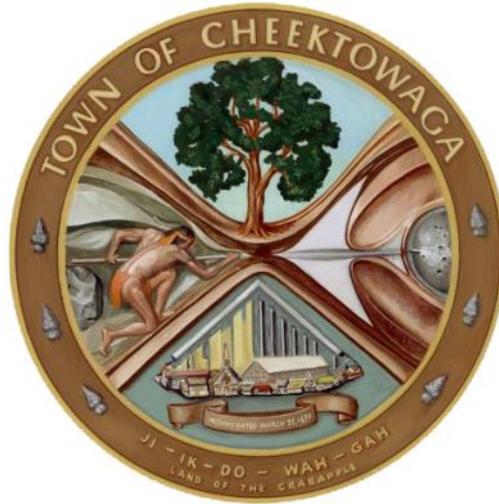


Town of Cheektowaga

2021 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN





Planning Consultant services provided by the design team of



DRAFT

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Why Plan? Why Now?

Comprehensive planning is a fundamental component to a successful and sustainable community. The average lifespan of a Comprehensive Plan is around 10 years before it reaches a point where it would need a more thorough review and update to reflect changes in the community and its vision for the next decade. A plan can and should be periodically amended or revised every few years as the document is intended to be a “living document” - providing direction but also intended to be flexible for adjustment. The Town of Cheektowaga first developed a Comprehensive Plan in 1969; that plan laid the framework for the then ever-growing and transforming post-war suburb. An update to the Plan was undertaken in 1992 and then again in 2008; however, that version of the Plan was not adopted due to disagreements over elements contained in the document - the Town has been working with an almost 30-year-old Plan since then.



The current administration guiding the community forward is looking to take a proactive approach in monitoring and nurturing the policy guidelines that currently frame the community. In doing so, this Comprehensive Plan update takes a reflective review of both the past planning efforts and changes within Cheektowaga that have occurred over the last decade or more. This update analyzes not only the successes and pitfalls within the community, but also reviews unforeseen influencing factors including, but not limited to, economic and market dynamics, demographic changes, social ideology, and various community-specific data sets.

Once completed, the updated Comprehensive Plan will continue to act as a “living document” that provides policy guidance and action items to achieve results, ensuring a community-based vision that is fit for strengthening the community while providing flexibility to allow for adaptations and change.

Purpose of the Plan

As stated in the draft 2008 Plan, the purpose of the document is to “...influence local actions on the part of the Town and its citizens, as well as the actions of County and State and Federal agencies that are proposed and undertaken within the Town.” While a Comprehensive Plan is not regulatory in nature, it is a community-based document that frames a community’s vision for its future and is meant to act as the guiding “blueprint.”

It establishes a reference point for local leaders, regional influencers, and other various influential entities as well as encapsulating a representation of the community's values, beliefs, and desires. The Comprehensive Plan reviews the community's assets (natural & man-made), economic trends, and demographic trends to establish a baseline. Once this baseline is established, it allows for community members to identify a more broader vision which then funnels down to strategic goals and policy statements, leading to actions and key projects to implement these elements. In order to ensure that this "living document" serves the people in a way that supports the greater good and public welfare of the community, it embodies the following general principals:

Collaboration - *Enticing acting bodies within the community to work together and build intermunicipal partnerships.*

Marketing - *Staging and showcasing the opportunities for development, re-investment and asset preservation.*

Capital Improvement - *Identifying strategic programs, initiatives, and community prioritized projects .*

Funding Leverage - *Identifying and targeting grant opportunities based on the community prioritized projects and initiatives.*

What This Plan Outlines?

This document is organized into several sections that provides the user with a step-by-step explanation of the comprehensive plan.

Introduction (Section 1)

How a planning process distinguishes value to the community of Cheektowaga and the outlining the methods used to solicit feedback/input through public outreach.

Our Community (Section 2)

Creates a profile of the Town based on demographics, economic environment, and physical conditions. Identifies trends and general characteristics.

Vision for the Future (Section 3)

Identifying the communities shared vision for the future. Including identifying goals that are correlated to recommendations of a real-world solution.

Looking Forward, Stepping Forward (Section 4)

Directing the implementation for how to enact the objectives and actions through identification of strategies, partnerships, key contacts, and funding opportunities.

The Process

The Town's Comprehensive Plan update was undertaken with management by the Town; directed and guided by a volunteer Steering Committee made up of a cross section of the community that included Town staff, board representatives, residents, business owners, and other community representatives; and a professional design consultant to provide technical assistance and help develop the document. The committee met monthly from October 2019 through May 2021.*

Overall, the planning process involved several key steps beginning with the gathering of data; understanding the physical assets; and soliciting and collecting input from residents, business owners, and other local stakeholders. From there, a future community vision was developed, goals identified, future land uses mapped out, and an action plan developed. Following the development of the draft plan, the necessary environmental review (SEQRA) was undertaken and a final plan developed.

**The 2020 global pandemic (COVID-19) delayed progress for a series of months due to quarantine restrictions.*

Community Outreach

Community members and their collective, embodied knowledge are the cornerstone of any planning process that will outline the community's narrative for their vision forward. In a traditional setting, community outreach would be achieved through in-person engagement sessions, helping the Steering Committee and planning consultants gain valuable feedback as well as establishing a voice for the community as to what they expect to see in the future. During the development of the Plan, the 2020 COVID-19 global pandemic stopped the Cheektowaga community and lives across the globe, causing a ripple effect that created rifts in all aspects of life, including the way public outreach was approached. Initially, a temporary pause was established with a new timeline and course of action developed. As time went on it became clear that the original mindset had to adapt and change and, in doing so, public outreach shifted to a virtual platform similar to so many other aspects of the temporary "normal" that came with the pandemic. While the unplanned circumstances hampered the original, initial approach, the Town was still able to overcome the obstacles and engage with the public.

Community engagement and outreach as part of plan development included various means, utilizing in-person (pre-pandemic) and virtual means, through three distinctive avenues: the Steering Committee (*community cross section*), local stakeholders (*strategic, element-specific groups*), and the public at-large (*direct community interaction*).

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee was an integral component of the planning process, helping to establish the narrative of the community and to identify what has shaped the Town over time. They also helped to guide the development of the community profile by identifying those elements to focus on for developing the community of tomorrow. To achieve this, in addition to regular meetings, the following input methods were utilized:

S.W.O.T. Analysis

A basic exercise that had the steering committee identify what they felt were the Strengths and Weaknesses (internal factors) and Opportunities and Threats (external factors) of the community. This led to discussions in subsequent meeting(s) as how to address topics brought up within each of these various sectors in the context of the what was learned/discovered/highlighted in the community profile.

Park Enhancement Brainstorm

During this session, the committee reviewed the community's collection of parks and the associated features established within the parks. Afterwards, the committee was then exposed to various features and amenities that have been established in other community parks for reference and case study review. In an open floor discussion amongst the Committee, general direction and more specific elements/features were identified for Town parks in the future.

Lego Exercise

Yes, Legos. This exercise was an interactive exercise that utilized scaled, aerial maps of the community to allow the Committee to place Legos where they would like to see development/redevelopment occur. The benefit of utilizing Legos is that they provide a visual representation of building density through floor area/square footage of buildings (residential, commercial, industrial) as well as height, helping to see in real-time at a 3D level how the community could be shaped by land use and policy changes.

Stakeholder Meetings

Beyond the more broad of the community, stakeholders and regional policy influencers are strategic in ensuring the integrity of a Comprehensive Plan. During the development process, the Town and the consultant team met with key stakeholders/groups to help identify other key components.

Bicycle Community

(Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), New York State Parks, GOBike Buffalo and Erie County)

This group helped to identify the need for a more cohesive transportation network throughout the Town to harness a more “Complete Street” approach when upgrading transportation facilities. The conversation also identified the need for more bicycle infrastructure and amenities to help support the local cycling community. Finally, one of the largest components of these discussions was the identification of potential East-to-West connector between existing cycling infrastructure in the area (Cheektowaga and neighboring communities). The implementation of this would be a key piece for cycling infrastructure in the region, as it would form a strong connection within Erie County.

Educational Leadership

In an unintentional dual effort, the consultant team met with the leadership group of Villa Maria College, located on the west end of Town, to discuss their internal planning efforts and how it impacted the community as a whole. This collaboration provided insight to what this communal asset felt is needed to not only strengthen their presence in Cheektowaga, but also how they can help to grow the community. Located in a neighborhood where the residents and business are under duress, it was identified that simple measures such as connecting the school with the community through arts, music, and cultural activities could enhance their relationship and help to make social improvements. It was also identified that providing more access to and enabling community education such as work sessions or seasonal classes, for examples, may be beneficial to the community.

Transportation

(Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council - GBNRTC)

This discussion focused on how Cheektowaga could act as a catalyst for the transformation of the region’s transportation system. Being a developed first-ring suburb, it was discussed that the imperative nature of this subject should focus on addressing the mobility of the pedestrian, specifically addressing and identifying the best possible solutions towards moving people throughout the Town. Elements identified include, but are not limited to, establishing transportation hubs throughout the community and creating micro-loops to help move users around the community, enabling a more reliable transportation system. The need to support more walkable communities and access for all users of transportation systems was also highlighted during this stakeholder meeting.

Community Kickoff

Traditionally, this point in the planning process would have been a milestone marker event in the development of the plan; however, due to the pandemic restrictions and

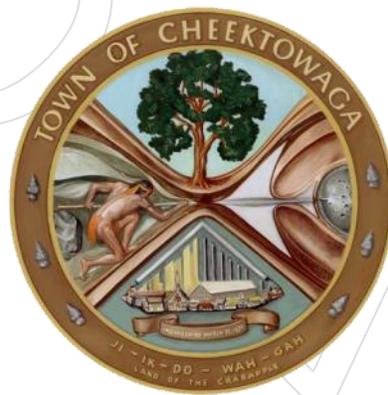
safety concerns, the event took place virtually with some degree of change. The agenda still remained the same, introducing the public to the plan and its importance, providing background on the community through researched data, and soliciting input from residents. The virtual manner of this kickoff meeting began with a video by Supervisor Diane Benczkowski highlighting the comprehensive plan as a precursor to community wide survey, which would provide the means for community input.

Public Survey

The use of a survey is a “tried and true” method for obtaining a wide variety of information from the community; it was also in part with keeping the community safe during the pandemic by leveraging a virtual option. In addition, for those that did not have regular access to the internet, a paper version of the survey was also made available at the local libraries along with Town Hall. A copy of the survey and a summary of the results are included in Appendix A.

Acknowledgments

The Town of Cheektowaga Comprehensive Plan update was guided by the volunteer efforts of the Steering Committee and various Town staff, in consultation with the Buffalo-based design firm of CPL and additional support from Jason Knight, PhD, AICP. In addition, the most important contributions came from the community itself and the Town wishes to extend their appreciation for the amount of input received and their time, effort and contributions to the 2021 Comprehensive Plan (even through a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic).



Town of Cheektowaga

Diane Benczkowski, Supervisor
Jerry Kaminski, Deputy Supervisor
Christine Adamczyk, Councilmember
Linda Hammer, Councilmember
Brian Nowak, Councilmember
Brian Pilarski, Councilmember
Richard Rusiniak, Councilmember
Kimberly Burst, Town Clerk
Lynn Rybak, Supervisor Assistant
Dale Marie Parks, Community Development Planner
Jessie Jesonowski, Town Planner (Former)

Steering Committee

Camille Brandon, Committee Chair
Fredrick Beaman, Conservation Advisory Council
Robert Brandon, Zoning Board of Appeals
Joshua Broad, Business Owner/Resident
Rick Couburn, Code Enforcement Officer
Jill Gorman, Youth and Recreational Services
Krisitna Groff, Chamber of Commerce
Joyce Hearh, Resident
Stanley Kaznowski, Resident
Paul Leone, Economic Development
Ralph Miranda, Resident
Kerry Peek, Senior Center Director
Olivia Warburton, Resident
Richard Willis, Community Development (Former)
Dr. Matthew Giordano, Villa Maria College President
Mary Robinson, Villa Maria College Vice President of Development

Regional Stakeholders

Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC)
New York State Parks
GO Bike Buffalo
Erie County
Buffalo & Erie County Public Library

Consultant

Brian Kulpa, Senior Planner *CPL*
Daniel T. Young, Assistant Planner *CPL*
Justin Steinbach, Senior Planner / Project Manager *CPL*



Brief History

Cheektowaga, New York has settlement pattern roots that stretch deeper than the formation of the Town itself. Native Americans were the first settlers with in this region of Western New York. The name Cheektowaga was derived from the Erie-Seneca Native American language, Jiikdowahgah /Ji-ik-do-wah-gah/. Meaning in modern linguistics “land of crabapples”.

The people of the Neutral nation were the earliest Native American dwellers until losing their lands to the League of the Iroquois. The following decades brought a majority of the area to be used as hunting and fishing grounds for the Six Nations. The first known settlement regarding the composition of an established structure was the construction of a long house on the north bank of Cayuga Creek between modern day Borden Road and Union Road. In the following years European conquerors would continue to settle around the WNY region in attempts to expand west.

Following the American Revolution, the Treaty of Paris granted everything West of the Mississippi River to the colonies on behalf of the King. Ownership of this land was heavily disputed by the Native American population. As disputes lingered, the Holland Land



Company purchased everything West of the Genesee River to the water's edge, including the land of modern Cheektowaga. Following the purchase many European settlements started to strengthen in density. One of the first established settlements by a European settler in Cheektowaga was that of Appollos Hitchcock. Appollos built a log cabin near the intersection of current day Borden Road and Broadway.

The current boundaries of the Town of Cheektowaga were originally a part of the Town of Clarence and the Town of Amherst. Finally becoming a part of Erie County in 1821, with the official adoption of the legislative act forming the town in 1839 on March 22nd. This successful community would eventually be divided once more in 1851 to help form what is now known as present day West Seneca.

In the early 19th Century, Cheektowaga as a progressive rural farming community. Farming crops that would be used locally and sent along the Erie Canal. In return, profits helped to develop the towns infrastructure. Infrastructure that would lead to the birth of

the town's involvement in the transportation business. At the time, roads were being created to help link the burgeoning City of Buffalo to the East, places like Batavia and Rochester.

As the country grew closer to a Civil War, Cheektowaga was developing rapidly for a rural community. Steadily producing agricultural goods and garnering respect from surrounding communities. So much so that Cheektowaga had multiple agricultural winners at the local Erie County Fair. With this rapid influx of agricultural grander allowed for the development of textile facilities, sawmills, taverns, and railroad lines that ran east to west. By the time the American Civil War had developed, the railroad boom was ripe with expansion. Leading to the development of five railroad stations across the central portion of Cheektowaga. This development led to the formation in the East side of Town called the Village of Depew; which was split down the middle by the Town border, in the West side of the Town the Village of Sloan was developed.

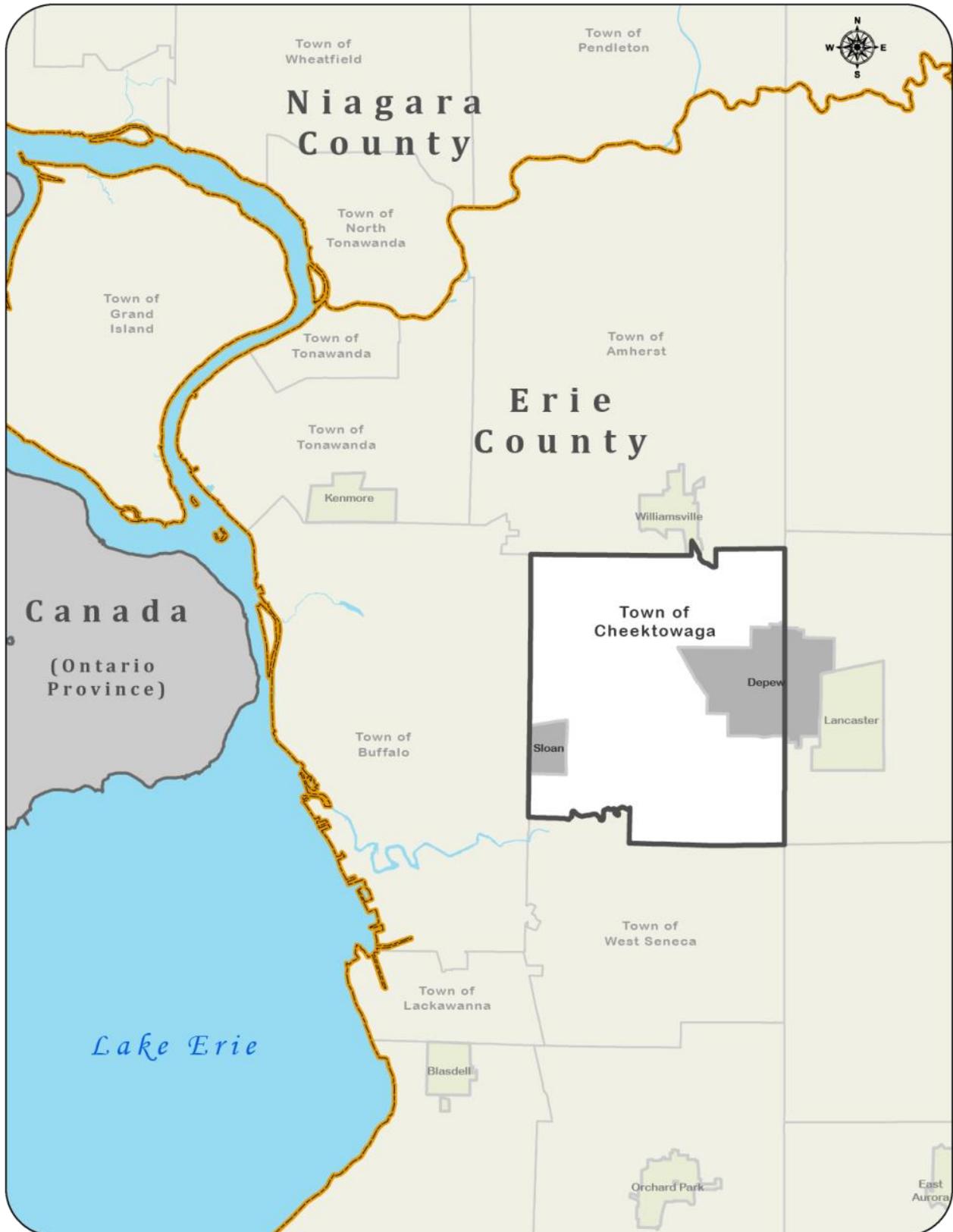


The end of the 19th century saw the introduction of the electric trolley system to the Western New York region. Leading to the development of the Buffalo-Bellevue-Lancaster line, intersecting the community and connecting the City of Buffalo's downtown to the Village of Lancaster via Cheektowaga. This caused for rapid growth and influx of residents surrounding the railway, in both the Town and surrounding communities. Including both the Village of Depew and the Village of Sloan, helping to strengthen both villages. However, by 1930's the electric railcar system had been abandoned by many users within the community as new technology established precedent, along in part with economic woes limiting the need. Technology such as the automobile, changed the way people did things across the nation. However, it was the Aviation Industry that was establishing itself within the community locally. Creating the formation of the Buffalo Municipal Airport and starting a legacy of air travel & development out of Cheektowaga.

World War II would lead to an increase in development of the aircraft industry across the country, including the WNY region. However, it is the post-war era that leads to increased industry and residential development seen within the Town. The Highway

Figure 1

Location Map



Revenue Act of 1956 called for the national development of a network of toll-roads that would allow for rapid connection between points of interest within the country. This double edge plan, created the newly formed system of roads, serving the public and if needed the military during war time. Pairing these infrastructure upgrades, with the previously mentioned industrial and commercial industry expansions, the town saw multiple residential expansions. By 1970 the residential population had peaked at 113,844.

The following decades saw the commercial business and industry sectors remain steady, while resident population declined. The wavering population within the community was reflective of the overall population trend within the Northeast part of the country at the time. Overall, the changes in the decades that followed the great depression and World War II led the once sleepy rural town of the early 20th century, into the 21st century as a full-fledged suburban community.

Cheektowaga of Today

The Cheektowaga of today is still the setting of an ever changing landscape as this once poster child for transformation continues to evolve and grow in modern times. Prized as one of Western New York's prominent post-war suburban developments, the Town of Cheektowaga is located directly east of the City of Buffalo.

This first-ring suburb features the Town of Amherst to the north, the

Town of Lancaster to the East and the Town of West Seneca to the south. The Town also shares borders with the three Villages; Depew, Sloan and Williamsville. Providing partial services for the Villages of Depew and the Village of Sloan whose borders are within the Township. Shy of 30 square-miles, the Town is a hub of transportation, logistics & features a strong hospitality industry. The Currently home to 87,018 residents who have helped and continue to drive the Western New York workforce.



Demographic/Housing

An in-depth look at the Town's current Demographic & Housing data can be found in Appendix B (*2018 Cheektowaga Community Inventory and Profile* and *Housing Market Report for Cheektowaga, NY*). In this section, a profile summary and infographic highlighting key statistical data is provided - a "snapshot" of the community, providing a foundation of the key indicators. Additionally, a compilation of other community statistics and supporting mapping housing provided for additional, quick-fact information of the community's demographic and housing market.

- The population has been decreasing at a consistent rate of about 500+/- people since the 2008 draft plan. The current population is 74,673.
- Median age has stayed relatively similar to the 2008 draft plan, approximately 43.1.
- The education attainment rate shows that the drop-out has declined since 2010.
- Residents with a bachelor's, Master's, or doctoral degree has increased by 6% since 2010.
- Overall income within the Town has increased. However, the median income saw a decline from \$54,652 in 2000, to an estimated \$48,994 in 2016.
- The population living below the poverty line saw an increase of 5.4%. This trend is in line with trends county-wide.
- Since 2000, the total number of households has declined by an estimated 842, from 34,188 in 2000 to 33,346 in 2016.
- Total housing units are approximately 35,880 units, with 2,308 of these vacant.
- Total vacant units within the Town has decreased by 12.6%

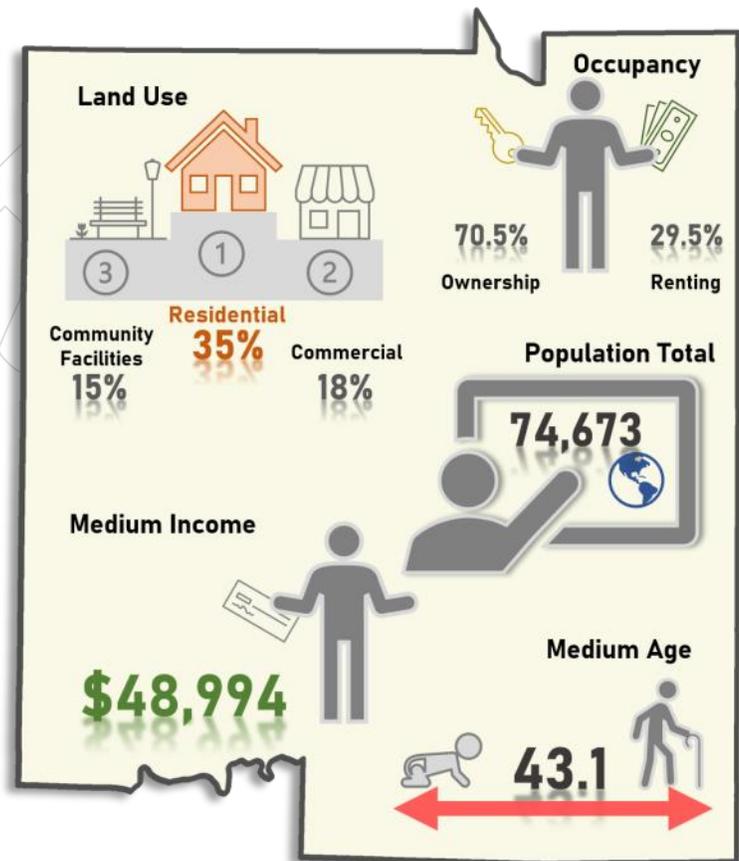
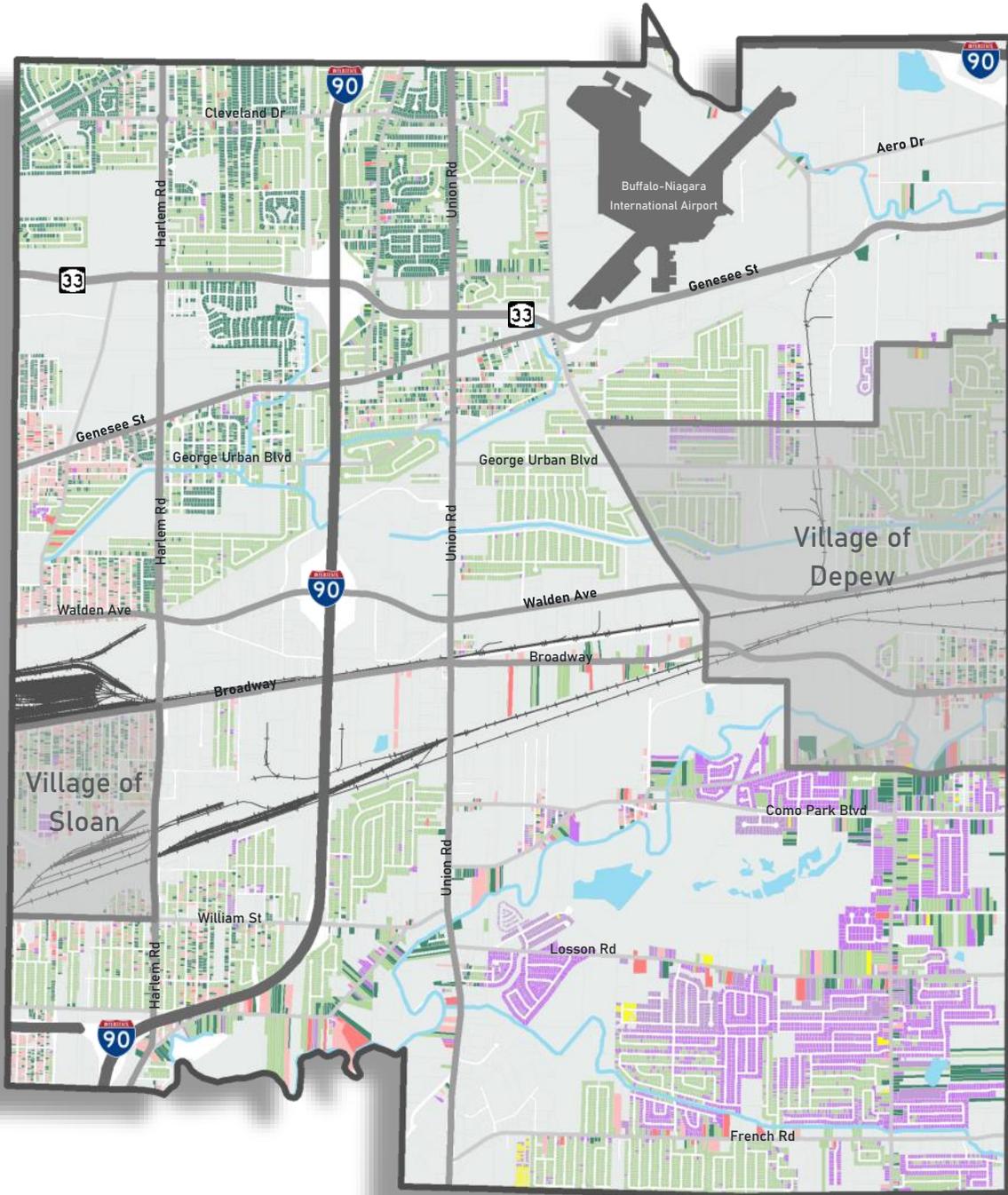


Figure 2

Housing Stock Age

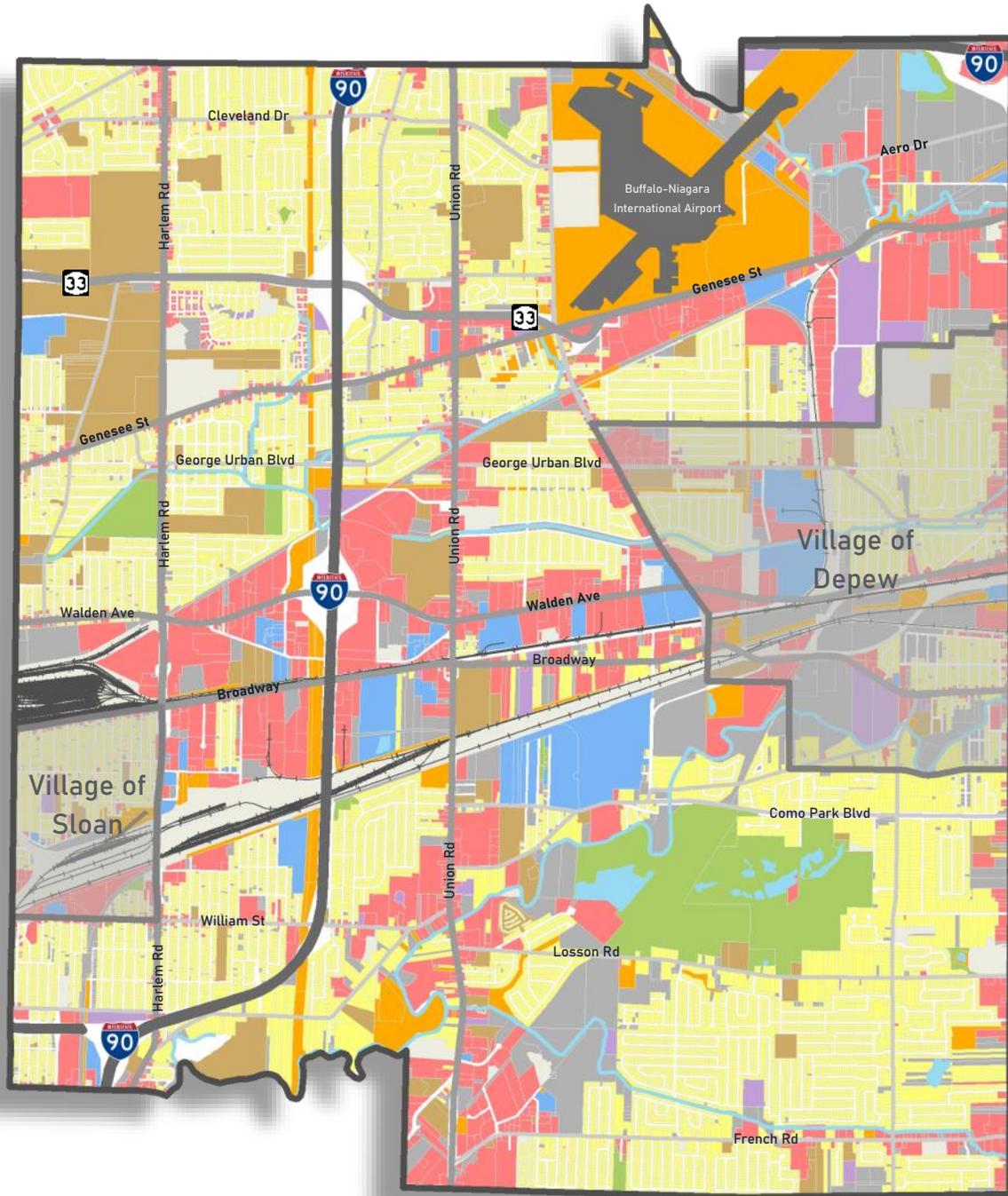


Legend:

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|
| Town of Cheektowaga | Interstate | Stream or River | Status Unknown | 1950-1969 |
| Villages within Town Border | State Routes | Pond or Lake | 1800-1899 | 1970-1989 |
| Railroad | County Roads | | 1900-1929 | 1990-2009 |
| | | | 1930-1949 | 2010-2019 |

Figure 3

Land Use



Legend:

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Town of Cheektowaga | Interstate | Stream or River | No Data | Commercial | Industrial |
| Villages within Town Border | State Routes | Pond or Lake | Residential | Recreation-Entertainment | Public Services |
| Railroad | County Roads | Parcel Boundary | Vacant | Community Services | Conservation-Public Parks |

Land Use

Cheektowaga, a developed first-ring suburb, has a strong focus of uses centered around residential dwellings, many of which were developed as part of the post-war era development, typical in many suburban regions across the country. Out of that intense growth period typical of bedroom communities came the need for supporting residential services that would help diversify these edge-city communities, focused primarily on the automobile. Modern-day Cheektowaga features the following diverse range of uses:

Use	Acres	Percent	# of Parcels	% of Parcels
Residential	4,908	35.9%	25,529	88.9%
Commercial	2,468	18.1%	1,366	4.8%
Industrial	305	2.2%	39	0.1%
Public Utilities	1,235	9.0%	162	0.6%
Institutional/Community Facilities	2,062	15.1%	184	0.6%
Vacant	1,756	12.9%	1,195	4.2%
Uncategorized	926	6.8%	232	0.8%
Total	13,660	100.0%	28,707	100.0%

A review of the current uses in the table above highlights the pronounced establishment of residential uses in the community in terms of both acreage (35.9%) and overall number of parcel (88.9%). In terms of number of parcels, this is followed by commercial uses (18.1%) due to the presence of Galleria Mall and the various other commercial uses found along the Walden Avenue corridor. While Institutional/Community facilities (community and public services) constitute the third-highest in terms of acreage, a result of the significant area the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport encompasses, it is towards the lower end in the total number of parcels. While the Town does have a significant commercial and industrial presence combined, it is still much lower compared to residential uses, indicating that a large margin of the tax burden still likely falls on these properties. Achieving a greater balance between these uses is desirable.

Vacant and uncategorized lands, the latter a result of inadequate information provided to the Town assessor's office which assigns a general use classification based on the physical use of the property, in total make up 5% of the total parcels in the Town (22.1% by acreage). This indicates that there a number of properties that are potentially (1) not being utilized to their fullest extent and have re/development potential and/or (2) not assessed at their fullest capacity, impacting tax revenue for the Town. These actual use of these parcels should be reviewed with opportunities explored for their highest and best use where feasible.

Zoning

Zoning in the Town of Cheektowaga is made up of 13 different districts, cataloged into three major district groups - Residential districts, Business districts and Manufacturing districts. The following is a summary of each district grouping.

Residential Districts *Residence (R), Residence District Single Family (RS), Apartment District (RA), Residential Senior Citizen District (RSC), Residential Mobile Home District (RMH)*

In the residential grouping, R is the acreage leader at 43.1% by a large margin compared to the other districts within this grouping. Permitted uses within this district are single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, places of worship, and educational facilities. The remaining districts of RS, RA, RSC and RMH make up a collective acreage grouping of 6.4%, with RS being similar in nature to R. These four other districts, while also allowing some of the same base uses as the R District, are more tailored and focus on multiple unit dwellings, age based housing, and semi-permanent housing.

Business Districts *Neighborhood Service District (NS), Retail Business District (C), General Commercial District (CM), Motor Service District (MS), Community Facilities District (CF)*

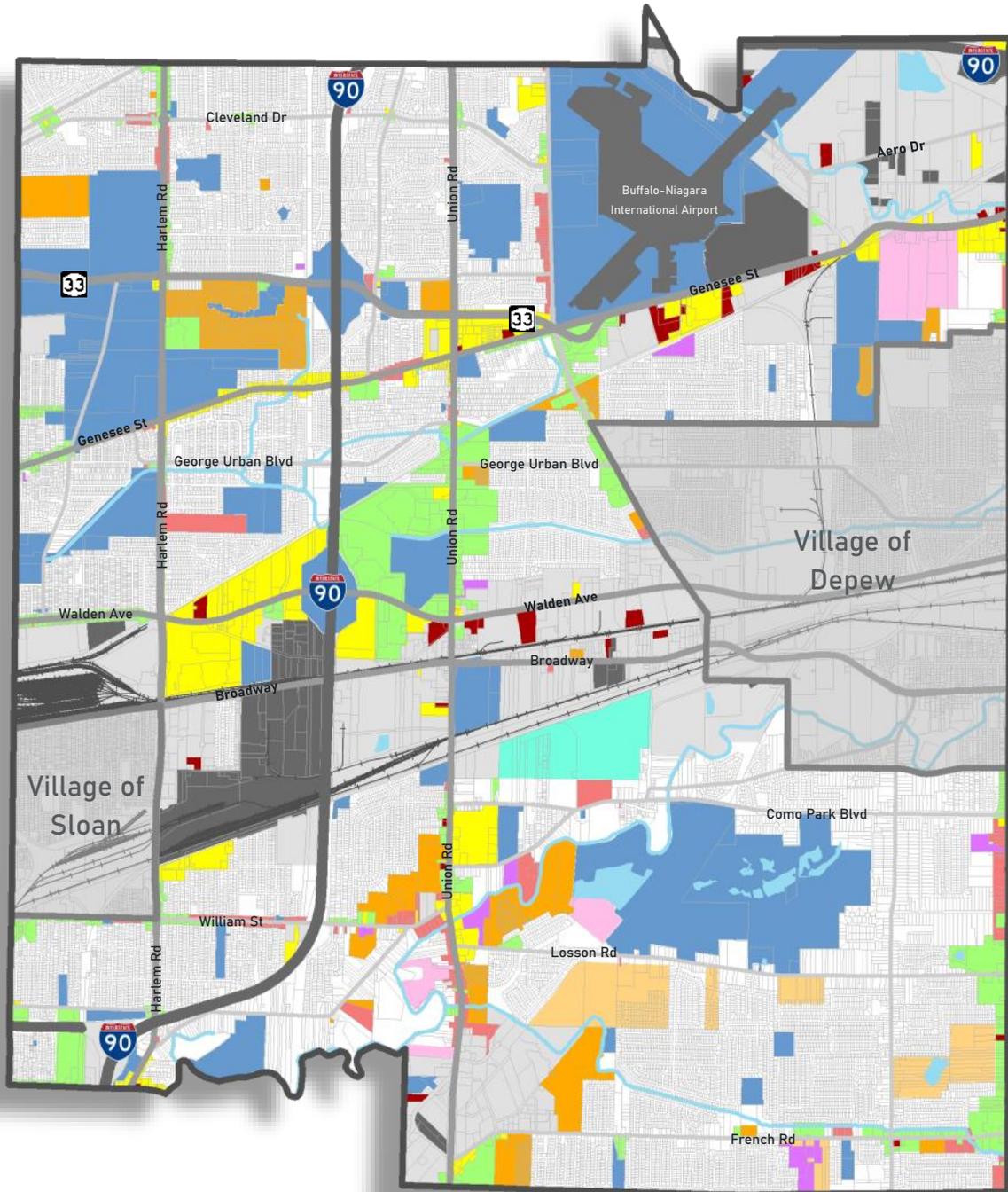
The business district grouping is a collective of districts that make up a smaller acreage percentage at 29.4%, featuring a diverse set of permitted uses that cater to the day-to-day life and activities of Town residents. The NS District features uses that consist of legal functions, health care facilities, places of gather and other various personal service establishments. The C District expands upon what is permitted in NS by including those listed plus a broad range of other uses such as laundromats, hotels, theaters, and other various day-to-day uses. The remaining districts of CM, MS CF, get into a more defined range of permitted uses including, but not limited to, hospitality, recreational, automotive & associated services, and even wildlife refuges.

Manufacturing Districts *Light Manufacturing District (M1), General Manufacturing District (M2), Special Aggregates District (AG)*

The collective of districts centered around manufacturing make up a collective acreage of 20.6%. The M1 District is the leader of this grouping, permitting uses focused towards warehouse storage, laboratory facilities, food processing facilities, and large footprint office space, among others. The M2 and AG Districts are focused on heavier industries and uses that potentially have more of an environmental/community impact are on the surrounding community such as rail yards, freight depots, storage yards, trucking terminals, adult uses, contractor yards, and mining.

Figure 4

Zoning



Legend:

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Town of Cheektowaga | Railroad | C- Retail Business District | M2-General Manufacturing District | RA - Apartment District |
| Villages within Town Border | Stream or River | CF- Community Facilities District | MS- Motor Service District | RMH- Residential Mobile Home District |
| Interstate | Pond or Lake | CM- General Commercial District | NS- Neighborhood Service District | RS- Residence District Single Family |
| State Routes | Parcel Boundary | M1- Light Manufacturing District | R- Residence District | RSC Residential Senior Citizen District |
| County Roads | AG- Special Aggregates District | | | |



Education

The Town of Cheektowaga has educational services that cater to pre-K thru 12, post-secondary, and trade & skilled labor education. When looking at the traditional K-12, the Town has eight school districts associated within the Town, though four of these are the predominate the providers of education for the youth including Cheektowaga Central School District, Cheektowaga-Sloan Union Free School District, Cleveland Hill Union Free School District, and Maryvale Union Free School District. These Districts all have a graduation rate above 80% with Maryvale UFSD at approximately 73%. One important aspect of the educational profile in the Town is that over half of the students in these four main districts are in a economic disadvantage category according to NYSED standards, indicating that the household is low income and participates in one or more economic assistance programs. This provides support to graduation data that shows that since 2000, the number of residents not graduating high school has declined.

Shifting towards post-secondary education, trends are in line with that of the County of an upward trend continuing with those who seek and obtain a bachelor, master, or doctorate degree; from 2000 to 2016 the number of residents with this level of education increased from 16% to 22%. The Town hosts several post-secondary schools including Villa-Maria, a long-standing private Catholic college established by the Felician Sisters in 1960, and Empire State College, a public school a part of the SUNY education system.

K-12 Public Schools

- Cheektowaga Central School District
- Cheektowaga-Sloan Union Free School District
- Cleveland Hill Union Free School District
- Maryvale Union Free School District
- Depew Union Free School District
- West Seneca Central School District
- Lancaster Central School District
- Williamsville Central School District
- Erie 1 BOCES – Harkness Career & Technical Center

Higher Education

- Villa Maria College (Private, Catholic College)
- Empire State College (Public, SUNY)

Community Resources

Transportation Systems

In Cheektowaga, the street network does not form the typical grid settlement that is formed around a dense developed center cross-section. Instead, multiple state and county connector routes create a grid system with various nodes of interaction and local neighborhood streets found between them. These corridors spawn residential sections of street systems that range from the post-war tract style grid to the winding style of more modern suburban style tract development. Public transportation is available in the form of the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) Bus System and features well over two dozen routes through the Town daily. Another service managed by the NFTA is the Buffalo Niagara International Airport terminal located in the northeast part of the Town. Cheektowaga is also the home to two railroad systems (yards/lines) operated under CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern; AMTRAK has a station within the Town, but is under the jurisdiction of the Village of Depew.

Railroad

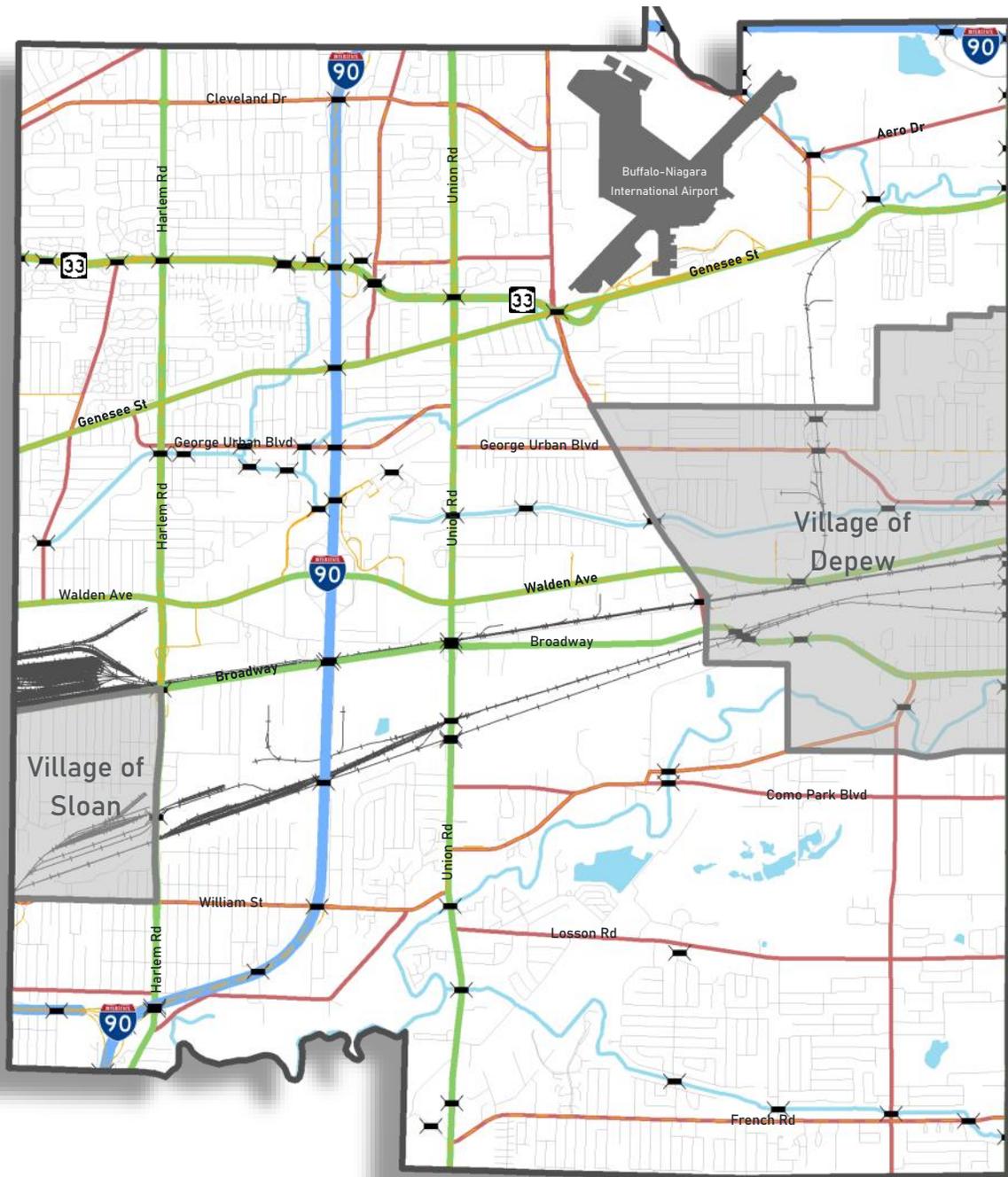
The Town's two major rail corridors cross-cut the Town of Cheektowaga, one North of Broadway (NYS Rt. 130) and one South of Broadway (NYS Rt 130) - the South corridor switches to North side of Broadway after entering the Village of Depew.

CSX Transportation owns and operates the rail corridor North of Broadway (NYS Rt 130) and the associated Frontier Yard with 63 tracks for switching and classification operations. The yard features the four main tracks traversing the county and beyond. A majority of the freight passing through this yard connects Canada, the Northeast, and the Midwest with operations including the managing of rail traffic from the Port of New York/New Jersey. Overall the CSX operations move an estimated 75 million gross tons per year. Amtrak, utilizing the CSX rail corridor, has passenger service that connects to and from New York City, Toronto (ON), Chicago, Montreal (QB) and other locations throughout New York State with a station in the Village of Depew, as noted.

Norfolk Southern owns and operates a rail corridor South of Broadway (NYS Rt130) which includes the Bison Yard, operating as an intermodal terminal, a lumber terminal and a bulk terminal. This facility allows various goods to be off-loaded and uploaded for distribution or transport throughout the Northeast and the Midwest. Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) and Canadian National Railway (CN) also operate between the yard and the international crossing bridge as well, utilizing the facility as a switching yard for international operations. The

Figure 5

Transportation



Legend:

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|----------|
| Town of Cheektowaga | Stream or River | Interstate | County Roads | Bus Route | Railroad |
| Villages within Town Border | Pond or Lake | State Routes | Local Roads | Bridge | |

conditions and rules for CP and CN apply in the Frontier Yard as well.

Public Transportation

Cheektowaga is serviced by NFTA, providing the Western New York region with mass-transit (Bus/Rail/Air) services and is the regional transportation authority.

There are multiple routes that service the Town of Cheektowaga, over two dozen routes in all. Services in the community include three Park & Ride locations, one at the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport, one at the Appletree Business Park east of Union Road, and the last one at the Thruway Mall east of Harlem Road. The NFTA also provides the community of Cheektowaga and WNY the Paratransit Access Line (PAL). This line allows for users to access the public transit services via direct pick-up from their location. PAL is for user's whose needs limit their ability to access traditional services and require additional assistance when traveling.

Aviation

Located along Genesee Street, the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport is the premier airport that services the Western New York region and Southern Ontario. This 1,000-acre property serves approximately 5,000 +/-passengers per year. Handling a mix of commercial, private, and cargo operations at the facility, the airport features seven different airlines that provide approximately 110 flights daily. Cargo facilities located on Cayuga Road feature four different airline companies with facilities of 300,000 square feet and handling approximately 158,500 tons of material. Prior-Aviation Service Inc., a private company, also has access to the airport as well as a full-service fixed-base operator (FBO), servicing general aviation aircraft and airlines.

Pedestrian & Cyclists

Pedestrian facilities can be found throughout the Town as a majority of the streets feature sidewalks. However, in some industrial areas and more rural-suburban areas that feature newer development sidewalks are segmented or not available.

Cyclists amenities are limited in relation to the population and size of the Town. However, like many communities in the region, these amenities have been growing over time; currently the Town features two dedicated cycle/pedestrian trails, three dedicated roadway lanes, and eight cycle-friendly roadways (i.e. wider shoulders, lower speeds to accommodate shared use).

Pedestrian & Cycling Facilities

Cycle/Pedestrian Trails

Lehigh Valley Railroad Rail Trail

Stiglmeier Park Trails

Roadway Lanes

Como Park Boulevard

Union Road

Harlem Road

Cycle Friendly

Losson Road

Cayuga Creek Road

Bennett Road

Nokomis Parkway

Harlem Road

Genesee Street

Holtz Drive

Aero Drive



Parks/Trails/Recreational

The Town of Cheektowaga Parks and Recreation Department boasts an expansive network of facilities, grounds, and buildings that provide various programs and recreational opportunities for all residents within the community. Providing basic amenities in most parks (e.g. benches, picnic tables) along with nature trails, picnic areas, shelters, playgrounds, parking, and other various amenities. In terms of active recreation (athletic fields), the park system consists of, but is not limited to, basketball courts, street hockey courts, baseball/softball diamonds, tennis courts, soccer fields, volleyball courts, and ice rinks.

Parks

- Town Park
- Stiglmeier Park
- Kelly Park
- Dartwood Park
- Eiffel Park
- Dingens Park
- Raymond Park
- Nokomis Park
- Nob Hill Park
- Cedargrove Park
- Orchard Playground
- Winston-Vegola Park
- Hanley Park
- N.Creek - S.Creek Park
- Firemans Park (*V. Depew*)
- Rehm Road Town Park (*V. Depew*)
- Wrazen Park (*V. Sloan*)
- Griffith Park (*V. Sloan*)

Recreational Facilities

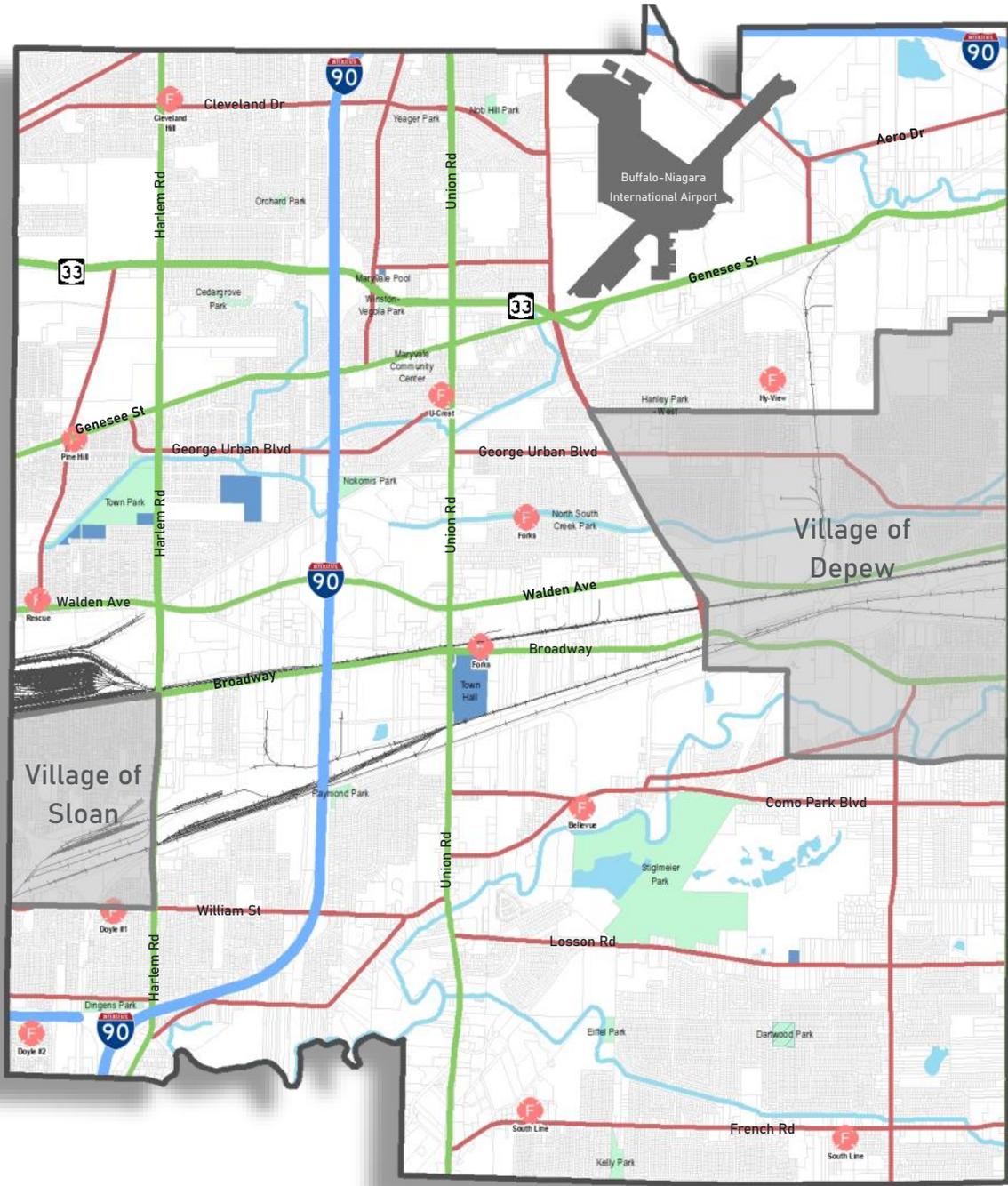
- Maryvale Pools
- Town Park Pool
- Town Ice Rink
- Youth & Recreation Center

Trails

- Lehigh Valley Railroad Rail Trail
- Stiglmeier Park Trails

Figure 6

Community Resources

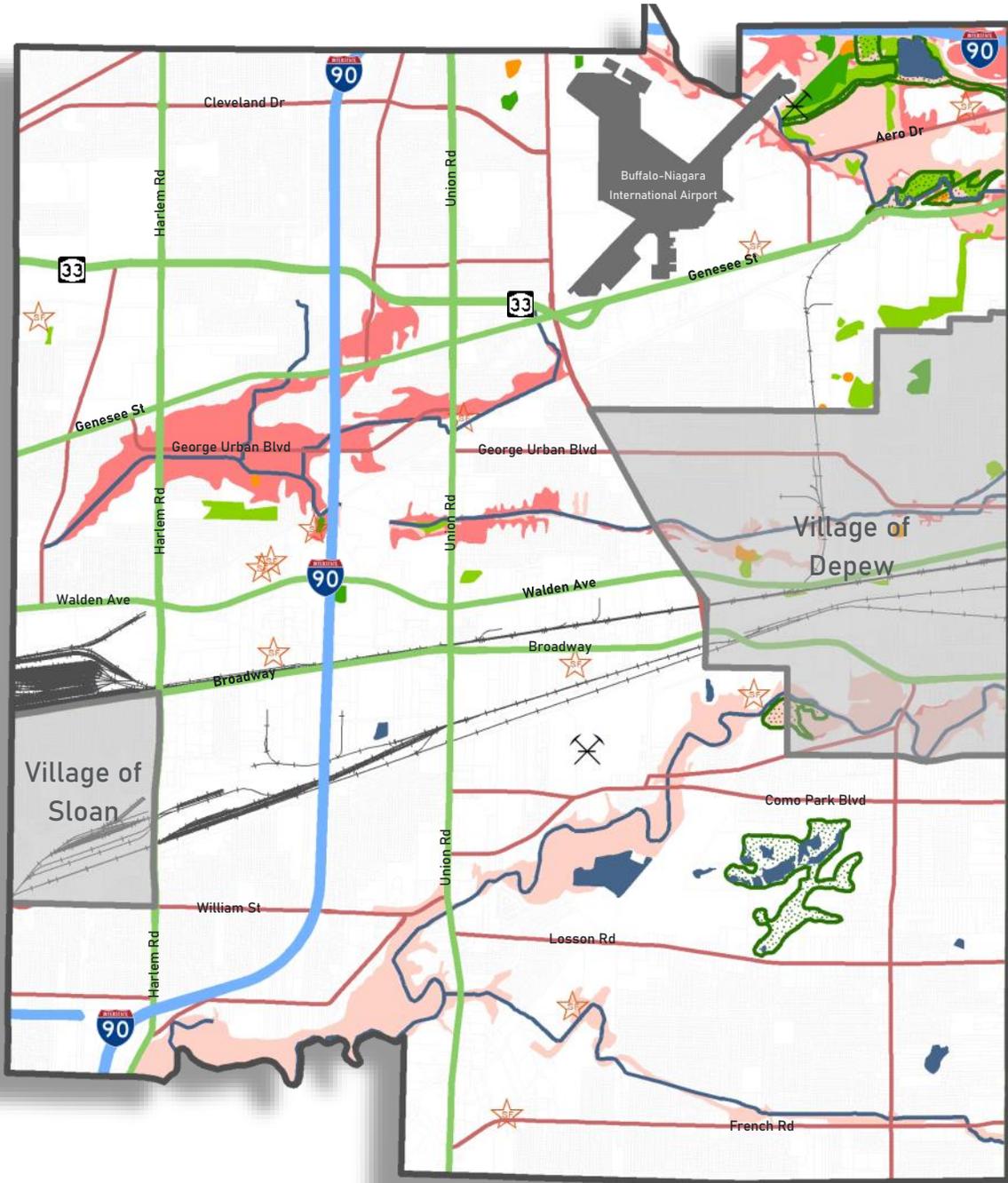


Legend:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Town of Cheektowaga | Interstate | Stream or River | Town Facility |
| Villages within Town Border | State Routes | Pond or Lake | Community Center w/Park |
| Railroad | County Roads | Parcel Boundary | Town Parks |

Figure 7

Water Resources



Legend:

- Town of Cheektowaga
- Villages within Town Border
- Railroad
- Interstate
- State Routes
- County Roads
- Stream or River
- Pond or Lake
- Parcel Boundary
- DEC Wetlands (State)
- Federal Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Federal Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Federal Freshwater Pond
- 100 Year Floodplain
- 500 Year Floodplain
- Superfund Sites
- Open-faced Quarry/ Mine

Water Resources

Cheektowaga is home to an expansive water resource system that is a part of the Lake Erie watershed. This system entails a series of creeks, waterbodies, wetlands (Federal & State), and floodplain zones. The creeks within the community, as noted below, are predominantly from headwaters that begin outside of the Town with minor tributary veins that are formed from start to finish within Cheektowaga.

Stream/Creek

- Cayuga Creek
- Ellicott Creek
- Scajaquada Creek
- Slate Bottom Creek

The bodies of water that exist in the Town are a collection of small ponds and two lakes. The ponds are predominantly located in the Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve (southeast corner of the Town) with other various ponds located throughout the community, typically surrounded by residential development beyond a natural buffer. The two lakes of the community are side-by-side in the northeastern corner adjacent to the New York State Thruway.

The wetlands of the community are predominately Federally-regulated with a series of State regulated wetlands mixed in as well. Federal wetlands fall under the Clean Water Act, Section 404 and are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. State regulated wetlands fall under the Freshwater Wetlands Act and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Floodplains are areas that buffer creeks and streams that, due to their topography and soils, are prone to flooding and act as a natural sponge to absorb excess water from storm runoff and snow/ice melt. These floodplains consist of 100-year (1% annual chance of flooding) and 500-year (0.2% or 1 in 500 annual chance) designations. Development in and around wetlands and floodplains are regulated by the Federal government, State, and the Town, respectively to protect these resources and their surrounding habitats as well as prevent property damage during heavy stormwater events.



Critical Infrastructure

Critical infrastructure distribution within the community features a variety of distribution systems that feature both public and private management. Currently this infrastructure includes the distribution of water, electricity, natural gas, petroleum, and sanitary sewer.

Water

The community features a full-service water distribution system that reaches all parts of the community. Currently the Erie County Water Authority (ECWA) administers the municipal water service for the community.

Sanitary Sewer

In the northern and southwestern part of the Town operates under their own consolidated sewer district. In the southeast part of Town, the sanitary sewer system is operated under the Erie County Sewer District (#01). All the wastewater is pumped to the City of Buffalo for processing and treatment.

Electric/Natural Gas

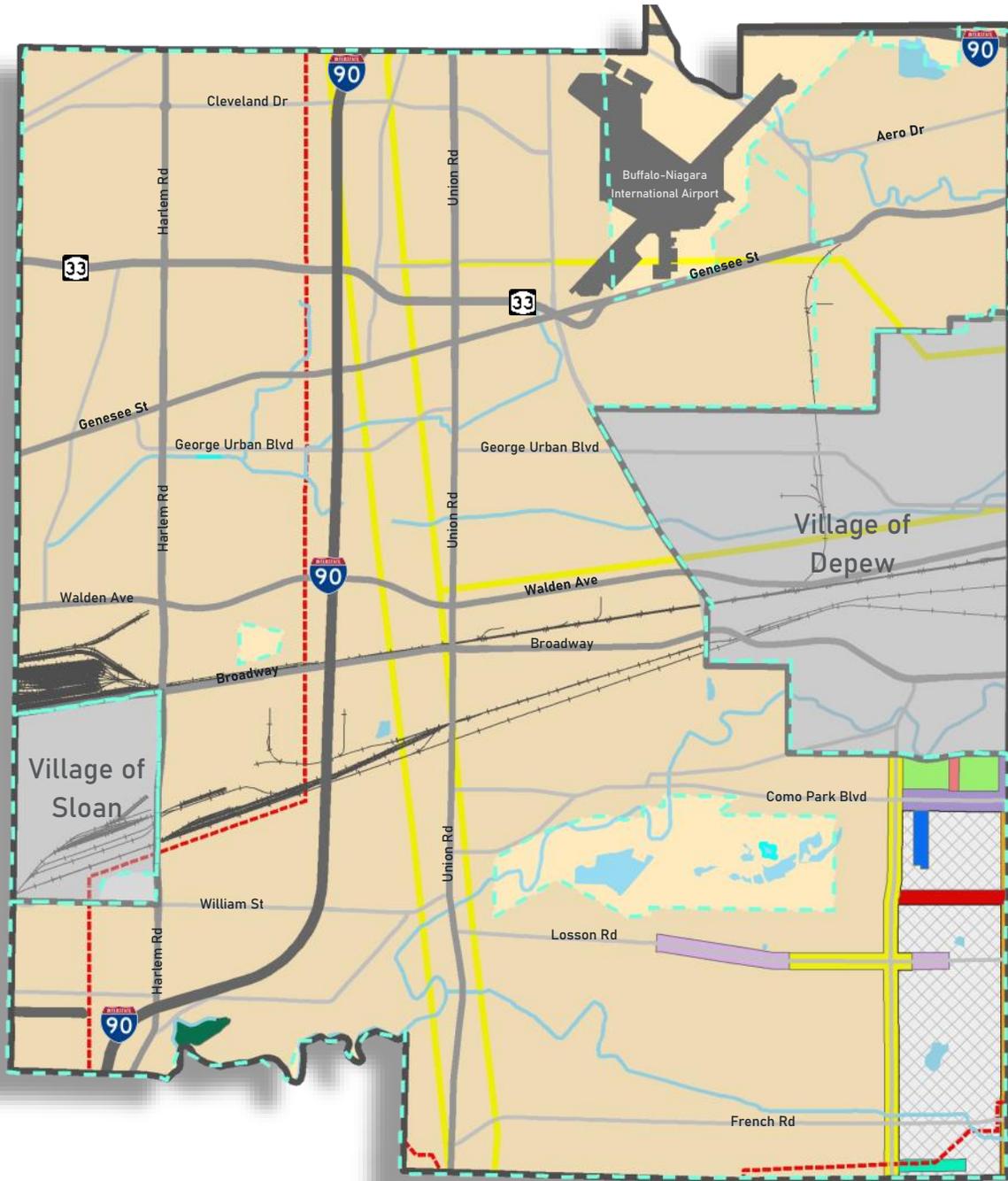
Town-wide services of electric and natural gas are provided by National Grid and New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG). With the majority of the electric grid above ground typical transmission remains along the Towns grid system. High voltage transmission lines distributing power from the Niagara Falls power station cross the Town from North to South parallel to the I-90 corridor.

Pipeline

Two major pipelines move petroleum and crude oil products through the Town. The Buckeye pipeline transports finished petroleum products between a refinery in Philadelphia and a terminal in the City of Buffalo. The Enbridge Line 10 is a trans-national pipeline that connects a terminal in Hamilton, Ontario to one in West Seneca, NY for the transfer of Crude oil into the Kiantone Pipeline.

Figure 8

Critical Infrastructure



Legend:

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Town of Cheektowaga | Stream or River | Cheektowaga Main Water District | CWD Freemont Ave Extension | CWD Strasmer Rd Extension |
| Villages within Town Border | Pond or Lake | CWD District 9 | CWD Losson Rd East & West Extension | CWD Transit Road Extensions |
| Railroad | NYS Electric Transmission Line | CWD Como Park Blvd Extension | CWD Lynnette Ct Extension | CWD West Seneca Water District |
| Interstate | Pipeline | CWD Depew Water District | CWD Messer Ave Extension | Exempt - Not a District |
| State Routes | Cheektowaga Sewer District | | | |
| County Roads | | | | |

Emergency Services

The Town provides emergency response services from a dedicated Police Department, Fire Department, and EMS division. In addition, various outside agencies work within the Town on a day-to-day basis providing supplemental and supporting emergency response services as outlined below.

Fire Departments

- Bellevue Volunteer Fire Company
- Cleveland Hill Volunteer Fire Company
- Doyle Hose Volunteer Fire Company 1
- Doyle Hose Volunteer Fire Company 2
- Forks Hose Volunteer Fire Company
- Pine Hill Hose Volunteer Fire Company #5
- Rescue Hose Volunteer Fire Company #1
- South Line Volunteer Fire District #10
- U-Crest Volunteer Fire Company
- Cheektowaga Fire Chiefs Mutual Aid Assoc.
- Village of Depew Volunteer Fire Department
- Hy-View Volunteer Fire Company (V.Depew)
- Village of Sloan-Active Hose Company #1

Law Enforcement Departments

- Cheektowaga Police Department
- Erie County Sheriff
- Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority- Transit Police
- New York State Police
- TSA (Airport)
- US Customs (Airport)
- CSX Police Department (Rail Yard)
- NS Police Department (Rail Yard)

EMS

- American Medical Response (AMR)
- Mercy Flight

Based on the diverse environmental conditions that exist in the Town with the associated hazards that face the Town, along with the variety of regionally significant transportation facilities and entities that service them, in 1981 Cheektowaga created the Office of Emergency Services. This department was established to analyze, prioritize, and plan for these hazards. In 2006, in conjunction with the Town Police Department, the Town organized the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), a strategic task force in charge of handling unique situations that may arise. The current CERT team consists of approximately 72 members.

Senior & Youth Services

Senior

In Cheektowaga, there are two main facilities that host senior services and/or programming related to seniors - the Cheektowaga Senior Center and the Town Senior Services Department, both located at 3349 Broadway. The senior services include a full outreach program of services, including but not limited to:

- Medicare and Medicaid Filing
- Food Stamp Filing
- Heat Assistance Filing (HEAP)
- Income Tax Preparation
- Finding Housing
- Nursing Home Placement
- Visiting Nurses
- Other Various Senior Services

The senior community also has a plethora of recreational activities available to them at the Senior Center, Town Park Recreation Facilities, and the Dartwood Community Center. The senior community population within the town has over 35 senior citizen groups, which receive support from the Town to maintain their groups and associated programming. The 35 group leaders meet every two months to share information and exchange ideas. Services within the Town also include 11 senior facilities that are not-for-profit or private practice, offering services ranging from assistant living to end of life care.

Youth

Cheektowaga features various efforts to provide youth services, programs and other opportunities to engage the youth. The youth program follows the traditional sense of growth with focuses that feature educational, health, culture and athletic benefits. The youth services feature the following outreach programs , including but not limited too:

- Community Service
- Various Athletic Programs
- Educational Assistance
- Friday Nigh Socials
- Saturday Mini Camps
- Afterschool Programs

Municipal Facilities and Services

In Cheektowaga, there are two main campuses and two satellite sites that fulfill the needs of municipal facilities and services. The Town Hall Campus is located at the intersection of Union Road and Broadway and houses over 12 different departments. The second campus is known as the Town Park Campus., which houses eight different departments with no thru access via the park; Straley Avenue connects the two different access points of Alexander Avenue and Harlem Road. The two satellite locations contain the Facilities, Parks, Buildings & Grounds Department at 500 Losson Road and the Town Archives & Records Center at 735 Maryvale Road.

Town Hall Campus

- **Accounting**
3301 Broadway
- **Animal Control**
3223 Union Rd
- **Assessors**
3301 Broadway
- **Employee Relations**
3301 Broadway
- **Highway Department**
3145 Union Rd
- **Justice Court**
3223 Union Rd
- **Law Department**
3301 Broadway
- **Police Department**
3223 Union Rd
- **Sanitation & Recycling Department**
3175 Union Rd
- **Senior Services**
3349 Broadway
- **Tax Office**
3301 Broadway
- **Town Clerk**
3301 Broadway

Town Park Campus

- **Building & Plumbing**
275 Alexander Ave
- **Community Development**
275 Alexander Ave
- **Engineering**
275 Alexander Ave
- **Fire Inspectors**
275 Alexander Ave
- **Housing & Neighborhood Preservation**
275 Alexander Ave
- **Inflow & Infiltration Department**
275 Alexander Ave
- **Youth and Recreational Services**
275 Alexander Ave
- **Emergency Services**
2600 Harlem Road

Satellite Locations

- **Facilities, Parks, Buildings & Grounds**
500 Losson Road
- **Archives & Records Center**
735 Maryvale Drive



Town Hall at Town Hall Campus



Town Park Campus

Historic and Cultural Resources

The town features multiple historic and cultural resources. The two main cultural resources of the community are the libraries hosted under the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library system. The Julia Boyer Reinstein Library at 1030 Losson Road (near JC Stiglmeier Park) and the Anna Reinstein Library at 2580 Harlem Road (near Town Park).

From a historic perspective, the Town features a Historical Museum housed at 3329 Broadway on the Town Hall Campus. Prominent residences include the former estate of George Urban Jr., a member of the late Urban family that founded the George Urban Milling Company. The locally renowned Urban Estate was home to the campaign launch of then NYS Governor; former Buffalo Mayor, Grover Cleveland. Cleveland would go on to become the 22nd President of The United States of America, as well as the 24th President.

Cheektowaga also features three places on the Historic National Register. They include the Chapel of Our Lady Help of Christians (90NR01199), the Villa Maria Motherhouse (06NR05564), and the War of 1812 Cemetery (95NR00821). The Town is home to multiple archeological sensitive areas as well due to the vast Native American Population that once resided across Western New York. Lastly, the community includes a variety of various churches and cemeteries with formation dates in the late 1800's.



George Urban Estate



*Villa Maria Motherhouse Complex
(Felician Sisters Immaculate Heart of Mary Convent Chapel and Convent)*



Our Lady Help of Christians Chapel (Maria Hilf Chapel)



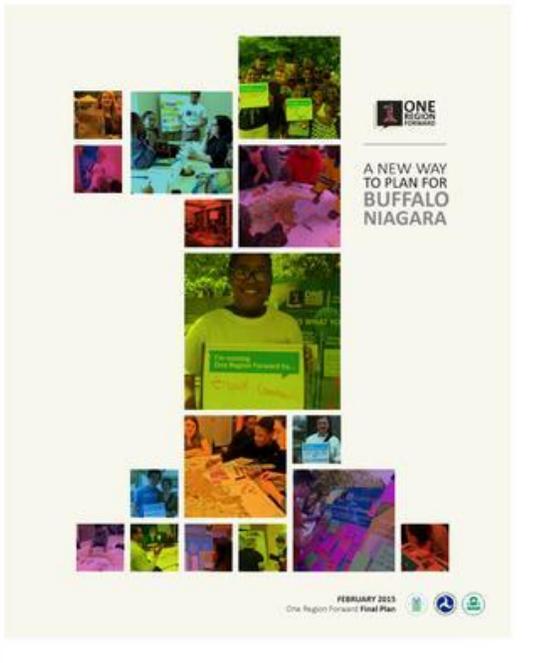
Garrison Cemetery (War of 1812 Cemetery)

Other Planning Initiatives

In addition to the 1992 adopted plan, and the 2008 plan draft, the Town has been involved or influenced by a range planning initiatives. Planning that has helped to shape and model both the policy and development that is a part of the Cheektowaga community. These associated documents have been reviewed and pertinent information was incorporated where applicable in developing this plan. The plans reviewed for this plan include the following:

- Erie County's Road to a Bright Future (2009)
- Town Final Draft Comp Plan- Not adopted (2010)
- Greater Buffalo Niagara 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan (2010)
- Transportation Improvement program 2011-2015 & Long-Range Transportation Plan (2010)
- Niagara Region Transportation Strategy Update (2011)
- Western New York Regional Sustainability Plan (2013)
- Buffalo-Niagara International Airport Master Plan (2013)





One Region Forward (2015)

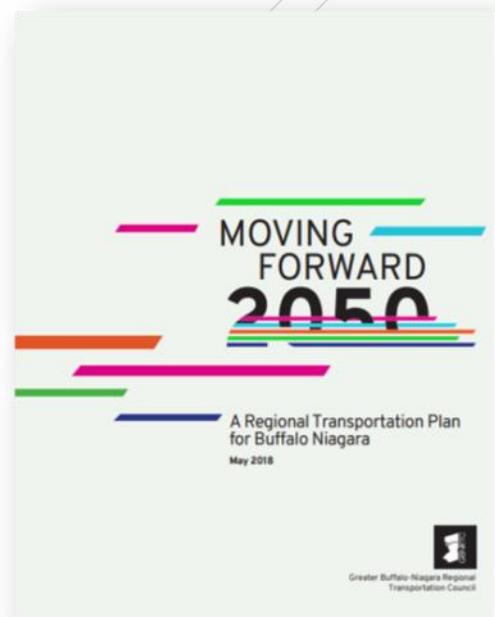
One Region Forward is a region-wide plan that was developed as a multi-year initiative that began with cataloging and researching countless sources of data that defines the region. In conjunction with this research, an extensive series of public outreach and engagement was held to identify how the community feels about the region. Like a typical comprehensive plan, this document cataloged the current standing of the region and projected a path forward for the Buffalo-Niagara Region. Some of the high-level recommendations that pertain to Cheektowaga include:

- Connect land use to transportation, especially public transit
- Promote form-based code
- Remedy sewer overflows and stormwater pollution
- Develop alternative energy infrastructure

Moving Forward 2050 (2018)

Moving Forward 2050 is a regional transportation plan developed by the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) that provides a strategic plan for the Buffalo-Niagara metropolitan area, identifying short-term objectives and long-term goals. These include:

- Establish “Smart” multi-modal transportation systems
- Revitalizing auto-centric corridors
- Promote and initiating a modern cycling network
- Strengthen the local economy through a efficient and diverse freight network



Cheektowaga's Vision

“Centrally located, Cheektowaga is at the heart of the WNY region. Driven by commerce, logistics, transportation and innovation. The Town, a suburban community; is a showcase of moderately dense walkable residential communities that harbor and foster an affordable, safe, family-friendly environment. Poised for gaining strength as Cheektowaga evolves, the foundational principles sought to be maintained are integrity towards economic stewardship, strong residential communities, a leader in regional transportation and logistics, and being an environmental pacesetter. The community looks to enhance upon these foundations by connecting the residential communities via multimodal transportation networks, bolstering business nodes and corridors by zoning change, marketing continuation of the towns logistics and transportation hubs at a international scale, and enhancing the green space through strategic planning initiatives.”

Planning Themes and Community Values

Transportation *“Harness and Enhance”*

“Our community looks to capitalize on our existing transportation systems by integrating alternative methods to create complete streets and ensuring access by all. We will also look to develop policy that will harbor the setting for transportation industry and industry related businesses to develop in locations surrounding our rail and air infrastructure.”

Economic & Industry Development *“Growth, Density, & Re-Development”*

“As our community reaches traditional suburban development capacity, we must begin to think urban and alternative. Implementing policy changes to allow for density growth, vertical growth, and re-development where applicable. Going beyond the region to entice international markets to invest. Enacting policy to support the formation of innovation districts where technology, industry, logistics , and commerce can develop a flourishing synergy.”

Public & Municipal Services *“Optimizing Efficiency”*

“Our community is one of fairly high taxes in comparison to neighboring communities.

However, the Town of Cheektowaga provides a plethora of services to demand the existing taxation. In doing so, it is imperative we demonstrate our commitment to efficient spending and optimize our services provided."

Social & Community Capital *"Support and Identify"*

"We define Cheektowaga by the residents who make up our community, and they define their community by the places they identify with. It is our duty to ensure that at-risk populations within the community are provided enough services where applicable. In addition to supporting the at-risk members of our community. We need to help all community members find a sense of place within the home they call Cheektowaga."

Housing & Neighborhoods *"Reinvest and Protect"*

"Our goal as a Western New York community is to always be a good neighbor. In keeping with tradition, it is important that we provide stability for at-risk homeowners, aging housing stock, and neighborhoods with neglectful or absentee owners. Helping further more to create neighborhoods that are diverse by not only the housing choose but by the income they house. Creating a community that caters to all demographics while supporting all housing types."

Parks, Recreation, & Green Space *"Preserve and Expand"*

"In helping to create a more identifiable sense of place within the community, we are looking to take the park outside the park. Currently our parks capture both recreation and green space in one place. Our goal is to set green space standards and carry them into the community to help define our public landscape. Inside the parks we look to preserve the natural space, upgrade our recreational components, and expand to capture our underutilized natural assets."

Goals & Recommendations

Utilizing planning themes as a way to catalog community values allows for the establishment of order when it comes to preparing recommendations and synthesizing the implementation of goals. The planning team, together with the steering committee, utilized public outreach, the community profile, and other planning efforts to update goals from previous plans and identify new goals to carry out the vision for the Town. Action items were then developed based on these goals.

OBJECTIVE

Redefine what it means to be from Cheektowaga

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

Promote the Town as a great place to live, work, visit, shop and recreate.

A strong sentiment was conveyed both within the steering committee and when surveying the public that that Town lacks a positive identity, a distinguishing feature, or what is also referred to as “a sense of place.”

The following actions highlight ways to help create a strong identity of what it means to be from Cheektowaga and to know that one is in Cheektowaga, but most importantly, that the Town welcomes you.

Establish Gateways

A part of a contiguous process to rebrand the identity of the Town, establishing “welcoming” gateways at the borders of the community can helping to signify arrival.

Enabling Historical Reverberation

Highlighting and identifying historical points of interest within the community helps individuals of all ages gain a better understanding of where they come from. In North American communities, it is important to pay homage to the native cultures who settled this land prior to the first European conqueror settlements.

Defining Public Space

Identify public space to continue the branding process and help signify a sense of place within the community. This can be accomplished through developing identity-based marketing integrated into design elements as well as the formation or designation of multi-use outdoor gathering space(s).

Enriching with the Arts

Integrating public art is another way to help signify place within the community by blending form and viewer impression. It also helps to signify art appreciation which entices private entities to curate their own art piece or donate towards public funded pieces, further enabling community pride.





OBJECTIVE

Strengthen Internal Government Efficiency & Resource Allocation

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

Promote intermunicipal and interjurisdictional cooperation and coordination, seeking avenues to improve efficiency in government.

Efficiency and effectiveness are key to helping improve the output of Cheektowaga's local government. Stronger internal department coordination will help identify and reduce repetitive processes for full efficiency of taxpayer fund. The opportunistic functioning and adaptable ability that the Town undertook during the depth of the 2020-2021 COVID pandemic highlighted how municipal staff can deviate from the traditional moderm of operation and still function successfully. In conjunction to the resourcefulness seen by the municipal staff's handling of the COVID pandemic, it is imperative for municipalities to also understand their resource allocation to ensure the best stability during times of hardship. Actions to carry this out include:

Resource Allocation

Refine the current allocation of resources where applicable, ensuring that all departments are equally optimized. This includes, but not limited to essential day-to-day operations being met before the allocation of additional funding to areas that may not be essential to day-to-day operations.

Explore Efficiency Opportunities

Like many local governments, there is a balancing act between investment and maintaining operations (expenses) and taxing properties (revenue); in some cases, governments have to do more with less. Cheektowaga would benefit from exploring various avenues for improving efficiency in the Town through sharing of or consolidation of services, among others, which provides benefits, such as improved capacity and resources, greater efficiency, enhanced service quality, and cost savings.

OBJECTIVE

Reshape the policy towards auto-centric plazas and strip plazas.

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

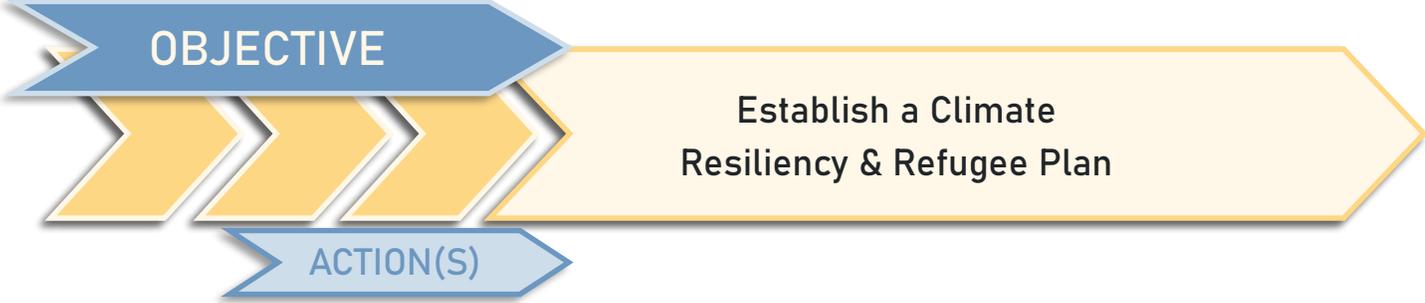
Create and strengthen neighborhood "Main Street" areas throughout the Town to create vibrant business districts that support the surrounding neighborhoods and create a greater sense of community.

Cheektowaga has historically been on the edge of development trends; however, in recent decades some of these trends have become dated on how they are integrated into modern societal needs. Repairing these development trends, often auto-centric, would allow for more modern multi-functional spaces that cater to the pedestrian. A shift in current policy and standards would not only enable the users improved movement at a pedestrian level, but to help stitch back communities; many spaces within the community have been divided by auto-centric design.

Develop More Walkable Regulations and Standards

Policies and standards that help the redesign of auto-centric plazas and strip plazas to allow for more modern redevelopment is a critical component. This shift would support the market signals that traditional retail is changing and therefore the needs of the consumer and end user are changing. This proactive approach would allow the community to adapt in more aggressive manner that would allow for sustainability and potential growth.





OBJECTIVE

Establish a Climate Resiliency & Refugee Plan

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

“Make Cheektowaga a “Climate Smart Community” through NYS, requiring certification and environmental commitments.

As the science projections behind climate change become more evident across the globe, communities have become more willing to embrace proactive measures in order to preserve their ability to adapt. Adopting and enabling practices that have climate change sustainability in mind. These actions are not only meant to allow the built world to evolve, but to allow an influx of those that will be seeking refuge from the extremes that are continued to be anticipated in other parts of the world.

Action items include:

Clean Energy

Adopt policies that enable the full diversity scope of clean energy practices to be utilized within the community where applicable.

Green Infrastructure

Adopt policy and design standards that enact green infrastructure implementation when rebuilding infrastructure or building new infrastructure.

Sustainable Design

Enact policy standards that ensure new design buildings, redevelopment and additions are utilizing sustainable design practices.

SMART Technology

Prepare for a more integrated system approach to monitoring the communities surrounding climate and climate changes.

OBJECTIVE

Replenish Local Waterways

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

Protect and improve significant creek and stream corridors.

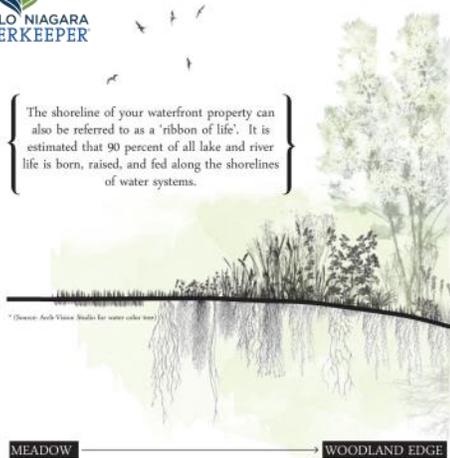
The Town of Cheektowaga is home to multiple tributaries found in the WNY region that influence the Lake Erie watershed. In continuation of local efforts, such as those led by Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, it is imperative to restore, preserve, and protect the regions shared waterways.

It is recommended that the Town of Cheektowaga review current policy standards that impact the tributaries traversing the community, revising them as needed and implementing new policies to ensure the longevity of these waterways. Measures should focus around accomplishing the following:

- Alleviate current detrimental impacts, including those that are weather-induced
- Mitigate the impacts of stormwater runoff pollution
- Repair, improve, and protect natural habitats and shorelines
- Provide appropriate public access and recreational opportunities where applicable.



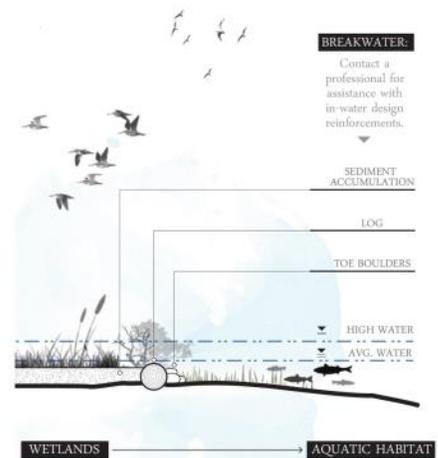
The shoreline of your waterfront property can also be referred to as a 'ribbon of life'. It is estimated that 90 percent of all lake and river life is born, raised, and fed along the shorelines of water systems.



MEADOW → **WOODLAND EDGE**
The fine textures of grasses and shrubs typical of meadow and woodland edge ecologies act as coarse filters that strain stormwater runoff, removing sediments and contaminants as water drains downhill towards the waterbody. Deep root zones add stability to the shoreline and soak up excessive nutrients carried in stormwater runoff before it enters a waterbody.



WOODLAND → **WETLANDS**
Large trees such as cottonwoods and willows have deeper root systems compared to the shallow spreading roots of upland tree species. These deep roots hold soil together, improving shoreline resistance to erosion. The large canopies of these trees provide habitat for birds and the shade they cast onto the water is ideal for fish and amphibians which eat mosquito larva.



WETLANDS → **AQUATIC HABITAT**
Wetland ecologies absorb flood waters and regulate stream fluctuations, further improving shoreline stability. Aquatic vegetation grows here which provides food for fish, and the fallen woody debris that collects along the edge offers juvenile fish protection from predators and dissipates wave energy, protecting the fragile ecosystems located closer to the shore.

OBJECTIVE

Develop a new district and set of policy standards, including design standards for the Galleria-Thruway Area.

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

Continue efforts to develop a regionally significant retail center around the Walden Avenue - Galleria core area.

Development is an ever-changing landscape that fluctuates with the nature of supply & demand, adjusting to the needs of the consumer. Currently, that exact process is playing in community in the area locally referred to as the Galleria-Thruway district.

The Galleria-Thruway District (GTD) is bisected by Walden Avenue and laterally by the New York State Thruway/Interstate 90 and bordered by Harlem Road in the west and Uniron Road in the east. Regionally and internationally this area within the community is known as a destination for shopping, retail, and dining due to the Walden-Galleria Shopping Mall, drawing visitors from both the US side of the border and the Canadian side of the border.

Given the nature of development trends and the way spaces are designed in modern day, it is recommended that the community begin to re-assess in more detail as to what is exactly is to become of this part of town. Long-standing ambitions suggest that there is sentiment to connect the airport to this part of town via an old rail corridor that directly runs through this portion of Town before crossing over into the City of Buffalo; this would potentially help bolster this center of activity.

Flexibility towards implementation of this policy should be the main objective to allow spaces the ability to adapt to changes. Utilizing mixed-use policy standards, enabling measures that allow for density formation, and lessening or removing current height restrictions within regulation standards set forth by the Federal Aviation Administration. All of these elements are example how new policy reformation could potentially enable a re-imaging of the Galleria-Thruway District (GTD).

OBJECTIVE

Continue and enhance the development opportunities around the Buffalo/Niagara International Airport

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

Improve coordination between the Town, NFTA and other related agencies to support and promote continued improvements in and around the airport, including plan for future light rails service to downtown.

Cheektowaga is home to the County's only international airport, the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport. This airport oversees a majority of travelers coming and going within the region, including being the local travel hub from many Canadians from southern Ontario. With that understanding, an effort has been made to help grow this airport into a prime world renowned mid-size airport. Recently developing more amenities such as hotels and car rentals directly across from the airport on the south side of Genesee Street.

Support Airport Development

It is important that the Town continue to enable the regional investment towards growth around the airport in order to support and sustain it. Utilizing Federal Aviation Administration guidelines, the Town can achieve this by allowing for more diversity of uses that are compatible with and make sense for being near an airport. It would also be beneficial to explore the option of connecting the airport area to the Galleria-Thruway district to provide more synergy between these active spaces within the community.



OBJECTIVE

Engagement with the Community

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

Strengthen neighborhoods to create a stronger sense of community throughout the Town.

Neighborhood associations and community groups are present both as recognized groups within the community and as grass roots movements. A majority of the grass root movement groups are formed via social media, but still tend to help disseminate information to the public realm. One such concern that was expressed through the public engagement process was the sentiment that their was too much taxation and not enough of provided for it in return, i.e. services.

Active Engagement

It is recommended that the Town enable a monthly information session that would connect community members with direct access to the resources available. Providing information, proactive engagement opportunities, 1-1 consulting, and overall enabling the community a direct line of contact through face to face interaction.

Taking initiatives of this nature will not only allow better support of the community by the local government that serves them, but allows for ease of redirection to the correct resources when they are all available in one setting.

Establish a Council of Neighbors

In helping connect the community and creating that sense of responsibility many of the members of a community often seek, the Town of Cheektowaga should help form a “council of neighbors” to engage in consistent communication and help target and manage communal needs that require action.



“This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in.”

Theodore Roosevelt



OBJECTIVE

Overhaul Zoning

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

Coordinate zoning revisions and design regulations with surrounding communities to reduce conflict and in some cases adopt similar laws to promote cohesive development.

Overhauling the town-wide zoning is a much-needed step towards bringing Cheektowaga towards a more competitive community that is aligned to adapt and prosper moving forward. Actions to implement this include:

Zoning Updates

Currently, the Town's zoning is based on a conventional style commonly referred to as Euclidean Zoning. This style limits the uses of parcels and the number of uses allowed per district, typically providing limitations and restrictions based on the zone, not the use.

Switching to a more modern style of zoning gives the opportunity to bring more refined nuances that allow spaces within the community to either flourish with ease or adapt with ease if the original uses did not come to fruition. Another form of zoning is known as form-based or design-based zoning. This style allows for increased density, encourages mixed-uses, and enables the use of street and building types/standards by district.

Shifting towards design-based zoning allows for the Town of Cheektowaga to have areas such as the Galleria-Thruway district or the French Road Shopping Plaza transform into a multi-use, multi-story communal focal point of activity.



OBJECTIVE

Support at Risk Housing Stock

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

Focus programs and actions on the older neighborhoods located contiguous to the City of Buffalo to improve housing, business and the overall vitality of these areas.

When it comes to ensuring the longevity of a community and the character it develops, it is imperative that the associated housing stock is preserved when applicable. In Cheektowaga the following actions are recommended to carry this out:

Strategic Targeting

Programs should be developed to help enable homeowners the ability to ensure the longevity of their home, specifically in areas of post-war tract housing and older stock. This can be accomplished by strategically identifying the most vulnerable neighborhoods and then identifying the most immediate issues in need of being addressed.

When addressing these issues, various tactics can be implemented to help stabilize the targeted portion of the community. Potential options include, but are not limited to:

- Develop a financial match incentive program for property owner investment.
- Public engagement to educate residents on code adherence.
- Advertise and direct residents towards resources for foreclosure preventives and assistance.
- Use code enforcement to enforce standing violations and to potential issue preventative maintenance notices as a proactive courteous measure.
- Developing rehabilitation standards.
- Document and regulate rental properties.
- Document and regulate temporary lodging/short-term rental properties (e.g. Air BnB).

OBJECTIVE

Fill in the Housing Inequality Gaps

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

Build upon the assets of each unique area of the Town and address problem areas to create stronger neighborhoods.

Based on the 2019 Housing Market Report for Cheektowaga by Neighborhood Planners in conjunction with the feedback provided by the community, it is recommended that Cheektowaga identify and enact ways to diversify the existing housing options available.

Flexible Housing

The community should actively plan for and enact policies that will help to form more inclusionary and adaptable housing throughout the community. This will help to respond to changing demographic trends, featuring homes that are capable of being used as a rental, a starter home, or a multi generational home pending the need.

Housing Diversity

The community should have enough range or diversity in housing options that an individual is able to transition from a low-income renter to a first-time home buyer, and eventual to an end-of-life residence. This will help to form neighborhoods that highlight more mixed-income levels while being able to help residents' transition through the stages of occupancy (first time homeowners - retiree).



OBJECTIVE

Dedicated Planning for Open Spaces and Recreation

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

*Protect and
improve the Green
Space/ Open
Space features of
the Town.*

Create a Green Space/Recreation Master Plan

Developing a Green Space and Recreation Master Plan would provide a cohesive vision for the community, while providing a policy guide towards integral features of the community. It should include planning guidance on the future of the communities parks, recreation facilities, public space landscaping, and town-wide tree/landscaping management.

The intent of this recommendation is to enable a more environmentally-focused community beyond the initiative outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, helping to target strategic points for cultivating these elements to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. More importantly, managing green space such as landscaping and trees introduces an immense benefit for a community that is relatively built-out as an auto-centric suburb. The implementation and managing of these natural features allows for heat reduction on high temperature days, improvement of air quality, and enables a more stable ecosystems for local wildlife.



OBJECTIVE

Expand Multi-Modal Opportunities

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

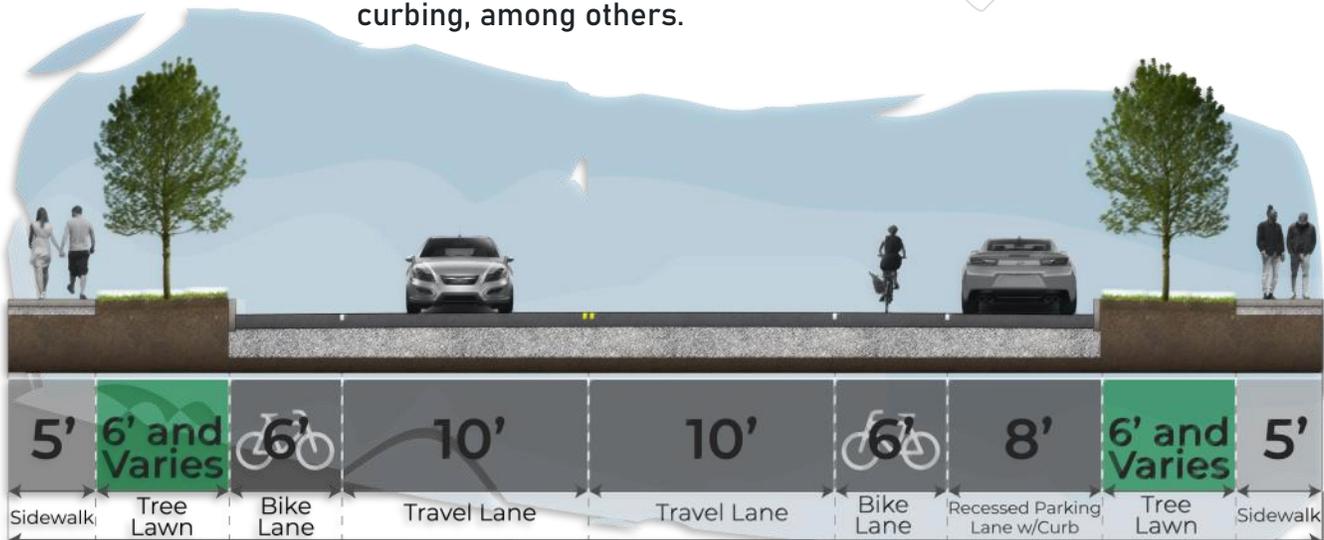
Enhance and expand alternative modes of transportation, including bike lanes, bus routes and possible future transit extensions.

Adopt a Complete Streets Policy

In a community that was developed around the automobile, adopting a complete streets program would help enable safer corridors of transportation.

A complete streets policy signifies to a community that a roadway is no longer solely centered around the personal vehicle, but rather designed for users ranging from that of a public transit system user to that of a cyclist on their commute to work. This would enable design features that create streets accessible by all, including ADA compliance.

Typically when implementing a complete streets policy into an existing infrastructure system, the transportation facility would either become multi-modal within the same footprint, or additional facilities would be built parallel to existing facilities. Features could also include traffic calming measures at critical points of interaction, landscape elements, cyclist facilities, public transportation amenities, land reduction for personal vehicles, and additional curbing, among others.



OBJECTIVE

Reimagine Public Transit

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

“Work with the NFTA to develop a more reliable transportation system”

In conjunction with the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA), re-imagining the Cheektowaga transportation system can be an example of how restructuring can resolve existing issues, move users efficiently, and alleviate congestion problems.

Cheektowaga Transit Planning

Further analysis of the existing system routes, facilities, and infrastructure is necessary to identify the successes of the current system and opportunities for improvement. When identifying improvements, it is imperative that the solutions should identify examples of other public-transit system successes that could be implemented within Cheektowaga.

The overall intentions are to identify ways and implement corrective actions to create a more stable, reliable public transit system. Potential feature changes could include the formation smaller route loops, increased transport vehicle presence during peak hours, or establishing flex stops.



OBJECTIVE

Connect the Airport to the Galleria-Thruway District.

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

Aggressively promote a light rail rapid transit connection between the Airport and downtown Buffalo.

As established in past community plans, a former rail line corridor exists north of the Walden Corridor at the intersection of Walden Avenue and Harlem Road, extending east towards the Airport and westward towards the City of Buffalo.

Support Mass Transit Corridor Reactivation

It is often vocalized by the community that this defunct corridor be reactivated into a fully functional mass transit feature to service Cheektowaga and beyond. Potential opportunities exist to connect the Airport to downtown Buffalo and further eastward to the neighboring township of Lancaster.

Activating this mass-transit option would help to provide a healthier environment option for moving residents throughout the community, increase access to the Galleria-Thruway District, and enable the opportunity to have users of the Buffalo Niagara International Airport be directly connected into the community.



OBJECTIVE

Ensure Town Policy is Conducive for Logistics and Commercial Transportation.

ACTION(S)

GOAL:

Capitalize on the significant railroad system and the international airport as an important transportation and economic resources in Town.

With two of the County's premier rail yards and the third largest airport within the State, Cheektowaga's transportation infrastructure is poised to remain a staple within the Western New York region. While the majority of the actual regulations surrounding rail and air transport are federal mandates, it is important to ensure the local policy follows suit and is conducive.

Rail/Freight Supportive Development

It is recommended that the Town review it's existing policies for the area surrounding these facilities to ensure that land uses are conducive to and support them where applicable, while remaining beneficial to the overall community.

Typically when fostering an environment that benefits from logistics and commercial transportation, communities can often expect to see hubs of interchange that include warehouse/distribution centers, manufacturing and support facilities, and vehicle maintenance facilities.

Support Connective Logistics

As commerce, transportation, and logistics growth increases with the use of online retail, it is recommended that the Town take an active role in facilitating opportunities to improve local connections between the rail yards and the airport to help alleviate potential logistics congestion and create a stronger regional presence. This may be outside of the purview of the Town in terms of jurisdiction or authority, but active engagement with the applicable agencies can be one way of providing support.

Developing Tomorrow

In making strides towards evolving the Town, the previous sections of the Comprehensive Plan outlined the community's assets, obstacles, opportunities and vision for the future. The following section outlines the various tasks needed to be checked off the list of items identified, including but not limited to policy changes and physical changes.

These tasks include:

Future Land Use and Design - Where/how growth is encouraged

Priority Projects - Conceptual initiatives/projects to enhance or act a catalyst for the community

Action Plan - Recommendations for policies, regulations, programs, etc.

Implementation Strategies - How this document can be applied to the real world.

Future Land Use

A Comprehensive Plan not only addresses community issues and opportunities, but also growth (and preservation). This section provides a graphic illustration of the preferred future land use patterns in the community, giving residents, business owners, and developers direction on the proposed form and framework for land uses. Existing land use patterns and targeted development areas serve as the basis for the future land use map, providing a more realistic view of what exists in the Town currently as well as potential trends and opportunities. The future land use plan provides the foundation for any potential zoning changes in the near future.

The land use categories include the following:

Traditional Residential Neighborhood

Residential dwellings characterize a large percentage of the community, featuring a housing stock that highlights a diverse range of housing development trends that transformed Cheektowaga from West to East. Characteristically the residential dwelling land uses that would fall in the parameter of being a traditional residential neighborhood, feature homes that are either single-family residential or multi-family residential. The multi-family units within the traditional residential neighborhood are typically characterized by 2-3-unit dwellings. Intentions are to maintain this housing stock over

redevelopment of new housing stock. However, redevelopment and infill development are encouraged. Redevelopment and infill development would allow to be single use, but it is encouraged to be multi-family. The multi-family dwellings should be tailored for income diverse dwellers and suitable for dwellers of all stages of life. Multi-family dwellings should be developed within reason, being mindful of surrounding density capacities, buffering when applicable, and accessible to public transportation facilities.

Urban Mixed Use

Urban Mixed-Use is an area of focus that centers around the Walden Corridor, predominantly between Harlem Road and Union Road. It also encompasses areas surrounding the Buffalo-Niagara international Airport, predominantly along the Genesee Corridor. Policy development should foster intentions geared towards Urban Mixed-Uses of moderately to high volume density development. Intentions are to see development form a co-dependent synergy between these two spaces that are to be linked by a proposed mass-transit system. Ultimately to enable growth that allows continuous sustainability of two predominate asset areas within the community, both of which are providers of economic and social stability. Use should cater towards the likes of hospitality, retail, office, business, residential, and technology. Shifting towards moderately dense urban centers with availability to sustain demand increase if presented with the opportunity to become higher density centers.

Suburban Mixed-Use

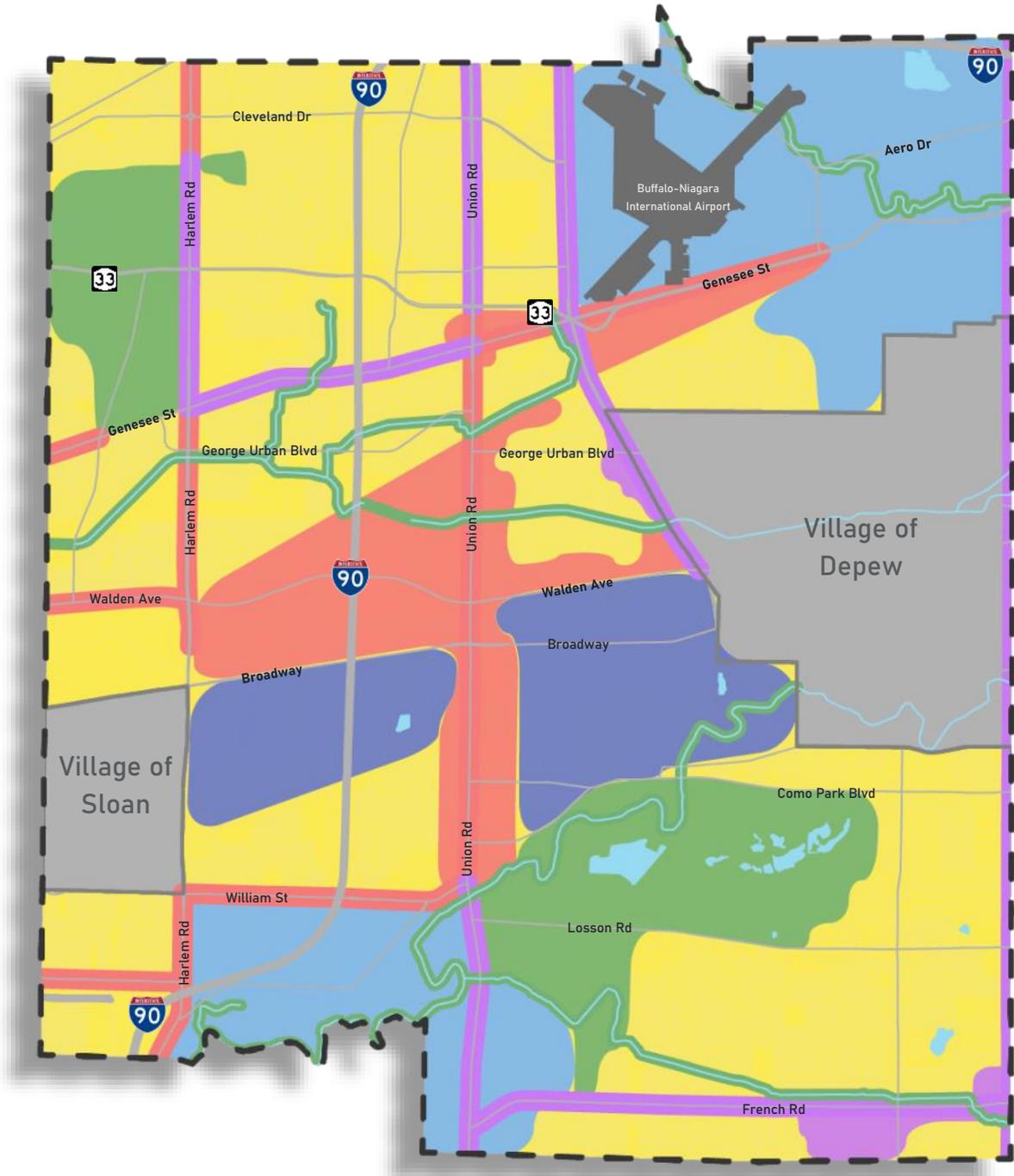
Suburban Mixed-Use categorically encompasses predominately the existing uses of high density residential, multi-use strip plazas, and auto-centric commercial/business development. Intentions are to allow policy for these spaces within the community to enable transformation through re-development and infill development practices. Over time, the idea is to harbor development that is moderately dense, caters to mix-uses, and pedestrian oriented in the intentions to create hubs or corridors of activity. Teasing residential communities together by shifting away from auto-centric development.

Park, Recreational, or Preserve Use

Under Park, Recreational, or Preserve, existing spaces defined by this definition defined form a collection that is typically meant for communal use as places of reprieve and leisure. Predominantly, found in the form of passive open space or recreational sport assembly space. Under this use, policy should enable practice that is beneficial and preservative of parks (public/private), playgrounds, preserves & refuges, recreational facilities, public plazas, tributary corridors, and other uses of similar nature. Including

Figure 8

Future Land Use



Legend:

- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Town of Cheektowaga | Interstate | Residential Neighborhood | Park, Recreational, or Preserve |
| Parcel Boundary | State Routes | Light Industrial | Suburban Mixed Use |
| Railroad | County Roads | Moderate Industrial | Urban Mixed Use |

spaces within the community that feature a heavy green space presence and a use not traditionally in focus, such as places of final rest. The natural environment shall be the main benefactor in order to enhance town-wide quality of living by having direct access to natural spaces.

Light Industrial

Light Industry would be areas within the Town defined as centers of production that would have minimal to no external impact on the surrounding external environment. Meaning that the surrounding residential communities would not be exposed to high-volume noise pollutant, air/odor pollutants, and/or vibration to name a few of the potential exposures that happen with heavier types of industry.

Areas of intended development concentration would be in the proximity of the Airport, the Broadway corridor, the west end of French Road and around the rail yards. The type of industry being outlined would entail processes that include but are not limited to research, development, fabrication, manufacturing, compounding, processing, packaging, storage, assembly, distribution and/or product sales. All of which would focus on processes that utilize semifinished materials, finished materials, and/or raw materials that involve no refinement.

Moderate Industrial

Industry (moderate) would remain present in the current boundaries of the areas surrounding the Broadway corridor and the rail yards. Some potential for expansion in areas Northeast of the airport exist. It is important to note that while the processes are similar to that of industry (light), industry (moderate) can at various times produce external effects causing noise pollutant, air/odor pollutants, and/or vibration etc. Typical processes that would be seen in this category are mass-production assembly line

Priority Projects/Initiatives

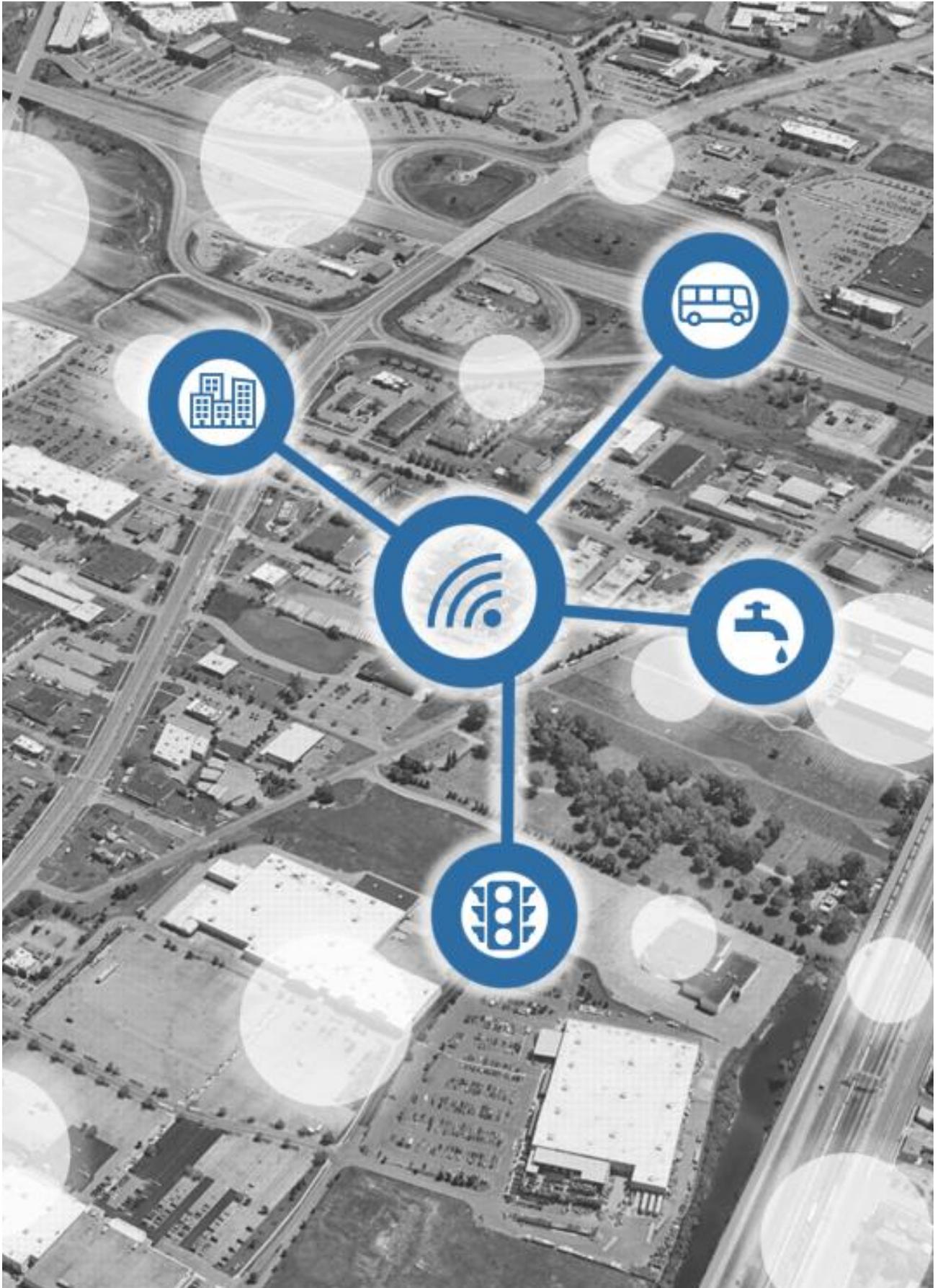
The established themes, goals, and actions/recommendations identified under Section 4 are a diverse series of objectives that will direct the Town towards their communal vision. The following are a collection of priority projects and initiatives meant to be implemented as part of the initial steps forward to enact land use change, providing a catalyst for larger changes in the community.

Explore a “SMART” Community

SMART communities are currently more idea, than they are practice. However, this emerging design practice form of an completely integrated community is taking place right here in Western New York. The City of Buffalo is currently developing the practices of what a “SMART” community would look like with a space of Downtown.

The opportunity for Cheektowaga to mimic and mirror their neighbor is a two-fold solution. As similar to the City of Buffalo, a full-scale roll-out across Town would have a small margin of plausibility given the initial cost at this point in time. However, given the timing for the Galleria Thruway District (GTD) area looking to establish a larger density of critical mass, there is ripe opportunity to align. Utilizing the GTD as a testing grounds would not only enable a more attractive space for more diverse uses. It would also provide a unique opportunity to create a SMART community within the suburbs and in change, provide opportunity to connect SMART communities. Given the proximity to the region of testing within the City of Buffalo, there is ample room in theory that test connection links between the two spaces would only make sense. Giving way to helping to develop the communities of tomorrow. To understand a SMART community in better context, below you will find the following categories catalog that are typically boxed out by SMART community.

To understand a SMART community in better context, a SMART community utilizes integrated computer technology and software to allow the establishment of connected telecommunications, transportation, and even utility systems. That not only communicate with the user, but amongst system components themselves. Creating a space of self-regulation and monitoring to enhance performance, quality of life, but more importantly enhance safety. This development of full integrated communities looks to optimize taxpayer dollars, reduce carbon footprints, and mitigate hazards before they impact the public safety. SMART communities could see a range of items interconnected via telecommunications and computer systems, including but not limited to, buildings, utility meters, utility distribution enters, microgrids, streetlights, vehicles, and other various elements of day to day life.



Preparing The Galleria-Thruway District for Tomorrow

Known as a regional destination for retail and hospitality, the Galleria-Thruway area is a 1,260-acre portion of the Town that through stakeholder support and valued public input, is currently being primed for a transformation. This intended district is ripe, as a county-wide economic driver; for seeing needed policy changes, development of all-inclusive design standards, and being prepared for being a more adaptable space in the long-term. The following steps are actions recommended for implementation to ultimately act as catalysts for bringing new growth, establishing a pedestrian friendly community, and harboring the continuation of being a destination for all.

Establish a District

Establishing a district would allow for the new formation of a zoning district that features a diverse selection of uses permitted or rather that identifies the uses not permitted to allow less rigidity. Helping to enable developers to create more stability and entice new industries within this region, along with enabling residential development. Ultimately in the hopes to create an atmosphere of live, work, play that is often found in thriving social centers.

Develop a GEIS

Concurrently with the development of the comprehensive plan, the Town is taking the initiative to develop and enact a Generic Environmental Impact Statement to the intended area of definition that encompasses a large area of underutilized properties. Leveraging a GEIS is a strategic move for the Town to help identify as a collective the potential impacts new development and growth could cause if unchecked. Through a GEIS the Town will be able to identify potential adverse impacts along with mitigation measures to thwart those impacts. Preliminary cost estimation of mitigation measures will be identified to enable the end user more transparent perspective when approaching a project within this 1,260-acres. The GEIS should include the following:

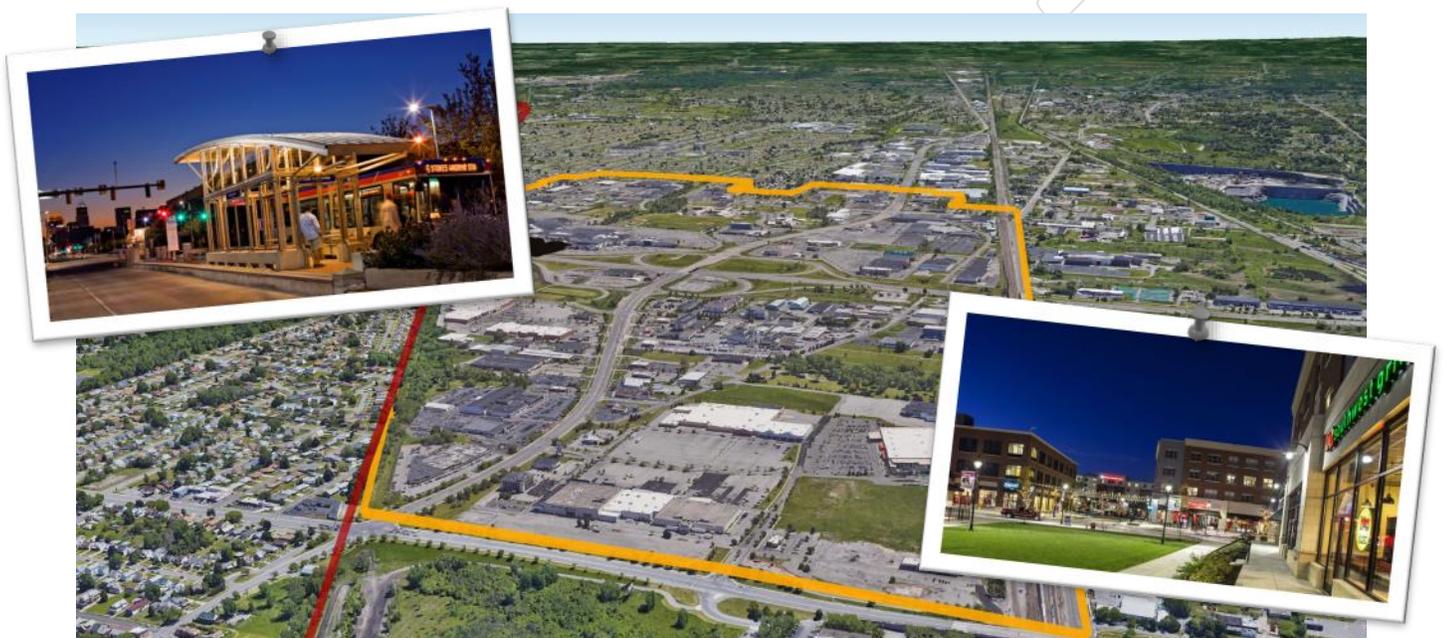
- Review Analysis of contextual planning documents, identifying land uses and zoning recommendations in order to sync or flag for conflict.
- Establish and identify preferred redevelopment scenario for analysis basis.
- Identify potential impacts & establish mitigation measures.
- Identify unavoidable adverse impacts, growth inducing impacts, irreversible resource commitments, and energy efficiency strategies.
- Provide alternatives including both growth scenarios and no-action scenarios.

Enact Design Standards

Design standards for a district of this type would allow for the transformation of a currently auto dominated center to transform into a center designed around mobility for all. This inclusive design should be considered when developing a GEIS. As the first ring suburb to the City of Buffalo, a more urban approach in this area of the community would help stitch together the neighboring communities in a more beneficial manner. Increased ability for density both in development and population to this area would also be beneficial to strengthening the supporting tax base.

Explore “SMART” Opportunities

Exploring action options and enabling this district as a “SMART” space would create a one-of-the-kind for the suburbs of the WNY region. Currently, the City of Buffalo is the only other community locally taking steps to develop a portion of their community into a “SMART” space. Cheektowaga has the opportunity to utilize the intended Galleria Thruway District (GTD) as a mirrored testing ground with the added opportunity to connect the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport.



Town-wide Zoning Update

Transforming the town-wide zoning is a much-needed step towards bringing Cheektowaga into a competitive community that is aligned to adapt and prosper moving forward. Re-writing and re-zoning the Town to enable more flexibility and a diverse use range in districts will allow for the transformation of a community heavily developed around the automobile, box stores, and strip plaza developments. The transformation of the zoning town-wide should see a shift towards a design-based zoning policy that would allow the tailoring to specific region's needs.

Smart Growth Thresholds

Enable smart growth standards in appropriate zones. To allow for design standards to be escalated to higher capacities based on the density per capita of that specific zone and/or along a specific corridor.

Urban Suburb

Develop and enable policy/standards that activate growth and redevelopment of auto centric spaces or corridors. Allowing these spaces within the community to harbor more pedestrian friendly spaces or corridors to better connect residents to the businesses and services that serve the community.

Transit Centric Design

Enable the mobility people in the community by enacting policy that allows for new design and re-development to incorporate design that is interactive with transportation systems.



Adopt Design Standards

In tandem with the re-development of the Town-wide zoning code, the new policy should incorporate design standards. Developing design standards will allow for a more transparent expectation of the Town by the end user looking to develop within the community. This helps to develop a relation and experience that foster future investment and attraction appeal for marketing the Town.

Design Standards

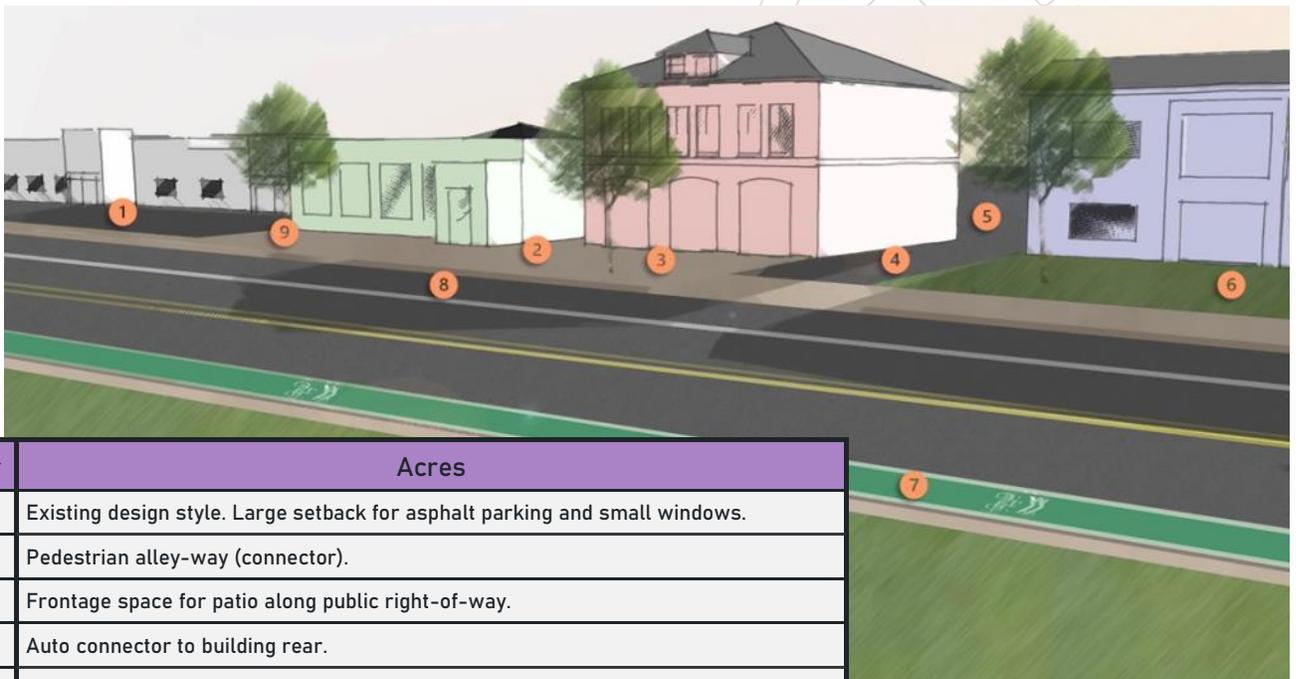
Initiate design policy that at the core would form design standards for site design, architectural aesthetics, and public realm interaction. Enabling these parameters would help define the districts character.

“SMART” Communities

Enabling the integration of the technology needed to develop a “SMART” community allows for the community to be proactive. The integration of technology that can communicate, interact, and monitor the build environment into design standards allows for a future of progressive interaction.

Climate Adaptable

Designing policy that allows for the built environment to be more prepared for changing climate normality. Incorporating such practices as utilizing green infrastructure, sustainable materials, and energy saving systems allow for a diversity in approaching building. Something that is needed when ensuring a buildings integrity for the community going forward.



Number	Acres
1	Existing design style. Large setback for asphalt parking and small windows.
2	Pedestrian alley-way (connector).
3	Frontage space for patio along public right-of-way.
4	Auto connector to building rear.
5	Parking in the rear of the building, away from pedestrian realm.
6	Building set further back to allow for greenspace for grass/foliage development.
7	Dedicated cycling lane along the roadway.
8	Parking lane to allow for curbside space to act a barrier from traffic.
9	Street trees to break-up the pedestrian realm visual and mitigate "heat" island effect.

Establish a “Complete Streets” Policy

For a community built on the back of modern transportation, Cheektowaga has the opportunity to transform what it means to be a transportation centric community. Typically, under the current model framework, most of the current design is centered around auto-centric design, specific single user vehicles. Modernizing this framework and reshaping how the current transportation footprints impact the community would not only enhance the quality of life but enable a more connected neighborhood fabric. During the re-development of the streets policy, design should focus policy around these three categories.

Complete Streets

Complete streets are meant to shift away road design from single-user vehicle orientation to more broad encompassing design. Enlisting design that focusses on enacting other methods of transportation such as mass-transit, bicyclists, but most importantly the pedestrian.

Mobility Access

Mobility access is the formation of design policy that ensures access for all users of the transportation system. All users mean a range that is all encompassing to include everyone from the able body pedestrian to the user who is wheelchair bound.

“SMART” Street Networks

Enacting “SMART” street networks and transportation systems may not be the most achievable method given its early stages of formation. However, preparing for the implementation and expectation of this type of technology to be adaptable and integrated into the current grid is imperative. The neighboring City of Buffalo is currently test tracking components of a “SMART” street networks that would help fast track any opportunity to enable this technology.



Prepare for Transportation Method Variation

On the cusp of evolving technology, many communities across the globe are seeing a shift of traditional transportation methods. In the case of Cheektowaga, the single-user vehicle mode of transportation is a method that needs to evolve. Preparing the community for a more diverse range of transportation practices sharing the same transit corridors will allow for sustainability.

Public Transit

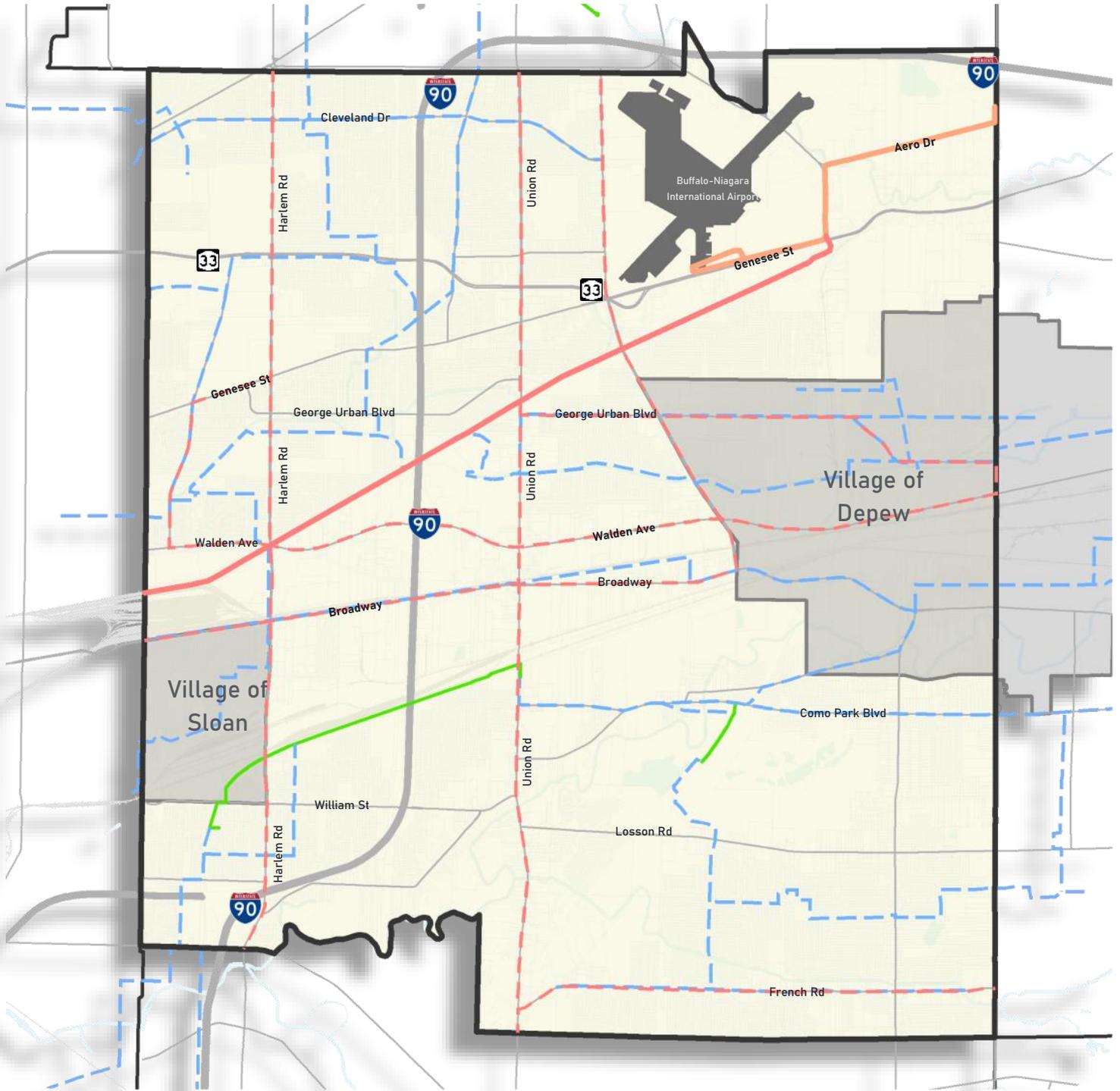
Promoting and enhancing public transit creates more access for all in the community while limiting the carbon footprint as a collective. Cheektowaga should focus on enabling opportunities such as enacting dormant rail corridors to connect centers of activity with existing railroad systems. It should also enable connectivity of the residential neighborhoods to centers of socialization and work.

Cyclist

Enhancing the cyclist infrastructure would be a proactive measure to allow opportunity for the community to shape how people transport themselves. This healthy alternative to the automobile should be enabled when appropriate and should include the needed infrastructure, amenities, and hardscaping associated with cycling.

Autonomous Vehicles

While still in the developing stages, communities across the country have been testing and encountering interactions with autonomous vehicles, or self-driving vehicles. Increasing opportunity for the development of 'SMART' systems within the community would ease any opportunity of transit to autonomous vehicles that may develop.



Legend:

- Town of Cheektowaga
- Interstate
- Mass Transit Rail
- Proposed Cycle Routes
- Parcel Boundary
- State Routes
- Airport Loop & Proposed Extension Routes
- Existing Multi-Use Trail
- Railroad
- County Roads
- Proposed Routes

Develop a “Green Space & Recreation” Plan

Developing a Green Space & Recreational Plan will offer the Town an opportunity to take a deep dive into communal places of reprieve and leisure. The development of policy under this effort should focus on the form, use, and preservation of spaces. Highlighting parks, preserves & refuges, tributary corridors, recreational facilities, and any other spaces deemed to be essential to the community as a place used for reprieve and leisure.

Parks

Providing a detailed plan for the Town park system would; weather it be a section or a stand-alone document, allow for a vision for reprieve to be develop by giving residents an escape from the daily routine through a closer connection to nature-based environments.

Communal-Wide Green Space

Bringing the natural environment outside the park parameters into the community would help to enhance the quality of life. Through policy regarding communal-wide green space, the natural environment should be allowed to flourish and thrive across the Town.

Tributary Corridors

Enabling healthy interactions with the local tributaries will not only be for cleaner waterways but provide a stronger ecosystem for the shorelines along which these tributaries traverse.

Recreation

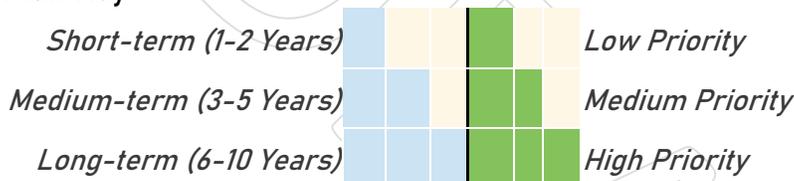
Recreational facilities throughout the Town have allowed access for users of all ages. Ensure these features for years to come allows for a stronger foundation of community quality of life. It is important that future development and improvements be mindful of integrating environmentally practices and features when applicable.



Action Plan

The title of this Section included the phrase “Developing Tomorrow,” a prelude to developing a course of action that is further outlined in the section. The action plan that follows is merely a recommended course for implementing the Plan for the Town, but it is not definitive; it is meant to be flexible and tailored to the Town’s need as time passes. The action plan extracts the recommendations defined under Section 4 along with the priority projects and catalogs them under the identified planning themes. Each recommendation then has the timeframe (when to undertake the action), priority level, lead agency (coordination), potential partner(s), and funding sources identified.

Action Plan Key



Transportation

Recommendation	Timeframe / Priority				Lead	Partner(s)
Continue and enhance the development opportunities around the Buffalo/Niagara International Airport	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	TB	EC
	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow		
Establish and adopt a “Complete Streets” policy	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	CED	TB, PB, Eng
	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		
Reimagine Public Transit	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	TB	NFTA, EC, Eng
	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow		
Prepare for Transportation Method Variation	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Eng	TB, CED, NFTA, EC
	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow		

EC = Erie County | TB = Cheektowaga Town Board | PB = Cheektowaga Planning Board | CED = Community & Econ Dev.
 Eng = Cheektowaga Engineering Dept. | YRS = Youth & Recreational Services | SS = Cheektowaga Senior Services
 NFTA = Niagara Frontier Transit Authority | HNP = Housing & Neighborhood Preservation

Economic & Industry Development

Recommendation	Timeframe / Priority	Lead	Partner(s)
Reshape the policy towards auto-centric plazas and strip plazas.		TB	CED, PB, EC
Develop a new district and set of policy standards, including design standards for the Galleria-Thruway Area.		TB	CED, PB
Ensure Town Policy is Conducive for Logistics and Commercial Transportation.		TB	Eng, CED
Preparing The Galleria-Thruway District for Tomorrow		TB	CED, PB, EC, NFTA
Adopt Design Standards		TB	CED, PB

Public & Municipal Services

Recommendation	Timeframe / Priority	Lead	Partner(s)
Redefine what it means to be from Cheektowaga		TB	CED
Resource Allocation		TB	-
Explore Efficiency Opportunities		TB	-
Explore a "SMART" Community		CED	Eng, TB, EC

Social & Community Capital

Recommendation	Timeframe / Priority	Lead	Partner(s)
Strengthen Internal Government Efficiency	High Priority	TBD	TBD
	Medium Priority		
Ensure Efficient Resource Allocation	High Priority	TBD	TBD
	Medium Priority		

Housing & Neighborhoods

Recommendation	Timeframe / Priority	Lead	Partner(s)
Town-wide Zoning Update	High Priority	TB	CED, Eng, PB
	Medium Priority		
Support at Risk Housing Stock	High Priority	HNP	TB, EC, CED
	Medium Priority		
Fill in the Housing Inequality Gaps	High Priority	HNP	TB, CED
	Medium Priority		

Parks, Recreation, & Green Space

Recommendation	Timeframe / Priority	Lead	Partner(s)
Establish a Climate Resiliency & Refugee Plan	High Priority	CED	YRS, PB, TB, Eng
	Medium Priority		
Replenish Local Waterways	High Priority	Eng	CED, PB
	Medium Priority		
Create a Green Space and Recreation Master Plan	High Priority	YRS	PB, CED, Eng
	Medium Priority		

EC = Erie County | TB = Cheektowaga Town Board | PB = Cheektowaga Planning Board | CED = Community & Econ Dev.
 Eng = Cheektowaga Engineering Dept. | YRS = Youth & Recreational Services | SS = Cheektowaga Senior Services
 NFTA = Niagara Frontier Transit Authority | HNP = Housing & Neighborhood Preservation

Plan Implementation

The Comprehensive Plan update serves as the guiding policy document for transformation and investment into the Cheektowaga community over the next 10-12 years, influencing local decision making, zoning, budgeting, grant awards, and coordination amongst influential entities. Fruition of a communal vision takes time and doesn't always fully bloom; however, through enacting annual checkpoints and leveraging resources, this goal can become more achievable. The following highlights tools & resources, execution & implementation strategies, and funding opportunities.

Tools & Resources

Plan Adoption

The action first and most upfront after the final draft submission will be the official adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. This gives credence to the notion of full support by the Town regarding the intended implementation of goals, objectives, and intended action items that are identified within the plan.

Implementation Committee

An implementation committee can be composed of past/present board members, residents, stakeholders, and/or other community volunteers who are able to assist in the Town process. While not a necessity, this option allows for a distinguished group to be responsible for the annual evaluation of the plan implementation. This system of 'checks and balances' helps maintain the plan as an active resource within the community and ensures the integrity of the values being upheld.

Sub-Committee

Sub-committees can be created in conjunction with the implementation committee or under any managing entity responsible for the plan's implementation. Sub-committees allow for a more tailored approach that help target certain topics through a more narrowed focus within a small designated group.

Local Regulations

Traditionally, one of the easiest ways to help implement a plan is by following up with identified actions regarding changes to local zoning and other community influential regulation. Accomplishing this can be done through a review of the current zoning code, site plan standards, and other various development standards in order to enact changes where applicable.

Town Budget

Under traditional circumstances, it is highly recommended that the Town Board references the plan during the development of the annual budget, especially when identifying capital project expenditures. Consideration of funding sources is imperative during this process because not all allocations need to be directly from traditional revenue sources, such as property taxes. Alternative sources of funding can be directed from revenue generated by other available tax funds, leveraged fines & fees, grants, and other various sources of revenue. Incorporating the plan objectives and goals into the budgeting decision process allows for a cohesive approach that coordinates not only community intentions, but targets the resources needed to fund these identified items requesting action. This approach can allow for funding to be disbursed annually and/or multilateral in junction with other entities that influence the community.

Capital Program

In conjunction with the development of the Town budget, a capital improvement program would allow for the Town to prioritize their long-term spending approach regarding public improvements that can only be funded by public dollars. With a process that typically forecasts 3-5 years at a time, objectives and action items are to be referenced when developing the capital improvement program. Identifying the most desirable and/or priority actions that fit within forecasted budget limitations.

Town Staff

Upon reaching a level of sustainable capacity for both development and the formation of new guiding planning documents, it is traditionally wise for a community to allocate responsibility to a designated planning staff position(s). This dedicated staff would act as the liaison between the board(s), committee(s), and/or advisory group(s) that provide reviews and/or recommendations to legal boards (Town, Planning, Zoning, etc.). This staff assignment would ensure implementation compliance where applicable, coordination as needed, proper grant administration, and monitor other various actions related to planning and development initiatives.

Execution & Implementation Strategies

Daily use

On a regular basis, Town government at all levels, should be referring to the Comprehensive Plan, ensuring that actions on behalf of the town staff actions are in alignment with the goals identified within the plan. This includes but is not limited to the evaluation of plans, initiative and project prioritization, investment sourcing, and the

seeking of grant funding opportunities.

Alignment

The comprehensive plan will not be the factor that guides all decisions within the community in relation to policy, investment, project proposal, or other efforts that require approval. Predominantly in part of there being other influencing factors and elements that overlap. In these situations, it is imperative to cross-reference and coordinate between long-term efforts with current actions being taken or proposed. Focusing the continuity of long-term efforts with short-term will allow for flexibility in the current trajectory. Maintaining an appropriate course of action within room for deviation to achieve the communal vision.

Community Engagement

The comprehensive plan process should act as a starting point if not as a steppingstone when it comes to community interaction. While many residents and stakeholders have taken part of the Comprehensive Plan development. It is important for the local leaders of the community to build on the dialogue and interaction created during the development process. To continue the public engagement in order to emphasizes the importance of long-term planning and the importance of the community's role in regards of civic engagement.

Plan Review/Evaluation

Annual reviews of the plan are critical to the implementation part of the plan and should be undertaken prior to the development of the next annual budget. Assessing the current progress track, completion of actions, on-going actions, and set priorities based on the current needs. Review can be accomplished through a variety of entities such as the Town Board, Planning Board, a long-range planning committee, a joint board, and/or a special implementation committee. The progress report is to include the following at minimum:

- A completed projects, programs, and initiatives list from over the current year.
- Identifying any current actions that are on-going. Include the projected outcome of the action in motion.
- Identify any alternates to actions that are not seeing success, both on-going and completed; to address and identify mitigation measures to be put in place that are intended to garner success.
- Designate priority action items that are to be implemented and/or considered to be implemented in the next year.

Amendments

Amendments allow a “living document” such as the comprehensive plan to be adaptable. It gives flexibility to the plan, allowing for responses to needs, factors, and conditions

that are ever changing. The plan should be reviewed and revised when applicable in response to communal changes and when impactful issues arise. Accounting for the immediate needs while reflecting upon and understanding the effects of a revision in relation to the long-term vision. Modifications through an amendment can be either minor or major in nature, but ultimately the overall goals can still be relevant.

Funding Opportunities

Funding for projects, programs, and other actions stretch beyond the traditional local funding through other various avenues of opportunities. In New York State, grant funding is traditionally administered through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) and changes yearly based on budgeting allocation. It is imperative that prior to the yearly release the Town should have actions identified as possible eligible for grant funding. Typical grants that are available are highlighted on the following pages with some variations assumed from year-to-year in regards to funding amounts and specific funding strategies. The CFA process is typically opened in the spring for a 2-3 month window with awards announced in later fall-winter of the same year; award contracts and funding release typically occurs in winter of the following year. Grants through other entities, including NYSDOT, EFC, and NYS Agriculture and Markets occur at different time periods and through different application portals.

Grant Pre-Submission

Grant application submission requires significant effort by the Town and traditional will require additional consultant from an outside party for preparation and delivery. With a comprehensive plan, application support becomes simplified for the goals, objectives, and desired actions are already addressed under the planning document. It is beneficial for a community to have the leverage of planning document for a variety of the applications provide additional scoring favoring updated plans on record. It is also beneficial of the applicant to highlight partnerships for each intended action identified.

Additionally, the Town should provide the following prior to any grant application:

- Identify and discuss joint opportunities with other communities and/or organizations.
- Dedicate and ensure adequate funding can be allocated towards the project. Grants can require that projects be funding in various ranges from 25% up to the full 100% of project costs. Only reimbursing the community upon completion of the project. Most matches are 50/50 but again range from 0-75%, both with a certain amount of the matching funding being in cash form.
- Identify and involve any stakeholders in the pre-submission discussions. In the event a project would consist of non-town owned land, formal letters or memorandums of understanding should be included in the application package.
- Letters of support are beneficial and should be sought for submission with the

application package. These letters can include but are not limited to local representatives, community organizations, regional groups and/or other various influential entities within the communities.

- Consulting a grant writing consultant may be applicable and beneficial to the submitted. It is to be noted that traditionally service fees may apply.
- Identify and prepare background information regarding the town background, including but limited to finances and governmental organization structure.
- Prepare a resolution of support noting dedication of local funds.
- Begin outreach of the project to the Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC) and other influential organizations, increasing project visibility.

While this information is not required for all grants, understanding the level of effort and documentation puts the Town on solid footing and better prepared to write a successful grant.

Grant Funding Opportunities

Consolidated Funding Application (CFA)

- Empire State Development – Strategic Planning and Feasibility Studies, Grant Funds,
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program
- New York Main Street Program
- Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation – Environmental Protection Funds, Recreational Trails Program
- Department of State – Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Local Government Efficiency
- Department of Environmental Conservation/Environmental Facilities Corp. – Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering/Planning Grant
- Environmental Facilities Corp. – Green Innovation Grant Program
- Climate Smart Communities Program
- State Council of the Arts – Arts and Culture Initiatives
- Department of Agriculture and Markets - Farm to School, Waste Storage and Transfer System Program, Amendments to Local Laws

New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)

- Consolidated Local Street & Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS)
- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)
- Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP)
- BRIDGE NY

Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC)

- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

APPENDIX A

Image Citation

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Image Citation

Cover Page

Upper Left / Source: Town of Cheektowaga

<https://tocny.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ThruwayPlazaDesktopResolution.jpg>

Upper Middle / Source: Unknown

Upper Right/ Source: Unknown

Lower Left / Source: Visit Buffalo Niagara

<https://www.visitbuffaloniagara.com/business-type/walden-galleria/>

Lower Middle / Source: Buffalo Business First

https://media.bizj.us/view/img/11248989/ent-buffalo-buffalo-niagara-international-airport-36862-03xx19*xx5536-4160-356-0.jpg

Lower Right / Source: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/education/1837.html>

Page 6

Source: Town of Cheektowaga

<https://tocny.org/services/residents/>

Page 12

Source: Town of Cheektowaga

<https://tocny.org/galleries/cheektowaga-historic-town-photos/>

Page 13

Source: Town of Cheektowaga

<https://tocny.org/galleries/cheektowaga-historic-town-photos/>

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Source: Town of Cheektowaga

<https://tocny.org/>

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Cheektowaga Central

Source: Cheektowaga Central School District

https://www.cheektowagak12.org/cms/lib/NY01913578/Centricity/Template/GlobalAssets/images///Logos/white%20background%20cut%20out%20logo_103.jpg

Cleveland Hill

Source: Cleveland Hill UFSD

https://www.clevehill.org/cms/lib/NY02214126/Centricity/Domain/240/Screenshot%202016-07-17%20at%206_21_13%20PM.png

Cheektowaga Sloan

Source: Cheektowaga Sloan UFSD

<https://www.cheektowagasloan.org/domain/157>

Depew

Source: Depew UFSD

https://apptegy-cms-v2.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/280/logo/309/wildcat_logo_rev-1-2-2020.png

Maryvale

Source: Maryvale UFSD

https://www.maryvaleufsd.org/cms/lib/NY02208569/Centricity/Domain/8/Maryvale_logo.png

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Source: Trail Link / Russ Nelson

<https://www.traillink.com/trail/cheektowaga-historic-rails-to-trails/>

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Source: Google Earth Image

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Upper / Source: Cheektowaga Chronicle

<https://cheektowagachronicle.com/grant-allows-cheektowaga-install-security-cameras-town-hall/>

Lower / Source: Boys & Girls Club of Cheektowaga

<https://www.cheektowagabgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/cbgc-exterior.jpg>

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Source: Buffalo Street Files / Mark H. Hubbell

https://buffalostreets.files.wordpress.com/2021/02/2019-01-28t11-52-03_houseofgeorgeurban1915frombeautifulhomesofbuffalo.jpg

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Upper/Source: New York State Cultural Resource Information System

NR Number: 06NR05564

Middle/Source: New York State Cultural Resource Information System

NR Number: 90NR01199

Lower/Source: New York State Cultural Resource Information System

NR Number: 95NR00891

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Source: Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council

<https://www.gbnrtc.org/one-region-forward>

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Upper Left/Source: Visit Buffalo Niagara

<https://www.visitbuffaloniagara.com/business-type/native-american/>

APPENDIX B

Public Outreach Summary

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APPENDIX C

Community Inventory and Profile

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APPENDIX D

*Neighborhood Planners : 2019 Housing Market
Report*

Due to an extensive page count of this Appendix, a copy can be made available upon request from the Town Clerks office.