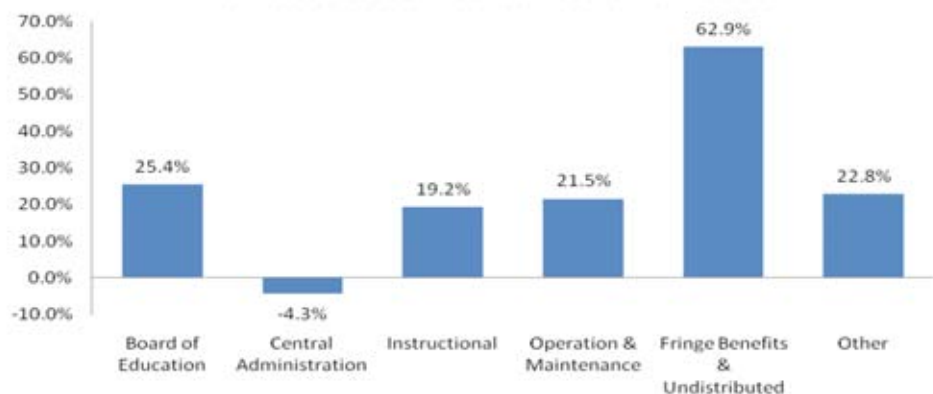
The second largest percent increase was in operation expenses, which increased 25.9 percent from \$27.3 million to \$34.4 million. Other “expenditures” (which primarily include intrafund transfers and community service program expenditures) was the only expense category that declined over the four-year period, decreasing 33.4 percent from \$7.1 million to \$4.7 million.

Figure VIII-11 Percent Change in Expenditures by Category – Niagara County School Districts, 2001-'02 to 2005-'06



Fringe benefit expenditures had the highest growth rate statewide from the 2001-02 to the 2005-06 school year, increasing by 62.9 percent as shown in Figure VIII-12. Board of Education expenditures showed the second highest increase, growing by 25.4 percent. Central administration expenditures decreased on a statewide basis, declining by 4.3 percent.

Figure VIII-12 Percent Change in Expenditures by Category – New York State School Districts, 2001-'02 to 2005-'06



Expenditure Per Pupil for the 2005-06 School Year

Analyzing the expenditure (or cost) and revenue per pupil is a common way of looking at the amount that a school district invests in each of its student's education. Overall, the Niagara County school districts invested less money per pupil than the State average in the 2005-06 school year. The Niagara County districts averaged a cost of \$12,555 per pupil, which was 77.4 percent of the average State cost per pupil.

Table VIII-6 summarizes per pupil expenditures by school district during the 2005 – 2006 school year. Within the County, the Barker Central School District exhibited the highest cost per pupil, \$14,383, which was 14.6 percent higher than the County average but 11.3 percent less than the State average. The Niagara Falls School District had the second highest cost per pupil at \$14,339. Starpoint School District had the lowest cost per pupil in the County, spending \$11,243 per student. This was 10.5 percent lower than the County average and 30.7 percent lower than the State average. Lockport School District exhibited the second lowest cost per pupil at \$11,335. The expenditure cost per pupil and percent of the State expenditure cost per pupil is provided below for each of the ten school districts in Niagara County.

Table VIII-6 – Per Pupil Expenditures by School District, 2005-‘06

School District	Total Enrollment	Expenditure Cost/Pupil	Percent of State Average
Lewiston-Porter Central School District	2,429	\$13,320	82.2%
Lockport City School District	5,543	\$11,335	69.9%
Newfane Central School District	2,120	\$12,071	74.5%
Niagara-Wheatfield Central School District	4,036	\$12,306	75.9%
Niagara Falls City School District	8,491	\$14,339	88.4%
North Tonawanda City School District	4,467	\$11,576	71.4%
Starpoint Central School District	2,859	\$11,243	69.4%
Royalton-Hartland Central School District	1,614	\$11,780	72.7%
Barker Central School District	1,082	\$14,383	88.7%
Wilson Central School District	1,487	\$11,894	73.4%
TOTAL ENROLLMENT/ AVERAGE	34,128	\$12,555	77.4%
State of New York		\$16,212	100.0%

Issues and Opportunities

A variety of issues and opportunities were identified by stakeholders during the planning process, most importantly as part of scheduled meetings that took place during June 2008 that focused on education and related topics. The following information is summarized from that meeting and categorized according to the five planning subregions of the County. Notes of that and all stakeholder meetings are also provided in the Appendix of this Plan.

Eastern Communities Subregion

Town of Hartland, Town of Royalton, & Village of Middleport

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- Classes and job training programs are missing key components of the working population (e.g., there is no Future Farmers of America type programs), and there is not enough training in the latest technologies.
- Taxes are increasing as population is decreasing.
- There is a need for an additional computer (Wi-Fi)/ library/resource center.
- There is a need for a Niagara County Community College satellite school or satellite classroom facility.

Key assets and opportunities that should be considered by the County include:

- Royalton-Hartland School District has plenty of room for expansion without the need for additional construction.
- The school district's grounds and facilities are environmentally clean.

Central Communities Subregion

Town of Cambria, Town of Lockport, City of Lockport, Town of Pendleton

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- School consolidation may be a way to increase efficiency is a major issue.
- Teacher salaries should be uniform; there should be a level playing field among districts.
- There should be other funding sources than taxes.

Key assets and opportunities that should be considered by the County include:

- There are more than enough school buildings in this part of the County.
- Link education and job training programs to tourism, Erie Canal, and wine trails.
- Educational programs, especially at the Community College level, can be tied to the County's marketing/business development (e.g., if you want to attract employers in a specialized industry, take time to discuss how NCCC can help develop a workforce in that industry).

Lakefront Communities Subregion

Town of Somerset, Village of Barker, Town of Newfane, Town of Wilson, Village of Wilson

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- The school districts' issues are similar to those of a private business: there is a need to innovate and to balance revenues and expenditures, etc.
- High fuel costs are a major issue, because of the dispersed nature of the population in this area.
- School districts need more diverse sources of revenue.
- Schools and job training programs need to stay ahead of workforce needs and keep up with changes in technology (e.g., agricultural industry trends).

Key assets and opportunities that should be considered by the County include:

- The quality of the education is good and/or improving: Nearly all districts in Niagara County have earned improved scores in math and science.
- Consolidation of administrative/business functions may be possible for some districts.

- Schools are community centers of activity.
- School facilities promote and provide quality-of-life activities – they are safe and clean.
- Each student can get personalized attention in a rural school district.

Lower River Communities Subregion

Town of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Village of Lewiston, Village of Youngstown

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- There seems to be a “disconnect” between career guidance and local economic development programs.
- Tax levies and budget approval are major political issues every year.
- Schools need up-to-date technology and infrastructure (hardware, software, etc.).
- Need coordinated business partnerships with academia.
- School facilities need to be maintained.
- Schools need to be community centers for sports and athletic activities.
- Boards of Education should be policy makers and understand that they impact enrollment and the degree to which people want to move into their school districts.

Key assets and opportunities that should be considered by the County include:

- There are two institutions of higher education in the community, offering a variety of programs and degrees.
- Good schools and higher education “fuel” the intellectual desires of the community and can make an area more attractive as a place to live.
- There is good support within the County for the providers of educational services: The BOCES system facilitates individual districts in equipment purchasing and staff development, and Niagara University offers teacher training.
- Schools are major employers in the County.
- Educational institutions give back to their communities (service learning, volunteerism, etc.).
- The Nioga Library System (shared by Niagara, Orleans and Genesee Counties) provides dispersed opportunities for learning and enrichment.
- School test scores are reasonably good and consistent.
- The area has an abundance of professional educators (good workforce to draw from)

Upper River Communities Subregion

City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Town of Wheatfield,
City of North Tonawanda

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- This part of the County is home to an economically disadvantaged student population and enrollment has been dropping. Over the last two years, the district has lost 2,000 students and compressed its facilities.
- School district buildings are being closed/re-used/sold for other uses in Niagara Falls.
- Improve the economic base to retain current generation of students.
- Student population has many needs and requires guidance; guidance counselors are available for students starting at kindergarten level.

Key assets and opportunities that should be considered by the County include:

- Infrastructure and buildings are very well maintained as a result of State funding: The Niagara Falls City School District has not raised its tax levy in several years. State funding has allowed the budget to remain steady in the \$20 to \$25 million range, despite falling population and enrollment.
- The residency rule for teachers in the Niagara Falls City School District maintains a pool of well-paid professionals looking for upscale City housing.
- School facilities contribute to quality of life in the City: School libraries are open to the community; buildings are open for adult education, etc.
- BOCES classes are a major asset: they provide education oriented around job opportunities.
- The Niagara Falls City School District's "Pride Program" provides after-hours (3-5 pm) classes focused on earning a GED.

Strategies

It is clear from discussions during the comprehensive planning process that many stakeholders, including local residents as well as educators and related service providers acknowledge that there are some significant issues related to the provision of educational services in Niagara County. Many, but not all, issues center around commonly expressed themes including:

- The continually increasing school taxes on property owners at a time of decreasing population in the County;
- The need to identify additional funding sources for education;
- The perception, and perhaps a reality, that there are redundancies and inefficiencies in service within and among school districts;
- Concerns over the escalating cost of fuel, especially in transporting students to and from dispersed rural locations;
- The possible time lag between the needs of employers for particular skill sets in the workforce and job training programs to meet those needs; and
- The need for improved educational facilities, resources and infrastructure, such as high-tech computer software and hardware.

These issues are complex and will not be resolved quickly or easily by any single action on the County's part or by other stakeholders. It is important to remember that this Comprehensive Plan is intended to prompt discussion on these issues, and possible ways to resolve them, among multiple school districts, educators, and residents. It is critical that these stakeholders create and sustain an ongoing dialogue, perhaps through a joint action committee involving all school districts and educators in the County including administrators, teachers, transportation officials, institutions of higher learning such as NCCC, and student representatives.

A countywide dialogue needs to focus on cost reduction initiatives by identifying where efficiencies and cost cutting measures can be established without adversely affecting the quality of services from a district and countywide perspectives. For example, such a committee would be well suited to look at possible partnerships among school districts and between the public school systems and the private sector. This committee could investigate the feasibility of inter-district sharing of staff, resources, training programs, equipment, transportation services, etc.

It is also important to consider that land use and development decisions can have significant effects on the need for public services and infrastructure, including educational facilities and related services. Sprawling development patterns that result in dispersed populations particularly in rural areas tend to translate into higher transportation costs on districts and consequently a need to site school facilities in multiple locations according to residential development patterns.

The land use and development principles recommended throughout this Plan provide opportunities to manage costs to taxpayers and school districts by encouraging redevelopment in areas where school facilities already exist. Managed growth and concentrated forms of development can control the cost of providing services and related infrastructure at dispersed locations and result in smaller taxpayer burdens by directing resident and student populations back to the traditional urban and developed centers of the County.

Goals, Objectives & Recommendations

Goal – The Countywide Availability of High Quality Education

To make available to all County residents the highest quality educational services, facilities, experiences and attainment opportunities possible.

Objective

- Identify deficiencies and inefficiencies in the educational system countywide by involving all school districts in dialogue, focusing on the need to provide cost-effective services, appropriate job training programs, additional library facilities, technical resource needs, before- and after-school programs, and sports, music and art programs.

Recommendations

- ☐ Establish an ongoing coordinating committee of school district administrators, private industry representatives, parents, teachers and students to serve as a clearinghouse for issues, opportunities and ideas that can continuously monitor how well the education system is serving the community from a unified, countywide perspective involving all school districts.
- ☐ Identify alternative funding sources and opportunities for coordination and sharing of services and facilities among school districts to help offset some costs, including securing public or private sector foundation grants or corporate sponsors, as possible additional funding mechanisms for improving educational opportunities, facilities and resources in the County.

Goal – Meet Existing and Future Workforce Needs

To utilize a comprehensive and coordinated Education & Training Program to meet the existing and future workforce needs of local communities and area employers, based on existing countywide priorities such as agricultural preservation, tourism and high technology businesses.





Objective

- Coordinate districtwide and inter-district educational policies and programs in schools to train and provide for local employment opportunities specific to the County's urban, suburban and rural businesses and industry needs.

Recommendations

- ☐ Continue to develop, provide and enhance job training programs offering long-term skilled employment and career opportunities which can provide on-the-job training possibilities, particularly in agriculture and agri-tourism based sectors of the economy.
- ☐ Support job shadowing programs countywide in partnership with local governments, school districts, and businesses, as well as NCCC and BOCES.
- ☐ Coordinate County and local economic development efforts with the countywide educational system and local school districts, including enhanced programs offered through Niagara County Community College and Niagara University.
- ☐ Coordinate the County's economic development programs, outreach and marketing to prospective employers with input and assistance from local educators, including capitalizing on staff knowledge, resources, expertise and experience of NCCC and Niagara University in County efforts to attract and retain businesses and industry.

Goal – Fully Utilize Existing Educational Resources

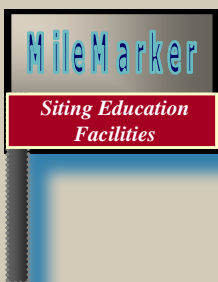
To utilize the existing educational resources provided in the County to their fullest potential.

Objective

- Encourage new private and public sector development and redevelopment opportunities through County and local initiatives in areas where a surplus or anticipated surplus of school buildings and other education-related facilities exist, including buildings, libraries and athletic facilities, consistent with an emphasis on upgrading existing facilities and infrastructure over construction of new facilities, unless otherwise warranted.

Recommendations

- ☐ In areas of potentially expanding student enrollment, the County and local school districts in coordination with local communities must consider the goals and objectives contained throughout this Comprehensive Plan and in local plans in all siting decisions for new school/educational facilities and satellite locations for facilities related to higher education.
- ☐ Support school districts' efforts to find suitable adaptive reuses for surplus facilities and coordinate marketing the availability of sites and facilities through County Economic Development.
- ☐ In cooperation with cities, towns and villages, and as part of an overall assessment of parks and recreation needs in the County (see Chapter VII), develop



joint-use agreements with public school districts for the use of their grounds as possible “after hours” recreation areas and community centers.

- ☐ Encourage, support and facilitate increased coordination among schools and school districts to share staff, resources, equipment and facilities as appropriate, including efforts to pursue and secure funding for shared services.

Goal – Retain Youth in the County

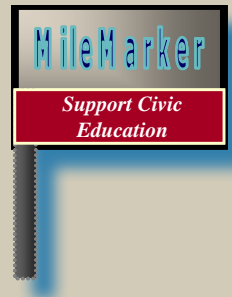
To encourage educational programs, job and career growth opportunities and related quality-of-life efforts like affordable housing to prevent the outmigration of the County’s youth.

Objectives

- Support local and countywide efforts and marketing campaigns to project a positive image of the County and promote local communities as places that provide diverse lifestyles, employment opportunities, job training and career opportunities.
- Develop programs and opportunities for middle school and high school students to become more interested and better educated about the history and unique character of local communities by participating in local government, attending meetings, participating in civic activities and through volunteer organizations.

Recommendations

- ☐ Create internships and job-shadowing programs within various County departments for students at the high school and college level to provide job-training experience and career guidance.
- ☐ Support a greater emphasis on civics in school curricula including local community and County history as well as opportunities for participating in the day-to-day operations of local governments to foster an increased awareness in students about issues that affect quality of life in Niagara County.
- ☐ Work with the Youth Bureau to develop a mock County Legislature for high school-aged students as a means of engaging students, encouraging their participation in local decision making and giving them a larger stake in the future of their communities.
- ☐ Encourage and include school age children to participate in community planning exercises and initiatives by holding youth summits that focus on future needs and issues of young adults in communities, including seeking input on upgrades to facilities for athletics and recreation programming.
- ☐ When developing educational materials for County departments and services, consider child-friendly versions for distribution at elementary and middle schools.



Funding Opportunities

Projects and needs identified in this chapter and elsewhere within this Comprehensive Plan, as well as projects that may be identified in other plans and reports, including the annual Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, require funding assistance to be implemented due to the fiscal constraints, such as budget limitations, of Niagara County and its communities. A variety of funding opportunities exist at local, regional, State and Federal levels of government as well as potential sources of assistance from the private sector. Often the amount of funding needed to implement a project, however may be in excess of what may be available from one source so combinations of funding sources may be needed to finance a project. Funding mechanisms may include earmarks/appropriations/member items, bonding, direct grants, competitive grants, general fund items, foundation monies, corporate assistance and so forth.

Funding opportunities change as economic conditions change, particularly at State and Federal levels. Currently the nation is experiencing a deep economic downturn. Increased funding opportunities exist at this time through the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This Federal Stimulus Bill is intended to stimulate the economy and employment by providing funding to undertake projects at local levels. In many cases the Federal Stimulus Bill appropriates funding above typical annual Federal spending levels, such as what may be authorized through the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009. Funding will be distributed through existing Federal programs and through new programs or may be passed through existing State programs.

The information provided below identifies Federal Stimulus funding opportunities and projects that have been identified to date at the time of preparing this document. The projects identified below are listed because they relate directly to this chapter and this particular focus area of the Comprehensive Plan. These projects are considered crucial to the health and well being of the communities in Niagara County and for improving the functioning of County government in providing services to the residents and businesses of Niagara County.

The following list of projects may be revised as projects are undertaken and new projects are identified and as local, State and Federal conditions change. Therefore this list of projects should not be considered to be inclusive of all potential projects that may be in need of funding assistance. Also, combined funding assistance for some of these projects may be available from other Federal, State, regional, local and private sector sources.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes funding provisions in Education and Training that include, but not limited to:

- \$53.6 billion for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund
- \$13 billion for Title I
- \$12.2 billion for Special Education/IDEA
- \$15.6 billion to increase the maximum Pell Grant by \$500
- \$3.95 billion for job training
- \$1 billion for NASA
- \$3 billion for the National Science Foundation
- \$2 billion for Science at the Department of Energy
- \$830 million for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association

Niagara County Projects include:

Niagara County Community College:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Replace Outdated Electrical Switching Gear	\$ 500,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reforest Northeast Part of Campus/Replace Screening Trees	\$ 150,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Construct Access Road for Service Areas & New Athletic Fields	\$ 1,200,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Construct Multi-Use Trail System Throughout Campus	\$ 1,018,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Repair and Reconstruct Existing Roads and Parking Lots	\$ 2,063,200
<input type="checkbox"/>	Correct Health, Safety, and ADA Deficiencies on Campus	\$ 1,615,400
<input type="checkbox"/>	Remediate Drainage Problems on Site	\$ 315,400
<input type="checkbox"/>	Construct Vehicle Maintenance and Equipment Building/	\$ 2,436,200
Improve Operations and Maintenance Areas		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Relocate & Renovate Athletic Fields/Construct Support Building	\$ 3,000,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Construct New Culinary Institute Facility in Niagara Falls	\$ 13,200,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Replace Floors and Doors in Common Areas	\$ 1,729,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Improve Energy Efficiency by Installing New Environmental	\$ 1,358,400
Controls and Replacing Outdated Equipment		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Renew and Improve Safety of Grounds, Fields, and Playgrounds	\$ 618,200
<input type="checkbox"/>	Replace Elevated Courtyard Membranes and Exterior Seals/	\$ 1,560,700
Repair and Repoint Brick		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Update Science Center and Improve Facility Safety	\$ 1,366,800
<input type="checkbox"/>	Repair Metal Mansard Roofs	\$ 339,300
<input type="checkbox"/>	Upgrade Classrooms/Lecture Halls to Educational Standards	\$ 5,835,300
<input type="checkbox"/>	Construct New Learning Commons Facility/Renovate Existing	\$ 20,000,000
Facility Expansion and Renovation		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Renovate Pool and Retrofit Squash Court	\$ 1,134,000
Education Technology		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Upgrade Scientific and Information Technology in Classrooms	\$ 1,329,000

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Chapter IX

Public Health & Safety

Background and Trends

The general trend towards increasingly complex and technologically dependent lives, the aging of the “baby boom” generation, a general decline of healthy lifestyles of large segments of the population in the United States, concerns over natural disasters, terrorism, food contamination, transportation-related accidents involving hazardous materials, and other potential emergency situations increases the importance of the role that County and local governments play in protecting public health and safety. Some of Niagara County’s population that is disadvantaged or has special needs, including many seniors and the disabled, are among the most vulnerable of society and rely on government for their protection and safety, particularly in emergency situations. However, all residents of Niagara County need to be assured that their health and safety are a priority and so communicating new and ongoing initiatives that are undertaken to protect the public’s health and safety is more important than ever.

It is estimated that by the year 2030, approximately one-fifth of the population in the U.S. will be 65 years of age or older. Upstate New York is expected to experience a 40 percent increase in its population of those who are 65 years old and older during the same timeframe, more than double the rate of increase for the same demographic segment during the period between 1980 and 2005 (Deitz and Garcia 2007). As the population continues to age it is important that policies and procedures are in place to anticipate future needs not only in the event of an emergency, but in meeting daily needs as well such as health care, affordable housing and access to transportation.

Estimates like those noted above are important considerations when planning for the future at any level of government, but they are especially important at county and local levels because these numbers translate into potentially large segments of the population that may need special attention and quick response in the event of a local emergency. The problem of response is further complicated during widespread emergencies, for example during severe storms and power outages, when potentially dispersed and vulnerable populations need to be reached efficiently and effectively.

Residents of Niagara County need to be assured that their health and safety is a priority and so communicating new and ongoing initiatives that are undertaken to protect the public’s health and safety is more important than ever.

Nationwide the number of volunteer firefighters decreased by 8%, or approximately 74,000 between 1984 and 2006. The number of EMT's declined by more than 15,000.

The Firemen's Association of New York estimates that it would cost local taxpayers more than \$5 billion annually to replace volunteers with paid fire and ambulance services.

Response to emergencies is complicated by the fact that fewer individuals are volunteering their time and skills as emergency responders due to a variety of reasons including time commitments required and other individual and family needs that must be met. It is estimated that Nationwide the number of volunteers fell by 8 percent, or approximately 74,000 between 1984 and 2006. In New York State volunteer firefighters declined from 140,000 in the early 1990's to fewer than 90,000 at the present time (New York Legislative Commission on Rural Resources 2008).

The number of Emergency Response Technicians declined by more than 15,000 volunteers to a current total of about 35,000. The Firemen's Association of New York estimates that it would cost local taxpayers more than \$5 billion annually to replace volunteers with paid fire and ambulance services (New York Legislative Commission on Rural Resources 2008).

Many issues related to an aging population and those with special needs in social services, public health, health care, child care and related services, are addressed in Chapter VII under County Services. This chapter focuses on the role of Niagara County and local governments in providing emergency preparedness, police protection, fire coordination, emergency response, and homeland security.

Niagara County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

One of the primary roles of County government is preparing for emergency situations and each year emergency responders across Niagara County review procedures outlined in the Niagara County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMP is prepared by County officials working in collaboration with Federal, State and local agencies and emergency responders under the coordination of the New York State Emergency Management Office, as part of a statewide emergency management program.

The purpose of the CEMP is to minimize or prevent the impacts of disasters, and to enhance the efficiency of response and recovery operations in Niagara County. Niagara County Emergency Services is responsible for maintaining and updating the CEMP with input from the Niagara County Local Emergency Planning Committee, County Manager, County Attorney, County government officials, New York State Disaster Preparedness Commission, other appropriate department heads, and the citizenry of Niagara County. Niagara County and its cities, towns, and villages are part of this multi-jurisdictional planning process.

Niagara County Emergency Services is the coordinating office for all emergency management activities. According to the CEMP, Emergency Services is "responsible for assisting individual towns and villages within Niagara County if they have fully committed their resources and are still unable to cope with any disaster." When local departments or agencies are unable to adequately respond, Emergency Services may be asked to assume a leadership role. The CEMP is intended to enhance Niagara County's ability to manage emergency situations if a local municipality is unable to handle an emergency.

The CEMP consists of three components:

1. Disaster Prevention and Mitigation. This component involves identifying and prioritizing likely hazards as well as response resources at risk and the appropriate measures to take to prevent or mitigate the effects of disasters;
2. Disaster Response. Effective response requires stipulating effective processes and policies for responding to potential disasters through the utilization and coordination of all of the County's response capabilities; and

3. Disaster Recovery. Recovery requires providing processes and policies for recovery and redevelopment after disasters, including the utilization of State and Federal programs for emergency recovery.

The CEMP defines roles and responsibilities in prevention, response, and recovery, including a detailed chain of command to be followed during an emergency. Emergency management responsibilities for County departments and agencies are outlined in the plan and assignments have been made within the framework of current department and agency capabilities and existing organizational responsibilities. Together, local government agencies and County departments work together to prevent, respond, and facilitate the recovery process for significant disasters.

The CEMP is an all-hazards management plan. Briefly summarized, the CEMP provides the following:

- Identifies, assesses, and prioritizes local vulnerabilities to emergencies or disasters and the resources necessary to prevent, mitigate, respond and recover from them
- Outlines measures to improve the County's ability to manage hazards
- Provides that County government will take appropriate actions to prevent, mitigate, respond and recover from disasters
- Provides for the efficient use of all available resources
- Provides for the use and coordination of County, State, and Federal programs to assist disaster victims and prioritize responses to the needs of the elderly, disabled, low income and other groups that may be affected, and
- Provides for coordination of State and Federal programs for recovery from a disaster

Niagara County Local Emergency Planning Committee

In 1996, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed regulations requiring facilities that use, make, or store more than certain amounts of regulated chemicals to make information available about their risk management activities to local emergency responders, Federal and State officials, and the public. The Niagara County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) was formed in response to those regulations. The LEPC is made up of member groups representing communities, government, and industry. The LEPC monitor activities of companies that store, use or transport hazardous chemicals.

LEPC members work to promote the health, safety, and economic well being of local community residents and company employees under risk management procedures. Risk management is intended to prevent chemical releases, improve company plant safety, and protect the public by collecting information to encourage community discussions in four key areas:

- The potential effects of chemical releases,
- A five-year history of the facility's accidental chemical releases,
- The facility's program for preventing accidents, and
- The facility's program for responding in an emergency.

LEPC members serve on technical and communications committees. The technical committee assists companies in gathering hazard, prevention, and emergency response information. The communications committee develops ways to effectively communicate risk management information to employees and local citizens.

The CEMP defines roles and responsibilities in prevention, response, and recovery, including a detailed chain of command to be followed during an emergency.

Risk management covers all aspects of a facility from its design and construction through start-up and operation, as well as maintenance and training procedures. It is an ongoing process requiring continuous monitoring and testing of equipment, management systems, and training personnel to ensure the safety of employees and community members as well as protecting the environment.

Risk management provides for the following:

- Eliminate or reduce hazards
- Prevent occurrences of incidents
- Minimize or contain impact of incidents
- Prepare the public and employees for possible incidents
- Respond promptly and professionally to emergencies, and
- Serve as a resource to other emergency agencies

Safety procedures that may be implemented include the following:

- Specially designed vehicles and rail cars for transport and storage of bulk chemicals
- Site lighting to provide for employee safety during operation and maintenance
- Messages over loud speakers describing plant activities
- Bells or sirens signaling an incident or drill, and
- Emergency response agencies operating at a plant for the purpose of familiarization or for training exercises

A number of Federal, State and local agencies require risk management activities. In particular, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires companies to maintain safety programs that review processes, equipment, training, and plant procedures on a regular basis.

Some of the issues and concerns raised by the public and industry in the past with regards to these types of emergencies include:

- Trucks transporting products through residential streets
- Noise abatement
- Notification methods of the community during an incident
- Effects of weather (e.g., high winds, tornadoes, snow storms) on plant operations
- Potential incidents involving trucks, rail cars, or pipelines
- Nuisance odors
- Emergency response training and preparation
- Plant inspection, testing, and maintenance
- Plant design safety
- Plant operations safety
- Accident prevention/risk reduction
- Community dialogue, and
- A Community Alert Network

County Fire Service

Niagara County communities are well covered to provide quick response to emergencies. The County includes 31 fire districts. Fire districts are political subdivisions established to provide fire protection and emergency response. A fire district has an elected governing body, administrative officers and limits on expenditures, and has the powers to incur indebtedness and require the levy of taxes which are collected at the same time as other municipal taxes.

The County is divided into four Mutual Aid areas. County Fire Services provides emergency response and coordination, training and instruction in fire and emergency response, as well as public informational materials to adults and children on fire-safety and emergency services.

County fire personnel include the following key positions that are responsible for emergency response, mutual aid coordination, communications, investigations, hazardous materials coordination, and training.

- Fire Coordinator and Director of Emergency Services
- Assistant Director of Emergency Services
- Mutual Aid Deputies (each of the four Mutual Aid areas of the County)
- Communications Deputy
- EMS Deputy
- Fire Investigations Deputy
- HazMat Deputy Coordinator

Office of the Sheriff

The Niagara County Office of the Sheriff provides a variety of public safety and security services to residents of Niagara County through its primary divisions and support units. Corrections, the largest division is responsible for operation of the County Jail. This division is also responsible for the inmate work program, inmate education program, corrections emergency response, jail medical services and facility maintenance.

The Civil Division includes a variety of services including road patrols, crime scene investigations, 911 communication and computer operations, criminal investigations, juvenile investigations, Western NY Joint Terrorism Task Force, Drug Task Force, forensics lab, property evidence, law enforcement academy and County Court/building security.

Special units and teams within the Sheriff's Office include: Marine Unit, Underwater Recovery Team, Aviation Unit, Emergency Response Teams and Firearms Training, Traffic Safety and Stop DWI, Domestic Violence, K-9 Unit, Warrants, Drug Awareness and Resistance (DARE), Victim's Assistance, and Welfare Fraud.

Additional information on County Emergency Services, County Fire Coordination, the County Sheriff's Office, and the LEPC is available at www.niagaracounty.com. Additional information is also provided in Chapter VII County Services.

Issues and Opportunities

During the planning process, community representatives and other project stakeholders involved in emergency preparedness and response were asked to provide insight into local issues and concerns relative to public health and safety. Individuals were asked to identify what they consider some of the most important public health and safety assets and opportunities that exist in Niagara County. This information is summarized according to the five planning subregions of the County.

Eastern Communities Subregion

Town of Hartland, Town of Royalton & Village of Middleport

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- A need for more speed zones and a caution light at NYS Route 104 & Checker Tavern Road
- Slow emergency response times by police – little or no Niagara County Sheriff or NYS Police presence in the area
- Need for a health and wellness center
- Perceived health issues and a lack of education - related to FMC
- Concern over a possible lack of mobility or access to routes in emergency situations in Hartland, Middleport, Gasport
- Need for local disaster plan and training in Royalton, especially with regard to increased train traffic in the area and FMC

Key assets and opportunities of the communities in this subregion include:

- Local police force presence
- Safe communities with low crime
- Present number of fire companies (5 in Royalton) – all working well together
- Local ambulance services

Central Communities Subregion

Town of Cambria, Town of Lockport, City of Lockport, Town of Pendleton

Only two representatives from these communities were present at this meeting, so these individuals merged with other subregions.

Lakefront Communities Subregion

Town of Somerset, Village of Barker, Town of Newfane, Town of Wilson, Village of Wilson

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- Police – lack of quality coverage in the area
- Fire – increasing demands on the volunteer fire service/ambulance services/ EMT status – regulatory actions are a constant threat and concern to volunteers. Training and regulation standards are a demand on the time of volunteers. We couldn't afford a paid service.
- Health care network – ICMH serves areas very well along w/volunteer ambulance service – they know when to refer people elsewhere
- Demand on ambulance vs. fire trucks, but readiness of both – too much concentration on fire trucks in relation to their degree of use.
- Border security concerns – telephone reporting system (is an honor system) doesn't work
- Border security/Water rescue – means an additional strain on local volunteer fire companies – need to be ready for water rescue/increases boat maintenance costs
- Border is porous and means there are many “targets”
- Appear to be no viable major routes for access/emergency evacuations

Key assets and opportunities of the communities in this subregion include:

- Border – Border Patrols mean a little extra police force is available in the area
- Coast Guard & County Sheriff's Water Patrol provides an extra layer of policing

on the water

- Volunteer fire companies provide more interaction with the public than in cities with paid fire companies
- Disaster preparation seems pretty good
- Area has strong volunteer fire forces

Lower River Communities Subregion

Town of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Village of Lewiston, Village of Youngstown

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- Concern with long response times from the Sheriff's Department
- Concerns w/ LOOW site, Chemical Waste Management and Modern Disposal in the community
- Sewer plant is reaching capacity

Key assets and opportunities of the communities in this subregion include:

- Sheriff's Patrol Boat is on the water frequently along with the Coast Guard
- Presence of Border Patrol, helicopters, State Troopers and local police
- Volunteer fire companies provide fire protection and ambulance services
- "We leave our doors unlocked."
- Abundance of EMS & health care facilities (St. Mary's Hospital, Our Lady of Peace, Fairchild Nursing Home, etc.)
- Community police force
- Very active volunteer fire depts. – mutual aid is often utilized during the day

Upper River Communities Subregion

City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Town of Wheatfield, City of North Tonawanda

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- Safety of tourists
- Traffic circulation – under and over-utilized roads – plenty of roads in some areas and not enough in others
- Niagara Falls – experiences a continual stream of tourists and a large percentage of underprivileged residents who need services
- As communities change, the County seems slow to change w/public health and safety services
- Overabundance of infrastructure in Niagara Falls no longer needed or used
- Proliferation of services: multiple fire departments, school districts – requires a "need-based" analysis
- County as a whole: not producing students w/an appreciation of other people and property
- "Brain drain" issue - youth leaving the area
- Outmigration of population
- Poverty related issues
- Multiple school districts
- Population down, infrastructure in abundance, costs increasing
- Border crossing relationships
- Business, quality of life needs in general
- Multiple fire and ambulance districts
- Social services – large part of County budgets
- Abundance of older adults requiring services

- Noise pollution, abundance of dogs – stress levels are high
- Heart disease and obesity higher in the County than downstate
- Concern about increasing waste imports to the County
- Politicians tend to “politick” rather than legislate

Key assets and opportunities of the communities in this subregion include:

- Military presence in the area – serves as a secondary public safety support in emergencies
- Need to encourage development for military to be maintained and supported in the area
- Array of medical facilities
- Military airbase – in a central location (provides supplemental fire fighting services, if needed)
- Local fire departments – have specialized training
- Fresh water is an important asset
- Sewage treatment is effective
- EMTs, Fire, Police – respond quickly in Niagara Falls

Strategies

An important part of County efforts to prevent or reduce the impacts of future emergency situations is to anticipate and recommend, through the CEMP, LEPC and other forums, supplemental recovery information relative to economic development, community development, land use, and transportation systems. These recommendations may address recovery measures from natural or man-made disasters relative to replacement priorities of public facilities and infrastructure, as well as to providing for private sector redevelopment and reinvestment.

Risk reduction is an important responsibility of Niagara County in protecting its citizens, property owners, businesses and taxpayers from the physical and financial impacts of emergencies and disasters. The County CEMP states that Niagara County may effectuate risk reduction in two ways:

1. Identifying, developing and implementing policies, programs and projects for County-owned resources and assets under its direct control, and
2. Advising and supporting local jurisdictions as necessary in reducing local risks, as authorized under NYS General Municipal Law, or as requested by local jurisdictions or private entities.

Furthermore the CEMP states that risk reduction activities include:

- Complying with local land use regulations when siting new County facilities;
- Adhering to State and Federal regulations (i.e., building and safety codes, floodplain and wetland regulations) when constructing new County facilities; and
- Advising and assisting local jurisdictions in the County with preparation of comprehensive plans, local waterfront revitalization plans, and subdivision zoning ordinances.

Land use management policies are key to preventing or mitigating the adverse effects of natural and man-made emergencies. The CEMP cites several examples, including:

- Adopting a land use management policies to promote the control of private development in floodplains at local levels of government, and to assure that County construction activities comply with State floodplain regulations;
- Encouraging lending institutions to withhold funding of projects in areas prone to disasters
- Promoting underground utility lines in new subdivisions to prevent power outages due to destruction of overhead lines during storms;
- Promoting the development of building regulations at local levels of government
- Developing compliance and code enforcement programs, including designation of officials to implement policies focused on risk reduction

Consistent with its role and the land use and environmental focus of this Comprehensive Plan, County government has the ability to take a proactive approach to facilitate and assist municipalities in preparing for and preventing or mitigating emergency situations, perhaps as multi-jurisdictional or subregional plans for response, recovery and redevelopment. Funding for such localized planning initiatives may be available from Federal and State programs, such as Quality Communities and/or Shared Municipal Services.

In 2003 a self assessment of the County's readiness to respond to emergencies was undertaken as part of the process to prepare the CEMP and identify future needs relative to emergency preparedness. That assessment of strengths and weaknesses identifies four readiness capabilities that were rated at less than 55 percent of full capability. Weaknesses included:

- Public Education & Information
- Exercises, Evaluations & Corrective Actions
- Direction, Control & Coordination
- Planning

During the comprehensive planning process, the issue of information dissemination prior to and during emergencies was identified by stakeholders in discussions about concerns over what needed to be done at local levels that might, for example, require implementation of evacuation routes. Although the County has made great strides in emergency preparedness in recent years, additional collaboration and information sharing with local officials and the public may be warranted, perhaps through local public information sessions, community meetings, and via County and local websites.

With regard to public health, safety and emergency preparedness, Niagara County needs to enhance communication and collaboration with local municipalities and other jurisdictional agencies involved in public health and safety in educating citizens, assisting in developing detailed local emergency plans, planning for disaster prevention through local land use policies, and establishing policies that facilitate recovery and redevelopment.

Improvements in information sharing between the County and other jurisdictional agencies, for example among the Sheriff's Office, local and State Police agencies, will



**Enhance
Information
Sharing**

also foster greater coordination among those agencies. Although this coordination now exists in data management for example, an expanded use of Countywide GIS mapping and databases could be produced from information collected by all police agencies to map and visually track concentrations of various types of crime throughout the County. This could enhance law enforcement capabilities and pinpoint potential problem areas that might require increased police presence or perhaps highlight where response times need to be improved. These same mapping and information sharing capabilities could be used to map and share information on flood prone areas, evacuation routes in the event of a rail accident, identifying high priority evacuation sites, and similar information that can be quickly accessed during an emergency.

Goals, Objectives & Recommendations

Goal – Educate the Public on Emergency Preparedness

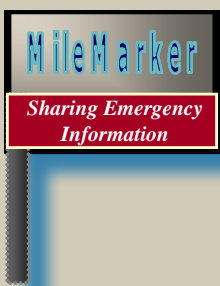
To increase public education opportunities and communication among communities to expand public awareness of Countywide and local efforts in preparing for potential emergencies and large-scale disasters.

Objectives

- Increase the flow of information from the County level to and among local governments and communities about disaster preparedness issues, plans and strategies.
- Integrate local emergency preparedness information into County and local plans, such as identifying local evacuation routes and alternative routes in response to local emergencies. For example, concern has been expressed about what would need to be done in the event of a train derailment in which streets might be blocked or inaccessible. Although these procedures may be in place, information should be made readily accessible to the public as part of the preparation and updating of local community comprehensive plans and Countywide emergency planning initiatives and decision-making.

Recommendations

- ☐ Update emergency preparedness information on the County's website, including actions to be taken in the event of an emergency, maps and information on emergency responders, maps of potential evacuation and alternative transportation routes, and links to local emergency plans as they are developed.
- ☐ Allow for increased stakeholder and public input on the preparation of local and regional emergency plans, and increase the dissemination of information through County and local websites and public educational materials.
- ☐ Include emergency service providers and responders as key stakeholders in the decision-making processes that involve or may affect their ability to fully execute their responsibilities to protect the health and safety of the public. For example, during the project planning and decision-making process for construction or reconstruction of County infrastructure and/or public facilities, include emergency responders in the process, especially during the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) process. The same consideration should be afforded for project reviews of private sector actions.



Goal – Create Safe, Healthy and Walkable Communities

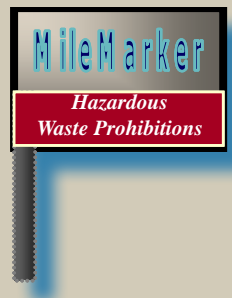
To facilitate and encourage the creation and maintenance of safe and healthy communities and recognize health and safety as perhaps one of the most important, but often overlooked aspects to enjoying a high quality of life that stimulates local economic benefits and maintains community vibrance and character.

Objectives

- Encourage the establishment of countywide land use and environmental policies and project review procedures, specifically through the SEQRA process, that prioritize natural resource protection and sustainable management practices including, but not limited to land, air and water quality.
- Work with local communities in encouraging more “eyes on the street” types of community planning initiatives and site design requirements for safety enhancement and as potential crime prevention techniques.
- Create opportunities for increased walkability and physical exercise, social interaction, and reduced reliance on automotive forms of transportation by establishing opportunities for safe, connected networks of non-motorized trails, pedestrian pathways, bikeways and public space destinations.

Recommendations

- Encourage countywide implementation of local land use and environmental policies that protect and conserve natural resources including, but not limited to air quality, water quality, significant wildlife and aquatic habitats, woodlands and unique natural features. Priorities need to be established at County and local levels to enhance protection, conservation and restoration of natural buffer areas and contiguous greenways and blueways along stream corridors, wetlands, and other significant drainageways.
- The County and communities working in collaboration should establish clear policies and project review procedures and criteria with the intent of placing restrictions and/or prohibitions on the development and/or expansion of specific types of land uses that may have significant adverse health, safety and environmental implications.
- Given past and ongoing environmental problems faced by Niagara County and its communities resulting from the operations of former and existing industrial hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities, as defined in New York Environmental Conservation Law Section 27-1101(5), and consistent with an equitable distribution of such facilities throughout New York State, Niagara County should continue to work with local communities as well as State and Federal agencies to establish prohibitions to the future development and/or expansion of any industrial hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facility within the County consistent with the policies established by the Niagara County Legislature via numerous resolutions passed in recent decades. Niagara County should also work with these and other stakeholders to ascertain liability for existing negative environmental impacts resulting from past and ongoing industrial hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities, including but limited to adverse impacts on natural resources, public health, property



values, public perception and quality of life. Niagara County should also continue to work with these stakeholders to ensure that sites contaminated with hazardous industrial waste are remediated for future use, or at a minimum, stabilized to prevent further adverse environmental impact.

□ The County should support and assist with implementation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and similar techniques which have shown to be an effective planning technique in creating safer neighborhoods and communities. CPTED initiatives can take many different forms of community action based on local needs and opportunities, ranging from detailed consideration of safety and security issues during site plan and project review processes; incorporation of traffic-calming measures; building and site security; landscaping techniques that create more visible public spaces; and increased policing to reduce opportunities for illegal activities.

□ Encourage the addition of sidewalks, pedestrian trails and similar neighborhood amenities in new residential and commercial developments that link to existing or planned pedestrian networks.

Goal – Encourage Volunteerism and Shared Services

To foster an atmosphere of greater commitment to community throughout the County by encouraging volunteers to participate in local emergency planning and response, public health and safety programs, and initiatives to investigate opportunities for shared services.

Objectives

- Stabilize and then increase the number of groups and individuals that participate in local volunteer efforts to protect public health and safety by increasing incentives for volunteering and removing some of the obstacles that hinder the volunteer spirit.
- Investigate opportunities for the consolidation and/or sharing of services among the various emergency service providers and districts within Niagara County.

Recommendations

□ County and local governments, institutions, organizations and groups need to work together to identify incentives to stabilize and then increase volunteerism. For example, as identified by the New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency & Competitiveness, new incentives need to facilitate the recruitment and retention of volunteers, such as appealing to the needs of young firefighters by perhaps providing tuition assistance to NCCC, providing for some form of college loan assistance or tuition reimbursement, or financial assistance with vocational training through BOCES and similar programs. Similar incentives have been passed by the NYS Legislature allowing local governments to implement property and income tax credits for active volunteer firefighters and ambulance corps members (New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency & Competitiveness. 2008.).

□ According to the New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources Rensselaer County, NY has established an emergency response program in which



Sheriff deputies in road patrols in rural locations are now certified by the State and cross trained as emergency response technicians. Niagara County should investigate the feasibility of instituting a similar program to enhance responsiveness in rural areas.

□ Niagara County should encourage through public education and the promotion of intermunicipal agreements that reduce costs through consolidation for the sharing of emergency services related functions that may include combined training, combined maintenance of equipment/facilities or joint dispatching of the nearest responders to emergency scenes. According to the NYS Department of State consolidation can take two forms. The first form is considered “operational” in which there is a sharing of services, equipment, apparatus and staffing through intermunicipal agreements. The second form is “jurisdictional” in which fire districts, for example combine operations into a new single district. As the numbers of volunteers continues to decline existing emergency providers should consider investigating the first or both forms to make more effective use of limited resources.

Funding Opportunities

Projects and needs identified in this chapter and elsewhere within this Comprehensive Plan, as well as projects that may be identified in other plans and reports, including the annual Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, require funding assistance to be implemented due to the fiscal constraints, such as budget limitations, of Niagara County and its communities. A variety of funding opportunities exist at local, regional, State and Federal levels of government as well as potential sources of assistance from the private sector. Often the amount of funding needed to implement a project, however may be in excess of what may be available from one source so combinations of funding sources may be needed to finance a project. Funding mechanisms may include earmarks/appropriations/member items, bonding, direct grants, competitive grants, general fund items, foundation monies, corporate assistance and so forth.

Funding opportunities change as economic conditions change, particularly at State and Federal levels. Currently the nation is experiencing a deep economic downturn. Increased funding opportunities exist at this time through the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This Federal Stimulus Bill is intended to stimulate the economy and employment by providing funding to undertake projects at local levels. In many cases the Federal Stimulus Bill appropriates funding above typical annual Federal spending levels, such as what may be authorized through the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009. Funding will be distributed through existing Federal programs and through new programs or may be passed through existing State programs.

The information provided below identifies Federal Stimulus funding opportunities and projects that have been identified to date at the time of preparing this document. The projects identified below are listed because they relate directly to this chapter and this particular focus area of the Comprehensive Plan. These projects are considered crucial to the health and well being of the communities in Niagara County and for improving the functioning of County government in providing services to the residents and businesses of Niagara County.

The following list of projects may be revised as projects are undertaken and new projects are identified and as local, State and Federal conditions change. Therefore this list of projects should not be considered to be inclusive of all potential projects that may be in need of funding assistance. Also, combined funding assistance for some of these projects may be available from other Federal, State, regional, local and private sector sources.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes funding provisions in Health that include, but not limited to:

- \$19 billion, including \$2 billion in discretionary funds and \$17 billion for investments and incentives through Medicare and Medicaid to ensure widespread adoption and use of interoperable health information technology (IT)
- \$1 billion for prevention and wellness programs
- \$10 billion to conduct biomedical research
- \$1.1 billion to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, NIH and the HHS Office of the Secretary

Niagara County Projects include:

Health Information Technology

Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Real Time Bed Management System	\$ 200,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Integrated Financial Accounting Software	\$ 140,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wireless Network on all Nursing Units with Medication Carts	\$ 505,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pharmacy System with Drug Interaction and Point of Care Medication Administration Checking	\$ 582,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enterprise-Wide Picture Archiving and Communication System	\$ 500,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Voice Recognition for Radiology	\$ 142,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Computerized Provider Order Entry w/ Nursing Documentation	\$ 3,800,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interactive Education Delivery System for Patients and Staff	\$ 210,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Preventative Care and Chronic Disease Management	\$ 200,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Laboratory Information System	\$ 735,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vitrea Enterprise-wide Advanced Visualization Software	\$ 207,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intesys Clinic Suite G2	\$ 102,000

Mount Saint Mary's Hospital:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Clinical Electronic Medical Record (EMR) - Hospital Facilities	\$ 6,500,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clinical Electronic Medical Record (EMR) for Doctors Offices	\$ 1,000,000

Prevention and Wellness Fund

Niagara County Office for the Aging

<input type="checkbox"/>	Chronic Disease Self-Management Program	\$ 50,000
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Niagara County Public Health

<input type="checkbox"/>	Childhood Lead Prevention Program	\$ 25,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asthma Education/Intervention Program	\$ 60,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Prevention Agenda	\$ 50,000

Mount Saint Mary's Hospital

<input type="checkbox"/>	School Health Literacy Program for Grades 3, 4, 5	\$ 20,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pre-Diabetes Education Program	\$ 20,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peri-Natal Mood Disorders Program	\$ 20,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hospital Employee Health Education Program	\$ 50,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Afternoon Reading All Stars Program for Underserved Children	\$ 10,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Summer Fitness and Nutrition Program - Underserved Children	\$ 5,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nutrition for Good Health Program for Impoverished Children	\$ 10,000

Healthcare Effectiveness Research

Niagara County Office for the Aging

<input type="checkbox"/>	Four Pillars of Care Model	\$ 50,000
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Community Health Centers

Mount Saint Mary's Hospital

<input type="checkbox"/>	Expanded Construction of Shovel-Ready 6,500 SF Community Health Clinic in Underserved Section of Niagara Falls	\$ 1,500,000
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Rural Community Facilities

Niagara County Emergency Services

<input type="checkbox"/>	Construction of Emergency Operations Center	\$ 1,250,000
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Nuclear Waste Cleanup

Niagara County Public Health

<input type="checkbox"/>	Niagara Falls Storage Site Risk Assessment Rep. Expert Review	\$ 25,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Project Continuance	\$ 50,000

References

Deitz, Richard and Ramon Garcia. 2007. *The Demand for Local Services and Infrastructure Created by an Aging Population*. Upstate New York Regional Review, Volume 2, Issue 1, 2007. Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Buffalo, NY.

New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency & Competitiveness. 2008. *21st Century Local Government*. Albany, NY.

New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources. 2008. *Rural Futures - News of Interest about Rural New York, September-October 2008*. Albany, NY.

United States Congress. 2009. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 - Federal Stimulus Congressional Press Summary. Washington, D.C.

Chapter X

Implementation Plan

Implementation and Action Items

This chapter provides recommendations and suggested action items for beginning the process of implementing key strategies, goals, and objectives discussed throughout this Comprehensive Plan, particularly those identified in chapters V through IX under each of the five focus topics. The recommendations that follow are not inclusive of all the recommendations suggested in earlier chapters. Rather the following actions relate to administrative actions in adopting and maintaining the Plan followed by several key actions considered high priority items that can be implemented over the next two to three year period following the Plan's adoption. Some actions may be subject to further review and compliance under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) prior to any action by the County or municipalities to undertake, fund or approve certain actions and/or projects.

Following each recommendation, potentially responsible entities are identified. These entities may include a range of government and non-governmental entities and elected and non-elected public officials at various levels of government particularly at County and local municipal levels. Responsible parties may include County departments, public agencies, and other stakeholders and/or potential project partners including citizen groups and not-for-profit organizations that are not specifically identified.

Recommendation under each focus topic are followed by possible funding opportunities and sources, primarily associated with New York State and Federal agencies. This information is provided as a starting point for further research on possible funding for projects. These agencies may not be the only source of funds and agencies under one topic may also provide funding opportunities under other project topics. Website information is also provided that includes the identification of some typical funding programs in each agency.

Funding information is always subject to change and providing all sources of project funds is not possible. The information provided is based on recent information

Some actions may be subject to further review and compliance under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) prior to any action by the County or municipalities to undertake, fund or approve certain actions and/or projects.

available from agencies and from information associated with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Projects identified for possible funding under this Act or through other funding mechanisms are identified in chapters V through IX. Information on the New York State Recovery website is also found at www.economicrecovery.ny.gov and information on the Federal program is available at www.recovery.gov.

Coordination and Collaboration

Several key factors are necessary for the successful implementation of the recommendations and projects identified in this Comprehensive Plan. These factors include the following.

1. Effective and ongoing dialogue to build consensus among all communities within the County for achieving the overall vision, goals and objectives of this Plan. Equally important is the need to link and integrate the visions, goals and objectives of each community into this Plan and with decision-making processes at County and local levels.
2. Over the course of time updates to this Plan may require adjusting that vision, goals and objectives as expectations and situations change and as new opportunities arise within the County. There needs to be a system in place at the County level for consistent review and update to keep this Plan current as a relevant source of information and as a reference tool for making decisions. Projects and funding needs and opportunities change often and this information needs to be kept current to be most useful in pursuing projects.
3. The Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed periodically and adjusted as needed. Ongoing review and updates of sections should occur at no greater than two year intervals with major updates and possible revisions occurring at no greater than five year intervals.
4. Maintaining, enhancing or creating some semblance of the Community Stakeholder Committee that assisted in the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan is a means to ensure that the Plan remains current. This Committee may be made up of community representatives as part of a more permanent structure, perhaps assisted by County staff to complete periodic reviews and updates within established timeframes. This Committee can also assist in further development of the Plan as an evolving document, assist in assigning priorities to recommended actions, and complete an annual summary report of the Plan's progress on implementation.
5. Building partnerships is essential by involving Federal, State, regional, County and local municipal officials, institutions, businesses, residents, property owners, private sector organizations and service providers in an on-going planning dialogue that consistently refers back to the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan. Effective and productive partnerships between the County and other entities have been very successful in recent years and these efforts need to continue, be encouraged through various means, and enhanced through new and innovative partnering focused on resolving issues identified in this Plan.

6. Developing sustainable funding mechanisms to facilitate private and public investment in implementing this Plan is also critical, especially in times of economic downturn and as financial resources become increasingly stressed. Being prepared to secure funding for projects and actions recommended in this Plan needs to be a high priority. Innovative solutions to partnering and funding projects also needs to be a high priority item for implementing this Plan.

The County and partner communities within Niagara County can achieve far greater things through a more regional or subregional approach to resolving issues and capitalizing on opportunities than by dealing with issues and opportunities in isolation. Consolidating services and sharing resources can free up capital that can be used for other things. The County and its existing and prospective partners must consider the following as opportunities for implementing this Plan.

- The allocation of limited financial resources requires greater efforts at prioritization of capital improvement programs and projects consistent with the goals, objectives and recommendations of this Plan
- Establishment of more private investment incentives such as low interest loans or revolving loan funds through local lending institutions
- Increased utilization of available Federal, State and regional grant programs as well as private sector funding opportunities through foundations and other groups and organizations to their fullest potential and “piggybacking” complementary grant funds to undertake and fund intermunicipal projects
- Consideration of tax increment financing opportunities, business improvement districts, special assessment districts and others as allowed under NYS Municipal Law as potential sources of revenue for projects
- Working towards greater efficiency and fiscal effectiveness through efforts focused on the sharing of resources and/or possible consolidation of services

The following recommendations are an important part of beginning the implementation process for this Comprehensive Plan. The specific actions complement the strategies and recommendations provided throughout this Plan. As with other sections of the Plan these action items require monitoring for benchmarking progress, shifting priorities as necessary, and updating information as conditions warrant. Modification of this information is an important part of an evolving planning and implementation process.

Action Items

Administrative Actions Required for the Comprehensive Plan

1. Recommendation - Finalize Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030
Primary Actions – Initiate municipal and public review and comment, conduct SEQRA public hearing, prepare revision/finalization of plan.
Potentially Involved Entities - County Legislature and County Economic Development
2. Recommendation - Adopt Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030
Primary Actions – Adoption by County Legislature and municipalities
Potentially Involved Entities - County Legislature and municipalities
3. Recommendation – Consider maintaining Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder Committee
Primary Actions - Committee provides oversight of implementation of Comprehensive Plan recommendations, future review and revisions.
Potentially Involved Entities - County Legislature and municipalities
4. Recommendation - Commence periodic review of Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan
Primary Actions - Schedule 2 year timeframe for interim review and update of sections of the Comprehensive Plan, followed by complete review and update at no more than 5 year intervals.
Potentially Involved Entities - County Legislature and municipalities

Land Use, Transportation and Environment

5. Recommendation – Update the Niagara County Agricultural Farmland Protection Plan
Primary Actions - Complete update of 1999 Farmland Protection Plan by 2011
Potentially Involved Entities - Farmland Protection Board, Cornell Cooperative Extension
6. Recommendation – Consider investigating the need to update/standardize County Planning Board project review/applicant criteria and SEQRA Type I procedures
Primary Actions - Coordinate with stakeholders to determine Section 239 project review procedures and establish SEQRA Type I list of projects
Potentially Involved Entities - County Planning Board, municipalities
7. Recommendation - Collaborate on future NYS highway corridor planning initiatives
Primary Actions - Identify funding and project priorities to undertake countywide NYS highway corridor land use and access management planning for NYS Routes 31, 62, 78, and 104 to assess future transportation needs, potential right-of-way acquisitions, bikeway feasibility, etc.
Potentially Involved Entities - NYSDOT, GBNRTC, County and municipalities



8. Recommendation - Collaborate with NYSDOT, GBNRTC and municipalities to identify potential designated bikeways along State, County and local roads.

Primary Actions - Secure funding and conduct preliminary feasibility studies, including cost estimates and addition of potential bikeway routes into Long Range Transportation Plan

Potentially Involved Entities - NYSDOT, GBNRTC, County and municipalities

9. Recommendation – Consider preparing an up-to-date countywide watershed management plan

Primary Actions - Identify funding and conduct a countywide watershed management plan to address stormwater management/drainage issues, erosion control, point source pollution control mechanisms, potential restoration projects and green infrastructure practices

Potentially Involved Entities - County Soil and Water Conservation, Cornell Cooperative Extension and stakeholders

10. Recommendation – Consider developing and conducting a community-based or subregional “Sustainability” survey of Niagara County communities

Primary Actions - Develop and implement a countywide survey to assess local needs including affordable housing, resource protection, land use, transportation alternatives, community services, needs of seniors and other quality of life issues due to changing demographics.

Potentially Involved Entities - County Economic Development and municipalities

11. Recommendation – Consider preparation of a countywide Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan and provide continuing support at local/subregional levels for the Niagara Escarpment Legacy Project and other similar initiatives to protect unique and significant open space resources by encouraging land trusts, transfer/purchase of development rights, etc.

Primary Actions - Funding identification and planning assistance

Potentially Involved Entities - County Economic Development, municipalities and stakeholders

Possible Funding Opportunities - Land Use, Transportation and Environment

NYS Canal Corporation
www.nys.canals.gov/

NYS Council on the Arts
www.nysca.org/public/guidelines/architecture/index.htm

NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets
www.agmkt.state.ny.us/
Agriculture & Farmland Protection Implementation Project Program
Agricultural Non-point Source Abatement Control Program (ANSCAP)



NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
www.nysdot.gov/portal/page/portal/programs/smart-planning/funding
Industrial Access Program (IAP)
DOT Capital Program
Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants
Ferry Boat Program
Transportation Enhancements (SAFETEA-LU)
www.nysdot.gov/programs/tep

Natural Resource Conservation Service
www.nrcs.usda.gov/
Watershed Rehabilitation

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
www.usace.army.mil/Pages/Default.aspx
Feasibility Studies
Construction Projects

U.S. Department of Agriculture
www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/cf/cp.htm
Rural Communities Facilities - Direct Loans

U.S. Department of Transportation
www.dot.gov
Discretionary Grants for a National Surface Transportation System

U.S. DOT Federal Aviation Administration
www.faa.gov
Grants-in-Aid for Airports

U.S. DOT Federal Highway Administration
www.fhwa.dot.gov
Highway Infrastructure Investment

U.S. DOT Federal Railroad Administration
www.fra.dot.gov
Capital Grants to the National Railroad Passenger Corporation
High Speed Rail Corridors

U.S. DOT Federal Transit Administration
www.fta.dot.gov
Fixed Guideway Modernization
Transit Capital Assistance
New Starts/Small Starts

Economic Development

12. Recommendation – Consider creation and maintenance of an up-to-date countywide GIS database of properties suitable for development and redevelopment.
- Primary Actions - Create GIS database and mapping with website links that provides information on vacant, underutilized and the infill/redevelopment potential of properties, including brownfield sites.
- Potentially Involved Entities - County Economic Development, Real Property Tax Services, municipalities and stakeholders
13. Recommendation - Continue to educate the public and encourage participation by property owners, municipalities and the development community in the Niagara County Brownfields Program and the State's Brownfield Opportunity Area program.
- Primary Actions - Seek additional funding and aggressively market the program within and beyond the boundaries of Niagara County and collaborate with communities on identification of potential BOA projects that include sites that cross multiple jurisdictions and municipalities.
- Potentially Involved Entities - County Economic Development, municipalities and stakeholders.
14. Recommendation – Consider increased coordination on business recruitment efforts with NCCC
- Primary Actions - Establish new programming and mechanisms for coordinating educational training and business recruitment activities between County economic development and NCCC on training programs and business/talent recruitment/marketing campaigns
- Potentially Involved Entities - County Economic Development and NCCC

Possible Funding Opportunities - Economic Development

- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
www.dec.ny.gov/index.html
Brownfields Cleanup Program (BCP)
Environmental Restoration Projects
Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Site Remedial Program
Environmental Protection Fund
- NYS Department of Housing & Community Renewal (DHCR)
www.dhcr.state.ny.us/
Housing Trust Fund
Housing Development Funds
- NYS Department of State
www.nyswaterfronts.org/grantopps_stategrants.asp
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)
Division of Coastal Resources

NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)
www.nyserda.org

Department of Energy
www.eere.energy.gov/
Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
Defense Environmental Cleanup Projects
Electric Power Transmission Projects

U.S. EPA Brownfields Program
www.epa.gov
Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund
Brownfields State and Tribal Assistance Grants

U.S. EPA Brownfields Program
www.epa.gov/brownfields/

U.S. Treasury IRS
www.irs.gov/
Recovery Zone Bonds
Industrial Development Bonds

FEMA Grants and Assistance Programs
www.fema.gov/government/grant/bzpp/index.shtm
Buffer Zone Protection Program (BZPP)

National Telecommunications and Information Administration
www.commerce.gov/
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program

U.S.D.A. Department of Agriculture
www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/rbeg.htm
Rural Business Enterprise Grants
Rural Community Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans
Rural Development Water and Environment Program
Rural Utilities Service

U.S. Economic Development Administration
www.eda.gov/
Economic Development Assistance Program

County Services, Facilities and Infrastructure

- 15.Recommendation – Consider preparation of an up-to-date County Official Map consistent with Sections 239-e and 239-f of NYS Municipal Law

Primary Actions - Determine feasibility, funding requirements and immediate need to prepare an up-to-date Official Map that provides mapped information on County infrastructure, properties, existing and future rights-of-way, etc. for future funding and infrastructure needs assessments.

Potentially Involved Entities - County DPW, Real Property Tax Services

- 16.Recommendation – Consider expanding and updating a GIS database of County infrastructure

Primary Actions - Expand GIS database inventory and mapping of County roads, bridges, drainage culverts, parks, buildings and grounds to track and monitor conditions, use, maintenance intervals and structural deficiencies.

Potentially Involved Entities - County DPW, Real Property Tax Services

- 17.Recommendation – Consider determining the feasibility of increased shared highway services

Primary Actions - Conduct a feasibility and needs assessment for increasing opportunities for shared highway services among County and local municipalities

Potentially Involved Entities - County DPW and municipalities

- 18.Recommendation – Consider determining the feasibility of countywide assessment and tax collection services

Primary Actions - Conduct a feasibility study to determine potential efficiencies and cost savings from combined tax services.

Potentially Involved Entities - County Real Property Tax Services and municipalities

- 19.Recommendation – Consider developing a County Trails program

Primary Actions - Seek funding to conduct subregion trail studies, for example, extending the Erie-Lackawanna Railway trail through Pendleton to the City of Lockport to link with the Erie Canal and identify other multi-use opportunities for trails such as an equestrian trails network in rural areas.

Potentially Involved Entities - County DPW Parks Division and municipalities

Possible Funding Opportunities - Community Services and Facilities

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation

www.nysparks.state.ny.us/grants/

Environmental Protection Fund

Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act

Municipal Parks Grants

Heritage Area Grants

Historic Preservation



Recreational Trails Program
Land & Water Conservation Fund
NYS Barn Restoration & Preservation Program
Snowmobile Trail Development

NYS Office of Real Property Services
www.orps.state.ny.us/
Real Property System
Assessment Administrator Training
Consolidation Incentive Aid
Maintenance and Reassessment Aid

National Endowment for the Arts
www.nea.org
Cultural Funding

U.S. Department of Energy
<http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/wip/>
Weatherization Assistance Program

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
www.hrsa.gov/
Community Health Centers and Infrastructure

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
www.hud.gov
Native American Housing Block Grants

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/omhar/
Assisted Housing Stability, Energy and Green Retrofit Investments

U.S.D.A. Rural Development
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ny/Mainprograms.htm
Water and Wastewater Loans and Grants
Technical Assistance & Training Grants
Solid Waste Management Grants

Education

- 20.Recommendation – Consider establishing a joint committee to conduct a feasibility study for expanding shared resource and administrative services among school districts and BOCES facilities.
Primary Actions - Seek funding and conduct studies to determine potential feasibility of expanded use of shared resources and functions.
Potentially Involved Entities - County facilitation, participating school districts and BOCES
- 21.Recommendation – Consider holding a countywide summit on education
Primary Actions - Prepare and conduct a survey of local educators and service providers, including school districts, NCCC, Niagara University, BOCES, student representatives, etc. to determine interest in a summit(s) to identify countywide educational issues and needs.
Potentially Involved Entities - County facilitation, educators and other stakeholders
- 22.Recommendation – Consider creation of new incentives to increase volunteer service
Primary Actions - Coordinate identification of possible incentives to encourage volunteerism, such as tuition assistance/tuition reduction for volunteering in emergency services.
Potentially Involved Entities - County facilitation, NCCC, BOCES, emergency providers and vocational/trades

Possible Funding Opportunities - Education

NYS Education Department
www.usny.nysed.gov/grants/

National Institute of Standards and Technologies
www.nist.gov
National Scientific and Technical Research
Construction of Research Facilities

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
www.noaa.gov
Operations, Research and Facilities

National Science Foundation
www.nsf.gov
Research Equipment and Facilities Construction





Public Health and Safety

23. Recommendation – Consider the expanded use of GIS databases and mapping including utilization of GIS information in this Plan in interdepartmental communication and coordination
- Primary Actions - Increase utilization of GIS data sharing and analyses among County departments and municipalities including the Sheriff's Office, County Fire Coordinator and Emergency Response Services.
- Potentially Involved Entities - County Manager, County Departments, municipalities
24. Recommendation – Consider determining the feasibility of department resource sharing
- Primary Actions - Seek funding to conduct feasibility studies focused on cost reduction from improved information and resource sharing, training and equipment sharing and possible consolidation of services and or locations.
- Potentially Involved Entities - County Manager, County Departments
25. Recommendation – Consider determining the feasibility of fire department/district and emergency services resource sharing and possible consolidation
- Primary Actions - Seek funding to conduct feasibility studies focused on cost reduction from improved sharing of resources, training and equipment and possible consolidation of services and or locations.
- Potentially Involved Entities – County, participating districts, municipalities and providers

Possible Funding Opportunities - Public Health and Safety

NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC)

www.efc.org/home/index.asp

Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)

FEMA Grants and Assistance Programs

www.fema.gov/government/grant/hsgp/index.shtm

Homeland Security Grant Program

Firefighters Assistance Grants

National Institute of Standards and Technology

www.nist.gov

Health Care Information Enterprise Integration Research Centers

U.S. EPA

www.epa.gov/owm/cwfinance/cwsrf/

Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)

www.epa.gov/safewater/dwsrf/index.html

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)

APPENDIX A

Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee Meeting Notes



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee Meeting #1 Meeting Notes

DATE: February 27, 2008
PLACE: Niagara County Community College, Faculty Dining Room, G211
TIME: 5:00 – 6:30PM

ATTENDEES: Clough Harbour & Associates planners, community representatives, and members of the general public.

PURPOSE: To introduce representatives from Niagara County municipalities to the project, to discuss the scope of the project and the focus areas of the plan, to provide an update on data collection efforts and other preliminary work conducted to date, and to discuss inclusion of all stakeholders in the planning process.

MINUTES:

1. Walt Kalina began the meeting by introducing himself as the project manager from Clough Harbour & Associates LLP, the consulting firm hired by Niagara County to facilitate the planning process. He also introduced the project, describing it as the first comprehensive plan focused solely on issues in Niagara County. He directed meeting attendees to sign-in and to note the handouts available: a preliminary draft of Chapter II of the Plan that outlines the planning process and contains a preliminary review of previous plans, reports, and studies identified and reviewed to date; the “Summary of the Planning Process for the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan” brochure providing information on the scope of the plan and opportunities for stakeholder participation; a list of representatives from local municipalities that will participate on the Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee; and the draft outline of the Plan, which includes components of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) required under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).
2. Mr. Kalina introduced the fundamental points of the planning process with the help of a PowerPoint presentation:
 - The success of the planning process will depend, in part, on the work of the Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee and input from the local communities; representatives will help relay information to and from their municipalities.
 - The ultimate purpose of the Plan’s recommendations will be to enhance the quality of life in the County. This will be achieved by working toward all of the goals and objectives that will be established during the process.
 - The primary goals of the planning process are to provide better decision-making with respect to managing growth and development, strengthening the local economy, improving services and infrastructure, coordinating

and prioritizing capital improvements, and enhancing quality of life. The goals will be addressed in the five (5) focus areas of the Plan: Land Use & Environment; Economic Development; Public Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure; Education; and Health & Safety.

- The issues and opportunities being considered will vary widely from one part of the County to another. This necessitates an approach that looks at sub-regions of the County that share common characteristics, for example natural resources, as well as common issues and/or opportunities such as farmland protection.
- The process used to develop the Plan needs to include input from all stakeholders to ensure that the Plan is used and supported.
- The Plan's recommendations are meant to reflect the visions, goals, and objectives of local communities and other stakeholders.

3. Mr. Kalina used a PowerPoint presentation to provide a detailed description of the Plan's legal basis, its goals, and the overall planning process to be used to develop the Plan. Key points included:

- The process to be used is unique because the Plan is not being developed from a "top down" perspective; instead it is being developed using input from the County's municipalities and other stakeholders as its basis, which is a "bottom up" approach.
- The planning process is currently in Phase I, information collection and review of previous planning initiatives, which will take advantage and be inclusive of plans, projects, and studies already undertaken in the county.
- *CommunityViz* GIS-based software will be used in the analysis phase of the project to evaluate the implications of various land use, environmental, infrastructure, and service strategies under different scenarios.
- This Plan will reflect and respect the "home rule" authority given to each city, town, and village through the New York State constitution. One goal of the Plan is to achieve greater consistency across municipal boundaries where broader issues often originate involving land use, transportation, zoning, infrastructure and services, etc.
- The Plan will build upon previous initiatives undertaken at all levels by articulating strategies and actionable steps that will address priority issues, providing greater efficacy in confronting challenges.

4. During the presentation, Mr. Kalina introduced the concept of "community profiles" as an important and unique component of the Plan, and examples of the profile sheets were distributed to individuals in attendance. A profile sheet will be prepared for each community in Niagara County and will be prepared with input from local communities and other stakeholders. The community profiles will serve as a starting place for identifying information pertinent to the planning process. The profile sheets include spaces to identify issues and opportunities as well as goals and objectives relative to each of the five focus areas of the Plan. Individuals were asked to review and consider these profiles and come prepared to discuss ideas at the next meeting. The profiles will be used throughout the



planning process and will be included within the Final Plan as a “snapshot” of each community in 2008 and the long-term visions, goals, and objectives that each community would like to see included in the Plan. The overarching goal of the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is to enhance quality of life for all County residents. The definition of “enhanced quality of life” will evolve through the input and insight gained during the planning process.

5. The meeting concluded with general discussion on major issues and opportunities facing communities in Niagara County. The following items were mentioned:
 - Issues:
 - Problems with State regulations and policies coming from Albany and the implications on local communities
 - High taxes
 - An overall resistance to change
 - Stagnant growth / the loss (out-migration) of young people
 - Opportunities:
 - Quality of life issues that could reverse the trend of people migrating out of New York
6. The meeting concluded with the reminder that the next Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee meeting will be held on March 26 at the Niagara County Center for Economic Development (6311 Inducon Corporate Drive, Sanborn, New York) as NCCC will be closed for Spring Recess.

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan


Stakeholder Communities
Plan Steering Committee Meeting 1
February 27, 2008

Clough Harbour & Associates LLP





Today's Agenda

- I. Introductions & Project Summary
- II. Distribution & Review of Materials
- III. Status Update on Phase I
- IV. Next Steps



The first of eight steering committee meetings







Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

The logo developed for the comprehensive planning process is intended to illustrate the participatory nature of the project.

What is the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan?



- The first countywide comprehensive plan undertaken solely for Niagara County.
- Past planning efforts involving Niagara County included the 1961 Erie Niagara Regional Plan & the 2006 Erie Niagara Framework for Regional Growth, which dealt primarily with land use patterns.
- It is intended to be a guiding document for decision-making developed through the input of stakeholders from across Niagara County

Stakeholder Communities


Niagara County Stakeholder Communities

- 12 Towns
- 3 Cities
- 5 Villages
- 3 Reservations





Comprehensive Planning

An overall process that considers a wide range of interrelated topics of importance which typically leads to the creation of a comprehensive plan, the function of which is to provide direction and guidance to achieve a desired set of goals and future conditions.



What is Comprehensive Planning?




CHA

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Defined by State Law

A Comprehensive Plan is defined under NYS law as “the materials, written and/or graphic including, but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development” of a town, city, village, county, or region.

 Niagara County
Comprehensive Plan

CHA

The contents of a comprehensive plan can vary depending on the focus & needs of the community identified during the planning process.

Typical Considerations

- Population & Demographics
- Existing & Future Land Use
- Transportation
- Utilities & Infrastructure
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Parks & Recreation
- Historic & Cultural Resources
- Natural Resources
- Community Services

 Niagara County
Comprehensive Plan

CHA

Why prepare a comprehensive plan?

Purpose

The purpose of the comprehensive plan is to provide guidance to public officials and all stakeholders in making more informed decisions about the future of Niagara County.

Issues & opportunities will be addressed under five categories:

- Land Use & Environment
- County Services, Facilities & Infrastructure
- Public Health & Safety
- Education
- Economic Development

 Niagara County
Comprehensive Plan

CHA

The Plan will address issues & opportunities under 5 topics implementing sound planning principles and practices.

Plan Goals & Topics



Planning Goals & Plan Elements


CHA

Is a plan really necessary?

Need

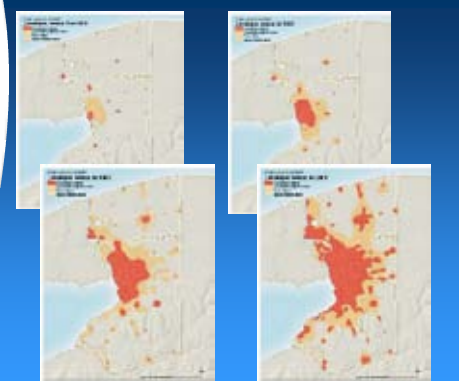
The plan will contain in one document an overall vision for the future of the County, future goals and objectives, and strategies for achieving them.

- It will provide a “snapshot” of Niagara County as it is in 2008 and provide an up-to-date source of information.
- It will build upon other recent planning initiatives not by duplicating them, but by expanding on more detailed actions.

 Niagara County
Comprehensive Plan

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Developed areas in Erie and Niagara Counties pre-1900 to 2000



Framework for Regional Growth 2006


CHA

Its value will be immediate & long-lasting.

Value

Value will be derived from the plan & from the process to create it.

- Bringing Communities Together in Dialogue
- Involving All Stakeholders
- Addressing Interrelated Issues
- Identifying Opportunities
- Agreeing on Strategies & Actions
- Creating Ongoing Review
- Finding Solutions to Complex Problems


 Niagara Community Comprehensive Plan

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What better time to develop a vision and plan for the future than during the Bicentennial of Niagara County!

Project Timeframes


- The planning process will occur during most of 2008 with a draft plan available for public review and comment later this year.
- The draft plan must undergo SEQRA review and comment by the public prior to its adoption.


 NIAGARA COUNTY BICENTENNIAL 1789-2008

CHA

The process will identify Countywide resources, services, needs & provide for greater planning consistency across municipal boundaries.

Major Steps in the Process



 Niagara Community Comprehensive Plan

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Opportunities to Participate

- Public meetings will be held at NCCC on the fourth Wednesday of April, June and August
- Public Hearing tentatively scheduled for October 1st, 2008 at NCCC
- Information exchange through a Stakeholders Communities Plan Steering Committee
- Information is available through the County's website

CHA

The Plan will focus on greater consistency across municipal boundaries, recognizing & respecting each community's uniqueness & "Home Rule".

Community Profiles

Each stakeholder community will have a Community Profile in the Plan, developed through the input by local residents and officials.

- Existing Conditions
- Community Assets
- Issues, Challenges & Opportunities
- Vision, Goals & Objectives
- Future Conditions & Needs

 Niagara Community Comprehensive Plan

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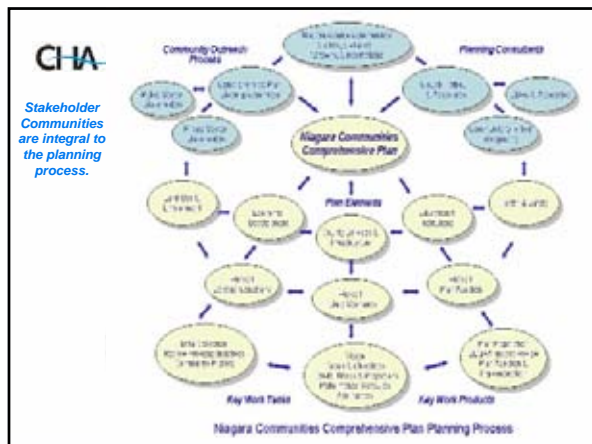
The process builds upon many previous initiatives which will be considered in the Plan.

Previous Planning Initiatives

Numerous studies & recommendations that are best carried out at local municipal levels

- Local community master plans, strategic plans, & local waterfront revitalization plans
- Framework for Regional Growth – Erie and Niagara Counties
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Niagara County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan
- Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

 Niagara Community Comprehensive Plan



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GIS Mapping & Analysis

GIS allows multiple layers of data to be analyzed at once to understand complex relationships. *CommunityViz* will be used to analyze development scenarios.

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Plan Results

- Establishing a Countywide Vision, Goals & Objectives
- Identifying Future Needs for Public Services & Facilities
- Prioritizing Capital Improvements & Investments in Infrastructure
- Identifying Strategies for
 - Strengthening the Local Economy
 - Protecting Important Natural Resources
 - Encouraging Desirable Development Patterns
 - Improving Quality of Life

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

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The Plan will be measurable and accessible.

Plan Performance

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan will provide:

- A Countywide Vision & Perspective on Planning Consistency
- A Guidepost for Niagara County Communities
- Improved Decision-making Capabilities
- Measurable Performance Goals
- Timeframes for Review
- Opportunity for Ongoing Dialogue
- Daily Access & Use by All Communities

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

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Benefits of the Countywide Plan

- Sets a clear direction & establishes priorities for the future
- Provides enhanced understanding of the complexity of issues
- Identifies economic efficiencies and reduces duplication of efforts
- Promotes protection of community resources & local character
- Respects each community's uniqueness & opportunities

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

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Questions and Information

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Thank You!

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

Notes of Meeting Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee Meeting #2 Niagara County Center for Economic Development Training Room

Wednesday, March 26, 2008
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Topic - Land Use & Environment

I. Introduction of Topic, Maps & Instructions

Break out sessions involved dividing the municipalities within the County into five (5) planning sub-region discussion groups. CHA provided the list of municipalities assigned to each group and each was given composite land use maps and environmental features maps for their use. Each group included about 3 or 4 stakeholder community representatives and varying numbers of stakeholders participating in the discussions. Each group assigned a leader, a note taker, and a spokesperson. Leaders were responsible for making sure that the discussion stayed on topic and schedule. CHA facilitated each group's discussions. A spokesperson provided a summary of discussions and conclusions by group.

II. Break-out Session One

Discussion Question #1

*Based on your experiences and knowledge of your community what do you consider to be the most pressing **land use/transportation issue or challenge** facing your community today? Do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and refer to some consideration points below to help with the discussion. We are considering land use and transportation together because they are interrelated topics. Decisions on land use influence transportation needs and decisions on where to invest in roads and transit affect future land use patterns.*

Each group was asked to provide the following:

- An overall list of the issues and challenges identified by the group.
- The top three issues and challenges as voted on by the group that represents shared issues with other communities in the planning sub-region.

Each Group was provided with the following points to facilitate discussion.

1. Think about recent changes in land use patterns, development projects, and community character by considering different types of land use categories in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Open Space and Recreation, Vacant. Refer to the Existing Land Use Map. What do you see happening in your community?
2. Think about what types of transportation services are provided in your community (public roads, public transportation, access to multimodal transportation, etc.), and if there have been significant changes in transportation

services or in public access to those services in recent years. Under transportation, consider conditions and capacities for pedestrian, bicycling, personal auto, bus, heavy truck, train, air, and marine uses.

3. Does the character of your community differ from neighboring communities? In what way?
4. How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no “greenfield” development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
5. How would you best characterize your community as it now exists – urban, suburban, or rural?

Discussion Question #2

*What is the most significant **land use/transportation asset or opportunity** that currently exists in your community? Again, do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and consider the same points above.*

Each group was asked to provide the following:

- A list of the assets and opportunities identified by your group.
- The top three assets and opportunities as voted on by the group that represents shared assets and opportunities with the other communities in the planning sub-region.

III. Break-out Session Two

Discussion Question #3

*Based on your experiences and knowledge of your community what do you consider to be the most pressing **environmental issue or challenge** facing your community today? Do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and refer to some consideration points below to help with the discussion.*

Each Group was provided with the following points to consider.

1. Think about the different natural features of your community such as its waterways, floodplains, open space areas, wetlands, wildlife and wildlife habitats, and scenic views. Refer to the Environmental Features Map. Have any of these features changed recently? In what ways?
2. Does your community provide access to natural areas, scenic views, parks and open space? In what ways?
3. Have any actions been taken to protect environmental features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized environmental features?
4. Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your everyday life? In what ways?

Each group was asked to provide the following:

- An overall list of issues and challenges identified by your group.
- The top three issues and challenges as voted on by the group that represents shared issues or challenges with other communities in your planning sub-region.

Discussion Question #4

*What is the most significant **environmental asset or opportunity** for the future that currently exists in your community? Again, do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and consider the same points above.*

Each group should provide the following:

- An overall list of assets and opportunities identified by your group.
- The top three assets and opportunities as voted on by the group that represents shared assets and opportunities with the other communities in the planning sub-region.

IV. Reconvened as a Group to Summarize Discussions

The Plan Steering Committee members and invited stakeholders reconvened at the end of the second breakout session. Each of the five groups was asked to provide a summary of their discussions, conclusions reached, and the lists of issues and opportunities each created. **These are provided below by Group.** Due to time constraints further discussions will continue at the April Committee meeting to identify common and unique issues and opportunities among the communities and the five planning sub-regions.

RESPONSES from GROUP A

Town of Hartland, Town of Royalton & Village of Middleport

Question #1

- Preservation of farmland and agriculture
- Controlling sprawl
- Designate business and growth area, main corridors
- Historic preservation
- Conservation – wildlife & green space / open space
- Railroad – need emergency plan – closing of crossings (1 in Middleport & 1 in Gasport)
- Vacant buildings
- Buildings and property with environmental issues
- Deteriorating roads – maintenance needs
- Dangerous intersections:
 - Slayton Settlement / Hartland
 - Mountain Road/Royalton Center Road
 - Checker Tavern /Rt 104
 - State / Main – Village, Rt. 104 – Hartland
 - Sidewalks

Question #2

- Canal – tourism
 - Water & electric facilities needed for boats
- Railroad
- Agriculture / farmland
- Corridor to Becker Farms [<http://www.beckerfarms.com/>]
- Becker Farms [340-acre working farm in Gasport]
- Maple producer

Question #3

- RCRA – FMC [see <http://www.fmc.com/corporateresponsibility/HealthSafetyEnvironment/tabid/63/Default.aspx>]
- Tire recycling
- FMC – water, soil, airborne issues
- Gas wells – natural gas – Hartland – testing farm areas
- CAMU – Middleport [Corrective Action Management Unit – FMC; <http://www.middleport-ny.com/middleport/index.cfm?module=walkingtour>]
- Dump on Griswold & Mountain Road
- Two brownfields in Village
- Potential brownfield – Royalton (Cold Storage)

Question #4

- Royalton Ravine
- Vet's Park – Gasport
- Trails – Recreation Field – Want to expand – Hartland
- Parks – Middleport
- Playground – Middleport
- Nature Trail – Middleport
- Reservoir – Middleport to Royalton
- Canal Trails
- Escarpment – effect of weather pattern
- Right to Farm – local law in Royalton
- Agri-tourism and open lands
- Stone quarry
- Drainage – permanent easements for maintenance – Hartland

Top 3 Issues and Challenges - Land Use

- Preservation of agricultural land & greenspace (protect against sprawl)
- Concern over rail accident/derailing with railroad cars to ethanol plant in Medina
- Vacancies along canal corridor and negative effects on tourism

Top 3 Assets and Opportunities - Land Use

- Canal
- Becker Farms (agri-tourism, agriculture is biggest industry)
- Railroad

Top 3 Issues and Challenges – Environment

- FMC/arsenic
- Tire recycling and dumps
- Gas (natural gas) well testing

Top 3 Assets and Opportunities – Environment

- Royalton Ravine
- Canal
- Nature trails

RESPONSES from GROUP B

Town of Cambria, Town of Lockport, City of Lockport, Town of Pendleton

Question #1

- Parks & open space
- Escarpment district
- Preserving farmland – 80% [of existing land] – Cambria Comp Plan
- Pendleton 22% [existing agricultural land percentage]
- Consider development pressure low at this point
- Small town
- Pendleton – single family homes
- Development upsets our road systems
 - Must think out corridor to handle large volume traffic
 - Create 2nd outlets to not over-power the roads
 - Campbell Boulevard – economic corridor
 - Bypass corridor near Lockport [opportunity]
 - Plan streets as through streets
- Pendleton – small percentage of commercial

Question #2

- Agriculture
- Cambria wineries
- Pendleton / Lockport
 - Town plans in place
 - Zoning
 - Need to incorporate local plans [in County plan]

Question #3

- Recognition of the Niagara Escarpment – preservation!
- Balance of farmland for agriculture and wildlife habitat
- Floodplain – need to study their locations – important for future climate change issues
- 18-Mile Creek
 - Preservation and protection
 - Open spaces

Question #4

- Land use and recreational opportunities of creek and streams
- Wineries – grape production

Top 3 Issues and Challenges - Land Use

- Lockport & Pendleton is developing, plans in place
- Cambria – agricultural preservation
- Highway corridors economic development vs. farmland preservation
 - Inter municipal agreements
 - Outlets needed as secondary access – ex.) Cambell Blvd.
 - Need to plan ahead

Top 3 Assets and Opportunities – Land Use

- Farmland
- Wine Trails
- Plans that are in place in Lockport and Pendleton

Top 3 Issues & Challenges, Assets & Opportunities – Environment

- Escarpment
- Need to balance agricultural lands and development (loss of wildlife habitat)
- Creeks & Streams – floodplain encroachment – 18 Mile Creek

RESPONSES from GROUP C

Town of Somerset, Village of Barker, Town of Newfane, Town of Wilson, Village of Wilson

Question #1

- Can we maintain our vision as an agricultural community?
- Drainage issues due to growing residential use & retracting use for agriculture
- Most residential development is road front, creating difficulty for agricultural uses
- It would be advantageous to cluster residential areas
- How do we promote cluster developments and agricultural regions?
- What kind of incentives do we need to create this situation?
- We don't believe we have huge issues with regard to transportation
 - One possible answer to one of the lesser transportation issues is the development of truck routes with proper maintenance of bridges and roads.
 - One small issue is transportation for seniors
- The impediment created by the Army Corps of Engineers to waterfront development
- The raising lake levels may also hinder residential and waterfront development
- Distance from Thruway

Question #2

- Two good main east-west routes (18 & 104)
- An asset in the eastern end is the railway from/to Somerset area
- Olcott Harbor and Wilson Harbor have tremendous potential with regard to tourism.
- Stable weather patterns that can help agriculture (grapes / wineries), industry (shipping), and energy (windmills)

Question #3

- Agriculture waste with the larger corporate farmers
- Brownfield locations
- 18-mile Creek has its environmental issues
 - Industrial origins [of communities]
- Old service stations that have fuel tanks that made the sale of these properties difficult (keeps them off the tax rolls)
- Ditching programs must be consistent throughout the towns with a coordinated plan (Countywide)

Question #4

- Lake Ontario – tourism
- Lake Ontario – industry
- Lake Ontario – recreation

Assets & Opportunities by Area

Somerset:

1. Agriculture
2. Waterfront – industry
3. Wind resource

Newfane

1. Agri-tourism
2. Olcott Harbor – deep harbor
3. Medical facility

Wilson

1. Agri-tourism
2. Wilson Harbor
3. Tuscarora State Park

Top 3 Issues and Challenges - Land Use

- Maintaining the vision as an agricultural community
- Transportation; truck routes along the Lake – industry and access to markets
- Army Corps permit requirements and regulations as impediments to development along the Lake and levels in Lake Ontario

Top 3 Assets and Opportunities – Land Use

- Routes 18 and 104 access
- Olcott and Wilson harbors for tourism and commerce
- Rail access, stable climate/weather and wind power resources

Top 3 Issues and Challenges – Environment

- Agricultural waste and runoff
- Brownfields
- Water Quality, 18 Mile Creek, drainage ditches along roads- need county-wide consistency

Top 3 Assets and Opportunities – Environment

- Lake Ontario
- Agriculture and Agri-tourism
- Harbors and State Parks

RESPONSES from GROUP D

Towns of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Villages of Lewiston, Village of Youngstown

Question #1

- There doesn't seem to be much changing
 - Some growth in the Town of Lewiston
 - Residential
 - Golf course
- Not much public transportation
 - Plans to extend an existing bike / pedestrian path
 - Future cross-river ferry
 - Marina in Youngstown has new owners
- Communities are very similar
- Some development, mostly Town of Lewiston, lot of residential potential
- Available lands for residential development in Youngstown and Porter
- Rural

Question #2

- River & lake front
- River & lake festivals
- Fort Niagara
- Art Park
- Residential development potential

Question #3

- Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Project
- CWM [hazardous waste]
- Modern Corporation solid waste
- Cleanup, control & oversight

Question #4

- Lake & river fronts
- Agri-business

Top 3 Issues and Challenges - Land Use

- Not much change
- Lewiston – bike path, golf course, ferry, marina
- Development opportunities in Youngstown and Porter

Top 3 Assets and Opportunities – Land Use

- River & Lakefront
- Art Park
- Fort Niagara

Top 3 Issues and Challenges – Environment

- Ordnance works – cleanup, control and oversight needed

Top 3 Assets and Opportunities – Environment

- Agriculture
- Lakefront
- Riverfront

RESPONSES from GROUP E

City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Town of Wheatfield, City of North Tonawanda

City of Niagara Falls**Issues & Challenges**

- Absentee landlords
- LaSalle Expressway bike path - across communities
- Need discussion over LaSalle Expressway and future development
- All transportation-related issues, including condition of streets and sidewalks and clearing snow from streets for senior citizens
- Brownfields that span municipal lines
 - Brownfields Opportunity Area adjacent to Niagara Falls boundary
- Wal-Mart relocation to Niagara Falls High School site
- Robert Moses Parkway Project in Downtown Niagara Falls

Assets & Opportunities

- Niagara Falls
- Upper & Lower River
- Cayuga Creek restoration – public access

Town of Wheatfield

Issues & Challenges

- 102nd Street landfill – covers waterfront
- Transition dense to less dense development effects on character
- Change of open space to suburban and resulting increase in infrastructure (sewer, etc.)
- Residential trends - suburban character
- Hamlet – need for mixed-use development
- Buffers needed along streams and floodplains – restrict development
- Oz – concerns dealing with RVs & campers
- Water quality issues related to stormwater drainage / sewer infrastructure from new development
- Bus services for north towns?

Assets & Opportunities

- Riverfront – new park
- Farmers – major asset – keep viable, farmland preservation – using PDR's
- Niagara Falls Airbase

City of North Tonawanda

Issues & Challenges

- Water quality issues
- Waterfront and Niagara River / Tonawanda Creek – restoration areas needed
- Brownfields – huge challenge
 - Redevelopment and cleanup
 - Transition from waterfront areas
 - Landfills in general “Mt. Garbage”
 - Need accurate info. on brownfields
- Air quality related to new development – potential biofuels plant proposed for Wheatfield
 - Smokestack concerns
- Water quality / sediment contamination / contamination from industrial dumps, sewers, stormwater

Assets & Opportunities

- Waterfront
- Preservation of open space – wildlife habitat
- Gratwick Park future use
- Archeological resources
- Wetlands preservation for better flood control

The meeting ended at approximately 7pm.



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

Notes of Meeting **Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee Meeting #3** **NCCC Faculty Dining Room - Student Center G212**

Wednesday, April 23, 2008
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Topic – Economic Development

I. Summary of Steering Committee Meeting #2

- Review of key points covered in the March 26th Steering Committee meeting, focusing on land use/transportation and environmental issues. Notes from this meeting are available on Niagara County's website under the Meeting Schedule section of the Comprehensive Plan web pages (www.niagaracounty.com/comprehensiveplan.asp.)
- Update on GIS mapping prepared to date, including the use of New York State Office of Real Property Services (RPS) property classification codes to show the current use of properties countywide.
- Brief review of how the "Community Profile" sheets are going to be used. A new profile sheet will be available at each Steering Committee meeting. Community representatives will use these sheets to provide information on their community's issues, opportunities, goals and objectives related to each week's meeting topic. Each month a profile sheet will be handed in to the consultants and Committee members will be given a clean sheet for the next meeting. The consultant will be inserting information on the sheets as provided by each community.

II. CommunityViz Presentation

Peter Young of Community Oriented Geography introduced the Committee to *CommunityViz*, an innovative geographic information system (GIS) that will be used during the planning process to model how current trends are affecting land use characteristics, population distribution, infrastructure needs, and County services over the next 20 years.

Examples presented included farmland conversion trends, an analysis of riparian corridor development patterns, a summary of where commercial and industrial land uses were gained and lost between 2002 and 2007, and a summary of how the County's projected 2030 population would affect the cost of providing services to elderly residents. The farmland conversion preliminary trend analysis, for example, indicates that land that is being converted from farmland into other uses is being offset to a large degree by conversion of land into farmland – most likely lands being converted into vineyards and as cropland to "feed" to ethanol plants.

III. Introduction of Topic, Maps & Instructions

As in the previous Steering Committee meeting (March 26th), the breakout session involved dividing the municipalities in the County into five (5) planning sub-region discussion groups. Each group included about 3 or 4 stakeholder community representatives and varying numbers of other stakeholder groups invited to participate in the discussions. Each group assigned a leader, a note taker, and a spokesperson. Leaders were responsible for making sure that the discussion stayed on topic and schedule. CHA facilitated each group's discussions as necessary. A spokesperson summarized what was discussed in each group at the conclusion of the breakout session.

IV. Break-out Session

Discussion Question #1

*Based on your experiences and knowledge of your community what do you consider to be the most pressing **economic development issue or challenge** facing your community today? Do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and refer to some consideration points below to help with the discussion.*

Each group was asked to provide the following:

- An overall list of the issues and challenges identified by the group.
- The top three issues and challenges (as voted on by the group) that represent shared issues or challenges with other communities in the planning sub-region.

Groups were asked to consider these points:

1. Think about recent economic development-related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This may include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
2. Think about what types of economic development-related services and/or infrastructure facilities (sewer, water, electric, communication, roads, bridges, highways, air, marine) that are provided by or to your community that you may be familiar with and whether there are significant issues or changes in those services or infrastructure that may be needed.
3. Does the character of your community or recent economic trends differ from neighboring communities in terms of development occurring, job loss, job creation? In what way?
4. Are community assets such as parks, natural environmental features, cultural resources, educational/training facilities or general quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used for promoting economic development opportunities, including tourism?

Discussion Question #2

*What is the most significant **economic development asset or opportunity** that currently exists in your community? Again, do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and consider the same points above.*

Each group was asked to provide the following:

- An overall list of the assets and opportunities identified by the group.
- The top three assets and opportunities (as voted on by the group) that represent shared assets and opportunities with the other communities in the planning sub-region.

III. Reconvene as a Group to Summarize Discussions

The Plan Steering Committee members and invited stakeholders reconvened at the end of the breakout session. Each of the five groups was asked to provide a summary of their discussions, conclusions reached, and the lists of issues and opportunities each created.

These are provided below by Group and are annotated in some instances based on additional feedback from the groups.

RESPONSES from GROUP A

Town of Hartland, Town of Royalton & Village of Middleport

Issues and Challenges:

1. From the farm to the factory – keeping it local!! What is being produced locally should stay local. (referring to the need for local food processing, packaging, shipping, etc.)
2. Small businesses – Expansion of existing businesses and enticing new businesses – marketing is needed
3. Upgrade of infrastructure facilities
 - a. Sewer
 - b. Natural gas (only Routes 31 and 104 has gas lines)
 - c. Roads (needed for shipping farm products, etc.)
4. Exposure to a great community – come and stay – (need for a marketing campaign)
5. Vacant buildings – demolish and/or beautify.

Assets and Opportunities:

1. Agri-tourism
2. Canal
3. Parks and recreation – need to expand and build up
 - o Schools and public parks share athletic facilities
4. Beautification of buildings that can be saved.
5. Wildlife and conservation areas

RESPONSES from GROUP B

Town of Cambria, Town of Lockport, City of Lockport, Town of Pendleton

Issues and Challenges:

1. Taxes – property tax rate is high
2. Overabundance of educational taxes (schools) – Town of Cambria has 5 districts, 5 in Town of Lockport
3. Municipalities paying municipalities for services, i.e., water treatment
4. Aging infrastructure: gas, water, etc.
5. Loss of people in the county
6. Shovel ready sites needed vs. red tape and bureaucracy in New York State, especially compared to other states.

Assets and Opportunities:

1. Wine trail
2. Educational component (NCCC)
3. Locks in Lockport (unique site on the Erie Canal)
4. Transit Road – historic (heritage) corridor

RESPONSES from GROUP C

Town of Somerset, Village of Barker, Town of Newfane, Town of Wilson, Village of Wilson

Issues and Challenges:

1. “Not In My Backyard” (NIMBY) negative attitude toward development proposals
2. Lack of sewers / natural gas in entire towns
 - a. Villages of Barker and Wilson are better, but towns (Wilson and Somerset) have poor coverage
 - b. Newfane has more coverage and it shows in more commercial use
3. Distance from main transportation systems
4. Employers leaving area
5. Parkways being non-commercial hinder use: Robert Moses Parkway should allow commercial traffic
6. Excessive taxes

Assets and Opportunities:

1. Harbors and lakefront
2. Road systems
3. Potential for other uses at AES facility in Somerset
4. Large areas are zoned industrial, but not being used

RESPONSES from GROUP D

Towns of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Villages of Lewiston, Village of Youngstown

Issues and Challenges:

1. Tourism – need to facilitate tourism
 - a. Farm Museum - Town of Lewiston (Sanborn)
 - b. Tourism in General
 - i. Town of Porter
 - ii. Village of Youngstown
 - c. Obstacles – Bureaucracy, High Taxes
 - d. Cross-River Ferry
 - i. Connection
 - ii. Cross-tourism (international – easy access across border needed)
 - e. Energy costs
2. Regional Employment – maintain employment levels
 - a. Village of Youngstown
 - b. Keeping residents in the area
3. Aging population
4. Community-specific:
 - a. Youngstown – sewer plant capacity
 - b. Town of Porter – promotion of agriculture

- c. Town of Porter / Town of Lewiston –
 - i. State properties (too many that cannot be developed) & development (Fort Niagara, Joseph Davis Park)
 - ii. Chemical Waste Management (CWM) / Modern Disposal
- d. Town of Lewiston – hydroponics / green houses

Assets and Opportunities:

- Geography of the area
 - River, lakes, etc.
- Cost of Living (COL), low housing costs
- Untapped potential for the area in general

RESPONSES from GROUP E

City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Town of Wheatfield, City of North Tonawanda

Issues/Challenges and Assets/Opportunities:

- “Oz”
 - Schedule – largest project in the area now on the board
 - EIS this summer
 - Fall groundbreaking
 - 4 years to develop
 - Wheatfield & BEL Review
 - Wheatfield as lead agency
 - Largest private employer
 - 3K – 5K year round
 - Issues
 - Housing / quality of housing stock – need diversity of housing
 - Land recapture
 - Agriculture – fresh food / guests
 - Hospitality “perception”
 - Training
 - Universities
 - Technology providers / workforce
 - Transportation services – Wheatfield
- Wheatfield
 - Air Base
 - Appropriate new terminal
 - International heavy jets
 - Spinoff opportunities and surroundings
 - Environmental – tech support
 - Williams Road medical corridor
 - River property and access needed to waterfronts
 - Niagara Falls Boulevard corridor
 - Overlay
 - Businesses that bring in other businesses
 - Working together
 - Maintaining farming
 - Right-to-farm

- Businesses
- Smart Growth
 - Neighborhoods
 - Stand alone
 - Developer educators
- Niagara Falls (between Main Street and Whirlpool)

Important issues center on brownfield clean-up and dealing with bureaucratic red tape that hinders redevelopment – need to better leverage investments

- Multi-modal transportation
 - Customs House
 - Customs / sealed buses
 - Cost of fuel – City growth
 - Niagara Falls Experience Center
 - BCP
 - Terminal / transportation
 - Road infrastructure
 - Culinary institute

The meeting ended at approximately 7pm.



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

Notes of Meeting **Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee Meeting #4** **NCCC Faculty Dining Room - Student Center G212**

Wednesday, May 28, 2008
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Topic – County Services, Facilities and Infrastructure

I. Introduction and Review of Website

- Brief update from Project Manager Walt Kalina on what has been accomplished since the April 23, 2008 meeting. Notes from previous meetings are on the Comprehensive Plan website.
- Walt reminded Steering Committee representatives to continue to provide input by way of the community profile sheets. Community profile sheets were distributed to representatives.
- Niagara County Planner Ben Bidell provided a review of what has been added to the project website recently, including agendas and notes from the previous three Plan Steering Committee meetings and two public information meetings, GIS mapping, community profiles, draft chapters, and other planning documents.
 - Ben encouraged meeting participants to use the “Feedback” portion of the website to provide input on draft documents posted online.
 - Project website: www.niagaracounty.com/comprehensiveplan.asp
 - Project email address: comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com

II. Goals and Objectives

- Walt introduced the Preliminary Comprehensive Plan Goals for the first two focus areas of the Comprehensive Plan: Land Use & Environment and Economic Development. The Preliminary Comprehensive Plan Goals are presented as broad statements and will be followed by more detailed Objectives that will recommend specific strategies and action items.
- The list of Preliminary Comprehensive Plan Goals represents a synthesis of several data sources including feedback from Plan Steering Committee representatives at past meetings, Niagara County’s Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, the County’s Economic Development Strategy, the Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth, and other planning documents.
- Meeting attendees provided additional input on the list of Preliminary Comprehensive Plan Goals. Specifically, the goals should include:
 - Brownfields
 - Niagara Escarpment Viticultural Area/Niagara Wine Trail
 - Right-to-farm ordinances
 - Escarpment preservation

III. Introduction of Topic, Maps & Instructions

As at the previous Steering Committee meetings, community representatives divided into five (5) groups, based on sub-regions of the County. Each group included about 3 or 4 Plan Steering Committee representatives and varying numbers of representatives of other stakeholder groups invited to participate in the discussions. The groups discussed questions as found on the Detailed Agenda for the meeting relative to Niagara County services, facilities, and infrastructure. At the conclusion of the breakout session, each group shared its findings.

IV. Breakout Session

Discussion Question #1

*Based on your experiences and knowledge of your community what do you consider to be the most pressing issue or challenge facing your community today **relative to County services, County facilities or County infrastructure**? Do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and refer to some consideration points below to help with the discussion.*

Each group was asked to provide the following:

- An overall list of the issues and challenges identified by the group.
- The top three issues and challenges (as voted on by the group) that represent shared issues or challenges with other communities in the planning sub-region.

Groups were asked to consider these points:

1. Think about what types of County-provided services (social services, health services, economic development, public works, public safety, courts, emergency services, education, employment and training, election services, etc.) are available and important to you and your community and whether there are any issues relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - "External" factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
2. Likewise, think about the types of County facilities and infrastructure that are available and important to you and your community and what issues there may be with the provision and/or maintenance of these facilities and infrastructure. Refer to the maps provided. The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings
 - 6 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina, and the County Golf Course)
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

Discussion Question #2

What is the most significant asset or opportunity that currently exists in your community relative to County services, facilities or infrastructure? Again, do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and consider the same points above.

Each group was asked to provide the following:

- An overall list of the assets and opportunities identified by the group.
- The top three assets and opportunities (as voted on by the group) that represent shared assets and opportunities with the other communities in the planning sub-region.

IV. Reconvened as a Group to Summarize Discussions

The Plan Steering Committee members and invited stakeholders reconvened at the end of the breakout session. Each of the five groups was asked to provide a summary of their discussions, conclusions reached, and the lists of issues and opportunities each created.

These are provided below by Group.

RESPONSES from GROUP A

Town of Hartland, Town of Royalton, & Village of Middleport

Issues and Challenges:

- Feeling of isolation from County
- Need better emergency service response times / greater police presence
- Desire to be included in more projects at the County level

Assets and Opportunities:

- A mobile DMV should be considered, providing monthly visits to outlying communities
 - Also election services [e.g., voter registration], social services, nutrition, etc.
- Opportunities for more shared services and improved efficiency
- County should consider decentralizing services to Towns and Villages

RESPONSES from GROUP B

Town of Cambria, Town of Lockport, City of Lockport, Town of Pendleton

Issues and Challenges:

- Redundant services / consolidation needed
- Being the County seat presents pros and cons for the City
 - Great access to services
 - Means a lot of non-taxable, public properties
- Size of County Legislature should be examined, many districts/legislators compared to other counties
- Greater efficiency in service delivery should be considered
 - For example: the Financial Recovery Division within County Social Services may be performing a function better left to State-level agencies
 - Are there other areas of County-State service overlap?

Assets and Opportunities:

- Potential for service consolidation, specifically water districts

RESPONSES from GROUP C

Town of Somerset, Village of Barker, Town of Newfane, Town of Wilson, Village of Wilson

Issues and Challenges:

- Nothing on County services map in this sub-region [other than roads and bridges] except for Krull Park
- Geographically distant from services in Lockport, Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda
 - Given gas prices, driving distance becomes a more serious obstacle
 - Everything is a half hour drive away
- Police coverage is insufficient
 - Improved coverage is needed for Towns
 - Slow response times have been noted in the past
- There are “imaginary lines” running east-west [along the escarpment] and north-south [just east of the City of Lockport] separating these communities from the rest of the County.

Assets and Opportunities:

- County bus service and/or van service for seniors – more services for the elderly, rural population are needed
- Service sharing: Town of Somerset is served by the Village of Barker’s police
- More service consolidation is possible
 - Local water district consolidation is needed
 - Tough decisions need to be made to use tax dollars wisely

RESPONSES from GROUP D

Towns of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Villages of Lewiston, Village of Youngstown

Issues and Challenges:

- Sheriff’s Department patrols are sparse in the area; Village of Youngstown has a part-time police force
- Distance from County services in Lockport / Niagara Falls
- “We try to take care of ourselves” – Services are available when needed

RESPONSES from GROUP E

City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Town of Wheatfield, City of North Tonawanda

Issues and Challenges

- Road infrastructure – not much County highway mileage in this area; County roads are “just as bad” as town roads.
- County buildings and facilities
 - In poor condition
 - Should be setting a higher standard for the area, but instead they reflect their surroundings
 - Volunteerism by County needed
- Oppenheim Park is a run-down facility
 - There was a proposal to sell this facility to the Town of Wheatfield
 - Accessible to tourists / visitors to the area and could be a major attraction – seems to be a missed opportunity now
 - County should consider selling it or making a greater investment in it

- Water & Sewer
 - Cities have their own service
 - Could be a model of “competitive cooperation” – more inter-regional perspective, without giving up local sovereignty.
- Aging population
 - Need for more services / better access to existing services
 - Seems to be a larger issue in Wheatfield
- Robert Moses Parkway
 - Replacement prior to removal
 - Improve time, opportunity to capture traffic
- LaSalle Parkway
 - Parkway to nowhere

Assets and Opportunities:

- Roads
 - Cities could use help from County in maintaining and improving roads
- Oppenheim Park
 - Could be a major asset, since it is right on Niagara Falls Boulevard
 - Possible zoo site?
- Surplus of low-income housing – insufficient newer moderate or higher-income housing development
- Airport holds a great deal of potential, because of its long runway and capability to handle cargo loads
 - Improve connections between Niagara Falls International and Buffalo Niagara International
- Multi-modal center in downtown Niagara Falls
- Old railroad rights-of-way present opportunities for trails / revival of rail
- Vantage Centre – filling up; should be marketed more
- County’s Brownfields coordinator has been a major asset to Niagara Falls and Wheatfield
- Aging population in the sub-region could be an asset

The meeting ended at approximately 7pm.



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

Notes of Meeting **Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee Meeting #5** **NCCC Faculty Dining Room - Student Center G212**

Wednesday, June 25, 2008
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Topic – Educational Institutions

I. Introduction and Review of Website

- Project Manager Walt Kalina welcomed the Steering Committee members and other stakeholders and provided a brief summary of the Plan's current status. (Notes from the PowerPoint presentation that accompanied this update are available on the Project website.)
 - Next month's meeting (July 23) will focus on the Health and Safety element of the Comprehensive Plan, the fifth of the five Plan elements.
 - The August meeting will be a more interactive discussion of goals, opportunities, issues and visions.
 - The Planning process, public meetings and Steering Committee meetings have produced valuable information, including the list of issues and opportunities by planning sub-region and community profiles.
 - Issues and opportunities by sub-region have been compiled in a single document as they pertain to the Plan elements previously addressed by the Steering Committee.
 - Community profiles will be Chapter 4 of the Plan.
 - Working drafts of Plan chapters 1 and 2 are on the website. Mr. Kalina reminded meeting attendees to review these chapters and provide comments.
- As part of the status update, Mr. Kalina presented a map showing 32 "growth areas" around the County. The locations of these are based on communities' plans and are symbolized by uniform-sized circles, meant to illustrate locations for growth, not the amount or geographic limits of growth.
 - Input from communities on the location of these growth areas is very important.
 - These growth centers will form the basis for future CommunityViz analysis of the impacts of growth.
- Mr. Kalina also presented the population projection data collected to date.
 - The Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council anticipates +8.7 percent growth to 2030.
 - Cornell University's projections show a -9.5% decline countywide by 2030.
 - For this study, we have utilized CommunityViz software to allocate Cornell's countywide projection to the Traffic Analysis Zone level using the GBNRTC data.
 - Projections also have a CommunityViz "slider bar" attached to them, allowing an interactive look at population projections by TAZ at various growth rates.

II. Introduction of Topic, Maps & Instructions

As at the previous Steering Committee meetings, community representatives divided into five (5) groups, based on sub-regions of the County. Each group included about 2 or 3 Plan Steering Committee representatives and varying numbers of representatives from educational institutions throughout the County, who were invited to participate in the discussions. The groups discussed questions as found on the Detailed Agenda for the meeting relative to educational institutions in Niagara County. At the conclusion of the breakout session, each group shared its findings.

IV. Breakout Session

Discussion Question #1

*Based on your experiences and knowledge of your community what do you consider to be the most pressing **issue or challenge** facing your community today **relative to educational institutions**? Do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and refer to some consideration points below to help with the discussion.*

Each group was asked to provide the following:

- An overall list of the issues and challenges identified by the group.
- The top three issues and challenges (as voted on by the group) that represent shared issues or challenges with other communities in the planning sub-region.

Groups were asked to consider these points:

1. How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Recent projections from Cornell University anticipate an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in some of the cities, but gains in other school districts in the County.]
2. How familiar are you with Niagara County school districts' performance relative to English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science achievement standards? Do any achievements or shortcomings stand out? Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
3. School district consolidation has been mentioned repeatedly throughout this process as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - i. Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - ii. Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - iii. Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs / activities than either could alone.

4. Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or being made in your community relative to educational facilities, including school districts and community-wide facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
5. Does your community need better access to:
 - i. Educational facilities (e.g. libraries, computer centers, etc.)?
 - ii. Higher education (colleges/universities)?
 - iii. Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, etc.)?
 - iv. Other facilities or programs?

Discussion Question #2

What is the most significant asset or opportunity that currently exists in your community relative to educational institutions? Again, do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and consider the same points above.

Each group was asked to provide the following:

- An overall list of the assets and opportunities identified by the group.
- The top three assets and opportunities (as voted on by the group) that represent shared assets and opportunities with the other communities in the planning sub-region.

IV. Reconvened as a Group to Summarize Discussions

The Plan Steering Committee members and invited stakeholders reconvened at the end of the breakout session. Each of the five groups was asked to provide a summary of their discussions, conclusions reached, and the lists of issues and opportunities each created.

These are provided below by Group.

RESPONSES from GROUP A

Town of Hartland, Town of Royalton, & Village of Middleport

Issues and Challenges:

- Missing key component of the working population:
 - Agriculture classes (e.g., Future Farmers of America)
 - Tech. classes
 - Computer classes
- Taxes increasing as population is decreasing
- Need for additional computer (Wi-Fi)/ library / resource center
- Need for satellite school/facility - NCCC

Assets and Opportunities:

- Royalton-Hartland School District has plenty of room for expansion without additional construction
- School grounds – environmentally clean!!

RESPONSES from GROUP B

Town of Cambria, Town of Lockport, City of Lockport, Town of Pendleton

Issues and Challenges:

1. Too many administrators? School consolidation is a major issue.
2. Teacher salaries should be uniform; there should be a level playing field from one school district to another.
3. There should be other funding sources than taxes
4. Services are duplicated in each district

Assets and Opportunities:

1. More than enough school buildings (“The greenest building is the one that’s already built.”)
2. Tie education to tourism, canal & wine trails
3. Educational programs, especially at the Community College level, can be tied to the County’s marketing / business development (e.g., if you want to attract employers in a specialized industry, take time to discuss how NCCC can help develop a workforce in that industry).

RESPONSES from GROUP C

Town of Somerset, Village of Barker, Town of Newfane, Town of Wilson, Village of Wilson

Issues and Challenges:

- Issues are similar to those of a private business
- Fuel costs are a major issue, because of the dispersed nature of the population in this area.
- Need more diverse sources of revenue
- Need to stay ahead of workforce needs and keep up with changes in technology (e.g., agricultural industry trends)
- Satisfy capacity needs

Assets and Opportunities:

- Nearly all districts in Niagara County have seen improved scores in math and science
- Consolidation of administrative / business functions may be possible
- Schools are community centers
- School facilities promote / provide quality of life activities – they are safe and clean
- Each student can get personalized attention in a rural school district

RESPONSES from GROUP D

Towns of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Villages of Lewiston, Village of Youngstown

Issues and Challenges:

1. Academic programs that match community/industry needs and opportunities (e.g., hospitality): disconnect between career guidance and local economic development programs.
2. Tax levies and budget approval are a big issue each year
3. Schools need up-to-date technology and infrastructure (hardware, software, etc.)
4. Need coordinated business partnerships with academia
5. School facilities need to be maintained
6. Schools need to be community centers for sports and athletic activities

7. Boards of Education should be policy makers and understand that they impact enrollment and the degree to which people want to move into their school districts.

Assets and Opportunities:

1. We have two higher education institutions in the community (2-year, 4-year and graduate programs: good variety for a range of student needs)
2. Good schools and higher education feed the intellectual desires of the community and attract new people
3. The BOCES system facilitates individual districts in purchasing, staff development, etc. Niagara U. offers teacher training.
3. Schools are major employers in the County.
3. Educational institutions give back/promote much in the community (service learning, volunteerism, etc.)
4. Library system (NIOGA)
5. School test scores are reasonably good and consistent
6. The area has an abundance of professional educators (good workforce to draw from)

RESPONSES from GROUP E

City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Town of Wheatfield, City of North Tonawanda

[The following items pertain primarily to the Niagara Falls City School District. The Niagara Wheatfield and North Tonawanda School Districts are also in this subregion.]

Issues and Challenges:

- Economically disadvantaged student population: enrollment has been dropping. Over the last two years, the district has lost 2000 students and compressed its facilities.
- Buildings are being closed / re-used / sold for other uses.
- Improve economic base to retain current generation of students.
- Student population is “needy”: guidance counselors are available for students starting at kindergarten level.

Assets and Opportunities:

- Infrastructure and buildings very well maintained as a result of State funding: Niagara Falls School District has not had to raise its tax levy in many years. State funding has meant that the budget has remained steadily in the \$20 to \$25 million range, despite falling population and enrollment.
- Residency rule for teachers in the District means a pool of well-paid professionals looking for upscale housing in the City.
- School facilities contribute to quality of life in the City: school libraries are open to the community, buildings are open for adult education, etc.
- BOCES: education oriented around job opportunities
- Pride Program: after-hours (3-5 pm) classes for school-aged kids who just want a GED.

OTHER ISSUES / QUESTIONS RAISED:

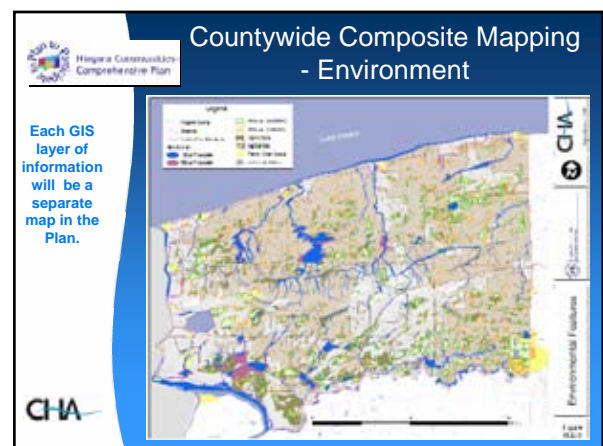
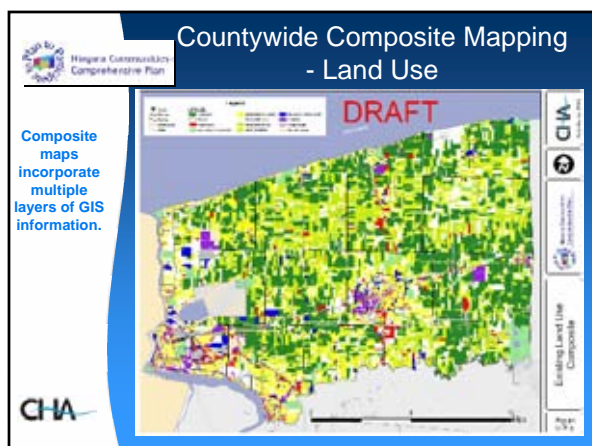
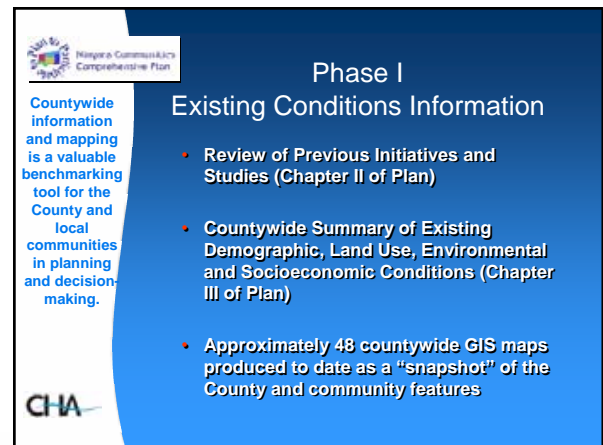
Q (from floor): How are public libraries financed? Why are they an item in some City budgets?

A (from floor): Sometimes library districts are a separate part of the school district – they may have a separate line in the budget, but may be getting some portion of the school tax, not an additional tax.

ISSUE: What is lacking is a good foundation for students in civics. Without this kind of empowerment, future generations will lack motivation for civic engagement and the tools they need to recommend improvements to their community. This is input that is lacking in making the kind of quality of life improvements that could mean greater retention of students. Local history also needs to be part of the curriculum.

ISSUE: On the subject of politics, the reality of local politics is the source of many of the issues being discussed, countywide.

The meeting ended at approximately 7pm.



**Work in Progress
– Community Profiles**


Profiles are important for benchmarking & comparisons to other communities.

- Community Profiles provide a brief summary of each of the 20 communities in Niagara County
- Each Community is working to complete its own Profile by identifying important local issues, opportunities, goals & objectives (local plans)
- Community Profiles will be incorporated as a Chapter into the Comprehensive Plan

CHA

Community Profile Example

Each community will have a profile summarizing existing conditions, local issues, goals & objectives.




CHA

Stakeholder Communities & Planning Sub-regions

Niagara County Stakeholder Communities:

- 12 Towns
- 3 Cities
- 5 Villages
- 3 Reservations
- 5 Sub-regions for planning purposes



CHA

Sub-regions by Community

Groups are identifying local issues & opportunities

- Group A - T. Hartland; T. Royalton; V. Middleport
- Group B - T. Cambria; T. Lockport; C. Lockport; T. Pendleton
- Group C - V. Wilson; V. Barker; T. Somerset; T. Newfane; T. Wilson
- Group D - T. Lewiston; T. Porter; V. Lewiston; V. Youngstown
- Group E - C. Niagara Falls; T. Niagara; T. Wheatfield; C. North Tonawanda

CHA

**Work in Progress
– Five Plan Elements**

Issues, Opportunities, Goals and Objectives are being identified for each Plan Element & by Sub-region:

- Land Use, Transportation & Environment
- Economic Development
- County Services, Facilities & Infrastructure
- Educational Institutions
- Health and Safety

CHA

**Key Issues
- Land Use & Transportation**

Land Use & Transportation Issues

- Group A - Preserve farmland & greenspace from sprawl; designate growth areas; vacancies along canal
- Group B - Parks & open space; Escarpment district; economic development vs. farmland
- Group C - Maintain agricultural character; industry and access to markets; ACOE permit regulations along lakefront
- Group D - Lack of change; opportunities in Lewiston; development in Youngstown and Porter
- Group E - Transportation-related issues; brownfields; change from open space to suburban development and infrastructure

CHA





Niagara County
Comprehensive Plan

Key Opportunities - Land Use & Transportation

Land Use & Transportation Opportunities

- Group A – Canal tourism; Rail access; agri-tourism
- Group B – Farmlands; Wine Trail; Comprehensive plans in place Lockport & Pendleton
- Group C – Route 18 & 104 access; Olcott & Wilson harbors; Rail access
- Group D – Riverfront and lakefront; ArtPark; Fort Niagara
- Group E – Niagara Falls; Upper & lower riverfront access; Niagara Falls airbase





Niagara County
Comprehensive Plan

Key Issues - Environment

Environment Issues

- Group A – Polluted lands, dumps & brownfields; water, soil and air quality; natural gas testing wells
- Group B – Escarpment protection; balance agriculture, development & loss of habitat; floodplain encroachment
- Group C – Agricultural waste and runoff; brownfields; water quality & drainage
- Group D – Ordinance Works; clean-up, control & oversight of the Ordinance Works
- Group E – Water quality; waterfront access; restoration of brownfields





Niagara County
Comprehensive Plan

Key Opportunities - Environment

Environment Opportunities

- Group A – Royalton Ravine; Canal; Nature trails
- Group B – Creeks & streams
- Group C – Lake Ontario; Agri-tourism; Harbors & State Parks
- Group D – Agriculture; Lakefront; Riverfront
- Group E – Waterfronts; Open space; Wildlife habitats






Niagara County
Comprehensive Plan

Key Issues - Economic Development

Economic Development Issues

- Group A – Keep farm products/processing local; small business expansion; upgrade infrastructure (sewer, natural gas, roads)
- Group B – High taxes esp. school taxes; Aging infrastructure; red tape & bureaucracy hinders ED
- Group C – NIMBY-ism; lack of sewer and natural gas; distance from main transportation routes
- Group D – Need to facilitate tourism; maintaining regional employment
- Group E – Challenges associated w/ OZ project; Need housing diversity; transportation services and need for multi-modes






Niagara County
Comprehensive Plan

Key Opportunities - Economic Development

Economic Development Opportunities

- Group A – Agri-tourism; Canal; Parks, recreation and conservation areas
- Group B – Wine Trail; NCCC; Erie Canal & Transit Road heritage corridors
- Group C – Harbor & lakefront; Road system; Potential uses of AES site in Somerset
- Group D – Geography of the area, rivers and lakes; Low cost of living and housing; Untapped potential of the area
- Group E – Niagara Falls; Riverfront areas





Niagara County
Comprehensive Plan

Key Issues - County Services, Facilities & Infrastructure

County Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Issues

- Group A – Feeling isolated from rest of County; better emergency services & response times; inclusion in more County projects
- Group B – Redundant services; pros and cons of Lockport as County seat; need greater efficiency in service delivery
- Group C – Lack of County services & facilities; distance to services in cities; insufficient police coverage
- Group D – Sparse Sheriff patrols; distance to services in Lockport and Niagara Falls
- Group E – Poor road conditions in NF; poor conditions of County buildings; better access to services for aging population



Hagera Communities Comprehensive Plan

Opportunities - County Services, Facilities & Infrastructure

County Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Opportunities

- Group A** – Need mobile services (DMV, social services, etc.); more shared services needed; decentralize County to towns and villages
- Group B** – Consolidate districts esp. water
- Group C** – More bus service for elderly and rural areas; service consolidation esp. water district; service sharing – police, etc.
- Group D** – Ability to take care of ourselves and provide services where needed
- Group E** – Cities could use help from county in maintaining roads; NF Airport has great potential; RR rows have potential for trails

CHA

Hagera Communities Comprehensive Plan

Identifying Potential Growth Areas

Potential growth areas are being identified from local plans and other sources of information.

Potential Growth Areas
Hagera Communities Comprehensive Plan

CHA

Hagera Communities Comprehensive Plan

Population Projections & Analysis

MPO projections indicate + 8.7% growth to 2030.

MPO PROJECTIONS POPULATION PROJECTIONS

CHA

Hagera Communities Comprehensive Plan

Population Projections & Analysis

Cornell projections indicate - 9.5% decline.

CORNELL PROJECTIONS POPULATION PROJECTIONS

CHA

Hagera Communities Comprehensive Plan

Population Projections & Analysis

Using CommunityViz it is possible to see any range in between both extremes

ZERO GROWTH POPULATION PROJECTIONS

CHA

Hagera Communities Comprehensive Plan

Work in Progress

- Establishing a Countywide Vision, Goals & Objectives
- Identifying Future Needs for Public Services & Facilities
- Prioritizing Capital Improvements & Investments in Infrastructure
- Identifying Strategies for
 - Strengthening the Local Economy
 - Protecting Important Natural Resources
 - Encouraging Desirable Development Patterns
 - Improving Quality of Life

CHA




Goals & Objectives

Goals & objectives are being prepared to address identified issues & opportunities and then these will be developed as action items in the Plan.



Issues being addressed include:

- Farmland protection and agricultural issues
- Growth, development and redevelopment opportunities
- Environmental protection and conservation measures
- Connections among Niagara County communities
- Economic development initiatives
- County services, facilities & infrastructure
- Education, public health & safety issues



Vision Statement Example #1

We the proud communities of Niagara County envision a future working together to create a world class living and working environment that befits the natural wonders and cultural heritage of our area. We will create sustainable economic health, protect and preserve our valuable and vital natural resources, and celebrate and enhance the unique character of each community. We will forge our future together with a sense of optimism, determination and connectedness to one another to assure that all residents and visitors enjoy a safe, healthy and productive environment.






Vision Statement Example #2

The Niagara County community is a collection of distinct municipalities working in collaboration to create a premier place to live, work and enjoy the fruit of our labor. Our legacy to future generations is the protection, preservation and conservation of our rich natural resources, productive lands and cultural heritage of our area in balance with sustainable economic vitality, quality job creation, physical health & well-being, and long-term safety and security.





What is your vision for Niagara County?

Important Reminders

- Public meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 27, 2008 at NCCC
- Public Hearing tentatively scheduled for October 1st, 2008 at NCCC
- Information exchange through the Stakeholders Communities Plan Steering Committee
- Plan Information is available through the County's website





Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

Notes of Meeting **Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee Meeting #6** **NCCC Faculty Dining Room - Student Center G212**

Wednesday, July 23, 2008
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Topic – Public Health and Safety

I. Introduction

Project Manager Walt Kalina welcomed the Steering Committee members and other stakeholders to the meeting and provided an update on the Comprehensive Plan's status:

- In order to provide a complete picture of individual communities' issues/ opportunities and goals/objectives, more communities need to prepare information for their community profiles. Some of the issues and opportunities information collected at stakeholder meetings can be used to fill these profiles in, but goals and objectives information is unique to each community and should be provided by the communities, perhaps as identified through existing local plans.

II. Visioning Exercise

Using two examples of vision statements of Niagara County, Mr. Kalina asked meeting attendees for their ideas or key words that could be used to describe Niagara County as it is now and words to describe the County in 20 years. A draft vision statement will be prepared for review at the next committee meeting.

- Descriptions of the County as it currently stands included:
 - Steeped in history
 - Unique
 - Premier
 - Mostly rural
 - Undiscovered beauty / beauty of our situation
 - We have Niagara Falls
 - Identification
 - Un-stereotyped
 - Border community
 - Take Canada for granted
 - Agricultural potential
 - Emerging viticulture
 - Locked in a megalopolis
 - Refreshing waterfront
 - Collaborative communities
 - Four seasons – refreshing weather

- Descriptions of the County in 2028 included:
 - World class tourist destination (that takes advantage of it)
 - Viticulture
 - Fishing
 - Cultural heritage: agricultural and historical resources preserved
 - Geographically located to support regional and industrial commerce
 - Healthy communities/healthy environment
 - Envious freshwater and water power
 - Easy to get to / not congested / spacious
 - Top educational facilities
 - Great place to live and raise a family
 - Continuous economic growth
 - Strong healthcare system nearby
 - National commerce
 - Safe
 - High quality jobs
 - Prepared and diverse workforce
 - Gentle lifestyle

III. Comprehensive Plan Objectives

- Working goals and objectives were presented for County Services, Infrastructure and Facilities and for Educational Institutions.
- The working collection of goals and objectives was available at the meeting for review. Steering committee members were asked for their input on these goals and objectives.

IV. Introduction of Topic and Instructions

As at the previous Steering Committee meetings, community representatives divided into groups, based on sub-regions of the County. Each group included about 2 or 3 Plan Steering Committee representatives and varying numbers of representatives from public health and public safety organizations and agencies from throughout the County. Because of a shortage of representatives from Group B (the Towns of Cambria, Lockport, and Pendleton and the City of Lockport), this part of the County was not discussed separately at the meeting. The two representatives from this part of the County joined other groups. The four groups discussed questions as found on the Detailed Agenda for the meeting relative to public health and public safety in Niagara County. At the conclusion of the breakout session, each group shared its findings.

Discussion Question #1 (20 minutes)

*Based on your experiences and knowledge of your community what do you consider to be the most pressing **issue or challenge** facing your community today **relative to public safety**? Do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and refer to some consideration points below to help with the discussion.*

Each group was asked to provide the following:

- An overall list of the issues and challenges identified by the group.
- The top three issues and challenges as voted on by the group that represent shared issues or challenges with other communities in the planning sub-region.

Groups were asked to consider these points:

1. What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
2. How would you rate the “visibility” of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
3. Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
4. How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
5. What is the level of awareness in your community of the County’s efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
6. What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
7. What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

Discussion Question #2 (5 minutes)

*What is the most significant **asset or opportunity** that currently exists in your community **relative to public safety**? Again, do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and consider the same points above.*

Each group was asked to provide the following:

- An overall list of the issues and challenges identified by the group.
- The top three issues and challenges as voted on by the group that represent shared issues or challenges with other communities in the planning sub-region.

Discussion Question #3 (20 minutes)

*Based on your experiences and knowledge of your community what do you consider to be the most pressing **issue or challenge** facing your community today **relative to public health**? Do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and refer to some consideration points below to help with the discussion.*

Each group was asked to provide the following:

- An overall list of the issues and challenges identified by the group.
- The top three issues and challenges as voted on by the group that represent shared issues or challenges with other communities in the planning sub-region.

Groups were asked to consider these points:

1. Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
2. Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
3. What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
4. Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
5. Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
6. What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

Discussion Question #4 (5 minutes)

What is the most significant asset or opportunity that currently exists in your community relative to public health? Again, do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and consider the same points above.

Each group was asked to provide the following:

- An overall list of the issues and challenges identified by the group.
- The top three issues and challenges as voted on by the group that represent shared issues or challenges with other communities in the planning sub-region.

IV. Reconvened as a Group to Summarize Discussions

The Plan Steering Committee members and invited stakeholders reconvened at the end of the second breakout session. Each of the four groups was asked to provide a summary of their discussions, conclusions reached, and the lists of issues and opportunities each created. **These are provided below by Group.**

RESPONSES from GROUP A

Town of Hartland, Town of Royalton & Village of Middleport

Question #1 (Public Safety Issues)

- Speed zones and caution light needed (104 & Checker Tavern)
- Emergency response time: Police – no Niagara County Sheriff or NYS Police presence
- Offer a health and wellness center
- Perceived health issues / lack of education-related to FMC
- Lack of mobility in emergency situations (Hartland, Middleport, Gasport)
- Need for local disaster plan and training in Royalton for increased train traffic and FMC

Question #2 (Public Safety Assets)

- Local police force presence
- Safe community – low crime
- Number of fire companies (5 in Royalton) – all work well together
- Ambulance services

Question #3 (Public Health Issues)

- [Included in Public Safety]

Question #4 (Public Health Assets)

- [Included in Public Safety]

RESPONSES from GROUP B

Town of Cambria, Town of Lockport, City of Lockport, Town of Pendleton

Only two representatives from Group B's communities were present; this group merged with other groups.

RESPONSES from GROUP C

Town of Somerset, Village of Barker, Town of Newfane, Town of Wilson, Village of Wilson

Question #1 (Public Safety Issues)

- Police – lack of quality coverage
- Fire – increasing demands on the volunteer fire service / ambulance service / EMT status – regulatory actions are a constant threat. Training and regulation standards are a demand on the time of volunteers. We couldn't afford a paid service.
- Health care network – ICMH serves areas very well along w/volunteer ambulance service – know when to refer
- Demand on ambulance vs. fire trucks but readiness of both – too much concentration on trucks in relation to their use.
- Border – telephone reporting system (honor system) doesn't work
- Border / Water – means an additional strain on local volunteer fire companies – water rescue / boat maintenance costs

Question #2 (Public Safety Assets)

- Border – Border Patrols means a little extra police force
- Coast Guard & County Sheriff's Water Patrol means an extra layer of policing
- Volunteer fire companies mean that there is more interaction with the public than in cities with paid fire companies

Question #3 (Public Health Issues)

- Border is porous and means there are a lot of "targets"
- No viable major routes for access / emergency evacuation

Question #4 (Public Health Assets)

- Disaster prep is pretty good
- Strong volunteer fire forces

RESPONSES from GROUP D

Towns of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Villages of Lewiston, Village of Youngstown

Question #1 (Public Safety Issues)

- Concern with response times for Sheriff's Dept.

Question #2 (Public Safety Assets)

- You see the Sheriff's Patrol Boat on the water frequently with the Coast Guard
- Presence of Border Patrol, helicopters, State Troopers and local police
- Volunteer fire companies provide fire protection and ambulance services
- "We leave our doors unlocked."

Question #3 (Public Health Issues)

- Concerns w/ LOOW site, Chemical Waste Management and Modern Disposal in our community
- Sewer plant reaching capacity

Question #4 (Public Health Assets)

- Abundance of EMS & health care facilities (St. Mary's Hospital, Our Lady of Peace, Fairchild Nursing Home, etc.)
- Community police force
- Very active volunteer fire depts. – mutual aid is often utilized during the day

RESPONSES from GROUP E

City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Town of Wheatfield, City of North Tonawanda

Question #1 (Public Safety Issues)

- Safety of Tourists – NF, Wheatfield (#1)
- Wheatfield – no workable emergency plan (#2)
- Traffic circulation – under and over-utilized roads (#3) – plenty of roads in some areas and not enough in others
- NF – continual stream of tourists and a large percentage of underprivileged residents
- As community changes, the County is slow to change w/public health and safety
- Overabundance of infrastructure
- Proliferation of services: multiple fire departments, school districts – requires a "need-based" analysis
- County as a whole: not producing students w/an appreciation of other people and property
 - Brain drain issue
 - Outmigration
 - Poverty related issues
 - Multi school districts
 - Population down, infrastructure in abundance, costs increasing
- Border crossing relationships
- Business, quality of life

Question #2 (Public Safety Assets)

- Military presence – secondary public safety support
 - Encourage development for military to be maintained and supported and influence the area

Question #3 (Public Health Issues)

- Multiple fire and ambulance districts (#1)
- Social services – large part of County budgets (#2)
- Abundance of older adults (#3)
- NF: noise pollution, abundance of dogs – stress levels are high
- Heart disease and obesity higher in NC than downstate
- Talk about increasing waste imports to the County
- Politicians have begun to “politick” rather than legislate

Question #4 (Public Health Assets)

- Array of medical facilities (#1)
- Military airbase – in a central location (supplemental fire fighting services, if needed)
- Local fire departments – have specialized training
- Fresh water
- Sewage treatment
- EMTs, Fire, Police – arrive quickly in NF

The meeting ended at approximately 7 pm.



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

Notes of Meeting **Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee Meeting #7** **NCCC Faculty Dining Room - Student Center G212**

Wednesday, August 27, 2008
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Topic – Visioning & Development Suitability Analysis

I. Introduction

- Project Manager Walt Kalina welcomed meeting attendees and summarized the meeting's agenda. Handouts available included:
 - Notes of July 23rd Plan Steering Committee Meeting
 - Community profiles
 - Draft "Connectivity" map
 - PowerPoint presentation summary
- Mr. Kalina introduced Peter Young of Community Oriented Geography, who has been using CommunityViz geographic information systems (GIS) software to analyze development suitability criteria countywide.
- Mr. Kalina reminded Plan Steering Committee members to provide input on behalf of their communities by way of the Community Profiles.
 - A question was raised regarding the major employer data on the community profiles. Specifically, the most recent draft of the Community Profiles does not reflect input previously provided on major employers. Mr. Kalina said that the previously provided information would be added to the profiles.
 - Mr. Kalina indicated that the Community Profiles have been reformatted to accommodate building permit data and the additional information has taken up any remaining room for community photos. However, photos will likely be used on the cover of the Plan and elsewhere in the document, so Steering Committee members are still encouraged to provide them.

II. Plan Status Update

- Mr. Kalina provided an update on the status of the Planning Process
 - The planning process is entering Phase III, Plan Preparation, wrapping up Phase II, Analysis.
 - The County's Vision Statement has been developed, based on Steering Committee input. Comments are invited on this Vision Statement.
 - Draft Goals and Objectives have been developed for each focus area of the plan (Land Use & Environment, Economic Development, etc.).
 - The cities, towns and villages in Niagara County have been classified in a matrix according to their overall development pattern (urban, suburban or rural) and the general development trend seen (developed, developing or undeveloped). Comments are invited on this matrix.
 - This matrix can be used to organize the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan, ensuring that the Plan both respects

- communities' differences and is relevant to their common issues, even as these communities change over time.
- The CommunityViz analysis continues to be developed and refined as data is added and updated.

III. Overview of CommunityViz Analysis

- Peter Young presented the CommunityViz analysis for the Comprehensive Plan, as it has progressed to date.
 - The CommunityViz analysis is intended to provide guidance on which parts of the County are better suited for development/redevelopment and which parts are better suited for natural resource preservation, based on planning principles and the geographic data compiled to date.
 - For the initial run of the CommunityViz analysis, only parcels near previously identified "development/redevelopment centers" were evaluated.
 - The analysis of parcels' development/redevelopment suitability was based on ten suitability factors, including:
 - ENVIRONMENT – Whether or not a parcel overlaps with the combined environmental constraints data.
 - A higher percentage of overlap with environmentally sensitive areas results in a lower score.
 - Environmentally sensitive areas currently include 100-year floodplains, agricultural district areas with prime ag soils, stream/riparian corridors, and wetlands (all DEC wetlands and NWI wetlands larger than 20 acres).
 - SUSTAINABILITY – Proximity to the draft development/redevelopment areas as currently defined from local plans.
 - Parcels closer to these areas get higher scores.
 - INFRASTRUCTURE 1 – Proximity to sewer districts.
 - A parcel gets a higher score if it is in or near a sewer district.
 - INFRASTRUCTURE 2 – Proximity to major roads.
 - A parcel gets a higher score if it is near a major road.
 - CURRENT ZONING – Within appropriate zoning district.
 - Parcels get higher scores if zoned commercial (C, C1, C2, C3), business (B, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5), light industrial (LI or IP), manufacturing (M1), mixed use (RC, VB), multi-family residential (R3), or planned unit development (PUD).
 - CURRENT SOCIAL FABRIC – Proximity to existing community anchors.
 - Parcels get higher scores if their property class code is 452 (Neighborhood Shopping Centers), 454 (Large Retail Food), 460-469 (Banks and Office Buildings), 480-489 (Multi-Use), 540-549 (Indoor Sports), 611 (Libraries), 640-642 (Health), 652 (Government Offices), 681 (Cultural Facilities), 710-715 (Manufacturing), or 800 (Public Services).
 - AVAILABLE SPACE – Whether or not the parcel is vacant.
 - Parcels get higher scores if they have a "vacant" property class code (300 - 399).
 - PUBLIC SERVICE 1 – Available School Capacity.
 - Parcels get higher scores if they are located in a school district with available capacity.
 - PUBLIC SERVICE 2 – Proximity to Fire Stations.
 - Parcels get higher scores if near existing fire stations.

- **DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS** – Whether or not the area is expected to gain or lose population based on population projections.
 - Parcels get higher scores if they are located in a TAZ with projected population growth.
 - This measure uses the TAZ-based population projections from GBNRTC, not the projections from Cornell University.
- The relative weights of these factors in determining an area’s overall score can be modified, using CommunityViz software.
- The analysis not only rates parcels’ suitability, but can be used to aggregate parcel information in order to rate the overall suitability of the identified development/redevelopment centers themselves.
- Comments and Questions from the Floor (paraphrased)

Q: Can the software be set up to differentiate between “development” and “redevelopment” centers?

A: The analysis may allow that eventually, but it is not ready to be used at that level of detail just yet.

Q: Some elements of the Social Fabric layer should be eliminated (e.g., the Army Base, the LOOW / CWM site, Bell Aerospace in Wheatfield, “notorious” brownfield sites, etc.)

A: We will take note of these and make sure that they are not included in the next run of the analysis.

Q: Some sewer districts appear to be missing, specifically Middleport, Youngstown, and Lewiston.

A: Thank you. We will make sure these omissions are corrected.

Q: Why does the rating of centers seem to show everything north and east of Lockport as poorly suited for development?

A: The most likely explanation is that the development/redevelopment centers themselves need to be re-evaluated. That is one goal of the analysis: to assist in identifying development/redevelopment centers that maximize community assets and minimize the development of lands where valuable natural resources are present.

Q: Will this application be available to my community? Will we be able to modify the weighted factors used to determine suitability?

A: We are in the process of identifying the best way to make the application available to the public. Niagara County will have the model and the underlying data.

IV. Wrap-Up

- The next, and final, Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee meeting will be held sometime in September with the date, time, and location to be determined.
- The Public Hearing is tentatively scheduled for October 1st at NCCC.
- Walt Kalina reminded meeting attendees that there is a public meeting immediately following today’s Plan Steering Committee meeting and he encouraged attendees to stay for this meeting, as well.

The meeting ended at approximately 7 pm.

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

Information Meeting

August 27, 2008



Niagara Communities
Comprehensive Plan



Today's Agenda

- I. **Project Information Update**
County Website
Citizens Guide
- II. **Phase I Existing Conditions**
Plan Chapters & Countywide Mapping
Stakeholder Community Profiles
- III. **Phase II Analysis**
Issues & Opportunities
Vision, Goals & Objectives
CommunityViz Analyses
Strategies & Recommendations
- IV. **Phase III Plan Preparation**
Draft Review & Public Hearing



Overall Guiding Principles - Planning Process

- *To Enhance Communication*
- *To Facilitate Collaboration*
- *To Improve Connections*



Niagara County Website

Project Information and Posted Materials

- Project Schedules
- Meeting Notes & Agendas
- Draft Plan Chapters, Community Profiles
- Draft Plan GIS Mapping & Analysis
- Links to Other Planning Sites of Interest



Citizens' Guide

The first guide to Niagara County Government

- Accessible through the County website
- Directory of County officials
- Overview of County budget
- Information on County departments & services



Phase I Existing Conditions Information

- Review of Previous Initiatives
(Chapter II of Plan)
- Countywide Summary & GIS Mapping
of Existing Conditions
(Chapter III of Plan)
- Stakeholder Communities Profiles
(Chapter IV of Plan)



Countywide &
community-
specific
information
and mapping
for better
decision-
making.



Five Plan Elements

Land Use & Environment

Economic Development

County Services, Facilities & Infrastructure

Education

Public Health & Safety

Existing Conditions

Chapter II is a summary of previous initiatives and studies that formed the basis for more detailed information in the Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter III consists of a snapshot of existing conditions in the County focused on the five Plan Elements including more than 40 countywide maps.

GIS maps contain information on existing environmental resources & land use.

Countywide Mapping

Profiles provide a quick overview of important community information.

Stakeholder Community Profiles

- Community profiles provide a brief summary of each community in Niagara County including land use & socioeconomic conditions
- Profiles contain information on local issues, opportunities, goals & objectives, in some cases based on local comprehensive plans
- Profiles are a snapshot of local conditions and can be used for benchmarking

Each stakeholder community has a profile summarizing existing conditions, local issues, goals & objectives.

Chapter IV Community Profiles

Niagara County Stakeholder Communities:

- 12 Towns
- 3 Cities
- 5 Villages
- 3 Reservations

5 Sub-regions for planning purposes

Stakeholder Communities & Planning Sub-regions

Issues & Opportunities

- Each community invited to participate as members of a Steering Committee
- Focus of several meetings was on identifying significant issues & opportunities specific to each community and to each sub-region according to each plan element



Land Use & Transportation Issues

Key Issues & Needs - Land Use & Transportation

- Preserve farmland & greenspace from sprawl
- Designate growth areas & address vacant lands along canal
- Protect parklands & open space
- Promote economic development and farming
- Maintain rural agricultural character
- Enhance local industries and access to markets
- Improve overall lack of change in communities
- Address transportation needs and alternatives
- Encourage brownfield redevelopment
- Manage changes in character from rural to suburban




Land Use & Transportation Opportunities

Key Opportunities - Land Use & Transportation

- Canal tourism
- Agri-tourism
- Farmlands
- Wine Trail
- Local comprehensive plans in place
- Olcott & Wilson harbors
- Riverfront and lakefront
- ArtPark and Fort Niagara
- Niagara Falls, upper & lower riverfront access
- Niagara Falls airbase




Environmental Issues

Key Issues & Needs - Environment


- Clean-up polluted lands, dumps & brownfields
- Protect quality of water, soil and air
- Local concern with natural gas test wells
- Protect Niagara Escarpment
- Balance agriculture, development & loss of habitat
- Floodplain encroachment
- Agricultural waste and runoff
- Clean-up, control & oversight of Ordinance Works
- Improve waterfront access
- Restoration of brownfield areas




Environment Opportunities

Key Opportunities - Environment


- Royalton Ravine
- Nature trails
- Erie Canal
- Creeks & streams
- Lake Ontario, harbors
- State Parks
- Agricultural lands
- Waterfronts - lakefront & riverfront
- Open spaces
- Wildlife habitats

Economic Development Issues

Key Issues & Needs - Economic Development

- Keep farm products & processing local
- Expand small business investment;
- Upgrade aging public infrastructure (sewer, roads, nat. gas)
- Control high taxes esp. school taxes
- Reduce red tape & bureaucracy that hinders Econ. Devel.
- NIMBY-ism and negative attitudes toward change
- Lack of sewer and natural gas in rural areas
- Distances from main transportation routes
- Need to facilitate tourism
- Maintaining regional employment
- Need housing diversity
- Transportation & distances to services, provide multi-modes





Economic Development Opportunities

Key Opportunities - Economic Development

- Agri-tourism
- Erie Canal, parks, recreation & conservation areas
- Wine Trail
- NCCC
- Transit Road, heritage corridors
- Harbors & lakefront
- Potential uses of AES site in Somerset
- Geography of the area, rivers and lakes
- Low cost of living and housing
- Untapped potential of the area
- Niagara Falls and riverfront areas






Niagara County
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County Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Issues

Key Issues & Needs County Services, Facilities & Infrastructure

- Feeling isolated from rest of County
- Improve emergency services & response times
- Inclusion in more County projects
- Reduce redundant services
- Pros and cons of Lockport as County seat
- Need greater efficiency in service delivery
- Lack of County services & facilities in rural areas
- Distance to services provided only in cities
- Insufficient police coverage esp. Sheriff patrols
- Poor road conditions in Niagara Falls
- Poor conditions of County buildings
- Need better access to services for aging population






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County Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Opportunities

Key Opportunities County Services, Facilities & Infrastructure

- Need mobile services (DMV, social services, etc.)
- Need more shared services – police, etc.
- Decentralize County services to towns and villages
- Consolidate special districts esp. water
- Need more bus service for elderly and rural areas
- Local ability to take care of ourselves & provide services
- Cities could use help from County in maintaining roads
- NF Airport has great potential
- Railroad ROWs have potential for trails







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 Strategic Plan

Education Issues

Key Issues & Needs Education

- Address workforce needs w/ tech classes (e.g. agriculture), computers, Wi-Fi, library, resources, software/hardware
- School tax burden increasing as population decreases
- Need NCCC satellite facility
- Too many administrators & duplication of services
- Need uniform teacher salaries
- Find sources of funding/revenue other than taxes
- Fuel costs and dispersed populations in rural areas
- Academic programs to match community/industry needs
- Need community centers for sports and athletics
- Improve economic base to retain students
- Teach civics and local history – promote civic engagement






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Education Opportunities

Key Opportunities Education

- Some districts have excess capacity w/o new construction
- Education programs at college level can be better tied to County's marketing & business development
- Nearly all districts have seen improved test scores
- Consolidation of administrative/business functions may be possible
- Schools are community centers, clean & safe
- Students in rural districts get personalized attention
- County's college & university can meet range of needs
- BOCES facilitates districts' needs/ oriented to job needs
- Schools are major employers
- School facilities and libraries contribute to quality of life





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Public Health & Services Issues

Key Issues & Needs Public Health & Services

- Improve response times and police presence (State & County)
- Offer health and wellness center
- Concerns with local mobility in emergency situations and local disaster planning
- Increasing time demands on volunteers
- Water rescue places demands on local departments
- Concern with hazardous waste sites and waste imports
- Proliferation of services – requires need based analysis
- Need workable local emergency plans
- Concern with safety of tourists
- Social services, budgets and abundance of older adults
- Heart disease, stress & obesity concerns in County






Niagara County
 Comprehensive
 Strategic Plan

Public Health & Services Opportunities

Key Opportunities Public Health & Services

- Safe communities and low crime
- Number of fire companies – all work well together
- Border Patrol, Sheriff Patrol Boat and Coast Guard provide extra police services
- Disaster preparation is pretty good
- Abundance of EMS and health care facilities
- Community police forces
- Active volunteer fire departments
- Military presence enhances public safety
- Fresh water






Draft Vision Statement

Vision

Niagara County - known world wide as the home of natural wonders: Niagara Falls, the Niagara River & Gorge, the Niagara Escarpment and much more. We are a composite of unique communities steeped in history and prepared for the future. We are working together to ensure that our gift to future generations is a sustainable environment that protects rich natural resources, conserves productive lands and celebrates cultural heritage.

Niagara County - a world class destination that offers something for everyone, from vibrant historic waterfront cities, towns and villages, to the undiscovered rural beauty and gentle lifestyle of our farming communities.

Niagara County - a center of national and international commerce, and a safe and healthy place to raise a family, attend fine institutions of learning, find high quality employment, be part of a well-prepared and productive workforce, and live comfortably.






Goals & Objectives

Goals & objectives are being prepared to address identified issues & enhance opportunities. These will translate into implementable action items in the Plan.

Key goals and objectives are centered around a number of important topics including:

- Protecting the long-term viability of agriculture, prime farmlands and rural character by managing sprawl
- Implementing sustainable management practices to promote open space conservation and protection of resources and environmentally sensitive lands
- Increasing connectivity, coordination and collaboration among Niagara County communities
- Enhancing communication and information sharing among communities and all levels of government






Goals & Objectives (continued)

Key goals and objectives are centered around:

- Maintaining existing infrastructure and prioritizing capital improvements to enhance redevelopment and infill opportunities
- Increasing efficiency and cost savings in County services and facilities utilizing state-of-the-art technologies and team-centered management
- Enhancing accessibility to education and County services
- Facilitate the creation and use of energy saving technologies and alternative modes of transportation
- Aligning education and training programs in preparing the workforce for future needs of businesses




Community Matrix

Land Use & Development Character

	Developed	Developing	Undeveloped
Urban	C. Lockport C. Niagara Falls C. North Tonawanda	N/A	N/A
Suburban	V. Lewiston T. Niagara V. Youngstown	T. Lockport T. Pendleton T. Wheatfield	N/A
Rural	V. Barker V. Middleport V. Wilson	T. Cambria T. Lewiston T. Newfane	T. Hartland T. Porter T. Royalton T. Somerset T. Wilson

Strategies & recommendations are being organized in the Plan by different types of existing development character.





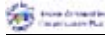
Community Matrix

Land Use & Development Character

	Developed	Developing	Undeveloped
Urban	C. Lockport C. Niagara Falls C. North Tonawanda	N/A	N/A
Suburban	V. Lewiston T. Niagara V. Youngstown	T. Lockport T. Wheatfield	N/A
Rural	V. Barker V. Middleport V. Wilson	T. Lewiston T. Newfane T. Pendleton	T. Cambria T. Hartland T. Porter T. Royalton T. Somerset T. Wilson


Strategies & recommendations are being organized in the Plan by different types of existing development character.





Strategies & Recommendations

Strategies & recommendations are being developed based in part on the analyses of some key natural and man-made factors that may influence land development trends and patterns, or in turn be influenced by land use development and related decisions, such as the provision of public infrastructure. Considering these factors in different ways using GIS database mapping and *CommunityViz* modeling as planning tools can result in alternative development strategies for the various sub-regions of the County.





Important Reminders

- **Public Hearing** tentatively scheduled for **October 1st, 2008** at **NCCC**
- **Plan Information** is available through the **County's website**

www.alameda-county.com/comprehensiveplan.asp





Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

Notes of Meeting **Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee Meeting #8** **Niagara County Center for Economic Development**

Wednesday, September 17, 2008
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Topic – Community Connections

I. Introduction

- Project Manager Walt Kalina welcomed meeting attendees and provided an overview of the meeting agenda. Mr. Kalina reminded everyone that this was the last scheduled meeting of the Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee, but encouraged everyone to continue to communicate their ideas and community profile input by way of email.
- Mr. Kalina made note of an important change in the Comprehensive Plan's schedule: the Public Hearing scheduled for October 1, 2008 is being postponed until after an additional five public meetings can be held in locations throughout the County. An initial draft of the Plan will be available for review prior to these meetings, which will be scheduled for early 2009.
- Handouts available included:
 - Notes of the August 29, 2008 Steering Committee Meeting
 - "Suitability Scores by Parcel" map based on CommunityViz
 - Suitability Factor Rating Form
 - Community Profiles
 - Vision Statement

II. CommunityViz Analysis

- Mr. Kalina introduced the countywide development/redevelopment suitability analysis being prepared using CommunityViz geographic information system (GIS) software. The data being prepared can be utilized by individual communities to define the boundaries of potential development or redevelopment centers within or adjacent to existing communities.
- Mr. Kalina explained that the CommunityViz analysis had been fine-tuned since the August 29th meeting. (For details on the model's methodology, see the August 29, 2008 meeting notes.) Changes to the model included:
 - Addition of an "Agricultural Districts" suitability factor, which lowers the overall suitability score of parcels within agricultural districts.
 - Elimination of remedial sites, landfills, wastewater treatment plants and parks from consideration as "social fabric anchors". Individual communities will need to determine how to integrate these uses into their long-range plans.
- Meeting attendees received a copy of the development/redevelopment suitability rating map produced by considering 11 factors for each parcel in the County. In general terms, the Comprehensive Plan will recommend preservation strategies for areas with relatively low scores and techniques for encouraging sustainable development in areas with relatively high scores. Mr. Kalina clarified that areas with

low scores are not considered undevelopable and areas with high scores should not be considered “open to development.” The suitability ratings are meant to assist communities in matching development ideas with the locations in which they are most appropriate and to help identify resource protection priorities.

III. Breakout Sessions

- Meeting attendees split into smaller groups (by the table at which they were seated, not by planning sub-regions as was done at previous meeting) for two tasks: ranking the CommunityViz suitability factors for the portion of the County in which their community is located and discussing physical connections between communities in the County. Community connections discussed included:
 - A bikeway along the lakeside portion of the Seaway Trail, connecting to riverside trails.
 - Possible use of the County’s many snowmobile trails for equestrian use. This led to an extended discussion of the possibility of expanding equestrian activities in Niagara County generally. [The question was raised of how many horses are currently in Niagara County: according to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, there are 1,698 horses and ponies in the County, or 2.3% of the statewide total.]
 - People-moving systems (east-west and north-south), transit and rail.
 - Improvements in connections to specific destinations, such as the Seneca-Niagara Casino and medical facilities (especially from rural communities).
 - Toronto-Niagara rail connection.
 - Connections between wineries using equestrian trails.

IV. Future Meetings and Wrap-Up

- This was the last scheduled meeting of the Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee. Mr. Kalina thanked all of the participants for their time and for being such excellent partners in the planning process. The County is planning five additional public meetings, one in each of the planning sub-regions of the County to broaden the public participation/community outreach process. During the meeting, Mr. Ben Bidell, Planner with the Niagara County Department of Economic Development asked meeting attendees for suggestions on where to hold additional meetings. Suggested locations included:
 - Upper River Communities:
 - Niagara Falls City Hall
 - Wheatfield Town Hall
 - North Tonawanda City Hall
 - Lakefront Communities:
 - Wilson High School Auditorium
 - Barker High School Auditorium
 - Newfane Community Center (Old Miller Fire Hose Co.)
 - Lower River Communities
 - Lewiston-Porter School District – school facilities
 - Eastern Communities
 - Gasport Elementary School
 - Central Communities
 - Lockport City Hall
 - Palace Theatre

The meeting ended at approximately 8 pm.

Niagara County Planning Census 2007

APPENDIX B

NIAGARA COUNTY PLANNING CENSUS 2007

Municipality	Comprehensive Master Plan				Zoning Text				Zoning Map					Local Waterfront Revitalization Program					Subdivision Regulations				GIS Mapping			Cell Tower Regulations	
	Adopted (Y/N)	Date of Original Adoption	Most Recent Update	Updated Version on File?	Adopted (Y/N)	Date of Original Adoption	Most Recent Update	Updated Version on File?	Adopted (Y/N)	Date of Original Adoption	Most Recent Update	Updated Version on File?	Map Appears to be GIS format	Adopted (Y/N)	Date of Original Adoption	Most Recent Update	Approved by NYS? (Y/N)	Updated Version on File?	Adopted (Y/N)	Date of Original Adoption	Most Recent Update	Updated Version on File?	Have (Y/N)	If Yes, Zoning Electronically?	Updated Version on File?	Have on File	Date
City Lockport	Y	1998	N/A	Y	Y	1984	2004	No - Have 1997	Y	1984	1998	Y	Yes - have GIS files	N	N/A	In process	N	N/A	Y	1971	1991	No - Have None	Y	Y	Y		
City Niagara Falls	Y	1992	Draft - 2004	Y	Y	No info. provided	1998	Y	Y	No info. provided	No info. provided	No Date on Map	Yes - have GIS files	N	Not adopted	2004	N	N/A	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	2007
City North Tonawanda	Y	1990	N/A	Y	Y	No info. provided	No info. provided	Y	Y	No info. provided	No info. provided	Y	No	Y	1998	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	1970	N/A	Y	N	N/A	N/A		
Town Cambria	Y	1965	1997	Y	Y	1939	2004	Y	Y	1939	2004	Y	Yes; source Wendel	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	1965	2007	Y	Y - Initial stages	N	N/A	Y	2002
Town Hartland	Y	1998	N/A	Y	Y	1986	2006	Y	Y	1983	2008	Y	Yes- have GIS files	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	1986	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	None provided
Town Lewiston	Y	2000	In process	Y	Y	1963	2004	Y	Y	1963	2008	Y	Yes- have GIS files	Y	2000	N/A	Y	Y	Y	1963	2004	Y	N	N/A	N/A	Y	1997
Town Lockport	Y	1963	1997	Y	Y	1961	2005	Y	Y	1961	2008	Y	Yes - have GIS files	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	1965	2003	Y	Y	Y	Y	Included within Zoning Code	2005
Town of Newfane	Y	1970	1998	Y	Y	1972	1999	Y	Y	1972	2005	Y	Yes - have GIS files	Y	1986	1998	Y	Y	Y	1993	2001	Y	N	N/A	N/A	Special Use Provision in zoning code	N/A
Town of Niagara	Y	1939	1972	Y	Y	2001	2008	Y	Y	No info. provided	2006	Y	Yes; source CRA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	1999	2000	Y	N	N/A	N/A	Y	N/A
Town Pendleton	N	1990	In process	Y	Y	No info. provided	2005	Y	Y	No info. provided	2004	Y	Yes- have GIS files	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	No info. provided	2001	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	1997
Town Porter	Y	1981	2004	Y	Y	1968	1995 (In process)	Y	Y	1968	2005 (In process)	Y	Yes; source R&D	N/A	N/A	In process	N/A	N/A	Y	1963	1975 (In process)	Y	No info. provided	No info. provided	N/A	Y	N/A
Town Royalton	N/A	N/A	In process	N/A	Y	1955	1999	Y	Y	1955	2006	Y	Yes; source unknown	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	1975	1996	Y	Y	N	N/A		
Town Somerset	Y	1971	2003	Y	Y	1978	2007	Y	Y	1978	2005	Y	Yes; source Wendel	Y	2005	N/A	Y	N - None on file	Y	1984	2007	Y	Y	N	N/A	Y	1997
Town Wheatfield	Y	No info. provided	2004	Y	Y	1988	2003	Y	Y	No info. provided	2004	Y	Yes; source Wendel	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	1995	In process	Y	Y	Y	Available on Town website only	Y	2004
Town Wilson	Y	1966	N/A	Y	Y	1972	1994	Y	Y	1975	2006	Y	Yes; source Metzger Civil	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	1994	2006	Y	N	N/A	N/A	Y	2006
Village Barker	Y	1972	N/A	Y	Y	1958	2004	Y	Y	1958	2000	Y	No	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N	N/A	N/A	Y	1997
Village Lewiston	Y	1973	2004	Y	Y	1973	In process	Y	Y	1973	In process	Y	No	Y	1991	N/A	Y	Y	Y	1973	In process	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	2001
Village Middleport	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	1955	2006	Y	Y	1954	2001	Y	Yes; source Wendel	Y	2002	N/A	2003	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N	N/A	N/A	Y	2001
Village Wilson	Y	1966	N/A	Y	Y	1970	1994	Y	Y	1994	N/A	Y	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y		
Village Youngstown	No info. Provided	1974	N/A	Y	Y	1962	2004	Y	Y	1976	2004	Y	Yes - have GIS files	Y	1989	N/A	Y	Y	Y	1977	1998	Y	Y	Y	Y		

Footnotes

	Muni submitted most recent version
	Version on file is not the most current version according to the October 2007 municipal survey

APPENDIX C

Niagara County Planning Board Referral Guide

Proposed Actions Requiring Referral

New York State General Municipal Law, Article 12B, Section 239 requires specific actions to be referred to the County for review if they involve issuance of a special permit, approval of a site plan or subdivision, granting of a use or area variance, or the amendment of a comprehensive plan, local law, or zoning ordinance where the action is within 500 feet of the following:

- Boundary of a city, town, or village*
- Boundary of an existing or proposed county or state park or any other recreation area
- Right-of-way of any existing or proposed county or state parkway, road, or highway or County-owned drainage channel
- Existing or proposed boundary of any county or state land on which a public building or institution is located
- Boundary of a farm operation located in an agricultural district

** As of July 1, 2006, this action requires notification to adjoining municipalities.*

Referral Exemptions

Several municipalities have entered into inter-municipal agreements with Niagara County exempting referral of certain actions.

Why is there a County Planning Board?

New York State General Municipal Law, Article 12B, Section 239 establishes the right for counties to create a County Planning Board. The intent of a county planning board is to review actions that may have countywide or inter-community impacts. Through the County Planning Board, the County is given the opportunity to review those development proposals that that might have a significant effect beyond the city, village, or town boundaries.

The Niagara County Planning Board (NCPB) consists of nine volunteer members appointed by the Niagara County Legislature. Each member serves a three-year term and brings various expertise related to planning and zoning ensuring a comprehensive review of proposed actions.



Notice of Final Action

Step 6 - Within thirty days after taking final action, the municipality shall send a notice of final action to the NCPB. Notice of final action forms are available at the NCDED and can be submitted by mail or fax.

Referral Deadlines

The NCPB meets the third Monday of every month. Referral applications are due to the NCDED ten days prior to the NCPB meeting. Applications received after the deadline will be reviewed at the following month's meeting. The NCPB has thirty days to provide a recommendation. If the NCPB fails to make a recommendation within thirty days, the municipality may take final action on the proposed action without the NCPB's recommendation.



For more information contact:

Niagara County Department
of Economic Development
Vantage Center, Suite One
6311 Inducon Corporate Drive
Sanborn, New York 14132
Telephone: (716) 278-8750
Fax: (716) 278-8757
Business Assistance Hotline:
(716) 278-8230

Niagara County Planning Board Referral Guide



A Guide for Local Officials

Prepared By

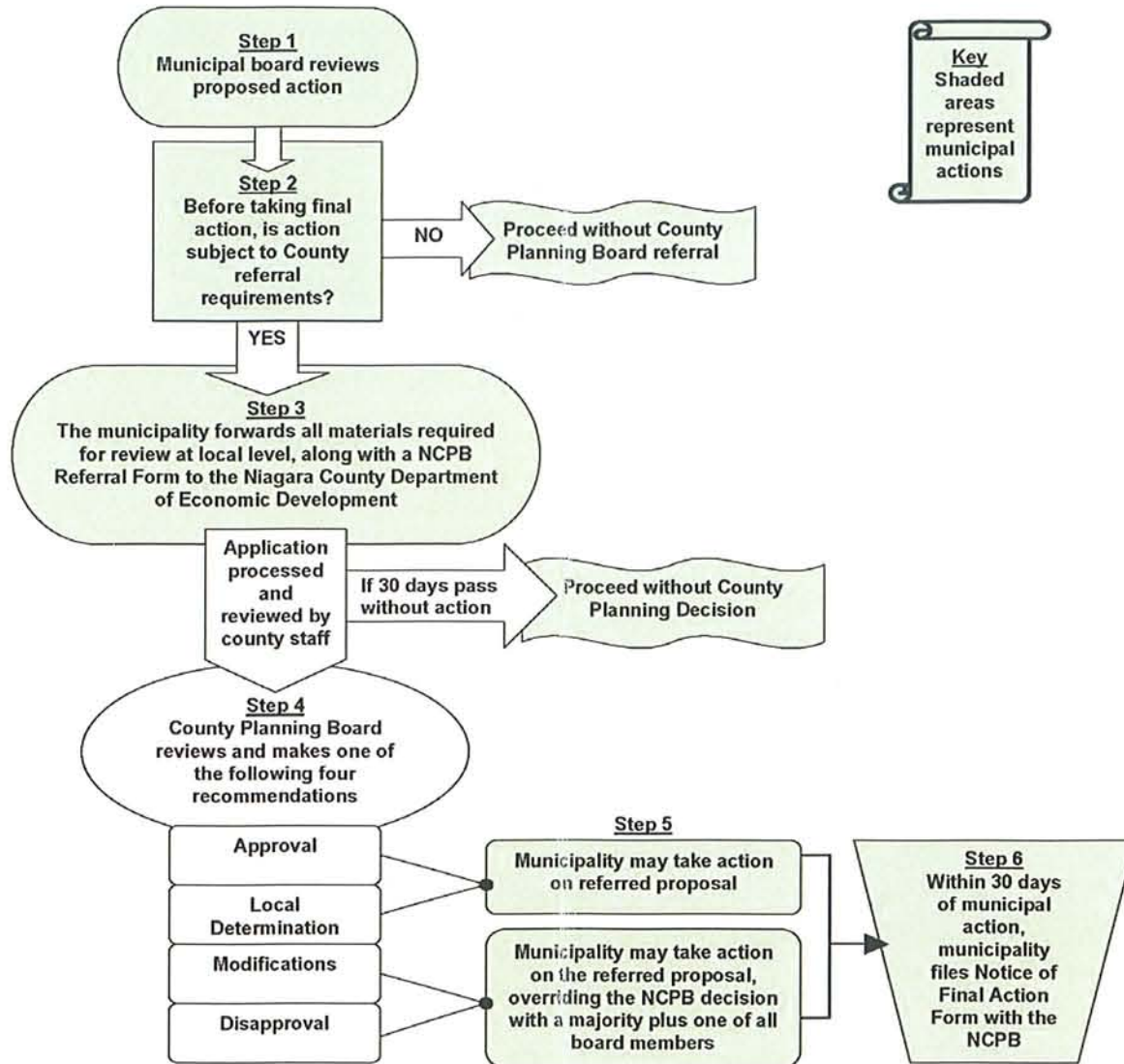
Niagara County
Center for Economic Development

Samuel M. Ferraro
Commissioner

September 2006

Niagara County Planning Board Referral Process

Figure 1. Niagara County Referral Flowchart



Procedures

Step 1 - The municipality reviews the proposed action and provides comments.

Step 2 - Before taking final action the municipality checks to see if the action is subject to County referral.

Step 3 - If the proposed action is subject to County referral, the municipality forwards all materials required for review at the local level, along with a NCPB Referral Form, to the Niagara County Department of Economic Development (NCDED). The application and completed referral form must include:

- The type of application (variance, rezoning, site plan review, etc.)
- The exact location, boundaries, and SBL number(s) for the property
- Zoning classification of the property
- Description of proposed action providing enough detail to allow the NCPB to evaluate potential impacts
- Completed SEQR documents and, if applicable, backup documentation used by municipality to make a SEQR determination

Step 4 - For each referral, the NCPB considers the following:

- Land use compatibility
- Traffic impacts and effects on existing infrastructure and emergency services
- Drainage and greenspace issues
- Impacts on existing and proposed county or state institutions
- Overall impacts to the community
- Impacts on policies, comprehensive plans, and capital improvement programs
- Protection of community character

The NCPB shall recommend approval, modification, or disapproval of the proposed action or report that the proposed action has no significant countywide impact (local determination).

Step 5 - The NCPB will return the recommendation to the municipal referring officer indicated on the NCPB referral form. If the NCPB recommends modification or disapproval of the proposed action, the municipality can act contrary to the recommendation only with a vote of majority plus one of all board members.

APPENDIX D

Niagara County National and State Historic Resources

Niagara County -
State and National Register Listing

National Register Number	Resource Name	Address	City	National Register Date	State Register Date
00NR01684	District No. 10 Schoolhouse	9713 Seaman Road	Middleport	12/1/2000	10/6/2000
00NR01727	Niagara Falls City Hall	745 Main Street	Niagara Falls	1/26/2001	12/13/2000
01NR01801	Former Niagara Falls High School	1201 Pine Avenue	Niagara Falls	1/24/2002	9/19/2001
02NR04943	Newton, Philo, Cobblestone House	3573 Wruck Road	Hartland vicinity	11/15/2002	8/29/2002
02NR04944	Bradley, Amzi, Farmstead	8915 Bradley Road	Hartland vicinity	11/15/2002	8/29/2002
02NR04950	Bixby, Constant Riley W., House	2888 Carmen Road	Hartland vicinity	11/15/2002	8/29/2002
02NR04985	North Ridge United Methodist Church	3930 North Ridge Road	North Ridge	12/31/2002	10/25/2002
03NR05053	Hopkins House	83 Monroe Street	Lockport	5/30/2003	4/7/2003
03NR05054	Gibbs House	98 North Transit Street	Lockport	5/30/2003	4/7/2003
03NR05055	Watson House	129 Outwater Drive	Lockport	5/30/2003	4/7/2003
03NR05056	Stickney House	133 Lock Street	Lockport	5/30/2003	4/7/2003
03NR05057	Conkey House	202 Akron Street	Lockport	5/30/2003	4/7/2003
03NR05058	Dole House	74 Niagara Street	Lockport	5/30/2003	4/7/2003
03NR05059	Maloney House	279 Caledonia Street	Lockport	5/30/2003	4/7/2003
03NR05060	White-Pound House	140 Pine Street	Lockport	5/30/2003	4/7/2003
03NR05196	Cold Springs Cemetery	4849 Cold Springs Road	Lckport vicinity	9/10/2004	7/5/2004
03NR05197	Marshall, James G., House	740 Park Place	Niagara Falls	7/28/2004	6/3/2004
03NR05198	St. Mary's Nurses' Residence	542 Sixth Street	Niagara Falls	7/16/2004	6/3/2004
04NR05251	First Baptist Church	6073 East Avenue	Newfane	9/15/2004	7/5/2004
04NR05293	Town of Niagara District School No. 2	9670 Lockport Road	Niagara Falls vic	2/9/2005	12/18/2004
04NR05294	Jefferson Apartment Building	250 Rainbow Boulevard	Niagara Falls	1/5/2005	9/22/2004
05NR05480	United Office Building	220 Rainbow Boulevard	Niagara Falls	1/18/2006	11/6/2005
05NR05513	DAY PECKINPAUGH Canal Motorship	Erie Barge Canal	Lockport		
06NR05650	First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara	639 Main Street	Niagara Falls	1/25/2007	11/12/2006
07NR05699	Carter, John, Farmstead	206 Lake Road	Youngstown vicinity	5/30/2007	3/28/2007
07NR05706	Walter, Peter D., House	127 Ontario Street	Lockport	5/30/2007	4/4/2007
07NR05707	Bacon-Merchant-Moss House	32 Cottage Street	Lockport	5/30/2007	4/4/2007
90NR01247	US Post Office--Tonawanda	96 Seymour St.	Tonawanda	5/11/1989	5/11/1989
90NR01958	Old Fort Niagara	N of Youngstown on NY 18	Youngstown	10/9/1960	6/23/1980
90NR01959	Fort Niagara Light	Niagara River	Youngstown	7/19/1984	
90NR01960	Thirty Mile Point Light	Niagara River	Somerset	7/19/1984	
90NR01961	Niagara Reservation	Niagara Reservation	Niagara Falls	10/15/1966	6/23/1980
90NR01962	U.S. Customhouse	2245 Whirlpool St.	Niagara Falls	7/16/1973	6/23/1980
90NR01963	Whitney Mansion	335 Buffalo Ave.	Niagara Falls	1/17/1974	6/23/1980
90NR01964	Deveaux School Historic District	2900 Lewiston Rd.	Niagara Falls	6/5/1974	6/23/1980
90NR01965	Niagara Falls Public Library	1022 Main St.	Niagara Falls	6/5/1974	6/23/1980
90NR01966	Adams Power Plant Transformer House	Buffalo Ave. near Portage Rd.	Niagara Falls	6/11/1975	6/23/1980
90NR01967	Holley-Rankine House	525 Riverside Dr.	Niagara Falls	10/4/1979	6/23/1980
90NR01968	Williams, Johann, Farm	10831 Cayuga Dr.	Niagara Falls	1/10/1980	6/23/1980
90NR01969	US Post Office--Niagara Falls Main	Main and Walnut Sts.	Niagara Falls	5/11/1989	5/11/1989

National Register Number	Resource Name	Address	City	National Register Date	State Register Date
90NR01970	Riviera Theatre	27 Webster St.	North Tonawanda	3/20/1980	6/23/1980
90NR01971	Herschell, Allan, Carousel Factory	180 Thompson St.	North Tonawanda	4/18/1985	3/6/1985
90NR01972	US Post Office--North Tonawanda	141 Goundry St.	North Tonawanda	5/11/1989	5/11/1989
90NR01973	Lowertown Historic District	Roughly bounded by Erie Canal and New York Central RR	Lockport	6/4/1973	6/23/1980
90NR01974	Moore, Benjamin C., Mill	Pine St. on the Erie Canal	Lockport	6/19/1973	6/23/1980
90NR01975	Lockport Industrial District	Bounded roughly by Erie Canal, Gooding, Clinton, and Water Sts.	Lockport	11/11/1975	6/23/1980
90NR01976	Union Station	95 Union Ave.	Lockport	12/2/1977	6/23/1980
90NR01977	US Post Office--Lockport	1 East Ave.	Lockport	5/11/1989	5/11/1989
90NR01979	Frontier House	460 Center St.	Lewiston	7/8/1974	6/23/1980
90NR01981	US Post Office--Middleport	42 Main St.	Middleport	5/11/1989	5/11/1989
90NR03278	Van Horn Mansion	2165 Lockport--Olcott Rd.	Newfane	9/9/1991	7/15/1991
91NR03351	St. John's Episcopal Church	117 Main St.	Youngstown	5/10/1990	3/15/1990
93NR00514	Tonawanda (25th Separate Company) Armory	79 Delaware Ave.	Tonawanda	1/28/1994	12/8/1993
95NR00777	Niagara Falls Armory	901 Main Street	Niagara Falls	3/2/1995	12/30/1994
95NR00834	Bond, Colonel William and Nancy Ralston, House	143 Ontario Street	Lockport	4/20/1995	3/9/1995
95NR00867	Carnegie Library	240 Goundry Street	North Tonawanda	7/14/1995	6/1/1995
97NR01185	Niagara County Courthouse and County Clerk's Office	Hawley Street	Lockport	5/9/1997	3/19/1997
98NR01370	Oliver, Thomas, House	175 Locust Street	Lockport	11/19/1998	9/30/1998
99NR01438	Kibler High School	284 Main Street	Tonawanda	1/15/1999	12/7/1998

Stakeholder Comments

APPENDIX E

Samuel M. Ferraro
Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

TO: William L. Ross, Chairman, Niagara County Legislature
Niagara County Legislators
Gregory D. Lewis, Niagara County Manager

FROM: Samuel M. Ferraro, Commissioner, Niagara County Economic Development
Benjamin J. Bidell, Senior Planner, Niagara County Economic Development

DATE: July 23, 2009

RE: **RESOLUTION # ED-020-09**
COMMENTS ON NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2030

The following is a summary of comments and recommendations received by Niagara County in connection with the *Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030* along with responses from the County on each. This information is being provided as background prior to action on the above referenced resolution. All comments and recommendations can be found in Appendix E of the final plan along with a copy of this memo. All comments and recommendations have been addressed and are organized in this memo as follows:

- **General** - comments received by email or in hard copy during plan development.
- **Public Hearing** - comments made at the public hearing held on June 16, 2009.
- **Public Comment Period** - comments received by the Clerk of the Legislature during the 30-day public comment period held between June 1, 2009 and June 30, 2009.
- **Municipal** - recommendations received in response to Niagara County's request for plan review by Niagara County municipalities.

General

1.) Comment: A topic paper was received containing development ideas for a winter wonderland hotel and resort in Niagara Falls.

Response: This idea may be revisited in future visioning and conceptual planning exercises. This document has been added to Appendix E of the plan.

2.) Comment: A topic paper was received containing development ideas for an oil refinery in Niagara County.

Response: This idea may be revisited in future visioning and conceptual planning exercises. This document has been added to Appendix E of the plan.

3.) Comment: A topic paper was received containing development ideas for a new domed professional football stadium in Niagara Falls.

Response: This idea may be revisited in future visioning and conceptual planning exercises. This document has been added to Appendix E of the plan.

4.) Comment: A letter was received stating that a comprehensive plan cannot serve as a generic environmental impact statement (GEIS) and that the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process must be closed out before Niagara County can legally adopt its comprehensive plan

Response: Niagara County prepared a Full Environmental Assessment Form Part 1 and Part 2 for the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan leading to a determination that the plan will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts and as such, a GEIS does not need to be prepared. Consultation from two planning firms with extensive SEQR experience indicated that a GEIS is not necessary for Niagara County's comprehensive plan given the following:

The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is intended as a guidance document with recommendations only that can be used to establish policies towards achieving the goals and objectives identified in the plan. The plan is not intended to be a land use plan as Niagara County does not have regulatory authority over land use controls, which is delegated to local municipalities under New York State's Municipal Home Rule Law. The plan does not commit Niagara County, any municipality within Niagara County, or any other stakeholder to undertake, approve, or fund any specific actions or actions, including projects identified in the plan. Future actions, policies, or projects, especially site-specific projects, carried out in connection with the plan will be subject to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act prior to implementation.

A poll was conducted by Niagara County involving counties in New York State with similar home rule structure (i.e. no land use controls) that have prepared a comprehensive plan and 100% of counties polled indicated that they followed the exact same SEQR process as Niagara County for their comprehensive plan.

Niagara County issued a Negative Declaration and officially closed out its SEQR process on July 6, 2009. This letter has been added to Appendix E of the plan.

5.) Comment: A letter was received stating that agriculture and farmland protection are not adequately addressed in the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan relative to land use, development, and zoning.

Response: Niagara County has an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, which is referenced extensively in the County's comprehensive plan, and while the comprehensive plan provides significant guidance on land use issues and support for agricultural and farmland protection, regulation of land use is an authority given to local municipalities under New York State's Municipal Home Rule Law. Niagara County will continue to provide guidance on land use issues and support for agricultural and farmland protection as outlined in the comprehensive plan, which recommends that the County support an update to the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. This letter has been added to Appendix E of the plan.

6.) Comment: A letter was received suggesting that the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan should include a targeted action addressing the need for greater support of arts and cultural attractions in Niagara County. The letter was accompanied by a copy of the 2006 Niagara County Arts & Cultural Needs Assessment Report.

Response: Several studies addressing arts, cultural, and heritage tourism were reviewed for the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan and are summarized in the document. The plan recognizes the importance of cultural resources to issues involving economic development, tourism, and quality of life. Future updates to the plan will consider opportunities to add and/or strengthen sections of the document involving arts and cultural attractions, including recommendations in the plan. This letter has been added to Appendix E of the plan along with the 2006 Niagara County Arts & Cultural Needs Assessment Report, which will serve as an important reference.

7.) Comment: A topic paper was received recommending that the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan include a long-term vision and plan for countywide transportation needs balancing development of land with movement of vehicles, including development of frontage along existing right-of-ways and planning for future arterials.

Response: The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan includes a recommendation that Niagara County encourage the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council to undertake countywide corridor management plans involving long-term land use/transportation planning for major road corridors linking communities in Niagara County. Implementation of Niagara County's comprehensive plan and/or future updates to the plan will consider opportunities to engage in visioning and planning for long-term transportation needs. This information has been added to Appendix E of the plan and will serve as an important reference.

- 8.) Comment: Comments were received clarifying programming offered by Niagara University.
- Response: Comments were received in the form of page-specific changes to the plan. All recommended changes have been made and the comments have been added to Appendix E of the plan.
- 9.) Comment: A number of comments were received via interactive display boards presented at the community outreach meetings held across Niagara County in April 2009.
- Response: A number of changes were made to the Plan based on input received via the display boards. A summary of comments received via display boards has been added to Appendix E of the plan.
- 10.) Comment: Recommendations were received that all municipalities in Niagara County should review and amend their approved comprehensive plans and zoning codes every 3 to 5 years and enact cell tower regulations, wind farm regulations, ethics policies, a farmland protection policy, a transfer of development rights policy, and a green infrastructure policy. Comments were also received that a countywide watershed protection policy and plan should be enacted and that there should be an intergovernmental agreement with regard to SEQR notification. It was also recommended that the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan be reviewed and amended every 3 to 5 years. A study on ethics for wind energy companies doing business in New York State was also provided.
- Response: The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan addresses a number of these issues. The plan includes a recommendation to provide technical support to local municipalities seeking to update their comprehensive plans, zoning codes, and subdivision regulations. The plan also includes a recommendation encouraging development of a countywide watershed protection plan as well as a provision that the plan be subject to ongoing review with minor updates to the plan made at least every two years and major updates performed at least every five years. While a number of these issues are mentioned in the plan, enactment of local policies and regulations is the responsibility of local municipalities under New York State's Municipal Home Rule Law. However, opportunities to facilitate these recommendations will be considered as part of implementation actions carried out in connection with the plan as well as future updates to the plan, any strategic planning carried out in connection with the plan, and any initiatives involving coordination and collaboration with municipal stakeholders. The recommendations have been added to Appendix E of the plan along with the study on ethics for wind energy companies, which will serve as an important reference.

11.) Comment: Comments were received clarifying programming offered by Niagara County Community College along with questions/comments on data.

Response: Comments were received in the form of page-specific changes to the plan. Recommended changes have been made as appropriate and the comments have been added to Appendix E of the plan.

Public Hearing

1.) Comment: Comments were made that: a comprehensive plan cannot serve as a generic environmental impact statement (GEIS); that a county comprehensive plan must include a GEIS; and that the New York State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process must be closed out before Niagara County can legally adopt its comprehensive plan.

Response: Niagara County prepared a Full Environmental Assessment Form Part 1 and Part 2 for the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan leading to a determination that the plan will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts and as such, a GEIS does not need to be prepared. Consultation from two planning firms with extensive SEQR experience indicated that a GEIS is not necessary for Niagara County's comprehensive plan given the following:

The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is intended as a guidance document with recommendations only that can be used to establish policies towards achieving the goals and objectives identified in the plan. The plan is not intended to be a land use plan as Niagara County does not have regulatory authority over land use controls, which is delegated to local municipalities under New York State's Municipal Home Rule Law. The plan does not commit Niagara County, any municipality within Niagara County, or any other stakeholder to undertake, approve, or fund any specific actions or actions, including projects identified in the plan. Future actions, policies, or projects, especially site-specific projects, carried out in connection with the plan will be subject to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act prior to implementation.

A poll was conducted by Niagara County involving counties in New York State with similar home rule structure (i.e. no land use controls) that have prepared a comprehensive plan. Of the counties polled, 100% indicated that they followed the exact same SEQR process as Niagara County for their comprehensive plan.

Niagara County issued a Negative Declaration and officially closed out its SEQR process on July 6, 2009. A transcription of these comments has been added to Appendix E of the plan.

2.) Comment: Comments were made that the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan should address apiculture (beekeeping) and the importance of pollinating insects to the agricultural industry in Niagara County.

Response: Niagara County has an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, which is referenced extensively in the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan. The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan includes a recommendation that the County support a full update of the 1999 Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and it is suggested that the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan would be more appropriate to address a topic of this scope. A transcription of these comments has been added to Appendix E of the plan.

Public Comment Period

1.) Comment: A letter was received stating that the planning process did not sufficiently include private businesses in the County and that the recommendation in the plan dealing with industrial hazardous waste management facilities misunderstands the regulatory process for siting and permitting of such facilities, including the role of the County and local municipalities.

Response: The planning process for the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan involved significant community outreach including 18 public meetings. Public meetings were announced in the local media and posted online via the County's website, which was actively promoted. Public meetings provided substantial opportunity for a broad cross-section of stakeholders to participate in the planning process and many individuals, including businesses, attended and participated in meetings.

The plan articulates a number of community positions involving industrial hazardous waste management that were identified over the course of the planning process, and the recommendation in the plan dealing with this topic is consistent with these positions. It should be noted, however, that the recommendation does not commit Niagara County, any municipality within Niagara County, or any other stakeholder to undertake, approve, or fund any specific actions or actions. In addition, the recommendation does not assert that Niagara County or any municipality within Niagara County has complete regulatory authority over the siting or expansion of industrial hazardous waste management facilities within the County. Furthermore, the recommendation is not intended to imply that Niagara County or any municipality within Niagara County has the authority to determine what constitutes an equitable geographic distribution of such facilities. The County's comprehensive plan is not a Hazardous Waste Facility Siting Plan. However, it will serve as an important instrument in future planning initiatives affecting Niagara County. The recommendation in the plan is intended as a framework only to help advance County policies respectful of proper State and Federal channels and consistent with applicable State and Federal statutes.

Language has been added to the plan recommending clarification of the policies and positions of the County and other stakeholders, including municipalities, residents, community-based organizations, and owners/operators of industrial hazardous waste management facilities, with respect to the treatment, storage, and disposal of industrial hazardous waste in Niagara County. This letter has been added to Appendix E of the Plan.

2.) Comment: A letter was received stating: that the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process followed by Niagara County is inadequate; that a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) should be prepared and/or further environmental review conducted given that the plan identifies actions that will likely result in significant impacts; that Niagara County should seek guidance on its SEQR process; that the SEQR process must be closed out before the County can legally adopt its comprehensive plan; that issuance of a Negative Declaration requires a 30-day public comment period; and that adoption of the plan by the County should be delayed to accommodate additional SEQR work.

Response: Niagara County prepared a Full Environmental Assessment Form Part 1 and Part 2 for the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan leading to a determination that the plan will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts and as such, a GEIS does not need to be prepared. Consultation from two planning firms with extensive SEQR experience indicated that a GEIS is not necessary for Niagara County's comprehensive plan given the following:

The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is intended as a guidance document with recommendations only that can be used to establish policies towards achieving the goals and objectives identified in the plan. The plan is not intended to be a land use plan as Niagara County does not have regulatory authority over land use controls, which is delegated to local municipalities under New York State's Municipal Home Rule Law. The plan does not commit Niagara County, any municipality within Niagara County, or any other stakeholder to undertake, approve, or fund any specific actions or actions, including projects identified in the plan. Future actions, policies, or projects, especially site-specific projects, carried out in connection with the plan will be subject to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) prior to implementation.

A poll was conducted by Niagara County involving counties in New York State with similar home rule structure (i.e. no land use controls) that have prepared a comprehensive plan. Of the counties polled, 100% indicated that they followed the exact same SEQR process as Niagara County for their comprehensive plan.

While a number of specific projects and programs are listed in the plan, many of those identified are conceptual. It was determined that review of

all potential actions associated with the plan and preparation of a GEIS, including review of specific projects and programs listed in the plan and potential actions carried out in connection with the recommendations in the plan, would be time consuming and expensive as well as potentially unnecessary given that many actions, especially those at the conceptual level, may never be undertaken. The County recognizes that any projects and programs, especially site-specific projects, carried out in connection with the plan or otherwise will be subject to SEQRA prior to implementation.

Niagara County issued a Negative Declaration and officially closed out its SEQR process on July 6, 2009. No public comment period is required for a Negative Declaration. Niagara County has determined that it is in full compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act. This letter has been added to Appendix E of the plan.

3.) Comment: A letter was received stating that the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan should address apiculture (beekeeping) and the importance of pollinating insects to agricultural in Niagara County.

Response: Niagara County has an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, which is referenced extensively in the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan. The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan also includes a recommendation to support a full update of the 1999 Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. It is suggested that the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan would be more appropriate for addressing a topic of this scope, though future updates to the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan will consider opportunities to address this topic. This letter has been added to Appendix E of the plan.

Municipal

1.) Comment: A letter was received from the Town of Wheatfield providing page-specific comments with recommended changes and items of general clarification.

Response: Changes recommended by the Town of Wheatfield have been made as appropriate. This letter has been added to Appendix E of the Plan.

NIAGARA FALLS IMPROVEMENTS
WEEK OF 10-5-2008 TO 10-12-2008
BY DAVID M. METRO

TOPIC:

NIAGARA FALL'S WINTER WONDERLAND

LOCATION:

NIAGARA STREET, FERRY AVENUE, FOURTH STREET, GOING EAST
TO JOHN DALY BLVD.. (A.K.A. MAIN STREET; A.K.A. EIGHTH STREET).

ZONING CODE REQUIREMENTS:

HIGH RISE OFFICE / HOTEL BUILDINGS ZONE
ONE MILLION SQUARE FEET OF USEABLE SPACE.
TEN THOUSAND PARKING SPACES
REQUIRED CONVENTION SPACE

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

A WORLD CLASS FIVE STAR HOTEL ATTRACTION, WITH
CONVENTION SPACE, CULTURAL ACTIVITIES (BROADWAY PLAYS,
MUSICAL PERFORMANCES), AND FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITIES (
A INDOOR WINTER MOUNTAIN RESORT, AND A NORTH POLE ASSOCIATION
(SANTA'S WORK SHOP, ETC.).

PROJECT DETAILS:

THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE HOTEL AND ATTRACTION WILL BE ON
THE NIAGARA STREET SIDE OF THE PROPERTY.

THE TEN THOUSAND PARKING SPACES WILL BE BROKEN UP INTO
TWO PARKING RAMPS. FIVE THOUSAND PARKING SPACES PER RAMP, TEN
FLOORS TALL PER RAMP, WITH FIVE HUNDRED PARKING SPACES PER
FLOOR PER RAMP. PLACE THE TWO PARKING RAMPS ON THE BACK LEFT
AND BACK RIGHT SIDES OF THE HOTEL. PARKING RAMP ENTRANCES WILL
BE ON THE NORTH-SOUTH RUNNING SIDE STREETS (E.G. FOURTH STREET).
PARKING RAMP ONE WILL BE ON FOURTH STREET. PARKING RAMP TWO
WILL BE ON A SIDE STREET TO BE DETERMINED LATER (PENDING THE
REQUIRED SIZE OF THE COMPLEX).

BETWEEN THE TWO PARKING RAMPS IN THE BACK OF THE HOTEL
WILL BE A TWO FLOOR STORAGE AND TRUCK LOADING / UNLOADING
DOCKS FOR THE SUPPLIERS / VENDERS / TRAVELING ENTERTAINMENT
GROUPS. THE TRUCK ACCESS WILL COME IN AND OUT OF THE HOTEL
FROM FERRY AVENUE.

ABOVE THE LOADING DOCKS WILL BE THE LOCATION OF THE
CONVENTION SPACE. EACH CONVENTION HALL WILL BE DIVIDED INTO
TWO SECTIONS; SECTION ONE; "THE MAIN HALL" WILL BE AN OPEN TWO
FLOOR TALL ROOM APPROXIMATELY SIXTY FEET WIDE AND THE SECOND
SECTION WILL BE TWO FLOORS CONNECTED BY BALCONY STAIRS /
BALCONY RAMPS / AND GLASSED IN ELEVATORS. THE SECOND SECTION IS
TO APPROXIMATELY SIXTY FEET WIDE. OR THE SUM OF THE TWO
CONVENTION SECTIONS ARE TO BE AS WIDE AS THE PARKING RAMPS. THE
LENGTH OF THE CONVENTION HALLS IS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE

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BY DAVID M. METRO

LENGTH OF THE HOTEL AND THE TWO PARKING RAMPS. A MINIMUM LENGTH OF ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY FEET. THE NUMBER OF CONVENTION HALL UNITS CAN NOT EXCEED TWELVE STORIES (TWO STORIES ABOVE PARKING RAMPS). THEIR WILL BE ACCESS TO THE CONVENTION SPACE FROM EACH OF THE PARKING RAMPS FOR AUTOMOTIVE / LARGE DISPLAYS.

THE BROADWAY STAGE THEATER MAIN ENTRANCE WILL BE ON FOURTH STREET. THE STAGE WILL FACE FOURTH STREET. BACK STAGE WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THE LOADING DOCKS - CENTRAL ACCESS HALLWAY - FROM THE LOADING DOCKS TO CENTRAL DISTRIBUTION. ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE CENTRAL ACCESS HALLWAY IS THE BACK STAGE FOR THE MUSIC STAGE THEATER. THE MUSIC STAGE WILL FACE EAST AND THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE MUSIC THEATER WILL BE ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE HOTEL (APPROXIMATELY MIRRORING EACH THEATER.).

ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE TWO THEATERS WILL BE THE MAIN ROOM CLUSTER OF THE COMPLEX. WHICH WILL STRETCH THE WHOLE LENGTH OF THE HOTEL FROM THE STREET SET BACK DISTANCE ON FOURTH STREET TO THE SET BACK DISTANCE ON THE SIDE STREET TO BE DETERMINED. THE BASE STRUCTURE WILL BE FOR THE RESTAURANTS, THE SKI LODGE(S) (ONE SKI LODGE LOCATED ON TOP OF TOWER NUMBER ONE), WINTER RELATED STORES, THE GENERAL TRAVELERS SUPPLY STORE, THE HEALTH SPA (HOT SPRINGS); THE GYM, SANTA'S SECRET SHOP(LOCATED ON THE TOP OF TOWER NUMBER TWO), BANQUET HALL(S)(ONE BANQUET HALL LOCATED ON THE TOP OF TOWER NUMBER THREE), AND A RINK WITH TWENTY ROWS OF SEATING, PLUS LUXURY SUITES, MEDIA BOX, ETC.(WHAT EVER IS REQUIRED TO GET THE TEAM HERE) FOR THE JUNIOR SABRES HOCKEY / CURLING.

THERE ARE THREE ELLIPTICAL HOTEL ROOM TOWERS WHICH APPROXIMATELY START ON THE TENTH FLOOR UP TO THE HOTEL. THE LONG SECTION OF THE ELLIPTICAL TOWERS WILL BE END TO END TO END, FROM WEST TO EAST. THE HEIGHT OF THESE TOWERS WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE NUMBER OF SUITES PER TOWER (APPROXIMATELY EQUAL NUMBER OF HOTEL ROOMS PER TOWER), THE LENGTH AND THE ANGULAR DEGREES OF THE SKI SLOPES (LONG; TOP OF TOWER NUMBER ONE, MEDIUM; SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE OF TOWER NUMBER THREE, SHORT; SOMEWHERE WITH IN THE LOWER TEN FLOORS).

SKI SLOPE CONCEPT HAS THE LONG SLOPE STARTING ON THE BACK SIDE (NORTH SIDE) AT THE TOP OF TOWER NUMBER ONE. THE SLOPE DOWN AND THE DOG LEG'S AROUND THE FRONT SIDE OF TOWER NUMBER TWO. THEN DOG LEG'S AROUND TO THE NORTH SIDE OF TOWER NUMBER THREE. THE SLOPE TAKES A HARD RIGHT TURN AROUND THE FRONT(SOUTH SIDE) OF TOWER NUMBER THREE, THEN DOG LEG'S AROUND THE NORTH SIDE OF TOWER NUMBER TWO, THEN A DOG LEG AROUND TOWER NUMBER ONE. (THE NUMBER OF DOG LEG'S IN DETERMINED BY THE HEIGHT OF THE TOWERS, WHICH TOWER BASE YOU WOULD LIKE THE SKI

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SLOPE TO END (AT THE BASE OF TOWER NUMBER ONE OR AT THE BASE OF TOWER NUMBER THREE; THE LONG SLOPE AND SHORT SLOPE FINISH AT THE SAME TOWER, WHILE THE MEDIUM SLOPE ENDS AT THE OTHER TOWER.) (NOTE: THE HOCKEY RINK IS LOCATED AT BASE OF TOWER NUMBER TWO).

SUITES THAT ARE IN CONTACT WITH THE SKI SLOPE ARE YOUR PRIME ROOMS. EACH SUITE WILL HAVE A FACADE OF AN APPALACHIAN HILLSIDE LOG HOME.(A SERIES INTERCONNECTED STRUCTURES BUILT DOWN THE SIDE OF A STEP SLOPE). THESE SUITES WILL HAVE STAIRS AND DECKS ON THEM WITH DIRECT ACCESS TO THE SLOPES; JUST LIKE THEY HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO THE SKI SLOPES AT ANY MAJOR SKI RESORT. THESE SUITES WILL BE MULTIPLE ROOM SUITES WITH MULTIPLE BEDROOMS FOR GROUPS AND FAMILIES.(TWO OR THREE FLOORS(EQUAL TO THE HEIGHT OF THE SKI SLOPE BAY); LIVING ROOM, KITCHEN, DINING ROOM, MASTER SUITE, THREE PLUS BEDROOMS, TWO AND A HALF BATHROOMS, LOFT, STORAGE ROOM; FOR SKI'S, FIRE PLACE, HOT TUBE).

THE DOG LEG'S WILL BE LINED WITH BUSHES AND SHRUBS TO HELP FOR A SEAMLESS CONNECTION BETWEEN TOWERS AND ALSO FOR SAFETY PURPOSES.

FROSTED GLASS WILL BE ON THE CEILING AND THE SIDE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE LOG STRUCTURES. THE FROSTED GLASS WILL BE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE DOG LEG'S. THE REASON FOR THE FROSTED GLASS IS FOR NIGHT AND DAY SKI RUNS, IN WHICH YOU CAN LIGHT UP THE SKI RUNS AT NIGHT. THE SKI LIFT IS TO BE ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE SLOPE NEXT TO THE FROSTED WINDOWS, FOR PRIVACY PURPOSES OF THOSE IN THE SUITES AND CROSSES OVER THE SKIERS AT THE DOG LEG'S. OR THEY CAN JUST TAKE THE ELEVATORS UP TO THE TOP OF THE SLOPE. THE FROSTED GLASS ALSO KEEPS THE PEOPLE ON THE SKI LIFT UNAWARE OF HOW HIGH UP THEY ACTUALLY ARE, WHICH INCREASES THEIR COMFORT LEVEL.

THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE HOTEL WILL BE THE WINTER FUN PLAZA SECTION. THE PLAZA WILL HAVE A RETRACTABLE ROOF ON IT WHEN IDEAL CONDITIONS OUTSIDE ALLOW. THE ROOF IS ARCHED WITH THE APEX OF ARCH WHICH FACES SOUTH AND RETRACTS NORTHWARD INTO BUILDING). THIS SECTION WILL INCLUDE TWO STRAIGHT NARROW TOBOGGAN RUNS, LIKE THE ONES AT CHESTNUT RIDGE STATE PARK. THERE WILL BE ONE SECTION OF STRAIGHT DOWN HILL RUNS WITH SMALL HILLS FOR THE INFLATABLE TUBES RIDES. THERE WILL BE ONE SECTION FOR A TWISTED DOWN HILL RUNS WITH SMALL HILLS FOR INFLATABLE TUBE RIDES. THE ICE SKATING RINK FOR GENERAL USE WILL BE AT THE SOUTH WEST END OF THE PLAZA. WE WILL LOCATE THE SNOW BOARDER HALF PIKE AT THE SOUTH EAST SIDE OF THE PLAZA.

THE BIG DRAW WILL BE THE OLYMPIC BOBSLED RIDE "SHOOT THE TUBE". THIS RIDE WILL START IN ONE OF THE TOWERS GO THROUGH AND AROUND SOME OF THE RESTAURANTS STORE SECTIONS OF THE HOTEL INTO THE PLAZA SECTION OVER THE HALF PIKE START GATE, UNDER THE

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NARROW TOBOGGAN AND TUBE RIDE START GATES(HALF GLASSED TUNNEL FOR VIEWING STATION HALLWAY/ RESTAURANT), DOWN AND AROUND THE PERIMETER OF THE ICE RINK TO UNLOADING STATION AT BASE OF PLAZA. AFTER UNLOADING THE BOBSLED, THE BOBSLED ENTERS ITS OWN ELEVATOR LIFT TO BRING BOBSLED BACK TO THE TOP OF THE BOBSLED TRACK.

TO MAKE THIS BOBSLED SAFE, WE HAVE TO PUT AN INFLATABLE SERIES OF RUBBER CHANNEL (THREE SIDED CLAMP; TOP, BOTTOM, INSIDE RAIL) ON EACH SIDE OF THE BOBSLED TO KEEP THE SLED ON THE TRACK THE TONGUE WHICH FITS INSIDE THE CHANNEL IS ICED OVER ON ITS THREE SIDES WHICH ARE CONTACT WITH THE INFLATABLE TUBES FOR A FRICTION LESS SURFACE (WHICH MEANS A FAST RIDE). AS FOR THE SAFETY CHANNELS BEING INFLATABLE TUBES IS TO ALSO CREATE AIR CUSHIONS WHEN THE BOBSLED IS GOING THROUGH THE TURNS. MAGNETIC BREAKS WILL BE INSTALLED ON THE FRONT AND BACK SECTIONS OF EACH END OF THE CHANNEL IN ORDER TO STOP AND START THE BOBSLED. THE BOBSLED RIDER ENTRANCE AND EXIST (DOOR) WILL BE FROM THE BACK OF THE BOBSLED, FOUR TO FIVE CHAIR BACKS PER BOBSLED, FOUR POINT SEAT BELT RESTRAINT SYSTEM TO BE USED. THE BOBSLED MOVES UNDER IT'S OWN WEIGHT AND MOMENTUM.

THE WINTER WONDER LAND MASCOT WILL BE "THE COLD MISER" FROM THE OLD CHRISTMAS CARTOONS. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR HAVING THE COLD MISER AS THE MASCOT ALLOWS FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO BUILD TO NEXT HIGH RISE HOTEL ATTRACTION NEXT DOOR. WHICH WILL BE THE INDOOR TROPICAL WATER PARK; LIKE THE ONE IN NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO CANADA AND THE ONE IN ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA. BY HAVING THE MASCOT "THE HEAT MISER" AS A PERFECT PLAY OFF OF THE COLD MISER. CREATING A REASON TO BUILD THE NEXT HIGH RISE HOTEL ATTRACTION.

NIAGARA COUNTY IMPROVEMENTS

12/2/2008

BY

DAVID M. METRO

TOPIC:

HIGH ENGINE GAS PRICES IN WESTERN NEW YORK, USA.

CAUSE OF PROBLEM:

1.) CLOSED DOWN OIL REFINERY IN CANADA.
2.) THE OIL PIPE LINE START POINT IS IN THE GULF OF MEXICO
3.) OIL FLOW IS FIVE MILES PER HOUR
4.) PIPE LINE FOLLOWS MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN (INTERSTATE 390 ?)

PROACTIVE SOLUTION:

CREATE AN OIL REFINERY IN NIAGARA COUNTY.

STEP 1: COUNTY PURCHASE OF PROPERTY IN TOWN OF SOMERSET ALONG ROUTE 18 FROM THE TRAIN TRACKS TO A.E.S. GENERATING STATION; WEST TO TOWN OF SOMERSET BORDER LINE . AND SOUTH TO WHERE THE TRAIN TRACKS TURNS EAST / WEST.

THE LOCATION JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS SITE IS AS FOLLOWS: NUMBER ONE; THE LOCATION IS PROXIMATE TO THE A.E.S. POWER PLANT WHICH WOULD SUPPLY POWER TO THE REFINERY. NUMBER TWO; LOCATION OF THE TRAIN TRACKS TO THE SITE. THIS IS CRITICAL TO THE CONSTRUCTION AND CAPACITY EXPANSION OF THE OF THE FACILITY WHICH WILL BE THE MAIN SUPPLY ROUTE FOR THE PRESSURE VESSEL TOWERS REQUIRED FOR THE PROCESS. WHICH CAN BE MADE LOCALLY IN WESTERN NEW YORK. NUMBER THREE; ACCESS TO WATER; OIL REFINING IS A WATER EXTENSIVE PROCESS REQUIRING HEATING AND COOLING OF THE PROCESS FLUID MANY TIMES OVER. NUMBER FOUR; CLOSE ACCESS TO THE WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT ON LOWER LAKE AND QUAKER ROADS. WITH ROOM TO EXPAND. NUMBER FIVE; HIGHWAY ACCESS; ROUTE 18 TO HESS ROAD TO ROUTE 104 (RIDGE ROAD) TO LAKE AVENUE (ROUTE 78) TO MILLERSPORT HIGHWAY TO THE INTERSTATE ROUTE 290 OR CONTINUE SOUTH DOWN ROUTE 78 TO THE INTERSTATE ROUTE 90 INTERCHANGE.

STEP 2: REZONE ACQUIRED AREA FOR OIL REFINERY PRODUCTION. A NEW OIL REFINERY HAS NOT BE CONSTRUCTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THIRTY YEARS. REZONING THIS AREA FOR AN OIL REFINERY WILL CAUSE THE OIL REFINING COMPANIES TO VIGOROUSLY PURSUE THIS OPPORTUNITY.

STEP 3: SETUP PROPERTY TAX ELIMINATION PROGRAM FOR SITE AND ANY OTHER PROGRAMS IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF BIDDERS. THIS INCLUDES ALL THE UNION CONTRACTS.

STEP 4: SECURE PIPE LINE EXTENSION CONSTRUCTION TO LOCATION FROM MAIN PIPE LINE USING BUNKER - TUNNEL STYLE CONSTRUCTION. THE

NIAGARA COUNTY IMPROVEMENTS

12/2/2008

BY

DAVID M. METRO

JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS STYLE OF CONSTRUCTION REMOVES THE EXPOSURE TO THE WEATHER AND GROUND WATER SEEPAGE. THE TUNNEL WILL HAVE A BUILT-IN OIL RECOVERY DRAINAGE SYSTEM, A ROAD DOWN TIME CENTER OF THE TUNNEL FOR MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION. A PORTABLE RAIL CRANE CAN BE SET ON A PERMANENT CONTINUOUS SUPPORT RAIL SYSTEM BUILT INTO THE SIDE WALLS OF THE TUNNEL. PIPE LINE OPERATIONAL AND CONTROL STATIONS WILL BE CONSTRUCTED ALONG BUNKER - TUNNEL PIPE LINE(S). THESE STATIONS WILL CONSIST OF A OIL RECOVERY PROCESS FOR LEAKS AND DRAINAGE FOR REPLACEMENT OF THE LINE, ROAD ACCESS CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT, AN ELECTRICAL SUB-STATION, FIRE SUPPRESSION PROCESS UNIT, HOLDING TANKS, AND MOBILE FIRE SUPPRESSION EQUIPMENT, EMERGENCY FIRST AID CENTER. ETC.

THE TUNNEL CAN ALSO BE USED FOR INTERNET CABLE LINES, NATURAL GAS LINES, TELEPHONE LINES, AND HIGH VOLTAGE ELECTRICAL LINES. PARALLEL TUNNELS CAN BE CONSTRUCTED, SEPARATING THE INTERNET AND TELEPHONES IN ONE TUNNEL, OIL AND NATURAL GAS IN THE MIDDLE TUNNEL, AND THE HIGH VOLTAGE ELECTRICAL LINES IN THE OTHER TUNNEL. OR EACH RESOURCE HAS THEIR OWN TUNNEL.

STEP 5: ADD ADDITIONAL ACCESS POINTS FOR FOREIGN OIL IMPORT STATIONS ALONG THE ATLANTIC COAST LINE. TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY IN THE DELIVERY OF THE FOREIGN OIL. THE ONE THAT WILL EFFECT NIAGARA COUNTY IS THE PIPE LINE ACCESS POINT OFF THE COAST OF MASSACHUSETTS PARALLELING THE INTERSTATE 90 HIGHWAY FROM BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS TO AND THROUGH WESTERN NEW YORK TO SOUTHERN ONTARIO, CANADA BY WAY OF AN UPPER NIAGARA RIVER BRIDGES TO CANADA, EITHER THE SHERIDAN DRIVE BRIDGE / TUNNEL, THE INTERNATIONAL TRAIN BRIDGE, OR THE PEACE BRIDGE. BY HAVING A OIL TANKER ACCESS POINT IN MASSACHUSETTS GIVES US A SHORTER GEOGRAPHICAL STRAIGHT RUN OF THE PIPE LINE. AND THE PIPE LINE ACCESS THE CANADIAN OIL FIELDS TO THE NORTH AND WEST OF US.

STEP 6: PLACE LAND WITH TAX PROGRAMS UP FOR AUCTION TO THE OIL PROCESSING COMPANIES.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

THIS SOLVES THE PROBLEM OF REGIONALLY HIGH GASOLINE PRICES IN WESTERN NEW YORK. AND CREATING A PIPE LINE FROM BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS REDUCES TRAVEL TIME AND COST OF DELIVERY OF THE OIL THROUGH THE PIPE LINE AND HAVING THE REFINING PROCESS SO GEOGRAPHICAL CLOSE TO THE REGION ALLOWS FOR LOWER GASOLINE PRICES. HAVING A MAJOR REFINERY IN OUR COUNTY CREATES DESIGN (ENGINEERING) JOBS, PRESSURE VESSEL FABRICATION JOBS, VESSEL DELIVERY / TRANSPORTATION JOBS, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

NIAGARA COUNTY IMPROVEMENTS

12/2/2008

BY

DAVID M. METRO

JOBS, OPERATIONAL JOBS (PRODUCTION, ACCOUNTING, PURCHASING, HUMAN RESOURCES, MANAGEMENT, ETC.), AND THE WEALTH EFFECT OF THE FAMILIES OF THE WORKERS. GAINING THE SALES TAXES THAT WILL BE CREATED BY THE SALES OF THE OIL PRODUCTS. RESULTING IN LOWER PROPERTY TAXES FOR THE COUNTY RESIDENTS. MEETING A NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY WITH LOWER GAS PRICES, LOWER COSTS OF LIVING. CREATING JOBS, AND PROSPERITY TO NIAGARA COUNTY AND ALL OF WESTERN NEW YORK.

CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS IMPROVEMENTS

2/5/2009

BY DAVID M. METRO

NEW DOMED N.F.L. STADIUM IN NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK

LOCATION:

BETWEEN JOHN DALY BLVD., PORTAGE ROAD, NIAGARA STREET, AND
BUFFALO AVENUE.

RELOCATE CURRENTLY PLANNED PROJECTS IN THE ABOVE
LOCATION TO OTHER PARTS OF THE CITY. THE EXACT LOCATIONS OF THE
OTHER PROJECTS WILL BE DETERMINED AT A LATER DATE.

REFERRING TO THE ATTACHED DRAWING THE NEW STADIUM FITS
IN PERFECT WITH THE PREVIOUS INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS (ROADS,
BRIDGES, POWER LINES, WATER LINES, SEWER LINES, ZONING
SPECIFICATIONS) LAID OUT EARLIER.

THE SITE LOCATION LENDS ITSELF FOR EASY ACCESS FROM THE
LEWISTON-QUEENSTON, WHIRLPOOL, RAINBOW, AND THE NIAGARA
FALLS-CHIPPAWA BRIDGES. EASY HIGHWAY ACCESS FROM THE I-190 AND
THE ROBERT MOSES EXTENSION, BUFFALO AVENUE, NIAGARA STREET,
AND MAIN STREET (ROUTE 104) (A.K.A. JOHN DALY BLVD.) IT ALSO IDEAL
THAT THE 100% RAISED MAG-LEV TRAIN FROM DOWN TOWN BUFFALO
TERMINAL AT HSBC ARENA FROM DELAWARE AVENUE, BUFFALO TO
NIAGARA STREET, NIAGARA FALLS. AND IS ATTACHED TO BOTH
AIRPORTS. AND INTERSECTS THE TRAIN STATION AT LOCKPORT ROAD
AND MAIN STREET. REDUCING CAR CONGESTION. RESULTING IN
INCREASED FOOT TRAFFIC DOWN TOWN. NOT TO MENTION THE WHEELED
TROLLEY ACCESS.

THE RESTAURANTS LOCATED ON THE BOTTOM FLOORS IN THE HIGH
RISE HOTELS/OFFICE BUILDINGS ALONG THE NORTH SIDE OF NIAGARA
STREET WILL BENEFIT MOST FROM 70,000+ PEOPLE AT ONE TIME IN DOWN
TOWN NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK FOR 16+ WEEKS A YEAR. FOR THE
REST OF THE YEAR THE STADIUM CAN BE USED AS CONVENTION SPACE,
CONCERTS, WRESTLING, PAINT BALL, BOXING, OLYMPIC EVENTS, ETC..

THE LAND SPECULATORS (A.K.A. NIAGARA FALLS REDEVELOPMENT)
WILL FINALLY GET PAID AND LEAVE THE CITY AND NEVER COME BACK.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE TEAM NAME:
THE BUFFALO BILLS = THE NIAGARA BILLS =
THE NIAGARA FALLS NORTH STARS

THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE NAME CHANGE IS TO REGIONAL HISTORICAL
MEANING TO THE TEAM. THE NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS HAVE A

CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS IMPROVEMENTS

2/5/2009

BY DAVID M. METRO

HISTORICAL CONNECTION TO THE PEOPLE IN THERE REGION IS THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. THE BUFFALO BILLS WERE BASED ON A WILD WEST SHOW THAT THE ORIGINAL OWNER SAW WHEN HE WAS A KID. THE NORTH STAR HAS HISTORICAL MEANING TO THIS REGION BECAUSE OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD. AND BY RENAMING THE TEAM "THE NIAGARA FALLS NORTH STARS" THEY ARE NOW ATTACHED TO THE GREATNESS TO THE FALLS ITSELF AND BY HAVING NIAGARA FALLS IN THE TEAM NAME ALLOWS THE CANADIAN AND THE AMERICAN FANS TO SUPPORT THE TEAM BECAUSE THERE IS A NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO, CANADA AND A NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK, USA. THUS, EFFECTIVELY MARKETING THE FRANCHISE TO LARGER GROUP OF FANS.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION:

THE NORTH SIDE, WEST SIDE (GABLE END), AND THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE FIELD HOUSE WILL HAVE A STRUCTURAL STEEL BAYS OF 30' x 20'; THE 30' CENTERS ALIGN NORTH AND SOUTH, AND 20' CENTERS ALIGN EAST AND WEST. THE GABLE PEAK WIDTH DIMENSIONS WILL BE 30', PLUS THE WIDTH OF PRACTICE FIELD (80' APPROX.), PLUS 30' (10' WIDE HALLWAYS AND 20' WIDE OFFICES). ONLY THE ROOF OVER THE PRACTICE FIELD WILL RETRACT. FULL SIZE PRACTICE FIELD. PLUS 10 YARDS BEHIND END ZONES. OFFICES, TRAINING MAIN MEETING ROOM, WEIGHT ROOMS, SWIMMING POOL, HEALTH FACILITIES, KITCHEN, PLAYER DINNING HALL, EQUIPMENT ROOMS, ETC. ALL THINGS AND SPACE REQUIRED FOR FOOTBALL OPERATIONS.

THE TEAM STORE WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE NORTH SIDE OF THE FIELD HOUSE AND TO THE WEST SIDE OF THE MAIN ENTRANCE AND TICKET OFFICE IN THE OFFICE TOWER. TEMPORARY PARKING LOT FOR TICKET PICKUP AND STORE PURCHASES ON NON-EVENT DAYS. AND ON EVENT DAYS WILL BE FOR PATROL CARS AND EMERGENCY VEHICLES.

THE TEAM FRONT OFFICE AND BUILDING OPERATIONS FRONT OFFICE TOWER WILL HAVE A RECTANGULAR FOOTPRINT BETWEEN THE PRACTICE FIELD AND THE STADIUM. I VISUALIZING A TRAPEZOID OFFICE BUILDING OR A VERTICAL RECTANGULAR BUILDING WITH A GABLED GLASS ROOF, THE GABLE PEAKS WILL FACE NORTH AND SOUTH. THE SOUTH GABLE END OF THE BUILDING WILL EXTEND SOUTH TO THE FLUSH SIDE END OF THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE ENCLOSED EMPLOYEE PARKING RAMP, WHICH WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE WEST SIDE OF THE OFFICE TOWER NEXT TO THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE FIELD HOUSE. THE EMPLOYEE PARKING RAMP WILL STOP SHORT OF THE WEST SIDE OF THE FIELD HOUSE GABLE PEAK FOR ENTRY TO THE VISITING PLAYERS SURFACE PARKING LOT AND THE MEDIA SURFACE PARKING LOT.

CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS IMPROVEMENTS

2/5/2009

BY DAVID M. METRO

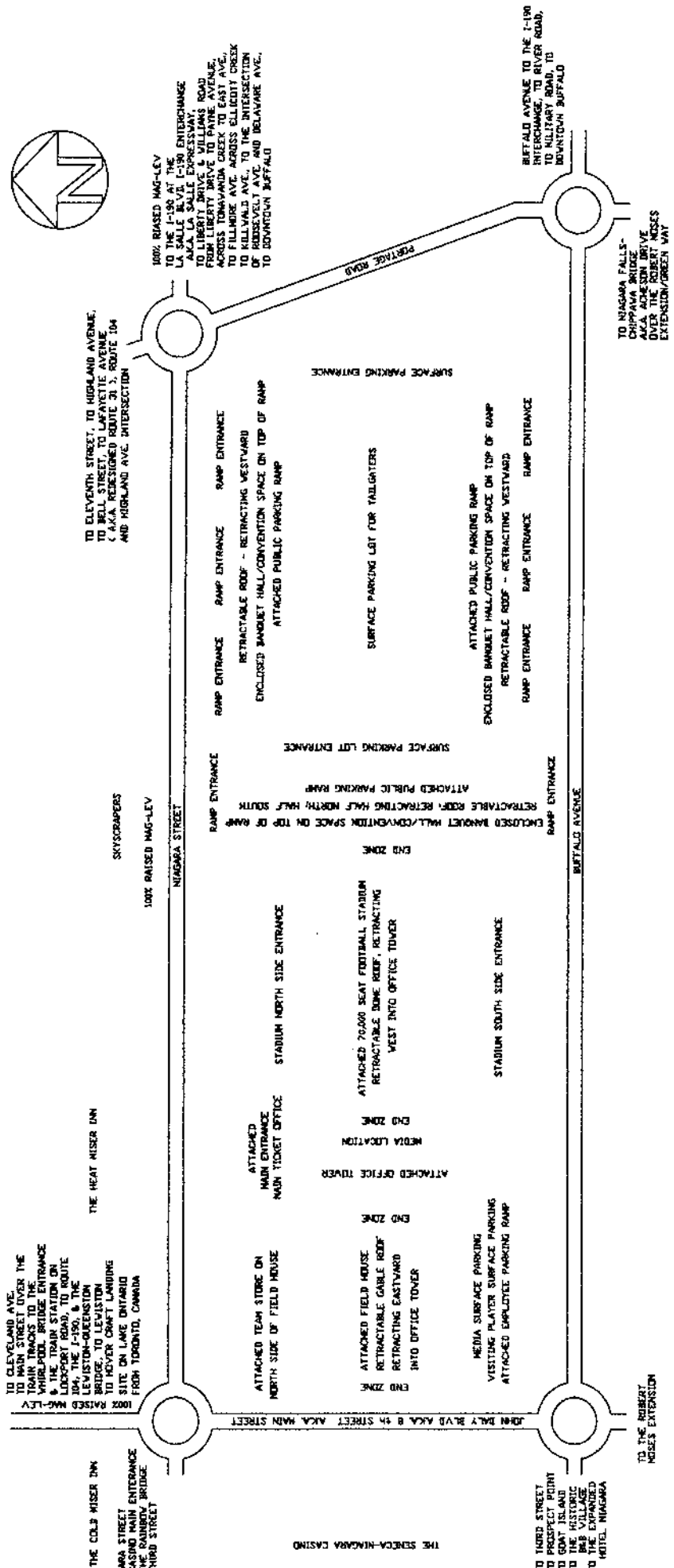
THE MAIN TICKET OFFICE AND THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE OFFICE BUILDING WILL BE AN OFFSHOOT STRUCTURE OF THE OFFICE. THE SIZE AND SHAPE THE MAIN ENTRANCE AND TICKET OFFICE WILL BE DETERMINED AT LATER DATE. ATTACHED INDOOR ACCESS TO THE STADIUM SEATING FROM THE MAIN OFFICE ENTRANCE AND TICKET OFFICE SECTION.

THE NORTH SIDE STADIUM ENTRANCE WILL PROJECT OUT OF THE STADIUM'S MAIN VERTICAL WALL WITH TWO HALF CYLINDRICAL TOWERS ON EACH END OF THE NORTH SIDE ENTRANCE TO HOLD THE EXIT/ENTRANCE RAMPS TO UPPER FLOORS. THE MAG-LEV STATION ON THE UPPER ENTRANCE OF THE NORTH SIDE ENTRANCE CAN BE PROVIDED DEPENDING ON WHICH SIDE OF NIAGARA STREET WE PLACE THE RAILS. IF THE MAG-LEV IS BUILT PRIOR TO THE STADIUM, THEN THE STATION WILL BE DESIGNED WITH THE ANTICIPATION THAT THE STADIUM WILL BE CONNECTED WHEN THE STADIUM WILL BE BUILT ON THAT SITE.

THE SOUTH SIDE STADIUM ENTRANCE WILL THE SAME HALF CYLINDRICAL TOWERS ON EACH END OF THE ENTRANCE PROJECTION, BUT WILL RISE HIGHER BETWEEN THE TWO RAMP TOWERS FOR THE RESTAURANTS IN THAT AREA TO HAVE A VIEW OF THE NIAGARA RIVER. A SLOPED GLASSED SHED ROOF WILL KEEP THE SNOW OFF THE STRUCTURE. HIGH LEVEL ACCESS FROM THE OFFICE TOWER WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE SOUTH WEST HALF CYLINDRICAL RAMP TOWER FOR ACCESS TO THE RESTAURANTS AND AT THAT SAME ELEVATION ACCESS FROM PUBLIC PARKING RAMPS ON THE EAST SIDE WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE SOUTH-EAST HALF CYLINDRICAL RAMP.

THE OWNER'S BOX WILL BE LOCATED ABOVE OR BELOW THE MEDIA LOCATION IN THE STADIUM. FOUR JUMBO TELEVISION SCREENS WILL BE LOCATED AT FORTY-FIVE DEGREES IN THE TOP CORNERS OF THE STADIUM. CAMERA LOCATIONS WILL BE LOCATED ABOVE THE TELEVISION SCREENS FOR ALL AROUND CAMERA ANGLES. TWO ROWS OF THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY DEGREES OF LUXURY BOXES AT THE MEDIA BOX ELEVATION AND AT THE OWNER'S BOX ELEVATION.

THE PUBLIC PARKING RAMPS WILL ALL BE ENCLOSED. EXITS AND ENTRANCES WILL EXTRUDE FROM PARKING RAMPS. GABLED RETRACTABLE GLASSED IN ROOFS. EACH SLOPE OF THE ROOF CAN BE INDEPENDENTLY OPENED AND CLOSED DEPENDING ON THE WIND DIRECTION AND INTENSE SUN LIGHT GLARE. IF POSSIBLE SOLAR PANEL SHADES ON THE INSIDES OF THE ROOF CAN BE AUTOMATICALLY AND MANUALLY ADJUSTED. FOR THE PEOPLE THAT PARK IN THE PUBLIC



HARRIS EnvEd

Mary Ellen Harris, PhD

Environmental and Educational Consulting

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MAY 11 2009

NIAGARA CO. ECONOMIC DEV.

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May 7, 2009

Benjamin A. Bidell, Senior Planner
Niagara County Department of Economic Development
6311 Inducon Corporate Drive
Sanborn, NY 14132

RE: Comments on Draft Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

I'm a local environmental consultant with significant expertise in NEPA/SEQRA. I would like to bring your attention to two issues regarding your section on "SEQRA Compliance" (Chpt. II, p. 3):

1. The statements in the paragraph on SEQRA compliance are incorrect. (a) The Comprehensive Plan **cannot** serve as the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). A GEIS must be a complete and separate document from any plan. Sections of the Comprehensive Plan can be used for the GEIS, however, such as for "Environmental Setting and Existing Conditions." From my cursory review, I do not think the Comprehensive Plan document produced so far would satisfy the level of detail required in some sections of an EIS. (b) No further environmental reviews would be required for subsequent site-specific county actions **only if** adequate thresholds, impacts and mitigation measures have been identified in the GEIS. The suitability analyses and maps for development or redevelopment of lands are very general. Actual site studies and further environmental reviews for specific proposed activities will still need to be completed and this should be stated.
2. The SEQRA review process **must be closed out** before the County can legally adopt the Comprehensive Plan. I have reviewed the NYSDEC's Environmental Notice Bulletin and have not seen any recent "Positive Declaration" to prepare a GEIS. If the County does not have a GEIS at this point, I suggest that the proposed deadline of adopting the

plan on July 28 cannot be met. I would like to summarize for you the key SEQRA milestones that are required:

- Positive Declaration—published in the NYSDEC Environmental Notice Bulletin, after which 60 days are allowed for agencies and the public to create draft and final scopes of the GEIS (i.e., a detailed outline of a document and issues that will satisfy SEQRA).
- Draft GEIS—Once a draft GEIS is completed, the lead agency (the County) has 45 days to decide if the GEIS is ready for public review (internal adequacy determination—does the GEIS include all the topics required by SEQRA and scoped by the agencies and the public?). Once circulated, the public has a minimum of 30 days to review the GEIS and submit comments.
- Public Hearing—There is usually a public hearing on the GEIS, which cannot be held until 15 days after the Notification of Hearing, and within 60 days after filing the Draft GEIS Notice of Completion in the NYSDEC Environmental Notice Bulletin.
- Final GEIS—The final GEIS is prepared within 45 days after a hearing, or within 60 days after filing the Draft GEIS Notice of Completion. A Notice of Completion of the Final GEIS must be submitted.
- Findings—A Findings Statement cannot be filed sooner than 10 days after the Notice of Completion of the Final GEIS, or within 30 days of the filing date.

Please feel free to have your consultants or staff talk to me about any of the above.

Yours truly,



Mary Ellen Harris, PhD
Principal, Harris EnvEd

Cc: Gregory D. Lewis



*Environment is around us.
Education is within us.™*

300 South Fifth Street
Lewiston, New York 14092
May 9, 2009

RE: N.C. Communities Comprehensive
Plan

To: Niagara County Dept. of Economics and Planning

Regarding the outreach survey presented for the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan during its individual outreach meetings, I chose not to fill it out, as it is statistic-driven; lacks goals and purpose for the county as a WHOLE; only applicable to the status-quo; and gives no action, no progressive action that addresses the responsibility to the statutory policy and laws of N.Y.S. or its regional, county and local governments.

It virtually ignores the county's prime natural resource and industry--farmland and agriculture, and treats this landuse as a continuing "impermanence syndrome".

The plan is an offering of "tea & crumpets" to a "backyard" region in N.Y.S. that will continue to promote this "frontier mentality", as it has for 100 years.

To me, the N.C. Comprehensive Plan is 4-plus decades late. On the other hand, if there had been a county comprehensive plan back then, I strongly doubt things would have been different than what has transpired in the county and western New York, to this day. Historically, local governments have run the show, wreaking havoc with the "local initiative" (the zoning power) and intentionally ignore the rule of law. The "Home Rule" law is archaic and further allows local administrations to act arbitrarily with "free license" in making landuse decisions.

Four clues alone give notice to this disregard for a county comprehensive plan:

1. The evolved plan (for months), has been reported to be on the Web Site and hard copies in public buildings, libraries. On 4/25/09, it was not in the Lewiston Library nor other public places in the county except Niagara Falls. (5 days before the L-P Outreach Mtg.)!
2. Attendance at these outreach meetings has been dismal. Nine people attended the Lewport meeting.
3. The general public has little awareness or understanding that their local government is responsible for legislating and exercising the planning/zoning power and laws--NOT the county; NOT the region; NOT the state; NOT the arbitrary, ad hoc decisions of the local administration.
4. Historically, the communities in Niagara County are politically "little fiefdoms"; county government is a "little fiefdom" (22 in all); the county's comprehensive plan is segregated into regions, denying coordination and cohesiveness.

Unlike a community's comprehensive plan which is NOT a guideline ONLY as it REQUIRES adoption of plan and enabling ordinance (code) that "must be in conformance with the plan" to exercise, the county comprehensive plan IS a guideline only and necessitates coordinating and developing broad standards in significant areas that address the county

as a WHOLE. Unfortunately, the plan is not only^{not} comprehensive, it is it's a study plan (an exercise in numbers), and not an action plan. Its review factors ignore efficient landuse planning, are fractured in content, and not pro-active. The N.C. proposed plan is a report; not a plan.

Noting the stats in the proposed plan under LANDUSE, N.C. lists now 34% Residential Use; 30% Agricultural Use; Vacant Land (likely past agricultural lands) at 16%.

Vacant land is the third highest category of landuse in the county. Every year, these lands are being developed for non-agricultural purposes at twice the amount of farmland being protected!

In the same years that the county population has declined by 50% plus, residential landuse has tripled!!

One would think the light bulb would go on. Alas, the county plan continues to accomodate the "status quo", developing its finite resources; extending water and sewer lines to accomodate development and local governments' lacking accountability; ignores city and urban needs in favor of suburban desires and taking for granted, the rural, farming resource and economy, and lifestyle. Makes no sense:

- inversely proportional to progress
- waste and loss of resources
- lacks an environmental conservation policy that continues to "use" them instead of protecting, maintaing them
- no pro-active goals or purpose
- not sustainable in the short or long term that condones more sprawl
- paraochial in character like its municipalities--an old industrial core now gone and a valuable, retreating agricultural base, economically and environmentally--that is not promoting, pursuing farming or its related industries and products. An entire industry is being ignored along with its resources, economy, environment and quality of life.
- a regressive tax base (an arbitrary property assessment) based on home, land ownership...instead of USE. "Cows don't go to school".

The proposed N.C. Comprehensive Plan attempts to work around the present situation and statistics that exist by encouraging cooperation and corroboration among municipalities. In our bureaucratic, political county, that's a hard sell. In our county where municipalities historically compete with each other and avoid exercising the legitimate process (planning/zoning), both procedurally and substantively, we suffer a 19th Century disease, well instilled to this day. It has been said that the definition of insanity "is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting a different result".

As you may have guessed by now, I am a resident of Lewiston; have over 40 years in community planning/landuse law; preferential assessment of farmland/forestland, development rights' programs; am a 14-plus year member of the Niagra County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (N.Y.S. Art. 25AA) representing land preservation with local, state and national level programs, specifically the American Farmland Trust in recent years; and 30 years with local, state, and county governments (Pa.) in developing and initiating farmland protection

through comprehensive plans, zoning and development rights--local, state and county, which included all resources in addition to farmland: forest, open space, floodplains, environmentally-sensitive land.

According to the N.C. Comprehensive Plan 2008, the county has 101,280 acres in agricultural use. This is a drastic difference from the stats reported by the NCAFPB in 1997 and still viable today (176,277 ac. 52%) in agricultural use, in agricultural districts alone. There are 9 districts, some combined. All county towns have a major portion of their lands in a district except the Town of Niagara which has one major farm; the program to owner is voluntary even tho' the state's purpose and policy is obvious for the protection of these resources while towns are unresponsive, looking at agricultural preservation and resource protection waiting to be developed -- the impermanence syndrome.

State law developed in 1974 and updated, strengthened in 1992 and 1996, is virtually ignored by the towns--although an integrated part of their planning/zoning process--and unknown to residents. The NCAFPB has been complacent in promoting the purpose of ~~the purpose of~~ this law, deferring to town politics and county innuendos which include rubber-stamping farms for residential and commercial development, sometimes in contradiction with residents and zoning who defend the local plan and law when their town administration doesn't, but fall victims to SPRAWL: increased school taxes, increased local taxes; added infrastructure and maintenance; services; (remember the "costs of community services"); add the conservation of the environment; food, water, wildlife habitats and the very character and quality of life. Art. 25 AA also addresses urban living.

If a country like Niagara where population has and is decreasing and the dispersion of people within the county increases as it has, the long term mass is critical--and all with the loss of its viable, economic, environmental resources, increased taxes, degraded maintenance and services, AND the impact of negative change: which towns and villages call "progress". The proposed comprehensive plan feeds all these outdated philosophies and treat its top industry with neglect--a direct contradiction of N.V.S. Agricultural District Law, Art. 25AA.

It is now 2009: the county has apparently lost (accordingly to your figures), 74, 997 agricultural ~~acres~~ acres to non-farm development! Wheatfield sawered 7000 acres of the best farmland in the county, which was half an agricultural district! They called it PROGRESS; farms and farmers abided. The other 65,000 acres apparently went to non-agricultural use or vacant land because the town governments promoted, fostered--and still do--non-agricultural use. a non-conservation policy in favor of development; ignore the legitimate purpose of the planning/zoning initiative while farmers and local gov't. look to developing this resource.

Along with the intentionally weak planning/zoning process of the municipalities that ~~does~~ does not conform with their comprehensive plans and goals as defined by statutory law, the county joins the ranks.

Where is the higher purpose? As stated, the county plan proposal is a report; not an action plan.

Respectfully,

Gretchen P. Morgan
Gretchen P. Morgan

**COMMENTS ON DISPLAY BOARDS FROM NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETINGS ORGANIZED BY PLANNING SUBREGION
[FROM MEETINGS HELD APRIL 2009]**

NATURAL RESOURCES & DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT SUITABILITY (FIGURE V.5)

General Comments

- Consider renaming map to “Natural Resources/Development/Redevelopment Suitability” or
- Remove "Dev/Redev Score" sub-heading from the legend
- Eliminate the scores and instead note the low end of the scale as “Natural Resources Concentration” and the high end of the scale as “Community Resources Concentration"
- If possible, consider using a gradient symbology for the map using the same colors

ONGOING INITIATIVES MAP (FIGURE V. 20)

General comments

- Show the boundary of the Niagara River Greenway as it extends into Erie County.
- Add the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

DESTINATIONS MAP (FIGURE V.21):

General comments

- Consider merging this map with the Destinations map to create a “Destination Corridor Concepts” map; remove destinations and add conceptual growth areas from local plans
- Include restaurants throughout county
- Include “bed and breakfasts” throughout county
- Include wineries throughout county
- Include farmers markets throughout county
- In the Niagara Escarpment callout, remove “Day Peckinpaugh Canal Motorship” as it is a transient vessel; not a permanent destination, no longer stationed in Lockport
- Identify other destination points in the villages or identify villages as destinations in and of themselves
- Include harbors, marinas, and boat launches (boating amenities) throughout the county; uniquely symbolize these features on the map and in the legend
- Add an Erie Canalway Scenic Corridor with a callout box noting attractions

Upper River Communities

- Include proposed Oz site
- Include Oppenheim County Park
- Include Daus Haus German Museum
- Add Military Road as a commercial corridor
- Include the Alcliff plaza, Hills plaza, Prime Outlets, and Military Square Plaza in a callout box for the Military Road Commercial Corridor, not Niagara Falls Boulevard Commercial Corridor
- Remove “Factory Outlet Mall” from the Niagara Falls Boulevard Commercial Corridor as this is now the “Prime Outlets”
- Add other shopping plazas in the callout box for the Niagara Falls Boulevard Commercial Corridor and Military Road Commercial Corridor

- Note businesses along Niagara Falls Boulevard in the Town of Wheatfield
- Remove the “Native American Center” from the Upper Niagara Scenic Corridor as it no longer exists and the building is currently vacant
- Extend Erie Canalway Corridor all the way through the City of North Tonawanda
- Make sure Fisherman, Gratwick Riverside, and Canalway Harbor Parks in the City of North Tonawanda are on the map

Central Communities

- Include the Erie Canalway Corridor and destinations therein
- Note the deep cut engineering along the Erie Canal
- Remove the businesses noted in the callout box for the Transit Road Commercial Corridor and replace them with a list of shopping plazas along Transit Road

Lakefront Communities

- Comment received that NYSDEC regulations involving shoreline protection impede development of and access to waterfront by property owners and residents
- Include “proposed fish hatchery” in the Lakefront Scenic Corridor

ROADS, TRAILS, & TRANSIT CONNECTIONS MAP (FIGURE V.22)

Central Communities

- Include existing multi-use trail system in Pendleton; Rails-to-Trails project already completed along half of old Erie-Lackawanna Railroad right-of-way in Pendleton

Upper/Lower River Communities

- Comment received that all four lanes of Robert Moses Parkway should be opened up in the City of Niagara Falls
- Comment received that all four lanes of Robert Moses Parkway should be removed in order to restore the area around the Niagara Gorge into an international tourist destination
- Propose a trolley line from U.S. Route 62/Military Road to NYS Route 31 to NYS Route 98 to NYS Route 104 to NYS Route 18
- Propose a trolley line from 4th Street/Niagara Street to 1st Street to Main Street to NYS Route 104 to Center Street
- Propose a trolley line along NYS Route 18 to Fort Niagara to NYS Route 18F to Center Street
- Propose trolley terminals at: #1 Niagara Falls International Airport; #2 Old Media Play; #3 Center Street; and #4 Fort Niagara

Upper River Communities

- Check to see if there is an Outlying Area Reporting Station (OARS) in the City of North Tonawanda and add if necessary

PROPOSED INITIATIVES MAP (FIGURE V. 23)

General comments

- Consider merging this map with the Destinations map to create a “Destination Corridor Concepts” map; remove destinations and add conceptual growth areas from local plans

- Include Tonawanda Creek as a natural corridor similar to Niagara Escarpment; note characteristics such as environmental sensitivity, recreation opportunities, and diversity (urban at westernmost point, natural resource protection area at easternmost point)
- Include a corridor along Youngstown-Lockport Road (Ransomville) as an important community linkage, trail linkage, and rural corridor

Lakefront/Lower River Communities

- Comment received that NYSDEC regulations involving shoreline protection impede development of and access to waterfront by property owners and residents

Upper River Communities

- Comment received that Niagara County Public Works project along Shawnee road should include widening of shoulders to provide bike access and improve connectivity with other bike routes and trail systems

Central Communities

- Comment received about need for increased and aggressive support for completion of the Canalway trail, which is interrupted between Lockport and Amherst
- Comment received that additional shoulder width is needed along Robinson Road/Lockport Road to accommodate continuous bike connection
- Comment received about improving connectivity of bike lanes and trails to provide access to West Canal Marina and Country Cottage
- Comment received regarding need to provide cross-county bike route access from Canalway trail; north-south and east-west connections between trail systems
- Note that Pendleton Rails-to-Trails is halfway completed and consists of two paths, one motorized and one non-motorized.

LAND USE CONCEPTS MAP (FIGURE V.24):

General comments

- Comment received about “intermingled diversity of agriculture” - agriculture is not confined to rural areas, but can be compatible in suburban areas

Upper River/Central Communities

- Need to market area, including heritage, through consistent signage, architecture, and public events

Lakefront Communities

- Note proposed fish hatchery and proposed improvements to Krull County Park, Olcott, etc.



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APR 30 2005
NIAGARA CO. ECONOMIC DEV.

Ben Bidell
Niagara County Dept. of Economic Development
6211 Inducan Corporate Drive
Sanborn, NY 14132-9099

Dear Ben:

Thank you for your presentation last night of the Draft County Master Plan. I know hours of work went into the plan. As I said, however, I am concerned about the lack of direct attention to the preservation and support of the many cultural attractions in Niagara County.

As a 20 year trustee of the Carrousel Museum, a 20 year member of the Cultural Alliance of Niagara, and the Chair of the Tonawandas Chamber of Commerce Tourism Committee, I am very much aware of the difficult financial situation in which our cultural attractions find themselves. Niagara County has historically done little to support these attractions. Yet it proposes to be a tourist destination. Numerous studies have concluded that Niagara Falls and the State Park system attract millions of visitors, but the full economic benefit of these visitors can not be realized unless there are reasons for visitors to stay for more than one day and to travel throughout the county.

In the Tonawandas we have been working diligently to create a tourist destination. The historic Rivera Theatre, the Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum, Carnegie Art Center, Ghostlight Theatre, and our new NT History Museum are permanent attractions. Throughout the summer visitors can enjoy concerts on the Erie Canal every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday evenings. New restaurants are bringing people from all across Western New York and more to come. The attraction of the water cannot be dismissed.

Supporting the efforts of the NTCC to promote the county for tourists is not sufficient. Efforts must be made to support the cultural attractions that can encourage visitors to extend their stay. If this concern is not addressed in the county master plan, it will never be on the radar of our legislators and planners. Please give serious consideration to this concern and include a targeted action in the master plan.

Sincerely,

Cc: Peter Smolinski, Andrea McNulty, Paul Wotaszek

Po Box 672, 180 Thompson St., North Tonawanda, NY 14120. Phone (716) 693-1885, Fax (716) 743-9018

"Once Around is Never Enough"

www.carrouselmuseum.org

The cover features a solid green background with white geometric lines. A vertical line runs down the right side, and a horizontal line runs across the middle. These lines intersect to form a large white cross-like shape. Within this shape, there are two overlapping rounded rectangles: one on the left and one on the right. The title text is positioned within the right-hand rounded rectangle.

Niagara County Arts & Cultural

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

2006



Tonawandas' Council on the Arts
Carnegie Art Center

240 Goundry Street
North Tonawanda, NY 14120
P: 716-694-4400 F: 716-995-0180
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was commissioned by the Tonawandas' Council on the Arts / Carnegie Art (TCA/CAC). Arts management consultant, Lawrence Cook, conducted the project and authored this report. Additional administrative support was provided by Claire Aubrey, Decentralization Coordinator, Arts Niagara Program and Ellen Ryan, Executive Director of the TCA/CAC. Funding was provided by the State and Local Partnership Program at the New York State Council on the Arts and Advancing Arts and Culture Buffalo-Niagara.

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INTRODUCTION



Needs assessments are a means to identify and analyze the complex needs in changing environments. A much more academic definition is:

A systematic set of procedures undertaken for the purpose of setting priorities and making decisions about programs or organizational improvements and allocation of resources. The priorities are based on identified needs. A need is generally considered to be a discrepancy between "what is" or the present state of affairs in regard to the group and situation of interest, and "what should be" or a desired state of affairs. [1]

The purpose of this project was to assess the current status of arts and cultural organizations within Niagara County. Information was collected from December 2005 through May 2006. This information included the total number and programmatic diversity of organizations, staff size, financial status, and audience impact, among other things. This project also identified asset development or management support needs of arts and culturals. Recommendations for professional development strategies to meet these needs appear later in the report.

Needs assessments are conducted for various reasons including the measurement or impact of

change on a system or community.

The timing for this particular management needs assessment survey is a reflection of many changes within our own region.

As with any environment, there has been a continuum of change within the Niagara County arts and cultural community over several years. Some of these changes have had greater impact than others. Significant changes have included an increasingly unpredictable funding environment as exemplified by the decision to discontinue funding culturals by the Niagara County Legislature as well as the Erie County Budget crisis in 2005 which placed a larger burden on foundations serving Western New York counties as scores of culturals lost all funding from the Erie County Legislature.

Other significant changes involved the formation and dissolution of key cultural organizations. Introduction of new organizations has necessarily affected a change in resource allocation as has the dissolution of other organizations. Some of these organizational "gains and losses" have had greater impact than others.

[1] Witkin, Belle Ruth & Altschuld, James W., 1995. Planning and conducting needs assessments: A practical guide. Thousand Oaks, CA.

A need is generally considered to be a discrepancy between “what is” or the present state of affairs in regard to the group and situation of interest, and “what should be” or a desired state of affairs.

Among these was the dissolution of the Niagara Arts Council in 2004, an organization which served the Niagara County arts and cultural community for over thirty years.

Although their New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) regrant programs remain in Niagara County, now administered by the Tonawandas' Council on the Arts / Carnegie Art Center, the institution that was the county's arts council no longer remains. Consequently, any additional technical support services that were provided to the arts and cultural community no longer exist. Shifts in the delivery of management services to arts and cultural are being felt in other communities as well. The closure of Niagara County's arts council does not stand alone. Other arts councils across the state have dissolved and many are struggling.

The Niagara County cultural community offers vital and diverse programmatic services to their constituents. Asset development is a critical need in order to stabilize and maintain existing services as well as to support further organizational development.

We hope that the findings in this report, and subsequent recommendations for technical management assistance, are instrumental in moving the Niagara County arts and cultural community forward.

We would like to thank the participating organizations for taking the time to complete the online survey. We also thank the organizations that participated in the interview process. Their insights and recommendations were extremely valuable in assessing the information collected. Thanks also go to Lawrence Cook, the consultant for this project; to Claire Aubrey, Decentralization Coordinator for the Arts Niagara Program at the Tonawandas' Council on the Arts / Carnegie Art

Center; and to Joanna Raczynska, Media Director, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, for her technical assistance.

Finally, we must thank the funders of this project. Without their support, it would not have been possible. Thanks to Advancing Arts and Culture Buffalo-Niagara and to the State and Local Partnership Program at the New York State Council on the Arts.

Ellen Ryan
Executive Director
Tonawandas' Council on the Arts /
Carnegie Art Center

Needs assessments are conducted for various reasons including the measurement or impact of change on a system or community.

METHODOLOGY

The goal of the Niagara County arts and cultural needs assessment survey was to identify needs and status of arts and cultural organizations within Niagara County.

The process consisted of two phases. The first was the development of a quantitative survey which collected demographic information from each organization. Data collected provided a base-line of information for analysis and also described the operational state of each participating organization.

Once this base-line information was compiled, the second part of the project consisted of collecting qualitative data from participating organizations

internet access, hard copies of the survey were sent upon request.

The survey consisted of fifty-six questions that addressed issues of basic organizational operation and structure. These questions covered topics such as staffing, facilities, finance, audience, programming, promotion and outreach, technology, and operational issues.

Following the collection of information from the survey, the participants in the second phase of the project provided detailed qualitative information about operations within their own organizations. This included specific management

This report is based on data collected from twenty-six respondents, 32%, in the first phase of the project and nine interviews at various organizations within the second phase of the project.

through individual interviews. This additional information was required to supplement the statistical data and provide a more comprehensive overview of the state of the arts and cultural in Niagara County.

This report is based on data collected from twenty-six respondents, 32%, in the first phase of the project and nine interviews at various organizations within the second phase of the project.

The process was initiated by a letter addressed to Niagara County cultural organizations about the purpose of the project and the importance of completing the survey. This letter of invitation was mailed to eighty-one cultural organizations.

Participating organizations were directed to complete an online survey. If they did not have

philosophies or organizational visions along with insights regarding broad-based, long-term issues facing the cultural community as a whole.

From the data collected, an assessment was made about the range of organizational development represented by respondents and what areas of technical management support would be of greatest benefit to the most recipients.

A number of trends or management needs were identified within the overall cultural community. Analysis of each part of this project resulted in recommendations of technical assistance that address needs which would enhance organizational ability to provide quality programs and services and allow for stabilization and growth.

NIAGARA COUNTY ARTS & CULTURAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT: SURVEY

Characteristics of Respondents

Organizations surveyed ranged from entities easily identified as cultural anchors to very small associations focused around a specific ethnic heritage. Respondents exemplified a diverse sampling of overall organizations. Identification was determined by size, geographic location, program types and disciplines.

Respondents represented rural areas such as Burt and Newfane along with the primary cities of the County - Niagara Falls, Lockport and

North Tonawanda. They ranged from smaller more community based organizations such as Starry Night Theatre to larger regional draws such as Old Fort Niagara. The types of programs offered by these organizations encompassed all disciplines from the performances to visual and literary arts as well as other offerings including professional development workshops and lectures.

Facilities

Of the respondents, 44% owned their own space and nearly 35% had sought temporary satellite space for specific programs. The facilities utilized by respondents, whether owned, leased or rented, were over 77% ADA compliant. The vast majority of respondents, 76%, stated that they

were not looking to identify a new space.

However, it was stated in several one-on-one interviews and determined by information collected by the survey regarding capital campaigns, there is a need for some of these organizations to enhance their current space.

Respondents exemplified a diverse sampling of overall organizations. Identification was determined by size, geographic location, program types and disciplines.

Fiscal Standing

Operational budgets of organizations ranged from under \$25,000 to over one million dollars. Approximately 50% of the organizations fell below \$150,000 with the majority of that grouping having budgets under \$25,000. This was approximately 27% of the overall total. Those organizations with budgets of \$150,000 or higher, were predominately between \$500,000 and one million at 15% with the next largest categories at

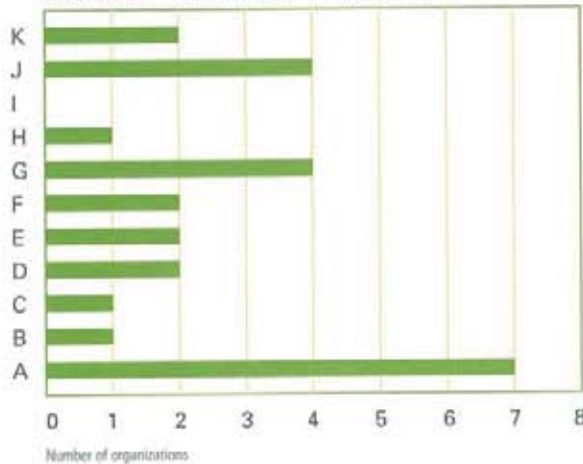
\$150,000 to \$200,000 and \$200,000 to \$300,000 both at approximately 12% respectively of the overall total.

A fourth of the respondents identified that their organization had an endowment in place. A majority of the respondents, 64%, did not conduct any type of annual fund drive. The majority of respondents, 77%, had a membership program in place.

Question 30

Please identify the size of your operating budget in its last completed fiscal year:

A. 0 to \$24,999 D. \$75,000 to \$99,999 G. \$200,000 to \$299,999 J. \$500,000 to \$999,999
B. \$25,000 to \$49,999 E. \$100,000 to \$149,999 H. \$300,000 to \$399,999 K. \$1,000,000 +
C. \$50,000 to \$74,999 F. \$150,000 to \$199,999 I. \$400,000 to \$499,999



Staffing

The total number of staff employed by respondents were: 79 full-time, 111 part-time, and 380 seasonal employees. Niagara County's cultural community employs a total of 491 individuals in some manner throughout the year. That figure is approximately 39% of the Niagara Falls School District, the County's fifth largest employer, and 65% of Niagara County's tenth largest employer, Mount St. Mary's Hospital.*

Only six organizations out of twenty-six had at least five or more full-time employees. This represents 79% of the 190 full-time workers reported. These organizations included Artpark

& Company, Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Kenan Center, Niagara Aquarium, Niagara Arts and Cultural Center, and Old Fort Niagara.

Approximately 58% of overall respondents have five or fewer full-time and/or part-time employees. Overall, 18 organizations have two or fewer full-time administrative staff members. The importance of available volunteers to assist management of activities and programs is critical to the majority of organizations.

*Employment data from the Niagara County Center for Economic Development.

Although Niagara County is the primary county served by the respondents, nearly every Western New York County is served by the Niagara County arts and cultural community with an emphasis on Southern Ontario and Western and Northern Pennsylvania.

Audience

Total audience served by the survey respondents was over 900,000 individuals. Given a certain degree of duplication within that figure, it is an impressive number of people served in a county of just over 219,000 residents.

Although Niagara County is the primary county served by the respondents, nearly every Western New York County is served by the Niagara County arts and cultural community with an emphasis on

Southern Ontario and Western and Northern Pennsylvania. Due to the international attraction of Niagara Falls, several organizations view individuals from Europe and Asia as part of their primary audience.

Audience diversity is not evident. This is in large part due to the fact that Niagara County is over 90% Euro-American as of the last census figures.

Technology

Regarding the use of technology, organizations appear to be well equipped to meet their basic needs. Overall, or 88%, of the respondents had internet access and 79% had their own website. Most had basic office equipment such as computers, copy machines, printers, etc. Several organizations had DVD players, digital cameras and camcorders.

Though office equipment didn't seem to be an overwhelming need, there was a strong interest in identifying tech support for their equipment and technology issues. Quite a few organizations expressed interest for support ranging from maintenance of their computer systems and websites to intellectual property laws concerning information posted on their sites. Also expressed, was an interest in learning about new technologies or innovations that exist which could be utilized in order to help them meet their missions.

Organizations expressed interest for support ranging from maintenance of their computer systems and websites to intellectual property laws concerning information posted on their sites. Also expressed, was an interest in learning about new technologies or innovations that exist which could be utilized in order to help them meet their missions.

Organizational Development

7

Some of the most illuminating data collected dealt with overall organizational development. In assessing developmental levels, several questions were asked to determine organizational capacity.

In response to the question, "has your organization conducted an internal assessment", regarding some type of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis; 16% of respondents hadn't conducted one in four years or more and 36% had never conducted an internal analysis. When asked whether their organization had gone through a strategic planning process; 24% of the respondents hadn't conducted one in four years or more; and 32% had never completed a strategic planning process. When asked whether their organization had conducted a planning process involving board development, 27% of the respondents hadn't conducted one in four years or more and nearly 41% had never conducted one.

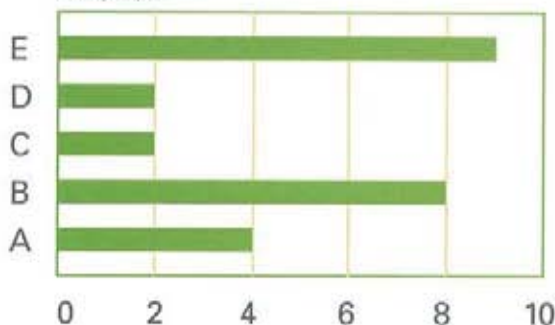
Currently, a principle concern for all Niagara County cultural organizations is fundraising and identifying additional sources of revenue. Few of the survey questions were focused on finances or fundraising but there was a question that asked, "Please identify if your organization has a structured fundraising process in place". Responses yielded that nearly 61% said they had no structured fundraising process in place.

Understanding that identifying revenue, both operational and programmatic, along with presenting quality programs are critical aspects to running a cultural organization, success and survival relies upon a solid organizational infra-structure. Overall, responses speak to needs in key areas of support and assistance that these organizations require to maintain stability and promote growth.

Question 51

Has your organization conducted an internal assessment?

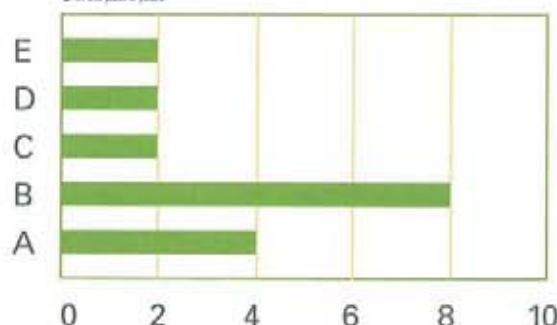
- A: In the past year D: Over 5 years
B: In the past 2 years E: Never
C: In the past 3 years



Question 52

Has your organization gone through a strategic planning process?

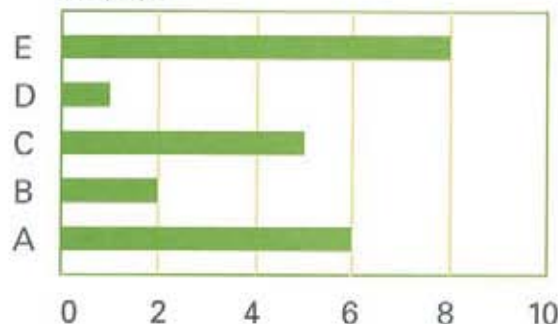
- A: In the past year D: Over 5 years
B: In the past 2 years E: Never
C: In the past 3 years



Question 53

Has your organization gone through a board development process?

- A: In the past year D: Over 5 years
B: In the past 2 years E: Never
C: In the past 3 years



Note: All x-axis = Number of organizations

Organizational Needs

In the survey, there was a question that asked participants to prioritize twelve different areas of needs including Legal support, Managerial support, Collaborations/Shared services, Bookkeeping/Financial support, Identification of Board Members, Identification of volunteers, Visibility, Health Insurance, Liability Insurance, Board Insurance, Facility/Space, and Planning.

From responses collected, primary areas of need were identified and prioritized as the following: Visibility, Identifying board members, Planning, and Collaborations/shared services.

Prioritized needs: Visibility, Identification of board members, Planning, and Collaborations/shared services.

... the majority of the respondents either didn't utilize management services or were unaware of available services.

When asked what management services Niagara County cultural organizations utilized to address some of their organizational needs, some respondents identified area colleges and universities such as Niagara University, Niagara County Community College, The University at Buffalo, and Canisius College. Some identified a few alliances and associations but the majority of the respondents either didn't utilize management services or were unaware of available services.

Conclusions from the Survey

Niagara County has a significant representation of cultural organizations that provide programs in a broad array of historic and artistic disciplines.

These organizations are dispersed geographically throughout the county as opposed to concentrated at one specific site or city within the county. Of the respondents, a large number provided a variety of programs in various disciplines and constantly worked towards being responsive to their constituencies.

- An impressive number of the organizations have addressed facilities issues such as accessibility for the physically disabled. This is notable since a significant number of facilities are historic sites.
- Many Niagara County arts and cultural organizations display good outreach efforts

throughout the county and work diligently to expand their reach to neighboring areas including surrounding counties, some areas of Pennsylvania and particularly Southern Ontario.

- Organizations work towards maximizing the usage of indigenous resources such as Niagara Falls; connections to history through the Underground Railroad or the Erie Canal; as well as collaborative relationships with each other and area educational institutions.

There are legitimate concerns regarding the availability of financial resources for these organizations. Without the presence of a prominent private sector or foundation community in Niagara County, these cultural institutions have to compete

with the vast array of principal cultural organizations in Erie County for support from those sectors.

With the exception of a limited few organizations, the vast majority of cultural organizations

receive no public funding from Niagara County. Thus, the identification of additional revenues, in whatever form, is a primary concern for these groups.

There are legitimate concerns regarding the availability of financial resources for these organizations. Without the presence of a prominent private sector or foundation community in Niagara County, these cultural institutions have to compete with the vast array of principal cultural organizations in Erie County for support from those sectors.

NIAGARA COUNTY ARTS & CULTURAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT: INTERVIEWS

Interview Process

The second phase of this project included one-on-one interviews with selected participants who completed initial survey. The interviews consisted of questions regarding programming, marketing, and technical assistance needs. Questions also addressed participant's opinions about a variety of factors that impact and affect the cultural community as a whole. Participating organizations included: Carousel Society of the Niagara

Frontier, Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, The Greater Niagara Ballet Company, Kenan Center, Inc., Lewiston Council on the Arts, Inc., Niagara Arts and Cultural Center, Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc., Starry Night Theatre, Inc., and Tonawandas' Council on the Arts / Carnegie Art Center.

Programming

Within these discussions, organizations were asked about their programmatic offerings and what the deciding factors were in presenting them. The primary factor for what programs were offered focused on how organizations could best fulfill their missions.

“It is the responsibility of this organization to provide quality programming and to educate the community. The public may say they want to see more of a specific type of performance but we try to present new and different experiences for them to enjoy and to learn from.”

Most organizations had a variety of assessment procedures in place in order to gauge how responsive they were being to the interests of their constituents. While identifying the importance of patron feedback, it wasn't the main reason for programming decisions. As an interview participant stated, “It is the responsibility of this organization to provide quality programming and to educate the community. The public may say they want to see more of a specific type of performance but we try to present new and different experiences for them to enjoy and to learn from.”

Many organizations depend on the expertise of their staff and board to determine what programs are offered. Organizations expressed the need to keep their programs as affordable as possible with the understanding that disposable income is decreasing while the number of alternative activities, whether arts related or not, continue to increase.

There is a wealth of cultural programming offered throughout Niagara County. Surprisingly, most of the county's organizations, which may be considered a visual arts organization or a historical museum, provide programs across multiple disciplines. This multi-disciplinary programming approach is reflective of the disparate geographic placement of cultural organizations across a largely

rural county as well as a reflection of a scarcity of resources. Diverse program offerings from one or more organization within a geographic area serves the needs of constituents in the absence of a larger number of single disciplinary arts and cultural organizations.

Diverse program offerings from one or more organization within a geographic area serves the needs of constituents in the absence of a larger number of single disciplinary arts and cultural organizations.

Organizations ranging from more prominent entities in the region such as the Castellani Art Museum and the Kenan Center to more community based organizations such as the Carnegie Art Center or the Herschell Carousel Museum offer a wide variety of programs and services to their constituents.

Most organizations stated that they are at capacity regarding the number of programs offered, the frequency at which they are offered, and in some cases how many people can be served. This does not indicate a lack of interest or desire to present additional programs or offer newer and more innovative programs to serve larger audiences.

Organizations expressed that the major obstacles to facilitating increased capacity is directly linked to the lack of identifiable revenue needed to bring on more staff which would allow them to manage an increase in programs and audiences. Several organizations indicated that they also needed additional space in order to accommodate an increase in programs.

Marketing

Next to the need for additional revenue, the subject of marketing drew the most insightful and enthusiastic discussion from interview participants. Although the majority of organizations performed some type of audience assessment and development, and/or marketing efforts, approaches varied in the level of sophistication and effectiveness from organization to organization. Some organizations, due to their small staff size and corresponding budget size, were unable to implement appropriate forms of marketing for their organizations. They concentrated primarily on less costly forms of publicity and promotion.

Several specific topics of interest continued to arise during discussions with interview participants regarding marketing, promotion and outreach within Niagara County. The most ardent discussions were centered on the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation (NTCC). Practically every cultural organization large and small viewed the NTCC to be a major asset in terms of getting the word out regarding all that Niagara County has to offer, including arts and cultural organizations.

The presence of an organization that is capable of marketing research, assisting with promotion and marketing for cultural organizations, in some cases with actual dollars, has been unprecedented in the County up to this time. In addition to marketing assistance, NTCC can also offer direction and guidance about how organizations can become more "visitor ready".

Practically every cultural organization large and small viewed the NTCC to be a major asset in terms of getting the word out regarding all that Niagara County has to offer, including arts and cultural organizations.

Cultural Leadership

The Cultural Alliance of Niagara (CAN), a coalition of the primary cultural entities in Niagara County, was another area of great interest within interview discussions. CAN's focus initially seemed to focus around promotion of organizations and advocacy for cultural funding, particularly funding from the County.

it would be an appropriate entity which could address issues of how various media outlets recognize Niagara County culturals.

Currently, members of CAN feel the organization is very worthwhile but have seen the effectiveness of the coalition strained. As previously stated, it has become more of an opportunity to

“The hand to mouth cycle that organizations are just trying to keep the wolf from the door robs us of the time we need to be proactive.”

As funding from Niagara County began to diminish, the focus and efforts of CAN began to evolve into more of a networking opportunity for its participants. The current perception of CAN varies from organization to organization whether they are members of the coalition or not.

Smaller neighborhood-based organizations, which are not CAN members but are aware of the coalition, perceive it as being an entity which serves as the primary concentration of leadership for Niagara County's cultural community. The perception is that CAN has the potential to affect funding, legislation and promote understanding of area culturals to legislators, businesses and residents in general. Organizations expressed that

network and share ideas and support. However, members found that the demands of their own organizations made it difficult to manage the coalition itself. As expressed in one interview, “The hand to mouth cycle that organizations are just trying to keep the wolf from the door robs us of the time we need to be proactive.”

Previously, CAN had a hierarchy in place that maintained the direction and efforts of the coalition. It is now being managed from member to member as each group takes on the responsibility of conducting monthly meetings and setting the agenda. Participants are concerned about a lack of continuity in CAN's structure and direction.

The overall consensus of interview participants

The overall consensus of interview participants, as members of CAN, feel that if there was some designated administrative support in place to handle the logistics of running the meetings and managing the coalition, it would give the group the ability to address some of its original initiatives and take on the enhanced role of being the voice of the cultural community in Niagara County.

as members of CAN, feel that if there was some designated administrative support in place to handle the logistics of running the meetings and managing the coalition, it would give the group the

ability to address some of its original initiatives and take on the enhanced role of being the voice of the cultural community in Niagara County.

Communication & Message

Issues relating to communication and message were also voiced by interview participants. This theme was expressed by large and small groups alike. This should not be confused with communication among each other; the level of collaboration and partnerships that exist among organizations of various sizes, disciplines and localities strongly imply that successful communication happens among these groups.

These organizations want to communicate their value throughout the County to all its stakeholders. As one interview participant said, "We have a rich cultural history here and we should be

telling our stories." The opinion within these groups is that education about the value of Niagara County's cultural community is necessary in order ensure success in addressing other areas of need.

All acknowledged the need for a more advanced level of fundraising; that advocacy efforts should be a fundamental component of their activities; and that steps need to be taken to enhance their visibility. The concerns behind all these issues are exemplified by the paraphrase, "Are we relaying the right message about ourselves and are we communicating it appropriately?"

Conclusions from Interviews

There is a sense of community among these cultural organizations and they work towards

opportunity to participate in affordable, quality technical assistance at the local level is limited.

Although some opportunities exist regionally, the opportunity to participate in affordable, quality technical assistance at the local level is limited.

partnering with each other through programming and events which at times highlight their presence as a united entity.

Through these series of interviews it was also apparent that there is a void within Niagara County in terms of specific organizational development services to its cultural organizations. Although some opportunities exist regionally, the

There is also a need to provide different layers of support-based services to address distinct levels of organizational development within the Niagara County cultural community. Very few organizations fall into a category that can be defined as "mid-sized". There are a few large, well established organizations with significant support mechanism such as Old Fort Niagara, the Castellani Art

There is also a need to provide different layers of support-based services to address distinct levels of organizational development within the Niagara County cultural community.

Museum and the Kenan Center, as examples. However, there are a larger number of smaller more community-based organizations. Organizational development services needed by the entire community will differ greatly between larger and smaller organizations depending on the level of organizational development. The type of support offered would need to accommodate these differences.

The most significant information to come out of the interview process was that this community wants and requires a more significant level of recognition as a cultural destination within the region.

This community wants and requires a more significant level of recognition as a cultural destination within the region.

Recommendations

Although Niagara County has an impressive array of cultural institutions, there are underlying concerns which impact further needed organizational development in addition to preserving the health and stability of the overall cultural community. Within the initial survey, questions addressing issues that organizations had about generating revenue were purposely excluded so that the information gathered for the report could focus more specifically on other areas of organizational need.

A primary concern is the lack of significant funding sources for this community within Niagara County. The absence of a strong corporate and/or foundation presence necessitates that these groups seek funding from outside sources. This puts them in direct competition most often with Erie County arts and cultural organizations for the same funding dollars.

As far as available public funds are concerned, with the exception of a rare and limited few

Although Niagara County has an impressive array of cultural institutions, there are underlying concerns which impact further needed organizational development in addition to preserving the health and stability of the overall cultural community.

organizations, almost no cultural entity receives funding from the Niagara County Legislature. Though some select organizations are supported at the municipal level, the majority are not.

Therefore, the identification of additional revenue, in whatever form, is a primary need for these organizations.

Organizational development was an overall need within the community. One of the most important factors identified was the fundamental need for Planning. The fact that such a high percentage of organizations had not conducted some basic internal assessment in four years or more makes it difficult for them to successfully accom-

Therefore, the identification of additional revenue, in whatever form, is a primary need for these organizations.

plish primary goals in fundraising or recruitment of appropriate board members. Planning was an expressed concern for most of the participants of the survey.

- Technical assistance should be offered in areas of operational development. Addressing internal assessments, strategic planning, and volunteer development are current and growing needs for most organizations.
- Structured fundraising plans to effectively pursue funding opportunities is needed by area organizations as well. A large percentage of organizations reported that they are currently, or will soon, conduct a capital campaign. Yet for such an intensive process, the majority of respondents do not have the experience of conducting an annual fund drive and have no structured fundraising plan in place.
- As expressed by practically every respondent, visibility is one of the main concerns of organizations throughout the county. Initiatives are needed to develop area-wide market research that would allow a uniform marketing strategy. These initiatives should

Addressing internal assessments, strategic planning, and volunteer development are current and growing needs for most organizations.

include all groups with the development of opportunities for either smaller segments or individual organizations to develop their own visibility strategies.

- Board development is another important area of need for most organizations. This is a critical area for Niagara County organizations as the vast majority have varying levels of difficulty identifying board members for their organizations.

Identification of appropriate candidates from the business sector within and beyond Niagara County who could be tapped for board service at various organizations would be of great benefit. Although there is not a considerable corporate presence in Niagara County, efforts to enlist the skills of small private business owners and representatives from educational institutions are prime examples of areas which need to be explored further.

As previously mentioned, due to the differences in levels of organizational development as well as size, a tiered level of technical assistance is recommended. Needs of newer or smaller organizations vastly differ from larger, more evolved organizations.

Support services should be planned for each level with some services that will naturally cross-over, serving all. Workshops or classes conducted by management professionals that explain the processes of specific professional service areas would be useful as well as one-on-one consultancies, mentorships or possible shared administrative support.

Currently existing technical support services provided to the WNY non-profit community should also be promoted as resources to Niagara County arts and cultural. This includes services provided by members of the WNY Non-Profit service sector including: Canisius College External Business Programs, Community Counsel Services New York State (CCSNYS), UB Institute

for Nonprofit Agencies, United Way - Not for Profit Resource Center, WNY NYMAC / Carnegie Art Center. Accessing additional resources at colleges, universities and business service organizations are also recommended.

...due to the differences in levels of organizational development as well as size, a tiered level of technical assistance is recommended. Needs of newer or smaller organizations vastly differ from larger, more evolved organizations.

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Artpark & Company, Inc.
 Carousel Society of the Niagara Frontier
 Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University
 Historical Association of Lewiston
 Historical Society of North German Settlements in Western New York
 Kenan Center, Inc.
 Lewiston Council on the Arts
 Lockport Community Television
 Middleport Community Choir
 Native American Museum of Art
 New York Power Authority
 Niagara Aquarium Foundation
 Niagara Arts and Cultural Center
 Niagara County Historical Society, Inc.
 Niagara Falls Little Theatre d/b/a Niagara Regional Theatre Guild
 Niagara Summer Fine Arts Program, Inc.
 North Tonawanda History Museum
 Retired Men's Service Club Chorus
 Riviera Theatre & Organ Preservation Society
 Starry Night Theater
 The Greater Niagara Ballet Company
 The Lockport Chorale
 The McClellan Interpretive Center, Inc.
 The Seldom Herd Performers
 Tonawandas' Council on the Arts / Carnegie Art Center

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University
 Carousel Society of the Niagara Frontier
 Greater Niagara Ballet Company
 Kenan Center, Inc.
 Lewiston Council on the Arts
 Niagara Arts and Cultural Center
 Old Fort Niagara
 Starry Night Theater
 Tonawandas' Council on the Arts / Carnegie Art Center

NIAGARA COUNTY ARTS & CULTURAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

- 1) Please enter your organization's legal name.
- 2) If your organization is "doing business as" a name different than stated in question #1 please enter that name.
- 3) Please list the name of your organization's primary administrative contact.
- 4) Please list her/his position title.
- 5) Please list your organization's mailing address.
- 6) Please enter your organization's phone/fax numbers.
- 7) Please list the organizations principle staff's email address(es) and the organization's website address (if applicable).
- 8) Please list your level of nonprofit status (i.e. 501 (c) 3, NYS Charities Registration, etc.)
- 9) What year was your organization founded?
- 10) What year was your organization incorporated?
- 11) Please give a BRIEF description of your organization's mission statement.
- 12) Please list your total number of staff (full-time/part-time/seasonal) and (administrative/artistic).
- 13) Please identify how many staff your organization has and in what areas: administrative; artistic.
- 14) Please identify the number of dedicated staff members your organization has in the following areas if any: Operations; Development; Marketing/PR; Program/Education; Bookkeeping/Finance.
- 15) Does your organization utilize interns?
- 16) If yes, how many interns is your organization utilizing currently?
- 17) Please identify how many board members you have.
- 18) Please list the demographic breakout of your board (men/women/multicultural/physically challenged).
- 19) Please list the various areas that your board members have expertise in (legal/finance/marketing/arts/human resources/etc.)

- 20) Please state what are your Boards term limits.
- 21) Please identify what board committees your organization has (nominating/fundraising/personnel/marketing/program).
- 22) Does your organization own its space(s)?
- 23) Does your organization lease its space(s).
- 24) Does your organization have to identify temporary satellite space as per program/event?
- 25) Is your facility a historic site?
- 26) Is your facility ADA compliant?
- 27) Is the space(s) your organization rents, leases, or utilize ADA compliant?
- 28) Is your organization looking for a new facility?
- 29) Please identify the size of your operating budget in its last completed fiscal year.
- 30) In the following categories (earned revenue/corporate/private foundations/fundraisers/indiv. Giving/membership/gov't/other) what are the percentages that make up your total revenue? (please keep in mind the total of all areas should equal 100%).
- 31) Does your organization have an endowment?
- 32) Does your organization conduct an annual fund drive?
- 33) Is your organization currently conducting a capital campaign?
- 34) Will your organization conduct a capital campaign in the near future?
- 35) If your organization has a members program how many members do you have?
- 36) If you have a members program what are the range of your fees?
- 37) Please identify your organization's annual total audience served.
- 38) Please identify the percentages of the following areas for your organization's total audience (seniors 65 and over/adults 18 to 64/youth K-12).
- 39) Please identify what counties in Western New York State you serve (Niagara/Erie/Chautauqua/Cattaraugus/Orleans/etc.)
- 40) Please list what counties or areas outside of WNY do you serve? (i.e. Southern Canada, Western Pennsylvania, etc.)
- 41) Please identify what percentage in the following areas does your audience reside (rural/suburban/urban).

42) To the best of your knowledge determine the percentage of the economic status of the audience your organization serves (wealthy-upper middle income/middle income/low income-poverty).

43) Please identify the ethnic diversity by percentage in the following areas for your organization's total audience(African-American/American Indian/Asian/Caucasian/Euro-American/Hispanic).

44) Please identify how your organization promotes its programs and/or services.

45) Please indicate the number of programs your organizations offers in the following areas (dance/music/exhibitions/theatre/visual arts/literary/folk arts/professional development/Tech. Assistance/art education/lecture panel).

46) Please indicate what equipment your organization utilizes on a frequent to daily basis (computer/copy machine/printer/television/camcorder/video player/DVD player/CD player/etc.

47) Does your organization have internet access?

48) Does your organization have a website?

49) Who supports and addresses your organization's information technology needs and concerns (internal staff/professional consultant/other).

50) Does your organization have technological issues or concerns not addressed in the survey that you would like to identify?

51) Has your organization conducted an internal assessment and if so when?

52) Has your organization gone through a strategic planning process and if so when?

53) Has your organization gone through a board development process and if so when?

54) Please identify if your organization has a structured fundraising process in place?

55) Prioritize which of the following is the greatest need of your organization?

Legal Support	Members	Board Insurance
Managerial Support	Identifying non-board members	Facility / Space
Collaboration/Shared Services	Visibility	Planning
Bookkeeping	Health Insurance	
Identifying Board	Liability Insurance	

56) Please list what management services your organization is currently aware of or utilizes?



This project was made possible, in part, with support from Advancing Arts and Culture Buffalo-Niagara, the Tonawandas' Council on the Arts, the City of North Tonawanda, and with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.

From: "Mary E. Borgognoni" <meb@niagara.edu>
To: "comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com"
Date: 5/13/2009 3:33 PM
Subject: comments regarding Comprehensive Plan
Attachments: Proposed revisions to Chapter VIII 051309.docx

Dear Ben Bidell,

Per our recent conversation, I have several suggested changes to the draft Comprehensive Plan that will clarify programming offered by Niagara University. All items refer to Chapter VIII of the report (Education) and are detailed on the attached file. I am submitting them for your consideration.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions. Thank you for your assistance and for the great work being done to finalize this plan.

Sincerely,
Mary Borgognoni

Mary E. Borgognoni
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs -
Operations & Outreach
Alumni Hall
Niagara University, NY 14109
(716) 286-8352
(716) 285-8349 (fax)

Chapter VIII – Education

1. Page 4, Paragraph 2 – under **Niagara University**

6th line

Currently: *Niagara University is a mid-size university*

Replace with: Niagara University is a comprehensive university

8th line

Currently: *...and community education programs. More information is*

Replace with: ...and community education programs. In addition, Niagara University offers bachelor's and master's degree programs at sites in the Toronto and York regions of Ontario. All programs operate with written consent from the Ministry of Training and enroll more than 300 students annually. More information is

2. Page 5, section entitled **Job Training/Adult Education**

Add the following:

Niagara University

Through the university's Family Literacy and Counseling Centers, job readiness programming and educational assistance in literacy and math skills are available. The Office of Continuing and Community Education at NU provides a number of workplace and professional development programs in areas such as computer applications, web graphics, personal enrichment and language. Professional certificates in Geographical Information Systems and Emergency Management are among program offerings. The Department of Nursing offers a bachelor of science nursing completion degree for registered nurses prepared in an accredited Associate Degree Program or Hospital School of Nursing as well as leadership workshops for nursing professionals.

3. Page 21, under Recommendations (at the top of the page)

3rd paragraph, 3rd line

Currently: *programs offered through Niagara County Community College*

Replace with: programs offered through Niagara County Community College and Niagara University.

4th paragraph, 3rd & 4th lines

Currently: *educators, including capitalizing on staff knowledge, resources and experience of NCCC in County efforts to attract and retain businesses and industry.*

Replace with: educators, including capitalizing on staff knowledge, resources, expertise and experience of NCCC and Niagara University in County efforts to attract and retain businesses and industry

Observations and Recommendations
Concerning the
Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

With specific focus on
Highways and Land Use

Peter Wendel

Private Citizen

May 9, 2009 - Updated May 21, 2009

Background - Community planning has been a passion of mine for over fifty years beginning when my dad was consultant to the Niagara County Planning Board. The board had no staff then so, working for my dad, I was 'staff.' I attended many of the meetings during the time when the Niagara County Comprehensive Plan was developed in the early 1960s.

Later, I worked with the City of Lockport Planning Board as consultant. I also prepared key aspects of the city comprehensive plan including the major traffic system recommendations,

I was a member of the Four Lanes to Lockport committee that was a driving force behind the Southwest Bypass, and the widening of Millersport Highway and Transit Road which linked the center of Niagara County to the I-990 and Metro Buffalo.

I served on the Erie Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board until its demise and have been a member of the Niagara Erie Regional Coalition since it was founded.

During all that time I have been a champion of regional planning – specifically the planning of highways and road systems and land use. For the past several decades, I have been concerned that Niagara County and its local municipalities have been growing in a random, uncoordinated way.

This has been especially true of their highway networks. Roads that might be parts of a network to move traffic safely and effectively through the region have remained as disconnected, disjointed segments that lead nowhere. Highway planning – or the lack of it – has always been my concern.

The county has never had a highway plan to follow. For years, the legislature allocated money for the reconstruction of particular highway segments – usually the construction dollars were distributed among the legislative districts on a 'it's your turn' basis. With very few exceptions (the extension of Beebe Road to Rt. 104 and the realignment of two

sections of Hosmer Rd and the Fisk-Fiegle bridge crossing come to mind) the focus was on improving segments, not building new highways and improving intersections to develop a 'system.'

Every building permit, every subdivision plan that is approved closes out our options and limits our future choices. As result development of the property frontage has choked the capacity of roads to move traffic. It's what has been describes as 'picking the low hanging fruit.'

So I was pleased to follow the development of the 'Framework for Regional Growth' and excited when Niagara County embarked on creation of its new Comprehensive Plan. Finally, I told myself, we will begin to plan and build a network of major highways and primary roads that will meet our current needs and plan for a changing future. I consider this to be an urgent need that has been ignored for too long.

Now that the Draft of the Comprehensive Plan is available, I have spent a considerable amount of time going over it. On the one hand, I extremely pleased to see the volumes of information that has been collected. On the other, I disappointed by the lack of specific plans and recommendations and the lack of urgency to develop plans for the future.

The Planning Process – Planning is a creative process. There are three key steps to creating: the Vision of what we want to create, and appraisal of our Current Reality – what is - where we are now – and choosing Action Steps to move from where we are to what we want to create. Every step we take will change our current reality but if we remain focused on our vision, we can refine our action steps to move closer to the vision.

It's important to know what our current reality is. The Comprehensive Plan does a great job on that score. And it does a good job of cataloging problems. In other words, it's great at describing 'what is,' and 'where we are.' The report points out the problems of urban sprawl – the results of poor planning (or no planning) in the past – and the danger to our environment, future life style and quality of life if past practices continue.

But I am disappointed in the sparseness of the vision for our future. I would like to see a richer description of what we want to create in the future – something akin to 'jumping forward and looking back' asking ourselves what we want to county to be like in the next generation – and generations beyond.

We have examples of successfully doing this in the past. The Four Lanes to Lockport effort is one example. We identified our vision – what we wanted as an outcome: a bypass around the City of Lockport from (then) Harrison Radiator and the Lockport industrial area to the I-990, and the widening of Transit Rd and Millersport Highway to connect Lockport and Eastern Niagara County to the Buffalo Metropolitan area. We focused our energies and achieved every aspect of that 'vision' (except the extension of the Southwest Bypass through Pendleton which was in the planning process when it was

beaten down by local opposition). We were able move projects up on the NYSDOT priority list, find financing for portions through our state representatives and get support from elected official at all governmental levels.

We were successful because we chose what we wanted to create, we had a clear picture of the desired outcome, and we were able to bring together the resources to make it happen.

It's important, once again, that we look ahead, choose what we want to create, and focus our energies on 'making it happen.' The county planning department is the fulcrum, the leader of the process – coordinating conversations between and offering professional planning expertise to local communities while communicating/promoting county and local priorities to the regional planning agencies such as GBNRTC and NYSDOT.

Elements of the transportation/land use plan – Every highway, road and street exists for two reasons: to move traffic from point to point and to serve the frontage. (The only exceptions are limited access highways.) The paradox is that we can't have both. The more a roadway does one, the less is it able to do the other. For instance, when the frontage of a particular section of road or street is developed, it is the less effective at moving traffic. We all know of roads that once moved traffic at 55 miles per hour but now, because of development along the frontage, have reduced speed limits and are more subject to accidents.

The general mind set doesn't seem to appreciate this concept. There is an eagerness to develop frontage, first, without appreciating the negative impact on the future ability of that roadway to move traffic – what has been called 'picking the low hanging fruit.'

I recently heard Fred Hansen, Transportation Director for Portland, Oregon, describe the goal this way: They want to develop a network of roadways that moves 'lots of cars long distances quickly.'

He went on to outline separating those roadways from 'neighborhood clusters' that had a healthy mix of residential, retail and commercial development along with schools and community buildings. People could move within those neighborhoods in a variety of 'modalities:' auto, bus, bike and walking, etc. His phrase was 'livable neighborhoods.' It is conceivable that an individual might live and work within the same neighborhood, thereby avoiding long commutes. The network of major roadways carried long distance traffic around these neighborhoods rather than through them

The Comprehensive Plan has recommended that growth be confined to certain areas so that other area can be reserved for open space, rural and agricultural areas. This is a major step forward. There are many good reasons for this recommendation and I totally support this concept.

The concept then raises two questions: how will we move traffic effectively and safely within each concentrated area and how will we move traffic from one developed region to another – and to areas through and outside the county?

This involves thinking about our current highway system, evaluating the future role/purpose of each highway segment (predominately to move traffic versus to serve frontage), designating major highways (sometimes called arterials in the report). In some instances, the construction of new roads to link segments into an integrated system may be required. Other times, major revisions to intersections may be needed to facilitate traffic flow and improve safety.

This is where ‘Leaping Forward and Looking Back’ is essential. It’s not enough to wait until the problem comes up and then fix it. Being in a reactive mode will always result in always being ‘behind the curve’ – ‘playing catch up.’ We need to look way into the future. We need to plan a highway network plan that anticipates both the development of local areas (neighborhoods) and the facilities needed to move traffic through out the region. This means identifying future highways and roadway links long before they must be built so that land can be zoned, rights of way can be designated and preserved before they are ‘chopped up’ by local development.

The process of building every new highway follows the same general pattern:

Planning – Property acquisition – Design – Construction

Throughout the process is Funding, which often can significantly speed up or delay the process. Waiting until the specific project is needed to begin the planning process can often result in either a project that is completed long after it is needed – or a project that can’t be built because the land is no longer available or a more expensive project because of land acquisition costs. And, of course, public opposition creates delays or can even ‘kill’ a project – such as in the extension of the Southwest Bypass example listed above.

Leaping ahead – in preparing a transportation and land use plan - can also provide much needed guidance to adjoining municipalities, property owners and developers.

Looking ahead is choosing and creating our future – a whole different mindset than fixing what we have and dealing with problems as they arise.

Specific comments relating to the Comprehensive Plan, Transportation and Land

Use - Our three key cities, NFIA and NCCC are all on the upper escarpment as is Inducon Industrial Park. So is the large piece of land once considered for an HSBC service center and, more recently, a Yahoo facility. This area is the closest to the Buffalo metropolitan area and, therefore, more likely to be subjected to development pressure. This southern part of the county stands between the lower escarpment/Lake Ontario municipalities and the rest of the Niagara Frontier. The decisions of the ‘southern communities’ concerning land use and transportation routes will impact the future ability of the northern communities to ‘connect’ with metropolitan Buffalo and Erie County.

Therefore, it is important to pay special attention to the future highway network of the southern parts of the county. If north-south corridors are not designated and set aside before more development takes place there is a danger that the movement of traffic will be choked off. Only far western section, where the Robert Moses Parkway (commercial traffic in restricted) and the I-190 are in place, is a partial solution to this problem. This is an urgent matter that is not addressed in the report!

There especially is an urgent need to develop routes to move traffic north and south around Lockport – both east and west of the city. These routes can serve a variety of needs: more efficiently move people and goods from between the northern (and eastern) communities and the Buffalo metropolitan area and reduce the ‘through traffic’ that doesn’t want to be in the city core and has no purpose there – traffic that negatively impacts the city’s quality of life.

RT 78 has been recommended as key tourism route through city, near the locks and other items of special interest. This is an excellent recommendation but it cannot effectively serve the goal of moving ‘traffic long distances quickly.’

These north south routes can be a combination of current and new rights of way, limited access in some sections where possible, planned with the local community planning boards, to move traffic through the areas designated for development in the comprehensive plan, thereby reducing unwanted traffic on more local roads and streets. This is a prime example of the need to separate through roadways from neighborhood clusters - a goal of Portland described earlier.

(The Town of Lockport has begun planning for a north-south on the east side of the City of Lockport but process has not been a high priority.)

Concerning the east-west flow of traffic, it is recommended in the report that the county work with NYSDOT and GBNRTC to plan improvements to State routes 31, and 104.

One map highlights RT 104 but not as a major arterial. Instead, it is designated as more of a touring route which seems appropriate – provided steps are taken to limit development of the frontage.

Relying on RT 31 as the main east west corridor on the upper escarpment across the county has several drawbacks. It goes through the heart of Lockport creating the same problems as described in the RT 78 discussion. In addition, much of the frontage is already developed which limits its ability to move traffic and makes it difficult to make major upgrades to improve traffic flow.

There is no mention of the Lockport –Robinson – Dysinger Roads corridor even though part of it is already a state route (93). Although some portions are built up, other long stretches are still mostly undeveloped. Focusing on this corridor and developing a plan in concert with the local communities can provide a basis for preserving the capacity and

assure the safe efficient movement of traffic all the way across the county – and further to the east.

Using the Lockport – Robinson – Dysinger corridor as an example, let me offer some ideas to plan its development. These ideas could also be integrated in different forms to the planning of other highways.

First, we need to determine the purpose – in this case as a main ‘through’ route to move traffic across the county from Niagara Falls to the ‘east.’ The ‘east’ in this case might be a continuation of RT 93 to the eastern part of the county and beyond into Erie County – perhaps even to a new interchange on the NY Thruway in the Akron area. Or it might be a connection to RT 77 and the Pembroke interchange. Or it might be extended– well into the future – to connect to RT 531 coming out of Rochester and Brockport.

The boldest move would be a limited access highway beginning with an interchange on I-190 and running across the county with interchanges at key locations – all on a new right of way. (Remember, the goal is to plan for future, not just solve current needs.)

In the planning process, some or all of the following elements might be integrated into the plan:

- Designate undeveloped sections, like those from the Canal west to Comstock Road and east of Raymond Road, for instance, as limited access with parallel service roads to serve the property on each side. Set backs could be included in the zoning to leave a future right of way wide enough to build a multi-lane highway with service roads.
- New sections could be built around some of the developed areas (such as those sections east and west of Shawnee Rd.) to separate the local traffic from the through traffic. Again, zoning could be used to preserve open land for the future highway
- Redesign of intersections to provide left and right turning lanes to keep traffic moving.
- Install turning lanes at key ‘T’ intersections (Nash Road and Bowmiller Road, for instance) to permit the smooth flow of through traffic and turning actions thereby reducing the potential for accidents.
- Where traffic signals are used, have left turn arrows.
- Where access is permitted along the frontage, require commercial operations to construct right turn lanes as part of their development. In larger developments, require left turn lanes, too.
- Where highway sections are planned through vacant land, preserve routes for future construction. Insure that these vacant corridors to be developed in the future are integrated with land development plans.
- Plan limited access highways to provide effective movement of traffic while removing the ability to develop the frontage along new highways. Limiting access, in combination with zoning can be a valuable tool to prevent urban sprawl.

These ideas can be applied in various forms when making plans for other highways and streets to create an integrated, efficient, safe means for our citizens to move about the region.

The focus on the planning process needs to be long term – creating an overall plan to serve future needs 20 and 30 plus years in the future. We're not just solving today's problems. We're planning the future to avoid problems while the solutions can be achieved economically.

We can't predict the available resources that might be available – we couldn't when we started Four Lanes to Lockport. Having a plan prepares us to generate and capitalize on unanticipated opportunities – including unpredictable funding sources. There is an old saying that 'Preparation plus Opportunity equals Luck.' Now is the time to prepare.

Conclusion – For the past several decades we in Western New York, like many other communities across the country, have just been 'bopping along' making decisions about our land and our highways without an overall plan to guide our decisions. Land has been developed on a piece by piece basis without thought about how these developments with impact each other or how they will impact our ability to move across the area.

'Bopping along' has created problems and squandered opportunities. We have paid a price for lack of planning: slow moving traffic, accidents, disconnected highways and too few through routes, resulting in unnecessary stops, starts and turns.

We need to replace this piecemeal thinking with a coordinated approach – a plan that looks far into the future to provide us with a basis for making coordinated decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan gives us a new beginning – a chance to choose the future we want to create, build consensus and work together to create a better future.

But it's just a beginning. We now know 'where we are' and we have a general direction and outline of what to do next – where to focus our energies to create a better future. But we can't stop here! There is an urgency to outline our vision and develop specific plans. Waiting or moving slowly will close out our options and limit our choices.

Now is the time to move ahead with all deliberate haste!

RECOMMENDATIONS ON *NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2030*
FROM PAULETTE GLASGOW, NIAGARA COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MEMBER
JUNE 12, 2009

- a) All local municipalities review and amend their approved comprehensive plan and zoning codes every 3-5 years;
- b) All local municipalities enact Cell Tower and Wind Farm regulations and policy, and that said regulations and policy be reviewed and amended every 5 years;
- c) All local municipalities enact an Ethics Policy with regard to conduct of municipal officials and cell tower and wind farm officials regarding approval and siting;
- d) All local municipalities, where it applies, enact a Farmland Protection Policy;
- e) All local municipalities, where it applies, enact a Transfer of Development Rights Policy;
- f) A county wide Watershed Protection Policy and Plan;
- g) All local municipalities enact a Green Infrastructure policy;
- h) Intergovernmental agreement with regard to notification of enactment of SEQRA;
- i) Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan be reviewed and amended every 3-5 years.

New Code of Ethics for Wind Energy Companies Doing Business in New York: A Back-Door Approach to Regulating Municipal Ethics

By Patricia E. Salkin



I. Introduction

The conduct of municipal officials in New York is regulated through a series of state statutes and local laws including Article 18 of the General Municipal Law, which is primarily called into play when the conduct in question involves a contract; the Legislative Law which addresses, in part, local lobbying; and the Penal Law which deals

with, among other things, bribery and rewards for official actions. Scattered provisions in at least 11 volumes of McKinney's also provide some guidance on certain ethics and conflicts situations.¹ In addition, municipalities are directed and/or empowered to adopt their own code of ethics to address the conduct of public officers within their own jurisdiction.² Despite the appearance of many ethics laws and rules governing the conduct of municipal officials, the fact remains that New York lacks a comprehensive code of ethics for local governments, and that Article 18 of the General Municipal Law is in need of reform.³

New York also lacks a state-level office or agency responsible for providing guidance for municipal officials on ethics issues, issuing model local laws, and/or conducting training for municipal officials on ethics-related topics. Rather, numerous state governmental entities play small and distinct roles in providing interpretation, guidance and rulemaking when it comes to municipal ethics. For example, the Office of the State Comptroller may issue informal opinions on General Municipal Law Article 18 questions from municipal attorneys, and the Attorney General's Office may also issue informal opinions on conflicts of interest issues and on questions of compatibility of dual office holding. The Commission on Public Integrity is responsible for training on and enforcement of the Legislative Law, which contains provisions on municipal lobbying, and while the New York State Department of State provides information and training to municipal officials on a wide range of local government topics, there is no mandated comprehensive local ethics training and education or clearinghouse function. The disorganized situation in New York often puts municipal attorneys on the front line of ethics education, but unfortunately,

legal counsel is most often sought after the questioned activity has occurred. Calls for focused attention and for reform of municipal ethics in New York date back at least as far as 1987 with the work of the State Commission on Government Integrity, followed in 1991 by the work of the Temporary State Commission on Local Government Ethics. The leadership of the Municipal Law Section of the State Bar, through the work of its Ethics Committee, has been a leading advocate for reform. Despite these pleas, neither the last three Governors nor the State Legislature has made municipal ethics reform a priority topic.

Given the history of a fragmented approach to municipal ethics resulting in gaps in statutory coverage and lack of state-level guidance, it is not surprising that recent actions by the Attorney General aimed at curbing alleged unethical and perhaps illegal conduct on the part of wind energy companies may in fact be an avenue for indirectly regulating the conduct of the municipal officials. Following alleged corruption in Upstate New York between wind energy companies and local government officials⁴ that include allegations of conflicts of interest and improper influence surfacing in about a dozen counties,⁵ Attorney General Andrew Cuomo commenced an investigation to determine "whether wind companies improperly influenced local officials to get permission to build wind towers, as well as whether different companies colluded to divide up territory and avoid bidding against one another for the same land."⁶ In launching the investigation, the Attorney General stated, "The use of wind power, like all renewable energy sources, should be encouraged to help clean our air and end our reliance on fossil fuels. However, public integrity remains a top priority of my office and if dirty tricks are used to facilitate even clean-energy projects, my office will put a stop to it."⁷ Recently, an appellate court dismissed a petition calling for removal of a town legislator that alleged that the legislator concealed a conflict of interest when he voted to approve a wind energy facility because the project would include a turbine on his property, finding that the petitioner failed to prove the existence of an actual conflict of interest.⁸

II. Voluntary Code of Conduct for Wind Farm Development

On the heels of an investigation, in October 2008 the Attorney General unveiled a voluntary code of

conduct for wind development companies (referred to hereafter as "Code" or "Wind Code") and announced that two companies that had been under investigation by the Attorney General (Noble and First Wind) had signed on to the Code, which is designed to make sure developers deal with local officials in a fair and transparent manner.⁹ The Code prohibits conflicts of interest between municipal officials and wind companies and establishes certain public disclosure requirements. Among other things, the Code bans wind companies from: hiring municipal employees or their relatives, giving gifts of more than \$10 during a one-year period, or providing any other form of compensation that is contingent on any action before a municipal agency. In addition, the Code prevents wind companies from soliciting, using, or knowingly receiving confidential information acquired by a municipal officer in the course of his or her official duties; requires wind companies to establish and maintain a public Web site to disclose the names of all municipal officers or their relatives who have a financial stake in wind farm development; requires wind companies to submit in writing to the municipal clerk for public inspection and to publish in the local newspaper the nature and scope of the municipal officer's financial interest; mandates that all wind easements and leases be in writing and filed with the County Clerk; and requires that within thirty days of signing the Wind Industry Ethics Code, companies must conduct a seminar for employees about identifying and preventing conflicts of interest when working with municipal employees.¹⁰ The Code also sets up a Task Force to provide oversight of wind farm development and to monitor compliance with the Code.¹¹ The wind companies who sign on to the Code are required to provide a proportional share of funding to cover the administrative work of the Task Force for a period of three years.¹²

While on its face, the Code is aimed at the conduct of wind energy companies and their employees (and in fact, only the wind energy companies are signatories to the voluntary Code), the reality is that this Code impacts not only the conduct of corporate employees, but through controlling corporate conduct it also impacts municipal officials in terms of their conduct, required disclosure and similar requirements on their family members. It is likely that the Attorney General recognized gaps in the manner in which municipal ethics are addressed at the state level and saw an opportunity to begin to fill in where the statutes fall short. In some areas covered in the Code, it is possible that the State Legislature has preempted the field of regulation. Further, in some instances there are inconsistencies between the new Code and existing statutes that could lead to confusion. Lastly, provisions in locally adopted codes of ethics enacted pursuant to the General Municipal Law may also address some of the

items covered in the new Code.¹³ The remainder of this article explores the intersection of the Code of Conduct for Wind Farm Development and existing municipal ethics regulations at the State level.

III. Comparing the Code of Conduct to Existing Municipal Ethics Provisions

Many provisions in the Wind Code are consistent with the General Municipal Law ethics provisions. For example, the prohibition on contingent compensation in General Municipal Law § 805-a(d) appears in the Wind Code in § I. This same section of the Code contains a prohibition on wind companies soliciting or knowingly receiving confidential information acquired by a municipal officer in the course of his or her duties. This prohibition is complementary to General Municipal Law § 805-a(b), which prohibits municipal officers from disclosing confidential information. The remaining sections of this article focus on a number of areas in the Wind Code where provisions may conflict with state or local law, where inconsistencies or ambiguities may arise or where new concepts and controls have been introduced that impact the conduct of municipal officials.

A. Disclosure of Interests

As a general matter, when the State Legislature enacted Article 18 of the General Municipal Law they clearly recognized that there are unique ethics issues that may arise in the local land development process. Specifically, § 809(1) of the General Municipal Law provides,

Every application, petition or request submitted for a variance, amendment, change of zoning, approval of a plat, exemption from a plat or official map, license or permit, pursuant to the provisions of any ordinance, local law, rule or regulation constituting the zoning and planning regulations of a municipality shall state the name, residence and nature and extent of the interest of any state officer or any officer or employee of such municipality or of a municipality of which such municipality is a part, in the person, partnership or association making such application, petition or request . . . to the extent known to the applicant.

Further, the statute provides that a municipal

officer or employee shall be deemed to have an interest in the applicant when he, his spouse, or their brothers, sisters, parents, children, grandchildren, or the spouse of any of them . . . is a

party to an agreement with such applicant, express or implied, whereby he may receive any payment or other benefit, whether or not for services rendered, dependent or contingent upon the favorable approval of such application, petition or request.¹⁴

A knowing violation of this section constitutes a misdemeanor.

While consistent with the requirement in the General Municipal Law that the applicant provide the aforementioned disclosure, the second section of the Wind Code contains a number of public disclosure provisions that provide specific instructions as to how disclosure by the wind company about municipal official interests is to be made and to whom. Specifically, the Code requires that the Company provide a chart to the Office of the Attorney General (as well as posted to the Company Web site) that discloses the nature and scope of any financial interest held by a municipal officer or his or her relative for interests held prior to the date of the Code of Conduct. For events transpiring after the Code, the Company is required to "publicly disclose" the name of the municipal official and his/her relative that has a financial interest in any property identified for wind farm development and the nature and scope of the interest by submitting this information to the clerk of the municipality, publishing it in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality, displaying it on the Company Web site and submitting it in writing to the Task Force and to the Attorney General. In addition, the Code requires that while the Company must file an abstract or memorandum of all wind easements and leases with the County Clerk, those that involve municipal officers or their relatives must also be posted on the Company Web site. Further, for those easements and leases that involve municipal officers or their employees, the Company must indicate in the abstract or memorandum the actual or estimated monetary consideration from monetary ranges provided in the Code.

The financial information required under the Code may go farther than the General Municipal Law requirements of simple disclosure in § 809. Further, §§ 811 and 812 of the General Municipal Law provide a framework for financial disclosure for local elected officials, persons seeking elective office and political party officials and certain officers and employees of counties, cities, towns and villages. Municipalities may adopt the form provided in § 812 or they may adopt their own. The voluntary Wind Code disclosure requirements apply to municipal officers, whether or not elected.

The disclosure requirements are interesting and, raise questions as to whether this area is preempted

by the existing disclosure requirements in Article 18 that specifically speak to disclosures in land use proceedings. Should stakeholders agree that increased disclosures and a process therefore could be better articulated in statute, this may be a good topic for a legislative program bill. Admittedly, the Attorney General is dealing only with the wind industry in this instance, but there are many other controversial land use applicants, such as big box retailers and wireless communication companies, where similar disclosures could be required if necessary and desired.

B. Gifts

Under General Municipal Law § 805-a(1), municipal officers are prohibited from soliciting or accepting a gift having a value of \$75 or more under circumstances where it can be reasonably inferred that the gift is intended to, or could reasonably be expected to, influence him or her in the performance of official duties, or was intended as a reward for official conduct. The Wind Code prohibits companies from giving municipal officers and their relatives or any third parties on behalf of the municipal officer any gift or gifts totaling more than \$10 in the aggregate during any one-year period (see § 1.2). The Wind Code, however, contains a definition section where the term "gift" is defined as "any thing having more than nominal value whether in the form of money, service, loan, investment, travel, entertainment, hospitality, or in any other form and includes an offer to a charitable organization at the designation of the Municipal Officer or at the designation of his or her relative." By introducing the phrase "nominal value" into the definition section, the Code is seemingly consistent with the 2007 Public Employee Ethics Reform Act, which changed the \$75 gift limit in § 73(5) of the Public Officers Law to prohibit all gifts of more than "nominal value." Although state statute fails to define "nominal value," the Commission on Public Integrity issued an Advisory Opinion in 2008 that sought to provide parameters by explaining, for example, that absent an intent to influence, a cup of regular coffee or a soft drink would normally be considered something of nominal value, but a glass of beer or wine, or some other alcoholic beverage would be a gift with greater than nominal value.¹⁵ Of course, a further complication in using this analogy is that the Public Officers Law does not apply to municipal officers, only to state executive and legislative branch employees and to lobbyists.¹⁶

Although the Wind Code does not provide the Attorney General's Office or the Task Force created under the Code with recourse against a municipal officer who accepts a prohibited gift from an employee of a wind company, exactly what constitutes a prohibited gift to government officials ought to be consistent among the various statutes, regulations and codes. Two possible reforms are appropriate here: the General Municipal

Law should be amended to make it consistent with the Public Officers Law (and it was before the 2007 amendment to the Public Officers Law); or, and perhaps more appropriate, there should be a zero tolerance for gifts whether or not of nominal value.¹⁷

C. Lobbying

Effective in April 2002, the New York State Legislative Law defines "lobbying" or "lobbying activities" at the local level as

any attempt to influence the passage or defeat of any local law, ordinance, resolution or regulation by any municipality or subdivision thereof or adoption or rejection of any rule, regulation, or resolution having the force and effect of local law, ordinance, resolution or regulation or any rate making proceeding by any municipality or subdivision thereof.¹⁸

Municipal lobbying covers

any jurisdictional subdivision of the State, including but not limited to counties, cities, towns, villages, improvement districts and special districts, with a population of more than fifty thousand; and industrial development agencies in jurisdictional subdivisions with a population of more than fifty thousand; and public authorities, and public corporations, but shall not include school districts.¹⁹

Individuals who meet the definition of lobbyist are required to register and file reports with the Commission on Public Integrity.²⁰

The Wind Code would also apply to situations that fit squarely under the definition of lobbying when wind company employees and paid advocates on their behalf seek to convince municipal officials to legislatively rezone property, and to adopt local laws, ordinances or resolutions allowing for and regulating the siting of wind turbines in the jurisdiction. The "General Standard" set forth in the Wind Code provides in part that wind companies may not directly or indirectly seek to confer benefits that would induce a municipal officer to act or refrain from acting in connection with their government responsibility with respect to wind farm development. Many, but not all, of the types of activities sought to be restrained under this section would also fit under the Legislative Law or lobbying requirements. The conduct in these sections regulates the actions of lobbyists and the private sector, not public sector officials. However, municipal officials need to be made more fully aware of what

state law and what the Attorney General would consider to be "improper relationships" between public and private sector interests. Training geared not just towards lobbyists and wind companies, but towards municipal officials would be a welcome "ounce of prevention."

D. Employment Restrictions

State level executive and legislative branch employees are subject generally to post-employment restrictions which prohibit the former government employees from appearing before their former agency on any matter for which they are receiving compensation for a period of two years after leaving government service.²¹ A lifetime bar applies to former employees in relation to "any case, proceedings, application or transaction" that they personally participated in while at the agency.²² In 2006, the State Ethics Commission (now known as the Commission on Public Integrity) issued an opinion declaring that,

(1) State employees may not solicit a post-government employment opportunity with any entity or individual that has a specific pending matter before the State employee; and only may, 30 days from the time a matter is closed or the employee has no further involvement because of recusal or reassignment, solicit an employment opportunity; (2) State employees who receive an unsolicited employment-related communication from such an entity or individual (a) cannot pursue employment with the entity or individual or (b) must recuse themselves from the matter and any further official contact with the entity or individual and wait 30 days from such recusal before entering into post-government employment communications with the entity or individual; and (3) State employees must promptly notify their supervisors and ethics officers of such employment-related communications whether or not they intend to pursue the employment opportunity.²³

At the local government level, the restrictions are not quite so clear. For example, a provision in the General Municipal Law prohibits municipal officials from receiving compensation for services in relation to any matter before their own agency or before any agency where he or she has jurisdiction or appointment power,²⁴ but state statute is silent with respect to post-employment restrictions. It seems as though the Legislature thought this was a matter best left to individual municipalities to decide as local ethics laws

are required by statute to address, among other things, future employment.²⁵ However, if there is a general belief among stakeholders that post-employment restrictions for municipal officials is something that should be addressed uniformly across the State, this is another provision worthy of debate through the introduction of a legislative proposal to amend the General Municipal Law.

E. Education and Training

One of the major items missing in General Municipal Law Article 18, or any other state law, is the statutory requirement for ongoing training and education for municipal officials on ethics issues. Although the Attorney General has addressed this topic in the Wind Code, training requirements are limited to signatory wind companies and their employees. However, municipal officials are parties to the alleged questionable transactions, indicating that training could be beneficial for these decision makers as well. While clearly it would be inappropriate for the wind companies to provide ethics training to municipal officials, this is an opportunity for the Attorney General (as well as for the Department of State, the State Comptroller, and the municipal associations) to conduct statewide training on municipal ethics. Further, the Attorney General should consider strengthening the existing training requirement for wind companies. For example, in addition to posting and distribution mandates, the Wind Code provides that within 30 days of the announcement of the signing of the Code, the wind company is to conduct a seminar for employees about indentifying and preventing conflicts of interest when working with municipal officers. Employees must sign an acknowledgment certifying that they attended the training and that they have read and agree to abide by the Code (and failure to agree obligates the Company to discontinue their employment). The Code should be amended to provide that wind companies are required to provide at least annual training on these issues and that all new employees, within a certain number of days from initial hire, must complete the training (whether in person, on-line or in some other appropriate format). For a period of three years following agreement to abide by the Code, the Attorney General is requiring wind companies to contribute a proportional share of the reasonable administrative costs of the Task Force set up to provide oversight and monitor compliance. It would be a welcome addition to the Code if an amendment were made to allow for some of that funding to support a training initiative geared towards municipal officials.

F. Notification to Municipal Attorney

A curious provision in the Wind Code requires the wind company to notify the attorney for the municipality when it is discovered that a municipal

officer or his or her relative has entered into a lease with the company. In addition, the Wind Code directs the wind company to recommend to that municipal officer that he or she consult with the municipality's attorney concerning their legal obligations, including any obligation to recuse. This puts the municipal attorney in an awkward position. The municipal attorney works for the municipality as a whole, and not for individuals who may be involved in the wind siting decision-making process. For municipalities who need to watch the bottom line with respect to their outside counsel legal bills (since for many municipalities in the State, the municipal attorney is part-time and/or on retainer), the office charged with hiring the municipal attorney typically gets to prescribe the client(s) and subject matter that such attorney is retained to address (and hopefully this is explicitly set forth in a written retainer agreement or in a written job description). Since there may be no attorney-client relationship between the government lawyer and individual board members regarding their individual ethical conduct, municipal officials may be better advised to seek legal counsel outside of the municipally retained attorney. Further, a number of municipalities have boards of ethics established pursuant to the General Municipal Law, and these boards may be the more appropriate place to inquire about these types of actions. Lastly, some municipalities may have a designated ethics officer who would more likely be the point of initial contact. The Attorney General should consider as part of a comprehensive training program publishing a pamphlet for municipal officials that discusses when disclosure and recusal are required pursuant to statute.

IV. Conclusion

It is clear that given the tensions existing in communities between those who support the siting of wind turbines and those who oppose them, all of the participants would be wise to ensure that their conduct is absolutely beyond reproach as they are likely to be watched very closely and challenged where conduct is questionable. Based upon annual surveys of ethics in land use, it is evident that there are a healthy number of cases reported each year where unhappy community members lodge allegations of unethical conduct on the part of municipal officials in an effort to void unfavorable decisions.²⁶ Although most of these fail because either the complainant did not have sufficient evidence to prove the allegation or because the complained-of action, while perhaps not appropriate, technically did not violate a law,²⁷ the bottom line is that allegations of unethical conduct in this arena have a negative ripple effect. The Internet and blogs have become a popular and cost-effective method of communication between individuals and community groups across the country opposed, in this case, to the siting of wind turbines. Postings related to ethics allegations in one jurisdic-

tion will trigger closer scrutiny of these issues in other communities where proposals are making their way through the review process.

Full disclosure and transparency in government decision making is critical to ensuring public integrity and trust in government. Officials at all levels of government must disclose and recuse themselves from decision-making roles when personal financial conflicts of interest arise. Many of the alleged activities that have occurred emanating from efforts to site wind turbines are clearly illegal or unethical under existing statutory and regulatory frameworks. Informal opinions issued by previous Attorneys General have even suggested that specific provisions of the General Municipal Law need not be violated in order to find an improper conflict of interest.²⁸ The fact that there have been numerous alleged instances of abuse in different jurisdictions over a relatively short span of time clearly indicates that this issue requires immediate attention. To that end, the Attorney General's action to shed sunlight on inappropriate conduct and to develop a document to guide future actions is a welcome effort. What is needed now is a more holistic approach involving the full spectrum of stakeholders to both reinforce and to strengthen the direction charted by the Attorney General. This includes a re-examination of state and local lobbying laws and regulations as well as municipal ethics requirements. It is critical that all stakeholders participate and that action is swift so that this issue can be appropriately addressed without slowing the progress on harnessing clean, renewable energy in New York. One concluding thought: This is not just a New York issue; what the Attorney General does in New York has great potential for ripple effects in other states who often replicate models developed in New York.

Endnotes

1. See, e.g., provisions in the Town Law, Village Law, General City Law, County Law, Alternative County Law, Election Law, General Municipal Law, Labor Law, Judiciary Law, the Real Property Tax Law and the Second Class Cities Law as set forth in a chart in Mark Davies "Non-Article 18 Conflicts of Interest Restrictions Governing Counties, Cities, Towns and Villages Under New York State Law," *Municipal Lawyer*, Vol. 20, No. 1 at 5 (Winter 2006).
2. N.Y. Gen. Mun. L. § 806.
3. See Mark Davies, "Ethics Laws for Municipal Officials Outside of New York City," 1 *Government Law & Policy Journal* at 44 (New York State Bar Association, 1999). Davies explains that sadly, there is no single, uniform and comprehensive code of ethics for municipal officials in New York. See also Mark Davies, "Enacting a Local Ethics Law—Part I: Code of Ethics," *Municipal Lawyer*, Vol. 21, No. 3 at 4 (Summer 2007); "Enacting a Local Ethics Law—Part II: Disclosure," *Municipal Lawyer*, Vol. 21, No. 4 at 8 (Fall 2007); "Enacting a Local Ethics Law—Part III: Administration," *Municipal Lawyer*, Vol. 22, No. 1 at 11 (Winter 2008); "Local Ethics Laws: Model Administrative Provisions," *Municipal Lawyer*, Vol. 22, No. 3 at 14 (Summer 2008).
4. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/18/nyregion/18windmills.html?_r=3&oref=slogin&oref=slogin (site visited January 2009).
5. For example, a town supervisor cast the deciding vote allowing private land to be condemned for purposes of siting a wind farm after acknowledging that he had accepted real estate commissions on at least one land deal involving the farm's developer. In another municipality, according to local residents, a town official took a job with a wind company after involvement with the passage of a zoning law relating to wind turbines. In another town, the supervisor reported that after a meeting during which he proposed a moratorium on wind towers, he had been invited to pick up a gift from the back seat of a wind company representative's car.
6. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/18/nyregion/18windmills.html?_r=3&oref=slogin&oref=slogin (site visited January 2009).
7. <http://lawoftheland.wordpress.com/2008/07/17/ny-attorney-general-launches-investigation-of-potential-unethical-and-illegal-dealings-between-wind-power-companies-and-municipalities> (site visited January 2009).
8. *Hedman v. Town Board of Town of Howard*, 867 N.Y.S.2d 634 (4th Dep't 2008).
9. <http://www.newsday.com/news/local/wire/newyork/ny-bc-ny--windpower-turbule1123nov23.03062001.story>.
10. http://www.oag.state.ny.us/media_center/2008/oct/WindCODE%20FINAL.pdf (site visited January 2009).
11. *Id.*
12. *Id.*
13. For example, General Municipal Law § 806 provides that among other things, locally adopted codes of ethics must address: standards with respect to the disclosure of interest in legislation before the governing body; standards with regard to the holding of investments in conflict with official duties; private employment and conflict with official duties; and future employment.
14. N.Y. Gen. Mun. L. § 809(2)(d).
15. New York State Commission on Public Integrity, Advisory Opinion 08-01, available at: http://www.nyintegrity.org/advisory/cpi/2008/Advisory_Opinion_08-01.pdf (site visited January 2009).
16. N.Y. Exec. L. § 94(1).
17. This view is counter to some that believe an absolute prohibition could also produce absurd results in certain situations, and that although there may be an assumption that every gift, no matter how insignificant, has some potential to influence public employees, the challenge "is to distinguish those where the potential is sufficiently significant so as to prohibit them." See Richard Rifkin, "Gift Giving in the Public Sector," in *ETHICAL STANDARDS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR*, 2nd ed. (P. Salkin, ed.) (American Bar Association, 2008). New York City's rule on lobbyist gifts offers a possible middle ground. New York City prohibits all gifts by lobbyists to New York City public servants (NYC Ad. Code § 3-225; 53 RCNY § 1-16(a)), but then exempts, *inter alia*, "de minimis promotional items having no substantial resale value such as pens, mugs, calendars, hats, and t-shirts which bear an organization's name, logo, or message in a manner which promotes the organization's cause" (53 RCNY § 1-16(c)(1)). See http://www.nyc.gov/html/conflicts/downloads/pdf2/rules_1_07_final.pdf (site visited January 2009).
18. http://www.nyintegrity.org/local/local_lobbying.html (site visited January 2009).
19. *Id.* For a list of covered municipalities see <http://www.nyintegrity.org/pubs/LocalFacts.PDF> (site visited January 2009).

20. The registration and reporting requirements are beyond the scope of this article, but New York Legislative Law Art. 1-A may be accessed at: <http://www.nyintegrity.org/law/lob/lobbying2.html>; and Guidelines adopted by the Commission on Public Integrity are available at: <http://www.nyintegrity.org/law/lob/guidelines.html> (site visited January 2009).
21. N.Y. Pub. Off. L. § 73(8)(a)(i).
22. N.Y. Pub. Off. L. § 73(8)(a)(ii).
23. N.Y.S. Ethics Commission, Advisory Opinion 06-01 (Jan. 23, 2006). The opinion may be accessed at: <http://www.nyintegrity.org/advisory/ethc/06-01.htm> (site visited January 2009).
24. N.Y. Gen. Mun. L. § 805-a(1)(c).
25. N.Y. Gen. Mun. L. § 806(1)(a).

26. See, generally, P. Saikin, "Ethics in Land Use," Ch. 38 in *AMERICAN LAW OF ZONING*, 5th Ed. (Thomson-West 2008).
27. *Id.*
28. See Inf. Op. N.Y. Att'y Gen. 97-5; Inf. Op. N.Y. Att'y Gen. 86-54.

Patricia E. Salkin is the Raymond & Ella Smith Distinguished Professor of Law at Albany Law School where she also serves as Associate Dean and Director of the Government Law Center. She is the author of the blog, *Law of the Land*, <http://lawoftheland.albanylaw.edu>.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT

The below-signed Wind Company voluntarily agrees to implement the following Code of Conduct to govern its future conduct in connection with Wind Farm Development in New York State.

I. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST - PROHIBITED

1. **General Standard:** The Wind Company shall not directly or indirectly offer to, or confer on, a Municipal Officer, his or her Relative, or any third party on behalf of such Municipal Officer any benefit under circumstances in which it could reasonably be inferred the benefit would induce such Municipal Officer to commit an official act or to refrain from performing an official duty in connection with Wind Farm Development, unless such Municipal Officer recuses him or herself from any official duties in connection with Wind Farm Development.
2. **No Gifts:** The Wind Company shall not give any Municipal Officer, his or her Relative, or any third party on behalf of such Municipal Officer, any gift or gifts totaling more than ten dollars (\$10.00) in the aggregate during any one-year period.
3. **No Compensation for Services:** The Wind Company shall not employ, hire, retain or compensate, or agree to employ, hire, retain or compensate, any Municipal Officer whose official duties involve Wind Farm Development in connection with the Wind Company, or his or her Relative, within two years of the time that such Municipal Officer had such duties, unless such Municipal Officer first recuses him or herself from any official conduct in connection with such Wind Farm Development. Accordingly, any compensation provided by the Wind Company to such Municipal Officer, his or her Relative, or third party on behalf of such Municipal Officer or Relative, shall be contingent on such prior recusal. The Wind Company shall disclose in writing to the Task Force and the Office of the Attorney General any agreement that is contingent on such recusal.
4. **No Contingent Compensation:** The Wind Company shall not provide or agree to provide compensation to any Municipal Officer or his or her Relative that is contingent upon such Municipal Officer's action before or as a member of any Municipal agency.
5. **No Honorarium:** The Wind Company shall not confer on any Municipal Officer or his or her Relative any honorarium during the Municipal Officer's public service, or for a period of two years after termination of such Municipal Officer's service.
6. **Restrictions on Easements/Leases with Municipal Officers:** The Wind Company shall not enter into any agreement with any Municipal Officer that requires the Municipal Officer to support or cooperate with Wind Farm Development in any manner that relates to the Municipal Officer's official duties.
7. **Confidential Information:** The Wind Company shall not solicit, use, or knowingly receive confidential information acquired by a Municipal Officer in the course of his or her official duties.
8. **Restrictions on Legal Representation:** The Wind Company shall not agree to pay legal fees for any Municipal Officer or Municipality in connection with any investigation by any law enforcement agency.

II. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

For events transpiring after the date that this Code of Conduct is signed, the Wind Company shall make the disclosures as set forth in this section. For any financial interest held by a Municipal Officer or his or her Relative in any property Identified for Wind Farm Development prior to the date of this Code of Conduct, the Wind Company shall make the disclosure of the Municipal Officer and the nature and scope of the financial interest by a chart submitted to the Office of the Attorney General and displayed on a website hosted by the Wind Company. The format of the chart shall be subject to the approval of the Office of the Attorney General.

1. The Wind Company shall publicly disclose the full names of any Municipal Officer or his or her Relative who has a financial interest in any property Identified for Wind Farm Development, and the nature and scope of the financial interest in the following manner:
 - a. Submit the information in writing for public inspection to the Clerk of such Municipality.
 - b. Publish the information in a newspaper having a general circulation in such Municipality.
 - c. Display the information on a website hosted by the Wind Company.
 - d. Submit the information in writing to the Task Force and the Office of the Attorney General.
2. All Wind easements and leases shall be in writing. The Wind Company shall promptly file, duly record, and index an abstract or memorandum of such agreements in the Office of the County Clerk for the county in which the subject property is located; if property owner is a Municipal Officer or his or her Relative, then the Wind Company also shall post an abstract or memorandum of any such agreement on a website hosted by the Wind Company.
3. The abstract or memorandum of such agreements shall, at a minimum, include:
 - a. the full names and addresses of the parties;
 - b. a full description of the property subject to the agreement;
 - c. the essential terms of the agreement, including the rights conveyed by the property owner and, if the property owner is a Municipal Officer or his or her Relative, which of the following ranges encompasses the actual monetary consideration offered by the Wind Company or, if the actual monetary consideration is not fixed, the Wind Company's estimate of the monetary consideration:
 - i. Under \$5,000
 - ii. \$5,000 to under \$20,000
 - iii. \$20,000 to under \$60,000
 - iv. \$60,000 to under \$100,000
 - v. \$100,000 to under \$250,000
 - vi. \$250,000 to under \$500,000
 - vii. \$500,000 to under \$1,000,000
 - viii. \$1,000,000 or higher.

III. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. The Wind Company shall promptly provide a copy of this Code of Conduct and a written statement of its intention to comply with this Code of Conduct to the government of any Municipality in which it engages in Wind Farm Development.
2. Within one week of the announcement of this Code of Conduct, the Wind Company shall publish this Code of Conduct on a website hosted by the Company and on any internal computer network (intranet) site that can be accessed only by its officers or employees, distribute copies of this Code of Conduct among its officers and employees, and post copies in its main office and at any local Wind Farm Development office.

3. Within thirty days of the announcement of this Code of Conduct, the Wind Company shall conduct a seminar for all officers and employees, except those who perform solely administrative/clerical, accounting, or building maintenance functions, about identifying and preventing conflicts of interest when working with Municipal Officers.
4. Within thirty days of the seminar, the Wind Company shall obtain acknowledgement forms from each of its employees, certifying that they have: (i) attended the seminar required by paragraph 3 of this section, unless they fall into the exception therein, and (ii) have read and agree to comply with this Code of Conduct. If, due to exceptional circumstances, an officer or employee is unable to attend the seminar required in paragraph 3 of this section, alternative arrangements should be made as soon as is practical for such officer or employee to receive the training described in paragraph 3 and sign the acknowledgement form. The Wind Company shall discontinue employment of anyone who fails to attend the seminar, or its equivalent, or sign the acknowledgment form.
5. The Wind Company shall distribute to all its employees and post prominently in all its work locations as well as on its website or intranet system the NYS Attorney General's Public Integrity Hotline with instructions that any misconduct, violation of the law, or corruption of any sort in connection with Wind Farm Development; or any violation of this Code of Conduct shall be promptly reported to the New York State Attorney General.
6. Upon discovery by the Wind Company that a Municipal Officer or his or her Relative has entered into a lease or easement with the Wind Company, the Wind Company shall (i) notify the attorney for the Municipality and (ii) recommend to such Municipal Officer that he or she consult with the Municipality's attorney concerning his or her legal obligations, including any obligation to recuse him or herself.

IV. ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

1. The Office of the New York State Attorney General shall establish the above-referenced Task Force to provide oversight of Wind Farm Development and monitor compliance with this Code. The Task Force shall include, among others, local elected officials, including District Attorneys, and others designated by the Office of the Attorney General. The Task Force shall report only to the Office of the New York State Attorney General. The Office of the New York State Attorney General shall establish responsibilities and guidelines for the Task Force.
2. For three years following the Wind Company's agreement to this Code of Conduct or until the Wind Company ceases operations in New York State, whichever is earlier, the Wind Company shall contribute a proportional share of the reasonable administrative costs of the Task Force, in an amount to be determined by the Task Force. So long as the Wind Company operates in New York State, it shall fully cooperate with the Task Force.
3. Should the Wind Company discover any conduct in violation of the provisions of this Code, the Wind Company shall promptly disclose such information to the Office of the New York State Attorney General. The Wind Company shall fully cooperate with the Office of the New York State Attorney General in any investigation arising out of such violation.
4. The Task Force shall give notice of any complaints relating to the Wind Company to the Office of the New York State Attorney General. The Task Force may decide not to refer such a complaint, if it determines that it involves a matter relating to this Code of Conduct that can be resolved by the Task Force. The Task Force may refer such complaints to the Office of the New York State Attorney General. With respect to any complaint referred to the Office of the New York State Attorney General by the Task Force, the Office of the New York State Attorney General shall advise the Wind Company of the complaint and give the Wind Company a reasonable opportunity to obtain and submit to the Office of the New York State Attorney General information relevant to the complaint. After providing such opportunity, the Office of the New York State Attorney General shall determine, in its reasonable discretion, and based on a reasonably comprehensive factual investigation including any information provided by the Wind Company, whether a preponderance of the evidence establishes that the Wind Company has violated this Code of Conduct in any material respect. In the event that a violation of any provision set forth in this Code is found, the Wind Company shall pay a civil penalty of up to \$50,000 for the first violation, and up to \$100,000 for any subsequent violation. In setting any penalty amount, the Office of the New York State Attorney General shall consider the relative severity of, and the relative harm to public integrity

occasioned by, the violation. Any payment shall be made by certified check made payable to the "State of New York." The Wind Company shall have the right to challenge the Office's finding of a violation and determination of penalty amount before a court of competent jurisdiction, but shall pay any assessed penalty to the State of New York pending the resolution of any such court challenge.

5. The Wind Company and the Office of the New York State Attorney General shall meet to review the terms of this Code both four months and one year from the date on which this Code is signed.

V. DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise stated or unless the context otherwise requires, when used in this Code:

1. "Gift" means any thing having more than a nominal value whether in the form of money, service, loan, investment, travel, entertainment, hospitality, or in any other form and includes an offer to a charitable organization at the designation of the Municipal Officer or at the designation of his or her Relative.
2. "Honorarium" means any payment made in consideration for any speech given at a public or private conference, convention, meeting, social event, meal or like gathering.
3. "Identified" means that the Wind Company has begun to pursue the purchase or lease of, or an easement on, real property in which the Wind Company knows, or through the exercise of reasonable diligence should have known, that a Municipal Officer or his or her Relative has a financial interest in the property.
4. "Municipality" means a county, city, town, village, public authority, school district, or any other special or improvement district, but shall have no application to a city having a population of one million or more or to a county, school district, or other public agency or facility therein.
5. "Municipal Officer" means any officer or employee of a municipality, whether paid or unpaid, and includes, without limitation, all members of any office, board, body, advisory board, council, commission, agency, department, district, administration, division, bureau, or committee of the municipality. It also includes any entity that is directly or indirectly controlled by, or is under common control with, such officer or employee.
 - a. "Municipal Officer" shall not include:
 - i. A judge, justice, officer, or employee of the unified court system;
 - ii. A volunteer firefighter or civil defense volunteer, except a fire chief or assistant fire chief; or
 - iii. A member of an advisory board of the municipality if, but only if, the advisory board has no authority to implement its recommendations or to act on behalf of the municipality or to restrict the authority of the municipality to act.
6. "Relative" means a spouse, domestic partner, child, step-child, sibling, or parent of the Municipal Officer, or a person claimed as a dependent on the Municipal Officer's latest individual state income tax return.
7. "Wind Farm Development" means any stage of past, present or future development or siting of wind farms, wind turbines, wind power and related facilities or wind power projects; whether considered planned, attempted or completed, including but not limited to permitting, licensing, construction and energy production.

[Note: Part VI containing Forms to be used has been omitted]

TOWN OF WHEATFIELD
County of Niagara
Office of Planning and Zoning Board
2800 Church Road
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Phone: 694-6440

June 13, 2009

Niagara County Department of Planning, Development & Tourism
Attn. Benjamin Bidell, Senior Planner
Vantage Centre – Suite One
6311 Inducon Corporate Drive
Sanborn, NY 14132-9099

Subject: Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan Comments – Town of Wheatfield

Good Morning Ben:

A Town Focus Group convened specifically to review the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan has completed its task with the following comments for your information and consideration:

- Executive Summary, page 9, third or fourth paragraph, states that large industrial uses and businesses should first consider locating in Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda, and Lockport because of available infrastructure. The areas of “first consideration” should be expanded to include existing industrial parks and industrial/commercially zoned areas that have been built to accommodate these large uses. ***Wheatfield has many areas, including existing industrial parks, which have all utilities available and are ready to accommodate large uses.***
- ***The above addition should also be made on Page 20 in Chapter VI.*** The same statement about large industrial uses is made in italicized type adjacent to a “guidepost” symbol.
- On page 55 in Chapter IV (the Wheatfield data chart), the ***Subdivision Regulations should show the latest update as 2007 instead of “in process”.***
- On page 13 in Chapter V, under Town of Wheatfield issues and challenges, lists “changes from open space to suburban uses and resulting increase in the need for infrastructure (sewer, etc.)”. ***Sanitary sewer or water should not be listed as needed infrastructure for the Town of Wheatfield. Essentially the entire Town has public sewer and water installed and ready for use.***

- Figure V.17 should ***show existing Wheatfield industrial parks as high development/redevelopment areas.***
- On page 7 in Chapter IX, under Upper River Communities Subregion, “primary issues and challenges”, safety of tourists in Wheatfield is listed. ***Why is safety of tourists in Wheatfield being listed as a challenge?***
- On the same page and section referenced in the bullet above, it is also states that “Wheatfield has no workable local emergency plan”. ***Wheatfield has a long-standing emergency plan that is currently undergoing revision and updating. The Focus Group participants include a Town Board member, County Sheriff department representative, and a federal government educated and experienced disaster preparedness officer. Estimated date of completion is October 2009.***

The Focus Group concluded that In general, the Niagara County Comprehensive Plan concentrates on increased collaboration, targeting development to utilize existing infrastructure, preserving Niagara County’s farmland and natural resources, and stopping sprawl. However, the Focus Group hesitates, without anecdotal evidence, to agree that sprawl is an issue in Niagara County.

Ben should need additional input, pleas advice.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Muscatello, Chair
Planning & Zoning Board

CC: Town Board Members
Town Supervisor
Planning Board Members
Building Department
T. Walck, W-D Engineers
A. Reilly, W-D Engineers
G. Witul, Business Development Focus Group
J. Petrozzi, Economic Development Focus Group
K. Frieder, Agriculture Preservation Focus Group

Daniel M. Darragh
Direct Dial 412.297.4718

ddarragh@cohenlaw.com
Direct Fax 412.209.1940

June 15, 2009

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan
Attention: Clerk of the Legislature
Niagara County Legislature
175 Hawley Street
Lockport, NY 14094

Re: Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

Dear Clerk of the Legislature:

These comments are submitted on behalf of our client CWM Chemical Services, LLC ("CWM"). CWM is the owner and operator of the Model City industrial and hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facility, located in the Town of Porter, and identified in the draft Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030 (the "Plan") as the second largest employer in the Lower River Communities Subregion. CWM has reviewed the Plan, and it submits the following comments.

Sections V and IX of the Plan include summaries of various concerns and recommendations from "Stakeholders" in the Lower River Communities Subregion. One recommendation is that State and Federal agencies should implement the equitable geographic distribution contemplated by ECL 27-1105 and act consistent with policies contained in various resolutions adopted by the Niagara County Legislature by establishing a prohibition against the future development or expansion of any industrial and hazardous waste treatment, storage or disposal facility capacity in the County.

CWM disagrees with this recommendation for a number of reasons. While the Plan claims to include data and information received "from a broad cross-section of Stakeholders," the Stakeholder Group mailing list available on the Plan's website is most notable for its failure to include, with the sole exception for real estate developers/builders, any private businesses/employers, large or small, located within the County. As a result, it appears that the process for developing the Plan omitted one of the most important Stakeholder groups in the County. That failure not only results in the omission of the significant data and information that such Stakeholders might offer, the failure results in an imbalance in the process as well as in the output of the process because a very significant Stakeholder group's input and perspective is missing. The

future success of the Plan is dependent at least in part, upon the support of and investment by this critical Stakeholder group. Therefore, CWM recommends that appropriate steps be taken to include the commercial business/employer Stakeholder group in this planning process.

The recommendation completely misunderstands the existing State and Federal statutory and regulatory structure that governs the siting and permitting of new or expanded industrial hazardous waste management facilities, and it reflects a misunderstanding of the County and local municipal roles in that process.

ECL 27-1107 provides:

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no municipality may, except as expressly authorized by this article or the board, require any approval, consent, permit, certificate or other condition, including conformity with local zoning or land use laws and ordinances, regarding the operation of a facility with respect to which a certificate hereunder has been granted...

Therefore, absent a change in State law, no municipal entity in the County, including the County, has any authority to ban a proposed capacity expansion at the Model City Facility.

Moreover, the Plan's reference to ECL 27-1105, as requiring an equitable distribution of hazardous waste management facilities throughout the State, is incorrect. Section 27-1105 contains the procedures to apply for, process, and issue a certificate of environmental safety and public necessity for a new or expanded hazardous waste management facility. Section 27-1105 does not make any reference to an equitable distribution of such facilities.

ECL 27-1102.2.f provides that the Statewide Hazardous Waste Facility Siting Plan, to be prepared by NYDEC, should include:

a determination of the number, size, type and location by area of the state of new or expanded industrial hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities which will be needed for the proper-long term management of hazardous waste consistent with the assurances required pursuant to subdivision one of this section and an equitable geographic distribution of facilities.

As provided in ECL 27-1102.1, the Statewide Hazardous Waste Facility Siting Plan is required "to assure the availability of industrial hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities" which have adequate capacity for the proper treatment and disposition of all hazardous wastes expected to be generated within New York over the next twenty years.

While the DEC has yet to adopt a Statewide Hazardous Waste Facility Siting Plan, it should be apparent that any such plan that complies with the capacity assurance requirements in § 27-1102.1 would need to include expanded capacity at the Model City Facility.

Moreover, denying the siting and permitting of a hazardous waste management facility on equitable geographic distribution grounds would be inconsistent with 40 CFR 271.4. That inconsistency could jeopardize the status of New York's hazardous waste management program as a Federal RCRA delegated program.

Thus, to be consistent with State and Federal law, the Plan should recognize that the Model City Facility has and will continue to play a role in meeting New York's and other States' hazardous waste management needs, and the Plan should recommend that the County take a leadership role in fostering a more open and cooperative relationship between the Model City Facility and the various municipal and other constituencies in the County. As noted in the draft Plan, the Town of Porter contemplates having a continued cooperative working relationship with the Model City Facility.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Plan.

Very truly yours,

COHEN & GRIGSBY, P.C.

By:



Daniel M. Darragh

DMD:mlv

cc: Michael Mahar
John Skoutelas

1465779_2

1 STATE OF NEW YORK

2 COUNTY OF NIAGARA : CITY OF LOCKPORT

3 - - - - -

4 In the Matter of Public Hearing

5 On

6 THE DRAFT NIAGARA COUNTY COMMUNITIES

7 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

8 - - - - -

9
10
11 Public Hearing held at the Niagara County
12 Legislative Chambers, Courthouse, Lockport,
13 Niagara County, New York on the 16th day of
14 June, 2009, commencing at approximately
15 6:30 P.M.

16
17
18 APPEARANCES: RICHARD E. UPDEGROVE,
19 Legislator
Economic Development Committee

20
21
22 Mary Ellen Pembroke, Court Reporter
23 5430 Carleton Lake Drive, Lockport, NY 14094
(716)433-4178

1 MR. UPDEGROVE: Please take notice that in
2 accordance with General Municipal Law, Article
3 12-8, Section 239-d(6) the Niagara County
4 Legislature will conduct a public hearing on
5 the 16th day of June, 2009 at 6:30 P.M. in the
6 Legislature Chambers, Courthouse, 175 Hawley
7 Street, Lockport, for the purpose of hearing
8 public comments on the draft Niagara
9 Communities Comprehensive Plan.

10 The draft plan is available in all of the
11 public libraries in Niagara County and on-line
12 at www.niagaracounty.com/mapsreports.asp,
13 r-e-p-o-r-t-s--a-s-p.

14 And, prior to the public hearing I have a
15 statement regarding the Communities
16 Comprehensive Plan and some history regarding
17 that plan that we would like to read into the
18 record.

19 In 2006 the Niagara County Legislature
20 resolved to convene a process of long range
21 planning to identify and address priority
22 issues, challenges and needs across a wide
23 range of issues affecting Niagara County, its

1 communities and its residents and to identify
2 effective and efficient means for addressing
3 them. The county began a process of
4 comprehensive planning in 2007 following
5 execution of agreements with the New York State
6 Housing Trust Fund Corporation Office of
7 Community Renewal and the New York Department
8 of State Quality Communities Program for grant
9 funding for the project. Through May 2009 the
10 firm of Clough Harbour and Associates provided
11 professional planning services to the county in
12 conjunction with subconsultants Basile Baumann
13 Prost Cole Associates and Community Oriented
14 Geography and was responsible for authoring the
15 plan.

16 The planning process has endeavored to
17 address five overarching goals for the county:
18 encouraging desirable and appropriate growth
19 and development; strengthening the local
20 economy and improving the quality of life for
21 Niagara County residents; improving delivery of
22 services and prioritizing and coordinating
23 capital improvements.

1 The plan is organized around five focus
2 areas: land use and environment which includes
3 transportation; economic development; county
4 services; facilities and infrastructure;
5 education and public health and safety.

6 The plan recognizes, respects and unifies
7 existing planning efforts at the local, county,
8 and regional level, all of which were reviewed
9 as part of the planning process and
10 incorporated into the plan in some way.

11 Niagara County's comprehensive plan is entitled
12 Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030 to
13 emphasize the importance of community
14 involvement in the planning process, to signify
15 the potential usefulness of the information in
16 the document to Niagara County communities and
17 to reflect the intended life span of the
18 document as a tool for assisting decision
19 making.

20 The community and public participation in
21 the planning process includes formation of a
22 Stakeholder Communities Steering Committee
23 comprised of representatives from

1 municipalities across the county. All
2 municipalities in the county were invited to
3 designate a community representative and an
4 alternate to sit on the committee. Eight
5 committee meetings were held over the course of
6 2008 which were attended by a broad
7 cross-section of stakeholders, including Plan
8 Steering Committee members, public agencies,
9 non-profit organizations and county residents,
10 among others. Four public information meetings
11 were also held over the course of 2008. The
12 2008 meetings helped to identify issues and
13 challenges and assets and opportunities
14 relative to the five focus areas of the plan
15 and this information was translated into goals
16 and objectives which were used as a basis for
17 strategies and recommendations in the plan.

18 The planning process also included six
19 community outreach meetings held in April 2009
20 following release of the first draft plan held
21 at the suggestion of various county
22 stakeholders. The purpose of the meetings was
23 to update the public on the planning process.

1 to make the planning process more accessible to
2 county residents and to garner feedback on the
3 first draft plan.

4 Comments received on the first draft plan
5 were incorporated into the final draft plan
6 which has been posted on the county's website.
7 Information will continue to be posted there as
8 it has been over the course of the project.
9 The plan is also available in all of the public
10 libraries in Niagara County.

11 The county has prepared a full
12 environmental assessment form for the project
13 in accordance with the New York State
14 Environmental Quality Review Act which is also
15 available on-line. The web address for the
16 Communities Comprehensive Plan is again,
17 Niagaracounty.com/comprehensiveplan.asp.

18 Niagara County has requested review and
19 recommendation on the comprehensive plan by the
20 local legislative bodies and planning boards of
21 each municipality in Niagara County and by the
22 Niagara County Planning Board in accordance
23 with the New York State General Municipal Law.

1 Tonight's public hearing is also being
2 held pursuant to New York State General
3 Municipal Law. Public comments on the plan
4 will be accepted by the Niagara County
5 Legislature through June 30, 2009 which must be
6 mailed in hard copy to Niagara Communities
7 Comprehensive Plan, attention Clerk of the
8 Legislature, Niagara County Legislature, 175
9 Hawley Street, Lockport, New York 14094.

10 The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan
11 2030 is intended as a guidance document and
12 informational tool for Niagara County and its
13 communities to use to assist decision making
14 over the next twenty years. The plan provides
15 direction on county policies including
16 allocation of resources and is intended as a
17 framework for future planning efforts involving
18 interdepartmental, intermunicipal and inter
19 organizational coordination and cooperation.

20 In addition to improved coordination
21 amongst stakeholders the plan is also expected
22 to yield significant grant funding for the
23 county. The plan does not commit Niagara

1 County, any municipality within the county or
2 any other stakeholder to undertake, approve, or
3 fund any specific action or actions at this
4 time. The plan provides a series of
5 recommendations only which can be used by the
6 county to establish policies towards achieving
7 goals and objectives identified in the plan.

8 With that having been said do any persons
9 in attendance have any comments regarding the
10 Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan?

11 Please state your name and address before
12 you provide your feedback and comments. Thank
13 you.

14 MS. HARRIS: Yes, Mary Ellen Harris, 14
15 High Street, Lockport, New York.

16 Umm, I'm Mary Ellen Harris. I have my own
17 environmental consulting company which is only
18 been located in this area for two years but I
19 basically have thirty years of environmental
20 planning experience doing environmental impact
21 studies, helping companies and agencies get
22 through the environmental impact process.

23 Most of my experience has been done in the

1 Hudson Valley but I must say I take the process
2 seriously. Apparently this county does not.
3 It's probably more environmental lawyers down
4 there, that might be a reason for that. But, I
5 submitted comments in May which I would just
6 like briefly to go over with you and update
7 those.

8 I said that the statements are SEQRA in
9 compliance. This is a New York State
10 Environmental Quality Review Act. It says that
11 the comprehensive plan may be used as a generic
12 environmental impact statement.

13 That is not correct. An environmental
14 impact statement has to be a completely
15 separate document from any plan. In no way,
16 shape or form can this plan be used as a
17 generic environmental impact statement.

18 There is a lot of information in the
19 statement that could be used for that but it
20 would be probably considered deficient to be
21 considered a generic environmental impact
22 statement.

23 It also says no further environmental

1 reviews would be required for site specific and
2 that is incorrect. That would only be true if
3 adequate thresholds compatibility and
4 mitigation measures were identified in a GEIS.
5 A suitable plans are very general. Actual site
6 studies and further environmental reviews for
7 specific proposed activities will need to be
8 completed.

9 Now as a result of that and the new
10 version of the plan under SEQRA they do make a
11 statement that further environmental reviews
12 would be required for county and local actions.

13 Second point I brought up I said that the
14 SEQRA process must be closed out before the
15 county plan can be legally adopted.

16 Now I went through the schedule when I
17 submitted these comments in May. I said if you
18 did not have a generic environmental impact
19 statement available in May it would take
20 approximately three to four months to go
21 through that process because that requires
22 separate notices, separate reviews, separate
23 agency reviews, separate public hearings. I

1 would suspect on county plans I've seen you
2 usually have nine months to a year just getting
3 through the environmental impact review process
4 on a county plan. So, what was the follow-up
5 on this? Ah, a section has been added that
6 environmental assessment form has been made
7 which means to me that the county has not even
8 started on the environmental review process for
9 this.

10 Umm, if you really have closing date of
11 July 28th, it hasn't even started.

12 Well, the environmental assessment form
13 that is included which is available on-line
14 basically says there's no impact. I have never
15 seen such a bogus environmental assessment form
16 in my entire life. It's ridiculous and I
17 strongly urge the county to get an
18 environmental lawyer to review the passage of
19 this plan and the SEQRA process.

20 I would suggest that if the SEQRA process
21 really hasn't been started basically this
22 environmental assessment form says blah, blah,
23 blah, no problem. Well, I think the county is

1 likely to be sued if it does not take SEQRA
2 process seriously.

3 Now I would just like to mention there is
4 two points on this that there are specific
5 proposed actions in this plan that SEQRA would
6 have to address and certainly this is land use
7 changes. The county owns land. The county has
8 projects the county should be addressing. It
9 doesn't want to deal with all the cities and
10 towns are going to end up dealing with this
11 plan. It has to address the county. It says
12 under existing acreage, different land use
13 types, it says not applicable. It says after
14 the projects which would be after
15 implementation of this plan project held by
16 land crews type not applicable. That isn't
17 true.

18 I'm just going to mention in the land use
19 and environmental section there is twenty-two
20 million dollars of specific highway projects,
21 county projects, specific locations for which
22 you can determine how many acres would be
23 affected and what kind of acres would be

1 affected and what kind of environmental impact
2 it might have.

3 The other point is on the suitability rate
4 with all this criteria, all these plans for
5 areas for development, for redevelopment. What
6 has to be done, an environmental impact review
7 is to say these are guidelines that everybody
8 is supposed to use. If everybody uses these
9 guidelines and uses all these suitability
10 criteria you will find thousands and thousands
11 of acres could be affected and that can be
12 documented how many acres if these suitability
13 guidelines are followed would be developed or
14 would be changed in their land use.

15 There could be a loss of wetlands, a loss
16 of agricultural land. That's what an
17 environmental impact review is supposed to do.

18 So, I just want to urge you to get a
19 better analysis. Really take care of SEQRA
20 because, as you know, anykind of development
21 projects, that's how it gets stopped, the
22 SEQRA, and this county better start taking it
23 seriously.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. UPDEGROVE: Do we have any other
3 speakers, any other comments?

4 Ma'am, please state your name and address
5 for the record.

6 MS. HENS: Yes. Good evening. I'm Jerry
7 Hens at 5566 Irish Road, North Tonawanda right
8 here locally. I live in the Town of Pendleton.
9 I actually am a full-time commercial beekeeper.
10 I'm one of two organic honey producers in the
11 state. I also have been vice-president of the
12 Western New York Honey Producers Association
13 for the past consecutive years and I just
14 recently retired from them and when I'm not
15 with my own operation I'm functioning as the
16 bee specialist person for several cooperative
17 extension units including here in Niagara
18 County and I'm also involved with a lot of
19 different municipalities and other folks
20 handling matters dealing with pollination
21 insects locally.

22 My concern and comments in regards in
23 which to have some things, have you had in the

1 recommendations for the proposed master plan
2 that we're putting together since agriculture
3 is considered to be one of the most important
4 economic forces and means of development in
5 this county and future proposals directed for
6 agrotourism, ecotourism, wineries and other
7 aspects that have been stated in the report in
8 regards to agriculture?

9 I want to call to everyone's attention
10 that in order for us to continue to be not only
11 a leader here in New York State in stone proof
12 productions but also a lot of other fruits and
13 field crop production and acknowledge the fact
14 that we routinely rank somewhere between nine
15 and eleven nationally. New York State is a
16 honey producer, a major honey producing state
17 that thereby inclusion in this comprehensive
18 report referenced to and agriculture is a
19 important means of agriculture here in Niagara
20 County and for that to be possible standard to
21 continue since we have long legacies of
22 knowledge, years being successful of doing this
23 in the county as well as in New York State,

1 that consideration be given to the performance
2 of pollinating insect populations, where those
3 reside, the critical habitats they need for
4 nesting and forage areas and bait. Without
5 that we can't be successful in terms of fruit
6 production and there is absolutely no reference
7 to this in our comprehensive plan at this point
8 in time.

9 I have been through chapter by chapter,
10 particularly in chapter 2, 3 and 5 , all the
11 environmental portions and have put together
12 and in the process of finishing up a written
13 statement hoping to address those concerns
14 because when we talk environmental impact and
15 the fact that over fifty percent of our soils
16 and I believe that was one of the major
17 determinants followed with agriculture and
18 environmental impact concerns that we look at
19 also comprehensive assessment of the vegetation
20 that we have in the county, where it's located
21 and what eco systems are involved because we
22 just forget about all of this it's going to
23 have major economic impact for agriculture if

1 we disregard. So, I think it's very important
2 to go back and take a look at whether those
3 issues have been addressed adequately in the
4 proposed comments and answers.

5 I have some ideas of that since I'm out in
6 this environment everyday throughout the county
7 and throughout many other counties throughout
8 the state. I would like us to be a county that
9 is, takes this very seriously and becomes an
10 industry leader.

11 There are guidelines that we can be
12 following that other states, particularly out
13 in the Pacific Northwest are utilization that
14 put in their comprehensive land use planning
15 process and actually have a number of workable
16 suggestions that state and federal agencies
17 have been involved with for years including at
18 the county level and I think we can be doing
19 the same here and it needs to be included in
20 our plans and that's really my major concern
21 with it that the inclusion of reference to
22 pollination, insects, among bees, honey bees
23 even insect cells. The fact that we have so

1 much area of the county in hydranth and
2 wetlands related soil indicates certain types
3 of vegetation and eco systems and there is
4 really no reason they're in our present plan
5 and we need to be concerned about when we want
6 to develop all of these areas because they're
7 listed in our present report as either vacant
8 lands or open areas and the use of the term
9 green space is often in the report referenced
10 mainly towards recreational activities and golf
11 courses and the like and needs to be more
12 inclusively of these type of eco systems where
13 pollinating insects which leads to the
14 development of continuing successful
15 agriculture in the county.

16 So, I will be submitting a written report
17 before the end of the month and will have a lot
18 more specifically to address specific areas
19 within our present report and I appreciate your
20 consideration of the inclusion of my
21 recommendations.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. UPDEGROVE: Thank you.

1 Any other comments?

2 Again, public comments will continue to be
3 received by the Niagara County Legislature
4 through June 30, 2009. Again, please mail
5 those comments in hard copy to the Clerk of the
6 Legislature and although we have recorded all
7 comments and included those in the record
8 tonight I would certainly urge everyone who has
9 made comments to send a copy of those comments
10 again in hard copy to the Clerk of the
11 Legislature.

12 Anyone, any other comments?

13
14 (No response.)

15
16 MR. UPDEGROVE: In the absence of any
17 other comments we will close the public
18 hearing. Thank you.

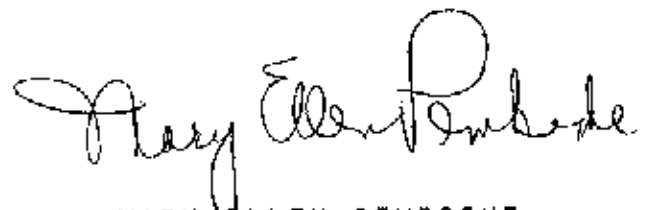
19
20 (Hearing concluded at approximately 7:00P.M.)

21
22 * * * * *

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, MARY ELLEN PEMBROKE, Court Reporter and Notary Public in and for the County of Niagara, New York, do hereby certify that I reported in machine shorthand the testimony in the above-styled cause; and that the foregoing pages were transcribed under my personal supervision and constitute a true record of the testimony in this proceeding.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 19th day of June, 2009.



MARY ELLEN PEMBROKE
Notary Public
State of New York
County of Niagara
Comm. Expires 9/30/10

HARRIS EnvEd

Mary Ellen Harris, PhD

Environmental and Educational Consulting

131 East Avenue, Suite 201
Lockport, NY 14094
Mailing: P.O. Box 852
Lockport, NY 14095-0852
Phone: 716-433-6052
Fax: 716-433-6053
Email: harenved@aol.com

June 26, 2009

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan
Attn: Clerk of the Legislature
Niagara County Legislature
175 Hawley Street
Lockport, NY 14094

RE: Comments on Draft Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

I'm submitting comments as a resident and property owner (104 High St.) and business owner in Lockport, NY. I'm submitting these comments on my business stationery to establish my professional credibility as a local environmental consultant with significant expertise in NEPA/SEQRA. However, no one has paid me to review or to comment on the plan.

I would like to bring your attention to issues regarding your section on "**SEQRA Compliance**" (Chpt. II, pp. 3-4):

1. The statements in the first paragraph on SEQRA compliance are incorrect. (a) The Comprehensive Plan **cannot** serve as a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). A GEIS must be a complete and separate document from any plan. Sections of the Comprehensive Plan can be used for the GEIS, however, such as for "Environmental Setting and Existing Conditions." From my cursory review, I do not think the Comprehensive Plan document produced so far would satisfy the level of detail required in some sections of a GEIS. (b) No further environmental reviews would be required for subsequent site-specific county actions **only if** adequate thresholds, impacts and mitigation measures have been identified in the GEIS. The suitability analyses and maps for development or redevelopment of lands are very general. Actual site studies and further environmental reviews for specific proposed activities will still need to be completed and this should be stated.

2. The SEQRA review process **must be closed out** before the County can legally adopt the Comprehensive Plan. I have reviewed the NYSDEC's Environmental Notice Bulletin and have not seen any recent "Positive Declaration" to prepare a GEIS. If the County does not have a GEIS at this point, I suggest that the proposed deadline of adopting the plan on July 28 cannot be met. I would like to summarize for you the key SEQRA milestones that are required for a GEIS.
 - Positive Declaration—published in the NYSDEC Environmental Notice Bulletin, after which 60 days are allowed for agencies and the public to create draft and final scopes of the GEIS (i.e., a detailed outline of a document and issues that will satisfy SEQRA).
 - Draft GEIS—Once a draft GEIS is completed, the lead agency (the County) has 45 days to decide if the GEIS is ready for public review (internal adequacy determination—does the GEIS include all the topics required by SEQRA and scoped by the agencies and the public?). Once circulated, the public has a minimum of 30 days to review the GEIS and submit comments.
 - Public Hearing—There is usually a public hearing on the GEIS, which cannot be held until 15 days after the Notification of Hearing, and within 60 days after filing the Draft GEIS Notice of Completion in the NYSDEC Environmental Notice Bulletin.
 - Final GEIS—The final GEIS is prepared within 45 days after a hearing, or within 60 days after filing the Draft GEIS Notice of Completion. A Notice of Completion of the Final GEIS must be submitted.
 - Findings—A Findings Statement cannot be filed sooner than 10 days after the Notice of Completion of the Final GEIS, or within 30 days of the filing date.
3. The second paragraph on SEQRA Compliance, which is new since May, describes the preparation of a Full Environmental Assessment Form and basically negates the need for doing a GEIS. This conflicts with the first paragraph, which discusses a GEIS and a Findings Statement. The attached Environmental Assessment Form is blank in the section on "Determination of Significance." This indicates that the County **has not even started** the SEQRA process and **has not yet determined** what level of environmental review is needed. According to the SEQRA Guidelines, 6 NYCRR Part 617, Sect. 617.4, the adoption of a plan that could affect land use and resources is considered a Type 1 action, or an action for which an EIS is probably necessary. Even if the County decides to prepare only a Negative Declaration, there is a 30-day comment period on the Negative Declaration after it is officially and publicly noticed. If the County really intended to adopt a plan by July 28, staff/consultants should have thought about this and started preparing SEQRA compliance items months ago.

The following are issues related to the attached **Full Environmental Assessment Form**:

1. Part 1, Project Information, Description of the Proposed Action—The narrative states that the Plan does not commit the County or any municipality to any action as a result of this plan. This is misleading and highly debatable. However, should the County be really be emphasizing in several places in this EAF that it has produced a comprehensive plan that cost over \$215,000 **that does absolutely nothing?** Please explain this to the taxpayers.
2. Part 1, Project Information, Site Description—Item 2, under specified land uses, the current acreages are given as "NA" (not applicable) and a reference is given to the attachment for land use acreages. However, the land use types and acreages in the attachment **do not match** those listed in this item. A serious attempt must be made to determine the acreages in the County that match the categories, and these acreages should then be put on this list. Further, "after completion" acreages must also be estimated, i.e., should all the guidelines in the plan be followed (including the suitability for development and redevelopment area maps), what will the land uses and natural resource areas in the County look like by 2030? **This is the single-most important item for the environmental review for this plan.** It is the burden of the County to demonstrate that this plan will or will not result in significant land use or resource changes. Simply putting "NA" shows no effort at all in completing this EAF. Further, I have been told several times that this is not a land use plan (if it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, quacks like a duck, maybe it's a duck?). I believe that the plan could result in substantial changes in land use.
3. Part 1, Project Information, Project Description—The County plan does address population changes within the County until the year 2030 and does specify the need for housing, improvements to the highways and transportation facilities, and the need for more County facilities. There are specific County projects identified, such as the \$22 million worth of highway projects listed in Chapter V, Page 35. The County should make some minimal attempt to specifically answer some, if not all, the questions in this section, at least for its own future activities.
4. Part 1, Planning and Zoning—Use of the guidelines in the plan (including the suitability for development and redevelopment area maps), as well as the recommendations made to local governments for subareas within the County, could result in land use changes and also an increased need for community services. This should be admitted somewhere in this section. Again, isn't the whole point of this plan to show the "desired" makeup (population, jobs, services, land uses, and natural resources) of the County in 2030? The entire purpose of the EAF is to find sufficient cause to do a further environmental review, or that further review is not needed.

Recommendations:

1. I strongly urge the County to have an environmental attorney review the situation regarding SEQRA compliance. As I stated at the public hearing on June 16th, the County could easily be sued for adopting a plan without proper SEQRA compliance. By this I mean not following the SEQRA procedures, as well as an inadequate substance in the environmental review.
2. I suggest that you contact staff from other New York counties who have recently adopted comprehensive plans. Establish what levels of SEQRA compliance were completed in adoption of their plans. Perhaps you can find a good example to follow. Also, consult with the NYSDEC SEQR department staff.
3. Put the burden of this issue on your consultants—get a written statement from your consultants on SEQRA compliance in relation to this plan and make the consultants verify the adequacy of the environmental review documents they prepare **before** the plan is adopted. When it comes right down to it, William L. Ross (who signs and certifies the SEQRA documents for the Lead Agency) will be held solely responsible for any improprieties unless the role of the consultants is clearly established.
4. I recommend that the adoption of the plan be delayed to a date beyond July 28. The County has initiated the SEQRA process too late, even for processing a Negative Declaration. Should a GEIS be deemed necessary, six or more months would be needed.

Yours truly,

Mary Ellen Harris

Mary Ellen Harris, PhD
Principal, Harris EnvEd

CC: Benjamin J. Bidell
Gregory Lewis



*Environment is around us.
Education is within us.™*

03 JUN 98 10:10:15
HARRIS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

5566 Irish Road
North Tonawanda, NY 14120
716-625-9322
June 29, 2009

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan
Attn: Clerk of the Legislature
Niagara County Legislature
175 Hawley Street
Lockport, NY 14094

RE: Comments on the Draft Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

As a long-time resident and property owner (5566 Irish Road - Pendleton), a farmer/apiculture (Hens Honey Bee Farm), and a tenured outdoor educator, I serve as a "Bee Specialist" (volunteer basis) for Cornell Cooperative Extension - Niagara County and other counties/CCE Units located here in Western New York providing education to the public, growers, and beekeepers and assistance with swarm collection & relocation, and related issues pertaining to pollinating insects (especially honey bees, bumble bees, and native bees). For the past ten years (1999-2009), I was Vice President of Western New York Honey Producers' Association, and am a Pride of New York Honey Producer of Raw Organic NYS Native Wildflower & Tree Varietal Honey (for the past 20 years), and a member of both New York State Farm Bureau and the Niagara County Farm Bureau. I am requesting that the enclosed comments be included in the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan:

General Comments:

In my professional opinion, the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is incomplete as stated (5/2009 draft and revised 6/2009 draft); the proposed Plan inadequately addresses/represents agriculture (in description/scope/economic impact/ agricultural resource inventory/acreage) as contained here in Niagara County, and it provides an incomplete picture of the importance agriculture contributes to the local economy here within Niagara County, and to the rest of New York State. For some unknown reason, apiculture was omitted in both Plan drafts. Apiculture (bees, honey production, and pollination) is essential for continued agricultural economic success (especially fruit, field crops, and livestock forage) in Niagara County. Apiculture occurs throughout the majority of the County - in both agricultural districts and significant acreage outside of the agricultural lands listed in the Plan. Apiculture and pollinating insects are found throughout the diverse ecosystems associated with wetlands, hydric soils, and associated vegetation, drainage basins for the Niagara River, Lake Ontario, the Tonawanda Creek and Erie Canal and other waterways throughout the County. The majority of Niagara County apiculture (bee forage and nesting habitats) is located on agricultural, vacant, and open space acreage, as well as in areas on/or adjacent to significant bird and wildlife areas of concern, Native American Reservations, areas including emergent/pioneer vegetation growth associated with forest ecosystems, and pastures. It should also be noted that New York State consistently ranks 9-11th nationally for honey production, and the pollination provided by apiculture and native pollinating insects contribute significantly to the Niagara County's agricultural economic success (apiculture, dairy, fruit, field crops, equine, and other types of agriculture). It is critical that Niagara County apiculture be included in the proposed Plan, and that its agricultural impacts (honey production, bees, pollination, ecosystem/habitats & land use/acreage) be included in both the agricultural and environmental resource inventories' portion of the Plan.

The Niagara County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (August 1999) is due to be updated sometime within the next year. I am requesting that Apiculture be included, and I am willing to volunteer to provide assistance to the Ag and Farmland Protection Board when the review and update of the 2009 Plan begins. A proper assessment of Niagara County Agricultural and Environmental Resource Inventories needs to be completed in order for an accurate report of Niagara County Agricultural

NIAGARA COUNTY
LEGISLATURE

09 JUN 30 PM 4:06

activities, economic impacts, acreage used, which categories of land use, and the associated ecosystems and habitats to be maintained/enhanced/ and/or preserved so as to ensure insect pollination is available for continued agricultural economic success here in Niagara County.

Secondly, the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is incomplete as stated (5/2009 draft and revised 6/2009 draft) as it inadequately addresses and represents the Environmental Setting and Overview of Existing Conditions, Land Use and Environment, Inventories of Natural Resources, and Incomplete Listings of Ecosystems /Habitats/and Associated Flora & Fauna. The proposed Plan incompletely and inaccurately describes Agricultural, Vacant, and Open Space Lands as having little to no present significance except as areas in need of future development. This assumption and description is incorrect - the majority of Niagara County vacant and open space lands are presently being used for agricultural purposes including apiculture. These land categories provide the necessary habitats and ecosystems that support the production of pollinator insect forage (pollen and nectar) and nesting sites/bee colony locations. These are the pollinating insects that make it possible for Niagara County agriculture (fruit, field crops, dairy, livestock forage, honey production, and pollination) to continue being of best Counties in New York State for agricultural production, and to keep Niagara County's agricultural economy humming (thanks literally to our pollinating insects and their ecosystems). It is vital that pollinator insect (especially honey bee, bumble bee, native bees) habitat and forage, and their ecosystems remain intact and be enhanced, and their contributions and relationships with agriculture here in Niagara County be understood, and reflected in apiculture's inclusion in the Plan; The recognition of the importance of pollinating insects and their needs and activities must be represented in present and future natural resource inventory counts, designations of land use categories and land use decisions pertaining to environmental quality, GEIS and SEQRA reviews, agricultural land use and agricultural economic development plans and activities, the maintenance, preservation and enhancement of pollinating insect ecosystems/habitats pertaining to present and future proposed land development projects here in Niagara County.

Specific Comments:

Enclosed are specific comments and language to be included in the proposed Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan:

Chapter II p.14: Refer to Agricultural Economic Development & Farmland Protection:

Issue: One or more local Towns (ie. Pendleton) may not/did not include agriculture as a category in their local Town Master Plan and farmers may not have been represented/involved in the actual development of the Town Master Plan. In Pendleton, agriculture was omitted and no Agriculture Committee was formed and farmers did not have a role in providing input directly to the Town Master Plan or in the components of the Plan. How many other Niagara County communities did similar actions? Why??? How many farmers were involved in the redistricting of Agricultural Districts and the related decisions, how were the decisions determined - by whom - do the decisions adequately represent the many forms of agriculture practiced here in Niagara County. Why wasn't apiculture represented at any of these Town and/or Agriculture District meetings or decisions about what to include in the each Town and the proposed County Plan.???

Regarding Niagara County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan (8/99) Plan does not presently reflect language (from a previous version that was updated to include language) pertaining to the inclusion of "apiculture" as an agricultural economic activity. Apiculture to include pollination, bees, and honey production. Since the majority of agricultural activities involve the need for insect pollination in order to produce fruits, nuts, seeds, or berries including livestock forage - agriculture requires pollinating insects and apiculture to produce its products for human food and livestock/poultry forage uses.

New York State ranks annually 9-11th nationally for honey production and Niagara County is an important honey producing and pollination County here in New York.

Chapter III Environmental Overview and Setting:

Need to add language to include categories for forestry, open space, critical areas of ecosystems and habitats as they relate to pollinating insects. Niagara County includes several critical floral and faunal ecosystems and habitats vital to the health of pollinating insects especially for honey bees, bumble bees, and native bees. These ecosystems provide both forage (pollen and nectar) and nesting sites for colonies. These insect populations and their health have direct agricultural economic impacts on numerous agricultural activities and local businesses.

For the purposes of the state environmental review processes (ie. SEQRA, there are many more and quite specific categories of environmental importance that should be identified.

Chapter III p. 16:

2) Agricultural Land:

1st paragraph: Needs to include language recognizing the importance of "apiculture" (pollination, bees, and honey production). Niagara County is an important honey-producing County here in New York State. New York State annually ranks 9-11th nationally for honey production. The health of pollinating insect ecosystems and habitats are vital for the continued success of Niagara County agriculture including fruit production, field crops, dairy and livestock forage, honey production, and Pollination.

Chapter III p. 17 & 18: Vacant Land

This land category also includes habitat for pollinating insects including honey bees (forage and colony nesting sites) essential for agricultural success here in Niagara County including fruit production Field crops, dairy and livestock forage, honey production, and pollination.

Chapter V p. 2-3:

2nd paragraph and related:

Needs to include language "apiculture" (pollination, bees, and honey production) as essential agricultural activity to be maintained and enhanced as part of efforts directed towards agricultural economic development.

Loss of farmlands and vacant lands, and continued zoning law and regulation changes, and land use planning decisions for increased residential, commercial, and industrial development purposes adversely impacts pollinating insect (honey bees, bumble bees, native bees) health, forage, and nesting colony sites and their ecosystems/habitats - will result in adverse consequences for Niagara County agricultural economic success (especially as it relates to apiculture, fruit, field crops, and livestock forage).

Chapter V p. 5:

Paragraph 4:

Needs to include language "apiculture" as a essential contributor activity to Niagara County agriculture economic development. Apiculture provides pollination, bees, and honey production. Niagara County apiculture impacts directly the success of other types of agriculture (fruit production, field crops, livestock forage, as well as pollination and honey production). It is absolutely essential that Niagara County natural resources, critical habitats and ecosystems be maintained and enhanced for pollinating insects (especially honey bees, bumble bees, and native bees) so that agriculture can continue to be productive and successful.

Chapter V p. 7-14 Issues and Opportunities

For each sub grouping/district:

There needs to be language recognizing the importance of agriculture and apiculture:

Specifically, language discussing the importance of maintaining and enhancing pollinating insect Ecosystems and habitats for honey bees, bumble bees, and native bees and their forage and colony Nesting sites. Failure to address these concerns will likely result in adverse health consequences To these insect populations, and will have detrimental effects on local agriculture success and Economic success.

Chapter VI p. 10:

Add language: Apiculture and the maintenance and enhancement of pollinating ecosystems/habitats Are vital to the continued success of agriculture, and the development of agritourism opportunities. Environmental quality and sustainability play a critical role in determining the health of and the Ability of local agricultural to be a leader here in Nee York State, and beyond.

Finally, it is absolutely essential that Niagara County natural resources be maintained and enhanced To ensure the continued health of pollinating insects and their ecosystems/habitats, that the health And character of vacant lands, agricultural lands, and open spaces be preserved where possible, and Priority be given to the importance of pollinating insect health when decisions be undertaken regarding Future land use decisions and proposed dvelopments here in Niagara County if Niagara County Is to remain an agricultural industry leader for fruit and honey production, livestock and dairy , and Pollination.

If I can be of further assistance regarding apiculture issues , agriculture, and land use issues, Please don't hesitate to contact me at (716) 625-9322.



Geri Hens
Hens Honey Bee Farm



Raw Organic NYS Native Honey
-Wildflower & Tree Varietals

Geri Hens
Hens Honey Bee Farm
(716) 625-9322
439-0870

Organic Apiculture Consulting
Educational Presentations
Swarm Collection



COMMENTS ON *NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2030*
FROM NIAGARA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
JUNE 30, 2009

Chapter VIII

Page 2

These data are 3 years old already. Is there no way to get more updated information than the 2006-07 school year?

Page 3

Why no enrollment for schools on bottom of Table VIII-3? There is no mention in text for the N/A notation in the chart.

The chart shows the enrollment for 2006-07 but not the capacity. How do we know how “full” these schools are?

Page 4

Line 5 in first paragraph should say State University of New York at Buffalo, not in Buffalo.

Please revise the NCCC paragraph as follows:

Niagara County Community College

Niagara County Community College was established in the city of Niagara Falls in 1962 as a locally sponsored college supervised by the State University of New York. The present campus was constructed in 1973 on 267 acres located in Sanborn, at Saunders Settlement Road (Route 31) and Townline Road (Route 429) in the Town of Cambria. The College offers over 60 programs of study and includes nine buildings including administration, a student center, a library, two gyms, and several academic buildings including a science center and fine arts, humanities and social sciences, and business classrooms. In August 2008, Village College Suites was opened to provide on-campus housing for approximately 300 students. Total full and part-time enrollment at the College is approximately 7,000 students in credit programs, and another 7,500 students enrolled in workforce and community education programs.

Page 5

Please revise the NCCC paragraph as follows:

Niagara County Community College

NCCC’s Division of Workforce and Community Development provides an umbrella of educational services for youth and adults in the Niagara region. Available in a variety of formats, programs include: foundational instruction, life skills, employment readiness,

vocational training, career development, professional preparation, testing, and technology education.

Workshops, as well as short-term and long-term training sessions, assist students in developing computer skills and directs students to entry into a certificate or a college program; immediate employment; or immediate employment with continuing education to obtain a certificate or an academic degree. The focus is determined by student need and desire.

The department's case manager works closely with students to identify their interests and skill levels, appropriate options, and available resources for funding. As students become involved in programs, the case manager will continue to help students throughout their experience.

Collaboration with several government and neighborhood organizations means students get more resources to help achieve lifelong goals. The department is also one of the WorkSource One-Stop Partners, a cluster of more than 10 groups working together to provide coordinated delivery of employment services to businesses and job seekers.

At the Career Education and Counseling Center, based at the Trott ACCESS Center, staff members focus on foundational instruction and job-readiness training. Preparation and testing for TABE and COMPASS are also provided.

NCCC participates in the College Acceleration Program (CAP) which is an articulation between NCCC and area high schools that provides over 1,200 students with the opportunity to obtain college credit while still enrolled in high school. Seniors and highly qualified juniors are eligible to be part of the program. The college-level courses are taught at the high school. By taking advantage of this opportunity, students are able to gain college credit while in high school and provide for a smoother transition to college.

Workforce and Community Development programs and services are always being evaluated and updated to provide students with the current information and skills students need to discover and enjoy lifelong learning. In addition to the Sanborn campus, offices are located at NCCC's Niagara Falls Extension Site, and at the Corporate and Business Development Center in Lockport, N.Y.

Page 10

"Federal" is missing from the legend for Figure VIII-3.

Page 11

Line 4 in paragraph 2: There is a missing end parenthesis around "\$24.7 million".

Page 24

Apparently none of these are being funded through ARRA unless through county support. Should this list still remain in the report?

SEQRA *Documentation*

APPENDIX F

NIAGARA COUNTY LEGISLATURE

FROM: Economic Development Committee

DATE: 7/28/09

RESOLUTION # ED-020-09

APPROVED

NIAGARA CO. ATTORNEY

By _____

COMMITTEE ACTION

ED - 7/8/09

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Approved: Ayes_____ Abs._____ Noes_____

Rejected: Ayes_____ Abs._____ Noes_____

Referred: _____

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2030

WHEREAS, in 2006, the Niagara County Legislature determined that it would be in the best interests of Niagara County to engage in long-range planning, and

WHEREAS, ED-034-06 accepted a \$25,000 Technical Assistance Grant from the New York State Office for Small Cities, now the New York State Office of Community Renewal, for funding to support the development of a long-range plan, and

WHEREAS, ED-019-07 accepted a \$136,960 Quality Communities Grant from the New York State Department of State for additional funding to support the development of a long-range plan, and

WHEREAS, in 2007, Niagara County began the process of long-range planning by contracting consultants Clough Harbour & Associates to facilitate the planning process and to prepare a comprehensive plan for Niagara County in conjunction with sub-consultants Basile Baumann Prost Cole & Associates and Community Oriented Geography, and

WHEREAS, the planning process was designed to address five overarching goals: encouraging desirable and appropriate growth and development; strengthening the local economy; improving delivery of services; prioritizing and coordinating capital improvements; and improving the quality of life for Niagara County residents, and

WHEREAS, the planning process focused on five key areas, which are included as chapters in the plan: land use and environment; economic development; county services, facilities, and infrastructure; education; and public health and safety, and

WHEREAS, the planning process included significant public participation and community involvement through eight Plan Steering Committee meetings and four public information meetings held in 2008 and six community outreach meetings held in 2009, which were attended by a broad cross-section of stakeholders including local municipalities, citizens, public agencies, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and others, and

WHEREAS, Clough Harbour & Associates completed a final draft comprehensive plan for Niagara County in May 2009, entitled the *Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030* to reflect the importance of community involvement in the planning process and to reflect the intended useful life of the document, and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act, 6 NYCRR 617.4, adoption of the plan is a Type I action requiring completion of a Full Environmental Assessment Form as part of the environmental review process required for the project, and

WHEREAS, following notification to potentially involved agencies and interested parties, Niagara County designated itself lead agency for the environmental review process in accordance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act, 6 NYCRR 617.6, and

WHEREAS, following preparation of a Full Environmental Assessment Form Parts 1 and 2, Niagara County issued a Negative Declaration in accordance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act, 6 NYCRR 617.7, concluding that the plan will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts and a generic environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared, notice of which was submitted to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Environmental Notice Bulletin, and

WHEREAS, the Negative Declaration issued by Niagara County was based, in part, on the fact that the plan, which is intended as a guidance document, provides a series of recommendations only that Niagara County can use to establish policies towards achieving the goals and objectives identified in the document and does not commit Niagara County, any municipality within Niagara County, or any other stakeholder to undertake, approve, or fund any specific action or actions including projects identified in the plan, and

WHEREAS, issuance of the Negative Declaration by Niagara County was also based, in part, on the fact that the plan, which addresses a range of topics including land use, is not intended as a land use plan given that Niagara County does not have regulatory authority over land use controls, which is delegated to local municipalities under New York State's Municipal Home Rule Law, and

WHEREAS, Niagara County recognizes that any actions, policies, or projects, especially site-specific projects, carried out in connection with the plan will be subject to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act prior to implementation, and

WHEREAS, the plan includes recommendations for updating the document, including minor updates at least every 3 years and major updates at least every 5 years, to ensure that the plan is flexible, relevant, and accurately reflects Niagara County's priorities, and

WHEREAS, Niagara County referred the plan to the local legislative bodies and planning boards of each municipality within Niagara County as well as to the Niagara County Planning Board for review and recommendation in accordance with New York State General Municipal Law Article 12-B Section 239-d(5), and

WHEREAS, on June 15, 2009, the Niagara County Planning Board, having reviewed the plan, unanimously recommended that it be adopted by the Niagara County Legislature, and

WHEREAS, Niagara County held a public hearing on June 16, 2009 to hear comments on the plan in accordance with New York State General Municipal Law Article 12-B Section 239-d(6), and

WHEREAS, Niagara County held a 30-day public comment period between June 1, 2009 and June 30, 2009 to receive written comments on the plan, and

WHEREAS, all comments received via the public hearing and 30-day public comment period have been incorporated into the plan with all other comments received over the course of the planning process, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Niagara County Legislature, recognizing that Niagara County has established and followed an open, inclusive, and comprehensive planning process that satisfies all statutory requirements including those set forth by the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act and New York State General Municipal Law, fully supports and hereby formally adopts the *Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030* and all attachments as the official comprehensive plan for Niagara County, and be it further

RESOLVED, that all Niagara County Departments be instructed to consider the recommendations of the plan in their planning and decision-making processes and, under the direction of the Niagara County Manager, assist in implementing the plan by carrying out all appropriate actions necessary to facilitate its recommendations, including any further strategic planning or environmental review necessary, and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of the plan be filed in the office of the Niagara County Clerk as well as with the Niagara County Planning Board, the New York State Secretary of State, and the clerk of each municipality in Niagara County in accordance with New York State General Municipal Law Article 12-B Section 239-d(8).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

NIAGARA COUNTY LEGISLATURE

FROM: Economic Development Committee DATE: 05/19/2009 RESOLUTION # ED-017-09

APPROVED BY
CO. ATTORNEY

REVIEWED BY
CO. MANAGER

COMMITTEE ACTION
ED - 05/13/09

LEGISLATIVE ACTION
Approved: Ayes _____ Abs. _____ Noes 0
Rejected: Ayes _____ Abs. _____ Noes _____
Referred: _____

SETTING A PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD AND PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE DRAFT NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, in 2006, the Niagara County Legislature determined that it would be in the best interests of Niagara County to engage in long-range strategic planning, and

WHEREAS, the purpose of public sector planning is to establish long-term goals, annual objectives and detailed actions/strategies that address issues related to performance, productivity, community and personal well-being and required statutory services, and

WHEREAS, ED-034-06 accepted a \$25,000 Technical Assistance Grant from the New York State Office for Small Cities for funding to support the development of a long-range plan, and

WHEREAS, ED-019-07 accepted a \$136,960 Quality Communities Grant from the New York State Department of State for funding to support the development of a long-range plan, and

WHEREAS, in 2007, Niagara County began the process of long-range planning by contracting Clough Harbour & Associates LLP to prepare a comprehensive plan for Niagara County with the participation of Niagara County communities and other stakeholders, and

WHEREAS, Clough Harbour & Associates has now completed a draft Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan and will prepare an Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) for the project in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and

WHEREAS, Niagara County will serve as the lead agency for the EAF in accordance with SEQRA, and

WHEREAS, Niagara County desires input and comment from Niagara County residents on the draft Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan and associated EAF, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that Niagara County shall, in accordance with SEQRA, accept public comments on the draft Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan and associated EAF for a period of 30 days, to begin June 1, 2009 and end June 30, 2009, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Niagara County Legislature shall, in accordance with SEQRA, conduct a public hearing on the draft Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan and associated EAF at the Legislative Chambers, Niagara County Courthouse, Lockport, New York, on Tuesday, June 16, 2009 at 6:30 p.m., and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Legislature, shall post a notice in advance of the 30-day public comment period announcing both the comment period and public hearing, and indicating that the draft plan is available in all of the public libraries in Niagara County as well as online at www.niagaracounty.com /

MapsReports.asp, which shall be posted upon the bulletin boards in the Courthouse at Lockport, the Civil Building at Niagara Falls and the County Building at North Tonawanda, and shall publish such notice in the Lockport Union Sun and Journal, the Niagara Gazette and the Tonawanda News. The notice shall also be given in writing to each municipal elected official in Niagara County and in all public libraries in Niagara County.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

NIAGARA COUNTY, NEW YORK REQUEST FOR LEAD AGENCY STATUS AND REQUEST FOR MUNICIPAL REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION ON THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2030

MAY 22, 2009

By this letter, Niagara County requests Lead Agency Status as petitioner for the adoption of the proposed Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030 for Niagara County, New York, hereafter referred to as “the Plan.” Please advise whether your agency agrees with Niagara County acting as Lead Agency by completing and returning the attached consent form. Consent forms must be postmarked no later than June 30, 2009 and should be mailed in hard copy to the following address:

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan
Attn: Clerk of the Legislature
Niagara County Legislature
175 Hawley Street
Lockport, NY 14094

Please find enclosed in connection with the Plan a complete State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Full Environmental Assessment Form Part 1 and Part 2 with attachment as well as a copy of the Plan on CD. This project is a Type I action pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617 of the Implementing Regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the Environmental Conservation Law. The project involves preparation of Niagara County’s first-ever comprehensive plan and the proposed action is the adoption of the Plan by the Niagara County Legislature.

The Plan does not commit Niagara County or any municipality within Niagara County or any other stakeholder to undertake, approve, or fund any specific action or actions at this time. The Plan provides a series of recommendations only, which can be used by the County to establish policies towards achieving goals and objectives identified in the Plan. As such, a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) is not required for this project. However, once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies, and projects, especially site-specific projects, considered by Niagara County may require additional SEQRA review at that time.

New York State General Municipal Law Article 12-B Section 239-d(5) requires the Niagara County Legislature to refer the Plan to the county planning board as well as to the planning boards and legislative bodies of each municipality within Niagara County for review and recommendation prior to the Plan’s adoption. Please consider this letter a formal request for review and recommendation on the Plan by the planning board and legislative body of your municipality. Recommendations must be postmarked no later than June 30, 2009 and should be mailed in hard copy to the address above.

Niagara County also invites your participation in the environmental review process as an involved agency or interested party. Written comments on the Plan will be received and considered by Niagara County between June 1, 2009 and June 30, 2009 as part of a 30-day public comment period. Comments on the Plan must be postmarked no later than June 30, 2009 and should be mailed in hard copy to the address above. Please be sure to differentiate between comments and recommendations, per the previous paragraph. The Niagara County Legislature will also hold a public hearing on the Plan on June 16, 2009 at 6:30 pm in the Niagara County Courthouse Legislative Chambers. A list of involved agencies/interested parties is attached along with the notice of public comment period and notice of public hearing.

If you have any questions about the environmental review or municipal review/recommendation process, please contact Ben Bidell, Niagara County Senior Planner, at (716) 278-8756. Thank you.



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

INVOLVED AGENCIES AND INTERESTED PARTIES CONTACT LIST

Environmental Notice Bulletin
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway, 4th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-1750

NYS Department of State
Quality Communities Program
99 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12231

City of Lockport Mayor and Common Council
Municipal Building
One Locks Plaza
Lockport, NY 14094

City of Niagara Falls Mayor and City Council
City Hall
745 Main Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14302

City of North Tonawanda Mayor and Common Council
City Hall
216 Payne Avenue
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Town of Cambria Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
4160 Upper Mountain Road
Sanborn, NY 14132

Town of Hartland Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
8942 Ridge Road
Gasport, NY 14067

Town of Lewiston Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
1375 Ridge Road, P.O. Box 330
Lewiston, NY 14092

Town of Lockport Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
6560 Dysinger Road
Lockport, NY 14094-7970

Town of Newfane Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
2896 Transit Road
Newfane, NY 14108-9705

Town of Niagara Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
7105 Lockport Road
Niagara Falls, NY 14305-3598

Niagara County Planning Board
6311 Inducon Corporate Drive
Sanborn, NY 14132

NYS Housing Trust Fund Corporation
Office of Community Renewal
Hampton Plaza, 38-40 State Street, 9th Floor
Albany, NY 12207

City of Lockport Planning Board
Municipal Building
One Locks Plaza
Lockport, NY 14094

City of Niagara Falls Planning Board
City Hall
745 Main Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14302

City of North Tonawanda Planning Board
City Hall
216 Payne Avenue
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Town of Cambria Planning Board
Town Hall
4160 Upper Mountain Road
Sanborn, NY 14132

Town of Hartland Planning Board
Town Hall
8942 Ridge Road
Gasport, NY 14067

Town of Lewiston Planning Board
Town Hall
1375 Ridge Road, P.O. Box 330
Lewiston, NY 14092

Town of Lockport Planning Board
Town Hall
6560 Dysinger Road
Lockport, NY 14094-7970

Town of Newfane Planning Board
Town Hall
2896 Transit Road
Newfane, NY 14108-9705

Town of Niagara Planning Board
Town Hall
7105 Lockport Road
Niagara Falls, NY 14305-3598



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

Town of Pendleton Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
6570 Campbell Boulevard
Lockport, NY 14094-9229

Town of Porter Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
3265 Creek Road
Youngstown, NY 14174

Town of Royalton Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
5316 Royalton Center Road
Middleport, NY 14105

Town of Somerset Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
8700 Haight Road, P.O. Box 368
Barker, NY 14012-0368

Town of Wheatfield Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
2800 Church Road
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Town of Wilson Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
375 Lake Street, P.O. Box 537
Wilson, NY 14172-0537

Village of Barker Mayor and Village Board
Village Hall
8708 Main Street, P.O. Box 298
Barker, NY 14012-0298

Village of Lewiston Mayor and Village Board
Village Hall
145 N. 4th Street, P.O. Box 325
Lewiston, NY 14092

Village of Middleport Mayor and Village Board
Village Hall
24 Main Street, P.O. Box 186
Middleport, NY 14105-0186

Village of Wilson Mayor and Village Board
Village Hall
375 Lake Street, P.O. Box 596
Wilson, NY 14172-0596

Village of Youngstown Mayor and Village Board
Village Hall
240 Lockport Street, P.O. Box 168
Youngstown, NY 14174

Town of Pendleton Planning Board
Town Hall
6570 Campbell Boulevard
Lockport, NY 14094-9229

Town of Porter Planning Board
Town Hall
3265 Creek Road
Youngstown, NY 14174

Town of Royalton Planning Board
Town Hall
5316 Royalton Center Road
Middleport, NY 14105

Town of Somerset Planning Board
Town Hall
8700 Haight Road, P.O. Box 368
Barker, NY 14012-0368

Town of Wheatfield Planning Board
Town Hall
2800 Church Road
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Town of Wilson Planning Board
Town Hall
375 Lake Street, P.O. Box 537
Wilson, NY 14172-0537

Village of Barker Planning Board
Village Hall
8708 Main Street, P.O. Box 298
Barker, NY 14012-0298

Village of Lewiston Planning Board
Village Hall
145 N. 4th Street, P.O. Box 325
Lewiston, NY 14092

Village of Middleport Planning Board
Village Hall
24 Main Street, P.O. Box 186
Middleport, NY 14105-0186

Village of Wilson Planning Board
Village Hall
375 Lake Street, P.O. Box 596
Wilson, NY 14172-0596

Village of Youngstown Planning Board
Village Hall
240 Lockport Street, P.O. Box 168
Youngstown, NY 14174



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW LEAD AGENCY STATUS CONSENT FORM

This notice is directed to you in accordance with State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) procedures. Please complete and submit the attached form to Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan, Attn: Clerk of the Legislature, Niagara County Legislature, 175 Hawley Street, Lockport, NY 14094. This form must be postmarked no later than June 30, 2009. Additional sheets may be used if necessary. Enclosed you will find a complete Full Environmental Assessment Form Part 1 and Part 2 with attachment for review.

1. Your agency's potential jurisdiction in the proposed action.

2. Your agency's concurrence that Niagara County assume the responsibility of lead agency.

3. Issues that your agency believes should be addressed.

Name of Involved Agency

Name and Title of Responsible Official

Signature of Responsible Official

Date of Signature



**NIAGARA COUNTY
LEGISLATURE**
NIAGARA COUNTY COURTHOUSE
LOCKPORT, NEW YORK 14094-2740
• (716) 439-7000 • Fax: (716) 439-7124

**WILLIAM L. ROSS
CHAIRMAN**

**MARY JO TAMBURLIN
CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE**

MAY 22, 2009

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Niagara County will conduct a public comment period for a period of 30 days, to begin June 1, 2009 and end June 30, 2009 on the draft Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan. The draft plan is available in all of the public libraries in Niagara County as well as online at [.niagaracounty.com/mapsreports.asp](http://niagaracounty.com/mapsreports.asp). Please address all comments to the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan Attn: Clerk of the Legislature, Niagara County Legislature, 175 Hawley Street, Lockport, New York 14094.

Mary Jo Tamburlin, Clerk
Niagara County Legislature



**NIAGARA COUNTY
LEGISLATURE**
NIAGARA COUNTY COURTHOUSE
LOCKPORT, NEW YORK 14094-2740
• (716) 439-7000 • Fax: (716) 439-7124

**WILLIAM L. ROSS
CHAIRMAN**

**MARY JO TAMBURLIN
CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE**

MAY 22, 2009

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that in accordance with General Municipal Law Article 12-B Section 239-d(6) the Niagara County Legislature will conduct a public hearing on the 16th day of June, 2009 at 6:30 PM in the Legislature Chambers, Courthouse, 175 Hawley St., Lockport, New York, for the purpose of hearing public comments on the draft Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan. The draft plan is available in all of the public libraries in Niagara County and online at .niagaracounty.com/mapsreports.asp.

Mary Jo Tamburlin, Clerk
Niagara County Legislature



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW LEAD AGENCY STATUS CONSENT FORM

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1. Your agency's potential jurisdiction in the proposed action.

Village Government within County

2. Your agency's concurrence that Niagara County assume the responsibility of lead agency.

Niagara County is lead agency

3. Issues that your agency believes should be addressed.

N/A

Name of Involved Agency

Village of Lewiston

Name and Title of Responsible Official

Mayor

Signature of Responsible Official

[Signature]

Date of Signature

5/29/09



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW LEAD AGENCY STATUS CONSENT FORM

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1. Your agency's potential jurisdiction in the proposed action.

City of Lockport

2. Your agency's concurrence that Niagara County assume the responsibility of lead agency.

3. Issues that your agency believes should be addressed.

Name of Involved Agency

City of Lockport

Name and Title of Responsible Official

Michael W. Tucker, Mayor

Signature of Responsible Official

Date of Signature

June 2, 2009



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW LEAD AGENCY STATUS CONSENT FORM

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1. Your agency's potential jurisdiction in the proposed action.

The Town of Porter

2. Your agency's concurrence that Niagara County assume the responsibility of lead agency.

The Town of Porter totally agrees that Niagara
County should be the lead agency.

3. Issues that your agency believes should be addressed.

Name of Involved Agency

The Town of Porter

Name and Title of Responsible Official

MERTON K. WIEPERT SUPERVISOR

Signature of Responsible Official

Merton K. Wiepert

Date of Signature

6-209



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW LEAD AGENCY STATUS CONSENT FORM

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1. Your agency's potential jurisdiction in the proposed action.

2. Your agency's concurrence that Niagara County assume the responsibility of lead agency.

We have no issues with Niagara County assuming the responsibility
of lead agency.

3. Issues that your agency believes should be addressed.

Name of Involved Agency

Town of Royalton Supervisor

Name and Title of Responsible Official

Richard J. Lang

Signature of Responsible Official

Richard J. Lang

Date of Signature

6-3-09



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW LEAD AGENCY STATUS CONSENT FORM

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1. Your agency's potential jurisdiction in the proposed action.

Town of Somerset

2. Your agency's concurrence that Niagara County assume the responsibility of lead agency.

The Town of Somerset concurs with Niagara County assuming
lead agency.

3. Issues that your agency believes should be addressed.

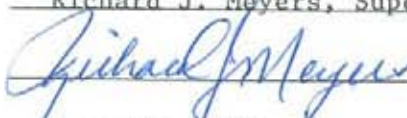
Name of Involved Agency

Town of Somerset

Name and Title of Responsible Official

Richard J. Meyers, Supervisor

Signature of Responsible Official



Date of Signature

June 18, 2009



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW LEAD AGENCY STATUS CONSENT FORM

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1. Your agency's potential jurisdiction in the proposed action.

Town of Hartland

2. Your agency's concurrence that Niagara County assume the responsibility of lead agency.

Town of Hartland has a comprehensive plan and does not
object to Niagara County taking lead responsibility in the
overall plan

3. Issues that your agency believes should be addressed.

Development of jobs - & increase in Tax base
Commercial site development & , Wine trail developments
recreational tourism

Name of Involved Agency

Town of Hartland

Name and Title of Responsible Official

Michael A. Hartman Code Enforcement

Signature of Responsible Official

Michael A. Hartman

Date of Signature

6-25-09



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW LEAD AGENCY STATUS CONSENT FORM

This notice is directed to you in accordance with State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) procedures. Please complete and submit the attached form to Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan, Attn: Clerk of the Legislature, Niagara County Legislature, 175 Hawley Street., Lockport, NY 14094. This form must be postmarked no later than June 30, 2009. Additional sheets may be used if necessary. Enclosed you will find a complete Full Environmental Assessment Form Part 1 and Part 2 with attachment for review.

1. Your agency's potential jurisdiction in the proposed action.

Town of Lewiston, New York

2. Your agency's concurrence that Niagara County assume the responsibility of lead agency.

**Motion made on June 22, 2009, that Niagara County is here by
authorized to be the Lead Agency. Motion seconded and carried
unanimously.**

3. Issues that your agency believes should be addressed.

n/a

Name of Involved Agency

Town of Lewiston

Name and Title of Responsible Official

Fred M. Newlin, Supervisor

Signature of Responsible Official

Date of Signature

June 25, 2009

RESOLUTION 2009 - 4

**TOWN OF LEWISTON
TOWN BOARD**

**Town Hall
1375 Ridge Road, Lewiston, New York**

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF LEWISTON TOWN BOARD
JUNE 22, 2009**

**Whereas, the Lewiston Town Board meeting on June 22, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at
1375 Ridge Road, Lewiston, New York passed the following Resolution;**

**Motion of Councilman Alfonso M. Bax to authorize the County of Niagara to
be the Lead Agency for the Niagara Community Comprehensive Plan.**

**Motion was seconded by Councilman Michael A. Johnson with all Town Board
Members voting in the affirmative.**

Dated: June 22, 2009

**Carol J. Brandon
Lewiston Town Clerk**

SEAL



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

MEMORANDUM

TO: Involved Agencies/Interested Parties

FROM: William L. Ross, Chairman, Niagara County Legislature

DATE: July 6, 2009

RE: Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan - SEQRA Negative Declaration

The Niagara County Legislature has designated itself lead agency pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), 6 NYCRR 617.6 for completion of its comprehensive plan, entitled *Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030*. Adoption of the *Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030* is a Type I action pursuant to SEQRA, 6 NYCRR 617.4. The project involves preparation of the plan and the proposed action is adoption of the plan by the Niagara County Legislature.

After preparing and reviewing Part 1 and Part 2 of the Full Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) for the project, the Niagara County Legislature has determined that adoption of the *Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030* does not constitute an action that will result in any significant adverse environmental impacts and therefore, a generic environmental impact statement (GEIS) does not need to be prepared for purposes of determining impacts resulting from this action.

The Niagara County Legislature, as lead agency, has made a determination of no significance and hereby issues a Negative Declaration pursuant to SEQRA, 6 NYCRR 617.7. Enclosed is a copy of the Negative Declaration and Full Environmental Assessment Form Parts 1 and 2 with Attachment A as well as copy of the SEQRA Environmental Notice Bulletin sent to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The final draft *Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030* is available online via Niagara County's website at [.niagaracounty.com/MapsReports.asp](http://niagaracounty.com/MapsReports.asp).

The Niagara County Legislature acknowledges that the *Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030* is intended as a guidance document that provides a series of recommendations only, which can be used to establish policies towards achieving goals and objectives identified in the plan. The Niagara County Legislature also acknowledges that the plan, which addresses a range of topics including land use, is not intended to be a land use plan given that Niagara County does not have regulatory authority over land use controls, which is delegated to local municipalities under New York State's Municipal Home Rule Law. The Niagara County Legislature further acknowledges that the plan does not commit Niagara County, any municipality within Niagara County, or any other stakeholder to undertake, approve, or fund any specific actions or actions including projects identified in the plan. The Niagara County Legislature also recognizes that any future actions, policies, or projects, especially site-specific projects, carried out in connection with the plan will be subject to SEQRA prior to implementation.

If you have any questions, please direct them to:
Benjamin J. Bidell, Senior Planner/Project Coordinator
Niagara County Department of Economic Development
6311 Inducon Corporate Drive
Sanborn, New York 14132
(716) 278-8756



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

INVOLVED AGENCIES/INTERESTED PARTIES CONTACT LIST

Environmental Notice Bulletin
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway, 4th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-1750

NYS Department of State
Quality Communities Program
99 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12231

City of Lockport Mayor and Common Council
Municipal Building
One Locks Plaza
Lockport, NY 14094

City of Niagara Falls Mayor and City Council
City Hall
745 Main Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14302

City of North Tonawanda Mayor and Common Council
City Hall
216 Payne Avenue
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Town of Cambria Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
4160 Upper Mountain Road
Sanborn, NY 14132

Town of Hartland Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
8942 Ridge Road
Gasport, NY 14067

Town of Lewiston Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
1375 Ridge Road, P.O. Box 330
Lewiston, NY 14092

Town of Lockport Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
6560 Dysinger Road
Lockport, NY 14094-7970

Town of Newfane Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
2896 Transit Road
Newfane, NY 14108-9705

Town of Niagara Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
7105 Lockport Road
Niagara Falls, NY 14305-3598

Niagara County Planning Board
6311 Inducon Corporate Drive
Sanborn, NY 14132

NYS Housing Trust Fund Corporation
Office of Community Renewal
Hampton Plaza, 38-40 State Street, 9th Floor
Albany, NY 12207

City of Lockport Planning Board
Municipal Building
One Locks Plaza
Lockport, NY 14094

City of Niagara Falls Planning Board
City Hall
745 Main Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14302

City of North Tonawanda Planning Board
City Hall
216 Payne Avenue
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Town of Cambria Planning Board
Town Hall
4160 Upper Mountain Road
Sanborn, NY 14132

Town of Hartland Planning Board
Town Hall
8942 Ridge Road
Gasport, NY 14067

Town of Lewiston Planning Board
Town Hall
1375 Ridge Road, P.O. Box 330
Lewiston, NY 14092

Town of Lockport Planning Board
Town Hall
6560 Dysinger Road
Lockport, NY 14094-7970

Town of Newfane Planning Board
Town Hall
2896 Transit Road
Newfane, NY 14108-9705

Town of Niagara Planning Board
Town Hall
7105 Lockport Road
Niagara Falls, NY 14305-3598



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

Town of Pendleton Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
6570 Campbell Boulevard
Lockport, NY 14094-9229

Town of Porter Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
3265 Creek Road
Youngstown, NY 14174

Town of Royalton Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
5316 Royalton Center Road
Middleport, NY 14105

Town of Somerset Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
8700 Haight Road, P.O. Box 368
Barker, NY 14012-0368

Town of Wheatfield Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
2800 Church Road
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Town of Wilson Supervisor and Town Board
Town Hall
375 Lake Street, P.O. Box 537
Wilson, NY 14172-0537

Village of Barker Mayor and Village Board
Village Hall
8708 Main Street, P.O. Box 298
Barker, NY 14012-0298

Village of Lewiston Mayor and Village Board
Village Hall
145 N. 4th Street, P.O. Box 325
Lewiston, NY 14092

Village of Middleport Mayor and Village Board
Village Hall
24 Main Street, P.O. Box 186
Middleport, NY 14105-0186

Village of Wilson Mayor and Village Board
Village Hall
375 Lake Street, P.O. Box 596
Wilson, NY 14172-0596

Village of Youngstown Mayor and Village Board
Village Hall
240 Lockport Street, P.O. Box 168
Youngstown, NY 14174

Town of Pendleton Planning Board
Town Hall
6570 Campbell Boulevard
Lockport, NY 14094-9229

Town of Porter Planning Board
Town Hall
3265 Creek Road
Youngstown, NY 14174

Town of Royalton Planning Board
Town Hall
5316 Royalton Center Road
Middleport, NY 14105

Town of Somerset Planning Board
Town Hall
8700 Haight Road, P.O. Box 368
Barker, NY 14012-0368

Town of Wheatfield Planning Board
Town Hall
2800 Church Road
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Town of Wilson Planning Board
Town Hall
375 Lake Street, P.O. Box 537
Wilson, NY 14172-0537

Village of Barker Planning Board
Village Hall
8708 Main Street, P.O. Box 298
Barker, NY 14012-0298

Village of Lewiston Planning Board
Village Hall
145 N. 4th Street, P.O. Box 325
Lewiston, NY 14092

Village of Middleport Planning Board
Village Hall
24 Main Street, P.O. Box 186
Middleport, NY 14105-0186

Village of Wilson Planning Board
Village Hall
375 Lake Street, P.O. Box 596
Wilson, NY 14172-0596

Village of Youngstown Planning Board
Village Hall
240 Lockport Street, P.O. Box 168
Youngstown, NY 14174

State Environmental Quality Review
NEGATIVE DECLARATION
Notice of Determination of Non-Significance

Project Number

Date: July 6, 2009

This notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

The Niagara County Legislature as lead agency, has determined that the proposed action described below will not have a significant environmental impact and a Draft Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Name of Action:

Adoption of the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030
by the Niagara County Legislature.

SEQR Status: Type 1 ☒
Unlisted ☐

Conditioned Negative Declaration: ☐ Yes
☒ No

Description of Action:

The project involves preparation of a comprehensive plan for Niagara County and adoption of the plan by the Niagara County Legislature. The plan, which is entitled the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030, serves to address five overarching goals: encouraging desirable and appropriate growth and development; strengthening the local economy; improving delivery of services; prioritizing and coordinating capital improvements; and improving the quality of life for Niagara County residents. The plan focuses on five key areas, which are organized as chapters in the plan: land use and environment, which includes transportation; economic development; county services, facilities, and infrastructure; education; and public health and safety. Following an in-depth community outreach and public participation process, Niagara County developed a plan that: provides an overall vision for the County; identifies issues and challenges as well as assets and opportunities at the local, subregional, and county level; establishes goals and objectives for Niagara County, working in collaboration with its communities; and provides strategies and recommendations for achieving stated goals and objectives. The plan is intended as a guidance document to assist decision-making in Niagara County. The final draft Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is available online at www.niagaracounty.com/MapsReports.asp.

Location: (Include street address and the name of the municipality/county. A location map of appropriate scale is also recommended.)

Niagara County (countywide)

Reasons Supporting This Determination:

(See 617.7(a)-(c) for requirements of this determination ; see 617.7(d) for Conditioned Negative Declaration)

Niagara County prepared a Full Environmental Assessment Form Part 1 and Part for the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan leading to a determination that the plan will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts and as such, a generic environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared. Niagara County has issued a Negative Declaration because: the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan is intended as a guidance document, which contains recommendations only that can be used to establish policies towards achieving the goals and objectives identified in the plan; the plan is not intended to be a land use plan as Niagara County does not have regulatory authority over land use controls, which is delegated to local municipalities under New York State's Municipal Home Rule Law; the plan does not commit Niagara County, any municipality within Niagara County, or any other stakeholder to undertake, approve, or fund any specific actions or actions, including projects identified in the plan; and future actions, policies, or projects, especially site-specific projects, carried out in connection with the plan will be subject to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act prior to implementation.

If Conditioned Negative Declaration, provide on attachment the specific mitigation measures imposed, and identify comment period (not less than 30 days from date of publication in the ENB)

For Further Information:

Contact Person: Benjamin J. Bidell, Senior Planner, Niagara County

Address: 6311 Inducon Corporate Drive, Suite One - Sanborn, New York 14132

Telephone Number: (716) 278-8756

For Type 1 Actions and Conditioned Negative Declarations, a Copy of this Notice is sent to:

Chief Executive Officer , Town / City / Village of

Other involved agencies (If any)

Applicant (If any)

Environmental Notice Bulletin, 625 Broadway Albany NY 12233-1750 (Type One Actions only)

The ENB SEQRA Notice Publication Form - Please check all that apply

[Reset Form](#)

Deadline: Notices must be received by 6 p.m. Wednesday to appear in the following Wednesday's ENB

☒ Negative Declaration - Type I

___ Conditioned Negative Declaration

___ Draft Negative Declaration

____ Positive Declaration

_____ with Public Scoping Session

_____ Draft EIS

_____ with Public Hearing

Generic

Supplemental

Final EIS

_____ Generic

Supplemental

DEC Region # 9 County: Niagara Lead Agency: Niagara County Legislature

Project Title: Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030

Brief Project Description: The action involves . . .

The project involves preparation of a comprehensive plan for Niagara County and the proposed action involves adoption of the plan by the Niagara County Legislature. The plan, entitled the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030, serves to address five overarching goals: encouraging desirable and appropriate growth and development; strengthening the local economy; improving delivery of services; prioritizing and coordinating capital improvements; and improving the quality of life for Niagara County residents. The plan focuses on five key areas, which are organized as chapters in the plan: land use and environment, which includes transportation; economic development; county services, facilities, and infrastructure; education; and public health and safety. Following a substantive community outreach and public participation process, Niagara County developed a plan that: provides an overall vision for the County; identifies issues/challenges and assets/opportunities at the local, subregional, and county level; establishes goals and objectives for Niagara County working in collaboration with its communities; and provides strategies and recommendations for achieving goals and objectives. A Full Environmental Assessment Form Part 1 and Part 2 with Attachment have been prepared and have been posted online along with the final draft Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030 and Negative Declaration, which can be found at www.niagaracounty.com/MapsReports.asp. The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030 is intended as a guidance document to assist decision-making in Niagara County.

Project Location (include street address/municipality): Niagara County (countywide)

Contact Person: Benjamin J. Bidell, Senior Planner, Niagara County Department of Economic Development

Address: 6311 Inducon Corporate Drive City: Sanborn State: NY Zip: 14132

Phone: (716) 278-8756 Fax: (716) 278-8757 E-mail: benjamin.bidell@niagaracounty.com

For Draft Negative Declaration / Draft EIS: Public Comment Period ends: / /

For Public Hearing or Scoping Session: Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Time: ____ : ____ am/pm

Location: _____

A hard copy of the DEIS/FEIS is available at the following locations:

The online version of the DEIS/FEIS is available at the following publically accessible web site:

For Conditioned Negative Declaration: In summary, conditions include:

617.20
Appendix A
State Environmental Quality Review
FULL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FORM

Purpose: The full EAF is designed to help applicants and agencies determine, in an orderly manner, whether a project or action may be significant. The question of whether an action may be significant is not always easy to answer. Frequently, there are aspects of a project that are subjective or unmeasurable. It is also understood that those who determine significance may have little or no formal knowledge of the environment or may not be technically expert in environmental analysis. In addition, many who have knowledge in one particular area may not be aware of the broader concerns affecting the question of significance.

The full EAF is intended to provide a method whereby applicants and agencies can be assured that the determination process has been orderly, comprehensive in nature, yet flexible enough to allow introduction of information to fit a project or action.

Full EAF Components: The full EAF is comprised of three parts:

- Part 1:** Provides objective data and information about a given project and its site. By identifying basic project data, it assists a reviewer in the analysis that takes place in Parts 2 and 3.
- Part 2:** Focuses on identifying the range of possible impacts that may occur from a project or action. It provides guidance as to whether an impact is likely to be considered small to moderate or whether it is a potentially-large impact. The form also identifies whether an impact can be mitigated or reduced.
- Part 3:** If any impact in Part 2 is identified as potentially-large, then Part 3 is used to evaluate whether or not the impact is actually important.

THIS AREA FOR LEAD AGENCY USE ONLY

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE -- Type 1 and Unlisted Actions

Identify the Portions of EAF completed for this project:



Part 1



Part 2



Part 3

Upon review of the information recorded on this EAF (Parts 1 and 2 and 3 if appropriate), and any other supporting information, and considering both the magnitude and importance of each impact, it is reasonably determined by the lead agency that:

- ☒ A. The project will not result in any large and important impact(s) and, therefore, is one which **will not** have a significant impact on the environment, therefore **a negative declaration will be prepared.**
- ☐ B. Although the project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect for this Unlisted Action because the mitigation measures described in PART 3 have been required, therefore **a CONDITIONED negative declaration will be prepared.***
- ☐ C. The project may result in one or more large and important impacts that may have a significant impact on the environment, therefore **a positive declaration will be prepared.**

*A Conditioned Negative Declaration is only valid for Unlisted Actions

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030

Name of Action

Niagara County Legislature

Name of Lead Agency

William L. Ross

Chairman

Print or Type Name of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency

Title of Responsible Officer

Signature of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency

Signature of Preparer (if different from responsible officer)

July 6, 2009

Date

website

APPROVED

NIAGARA COUNTY ATTORNEY

BY

PART 1--PROJECT INFORMATION
Prepared by Project Sponsor

NOTICE: This document is designed to assist in determining whether the action proposed may have a significant effect on the environment. Please complete the entire form, Parts A through E. Answers to these questions will be considered as part of the application for approval and may be subject to further verification and public review. Provide any additional information you believe will be needed to complete Parts 2 and 3.

It is expected that completion of the full EAF will be dependent on information currently available and will not involve new studies, research or investigation. If information requiring such additional work is unavailable, so indicate and specify each instance.

Name of Action Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030

Location of Action (include Street Address, Municipality and County)

Niagara County, NY

Name of Applicant/Sponsor Niagara County Legislature

Address 175 Hawley Street

City / PO Lockport State NY Zip Code 14094-2740

Business Telephone 716-439-7213 (County Manager)

Name of Owner (if different) SAME

Address _____

City / PO _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Business Telephone _____

Description of Action:

Adoption of Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030

See Attachment A to this Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) for a complete description of the proposed action and specific answers to questions in Parts 1, 2, and 3. Answers are provided according to the same Part section and Question number.

Please Complete Each Question--Indicate N.A. if not applicable

A. SITE DESCRIPTION

Physical setting of overall project, both developed and undeveloped areas.

1. Present Land Use: ☒ Urban ☒ Industrial ☒ Commercial ☒ Residential (suburban) ☒ Rural (non-farm)
☒ Forest ☒ Agriculture ☒ Other See Chapter III of Plan
Also see Attachment A for land uses

2. Total acreage of project area: 337,253 acres.

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE	PRESENTLY	AFTER COMPLETION
Meadow or Brushland (Non-agricultural)	<u>NA</u> acres	<u>NA</u> acres
Forested	<u>NA</u> acres	<u>NA</u> acres
Agricultural (Includes orchards, cropland, pasture, etc.)	<u>NA</u> acres	<u>NA</u> acres
Wetland (Freshwater or tidal as per Articles 24,25 of ECL)	<u>NA</u> acres	<u>NA</u> acres
Water Surface Area	<u>NA</u> acres	<u>NA</u> acres
Unvegetated (Rock, earth or fill)	<u>NA</u> acres	<u>NA</u> acres
Roads, buildings and other paved surfaces	<u>NA</u> acres	<u>NA</u> acres
Other (Indicate type) <u>See Attachment A for land use acreages</u>	<u>NA</u> acres	<u>NA</u> acres

3. What is predominant soil type(s) on project site? See Attachment A for associations

- a. Soil drainage: ☒ Well drained NA % of site ☒ Moderately well drained NA % of site.
☒ Poorly drained NA % of site

- b. If any agricultural land is involved, how many acres of soil are classified within soil group 1 through 4 of the NYS Land Classification System? NA acres (see 1 NYCRR 370).

4. Are there bedrock outcroppings on project site? ☐ Yes ☒ No See Attachment A

- a. What is depth to bedrock 1.5-6.0+ (in feet)

5. Approximate percentage of proposed project site with slopes: See Attachment A

☐ 0-10% NA % ☐ 10- 15% NA % ☐ 15% or greater NA %

6. Is project substantially contiguous to, or contain a building, site, or district, listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places? ☒ Yes ☐ No See Attachment A

7. Is project substantially contiguous to a site listed on the Register of National Natural Landmarks? ☐ Yes ☒ No

8. What is the depth of the water table? 0.0-3.0+ (in feet) See Attachment A

9. Is site located over a primary, principal, or sole source aquifer? ☒ Yes ☐ No See Attachment A

10. Do hunting, fishing or shell fishing opportunities presently exist in the project area? ☒ Yes ☐ No See Attachment A

11. Does project site contain any species of plant or animal life that is identified as threatened or endangered? ☒ Yes ☐ No

According to:

See Attachment A

Identify each species:

12. Are there any unique or unusual land forms on the project site? (i.e., cliffs, dunes, other geological formations?)

☒ Yes ☐ No

Describe:

See Attachment A

13. Is the project site presently used by the community or neighborhood as an open space or recreation area?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, explain:

See Attachment A

14. Does the present site include scenic views known to be important to the community? ☒ Yes ☐ No

See Attachment A

15. Streams within or contiguous to project area:

See Attachment A

a. Name of Stream and name of River to which it is tributary

16. Lakes, ponds, wetland areas within or contiguous to project area:

See Attachment A

b. Size (in acres):

17. Is the site served by existing public utilities? ☒ Yes ☐ No See Attachment A
- a. If YES, does sufficient capacity exist to allow connection? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- b. If YES, will improvements be necessary to allow connection? ☐ Yes ☐ No
18. Is the site located in an agricultural district certified pursuant to Agriculture and Markets Law, Article 25-AA, Section 303 and 304? ☒ Yes ☐ No See Attachment A
19. Is the site located in or substantially contiguous to a Critical Environmental Area designated pursuant to Article 8 of the ECL, and 6 NYCRR 617? ☐ Yes ☒ No See Attachment A
20. Has the site ever been used for the disposal of solid or hazardous wastes? ☒ Yes ☐ No See Attachment A

B. Project Description

1. Physical dimensions and scale of project (fill in dimensions as appropriate). See Attachment A
- a. Total contiguous acreage owned or controlled by project sponsor: NA acres.
- b. Project acreage to be developed: NA acres initially; NA acres ultimately.
- c. Project acreage to remain undeveloped: NA acres.
- d. Length of project, in miles: NA (if appropriate)
- e. If the project is an expansion, indicate percent of expansion proposed. NA %
- f. Number of off-street parking spaces existing NA ; proposed NA
- g. Maximum vehicular trips generated per hour: NA (upon completion of project)?
- h. If residential: Number and type of housing units:
- | | One Family | Two Family | Multiple Family | Condominium |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Initially | <u>NA</u> | <u>NA</u> | <u>NA</u> | <u>NA</u> |
| Ultimately | <u>NA</u> | <u>NA</u> | <u>NA</u> | <u>NA</u> |
- i. Dimensions (in feet) of largest proposed structure: NA height; NA width; NA length.
- j. Linear feet of frontage along a public thoroughfare project will occupy is? NA ft.
2. How much natural material (i.e. rock, earth, etc.) will be removed from the site? NA tons/cubic yards.
3. Will disturbed areas be reclaimed ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A
- a. If yes, for what intended purpose is the site being reclaimed?
-
- b. Will topsoil be stockpiled for reclamation? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- c. Will upper subsoil be stockpiled for reclamation? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. How many acres of vegetation (trees, shrubs, ground covers) will be removed from site? NA acres.

5. Will any mature forest (over 100 years old) or other locally-important vegetation be removed by this project?

☐ Yes ☒ No

6. If single phase project: Anticipated period of construction: NA months, (including demolition)

7. If multi-phased:

a. Total number of phases anticipated NA (number)

b. Anticipated date of commencement phase 1: _____ month _____ year, (including demolition)

c. Approximate completion date of final phase: _____ month _____ year.

d. Is phase 1 functionally dependent on subsequent phases? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Will blasting occur during construction? ☐ Yes ☒ No

9. Number of jobs generated: during construction NA ; after project is complete NA See Attachment A

10. Number of jobs eliminated by this project NA.

11. Will project require relocation of any projects or facilities? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, explain:

12. Is surface liquid waste disposal involved? ☐ Yes ☒ No

a. If yes, indicate type of waste (sewage, industrial, etc) and amount _____

b. Name of water body into which effluent will be discharged _____

13. Is subsurface liquid waste disposal involved? ☐ Yes ☒ No Type _____

14. Will surface area of an existing water body increase or decrease by proposal? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, explain:

15. Is project or any portion of project located in a 100 year flood plain? ☐ Yes ☒ No See Attachment A

16. Will the project generate solid waste? ☐ Yes ☒ No

a. If yes, what is the amount per month? _____ tons

b. If yes, will an existing solid waste facility be used? ☐ Yes ☐ No

c. If yes, give name _____ ; location _____

d. Will any wastes not go into a sewage disposal system or into a sanitary landfill? ☐ Yes ☐ No

e. If yes, explain:

17. Will the project involve the disposal of solid waste? ☐ Yes ☒ No

a. If yes, what is the anticipated rate of disposal? _____ tons/month.

b. If yes, what is the anticipated site life? _____ years.

18. Will project use herbicides or pesticides? ☐ Yes ☒ No

19. Will project routinely produce odors (more than one hour per day)? ☐ Yes ☒ No

20. Will project produce operating noise exceeding the local ambient noise levels? ☐ Yes ☒ No

21. Will project result in an increase in energy use? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, indicate type(s)

22. If water supply is from wells, indicate pumping capacity NA gallons/minute.

23. Total anticipated water usage per day NA gallons/day.

24. Does project involve Local, State or Federal funding? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, explain:

The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030 was prepared with grant funds provided by the New York State Department of State Quality Communities Program, grant funds provided by the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation, Office of Community Renewal (formerly the Office for Small Cities), and funds from Niagara County's General Fund.

25. Approvals Required:

			Type	Submittal Date
City, Town, Village Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	_____	_____
			_____	_____
			_____	_____
City, Town, Village Planning Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	_____	_____
			_____	_____
			_____	_____
City, Town Zoning Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	_____	_____
			_____	_____
			_____	_____
City, County Health Department	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	_____	_____
			_____	_____
			_____	_____
Other Local Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	_____	_____
			_____	_____
			_____	_____
Other Regional Agencies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Niagara County Legislature	July 2009
			_____	_____
			_____	_____
State Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	_____	_____
			_____	_____
			_____	_____
Federal Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	_____	_____
			_____	_____
			_____	_____

C. Zoning and Planning Information

1. Does proposed action involve a planning or zoning decision? ☒ Yes ☐ No See Attachment

If Yes, indicate decision required:

<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning variance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New/revision of master plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision
<input type="checkbox"/> Site plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Special use permit	<input type="checkbox"/> Resource management plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

2. What is the zoning classification(s) of the site?

NA

3. What is the maximum potential development of the site if developed as permitted by the present zoning?

NA

4. What is the proposed zoning of the site?

NA

5. What is the maximum potential development of the site if developed as permitted by the proposed zoning?

NA

6. Is the proposed action consistent with the recommended uses in adopted local land use plans?

☒

Yes

☐

No

See Attachment A

7. What are the predominant land use(s) and zoning classifications within a ¼ mile radius of proposed action?

NA

8. Is the proposed action compatible with adjoining/surrounding land uses with a ¼ mile?

☒

Yes

☐

No

9. If the proposed action is the subdivision of land, how many lots are proposed? NA

a. What is the minimum lot size proposed? _____

10. Will proposed action require any authorization(s) for the formation of sewer or water districts? ☐ Yes ☒ No

11. Will the proposed action create a demand for any community provided services (recreation, education, police, fire protection)?

☐ Yes ☒ No

a. If yes, is existing capacity sufficient to handle projected demand? ☐ Yes ☐ No

12. Will the proposed action result in the generation of traffic significantly above present levels? ☐ Yes ☒ No

a. If yes, is the existing road network adequate to handle the additional traffic. ☐ Yes ☐ No

D. Informational Details

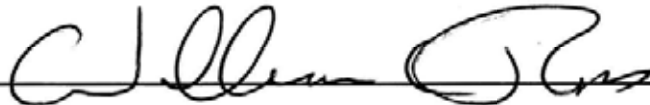
Attach any additional information as may be needed to clarify your project. If there are or may be any adverse impacts associated with your proposal, please discuss such impacts and the measures which you propose to mitigate or avoid them.

E. Verification

I certify that the information provided above is true to the best of my knowledge.


Applicant/Sponsor Name Niagara County Legislature Date July 1, 2009

Signature



Title Chairman

If the action is in the Coastal Area, and you are a state agency, complete the Coastal Assessment Form before proceeding with this assessment.

APPROVED
NIAGARA COUNTY ATTORNEY
BY 

PART 2 - PROJECT IMPACTS AND THEIR MAGNITUDE

Responsibility of Lead Agency

General Information (Read Carefully)

- ! In completing the form the reviewer should be guided by the question: Have my responses and determinations been **reasonable**? The reviewer is not expected to be an expert environmental analyst.
- ! The **Examples** provided are to assist the reviewer by showing types of impacts and wherever possible the threshold of magnitude that would trigger a response in column 2. The examples are generally applicable throughout the State and for most situations. But, for any specific project or site other examples and/or lower thresholds may be appropriate for a Potential Large Impact response, thus requiring evaluation in Part 3.
- ! The impacts of each project, on each site, in each locality, will vary. Therefore, the examples are illustrative and have been offered as guidance. They do not constitute an exhaustive list of impacts and thresholds to answer each question.
- ! The number of examples per question does not indicate the importance of each question.
- ! In identifying impacts, consider long term, short term and cumulative effects.

Instructions (Read carefully)

- a. Answer each of the 20 questions in PART 2. Answer **Yes** if there will be **any** impact.
- b. **Maybe** answers should be considered as **Yes** answers.
- c. If answering **Yes** to a question then check the appropriate box(column 1 or 2)to indicate the potential size of the impact. If impact threshold equals or exceeds any example provided, check column 2. If impact will occur but threshold is lower than example, check column 1.
- d. Identifying that an Impact will be potentially large (column 2) does not mean that it is also necessarily **significant**. Any large impact must be evaluated in PART 3 to determine significance. Identifying an impact in column 2 simply asks that it be looked at further.
- e. If reviewer has doubt about size of the impact then consider the impact as potentially large and proceed to PART 3.
- f. If a potentially large impact checked in column 2 can be mitigated by change(s) in the project to a small to moderate impact, also check the **Yes** box in column 3. A **No** response indicates that such a reduction is not possible. This must be explained in Part 3.

1	2	3
Small to Moderate Impact	Potential Large Impact	Can Impact Be Mitigated by Project Change

Impact on Land

1. Will the Proposed Action result in a physical change to the project site?

NO ☒ YES ☐ See Attachment A

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Any construction on slopes of 15% or greater, (15 foot rise per 100 foot of length), or where the general slopes in the project area exceed 10%. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Construction on land where the depth to the water table is less than 3 feet. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Construction of paved parking area for 1,000 or more vehicles. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Construction on land where bedrock is exposed or generally within 3 feet of existing ground surface. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Construction that will continue for more than 1 year or involve more than one phase or stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Excavation for mining purposes that would remove more than 1,000 tons of natural material (i.e., rock or soil) per year. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

	1 Small to Moderate Impact	2 Potential Large Impact	3 Can Impact Be Mitigated by Project Change
• Construction or expansion of a sanitary landfill.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Construction in a designated floodway.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Other impacts:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<div></div>			

2. Will there be an effect to any unique or unusual land forms found on the site? (i.e., cliffs, dunes, geological formations, etc.)

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

• Specific land forms:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<div></div>			

Impact on Water

3. Will Proposed Action affect any water body designated as protected? (Under Articles 15, 24, 25 of the Environmental Conservation Law, ECL)

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

Examples that would apply to column 2

• Developable area of site contains a protected water body.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Dredging more than 100 cubic yards of material from channel of a protected stream.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Extension of utility distribution facilities through a protected water body.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Construction in a designated freshwater or tidal wetland.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Other impacts:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<div></div>			

4. Will Proposed Action affect any non-protected existing or new body of water?

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

Examples that would apply to column 2

• A 10% increase or decrease in the surface area of any body of water or more than a 10 acre increase or decrease.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Construction of a body of water that exceeds 10 acres of surface area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Other impacts:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<div></div>			

1	2	3
Small to Moderate Impact	Potential Large Impact	Can Impact Be Mitigated by Project Change

5. Will Proposed Action affect surface or groundwater quality or quantity?

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Proposed Action will require a discharge permit. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action requires use of a source of water that does not have approval to serve proposed (project) action. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action requires water supply from wells with greater than 45 gallons per minute pumping capacity. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Construction or operation causing any contamination of a water supply system. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will adversely affect groundwater. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Liquid effluent will be conveyed off the site to facilities which presently do not exist or have inadequate capacity. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action would use water in excess of 20,000 gallons per day. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will likely cause siltation or other discharge into an existing body of water to the extent that there will be an obvious visual contrast to natural conditions. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will require the storage of petroleum or chemical products greater than 1,100 gallons. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will allow residential uses in areas without water and/or sewer services. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action locates commercial and/or industrial uses which may require new or expansion of existing waste treatment and/or storage facilities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Other impacts: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

1	2	3
Small to Moderate Impact	Potential Large Impact	Can Impact Be Mitigated by Project Change

6. Will Proposed Action alter drainage flow or patterns, or surface water runoff?

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Proposed Action would change flood water flows | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action may cause substantial erosion. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action is incompatible with existing drainage patterns. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will allow development in a designated floodway. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Other impacts: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

IMPACT ON AIR

7. Will Proposed Action affect air quality?

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Proposed Action will induce 1,000 or more vehicle trips in any given hour. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will result in the incineration of more than 1 ton of refuse per hour. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Emission rate of total contaminants will exceed 5 lbs. per hour or a heat source producing more than 10 million BTU's per hour. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will allow an increase in the amount of land committed to industrial use. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will allow an increase in the density of industrial development within existing industrial areas. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Other impacts: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

IMPACT ON PLANTS AND ANIMALS

8. Will Proposed Action affect any threatened or endangered species?

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Reduction of one or more species listed on the New York or Federal list, using the site, over or near the site, or found on the site. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

	1 Small to Moderate Impact	2 Potential Large Impact	3 Can Impact Be Mitigated by Project Change
• Removal of any portion of a critical or significant wildlife habitat.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Application of pesticide or herbicide more than twice a year, other than for agricultural purposes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Other impacts:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

9. Will Proposed Action substantially affect non-threatened or non-endangered species?

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | 1
Small to
Moderate
Impact | 2
Potential
Large
Impact | 3
Can Impact Be
Mitigated by
Project Change |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| • Proposed Action would substantially interfere with any resident or migratory fish, shellfish or wildlife species. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action requires the removal of more than 10 acres of mature forest (over 100 years of age) or other locally important vegetation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Other impacts: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

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IMPACT ON AGRICULTURAL LAND RESOURCES

10. Will Proposed Action affect agricultural land resources?

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | 1
Small to
Moderate
Impact | 2
Potential
Large
Impact | 3
Can Impact Be
Mitigated by
Project Change |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| • The Proposed Action would sever, cross or limit access to agricultural land (includes cropland, hayfields, pasture, vineyard, orchard, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Construction activity would excavate or compact the soil profile of agricultural land. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • The Proposed Action would irreversibly convert more than 10 acres of agricultural land or, if located in an Agricultural District, more than 2.5 acres of agricultural land. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

	1 Small to Moderate Impact	2 Potential Large Impact	3 Can Impact Be Mitigated by Project Change
• The Proposed Action would disrupt or prevent installation of agricultural land management systems (e.g., subsurface drain lines, outlet ditches, strip cropping); or create a need for such measures (e.g. cause a farm field to drain poorly due to increased runoff).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Other impacts:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

IMPACT ON AESTHETIC RESOURCES

11. Will Proposed Action affect aesthetic resources? (If necessary, use the Visual EAF Addendum in Section 617.20, Appendix B.)

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | 1
Small to
Moderate
Impact | 2
Potential
Large
Impact | 3
Can Impact Be
Mitigated by
Project Change |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| • Proposed land uses, or project components obviously different from or in sharp contrast to current surrounding land use patterns, whether man-made or natural. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed land uses, or project components visible to users of aesthetic resources which will eliminate or significantly reduce their enjoyment of the aesthetic qualities of that resource. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Project components that will result in the elimination or significant screening of scenic views known to be important to the area. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Other impacts: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

IMPACT ON HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

12. Will Proposed Action impact any site or structure of historic, prehistoric or paleontological importance?

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | 1
Small to
Moderate
Impact | 2
Potential
Large
Impact | 3
Can Impact Be
Mitigated by
Project Change |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| • Proposed Action occurring wholly or partially within or substantially contiguous to any facility or site listed on the State or National Register of historic places. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Any impact to an archaeological site or fossil bed located within the project site. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will occur in an area designated as sensitive for archaeological sites on the NYS Site Inventory. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

	1 Small to Moderate Impact	2 Potential Large Impact	3 Can Impact Be Mitigated by Project Change
• Other impacts:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

IMPACT ON OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

13. Will proposed Action affect the quantity or quality of existing or future open spaces or recreational opportunities?

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| • The permanent foreclosure of a future recreational opportunity. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • A major reduction of an open space important to the community. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Other impacts: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

IMPACT ON CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS

14. Will Proposed Action impact the exceptional or unique characteristics of a critical environmental area (CEA) established pursuant to subdivision 6NYCRR 617.14(g)?

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

List the environmental characteristics that caused the designation of the CEA.

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| • Proposed Action to locate within the CEA? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will result in a reduction in the quantity of the resource? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will result in a reduction in the quality of the resource? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will impact the use, function or enjoyment of the resource? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Other impacts: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

1	2	3
Small to Moderate Impact	Potential Large Impact	Can Impact Be Mitigated by Project Change

IMPACT ON TRANSPORTATION

15. Will there be an effect to existing transportation systems?

☒ NO ☐ YES [See Attachment A](#)

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| • Alteration of present patterns of movement of people and/or goods. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will result in major traffic problems. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Other impacts: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

IMPACT ON ENERGY

16. Will Proposed Action affect the community's sources of fuel or energy supply?

☒ NO ☐ YES [See Attachment A](#)

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| • Proposed Action will cause a greater than 5% increase in the use of any form of energy in the municipality. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will require the creation or extension of an energy transmission or supply system to serve more than 50 single or two family residences or to serve a major commercial or industrial use. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Other impacts: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

NOISE AND ODOR IMPACT

17. Will there be objectionable odors, noise, or vibration as a result of the Proposed Action?

☒ NO ☐ YES [See Attachment A](#)

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| • Blasting within 1,500 feet of a hospital, school or other sensitive facility. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Odors will occur routinely (more than one hour per day). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will produce operating noise exceeding the local ambient noise levels for noise outside of structures. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will remove natural barriers that would act as a noise screen. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Other impacts: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

1	2	3
Small to Moderate Impact	Potential Large Impact	Can Impact Be Mitigated by Project Change

IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH

18. Will Proposed Action affect public health and safety?

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| • Proposed Action may cause a risk of explosion or release of hazardous substances (i.e. oil, pesticides, chemicals, radiation, etc.) in the event of accident or upset conditions, or there may be a chronic low level discharge or emission. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action may result in the burial of "hazardous wastes" in any form (i.e. toxic, poisonous, highly reactive, radioactive, irritating, infectious, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Storage facilities for one million or more gallons of liquefied natural gas or other flammable liquids. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action may result in the excavation or other disturbance within 2,000 feet of a site used for the disposal of solid or hazardous waste. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Other impacts: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

IMPACT ON GROWTH AND CHARACTER OF COMMUNITY OR NEIGHBORHOOD

19. Will Proposed Action affect the character of the existing community?

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

Examples that would apply to column 2

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| • The permanent population of the city, town or village in which the project is located is likely to grow by more than 5%. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • The municipal budget for capital expenditures or operating services will increase by more than 5% per year as a result of this project. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will conflict with officially adopted plans or goals. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will cause a change in the density of land use. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Proposed Action will replace or eliminate existing facilities, structures or areas of historic importance to the community. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Development will create a demand for additional community services (e.g. schools, police and fire, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

	1 Small to Moderate Impact	2 Potential Large Impact	3 Can Impact Be Mitigated by Project Change
• Proposed Action will set an important precedent for future projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Proposed Action will create or eliminate employment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Other impacts:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

20. Is there, or is there likely to be, public controversy related to potential adverse environment impacts?

☒ NO ☐ YES See Attachment A

If Any Action in Part 2 Is Identified as a Potential Large Impact or If you Cannot Determine the Magnitude of Impact, Proceed to Part 3

See Attachment A

Part 3 - EVALUATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPACTS

Responsibility of Lead Agency

Part 3 must be prepared if one or more impact(s) is considered to be potentially large, even if the impact(s) may be mitigated.

Instructions (If you need more space, attach additional sheets)

Discuss the following for each impact identified in Column 2 of Part 2:

1. Briefly describe the impact.
2. Describe (if applicable) how the impact could be mitigated or reduced to a small to moderate impact by project change(s).
3. Based on the information available, decide if it is reasonable to conclude that this impact is **important**.

To answer the question of importance, consider:

- ! The probability of the impact occurring
- ! The duration of the impact
- ! Its irreversibility, including permanently lost resources of value
- ! Whether the impact can or will be controlled
- ! The regional consequence of the impact
- ! Its potential divergence from local needs and goals
- ! Whether known objections to the project relate to this impact.

See Attachment A



New York State Environmental Quality Review Act Full Environmental Assessment Form Attachment A

PART 1 - PROJECT INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

Description of Proposed Action

The proposed action is the adoption of the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030 (hereafter referred to as the Plan) as the County's official and first Comprehensive Plan. The Plan is a document intended to guide decision-making at the County level in providing services, facilities and infrastructure based on countywide and up-to-date information on a comprehensive list of topics. The Plan provides:

- An overall vision for the future of the County
- The identification of current community issues, assets and opportunities provided by stakeholders during the comprehensive planning process
- Strategies for addressing issues and opportunities
- Goals and objectives in carrying out strategies
- Recommendations for further action in achieving stated goals and objectives

The Plan does not commit the County or any municipality within the County or any other stakeholder to undertake, approve or fund any specific action or actions at this time. Rather the Plan provides a series of recommendations, albeit some more detailed in scope than others that can be followed to achieve stated goals and objectives under five key elements of the Plan:

- Land Use, Transportation and the Environment
- Economic Development
- County Services, Facilities and Infrastructure
- Education
- Public Health and Safety

The Plan encourages dialogue, coordination and collaboration among stakeholders for dealing with varied issues throughout the County and forms a basis for future policy-making and establishing policies at the County level without formulating any stated policies at this time.

An introduction and overview of the Plan with a summary of its organization and content is provided in Chapter I, pages 1 through 9.

Purpose, Value and Need

Chapter II, specifically pages 1 through 10 of that chapter, discusses in detail the preparation of the Plan; its definition, content, authority and general requirements under Section 239-d of NYS General Municipal Law; and the Purpose, Value, Intent, Need and Benefits of the Plan. Chapter II also includes a summary of the planning process with an overview of community and stakeholder participation in the process which is documented throughout the Plan and in its appendices.

A. Site Description

1. Present Land Use

Niagara County contains virtually all typical forms of land use ranging from developed urban and suburban areas to less developed rural areas. Land use within the County is described in detail in Chapter III Section E and Figures III.E.1 through E.9. Land use in the Plan is categorized according to NYS Land Use Classification Codes.

2. Project Acreage

Niagara County contains approximately 337,253 acres of land. Included in this total is approximately 29,795 acres of potential Federally-regulated wetlands and approximately 17,813 acres of potential State-regulated wetlands as described in Chapter III Section D. The breakdown by acreage of land use according to NYS land use classification includes:

Residential	115,606 acres
Agriculture	101,280 acres
Vacant Land	54,150 acres
Commercial	8,462 acres
Recreation	5,026 acres
Community Services	6,726 acres
Industrial	5,525 acres
Public Services	5,438 acres
Conservation and Parks	6,684 acres
Lakes, Reservations, etc.	14,908 acres
Other – Roads, ROW's, etc.	13,448 acres

3. Soil Types

Soil information was obtained from the Soil Survey of Niagara County and from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Resource Conservation Service Web Soil Survey. The web address is <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>. Niagara County soils are described in Chapter III Section D. The County contains 11 soil associations ranging from well-drained to poorly-drained and 14 different hydric soils as illustrated on Figure III.D.3 of the Plan.

4. Bedrock

Bedrock conditions in the County are described in Chapter III Section D and bedrock conditions vary across the County. Depth to bedrock generally ranges from 3.5 to 6.0+ feet in most areas although in some locations depth to bedrock may be as shallow as 1.5 feet according to the Soil Survey.

5. Topography

Topography in the County is described in Chapter III Section D. Elevations are illustrated on Figure III.D.1a and 1b. Topography in the County is generally level to gently sloping with the exception of steeper terrain along the Niagara Escarpment, particularly along its north-facing slope.

6. State and National Register of Historic Places & Archeological Resources

Cultural and historic resources are discussed in Chapter III Section I and illustrated for some locations on Figure III.I.1. A complete listing of National and State Register sites in the County is included in the Cultural Resources Appendix in the Plan.

7. Is project substantially contiguous to a site listed on Register of National Natural Landmarks?

None are located within Niagara County.

8. Water Table

According to the Niagara County Soil Survey, soils have a depth to seasonal high water that ranges from as low as 0.0 feet to 3.0+ feet with an average that appears to be in the range from 0.5 to 1.5 feet below the surface.

9. Primary, Principal, or Sole Source Aquifer

Aquifers in the County are discussed in Chapter III Section D and identified on Figure III.D.4 Hydrology.

10. Hunting, Fishing, and Shell Fishing

Hunting and fishing occur throughout the County and are discussed in Chapter III Section J.

11. Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

Niagara County contains an abundance of terrestrial and aquatic ecological systems and the potential exists for rare, threatened and endangered species in many locations across the County, particularly along the Niagara River corridor and Ontario lakefront. The Niagara River corridor has been designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA). Several State listed threatened and endangered bird species have been identified including the pied-billed grebe, least bittern, black tern, common tern, bald eagle, peregrine falcon, northern harrier and sedge wren according to the Niagara River Greenway Plan Final EIS (April 2007). State listed aquatic species include the silver chub (endangered), lake sturgeon and mooneye (threatened) and black redhorse sucker and redbfin shiner (special concern). These and other species may occur throughout the area and specific listings of plant and animal species identified at the State and Federal level need to be determined in consultation with the NYSDEC Natural Heritage Program and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for up-to-date listings as part of any further SEQRA actions in implementing the recommendations the Comprehensive Plan.

12. Unique or Unusual Land Forms

Unique and unusual landforms include the Niagara Escarpment and related formations located along the Niagara River.

13. Open Space or Recreation Areas

Open space resources and recreation areas are located throughout the County and discussed in Chapter III Section J and Chapter VII under parks and recreation. Existing parks are located on Figure III.D.5.

14. Scenic Views

Scenic resources exist in many locations within the County the most notable are located along the Niagara River corridor, the Niagara Escarpment, the Lake Ontario shoreline.

15. Streams within or Contiguous to the Project Area

Water resources including surface waters in the County are discussed in Chapter III Section D and identified on Figure III.D.4 Hydrology.

16. Lakes, Ponds, Wetland Areas

Water resources including surface waters in the County are discussed in Chapter III Section D and identified on Figure III.D.4 Hydrology.

17. Public Utilities

Public utilities are discussed in Chapter III Section H and Chapter VI of the Plan.

18. Agricultural Districts

Agricultural lands and agricultural districts are discussed in Chapter III Section E and illustrated on Figure V.4 in Chapter V. The following information is also provided that identifies specific agricultural district within Niagara County.

Ag District	Towns	Acres	
		1999*	2006**
District 2	Hartland, Royalton, Somerset	37,381	40,454
District 4	Hartland, Lockport, Newfane, Royalton	34,828	34,663
District 6	Cambria, Lewiston, Niagara, Pendleton, Wheatfield	22,283	24,076
District 7	Cambria, Lockport, Pendleton, Wheatfield, Wilson	17,449	18,067
District 8	Porter, Wilson	38,979	40,726
District 9	Royalton	25,186	30,667
	TOTAL	176,106	188,654
*Niagara County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2006)			
**Cornell University Geospatial Information Repository (CUGIR, 2006)			

19. Critical Environmental Areas

According to the NYSDEC website, there are no CEAs in Niagara County.

20. Solid and Hazardous Wastes

Several active and inactive solid and hazardous waste landfills and sites exist within the County. Municipal solid waste landfills are located at the Modern and Allied Niagara facilities in the County. Additional sites are located primarily in the western communities of the County.

B. Project Description

The proposed action is the adoption of the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan which is an administrative action and not a site specific project. Therefore, answers to most questions in this Section B of Part 1 of the EAF are not applicable. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies and/or in particular site specific projects that are considered by the County, additional SEQRA review at that time may be warranted.

1. Physical Dimensions and Scale of the Project

The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is countywide in scope and an administrative action that does not include project or site specific actions or physical actions affecting the environment.

2. Natural Material Removed from the Site

N/A

3. Reclamation

N/A

4. Vegetation Removed

N/A

5. Mature Forests (over 100 years old)

N/A

6. Single Phase Project

N/A

7. Multi-phase Project

N/A

8. Blasting

N/A

9. Job Creation

The proposed action to adopt the Plan does not involve job creation. Subsequent actions in implementing recommendations provided in the Plan may create employment opportunities in the future, both directly and indirectly.

10. Job Elimination

The proposed action to adopt the Plan does not involve job elimination.

11. Relocation of projects or facilities

The proposed action to adopt the Plan does not involve the relocation of projects or facilities.

12. Surface Liquid Waste Disposal

The proposed action to adopt the Plan does not involve the disposal of surface liquid waste.

13. Subsurface Liquid Waste Disposal

The proposed action to adopt the Plan does not involve the disposal of subsurface liquid waste.

14. Water Body Surface Area

The proposed action to adopt the Plan does not involve the surface area of any water body.

15. Floodplain

The proposed action to adopt the Plan does not involve floodplains. The Plan provides recommendations that will ultimately be beneficial to the function and integrity of existing floodplains and other water-related resources.

16. Will the project generate Solid Waste?

No

17. Will project involve the disposal of Solid Waste?

No

18. Herbicides and Pesticides

N/A

19. Odors

N/A

20. Project Operating Noises

N/A

21. Energy Use

N/A

22. Water Supply

N/A

23. Total water usage by day

N/A

24. Local, State or Federal Funding

The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030 was prepared with grant funds provided by the New York State Department of State Quality Communities Program, grant funds provided by the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation, Office of Community Renewal (formerly the Office for Small Cities), and funds from Niagara County's General Fund.

C. Zoning and Planning Information

1. Planning or zoning decision?

Yes. The proposed action does involve a planning decision which is the adoption of Niagara County's first comprehensive plan.

2. What are the current zoning classification(s) of the site?

N/A

3. What is the maximum potential development by present zoning?

N/A

4. What is the proposed zoning of the site?

N/A

5. What is the maximum potential development of the site if developed as permitted by the proposed zoning?

N/A

6. Consistency with local plans.

Yes. The Comprehensive Plan was prepared with input provided by communities and other stakeholders within Niagara County. Local plans were reviewed and additional information was provided by stakeholders and subsequently considered in the analysis of existing and future land use conditions and recommendations.

7. Predominate Land Uses

N/A

8. Surrounding Land Use Compatibility

The proposed action to adopt the Plan does not involve the subdivision of land. Subsequent actions in implementing recommendations provided in the Plan may require further SEQRA review at that time that specific actions are considered.

9. Subdivision of Land

The proposed action to adopt the Plan does not involve the subdivision of land. Subsequent actions in implementing recommendations provided in the Plan may require further SEQRA review at that time that specific actions are considered.

10. Sewer/water district formation

The proposed action to adopt the Plan does not involve the creation of sewer/water districts. Subsequent actions in implementing recommendations provided in the Plan may involve consideration for possible creation, consolidation or restructuring of districts in the future, that may require further SEQRA review at that time.

11. Community provided services

The proposed action to adopt the Plan does not involve specific community services at this time. Subsequent actions in implementing recommendations provided in the Plan may involve community services in the future that may require further SEQRA review at that time.

12. Traffic Generation

The proposed action to adopt the Plan does not involve traffic generation or potential impacts (adverse or beneficial) to traffic and/or transportation at this time. Subsequent actions in implementing recommendations provided in the Plan may involve traffic and/or transportation both directly and indirectly that may require further SEQRA review at that time that specific actions are considered.

PART 2 - PROJECT IMPACTS AND THEIR MAGNITUDE

Impact on Land

Question 1. Will the Proposed Action result in a physical change to the project site?

Answer - No. The Plan provides recommendations intended to reduce the potential for sprawl within the County by encouraging development to those areas of the County within cities, towns and villages that can best support and facilitate development as discussed in detail in Chapter V. The Plan also provides recommendations for protecting important natural and cultural resource areas from the adverse effects of sprawl through sustainable land use principles and practices. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Question 2. Will there be an effect to any unique or unusual land forms found on the site?

Answer - No. The Plan is intended to protect and enhance important unique or unusual landforms. It provides recommendations for support of efforts to protect and manage undeveloped areas along the Niagara Escarpment. Its adoption is not anticipated to create adverse impacts on important landforms or features. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Impact on Water

Question 3. Will Proposed Action affect any water body designated as protected?

Question 4. Will Proposed Action affect any non-protected existing or new body of water?

Question 5. Will Proposed Action affect surface or groundwater quality or quantity?

Question 6. Will Proposed Action alter drainage flow or patterns, or surface water runoff?

Answer – No. The Plan is intended to protect and enhance important surface and groundwater resources. Its adoption is not anticipated to create adverse impacts on water resources. In fact the Plan provides recommendations for protecting wetlands and floodplains from the adverse effects of unregulated development and encroachment. The Plan also recommends consideration of implementing “green infrastructure” and promoting greenways and stream restoration efforts within the County which will have positive influences on stormwater management, erosion control, drainage and runoff, water quality and quantity. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Impact on Air

Question 7. Will Proposed Action affect air quality?

Answer – No. The adoption of the Plan is not anticipated to create adverse impacts on air quality and air resources. The Plan provides recommendations for alternative means of transportation, mixed land use, redevelopment of underutilized properties, more walkable and sustainable communities designed to promote improved air quality. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Impact on Plants and Animals

Question 8. Will Proposed Action affect any threatened or endangered species?

Answer – No. The Plan is intended to protect and enhance important plant and animal resources. Its adoption is not anticipated to create adverse impacts on any threatened or endangered resources. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Question 9. Will Proposed Action substantially affect non-threatened or non-endangered species?

Answer – No. The Plan is intended to protect and enhance plant and animal habitat and its adoption is not anticipated to create adverse impacts on non-threatened or non-endangered species. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Impact on Agricultural Land Resources

Question 10. Will Proposed Action affect agricultural land resources?

Answer – No. The Plan is intended to protect and enhance important agricultural land resources. Its adoption is not anticipated to create adverse impacts on agricultural resources. In fact, as discussed in several sections of the Plan, including Chapter V and VI the Plan recommends actions to promote agriculture and farmland resources. This includes support for an update of the County's Agriculture and Farmlands Protection Plan and land use principles that reduce the effects of sprawl on agriculture by encouraging development in non-agricultural areas of the County, including but not limited to redevelopment of brownfields and other previously developed lands. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Impact on Aesthetic Resources

Question 11. Will Proposed Action affect aesthetic resources?

Answer – No. The Plan is intended to protect and enhance important scenic and aesthetic resources. Its adoption is not anticipated to create adverse impacts on these resources. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Impact on Historic and Archeological Resources

Question 12. Will Proposed Action impact any site or structure of historic, prehistoric or paleontological importance?

Answer – No. The Plan is intended to protect and enhance important cultural resources. Its adoption is not anticipated to create adverse impacts on historic and archeological resources. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Impact on Open Space and Recreation

Question 13. Will Proposed Action affect the quantity or quality of existing or future open spaces or recreational opportunities?

Answer – No. The Plan is intended to protect and enhance important open space and recreation resources. The adoption of the Plan is not anticipated to create adverse impacts on open space and recreation. In fact, recommendations provided in the Plan, primarily in Chapter VII include the preparation of a County Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation master plan to determine existing and future needs. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Impact on Critical Environmental Areas

Question 14. Will Proposed Action impact the exceptional or unique characteristics of a critical environmental area?

Answer – No. The adoption of the Plan will not have an adverse impact on Critical Environmental Areas (CEA). There are no designated CEA in Niagara County at the present time. The Plan is intended to enhance the protection, conservation and management of important environmental features and resources in Niagara County. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Impact on Transportation

Question 15. Will there be an effect to existing transportation systems?

Answer – No. The Plan is intended to enhance existing transportation systems and alternative means of transporting people and goods. Recommendations relative to transportation are included primarily in Chapter VI and Chapter VII of the Plan. For example, the Plan recommends corridor long land use and transportation studies for several important highway corridors to maintain capacity and local character. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Impact on Energy

Question 16. Will Proposed Action affect the community's sources of fuel or energy supply?

Answer – No. The Plan is not anticipated to create adverse impacts on sources of fuel or energy supply. The Plan recommends actions to reduce the County's "ecological footprint" and promotes sustainable principles and practices intended to reduce energy use, for example through encouraging alternative means of transportation and mixed land uses that promote walkability and greater connectivity between communities and destinations. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Noise and Odor Impact

Question 17. Will there be objectionable odors, noise, or vibration as a result of the Proposed Action?

Answer – No. The Plan is not anticipated to result in adverse noise and odor impacts. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Impact on Public Health

Question 18. Will Proposed Action affect public health and safety?

Answer – No. The Plan is intended to enhance public health and safety through a variety of recommended actions discussed, particularly in Chapter IX Public Health and Safety. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood

Question 19. Will proposed Action affect the character of the existing community?

Answer – No. The Plan is intended to enhance quality of life in communities and be consistent with local plans that focus on protection of community and neighborhood character. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County may warrant additional SEQRA review at that time.

Question 20. Is there, or is there likely to be public controversy related to potential adverse environmental impacts?

Answer – No. The adoption of the Plan has not been shown to be controversial and no adverse environmental impacts are anticipated to occur from its adoption. Once the Plan is adopted and implementation of its recommendations commences, if public controversy becomes known or is anticipated to be possible for any specific actions, policies or, in particular, site specific projects considered by the County, then additional SEQRA review may be warranted at that time.

PART 3 - EVALUATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPACTS

The adoption of the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan, as an administrative action is not anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts upon the environment. Until such time that specific actions, policies or projects are identified and considered to be undertaken, approved or funded that may require additional SEQRA review by the County, no mitigation is required.

ADDITIONAL SEQRA CONSIDERATIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The environmental setting of Niagara County is described in detail in Chapter III of the Plan. The following topics are addressed in Chapter III accompanied by maps and other graphics that identify existing conditions and locations of important resources and characteristics of the County. Chapter IV of the Plan further summarizes key aspects of existing conditions and characteristics within each stakeholder community in the County.

Chapter III addresses the following topics in text and map formats. Additional information that discusses existing conditions within the County is addressed by topic in Chapters IV through IX.

- Geographic Setting
- History of Niagara County
- Political and Administrative Structure (also discussed on Chapter VII)
- Environmental Features (climate, geology, soils, surface and groundwater resources, etc. – also discussed in Chapter V)
- Land Use Characteristics (agriculture, residential, commercial, industrial, etc. – also discussed in Chapter V)
- Population and Housing

- Economic Data
- Economic Development (also discussed in Chapter VI)
- Cultural and Historic Resources
- Recreation and Tourism
- Transportation (roads, bridges, aviation, marine, etc. – also discussed in Chapter V)
- Health and Safety (also discussed in Chapter IX)
- Education (also discussed in Chapter VIII)

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

No-Action Alternative

The no action alternative would be the continued lack of an adopted Comprehensive Plan at the County level. The lack of a Plan has inhibited the County's ability in the past by not having a Plan in place to use for decision-making, policy guidance and pursuing funding opportunities for projects. The lack of an adopted Comprehensive Plan has:

- Inhibited the County's ability to have a ready source of information to market areas outside of the County for enhanced economic, tourism and business development opportunities
- Restricted the flow of information to and from residents and communities in the County relative to the identification of issues and opportunities from a countywide perspective that are on the minds of stakeholders as now stated in the Plan
- Inhibited the ability to formulate, revise and achieve a coherent vision, goals and objectives for the County to enhance quality of life
- Limited the ability of the County to provide communities with one source of important countywide information that provides planning guidance based on up-to-date information
- Limited the ability of the County to benchmark itself against other counties and areas
- Precluded the ability to use the Plan as an educational tool for decision-makers and the public
- Restricted the ability of the County to formulate and establish important policies and chart a direction for dealing with present and future issues, opportunities and challenges as they arise.

Alternative to Sustainability

The Plan provides recommendations that encourage and promote sustainable principles and related practices as an important alternative to less sustainable practices that create the potential for adverse impacts on the environment. Adherence to more sustainable principles and practices could promote more favorable development patterns throughout the County that will consequently result in positive benefits upon traditional population centers, developed areas, natural resources, farmlands, economic development opportunities, services and infrastructure and local community character.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

No significant unavoidable adverse effects are anticipated from adoption of the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030. On the contrary, the Plan is focused on a series of recommendations designed to reduce or avoid potentially adverse impacts on the environment and communities by promoting sustainable principles and practices in providing services, facilities, and public infrastructure as well as through more sustainable land use development and protection of natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas of the County.

IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVEABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

The Plan does not directly commit the County or any municipality to a specific course of action that results in an irreversible and/or irretrievable commitment of resources, including human resources, materials and/or financial resources. Some of the recommendations of the Plan, such as preparation of future plans, locating and constructing new facilities, etc. may require commitment of resources at the time that such actions are considered. Depending on the scope and scale of future required commitment of resources, the County may need to conduct additional SEQRA review prior to undertaking, approving and/or funding such actions.

CUMULATIVE AND GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

Cumulative Impacts

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) defines a cumulative impact as “two or more individual effects on the environment which, when taken together, are significant or which compound or increase other environmental effects. The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.” Cumulative impacts can result from the proposed action under consideration or external factors that may not be directly related to the proposed action.

An important goal of the Plan is to reduce unanticipated or unintended potential cumulative effects on the environment resulting from single actions or isolated decisions. The Plan promotes concerted actions involving multiple stakeholders and jurisdictions working together in collaboration to consider and mitigate the potential for cumulative impacts through coordinated actions. The Plan likewise recommends various actions that can be considered by the County and local municipalities to limit the adverse cumulative effects of sprawl on the environment. However, the Plan does not commit the County or any municipality to any policy or action at this time. Rather, the Plan outlines and emphasizes the beneficial effects of sustainable principles and practices for protecting environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands and floodplains and other important local resources, such as prime and unique farmlands and open space.

Recommendations contained within the Plan are anticipated to be consistent and compatible with local plans and efforts to protect the environment. These include avoiding development in environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and floodplains, encouraging farmland protection efforts and waterfront access and protection. The Plan also recommends preparing highway corridor plans for better traffic, access and land use management. Recommendations also include practices to reduce the adverse and potential cumulative effects of stormwater runoff and drainage through possible incorporation of green infrastructure practices as an alternative to more traditional gray infrastructure measures. The Plan also supports the establishment of blueways and greenways as functioning natural corridors in the County.

Any commitment to undertake, approve, or fund substantial actions or projects in specific areas of the County, including actions that may create a potential for cumulative impacts in an area(s) may require additional SEQRA review prior to decision-making on such actions or projects. For example, consideration of providing public access into potential environmentally sensitive areas via trail systems need to consider the potential impacts on sensitive resources from increased public use and exposure prior to undertaking an action.

Potential Growth Inducing Impacts

The Plan itself will not result in any direct induced growth or development in any one area of the County. The Plan does not identify specific locations or consideration of new County facilities, infrastructure or services. These may be addressed in future revisions of the Plan and may need to undergo additional SEQRA review at that time when such information is known. Neither will it result in any immediate or direct extension of roads, utility infrastructure or County services that would induce growth.

The Plan includes numerous recommendations to achieve overall goals and objectives focused on managing future growth and development to reduce the potential for sprawl in areas of the County where extended infrastructure in particular, could result in adverse impacts on important local resources. Recommendations include a focus on maintaining existing infrastructure as a priority in lieu of new or expanded infrastructure wherever possible, unless public health and safety are a concern, in order to mitigate the adverse effects of sprawl on communities.

The Plan emphasizes redevelopment of traditional population centers in urban, suburban and rural areas of the County where development has occurred and where public infrastructure and services likely already exist, recognizing the “home rule” authority of local municipalities over land use decisions and regulations via zoning and other enforcement mechanisms. The Plan recognizes that further growth and development in developed areas may require upgrades to the condition and capacity of existing systems and the potential exists that in communities new or replacement systems, such as sewer, wastewater and water treatment, may also be necessary to encourage future growth and development in these areas as opposed to presently undeveloped areas. Any commitment to undertake, approve, or fund substantial capital improvement projects in specific areas of the County, including actions that may induce growth in an area(s) will require additional SEQRA review prior to decision-making on such actions or projects.

EFFECTS ON THE USE AND CONSERVATION OF ENERGY

The Plan reiterates a goal of the County to reduce its “ecological footprint” and promotes the principles of sustainability throughout the County with the intent of avoiding and reducing potential adverse impacts on the environment. The Plan provides recommendations for both reducing the use of energy and conserving energy. For example, Chapter V of the Plan emphasizes the importance of encouraging more sustainable communities through the development of mixed land uses and more walkable neighborhoods by providing increased connections via alternative modes of transportation and greater access and mobility via these alternatives.

The Plan does not commit the County or any municipality to any specific course of action that will directly affect the use and conservation of energy. The next phase of the Plan is in implementing its recommendations through subsequent actions and definition of possible policies that the County may undertake towards energy reduction and conservation. Subsequent actions and establishing policies may require the County to conduct additional SEQRA review at that time to determine the effects of its actions or policies on the use of energy. For example, depending on the scope and scale of the program, subsequent actions and/or policies may include more aggressive recycling programs and the use of recycled materials in County operations; using more recycled construction and demolition materials in County capital projects; conducting energy audits of County facilities with the intent of becoming more energy efficient via replacement of heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems; replacement of vehicle fleets with more fuel efficient vehicles; and possible consolidation of facilities and services as a conservation measure. These types of actions may require additional SEQRA review at the time they are being considered.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - SEQRA APPENDIX

The Comprehensive Plan includes an appendix that documents the SEQRA process followed for its adoption.

Community Surveys

APPENDIX G



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY OUTREACH SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS. Fill out as much or as little of this survey as you like. When you are finished, please mail it back to us at the address listed on the last page. You can also scan it and email it to us or leave it with project staff at any of the community outreach meetings. You can download an electronic copy of the survey from the project website at www.niagaracounty.com/ComprehensivePlan.asp by clicking on the "Feedback" link. The downloadable survey can be filled out electronically, saved, and submitted to us by email or printed out and submitted in hard copy. **All surveys must be received by Friday, May 15, 2009.** Your input is very important to the planning process and your responses will help shape the final Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan. If you have any questions, please email us at comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com. Thank you for your interest and participation!

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: William L. Agnolin

TITLE: _____

MUNICIPALITY: _____

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: Niagara County Planning Board

MAILING ADDRESS: 11 Berkeley Dr. Lockport, NY 14094

PHONE NUMBER: (716) 433-2164

EMAIL ADDRESS: dagronine@gmail.com

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in the type of development that you see occurring or changes in community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community and Niagara County as a whole: Agricultural, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Recreational, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community and Niagara County as a whole?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no "greenfield" development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: agricultural areas not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community and throughout Niagara County including construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, passenger air and rail service, cargo transportation, recreational opportunities along roadways/trailways/waterways, etc. Have there been many changes in transportation services or public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and maritime uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to land use/transportation?

1. VACANT BUILDINGS IN THE 3 CITIES - LEADING TO
BLIGHT
2. POOR ROADS - MANY IN DISREPAIR AND DANGEROUS
DECLINING BRIDGES POSING A DANGER
3. TOO MANY HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS BEING BUILT AND
NOT OCCUPIED

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to land use/transportation?

1. ABUNDANT FARMLAND
2. GOOD CLEAN WATER SOURCES

3. _____

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for land use/transportation in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

- ① REPAIR THE ROADS
 - ② TEAR DOWN DILAPIDATED BUILDINGS
 - ③ LIMIT BUILDING NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT UNTIL VACANT BUILDINGS ARE REPAIRED OR DEMOLISHED
- _____

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about different natural features in your community and throughout Niagara County, including forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitat, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years? In what ways?
- Does your community have access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? How could access to these areas be improved in your community as well as in other parts of Niagara County?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- In what ways are the environmental features in your community and across Niagara County an important part of your life?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. LIMITING DEVELOPMENT AROUND THE NATURAL RESOURCES
2. GET THE TOWNS, VILLAGES AND CITIES ON THE SAME PAGE CONCERNING ZONING AND LAND USAGE
3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. THE FALLS AS A TOURIST DESTINATION
2. THE ELIE CANAL
3. THE BEAUTIFUL PARKS AND GREEN ALONG LAKE ONTARIO

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for natural features and the environment in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

PROTECT THE SHORELINE OF LAKE ONTARIO
CLEAN UP THE ELIE CANAL CORRIDOR

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- > Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community and across Niagara County - perhaps news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings/layoffs), new construction projects, openings or closings of businesses, etc. What do you see or hear happening relative to the local economy?
- > Think about different types of infrastructure within your community and Niagara County as a whole (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing ones?
- > Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- > Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities in your community? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to economic development?

1. Easing the Tax Burden on Business
Becoming more "Business Friendly"
2. Lowering Construction Costs within the County
3. Obtaining more State and National Funds to Assist in Economic Development
4. Obtaining "Cheaper" Power from NYPA

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to economic development?

1. Possibility of obtaining cheaper power from NYPA
- 2.
- 3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for economic development in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

Lower taxes to get businesses to settle in
Niagara County

Get lower cost electricity for business use

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - Changes in factors such as technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, levels of service provided at other levels of government, etc.
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water, and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. UPDATE OR FIX THE INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE WHOLE COUNTY — ROADS, BRIDGES, WATER LINES
2. CONTROLLING MEDICAID COSTS
3. CLEAN UP BOND LAKE PARK AND OLCOTT HARBOR

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. THE PARK SYSTEM
2. WILSON AND OLCOTT HARBORS

3. THE ERIE CANAL

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for County services, facilities, and infrastructure in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

IMPROVE OUR PARK SYSTEM

IMPROVE OUR PORTAGE OF THE ERIE CANAL

CLEAN UP AND IMPROVE ACROSS AND THE
HARBOR

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community or in other parts of Niagara County that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to: resource centers (libraries, computer centers, career development/job placement services), higher education (colleges, universities or satellite facilities), workforce development programs (i.e. Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to education?

1. INFRASTRUCTURE REPAIR - OLD SCHOOL BUILDINGS
2. CONSOLIDATION - IF NOT A COUNTY WIDE SCHOOL SYSTEM, THEN SHARED SERVICES (THROUGH BOCH) FOR ALL THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS (DISTANCE LEARNING)
3. AFFORDABILITY - TOO MUCH BUDGET PLACED ON THE AVERAGE TAX PAYER

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to education?

1. STRONG SCHOOL SYSTEMS
2. RICH HISTORY TO DRAW UPON
3. AFFORDABLE HIGHER EDUCATION (NECC)

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for education in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

LOWER SCHOOL (PROPERTY) TAXES
SHARED SERVICES
UPDATE INFRASTRUCTURE

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of safety/security in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate visibility of police patrols in your community or the County as a whole? Who provides police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times and coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community? What types of events might your community or Niagara County experience that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community and/or Niagara County possess that would help during an emergency?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County's efforts to coordinate disaster/emergency preparedness programs?
- Do you feel that the safety/security of your community or Niagara County as a whole is affected by the Canadian border?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to public safety?

1. INCREASE IN DRUG TRAFFICKING IN THE COUNTY

2. SECURING OUR BORDER WITH CANADA

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to public safety?

1. DECENT SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

2. STRONG PRESENCE OF NYS POLICE IN THE COUNTY

3. DECENT POLICE SERVICES IN THE 3 CITIES

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for public safety in Niagara County?
Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

UPGRADE ALL OUR POLICE AGENCIES

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Do you think that your community has adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals, and adequate response times/coverage relative to ambulatory services? Do you think that Niagara County as a whole has adequate healthcare facilities and related services?
- Do you feel that your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise? What about the County as a whole?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats? Do you perceive there to be significant health concerns or health threats in surrounding communities or in Niagara County as a whole?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health and wellness? What types of programs are offered (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue in your community? How so? Do you perceive there to be significant environmental health concerns in surrounding communities or in Niagara County as a whole?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of programs and services offered by the Niagara County Health Department?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to public health?

1. AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE - LOWER MEDICARE
COSTS FOR THE COUNTY

2. CONTROL OF RABID ANIMALS

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to public health?

1. GOOD HOSPITALS
2. EXCELLENT COUNTY AID TO HANDICAPPED CHILDREN
3. GOOD CLEAN WATER

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for public health in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS TO:

**Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan
6311 Inducon Corporate Drive
Sanborn, NY 14132**

or

comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

RECEIVED
DEC 10 2008
NIAGARA CO. ECONOMIC DEV.

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Neil C. Riordan

TITLE: Mayor

MUNICIPALITY: Village of Youngstown

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: Village of Youngstown

MAILING ADDRESS: 240 Lockport Street, P.O. Box 168, Youngstown, NY 14174

PHONE NUMBER: 716 745-7721

EMAIL ADDRESS: cjt24@roadrunner.com

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no "greenfield" development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Redevelopment and environmental clean-up of our Youngstown Cold Storage site
an abandoned farmers cooperative on Elliott Street.
2. Preservation and enhancement of all Village owned Waterfront Parks and
potential additional aquisition to facilitate fishing, recreational boating
and across river ferry service.
3. Restoration of regional bus transportation to the Village and Fort Niagara to
energize tourism business and accomodate senior population access south.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Waterfront Park development completion north and south for vista enjoyment,
fishing, sailing and recreational boating and access for potential cross river
ferry return.
2. Route 18 River Road completed reconstruction plus pedestrian and bike path,
as one of WNY's most scenic drives and walkways along the Seaway Trail.

3. "Imagine Youngstown" Project with Niagara University Tourism Department
to promote Village Waterfront, Fort Niagara and Business Community and
create expanded business opportunities.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Continue initiative to successfully implement cross river ferry, network
all area Commerce Chambers to promote Youngstown; engage local residents to
support existing businesses; expand agriculture and historical site and tour
promotion and exhibit sites.

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Commercial Condo Development of Green Space entry to South Waterfront entry
eliminating spectacular vista and Main Street Business Theme -- a major challenge.
2. Beyond highly successful South Waterfront Park re-development to improve
Water Street and embankment, infrastructures approximately a \$2 million
project.
3. All Village Parks have been successfully redeveloped for family and Village
visitor recreational use and further resource expansion and maintenance
cost a major issue.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Spectacular Waterfront vistas, celebrated Level Sailing Regattas, Jet Boat and recreational boating resource sites in Western NY.
2. One of Western NY's most prolific fishing areas -- nearly 50% of all fishing tournament fish caught off the "bar" by Fort Niagara.
3. Three beautiful and accessible parks (i.e. 2 in Village) and Fort Niagara State Park plus the world famous Fort Niagara Historical site and visitors center.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Complete Water Street reconstruction and deteriorating retaining walls; Greenway and NYS grant funding; ecological restoration of Village and resident owned waterfront properties and habitats; support Niagara River Keeper Riparian Restoration Greenway Grant Project.

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed in your community's infrastructure to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing companies?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. Re-energizing the Business Community: diversity, quality of services,
special niches on feature products, and unifying the Business Association.
2. Attracting new and unique businesses that can succeed year round in this
seasonal and distant north community.
3. Engaging the area residents to support their local businesses, not just enjoy
the quality of life here but spend and buy locally.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

1. Certainly Fort Niagara, a must significant historical site attracting
100,000+ visitors annually; challenging these visitors into rather than around
the village is a challenge.
2. The Waterfront: Fast River Ferry initiative, year round fishing, more efficient
customs processing, more than one museum, marina service expansion.
3. Recreational sports tournament, concert and festival use of in village parks
and Fort Niagara State Park.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Village and Niagara River Chamber promotion of Village assets, resources and
businesses; Niagara University/Village "Imagine Youngstown" tourism project,
TV, radio, cable and newsletter promotions and ads, meet with key business
franchise and expanded WIFI services.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - External factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. \$.36 County Tax increase to Porter/Youngstown because we complied with NYS mandated full assessment is an unfair community burden, especially in this pressing economic cycle.
2. Niagara County IDA services need to be more aggressively marketed and services to smaller rural community businesses enterprise initiatives.
3. Niagara County Road Route signage needs update and replacement in many areas due to wear, weather and plowing/collision damage.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Niagara County Public Works Management is responsive to drainage and road and bridge issues reported.
2. Niagara County tub chipper rental facilitates our DPW brush chipping and recycling program and resident services.

3. Emergency response preparedness training is excellent as is emergency response agency coordination for storm, severe weather or environmental incidents.
-

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

More open and specific communications regarding homeland security, volunteer fire company state mandate expense, community development funding (i.e. fast ferry) vital service needs.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative education?

1. Requirement for additional after school education, training and supportive or supplemental activities: computer literacy, trade skills, etc.
2. Need for more corporate involvement in community to define WNY potential employee opportunities, needed skill sets, course requirements, etc.
3. Area summer and part-time student job opportunities are severely limited for students to aid college expenses and to apprentice for professions.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

1. Lewiston Porter School Academic rating is high and excellent resource for advanced education.
2. Solid network of area Library facilities with strong emphasis on youth reading programs coordinated with Lewiston Porter.
3. Niagara County Community College and Niagara Boces facilities in near by communities excellent resource for special workshop training if advantages better advertised.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

New Community Room for computer training and skill sharpening, special education and speakers, workshops, etc. \$10,000 funding to date, construction next quarter.

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the "visibility" of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County's efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public safety?

1. Very limited Niagara County Sheriffs support due to distance, time and
short staff.
2. Rarely receive incident reports from Niagara County Sheriff's Department on
Village calls.
3. Due to proximity to border, limited access to vitally needed Homeland Security
Funds as Police and Fire Agencies often first responders.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. Part-time, affordable and very accessible Police Department staff,
continued communication, special patrol assignments, bike and foot patrols.
2. Excellant Volunteer Fire Company, fire and ambulance response, deeply involved
with community as a partner.
3. Very responsvie to Village declared emergency disasters: i.e. gas leaks,
storm ice and wind, snow, etc.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Part-time police force in increasing crime and vandalism era; need much tighter and more communicative relationship with Niagara County Sheriffs for response, coordinator and incident reporting.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public health?

1. Proximity of Chemical Waste Management Facility and DEC in-action on low site facilitator agency to investigate site threats.
2. Expansion of CWM facility and constant transport of hazardous chemicals adjacent to Lewiston Porter Central School.
3. Severe winter cold weather and rising fuel costs especially for senior citizens.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

1. Excellant Parks system and area to facilitate walking, jogging, biking and recreational family activities.
2. Very accessible to in Village Health Club, Medical Offices and near by Clinic and Hospital facilities.
3. Police driving and Yacht Club and Coast Guard optional safety courses accessible and well thought and attended.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Major issue here of course is preventing further volume immort of hazardous chemicals to CWM and the facility expansion. More Professional Environmental Agency involvement in the site monitering and violations critical.

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NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
VANTAGE CENTRE – SUITE ONE
6311 INDUCON CORPORATE DRIVE
SANBORN, NEW YORK 14132**



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

DEC 6 2008

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Richard F. Soluri

TITLE: Mayor

MUNICIPALITY: Village of Lewiston

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 325 / 145 N 4th St Lewiston, NY 14092

PHONE NUMBER: 716-754-9152

EMAIL ADDRESS: mayor@villageoflewiston.com

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- > Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- > How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- > How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no "greenfield" development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- > Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Continuation of the Robert Moses Parkway between Niagara Falls and Lewiston.
2. Introduction of a Visitors Trolley from Niagara Falls to Lewiston to Youngstown, Old Fort Niagara.
3. Recreate additional Parking and improve outgoing traffic from Artpark.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. We are a walkable community.
2. A visitor freindly and scenic Parkway along the gorge between Lewiston and Niagara Falls.

Visitors + economy
parking
New EXIT
parking
exit

3. World class fishing and charter fishing destination.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

First class maintenance of Center Street, Lewiston Landing and Village Parks.

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

outlook
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What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Plant management to prevent erosion at Lewiston Landing hill.
2. Advance recreation and habitat areas at Lewiston Plateau.
3. Close Chemical Waste Management Hazardous Landfill located in Town of Porter.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Lower Niagara River and Lewiston Landing

2. Lewiston Plateau

3. Parks in and around the Village of Lewiston

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Maintain the Lower Niagara River shoreline. Beautification
of Center Street, Hennepin Park, Academy Park, and Seneca Park
The Lewiston Plateau Recreation and Habitat continued development.

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Consolidation

*Tourism
events*

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed in your community's infrastructure to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing companies?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. Transportation - Countywide and Regional

2. Improve and enhance the Niagara Parkway.

3. Winter activities to make our community a twelve month destination.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development? *Hotel Restaurant Row*

1. Consolidation of Governments.

2. Support of Artpark.

3. Good location: safe community to visit, live and work.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals. *Colon Mills Road*

Always strive to be better with a clean Village
and a multitude of Festivals and Activities.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - External factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Do we need County Government?

2. Do we need a County Legislation and, Town Supervisor.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Better use of Bond Lake Park.

2. Shrinkage of County Government.

3. Reduction in County Taxes.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Improve the Village of Lewiston's Sewer system.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts. *consolidation*
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative education?

1. Consolidation of School Systems.

2. School Taxes

3. Tie in Lewiston Porter Schools with the Niagara River Greenway

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

1. Niagara University

2. Niagara County Community College

3. Historic Landmarks

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

- Offer Adult Education courses in the Village.

- Attract Board members with common sense values and business backgrounds.

- Board Harmony

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the "visibility" of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County's efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs? COS ↑
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency? Police / Fire
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region? COS ↑

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public safety?

1. Eliminate Transportation of Hazardous Waste to Chemical
Waste Management sites.
2. Overall cost for Public Safety.
3. Establish a walkable community.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. Excellent Local Police Department.
2. Excellent Volunteer Fire Company.
3. Cooperation between Local Police Department, Border Patrol
State Police and County Sheriff Department.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Continue with High skilled and personable Police and Fire
departments.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public health?

1. We encourage good helath since we are a walkable community.

2. Citizens groups and elected Leaders must be determined to
to remove Chemical Waste Management from the Town of Porter.

3. Too much smoking outside of Local Restaurants.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

1. Mt. St. Mary's Hospital.

2. Two Nursing Homes.

3. Removal of Chemical Waste Management which will reduce
Heavy Truck traffic.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Choser relationships with Mt St Mary's Hospital.

Better understanding of County Health Services.

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SANBORN, NEW YORK 14132



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

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NOV 21 2008

NIAGARA CO. ECONOMIC DEV.

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Kathie K Smith

TITLE: Clerk-Treasurer

MUNICIPALITY: Village of Barker

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: N/A

MAILING ADDRESS: PO Box 298 Barker, NY 14012

PHONE NUMBER: 716-795-3777

EMAIL ADDRESS: barkervillage@roadrunner.com

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no "greenfield" development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Redevelopment of vacant properties. Attracting business
and industry to our small Village. Loss of our only industry
and largest water user by 50%.
2. Road improvements to support current truck traffic and to
allow increased usage from a more appropriate route.
3. Replacement of our ancient water lines and drainage system
to improve our residential properties as well.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Rural location, low traffic volume.
2. Relatively low taxes, low cost purchasing, and excellent
school system

3. All utilities available; ie. water, sewer, electric,
gas, phone, cable.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

The Village hopes to improve our infrastructure to attract business and light industry. Road improvements will facilitate existing truck traffic and allow increase. Working for grant funding and shared services.

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Erosion of shoreline at our lake park. Sink holes in this park also.
2. Creek that passes through village needs dredging for better water flow and reduce possibility of flooding.
3. Village Park on Main Street could use improvements to ice skating rink. Paving this facility would provide year-round usage for recreation.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. We continue to offer lake Ontario access at our BiCentennial Park. Park has gazebo, picnic tables, grills, and beautiful sunsets.
2. Our large Village park, located in the center of the Village on Main Street provides an excellent location for our Farmer's Market and other community gatherings.
3. Our rural setting provides a lovely backdrop for biking and walking. The school has a nature trail in the Village also for walking and cross country skiing.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

The Village is always looking for more uses of our parks. We hope to construct shoreline erosion protection and provide beach access that is not available now. Revamping the ice rink and adding basketball and skateboard usage is another goal. More picnic tables and benches are also necessary.

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed in your community's infrastructure to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing companies?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. Attracting business and industry to our Village.
2. Vacant businesses.
3. Support of local businesses and encouraging residents to
buy locally.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

1. All utilities available - water, sewer, electric,
natural gas, cable, phone.
2. Attractive "downtown" Main Street area. Farmer's Market
has brought in visitors from other areas.
3. Affordable pricing on available properties.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Our Planning Board is becoming more active in encouraging
economic growth. We hope to tap into County resources to help
attract business to our Village. The Village owns a 7 acre parcel
in an Industrial Zone that we hope to market to our advantage.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - External factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Our greatest issue is our decrepit water system.
2. Widening and refurbishing of West Somerset Road to
handle truck traffic entering the Village.
3. Uncertainty as to what County services are available to us.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Niagara County Public Works have been very helpful to us.
2. Niagara County Water District is always ready to come out
to help with a problem

3. Niagara County Health Department, as well as Treasurer.s

Office, Real Property, Clerk's Office, Data Processing,

Civil Service, Economic Development, Emergency Services, Print Shop, Risk Mgmt., Sheriff's Dept. have all been helpful.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Continue to communicate and work together to improve
services for our residents and businesses. Increase
communication.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to education?

1. Barker has an excellent school district. We have experienced
an increased tax burden due to the PILOT granted to AES.
This has resulted in loss of jobs.
2. As far as consolidation is concerned, it is a great distance to
the next district
3. Our local NIOGA Free Library struggles financially.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

1. Barker Central has had a pre-K program for many years.
We also have Community Education and Summer Recreation.
2. We have an excellent campus which is continually being
restored and improved.
3. _____

I feel the school administrators would be better to answer these.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Continue to communicate with the district residents.

Continue to strive for excellence.

Again, this section should be completed by Barker Central personnel.

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the "visibility" of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County's efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public safety?

1. We are fortunate to have our local Police. We don't seem to have much coverage from the Sheriff's Department. Our Department is part-time. If no one is on duty, we may have a long wait.
2. We are always in need of more volunteer firemen. Especially that are available during daytime hours.
3. Lack of funding to increase police hours, purchase better equipment. especially with the proximity of the AES plant.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. Local Barker Police Department provides coverage and "small town" service.
2. Volunteer Fire and Ambulance service with several EMT's.
3. Working with entire county on Emergency Response and Disaster Mitigation.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Continue to work together with all county agencies and municipalities to share resources to provide the safest environment for our residents. To encourage better participation in these endeavors.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public health?

1. Concern that our aging water system may contain lead.

2. Ten miles to ICMH. No doctor in the Village.

3. Need for more volunteers.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

1. Several volunteer EMT's in our Fire Department.
Access to Mercy Flight.
Village considering a tax exemption for Volunteer Firemen.
2. Barker Police Department has a defibrillator and all
officers have been trained to use it.
3. We have a Senior Nutrition Site at our firehall.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

There has been discussion on bringing a doctor and
dentist into the community. Continually looking for the
best method, most cost effective, of replacing water lines.

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NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
VANTAGE CENTRE – SUITE ONE
6311 INDUCON CORPORATE DRIVE
SANBORN, NEW YORK 14132**



Niagara Communities
Comprehensive Plan

RECEIVED

JAN 15 2009

NIAGARA CO. ECONOMIC DEV.

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE
NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: JOINT MEETING OF ZONING BOARD + PLANNING BOARD

TITLE: _____

MUNICIPALITY: TOWN OF WILSON

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: 375 LAKE ST, PO Box 537, WILSON NY 14172

PHONE NUMBER: 716 751 6704

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no "greenfield" development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Reddeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. ROAD & BRIDGE MAINTENANCE NEEDS TO BE
A PRIORITY
2. WE ALSO NEED TO MAINTAIN OUR IMAGE
AS AN AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY
3. IT WILL ALSO BE IMPORTANT TO DEVELOPE
A LINK THROUGH PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION WITH
THE REGIONAL CITIES (ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR SENIORS)

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. OUR BIGGEST ASSET IS OUR WATERFRONT AND THE
OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOPE TOURISM. WE HAVE A
LARGE STATE PARK WITH THE SEAWAY + NIAGARA WINE TRAILS
2. WE ALSO HAVE SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF LAND
SITLL AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPEMENT

3. WE ALSO HAVE AN INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR SOUTH OF THE VILLAGE ON ROUTE 425, THIS AREA LEADS ITSELF TO SMALLER INDUSTRY WITH ACCESS TO ASTATE RIVER

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

- 1) THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WORKABLE MASTER PLAN
- 2) REZONING & UPDATING OF ZONING LAWS
- 3) DEVELOPMENT OF SUFFICIENT SEWER & WATER SYSTEMS

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. WATERFRONT SHORE EROSION WITH HIGH WATER LEVELS AS WELL AS WATER QUALITY
2. DEVELOPMENT OF REGULATIONS WITH REGARD TO THE USE OF WINDPOWER
3. DEVELOPMENT OF A COUNTYWIDE DITCHING PROGRAM

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. OUR COMMUNITY IS BLESSED BY HAVING THE
WATER FRONT ACCESS PROVIDED BY A STATE PARK
ADJACENT TO A PICTURESQUE HARBOR
2. BECAUSE OF THE SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF
UNDEVELOPED LAND, WE CAN PROPERLY PLAN FOR
DEVELOPMENT THAT CAN PRESERVE THE PEACEFUL
COMMUNITY WE NOW ENJOY.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

DEVELOPMENT OF A ZONING PLAN AND
ZONING LAWS TO PRESERVE THESE
NATURAL FEATURES

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
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- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. OUR PROXIMITY TO CITIES CAN BE A CHALLENGE ESPECIALLY FOR SENIORS
2. THE DISTANCE CAN MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO DRAW INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
3. ANOTHER ISSUE IS THE LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SEAWAY AND NIAGARA WINE TRAILS CAN SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT TOURISM
2. THE NEW YORK STATE TUSCARORA PARK PROPERTY ALONG BOTH THE EAST + WEST BRANCH OF TWELVE MILE CREEK
3. MAINTAINING OF THE AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

- 1) MAINTENANCE OF ROAD, BRIDGES, SEWER AND WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS
- 2) DEVELOPMENT OF MORE SERVICES AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FOR AN AGING POPULATION
- 3) WE FEEL IT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO EVERYONE IF THE COUNTRY WOULD GET RID OF PROPERTIES + BUSINESS THAT WOULD BE BETTER IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
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 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - External factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. WE GET EXCELLENT COVERAGE FROM THE SHERIFFS DEPT & OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES
2. WE HAVE TWO WELL TRAINED & EQUIPED VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES
- 3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. These items should be listed as assets
- 2.

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

SMALLER AND MORE EFFICIENT GOVT. SERVICES

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to education?

1. FINANCIAL ISSUES ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES
WITH REGARDS TO EDUCATION SCHOOLS RELY
HEAVILY ON STATE AID
2. STATE MANDATES, DECLINING FUNDAMENT
MAKE COSTS DIFFICULT ON SCHOOL DISTRICTS
3. COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION (COLLEGE) & THE LACK
OF LOCAL EMPLOYMENT IS CREATING CHALLENGES
FOR OUR YOUTH

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

1. A STRONG ACADEMIC PROGRAM RANKED
HIGHLY ON A REGULAR BASIS AT A GOOD COST PER
STUDENT
2. PLENTY OF ACTIVITIES FOR OUR YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE
IN
3. OUR BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS ARE IN VERY GOOD
CONDITION

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

MAINTAIN OUR HIGH STANDARDS AND EXPAND
TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the "visibility" of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County's efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public safety?

1. THE LACK OF PROGRAMS AND CARE
FOR AN ELDERLY POPULATION
2. LACK OF A COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
PLAN
3. WITH THE INCREASED TIME OBLIGATIONS AND
TRAINING REQUIRED IT BECOMES DIFFICULT
TO MAINTAIN A VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

COMPLETE A COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public health?

1. THE TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS WASTE THROUGH THE AREA
2. WATER QUALITY INCLUDING RUNOFF AND OUR STOREFRONT
- 3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

1. Our CLEAN RURAL ENVIRONMENT IS A HUGE ASSET
2. ACTIVE FIRE COMPANY PROCEEDS IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITY TRAINING AND HEALTH SERVICES (BLOOD PRESSURE TESTING)
3. FITNESS EQUIPMENT IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS IS OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
- 4) PROXIMITY TO LOCAL HOSPITALS

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS TO:
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VANTAGE CENTRE - SUITE ONE
6311 INDUCON CORPORATE DRIVE
SANBORN, NEW YORK 14132



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Melissa Germann

TITLE: Planning Board Member and Secretary

MUNICIPALITY: Town of Wheatfield

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: Planning Board

MAILING ADDRESS: 2800 Church Road, North Tonawanda, NY 14120

PHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL ADDRESS: Germann@buffalo.edu

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no “greenfield” development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. We have a shortage of East/West roads. There is also a possible issue facing North/South roads => waiting time at intersections.

2. Major economic impact (Oz project) may have significant impact on local roads. Setbacks should be increased to plan for future expansion of Niagara Falls Blvd.

3. Increasing commercial uses along commercial corridor.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. If Oz project comes to fruition, the project will alter the Town of Wheatfield forever.

2. Commercial Development contiguous to the Airport.

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Preserving farmland => Comprehensive Plan Task Force is working toward, possibly, PDRs and TDRs.

Oz => the Task force is beginning to plan for the possibility of a large scale theme park.

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Preservation of NYS and Federal wetlands.

Revisiting berm requirements.

2. Preventing government entities expansion of floodplains.

3. Improving Town drainage, the town is flat.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Niagara River

2. Bull Creek, Cayuga Creek

3. Bergholz Creek, Sawyer Creek

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Preserving greenspace and recreation space

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed in your community's infrastructure to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing companies?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. Commercial development to revisit zoning along major routes coming into the Town,
especially along Niagara Falls Blvd.

2. Attracting commercial and industrial parks => need regional economic development
coordinated effort.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

1. Airport, waterfront, railroads

2. Industrial parks

3. Proximity to thruways

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Get organized.

Have some goals and objectives.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - External factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Oppenheim park should be better maintained. The park could also be upgraded.

2. Emergency communication system.

- 3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. If Oppenheim were maintained, the park could be a major asset.

- 2.

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to education?

1. Niagara Wheatfield Central School is almost at capacity.

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

1.

2.

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the “visibility” of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County’s efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public safety?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public health?

1.

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

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NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
VANTAGE CENTRE – SUITE ONE
6311 INDUCON CORPORATE DRIVE
SANBORN, NEW YORK 14132



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Richard J. Meyers

TITLE: Supervisor, Town of Somerset

MUNICIPALITY: Town of Somerset

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION:

MAILING ADDRESS: 8700 Haight Road, Barker, New York 14012

PHONE NUMBER: 716-795-3575

EMAIL ADDRESS: richardmeyers@roadrunner.com

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no “greenfield” development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Preservation of rural character and associated agricultural areas while developing our base with clean commercial and industrial development.

2. Highlight the need for county transportation amenities that our residents pay for that currently do not service this part of the county. The associated cost of fuel when no other transportation resource is offered is a heavy burden on the residents of Somerset.

3. County bridge and road repair seem to be lagging the need.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Large availability of open land and wind resource for wind plant development.

2. Waterfront access for both residential and industrial uses with the additional possibility of a port facility associated with AES Somerset.

3. Access to the Somerset Railroad rail system.
-
-
-

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Development while in keeping with our rural character. This can be accomplished by pursuing the types of businesses that are in keeping with our community characteristics. Companies such as microchip assembly or other clean businesses can coexist with the rural farming land use that we currently have here in Somerset.

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Development of a waterfront public recreational park for our residents.
-
-
-

2. Drainage that crosses municipal boundaries must be coordinated to meet the needs of each community. State and County drainage ditches must be kept clean to insure proper drainage of properties and roadways.
-
-
-

3. Shoreline erosion promises to increase if the International Joint Commission chooses to raise the lake levels in opposition to the wishes of the coastal residents.
-
-
-

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. The Lake Ontario shoreline and all of the benefits that come along with it..

2. Large amounts of green space.

3. The close proximity to the waterfront creates steady winds that are beneficial for harvesting the power of that wind.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Insure that we pursue the proper size wind plant for our area that can both utilize our wind assets as well as not obstructing our natural beauty.

Create a community park on the waterfront property that has been agreed upon to be turned over to the Town from AES Somerset.

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
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- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. Declining stable tax base from commerce and industry. Too much dependence on one taxing entity (AES Somerset).

2. Not enough of the necessary promotion from outside of the Town of Somerset, eg. IDA, NCCED, Empire State Development Corporation.

3. The need to bring the small portion of the residents who are strongly against any development in our town into the mindset that it is necessary to survive.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

1. Available large acreage property on the Lake Ontario shoreline for companies that need waterfront access or cool clean water for their processes.

2. The Possibility of low cost power and steam access through an industrial partnership with AES for potential industrial applications.

3. Low taxes, good schools, and cheap housing and property.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Pursue business that can locate in our town and utilize the many assets we have. We need to meet with the different economic development groups in NYS to insure we are being properly represented to those companies who are looking to locate in our state.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
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 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. The Water district is the only county services available in the Town of Somerset.

2. The county does not recognize the need in Somerset as being significant enough to be worth the additional cost associated with a community far from the county services centers.

3. We do not have accessible public transportation to get to the county services.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. There are none.

- 2.

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Encourage the County to establish a mobile services unit to bring county services out to the Town of Somerset, as well as other towns, so the residents would not have to travel the 60 – 100 mile round trip to access most community services.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
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- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to education?

1. Excessive educational taxation.

2. Opening the school grounds to the community when available.

3. AES Pilot and State tax losses and the additional cuts needed at the school.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

1. Good school system at Barker Central School.

2. Many good colleges within driving distance.

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Reduce cost at Barker Central School. Bring in additional and diverse revenue for the district.

Consolidate duplicate services of the Town, Village and District.

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the “visibility” of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County’s efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public safety?

1. Evening police coverage.

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. Local police force.

2. Large, well equipped fire and rescue department.

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public health?

1. Too far away from major medical centers.

2. No local fitness centers.

3. No local major grocery shopping center

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

1. Farming community with fresh fruits and vegetables during the harvest months.

2. Clean air and water

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

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Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

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NIAGARA CO. ECONOMIC DEV.

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Spira, George

TITLE: Chairperson of the Town of Porter Planning Board

MUNICIPALITY: Town of Porter

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: 327 Riverview Drive, Youngstown, NY 14174

PHONE NUMBER: 745-9924

EMAIL ADDRESS: JSASPIRA@aol.com

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no "greenfield" development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. A need for senior citizen housing with a potential for transportation needs to be met.
2. We should plan for the commercial development of lands associated with the Lake Ontario Ordinance Works (LOOW) which is about 1500 acres after it is made available.
3. Land use should be about 70% agriculture, 20% residential and 10% commercial/industrial.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. We need to revitalize agriculture by increasing the demand for local agricultural products.
2. Growth in single family housing will slow down over the next 10 years.

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
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What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. The cost of electricity is disproportionate for the fact that it is generated in our area. Locally generated energy should assist our business development.
2. We are not centrally located.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

1. We need to entice people to this area for the months of April – October. Our housing is very reasonable, but the taxes are a detriment.

2.

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
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 - Changes in your community's economic base
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 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Serious consolidation of all aspects of gov't. services to
reduce the cost of government, hence taxes.
2. Reduce the size of the legislature, merge towns and
villages, school districts.
3. Put welfare and social services recipients on infra-
structure improvement. Use BOCES as a training
ground for the people using the system.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. _____

2. _____

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to education?

1. We should look at a consolidated Lewiston-Porter-Wilson school district with state of the art educational opportunities.
2. Expand the libraries to serve multiple purposes, such as a latchkey service, and to service the younger generation.
- 3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the “visibility” of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County’s efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public safety?

This comment should be under public health./

1. The sewer and water infrastructure must allow for
future development. (a) adequately repair the existing
system and (b) ensure expansion potential, this
2. would include the hamlet of Ransomville.

3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public health?

1.

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS TO:
NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
VANTAGE CENTRE – SUITE ONE
6311 INDUCON CORPORATE DRIVE
SANBORN, NEW YORK 14132



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: BARBARA HATHAWAY

TITLE: PLANNING BOARD CHAIRMAN

MUNICIPALITY: TOWN OF NIAGARA

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: 7105 LOCKPORT ROAD

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FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no "greenfield" development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

- resident* 1. Less residential area available for new construction. Try to determine best use of current vacant land that would benefit community.
- business* 2. Seek different developers for business area. Excellent access to interstate & rail transportation.
- industry* 3. Transportation feature can be developed to expand local industry.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

- resident* 1. Highly regarded school district is an asset to the town. Community Center/Park current and future development is positive.
- business* 2. Ease of public transportation; NFTA location, bring shippers to Outlet. Easy access for shippers and couriers. Two businesses will benefit -

industry 3. Easy access for transporting goods to area industrial parks, etc.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

- resid. 1. Continue to preserve natural environment as much as possible i.e. Iowa Park.
- business 2. Encourage developers to maintain green spaces and bring into the area businesses that will not harm our environment.
- industry 3. Develop more industrial area/parks for better concentration and encourage maintaining as much green space as possible.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

res. 1. Jew of Neagura Community Park - protecting & enhancing a large green space for use by community. Plans to provide all year round (12 mo) recreation for residents.

busin. 2.

ind. 3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

resident - Complete plans for Jew Park & maintain.

Maintain BF landfill and stone quarry when all operations has been completed and both are closed.

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed in your community's infrastructure to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing companies?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. Town is limited to development of gun space. Military Road development has been the emphasis.
2. Military Road has been the main development emphasis. Shopping areas as well as medical offices and business/agencies.
3. Important to find proper tenants for Pease base when military leaves.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

1. Military Road business district and access to I-90.
2. "Medical Corridor" developing on northern part of Military Road.
3. Tenants for US Pease Base can bring employment to area.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - External factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. *improvement and/or repair of any county roads and bridges*
2. *making county services more available to Iroquois residents (young and old residents)*
3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. *Close proximity to opportunities offered at County parks.*
2. *Availability of County water & sewer systems*

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to education?

1. Maintaining the quality of education in the N-W School District without a substantial increase of taxes.
2. Lack of a satellite educational opportunity that could be established in one of the vacant storefronts in the Town.
3. Provide better access to workplace development programs for residents. Schedule outreach services on a weekly basis in Town area.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

1. A highly regarded school district that is a draw for residential development.
2. Potential for satellite educational opportunity.
- 3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the "visibility" of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County's efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public safety?

1. *The potential of a hazardous incident that requires a hazard response procedure.*

2. *The potential of an air port incident.*

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. *Cooperation of local industries that manufacture hazardous material, transported through the town, works with town to establish a hazardous response procedure.*

2. *Cooperation with the air base that allows their special response equipment to be used during an appropriate emergency.*

3. *Cooperation of neighboring fire districts to share equipment during an emergency.*

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public health?

1. A program for seniors of the Town to become better informed of available County and not for profit services.
2. A better system to provide ambulatory services for all areas of the Town.
3. Ability to expand nutrition program provided currently at the Town Community Center. Transportation for seniors is an ongoing issue. Seniors need good nutrition and socialization on a regular basis.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

1. A Town Park Activity building capable of hosting county presentations for available services to residents.
2. A good road network to access healthcare facilities.

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

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Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Robert Pettit and Laura Rutland

TITLE: Town Council

MUNICIPALITY: Town of Newfane

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION:

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PHONE NUMBER: 716 778-8531

EMAIL ADDRESS: tonsupervisor@roadrunner.com

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no “greenfield” development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Lack of sufficient public transportation!! Our population is aging.

2. No major highway – north to south- Route. NYS Route 78 for all intense purposes ends in Lockport, NY

- 3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. The Harbor at Olcott beach at the mouth of 18 Mile Creek. Our lakefront has enormous potential for recreational, industrial & agricultural development.
2. The fishery in 18 Mile Creek, the fish stocking program attracts sportsmen from all states, Canada – from the Lake to the Burt Dam is a world class attraction.

3. We host the best fruit growing lands in North America – Strong agricultural base.
-
-
-

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Maximize our natural resources by revitalizing historic Olcott Beach attractions, town village shops, carousel project, Krull Park and swimming enhancement.

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Harbor Breakwall at Olcott Harbor – this has long history of study & NO ACTION.
-
-
-

2. The beach at Krull Park has remained a problem for years – County of Niagara only recently has made public swimming possible.
-
-
-

3. Assisting towns to remediate Brownfields ie: old gas stations with contaminated areas.
-
-
-

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. The harbor at Olcott and all lakeshore areas.

2. The Fishery – Lake Ontario – 18 Mile Creek – Fisherman’s Park at Burt Dam – World class.

3. Agricultural acreage – The Ontario plain presents finest acreage in North America – finest fruit orchards period!

Describe your community’s goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Town of Newfane has enacted a Wind Ordinance to protect agricultural areas and also promote wind energy plans.

Applying for all grants to enhance agriculture, fishery and recreation opportunities.

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed in your community’s infrastructure to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing companies?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. Eliminating & Redevelopment of aging structures & properties ie: Brownfields (old gas stations)

2. Lack of light industry – Very few jobs

3. Constant struggle to maintain successful small businesses.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

1. Excellent community hospital & local school system. Great environment for families and light industry

2. Harbor – Fishery – Waterfront

3. Excellent geography & lake effect that supports the best fruit farms in the world

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Town of Newfane has a master plan & zoning and planning mechanisms to assist progress.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
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 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. No major North/South highway

2. Struggle to maintain present water, sewer, etc. Expensive and constant.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Krull Park is the only County presence in our town – Any enhancement would be appreciated.

2. No County offices in our town – Town Hall project on Main St. will make information more available.

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Improve Krull Park!!!

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to education?

1. The school system is the largest taxing entity in the town. School tax levies are higher than the county's.

2. More transportation to get citizens to NCCC or any other higher educational venues.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

1. The local school system is excellent. Our local community hospital is profitable and extremely efficient.

2. NCCC provides opportunities for all ages. Inexpensive first step for higher education pursuits.

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Cooperate with school organizations and groups. Local churches are quite active and need support. Also volunteer fire companies to give educational instruction.

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the “visibility” of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County’s efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public safety?

1. More road patrols – either county or state

2. Curfew enforcement

3. Waterfront – International Harbor – Need video camera in Olcott Marina

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. Response time for 1st responders, especially fire and EMS is unparalleled. Miller Hose, has only paramedics in Western Niagara County.

2. Neighbor watch groups with Niagara County support are now effective in our town.

3. Town drafting an emergency plan document

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

State Police negotiating for office space (satellite) in old town hall on Transit Rd. We encourage
any increase in Police patrols in Town of Newfane.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public health?

1. Pollution in area streams. Reducing mercury levels etc.
-
-

2. Residue from agricultural spraying.
-
-

3. Eliminate contaminated properties in the community especially old gas stations.
-
-

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

1. Local hospital very active in local events and media.

2. Response of first responders – fire, ambulance etc. Volunteer fire companies more effective than paid city units.

3. Public education from fire units & County Health Dept is very good.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Support all efforts of our hospitals and volunteer fire companies to continue their excellent efforts.

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comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com

OR

**Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan
6311 Inducon Corporate Drive
Sanborn, NY 14132**



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: MARC R. SMITH

TITLE: SUPERVISOR

MUNICIPALITY: TOWN OF LOCKPORT

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: _____

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PHONE NUMBER: 716-478-0601

EMAIL ADDRESS: MARC@ELUCKPORT.COM

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no "greenfield" development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. MAINTAINING INFRASTRUCTURE, FIX AGING INFRASTRUCTURE
AND EXPAND INFRASTRUCTURE AS COMMUNITY GROWS - WATER/SEWER
2. BRIDGE MAINTENANCE & REPAIR
3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. INEXPENSIVE LAND FOR DEVELOPMENT
2. INFRASTRUCTURE GROWTH CAPACITY

3. GOVERNMENT WILLING TO WORK WITH DEVELOPERS
TO ENCOURAGE QUALITY GROWTH.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

① TRANSIT NORTH - THEMED HISTORIC RETAIL SHOPPING DIST.

② NEW IDA DIRECTLY WITH SUPERVISOR LEADING DEVELOPMENT

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- > Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- > Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- > Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- > Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. UNFUNDED STATE / FEDERAL MANDATES

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. CANAL

2. NIAGARA ESCAPEMENT

3. AGRICULTURE / FARMING → MORE AGRI-TOURISM

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

EXPANDING PARKS

BUILDING BIKEPATH / WALKWAYS

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed in your community's infrastructure to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing companies?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. NATIONAL ECONOMY

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

1. WNY STIGMATISM AS RUST BELT - POOL - SNOW BOUND.

2.

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

SECURING MONEY FOR COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR INFRASTRUCTURE
25 MILLION NEEDED.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - External factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. THE PERCEPTION THAT CONSOLIDATION WILL MAKE GOVERNMENT MORE EFFICIENT.

2. POOR COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN LEGISLATORS - SUPERVISORS

3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. _____

2. _____

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to education?

1. THIS SURVEY IS WAY TOO LONG.

2. _____

3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

1. CUT SCHOOL PROPERTY TAXES IN 1/2.

2. _____

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the "visibility" of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County's efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public safety?

1. COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES ARE NOT READY FOR AN EMERGENCY.

2. WE NEED TO HOLD A LIFE DRILL AT LEAST 1 TIME PER YEAR. TURN OFF THE POWER & SEE WHAT WORKS.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. NYS POLICE

2.

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public health?

1.

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS TO:
NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
VANTAGE CENTRE – SUITE ONE
6311 INDUCON CORPORATE DRIVE
SANBORN, NEW YORK 14132



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: *See Below.

TITLE:

MUNICIPALITY: Town of Lewiston

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: Town of Lewiston

MAILING ADDRESS: 1375 Ridge Road Lewiston, New York 14092

PHONE NUMBER: (716)754-8213

EMAIL ADDRESS: cbrandon@townoflewiston.us

- * Timothy Masters-Building & Zoning Officer
- *Robert Martinez- Chairman of the Town of Lewiston Planning Board
- * Carol J. Brandon-Town Clerk
- * Police Chief Christopher Salada
- *John Sharpe, Ass't. Engineer/GIS Specialist

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
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 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Current Master Plan consistent with Town Code,

2. Attract & encourage commercial tax base within existing
business zones.

3. Continue to encourage use of designated bike paths and walking
trails.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Escarpment, river access & park land i.e. Picturesque views.

2. Promotion of country like setting.

3. Senior Citizen Center and transportation availability.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Promote continued stability in established neighborhoods.

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Protect open areas, woodland, wild life habitats & water courses from encroachment of development.
2. Controlled development river front & gorge & escarpment areas.
3. Insure that mining within the Town is controlled for the safety of the Town and aesthetics of our community.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Park land/waterfront & ways.

2. Escarpment

3. Bike paths/walking trails.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Preserve the Niagara Escarpment and the Niagara Gorge.

Town Environmental Commission established to protect our
environmental concerns.

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed in your community's infrastructure to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing companies?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. Distance from an airport maybe a challenge to economic development.
2. Existing transportation costs, fees, taxes.
3. Limited economic prosperity during seasonal conditions.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

1. Closeness to the NYS Thruway & International Bridge; the Falls/tourists.
2. Hospital facilities & nursing home availability.
3. Fresh water fishing facilities and an agricultural area i.e NYS Wine Trail.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Continue to encourage economic vitality of the Town & Village of Lewiston including the Hamlet of Sanborn.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
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 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
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 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - External factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Underdevelopment of the County & State Parks.

2. Areas of Lewiston that are part of the Niagara County Sewer Dist.
are not sewered but continue to pay fees for the plant.

3. Ongoing problems in the Town with drainage issues

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Current parks maintained by the County could be better utilized
if maintained aggressively.

2. _____

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

County parks should be maintained to meet standards of county residents. Near term goals for upgrades and repairs on sanitary sewer infrastructure.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative education?

1. Population growth would enable school districts to improve and better utilize their current facilities.
2. STAR programs which alleviate burden for all residents would be continued.
- 3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

1. Our current school districts can accomodate growth.
2. Recent capital improvements to our school systems are an asset to the entire community.
3. Greenway Commission's allocated funds will enhance our entire educational facilities without placing a burden on the taxpayers and residents.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

- To utilize any and all available funding sources.
- Safe and reliable transportation.
- Maintain the high standard of quality education.

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the “visibility” of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County’s efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public safety?

1. Challenges to illegal activities along Niagara River and the international bridge. (Lewiston Queenston Bridge)
2. Increase in crime and having to deal with less personnel. i.e. illegal drug use and sales.
3. Current traffic to CWM(hazardous waste facility) by chemical trucks poses a potential danger to the Town. Large volumes of trucks carrying refuse to Modern Disposal site has major concerns for the Town on the highways.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. Lewiston has its' own Police Dept. that works in conjunction with the Niagara County Sheriffs Ept. and the NYS Police.
2. Active U.S. Border Patrol Agency presence at the Niagara River access and bridge areas.
3. Trained volunteer firemen and HAZMAT teams provide protection and safety when an incident occurs.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Having the New York Power Authority located in the Town of Lewiston brings potential terrorism threats to our community and a need to encourage an open communication & preparedness with all agencies involved. To keep our community safe with the budget afforded to us and the current laws that we have.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative public health?

1. LOOW Site,
2. Out of town hazardous waste being trucked thru the Town of Lewiston.
3. Agricultural spraying poses a threat to our water and air quality.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

1. Hospital and nursing facilities are available.

2. Provide transportation for our senior citizens to get to our
medical corridor.

3. Provide a facility for seniors to partake in "Meals on Wheels"
availability and other seniors activities in the Town of Lewiston.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Insure that our drinking water is free of pharmaceutical
contaminants.

Continue efforts to cease having hazardous wastes being trucked
into our community.

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VANTAGE CENTRE – SUITE ONE
6311 INDUCON CORPORATE DRIVE
SANBORN, NEW YORK 14132



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

RECEIVED
JAN 30 2009
NIAGARA CO. ECONOMIC DEV.

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Michael Hartman

TITLE: Zoning officer

MUNICIPALITY: Town of Hartland

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: 8942 Ridge Rd Gosport, N.Y. 14067

PHONE NUMBER: 716-735-7778

EMAIL ADDRESS: mehlhrtmann@yahoo.com

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
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 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Desperation of development

2. Keeping Ag characteristics

3. Re Opening Bridge (wreck rd) for corridors to Erie Canal and alternate Rts

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Location of Emergency Services

2. Agri-tourism

3. People

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Re-development of The Township - New Face For Buildings - expansion of recreation park for more tourism. We are on the wine Trail - would like to see these people passing through to stop and smell our roses

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Old buildings in need of repair
2. Constant battle to clean up
3. Making room for more people to enjoy the park

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Opportunity For Park Expansion - This could be one of the nicest Parks in Niagara County - excluding State Parks
2. 104 Corridor - Wine Trail Brings People right Through Hartard
3. Agricultural land.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Currently investigating types of Grants to help with Park expansion

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed in your community's infrastructure to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing companies?
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- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. Lack of Building

2. Jobs

3. Taxes

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

1. Land to Build.

2.

3. Increase in total Town Value to bring Tax Rates down

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Building lots have been made larger to promote green space - also smaller lots grandfathered for building
Town feels that more tourism from wine trail will help economic status - Resulting in more development

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - External factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Lack of Police Protection
Contact with another municipality for protection
2. Distance to health providers
3. Road Maintenance

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. _____
2. _____

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

None

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to education?

1. — Three school districts — one district is for another County

2. —

3. —

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

1. — Two school districts — Change all residents to Niagara County

2. —

3. —

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

— None — Suggestions

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the “visibility” of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County’s efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public safety?

1. lack of police enforcement

2. _____

3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Contract with other municipalities for protection

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals?
Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public health?

1. Distance to Health Providers

2. —

3. —

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

None Suggesting

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS TO:

comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com

OR

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

6311 Inducon Corporate Drive

Sanborn, NY 14132



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY OUTREACH SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS. Please feel free to fill out as much or as little of this survey as you like. The survey can be filled out electronically and submitted to us by email at the address below or it can be printed out and mailed to us in hard copy using the address listed on the last page. **The deadline for submitting surveys is Friday, May 15, 2009.** Your input is very important to the planning process and your responses will help shape the Final Draft Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan. If you have any questions, please email us at comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com. Thank you for your interest and participation!

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Robert J. O'Toole

TITLE: Town Attorney

MUNICIPALITY: Town of Wheatfield

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: _____

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FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in the type of development that you see occurring or changes in community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community and Niagara County as a whole: Agricultural, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Recreational, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community and Niagara County as a whole?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no “greenfield” development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: agricultural areas not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community and throughout Niagara County including construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, passenger air and rail service, cargo transportation, recreational opportunities along roadways/trailways/waterways, etc. Have there been many changes in transportation services or public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and maritime uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Availability of convenient mass transit.

2. Traffic in some areas, particularly on north/south roads in the Western part of the county (Wheatfield, in particular). Condition of roads in several of the cities in the county.

3. Inadequacy of Niagara Falls Airport

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Niagara Falls Airport

2. Confluence of air, rail, and road transportation systems (Niagara County could be a regional transportation hub with roads and rail service available at the airport).

3. General lack of traffic congestion`

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for land use/transportation in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

Improve the condition of the roads, particularly in the cities. Widen north south roads, particularly in Wheatfield.. Accelerate reconstruction of Niagara Falls Boulevard. Develop the airport into a transportation hub, combining rail, road and air traffic.

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about different natural features in your community and throughout Niagara County, including forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitat, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years? In what ways?
- Does your community have access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? How could access to these areas be improved in your community as well as in other parts of Niagara County?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- In what ways are the environmental features in your community and across Niagara County an important part of your life?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Improve public access to the upper Niagara River.

2. Preserve green space and open land, including agricultural protection.

3. Redevelop brownsfields in urban areas.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Availability of water resources.

2. Relatively abundant open spaces.

3. Natural resources, such as fishing, can be used to promote economic development.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for natural features and the environment in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

Promote preservation of green space, including agricultural lands. I do not favor removal of the parkway and I do not think that eco-tourism has realistic economic potential. I do, however, see the benefit to continuing to develop the sport fishing industry.

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community and across Niagara County - perhaps news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings/layoffs), new construction projects, openings or closings of businesses, etc. What do you see or hear happening relative to the local economy?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community and Niagara County as a whole (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing ones?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities in your community? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to economic development?

1. High taxes, both New York State and local.

2. The approval process for economic development projects in some jurisdictions. Some, such as Wheatfield, are significantly better than others.

3. Multi-layered approval and funding process.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to economic development?

1. Location

2. Availability of water

3. Work force

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for economic development in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

Niagara County needs to recognize that it can no longer have primarily an industrial economy.

We need to promote tourism and transportation opportunities. Our proximity to Canada, as well the major population centers of both the US and Canada, is a significant asset. The Niagara Falls Airport and availability of power at a reasonable cost could be assets, but are not at the present time.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - Changes in factors such as technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, levels of service provided at other levels of government, etc.
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water, and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Deteriorating roads and infrastructure, particularly in the cities.

2. Population that is too dependent on governmental assistance.

3. Recreational opportunities, especially, parks, could be better.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

- 1.

- 2.

3. _____

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for County services, facilities, and infrastructure in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

Improve road conditions. The County could use additional park land and improve the existing park system. Water and sewer service outside of the cities are more than adequate.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community or in other parts of Niagara County that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to: resource centers (libraries, computer centers, career development/job placement services), higher education (colleges, universities or satellite facilities), workforce development programs (i.e. Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to education?

1. In general, the quality of education in Niagara County is good.

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to education?

1.

2.

3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for education in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of safety/security in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate visibility of police patrols in your community or the County as a whole? Who provides police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times and coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community? What types of events might your community or Niagara County experience that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community and/or Niagara County possess that would help during an emergency?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County's efforts to coordinate disaster/emergency preparedness programs?
- Do you feel that the safety/security of your community or Niagara County as a whole is affected by the Canadian border?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to public safety?

1. Crime in urban areas.

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to public safety?

1.

2.

3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for public safety in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Do you think that your community has adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals, and adequate response times/coverage relative to ambulatory services? Do you think that Niagara County as a whole has adequate healthcare facilities and related services?
- Do you feel that your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise? What about the County as a whole?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats? Do you perceive there to be significant health concerns or health threats in surrounding communities or in Niagara County as a whole?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health and wellness? What types of programs are offered (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue in your community? How so? Do you perceive there to be significant environmental health concerns in surrounding communities or in Niagara County as a whole?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of programs and services offered by the Niagara County Health Department?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to public health?

1. Inability to attract top notch health care providers.

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to public health?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for public health in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS TO:

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

6311 Inducon Corporate Drive

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Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

RECEIVED

MAY 18 2009

NIAGARA CO. ECONOMIC DEV.

NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY OUTREACH SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS. Fill out as much or as little of this survey as you like. When you are finished, please mail it back to us at the address listed on the last page. You can also scan it and email it to us or leave it with project staff at any of the community outreach meetings. You can download an electronic copy of the survey from the project website at www.niagaracounty.com/ComprehensivePlan.asp by clicking on the "Feedback" link. The downloadable survey can be filled out electronically, saved, and submitted to us by email or printed out and submitted in hard copy. **All surveys must be received by Friday, May 15, 2009.** Your input is very important to the planning process and your responses will help shape the final Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan. If you have any questions, please email us at comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com. Thank you for your interest and participation!

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

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Paul Lehman

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CCE, Niagara County Extension Educator

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FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- > Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in the type of development that you see occurring or changes in community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community and Niagara County as a whole: Agricultural, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Recreational, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community and Niagara County as a whole?
- > How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- > How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no "greenfield" development potential) ** What do you mean by this?*
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: agricultural areas not being developed
- > Think about transportation in your community and throughout Niagara County including construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, passenger air and rail service, cargo transportation, recreational opportunities along roadways/trailways/waterways, etc. Have there been many changes in transportation services or public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and maritime uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Need for directed growth

2. Need for countryside planning - in light of conservative values and attitudes, it does not seem this happening until the "last is out of the barn" or success of other models is observed

3. NFTA needs to think smaller in designing public transportation, incentives locally for car-pooling

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Urban sprawl is not yet out of control to the point of making agriculture an artifact of history. However, transportation needs to be responsive to growth patterns & safety. Incentives implemented

2. growth can encourage in-filling and savings on transportation costs
2. People are starting to appreciate localism in food supply & the stimulation of economy from agri-tourism/markets & farmer-direct purchases & food security. Need municipal leadership in accessing Purchase of Development Rights funding

3. Area ~~of~~ water supply adds insurance to unfavourable relative to climate change.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for land use/transportation in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

1. Offer strong incentives to infill & even return to the cities. Redevelopment of Brownfields (underway)
2. Discontinue ^{new} residential access to existing sewer laterals except in multiple unit sub-divisions & cluster development
3. ~~Offer~~ Create tax incentives for carpooling / public transportation to reduce demand for highway expansion

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about different natural features in your community and throughout Niagara County, including forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitat, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years? In what ways?
- Does your community have access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? How could access to these areas be improved in your community as well as in other parts of Niagara County?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- In what ways are the environmental features in your community and across Niagara County an important part of your life?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Lack of wooded lots large enough to satisfy certain song birds
2. Natural areas for healthy honey bee populations are lacking
3. Degradation / building timber harvest of escarpment

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Proper use of relicensing funds to create something even minimally as classy as the Canadian/Niagara Parkway Natural Area
2. Linear parks along the escarpment including equine trails.
3. Better oversight of wetlands recognizing their role in flood control

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for natural features and the environment in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

1. Financial Support of Environmental Management Council with enough staffing to access State Environmental Protection Fund
2. Use relicensing money to cover the ~~into~~ transaction costs of donations of development rights on natural areas
3. Limit ATV traffic in parks

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- > Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community and across Niagara County - perhaps news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings/layoffs), new construction projects, openings or closings of businesses, etc. What do you see or hear happening relative to the local economy?
- > Think about different types of infrastructure within your community and Niagara County as a whole (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing ones?
- > Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- > Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities in your community? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to economic development?

1. Constant feedback on high cost of doing business in New York State / Niagara County.
2. Constant parade of business proposals that never come to fruition
3. Revolving fund / competitive grants for local small business / lacking
4. Retail shopping opportunities obligate one to go to Erie County

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to economic development?

1. Entrepreneurial spirit of post-heavy industry - job for life generation
2. Canadian investment
3. Training of community

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for economic development in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

1. Need a systematic point-by-point comparison of criteria businesses used for selecting an area to locate in & invest. Measure systematically wage rates, business taxes, labor force, etc. Design local efforts to balance other areas comparative advantage

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - Changes in factors such as technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, levels of service provided at other levels of government, etc.
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water, and refuse districts *districts plural?*

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. *High cost of public safety. Spending on policing among the highest per capita in the state (all levels aggregate)*

2. _____

3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. _____

2. _____

3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for County services, facilities, and infrastructure in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

Health Department needs to complete animal emergency health response plan - Started & now completed

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community or in other parts of Niagara County that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to: resource centers (libraries, computer centers, career development/job placement services), higher education (colleges, universities or satellite facilities), workforce development programs (i.e. Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to education?

1. If per capita student spending is not above the rest of the state but total tax load per \$1000 assessed value is (the) (among the) highest in the country, does this simply reflect low home values relative to the tax load?

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to education?

1.

2.

3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for education in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

It is not clear why you ignore Cornell Cooperative Extension as the most significant non-formal educational resource you have (see previous page)

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of safety/security in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate visibility of police patrols in your community or the County as a whole? Who provides police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times and coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community? What types of events might your community or Niagara County experience that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community and/or Niagara County possess that would help during an emergency?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County's efforts to coordinate disaster/emergency preparedness programs?
- Do you feel that the safety/security of your community or Niagara County as a whole is affected by the Canadian border?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to public safety?

1. Have never directly needed these services except
in conjunction with fire, bad accidents & medical
services. Service was timely
2. _____
3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to public safety?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for public safety in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Do you think that your community has adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals, and adequate response times/coverage relative to ambulatory services? Do you think that Niagara County as a whole has adequate healthcare facilities and related services?
- Do you feel that your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise? What about the County as a whole?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats? Do you perceive there to be significant health concerns or health threats in surrounding communities or in Niagara County as a whole?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health and wellness? What types of programs are offered (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue in your community? How so? Do you perceive there to be significant environmental health concerns in surrounding communities or in Niagara County as a whole?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of programs and services offered by the Niagara County Health Department?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to public health?

1. See item under County Services
2. We are told air quality is worsening
3. Overflows & co-mingled discharges to the Niagara River unsatisfactory

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to public health?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for public health in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS TO:

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6311 Inducon Corporate Drive
Sanborn, NY 14132**

or

comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

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MAY 15 2009

NIAGARA CO. ECONOMIC DEV.

NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY OUTREACH SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS. Fill out as much or as little of this survey as you like. When you are finished, please mail it back to us at the address listed on the last page. You can also scan it and email it to us or leave it with project staff at any of the community outreach meetings. You can download an electronic copy of the survey from the project website at www.niagaracounty.com/ComprehensivePlan.asp by clicking on the "Feedback" link. The downloadable survey can be filled out electronically, saved, and submitted to us by email or printed out and submitted in hard copy. **All surveys must be received by Friday, May 15, 2009.** Your input is very important to the planning process and your responses will help shape the final Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan. If you have any questions, please email us at comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com. Thank you for your interest and participation!

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Nancy J. Orsi

TITLE: Town of Porter Councilperson

MUNICIPALITY: Town of Porter

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: —

MAILING ADDRESS: 3265 Creek Rd., Youngstown, NY 14174

PHONE NUMBER: 745-7576 (H)

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FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in the type of development that you see occurring or changes in community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community and Niagara County as a whole: Agricultural, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Recreational, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community and Niagara County as a whole?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no "greenfield" development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: agricultural areas not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community and throughout Niagara County including construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, passenger air and rail service, cargo transportation, recreational opportunities along roadways/trailways/waterways, etc. Have there been many changes in transportation services or public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and maritime uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Maintaining a rural character concentrating development around the villages & hamlets (services) Many farmers who are ready to retire oppose this.
2. We need public transportation to bring pple. to & from the cities to state parks & countryside markets, etc.
3. We need to create more walkability in our communities and encourage small farms. Agribusiness won't fit in our county.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to land use/transportation?

1. We tend to have a somewhat mild winter climate.
2. Beautiful vistas and many opportunities for fishing and recreational water activities.

3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for land use/transportation in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

We need a transportation system to bring tourists/visitors from Niagara Falls & Canada (if cross-border ferry begins) to and from the Fort Niagara area & places in between.

We need to capitalize on the airport in Niagara Falls — fabulous runway and it doesn't sit in a snowbelt.

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about different natural features in your community and throughout Niagara County, including forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitat, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years? In what ways?
- Does your community have access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? How could access to these areas be improved in your community as well as in other parts of Niagara County?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- In what ways are the environmental features in your community and across Niagara County an important part of your life?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. We need to preserve the northern sections (from Findlay Drive northward) of the Robert Moses Parkway & allow visitors to stop at edge of escarpment to enjoy the ~~panoramic~~ spectacular view of river, lake, Toronto, etc.
2. Cultivate more commercial ^(restaurants) / tourist attractions along Lake Ontario shoreline.
3. Get the Army ~~Corp~~^{Corp} of Engineers to deal with the LOOW site in an environmentally sound manner.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Niagara Falls / Niagara River

2. Escarpment & Erie Canal

3. Lake Ontario skyline & shoreline

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for natural features and the environment in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community and across Niagara County - perhaps news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings/layoffs), new construction projects, openings or closings of businesses, etc. What do you see or hear happening relative to the local economy?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community and Niagara County as a whole (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing ones?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities in your community? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to economic development?

1. I have/we major concerns about PILOTS from the IDA. Municipalities are hard pressed to provide services when a major business with "big" earning potential is given a tax break.
2. As a county, you should work to provide the infrastructure, as well as help maintain it, so companies can put their money into their structures, employees & business development
3. and still pay their fair share of the tax burden.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to economic development?

1. Water
2. Water power that should be cheap for all the Western New York region — businesses & homes
3. Strategic location ~~to~~ between Toronto, Hamilton, Buffalo & Rochester (even Cleveland)

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for economic development in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - Changes in factors such as technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, levels of service provided at other levels of government, etc.
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water, and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. _____

2. _____

3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for County services, facilities, and infrastructure in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

1. Sewers to provide clean waters for drinking, etc.
2. Reasonable power costs, since it is generated here, at quite a profit
3. Good roads

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community or in other parts of Niagara County that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to: resource centers (libraries, computer centers, career development/job placement services), higher education (colleges, universities or satellite facilities), workforce development programs (i.e. Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to education?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to education?

1. BOCES & NCCC provide trade (building, mechanical, nursing, electrical) skills education which are needed (jobs) in the community
2. _____

3. _____

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for education in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

We needed to provide diverse educational opportunities for Niagara County students that provide training for future jobs thru many avenues of learning.

We to invite "drop outs" back into educational systems, instead of just getting a GED.

We need to ~~fed~~ further develop communication and linkages from public education and higher education.

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of safety/security in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate visibility of police patrols in your community or the County as a whole? Who provides police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times and coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community? What types of events might your community or Niagara County experience that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community and/or Niagara County possess that would help during an emergency?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County's efforts to coordinate disaster/emergency preparedness programs?
- Do you feel that the safety/security of your community or Niagara County as a whole is affected by the Canadian border?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to public safety?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to public safety?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for public safety in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Do you think that your community has adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals, and adequate response times/coverage relative to ambulatory services? Do you think that Niagara County as a whole has adequate healthcare facilities and related services?
- Do you feel that your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise? What about the County as a whole?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats? Do you perceive there to be significant health concerns or health threats in surrounding communities or in Niagara County as a whole?
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- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue in your community? How so? Do you perceive there to be significant environmental health concerns in surrounding communities or in Niagara County as a whole?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of programs and services offered by the Niagara County Health Department?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to public health?

1.

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to public health?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for public health in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

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NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY OUTREACH SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS. Fill out as much or as little of this survey as you like. When you are finished, please mail it back to us at the address listed on the last page. You can also scan it and email it to us or leave it with project staff at any of the community outreach meetings. You can download an electronic copy of the survey from the project website at www.niagaracounty.com/ComprehensivePlan.asp by clicking on the "Feedback" link. The downloadable survey can be filled out electronically, saved, and submitted to us by email or printed out and submitted in hard copy. **All surveys must be received by Friday, May 15, 2009.** Your input is very important to the planning process and your responses will help shape the final Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan. If you have any questions, please email us at comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com. Thank you for your interest and participation!

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Morris Wingard

TITLE: _____

MUNICIPALITY: Town of Lockport

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: ~~The~~ Town Planning Board

MAILING ADDRESS: 7396 Tonawanda Creek Lockport 14094

PHONE NUMBER: 433-9483

EMAIL ADDRESS: m.wingard@roadrunner.com

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in the type of development that you see occurring or changes in community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community and Niagara County as a whole: Agricultural, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Recreational, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community and Niagara County as a whole?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no "greenfield" development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: agricultural areas not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community and throughout Niagara County including construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, passenger air and rail service, cargo transportation, recreational opportunities along roadways/trailways/waterways, etc. Have there been many changes in transportation services or public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and maritime uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Limit suburban sprawl to reduce demands on infrastructure
2. Preserve the most productive farmland
3. Reclaim inner city land to make it habitable.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Low cost of land available for development.
2. Close to Canada

3. _____

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for land use/transportation in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

1. Zoning to limit sprawl
 2. Preserve the most productive farmland
- _____

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about different natural features in your community and throughout Niagara County, including forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitat, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years? In what ways?
- Does your community have access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? How could access to these areas be improved in your community as well as in other parts of Niagara County?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- In what ways are the environmental features in your community and across Niagara County an important part of your life?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Reclaim brownfield sites so they can be developed.
 2. Improve Niagara River shoreline and make it more accessible.
 3. Improve area around the Falls
- _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. The Falls and Niagara River shoreline - improvements.
2. The canal and its history
- 3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for natural features and the environment in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

1. Improve the area around the Falls
2. More direct access via roads to the Falls to avoid most of the Niagara Falls City streets.

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community and across Niagara County - perhaps news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings/layoffs), new construction projects, openings or closings of businesses, etc. What do you see or hear happening relative to the local economy?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community and Niagara County as a whole (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing ones?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities in your community? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to economic development?

1. Excessive cost of local government - we do not need all the town and village governments nor do we need 19 county legislatures
2. Unfunded State mandates and high taxes. We must be competitive with other counties throughout the country - not just within N.Y. state
3. Too much unionization

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to economic development?

1. Adequate water and electric power (if at low rates)
2. Adequate land for development
3. Good transportation

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for economic development in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

1. Attract Canadian companies
2. Reduce taxes and regulations at the State and County level to enable businesses to be successful.
3. We cannot be successful without help from the State, so we can compete with other areas throughout the country.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
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 - Changes in factors such as technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, levels of service provided at other levels of government, etc.
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water, and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. *Maintaining existing roads, water and sewer.*
2. *Cost of county services are too high compared to other parts of the country.*
3. *Provide existing services efficiently and at low cost.*

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. *Towns and villages to share services*
2. *Towns to make joint purchases*

3. _____

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for County services, facilities, and infrastructure in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
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- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
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- Does your community need better access to: resource centers (libraries, computer centers, career development/job placement services), higher education (colleges, universities or satellite facilities), workforce development programs (i.e. Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to education?

1. Education costs/~~per~~ student are too high compared to other states

2. Need better vocational education

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to education?

1. Good suburban schools

2. Good community college

3. Close to major State University

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for education in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

1. Do Not compare per student expenditures with other counties of the State - compare them with other States (Wake Up! we are in competition with every county in the US)
2. Eliminate the State Board of Regents

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of safety/security in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate visibility of police patrols in your community or the County as a whole? Who provides police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times and coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community? What types of events might your community or Niagara County experience that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community and/or Niagara County possess that would help during an emergency?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County's efforts to coordinate disaster/emergency preparedness programs?
- Do you feel that the safety/security of your community or Niagara County as a whole is affected by the Canadian border?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to public safety?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to public safety?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for public safety in Niagara County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Do you think that your community has adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals, and adequate response times/coverage relative to ambulatory services? Do you think that Niagara County as a whole has adequate healthcare facilities and related services?
- Do you feel that your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise? What about the County as a whole?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats? Do you perceive there to be significant health concerns or health threats in surrounding communities or in Niagara County as a whole?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health and wellness? What types of programs are offered (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue in your community? How so? Do you perceive there to be significant environmental health concerns in surrounding communities or in Niagara County as a whole?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of programs and services offered by the Niagara County Health Department?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in Niagara County today relative to public health?

1. Aging population

2. A medicaid program that provides too many benefits and is too costly thereby contributing to high taxes which impede economic development.

3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in Niagara County today relative to public health?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for public health in Niagara County?
Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

Reduce the cost of Medicaid and the burden
it places on county government.

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NIAGARA COUNTY, NEW YORK

NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY OUTREACH SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS. Fill out as much or as little of this survey as you like. When you are finished, please mail it back to us at the address listed on the last page. You can also scan it and email it to us or leave it with project staff at any of the community outreach meetings. You can download an electronic copy of the survey from the project website at www.niagaracounty.com/ComprehensivePlan.asp by clicking on the "Feedback" link. The downloadable survey can be filled out electronically, saved, and submitted to us by email or printed out and submitted in hard copy. **All surveys must be received by Friday, May 15, 2009.** Your input is very important to the planning process and your responses will help shape the final Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan. If you have any questions, please email us at comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com. Thank you for your interest and participation!

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: JOHN D. CANNON

TITLE: CHAIRMAN of the PLANNING BOARD

MUNICIPALITY: YOUNGSTOWN, NY

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: 905 RIVER ROAD, YOUNGSTOWN, NY, 14174

PHONE NUMBER: 745 9745

EMAIL ADDRESS: J.CANNON@CANNONDESIGN.COM

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in the type of development that you see occurring or changes in community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community and Niagara County as a whole: Agricultural, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Recreational, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community and Niagara County as a whole?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no "greenfield" development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: agricultural areas not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community and throughout Niagara County including construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, passenger air and rail service, cargo transportation, recreational opportunities along roadways/trailways/waterways, etc. Have there been many changes in transportation services or public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and maritime uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in ^{Youngstown} ~~Niagara County~~ today relative to land use/transportation?

1. BASICALLY DEVELOPED: built out with minimal opportunity to DEVELOP ADDITIONAL TAXABLE USES.
2. ADVOCATES OF CLOSING ROBTMOSES PARKWAY WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE TRAFFIC TO FORT NIAGARA AND YOUNGSTOWN
3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in ^{YOUNGSTOWN} ~~Niagara County~~ today relative to land use/transportation?

1. POSSIBILITY OF DEVELOPING MAIN ST / NORTH WATER ST INTO HIGH END HOUSING, INCREASING TAX BASE & MORE LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT.
2. POSSIBILITY OF DEVELOPING COLD STORAGE SITE INTO 12-15 UNITS OF HOUSING, INCREASING TAX BASE & LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT.

3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for land use/transportation in ^{YOUNGSTOWN} ~~Niagara~~ County? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

- FOR LAND USE, DEVELOP REMAINDER OF LAND FOR
ADDITIONAL HOUSING AND OTHER TAX REVENUE GENERATORS.
- CREATE GREENSPACE BOTH SIDES LOCKPORT TO THIRD ST
- MOVE GAS STATION AWAY FROM THE RIVER.
- SELL STREET END PARKS TO ADD TAX BASE.
- CONTINUE IMPROVEMENTS TO VILLAGE CENTER IE:
POWER LINES, FACADES, LIGHTING TO FALICNER PARK

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about different natural features in your community and throughout Niagara County, including forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitat, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years? In what ways?
- Does your community have access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? How could access to these areas be improved in your community as well as in other parts of Niagara County?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- In what ways are the environmental features in your community and across Niagara County an important part of your life?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in ^{YOUNGSTOWN} ~~Niagara County~~ today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. WE ARE BLESSED, WE DONT HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT
ISSUES

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in ^{YOUNGSTOWN}~~Niagara County~~ today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. THE HISTORIC HARBOR, LAUNCH RAMP, MARINAS AND YACHT CLUB TO ATTRACT FISHERMAN, SAIL AND POWER BOAT ACTIVITY AND VISITORS
2. FORT NIAGARA CONSTITUTION AND SOUTH PARK, ALL WITH WATERFRONT ACCESS. MORE THAN LEWISTON AND NIAGARA ON THE LAKE.
- 3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for natural features and the environment in ^{Ytown}~~Niagara County~~? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

THE UNIQUENESS OF YOUNGSTOWN IS ITS NATURAL FEATURES. WE ARE FORTUNATE COMPARED TO OTHER SMALL COMMUNITIES

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community and across Niagara County - perhaps news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings/layoffs), new construction projects, openings or closings of businesses, etc. What do you see or hear happening relative to the local economy?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community and Niagara County as a whole (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing ones?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities in your community? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in ^{YOUNGSTOWN}~~Niagara County~~ today relative to economic development?

1. NEGATIVE DEMOGRAPHICS, POPULATION DECLINE,
AGING RESIDENTS, RETIRED, DISCRETIONARY INCOME.
2. LONGER COMMUTE TO EMPLOYMENT SOURCES THAN OTHER
COMMUNITIES, COST INCREASE OF COMMUTE.
3. PEOPLE WHO DONT UNDERSTAND NO. 1 ABOVE OPPOSE DEVELOPMENT
OF HOUSING AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND TAX BASE.
TAXES HAVE NO CHOICE EXCEPT GO UP, REDUCING
ATTRACTION OF LIVING WITHIN THE VILLAGE.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in ^{YOUNGSTOWN}~~Niagara County~~ today relative to economic development?

1. DEVELOPER WILLING TO BUILD HIGH END HOUSING
AT MAIN ST/N. WATER ST
2. DEVELOPERS INTERESTED IN BUILDING HOUSING ON
COLD STORAGE SITE, IF DEMOLISHED. GRANTS IN PLACE
TO DEMOLISH BLDG
3. CONTRARY TO VIEWS OF SOME, CROSS RIVER FERRY COULD
BE A NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENT. TRAFFIC MOSTLY ONEWAY
TO CANADA. HOMELAND SECURITY WILL DISCOURAGE
VISITORS TO HARBOR.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for economic development in ^{YOUNGSTOWN}~~Niagara~~
~~County~~? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

- PROACTIVELY SEEK DEVELOPMENT OF LAND/SITES AVAILABLE,
CREATE MORE "ROOFTOPS," EXPAND THE TAX BASE.
- REDUCE COST OF GOVT SERVICE THROUGH SHARED
RESPONSIBILITIES WITH ADJACENT GOVT UNITS.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - Changes in factors such as technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, levels of service provided at other levels of government, etc.
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water, and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in ~~Niagara County~~ today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. No opinion
- 2.
- 3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in ~~Niagara County~~ today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. No opinion
- 2.

3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for County services, facilities, and infrastructure in ~~Niagara County~~? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

NO OPINION

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community or in other parts of Niagara County that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to: resource centers (libraries, computer centers, career development/job placement services), higher education (colleges, universities or satellite facilities), workforce development programs (i.e. Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in ^{YOUNGSTOWN}~~Niagara County~~ today relative to education?

1. SCHOOL TAXES DISINCENTIVE TO LIVING IN AREA
STUDENT POPULATION DECLINES, COST PER CAPITA
INCREASING.
2. QUALITY K-12 ALTERNATIVES 30 MILES⁺ FROM
YOUNGSTOWN. DETERRANT TO FAMILIES WITH
OTHER PLANS FOR EDUCATION.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in ^{YOUNGSTOWN}~~Niagara County~~ today relative to education?

1. NO ASSET NOT FOUND IN OTHER COMMUNITIES.

2.

3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for education in ^{YOUNGSTOWN}~~Niagara County~~? Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

NO OPINION

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of safety/security in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate visibility of police patrols in your community or the County as a whole? Who provides police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times and coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community? What types of events might your community or Niagara County experience that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community and/or Niagara County possess that would help during an emergency?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County's efforts to coordinate disaster/emergency preparedness programs?
- Do you feel that the safety/security of your community or Niagara County as a whole is affected by the Canadian border?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in ^{YOUNGSTOWN}~~Niagara County~~ today relative to public safety?

1. SECURITY IS AN ASSET IN THE VILLAGE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF VANDOLISM BY LOCAL YOUTH. SHOULD BE CONTROLLABLE
2. ADVOCATES OF SUBSIDIZED HOUSING, IF SUCCESSFUL, WILL CREATE A SAFETY PROBLEM THAT DOES NOT NOW EXIST
- 3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in ^{YOUNGSTOWN}~~Niagara County~~ today relative to public safety?

1. NO OPINION
- 2.
- 3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for public safety in ^{YOUNGSTOWN} ~~Niagara County~~?
Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

NO OPINION

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Do you think that your community has adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals, and adequate response times/coverage relative to ambulatory services? Do you think that Niagara County as a whole has adequate healthcare facilities and related services?
- Do you feel that your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise? What about the County as a whole?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats? Do you perceive there to be significant health concerns or health threats in surrounding communities or in Niagara County as a whole?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health and wellness? What types of programs are offered (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue in your community? How so? Do you perceive there to be significant environmental health concerns in surrounding communities or in Niagara County as a whole?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of programs and services offered by the Niagara County Health Department?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges in ^{YOUNGSTOWN} ~~Niagara County~~ today relative to public health?

1. ONLY HAZARDOUS WASTE SITE IN NORTHEAST CAN ONLY MEAN MORE THREAT IN THE FUTURE, IF NOT NOW. NOT JUSTIFIED BY ANY STANDARD
2. AND REFLECTS "POLITICAL COWARDICE" IN NOT FINDING OTHER SITES

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in ^{YOUNGSTOWN}~~Niagara County~~ today relative to public health?

1. CLEAN AIR, IMPROVED WATER CONDITION
UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS. SPILLS AND STORM
OVERLOAD RENDERES RIVER UNSAFE!

2.

3.

What do you think the top goals and objectives should be for public health in ^{YOUNGSTOWN}~~Niagara County~~?
Describe any strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish these goals.

• IMPROVE WATER/TREATMENT PLANTS UP RIVER
OR YOUNGSTOWN.

• DEMAND ALTERNATE SITES FOR HAZARDOUS
WASTE.

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Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Chuck Bell

TITLE: Economic Development Coordinator

MUNICIPALITY: City of North Tonawanda

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION:

MAILING ADDRESS: 216 Payne Avenue, North Tonawanda, NY 14120

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FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no “greenfield” development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. The reuse and remediation of brownfields.

2. Greater involvement in regional transportation systems, from trails to public transportation corridors

3. Best and highest use for our waterfront, that is compatible with the uses of neighboring communities.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

1. Regional location

2. Downtown revitalization

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Encourage (re)development in former industrial areas:

Remediation

Re-zoning (where appropriate)

Local and regional incentives

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Making the waterfront more accessible and friendly to all ages

2. Improving the trail systems and connectivity for pedestrians and other recreational travelers

3. Cleanup of former industrial sites

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Waterfront

2.

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed in your community's infrastructure to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing companies?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - External factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Aging infrastructure (roads)

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. County economic development is a great coordinator for local and regional efforts

2.

3. _____

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to education?

1. Maximizing the use of job training resources available

2. Increasing partnerships between the City and the School District

3. Planning for the highest and best use of school district lands and properties.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

1. Working with the County to bring in job training opportunities and continuing education to an aging and evolving population.

2.

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the “visibility” of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County’s efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public safety?

1. Public safety is currently confidence inspiring and efficient.

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1.

2.

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public health?

1. DeGraff's future!

2. Keeping DeGraff as a full service health care facility.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

1. DeGraff

2.

3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

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Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Thomas J. DeSantis, AICP

TITLE: Senior Planner

MUNICIPALITY: City of Niagara Falls

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION: Office of Planning

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FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no “greenfield” development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE / TRANSPORTATION

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

Introduction

The City of Niagara Falls is essentially a fully built-out urban settlement, with a mix of residential, commercial and industrial land uses. There is also a high percentage of institutional uses within the jurisdiction compared to other places in the county. However, many of these land uses were established over 60 years ago and the older structures have lost extrinsic value due to the city’s primary challenges: Declining population, including deteriorating obsolete building stock; Declining employment in the industrial sector and an inability to compete in other growth sectors, and; Underutilized “brownfields,” including the counter-productive Robert Moses Parkway. This means that the City is focused on re-development and land management strategies.

Issues or Challenges:

Over the past four decades, the City of Niagara Falls has suffered from economic and industrial decline, and serious employment and population loss. As well, a number of misguided renewal initiatives that removed residential and commercial stock in the heart of the city have fragmented the downtown core and the communities that traditionally supported it. Today, many urban neighborhoods are in decay, large areas of the city’s industrial corridors are abandoned, and many residents, community and business leaders have lost their sense of pride in their city. In fact, many former residents have chosen to move out of Niagara Falls. Many visitors are disappointed and clearly unimpressed by the quality of the urban environment and the tourism offering that is not what they would expect adjacent to a world-class natural heritage destination such as the Falls. Tourists prefer to visit Niagara Falls, Ontario than remain in Niagara Falls, New York for more than a couple of hours.

Niagara Falls did not fare well in the post-industrial era, but the 21st century will see different global economic and social forces that may serve to fundamentally change the prospects of the City looking out over the next twenty years. Niagara Falls for all its current cosmetic faults still has great bones. Niagara Falls still possesses a number of existing assets and key opportunities that can be positioned and leveraged to improve the overall social and economic circumstance of the city; support and strengthen new and emerging economic, employment and cultural sectors; and achieve, over time, the renewal of the city as an attractive and desirable place to live, work, invest, visit and play. The City's current planning strategies place a strong emphasis on the quality of the urban experience for both visitors and residents. By supporting improvements to the whole community – main streets, parks, heritage neighborhoods and local business establishments – the intent is to enhance the quality of life for Niagara Falls residents living here today, residents that will come to live here in the future, as well as, enticing tourists to come, stay longer, and visit again and again.

The Decline of Industry and Manufacturing

Over the past 40 years, both the region and the city have experienced significant changes, resulting from the steady decline of the city's industrial and manufacturing base. In the 20 years between 1970 and 1990 alone, total employment in the region's¹ manufacturing sector fell from 170,000 to 90,000, a decline of 53%².

The loss of industrial jobs has had numerous widespread impacts that are outlined below. As in many industry-based cities in North America, expansion of this sector in the future is not likely due to global shifts in the manufacturing economy. However, there is a huge built-in locational value here which can revive new production, but additional manufacturing production without high-tech, value adding employment, and without more competitive residential markets can never produce the same level of economic impact it did in the 1950's.

Public and private sector initiatives aimed at generating and strengthening new employment 'growth sectors' must be supported and encouraged by all levels of government in order to stabilize and ultimately expand the economic and residential bases of Niagara Falls. Key growth sectors include tourism and hospitality generally, and heritage and nature-based tourism, specifically; professional services, including emerging "green" technology research and manufacturing; regional health services; arts, culture and entertainment; and regional and bi-national transport of goods and services.

High Unemployment

For decades, Niagara Falls has relied almost solely on one employment sector – heavy industry – with very little in the way of economic or employment diversification. The transformation of local, regional and national economies has resulted in reductions and consolidations that have minimized the presence of corporate head offices in the city. In addition, major government offices have not located in the city, and tourism has only very recently been considered an important sector for future economic growth. As a result, the eggs have been in one basket and Niagara Falls has become 'a single resource town'. Personnel reductions and the out-right closure of large-scale industrial operations by major employers have consequently had a debilitating effect on the city. High unemployment, averaging almost twice the state and national averages³ – continues.

The capital-intensive nature of chemical and other heavy industries in Niagara Falls has made it next to impossible for former employees to start their own companies. Consequently, closures have not led to new businesses or related spin-off activity. Furthermore, Niagara Falls' industrial base has not

¹ Defined as the Buffalo-Niagara MSA

² Strategic Projections Inc. (2001) *Economic Trends in Niagara Falls and the State of New York, Draft Report*

³ United States Census Bureau

traditionally been engaged in research and development – an important component for continued economic growth and business development. The rare introduction of new industrial operations has not been of sufficient scale to replace lost jobs. Manufacturing closures have instead resulted in a large number of workers competing for the few remaining jobs or leaving the region altogether for new opportunities elsewhere.

Programs, institutions and activities aimed at the promotion and development of retraining programs, facilities and satellite facilities within key growth sectors should be actively supported cooperatively by all levels of government to:

- ***Stabilize and retain the city's workforce and population base***
- ***Support economic diversification***
- ***Reduce unemployment***
- ***Better equip potential employees to participate and contribute in the service and knowledge-based economy as well as in "green manufacturing" companies***

A Declining and Aging Population

Diminishing economic opportunities, high unemployment associated with steady industrial decline and new employment opportunities occurring within the region have caused many residents to relocate elsewhere. The city, built to support a population of just over 100,000 at its post-war peak, accommodates a current population of close to 50,000. Not surprisingly, the majority of those who have left Niagara Falls have been young adults and families with young children. The number of family households in the city fell by 13% in the 1990s⁴. This decline in population has impacted neighborhoods, diminished the strong sense of community once found here and resulted in inner city school closures and reduced community support services and facilities. The ultimate result is inner city neighborhoods that are less desirable to existing and potential new residents.

The decline of the young adult population is not only detrimental to stabilizing the population, but in particular to the emergence of an entrepreneurial culture in Niagara Falls. A young adult demographic typically promotes and supports a willingness to venture in new directions, exhibits a willingness to take informed risks, and supports cultural development and renewal. In the absence of strong representation by these younger age cohorts, the city's cultural and entrepreneurial potential will not be fully realized and its available workforce will continue to be reduced, leaving employers with fewer options for new employees. The presence of an educated and available workforce is a significant factor, which cannot be over-emphasized in attracting new employers to locate their operations in the city.

While the population of Niagara Falls is declining, it is also aging. A growing elderly population will place increased demands on health care services and already stretched social agencies over time. The burden of these demands will intensify if the city's tax base continues to fall due to a declining population, high unemployment, an absence of new development, and a lack of growth in key industry sectors.

To retain and attract a broader population to Niagara Falls, including young families and young adults, the municipality must pursue a range of activities and programs aimed at improving the overall quality of life experienced in the city. These initiatives should:

- ***Improve the condition of residential housing stock and neighborhoods, and the range of housing types***
- ***Support high-quality, specialized inner city educational opportunities***
- ***Improve the physical and visual quality of the urban environment and experience***

⁴ Ibid.

- *Support specialized retail/commercial development and business opportunities*
- *Provide for arts, cultural and entertainment development*
- *Promote employment opportunities within key industry growth sectors*
- *Improve community, health care and recreational amenities and services*

Competitive Suburban Growth and the Decline of the Core City

While the suburban communities surrounding Niagara Falls have experienced the impacts of decline in the region as a whole, they have fared somewhat better than the city itself. Seen by many as attractive, safe and affordable alternatives to living in Niagara Falls, many surrounding municipalities have experienced both population and employment growth, albeit fueled by “internal migration” of upper income households from the City to the towns. New housing developments and commercial activities have concentrated in these surrounding towns due to readily available raw land. A prime example is the array of new format retail developments found along Military Road. These developments, along with new regional shopping centers, are marketed on convenience and the presence of national retailers. With their selection of shops and easy access from major regional transportation routes, commercial offerings in nearby suburban areas have pulled consumers away from the city’s traditional shopping streets, namely Main Street and Pine Avenue, and refocused much of the retail activity outside of the core.

Governments should address the imbalance between suburban growth and the decline of the Core City through targeted policies and actions focused on making the Core City a unique, high value and attractive place to developers, residents and visitors. Initiatives should focus on enhancing quality of life, as well as:

- *Providing tax or incentive programs to kick start positive change in the city*
- *Making land available for new development through clearance of blighted or obsolete structures*
- *Re-configuring suburban style offerings and amenities currently found in the Core City to urban development typologies that support a high-quality urban identity*
- *Offering and marketing unique elements and amenities not available in suburban locations, such as:*
 - *Walkable arts, entertainment, cultural and shopping precincts; niche boutique and specialty retail areas;*
 - *Heritage district preservation and interpretation;*
 - *High-quality education and resources;*
 - *Regional services;*
 - *Convention and healthcare services;*
 - *A high-quality of design excellence in the built and natural environments; and*
 - *Greater employment and economic opportunities.*
- *Creating and marketing a distinct and high-quality urban identity and shopping experience*

The Residential Market, Neighborhoods and Housing

The growth of Niagara Falls and its neighborhoods occurred largely in response to the city’s pre-war economic and industrial expansion. As a result, many working class neighborhoods developed quickly and were located immediately adjacent to existing or former industrial areas and the infrastructure serving them, such as train tracks. While this provided quick access to employment areas, many neighborhoods were not sufficiently buffered from heavy industry or became surrounded by industrial uses over time and isolated from neighboring residential areas or as the older, closer-in housing became obsolete and surplus in the marketplace, it simply deteriorated. This situation continues today; few of these neighborhoods enjoy connections to the river, as industry and/or transportation routes occupy the waterfront without serving an economic function. These existing conditions and land uses in the city

together with the destructive impact of Urban Renewal initiatives of the 1960s and 70s served to further fragment neighborhoods.

These difficult physical relationships, combined with de-industrialization, loss of population, suburban flight, and the decline in the overall economic circumstance of Niagara Falls have resulted in systemic deterioration of many neighborhoods, making the city unattractive to many home-builders and homebuyers. As a result of these conditions, Niagara Falls has a tremendous oversupply of (lower-density) pre-World War II multifamily dwellings of two, three or four units; houses built two to a lot; and stately single-family homes converted into multiple units.

Oversupply of this older residential stock and a continuing decrease in family size, together with population out-migration have meant that the overall housing market is low. Resale values in the Core City are extremely weak, where one would typically expect to find the most desirable and upscale housing, given proximity to the core and the extent of original or heritage housing stock.

The city's vacancy rate has increased in recent years to 13%, while the rates for the county and state have fallen to 8%⁵. Within the current oversupplied market, there is no incentive for the repair and upgrading of rental units and many homes are abandoned and in significant need of repair, updating or replacement. Due to the oversupply of this obsolete older housing, and the built-out nature of most parts of the city, construction of new market-rate housing units has been non-existent.

Today, the healthiest neighborhoods are those located furthest to the east, north of the Core City, and away from major industrial areas. The areas in greatest state of decline are generally found in the Core City or immediately adjacent to the city's primary industrial areas. School closures and reduced community support facilities resulting from population decline and the lack of medium and high-density housing alternatives offer very limited choice for those wishing to live in the city. The widespread dilapidation of under-occupied neighborhoods is clearly noticeable and speaks of a city in dire need of renewal and change.

The municipality will need to pursue a residential renewal and reinvestment strategy comprised of a number of ongoing programs to:

- ***Stop and reverse the decline in the residential housing market***
- ***Reduce the oversupply of derelict housing units to stabilize the market at more normative and regionally competitive values***
- ***Address the education and community needs within stable neighborhoods to begin to attract residents back to the city and provide a support base for business and economic development***
- ***Position new housing alternatives to support and reinforce existing and anticipated commercial and tourism developments***

Weak Market Conditions

The market in Niagara Falls is weak, due to a cascading series of problems following industrial decline that have affected the employment base and by extension real estate value and property-tax rates. Erosion in the quality of life; loss of population; physical deterioration of neighborhoods and community support facilities; infrastructure in obvious need of repair; and unattractive built form and vacant parcels in the tourism precinct make the city unattractive to residential, and business development interests, and unattractive to financial and lending institutions necessary to support these interests. It is this fundamental economic shift and the lack of a consistent economic strategy or investment in tourism that have created the current weak market conditions.

⁵ City of Niagara Falls

In addition, while tourism is increasingly seen as an important new economic driver for the city, the current visitation numbers indicate a profound inability to capture a significant portion of an otherwise strong market. The dearth of new or upgraded lodging or attractions also presents a weak market case. These factors, coupled with the existing poor quality, appearance, and physical condition of tourist areas in Niagara Falls, must be addressed to advance the tourism industry and provide the necessary growth, which then supports growth in other commercial and residential sectors.

Yet, the unrealized opportunity is for additional and upscale lodging development and for expanding the existing 'tourism program' and recreational offerings. It is the city's latent ability to expand its offerings with new attractions, quality lodgings, restaurants, boutique shopping, entertainment, family and educational destinations and other amenities, and, at the same time, improve the visual or physical quality of the urban environment, which has the greatest potential to yield positive economic growth for Niagara Falls and encourage new growth in other sectors.

The municipality must establish a clear vision for the Core City tourism sector. Its programs and activities must reflect a demonstrated commitment to positive change, whereby the City of Niagara Falls leads critical catalyst initiatives that can induce private sector investment and renewal of the city.

Excess Infrastructure

Niagara Falls is a city built to accommodate a population of approximately 100,000 people, and its land base includes a significant amount of employment/commercial land intended for large industrial operations. With the continuing decline of both its residential and industrial bases, the city is now 'oversized', with an excess of infrastructure and developed land in relation to actual use and municipal tax return.

A number of difficult decisions are necessary to determine where infrastructure investment, maintenance and improvements will have the greatest positive impact, in order to pursue programs and strategies necessary to begin the city's renewal and support critical economic sectors.

Brownfields

The City and its industry were founded on the locational advantage offered by the Falls and the Niagara River. With the decline of industrial activity, the city is left with a large collection of contaminated sites that cannot be remediated easily or quickly. The majority of these sites sit vacant and/or abandoned with neglected buildings dotting the landscape. These conditions further depress real estate values, prevent public access, and often preclude reuse. Many residential neighborhoods adjacent to these areas have been negatively affected by their proximity to abandoned sites, which has contributed to neighborhood disinvestment and decline. Clean-up costs, perceived regulatory inflexibility, and issues of liability and responsibility hinder remediation efforts.

Across North America, many cities are actively engaged in remediating and redeveloping brownfield sites, to re-establish connections to previously industrialized waterfronts and initiate a new era of economic development and growth focused on transforming these areas into vibrant, mixed use waterfront communities. In Niagara Falls, many industrial uses will continue to be located within existing industrial corridors; however, over the long term, the City should pursue existing brownfield remediation programs to begin to prepare priority sites for future use, particularly those adjacent to the city's waterfront. These areas represent the next era of city building in Niagara Falls and municipal resources, which should be directed toward the identification of priority remediation areas along the riverfront and entrances to the city, for priority redevelopment. In the short term, improvements aimed at reducing the visual impact of prominent brownfield sites, consolidation of industrial uses, re-use were appropriate, as well as, developing industrial heritage sites should be the initial thrust for brownfield sites.

The municipality should anticipate brownfield redevelopment over the long-term and identify sites located within or adjacent to the Core City and/or the waterfront for preliminary scoping and feasibility analysis.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

Land Use

The challenges described above are great, and will require a shift in thinking, actions and priorities to effectively deal with many difficult aspects of long-term urban decline. At the same time, there are a number of key drivers and opportunities that have tremendous potential to contribute positively to the future of the city. These need to be carefully nurtured and leveraged to bring economic, social and cultural benefit to Niagara Falls.

It is time to redefine the city as a more complex and diverse ‘regional center’, and to explore opportunities and actions that can encourage diversification of the economic base. A diverse economy that capitalizes on local assets will better position Niagara Falls to realize new growth and development, and make it a better place to live, open a business or engage in cultural and recreational activities.

The existing Core City contains the Downtown, Casino Precinct, primary institutions, shopping areas and commercial corridors, framed by Core City neighborhoods. The Robert Moses Parkway is clearly a barrier to the city’s waterfront. The removal of this barrier will enable the city to capitalize on the economic and social benefits of waterfront redevelopment. The many gaps in the existing urban fabric present new development opportunities which can better connect neighborhoods to each other, while permitting new public realm, housing and open space opportunities. The core neighborhoods, the city’s commercial nodes and corridors, primary institutions, key educational and cultural resources, Casino Precinct, and East Falls Street Redevelopment Area each have particular opportunities and drivers which must be carefully timed and leveraged to bring about the renewal of the city.

While any of the following listed “opportunities and economic drivers” have significant potential to improve the quality of life within Niagara Falls, it is the creation of employment and training opportunities that will have the most immediate impact on the lives of residents now and in the future.

- Green-Economy Commerce;
- Tourism;
- Arts and Culture;
- Regional Health Care;
- Education / Employment Training;
- Primary Commercial Nodes and Corridors;
- Heritage Resource Protection;

Transportation

Generally, the City has a very complete roadway infrastructure capable of handling far more traffic than is present on the network. However, due to age and cost, there are severe maintenance issues that need to be addressed. There are also points within the network where transportation improvements are warranted due to changing land uses.

More specifically, transportation assets/opportunities include the continued improvements in the configuration and function of downtown streets and the connecting arterials, as well as, the

establishment of “mutli-modal” transportation connections. These include: » The development of the Old Customhouse as the Niagara Falls International Railway Station/Intermodal Transportation Center (IRS-ITC) at the Whirlpool Rapids International Bridge into an important arrival node and major point of North Main Street activity. » The development of Niagara Falls International Airport as both a hub for cargo trans-shipment and simultaneously for overseas and low-cost commercial airlines. » And, the one significant “Big-Move” —the reconfiguration of the Robert Moses Parkway, which is the strategy for connecting the city to its waterfront and creating a more pedestrian friendly ‘alternative.’ This is an alternative appropriately scaled to existing and emerging transportation needs, and represents a return to the traditional, urban, inter-connected, street network for the efficient movement of traffic within a rational hierarchy of arterials and collectors away from the riverfront. The reconfigured Parkway is essential since it can re-define the interface between the city and its riverfront; it can support accessibility; by people and cars, and it can also support non-transportation goals, including recreation and ecological enhancement; an expanded “world-class park” and; it can create a new setting to stimulate economic development and re-investment across the entire riverfront corridor.

Describe your community’s goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

LAND USE General Policy Statement:

It is the City’s policy to ensure that the City’s vision for development is supported by appropriate land use policies and regulations, and that the City pursue a fine-grained, mixed use approach to land use that respects the existing character of healthy, stable neighborhoods, while allowing the City to grow and revitalize. In order to achieve this, the City has established the following policies:

- ❖ Conserve and strengthen existing residential neighborhoods.
 - **Action** Promote development that rehabilitates existing housing stock within city neighborhoods.
- ❖ Encourage a pattern for new development that incorporates a mix of uses at a variety of densities.
- ❖ Pursue a “fine grained” approach to land use that allows uses to mix and benefit from one another.
- ❖ Strengthen the Core City by encouraging higher density development that encompasses a mix of uses that supplies services to residents, especially to adjacent neighborhoods, as well as to tourists.
- ❖ Encourage development that supports an accessible waterfront from waterfront adjacent districts which offer a mix of uses and connections to other land use districts – such as nearby neighborhoods, parks, greenways or trails, etc.
- ❖ Maintain and enhance natural areas and open space while also providing connections and which may promote alternative forms of transportation.
- ❖ Encourage commercial and light industrial uses only where most appropriate.
- ❖ Encourage and support alternative or interim land uses and creative site planning solutions in vacant and/or underutilized industrial areas that support the City’s overall renewal vision and strategy.
- ❖ Retain public sector functions, uses, and institutions in centralized locations.
 - **Action** Coordinate with the operators of public uses (i.e., school board, United States Postal Service, library system, municipal government) to rethink relocation and decentralization plans.

- ❖ Coordinate the City's land use vision with its transportation policies and projects to encourage and support the connection between development and transportation for both resident and tourist populations.
- ❖ Employ land use policy to solve and prevent transportation related issues, such as traffic congestion and land use related issues, such as parking.
- ❖ Undertake and adopt future area- and/or issue-specific plans, as needed.

TRANSPORTATION General Policy Statement:

It is the City's policy to encourage and provide a citywide transportation system that facilitates connections between multiple modes of transportation; is safe, efficient, affordable, user friendly and accessible to residents, tourists, and others; and that provides a viable alternative to the use of the private automobile, and encourages walking and bicycling which in turn decreases the need for large parking facilities. In order to achieve this, the City sets the following policies:

- ❖ Offer choices between multiple modes of transportation so that residents and tourists can choose to travel and move about and through the City in many different ways.
- ❖ Coordinate land use and transportation policies.
 - **Action 1** *Ensure that transportation considerations are built into the site plan review process.*
 - **Action 2** *Focus higher density and mixed-use development in transit accessible locations.*
- ❖ Favor and nurture pedestrian environments over automobile environments, if required at all, and utilize design standards to camouflage parking through design and landscaping.
 - **Action 1** *Emphasize a pedestrian and bicyclist friendly and oriented urban built form over parking.*
 - **Action 2** *Emphasize the destination (i.e., Core City, shopping and entertainment districts, heritage areas) over the parking facilities that serve the destination.*
 - **Action 3** *Place parking to the rear or sides of buildings within the Core City and historic areas.*
- ❖ Encourage walking and bicycling as viable alternate modes of transportation.
 - **Action** *Utilize traffic calming measures to create a safe pedestrian and bicyclist environment.*
- ❖ Promote transit supportive development.
 - **Action** *Encourage a development pattern that incorporates a mix of uses at a variety of densities, which in turn limits the need and demand for parking and unnecessary automobile trips, while supporting the use of public transportation.*
- ❖ Ensure that the public transit system is designed to be a system of "choice" rather than a system of "last resort."
 - **Action** *Make the transit system easy to use for both discretionary riders and those that depend upon it.*
- ❖ Reduce opportunities for transportation conflicts, both within and between modes.
- ❖ Employ alternative approaches to traffic and congestion management than traditional limited access, highway approaches.
 - **Action** *Encourage new road development that completes the street grid and connects the City's neighborhoods together and also reduces traffic congestion by dispersing automobile traffic over a large, integrated network.*
- ❖ Balance the needs of multiple modes of transportation to move both "through" the City and "within" the City.
 - **Action** *Evaluate where transportation corridors and infrastructure creates barriers to human interaction, and find ways to remove or mitigate such barriers.*

- ❖ Mitigate the Negative Impacts of Past Transportation Choices
 - **Action 1** *Undertake an Integrated land use and transportation improvement project to redesign and reconfigure the Robert Moses Parkway.*
 - **Action 2** *Undertake an Integrated land use and transportation improvement project to redesign and reconfigure the LaSalle Expressway.*
 - **Action 3** *Undertake an Integrated land use and transportation study of the Grand Island Bridge interchange.*

FOCUS AREA: ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

FOCUS AREA: ENVIRONMENT

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

As was mentioned above, the City of Niagara Falls is a fully developed city. It was nearly so over fifty years ago. Most of the physical environmental changes to the natural environment were well established by the first quarter of the last century. Notwithstanding the major natural features of the City are the Niagara River and its tributaries, Niagara Falls, and the Niagara Gorge, including as defined by the State Parkland and lands in immediate proximity thereto. There is accessibility to these resources but these are very limited. There is no doubt that these resources are important to the life of the City—these are important icons of nature to the nation and to the world. Very little open space or natural areas exist outside of parkland. As for improving the availability of and access to open space resources there would need to be a broader and more general commitment to establishing green infrastructure by all levels of government, particularly in the area of maintenance. Likewise, a collaboration of governments in the development of the greenway plan would be a useful beginning. Many plans and studies have brought recommendations to the public for consideration, which may yet produce an evolving implementation of an environmental (open-space and natural resource) conservation agenda. However, while the threats of over-development and inappropriate encroachment into environmentally and aesthetically sensitive locations will continue toward calamity unless the biggest threats to this eventuality are addressed — ignorance and poverty.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

With the assets mentioned above, the most significant opportunities would be the transformation of the Niagara River waterfront into the Niagara River Greenway and National Heritage Corridor and its

physical connections to existing park assets as well as its programmatic integration into the fabric of the community. See the Niagara River Greenway Vision.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

The community's goals and objectives in this regard can, again, be found in the Niagara River Greenway Vision as well as the City draft Comprehensive Plan < http://www.egovlink.com/public_documents300/niagarafalls/published_documents/PDFs/Proposed%20Comprehensive%20Plan%20Text%2010%202008.pdf >

ENVIRONMENTAL AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES: General Policy Statement

It is the City's policy to preserve, conserve, and recognize the environmental and natural resources of the City in a manner that contributes to the City's overall quality of life, enhances public health, and fosters appropriate development. In order to achieve this, the City will:

- ❖ Limit the potential for cumulative and secondary impact of development and other activities on water, air, and land quality and quantity.
 - **Action** *Ensure that proposed development or redevelopment is subject to development review that seeks to protect important environmental areas or resources.*
- ❖ Provide connections and public access, where appropriate, between development and natural areas, parks, and recreation areas within the City, as well as to regional connections of these resources outside of the City.
 - **Action 1** *Devise an open space and recreation plan that outlines the City's goals for specific open spaces and recreational areas and looks to provide connections between these resources.*
 - **Action 2** *Improve Gill Creek as a ecological connection*
- ❖ Ensure that there is an adequate supply of permanently protected natural areas, open space, and recreation resources.
 - **Action** *Evaluate and consider the adoption of a development impact fee that is dedicated to the acquisition of open space and recreational resources.*
- ❖ Protect and enhance the city's waterfront from degradation and damage associated with new development.
- ❖ Guide development into the Core City to protect the city's natural resources and to provide an efficient level and cost of services to residents.
- ❖ Preserve important viewsheds and corridors with scenic views.
 - **Action** *Create scenic overlay districts within the city's zoning to address the protection of scenic views and corridors.*
- ❖ Protect, maintain, and enhance the city's open space resources, parks, and natural environment.
 - **Action 1** *Implement the strategies for open space connections as outlined in the Greenway Plan and the City's draft Comprehensive Plan.*
 - **Action 2** *Develop a Citywide Parks Plan*
- ❖ Support the National Heritage Area Designation
- ❖ Establish agreements with State Parks and a management entity to implement the City Waterfront Programs and develop a Natural Heritage Area Master Plan and Programming Strategy

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?
- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed in your community's infrastructure to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing companies?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

See above.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

See above.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: General Policy Statement:

It is the City's policy to ensure that the City's economy is comprised of and supported by a diverse mixture of businesses and that the City's land use, zoning and development policies are supportive of economic growth, including the development and expansion of the tourism industry, cultural resources and the health care sector. In order to achieve this, the City sets the following policies:

- ❖ Work actively to retain existing businesses and jobs and to promote and strengthen a mixed economy.
 - **Action 1** *Redefine the City as a more complex and diverse regional center.*
 - **Action 2** *Diversify the economy and move beyond historical reliance on heavy industry.*
- ❖ Promote and support locally owned and controlled small businesses.
- ❖ Coordinate the City's land use and zoning policies with the City's economic development vision.
- ❖ Pursue and support programs, institutions and activities aimed at the promotion and development of retraining programs, facilities and satellite facilities within key growth sectors.
- ❖ Retain and attract a broader population to Niagara Falls, including young families and young adults.

- **Action 1** *Develop and market the Core City and special neighborhood districts, such as Little Italy, as unique, high value and attractive places to developers, residents and visitors.*
- **Action 2** *Provide tax or incentive programs to jumpstart positive change in the City.*
- **Action 3** *Re-configuring suburban style offerings and amenities currently found in the Core City to support a high-quality urban identity.*
- **Action 4** *Focus expenditures on projects that will encourage the desired and necessary private sector reinvestment and enhance the quality of life and quality of experience offered to residents and visitors.*
- ❖ Encourage incremental, holistic and broad based approaches to improving the City's quality of life that pay off in the long term, rather than focusing on large scale, "silver bullet" projects.
- ❖ Acknowledge the importance and uniqueness of the City's traditional commercial and retail corridors and activity areas, such as Main Street, Pine Avenue, Niagara Street and Third Street, and support these corridors. Coordinate activities and development ventures with the Seneca Nation to maximize mutual economic benefit and ensure every project fully contributes to positive change within the city without precluding future opportunities.
- ❖ Coordinate activities and development ventures with the Seneca Nation to maximize mutual economic benefit and ensure every project fully contributes to positive change within the city without precluding future opportunities.
 - **Action** *Provide visitor information centers and enhances tourist amenities and other services.*
- ❖ Use historic preservation as an economic development tool.
 - **Action** *Encourage the restoration and reuse of valuable heritage resources throughout Niagara Falls, including buildings, parks and squares to preserve these important cultural and character features and the value they add to the City and adjacent properties.*
- ❖ Support the development of high quality education at all levels.
 - **Action** *Address the education and community needs within the City to begin to attract residents back to the City and provide a support base for business and economic development.*

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - External factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:

- Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
- 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
- 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
- Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

County cuts in social services and programs effecting the largest number and concentration of low-income residents, particularly in the areas of housing and job training.

Lack of cooperation in consolidating service infrastructure and facilities, including utilities, as well as, the lack of restraint in allowing the expansion of water and sewer utilities, and service areas.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

Social services and programs being provided at the neighborhood level effecting the largest number and concentration of low-income residents.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Provide resources in the area of housing assistance, and job training for residents.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?

Comment [TJD1]:

- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Provide additional resources to NCCC generally and for job training programs specifically

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the “visibility” of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County’s efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?
-

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC SAFETY

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals? Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?

- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH

Juvenile drop-out and drug avoidance programs focusing on at-risk populations, and/or a Youth Conservation Program, for low-income youth

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS TO:

comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com

OR

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

6311 Inducon Corporate Drive

Sanborn, NY 14132

I.

How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]

The Niagara Falls City School District facilities are well suited and flexible enough to meet the changing demographic trends. Extensive demographic studies **formed the basis of "Facing the Future V," a planning document the District has** used to guide decision making regarding facilities. Recent capital improvements to all buildings provide cutting edge technology and flexible learning and teaching settings.

Niagara Falls High School is a community center that can handle up to 3,400 students. The school currently houses seven community agencies and has capacity to add many more. The Performing Arts Center, Amphitheatre and recreational facilities are the cultural and social hub of the community. Niagara Street School was strategically located to provide access to a very populated area of the city.

All facilities and properties are well-maintained and are accessible for community use. The Niagara Falls Board of Education is well positioned to consolidate the facility or provide for an increase in student population.

II.

Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?

The Niagara Falls City School District operates a Magnet school with a futures and communications theme at the Henry J. Kalfas School. In May 1994, Kalfas Magnet School was awarded the Blue Ribbon Award by the U.S. Education Department. In May 2000, Kalfas was one of only 14 schools nationally to receive the prestigious Magnet Schools of Merit Award from Magnet Schools of America. Kalfas School was recognized for its clear educational goals, evidence of parent participation in the development of goals, a curriculum addressing individual needs and high standards, its innovative approaches to change, and effective use of programs for at-risk students. Admission to the Magnet school is voluntary and students are chosen by lottery, which is held every spring.

For students who demonstrated the need for a more challenging academic experience, the Niagara Falls City School District offers an Enrichment program for students in grades 2 through 6, and a Comprehensive Acceleration Program for students in grades 7-8. The Enrichment program is located at Harry F. Abate, and the Comprehensive Acceleration Program is housed at Gaskill and LaSalle Preparatory Schools. Each of our Prep schools also offers accelerated courses in Math and Science for students who demonstrate high ability in these academic areas.

The Enrichment and Accelerated curriculum taught are designed to lead students to Advanced Placement courses at Niagara Falls High School. The program was designed and is monitored by a District Acceleration Committee consisting of administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and students.

The District also offers the Mary C. Dyster Center for Young Parents (CYP) at the Niagara Falls High School, which offers pregnant teens and school-age mothers the opportunity to continue their education while receiving parenting training.

The District takes seriously its obligation to provide a comprehensive education for all children. However, some children cannot function in a regular school setting. For them, alternative programs provide the best opportunity to obtain an education. For secondary students who have seriously disrupted their ability to learn, or the ability of others to learn because of behavioral problems, the Niagara Falls School District, through Orleans-Niagara BOCES, offers an alternative school at the Niagara Falls Housing Authority Family Resource Center. This program allows severely troubled youth a last chance to receive an education.

The Niagara Falls School District also offers Media Studies at some elementary and Prep schools where students operate intra-school television stations for morning programming. Students operate cameras, prepare scripts and host these morning broadcasts. The program culminates at the high school level where Media Production students run a fully operational educational access television station that serves the western half of Niagara County. Students work with community agencies and learn production, post-production, floor management, script writing, and on-air media skills.

III.

School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider:

Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.

If the district were to merge with another district it would definitely mean that some students would be on busses longer if buildings were closed. For example if Niagara Falls were to merge with Lewiston-Porter and use Niagara Falls High School as the "combined" high school there would be students from northern Niagara County who would definitely be on a bus longer than they are now. The converse would be true if city students were attending in buildings in the suburbs.

While districts could combine without the closure of buildings the financial savings would be limited to some administrative costs. The substantial savings would come from the closure of buildings and the reduction of redundant staffs and the costs associated with running those buildings.

Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.

This is true but the sources of that funding vary widely. City school districts in general and Niagara Falls in particular receive the majority of their funding in the form of state aid, while the suburban districts raise more of their funding through direct taxation. Consolidation would require the equalization of those tax rates which would possibly mean an increase for the city taxpayer and reduction for the suburban.

Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.

This would be a distinct possibility. A larger pool of students may increase interest in programs that districts are currently hesitant to fund because of limited student involvement. Savings from the consolidation could be put to use to fund these programs.

IV.

Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?

The Niagara Falls City School District in the last nine years has replaced two aging high schools with one modern facility, built a new elementary school, completed smaller projects in other district facilities that related to health, safety and environmental conservation and is currently implementing a project to infuse technology in all classrooms as well as make improvements in infrastructure outside many of its buildings. The District has spent in aggregate over \$137

million during this period on capital improvements and projects that the proposed project for 2009 will add another \$17 million to that total.

The Niagara Falls City School District has completed the design phase and will begin the bidding process of a \$13 million capital project undertaking. The project will include technology, mechanical and safety upgrades throughout the District, as well as a total cafeteria reconstruction at Gaskill Preparatory School.

V.

How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?

What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?

Does your community need better access to:

Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?

Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?

Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?

Other programs or facilities?

The Niagara Falls City School District takes very seriously the mission of transitioning students to higher education or the world of work. In 2008, 68% of the graduates entered a two or four year college, 9% entered the military and 23% entered the workforce. That same year, 160 of the 470 graduates received a certification from a BOCES program along with their high school diploma. Additionally, Microsoft Office Certification was attained by 73 graduates.

Students have excellent access to higher education and workforce development programs. A Business Advisory Council meets to inform and guide curricular and entrepreneurial opportunities for high school students. This council is made up of business and educational professionals from our community.

The major industries that our students express interest in include: Culinary Arts, Human and Social Services, Education, Tourism, Electrical, Plumbing, Carpentry and Building Trades, Television, Music Editing and

Production, and Home Care and Nursing. The District offers opportunities for instruction in all of these areas.

VI.

Issues/Challenges:

1. Increased student achievement beginning in Universal PreKindergarten and sustained through Senior year is the single most important issue for the District.
2. Many families in Niagara Falls are unable to provide a quality of life for their children such that they are well-fed, adequately clothed, suitably sheltered, and cared for medically. Students living in poverty sometimes bring greater needs to the classroom and struggle academically as a result.
3. Financial stability is a key concern. The tax base in Niagara Falls continues to diminish while students' needs increase. Remaining residents have no ability to pay greater taxes.

Assets/Opportunities:

1. The Niagara Falls City School District is committed to excellence and equity for all students, regardless of socioeconomic strata or any other consideration. Also, we work to provide access to 21st Century technology.
2. In our community, students are safest when they are in school, and many receive their best or only meal at school. Also, adult supervision in a caring environment.
3. The Niagara Falls City School District is committed to providing access to school as much as possible, and to keep the doors open after school and through summer programming.

Goals/Objectives:

The Niagara Falls City School District works to maintain current and foster new, meaningful partnerships with other agencies committed to advocacy for children.

We work to increase student achievement and opportunities for applied learning (internships, career exploration) to all students. Our community partnerships are also helpful in this regard. We are also striving for financial precision and providing the very most we can to all students through increased financial diligence.

PUBLIC SAFETY

(Niagara Falls Police Department)

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the “visibility” of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County’s efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public safety?

1. _____

2. Again, dealing with a lack of proper funding, having the latest technology and crime fighting/crime solving equipment available for our personnel is always a problem. I am always striving to obtain the tools and equipment necessary for a positive resolution to an investigation. Unfortunately, those items are sometimes prohibitively expensive.

3. With a higher than normal number of either vacant or dilapidated housing units. The lack of sufficient locks, doors, motion detectors and burglar alarms tend to increase our number of burglaries and larcenies. In 2008, we experienced an unusual number of burglaries involving the theft of cooper and other metals from vacant homes that may not have occurred if they were occupied.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. Niagara Falls seems to be making more progress in its economic development plan. With more businesses and factories opening, this will give Niagara Falls an opportunity to not only increase its tax base but possibly increase the number of residents moving into the City. This in turn helps turn stagnant street into vibrant neighborhoods.

2. With the financial assistance from New York State, Division of Criminal Justice Services, the N.F.P.D. has dramatically improved its intelligence gathering and analytical study of crime. We are

communicating better with the P.D. to attain our ultimate goal, crime reduction.

3. Since the inception of the Seneca Niagara Casino and the disbursement of the City's share of those funds, the N.F.P.D. has been able to improve our equipment and infrastructure. That would not be possible without the use of those funds. Examples are the new Municipal Court Building being constructed on Main Street, the ability to upgrade our vehicular fleet every year, and buying different items from our longtime idled capital improvement plan. Unfortunately, our needs are greater than our budget. I would like to see a county-wide inventory system of crime fighting tools possessed by each Niagara County Police agency be circulated so that those agencies would not only know what is available, but work out a process where the items could be shared no matter who owned them.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

There are 7 strategic goals for the N.F.P.D. in 2009. They are too lengthy to repeat here but cover everything from crime reduction and prevention, arrests and investigations, traffic management, working with the community, and finally homeland security and emergency disaster plans. As far as measurable objectives and/or actionable steps, we are an Operation Impact site. By that, I mean we are eligible as a Niagara Partnership, with the Niagara County Sheriff's Department, The Niagara County District Attorney, and the Niagara County Probation included, eligible to apply for funding to accomplish our goals, which are stipulated in the Impact application each year. The N.F.P.D. has to report quarterly to New York State, who gauges our progress in crime reduction.

COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

(Niagara Falls Police Department)

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - External factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County

- 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
- 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
- Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

First, let me highlight that, unlike jurisdictions such as Cambria and Newfane, the Niagara Falls Police Department handles its own law enforcement issues, ranging from patrol, narcotics, juveniles, traffic, communications, and crime scene and criminal investigations.

Probably the biggest issue with County facilities is the security involved with the Trott Access Center at 11th St. and Ashland Ave. The area has posed some problems for not only the building, but the employees and their vehicles. There have been several incidents that have alarmed the county workers. I and the N.F.P.D. have tried to resolve these issues as they arise. I have conversed with Jennifer Pitarresi, the County Risk Manager, about a more proactive approach and have assured her the N.F.P.D. will assist in any way possible.

I cannot think of any other specific issues, but can only say that as they arise with any County property or service, the N.F.P.D. will approach a potential resolution with a team concept, involving any County agency tasked with that duty. I do anticipate working closely with Sheriff James Voutour on most issues.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. First and foremost, the greatest asset we have regarding County services, facilities, and infrastructure is the close relationship with Sheriff Voutour and the Niagara County Sheriff's Department. As the term regionalism becomes more popular, the two Agencies will explore combined efforts, such as training, purchases, and crime reduction projects.
2. Because the N.F.P.D. is a full-service police department, we are in a better position to help the County with its involvement in Niagara Falls.
3. Because Niagara Falls generates the most criminal activity, the N.F.P.D. and the N.C.S.D are involved daily with communicating and sharing information regarding criminals that may be active in both jurisdictions.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

As stated earlier, because both Niagara Falls Police and the Niagara County Sheriff's Department receive Impact funding, the two Agencies are working united in reducing crime in Niagara Falls and also working to reach our stated objectives in the Impact application. We both have intelligence officers and analysts who are working hand in hand to discuss strategies towards our Impact goal. We share

personnel in various projects designed for crime reduction. They have members participating in our Warrant Task Force, Saturation Patrols, and other undercover/plainclothes assignments directed toward street interdiction of criminals.

PUBLIC SAFETY

(Niagara Falls Fire Department)

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?

There is an overall lack of fire safety awareness within the community. The large amounts of unkempt property create numerous hazards for those residents who are trying to maintain their homes. The income level of many residents does not allow them to make necessary repairs and keep up with maintenance related items. The majority of residents I come into contact with are satisfied with the level of services (fire) that they receive from the city.

- How would you rate the “visibility” of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?

Despite being cut more than 50 members and the closing of 4 fire stations, the Niagara Falls Fire Department responds to more incidents today than it did in any time in its history. Response time for ambulance transport (provided by Rural Metro) is rising and with the number of total incidents on the rise and the fact that units are committed for longer duration, it is causing units to have to respond from greater distance. Often the primary response company is already committed to an incident when a 2nd event occurs in their territory. If call volume continues to escalate and the situation with pre-hospital care and transport is not addressed residents will see delays in response to their emergencies.

- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?

The border presents some unique challenges to our department. Mutual Aid can only come from either the North or East. The border and Niagara River limit access to Mutual Aid companies in a timely manner. In addition the different radio frequencies as well as the use of the metric system make the compatibility of our equipment with our counterparts in Canada an issue.

- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County’s efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?

The community is familiar with the CERT program but does not see much in the development of a coordinated response by traditional agencies from different jurisdictions to potential emergencies.

- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?

The City of Niagara Falls is vulnerable to many man-made and natural emergencies. The city has a large concentration of chemical plants as well as a large rail yard. The facilities produce, store, and use a large amount of exotic hazardous materials. In addition we are directly over the flight path for a combination general, commercial, and military airport. Weather related emergencies are very prevalent and range from significant ice/snow events in the winter to the occasional tornado activity in the summer.

The assets within the community are not staffed or equipped to respond to a significant event that generates large amounts of casualties or involves hazardous materials. The on-duty staffing of the fire department is 26 firefighters and the department is unable to commit adequate resources to more than one significant fire event at any one time. Any multi-casualty event such as a tour bus crash would also significantly challenge the department.

- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

Lack of adequate staffing and being properly equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public safety?

1. Staffing
2. Equipment age and reliability
3. Interoperable communications

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. Cooperation between LE and the FD
2. Community support
3. Lack of significant events (could also be a detriment as the odds will catch up with us)

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

I am unable to answer this question. I do suggest the administration convene a Strategic Planning workshop to address this issue.



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NIAGARA COMMUNITIES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

NAME: Michael W. Tucker

TITLE: Mayor

MUNICIPALITY: City of Lockport

AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION:

MAILING ADDRESS: One Locks Plaza, Lockport, NY 14094

PHONE NUMBER: (716) 439-6665

EMAIL ADDRESS: mayor @elockport.com

FOCUS AREA: LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

Points to Consider

- Think about changes in land use patterns over the last 20 years, including any changes in types of development projects or community character. Consider different types of land uses in your community: Agriculture, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreation, Open Space, Vacant, etc. What do you see happening in your community?
- How would you best characterize your community at present - urban, suburban, or rural?
- How would you best describe your community as it now exists:
 - Developed: built-out with virtually no “greenfield” development potential
 - Developing: a mix of established and emerging development
 - Redeveloping: e.g., re-use of formerly vacant properties
 - Undeveloped: e.g., agricultural areas are not being developed
- Think about transportation in your community (construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges, access to public transit such as bus service, recreational opportunities, freight transportation, etc.) Have there been significant changes in transportation services or in public access to those services over the last years? Consider conditions and capacities for personal automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, heavy truck, train, aviation, and marine uses.

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to land use/transportation?

- 1. Loss of Industrial Tax Base and industrial jobs**
- 2. Aging Infrastructure**
- 3. Lack of developable land**

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to land use/transportation?

- 1. Location (proximity to Buffalo, Niagara Falls & Toronto)**
- 2. Affordable Housing**
- 3. Established Industrial Facilities**

Describe your community's goals and objectives for land use/transportation as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

ENVIRONMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about the different natural features of your community such as its forestlands, open space areas, wildlife and wildlife habitats, waterways, floodplains, wetlands, geological formations, scenic views, etc. Have any of these features changed over the past 20 years?
- Does your community provide access to scenic views, parks, open space, and other natural areas? In what ways? How could access to these areas be improved in your community?
- Have any actions been taken in recent years to protect the natural features in your community? Have any actions jeopardized your community's natural features?
- Are the environmental features in your community an important part of your life? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Contaminated property

2. Potential upgrade of 18 Mile Creek from Class D, which will require upgrade of

Wastewater Treatment facilities

3. Tightening of Federal & State regulations of the elimination of combined sewer outfalls

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to natural features and the environment?

1. Niagara Escarpment

2. Waterways – 18 Mile Creek and the Erie Barge Canal

3. Network of Municipal Parkland

Describe your community's goals and objectives for natural features and the environment as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider

- Think about recent economic development related issues that have been identified in your community or discussed through local media that have or may impact your community. This could include news about relocation of firms, changes in local employment numbers (hirings

and/or layoffs), openings or closings of businesses, new construction projects, etc. What do you see or hear happening in your community that relates to the local economy, jobs, etc.?

- Think about different types of infrastructure within your community (sewer, water, electric, telecommunications, roads, bridges, highways, rail lines, aviation and marine facilities, etc.). Are any significant changes needed in your community's infrastructure to support economic development activities, such as attracting new companies or retaining existing companies?
- Does the economic character of your community or any economic trends within your community differ from neighboring communities in terms of the amount of development occurring, job loss/job creation, changes in types of industries, etc.? In what ways?
- Are community assets such as parks and open space areas, schools, community safety and security, affordable housing, and other quality of life considerations being recognized as contributing to or being used to promote economic development opportunities? How so?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to economic development?

1. State of Economy

2.

3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to economic development?

1. Affordable Housing

2. Greater Lockport Development Corporation

3. Community Development Programs -- 1st time homebuyers -- Home Improvement program

Describe your community's goals and objectives for economic development as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: COUNTY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Points to Consider

- Think about the types of services that are provided to your community by Niagara County (social services, public health, public works, public safety, economic development, courts, emergency services, higher education, employment and training, election services, etc.). Are there any issues in your community relative to the need for:
 - Additional services
 - Access to services currently provided
 - Changes in services provided as a result of, for example:
 - Changes in your community's population
 - Changes in your community's economic base
 - External factors (including changes in technology, national/global trends, legislation, local providers, level of services provided by government, etc.)
- Likewise, think about the types of facilities and infrastructure that are operated by the County. Are there any issues with the provision and/or maintenance of the County's facilities and infrastructure? The County is responsible for and maintains:
 - Administrative, service, and public safety buildings across the County
 - 5 County parks (Oppenheim, Krull, Bond Lake, Royalton Ravine, West Canal Marina) and the County Golf Course
 - 283 miles of roads, 89 bridges, and 800 drainage culverts
 - Sewer, water and refuse districts

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. County does very little in the way of providing services to City versus towns
- 2.
- 3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to County services, facilities, and infrastructure?

1. Niagara County Community College – Corporate Training Center
- 2.
- 3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for County services, facilities, and infrastructure as well as any actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

Points to Consider

- How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Projections from Cornell University show an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in the cities, but gains in other school districts.]
- Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
- School district consolidation has been mentioned as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs/activities than either could alone.
- Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or currently being made in your community relative to educational facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
- How important is it to have job training programs, job placement services, and continuing education courses readily available to adults and young adults in your community?
- What types of industries exist within your community that require special training? How important is it to connect education and training programs with local businesses to create a sustainable workforce? What types of education and training programs should be invested in to attract new companies to Niagara County?
- Does your community need better access to:
 - Resource centers (e.g. libraries, computer centers, career development centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education institutions (colleges and universities or satellite facilities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, NCCC Workforce Training/Community Development)?
 - Other programs or facilities?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to education?

1. Rising cost of college tuition
2. School Taxes
- 3.

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to education?

1. Niagara County Community College – Corporate Training Center
- 2.
- 3.

Describe your community's goals and objectives for education as well as actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Points to Consider

- What is the overall sense of security / safety in the neighborhoods in your community?
- How would you rate the “visibility” of police patrols in your community? Who provides primary police coverage in your community (local police, Sheriff, State police)?
- Based on your experience, are response times / coverage for emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) adequate in your community?
- How is your community affected by proximity to the Canadian border?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County's efforts to coordinate emergency / disaster preparation programs?
- What types of events has or might your community experienced that would require major emergency response? What assets does your community possess that would help it during an emergency?
- What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges to public safety in your community? How about within the County and/or the region?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public safety?

1. Cost of Providing Public Safety services
2. Cost of NOT providing Public safety Services
3. declining Tax Base

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public safety?

1. Police Departments
2. Paid Fire Department with EMS
3. Increased Staff in Building Inspection Department

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public safety as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Points to Consider

- Does your community have adequate access to healthcare facilities, including hospitals?
Does your community have adequate coverage in terms of ambulatory services, including response times?
- Do you feel your community would have adequate access to health services in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or otherwise?
- What are the biggest public health concerns within your community? Are these ongoing concerns? Are there any issues that might be classified as health threats?
- Does your community or organizations within your community offer programs aimed at improving public health/wellness? What types of programs (i.e. nutrition, vaccinations, exercise, anti-smoking, etc.)?
- Is environmental health (i.e. water and air quality) a significant issue within your community? If so, why?
- What is the level of awareness in your community of the County Health Department's programs and services?

What do you consider to be the three most pressing issues or challenges facing your community today relative to public health?

- 1. Rising Costs of providing medical care to employees**
- 2. Lack of medical insurance for working poor**
- 3. Aging Population**

What do you consider to be the three most significant assets or opportunities in your community today relative to public health?

- 1. City owned and operated Water and Wastewater Treatment Facilities and Compost Facility**
- 2. Lockport Memorial Hospital**
- 3. Lockport Fire Department - EMS**

Describe your community's goals and objectives for public health as well as any measurable objectives and/or actionable steps that can be taken towards accomplishing those goals.

Maintain a cooperative relationship with the County for emergency water service versus the county installing more water lines

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS TO:

comprehensiveplan@niagaracounty.com

OR

Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

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