

Orchard Park Economic Development Committee

Strategic Plan



Prepared by:



Orchard Park
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and



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May, 2008

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**Orchard Park Economic Development
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Chapter 1: Study Purpose and Methodology

1.1: STUDY PURPOSE

The Orchard Park Economic Development Committee (OPEDC) is a volunteer committee that promotes economic development in both the Town and Village of Orchard Park, New York. The committee is comprised of a business leaders from Orchard Park, Town and Village officials, and other concerned residents and is not directly affiliated with any local government (current OPEDC members are listed in Appendix A).

The OPEDC decided to embark on preparation of this strategic plan because the group , after many years of activities, felt a need to determine how it can best reposition and/or redefine its role, goals, and strategies to improve its effectiveness in promoting economic development. The OPEDC consulted with the Urban Design Project (UDP) to complete this study. The UDP is a center at the University at Buffalo, the State University of New York (UB), in the School of Architecture and Planning.



1.2: METHODOLOGY

There were three major steps in the process of creating this plan. The first step, contained in Chapter 2, “Economic Base and Context,” involves preparing a profile of Orchard Park’s socioeconomic characteristics. In order for the OPEDC to be effective at promoting and improving the community’s economy, Orchard Park’s current economy and recent economic trends must be understood. This evaluation includes a profile of Orchard Park’s population and housing characteristics, an overview of economic activity by sector (i.e., retail, manufacturing), existing land use and major employers by sector, and a detailed profile of major retail centers and corridors. The chapter also includes an overview of the regulatory environment and the availability of land for new commercial or industrial use.

Chapter 3, “Strategic Considerations,” represents the second step in the process of building a strategic plan for the OPEDC. In this phase, brainstorming sessions led by UDP staff facilitated discussions—first with committee members and later with a group of business leaders and stakeholders—about Orchard Park as a place to do business. Specifically, the sessions focused on the following strategic considerations: Orchard Park’s inherent strengths and weaknesses from an economic development perspective, opportunities for enhanced economic development that have not achieved their potential, and threats to the local economy from factors outside local control. Stakeholder input in this phase also includes specific recommendations by participants for measures that they believed would foster economic development in Orchard Park.

Chapter 4, “Strategic Plan Development,” represents the OPEDC’s conclusions and findings. Drawing on the preceding work, which documented the existing Orchard Park economy and stakeholder perceptions about economic development in the community, the group confirmed its mission statement, which describes its sense of purpose. Next, the committee developed a vision statement that identifies its aspirations for its future effectiveness. The chapter also addresses OPEDC’s organizational factors including its internal strengths and limitations. Finally, based on the strategic considerations that were identified, the community’s economic base, and other factors, the members of the OPEDC defined a set of targeted goals that the group feels are the most important for the committee to pursue to fulfill its economic development mission. This chapter also sets forth a specific step-by-step plan for the OPEDC to follow to promote its vision and each of the four strategic goals the committee identified in the visioning phase. This work plan, which gives the OPEDC a systematic organizational development strategy, is presented in Chapter 4, “.Strategic Plan Development”. The plan recommends detailed objectives and specific actions for OPEDC to address to help achieve each strategic goal. Key partner organizations and relative time frames are also identified.

2: Economic Base and Context

2.1: REGIONAL SETTING

As shown in Map 1, below, Orchard Park, NY is centrally located in the Southtowns of Erie County — bordered by and the Towns of West Seneca, Elma, Aurora, Colden, Boston, Hamburg, and the City of Lackawanna . US 219, a limited access highway that connects to the New York State Thruway (I-90) and beyond, provides the region with easy access to the Town. The community is also accessible by major arterial routes including US 20 (Southwestern Boulevard), US 20A (Quaker Street), NYS 179 (Milestrip Road), NYS 240 (Buffalo Road), and NYS 277 (Chestnut Ridge Road). US 219 runs north-south in the western portion of the town and has interchanges at Milestrip, the village (US 20A), and Armor-Deuells Corners.

Map 2, below, from the *Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth*, illustrates Orchard Park's current and historic position in Erie County from a land development perspective. As the map shows, Orchard Park, a completely rural township in 1900 is now positioned in a transitional area between urbanized areas to the north and west and rural areas to the south and east.

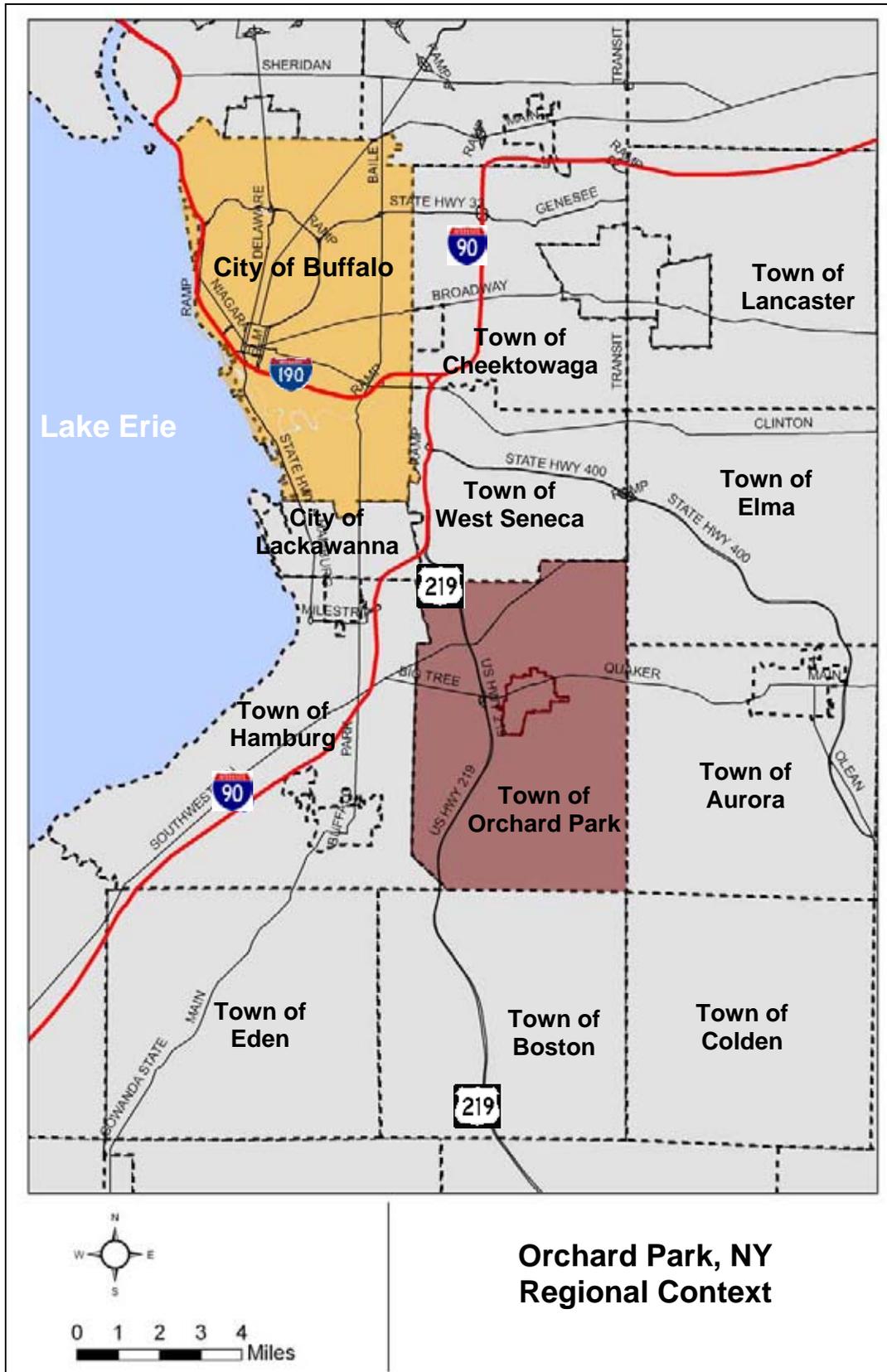
Its central location and excellent highway access is a major economic development asset for the community. Easy and direct access to regional markets makes Orchard Park a desirable location for retailers and provides easy access for workers and the shipping and receiving of goods and materials related to industrial and commercial activities.

2.2: POPULATION AND HOUSING

In 2000, the population of the Town of Orchard Park was 27,637 residents (note: this is the latest data available for Orchard Park the U.S. Bureau of the Census). The Village had a population of 3,294 residents in 2000, about 11 percent of the Town total. Orchard Park is a growing community—the 2000 Town population was up 12 percent from 24,632 in 1990. This compares to a 7 percent drop in the population of Erie County as a whole, from 968,532 in 1990 to 950,265 in 2000.

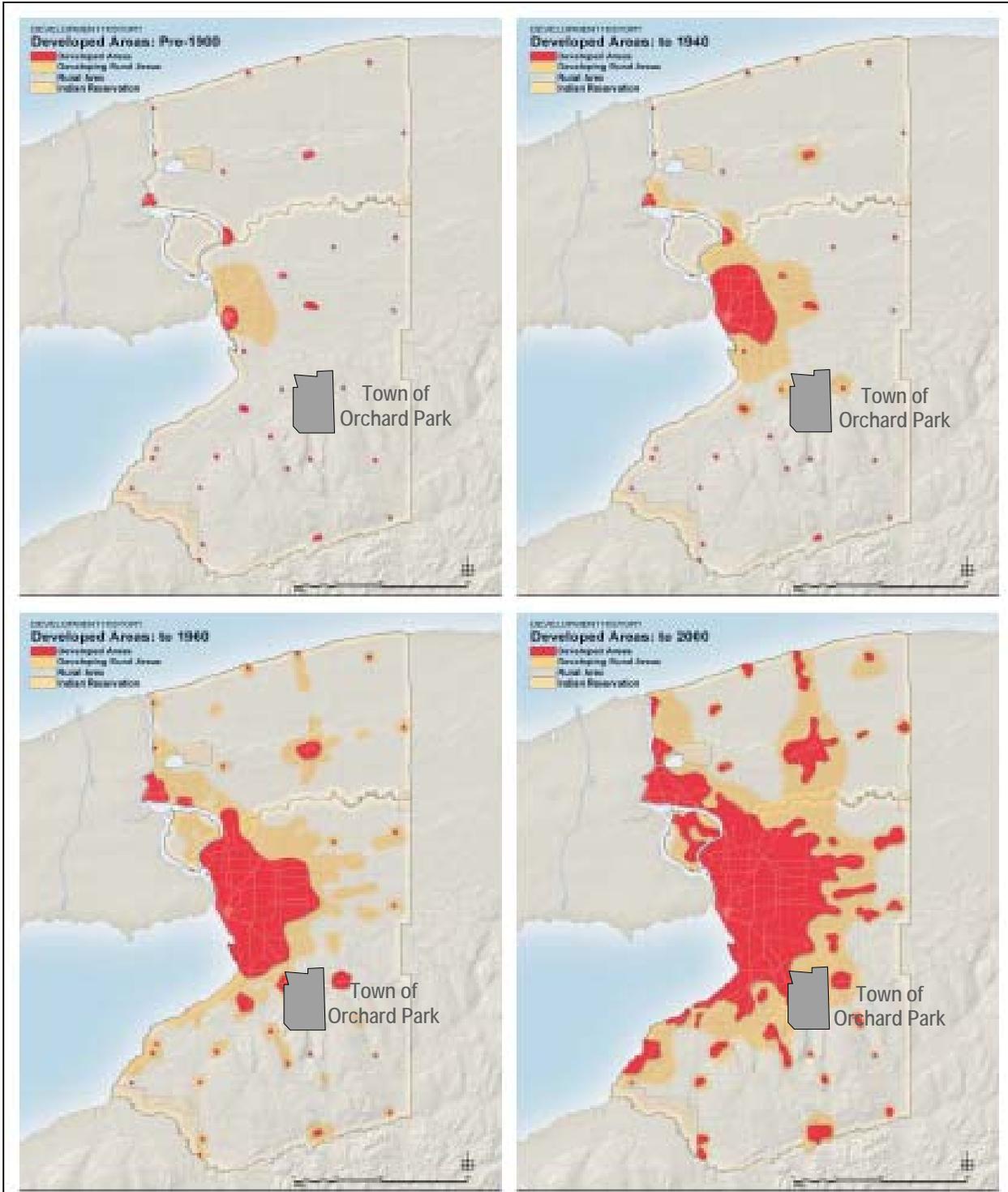
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, median household income was \$59,762 and \$51,520 in the Town and Village, respectively, and \$38,567 for all of Erie County. Thus, overall, Town and Village residents earned 54 and 33 percent more, respectively, than

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Map 2-1. Orchard Park's central location in the Southtowns and proximity to the metro area.

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**Expansion of Developed Areas, 19th Century-Present
Erie County, NY**

Source: Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth, October 2006

Map 2-2. The Town of Orchard Park in relation to the County's expanding urbanized area.

the average County resident. The 2000 Census indicated that 4.3 percent of Village residents and 3.2 percent of Town residents had incomes below the poverty line, significantly less than the 12.1 percent figure for the County as a whole. The median value of owner-occupied housing in the 2000 Census was much higher in the Village (\$147,200) and the Town (\$140,000) than in the whole County (\$88,000).

Educational attainment is also higher among residents of Orchard Park than the County as a whole. In 2000, the percentage of high school graduates among the adult population 25 years of age and over) was 90 percent in the Town and 95 percent in the Village, compared to 83 percent in Erie County. Moreover, the proportion of four-year college graduates among Village residents (50 percent) was twice as high as the County rate (24.5 percent).

Orchard Park has desirable demographics from a retail market perspective: its population is growing; residents are affluent and highly educated; and housing values are above regional averages.

According to the Chamber of Commerce, the largest employer in Orchard Park is the Orchard Park Central School District. The majority of the work force living in Orchard Park commute to places of work beyond the town. In 2000, the mean commute time of Town residents 16 years and over travelling to work was 22.4 minutes (19.2 minutes for Village residents). This indicates that many in the labor force are employed outside of the Town.

2.3: ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

2.3.1 Overview of the Local Economy

Major economic sectors in Orchard Park were identified using the U.S. Economic Census released in 2002. Table 2-1 shows the available economic data broken down between Village, Town, and County. It also gives the percentage of economic activity in Erie County that takes place within Orchard Park. Largest among the economic sectors, in terms of sales and receipts, was retail trade in which 106 establishments generated \$578.97 million and 5.9 percent of the Erie County total respectively. Second was wholesale trade, in which 69 establishments generated \$427.08 million (wholesale trade data for Erie County was withheld). Third was manufacturing, in which 50 establishments generated \$378.08 million and 2.8 percent of Erie County manufacturing respectively.

In terms of employment, manufacturing provides the greatest source of jobs in the Town of Orchard Park, employing 2,114 in the year 2002, followed by retail trade (employing 1,868) and health care and social assistance (employing 1,467). A further break down of employment by economic sector can be seen in the following Table 2-2. Another interesting statistic that comes to light in Table 2-2 is that six to 11 percent of arts, entertain-

Table 2-1. Economic Sectors in Orchard Park and Erie County (2002)

Economic Sectors	Number of Establishments				Percent of Erie County Establishments in Orchard Park	Sales, Shipments, Receipts, or Revenue (\$1,000)				Percent of Erie County Receipts, or Sales, Revenue in Orchard Park
	Village of Orchard Park	Town of Orchard Park	Total Orchard Park	Erie County		Village of Orchard Park	Town of Orchard Park	Total Orchard Park	Erie County	
Manufacturing	0	50	50	1,146	3.8%	\$0	\$378,807	\$378,807	\$13,494,429	2.8%
Wholesale trade	13	56	69	1,213	5.7	\$84,567	\$342,519	\$427,086	withheld	NA
Retail trade	23	83	106	3,457	3.1	\$26,530	\$552,445	\$578,975	\$9,838,147	5.9
Information	2	8	10	360	2.8	NA	NA	NA	withheld	NA
Real estate and rental and leasing	13	21	34	798	4.3	\$16,516	\$21,726	\$38,242	\$1,023,645	3.7
Professional, scientific, and technical	20	66	86	2,064	4.2	\$7,646	\$30,920	\$38,566	withheld	NA
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation service	8	39	47	1,179	4.0	withheld	\$18,195	\$18,195	\$1,401,991	1.3
Educational services	1	6	7	156	4.5	withheld	\$1,139	\$1,139	withheld	NA
Health care and social assistance	22	102	124	2,650	4.7	\$8,173	\$89,420	\$97,593	\$4,482,200	2.2
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	3	14	17	311	5.5	\$5,637	withheld	\$5,637	\$438,792	1.3
Accommodation and food services	12	47	59	2,072	2.8	\$2,519	withheld	\$2,519	\$1,213,115	0.2
Other services (except public administration)	13	47	60	1,841	3.3	\$2,965	\$11,442	\$14,407	857,445	1.7
Total	130	532	662	17247	3.8%	\$154,553	\$1,446,613	\$1,601,166	\$32,749,764	4.9%

Table 2-2. Employment by Economic Sector in Orchard Park (2002)

Economic sector	Number of Employees				Orchard Park Employment as a % of County Total
	Orchard Park, Village	Orchard Park Town outside Village	Orchard Park, Total Town	Erie County	
Manufacturing	0	2,114	2,114	57,645	3.7%
Wholesale trade	109	487	596	10,000 - 24,999	2.0 - 6.0%
Retail trade	134	1,734	1,868	53,521	3.5%
Information	20-99	183	203 - 282	10,425	2.0 - 3.0%
Real estate and rental and leasing	71	139	210	6,078	3.5%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	54	339	393	10,000 - 24,999	1.5 - 4.0%
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation service	100-249	343	443-592	33,249	1.3 - 1.8%
Educational services	20-99	53	73-152	1,000 - 2,499	6.0 - 7.3%
Health care and social assistance	146	1,321	1,467	64,793	2.3%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	120	250-499	370 - 619	5,451	6.7 - 11.3%
Accommodation and food services	110	500-999	610 -1109	35,300	1.7 - 3.1%
Other services (except public administration)	25	262	287	12,506	2.3%
Total	909 -1,216	7,725 - 8,473	8,294 - 9,689	299,968 - 331,465	2.7 - 3.0%

ment, and recreation jobs in Erie County are in Orchard Park. This is due mainly to the presence of Ralph Wilson Stadium (home of the Buffalo Bills) on the western edge of Town. There is also a relatively high percentage of educational services jobs in Orchard Park.

2.3.2 Economic Data by Sector

The following section looks at the specific components of the three largest economic sectors in Orchard Park — manufacturing, wholesale trade, and retail trade. Each of the corresponding tables provide the percentage of each component as a part of the whole economic sector.

In addition, the corresponding data for Erie County has been placed beside the Orchard Park data in order to analyze and better understand the local business community's economic niche in the overall region.

Table 2-3.
Manufacturing Establishments, 2002
Town of Orchard Park and Erie County, NY

Type of Manufacturing	Establishments			
	Orchard Park		Erie County	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Food	1	2.0	106	9.2
Beverage and tobacco products	0	0.0	8	0.7
Textile mills	0	0.0	6	0.5
Textile product mills	2	4.0	19	1.7
Apparel	0	0.0	17	1.5
Leather and allied products	0	0.0	7	0.6
Wood products	2	4.0	30	2.6
Paper	1	2.0	22	1.9
Printing and related support activities	3	6.0	138	12.0
Petroleum and coal products	0	0.0	12	1.0
Chemical	1	2.0	45	3.9
Plastics and rubber products	3	6.0	60	5.2
Nonmetallic mineral products	4	8.0	45	3.9
Primary metal	1	2.0	16	1.4
Fabricated metal products	12	24.0	235	20.5
Machinery	5	10.0	119	10.4
Computer and electronic products	5	10.0	54	4.7
Electrical equipment, appliance, and component	2	4.0	16	1.4
Transportation equipment	3	6.0	44	3.8
Furniture and related products	1	2.0	34	3.0
Miscellaneous	4	8.0	113	9.9
Total	50	100.0%	1,146	100.0%

The economic tables utilize data from the 2002 U.S. Economic Census concerning the number of establishments per economic sector in the Town of Orchard Park (all data for the Town in this section is inclusive of the Village). This category was chosen due to the greater availability as well as better clarity

of that data. As seen in the previous tables, much of the data concerning sales and receipts is withheld for reasons of privacy and security.

2.3.2.1 Manufacturing Sector

As shown in Table 2-3, fabricated metal products, machinery, and computer and electronic products are the three largest areas of manufacturing in Orchard Park. While the percent of fabricated metal products and machinery manufacturing in Orchard Park is consistent with Erie County’s industrial setting, the percent of computer and electronic manufacturing establishments in Orchard Park is nearly twice that of Erie County. In addition, Orchard Park has a rather strong regional presence in the area of electrical equipment, appliance, and component manufacturing which makes up four percent of Orchard Park’s manufacturing, compared to only one percent of Erie County.

2.3.2.2 Wholesale Sector

Table 2-4				
Wholesale Trade Establishments, 2002				
Town of Orchard Park and Erie County, NY				
Type of Wholesale	Establishments			
	Town of Orchard Park		Erie County	
	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total
Durable goods, merchant wholesalers	41	59.4	911	63.8
Nondurable goods, merchant wholesalers	10	14.5	348	24.4
Wholesale electronic markets, agents and brokers	18	26.1	169	11.8
Total	69	100.0%	1,428	100.0%

The strength in electronics seen in manufacturing also continues into the wholesale sector of Orchard Park’s economy. While durable merchant goods compose the majority of Orchard Park’s wholesale, this is a common characteristic of the regional economy. On the other hand, the percent of the wholesale electronics market as a part of the total wholesale is more than double the percentage the percent in Erie County, as seen in Table 2-4.

Table 2-5.
Retail Establishments , 2002
Town of Orchard Park and Erie County, NY

Type of Retail	Establishments			
	Town of Orchard Park		Erie County	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Food and beverage stores	17	51.5%	557	46.8%
Health and personal care stores	7	21.2	324	27.2
Gasoline stations	9	27.3	310	26.0
Subtotal, Convenience Goods	33	100.0%	1,191	100.0%
Convenience Goods as a % of Total Retail Trade	—	34.4%	—	34.5%
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	15	23.8	336	14.8
Furniture and home furnishings stores	8	12.7	191	8.4
Electronics and appliance stores	4	6.3	128	5.6
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	2	3.2	252	11.1
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	8	12.7	509	22.5
Sporting goods, hobby, book, and music stores	7	11.1	211	9.3
General merchandise stores	2	3.2	146	6.4
Miscellaneous store retailers	9	14.3	334	14.7
Non-store retailers	8	12.7	159	7.0
Subtotal, Comparison Goods	63	100.0%	2,266	100.0%
Comparison Goods as a % of Total Retail Trade	—	65.6%	—	65.6%
Total Retail Trade	96	100.0%	3,457	100.0%

2.3.2.3 Retail Sector

In Table 2-5, above, the retail sector of Orchard Park's economy has been divided between convenience goods, such as food and gasoline, and comparison goods, such as motor vehicles and clothing. In general, shoppers travel further to purchase comparison goods such as furniture than they do to purchase convenience items such as food. The data also show that certain elements Orchard Park's comparison retail economy serve a specific niche in the region. For example, both motor vehicle dealers and home furnishing suppliers make up a rather large percentage of Orchard Park's retail trade, in comparison to Erie County. In addition, there is larger percentage of non-store retailers in Orchard Park. These are people who provide goods via the internet or through a catalogue.

2.3.3 Industry Clusters

2.3.3.1 Overview

Clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field that are present in a nation or region. Clusters arise because they increase the productivity with which companies can compete. The development and upgrading of clusters is an important task for economic development organizations

The State of New York identifies the following 15 "strategic industries" statewide:

- biotechnology and pharmaceuticals
- business services
- communications & media services
- distribution
- electronics manufacturing
- fashion, apparel and textiles
- financial services
- food processing
- forest products industry
- industrial machinery & systems
- materials processing
- medical technology
- optics & imaging
- software and related services
- transportation equipment

The Buffalo Niagara Enterprise, a regional economic development organization, finds six "industry clusters" in Western New York:

- Advanced manufacturing
- Agribusiness

Table 2-6 Buffalo-Niagara Life Sciences Cluster Companies Located in Orchard Park, 2007	
Accellent Endoscopy 3902 California Rd. www.accelent.com <i>Provides engineering, product development, and manufacturing services to medical device companies</i>	
elCON Enterprises 62 Wildwood Ln. <i>Strategically assists organizations in their growth and development as well as bringing in key external resources to assist companies</i>	
Gaymar Industries Inc. 10 Centre Dr. www.gaymar.com <i>Medical device manufacturer of pressure ulcer management products used to treat and prevent pressure ulcers (bedsores), and temperature management systems for regulating patients' body temperatures</i>	
Matrx by Midmark 145 Mid Country Dr. www.matrxmedical.com <i>Provider of emergency medical, analgesia, and anesthesia products</i>	
MINRAD Inc. 50 Cobham Dr. <i>Specializes in orthopedics, neurosurgery, interventional radiology and anesthesia</i>	
Polymer Conversions, Inc. 5732 Big Tree Rd. www.polymerconversions.com <i>Custom injection molding, mold making and value added services for plastic products including engineering and design, decorating, joining, component assembly, packaging and prototypes</i>	
SciBiz International 56 Henning Dr. www.scibiz.com <i>Provides marketing and business development consulting for technology product/service companies in the biopharmaceutical marketplace</i>	
The Mentholatum Company Inc. 707 Sterling Dr. www.mentholatum.com <i>A global health and wellness company, providing non-prescription pharmaceutical, healthcare, and cosmetic products to consumers worldwide.</i>	
ValueCentric 11 Cobham Dr. www.valuecentric.com <i>Provides information services, data analysis and performance analytics to pharmaceutical manufactures and bio technology companies</i>	
Source: Buffalo-Niagara Enterprise	

- Back Office
- Hospitality/Tourism
- Life Sciences
- Logistics

Two of these industry clusters—life sciences and advanced manufacturing/industrial machinery— have significant presence in Orchard Park. A third, hospitality/tourism, has great potential to expand in the town.

2.3.3.2 Life Sciences Cluster

Buffalo Niagara is a center for molecular medicine, oncology, medical devices, drug discovery and development, and bioinformatics. Western New York has more than 130 life sciences companies employing some 6,500 workers. Regional institutions grant 1,000 life sciences degrees annually. In a recent national report, Buffalo Niagara ranked 4th in the nation in terms of the number of science and engineering degrees per capita granted each year. Within a 90-mile radius of Buffalo there are approximately 650 medical industry companies and research institutions, including such established companies as GlaxoSmithKline, Wilson Greatbatch, and Pfizer Global.

The life sciences industry cluster contains three related sub clusters—research, medical products, and pharmaceuticals. In terms of research, the heart of the region's life sciences industry, the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC) in downtown Buffalo, is a consortium of the region's premier clinical care, research and medical institutions, including the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, the New York State Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences, University at Buffalo and Hauptman-Woodward Medical Research Institute.

The medical products sub cluster includes producers of laboratory, surgical, medical, dental, and ophthalmic equipment for the health care industry. This sub cluster is well represented in Orchard Park (see Table 2-6, above). As shown in Table 2-7, three Orchard Park manufacturers are on the list of the top producers of patents in the Buffalo-Niagara Metropolitan Area—including one in the life sciences cluster (Gaymar) and one in advanced manufacturing (Enidine).

Table 2-7

Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY Metropolitan Area Patents by Organization		
Rank	Organization	Total Patents
		2000 through 2004
1	PRAXAIR TECHNOLOGY, INC.	202
2	DELPHI TECHNOLOGIES, INC.	126
3	WILSON GREATBATCH LTD.	123
4	MATTEL INC.	73
5	RESEARCH FOUNDATION OF STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK	51
6	OCCIDENTAL CHEMICAL CORPORATION	41
7	ALLIED-SIGNAL INC.	36
8	HONEYWELL INTERNATIONAL INC.	33
9	EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY	32
10	MOORE BUSINESS FORMS INC.	30
11	HEALTH RESEARCH, INCORPORATED	22
12	E. I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS AND COMPANY	20
12	MOORE U.S.A. INC.	20
12	MULTISORB TECHNOLOGIES, INC.	20
15	MOORE NORTH AMERICA, INC.	19
16	MCGARD, INC. *	15
16	WILSON GREATBATCH TECHNOLOGIES, INC.	15
18	REICHERT, INC.	14
19	GAYMAR INDUSTRIES, INC. *	13
20	GENERAL-ELECTRO MECHANICAL CORP.	12
20	SAINT-GOBAIN ABRASIVES TECHNOLOGY COMPANY	12
22	LEICA MICROSYSTEMS INC.	11
22	UOP	11
22	NATIONAL GYPSUM PROPERTIES, LLC	11
25	DERRICK MANUFACTURING CORPORATION	10
26	ENIDINE INCORPORATED *	9
27	TECHNICOR, INC.	8
28	ELECTROSYNTHESIS COMPANY, INC.	7
28	PAUL KRISTEN, INC.	7
28	INTERNATIONAL IMAGING MATERIALS, INC.	7
	TOTAL	1,010
* Company located in Orchard Park		
Source: Prof. Michael E. Porter, Cluster Mapping Project, Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness, Harvard Business School.		

2.3.3.3 Advanced Manufacturing and Industrial Machinery Cluster

As defined by the Department of Labor, “Advanced Manufacturing” is the accelerated use of high-tech processes in the manufacturing plant. In other words, it is using high-tech equipment to produce items for various industries. This includes automotive part producers and their suppliers; aerospace and defense; industrial chemicals, advanced plastics and new polymers; processing and packaging of food stuffs. Western New York has more than 575 advanced manufacturing and industrial machinery companies employing some 17,400 workers. Western New York schools graduate over 200 associates degrees, over 400 Bachelor degrees, and at least 300 Master+ degrees in engineering yearly. Enidine is a leader in integrating sophisticated technologies into manufacturing facilities.

The Buffalo-Niagara region ranks 4th in the nation in terms of the number of science and engineering degrees per capita granted each year.

The 41 Orchard Park companies in this cluster include:

- Advan-Tech Manufacturing, Inc
- Advanced Air Inc
- Alton A Chilcott
- Amot Controls Corporation
- Applied Fabric Technologies, Inc
- Buffalo Industrial Products
- Carleton Technologies, Inc
- Cobham Holdings Inc
- Drive Systems Inc
- E-Structures, Inc
- East Coast Tool & Manufacturing Inc
- Engineered Lifting Technologies, Inc
- Enidine Incorporated
- Flow Safe Supply Inc
- Genius Tools
- Americas Corp
- Graphcon Inc
- Hale Systems Company Of WNY, Inc
- Hesse Industrial Sales Inc
- Hydraulic & Motor Control
- Industrial Processing Systems Inc
- JH Buscher Inc
- Jaccard Corporation
- Lesco, Inc
- Metrepcoc Inc
- Niabco Equipment And Industrial Sales
- Niabco-Florida Inc
- Nibsco Supply Inc
- Paratus Industries Pioneer Adhesive Products of America
- Progentex Inc
- R E Williams Co Inc
- R M Headlee Co Inc
- Robert Lally
- Techleader Tooling Inc
- The Cunningham Co
- Transport National Development Inc
- Werth America Inc

2.4 Industrial and Commercial Land Use

2.4.1 Industrial and Manufacturing

The Town’s industrial (I1) zoning district covers about 1,164 acres along US 219 in the northeast portion of the Town. It is accessible by a number of secondary roads — such as South Taylor Road, California Road, Centre Drive, Cobham Drive, and Mid County Road — which intersect and connect major routes, including US20, US20A, and NYS179. There are 13 active manufacturing parcels in the I1 district, totaling 121 acres, just over 10 percent of the total industrially zoned area. The remainder of the industrial zoning district is used for either office, retail, health and technical services, residential, or is vacant (see Figure 2-1).

There are currently 16 major parcels of land being used for manufacturing purposes within the Town and Village combined, ranging from under an acre to 34.5 acres in size and totaling 173.92 acres (See Map 2-3 and Table 2-8) . The map also identifies those properties which are not in use within the I1 district and are currently available for development. These vacant parcels consist of mostly large tracts of land, some of which have been subdivided into smaller parcels (as seen to the west of Mid County Road). Vacant properties in the I1 district range greatly in size from 2,500 to 1,806,175 square feet. There is currently a total of 248.26 acres of land available for development in Orchard Park’s Industrial (I1) district, or 21.34% of the I1 district’s total area.

There are also a number of parcels outside of the I1 district in the Town of Orchard Park which are used for purposes of manufacturing. Multiple parcels are located at three specific locations throughout Orchard Park. They are in the northwest corner of the Town on California Road, the west side of the Village, and at the southwest corner of the Town at its border with the Town of Hamburg.

Figure 2-1. Land Use Breakdown, Orchard Park I1 zone, 2007

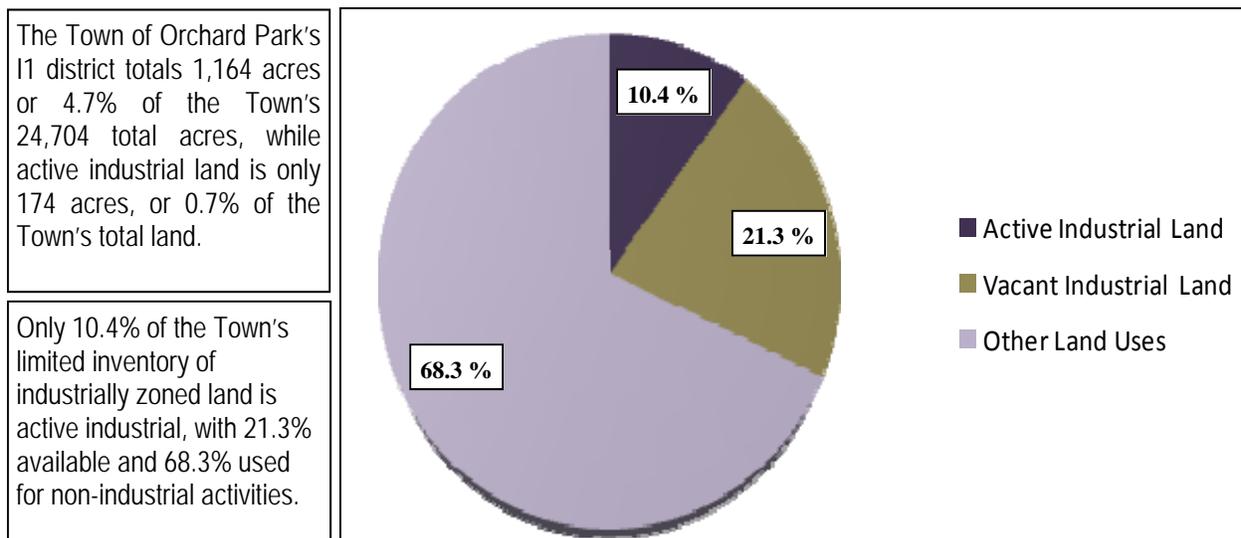


Table 2-8
Selected Manufacturing Companies by Location
Town of Orchard Park, 2007

Map Ref. #	Address	Parcel Area (sq. ft.)	Company	Type of Manufacturing
1	50 Cobham Drive	296,847	Buffalo Oxygen	Medical gas supply
2	707 Sterling Drive	496,100	The Mentholatum Company	Pharmaceuticals
3	5720 Ellis Road	224,976	Transport National Development, North American Carbide	Automotive and aerospace parts and tools
4	5732 Big Tree Road	305,748	Polymer Conversions	Thermoplastic molded products
5	3333 California Road	344,829	Diversified Control	Security technology
6	6860 So. Abbott Road	1,535,998	Boston Valley Pottery	Structural clay products
7	4222 So. Taylor Road	279,540	BonCraft	Printing
8	7 Centre Drive	478,151	Enidine	Energy absorption, vibration isolation and motion control products
9	20 Centre Drive	218,184	Curbell	Plastics and electronics
10	10 Centre Drive	647,541	Gaymar Industries	Medical technology
11	10 Cobham Drive	606,110	Carleton Technologies	Pneumatic components
12	100 Centre Drive	693,100	Mail-Well Corporation	Printing
13	3875 California Road	824,076	McGard, LLC	Security technology
14	145 Mid County Road	203,715	Matrx Holdings LLC	Medical technology
15	75 Bank Street (Village)	70,278	Holmes and Murphy Inc	Highway construction
16	1 Bank Street (Village)	46,736	PM Plastics Inc	Injection molded plastics
	3465 California Road		Advan-Tech Manufacturing	Industrial machinery
	3370 N Benzing Rd		Amot Controls Corporation	Electrical measuring instruments
	6650 E Quaker Street		Pyko Inc	Fabricated rubber and plastic products.

Note: Map reference numbers apply to Map 2-3.



84 Lumber, Taylor Road area.

2.4.2 Wholesale and Service

Taylor and California Roads Area

The Taylor and California Road Area is zoned for industrial (I1) use and contains a mix of commercial offices, service establishments, contractors, and wholesalers.

The Taylor and California Road corridor begins at the western boundary of the Village on US 20A and near US 219 (see Map 2-4). At this corner there is an 84 Lumber with an adjacent self storage facility as well as a large welcome sign that lists a diverse collection of enterprises located along Taylor Road, including:

- Scott D. Humphrey (building contractor)
- World Wide Stone Inc. (marble and granite)
- Kern Construction
- Repp Construction
- Boncraft Inc. (printing)
- Peter Bruin (collision repair)
- MatrX (environmental technologies)
- Lesco Corporation
- National Overhead Door
- WNY Dialysis Center
- Lehigh Construction
- NIABCO Equipment Supply
- Mercy Ambulatory Care Center

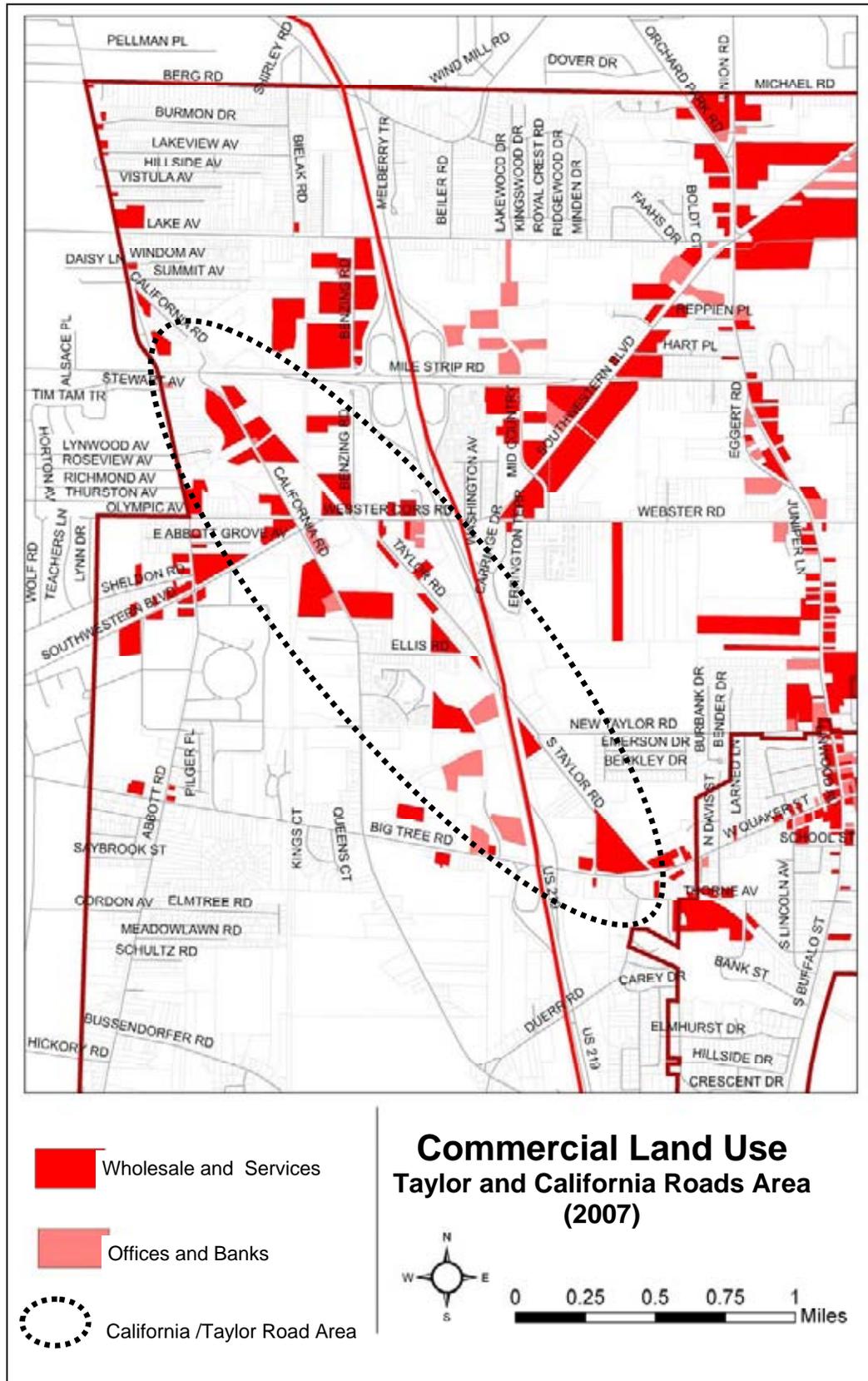


Listing of Taylor Road businesses.

Continuing northwest across Webster Road and onto California Road are similar businesses to those on Taylor Road — building materials and technical services. They include:

- LA Hazard's (plumbing supplies)
- Professional Laundry Systems
- Thruway Builders of Orchard Park (building/masonry supplies)

Map 2-4. Taylor and California Roads Area



2.4.3 Retail

As shown below in Table 2-9, Orchard Park has considerable purchasing power. Food at home sales alone would support 110,000 to 130,000 gross square feet of supermarket space or two stores the size of the Tops store in East Aurora. A description of the community's shopping areas follows on the pages below.

Table 2-9		
Retail Purchasing Power Profile, Orchard Park, NY		
Zip Code 14127		
Expenditure Category	Est. Annual Expenditures	Expenditures per Square Mile
Food at Home	\$44,837,359	\$1,131,114
Food away from home	\$18,827,725	\$474,968
Apparel and related services	\$17,551,917	\$442,783
Television equipment, tapes disks	\$6,881,146	\$173,591
Audio equipment, CDs, tapes	\$1,937,825	\$48,886
Household textiles	\$1,273,167	\$32,118
Furniture	\$6,145,461	\$155,032
Floor coverings	\$671,740	\$16,946
Major appliances	\$2,485,195	\$62,694
Small appliances and housewares	\$811,902	\$20,482
Computer hardware and software	\$2,266,098	\$57,167
Miscellaneous household equipment	\$4,139,116	\$104,418
Non-prescription drugs and supplies	\$3,481,042	\$87,816
Housekeeping supplies	\$6,574,371	\$165,852
Personal products	\$3,698,861	\$93,311
Home repair commodities	\$1,474,612	\$37,200
Total for 16 categories	\$123,057,537	\$3,104,378
Source: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2004. The analysis is based on 2002 Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Surveys and 2000 U.S. Census data.		

This section analyzes the Town’s retail concentrations, defined as clusters of retail stores and service establishments located in a specific geographic location such as a traditional village center, an intersection, or shopping center. As shown on Map 2-5, Orchard Park has four primary areas of concentrated commercial activity:

- **Village Center:** The historic commercial heart of Orchard Park, located in the center of the Village at the “Four Corners,” the intersection of Buffalo Street (NYS 240) and Quaker Street (US 20A).
- **North Buffalo Street:** Along North Buffalo Street (NYS 240) between the Village and Southwestern Boulevard
- **Southwestern Boulevard/Five Corners:** The commercial corridor along U.S. Route 20 near its intersection with NYS 179 and NYS 240.
- **Milestrip Road:** The growing shopping district located at the Milestrip Road (NYS 179) interchange of US 219.

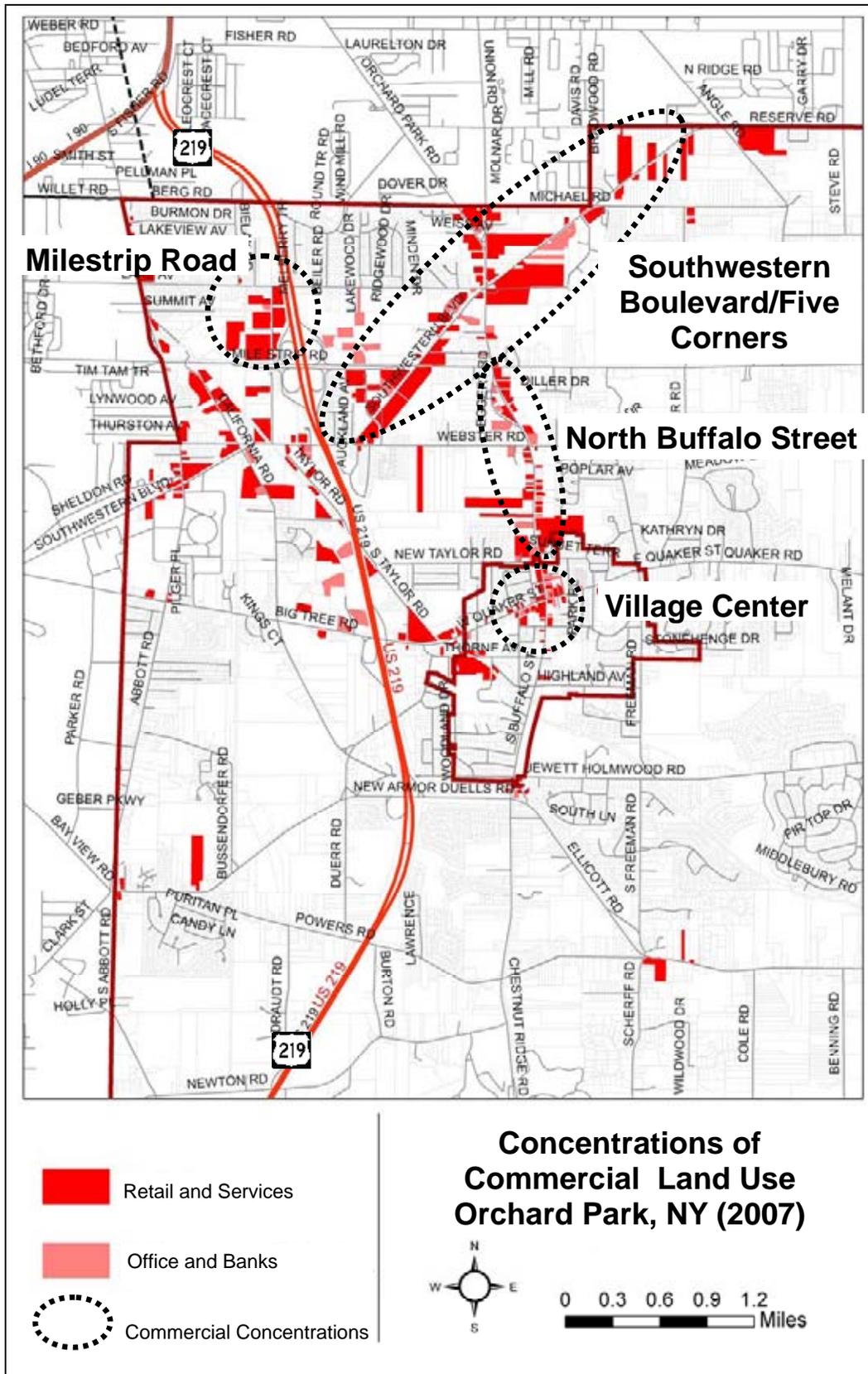
The Village Center

The intersection of Quaker Street (NYS 20A) and Buffalo Street (NYS 240) — commonly known as Four Corners — forms the center of this concentration (see Map 2-6). The Village Center is also home to a number of Town and Village government offices, the Orchard Park Middle School, and the U.S. Post Office, which provide sources of employment and draw potential shoppers into the district. Businesses in the Village Center are mainly small, locally owned, and specialized. Many are housed in detached mixed use structures with a minimum setback from the sidewalk.



Local businesses at the Village of Orchard Park’s “Four Corners”.

Map 2-5. Commercial Activity in Orchard Park, NY (2007)



The majority of businesses in this area fall within the categories of apparel and accessories, eating and drinking places, furniture and home furnishings, miscellaneous shopping goods stores, and neighborhood services. Below is a sampling of businesses in the Village Center:

Apparel and Accessories:

- In-Style Boutique
- Jewelers Studio
- Runner's Roost
- Village Togs

Eating and Drinking Places:

- Mangia
- David's Grille
- Exquisite Taste
- Cinco de Mayo
- Jemiolio's
- Village Brew House
- Two Sisters

Furniture and Home Furnishings:

- Quaker Country Home Furnishings
- W.G. Arthur's Hardware and Home Furnishings
- Lamplight Gallery and Frames

Miscellaneous Shopping Goods Stores:

- Accents
- Lemon Tree Gift Shop
- Al Hemer Music

Neighborhood Services:

- Joe's Barber
- Park Salon
- Patrick Joseph Salon
- Salon Sass
- Law Offices of Bender and Paul
- Canestrari Insurance Agency
- G.E. Commercial Finance
- Morgan Stanley
- Realty USA
- National Property Management

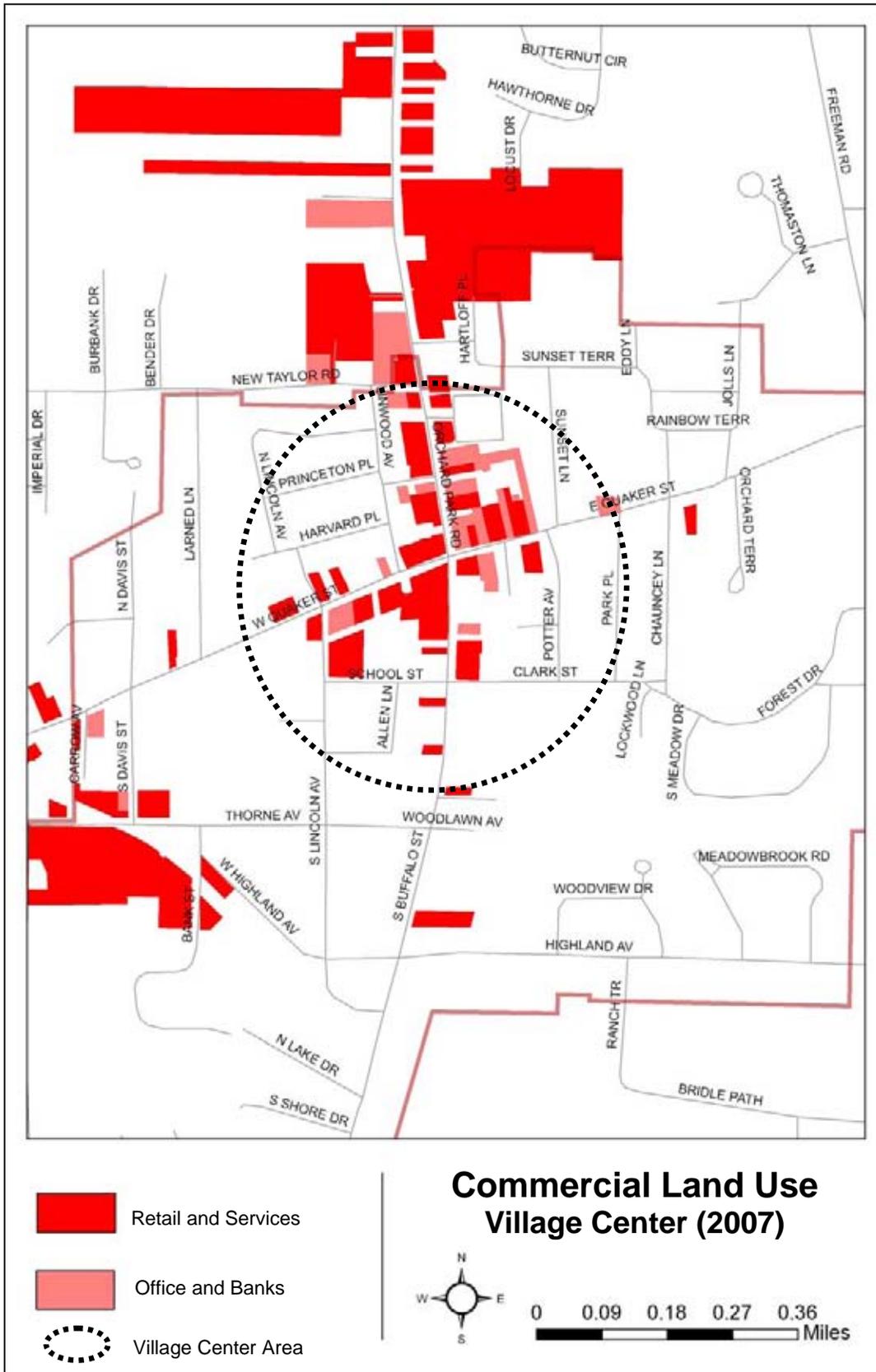


Quaker Country Home Furnishings occupies one of the Village Center's unique buildings.



Sidewalks of North Buffalo St.

Map 2-6. The Village Center of Orchard Park



North Buffalo Street

The stretch of North Buffalo Street (NYS 240) between the Village and Five Corners, is an interesting mixed use corridor in the Town of Orchard Park (see Map 2-7). North Buffalo Street is characterized primarily by a variety of multi-purpose structures, especially a large number of residences converted into businesses.



North Buffalo Street business in a converted residence.

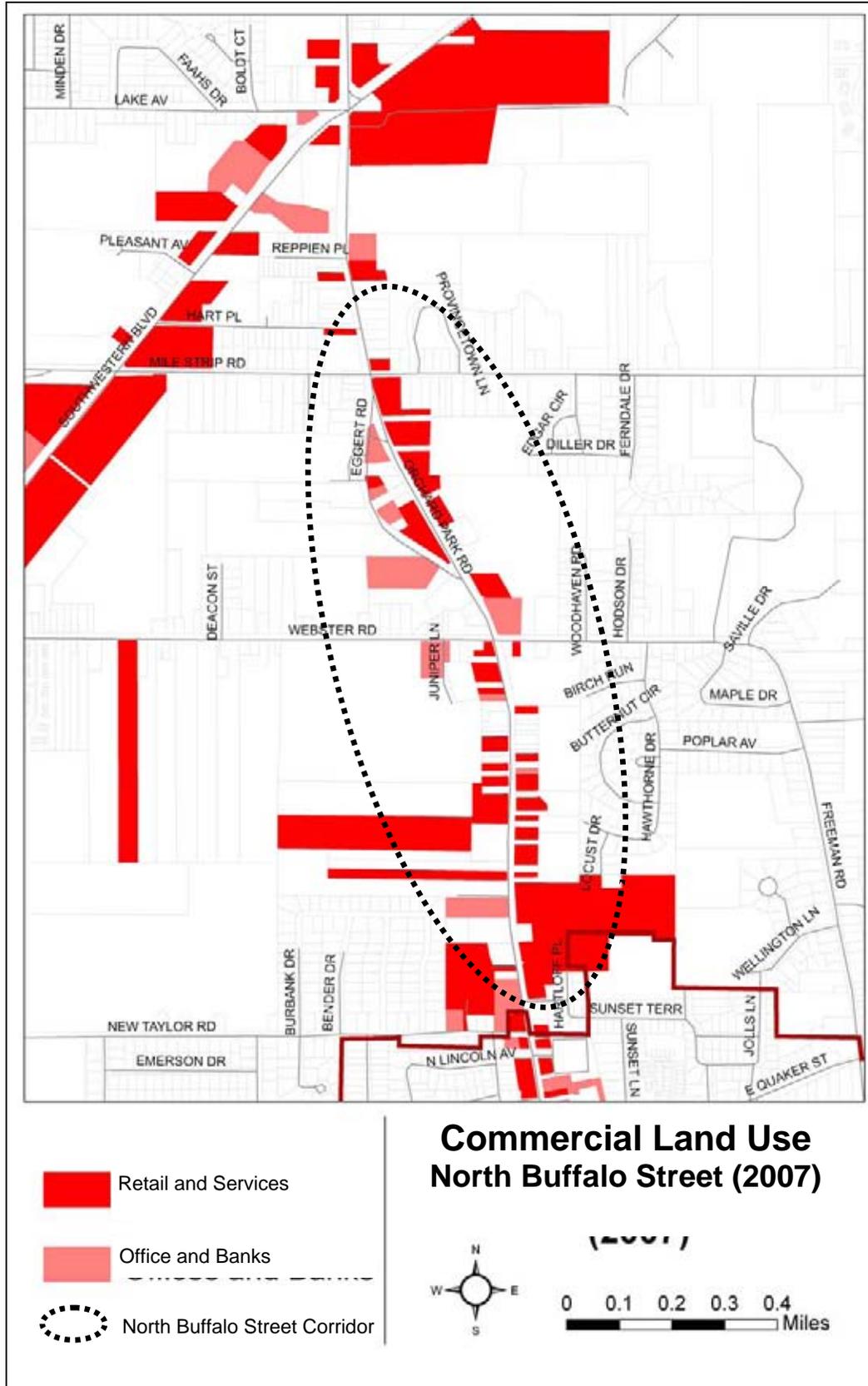
The family owned and operated Saville's Florist and Outdoor Power Equipment. Saville's Florist, in business since 1952, prepares floral arrangements and grows plants in the greenhouses. Saville's Outdoor Power Equipment has also been serving Western New York for over 30 years.



Saville's, an Orchard Park fixture since 1952.

There are also a number of shopping centers, plazas, and larger office buildings along this strip. The most recent addition is the shopping center at 3995-4005 North Buffalo Street, on a site of a former farm market. The center contains specialized retail (mainly clothing), a restaurant/café and the 53,000-square-foot former grocery store at 4050 North Buffalo Street that is now the new home of the Orchard Park Veterinary Medical Center.

Map 2-7. North Buffalo Street Corridor



Businesses along North Buffalo Street fall mainly within the categories of apparel and accessories, eating and drinking places, furniture and home furnishings, miscellaneous convenience goods, and neighborhood services. A representative listing is found below:

Apparel and Accessories:

- Chico's
- The Loft
- Talbot
- The Clothes Horse
- Jos. A. Bank

Eating and Drinking Places:

- Capelli's
- Panera Bread
- Rix

Furniture and Home Furnishings:

- Home and Office Unfinished Furniture
- Rider's Frames and Gallery
- Invisible Fence
- Shanor Lighting

Miscellaneous Convenience Goods:

- Rite-Aide Drugstore
- Saville's Florist and Equipment

Neighborhood Services:

- Independent Funding
- Michael's Studio
- The Executive Center
- Attorney Susan S. Hogan



Furniture is one of Orchard Park's retail niches.



A new mixed retail and service center at 3995 North Buffalo Street.

Southwestern Boulevard / Five Corners

The Southwestern Boulevard /Five Corners shopping district is an approximately 2.5 mile corridor of commercial activity along U.S. Route 20 in the Town of Orchard Park, near its convergence with NYS 179 and NYS 240. Businesses along Southwestern Blvd. / Five Corners fall mainly within the categories of auto-related trade, building materials and hardware, eating and drinking places, food stores, furniture and home furnishings, general merchandise, miscellaneous convenience goods, and neighborhood services. Fast-food retailers, gas stations, and other convenience retailers serve both patrons of the surrounding retail stores as well as drive-by traffic on the major arterials.

An exception to the national chains which predominate at the Five Corners is Taffy's hot dog stand. Since 1949, Taffy's Red Hots has been a fixture on the southeast corner of Five Corners. A favorite of local residents and frankfurter connoisseurs, this locally-owned establishment retains its unique ambience in a constantly changing retail landscape.



A long-time local favorite, Taffy's Red Hots, sits unchanged at the Five Corners.

The Auto-Mall

The Southwestern Boulevard/Five Corners area includes a prominent retail niche—the Orchard Park vehicle sales district (“auto-mall”) The Auto-mall sits along Southwestern Boulevard in the Town of Orchard Park between the intersections of Webster Road and Milestrip Road. Vehicle dealers started to locate in the area about 20 years ago. The Auto-Mall has grown into approximately 37 acres between both edges of Southwestern Boulevard and is now one of Western New York's largest auto-suppliers. The district provides regional customers with one-stop shopping for new and used vehicles.

Map 2-8. Southwestern Boulevard /Five Corners Area

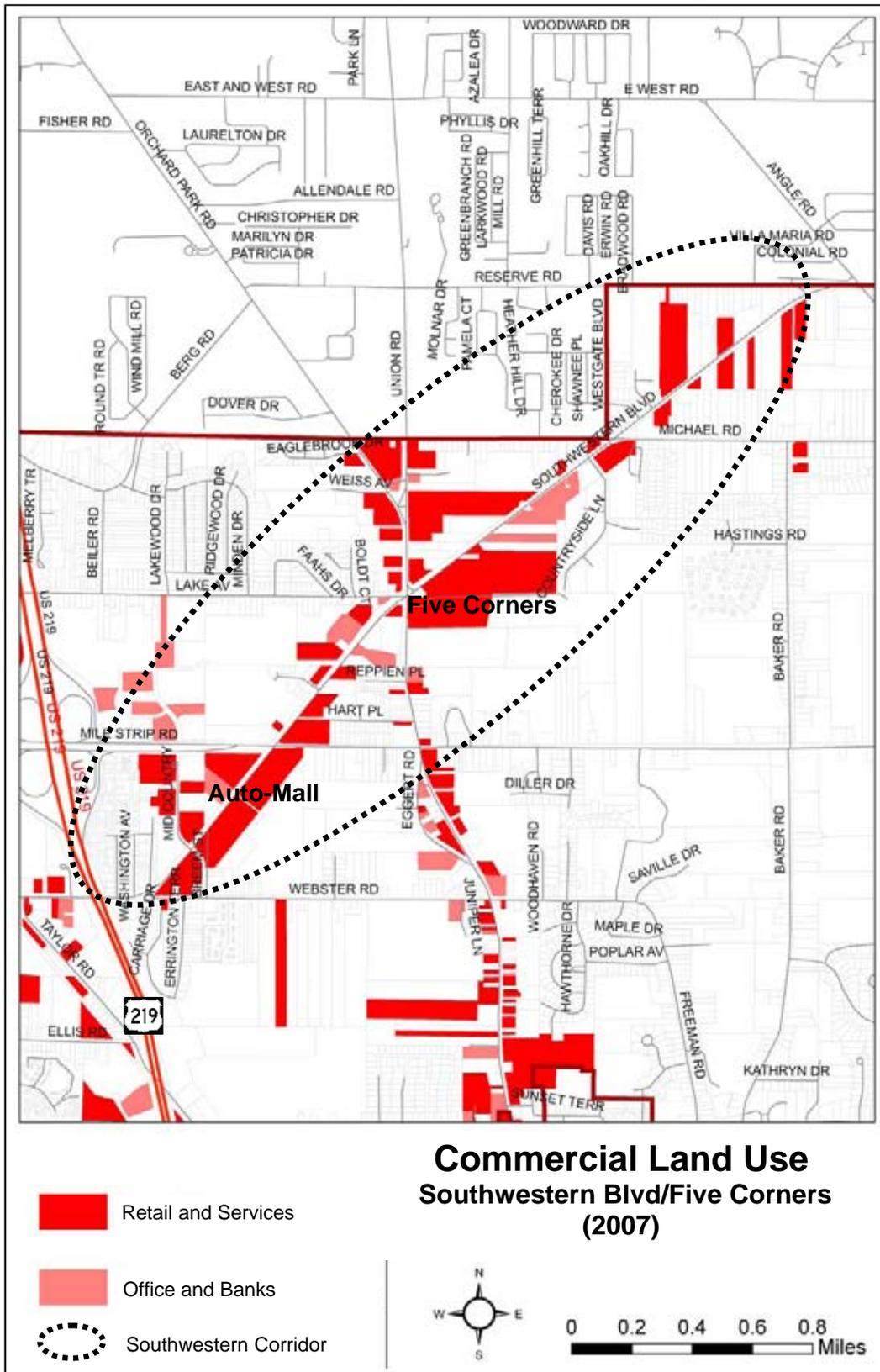


Table 2-10 Orchard Park Auto-Mall Businesses, 2007	
Vehicle Sales	
Jim Ball Pontiac Buick GMC	
Saturn of Orchard Park	
West Herr Automotive Group	
West Herr Dodge	
West Herr Chevrolet	
West Herr Subaru	
West Herr Toyota	
West Herr Nissan	
Towne Automotive Group	
Towne Hyundai	
Towne Ford	
Autohaus South Volkswagen	
Orchard Park Harley Davidson	
Vehicle Service	
Avis (car rental)	
Valvoline (oil change)	
Delta Sonic (gas and car wash)	

According to the 2002 U.S. Economic Census, the percent auto-sales of total sales in the Town of Orchard Park is 24.6 percent, while the same statistic for auto-sales in Erie County is 14.8 percent. Orchard Park is home to one of the two major vehicle sales districts in Erie County (the other is in Amherst). Orchard Park's Auto-Mall had more than \$552 million in sales in 2002, 14.1 percent of total vehicle sales countywide. (Amherst, with \$615 million in sales in 2002, had a 22.2 percent market share.) Orchard Park's 14.1 percent share of Countywide motor vehicle sales is more than double the town's share of County sales of all retail goods (5.8 percent).

Other Retail Activity

The district is also home to a large community shopping center, known as Crossroads Centre, on Southwestern Blvd at Five Corners. Crossroads is anchored by a Lowe's home improvement store and Top's supermarket. Raymour and Flannigan, one of the largest furniture dealers in Western New York, is located on Southwestern Boulevard.



The Auto-Mall in Orchard Park is approximately 37 acres dealerships along US 20.



Raymour and Flannigan furniture store on US 20

District anchors include the auto dealers, the larger comparison goods stores listed in Table 2-11 and the Tops supermarket.

**Table 2-11
Southwestern Boulevard/Five Corners
Comparison Goods Stores**

Building Materials and Hardware:

Lowe's

Furniture and Home Furnishings:

Custom Carpet

Raymour and Flanigan

General Merchandise:

Dollar Galaxy

Steinmart

Miscellaneous Shopping Goods :

Poolmart



Commercial development at Five Corners in the Town of Orchard Park

As shown in Table 2-12, its accessible location makes the Southwestern Boulevard/Five Corners area attractive to a wide range of convenience goods and service establishments.

Table 2-12 Southwestern Boulevard/Five Corners Area Convenience Goods and Services Establishments
Eating and Drinking Places:
Arby's
Denny's
McDonalds
Mighty Taco
Moe's Southwest Grill
Taffy's Red Hots
Tim Horton's
Wendy's
Zebb's
Food Stores:
Tops Supermarket
Miscellaneous Convenience Goods:
Colonial Wine and Spirits
Orchard Park Gardens
Neighborhood Services:
Gamestop
SuperCuts
Total Tan
The UPS Store
Cingular
Blockbuster Video
Colortech
Allstate Insurance
Cardsmart

Milestrip Road/US 219 Area

Table 2-13 Milestrip Road/US 219 Area Retail Establishments
Eating and Drinking Places
International House of Pancakes
Red Robin
Misc. Convenience Goods
Premier Wine and Spirits
Neighborhood Services
First Niagara Bank
Apparel and Accessories
Marshalls
Famous Footwear
Footlocker
Furniture and Home Furnishings
Ashley Furniture
Orville's (appliances)
Oreck
General Retail
Target
Kohl's
Miscellaneous Shopping Goods
Borders
PetSmart

The Quaker Crossing Retail Center is the focal point of this concentration. Its location, just west of the Milestrip Road (NYS 179) interchange of US 219, makes the center easily accessible by automobile to communities from the metropolitan area and the rural towns to the south (see Map 2-9). Milestrip Road and other arterials also provide access to costumers from the west (Hamburg) and east (Aurora). According to *The Deal-makers*, an internet-based retail data source, the market demographics which make the site attractive for regional retail include a population of approximately 490,000 residents with an average household income of \$41,000 living within 10 miles of the interchange.



Quaker Crossing , Milestrip Rd.

Quaker Crossing is part of the "McKinley Mall" retail submarket—one of six submarkets in Western New York tracked by CB Richard Ellis. The primary trade area for the McKinley submarket includes Blasdell, East Aurora, Elma, Hamburg, Lackawanna, Orchard Park, and West Seneca. The McKinley submarket had an inventory of 5.05 million square feet of retail space in 2005-06, just behind the Boulevard Mall (5.23 million) and Galleria Mall (5.21 million) submarkets. The vacancy rate in 2005-06 was 13.8 percent, which compares to a low of 6 percent in

Quaker Crossing is a regional retail super center that is part of a corridor of commercial activity along Milestrip Road, connecting with Blasdell's McKinley Mall and other big box retailers. Anchored by two major general retail department stores — Target and Kohl's — and the Regal Cinemas, its contains national and regional retail chain stores. It also houses restaurants and a movie theatre complex. Businesses at Quaker Crossing include apparel and accessory stores, eating and drinking places, furniture and home furnishings, general retail, miscellaneous convenience goods, miscellaneous shopping goods stores, and neighborhood services.

Map 2-9. Milestrip Road /US 219 Area



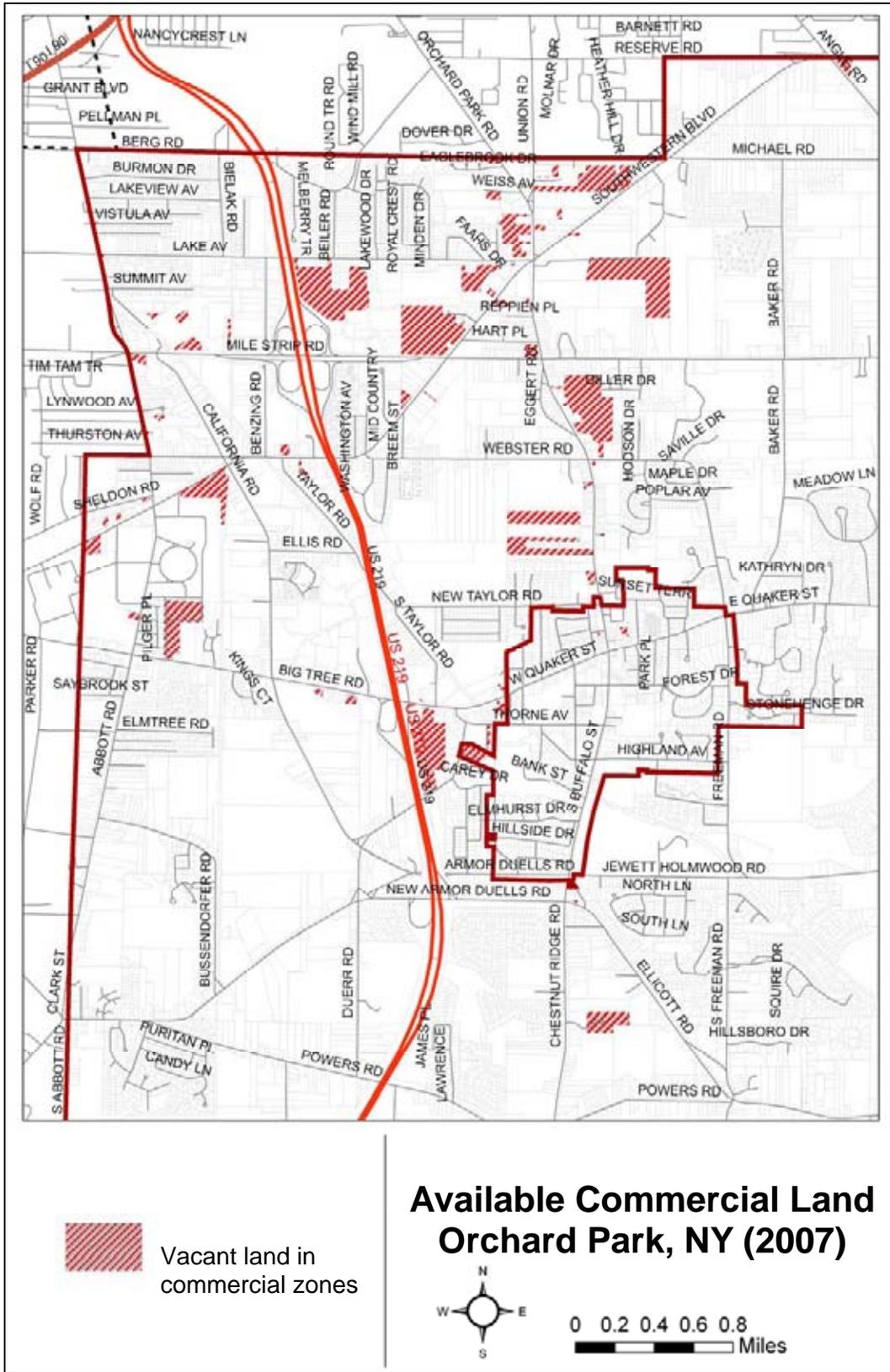
Availability of Commercial Land

The following analysis of commercial land availability is based on 2007 Geographic Information System (GIS) data obtained from the Town of Orchard Park Engineering Department. According to the land use classification code (assigned to each parcel by the Town Assessor's office) there are currently 391 acres of land in Orchard Park that are available for commercial use. This contrasts with the availability of commercially-zoned vacant land shown on the town's official zoning map. The current zoning map, approximately 108 acres of those vacant parcels are zoned for commercial use. This means that the development of these vacant parcels would, in many cases, require rezoning measures. As Table 8 shows, only 108.1 acres (or 9.5 percent) of land in Orchard Park that is currently zoned for commercial use is available. The table also shows that zoning districts designated as B1 and B2 provide the greatest area of land for commercial use. Yet, it should be noted that the allowable uses within B3 and B4 districts require a considerably less amount of space than those in B1 and B2. Interestingly, the districts with the largest percentage of available land are B1 and B4, which represent the opposite extremes of Orchard Park's commercial land use spectrum.

Table 2-14. Commercial land and availability in the Town of Orchard Park, 2007

Zoning Code	Allowable Uses	Total Area of District (Acres)	Area of Available Land in District (Acres)	Percent of District that is Available Land
B1	Manufacturing, assembly, light industry, professional offices, hospitals, nursing homes, lumberyards and warehouses. By Special Permit: Motels, Contractor equipment, and	194.3	52.7	27.1%
B2	Indoor amusements, hospital, nursing home, hotels & motels, movie theatres, retail and personal services (examples provided), shopping centers and business centers. By Special Use Permit: All franchised dealers and show rooms, auto service stations, car washes, pet boarding, public stable, riding centers.	814.2	50.7	6.2%
B3	Beauty shop, day care, hospital, nursing home, retail or service establishments (examples provided) No special exception uses. Prohibited uses: Auto dealers and service stations, restaurants, outside storage, parking in front of premises, and supermarkets.	109.3	1.4	1.2%
B4	Medical, private, professional and public offices, retail comprising less than 1/3 of the total floor area. No special exception uses. Outside storage and parking in	24.3	3.3	13.7%
Total		1,142.0	108.1	9.5%

Map 2-10. Properties Available for Commercial Development in Orchard Park



There is very little land available for new commercial development in the Village, due to its dense existing infrastructure. The larger concentrations of vacant commercial land are located in the northeastern portion of the Town. Many of the Town's vacant parcels are within existing concentrations and corridors, especially in and around the Five Corners and Quaker Crossing — the largest being 44 acres on Sterling Drive, off of Southwestern Blvd owned by the Orchard Park Commerce.

2.5 Tourism Development Potential

The extensive cultural, historic, recreational, scenic, and natural resources of the Town and Village of Orchard Park are documented in the Western New York Scenic Byway Nomination Study and are summarized below. These cultural and natural assets are capable of attracting diverse audiences with a variety of interests. Features that attract the greatest amount of interest are those that can be used as the “anchors” of a village/town/regional tourism development plan.



Buffalo Rochester & Pittsburgh Depot in Orchard Park



The Casino at Chestnut Ridge Park

Sports and Recreation

Chestnut Ridge Park, comprised of about 1,213 beautiful acres, is the largest park space in the area – serving both local and regional visitors. It is a delightful combination of Works Progress Agency (WPA) depression era buildings, surrounded by acres of curved and deeply-carved ravines with steep waterfalls (such as the unique natural phenomenon named the “Eternal Flame Falls”) and 60 miles of scenic trails. It was acquired by Erie County in 1926. Named after the great chestnut trees that once towered throughout the area, and from which many park structures are made, it is the oldest of the Erie County parks. Chestnut Ridge is open year-round, with its highest usage in the winter months, when people flock to the park for its beginner ski slopes and historic casino complete with a huge wood burning fireplace. Visitors to the park also come for the outstanding view of the City of Buffalo available from the tobogganing hill. Chestnut Ridge is the largest and most heavily utilized of all the parks owned by Erie County. Unfortunately, the once highly popular tobogganing chutes have fallen into disrepair and are now closed.



Ralph C. Wilson Stadium

Home to the National Football League’s (NFL’s) Buffalo Bills, **Ralph C. Wilson Stadium** is a private recreational/professional sports facility that is a regional and national attraction. The 74,000-seat stadium is the sixth largest NFL stadium in the country. Attendance in 2003 averaged 73,000 fans per game, which put the stadium in the top quarter for NFL stadium attendance. With 11 season and pre-season Bills home games, more than 800,000 fans attend Bills games in a typical year.

The **Orchard Park Country Club** is a private membership club that offers an 18-hole golf course, a swimming pool, tennis courts, a year-round roster of special events, and full dining and catering facilities. Designed by renowned golf course designer Walter Travis in 1916, the golf course is beautifully landscaped and a prominent visual amenity and makes an especially scenic entry point to the historic village, from the 219, the 240 and the 277.

Attractions

- The **Orchard Park Historical Society Museum** is located in the Jolls Home built in 1870 by Ambrose Johnson; it is one of the best examples of Italianate architecture in the region.
- The **Pedaling History Bicycle Museum** offers visitors a collection of antique bicycles from around the world.
- Historic buildings, including **Quaker** sites, train depot, and Jolls Mansion (listed on the National Register of Historic Places).

Performing Arts Groups

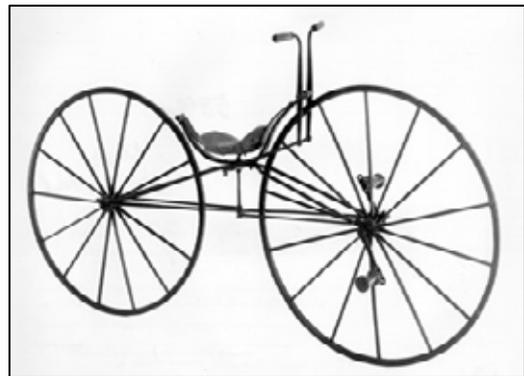
The **Orchard Park Symphony** holds four concerts at the Middle School auditorium each year, plus one outdoor concert during the summer as part of the Quaker Pavilion series.

Special Events

- Orchard Park also has many festivals throughout the year: The largest is the **Quaker Arts Festival**, which draws visitors from around the region each September.
- Each July, the Chamber of Commerce hosts **Quaker Days**, to showcase the downtown-shopping district. The multi-day event features sidewalk sales, street entertainment, and food vendors.



The historic landscape of the Orchard Park Country Club



1871 Bicycle, Pedaling History Bicycle Museum

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Chapter 3: Strategic Considerations

3.1: METHODOLOGY

Whereas Chapter 2 provides a snapshot of the Orchard Park economy today in terms of size, composition, and its relationship to the regional economy, this chapter represents an effort to understand the factors which together fostered that economy. These factors, referred to in this study as “Strategic Considerations,” include Orchard Park’s physical and social assets or strengths, limitations or weaknesses inherent in the community, potential opportunities which have not been fully pursued, and threats to the local economy from outside forces beyond the community’s control.

The process of identifying strategic considerations involves listening to and understanding peoples’ perceptions. Perceptions, whether they are based in fact or not, affect behavior, including such decisions as where to locate or expand a business, take a job, or go shopping. It is important to note that the discussion of strategic considerations below does not attribute comments to individuals or attempt to ascertain whether the comments are factual.

This entire chapter reflects a brainstorming effort and does not represent the findings of OPEDC (see box, below).

The comments recorded on the following pages were taken from the brainstorming sessions and reflect the observations of the individual commentators, including members of the broader business community and other stakeholders. As such, the points raised in Section 3.2.2, “Stakeholder Input” are presented to inform the OPEDC of stakeholder perceptions, but do not represent the conclusions of the OPEDC or the community as a whole. To further distinguish stakeholder perceptions from OPEDC findings, Section 3.2.2, below, has been italicized.

3.2: STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

3.2.1: The Process: Identifying the Issues

To assist in the identification of issues related to economic development, the Urban Design Project (UDP) facilitated two brainstorming sessions—one with the Orchard Park Economic Development Committee (OPEDC) alone and one with invited stakeholders and strategic partners. OPEDC hosted this second meeting, attended by many of Orchard Park’s business leaders, at the Orchard Park Country Club on May 22, 2007. In addition, UDP staff held interviews with stakeholders unable to attend the meeting.

The meetings were held to discuss economic development opportunities, unmet needs particularly those that could be served by OPEDC, and threats to the economic base of the town. A related purpose of the meeting was for the OPEDC to learn how the business climate in Orchard Park is perceived by stakeholders in the local economy. Attendees included 25 Orchard Park business leaders. The level of commitment to the community was evidenced by the high level of attendance and participation at the meeting.

The output gathered helped to guide the OPEDC in developing the strategic plan, specifically to help the group review, reassess, and confirm or refine its mission statement and define a vision of how the organization should operate in the future. The output of these meetings is summarized below.



3.2.2: Stakeholder Input

Participants in the brainstorming sessions were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses of the Orchard Park economy, opportunities to strengthen the economy, and threats to the community's economic well-being that they have encountered while conducting business in Orchard Park. They were also asked to provide input as to recommendations for OPEDC and other actions that they felt would improve the business climate. All comments that were given have been paraphrased without editorial comments and grouped into common headings and themes. This section includes all opinions expressed by individual committee members, business community representatives, and other stakeholders in the sessions described above.

All opinions expressed by OPEDC members and the broader stakeholder group are presented in this chapter. It is noted that some of these opinions conflict with one another and not all recommendations are endorsed by the OPEDC or included in the OPEDC Strategic Plan.

3.2.2.1: Strengths

Strengths were defined to the group as the salient characteristics of the Town and Village of Orchard Park that makes the community attractive to investors. Stakeholder perceptions are presented below:

Easily Accessible Location

- *The Town of Orchard Park is a regional economic hub. Access to US 219 helps capture regional expenditures. This access stimulates commercial and industrial development.*

Attractions

- *Ralph Wilson Stadium, a regional attraction, brings tens of thousands of visitors to Orchard Park for Buffalo Bills games and other events.*
- *The historic Orchard Park Village is a center for small scale economic activity.*

Socioeconomic Characteristics

- *The residents of the Town of Orchard Park have high educational attainments.*
- *This educational attainment has created a strong and talented workforce.*
- *This is also one of the reasons why the residents of Orchard Park have higher average incomes compared to the surrounding region.*
- *Orchard Park is a safe and stable community. It has a relatively low crime rate, long homeownership tenure, and abundant good quality housing.*

Visual Character

- *Orchard Park is well landscaped and very clean.*
- *The southern part of the Town has been able to maintain a strong rural character.*
- *A strict development approval process brings about high quality development.*
- *The 4-Corners Village Center is well kept and visually pleasing.*
- *Development within the Quaker Industrial Center is also aesthetically pleasing.*

The Community

- *The Town and Village do a great job maintaining a solid public and private infrastructure.*
- *Orchard Park is a social and cultural hub in the region.*
- *Orchard Park is perceived as the “community of choice” for the Southtowns.*
- *There is a very strong sense of community throughout the town.*

Municipal Services and Infrastructure

- *Orchard Park provides quality public services to its residents and businesses. These services make the Town a good place to live and do business.*
- *All municipal employees are hard-working and responsive.*
- *Orchard Park has a very good public school system.*
- *Orchard Park is the first Town in the area to provide fiber optic services.*

Specific Economic Strengths

- *Orchard Park has a strong local economy.*
- *The historic Orchard Park Village is a center for local commercial activity. Banks and corporate enterprises are a strong part of the community.*
- *There is relatively long term ownership on properties. This generates a sense of stability in the local economy.*
- *Local educational institutions, including Bryant & Stratton and Erie Community College have the potential for providing and strengthening the local workforce.*
- *The market for industrial development has been gaining interest in Orchard Park in recent years. There is currently a high tech industrial medical corridor within Orchard Park.*

3.2.2.2: Weaknesses

Participants were asked to comment on weaknesses, defined for purposes of the study as internal characteristics of the Town and Village that need to be improved in order to make Orchard Park more attractive to investors. Stakeholder perceptions are presented in the following paragraphs.

What is Missing

Commentators felt that there are several missing uses and amenities that would improve the quality of life and economy of Orchard Park. These are listed below:

- *There is no centralized grocery store for people to go shopping.*
- *There is no hotel that can accommodate tourist or visitors.*
- *There is no large medical service group to provide for the Town's health care needs.*
- *There is a lack of recreational opportunities for youth in the area.*
- *There is no performing arts center, which can provide recreation for all ages.*
- *There lacks a sufficient regional public transportation system to bring in a regional work force.*
- *There is also a lack of parking spaces the Village of Orchard Park which may be hurting businesses there.*
- *There is no Orchard Park Industrial Development Agency (IDA)*

Limited Availability of Industrial and Commercial Land

- *There is a lack of industrial land in the town*
- *There is a lack of affordable rental properties for retailers throughout the town and Village Center.*

Orchard Park's Business Climate

- *Many of Orchard Park's small businesses have been unable to succeed. Retaining a strong workforce is also becoming difficult.*
- *There is a lack of regional cooperation among Orchard Park, local governments, and regional agencies that could help address these and other issues.*

Municipal Government

- *The same due diligence required by the Town to maintain a high quality of development can also be a deterrent to future development.*
- *The Town of Orchard Park is perceived as being anti-growth. The push and pull of growth and anti-growth supporters leads to internal conflicts in Orchard Park. There has also been little acknowledgement of smart growth.*

3.2.2.3: Opportunities

The group was asked to identify and discuss their thoughts on economic development opportunities, defined as potential characteristics or actions that, if pursued or implemented, could strengthen Orchard Park's economy.

Enhance Orchard Park's Strengths

- *The OPEDC can discover and practice new ways of promoting the unique strengths that Orchard Park provides its residents and businesses. Orchard Park can be included in publications that feature developable industrial sites across the country. This can help attract new development from outside of the region.*
- *Orchard Park's assets can be properly used to improve existing infrastructure that would make the town more attractive to businesses. Developing within the distinct character of the Town and Village Center is one way to utilize existing assets.*

Encourage Innovation

The immediate risks of starting a business in Orchard Park should be reduced. Local entrepreneurship can be promoted through subsidies to small business owners. Incentives can be provided to businesses that are better for the businesses and Orchard Park.

Ensure that Adequate Land is Available

Some of the vacant buildings in the town should be adaptively reused for industrial purposes.

Develop Tourism

- *The historic path of the Buffalo, Rochester, and Pittsburgh rail line can be reused as some form of multi-use trail for recreation and transportation.*
- *Chestnut Ridge Park can be utilized better for recreation purposes as well. The possibility of obtaining the park from Erie County can be pursued as the County deals with its fiscal crisis.*

Build Partnerships

- *Working with and between existing educational institutions can help retain professional talent in Orchard Park (ECC Auto Technology Center has put approximately 2,000 employees in the work force).*
- *Creating stronger relationships and strategic alliances with regional municipalities and organizations (such as those in the WNY Southtowns Scenic Byway) or agencies (such as the Erie County Industrial Development Agency) can help Orchard Park accomplish its economic development goals quicker.*

Define "Smart Growth" for Orchard Park

Orchard Park should come to a consensus about what type of development is "smart" for the town. Smart growth precedents from Saratoga Springs, Ithaca, and Queensbury can be used as precedents for Orchard Park.

3.2.2.4: Threats

In this section, the perceptions of participants are presented regarding what they see as threats to Orchard Park's economy. For the purposes of the study, threats were defined as things from outside the community that might weaken the local economy.

Threats to Small-Business

- *Development pressures from the north and west, threaten the unique "small-town" character of Orchard Park's business community.*
- *The loss of small local businesses due to corporate developments threatens the community's overall economic well-being.*

High Costs

- *The extensive due diligence processes in Orchard Park bring unreasonable costs upon developers.*
- *There are no Empire Zones in Orchard Park, unlike the surrounding region, causing the Town to be often overlooked by the Erie County Industrial Development Agency.*
- *A high New York State tax structure gives Orchard Park a disadvantage in the national competition for attracting industry.*
- *The poor state of the Erie County budget is limiting the potential for economic growth in Orchard Park.*

Erosion of the Visual Quality

- *Manufacturing should be sensitively designed to protect Orchard Park's scenic character.*
- *Encroaching development and the loss of small businesses was also seen as a threat to Orchard Park's aesthetic value.*

3.2.2.5: Stakeholder Recommendations for Economic Development Strategies

The following comments represent the ideas of stakeholders regarding measures that they believed would enhance the economic development climate and opportunities in Orchard Park. It is stressed that this chapter reflects all input received, and does not represent the Strategic Plan recommendations endorsed by the OPEDC. The OPEDC's plan is presented in Chapter 4, below.

Development Recommendations

- *Promote the in-fill of currently undeveloped land.*
- *Build a hotel in Orchard Park that will accommodate tourism.*
- *Promote local bed & breakfasts.*
- *Promote and maintain small, local businesses rather than more big-box developments.*
- *One participant expressed the opinion that more corporate, big-box developments should be promoted in Orchard Park.*
- *Soccer/athletics complex*
- *A performing arts center*

Procedural/Regulatory Recommendations

- *Frame an appropriate and convenient approval process for the Orchard Park Planning Board regarding new development. Especially, the site plan review process should have three phases: sketch, draft, and final.*
- *The approval of new projects should be based strictly on zoning and influence on the quality of life or cost of living, rather than politics.*
- *Simply maintain business as usual for Orchard Park.*
- *Embrace the strategies put forth in the Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth.*
- *Remove any excessive government spending.*
- *Explore the use of contingency zoning to address the possibility of eventual sites.*

Recommendations to Enhance the Quality of Development

- *Provide greater incentives to small-business owners who will support the betterment of Orchard Park.*
- *Strengthen and utilize Orchard Park's unique visual qualities.*
- *Avoid the undesired consequences of becoming an industrial area.*

Staffing Recommendations

- *Hire a full-time economic development specialist for the Town and Village of Orchard Park.*
- *Form a new committee dedicated to advocating new entrepreneurship and establishing liaisons.*

Recommended Partnerships

- *Establish a set of community groups that will represent the interests of local businesses in economic issues.*
- *Establish a stronger working relationship with the Erie County Industrial Development Agency, as well as other state and regional agencies.*

Recommended Regulatory Initiatives

- *Create a “technology zone” that will accommodate manufacturing and processing in an aesthetically pleasing and environmentally friendly way.*
- *The rezoning of land around Ralph Wilson Stadium could make it available for commercial and industrial development.*

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Chapter 4: Strategic Plan Development

4.1: OPEDC MISSION AND VISION

The Orchard Park Economic Development Committee (OPEDC) is committed to the high quality of life enjoyed by its citizens and businesses and understands the importance of a strong and diversified tax base. The mission and vision of the OPEDC are intended to guide their efforts to promote quality new economic activity and expansion of existing businesses.

The development of the mission and vision statements was influenced by the input summarized above. These statements are by necessity broad and inclusive: they are the basic tenets under which the detailed objectives and actions steps in Chapter 4 are organized.

Mission of the OPEDC

To promote Orchard Park as a great place to do business.

Vision of the OPEDC

To be a driving force behind a sustained strong economy in the Town of Orchard Park, a key element of a vibrant community with a high quality of life.

4.2.: DEFINING THE GOALS

To achieve its vision, the OPEDC will work to promote a positive business climate in the following ways:

Goal 1: Infrastructure/Process

Goal 2: Tourism and Recreation

Goal 3: Special Projects

Goal 4: Acknowledge that competitive analysis is an ongoing process. .

4.3: DEVELOPING OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS TO MEET GOALS

This Strategic Plan is meant to establish a clear step-by-step approach for the Orchard Park Economic Development Committee (OPEDC) to follow to accomplish the strategic goals described in Chapter 3. The objectives necessary for accomplishing each goal are included in this section of the report. It is emphasized that the objectives and action items listed below are all-inclusive, regardless of the agencies or organizations which may be responsible.

4.3.1: Goals, Objectives, and Action Items

Goal I: Infrastructure/Process. Improve the community physical, social, and regulatory “infrastructure” necessary to attract investment and improve the development process

Objective 1: Support efforts to revise zoning to ensure adequate amount of industrially zoned land.

Objective 2: Communicate with local schools, service organizations, institutes, and employers to ensure an education curriculum tailored to local employment needs.

Objective 3: Improve the project review process.

Action Items:

- Hire an economic development specialist for the Town and Village of Orchard Park.
- Facilitate the development process by serving as an intermediary between developers, local government agencies, and the Orchard Park community.

Objective 4: Continue to provide an inventory of developable land.

Action Items:

- Identify existing and future shortfalls of land to meet business needs, identify this need to public officials, and work to find a solution.
- Maintain an economic development resource listing.

Goal II: Tourism/Recreation. Promote historic and recreational resources in Orchard Park and work to encourage appropriate economic development that capitalizes on these resources. The OPEDC should explore projects that will compliment these resources and further accommodate tourism.

Objective 1. Support regional tourism development projects, such as the WNY Southtowns Scenic Byway.

Objective 2. Actively pursue alternative means of restoring Chestnut Ridge Park, including options for ownership and maintenance and operations.

Objective 3. Promote mechanisms to develop amenities that serve the tourist trade, such as hotels, bed and breakfasts, and restaurants.

Objective 4. Support efforts to construct a critical mass center for cultural activities to serve Orchard Park, the Southtowns, and beyond.

Goal III: Special Projects. Work to enhance the business climate and setting for existing and emerging clusters of economic activity in Orchard Park.

Objective 1. Actively support the life sciences, advance manufacturing, and bio-manufacturing economic cluster.

Objective 2. Initiate and support measures to retain, reinforce, and enhance the competitiveness of the regional retail niches in Orchard Park, in particular the furniture niche and the auto mall on Route 20.

Objective 3. Investigate ways of promoting economic development associated with the horse farms, riding schools, and other horse industry activities in the Town.

Objective 4: Support effort to attract a supermarket to serve community residents

Goal IV: Establish and maintain a process for ongoing competitive analysis.

Objective 1. Business Intelligence. To understand the needs of business and to identify positive and negative factors.

Action Item:

- Establish a regular framework for ongoing consultation with the business community.

Objective 2: Awareness of what is going on around us. To identify and facilitate solutions that address negative factors within the community. To promote understanding and cooperation between businesses and the region.

Action Items:

- Form a group dedicated to advocating new entrepreneurship and establishing liaisons.
- Form and maintain strong relationships with regional agencies, such as the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA), the Buffalo-Niagara Partnership, the Buffalo-Niagara Convention and Visitor Bureau (CVB) and with other municipalities.
- Promote non-confrontational and productive dialogue between residents and the business community.
- Establish a set of community groups that will represent the interests of local businesses in economic issues.
- Work with the Coalition for Community Building.

