

A Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Porter: **Connecting Our Past With the Future**



FINAL DRAFT PLAN - AUGUST 2004

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***Town of Porter Comprehensive Plan:
Connecting Our Past With The Future***

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1.0 The Porter Comprehensive Plan

1.1 Porter's History

On June 1, 1812, by an act of the New York State Legislature, the Town of Porter was formed from land that was previously part of the Town of Cambria. At that time the Town of Porter included what is now the Town of Wilson, the western portion of Newfane as well as its current land area. Named in honor of Judge Augustus Porter, a member of one of the leading families in the Niagara County and the first Judge of the County, Porter was the fourth town into which Niagara County was divided. The Town's two population centers are the Hamlet of Ransomville to the southeast and the Village of Youngstown the northwest; each has its own history and identity:

Hamlet of Ransomville

The Hamlet of Ransomville was founded in 1817 by frontiersman Gideon Curtiss, Mr. Curtiss is credited with felling the first timber, building a log cabin and establishing the first tavern in what is now known in Ransomville. The Hamlet was name after Jehial C. S. Ransom, who came to the area in 1826, was a member of a notable family and served as the community's first postmaster.

Ransomville has historically served as the market for the farms of Porter, and portions of the Towns of Cambria, Wilson and Lewiston. By 1820, lumbering, corn, wheat and vegetables crops had made the Hamlet a thriving place. The railroad came to the community in 1876 and played a major role in the transportation of farm products and passengers. In 1907 ten passenger trains went through the Hamlet each day. In 1910 an average of 28 carloads of apples were shipped daily.

In the 1920's the use of trucks and tractors to transport goods became more prevalent and labor saving machines were devised. Passenger rail service to Ransomville was discontinued in 1932. The combine (a combination harvester–thresher machine) was also introduced to farming during this time period and greatly reduced the number of workers that were needed on farms.

Village of Youngstown

John Young, proprietor of the first store and the Village's namesake, founded the Village of Youngstown in 1811. The Village's proximity to Fort Niagara and its large waterfront were important influences on its development. The Fort provided a sense of security and attracted skilled tradesmen and storekeepers who supplied the Fort with needed supplies and services. In 1813, the British burned the entire Village in retaliation for the Americans burning what is now Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The Village was gradually rebuilt and by the 1840's it had many fine homes and stores. Lumber, shipbuilding and fishing were important businesses. The Village was incorporated in 1854. Other contributors to Youngstown growth were the area's moderate climate, rich soils and its closeness to Canada. A fruit culture developed which led to the development of industries such as barrel making, fruit packing and storage, apple drying and cider and vinegar making.

Between 1852 and 1897 three railroad lines were established in Youngstown. The first two lines went out of business after only one train run each. Construction was completed on the third line in 1897 and it remained in operation until 1932. The Niagara Gorge Railroad carried supplies to the Village and Fort Niagara as well as thousands of visitors to the area. In the early 1900's Youngstown was a popular summer resort.

Youngstown was a station in the "underground railroad" and served as crossing point for escaping slaves to enter Canada. The village's waterfront also played an active role in the smuggling of goods to and from Canada.

Despite changes over the years, the Town of Porter has maintained its appeal as a place to live and raise a family. The Town has evolved from a farming community into a bedroom community for those employed in nearby cities. Residential development has increased and the number of farms in the community has diminished but those that remain contribute greatly to the community's aesthetic appeal.

1.2 Principles for The Future

The Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Porter documents the Town's characteristics and trends regarding population, land use, the environment, economic opportunities and community services. The Plan not only serves as a "blueprint" for the future, but includes information needed to measure progress as future updates are completed. The Plan provides a vision and illustrates this vision to potential funding sources as the Town continues efforts to secure state and federal funding. Additionally, the Plan includes a "future land use" plan that will be used to guide decisions in a way that the community agrees is the part of the Town's vision. The characteristics of the Town – open space, rural, agricultural, good quality of life, historic, waterfront – will be maintained and protected when decisions are based on the Comprehensive Plan.

Principles are a set of guidelines that form the basis, or assumptions, for the Comprehensive Plan in the Town of Porter. These fundamental, key principles represent the themes that were voiced throughout the planning process and the input received from the public, special interest groups, elected/appointed officials and Town staff. The method of realizing these Principles may vary and recommendations are provided in the next Chapter.

The following Principles underlie many of the Plan's recommendations:

- Principle 1 - Maintain the rural, agricultural character of Porter
- Principle 2 – Preserve the waterfront and ensure accessibility to all residents
- Principle 3 - Improve the quality of our environment
- Principle 4 - Promote resident involvement and encourage communication and cooperation among residents
- Principle 5 – Strengthen development in and around the Village of Youngstown and Hamlet of Ransomville

Principle 1 - Maintain the rural, agricultural character of Porter

The rural and agricultural characteristics of Porter are its greatest assets. Residents might describe specific aspects of the Town in different ways, but most would agree that the character should be protected. Most residents would also agree that low-density residential land uses, combined with ample open space, is a critical component of the community's character. An abundance of wildlife and access to historic and natural resources, such as Old Fort Niagara, Fort Niagara and Four Mile Creek State Parks, Lake Ontario and Niagara River, also contribute to making Porter a unique and attractive place to live and visit. To summarize this Principle:

- Maintain Rural, Agricultural Characteristics
- Maintain Low-density Residential Uses and Open Space
- Ensure Access to Historic and Natural Resources

Principle 2 – Preserve the waterfront and ensure accessibility to all residents

The waterfront is an important community asset that borders two sides of the community: the Niagara River and Lake Ontario. Residents are interested in protecting both visual and physical access to this unique resource. The Niagara River is the source of the County's drinking water, a significant stopover for numerous species of migratory birds and a wintering place for many others, as well as an important resource for recreational fishing. Lake Ontario provides fishing and boating opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Steps should be taken to protect the Town's river and lake resources from overuse by both residents and visitors as well as to protect the shoreline from erosion. Limiting the height and proximity of structures along the waterfront could assist in the protection of viewshed for residents viewing the water. Improved access to the waterfront – though trails and open space/park resources, will also allow residents to enjoy this important resource.

- Reduce Potential Viewshed Infringements
- Maintain Physical Access to the Waterfront
- Promote Quality Development along the Waterfront

Principle 3 – Protect and improve the quality of our environment

The location of CWM in the Town of Porter has an impact on the community and how residents and visitors perceive the south central portion of the community. The potential impacts on the environment, as they relate to CWM and beyond, is an important consideration for all policy that is developed for the Town. The protection of open space, wetlands, shorelines, ground water and wildlife habitats should also be considered. Points to remember include:

- Limit future impacts of CWM
- Protect natural resources in the Town including, but not limited to, open space, wetlands, shorelines, ground water and wildlife habitats

Principle 4 - Promote resident involvement and encourage communication and cooperation among residents

The very high response rate to the Community Survey and attendance at public meetings through the planning process serves to confirm that residents in Porter are interested in being involved when decisions are made that will impact their lives. They care very deeply about decisions that could potentially impact their ability to enjoy the lifestyle they envisioned when they chose to make Porter their home. The Principle of involving the public is important as the Town moves forward with any plans. Town officials should consider:

- Improve Opportunities for Resident Involvement
- Provide Internet opportunities for Resident Involvement

Principle 5 – Strengthen development in and around the Village of Youngstown and Hamlet of Ransomville

There appears to be a desire for adding housing for seniors that require less maintenance than the traditional detached single-family home. It is also anticipated that the population of the Town will increase and additional housing will be needed to accommodate the larger numbers. To accommodate the larger population and still maintain the significant open space that is important to maintaining the community's character, higher denser development should be concentrated in or near the Village of Youngstown or the Hamlet of Ransomville. As public sewer service is not currently available in Ransomville, this may need to be addressed in the future. To summarize:

- Promote Denser Development in the Village and Hamlet area
- Provide Housing for all Income Levels
- Consider Providing Public Sewer Service in Ransomville

1.3 Comprehensive Plans in New York State

New York State provides procedures for municipalities to prepare and adopt, by local ordinance or law, a comprehensive plan. New York State statutes define a comprehensive plan as:

“...the materials, written and/or graphic, including, but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the town... The town comprehensive plan...shall...serve as a basis for land use regulation, infrastructure development, public and private investment and any plans which may detail one or more topics of a town comprehensive plan.”

Town Law, under Section 272-a defines two important impacts of adopting a comprehensive plan:

- “All town land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to town law.
- All plans for capital projects of another governmental agency on land included in the town comprehensive plan...shall take such plan into consideration.”

The comprehensive plan is a, “means to promote the health, safety and general welfare of Town residents and offer consideration to the needs of those in the region of which the Town is a part.”¹ In general, the plan will:

- “Provide a process for identifying community resources, long range community needs and commonly held goals.
- Provide a process for community consensus.
- Provide a blueprint for future government actions.”²

The Comprehensive Plan is an important planning tool that serves as a guide to public and private decisions about development in the Town of Porter. The Plan is a guide for public action and a statement of what the public wants their community to become. This Comprehensive Plan includes a survey of existing conditions to provide a framework for change that is likely to occur in Porter. The Plan is an expression of how the Town sees itself in the future and presents a desirable pattern of development.

¹ New York State Department of State. Local Government Handbook: Zoning and the Comprehensive Plan. Albany: Department of State. 2000. p. 204.

² Ibid. p. 210.

1.4 Using the Plan In Porter

With the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update for the Town of Porter, the elected officials are demonstrating their commitment to maintaining the positive aspect of the Town and improving those areas targeted for changes. Elected officials for the Town will use the plan to understand how the residents see the future of their community; local codes and ordinances should reflect this vision that residents have helped to outline and define. The Town officials will be responsible for implementing many of the specific actions outlined in the Plan to ensure the residents' vision is realized.

The Comprehensive Plan will guide Planning Board and Zoning Board members, as appointed public servants, as they review development applications; this will ensure implementation continues on a consistent basis over the life of the Plan. The vision and actions outlined by the residents should always be the top priority as decisions are made on new proposed development to ensure they conform to the goals and policies outlined in this Plan.

Town employees are also responsible for the implementation of the Plan. The goals and policies will be the “measuring stick” for employees as they advise and work with residents in Porter. Municipal employees can also use the plan when interpreting legislative mandates, making administrative decisions, enforcing development related codes and prioritizing work efforts.

Finally, local residents and community groups in the Town of Porter can use the plan to ensure that they are aware of the future direction desired by the residents. Residents may also use the plan as a reference when making residential relocation choices, evaluating the effectiveness of local government, lobbying for financial or legislative support and when choosing political representation.

All aspects of a community (environmental, fiscal, economic development and social) are tied together and are considered as goals, policies and actions are prepared for the Town of Porter. The Town's Comprehensive Plan considers the potential impacts of all aspects of the community – as is evidenced in the detailed inventory included in this Plan. The future land use plan and goals, policies and actions in the next Chapter were prepared with the this inter-relationship as a key driving force

.

2.0 Implementation of the Plan

2.1 Future Land Use Plan

The future land use plan for the Town of Porter focuses on protecting the rural character and agricultural history of the community. Higher density development is focused around the Village and Hamlet areas to maintain open space and agricultural land in other areas of the Town. A “Community Center” area that surrounds Town Hall would provide additional open space and recreational amenities to create a destination in the Town. The following outlines the Future Land Use Plan for the Town based on the inventory and analysis contained in this Comprehensive Plan:

Agricultural/Residential

Agriculture is an important part of the Town’s character. The majority of the Town is in this classification to ensure protection of viable farmland and minimize development that infringes on the character and productivity of agricultural land. The eastern and northern portions of the Town are included in this category where limited residential development should be allowed. The Town would not extend sewer and water in to these areas under normal circumstances in order to limit the growth areas in Porter around the Village of Youngstown and the Hamlet of Ransomville.

Waterfront Residential

The waterfront residential areas of the Town include the lands north of Lake Road along Lake Ontario and the area along the Niagara River at Fort Niagara State Park and the southern boundary of the Town. These areas would include waterfront housing and complementary commercial uses (marinas, boat launches, yacht clubs) to take advantage of the waterfront location of the Town. The waterfront residential would focus on preserving views to the waterfront and providing adjacent access whenever possible. This will allow for higher-end residential development in the Town while still providing visual and physical access for all Town residents.

Low Density Residential

The area of the Town of Porter designated as low density residential on the Future Land Use Plan includes the areas south of Lockport Road to the west of the Robert Moses Parkway. This area would be primarily single family residential uses mixed with the existing agricultural uses. These single-family homes would be primarily on larger lots that are not serviced.

Village Related Residential

This would include the highest density of housing in the Town and would be located north and south of the Village of Youngstown to the west of the Robert Moses Parkway. Housing would include apartment (senior and affordable housing) and higher density single-family attached and detached housing. Housing densities would decrease as the distance from this area increases; the eastern portion of the Town would be the least dense area and protected as agricultural/residential to maintain the Town's existing character and would help maintain the quality of life for residents in Porter. Future servicing in the Town would be limited to the Village Related Residential and Hamlet/Ransomville Center areas.

Hamlet/Ransomville Center

The Hamlet of Ransomville designation includes enhancement of the neighborhood commercial/mixed use development that exists in the Ransomville Hamlet. This area would continue to accommodate primarily local service type retail and varied housing types. The land use designation is centered at the Ransomville Center (intersection of Youngstown-Lockport Road and Ransomville Road) and the area that surrounds the Hamlet. Ransomville Center should be redesigned and developed to become an attractive "Center" that includes a variety of public enhancements and improvements.

Porter Center

The Porter Center is located at the corner of Lockport Road and Creek Road. The Town Hall is located here and can be enhanced with public improvements and other amenities that will create an attractive community-based area tied together with a green system that includes a comprehensive pedestrian circulation system (both sidewalks and trails). The Porter Center would include a large gathering space for Town-wide events and would create an identity of "Porter Center" for both residents and visitors.

Industrial

The industrial area designated in the Town of Porter is located in the southern portion of the community. This area is adjacent to the current CWM landfill and US Army lands that are currently industrial land uses. This area is designated for industrial development because of its proximity to the existing industrial uses and to minimize the impacts on the rural character and agricultural lands. Designation of these areas will allow for the industrial tax-base to grow if industrial uses seek to locate in Porter.

Figure 2-1 Future Land Use Plan
Town of Porter



Gateway

The gateway area of the Town of Porter includes the Lockport Road corridor as vehicles exit the Robert Moses Parkway. This point is the gateway to both the Village of Youngstown, including the waterfront, and the Town of Porter. Signage and landscaping should be added to the exit area to create an inviting and attractive entry in to the Town. The gateway should not allow for any type of strip, retail development, but rather should enhance the existing residential / agricultural character that exists in the Town portion of the corridor.

2.2 Goals, Policies and Actions

As a precursor to the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, in April 2002, a Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee was formed that included all residents who volunteered to participate. That committee collaborated with the University of Buffalo, Studio of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning in the preparation of a document entitled “Towards a Smart Growth Master Plan: Assessment and Recommendations for the Town of Porter”. In June 2003, the committee was reconstructed and the Town Board selected our firm to prepare this Comprehensive Plan.

The process of preparing the Comprehensive Plan included a vision session with the Committee, regular Committee meetings, a random community survey, focus group sessions and several interactive public forums. The information collected through the process was used to develop the goals, policies and actions included in this Plan. The goals will guide future decision making for the Town of Porter to ensure that the residents are able to maintain the high quality of life they have come to enjoy. Below each goal are policy statements, which further define the goal; the policies are then accompanied by actions that identify specific ways the residents and Town can achieve the stated goal. The actions include information on responsibilities, estimated costs and time frames. The costs and time frame should be a guide; additional information may be required before implementation.

The following goals address the various aspects of the Town of Porter to reflect the desired character and quality of life expressed by residents through the planning process.

2.3 Physical Characteristics Goals, Policies and Actions

Regional Growth

GOAL 1 - To acknowledge the role of the Town of Porter in Western New York as an agriculturally-based, bedroom community and work towards inter-municipal cooperation with surrounding communities

Policy - 1 Understanding the role of Porter in the entire Western New York and Southern Ontario region allows residents and officials to make better-informed decisions

Action 1 - Strengthen Ties with Niagara-on-the-Lake and the lower River corridor communities

Town officials should work together with officials from Niagara-on-the-Lake, and other lower River communities, to determine potentials for the development of a unique tourism and economic development strategy that could build on the physical relationship of the two communities, their accessibility to boaters and their history. The “horseshoe” that links the Town of Porter and Niagara-on-the-Lake could be developed as a destination that is tied with various themes. These two communities are proximate to each other and the concept of developing a formalized scenic drive as a destination that links the two communities should be considered.

Responsibility: Town Board
Niagara-on-the-Lake
Lower River Communities

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-Going

Action 2 - Continue to Work with the Village of
Youngstown Officials

The Town of Porter should maintain a working relationship with the Village of Youngstown and allow for open discussions regarding the consolidation of services. Discussions between the two communities should focus on issues that impact both communities, allowing the communities to identify ways to jointly address these issues and develop a united way of addressing future opportunities and constraints. As agreements are made, the Town and Village should also consider the possibility of dissolving the Village to reduce the redundancies in services and facilities offered by the two communities.

Responsibility: Town Board
Village Board
Planning Boards

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-Going

Action 3 - Retain a Grant Writer to Seek Funding for
Programs and Facilities Recommended in the
Comprehensive Plan

Many of the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan could be eligible for funding once the Plan is adopted. The Town should retain a professional grant writer to seek and submit applications for various projects outlined in this Plan. Funding could be sought for trail improvements, housing development, developing physical plans or other planning efforts outlined in the Plan.

Responsibility: Town Board
Grant Writer

Cost: Varies by Grant Being Sought

Time Frame: Immediate

Action 4 - Actively Participate in Regional Efforts

Because the community does not sit in isolation, the Town of Porter should participate in Regional efforts to promote the region’s unique agriculture and historic resources in conjunction with the Niagara County Planning Development and Tourism Department, surrounding communities and regional groups. This would include the establishment of a committee that includes a Town Board Member as a liaison, to ensure regular meetings and coordination of these efforts. In addition to the tourism and agricultural aspects, the Town can coordinate efforts for marketing, economic development, historic preservation and land use programs. These efforts are important opportunities for future savings and decision-making in the Town.

Responsibility:	Town Board Regional Cooperation Committee Planning Board Surrounding Communities Niagara County Planning
Cost:	N/A
Time Frame:	On-Going

**Policy - 2 In Porter, promoting the public's health and safety
is the basis for decision-making**

Action 5 - Adopt The Comprehensive Plan

The Town Board should adopt this Comprehensive Plan, which incorporates many of the concepts that have been obtained from residents. The Plan has been prepared with input opportunities for all residents and businesses to ensure that all concerns could be identified and addressed in its development. The Plan is the culmination of an on-going planning process that includes a clear direction and vision for the Town of Porter. Oversight of the implementation of the Plan is essential and the Town Board should maintain the Comprehensive Plan Committee in this capacity. The Committee could spearhead, monitor and report on the activity of implementation. Reports would be submitted and presented to the Town Board on a quarterly basis. This Committee could also spearhead future updates of the plan. As a legal basis for any land use regulation changes, the Comprehensive Plan should be revisited every three to five years to ensure the direction and vision is updated to meet changing conditions.

Responsibility:	Town Board Comprehensive Plan Committee
Cost:	N/A
Time Frame:	Immediate – Adopt 3-5 Years – Update

Policy - 3 The Town of Porter works with all local, state and federal agencies to ensure that decisions made in the Town are in the best interest of residents

Action 6 - Continue to Coordinate with NYS DOT

The Town of Porter should continue to coordinate planning efforts with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) on future improvements to roads under their jurisdiction, especially the Robert Moses Parkway, as well as other agencies that may have an impact on the roadway infrastructure in Porter to keep the roads safe for residents.

Responsibility:	Town Board NYS DOT
Cost:	N/A
Time Frame:	On-Going

Action 7 - Coordinate with NYS DOS on Quality
Communities Initiatives

The Town of Porter should establish a Committee, potentially the Regional Cooperation Committee, to liaise with the NYS DOS and the Quality Communities Initiative. This would include maintaining information on applying for funds, interacting with DOS staff and networking to determine how to utilize this program in the Town of Porter. One or more Committee members should be sponsored by the Town of Porter and encouraged to attend the annual conference held by NYS DOS to improve relationships and keep up to date on the program.

Responsibility: Town Board
Regional Cooperation Committee
Planning Board
NYS DOS

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: Immediate

Action 8 - Coordinate NYS OPRHP for “Resident”
passes to State Parks

The Town should approach the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to determine the potential for “resident passes” to the two State parks. Many residents are concerned that fees must be paid to access the parks and that much of the waterfront access is only available in these areas. Town representatives should be proactive and meet with the State on a regular basis to maintain contact and improve relationships. This will help to lower the costs for residents interested in accessing the waterfront and build a stronger relationship with the State. The state currently offers free weekday admission to NYS residents over the age of 62, and this program could be expanded.

Responsibility: Town Board
NYS OPRHP

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: Immediate

Action 9 - Improve Communications and Relationship
with NYS DEC

The Town should continue to work with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to maintain environmentally sensitive areas under their jurisdiction. The lines of communication remaining open is important because of the various issues that face the Town of Porter now and potentially into the future (shoreline protection, floodplain maintenance, CWM).

Responsibility: Town Board
 NYS DEC

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: Immediate

Action 10 - Consider Joseph Davis State Park Road
Access

The Town should approach the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to determine the potential for maintaining the road through Joseph Davis State Park as an open corridor throughout the year. Many residents in Porter use this access road that is closed throughout the winter. By remaining open, this road allows better access to the Town of Porter. In pursuing this, the Town and State must consider that this is a park road and that access could impair the park experience. The speed limit should remain low, the lanes should not be widened and the State would have to upgrade the road to accommodate this level of traffic.

Responsibility: Town Board
 NYS OPRHP

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: 1-3 Years

Land Use

GOAL 2 - To coordinate growth in the Town of Porter that complements the existing agricultural character and capitalizes on its unique waterfront location

Policy - 4 Future development in the Town of Porter conforms to our Future Land Use Plan and is ensured through updating land use regulations

Action 11 - Update Land Use Regulations

The Town of Porter should update their Land Use regulations to reflect the findings of this Comprehensive Plan to ensure that all elements work together and there are no contradictions. The zoning should reflect the recommendations of the future land use plan and the designations outlined in that portion of the Plan. Issues to consider in the regulations include, but are not limited to: agricultural protection, high density housing near Village and Hamlet, waterfront viewshed protection, light pollution, mixed-use development near the Village and Hamlet and maintaining the rural character. A gateway should be developed off of the Robert Moses Parkway to access a new “Porter Center” that would surround Town Hall. The Town should also make a commitment to re-examine its land use regulations each time the Comprehensive Plan is updated in the future.

Responsibility:	Town Board Planning Board Zoning Board
Cost:	\$50,000 - \$60,000
Time Frame:	Immediate

Action 12 - Prepare Development Limitation Regulations

The Town should outline development limitations to identify specific areas of the Town where additional restrictions are necessary. The shoreline along Lake Ontario and the Niagara River are especially subject to potential impacts of development and unrestricted shoreline protection that currently occurs. The development limitations regulations should also consider floodplains and wetlands and not allow further development in these areas. Special consideration should be given to any proposals that come before the Town, requesting a permit to construct any type of strip, suburban-style development; design guidelines would help protect the community character in Porter, which is an important part of the environment.

Responsibility:	Town Board Planning Board
Cost:	N/A – Part of Updating Land Use Regulation
Time Frame:	Immediate

Action 13 - Regulate Waterfront Residential
Development

Porter's location on the water is an asset that should benefit all of the community, not just waterfront property owners. The Town should develop land use requirements for properties along the waterfront, with respect to height and size limitations. Height limits should be implemented to preserve views to the water, maintain the visual integrity of the community and to maintain the overall waterfront character of the community. In addition, the Town should begin purchasing easements or land along the waterfront to move towards the goal of a continuous waterfront trail; this can be done in conjunction with new approvals for residential development.

Responsibility: Town Board
Planning Board

Cost: N/A – Part of Updating Land Use
Regulation

Time Frame: Immediate

Policy - 5 Nodes of higher density development in the Town of Porter is focused in and around the Village of Youngstown and the Hamlet of Ransomville

Action 14 - Promote Development Within Existing Commercial Centers

The Village of Youngstown and Hamlet of Ransomville offer Town residents a variety of goods and services. Historically, retail, commercial and restaurant development has occurred at these locations, contributing to the Town’s existing land use character. In order to continue preserving the open space, farmland and residential quality of the Town, future high intensity development should be directed to the existing nodes, ensuring their viability and preserving the qualities that residents and visitors have come to appreciate. The future land use plan promotes higher density housing, especially senior housing, near the Village and in the Hamlet to encourage neighborhood development that is proximate to needed services and the clustering of retail sales and services to accommodate the population.

Responsibility:	Town Board Planning Board
Cost:	N/A – Part of Updating Land Use Regulation
Time Frame:	Immediate

Action 15 - Develop Gateways at Primary Entry Points

The Town should develop gateways into Porter at the following locations:

- ❑ Robert Moses Parkway and Lockport Road
- ❑ Lockport Road and Creek Road
- ❑ Robert Moses Parkway/Town Line
- ❑ Lake Road/Town Line
- ❑ River Road/Town Line
- ❑ Ransomville Road/Youngstown-Lockport Road

These gateways should include attractive signage, landscaping, specialty paving patterns and banners that welcome people into the Town and reflect the local character and “flavor” of the community.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: \$15,000-\$20,000 each

Time Frame: 3-5 Years

Action 16 - Prepare a Streetscape Improvement Plan for the Hamlet of Ransomville

In order to create a sense of arrival and a “sense of place” in the Ransomville Hamlet, the Town should work with a design team to prepare a Streetscape Improvement Plan for the Hamlet of Ransomville. Sidewalk improvements, a specialty paving pattern, landscaping, the addition of street amenities such as benches, lighting fixtures and trash cans, as well as banners, would help to highlight the Hamlet as a destination in the Town.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: \$20,000-\$30,000

Time Frame: 3-5 Years

Policy - 6 The Town of Porter elected and appointed officials ensure that future land use conflicts are minimized

Action 17 - Develop Property Maintenance Code

The Town should prepare a property maintenance code to ensure that the character of Porter is protected. The Town currently relies upon the State law, but a local law would be more effective to deal with specific issues.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: \$25,000–\$30,000

Time Frame: On-going

Action 18 - Limit Further Expansions of Chemical Waste Management (CWM) in the Town

The Town should limit future expansion of CWM in the Town of Porter. Zoning land surrounding the current landfill site for uses that do prohibit landfill expansion would help to contain this use within their existing boundaries. This would allow CWM to continue to operate under their existing permits, but would also provide residents with some assurances that, in the future, the landfill will not expand.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-going

Environmental Resources

GOAL 3 - To recognize the unique natural resources in the Town of Porter and protect them for future generations

Policy - 7 Open space is an important non-renewable resource in the Town of Porter

Action 19 - Consider Alternatives for Land Conservation

The Town of Porter should consider alternatives for land conservation to protect the character of the community. Mechanisms such as land-banking of significant parcels, transfer of development rights, designation of land as “forever green” through the Farm Service Agency or obtaining conservation easements throughout the community can be implemented to help maintain the Town’s open space. The open space in the Town should be viewed as a system and an open space acquisition plan should be included in the Town’s proposed Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: Acquisition Costs – Vary
 Open Space Plan – N/A –
 Part of Parks and Recreation
 Master Plan

Time Frame: 5-10 Years

**Policy - 8 Future decisions made in the Town of Porter
protect environmental resources**

Action 20 - Develop Shoreline Protection Ordinance

The Town of Porter should develop a process to ensure a coordinated approach to shoreline protection; this process would have to be coordinated with the Army Corps of Engineers permitting process. This process would require all waterfront landowners to apply for and obtain a permit from the Town before any shoreline improvements could be made. The process would focus on ecological approaches that include a combination of natural (vegetation) and structural (armourstone, piles, concrete) to ensure that the shoreline is naturalized. The landowner would have to ensure that surrounding lands and shoreline protection is taken into consideration to minimize impacts on surrounding property owners. The Town should also better communicate and participate with the Joint Commission to ensure that the latest information on Lake levels is always considered in the process.

Responsibility:	Town Board Army Corps of Engineers International Joint Commission
Cost:	\$5,000-\$7,500
Time Frame:	1-3 Years

Action 21 - Develop Tree Protection Ordinance

The Town should prepare a Tree Protection Ordinance to ensure that wooded lots and forested areas of the Town, not protected as part of the State Park system, are safeguarded from future destruction. This ordinance would require that trees over a certain size be protected and, if removal is necessary, outline replacement requirements. A potential species list should be developed and included as part of the Ordinance.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: \$5,000-7,000

Time Frame: 3-5 Years

Policy - 9 Improving the condition of water-quality, including the streams and creeks in the Town of Porter, is essential

Action 22 - Work with Local Groups to Protect Streams

The Town of Porter should work with local sport-groups and the State to protect the quality of the streams and creeks in the Town of Porter. Sport fishing is a growing sport with many now practicing catch/release. The quality of the streams is not only important for the wildlife habitats, but for the economic growth potentials in the Town. Ensuring the quality of the streams, by reducing runoff, limiting development in areas directly surrounding the floodplains and ensuring compliance with State regulations will help to improve the quality of streams and creeks in Porter. The Town could also offer assistance with advertising and marketing various events and derby activities that would promote economic activities that encourage stewardship of the streams and their resources.

Responsibility: Town Recreation Department
Niagara Anglers Association
Trout Unlimited

Cost: Not Applicable

Time Frame: On-Going

**Policy - 10 Enhancing and protecting the Lake Ontario and
Niagara River waterfront, unique resources in our
Town, is imperative**

Action 23 - Require Naturalized Shoreline Protection
Features

Shoreline protection features in the Town have been constructed using a variety of materials and techniques. In order to enhance the natural character and quality of the shoreline, the Town should look into techniques to regulate the materials and techniques that are used in the future by property owners for shoreline protection purposes. To the greatest extent possible, this should include a naturalized approach to shoreline protection that builds on and enhances the environmental quality of the shoreline. The Town could incorporate requirements into the their Zoning Ordinance through a series of design guidelines that set forth specific materials, size requirements, etc.

Responsibility:	Town Board
Cost:	N/A – Part of Shoreline Protection Ordinance
Time Frame:	1-3 Years

Transportation Network

GOAL 4 - To ensure continued access to a functional and appropriate transportation network in the Town of Porter that does not negatively impact the character

Policy - 11 Access to the Town of Porter must remain unencumbered

Action 24 - Determine Feasibility of Linking Porter with Canada

The Town should consider working with investors and developers in the development of a ferry from Porter to a location in Canada and especially Niagara-on-the-Lake. The ferry would provide an additional amenity for residents, providing an alternative, and expedited, means for travel to Canada. Additionally, the ferry would act as a tourism and economic development catalyst, bringing new visitors and tourists into the Town. This would, in turn, assist local business owners, restaurant owners, farmers and could eventually increase use of the State Parks and related amenities.

Responsibility: Town Board
Private Inventors

Cost: Variable

Time Frame: 3-5 Years

Action 25 - Develop Linked Trail System

The Town of Porter should develop a system of pedestrian/cycling trails and sidewalks for residents. The trail system should include a continuous waterfront trail, linked with sidewalks in the Village and linked with trails in Ransomville. Linking the entire Town will improve the sense of community and spirit of residents and provide both recreation and alternative means of transportation.

Responsibility: Town Board
NYS OPRHP
NYS DOT

Cost: Variable

Time Frame: 5-10 Years

Policy - 12 Waterfront corridors reflect the character of the Town of Porter

Action 26 - Market Lake Road and River Road as part of the Seaway Trail

The Town should market the Seaway Trail through the community, as a local and regional tourism experience, that captures the beauty and natural character of the Town of Porter. The Town should update their zoning ordinance to include the Seaway Trail as an overlay zone with a special set of guidelines to control development along the roadways, in a manner that enhances its attractiveness and natural beauty to travelers. The Town should investigate management techniques and appropriate setbacks and landscaping requirements.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: N/A –Part of Updating Land Use Regulation

Time Frame: 1-3 Years

Policy - 13 Ensuring general maintenance and safety of our roadways is important

Action 27 - Preserve the Existing Rural Character of the Road System

The Town should ensure the long-term preservation of the road character, as this directly contributes to the overall charm and character of the community. Maintaining the character, and vehicular safety, is important as future land use decisions are made in Porter. The Town should adopt a policy to minimize future road widening, especially along the Lake or River. In addition, as new roads are maintained or improved, bike paths should be added to promote additional forms of transportation that are safe and viable.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-Going

Policy - 14 The Town of Porter works cooperatively with the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council, state agencies and surrounding communities to monitor changes in transportation systems throughout the communities and region

Action 28 - Improve Relationship With Local and Regional Transportation Agencies

The Town should improve relationships with surrounding municipalities, Niagara County, NYSDOT and the GBNRTC to monitor improvements and changes to roadways under their jurisdiction. The NYSDOT and other decision-making entities should be made aware of the policies stated in this Comprehensive Plan. Lines of communication must remain open between the Town and the above-mentioned entities to ensure that changes to the circulation system in Porter conform, and reflect, to the Town’s vision.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-Going

Infrastructure and Utilities

GOAL 5 - To coordinate the delivery of infrastructure and utilities in Porter while protecting the rural character of the community

Policy - 15 Offering the necessary infrastructure and utility services and facilities to residents in the Town of Porter is important

Action 29 - Monitor Servicing Needs and Changes

The provision of services and issues related to them should be monitored and tracked so that they are addressed in an appropriate and timely manner; this would include sewer and water in the Town that should be focused in the more developed or “urban” areas of the community. The Town should develop long-range inventory and implementation plans for all utilities (sewer, water and storm) provided to residents of Porter and determine, in a systematic and appropriate manner, where these should expand. This is especially true for future sewer service to ensure that development in agricultural areas is limited or prohibited. Generally, only the areas surrounding the Village and Hamlet should be considered for sewer and water to prevent potential “sprawl” issues – especially along the waterfronts. Impervious materials should be limited to minimize storm water runoff and issues associated with its increase.

Responsibility: Town Board
Department of Public Works

Cost: \$10,000-\$20,000

Time Frame: 1-3 Years

Action 30 - Ensure that Future Communication Facilities
are Available

The Town of Porter should work with local internet providers to determine the potential for updating and upgrading available communication services. Any new telecommunications towers should be regulated through the Town’s zoning to ensure co-location, and other appropriate limits as allowed by the FCC. The internet connections should be upgraded when possible to ensure that current technology is used in the best possible way.

- Responsibility: Town Board
 Local Providers
- Cost: N/A
 Telecommunications – Part of
 Land Use Regulations
- Time Frame: Immediate

Policy - 16 The Town of Porter limits the expansion of municipal services to specific development nodes that can accommodate greater densities

Action 31 - Promote Areas Surrounding Ransomville and Youngstown for Future Development

The Town should promote vacant lands surrounding the Hamlet of Ransomville and the Village of Youngstown for more dense development; this would include retail sales and services and a variety of residential uses. The areas surrounding these two population centers, in addition to offering goods and services within close proximity, would help to minimize the need to expand costly services to all areas of the Town.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: N/A – Part of Updating Land Use Regulation

Time Frame: On-Going

Action 32 - Prepare Detailed Sewer Service Study for
Ransomville

Providing public sewer service in Ransomville should be examined in a detailed study. Sewers in this area would allow higher concentrations of development and higher population density in the Ransomville area. This coincides with the Town’s goal to concentrate future development around its two existing population centers – Youngstown and Ransomville. Sewers should be concentrated in the Hamlet area and not extended from the Village to the Hamlet; rather, the Town should work with the surrounding communities to determine methods to create nodes of servicing that would limit sprawl and impacts on agricultural lands. Costs and phasing should be part of the plan to allow the Town Board to determine if and how they can move forward with the recommendations. Once completed, the Town should engage a grant writer to help identify potential funds to implement the recommendations.

Responsibility:	Town Board Surrounding Communities
Cost:	\$20,000-\$30,000
Time Frame:	1-3 Years

2.4 Social Characteristics Goals, Policies and Actions

Population

GOAL 6 - *To ensure that Porter continues to be a desirable place to live*

Policy - 17 The Town of Porter provides a high quality of life for all residents – current and future – and sustainable population growth will be welcome

Action 33 - Maintain Services for Growing Population Segments

More than a quarter of the Town's population is under the age of 18 years old. Services to this age group will be important to ensure that the community remains an attractive place for young families to locate, and raise their children. The Town should commit to maintaining and improving the services available for young children, and their parents by working with the local school districts and other providers for services to this age group. This includes providing appropriate recreation opportunities and encouraging new businesses that cater to this population set, such as day care providers. This also includes ensuring the maintenance and quality of the Lewiston-Porter and Wilson school system.

Responsibility: Town Board
Lewiston-Porter District
Wilson District
Town Recreation Department

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: 1-3 Years

Policy - 18 Resident involvement is important to both the appointed and elected officials

Action 34 - Encourage Residents To Take Part in Decision Making

The Town has recently begun preparing and distributing a newsletter for all residents. The Town should continue to encourage attendance at Town Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board Meetings, as well as special meetings for projects, such as the Comprehensive Plan. This would include advertising in local papers, posting advertisements in high profile locations throughout the Town and maintaining up-to-date schedule of events on the Town website.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: \$5,000-6,000 Annually

Time Frame: On-Going

Action 35 - Maintain Town Website and Develop a List-Serve

One of the best ways to communicate with a large audience of Town members is through the existing Town website. The website could be updated on a daily or weekly basis to relay to community members upcoming meeting, events and latest news. The Town should also consider developing a list-serve of residents to inform them of meetings and other events occurring in the Town of Porter. Interested residents could sign up for the list-serve, which could be maintained by the current webmaster. The Town should also encourage local associations and organizations that have websites to link with the Town's; those with no website should consider developing one as a way of disseminating information to residents.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: \$5,000 – One Time Fee
\$1,000 – Updates

Time Frame: On-Going

Policy - 19 Focusing on the exceptional quality of life, unique history and various assets in the Town of Porter is essential

Action 36 - Promote the Historic Resources in the Town

There are several historic resources in the Town of Porter that are unique to this area and tell the history of the Town. The Fort Niagara State Park, Old Fort Niagara Association and other historic buildings in the Village provide an existing story that should be told through various venues – interpretive signage, tours and access to these resources. The Town should continue to promote these resources and determine ways to better advertise them, in conjunction with the operators of these facilities.

Responsibility: Town Board
NYS OPRHP
Old Fort Niagara Association
Various Building Owners

Cost: Varies

Time Frame: On-Going

Action 37 - Promote Waterfront Use

The Town of Porter should promote the waterfront. The Town is in a unique position in that two of its borders are water; this provides an excellent opportunity to promote water use for both private and public uses. The trail along River road should be extended to link the Village of Lewiston with Old Fort Niagara as part of the overall trail system. Through the development of a continuous waterfront trail, public parks, the State Parks and other mechanisms, the Town can increase access and use of the water.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: Varies

Time Frame: On-Going

Housing

GOAL 7 - To ensure adequate choices in housing for all residents in the Town of Porter

Policy - 20 The Town of Porter is open to all residents and offers a variety of housing choices

Action 38 - Promote the Development of Affordable Housing

The Town should allow for a variety of housing types, including both rental and ownership units, for young couples, families and adult communities, whom might have the opportunity to live in Porter only if smaller homes and lower maintenance homes are built. The Town should designate area for this type of housing and housing developers should be encouraged to provide a variety of housing options. These areas would be close to the Village of Youngstown and Hamlet of Ransomville as outlined in the future land use plan.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: Immediate

Policy - 21 Alternative housing choices in the Town of Porter will not detract from our character

Action 39 - Develop Design Guidelines and Standards

The Town should utilize and integrate design guidelines and standards into their zoning requirements to address issues of building design, siting, massing, vehicular ingress and egress, pedestrian movement, densities, landscaping and parking. These regulations would help maintain the rural, agricultural character of the community.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: \$35,000-\$40,000

Time Frame: Immediate

Action 40 - Regulate New Single-Family Housing
Development

The Town should continue to regulate all new single-family housing developments to minimize the impacts of new development. This will help to protect existing agricultural operations and minimize land use conflicts between farming operations and residential uses. For all new subdivisions, the Town should require landowners to submit appropriate plans outlining how prime agricultural lands, natural resources and the Town's character will be protected. This should include a graphic that illustrates the clustering of housing units.

Responsibility: Town Board
Planning Board

Cost: N/A – Part of Updating Land Use
Regulation

Time Frame: 1-3 Years

Action 41 - Provide Zoning Incentives to Housing
Developers

The Town should provide incentives to ensure future high-density housing developments occur around already developed “hubs”, such as the Hamlet of Ransomville and the Village of Youngstown. The Town should entice people to live in Porter by promoting this accessibility to services, goods and conveniences. Simultaneously, valuable open space, wooded areas and farmland would be preserved, protecting the rural character of the Town of Porter.

Responsibility: Town Board
Zoning Board

Cost: N/A - Part of Updating Land Use
Regulation

Time Frame: On-Going

Action 42 - Require Viewshed Analysis for New Housing Development

Some of the homes being developed in Porter are expansive and could impact the views to Lake Ontario and the Niagara River. To minimize visual conflicts in land uses, Porter should require high design standards for development along the waterfront that includes the need to complete a viewshed analysis. The viewshed analysis would address impacts to views and ways to ensure visual access to the River and Lake.

Responsibility:	Town Board Planning Board
Cost:	\$3,000-\$5,000
Time Frame:	Immediate

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Resources

GOAL 8 - To continue to provide unique park, recreation and open space opportunities for all residents in the Town of Porter

Policy - 22 The State Parks, important assets for both residents and visitors, are promoted by the Town of Porter

Action 43 - Maintain Relationship with the NYS OPRHP

The Town and Village should continue to work with NYS OPRHP and representatives of both State Parks to promote them for both residents and visitors. The Town should consider coordinated promotional and marketing efforts with the State Parks, promoting them as integral to the quality-of-life of residents and contributing to the high standard of living. Coordinated marketing efforts could also focus on the Town and Parks as tourism draw, for local and regional visitors.

Responsibility: Town Board
Village Board
NYS OPRHP

Cost: Variable

Time Frame: On-Going

Policy - 23 The Town of Porter strives to develop a system of open space that includes a network of parks and trails

Action 44 - Extend Trail along Robert Moses Parkway

The Town should work with the State and other regional agencies to develop a regional open space/trail system that connects to the regional system and State parklands and could offer a variety of recreational opportunities. The trail along the Robert Moses Parkway should be extended into the Town and then the system expanded to link the Village and Hamlet. The waterfront should also be part of the system.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: Variable

Time Frame: On-Going

Action 45 - Develop Continuous Waterfront Access

The Town should examine opportunities to create a continuous waterfront trail that extends along all waterfront lands in the Town, along the Niagara River and Lake Ontario. A majority of waterfront land in Porter is privately owned, but the Town should consider the potentials for continuous waterfront access by purchasing easements from property owners, or acquiring waterfront lands as they become available. The trail could extend up to, and follow, the road when easements or access is not permitted along the water, but would ultimately lead back to the waterfront. The Town could capitalize on its waterfront location, as the trail would be a significant draw for the community, as residents and visitors alike, are drawn to waterfront locations. Further, the trail could connect, at determined locations, to existing trail systems, and the State Park system.

Responsibility: Town Board
Niagara County Parks

Cost: Variable

Time Frame: 5-10 Years

Action 46 - Prepare a Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The Town should develop an overall Parks and Recreation Master Plan to determine a long-term vision and improvement plan for the entire system of trails, parks and open spaces. The Plan should develop a matrix of open spaces and recreation resources, as well as the most appropriate way to link all the existing, and proposed, resources. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will guide the community and would also examine uses, and users, of various facilities to determine deficiencies that may exist in the Town.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: \$35,000-\$45,000

Time Frame: 1-3 Years

Community Services and Facilities

GOAL 9 - To deliver community services to all residents and improve the quality of life within Porter

Policy - 24 The historic and cultural resources in the Town of Porter enhance our quality of life and are promoted and protected

Action 47 - Continue to Promote the Efforts of Local Historic Organizations

The Town of Porter Historical Society, Town of Porter Historical Museum and the Ransomville Historical Room should continue to be supported in its efforts to protect significant historic resources within the Town. The Town's history should be protected and documented for future generations to understand and study.

Responsibility: Town Board
Porter Historical Society
Porter Historical Museum
Ransomville Historical Room

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-Going

Policy - 25 Cost effective emergency services improve the image of Porter as a desirable place to live

Action 48 - Continue to Support the Fire Departments

Volunteers staff the fire companies that service the Town. Adequate staffing is essential for the provision of quick response times. The Town should continue to assist the efforts of the Ransomville and Youngstown Fire Departments by publicizing the need for volunteers and fostering cooperation among the companies.

Responsibility: Fire Departments
Town Board

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-Going

Action 49 - Promote Continued Cooperation Among
Police Enforcement Agencies

New York State and Niagara County provide police services in the Town, with back-up services provided by the Village of Youngstown; in addition, the presence of Border Patrol and other law enforcement agencies is evident in the Town of Porter. In order to ensure the continued standard of service provided to area residents the Town should maintain positive working relationships with the three providers and promote cooperation among the various police entities.

Responsibility: Town Board
Law Enforcement Agencies

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-Going

Policy - 26 High-quality education that utilizes the latest computer and teaching technology is essential for all Porter residents

Action 50 - Work with the Lewiston-Porter and Wilson School Districts to Identify and Implement Programs That Benefit the Entire Community

The Town of Porter should take an active role in continuing to work with the Lewiston-Porter and Wilson School Districts to develop programs that benefit all age groups. The School District has many facilities (auditorium, sports fields, library) that could be used for programs that target students, senior citizens and others residing in the Town of Porter. The School Districts have an excellent reputation, which could be promoted, along with other desirable Town qualities, in promotional materials that advertise and market the Town as a great place to live, do business and recreate. Promotional materials could include such things as a calendar of events or a brochure that publicizes activities and special events in both the Town and at the Schools.

Responsibility: Town Board
School District

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-Going

Action 51 - Maintain the School in Ransomville

The Town of Porter should work with Wilson School District to ensure the school in the Ransomville Hamlet remains in the community. This school and the children at the school are important components of the community character for Ransomville. This asset should be protected.

Responsibility: Town Board
School District

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-Going

Action 52 - Continue to Support the William J.
McLaughlin Free Library and Youngstown
Free Library

The William J. McLaughlin Free Library and Youngstown Free Library provide a valuable supplement to educational resources provided by the community's school districts. In addition to literary resources the library also provides access to computer technology that may not be available in the home. The Town's continued support is essential to the continued provision of this valuable resource.

Responsibility: Town Board
William J. McLaughlin Free
Library
Youngstown Free Library

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-Going

2.5 Economic Characteristics Goals, Policies and Actions

Economic

GOAL 10 - To recognize the Town of Porter as a bedroom community and promote appropriate businesses within the Town

Policy - 27 The Town of Porter is a business-friendly community with an attractive business climate

Action 53 - Meet Regularly with Existing Small-Business Owners

The Town should work with existing small-business owners to promote and ensure their retention, development and expansion. The small business owners are essential to the character and livelihood of the community and discussion should take place to ensure their continued success. The Town should establish a committee that meets regularly with the businesses in the Village and Hamlet. This will not only allow the Town to understand their needs, but will also allow businesses in the two communities to develop better working relationships.

Responsibility: Town Board

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-Going

Action 54 - Project a Business Friendly Image

The Town should coordinate efforts with the regional Chamber of Commerce and existing business organizations, such as the Ransomville and Youngstown Businessmen Association, to promote the area as one that welcomes businesses and helps to protect their investment in order to attract new businesses and industries. Together, the Town and these organizations could develop marketing materials, develop marketing themes, outline ways to market on the internet and develop other mechanisms to improve the local business environment. The Town should also meet with prospective businesses and offer tours to develop a working relationship and cultivate relationships.

Responsibility: Town Board
Business Associations

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-Going

Policy - 28 New businesses and industries are promoted to improve the quality of life for all Porter residents

Action 55 - Provide Opportunities for Light Industrial Activities

Areas in the Town where light industries would be appropriate have been identified on the future land use plan and should be promoted for light industrial and other mixed uses. These areas are generally located in and around the CWM facility, which is not a highly desirable residential area. By designating portions of the Town that could be used for industrial uses, the Town is welcoming new, clean industries to provide employment opportunities.

Responsibility: Town Board
Planning Board

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: 1-3 Years

**Policy - 29 The Town of Porter continues to work
collaboratively with CWM**

Action 56 - Ensure Preparation of an End-Use Plan for
Lands Used by CWM

The Town should undertake the task of assuring that an End Use Plan is prepared for the lands currently occupied by Chemical Waste Management (CWM). The Plan would identify the current operations that take place on the site, potential hazards, remediation requirements for the site in the event that CWM would one day re-locate and potentials for re-development of the site. The End Use Plan could help to clear up unanswered questions and uncertainty felt by residents with respect to CWM, and their role in the Town.

Responsibility: Town Board
 CWM

Cost: \$40,000

Time Frame: 1-3 Years

Policy - 30 Tourism is supported in the Town of Porter to diversify the economy and promote economic growth

Action 57 - Coordinate Efforts to Encourage Small Tourism-Based Businesses

The Town should coordinate efforts to promote itself and its resources to visitors. The economic benefits would be evident in the number of small businesses (e.g. bed & breakfast, restaurants, tours). This may include quarterly meetings to update the County Tourism Organizations, regional Chamber of Commerce, business owners and other organizations on efforts the Town is undertaking – and potential partnerships - that could impact the tourism industry. Opportunities for input on concerns the businesses have should also be part of the on-going process.

Responsibility: Town Board
Chamber of Commerce
Business Associations

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: On-Going

Agriculture

GOAL 11 - To understand the role of agriculture in the Town's economy

Policy - 31 The Town of Porter supports and promotes agricultural land uses

Action 58 - Coordinate with Local Farmers

The Town should work with local farmers to ensure their needs are met to maintain a viable business. A Committee of farmers, educators, residents and Town officials should be devised to work together to identify development issues, environmental concerns, local land use conflicts and other issues that impact agriculture in the Town of Porter. The Committee could develop an educational program for residents to outline reasons that agricultural protection is needed in Porter. A strategic approach should be taken to ensure farmland conservation, support farm families, promote and market this industry and examine additional agricultural opportunities in the Town. The Committee should also be involved in understanding and addressing the inadequacies of the local, national and global agricultural policies and their impact on the Town of Porter.

Responsibility: Town Board
Local Farmers

Cost: N/A

Time Frame: Immediate

Policy - 32 The Town of Porter seeks to minimize land use conflicts between agricultural land and other uses

Action 59 - Initiate an Agricultural Preservation Strategy

The Town should consider exploring an active approach to farmland protection, including the preparation of an Agricultural Preservation Strategy, implemented at the municipal level, which would provide direction and assistance to local farming operations. This could be done through innovative zoning techniques such as TDR's or PDR's or through outright purchase. Additionally, servicing should be limited in agricultural areas to minimize the development pressures that occur when sewer and water is available. The Strategy should list the options available to the Town and the costs/benefits of each.

Responsibility:	Town Board Local Farmers
Cost:	\$10,000-\$15,000
Time Frame:	1-3 Years

Action 60 - Prepare Agriculture PUD Regulations

The Town should consider preserving and protecting the agricultural land and prime soils in the Town of Porter. The implementation of an Agricultural Planned Unit Development District into the Zoning Ordinance would provide a flexible alternative to ensure the exclusion of incompatible or detrimental uses on prime lands, while still allowing for the possibility of limited and controlled residential and commercial growth in the future. The specific requirements and procedures associated with the Agricultural PUD would require further study by the Town, but potential benefits could include: providing farmers and landowners with an opportunity to sell their land while conserving valuable agricultural resources, implementing a Transfer of Development Rights program and the preservation of desirable Town character and the prevention of soil erosion.

Responsibility:	Town Board Zoning Board Planning Board
Cost:	\$5,000-\$7,000
Time Frame:	Immediate

3.0 Physical Characteristics

3.1 Land Use in Porter

Existing Land Use Patterns

The existing, observable land use of each parcel in the Town of Porter is important because it reveals the pattern of past growth, the location of areas that should be preserved, and the potential locations for future development. An Existing Land Use Map has been prepared for the Town showing the current land use classification for each tax parcel in the two communities. A base map was obtained from the Niagara County Department Planning, Development and Tourism; this information was verified on-site by a windshield survey of each property in the summer of 2003. The resulting map provides a picture of the current pattern of land uses in Porter.

The land use patterns in the Town of Porter lend to the character that has attracted people to the community to make it their home. The existing land use patterns, and percentages of different land uses, gives insight into the assets of the community and help form policies for future development in Porter. This analysis includes a summary of existing land uses and land use regulations. The analysis of the existing land use is based on the NYS Real Property Service codes that are used for assessment purposes in the Town. The total acreage devoted to each use is shown in the table below.

**54% of the total land
area in Porter is
Agricultural**

Table 3-1 Summary of Land Use
Town of Porter

Land Use	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	
	Acres	%
Agriculture	10,453	54.0%
Residential	3,572	18.4%
Commercial	129	0.7%
Industrial	630	3.3%
Recreation	744	3.8%
Community Service	1,106	5.7%
Public Services	45	0.2%
Vacant	2,693	13.9%
TOTAL	19,373	100.0%

Source: Niagara County and peter j. smith & company, inc.

Table 3-2 Summary of Land Use – Surrounding Communities*
Youngstown, Lewiston, Wilson, Cambria and Niagara Falls

Land Use	Youngstown		Lewiston		Wilson		Cambria		City of Niagara Falls	
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%
Agriculture	0	0.0%	6,582	22.3%	11,172	36.6%	10,565	42.7%	0	0.0%
Residential	325	56.4%	6,606	22.4%	13,783	45.2%	6,890	27.8%	2,502	37.1%
Commercial	9	1.6%	121	0.4%	77	0.3%	312	1.3%	615	9.1%
Industrial	0	0.0%	34	0.1%	27	0.1%	59	0.2%	706	10.5%
Recreation	13	2.3%	1,519	5.2%	670	2.2%	231	0.9%	880	13.0%
Community Service	11	1.9%	6,815	23.1%	57	0.2%	604	2.4%	372	5.5%
Public Service	1	0.1%	3,830	13.0%	164	0.5%	570	2.3%	553	8.2%
Vacant	211	36.5%	3,822	13.0%	4,528	14.8%	3,552	14.3%	1,122	16.6%
No Data	7	1.1%	132	0.4%	27	0.1%	1,974	8.0%		
TOTAL	577	100.0%	29,461	100.0%	30,505	100.0%	24,756	100.0%	6,749	100.0%

Source: Niagara County and peter j. smith & company, inc.
* - Not Verified

A total of 19,373 acres was calculated for the land area of Porter. The details of this land are included below.

Agricultural (or Fallow)

Land in agricultural use comprises the majority of land in the Town and is the highest of any category; 10,453 acres or 54% of the land area in the Town is agricultural. The agricultural classification was applied to:

- Parcels that are currently being farmed
- Parcels that appear to have been recently farmed but are currently lying fallow.



Productive Land and Field Crops are the largest land use categories for Agricultural Uses

The Town's agricultural parcels are located throughout the entire municipality, but the highest concentration is in the eastern part of the Town. The areas around the Village of Youngstown are the least agricultural. Ransomville is surrounded by agricultural land. The agrarian character of Porter is evident as one travels along nearly every major and minor roadway in the Town.

According to the Towards a Smart Growth Master Plan: Assessment and Recommendations for the Town of Porter, the greatest percentage of agricultural uses include productive land (44.2%), field crops (36.4%), fruit orchards (12.1%). Other uses include other livestock (2.4%), vineyards (1.9%), poultry farms and dairy farms (1.0%) and truck crops (0.5%).³

The percentage of agricultural land in the surrounding communities is lower than the Town of Porter. The Town of Cambria has approximately 42.7% of land in agricultural use; this is the highest percentage of the surrounding communities. The Town of Wilson has approximately 36.6% of land in agricultural use.

Residential

Residential uses account for 18.4% of the land in the Town of Porter; approximately 3,572 acres are residential and this is the second largest land use category. Most of these residential uses are located along River Road to the west and in or around Ransomville. There are some lots being subdivided off existing farms; this is most evident along Cain Road and Youngstown/Lockport Road. Lake Road is also almost all developed residentially with the exceptions of the State Parks along this corridor. Blairville Road also is residentially developed, as are Calkins Road and Creek Road. Most of residences in the Town are single-family (89.9%). There are also some seasonal residences with 3.29% (or 77 homes) in this category.⁴

***Residential Uses
occupy over 3,500 of
land in Porter***

In the Village of Youngstown, approximately 56.4% of the land is residential. These are primarily smaller, urban lots with a much higher density than the other surrounding communities. The Town of Wilson has approximately 45.2% of its land area as residential; these are primarily larger, rural single-family homes.

Commercial

Commercial uses encompass a small percentage of land in the Town of Porter. Less than one percent (0.7%) is dedicated to this land use; this is equal to 129 total acres. These commercial uses are located primarily in a cluster in the Ransomville area. Others are dispersed along Youngstown/Wilson Road, Balmer Road, Blairville Road and River Road. With Niagara Falls and the City of Buffalo located less than an hour away, residents tend to do their shopping in these two urban areas. Most of the commercial uses tend to be restaurants and bars, auto body repairs or mixed use.⁵

***There is limited
Commercial Land in
the Town of Porter***

The Village of Youngstown has approximately 1.6% of its land area used for commercial uses. The City of Niagara Falls, with 9.1% of its land area as commercial, has the highest percentage of commercial land in the surrounding communities.

³ Towards a Smart Growth Master Plan: Assessment and Recommendations for the Town of Porter. UB Studio on Smart Growth. 2003.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Industrial

Approximately 630 acres are dedicated to industrial land uses in the Town of Porter. This would include CWM as the only industrial land use based on these classifications. This hazardous waste treatment and landfill accounts for 3.3% of the land use in the Town of Porter. The facility is located on Balmer Road in the south-central portion of the community.

The surrounding communities have little industrial land as well, with the exception of the City of Niagara Falls, which has 10.5% of the land area designated as industrial uses. There is no industrial land designated in the Village of Youngstown.

Parks and Recreation

There are over 740 acres of parkland in Porter

Within the Town of Porter, residents of Porter have access to several State owned facilities that also allow residents to access the Niagara River and Lake Ontario. These State Parks include Fort Niagara State Park and Four Mile Creek State Park. In addition, the privately owned facilities, Niagara Frontier Country Club on Lake Road and the Ransomville Speedway on Braley Road are included in this category. These facilities make up approximately 3.8% of the land uses in the Town of Porter and encompass 744 acres.

In the Village of Youngstown, approximately 2.3% of the land is designated as recreational. These facilities are available for Town residents to use. In the City of Niagara Falls, 13.0% of the community is designated as parks and recreation; this is the largest percentage of the surrounding communities.

Community Service

The Community Service category includes those uses that provide services to the residents of the Town, such as churches, schools, fire and police, libraries and cemeteries. The total acreage in community service for the Town of Porter is 1,106 acres or



5.7% of the land. This would include the National Guard local training area and all other lands owned by the government. Other uses include nine churches, seven cemeteries, two highway garages, two fire stations and two schools. There is also one library in the Town of Porter outside the Village of Youngstown.⁶ A second library is located in the Village, but not included in this percentage.

In the Village, approximately 1.9% of the land is designated as community services; these facilities are available to Town residents and serve the entire community. In Lewiston, approximately 23.1% of the land is designated to community service, in part, because of Niagara University.

⁶ Ibid.

Public Service

A total of 45 acres or 0.2% of the land area in Porter is devoted to public service uses – those uses such as utilities and public works facilities, which provide infrastructure support to the residents. Public services include water, telephone, electric and gas facilities in the Town.

In Lewiston, approximately 13% of the land is designated for public service; this is due, in part, to the Power Project along the Niagara River. The City of Niagara Falls has approximately 8.2% of its land designated to this land use.

Vacant

Land with no apparent use that is not wooded or maintained as open space, has no buildings and is not fallow farmland is listed as vacant. A total of 2,693 acres or 13.9% of Porter is classified as vacant. Most of this land is located in the western portion of the Town southeast of the Village of Youngstown. There are also vacant parcels located along Lake Road interspersed with the residential properties.

***A total of 2,700
acres of Vacant
Land are Available
in Porter***

Approximately 36.5% of the Village is vacant land. This is the highest percentage of the surrounding communities. Vacant land percentages in the other surrounding communities range from 13% to 17%.

Land Ownership Characteristics

In the Town of Porter, almost 92% of the land is in private ownership. This would include parcels that are private residences, commercial businesses and the CWM landfill. Of the publicly owned land, the United States federal government is the largest landholder with almost 1,000 acres or 4.9% of the Town. New York State owns approximately 488 acres of land at the two state parks: Fort Niagara State Park and Four Mile Creek State Park. The Town owns approximately 40 acres of land or 0.2%; this is primarily Town Hall and the surrounding area. The school owns approximately 117 acres in the Town or 0.6% of the land area.

***Almost 92% of the
Town's land area is
in private ownership***

Table 3-3 Landownership Characteristics

Town of Porter

Ownership	Acres	Percent
School	117	0.6%
Town	40	0.2%
New York State	488	2.5%
United States	954	4.9%
Private	17,770	91.8%
Total	19,367	100.0%

Source: Niagara County and peter j. smith & company, inc.

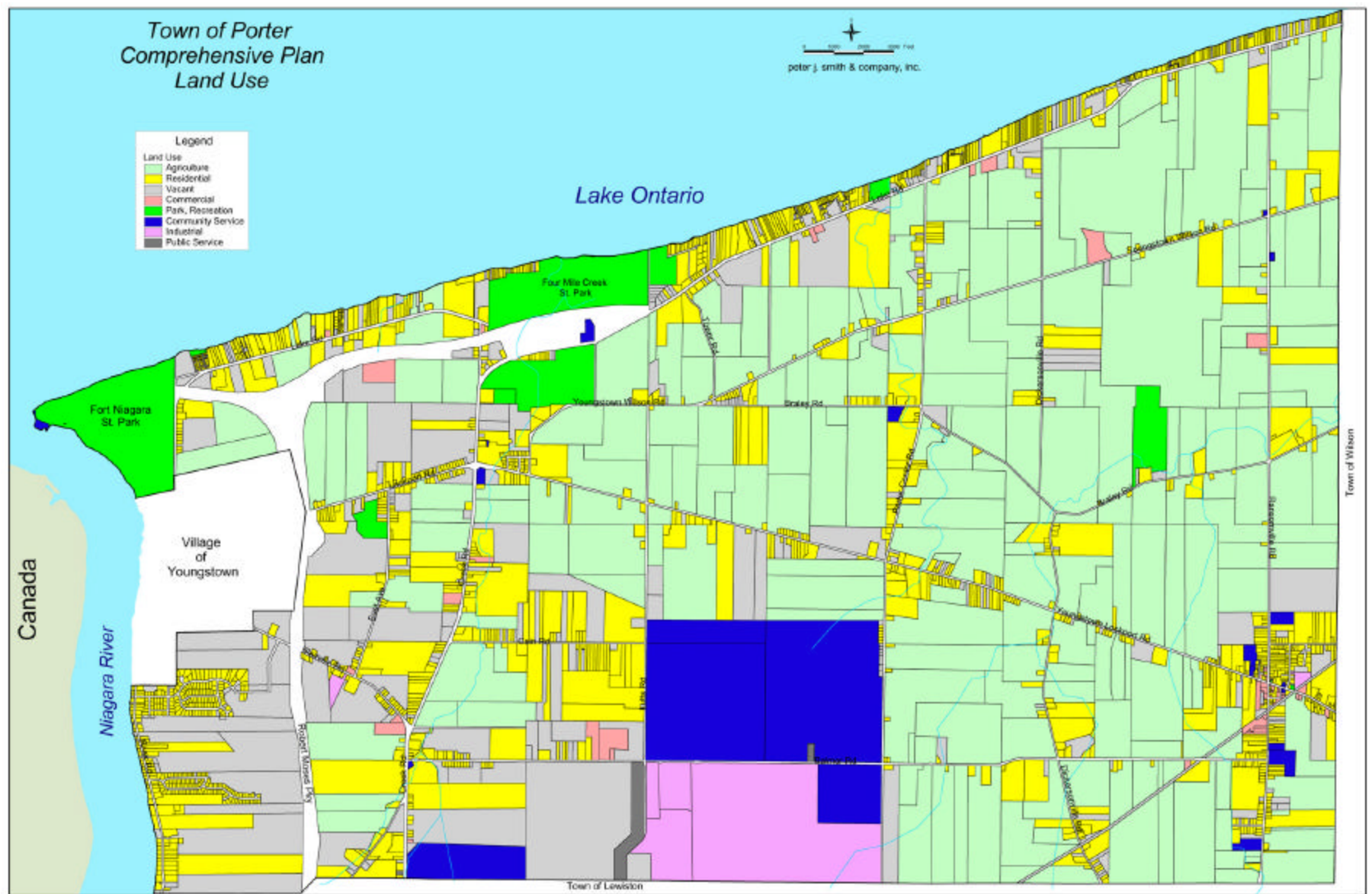
Land Use Regulations

Zoning Law

In 1986, the Town of Porter adopted the current Zoning Law that is in effect in the community. The Law has been amended and updated as needed throughout the past 15 years. The code establishes 16 different zoning districts in this rural community. These include:

- ARR-100 - Agriculture and Rural Residential – Includes areas of the Town with no sewer service; these areas are not designated for commercial or industrial uses and residential lots are at least 20,000 SF.
- ARR-100-A – Agricultural and Rural Residential - Includes areas of the Town with no sewer service; these areas are not designated for commercial or industrial uses and residential lots are at least 20,000 SF. In addition, this district provides regulations for truck parking and maintenance in designated areas.
- UR-100 – Urban Residential – Provides area for residential development of areas in the Town having sewer and water.
- UR-80 – Urban Residential – Provides area for residential development of suitable areas of the Town having sewer and water where four families per acre are appropriate.
- UR-60 – Urban Residential – Provides areas for residential development at higher densities, where lots are smaller and the availability of sewer and water makes more intensive development appropriate.
- MF-80 – Multi-Family – This district accommodates apartment units and provides alternative housing. Traffic and public utility demands will not be substantially increased.
- MF-100 – Multi-Family – Similar to the MF-80, but designed to be more compatible with single-family housing.
- RHC-360 – Rural Highway Commercial – Provides for the development of auto-oriented and related uses along major traffic arterials.
- WC-240 – Waterfront Commercial – Provide for suitable development of areas oriented to lakeshore related commercial uses.
- UNC-100 – Urban Neighborhood Commercial – Provides development of commercial and related facilities for convenient shopping and personal services within areas where sewer service is available.
- UCC-60 – Urban Central Commercial – Provides for development in Ransomville as a safe, convenient and attractive shopping center.
- M-1 – Restricted Industrial – Includes areas for the establishment of research-development and related production activities, light manufacturing and offices.
- M-2 – General Industrial – Provides for heavier manufacturing and processing facilities. Offices, research and service establishments are also allowed.

Figure 3-1 Existing Land Use
Town of Porter





- M-3 – Heavy Industrial – Includes areas for heavy manufacturing and processing facilities strictly regulated to minimize any adverse impacts.
- M-4 – General Industrial – Service Related – Provides for an area for service related specialty shops with limited amount area.
- NRE – Niagara River Environmental – Establishes Niagara River frontage in the Town as an environmental protection area.

In Porter, there are 16 different Zoning Districts that include Agricultural, Residential and Commercial Districts

The following summarizes the acreage and area percentage for each zone in the Town of Porter.

Table 3-4 Zoning Classifications
Town of Porter

Zone	Zone Name	Acres	% Area
ARR-100	Agriculture and Rural Residential	12,365	60.7%
ARR-100-A	Agriculture and Rural Residential	5,226	25.7%
UR-100	Urban Residential	28	0.1%
UR-80	Urban Residential	863	4.2%
UR-60	Urban Residential	49	0.2%
MF-80	Multi -Family Residential	127	0.6%
MF-100	Multi -Family Residential	14	0.1%
RHC-360	Rural Highway Commercial	136	0.7%
WC-240	Waterfront Commercial	29	0.1%
UNC-100	Urban Neighborhood Commercial	53	0.3%
UCC-60	Urban Central Commercial	46	0.2%
M-1	Restricted Industrial	87	0.4%
M-2	General Industrial	846	4.2%
M-3	Heavy Industrial	384	1.9%
M-4	General Industrial - Service Related	100	0.5%
NRE	Niagara River Environmental	13	0.1%

Source: Town of Porter and peter j. smith & company, inc.

The majority of the land area is zoned Agricultural and Rural Residential; over 85% of the Town of Porter is in the ARR-100 or ARR-100-A district. There are pockets of residential, mixed use and protection areas throughout the Town. The purpose of these Districts is to protect agricultural areas from suburban and urban development and preserve open space and natural resources in the Town. The permitted uses and special permitted uses appear to be consistent with the overall objectives of this district. Uses that do not complement the agricultural use of these lands should continue to be regulated away from these districts.

There are three Urban Residential districts in the Town of Porter; the UR-100 District is located along the Niagara River and encompasses only 0.1% of the Town. The UR-80 and UR-60 are located in and around the Ransomville Hamlet and include approximately 4.4% of the Town. The purpose of these districts is to provide locations for single family residential and some multi-family housing. There are different requirements in these districts for lots that are serviced with sewer and/or water. Smaller lots are allowed in the UR-80 and UR-60 when sewer and water are available.

The Town of Porter has two Multi-family Residential districts that include about 0.7% of the community. These districts are located primarily on the west side of Porter and along Lake Ontario. Permitted uses in the MF-80 and MF-100 Districts include multi-family and single family homes. The primary difference in the two districts is the minimum lot area for each dwelling unit; the MF-80 requires 3,500 SF while the MF-100 requires 5,000 SF per dwelling unit.

The Rural Highway Commercial district includes approximately 0.7% of the Town and is located primarily along Lake Road and Creek Road. These areas allow for commercial uses mixed in with the agricultural uses that surround them. The commercial district allows for a variety of commercial uses that include auto-related uses, offices, and restaurants.

The Waterfront Commercial district consists of 0.1% of the Town of Porter and is located in the west part of the Town along Lower Niagara Road. This district provides areas for water related uses such as boat sales, launches, parks and sales of fishing equipment and supplies.

The Urban Neighborhood Commercial district includes approximately 0.3% of the Town land and is located near the Hamlet of Ransomville on Balmer Road and on Blairville Road near the Village of Youngstown. The uses allowed include offices, restaurants and other commercial uses; personal services are the primary uses allowed in this district.

The Urban Central Commercial includes approximately 0.2% of the Town of Porter. This district is located at the intersection of Ransomville Road and Youngstown-Lockport Road in the Hamlet of Ransomville. This area is the Central Business District (CBD) of the Hamlet and allows for a variety of commercial and residential uses.

There are three Industrial districts in the Town of Porter. They encompass approximately 6.3% of the land area. The largest of these districts is the M-2 General Industrial, which includes much of the CWM site and the US Military Reserve along Balmer Road. The M-3 district also includes the CWM site. The M-1 district is located in two areas: a portion of the CWM site and near the Hamlet of Ransomville. These districts allow for a variety of industrial uses in the Town and regulate the location and expansion of these uses.

The Niagara River Environmental district is located along the Niagara River in the southwest portion of Porter. This allows only private boathouses, docks, hunting blinds and other private structures. Uses in this district require a permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the County Health Department. In addition, these uses must go through site plan review.

Subdivision Regulations

The Town of Porter adopted their subdivision regulations in June 1979. These regulations outline the procedure for filing a subdivision application, which includes the sketch plan process, approval for minor subdivisions (not more than four (4) lots) and preliminary and final plat requirements for major subdivisions. The procedures also outline required improvements and/or performance bonds that are required.

There are general requirements and design standards set out for street layout, street design, street names, lots, drainage improvements and parks, open space and natural features when subdivisions are proposed in the Town of Porter. This helps ensure that a minimum standard is met for all new subdivisions that will ensure that there are limited impacts on existing residents.

Future Land Use Needs

Residential Development

The Town of Porter has been able to maintain its rural, agricultural character in part because of its location away from any major urban centers. The City of Niagara Falls is about 15 miles from the Town and is the largest urban area that is proximate to the Town.

There are land use patterns throughout the United States that have changed and could eventually impact the Town of Porter. There is the potential for an influx of new residents that would require more housing and commercial services. Development could become denser as the larger lots in the Town are further subdivided. With sound land use practices and policies in place, Porter can protect its character while still planning for growth that is projected for the Town.

To determine the number of units required in the Town in the future, the projected population for the year 2025 is used. The Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) estimates the population of the Town and Village could grow to 7,500 by 2025. The Village of Youngstown currently includes approximately 28% of the population in the Town. Maintaining this percentage, in 2025, approximately 5,400 people would live in Porter outside the Village. This is an increase of 437 people.

***Porter's population,
excluding the
Village, should grow
by approximately 437
people***

The mean household size for the Town of Porter was 2.68. Assuming the household size remains the same over the next 20 year period, the number of new housing units required to meet the projected increase in populations is determined by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Projected Population}}{\text{Mean Household Size}} = \text{Projected Number of Housing Units Needed}$$

To meet the projected population growth into 2025, Porter will need new housing to accommodate the new population growth

The 437 people could require approximately 163 new housing units if the housing size remains at 2.68. Based on the above formula, the Town could require 2,014 units by the year 2025. In 2000, there were 1,977 housing units. This would indicate that over the next 20 years, approximately 37 new housing units would be needed. This is less than two each year and the current building rate far exceeds this number. This would indicate that from 2-20 houses would be built depending on the demand and the population influx into the Town.

Commercial Development

Throughout the United States, changes in land use patterns over the past decade have had a great impact on the percentage of land designated for commercial use within a community. While the number of commercial establishments does not seem to be increasing, the amount of land designated to commercial uses has been increasing. This is due, in part, to the “big box” phenomenon, the large, expansive parking lots in many retail complexes and strip development that lines major corridors; these factors seem to inflate the acreage required for commercial uses.

Establishing specific criteria for how much land should be designated for commercial use in a community will vary considerably. Factors such as the community’s character (urban vs. suburban vs. rural), the regional land uses surrounding a community, agricultural protection issues or the extent of the transportation network will greatly dictate how much commercial land use is needed in a community.

In 1992, the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) prepared an analysis of updated land use ratio⁷ information for communities under 100,000 people. According to this information, approximately 10% of all land in an urban or suburban community is generally designated for commercial uses. This percentage has risen from 2% in 1955 to 7% in 1983 to 10% in 1992 because of the changes in commercial land use development.

Today, land use regulations tend to promote performance standards of shared parking/access and landscaping requirements that “green” the site. This has led to a general decline in the percentage of land dedicated to commercial uses which today, is closer to 5% of the total land area.⁸ This is by no means a standard for a community, but generally 5-10% of a community’s land use is typically dedicated to commercial land uses.

⁷ PAS memo – August 1992.

⁸ Based on research at the following websites: American Planning Association, Urban Land Institute, International Economic Development Council and Association for Economic Development and various phone interviews with developers, business organizations and real estate experts.

Most of the retail trade and commercial services patronized by Porter residents are situated outside the Town. According to the land use analysis, approximately 0.7% or 129 acres are designated as commercial uses. In the Village of Youngstown, approximately 1.6% of the land is designated as commercial. Combined, this accounts for approximately 2.3% designated for commercial use. This is considerably lower than the national average, but to be expected in a rural community such as Porter as most residents will go to the Cities of Niagara Falls and/or Buffalo for many of their needs. Additional commercial may not be necessary, but should be concentrated in nodes and in the Hamlet and village areas.

There is a need for some additional commercial land – which should be concentrated in nodes – in the Town

Industrial Development

The American Planning Association and the Planning Advisory Service have also provided information on industrial land use percentages. On average, 7% of a community is designated for industrial land uses throughout the country. These guidelines are based on various communities under 100,000 people throughout the country. This would translate into approximately 1,330 acres needed for industrial development in the Town of Porter. This percentage would be in addition to the land at the CWM site, which is a unique situation, in that much of the land is landfill, rather than buildings where employment opportunities are available.

Other standard industrial guidelines recommend that 12 acres of industrial land per 1,000 residents should be set aside for a current reserve for industrial development. In addition, 12 acres should be set aside per 1,000 residents for future reserve. Given the population projections for the Town of Porter, industrial land use would calculate to approximately 180 acres.

Parks

To determine the adequacy of the Porter recreation system, an inventory of existing parks and recreation facilities in the Town was prepared. The inventory included facilities that are owned, leased, maintained or programmed by a government or not-for-profit entity for use by residents either free of charge or on a fee basis.

The parkland was categorized based upon definitions provided in the New York State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) published by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The standards include:

- **Pocket Park:** between ¼ and ½ acre in size and used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.
- **Neighborhood Park:** usually 4-7 acres in size; serves as the basic unit of the park system and the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood.
- **District Park:** 20-100 acres and provides active and passive recreation opportunities, including winter activities, for persons of all ages; generally accessed by automobile, mass transit, bike or hiking.
- **Connector Trail:** multi-purpose trail that emphasizes safe travel for pedestrians and around the community; focus is on both transportation and recreation.
- **Sports Complex:** consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities to larger (40-80 acres) and fewer sites located throughout the community.
- **Private Recreation Facility:** privately owned facilities that contribute to the public recreational system.

The table below summarizes the parkland and recreation facilities located within Porter, including those in the Village of Youngstown. Parks were categorized based upon the lot size and facilities. All acreages are based upon tax assessment maps and site visits.

Table 3-5 Parkland and Recreation Facilities
Town of Porter

Park Type	Name	Acres	Owned By	Total Acres
Play Lots	N / A	N / A	N / A	0
Neighborhood	Constitution Park Falkner Park Waterfront Park and Pier	0.5 2.5 0.5	Village of Youngstown Village of Youngstown Village of Youngstown	3.5
District Parks	John Plain MD Memorial Park	2.0	Ransomville Fire Dept.	2.0
Regional Parks	Fort Niagara State Park Four Mile Creek State Park	280 248	State State	522
Sports Complex	Lions Park Veterans Park	2 8	Village of Youngstown Village of Youngstown	10
Private	Niagara Frontier Country Club Ransomville Speedway	18 holes N / A	N / A	18 holes

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc. Based on Interviews with Providers

From the above information, the future need for parkland can be computed based on standards used by New York State. The projected parkland needs are summarized in the table below.

Table 3-6 Projected Parkland and Recreation Facility Needs (acres)*
Town of Porter

Park Type	NY SCORP Standard per 1,000 persons	2025 Parkland Needs	Existing Parkland	2025 Surplus/ Deficit
Play Lots	2.0 ac.	15.0	0	-15.0
Neighborhood	1.0 ac.	7.5	3.5	-4.0
District Parks	20.0 – 35.0 ac.	20.0 – 35.0 ac.	2.0	-18.0 – 33.0 ac.
Regional Parks	2.0 ac.	15.0	522.0	+517.0
Sports Complexes	2.0 ac.	15.0	10.0	-5.0
Golf Courses	0.5 holes	3.8 holes	18 holes	+14 holes
Total	12.3 ac.	54.8	537.5	

* Includes Village of Youngstown
Source: peter j. smith & company, Inc.

The New York SCORP standards recommend that the communities have 12.3 acres of active parkland per 1,000 persons. Based upon 2025 population projections of 7,500 people, Porter should have approximately 93.0 acres of active parkland. The Town of Porter has a total of approximately 537.5 acres of park space within their borders, exceeding state active parkland standards. This is due, primarily, to the two large state parks located in the Town. There appears to be deficit in neighborhood parks and district parks to serve all Town residents. Additional neighborhood parks and a Town park should be considered for Porter. They should be located near population centers; this is especially true of the Ransomville area that is underserved. There are no play lots in Porter; this is due, in part, to the rural character where residents and their children are likely to play in their own yards.

***The Parkland
Deficits are Primarily
in Smaller Parks***

3.2 Environmental Resources and Facilities

The natural environment of the Town of Porter defines much of its character and greatly influences the area and its potential for development. Natural features such as the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment create a distinctive environment and influence the patterns of development in the Town. New development along the much desired Lake Ontario coast and along the Niagara River change the physical landscape of the Town and the rural character that has drawn many residents to this primarily agricultural community.

The careful consideration of the characteristics of the natural environment will allow the Town of Porter to make informed development decisions that maintain residential land values, promote protection of environmentally sensitive lands, ensure resident access – both physical and views - to the Lake and River and maintain the natural beauty of the Town.

This section addresses the following areas of the Town's natural environment: geology / topography, lake and river coast, soil, climate, hydrology, woodlands, rare plant species, wildlife, contaminated sites, air quality and noise. These features are integral components in the planning process to determine the most suitable development plan for the land.

Geology and Topography

Soils in Niagara County formed in glacial material that was deposited during and shortly after the ice age. During the Pleistocene epoch, the advancing ice sheet moved slowly southward and picked up rocks and soil material. This material was transported south and later dumped to form hills, ridges and plains; this is called glacial till.

Porter primarily consists of rolling lands with slopes of 10% or less

Porter is primarily in the Lake Ontario Plain and its elevation is approximately 246 feet above sea level. Generally, the land in the Town is gently rolling with slopes that are 10% or less. A number of streams break up the northern slopes of the Town and have steeper slopes: Four Mile Creek, Six Mile Creek and Twelve Mile Creek. Along the shore of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario, there are also steeper slopes.

The Niagara Escarpment is the primary topographic feature that impacts Niagara County. This prominent landform is present in Wisconsin, through Ontario and into New York. “The Niagara Escarpment is a landform called a *cuesta*, where a gently-sloping layer of rock forms a ridge. One side of the ridge has a gentle slope, a so-called *dip slope* that is essentially the surface of the rock layer. The other side is a steep bluff. The Niagara Escarpment owes its prominence to both the resistance of the Silurian dolomite layers and the relative softness of the Ordovician and Devonian rocks on either side. The Escarpment swings southeast across Ontario and into New York, where it is cut by Niagara Falls (NF).”⁹

⁹ <http://www.uwgb.edu/dutchs/geolwisc/niagesc.htm>

The eastern portion of the Niagara Escarpment is higher than in the west. The escarpment at Watertown, New York is 147 meters (483 feet) above Lake Ontario level while at Hamilton, Ontario the escarpment is 35 meters (116 feet) above Lake level.¹⁰ In Niagara County, the Escarpment divides the County into two areas; these include the Ontario Plain to the north and the Huron Plain to the south.¹¹ Drainage in the northern portion of the County is to the north into Lake Ontario while in the south, drainage is towards Tonawanda Creek, which flows into the Niagara River.

Lake and River Ecosystems

Erosion Issues

The New York State Department of State, Division of Coastal Resources is addressing coastal issues with input from residents, users and all levels of government in the State. Key actions undertaken by the Division of Coastal Resources, which will correct past mistakes and improve decision making, include implementation of sand bypassing at inlets to restore the natural system of shore protection, erosion monitoring to enrich the coastal processes database for making informed coastal management decisions and technical assistance to all levels of government to ensure best management practices in addressing site-specific problems.¹² Management of coasts along the Great Lakes is problematic because of the complex issues involved: land ownership, environmental, economic.

One of the best ways for a community to establish coastal policies and ensure that they meet the requirements of the NYS DOS is to develop a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP). The LWRP helps ensure that projects and activities along the Lake Ontario and Niagara River shoreline are consistent with the policies of the New York State Coastal Management Program (CMP). At the present time, the Town of Porter does not have an adopted LWRP that sets forth coastal policies.

The bluffs along the Niagara River and Lake Ontario shoreline are areas where special coastal protection is important. While both resources offer great recreational potential to Town residents, the shoreline of the Lake is subject to rapid erosion because of the waves and wind coming from the Lake. As more residential development occurs along the shore, which is the trend in the Town right now, these areas will have to be better protected, in a comprehensive manner, to stabilize them. Shoreline protection activity along the lake, including the installation of jetties and barriers, has generally taken place on an individual landowner basis. There are efforts, at the State, National and International level, to ensure that a more comprehensive approach to lakeshore protection takes place. There are numerous groups and organizations that have formed to address environmental issues surrounding the Great Lakes. The following is a summary of a few with the most local impacts.

The Lake Ontario shoreline is subject to rapid erosion from waves and winds

¹⁰ <http://www.iaw.com/~falls/origins.html#b>

¹¹ Towards a Smart Growth Master Plan: Assessment and Recommendations for the Town of Porter. UB Studio on Smart Growth. 2003.

¹² <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/cstl/erosion.html>

Friends of the Buffalo Niagara Rivers

The Friends of the Buffalo Niagara Rivers (FBNR) is a locally based organization that is dedicated to promoting, preserving and protecting the natural and historical environments of the Buffalo Niagara Rivers and their environs for the benefit of the local community. The FBNR is working on the Niagara Power Project re-licensing. The Power Plant, which is located about five miles downstream from Niagara Falls, is the largest of eight hydropower facilities operated by the New York Power Authority and one of the largest electric generating facilities in the world. The construction and operation of the Niagara Power Project has had an extensive influence upon the Niagara River and its natural habitats; this includes impacts on the Town of Porter because the River forms its western boundary. FBNR has three goals for the re-licensing process:

- To mitigate the impacts of the Niagara Power Project and its operations on the Niagara River System
- Agreement with NYPA on river solutions designed to support River vitality which are long-term, flexible, cost-effective, performance-focused and watershed based
- The active engagement of the WNY environmental community in the re-licensing process

Great Lakes United

Great Lakes United is an international coalition dedicated to preserving and restoring the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River ecosystem. Great Lakes United is made up of member organizations representing environmentalists, conservationists, hunters and anglers, labor unions, community groups, and citizens of the United States, Canada, and First Nations and Tribes. Great Lakes United was founded in 1982 on Lake Huron's Mackinac Island. In 1985 GLU established a central office in Buffalo, New York, and hired its first executive director. In 1986 GLU achieved its first significant impact on Great Lakes environmental consciousness by holding more than a dozen hearings around the Great Lakes to make people aware of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and the treaty organization that reports on progress under it, the International Joint Commission.¹³

International Joint Commission

The International Joint Commission is an independent bi-national organization established by the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. Its purpose is to help prevent and resolve disputes relating to the use and quality of boundary waters and to advise Canada and the United States on related questions.¹⁴

¹³ <http://www.glu.org/english/index.html>

¹⁴ http://www.ijc.org/en/background/biogr_commiss.htm

The IJC has identified 43 Areas of Concern (AOC) along the Great Lake system. The Niagara River is the only AOC that is directly adjacent to or in the Town of Porter, but others within the system could also impact the Town of Porter. A Remedial Action Plan (RAP) is in progress for the Niagara River and many of the hazardous sites in the River's watershed.

Additionally, the IJC has established the Lake Ontario - St. Lawrence River Study Board to undertake a comprehensive five-year study that assesses and evaluates the current criteria used for regulating water levels on Lake Ontario and in the St. Lawrence River. In August 2003, the Study Board adopted goals and guiding principals for development that could occur in the Lake Ontario – St. Lawrence River system.

Great Lakes Commission

The Great Lakes Commission is a bi-national agency that promotes the orderly, integrated and comprehensive development, use and conservation of the water and related natural resources of the Great Lakes basin and St. Lawrence River. Established 45 years ago, the Great Lakes Commission has been a pioneer in applying principles of sustainability to the development, use and conservation of the natural resources of the Great Lakes basin and St. Lawrence River. The Commission recognizes and promotes complementary environmental protection and economic goals and has built its reputation on an integrated and objective approach to public policy issues and opportunities.¹⁵

Soils

Soils are naturally occurring matter found at the earth's surface. They are the products of the earth's weather conditions and added processes that act on parent materials. Parent materials are the "unconsolidated organic and mineral materials in which soil forms."¹⁶ The properties of any soils are dependent upon a combination of factors including: physical and chemical composition of the parent material, climate and topography, animal and plant life and time.

Soils are very important for agriculture and dictate where prime agricultural lands are located. The soil type will directly affect the land's productivity for farming and its suitability for future development. The USDA has classified prime farmland as those having a favorable temperature, moisture supply and growing season for generating high yields of crops. It is the land best suited for producing food, feed, forage and fiber and oilseed crops¹⁷.

¹⁵ <http://www.glc.org/about/>

¹⁶ US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service.

¹⁷ US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service.

According to Niagara County and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) classification system there are a three predominant soil types in the Town of Porter: lacustrine silt & clay, lacustrine sand and till. The following summarizes the soils in Porter:

Table 3-7 Soil Types and Percentages
Town of Porter

Soil Type	Percentage
Lacustrine Silt and Clay	81.8%
Lacustrine Sand	0.8%
Till	17.4%

Source: Niagara County Department Planning, Development and Tourism and peter j. smith & company, inc.

- Lacustrine Silt and Clay - Generally laminated silt and clay, deposited in pro-glacial lakes, generally calcareous, low permeability, potential land instability, thickness variable (up to 50 meters)¹⁸
- Lacustrine Sand – Generally quartz sand, well sorted, stratified, usually deposited in pro-glacial lakes, but may have been deposited on remnant ice, generally near-shore deposit or near a sand source, permeable, thickness variable (2-20 meters)
- Till – Variable texture (boulders to silt), usually poorly sorted sand-rich diamict, deposition beneath glacier ice, permeability varies with compaction, thickness variable (1-50 meters)

***Only 4% of the land
in Porter is
considered not
farmable***

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets has developed a classification system for prime agricultural soils; this system differs from the NRCS system in that the rating is based on productivity. There are 10 categories in the State's system. The Commissioner establishes and maintains this classification system. In information obtained from the Niagara County Cornell Cooperative Extension, the soils in Niagara County have been separated into four categories for the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan. These categories include:

- Prime Agricultural Lands
- Prime Agricultural Lands if Drained
- Important Agricultural Soils
- Not Farmable (primarily floodplains and other environmentally sensitive areas)

According to this information, approximately 4,600 acres (23%) are considered prime agricultural lands, 9,100 (45%) are considered prime if drained, 3,900 (19%) are considered important and 900 (4%) are considered not farmable.

¹⁸ http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/data/surficial_type.txt

Climate

Climate impacts both vegetation and animal life. Climate plays a significant role in many physiological processes of humans, who can affect climate through the alteration of the earth's surface and the introduction of pollutants and chemicals such as carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Climate is best defined as the long-term effect of the sun's radiation on the rotating earth's varied surface and atmosphere. Climate can be understood most easily in terms of annual or seasonal averages of temperature and precipitation. Land and water areas, being so variable, react in many different ways to the atmosphere, which is constantly circulating in a state of dynamic activity. Day-by-day variations in a given area constitute the *weather*, whereas *climate* is the long-term synthesis of such variations¹⁹. In contrast, weather is measured on a daily basis by thermometers, rain gauges, barometers and other instruments. A long-term study of weather changes and the analysis of daily, monthly, and yearly patterns helps in understanding climate.

Niagara County has a humid, continental climate. Airflow is dominated by the continental sources. Generally, summers are pleasant and warm but winters can be long and cold. There can be spells of clouds in the winter. Generally, the minimum temperature in the County will range from 1 (January) to 50 (July) degrees while the maximum will range from 46 (January) to 90 (July) degrees. Precipitation is generally distributed evenly throughout the year, though there is less precipitation in the winter than other seasons. Precipitation will average approximately 32.6 inches per year; this includes an average snow total of 56 inches.²⁰

According to information obtained from the Cornell University Climate Center, at a Lewiston weather station, the median low temperature between 1987 and 1994 was 39.2 degrees; this included a low maximum of 63.5 degrees in August 1991 and a low minimum of 8.2 degrees in January 1994. The median high temperature between 1987 and 1994 was 58.8 degrees. This included a high maximum of 88.2 degrees in July 1988 and a high minimum of 23.7 degrees in January 1994.

The microclimate influenced by Lake Ontario can help to moderate the temperature and weather in the Town of Porter, which experiences one of the more equable climates of New York State. Lake Ontario has a tempering impact on the Ontario Plain, which has led to the production of fruits and vegetables as a primary agricultural product. This results in a longer growing season in areas adjacent to the Lake. The southwesterly, prevailing winds that come across the deep Lake, modifies the temperature to moderate the heat of summer and the cold of winters. The first frost dates of most areas along the Lake occur in Porter later than they occur in Lockport, located further inland. The upper half of Niagara County, including Porter, is one of the driest areas in the State, receiving less than 30 inches of mean annual rainfall.²¹

***The moderating effect
of Lake Ontario on
the climate in Porter
allows for a longer
growing season***

¹⁹ <http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/refpages/RefArticle.aspx?refid=761567994>

²⁰ Soil Survey of Niagara County, NY. P. 1.

²¹ Town of Porter Master Plan. 1981.

According to the Cornell University Climate Center, the median amount of precipitation at the Wilson weather station was 30.65 inches between 1948 and 1997. This included a minimum of 0 inches in October 1963 and a maximum of 8.13 inches in September 1996.

Hydrology

Watersheds

Throughout the United States, communities are beginning to recognize the importance of watershed management and protection. A watershed is an area of land that catches all forms of precipitation and drains or seeps into a marsh, stream, river, lake and/or groundwater. Today, watershed management is important as communities recognize that one of the most significant ways to protect their quality of life is by recognizing the need to manage watershed development. Water resources are important not only to human health, but to wildlife and plant health as well.

Watersheds are delineated by USGS using a nationwide system based on surface hydrologic features. The USGS system divides the country into 21 regions, 222 sub-regions, 352 accounting units, and 2,262 cataloguing units for watershed definition and information. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), there are three watersheds in Niagara County, but only one encompasses the Town of Porter. The Oak Orchard – Twelve Mile Creek watershed includes the area from the Niagara River to the City of Rochester.

Three creeks encompass the watershed in the Town of Porter: Twelve Mile Creek, Six Mile Creek and Four Mile Creek. Six Mile Creek originates in the Town while Four Mile and Twelve Mile Creeks originate outside the Town. Twelve Mile Creek drains the southeast portion of Porter including the entire Ransomville area and areas along Dickersonville Road and Youngstown Wilson Road.



The northern part of the Town between Lake Road and Youngstown Wilson Road drains mostly into Lake Ontario or into Six Mile Creek. The western portion of the Town drains into Four Mile Creek or the Niagara River.

Surface Water

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation classifies surface water resources based upon water quality and their ability to sustain plant and animal life. Waters with classifications A, B, and C may also have a standard of (T), indicating that it may support a trout population, or (TS), indicating that it may support trout spawning (TS). Special requirements apply to sustain these waters that support these valuable and sensitive fisheries resources. The classifications are further described below:

The Niagara River is the only surface water resource in Porter with an A quality rating

- The classification AA or A is assigned to waters used as a source of drinking water.
- Classification B indicates a best usage for swimming and other contact recreation, but not for drinking water.
- Classification C is for waters supporting fisheries and suitable for non - contact activities.
- The lowest classification and standard is D.

The following summarizes the classification of rivers and streams in the Town of Porter:

Table 3-8 Stream Classifications

Town of Porter

River/Stream Name	Classification
Niagara River	A - International Boundary Water
Four Mile Creek	C (Part 848 Item 38)
Six Mile Creek	C (Part 848 Item 34)
Twelve Mile Creek	C and C (T) (Part 848 Item 29)

Source: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Wetlands

Wetlands act as filters in a community and help to remove excess nutrients from the water that flows through them; this helps improve or maintain the quality of groundwater in a community. Wetlands benefit the environment and the residents of the communities where they are located by providing for cleaner drinking water, safer recreation opportunities and improved fish and wildlife habitats. The New York Freshwater Wetlands Act, seeks to “preserve, protect and conserve freshwater wetlands and the benefits derived, to prevent the despoliation and destruction of freshwater wetlands, and to regulate use and development of such wetlands to secure the natural benefits of freshwater wetlands, consistent with the general welfare and beneficial economic, social and agricultural development of the state.”²² The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation regulates activity within State designated wetlands and the areas immediately adjacent (within 100 feet) to wetlands.

²² 6 NYCRR Chapter X Part 663.1

New York classifies each wetland according to the classification system that establishes four separate classes that rank wetlands according to their ability to perform wetland functions and provide wetland benefits. Class I wetlands have the highest rank, and the ranking descends through Classes II, III and IV.

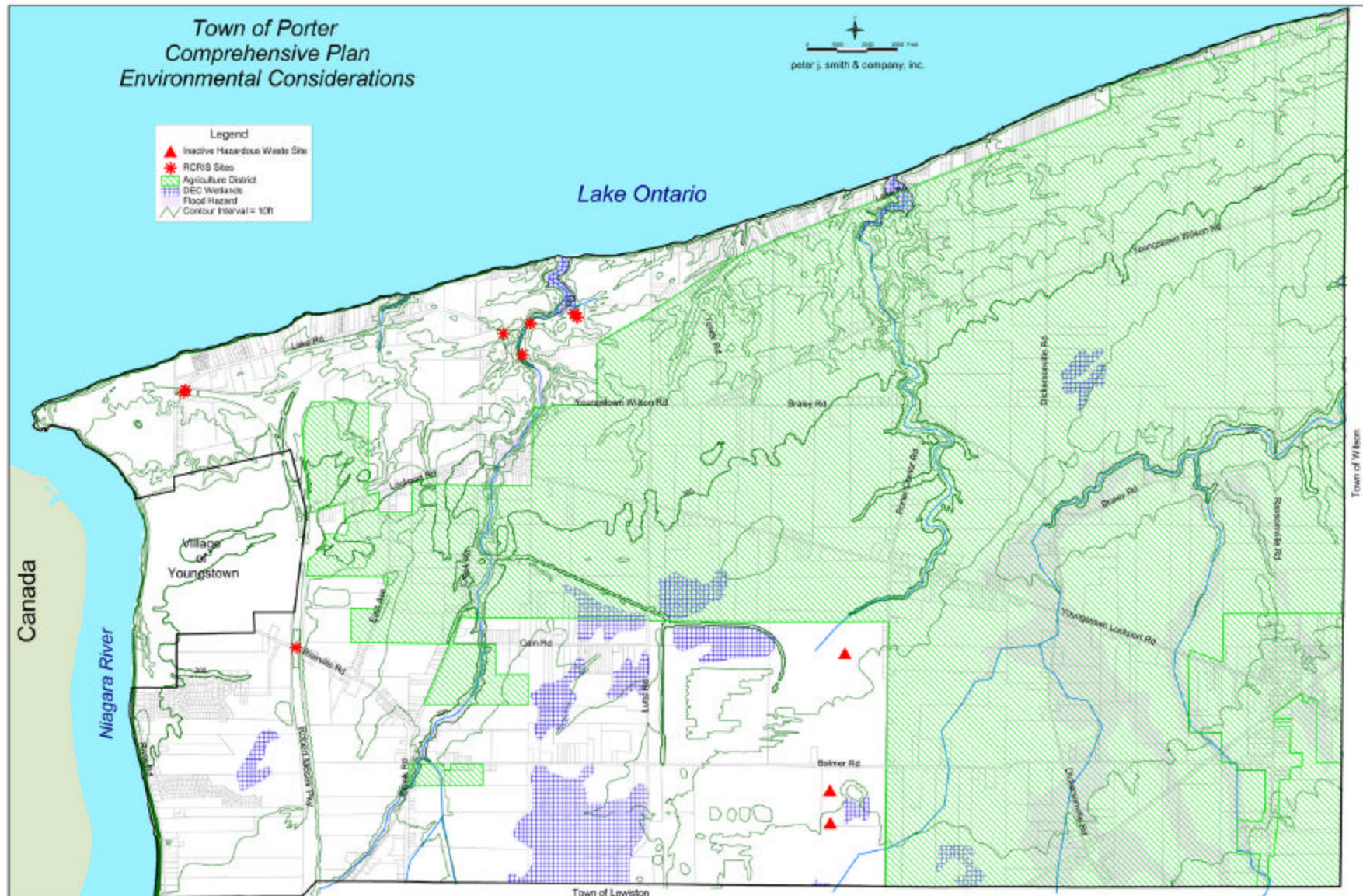
- Class I wetlands provide the most critical of the state's wetland benefits, reduction of which is acceptable only in the most unusual circumstances. A permit shall be issued only if it is determined that the proposed activity satisfied a compelling economic or social need that clearly and substantially outweighs the loss of or detriment to the benefit(s) of the Class I wetland.
- Class II wetlands provide important wetland benefits, the loss of which are acceptable only in very limited circumstances. A permit shall be issued only if it is determined that the proposed activity satisfies a pressing economic or social need that clearly outweighs the loss of or detriment to the benefit(s) of the Class II wetland.
- Class III wetlands supply wetland benefits, the loss of which is acceptable only after the exercise of caution and discernment. A permit shall be issued only if it is determined that the proposed activity satisfies an economic or social need that outweighs the loss of or detriment to the benefit(s) of the Class III wetland.

There are three State classified wetlands in Porter – one is rated Class 1 and two are rated Class III

According to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, there are three State classified wetlands in the Town of Porter. These include a Class I wetland, approximately 6 acres, near Six Mile Creek that begins at the Lake and includes areas south of Lake Road; the wetland is located between Murphys Corners Road and Porter Center Road along the Creek. An approximately 34-acre wetland, Class III, is located south of Youngstown Road to the east of Dickersonville Road. There are approximately 22 acres of wetlands, Class III, located near Twelve Mile Creek to the west of Fitch Road; most of this Wetland is in the Town of Wilson, but a portion is in the Town of Porter.

Other wetlands in the Town are not classified by New York State, but are also important resources; these are mapped and shown on the environmental characteristics map included in this Plan. These include a wetland to the west of the Robert Moses Parkway south of the Village of Youngstown, two wetlands north of Cain Road, one to the east and one to the west of Lutts Road' south of Cain Road and to the west of Lutts Road are two significant wetlands. Other wetlands in the Town are located on the CWM site and the US National Reserve land.

Figure 3-3 Environmental Considerations
Town of Porter



Flood Plains

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) prepares mapping of floodplains for communities. These maps may be used to restrict development in areas that are prone to flood damage. Banks usually require flood insurance if conventional financing is proposed within designated flood plain areas (flood zones).

Each of the three streams in the Town of Porter has a floodplain associated with them. Twelve Mile Creek's floodplain is the most extensive of the three and covers much of the southeastern portion of the Town. This includes much of the areas along Dickersonville Road up to Youngstown Lockport Road and the area north of Braley Road. The areas along much of the Creek are included in the floodplain and they range in width from about 250 feet to over 4,000 feet.

The floodplain along Four Mile Creek traverses the entire length of the stream in the Town of Porter and encompasses an areas about 250 feet on either side of the Creek. The Six Mile Creek floodplain begins approximately at Youngstown Wilson Road and follows the stream to the Lake. This area ranges in width from about 100 feet to almost 1,000 feet at Lake Road.

The cresting patterns of these streams must be considered to determine the flooding potential to the lands within the Town of Porter. An assessment of the cresting patterns reveals the expected timing of floods and enables communities to plan for flooding situations. This information also facilitates the development of appropriate storm water detention facilities for creek waters. To determine when a stream will crest, it is important to determine the origin and termination of the stream. Six Mile Creek originates in the Town of Porter and would be subject to flooding while a rainstorm is occurring. Both Four Mile Creek and Twelve Mile Creek originate in Lewiston and would likely crest after the storm.

***Six Mile Creek
would be subject to
flooding while a
rainstorm was
occurring while Four
Mile Creek and
Twelve Mile Creek
would likely crest
after the storm***

Woodlands

Woodland areas are an important community resource. Woodland areas clean and store water, generate oxygen, provide wildlife habitat, create recreation opportunities, buffer adjoining uses, offer scenic views and generate forestry income. According to the land use inventory completed in Fall 2003, the Town of Porter has no significant woodland areas; there are no parcels with a Real Property Service (RPS) classification of woodland. There are wooded areas in the Town, but the primary use of the site is not wooded; they could be classified as residential, vacant, agricultural or park areas in the land use portion of this Comprehensive Plan.

Plants and Wildlife

Endangered Species

Ten endangered or proposed endangered species are known to be located in Porter and one threatened species may also be

According to the US Fish and Wildlife service, there are eighteen species of plants and animals that are threatened or endangered in New York State.²³ There are many types of wildlife in the Town of Porter that are significant not only to the Town, but to the State as a whole. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Audubon Society, the following endangered or proposed endangered species are known to be located in the Town of Porter: Bald Eagle, Pied-Billed Grebe, Least Bittern, Northern Harrier, Upland Sandpiper, Common Tern, Sedge Wren, Indiana Bat, Eastern Cougar, Small Whorled Pagonia. The US Fish and Wildlife service indicates that the Northern Wild Monkshood (*Aconitum noveboracense*) may be found in the Town of Porter and is a threatened species.

Birding

The Niagara River is a significant migratory stopover and wintering site for a large and diverse population of birds and waterfowl

The Niagara River annually supports one of the world's most spectacular concentrations of gulls, with 19 species recorded and one-day counts of over 100,000 individuals. The site is particularly noteworthy as a migratory stopover and wintering site for Bonaparte's Gulls, with one-day counts of 10,000-50,000 individuals (2-10% of the world population). Herring Gull one-day counts vary from 10,000-50,000 and Ring-billed Gull one-day counts vary from 10,000-20,000. The river also hosts a remarkable diversity and abundance of waterfowl. Winter NYSDEC surveys have shown a 22-year average of 2808 Canvasbacks (31.5% of state wintering population), 7527 Common Mergansers (31% of state wintering population), 2015 Common Goldeneyes (29% of state wintering population), and 2369 scaup (6% of state wintering population). Annual peak numbers for Canvasbacks range from 2000-15,000, for Common Goldeneyes 2300-3000, for Common Mergansers 2500-12,000, and for Greater Scaup 2500-15,000. The river also supports breeding colonies of Common Terns, Herring Gulls, Ring-billed Gulls, Black-crowned Night Herons (50-60 pairs), Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, and Double-crested Cormorants. The habitats along the river edge support an exceptional diversity of migratory songbirds during spring and fall migrations. The few remaining marshes, such as that at Buckhorn Island State Park, have supported breeding Least Bitterns, Northern Harriers, and Sedge Wrens.²⁴

Fishing

The NYS DEC has listed Lake Ontario as a prime fishing area for several types of fish

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation has listed Lake Ontario as a prime fishing area for pacific salmon, lake trout, brown trout, rainbow trout/steelhead, walleye, black bass, northern pike and panfish. The Niagara River is also is a prime fishing area for walleye, northern pike, smallmouth bass and largemouth bass; the lower river fish include chinook salmon and steelhead in autumn, lake trout during winter and spring, and walleye and smallmouth bass.

²³ http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/TESSWebpageUsaLists?state=NY

²⁴ <http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ny/ny/iba/niagara.html>

Each year DEC releases over one million pounds of fish into more than 1,200 public streams, rivers, lakes and ponds across the state. These fish are stocked for two main purposes-- to enhance recreational fishing and to restore native species to waters they formerly occupied. The following lists fish stocked in the Town of Porter and surrounding communities by the NYS DEC and the County Federated Sportsmen:

***The Niagara River
is an important
resource for
recreational fishing***

Table 3-9 Fish Stocking List - 2002

Porter and Surrounding Communities

Water (Township)	Number	Species	Size (inches)
Lake Ontario (Porter)	40,000	Lake trout	6.5
Lake Ontario (Porter)	80,000	Lake trout	7.0
Lake Ontario (Wilson)	6,200	Brown trout	9.5
Lake Ontario (Wilson)	11,500	Rainbow trout	8.5
Lake Ontario (Wilson)	15,350	Brown trout	8.0
Lower Niagara River (Lewiston)	10,000	Steelhead	6.0
Lower Niagara River (Lewiston)	40,000	Steelhead	5.5
Lower Niagara River (Lewiston)	5,000	Brown trout	7.5
Lower Niagara River (Lewiston)	25,000	Coho salmon	5.5
Lower Niagara River (Lewiston)	110,000	Chinook salmon	3.0
Lower Niagara River (Porter)	75,000	Chinook salmon	3.5
Niagara River	23,000	Brown trout	6.0
Niagara River	22,000	Brown trout	6.5
Twelve Mile Creek (Wilson)	18,500	Steelhead	5.5
Twelve Mile Creek East Branch (Wilson)	18,500	Steelhead	5.5

Source: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

The Niagara River Anglers Association also stocks fish in the Lower Niagara each year. Three years ago, they began a salmon pen-rearing project under the guidance of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation where they raise steelhead trout and salmon in pens at a marina in Youngstown. Once released, the fish should return to the Niagara River, because they were raised in this area, for spawning; this helps maintain the Niagara River as a successful fishing area. The Niagara River Anglers Association has released approximately 10,000 – 25,000 walleye into the Niagara River each year for the past 16 years; these are primarily stocked at Joe Davis State Park and the average size ranges from 2-9 inches.²⁵

²⁵ www.niagarariveranglers.com

Hazardous Waste

Superfund Sites

There are no Superfund sites in Porter according to the CERCLIS

Superfund is a program administered by the Environmental Protection Agency to locate, investigate, and clean up the worst hazardous waste sites throughout the United States. Before Superfund, communities, residents and industry were less aware of how dumping chemical wastes might affect public health and the environment. Hazardous wastes were often left in the open, where they seeped into the ground, flowed into rivers and lakes, and contaminated soil and groundwater. Consequently, where these practices were intensive or continuous, there were uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites. According to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System (CERCLIS), there are no Superfund sites in the Town of Porter. Youngstown Cold Storage located in Youngstown is not a National Priority site. There are two Superfund sites, neither of which are National Priority sites, located in Lewiston: Stauffer Chemical/PASNY on Upper Mountain Road and Stauffer Chemical/ArtPark on Old Lewiston Road.²⁶

According to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, there are three inactive hazardous waste sites in the Town of Porter.²⁷ These include the Bell Aerospace Textron-Air Force site on Balmer Road and two at the US Air Force Plant 68 on Lutts Road.

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) requires that generators, transporters, treaters, storers and disposers of hazardous waste (as defined by the federally recognized hazardous waste codes) provide information concerning their activities to state environmental agencies. These agencies then provide the information to regional and national Environmental Protection Agency offices.

Congress enacted the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act in 1976. RCRA's primary goals are to protect human health and the environment from the potential hazards of waste disposal, to conserve energy and natural resources, to reduce the amount of waste generated, and to ensure that wastes are managed in an environmentally sound manner. RCRA regulates the management of solid waste (e.g., garbage), hazardous waste, and underground storage tanks holding petroleum products or certain chemicals. Wastes that exhibit certain characteristics may be regulated by RCRA. A waste may be considered hazardous if it is ignitable (i.e., burns readily), corrosive, or reactive (e.g., explosive). Waste may also be considered hazardous if it contains certain amounts of toxic chemicals. In addition to these characteristic wastes, EPA has also developed a list of over 500 specific hazardous wastes. Hazardous waste takes many physical forms and may be solid, semi-solid, or even liquid.

²⁶ <http://cfpub.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/srchrslt.cfm?Start=226&sortby=cnty>

²⁷ <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/imsmaps/facilities/viewer.htm>

Hazardous waste data is contained in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Information System (RCRIS); ten sites are located in the Town of Porter²⁸ while there are 500 located in the County as a whole. Hazardous materials sites may introduce toxins to the local environment through non-point source runoff and accidents and should be considered as future land use decisions are made.

***The RCRIS lists
ten sites in the
Town of Porter
as hazardous
material sites***

The following summarizes the sites in the Town of Porter:

Table 3-10 RCRIS Sites

Town of Porter

Facility Name	Location
Air Force Plant 38	Balmer Road
Bell Test Center	Balmer Road
NYS DOT BIN – 1	Robert Moses Parkway Southbound Park Entrance
NYS DOT BIN - 2	Robert Moses Parkway Northbound Park Entrance
NYS DOT BIN	Route 18 Bridge over Four Mile Creek
NYS DOT BIN	Robert Moses Parkway West Bound
NYS DOT BIN	Robert Moses Parkway East Bound
NYS DOT BIN	Route 18F Bridge over Robert Moses
NYS DOT BIN	Robert Moses State Parkway over Blairville Road
NYS DOT BIN	Robert Moses Parkway Over Four Mile Creek

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency

Lake Ontario Ordnance Works (LOOW)

According to the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works (LOOW) is approximately 7, 500 acres located within the Towns of Lewiston and Porter. The site was purchased in 1941 by the Department of Defense (DOD) for a trinitrotoluene (TNT) production plant. The former LOOW has three components; the LOOW undeveloped area, the LOOW developed area, and the Niagara Falls Storage Site (NFSS).

The LOOW developed area consists of 2,500 acres on the east side of Lutts Road that the Army used to manufacture TNT for a nine months period during World War II. The TNT plant was decommissioned in 1943. The NFSS refers to 1,500 acres, of the developed area, that in the mid 1940's was transferred to the Manhattan Engineering District (MED). The MED evolved into the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), then the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) and finally the Department of Energy (DOE). From the 1950's to the 1980's this area was used to produce high-energy fuel, and to store radioactive materials during the development of the atomic bomb. All radioactive materials located throughout the property were consolidated in the current 191-acre NFSS area, which is located in the southwestern portion of the former LOOW TNT production area. A 10-acre waste containment structure that contains radioactive residues is located within the NFSS. The other areas formerly used by the DOE are known as the vicinity properties. Some of the vicinity properties were cleaned by the DOE and closed out. The NFSS is currently owned by the Federal government.

²⁸ http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/rcris/rcris_query_java.html

The 5,000 acres, located to the west of Lutts Road, were left undeveloped. In 1945, this area was transferred to General Service Administration for disposal to private landowners and the remaining acres were used by various government agencies. As Department of Defense operations decreased, additional property was sold. Environmental investigations have confirmed Department of Defense (DOD) related contamination at several areas. Current owners of the site include the Lewiston-Porter Schools, local and federal governments, general residential areas, and private corporations.

The former LOOW site is being addressed under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites (DERP-FUDS). The DERP-FUDS program is used to clean up property that was once owned or used by DOD, but is no longer owned by the DOD. The NFSS is part of the Formerly Used Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP), a program to decontaminate or otherwise control sites where residual radioactive materials remain from the nation's atomic energy program or from commercial operations. The FUSRAP was administered by the USDOD until October 1997 when Congress transferred the program to the USACOE.

As of March 2004, the USACOE was using the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) process to investigate the extent of chemical and radiological contamination at the former LOOW and NFSS. The process includes a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) phase and the development of a Proposed Plan and Record of Decision before doing site cleanup. The remedial investigation will involve: identifying on-site contaminants, determining extent of contamination, determining potential risk to people and the environment, and determining how long chemicals will persist in environment and where they may move within the environment. The feasibility study will identify possible technologies for site cleanup and an evaluation of each technology. The proposed final remedy will be specified in the proposed plan. Tasks for the NFSS include: performing RI/FS, remediating the Waste Containment Structure, cleaning up the remaining surface soil that has radiological contamination, determining if there is on-site chemical contamination and if there is, cleaning up, decontaminating and demolishing contaminated buildings. The Remedial Investigation of NFSS is almost complete and building 403 has been decontaminated and demolished. The site will be maintained and monitored. The Feasibility Study began April 2001 and should be completed by December 2005. The time schedule for the Proposed Plan will be dependent on the RI/FS findings.

At the LOOW site, a historical archive search was conducted in 1997. Two phases of a Remedial Investigation were completed to study areas that were identified in the historical records as possible contamination areas and areas where data gaps existed from prior investigations. Tasks to be completed include: a risk assessment of previously investigated areas of the site to determine if they pose unacceptable risks to human health and the environment or warrant further investigation, completion of the Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection of the Small Bermed Clearings report and investigation of the underground pipelines and utilities.

Questions have been raised regarding possible contamination at the Lewiston-Porter school. The USACE has indicated that they have no evidence of radioactive contamination from DOD activities at the school. The background radiation study in the, “ LOOW History Search Report, August 1998”, prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District by EA Engineering, Science and Technology was used to support this conclusion. The USACE also analyzed soil samples from the school property for metals and organic compounds and presented the results at a June 2001 LOOW Restoration Advisory Board meeting. They indicated that samples showed lead and arsenic levels that were higher than the NY State background concentration but within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s acceptable range for child’s play area. Information from the NYS Department of Health indicated that arsenic levels were comparable to old fruit orchards in this area of the State and that arsenic was not found at elevated levels on the LOOW site, thus it could not be migrating from the LOOW site to the school property. Radon levels were also said to be normal at school monitoring sites.

In response to questions regarding groundwater flow, the USACE indicated that a groundwater model was being developed to determine the path that contaminants would take if a release occurred.²⁹

CWM Model City

The greatest potential impacts to the Porter environment most likely occur because of the location of the Chemical Waste Management “Model City”. The facility is located in the Towns of Porter and Lewiston; the CWM site is located within the former LOOW. The site specializes in hazardous waste treatment and landfill service. The site is currently 710 acres, but has recently requested an internal extension of 50-acres on the existing site.

Chemical Waste Management, a hazardous waste treatment and landfill service, is located in the Towns of Porter and Lewiston

According to CWM³⁰ the site current design capacity includes 425,000 tons per year on a 47-acre active landfill site. There are 80 acres of inactive landfill. The overall site life is the year 2051. There are two NYS DEC monitors on site to oversee the daily facility operations and three on site during construction activities. Water is tested for compliance to the State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit prior to discharge and groundwater wells are located throughout the site and tested.

²⁹ Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Webpage, <http://www.lrb.usace.army.mil/derpfuds/loow/index.htm>, <http://www.lrb.usace.army.mil/fusrap/nfss/nfss-loow-faqs-2004-04.pdf>, retrieved May 3, 2004.

³⁰ A Guide to CWM Waste Management’s Model City Facility. 2003 Issue.

Weekly sampling and analysis of surface water occurs and there are temporary holding areas for rainwater run-off. Air quality is tested every six days with monitoring points both up and downwind. CWM participates in the Adopt-A-Highway Program where they cleanup and maintain a two mile section of Creek Road. In 2000, a five-acre area was excavated to provide a 100-year floodwater storage volume for Twelve Mile Creek, which was turned in to a wetland as part of a wetlands replacement project. Because of the sensitive nature of the materials stored at the site, there is local opposition to the expansion of the landfill; this includes opposition from County Legislators, environmental groups and local citizens.

Critical Environmental Areas

Critical Environmental Areas, as defined by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, are areas that must have an exceptional or unique character with respect to one or more of the following³¹:

- A benefit or threat to human health;
- A natural setting (e.g., fish and wildlife habitat, forest and vegetation, open space and areas of important aesthetic or scenic quality);
- Agricultural, social, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or educational values; or
- An inherent ecological, geological or hydrological sensitivity to change that may be adversely affected by any change.

Following designation as a Critical Environmental Area, the potential impact of any Type I or Unlisted Action on the environmental characteristics of the Area is a relevant area of environmental concern and must be evaluated in the determination of significance prepared pursuant to Section 617.7 of SEQRA. According to the NYS DEC, there are no critical environmental areas in Niagara County.

Local Environmental Organizations

Residents for Responsible Government and Residents Organized for Lewiston-Porter's Environment are two of the grass-roots organizations that are opposed to the expansion of the landfill and also focus on other environmental issues. Both are interested in obtaining additional information on the environmental impacts of the expansion of the landfill. Residents for Responsible Government is a community group intent on bringing information to the residents that live near western New York's largest hazardous waste landfill, operated by Chemical Waste Management (CWM), located in the Town of Porter in Niagara County, New York. They have organized in order to provide a method for citizens to become better informed and become involved in the effort to rescind rezoning decisions and restore the legislative process to local control.³² Residents Organized for Lewiston-Porter's Environment were formed to present a collective voice for environmental causes.³³

³¹ <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dcs/seqr/cea/>

³² <http://www.rrg-wny.org/about.php>

³³ <http://www.nfwhc.org/groups/role.htm>

Air Quality

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Air Resources monitors air quality throughout the state using its Ambient Air Monitoring System. The State maintains air-monitoring stations throughout the State; there are a total of 10 State and local monitoring stations in Niagara County.

There are two monitoring stations in the Town of Lewiston, which are the closest in proximity to the Town of Porter; one is operated independently by CWM and they are responsible for operation, site survey, site upgrading and quality assurances at their facility; the site does not monitor odor or smell. The other station in Lewiston is located at the switchyard of the State Power Authority. A comprehensive monitoring station is located on Frontier Avenue in the City of Niagara Falls. The station monitors total suspended particulates, ozone, nitric oxide, soiling and wind speed/direction, horizontal/vertical sigma, temperature, barometric pressure, and relative humidity. According to the 1999 annual report, air quality measurements at the station fell within State air quality standards for all parameters at both the Lewiston and Niagara Falls monitoring stations.

Air quality measurements at stations in Lewiston and Niagara Falls met State air quality standards

Noise

Noise has been documented to adversely affect residents' quality of life by causing sleep disturbance, communication interference and general annoyance. Background noise levels in rural New York State may be as low as 40-50 dB.³⁴ The following table summarizes the impacts of noise on people.

Table 3-11 Effects of Noise Levels
General Levels

Noise Level (dB)	Effect
55-64	Annoyance (physical and psychological stress)
65-69	Communication interference (nearby traffic masks normal conversation causing people to strain in order to be heard)
70-79	Muscles and glands react
Above 80	Changed motor coordination

Source: US DOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 1994 Transportation Statistics Annual Report

In the Town of Porter, the largest noise generator is the Robert Moses Parkway, which is located on the western portion of the Town as a four-lane highway and becomes a two-lane road as it feeds into Lake Road. The level of traffic noise generated by a highway depends upon the mix of vehicles using the road, traffic speed, surface materials and volume. Noise levels dwindle with distance and the presence of barriers that block, deflect and absorb noise. According to the NYS DOT, the level of traffic on the Robert Moses Parkway ranges from a low of approximately 950 to a high of 4,300 average annual daily traffic (AADT) level. This amount of traffic has minimal noise impacts on the Town as a whole, although in the summer when traffic increases, some noise impacts may be evident.

Traffic on the Robert Moses Parkway has minimal noise impacts on the Town of Porter

³⁴ William McCall, New York State Department of Transportation, Environmental Analysis Bureau, November 14, 2000.

3.3 Transportation Network

The transportation network determines how easily people and goods can move into, out of and within a community. The following chapter looks at the existing transportation network in the Town of Porter including roads, bus service, rail service, air service, water access and bicycle and pedestrian circulation. An analysis of existing infrastructure, including water, sewer and utilities is also included. This analysis examines the public services residents are receiving and identifies areas of deficiency.



Roads and Traffic

Road Classifications

There are approximately 73 miles of public roadway within the Town of Porter: about 22 miles are State maintained, 24 miles are County maintained and 27 miles are Town maintained. Streets and highways are classified in terms of their functional importance, which is based on travel patterns and typical use. Porter has five categories of roadways: Principal Arterial Expressway, Urban Minor Arterial, Rural Minor Arterial, Rural Major Collector and Local Roads. Arterial and collector roads are eligible for federal funds through either the National Highway System (NHS) or the Surface Transportation Program (STP). Principal arterial expressways are eligible for both programs while minor arterials and collectors are only eligible for STP program funds.

- Principal Arterials – Intended for large volumes of traffic at high speeds and long distance trips, principal arterial roads serve as connectors to major activity centers and provide access to limited access highways. The Robert Moses Parkway is the only principal arterial. This four-lane parkway starts in Niagara Falls and ends in Porter. The section between the Niagara Gorge Discovery Center and the Niagara Power Project has been reduced to two-lane traffic since 2001. A report is expected by early 2004 with recommendations for the parkway's future.
- Minor Arterials – Designed to be a feeder system that ties the region together, minor arterials serve a more localized area and accommodate fewer and shorter trips at lower speeds. Porter roads in this classification include River Road, the Robert Moses Parkway Spur and Route 18 from Deitz Road to the Town Line.
- Collector Roads – Collector Roads connect local, primarily residential traffic to arterial streets. Major collector roads include: Creek Road, Youngstown-Lockport Road, and Ransomville Road. Minor collector roads include: Youngstown-Wilson Road and Blairville Road

- Local Roads – Local roads are intended to serve neighborhoods as a whole. The distribute traffic from collectors and provide direct access to abutting properties. Roads not included in the higher classifications are part of local road system.

Pavement Conditions

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) uses a rating system to assess the pavement conditions of all highways that are owned or maintained by the State. Roads are rated on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the best condition. The following is a general categorization of surface rating.

***Most State
maintained
roadways in
Porter had
surface ratings
of fair or good***

Table 3-12 Generalized Description of Surface Ratings

Town of Porter

Rating	Condition Description
Excellent (9-10)	No pavement distress
Good (7-8)	Distress symptoms are beginning to show
Fair (6)	Distress is clearly visible
Poor (1-5)	Distress is frequent and may be severe. These sections are flagged by the Department computers for further investigation and possible action
Under Construction (U)	Not rated due to on-going work

Source: 2001 Highway Sufficiency Ratings for New York State

According to 2002 pavement ratings for the Town of Porter, Route 18F from the northern Village line to Orchard Drive was the best section of roadway. It received a rating of 10 (excellent). Route 18F from the area around Orchard Drive to the intersection with Route 18, which was last paved in 1993 was the worst section of roadway. It received a rating of 5 (poor). Most of the State maintained roadways were in the fair or good categories.

County roadways receive a similar pavement rating. According to ratings issued May 2003, most County maintained roads in Porter were also in the fair or good categories, receiving ratings of 6 or 7. Lower River Road was the only road that received ratings of 8 and 9. Blairville Road from the underpass to Creek Road and the Porter Center Road and Langdon intersection received a rating of 5 (poor).

Traffic Volume and Safety

The NYSDOT uses a volume/capacity ratio to indicate a roadway's ability to serve present traffic volume. Within the Town of Porter, volume/capacity ratios ranged between 2% and 28%, indicating that not only are roadways adequate for current needs but they are also capable of handling a considerable increase in use.

***Roadways in the
Porter are
operating at less
than 30% of
their maximum
capacities***

According to the latest available traffic counts, Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), Creek Road and the Robert Moses State Parkway were the two most traveled roads within the Town. Truck traffic was most prevalent on Youngstown-Lockport Road (9%) and Route 18 (9%). There's no truck traffic on the Robert Moses Parkway.

The table below presents the traffic volume for all state and several local roads in Porter.

Table 3-13 Traffic Volume
Town of Porter

Route No.	Route Name	Route Segment	AADT	Year
18	Creek Road	From RT 104 (Ridge Rd) to CR 86 Blairville Rd	4000	2003
18	Creek Road	From CR 86 Blairville Rd to RT 93 Youngstown-Lockport Rd	1465	2001
18	Creek Road	From RT 93 Youngstown-Lockport Rd to RT 18F Center St	1226	2002
18	Creek Road	From RT 18F Center St to RT 957A Robert Moses Pkwy	678	2001
18	Creek Road	From RT 957A Robert Moses Pkwy to CR 57 Porter Center Rd	1582	2001
18	Creek Road	From CR 57 Porter Center Rd to CR 17 Ransomville Rd	1300	2003
18	Creek Road	From CR 17 Ransomville Rd to RT 425 Wilson	2341	2001
18F	Lake Rd	From Fourth St to RT 93 Youngstown-Lockport Rd	2239	2001
18F	Lake Rd	From RT 93 Youngstown-Lockport Rd to Town of Porter RT 18	1348	2001
93	Youngstown-Lockport Rd	From RT 18F Youngstown to JCT 957A Robert Moses Pkwy	3085	2001
93	Youngstown-Lockport Rd	From JCT 957A Robert Moses Pkwy to RT 18 Creek Rd	2150	2003
93	Youngstown-Lockport Rd	From RT 18 Creek Rd to CR 36 Youngstown Rd	2196	2002
93	Youngstown-Lockport Rd	From CR 36 Youngstown Rd to CR 57 Porter Center	1834	2002
93	Youngstown-Lockport Rd	From CR 57 Porter Center to CR 17 Ransomville Rd	1834	2002
93	Youngstown-Lockport Rd	CR 17 Ransomville Rd to RT 425 Northridge	1850	2003
957A	Robert Moses State Pkwy	From Pletcher Rd to RT 93 Youngstown-Lockport Rd	4521	2002
957A	Robert Moses State Pkwy	From RT 93 Youngstown-Lockport Rd to ACC Ft Niagara St Park RT 958A	1538	2002
957A	Robert Moses State Pkwy	From ACC Ft Niagara St Park RT 958A to ACC Four MI Ck St Park	1150	2003
957A	Robert Moses State Pkwy	From ACC Four MI Ck St Park to RT 18 Lake Rd End 957A	1450	2003
958A	Robert Moses State Pkwy Spur	Town Porter Robert Moses Pkwy to End RT 958A	1230	2001
CR	Balmer Rd		829	2001
	Braley Rd E		661	2001
CR	Dickersonville Rd		1266	2001
CR 57	Porter Center Rd		895	2001
CR 57	Porter Center Rd		597	2001
CR	Ransomville Rd	To CR 36 Young Rd	1155	2001
	Youngstown Rd		476	2001

Source: NYS Department of Transportation

According to the Youngstown Police Chief the intersection of East Avenue and Youngstown-Lockport Rd has a history of cars failing to stop and hitting the house on the corner. He believes a guardrail would be helpful at that location. Lake Road (Route 18F) heading east just outside the village is also a point of concern. The current speed limit of 55mph may be excessive due to the new construction in the area, which has increased the number of driveways and children in the area, as well as the potential for accidents. During the fall season increased deer activity also increases the number of deer related accidents (approximately one per day), especially near the Robert Moses Parkway.

Planned Improvements

NYSDOT plans to make improvements to Route 18 between Porter Center Road and Ransomville Road in 2004. This maintenance project will be advertised for bidding in Spring 2004 and should be completed by Summer 2004. The project involves the overlaying of 1 ½ inch of asphalt on existing pavement and is expected to cost about \$275,000.

Bus Service

Town of Porter residents have limited access to bus service. As of October 1, 2003, Niagara Falls Coach Line provides service that was previously provided by Rural Niagara Transportation. Route 4 serves Ransomville, Youngstown and Lewiston and operates from 6:20 am to 4:45 pm. The Route 4 line begins and ends at Niagara Community College four times per day. The first three runs have between eight and ten scheduled stops while the last run only has 5 scheduled stops. Connections are available to the Metro Bus Lines.

According to the 2000 US Census, less than 1% of workers 16 years or older use public transportation as a means of getting to work. In addition, over 95% of Porter's households had access to a vehicle and over 65% had access to two or more vehicles. The limited access to public transportation in the community is probably a reflection of the large number of individuals with private means of transportation. However, as the number of older residents increases the demand for public transportation may also increase.

***In 2000 less than
1% of workers
used public
transportation to
get to work***

Van Service

Senior Van Service

Residents of the Town of Porter and the Village of Youngstown that are 55 years or older have access to a van service that will take them to medical appointments, shopping and other appointments within the Youngstown, Ransomville, Lewiston and Niagara Falls areas. Residents needing a ride have to contact the Village office to schedule a pickup. Although a few days notice is preferred, emergency service is available. There is no set fee for the service but donations are accepted. The program has one van that can hold 6-7 passengers and four drivers. Service is available between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm. Funding for this service is provided by the Village of Youngstown and the Town of Porter.

VanGo Patient Transportation Service

VanGo provides transportation services for residents of Niagara Falls, Sanborn, Wheatfield, Lewiston, Youngstown and Ransomville wishing to get to the following locations:

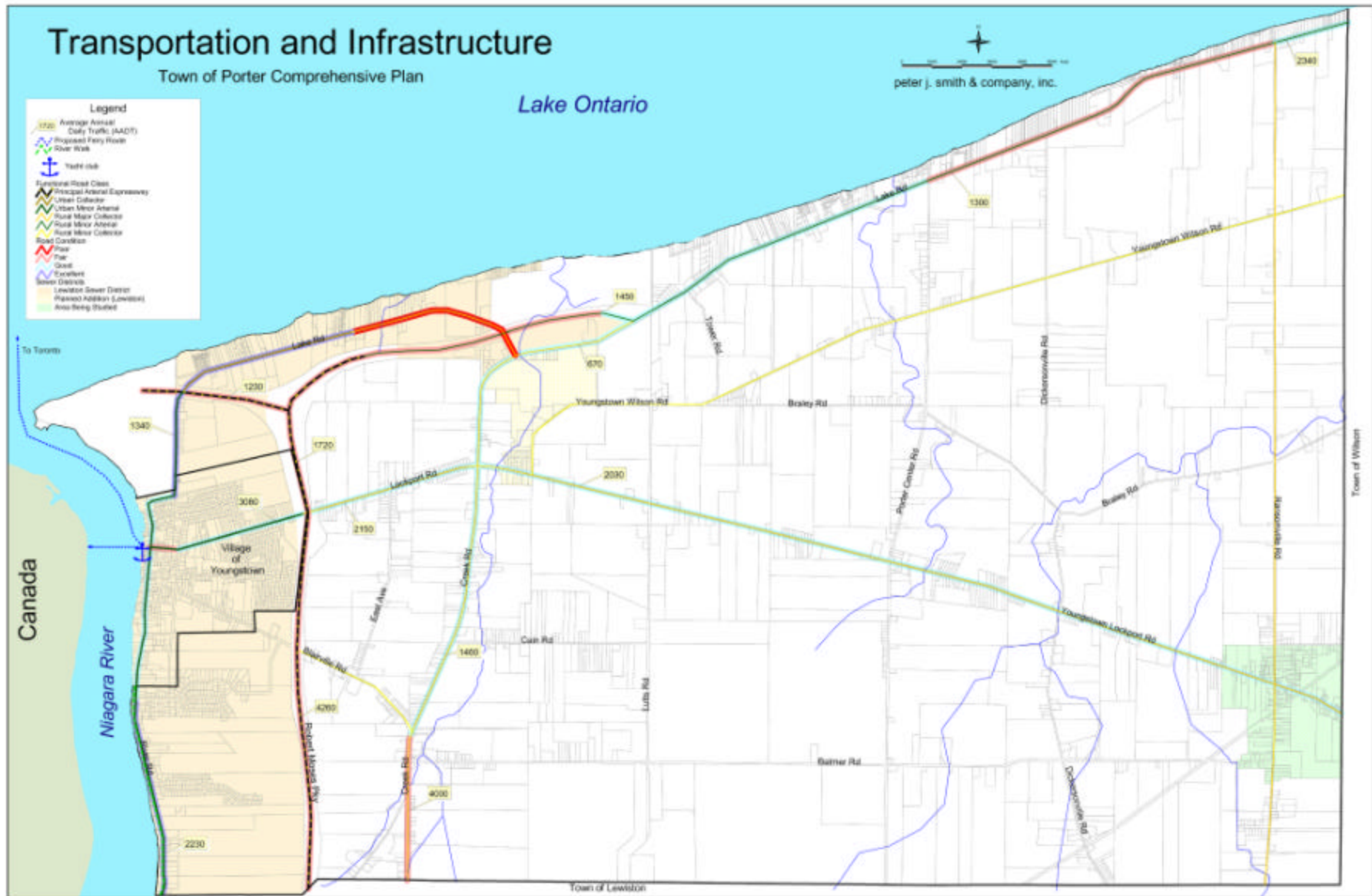
- Mount St. Mary's Hospital & Health Center – Military Road, Lewiston
- Doctors Offices on the Mount St. Mary Hospital Military Road Campus
- Neighborhood Health Center – 3003 Ninth Street, Niagara Falls
- Mount St. Mary's Rehabilitation Center – 4525 Witmer Road, Niagara Falls

Individuals 16 years or older in the service area that need a ride can call the VanGo service, at least 24 hour in advance, to make reservations. There is a \$1.00 fee for one-way travel and all passengers must be ambulatory. Service is provided Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. The Maid of the Mist Corporation provides Funding for the service

Rail Service

Amtrak is the sole provider of passenger rail service in the region. The Niagara Falls Railroad Station, which is about 10 miles away at 27th Street and Lockport Road in the City of Niagara Falls, is the closest station to Porter. The other two rail stations in the region are located in Buffalo and Depew. The Maple Leaf and Empire Service lines of Amtrak use these stations en route to New York City and Toronto, Canada.

Figure 3-4 Transportation and Infrastructure Characteristics
Town of Porter



Air Service

Air transportation is provided by two facilities that are owned by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA): the Buffalo Niagara International Airport and the Niagara Falls International Airport. The Buffalo Niagara International Airport is a recently renovated 25-gate terminal, which averages 90 flights daily and provides non-stop service to 18 cities. Charter and air cargo service are also available at this facility. The Niagara Falls International Airport is a full service facility that offers international charter and cargo service and functions as the reliever airport for the region. The Niagara Falls International Airport is about 10 miles from the center of Porter and the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport is about 25 miles away.

***Air and rail
service is located
within 10 to 25
miles of the Town***

Water Access for Boaters

The Youngstown Yacht Club, a private facility, Williams Marina Inc., Fort Niagara State Park and Wilson-Tuscarora State Park, and Youngstown's Waterfront Park and Pier provide water access for recreational boaters. A \$6 parking fee or a \$6 boat launch facility fee is assessed to those who use the state park's boating facilities.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel

Numerous hiking trails exist within the State Parks in the area. However, the only off-road pathway within Porter is the Pedestrian Path along River Road, which is located along the Niagara River from the Village of Youngstown line to the Town of Lewiston line. This Town maintained paved path, 5 feet wide and 6,800 feet long, is designated for pedestrian use.



Due to the rural nature of the Town of Porter sidewalks are limited outside of the Village of Youngstown and the Hamlet of Ransomville. Sidewalks are currently located on the following streets within the Town: Academy Street, Curtiss Avenue, New Road, Ransomville Road, River Road, Riverview Drive and Youngstown-Lockport Road.

3.4 Infrastructure and Utilities

Water

***Water quality in
Porter is considered
excellent***

According to the Town of Porter Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for 2002, the Town of Porter purchases water from the Niagara County Water District whose water intake is located in the west branch of the Niagara River. As water travels over the surface of land or through the ground it dissolves naturally occurring mineral and can become contaminated from animal or human activities. Therefore, to ensure the safety of tap water, the State and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulate the amount of certain contaminants that may be present in water provided by public water system.

The water quality in Porter is considered excellent. In 2002, although some contaminants were detected, the tap water met or exceeded all state and federal drinking water health standards and the system did not experience any restrictions on its water source. System improvements in the Town of Porter, during 2002, included the installation of 400 Trace radio-read water meters.

The Niagara County Water District has a nominal capacity of 38 million gallons per day and during 2002 the daily average of water treated and pumped into its distribution system was about 17,000,000 gallons. The highest single day volume was approximately 27,000,000 gallons. The water treatment plant is a direct filtration plant that uses 10 multimedia filters and adds fluoride and corrosion inhibitors to drinkable water prior to distribution. In 2002, the Town provided water to 6920 residents through 1976 service connections at a fee of \$2.16 per 1,000 gallons of water.

Sanitary Sewer

Two types of sewer systems are generally available to communities. The system available in urban areas consists of a network of pipes that carry sewage from residential, commercial and industrial facilities to treatment plants, where sewage is treated before being discharged into waterways. These systems are capital intensive and because of associated economies of scales these systems typically serve more than one political jurisdiction.

The system commonly available in rural communities consists of septic tanks in which solids are collected and periodically removed to sewage treatment plants and liquids are slowly released into leaching fields where soil bacteria destroy remaining organic material. A municipality may operate septic systems or they may be owned and operated by individual residents. According to 1990 US Census, the last year this data was collected, 55% of the housing units within Porter had septic tanks or cesspools, 44% had public sewer service and 1% used some other means.

The Town of Porter consists of two sewer districts that border each other, the Porter West Sewer Improvement Area and the Lakeshore Sewer Improvement Area. The Lakeshore S.I.A. uses the Porter West S.I.A. pumping facility. The Porter West S.I.A. encompasses the area from the Robert Moses Parkway west to the Niagara River and starts at the Lewiston-Porter border and extends north to Lake Ontario. The Lakeshore S.I.A. starts at the eastern boundary of the Porter West S.I.A. at Lake Ontario and extends east along Lake Road to the entrance of Four Mile Creek State Park with the completion of Phase I and II of the expansion plan. Phase III of the expansion plan will extend service from the southern border of Phase II on Creek south to Youngstown Lockport Road (Rte 93). Phase III is scheduled to go to bid Spring 2004. The Ransomville area does not have service and is currently being studied for a stand-alone sewer system because of distance and grading from the existing service.

***Porter West and
the Lakeshore
area have public
sewers but
Ransomville
does not***

The Town of Lewiston Water Pollution Control Center (WPCC) provides sewer service to the Porter West Sewer Improvement Area and the Village of Youngstown. The Niagara River is the effluent-receiving stream for the plant. According to the WPCC, the original Operations and Maintenance manual for the Water Pollution Control Center anticipated that the Village of Youngstown would send about 250,000 gallons per day and the Porter West Sewer Improvement would send about 460,000 gallons per day to the plant for treatment. The present plant design has a capacity of 2.75 million gallons per day with an annual average daily flow of 2.1 million gallons per day. There is currently is about 650,000 gallons per day of capacity available (25% of design) for system expansion and there are no prohibitions on the acceptance of new sanitary sewer connections from the Niagara County health Department of New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Storm Drainage

The Town of Porter has a relatively flat topography and storm drainage in the Town primarily consists of a series of ditches and streams that carry storm water. The Town also owns an outfall to the Niagara River. The river drainage outlet on River Road south of Howard Drive consists of a pipe system that collects service water in ditches behind the Collingwood Development.

Natural Gas and Electric

National Fuel Gas Company and Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation, regional providers, offer gas and electric service to Porter residents. According to the 2000 US Census, approximately 55% of Town of Porter residents used utility gas to heat their homes while 28% used fuel oil or kerosene, 9% used bottled, tank or LP gas and 5% used electric.

Within New York State, investor-owned energy companies negotiated with the New York State Public Service Commission and other interested parties to allow their customers to choose among competing, unregulated, Energy Services Companies (ESCOs) for their energy supply. Residential, commercial, industrial and municipal customers can purchase natural gas and electricity from ESCOs that provide the energy but are not responsible for maintaining the gas and electric systems or providing emergency response services like regulated utilities and may therefore be able to offer lower energy prices and additional energy services.

Telephone and Cable

According to the 2000 Census nearly all households in Porter (99.6%), have telephone service. Local phone service to the Town is provided by Verizon Communications and Adelphia provides cable service.

4.0 Social Characteristics

4.1 Demographic Overview

The following inventory compares the current population, gender/age, race, educational attainment and other demographic characteristics of the Town of Porter and surrounding Towns. Unless otherwise noted, the Village of Youngstown is not included in the demographic data for the Town of Porter and is considered a separate entity. In many cases, Niagara County and the State are used in the comparison.

The evaluation of demographic data is an important factor in determining future policies and decisions regarding land use, infrastructure and community services. The demographic analysis is essential to understand the growth, or decline, in the population to allow the Town of Porter to properly allocate future resources. The Town will be able to identify actions that are necessary to maintain the quality of life residents have come to expect.

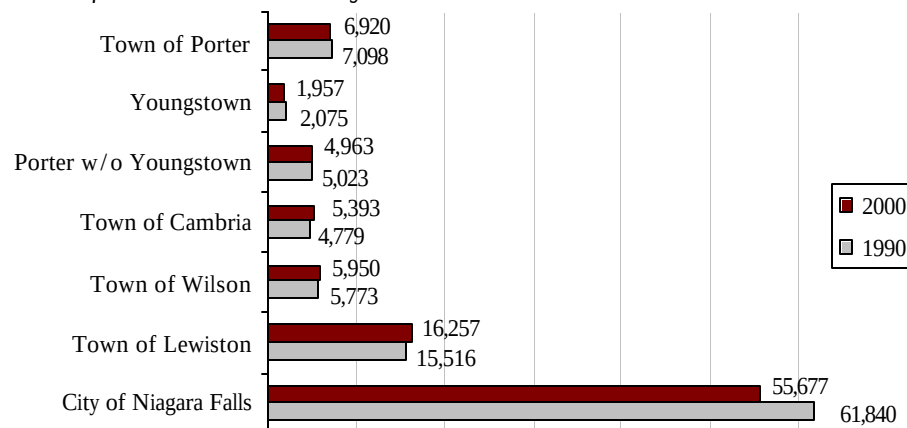
Change in Population

The Town of Porter has seen a slight decrease in population over the past ten years. In 1990, the population was 7,098; this decreased to 6,920 in 2000 for a decrease of 2.5%; these populations include the Village of Youngstown. Examining the population characteristics more closely, it becomes evident that much of the population loss was experienced in the Village of Youngstown, which experienced a 5.7% decrease. The Town, excluding the Village, experienced a decrease in population of 1.2%. This population decrease is typical of the Western New York region that has experienced an overall decline in population.

The population in the Town decreased slightly between 1990 and 2000

Figure 4-1 Change in Population 1990-2000

Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities



Source: US Bureau of the Census – 1990 and 2000

Unlike Porter and Youngstown, the Towns of Cambria, Wilson and Lewiston have seen an increase in population over the past ten years. Cambria experienced an increase of 12.8%, Wilson an increase of 3.1% and Lewiston an increase of 4.8%. In Niagara County, the greatest population loss was experienced in the City of Niagara Falls where they experienced a population loss of 10%.

Age and Gender Characteristics

The median age for men is 39.7 while the median age for women is 40.5

The following summarizes the age and gender characteristics of the Town of Porter excluding the Village of Youngstown. The median age of the Porter population is 40.3 years of age. The median age for the male population is 39.5 while the median age for the female population is 41.1 years of age.

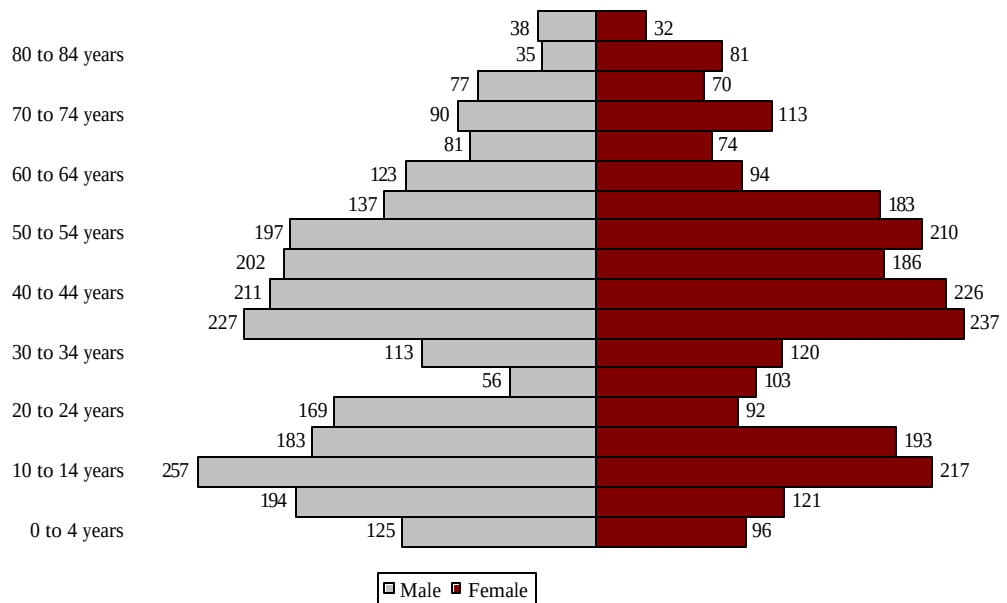
In the Town of Porter, women make up 49.5% of residents in the Town of Porter and men make up 50.5% of residents. The largest age cohort for the women in Porter is the 35-39 year olds that make up 4.8% of the female population; this is the second largest age cohort for the men in the Town of Porter. The largest age cohort for men in the Town is the 10-14 year olds; this includes approximately 5.2% of the male population. The women in the 10-14 age cohort include approximately 4.4% of the female population.

The ratio of men to women is 49.5 - 50.5

In looking at the age and gender distribution on the figure below, there appears to be a bulge in both the male and female population for the ages 35-54 and the ages 10-19. This configuration is similar to the national population characteristics that include a large group of “baby boomers” and their children.

Figure 4-2 Age and Gender Distribution - 2000

Town of Porter



Source: US Bureau of the Census – 2000

The male/female distribution in the Town of Porter is approximately 50:50. This is similar to the Town of Cambria and slightly different from the Village of Youngstown (48:52), Town of Wilson (49:51), Town of Lewiston (47:53) and City of Niagara Falls (47:53).

Residents under the age of 18 in the Town include approximately 26.6% of residents. This is slightly higher than the Village of Youngstown (25.8%) and Town of Lewiston (24.2%). In Porter, the 19-34 year olds include only 14.5% of the population, which is lower than all of the other comparison communities and lower than the Town of Lewiston (18.9%), City of Niagara Falls (19.3%), Niagara County (18.7%) and New York State (22.3%).

***Approximately 27%
of residents are under
the age of 18***

The age group between 35-49 includes approximately 26%, which is higher than the Village of Youngstown and City of Niagara Falls; this is due, in part, to the movement of families into more rural, suburban communities and out of more urban areas. According to the Smart Growth Master Plan³⁵ prepared for the Town of Porter by the University at Buffalo Graduate Student studio, there appears to be a distribution of older residents (median age ranging from 41.1 - 42.6) along both the Lake and River waterfronts; the census block along the Lake also appear to have smaller household size (2.92). Ransomville, on the other hand, appears to have a younger median age (38.0) and larger household sizes (3.16) than the area along the Lake.

In Porter, 50-64 year olds include approximately 19.0% of the population, which is higher than the Town of Cambria (16%), City of Niagara Falls (13.4%), Niagara County (15.5%) and New York State (15.2%). Residents over the age of 65 include approximately 13.9% of the Town of Porter, which is lower than the Village of Youngstown (16.3%), Town of Lewiston (17.2%) and City of Niagara Falls (18.5%).

Table 4-1 Gender and Age Characteristics - 2000
Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
Male	50.7%	48.4%	50.2%	48.8%	47.0%	46.7%	48.2%	48.1%
Female	49.3%	51.6%	49.8%	51.2%	53.0%	53.3%	51.8%	51.9%
18 Years and Younger	26.6%	25.8%	27.4%	27.9%	24.2%	26.2%	26.1%	26.0%
19 to 34 Years	14.5%	15.0%	15.1%	14.9%	18.9%	19.3%	18.7%	22.3%
35 to 49 Years	26.0%	21.9%	27.9%	25.8%	22.2%	22.6%	24.2%	23.6%
50-64Years	19.0%	21.1%	16.0%	18.1%	17.5%	13.4%	15.5%	15.2%
65 Years and Older	13.9%	16.3%	13.5%	13.3%	17.2%	18.5%	15.5%	12.9%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – 2000

³⁵ Towards a Smart Growth Master Plan: Assessment and Recommendations for the Town of Porter. UB Studio on Smart Growth. 2003.

Race / Ethnicity

96% of residents in Porter are White

Race refers to the physical characteristics of residents while ethnicity refers to their cultural origin. According to the 2000 Census, a majority of residents in the Town of Porter, excluding the Village, are White with 96.0% of residents in this category. This is comparable to the Town of Lewiston (95.8%), but slightly lower than the Village of Youngstown (97.9%), Town of Cambria (97.9%) and Town of Wilson (97.7%). The percentage of the population that is White in the City of Niagara Falls (75.5%), Niagara County (89.8%) and New York State (62.0%) is considerably lower than the percentage in the Town of Porter.

Table 4-2 Racial and Ethnic Profile – 2000

Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
White	96.0%	97.9%	97.9%	97.7%	95.8%	75.5%	89.8%	62.0%
Black	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.7%	18.6%	6.0%	14.7%
Native American	0.8%	1.9%	0.8%	0.1%	0.5%	1.3%	0.9%	0.3%
Other	2.7%	0.2%	0.5%	1.1%	2.3%	2.7%	2.0%	7.9%
Hispanic or Latino	0.6%	0.0%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	1.9%	1.3%	15.1%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – 2000

In Porter, there are a small percentage of Native American (0.8%) and Hispanic (0.6%) residents. According to the Census, Other ethnicities, those with two or more races or not of Hispanic origin, account for 2.7% of the population. These figures are comparable to other Towns in Niagara County, and the County as a whole, but are very different from the racial and ethnic make up of New York State as a whole.

Education

The educational enrollment and attainment levels of a community outline important characteristic of a community. These statistics can be used by businesses as an indicator of the age and skills of the workforce. The Town officials, including the school districts, can use these numbers to identify the types of services that may be necessary in both the immediate and long-term future.

School Enrollment

Approximately 30% of the residents in the Town of Porter are enrolled in school. This is similar to the enrollment of residents in the Town of Cambria and slightly higher than the enrollment in the Village of Youngstown (25.6%), City of Niagara Falls (26.1%) and the County (27.1%) as a whole. The enrollment percentage is lower than the Town of Lewiston, which has an enrollment rate of 32.2%.

The enrollment rates in the Town of Porter are generally similar to the surrounding communities, County and New York State. There are some exceptions that are notable and indicated on the table below. The percentage enrolled in nursery school in the Town of Porter is lower than most of the surrounding Towns, County and New York State; this is also true of those enrolled in kindergarten. The percentage enrolled in grades 5-12 is higher than the Village of Youngstown, Town of Lewiston, Niagara County and New York State. The percentage of residents in undergraduate college is similar to most of the communities with the notable exception of the Town of Lewiston, which has an enrollment rate almost double that of the Town of Porter and surrounding communities. This is because of Niagara University located in the Town of Lewiston.

Table 4-3 School Enrollment – 2000
Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
Nursery school; preschool	1.1%	1.7%	2.4%	1.8%	1.2%	1.7%	1.6%	1.8%
Kindergarten	0.7%	1.5%	1.2%	0.8%	0.9%	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%
Grade 1 to grade 4	6.3%	5.1%	6.5%	5.8%	4.4%	6.5%	6.2%	6.1%
Grade 5 to grade 8	7.4%	4.7%	6.3%	7.7%	5.9%	5.9%	6.0%	6.0%
Grade 9 to grade 12	7.6%	7.0%	7.6%	7.0%	6.3%	5.7%	6.2%	6.0%
College; undergraduate	5.6%	4.9%	4.8%	3.1%	11.9%	4.0%	4.8%	5.6%
Graduate or professional school	1.1%	0.5%	0.7%	1.0%	1.5%	0.9%	1.0%	1.5%
K-12 Private School	9.9%	13.3%	11.9%	5.8%	21.7%	11.8%	11.1%	14.1%
Not enrolled in school	70.2%	74.6%	70.6%	72.8%	67.8%	73.9%	72.9%	71.4%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – 2000

In the Town of Porter, approximately 10% of residents enrolled in school are enrolled in a private school. This is comparable to the Town of Cambria, City of Niagara Falls and Niagara County, although the Town of Porter percentage is slightly lower. The biggest differences in this category are in the Town of Wilson, only 5.8% of those enrolled in school are enrolled in a private school, and the Town of Lewiston where 21.7% of residents are enrolled in private school.

Educational Attainment

The percentage of residents that have completed a college degree in Porter is 36%

The US Census figures for educational attainment level in the Town of Porter shows that approximately 55.2% of residents have continued beyond high school in education. Approximately 19.5% have some college, but no degree while 35.7% have attained a degree – associates, bachelors or graduate/professional. This is higher than the Town of Cambria (31.4%), Town of Wilson (25.8%), City of Niagara Falls (21.1%) and Niagara County (27.6%). The Village of Youngstown and Town of Lewiston both have over 38% of residents with a degree, which is higher than the Town of Porter.

Table 4-4 Educational Attainment – 2000

Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
Below 9th Grade	2.7%	1.0%	3.9%	5.1%	2.5%	6.4%	4.5%	8.0%
9th thru 12th Grade (No Diploma)	9.2%	5.3%	8.1%	12.0%	8.7%	17.0%	12.2%	12.9%
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	33.0%	30.5%	39.1%	37.0%	32.2%	37.9%	36.9%	27.8%
Some College (No Diploma)	19.5%	25.1%	17.5%	20.1%	18.3%	17.7%	18.7%	16.8%
Population 25 Years and Over: Associate Degree	9.5%	10.9%	14.6%	10.7%	9.6%	8.6%	10.2%	7.2%
Population 25 Years and Over: Bachelors Degree	16.4%	17.7%	12.0%	9.1%	15.1%	7.7%	10.7%	15.6%
Graduate or Professional Degree	9.8%	9.5%	4.8%	6.0%	13.6%	4.8%	6.7%	11.8%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – 2000

Household Characteristics

There are 1,811 households in the Town of Porter

The household size and characteristics of the Town of Porter and surrounding communities is an important factor in assessing and developing needed policies. A household includes all of the people who occupy a housing unit; people not living in a household are classified as living in group-quarters. In the Town of Porter, there are approximately 1,811 households: 1,370 family households and 441 non-family households. The number of households in surrounding communities is summarized below.

Table 4-5 Number of Households – 2000

Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities

	Porter Excluding Youngstown	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
Total Households	1,811	818	1,991	2,253	5,902	24,071	87,877	7,060,595
Family households	76%	70%	77%	75%	73%	60%	67%	66%
Non-family households	24%	30%	23%	25%	27%	40%	33%	34%

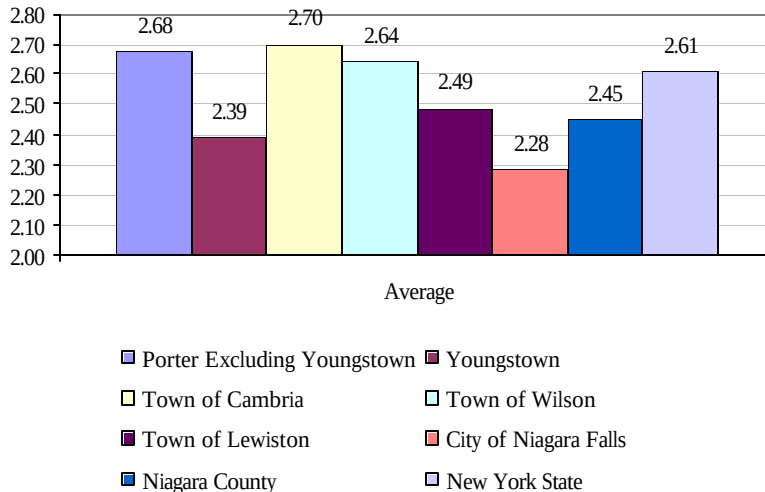
Source: US Bureau of the Census - 2000

Household Size

According to the 2000 Census, the average household size in Porter is higher than the surrounding communities, with the exception of the Town of Cambria. In Porter, the average household size is 2.68 people. The following illustrates the household size of Porter and the surrounding communities.

Figure 4-3 Average Household Size - 2000

Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities



Source: US Bureau of the Census – 2000

Two-person households make up the greatest number of homes in Porter; approximately 35.5% of households are 2- person. One-person households make up the second greatest number of households with 19.5%. This would indicate that approximately 55.0% of households are one or two-person. Four-person households make up approximately 17.2% and three-person household comprise another 16.5%; this is a total of 33.7% of households that are three or four-person.

One and two person households make up 55% of all households in Porter

The percentage of one-person households appears to be lower than the Village and most of the surrounding Towns, Niagara Falls, County and State. The two-person household size seems comparable to the surrounding Village and Towns. Youngstown two-person households make up approximately 39.1%, Town of Cambria - 35.2%, Town of Wilson – 37.1% and Town of Lewiston – 36.9%. This percentage is higher than Niagara Falls (30.1%), the County (28.6%) and the State (29.4%).

Only 1.6% of households are 7 or more persons in the Town of Porter. This low percentage is higher than all of the surrounding communities where, in some cases, there are no households this size. The following summarizes the household size characteristics.

Table 4-6 Household Size (Family and Non-Family Households) – 2000
Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
1-person household	19.5%	25.9%	19.8%	21.0%	24.2%	35.9%	28.6%	28.1%
2-person household	35.5%	39.1%	35.2%	37.1%	36.9%	30.1%	32.8%	29.4%
3-person household	16.5%	16.5%	16.1%	15.7%	15.8%	15.3%	16.0%	16.3%
4-person household	17.2%	12.1%	18.2%	16.8%	14.5%	11.4%	14.0%	14.2%
5-person household	7.7%	3.9%	7.5%	6.5%	6.3%	4.8%	6.0%	7.1%
6-person household	2.0%	2.4%	3.2%	2.0%	1.4%	1.7%	2.0%	2.9%
7-or-more-person household	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	1.9%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – 2000

Household Type

98% of residents live in a household in Porter – and 87% of these are family households

According to the US Census, “a family includes a householder and one or more other people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. All people in a household who are related to the householder are regarded as members of his or her family.”³⁶ In the Town of Porter, 97.7% of residents live in a household and approximately 87.2% of the households are family households. These figures are comparable to the most of the surrounding communities with a notable exception of the Town of Lewiston where 79.1% of households are family households; this is due, in part, to the high percentage of group quarter households in Lewiston.

Non-family households comprise approximately 10.5% of all households in the Town of Porter. This is the lowest percentage, except for the Town of Cambria with 10.4%, of all the surrounding communities. The Village of Youngstown has approximately 10.4% of non-family households, the City of Niagara Falls has 19.7%, Niagara County has 15.3% and New York State has 15.3%. The Towns surrounding Porter have a comparable percentage.

³⁶ <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf>

Residents living in group-quarters make up approximately 2.3% of Porter's households. There are no group-quarters in Youngstown or Wilson. The Town of Lewiston has a high percentage of its population living in group-quarters due, in part, to students at Niagara University. The following summarizes the household types in Porter and the surrounding communities.

Table 4-7 Household Types – 2000
Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
In households	97.7%	100.0%	99.8%	100.0%	90.4%	98.6%	98.1%	96.9%
In family households	87.2%	84.7%	89.4%	88.9%	79.1%	78.9%	82.8%	81.6%
In non-family households	10.5%	15.3%	10.4%	11.1%	11.3%	19.7%	15.3%	15.3%
In group quarters	2.3%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	9.6%	1.4%	1.9%	3.1%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – 2000

Migration

Recognizing the migration patterns of residents within a community helps to indicate the stability of the population. In the Town of Porter, approximately 74% of residents are in the same house where they lived in 1995; an additional 20.9% are in the same county. The following summarizes the place of residency in 2000 for residents in the Town of Porter.

Table 4-8 Place of Residency – 2000
Town of Porter

Geography	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	
	Number	Percent
Residence in 1995	6570	100.0%
Residence in 1995; Same house	4828	73.5%
Residence in 1995; Different house in the US	1691	25.7%
Residence in 1995; Different house in the US; Same county	1372	20.9%
Residence in 1995; Different house in the U.S; Different county	319	4.9%
Residence in 1995; Different house in the US; Different county; Same state	168	2.6%
Residence in 1995; Different house in the US; Different county; Different state	151	2.3%
Residence in 1995; Elsewhere	51	0.8%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – 2000

Population Projections

The population of Porter is expected to increase to 7,500 by 2025

The Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council has completed population projections for all of the communities in Western New York. The municipalities were separated into Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) and an estimate of population, households and employment were prepared for each community. According to the GBNRTC, the population of Porter is expected to increase by approximately 580 residents for an increase of approximately 8.4%.

Table 4-9 Population Projections

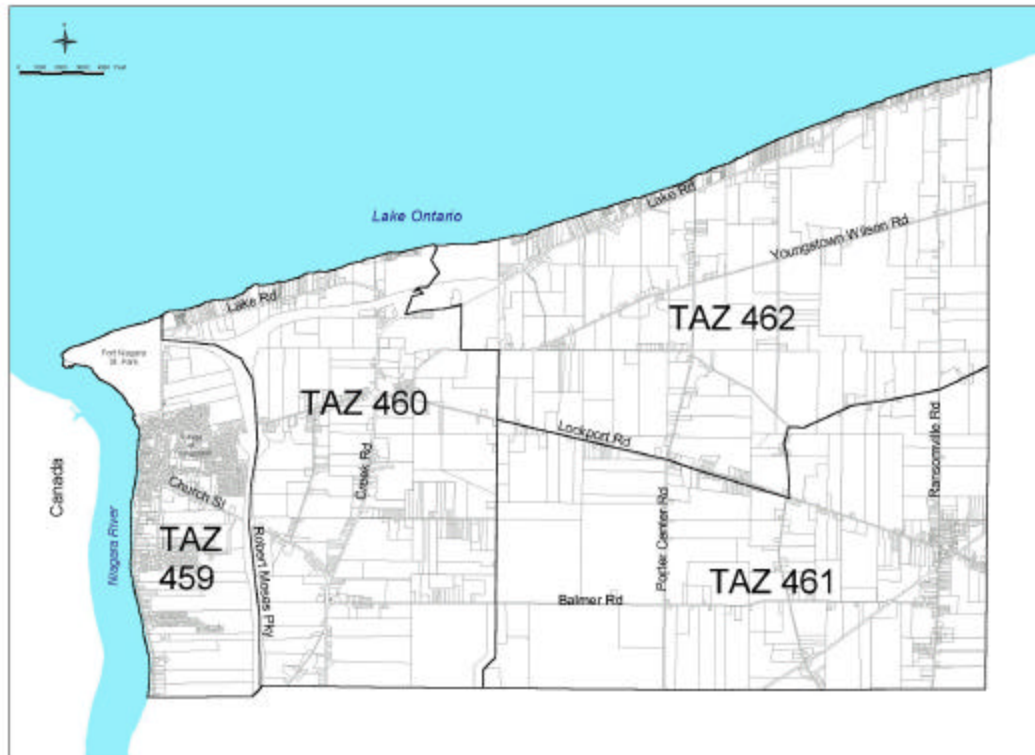
Town of Porter

TAZ	1980	1990	2000	Adjusted 2025 Forecast
459*	3,109	2,956	2,809	3,045
460	1,629	1,486	1,507	1,633
461	1,569	1,554	1,507	1,633
462	926	1,114	1,097	1,189
TOTAL	7,233	7,110	6,920	7,500

* Includes Village of Youngstown
Source: GBNRTC – March 2003

Figure 4-4 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ)

Town of Porter



Source: GBNRTC – March 2003



The Town of Porter can be expected to grow at a steady rate through 2025. This growth should be addressed to ensure that the rural, agricultural character of the community is not detrimentally impacted. While a population increase of 580 people may not seem high, the number of households can be expected to increase by approximately 284 new households; this could translate into 284 new homes. This is an increase

The number of households in Porter is expected to increase by 11% over the next 20 years

of 11.0%. These new homes could impact the transportation and aesthetic qualities of the community. The persons-per household is expected to decrease in the Town as a whole from 2.60 to 2.53.

Table 4-10 Projected Number of Households
Town of Porter

TAZ	1990	2000	Group Quarters (2000)	Persons per Household 2000	Estimated Persons Per Household for 2025	Adjusted 2025 Forecast
459*	1,065	1,106		2.54	2.47	1,225
460	582	579		2.60	2.53	641
461	481	492	113	2.83	2.75	548
462	377	439		2.50	2.43	486
TOTAL	2,505	2,616	113	2.60	2.53	2,900

* Includes the Village of Youngstown
Source: GBNRTC – March 2003

4.2 Housing Characteristics

The housing characteristics of the Town of Porter, relating to the number of units, units in a structure, age, monthly costs, housing values, occupancy, utilities and sales/starts are outlined in this Section of the Plan. This information is important to understand the housing stock in the Town and recognize potential policies that can be developed to maintain or improve this valuable asset. The information will also be used to develop policies that ensure that all residents have adequate housing and opportunities in the Town of Porter.

Total Housing Units and Occupancy

There are 1,977 housing units in the Town of Porter, 91% of which are occupied

According to the US Census, in the Town of Porter, there are approximately 1,977 housing units. This includes approximately 1,807 (91%) occupied and 170 (9%) unoccupied. This is comparable to the Town of Wilson, the County and the State that also have an occupancy rate of approximately 91%. The Towns of Cambria and Lewiston have an occupancy rate of approximately 95% while the City of Niagara Falls is low at 86.6%.

Table 4-11 Housing Units and Occupancy

Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
Total Housing Units	1,977	869	2,066	2,489	6,147	27,836	95,715	7,679,307
Occupied	91.4%	93.1%	96.6%	91.4%	95.7%	86.6%	91.8%	91.9%
Vacant	8.6%	6.9%	3.4%	8.6%	4.3%	13.4%	8.2%	8.1%
Tenure of Occupied Housing								
Owner Occupied	85.2%	71.7%	82.2%	86.1%	79.6%	57.7%	69.9%	53.0%
Renter Occupied	14.8%	28.3%	17.8%	13.9%	20.4%	42.3%	30.1%	47.0%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – 2000

85% of homes in Porter are owner occupied

Most of the homes in Porter are owner occupied. Approximately 85% of homes are owner occupied; only the Town of Cambria (86.1%) has a higher percentage of owner-occupancy than the Town of Porter. The Village of Youngstown has a rate of 71.7% owner occupancy, the Town of Lewiston – 79.6%, the City of Niagara Falls – 57.7%, the County 69.9% and the State 53%. This would indicate that most homes in the Town are single-family or two-family and the owner of the home is living in the structure.

There a number of vacant seasonal and recreational homes in Porter according to the 2000 Census. Of the 230 vacant units, almost half (109) are vacant seasonal, recreational or occasional use.

Units in Structure

The number of units in housing structures offers information on the character and density of development in the Town of Porter. Of the 1,977 housing units in the Town of Porter, approximately 87.8% are single-family detached homes; an additional 1.6% are single-family attached units. There are also 4.5% of homes that are two-family homes.

The percentage of detached units is the highest when comparing Porter to the surrounding communities, the County and the State. The Town of Cambria is most like the Town of Porter in that 82.2% of homes are single-family detached homes. The Town of Porter's percentage of detached units is more than twice that of the State as a whole.

***Almost 88% of the
houses in Porter are
single-family
detached homes***

There are only 1.8% of homes that include 3-9 units and no structures offer more than 10 units; this could indicate that the opportunities for renting in the Town of Porter are limited. There are also 4.4% of homes classified as mobile homes. This is one of the highest percentages when comparing with the surrounding communities with the exception of the Town of Wilson and the County as a whole. The following summarizes the information for the Town of Porter and surrounding communities.

Table 4-12 Units in Structure (Percentage)

Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
Housing units: Total	1,977	869	2,066	2,489	6,147	27,836	95,715	7,679,307
Detached Units in Structure	87.8%	69.7%	82.2%	77.3%	78.8%	52.0%	63.7%	41.7%
Attached Units in Structure	1.6%	1.5%	0.8%	1.1%	2.8%	2.2%	1.7%	4.9%
2 Units in Structure	4.5%	4.7%	5.1%	5.6%	5.0%	19.5%	11.7%	10.9%
3 or 4 Units in Structure	1.4%	8.1%	3.2%	1.7%	3.4%	10.9%	7.4%	7.3%
5 to 9 Units in Structure	0.4%	6.9%	6.2%	1.6%	3.1%	6.1%	4.9%	5.3%
10 to 19 Units in Structure	0.0%	4.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	3.1%	2.3%	4.3%
20 to 49 Units in Structure	0.0%	3.8%	1.6%	1.3%	2.5%	1.6%	1.6%	8.1%
50 or More Units in Structure	0.0%	0.6%	0.8%	0.1%	1.0%	3.5%	2.0%	14.8%
Mobile Home	4.4%	0.0%	0.0%	11.4%	0.1%	1.0%	4.7%	2.7%
Boat; RV; Van; etc.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – 2000

Age of Housing

In the Town of Porter, there is a mixture of older, historic homes and newer, large homes. Approximately 25.7% of homes were built before 1939; this is similar in the Village of Youngstown. Between 1940 and 1949, few homes were built in most of the Towns and Village of Youngstown and a sharp increase is noted beginning in 1950; this was the start of the movement away from cities into the rural areas that surrounded them. In addition, during the 60's, the construction of the Power Project, and an influx of other industries into Niagara Falls, led to a building increase as more residents moved to Niagara County.

The median year structures in Porter were built is 1958

Noting the periods when homes were built in the City of Niagara Falls, the movement away from cities become evident as the percentage of homes built since 1960 has decreased considerably; between 1990 and 2000, only 1.6% of homes in Niagara Falls were built, while this time frame accounts for 10.7% of homes in the Town of Porter and an even higher percentage in the other surrounding Towns.



There is also a drop in the percentage of homes built after 1980 in the County and New York State as a whole. This would be due, in part, to the declining population of the region and state through this time frame. From 1990 to 2000, Niagara County appears to have experienced growth in new homes, although the growth was not as great as the Towns noted in the table below.

Table 4-13 Age of Housing – 2000
Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
1990 to 2000	10.7%	5.8%	18.4%	15.5%	16.7%	1.6%	9.5%	6.8%
1980 to 1989	10.0%	6.1%	12.9%	9.8%	7.7%	2.8%	7.8%	7.7%
1970 to 1979	10.4%	11.4%	13.9%	12.2%	10.8%	7.9%	11.9%	11.3%
1960 to 1969	14.5%	21.2%	10.1%	8.9%	11.6%	7.3%	10.3%	14.6%
1950 to 1959	22.4%	23.8%	14.7%	13.1%	30.3%	22.5%	18.8%	16.4%
1940 to 1949	6.3%	4.9%	7.3%	4.5%	8.2%	20.7%	11.9%	11.9%
1939 or earlier	25.7%	26.8%	22.7%	36.0%	14.8%	37.2%	29.8%	31.2%
Median Year Structure Built	1958	1958	1965	1957	1959	1946	1954	1954

Source: US Bureau of the Census - 2000

According to the US Census, the median year for houses built in the Town of Porter is 1958. This is comparable to the Village of Youngstown and the Towns of Wilson and Lewiston. The Town of Cambria has a median age year built of 1965 because development in this community is newer as people are moving further from the urban areas of the County. The City of Niagara Falls, on the other hand, has a median year for structures being built of 1946; this housing stock, like many cities in the country, is older than the communities that surround them.

Public Utilities

There are few homes in the Town of Porter that do not have complete plumbing facilities; only 1.5% of homes (29) lack complete plumbing facilities. This percentage is the highest when compared to the Village of Youngstown (0.5%), Town of Lewiston (0.3%) and the City of Niagara Falls (0.6%). The County percentage of homes that lack complete plumbing is 0.6% while the State is 1.2%.

***Only 1.5% of homes
lack complete
plumbing in the
Town of Porter***

Table 4-14 Complete Plumbing – 2000

Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
Total Housing Units	1,977	869	2,066	2,489	6,147	27,836	95,715	7,679,307
Complete plumbing facilities	98.5%	99.5%	100.0%	99.6%	99.7%	99.1%	99.4%	98.8%
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	1.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%	0.9%	0.6%	1.2%

Source: US Bureau of the Census - 2000

Selected Monthly Costs

“In Census 2000 the selected monthly owner costs are calculated from the sum of payment for mortgages, real estate taxes, various insurances, utilities, fuels, mobile home costs, and condominium fees...This item is used to measure housing affordability and excessive shelter costs. For example, many government agencies define excessive as costs that exceed 30 percent of household income.”³⁷ The median monthly owner costs for residents with a mortgage in the Town of Porter is \$1,068. This is slightly lower than the Village of Youngstown and Towns of Cambria and Lewiston. The City of Niagara Falls shows median costs of \$821 per month while the County’s median cost is \$985. In NYS, the median costs are \$1,357. For residents with no mortgage, the selected monthly costs are \$381 in the Town of Porter. This is comparable to the costs of the surrounding Towns and Village. The Niagara Falls selected monthly costs are \$334, which is significantly lower than Porter and the other Towns. In NYS, the average costs are \$457.

³⁷ US Bureau of the Census

Table 4-15 Median Selected Monthly Costs – Owner Occupied Housing Units
Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Village of Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
With Mortgage	\$1,068	\$1,111	\$1,101	\$994	\$1,103	\$821	\$985	\$1,357
Without Mortgage	\$381	\$391	\$393	\$389	\$398	\$334	\$374	\$457

Source: US Bureau of the Census - 2000

**About 28% of
Renters pay more
than 40% of their
total income for rent**

In Porter, 254 rental units are available. Of these only 4 were available for rent and the others were occupied. This would indicate that finding rentals in the Town of Porter is difficult. For those that rent, about 28% pay more than 40% of their income on rent. This is higher than all of the surrounding Towns and Village; this is also comparable to the County and State figures. A notable exception is the City of Niagara Falls, where over 33% spend more than 40% of their income on rent.

Table 4-16 Gross Rent - Percentage of Household Income in 1999
Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
Total Renter Specified Housing Units	254	229	337	301	1,195	10,175	26,197	3,301,784
Less than 10.0 percent	3.1%	6.6%	2.4%	5.3%	10.5%	5.7%	6.1%	7.6%
10.0 to 14.9 percent	5.5%	19.7%	11.3%	13.3%	10.7%	9.3%	11.8%	11.6%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	21.3%	14.0%	15.7%	17.3%	11.0%	11.0%	12.8%	12.8%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	13.8%	13.1%	12.8%	14.0%	12.1%	10.5%	12.0%	11.4%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	7.9%	11.4%	2.7%	5.6%	12.1%	11.3%	10.9%	9.8%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	4.7%	4.4%	13.1%	7.6%	3.0%	6.5%	6.9%	7.1%
35.0 to 39.9 percent	4.7%	4.4%	13.6%	2.3%	5.9%	5.3%	5.5%	5.0%
40.0 to 49.9 percent	13.4%	7.0%	7.1%	7.6%	8.2%	8.4%	7.4%	6.8%
50.0 percent or more	14.6%	13.1%	13.4%	14.3%	16.2%	24.8%	19.5%	21.6%

Source: US Bureau of the Census - 2000

Housing Trends

Housing trends in a community illustrate the desirability of living in that community. The follow summarizes the housing values and starts in the Town of Porter and surrounding communities to provide insight into the characteristics of the Town as a place for new and existing residents.

Housing Values

In the Town of Porter, the greatest percentages of home values are between \$80,000-89,000 (15.7%) and \$100,000-124,999 (14.8%). These two categories are also the highest percentage of home values in the Village of Youngstown. Less than 14% of homes in the Town of Porter are valued at under \$60,000. This percentage is higher than the Village of Youngstown (3.5%), Town of Cambria (3.3%), Town of Lewiston (2.5%) and the State (9.3%). In the City of Niagara Falls, approximately 48.5% of homes are valued under \$60,000.

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
Less than \$50,000	7.6%	2.8%	1.2%	7.7%	0.7%	29.6%	11.7%	5.6%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	6.0%	0.7%	1.1%	6.7%	1.8%	18.9%	9.2%	3.7%
\$60,000 to \$69,999	7.5%	4.6%	3.9%	8.9%	5.8%	18.6%	12.1%	5.0%
\$70,000 to \$79,999	7.7%	13.9%	11.1%	14.1%	10.5%	13.1%	13.2%	5.8%
\$80,000 to \$89,999	15.7%	20.3%	12.6%	15.3%	15.7%	9.0%	13.8%	6.5%
\$90,000 to \$99,999	10.9%	13.0%	14.8%	14.6%	15.9%	4.7%	10.7%	5.5%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	14.8%	21.7%	24.9%	14.3%	17.9%	3.5%	12.3%	9.2%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	12.2%	9.5%	16.7%	9.6%	14.1%	1.4%	8.6%	9.1%
\$150,000 to 199,999	11.1%	8.7%	11.8%	5.5%	9.1%	1.1%	5.7%	17.4%
Over \$200,000	6.5%	4.6%	1.8%	3.3%	8.5%	0.2%	2.5%	32.1%

Source: US Bureau of the Census - 2000

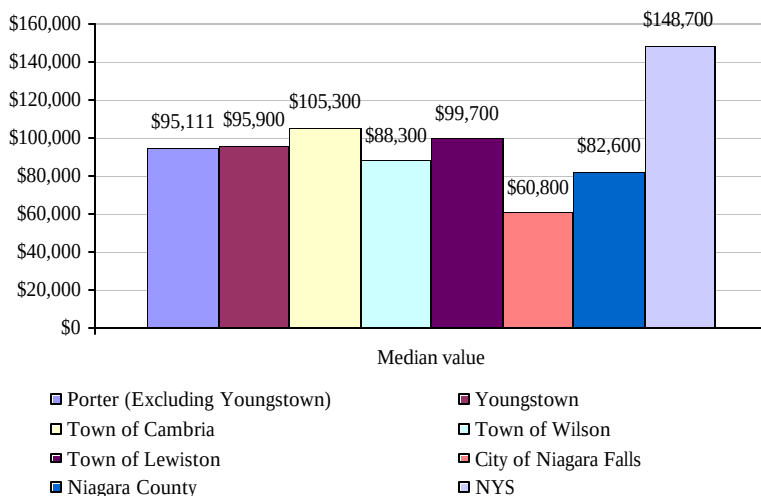
The median value of a home in the Town of Porter is approximately \$95,000. This is comparable to the Village of Youngstown, which is located in the Town of Porter. The highest median value of homes is the Town of Cambria (\$105,000) and the Town of Lewiston (\$99,700) for those communities that are proximate to the Town of Porter. The City of Niagara Falls median home value is considerably lower than the Town at \$60,800.

***The median value
of a home in
Porter is \$95,000***

The Towns and Village in this portion of Niagara County all have a higher median home value than the County as a whole, but all are considerably lower than the State. This is not surprising in that the cost of living in Western New York is much lower than other parts of the State where the median value of a home would be considerably higher.

The median home values are outlined below:

Figure 4-5 Median Home Value – 2000
Town of Porter and Surrounding Communities



Source: US Bureau of the Census - 2000

Housing Starts

Housing starts in the Town of Porter over the past five years is evident in the building permit activity. The number of building permits helps illustrate the overall health of the community. Since building permits are issued for all types and levels of construction – from minor projects such as sheds, signs, additions, etc. to new industrial and commercial buildings – they reflect several trends:

- The level of investment being made in the community;
- The attractiveness of the community as a place to live; and
- The desire of residents to upgrade their homes.

Investments in housing have increased in number and money spent

Between 1998 and 2002, there was a steady increase in the number of permits for single-family homes and the amount invested per home. In 1998, there were 9 single family homes built with an average per home of \$91,000. By 2002, there were 15 permits issued at an average of \$280,267; this could be due, in part, to several large homes along the Lake that have been recently constructed. The amount of investment in home improvements increased from \$1.3 million to over \$4.6million in 2002.



The number of demolitions has remained relatively the same over the past 5 years; there has been an increase in number but no large increases. The following summarizes the construction costs for residentially related building, improvements and additions.

Table 4-17 Construction Costs – 1998-2002 for Residential Uses

Town of Porter

		Single Family	Duplex Family	Additions	Garages	Demolitions	TOTAL
1998	Number	9	0	20	15	1	
	Costs	\$819,000.00	\$0.00	\$392,814.00	\$122,700.00	N / A	\$1,334,514.00
1999	Number	7	1	23	12	3	
	Costs	\$1,085,000.00	\$90,000.00	\$403,000.00	\$101,050.00	N / A	\$1,679,050.00
2000	Number	7	0	14	10	4	
	Costs	833,000.00	0.00	389,586.00	99,500.00	N / A	\$1,322,086.00
2001	Number	15	0	9	7	2	
	Costs	\$3,316,000.00	\$0.00	\$134,300.00	\$71,600.00	N / A	\$3,521,900.00
2002	Number	15	1	24	8	4	
	Costs	\$4,204,000.00	\$130.00	\$413,377.00	\$75,442.00	N / A	\$4,692,949.00

Source: Town of Porter Zoning Officer

4.3 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Resources

The availability of safe, attractive and accessible recreational sites is a major contributor to a community's overall quality-of-life and increases its desirability as a place to live. The Niagara River, Lake Ontario and several state parks provide Town of Porter residents with considerable recreational opportunities. This section discusses the recreational facilities and services available to Town of Porter residents.



Public Facilities

Town of Porter residents have access to several regional parks: Fort Niagara State Park and Four Mile Creek State Park in the Town of Porter, Joseph Davis State Park in the Town of Lewiston and Wilson-Tuscarora State Park in the Town of Wilson. Town residents also have the use of the recreational facilities at the W. H. Stevenson Elementary School, the John Plain M.D. Memorial Park and the following five Village maintained parks: Constitution Park, Falkner Park, Lions Park, Veterans Park and the Waterfront Park and Pier.

Porter residents have access to several regional and community recreational facilities

Fort Niagara State Park

Fort Niagara State Park is a 504-acre state owned park that is situated on Route 18F. A significant portion of the park's acreage is located underwater. Actual operating acreage is approximately 280 acres. The park is open year round. A \$6.00 per car entrance fee is collected from June to Labor Day and from April to November a \$6.00 per car fee is collected from those using the boat launch. The Old Fort Niagara State Historic Site is located within the park. The park's 10,600 feet of shoreline and



two boat launches provide access to the water for fishing, swimming and sailing. Additional features include wooded trails, walking and bike paths, nature programs, limited water fowl hunting in season, pool, waterslide, wading pool, 18 soccer fields, three small playground, five pavilions that can be rented, picnic tables, snack bar and restrooms. Winter activities include sledding, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

The Niagara Pioneer Soccer League has its home field in Fort Niagara State Park. The league has maintained a relationship with the park for over 25 years and about 700-800 youngsters participate in its activities. In addition to regular season games, the league also hosts the annual Niagara Pioneer International Soccer Tournament. This two-day event has been held in the park for over 18 years. The North East Regional Soccer Championship, a four-day event with participants from 13 northeastern States, has been hosted by the league and held in this park about 10 times over the past 20 years. The Niagara County Chamber of Commerce estimates that the North East Regional Soccer Championships have a \$13,000,000 to \$15,000,000 economic impact on the Buffalo-Niagara Region.

Four Mile Creek State Park

Located on Lake Road, Four Mile Creek State Park is a 248-acre state park that provides over 250 camp sites, a camp store, nature and bike trails, bike paths, fresh water fishing and panoramic views from the shore and marshlands. The marshlands support several varieties of plant life. Other amenities include picnic tables, shower, playground, restrooms, a snack bar and recreation programs. Camping season extends from mid-April to mid-October.

Joseph Davis State Park

The Joseph Davis State Park is a 388-acre state park in the Town of Lewiston that is open year round. This facility offers a nature trail and walking paths, snow shoeing/cross country skiing and snow mobile trails, opportunities for fishing and hunting (in season), and an 27-hole frisbee golf course. A playground, snack bar, shelters, picnic tables and restrooms are also provided.

Wilson-Tuscarora State Park

The Wilson-Tuscarora State Park is located at 3371 Lake Road in the Town of Wilson. The park is open all year long and consists of 395 acres of mature woods, open meadows and marshland. The Tuscarora Bay, which is divided from Lake Ontario by a strip of land called "The Island," has a boat launch and emergency storm shelter docks. The park's four-mile nature trail is used for hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Fishing can be done from boats or the shore and small game and waterfowl can be hunted during specified seasons. Other amenities include a playground, pavilions, snack bar, picnic tables and showers.

John Plain M.D. Memorial Park

John Plain M.D. Memorial Park is located behind the Ransomville Fire Department at 2525 Youngstown-Lockport Road. The facility is maintained by the Ransomville fire Department with support from the Town of Porter. The 1.8-acre facility has playground equipment, a pavilion, two horseshoe pits, a basketball court and two baseball diamonds on adjacent property.



WH Stevenson Elementary School

The W.H. Stevenson Elementary School is part of the Wilson Central School District. Several Town sponsored recreational programs use the school's facilities including: the Children's Summer Recreational Program, the Adult Volleyball Program and the Easter Egg Hunt.

Constitution Park

Constitution Park is a .5-acre village owned park located on Main Street on the waterfront. Amenities include scenic observation points, fishing, a gazebo and a picnic table.

Falkner Park

A 2.5-acre park on Main and Second Street, Falkner Park offers a garden pathway, playground, wading pool, picnic shelter, picnic tables and restrooms.

Lions Park

Lions Park is situated on Brampton Street near Northfield. This 2-acre athletic park offers a basketball court, baseball diamond and open play area.



Veteran's Park

Located on Nancy Price Drive (Third St.) and Church Streets, Veterans Park is a 7.6-acre athletic facility that provides four tennis courts, two baseball diamonds, a basketball court, a picnic shelter, a snack bar, picnic tables and restrooms.

Waterfront Park and Pier

Waterfront Park and Pier is a .6-acre village owned structure that extends into navigable waters and provides a boat launch and boat slips for sailing. Picnic tables and a grill are other amenities provided in this park.

Private Facilities

In addition to the public facilities previously mentioned, Porter residents also have access to several private facilities for recreational activities including the Niagara Frontier Country Club, the Niagara River Anglers Association, the Ransomville Speedway and the Youngstown Yacht Club.

Niagara Frontier Country Club

The Niagara Frontier Country Club is a private, not for profit organization, with an 130-acre facility located at 1058 Lake Road that was built in 1930. The Country Club is open from April to mid-November and has maintained an 18-hole golf course since 1937. The country club has about 500 golfing members, 140 social members and 55 junior or dependent members. Approximately 20% of the country club's members reside in the Town of Porter. The club's facilities can be used for charity events, for minimal costs, if sponsored by a member.

There are several private recreational facilities in Porter that include a Country Club and Speedway

In addition to the golf course, a clubhouse and maintenance sheds are located on the grounds. Amenities include a restaurant and full bar that is open to members only. Between 1997 and 2000 an \$860,000 renovation process was completed that included a new driving range, five new holes and two additional greens.

Niagara River Anglers Association

The Niagara River Anglers Association is a 700+ member club dedicated to the sport of fishing that has promoted cleaner water, fish stocking and wildlife preservation projects since 1982. In 1984 the 61-acre Walleye Ponds and Wilderness Preserve was established on Balmer Road in the Town of Porter. Approximately 20,000 Walleye Sac Fry are raised at the facility and transferred to the Lower Niagara River annually. A pen-rearing program for stocked Trout and Salmon has also been implemented to ensure that the stocked fish return to the Niagara River for the enjoyment of local anglers. The facility also includes a 21-acre preserve that provides fishing, camping, hiking, picnicking and bird watching opportunities for members and their families. The association also provides trips, tournaments and educational opportunities for its members.

Ransomville Speedway

Situated on a 68-acre lot at 2315 Braley Road, the Ransomville Speedway has been operational since 1958 but has only been under its current ownership since the early 1970's. The track consists of a ½ mile, semi-banked oval with dirt surface. Races are held on Thursday and Friday nights from May to September. Thursday's go-cart races have drivers that range in age from 7 to adults and generally have a couple of hundred people in attendance. Friday night's stock car races have an average nightly attendance of about 3000 people. Annual activities include: the Grass Day, a drag race involving snowmobiles and ATV's (3rd Saturday in October), the Ransomville Speedway Awards and Dinner Banquet (1st Saturday in November) and the Annual Hangover 200, a 200 lap race (January 1).

Youngstown Yacht Club

The Youngstown Yacht Club, located at 491 Water Street, is a private sailboat racing and cruising club. The Yacht Club sponsors activities such as regattas, cruises and a Junior Sailing Program with instructors. Within the last 10 years, 250 to 450 boats have participated in the annual regatta with an average of 6-7 persons per boat. Participation levels for the regatta peaked in 1995 at about 450 boats. Last year approximately 300 vessels participated in the event. The event has drawn visitors from Niagara-Ontario region and even from the Lake Michigan area.

A recently renovated clubhouse that overlooks the Niagara River and Lake Ontario, a casual grill, social lounge, patio and a full service restaurant are available to members and their guests. Other amenities include: moorings and launch services for about 140 vessels, docking, yacht dry-sail area that can accommodate 15-20 boats on a permanent basis, hoist facilities, boat storage, marine repair and maintenance services, showers and washrooms, lockers, and parking adjacent to the clubhouse.

Recreation Programs

The Town of Porter sponsors the following programs for its residents: a Summer Recreation Program, Story Hour at the libraries in Ransomville and Youngstown, Adult Volleyball and an Easter Egg Hunt. Residents also have access to several recreational activities that are sponsored by local organizations as well as the recreational programs provided by the Village of Youngstown.

Summer Recreation Program

The Summer Recreation Program is a 6-week day program that is held at the W. H. Stevenson Elementary School. Eighteen supervisors provide services to about 120 youngsters in grades 1-10 daily. Participants are divided in four groups according to their age and are involved in various craft and sport activities. Athletic opportunities include tennis, dodge ball, softball and foosball.

Story Hour

A Story Hour program is held at both the William J. McLaughlin Free Library and the Youngstown Free Library. There is a school year as well as a summer program that serves 3 to 5 year olds. The program is held on Tuesdays in the library in Youngstown and on Wednesdays in the library in Ransomville. The program is opened to all appropriately aged youngsters and serves about 180 youths between its two locations.



Adult Volleyball

An 18-week volleyball program is available for adult residents in the Town of Porter. The program is held Wednesday evenings from 7 pm-9 pm in the W. H. Stevenson Elementary School. On average 23 individuals participate in the program.

Easter Egg Hunt

An Easter Egg Hunt is held for youngsters aged 4 to 13 years old. Activities are held in the park behind the W. H. Stevenson Elementary School. Depending on weather conditions participation levels range between 100 and 200 youngsters.

The Town and Village provide recreational programs

Lighting of the Wreath

The lighting of the Wreath is a Town sponsored annual activity that for the past 15 years has been held on the first Sunday after Thanksgiving. Activities are varied and in the past have included among others:

- An adult scavenger hunt that usually attracts about 50 participants
- A scavenger hunt for children (0 to 14) with 20 and 50 participants
- Opportunities for small and large prizes from local businesses
- A Ransomville Fire Department raffle for an all terrain vehicle (ATV)
- Horse drawn carriage ride along Youngstown-Lockport Road to the Ransomville Library during which, current and past points of interest along the route are highlighted.
- Kids Christmas Crafts
- A live manger scene in front of the Ransomville United Methodist Church
- Entertainment and refreshments

Ransomville Community Faire

The Ransomville Community Faire, which is held on the 2nd Saturday in June, is the annual fundraiser for the Ransomville Historical Room. Activities include; an antique tractor show, Chinese auction, games for the children, and performances by the W. H. Stevenson Elementary School band and choir. Refreshments are provided and the Historical Room is open to the public. The event usually gets about 200 participants.

Village of Youngstown

The Village of Youngstown offers a variety of activities and programs. The Village sponsors a series of Friday night band concerts at Falkner Park. The Youngstown Garden Club maintains flowers and gardens around Village Hall and other parks in the Village. The Youngstown Volunteer Fire Company holds a Labor Day parade and field day that celebrates the close of the summer season.

Youngstown Recreation

Youngstown offers recreational activities for children (5-14) including the following:

Summer Program

- Tennis ball (4-5 years old)
- Softball and baseball in Veterans Park
- Faulkner Park-wading pool and craft program in the gazebo

Winter Program

- Ten consecutive weeks of basketball and floor hockey are held in the gym of the Village Hall.

Scenic Byways

Several scenic byways traverse the terrain of the Town of Porter

Several scenic routes traverse the Town of Porter's terrain and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the community's open space areas: the New York State Seaway Trail, the Niagara Historic Trail and the Audubon Niagara Birding Trail.

Seaway Trail

The New York State Seaway Trail is a 454-mile scenic route that stretches across 10 counties as it parallels Lake Erie, the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. Designated as a National Recreation Trail, this trail is intended for use by car, RV, Tour bus, bicycle or boat. Green and white markers, with footprints and watermark, are positioned along the route to guide travelers as the journey along the shoreline from Ripley on Lake Erie to Rooseveltown in St. Lawrence. Hiking and camping is available at parks and campgrounds along the route.



The Niagara Historic Trail

The Niagara Historic Trail is an over 100 mile long marked trail, which travels along the outer perimeter of the entire county. Residents and visitors to Niagara County can obtain a copy of the Niagara Historic Trail brochure from the Niagara County Tourism office and enjoy a self-guide tour of the region. The guide offers maps that indicate the historic and cultural points of interest within each of the communities through which the trail travels. Brown and white trail signs that are maintained by the county mark the route. Within the Town of Porter the Niagara Historic Trail and the Seaway Trail follow the same scenic path along Routes 18F and 18.

Audubon Niagara Birding Trail

The Niagara River has been identified by the US and Canada as an Important Bird Area (IBA). According to the Buffalo Audubon Society during the fall and winter the Niagara River provides food and shelter for as many as 100,000 gulls and 50,000 ducks daily. Twenty-four species of gulls, almost half of all the species in the world, can be found along the Niagara River Corridor. The Buffalo Audubon Society has identified a regional birding trail that extends 115 miles from the Woodlawn Beach State Park in the south, to Fort Niagara State Park in the north and Iroquois National Wildlife in the east. The Audubon Niagara Birding Trail North starts in Niagara Falls and passes through the Town of Porter. The four state parks in the area, Joseph Davis State Park, Fort Niagara State Park, Four Mile Creek State Park and Wilson-Tuscarora State Park are identified as good viewing areas for bird life. An Audubon Birds of Prey-themed nature center is being planned. The facility will be located at or near the Joseph Davis State Park.³⁸

³⁸Buffalo Audubon Society, Nature Tourism in Buffalo Niagara

Pedestrian Path along River Road

A pedestrian pathway exists within the Town of Porter. The Town maintained paved path is 6,800 feet long and runs along the Niagara River from the Village of Youngstown line to the Town of Lewiston line.

4.4 Community Services and Facilities

Historic Resources

Three resources located within the Town of Porter, one of which is situated within the Village of Youngstown, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: The Fort Niagara Lighthouse, Old Fort Niagara and St John's Episcopal Church.

***Three sites in Porter
are on the National
Register of Historic
Places***

Fort Niagara Lighthouse

Built in 1871, the Fort Niagara Lighthouse is located on Niagara River and is listed on the National Register of Historical Places. The lighthouse was built to mark the mouth of the Niagara River and remained in operation until 1993. The current octagonal structure was constructed south of the fort grounds and replaced two earlier towers that were located on the roof of the Fort Niagara. The lighthouse is a federally owned structure that is currently being leased to the Old Fort Niagara Association, which uses it as a gift shop and museum.

Old Fort Niagara

Old Fort Niagara is a State and National Historic Site, located in Fort Niagara State Park. Gaspard -Joseph Chaussegros de Lery built the fort in 1726. Although the Fort is owned by the State, the Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc., in cooperation with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, manages the Fort.

Old Fort Niagara consists of approximately 23 acres of land and Lake Ontario bottomland at the mouth of the Niagara River and includes fortifications, outworks, six 18th-century buildings, significant archaeological remains, and the early post cemetery. Active educational programs and special events are provided for visitors. Most of the Fort's 100,000 annual visitors come from the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio but visitors have been received from all over the nation, Europe and even the Far East.

St John's Episcopal Church

St John's Episcopal Church at 117 Main Street in the Village of Youngstown was constructed in 1876. This privately owned structure is believed to have been designed by Richard Upjohn, a notable 19th century architect. Constructed in what is known as a country or carpenter gothic rival style, the building still maintains its original "board and batten" exterior. The church has been listed on the National Register of Historical Places since 1990.

Cultural Resources

Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc.

The Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc. in Youngstown has a license agreement with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to operate Old Fort Niagara. The stated purpose of this nonprofit organization is the preservation, restoration and maintenance of Old Fort Niagara, the promotion of a deeper understanding of its history and maintenance of various collections related to the site. The Association also sponsors the Old Fort Niagara 18th Century Dance Group.

Old Fort Niagara 18th Century Dance Group

Old Fort Niagara 18th Century Dance Group is a nonprofit educational organization that provides instruction in 18th century English Country dances, the Minuet and also offers workshops on 18th century music, clothing and deportment.

Ransomville Historical Room

The Ransomville Historical Room is located at 3733 Ransomville Road, behind the William J. McLaughlin Free Library and is governed by the Library. In 1994, the Old Post Office was donated and moved to an area behind the Library and became the new home of artifacts and documents that were previously housed within a room in the library. The facility provides displays of the Hamlet's history including the history of local families and organizations, war mementos and much more. In 2003, 1400 square feet were added to the structure, which greatly increased the facility's floor space. The facility is open Saturdays 2pm – 4pm and by appointment.

Town of Porter Historical Museum

The Town of Porter Historical Museum is located at 240 Lockport Street in three rooms on the second floor of an 1894 "red brick" building that previously served as a school for the Village. The museum was established in 1975 and has over 5,000 artifacts and documents that document the history of the Town. In addition to family histories, artifacts and a variety of collections related to the Town and its residents, the museum also has census, vital statistic, cemetery and other records that are useful for genealogical research. The Town of Porter Historical Society administers the museum.



Town of Porter Historical Society

Founded in 1964, the Town of Porter Historical Society is committed to the collection and preservation of historical information on the Town of Porter. The Historical Society is located at 240 Lockport Street, in the same building that house the Village Office, the Youngstown Free Library and the Town of Porter Museum. In addition to the information provided in the museum, the Historical Society also sponsors a monthly lecture series on topics of historical significance.

4.5 Educational Resources

Two school districts provide services to the Town of Porter residents: Lewiston-Porter Central School District and Wilson Central School District. A random community survey was conducted in February 2004 and 65% of respondents believed that the schools in Porter were outstanding.

Facilities

The Lewiston-Porter Central School District maintains an administration building, two elementary schools, a middle school, a high school and a Community Resource Center on its campus located at 4061 Creek Road, which is situated on the border of Porter and the Town of Lewiston. While facilities are currently sufficient to meet needs and no significant increase in student population is anticipated, a facilities study is being planned to address maintenance and upgrade needs.

The Lewiston-Porter and Wilson Central School Districts serve Porter residents

The Community Resource Center currently houses the building and grounds staff, a family resource center that provides counseling services and a privately operated day care center. The District Superintendent indicated that developing the building into a community recreational facility is a possibility for the future.

Wilson Central School District's facilities include two elementary schools a high school and a Fitness Center that consists of a commercial size gym with strength and fitness equipment. The W. H. Stevenson Elementary School at 3745 Ransomville Rd is the only district facility that is located in Porter. All other district facilities are located in the Village of Wilson. The District's facilities are close to maximum capacity but a study completed by the district did not project any significant increases in enrollment. However, an \$18 million capital improvement project is planned that will impact all of the district's facilities. The recreational facilities at the W. H. Stevenson Elementary School are used for several of the Porter's recreational programs.

Enrollment

The Lewiston-Porter Central School District serves residents of the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown and the towns of Lewiston and Porter. Approximately 42% of the district's students are residents of the Town of Porter. During the 2001-2002 school year this district had a total enrollment of 2,407 students.

The Wilson Central School District serves residents in the Village of Wilson and the Towns of Cambria, Newfane, Porter and Wilson. In 2001-2002, there were 1,513 students enrolled in classes throughout the Wilson-Central School District. Approximately 40% of the district's students resided in Porter or Lewiston.

Table 4-18 Student Enrollment
Lewiston-Porter and Wilson School Districts

District	School	Grades	2001-2002 Enrollment
Lewiston-Porter	Lewiston-Porter Primary Education Center	PK-5	486
	Lewiston-Porter Intermediate Education Center	1-5	461
	Lewiston-Porter Middle School	6-8	582
	Lewiston-Porter High School	9-12	878
Wilson Central	Thomas Marks Elementary School	K-5	375
	W. H. Stevenson Elementary School	PK-5	247
	Wilson Central Junior-Senior High School	6-12	891

Source: New York State Department of Education

Teaching Staff

Both school districts serving the Town of Porter had lower pupil to teacher ratios than the County and the State. The Lewiston-Porter School District had the highest median teacher salary of the comparison areas, however it also had the most experienced staff. An examination of expenditure per pupil in 1999-2000 showed that the Wilson School district had the lowest per pupil expenditure and both districts had a lower per pupil expenditure than the State.

Student Performance

Student performance indicators were positive for both school districts. Both districts had lower dropout rates and higher percentages of students receiving Regents Diplomas and going on to college than the County and the State.

The table below compares expenditures and student performance indicators for the two school districts and comparison areas.

Both School Districts have a low drop out rate and high rates of students with Regents diplomas

Table 4-19 2000-2001 Teaching Staff and Student Performance Indicators

Lewiston-Porter and Wilson School Districts and Comparison Areas

District	Pupil/ Teacher Ratio	Median Years Experience	Median Teacher Salary	Expenditure per Pupil (1999-2000)	Drop- out Rate	Percent Regents Diploma	Percent to College
Lewiston-Porter	12.7	15	\$53,604	\$10,988	1.1	63	83.0
Wilson	12.2	12	N / A	\$9,485	0.6	72	84.1
Niagara County	13.8	14	\$50,977	\$10,703	1.5	58	82.1
New York State	13.3	13	\$51,020	\$11,040	3.8	50	80.0

Source: New York State Department of Education

4.6 Library Resources

Town of Porter residents have access to the Youngstown Free Library as well as the William J. McLaughlin Free Library. Both of these facilities are part of the NIOGA Library System that serves the counties of Niagara, Orleans and Genesee. The Youngstown Civic Guild established the Youngstown Free Library in 1949 in a 925-square foot building at 120 Lockport Street. In 1973 the library relocated to a much larger facility (2,798 sq. feet) at 240 Lockport Street. The library currently houses approximately 26,000 volumes as well as the customary audio-visual materials such as books on tape, CDs and DVD. The facility has three computers with internet access and computer workstation that is used for word-processing and children's games. Other offerings of the library include story hours for toddlers and preschoolers, a young authors program in conjunction with the schools, book and lunch discussion groups, and informational programs from November to April. The library is open Monday through Saturday.

The Ransomville (William McLaughlin) Free Library was established in 1923 and is located at 3733 Ransomville Road in a 3000-square foot facility. The Library is open five days per week, Monday through Thursday and Saturday, and has over 32,000 holdings including books, magazines, newspapers, audiocassettes, DVD's, books on tape, and other audio video material. The library offers many services including story hour sessions, Ransomville Historical Room, displays of local collections and artwork, a meeting room, computers with internet access as well as fax/copier services.

4.7 Emergency Services

Police Service

The Niagara County Sheriff's Department, New York State Police-Troop A Headquarters and the Youngstown Police Department provide police protection in the Town of Porter. The Niagara County Sheriff's Department is located at 5526 Niagara Street Extension in the City of Lockport.

The County Sheriff's Department, NYS Police and the Youngstown Police Department provide police protection

Troop A of the New York State Police has a patrol area that includes Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming Counties. The patrol area is divided into zones and each zone is composed of several stations. The Niagara Station in Zone 1 serves the Town of Porter and is located at 3609 Witmer Road in Niagara Falls. According to a station representative, Porter is a quiet community with no major problem areas. Accidents in the Town are usually minor "fender benders".

The Youngstown Police Department, located at 240 Lockport Street, was established in 1977 and has 8 paid part-time employees and one marked police car. The department provides 8 hours of service per day and is the primary response unit within the Village of Youngstown and provides backup service to Niagara County Sheriff Department and NY State Police cars that respond to calls within the Town of Porter. According to Chief Palmer, there have been discussions between his department and the Lewiston Police Department regarding consolidation of services and the creation of a Lewiston-Porter Police Department.

Fire and Ambulance Service

The Town of Porter receives fire protection from the Ransomville and Youngstown Fire Companies. Both companies are manned by volunteer firefighters.

Fire protection is provided by the Ransomville and Youngstown Fire Companies

The Ransomville Fire Company belongs to the Ransomville Fire District, which serves part of the Town of Porter, as well as the Towns of Lewiston and Wilson. Located at 2525 Youngstown-Lockport Road, the Ransomville Fire Department has been in existence since 1924. With a roster of approximately 100 volunteers the Ransomville Fire Department provides fire, ambulance and rescue service to the community. Equipment include: three Class A Pumpers, one Rescue Pumper, a utility pickup, that is used for brush fires and small incidents, and an ambulance. Fire and rescue training is provided to youngsters through the Junior Fireman Program.



Established in 1911 the Youngstown Fire Company belongs to the Youngstown Fire District. The fire company is located at 625 Nancy Drive and has approximately 50 volunteers who provide fire protection to the Village of Youngstown. The company also provides ambulance service to the Youngstown Fire District using seven volunteer EMTs. Company equipment consists of four pumpers, one ambulance and one pickup

4.8 Health Services

There are no hospitals or medical centers in the Town of Porter. The closest facilities are Mount St. Mary Hospital and Health Center and Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center. Mount St. Mary's Hospital and Health Center at 5300 Military Road is a 179-bed community hospital that has been serving the Niagara community since its inception in 1907. In 1965 the facility was moved from its original location in Niagara Falls to its current location on a 30-acre campus in the Village of Lewiston. The facility provides a wide array of inpatient and outpatient services at its Military Road location. Mount St. Mary recently opened a skilled nursing facility, Our Lady of Peace, adjacent to the hospital campus. Service is also provided at the following sites:

The closest medical facility is Mount Saint Mary's Hospital and Health Center in Lewiston

- Neighborhood Health Center - 3001 Ninth Street, Niagara Falls
- Clearview Outpatient Services - 66 Mead Street, North Tonawanda
- Patient Services Centers - 459 Fourth Street and 6950 Williams Road, Niagara Falls

Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center is a full service medical center with extensive inpatient and outpatient services. Located at 621 Tenth Street in Niagara Falls, it has been serving the Greater Niagara community since 1895. The Medical Center has grown considerably since its inception and now has several satellite facilities including:

- Summit Healthplex - 6932-6934 Williams Road, Niagara Falls
- Hamilton B. Mizer Primary Care Center - 501 Tenth Street, Niagara Falls
- Tuscarora Health Center - 2015 Mount Hope Road, Lewiston
- Schoellkopf Health Center - 621 Tenth Street, Niagara Falls

4.9 Social Services

Community Organizations

O. Leo Curtiss Post 830 and American Legion Auxiliary Post 830

The O. Leo Curtiss Post 830 and its sister organization American Legion Auxiliary Post 830 have their meetings at the Legion Hall which is located at 2589 Ransomville-Lockport Road. Veterans of the World War I established the post and this year they will be celebrating their 83rd anniversary. The post has about 90 members but activities are limited because of the age of members (70-80 years old). However, every year members decorate the graves of veteran in the area on Memorial Day and the post's facilities are made available to the 4H Club and other community organizations to hold meetings and other functions.

American Legion Auxiliary post 830 was established in the 1930's and continues to hold monthly meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. The organization has approximately 65 members some of whom have relocated to other regions but are still dues paying members. The organization seeks to assist children and veterans. Activities include working with students from W.H. Stevenson Elementary School on the annual Poppy and Poster Program, assisting with the Flag Day Parade and ceremonies, organizing fundraisers for families in need, as well as hosting dinners for local veterans several times a year.

Kiwanis Club of Lewiston

Established in 1958, the Kiwanis Club of Lewiston is part of an international organization. The Kiwanis Club of Lewiston meets weekly at Parrone's Restaurant, which is located at 3474 Creek Rd in Youngstown. This community service organization has about 100 members from the Youngstown, Ransomville and Lewiston areas and they focus on children and causes related to children. One of the major events that Kiwanis Club organizes is the annual Peach Festival – One of Niagara County's largest family oriented festival. During its 45 years of existence the festival has raised over \$1 million, which the Kiwanis Club distributes to various community projects and organizations.

Lions Club

Two Lions Clubs are located in the Porter area and they are both part of Western New York District 20-N. Area clubs work together as they offer community service opportunities in the areas of blindness prevention, eyesight restoration, and community improvement. Organizations and activities they have supported include, among others:

- Dogs for the Blind
- Canine Helpers
- Journey for Sight
- Toys for Tots
- Ransomville Fall Festival Pancake Breakfast
- Easter Egg Hunt

The Ransomville club has about 14 members. Members meet the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at John's Restaurant, 2575 Academy Street. The Youngstown Club also meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month. Their club has about 30 members and meetings are held at Parrone's Restaurant, 3474 Creek Road.

Ransomville Fire Company Ladies and Junior Auxiliary

The Ladies Auxiliary serves the community by supporting the Ransomville Fire Department in their fund raising activities and by providing refreshment to rescue workers at large fires. The Auxiliary meets the 3rd Monday of the month at the Ransomville Fire Hall at 2525 Youngstown-Lockport Road. To raise funds the Ladies Auxiliary, with the assistance of Junior Auxiliary members, provide catering services for weddings, banquets and other large gatherings.

The Junior Auxiliary is part of the Boys and Girls Scouts of America program and allows 14 to 18 year olds to receive training and to share the service experience with older family members and community residents.

Junior Fireman

Youngsters who have an interest in fire and rescue services can become Junior Firemen. The Junior Fireman position is an explorer post sponsored by the Fire Department and covered by the Boys Scouts of America. Participants receive training in CPR, the use of fire extinguishers and other fire and rescue related activities. At the age of 18, interested participants can become members of the Ransomville Fire Departments. The program is an excellent way to ensure a steady supply of trained individuals for fire and rescue service as well as a good opportunity for older and younger family members to develop a common interest while serving their community.

Ransomville Businessmen's Association

The Ransomville Businessmen's Association meets the 1st Thursday of every month. Meetings are held at the Knead the Dough Restaurant, which is located at 3645 Ransomville Road. The organization has about 10 members and their goal is to improve the sense of community within the Hamlet. To that end the organization sponsors and participates in many social projects to which the entire community is invited. Community activities in which the association has



participated include the annual Lighting of the Wreath Festival, Toys for Tots, Cow Chip Bingo, Thanksgiving Dinner and the New Years Eve Party. The association is currently seeking a grant to assist with beautification projects in the Hamlet.

Ransomville Lodge #551 Free and Accepted Masons

The Ransomville Lodge #551 Free and Accepted Masons was chartered in 1865 and currently has approximately 110 members. Meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month in the lodge located at 2553 Lockport Road. Other community organizations also use the lodge as a meeting place. Members of the Masons are involved in numerous community service activities. One of the main programs supported by the Masons is the College Scholarship program. Children and grandchildren of Masons are eligible to apply for scholarships based on academic achievement. The Scholarship Program distributes approximately \$700,000 annually to youngsters that reside within the State of New York.

Ransomville Chapter #374 Order of the Eastern Star

The Ransomville Chapter #374 Order of the Eastern Star was formed in 1906. This is a sister organization to the Free and Accepted Masons and meetings are held in the Masonic Lodge on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month (except during the summer). The organization has about 100 dues paying members and is involved in community service.

Universal Craftsmen Council of Engineers, Inc.

The Universal Craftsmen Council of Engineers, Inc., is a national organization with ties to the Masonic Fraternity. Membership is open to those who are both Master Masons and connected with the Engineering Profession. A stated purpose of the organization is "the better education, improvement and elevation of engineers and craftsmen the Masonic Fraternity. Meetings are held in the Masonic Lodge on Lockport Road on the 3rd Friday of the month.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Lake Ontario Post 313

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is a national organization that has a rich tradition of community service activities. Lake Ontario Post 313 was established in 1945 and it currently has about 130 dues paying members. Meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month at 434 3rd Street in Youngstown. Members hold Memorial Day Services at the 1812 Cemetery at Fort Niagara to honor deceased veterans of the Post, services on November 11 (Veterans Day) to commemorate the signing of the Armistice that ended World War I, and provide an honor guard at funeral homes to honor deceased veterans. Membership is open to anyone who served in the military overseas.

Cemeteries

The following cemeteries are located in the Town of Porter:

- Fort Niagara Cemetery - Fort Niagara State park
- Halstead Cemetery - Ransomville Rd
- Oakland Cemetery - Lake Rd
- St. Johns Cemetery - Creek Rd
- Towers Cemetery - Creek Rd



5.0 Economic Characteristics

5.1 Economic Overview

Porter is a historically rural community. However, since World War II and the construction of the Robert Moses Parkway in the 1960's, it has evolved into a bedroom community with a diverse mixture of small businesses. Agriculture still plays a significant role in the aesthetics of the community but, according to the 2000 US Census, less than 1% of the population was employed in this industry.

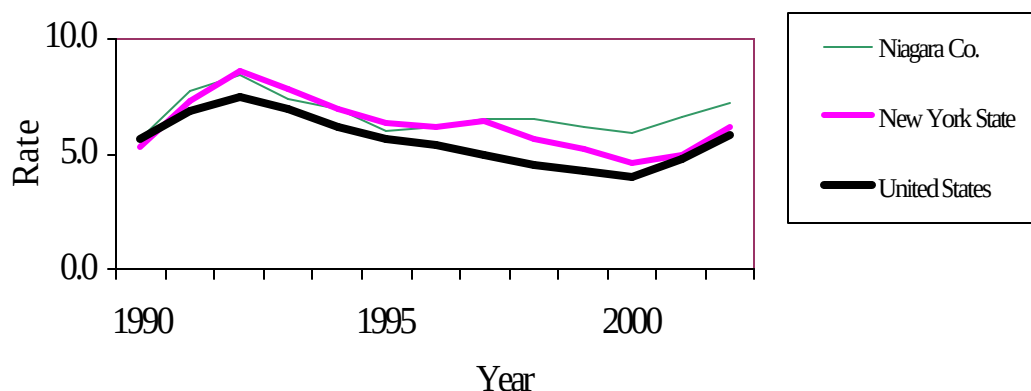
This section provides an economic inventory and analysis of Porter as it compares to surrounding communities, the County and the State and serves as a basis for future economic policy in the Town. Employment and income are important elements of this economic analysis. Employment characteristics are useful when targeting commercial activity within a community. Income characteristics are an indicator of the financial stability of a community and suggest how much a community is able to pay for municipal services. Since no one statistic can accurately portray the economic character of a community, a variety of income characteristics will be examined.

Regional Characteristics

Economic trends experienced at the county and state levels often impact the economy of lower level municipalities, especially since many residents work outside the municipalities in which they reside. The following chart illustrates the trend in unemployment rate for Niagara County, New York State and the United States from 1990 to 2002.

Figure 5-1 Unemployment Rate 1990 – 2002

Niagara County, New York State and United States



Source: US Department of Labor – Local Area Unemployment Statistics – 2002.

In 2002 the unemployment rate in the County was higher than both the State and the Nation

The figure illustrating county, state and national unemployment rates from 1990 to 2002 shows that while rates were relatively close at all three levels in 1990, by 1992 unemployment rates were significantly higher at the state and county levels until 2000 when unemployment rates for the state decreased to be more in line with that of the nation. However at the county level unemployment rates have remained significantly higher than state and national levels since 1997. These figures indicate that the economy in Niagara County has not adapted to changes as well as the State as a whole and therefore has not shared in the growth experienced at the national and state levels.

Labor Force Characteristics

Labor force characteristics provide an indication of the availability of workers in the community. At the time that the 2000 US Census was taken, Porter had a lower percentage of unemployed residents than comparison areas including the County and State. Porter also had a larger percentage of its residents in the labor force than comparison communities, with the exception of Town of Cambria and the Village of Youngstown.

Table 5-1 Labor Force Status

Persons 16 Years and Older

Labor Force Status	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
Total	3,859	1,563	4,201	4,591	13,427	43,186	171,806	14,805,912
In labor force	2,422	1,054	2,692	2,900	8,419	24,786	107,560	9,046,805
Percent in Labor Force								
Unemployed	2.7%	3.9%	4.7%	5.4%	4.0%	10.1%	6.1%	7.1%
Percent Not in Labor Force	37.2%	32.6%	35.9%	36.8%	37.3%	42.6%	37.4%	38.9%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, SF3

Employment

Educational, Health and Social Services was the most important industry of employment for the Town

While the unemployment rate indicates the level of employment, industry and occupation of employment reflect the qualities of jobs held by residents and are indicators of residents' earning power as certain industries and occupations tend to offer higher wages than others. As indicated in the table below, with slight variations, the same industries were responsible for most of the employment in all comparison areas. Educational, Health and Social Services was the most significant industry of employment for the Town of Porter and comparison areas, with the exception of the Town of Cambria where manufacturing was the most significant industry.

Table 5-2 Industry of Employment – 2000

Persons 16 Years and Older

Industry	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1.2%	0.0%	4.6%	1.6%	0.9%	0.2%	0.9%	0.6%
Construction	5.3%	6.2%	7.1%	7.9%	4.8%	4.1%	5.0%	5.2%
Manufacturing	17.4%	14.6%	23.8%	23.1%	17.0%	18.7%	20.9%	10.0%
Wholesale trade	3.4%	3.0%	2.5%	3.0%	4.4%	2.9%	3.4%	3.4%
Retail trade	9.1%	15.6%	13.0%	7.7%	12.3%	13.9%	12.8%	10.5%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.0%	4.5%	3.5%	8.8%	4.0%	5.6%	5.4%	5.5%
Information	1.9%	2.1%	1.7%	0.9%	2.4%	3.4%	2.3%	4.1%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	6.7%	5.3%	3.4%	3.4%	4.4%	3.9%	4.6%	8.8%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	7.2%	7.1%	6.3%	6.3%	6.6%	6.9%	6.8%	10.1%
Educational, health and social services:	24.8%	23.2%	16.9%	22.7%	27.1%	21.6%	21.4%	24.3%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	8.3%	9.6%	7.8%	6.2%	6.8%	10.5%	8.0%	7.3%
Other services (except public administration)	7.0%	5.0%	4.1%	4.7%	4.6%	4.9%	4.8%	5.1%
Public administration	2.7%	3.8%	5.4%	3.5%	4.8%	3.7%	3.8%	5.2%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, SF3

Similarities also existed between the State and the Town of Porter with regard to predominate occupation types. Management, Professional and Related Occupations and Sales and Office Occupations were the predominant job types within both the State and the Town of Porter.

Table 5-3 Occupation – 2000

Persons 16 Years and Older

	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
Management, professional, and related occupations	36.7%	36.6%	29.3%	27.4%	35.0%	24.3%	28.6%	36.7%
Service occupations	14.5%	13.2%	16.5%	14.5%	13.5%	20.0%	16.1%	16.6%
Sales and office occupations	21.6%	27.9%	21.2%	20.1%	31.7%	29.2%	26.7%	27.1%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	1.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.4%	0.3%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations:	9.1%	9.3%	11.1%	11.7%	8.1%	7.7%	9.0%	7.6%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	18.1%	12.9%	20.8%	24.9%	11.4%	18.7%	19.1%	11.7%

Source: US Bureau of Census, SF3

Income

Per capita income is the total income of residents divided by the population and better reflects the wealth of the community. The median household income is the level at which the number of households that have more is equal to those that have less and better reflects the distribution of income.

The median household income was \$51,773

An assessment of median household income provides insight into the relative wealth of town residents in comparison to the surrounding region. As the following table illustrates, the median household income of Porter residents (\$51,773) is significantly higher than both the County (\$38,136) and the State as a whole (\$43,393). This higher figure could indicate more disposable income for town residents.

Table 5-4 Household Income Distribution – 1999

Town of Porter and Comparison Areas

Household Income	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	New York
Total	1,811	818	1,991	2,253	5,902	24,071	87,877	7,060,595
Less than \$25,000	18.3%	21.5%	23.3%	21.5%	21.7%	47.1%	32.3%	29.5%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	30.4%	30.4%	29.7%	35.8%	27.0%	29.3%	30.6%	26.3%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	36.3%	34.6%	36.1%	35.2%	35.6%	19.6%	29.3%	29.0%
\$100,00 to \$149,999	9.4%	11.6%	8.6%	5.8%	11.4%	3.1%	6.1%	9.1%
\$150,00 or more	5.6%	1.8%	2.3%	1.7%	4.3%	0.8%	1.7%	6.2%
Median Household Income	51,773	48,333	46,534	44,557	50,819	26,800	38,136	43,393
Per capita Income	23,618	23,705	20,397	19,654	23,275	15,721	19,219	23,389

Source: US Bureau of the Census, SF3

It's important that a community determines not only how much wealth its residents generate but also the source of that wealth in order to assess the relative economic health of the community. The table that follows summarizes the aggregate values of all income sources within each community. The aggregate value of each income source was divided by the sum of all sources to determine the proportion of income obtained from each source.

Combined real earnings sources (wages, salary and self employment) accounted for over 75% of the income in comparison areas except for the City of Niagara Falls (69.5%). Porter had a lower percentage (6.1%) of income from public sources (social security, supplemental security and public assistance income) than all other comparison areas except the State (5.8%). In addition to having a lower percentage of public source income, which is not taxable and decreases the municipalities taxing potential, Porter also had a relatively high percentage of retirement income (8.3%). Only the City of Niagara Falls had a higher percentage of retirement income (8.9%). This relatively high percentage of retirement income, even though some comparison areas with higher percentages of residents that were 65 years or older had lower percentages of retirement income, indicated that residents of Porter that received retirement income received a greater percentage of retirement income per person, and were potentially in a better position to pay taxes than their counterparts in comparison areas.

Table 5-5 Income Sources 1999 (Percent Dollars)

Town of Porter and Comparison Areas

Income Source	Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	Youngstown	Town of Cambria	Town of Wilson	Town of Lewiston	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	NYS
Wage or Salary Income	74.3%	70.9%	76.4%	75.0%	72.0%	67.0%	73.7%	75.4%
Self-Employment Income	2.9%	4.5%	2.6%	3.5%	4.8%	2.5%	2.9%	5.6%
Interest, Dividends, or Net Rental Income	6.5%	5.7%	4.7%	4.0%	7.1%	5.4%	5.0%	6.7%
Social Security Income	5.7%	7.8%	7.8%	7.2%	6.9%	11.3%	7.9%	4.9%
Supplemental Security Income	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%	1.1%	0.7%	0.6%
Public Assistance Income	0.0%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%
Retirement Income	8.3%	7.3%	6.1%	7.0%	6.8%	8.9%	7.3%	4.8%
Other Types of Income	2.0%	3.2%	2.3%	2.7%	2.0%	3.2%	2.4%	1.7%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, SF3

Poverty

Poverty status is a measure of an individual's ability to afford the basic minimum amount of goods and services. Poverty levels are based on household income, the number of individuals within the household and the cost of living in the area. As indicated in the table below, of comparison areas Porter had one of the lowest percentages of residents below the poverty level (4.1%). Only the Village of Youngstown had a lower percentage of residents below the poverty level (3.9%).

***Among
comparison areas
Porter had one of
the lowest poverty
rates***

Table 5-6 Poverty Status (1999 Income)

Town of Porter and Comparison Areas

Municipality	Persons Below Poverty Level	Percent of Population
Porter (Excluding Youngstown)	204	4.1%
Youngstown	77	3.9%
Town of Cambria	275	5.1%
Town of Wilson	309	5.2%
Town of Lewiston	861	5.8%
City of Niagara Falls	10,705	19.5%
Niagara County	22,834	10.6%
New York	2,692,202	14.6%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, SF3

Commuting to Work

According to the 2000 US Census, approximately 3% of Porter residents worked from home in 2000. Of those who worked outside their home approximately 80% worked within the county of residence, 19% worked outside county of residence and 1% worked outside the state of residence. Most residents (69%) working outside the home had travel times of less than 30 minutes and another 25% traveled between 30 and 59 minutes.

Business Activity

According to the 2000 US Census the two largest industries of employment in Porter were the Educational, Health and Social Services sector (24%) and Manufacturing (17%). The most significant employers within these two industry categories were the Lewiston-Porter School District and Chemical Waste Management (CWM) respectively. During the 2003-2004 school year the Lewiston-Porter School District had a total of 392 employees and about 22 % of were Porter residents. Chemical Waste Management has about 84 employees and 15-20% of them are Porter residents. The table below indicates some of the larger employers within the community.

Table 5-7 Major Employers

Town of Porter

Employer	Location	Industry Type	Employees
CWM Chemical Services, LLC	1550 Balmer Rd	Hazardous Waste Disposal	84
Ransomville Manor	3509 Ransomville Rd	Adult Care Home	60
Lewiston-Porter School District	4061 Creek Rd	Public School	392
Ki-Po Motors Chevrolet	2534 Youngstown-Lockport Rd	Auto Dealership	13
NYS Department of Parks and Recreation	Fort Niagara State Park and Four Mile Creek State Park	State Park	60 20
Old Fort Niagara Association Inc.	Fort Niagara State Park	Historic Site	53
Porter Country Mart	3628 Ransomville Rd	Convenience Food Store	16
Ransomville Bus Lines	3704 Ransomville Rd	Transportation	100
Rite Aid	3636 Ransomville Rd	Pharmacy	N/A
Wilson Central School District- WH Stevenson Elementary	3745 Ransomville Rd	Public School	249 45

Source: Town of Porter

To gain an understanding of the business climate within the Town of Porter several employers located within the Town were personally contacted to obtain information pertaining to their company. The section is not intended to serve as a complete inventory of local business, but to provide insight into the types of firms that operate within the town and some of the issues they face.

CWM Chemical Services, LLC

CWM Chemical Services is a waste management facility located on a 710-acre lot at 1550 Balmer Road. The company's 84 full-time employees include scientists, administrators, engineers, technicians, clerks, equipment operators and maintenance workers. Most positions are skilled positions requiring a technical degree or higher. About 15-20% of the employees are residents of the Town.

CWM has a market area that includes the Mid Atlantic and Northeastern States and Canada. Most employees have been with the company 15 or more years and the facility's proximity to industrial sectors in Niagara Falls and Buffalo and the large number of colleges and universities in the area is seen as assurance that a ready supply of replacement staff will be available into the future. Business has declined within the past three years and has resulted in a 20% decrease in the size of the workforce. The slow down has been experienced nationwide and is believed to a result of the decrease in the amount of manufacturing that occurs within the nation and a shift in the federal government's spending focus from environmental cleanup to homeland security.

Ransomville Manor

Located at 3509 Ransomville Road, Ransomville Manor is an adult care facility that has recently had a change of status from a privately owned operation to a not-for-profit. The facility was once operated as a hospital and later as a nursing home but it has served as an adult care facility since the mid 1960's. A total of 60 full and part-time employees hold positions as administrators, personal care aides (PCA's), dietary aides, PC charge attendants, cooks, housekeeping staff and maintenance workers. Most positions require at least a high school diploma. Business has decreased over the last three years and is perceived to be a reflection of a statewide trend in healthcare as changes are made in the State's reimbursement procedures.

Ki-Po Motors Chevrolet

The former Mullane Chevrolet, a private auto dealership located at 2534 Youngstown-Lockport Road (Route 93), was purchased January 2004 by two partners and renamed Ki-Po Motors Chevrolet. Mullane bought the dealership four years ago from Bob Krueger Chevrolet who had sold new and used vehicles for about 25 years. Under Mullane the dealership had a total of 13 full and part time employees. Positions included sales persons, technicians and mechanics and generally require at least a high school diploma. Business had decreased over the last three years and while the general manger saw this as an industry-wide trend, he felt that it appeared to be more acutely felt in this area. He also indicated that while the business' location on Route 93 was convenient for locals the lack of a direct route to the location for those living outside of Porter was a hindrance.

Lewiston-Porter School District

Although situated outside the borders of the Town of Porter, the Lewiston-Porter School District is a significant local economic presence, employing a staff of almost 400, including faculty, support staff and custodial services that serviced 2460 students during the 2003-2004 school year. About 22% of the district's employees are Porter residents. Professional staff have either a bachelor's degree or higher and support staff typically have at least a high school diploma.

There are no plans for additional classroom space but a Facilities Plan is proposed to assess the need for maintenance work and upgrades to buildings. The district's facilities consist of five structures housed on the campus at 4061 Creek Road in Lewiston. One of those structures, a former school building, is being used as a Community Resource Center. It is used to house the district's maintenance facilities and boardroom. Several private enterprises also rent space in the building including among others a daycare program, motorcycle shop and a dance instructor.

NYS Department of Parks and Recreation

Fort Niagara State Park and Creek State Park are both located in the Town of Porter. Fort Niagara State Park is open year round and consists of approximately 280 acres of land. The Old Fort Niagara State Historic Site is located within the park. The Old Fort Niagara Historic Site attracts about 100,000 visitors annually from across the nation and around the world. While some of these



tourists also make use of the facilities in Fort Niagara State Park, the park's primary visitors are families and companies in the Buffalo-Niagara Region who make use of the parks water and picnic resources. Between 1998 and 2003, Fort Niagara State Park averaged over 650,000 visitors annually. The park has about 8 full-time, yearlong employees and during the summer months, an additional 50 employees are hired. Seasonal employees include lifeguards, fee collectors, maintenance workers and pool cleaners and filtration system operators. Four Mile Creek State Park is a 248-acre state facility that is open from April to mid-October. That facility employs 15-20 full time seasonal employees.

Old Fort Niagara Association Inc.

Situated on 23 acres at 2 Scott Street in the Fort Niagara State Park, Old Fort Niagara is an internationally significant historic site. Old Fort Niagara is managed by the Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc., a nonprofit organization whose goals include the preservation, restoration and maintenance of Old Fort Niagara, the promotion of a deeper understanding of its history and the maintenance of various collections related to the site.

The organization was established in 1927 and has 13 full-time and approximately 40 part-time (seasonal) employees. Staff includes administrators, educators, curators, salespersons and building/grounds maintenance workers. Annual payroll in 2002 was over \$500,000. Most full-time positions require a Bachelor's degree or higher. Retirees and students generally hold the part-time positions and many have some college experience. The Fort generally received over 100,000 visitors annually. However, figures are about 15% lower than normal for 2003. This trend was observed nationally but figures are expected to rebound next year.

Porter Country Mart

Porter Country Mart is a local convenience store located at 3628 Ransomville Road that sells gas, cooked food, groceries and other items. Established in 1980, the business employs 16 individuals on a part-time basis. Employees serve as store clerks, managers and kitchen staff and there are no minimum educational requirements for employment. From November to March customers are mainly from the local community and business is slow. Business increases sharply in the spring and summer months with the influx of visitors to Old Fort Niagara, Ransomville Speedway, campers and anglers. Overall business has declined in the last three years and the owner attributes the decrease to retail activity on the Tuscarora Indian Reservation.

Tower Orchards

Tower Orchards, located at 3232 Lutts Road, is a family business that has been in existence for about 100 years. Robert Tower farms approximately 150 acres that are currently being used for orchards. Apples and peaches are the primary crops but cherries and pears are also grown. Described as a “mom and pop” operation by the owner, the business employs up to 10 seasonal workers during harvest time, which runs from early April to early November. Workers tend to be Mexican migrant workers who reside in Lockport, NY and commute to work daily. Workers are obtained through word of mouth.

Overall business has improved slightly over the past five years. The small positive change is largely a result of a rebound in the price of apples, which had reached a very low point about five year ago. Farmers are struggling nationwide, as increases in foreign production lower the prices of agricultural products.

W.H. Stevenson Elementary School

The W. H. Stevenson Elementary School is part of the Wilson Central School District, which serves residents in the Village of Wilson and the Towns of Cambria, Newfane, Porter and Wilson. The District has a total staff of 249 to serve 1,481



students for the 2003-2004 school year. Approximately 27% of the district's staff members are Porter residents. The district does not anticipate any significant increases in student enrollment.

Located at 3745 Ransomville, W. H. Stevenson Elementary School is the only district facility that is located in Town of Porter. During the 2003-2004 school year, the facility served 265

students in pre-kindergarten to grade 5 and had a total of 45 employees including faculty, support staff and custodial services. Faculty have a bachelor's degree or higher and support staff have at least a high school diploma. Approximately 40% of the employees at W.H. Stevenson Elementary School are Porter residents.

Proposed Projects

The following projects have been proposed and have the potential to increase the number of visitors to the Porter community if they are brought to fruition.

International Fast Ferry Corporation

International Fast Ferry Corporation, a Toronto company, has proposed the development of a high-speed ferry service that would link Porter, New York and Toronto, Ontario. The project was expected to cost about \$170 million, including the purchase of three ships, construction of a port and terminal and infrastructure expenses. Three ships with the capacity to carry 1000 passengers and 250 autos each was envisioned to make the 28-mile trip several times a day at a cost of \$35 per vehicle and driver or \$21 per pedestrian. The terminal was to be constructed about four miles east of the Niagara River on land that is part of the Four Mile Creek State Park. To date a formal application has not been made to the Town of Porter Planning Board for the project and efforts to gather funding support appear to have stalled. The company president believes that a similar ferry project in Rochester has dissipated support for the ferry project in Porter and has put the project on hold.

Magna Corporation

Magna Corporation is a Canadian corporation that purchased three properties in the Town of Porter in 1999:

- Former Occidental Chemical recreation area north of Lake Road and east of Deitz Road (38 acres)
- Youngstown-Wilson Road between Dickersonville and Ransomville Roads (570 acres)
- Northwest corner of Youngstown-Lockport Road and Creek Road (58 acres)

In March 2000 the corporation showed interest in constructing a large project that could include a thoroughbred racetrack and adjacent theme park. The corporation then applied for and received approval to form a NYS racing corporation for the purpose of running a racetrack in Porter. Additional land purchases in 2002 bring the total acreage owned by the Magna Corporation to approximately 823 acres. The corporation has not made a formal proposal to the Town or provided any additional information as to its plans for the acquired properties. In order to move the project forward, a formal racing license and approval from Porter Town officials would be required.³⁹

³⁹ Niagara Frontier Rapid Review of the News, www.lockport-ny.com/frontier.htm, Retrieved 12/11/03

5.2 Tourism

The Town of Porter is strategically located within a region that has historically been a major tourist destination. Situated with 15 miles of Niagara Falls, one of the seven wonders of the world, surrounded by the Niagara River and Lake Ontario, and favored with numerous historic and natural resources within its borders, the Town has the potential to develop its tourist industry.

According to the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation records, between 1998 and 2003, total annual attendance at the four state parks in and around Porter (Fort Niagara, Four Mile Creek, Joseph Davis and Wilson Tuscarora) was generally over 1 million persons. During the 2002-2003 fiscal year, attendance figures fell below the 1 million mark, to approximately 950,000 persons. Of the four parks, Fort Niagara State Park had the largest number of visitors, with annual attendance ranging between 650,000 and 930,000 persons.

***Porter tourism
industry offers
great economic
potential***

The UB Studio on Smart Growth assessed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) associated with Porter's tourism industry. It was suggested that the provision of additional events during the winter season, increased public access to the shoreline and a local tourism organization would improve the Town's competitive position.⁴⁰

Nature Tourism

The Niagara County Fisheries Advisory Board has been in existence since the 1970's and represents all segments of the sport fishing industry. In September 2003, the Board compiled economic statistics from the county, region and state to illustrate to the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation the importance of sport fishery to the surrounding communities. According to the Board, sport fishing is big business in Niagara County and it is a year-round resource.

The report generated by the Niagara County Fisheries Advisory Board indicated that sport fishing had an impact of up to \$1 million annually for the Village of Youngstown. The Lake Ontario Counties Trout and Salmon Derbies were said to have a combined estimated impact of \$2 million annually for Niagara County.⁴¹ Other fishing competitions that are held in the Niagara Region include: The Greater Niagara River Classic Team Bass Challenge, the Greater Niagara Fall Classic and the Lake Ontario Pro-Am Salmon Team Tournament-Niagara County. A Greater Niagara Hot Spot Fishing Map, with information on everything from fishing license and fishing spots to charter listings and marina information is available from the County Tourism Department.

⁴⁰ Towards a Smart Growth master Plan: Assessment and Recommendations for the Town of Porter. UB Studio on Smart Growth. 2003

⁴¹ Niagara County Fisheries Advisory Board, Important Considerations as they Relate to Tourism, September 2003.

Additional outdoor attractions in the area include recreational boating and sailing, hiking paths in parks, hunting and birding opportunities. The Niagara River is internationally recognized as an important bird area. The Buffalo Audubon Society has prepared a brochure that highlights the natural and scenic resources within the Western New York area. Both the Seaway Trail and the Audubon designated birding Trail travel through the Town of Porter and have the potential to attract visitors to the community.

Historic/Antiques

Old Fort Niagara and the US Coast Guard Lighthouse are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and are just two of the many historic sites within Porter. Brochures with maps indicating the location of historic sites within the region are available from the County and local historic organizations. Using these guides and markers along the roadways residents and visitors can enjoy self-guided tours of the area. In addition to historic sites there are also several establishments that specialize in antiques and collectibles in the county.

The Antique Trail of Niagara County brochure provides a map and brief descriptions of the antique and gifts establishments in the region. The brochure is prepared by the Niagara County Antique Dealers Association, an informal group of antique dealers who contribute to cover the cost of the brochure, and has been doing so for about 15 years. Brochures are available at most antique dealerships in Niagara County, as well as the Tourist Information Centers at the NYS Thruway's Angola and Clarence exits.

5.3 Town Budget

Revenue

According to the Town Supervisor, Merton Wiepert, while County and School Taxes have increased, the Town's tax rate has been relatively stable over the past five years. He credited the stable tax rate to increases in sales tax revenues as well as increases in assessment revenue that resulted from the construction of several high value homes.

Another ongoing factor that has had a stabilizing influence on Town taxes is the revenue received from Chemical Waste Management (CWM). In the 2003 Budget adopted by Porter, approximately \$400,000 was provided by CWM. New York State requires hazardous waste facilities to charge a 6% Gross Receipt Tax (GRT) on all hazardous waste received. The Towns of Porter and Lewiston each receive 1/3 of the GRT collected and the three school districts (Lewiston-Porter, Wilson Central and Niagara-Wheatfield) share the final 1/3. The amount each school district receives is based on school population, with the Lewiston-Porter receiving about 75%, Niagara-Wheatfield approximately 15% and Wilson about 10%. For 2003 the Porter portion of the GRT amounted to \$300,000. In addition to the GRT, CWM also provided \$100,000 as an air enhancement fee – the final installment of a \$500,000 fee, payable over five years, which was assessed for an increased height allowance for the landfill.

The Town's tax rate has been relatively stable over the past five years

The tax rate for the town is currently \$.88 per \$1,000 of assessed value. According to Supervisor Wiepert, without the income received from CWM the Town's tax rate would increase by \$1.33 to \$2.21 per \$1,000 of assessed value. While this would more than double the Town's rate, he believed that the rate would be still be comparable with other local municipalities. The Town Supervisor also noted that revenues received from gross receipts are decreasing due to reduction in Superfund cleanups and resultant decreases in CWM receipts.

Table 5-8 Municipal and School Tax Rates

Per \$1,000 of Assessed Valuation

Municipality	County Tax Rate	Town Tax Rate	School District	School Tax Rate	Total Tax Rate*
Town of Cambria	\$8.84	\$1.19	Wilson	\$24.48	\$34.51
Town of Lewiston	\$8.84	.57	Lewiston-Porter	\$21.36	\$30.77
Town of Porter	\$8.84	.88	Lewiston-Porter	\$21.36	\$31.08
			Wilson Central	\$24.48	\$34.20
Town of Wilson	\$8.84	3.25	Wilson Central	\$24.48	\$36.57

* Includes County, Town and School Tax

Source: Municipal Assessor's Office

According to the Town Supervisor the new host agreement with CWM, which has recently been upheld in court, calls for an additional \$3 million in installment payments by 2007. If the expansion is successful, in addition to the \$3 million dollars, the Town will receive \$3/ton of deposits, with a guaranteed minimum annual payment of \$200,000. No definite plans have been made for these funds but some possible uses are: a community center, town wide sewer improvements or the purchase of parkland along the waterfront for town residents.

CWM estimates that its economic impact to Niagara County is about \$21 million annually through payment of payroll, taxes and purchase of goods and services. That figure does not include Gross Receipts Payments (\$1 million), property and school taxes (\$600,000) and the new host agreement (\$3 million over 4 years).⁴²

The State also receives income from CWM. The company pays about \$750,000 annually for an assortment of permits, fees and surcharges in addition to a hazardous waste tax (\$27/ton of direct land fill or \$16/ton of treated hazardous waste). The State is also the beneficiary of a series of surety bonds, provided by CWM, with a total value of \$70 million that covers the cost of post facility closure care.⁴³

Expenses

On the other side of the budgetary equation, total expenditures have remained relatively constant over the past five years and are expected to continue in that manner. However, while there has not been a significant change in the overall figure there has been significant increases in certain budgetary items such as contributions to the New York State Retirement System and health insurance costs.

The recent dramatic drop in stock market prices resulted in a financial short fall in the NYS Retirement system. To compensate for the decrease in investment revenues the State has requested higher contributions from local municipalities. In 2003 Porter's contribution to the retirement system was about \$27,000. In 2004 approximately \$80,000 is budgeted for retirement contributions and a similar amount is expected for 2005. It is uncertain how long the retirement system will take to recover and revert back to the former contribution levels.

The other major expense that is increasing significantly is health insurance costs, which has been rising steadily for a while, with premiums increasing at a rate of 10-15% annually. However, despite these big tickets items, careful control of expenses have kept the Town's budget relatively stable and with some surplus.

⁴² Waste Management, A Guide to CWM Waste Management's Model City Facility, 2003 Issue

⁴³ Richard Sturgess, Telephone interview March 2004.

5.4 Agriculture

Agriculture is important to New York State. Agricultural production returned over \$3.4 billion to the farm economy in 2002. Today, 37,500 farms, approximately 25% of the State's land area (7.6 million acres) are used to produce a very diverse array of food products.⁴⁴

Agriculture has an impact on Niagara County's economy, but limited impact on the entire State's economy. In 1997, approximately \$57 million dollars can be attributed to agriculture in the economy of Niagara County⁴⁵. This is approximately 2% of the overall agricultural economic output for the entire state.

In the Town of Porter, the impacts of agriculture on the local economy are not significant, but are noticeable in the quality of life and community character. According to the US Census, only 29 people are employed in the agricultural industry on a full-time basis; this is less than 1% of the residents in the Town of Porter. In 1998, there were 6,737 acres of active farmland in the Town of Porter.

Agriculture has a limited impact on the local economy but a significant impact on quality of life and community character

The overall impacts of agriculture on the economy may be less significant than the quality of life impacts that this industry has on the Town. This section of the Comprehensive Plan addresses various aspects of agriculture in Niagara County, Agricultural District No. 8 and the 14174 and 14131 zip codes.

Niagara County

Historically, agriculture has been an important land use throughout Niagara County; the County lies within the Ontario Plain, which has been identified as a Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) by the American Farmland Trust. The Ontario Plains and Finger Lakes Region is one of the top 20 most threatened MLRA s in the country. To track the changes in agricultural land and uses, the Niagara County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan was prepared in the late 1990's by the Niagara County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. This study found that the number of acres of agricultural land in the County saw a decrease between 1974 (155,835 acres) and 1997 (127,355 acres). The number of farms also decreased from 1,228 to 687 during this same time period.⁴⁶

According to the US Census of Agriculture, there has been a dramatic loss of productive agricultural land in Niagara County over the past 60 years. The number of farms has decreased from 3,871 to 830 for a loss of 78%. The total number of acres in cropland has decreased from 206,593 in 1950 to approximately 119,200 in 1998; this represents a loss of 42%.

⁴⁴ <http://www.nass.usda.gov/ny/>

⁴⁵ US Bureau of Census – 1997 Census of Agriculture

⁴⁶ Farmland Protection – A Plan for Niagara County. 1998

Between 1992 (135,494) and 1997 (127,355), there was another 6% decrease in the acreage in farms. The number of full-time farms decreased 13% from 391 farms to 340 farms. In this time period, the average size of farms has increased by 2% from 181 acres to 185 acres.⁴⁷ The following table summarizes the loss of agricultural land in Niagara County since 1940:

Table 5-9 Farm Statistics – 1940-1998
Niagara County

Year	Number of Farms	Land in Farms (Acres)	Total Cropland (Acres)
1940	3,871	274,687	N / A
1950	3,362	247,904	206,593
1959	2,456	168,892	168,892
1969	1,654	140,259	140,259
1982	1,093	127,055	127,055
1992	880	123,400	123,400
1998	830	119,200	119,200

Source: New York Agricultural Statistics Service, April 2000

The market value of agricultural products sold in the County increased 25% from 1992 to 1997. In 1997, the market value of agricultural products sold was approximately \$57,726,000; the 1992 market value was \$46,026,000 (which, converted using the Consumer Price Index, equals \$51,714,000 in 1997 dollars). Crop sales accounted for 66% of the market value. The average market value of agricultural products per farm increased by 37% in Niagara County from \$61,449 (\$74,511 in 1997 dollars) to \$84,026. The following table summarizes this information:

Table 5-10 Market Value of Farm Products – 1992 & 1997
Niagara County

Item	1992	1997
Market Value of all agricultural products sold	46,026,000	57,726,000
Market Value of all agricultural products per farm	61,449	84,026
Market value of all crops, including greenhouse crops	29,157	38,174
Market Value of all livestock, poultry and products	16,868	19,553

Source: US Bureau of Census – 1997 Census of Agriculture

⁴⁷ 1997 Census of Agriculture County Profile – USDA – NSAA.

In 1997, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) statistics show that the leading agricultural product in the County was dairy (26%) while fruits & berries ranked second at 24%. Vegetables make up approximately 16% of the County's agricultural product. The following table summarizes the 1997 sales and their percent as a total:



Table 5-11 Leading Agricultural Products - 1997
Niagara County

Product	1997 Sales (thousand dollars)	Percent of Total
Dairy	15,526	26
Fruit & Berries	13,620	24
Vegetables	8,980	16
Corn for Grain	6,297	11
Nursery & Greenhouse	4,681	8
Other Products	8,892	15
Total Sales	57,726	100

Source: US Bureau of Census – 1997 Census of Agriculture

Most farms in Niagara County are in the sales class of under \$10,000. In 1997, approximately 250 of the 687 farms reporting indicated that their sales were under \$10,000. Approximately 190 farms were in the \$10,000 to \$49,000 sales class; this is approximately 28% of the farms in the County. In 1997, 104 farms indicated a sales class of \$100,000 or more in the County.

Table 5-12 Farms by Sales Class – 1992 & 1997
Niagara County

Sales Class	1992	1997
Under \$10,000	414	350
\$10,000 to \$49,000	168	190
\$50,000 to \$99,000	70	43
\$100,000 or more	97	104
Farms Reporting	749	687

Source: US Bureau of Census – 1997 Census of Agriculture

Agricultural District No. 8

Agricultural land uses occupy 50% of Porter's land area

In Niagara County, 12 of the 20 communities have land in Agricultural Districts. These Districts encompass over 176,000 acres or 52% of the County⁴⁸. Approximately 13,080 acres land⁴⁹ – which includes both agricultural and non-agricultural uses - in the Town of Porter are located within Agricultural District 8, which encompasses both Porter and Wilson. The total number of acres in the district is 39,263; of this, 33,098 acres are in farms. In the Town of Porter, agricultural land uses encompass over 50% of the land in the community; this is approximately 10,453 acres of both active and inactive farmland.

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets uses soil productivity as a common denominator for classifying all New York farmland. Land productivity is measured by the yields of corn and hay crop rotations over a ten-year production cycle. In 1998, there were 6,737 acres of active farmland in the Town, which is a decrease from almost 10,000 acres of active farmland in the Town in 1968⁵⁰.

50% of farms in Agricultural District No. 8 produce grain and vegetables and 13% produce orchards

According to the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, there are 102 farms in Agricultural District No. 8; this includes those in both Porter and Wilson. The highest percentages of farms in the District are grain and vegetable; combined, they comprise almost 50% of the farms in the District. Orchards make up approximately 13% of the farms in the district. The following table summarizes the types of farms in Agricultural District No. 8:



Table 5-13 Farms by Type – Agricultural District No. 8
Towns of Porter and Wilson

Product	Number of Farms
Dairy	8
Grain	25
Vegetable	25
Orchard	14
Vineyard	5
Livestock	10
Horticulture	3
Christmas Tree	2
Other	10
Total	102

Source: NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Niagara County and peter j. smith & company, inc.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Of these 102 farms within the Agricultural District, the receipts reported vary significantly. Six farms report receipts of over \$500,000 while 7 report receipts between \$200,000 and \$500,000. The highest percentage of farms indicate receipts of under \$40,000 but over \$10,000; 27 farms report receipts of under \$10,000. The following table summarizes the receipts reported:

Table 5-14 Receipts Reported – Agricultural District No. 8
Towns of Porter and Wilson

Number Reporting	Receipts
6	Over \$500,000
7	Under \$500,000
8	Under \$200,000
24	Under \$100,000
30	Under \$40,000
27	Under \$10,000

Source: NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

Approximately 10% of the farms reported making capital investments of over \$200,000 over the past 7 years; the highest percentage made investments of under \$10,000. The total capital investments (land, building, livestock, trees, etc.) made to farms in Agricultural District No. 8 is summarized in the following table:

Table 5-15 Capital Investment – Agricultural District No. 8
Towns of Porter and Wilson

Number Reporting	Total Capital Improvements
10	Excess of \$200,000
8	Under \$200,000
20	Under \$100,000
30	Under \$50,000
34	Under \$10,000

Source: NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

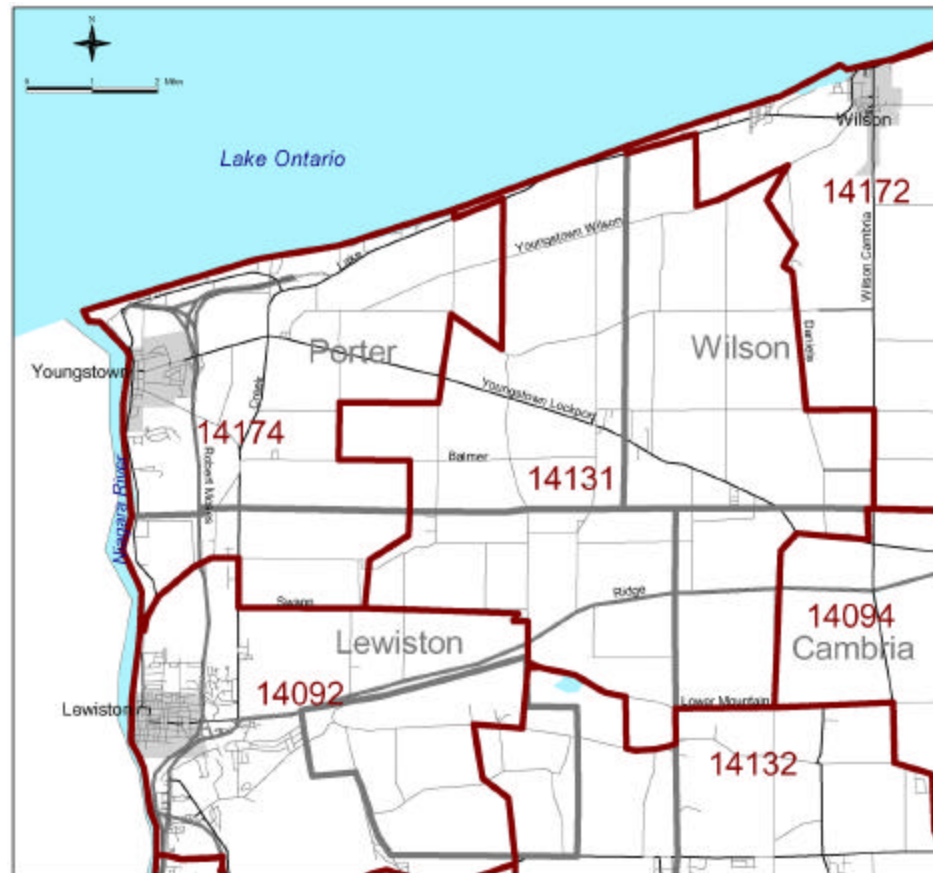


14174 and 14131 Zip Code Farms

According to the US Bureau of Census, there are 14 farms in the 14174 zip code and 64 in the 14131 zip code; this include farms in the Town of Porter and the surrounding communities. A large portion of the 14131 zip code is outside the Town of Porter in the Towns of Wilson, Lewiston and Cambria. A small portion of the 14174 zip code is in the Town of Lewiston. The following figure illustrates the location of these zip codes:

Figure 5-2 Zip Codes 14174 and 14131

Niagara County



Source: US Bureau of the Census

In the 14174 zip code, 10 of the farms are full owners while 3 are part owners and 1 is a tenant. In the 14131 zip code, 41 of the farms are full owners with 19 part owners and 4 tenants. This would indicate that the majority of farmers are operating land they own, rather than rent. In the 14131 zip code, about a third operate land they rent. Only 52% in the 14131 zip code show that the principal occupation of the owner is farming while 48% show that there is some other principal occupation. In the 14174 zip code, almost 78% show the principal occupation as farming. These figures may indicate the need to bolster farm income with additional sources or the emergence of smaller, “hobby” agricultural activities in addition to a primary, non-farming occupation in the 14131 zip code.⁵¹ The following summarizes the information:

52% of farms in the Ransomville zip code and 78% of farms in the Youngstown zip code indicated that farming was the principal occupation of the owner

Table 5-16 Farm Ownership, Residence and Operation – 1997
14174 and 14131 Zip Codes

Ownership / Operation	14174 Youngstown	14131 Ransomville
Ownership		
Full owners	10	41
Part owners	3	19
Tenants	1	4
Residence		
Operator living on farm	13	58
Operator not living on farm	0	2
Residence not reported	1	4
Operation		
Principal Occupation is Farming	11	33
Other Principal Occupation	3	31

Source: US Bureau of Census – 1997 Census of Agriculture

The majority of farms (71%) in the 14174 zip code are between 50 and 999 acres while the remaining 29% are farms smaller than 50 acres. There are no farms in this zip code that are over 1,000 acres. In contrast, in the 14131 zip code, there are 3 farms, or 5%, that are over 1,000 acres. Like the 14174 zip code, the majority of farms (53%), are between 50 and 999 acres. Approximately 42% of farms in the 14131 zip code are less than 50 acres.

Most farms in the two zip code areas are 50-999 acres

This information is summarized below:

Table 5-17 Farms by Size – 1997
14174 and 14131 Zip Codes

Size of Farm*	14174 Youngstown	14131 Ransomville	Total
1 – 49 acres	4	27	31
50 – 999 acres	10	34	44
1000 acres or more	0	3	3
Total	14	64	78

* Includes land both owned and rented from others.

Source: US Bureau of Census – 1997 Census of Agriculture

⁵¹ Ibid.

According to the 1997 Census of Agriculture, 48 of the 73 total farms in both zip codes (66%) actively harvest crops. The majority of the cropland is harvested on farms of less than 500 acres in the 14174 and 14131 zip codes; in the 14174 zip code, the majority is harvested on farms between 50 and 499 acres, while in the 14131 zip code, most is harvested on smaller farms. Shown below is the most recent data on acreage of harvested cropland in the two zip codes:

Table 5-18 Harvested Cropland – 1997
14174 and 14131 Zip Codes

Area	14174 Youngstown	14131 Ransomville	Total
1 – 49 acres	6	42	48
50 – 499 acres	7	14	21
500 acres or more	0	4	4
Total	13	60	73

Source: US Bureau of Census – 1997 Census of Agriculture

The leading agricultural activities in the 14174 zip code are lands in orchards. The same number of farms are used for berries, vegetables, hay and to raise horses/ponies. In the 14131 zip code, hay-alfalfa is the leading activity with orchards also being a significant activity. Vegetables and cattle/calves are important agricultural activities in the 14131 zip code. The following table summarizes the number of farms engaged in the production of specific agricultural products for the two zip codes, the County and the State.⁵²

Table 5-19 Type of Agricultural Products – 1997
14174 and 14131 Zip Codes

Product	14174 Youngstown	14131 Ransomville	Niagara County	New York State
Cattle and calves inventory total farms	1	17	236	16444
Beef cow inventory total farms	1	11	124	6160
Milk cow inventory total farms	0	4	70	8732
Hogs and pigs inventory total farms	0	3	33	1508
Sheep and lambs inventory total farms	0	0	20	1515
Hens & pullets laying age inventory total farms	1	3	2	1842
Horses and ponies of all ages inventory total farms	3	10	129	6491
Corn for grain total farms	0	12	192	5493
Corn for silage total farms	0	2	92	8250
Wheat for grain total farms	0	1	N / A	1887
Oats for grain total farms	0	2	79	2808
Soybeans for beans total farms	0	4	N / A	952
Irish potatoes total farms	0	3	N / A	544
Hay-alfalfa other tame small grain etc. total farms	3	27	340	20805
Land used for vegetables total farms	3	18	144	2720
Land in orchards total farms	9	23	146	2436
Berries total farms	3	4	33	826
Total Farms	14	64	687	31757

Source: US Bureau of Census – 1997 Census of Agriculture

⁵² The total number exceeds the number of farms reported earlier because most farms produce more than one product.

In the 14174 zip code, 36% of farms earn less than \$10,000, 28% earn between \$10,000 and \$99,000 and 35% earn over \$100,000. In the 14131 zip code, 40% of farms earn under \$10,000 and 40% earn between \$10,000 and \$99,000. 20% of farms in the 14131 zip code earn over \$100,000. The following summarizes this information:

Table 5-20 Gross Farm Sales – 1997
14174 and 14131 Zip Codes

	14174 Youngstown	14131 Ransomville
Total Farms	14	64
Market value of agricultural products sold less than \$10,000	5	26
Market value of agricultural products sold \$10,000 to \$99,999	4	27
Market value of agricultural products sold \$100,000 or more	5	11

Source: US Bureau of Census – 1997 Census of Agriculture

Cost of Community Services Analysis

Agriculture is an important component of the Town's character and economy. By carefully planning for the development of residential uses on agricultural land, the Town will not only protect its character, but may realize savings in servicing the communities. The American Farmland Trust has developed a mechanism to determine the overall cost of various development types. They reviewed the results of 70 Cost of Community Service Studies (COCS) conducted throughout the country and according to the Farmland Trust's review, for every \$1.00 spent in municipal taxes:

- Residential uses require \$1.15 in services
- Farm/forest uses require \$0.35 in services
- Commercial/industrial uses require \$0.27 in services⁵³.

A COCS study completed for a primarily residential community, Amherst, NY in Erie County, and a rural/agricultural community, Wilson, NY in Niagara County, illustrate local results for servicing different land uses. In Amherst, the Town spends \$1.15 for each dollar generated from residential uses and only spends \$0.46 for each dollar generated from open space/agricultural uses. In Wilson, the Town spends \$1.10 for each dollar generated from residential uses and only spends \$0.57 for each dollar generated from open space/agricultural uses.

Open space and agriculture land uses require less municipal expenditure than residential land uses

⁵³ Median rate.

The following summarizes the results of the COCS prepared for the Towns of Amherst and Wilson:

Table 5-21 Cost of Community Service Comparison
Town of Amherst and Town of Wilson

Land Use Category	Amherst, NY ⁵⁴			Wilson, NY ⁵⁵		
	Revenues	Expenditures	Cost for Each \$ Generated	Revenues	Expenditures	Cost for Each \$ Generated
Residential	\$289,489,668	\$334,458,915	\$1.15	\$5,392,913	\$5,947,795	\$1.10
Commercial	68,518,783	25,924,373	0.38	504,716	148,954	0.30
Open Land	4,388,404	2,013,567	0.46	460,741	261,621	0.57

Source: Farmland Protection – A Plan for Niagara County - 1998.

While these figures have not been specifically gathered for Porter, the findings illustrate that protection of the rural character can also have a significant economic impact on residents in the community.

Agricultural Programs Available in Niagara County

NYS Agricultural Districts

In 1971, New York became the first state to create a comprehensive agricultural district program. The NYS Agricultural Districts Law supports agriculture through several provisions:

- Agricultural assessments for land in active agricultural production;
- Limits on the taxation of farmland for certain municipal improvements;
- Limits on public utility taxes to the ½ acre of farm which is devoted to housing
- Requirement that state agency policies support farming;
- State review of local ordinances which affect agriculture;
- Limitations on the exercise of eminent domain and other public acquisitions;
- Limits on public investment for non-farm development;
- Agricultural impact statement requirements for public projects;
- Right-to-farm protection for sound agricultural practices;
- Disclosure notices to real estate purchasers in agricultural areas; and
- Right to recover legal fees where farmer wins nuisance lawsuit.⁵⁶

An agricultural district is created by the county legislature upon petition by interested landowners. The owners must collectively own at least 500 acres (or 10%) of the land proposed for the district.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Completed in March 1992 by Fox & Company for the IDA.

⁵⁵ Farmland Protection – A Plan for Niagara County, 1998.

⁵⁶ American Farmland Trust. *Saving American Farmland: What Works*, American Farmland Trust, 1997, pp. 198-201

⁵⁷ Ferguson, Kirsten, Cosgrove, Jeremy and Teri Ptacek. *Action Guide: Agricultural and Farmland Protection for New York*, American Farmland Trust, 1999, pp. 10.

For farms located in agricultural districts, right-to-farm laws are essential. These laws help to protect farmers from nuisance lawsuits in New York State. Farms are only eligible for protection under this law if they are located in agricultural districts or if the farm is subject to an agricultural assessment. Protections under the law include:

- Sound Agricultural Practice Opinions – If the farm is located in an agricultural district or receives an agricultural assessment, the owner can petition the commissioner of the Department of Agriculture & Markets for a “sound agricultural practice” opinion if there are complaints against the farm owner or renter. Any changes in farm operations would require the landowner to obtain another sound agricultural opinion.
- Nuisance Suits and Award of Attorney Fees - If a private nuisance suit is brought in a situation where a sound agricultural opinion has been issued and the farmer prevails in the lawsuit, the court can require the opposing party to pay for the farmer’s attorney fees expended to defend the private nuisance action.⁵⁸

NYS Tax Relief

To reduce the tax burden on state farmers, the New York Legislature enacted the 1996 Farmers’ Protection and Farm Preservation Act. The law created a refundable income tax credit for school taxes paid by farmers. The program is fully funded by the state. In addition, farm buildings and structures are also exempt from several provisions of the Real Property Tax Law:

- Section 483 exempts new and rebuilt farm buildings for ten years;
- Section 483-a entirely exempts certain agricultural structures;
- Section 483-c exempts temporary greenhouses; and
- A limited exemption is offered for the rehabilitation of historic barns.

The amount of the building exemption is determined by the increase in assessed value of the land because of the new construction; it is not based on actual construction costs.

NYS Farmland Protection Plan Development

In 1994, the state began to provide funding for the development of County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plans. Approval of such plans enables counties to apply for federal and state funding for the purchase of farmland development rights. Additional information on the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board is included in the section of this Chapter on organizations.

⁵⁸ <http://www.nyfb.org/legislation/AgDistricts.htm>

NYS Purchase of Development Rights Grants

In 1996, the legislature amended the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Programs, Article 25-AAA, to provide implementation grants for the purchase of development rights on farmland. Municipalities with approved agricultural and farmland protection plans were eligible for funding under the 75% state contribution/25% local contribution program.

Since 1996, the state has committed \$30 million to preserving thousands of acres of farmland in the state to keep viable farmland in production and protect it from development.⁵⁹ In 2000, the state awarded \$12 million to 15 municipalities to help protect economically viable farmland from development. The award is the largest amount ever appropriated for farmland protection in New York and represents a 56% increase over last year's funding.⁶⁰

US Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes direct and guaranteed Farm Ownership (FO) and Operating Loans (OL) to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank, Farm Credit System institution or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed, and supplies. The loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements.⁶¹

USDA Farm Service Agency Conservation Programs

There are many programs available to farmers from the USDA Farm Service Agency that may help a community in the protection of open space and agricultural land. These include:

- Conservation Reserve Program
- Environmental Quality Incentive Program
- Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program
- Wetland Reserve Program
- Stewardship Incentive Program.

The Debt for Nature Program is available to farmers that have a FSA loan secured by real estate; according to the USDA, approximately 12 farmers in Niagara County currently participate in the program. The FSA may cancel a portion of their FSA indebtedness in exchange for a conservation contract with a term of 50, 30 or 10 years. The conservation contract is a voluntary, legal agreement that restricts the type and amount of development that may occur on portions of the landowner's property.

⁵⁹ State of New York Executive Chamber, George E. Pataki, Governor. "Governor Announces \$12 Million in Farmland Protection Grants", January 6, 2000.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafl/default.htm>

The contracts can be established on marginal cropland or other environmentally sensitive lands for conservation, recreation or wildlife purposes. By participating, landowners can reduce their FSA debt and improve financial stability. Eligible lands include:

- Wetlands;
- Highly erodible lands;
- Lands containing aquatic life, endangered species, or wildlife habitat of local, regional, or national importance;
- Lands in 100-year floodplains;
- Areas of high water quality or scenic value;
- Historic or cultural properties listed or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
- Aquifer recharge areas of local, regional, or State importance;
- Buffer zones necessary to protect proposed conservation easement areas;
- Areas within or adjacent to Federal, State, or local conservation areas.⁶²

Local Land Use Regulations

Much of the Town of Porter is zoned agriculturally. This helps the farm owner and/or operator in that land use conflicts can be minimized as the regulations consider the impact on agricultural uses. Local governments cannot pass regulations that are unreasonably restrictive of farming operations in agricultural districts, unless the public health or safety is threatened. The Department of Agriculture and Markets has the authority to determine whether local regulations unreasonably restricts farming operations in the municipality, and can issue an order requiring the local government to repeal the regulation if they so find.

Transfer of Development Rights

Many communities use the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) mechanism to steer development away from prime agricultural lands and into defined areas; this leads to a protection of the land and minimizes land use conflicts. Traditionally, the TDR defines geographic areas designated for open space protection (development rights sending areas) and higher density residential/commercial development (development rights receiving areas). This mechanism helps the community protect these key open space/agricultural areas while still allowing for development within the community.

⁶² <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/dfn01.htm>

Agricultural Agencies and Organizations

Niagara County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board

In New York State, Agricultural and Farm Protection Boards help to increase the profile of agricultural concerns at the local level. Board members provide information on environmental and open space issues as they address the real concern of agricultural land protection. In 1992, the Agricultural Protection Act changed the membership and the function of the former County Agricultural District Advisory Boards and renamed them Agricultural and Farmland Protection Boards.⁶³ The Boards promote the State's agricultural districts as a viable mechanism to improve the agricultural industry. Because the agricultural district is still voluntary, the local land use regulations are needed to complement the agricultural districts usefulness.

The Niagara County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board has completed a Farmland Protection Plan that offers recommendations on promoting agricultural industries and protecting agricultural land in the County. The Plan generally recommends the following:

- Creating a position of County Agricultural Economic Development Coordinator
- Marketing agricultural business planning, retention and expansion
- Continuing to build on the “Buy Local” campaign
- Continuing to work with the Niagara County IDA to assist with business retention and expansion
- Working with the IDA to develop policies to encourage businesses to commit to purchasing local agricultural commodities
- Encouraging farm cooperatives
- Developing an Eastern Niagara County Farmers Market
- Supporting local stands and other agri-tourism businesses
- Setting up a revolving loan fund
- Creating a cooperative food processing kitchen
- Developing a media campaign
- Improving awareness of the agricultural industry in the County
- Developing a school program to educate youth
- Educating non-farm neighbors of farming practices
- Improving consumer awareness of farming
- Providing education in the industry
- Working with the media to present an accurate image of the industry
- Providing education to local officials to promote policies that support the industry
- Allowing for creative land use regulations to protect agricultural land

⁶³ http://www.cardi.cornell.edu/research_briefs/CDR6-2.cfm

Niagara County Farm Bureau

The Niagara County Farm Bureau, Inc. is a non-governmental volunteer organization financed and controlled by member families concerned with addressing agricultural issues and formulating action to achieve economic opportunity within the farming community. Statewide, Farm Bureau has a membership of approximately 31,000 member families. Niagara County is a member of the Western New York Resource Center, which was established in 1999 by New York Farm Bureau. The WNY Resource Center, located in Batavia, serves the ten-member county Farm Bureaus in the areas of media services and issue involvement. A part time Resource Specialist and a part time assistant staff the Center. Two regional Field Advisors work in conjunction with this office. The resource center has dedicated itself to providing the media, public officials and members with current and accurate agricultural information.⁶⁴

US Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA)

The US Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency is committed to stabilizing farm income, helping farmers conserve land and water resources, providing credit to farmers and helping farm agencies recover from disasters. The USDA was reorganized in 1994 and the FSA was established. The Federal farm programs are locally administered through the FSA. When eligible, the farmers elect a 3-5 person County Committee that reviews County office operations and makes decisions on applying the programs. This approach, from the local level, allows the farmers to have more involvement in Federal actions that impact their community and their farming operations.

American Farmland Trust

American Farmland Trust (AFT) is a private, non-profit conservation organization founded in 1980 to protect the nation's agricultural resources. AFT works to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that contribute to a healthy environment. In addition to its programs of public education and technical assistance in policy development, AFT provides direct assistance to communities by managing conservation easements and other local farmland protection programs.



⁶⁴ <http://www.nyfb.org/counties/wnyctr.htm>

Cornell Cooperative Extension

The Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) helps to build partnerships among residents, municipalities and businesses. There are 412 extension educators throughout New York State; 50,000 volunteers participate in programs throughout the State. CCE is committed to maintaining strong, rural communities, advancing a clean, healthy environment, promoting attractive landscapes, assuring a safe, nutritious and abundant local food supply and supporting a thriving NYS economy.⁶⁵ The Niagara County Cooperative Extension is located in Lockport, NY. The CCE offers agricultural programs for various types of farming in Niagara County. There are four teams that offer assistance to farmers in the County: the NWNYS Dairy-Livestock Team, the Lake Ontario Fruit Team, the Lake Plains Vegetable Team and the Lake Erie Regional Grape Team. The CCE offers assistance with land use issues, taxes, farmland protection, water quality and environmental protection.

Western New York Land Conservancy

Based in East Aurora, the WNY Land Conservancy provides technical assistance to communities in managing and acquiring open space lands. They have worked with communities throughout Western New York in purchasing conservation easements on agricultural land. Two new farmland protection projects have recently been initiated in partnership with the Western New York Land Conservancy. These include the Town of Clarence Farmland Protection Project and the Chautauqua County Farmland Protection Project (Bunce Farm Application), which is a farm family-initiated application prepared by Kim and Mark Bunce and submitted through the WNYLC.⁶⁶

The Town of Marilla initiated the Marilla Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (P.A.C.E.), a \$375,000 New York State grant approved in January. Contracts have been finalized with five farmland owners in the Town with the objective of having the easements filed by the end of the year. The Conservancy and the Town of Marilla will hold approximately 307 acres of conservation easements. The Town hopes to have at least 3,000 acres under conservation easement within 10 years. Ultimately, Marilla hopes to protect up to 10,000 acres within the township.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ <http://www.cce.cornell.edu/Topic/Agriculture/index.php>

⁶⁶ <http://www.wnylc.org/news.htm#Grants>

⁶⁷ <http://www.wnylc.org/news.htm#Marilla>

6.0 Public Input

6.1 Committee Meetings

Several meetings were held throughout the planning process for the Comprehensive Plan. These meetings with the Committee offered an opportunity for them to review the information, ask for additional information or clarification and provide input for the Consultant. The meetings were held approximately every 6-8 weeks beginning in October 2003. The following summarizes the general activities at each of the meetings

- The first meeting of the Steering Committee was held on October 30, 2003. At this meeting, a Vision Session was held; a summary is included in the next section of this Chapter. Information and data was distributed to the Consultant and a comprehensive list of contacts was provided. The project schedule and scope were discussed with the Committee. The focus group attendees were also identified. The SEQRA process was discussed and initialized.
- The second meeting was held on December 11, 2003. At this meeting, the initial inventory chapters that addressed Land Use, Demographic/Housing Characteristics and Recreation/Open Space were discussed. Input was provided to the Committee. The focus groups were briefly discussed. The involved/interested parties for SEQRA were identified and the preliminary EAF discussed.
- The third meeting of the Committee was held on January 22, 2004. This meeting included a review of the Public Input (to date), Environmental Resources and Transportation/Infrastructure Analysis. The community survey was finalized with the Committee for distribution in early February. The list of involved/interested parties was finalized and comments/revisions were made to the EAF as the SEQRA process continued.
- The fourth meeting of the Committee was held on March 11, 2004. During this meeting the inventory chapters that addressed Economic and Agriculture and Community Facilities were reviewed. The results of the community survey, preliminary goals and objective and the SEQRA memo and resolution declaring lead agency were also discussed and feedback obtained from the Committee.
- A final Committee meeting was held on June 10, 2004 to review the final draft and discuss the findings of the public input session. Final revisions and changes were offered and made during this meeting. The DGEIS was discussed and is to be distributed to further the SEQRA process that would be completed before adoption.

6.2 Vision Session Summary

A vision session was held on October 30, 2003 with the Steering Committee for the Town Comprehensive Plan to identify the strengths and constraints within Porter. The vision session included an input session that was facilitated by the Consultant. The following is a summary of all the statements that were made and recorded at the meeting; these are the perceptions and opinions of those in attendance and the statements may not reflect the majority opinion or perception. The following summarizes the input and discussion of the Vision Session:

What are the top Strengths of the Town of Porter

The top three from the group include:

1. Character/Quality of Life
2. Waterfront/Natural Resources
3. History

How does the Town capitalize on the first strength? What would have to change to better utilize this strength? **CHARACTER/QUALITY OF LIFE**

- Potential to Grow through Agricultural Lands and Proximity to Canada
- Niagara-on-the-Lake type area – smaller scale
- Continue to provide resources – advertising, publication – promotion
- Strengthen the quality
- Get the Word Out – We have a good quality of life
- We need to promote ourselves
- Sunsets at Fort Niagara
- Enforcement of Land Use Regulations
- Preserve Open Land
- Accessible Open Space
- Town waterfront park – for Residents
- Have accessible waterfront – State, Fort Niagara Association – Town does not have to own for people to access water
- Quality of Life is appreciated by residents
- Identify and develop asset of “quality of life”
- What is quality of life
- Town becoming more elderly and affluent – must be addressed
- Sense that element that does not want change – staying the same addresses some desire – some discouragement when change occurs
- Business Association website – Village website – Town website – possible to merge/work together
- Promote Village and Town

- Protect while attracting new people
- Change – may lose – may want to preserve – change has to be done carefully – or lose quality of life that is treasured
- Have to Plan – Cannot close the door
- Negative politics are perceived – may not be what happens
- Educate and Inform the public
- Young people find it dreary and cold
- Better capitalize – update plan
- Public Input
- Organize Planning Effort around goal
- Support of the People
- Demand for Elderly Housing – downsized – Village – only conceptual
- Smaller lots to help people downsize – patio homes, zero lot lines
- Need investors

How does the Town capitalize on the second strength? What would have to change to better utilize this strength?

WATERFRONT

- We have to identify what is special about the waterfront
- We have to inventory the natural resources
- Eco-friendly ways to attract
- We do not capitalize on the waterfront
- We need access – pathway along River Road – visual access to waterfront - ultimately try to preserve – near without stifling development
- Town has willingly explored developing waterfront – marinas, ferries – water related uses
- Fort Niagara – limited access – have to pay and times are limited
- Have to be more flexible – for waterfront development – fast ferry – doors closed – people do not want to even discuss
- Have to look at all the possibilities
- Meet with the state parks officials – encourage them to cooperate to improve access, vistas
- Stairway to water's edge in State Park – boardwalk – encourage fishing, hiking, picnicking
- Village has boat ramp and one other accessible area – to waterfront – only Village residents use – no signage and others are not encouraged to use – services Yacht Club – encourage Village to improve
- Campsite is not used by residents – if not on waterfront, access is limited
- River is underutilized
- Village talks of doing more along River

- Purchase land with goals – land use – do not miss out on opportunities that are presented to the Town
- Investigate as land becomes available
- Riverwalk should continue toward lake
- People are a resource and there needs to be more done to keep people here - economy
- Senior housing
- Town needs own waterfront
- Sailing community operates independently from the community – but also enhances
- Ferry to Niagara-on-the-Lake – used to exist – asset – would like to see it reinstated
- Busy fishing component – activity that is attractive – can't eat the fish – water is polluted
- Water quality appears to be better
- Emphasis on clean water for swimming, fishing

How does the Town capitalize on the third strength? What would have to change to better utilize this strength?

HISTORY

- Improve community ties with Old Fort Niagara Association (different from the Park)
- Historic markers along River Road – should be maintained and visible
- Kiosks in the Village – historical roots
- Seaway Trail kiosks
- Brochures on history
- See signs – Historic Niagara Trail – Brown Trail
- Historic buildings – Fort Niagara – watch that they do not fall apart
- Vital to help tourism industry – conference center, inn – Fort Niagara
- Soccer tournaments – from around the State – Fort Niagara buildings used to house teams in old barracks, etc.
- Tournaments from throughout the Country – Soccer
- Great attraction – some do not want to come back – entry fee in to the Park
- Old Fort Niagara – with Ransomville – festivals, historic house tours, maintain, grants
- Tours from Falls – collaborate with Lewiston – sell the area
- Town promotes Old Fort Niagara – do not have anything to keep the people here
- Lewiston – sidewalks – within Village – Youngstown could learn from this – try to enhance the Village and thus the Town (tourism)
- Signage back to the Village from the Fort should be improved

- Association – does a great job
- Other historical aspects – are not capitalized upon – promote with the historic Village – more history than the Old Fort – other history
- Tie to soccer – link history with other activities
- Ransomville – historic structures
- Identify resources and tie to other aspects of the Town (underground railroad/agricultural) – good opportunities – where are these points
- Growing museum in the Town – active historic society
- Interesting programs – good turn out
- Maintain old buildings – policies and land use regulations
- Cold storage building in the Village – needs preservation and refurbishing
- Farmland protection – grants to preserve land forever for agricultural purposes
- Taped stories of the area
- Promotion of the resources, walking tours
- Historic museum – advertising and promotion – Youngstown and Ransomville

What are the top Constraints in the Town of Porter

The top three from the group include:

1. Attitude of People
2. CWM
3. Declining Agricultural Land

What would have to change to minimize or eliminate the first constraint? Can this constraint be turned into an asset? How?

ATTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE

- Try to build on successes
- Start small and build – pathway along the River – people love it!
- Sense of success
- Point to other communities
- Gather facts and educate the public – educated public makes informed decisions
- Asset if citizens know – positive change
- Positive promotion of one change and a demonstration – support, united front
- Small successes – united, vocal
- Joe Davis – wasted land and underutilized
- Accentuate the positive

- Turn this into an asset – list the good things and improve on them and promote them
- Enhance Village and Hamlet – put out flowers – attractive
- Flood with flowers
- Pride in the area – improvements
- Public awareness programs – projects, committees, planting
- Public involvement
- Town newspaper
- Education
- Planning
- Involvement
- Good people here – we need to encourage them and educate about the issues
- Hold government representatives responsible

What would have to change to minimize or eliminate the second constraint?

Can this constraint be turned into an asset? How?

CWM

- They are here and not leaving
- Limit their growth – size and types of things they handle
- Possibly determine ways to better utilize revenues – not really to keep taxes lower – targeted uses – to stimulate things happening
- Public policy – environmental justice – relationship
- Can be turned into an asset – equitable, safe
- Land is useless for anything else – have to know this – need understanding of the history of the site – land is polluted
- Happened before CWM – no other use
- Need partnerships – positive
- Would like to see closure in a certain period of time
- Hazardous waste on top of hazardous waste
- Trucks running by high school
- Alternative technologies
- Why is the waste put here
- Only one in the northeast – it's all coming here
- We don't need more
- Do not need money from them
- Economically viable without them
- Attempt to limit expansion
- Could have another 40 years if they expand
- Federal government – responsibility
- How to replace lost revenue – think about it now – will not be here forever

- Competent people in community that can help
- Know what is there – know it needs to be limited
- Work to bring in resources – legal, education – put a stop to it
- Better ways of handling waste

What would have to change to minimize or eliminate the third constraint?

Can this constraint be turned into an asset? How?

DECLINING AGRICULTURAL LAND

- Town has limited control
- Town could grow and increase tax base – if done to not cause service costs – control sprawl – keeps Town costs down and protects agriculture
- Short, immediate – niche markets – long term answers harder
- Equitable wage scales
- Tax breaks for farmers – but Town is not in control
- Uncertainty of markets – new products to grow – wine, tours
- Town products
- Cold Storage – problems with the building – take history and play with it – how can this be used – farm market, antiques, artists
- Vision on the part of the people
- Promote tender fruit in the area
- Apple Festival – promote Town
- Organize farmers
- Connect with Cornell
- Buy Local
- Grants, programs, organics, buy locals
- Can we really save it
- Promote apples
- Speakers – grants, programs to support farmers – tap in to it
- Smart growth – zoning
- Farmers – help merchandising
- Think out of the box – programs, markets

The Town of Porter recently completed a project with the University at Buffalo. The project identified ways the Town can improve on the future. If anything was possible, and there were no constraints, what is your personal ideal future for the Town of Porter?

- Revised Agricultural
- Vibrant Eco-Tourism
- Housing for all
- Diverse Viable Agricultural Community
- Capitalize on linking waterfront, history, tourism
- Diverse housing
- Parks, Recreation, Residential – all tied together
- Easy access to water, vista
- Walkways
- History tied to community today – basis of conversations – flyers
- Small retail stores – locally made products
- Artist – scenes
- Tommy's Basil - Porter's Pesto
- Housing for all Ages
- CWM Gone
- Ransomville improved – stronger community
- CWM Gone
- Niagara-on-the-Lake Character
- Patio Homes – Seniors – walking distance
- Tourists – flower lined streets
- Gateway to Canada – ferry service
- Regionalism – stronger tie with Niagara Falls/Tourism
- Job Markets
- Developed Waterfront
- CWM Gone
- High quality clustered housing
- Apples
- Promote beauty of the area
- Link the two sides of the Town – One governing body – consolidate all services – dissolve the Village
- Comprehensive Plan that guides residential growth – benefit of all and services
- Allow for the continuation of farming
- Allow for growth and revitalization of farming
- Suitable areas for commercial and industrial
- Better promotion of the area
- David Rosenwasser – Regional Tourism development
- Bring in high-tech industry

What issues, large or small, do you think we should be aware of as we complete the Town of Porter Comprehensive Plan?

- Pressure to Close Robert Moses Parkway would be an issue – hurt this entire area
- There is a strong divide – Ransomville and Youngstown - Youngstown is independent – no cohesion
- Fast ferry
- Magna and land purchases (800 acres – not contiguous) – what are their plans – what is their history – racetrack, slots, amusement, concert hall
- Regional development – New York State lands through eminent domain – to the Seneca Nation
- Pockets of poverty – need to be addressed – services
- Increasing division – people left behind

6.3 Focus Group Sessions

Focus group sessions were held in the Town of Porter to enable special interest groups and agencies to provide input into the Comprehensive Plan. The focus groups were conducted on Tuesday, December 2, 2003 at Town Hall. The sessions included a Business/Agricultural, Elected/Appointed Official and Recreation/Open Space/Natural Resource Focus Group. The following is a summary of all the statements that were made and recorded at the meeting; these are the perceptions and opinions of those in attendance and the statements may not reflect the majority opinion or perception. The following summarizes the comments and discussion of the sessions.

Business/Agricultural Session

Attendees: Robert Emerson, Old Fort Niagara Historic Site
Amy Fisk, Niagara County Planning and NCIDA
Ken Gruelick, Wilson Realty
Ron Johnston, Restaurant Operator
Sue McNaughton, Business Association/Restore Main Street
Dick Sturges, Waste Management CWM
Tom Tower, Tom Towers Fruit and Vegetable

List some of the unique assets that make Porter an attractive place to locate a business.

- Safe
- Climate (mild and temperate – welcoming year round)
- Historic nature (Fort Niagara)
- On the Seaway Trail (scenic)
- Community feel
- Climate is much more mild then the rest of Western New York
- Lakefront and riverfront is a unique attribute
- Proximity to Buffalo and Niagara Falls (as well as Canada)
- Proximity to the different universities (UB, Niagara, etc.)
- Skilled workforce
- Proximity to an international border
- Waterfronts (could use more advertising and development)
- Community character
- Agricultural assets
- Authentic historic character
- Quality-of-life is hard to match
- Proximity to Buffalo and all of the City's amenities
- Lack of traffic
- Live in small town but close to urban "benefits"
- Comfortable to raise a family here
- Friendly neighborhoods and neighborhood organizations
- School system is excellent

- Development of the fishery has been important
- Upscale customer base (appreciative)
- Readily accessible to larger customer base (metro areas, etc.)
- Very close to a lot of people
- Good road system
- Good weather for growing fruits and vegetables
- Community that supports small-town agriculture
- French-European model of agriculture (fruit and veggies should come from the guy down the road!)
- Small town atmosphere of Youngstown
- Sailing community – assets with taking advantage of the sailing community
- Sport fishing business
- Residential areas still have room for growth in the Town (no shortage of land)
- We are a growing community

List your Top Business Issue in the Town of Porter (e.g. tourism development, protection of agricultural land, small business development)

- Reputation of being a chemical waste site (negative image)
- Avoidance of blunders in land use planning in response to specific projects (spot zoning, etc.)
- Create a Central Business District in the Town
- Tourism development - sustainable
- Historic preservation
- Developing and promoting some of the areas unique features
- Public perception of the chemical waste site
- Tourism development leads to small business development which incorporates agricultural protection (need a plan that addresses everything and promotes and attracts tourists – a marketing brochure that defines who the community is)
- Lack of a compact plan that encourages tourism development
- Tend to gravitate to the negative issues instead of promoting the positive

What can you do to help resolve the issue?

- Fort needs to collaborate better with other regional attractions
- Fort needs to come up with better products
- Fort needs to extend the stay of visitors into Porter/Youngstown/Lewiston by promoting information in an attractive manner – once a visitor is captured we do not do a good job at keeping people here
- Need to think regionally and comprehensively – market as the “Lower Niagara Region”
- Expand marketing on the Internet
- Added value – enhance collaborative efforts
- CWM needs to be more active in local grassroots efforts – provide information on the business so people understand what is really happening at the site
- Put a positive spin on CWM – explain the technology and truth about the business
- CWM could do a public relations campaign to educate the public and local residents and businesses
- CWM has an open house to show the public what really happens at the site

What can the Town do to help resolve the issue?

- Need better signage to sites and features (PA has a good sign system)
- Need to market and promote the Town better
- Develop a brochure summarizing the features in Porter
- Town does a marketing initiative with Lewiston – should build and expand on that
- Town government cooperates with local attractions to improve the “products” – should keep that relationship strong
- Need definitive/positive information on issues such as safety, CWM, etc.
- Media focuses on the negative so Town needs to focus on spreading the positive
- Town does a lot of things right – should just continue and expand the cooperative efforts
- Town should develop a ferry across the river

What role does agriculture play in the current business climate? What role should it have?

- Farm Theme Park
- Develop a family oriented agricultural themed center
- Corn maze
- Minor role in the Town, but a crucial role
- Very silent, but important part of the Town
- Key is to try to build the agricultural aspect of the community into tourism development – also a quality of life issue for new residents
- Agricultural is part of our character- very important
- Contributes to green space which is critical to the Town's character
- Not seen as the main industry – agriculture is underplayed and people don't realize how important it is
- Agriculture should be a higher priority
- Could be an important component for tourism development – encourage people to shop at a Farmers Market instead of Tops or Wegmans

What issues should the Comprehensive Plan address to ensure the healthy development of business in the Town of Porter?

- Residents may not want all the businesses
- Someone wanted to do a Renaissance Fair, but no one wanted the crowds and traffic on their roads
- People love the nice, quiet community – people don't understand they need the business aspect to maintain their high standard of living and quality of life
- Lots of empty retail in Youngstown
- Don't have the foot traffic because we are not on the way to anywhere – we are a destination and not a pass-through community
- Need more year round visitors
- Need to build off the Fort more
- People do not want another Niagara-on-the-Lake (or Lewiston for that matter)
- Re-development of brownfield sites (there are a few old gas station and retail)
- Need more infill development

Elected/Appointed Officials Session

Attendees: Scott Hillman, Town DPW
Phila Ibaugh, Director Ransomville Library
John MacArthur, Town Clerk
Valerie Pillo, Francine Delmonte's Office
Don Rappold, Lewiston Porter Asst. School Superintendent
Neil Riordan, Mayor of Youngstown
George Spira, Chairperson – Town Planning Board
Whitney VanTine, Lewiston-Porter School Superintendent
Karen Weiland-Schmidt, Town Assessor
Larry White, Town Council – elect
Merton Wiepert, Town of Porter Supervisor

How would you describe your vision for the Town of Porter?

- Great place to live, a lot of potential
- Good weather balance
- Good mix of residential and businesses
- Full of great people
- Great place to live and raise a family
- No negatives – safe
- A lot of civic activity and community pride
- Almost an escape from the average life
- Agricultural opportunities
- Waterfront potentials and activities
- Great place for families
- Great features – Fort Niagara, the river, farming
- Great school systems and libraries
- Good community facilities
- Agriculture
- Place to live, work and play
- We are a destination place – you come here because you want to – need to get more people here and show off all the unique attributes
- Great community with a lot of potential
- Bordered by river, lake and Canada
- Need to encourage more people to come here
- Vision is to try develop features that will bring people here to visit
- Porter should continue as a recreation community
- Build more residential for a variety of users
- Need more public waterfront lands to increase access opportunities
- Foster further growth with respect to families coming into the District – focus on attracting more families
- Continue to support small businesses
- Develop while considering natural features and character of the Town
- School system is one of the best school districts in western New York

- Build a bridge between the school and the Towns and Villages – the school campus is an island unto itself
- Installation of sewers will allow for more growth – lots of unused farmland is available
- Residents need more access to the lake

What are some of challenges facing the Town as growth occurs?

- If we want to grow, we need sewers
- Need to encourage tourism
- Costly to purchase and develop lakefront property (town park/open land)
- Aging population
- Lack of jobs for young people
- Town needs to work with surrounding communities
- Meeting the opposition – anytime a project is mentioned the residents are automatically against it – how to keep things the same
- Public relations is necessary
- Meeting growth and looking at the tax base
- Commercial development is good for taxes
- Getting average person involved in the planning process
- Keeping the desirable qualities while allowing for growth
- Lack of jobs
- Shrinking tax base
- Lots of public opposition for growth-related projects
- People are opposed to change in this area
- Example of Renaissance Festival
- Children are all moving away because of the lack of jobs
- Send flyers to reach people and keep them educated about activities
- Limited housing developments for seniors
- Lack of industry throughout the entire County
- Improve marketability – need more business property
- Seasonal activity – completely dependent on spring/summer activities
- Fishing is vastly overlooked here
- Fishing tournaments to bring families into the area (capitalize on this tourism area)
- Lack of industries coupled with the high taxes is the biggest problem
- Continuing infrastructure improvements
- Sewer improvements funded by NYS will be dried up after grant money is gone
- People want sewers, but they don't want to pay for them
- People don't want to pay taxes
- Providing essential services
- Opposition from residents – they don't want any change – we need change to have growth
- Loss of manufacturing and jobs – cannot keep younger people here
- Need senior housing – we don't have it here

- Public relations – as a region we do not do a very good job at telling the story of the region
- We do not have a very large tax base
- Need a stronger residential base to spread out the taxes
- Waterfront area would benefit from more dockage and access opportunities for residents and visitors
- Fishing and sailing attracts people (could be year-round)
- People need to hear the whole story
- Greatest challenge for schools is to prepare community to meet the changes and challenges of the world
- Increase tax base while maintaining pristine image
- Lake Ontario Ordinance is a problem
- Waste site is a concern for many people – it's a great tax revenue for the Town though
- Job ratio of municipal verse private industry in the Town

Is Regionalism an important aspect of Porter's future?

- Absolutely – all entities must work collaboratively and cooperatively
- “Turf” issues need to be pushed aside
- Must look at big picture, not individuals
- Consolidation is going to be important in the future
- Less layers of government – consolidation is going to key
- Regionalism is going to be critical
- Lew-Port shares many things with other school districts – could not exist as is without the regional cooperation
- Regionalism has worked in the area of Public Works between the Towns and Villages – have done it without any bureaucracy – shared marketing efforts and eliminating duplication of purchasing, etc.
- Inevitably we need to start consolidating goods and services
- Assessment function is beginning to be consolidated
- Towns have begun to merge their assessment rules into one
- County-wide assessing may be something that is considered in the future
- Need more marketing for the area
- DPW – beg, borrow and steal from all our neighbors – we could not do it without our neighbors
- We work with surrounding communities – “scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours”

How can the Comprehensive Plan address these challenges and use these assets?

- Should have a mission statement – not sure the community has identified its vision and mission for 5, 10, 15 years from now
- Strategic Plan needed to achieve the vision and mission of the Town
- What do we want to look like?
- We must have the political resolve to follow through with the projects, etc.
- Must re-zone to accommodate specific uses, such as higher density housing
- Market the Comprehensive Plan – show the before and after – here is where we are, here is where we can be
- The Plan will be an opportunity to show a mix of development types and how the community should ideally evolve
- Clarify potentials and issues for the community
- Must address the few commercial areas in the Town
- Market the inventory – what is the real estate – show the advantages
- Need an Architectural Review Board and/or design standards to create guidelines for what future developments should/could look like
- Work with developers so that the desired theme is integrated into new developments
- Need to market young families

Recreation/Open Space/Natural Resource Session

Attendees: Mel Baker, Niagara Frontier Country Club
William Broderick, WNY Land Conservancy
Dave Clark, Park Manager – Fort Niagara State Park
Andy Giarrizzo, Landscape Architect – New York State Parks
Charles Lamb, Sierra Club
Bill McKeever, Seaway Trail and Buffalo Audubon

How would you describe your vision for the Town of Porter?

- Good zoning to limit sprawl – no Sheridan Drive
- End to toxic waste dumping in the Town (Chemical Waste Management)
- Tourist-friendly, environmentally safe and attractive Town
- End to hazardous waste transport and storage in the entire County
- Residents need to be better protected with respect to land use, water use and environmental issues (air quality, etc.)
- Lots of enhanced leisure time potentials
- Natural uses are altered with demise of farms, changes the make-up of the wildlife
- Town of Porter has a “lands end” quality
- Waterfront, natural resources, scenery are bountiful
- Quality of Villages – personifies the Town
- Romantic reputation of small town America
- CWM is not as problematic as people think – it is a limited land use

- Lack of sprawl is ideal – don't want to see spread out land uses
- Zoning is important
- In a way, this is a retirement community
- Low crime, nice area
- Community services are adequate
- More tourism publicity and facilities to accommodate additional tourism
- More of a developed downtown Youngstown
- Zoning is most critical to prevent sprawl, limit industry, etc.
- Many opportunities – people need to define what they want the community to become – could become an exclusive community

What are some of challenges facing the Town relating to recreation, open space and natural resources?

- Landfill
- The way business is done
- Competing values of special interest groups vying to use the same facilities (hunters verse anti-hunting groups, trails used by a number of incompatible uses such as horse, snowmobiles, etc.)
- Finding a balance for the various recreational uses
- Balance economic growth with more environmentally sound principles
- Chemical Waste Management is dangerous and not well maintained or monitored well – its near the school and the dumping may be hazardous to the health of residents
- CWM is a reason that people do not move here
- Town has become dependent on CWM for tax money
- Political unawareness
- Sign ordinance would be beneficial
- Parkway is so much more attractive on the other side of the river (Canada to Niagara-on-the-Lake)
- Areas that were farming are no longer because of competition – land becomes available to developers and entire landscape is changed
- Value of natural resources are taken for granted
- No new areas for recreation have been designated in over forty years
- No one has planned for any additional recreation opportunities in the Town
- Town has begun to spread out
- Residential development does not improve the tax base – makes government more expensive
- Town needs more access to the water, very few boat ramps
- Scenic lands and natural lands need to be preserved and promoted
- Waterfront access – you can not say enough – important to residents and visitors
- Preserving scenic vistas – ties into issues of sprawl and promotion of smart growth policies

What are the greatest assets relating to recreation, open space and natural resources in the Town of Porter?

- Waterfront
- State Parks – Fort Niagara, Joe Davis State Park
- Lack of development
- Development comes with many negatives
- Parkways
- Housing costs are really much lower than other parts of the country
- Safe
- Open and friendly people
- People are more open and less judgmental
- Great Lake basin area is one of the best farming areas around
- Ideal for fruit crops, vineyards, etc.
- Agricultural tax base is good for the community, as is open space and recreational lands
- Water resources – the lake and the river – limited due to winter but there is still a good six months of weather that can take advantage of the water
- Need a fishery
- History (Fort Niagara)
- Any of the cultural attractions along the Parkway
- Scenic Byway (Seaway Trail)
- Birds of Prey Natural Center at Joe Davis State Park
- North Atlantic Flyway (important bird area) - Times Beach in Buffalo
- Niagara River is one of the best places in the world to see gulls in the winter

How can the Comprehensive Plan address these challenges and use these assets?

- Enacted and enforced – this will be key to implementation
- Plan should include everything that we talked about
- Encourage old-fashioned cluster development around established nodes
- Create a PDR program for open space preservation, etc.
- Limit sewer expansion
- Create farm tax incentives
- Prohibit exploitation of land uses (ex. Horse stables)
- Scenic overlay
- Design guidelines are necessary
- Identify conservation and preservation opportunities
- Purchase of land for open space or recreation development by the Town
- Limit population growth
- Sharing of resources with surrounding communities
- Regionalism – develop in policies
- Consolidation and sharing of services is essential
- Attorney general has guidelines promoting consolidation and sharing of services

6.4 Community Survey

A Comprehensive Plan would not be a “comprehensive” document without the input of landowners and renters in the Town of Porter. The participation of residents in the Plan is important because the Town leaders will make decisions based upon the Plan; this will have a direct effect on the lives of the people that live in Porter. In addition, the public can provide pertinent information and ideas on numerous issues.

The Village of Youngstown was included in the survey as part of the “survey population”. The Village residents, as Town residents also, were included because they, too, have an interest in the future of the Town and policies that are implemented regarding Town-wide facilities and services. While the Village residents also have access to amenities that are not available for those within the Town (e.g. Village sewer or water), they pay Town taxes and their inclusion in the survey was imperative.

One way to ensure that a true cross-section of residents is reached and that all voices are heard is to implement a random community survey. Statistics show that there are ways to distribute or survey a sample of the entire population and be fairly confident that the sample results would be similar to the results obtained if the entire population were surveyed. The Town of Porter population is approximately 6,920 people and the Village population is 1,957. A sample of this population (601 residents) was surveyed to find out their opinions on the various aspects of living in the Town.

This sample size allows for a 95% confidence interval $\pm 4\%$.⁶⁸ While sampling error is always possible, a sample size of 601 was chosen to increase the confidence in the results and decrease the amount of sampling error in the results of the survey.

In February 2004, a random community survey was distributed to residents in the Town of Porter; this included residents in the Village of Youngstown. The survey was designed to be simple to understand and answer to allow residents to finish the survey in 10-15 minutes and encourage their participation. For those interested in providing additional information, additional space was included for them to write in comments. The survey package mailed included a stamped, self-addressed return envelope to further encourage residents to answer and mail back the survey. Residents were randomly selected from the Town’s tax roles; renter surveys were hand-delivered to various rental properties as identified by the Town of Porter.

⁶⁸ Levin, Jack and James Alan Fox. Elementary Statistics in Social Research: 5th Edition. 1991.

A total of 601 surveys were distributed. Of these, 489 (81%) were distributed to owners to correspond with the percentage of owners in the Town. 19% or 112 surveys, were distributed to renters. A total of 268 surveys were returned to the Consultants office by the deadline of February 24, 2004; this is a survey response rate of approximately 45%. For a random survey to be considered statistically significant, a response rate of only 15 to 20% is required. The response rate for this survey exceeds that necessary for the survey to be considered statistically significant. This would infer that the results of the survey represent the general sentiment of the residents within the Town of Porter.

Approximately 51% of the respondents were in households of 2 people and 33% were in households of 3-5 people. The highest percentage of respondents were over 60 (37%) and the second highest were between 51-60. 90% of the survey respondents were homeowners and 10% were renters. Over 64% have been in the Town for over 15 years. The surveys were returned from various parts of the Town including 36% from the Village, 17% from Ransomville, 8% from along the River, 15% from along the Lake and 24% from other parts of the Town. An overview of the survey respondents includes the following:

Table 6-1 General Survey Respondent Characteristics
Town of Porter

How many people in your household?					
1		2		3-5	
13.9%		51.1%		32.7%	
6 plus				2.3%	
What is Your Age?					
18-21		21-30		31-40	
0.4%		3.0%		12.5%	
41-50		51-60		Over 60	
20.0%		27.2%		37.0%	
Do you own your home?					
Own			Rent		
90.6%			9.4%		
How long have you lived in the Town?					
0-2 years		3-5 years		6-10 years	
7.5%		9.0%		8.6%	
11-15 years		Over 15 years			
10.5%		64.3%			
Please Indicate Where You Live					
Village of Youngstown		Ransomville		Along River	
36.4%		17.0%		7.6%	
Along Lake		Other Location in the Town			
14.8%		24.2%			

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

The survey was separated into several sections to correspond with the inventory chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. These include:

- Community Design
- Community and Governmental Services
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Recreational Services
- Environment
- Economic and Business Services
- Growth and Development

The following summarizes the results of the survey in each of these sections. In each of these questions, the respondent was asked to check a number (from 1-5) that corresponded with their opinion. An answer of 1 would indicate strongly agreeing while a five would indicate strongly disagreeing.

Community Design

Several questions were asked about the Town of Porter's community design. When asked if the Town of Porter was a good place to live 61% strongly agreed and 36% agreed. The rural character should be complemented in future development according to over 90% of respondents (those that strongly agreed and agreed). The Town should promote mixed-use development around the Village and Hamlet of Ransomville according to 67% of residents answering the survey. Over 90% of respondents believe the lakefront is an important resource that should be accessible by all residents. Over 85% believe the history should be an important consideration for any future decisions.

Table 6-2 Community Design Survey Results

Town of Porter

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Town of Porter is a good place to live and raise a family				
61.0%	36.3%	1.1%	1.5%	0.0%
I like the rural character of Porter and future development should complement this character				
44.4%	45.9%	4.2%	5.0%	0.4%
The Town of Porter should promote mixed-use development around the Village of Youngstown and Ransomville Hamlet				
18.4%	48.9%	13.2%	16.5%	3.0%
Our lakefront is an important resource that should be accessible by all residents				
53.4%	37.4%	3.4%	4.2%	1.5%
The history of Porter should be an important consideration for any future decisions				
42.6%	42.6%	10.3%	4.2%	0.4%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Of those that strongly agree that lakefront access is important, 38% of respondents are from the Village, 18% of respondents are from Ransomville and 28% of respondents are from other parts of the Town. Of those that strongly disagree, 50% of respondents live along the Lake, 25% live in the Village and 15% live in other parts of the Town.

Table 6-3 Lakefront Access Importance

By Place of Residence

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Village of Youngstown	38%	35%	44%	18%	25%
Ransomville	18%	18%	0%	18%	0%
Along River	7%	6%	11%	9%	0%
Along Lake	9%	19%	22%	45%	50%
Other Location in Porter	28%	23%	22%	9%	25%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Community and Government Service

When asked if the police protection was excellent, 68% strongly agreed and agreed. The fire and emergency services are excellent according to over 87% of respondents. 95% believe that basic services (snowplowing, road maintenance, etc.) are met. According to 39%, the Town should consider expanding sewer and water services; 40% of respondents had no opinion on this question. According to 25% of respondents, they would be willing to pay more taxes for additional services while 54% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. The schools in Porter are outstanding according to 65% of respondents; 83% of respondents were in the Lewiston-Porter School District while 17% were in the Wilson School District.

Table 6-4 Community and Government Services

Town of Porter

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
We have excellent police protection in the Town of Porter				
15.2%	53.8%	19.7%	8.7%	2.7%
Our fire protection and emergency rescue services are excellent in Porter				
41.2%	45.8%	10.7%	1.9%	0.4%
My basic needs – for example, snow plowing or road maintenance – are met by the Town of Porter				
44.2%	50.6%	1.9%	1.9%	1.5%
The Town of Porter should consider expanding sewer and water services into Ransomville				
16.3%	23.5%	40.9%	13.3%	6.1%
I would be willing to pay more for additional services provided by the Town				
4.2%	22.6%	19.2%	32.6%	21.5%
The schools in Porter are outstanding and add to the quality of life in our Town				
24.4%	40.1%	14.5%	17.6%	3.4%
In which school district do you live?				
Lewiston-Porter		Wilson		Other
82.3%		17.7%		0.0%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

68% of respondents that strongly agree that the schools are outstanding are from the Lewiston-Porter District. Of those that strongly disagree, all were from the Lewiston-Porter School District; this is less than 4% of all responses to the question.

Table 6-5 Outstanding Schools

By School District

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Lewiston Porter	68%	84%	82%	95%	100%
Wilson	32%	16%	18%	5%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Land Use

Several questions on land use were asked on the survey for the Town of Porter. Over 70% of respondents believed that an updated zoning ordinance was needed to minimize potential land use conflicts in the Town. Over 70% also indicated that the appearance of new development should be better regulated. Historic preservation is an important issue that should be included in land use regulations according to 87% of respondents. A variety of housing types are needed according to 67% of survey respondents. Season homes should not be promoted according to 42% of respondents and 43% do not believe that Porter should be promoted as a community for second homes. Approximately 27% of respondents agreed with these statements. Respondents were split on whether Magna's plans should be further explored. (38% agreed while 47% disagreed).

Table 6-6 Land Use

Town of Porter

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
We need an updated zoning ordinance in the Town of Porter to minimize potential land use conflicts				
26.3%	45.1%	23.3%	3.8%	1.5%
The appearance of new development – residential, commercial, light industrial – should be better regulated				
28.9%	42.2%	16.7%	10.3%	1.9%
Historic Preservation is an important issue and should be included in our land use regulations				
36.9%	51.3%	5.7%	6.1%	0.0%
We should offer a variety of housing types (single family, patio homes, apartments) within the Town of Porter				
22.1%	44.2%	13.5%	14.2%	6.0%
We should promote more seasonal homes in Porter				
6.0%	19.2%	33.2%	31.3%	10.2%
We should promote Porter as a community for second homes				
6.5%	21.3%	28.9%	31.2%	12.2%
Magna's plans for a racetrack/slot casino/amusement park and concert hall is a good idea and we should promote it further				
17.7%	21.4%	12.0%	22.9%	25.9%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Of those that strongly agree that Magna's plans should be further promoted, 39% are from the Village, 20% are from Ransomville and 24% are from other areas of the Town. 35% of those that disagree are from the Village and 31% from other parts of the Town.

Table 6-7 Support and Promote Magna's Plans
By Place of Residence

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Village of Youngstown	39%	30%	38%	41%	35%
Ransomville	20%	20%	19%	18%	12%
Along River	9%	5%	9%	10%	6%
Along Lake	9%	20%	13%	13%	16%
Other Location in Porter	24%	25%	22%	18%	31%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Transportation

Transportation issues in Porter were addressed in the survey. Approximately 47% agreed that the Robert Moses Parkway would be better used to include other modes of transportation. The bicycle trail along the Parkway should be extended into the Town of Porter according to 75% of survey respondents. A network of trails that link parks, open space and the waterfront should be developed according to 77% of survey respondents. According to 55% of respondents, better signage is needed along the Parkway to direct tourists into Porter. Public transportation is needed between Porter and major urban areas according to 48% of respondents; approximately 25% disagreed. Promoting and developing a fast ferry to Toronto is important according to 51% of respondents; 28% disagreed. Approximately 41% of respondents travel less than 15 minutes to work, 32% travel 15-30 minutes and 20% travel between 30-45 minutes.

Table 6-8 Transportation

Town of Porter

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Robert Moses Parkway corridor could be better utilized in the Town of Porter to include other modes of transportation				
17.1%	29.2%	17.6%	24.5%	11.6%
The bicycle trail along the Parkway should be extended into the Town of Porter				
28.7%	46.8%	10.2%	10.9%	3.4%
Porter should develop a network of trails (both pedestrian and cycling) that link the parks, open spaces and waterfront				
31.2%	46.8%	11.0%	7.8%	3.2%
Better signage is needed along the Parkway to direct tourists to the Town of Porter				
12.6%	42.5%	26.1%	16.9%	1.9%
There is a need for public transportation in Porter to the major urban areas				
14.3%	34.0%	27.2%	19.6%	4.9%
We should promote and develop a fast ferry to Toronto				
19.5%	32.8%	18.7%	14.5%	14.5%
What is your travel time to Work?				
0-15 min	15-30 min	30-45 min	45-60 min	60+ min
41.2%	32.4%	20.1%	4.9%	1.5%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

When asked where they worked, 21% of respondents indicated they are retired. The highest percentage of respondents indicated they worked in Niagara Falls. The next highest percentages included Lewiston (9%), Youngstown, Lockport and Porter (7%), Buffalo (6%), Ransomville, Tonawanda, Sanborn and Amherst (3%), Wilson, Niagara County, Home, Canada (1%) and Cheektowaga, Clarence, Depew, Kenmore, Orchard Park and Williamsville (under 1%).

Of those that strongly agree that the ferry should be further promoted, 47% are from the Village, 18% from other places in the Town and 16% from Ransomville. Of those that strongly disagree, 32% are from other places in the Town, 29% are from the Village and 21% live along the Lake.

Table 6-9 Promote Ferry

By Place of Residence

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Village of Youngstown	47%	41%	27%	32%	29%
Ransomville	16%	16%	27%	16%	11%
Along River	14%	1%	12%	3%	8%
Along Lake	4%	16%	12%	22%	21%
Other Place in Porter	18%	25%	22%	27%	32%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Recreational Services

48% of survey respondents do not agree that there is a need for more Town parks in Porter; 27% agreed with this statement. According to 67% of residents, more waterfront access should be established for Town residents; 58% believe that a waterfront park should be developed. Cultural resources should be promoted according to over 66% of respondents to the survey. Porter and the State should promote the State parks according to 67% of survey respondents. Better facilities to accommodate sport fishing potentials should be developed according to 55% of respondents. Almost 40% of survey respondents believe that birding is important to Porter and should be promoted. Recreational programs are needed for teens according to 60% of residents and more senior programs are needed according to 47% of respondents. Only 35% of respondents would be willing to pay more taxes for recreational services, while 47% would not be willing.

Table 6-10 Recreational Services

Town of Porter

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There is a need for more Town parks in Porter				
5.7%	22.6%	22.6%	36.4%	12.6%
More waterfront access should be established for Town residents				
20.5%	47.5%	14.1%	12.9%	4.9%
Porter should develop a waterfront Park				
20.8%	37.5%	16.6%	18.1%	6.9%
Our cultural resources should be better promoted as recreational resources				
16.5%	50.4%	26.2%	6.2%	0.8%
Porter should work more closely with the State in promoting the State Parks				
17.6%	50.8%	22.1%	8.0%	1.5%
We need better facilities to accommodate our sport fishing potentials				
18.6%	37.3%	31.9%	11.0%	1.1%
Birding is an important recreational pastime and should be promoted in Porter				
10.3%	29.8%	44.7%	10.3%	5.0%
We need more recreational programs for youths in Porter (those under 13)				
18.1%	36.2%	31.3%	12.8%	1.5%
We need more recreational programs for teens in Porter (those between 13-19)				
19.9%	41.4%	27.8%	9.8%	1.1%
We need more recreational programs for seniors in Porter				
17.0%	30.9%	39.2%	10.6%	2.3%
I would be willing to pay more for additional recreational services provided by the Town				
7.0%	28.9%	15.9%	24.9%	23.4%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Facilities needed in the Town of Porter varied among survey respondents and included: golf course, senior center, senior programs, teen center, teen programs, ice skating rink, swimming/beach facility and waterfront park.

Environment

Several environmental issues in Porter were considered in the survey completed for the Comprehensive Plan. Over 86% of residents are concerned with the planned expansion of CWM in the Town of Porter and over 78% believe that further expansion of the landfill should be prohibited. The Town should consider purchasing development rights according to 60% of survey respondents; the same percentage agreed that this technique should be used to preserve agricultural land in the Town. The lakeshore should be protected from further residential development according to 44% of respondents while approximately 32% disagreed with this statement. Shoreline protection is an issue according to 70% of survey respondents.

Table 6-11 Environment

Town of Porter

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am concerned with the planned expansion of CWM in the Town of Porter				
60.0%	26.0%	6.4%	3.8%	3.8%
We should prohibit any future expansion of the CWM landfill				
58.6%	20.2%	9.1%	8.4%	3.8%
We should consider using the Purchase of Development Rights technique to preserve open space in Porter				
25.9%	35.0%	30.0%	4.9%	4.2%
We should consider using the Purchase of Development Rights technique to preserve agricultural land in Porter				
25.9%	35.0%	28.9%	6.8%	3.4%
The lakeshore should be protected from further residential development				
17.6%	27.9%	23.3%	25.2%	6.1%
Shoreline erosion protection is an issue in Porter				
29.9%	40.2%	22.0%	6.8%	1.1%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Of those that strongly agree that the lakefront should be protected, 35% are from the Village, 30% are from other areas in Porter and 15% are from Ransomville. Of those that strongly disagree, 31% live along the Lake and 31% are from Ransomville.

Table 6-12 Protect Lakefront from Development

By Place of Residence

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Village of Youngstown	35%	40%	37%	39%	13%
Ransomville	15%	22%	17%	11%	31%
Along River	7%	5%	8%	9%	13%
Along Lake	13%	7%	8%	23%	31%
Other Place in Porter	30%	26%	29%	18%	13%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Economic and Business Services

According to 52% of respondents, the Town of Porter should consider tax abatement and other incentives to encourage new businesses; 31% disagreed with this statement. Mixed-use development should be encouraged near Youngstown and Ransomville according to 57% of respondents. Over 89% of respondents do the majority of their retail shopping in Niagara County; 18% do the majority in Erie County while only 7% do their retail shopping elsewhere (catalogs, internet, Canada, Pennsylvania, Monroe County). Asked about grocery shopping, 97% shop in Niagara County while 5% shop in Erie County; less than 2% shop elsewhere. More residential growth is needed according to 50% of survey respondents, 54% believe more commercial growth is needed and 50% believe that more industrial growth is needed.

Tourism should be promoted according to over 50% of survey respondents. Over 65% of survey respondents believe that the Town and Village should consider consolidate services while 64% of respondents believed that the Town and Village should further explore the possibility of consolidating the two governments and services.

Table 6-13 Economic and Business Services

Town of Porter

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
We should consider tax abatement and other incentives to encourage new businesses in Porter				
15.1%	37.7%	15.8%	24.2%	7.2%
Mixed-use development (residential, commercial and light industrial) should be encouraged near the Village of Youngstown				
11.8%	39.9%	12.2%	25.1%	11.0%
I do a majority of my retail shopping in Niagara County				
44.5%	44.5%	0.4%	8.7%	1.9%
I do a majority of my retail shopping in Erie County				
5.4%	13.2%	6.6%	46.7%	28.1%
I do a majority of my retail shopping elsewhere				
2.2%	4.8%	17.0%	41.5%	34.5%
I do a majority of my grocery shopping in Niagara County				
65.9%	32.6%	0.0%	1.1%	0.4%
I do a majority of my grocery shopping in Erie County				
0.9%	3.4%	5.2%	44.0%	46.6%
I do a majority of my grocery shopping elsewhere				
0.5%	1.4%	12.4%	38.1%	47.7%
More residential growth is needed in Porter				
11.2%	39.8%	19.7%	22.4%	6.9%
More commercial growth is needed in Porter				
12.3%	41.2%	12.3%	25.0%	9.2%
More light industrial growth is needed in Porter				
13.1%	37.1%	16.2%	20.5%	13.1%

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
We should promote tourism to improve the economy of the Town of Porter				
13.1%	37.1%	16.2%	20.5%	13.1%
We should consider consolidation of services with surrounding Towns and the Village of Youngstown				
30.8%	35.7%	12.4%	14.7%	6.4%
We should begin discussions with the Village of Youngstown to consolidate the two governments and its services				
31.2%	33.8%	12.8%	13.2%	9.0%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Growth and Development

Over 42% of survey respondents would like to see moderate growth in the Town of Porter over the next ten years; this would correspond into a growth of 1,190 – 2,680 people in this time frame. 30% would like to see slow growth and 19% would like to see minimal growth.

The 2000 Census population of the Town is approximately 4,963 and the Village population is 1,957. What type of <u>annual population growth</u> would you prefer to see in the next 10 years:	
19.2%	Minimal Growth 0-1% growth (0-69 people/per year)
29.8%	Slow Growth - 1-2% growth (70-118 people/per year)
42.4%	Moderate Growth - 2-5% growth (119-268 people/per year)
5.1%	Moderately Fast Growth – 5-9% (269-486 people/per year)
3.5%	Rapid Growth – 10% plus growth (over 487 people/per year)

6.5 Public Meetings

March 22, 2004

On March 22, 2004, the Town of Porter conducted a public meeting moderated by peter j smith & company, inc. The meeting provided another venue through which residents could indicate their vision for the future and identify issues/areas of concern. The meeting included an explanation of the planning process, activities that had been completed to date as part of the planning process, a presentation of inventory findings and an interactive segment. During the interactive segment, participants used workbooks to identify issues of concern and they also worked in groups of 10 to identify areas on a map that corresponded to the issues raised by the questionnaire. Finally, each group was asked to identify the three issues that were of the greatest concern. There were 55 people who attended the meeting. The following is a list of those in attendance.

Matthew Agnello	Robert Gallucci	Judith Mokhiber
Vincent Agnello	Harry Greenwald	Paul Mokhiber
Tom Baia	William Hammer	David Montante
Paul Bencal	Susan Hillman	Margaret Nan
John Bis	Edward Hogan	Bill Oddy
Joan Broderick	Michael Horn	Kathy Oddy
David Brooks	Leila Kahn	Timothy Owen
Diane Bruening	Lynda King	Linda Pawlak
Fred Bruening	Thomas Korn	Randy Pawlak
Bruce Cantara	Pam Kowalik	Bill Rolland
WM Cantara	WM Kowalski	Rose Salvatore
Bernie Carreno	Pastor Bill Lowery	William Smith
Bill Choboy	James Lynch	Fred Teeter
Joanne Choboy	Mark Lynch	Skeeter Tower
J. Anthony Collard	Mary Lynch	Mary Ann Tower-Rolland
Betsy Diachun	Patricia Lynch	Janice Venne
Terry Duffy	Sue MacNaughton	Larry White
Dennis Duling	Edward McGreery	Terry Yonker
Gretchen Duling		

The issues were broken down into four categories; Land Use, Economic Development, Community Services and Transportation. The following information was gathered from the questionnaires and group exercise.

Land Use

On questions concerning land use, there was general agreement that regulations were necessary to protect vital assets of the community. The strongest level of agreement was expressed for protecting views and vistas of the waterfront. Two-thirds of the attendees strongly agreed that regulations were needed to protect these views. Over half of the attendees strongly agreed that stricter land use regulations were necessary to protect the community's character and that more should be done for shoreline protection. Nearly half of the attendees also strongly agreed that agricultural land and unique environmental features needed to be protected. While the smallest percentage of attendees strongly agreed that housing should be developed as part of mixed-use development around the Village of Youngstown and the Ransomville Hamlet, there was still a majority of people (60.8%) that expressed some level of agreement to this concept. The strongest level of disagreement (17.6% strongly disagree) was exhibited towards the idea of using alternative mechanisms to preserve open space. However, over 60% of the attendees conveyed some level of agreement that these techniques should be considered. The table below displays the results of the land use questions on the questionnaire.

Table 6-14 Land Use Questionnaire Results

Public Input – Issue Identification

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Stricter land use regulations (zoning, sign, landscaping, etc.) should be developed & enforced to protect our community's character.				
52.0%	22.0%	18.0%	2.0%	6.0%
Agricultural lands should be protected using stricter land use regulations.				
49.0%	19.6%	17.6%	11.8%	2.0%
Housing should be developed as part of mixed-use developments in and around the Village of Youngstown and the Ransomville Hamlet.				
31.4%	29.4%	21.6%	5.9%	11.8%
Land use regulations should focus on protecting views and vistas to the waterfront (both Lake and River).				
66.0%	20.0%	10.0%	2.0%	2.0%
The Town should consider purchasing unique natural features in Porter to protect these areas.				
49.0%	23.5%	11.8%	5.9%	9.8%
More should be done for shoreline protection in Porter.				
54.0%	24.0%	10.0%	8.0%	4.0%
The Town should consider alternative mechanisms to protect open space (Purchase of Development Rights, Transfer of Development Rights, outright purchase).				
43.1%	17.6%	15.7%	5.9%	17.6%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Each group was asked to identify areas where land use conflicts existed. Most groups identified the CWM and Occidental sites as conflicts. Sites owned by the Magna Corporation were also identified by a number of the groups. It was acknowledged by one group that while there is not a present conflict, Magna's plans for development would be in conflict with the surrounding land uses. One group suggested that the proposed Magna project site on Lake Road would be ideal for vineyards and could be an extension of the wine trail already established in Cambria. Another group identified a large area along Lake Road and a stretch of Youngstown-Lockport Road, in the center of the Town as areas where land use conflict existed.

The groups were asked to identify where housing should be developed as part of mixed-use development. There were several areas chosen by the various groups. Generally, these areas were large parcels in and around the Village of Youngstown and the Hamlet of Ransomville. The groups basically identified the entire shoreline of the Town of Porter as an area that should be protected for its views and vistas.

Attendees were asked to distinguish areas that should be purchased to preserve its environmental features. The Magna project site on Dietz Road was selected by most of the groups. Other areas include a stretch of Four-mile Creek, south of the golf course and a couple of parcels adjacent to the CWM facility.

Economic Development

Over three-fourths of the people that attended the session (76.5%) strongly agreed that tourism was an important aspect of the economy. A similar number of attendees strongly agree that they would be willing to pay 2 to 3 times more Town taxes if/when CWM closed. More than half of the attendees displayed some level of agreement that light industrial growth was needed to provide job opportunities. The greatest number of people had no opinion as to whether commercial growth was needed near the Village and Hamlet areas. However, there was more agreement than disagreement with this statement. It was unclear whether the lack of agreement was



due to opposition to commercial development or the area in which it is located. Reactions to promoting commercial and industrial growth, including providing tax incentives, were equally divided by those that agreed and those that disagreed although a greater number of the people disagreed strongly than those that agreed strongly. The table below shows the results of the economic development questions.

Table 6-15 Economic Development Questionnaire Results
Public Input – Issue Identification

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I understand that if/when CWM closes my taxes may increase 2 or 3 times what they are now and I am willing to pay this difference.				
72.5%	3.9%	5.9%	3.9%	13.7%
We should do more to promote commercial and industrial growth including providing tax incentives to new enterprises.				
17.6%	21.6%	21.6%	9.8%	29.4%
More <u>commercial</u> growth and development centered near the Village and Hamlet is needed in our Town.				
21.3%	27.7%	29.8%	6.4%	14.9%
<u>Light industrial</u> growth and development is needed in Porter to provide job opportunities and diversify our tax base				
28.6%	28.6%	22.4%	6.1%	14.3%
Tourism is an important aspect of our economy and should be encouraged.				
76.5%	13.7%	5.9%	0.0%	3.9%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Along Main Street in Youngstown and Ransomville Road in the Hamlet of Ransomville were identified as areas for commercial development. Two large parcels within the Hamlet were also selected as locations for commercial development, as were several intersections along Creek Road.

The majority of the groups singled out Balmer Road as an area for light industrial development. One group indicated that an area between Ransomville Road and Dickersonville Road and south of Youngstown-Wilson Road would be appropriate for light industrial development.

Several areas were identified as tourist destinations in the Town of Porter. The State Parks were indicated by all of the groups. The Ransomville Speedway was identified by several of the groups. Other areas in the Town of Porter which were chosen as tourist destinations included Lake Ontario itself, the riverfront, the Village of Youngstown and the Ransomville Hamlet. The series of tourist destinations along Lake Road on the map below collectively represent the “Wine Country” area designated by one of the groups.

Community Services

Issues of Community services showed a greater diversity of responses than the other issues. There was only one issue for which more than half of the respondents leaned towards one side of the issue. When asked if trails should be developed to connect the Town to surrounding communities, 56.0% of attendees expressed some level of agreement. Less than one half (49.1%) agreed that the Town needed a multi-use recreational trail. More people disagreed that the Town should develop a town park than those who agreed. The same was true concerning the development of a waterfront town park that includes swimming facilities. More people agreed that additional sewer and water services should be considered than those that disagree. The following table summarizes the results of the community service questions on the questionnaire.

Table 6-16 Community Service Questionnaire Results
Public Input – Issue Identification

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Additional sewer and water service should be considered in Porter.				
29.2%	18.8%	18.8%	14.6%	18.8%
The Town of Porter should develop a Town Park on the waterfront that includes swimming facilities.				
19.6%	11.8%	27.5%	11.8%	29.4%
The Town of Porter should develop a Town Park.				
12.0%	18.0%	30.0%	8.0%	32.0%
We need multi -use recreational trails in the Town of Porter.				
27.5%	21.6%	21.6%	15.7%	13.7%
Porter should develop trails to link us with surrounding communities.				
34.0%	22.0%	22.0%	8.0%	14.0%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Ransomville Hamlet was designated as an area where sewer/ water services should be considered. The Hamlet is currently not serviced with a sewer system. Another area, were it was indicated that sewer/ water service should be considered, is along Lockport Road at Creek Road.

Currently, this area is not serviced by a sewer system, although a sewer district extension to the area is under development. There were several areas around the Village of Youngstown, which were indicated as needing sewer and water. These areas were within service districts. The areas were selected in conjunction with housing developments from a previous question.



Every group chose the property on Dietz Road, now owned by Magna, as a location for a town park on the waterfront. One of the groups identified a parcel east of the Ransomville Speedway as a location for a town park. Existing parks in Ransomville and Youngstown were also pointed out by one of the groups.

The groups selected several locations for trail development. Along the Robert Moses Parkway was highlighted by three of the groups. A couple of the groups designated the route of the Historic Niagara Trail as needing development. Other locations suggested for trail development were along Four-Mile Creek and the abandoned railroad right-of-way that passes through Ransomville.

Transportation

Generally, attendees disagreed that transportation was an issue in the Town of Porter. More than half (52.9%) of the people strongly disagreed that the volume of traffic was a concern. A majority of the people did not think there were any traffic conflicts or safety issues concerning traffic. Those that did express concern specifically mentioned truck traffic as the major concern. While there are few sidewalks in the Town of Porter, 62.7% of the respondents disagreed that it was an issue. More than three-fourths of the attendees did not want to re-develop Lake Road as a waterfront Boulevard. There was also disagreement about whether the Robert Moses Parkway should be used for other modes of transportation. The following table summarizes the results to the transportation questions on the questionnaire.

Table 6-17 Transportation Questionnaire Results

Public Input – Issue Identification

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am concerned with the volume of traffic in the Town.				
15.7%	3.9%	19.6%	7.8%	52.9%
Traffic conflicts and safety is an issue in the Town of Porter.				
18.0%	10.0%	12.0%	22.0%	38.0%
The Robert Moses Parkway is underutilized and should be used for other modes of transportation (e.g. trails for cyclists or pedestrians).				
17.6%	13.7%	5.9%	7.8%	54.9%
There is a need for sidewalks in the Town of Porter.				
5.9%	11.8%	19.6%	19.6%	43.1%
Lake Road and River Road should be re-developed as a waterfront boulevard to take advantage of its location near the water.				
6.0%	4.0%	12.0%	8.0%	70.0%

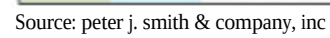
Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

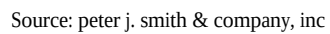
Few transportation issues were of general concern. None of the issues presented on the following map appeared on more than two of the group maps. Two of the groups pointed out a traffic conflict at the corner of Riverview Dr and River Road. Another conflict was indicated at Creek Road at the Lewiston border.

Youngstown-Lockport Road in the Ransomville Hamlet was identified as a road on which volume was a concern. Creek Rd and Balmer Road were also mentioned as a traffic concern with a modifier that this was due to trucks. One group indicated that a new road should be constructed between Riverview Drive and Lynbrook Drive and 3rd Street should be extended to Brentwood Drive.

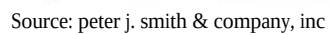
The Village of Youngstown and the residential neighborhoods south of the Village were areas where sidewalks were a concern.











May 24, 2004

On May 24th, a second public meeting was held at Town Hall. Approximately 50 people attended this meeting that would allow residents to identify solutions to the issues identified at the March 2004 meeting. The meeting included a review of the preliminary goals and policies developed by the Steering Committee and an overview of the process to date. The input session included an interactive session where residents could discuss potential solutions with each other. The following attended the public meeting:

Laura Andrus	Harry Greenwald	Bill Rolland
Mary Ellen Aureli	Anthony Hartman	Mary Ann Rolland
Tom Baia	Susan Hillman	Steve Rydzyk
Paul Bencal	Paul Inskeep	Carl Shaffer
Bob Borks	Thomas Korn	Sally Shaffer
Bill Broderick	Lynda Lagreca	William Smith
Joan Broderick	William John Leggett	George Spira
Bernie Carreno	James Lynch	Fred Stephens
Joanne Choboy	Mark Lynch	Skeeter Tower
William Choboy	Patricia Lynch	Tom Tower
J. Anthony Collard	Sue MacNaughton	Janice Venne
Cliff Collins	David Montante	Larry White
Gretchen Darling	Edward Nort	Mert Wiepert
John Esposito	Nancy Orsi	
Bob Gallucci	Neil Riordan	

The issues included a series of potential solutions that the participant was asked to choose from; the participant could choose more than one or none. Each participant was given the opportunity to offer additional solutions. Of those that chose the solutions offered, the following summarizes the results:

1. Protection of Rural Character—The Rural Character in Porter Could be Negatively Impacted If New Development Occurs
 - ✓ 94% of respondents answered that the Town should zone areas around the Village and in the Hamlet for higher density, mixed-use development.
 - ✓ 3% indicated that the Town should do nothing
 - ✓ 3% indicated that the Town should minimize densities for all development in Porter
2. River /Lake Viewshed Protection—Views to the Waterfront Should be Protected for All Residents
 - ✓ 77% of respondents indicated that the Town should develop new land use regulations
 - ✓ 18% indicated the Town/other organization should purchase easements
 - ✓ 5% indicated the Town should promote voluntary protection of views

3. Protection of Agricultural Land—Farmland in Porter Should Be Protected

- ✓ 37% of participants believed the Town/other organization should purchase development rights
- ✓ 33% of respondents agreed that the Town/other organization should develop a transfer of development rights mechanism
- ✓ 25% agreed the Town should require a PUD for development of agricultural land
- ✓ 5% of participants thought the Town should do nothing

4. Agricultural Revitalization—Solutions to Revitalize Agricultural Industry are Needed

- ✓ 82% of participants believed the Town should form a committee to work with farmers
- ✓ 18% believed the Town should do nothing

5. Shared Services—There is a Duplication of Many Services in Porter and Youngstown

- ✓ 60% of participants believed the Town and Village should consolidate services
- ✓ 33% believed the Town and Village should merge
- ✓ 7% agreed that the Town should do nothing

6. Diversify Housing—Alternative Forms of Housing Are Needed

- ✓ 97% of participants agreed that higher density housing should be focused near population centers
- ✓ 3% believed the Town should allow higher density housing anywhere in Porter

7. Expanded Sewer and Water—Availability of Sewer And Water is an Issue for Future Businesses and Residents

- ✓ 66% of participants believed that sewer should be concentrated near population centers (Village and Hamlet)
- ✓ 28% believed the Town should allow expansion anywhere in Porter
- ✓ 6% agreed nothing should be done.

8. Shoreline Protection—Along the Lake, Shoreline Protection is Essential

- ✓ 70% of participants agreed that the Town should require naturalized shoreline protection
- ✓ 27% agreed that the Town should minimize lot sizes along the waterfront
- ✓ 3% believed the Town should do nothing

9. Lake and River Access—Additional Access Should Be Developed for All Residents
 - ✓ 63% of respondents agreed that the Town should promote the use of State parks and negotiate a lower fee for Town residents
 - ✓ 37% of participants believed the Town should develop a Town waterfront park
10. Park System—There is a Need for Additional Parks In Porter
 - ✓ 57% of respondents believed the Town should do nothing
 - ✓ 43% of participants agreed the Town should develop additional Town parks
11. Link Existing Trails with New Trails to Create a System
 - ✓ 97% of participants agreed that the Town should develop a comprehensive trail system
 - ✓ 3% agreed that the Town should do nothing
12. History—Promote the Historic Resources of Porter
 - ✓ 69% of participants agreed the Town should develop partnerships with historic preservation groups and market resources
 - ✓ 31% agreed the Town should develop historic preservation regulations
13. Tourism—Tourism as an Economic Development Potential
 - ✓ 52% agreed the Town should promote the Town of Porter for Tourism
 - ✓ 48% of participants believed the Town should provide small entrepreneurial tourism opportunities
14. Ransomville Development—Hamlet Area Improvements
 - ✓ 100% of respondents agreed the Town should promote mixed-use development in the Hamlet area through Land Use regulations
15. CWM—Future of the Landfill
 - ✓ 86% of participants agreed the Town should not allow for further expansion by not allowing further rezonings
 - ✓ 6% believed the Town should allow expansion as needed
 - ✓ 8% believed the Town should do nothing

16. Future Light Industrial Development—Improve Industrial Tax Base and Opportunities

- ✓ 90% believe the Town should focus new light industrial development near CWM
- ✓ 7% agreed the Town should allow industrial development anywhere in Porter
- ✓ 3% believed the Town should do nothing

17. Fast Ferry—Need for Additional Linkages And Transportation Opportunities

- ✓ 80% believe the Town should do nothing
- ✓ 20% believed the Town should further pursue the ferry

18. Magna Proposed Development—Need for Large-Scale Projects To Improve Economy

- ✓ 55% of participants agreed the Town should continue to pursue the project
- ✓ 45% believe the Town should do nothing



Additional solutions identified by the participants for each of the identified issues include:

1. Protection of Rural Character—The Rural Character in Porter Could be Negatively Impacted If New Development Occurs
 - ✓ Purchase development rights
 - ✓ Define our character well within the Plan
 - ✓ Marketing agri-tourism
 - ✓ Farmland protection
 - ✓ Do a detailed plan including agricultural, industrial and residential and recreation zone
 - ✓ Don't place limits
 - ✓ Use sewer development to determine
 - ✓ Keep sewers out of Agriculture district
2. River /Lake Viewshed Protection—Views to the Waterfront Should be Protected for All Residents
 - ✓ Acquire dedicated town waterfront property
 - ✓ Enforce present regulations
 - ✓ Scenic easements
 - ✓ Set up scenic easement of “special” views
 - ✓ We need free access for residents of the Town
 - ✓ Work with future developers to get concessions
3. Protection of Agricultural Land—Farmland in Porter Should Be Protected
 - ✓ Become a power district-lower utility cost for all businesses
 - ✓ Need more information with farmers
 - ✓ Tax breaks, cheap power
 - ✓ State and County develop tax policies to retain farms
 - ✓ These are all short time solutions
 - ✓ Restrict sewer expansion

4. Agricultural Revitalization—Solutions to Revitalize Agricultural Industry are Needed
 - ✓ Investigate Agri-Tourism success in other areas
 - ✓ Low cost power – irrigation, shipping
 - ✓ Seek help from State and Federal agencies
 - ✓ Farmers market – weekends?/ antiques
 - ✓ Farmers market on weekends in Youngstown/Ransomville (alternate)
 - ✓ Must (Town) committee to organize and advise
 - ✓ Low cost power for cold storages
 - ✓ NYPA electric for cold storage
 - ✓ Power for farms
 - ✓ Low cost power for farmers
 - ✓ Cooperative Extension can help advise
 - ✓ Hire a marketing person instead of committee
5. Shared Services—There is a Duplication of Many Services in Porter and Youngstown
 - ✓ Already pay for Sheriff and State Police through taxes
 - ✓ Reduce county tax inefficiency – eliminate county highway
 - ✓ Keep localized control
6. Diversify Housing—Alternative Forms of Housing Are Needed
 - ✓ Senior housing near services
 - ✓ Assisted living senior housing
 - ✓ Independent housing for seniors – use Cold Storage facility
 - ✓ Need senior housing near services
 - ✓ Assisted living senior housing
 - ✓ Need for assisted living
 - ✓ Need for assisted living and senior housing
 - ✓ ID zone in town for patio homes, apartments and assisted living and nursing homes
 - ✓ Keep near amenities; stores, bus stop

7. Expanded Sewer and Water—Availability of Sewer And Water is an Issue for Future Businesses and Residents

- ✓ Ransomville needs sewers
- ✓ Develop a Comprehensive Plan with neighboring Towns, Lewiston, Wilson, Cambria
- ✓ Develop plan with other communities, Wilson, Cambria
- ✓ Develop comprehensive plan with neighboring towns
- ✓ Coordinate plans with adjoining towns
- ✓ Develop comprehensive plan with neighboring towns, i.e. not pump up hill to Lewiston
- ✓ Needs a comprehensive plan with neighboring towns (detailed)
- ✓ Get Magna to provide for Ransomville (town pay for operation), no industrial waste (Magna & CWM etc.); should go into municipal system; we must keep capacity and technical requirements are very different
- ✓ No sewers in Agriculture district

8. Shoreline Protection—Along the Lake, Shoreline Protection is Essential

- ✓ Effective techniques need further study
- ✓ Federal/State Loans/Grants
- ✓ Lake level controlled at St. Lawrence – lower lake level
- ✓ Ensure protective walls to assure no erosion
- ✓ This issue is important – further study is imperative
- ✓ Build cement walls with crawling vines
- ✓ Organize lake front committee to appeal collectively to NYS and federal government for help
- ✓ Acquire vacant land – push NYS
- ✓ Select locations appropriate for high rise
- ✓ Invite expert to assess impact
- ✓ Require engineering approval
- ✓ Encourage effective, permanent shoreline protection
- ✓ Town get Army Corp of Engineers to lower lake level
- ✓ Do not allow any development next to the lake. Erosion will occur – leave natural protections
- ✓ Restrict how close to the shore development can occur. Not Town responsibility to pay for.
- ✓ Encourage effective permanent
- ✓ Naturalized shoreline protection at whose expense?

9. Lake and River Access—Additional Access Should Be Developed for All Residents

- ✓ Use “Oxy” property from Magna
- ✓ Purchase/Eminent Domain
- ✓ Improve existing boat launch facilities and create boat launch at Four Mile Creek
- ✓ Trim trees to give public access to views
- ✓ Waterfront park for Ransomville
- ✓ Purchase Oxy on the Lake from Magna
- ✓ Ask people to donate land
- ✓ Develop hooker on lake for boat launching
- ✓ Improve existing parks
- ✓ More boat launching facilities
- ✓ More boat launches
- ✓ Swimming beach, boat launch
- ✓ Hooker property
- ✓ “Old Hooker-on-Lake”
- ✓ Open the beaches

10. Park System—There is a Need for Additional Parks In Porter

- ✓ Use “Oxy” property for Town Park
- ✓ Acquire/Purchase
- ✓ State parks under utilized; need sewers first in Ransomville
- ✓ Improve boat launches
- ✓ Ransomville needs access to water for free or lower cost; must drive 10-13 miles for this
- ✓ Pocket parks
- ✓ Make Oxy on the lake into park with dock for fishing
- ✓ Present parks are under utilized
- ✓ Add programming not land
- ✓ Make better utilization of existing parks
- ✓ Improve boat launches, add more boat launches at Four Mile Creek, improve existing
- ✓ Work with State, i.e. fees for soccer
- ✓ Proactively work with State for better facilities and community for more use
- ✓ We need a waterfront park on the lake that allows free access for Porter residents
- ✓ Buy 95A Air Force property (corner of Balmer and Porter Center Rd) as wildlife or future toxic waste research institute
- ✓ Preserve green areas without developing
- ✓ Develop natural parks in unique areas i.e. Four Mile Creek
- ✓ Possible park in rural area
- ✓ An environmental park near creeks and wetlands

11. Link Existing Trails with New Trails to Create a System

- ✓ Has to parallel highway
- ✓ Link Fort Niagara to Four Mile Creek. Build on existing. Add horse-riding trails.
- ✓ Market existing trails better via brochures, etc. and events, i.e. 5K Runs etc.
- ✓ Trim trees for public access to views
- ✓ Just for walking and bikes
- ✓ No 4 wheelers and dirt bikes
- ✓ Develop comprehensive trail system between existing parks
- ✓ Connect state parks – extend Robert Moses trail from Lewiston
- ✓ Horse trails
- ✓ Build on existing from Four Mile Creek to Fort Niagara to Lewiston
- ✓ Marketing existing trail through events and brochures
- ✓ Brochure for existing trails; marketing with events
- ✓ Promote use
- ✓ Especially to Robert Moses/Lewiston/Old Fort Niagara and future Town park on the Lake (Oxy)
- ✓ Create more from Joe Davis to Youngstown and to eh Parkway exit
- ✓ Include horse trails
- ✓ Let them roller blade in State parks
- ✓ Link bike/walk trail from Lewiston

12. History—Promote the Historic Resources of Porter

- ✓ Purchase scenic easements. Protect the Carter Farm.
- ✓ Develop historic preservation regulations for identified historic districts
- ✓ Partnerships with volunteer groups – help in preservation
- ✓ Preserve our history
- ✓ Encourage marketing and development of historical regions
- ✓ Historic trail signage

13. Tourism—Tourism as an Economic Development Potential

- ✓ Agri-Tourism, Winery Development
- ✓ Agri-Tourism
- ✓ Tour of homes – extend season with activities, horse back riding network of trails
- ✓ Boating and fishing – Farming, agri-tourism
- ✓ Antique market
- ✓ Extend season
- ✓ Extend season
- ✓ Fishing tournaments, sailing events

14. Ransomville Development—Hamlet Area Improvements

- ✓ Sewers
- ✓ Install sewers
- ✓ Sewer the hamlet
- ✓ Install sewers
- ✓ Install sewers
- ✓ Install sewers
- ✓ Plan, regulate and install sewers
- ✓ Ransomville needs sewers
- ✓ Promote mixed use development in Ransomville only if sewers are provided

15. CWM—Future of the Landfill

- ✓ Stop Hudson River PBC coming to Porter
- ✓ No disturbance what so ever
- ✓ Push government and industry to provide other safe waste management alternatives
- ✓ Pursue other industry to provide employment opportunities
- ✓ Oppose all siting applications – enough is enough
- ✓ CWM pay all land taxes in town
- ✓ Do not allow any horizontal expansion in LOOW site
- ✓ Push industries and government to seek other alternatives-CWM provides a needed service for industries
- ✓ Further testing needed
- ✓ No expansion until testing on environmental threat is conclusive
- ✓ Monitor carefully
- ✓ Close the dump
- ✓ Surrounding property should never be rezoned
- ✓ Close it up
- ✓ Shut it down – enough is enough!!
- ✓ Rescind other existing rezoning as well. Close it down!

16. Future Light Industrial Development—Improve Industrial Tax Base and Opportunities

- ✓ Approach Kraft, Welch's, Heinz, Smuckers
- ✓ Industrial Empire Zone
- ✓ The area north of Ransomville in not good – agricultural
- ✓ Pursue new light industrial opportunities
- ✓ Identify industries which would compliment our community and that would also find us to be attractive site to locate
- ✓ Industrial development zone
- ✓ Certain light industry may be allowed in other areas with limitations
- ✓ None of the above
- ✓ Minimal need
- ✓ Allow industrial development near Ransomville and Youngstown
- ✓ Detailed plan by location and function
- ✓ No development near CWM since contamination issues are not settled
- ✓ Allow development in selective areas
- ✓ Never put anything on LOOW land; history of contamination and no industry would want to take liability for potential cleanup requirements
- ✓ Close CWM – Develop university to study new technology for dealing with hazardous and toxic wastes
- ✓ Need for light (Grand Island) type industry somewhere in town
- ✓ Allow only near populated areas
- ✓ Regulated and zoned



17. Fast Ferry—Need for Additional Linkages And Transportation Opportunities

- ✓ Ferry Between Youngstown and Niagara-on-the-Lake
- ✓ Pursue Youngstown/Niagara-on-the-Lake Ferry
- ✓ Rochester beat us
- ✓ Ferry from Youngstown to Niagara on the Lake
- ✓ Get Robert Moses reopened
- ✓ Ferry to Niagara on the Lake
- ✓ No ferry
- ✓ Continue to worry about possibility of importation of trash and hazardous material
- ✓ This will take care of itself
- ✓ Youngstown/Niagara on the Lake ferry – great idea
- ✓ We do not want this!! Look at the disaster in Rochester
- ✓ No market
- ✓ No Ferry
- ✓ Wait and see what happens in Rochester
- ✓ Ferry- Niagara on Lake to Youngstown
- ✓ Ferry to Niagara on the Lake
- ✓ Ferry to Niagara on the Lake
- ✓ Ferry between forts
- ✓ Reopen Robert Moses to Niagara Falls
- ✓ More information on environmental impacts
- ✓ Small ferry to Niagara on the Lake
- ✓ Do ferry to Niagara on the Lake
- ✓ Pursue transportation to Niagara on the Lake
- ✓ Ferry between Youngstown and Niagara on the Lake
- ✓ Ferry between Porter and Niagara on the Lake
- ✓ No ferry' unless treaty can limit to passenger vehicles only
- ✓ Do ferry between Fort Niagara and Niagara on the Lake
- ✓ Opposed
- ✓ Don't allow it – Fishing and recreational boating would be affected too greatly. Ferry for Niagara on Lake only

18. Magna Proposed Development—Need for Large-Scale Projects To Improve Economy

- ✓ Do not allow Magna to develop anything here
- ✓ Work towards more detailed plan
- ✓ Identify industries which would compliment our community
- ✓ Not sure/feel not being kept up to date. What is happening?
- ✓ Need for more information
- ✓ Any Magna development must be controlled – evaluated
- ✓ No Magna
- ✓ Do we want this!!!
- ✓ Jobs
- ✓ Need more information
- ✓ Need more information
- ✓ Do not want this project pursued
- ✓ Watch, listen, cooperate and wait
- ✓ Require industries, i.e. Magna & CWM, to build own sewage/water treatment and amenities for communities
- ✓ Prohibit development inconsistent with Master Plan
- ✓ Drop it or force their hand to make a decision
- ✓ Opposed to Magna project in any form
- ✓ Consider other proposals with strict public guidelines

The group was asked to identify additional issues and solutions that were not identified in the survey. These included:

- Regional Approach – Work with surrounding communities for improvements
- Relationship with NOTL – ferry between Youngstown and Niagara-on-the-Lake
- Economic Relationship with NOTL – Cooperation - International
- Economic Development – Need Porter Economic Development Council/Comprehensive Marketing Plan
- Marketing – Regional Marketing Effort
- Lack of Business – Any business we think we want here, we should invite here to visit and cultivate relationships
- Agriculture – Meetings with major Agricultural Businesses
- Funding – Hire a grant writer
- Funding - Tap in to State/Federal funding resources to fund projects by bringing legislators to Porter to evaluate projects and suggest funding sources. Also, participate in the DOS Quality Communities Program
- Funding – State/Federal grants to acquire parkland
- Funding – Grants for improvement to South Water Street Parks in Village
- Land Use – Property Maintenance
- Land Use Designations – Village/Residential while Ransomville/Commercial
- Land Use Designation – Creek Road Residential
- Housing – Senior Housing
- Housing – Higher density housing along water
- Historic Preservation – Cold Storage – save
- Access – Parallel Road to RMP – West of Parkway
- Access – Entrance to Parkway at Church Street
- Trails – Trails from Lewiston to Old Fort Niagara along River Road
- Servicing – Sewers in Ransomville
- Light Pollution – need for dark sky regulations