

THE TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

Growing In A New Direction



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA

Erie County, New York

Prepared for:
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Town Hall
Broadway and Union Road
Cheektowaga, New York 14225

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TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA
ELECTED TOWN OFFICIALS

Frank E. Swiatek Supervisor
Dennis H. Gabryszak Deputy Supervisor
Dennis H. Gabryszak Councilman
Patricia A. Jaworowicz Councilman
William P. Rogowski Councilman
Andrew A. Kulyk Councilman
Jacqueline A. Blackhowski Councilman
Richard B. Solecki Councilman
Richard M. Moleski Town Clerk
Christopher J. Kowal Hwy. Superintendent
Joan E. Dudek Receiver of Taxes
Thomas S. Kolbert Town Justice
Dennis J. Ciotuszynski Town Justice

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Councilman Andrew Kulyk, Chairman

Councilman Dennis Gabryszak

Councilman Bill Rogowski

Mr. Salvatore LaGreca

Mr. Donald Wegner

Chief Bruce Chamberlin

Mr. Casey Kozminski

Mr. Bill Pugh

Mr. Kevin Schenk

Mr. Ronald Marten

Mr. Tom Adamczak

Mr. Ray Pugh

Mr. William Wind

Mr. Michael Papero

Mr. Arthur Darmstedter

1. INTRODUCTION

A. MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

Master planning activities play an important role in the continued development of a community. The master planning process is an organized manner by which a community can identify its needs and establish goals and objectives for future development. Development and implementation of a master plan is an effective and efficient means to achieve meaningful and desired change in a steady, incremental manner. Furthermore, the master plan serves to identify changes or trends that are desirable or undesirable in the community.

In the fall of 1990 the Town of Cheektowaga retained The Saratoga Associates to undertake the update to the Community Master Plan. The process included:

1. Determination of community goals and objectives
2. Inventory of existing conditions
3. Identification of planning concepts to address goals and objectives
4. Preparation of Master Plan and Policies for specific target sectors
5. Revisions to Zoning Ordinance as required to support the plan.

This document summarizes the findings and recommendations of the master plan effort.

In order to prepare a plan which is responsive to the community's needs a Steering Committee of Town representatives was organized. This committee provided insight to community needs and problems, and offered suggestions on opportunities to be considered in meeting the goals and objectives.

In addition, several public meetings were held with both the general resident population and specific interest groups. This document incorporates the comments received throughout the planning process.

B. THE COMMUNITY SETTING

Cheektowaga has historically been a residential suburb, composed of single family homes, with necessary supporting commercial activity. In recent years the need for apartment construction has been recognized and several multi-family units have been built.

The Greater Buffalo International Airport, the Governor Thomas E. Dewey Thruway and significant rail yard facilities have all contributed to the development of major commercial and manufacturing sectors throughout the Town.

In 1989 the Walden Galleria Mall opened and this 1.2 million sq.ft. regional shopping center has become a magnet for commercial growth. The New York State Department of Transportation completed the rebuilding of the Kensington Expressway in 1990 to service the Buffalo Airport

and move traffic efficiently to and from the eastern suburbs. This reconstruction was coordinated with the proposed expansion of facilities at the Airport and to service the industrial and commercial growth that is occurring due to the influence of the airport.

The thruway divides the town from north to south approximately one third to the west adjacent to the City of Buffalo and two thirds to the east adjacent to the Town of Lancaster.

Thruway links to the I-190, 290, 219 and 400 expressways, plus the Kensington, bring tourist and commercial travelers to the town.

Cheektowaga also contains the incorporated villages of Sloan and Depew. These villages, while not part of the master plan, exert influences on community services, traffic and population.

The town has developed an urban character due to its location and the influences of the City of Buffalo, traffic ways and the airport. Large areas of vacant land are at a premium. The few that remain should be permitted to develop only after careful analysis of community needs. This open land occurs primarily in the southern third of the town and is generally surrounded by residential uses. With single family housing sites becoming difficult to find these areas may be considered prime locations for high quality housing.

With a Community that is approximately 85% developed the comprehensive plan is directed toward: the preservation of existing neighborhoods, the protection of the residential areas from commercial and industrial encroachment; the maintenance of governmental services; and enhancement of key development districts.

2. INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

A. LAND USE

Land Use

The predominant land use in the Town of Cheektowaga is residential with approximately 55 percent of the town being used for single family housing or apartment developments this is followed by industrial use which accounts for approximately 25 percent of the land use which includes a regional shopping center (Galleria Mall) and the Greater Buffalo International Airport (1000+ acres). The next major use is commercial and retail uses approximately 20 percent which also includes a regional shopping center, the Thruway Mall, the first mall in Western New York (1956), and Apple Tree Mall, primarily outlet retail; parks, playgrounds, schools, cemeteries, and vacant land make up the balance, but are included in the zoning districts which encompass the above three major categories.

Recreation

The Town of Cheektowaga presently has an excellent recreational system. The Town currently has 28 town park and school playgrounds and recreational sites to service the community. The Town is in the process of developing Stiglemier Park into a major facility by the expansion of recreational uses. The Town is also utilizing the required donations of land or recreations fees to expand some smaller Town facilities or to develop some of their under utilized play areas. In addition, the Town of Cheektowaga and the Cheektowaga, Maryvale School systems have continued to cooperate very closely in allowing the use of the school's recreational facilities outside school hours which has led to a very effective utilization of the available recreation facilities. Similar agreements with parochial schools, churches and some fire districts also provide organized sports fields for town residents.

The Town has recently completed a town recreation master plan which details the overall recreation program and facilities.

An addition to the Recreation Plan is the development of a town-wide bike/hike trail system. The system as conceptually illustrated on Figure 1 - Recreational Systems could be used to link neighborhoods and community parks. A combination of abandoned rail corridors, active stream and power transmission corridors and public streets/sidewalks could be considered as rights-of-way for the system.

Open Space

Considering that Cheektowaga is approximately 85% built out, there is considerable open space within the Town. Stream corridors and abandoned railroad rights-of-way are underutilized areas that may be used to link parks and play areas. These same corrections may also be used for hiking or bike trails as separate recreational pursuits.

In addition, the Town has the Victor Reinstein Nature Preserve, adjacent to the Stiglemier Park, a major quasi - public open space administered by the New York State Department of

LEGEND



POSSIBLE BIKWAYS + TRAILS



PARKS + RECREATION AREAS



SCHOOLS



FUTURE GOLF COURSE



CEMETERY



EXISTING WOODED AREA

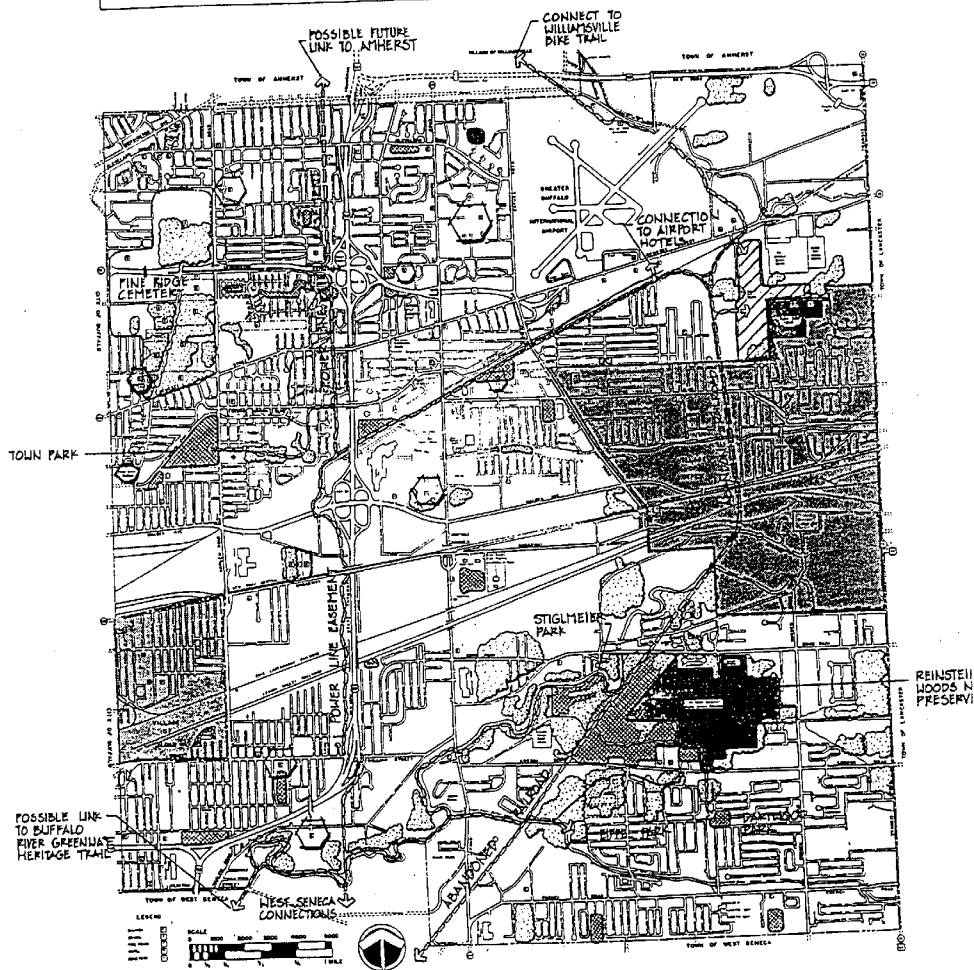


FIGURE 1



THE TOWN OF
CHEEKTOWAGA
ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

MASTER PLAN
RECREATIONAL SYSTEMS



Environmental Conservation. The Town presently does not have an open-space plan but is working in that regard through the recreation plan.

Historic Resources

The Town of Cheektowaga appears to most to be a relatively young or new community. This is due to the new commercial and residential development that has occurred over the past few years. In fact, much of the existing Town is a result of the post war development boom and the recent expansion and urbanization of the City of Buffalo.

Historically, Cheektowaga was a rural agricultural community with farms serving the nearby city population. With the development of the railroad and later the highway system, Cheektowaga became a transportation crossroads prompting increased suburban development. In turn, the City of Buffalo expanded its borders and pushed residences and businesses into neighboring towns.

There are a few notable historical landmarks within the Town of Cheektowaga. Many such sites have been demolished over the years to make way for new development. In the northeast section of Town somewhat overshadowed by the Greater Buffalo International Airport is a small "War of 1812" cemetery. Bordering the Town's western edge, we find two significant historical structures, the George Urban House and the Maria Hill Chapel. Lastly, in center of Town along Broadway Avenue is the Old Methodist Home, listed on the local historical register.

Land Use Regulation

The Town has continued to tighten its land use controls through the addition of new ordinance and modification of existing ones. An example of this is the Landscaping requirements that were instituted in 1985. The current zoning code, however, has led to many variance requests. Some consolidation of sections, reduction of pyramiding provisions and the addition of use groups may clarify the ordinance.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Environmental Features

The Town of Cheektowaga is located within the physiographic area known as the Erie-Ontario lowlands. This is a plain which generally ranges from 600-700 feet above sea level.

Three major streams flow through Cheektowaga. Ellicott Creek cuts through the northeast corner of the Town, Scajaquada Creek bisects the Town into approximately half east to west and Cayuga Creek flows through the Town from the East Central Sector south westerly to its meeting with the Buffalo River. In addition a small network of streams occurs in the south east portion these include Slate Bottom Creek and it's tributaries.

Topography

Topography is virtually flat throughout the Town except for gentle slopes to the creeks. Some rolling topography occurs in the south eastern section of the Town between Cayuga and Slate Bottom Creeks.

LEGEND



▢ PARKS/RECREATION AREAS



▢ HISTORIC SITES



▢ CEMETERIES



▢ STREAMS



▢ MAJOR WETLAND



▢ WOODED AREA

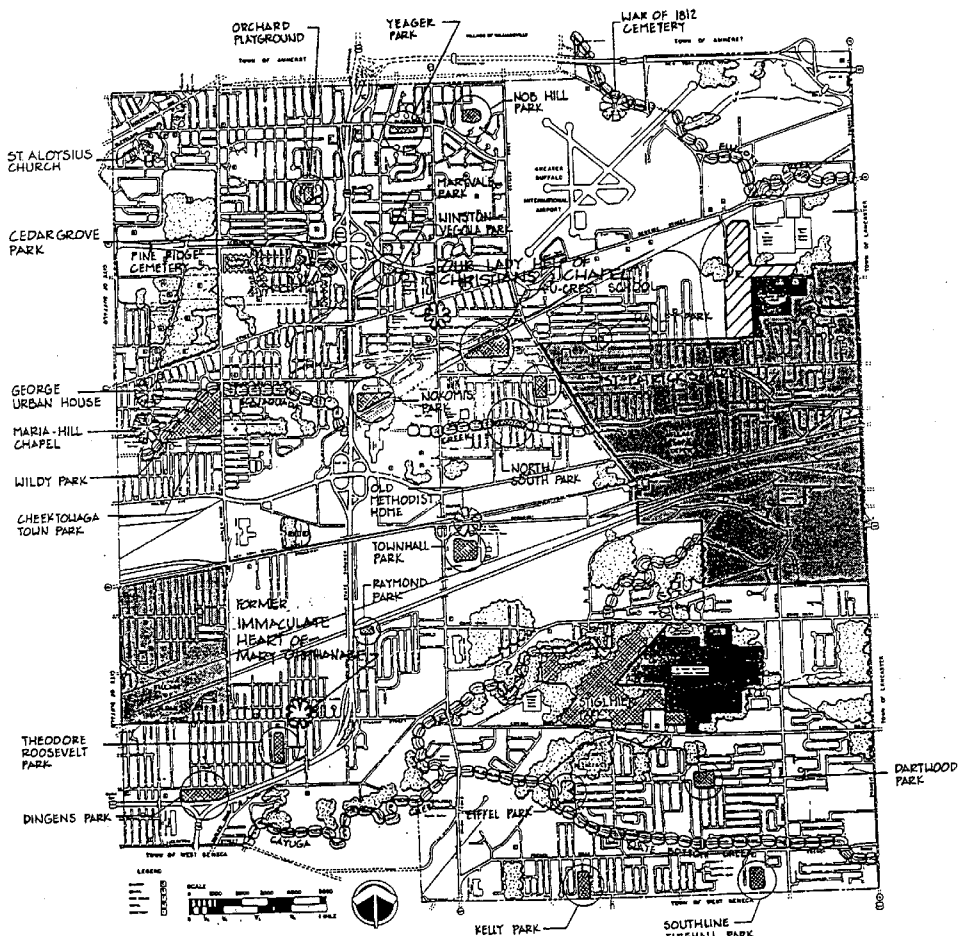


FIGURE 2



THE TOWN OF
CHEEKTOWAGA
ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

MASTER PLAN

VISUAL & HISTORIC FEATURES



Soils and Bedrock

The Town of Cheektowaga as shown on the generalize soils classification map prepared by the USDA Soil Conservation Service indicate that the majority of the Town is urban land. The north west corner of the town is the Churchville - Ovid - Lima association a nearly level deep somewhat poorly drained and moderately drained medium textured soil on lowland plains. The Darien - Remsen - Angola and Odessa - Scholanie - Rhinbeck associations are both dominantly nearly level and gently sloping, deep, somewhat poorly drained medium textured and moderately fine textured soils, on lowland plains. The Niagara-Canandaigua-Cosad series is dominantly nearly level, deep, somewhat poorly drained to very poorly drained medium textures soils on lowland plains.

Bed rock in the town generally consists of grey to blank shale at a depth over 5 feet in all the soil associations. Lime stone and dolomite may be found in narrow bands or pockets at depths excluding 5 feet in the central part of the Town.

C. DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC BASE

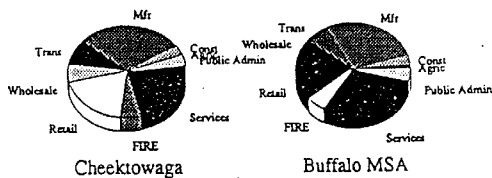
General Demographic and Economic Information

The 1980 Census of Population and Housing provides a "snapshot" of demographic and economic information about the community. While these data are ten years old, they provide important clues to the character of the Cheektowaga economy.

In many ways, Cheektowaga mirrors the Buffalo metropolitan area. Cheektowaga's family income is roughly comparable to that of the county. Median family income for the Town was \$21,008; the Buffalo Metropolitan Statistical Area¹ median family income was \$20,704. See Table II-1 for 1980 Income & Poverty Characteristics for Cheektowaga). Reflecting the significance of Cheektowaga's manufacturing and retail base, the Town of Cheektowaga has a greater share of its work force than the metropolitan area in Technical, Sales and Administrative Support occupations (35% of the town workforce compared to 31% of the MSA workforce) and in the category "Operators, Fabricators and Laborers" (22% of the town workforce compared to 20% for the MSA). Just over 29% of the workforce was employed in the manufacturing sector on 1980. Retail trade was the home industry for 19% of residents. Manufacturing and retail were the industry home to 28% and 18% of MSA residents, respectively. See figure 1 for occupational and industrial comparisons.

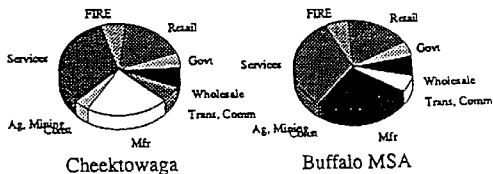
¹Composed of Erie and Niagara counties.

FIGURE 1
Industry Distribution



1980 Census of Population and Housing

FIGURE 2
Industry Distribution



Equifax Marketing Decision Systems

TABLE II-1 Income and Poverty Characteristics Town of Cheektowaga		
Income of Residents (1979)	Cheektowaga	Buffalo MSA
Median Household Income	\$18,945	\$17,252
Median Family Income	\$21,008	\$20,704
Per Capita Income	\$7,090	\$7,073
Persons Below Poverty Level	5.4%	10.3%
Families Below Poverty Level	4.4%	8.1%
Source: 1980 Census of Population and Housing		

Town of Cheektowaga residents were slightly less well educated than metropolitan area residents, according to the 1980 census. High school graduates comprised 61% of the population over the age of 25 compared to 65 for the Buffalo MSA.

The recently released 1990 population figures for the Town show that, like the county, Cheektowaga lost population between 1980 and 1990. The town lost over 10,000 residents over the decade, greater than 9% of its total population. Erie County population declined 4.6% over the period. See Table II-2 for 1980-90 population trends for Cheektowaga, the villages of Sloan and Depew, Erie County and the City of Buffalo.

TABLE II-2 Population Characteristics Town of Cheektowaga and Region				
Population Change 1980-90		Change From Previous Census		
Governmental Unit	1990	1980	Change	Percent Chg
ERIE COUNTY	968,532	1,015,472	(46,940)	-4.62
DEPEW VILLAGE (partly in Cheektowaga)	17,673	19,819	(2,146)	-10.83
BUFFALO CITY	328,123	357,870	(29,747)	-8.31
CHEEKTOWAGA TOWN	99,314	109,442	(10,128)	-9.25
SLOAN VILLAGE	3,830	4,529	(699)	-15.43

Economic Base

The community has a strong economic base that is supported both by a diversified manufacturing sector, a significant transportation hub (the Buffalo Airport) and a vibrant retail sector. Based on Equifax Marketing Decision Systems estimates, about 26% of 1990 daytime employment in the Town of Cheektowaga is based in the manufacturing sector (see Figure 2). This compares to about 21% in Erie County. The Equifax data report just under 5,000 employees in the retail sector, approximately 18% of the total number of jobs in the town. While roughly comparable to the share of retail jobs in the county, these data do not include the Galleria Mall.

Galleria has made a dramatic impact on the retail market. With a present size of approximately 1.2 million square feet, it services a major portion of the Buffalo metropolitan market. It will reach almost 1.5 million square feet after planned expansion is completed. Employment at Galleria is substantial and growing. Current annual sales are estimated to be \$250 million. Planned expansion (Lord & Taylor, Filene's Basement and Leachmere) should boost that total closer to \$290 million.² While some business has suffered since the new mall was developed, the overall retail future of the community is very strong. Galleria has induced substantial growth and renovation in retail areas in the proximity, particularly along Union Road.

The housing market has remained strong in recent years. Total building permits almost doubled between 1980 and 1989, rising from 822 to 1,408³. While the community's share of the single family home market decreased slightly between 1987 and 1990, this is to be expected in a mature suburb like Cheektowaga. Cheektowaga's share of the single family sales reported by the Greater Buffalo Association of Realtors fell from 8% of the total in 1987 to 7.3% in 1990. Relative single family home prices have also been falling relative to the metropolitan area, although prices have increased 28% over the period. The average price of a home sold in Cheektowaga in 1987 (\$57,300) was 83% of the average for the metropolitan area (\$69,000). By 1990, the Cheektowaga average price (\$73,200) had fallen to 80% of the metropolitan area total (\$91,000).⁴

²The Saratoga Associates estimate.

³See Table ____ above. Source: Town of Cheektowaga.

⁴Greater Buffalo Association of Realtors, West Amherst, NY. Data for 1990 through October.

Existing Industrial Base

Total daytime employment in the community is estimated at 27,860 by Equifax Marketing Decision Systems. This constitutes 5.5% of the total Erie County workforce. Detailed estimates are presented in Table II-3. The community's conspicuous strengths within the Buffalo area economy are indicated by the employment shares noted in the last column. Product categories "Hotels and Lodging" and "Apparel and Accessory" stand out with 16.4% and 12.4% of Erie County employment, respectively. As the town includes 10.2% of the total county population, it has captured more than its expected share of employment in each of these categories. By this measure, Transportation, Communication and Public Utilities is also a significant industrial sector.

Business Type	Number of Businesses	Number of Employees	Share of Erie County Employment
Retail Trade	631	4,968	5.6%
Home Improvement	26	153	4.2%
General Mdse	11	317	3.9%
Food	56	442	4.0%
Auto Dealers & Gas Stations	74	482	6.5%
Apparel & Accessory	107	708	12.4%
Furniture & Home Furnishings	75	472	7.9%
Eating & Drinking Estab	110	1,304	4.5%
Miscellaneous Retail	172	1,090	6.1%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	137	1,297	3.9%
Banks, Savings & Lending	21	617	4.5%
Securities Brokers & Invest	9	69	3.1%
Insurance Carriers & Agents	40	205	2.7%
Real Estate, Trust, Holding Co	67	406	4.3%
Services	786	7,174	4.3%
Hotels & Lodging	10	583	16.4%
Personal Services	233	1,430	6.1%
Business Services	184	1,601	4.9%

TABLE II-3 Daytime Employment Report: Town of Cheektowaga			
Business Type	Number of Businesses	Number of Employees	Share of Erie County Employment
Motion Picture & Amusement	45	424	6.0%
Health Services	131	1,868	3.7%
Legal Services	18	78	1.5%
Education Services	21	205	2.6%
Social Services	20	191	4.5%
Other Services	124	794	2.6%
Agriculture	12	53	2.3%
Mining	0	0	0.0%
Construction	120	857	4.6%
Manufacturing	104	7,236	6.5%
Transportation, Commun, Public Util	113	2,891	10.5%
Wholesale Trade	185	2,358	6.1%
Government	14	1,026	4.1%
TOTAL	2,102	27,860	5.5%
SOURCE: Equifax Marketing Decision Systems, 1990			

Major Employers

One of the significant employment concentrations in the town includes the various businesses associated with the airport. On-airport employment was estimated to be over 1,500 in 1984. Off-airport direct employment, some of which is located in Cheektowaga, was estimated to be an additional 6,000⁵. While total passengers and air freight fell between 1984 and 1988, 1988

⁵Peat Marwick, *Economic Impact of Greater Buffalo International Airport*, 1984.

projections indicated that growth was likely through the 1990's.⁶

Other major employers include LTV's Sierra Research facility, a manufacturer of electronic components for the defense industry. While employment has fallen from 900 in 1989 to 615 presently, LTV is still an important employer. Given the difficulties of the defense industry, however, this is not likely to be growing source of employment. LTV has indicated interest in selling the division. The implications of a sale are unknown. The Arvin-Calspan research and development firm is also an important employer at approximately 600 total employees. Depew is the home a major printing firm, Arcata Graphics with employment of 1,500. Cooper Industries employs over 300.

Economic Prospects

The current lack of space for industrial expansion is an issue that has already been addressed by the community. In many ways, Cheektowaga is the hub of activity for the Buffalo metropolitan economy, which is itself a healthy, dynamic market. The difficulties of the 1980's have forced the region to learn new approaches to economic development and have driven local industry to improve competitiveness and productivity. Cheektowaga is well positioned to take advantage of the strength of region. The town already boasts a diversified industrial base. The limited quantity of vacant land, however, suggests that careful land management is critical.

Existing industrial parks are almost full. Several projects are now in the planning stages that should boost industrial development and create new employment, however. These include the Conrail/Uniland industrial development between Dick and Harlem roads and the Town of Cheektowaga development project behind Walden Avenue near the intersection of Walden and Harlem roads. The community recognizes the value of these industrial properties. Industries wishing to locate in these developments should be expected to meet the standards of the community with respect to employment generation and neighborhood impact. Cheektowaga's position in the marketplace enables it to be selective about the industrial development it permits.

The possible expansion of the airport is another critical issue for Cheektowaga. An expanded use of vacant lands in the airport vicinity for industrial development is possible. The town must work closely with the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority to ensure that future development meets the needs of the airport and the town.

The Galleria Mall should ultimately boost the retail business of the entire town, although the short run impact has been negative for many businesses. Rather than competing with Galleria, the community's retailers should specialize in product lines that are not served by the mall, yet are appealing to the upscale consumer it attracts. An expansion of office development is another logical growth path for the Cheektowaga community.

⁶Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, *Draft Final Report, Master Plan/Terminal Area Plan Update*. Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff, January 1988.

Assessment Base

Building permit data supplied by the Town from 1977 to 1990 indicated steady growth in the residential sector with slight dips in 81 and 82. These correspond to a national recession and the closing of the Bethlehem Steel Lackawanna plant. Commercial and industrial growth were also steady from 1982 to 1987 growing from 4.9 million to 13.1 million. The years 1988 and 1989 were construction boom years primarily caused by the Galleria Mall construction, the renovation of the Thruway Mall and the commercial rush to build or renovate to keep pace with the malls. Commercial and industrial permits jumped to 57.9 million in 1988, remained high at 42.2 million in 1989 and have slowed somewhat in 1990 to 25.5 million. (See Table II-4, Issued Building Permits.)

Growth Trends

The projected growth in the Town of Lancaster to the east and the continued out migration from the City of Buffalo to the west. Cheektowaga offers the availability of the wide range of housing types from very urban to semi-rural. Lancaster is seeing considerable growth due to the increasing location of business activities in both Cheektowaga and Lancaster. This growth in Lancaster has been particularly strong in the western Lancaster area directly adjacent to Cheektowaga. The border line has seen increased presence for infill housing, multi-family uses and commercial activity.

Residential Growth

Growth has been relatively slow in the Town but creeping steadily upward. Based upon building permit data the Town averaged 59 single units in 82 through 85 and 4 double or family unit apartment growth was virtually nil. However, in 1986 single family housing permits were at 146 and 2 families at 19. 1987 through 1990 single units average 157.5, two family units 21.5 and multiple dwellings were beginning to reappear. No data was available on the number of apartment units constructed, however, an average of 2 multi-family dwellings per year can be found in the data.

The remaining pockets of vacant land along Transit and Losson Roads and Como Park Boulevard will provide some areas for continued medium price single family development. The vacant heavily wooded land near Apple Tree Mall may provide for some large lot more expensive housing and the vacant lands along Cayuga Creek Road may be utilized for cluster or multi-family housing due to environmental constraints.

TABLE II-4, ISSUED BUILDING PERMITS

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF BUILDING PERMITS *	ESTIMATED COST (IN MILLIONS)
1977	687	11.1
1978	866	17.3
1979	826	12.9
1980	822	11.1
1981	727	9.1
1982	817	9.1
1983	867	10.3
1984	872	15.3
1985	980	14.6
1986	1051	25.8
1987	1173	25.7
1988	1319	72.0
1989	1408	63.2
1990	909	37.7

* Includes all permits which required an application for construction.

Commercial Growth

Commercial development activity takes place throughout the Town. Major new activity has been taking place in the Walden Avenue/Union Road corridors due to the influence of the Galleria Mall. Renovation to existing strip plazas and the infill of vacant sites has been active during the past three years to keep pace with the compete with the new mall.

The Town has had strong commercial activity in the form of strip plazas and shopping centers throughout the Town. There is presently in the planning stages a significant development in the west central area of the Town south of Walden Avenue. The proposal includes office and commercial space and possibly some light manufacturing.

Throughout the Town there is little transitional buffer space between commercial uses and the surrounding residential areas. Unscreened parking lots and service areas abut rear and side yards. Older areas of the Town, primarily from Harlem Road west are 30 and 40 foot lots. These are being converted to office and small commercial establishments without adequate parking, buffers or open space.

Industrial Growth

Industrial growth has been slow in recent years due to the built out condition of the Town, and the Western New York economy changing from manufacturing to service industries. The redevelopment of some former manufacturing plants to office and light industrial uses has provided a stable job market. Redevelopment and growth in the vicinity of the Greater Buffalo International Airport has had a strong influence in the north east sector of the Town. Small manufacturing warehousing and office uses surround the airport facility. The former Westinghouse plant is proposed to be razed for airport expansion and the industrial users located there can be expected to relocate to available industrial sites in the area.

There are proposed industrial park plans being developed for the former Conrail land north of Broadway comprising approximately 200 acres. This project in conjunction with the rail lands west of Harlem Road will provide growth potential for light industrial and warehousing needs for the foreseeable future.

Older industrial areas along Broadway, Walden Avenue west of the thruway and in the Dick Road. Broadway sections are gradually infilling and upgrading as the economic climate improves.

D. INFRASTRUCTURE

Utilities

The Town of Cheektowaga is virtually 100% serviced by public water, electric and natural gas, with the exception of the vacant land noted earlier. Extensions of these utilities will service the projected development. Sanitary sewer are presently available throughout the Town. Town and county sewer districts service the majority of the Town. The main trunk sewers and fielder lines have the capacity to handle the limited growth opportunities in the Town.

Drainage

The Town has taken strong steps to improve drainage in the Town carrying out extensive study of the Scajaquada Creek water shed prior to the construction of the Galleria Mall. The Town has also studied the Cayuga, Ellicott, Slat Bottom, and tributary creeks drainage basins and then adopt a policy for regulating development within the entire Town. This policy requires that any development insure that after its completion it will improve the Towns overall drainage system to such measures as stormwater detention or improved channel capacities. The Town also has a policy of working with the Town of Lancaster on upstream storm water management prior to its entering the Cheektowaga part or the water shed.

Traffic

The primary traffic problem that effects Cheektowaga is congestion along the principle arterial routes. In a north-south direction Harlem and Union Road completely bisect the Town, Cayuga/Dick Road stop at Broadway and traffic continues south bound via Borden Road south of Broadway out to the Village of Depew (see Figure 4 -Transportation System). Transit Road along the eastern border serves both Cheektowaga, Lancaster and Depew and has been upgraded by NYSDOT from 2 to 4 lanes in many locations. The remaining 2 lane section from French to Como Park is in the planning stage by D.O.T.

Harlem Road from the Town of Amherst south to St. Joseph's Hospital is still a 2 lane arterial currently being studied by N.Y.S.D.O.T. The southern portion of Harlem Road has been widened and left turn lanes added at major intersections. New bridges and controlled access have improved this section.

Union Road has been improved through the entire town into a four lane, left turn lane arterial. Even so it is congested due to the large commercial uses which utilize this highway from the Kensington expressway southerly to the West Seneca town line. Union Road congestion is a major concern and a detailed traffic analysis would be required to analyze the problems and potential solutions for this roadway. Dick Road from Genesee south of Walden Avenue is another major commercial arterial which service the Town and the Village of Depew. Strip plazas and small retail shopping centers line both sides with some what controlled access. Congestion has not been noted as an issue on Dick Road. Borden Road south of the Village has been improved from a narrow 2 lane to a wide 2 lane with left turn slots, however, congestion is a concern due to the housing growth that has been taking place.

The New York State Thruway also services the Town north to south as a freeway with interchanges at Cleveland Drive, the Kensington Expressway, Walden Avenue/Galleria Drive and a new interchange under construction at William Street. It is anticipated that this new interchange will alleviate rush hour traffic at the Walden interchange and from Union Road in that some traffic exiting at Walden to head south on Union will now exit at William to Union directly to reach the south eastern sections of the Town.

East to west the Town is bisected by 3 major arterial. Genesee Street, Walden Avenue and Broadway. The Kensington Expressway brings traffic from Downtown Buffalo to the Airport and Dick Road/Genesee Street area. Genesee Street from the city line to Dick Road is under utilized at present due to the Kensington now carrying the traffic load. The Genesee Street/Union Road intersection however, is congested due to commercial activity. Genesee Street from Dick Road to the east is a 6 lane divided arterial servicing hotels, industrial complexes and the Greater Buffalo International Airport. Although somewhat congested during peak hours impromptu by NFTA to have the Kensington Expressway exit airport traffic directly to the airport will relieve some of the congestion.

Walden Avenue serves as a major east/west arterial. From the city line easterly to Union Road it services primarily commercial uses. It then services light and heavy industrial users, warehousing and distribution centers up to and through the Village of Depew. It is also a major

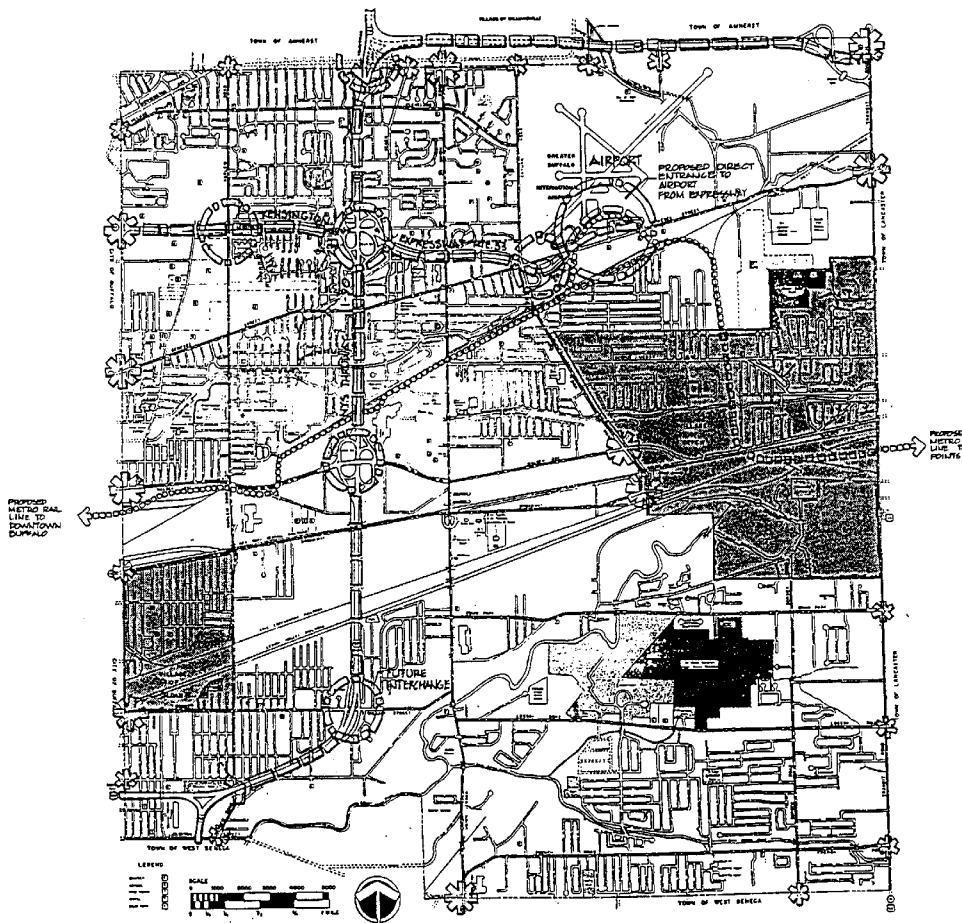
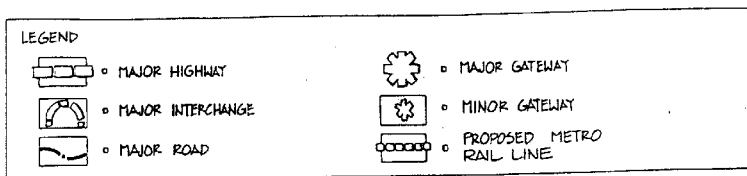


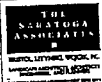
FIGURE 4



THE TOWN OF
CHEEKTOWAGA
ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

MASTER PLAN

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS



traffic way into the Town of Lancaster. New developments proposed along Walden Avenue, e.g., the Walden Village development will add to the traffic impacts in the Walden-Harlem Road area and easterly to the thruway interchange.

Broadway is currently an underutilized 4 lane arterial servicing the industrial corridor from the city line and Village of Sloan easterly to the Village of Depew. It is also a feeder route to the Town and Village of Lancaster. The proposed Conrail industrial park between Harlem Road and easterly to Union Road along the rail corridor will be serviced by Broadway.

Five major interrupted thoroughfares that bisect the Town in east/west corridors are Cleveland Hill Drive, which services primarily the north west residential sector and terminated at Cayuga Road, and William Street, Como Park Boulevard, Losson Road and French Road all in the southern third of the Town.

William Street will soon have an interchange at the New York Thruway - Fall 1991 projected this will alleviate some of the through Town traffic now using the Walden Avenue/Union Road corridor. There is concern however, that through traffic to the Town of Lancaster will use Bennett Road, Como Park Boulevard Route increasing the traffic through residential areas. Losson Road is also a residential major collector with a direct link to Lancaster and there is a similar concern with increased traffic.

French Road connects Union to Transit road. It is a mixed use collector with strip plazas apartment complexes, light industrial and warehouse uses and neighborhood services strung out along its length. By not having direct access into Lancaster it is not utilized as a connector as Como Park and Losson Road. As a 4 lane collector this roadway should be promoted as a major link in the Town's traffic system.

3. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. VISION

The vision to be implemented by the Master Plan is that of Cheektowaga as a complete town which has accommodated growth while preserving open space and creating sufficient recreational facilities for a growing population. A complete town provides its citizens with a variety of housing types, opportunities for employment and business, public facilities of all kinds, and places for relaxation, recreation and enjoyment. A beneficial quality of life contributes a sense of friendliness, safety, caring and the ability of citizens to personally influence their town and its environment.

Cheektowaga is a complete town yet maintains an opportunity for growth and development. The Master Plan builds on this reality and reinforces it. The plan's goals and objectives have been developed to provide a commonly agreed-upon basis for decision-making in the various subject areas addressed by the plan.

The goals are considered "end states" which the plan is intended to achieve. The objectives following each goal are a series of actions or conditions required to realize the goal. The Comprehensive Plan will build on these goals and objectives to set guidelines for zoning regulations, capital programming, action projects and other Town implementation mechanisms.

B. LAND USE GOAL

Promote development uses, patterns, densities, and a mixture of activities which will reduce conflicts between various land uses and encourage positive investment in the form of new construction, restoration and improvement of existing structures, and the protection of important community land resources.

Objectives:

1. Work with developers and community leadership to assure that methods to address recreation, open space, and transportation needs are provided in conjunction with land development.
2. Through zoning, protect business and residential neighborhoods from potentially adverse effects of more intensive land uses.
3. Manage commercial development along major roads and intersections experiencing development pressure so as to provide commercial services convenient to residential areas while minimizing traffic congestion.

4. Promote uses of conservation areas to protect important vistas, vegetation and wildlife habitats, while providing public access where possible.
5. Use the master plan as the basis for continuous decision making in conjunction with the Town's zoning code, subdivision regulations, official map and capital improvement program.

C. TRANSPORTATION GOAL

Minimize traffic congestion on heavily-travelled arteries. Maintain and enhance the existing roadways, sidewalks, and trail network. Ensure that future improvements are beneficial in shaping the built environment of the town.

Objectives:

1. Regulate the intensity of development as necessary to maintain a reasonable level of roadway service especially on major town thoroughfare:
2. Regulate curb cuts along commercial roadways through development and implementation of a long-range curb cut consolidation plan.
3. Provide or cause to be provided adequate landscaping and pedestrian improvements in conjunction with roadway improvement projects.
4. Require handicapped accessible sidewalks in all new developments or redevelopment in order to promote pedestrian use and safety.
5. Encourage the development and expansion of trail and bikeway systems along the stream corridors, abandoned rail road rights-of-way and utility corridors and open space areas of the Town of Cheektowaga.
6. Review posted speed limits on all heavily travelled roadways to assess effectiveness.

D. GOVERNMENT SERVICES/UTILITIES GOAL

Promote the development, maintenance and enhancement of government services and community facilities to meet the needs of the citizens of Cheektowaga in the most cost-effective manner practicable.

Objectives:

1. Coordinate utility recommendations of the Town Engineering Department with land use policy.
2. Maintain and enhance the electric, water and sanitary and storm sewer systems to allow for managed growth in the remaining development areas.

3. Structure the utility rate system to financially support operating, maintenance, replacement and expansion of capital facilities as needed.
4. Require all new developments to provide underground electric lines. Where resources and opportunities permit, relocate existing above-ground electric lines underground.

E. VISUAL RESOURCES GOAL

Enhance and maintain the visual resources of the Town of Cheektowaga, particularly the stream corridors, floodplain areas, significant woodlot and open space areas.

Objectives:

1. Develop a method to ensure the preservation of scenic views of Ellicott, Scajaquada, Cayuga and Slate Bottom Creeks as well as wetlands and woods. Consider site plan review, land or easement acquisition, and other methods as appropriate.
2. Identify scenic roads and places in the town and help to maintain them through landscaping, site plan review and, as appropriate, through enactment of local laws.
3. Maintain historic character in appropriate areas of the Town of Cheektowaga.
4. Require more substantial landscaping and, where appropriate, scenic view preservation as part of the site plan approval process. In the case of commercial projects, this would include additional landscaping in parking areas. Strengthen the landscaping code to define permanency of landscaping amenities throughout the town.
5. Encourage the development of harmonious signage, landscaping, street furnishing, lighting and pavement materials in new developments and in older areas when improvements or use changes occur.

F. CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL

Promote the historic and cultural heritage of the Town of Cheektowaga and preserve significant artifacts, records, landscapes, structures and sites. Increase the amount and type of cultural activities and resources available to the residents of the town.

Objectives:

1. Encourage and support, where appropriate, the preservation and adaptive reuse or relocation of historic properties throughout the town.

2. Require new developments to incorporate existing historic and cultural resources into project plans to the maximum extent practicable.

G. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS

Continue to improve and expand open space facilities in the town that are readily available to all residents. Preserve and enhance permanent open space that protects significant scenic and environmentally important areas.

Objectives:

1. Encourage the continued development of diverse recreational facilities, including park expansion or redevelopment, trails, bikeways, community centers and other facilities that meet the recreational and educational needs of all members of the community.
2. Expand the trail/bikeway system to provide opportunities for public access to stream corridors as well as to outdoor recreational facilities. Link various parks, playing fields, schools and residential areas and other recreational and community destinations through use of an expanded trail system. Utilize watershed floodplain rail and utility corridors and emphasize scenic vistas wherever possible.
3. Make appropriate use of innovative land use controls such as cluster development, transfer of development rights, coordination of parkland reserves in multiple developments, parkland and/or recreation fee dedication, and easement arrangements within developments as a way to improve open space and recreation opportunities.
4. Encourage the location of new recreational facilities in areas where they will contribute to the preservation of open space, historic sites or unique natural resources.
5. Include the Town Recreation Department during all development review phases, in order to coordinate adequate provision of parks and recreation space.

H. BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT GOAL

Preserve and strengthen the economy of the Town of Cheektowaga and encourage a growing and diversified economic base.

Objectives:

1. Continue to attract new industrial and business uses to the town, as well as mixed use office/research park/education facilities in order to provide employment opportunities for local residents, diversify the economy and expand the town's property tax base.

2. Promote the location and site development of industrial and commercial uses where they will be convenient to major roadways, railways and business services and where they will not intrude on residential uses.
3. Review current tax abatement policies to assess impacts on development and tax revenues.

I. HOUSING GOAL

Promote a variety of quality housing opportunities which are affordable and accessible for all residents of the Town of Cheektowaga.

Objectives:

1. Provide for an appropriate range of housing types, densities and price ranges to accommodate all residents of the town.
2. Increase the availability, quality and affordability of housing for senior citizens and handicapped persons.
3. Review the design of new housing units and site plans to ensure visual compatibility with the architectural character of the surrounding area, or to define a desirable landscape character in undeveloped areas, as appropriate.

J. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES GOAL

Preserve and maintain the quality of the town's environmental features, especially surface and groundwater resources, wetlands and the stream corridors.

Objectives:

1. Through zoning, site plan review process and existing state and federal regulations, protect the stream corridors and environmentally sensitive wetlands.
2. By means of acquisition and land use controls, as appropriate, encourage the preservation of greenbelt corridors throughout the town, especially along streams, wetland and flood plain areas, in order to provide open space and wildlife areas, and to protection from flooding.
3. Continue to utilize the procedures outlined in the NYS Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) in order to evaluate and address the impacts of activities on the environment.
4. Encourage and, where appropriate, require dedication of parkland and/or open space in new developments.
5. Protect the town's environmentally important areas through various design and other review requirements placed on development projects.

4. MASTER PLAN AND POLICIES

A. INTRODUCTION

The development of the master plan is driven by two major factors; the community needs as expressed by the Goals and Objectives and the opportunities and limitations presented by the Town's environmental setting, built environment and its economic position in the region.

The master plan blends the community goals and opportunities for development and conservation into a guide to decisions about physical development of the community. The plan includes both physical plan and policy recommendations which are general in nature. For purposes of this planning effort six major areas - defined as target sectors were identified as discrete planning units for review. The target sectors were identified by the community leaders as those areas which are either experiencing transitioning land uses or are large undeveloped tracts and are facing development pressures. The discussion therefor is presented principally at the six key target sectors level. However, there are several broad-scope concepts which extend appropriately to a community-wide scale of action and need and therefor are presented as such.

B. Key Target Sectors

The following discussion summarizes the development constraints and opportunities that are to be found in the target sector areas. In addition, policy recommendations are provided for guiding improvements in the district. These sectors (see Figure 5 - Target Sectors) have been defined as Genesee Street from Dick Road easterly to Sonwil Drive, Harlem Road from Genesee Street south to Walden Avenue, Walden Avenue from the Buffalo city line easterly to the thruway, and Walden Avenue east of the thruway to Dick Road. Union Road is a major sector from the Kensington Expressway south to Walden Avenue and from Walden Avenue continuing south to French Road. The other major sectors under consideration are the railroad lands that are parallel to Broadway running from the Village of Sloan easterly to approximately Union Road.

The findings and recommendations for each sector are graphically illustrated on Figure 6 - Key Target Sectors Land Use Plan.

The Genesee Street Sector, beginning at Sonwil Drive is industrial and commercial on both sides with restaurants and hotels lining the highway. This area also has a wide variety of automotive oriented business lining both sides of the highway from automobile collision and repair shops to gas stations and several automobile rental agencies. The Greater Buffalo International Airport utilizes virtually all of the northern side of the Genesee Street frontage from Holtz Road, to Cayuga Drive. The south side of the highway is lined with industrial users, restaurants and hotels. A major tenant on the south side is the Cal-Span Advanced Technology Center. Between the east and west entrance roads to the Airport there are small retail uses comprised of a car and limousine rental and a motel; however, these two parcels will be utilized for airport use when the new airport master plan is implemented.

LEGEND



HARLEM ROAD



WALDEN AVENUE



UNION ROAD



GENESEE STREET



RAILROAD CORRIDOR



VACANT LAND

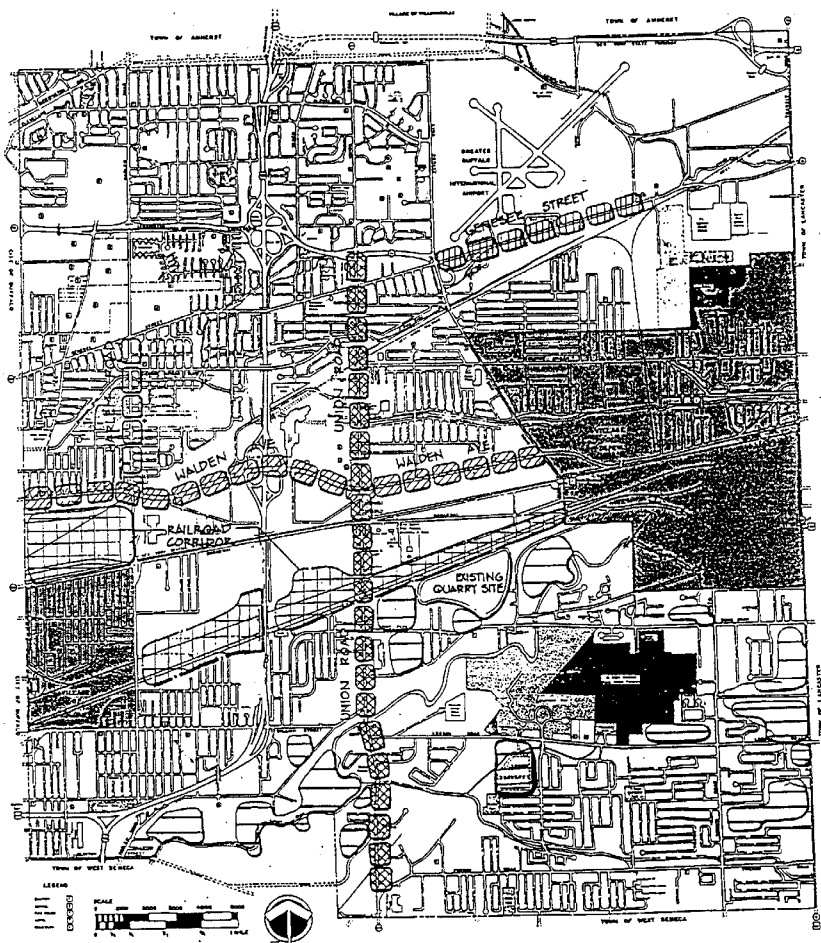
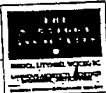


FIGURE 5



THE TOWN OF
CHEEKTOWAGA
ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

MASTER PLAN
TARGET SECTORS



Opposite the east airport entrance is a major hotel complex comprised of two hotels, two restaurants and some office uses. The Peter J. Schmidt Company has a major food distribution warehouse opposite the west terminal entrance and the balance of the frontage between Peter J. Schmidt and the Dick Road/Cayuga Drive area are retail uses and a major office building, housing, banking facilities and the attending parking areas. The sector is limited for future development and redevelopment primarily to back lands as the facilities that currently are located there have very minimal setbacks from the highway and this setback area is primarily used for parking lots. The sector would benefit from improved sign control and some landscape development and tree planting. However, tree planting would have to be done in conjunction with the FAA requirements for clearance.

The balance of the Genesee corridor from Dick Road west to Harlem would benefit from sign control, pavement reduction and landscape improvements.

Summary

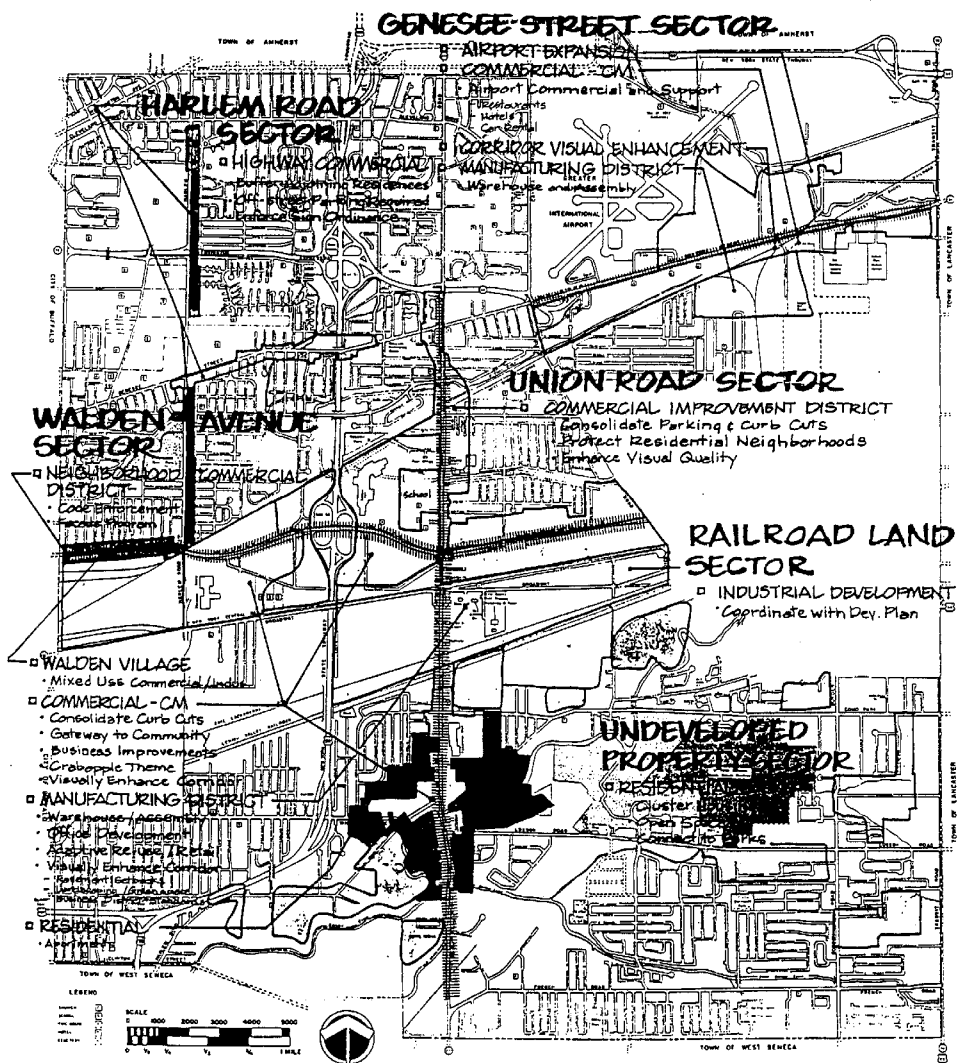
Major gateway into the Community first impression into Western New York by international and national traveler visiting business, industry, education and tourist facilities.

Objectives:

1. Improve visual character of sector
2. Provide an "identity" theme for community
3. Create a high profile airport development district - regulate land use along Genesee Street - frontage properties, commercial, lodging,

Policies/Implementation

1. Enforce code requirements for signs, setbacks, landscaping, etc.
2. Develop a "theme plan" for the town and use these in the airport area, eg: tree planting architectural component, unique signage
3. Institute a median tree planting program in concert with NYSDOT and FAA requirements
4. Create a special overlay district in the zoning code to permit signage and attraction features not generally permitted in the Town.
5. Develop a policy for the coordination of planning in the corridor with the NFTA Airport Plan.
6. Promote Airport Commercial related development in the Genesee Road Corridor - frontage properties should relate to airport commerce - office and hotel. Back lots - industrial and supply/warehouse.
7. Promote full lot depth development; discourage highway frontage/strip development.
8. Consolidate curb cuts along Genesee Street.



The next sector under consideration is **Harlem Road Sector** from Genesee Street south to Walden. This is an older area of the community, one that was residential in its early development and the residential uses have gradually been taken over by commercial and office uses, either on the small parcel that the residence occupied or by combining one or more residences. In other sections, several residences have been removed and new offices, light industrial, and mixed commercial uses have been built. The area would benefit strongly from sign control that would eliminate or severely down size many of the signs used throughout the district. Where possible, parking lots that back directly out onto Harlem Road or parking lots that are inadequate for the uses that are taking place on the parcels should be required to be reconfigured to permit better access to Harlem Road and to limit the number of curb cuts that in general are parcel-wide. The uses along the highway are all in the commercial categories, however, auto body and other automotive uses do have some intrusion into the area.

The Town has a major Town recreation area on Harlem Road with several ball diamonds and ice rink and other recreational facilities present. Opposite the Town park and library is the community's only medical facility, St. Joseph Hospital, and while the hospital has adequate setback from the highway, the hospital parking lot comes right up to the highway right-of-way and since it is a major parking facility could benefit from the use of tree planting and screening treatments.

Opposite the hospital and library, Harlem Road becomes a five lane highway with the fifth lane as a center left turn area, lined on both sides with strip commercial facilities, some automotive uses and some home occupation facilities. The areas of open land on the east side of Harlem road, one at the corner of Genesee Street, the other two at the intersection of Harlem Road and McParlin Avenue should be developed but with adequate setbacks and buffer screening to the residential areas that are adjacent to them on the east. From the McParlin intersection to Walden Avenue on the west side are substantial residential homes. This area should be preserved by rezoning the area to a residential district that will not permit commercial activities, home occupations, or the like in order to protect the character of this neighborhood.

Summary

This sector is characterized as a major neighborhood sector with Community facilities playing a major role in influencing the development. Highway frontage properties are converting to commercial development. Cemeteries, Town Park and offices, hospital and library, commercial uses and the Thruway Mall all add to the development demand in this sector.

Objectives:

1. Improve traffic circulation in the area north of Walden Avenue
2. Improve the visual appearance of the sector
3. Protect the residential uses from commercial intrusion

Policies/Implementation:

1. Work with NYSDOT during the planning and construction phase for the area north of Walden Avenue to consolidate curb cuts where possible
2. Remove parcel wide paving and permit only driveway access to business uses
3. Work with the business community to develop a tree planting program during the reconstruction of the roadway
4. Enforce the landscaping and screening provisions of the code
5. Enforce the signage provisions of the code
6. Formulate a policy and code requirement of 50 ft. frontage minimums for conversions from residential to office or business
7. Encourage the formation of a business district in the corridor; distinguish between neighborhood business and commercial development. Protect adjoining residential neighborhoods from commercial development intrusions

The third sector under consideration is Walden Avenue Sector from the Buffalo city line easterly to the thruway. The Cheektowaga line is at the beginning of the 1000 block of Walden Avenue and is a continuation of typical city development. There is little or no setback to the buildings. Many of the buildings in the 1000 block and out as far as Leonard Post Drive have virtually no frontage. It is a mixed-use area of two and three family houses, funeral parlors, drug stores, printing shops, taverns and restaurants. The entire area is very urban in character and suffers from the urban facade deterioration that has taken place over the last several years. This is an area that would benefit from a facade corridor treatment and landscaping and tree planting. Should this area be able to redevelop with some type of theme it would be a benefit to the community as Walden Avenue is a major entrance into the Town of Cheektowaga.

Behind the residence and business uses to the south of Walden is an area of development opportunity on old railroad lands. There is also a large parcel opposite Leonard Post Drive that is currently available that would lend itself to a development of some magnitude and give the opportunity to start improving the appearance of this major area along Walden Avenue. The Harlem Road/Walden Avenue intersection is a major intersection within the community and it has commercial activity in the form of a strip plaza on the northeast corner and the thruway on the southeast corner. The Thruway Mall has undergone extensive renovation; however, it has suffered in tenancy due to the Walden Galleria Mall less than one mile to the east. Walden Avenue from Harlem Road easterly to the thruway is primarily an area of automobile dealerships and large retail establishments interspersed with fast food restaurants, a large bowling facility, small retail facilities and major light industrial users, especially midway between Harlem Road and the thruway. There are also some industrial facilities that could be redeveloped into office or light industrial parks in the area between the thruway and Harlem Road.

From the thruway easterly, Walden Avenue is primarily a mixed use industrial corridor, however, it does have the entrance to the Walden Galleria Mall and a major hotel on the north side. The south side is primarily automotive uses and automobile sales facilities up to Union Road. These are interspersed with some retail establishments.

To the east of Union Road, Walden Avenue becomes primarily light industrial in nature. Although there are some retail facilities that service both the office workers and the general public, these are at a minimum and there are no major retail establishments for the general public along this highway. What little vacant land is apparent along this section of Walden Avenue will probably develop into similar type uses of office and light industrial. This area is typical of the Walden corridor, although the business uses and industrial tenants have greater setbacks, it suffers from a lack of landscaping and does not have a sense of unity. Walden Avenue from the thruway easterly is a five lane divided highway and handles the traffic adequately. Curb cuts could be consolidated throughout this district to service two or more parcels should the opportunity arise. Landscaping could be required of new or existing developments as they add to their facilities or wish to redevelop their parking lots.

Summary

Walden Avenue is one of the primary entrances to the Town. The sector has three district segments each with unique characteristics as discussed in the text; however, the following would apply to all segments.

Objectives:

1. Improve the visual character of the area
2. Institute an identification program to highlight the gateway into the community
3. Develop a policy for backland and open land development that will assume high quality development
4. Institute a program of parking and circulation improvement

Policies/Implementation:

1. Enforce Zoning Code requirements on signage
2. Develop a facade and street improvement district for the city line to Harlem Road segment
3. Formulate a street tree planting program for the entire sector including median planting where possible
4. Formulate a gateway theme plan for the town and utilize it at the expressway and Union/Walden area
5. Institute a parking and curb cut program to coordinate between adjacent uses to limit curb cuts
6. Enforce the parking lot improvement and landscaping requirements from Harlem Road easterly to Dick Road.
7. Adopt zoning regulations to prevent the conversion and/or intrusion of incompatible uses into the prime commercial areas and residential districts.
8. Promote the vacant land area south of Walden Avenue for office and light industrial development, with supporting mixed-use development.

The next sector under consideration is the **Railroad Lands Sector** that generally fronts along Broadway and extends from the Buffalo Forge Company Number 2, which runs from Union Road easterly to a Niagara Mohawk Substation at the thruway, mixed use and vacant lands along the railroad tracks all the way to the Village of Sloan line, bisected by the Harlem Road overpass. This area is higher than Broadway by approximately seven feet and the road frontage should definitely be improved by any development that takes place in this area.

The south side of Broadway from Union Road to the Village of Sloan line is a mixed use frontage area and again very urban in its development character in that the buildings are of minimum setback or front immediately on the road right-of-way. There is very little differentiation between the development in the Village of Sloan and that development in the Town of Cheektowaga along south Broadway. In this area on both sides, the community would benefit from a sign program and a street tree planting program. The south side especially and the north side should be very carefully planned as the proposed industrial park comes to reality so that adequate berming, screening and landscaping are provided along the Broadway frontage. The railroad lands between William Street and Broadway offer an excellent opportunity for redevelopment as they become available through continued sale or abandonment by the railroad corporations. This area as it redevelops should be planned for setback landscaping and buffering similar to what has been suggested for the north side of Broadway.

Summary

New opportunities for high profile development and the improvement of adjacent existing development are possible due to the change of use in this sector.

Objectives:

1. Improve the visual character of the sector
2. Pursue high quality development for vacant reuse area
3. Prevent the expansion of inappropriate uses adjacent to the redevelopment area

Policies/Implementation:

1. Enforce sign, setback and landscaping requirements as they apply to the existing uses.
2. Adopt a coordinated "Development Plan" for the reuse area that will assure good traffic circulation and aesthetic considerations - appropriately scheduled for industrial and office activity. Supporting mixed-use should be allowed.
3. Develop a street tree planting program for the perimeter of the district and within the sector as it develops

The next two sectors entail **Union Road Sector** from French Road north to Walden and the continuation of Union Road Sector from Walden north to the Kensington Expressway. Union Road at Innsbrook Avenue north of the railroad overpass is the beginning of an industrial park area and mixed retail uses on the east side of the highway. The west side of the highway

consists of residential and home occupation uses lining the road. Small office complexes mixed with funeral homes, medical offices and reuse of existing homes appears to be generally the case along the Union Road corridor northerly to William Street. The area does not have a definition of character because of the mixed use that is taking place. Where new developments are occurring, they do have some setback and some landscaping to beautify the front yards. From the William Street intersection northerly, however, the area changes significantly into one of commercial activity, automotive uses, retail service uses, retail stores, and apartment complexes. A major retail outlet, the Apple Tree Mall, is located just to the north of Bennett Road and this mall also has suffered retail sales decline. The stores in this facility are becoming of the outlet mall variety.

North of Como Park Boulevard, the character of the strip again changes to one of industrial uses and office park facilities. The railroad overpasses break up the continuity of Union Road and lend to the industrial character of the section. Once past the industrial corridor, the Town highway facilities are on the right and more industrial uses interspersed with residential uses are on the west side of Union Road to the Broadway underpass. Most of the facilities through this section have very little setback and are poorly configured parking layouts.

Summary

With Walden Avenue, the major shopping/retail district in the community, this sector includes Union Road from the Kensington Expressway south to French Road.

Objectives:

1. Improve the visual character of the area
2. Institute an identification program to highlight the gateway into the community
3. Institute a program of parking and circulation improvement
4. Protect the residential uses from commercial intrusion

Policies/Implementation:

1. Enforce Zoning Code requirements on signage and landscape improvements
2. Formulate a street tree planting program for the entire sector including median planting where possible
3. Formulate a gateway theme plant for the town and utilize it at the expressway and Union/Walden area
4. Institute a parking and curb cut program to coordinate between adjacent uses to limit curb cuts
5. Enforce the parking lot improvement and landscaping requirements from Harlem Road easterly to Dick Road.
6. Work with the business community to develop a tree planting program during the reconstruction of the road way.
7. Consolidate land use patterns by type throughout the corridor including commercial and high density residential

The next sector should really begin at the Broadway underpass and extend to Walden Avenue. This area is one of mixed uses, restaurants, automotive facilities, and retail - wholesale business establishments. The intersection of Duke Road and Union needs to be studied to alleviate an exiting problem by traffic problem by using businesses on Duke Road. North of Walden Avenue the Cheektowaga Central School District maintains a large portion of the acreage. On the east side it is, again, a mixed use of offices, retail establishments and automotive facilities. The area along the east side would benefit from stringent sign and landscape controls. When uses change, the Town should require landscape treatment and some buffering of the retail uses to the east.

From the intersection of South Creek Drive, there is a strip plaza development on both sides of South Creek which lends itself to high intensity retail use. These have improved their facilities to keep pace with the Walden Galleria Mall which is approximately one half mile to the west of this area. Galleria Drive bisects this strip of retail uses and it continues to be a mixed use area of retail office, and light industrial business. The entire strip on both sides of Union would benefit from landscaping, setback improvements where possible, and the addition of buffer plantings or screening of the parking lots to the residential uses.

Major intersections such as Walden Galleria Drive, and George Urban Boulevard to the west would all benefit from intersection landscaping improvements. Some zoning steps should be taken between George Urban to the west and Genesee Street to limit the reuse of the existing residential facilities into office or home occupations due to the severe problems of sight distance and traffic. The last segment of the Union Road corridor from Genesee Street to the Kensington Expressway is a strip plaza on the west side and a mixed use retail area on the east side of retail facilities, office buildings and fast food restaurants.

General Improvements

The sectors described in the preceding pages are all in need of general upgrade in terms of sign control and landscaping to enhance their visual quality.

The crabapple is the official tree of the Town of Cheektowaga and as there are many hardy types of crabapples suitable for street trees, we recommend that the Town institute a street tree program in the development sectors of both flowering crabapple and other street tree species.

In the major sectors discussed the spring flowering trees would add color and texture to the current hardscape development and could, as they matured, become a tourist attraction in their own right.

The suggested business associations in the sectors could develop an adopt-a-tree program for installation and maintenance of the landscape plantings. The landscape ordinance can require that certain species of flowering trees will be permitted in some districts so that the intent of the program is covered out by new developments.

In older sections the adopt-a-tree can be provided by the Chamber of Commerce or local block clubs. The various neighborhood garden clubs may also wish to participate.

The development of a Gateway or entry theme will also lend itself to the townwide identity and beautification program.

Code enforcement in addition to the suggested additions and modifications to the code should help to lessen the number of various requests and provide the building department and planning board with the tools to continue an effective job of growth management.

C. COMMUNITY-WIDE IMPROVEMENTS

Vacant Land

Presently the Town has very little remaining vacant land due to the extensive development that has taken place. The remaining vacant land should be utilized to make open space an integral part of the Town's future character.

Objectives

- A. To preserve the beneficial natural areas such as: creek and drainage channels, wetlands, and high value wooded areas. Wetlands have both natural benefits and stormwater detention benefits.
- B. To preserve unique open space, such as the Rhinestein Nature area.
- C. To permit public access to publicly owned natural open space, but limit this access to nature trails, cross country skiing or similar type access to preserve its natural state.

Policies/Implementation

Preserve beneficial natural areas by:

- A1. Commissioning and implementing an open space plan under the jurisdiction of the Planning Board that will continue to improve the protection of flood plains, drainage ways, stream corridors and beneficial wooded areas.
- A2. Increasing the easement along the major creeks and drainage ways to 35 feet from the top of bank on both sides.
- A3. Making provisions for cluster development on large lot development in the remaining vacant land areas.
- A4. Requiring, where feasible, the use of buffers in developments to preserve woodlands.
- B1. Developing an acquisition program for beneficial properties by either public financing or from an open space fundraiser that includes the donation of property or easements thereto. The acquisition priority would be established in an open space plan.
- B2. The Town designating the open space areas it wants to preserve on an official map; however, this will not assure the Town will be able to obtain these parcels.
- C1. Public access to open space should be done selectively where the trails will provide linkage between facilities.
- C2. Trails should be constructed that can be built and maintained at a relatively low cost; and
- C3. Can maintain the basic privacy of the adjoining property owners.

Development Constraints/Environmental Features

The development constraints discussed in this section were presented in the inventory and analysis section of this master plan and included Environmental Features Map, the Physical Barrier map, and the Town Soils Interpretation map from the Erie County Agriculture department. Information on the environmental and physical barrier maps are a compilation of data from the Town Flood Plain Maps (F.E.M.A.), the New York State Department of Conservation Wetland Maps, the U.S.Fish and Wildlife Federal Wetlands Maps and Town records.

Objectives

- A. To control further development that may have a negative effect on other properties in the Town or adjoining communities by increasing flooding hazards. This includes such items as construction in the floodplain, or increasing runoffs due to site development without compensating measures such as stormwater detention facilities.
- B. To control development that would further remove the few remaining densely wooded areas of the Town such as along the Cayuga Creek and Slate Bottom Creek corridors, the major woods between Bennett Road and Como Park Boulevard north to the rail line and the remaining wooded area east of Indian Road.
- C. To control development that may intrude upon areas of archeological, historical or significant habitat for flora or fauna.

Policies/Implementation

- A1. Review the existing floodplain policy and the adequacy of the tools necessary to carry it out such as the availability of topographic information to set floor elevations.
- A2. Review the policy for site design to assure that adequate information is provided to determine the need for detention or retention facilities.
- A3. Utilize applicable state or federal data for delineating wetlands to assure that the Town protects or prevents development in areas of severe soil wetness limitations.
- B1. Develop a Town policy on the development in significant wooded areas that will promote the preservation of wooded open space and buffer areas.
- B2. Develop a policy to restrict development within the Cayuga Creek and Slate Bottom Creek corridors unless it is based upon a soils and foundation report and designed by a qualified professional engineer.
- C. Adopt a check list for all development submittals that includes the archeological, historical, habitat and hazardous waste data from the appropriate state and/or federal file search.

C. TRANSPORTATION

Traffic flow in the Town of Cheektowaga is basically good, however, traffic congestion occurs at major intersections and during peak travel periods. Target sector traffic is a concern in the community. Through traffic into the growth areas of the town of Lancaster over Como Park and Losson Road are of importance due to increased traffic projected by the William Street Thruway interchange scheduled for opening in late 1991 or spring of 1992.

Discussions with the Planning Staff with New York State Department of Transportation and the Erie County Highway Department have indicated that some areas of concern to the Town are currently under study, in the design phase or due for construction/implementation during the current five year program.

In the sector areas the State D.O.T. has provided traffic count data which indicates that some sections of highway may be experiencing congestion. The following is a Table of Traffic count data supplied by NYS DOT and ECHD. All counts are two way gross amounts.

STREET	SECTOR	YEAR	COUNT
Harlem Road	Genesee/Walden	1989	19,200
Union Road	French/Losson	1986	23,900
	Losson/William	1986	29,600
	William/Broadway	1986	33,400
	Broadway/Walden	1986	33,500
	Walden/George Urban, east	1986	24,200
	Geo. Urban, east/Geo. Urban, west	1986	29,400
	Geo. Urban, west/Genesee	1989	26,000
	Genesee/Kensington Expressway	1989	22,700
Broadway	Harlem Rd./Union Rd.	1987	18,700
	Union Rd./Transit Rd.	1988	14,400
Genesee Street	Expressway to West Airport Entrance	1989	42,700
	West Entrance to East Entrance	1989	38,200
	East Entrance to Holtz Road	1989	33,000
	Holtz Road to Transit	1989	28,100
Walden Avenue	Cityline to Harlem Road	1987	10,000
	Harlem Road to Thruway	1989	33,200
	Thruway to Union Road	1988	39,900
	Union Road to Dick Road	1987	21,300
Transit Road	Clinton Street to Broadway	1987	18,400

The State D.O.T. has identified the following projects in the sector areas to improve traffic flow and turning movements.

Harlem Road will be widened to five lanes from MacNaughton north to just past Genesee Street. This is a firm project and scheduled for 1993 construction. This will match the five lanes currently in place from MacNaughton south.

Union Road will have a fifth lane added north of Walden to the Scajaquada Creek area. Also to be constructed is a fifth lane from Galleria Drive south to the scajaquada Creek. Both installed by developers by agreement with the Town and the State for the traffic ingress and egress to service the additions and renovations to the existing strip plazas along the east side of Union Road.

Broadway is schedule for a resurfacing from Harlem Road to Union Road during the next three years and the Broadway, Dick Road intersection is scheduled for improvements including two left turn lanes from Dick east onto Broadway.

In 1992 Genesee Street is scheduled to be straightened and widened from Holtz Road east to Transit. This improvement is designed to eliminate the sharp curves and to provide a fifth lane for turning movements. In addition, the NFTA is proposing improvements where by the Expressway will feed directly into the airport and not impact Genesee Street (See Airport Master Plan). Walden Avenue will have a widening improvement under taken as part of the Galleria Mall/Wegmans agreement with NYSDOT. This improvement will take place in conjunction with project construction.

Transit Road is scheduled to have improvements and widening from Clinton to north of French as part of an agreement with NYSDOT and private developers. Two major projects in the Town of Lancaster have brought about this improvement.

A third lane is projected for left turns at the Losson Road-Transit Road intersection. However, this may not occur as the development project for a shopping area at the intersection is on indefinite hold.

The Erie County Highway Department does not currently have any traffic improvement projects under consideration in any of the sector areas.

Their counts over a three day period on Losson Road in October of 1990 do indicate a through traffic movement to Transit Road.

ECHD TRAFFIC COUNTS FOR LOSSON ROAD

DATE	LOSSON WEST OF TRANSIT	LOSSON EAST OF UNION
10-23-90	16,578	16,578
10-24-90	14,551	14,551
10-25-90	11,541	11,541

These counts would indicate that the two way traffic to and from work and two way trips are uniform. Using French Road as a connector.

Como Park Boulevard was only counted recently east o Bennett Road and indicate a count similar to French.

DATE	TWO WAY COUNT
6-7-90	13,685

Objectives

- A. To discourage excess automobile usage of residential collector streets as thoroughfares.
- B. To reduce the number of traffic ingress and egress points in the target sectors in order to reduce the potential for traffic accidents.
- A. Begin a town wide sector beautification/identification program.

Policies/Implementation

- A. Review the Town's street map and where not currently in place utilize four way stop signs to discourage through traffic in residential areas.
- B. Require that all residential parcels in any R-C, C or CM districts have a minimum of 50 feet frontage prior to conversion to a business or commercial use.
- C1. Institute an overall sector tree planting program. Develop a fee structure for commercial permits to be used for beautification projects.
- C2. Develop a coordinated Town entrance identification program. Develop a standard entrance logo and planting scaled to the importance to the entry/sector.

Civic, Public and Governmental Facilities

The Town of Cheektowaga as an Urban Suburban Community has outgrown its' original Town Hall. Expansions and additions have taken place to improve the Union Road facilities. Most recently the Town acquired the Alexander Street School and has moved the Town Engineer, Planning and others into this facility. This provided interior expansion for Town Administration uses within the Town Hall proper. The Recreation Department, Community Development, Senior Citizen Services along with police, court and Highway Department occupy separate facilities either on the Union/Broadway site or in other locations.

Civic, public and governmental services within the sector areas are primarily related to police, fire and emergency notification and access. Major facilities, eg, Walden Galleria Mall, have direct line hookup for police and fire response to alarms. The Town also subscribes to the 911 central alarm system for emergency coverage.

Objectives

- A. Increase awareness for public safety needs throughout the community.
- B. Improve response times to emergency calls.
- C. Provide for the development of a public safety policy in the sector areas.

Policies/Implementation

- A. Develop a community public service committee to educate the citizens on public safety issues.
- B. Develop a program and provide community information to utilize the center/left Town lane as an emergency response lane.
- C. Institute a program of "hard wire" linkage to the fire and police for all new or redeveloped facilities in the target sectors in excess of 20,000 s.f.

Land Use Controls

As part of the master plan review, the present zoning ordinance, adopted in 1969 and updated by revision or amendment through 1987, need a thorough revision. Significant changes to the existing zoning ordinance are called for. However, as the Town is most familiar with the existing ordinance, it may be preferable to overhaul the existing ordinance rather than adopt a significantly revised format.

Objectives

1. To update the zoning ordinance to reflect the recommendations of the master plan.
2. To rationalize and put in one place the applicable land use controls.

Policies/Implementation

1. Authorize the work necessary to draw up and adopt a new zoning ordinance.
2. Include in the new zoning ordinance the:
 - a. develop additional residential use districts;
 - b. develop a mobil home park district;
 - c. develop a senior citizen district
 - d. develop residential cluster district
 - e. distinguish and define allowable uses in commercial districts; distinguish between commercial, neighborhood business and motor serves
 - f. new sign control regulations;
 - g. define site development application standards.

Utility Analysis

The Town is fully serviced along all main thoroughfares with sanitary sewer and stormwater collection systems. Also the entire Town is served by public water distribution. New York State Electric and Gas, Niagara Mohawk Power Company and National Fuel Gas also service the Town. The only extensions of service anticipated will be into the remaining vacant land areas as they come under development pressure.

The Town has acquired a railroad corridor connecting to the Buffalo River at the West Seneca line to carry excess storm water south and this should alleviate some flooding concerns according to an assistant town engineer.

Should the environmental concerns in the northeast section of the Town be remediated to permit the expansion of industrial uses some expansion of sanitary sewer facilities will be necessary.

The town engineer has also stated that many former industrial water users have left the community. This has provided the Town with excess capacity of both sanitary sewer and potable water.

Policies/Implementation

- B1. The Town should utilize the S.E.Q.R.A. process to control sanitary and potable water uses as provided in the threshold analysis of the review process.

- B2. Continue to enforce the Town drainage policy and flood control procedures for all new developments and major reconstruction of existing developments.
- B3. Monitor development in the identified sectors to be sure that adequate pressures and capacity remain to serve the existing and proposed new development and reuse activities.
- B4. Continue to coordinate the review process for the extension of services into remaining growth and development areas with Erie County agencies and New York State D.E.C.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEP

A. INTRODUCTION

It is important to recognize that the Town of Cheektowaga has established itself as a leader in Western New York in its community development efforts and in its role in providing and maintaining a positive environment for development. The plan developed herein is a continuation of previous efforts in planning with a renewed focus on achieving quality of life and built environment in the community. In short, this plan attempts to recognize those assets, in particular the strong neighborhood and community identity, upon which the community has been built and to organize community efforts to continue to build upon this base.

B. INITIATION ACTIVITIES - IMMEDIATE AND SHORT-RANGE

Plan Adoption - An early decision should be made whether or not the town, through its Town Board and Planning Board will officially adopt the Master Plan for the targeted sectors pursuant to Town Law and the State Environmental Quality Review Act. Adoption of this study as a Master Plan for the Town offers the advantage of providing policy-assisting support for any zoning amendments or other land use regulations which the Town may consider adopting as a result of this study.

The major disadvantage of adoption of this study as a Master Plan is that it commits the Town, to a degree, to accept the proposed land use categories suggested herein as the preferred use upon which zoning amendments should be made. While this is a potential outcome of this study, it is recommended that adoption be considered at this time. New York State Environmental Quality Review will be required in order for the Town to act in this manner.

In addition to revising the Master Plan, the Zoning Ordinance and Map should also be amended to reflect the plan recommendations. It is important to recognize that the Master Plan provides a general guide to community development. The Zoning Ordinance delineates the exact boundaries of districts and the regulations for developing property within them. In order effectively achieve the plan recommendations the Town should pursue ordinance revisions and adoption.

A number of programs have been described in this study. The list developed below is designed as a "first cut" recommendation for activities to be commenced to realize the plan. Many of these activities have already been started or are part of an ongoing process while others are new activities or are in the discussion stage only:

- Town gateways: Identification of potential funding sources and development of a recommended design with cost estimate. Lead: Local Civic Organization. Support: Planning and Highway Department.
- Street Tree Planting Program: Addition of plantings to beautify public spaces and development districts with high visibility. Annual planting (bulbs, annuals, etc.) and permanent planting of

flowering trees flowering. Lead: Local Civic Organization/Garden Club. Support: Local Businesses.

- Pedestrian Trail System: Identification of priority segments and potential sponsors. lead: Town Planning Office. Support: Town Board.

- Funding Assistance: Development of grant applications to address opportunities eligible for outside funding assistance (trail system development, park and recreation facility improvement, infrastructure upgrade). Lead: Planning Office. Support: Town Board.

C. INTERMEDIATE TO LONG-TERM ACTIVITIES

- Development Sector Management: With an important goal of improving the economic competitiveness of the town, in particular in the retail, food, lodging, and entertainment and tourism industry in general, it is rational that the businesses located in the development district pool their resources to ensure continued and expanded success in an increasingly competitive regional marketplace. To this end, it is recommended that a "district manager" position be developed and funded by the businesses. Mutual understanding and support of this position among a strong majority of property owners is required for the enactment of this recommendation. The benefits gained by establishing marketing and management leadership for the entire central business district is expected to far outweigh the cost.

The role of the manager would not supplant that of the chamber of commerce, but rather would supplement the activity of the chamber in managing the downtown area as a unified force in the regional marketplace. The funds for such a position could be raised through a special improvement district. Downtown projects and programs would be coordinated through this position along with the current activities of the Town. Projects could include a marketing and promotional campaign, an improved planting and streetscape enhancement program, coordination of special downtown-wide Sales events and other programs and projects specifically designed to increase sales activities for downtown businesses.

- Housing Development: Preservation of quality housing/neighborhoods was a need voiced often during this study. Lament for the decline of some of the fine housing, particularly on the edges of transitioning neighborhoods, in the town was also heard. The limitation of available federal and state funds and strict eligibility requirements means that private financing will become increasingly important in rehabilitation of much of Cheektowaga housing stock in need. Confidence in town housing as a sound investment needs to be maintained.

The Planning Board is expected to play a major role in its ongoing efforts to strengthen the residential neighborhoods. Homeowners and potential buyers desire the security that neighborhood quality will be stable or improving. Requirements of open space and pedestrian link to recreational facilities must be incorporated into neighborhood design.

In addition, site plan regulations need to be established for all zoning districts, with rigorous standards for landscaping and open space, building and parking setbacks, etc.

The Board of Appeals must continue to carefully review requests for zoning variances to protect the integrity of town neighborhood. Vigorous enforcement of building and health code violations is required. It is suggested that funding for legal pursuit of major code violations be established. Town Board leadership is required to implement this activity.

Environmental Protection: The stream corridor habitats is most important as a component of open space plan. One mechanism to aid in the protection of the corridors is the designation of a Critical Environmental Area (CEA) per the regulations promulgated to implement the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR, 6NYCRR Part 617). In brief, as a CEA, any major action proposed would be classified as Type I, and environmental impact statement would likely be required before project funding and/or approval by an agency. Another protection mechanism could include increased building setbacks and/or a special site plan review district under town zoning code. In addition, an open space plan should be prepared and adopted as an integral component of the Town's Land Use Regulation.

CONCLUSION

The items developed above is only a partial list. A successful conclusion to this plan would be the continued involvement and cooperation of the Town Board, the Planning Board and Board of Appeals, and other local agencies, organizations and citizens to bring one or more of the programs suggested herein to fruition. Individuals and organizations should be encouraged to take "ownership" of a particular project and guide it along.