

FINAL DRAFT

Town of Cheektowaga
Comprehensive Plan and
Generic Environmental
Impact Statement



June 2010



HOK Planning Group, Inc.



Economic Stewardship, Inc.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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And the Citizens of the Town of Cheektowaga



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary (not completed)

Section 1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
Section 2.0	GOALS AND VISIONING	
	2.1 Public Participation Overview	1
	2.2 Goals and Objectives	4
Section 3.0	COMMUNITY INVENTORY AND PROFILE	
	3.1 Existing Land Use Patterns	1
	3.2 Land Use Controls.....	4
	3.3 Demographic Profile.....	9
	3.4 Housing and Neighborhoods	12
	3.5 Economic Development	16
	3.6 Environmental Resources and Conditions.....	39
	3.7 Utilities	45
	3.8 Transportation.....	45
	3.9 Community Facilities and Cultural Resources	55
	3.10 Existing Planning Reports, Studies and Plans.....	62
Section 4.0	COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT	
	4.1 Introduction and Initial Findings	1
	4.2 Transportation.....	2
	4.3 Economic Development	23
	4.4 Community Development	29
	4.5 Neighborhood Revitalization.....	32
	4.6 Land Use and Zoning	39
Section 5.0	RECOMMENDATIONS	
	5.1 Initial Consideration	1
	5.2 Transportation.....	1
	5.3 Economic Development	5
	5.4 Community Development	12
	5.5 Neighborhood Revitalization.....	16
	5.6 Land Use and Zoning	38
Section 6.0	ACTION PLAN / IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	1
Section 7.0	ANNUAL REVIEW.....	1



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Section 8.0	ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW	
8.1	Potential Significant Adverse Environmental Impacts.....	1
8.2	Adverse Environmental Impacts that Cannot be Avoided	5
8.3	Growth Inducing Aspects of the Plan	6
8.4	Mitigation Measures	6
8.5	Evaluation of Alternatives	8

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Neighborhood Revitalization Planning (draft)
Appendix B: Summary of Meetings (not included)
Appendix C: Glossary (not included)

LIST OF MAPS

Follows Page

Section 1.0 – Community Inventory and Profile:

Map 1:	Regional Setting	1
Map 2:	Aerial Photography	1

Section 3.0 – Community Inventory and Profile:

Map 3:	Existing Land Use.....	2
Map 4:	Existing Zoning	2
Map 5:	Environmental Conditions.....	40
Map 6:	Water Districts	46
Map 7:	Sewer Districts	46
Map 8:	Roadway Classification.....	46
Map 9:	Roadway Jurisdiction	46
Map 10:	Traffic Counts	46
Map 11:	Transit Routes	52
Map 12:	Community Facilities and Parks	58
Map 13:	School Districts.....	58

Section 4.0 – Community Assessment:

Map 14:	Roadway Classifications	4
Map 15:	Traffic Volumes	4
Map 16:	Level of Service	4
Map 17:	Public Transportation Routes	14
Map 18:	Bicycle Level of Service	14
Map 19:	Character Corridors	18

Section 5.0 – Recommendations

Map 20:	Transportation Vision	4
Map 21:	Land Use Vision.....	40



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LIST OF TABLES –

Section 3.0 – Community Inventory and Profile:

Table 1	Land Use – Breakdown by Category	4
Table 2	Population.....	10
Table 3	Population Change	10
Table 4	Households	11
Table 5	Change in Households by Community	11
Table 6	Percentage of Homeownership by Community.....	13
Table 7	Change in Household Types from 1990 to 2000.....	18
Table 8	Erie County Consumer Spending and Retail Sales	24
Table 9	Cheektowaga Consumer Spending and Retail Sales	28
Table 10	Revenues and Expenditures by Area	34
Table 11	Buffalo Niagara International Airport Summary of On-Site Employment	37
Table 12	Major Employers in Cheektowaga	38
Table 13	Traffic Counts.....	48
Table 14	Transportation Improvements – Project List	51
Table 15	NFTA Bus Routes	51
Table 16	Town of Cheektowaga Fire Districts and Fire Companies.....	57
Table 17	School District Statistics	62

Section 4.0 – Community Assessment:

Table 1	Average Daily Traffic Counts for I-190 Tolls By-Pass Roads	3
Table 2	Comparison of Economic Development Alternatives	28

Section 5.0 – Recommendations

Table 1	Affordability and Personal Crime in First-Ring Suburbs in Northeast US.....	9
Table 2	Transit Ready Transect Zones	17
Table 3	Corridor Transect Zones.....	21
Table 4	Neighborhood Transect Zones.....	25

LIST OF FIGURES –

Section 3.0 – Community Inventory and Profile:

Figure 1	Population and Household	12
Figure 2	Housing Type	13
Figure 3	Housing: Year Built.....	14
Figure 4	Building Permit Activity.....	15
Figure 5	Construction Value of Building Activity	15
Figure 6	Population Pyramid for Cheektowaga and U.S.	17
Figure 7	Cheektowaga Households by Type in 1990 and 2000	18
Figure 8	Housing Occupancy and Tenure	19
Figure 9	Performance of Buffalo-Niagara MSA relative to NY, OH and PA Combined	21
Figure 10	BNIA Passenger Volume, 1997 – 2007	35
Figure 11	BNIA Air Cargo Volume, 1997 – 2007	36



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LIST OF FIGURES Continued –

Section 4.0 – Community Assessment:

Figure 1	NFTA Daily Transit System Boardings	8
Figure 2	Transit Ready – Walden Avenue and Harlem Road	34
Figure 3	Corridor – French Road Area	35
Figure 4	Neighborhood – Union Road / Genesee Street Area	38
Figure 5	Land Use in the Northwest Corner of the Town	41
Figure 6	Land Use in the City Line Area of the Town	43
Figure 7	Land Use in the Airport Area of the Town	44
Figure 8	Land Use in the Town Center Area of the Town	46
Figure 9	Land Use in the Southeast Corner of the Town	48
Figure 10	Zoning in the Northwest Corner of the Town	51
Figure 11	Zoning in the City Line Area of the Town	52
Figure 12	Zoning in the Airport Area of the Town	53
Figure 13	Zoning in the Town Center Area of the Town	54
Figure 14	Zoning in the Southeast Corner of the Town	56

Section 5.0 – Recommendations

Figure 1	Complete Street Strategy.....	2
Figure 2	Transit Ready Concept Plan	28
Figure 3	Transit Ready – Improved Connections	29
Figure 4	Transit Ready – Denser Mixed Use Development	30
Figure 5	Transit Ready – Repaired Walden Avenue Corridor	31
Figure 6	Corridor Concept Plan.....	32
Figure 7	Corridor – A Renewed Shopping Center	32
Figure 8	Corridor – Improved Crossroads	33
Figure 9	Corridor – Green Connections	34
Figure 10	Neighborhood Concept Plan.....	35
Figure 11	Neighborhood – A Redesigned Airport Plaza.....	36
Figure 12	Neighborhood – Repairing the Union Road Corridor	37
Figure 13	Neighborhood – Transit Oriented Development	38



SECTION 1.0 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Regional and Local Setting

The Town of Cheektowaga is centrally located in Erie County, New York, with the Town of Amherst and Village of Williamsville to the north, Town of Lancaster and the Village of Depew to the east, the Town of West Seneca to the south, and the City of Buffalo and Village of Sloan to the west (Maps 1 and 2). Cayuga Creek flows northwesterly across the central portion of the Town. The Town did not develop around a traditional center. Rather, the City of Buffalo's radiating transportation network allowed residents to seek neighborhoods beyond the City and still easily reach jobs downtown and throughout the area. This resulted in the growth of the westernmost neighborhoods that sprouted up along William Street, Broadway, Walden Avenue, and Genesee Street. The extensive railroad network that transects the Town further stimulated the growth, and prompted the growth of the Village of Depew. The development of the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport, as well as the New York State Thruway, with interchanges within the Town, enabled the commercial and residential base to grow and expand to the north and east. Today, the Town is mostly built-out, with limits undeveloped land available for development.

The Town is a suburban community and a first-ring suburb of the City of Buffalo. The Town's population is aging in place, particularly in attractive residential areas. The Town's population in 2000 was 94,019 persons. This represents a decrease of 7.3 percent from the 1990 population of 99,300. In 2006, at the time of the last U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, the Town (outside of the Villages) had an estimated population of 75,279 persons. Including the Villages, the Town's population in 2006 was estimated at 87,185 persons, representing a continued decline.

The Town's two largest employers and primary economic drivers are Buffalo-Niagara International Airport and the Walden Galleria. Cheektowaga's greatest economic development asset is its transportation infrastructure: airport, highways, surface roads, rail, transit, and trails that all serve the Town. There is a surplus of large, vacant retail spaces along some of the Town's arterial roads, many of which are ripe for redevelopment with alternative uses.

The Town of Cheektowaga is currently governed by a seven member Town Board, which includes the Town Supervisor. There is a seven member Planning Board that is a referring body to the Town Board for rezoning, site plan and subdivision review actions. The Town has a five member Zoning Board of Appeals, as well as a Traffic Safety Commission and a Conservation Advisory Council.

1.2 Reasons for Preparing a Comprehensive Plan

New York State Town Law §272-a authorizes local municipalities to develop and adopt a Comprehensive Plan to help promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the community, with due consideration given to the needs of the people of the community. The Law states that -



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

“Among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a town government is the authority and responsibility to undertake town Comprehensive Planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens.”

“The town Comprehensive Plan fosters cooperation among governmental agencies planning and implementing capital projects and municipalities that may be directly affected thereby.”

The Town of Cheektowaga last developed a Comprehensive Plan in 1969. Recognizing that this plan is vastly outdated and no longer addresses the issues and opportunities of the community, the Town chose to undertake the preparation of an update to the Comprehensive Plan in 2008. The Town Board, in making its decision to authorize an update to the plan, recognized that the Comprehensive Plan is the most important document for managing the Town’s physical growth and maintaining the rural character of the area.

There are many concrete benefits of a Comprehensive Plan. One critical benefit relates to the Town’s zoning authority. Municipalities are given the power to regulate land uses within the community, but these decisions should be based on sound planning principles and developed through a process that represents a consensus of the community. The process of developing a Comprehensive Plan provides a rational basis for decisions regarding zoning and other land use regulations. This helps ensure better decision making, while providing the Town with a powerful tool to help direct growth in a manner and intensity that meets the community’s vision for the future.

A Comprehensive Plan provides the vision for the future of the community and establishes goals and objectives that guide future growth, reflecting the principles and concepts that the community feels will enhance the character and quality of life therein. Therefore, another benefit of a Comprehensive Plan is that it helps guide local officials, who can look to this established vision and the goals and objectives for assistance in making future land use decisions. These elements of the plan also have an influence on other levels of government. All County, State or Federal governmental agencies that plan capital projects that will affect lands in the Town must take the Comprehensive Plan into consideration as part of their own decision-making processes.

The Comprehensive Plan, developed with the support and input from both municipal officials and the general public, acts as a standard for ensuring that the Town’s land use regulations are built on a solid foundation and represent a consensus of the community. It shows the cooperation and commitment of the community that can aid in seeking governmental grants and other assistance. In short, the Town’s Comprehensive Plan provides Cheektowaga with an effective tool for shaping its future. It influences 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.



1.3 Public Participation Overview

The Town of Cheektowaga is committed to the idea that a critical and necessary element of the Comprehensive Planning process is continuous and effective public participation. Hence, this Plan was prepared from the beginning with acknowledgement of public concerns and desires and consisted of on-going public outreach to build support of the Plan. The Town of Cheektowaga established an Advisory Committee to oversee the development of the Comprehensive Plan, which included representation from local government, the business community, and other organizations who worked hard to make sure this Plan expressed the vision of the Town. The Advisory Committee was assisted, as needed, by an AdHoc Committee made up of prominent community associations and organizations that helped provide input and build support for the Plan. The Advisory Committee met on a regular basis to provide guidance and insight into the planning process, to ensure that the final document would be an effective Plan, and that the concerns of local citizens were taken into consideration.

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee held a series of public meetings and conducted a Visual Preference Survey. The first Public Information Meeting was held on April 8, 2008, in the Hospice Center for Palliative, to gather input from the general public on the issues and opportunity that exist in the Town that should be considered in the Comprehensive Plan. Input from this meeting was essential in developing goals and objectives and a future vision for the Town. After this first meeting, a series of meetings were held with Stakeholder groups to gather additional information and assist with the development of the goals and objectives.

A second Public Focus Meeting was held with the public on December 10, 2008 to present the draft goals and objectives and confirm and strengthen the issues and opportunities identified through previous meetings. At this meeting the input that was gathered helped to set the direction for the Plan and provide input that was used to begin shaping findings and recommendations.

Finally, a third Public Visioning Workshop was held on September 3, 2009. The purpose of this highly interactive meeting was to allow residents and others to actively participate in the development and clarification of the recommendations and view the draft Vision Map for the future of the Cheektowaga community. This meeting was very interactive with break out sessions and other opportunities for the public to provide their input on the ideas and materials presented. Project information, and information on the meetings, was also made available on the Town's website. Prior to and following the visioning workshop, some additional Stakeholders' meetings were held with municipal agencies to ensure their input and comments for the Plan.

At the onset of the project an internet website was set up as a means of keeping the public informed and involved in the project. The website included information on the project team, the Advisory Committee and AdHoc Committee, various sections of the report, summaries and results from public meetings, and project maps and graphics. The website also offered an interactive public comment map and a visual preference survey to enable residents and other to offer comments and insights for locations around the



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

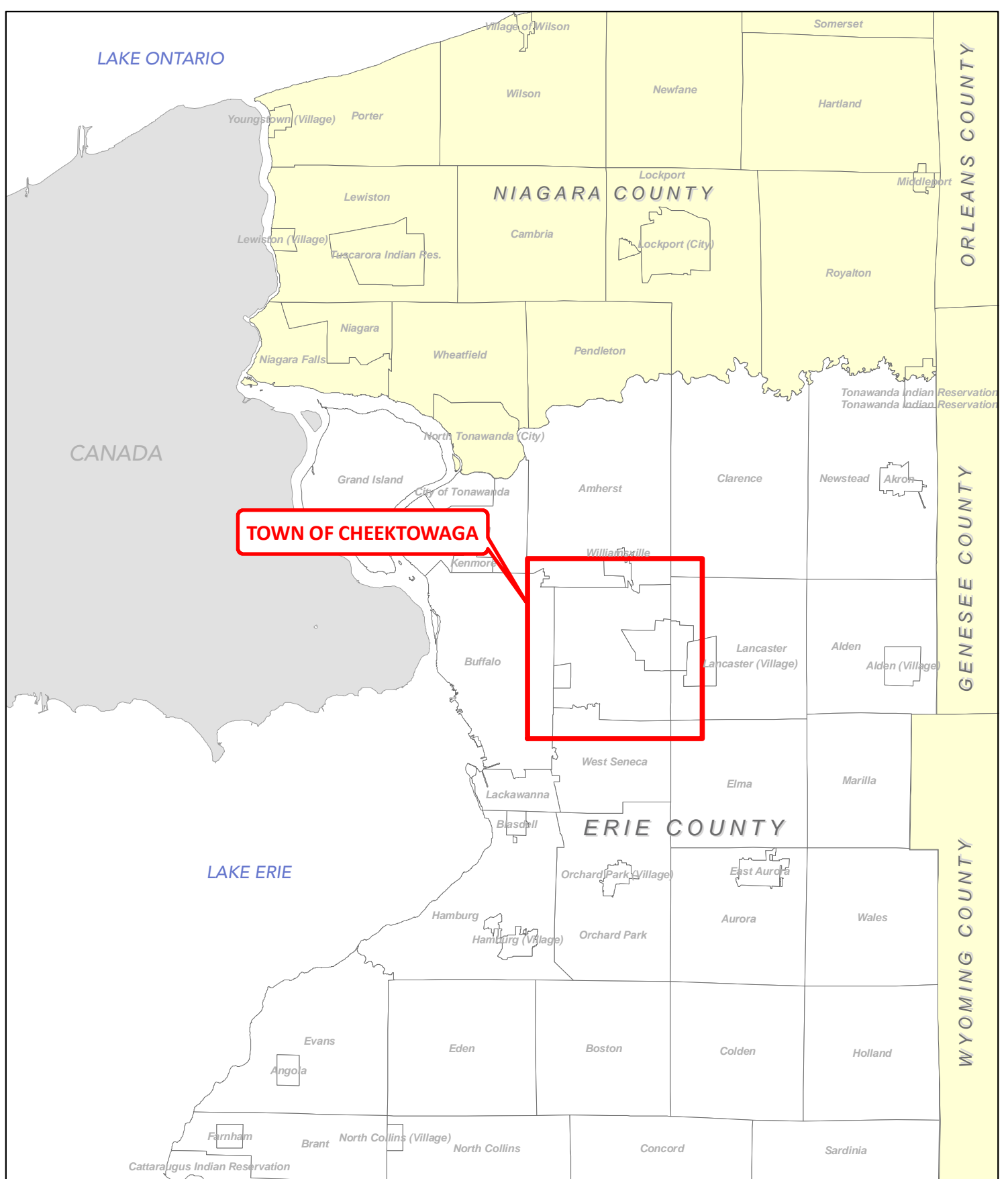
Town, and to provide more targeted information that helped with the development of the findings and recommendations.

1.4 How the Plan will be Utilized

New York State does not dictate what form a Comprehensive Plan must take, but suggests that it consist of written and graphic materials, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports, and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, and recommendations that the Town wishes to set forth to attain its vision. It examines the environmental, demographic, physical, and developmental aspects of the Town, as well as the regulatory setting that guides these factors.

While municipalities are given the power to regulate land uses within their communities, these decisions should be based on sound planning principals, and must not be arbitrary or capricious. As previously noted, Town Law generally indicates that municipal planning, zoning, capital budgeting, and other land use regulation decisions made in the Town should be done so in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. A Comprehensive Plan provides an accessible and clear guide for entities seeking to undertake an action or project in the community. It also provides the Town with greater leverage on land use and planning related activities and programs instituted by other governmental authorities, such as State or County agencies, who are required to take local plans into consideration when proposing to undertake capital projects in local communities.

The Comprehensive Plan addresses the issues and concerns specific to the Town based on input from local residents and stakeholders, gathered through a variety of forums. The Plan provides a vision for a community and reflects the principals and concepts that the community feels will enhance its character and quality of life. The goals and objectives, recommendations, and implementation strategy included in this Plan are designed to address the Town's unique issues and concerns. This Plan demonstrates the cooperation and commitment of the community, which also lends strong support for grant funding opportunities. The Comprehensive Plan provides an assessment of where the community is, identifies what the community would like to be, and includes recommendations and strategies to attain its vision. Once adopted, the Town of Cheektowaga should begin to implement the Plan by amending its land use regulations to conform to the Comprehensive Plan and consider the Plan in all of its land use making decisions (site plans, subdivisions and zoning actions) and capital budgeting actions. Copies of the completed Comprehensive Plan must be filed with County and State agencies and must be utilized by those agencies in planning projects and actions that could affect the Town of Cheektowaga. The Town should actively utilize the plan as a tool, resource and guide for all future land use decisions,



Map 1 - Regional Setting

**TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
Regional Setting

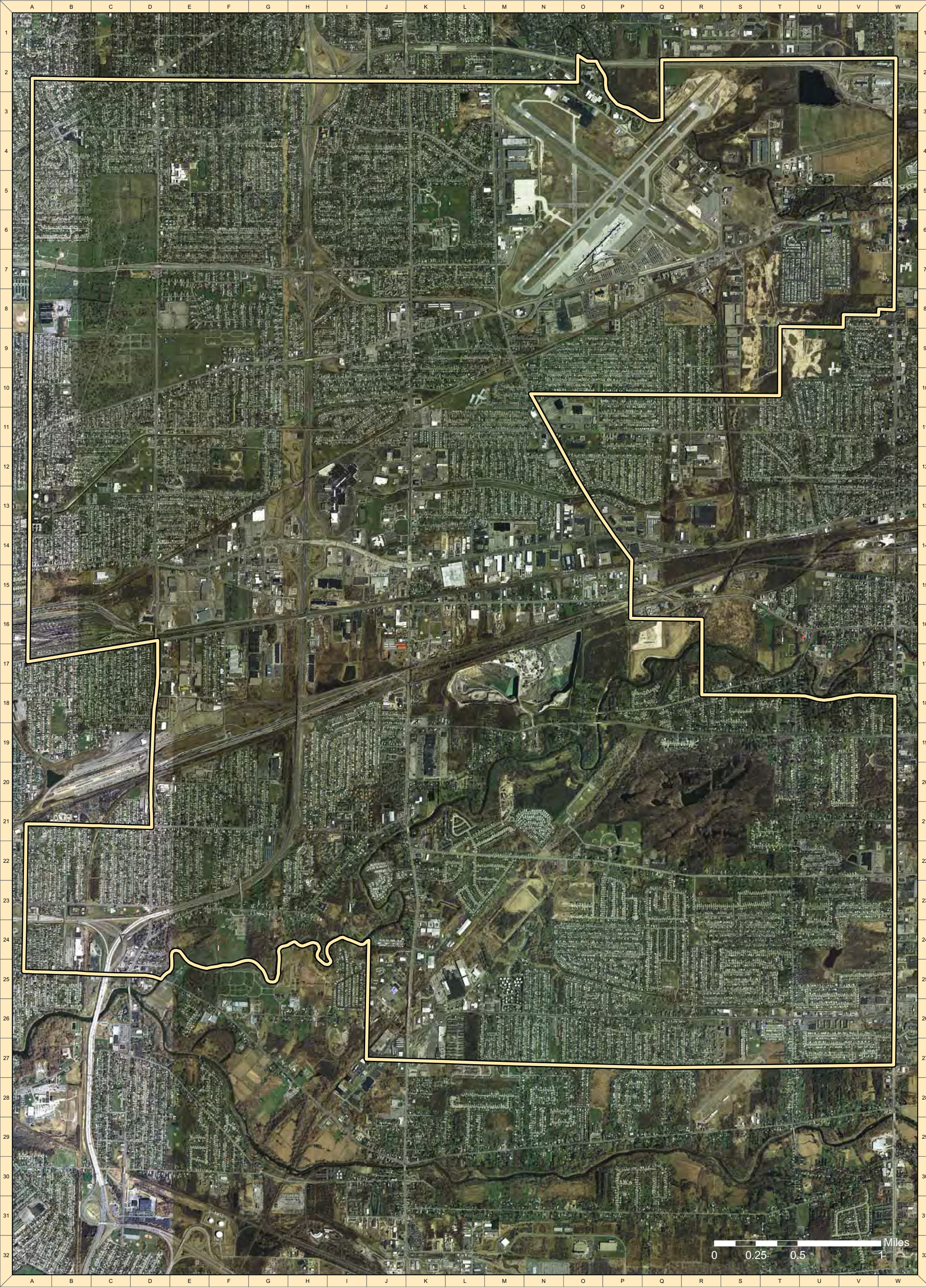
LEGEND

- Erie County
- Surrounding Counties

0 1 2 4
Miles



WENDEL DUCHSCHERER
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WD Project # 313306
Map Created: November, 2009

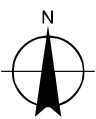


Map 2 - Digital Orthoimagery

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

 Town Boundary



*The information on this document is based on data gathered from the following data sources and should not be used for design or construction. -Data Sources: Town of Cheektowaga, NYS GIS Clearinghouse.



SECTION 2.0 – GOALS AND VISIONING

This section of the Comprehensive Plan presents the Goals and Objectives that were developed for the Town of Cheektowaga with the assistance of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee and AdHoc Committee. The goals and objectives have been influenced by data from the inventory and analysis and input gathered from residents, Town representatives and others through public meetings, stakeholder meetings, website input and written comments.

The goals and objectives focus on the major issues and opportunities identified by the Committee, Town residents and other stakeholders. They are aimed at helping to guide future growth and development in the Town. The recommendations that are outlined in Section 5.0 of this Plan include more specific actions that can be implemented to achieve the community's vision for the future.

2.1 Public Participation Overview

The Town of Cheektowaga was committed to the idea that a critical element of the planning process is effective public participation. This Comprehensive Plan has been prepared with extensive public input. A variety of mechanisms were utilized to solicit input, including two public meetings, two public visioning charrettes, meetings with a variety of stakeholders, comment forms for the submittal of written comments, interactive surveys, meetings with government officials and organizations, student participation, an internet website, a project email address and press releases. In addition, the entire process was closely overseen by the Advisory Committee, which was comprised of residents and others from around the community who represented a variety of interests. The Committee met on a regular basis to provide guidance and insight into the planning process to ensure that the views and concerns of the community were effectively addressed. Input and guidance was also received from an AdHoc Committee that further represented public interests.

A. Public Information Meeting

At the onset of the project, a public information meeting was held in the Hospice Center for Palliative Care on April 8, 2008. This meeting was held to introduce the public to the planning consultants, the Advisory Committee and the project. A brief overview of the project, the reasoning behind it and an understanding of how the plan would be developed was provided. This was followed by an open discussion of important issues and opportunities designed to generate public comments. An important goal of this meeting was to gather as much public input as possible regarding what features residents liked about their community, where they had concerns and what they saw as key opportunities for improving their quality of life. Brainstorming encouraged those in attendance to articulate their vision for the Town.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



B. Public Focus Meeting

A second meeting with the public was held on December 10, 2008 to present the draft goals and objectives and confirm and strengthen the issues and opportunities identified through previous meetings. The purpose of this meeting was to provide local residents and stakeholders the opportunity to view progress on draft Comprehensive Plan and confirm their vision for the future of the Cheektowaga community, including a review of draft goals and objectives to set direction for the Plan. The center point of this meeting was the use of Instant Response Survey technology that focused on key issues, including the goals and objectives, neighborhoods, community image, parks and public spaces, transportation, public services, residential and commercial development patterns and design standards.

C. Public Charrette Meeting

A public visioning charrette was held with the public on September 3, 2009 to help shape the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of this highly interactive meeting was to allow residents and others to actively participate in the development and clarification of the recommendations for the Plan. The draft recommendations and visioning concepts for the community, which were developed by the Planning Consultants and the Advisory Committee, were presented for comments and critique. Citizens were divided into smaller groups to discuss the vision and specific recommendations in



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

greater detail. The input from these meetings was used to strengthen and finalize the recommendations and vision for the Comprehensive Plan.



D. Stakeholders' Meetings

A series of meetings were held with community organizations, interest groups and public agencies to identify and discuss relevant issues and build broader consensus for the Comprehensive Plan. Key stakeholders included the Chamber of Commerce, a variety of local taxpayers' and homeowners' associations, student groups, Town department heads and representatives, and government agencies. These meetings were held in the earlier stages of the planning process and provided wider and more diverse comments, helping the Project Team to gain a better understanding of important issues and opportunities in the community.

E. Interactive Website

At the onset of the project a project website was set up as a means of keeping the public informed and involved in the project. The website included information on the project team, the Advisory Committee and AdHoc Committee, various sections of the report, summaries and results from public meetings, project maps and graphics, a visual preference survey and other information on the



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

project. One particular aspect of the website was an interactive map of the Town that allowed website users to post comments related to their concerns and insights for various areas around the Town. A copy of this map with comments is included in the Appendix.

2.2 Goals and Objectives

The Goals and Objectives of a Comprehensive Plan set forth a shared vision for the Town's future. They represent the values and priorities of the community and serve as a guide for evaluating future land use and planning decisions. The shared vision articulated in the community's goals also provides guidance for decision makers at the local, County and State levels. The goals in the Comprehensive Plan are general in nature, so they can remain relevant over the long-term. These goals also form the foundation for the community's vision for the future, as well as for the recommendations and specific actions that the Town will implement to achieve this vision.

Goal One: IDENTITY

Define a clear vision, image and identity for the Town of Cheektowaga that reflects the needs and desires of its residents and businesses.

- Promote the Town as a great place to live, work, visit, shop and recreate.
- Strengthen neighborhoods to create a stronger sense of community throughout the Town.
- Improve existing, and create new, "Gateway" features and elements at entryways into the community.
- Build upon the assets of each unique area of the Town
- Protect and improve the Green space/Open space features of the Town.
- Build upon and promote the regionally significant assets of the Town.
- Continue to build upon the cultural and historic traditions of the Town.
- Protect and improve significant creek and stream corridors.
- Work with the School Districts within the Town to improve their ability to provide first rate education to the youth of the Town.
- As a community, continue to appeal to young families, and be a melting pot for races and ethnicities.
- Recognize and promote the Town's important Native American heritage.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Goal Two: REVITALIZATION

Promote, assist and sponsor Neighborhood redevelopment, renewal and revitalization.

- Build upon the assets of each unique area of the Town and address problem areas to create stronger neighborhoods.
- Continue to find solutions for the vacant/abandoned buildings in the Town.
- Create and strengthen neighborhood “Main Streets” areas throughout the Town to create vibrant business districts that support the surrounding neighborhoods and create a greater sense of community.
- Improve the walkability and pedestrian connections in neighborhoods.
- Improve property maintenance problems through legislation, incentives and other programs.
- 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.
- Evaluate and implement guidelines, rules and regulations that result in redevelopment of the appropriate scale and character that will result in long term stability and viability of these areas.
- Address areas of high vacancy.
- Encourage and support the redevelopment of brownfield areas in the Town.
- Support small business growth.
- Revitalize and fill the commercial areas along Union Road, Walden Avenue and Genesee Street.
- Address the issue of absentee landlords and irresponsible renters who degrade neighborhoods.

Goal Three: LEADERSHIP

Acknowledge and strengthen the regional importance of Cheektowaga and take a leadership role in Western New York’s future.

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



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Work with Erie County to implement and improve upon the County's Regional Framework for Growth and take an active role in other planning initiatives in Western New York.
- Encourage consolidation of the prominent school districts in the Town to provide more cost effective education services.
- Support the strengthening of the centralized rail facilities within the Town to promote the development of light industrial and distribution facilities.
- Continue efforts to develop a regionally significant retail center around the Walden Avenue - Galleria core area.
- Build upon the economic development opportunities associated with the airport and major Thruway areas in the Town.
- Capitalize on and promote the strong existing business base for continued job development.
- Promote and encourage investment (public and private) to improving the quality of development in the Town.
- Support incentives to encourage investment in aging neighborhoods, including re-establishing a 485B program.
- Coordinate Economic Development issues with the County, State and Federal representatives and devise a regional approach to these issues.
- Encourage the Villages to consider the benefits of merging with the Town.
- Promote the Town's position as a destination for rail service from other locations, such as Toronto.

Goal Four: CREATIVITY

Utilize creative planning, zoning and design techniques to help Cheektowaga achieve its goals.

- Re-evaluate zoning to ensure the location of residential, commercial and industrial uses in appropriate locations.
- Create zoning provisions that allow mixed uses in appropriate areas within the Town.
- Simplify developmental regulations in the Town to make them easier to understand and interpret.
- Coordinate zoning revisions and design regulations with surrounding communities to reduce conflict and in some cases adopt similar laws to promote cohesive development.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Improve and increase opportunities for public transit through the development of a light rail linkage between Cheektowaga and downtown Buffalo.
- Focus on design techniques and requirements that improve the aesthetics of the community and reflect and enhance the character of Cheektowaga.
- Provide input and influence to better coordinate the long term planning of the quarries within the Town.
- Adopt regulations that promote sustainable development practices and green design in the Town.
- Utilize innovative techniques, such as transfer of development rights, to preserve the natural resources in the Dubonnet Ponds area.
- Promote the Town's position as a destination for rail service from other locations, such as Toronto.

Goal Five: COOPERATION/COORDINATION

Identify and take advantage of opportunities for fiscal efficiency within local, regional and state governments.

- Promote intermunicipal and interjurisdictional cooperation and coordination.
- Coordinate the provision of community services (police, etc.) with adjoining municipalities.
- Encourage the consolidation of fire districts.
- 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 rail service to downtown.
- Continue to improve the Town's communication with its residents, through media, print, web and other creative techniques, to allow for suggestions on efficiencies within government.
- Foster improved communication and cooperation with and between other regional and state agencies.
- Coordinate planning efforts with the Villages of Sloan and Depew and work cooperatively with them in implementing these plans.
- Encourage the Villages to consider the benefits of merging with the Town.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Improve communication with the school districts and evaluate joint efficiency improvements that can be made.
- Encourage the consolidation of the prominent school districts in the Town to provide more cost effective educational services.
- Promote the yearly evaluation of services provided within the Town by all governmental entities providing these services.

Goal Six: QUALITY

Provide needed quality services and facilities for residents and businesses.

- Evaluate and improve safety issues in various neighborhoods in the Town.
- Utilize a yearly analysis of services provided by the Town to improve and revise these services to best meet the needs of residents and businesses.
- Evaluate the need for and plan for additional trails and pathways within the community.
- Maintain and improve the quality of education provided in the districts.
- Continue to support and improve the cultural amenities within the Town and promote the creation of additional amenities in appropriate locations.
- Provide appropriate services to the seniors, youth, families, non-traditional households and businesses within the community to ensure a proper quality of life for all residents and a diverse economic base for the Town.
- Celebrate the rich heritage and cultural/ethnic diversity of the Town.

Goal Seven: MOBILITY

Take advantage of and improve upon the significant transportation system in the Town; acknowledging all of the present modes of transportation: pedestrian, bicyclist, transit, automotive, truck, rail and air.

- Make the Town “transit ready”.
- The airport plays a significant role in the Town’s future, and planning at and around the airport should be coordinated between the Town, NFTA and other related agencies.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Travel connections into the Town should be protected and improved, and additional connections/access points, including thruway interchanges, should be evaluated for the potential relief and improvement of traffic problems within the community.
- Capitalize on the significant railroad system as an important transportation and economic resource in the Town.
- Continue to evaluate and improve upon the existing roadway system within Town, maintaining existing infrastructure, making required improvements, and evaluating innovative ways to integrate transportation and land use.
- Enhance and expand alternative modes of transportation, including bike lanes, bus routes and possible future transit extensions.
- Provide greater identity for the Amtrak station as a destination and major location for transportation in the community.
- Promote the Town's position as a destination for rail service from other locations, such as Toronto.

Goal Eight: PROSPERITY

Provide conditions that will lead to economic growth, a strong and stable tax base and business opportunities for a vital future.

- Strengthen neighborhood commercial districts to support and enhance the local economic environment.
- Identify opportunities for small business growth.
- Revitalize abandoned and underutilized commercial and industrial lands.
- Capitalize on key transportation assets and expand opportunities for multi-modal travel in the Town.
- Promote the Town as a regional destination.
- Promote increased investment in the commercial and industrial sectors of the local economy.
- Achieve necessary transportation improvements to enable commercial and industrial development in underutilized areas.
- Identify and support opportunities for sustainable development.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SECTION 3.0 – COMMUNITY INVENTORY AND PROFILE

This section identifies the existing conditions and resources of the Town of Cheektowaga, including demographics, land uses, environmental resources, transportation, infrastructure and utilities, and community facilities and services. A thorough evaluation of the existing conditions and resources provides an understanding of “where the Town is” today.

3.1 Existing Land Use Patterns

The Town of Cheektowaga consists of a diverse mix of land uses covering a range of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional and public facilities (Map 2 – Aerial Photography). The Town did not develop around a traditional center. Rather the radiating transportation network allowed residents to seek neighborhoods beyond the City of Buffalo and still easily reach jobs downtown and throughout the City by streetcar. This resulted in the growth of the westernmost neighborhoods that sprouted up along William Street, Broadway, Walden Avenue, and Genesee Street. The extensive railroad network that transected the Town further stimulated the growth, and prompted the growth of the Village of Depew. The completion of the Airport as well as the New York State Thruway, with its interchanges to various roads in the Town, enabled the commercial and residential base to grow and expanded north and east. Today, the Town is mostly built-out, with minimal unconstrained land available for development (Map 3 – Existing Land Use).

Residential

The residential makeup of the Town is dominated by single family residential neighborhoods that vary from older, early 20th century neighborhoods near the boundary with the City of Buffalo and Village of Sloan, to post World War II housing throughout the majority of the northern and central portions of the Town, to newer residential development located in the southeastern portion of the Town. There are clusters of apartment complexes scattered along French Road, near the intersection of William Street and Union Road, near the intersection of Union Road and Maryvale Drive, and Kensington Village along Eggert Road.

The neighborhoods west of Harlem Road tend to include a greater mix of residential types. The 2006 U.S. Census American Community Survey estimates, the most current population figures available, indicate that there are 35,115 housing units within the Town of Cheektowaga, 61 percent of which are single family residences, 20 percent of which are within two-family residential structures, 16 percent of which are within multiple family residential structures, and 3 percent are mobile homes. The majority of these residential structures, 82 percent, were built between 1940 and 1979 with nearly 10 percent built before 1940 and 8 percent built since 1980.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Commercial

The Town embraces a mix of commercial uses including several neighborhood commercial districts, corridors with strip commercial development, and major regional shopping centers. Neighborhood commercial districts are located in the Cleveland Hill area along Harlem Drive, between Cleveland Drive and the Amherst town line, the Pine Hill area along Genesee Street west of Pine Ridge Road, along Walden Avenue west of Harlem Road, along William Road near the intersection with Harlem Road, near the intersection of Dick Road and George Urban Boulevard, and near the intersection of French Road and Borden Road.

Smaller scale, neighborhood oriented commercial areas can also be found along East Delavan Avenue, Dingens Street, Genesee Street, Dick Road, Rossler Avenue, Clinton Street, Cleveland Drive, Beach Road, and Kensington Avenue. Larger scale commercial strip development is located along Harlem Road between Cleveland Drive and State Route (SR) 33 and between Genesee Street and Walden Avenue, Genesee Street east of Harlem Road, Union Road between SR 33 and Walden Avenue and between Como Park Boulevard and the West Seneca town line, French Road east of Borden Road, and along Transit Road. Regional commercial areas include areas along Genesee Street that provide airport support services and the Walden Galleria area surrounding the I-90 interchange at Walden Avenue.

There are very few office complexes within the Town, however, office clusters can be found within the Airport Commerce Park on Cayuga Road, the Airport Commerce Park East on Genesee Street, the Aero Business Park on Aero Drive, along Walden Avenue east of Union Road, and at the Appletree Business Park on Union Road. Airborne Business Park, a 40 acre office park located along the east side of Holtz Drive is still under construction. The office park has a 54,000 s.f. , two-story office building completed and a second 108,000 s.f. three story office building under construction. Transportation related research and technology facilities, such as DRS, formerly Sierra Research, and Calspan, can be found in large complexes located near the Airport. Smaller service type offices can be found scattered throughout most of the commercial areas identified previously. Offices also exist within larger industrial uses, described in further detail below.

Industrial

Due to the presence of a large network of railroads, the airport, and I-90 in the Town, distribution, warehouse, or other industrial type uses are an integral economic base for the region. Industrial uses are generally clustered near the Airport, across the central portion of the Town paralleling the CSX and Norfolk Southern Railroads, and at the southwestern portion of the Town. Industrial uses throughout the Town include warehousing and storage, truck terminals and distribution centers, light manufacturing and assembly, research, rail intermodal centers, and heavy industrial. Buffalo Crushed Stone operates an extensive quarrying operation off of Como Park Boulevard east of Union Road.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Several industrial parks are located throughout the Town, some of which were developed by various public economic development agencies. Buffalo Airport Center on Genesee Street, and Sonwill Industrial Park off Genesee Street are located near the Airport. The Airport Commerce Park also offers warehouse and distribution space. Walden Commerce Exchange on Walden Avenue near Harlem Road, Kennedy Industrial Park on Broadway, Benbro Industrial Park on Walden Avenue west of Dick Road, and Cheektowaga Commercial Park on Broadway west of Dick Road are located along the railroad corridor between Walden Avenue and Broadway. The Gardenville Industrial Park and Gardenville East Industrial Park are located near the intersection of Union Road and French Road. Individual warehouse, distribution, and industrial uses are aligned along Broadway from the Village of Sloan to the Village of Depew and along Walden Avenue between just east of Union Road and Dick Road.

The Bison Yard intermodal center operated by Norfolk Southern is located off of Harlem Road. The intermodal center offers rail switching operations and rail to truck loading/ unloading. Frontier Yard, located off Broadway in the western portion of the Town, functions as a rail switching yard for CSX Transportation. There is also a cluster of truck terminals located near the I-90 interchange at Transit Road. Truck rest and fueling centers are located along Walden Avenue near the I-90 interchange. The Air Cargo facility located on Cayuga Road boasts 305,000 square feet of building space and houses FedEx, DHL, UPS, and the United States Post Office facilities.

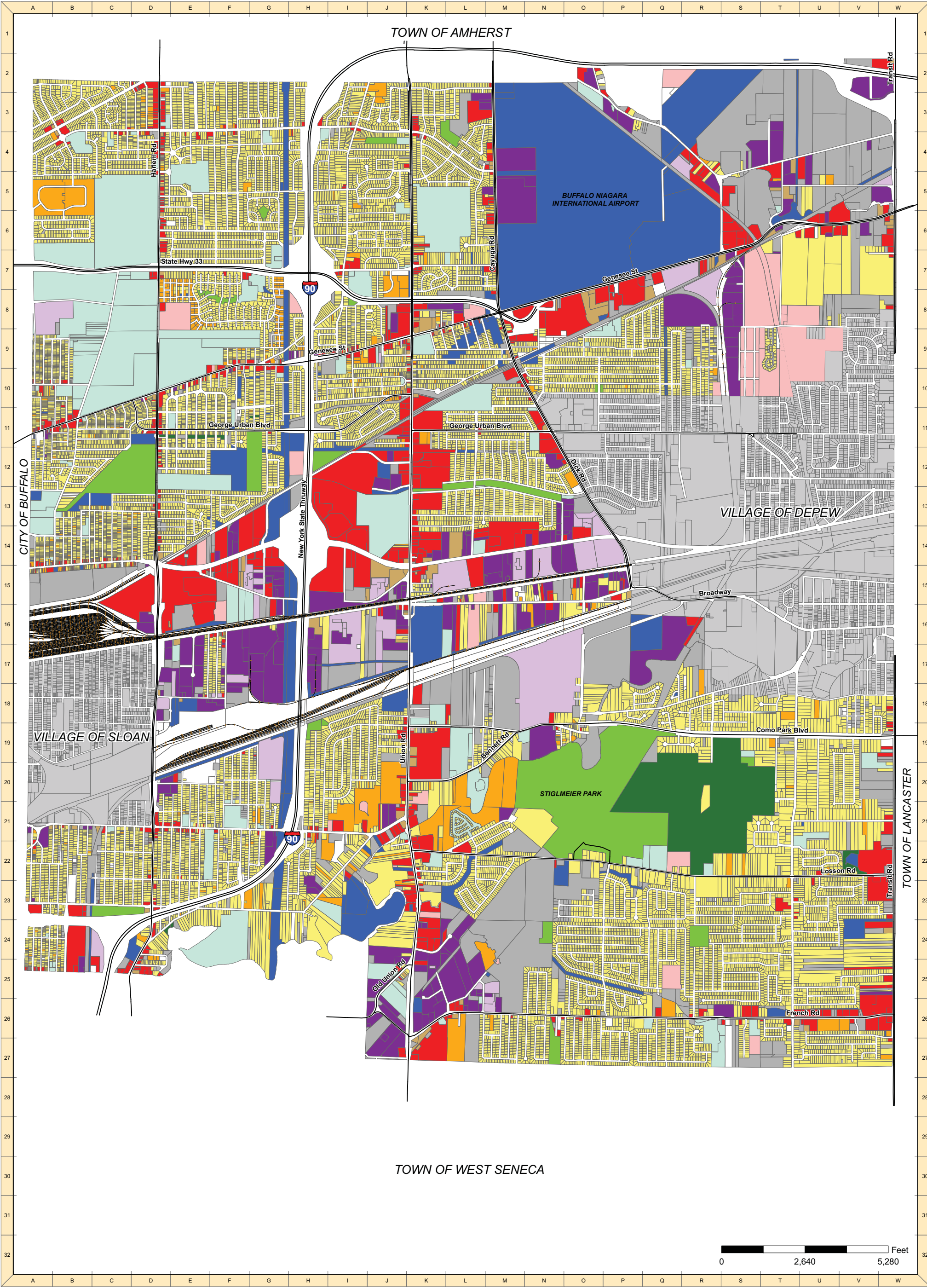
Institutional/ Public Facilities

The Buffalo-Niagara International Airport is a prominent public facility located in the Town. The Town also boasts St. Joseph's Hospital, Villa Maria College, Cheektowaga Town Park, JC Stiglmeier Park, Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve, several public and private schools, numerous community parks, and several notable cemeteries. Many of the neighborhoods throughout the Town are interspersed with churches representing numerous denominations as well as various community clubs. The Town of Cheektowaga Town Hall is located on Broadway near Union Road, the Police Department and Highway Department are located on Union Road south of the Town Hall. The Town also owns and operates several smaller facilities and grounds across the Town.

Vacant Land/ Open Space

There is very little remaining vacant land or undeveloped open space within the Town. The most vacant land available for development is located in the south east quadrant of the Town; however, the land requires assemblage of numerous parcels with narrow road frontage prior to development. Much of the remaining vacant land in the Town is within designated business and industrial parks awaiting development, is protected under conservation easements, is constrained by floodplains and/or wetlands, or is undevelopable due to a number of factors, such as locations of floodplains or presence of environmental concerns (brownfields).

The total breakdown of uses by percentage of land in the Town of Cheektowaga is shown in Table1 :



Map 3 - Existing Landuse

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

Town Boundary

Major Roads

Parcels (2007)

Railroad

Multiple Family Residence

Single/Two Family Residence

Landuse

Vacant

Commercial

Motor Service

Rec/Entertainment

Community Service/Religious

Gov't/Public

Industrial

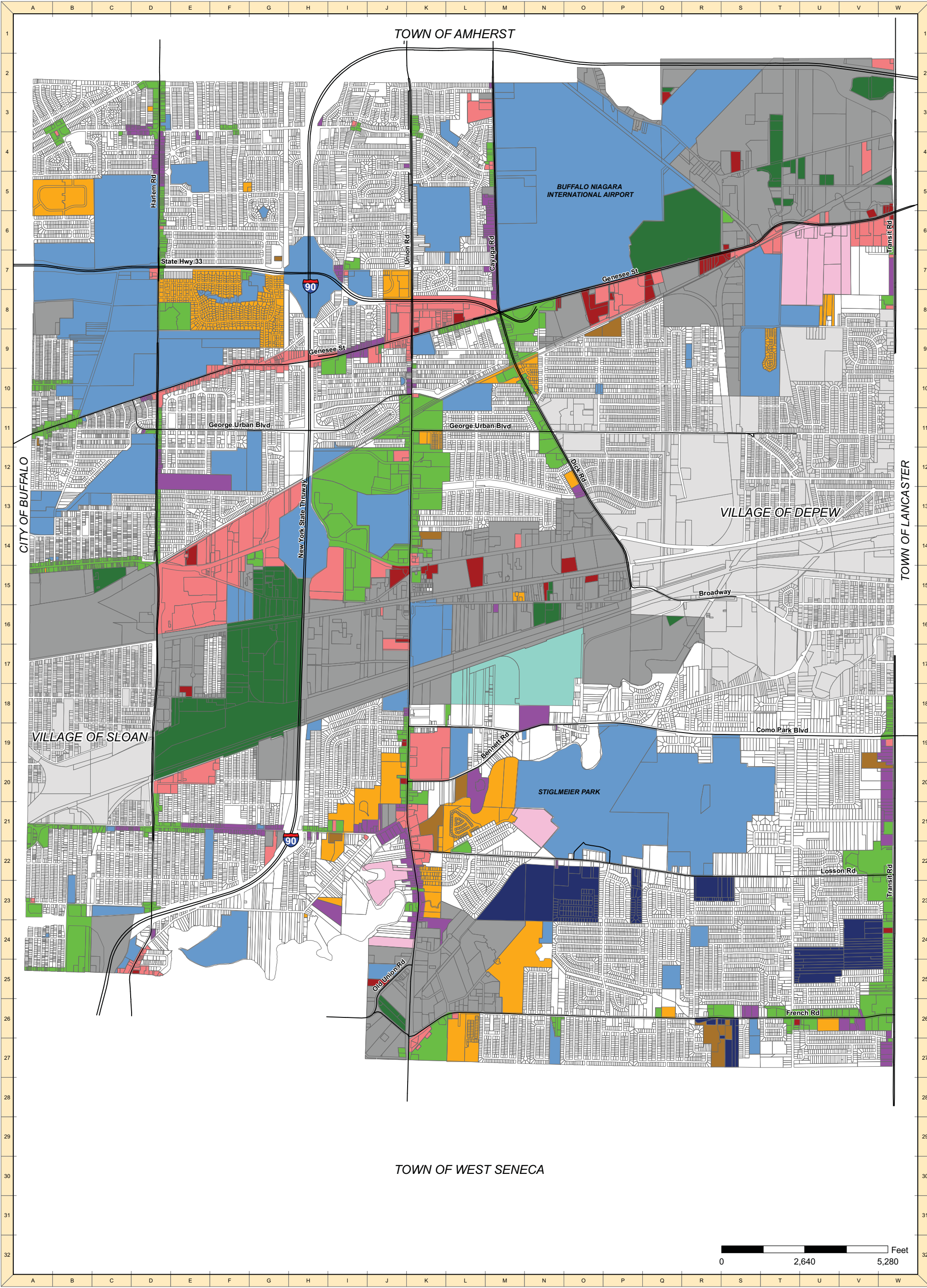
Warehouse/Distribution

Parks

Wild/Conservation Land

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: April, 2009

*The information on this document is based on data gathered from the following data sources and should not be used for design or construction. -Data Sources: Town of Cheektowaga, NYS GIS Clearinghouse.



Map 4 - Zoning

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND					
Town Boundary	AG- Special Aggregates District	M1- Light Manufacturing District	R- Residence District	RSC Residential Senior Citizen District	
Major Roads	C- Retail Business District	M2-General Manufacturing District	RA - Apartment District	RMH- Residential Mobile Home District	
Parcels (2008)	CF- Community Facilities District	MS- Motor Service District	NS- Neighborhood Service District	RS- Residence District Single Family	
	CM- General Commercial District				

*The information on this document is based on data gathered from the following data sources and should not be used for design or construction. -Data Sources: Town of Cheektowaga, NYS GIS Clearinghouse.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 1

Land Use*	Acres	Percent
Residential	4,956	36.4%
Commercial	2,143	15.7%
Industrial	343	2.5%
Public Utilities	1,236	9.1%
Institutional/ Community Facilities	1,941	14.2%
Vacant	1,698	12.5%
Uncategorized	1,313	9.6%
Total	13,630	100.0%

* Note: figures based on Town assessment records and exclude acreage in Town dedicated to rights-of-way, surface waters and other lands not covered by the property valuation system. Uncategorized lands are parcels with no land use codes provided in the assessment data.

3.2 Land Use Controls

A. Zoning

The Town of Cheektowaga adopted its current Zoning Law that establishes the following zoning districts for areas of the Town outside of the Villages (See Map 4 – Existing Zoning). Total acreage devoted to each zoning category is also shown.

Residence Districts:

- Residence District (R) – 4,446 acres (33.6%)
- Single Residential District (RS) – 267 acres (2.0%)
- Apartment District (RA) – 541 acres (4.0%)
- Residential Senior Citizen District (RSC) – 64 acres (0.5%)
- Residential Mobile Home District (RMH) – 179 acres (1.3%)

Business Districts:

- Neighborhood Service District (NS) – 258 acres (1.9%)
- Retail Business District (C) – 848 acres (6.2%)
- General Commercial District (CM) – 645 acres (4.7%)
- Motor Service District (MS) – 94 acres (0.7%)
- Community Facilities District (CF) – 2,903 acres (21.3%)

Manufacturing Districts:

- Light Manufacturing District (M1) – 2,625 acres (19.3%)
- General Manufacturing District (M2) – 600 acres (4.4%)
- Special Aggregate District (AG) – 160 acres (1.2%)



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Residential Districts

The Residence District (R) is intended to provide areas that will accommodate a wide variety of dwellings suited to the varying lifestyles, desires, and means of the present and future residents of the Town. Specific limitations have been established since certain types of dwellings will not be compatible in all areas of the Town. The Residence District permits single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, churches or similar places of worship, and schools. A special use permit is required for golf courses, windmills, and two-family dwellings located in certain areas of the Town. A home based business can be permitted upon the issuance of a temporary permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. The minimum lot size varies from 7,200 square feet for a single-family residence to 15,000 square feet for other principal buildings. The minimum lot width ranges from 60 feet to 95 feet depending upon use. All lots are required to have a minimum front setback of 25 feet.

The Single Residential District (RS) is intended to provide areas for low-density single-family detached residential development where each dwelling unit must be located on an individual lot and the maximum density will be approximately three dwelling units per gross acre. The Single Residential District permits single-family dwellings, churches or similar places of worship, and recreational uses. The minimum lot size varies from 10,800 square feet for an interior lot to 12,825 square feet for a corner lot. The minimum lot width ranges from 80 feet for an interior lot to 95 feet for a corner lot. All lots are required to have a minimum front setback of 35 feet.

The Apartment District (RA) is intended to provide areas for multi-family dwellings not to exceed 12 dwelling units per gross acre. The Apartment District permits multi-family dwellings, townhouses, condominiums, or apartments. The minimum lot size is 12,000 square feet, plus 3,500 square feet for each additional dwelling unit over three. The minimum lot width is 150 feet where the development abuts a public road. All lots are required to have a minimum front setback of 25 feet.

The Residential Senior Citizen District (RSC) is intended to provide areas for housing dedicated to persons 62 years of age or older. This district only permits senior housing in a complex setting. The minimum lot size is depended upon the type and number of units, but in no case is less than 1,000 square feet per unit. The minimum lot width is 100 feet. All lots are required to have a minimum front setback of 50 feet.

The Residential Mobile Home District (RMH) is intended to provide areas planned and developed as mobile home parks within the Town. The district will permit single-family detached mobile dwelling units on individual lots at a maximum density of approximately eight units per gross acre. The District also permits community offices and small convenience or retail stores of up to 3,000 square feet designed to serve the needs of the residents. The minimum lot size of the overall development is 20 acres with a minimum lot width of 100 feet. All individual lots are required to have a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet with a minimum width of 40 feet and a front setback of 15 feet.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Business Districts

The Neighborhood Service District (NS) is intended to provide a transitional zoning district within the Town for uses that are less intensive and/or obtrusive than retail business uses, are more compatible with nearby or adjacent residential uses and that are strictly limited to those uses which are in an enclosed building. The Neighborhood Service District permits offices, art, dance, or music studios, nursing homes, nonprofit institutions, and personal service establishments. There is no minimum lot size; however, the minimum lot width is 50 feet. All lots are required to have a minimum front setback of 50 feet.

The Retail Business District (C) is intended to provide a zoning district that would allow for the sale of goods and services to the general public within enclosed buildings. The goods and services offered within this district typically generate larger volumes of traffic than are generated by uses in the NS District, or are conducted from large complexes. These areas are typically isolated from residential areas by the transitional zoning district or abut the rear of residential areas, have direct access to main roads, and usually take the form of plazas. The Retail Business District permits any use in the NS District plus retail sales, dry cleaning or Laundromat, hotel or motel, restaurant, amusement or recreation facility, and drive-in banks. There is no minimum lot size; however, the minimum lot width is 50 feet. All lots are required to have a minimum front setback of 50 feet.

The General Commercial District (CM) is intended to provide an area for businesses that require outdoor display or storage areas in the normal operation of the business. The district also provides an area for businesses that, due to their nature, generate large volumes of traffic, result in large number of people gathering, and can result in higher levels of noise. The General Commercial District permits any use in the C District, plus machine or custom shops, drive-in theaters, self storage, building supply yards, and golf courses. There is no minimum lot size or minimum lot width. All lots are required to have a minimum front setback of 50 feet.

The Motor Service District (MS) is intended to provide areas within the Town for the location of transportation-oriented commercial uses designed to serve the needs of motorists and related vehicular needs. The Motor Service District permits motor vehicles service and filling stations, boat or marine sales, car wash, parking lots for vehicles, and automobile sales. There is no minimum lot size, except for automobile sales which require a minimum lot size of a half acre. The minimum lot width is 100 feet and all lots are required to have a minimum front setback of 50 feet.

The Community Facilities District (CF) is intended to provide a special zoning classification for public and semipublic facilities, including governmental, religious, educational, protective, and other civic facilities in order to ensure the proper location of such facilities in relation to transportation and other land uses within the Town, compatibility of such facilities with adjacent development, and proper site design and land development. The Community Facilities District permits cemeteries,



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

colleges, schools, government and public buildings, public recreation areas, public utility stations, and other civic uses. There is no minimum lot size or minimum lot width. All lots are required to have a minimum front setback of 50 feet.

Manufacturing Districts

The Manufacturing Districts are intended to provide areas for manufacturing, processing, warehousing and other uses that generally involve truck traffic, noise, and extensive outdoor storage/usage of the premises. These areas are typically located a distance from residential areas and are separated from residential areas by large expanses of retail/office use. The Light Manufacturing District (M1) permits laboratories, manufacturing and assembly plants, bottling, food processing and packaging, warehouse, offices, and medical facilities. Manufacturing or assembly uses that are first permitted in the M2 district are not allowed. All activities must take place within a completely enclosed building. There is no minimum lot size or minimum lot width. All lots are required to have a minimum front setback of 50 feet.

The General Manufacturing District (M2) is intended to provide areas within the Town for heavier industrial uses. The General Manufacturing District permits any use in the M1 District plus rail and freight yards, cement products and concrete mixing plants, building contracting yards, lumberyards, open storage yards, truck terminals, and adult uses. Upon the issuance of a special use permit, the District permits bulk storage of petroleum products, processing and treatment of bituminous products, solid waste transfer stations, and other industrial processes. The minimum lot size is one acre and the minimum lot width is 100 feet. All lots are required to have a minimum front setback of 50 feet.

Others Districts

The Special Aggregates District (AG) is intended to provide areas within the Town for the excavation or quarrying of aggregates and the treating and processing of such aggregates. The Special Aggregates District permits quarrying or excavation of earth materials and manufacturing of bituminous products. The only lot requirements are a 200 foot setback from any public right-of-way or adjacent property line.

The Special Flood Hazard Area is an overlay district that encompasses the floodplain boundaries of Ellicott, Scajaquada, Cayuga, and Slate Bottom Creeks and their tributaries to allow the free flow of flood waters and to prevent encroachments into the floodplains. The uses permitted within the overlay district are restricted to the raising of agricultural crops, roads, railroads, and utility lines, outdoor recreation areas, and storage yards.

The Critical Environmental Impact Zone is an overlay district created to promote the conservation and protection of certain environmental areas within the Town and to establish a more intensive review



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

of land use proposals. The lands that fall under the overlay district include the Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve and all areas within 400 feet of the Preserve, freshwater wetlands, as designated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the floodplains of Cayuga Creek and its tributaries as well as all parkland contiguous to such floodplain, and inactive hazardous waste sites, as designated by NYSDEC. The uses permitted within the overlay district are restricted to outdoor recreational areas or other low-intensity uses permitted by the underlying zoning district that maximizes conservation and protection of environmental features.

Other Zoning Restrictions

The Zoning Law establishes dimensional and use regulations, standards for signs, off-street parking and loading standards, height regulations, and lot size and open space regulations. The Zoning Law also includes provisions for non-conforming uses, procedures for Special Use Permits. Supplemental regulations are established for a number of uses including:

- Outdoor dining areas
- Temporary structures or uses
- Signs
- Motor fuel service stations
- Public garages
- Uses in Business and Manufacturing Districts
- Temporary outdoor sales or display

Any requests for interpretations of the Zoning Law or variances to the Zoning Law shall be taken up with the Town's Zoning Board of Appeals.

B. Land Subdivision Regulations

The Town of Cheektowaga currently does not have any adopted subdivision regulations. All lot and subdivision requirements are regulated under the Zoning Law as part of the site plan review process.

C. Site Plan Review

The Town Zoning requires the submittal of a site plan for all new developments in business or manufacturing zoning districts, and for developments in the following residential districts: RA Apartment District, RSC Senior Citizen Housing District and RMH Residential Mobile Home Districts. Site plans are also required for additions in excess of 350 square feet in Business zoning districts; or in excess of 500 square feet in manufacturing districts. Site plan submittal is also required for any change of use in a Business or Manufacturing zoning district.

The definitions section of the zoning lists what needs to be shown on a site plan, including existing conditions and proposed improvements. The code does not include a description of the process of submitting a site plan for review, and standards for what is to be reviewed are not explicitly listed. However, the standards for location of parking, signage, landscaping, screening and other issues are contained in other sections of the zoning regulations, particularly in Article V: Regulations Applying to



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

All Districts and Article VI: Supplemental regulations. For uses requiring a special use permit, approval must be granted by the Town Board following a public hearing.

D. Other Land Use Regulations

In addition to the Zoning Law, the Cheektowaga Town Code also establishes other laws that apply to land use activities regarding Environmental Impact Review, Noise, and Stormwater Management. The Environmental Impact Review Ordinance sets forth criteria for uses that will likely have a significant impact on the environment. The Noise Law of the Town of Cheektowaga provides regulations regarding noise. The Law establishes a process for obtaining a variance to allow any noise that exceeds the noise regulations and defines the enforcement procedures of noise violations. The Stormwater Management chapter is intended to establish minimum stormwater management requirements and controls to protect and safeguard the general health, safety, and welfare of the public. The chapter requires that all development submit a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to be approved by the Town Engineer and that certain larger developments shall include additional water quantity and quality controls. The Town also has a regulation addressing Wireless Telecommunications facilities that is intended to establish a fair and efficient process for the review and approval of wireless telecommunication facilities while minimizing potential negative impacts.

3.3 Demographic Profile

The demographic background, including population, housing, income, and economic data for the Town of Cheektowaga is based on the 2000 U.S. Census. Although this data is relatively dated, it provides the most comprehensive data for the area, as well as the preferred Town geography for the creation of the community inventory report. The 2006 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey provided population estimates for several communities, including the Town of Cheektowaga. The 2006 Census Bureau population estimates do not go beyond the county level geography, and therefore, cannot be used for the Town.

Population

The Town of Cheektowaga's population in 2000 was 94,019. This represents a decrease of 7.3 percent from the 1990 population of 99,300. According to population estimates prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, the Town population was estimated to be 87,185 in 2006, representing a continued decline. (These population estimates have a margin of error of +/- 5.6 percent, so the actual population may be higher or lower than the estimate by about 4,900 people. Population losses in the Town are more pronounced than those for Erie County as a whole, which lost 47,142 residents, or approximately 5 percent between 1990 and 2006.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 2 – Population

	1990	2000	2006 (estimate)**
Cheektowaga Town	99,300	94,019	87,185
Villages*	14,913	14,031	11,906
Town outside Villages	84,387	79,988	75,279
Erie County	968,532	950,265	921,390

Table 3 - Population Change

	1990-2000		2000-2006		1990-2006	
Cheektowaga Town	-5,281	-5.3%	-6,834	-7.3%	-12,115	-12.2%
Villages*	-882	-5.9%	2,125	-15.1%	-3,007	-20.2%
Town outside Villages	-4,399	-5.2%	-4,709	-5.9%	-9,108	-10.8%
Erie County	-18,267	-1.9%	28,875	-3.0%	-47,142	-4.9%

* Villages include all of Sloan and those parts of the Villages of Depew and Williamsville that fall within the Town of Cheektowaga.

** 2006 figure is an estimate with a margin of error of +/- 5.6%. Actual figures could be higher or lower.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Cheektowaga's population skews considerably older than that of Erie County as a whole. As of the 2000 Census, 20.5 percent of the Town's persons were aged 65 or older (up from 18.3 percent in 1990), in comparison with the county total of 15.9 percent. Similarly, about 20 percent of Cheektowaga's residents in 2000 were under 18 year old, compared with 24.3 percent of all County residents.

Just over 80 percent of the Town's population has at least a high school degree, with 15.1 percent obtaining a bachelor's degree or higher. These rates are somewhat lower than the County's, where nearly 83 percent of the population has a high school degree, and 24.5 percent are college graduates.

The Town's median family income as of the 2000 Census was \$46,646, which was nearly \$3,000 lower than the County median family income of \$49,490. Median household income, which includes incomes from single person households, who are not classified as 'families' under Census definitions show a much smaller gap: In Cheektowaga, median household income was \$38,121, while the median household in the County had income of \$38,567. Current estimates suggest that the median family income in Cheektowaga increased to \$50,415, an increase of only about 1.3 percent annually (below the inflation rate). As a result, the share of families living below the federal poverty line has increased, rising from 4.6 percent of families (6.5 percent of all individuals) in 2000 to 5.9 percent in 2006 (representing 8.6 percent of the town's total population). Due to concentrations of poverty in the urban centers of Buffalo and Lackawanna, poverty levels are much higher in Erie County, where 9.2 percent of families (12.2 percent of



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

individuals) fell below the poverty line in 2000, and currently an estimated 13.9 percent of individuals fall below the federal poverty line.

Households

In 2000, the Town of Cheektowaga had a total of 40,045 households (occupied housing units). Despite decreasing population figures, the number of households actually increased between 1990 and 2000, as the town's average household size dropped from nearly 2.5 persons in 1990 to 2.32 persons in 2000. This downward trend in average household sizes was due in large measure to an increase in single-person households, which increased from 25.0 percent of all household types in 1990 to 30.4 percent in 2000.

2006 estimates suggest that this trend toward smaller household sizes has continued, with average household size estimated at 2.25 persons. A large share of this smaller household size can be attributed to the increase in single-person households, which increased from 25.0 percent of all household types in 1990 to 30.4 percent in 2000. The Town's average household size was essentially the same as the county's in 1990, but has decreased more rapidly than the County, where the current estimate is 2.35 persons per household.

Table 4 - Households

	1990	2000	2006 (estimate)**
<i>Cheektowaga Town</i>	39,684	40,045	38,247
Avg. HH Size	2.49 persons	2.32 persons	2.25 persons
Villages*	5,780	5,857	5,677
Town outside Villages	33,904	34,188	32,570
<i>Erie County</i>	376,994	380,873	374,234
Avg. HH Size	2.50 persons	2.41 persons	2.35 persons

Table 5 - Change in Households by Community

	1990-2000		2000-2006		1990-2006	
Cheektowaga Town	361	0.9%	-1,798	-4.5%	-1,437	-3.6%
Villages*	77	1.3%	-180	-3.1%	-103	-1.8%
Town outside Villages	284	0.8%	-1,618	-4.7%	-1,334	-3.9%
Erie County	3,879	1.0%	-6,639	-1.7%	-2,760	-0.7%

* Villages include all of Sloan and those parts of the Villages of Depew and Williamsville that fall within the Town of Cheektowaga.

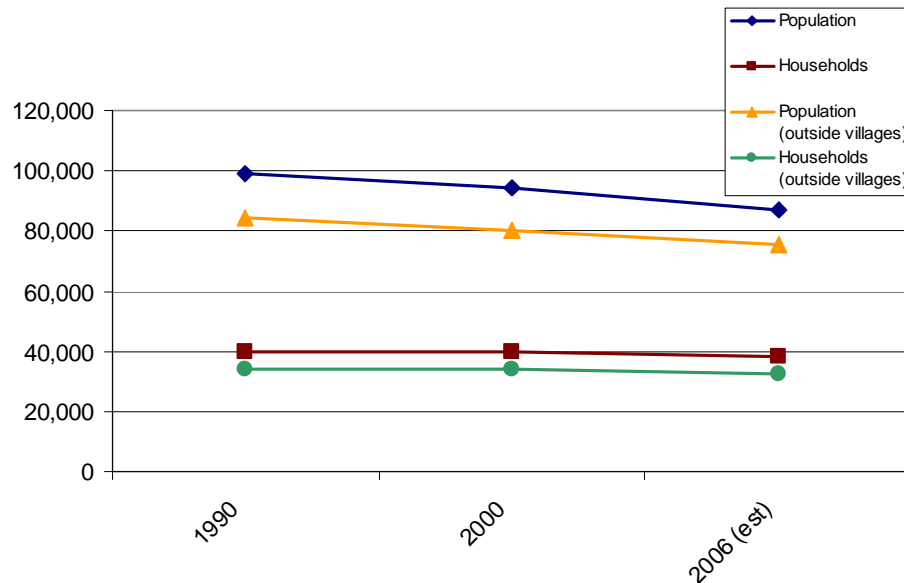
** 2006 figure is an estimate with a margin of error of +/- 5.6%. Actual figures could be higher or lower.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 1 - Population and Household Trends



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and American Community Survey, 2006

As the table above indicates, the Town actually saw an increase in the number of households between 1990 and 2000, despite population losses, which helped support housing occupancy over the 1990's. However, this trend has not continued into the current decade. Census estimates project that the Town lost 1,798 households in the period between 2000 and 2006, the equivalent of a 4.5 percent decrease. This decrease is concentrated in the area of the Town outside the Villages. Erie County also saw a decrease in the number of households, but at a much more modest pace (1.7 percent). The following graph depicts population and household trends.

3.4 Housing and Neighborhoods

In 2000, there were 41,901 total housing units in the Town. Nearly 96 percent of the units were occupied, and the town-wide vacancy rate was 4.4 percent. Vacancy rates of under 5 percent are generally considered 'normal' vacancy that occurs due to transition in the marketplace (home sales). Most of the vacancy was in rental units. Homeowner vacancy was only 1.3 percent, while rental vacancy was 5.3 percent. The current population estimates from the Bureau of the Census suggest that vacancy has increased to 7.6 percent, or a total of 3,132 units in the Town.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

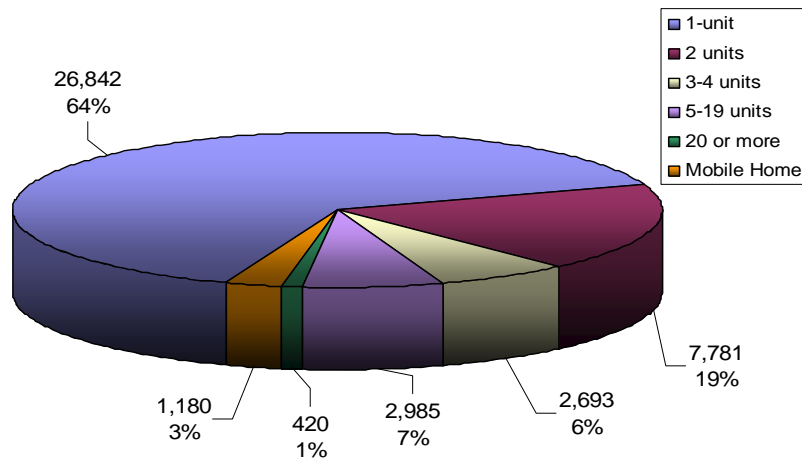
The majority of housing units in the Town (72 percent) were owner-occupied as of the 2000 Census. This is slightly higher than homeownership rates of Erie County (65 percent) and the U.S. (66 percent), but slightly lower than in comparable suburban communities in Erie County, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 – Percentage of Homeownership by Community

	Population	Homeownership Rate
Town of Cheektowaga	94,019	71.8 %
Town of Amherst	116,510	74.0%
Town of Lancaster	39,019	77.2%
Town of Tonawanda	78,155	72.9%
Town of West Seneca	45,920	78.4%
Erie County	950,265	65.3%
City of Buffalo	292,648	43.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Figure 2 – Housing Type



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

Most of the housing stock in Cheektowaga consists of single-family units, with 64.1 percent of all housing units in one-family homes, with another 2.8 percent in mobile homes. About 19 percent of units are in two-family homes. Apartments in buildings with three or more units make up the remaining 15 percent

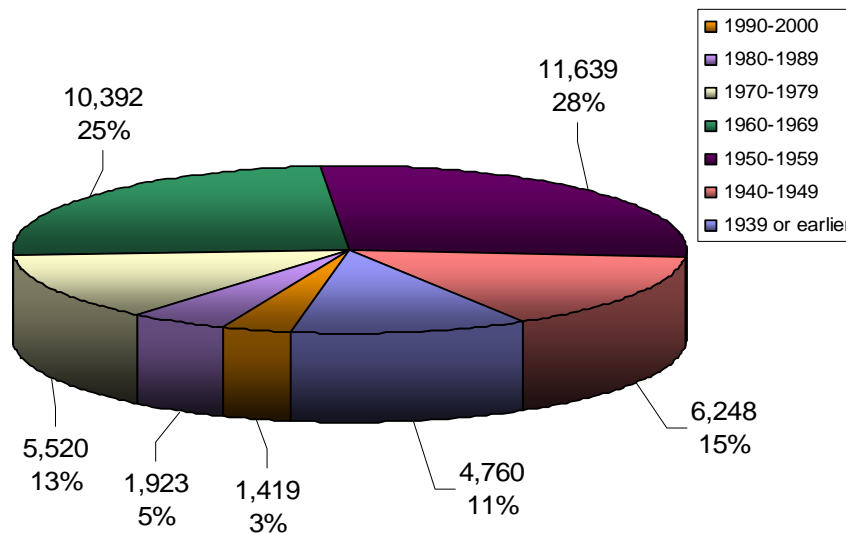


TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

of the housing stock, with most concentrated in small buildings. Large apartment buildings (20 or more units) comprise only one percent of the housing stock.

Most of the Town's housing stock was built in the years following World War II. Approximately 43 percent of the housing stock was built between 1940 and 1959. The median age of housing in the Town is about 50 years old (median year built: 1959). There is still new housing being constructed in the Town, with over 1,400 new units built between 1990 and 2000.

Figure 3 - Housing: Year Built



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

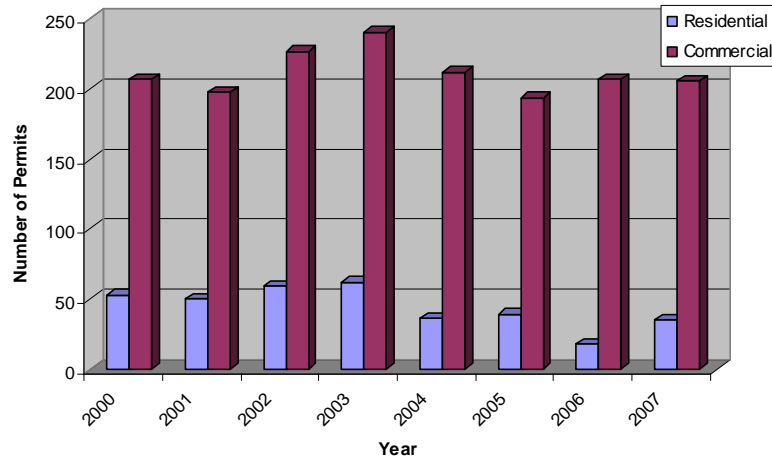
Building Permit Trends

Residential and commercial building activity in the Town has remained relatively stable since 2000. Between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2007, there were a total of 352 residential building permits and 1,692 commercial building permits issued in the Town, with the greatest activity for each occurring in 2003. The following chart shows the building permit activity in the Town between 2000 and 2007.



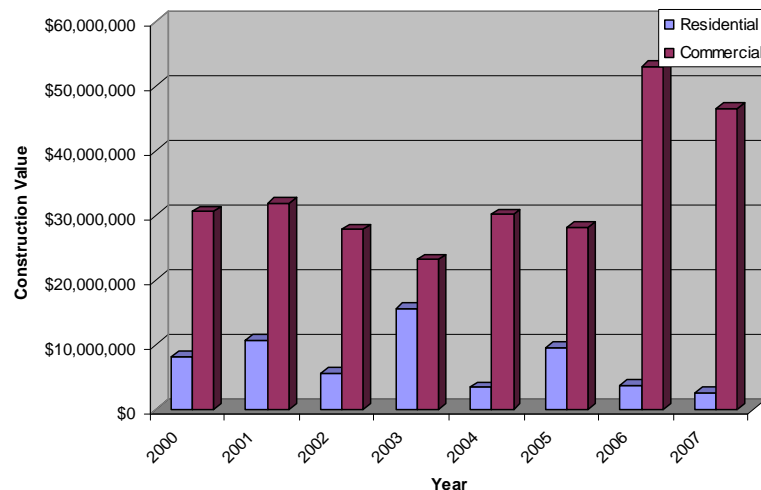
TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 4 - Building Permit Activity



The construction value of both residential and commercial building activity does not necessarily correspond to the number of permits issued. While the construction value of residential building activity has remained somewhat stable throughout the decade, the value of commercial building activity has increased since 2006. Since 2000, residential building has resulted in total construction costs of approximately \$60 million, while commercial building has accounted for total construction costs of nearly \$270 million. The following chart shows the construction value of building activity in the Town between 2000 and 2007.

Figure 5 - Construction Value of Building Activity





TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

3.5 Economic Development

An Aging Population

In the next ten years, the United States will undergo a profound demographic shift as baby-boomers enter retirement. The economic consequences will be enormous. Consumer spending patterns will shift, while companies providing those goods and services will need to re-tool their workforce to deal with the exit of experienced talent and entrance of new talent. The inventory has identified two major indicators that illustrate the reality of this change. To ease the interpretation of this data, we have prepared a population pyramid and a bar graph displaying the current types of households. An aging population requires a significantly different set of services (both public and private). These include medical, public transportation, personal care, and social services. The comprehensive plan must account for this change.

These data reflect the most recent set of statistics available for Cheektowaga; although communities with over 65,000 residents are evaluated every year, reports lag collection considerably. The American Community Survey (ACS) is also sample based and should not be considered a substitute for the accurate population counts provided by the decennial census. Grouping people by age and sex can often lead to insights about local spending patterns, for example, explaining significant sales of such goods as diapers or dentures. The following Figure 6 shows population pyramids derived from the 2006 ACS for Cheektowaga's population and the U.S. population. These charts illustrate how Cheektowaga's population is more heavily concentrated among older age cohorts than the national population as a whole. The U.S. pyramid is a relatively smooth shape, with bulges among the Millennial (0-19 years) and Baby Boomer (40-59 years) generations, followed by a sharp drop into the older age cohorts. In contrast, Cheektowaga's pyramid is very small among young working adults (ages 25-39 are among the smallest cohorts), very large among Baby Boomers (ages 40-49) and disproportionately concentrated among older residents. Tellingly, there are almost as many 70-74 year old residents in Cheektowaga (4.24 percent of the town total) as 25-29 year olds (4.67 percent). By comparison, just 2.86 of all U.S. residents are between 70 and 74 years of age and 6.79 percent are between 25 and 29.

Households by Type

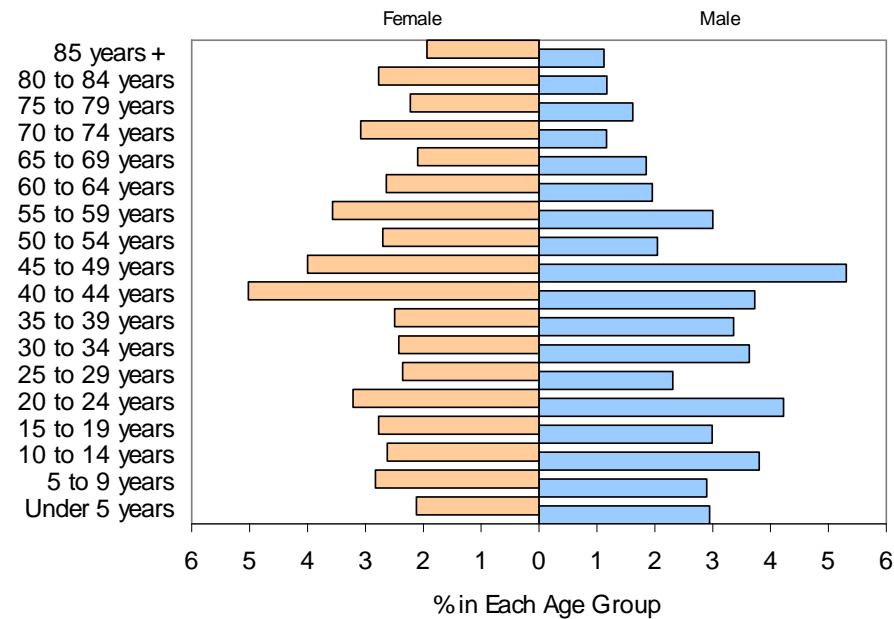
In 1990, Married-couple families constituted 58 percent of households in the Town of Cheektowaga. By 2000, the proportion of married-couple families declined significantly to 50 percent. For all of Erie County, 64 percent of households in 2000 were headed by married couples, down slightly from 67 percent in 1990 (see Figure 7)



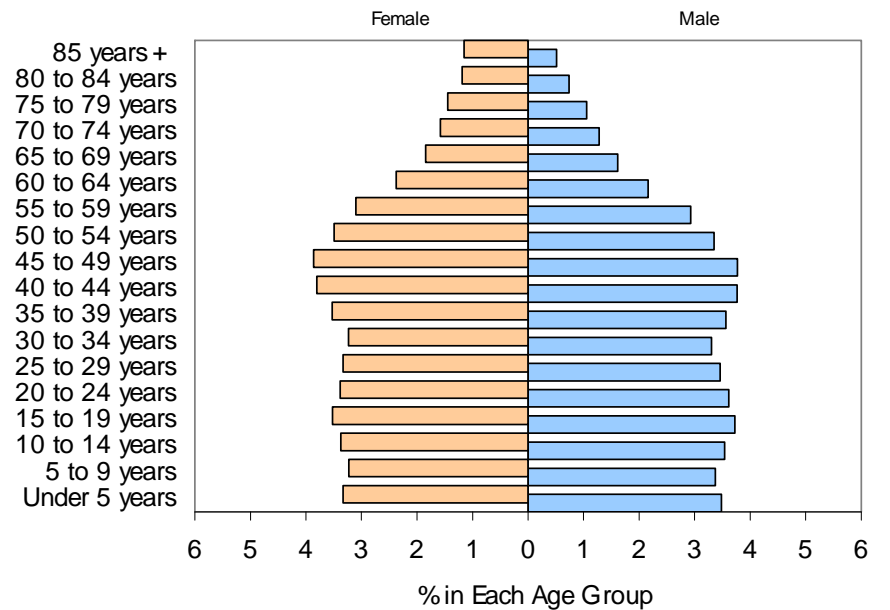
TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 6 – Population Pyramids for Cheektowaga and U.S.

Population Pyramid for Cheektowaga, 2006



Population Pyramid for U.S., 2006

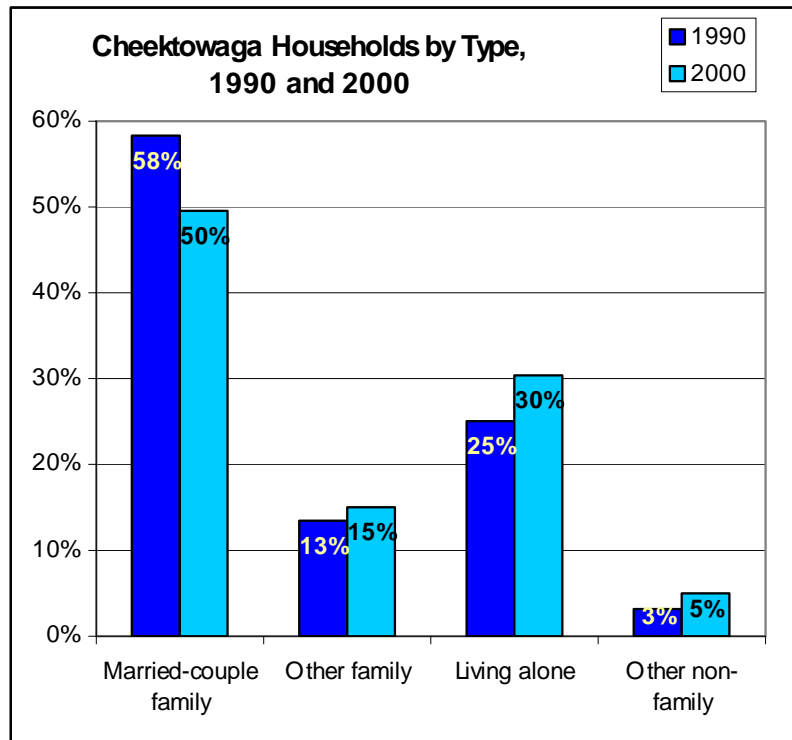


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 7



Among other types of households, the fastest increase was among those living alone, mirroring a national trend. As of 2000, 30 percent of all households in Cheektowaga only contained one resident. This shift illustrates the changing nature of housing demand among the town's residents and the need for diverse housing types in the future that respond to these needs.

Table 7 – Change in Household Types from 1990 to 2000

	Change (by number and percent)	
Total households	350	0.9%
Family households (families)	-2,618	-9.2%
Married-couple families	-3,310	-14.3%
Other family, female householder	419	10.1%
Non-family households	2,968	26.5%
Householder living alone	2,223	22.3%
Householder 65 years and over	1,071	20.9%



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

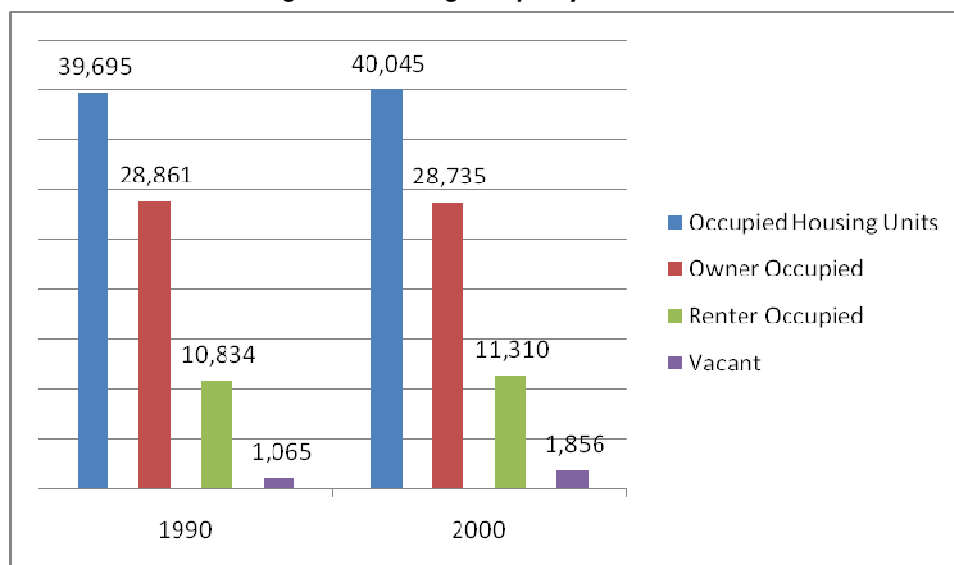
Major Findings: Although there was a slight gain in the number of households between 1990 and 2000, the type of households drastically shifted. Married couples and families declined, while singles –especially those over 65– increased dramatically.

Housing Occupancy and Tenure

In keeping with regional trends, Cheektowaga has experienced a significant rise in housing vacancy. In 1990, there were 1,065 vacant households in the Town of Cheektowaga, representing 2.7 percent of the town's housing stock. By 2000, the number of vacant units had risen by over 70 percent to 1,856, a vacancy rate of 4.6 percent. This finding tracks with the town's population decline of more than 5,000 people over the same period. Despite Cheektowaga's rising vacancy rate, its vacancy is still well below the rate for all of Erie County. As of the 2000 Census, the county's housing vacancy rate was 8.4 percent, nearly double that of Cheektowaga's, although much of the county's vacancy is concentrated in the City of Buffalo.

Among occupied units, the number of owner occupied units dropped very slightly from 1990 to 2000 (0.4 percent), but the number of renter occupied units increased by 4.4 percent.

Figure 8 - Housing Occupancy and Tenure



Occupancy and Tenure	1990	2000
Occupied housing units	39,695	40,045
Owner occupied	28,861	28,735
Renter occupied	10,834	11,310
Vacant housing units	1,065	1,856



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Regional Employment Statistics: Location Quotient Analysis

Economic Stewardship, Inc. performed a location quotient analysis to help us determine what economic activity the Buffalo- Niagara region is currently concentrated in (meaning a large proportion of people work in that field) and whether any industry sectors are rising or falling significantly (signified by a recent change in the number of people working there). This metric, which appears on the chart below, uses BLS employment data to estimate the degree of specialization across industry sectors for a particular area relative to a larger geography (a state, region, nation, or group of nations), as measured by relative strength of employment figures in particular fields. For this analysis, the Buffalo- Niagara metropolitan area¹ has been compared to the wider region consisting of New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio, noted here as the “Tri-State Area”.

Calculation:

$$\text{Location Quotient} = \frac{\text{Cheektowaga Jobs in Industry Sector}}{\text{Total Cheektowaga Jobs in All Sectors}} \div \frac{\text{Tri - State Area Jobs in Industry Sector}}{\text{Tri - State Area Jobs in All Sectors}}$$

Interpretation of the location quotient chart:

- Above 1.00: A location quotient for the local employment market that is greater than 1.00 indicates that the area has a specialization in this field relative to the Tri-State region; a number greater than 1.20 indicates a large degree of specialization as compared to the broader three-state region.
- Below 1.00: A location quotient less than 1.00 indicates that the sector is not specialized relative to the Tri-State Area; less than .80 indicates it is not very specialized at all relative to the region, or comprises an area where the Buffalo-Niagara area is relatively ‘under-represented.’
- Equals 1.00: A location quotient equal to 1.00 indicates that employment in that sector in the Buffalo MSA mirrors employment levels in that sector in the Tri-State Area of NY, OH, & PA.

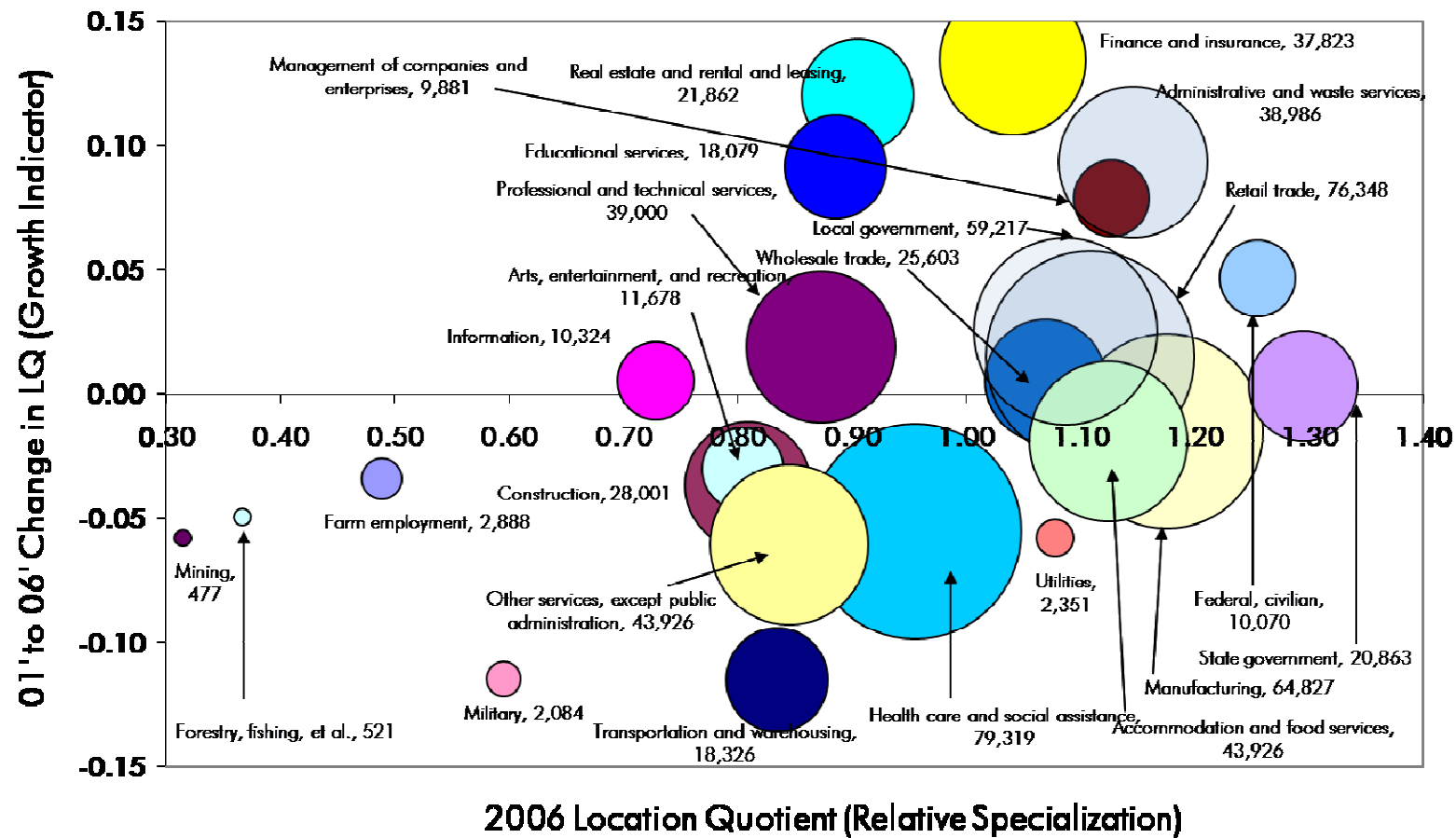
The Figure 9 bubble diagram on the following page graphically illustrates the relative strength of specific industries in the Buffalo-Niagara region. The size of the bubble depicts how many people in the Buffalo

¹ Employment data are only available at the metropolitan level, not at the Town level.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Performance of Buffalo-Niagara MSA relative to NY, OH, and PA combined





TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

area who are employed within that industry. The location of the bubble depicts the relative strength of the industry in comparison to the wider Tri-State region. Industries on the right side of the diagram are areas of relative specialization for the Buffalo-Niagara MSA (location quotient is greater than 1.0). For example, State government is the industry with the highest location quotient, indicating the relative strength of the first sector. The y-axis of the graphic depicts relative shifts in specialization between 2001 and 2006. Industries falling below the horizontal line are becoming less competitive, compared to the Tri-State region, suggesting a declining industry, while sectors above the line are growing. Findings of the Location Quotient Analysis:

- Buffalo as a region is specialized and experiencing growth in the industries of Finance and Insurance, Administrative and Waste Services, Management of Companies and Enterprises, Retail and Wholesale Trade, and Government Employment. The growth in retail and wholesale trade may be a regional trend that Cheektowaga is driving or benefiting from.
- Buffalo as a region is not specialized in Information, Professional and Technical Services, Educational Services, and Real Estate (local employment concentrations are lower in these sectors than in the comparison Tri-State region). However, the Buffalo region is experiencing some growth in these sectors.
- Buffalo as a region is specialized in Utilities, Manufacturing, and Accommodation and Food Services, but these industries are declining in importance in the Buffalo metropolitan area, compared to the wider Tri-State region.
- Buffalo as a region is shrinking in Health Care and Social Assistance, Other Services, Construction, Transportation and Warehousing, and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation. Also, despite the large numbers of people employed in some of those industries, these sectors make up a smaller proportion of Buffalo's employment base than in the Tri-State region.

Commercial Retail Specialization

■ **Retail Spending Patterns**

We obtained retail sales data by category for Erie County and Cheektowaga from Claritas (a data clearinghouse) to extract current (2007) local and regional spending habits. Retail sales figures (see Tables 1 and 2) are collected and categorized using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) which, despite its name, addresses all aspects of the economy including government, retail and service



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

activity, as well as industrial enterprises. NAICS organizes the economy into numerous sectors and sub-sectors corresponding to numeric codes (these numbers following the categories on the chart).

NAICS codes are nested and specificity increases with the number of digits². For example, NAICS category 541 encompasses all Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; within NAICS 541, 5411 includes all Legal Services; within that, 54119 addresses Other Legal Services and within that, 541191 Title Abstract and Settlement Offices. Although this degree of specificity yields some fascinating information—and some NAICS sub-sectors require 8 digits to describe—for smaller geographic areas, the need to suppress data to preserve confidentiality means that even the four-digit level of detail contains significant gaps.

Tables 1 and 2 (below) describe consumer spending for, respectively, Erie County and Cheektowaga:

■ Expected Consumer Expenditures

The expected consumer expenditures columns in Tables 1 and 2 provide estimates of what people are expected to spend on goods categorized by industrial sectors and sub-sectors (NAICS) in Cheektowaga and Erie County (See Table 1 & 2). The estimates are calculated by applying national spending data from the 2005 Consumer Expenditure Survey to local average household incomes³. As a hypothetical example, if, on a national basis, consumers spend 1 percent of their household income buying fresh cut flowers, then a local household with an average annual income of \$50,000 would be expected to spend \$500 every year on them (1 percent of \$50,000). If the local economy had 50,000 households, we would expect consumer expenditures in that community on fresh cut flowers to total \$25 million. To the extent that

² NAICS replaced the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code system in 1997. The SIC code system also used a nested numeric system which influenced the NAICS taxonomy: for example, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services was formerly SIC category 54 and is now NAICS category 541. For this reason, as well as habit, many people refer to “SIC” codes when they actually mean “NAICS” codes. People using pre-1997 figures classified using the SIC system use generally accepted practices to combine them with contemporary data organized using the NAICS codes.

³ **Leakage or Excess Capture** = $RS - \left(AHI * \left(\frac{CE}{Total\ CE} \right) * H \right)$

Where:

RS = Retail Sales in Industry Sector

AHI = Average Household Income in Cheektowaga

CE = Consumer Expenditures in Industry Sector

Total CE = Total Consumer Expenditures across all Sectors

H = Number of Households in Cheektowaga



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 8 - Erie County Consumer Spending and Retail Sales

3 Digit NAICS Code	4 Digit NAICS Code	Expected Consumer Expenditures in 2007 Dollars	Actual Retail Sales in 2007 Dollars	Expected Consumer Expenditures less Actual Retail Sales
	5 Digit NAICS Code			
	6 Digit NAICS Code			
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers-441	Automotive Dealers-4411	\$ 2,359,816,731	\$ 2,965,656,897	\$ (605,840,166)
	Other Motor Vehicle Dealers-4412	169,616,045	119,317,034	50,299,011
	Automotive Parts/Accsrs, Tire Stores-4413	209,617,175	180,080,906	29,536,269
	Total	\$ 2,739,049,951	\$ 3,265,054,837	\$ (526,004,886)
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores-442	Furniture Stores-4421	\$ 213,084,685	\$ 158,223,997	\$ 54,860,688
	Home Furnishing Stores-4422	185,815,486	107,306,073	78,509,413
	Total	\$ 398,900,171	\$ 265,530,070	\$ 133,370,101
Electronics and Appliance Stores-443	Appliances, TVs, Electronics Stores-44311	\$ 271,001,797	\$ 249,795,057	\$ 21,206,740
	Household Appliances Stores-443111	60,630,718	88,972,001	(28,341,283)
	Radio, Television, Electronics Stores-443112	210,371,079	160,823,056	49,548,023
	Computer and Software Stores-44312	69,717,485	40,493,019	29,224,466
	Camera and Photographic Equipment Stores-44313	14,527,136	4,810,000	9,717,136
	Total	\$ 355,246,418	\$ 295,098,076	\$ 60,148,342
Building Material, Garden Equipment Stores -444	Building Material and Supply Dealers-4441	\$ 1,540,813,740	\$ 1,221,814,790	\$ 318,998,950
	Home Centers-44411	580,610,723	488,644,994	91,965,729
	Paint and Wallpaper Stores-44412	39,740,653	25,945,998	13,794,655
	Hardware Stores-44413	118,854,947	74,248,976	44,605,971
	Other Building Materials Dealers-44419	801,607,417	632,974,822	168,632,595
	Building Materials, Lumberyards-444191	272,741,316	215,851,310	56,890,006
	Lawn, Garden Equipment, Supplies Stores-4442	151,215,906	104,464,980	46,750,926
	Outdoor Power Equipment Stores-44421	23,618,041	41,957,009	(18,338,968)
	Nursery and Garden Centers-44422	127,597,865	62,507,971	65,089,894
Total		\$ 1,692,029,646	\$ 1,326,279,770	\$ 365,749,876



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Food and Beverage Stores-445	Grocery Stores-4451	\$	1,672,086,861	\$	2,455,890,980	\$	(783,804,119)
	Supermarkets, Grocery (Ex Conv) Stores-44511		1,586,585,577		2,292,379,980		(705,794,403)
	Convenience Stores-44512		85,501,284		163,511,000		(78,009,716)
	Specialty Food Stores-4452		57,313,829		103,311,067		(45,997,238)
	Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores-4453		120,819,861		148,904,016		(28,084,155)
Total		\$	1,850,220,551	\$	2,708,106,063	\$	(857,885,512)
Health and Personal Care Stores-446	Pharmacies and Drug Stores-44611	\$	618,291,092	\$	915,482,999	\$	(297,191,907)
	44612		25,252,424		27,880,982		(2,628,558)
	Optical Goods Stores-44613		28,426,385		46,359,993		(17,933,608)
	Other Health and Personal Care Stores-44619		45,899,268		48,080,978		(2,181,710)
Total		\$	717,869,169	\$	1,037,804,952	\$	(319,935,783)
Gasoline Stations-447	Gasoline Stations With Conv Stores-44711	\$	1,173,771,489	\$	923,162,948	\$	250,608,541
	Other Gasoline Stations-44719		374,572,311		195,419,039		179,153,272
	Total	\$	1,548,343,800	\$	1,118,581,987	\$	429,761,813
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores-448	Clothing Stores-4481	\$	492,681,336	\$	486,854,076	\$	5,827,260
	Men's Clothing Stores-44811		32,739,866		28,324,011		4,415,855
	Women's Clothing Stores-44812		123,656,967		124,904,008		(1,247,041)
	Childrens, Infants Clothing Stores-44813		27,928,031		37,927,004		(9,998,973)
	Family Clothing Stores-44814		264,023,650		247,184,996		16,838,654
	Clothing Accessories Stores-44815		11,429,183		11,872,011		(442,828)
	Other Clothing Stores-44819		32,903,639		36,642,046		(3,738,407)
	Shoe Stores-4482		94,057,877		98,729,998		(4,672,121)
	Jewelry, Luggage, Leather Goods Stores-4483		98,817,308		84,058,930		14,758,378
	Jewelry Stores-44831		91,156,135		84,058,930		7,097,205
	Luggage and Leather Goods Stores-44832		7,661,173		-		7,661,173
	Total	\$	685,556,521	\$	669,643,004	\$	15,913,517



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

<i>Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores-451</i>	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Inst Stores-4511	\$	198,790,977	\$	267,019,891	\$	(68,228,914)
	Sporting Goods Stores-45111		105,689,873		143,845,934		(38,156,061)
	Hobby, Toys and Games Stores-45112		61,984,597		85,806,996		(23,822,399)
	Sew/Needlework/ Piece Goods Stores-45113		12,870,403		19,897,000		(7,026,597)
	Musical Instrument and Supplies Stores-45114		18,246,104		17,469,961		776,143
	Book, Periodical and Music Stores-4512		84,657,122		115,510,030		(30,852,908)
	Book Stores and News Dealers-45121		59,255,543		57,466,019		1,789,524
	Book Stores-451211		55,516,607		55,373,021		143,586
	News Dealers and Newsstands-451212		3,738,936		2,092,998		1,645,938
	Prerecorded Tapes, CDs, Record Stores-45122		25,401,579		58,044,011		(32,642,432)
Total		\$	283,448,099	\$	382,529,921	\$	(99,081,822)
<i>General Merchandise Stores- 452</i>	Department Stores Excl Leased Depts-4521	\$	832,663,403	\$	896,456,005	\$	(63,792,602)
	Other General Merchandise Stores-4529		978,018,159		344,937,897		633,080,262
	Warehouse Clubs and Super Stores-45291		842,909,257		318,736,844		524,172,413
	All Other General Merchandise Stores-45299		135,108,902		26,201,053		108,907,849
Total		\$	1,810,681,562	\$	1,241,393,902	\$	569,287,660
<i>Miscellaneous Store Retailers- 453</i>	Florists-4531	\$	29,591,787	\$	38,079,007	\$	(8,487,220)
	Office Supplies, Stationery, Gift Stores-4532		161,708,975		184,894,938		(23,185,963)
	Office Supplies and Stationery Stores-45321		91,690,540		102,379,017		(10,688,477)
	Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Stores-45322		70,018,435		82,515,921		(12,497,486)
	Used Merchandise Stores-4533		33,950,618		9,844,108		24,106,510
Total		\$	408,779,153	\$	394,585,141	\$	14,194,012



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Non-Store Retailers-454	Electronic Shopping, Mail-Order Houses-4541	\$ 645,460,654	\$ 223,383,998	\$ 422,076,656
	Vending Machine Operators-4542	41,966,389	20,458,994	21,507,395
	Direct Selling Establishments-4543	371,848,106	138,109,975	233,738,131
	Total	\$ 1,059,275,149	\$ 381,952,967	\$ 677,322,182
Food Service and Drinking Places-722	Full-Service Restaurants-7221	\$ 636,383,696	\$ 570,739,927	\$ 65,643,769
	Limited-Service Eating Places-7222	582,736,240	509,885,030	72,851,210
	Special Foodservices-7223	112,651,880	220,811,990	(108,160,110)
	Drinking Places -Alcoholic Beverages-7224	64,995,237	70,132,062	(5,136,825)
	Total	\$ 1,396,767,053	\$ 1,371,569,009	\$ 25,198,044
Total Retail Sales Including Eating and Drinking Places		\$ 14,946,167,243	\$ 14,458,129,699	\$ 488,037,544
Small Locally Owned Stores (General Merchandise, Apparel, Furniture and Other; non-franchise)				
	General Merchandise Stores-452	\$ 1,810,681,562	\$ 1,241,393,902	\$ 569,287,660
	Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores-448	685,556,521	669,643,004	15,913,517
	Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores-442	398,900,171	265,530,070	133,370,101
	Electronics and Appliance Stores-443	355,246,418	295,098,076	60,148,342
	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores-451	283,448,099	382,529,921	(99,081,822)
	Office Supplies, Stationery, Gift Stores-4532	161,708,975	184,894,938	(23,185,963)
	Total	\$ 3,695,541,746	\$ 3,039,089,911	\$ 656,451,835



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 9 - Cheektowaga Consumer Spending and Retail Sales

3 Digit NAICS Code	4 Digit NAICS Code	Expected Consumer Expenditures in 2007 Dollars	Actual Retail Sales in 2007 Dollars	Expected Consumer Expenditures less Actual Retail Sales
	5 Digit NAICS Code			
	6 Digit NAICS Code			
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers-441	Automotive Dealers-4411	\$ 201,449,946	\$ 280,815,845	\$ (79,365,899)
	Other Motor Vehicle Dealers-4412	13,839,072	781,356	13,057,716
	Automotive Parts/Accsrs, Tire Stores-4413	18,710,017	24,381,874	(5,671,857)
	Total	\$ 233,999,035	\$ 305,979,075	\$ (71,980,040)
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores-442	Furniture Stores-4421	\$ 17,348,293	\$ 34,880,520	\$ (17,532,227)
	Home Furnishing Stores-4422	15,230,815	28,000,297	(12,769,482)
	Total	\$ 32,579,108	\$ 62,880,817	\$ (30,301,709)
Electronics and Appliance Stores-443	Appliances, TVs, Electronics Stores-44311	\$ 22,067,239	\$ 60,026,613	\$ (37,959,374)
	Household Appliances Stores-443111	5,150,114	30,141,593	(24,991,479)
	Radio, Television, Electronics Stores-443112	16,917,125	29,885,020	(12,967,895)
	Computer and Software Stores-44312	5,539,348	1,794,798	3,744,550
	Camera and Photographic Equipment Stores-44313	1,172,677	1,202,501	(29,824)
	Total	\$ 28,779,264	\$ 63,023,912	\$ (34,244,648)
Building Material, Garden Equipment Stores -444	Building Material and Supply Dealers-4441	\$ 131,989,930	\$ 132,927,954	\$ (938,024)
	Home Centers-44411	49,842,160	47,686,048	2,156,112
	Paint and Wallpaper Stores-44412	3,305,532	3,939,216	(633,684)
	Hardware Stores-44413	10,127,036	3,126,272	7,000,764
	Other Building Materials Dealers-44419	68,715,202	78,176,418	(9,461,216)
	Building Materials, Lumberyards-444191	23,465,040	26,659,012	(3,193,972)
	Lawn, Garden Equipment, Supplies Stores-4442	12,760,708	2,198,228	10,562,480
	Outdoor Power Equipment Stores-44421	2,081,741	1,535,015	546,726
	Nursery and Garden Centers-44422	10,678,967	663,213	10,015,754
Total		\$ 144,750,638	\$ 135,126,182	\$ 9,624,456



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Food and Beverage Stores-445	Grocery Stores-4451	\$	146,125,029	\$	180,574,114	\$	(34,449,085)
	Supermarkets, Grocery (Ex Conv) Stores-44511		138,520,819		172,258,399		(33,737,580)
	Convenience Stores-44512		7,604,210		8,315,715		(711,505)
	Specialty Food Stores-4452		4,947,402		11,535,671		(6,588,269)
	Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores-4453		10,281,893		13,235,911		(2,954,018)
Total		\$	161,354,324	\$	205,345,696	\$	(43,991,372)
Health and Personal Care Stores-446	Pharmancies and Drug Stores-44611	\$	57,072,216	\$	97,446,990	\$	(40,374,774)
	44612		2,356,711		8,247,950		(5,891,239)
	Optical Goods Stores-44613		2,370,437		8,145,152		(5,774,715)
	Other Health and Personal Care Stores-44619		4,265,298		3,251,180		1,014,118
Total		\$	66,064,662	\$	117,091,272	\$	(51,026,610)
	Gasoline Stations With Conv Stores-44711	\$	103,888,935	\$	46,390,091	\$	57,498,844
	Other Gasoline Stations-44719		32,916,753		13,866,616		19,050,137
Total		\$	136,805,688	\$	60,256,707	\$	76,548,981
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores-448	Clothing Stores-4481	\$	37,306,259	\$	138,294,947	\$	(100,988,688)
	Men's Clothing Stores-44811		2,548,779		10,450,876		(7,902,097)
	Women's Clothing Stores-44812		9,082,157		39,328,651		(30,246,494)
	Childrens, Infants Clothing Stores-44813		2,154,840		15,355,808		(13,200,968)
	Family Clothing Stores-44814		20,205,760		65,231,920		(45,026,160)
	Clothing Accessories Stores-44815		849,500		844,827		4,673
	Other Clothing Stores-44819		2,465,223		7,082,865		(4,617,642)
	Shoe Stores-4482		7,087,793		27,446,938		(20,359,145)
	Jewelry, Luggage, Leather Goods Stores-4483		7,363,472		18,603,220		(11,239,748)
	Jewelry Stores-44831		6,770,643		18,603,220		(11,832,577)
	Luggage and Leather Goods Stores-44832		592,829		-		592,829
Total		\$	51,757,524	\$	184,345,105	\$	(132,587,581)



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

<i>Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores-451</i>	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Inst Stores-4511	\$	15,600,030	\$	44,413,359	\$	(28,813,329)
	Sporting Goods Stores-45111		8,033,154		22,520,148		(14,486,994)
	Hobby, Toys and Games Stores-45112		5,059,687		18,786,936		(13,727,249)
	Sew/Needlework/ Piece Goods Stores-45113		1,096,452		2,439,480		(1,343,028)
	Musical Instrument and Supplies Stores-45114		1,410,737		666,795		743,942
	Book, Periodical and Music Stores-4512		5,934,517		13,305,360		(7,370,843)
	Book Stores and News Dealers-45121		3,963,140		7,701,108		(3,737,968)
	Book Stores-451211		3,636,384		7,656,515		(4,020,131)
	News Dealers and Newsstands-451212		326,756		44,593		282,163
	Prerecorded Tapes, CDs, Record Stores-45122		1,971,377		5,604,252		(3,632,875)
Total		\$	21,534,547	\$	57,718,719	\$	(36,184,172)
<i>General Merchandise Stores- 452</i>	Department Stores Excl Leased Depts-4521	\$	67,482,870	\$	170,268,230	\$	(102,785,360)
	Other General Merchandise Stores-4529		83,174,042		41,863,227		41,310,815
	Warehouse Clubs and Super Stores-45291		71,887,957		38,879,472		33,008,485
	All Other General Merchandise Stores-45299		11,286,085		2,983,755		8,302,330
Total		\$	150,656,912	\$	212,131,457	\$	(61,474,545)
<i>Miscellaneous Store Retailers- 453</i>	Florists-4531	\$	2,500,973	\$	1,208,854	\$	1,292,119
	Office Supplies, Stationery, Gift Stores-4532		13,883,608		25,215,031		(11,331,423)
	Office Supplies and Stationery Stores-45321		7,893,794		12,132,233		(4,238,439)
	Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Stores-45322		5,989,814		13,082,798		(7,092,984)
	Used Merchandise Stores-4533		2,723,580		831,891		1,891,689
	Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers-4539		15,879,301		18,555,295		(2,675,994)
Total		\$	34,987,462	\$	45,811,071	\$	(10,823,609)
<i>Non-Store Retailers-454</i>	Electronic Shopping, Mail-Order Houses-4541	\$	52,619,374	\$	-	\$	52,619,374
	Vending Machine Operators-4542		3,643,584		2,922,714		720,870
	Direct Selling Establishments-4543		32,848,489		17,520,213		15,328,276
Total		\$	89,111,447	\$	20,442,927	\$	68,668,520
<i>Food Service and Drinking Places-722</i>	Full-Service Restaurants-7221	\$	54,051,158	\$	66,673,309	\$	(12,622,151)
	Limited-Service Eating Places-7222		49,377,394		56,704,206		(7,326,812)
	Special Foodservices-7223		9,545,904		8,547,606		998,298
	Drinking Places-Alcoholic Beverages-7224		5,588,555		3,177,784		2,410,771
Total		\$	118,563,011	\$	135,102,905	\$	(16,539,894)



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Total Retail Sales Including Eating and Drinking Places	\$	1,270,943,622	\$	1,605,255,845	\$	(334,312,223)
Small Locally Owned Stores (General Merchandise, Apparel, Furniture and Other; non-franchise)						
General Merchandise Stores-452	\$	150,656,912	\$	212,131,457	\$	(61,474,545)
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores-448		51,757,524		184,345,105		(132,587,581)
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores-442		32,579,108		62,880,817		(30,301,709)
Electronics and Appliance Stores-443		28,779,264		63,023,912		(34,244,648)
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores-451		21,534,547		57,718,719		(36,184,172)
Office Supplies, Stationery, Gift Stores-4532		13,883,608		25,215,031		(11,331,423)
Total	\$	299,190,963	\$	605,315,041	\$	(306,124,078)



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

spending patterns in Erie County and Cheektowaga match national averages, this column serves as a proxy for what residents are spending on different categories of goods and services, although it does not give any indication of where that spending occurs (locally, out-of-town, on-line).

▪ **Actual Retail Sales**

The Actual Retail Sales figures refer to purchases made at merchants physically located with either Erie County (Table 1) or Cheektowaga (Table 2) during 2007. These figures do not reveal anything about where the people making these purchases live.

▪ **Expected Consumer Expenditures less Actual Retail Sales**

This number indicates whether a market opportunity may exist depending on whether the actual retail sales are greater than or less than the expected consumer expenditures.

Using the cut flowers example above, if actual retail sales total \$15 million as compared to expected consumer expenditures of \$25 million, we can conclude that local households are either spending \$10 million on flowers at stores located in other communities or, for whatever reason, spend below average amounts on flowers. In this case, the calculated figure will be **positive**: \$25 million expected consumer expenditures less \$15 million in actual sales yields \$10 million representing potential missed sales.

Missed sales that are actually taking place elsewhere comprise what's known as "leakage:" the sales are "leaking" out of the local economy and into another region. Missed sales that never take place anywhere—perhaps there are no convenient stores selling cut flowers so people purchase wine or chocolate gifts or do without—are potentially available to an enterprise capable of inducing demand. When missed sales are significant enough to support an enterprise offering these goods, an opportunity awaits investors willing to accept the associated risks.

To continue with the cut flowers example, if, conversely, actual cut flower sales total \$35 million as compared to expected consumer expenditures of \$25 million, we can conclude that either households located elsewhere are coming to the community to buy fresh cut flowers (to the tune of \$10 million annually) or that local households are spending an extraordinary amount on them. In this case, the calculated figure will be negative: \$25 million expected consumer expenditures less \$35 million in actual sales yields -\$10 million representing a surfeit of sales. Higher than expected sales comprise what's known as "excess capture:" the sales are being "captured" from other areas by stores doing business within the local economy.

Communities like Cheektowaga that include regional malls often demonstrate excess capture across many retail categories because people from other nearby towns cross municipal borders to shop. Super-



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

regional and destination retail stores (e.g., a major factory outlet cluster) can capture sales from an extremely large market area; Cabela's, for example, is known for its enormous shed.

The type of product also has an influence. Cut flowers are fragile and difficult to transport, so people buy them close to where they will be used (home, the hospital, the graveyard, the party, etc.). People buying cut flowers on the spur of the moment (as opposed to, say, for a wedding) will make do with whatever selection is available that day. Some more durable goods, however, are subject to a more thorough review—comparison shopping—and are easy to transport. Stores selling these goods often benefit from proximity to other stores offering the same products because people will go where they can easily find a wide selection to consider: groupings appeal to consumers looking for a perfect fit. These “agglomeration” benefits are why shoe stores and car dealers locate near each other. For these uses, excess capture is a sign that more stores of the same type should locate nearby.

To summarize how to interpret the figures, **Negative** numbers in the above Tables show that area stores sold more than what people within that geography were expected to buy. Unless there is a compelling reason why local households would be buying unusually large quantities of those goods (perhaps the local gossip columnist always reports on the flower arrangements at area events), negative figures generally suggest that retail stores in that sector are attracting customers from outside the area.

Positive numbers show that local stores are selling less than what people within that geography were expected to buy. Unless there is a compelling reason why local households would be buying unusually small quantities of these goods (perhaps the area's outstanding Allergy Hospital attracts patients who live nearby and can't tolerate flowers), retail stores in that sector are losing sales to their counterparts elsewhere.

Major Findings:

- Cheektowaga is extremely attractive to consumers from outside the area in the sectors of Department Stores, Clothing Stores, and Automotive Dealers.
- Consumers in Cheektowaga are spending less than would be expected from local Nursery and Garden Centers, Hardware Stores, Non-Automotive Motor Vehicle Dealers, Gas Stations, Warehouse Clubs, and Drinking Places that serve Alcohol.

Analysis of Local Government Spending

This section analyzes the budget of the Town of Cheektowaga and compares it with other communities of similar budgetary size throughout New York State. The purpose of this review is to better understand how Cheektowaga is faring for the major revenue and expenditure categories in town government. The review includes data for all towns in New York State with budgets between \$30-100 million for the year 2006.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This information is publicly available from the New York State Office of the State Comptroller's website at http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/datanstat/findata/index_choice.htm.

Including Cheektowaga, a total of 25 towns in New York state meet this definition; these are: Bedford, Bethlehem, Carmel, Clifton Park, Cortlandt, Eastchester, Greece, Guilderland, Hamburg, Irondequoit, Mamaroneck, Mount Pleasant, New Castle, Newburgh, Orangetown, Poughkeepsie, Ramapo, Riverhead, Smithtown, Southold, Tonawanda, Walkill, West Seneca, and Yorktown. Three of these, Hamburg, Tonawanda and West Seneca, are located in the Western New York region. The following table compares Cheektowaga's municipal budget data with these other communities.

Table 10 – Revenues and Expenditures by Area

	% of Total			Amount Per Capita		
	Cheektowaga	All Other Towns	Other WNY	Cheektowaga	All Other Towns	Other WNY
Revenues						
Real Property Tax	69.1%	55.3%	58.5%	\$575.88	\$514.59	\$489.72
Sales Taxes	12.9%	8.4%	9.9%	\$107.82	\$77.90	\$83.20
Other Taxes	1.0%	1.7%	1.2%	\$8.57	\$15.48	\$9.67
Intergov't	7.8%	12.4%	7.4%	\$65.24	\$114.98	\$61.81
Interest	3.3%	3.1%	2.8%	\$27.15	\$28.93	\$23.04
Other	5.9%	19.1%	20.3%	\$49.22	\$177.91	\$169.82
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	\$833.88	\$929.78	\$837.25
Expenditures						
General Government	13.1%	16.4%	10.0%	\$100.09	\$168.15	\$95.49
Public Safety	31.6%	22.2%	21.5%	\$242.07	\$226.75	\$204.65
Health	0.0%	1.4%	0.1%	\$0.00	\$13.90	\$0.90
Transportation	15.1%	15.8%	13.2%	\$115.61	\$161.43	\$125.63
Econ Assist	0.1%	1.8%	6.8%	\$1.14	\$18.85	\$64.36
Culture-Recreation	9.2%	11.1%	9.7%	\$70.65	\$113.17	\$91.88
Utilities	12.5%	10.5%	10.2%	\$95.78	\$107.10	\$96.85
Other Community Service	13.5%	12.4%	23.3%	\$103.18	\$126.46	\$221.98
Debt Service	5.0%	8.5%	5.3%	\$38.27	\$86.74	\$50.15
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	\$766.79	\$1,022.56	\$951.90

Note: "All Other Towns includes other Western New York Towns"

In general, Cheektowaga is more frugal than the overall sample of other towns in terms of revenues and expenditures per capita (between \$800-900, compared with \$900-1,000 for the others). On the revenue side, Cheektowaga is much more heavily dependent on real property taxes (69% of revenues) than are the other communities (55% of all, 59% of the other three WNY towns), but its ample commercial and industrial base is a primary reason for this. Cheektowaga also takes in a strong share of sales taxes (13%, compared to 8% for the other towns, 10% for the other WNY towns) due in large part to the Walden Galleria. On the expenditure side, Cheektowaga spends a much higher share of its budget on Public Safety (32%) than do the other towns (23% for all, 22% for the WNY towns). Cheektowaga also spends comparatively more on utilities than do the other towns. Cheektowaga expends a lower share of its



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

budget than the other towns on General Government, Transportation, Economic Assistance, and Debt Service.

Economic Implications of Transportation Issues

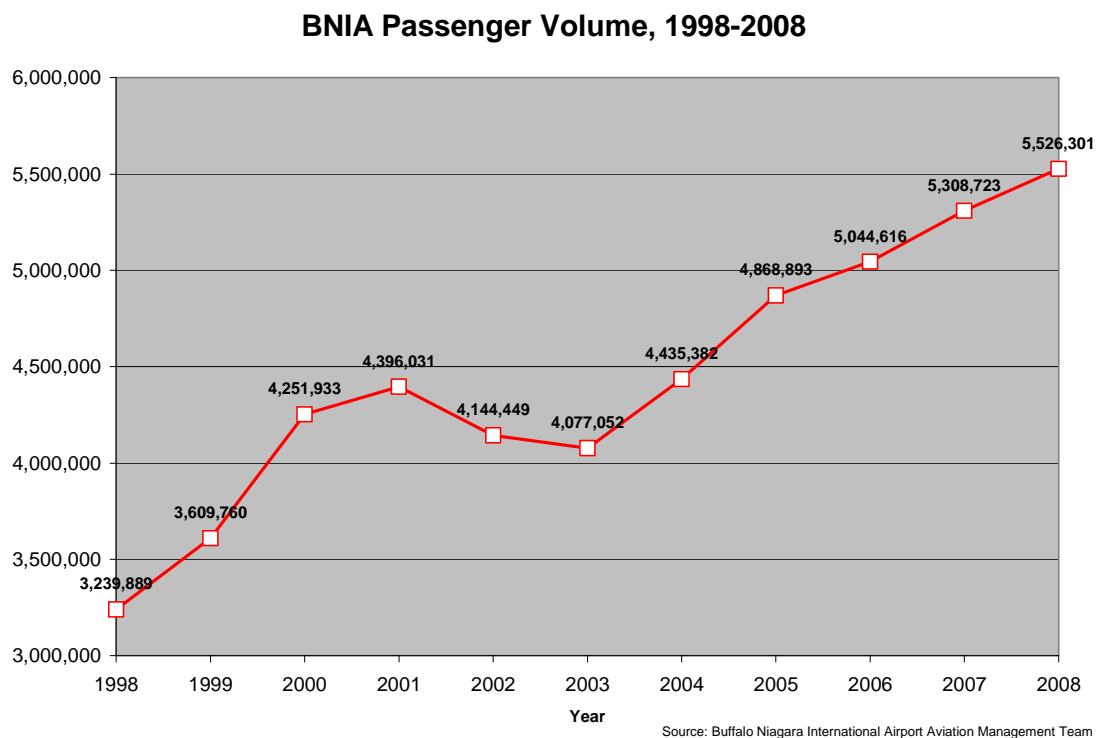
This section summarizes a variety of information related to the transportation system in Cheektowaga as a means of understanding how the town's economy interrelates with road, rail, and air transport.

▪ **Buffalo Niagara International Airport Passenger Statistics**

After dropping off in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, passenger volume at Buffalo Niagara International Airport (BNIA) has been on a strong upward track for the past several years, as shown in the chart below.

According to airport management, the airport broke its record for passenger volume in 2008, exceeding 5.5 million passengers for the first time (Figure 10). Nationally, passenger volume only increased about one percent for 2008. Since 2003, the airport's passenger volume has grown by an annual average rate of 6.3 percent.

Figure 10



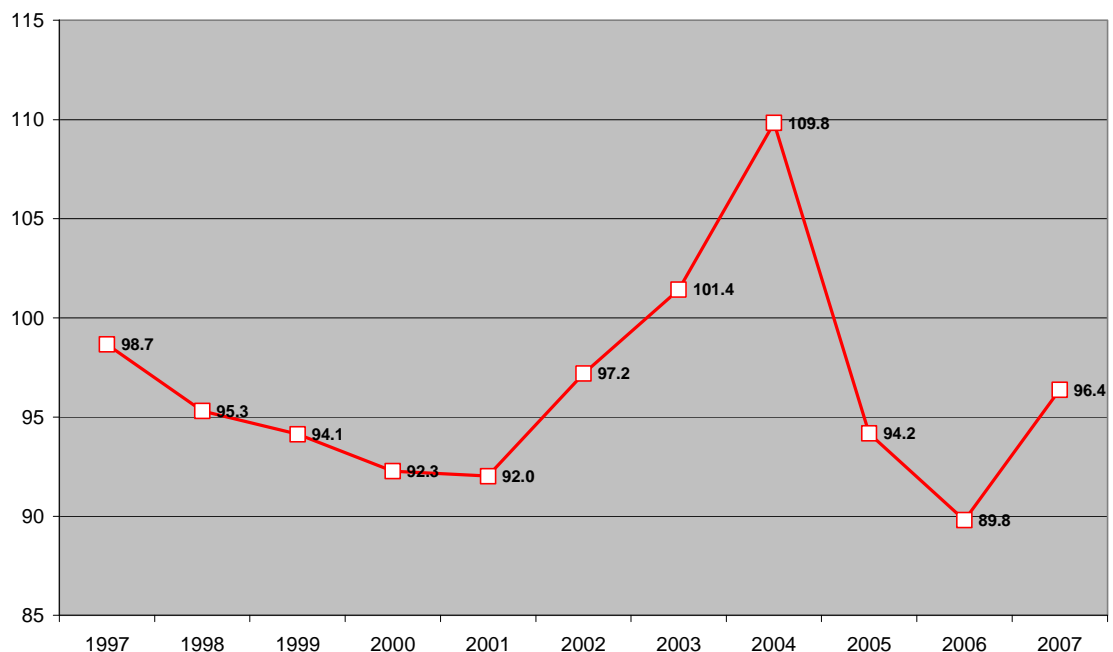


TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As the closest U.S. airport to Toronto with regular passenger service, BNIA is a very popular destination for Canadian travelers, as it allows Canadians to avoid passing through international customs at the airport. For the 12 months between August 2007 and August 2008, BNIA management reports that 34% of all vehicles parked long-term at the airport were from Canada; this is up significantly from 19% in 2005 and 23% in 2006. The increase in the volume of Canadian passengers tracks with the Canadian dollar's strengthening against the U.S. dollar.

Figure 11

BNIA Air Cargo Volume, 1997-2007 (Millions of Lbs.)



■ **Buffalo Niagara International Airport Cargo Statistics**

Air cargo activity at BNIA (Figure 11) peaked in 2004 after several strong years of growth, but then dropped off substantially, bottoming out below 90 million tons in 2006 for the first time since 1995. Cargo volume did recover in 2007, rising back to 96.4 million tons, but it is still well below the 2004 peak of 109.8 tons. The chart below shows the recent history of air cargo volume. Air cargo data for 2008 are not yet publicly available as of February 2009.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

■ Economic Impacts of the Airport

BNIA management reports that, for 2008, the average passenger at the airport spends \$8.84 per trip at airport concessions (including purchases of food/beverage, parking fees and auto rental). This translates to about \$47 million in total annual spending by passengers at the airport alone. It does not include spending at nearby hotels, restaurants, off-airport car rental agencies, gas stations and other airport-dependent businesses.

As of 2003 (the last time that a survey of on-site jobs was taken by airport management), there were about 1,600 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs located on site. Approximately 500 of these were public employees, either of the Niagara Frontier Transit Authority, the Federal Aviation Administration, Transportation Security Administration, or other federal agencies. An estimated 1,100 were employed by airlines, rental car companies, air cargo companies, or other private concessionaires. The following table profiles employment at the airport.

Table 11

Buffalo Niagara International Airport Summary of On-Site Employment

Job Category	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total FTE*
Public Employees			
Airport Management (NFTA)	195	0	195
Federal Aviation Administration	93	1	94
Transportation Security Administration	175	0	175
US Postal Service	40	0	40
Other Federal Employees	28	1	29
Subtotal	531	2	532
Private Employees			
Concession Operations	244	169	329
Commercial Air Carriers	240	124	302
Commercial Car Rental Agencies	108	72	144
Fixed Base Operator	101	60	131
Air Freight/Cargo	165	63	197
Subtotal	858	488	1,102
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	1,389	490	1,634

* FTE = Full-Time Equivalent; assumes 0.5 FTE jobs per part time employee.

Source: Buffalo Niagara International Airport Aviation Management Team, 2003



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

■ **Major Employers in Cheektowaga**

Cheektowaga's base of large employers includes a diverse set of manufacturing, retailing, educational, health care, transportation, and warehousing businesses. In addition to supporting nearly 5,000 retail jobs at the following companies:

Table 12 – Major Employers in Cheektowaga

Business Name	Business Type
Walden Galleria*	Retail
Buffalo Niagara International Airport	Transportation
Quebecor World Buffalo Inc.	Printing
St. Joseph Hospital	Health Care
Cameron Industries	Manufacturing
Derrick Manufacturing	Manufacturing
API Basco	Manufacturing
American Axle	Transportation
FedEx Ground	Transportation
ICOR	Transportation
Villa Maria College	Education
Wal-Mart/Sam's Club	Retail
Target	Retail
The Home Depot	Retail
Elderwood Senior Care	Health Care
Bison Yard	Transportation
Frontier Yard	Transportation
DRS (Sierra Research)	Defense Contractor
Calspan	Transportation
Time Warner Cable	Telecommunications
Internal Revenue Service	Government
Catholic Health System	Health Care
Sprint	Telecommunications

* Walden Galleria includes more than 100 individual businesses, accounting for up to 5,000 jobs during peak retail season

Source: Buffalo Niagara Enterprise, Economic Stewardship, Inc.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

3.6 Environmental Resources and Conditions

Topography

The topography of the Town of Cheektowaga generally slopes in a southwesterly direction, with approximately 120 feet of fall across the town. Very minor slopes are located along the banks of Cayuga and Ellicott Creeks. Pine Ridge Road runs atop a small hilltop that stretches from Scajaquada Creek north to SR 33. The topography has been altered in some areas of the Town where quarrying or land filling operations have been conducted, such as the case on lands along Broadway west of the Village of Depew.

Water Features and Watersheds

The major creeks and streams in the Town of Cheektowaga are Ellicott Creek, Scajaquada Creek, Cayuga Creek, and Slate Bottom Creek (Map 5 – Environmental Conditions). Ellicott Creek flows from the east through the northeast portion of the Town, then north through the Town of Amherst. The Creek conveys water to Tonawanda Creek, which then empties into the Niagara River. Scajaquada Creek flows from the Village of Depew through the central portion of the Town, and eventually empties into the Niagara River. Portions of this creek have been rerouted or piped to conform to the surrounding urban landscape. Cayuga Creek flows from the east through the southern portion of the Town before converging with Buffalo Creek to form the Buffalo River. The Buffalo River flows to Lake Erie. Slate Bottom Creek originates in Elma and Lancaster and flows through the southern portion of the Town, conveying water to Cayuga Creek.

Several lakes and ponds exist within the Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve. Outside of the preserve, lakes and ponds are limited to Aero Lake located near the New York State Thruway interchange with Transit Road, a pond located between Borden Road and Transit Road in the southeastern portion of the Town, and quarries located along Broadway that have filled with water.

Water in the Town is conveyed to three distinct drainage systems. The northern portion of the Town drains northerly to Ellicott Creek, the central portion of the Town drains through Scajaquada Creek or its tributaries. The southern portion of the Town drains to Cayuga Creek or Slate Bottom Creek.

Wetlands

The existence of both federal and state wetlands are fairly extensive across the Town, including along all creeks and streams (Map 5). A substantial portion of the northeast portion of the Town within an area approximately bound by the New York State Thruway to the north, Transit Road to the east, Ellicott Creek to the south, and the Airport to the west consists of federal or state wetlands, with the exception of the Aero Business Park and Airborne Business Park. The Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve on Losson Road also consists of a vast area of federal and state wetlands.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Large areas of federal wetlands exist adjacent to Norfolk Southern's Frontier Yard near the intersection of Walden Avenue and Harlem Road and between Borden Road and Transit Road in the southeastern portion of the Town.

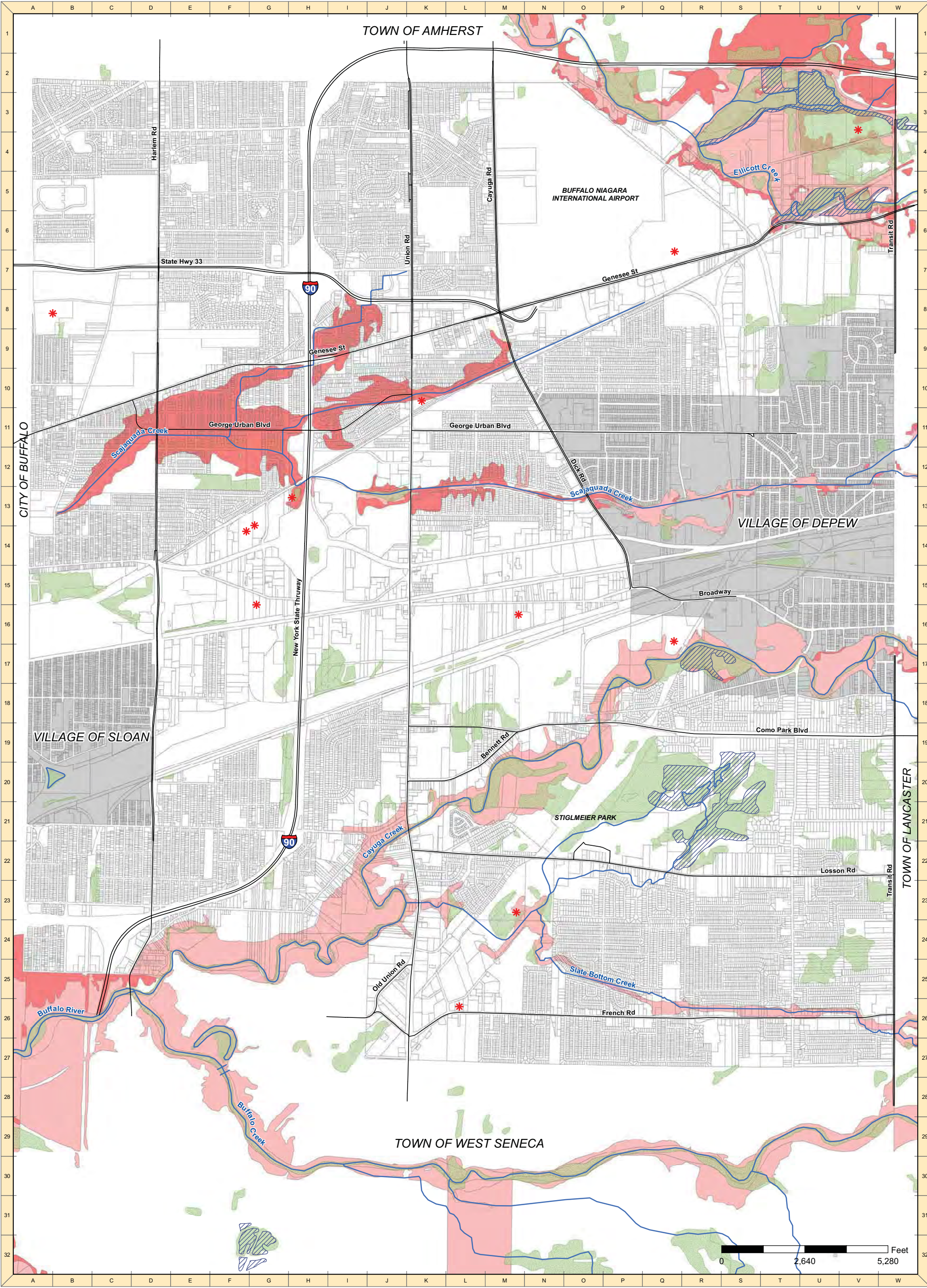
There are smaller clusters of federal wetlands located near the Diamond Hawk Golf Course and along the border with the Village of Depew, paralleling portions of the New York State Thruway, with a larger federal wetland located near the Broadway overpass, lining portions of Cayuga Creek between Union Road and the Village of Depew.

State wetlands are those under jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Environment and Conservation (NYSDEC) and are identified by the existence of certain species of vegetation that grow well in wet soils. The Freshwater Wetlands Act protects all wetlands of 12.4 acres (5 hectares) or larger. The State also regulates the land area within 100 feet of protected wetlands. Wetlands smaller than this may be protected if they are considered to be of local importance. State wetlands are ranked in four classes ranging from Class I, which is a wetland of greatest importance and contains the highest restriction, to Class IV. Regardless of the wetland class, a permit is required to conduct any regulated activity within a wetland area or the 100 foot buffer that surrounds a wetland.

Federal wetlands are regulated under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers through Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, irrespective of their size, and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. Many wetlands that are state wetlands are also federal wetlands, however, many smaller wetlands that do not meet the state's minimum size requirement are only under federal jurisdiction. Under the law, a permit is required for any structure or work that takes place in, under, or over a navigable waterway or wetlands adjacent to navigable waters (such as dock construction, dredging, and shoreline protection). In addition, any activity that involves a discharge of dredged material or fill material into navigable waters or associated wetlands requires a permit, as well as activities that would drain or flood wetlands or significantly disturb the soil (such as land clearing, ditching, stream channelization, and excavating).

Floodplains

There are two types of floodplains that exist within the Town, 100-year floodplains and 500-year floodplains (Map 5). The 100-year floodplain is the area surrounding a water feature that is inundated with water during a 100-year flood event, or a flood that has a 1 percent chance of occurring each year. The 500-year floodplain is the area surrounding a water course that is inundated with water during a 500-year flood event. The 100-year floodplain is divided into the floodway and the floodway fringe. The floodway is the portion of the floodplain which includes the stream's channel and any adjacent areas that must be kept free of encroachments that might block flood flows or restrict storage of flood waters. The flood fringe is the area covered by flood waters but that does not carry strong currents of flood waters.



Map 5 - Environmental Conditions

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

Town Boundary

Parcels (2007)

Major Roads

Stream \ Creek

NYS Superfund Sites

Federal Wetlands

NYSDEC Wetlands

100 Year Floodplain

500 Year Floodplain

Floodplains

100 Year Floodplain

500 Year Floodplain

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: July, 2008

*The information on this document is based on data gathered from the following data sources and should not be used for design or construction. -Data Sources: Town of Cheektowaga, NYS GIS Clearinghouse.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The extent of 100-year floodplains throughout the Town includes a rather extensive area in the northeastern portion of the Town along Ellicott Creek and lands near the New York State Thruway interchange with Transit Road and along Cayuga Creek and Slate Bottom Creek. Minimal 100-year floodplain area exist along Scajaquada Creek. The extent of the 500-year floodplains in the Town is confined to areas surrounding Scajaquada Creek and its tributaries, encompassing areas of Mount Calvary Cemetery and adjacent neighborhoods extending along Genesee Street and George Urban Boulevard. The 500-year floodplain also surrounds the 100-year floodplain along Ellicott Creek and Scajaquada Creek.

Forest Communities

Although the Town is mostly built out, there does exist some forest communities, both in private and public lands, located primarily in the southern and eastern portions of the Town. In particular, notable forest communities include:

- There are several areas of forest cover along the banks of Ellicott Creek, east of the Airport. Forested areas extend north to the New York State Thruway, to the pond near the former Pfohl Brothers Landfill and east of Rein Road between Genesee Street and Pfohl Road, continuing to Transit Road. Most of this forest is located on privately owned land.
- An area of forest cover at the rear of St. Joseph's hospital, which is located on private land, continuing east to parkland under public ownership.
- There remain some forested areas around the quarry on Broadway that are located on private property.
- There is extensive forest cover in the Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve and JC Stiglmeier Park area. The majority of this forest area is within public property. Pockets of forest cover extend west along the banks of Cayuga Creek, most of which is in private ownership, the exception being areas owned by Erie County for flood control and areas near JFK High School.
- There is a large area of forest cover located west of Transit Road south of Como Park Boulevard that is primarily wetland areas and in private ownership. Further south, there is an extensive area of forest cover between Transit Road and Borden Road, north of French Road, that is also wetland area and in private ownership.

Superfund Sites

Superfund sites are those sites identified under the Superfund Program that consist of the most hazardous sites nationwide. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identifies these abandoned hazardous waste sites and develops an environmental cleanup program for each. There are several Superfund sites within the Town, currently undergoing a range of cleanup actions (Map 5).



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- *Pfohl Brothers Landfill*

The Pfohl Brothers Landfill is located on Aero Drive near the Airport. The site consists of 130 acres that was a former landfill that accepted household and industrial wastes between 1940 and 1969. In 1992, a Record of Decision (ROD) was issued requiring the landfill to be consolidated and properly closed, including an Interim Remedial Measure involving the removal of 4,800 drums and 660 cubic yards of contaminated soil. The final remedial design for the site was completed in 2002, and consisted of waste consolidation, capping of landfills, providing leachate collections, restoring wetlands, and fencing the site. The consolidation of the landfill reduced the Superfund site to 94 acres

- *Westinghouse Electric Corporation*

The former Westinghouse Electric Corporation facility is located on Genesee Street adjacent to the Airport. The site was used for aircraft production by the Curtiss-Wright Corporation in the 1940's before it was sold to Westinghouse Electric Corporation, which manufactured AC and DC industrial motor controls and electric motors and generators until 1984, when the facility closed. Beginning in 2000, the buildings on the site were demolished and the area is currently used as a parking lot for the Airport and supports an extension to the runway. Two Records of Decision resulted in cleanup of the site, which was completed in 2000, that involved removal of pollution source areas and treatment of groundwater, which is currently being collected and treated prior to discharge.

- *Leica, Inc.*

The Leica, Inc. site is located at the intersection of Eggert Road and Sugar Road. The site was formerly a facility used for the manufacturing of scientific instruments and optical devices. Remedial actions on the site include a groundwater extraction system and air sparge system was installed in 2000 and contaminated soils were excavated and removed from the site. The property is currently under a long-term operation, maintenance, and monitoring plan.

- *Niagara Transformer*

The Niagara Transformer site is located on Dale Road adjacent to St. Adalberts Cemetery. There is an active manufacturing facility on the site that manufactures electrical transformers. Previously, waste transformer oil was disposed of at the site which had seeped into soils of the adjacent cemetery and into the stormwater drainage system. The remedial plan called for the excavation and removal of contaminated soils and sediments and a diversion of site stormwater flow from the current drainage system.

- *ARO Corporation*

The ARO Corporation site is located on Broadway that formally manufactured life support equipment, cryogenic storage containers, and breathing regulators. In 1990, the property was purchased by



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Ingersoll-Rand and the main facility was demolished. Following the demolition, soils beneath the building were found to be contaminated by machine and cleaning grease. The remedial plan for the site called for the treatment of groundwater and extraction of contaminated soils. The treatment system was put into operation in 1998 and upgraded in 2004. The site has been classified as a site that has been remediated, with the condition that the treatment system remains operational.

- *Land Reclamation*

The Land Reclamation site is a landfill located on Indian Road near Broadway. During its years of operation, the site accepted municipal and industrial wastes from various communities. A Phase I and Phase II Investigations has been conducted, leading to the installation of a new cap placed over the landfill.

- *Union Road Site*

The Union Road Site is located off Losson Road and was formally used by New York Central Railroad as a maintenance and classification yard. Coal ash, grease, and oil were disposed of on site. The remedial action included containment of waste with a subsurface barrier and cap, removal of contaminated soils and sediments, extraction and treatment of groundwater, and covering the site with clean fill and vegetation.

- *CMS Associates, Inc.*

The CMS Associates, Inc. site is located on the north side of French Road and is currently used as a warehouse. The site formally contained an underground storage tank that leaked contaminants into the groundwater. The tank and its contents were removed and disposed of, contaminated soils were excavated and removed, and groundwater was extracted and treated and remedial action is on-going.

- *Former NL Industries Foundry*

The Former NL Industries Foundry site is located on Walden Avenue in the Village of Depew. It consists of 7.5 acres. The site was first used as a brass foundry until 1972 when the brass foundry ceased operations and later sold and used for paper recycling. Lead contamination was found on site and on nearby residential properties. Remediation actions included consolidation and removal of contaminated soils.

Voluntary Cleanup Program

New York State established the Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) to address the environmental, legal, and financial barriers that often hinder the redevelopment and reuse of contaminated properties. The Voluntary Cleanup Program was developed to enhance private sector cleanup of brownfields by enabling parties to remediate sites using private rather than public funds and to reduce the development pressures on "greenfield" sites.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- *Roco, Ltd. Property*

The Roco, Ltd. Site is located at the intersection of Dale Road and Anderson Road and is occupied by a warehouse used for storing dairy products. Roco, Ltd. operated a metal and plastic manufacturing facility at the site until 1994. The site became contaminated with solvents used in the metal working operations. Remedial actions on the site include treatment of groundwater and soils using a hydrogen-released compound.

- *ITT Heat Transfer*

The ITT Heat Transfer site is located on Standard Parkway, adjacent to the New York State Thruway. The site consists of a manufacturing facility that manufactures heat exchangers. The site was formally used as a tire and rubber recycling facility, which likely leads to some contamination. An environmental study concluded that there were no impacts due to contamination and that no remediation would be necessary as long as the property continued to operate as an industrial use.

- *Buffalo Beverage Company*

The Buffalo Beverage Company site is located off Union Road near William Street. Remedial action of the site consisted of removal of several underground storage tanks and the removal of contaminated soils. The site is also restricted to commercial or industrial uses.

Critical Environmental Areas

There are four areas within the Town identified as Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs). These areas are the wetland areas in the northeast portion of the Town near the Airport, the Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve, JC Stiglmeier Park, and wetland areas along portions of Cayuga Creek. CEAs are areas that have exceptional or unique character with respect to one or more of the following:

- A benefit or threat to human health;
- A natural setting (fish and wildlife habitat, forest and vegetation, open space, or areas of aesthetic or scenic quality);
- Agricultural, social, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or educational significance; or,
- An ecological, geological, or hydrological sensitivity.

Critical Environmental Areas are regulated locally in the Town by the Critical Environmental Impact Zone Overlay District.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

3.7 Utilities

The Town is fully serviced with municipal water and sanitary sewer through a network of mains and lines that replicate the modified grid pattern of development found throughout much of the Town. The Erie County Water Authority (ECWA) administers the municipal water service for the Town (see Map 6). Sanitary sewer service is provided to the northern and southwestern portions of the Town by wastewater infrastructure owned and maintained under the Town's Consolidated Sewer District. Sewer service in the southeast portion of the Town is provided by Erie County Sewer District Number 1.

All wastewater is pumped to the City of Buffalo for treatment. The Town's main pump station is located off Central Boulevard near the NYS Thruway. Map 7 identifies the sewer districts, major trunk lines, and locations of pump stations throughout the Town.

Electric and gas utilities are provided by National Grid and New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG) and are available Town-wide. The majority of electric utility lines are located above ground.

3.8 Transportation

The Town is a transportation crossroads for regional transportation throughout Western New York. Several major highways, public transportation routes, freight and passenger railroads, and the area's commercial airport exist within the Town's boundaries, affording its residents vast opportunities for travel and offering businesses and industries exceptional access to transportation facilities.

Existing Highway System

The Town of Cheektowaga is essentially built out and consists of a mature transportation system dominated by a pattern of major roads radiating from Downtown Buffalo, transversed by a modified grid pattern of streets (see Map 8 – Roadway Classification).

The New York State Thruway (I-90) spans the Town, running generally from the I-190 interchange to the south, through the I-290 interchange, and generally parallels the Amherst/ Cheektowaga Town line as it heads east (Map 9). Interchanges are located at I-190, William Street, Walden Avenue, Kensington Expressway, I-290, Cleveland Drive, and Transit Road. The Thruway handles heavy volumes of commuter traffic intermixing with out-of-town vehicles between the I-190 interchange and I-290 interchange, resulting in average annual daily traffic (AADT) counts ranging from about 125,000 to 150,000 vehicles per day.



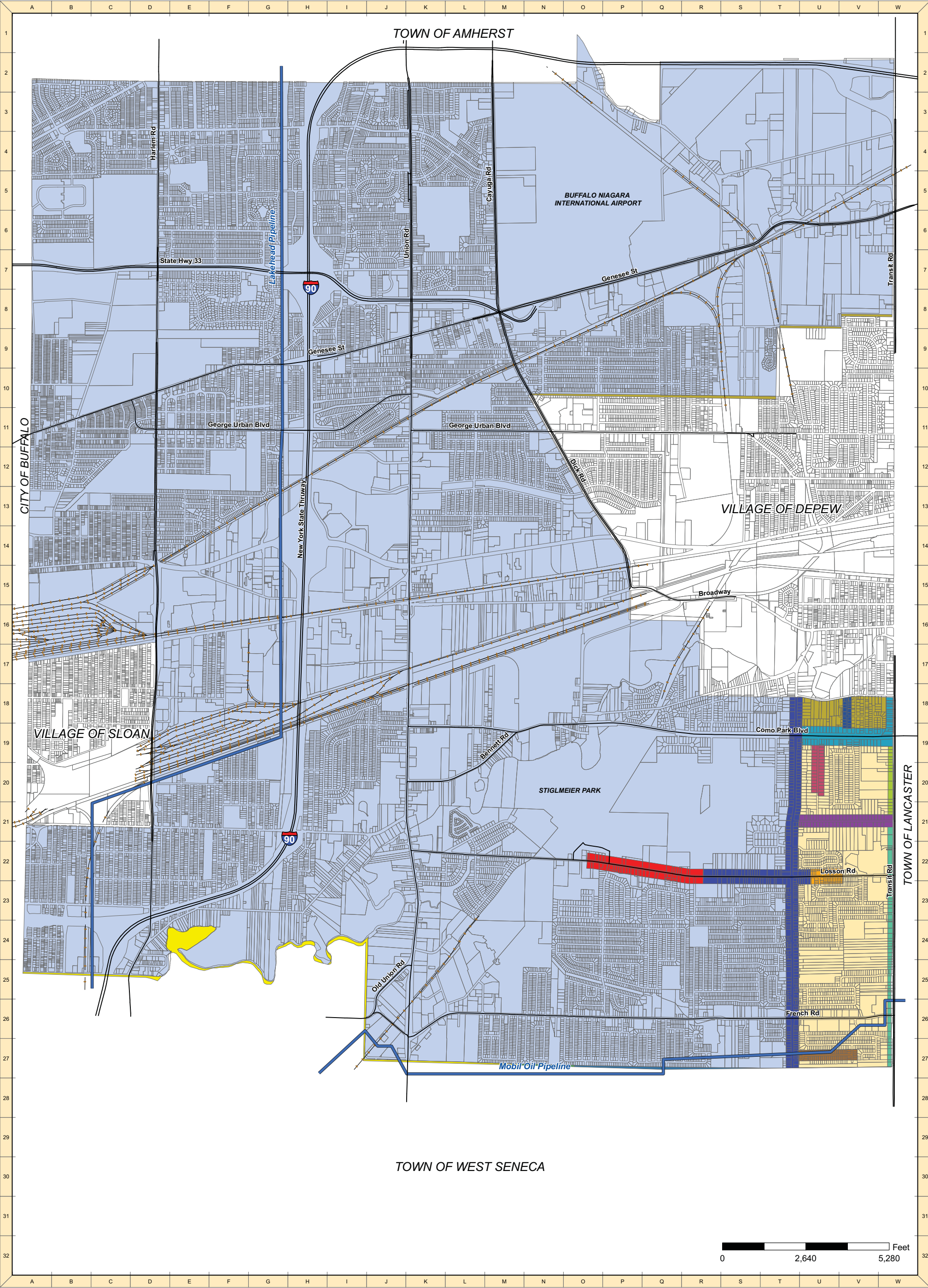
TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A small leg of the Niagara Section of the New York State Thruway (I-190) passes through a small portion of the Town as it heads west towards Buffalo from its interchange with I-90. An intersection at S. Ogden Street is partially located within the Town. Traffic volumes along this section of I-190 are around 78,000 vehicles per day.

The Kensington Expressway (SR 33) connects Downtown Buffalo with the Airport, as it transects the Town of Cheektowaga. Interchanges in the Town are located at Eggert Road, Pine Ridge Road/ Harlem Road, I-90, Union Road and Dick Road. The Expressway terminates at Genesee Street with an at-grade intersection and offers continuing access to the Airport. Traffic volumes along the Kensington Expressway are significantly higher west of the I-90 interchange and range from approximately 30,000 vehicles per day at Genesee Street to 95,000 vehicles per day near the Eggert Road interchange.

The major arterial surface roads radiating from Downtown Buffalo include Genesee Street (SR 33 east of Kensington Expressway), Walden Avenue, Broadway (SR 130), William Street, Losson Road, and Clinton Street (SR 354). Genesee Street passes through the Pine Hill area and U-Crest neighborhoods, offers direct access to the Airport, and eventually intersects with Transit Road before continuing into Lancaster. Traffic volumes along Genesee Street generally range from 30,000 to 45,000 vehicles per day east of the Kensington Expressway and decrease significantly to the west ranging from 10,000 to 20,000 vehicles per day. Walden Avenue is a state maintained thoroughfare (SR 952Q) that provides access to residential neighborhoods, retail hubs, commercial/ office centers, and industrial complexes. As a result, a mix of automobile and heavy duty truck traffic can be found along the corridor as it runs from the City of Buffalo through the Village of Depew. Traffic volumes near 12,000 vehicles per day west of Harlem Road, but jump substantially to around 30,000 to 40,000 vehicles per day as you continue to progress east. Broadway is corridor that provides access to numerous industrial areas of the Town, and thus, handles a large percentage of heavy duty trucks. Traffic volumes along Broadway range from about 12,000 to 20,000 vehicles per day. William Street passes through the Doyle neighborhood as it extends east of Buffalo to the interchange with I-90. This section of William Street handles approximately 15,000 to 20,000 vehicles per day. East of the I-90 interchange, the road, along with Losson Road, becomes a major commuting corridor for south Cheektowaga and the Town of Lancaster to access the Thruway, and handles 30,000 to 40,000 vehicles per day. Beyond Union Road, Losson Road handles 14,000 to 18,000 vehicles per day. Clinton Street (SR 354) acts as the southern border for only a small portion of the Town west of the I-90. Traffic volumes stand at around 16,000 vehicles per day along this section.

Harlem Road (SR 240), Union Road (SR 277), and Transit Road (SR 78) are the only major north-south corridors that transverse the entire Town. Harlem Road is a major north-south corridor through the western portion of the Town, stretching from Amherst to West Seneca that provides access to several of the Town's industrial areas, retail centers, residential neighborhoods, emergency facilities, and parks / cemeteries. Traffic volumes range from 15,000 to 30,000 vehicles per day, with the largest volumes found



Map 6 - Water Districts

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

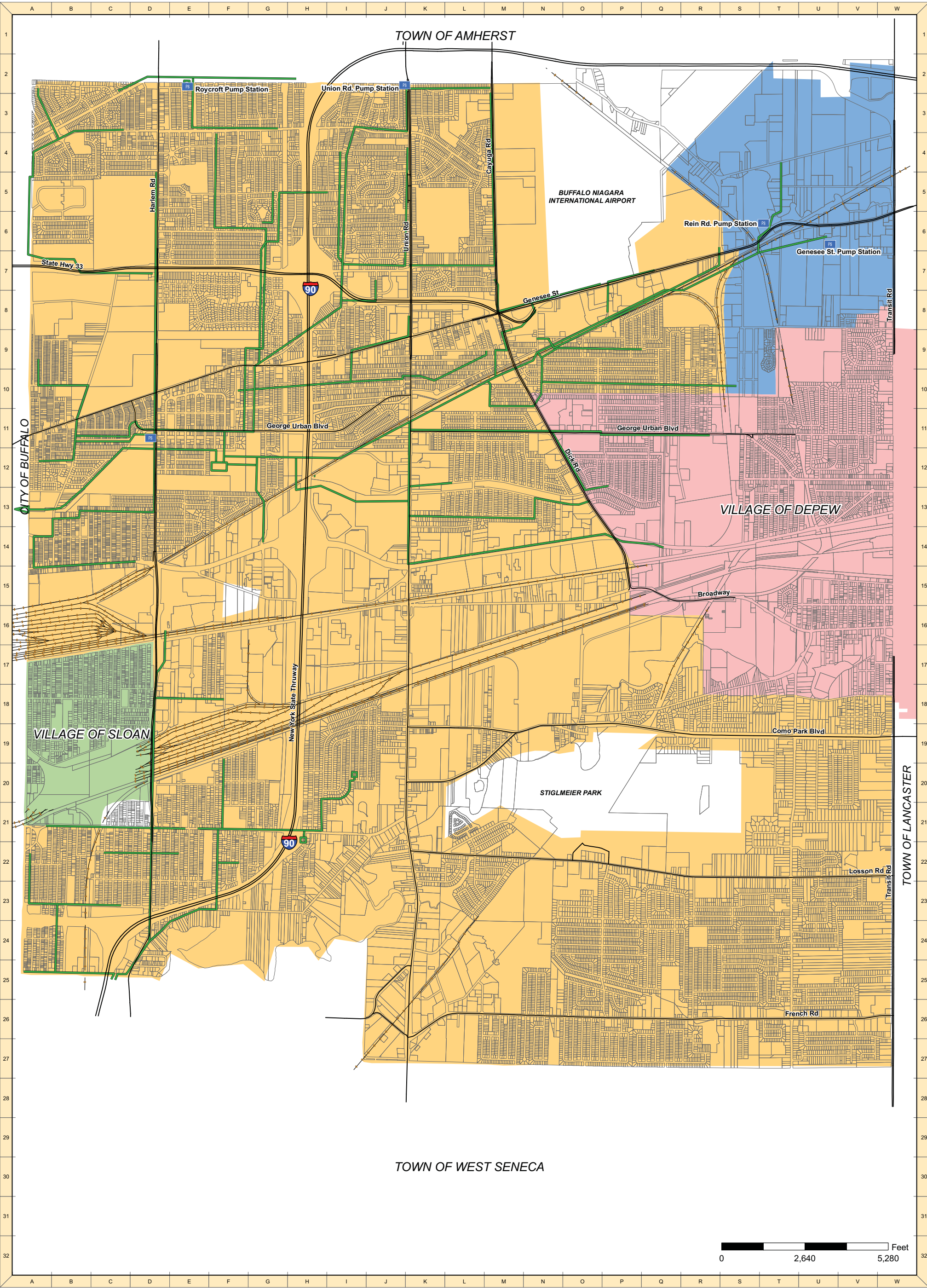
- Town Boundary
- Major Roads
- Railroad
- Parcels (2007)

Water Districts

- Amherst Water District
- Cheektowaga Water District
- Cheektowaga Water District 9
- Depew Water District
- Exempt - Not a District
- Freemont Ave Extension
- Como Park Blvd Extension
- Depew Water District
- Losson Rd East Extension
- Losson Rd West Extension
- Lynnette Ct Extension
- Messer Ave Extension
- Strasmer Rd Extension
- Transit Rd Extension
- Transit Road Extension
- West Seneca Water District
- West Seneca Water District 6
- West Seneca Water District 8

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: July, 2008

*The information on this document is based on data gathered from the following data sources and should not be used for design or construction. -Data Sources: Town of Cheektowaga, NYS GIS Clearinghouse.



Map 7 - Sewer Districts

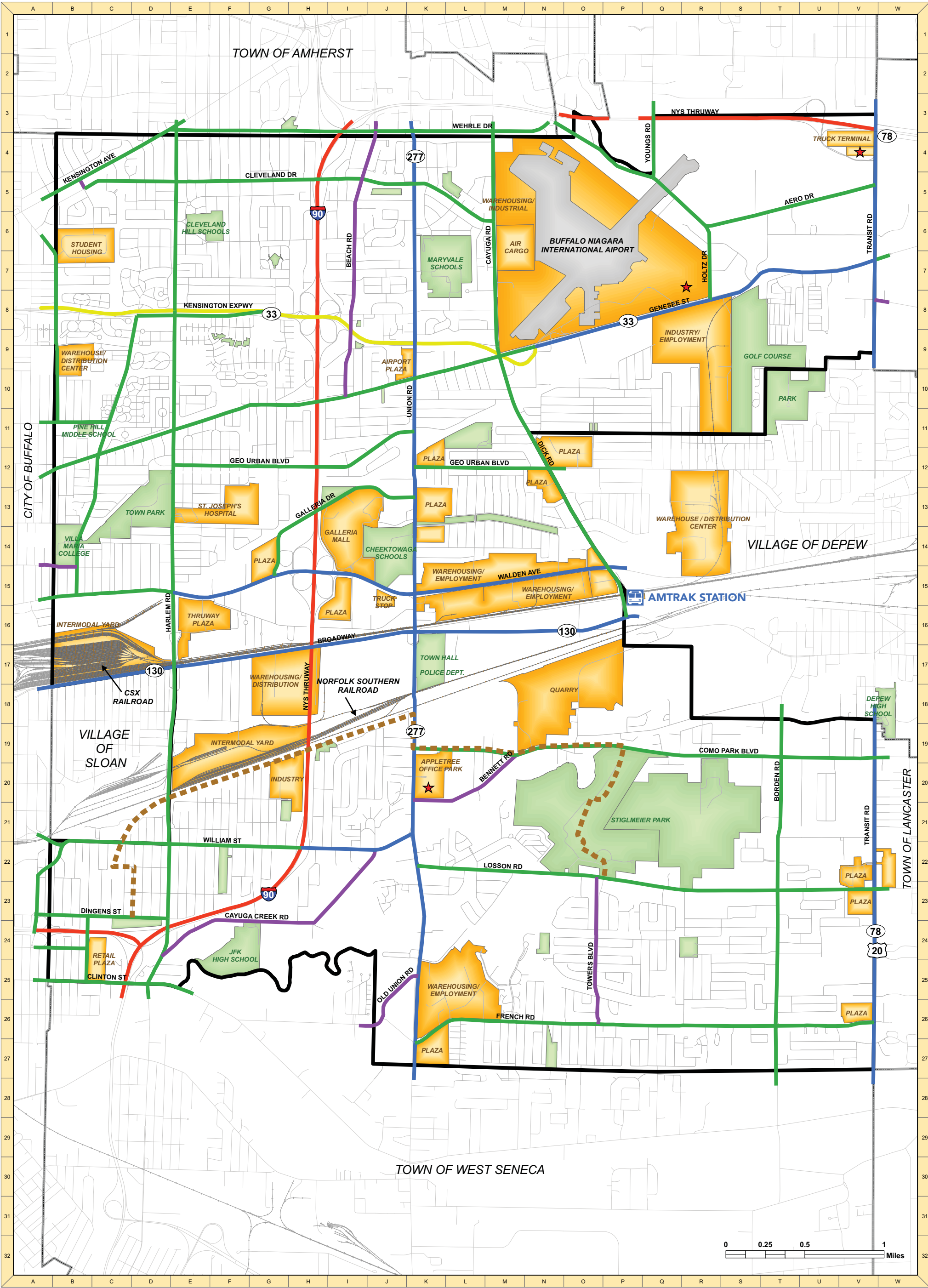
TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

Town Boundary	Railroad	Sewer District	Cheektowaga 8	Sloan
Major Roads	Main Trunk Lines	Cheektowaga	Depew	
Parcels (2007)				

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: July, 2008

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Map 8 - Roadway Classifications

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

Municipal Boundary

Cheektowaga Boundary

Road Centerline

Railroad

Historic Rails To Trails

Park / Community Facility

Activity Center

Park & Ride

Interstate

Expressway

Principal Arterial

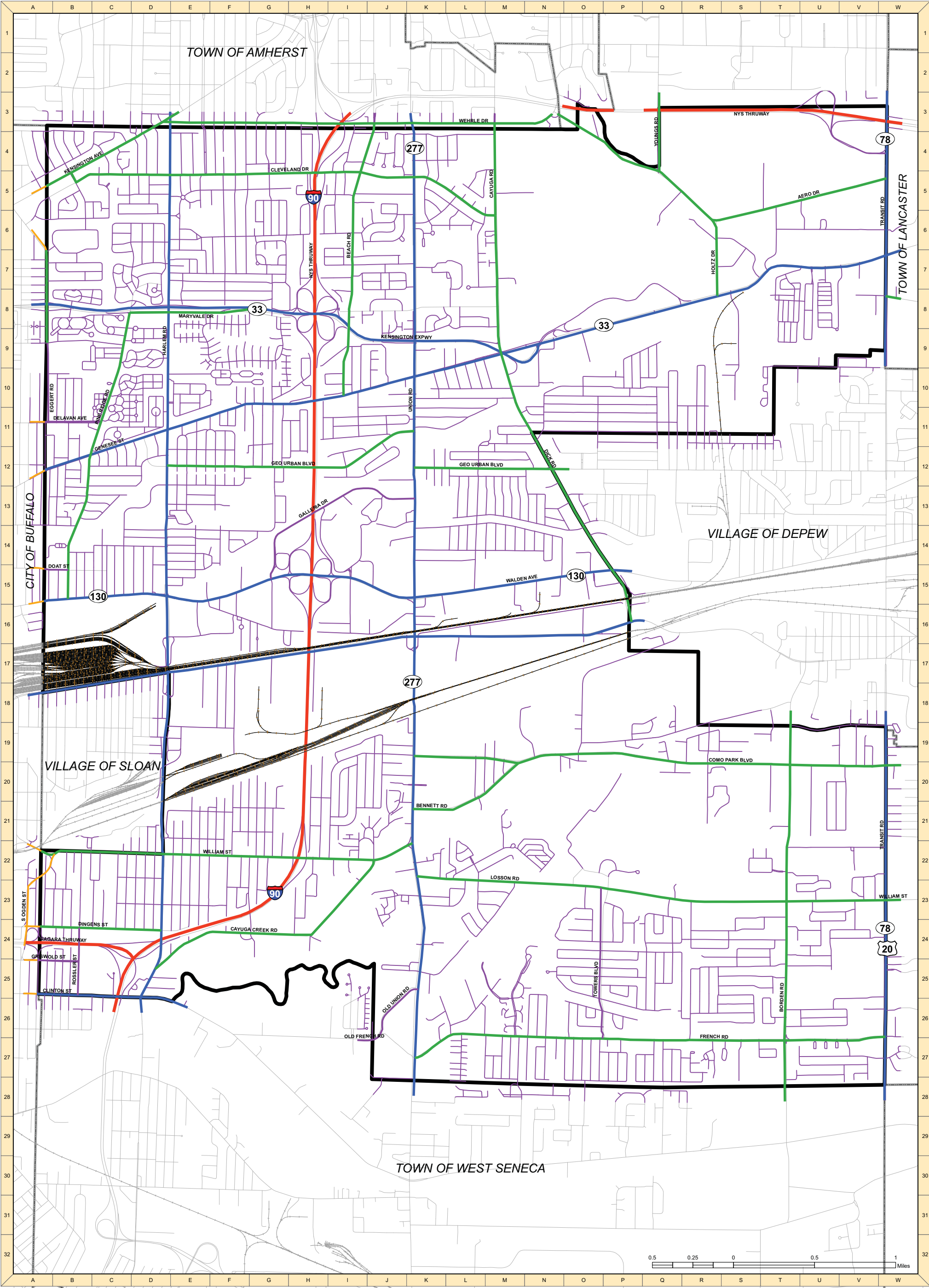
Minor Arterial

Collector

N

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: August 2009

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Map 9 - Roadway Jurisdiction

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

Town Boundary

Municipal Boundary

Railroad

Jurisdiction

New York State

Town of Cheektowaga

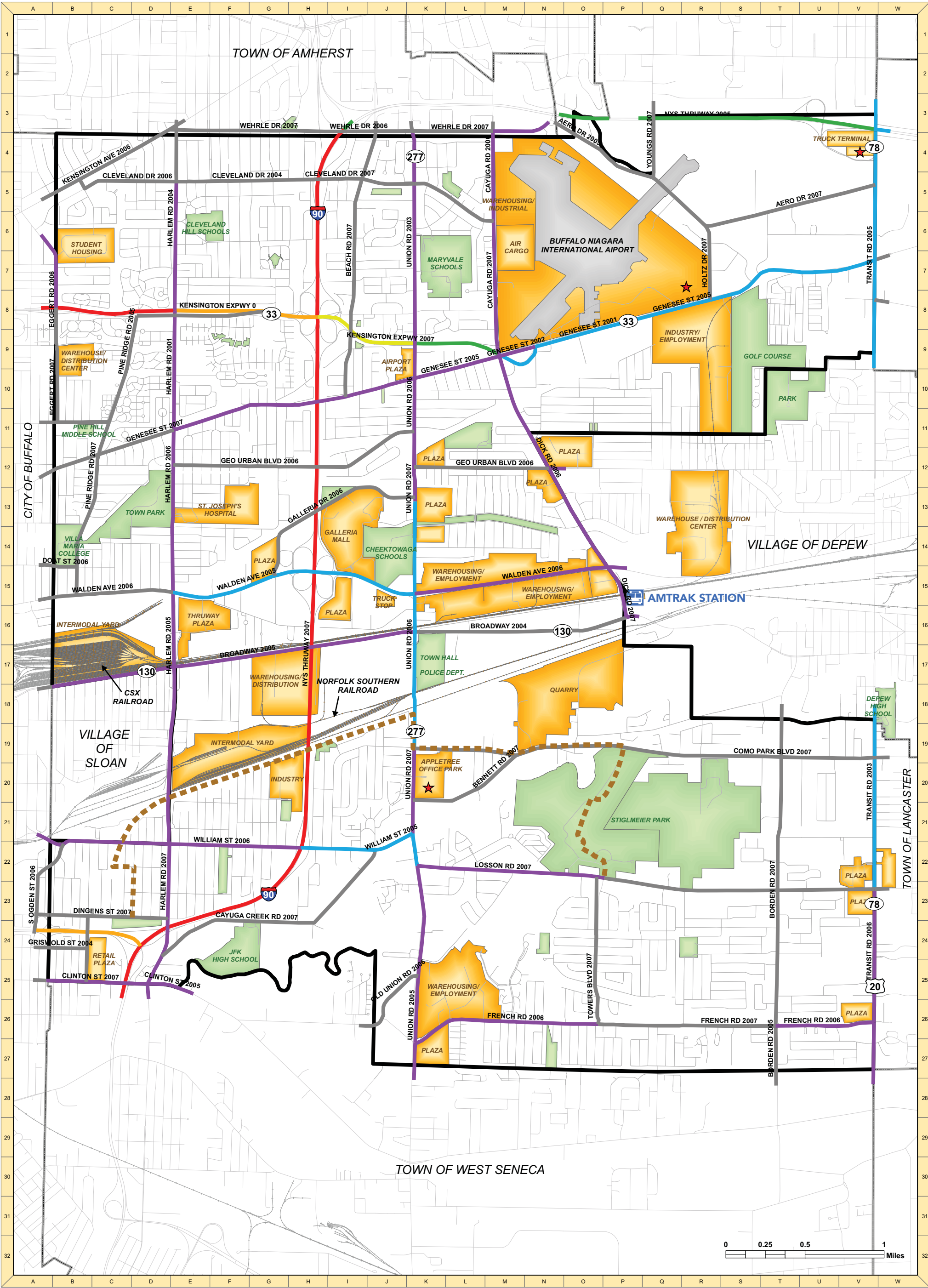
NYS Thruway Authority

Erie County

City of Buffalo

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: April, 2009

*The information on this document is based on data gathered from the following data sources and should not be used for design or construction. -Data Sources: Town of Cheektowaga, NYS GIS Clearinghouse.



Map 10 - Traffic Counts

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

Municipal Boundary

Cheektowaga Boundary

Road Centerline

Railroad

Park & Ride

Historic Rails To Trails

Park / Community Facility

Activity Center

0 - 15000

15001 - 30000

30001 - 45000

45001 - 60000

60001 - 75000

75001 - 90000

90001 - 150000

N

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: August 2009

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TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

between Walden Avenue and Broadway. Union Road is another major north-south corridor that runs practically through the center of the Town. Union Road provides access to numerous retail centers, including the Walden Galleria Mall, schools, and several Town buildings. Traffic volumes range from around 25,000 vehicles per day, at the northernmost and southernmost stretches of the corridor, to around 30,000 vehicles per day near the intersection with Walden Avenue, to about 45,000 vehicles per day between Losson Road and William Street. Transit Road acts as the eastern border for the Town of Cheektowaga, stretching from Amherst and Clarence south to West Seneca and Elma, as it passes through the Village of Depew. Transit Road handles anywhere from 25,000 to 35,000 vehicles per day.

Other major roads throughout the Town include Borden Road, Cayuga Road, Cleveland Drive, Como Park Boulevard, Dick Road, Dingens Street, Eggert Road, French Road, Galleria Drive, George Urban Boulevard, Kensington Avenue and Youngs Road. Borden Road runs north-south and provides access between Depew and West Seneca and handles approximately 11,000 vehicles per day. Cayuga Road runs along the western edge of the Airport and carries between 20,000 and 30,000 vehicles per day. Cleveland Drive runs through the Cleveland Hill neighborhood between Eggert Road and Cayuga Road. Between 5,000 and 12,000 vehicles travel this corridor each day. Dick Road is a continuation of Cayuga Road, providing access further south to Depew. Approximately 20,000 to 25,000 vehicles travel this road daily. Dingens Street runs parallel to William Street west of I-90 and handles about 6,500 vehicles per day. Eggert Road forms part of the western boundary of the Town and provides access to Amherst and Tonawanda, with 10,000 to 20,000 vehicles per day traveling the corridor. French Road runs parallel to Losson Road and offers alternative access for south Cheektowaga and Lancaster neighborhoods between Transit Road and Union Road. The road carries 15,000 to 20,000 vehicles daily. Galleria Drive provides access to the Galleria Mall from the I-90 interchange at Walden Avenue and Union Road. The roadway handles 10,000 to 15,000 vehicles each day. George Urban Boulevard consists of various segments that provide east-west access through the central portion of the Town between Depew and the Pine Hill neighborhood. Anywhere from 7,500 to 13,000 vehicles travel the corridor each day (see Map 10).

From an operational standpoint traffic congestion is noticeable in the Town, mainly during the morning and evening commuting peak hours and during the Saturday midday peak hour. Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes indicate that the majority of roadways are operating at a level of service (LOS) of C or better during average daily operations. These volumes can be seen on Table 13.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 13 - Traffic Counts

Route Name	Location / Roadway Segment	Vehicle Count
NYS Thruway (I-90)	I-190 to William St	129,750
NYS Thruway (I-90)	Kensington Expwy to Cleveland Dr	148,100
Niagara Thruway (I-190)	I-90 to Ogden St	77,600
Kensington Expwy (SR 33)	Eggert Road to Pine Ridge Road	95,000
Kensington Expwy (SR 33)	I-90 to Union Road	73,700
Genesee Street (SR 33)	Airport west entrance to Airport east entrance	43,600
Transit Road (SR 78)	Clinton St to French Road	25,300
Transit Road (SR 78)	Genesee St to NYS Thruway	33,775
Broadway (SR 130)	Harlem Road to Union Road	18,900
Broadway (SR 130)	Union Road to Dick Road	12,600
Harlem Road (SR 240)	Dingens St to William St	16,700
Harlem Road (SR 240)	Broadway to Walden Ave	29,600
Union Road (SR 277)	Losson Road to William St	44,400
Union Road (SR 277)	Broadway to Walden Ave	31,800
Union Road (SR 277)	Genesee Street to Kensington Expwy	25,200
Aero Drive	Wehrle Dr to Youngs Road	8,500
Beach Road	Cleveland Dr to Wehrle Dr	7,300
Bennett Road	Union Road to Como Park Blvd	6,500
Borden Road	French Road to Losson Road	12,300
Cayuga Creek Road	Harlem Road to William St	3,400
Cayuga Road	Genesee St to Kensington Expwy	29,700
Century Road	Cleveland Dr to Wehrle Dr	5,800
Cleveland Drive	NYS Thruway to Beach Road	12,200
Cleveland Drive	Union Road to Cayuga Road	7,000
Como Park Boulevard	Union Road to Bennett Road	5,900
Como Park Boulevard	Borden Road to Transit Road	9,200
Delavan Avenue	Buffalo City Line to Pine Ridge Road	5,200
Dick Road	Broadway to Walden Ave	20,300
Dingens Street	Buffalo City Line to Harlem Road	6,400
Doat Street	Buffalo City Line to Pine Ridge Road	3,600
Eggert Road	Kensington Expwy to Kenville Rd	20,000
French Road	Union Road to Towers Blvd	18,100
French Road	Borden Road to Transit Road	17,100
Galleria Drive	I-90 WB ramp to Walden Ave	14,400



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Genesee Street	Buffalo City Line to Harlem Road	10,600
Genesee Street	Harlem Road to Union Road	14,500
Genesee Street	Union Road to Dick Road	15,100
George Urban Boulevard	Harlem Road to Union Road	7,600
George Urban Boulevard	Union Road to Dick Road	13,400
Griswold Street	I-190 SB ramp to Rossler St	4,300
Holtz Drive	Genesee St to Aero Dr	9,300
Kensington Avenue	Buffalo City Line to Amherst Town Line	11,000
Losson Road	Union Road to Towers Blvd	17,000
Losson Road	Borden Road to Transit Road	14,300
Maryvale Drive	Pine Ridge Road to Harlem Road	6,900
Old Union Road	West Seneca Town Line to Union Road	6,200
Pine Ridge Road	Genesee St to Delavan Ave	9,400
Rossler Street	Clinton St to Dingens St	7,100
Towers Boulevard	French Road to Losson Road	5,200
Walden Avenue	Buffalo City Line to Harlem Road	12,700
Walden Avenue	Harlem Road to NYS Thruway	32,000
Walden Avenue	NYS Thruway to Union Road	36,300
Walden Avenue	Union Road to Dick Road	28,600
William Street	Buffalo City Line to Harlem Road	15,300
William Street	Harlem Road to NYS Thruway	18,500
William Street	Cayuga Creek Road to Union Road	35,600

Town of Cheektowaga regulations restrict trucks having a gross weight rating in excess of five tons to traveling on the following designated truck routes (except for local deliveries):

- All State highways
- Aero Drive, from the Town of Amherst line to Transit Road
- Cayuga Road, from Genesee Street to the Town of Amherst line
- Dingens Street, from the City of Buffalo line to Harlem Road
- Dick Road, from Broadway to Genesee Street
- East Delavan Avenue, from the City of Buffalo line to Pine Ridge Road
- Eggert Road, from Sugar Road to the westbound Kensington Expressway ramp
- French Road, from Union Road to Transit Road
- Galleria Drive, from Walden Avenue to Union Road



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Holtz Drive, from Genesee Street to Aero Drive
- Kensington Avenue, from the City of Buffalo line to the Town of Amherst line
- Maryvale Drive, from Pine Ridge Road to the Kensington Expressway on-ramp
- Pine Ridge Road, from Genesee Street to Maryvale Drive
- Richard Drive, from the City of Buffalo line to William Street
- Sugar Road, from Eggert Road to Pine Ridge Road
- William Street, from the City of Buffalo line to Union Road
- Youngs Road, from Aero Drive to the Town of Amherst line

Programmed Highway Improvements

Since the early 1990's, considerable transportation funding has been dedicated to the enhancement of the principal and minor arterial roadways to enhance the mobility of the driving public throughout the Town. In addition, significant financial investment has been utilized for improvements to the interstate and expressway network. This work includes the development of new interchanges from the interstate/expressway network to connect with local principal arterials and the airport. Substantial roadway improvements made recently include:

- 1) Construction of the I-90/ William Street interchange,
- 2) Construction of the Kensington Expressway/Genesee Street intersection,
- 3) Reconstruction of Genesee Street along the length of the airport, and
- 4) Widening of Transit Road to four lanes through the entire corridor.
- 5) Harlem Road from Genesee Street to Yorktown Street in the Town of Amherst

Most transportation improvements that occur along state or county highways are done so with funding by the federal, state, and county government. These projects are included in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and projects sponsored by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) are also included in the Statewide TIP. The TIP is a priority listing of all federally funded transportation projects being considered for implementation during a five-year period. The currently approved TIP includes projects to be funded between October 1, 2007 September 30, 2012. The Greater Buffalo- Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), in cooperation with the NYSDOT, is responsible for selecting projects to be included in the TIP. Projects occurring within the Town of Cheektowaga that are listed in the TIP are listed below:



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 14 - Transportation Improvements Project List

Corridor	Segment	Project	Cost	Status
NYS Thruway	I-90/ I-290 interchange	Interchange reconstruction	\$154,241,000	Proposed letting: 2012
Transit Road	Intersection of Transit Road at I-90 and at Genesee Street	Engineering for intersection reconstruction	\$792,000	Proposed letting: 2015
Como Park Boulevard	Union Road to Indian Road	Multi-course overlay	\$2,969,000	Let in December 2007
Youngs Road	Intersection at Aero Drive	Intersection reconstruction	\$1,283,000	Proposed letting: April 2009

Table 15 – NFTA Bus Routes

Route Number	Route Name
1, 1B, 1D	William/ Appletree Park & Ride
2B, 2C	Clinton/ Appletree Park & Ride
4, 4A, 4B, 4H	Broadway/ Appletree Park & Ride
6, 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D	Sycamore/ Walden
12, 12A	Utica
24, 24A, 24B, 24C, 24D, 24P	Genesee/ Airport Park & Ride
26	Delavan
30C, 30D	Kenmore/ Airport Park & Ride
32, 32B, 32C	Amherst
42	Lackawanna/ Appletree Park & Ride
65	Amherst Express
66	Williamsville Express
67, 67A, 67B	Cleveland Hill Express
68	George Urban Express/ Airport Park & Ride
69, 69F	Alden Express
70A, 70B, 70C, 70F	East Aurora Express
102	Bailey to Villa Maria College
103	East- Suburban
106	South- Suburban
115	South- Sycamore to Villa Maria College
204	Airport – Downtown Express



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Public Transportation

The Town of Cheektowaga's public transportation needs are serviced by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA). The NFTA, as the regional transportation authority, administers bus, rail, and air transportation for the Buffalo/ Niagara Falls region. There are several Metro Bus routes throughout the Town of Cheektowaga that provide public transportation, as noted in the following table and on Map 11.

The routes run along main thoroughfares in the Town, as well as deviating into residential and commercial areas to provide sufficient service to all areas. In addition to the NFTA Metro Bus routes, there are two Park & Ride locations within the Town that offer riders the opportunity to park their vehicles and ride the bus. Park & Ride facilities are located at the Buffalo- Niagara International Airport and Appletree Business Park. Several transportation providers offer on-demand services to residents within the Town.

Railroad

The Town has a significant amount of active rail lines within its boundaries. There are two major rail corridors that traverse the Town. CSX Transportation owns and operates a series of east-west rail lines known as the Chicago Line East that run through the Town, paralleling the north side of Broadway. This railway is a high capacity, double track line that allows freight trains to travel at speeds of up to 60mph. The rail line acts as a major connection between the Northeast and the Midwest and handles a substantial amount of rail freight. In addition, the rail lines provide a major connection for intermodal rail traffic between the Port of New York/ New Jersey and Canada. Rail tonnage along this corridor ranges from 60 to 75 million gross tons (MGT) per year. CSX also operates the Belt Line Branch which is a 7-mile double track railroad that extends from Frontier Yard to Tonawanda. The track handles approximately 20-30 MGT per year.

Norfolk Southern owns and operates the other major series of rail lines in the Town that run east-west, roughly paralleling Broadway, but further south, known as the Buffalo Conneaut Line. The rail line provides a connection between the Northeast and Midwest and handles about half of the tonnage that the CSX line carries (25-40 MGT per year).

There are two rail yards located within the Town. CSX Transportation owns and maintains Frontier Yard, located west of Harlem Road between Walden Avenue and Broadway. Frontier Yard is the largest classification yard in the region with over 63 classification tracks and is where CSX performs its main train switching and classification operations.

Norfolk Southern owns and operates Bison Yard, located east of Harlem Road south of Broadway and adjacent to the Village of Sloan. Norfolk Southern conducts switching and interchange operations and operates an intermodal terminal at Bison Yard. Intermodal terminals allow freight containers to be



WD Project # 313306
Map Created: August 2009

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TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

uploaded/downloaded to truck trailer chassis without handling the individual commodity. The intermodal terminal is configured to handle 53 rail cars, 308 wheeled units, and 188 stacked containers. Each weekday, a single intermodal train operates between the terminal and Toledo, Ohio and Chicago, Illinois. NS also operates a facility near the Bison Yard that provides lumber transloading and distribution services. The facility has 30 rail spots and has 9,500 square feet of indoor storage and a 7 acre outdoor lay down area. NS also operates the Thoroughbred Bulk Terminal at the Bison Yard used for bulk transfer and distribution. Bulk transfer terminals require that the commodity be individually handled and transported between truck and rail. The facility has 80 car spots.

Frontier Yard and Bison Yard act as switching yards where trains are diverted to/from Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) and Canadian National Railway (CN), which have trackage rights from the yards to the International Bridge. In addition, the Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad (BPRR) has trackage rights to the Frontier Yard and provides rail service to Edina, PA, just north of Pittsburgh.

Amtrak operates passenger train services, known as the Empire Service, along the Empire Corridor route between the City of Niagara Falls and New York City. The train makes stops in Downtown Buffalo, Depew, Rochester, Syracuse, Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, Schenectady, Albany-Rensselaer, Hudson, Rhinecliff-Kingston, Poughkeepsie, Croton-on-Hudson, Yonkers, and New York City. Branching from the Empire Corridor, Amtrak provides extended service to Toronto, Chicago, and Montreal, as well as locations throughout the Northeast. The Amtrak Empire Corridor utilizes the CSX rail corridor that runs along the north side of Broadway.

Air

The Buffalo-Niagara International Airport is the regional commercial airport for the Western New York area. The airport handles commercial and general aviation as well as air cargo operations. The airport is serviced by 12 commercial airlines that offer approximately 110 daily flights. The main airport terminal is accessible from Genesee Street. The airport is accompanied by a 5,300 vehicle on-site parking area.

The airport consists of an airside cargo complex that handles air cargo, express carrier cargo, and under-belly cargo. The air cargo complex is accessible from Cayuga Road and consists of approximately 300,000 square feet of air cargo building space, and houses FedEx, UPS, DHL, and United States Postal Service. In 2006, the Airport handled approximately 158,500 tons of air freight. In addition, there is one general aviation/ fixed base operator accessible from Aero Drive or Holtz Drive.

Pipeline

There are two major pipelines that run through the Town (Map 5). The Buckeye Pipeline (former Mobil Oil Pipeline) runs along the southern portion of the Town and transports finished petroleum products between a refinery in Philadelphia and the Buckeye Terminals (former ExxonMobil tank farm terminals)



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

along Elk Street in Buffalo. The Enbridge Energy (Lakehead) pipeline is a crude oil pipeline that essentially parallels I-90 through the Town, connecting the same Buckeye Terminal with pipelines in Canada. This pipeline is currently not in use and is capped and charged with an inert material to maintain its integrity.

Freight Transportation

The Town of Cheektowaga is situated at an international crossroads for freight transportation in the Niagara Frontier Region and acts as a hub for freight activity. There are numerous Thruway interchanges throughout the Town that provide excellent truck accessibility to the National Interstate System and international border crossings. The Thruway also offers convenient access to/from the region's rail bulk and intermodal facilities, marine terminals, and pipeline terminals.

The Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) is currently undertaking an Urban Area Freight Transportation Study that will allow the Town to better understand its role in freight transportation and help the Town realize its potential for becoming a regional freight hub. The Study is currently about ¾ complete, with the final report expected in August, 2010. Technical Memorandum #4 outlines several recommendations to improve freight transportation and capitalize on opportunities to enhance the freight related economy. In general, the Study recommends that the Buffalo-Niagara Region leverage its transportation infrastructure and available industrial land to promote the area as a hub for logistics. Specifically, the Study suggests that opportunities for railroad intermodal terminals, satellite marine terminals, multimodal logistics parks, trade processing centers, and multi-site economic development initiatives exist in throughout the Region. The Study indicates that in order to help realize these opportunities, some improvements to the transportation infrastructure are required. Among the recommendations are improvements to the I-90/ I-290 corridor, which ranks 7th nationally in intercity large truck delays (FHWA). Other recommendations are centered on improving signage, implementing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), improved truck route management and signal timing, improved access to air cargo facilities, and maintenance of bridges and railroad crossings.

Pedestrian/ Bicycle

The pedestrian facilities of the Town consist of a network of sidewalks lining practically every roadway within the areas of the Town developed with traditional residential and commercial patterns. Sidewalks are somewhat fragmented or do not exist near industrial areas or in less densely populated areas such as along most of Como Park Boulevard, Borden Road, Losson Road, Cayuga Creek Road, Holtz Drive, and Aero Drive.

An on-street signed bicycle route exists along Harlem Road between William Street and Broadway (Map 12 – Community Facilities). The majority of the Rails-to-Trails project, consisting of a 5.5 mile paved trail occupying abandoned railroad beds between Dingens Park and Stiglmeier Park, is completed and open.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The only remaining segment to be constructed is the on-road portion along Como Park Boulevard, which the County is expected to complete during the summer of 2009.

3.9 Community Facilities and Cultural Resources

Municipal Buildings

The Cheektowaga Town Hall Complex is located at the intersection of Broadway and Union Roads and consists of 14 structures (Map 12 – Community Facilities). The Town Hall building, located at 3301 Broadway, was constructed in 1925 and currently houses ten town departments. The Town police station and Town Court are located at 3223 Union Road adjacent to the Town Hall. The highway department is located at 3145 Union Road and consists of the highway garage, salt barn, sanitation and recycling facility, maintenance facility, and other storage.

The Town also houses several departments at the Alexander Community Center. The Town Engineering Department, Community Development Department, and Youth and Recreational Services, among others, are located within the Alexander Community Center at 275 Alexander Avenue. The Town Park Garage is located on the northern portion of the park and acts as a storage and maintenance facility. The Town Office of Emergency Services is located at the Town's Recreation Center within the Town Park.

The Town Parks and Facilities Department is located within the Matecki Buildings at 500 Losson Road, near the entrance to JC Stiglmeier Park. The facility contains an office building with storage garage, and storage yard.

The Town's Sewer Department Offices are located off of Central Boulevard near the NYS Thruway. The site consists of the sewer department offices, main pump station, and storage and maintenance garage.

The Town's Records Center is housed within the former North Branch Library on Maryvale Road. There is an Erie County highway garage located on Harlem Road near Clinton Street. The Erie County Water Authority has a facility on Union Road near Broadway and operates a water tower on Pennock Place near Cheektowaga Town Park.

Municipal Solid Waste Services

Garbage collection in the Town is done by municipal curbside pickup. Curbside recycling collection is contracted out to a private company, Allied Waste Services. Curbside pickup includes collection of yard waste, bulk items, and construction debris. Composting of yard waste is contracted out. Larger commercial and industrial facilities arrange for their garbage collection through contracted waste disposal services.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Senior Services

The Cheektowaga Senior Center and Town Senior Services Department are located at 3349 Broadway. The Town also provides some senior services at the Cheektowaga Community Center at Town Park. The Town, in cooperation with the Erie County Department of Senior Services, operates a VANS program that can provide transportation to senior citizens who have no other means for medical appointments, food shopping, or other services. The Town also participates in the serving of lunches for seniors at several sites across the Town and operates a Meals on Wheels program.

The Buffalo Hospice is located on Como Park Boulevard. In addition to the Town operated senior facilities, there are several not-for-profit or private senior centers and/or housing throughout the Town, including:

- Bell Tower Senior Center and Apartments located on French Road
- Cayuga Village located on Hutchens Drive
- Cedargrove located on Harlem Road near Walden Avenue
- Convent Apartments located on Old Maryvale Drive
- Elderwood Assisted Living located on Bennett Road
- Maple Senior Housing Corporation located on Union Road
- Maryvale East Housing Development located on Moorman Drive
- Peregrine's Landing Senior Community located on Cayuga Creek Road
- Southwind Landing Apartments located on Transit Road
- Violet Housing Corporation on French Road

Fire, Police & Emergency Services

The Town of Cheektowaga is served by the Town Police Department (Map 12). The police department is located on Union Road, adjacent to Town Hall, and there is a police substation on Genesee Street, near the City of Buffalo border. Police officers patrol five districts in the Town: Harlem, Midtown, Airport, William, and French. Foot patrols are conducted in Cedargrove Heights and along Walden Avenue and Genesee Street. The New York State Police patrol the New York State Thruway and can assist Town police. St. Joseph's Hospital is located on Harlem Road, near Cheektowaga Town Park.

The Town is divided into nine fire districts. These fire districts are the governing bodies for fire protection activities within the Town. Fire Districts are independent political jurisdictions under New York State law and are governed by Boards of Commissioners elected by the residents of each district. The Town has no authority over spending or taxing for fire protection activities. Each fire districts own and maintain the



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

fire halls, apparatus and other equipment necessary for fire prevention and fire protection within their district, and they are responsible for budgeting the funds needed for equipment, training and other activities. The funds are raised through fire districts taxes on real property within the district, set by the Boards of Commissioners. Actual fire, rescue and emergency medical services within the fire districts are provided by volunteer fire departments.

Table 16
Town of Cheektowaga Fire Districts and Fire Companies

Fire District	Fire Company	Fire Hall location
Bellevue No. 9 Fire District	Bellevue Fire Company	511 Como Park Boulevard
Cleveland Hill No. 6 Fire District	Cleveland Hill Hose Company	440 Cleveland Drive
Doyle No. 1 Fire District	Doyle Hose Company #1	2199 William Street
	Doyle Hose Company #2	100 Willowlawn Parkway
Forks No. 3 Fire District	Forks Hose Company	3330 Broadway
		222 Nagel Drive (substation)
Hy-View Fire District No. 8	Hy-View Fire Company	8 Airport Drive
Pine Hill No. 5 Fire District	Pine Hill Hose Company #5	2435 Genesee Street
South Line Fire District No.10	South Line Fire Company	1049 French Road
		40 Boxwood Lane (substation)
U-Crest No. 4 Fire District	U-Crest Fire Department	255 Clover Place
Walden No. 2 Fire District	Rescue Hose Company #1	20 Pine Ridge Road

The Erie Division of Fire Safety operates a central training facility, the County Fire Training & Operations Center, which is located on Broadway, adjacent to the Town Hall. The facility provides training to fire fighters and emergency personnel on a daily basis. Fire protection and emergency services at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport is handled by the NFTA at their facility at 251 Cayuga Road.

Parks and Recreation

The Town Youth and Recreation Department is located at 275 Alexander Avenue, within Cheektowaga Town Park. The Youth and Recreation Department provides arts, athletics, education, health, recreation, and social opportunities for all residents of the Town. There are several parks throughout the Town, of varying size and function (Map 12). Five of the larger parks include:

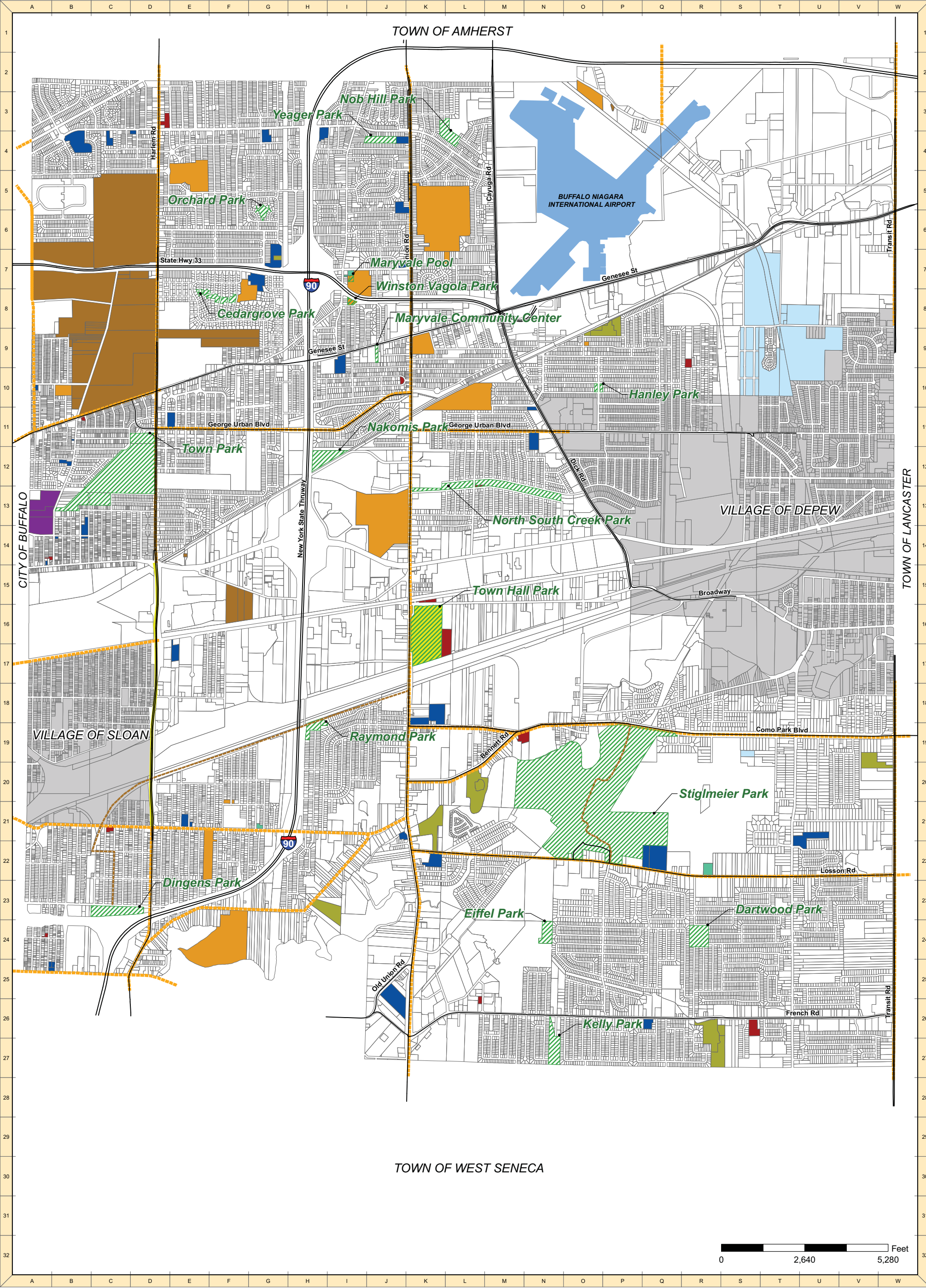


TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- JC Stiglmeier Park, located on Losson Road, encompasses over 324 acres and is the largest of the Town's parks. Bordering along Cayuga Creek, the park offers a variety of opportunities for passive and active recreation. Stiglmeier Park includes several baseball and softball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, soccer fields, picnic facilities, and walking trails. The Stiglmeier Center is a 6,000 square foot building used for seasonal activities, youth and recreation programs, and meetings or educational programs.
- Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve is a unique 292-acre complex of forests (including old growth forest), ponds and wetlands. Located immediately east of Stiglmeier Park, this preserve is home to many species of wildlife native to Western New York, including white-tailed deer, beaver, waterfowl, aquatic wildlife, red-tailed hawk, pileated woodpecker and blue heron. The area also supports a variety of native wildflowers, ferns and fungi. Reinstein Woods offers a variety of opportunities to learn about nature. Owned and operated by the NYSDEC, this site hosts a number of special programs and free guided tours. In addition, the site offers a number of passive and active recreational opportunities, such as hiking, bird watching, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.
- Cheektowaga Town Park, located on Harlem Road, south of George Urban Blvd. The park contains of several baseball and softball fields, soccer fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, a swimming pool complex, a playground, picnic facilities, and walking trails. The Pulaski Cultural Center, located within the park, provides for civic celebrations and outdoor concerts at an amphitheater. The park also incorporates the Alexander Community Center, which houses the Town Youth and Recreation Department.
- North/ South Creek Park located parallel to Scajaquada Creek between North Creek Drive and South Creek Drive, east of Union Road. This park provides public greenspace for passive recreation for surrounding residents.
- Town Hall Park is a 76.5 acre facility located on Broadway, behind the Cheektowaga Town Hall. This park includes baseball and soccer fields and other Town facilities.

Other neighborhood parks and play lots throughout the Town include:

- Yeager Park, located between Yeager Drive and Cleveland Drive.
- Nob Hill Park, located on Colonial Court, near Cleveland Drive.
- Cedargrove Park, located within Cedargrove Circle, south of Maryvale Drive.
- Nokomis Park, located on Nokomis Parkway near Walden Galleria.
- Dingens Park, located on Dingens Street, west of Harlem Road.
- Raymond Park, located at the foot of Raymond Avenue near the New York State Thruway.



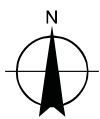
Map 12 - Community Facilities and Parks

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

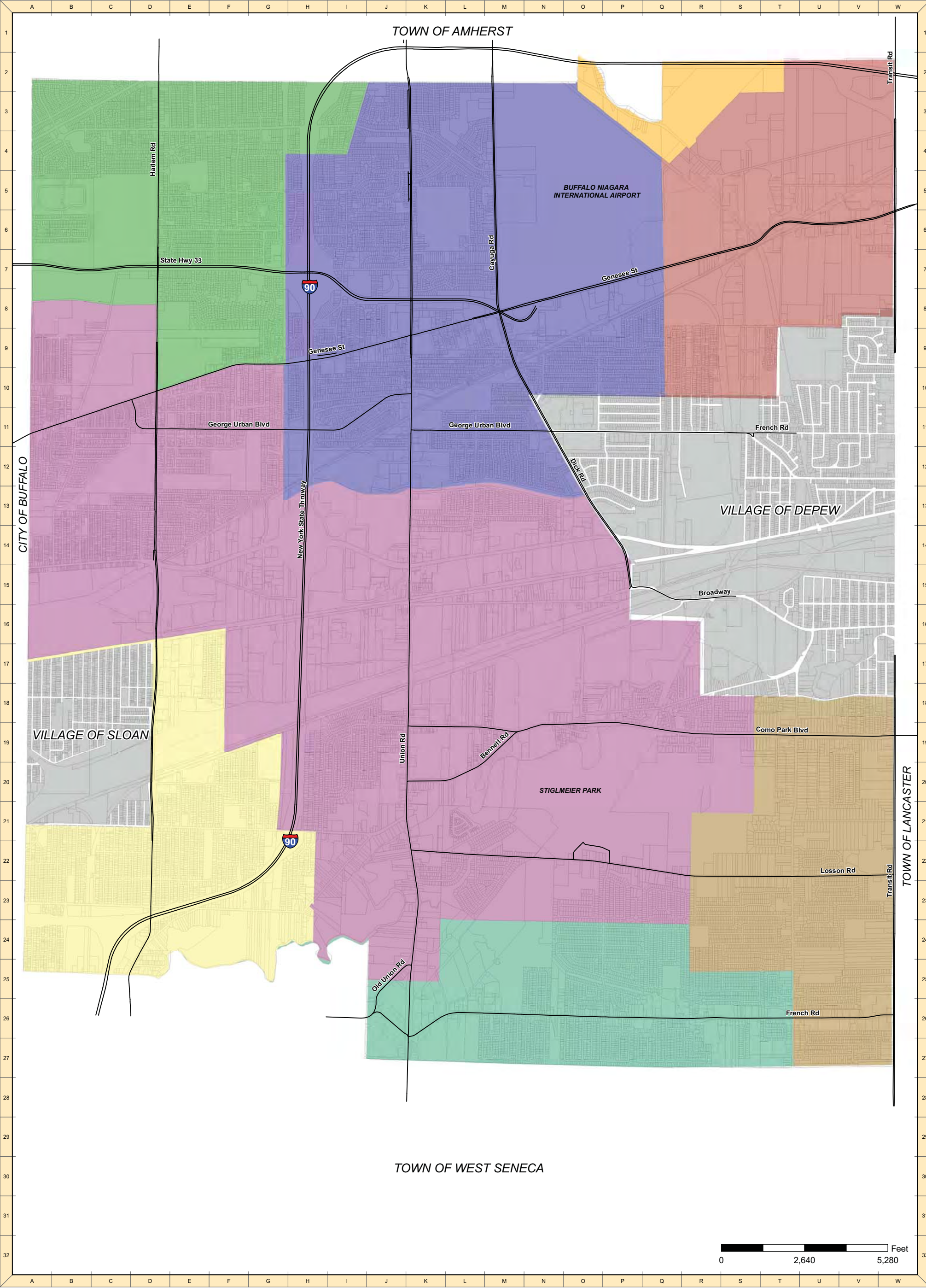
LEGEND

- | | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Town Boundary | Parcels (2007) | Bike Trails | Community Facilities | College | Police/Fire Department | Library |
| Major Roads | Historic Rails To Trails | On Street Bicycle Network | Religious | Town Hall | Senior Housing | Buffalo Niag. Int'l Airport |
| Parks | Designated Bike Lanes | Cemetery | Recreation Facility | School | | |

*The information on this document is based on data gathered from the following data sources and should not be used for design or construction. -Data Sources: Town of Cheektowaga, NYS GIS Clearinghouse.



WD Project # 313306
Map Created: September, 2008



Map 13 - School Districts

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

Town Boundary

Major Roads

Parcels (2007)

School District

Cheektowaga-Maryvale

Cheektowaga

Cheektowaga-Sloan

Cleveland Hill

Depew

Lancaster

West Seneca

Williamsville

WENDEL DUCHSCHERER
ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: July, 2008

*The information on this document is based on data gathered from the following data sources and should not be used for design or construction. -Data Sources: Town of Cheektowaga, NYS GIS Clearinghouse.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Eiffel Park, located in the Idylwoods neighborhood, west of Towers Blvd. in south Cheektowaga.
- Kelly Park, located on Kelly Drive near French Road.
- Dartwood Park, located on Dartwood Drive, between Losson Road and French Road.
- Orchard Park, located on Gardenvale Drive, south of Huth Road.
- Winston Vagola Park, located on Fonda Drive near Beach Road.
- Hanley Park, located on Patrick Lane near the Urbandale Plaza.

The Town operates several community centers for use by youth:

- Alexander Community Center, located at Cheektowaga Town Park.
- Dartwood Community Center, located at Dartwood Park.
- Maryvale Community Center, located on Genesee Street.
- Stiglmeier Park Community Center, located at Steiglmeier Park.

The Town operates three public pools for use by Town residents:

- Dingens Pool, located at Dingens Park.
- Maryvale Pool, located on Maryvale Drive.
- Town Park Pool, located at Cheektowaga Town Park.

Ice skating facilities are located at the Recreation Center Arena at Cheektowaga Town Park. The Town also owns Diamond Hawk Golf Course on Sonwil Drive, which has been leased to a private entity for operation and maintenance.

Athletic and recreational facilities are located at many of the schools and fire departments throughout the Town. There are also private organizations, such as the Southline Athletic Association, who provide recreational opportunities within the Town.

The Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve, operated by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, has an extensive trail system and offers several guided nature tours and other educational programs.

Historic and Cultural Resources

There are two public libraries within the Town that are part of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System. Julia Boyer Reinstein Library is located at 1030 Losson Road near JC Stiglmeier Park. The Anna Reinstein Library is located at 2580 Harlem Road adjacent to Cheektowaga Town Park.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

There are three places in Cheektowaga that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Chapel of Our Lady Help of Christians located at 4125 Union Road, the War of 1812 Garrison Cemetery located on Aero Drive, and the Villa Maria Motherhouse Complex located at 600 Doat Street.

Other cultural or historic resources of significance in the Town include the Cheektowaga Historical Museum, located at 3329 Broadway, which offers displays of significance to the Town, the George Urban Residence on Pine Ridge Road, Mt. Calvary Cemetery on Harlem Road, and St. Stanislaus Cemetery on Harlem Road.

Schools

Parts of eight different school districts fall within the Town of Cheektowaga (Map 13). School districts include Cleveland Hill Union Free School District, Maryvale Central School District, Cheektowaga Central School District, Cheektowaga-Sloan Union Free School District, Depew Central School District, Lancaster Central School District, and West Seneca Central School District, and Williamsville Central School District.

The Cleveland Hill Union Free School District had an enrollment of 1,471 students in 2006-2007. The District covers the northwest portion of the Town. There are three schools in the District:

- Cleveland Hill Elementary School, 105 Mapleview Road
- Cleveland Hill Middle School, 105 Mapleview Road
- Cleveland Hill High School, 105 Mapleview Road

The Maryvale Central School District had an enrollment of 2,354 students in 2006-2007. There are four schools in the District:

- Maryvale Primary School, 1 Nigel Drive
- Maryvale Intermediate School, 1050 Maryvale Drive
- Maryvale Middle School, 1050 Maryvale Drive
- Maryvale High School, 1050 Maryvale Drive

The district also operates a facility for continuing education at a former school building.

The Cheektowaga Central School District had an enrollment of 2,459 students in 2006-2007. The District is the largest in the Town and covers a majority of the central portion of the Town. There are four schools in the District:



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Union East Elementary School, 3550 Union Road
- Pine Hill Primary School, 1635 E. Delavan Avenue
- Cheektowaga Middle School, 3600 Union Road
- Cheektowaga High School, 3600 Union Road

The Cheektowaga-Sloan Union Free School District had an enrollment of 1,636 students in 2006-2007. The District covers the Village of Sloan and adjoining areas of the Town. There are four schools in the District:

- Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, 166 Halstead Avenue
- Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School, 2495 William Street
- John F. Kennedy Middle School, 305 Cayuga Creek Road
- John F. Kennedy High School, 305 Cayuga Creek Road

The Depew Central School District had an enrollment of 2,188 students in 2006-2007. The District covers the Village of Depew and the eastern portion of the Town, as well as portions of the Town of Lancaster. There are three schools in the District, however, none are within the boundaries of the Town.

- Cayuga Heights Elementary School, 1780 Como Park Boulevard
- Depew Middle School, 5201 Transit Road
- Depew High School, 5201 Transit Road

The Williamsville Central School District had an enrollment of 10,649 students in 2006-2007. The District covers a very small portion of the town, north of the Airport. There are thirteen schools in the District, however, none are within the boundaries of the Town of Cheektowaga.

The Lancaster Central School District had an enrollment of 6,232 students in 2006-2007. There are eight schools in the District, however, only one is within the boundaries of the Town of Cheektowaga (within the Village of Depew).

- John A. Sciole Elementary School, 86 Alys Drive, East

The West Seneca Central School District had an enrollment of 7,464 students in 2006-2007. The District covers the southern portion of the Town. There are twelve schools in the District, however, none are within the boundaries of the Town of Cheektowaga.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The following table summarizes general statistics regarding spending per pupil, student-teacher ratios and the high school dropout rate for the public school districts in the Town of Cheektowaga.

Table 17 - School District Statistics

	Spending per Pupil	Percentage spent on instruction	Student/ Teacher Ratio (FTE*)	High School Drop-Out Rate
Cheektowaga Central	\$12,692	60%	14/FTE	4%
Cheektowaga-Sloan	\$14,304	67%	13/FTE	3%
Cleveland-Hill	\$14,282	67%	11/FTE	6%
Depew	\$14,520	61%	13/FTE	6%
Lancaster	\$10,543	59%	14/FTE	4%
Maryvale	\$13,175	65%	13/FTE	6%
West Seneca	\$11,789	62%	15/FTE	2%
Williamsville	\$11,964	65%	14/FTE	1%

* Full-time equivalent

Source: NCES 2007: www.education.com

There are several private schools within the Town, including Mary Queen of Angels School, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament School (Village of Depew), St. Barnabas School (Village of Depew), Our Lady of Help Christian School, and Kolbe Catholic School. In addition, Erie County BOCES operates the Harkness Career & Technical Center on Aero Drive. The Stanley G. Falk School has a location on Rossler Avenue that provides schooling to students with special learning needs. The Maryvale Continuing Education School is located at 777 Maryvale Drive.

Villa Maria College is a private two-year institution located on Pine Ridge Road. Beginning in the fall of 2008, the College will offer off-campus housing for its students at the new Collegiate Village (formally Kensington Village). Empire State College has a satellite facility located in the Appletree Business Park.

3.10 Existing Planning Reports, Studies and Plans

The Town of Cheektowaga has participated in the development of several planning documents, master plans, neighborhood plans, transportation and corridor studies, economic reports, and community facility and recreational plans. The Town of Cheektowaga Comprehensive Master Plan that is currently in place was adopted in 1992 and replaced the original master plan for the Town, which was completed in 1969.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Studies and plans that have been developed for specific neighborhoods include the Harlem-Kensington-Cleveland Economic Development Strategy, the Harlem-Kensington-Cleveland Village Revitalization Plan, and the Pine Hill/ Schiller Park Historic Area Revitalization Study.

The Harlem-Kensington-Cleveland Economic Development Strategy covers a two-mile long commercial strip along Harlem Road and provides a market analysis, redevelopment site analysis, and implementation plan for the area. The Harlem-Kensington-Cleveland Village Revitalization Plan promotes a preferred context sensitive approach to the widening of Harlem Road that allows for mixed use redevelopment for the commercial area along Harlem Road to accommodate new growth and infill development in a manner that minimizes impacts to the surrounding neighborhood and promotes alternative modes of transportation. The Pine Hill/ Schiller Park Historic Area Revitalization Study covers the neighborhood straddling the City of Buffalo/ Town of Cheektowaga line and aims to restore the image and theme for Genesee Street as an historic, residential style commercial/ mixed use area with a reinstated pedestrian scale.

There have also been several transportation and/or corridor studies conducted for roadways within the Town including the Williams Street/ Losson Road Corridor Study, Transportation Improvements Impact Study for the William/ Losson Corridor, the Transit Road/ French Road Corridor Study, the I-90 Buffalo Corridor Study, the Route 33 – Kensington Expressway Safety Study, and the Route 78/ Transit Road Access Management Study.

The William Street/ Losson Road Corridor Study inventoried factors impacting land use in the William/ Losson corridor, defined goals of the corridors, and recommended a strategy for future land use. The Transportation Improvements Impact Study for the William/ Losson Corridor examined improvements that would result in relieving traffic congestion in the corridor. This study recommended incorporating a Broadway interchange at I-90. The Transit Road/ French Road Corridor Study inventoried factors impacting land use in the Transit Road/ French Road area, defined goals of the corridor, and recommended a strategy for future land use. The I-90 Buffalo Corridor Study addressed capacity, structural, safety, and operational needs within the I-90 corridor, from I-190 to Transit Road, over the next 30 years. The Corridor Study resulted in the improvements proposed for the I-90/ I-290 interchange. The Route 33 – Kensington Expressway Safety Study identified high accident locations and comprised methods to reduce accidents along the corridor. The Route 78/ Transit Road Access Management Study identified existing access control problems and offered specific access management solutions.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SECTION 4 – COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION/GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The following section of the Comprehensive Plan provides professional observations concerning the existing conditions of the Town and the findings of the analysis of information gathered as part of the Section 3.0 - Community Inventory and Profile. These observations and findings are centered on the major focus areas of the Plan: Transportation, Economic Development, Neighborhood Revitalization, and Land Use and Zoning. This section also includes a fifth focus area that looks at additional topics. These observations cannot be analyzed independent of each other, as each affects the other.

It is important to provide the observations and findings, because they offer an outside view of the Town at a moment in time. This outside perspective is as important as the view provided by the residents of the community, which has been articulated through the public input process. Perception, understanding and reality are equally important and must be weighed against each other.

Observations, in general, fall into categories related to Strengths and Weaknesses, and Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), and provide the basic elements for analysis. This allows the comprehensive plan to assess and address the Town's strengths and weaknesses through recommendations developed to take advantage of opportunities and addressing threats.

In general the Town of Cheektowaga is an older first ring suburb of the City of Buffalo that is blessed with valuable assets:

- an expansive infrastructure system,
- good parks and outdoor features (such as the Reinstein Woods),
- strong, well identified neighborhoods,
- transportation system that includes a significant railroad infrastructure and an international airport,
- a major retail destination - the Walden Galleria,
- a central location that makes the Town very accessible,
- significant stream/creek corridors,
- dense development patterns, and
- an ethnically diverse population with wonderful cultural aspects and traditions.

With these great assets, however, it is also important to recognize some challenges and weaknesses of the Town:



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- an aging infrastructure, with its associated higher maintenance costs,
- an older housing stock with dwelling units that may not meet current housing preferences,
- neighborhoods near the City line experiencing evidence of disinvestment,
- traffic and congestion associated with local and regional growth,
- brownfields and abandoned properties, and
- conflicting land uses (such as the quarry and the surrounding residential neighborhood)

These challenges have resulted in other problems and affect the overall image of the Town in WNY. There are also continued threats to the future of the Town:

- weak economic conditions,
- an aging and declining population,
- small areas of urban decay and crime,
- declining property values,
- taxes and budgetary impacts, and
- Foreclosed/distressed properties.

At the same time, there are many excellent opportunities for the Town:

- plentiful available affordable properties,
- the potential for re-use of abandoned railroads,
- economic investment opportunities,
- “staycations” - people staying closer to home due to poor economic times
- the ability to improve/change the local image,
- a central location in the region serving all the people who travel through the Town,
- people looking for change, and
- a strong cultural/historic awareness of the community and devotion to its future.

Identifying opportunities and threats provides the Town the ability to take advantage of the opportunities that exist and better plan for the threats that have the potential to weaken the community. That is the goal of the Comprehensive Plan.

4.2 TRANSPORTATION

The following is an assessment of the Town of Cheektowaga’s transportation system based upon findings derived from the inventory of existing conditions, review of town corridor studies and community plans, and input from various transportation agencies, town officials, and the public. This assessment is not intended to reflect specific recommendations but rather is an evaluation offered by professional



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

transportation engineers and planners of the positives and negatives of the Town's transportation system along with the opportunities and threats facing the Town's future transportation system.

Overall Transportation System

As illustrated on Map 14, the Town is a transportation crossroads for regional transportation throughout Western New York. Several major highways, public transportation routes, freight and passenger railroads, and the region's airport exist within the Town's boundaries, affording its residents vast opportunities for travel and offering businesses and industries exceptional access to transportation facilities.

Highway

The New York State Thruway (I-90) bisects the Town north to south, bringing nearly 150,000 vehicles per day through the Town. This interstate has several interchanges located within the Town. The combination of high visibility and great Thruway access make Cheektowaga a prime location for regional commerce.

The Town's residents can easily access almost any part of the area within minutes due to the presence of the Thruway, Kensington Expressway (State Route 33), and I-190. The elimination of the tolls on the I-190 has minimized the traffic impacts to surface streets in the surrounding neighborhood and has redistributed traffic and altered travel patterns along major regional highways. Table identifies average daily traffic (ADT) counts on roadways that were used to bypass the I-190 tolls compared with average daily traffic counts following the removal of the I-190 tolls.

Table 1 – Average Daily Traffic counts for I-190 Tolls By-Pass Roads

Street	Segment	ADT prior to removal of I-190 tolls	ADT following removal of I-190 tolls
Clinton Street	Harlem Road to City of Buffalo line	19,000	16,800
Dingens Street	Harlem Road to City of Buffalo line	9,700	6,400
William Street	Harlem Road to City of Buffalo line	15,900	15,300
I-190	I-90 to Ogden Street	54,930	77,600

The study to relocate the Williamsville Mainline Toll Barrier is in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) stage. If this toll barrier is relocated, additional traffic redistribution will occur and affect travel patterns throughout the Town.



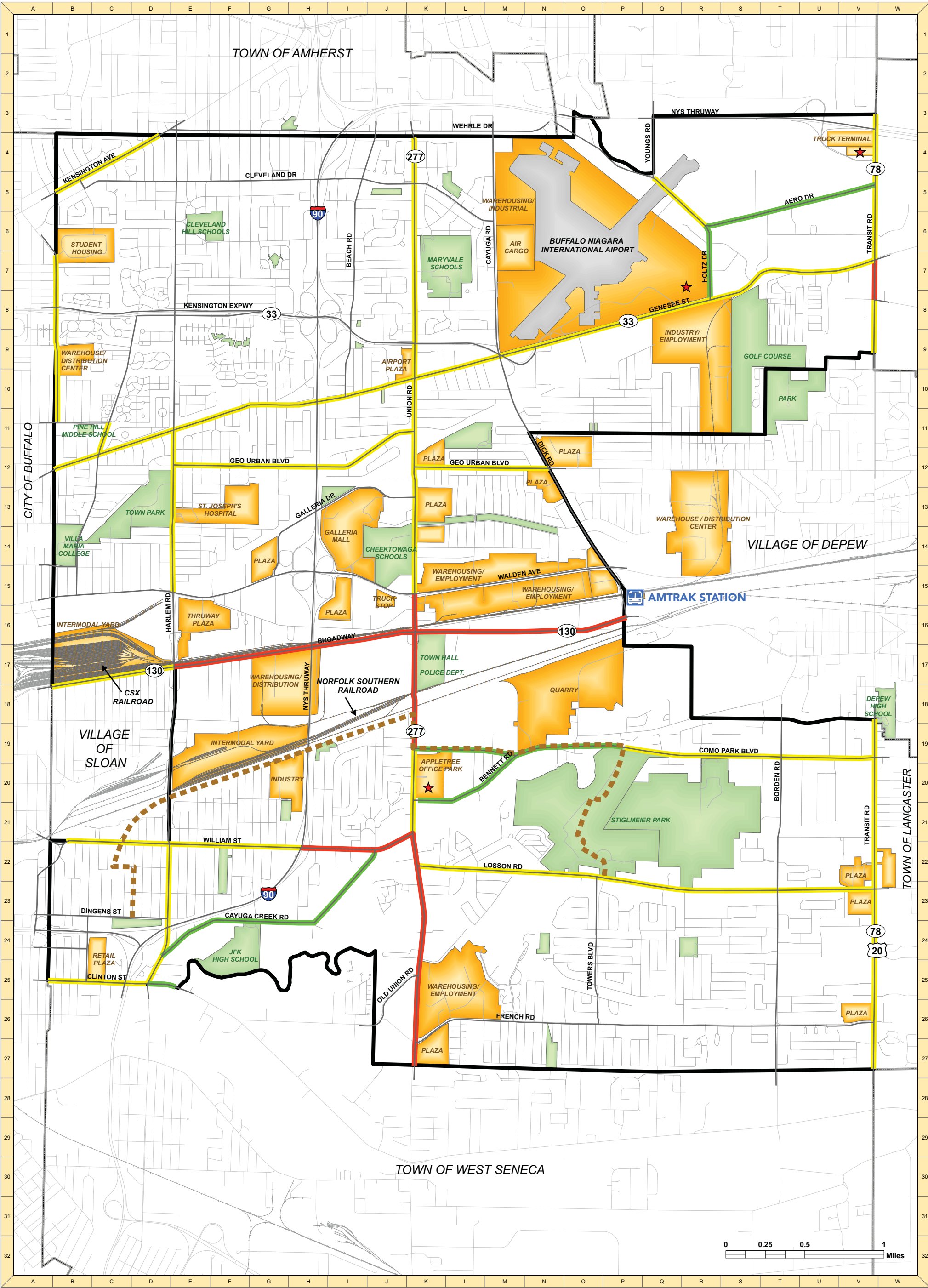
TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As a result of population growth in Cheektowaga, major roadways in the Town have been expanded over the last half decade to handle the associated growth in vehicular travel. The result is a road system that for the most part has excellent connectivity and sufficient capacity to handle existing vehicle travel. Traffic counts for roadways throughout the Town are portrayed on Map 15. There are a few corridors and individual intersections that have been stressed due to increases in commuter traffic from adjacent growing communities and nodes of retail redevelopment that have occurred in the Union-Walden area. Unfortunately, recent roadway improvements that have been undertaken to improve vehicular travel are unfriendly to alternative modes of transportation, such as pedestrian traffic, bicyclists and transit (buses). One of the challenges the Town faces is recognizing opportunities to incorporate alternative transportation modes into the existing roadway system and move away from such great dependence on the automobile. Particularly with an aging population, these alternatives are important.

The Town has an excellent surface road system consisting of evenly spaced north-south and east-west arterials intertwined with a grid road system that results in excellent connectivity that distributes vehicular traffic rather evenly. Due to the residential growth that has taken place in eastern portions of the Town as well as in the Town of Lancaster and eastern suburbs in recent decades, additional commuter traffic has placed strains on the east-west arterials. In particular, the William-Losson corridor has experienced significant traffic growth and its function has transformed from a major residential collector for neighborhoods in southeastern Cheektowaga to a minor and principal arterial servicing an increasing number of pass-through commuters accessing the New York State Thruway interchange at William Street. The corridor bottlenecks at Union Road where William Street and Losson Road are offset by approximately a half mile. This configuration creates traffic operational problems that cause additional turning movement conflicts and places undue traffic on this segment of Union Road.

In 1999, the Town of Cheektowaga Police Department performed a 10-day long license plate survey to determine the origin of motorists using the William/ Losson corridor. A traffic officer was assigned at two locations to survey traffic exiting the eastbound I-90 ramp and turning eastbound onto William Street and traffic turning from southbound Union Road to eastbound Losson Road. It was found that Cheektowaga-Sloan residents comprised of 56% of the vehicles exiting the eastbound I-90 ramp to eastbound William Street, with West Seneca residents making up 11% and Lancaster-Depew residents 10%. Cheektowaga-Sloan residents comprised 68% of vehicles turning onto eastbound Losson Road from southbound Union Road. Lancaster-Depew residents made up 16% of these vehicles. Based on this survey, the majority of the traffic through this busy corridor is local in nature (Cheektowaga residents).

As the suburbs east of Cheektowaga continue to grow, it is likely that increasing numbers of residents will utilize corridors in Cheektowaga for commuting purposes. Transportation agencies will be challenged with increased pressure to improve and maintain acceptable travel conditions for Town residents in the wake of increased traffic on these commuter corridors. Formulation and implementation of capacity



Map 18 - Bicycle Level of Service

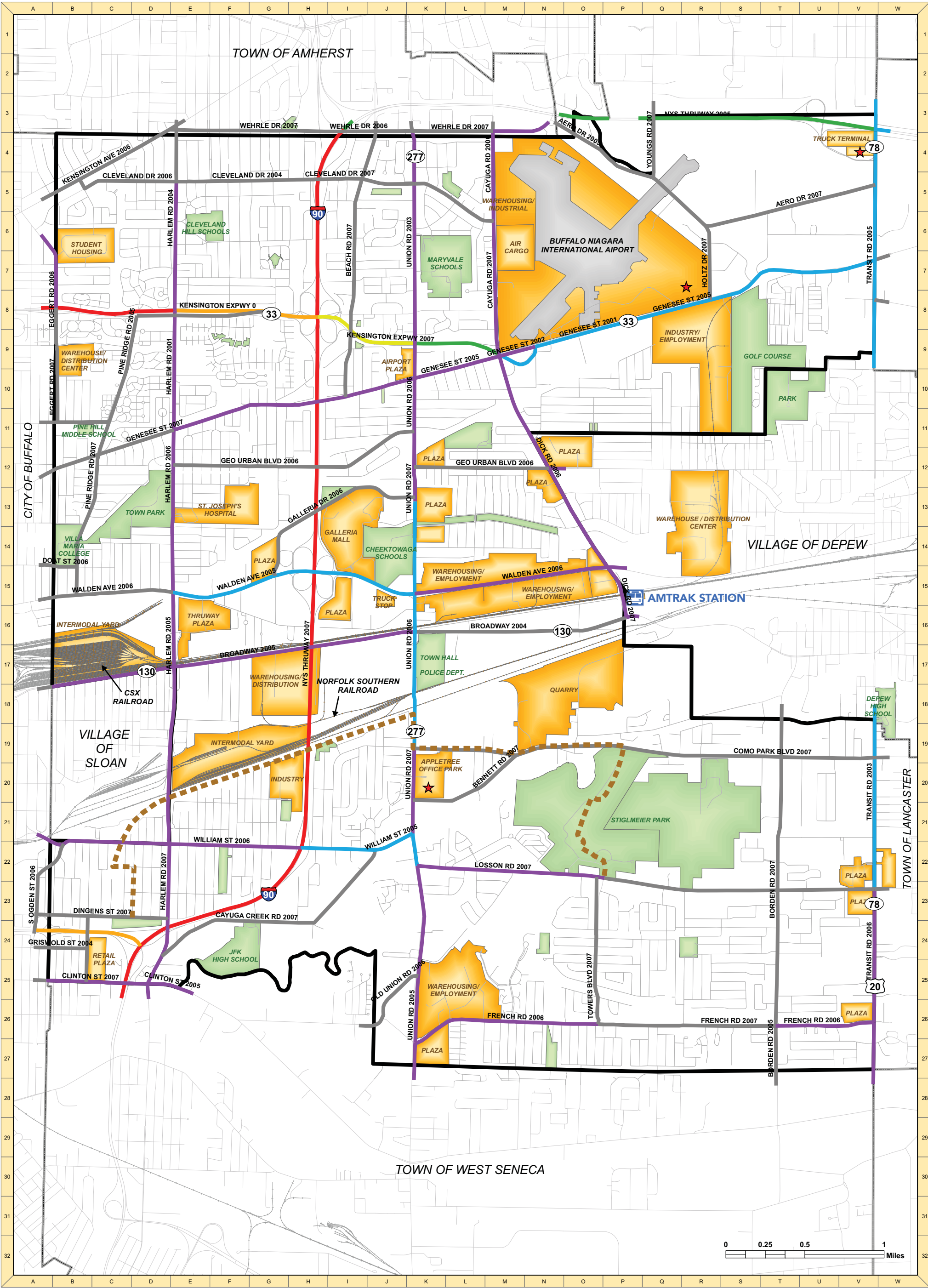
TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

Municipal Boundary	Railroad	Park / Community Facility	Bicycle LOS	Extreme Caution - Experienced
Cheektowaga Boundary	Historic Rails To Trails	Park & Ride	Caution Advised	Suitable for Bicyclists
Road Centerline	Activity Center			

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: August 2009

*The information on this document is based on data gathered from the following data sources and should not be used for design or construction. -Data Sources: Town of Cheektowaga, NYS GIS Clearinghouse, GBNRTC.



Map 15 - Traffic Volumes

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

Municipal Boundary

Cheektowaga Boundary

Road Centerline

Railroad

Park & Ride

Historic Rails To Trails

Park / Community Facility

Activity Center

Traffic Ground Counts AADT

0 - 15000

15001 - 30000

30001 - 45000

45001 - 60000

60001 - 75000

75001 - 90000

90001 - 150000

N

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ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: August 2009

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TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

improvements will require coordination with neighboring municipalities and Greater Buffalo- Niagara Regional Transportation Council members.

The Transportation Improvements Impact Study for the William/ Losson Corridor was conducted for the Town in 2000. This study evaluated potential improvements to the William/ Losson corridor that attempt to improve traffic flow and minimize congestion and safety concerns. The Study suggests that the most effective short term solution to improving travel conditions along the William/ Losson corridor is to construct a New York State Thruway interchange at Broadway.

A separate William/ Losson Corridor Study developed for the Town indicated that traffic counts on William Street indicate traffic decreases between the New York State Thruway and the City of Buffalo line, confirming that the Thruway/ William Street interchange is the significant contributor of traffic congestion in the corridor.

The William/ Losson Corridor Study identified vehicle queuing as a major problem during the morning peak hours along the westbound lanes of William Street resulting from vehicles accessing the Thruway interchange. During the afternoon peak hours, vehicle queuing is a major problem along the eastbound lanes of William Street resulting from backups at the Union Road traffic signal. As a result of excessive queues, residents living in adjacent neighborhoods are unable to enter the roadway during peak hours.

The visioning efforts of the Harlem/ Kensington/ Cleveland Village Revitalization Plan helped shape the roundabouts that were constructed along Harlem Road by the New York State Department of Transportation. The Plan identified other context sensitive design approaches to roadways in the area such as the restriping of Harlem Road and Kensington Avenue, neighborhood traffic calming, access management opportunities, on-street parking, and gateways into the community.

The Pine Hill/ Schiller Park Traditional Area Revitalization Plan identified several transportation related objectives aimed at enhancing the aesthetics of Genesee Street, improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and enhancing transit facilities.

The Transit Road/ French Road Corridor Study included goals and objectives aimed at providing access management along these two corridors, enhancing aesthetics, improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and incorporating traffic calming.

The Greater Buffalo- Niagara Regional Transportation Council developed a region-wide analysis of corridors throughout the Buffalo metropolitan area and identified the corridors that operate at poor Levels of Service (LOS). Level of Service was determined by evaluating the volume of traffic on a roadway and the capacity for which it was built to handle. Roadways identified as having a poor Level of Service



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

(LOS D or worse) often experience congestion, especially during peak hours. The corridors throughout Cheektowaga that experience a LOS D or worse are identified on Map 16 and are as follows:

- Kensington Expressway (State Route 33) – Eggert Road to Union Road.
- Eggert Road – East Delavan Avenue to Kenville Road.
- Union Road – Como Lake Boulevard to George Urban Boulevard; Losson Road to William Street; at the Genesee Street intersection; at the George Urban Boulevard intersections.
- Genesee Street – at the Cayuga Road/ Dick Road intersection.
- William Street – I-90 interchange to Union Road.
- Losson Road – Union Road to Borden Road.
- New York State Thruway (I-90).
- Transit Road – Genesee Street to Town of Amherst line.

A traffic impact study was conducted during the winter of 2009 to analyze the impacts of additional development at the Galleria Mall on the surrounding intersections. The study found that all adjacent intersections to the Galleria Mall operate at a Level of Service of E or better.

The New York State Thruway Authority will be undertaking the development of the I-90 Corridor Study in the next few years to evaluate improving traffic operations, the location and operation of interchanges, and improving safety. The Corridor Study will extend from Youngs Street to the I-190 interchange, and include the I-290 interchange. The timing of the Corridor Study has been delayed and construction of proposed recommendations would not begin until 2017. The corridor study will evaluate a possible new interchange at Youngs Street, and the possible elimination of the Cleveland Drive interchange. The study scope does not consider a Broadway interchange; however, this could be included in the Corridor Study.

The only New York State Thruway Authority sponsored construction related projects proposed in the short term for the I-90 corridor are milling and overlay. The 5-year maintenance program does not include any expansion projects. The reconstruction of the I-90/ I-290 interchange has been pushed back to 2012.

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), as of June 2009, has the following projects on its Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) list that are funded and readying implementation:



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Transit Road – New York State Thruway (I-90) to Kensington Expressway (State Route 33), intersection upgrades/ reconstruction.
- Clinton Street – Harlem Road to Transit Road, roadway reconstruction.
- Transit Road – French Road to Gould Avenue, roadway reconstruction. The railroad bridges along this stretch constrain roadway reconstruction and increase the cost of the project.
- Kensington Expressway (State Route 33) – New York State Thruway (I-90) to Dick Road, maintenance, safety improvements at interchanges. Scoping is expected to begin in 2012. The project may include the construction of a noise barrier in 2016.
- Improvements/ reconstruction of the New York State Thruway (I-90) and I-290 interchange.
- Implementation of ITS facilities along the New York State Thruway (I-90).
- Construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Youngs Road and Aero Drive; right-of-way acquisition underway.
- The Town has a \$410,000 federal earmark to implement streetscape enhancements at the Union Road/ Walden Avenue intersection that has yet to be drawn from.
- Reconstruction of Rein Road bridge over Ellicott Creek (2013).

Roadways with adjacent commercial land use are inundated with multiple curb cuts and poor cross-connection between sites. This results in traffic congestion and safety concerns created by varying traffic speeds and conflicting turning movements. The Town has a draft Transit Road Overlay District that addresses access management along Transit Road. However, the Town should consider developing a Town-wide access management plan.

The industrial/ commercial development along Broadway east of the Village of Sloan and the quarry site generate a significant number of heavy duty truck trips. The lack of significant residential and commercial development surrounding this corridor allows industries to operate and trucks to utilize this corridor with minimal conflicts to residents, shoppers, and commuters. The downfall is that there is no direct access to the New York State Thruway from Broadway, meaning trucks must utilize alternative routes to either Walden Avenue or William Street. The lack of direct Thruway access results in increased truck traffic on those corridors, increasing the potential for vehicular/ truck conflicts. There is limited space to construct any type of interchange from the New York State Thruway to Broadway due to the proximity of existing interchanges, adjacent development, power lines that parallel the Thruway, and an active rail corridor that parallels Broadway. One of the challenges of solving the Town's transportation issues will be to work with involved agencies to reach a solution on improving access between the New York State Thruway and Broadway.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Truck traffic will tend to increase faster than employment or population due to continued expansion of intermodal and warehousing/ distribution operations, as well as, improvements in employee productivity, and changing trade patterns. As businesses continue to inventory less and rely on just-in-time shipments and with an increase in the amount of industrial and retail goods that are sourced from locations outside the region, demand for truck transportation will tend to rise.

Transit

The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) Metro Bus provides abundant transit service throughout the Town, operating regional express routes, local routes, and neighborhood connector routes, see Map 17. The express routes mainly operate on expressways or principal arterials and provide express transit service to/from major activity centers, such as the Airport, downtown Buffalo, and Appletree Business Mall. These routes operate with less frequent stops and with greater headways between services. There are numerous local bus routes that operate along the Town's arterials and collectors that additionally connect into adjoining municipalities. Neighborhood bus routes are intended to connect denser residential areas with major bus routes.

The NFTA is currently undertaking the development of the Service Restructuring and Fare Analysis/ Strategic Assessment. This study will evaluate the current NFTA transit system and develop a future network/ service. The study is currently in the analysis / findings stage. The most recent findings to come out of the assessment indicate that region-wide, 51 percent of passengers use transit to travel to/from work, 19 percent ride for personal business, and 14 percent ride to get to/from school. Nearly 70 percent of passengers walk to a station to access transit.

Figure 15 is taken from the NFTA Study and shows the number of daily boardings occurring at transit stops. The orange line is the light rail rapid transit line that travels along Main Street in the City of Buffalo. The green lines are bus lines. As expected, the highest density of daily boardings occurs within the City of Buffalo, particularly along the termini of the light rail transit line. However, there are several locations within the Town of Cheektowaga where there are relatively high rates of boarding. These destinations include the airport, the Galleria Mall and the Thruway Plaza, as well as the Park & Ride lot at the Thruway Exit on Transit in the far northeast corner of the Town.

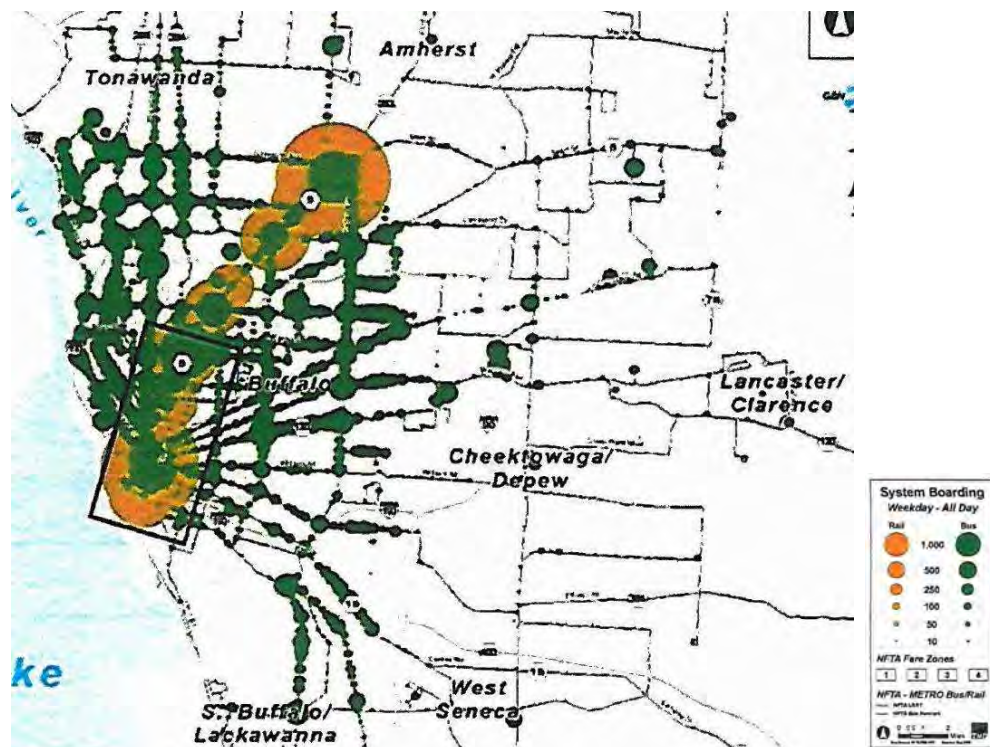
The majority of residents live within one quarter mile radius of a bus route. Bus routes serve virtually all parks, community facilities, shopping centers, and employment centers. However, there are several barriers that reduce the feasibility of utilizing transit such as wide roadways that handle large traffic volumes and high speeds, poor cross-access between shopping plazas and employment centers, and unfriendly and unsafe conditions for pedestrians. Some of the barriers that have been identified include the New York State Thruway, I-190, Kensington Expressway, active and abandoned rail corridors, creeks



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

and streams, and the high voltage power line that parallels the New York State Thruway. Besides those physical barriers, there are several other obstructions that can physically be traversed but act as psychological barriers because they don't necessarily accommodate pedestrians, such as large retail centers and employment areas that cater to the automobile, busy 5-lane arterial roadways, or roadways that lack pedestrian facilities. The Town is faced with the challenge of capitalizing on NFTA's extensive transit service to produce a more transit friendly community.

Figure 1 - NFTA Daily Transit System Boardings



There are two major activity centers in the Town, the Walden Galleria Mall and the Buffalo Niagara International Airport, that are linked to Downtown Buffalo by active and abandoned railroad corridors, making for an excellent opportunity to explore the development of enhanced transit corridors. Improving travel between these two important destinations is key for economic development and revitalization.

The Town has several opportunities to expand Park & Ride lots along major transit corridors to entice and expand transit ridership. There are currently Park & Ride lots located on Transit Road near the New York State Thruway and at the Appletree Business Mall. Park & Ride lots, combined with enhanced transit



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

facilities and great multi-modal accessibility, are vital components of a successful transportation demand management (TDM) program and can promote transit oriented development/ redevelopment.

During construction of the Galleria Mall, Pyramid funded the purchase of the abandoned railroad corridor that runs north of the Galleria Mall for NFTA. NFTA owns portions of the abandoned railroad corridor from Harlem Road to the Galleria Mall, Pyramid owns the portion near the Galleria Mall to Union Road, NFTA owns the portion from Union Road to Dick Road, R.J. Coleman owns the portion from Dick Road to Calspan, and the Town owns the portion from Calspan to Transit Road. This fractured ownership is one impediment to developing the proposed enhanced transit corridor.

The NYSDOT has been studying existing Park and Rides. The NYSDOT has additional funding to work with the Town on improving / locating new Park and Ride facilities. The expansion/ improvement of the Park and Ride facility on Transit Road near the New York State Thruway was submitted for Federal stimulus funding, but not selected. The project remains on the Illustrative List if additional funding becomes available.

Rail

The Town possesses excellent rail facilities that can be capitalized upon to generate opportunities for both passenger and freight rail. Two Class I railroads (Norfolk Southern and CSX) and a passenger rail (Amtrak) operate in the town providing connections to the East Coast, Canada, and the Midwest.

Norfolk Southern operates an intermodal facility at Bison Yard, off Harlem Road, that allows containers to be transported directly between rail flat cars and truck chassis without individually handling freight. In addition, CSX handles numerous intermodal container rail shipments along its rail corridor that are unloaded from ocean vessels at the Port of New York/ New Jersey and are being transported to Canada or the Midwest. Between the two rail carriers, 825,000 intermodal units pass through Cheektowaga each year. As the Port of New York/ New Jersey becomes increasingly congested, CSX plans to utilize its Buffalo Seneca Yard as an inland port, which allows intermodal containers to be taken directly from ocean vessels to inland ports to undergo inspection and distribution. An opportunity for Norfolk Southern to operate a similar facility at its Bison Yard is possible since railroad and highway infrastructure is already in place. CSX also operates a rail switching yard and bulk transloading facility at Frontier Yard.





TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The initial findings of the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council freight study indicate that intermodal shipments will increase 130 percent by 2030. Additionally, an increasing amount of freight being transported between the U.S. and Canada is being converted to rail from trucks. The presence of excellent rail facilities in the Town combined with exceptional Thruway access, the presence of air cargo facilities, and the availability of vacant former industrial lands for redevelopment for light industrial/distribution uses make Cheektowaga a potential candidate to capitalize of its transportation infrastructure and attract intermodal and international logistics and trade and warehousing and distribution facilities.

Buffalo Niagara International Airport

The presence of the region's airport in the Town makes Cheektowaga the "first impression" for travelers to the region.

Several low cost air carriers operate from the Buffalo Niagara International Airport (BNIA). As a result, enplanements at the Airport continue to increase at a steady pace, drawing passengers from Southern Ontario, Rochester, Southern New York, and Western Pennsylvania in addition to the Buffalo/ Niagara Region. In addition to private vehicles, public transit and charter operations provide service to and from the Airport.



The reconstruction of the terminus of the Kensington Expressway at Genesee Street coupled with a new realigned access to the Buffalo Niagara International Airport has improved overall accessibility to/from the Airport. Additionally, the reconstruction of the Airport access was combined with improvements to Genesee Street, which have resulted in less traffic congestion, reduced traveler confusion, improved



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

accessibility to adjacent hospitality businesses, and enhanced streetscape aesthetics. All of these features offer a vastly enhanced “first impression” of Cheektowaga. The presence of the airport in Cheektowaga has resulted in numerous spillover opportunities in the air cargo industry and hospitality industry, especially along Cayuga Road and Genesee Street.

Pedestrian/ Bicycle

The majority of the Town was built as a traditional grid system, resulting in neighborhoods with short blocks, sidewalks along streets, excellent accessibility and connectivity, and proximity to neighborhood services. These features make Cheektowaga a “pedestrian-oriented” community. However, pedestrian oriented does not necessarily result in pedestrian friendliness, and measures to enhance pedestrian and bicycle opportunities and safety for recreation, daily services, and commuting travel should be pursued.

The character of a roadway corridor often determines the level comfort pedestrians feel. If a roadway is wide, has numerous parking areas, and buildings are oriented away from the street and segregated, the comfort level for pedestrians will be very low. When roadways are reduced in width, traffic speeds are calmed and the comfort level of pedestrians is enhanced. To further promote pedestrian safety and comfort, the roadway design should include a buffer between people and vehicles (tree/lawn), and buildings should front the street and be clustered close together. The Town is fortunate to have many walkable residential neighborhoods and great connectivity; however, the majority of the streets that host shopping areas or employment centers are not comfortable or inviting places for pedestrians.

The Town also benefits from numerous neighborhood parks, schools, and other community services that are prime destinations for pedestrian travel, particularly for children and families. Oftentimes, however, wide roadways act as a barrier to pedestrian crossing, particularly where there are high traffic volumes. In these situations, even nearby facilities can become inaccessible to children without travel assistance from their parents.

The Greater Buffalo- Niagara Regional Transportation Council developed the Niagara Frontier Bicycle Master Plan, which aims to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities into the overall transportation system. The Plan scored various roadways for their friendliness to bicyclists using a color coded system portrayed on a map. Roadways highlighted with green are considered to be suitable for bicyclists. Roadways highlighted with orange are corridors where caution is advised for bicyclists. Roadways highlighted with red are corridors where extreme caution is advised and are only recommended for experienced bicyclists. Map 18 depicts the Greater Buffalo- Niagara Regional Transportation Council scoring of bicycle friendliness of studied roadways throughout the Town of Cheektowaga.

The following roadways throughout the Town of Cheektowaga are identified by the Greater Buffalo- Niagara Regional Transportation Council as green, or suitable for bicyclists:



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Harlem Road – Genesee Street to Cleveland Drive.
- Aero Drive – Holtz Drive to Transit Road.
- Holtz Drive – Genesee Street to Aero Drive.
- Como Park Boulevard – Union Road to Indian Road.
- Bennett Road – Union Road to Como Park Boulevard.
- Cayuga Creek Road – Harlem Road to William Street.

The following roadways throughout the Town of Cheektowaga are identified by the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council as orange or corridors where caution is advised for bicyclists:

- Harlem Road – Clinton Street to William Street; Walden Avenue to Genesee Street; Cleveland Drive to the Town of Amherst line.
- Eggert Road – East Delavan Avenue to Kenville Road.
- Union Road – Bennett Road to Como Park Boulevard; Walden Avenue to Town of Amherst line.
- Aero Drive – Youngs Street to Holtz Drive.
- Genesee Street – City of Buffalo line to Transit Road.
- Pine Ridge Road – Genesee Street to East Delavan Avenue.
- George Urban Boulevard – Harlem Road to Union Road; Union Road to Village of Depew line.
- Como Park Boulevard – Indian Road to Transit Road.
- William Street – City of Buffalo line to New York State Thruway.
- Losson Road – Union Road to Transit Road.
- Clinton Street – City of Buffalo line to Harlem Road.
- Broadway – City of Buffalo line to Harlem Road.
- Transit Road – Town of West Seneca line to Broadway; Walden Avenue to Pleasant View Drive; Genesee Street to Town of Amherst line.
- Kensington Avenue – City of Buffalo line to Town of Amherst line.

The following roadways throughout the Town of Cheektowaga are identified by the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council as red, or corridors where extreme caution is advised and are only recommended for experienced bicyclists:



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Youngs Road – Aero Drive to the Town of Amherst line.
- East Delavan Avenue – City of Buffalo line to Pine Ridge Road.
- Broadway – Harlem Road to Dick Road.
- Transit Road – Pleasant View Drive to Genesee Street.

A portion of Harlem Road between William Street and Walden Avenue is signed as a bicycle route. Clearly, routes coded as orange or red merit improvements to enhance the safety and comfort of bicyclists on these routes. Even many corridors categorized as “suitable” for bicyclists are not fully ‘bicycle-friendly’ and would benefit from additional improvements to enhance bicycle facilities.

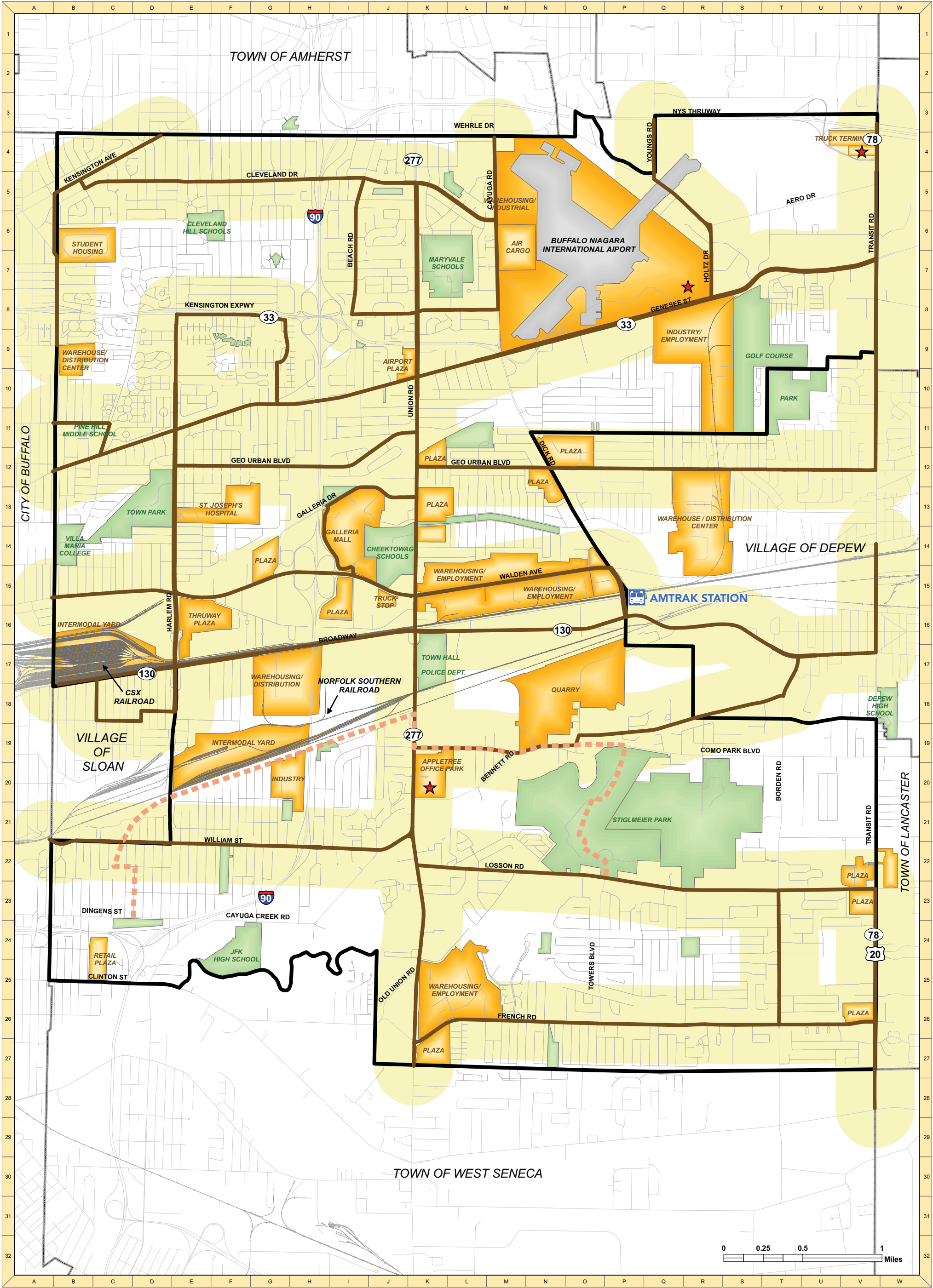
There are several abandoned railroad corridors that would make for excellent rails-to-trails opportunities to link portions of the Town. One such Rails-to-Trails corridor has recently been completed from the Doyle Neighborhood to Stiglmeier Park. These corridors provide a dedicated off-road route for pedestrians and bicyclists and can drastically increase the comfort level for the novice bicyclist. However, the opportunities for off-road bicycle routes are limited and improving bicycle facilities along the Town’s roadways offers the best opportunity for implementing better bicycle access through the Town.

Safety

The Greater Buffalo- Niagara Regional Transportation Council developed the Route 33 – Kensington Expressway Safety Study Report, which identified safety concerns along this route. The Study concluded that the Kensington Expressway interchange with the New York State Thruway exceeded the statewide average accident rate and is in need of safety improvements. No other safety concerns were identified along the Kensington Expressway within the Town of Cheektowaga.

Town of Cheektowaga Traffic Safety Office analyzed crash data over the past year and indicated the intersections that have experienced the highest number of crashes in the Town are as follows:

- Transit Road/ Genesee Street
- Union Road/ Genesee Street
- Genesee Street/ Kensington Expressway (State Route 33)
- Dick Road/ George Urban Boulevard
- Losson Road/ Borden Road



Map 17 - Public Transportation Routes

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

Municipal Boundary	Road Centerline	Park /Community Facility	Public Transit Routes	Park & Ride
Cheektowaga Boundary	Railroad	Activity Center	Historic Rails To Trails	1/4 Mile Walkability Zone From Transit Routes

WENDEL DUCHSCHERER
ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: August 2009

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TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The corridors that have experienced the highest number of crashes are as follows:

- Union Road
- Walden Avenue
- Kensington Expressway (State Route 33) in the vicinity of the New York State Thruway interchange
- Genesee Street

Safety concerns on the Kensington Expressway (State Route 33) east of the New York State Thruway interchange were also expressed. There are sharp curves that have caused serious accidents in the past, especially in winter.

The completion of the roundabouts at the Harlem Road/ Cleveland Drive intersection, as well as the “double” roundabout just over the Town line in Amherst, have greatly improved safety in the Harlem-Cleveland-Kensington area and has reduced the number of crashes reported.



Roundabouts on Harlem Road



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Character Corridors

Various corridors throughout the Town take on different characteristics and the “one size fits all” approach to transportation planning would produce harmful impacts on the community. The use of context sensitive design or Complete Streets resources would improve the coordination between land use and transportation planning, incorporate residents and businesses from the community in the planning process, make the corridor favorable to all forms of transportation, entice neighborhood reinvestment and revitalization, and maintain the community character that makes Cheektowaga’s neighborhoods so unique.

As illustrated in Map 19, corridors throughout the Town of Cheektowaga can be generally classified into four categories- Traditional, Suburban, Commercial, and Expressway. Traditional corridors are those located within higher intensity centers and older neighborhoods. These corridors are characteristic of a pedestrian-friendly environment and contain a diverse mix of uses that are generally clustered close together. For these Traditional corridors, the focus should be on slowing traffic, enhancing pedestrian facilities, and adding amenities, such as trees and streetscaping, that encourage more pedestrian activity and get at least some vehicular traffic off the road. Where feasible, the number of curb cuts impeding pedestrian traffic should be limited and redevelopment should encourage buildings to be placed closer to the street rather than devoting large areas of the frontage to parking.

The following corridors take on characteristics of a Traditional corridor:

- Cleveland Drive – South Century Road to Cayuga Road.
- Kensington Avenue – City of Buffalo line to Town of Amherst line.
- Harlem Road – Kensington Expressway (State Route 33) to Town of Amherst line.
- Beach Road – Genesee Street to Town of Amherst line.
- Maryvale Drive – Harlem Road to Cedargrove Circle; Beach Road to Cayuga Road.
- George Urban Boulevard – Genesee Street to Union Road.
- Genesee Street – City of Buffalo line to Beach Road.
- Pine Ridge Road – Walden Avenue to Genesee Street.
- East Delavan Avenue – City of Buffalo line to Pine Ridge Road.
- Eggert Road – East Delavan Avenue to Kenville Road.
- Walden Avenue – City of Buffalo line to Harlem Road.
- William Street – City of Buffalo line to Starlite Avenue.
- Clinton Street – City of Buffalo line to Rossler Avenue.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



An example of a Traditional Character Corridor – Genesee Street in the Pine Hill Neighborhood



An example of a Traditional Character Corridor – Harlem Road

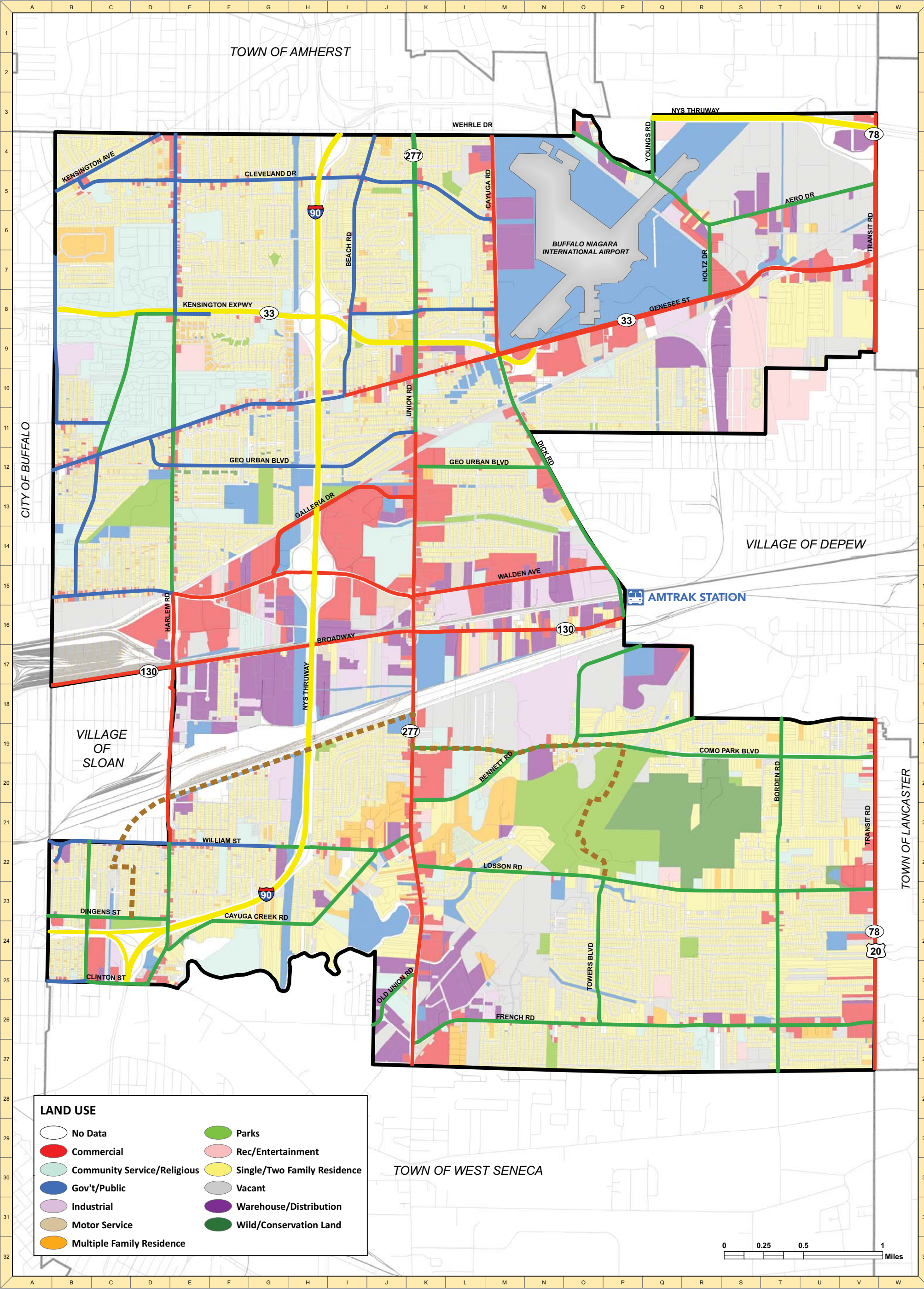


TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Suburban corridors are those serving newer residential subdivisions and handle a large percentage of non-local traffic. These corridors typically are geared towards moving vehicles and support automobile-oriented development. While recognizing the need to maintain traffic operations, there are still opportunities to make these corridors more accessible and safe for pedestrians. Often the number of lanes or the widths of the lanes are excessive, or landscaping could be added. These “Suburban” character streets require a close look at how to incorporate accommodations for non-vehicular traffic.

The following corridors have been categorized as Suburban corridors:

- Harlem Road – Walden Avenue to Kensington Expressway; Clinton Street to William Street.
- Union Road – George Urban Boulevard to Town of Amherst line.
- Cayuga Road – Genesee Street to Town of Amherst line.
- Dick Road – Broadway to Genesee Street.
- George Urban Boulevard – Union Road to Dick Road.
- Aero Drive – Transit Road to Town of Amherst line.
- Holtz Drive – Genesee Street to Aero Drive.
- Youngs Road – Aero Drive to Town of Amherst line.
- Dingens Street – City of Buffalo line to Harlem Road.
- William Street – Starlite Avenue to Union Road.
- Losson Road – Union Road to Transit Road.
- Rossler Avenue – Clinton Street to William Street.
- Clinton Street – Rossler Avenue to Town of West Seneca line.
- Cayuga Creek Road – Harlem Road to William Street.
- Como Park Boulevard – Union Road to Transit Road.
- Bennett Road – Union Road to Como Park Boulevard.
- French Road – Union Road to Transit Road.
- Borden Road – Town of West Seneca line to Village of Depew line.
- Rowley Road – Indian Road to Village of Depew line.
- Indian Road – Como Park Boulevard to Village of Depew line.
- Towers Boulevard – French Road to Losson Road.
- Old Union Road – Town of West Seneca line to Union Road.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- LEGEND**
- | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Municipal Boundary | Road Centerline | Commerical Character Corridor | Suburban Character Corridor | Historic Rails To Trails |
| Cheektowaga Boundary | Railroad | Expressway Character Corridor | Traditional Character Corridor | |

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: August 2009

WENDEL DUCHSCHERER
ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS

*The information on this document is based on data gathered from the following data sources and should not be used for design or construction. -Data Sources: Town of Cheektowaga, NYS GIS Clearinghouse.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



An example of a Suburban Character Corridor – Harlem Road



An example of a Suburban Character Corridor – George Urban Boulevard near Nagel Drive.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



An example of a Suburban Character Corridor – Como Park Boulevard

Commercial corridors have an established linear commercial development pattern and typically handle much higher volumes of traffic. Typically called “strip development” most of these corridors are currently very automobile-dependent. The following corridors have been categorized as Commercial corridors:

- Harlem Road – William Street to Walden Avenue.
- Union Road – Town of West Seneca line to George Urban Boulevard.
- Genesee Street – Beach Road to Transit Road.
- Galleria Drive – Walden Avenue to Union Road.
- Walden Avenue – Harlem Road to Dick Road.
- Broadway – City of Buffalo line to Dick Road.
- Transit Road – Town of West Seneca line to Town of Amherst line.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



An example of a Commercial Character Corridor – Walden Avenue



An example of a Commercial Character Corridor – Union Road



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



An example of a Commercial Character Corridor – Genesee Street near Union Road

Expressway corridors are characteristic of high speed controlled access corridors geared towards moving a large amount of vehicular traffic and proving access to major activity centers. The corridors typically support a regional transportation system and act as both commuter corridors for local residents and interstate corridors for long distance travelers. The roadways are part of the interstate highway system and are designed for higher speed automobile use. Incorporating other modes, other than express bus routes, is not appropriate along Expressways. Cheektowaga has three Expressway corridors running through the Town:

- New York State Thruway (I-90).
- New York State Thruway – Niagara Section (I-190).
- Kensington Expressway (State Route 33).

Several corridors throughout the Town are long. In order to encourage alternative forms of transportation, activity centers should be clustered into nodes that are pedestrian/ bicycle friendly, that are located at the crossroads of major bus routes, and that are within a ¼ mile of denser residential areas. Allowing development to stretch out in a “strip” character increases the length between activity centers (attractions and destinations) and promotes vehicular travel over pedestrian or biking.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The use of roundabouts can be an effective tool in improving the character of a roadway, calming traffic speeds, relieving congestion caused by traffic lights, and creating a gateway or entryway into a neighborhood. Roundabouts take up more land than a traditional intersection, therefore, proposing roundabouts in developed areas may result in the need to purchase corner lots and demolish viable residences or businesses. They also need to be carefully designed to ensure they can accommodate pedestrian crossings. The Town has had success with the roundabouts along Harlem Road and should explore additional opportunities to implement roundabouts where benefits will outweigh the impacts.

4.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This section of the Comprehensive Plan puts forth a program for promoting economic development in the Town of Cheektowaga, and contains three sub-sections:

- Findings from Inventory and Analysis
- Overall Economic Development Vision
- Alternative Models for Economic Development
- Recommended Actions

Findings from Inventory and Analysis

As part of the planning process, an extensive amount of primary and secondary research was completed relating to Cheektowaga's economic situation (a full summary is included as an appendix.) The following types of research were conducted:

- Review of a variety of demographic, economic, labor, retail, tourism, and transportation datasets and reports;
- Private interviews with key leaders in the local and regional business, real estate, economic development, tourism, and transportation communities;
- Meetings with town officials, town staff, and key development partners;
- Feedback from public meetings;
- Discussions with the Steering Committee; and
- Internal consulting team discussions.

Based on these efforts, four key findings were made regarding Cheektowaga's situation and outlook for economic development. These are summarized below.

Key Finding #1: Neighborhood Change Needs to be Actively Managed

- The town's population is aging in place, particularly in attractive residential areas



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Household sizes are declining all over town, as children relocate after graduation and empty nesters stay put
- Housing stock in older neighborhoods tends to be not competitive in today's real estate market where buyers are looking for larger homes, open floor plans and more modern styles.
- Many property owners are older residents with limited means to reinvest in improvements to their homes, and those who may have the means are unsure about recouping their investments.
- Commercial areas in older neighborhoods no longer serve local markets, and are largely auto dependent.
- Heavy traffic and limited pedestrian infrastructure makes walking and biking difficult in many neighborhoods.
- Increasing stock of vacant residential and commercial buildings in older neighborhoods is frustrating revitalization efforts.

Key Finding #2: Economic Transition Presents a Variety of Opportunities and Challenges

- Although Cheektowaga still retains many large manufacturing businesses (Quebecor, Cameron Industries, Derrick Manufacturing, etc.) its overall industrial employment base has been in decline.
- The town is largely built out, and there are few undeveloped sites left for larger manufacturing, warehousing or other large-scale industrial uses, making redevelopment a priority.
- Cheektowaga's greatest economic development asset is its transportation infrastructure: airport, highways, surface roads, rail, transit, and trails all serve the town. The potential Airport-Downtown transit corridor would both reinforce this identity and offer targeted redevelopment opportunities at potential transit station locations (Union/George Urban, Galleria, Harlem/Walden).
- The town's two largest employers and primary economic drivers are Buffalo-Niagara International Airport and the Walden Galleria, which are among the two leading visitation drivers in the entire region:
 - BNIA's passenger volume has nearly doubled in the past ten years, fueled by presence of discount airlines, which has in turn brought in a lot of Canadian customers.
 - Galleria's recent expansion has revitalized the property and reinforced its role as the top regional mall in Western New York; its diversity of shopping and dining give it a broad regional draw and make it a very popular destination for Canadians.
- Lower rents in Cheektowaga limit ability to build or renovate higher quality professional office space, and keep many buildings as flex/back-office space.
- There is a surplus of large, vacant retail spaces along the town's arterial roads, many of which are ripe for redevelopment as alternative uses.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Key Finding #3: Town Needs to Build and Sell a Positive Identity

- From an economic development and tourism perspective Cheektowaga has allowed itself to be defined by mostly negative, persistent stereotypes, rather than staking out its own identity—as a community, Cheektowaga has never worked in a coordinated fashion to establish a marketable identity for itself or to leverage its assets to aggressively promote itself to prospective investors, developers, businesses, or residents. There are many aspects of this issue:
 - Despite its efforts to improve and streamline its development regulations and procedures, Cheektowaga continues to be perceived by investors and developers as a town with unfair and/or unclear development regulations
 - Due to negative prejudices about Cheektowaga, many realtors and relocation professionals steer prospective homebuyers to other nearby communities.
 - Regional economic and tourism development professionals typically pass along materials from individual municipalities to prospective businesses, investors, and residents; in the absence of such materials, Cheektowaga is at a disadvantage with other communities in the region.
 - Out-of-town visitors to BNIA and the Galleria area are unlikely to even be aware that they are in a place called “Cheektowaga.”
- Cheektowaga has an excellent opportunity to sell itself as an ideal residential community to those who have little familiarity with Western New York and/or past local prejudices (for example, how many young families in larger cities like New York, Washington, or Chicago who pay \$1,500 a month to rent a small apartment would jump at the opportunity to purchase a well-kept family home in a stable neighborhood in a vibrant metro area with a mortgage of less than \$500 a month?)
- Like much of Western New York, local development interests too often fall into negative traps (e.g., “we tried that already,” or “that won’t work here.”) Given Cheektowaga’s many assets, a rethinking of the community’s entire self-image and attitude is in order.

Key Finding #4: A Coherent Economic Development Program is Needed

- At the present time the only economic development functions directly fulfilled by the Town of Cheektowaga are business retention/attraction, and technical assistance, targeted at individual companies. These efforts are done in a largely ad hoc fashion directly through the Supervisor’s office and an “on call consultant” acting as Economic Development Coordinator.
- The Cheektowaga Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) is an underutilized body. It has no staff, the Board meets infrequently and the organization has a largely undefined mission; it largely is reactive, responding to individual requests for funded as they arise. However, if funded and managed with a more proactive approach, CEDC could have significant impacts on the community.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- A survey of active economic development programs in several other Western New York communities found that Cheektowaga's peer communities are conducting far more proactive economic development activities, including:
 - A dedicated economic development website, including an online database of available commercial/industrial spaces and properties.
 - Regular research reports on economic indicators, labor force, and other data.
 - Site acquisition and disposition (including land banking)
 - Low-interest loans to businesses and real estate developers
 - Regular dialogue/outreach with business community
 - Active marketing of tourism activities
 - Greater effort to secure convention/ business meeting activity
 - Comprehensive program for funding environmental studies and remediation on redevelopment sites (federally-funded Brownfields program).
- A common complaint by local development interests is Cheektowaga's inability to secure state approval for the establishment of its own Industrial Development Authority or Empire Zone. Given the ability of the town to take on other economic development initiatives, along with the newfound commitment of the Erie County IDA to redevelopment, these should not be seen as insurmountable obstacles.

Overall Economic Development Vision

The proposed vision for economic development in Cheektowaga supports the eight overall goals spelled out in Section 2.2, and highlights both the town's existing strengths and future development aspirations. The economic development vision statement follows:

"The Town of Cheektowaga is Western New York's leading location for companies, families, and visitors alike. Our diverse economic base includes professional firms, innovative manufacturers, logistics operations, and retail/hospitality businesses. Cheektowaga's unparalleled combination of air, rail, and highway access, livable residential neighborhoods, high-quality education and recreation, world-class shopping, and convenience to all of upstate New York and Southern Ontario, makes us the Hub of the Niagara Frontier."

Alternative Models for Economic Development

Translating this vision into an economic development program will require a comprehensive, coordinated effort among town leaders, the business community, and regional development interests. The actual agenda for such a program will depend heavily on the selected model for economic development desired by the Town of Cheektowaga. This decision, in turn, will be affected by a number of forces, including: available funding, external political considerations, staff capacity, participation by potential partners, and changes in market demand.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Given the long-term nature of the Comprehensive Plan, the plan does not commit the Town of Cheektowaga to a particular path for achieving its economic development vision. Instead, it offers three alternative models for future economic development activities. As implementation of the Comprehensive Plan proceeds, the town can then choose among these models, and may in fact choose to pursue a hybrid that combines elements of two or three of the models. The three models are sketched out below.

➤ ***Alternative #1: Economic Development Committee***

This model consists of a volunteer committee appointed by the Town Supervisor, including at least one Town Board member. This committee may include some or all of the current board members of the Cheektowaga Economic Development Corporation (CEDC). The Committee would set general direction and policies for economic development, and would work to ensure the consistency of all business attraction, community development, planning, and tourism promotion efforts with the overall vision for economic development. The Committee would also take over the operations of CEDC and continue its loan program. This model would carry over the existing Economic Development Coordinator position in a consulting role, with the Coordinator moderating all Committee meetings and continuing to represent the town in negotiations with prospective businesses and developers.

➤ ***Alternative #2: Economic Development Corporation***

This model represents an expansion of the existing Cheektowaga Economic Development Corporation (CEDC), growing its mission to include a full menu of business attraction/retention, real estate disposition, research, and community outreach functions, in addition to its existing loan program. Funds for this expansion could be raised through federal and state grants, as well as through earned income from property sales/leases and revolving loan fund income. An expanded CEDC would require at least 1.5 staffers: a full-time Executive Director and a part-time Administrative Secretary. The CEDC board would also have the responsibilities of the Committee from Alternative #1 to coordinate all of the town's activities related to community development and tourism promotion.

➤ ***Alternative #3: Office of Economic and Community Development***

This model includes a full-service economic and community development operation that reorganizes all related functions into a single department within town government. Under the leadership of a Director of Economic and Community Development, the Office of Economic and Community Development (OECD) would encompass the existing Community Development and Building departments, as well as the economic development functions outlined under Alternative #2 (business attraction/retention, research, community outreach), plus a proactive tourism development initiative. Under this model, OECD would also take over the operation of the CEDC, carrying forward the existing loan program and adding additional programs, including real estate acquisition and disposition functions. In this model CEDC's board would provide citizen oversight to all of the functions of OECD. It is estimated that a new full-time Director and Administrator would be required.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Comparison of Alternatives

Table 2, below, compares and contrasts these three alternatives.

	Alternative #1: Economic Development Committee	Alternative #2: Economic Development Corporation	Alternative #3: Office of Economic & Community Development
Functions			
Business Recruitment	Yes, as needed	Yes	Yes
Business Outreach	No, done by Chamber	Yes	Yes
Community Development (CDBG)	No, done by CD Office	No, done by CD Office	Yes, merge with CD Office
Comprehensive Environmental Remediation Program (Brownfields)	No, case-by-case only	Yes	Yes
Identity Development/ Marketing	Yes	Yes	Yes
Low-Interest Loan Program	Continue to operate CEDC Loan Fund	Yes, expand CEDC Loan Fund	Yes, expand CEDC Loan Fund
Online Property Database/ Econ Development Website	Yes	Yes	Yes
Planning/Zoning Administration	No	No	Yes, as part of reorganization
Property Acquisition/ Disposition	Limited to oversight of Land Bank	Yes	Yes
Tourism Marketing	Limited to coordination with Chamber & regional CVB	Limited to coordination with Chamber & regional CVB	Yes
Staffing	None—continue to use consultant as Economic Development Coordinator	1.5 (full-time Exec Director, part-time Administrator)	2.0 (full-time Director and Administrator)
Oversight	Committee appointed by Supervisor, replaces CEDC Board	CEDC Board	CEDC Board expands role, Director reports to Supervisor
Additional Incremental Cost	Minimal	\$100,000	\$150,000 (in addition to existing departments)
Potential Funding Sources	Town Appropriation, Loan Fund income, Project-specific grants, CDBG	Town Appropriation, Loan Fund Income, Property Proceeds, Grants (Admin Fees)	Town Appropriation, Loan Fund Income, Property Proceeds, Grants (Admin Fees), Permit Fees



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

4.4 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This section of the document addresses community development issues. This issue is strongly related to economic development, discussed in the previous section, as well as Neighborhood Revitalization, which is addressed in the next section. Economic development focuses primarily on job creation and retention, but there is an increasing recognition of how important quality of life and the attractiveness of a municipality are for attracting business development. Community development issues are typically associated with efforts to address issues of blight, deteriorating infrastructure, and housing, with a focus on maintaining healthy communities through investment in the housing stock and in neighborhoods, and through providing employment opportunities. Funding for these efforts is largely supplied through the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and, therefore, must meet HUD guidelines and objectives. These national objectives are:

- Benefit low- to moderate-income residents or special populations, such as the elderly or persons with disabilities, either directly, or through improvements to an area with a high proportion of low- to moderate-income persons;
- Help to prevent or eliminate slums or blighting influences;
- Meet an urgent threat to public health or safety.

While activities must meet these national objectives, a well-conceived community development strategy will support job retention and growth, improve quality of life, address deterioration and generally help advance both economic development and neighborhood revitalization goals in the community.

The Town of Cheektowaga has been proactive in dealing with community development issues. The Town is a member of the Amherst-Cheektowaga-Tonawanda (A-C-T) Consortium for the purposes of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership funds. Cheektowaga's Office of Economic and Community Development administers these programs for the Town and determines where these monies will be spent. Since the program's inception in 1975, the Town has allocated CDBG funds for housing rehabilitation, demolition of dilapidated structures, drainage and sewer improvements in income-eligible neighborhoods, road reconstruction, sidewalk replacement, installation of playground equipment in Town parks and playgrounds, economic development activities, summer day camp, housing counseling, neighborhood police foot patrols, purchase of senior citizen vans, senior citizen outreach assistance and senior citizen housing. The Town uses HOME funds for housing rehabilitation, construction of new housing units for low- to moderate-income residents, and first-time homebuyer assistance counseling and programs.

The Town's participation in the A-C-T Consortium ensures an annual source of funding to address community development and housing needs of low- to moderate-income residents and special populations. In 2009, Cheektowaga received approximately \$1.04 million in CDBG funds and additional



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

monies through HOME Investment funds. To qualify for the funding, the three Towns prepare a Consolidated Plan that addresses anticipated needs and actions over the next five years, and an annual action plan to direct interim activities. The most recent Consolidated Plan covers the time frame of April 1, 2010 through March 31, 2015. The following findings were drawn from the Strategic Plan section of the A-C-T Consolidated Plan 2010-2015.

➤ ***The Town of Cheektowaga is largely urbanized and built-out.***

There are fewer and fewer areas of undeveloped lands available for new growth, so increasingly, the focus in Cheektowaga will be redevelopment and revitalization.

➤ ***In the neighborhoods that about the City of Buffalo, the housing stock is generally older and conforms to a traditional grid-style street pattern.***

This represents both a constraint and an opportunity. As noted elsewhere, the Town needs to carefully manage neighborhood revitalization efforts to ensure the continued strength of its neighborhoods. An aging housing stock is more likely to need repairs, not conform to modern housing styles, and have issues relating to high energy costs. On the other hand, older homes are more likely to be affordable and are often better built. Under current economic conditions, there has been increasing appreciation of smaller, more affordable housing. Furthermore, housing preferences are changing. Younger generations, in particular, more likely prefer smaller homes in traditional, urban neighborhoods with grid street patterns that facilitate walking, biking and transit use.

➤ ***The most prevalent household type in Cheektowaga is “non-family” households.***

Nearly 40% of households in Cheektowaga are categorized as “non-family” households, according to the most current Census estimates. Non-family households include single persons, unmarried couples, and other people sharing living arrangements (roommates). The second most common household type is married couples with no children living at home (either childless or with adult children). Only 16 percent of households are traditional married couples with children living in their home with them. Partly, this reflects the aging population in Cheektowaga, but there are also growing numbers of non-traditional family types in all age groups. These changing demographic trends will affect what types of services and programs residents need and want from the Town. It will also affect preferences in housing style, unit size and living patterns.

➤ ***The most significant growth in the elderly population is among the oldest residents.***

From 1990 to 2005, the number of the oldest residents (age 85 and older) has more than doubled in size, increasing from just over 1,000 to an estimated 2,589 residents in Cheektowaga. This population is more likely to require subsidized housing, nursing care and other supportive services. With the aging of the “baby boomer” generation, this trend is likely to continue.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

➤ ***Cheektowaga has a significant proportion of low-income individuals.***

Low-income residents are defined by HUD as households earning 80 percent or less of the median family income. Median family income for the Consortium is currently set at \$65,320, and 80 percent of this figure is \$52,256. In Cheektowaga, 40 percent of households fall below this threshold, which is the highest rate of the three communities in the Consortium. These households tend to be concentrated in certain areas of the Town. The Consolidated Plan includes a table of low and moderate income population by Census Tract Block Group. There are 31 Census Tract Block Groups in the Consortium where over half of households are categorized as low- to moderate-income: 15 of those 31 Block Groups are located in the Town of Cheektowaga.

➤ ***There is a significant need for housing rehabilitation in Cheektowaga.***

There are many homes in Cheektowaga that are in need of significant investment to address deficiencies and/or code violations. The Town's housing stock tends to be older, and these homes often require costly improvements such as new siding, new windows and new roofs. Based on local windshield surveys, approximately 24 percent of rental units and 10 percent of owner occupied units in Cheektowaga have major deficiencies or enough minor deficiencies that in the aggregate they represent a health or safety threat to the occupant. On the positive side, approximately 99% of these homes are suitable for rehabilitation (expected costs of renovations do not exceed 70% of the home's value). In Cheektowaga, it estimated that there are 5,758 substandard units that are suitable for rehabilitation, representing approximately 13.7 percent of the Town's housing stock. Substandard housing that has deteriorated to a point where renovations are not feasible represents only 0.2 percent of the Town's housing stock.

➤ ***Affordability for low- and moderate-income households is an issue.***

It is generally expected that a household should be paying no more than 30 percent of its income on housing expenses, which include mortgage or rent payments, utilities, home insurance and property taxes. Households that pay more than that for housing expenses are classified as "cost burdened." In Cheektowaga, 26 percent of owner-occupied households and 38 percent of renter occupied households are considered "cost burdened." Data for all three towns show a pattern, with lower income households experiencing the greatest proportion of cost burden, but issues of housing costs are seen in all income categories. While all categories of family types have issues, large families (more than 5 family members) are especially likely to be experiencing affordability problems.

➤ ***The Western New York Housing Needs Study has identified specific housing needs.***

The New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) produced a statewide study of housing needs which looked at regional needs. For the five counties of Western New York (Erie, Niagara, Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua), the following issues were identified:



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Rehabilitation and modernization funds for existing housing
- Construction of more family housing
- Rental opportunities for very low-income families
- Affordable homeownership opportunities
- Housing needs of aging population (independent living)
- Vacant properties.

➤ ***Foreclosures are increasingly a problem in Cheektowaga.***

While foreclosures are heavily concentrated in the City of Buffalo (41 percent), Cheektowaga ranks as having the second highest number of foreclosures in Erie County. A total of 271 houses in Cheektowaga were foreclosed in 2007, representing 10 percent of all foreclosures in the County. High-risk loans accounted for 26.2 percent of the foreclosures in Cheektowaga, which is comparable to the County rate (26.7 percent). Approximately 27 percent of foreclosures in the Town of Cheektowaga resulted in the cancellation of *lis pendes*, which is a legal action to end the foreclosure process, frequently due to a satisfactory arrangement between the homeowner and the mortgage holder. While the exact outcome of these cases cannot be determined, at least some proportion resulted in the homeowner retaining ownership of the unit. This rate of cancellation of *lis pendes* for Cheektowaga is about the same as the countywide rate. Current data suggest that foreclosure rates in Erie County are falling, with rates in 2009 down 35 percent from 2005.

4.5 NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

The Comprehensive Plan for Cheektowaga, by definition, focuses on ensuring the future health of the *entire* Town. At the same time, the Comprehensive Plan for Cheektowaga recognizes that Towns are large areas that are made up of a collection of unique neighborhoods, diverse land uses, and physical structure of corridors, centers and districts.

Cheektowaga is a varied and diverse Town, and to strategize about its future character necessitates the study of *different* areas of Town in more detail – celebrating differences in scale, character, and value (both real and perceived). The Neighborhood Revitalization component of the Town's Comprehensive Plan focused on three areas that embody the diverse character of places in Cheektowaga. All of the neighborhood areas in the plan were chosen for their ability to provide a set of implementation strategies that have application both at their specific location and in other areas across the Town of Cheektowaga.

Each of these Study Areas highlighted in the Neighborhood Revitalization section is intended to help visualize and strategize about Cheektowaga's future, by helping to provide clear visual direction to accompany the text in the Comprehensive Plan. Among other things, each of these studies presents:



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Opportunities for positive change covering a full range of investments
- Opportunities to stabilize existing neighborhoods
- Opportunities to protect valuable cultural capital and Town character
- Opportunities to improve access and mobility

Each of these Neighborhood Revitalization studies reflects one potential way each neighborhood could evolve, and is intended to provide the Community with an understanding of the ramifications of the Comprehensive Plan. These should not be taken as specific design interventions, but as guiding principles for a healthy and sustainable future.

Study Areas

Through collaborative dialogue between the Project Team, the Advisory Committee and other Town representatives, three areas were selected for study as part of the Neighborhood Revitalization efforts. These areas are described as follows.

A. Transit Ready – Walden Avenue/Harlem Road Area

The area surrounding the intersection of Walden Avenue and Harlem Road (Figure 2) is a very important spot in the Town. Within a half mile from the center of this intersection, there are a multitude of land uses, a wide array of building types, a useful shopping center, a major Town park, a college, neighborhoods of different values, and an abandoned railway corridor that has the potential to provide a future transit link from downtown Buffalo to the Airport. This area includes all of the components necessary for a thriving mixed-use center, surrounded by highly valued neighborhoods.

There are a multitude of uses present in the study area; they are configured as separate “pods” of conventional suburban archetypes: shopping centers, residential subdivisions and institutional campuses. While these uses are fundamental ingredients of a livable and walkable (and therefore highly valued) built environment, they are not well connected. This separation is focused on automobile access, creating a pedestrian-hostile environment. There is a strong future for more intense uses in the area, as well as for much better connections and more intensely mixed uses. While future redevelopment is absolutely tied to the condition of the real estate market, the shopping center, sizable parcels of vacant land and the transit corridor itself could easily become strong catalysts for growth.

The Area contains a wide array of thoroughfare types – from Thruway to residential street. While many of the residential streets are not in need of immediate change, larger capacity streets are in need of improvement if they are to become high quality pedestrian environments. The thoroughfare network itself, being a loose grid system, provides good connections and provides good mobility through the Study Area. Specific thoroughfares, especially those of three or more lanes, do a decent job of moving vehicular traffic, but are not at all hospitable toward pedestrians or bicyclists.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 2 – Transit Ready – Walden Avenue and Harlem Road Area



This erodes potential value despite having daily needs within a short distance from homes and offices. Walden and Harlem can be improved within the existing rights-of-way to promote better pedestrian access and better frontage conditions while continuing to provide appropriate traffic counts and through-put. The Transit Corridor is also treated as an important thoroughfare – and is a tremendous benefit when competing for transportation resources, as virtually no additional land is needed to accommodate a transit line. Trails and pedestrian connections need to be strengthened in order to connect higher-density centers to the rich open spaces nearby.

Block size is another important factor when considering the intensity and type of use that a particular area can support. Because of its history as a first-ring suburb of Buffalo, the long and narrow blocks in the northwestern neighborhood support pedestrian use and can accommodate finely-grained



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

mixed-use at the connections to larger streets, like Walden. The areas to the east and south (Thruway Plaza, for example) have larger block sizes, which make them ideal for more intense uses, both now and in the future. It is not inconceivable in a long-term build out scenario to consider the Thruway Plaza as a four-block urban center, rather than a series of surface parking lots. The large block size, which can accommodate structured parking and larger building floor plates, makes it reasonable to target this area for considerable growth. Having both block sizes in the Study Area is a great advantage to raising the value of the entire area – making it easy to imagine a future center that includes both highly valued single-family neighborhoods within walking distance to more intense and pedestrian-friendly urban center. It is vital to consider this sector in light of its past as a first-ring suburb and as a revitalized mixed-use center, whether or not additional transit options (light rail, bus rapid transit, e.g.) are imminent. It is important for the Town and the Plan to recognize that planning recommendations should include rather than preclude the option of transportation choice. Several factors, however, are present today that prevent this area from reaching its value potential. The following pages explore these factors and offer ways to correct or repair them through future public and/or private investment.

B. Corridor – French Road Area

French Road, in south Cheektowaga (Figure 3), provides an opportunity to examine several elements that are key to the Town’s future character. This three-mile roadway corridor includes stable neighborhoods, with pockets of commercial use that range from healthy to abandoned. The area specifically includes several mixed-use nodes of development activity, at different scales, that are located at Union Road and Transit Road, and along the corridor at Borden Road, Brentwood Drive and Towers Boulevard.

Figure 3 – Corridor – French Road Area





TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This area is proximate to important greenways and parks and offers significant gateway opportunities. Like other areas of Cheektowaga, the French Road Corridor is challenged by its real and perceived value as a suburban residential area, and the threat to stability provided by abandoned and under-performing sites that are situated at Cheektowaga's "front door".

Unlike the Transit-Ready and Neighborhood Center Study Areas, the French Road Corridor provides few opportunities for major, large-scale projects – few large parcels exist and it is important to the Town to keep the development of this area at a moderate scale. Therefore, the recommendations must be in keeping with current character – striving for neighborhood and residential stability, more and better services, a more distinct gateway into Cheektowaga, increased mobility and better access to open space.

The French Road Corridor is predominantly residential – with a narrow range of building types – largely single-family residences with a sprinkling of apartment complexes. At either end of the corridor, shopping centers and convenience retail are present, primarily because of the high volume of traffic, easy vehicular access and visibility of properties. Despite this, some shopping centers are vacant and present a blighted image of the Town. There are a few areas of light industrial/manufacturing/warehousing that are concentrated near former railway corridors and highway connections. Some of these are not particularly compatible with the neighboring residential uses. There is a strong opportunity to repair some of the commercial areas in an effort to strengthen the value of the suburban residential component.

There are three distinct types of thoroughfare in the area. Union Road and Transit Road are both large-scale commercial corridors; French Road is a rural roadway that serves as the entry to several high-quality neighborhoods and a multitude of residential streets. The pedestrian quality of these streets could be improved with minor alterations, and should be considered as an opportunity to make the area more walkable. Connections to trails and parks can be made more pronounced and create a positive impact for the surrounding neighborhoods. The thoroughfare network itself is more rural than in northern districts of Town, which puts more emphasis on French Road and a few north-south connectors to be able to handle traffic and pedestrians. With the connection to the park system, better accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians could significantly and positively impact residential values. The character of the larger thoroughfares could also be significantly improved without change to the right of way dimensions in order to calm traffic and make a more pedestrian-hospitable condition. Trails and pedestrian connections can be added in order to connect neighborhoods to the natural resources and parks nearby.

Block size is an important factor in considering the type of intensity and use a particular land area can support. Longer and more organic thoroughfares create a suburban condition that is suited for residential use. Areas that front along French Road can be considered for smaller commercial and



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

mixed-use that is intended to serve the neighborhoods. Larger land parcels at the edges of this area could accommodate present and future retail needs of the neighborhoods. Change will occur incrementally in this area and will be focused on improving livability and stabilizing neighborhoods, not changing them to a significantly more urban experience.

C. Neighborhood– Union Road/Genesee Street Area

The area surrounding the intersection of Union Road and Genesee Road (Figure 4) provides excellent opportunities for considering several of Cheektowaga’s unique issues. This approximately 500-acre study area (½-mile radius pedestrian shed), which is centered at the Union and Genesee intersection, includes residential neighborhoods that consists mostly of very small lots and yards, a shopping center, a variety of thoroughfare types (from highway to neighborhood street), and important heritage and historic sites. The area is a hodgepodge of land uses and offers excellent access to the Buffalo Airport. Just a 10-minute walk to the south, the Neighborhood study area intersects an abandoned railway corridor that is considered to offer a future transit link from the airport to downtown Buffalo. As with the Transit-Ready study area, this area possesses some of the same ingredients that exist in highly-valued neighborhoods across the Country. However, because of their condition, configuration and form, this study area is prevented from being widely considered a great place to live. Unlike the Transit-Ready Study Area, recommendations for the Neighborhood Center study area will most likely be transformation at a different scale – smaller and with incremental investments in the smaller land parcels, upgraded streetscape considerations and the potential “pruning” of some residential areas.

This Neighborhood study area is an important sector located at the crossroads of two major thoroughfares. The mix of land uses is moderate, consisting mostly of residential and retail, with a smattering of office uses. A relatively recent focus on light manufacturing and industrial, warehousing and distributing has sprung up due to the proximity of this area to the airport. Studying this area permits focus on transitional neighborhoods, improvements to thoroughfares and streetscape, protection of historic elements and consideration of often incompatible land uses. Future evolution of the built environment, at first glance, is most likely to include improvements to existing shopping centers, better pedestrian access and considerations for improving residential conditions.

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TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 4 - Neighborhood– Union Road/Genesee Street Area



Future evolution of the built environment, at first glance, is most likely to include improvements to existing shopping centers, better pedestrian access and considerations for improving residential conditions.

The area contains a wide array of thoroughfare types – from Thruway to residential street. While many of the residential streets are not in need of immediate change, larger capacity streets, such as Union Road, present a distinct opportunity to create a more pedestrian-oriented corridor that may even include a greenway or linear park. The thoroughfare network itself provides fair connections and provides decent mobility through the study area. Two corridors present themselves as convenient boundaries to provide containment for reinvestment strategies – Kensington Expressway (SR 33) to the north and the continuation of the transportation corridor to the south. North of the Kensington Expressway, growth will be minimal. Near the future transit corridor there is potential for growth similar to what exists at Walden and Harlem. Changes to thoroughfares in the Neighborhood study area should be focused on improving accessibility and making pedestrian, bicycle and motor vehicle mobility as equitable as possible. Strong multi-modal connections should be considered for access to the transportation corridor. Trails and pedestrian-only connections should also be considered as a way to strengthen neighborhood values by connecting them to local open spaces.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Block size is another important factor in considering the type of intensity and use a particular land area can support. Block size in the Neighborhood study area is presently, and should continue to be, accommodating of low and moderate scale development or redevelopment. With few large land parcels available in the area, redevelopment scenarios will likely take the form of upgrades to existing uses – potentially mixing residential and retail. Some apartment complexes could be redeveloped to upgrade the form and the quality of construction. Depending on market strategy, some of the larger blocks to the east, approaching the airport, could be considered for special uses that require highway and airport access.

4.6 LAND USE AND PLANNING

Land Use

A. General Land Use Patterns

The Town of Cheektowaga exhibits the typical land use patterns of a first ring suburb, but includes some interesting qualities and characteristics that make it very unique (see Map 2 in Section 3.0 – Community Inventory and Profile). The Town includes a diversity of neighborhoods and features that provide character and cultural authenticity to the community.

Bordering the City of Buffalo, the City line areas are densely populated residential neighborhoods with strip commercial development along the major roadways. This pattern continues as you move to the northern end of the Town, which abuts the Town of Amherst. The central part of the Town is criss-crossed by a railroad system, the NYS Thruway, the Kensington Expressway, and a number of major highways (Broadway, Walden Avenue and Genesee Street). These transportation corridors are the commercial, business and industrial corridors of the community that frame a diversity of residential neighborhoods. The southeastern part of the Town is a transitional area located between the more urbanized city and central areas of the Town and the more suburban, neighboring Towns of Lancaster and West Seneca. This area is demarcated to the west by a large scale business and commercial uses centered along Union Road, with suburban-style residential and recreational land use patterns extending to the east.

Some of the unique components of the Town that have a strong influence over land use and the overall appearance of the Town include:

- the Buffalo International Airport and its surrounding business area,
- Stiglmeier Park and Reinstein Woods, which dominate the southeastern/central area, giving it more of the rural residential feel,
- the large cemetery area in the northwest corner that breaks up the urban residential area,



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- the Galleria Mall and commercial business districts along Walden Avenue and Union Road, in the center of the Town, and
- the two villages on either side of the Town that provide urbanized “bookend” areas to the community.

B. Specific Land Use Areas of the Town

The following sections describe in more detail the land use issues in the community.

- **Northwestern Area** (includes Cleveland Hill, Nob Hill and Maryvale, Cedar Grove Heights and the areas of the bordering City of Buffalo and Town of Amherst – Figure 5).

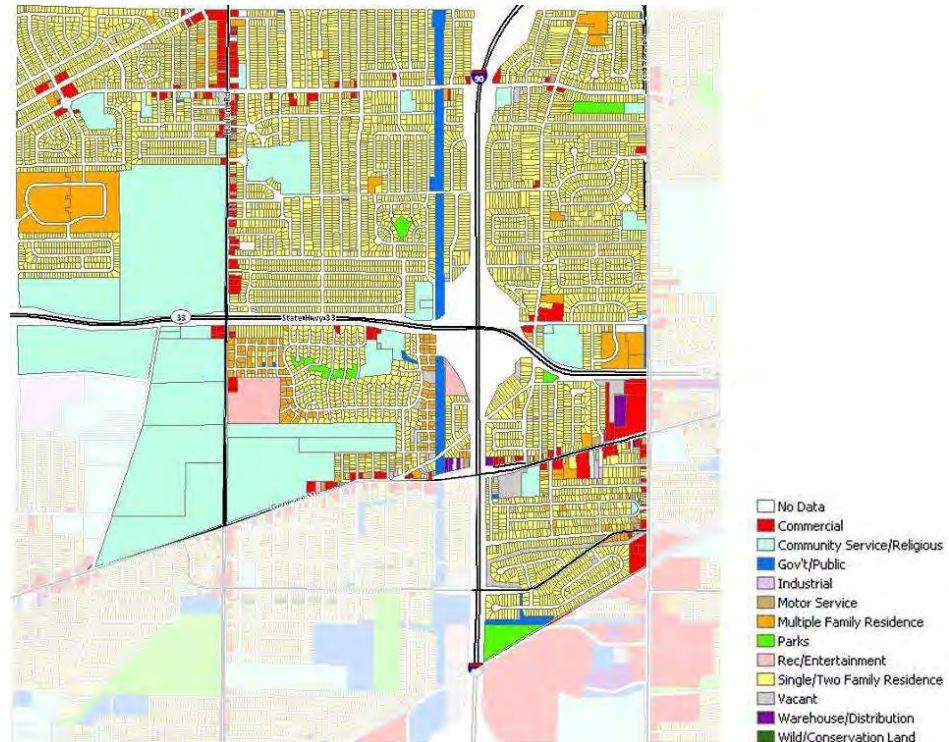
Although the northwestern area of the Town is predominantly residential in nature, it includes some older and important commercial districts – the northern sections of Harlem Road, Union Road and Cayuga Drive, Genesee Street, Cleveland Drive and Kensington Avenue - that provide personal service support and character to the area (including the Airport Plaza commercial center). Other features that influence the area include the large cemetery complex, Collegiate Village student housing, and various neighborhood parks. Much of the housing in this area consists of smaller homes, situated on small lots, in stable neighborhoods that provide a solid and diverse supply of affordable housing in the Town. The area along the City line, however, is slowly succumbing to the pressures of deterioration, crime and abandonment.





TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 5 – Land Use in the Northwestern Area of the Town



Transportation features include the Kensington Expressway (State Route 33) and the New York State Thruway (Interstate 90), which both bisect the area, as well as the recent addition of roundabouts along Harlem Road. The Thruway and Route 33 separate the neighborhoods and provide significant barriers to connectivity between these areas. The characteristics of the neighborhoods differ to the north and south of Route 33.





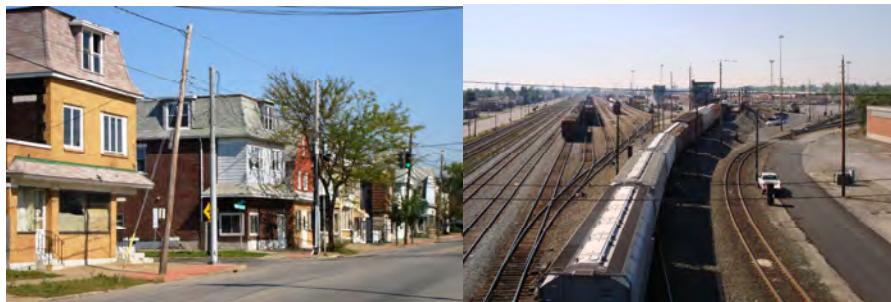
TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The large cemetery complex is another large and significant feature of this area of the Town. This widespread land use is an 'open space' that provides a calming effect to the surrounding, densely populated area. Other influences that affect land use in this area are the bordering communities, with Amherst to the north and the City of Buffalo to the west (see discussions of these communities in Section C). These communities tend to have stabilizing, as well as some disrupting influences, respectively, that will affect the future direction of this area.

In general it can be stated that the existing land use patterns in the northwest corner of the Town are stable; it is the need to spur revitalization in some locations that is the issue. The zoning section of this report will provide land use guidelines for this area, but other efforts will be needed to spur revitalization and stabilize the area.

➤ **City line area** (includes Pine Hill, Town Park, Walden Village, William Street and the areas bordering the City of Buffalo and Town of West Seneca).

The City line area is separated by a large rail yard and the Village of Sloan and includes the areas and neighborhoods located west of the Thruway and generally south of Genesee Street and the cemetery complex to the north of Sloan; and west of Harlem Road south of Sloan (Figure 6). This area north of Sloan tends to blend in with the previously described Northwestern area. The area south of Sloan tends to be an extension of the Village and tends to be more influenced by the City of Buffalo. The City Line area is predominately residential in nature and includes small pockets of neighborhood commercial activity along parts of Genesee Street, Walden Avenue and William Street.



This area contains a number of key features including St. Joseph's Hospital, Villa Maria College, and the Cheektowaga Town Park. Many of the residential neighborhoods contain historic and older housing, some of which is experiencing deterioration in areas closer to the City line. These distinct assets offer opportunities for the future of Cheektowaga.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

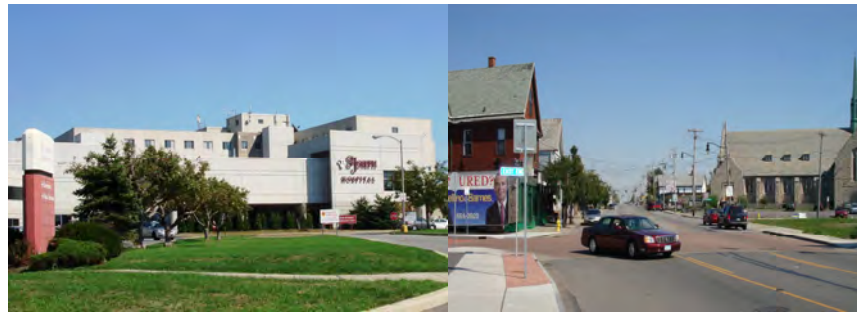
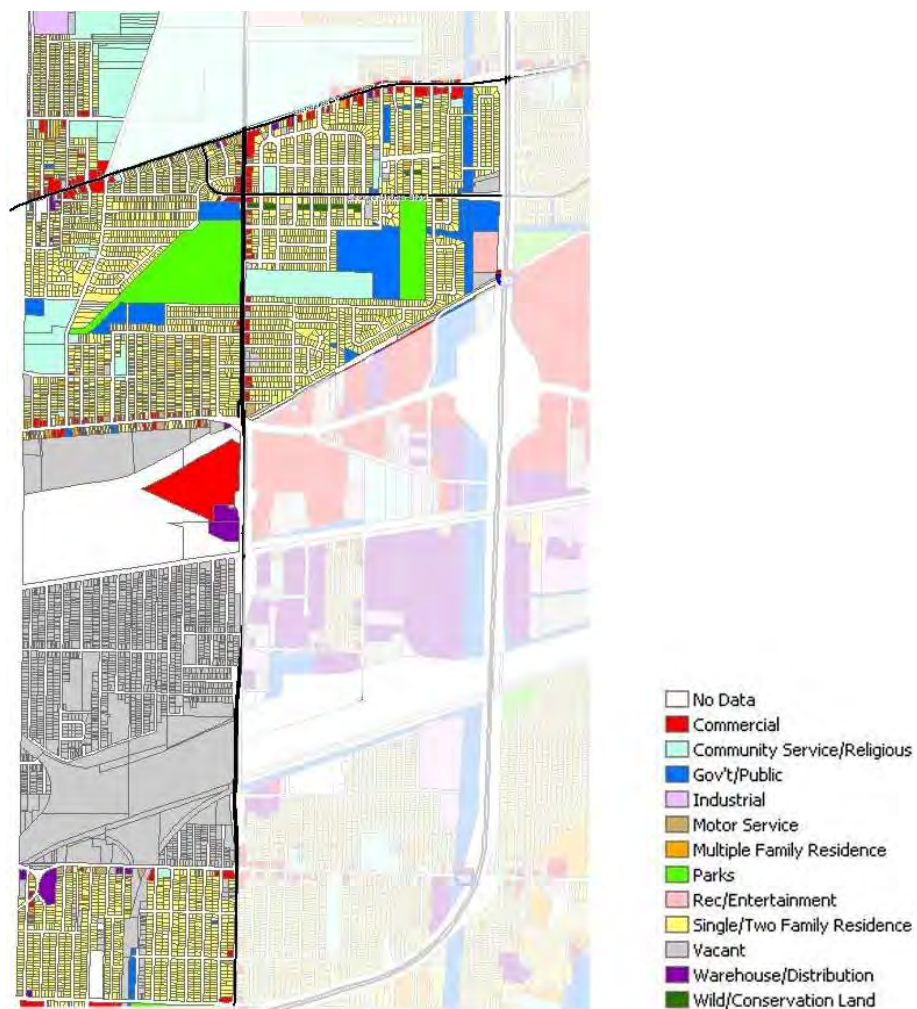


Figure 6 – Land Use in the City Line Area of the Town





TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Harlem Road is the primary north-south transportation corridor in the area; Genesee Street, Walden Avenue, Broadway and William Street provide east – west cross access. There is an abandoned railroad line that extends from the Buffalo Niagara International Airport area into the City of Buffalo that offers great potential for future rapid transit use. See Section 4.2 for further discussion of future transportation connections and how this area can be better connected and changed to a more modern urban center.

To address community development needs in this area, a number of studies have been undertaken to identify needs and establish recommendations for improvement, particularly for the area north of Sloan. In general, these plans deal with the historic nature of this area (Pine Hill, Schiller Park and Walden) and provide guidance for utilizing, rebuilding and solving the problems of abandoned and blighted housing. Highlights and findings from some of the housing studies are discussed in Section 4.4 – Community Development.

The City Line Area has the characteristics of a well established urban area (dense population patterns, nearby commercial districts and connections or potential connections into a good transportation system). The area also possesses historic and cultural characteristics that are not found in other parts of the Town. These characteristics enhance the importance of this area and provide additional opportunities.

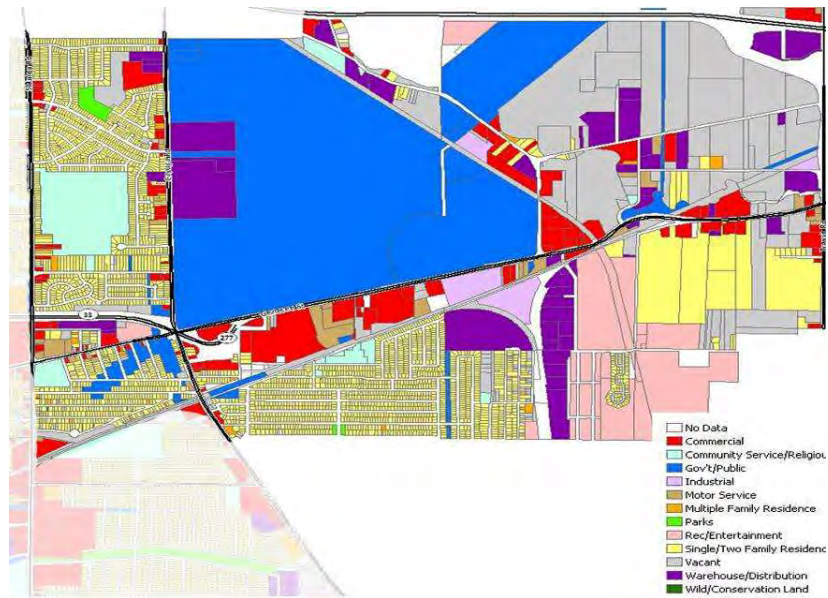
➤ **Airport area** (includes the Buffalo Niagara International Airport, the office and industrial uses northeast of the airport, the Genesee Street commercial corridor, Sky Harbor Mobile Home Park and the Maryvale/Nob Hill and Eucrest neighborhoods and the residential area extending north of the Village of Depew – Figure 7).

This area of the Town is greatly influenced by the Buffalo Niagara International Airport. Land uses adjoining the airport have been transitioning to airport support/hospitality uses over the years. Genesee Street has converted mostly over to commercial business uses such as hotels/motels, parking facilities, car rental businesses, and restaurants that benefit from the airport. Only a few of the historic commercial and industrial uses still remain. Holtz Road, which forms the eastern border for the airport, contains a mix of commercial support uses and offices, and provides a connection to the light industrial and business uses found along Aero Drive and Pfohl Road, some of which are airport dependent. Cayuga Road, to the west, is lined with a mixture of airport support and smaller commercial and office uses and some residential housing. Between Cayuga Road and Union Road the area predominately includes single-family homes in the Maryvale and Nob Hill neighborhoods and the Maryvale School complex. South and east of the airport, the area includes residential uses that extend north of the Village of Depew, the Diamond Hawk Golf Course, the Sky Harbor mobile home park and commercial businesses along Genesee Street and Transit Road. The east side of Union



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 7 – Land Use in the Airport Area of the Town





TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Road, near the Thruway, and Genesee Street, include a mixture of small and medium-scale commercial and retail uses, which front the small, older Eucrest residential neighborhood. Noise issues relating to residential uses located especially south west of the airport have been a problem over the years.

Genesee Street is the primary east – west travel corridor, with Union providing north – south access. The abandoned railroad corridor extends through this area, passing the airport and providing an excellent opportunity for public transit connections to Downtown Buffalo.

➤ **Town Center** (includes the Walden commercial corridor with the Galleria Mall, Thruway Mall and adjacent commercial uses; the Cheektowaga Schools complex, the Broadway commercial/industrial corridor, the St. Barnabas residential neighborhood, and the Town Hall complex).

This Town Center area is generally located between the Village of Depew (Dick Road) to the east, Harlem Road on the west, the abandoned railroad right-of-way to the north and the active railroad lines to the south (Figure 8). The area includes commercial and business uses, light industrial development, residential use in the northeast section (the St. Barnabas neighborhood), public uses in the Town Hall complex, and a small residential area south of Broadway. The area is bisected by the Thruway and contains two active railroad corridors (one that parallels Broadway and one to the south) and an abandoned corridor to the north, which offers potential for future rapid transit service. Union Road is the primary north-south travel corridor and Broadway and Walden Avenue accommodate east to west travel.

Land use along Broadway, from the Village of Depew to about the Thruway, is transitioning from its light industrial past to include a greater mix of business uses. Closer to the Thruway, uses still include light and heavy industry, with limited land for additional development opportunities. Broadway carries a high volume of truck traffic that services local businesses.

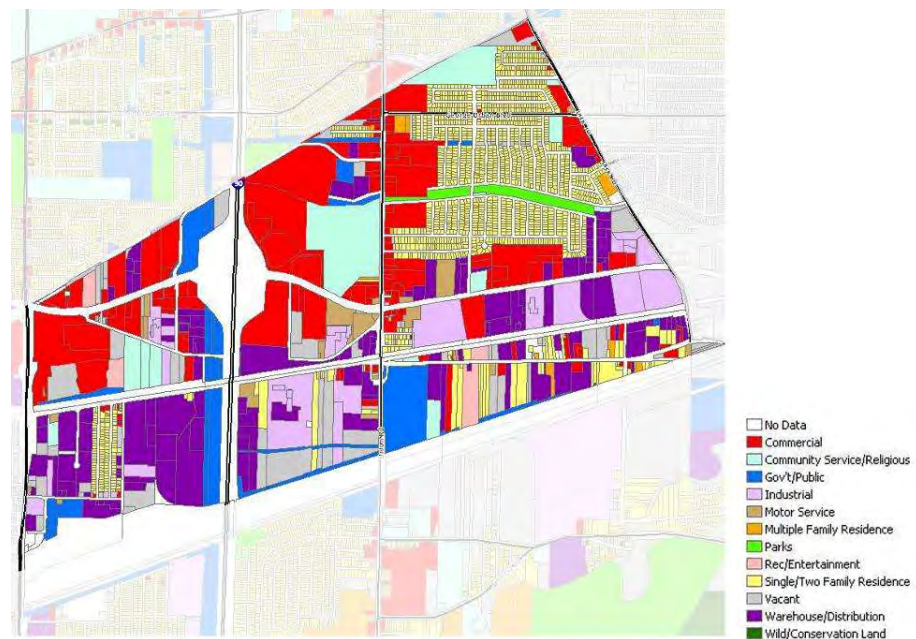




TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Walden Avenue is another area of land use in transition. The northern side of Walden Avenue has almost completely changed over to commercial and retail uses; uses on the south side are more slowly transitioning (still predominately heavy business and light industrial). This area, with the

Figure 8 – Land Use in the Town Center Area of the Town



Galleria Mall as its central focus, has become a regional destination for shopping activity. This area of the Town presents the greatest opportunity for land use changes (based on market changes and the extent of available properties). It is actively transitioning away from uses that supported the Thruway, such as truck stops, to uses that support and complement, and compete with, the Galleria Mall. This commercial activity has spread west along Walden Avenue and north along Union Road. The potential for redeveloping the abandoned rail corridor for public transit presents the opportunity for a stop at Galleria Mall, further increasing economic development possibilities for this area.

Walden Avenue, west of the Thruway to Harlem Road continues to support large scale commercial and retail uses. Dale Road, south of Walden Avenue, includes a mixture of commercial and community services (lodging) and light industrial uses (newer areas of development). As noted, Union Road, north of Walden Avenue, contains commercial and retail uses that are continually transitioning, along with the Cheektowaga Central School facilities.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



On Broadway, immediately east of Union Road, the Town Hall complex (“Forks Civic Center”) includes the Town Hall structure, the Police Department, the Senior Center and a fire training facility, among other public uses. This area has the potential to serve as the focal point of an important Town Center. Broadway will continue to be developed with light industrial and business uses at its western end (west of Union Road) and commercial/business uses at its eastern end (east of Union). Its connections to the Town Hall complex, the Village of Depew, and Walden Avenue will help with its success as a future Town Center.

➤ ***Southeast Corner*** (includes Losson Road /Como Park Blvd., South Cheektowaga and the areas bordering the Town’s of Lancaster and West Seneca).

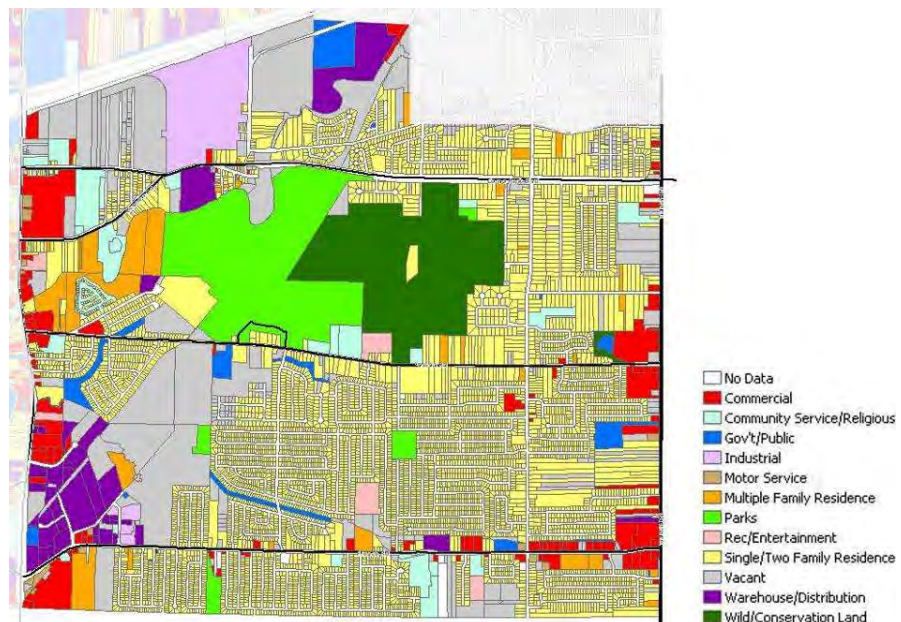
The southeastern corner of the Town is dominated by single-family residential development and recreational uses (Figure 9). The area is framed by Transit Road on the east, which supports a mixture of commercial and residential uses and vacant lands; Union Road to the west, which is predominantly lined with commercial and business uses, along with some small residential areas; and French Road at the southern end, which is a mixed- use roadway, with residential and commercial uses along the corridor. The active CSX rail corridor and the Village of Depew form the northern limits of this area. Como Park Blvd. and Losson Road offer east – west travel access through the area, along with French Road. Transit Road and Union Road provide north – south routes for travel.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Figure 9 – Land Use in the Southeast Corner of the Town





TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Southeast corner of the Town is very suburban and residential in nature. Land use trends and previous studies indicate that much of this area will remain as is; residential neighborhoods with single-family homes and commercial services along travel corridors. These residential uses generally wrap around the central feature in this area – Stiglmeier Park and the Reinstein Preserve. North of the parklands is the Buffalo Crushed Stone quarry. The long range plan for that area is to decommission quarry uses and transition lands over to parkland, which would act to form a larger “central park” area in the Town.

Transit Road has a number of larger commercial – retail uses, as well as some areas of vacant land. This area should continue to support a mix of residential and commercial uses but at a more limited scale. These uses should be oriented for servicing the surrounding residential development in Cheektowaga and Lancaster, rather than as a regional attraction (supermarkets, restaurants, etc.). French Road is expected to continue as a mixed use area, with commercial uses concentrated at primary intersections, such as Borden Road. The focus should be on improving the character of this roadway (see Section 4.2) and design aesthetics. Development in the Losson Road and Como Park Blvd. areas will remain predominantly residential in nature and future development should compliment the open space and passive recreational of uses in the area. Union Road will continue to support wider scale office and commercial uses, with emphasis placed on the revitalization of the Garden Village Plaza area, at Union and French Roads.





TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Traffic is one issue of concern in the Southeast corner of the Town. As previously noted, French Road, Como Park Blvd. and Losson Road serve as major east - west routes, connecting the Town of Lancaster to the Thruway and the City of Buffalo, to the west. Como Park Blvd. is further impacted by the quarry and industrial and business uses at its western end.

Zoning

1. General

The zoning patterns in the Town are fairly consistent with the described land use patterns that exist outlined above (see Map 4 in Section 3.0 – Community Inventory and Profile). Much of the Town is zoned R (residential), which allows single-family and two-family units on smaller lots, with a typical density of 6 to 8 units per acre (Section 3.2 provides a breakdown of zoning classifications by total acreage and percent). A small amount of land in the southeastern portion of the Town is zoned RS (residential single family), which only allows single-family homes on slightly larger lots (4 units per acre density). There are pockets of RA (apartment district) zoning that exists in the south-central part of the Town, in the vicinity of the Union Road commercial corridor, and in the northwestern corner of the Town. The RA district allows multi-family housing with an approximate density of 12 units per acre. There are a few other properties zoned RA that are scattered throughout the northern part of the community.

The Town has four categories of Commercial zoning. These include General Commercial (CM), Retail Business (C), Motor Service (MS) and Neighborhood Services (NS). The C district allows a variety of retail uses (of all sizes) and includes many of the Town's plazas. In general, C districts are located on:

- Transit Road, south of Depew (and spreads down French Road west of Transit),
- in spotty areas along Union Road south of Como Park Boulevard,
- in the Union Road/Walden Galleria area, and
- in pockets or along stretches of Harlem Road, William Street, Genesee street, Dick Road, Walden Avenue, and Losson Road (west of the Thruway).

The General Commercial (CM) district, allows commercial uses including outdoor uses (which are restricted in the C district). The areas of CM districts in the Town are located similar to the Commercial districts. These include:

- Union Road south of Como Park Boulevard,
- Walden Avenue (primarily west of the Thruway), and
- along Genesee Street.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Neighborhood Service (NS) districts, which allows smaller, less intensive business uses, are generally located in the following areas:

- Union Road south of Bennett Road,
- William Street,
- Losson Road west of Union,
- the northern reach of Harlem Road,
- Genesee Street in the vicinity of Union Road,
- Cayuga Road, near the airport, and
- Transit Road between Losson Road and Como Park Boulevard.

The Town has two Industrial zoning districts; M-1 – Light Manufacturing (allows no outdoor activities), and M-2 – General Manufacturing (which allows more intense uses, with outdoor activities). The M-1 district is the predominant district and is located around the airport, in the central part of the town around the railroad tracks (mostly south of Walden), and in the southern part of the Town around Union Road. There is also some M-2 zoning around the airport and west of the Thruway, south of Walden.

Another predominant zoning district in the Town is the Community Facilities District (CF). this district has been applied to many of the public facilities in the Town (airport, parks, cemeteries, government facilities, etc.) and is spread throughout the Town.

The Zoning Law of the Town (Chapter 260 of the Town Code) is a fairly standard code developed in the 1970's and 1980's, with Euclidean (2 dimensional) zoning districts. The Town has updated some sections of its Zoning Law and added some new sections throughout the years, but the Zoning Law is far from modern and lacks both specificity and flexibility for design.

2. Specific Zoning Areas

The following sections provide more detail on the zoning in the various areas of the Town, and outlines some observations about the zoning designations.

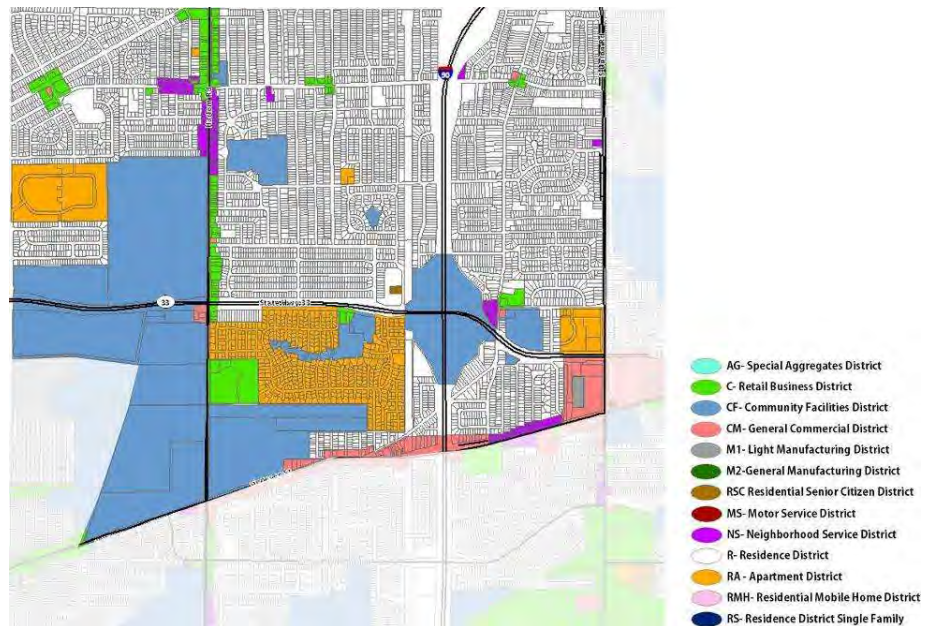
Northwestern area – this area has two predominate zoning districts, the R (Residential Single Family) and CF (Community Facility). The CF district covers the cemetery complex, the Thruway interchange, some parkland and public school facilities (Figure 10). Three areas are zoned RA (Apartment District), including the Collegiate Park Village student housing complex, the Cedar Grove Heights residential area, and apartments and condominiums (Linda Lane) in the Maryvale area, north of Airport Plaza. Harlem Road is zoned C (Retail Business), with two areas of NC (Neighborhood Service) zoning. Much of Genesee Street is zoned CM (General commercial), including the Airport Plaza, with



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

a small C (Retail Business) district located near the City line, and a few small areas of NS (Neighborhood Service) zoning. East Delavan Road is also zoned Retail Business, as well as some small areas along Kensington Avenue and Cleveland Drive.

Figure 10 – Zoning in the Northwest Corner of the Town



Finally, there are two isolated areas that are zoned Light Manufacturing; one at the City line at Eggert and Sugar, and one land locked parcel at Union Road and Genesee Street.

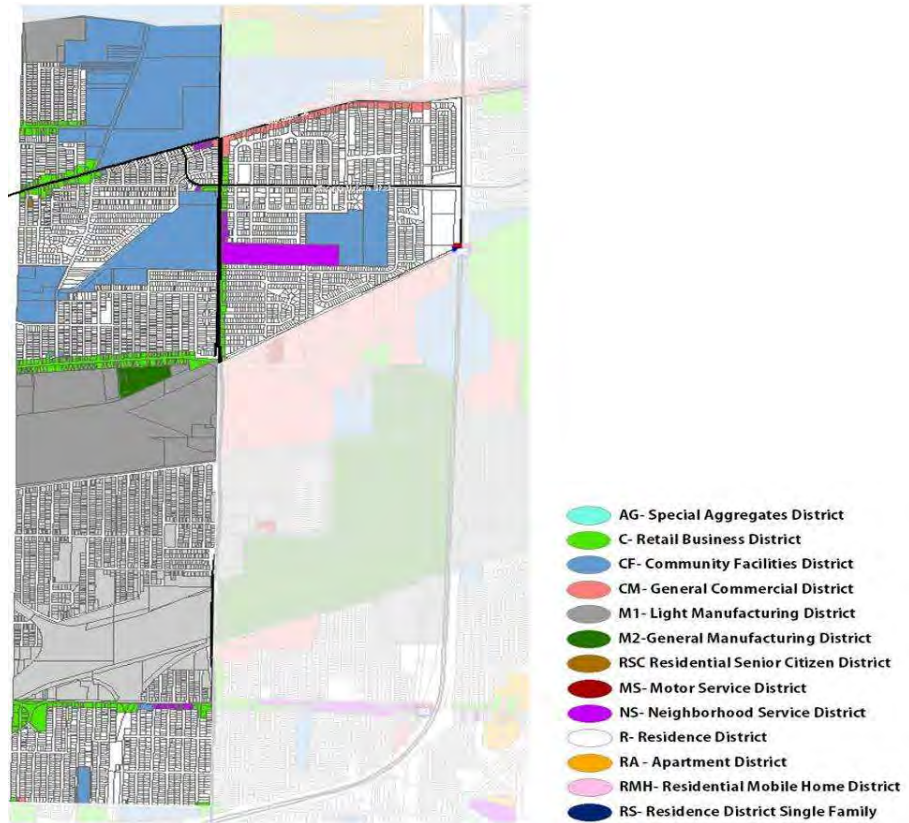
The general zoning patterns in this area (residential with commercial corridors and nodes) are not problematic, but as the area revitalizes attention should be paid to aesthetics, connectivity/ walkability, and the mixture of uses that would be best for the Town and the area (design and flexibility).

City Line Area - includes those areas along the City of Buffalo boundary, which are mainly residential in nature and are predominately zoned R (Residential). This area also includes the Village of Sloan which is also predominately zoned residential. The area includes a number of Retail Business districts (zoned C), which are located along Genesee Street, Harlem Road, Walden Avenue, William Street and Dingers Street. These commercially zoned properties tend to be on small lots that front along these highways, with residential zoning districts situated directly behind. There is also a large area zoned



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 11 – Zoning in the City Line Areas of the Town



Light Manufacturing District (M1), located north of the Village of Sloan (north to Walden Avenue and east to Harlem Road). This is the location of the large CSX rail yard, with numerous track lines. The other zoning districts in this area include Community Facilities (CF), which includes cemetery properties and the Cheektowaga Town Park, as well as a large park area owned by the Cheektowaga School District and a few other isolated parcels. There are a few properties zoned Neighborhood Service District (NS), including the St. Joseph's Hospital property and a small stretch along William Street.

It appears that “rezoning” has not been a big issue in this area, with only some minor rezoning actions occurring in the last 15 years. These have dealt with conflict issues or the expansion of retail businesses along the commercial corridors (the rear extent of properties abutting residential areas).

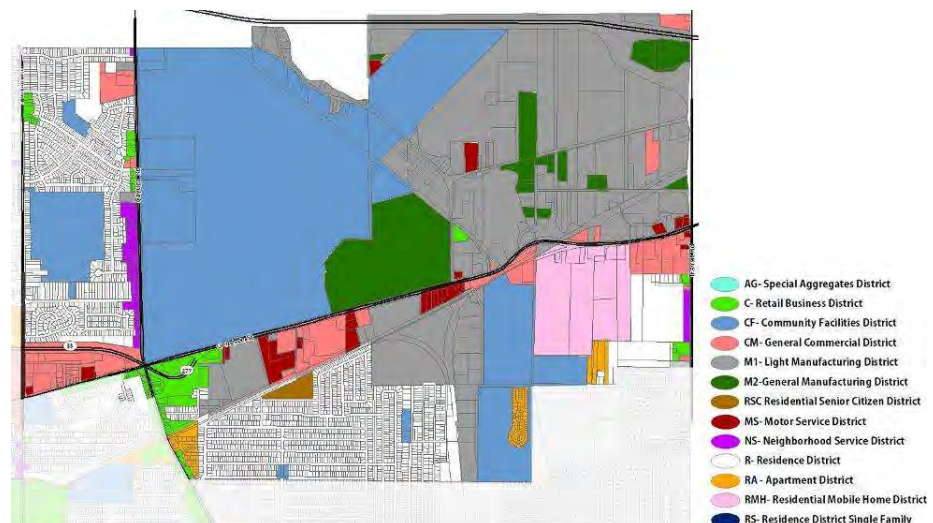


TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

While zoning does not appear to be a problem in this area, the bigger issues deal with the appearance of structures along the main corridors, including abandoned buildings.

Airport Area - includes a mixture of zoning classifications from Residential (R) to General Manufacturing District (M2). Areas to the east of the airport are predominately zoned M-1 (Light Industrial) and M-2, with some C-commercial, MS – motor service and CM – general commercial zoning districts in located around the area (Figure 12). Along Genesee Street the properties are zoned a mixture of CM and MS, with smaller areas of C zoning and a few Light Industrial properties. A long stretch of properties along Cayuga Road, across from the airport, are zoned NS - Neighborhood Service, with some smaller C and CM districts. The Nob Hill and northern St. Barnabas areas are zoned R – Residential; the Sky Harbor mobile home development, south of Genesee Street is zoning RMH – Residential Mobile Home. The airport itself, and the Town’s golf course, are zoned Community Facilities (CF), along with the Maryvale School complex and a few other small isolated parcels. There are three areas zoned RA - Apartment District, located south of Genesee Street, in the vicinity of the Village of Depew and just east of Dick Road. There is also one property zoned Residential Senior Citizen District (RSC), which is found in the northern portion of the St. Barnabas community, north of the Village of Depew.

Figure 12 – Zoning in the Airport Area of the Town



The Airport area has seen several rezonings; mostly to allow for some different uses in the Light Manufacturing area, the east of the airport (rezoning to General Manufacturing and to Motor Service). Other amendment actions include a rezoning for multi-family apartments and one to accommodate a new Community Facility (CF) district. Other rezonings were made across from the



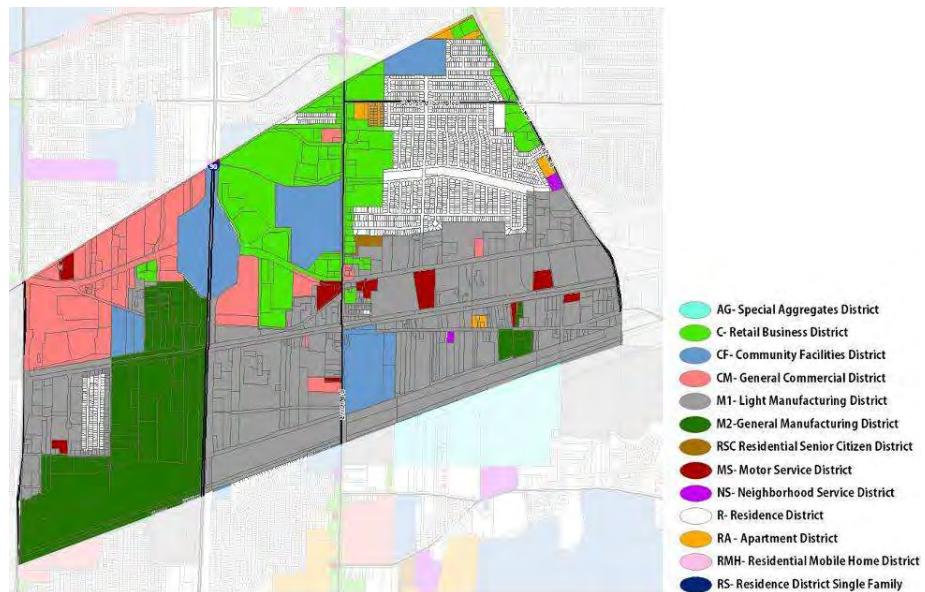
TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

airport on properties, where properties front along Genesee Street; these included rezonings for Motor Service and Commercial uses.

In general, we see the zoning patterns of the area continuing as they are. Some changes are likely to occur to allow for certain uses that could fit better into the area, and help the area succeed, such as transitioning from manufacturing to more commercial zoning to accommodate additional hospitality oriented uses in the vicinity of the airport. Cayuga Road seems to be the area with the most conflicts and a closer look at zoning in this area may be necessary.

Town Center represents the “center” of commerce and business in the Town, and includes generally discrete areas zoned Light Manufacturing, General Manufacturing, Retail Business, and General Commercial, as well as areas zoned for Motor Service and Community Facilities (Figure 13). There is also one large R - Residential district (St. Barnabas) and a smaller one, south of Broadway.

Figure 13 – Zoning in the Town Center of the Town



The southern portion of this area primarily includes lands zoned for Light Manufacturing (M-1), which are situated between the Village of Depew and the New York State Thruway. There are also M1 districts located south of Broadway, at the western end of the area. The lands along Broadway, immediately west of the Thruway are zoned M2 for general manufacturing use. This area includes the rail yard and a wide area of warehousing and other industrial businesses.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Walden Avenue area, on both sides of the Thruway, west of Union Road and north of active rail corridor that parallels Broadway, is zoned for a mix of commercial and community facility uses. West of the Thruway, the land is zoned primarily CM, covering retail plazas (Thruway Plaza and others), office uses and light industrial uses. There is one CF – Community Facility District in this general vicinity that includes a small complex of cemetery properties. The area around and including the Walden Galleria (including lands on the east side of Union Road) are zoned Retail Business (C). CF properties in this general vicinity include two large Cheektowaga School District properties. There are also a few properties along (or near) Walden Avenue that are zoned Motor Service (MS), which include a truck stop, a car wash and a number of trucking terminals.

In reviewing the mapping supplied by the Town, which illustrates all of the rezonings that have occurred since 1992, it was observed that many rezonings have taken place in this area. Almost all of these rezonings converted land from Light Manufacturing zoning to one of the Town's commercial districts. These changes could be indicative of the changing trends toward commercial uses that have occurred since the construction of the Walden Galleria Mall in the late 1980's. This area has become a regional destination for retail sales.

This pattern of development, current trends and economic conditions could indicate a need for better planning and, subsequently, new zoning for this area. Walden Avenue is a prime commercial corridor and is an important gateway to the community. A better zoning pattern and design guidelines may help to improve the quality of this area. For Broadway, east of Union, this corridor seems to be transitioning to a business and commercial corridor with "Main Street" influences, while lands along Broadway, on the west side of Union, are more consistent with the zoning.

Southeast Corner, sometimes referred to as South Cheektowaga, is generally located south of the Village of Depew and east of Union Road (Figure 14). The Southeast Corner of the Town includes a mix of residential zoning districts. A large portion of the area is zoned R (Residential), with some areas zoned Residence Single Family (RS) and four large areas of RA (Apartment District) zoning (there are also two smaller RA zones on French Road). This is the only part of the Town that has lands zoned RS. The RS zoning designation, unlike the other residential districts in the Town, only allows single family homes and has a larger minimum lot size requirement (10,800 square feet). There is one area at the southwestern end of Stiglmeier Park zoned Residential Mobile Home District. There are also four areas zoned for senior housing (RSC – Residential Senior Citizen District). Two in the vicinity of Losson and Bennett Road, one along Transit Road and one off of French Road.

Other zoning in the Southeast Corner of the Town includes Commercial districts (predominately C and NS Districts, with some CM zoning and a couple of properties zoned MS). Commercial and retail properties along Transit Road are zoning primarily C – Commercial. There is a stretch of Neighborhood Service zoning along Transit Road, between Como Park Blvd. and Losson Road and

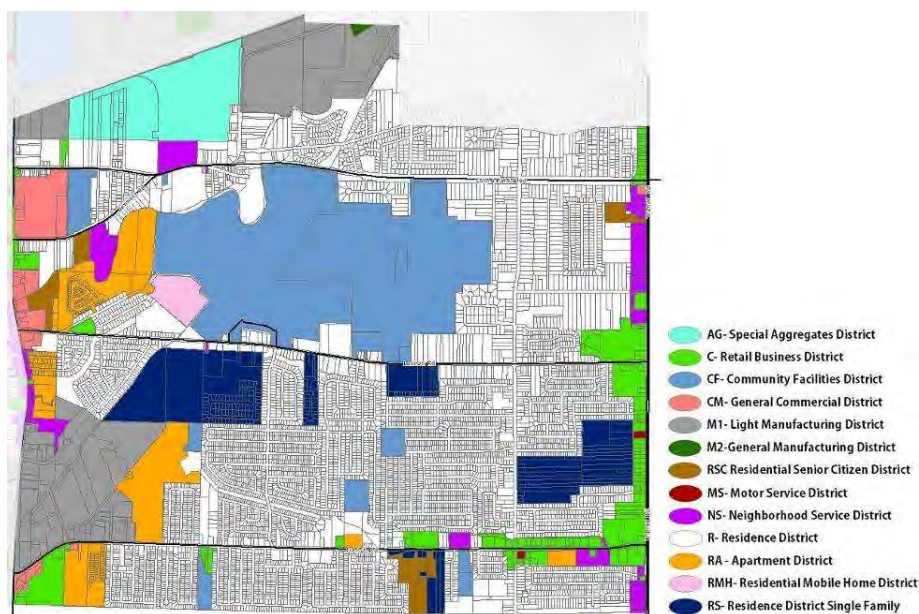


TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

another area near the border with the Town of West Seneca. Commercial zoning extends west along French Road, to about Borden Road. The Gardenville Plaza area at the western end of French Road is zoned C, with frontage properties at the corner zoned General Commercial (CM). Union Road is zoned for a mix of commercial and retail business, with areas of CM, C and NS zoning. Union Road also includes Light Manufacturing (M1) Districts. There is a large area of Light Manufacturing District (M-1) zoning in the southwestern portion of South Cheektowaga, centered between Union Road and French Road. The area north of Como Park Blvd., in the northwest portion of the Town, is also zoned M1, for light manufacturing use. The M1 zoning frames a special zoning district, the AG –Special Aggregates District, which encompasses the Buffalo Crushed Stone quarry.

The last major zoning category in the Southeast Corner area is the CF – Community Facility. Lands zoned CF include Stiglmeier Park, the Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve, Hospice Center and other small neighborhood parks.

Figure 14 – Zoning in the Southeast Corner of the Town



There have been a number of rezonings that have occurred in this area. These include actions for the creation of a Residential Senior Citizen District (RSC) for senior housing, for an Apartment District (RA)



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

for multi-family housing, for Neighborhood Service (NS) and Motor Service (MS) Districts for commercial enterprises, and for Community Facility Districts (CF) for public undertakings. Areas where zoning needs to be evaluated or where issues have arisen include the Union Road and Transit Road corridors, at the east and west ends of the French Road corridor, and the Light Manufacturing District (could be a transition area). There have also been some issues with residential development, and requests for rezoning, in the vicinity of Stiglmeier Park.

Zoning Law Issues

1. General

The Town's zoning regulations are, in general, older, standard zoning provisions, with many sections that need updating. In November of 2000, Code Publishers supplied a critique of the Town's zoning Ordinance, which was followed up by a memorandum from the Town's Zoning Officer outlining changes to the regulations. The Town has updated various sections of the ordinance over the years, and has a Zoning Committee that reviews all zoning issues, but more work needs to be done. The following are our general observations concerning some of the Town regulations, including zoning; more specific recommendations are included in Section 5.0, Recommendations. Also see the Code Publishers report and the response from the Town Zoning Office, in the appendix.

2. Zoning and Other Code Observations

- The "Critical Environmental Impact Zone" is confusing and needs work.
- Windmill regulations will need to be added concerning residential grade windmills.
- The RSC district is a Floating Zone that needs to be better detailed.
- The Adult use Law needs to be updated.
- The Special Use Permit section of the ordinance needs to be updated.
- Additional requirements for Motor Fuel, Public Garages and Business and Marketing Districts (200-52 & 53) need to be moved to specific sections.
- The Environmental Impact Review Section needs updating.
- More modern regulatory sections are needed in the Zoning Ordinance:
 - Better Mixed Use/TND (Traditional Neighborhood Design) regulations
 - Additional design standards
 - Overlay district to reflect conditions in specific areas of the Town
 - Performance/Incentive Zoning could be utilized to remedy use issues in more difficult areas (re-development)
 - TOD's (Transit Oriented Developments) should be considered, particularly in areas along the proposed transit corridor (to match some ideas in this plan)



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Regional Issues Affecting Land Use and Zoning

1. Erie County (Framework for Regional Growth)

Erie County, in conjunction with Niagara County, completed a Regional Plan, entitled the Framework for Regional Growth (FRG), which acts as Erie County's Comprehensive Plan. This plan and the implementation strategy for this plan will have a tremendous influence on development and redevelopment in the County. Highlights of the FRG, for the Town of Cheektowaga, are as follows:

- Figure 6 of the Plan highlights household densities in the counties, and illustrates that Cheektowaga has a high level of household density (second only to the City of Buffalo).
- The FRG acknowledges that the first ring suburbs (like Cheektowaga) are under stress; declining populations, aging housing, vacated and underutilized commercial buildings and sites, and deteriorating infrastructure.
- The FRG targets industrial growth in existing industrial/business parks; the plan only illustrates one available Industrial/Business Park in Cheektowaga, with available acreage (Airborne Business Park), and one park prepared for re-investment (Walden Commerce Exchange).
- Cheektowaga is all within the identified "Developed Area" of the FRG Planning Policy Area.
- The FRG also identifies major growth corridors in the region; Cheektowaga contains two of these corridors - - the Walden Broadway Corridor and the Buffalo-Niagara Airport/Cheektowaga Growth Area (corridor).
- The FRG also identifies Regional Centers in the Counties, with the City of Buffalo being one of those centers.
- The Framework states that "County Planning and Growth Management Strategies are designed to promote appropriate reinvestment, redevelopment, conservation, adaptive reuse, and infill development. As envisioned by the Framework, the Regional Centers and Growth Corridors will capture a high percentage of the growth projections for the Developed and Developing area".
- The Framework calls for 70 percent of the households projected for 2000 to 2025 to be located in the Developed area, and calls for densities of at least six households per acre.
- It is recommended, by this Plan, that the "City of Buffalo Regional Center", as discussed in the FRG, be expanded to include areas of Cheektowaga. Much of the City line area of Cheektowaga is very much a part of (and indistinguishable from) the City of Buffalo. This Regional Center area should at least extend to the NYS Thruway lands. Therefore, the Town of Cheektowaga would have parts of the Town in a Regional Center and in two Growth Corridor target areas of the Framework for Regional Growth.
- As a community that is completely in the developed area of the FRG Plan, the following principles of that plan would apply to Cheektowaga: (quoted directly from the FRG Manual - May 2006).



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Framework for Regional Growth Developed Area Policies and Strategies

Spark reinvestment, attract new households and businesses, and improve the livability and economic vitality of the region's existing communities. Support a) the conservation and stabilization of existing neighborhoods; b) new compact, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use development on vacant and underutilized sites; and c) higher density, employment intensive, mixed use development in Regional Centers and Growth Corridors.

Economic Development & Public Investment Strategies

- *Expand on previous "shovel-ready site" assessments and develop a regional inventory and marketing strategy for vacant, underutilized, and brownfield properties; and support the preparation of conceptual development plans and marketing strategies for sites best positioned to support regional economic development objectives.*
- *Encourage localities to preserve and properly zone larger-scale vacant and underutilized sites with potential to accommodate research and development, technology, manufacturing, and distribution enterprises.*
- *Explore the feasibility of creating a regional "Main Street" organization modeled after successful programs of the National Main Street Center.*
- *Identify a mechanism for generating and deploying a shared source of revenue to support regional initiatives to improve neighborhood livability and support reinvestment.*
- *and within regional centers and growth corridors.*
- *To improve local accessibility, a)*

- *Encourage major government and educational facilities, sport and entertainment venues, and cultural facilities and attractions to locate in Regional Centers.*

Mobility & Accessibility Strategies

- *Support GBNRTC's "maintenance first" policies focusing on the preservation, repair, and restoration of existing infrastructure to provide safe and efficient transport and continued economic development and do not support major capacity expansions nor the construction of new highway facilities on new right-of-way, unless such projects are identified on GBNRTC's Long Range Plan.*
- *Support efforts to a) plan and zone for employment-intensive commercial and industrial development on sites with ready access to the region's highway and rail networks, b) recognize existing and planned transit services as catalysts for higher density development and reinvestment in regional centers and growth corridors; and c) improve access to, between,*
- *Hood stabilization, and economic development efforts.*
- *Favor the development of vacant and underutilized sites with existing sewer and water service over those where extensions are required.*



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

encourage localities to develop networks of interconnected local streets, sidewalks, and pedestrian/bicycle trails; b) ensure pedestrian facilities and aesthetic enhancements are considered as part of all transportation improvement projects; and c) continue to work with the GBNRTC, NFTA, and localities to promote public transit use, walking, and biking as alternatives to automobile use.

- *Support efforts to improve the efficiency and reliability of truck and rail freight movements within and through the region and improve multi-modal facilities and system connectivity.*

- *Review criteria for the approval of curb cuts on county roads and revise if necessary to encourage effective access management and parcel-to-parcel connectivity.*

- *Employ context-sensitive design principles for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of county roadways.*

Public System & Service Strategies

- *As part of the counties' annual budget review processes, evaluate the consistency of proposed capital and operating expenditures with Framework policies and assess the geographic distribution of proposed expenditures and levels of planned support for revitalization, neighbor-*

- *Support local policy and planning provisions that channel growth to areas with existing sewer and water service.*

- *Encourage new public facilities and services to locate close to existing and planned bus and light rail transit corridors, and expand efforts to encourage ridesharing and transit use, especially among public employees.*

- *Identify isolated capacity deficiencies and condition issues in the Developed Area, especially in locations where higher density residential and commercial/industrial development is encouraged.*

- *Continue support for intermunicipal agreements that increase cost savings in the delivery of public services.*

- *Support the rehabilitation and improvement of existing parks, recreation and community facilities and cultural institutions in Developed Areas over the development of new facilities in Developing and Rural Areas.*

- *Assist localities in the assessment of economic, fiscal, and environmental costs and benefits of extending sewer and water service beyond current limits.*

2. Surrounding Communities

City of Buffalo

The City of Buffalo forms the western border with the Town for its entire north south duration. This area is predominately characterized with older stock residential units. The residential nature is shown on both sides of the border and some neighborhood groupings span the municipal boundary line.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The border area is serviced by several significant east west routes. These include Walden Avenue, Genesee Street, Broadway and Kensington Avenue. The cross connection add to the unification of and cross municipal border planning activities.

Adopted planning documents for the City of Buffalo do not directly reference this area of the City. It is more detailed in the Good Neighbor Planning Alliance; a City program that plans based on the neighborhood units that comprise the City as a whole.

The areas that border the Town have been identified by the City where redevelopment or demolition is needed. There are abandoned properties in this area that has increased the dilapidated appearance of the neighborhood.

Town of Amherst

In reviewing the Town of Amherst's Comprehensive Plan, the following issues were noted as having influence on the Town of Cheektowaga:

- Amherst denotes Eggert Road and Harlem Road as important on-street bicycle and pedestrian networks.
- These two corridors (Eggert and Harlem) are noted as "Character Corridors" with a "Traditional" category. Cheektowaga should work with Amherst on creating/improving these character corridors and ensuring that they are accessible to bicycles and pedestrians.
- The Town of Amherst that abuts the Town of Cheektowaga's northwest area is predominately Single Family Residential. The Harlem Road corridor is Mixed Use and at its border with Cheektowaga it is described as a Mixed Use/Activity Center.
- The Town of Amherst compliments the Town of Cheektowaga by having a planned Industrial Office area around the airport.
- The Amherst Plan also designates a possible Youngs Road/I-90 Interchange. The Town of Cheektowaga should be involved in any discussions about this as this would greatly change the traffic patterns in this area.

Town of West Seneca

In reviewing the Town of West Seneca's Comprehensive Plan, the following issues were noted as having possible influence on Cheektowaga:

- The Town of West Seneca's Comprehensive Plan recommended a Transit Road overlay that would address aesthetic and design issues, and also address Access Management.
- It also recommends a Union Road overlay with similar requirements, and demarcates Union Road at the Town's boundaries as a Gateway entrance to the communities.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- The northwest corner of West Seneca is environmentally sensitive (flood plains, and Cayuga Creek/Buffalo Creek) and includes important connective features into the Buffalo Greenway Plan. It also includes the Cayuga Creek protection area and a proposed railway system along the Town boundary to Clinton Street and southeast to the Seneca Creek Pathway.

Town of Lancaster/ Village of Depew

In reviewing the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew, the following issues were noted as having possible influence on Cheektowaga:

- The Village of Depew and western portions of the Town of Lancaster are linked through location, culture, transportation and economics with the Town of Cheektowaga.
- The major transportation arteries (Walden Avenue, Broadway, rail lines and the Amtrak Station) directly link Lancaster and Depew with the Town of Cheektowaga.
- The critical mass of retail development in Cheektowaga was considered a catalyst to spur future growth within the Town of Lancaster and two villages.
- Close proximity to the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport in Cheektowaga is an advantage to the three communities.
- The existing industrial base on Walden Avenue, which extends through the Town of Cheektowaga, establishes a critical mass of economic activity that the three communities can build upon.
- One of the goals of the Lancaster/Depew Comprehensive Plan is to develop a regional identity within Erie County to promote the three communities and the Town of Cheektowaga. This was supported by a policy that recommended the development of a “community theme” for Lancaster Town, Lancaster Village, the Village of Depew and the Town of Cheektowaga and the promotion of this theme in future development.

Village of Sloan

The Village of Sloan commenced an effort to complete a comprehensive plan in the several years ago, but this plan was never finalized. Located on the western side of the Town, the Village is small and primarily residential in nature. The Town provides a number of services for this community. Recently, the Village has been considering dissolution and consolidation with the Town.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SECTION 5.0 – RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Initial Considerations

The following recommendations are broken into three categories: “essential” – these actions are focused on improvements that should be considered immediately to stabilize existing areas or neighborhoods, repair current facilities or permit changes without great difficulty; “desirable” – these actions are important for supporting the Town’s future vision, but will require additional funding and/or manpower making them somewhat less critical than essential actions; and “intensive” – these actions require significant investments of staff time and/or public resources and, therefore, can only realistically be accomplished by a more aggressive approach, often requiring the commitment of multiple agencies.

5.2 Transportation

Recommended Actions

The actions presented in this section represent multi-modal transportation actions that should be undertaken by the Town of Cheektowaga in coordination with other transportation agencies to ensure a safe and efficient transportation system for all users. These actions are divided into three classifications (essential, desirable, and intensive). Essential actions should be undertaken as quickly as possible. Desirable actions are important for supporting the transportation vision, but will require additional funding and/or manpower, so are somewhat less critical than the essential actions. Intensive actions will require significant investments of staff time and/or public resources and, therefore, can only realistically be undertaken by a more aggressive approach, often requiring the commitment of multiple agencies.

A. Essential Actions (First Steps)

The following actions are those that should be undertaken by the Town as quickly as possible and lay the foundation for further actions.

Action #1: Undertake a Town-wide Complete Streets Study

The design of a roadway can have a significant impact on the character of the surrounding neighborhood and can affect the way people relate to a corridor. For years, the focus of transportation planning has been on designing roadways for the operational movement of vehicles, and this approach has resulted in and will continue to result in harmful impacts to several communities. The Town should undertake a Town-wide Complete Streets Study to further survey the character corridors identified in Section 4 and to develop a context sensitive approach to transportation/ land use planning throughout the Town with the focus of improving the coordination between land use and transportation planning, incorporating residents and businesses from the community in the planning process, making corridors favorable to all forms of transportation,

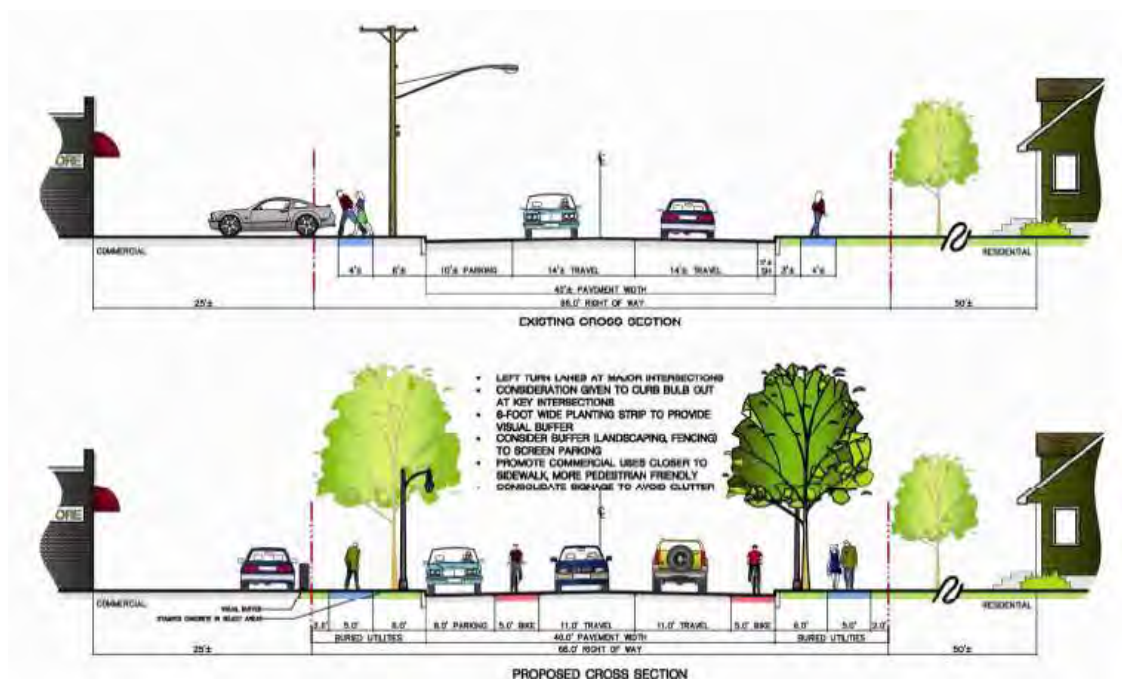


TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

enticing neighborhood reinvestment and revitalization, and maintaining the community character that makes Cheektowaga's neighborhoods so unique.

Figure 1, below, is an example of a complete street strategy taken from the Town of Amherst Context Sensitive Highway Design Report that could be developed and applied to similar streets in the Town of Cheektowaga to create safe streets for all users.

Figure 1 – Complete Street Strategy



Source: Town of Amherst Context Sensitive Highway Design Report, 2009

Action #2: Adopt Town-wide Access Management Regulations

Roadways with adjacent commercial land use are inundated with multiple curb cuts and poor cross-connection between sites. This results in traffic congestion and safety concerns created by varying traffic speeds and conflicting turning movements. The Town has a draft Transit Road Overlay District that addresses access management along Transit Road. However, the Town should consider developing a Town-wide access management plan to ensure a safe and efficient transportation system.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Action #3: Consult with the New York State Thruway on the I-90 Corridor Study

The New York State Thruway Authority will be undertaking the development of the I-90 Corridor Study in the next few years to evaluate improving traffic operations, the location and operation of interchanges, and improving safety. The Town should lobby for the Thruway Authority to include an evaluation on the potential for an interchange to be constructed at Broadway.

Action #4: Set forth a strategy to implement the federal earmark for transportation enhancements

The Town was awarded a \$410,000 federal earmark for transportation enhancements to the Union Road/ Walden Avenue intersection. The Town should begin identifying the \$102,000 match needed to implement the transportation enhancements and begin drawing from the federal earmark before it is eliminated.

Action #5: Evaluate recommendations from the Greater Buffalo- Niagara Freight Study

The Greater Buffalo- Niagara Regional Transportation Council is currently developing the Greater Buffalo- Niagara Freight Study. When the Study is complete, the Town should evaluate the recommendations and determine appropriate measures that should be taken to capitalize off of the highway, rail/ intermodal, and airport infrastructure in the Town.

Action #6: Implement the Multi-Use Trail Plan

The Town should continue to implement the Multi-Use Trail Plan and reevaluate periodically to identify opportunities to expand the trails and bikeway facilities along creek corridors, abandoned railroad rights-of-way and utility corridors, and open space areas of the Town.

B. Desirable Actions (Next Steps)

The following actions are important for supporting the transportation vision, but will require additional funding and/or manpower, so are somewhat less critical than the essential actions

Action #1: Further analyze crash data at high crash locations

The Town should further analyze crash data from high crash locations to gain an understanding of the characteristics of the crashes. Proper mitigation strategies should be developed and implemented to improve safety at high crash locations.

Action #2: Determine potential highway improvements

The Town should work with appropriate transportation agencies to determine potential highway improvement projects along corridors or at intersections that experience operational or safety deficiencies. The Town should also evaluate results from the Complete Streets Study and begin implementing simple context sensitive design strategies.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Action #3: Expand Park & Ride Lots

The Town should identify opportunities for additional and enhanced Park & Ride lots. The New York State Department of Transportation has indicated that they are willing to provide funding assistance to develop new and/or enhanced Park & Ride facilities. Park & Ride lots, combined with enhanced transit facilities and great multi-modal accessibility, are vital components of a successful transportation demand management (TDM) program and can increase transit ridership and promote transit oriented development/ redevelopment. Potential locations for new and/or enhanced Park & Ride facilities are indicated on Map 1: Transportation Vision.

Action #4: Explore enhanced transit service

The Town should work with the NFTA to explore opportunities for enhanced transit service to/from the Airport, especially to/from Downtown Buffalo and the Amtrak Passenger Rail Station in Depew.

Action #5: Enhance pedestrian and bicycle facilities

Cheektowaga is a “pedestrian-oriented” community. However, pedestrian oriented does not necessarily result in pedestrian friendliness. The Town should work with appropriate transportation agencies to undertake measures that enhance pedestrian and bicycle opportunities and safety for recreation, daily services, and commuting travel should be undertaken.

C. Intensive Actions (Potential Future Steps)

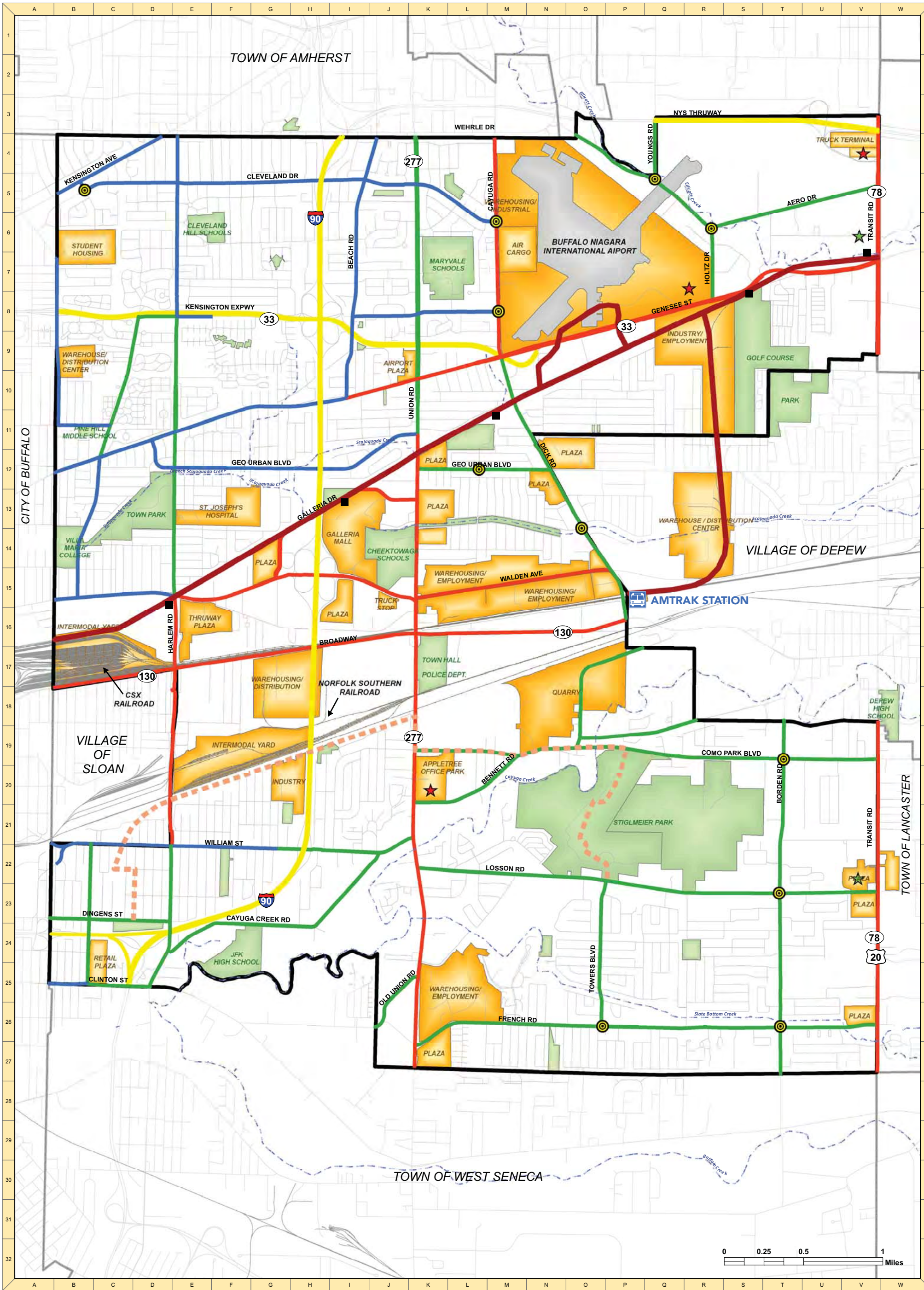
The following actions require significant investments of staff time and/or public resources, and therefore can only realistically be undertaken by a more aggressive approach, often requiring the commitment of multiple agencies.

Action #1: Construction of roundabouts

After development of a Complete Streets Study and upon further evaluation of high crash locations, the Town should initiate the process to develop roundabouts at strategic intersections and at high crash locations to implement a context sensitive design approach and to improve safety and efficiency of traffic.

Action #2: Implement recommendations of the William/Losson Corridor Study

The Town should work with appropriate transportation agencies to implement the recommendations of the Transportation Improvements Impact Study for the William/ Losson Corridor. Specifically, the Town should begin working with the New York State Department of Transportation and New York State Thruway Authority on developing an interchange along I-90 at Broadway or improved access between Broadway and the existing interchange at Walden Avenue.



Map 20 - Transportation Vision

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

Municipal Boundary

Cheektowaga Boundary

Road Centerline

Railroad

Activity Center

Park /Community Facility

Historic Rails To Trails

Enhanced Transit Corridor

Park & Ride

Round-About Opportunity

Proposed Park & Ride

Transit Stop

Character Corridor

Commerical

Suburban

Expressway

Traditional

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: August 2009

*The information on this document is based on data gathered from the following data sources and should not be used for design or construction. -Data Sources: Town of Cheektowaga, NYS GIS Clearinghouse.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Action #3: Development of enhanced transit corridors

The Town should initiate the process of developing enhanced transit corridors throughout the Town. There are two major activity centers in the Town, the Walden Galleria Mall and the Buffalo Niagara International Airport, that are linked to Downtown Buffalo by active and abandoned railroad corridors, making for an excellent opportunity to explore the development of enhanced transit corridors. Ownership of this corridor has been identified in Section 4. One of the first initiatives undertaken should be for the Town to pursue options to obtain ownership rights to the corridor in order to implement an enhanced transit corridor.

5.3 Economic Development

Recommended Actions

The actions presented here represent a full slate of potential economic development actions that could be undertaken by the Town of Cheektowaga and its many current and potential partners. Since the Town's future level of effort for economic development programs is not current known, these actions are divided into three classifications (essential, desirable, and intensive). Essential actions should be undertaken regardless of the structure; desirable and intensive actions are designed to be incorporated into more aggressive efforts, should resources become available.

A. Essential Actions (First Steps)

The following actions are those that should be undertaken as quickly as possible, regardless of the Town's preferred approach to economic development. These actions are all critical to achieving the Town's economic development vision, inexpensive, and relatively straightforward.

Action #1: Create economic development webpage

An immediate priority is to establish an internet presence for the Town's economic development efforts. In the short-term, this only needs to be a webpage that is linked from the Town's website, containing basic data about the community, phone numbers/email addresses for key contacts, and links to key regional partners (Cheektowaga Chamber, Erie County IDA, Buffalo-Niagara Enterprise, Empire State Development, Buffalo-Niagara CVB, NFTA, GBNRTC, etc.) This webpage can be expanded or even spun off to a stand-alone site in the longer term.

Action #2: Reorganize Cheektowaga Economic Development Corporation (CEDC)

The Town of Cheektowaga recognizes that CEDC is an underutilized resource that must be put to better use in coming years. Regardless of which model for economic development is chosen by the Town, CEDC will need to play a larger and more central role in future activities and immediate action is needed to set this course of action. There are two options for how to reorganize CEDC, depending on which model is followed:



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Alternatives #1 and #3: Appoint Economic Development Committee (members may include existing CEDC members), rewrite CEDC bylaws to give CEDC oversight to Committee, and disband existing CEDC board.
- Alternative #2: Rewrite CEDC bylaws to expand its mission, develop strategic plan, identify funding sources, hire staff.

Action #3: Develop online property database

A simple and critical element of the Town's economic development webpage will be a searchable online database of available commercial and industrial space and property for lease or sale. The simplest way to achieve this is to subscribe to Catalyst, a fee-based service run by Buffalo-Niagara Enterprise (BNE) that works directly with commercial and industrial brokers in the area to document available sites. The cost of this subscription is about \$1,500 per year. If this cost is prohibitive, the Town could work with the Cheektowaga Chamber and local brokers to develop and maintain a database for Cheektowaga, but this locally-driven database would not get the wider exposure of the BNE website.

Action #4: Implement a Land Bank program in declining neighborhoods

The Town of Cheektowaga has already begun efforts to purchase tax delinquent residential properties in the Town that are being auctioned off by Erie County. As of June 2009 the Town owns 16 such properties, of which 12 are already vacant or have houses that are set for demolition, and four are being rehabilitated for sale back to the private market. This ad hoc effort is already effectively serving as a land bank, though there is not presently a strategic plan for acquisition and disposition. The Town should develop such a plan, so that acquisitions are not random, but contribute to redevelopment goals. Following the reorganization of CEDC (see Action #2), the land bank program should be formalized and placed under control of CEDC, which can develop policies and priorities for land acquisitions and disposals. This will set the stage for potential further acquisitions and dispositions, if desired. The Town's land banking efforts should also be coordinated with the countywide Distressed Properties Task Force and the land bank program in the City of Buffalo.

Action #5: Work proactively with owners to redevelop key commercial/industrial sites

In preparing the property database (see Action #3), the Town should take special care to identify large, visible sites that are vacant, underutilized, or otherwise blighted. From this starting point the Town can then actively engage property owners to formulate mutually beneficial redevelopment plans.

A key component of this action is to take a leading role with the Erie County IDA. As the largest municipality in Erie County that lacks its own Industrial Development Authority Cheektowaga has the most to gain from a productive partnership with ECIDA. Cheektowaga's Town Supervisor holds a



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

permanent seat on the IDA board and the Town's voice was crucial in getting ECIDA to adopt its new Adaptive Reuse Strategy. This policy gives priority to commercial and industrial properties located in built-out areas that are:

- more than 20 years old;
- vacant or underutilized for 3+ years;
- generating less than 50% of the average market rent for its property class;
- unable to garner adequate redevelopment financing;
- supported for redevelopment by the local government.

Other "traditional" ECIDA programs for tax abatement, Foreign Trade Zone, and infrastructure development also apply for eligible developments in Cheektowaga, and should be actively considered in redevelopment activities.

Action #6: Advocate for Airport Corridor transit line

The proposed reuse of the abandoned rail corridor running from downtown Buffalo to Buffalo-Niagara International Airport as a light rail line would have significant impacts on the Town of Cheektowaga. Current plans put forth by Citizens Regional Transit Corporation envision five transit stops along the line within the Town limits (Airport, Dick Rd, Union/George Urban, Walden Galleria, Harlem/Walden) and a sixth just over the city line at Walden Village. The marketability of these areas stands to benefit greatly from the proposed line, and the Town should continue to take an active role in promoting the line, preferably in concert with the City of Buffalo. The feasibility of this line is currently being studied by NFTA, with results expected sometime by the end of 2009. Should NFTA find it to be feasible, Cheektowaga will need to stay aggressive about finding funds for the project, as well as to actively plan for appropriate land uses around future stations.

Action #7: Develop branding treatment for Town of Cheektowaga

An early action regardless of the model pursued must be to begin the process of building a brand identity for Cheektowaga's economic development and tourism promotion efforts. This effort must be completed through an open process that takes an honest look at the community's strengths and weaknesses to ensure that the results are both appropriate and believable. At a minimum Cheektowaga needs to develop a logo, marketing tagline(s) and uniform style guide. If additional resources are available it could encompass a full branding and marketing plan.

C. Desirable Actions (Next Steps)

These actions are all important for supporting the economic development vision, but will require additional funding and/or manpower to complete, so are somewhat less critical than the essential actions.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Action #1: Convene regular economic development roundtables

A potentially effective means of combating lingering negative perceptions about the Town of Cheektowaga's business climate would be to engage in proactive dialogues with economic development stakeholders. These roundtable discussions, which would be organized by the Economic Development Committee or the CEDC (depending on the model chosen) should focus on current economic/business topics of concern to businesses, developers, educational institutions, brokers, investors, neighborhood groups, and other stakeholders. To maintain visibility at least two such roundtables should be held each year, and the Town should work with participants to select topics, speakers, and venues.

Action #2: Develop promotional materials and share with regional marketing groups

Cheektowaga's interests are served by a variety of regional organizations that promote aspects of economic development to the world (BNE, Buffalo-Niagara CVB, ECIDA, Empire State Development, etc.), but these organizations are obligated to market the entire region, and not individual Towns. That said, these organizations do offer their audiences access to promotional materials about industrial development, business incentives, convention activity, tourism, and available sites for municipalities. In order to stay on a level field with other communities in the region Cheektowaga will need to develop its own print and web materials, and then make sure to get them in the hands of regional groups that can disseminate materials to wider audiences.

Action #3: Regularly revisit commercial and industrial zoning designations

The Town of Cheektowaga is increasingly challenged by large, persistently vacant retail, commercial and industrial buildings. Rather than waiting for the next comprehensive planning process to reassess the appropriateness of zoning for such properties, the Economic Development Committee (or CEDC) should regularly coordinate with the Building Department and the Planning Board to determine if the redevelopment potential of such properties could be aided by zoning changes. This action is also closely related to the Adaptive Reuse program described in Action #5.

Action #4: Market Cheektowaga beyond the region as a residential haven

Even within a region with a very affordable housing stock, Cheektowaga stands out as a suburban community of stable neighborhoods with particularly affordable housing. The 2007 CNNMoney.com report on 25 Towns "where homes are affordable" cited Cheektowaga as a place with "hundreds of multi-dwelling units that go for \$90,000 and under as well as an amazing array of single-family houses priced below \$75,000." Considering that the average home price in CNN Money's Top 100 places to live for the same year was \$359,000, compared with Cheektowaga's \$88,000, the Town clearly has a leg up on suburban areas in larger cities in the northeast (see Figure 2).

Consider the average home prices from the same survey in similar moderate income, first-ring suburbs in the Northeast (Table 1):



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Table 1 - Housing Affordability and Personal Crime in First-Ring Suburbs in Northeast US
(Sorted by Price/Income Ratio)**

Community	Metro Area	Median Family Income	Average Home Price	Price/Income Ratio	Personal Crime Rate Per 1,000 Population
Dormont, PA	Pittsburgh	\$58,667	\$95,092	1.62	7
Cheektowaga, NY	Buffalo	\$53,039	\$88,239	1.66	3
Greece, NY	Rochester	\$62,537	\$119,499	1.91	4
Lakewood, OH	Cleveland	\$60,319	\$137,362	2.28	2
Dearborn, MI	Detroit	\$60,947	\$151,252	2.48	6
New Carrollton, MD	Washington	\$65,605	\$251,807	3.84	8
Arbutus, MD	Baltimore	\$62,644	\$243,538	3.89	7
Berwyn, IL	Chicago	\$59,979	\$243,627	4.06	3
Conshohocken, PA	Philadelphia	\$54,559	\$265,603	4.87	3
Malden, MA	Boston	\$62,852	\$326,929	5.20	4

Source: CNNMoney.com, 2007 Best Places to Live Survey

Most of these communities have substantially higher ratios of home prices to incomes than does Cheektowaga. The sample communities in the Boston (Malden) and Philadelphia (Conshohocken) areas have home prices that are three times higher relative to income than does Cheektowaga. The only community in the sample with a comparable affordability ratio (Dormont, PA), has a personal crime rate more than double that of Cheektowaga's.

Given these statistics, it seems clear that Cheektowaga could be a very appealing place to live for young families currently struggling to find a safe, affordable place to live in other metropolitan areas. Such families do not have the historic prejudices that likely keep longtime Buffalo-area residents from seeking Cheektowaga as a place to live and raise families. The Town should therefore formulate a strategy for reaching such families as part of its marketing efforts.

Action #5: Prepare and update research on economic development topics

It is common practice for local development offices, corporations and IDAs to produce regular updates of local demographic, housing, labor force, employment, and wages statistics and post them on their websites. Some agencies conduct further targeted research such as business surveys, cluster analyses, and economic outlook reports. While the local office of the Federal Reserve Bank creates some of this research for the greater metropolitan area, Cheektowaga could provide more targeted reports about the Town's conditions. Cheektowaga can choose which types of research to conduct as



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

it goes forward, but current “snapshot” information on economic indicators will definitely be needed at a minimum. This action will require some sort of professional support, though not necessarily full-time, in-house staff. Research reports could be undertaken under the present structure by the Economic Development Coordinator on a consulting basis, or could even be completed as independent research or internship projects by college students from programs such as the UB Urban and Regional Planning program or Buffalo State College’s Geography and Planning Department.

D. Intensive Actions (Potential Future Steps)

These actions represent potentially high-impact initiatives that will require significant investments of staff time and/or public resources, and therefore can only realistically be undertaken by a more aggressive economic development program.

Action #1: Actively acquire and redevelop priority properties via CEDC

A key function of economic development corporations in many communities is the acquisition and preparation for redevelopment of priority properties for which the risks and/or costs to private developers are prohibitively high. The Town will have already identified key sites and tried to work with owners to pursue redevelopment (see Action #5), so this action will only be needed if that path does not work. Though the scope of such a program depends on the ability of the community to capitalize a fund to acquire properties, as well as the willingness of the CEDC board to take on risky projects, the Town has already taken steps in this direction with its acquisition of vacant homes. Establishing a Land Bank (see Action #4) would further move Cheektowaga in this direction.

CEDC should be able to recover at least some of its investments through the ultimate sale/ground lease of the sites it acquires, and the Town will benefit in the long run by returning vacant or underutilized properties to active, taxpaying uses.

Action #2: Partner with UB on technology transfer

The University at Buffalo, located just a short drive from Cheektowaga, is the flagship research institution of the SUNY system, spending \$200 million per year on R&D activities. UB operates a technology incubator at the Baird Research Park in Amherst, and this program has produced 45 surviving separate companies since 1988. Though most of these firms have historically gone on to locate in commercial or industrial space near the UB North Campus in Amherst, Cheektowaga’s close location and lower rents should make it a desirable location. The Town should therefore pursue a relationship with UB’s Office of Science, Technology Transfer and Economic Outreach (STOR) to explore such opportunities.

Action #3: Establish a program to address underutilized properties

Given the presence of many very old industrial and commercial sites in Cheektowaga, it is likely that many such sites contain suspected environmental hazards that may hinder redevelopment. While



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

environmental hazards are typically associated with heavy industry, such hazards can be as simple as leaking underground storage tanks left over from old gas stations or contaminated soil from dry cleaning chemicals.

New York State's mechanism for helping communities addressing these hazards is its Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) program. This program invites municipalities to designate a specific geographic area that contains sites with known or suspected environmental issues that may hinder their redevelopment. Selected BOAs can then receive state funding support for up to 90 percent of the cost of documenting hazards and development of remediation plans. Privately owned sites within the BOA are eligible for enhanced participation in state remediation programs through the DEC. BOAs designated in other communities have run the gamut of uses, from vacant heavy industry sites in New York City to small neighborhood cleanup projects in Albany to vacant retail sites along Sheridan Drive in Amherst.

Action #4: Develop "We Speak Canadian" marketing program

The Buffalo-Niagara region has placed increasing emphasis in recent years on positioning itself as the central hub of the so-called "Tor-Buff-Chester" region, an international megalopolis of eight million, stretching along the shores of Lake Ontario from Toronto to Rochester. Noted "creative economy" guru Richard Florida, who once lived in Buffalo and is now a resident of Toronto has gone further, asserting that the region really stretches all the way around Lake Ontario, connecting Waterloo, Ontario and Montreal, including a population of 22 million.

Within this context, Buffalo Niagara Enterprise (BNE), the region's international marketing entity, has built a potent campaign around attracting Canadian industries and enterprises to the Buffalo area, with some success. BNE touts the area as offering a US address in very close proximity, a similar culture, a very low cost of living relative to both Toronto and larger US cities and a track record of professional expertise in cross-border trade.

As the home to the region's leading transportation hub (BNIA) and shopping destination (Walden Galleria), Cheektowaga is well positioned to attract interest from Canadian companies and investors. The Town further benefits from the heavy usage of those two facilities by individual visitors from Southern Ontario. Perhaps more so than any other community in Western New York, Cheektowaga could plausibly assert the tongue-in-cheek ability to "speak Canadian," and design a marketing program around this theme.

Action #5: Act to selectively reduce density in oldest residential neighborhoods

Cheektowaga's unique name, meaning "place of the crabapple tree" provides a compelling metaphor for defining how the Town should approach revitalization in its oldest residential neighborhoods. Like a mature tree, these neighborhoods have ceased to grow, but still require ongoing pruning of dying



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

branches to maintain their overall health. In some of Cheektowaga's older individual neighborhoods, there has been a decrease in property values, and increase in public spending on maintenance and public safety. The result has been to drag down the Town's image, thus harming its overall vitality. In other words, it would benefit Cheektowaga to effectively manage decline in older neighborhoods rather than trying to save every troubled property.

The idea of managing population decline is not new—it has been done effectively in many larger cities (including Buffalo) where population has dropped substantially from peak levels. Now that Cheektowaga's population is stabilizing (if not declining), it must take an honest look at its older residential and commercial areas in light of today's economic and real estate market realities. The unfortunate fact is that small, drafty houses in need of repairs on tiny lots packed tightly together are not attractive to most prospective homebuyers. Similarly, tiny storefronts with no off-street parking on busy streets cannot compete when nearby shopping centers have ample vacant space available at bargain basement rents. These commercial businesses depended on foot traffic from nearby neighborhoods that no longer exists.

Knowing these truths, revitalizing some of Cheektowaga's oldest neighborhoods may require some "pruning" of dilapidated houses and commercial buildings on tiny lots for which renovations would cost as much or more than their resulting market values. The suggested approach to this problem is to continue to acquire abandoned properties through the Land Bank program (see Action #4), and then demolish these buildings. This program could be at least partially funded by selling the vacated lots to abutting property owners—residents would get larger yards, and commercial businesses would get space for off-street parking. In both cases, the result would be for the abutting properties to become more valuable, both from having additional land and from the removal of blighted buildings.

This approach to revitalization also relates directly to the goals and objectives that concern calibrations to zoning (see Action #10), as these efforts will depend heavily on demographic trends and the effective management of decline in struggling neighborhoods.

5.4 Community Development

The following Community Development recommendations are derived from the Town's Consolidated Plan, prepared with the Towns of Amherst and Tonawanda as a requirement for participation with HUD funding programs. The format of that document is prescribed by HUD, and therefore recommendations are classified as "High", "Medium" or "Low" priority. In addition to the specific recommendations included below, all recommendations in the Consolidated Plan document pertaining to the Town of Cheektowaga are incorporated here by reference. Under HUD restrictions, all community development activities must benefit eligible clientele, such as low- to



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

moderate-income residents or specific targeted classes of people (e.g. elderly or persons with disabilities). Area-wide activities are permitted if the area has a large proportion of eligible low-income residents. These regulations affect where CDBG funds can be spent. Since the following recommendations are derived from the HUD plan, they are targeted to eligible areas. However, many of the recommended actions would also benefit other areas of the Town. The following recommendations begin with the specific action items included in the Community Development planning document; but they also include more generalized recommendations associated with these action items that apply more generally for the town.

A. Essential - High Priority Actions (First Steps)

The following activities have been classified as High Priority Actions in the Town's Community Development Plan:

Action #1: Actively enforce building code standards

The Town of Cheektowaga is committed to maintaining the quality of the building stock in the Town. The Town will conduct periodic code enforcement inspections, particularly in older neighborhoods and areas with high proportions of rental housing, to identify and address problem properties before they become a blighting influence. Targeted areas include Walden, Cedargrove Heights, and other low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. The Town should continue to aggressively address problem properties and maintain high standards for building code enforcement.

Action #2: Maintain the quality of Town's parks and recreation facilities

The Town has an extensive park and recreation system that exerts a positive impact on the quality of life of area residents, assists in supporting neighborhood stability and supports higher property values. The Town will continue to make investments in this park system. Specific improvements planned by the town include handicap accessibility improvements (new wheelchair lift) at the Alexander Community Center. The Town should continue to make regular improvements at its parks and recreation facilities.

Action #3: Maintain the quality of the Town's infrastructure

Investment in public infrastructure helps promote private sector investment and prevent deterioration of neighborhoods. The Town of Cheektowaga will invest in ADA-compliant ramps at intersections and replace hazardous sidewalks in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. Other proposed public improvements include new storm drainage, sanitary sewer manholes, road reconstruction and related improvements to the Cedargrove neighborhood. The Town should continue to invest in public infrastructure, particularly in problem neighborhoods, to help keep them healthy, attractive and safe. High priority items are matters of health and safety, followed by investments that would have the greatest positive impact on the image and quality of life of the neighborhood.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Action#4: Provide transportation services for Senior Citizens

Given the aging population, the Town anticipates increasing demand for transportation services for Seniors. Specific actions include transportation services through the purchase of a new senior van, and coordination with the Village of Depew for transportation services. The Town should continually monitor transportation needs and identify creative ways to meet this growing need.

Action#5: Promote crime prevention and public safety activities

The Cheektowaga Police Department offers the full benefits of police protection in eligible neighborhoods. Ensuring safe neighborhoods and deterring crime will help keep a high quality of life in the Town. The Town's community policing program operates in Walden Avenue, Pine Hill and Cedargrove Heights neighborhoods. Police officers patrol on foot and bike during summer months, helping to foster safety and stronger relationships and trust between residents and officers. The Town should continue to keep a strong focus on crime prevention and public safety, expanding community policing strategies as necessary.

Action#6: Promote Fair Housing Activities

The Town of Cheektowaga has established a range of fair housing activities intended to improve the Town's housing stock and support housing needs of low- to moderate-income residents. These include housing unit rehabilitation activities for both rental and owner-occupied properties, addressing substandard housing units through rehabilitation or demolition; and housing counseling and assistance for low- to moderate-income persons. The Town also provides a weatherization assistance program to help lower housing costs for heating. The Town should continue to monitor local housing needs and develop appropriate programs to address problems.

Action#7: Invest in Neighborhood Business District Development

One of the goals of the Consolidated Plan is support of economic development activities in support of a number of benefits. Business development provides economic stability and employment opportunities for residents, including targeted income groups. Retention of local businesses supports the local tax base and improves the economic diversity of the Town. Local Business Districts also contribute greatly to the economic vitality of neighborhoods and quality of life for residents. Cheektowaga supports neighborhood business district revitalization, focusing currently on Walden Avenue and Genesee Street west of Harlem Road, the Airport Plaza and the former Garden village Plaza at Union and French Roads. More specific recommendations for these areas are provided in the next section on neighborhood revitalization.

Action#8: Provide Microenterprise Support

The Town of Cheektowaga, through the Cheektowaga Economic Development Corporation, will continue to offer loans to businesses that provide jobs for low- to moderate-income residents.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Eligible businesses include manufacturing, warehousing, and wholesale distribution. Retail or service businesses locating in one of three target areas (west of Harlem Road; Genesee Street between Harlem Road and the Thruway; or William Street between Harlem Road and the Thruway underpass) are also eligible for support. The Town should continue to encourage small business development and support local entrepreneurial activities.

B. Desirable - Medium Priority Actions (Next Steps)

The following activities have been assigned a “Medium” priority in the Town’s Community Development plan.

- ***Action#1: Address dilapidated properties.***

The Town proposes targeted acquisition and disposition of dilapidated properties on a limited scale. Activities, depending on the circumstances, may include demolition or renovation. This option is generally undertaken on a “spot” basis, addressing a specific blighting property. The Town works with a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) to accomplish this activity. The Town should continue to work closely with CHDOs to identify blighting properties and develop an appropriate strategy for addressing the problem, whether through acquisition, and demolition, renovation or other means.

- ***Action#2: Provide services for youth.***

Youth services help deter youth crime, and can have a positive influence on local residents. Proposed youth services include assistance for homeless or runaway youth, after-school programs and summer day camp opportunities for eligible youth. The youth are the future of the Town, and Cheektowaga should continue to provide appropriate services for all youth, focusing particularly on high-risk individuals.

- ***Action#3: Improve Neighborhood Facilities.***

As noted above in the high priority items, investment in public infrastructure helps promote private sector investment and prevent deterioration of neighborhoods. In addition to the sidewalks and ramps classified as a higher priority, the Town of Cheektowaga will also invest in new storm drainage, sanitary sewer manholes, road reconstruction and related improvements to the Cedargrove neighborhood. While the higher priority investments are listed above, the Town should address all infrastructure and facility needs as funds become available.

C. Intensive - Low Priority Actions (Future Steps)

Two activities were assigned a low priority in the Town’s Community Development Plan. These are the historic preservation of non-residential property, and providing economic development technical assistance. No specific activities in either of these areas are currently proposed.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

5.5 Neighborhood Revitalization

Each Neighborhood Revitalization Study Area, as discussed in Section 4.5, can benefit from some short, medium and long-term thinking. The ideas presented here are for the Town to consider in leading the different areas of Cheektowaga toward a more connected and more livable future, as valuable places to live, work and play.

Recommended Actions

Transit Ready – Walden/Harlem Road Area

The Walden/Harlem Road study area consists of a ½-mile radius pedestrian shed – an area equivalent to about 500 acres. This area includes a wide variety of land uses and great potential for both new and re-development. This planning study is intended to illustrate the possibilities of future change – short and long term – and the boundaries are, therefore, loose. It is expected that the types of ideas and recommendations that appear here are to continue throughout the Town of Cheektowaga, rather than ending at a specific property boundary.

It is also vital to consider the Walden/Harlem Road area in light of its past as a first-ring suburb and as a revitalized mixed-use center, whether or not additional transit options (light rail, bus rapid transit, e.g.) are imminent. It is important for the Town and the Comprehensive Plan to recognize that planning recommendations should include, rather than preclude, the option of transportation choice. Several factors, however, exist today that prevent this area from reaching its value potential. The following pages explore these factors and offer ways to correct or repair them through future public and/or private investment.

A. Essential (First Steps)

Action #1: Adopt a Transect-Based Map and Special Requirements Plan

A Transect-based Map and Special Requirements Plan can serve to express the most important issues and concerns to potential developers, while still providing wide latitude for specific design. These two maps (used together) can help provide developers and residents with a clear understanding the desired future form and character of the area.

Elements which are included in a Transect Map:

- **Building Types** – permitted types, such as single-family house, townhouse, apartment building or commercial building. A range is provided for each zone of the transect.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- **Frontage** – each building meets the street in a different way. In this particular area – intended to be more urban than rural, buildings shape the public realm and are generally located closer to the sidewalk, providing a welcome edge to pedestrians.
- **Commercial Activity** – described as intense, scattered, or low. The amount of commercial activity on a street or in a neighborhood gives it a particular character.
- **Pedestrian Activity** – described as high or low. The pedestrian activity factor is intended to reflect the *quantity* of expected foot traffic, not the *quality*. In a high pedestrian activity area, wider sidewalks and accommodations for slower traffic provide a better environment for the expected levels of foot traffic in a retail-intense area. In low pedestrian activity areas, sidewalks may be narrower and storefronts (vs. other frontage types) may be less frequent or non-existent. A small scale neighborhood of single-family houses, for example, would have a low pedestrian activity quotient.
- **Building Height** – expressed as a range in numbers of occupiable floors. The building heights proposed here provide a good proportion of street width to building height and deliver a character that is in keeping with intended development intensity. These ranges are not intended to be absolute, but will provide the type of human environment conducive to a more vibrant experience in each of the transect zones.
- **Public Space** – expressed in terms of open space type. All places are expected to deliver some form of quality open space. New development and redevelopment scenarios should provide open space to be added to the Town’s public realm. The Public Space types found in each transect zone are intended to parallel the appropriate level of intensity. Plazas and high quality streetscape are more appropriate in Town centers, while passive parks and preserves are more appropriate for neighborhood edges.

The Transit-Ready Study Area can be divided into three Transect Zones and one Special District (see Table 2). The areas immediately adjacent to the intersection of Walden and Harlem represent a sector of Cheektowaga that could support intense redevelopment scenarios. Within a ten-minute walk of the intersection of Walden and Harlem, there are a number of elements that could help inspire economic development. These include:

- Cheektowaga Town Park – a large, active community park
- St. Joseph’s Hospital
- Thruway Plaza



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 2

Transit-Ready	T3 Zone (Sub-Urban)	T4 Zone (General Urban)	T5 Zone (Urban Center)	SD Zone (Special District)
General Character	Predominantly residential fabric. Neighborhoods in this zone are marked by single family homes, small lots, tree lined narrow streets, and access to open spaces and public facilities.	Low to moderate mixed-use. This zone is marked by ground floor retail along major thoroughfares.	Higher-density mixed-use with retail space at the ground floor.	Low-density, limited mixed-use. SD is intended to provide employment mixed-use, including manufacturing, distribution and warehousing. SD does not permit residential uses to minimize land-use conflicts.
Building Types	A variety of lot sizes permit single-family and townhouses.	A variety of building types are permitted - including single-family houses, townhouses, and small-scaled apartment buildings.	A variety of building types are permitted including apartment buildings, large retail and commercial buildings.	Building types which accommodate manufacturing and/or industrial uses are permitted.
Frontage	Front setbacks accommodate front yards and porches.	No setbacks required - buildings may be built immediately behind public sidewalk.	No setbacks required - buildings may be built immediately behind public sidewalk.	No setbacks required.
Commercial Activity	Low	Moderate	High	Low (Distribution/Manufacturing)
Pedestrian Activity	Low	Moderate	High	Low
Building Height	2- to 3-story	2- to 4-story	2- to 4-story with occasional 6 story building permitted	1- to 2-story
Public Space	Parks and Playgrounds	Enhanced Streetscape and Plazas	Plazas, Squares and Medians	Buffers and Landscaped Corridors



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Action #2: Designate key Town-owned parcels as Civic Reserves

Harlem and Walden is a key intersection for Western Cheektowaga. It handles a great deal of traffic due to its proximity to the Galleria, Interstate 90 (the New York State Thruway), and therefore enjoys extremely high visibility. It is also the point at which the vacated rail right-of-way could become a future transit stop. All these things combined give this location an opportunity to become a new gateway to Cheektowaga.

Gateway sites are excellent opportunities to provide space for public infrastructure – such as civic buildings and spaces. The Town should consider this area for future civic or cultural use. Land which is controlled by or could easily be controlled by the Town should be considered to be designated immediately as a civic reserve for future public (vertical) infrastructure.

B. Desirable Actions (Next Steps)

Action #1: Improve mobility and access for pedestrians to the Town Park and Thruway Plaza

Current infrastructure accommodates little more than vehicular circulation around this part of Town. Connections from open space to neighborhoods and from neighborhoods to shopping and commercial areas need to be improved to provide pedestrians with safe and easy access to these important centers of activity. When road improvements occur, equitable design attention must be given to safe and accommodating sidewalks, safe and easy pedestrian crossings of major roads, and road sharing with bicycles.

Action #2: Provide additional locations for new public open space

As development and investment in Cheektowaga increase, it will be important to balance the built environment with additional places for people – new development should be permitted as long as they deliver an improved public realm – including streets, plazas, squares and parks. The Development Guiding Plan provides potential locations for new open spaces – for example, at a redeveloped thruway plaza – that will balance density with exceptional pedestrian environments.

A comprehensive open space plan, as an extension of the Town's Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment, could also begin to establish the Town's expectations from future development projects and ultimately provide better connections from open space to open space.

C. Intensive Actions (Potential Future Steps)

Action #1: Focus on ensuring that transit options are pursued and run along existing corridor

The Town of Cheektowaga should continue to be involved in efforts to extend transit connections from Downtown Buffalo to the Airport. This includes enhanced rubber-tired (bus) service, as well as supporting efforts for light rail or bus rapid transit along the available transit corridor.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The existence of a transit corridor through Cheektowaga will greatly improve the economy of the Town and provide residents of Cheektowaga with better access and more transportation choices. Additionally, new transportation options will improve the outlook for development and be considered a valuable positive amenity by the development community in general.

Corridor – French Road Area

This area consists of a three-mile long corridor and the areas immediately adjacent to French Road. The Study Area will also consider several mixed-use nodes at different scales – at Union Road, Transit Road, and at Borden, Brentwood and Towers Boulevard. This planning study is intended to illustrate the possibilities of future change – short and long term – and the boundaries are therefore loose. It is expected that the ideas and recommendations that appear here are to continue throughout the Town of Cheektowaga, rather than ending at a specific property boundary.

Unlike the Transit-Ready and Neighborhood Center Study Areas, the Corridor provides few opportunities for major, large-scale projects – few large parcels exist and it is important to the Town to keep this area's scale in a moderate range. Therefore, the scale of recommendations must be in keeping with current character – striving for neighborhood and residential stability, more and better services, a more distinct gateway into Cheektowaga, increased mobility and better access to open space. The following pages explore the opportunities for change along the French Road Corridor.

A. Essential (First Steps)

Action #1: Adopt Transect-Based Map and Special Requirements Plan

The French Road Corridor can be divided into three Transect Zones and one Special District (see Table 3). The Corridor can be characterized as a long road with automobile-oriented centers at each end – Transit Road to the east and Union Road to the west - and two minor, neighborhood-oriented centers, at Brentwood Drive and Borden Road. The Corridor serves as a protective edge between the traffic moving east and west and the neighborhoods immediately behind the right-of-way. The application of a Transect-based map to assist in directing future growth is important to:

- Establish French Road as a gateway to Cheektowaga
- Protect the rural character of French Road and the access roads to the neighborhoods
- Provide targeted locations for the limited expansion of commercial use to serve the adjacent neighborhoods
- Re-establish the Union Road and Transit Road intersections as important commercial centers that better serve the region while improving access from the adjacent neighborhoods
- Improve connections from neighborhoods to important open spaces – large and small



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 3

Corridor	T3 Zone (Sub-Urban)	T4 Zone (General Urban)	T5 Zone (Urban Center)	SD Zone (Special District)
General Character	Predominantly residential fabric. Neighborhoods in this zone are marked by single family homes, moderate to large lots, tree lined narrow streets, and access to open spaces and public facilities.	Low to moderate mixed-use. This zone is marked by ground floor retail along major thoroughfares and crossroads.	Higher-density mixed-use with retail space at the ground floor.	Low-density, limited mixed-use. SD is intended to provide employment mixed-use, including manufacturing, distribution and warehousing. SD does not permit residential uses to minimize land-use conflicts.
Building Types	Predominantly single family houses with opportunities for townhouses.	A variety of building types are permitted - including townhouses, live-work units, and small-scaled apartment buildings.	A variety of building types are permitted including apartment buildings, large retail and commercial buildings.	Building types which accommodate manufacturing and/or industrial uses are permitted.
Frontage	Deep front setbacks accommodate front yards and porches.	No setbacks required - buildings may be built immediately behind public sidewalk.	No setbacks required - buildings may be built immediately behind public sidewalk.	No setbacks required.
Commercial Activity	Low	Moderate	High	Low (Distribution/Manufacturing)
Pedestrian Activity	Low	Moderate	High	Low
Building Height	1- to 2-story	2- to 3-story	2- to 4-story	1- to 2-story
Public Space	Parks and Playgrounds	Enhanced Streetscape and Plazas	Plazas, Squares and Medians	Buffers and Landscaped Corridors



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

B. Desirable Actions (Next Steps)

Action #1: Improve visibility of and access to Town open spaces

One of the best amenities of life in Cheektowaga is its abundance of open spaces – parks, rural reserves and waterways. However, often these amenities are not easy to reach or find. A plan to increase the visibility of these spaces and allow for easier access from residential areas is important to add value to the community.

It is important to note that such a strategy should balance access and environmental impacts. Therefore, a *protective* strategy that raises awareness of the system of open spaces, provides for better access at key locations and focuses on stewardship is superior to an *expansion* strategy that focuses on more parking lots and/or encourages usage that is out of sync with the natural systems.

Finding appropriate location points to enter and access open spaces and a policy which encourages the knitting together of the system are 2 key initiatives which could be enacted by the Town early in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Action #2: Improve pedestrian conditions along and crossing French Road from neighborhood to neighborhood

French Road could benefit from at least 2 infrastructure adjustments:

- **Narrower lane widths** could serve to slow traffic and make crossing on foot easier and safer, *without* compromising vehicle capacity. In addition, narrower lane widths may provide opportunities to re-use existing right-of-way width for bicycle lane(s) and/or improved natural drainage and storm water control/storage.
- **Enhanced pedestrian crossings** at key intersections. The south side of French Road has suffered from being disconnected from park access primarily due to the design of the rural road. Crosswalks, especially at locations that have excellent visibility and occur at appropriate locations where traffic would expect them are keys to making crossings safe.

Action #3: Protect rural character while improving gateway from the south at Union Road

French Road currently has a rural character – no curb and gutter, deep setbacks, view corridors, etc., and this character gives it an inherent value. Improvements (which are needed to improve traffic calming and pedestrian access, among other things) should consider the character of the road as important to preserve.

Pedestrian crossings, therefore, should happen at proper locations where painted stripes and minimal signage can achieve the objective of crossing safely. Creating a crossing that relies on



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

flashing signals, heavy signage and changes to the road surface may achieve a similar result but at the cost of changing the rural character and should be avoided if possible.

C. Intensive Actions (Potential Future Steps)

Action #1: Enhance Southern Gateway

Gateway sites are excellent opportunities to provide space for public infrastructure – such as civic buildings and spaces. The Town should consider this area for future civic or cultural use. Land which is controlled by or could easily be controlled by the Town should be considered to be designated immediately as a civic reserve for future public (vertical) infrastructure.

Short of building sites, the Town should consider an appropriate marker welcoming people to Town. Signage and monummentation should be appropriately sized, visible and, above all, require low to no maintenance

Action #2: Proactively plan for the Shopping Center redevelopment at Union and French Roads

The site at the former (Shopping center name) is currently vacant and presents a bad image of the Town as one enters Cheektowaga from the south along Union Road. With such an important site being left vacant, it may be appropriate for the Town to engage in discussions with owners in order to help find a solution that allows for appropriate re-development and a situation that benefits the owners and the Town as a proper welcome to Cheektowaga.

Meetings with owners, help from professionals and a clear idea of what both parties are after, may help catalyze a sustainable and contributing new development at this important gateway site.

Neighborhood – Union Road/Genesee Street Area

This area consists of a ½ mile radius pedestrian shed – an area equivalent to about 500 acres. This area includes a wide variety of land uses and potential for upgraded streetscape considerations, reinvestment in existing shopping centers, a more comprehensive look at land use and compatibility and considerations for stabilizing otherwise transitional residential areas. This planning study is intended to illustrate the possibilities of future change – short and long term – and the boundaries are therefore loose. It is expected that the ideas and recommendations that appear here are to continue throughout the Town of Cheektowaga, rather than ending at a specific property boundary.

The area surrounding the intersection of Union Road and Genesee Road will provide excellent opportunities to consider several of Cheektowaga's unique issues. This area – a 500 acre Study Area centered at the Union and Genesee intersection – includes residential neighborhoods (mostly consisting of very small lots and yards, a shopping center, a variety of thoroughfare types from highway to neighborhood street, important heritage and historic sites, a hodgepodge of land uses and excellent



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

access to the Buffalo Airport. Just a 10-minute walk to the south, the Study Area also intersects the abandoned corridor considered as a future transit way. As in the Transit-Ready Study, these are the same ingredients that exist in highly-valued neighborhoods across the Country, but because of their condition, configuration and form, the area is prevented from being widely considered a great place to live. Unlike the Transit-Ready Study Area, however, the Neighborhood Center will most likely be transformed at a different scale – smaller and incremental investments in smaller land parcels, upgraded streetscape considerations and a potential “pruning” of some residential areas, will all be considered in the recommendations for this Area.

A. Essential (First Steps)

Action #1: Adopt Transect-Based Map and Special Requirements Plan

The Neighborhood Study Area can be divided into three Transect Zones and one Special District (see Table 4). The areas immediately adjacent to the intersection of Union and Genesee represent a sector of Cheektowaga that could support moderate redevelopment scenarios. Within a ten-minute walk of the intersection of Union and Genesee, there are a number of elements that could help inspire economic development. These include:

- Airport Plaza
- Neighborhood Mixed-use along Union Road between Genesee and Galleria
- Improved walkability and pedestrian character along Union Road

A significant amount of traffic filters through the area and the potential exists to reconsider the area as a thriving mixed use center that is within walking distance of future transportation modes such as rapid bus or light rail.

B. Desirable Actions (Next Steps)

Action #1: Protect and Celebrate significant cultural sites and buildings

The intersection of Union and Genesee is home to a wide variety of building types and uses and includes several significant cultural sites that demonstrate Cheektowaga’s heritage and diversity. These sites – places of worship, parks, etc. – are valuable in the sense that they reflect the Town’s values and character.

It is important to recognize these sites as part of the context of Cheektowaga. New development adjacent to these sites should be sensitive to their importance. For example, new building massing and height should be sensitive to existing cultural facilities. New streetscape improvements should ensure that access to these sites is improved rather than compromised.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 4

Neighborhood	T3 Zone (Sub-Urban)	T4 Zone (General Urban)	T5 Zone (Urban Center)	SD Zone (Special District)
General Character	Mixed-use, but predominantly residential fabric. This zone is marked by single family homes, small lots, tree lined narrow streets, and access to open spaces and public facilities.	Low to moderate mixed-use. This zone is marked by ground floor retail along Union Road.	Higher-density mixed-use with retail space at the ground floor.	
Building Types	A Variety of lot sizes permit single-family and townhouses.	Permitted building types include live-work units and small apartment buildings with ground floor commercial space.	A variety of building types are permitted including apartment buildings, large retail and commercial buildings.	
Frontage	Front setbacks accommodate front yards and porches.	No setbacks required - buildings may be built immediately behind public sidewalk.	No setbacks required - buildings may be built immediately behind public sidewalk.	
Commercial Activity	Low	Moderate	High	
Pedestrian Activity	Low	Moderate	High	
Building Height	1- to 2-story	2- to 4-story	2- to 4-story	
Public Space	Parks and Playgrounds	Enhanced Streetscape	Plazas, Squares and Medians	



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Action #2: Improve pedestrian conditions to reconsider Union Road as a neighborhood main street

Union Road has been transformed from a Main Street for most of its history to an automobile-oriented highway. While the infrastructure of the road may be difficult to change, the character of the road could be improved, perhaps with less difficulty, by considering changes to the following:

- **Building Types.** Buildings that have a taller ground floor suitable for retail or other commercial uses should be considered for the edges of Union Road. These types balance work and live options and also provide a nice transition from main thoroughfare to neighborhood – acting as a “protective crust” between the harshness of the highway and the fragility of the neighborhoods. Types such as “live work” units and “commercial under” apartment buildings are recommended for approval in this sector – and should be encouraged in redevelopment scenarios along Union Road.
- **Sidewalks.** Wider sidewalks that provide room for increased pedestrian traffic, outdoor seating (as for restaurants and cafes), street trees and other inviting furnishings and fixtures can transform the character of Union Road to comport with the Main Street ideal.
- **Frontage.** Allowing new buildings, such as “live-work” units or “commercial-under” apartment buildings to engage the sidewalk and be built immediately behind the sidewalk will provide a more intimate and pedestrian-friendly environment, in spite of the width of Union Road. An environment that is more conducive to neighborhood retail – storefronts, continuous retail, etc. – will also transform the corridor.

Action #3: Improve thoroughfare conditions to accommodate bicycles

Union Road could benefit as a north and south connector for bicycle travel through Cheektowaga. A bicycle lane in Union Road could help to accommodate other modes of transportation, and could help to calm traffic on Union Road. If a bicycle lane can be added to the travel way without increasing the right-of-way, then this objective could be realized earlier in the implementation phase of the Comprehensive Plan.

The proximity of this neighborhood to the future transit corridor makes it an ideal opportunity to add modes to the transportation system in Cheektowaga.

Action #4: Redevelopment opportunities at Genesee and Union should be focused on the creation of a neighborhood center

Airport Plaza and the other retail centers that surround Genesee and Union Road have historically provided this location with a neighborhood center. These areas have included tenants that support daily life within a few minutes walk or a short drive. The ability to meet daily needs in one’s own neighborhood is a hallmark of smart growth and provides value for residents choosing to live here.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Future development interventions should continue the legacy of Genesee and Union as a Neighborhood Center. This can be achieved by considering the following criteria:

- **Building Height.** New buildings in this area should continue to relate to a human scale. 2 and three story buildings should be the norm, with the ground floor (especially near the two principal roadways) being considered as a retail level. This will also ensure conformity with the surrounding context.
- **Pedestrian Environment.** New development should place buildings closer to public sidewalks, providing a more welcoming architectural elevation within easy reach of pedestrians.
- **Concentration.** Gaps in retail strips are problematic to the success of an area. Focused interventions will help ensure that there is a critical mass where people are expected to congregate. Future development should be compact and then be permitted to expand based on the success of that concentration.

The Vision for Neighborhood Revitalization

Each of the selected Neighborhood Study Areas was given a broad-brush overview that was focused on building form and type. This was done to illustrate how these areas might actually be transformed to achieve the “physical form of changes” that are promoted through the Comprehensive Plan.

A. Transit-Ready Walden/Harlem Road Area

In keeping with the guidelines developed for the, the following Concept Plans was developed (see Figure 2). Among its features:

- **An evolutionary plan for a Transit Plaza**
Over time, the large box retail for of development model, which is typically accompanied with the vast “sea” of surface parking, will become obsolete. This is especially true as public transit begins to drive up the value of development. The following conceptual drawing illustrates how re-development in the Walden and Harlem Road area could offer benefits, such as more retail space in the form of future linear retail buildings that frame parking. This development style can provide far more public benefit in the form of a new, large public space. The current drive aisles at the Thruway Plaza would be revitalized as proper streets. This would lend improvement to the pedestrian experience in this area and also provide an enhanced network of thoroughfares in this general vicinity.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 2 – Transit Ready Concept Plan





TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This conceptual design would improve connections to the uses in the vicinity of Dale Road, enhancing traffic flow and circulation. It also improves access to Walden and Harlem Road, enhancing public safety. The idea is to make better use of the area as a whole, create improved activity and take advantage of opportunities for public transit connections.

Figure 3 – Transit Plaza - Improved Connections



- **A new Mixed-use Development**

Large, undeveloped parcels near future transit connections are vital to consider for the next wave of development for the Walden Avenue – Harlem Road area. A scheme for the area west of Harlem Road promotes higher-density residential and office space close to the future transit corridor, as opposed to locating such uses immediately adjacent to the more fragile neighborhoods in the surrounding area. Visibility, access to transit and good roadway access make this scheme of mid-to-high density development reasonable to consider for this area of the Town (see Figure 4).



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 4 – Denser Mixed Use Development



- **Repair of the Walden Avenue Corridor**

Beyond Harlem Avenue (heading west toward the City of Buffalo), the condition of Walden Avenue has deteriorated from a pedestrian-scale mixed use Main Street to an area in transition. This area “floats” between the urban setting of the City to the west, and the expanse of retail and commercial uses to the east. The concept for the area west of Harlem Road is to repair the urban fabric of Walden Avenue, at the edge of the Town, to help transform this area from low-scale residential neighborhoods to a more vibrant mixed-use center, near a transit stop. Building types that fit with the historic character of Walden Avenue, including two-story storefronts and buildings that better shape the public realm are proposed for this area in an effort to retain and recreate the streetscape.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 5 – Improved Walden Avenue Corridor



B. Corridor - French Road Area

In keeping with the guidelines for the **Corridor - French Road Area**, the following concept plan was developed (see Figure 6). The important features for the French Road corridor area include:

- **A Re-developed Shopping Center**

The Garden Village shopping center has the potential to serve the needs of the southern neighborhoods of Cheektowaga and the upper reaches of the adjoining Town of West Seneca. This area marks the entry into the Town of Cheektowaga from the south. The concept plan for this area illustrates a revamped/renewed shopping center, at the corner of Union Road and French Road, to help service the daily needs of the community and provide a revitalized gateway entrance into the Town. Buildings in this area may remain back from the road, behind the surface parking area (until economic demand otherwise), but their design should be vastly improved to reflect a clear understanding that this development offers the first impression that residents and visitors receive as they pass through this area.

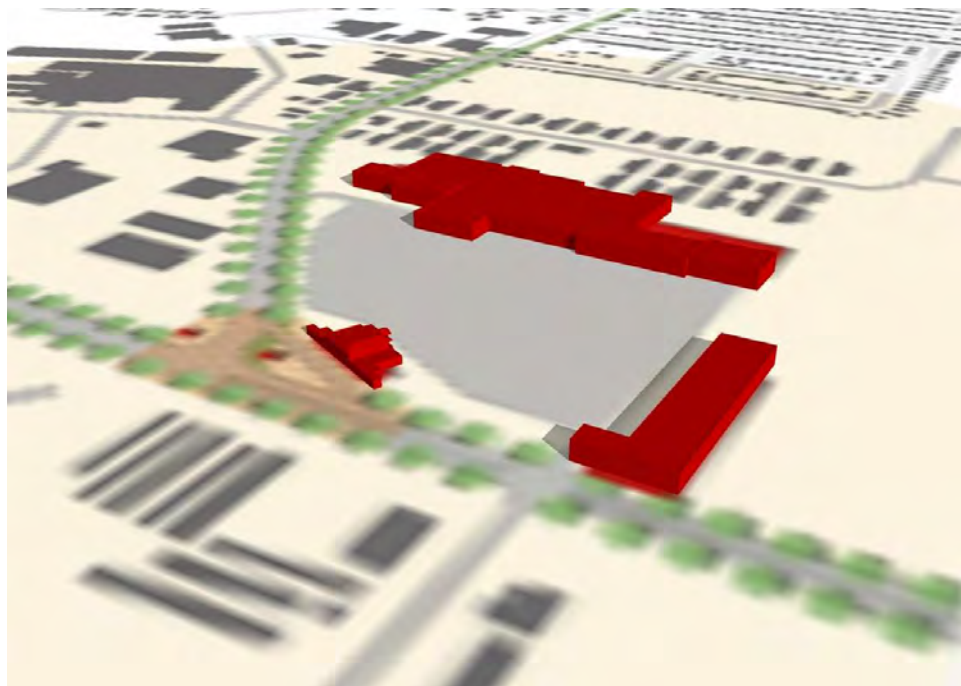


TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 6 – Corridor – French Road Concept Plan



Figure 7 – A Renewed Shopping Center





TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- **Improved crossroads at Borden Road**

The intersection of Borden Road and French Road is a classic example of an intersection that has been transformed to an automobile-dominated and pedestrian hostile environment. This intersection is marked with buildings pulled well away from the street, deteriorated corners and a less pleasant entrance way into the Town. As redevelopment opportunities occur at this intersection and in the surrounding area, building should be required to front along the roadway corridor in order to present an “improved face” for pedestrians and vehicular travelers. These design improvements are critical to framing and improving the visual quality of public realm in this area. The form and scale of development could also aid in revitalizing the area.

Figure 8 – Improved Crossroads



- **Creating green connections**

As a road with significant rural character, French Road has great possibilities for becoming a thoroughfare that can accommodate automobiles, pedestrians and bicyclists. However, it must undergo a character change to ensure that all modes of transportation are treated



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

equitably. Opportunities exist to create bike lanes, introduce entry points to Town parks and to retain a rural profile that helps move traffic at slower and safer speeds.

Figure 9 – Green Connections



C. Neighborhood – Union Road / Genesee Street Area

In keeping with the guidelines developed for the **Neighborhood Study Area**, the following concept plan was developed. Among its important features:

- **A Redesigned Airpark Plaza**

This conceptual plan shows a transformed Airpark Plaza designed to eventually move the area away from an automobile-oriented convenience center to a neighborhood center serving Main Street development. Buildings are shown moved up to the edge of Union Road, with parking is placed at the rear of the structures. Additionally, as property owners consider the benefits of joining forces, this area could come to support a more regional group of tenants, with additional parcels being used for parking (to the west). The opposite side of Union Road could also be revitalized and redeveloped, but this area is more



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

constrained by the parcel size and land ownership. Ultimately, buildings lining both sides of Union Road, north of Genesee could vastly improve the visual character and quality of this roadway, from highway to pedestrian friendly connector, and from pass by to destination.

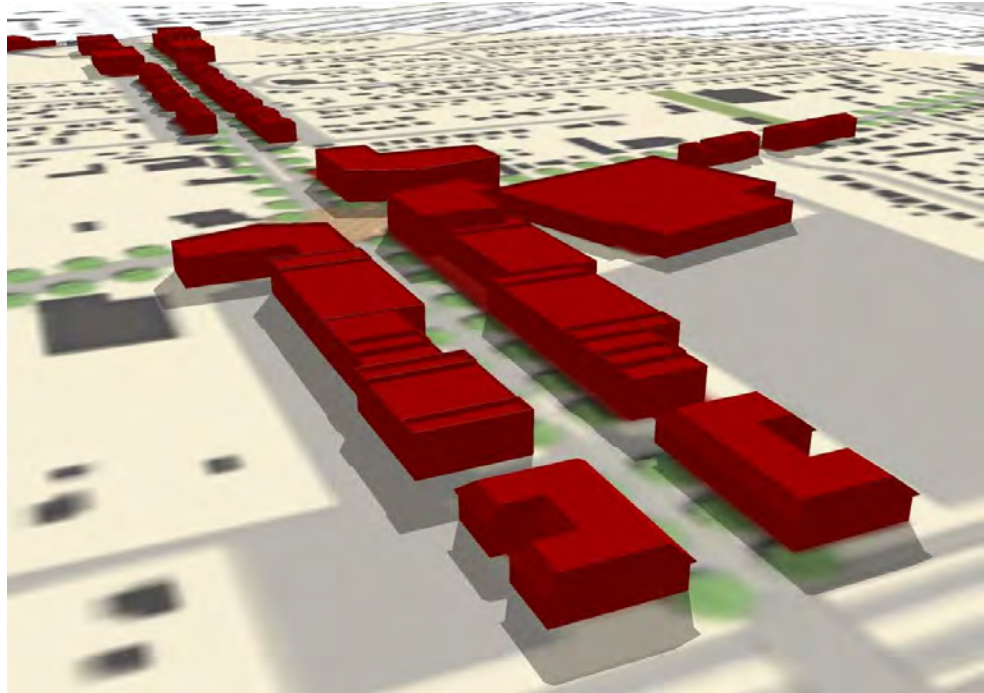
Figure 10 – Neighborhood Concept Plan





TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 11 – A Redesigned Airport Plaza

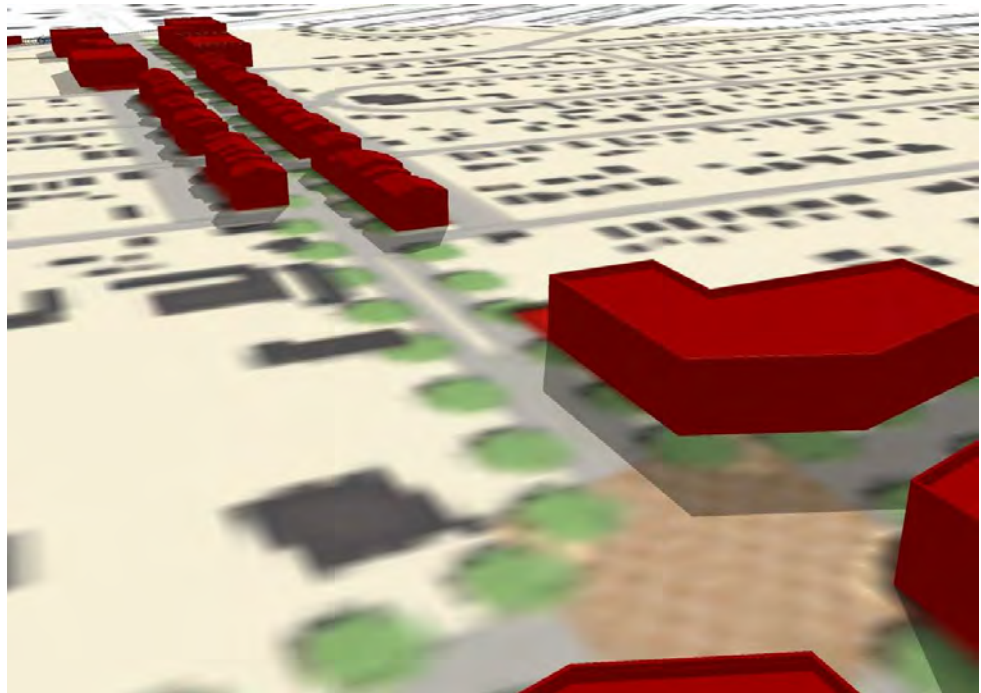


- **Repair of the Union Road corridor**

South of Genesee Street, the once-vibrant sidewalks of Union Road provided a welcoming pedestrian realm for shopping (an active neighborhood service area), neighborhood housing and access to a number of important cultural sites. Union Road always had an eclectic character, but it was *continuous*. Future repairs to the neighborhood fabric along Union Road should focus on recreating and maintaining a continuous row of building fronts. Live-Work units, for example, would fit well with the past and future character of this area, helping to buffer the neighborhoods to the east and west from the impacts of this busy roadway. This form of building design also aids in transitioning the area from less urban (the Maryvale area to the north) to the more commercial and urban setting as you move toward George Urban Blvd to the south (and proposed the transit corridor).



Figure 12 – Repairing the Union Road Corridor



- **Transit-Oriented development**

As Transit becomes a reality, the parcels immediately north of the station location will more than likely benefit from increased visibility and traffic counts. This will make them more ripe for redevelopment. We encourage re-development scenarios with increases in density to be located within a 5-minute walk of the transit station. This concept shows an increase in density near the tracks, but then dissipating intensity toward the neighborhoods. The retail can benefit from increased views and traffic, and residents in close-by neighborhoods can opt to walk for daily needs, rather than being required to drive.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 13 – Transit Oriented Development



5.6 Land Use and Zoning

General

The following section of the Comprehensive Plan discusses the major findings of the plan as it relates to land use and zoning, and presents findings and recommendations for bringing about change to help the Town achieve its goals and objectives. This section focuses on those recommendations that will specifically affect land use, typically through zoning code and map amendments, and other legislative actions. Although the focus of this section is on land use and zoning, it must be clearly understood that zoning is not the only tool for effectuating land use changes and accomplishing community goals; zoning must be combined with other actions and recommendations of the Plan. A strongly related section of the Plan is the neighborhood revitalization section, which also includes land use and zoning recommendations.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

One of the challenges of the Plan is that the Town of Cheektowaga is fairly well “built out”, and zoning changes by themselves are not adequate to generate change. These zoning recommendations must be combined with other recommendations and actions to accomplish the changes the Town would like to see occur. Zoning, by itself, sets up the basic parameters for change (preferred uses), but to accomplish the desired land use changes many other tools and actions are needed. Furthermore, zoning land for a particular use does not, by itself, cause the existing land use to change. Other tools to incentivize and sometimes to “push” change are needed. It should also be noted that, sometimes, zoning changes in already developed areas create non-conforming uses, which can create other types of problems.

In general, the Zoning Code of the Town is somewhat outdated and is a fairly standard Euclidean-style (two dimensional) document that includes allowable uses and dimensional requirements. Some more up-to-date sections include a Special Flood Hazard Area, a Critical Environmental Impact Zone, a Special Aggregates District, and an expanded Supplemental Regulation Section (including regulations on exterior dining areas, drive-through windows, landscaping, etc.). Recently, the Town also updated its Site Plan regulations, and created new zoning requirements for establishments with drive through windows, Light Emitting Diode (LED) signage and billboards, exterior dining areas, and a new Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) Zoning District.

Finally, another important tool that will be utilized in this section of the plan is a Vision Map. Unlike a Future Land Use Map, which is utilized in many older Comprehensive Plans, a Vision Map provides a visual portrayal of many of the general land use recommendations of the Plan and other related concepts, and is utilized as a reference map to direct readers to appropriate sections of the Plan. Future Land Use Maps, on the other hand, try to show all the future land use patterns in a Town and in general, are directly tied to zoning. These maps tend to become outdated quickly, are very controversial (and can be litigious), and are a poor attempt to illustrate the acceptable zoning in the community. The Vision Map cannot be utilized by itself to make zoning decisions; it provides one source of information to be considered when making zoning decisions (utilize the entire plan and not just one map).

Zoning Codes and Laws

In general, the certain chapters of the Town Code need to be “cleaned-up”. A General Code Publisher’s critique was done many years ago (2000) and a follow-up memorandum by the Zoning Officer was completed. These documents are included in the Appendix of this Plan, and it is recommended that they be reviewed with the Town Board for action.

It is also recommended that the Town continue to amend to make it more modern, to allow it to reflect current enabling legislation, and to help implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. As the Town implements new zoning tools, it will also need to make amendments to the Zoning Map to ensure consistency with adopted zoning actions.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Land Use and Property Zoning Considerations/Vision Map

This part of the Plan discusses the land use recommendations for various areas of the Town. In some cases, but not all, these land use recommendations may result in the need to rezone properties or create new zoning requirements. To assist with the understanding of land use and zoning, and to illustrate its relation with other important elements, such as transportation, open space, recreation, etc., a Vision Map has also been created (see Map 21). This Vision Map is not a stand alone tool, but a reference document that is visual in nature. It allows the reader to view the Town as a whole, visualize the changes being proposed and references the appropriate sections of the Comprehensive Plan for more information. This map is not to be interpreted to delineate specific future land use changes; it is a means for visualizing potential changes that could occur as a result of implementing the comprehensive plan.

This section of the Plan will be utilized in two ways; it provides the detail for the implementation strategy outlined in Section 6, and it will be utilized when applications are made for rezoning in the Town.

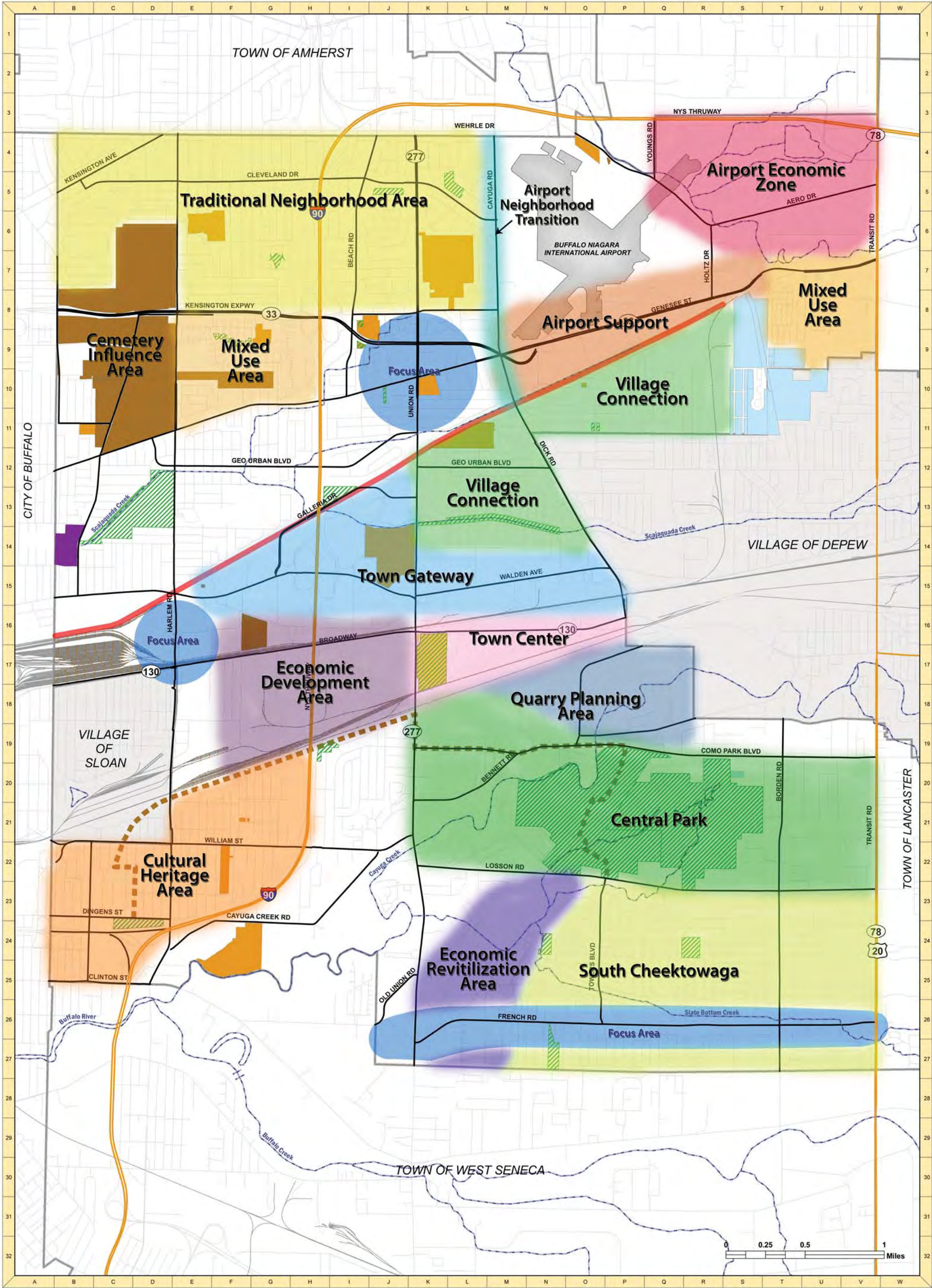
The following are the recommendations for the five areas that were analyzed in Section 4.0 (Community Assessment) of the Comprehensive Plan:

A. Recommendations for the Northwestern Area

- The Harlem Road corridor will continue to be populated with smaller commercial uses that are zoned C (Retail Business District) and NS (Neighborhood Service District). Future zoning in this area could include additional design requirements, perhaps through the adoption of an overlay zoning district, to address important “Character Corridor” issues (similar to what the Town of Amherst is doing in the Harlem-Kensington area). Provisions should be considered that address building style, landscaping, access, site lighting and signage. All of these elements are important for the achievement of better site design and better development for this area.

Over the longer term, the Town should look at new zoning that is more “form based” (less based on allowable use, focusing on design and function). The Town should also build upon the gateway elements created by the new roundabouts located along Harlem Road. These traffic calming features help to maintain and instill character to the surrounding area, retaining the neighborhood scale.

- The Town should utilize the “Pine Hill/Schiller Park Historic Area Revitalization Study” to address land use and zoning issues along Genesee Street. This study is incorporated in this Comprehensive Plan by reference. The document includes actual zoning text and design guidelines and offers practical and useful recommendations for that area of the Town.



DRAFT Map 21 - Land Use Vision

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

- Town Boundary
- Road Centerline
- Railroad
- Stream \ Creek

- Proposed Transit Line
- Focus Areas
- Historic Rails To Trails

Community Facilities

- Parks
- Cemetery
- College
- Town Hall
- Recreation Facility
- School

WD Project # 313306
Map Created: November 2009

*The information on this document is based on data gathered from the following data sources and should not be used for design or construction. -Data Sources: Town of Cheektowaga, NYS GIS Clearinghouse.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- The Town should **not** consider additional standard commercial rezoning along Cleveland Drive or Kensington Avenue. Long term, consideration should be given to more Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) concepts for this area that would allow more mixed uses with smaller commercial components. The character and scale of this area and the commercial uses that are located along these corridors should be in harmony with the surrounding residential uses.
- Most of the residential areas are stable, but for those in transition, the Town longer term may look into creating a “planned Residential District” that could be utilized in the future for a larger residential redevelopment project. This Floating Zone District would establish criteria (densities, configurations, etc.) and design guidelines that could allow residential mixed use redevelopment in this area.
- The cemeteries are important open space and historic/cultural features in this area that should be capitalized upon. Historic markers improved landscaping elements and other streetscape elements could help to further improve the areas potential.
- Finally, see Section 5.5, which discusses the Neighborhood Revitalization concepts for the Union Road and Genesee Street area, which offers useful information that could be applied in the Northwestern area of the Town.

B. Recommendations for the City Line Area

- The Town is presently completing the “Pine Hill-Walden Area” Study, which is incorporated by reference to this Comprehensive Plan. This study highlights the important assets of the City Line area: Cheektowaga Town Park, Villa Maria College, the strong School District, religious institutions and the area’s central location, near many important community features. The recommendations of this plan, and cooperation with the City of Buffalo, should be implemented to help to revitalize this area of the Town.
- The Village of Sloan began preparing a Comprehensive Plan a number of years ago, but a copy of that Plan could not be located. The Town and Village should collaborate to discuss the Village’s vision and comprehensive planning objectives to determine how such planning efforts can be made consistent with the Town’s Plan. The Village is an integral part of the Town and is similar to a hamlet area within a municipality. In the long term, the Village of Sloan may be better served as a hamlet and not a separate municipality (hence, consider dissolution).
- This area of the Town, along with portions of the northwestern area, should be continued as target areas for reinvestment and community development funds. Maximum efforts are needed to accomplish revitalization in these areas. Targeted efforts will need to be continued to stop the



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

proliferation of vacancies and blight in this area. The Town should continue to pursue the acquisition of vacant properties to address some of the issues associated with smaller lots and restrictive lot area requirements.

- As stated previously, zoning efforts will not solve the more difficult issues of the City Line area.
- Finally, see Section 5.5, which discusses the Neighborhood Revitalization concepts for the Union Transit Ready – Walden Avenue / Harlem Road discussion, which offers information that applies to the City Line area of the Town.

C. Recommendations for the Airport Area

- Genesee Street will continue its transition to an Airport Support area with commercial and hospitality uses. The Town should continue to “adjust” zoning in this area to accommodate these uses. The Town should discourage uses that do not meet this objective (for example, automotive sales and service, standard retail development, etc.), as these types of uses are better suited for other locations. Industrial uses should be guided to the Light Industrial and Business Park area off of Holtz Avenue and Aero Drive. This area should continue to develop in this manner.
- The Light Industrial and Business park area off of Holtz Avenue and Aero Drive should continue to be developed with a mix of light industrial and business uses. The Town will need to ensure that these uses are oriented in a logical fashion and uses that would not be compatible in this area (such as retail, restaurants, etc.) should be excluded. The Town may want to consider a new zoning category that would address the appropriate uses of this area. Also, re-aligning Aero Drive may help with opening up areas (increasing property depths) to enable development.
- The West side of Cayuga Road, between Genesee Street and the Town boundary to the north, should continue to accommodate small businesses and offices. Rezoning and site plan approvals will need to consider the residential area behind these properties, and how to appropriately buffer/screen these uses. The scale of commercial development along Cayuga Road should be compatible with the adjacent neighborhood.
- The area between Cayuga Road and Union Road is an important and stable residential area that should be well connected and walkable. Walkability is especially important to the Maryvale schools, parks and commercial uses. Issues relating to airport noise in this area will continue to be a focus.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- A huge long term factor in this area will be the potential future development of a public transit system along the former railroad right-of-way that runs diagonally from the airport to the rail yard in Sloan. This transit element has the potential to connect the airport and the businesses along Genesee Street, with the City of Buffalo. Important features along this corridor, including the Walden Galleria, could be connected to this system. The opportunities that could be generated by this transit system are vast. It would help to make the Town an important destination.
- The Pfohl Landfill area will continue to be planned utilizing brownfield opportunity area concepts and potential funding opportunities from this program. This area has the potential to be redeveloped as a park and ride facility that could support the proposed transit corridor. The remediated landfill area provides ample area for the terminus of the transit line, which could be surrounded by a park and ride facility. Such reuse is suitable for redevelopment of this brownfield area.
- Genesee Street, in the Transit Road area, is a transition zone that extends beyond the airport economic development area to the north and west. This area contains a mixture of uses (residential mobile home park, standard commercial development, a golf course, etc.) that needs to be better planned. The area currently doesn't support a neighborhood and does not appear to fit a "nitch" for services. It is recommended that this area be incorporated into the planning for the airport economic area. It could offer additional support services and business park / office uses that would compliment the airport area. If the transit corridor becomes a reality, this area becomes even more valuable as a support area.

D. Recommendations for the Town Center Area

- The area bounded by Union Road to the west and the Village of Depew to the east that is centered on Broadway (bounded by the railroads to the north and south of Broadway) is an area in transition. Historically, it has been a somewhat isolated area that had businesses dependant on railroad access. As this area has begun to change, this area can be transformed into a Cheektowaga "Town Center". Land uses along Broadway in this area should continue to transition to businesses, warehousing and commercial uses (would also accommodate campus like settings such as the Hospice facility). With the Town Hall and other municipal services at one end, this area should be made walkable (sidewalks, paths, rails to trails expansion, etc.), and streetscape improvements will also be necessary to achieve the Town Center concept. As a longer term concept, if the Amtrak station was to be considered for re-location, this area along Broadway would be well suited for the Station. Imagine a vibrant commercial/business Center with a Municipal complex with numerous Town services, walkable connections to many important Town features, and a major train station!



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Broadway to the west of Union Road will continue to be a strong Business/Light Industrial area providing jobs and economic growth. The railroad on the north side of Broadway separates this area from the Commercial uses to the north. Consideration should be given again to the addition of a trail/bike way on the north side of this road (providing access to the municipal complex and the Town Center area).
- Walden Avenue to the east of the Thruway should continue to transform into major Commercial/Business uses. This area is an important “magnet” for visitors from around the region and Canada and should be considered a major Gateway to the Town. The Town should require strong design guidelines for development along this corridor. Although a mixture of businesses including commercial, retail, office, etc. is important to its success, certain uses should be restricted (car repair, truck facilities, etc.). Issues dealing with traffic, streetscaping, and accessibility will also be important to make sure this area continues to become a regional center. Development on the north side of Walden between Union and Dick road should take into consideration the residential developments in this area and incorporate appropriate buffers and screening.
- Walden Avenue to the west of the Thruway is also an important Commercial Corridor segment. Refer to the Neighborhood Plan section for the land use ideas for this area.
- This area is bounded to the north by the potential long term transit corridor. Planning of this area should consider the possibility of connections to this transit system and spin off development near its nodes.

E. Recommendations for the Southeast Corner

- The Quarry area (in the northwest corner of this part of Cheektowaga) located approximately between Como Park Boulevard and the railroad right-of-ways will necessitate a long term plan as the Quarry completes its operations. Consideration in this planning should be given to open space features, recreation and residential development. A kind of central park area, centered on a lake that would have connections to the parks to the south (previous planning studies of this area have shown community centers, recreational features and some residential components). If possible, pathways and connections to the Town Center area north of this region should also be considered.

In the near term, the Town will continue to work with the Quarry to mitigate traffic issues related to Quarry operations. Monitoring of other environmental issues will also be necessary to help mitigate public health and safety issues.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- The area between Como Park Boulevard and Losson Road, for the purposes of this Plan, is being referred to as the “Park Character Area”. All actions, proposals and development should consider the overall park like character of this area. The development that currently exists around Stiglmeier Park and the Reinstein Woods is predominantly single family homes; commercial development is at the far ends of this area near Transit Road to the east and Union Road to the west. This development pattern should remain, with any residential development taking into consideration the preservation of Greenspace/environmental features and maintaining character along Como Park or Losson Road. Any new commercial/business development at the “ends” should include improved design standards to reflect the character of the area (Gateway to the Park area).
- To build upon what other adjoining communities are doing, Transit Road should include potentially an Overlay Zoning District that would address design issues and access management requirements (some work already done to date).
- The area south of Losson Road is predominantly residential with a few areas along French having some commercial development. Improvements to this area include improving non-automotive connections (pathways, trails, sidewalks, etc.) and potentially a new park/open space feature incorporating the Dubonnet Pond area. Expansion of commercial areas along French Road should be restricted (existing areas for commercial should be more on the neighborhood scale).
- Other sections of this Plan should be referred to for discussion on transportation issues and other design issues especially along French Road.
- The southwest corner of this region is an important economic region of the Town. Retail and Business Parks are integral to the success of this area. Because Union Road in this area is an important gateway into the Town and this region, the Town should focus revitalization efforts in the Union Road area near the Town boundary. Attention needs to be given to the Brownfield site in this area, so that additional opportunities for economic development are realized. See the Neighborhood Planning section of this Plan for more detail on this area.
- For more information on land use and zoning issues in this area (especially Transit Road and French Road), see the URS Study completed in 2004/2005.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

F. Other Zoning/Land Use Recommendations

- In the southwestern portion of Cheektowaga, the Town should refer to the William Street/Losson Road study for input on the land use/zoning issues along Williams Street.
- Williams Street, Dingens Street, Clinton Street, and Harlem Road are important gateways into and out of the Town. Consideration should be given to creating design overlays in this area.
- Dingens Park area could be considered for Rails to Trails for future connection to areas in the east.
- Recreation facilities and parks are important land use components throughout the Town. These important facilities need to be maintained and kept up to date to support these areas and their uses. The Town should utilize its Parks Master Plan and supporting database to plan and implement this needed maintenance and necessary updates to these facilities.



SECTION 6.0 – ACTION PLAN / IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

A. Introduction

A Comprehensive Plan can be utilized in many ways and the following section outlines ways that the Town of Cheektowaga can use this Plan to gain the greatest benefit. The Plan is a guide - - a tool - - that should be used to lend direction to future land use decisions and actions. It provides a foundation or basis that sets the stage for the future. This Plan contains a number of recommendations that are centered on key elements for growth and development and for land use management, which are generally framed for short, medium and long term action. It offers strategies and support for deriving solutions and achieving the Town's goals and objectives.

A Comprehensive Plan must be implemented, or it becomes just another item for a book shelf. This plan contains many recommendations for improving the community and achieving the Town's vision for the future. Without putting it into action through the implementation of those recommendations, the Town will not achieve the true value of this Plan.

Utilization of the Cheektowaga Comprehensive Plan falls into two major categories: Proactive Actions and Reactive Actions. Proactive actions are those activities that the Town can undertake or commence on its own to help achieve the goals and objectives of the plan, and to effectuate change in the community. Proactive actions include things such as creating new or amending existing laws, undertaking or initiating capital improvement projects, changing decision making processes and procedures, organizing advisory groups and activities, completing essential studies and plans, and taking actions to achieve or stimulate change on the part of other governmental agencies, organizations and private and semi-private groups.

Reactive Actions are those responses that Cheektowaga can take when actions, projects or programs/activities are taking place that can impact the future of the Town. Reactive Actions include responses, such as acting on rezoning requests (which is the most common and standard usage of a comprehensive plan); analyzing private development proposals in the Town, reviewing other government actions or projects that would affect the community; and responding to changes, issues or events that are happening or proposed in the Town.

To help establish the foundation for using this Comprehensive Plan, the following actions should be undertaken.

B. Establishing the Foundation – Things to be Accomplished After the Plan is Complete

- The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan – As a first step, the Town Board needs to pass a resolution to formally adopt the Comprehensive Plan as the guidance document for managing growth and development in the community.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Copies of the final Comprehensive Plan should be provided to Town leaders, Town Department Heads, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals members, and members of other relevant Town Committees.
- The Comprehensive Plan should be posted on the Town of Cheektowaga's website (in a user friendly format).
- Copies of the Town of Cheektowaga Comprehensive Plan should be given to other governmental agencies and meetings should be set up with representatives from those agencies to discuss the Town's vision for the future and the specific components of the Plan that affect them.
- A Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee should be created that would be charged with the following responsibilities:
 - The Committee will review the prioritized recommendations and strategies in the Comprehensive Plan and formulate a list of specific actions to be accomplished in the following year based this information. The Committee should identify the appropriate party or parties to direct and/or undertake the actions and potential funding sources. The Committee's findings, and the listing of implementation actions, should be summarized and provided to the Town Board for review and approval.
 - The Committee will produce an annual report, to be provided to the Town Board, which outlines the progress being made to implement the Comprehensive Plan. This report should outline accomplishments or status of current implementation actions, identify any new issues that have arisen, document requests for implementation actions in the coming year and identify potential sources for funding, and outline any recommendations for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan or other reports and studies that should be appended to the Comprehensive Plan.
 - The Committee will be responsible for organizing, assisting or undertaking implementation actions that are assigned by the Town Board. The Committee can help other groups and committees with implementation activities; they can work on certain actions themselves, and/or assist consultants with implementation actions. The Committee would be the primary resource and administrator for Comprehensive Plan implementation matters.
 - The Committee will act as a "sounding board" for issues raised by residents concerning the Comprehensive Plan and associated implementation activities. They would receive ideas and recommendations from Town Departments, staff and other organizations and groups. This information will be evaluated, as part of their efforts, and forwarded to the Town Board at various intervals throughout the year, as appropriate.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- The Committee can be utilized by the Town Board as a review body for rezoning requests to help the Board determine whether or not a rezoning action has merit (conforms to the Comprehensive Plan) and should be entertained for further action.
- The Committee can provide training to other Boards, Committees and Town Departments on the appropriate use of the Comprehensive Plan. They can assist with the creation of forms, checklists or other tools that can help other bodies with Comprehensive Plan use.

C. Reactive Usage of the Comprehensive Plan – Actions Required After the Plan is Adopted

- **Rezoning Applications** – Pursuant to §272-a.11.(a) of New York State Town Law, all Town land use regulations, including zoning, must be in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, when an application for rezoning is received by the Town, it should be sent to the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (or Town designee, as determined by the Town Board) for evaluation. That Committee or staff person would help the Board to determine if the proposed rezoning request is in conformance with the goals and recommendations of the Cheektowaga Comprehensive Plan. Where it is found to be in conformance with the Plan, it would be considered to “have merit” and the Committee would recommend that the Town Board entertain (move forward with the review of) the rezoning action. Determining that a rezoning request has merit does not guarantee that the Town Board has to, or will, approve the action. It is just a determination that the request complies with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan; the request must still go through the rezoning review and SEQR process that will determine further action to be taken by the Town Board. Where a rezoning request is determined to not be in accordance with the Plan, the request could be denied.
- **Analyzing Private Development Projects** – In the case of a request for rezoning, the Comprehensive Plan is utilized to help determine whether the action should be considered (zoning must be in accordance with the comprehensive plan). For private development actions that require site plan, subdivision or special permit approval, the Comprehensive Plan acts as a reference tool to help the Town gain a better understanding of the project and its potential impacts on the community. It is used to help the Town achieve better projects.

Town Department and Boards should utilize the Comprehensive Plan in their review of development actions, along with any other tools and references they currently use, to determine how the project may fit in with the surrounding community and how the plan addresses land use or zoning in that particular area. It should be determined if the project fits with the concepts outlined for that area of the Town. For example, if a site plan is proposed, the comprehensive plan would be referenced to identify how the project might be amended to better meet the goals and objectives of the plan, such as incorporating access management principles or improving site aesthetics and architectural features to ensure that a project is more in keeping with community character. Furthermore, if the project falls within one of the three planning areas outlined in the



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Neighborhood Revitalization discussion in Sections 4.0 and 5.0, it should be evaluated based on how it fits with the planning and design concepts set forth for that particular planning area.

D. Proactive Planning Efforts – Actions Required to Support and Promote Implementation

- **Committees** – The Town should consider establishing targeted committees to help achieve certain implementation actions. Where more information is required, where existing planning information requires better organization, or where guidance for specific projects is necessary, an advisory committee can be a useful way to manage such efforts. Examples of actions where a dedicated committee would be useful include, an attempt to expand the number of park and ride lots in the community, develop a branding treatment for the Town or improve pedestrian conditions along French Road could benefit from input from an advisory committee.
- **Town Board Support** – For certain studies or capital projects, it is important to have a community leader who is dedicated to these efforts. Having this type of support can be critical to achieving success because it demonstrates commitment and a sense of obligation to the community. When projects or studies have a “champion” to lobby and promote their importance to the community, it can help to build public support, as well as the support and assistance of necessary public agencies and political representation. Advocating for the transit corridor to the airport is one example of where Town Board support would be essential.
- **Budgeting** – To help the Town achieve certain implementation actions, particularly those that require funding, it is important for the Town Board to devote resources for these efforts. A line item in the annual budget for comprehensive plan implementation is important for guaranteeing a financial means for achieving progress. Whether the monies are allotted for completing studies, undertaking physical improvements, covering the costs of producing marketing materials, or meeting the match requirements for grant programs, having a dedicated source of funding for comprehensive plan implementation is important and necessary for keeping the plan active and useful.
- **Funding Strategies** – In line with annual budgeting noted above, it is important to stay abreast of potential funding sources for implementation efforts. There are a number of federal and state programs that offer funding for planning, design and/or capital projects. Funding programs have different protocols and criteria, so it is important to know what is available and how the Town may be able to satisfy grant program requirements. Whether the Town utilizes the services of a professional grants writer or assigns these duties to a staff person, identifying and taking advantage of funding opportunities is an important part of implementing the Plan and achieving the Town’s goals for the future.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Some examples of possible funding sources include:

- Environmental Protection Fund Program offers matching grants through the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for planning, designing or constructing parks and recreation projects. These grants are useful for achieving parks and trails design, renovation and development.
- Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program offers grants for planning and designing surface transportation projects, such as streetscapes, bridge repair, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, rail and port projects and highway reconstruction.
- U.S. Housing and Urban Development Sustainable Communities funding is aimed at fostering neighborhood reform. The program is focused on reducing barriers to achieve affordable, economically vital and sustainable communities.
- Local Government Efficiency Grants, which offer funding to explore or accomplish shared services, cooperative agreements and other means of streamlining governmental services.]
- Restore New York is a program that offers monies for demolition or reconstruction. This program is designed to spur redevelopment and revitalization.
- New York Main Street Program for promoting the revitalization of neighborhood commercial districts ("downtowns"). Eligible activities include façade or building renovation and assistance for anchor businesses. Streetscape improvements can also be eligible as an ancillary activity in some cases.
- New York State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program could be useful for conducting an area-wide study of brownfields. This program supports planning and eventual implementation funding to bring vacant and underutilized properties back to active use.

This list is not all inclusive and there are other programs that provide a potential source of funding for Town implementation efforts. The Town should also actively investigate member item grants through their New York State representation (this ties in with Town Board support, noted above), as well as private foundation funding for specific project that fall within the interests of those sources.

- **Involvement of other Governmental Agencies**—There are a number of the recommendations outlined in Section 4.0 require input and support from various public agencies. Per New York State Town Law, the comprehensive plan should foster cooperation among governmental agencies for the mapping and implementation of capital projects. The Law also states that all planning efforts and capital projects outlined or proposed by other governmental agencies must take the goals and recommendations of the Cheektowaga Comprehensive Plan into consideration.

It is important for the Town to maintain open lines of communication with these agencies, including the New York State Department of Transportation, the Erie County Industrial Development Agency, the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council and Niagara Frontier Transit Authority, among others. These agencies must be aware of the Town's vision for



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

achieving change and revitalization in the Town and become a partner in helping the Town to accomplish its goals and vision for the future.

Along these same lines, it is also important for the Town to communicate and collaborate, where helpful, with other communities. The Towns of Amherst, Lancaster and West Seneca, as well as the City of Buffalo, have all prepared comprehensive plans and there are certain elements in their plans that could be advanced by working with the Town of Cheektowaga. Consistent cross border planning is important to the adjoining communities and the region, as a whole.

Finally, the plans and studies referenced (and included by reference) in this Comprehensive Plan, and those included in the Appendix, offer many implementation actions and strategies. Some of these items are fully developed, such as zoning updates, which the Town can utilize to implement the Community's vision. Others are recommendations for additional studies or for physical projects. The point is that the Town has invested resources into the preparation of a number of studies, or studies and projects have been undertaken by other agencies, which offer great benefit. In many cases, there was no need to establish recommendations or implementation strategies when those outlined in these reference materials are highly acceptable.



SECTION 7.0 – ANNUAL REVIEW

One of the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan is for the Town of Cheektowaga Town Board to establish a Comprehensive Plan Committee that will conduct an annual review of the Plan to ensure that it remains a dynamic and useful document that continuously aims to achieve the overall vision and individual goals of the Town. This is accomplished through constant implementation of the recommendations, monitoring of conditions and evaluation of applied measures. This Committee would most likely consist of members of the Town Planning Board, assisted by representatives from the local community, as designated by the Town Board. The Committee that was established to oversee the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan could also remain intact and be responsible for the annual review.

The annual review should include the following:

- All site plan and subdivision approvals issued during the previous year should be reviewed in conjunction with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to determine where the development activity has occurred or is proposed, if it has designed to be consistent with the vision and recommendations of the Plan, and the overall impact of these planning approvals on general land use trends in the Town.
- All rezoning decisions approved during the previous year should be reviewed in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan to determine if these actions were undertaken in conformance with the vision and recommendations of the Plan and if the overall impact of the rezoning decisions are consistent with the general land use trends in the Town.
- The priority listing of Zoning Code amendments specified in the Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed to determine which items were accomplished and which ones should be undertaken in the coming years. The Comprehensive Plan Committee should also determine if there are any new Zoning amendments that should be added to this list.
- The list of other priority items, as contained in the implementation section of the Comprehensive Plan, should be reviewed to determine which items were accomplished during the previous year. It should also be determined if there is a need to update or amend this list.
- Comments from the Town Board, Town departments and committees, and public input gathered during the previous year should be evaluated in conjunction with the information ascertained from the reviews outlined above, and an action plan for Comprehensive Plan implementation activity in the coming year should be developed.
- The Committee should prepare a statement outlining the accomplishments of the past year, including a listing of all site plan, subdivision, and rezoning approvals, and a list of accomplishments in terms of Zoning Code amendments and other implementation activities, as



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

specified in the Comprehensive Plan. This information, along with the action plan for the continuing implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, should be presented to the Town Board for their review and approval.

By following this procedure, the Town will be able to continually monitor the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan for achieving the future vision it articulates. It is anticipated that the Comprehensive Plan Committee will need to meet several times during the first year in order to establish procedures and review the priority actions. As items are implemented and the procedure becomes more established, less frequent meetings are likely to be required. The adjustments, amendments and changes recommended by the Committee and approved by the Town Board will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by acceptance of the Town Board, and provided as an annual update document.

Approximately every five years, or as circumstances dictate the need, the Comprehensive Plan should be more thoroughly reviewed and updated, as required, to reflect current priorities, needs, and goals, using the annual update reports to assist in this effort. At the end of this more extensive review and update, the Town should incorporate all changes into an updated plan, and undergo formal adoption procedures (including public hearings and SEQR review) to accept the updated plan. Unless there are major changes to circumstances or conditions in the Town, it is anticipated that these reviews and re-adoption procedures will not be complicated. They are important, however, in order to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan remains a relevant and useful document to guide growth and development in the Town and help the citizens of Cheektowaga realize their vision and goals for its future.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SECTION 8 – ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Comprehensive Plan is classified as a Type 1 action under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and a full assessment of the potential environmental impacts associated with the document is required. Rather than prepare a separate, parallel document as the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS), this Comprehensive Plan itself has been set up to represent the GEIS. This approach is explicitly allowed under §272-a.8 of New York State Town Law, which states that a town Comprehensive Plan “may be designed to also serve as, or be accompanied by, a generic environmental impact statement pursuant to the state environmental quality review act statute and regulations.” This combined format enables the reviewers, the Lead Agency, all involved and interested agencies, and the public to review one comprehensive document that outlines plans for the future and the potential environmental implications of the Plan document itself. This section of the Comprehensive Plan has been provided to assist with the environmental review for this document.

The Inventory section (Section III) of this Comprehensive Plan provides a description of the environmental setting of the Town of Cheektowaga as it exists now. Section III includes information on the following:

- Existing Land Use (Subsection 3.1 and Map 3: Existing Land Use)
- Land Use Controls (Subsection 3.2 and Map 4: Zoning)
- Demographic Profile (Subsection 3.3)
- Housing and Neighborhoods (Subsections 3.4)
- Economic Development (Subsection 3.5)
- Environmental Resources and Conditions (Subsection 3.6 and Map 5: Environmental Conditions)
- Utilities (Subsection 3.7 and Map 6: Water Districts and Map 7: Sewer Districts)
- Transportation (Subsection 3.8 and Map 8: Roadway Classification, Map 9: Roadway Jurisdiction, Map 10: Traffic Counts, and Map 11: Transit Routes)
- Community Facilities and Cultural Resources (Subsection 3.9 and Map 12: Community Facilities and Parks and Map 13: School Districts)

8.1 Potential Significant Adverse Environmental Impacts

The underlying purpose and one of the major goals of the Comprehensive Plan is to promote appropriate land uses and to avoid significant adverse environment impacts in the community that it covers. The Town of Cheektowaga Comprehensive Plan has been designed to improve conditions in the Town and lead to beneficial impacts. However, it is important here to acknowledge and discuss potential adverse impacts. This section of the Comprehensive Plan addresses potential impacts to the community related to land use and development, which would be affected by the Plan.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Short Term, Long Term and Cumulative Impacts

The Comprehensive Plan is designed to properly guide growth in the Town to lessen the negative impacts of land use and development decisions. Based on the environmental setting of the Town of Cheektowaga, the following potentially significant adverse environmental impacts could occur if the community did not plan adequately and did not provide the proper tools for the management of growth and development. The discussion is based on the format of the Full Environmental Assessment form (SEQR Areas of Review). The following are the potential short term and long term impacts due to present growth patterns and how they may be affected by the actions of this Plan:

A. Impacts on Land

- In general, the Town has limited areas for future development. This Plan helps to focus new development and redevelopment to areas where land is already developed, spur revitalization in areas subject to disinvestment or other issues, and protect important conservation lands from inappropriate development. There are very few areas of undeveloped lands where new development may occur within the Town of Cheektowaga. Some vacant lands are located in the area north and east of the Airport, between Transit Road and Borden Road, the southwest area of the Town along Cayuga Creek, and in the central portion of the Town near the quarry. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact redevelopment and revitalization efforts.
- There are additional vacant lands located within designated business and industrial parks or within brownfields, where redevelopment is encouraged by the Comprehensive Plan. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact development of business or industrial parks.
- Although the Town is mostly built out, there does exist some forest communities, both in private and public lands, located primarily in the southern and eastern portions of the Town, specifically near the Airport, behind St. Joseph's Hospital, around the quarry, Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve and JC Stiglmeier Park, along Cayuga Creek, and pockets between Transit Road and Borden Road. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact these forested areas.
- There are four areas within the Town that are designated as Critical Environmental Areas (CEA's). These areas are the wetland areas in the northeast portion of the Town near the Airport, the Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve, JC Stiglmeier Park, and wetland areas along portions of Cayuga Creek. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact these CEA's.
- Other undeveloped lands in the Town are generally protected by conservation easements, or are constrained by environmental features, such as wetlands or floodplains.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

B. Impacts on Water

- The Town has areas of Federal and State wetlands that have been identified on the Comprehensive Plan mapping. (See Map 5: Environmental Conditions). Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact these wetland areas.
- The Town's major water features include several creeks and their tributaries, including: Ellicott Creek, Scajaquada Creek, Cayuga Creek, Slate Bottom Creek and a small section of the Buffalo River, which runs along the southern border of the Town. There are areas of floodplains associated with several of these waterways. (See Map 5: Environmental Conditions). Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact these water features.
- The Town is fully serviced with municipal water and sanitary sewer (See Map 6: Water Districts and Map 7: Sewer Districts). There are currently no capacity issues throughout the Town. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact municipal water and sewer systems and cause capacity issues.

C. Impacts on Plants and Animals

- Significant wildlife habitats are located at the Reinstein Woods nature preserve. New York State is responsible for this area, which is protected, however, improper planning and development activity could adversely impact the area around the Reinstein Woods.
- Other Critical Environmental Area's contain wildlife habitats that are protected. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact these CEA's.

D. Impacts on Agricultural Land Resources

- There are no agricultural lands in the Town.

E. Impacts on Aesthetic Resources

- As a developed suburb, there are several historically and culturally significant buildings that are deemed aesthetically pleasing to the community. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact aesthetic resources of the Town.
- The Town contains numerous parks and public areas that add aesthetic value to the Town. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact these parks and public areas.
- The Town has several neighborhoods that consist of an older housing stock and higher vacancy rates. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact revitalization efforts of older neighborhoods.

F. Impacts on Historic and Archaeological Resources

- There are significant areas of important archaeological resources in the Town of Cheektowaga, particularly along the Town's creeks. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact these archaeological resources.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- There are also a number of historically significant sites, including three sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Chapel of Our Lady Help of Christians located at 4125 Union Road, the War of 1812 Garrison Cemetery located on Aero Drive, and the Villa Maria Motherhouse Complex located at 600 Doat Street. Other cultural or historic resources of significance in the Town include the Cheektowaga Historical Museum, located at 3329 Broadway, which offers displays of significance to the Town, the George Urban Residence on Pine Ridge Road, Mt. Calvary Cemetery on Harlem Road, and St. Stanislaus Cemetery on Harlem Road. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact historic resources.

G. Impact on Open Space and Recreation

- The Town has major areas of open space associated with the Reinstein Woods nature preserve and the adjacent Stiglmeier Park, as well as the other CEAs in the Town. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact these areas.
- The Town has an excellent park system, with parks, playgrounds, recreation areas and trails distributed throughout the community. School facilities also provide open space and recreational resources. Some additional recreational opportunities are supplied by private businesses and by governmental facilities in adjacent communities. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact these recreational areas.

H. Impact on Transportation

- The Town boasts an excellent grid-like transportation system with excellent access to the New York State Thruway (I-90), Kensington Expressway (SR 33), and other regional routes. As a result of population growth in the Town over the last 50 years, Cheektowaga's roadways have been expanded and consist of excellent connectivity and sufficient capacity. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact the Town's transportation system.
- Development and growth both within and outside of the Town, especially within the southeastern portion of the Town and within the Town of Lancaster, has increased traffic congestion along a few major commuter and commercial corridors, especially those that interchange with the New York State Thruway. Improper planning and development activity could further adversely impact the Town's roadways.
- Two major railroad lines, each with freight yards located within the Town, provide excellent rail access. The Town also is the location of the regional Amtrak passenger rail station (in the village of Depew). Improper planning and development activity could threaten opportunities to take advantage of rail facilities.
- The region's international airport is located within the Town, providing excellent air transportation and air cargo opportunities. Improper planning and development activity could threaten opportunities to expand and take advantage of the airport.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Land uses throughout most of the Town are dense enough to support alternative modes of travel, such as transit, walking, or biking, but there are not always adequate facilities for these alternative modes. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact opportunities to realize opportunities for alternative transportation modes.

I. Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood

- The Town contains numerous neighborhoods consisting of older mixed-use neighborhoods and newer suburban neighborhoods. Improper planning and development activity could adversely impact the ability to preserve the character and strengthen the Town's neighborhoods.
- Redevelopment and reinvestment of older neighborhoods could potentially result in population increases and infrastructure capacity issues if not properly planned for.
- The Comprehensive Plan recognizes a growing issue with housing vacancy and foreclosures in the Town. If these houses are demolished and removed from the housing stock, there could be the potential for continued decreases in population.
- A large quarry, airport, Interstate highway, and several industrial areas are present within the Town, which currently present conflicts with the character of several of the Town's neighborhoods. Improper planning and development activity could allow these uses to further impact the character of these neighborhoods.
- The Town was built to accommodate a larger population than is currently residing in the Town, and is able to absorb the level population growth likely to occur due to the Plan's recommendations without negative impacts to community character.

8.2 Adverse Environmental Impacts That Can Not Be Avoided

With or without the adoption and implementation of the Cheektowaga Comprehensive Plan, the Town will continue to have new development and redevelopment that will affect the environment and the character of the Town. The adoption of this Plan will allow the Town to better manage growth and development and reduce potential negative environmental impacts.

The preparation of a GEIS is often completed to allow future actions that are in conformance with certain conditions and thresholds established in the GEIS and its findings. While this approach facilitates future development, it removes a level of control over growth and development from the Town. The environmental review contained in this document is limited to assessing the impacts of the plan document itself, and explicitly does not 'pre-approve' future site-specific actions. All development actions taking place after the adoption of this Plan will still be subject to the State Environmental Quality Review process on a site specific basis. Nothing contained in this document supplants the necessity of adequate review of future actions. However, this Comprehensive Plan will be a resource that can be used to facilitate the review of



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

future development actions. The Plan will have the greatest impact on rezoning requests, because zoning must be in accordance with the community's Comprehensive Plan.

8.3 Growth Inducing Aspects of the Plan

Most of the implementation actions outlined in this Plan will help to control and better direct growth within the community. Certain implementation actions will act to encourage certain types of development or redevelopment in specific areas of the Town. However, the Town is largely built out, and most of the anticipated development will be improvements and upgrades, consistent with the general character of the Town, or redevelopment of underutilized land. The general intent, as illustrated in the four sub-area studies, is to improve the built environment, make the Town less automobile dependent, and encourage redevelopment in an appropriate manner and place.

8.4 Mitigation Measures

It is the objective of this Comprehensive Plan to help reduce the potential negative impacts that could be caused by improper planning and development in the community. This can be accomplished by providing techniques for changing the development trends of a community, such as amending zoning or other development regulations. It can also be achieved by providing tools to help mitigate the possible impacts of those development trends (improved infrastructure, improved standards for development, etc.). It is the intent of this Comprehensive Plan to supply techniques to guide the direction of the community and the tools for reducing the impacts of development without resulting in other adverse environmental impacts. The following section discusses the Plan's recommendations and the logic as to why and how these actions will help mitigate the potential impacts of future growth. (See Section 5.0 for further discussion of the recommendations.)

A. Impacts on Land

- The intent of this plan is to focus development in areas in need of revitalization and investment, which will tend to divert development away from environmentally sensitive areas and toward previously disturbed and developed areas.
- Future development will need to study and assess potential environmental impacts on a site-specific basis and avoid or mitigate any impacts.

B. Impacts on Water

- The Plan supports efforts to avoid impacts of development on wetlands, floodplains or waterways within the Town.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- The Plan encourages continued investment in existing water and sewer systems and guides development and redevelopment to areas that already contain water and sewer infrastructure.
- The Town will continue to implement the stormwater regulations (SPDES), thus helping to protect the community's waterways (including protection from erosion and siltation).

C. Impacts on Plants and Animals

- By encouraging redevelopment of existing developed lands and preservation of important open space, the Plan minimizes potential impacts on plants and animals.
- The Plan identifies important habitat areas and Critical Environmental Areas to be preserved.

D. Impacts on Agricultural Land Resources

- There are no agricultural lands in the Town of Cheektowaga.

E. Impacts on Aesthetic Resources

- The Plan recommends implementing provisions that improve the overall design of developments and promote high quality development that will aid in enhancing neighborhood appearance and character.
- The Plan supports reinvestment and improvements to the existing housing stock, which will aid in enhancing the aesthetic appearance of the Town.
- The Plan encourages enhancing the entryways into the Town.

F. Impacts on Historic and Archaeological Resources

- The Plan identifies important historical, cultural, and archaeological resources throughout the Town and encourages their protection and ways to capitalize off their significance.

G. Impacts on Open Space, Parks and Recreation

- The Plan identifies the important open space and recreation features of the community and encourages their preservation and enhancement.
- The Plan recommends implementing the Town's Multi-Use Trail Plan to provide for alternative transportation and recreational opportunities.

H. Impacts on Transportation

- The Plan recommends that the Town undertake a Complete Street study in order to reduce the potential adverse impacts roadway design and function have on the character of the surrounding area, thereby enhancing the Town's neighborhoods.
- The Plan recommends that the Town adopt Access Management Regulations in order to control curb cuts on collectors and arterials and improve safety and traffic flow.
- The Plan encourages coordination with the New York State Thruway Authority on the I-90 Corridor Study to mitigate any potential adverse impacts resulting from the Thruway.



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- The Plan suggests that the Town explore enhanced transit service, especially to/from the Airport, Downtown Buffalo, Walden Galleria, and the Amtrak Station to improve connectivity, provide alternative transportation opportunities, and reduce automobile dependency. One of the strategies the Plan suggests is developing a light rail extension along the abandoned railroad line between Downtown Buffalo and the Airport.
- The Plan makes numerous suggestions to improve multi-modal opportunities, such as improved urban design to support pedestrian access, enhanced trail connections, improved on-street bike paths and other improvements to encourage walking and biking.
- Recommendations in the Plan are designed to facilitate pedestrian or bicyclist access to uses, potentially reducing congestion on the roadways and enhancing the transportation system for all users.
- The Plan suggests that the Town implement measures to improve transportation safety such as improvements to high crash locations and constructing roundabouts and certain intersections.

I. *Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood*

- The adoption of the Plan may lead to the reversal of population decline or modest growth, if younger families move in and there are more people per household. The Town was built to accommodate a larger number of people, and could accommodate additional population growth without adverse negative impacts.
- The recommendations in the Plan are intended to support appropriate redevelopment and revitalization of older sections of the Town, encourage new population growth, and reduce potential decline of existing neighborhoods.
- Recommendations discussed throughout the Plan focus on enhancing the character of the community and include creating better mixed-use and walkable commercial districts, improving design and development standards throughout the community, revitalization of older neighborhoods, and improving gateways.
- The Plan recommends revisiting the Town's zoning to identify potential revisions that will improve the development process, aid in redeveloping existing properties, and enhance neighborhood character and viability.
- The Plan recommends encouraging redevelopment of existing neighborhoods by making them transit ready so that when enhanced transit service is provided, these neighborhoods can capitalize on the benefits of being a Transit Oriented Development.

8.5 Evaluation of Alternatives

Throughout the planning process, alternatives for helping residents of the Town Cheektowaga achieve their Goals and Vision were evaluated, and the recommendations in this Plan represent the concepts that best express their Goals. Recommendations and implementation alternatives were evaluated for not only



TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

their desired results, but also their impact to the environment, the needs of local residents, private property rights, and the vitality of the community.

The “No Action” alternative was considered for the Town. However this alternative does not afford the Town the ability to effectively manage growth or mitigate potential environmental impacts, and was therefore deemed inappropriate. There is also the potential that the “No Action” alternative would lead to increased negative impacts, as the Plan encourages revitalization and enhancements to the Town which may not occur without the Plan in place.

APPENDIX A
Neighborhood Revitalization
(Draft)

TRANSIT-READY

TRANSIT-READY

EXISTING CONDITIONS



TRANSIT-READY

EXISTING CONDITIONS

WHY WE SELECTED THIS AREA

TRANSIT-READY

The area surrounding the intersection of Walden Avenue and Harlem Road is a very important spot in Town. Within a half mile from the center of this intersection, there are a multitude of land uses, a wide array of building types, a useful shopping center, a major Town park, a university, neighborhoods of different values, and an abandoned railway corridor that has the potential to provide a future transit link from Buffalo to the Airport – all of the components necessary for a thriving mixed-use center surrounded by highly valued neighborhoods.

It is vital to consider this sector in light of its past as a first-ring suburb and as a revitalized mixed-use center, whether or not additional transit options (light rail, bus rapid transit, e.g.) are imminent. It is important for the Town and the Plan to recognize that planning recommendations should include rather than preclude the option of transportation choice.

Several factors, however, are present today that prevent this area from reaching its value potential. The following pages explore these factors and offer ways to correct or repair them through future public and/or private investment.

Mechanics:

This area consists of a ½ mile radius pedestrian shed – an area equivalent to about 500 acres. This area includes a wide variety of land uses and great potential for both new and re-development. This planning study is intended to illustrate the possibilities of future change – short and long term – and the boundaries are therefore loose. It is expected that the types of ideas and recommendations that appear here are to continue throughout the Town of Cheektowaga, rather than ending at a specific property boundary.

TRANSIT-READY

EXISTING CONDITIONS

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

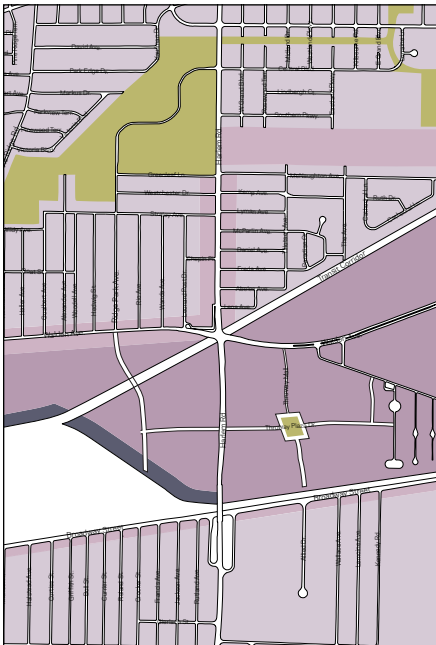
LAND USE. While there are a multitude of uses present in the study area, they are configured as separate “pods” of conventional suburban archetypes: shopping centers, residential subdivisions and institutional campuses. While these uses are fundamental ingredients of a livable and walkable (and therefore highly valued) built environment, they are not well connected. This separation is focused on automobile access, creating a pedestrian-hostile environment. There is a strong future for more intense uses in the area, as well as for much better connections and more intensely mixed uses. While future redevelopment is absolutely tied to the condition of the real estate market, the shopping center, sizable parcels of vacant land and the transit corridor itself could easily become strong catalysts for growth.

THOROUGHFARES. The Area contains a wide array of thoroughfare types – from Thruway to residential street. While many of the residential streets are not in need of immediate change, larger capacity streets are in need of improvement, if they are to become high quality pedestrian environments. The thoroughfare network itself – being a loose grid system – provides good connections and provides good mobility through the Study Area. Specific thoroughfares – especially those of 3 or more lanes – do a decent job of moving vehicular traffic, but are not at all hospitable toward pedestrians or bicyclists. This erodes potential value despite having daily needs within a short distance from homes and offices. Walden and Harlem can be improved within the existing rights-of-way to promote better pedestrian access and better frontage conditions while continuing to provide appropriate traffic counts and through-put. The Transit Corridor is also treated as an important thoroughfare – and is a tremendous benefit when competing for transportation resources – as virtually no additional land is needed to accommodate a transit line. Trails and pedestrian connections need to be strengthened in order to connect higher-density centers to the rich open spaces nearby.

BLOCK STRUCTURE. Block size is an important factor in considering the type of intensity and use a particular land area can support. Because of its history as a first-ring suburb (of Buffalo), the northwestern neighborhood long and narrow blocks support pedestrian use and can accommodate finely-grained mixed-use at the connections to larger streets like Walden. The areas to the east and south (Thruway Plaza, for example) have larger block sizes – which make them ideal for more intense uses both now and in the future. It is not inconceivable to consider Thruway Plaza as a 4-block urban center rather than a series of surface parking lots in a long-term build-out scenario. The large block size, which can accommodate structured parking and larger building floor plates, make it reasonable to target this area for considerable growth. Having both block sizes in the Study Area is a great advantage to raising the value of the entire area – making it easy to imagine a future center that includes both highly valued single-family neighborhoods within walking distance to more intense and pedestrian-friendly urban center.

TRANSIT-READY

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN



TRANSECT MAP

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN

A Development Guiding Plan is intended to provide balance to the often exclusive issues of land use and built form. This pair of maps provides the Town and development interests with clear direction for sites with larger-scale development opportunities whether existing or future.

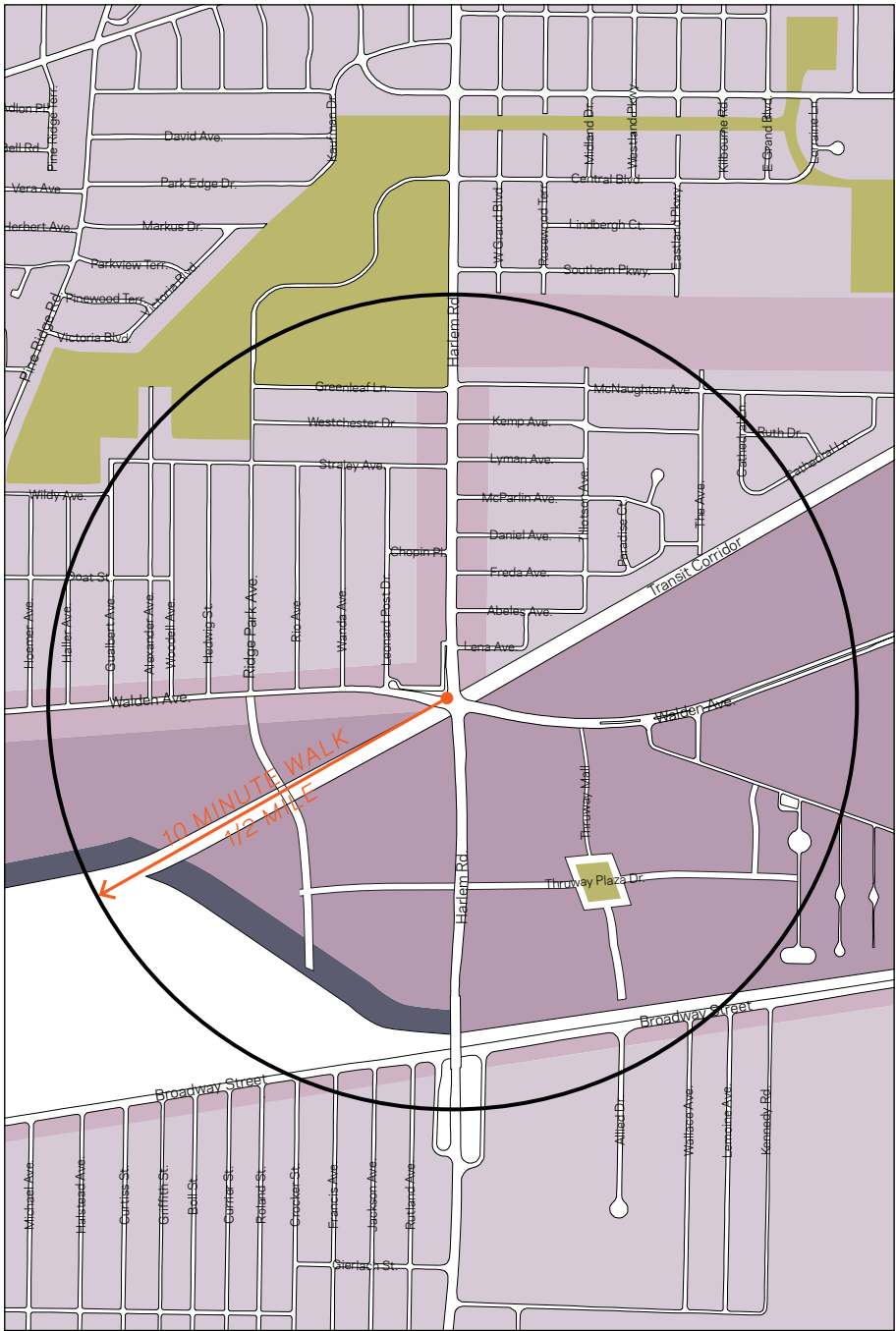
These maps focus on large issues. The essential components are the block, the street and the building. These are the critical form-givers to any urban context. This particular Study Area has been chosen to describe the potential for change in an area with a mixture of uses, a former (and currently unused) rail corridor that has been targeted for re-use as a transportation corridor, several high-volume transportation arteries and a shopping center that provides many daily needs for folks living in the neighborhoods, the Town and the Region.



SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS PLAN

TRANSIT-READY

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN



TRANSECT MAP

- Open Space
- T3 Zone (Sub-Urban)
- T4 Zone (General Urban)
- T5 Zone (Urban Center)
- SD Zone (Special District)

TRANSIT-READY

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN

TRANSECT-BASED MAP

The Transit-Ready Study Area can be divided into three Transect Zones and one Special District.

The areas immediately adjacent to the intersection of Walden and Harlem represent a sector of Cheektowaga that could support intense redevelopment scenarios. Within a ten-minute walk of the intersection of Walden and Harlem, there are a number of elements that could help inspire economic development. These include:

- + Cheektowaga Town park – a large, active community park
- + St. Joseph's Hospital
- + Thruway Plaza

A significant amount of traffic filters through the area and the potential exists to reconsider the area as a thriving mixed-use center, flexible enough to accommodate future transportation modes such as rapid bus or light rail.

LAND USE STRATEGY. The whole area could benefit from a Transect-Based approach to zoning and land use. The Transect-Based Map provides initial thoughts about appropriate intensity of development, flexibility of land use and improvements to the public realm. The entire area is provided with a series of overlays that refer to the intended levels of intensity. They include:

T3- an area that is predominantly residential – unlikely to change uses, but could greatly benefit from better connections to the other zones.











T4- an area that includes a mix of uses that focus primarily on a neighborhood (as opposed to regional) service area. The mix is low-intensity and fits well with the residential scale of its surroundings. This Zone is reserved for the edges of important thoroughfares as it provides an excellent transition from all-residential to intensely mixed use.

T5- an area that includes a more vigorous mix of uses – potentially vertically in a single building, as in living above a shop or office with retail ground floor. This area benefits from easy access to multiple transportation options, including cars and busses. In this area, residential uses will generally take the form of apartment or condominium buildings.

SD- an area that is dedicated to railway tracks and supportive uses. This area can remain to be economically important to the Town and should be treated differently than the other mixed-use areas. It will continue to provide a needed service for the region and should be permitted to remain without the need for changes to zoning. Transitions to adjacent Zones must be looked at carefully.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN



-
-  "A" Grid
 "B" Grid
 Required Retail Frontage
 Recommended Retail Frontage
 Existing + Reserved Civic Building
 Existing + Reserved Open Space
 Recommended Terminated Vista
 Gateways
 Existing + Reserved Parking
 Proposed Streets



0 1,000 3,000ft

TRANSIT-READY

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS PLAN

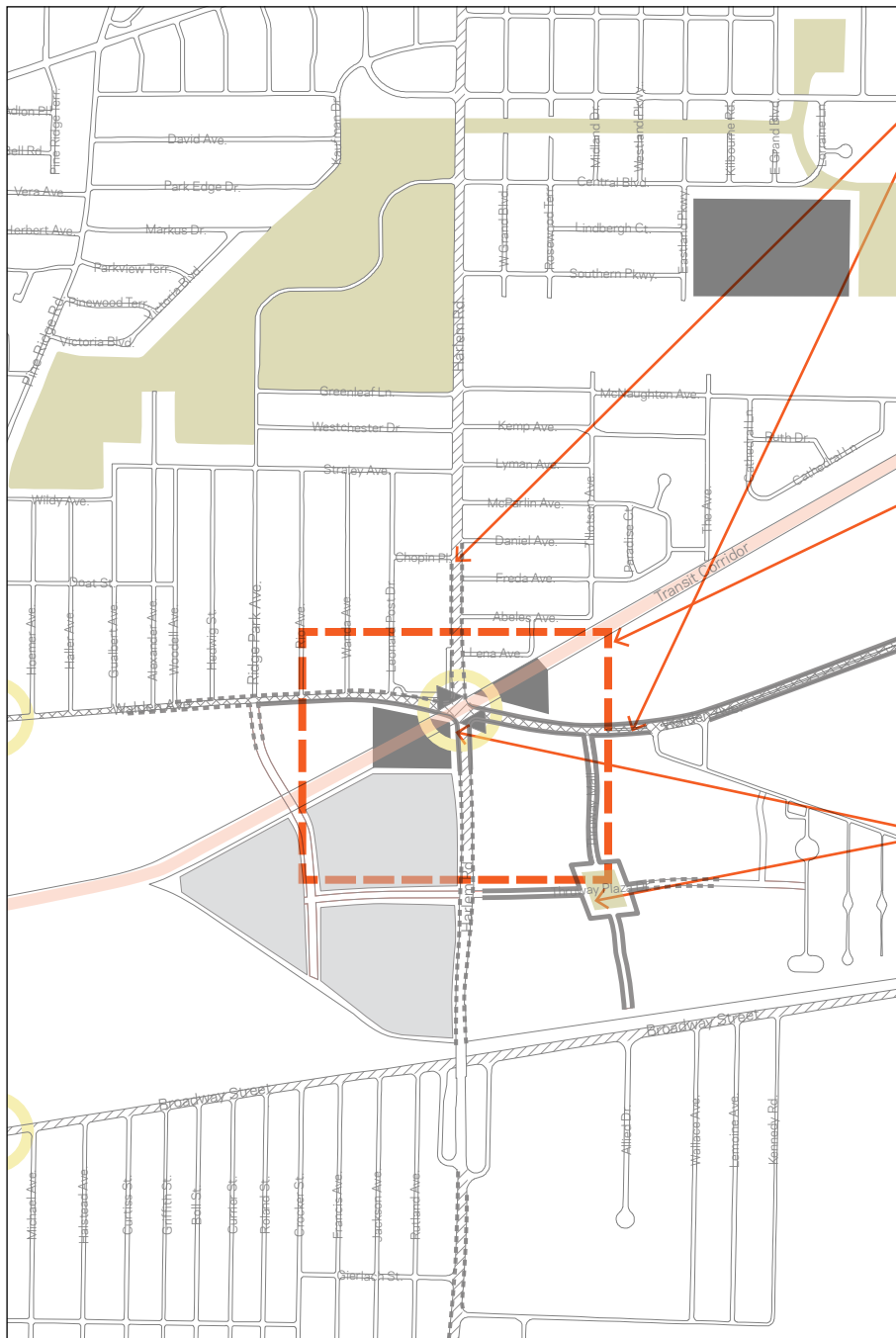
This map has been created to clearly reflect the importance of the most significant components of a Transit-Ready location – and to guide development toward a more urban and more valued character. This map makes specific recommendations about:

Thoroughfare Hierarchy – considering dimension, capacity, continuity, retail frontage, pedestrian comfort. Further divided into

- *“A” Grid – expected not to deviate from rigorous standards guaranteeing high activity and pedestrian comfort*
- *“B” Grid – still of high quality, but less active uses or necessary pedestrian-hostile elements such as structured parking entrances or secure building frontages*
- *Civic and Open Spaces – including existing and future recommended public spaces*
- *Vistas – special locations requiring increased architectural sensibility and design effort*
- *Gateways – as important non-building markers reflecting the Town’s boundaries*
- *Parking – areas reserved for consideration as mass parking locations*
- *Proposed Streets – proposed streets to improve connectivity*

TRANSIT-READY

PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY



PUBLIC REALM

Reinforce A-B

1. address streetscape level of finish and character
2. improve pedestrian conditions, including crossing times and sidewalk widths

Focus Investment

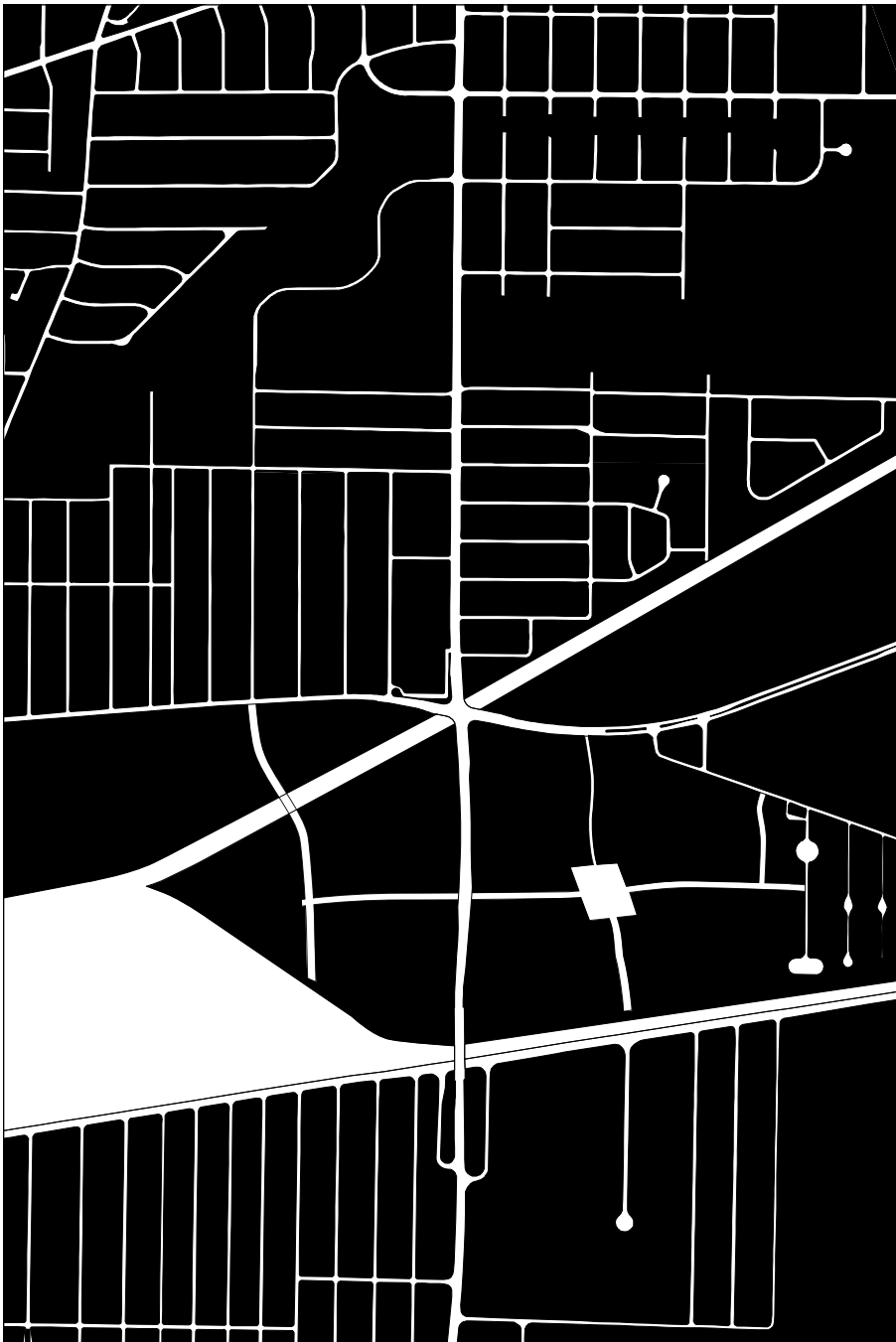
1. increased design intention
2. increased building height
3. attention to creating an urban center

Consider new Civic components

1. create public spaces as key assets for the city
2. utilize public spaces as termination points

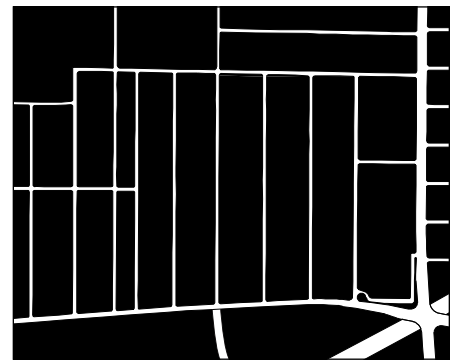
TRANSIT-READY

BLOCKS



NARROW BLOCK TYPE

- Fine-grain residential
- Highly walkable streets
- Neighborhood scale mixed-use



LARGER BLOCK TYPE

- Large scale mixed-use
- Pedestrians and automobile equity
- Transit leverage



CORRIDOR

CORRIDOR

EXISTING CONDITIONS



CORRIDOR

EXISTING CONDITIONS

WHY WE SELECTED THIS AREA

CORRIDOR

French Road, in south Cheektowaga, provides an opportunity to study several elements that are key to the Town's future character. The Study Area, a corridor 3 miles in length, includes stable neighborhoods; Commercial pockets ranging from healthy to shuttered; proximity to important greenways and parks; and, significant gateway opportunities. Like other areas of Cheektowaga, the French Road Corridor is challenged by its real and perceived value as a sub-urban residential area, and the threat to stability provided by abandoned and under-performing sites at Cheektowaga's "front door".

Unlike the Transit-Ready and Neighborhood Center Study Areas, the Corridor provides few opportunities for major, large-scale projects – few large parcels exist and it is important to the Town to keep this area's scale in a moderate range. Therefore, the scale of recommendations must be in keeping with current character – striving for neighborhood and residential stability, more and better services, a more distinct gateway into Cheektowaga, increased mobility and better access to open space.

The following pages explore the opportunities for change along the French Road Corridor.

Mechanics:

This area consists of a 3 mile long Corridor and the areas immediately adjacent to French Road. The Study Area will also consider several mixed-use nodes at different scales – at Union Road, Transit Road, and at Borden, Brentwood and Towers Boulevard. This planning study is intended to illustrate the possibilities of future change – short and long term – and the boundaries are therefore loose. It is expected that the ideas and recommendations that appear here are to continue throughout the Town of Cheektowaga, rather than ending at a specific property boundary.

CORRIDOR

EXISTING CONDITIONS

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

LAND USE. The French Road Corridor is predominantly residential – with a narrow range of building types – largely single-family with a sprinkling of apartment developments. At either end, shopping centers and convenience retail are present, primarily because of the high traffic counts, easy vehicular access and visibility of properties. Despite this, some shopping centers are vacant and present a blighted image of Cheektowaga. There are a few areas of light industrial/manufacturing/warehousing that are concentrated near former railway corridors and highway connections – and some of these are not particularly compatible with the neighboring residential uses. There is a strong opportunity to repair some of the commercial areas in an effort to strengthen the value of the sub-urban residential component.

THOROUGHFARES. There are three distinct general thoroughfare types in the Area – Union and Transit are both large-scale commercial corridors; French Road is a rural roadway that serves as the entry to several high-quality Cheektowaga neighborhoods and a multitude of residential streets. The pedestrian quality of these streets can be improved with minor alterations, and should be considered as an opportunity to make the area more walkable. Connections to trails and Parks can be made more pronounced and create a positive impact for the surrounding neighborhoods. The thoroughfare network itself is more rural than in northern districts of Town – which puts more emphasis on French Road and a few north-south connectors to be able to handle traffic and pedestrians. With the connection to the park system, better accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians can significantly and positively impact residential values. The character of the larger thoroughfares can also be significantly improved without change to the right of way dimension – in order to calm traffic and make a more pedestrian-hospitable condition. Trails and pedestrian connections can be added in order to connect neighborhoods to the natural resources and parks nearby.

BLOCK STRUCTURE. Block size is an important factor in considering the type of intensity and use a particular land area can support. Longer and more organic thoroughfares create a sub-urban condition that is suited for residential use. Areas that front French Road can be considered for smaller commercial and mixed-use that is intended to serve the neighborhoods. Larger land parcels at the edges can accommodate the present and future retail needs of the neighborhoods.

Change will occur incrementally and will be focused on improving livability and stabilizing neighborhoods, not changing them to a significantly more urban experience.

CORRIDOR

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN



TRANSECT MAP

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN

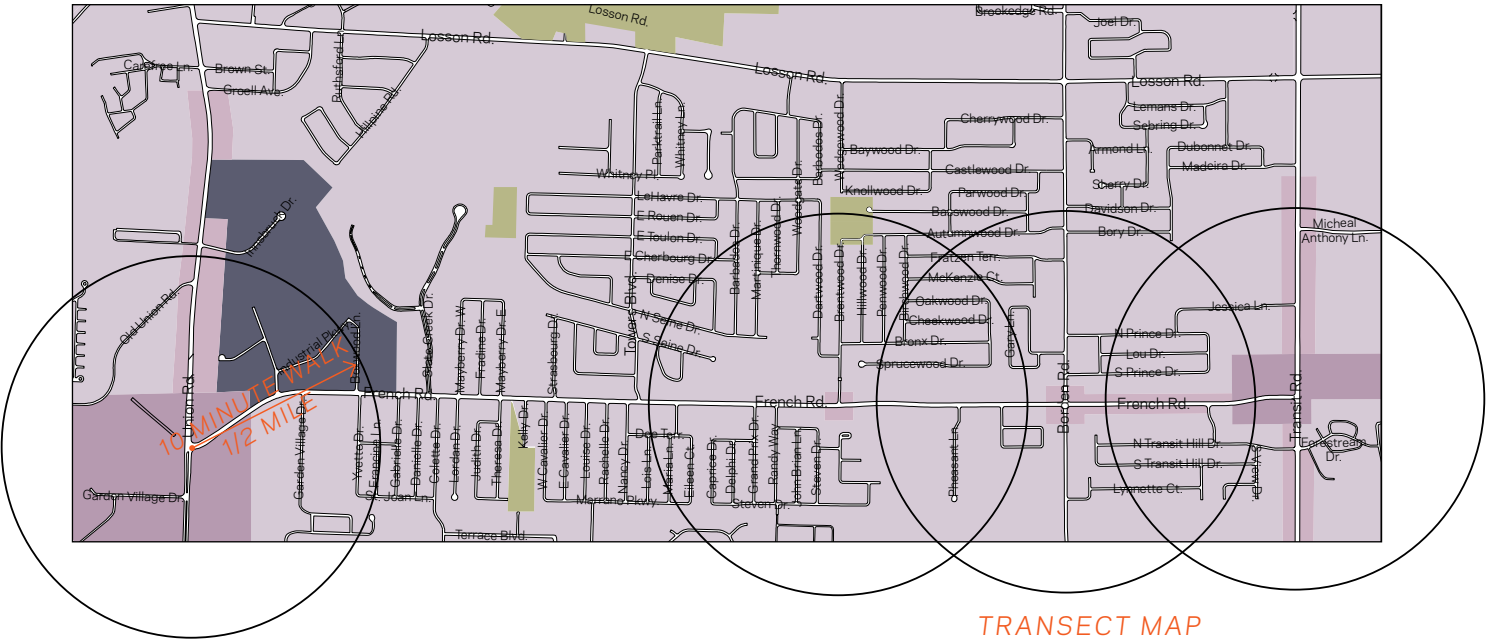
A Development Guiding Plan is intended to provide balance to the often exclusive issues of land use and built form. This pair of maps provides the Town and development interests with clear direction for sites with larger-scale development opportunities whether existing or future. These maps focus on large issues. The essential components are the block, the street and the building. These are the critical form-givers to any urban context. This particular Study Area has been chosen to describe the potential for change in an area marked by stable neighborhoods, good park access, deteriorating commercial areas, and automobile-oriented retail.



SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS PLAN

CORRIDOR

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN



TRANSECT MAP

- Open Space
- T3 Zone (Sub-Urban)
- T4 Zone (General Urban)
- T5 Zone (Urban Center)
- SD Zone (Special District)



CORRIDOR

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN

TRANSECT-BASED MAP

The Transit-Ready Study Area can be divided into three Transect Zones and one Special District.

The Corridor can be characterized as a long road with automobile-oriented centers at each end – Transit Road to the east and Union Road to the west – and two minor, neighborhood-oriented centers, at Brentwood Drive and Borden Road. The Corridor serves as a protective edge between the traffic moving east and west and the neighborhoods immediately behind the right-of-way. The application of a Transect-based map to assist in directing future growth is important to:

- + Establish French Road as a gateway to Cheektowaga
- + Protect the rural character of French Road and the access roads to the neighborhoods
- + Provide targeted locations for the limited expansion of commercial use to serve the adjacent neighborhoods
- + Re-establish the Union Road and Transit Road intersections as important commercial centers that better serve the region while improving access from the adjacent neighborhoods
- + Improve connections from neighborhoods to important open spaces – large and small

A significant amount of traffic filters through the area and the potential exists to reconsider the area as a thriving mixed-use center that is flexible enough to accommodate future transportation modes such as rapid bus or light rail.

LAND USE STRATEGY. The whole area could benefit from a Transect-Based approach to zoning and land use. The Transect-Based Map provides initial thoughts about appropriate intensity of development, flexibility of land use and improvements to the public realm. The entire area is provided with a series of overlays that refer to the intended levels of intensity. They include:

T3- an area that is predominantly residential – unlikely to change uses, but could greatly benefit from better connections to the other zones.

T4- an area that includes a mix of uses that focus primarily on a neighborhood (as opposed to regional) service area. The mix is low-intensity and fits well with the residential scale of its surroundings.

T5- an area that includes a more vigorous mix of uses. This area benefits from easy access to multiple transportation options, including cars and busses.

SD- an area that is dedicated to railway tracks and supportive uses. This area can remain to be economically important to the Town and should be treated differently than the other mixed-use areas. Transitions to adjacent Zones must be looked at carefully.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN



CORRIDOR

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS MAP

This map has been created to clearly reflect the importance of the most significant components of a Corridor – intended to protect existing high value neighborhoods and increase livability by providing focused and mixed-use opportunities..

This map makes specific recommendations about:

Thoroughfare Hierarchy – considering dimension, capacity, continuity, retail frontage, pedestrian comfort. Further divided into

- *“A” Grid – expected not to deviate from rigorous standards guaranteeing high activity and pedestrian comfort*
- *“B” Grid – still of high quality, but less active uses, or more rural character.*
- *Civic and Open Spaces – including existing and future recommended public spaces and connections to existing parks.*
- *Vistas – special locations requiring increased architectural sensibility and design effort*
- *Gateways – as important non-building markers reflecting the Town’s boundaries*
- *Parking – areas reserved for consideration as mass parking locations*

CORRIDOR

PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY



PUBLIC REALM

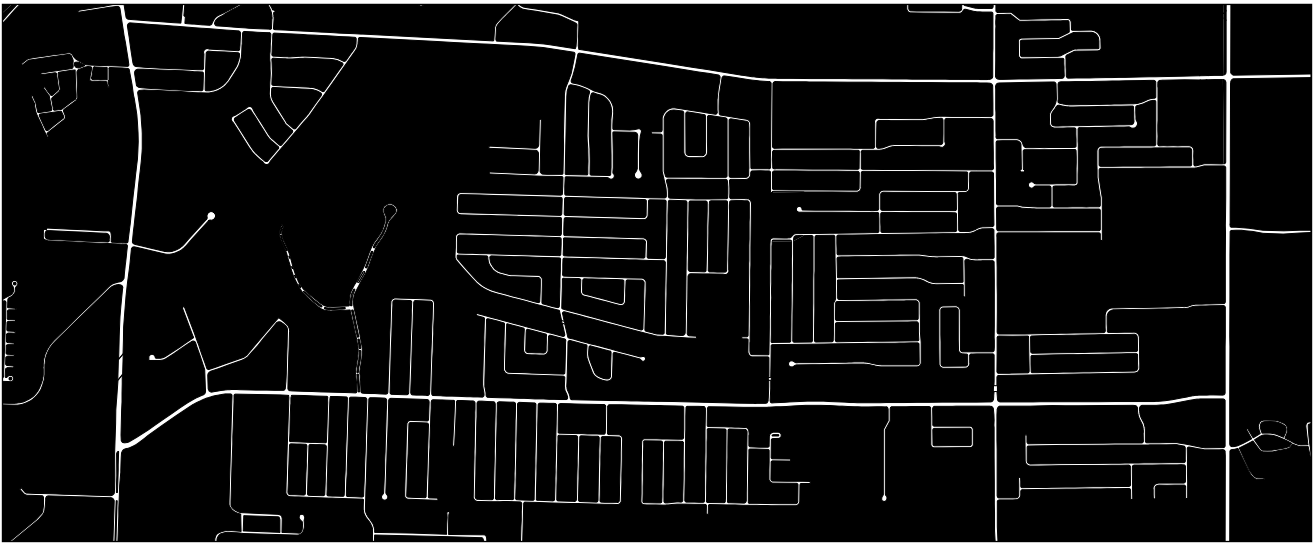
- Reinforce A-B
 1. improve pedestrian conditions, including crossing times and sidewalk widths
 2. protect rural character at neighborhood entries
- Focus Investment
 1. gateway opportunity
 2. shopping center redevelopment
 3. improved accessibility
- Consider new Civic components
 1. improve connections to open space system
 2. increase visibility of important cultural sites



0 2,000 6,000ft

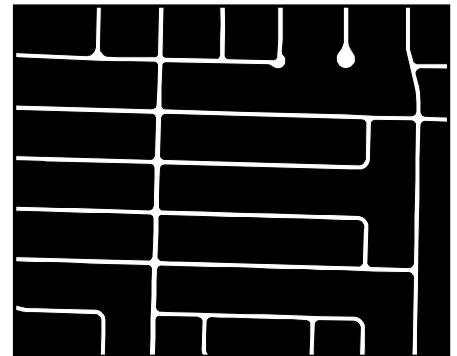
CORRIDOR

BLOCKS



LONG BLOCK TYPE

- Long residential blocks
- Appropriate for single use
- Incremental redevelopment at a small scale.



LARGE BLOCK TYPE

- Supportive of opportunities for more intense redevelopment



NEIGHBORHOOD

NEIGHBORHOOD

EXISTING CONDITIONS



NEIGHBORHOOD

EXISTING CONDITIONS

WHY WE SELECTED THIS AREA

TRANSIT-READY

The area surrounding the intersection of Union Road and Genesee Road will provide excellent opportunities to consider several of Cheektowaga's unique issues. This area – a 500 acre Study Area centered at the Union and Genesee intersection – includes residential neighborhoods (mostly consisting of very small lots and yards, a shopping center, a variety of thoroughfare types from highway to neighborhood street, important heritage and historic sites, a hodgepodge of land uses and excellent access to the Buffalo Airport. Just a 10-minute walk to the south, the Study Area also intersects the abandoned corridor considered as a future transit way. As in the Transit-Ready Study, these are the same ingredients that exist in highly-valued neighborhoods across the Country, but because of their condition, configuration and form, the area is prevented from being widely considered a great place to live. Unlike the Transit-Ready Study Area, however, the Neighborhood Center will most likely be transformed at a different scale – smaller and incremental investments in smaller land parcels, upgraded streetscape considerations and a potential “pruning” of some residential areas, will all be considered in the recommendations for this Area.

Mechanics:

This area consists of a ½ mile radius pedestrian shed – an area equivalent to about 500 acres. This area includes a wide variety of land uses and potential for upgraded streetscape considerations, reinvestment in existing shopping centers, a more comprehensive look at land use and compatibility and considerations for stabilizing otherwise transitional residential areas. This planning study is intended to illustrate the possibilities of future change – short and long term – and the boundaries are therefore loose. It is expected that the ideas and recommendations that appear here are to continue throughout the Town of Cheektowaga, rather than ending at a specific property boundary.

NEIGHBORHOOD

EXISTING CONDITIONS

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

LAND USE. This Area is an important sector located at the crossroads of two major thoroughfares. Mix of uses is moderate – mostly consisting of residential and retail, with a smattering of office. A relatively recent focus on light manufacturing and industrial/warehousing/distributing has sprung up due to the proximity of the airport. Studying this Area permits focus on transitional neighborhoods, improvements to thoroughfares and streetscape, protection of historic elements and consideration of often incompatible land uses. Future evolution of the built environment, at first glance, is most likely to include improvements to existing shopping centers, better pedestrian access and considerations for improving residential conditions.

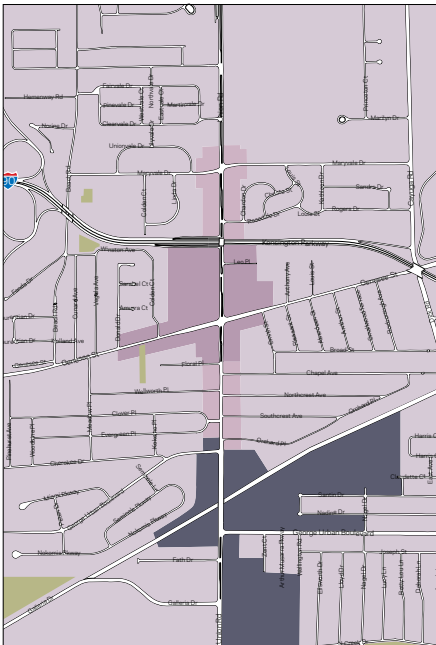
THOROUGHFARES. The Area contains a wide array of thoroughfare types – from Thruway to residential street. While many of the residential streets are not in need of immediate change, larger capacity streets such as Union Road present a distinct opportunity to create a more pedestrian-oriented corridor that may even include a greenway or linear park. The thoroughfare network itself provides fair connections and provides decent mobility through the Study Area. Two corridors present themselves as convenient boundaries – Kensington parkway to the north and the continuation of the transportation corridor to the south – to provide containment to reinvestment strategies. North of Kensington Parkway, growth will be minimal and near the transportation corridor will have potential for growth similar to that at Walden and Harlem. Changes to thoroughfares in the Neighborhood Center areas should be focused on improving accessibility and making pedestrian, bicycle and motor vehicle mobility as equitable as possible. Strong multi-modal connections should be considered for access to the transportation corridor. Trails and pedestrian-only connections should be considered as a way to strengthen neighborhood values by connecting them to local open spaces.

BLOCK STRUCTURE. Block size is an important factor in considering the type of intensity and use a particular land area can support. Block size in the Neighborhood Center is presently and should continue to be accommodating of low to moderate scale development or redevelopment. With few large land parcels in the area, redevelopment scenarios will likely take the form of upgrades to existing uses – potentially mixing residential and retail. Some apartment complexes could be redeveloped to upgrade the form and the quality of construction.

Depending on market strategy, some of the larger blocks to the east approaching the airport could be considered for special uses that require highway and airport access.

NEIGHBORHOOD

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN



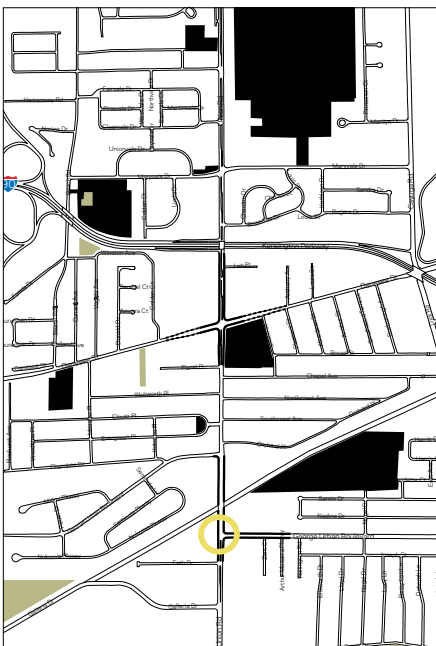
TRANSECT MAP

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN

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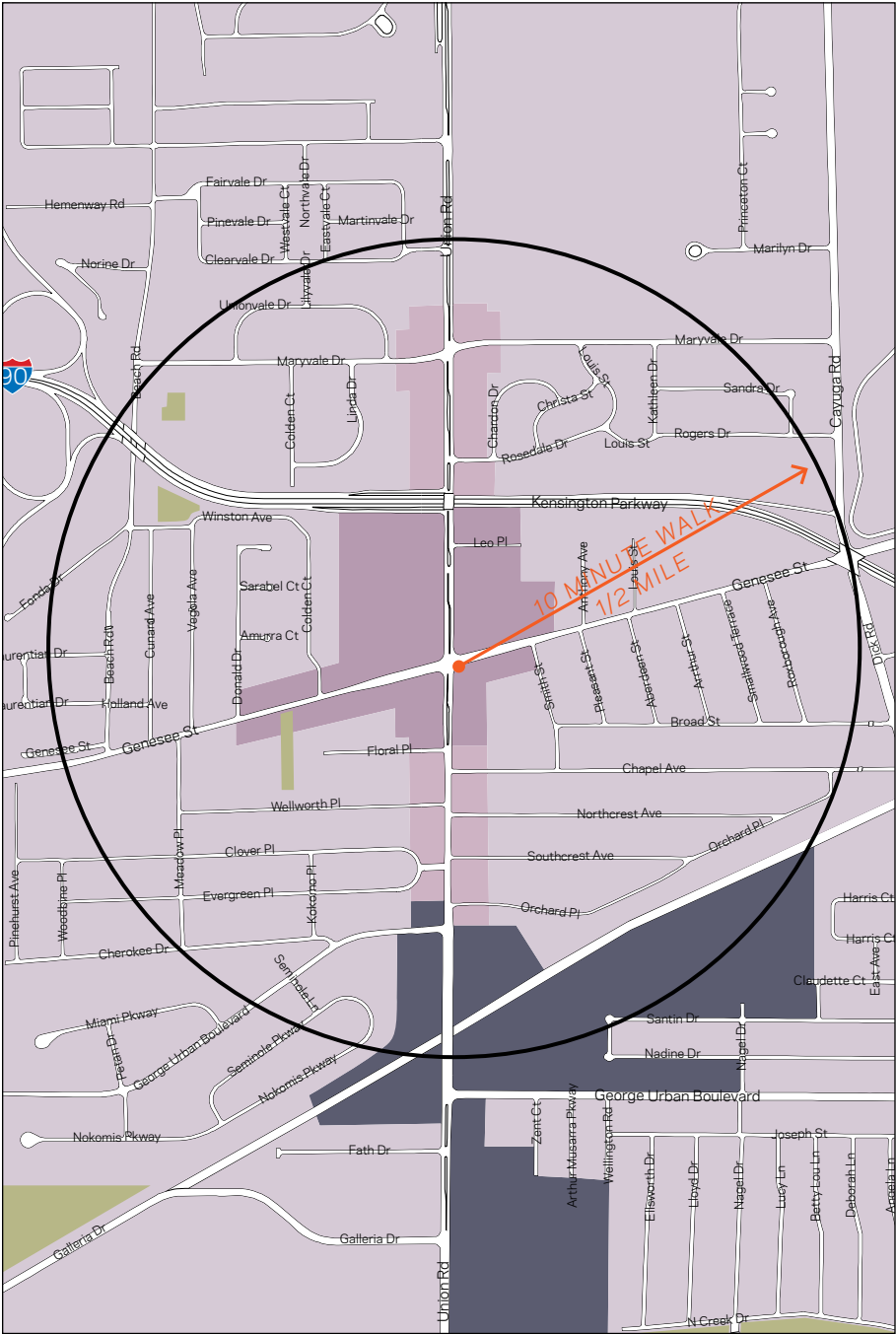
This particular Study Area has been chosen to describe the potential for change in an area that includes transitional neighborhoods, neighborhood retail, heavily travelled thoroughfares, historic and heritage sites and opportunities for light to moderate re-investment. This area also includes opportunities to consider access to future transportation options and a thorough study of land use and economics.



SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS PLAN

NEIGHBORHOOD

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN



TRANSECT MAP

- Open Space
- T3 Zone (Sub-Urban)
- T4 Zone (General Urban)
- T5 Zone (Urban Center)
- SD Zone (Special District)



NEIGHBORHOOD

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN

TRANSECT-BASED MAP

The Neighborhood Study Area can be divided into three Transect Zones and one Special District.

The areas immediately adjacent to the intersection of Union and Genesee represent a sector of Cheektowaga that could support moderate redevelopment scenarios. Within a ten-minute walk of the intersection of Union and Genesee, there are a number of elements that could help inspire economic development. These include:

- + Airport Plaza
- + Neighborhood Mixed-use along Union Road between Genesee and Galleria
- + Improved walkability and pedestrian character along Union Road

A significant amount of traffic filters through the area and the potential exists to reconsider the area as a thriving mixed-use center that is within walking distance of future transportation modes such as rapid bus or light rail.

LAND USE STRATEGY. The whole area could benefit from a Transect-Based approach to zoning and land use. The Transect-Based Map provides initial thoughts about appropriate intensity of development, flexibility of land use and improvements to the public realm. The entire area is provided with a series of overlays that refer to the intended levels of intensity. They include:

T3- an area that is predominantly residential – unlikely to change uses, but could greatly benefit from better connections to the other zones.

T4- an area that includes a mix of uses that focus primarily on a neighborhood (as opposed to regional) service area. The mix is low-intensity and fits well with the residential scale of its surroundings. This Zone is reserved for the edges of important thoroughfares as it provides an excellent transition from all-residential to intensely mixed use.

T5- an area that includes a more vigorous mix of uses – potentially vertically in a single building, as in living above a shop or office with retail ground floor. This area benefits from easy access to multiple transportation options, including cars and busses. In this area, residential uses will generally take the form of apartment or condominium buildings.

SD- an area that is dedicated to railway tracks and supportive uses. This area can remain to be economically important to the Town and should be treated differently than the other mixed-use areas. It will continue to provide a needed service for the region and should be permitted to remain without the need for changes to zoning. Transitions to adjacent Zones must be looked at carefully.

NEIGHBORHOOD

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN



SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS PLAN

- “A” Grid
- “B” Grid
- Required Retail Frontage
- Recommended Retail Frontage
- Existing + Reserved Civic Building
- Existing + Reserved Open Space
- Recommended Terminated Vista
- Gateways
- Existing + Reserved Parking

NEIGHBORHOOD

DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PLAN

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS MAP

This map has been created to clearly reflect the importance of the most significant components of a Neighborhood centered location – and to guide development toward a more urban and more valued character. This map makes specific recommendations about:

Thoroughfare Hierarchy – considering dimension, capacity, continuity, retail frontage, pedestrian comfort. Further divided into

- *“A” Grid – expected not to deviate from rigorous standards guaranteeing high activity and pedestrian comfort*
- *“B” Grid – still of high quality, but less active uses or necessary pedestrian-hostile elements such as structured parking entrances or secure building frontages*
- *Civic and Open Spaces – including existing and future recommended public spaces*
- *Vistas – special locations requiring increased architectural sensibility and design effort*
- *Gateways – as important non-building markers reflecting the Town’s boundaries*
- *Parking – areas reserved for consideration as mass parking locations*

PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY



1. address streetscape level of finish and character
2. improve pedestrian conditions, including crossing times and sidewalk widths

1. increased design intention
2. increased building height
3. attention to creating a neighborhood center

1. create public spaces as key assets for the city
2. utilize public spaces as termination points
3. consider transportation center as key public space



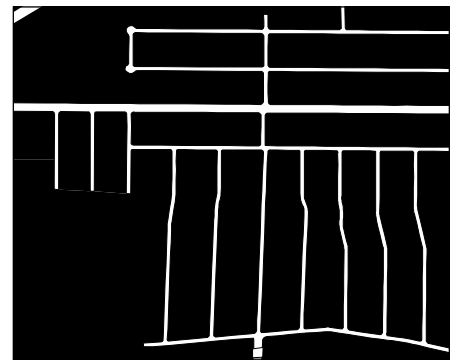
NEIGHBORHOOD

BLOCKS



NARROW BLOCK TYPE

- Fine-grain residential
- Highly walkable streets
- Neighborhood scale mixed-use



LARGER BLOCK TYPE

- Large scale mixed-use
- Pedestrians and automobile equity
- Transit leverage

