

CORRIDOR STUDY
SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 2008



TRANSIT NORTH

HISTORIC CANALWAY CORRIDOR



THE FUTURE OF TRANSIT ROAD IN NIAGARA COUNTY

From the Niagara County line
at Tonawanda Creek to the
Erie Canal in the City of Lockport

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I. Executive Summary

Transit North is a joint effort of the Town of Lockport, Town of Pendleton and the City of Lockport, dedicated to the future of the "Transit North Corridor" in Niagara County. The Transit North Corridor represents the portion of Transit Road (NY Route 78) that stretches from the Niagara County line at Tonawanda Creek to the Erie Canal in the City of Lockport. This section of highway represents an important historic entrance into Niagara County, a connection into the heart of the City of Lockport and a gateway to the Erie Canal system.

The corridor project is a long term undertaking envisioned by the Supervisor of the Town of Lockport, Marc Smith, with the cooperation and support of Supervisor James Riester of Pendleton and Mayor Michael Tucker of the City of Lockport. Each agreed that the Transit Road corridor represented an important asset to the region and to each community. While acknowledging that each community was different, they recognized that through cooperation, they could create a greater sense of identity for the area, a place that was "worth remembering". To ensure a well-represented project, the three communities formed a committee with representatives from each of the communities, Niagara County, the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Committee (GBNRTC), the New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT) and the business community. This committee worked diligently to compose a vision statement and define their mission. Their vision for the corridor is:

The Transit Road corridor will be revitalized through the use of common themes, clearly marked elements, aesthetic standards, economic development and cohesive land use patterns to develop a gateway that creates a sense of arrival and a place worth remembering.

Their mission is to work cooperatively among themselves and the broader community to implement this vision of an economically vital Transit Road corridor. Building upon this consensus, the Committee developed goals for the corridor centered on the following objectives:

- Aesthetic Standards/Common Themes,
- Cohesive Land Use/Access/Mobility,
- Economic Development,

- Consensus of Stakeholders, and
- Public Involvement.

Understanding the importance of identity in the market place, the Committee turned their focus to developing a project name or "branding the project". Through much work and collaboration with a market specialist, John Moore, the committee named their project "**Transit North - Historic Canalway Corridor**". The Committee also developed a project website to increase public awareness of their efforts, help reinforce the new identity and provide an avenue for feedback from the public and business community.

The next step of the Transit North Committee was to survey existing conditions of the corridor, forming two sub-committees to accomplish this task. One sub-committee focused on the physical conditions of the corridor. This sub-committee examined each individual parcel along the corridor and created a complete database of tax parcels, Niagara County tax information, building type, use, condition of the building, location of the building, occupancy, photographs, etc. This database was all coded into a Geographic Information System (GIS) program for easy access, mapping and updating. The second sub-committee analyzed zoning and land-uses along the corridor in each of the three communities, and assessed the relation of land use along the corridor to each community's Comprehensive Planning documents. They identified issues of concern, opportunities for cooperation and places where revisions to existing zoning controls could help better implement the desired vision for the corridor.

Once this solid database of information concerning the corridor was completed, the Transit North Committee began brainstorming actions, mitigations, projects, laws and policies that would move the Corridor towards its vision. This database will be updated annually so that the changes to the Corridor can be documented and analyzed.

The project included public outreach throughout the process. In addition to the project website, the Transit North Committee held two major public outreach meetings. The first public outreach meeting occurred on September 13, 2007. This meeting was an all-day multi-media event. Presentation graphics included maps and photographs of existing conditions and photo-simulations of potential improvements to segments of

the corridor that illustrated what the area could look like. A slide show explaining the purpose of the project was shown throughout the day, and project representatives were available for questions and discussions, allowing attendees to have one-on-one input on the concepts of the project. In the evening, the project consultants facilitated interactive discussions on the following topics:

- Planning the Corridor (land use and zoning issues- led by land use planners)
- Designing the Corridor (design of amenities along the corridor, such as landscaping, signage, bike paths, etc. - led by landscape architects)
- Building the Corridor (architectural standards and design issues- led by architects)
- Hardscaping the Corridor (utilities and transportation issues- led by engineers)

The results of the September meeting confirmed the work of the Committee to date, with general support for the ideas presented. The meeting also provided an opportunity to delve into these topics in more depth.

The follow-up meeting was held on October 11, 2007. This meeting included a showing of a video entitled "The Dollars and Sense of Preserving Community Character," by Ed McMahon, a specialist in encouraging appropriate redevelopment of commercial corridors. This meeting also included a report on the results of the first meeting, and a comment / question and answer period. During both meetings, surveys were distributed to attendees to obtain additional feedback on their reaction to the vision of the project. The meetings also were taped and broadcast on LCTV, the local-access television station. Throughout the process, the project's web-site was utilized to promote the project and gather input.

These efforts helped direct the action plan for the project that outlined next steps. By the end of 2007, the Transit North project has accomplished the following:

- Established a united vision for the Transit Corridor
- Branded the area/project as "Transit North - Historic Gateway Corridor"
- Established its own web-site

- Set up a Mission and established goals and objectives for the project
- Developed a work plan of action for committee to accomplish
- Established greater coordination between the Towns of Lockport and Pendleton, the City of Lockport, Niagara County, GBNRTC, NYS DOT, the Development / Business Community, and the Citizens of the region
- Created a GIS database of the Corridor
- Reviewed the existing land-use and zoning along the corridor
- Identified issues of concern and opportunities for working together
- Visually presented images of the corridor representing potential future development scenarios, and improvements to the Corridor
- Held two public out-reach meetings to gather support and comments from interested citizens, groups and organizations
- Created short term and long term implementation actions for the three communities and the Transit North project
- Began implementation efforts by creating draft design guidelines for the Corridor
- Created and began utilizing a marketing plan for the region

In 2008, the Committee will continue to build upon these accomplishments. They will further develop the plan and facilitate its implementation. Objectives for this next phase include getting more groups, organizations and businesses involved in the project; continuing to market the corridor and region; updating laws and codes in the three communities in conformance with the stated vision; further evaluating infrastructure needs; identifying other corridor improvement projects; and looking for funding sources for these projects. Through these efforts, the Transit North Committee hopes to help achieve their vision for a better future for the corridor.

II. Introduction

The communities sharing the boundaries of the New York State Route 78 (Transit Road/Transit Street) north of the Erie and

Niagara County line and south of the Erie Canal have unified their efforts to foster the creation of a Western New York destination. This destination has been branded "Transit North - Historic Canalway Corridor". The development of Transit North is the culmination of the initial phases and nearly two years of work on a project that is fueled by the municipalities of the Town of Lockport, Town of Pendleton and City of Lockport.

As a multi-jurisdictional project, it was necessary to identify all stakeholders beyond the member municipalities. Given the breadth of this project, community and regional stakeholders were identified. Community stakeholders are those property and/or business owners within 500 feet of the centerline of Transit Road, who given their location have a vested interest in developing the corridor. Regional stakeholders identified include the NYSDOT, GBNRTC, the County of Niagara, and key development companies holding property within the corridor and those development companies active in the region. All stakeholders are an integral part of the Transit North committee, through their participation in regular meetings and public meetings.

A. *History of the Project*

Transit North is a corridor study that originated with the Town of Lockport Supervisor. Supervisor Marc Smith recognized the unique assets and opportunities that Transit Road presented and had not been capitalized on. Smith convened a 21 member focus group committee consisting of business, government and community leaders to address the assets and opportunities that exist for the Town of Lockport, City of Lockport and Town of Pendleton. The original group was known as the Transit Road Corridor Focus Group (TRCFG). The TRCFG collaborated on initial efforts to create new direction for the future development and economic revitalization of the Transit Road corridor.

The TRCFG committed to a regular meeting schedule of approximately once a month to work on a set agenda. The meeting schedule began with a kick off meeting held in February 2006. Since that meeting the TRCFG has grown to over twenty-five members. To assist with specialized goals and objectives, the TRCFG has regularly sought out topic experts to provide them extensive guidance and knowledge base.

The TRCFG, since its inception has been solely committed to the development of Transit North, as vital part of the eastern Niagara County landscape and in the larger Western New York region. The dedicated members include:

Marc Smith, Supervisor, Town of Lockport
James Riester, Supervisor, Town of Pendleton
Michael Tucker, Mayor, City of Lockport
Rick Updegrove, Niagara County Legislature
Gerald Farnham, Niagara County Legislature
Tony Nemi, Niagara County Legislature
Keith McNall, Niagara County Legislature
Hal Morse, Director, GBNRTC
Matthew Balling, NYSDOT
Sam Ferraro, Director, Niagara County Economic Development
Jeffery Degnan, Niagara County Economic Development
Kevin O'Brien, Niagara County Engineering
Rick Eakin, Niagara County Engineering
Jane Haenle, Dean, Niagara County Community College (retired)
Daniel Seaman, Town of Lockport Attorney
David Knight, Town of Lockport Councilman (retired)
Richard Forsey, Town of Lockport Planning Board Chairman
Dave Kinyon, Town of Lockport Planning Board member
John Ottaviano, City of Lockport Attorney
Pat Schrader, City of Lockport Alderman
Joseph Frawley, Town of Pendleton Councilman
Jim Sacco, Town of Pendleton Planning Board member
Val Janik, Town of Pendleton Business Development Committee
Clint Starke, Erie Canal Task Force member
Charles Heinrich, Automobile Dealership Owner
Glen Miller, Commercial Developer
John Moore, JDM Promotions
Drew Reilly PE/AICP, Principal, Wendel Duchscherer
Dana Braun, Planner, Wendel Duchscherer

All members have worked diligently to foster the goals of Transit North. Each member has a personal stake in the corridor whether living within, working in, or providing leadership at the local, county, regional or state level. For an illustrated account of the groups efforts, meeting minutes have been included in the appendix.

B. Mission and Vision

TRCFG worked diligently to define themselves and the purposes of their efforts. In taking the first step to

define their purpose, the group collectively worked to develop a vision and mission statement. Once developed, the vision and mission statement laid the framework and focused the efforts of the TRCFG. The vision and mission have been significant elements since their adoption and are provided in the next sections.

1. Vision

"The Transit Rd corridor will be revitalized through the use of common themes, clearly marked elements, aesthetic standards, economic development and cohesive land use patterns to develop a gateway that creates a sense of arrival and a place worth remembering."

2. Mission

"Transit North, with representatives from affected communities, agencies and the business community, will help to create a unified vision for Transit Road that will create a sense of place and an economically vital environment."

C. Goals and Objectives

TRCFG quickly developed clear cut goals and objectives to help guide its membership. The goals and objectives helped to further focus and define the vision and mission. Initially focused on tangible year one and year two timeframes, the intention was in part to not create ambitions so high that they never would be reached and to create a solid framework for future goals and objectives.

The goals and objectives were developed under broad categories that applied to the corridor as a whole. The committee determined the initial focus of each objective category and then set precise goals to achieve that. The goals and objectives being determined early in 2006 provided the TRCFG an easy to read road map of their next steps. These initial objectives and their corresponding goals are as follows:

Objective 1: Aesthetic Standards/Common Themes

Utilization of design styles (with common elements) is desired to define the area and serve as the

unifying appeal, fostering a sense of place. Use of existing and creation of new physical features (living and man-made materials) is desired to convey a feeling of comfort and create desirable curb appeal throughout the area.

GOAL: Establish Design Standards

Objective 2: Cohesive Land Use/Access/Mobility

Transit Road is a significant regional roadway. Creating the ability to easily get to a destination within the corridor is crucial. This includes implementing access management, traffic calming, way finding features, and signage plans.

GOAL: -Cooperation between roadway jurisdictional agencies and TRCFG for the betterment of the traffic within the corridor area
-Encourage multi-modal uses and manage automotive traffic to create a more appealing corridor

Objective 3: Economic Development

The monetary benefits the corridor offers for the member municipalities is unlimited. However, it is located in and directly related to the number of visitors and type of business located in an area. Development of an economic base that creates a destination place is crucial.

GOAL: Develop a marketing plan focusing on:
▪ Marketing the areas commercial potential
▪ Creating a brand to sell

Objective 4: Consensus of Stakeholders

The development of a common ideological between all stakeholders is needed to support the project as a whole. A multi-jurisdictional project must incorporate varied views to produce the best results for the project.

GOAL: Coordinate master/comprehensive planning between member communities

Objective 5: Public Involvement

The public opinion of the project is critical and can impact even the best planned projects. A project that the public sees as benefiting them directly is beneficial to the project, public involvement can be the key to a successful project.

GOAL: Host public meetings encouraging involvement
public Maintain open communication with the public

D. Branding

TRCFG, once solidifying their vision, mission, goals and objectives, took the next step and began to create an identity. The committee determined that an identity was needed for this project to succeed. To facilitate creation of this identity, a professional marketing firm was consulted. John Moore, President of JDM promotions was invited by Supervisor Smith to help the group brand themselves and the project.

1. Creating Identity

Mr. Moore worked with TRCFG for approximately five months to develop a brand and logo for the TRCFG. He utilized worksheets to draw out ideas, concepts, intuitive responses and emotions regarding the corridor from the committee members. In some instances, he asked the blunt questions to the committee of why should they care and conversely why the general public care should. Mr. Moore drew upon the vision and mission statements and the goals and objectives previously developed to obtain a sense of the core elements of the group and what they wanted to achieve for the Transit Road corridor. Mr. Moore's efforts were conducted to create a brand and logo that truly fit the TRCFG and conveyed what they aimed to achieve.

Work on branding took a little longer than expected due to the diversity of the corridor and representatives on the committee. Mr. Moore's aim was to develop a catch name or phrase that would draw people in and make them to take interest in the corridor. The group worked diligently trying to develop the correct wording and not repeat the words of other destinations. At each meeting Mr. Moore brought new samples and listened diligently to

the feedback from the group. The TRCFG narrowed the choices and ideas of the group to a select few. Then the group as a whole voted their favorite. The results of Mr. Moore's and the groups' efforts permanently renamed, identified and branded the group. The group from here forth would be known as, "Transit North - Historic Canalway Corridor", capturing the essence of the place and its context within the regions history and future.

2. Showing Identity

In developing the brand name and tag line, a graphic representation of the corridor was determined to be critical to future marketing efforts. The logo was developed with the assistance of Jeffery Degnan, a graphic artist who works for Niagara County Planning. The logo has three distinct components. The first component is the upper triangle, which shows a scene of a barge on the Erie Canal, representative of the history that shaped the corridor. The second component, is the brand name and tag line, this is illustrated in a text that has a classic, rich feeling. The third component is the lower triangle. It shows a sketch of a rolling farm field and highlights the agricultural heritage of the corridor. Each of the components chosen was determined to be significant to the corridor development over the course of history, as well as today and in the future. The graphic logo is used exclusively for all official communications, documentation and any item produced by the Transit North.



E. Visual Renderings

The Transit North committee wanted to convey their excitement regarding the future of Transit Road to the public. To achieve this, graphic renderings were determined to provide the largest eye-opening representation of what could happen in the future. Transit North contracted with Wendel Duchscherer to have their graphic artist develop four renderings. The

renderings were based on four predetermined locations within the corridor. The renderings, after a half dozen revisions, were completed prior to the initial public meeting in September 2007.

The renderings were used as the center piece and as a tool at the public meetings. They provided the eye-opening impact for the general public regarding what the committee was envisioning the future of the corridor to be. The renderings set the stage for general interest and excitement for Transit North. They are continuously on display at the Town of Lockport town hall. For reference they are also included in the appendix of this document with the accompanying before pictures of the locations.

III. Corridor Characteristics

The Transit North corridor offers a varied and diverse landscape representing the built and natural environment. The most significant corridor characteristics of Transit Road were evaluated. They included the natural environment, built environment, transportation network, zoning and land use characteristics. Each characteristic was investigated in more detail, as well as in the context of the entire corridor.

A. *Natural Environment*

The Transit Road corridor in Niagara County by definition is a flat plateau of land. This natural characteristic is clearly evident when driving the length of the corridor. The flat tendency naturally lends itself to recreational and agricultural activities. Today, the corridor is a classic example of rural, suburban and small city development. The transitions from one land use pattern to another are visible in the corridor. These transitions shape the natural environment by the relationship to the built environment.

The southern end of the corridor is rural, with open farm fields both active and vacant, standing wood lots, recreational development, small scale commercial business and several large scale "statement" commercial businesses. Driving north the commercial uses become denser, with small commercial strip plazas being developed, eating establishments, service establishment and national brand stores. The heart of the commercial

portion is typical suburban development. The landscape is dotted by big boxes stores, fast food establishments, and national chain stores. Continuing north, you enter into the City and find mixed use development, where housing and commercial business go hand in hand. The structures are located very near the curb line and sidewalks line the roadway. Further into the city, buildings are more compact and larger office buildings can be seen in the distance. The Transit North Corridor changes dramatically from end to end and is quite literally a study in classic American development patterns.

A better feeling for the natural environment and its relation to the built environment can be developed through looking at the attached pictures of the corridor. They represent the existing open areas along with the more developed and less natural areas.

B. Built Environment

The built environment in the corridor is a result of the development patterns over the past 75 years. Developed areas continue to follow these past development patterns which are illustrated in the three different areas of the corridor. The southern portion of the corridor has minimal development and the majority of land comprises the open space available within the corridor. The middle portion is typical suburban strip style development. There is a mix of small and large scale commercial developments in this area and development tends to be clustered. There is a hub of big box and national chain stores that has placed their corporate stamp on the built environment. In this area connection to residential areas is almost exclusively achieved by car. The northern portion of the corridor is more densely organized and is a mix of residential and commercial activities. In the north most area a sense of a small city atmosphere is developed with dense housing and business located next to each other. The stylings of the built environment are that of national chains and generally lower cost or dated designs. To better understand and analyze the built environment, an inventory of properties and their characteristics in the corridor was completed. This detailed information regarding the built was compiled into a database to be used to produce graphic representations of corridor characteristics.

1. GIS Database

Modern technology was used to identify specific characteristics of the built environment. The GIS software system, ArcView, was used to develop a database listing of all properties fronting Transit Road within the study corridor. All properties within the corridor were then photographed and catalogued by the building inspector's office from each municipality. During the database creation additional information was collected regarding general condition of building, occupation, type of construction, and use. The database created was referenced on the Niagara County tax information, as it is a universal identification, for each land parcel. Once completed, the database allowed characteristics about the corridor to be displayed in a visual manner. The database is searchable and allows query's to be performed. The database is a great resource for Transit North and can easily be updated. A copy of the database was provided to each member municipality. Samples of the queries performed can be found in Appendix.

C. *Transportation Network*

Transit North is a transportation corridor that joins three municipalities. The central axis of the corridor is NYS Route 78 and serves as a major north south arterial road for Niagara County. The roadway has average annual daily traffic (AADT) volumes approaching 32,000 vehicles, as per NYSDOT records. As a result, the transportation network is currently centered on the automobile.

The Town of Lockport, prior to the commencement of the Transit North project, had undertaken a Trails and Connectivity plan. The plan aimed to determine what non-automobile resources existed in the Town and how they could be enhanced. This plan specifically dealt with connecting the residences to Transit Road and fostering further connections to the neighboring municipalities on all sides of the Town. The report is provided for further review, in the appendix.

For Erie and Niagara counties in New York, the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) serves as the regional metropolitan planning organization (MPO). As the MPO for the region, the GBNRTC is focused on establishing a comprehensive, coordinated, and

continuing transportation planning process for the Erie and Niagara Counties' metropolitan area. The metropolitan planning process allows for the allocation of millions of dollars in federal funding annually improving all modes of travel. This includes public transit, walking, bicycling, as well as the automobile in the two-county region. As part of this project and in conjunction with GBNRTC's 2030 Long Range Plan and other ongoing initiatives, the committee has noted the significance of the roadways within the corridor. Transit North has worked collaboratively with the GBNRTC to review data for the area, determine priorities and ensure complementary planning that tie to the regional goals for transportation. The GBNRTC studied the automotive and transportation issues in the area and the existing needs in the corridor and for interconnections to other regional destinations.

D. Zoning and Land Use

The zoning and land use for the Transit Road corridor is a large determining factor the future of Transit North. In reviewing the Comprehensive or Master Plans for the Town of Lockport, Town of Pendleton and City of Lockport, it was determined that each community's plan gave little direction regarding the Transit Road corridor. The Town of Pendleton's Plan illustrates commercial and industrial development along the corridor, the Town of Lockport's Plan acknowledges mixed use development patterns, and the City of Lockport's Plan does not discuss Transit Street in any specifics.

Due to the minimal or non-existent discussion of the Transit Road corridor in the existing member municipalities planning documents, the next focus was to determine the similarities and differences in the existing land uses within the Transit Road corridor. This led to a full review of the existing zoning codes of all municipalities with jurisdiction throughout the corridor and included municipalities not included in the corridor, but that could have an impact on the development of Transit North due to their proximity. During this comprehensive review the Transit North area was determined to be comprised of four distinct sections. Each section was determined to have variations in land use and zoning but generally similar uses were allowed. A detailed account of each section is detailed below.

1. Niagara County line north to Heritage Point

The Town of Lockport currently has a Local Business (B-1) Zone that extends from the county line north to Heritage Point along the east side of Transit Road. This section has limitations as to the building size; the same limitations are not found on the west side of Transit Road in the Town Pendleton. The Pendleton Town Code has similar use requirements, but no building size limitation (only setback and height limitations) in the Medium Commercial Zoning (CO2) along that section of Transit Road.

In the wider section of Transit Road, the lots in the Town of Pendleton have a larger area and longer frontage. In addition, the existing buildings in this section of Transit Road (First Niagara Bank and Victory Christian (restaurant, recreation, etc.)) are larger than those on the Lockport side of Transit Road. The Town of Lockport has a building size limit in the Local Business (B-1) Zone. Although, the Pendleton does not have a building size limit like the Town of Lockport, all the types of allowed buildings on the Pendleton side of Transit Road (First Niagara and Victory Christian) are allowable uses in the Local Business (B-1) Zone in Lockport.

Other issues such as prohibiting automobile sales and service uses, setting standards for landscaping (streetscape) and building/sign facades were discussed. Developing and implementing such standards may be good for both Towns.

2. Heritage Point north to Robinson Road

The Town of Lockport currently has a General Business (B-2) Zone that extends along this section of Transit Road. The requirements in this General Business (B-2) Zone in the Town of Lockport Code are similar to that of the Town of Pendleton Code requirements. Since there appears to be a growing number of vacant lots being used for automobile sales in the Town of Pendleton along this section of Transit Road, the Town of Pendleton may want to consider setting requirements for this use similar to that in the Town of Lockport code.

Other requirements, for items such as standards for landscaping (streetscape) and building/sign facades, may be in the best interest of both towns to look into jointly.

3. Robinson Road north to the City of Lockport line

The area within this portion of Transit Road lies completely in the Town of Lockport boundaries, and is the most commercialized area of the corridor. The zoning in this area is comprised of Local Business (B-1), General Business (B-2), and a few small areas of R1 exist. Strip plazas, automobile dealerships, big-box retail and food establishments characterize this section of the corridor. In this section everything within 1000 feet of Transit Road is regulated by the Commercial Corridor Overlay District (CCO District), which the Town of Lockport has implemented to help manage development.

The Town may utilize their existing overlay in conjunction with a new, joint overlay in effort to achieve development that is beneficial for the Town, and that fits in with the future of the entire corridor.

4. City of Lockport line to the Erie Canal

This portion of the study area lies within the boundaries of the City of Lockport. The southernmost portion of this area has currently been experiencing redevelopment and investment in the form of commercial development and community infrastructure. This area is a true mixed use development area, as commercial, retail, offices, and residential all exist in the immediate vicinity of one another.

For many properties, the buildings are located at the front of the property with parking in the rear and on the side. Effort has been taken by the City to develop human elements (sidewalks, parks, etc.). Overlay requirements could be beneficial to further developments in this area by creating a link with the other areas to the south, through use of architectural, design and landscaping standards.

IV. Public Outreach

A. Community Meetings

The Transit North committee, from inception has been acutely aware that efforts needed to involve the community and gain their full support. It was critical that Transit North did not go to the public prematurely, nor give the perception that decisions for the corridor had been completed without their participation. To achieve this, Transit North opted to wait nearly a year and half before taking the corridor study to the public. Research and analysis was completed and key initial thoughts for the corridor were developed. The decision to have two public meetings was in part to try to include as many interested citizens as possible and to provide as much information to the public as possible.

1. September 13, 2007

The first community meeting for the Transit North project was held on Thursday, September 13, 2007. This initial public meeting had two components. The first part of the day started at 12:00 p.m. with an open house, showcasing the work of the committee over the past year and a half. The open house offered the public an opportunity to discuss the Transit North corridor on a personal level with committee members, elected officials, and planning consultants. This portion of the day wrapped up at 5:00 p.m. to allow for transition time to the second portion of the community meeting.

The doors opened at 5:30 p.m. for the second portion of the community meeting. This portion was opened with introductory remarks from the Mayor Tucker, Supervisor Smith and Supervisor Riester from the involved communities. The attendees were then divided into four breakout groups that were randomly assigned when they signed in. The four breakout groups were Planning the Corridor, Designing the Corridor, Building the Corridor, and Hardscaping the corridor. Each focus group was facilitated by two knowledgeable consultants and a committee member. Each facilitator was given a forty-five minutes to explain the importance of their focus in the corridor and obtain public opinion regarding the elements. After the first

breakout session, a short break was taken, and then a second focus group session was started. For the second focus group, participants were allowed to choose the focus group they participated in. The second session operated under the same format as the first 45 minute session.

After the two focus sessions concluded, all attendees reconvened to briefly discuss the breakout sessions. Attendees were asked to complete a visual preference survey to garner what the public preferred for the development of Transit Road. The Visual Preference Survey provided additional information regarding the public opinion. The meeting concluded with discussion regarding the future plans of the Transit North committee, what they will be doing with this information gathered at the public meetings and where/how people can obtain further information regarding the project.

The first community meeting had attendance numbers totaling approximately 60 visitors at the open house and approximately another 60 attendees at the community meeting. When signing in people were asked to place a "dot" on a map representing where they lived in the community. The majority of attendees were from within the city boundary and along the Transit Road corridor, however not all attendees placed a "dot" on the map.

2. October 11, 2007

The second community meeting for the Transit North project was held on October 11, 2007. This second meeting was a follow-up and informational meeting related to the efforts of the first meeting. The structure of this meeting was scaled back in comparison to the first meeting.

For the second meeting it was decided that a movie would be shown highlighting the heart of the mission for Transit North. The video was a presentation from a nationally known speaker in the field of place making and community development, Mr. Ed McMahon, a nationally renowned authority on sustainable development, land conservation and urban design, is a senior resident fellow at the Urban Land Institute. He previously served as

director of The Conservation Fund's "American Greenways Program" and as president of Scenic America, a national non-profit organization devoted to protecting America's scenic landscapes. The video highlighted the importance of making your community different from the one down the road and across the country. The video discussed the tools communities have to create something improved from the standard design offered to them. All the examples provided throughout the video for development and redevelopment could easily be utilized in the Transit North Corridor. For this second meeting, it was deemed important that the community see that the area is not the only area undertaking these efforts and can be achieved from efforts such as Transit North.

The evening, at the end of the video presentation, quickly transitioned into a formal presentation pertaining to the results of the first meeting and the visual preference survey. From these two sources, some preliminary trends were identified regarding the type of preferred building, color scheme, development nodes and transportation items in the corridor. The presentation concluded with an open questions and comment period. The public provided some great questions regarding the future, how they could be involved, how will Transit North impact existing business, where funding maybe coming from, and how will they be kept informed. Within the same conversation some great thoughts and commentary were provided regarding the design of the future corridor, what fits in with the existing community, the assets that should be utilized, and how to use future plans to rectify existing problems. At the end of the question and comment period the public was informed that information would be posted on the website and to expect a report to be issued after the first of the year.

The second community meeting was concluded with thanks given to the community for involving themselves in the project. This second meeting had an attendance of about 70 persons, drawing people from a slightly expanded area from the first meeting.

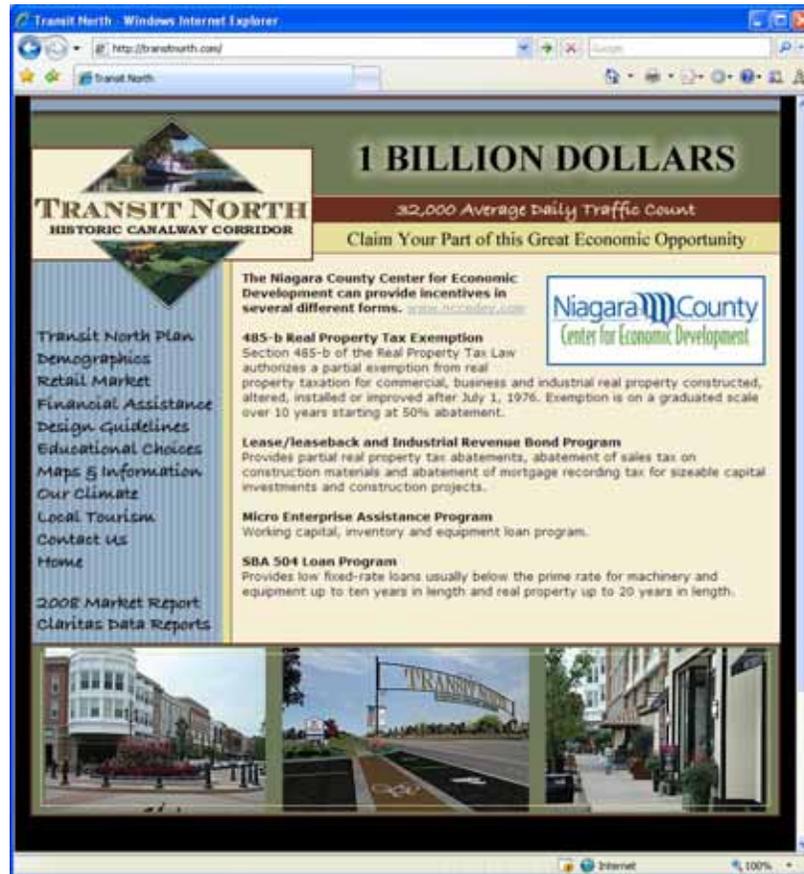
B. Survey

The Visual Preference Survey was a tool that the Transit North Committee will utilize in identifying what the community would like to see in the Transit Road Corridor. The survey was not designed to tell people what would be built or where future developments will occur on the Transit Road Corridor. The Transit North Committee was purely interested in finding out what people honestly wanted to see the corridor develop into.

Through a series of questions, graphics, and rating scales, Transit North attempted to introduce the possibilities for Transit Road to the public. This information lead to further defining preferred styles, themes, and developmental elements for the corridor on a whole. This aided the committee in finalization of draft Design Guidelines for the corridor. At the end of the survey, an opportunity was given to comment freely on other elements that relate directly to the Transit Road Corridor. People were also given the opportunity to provide contact information for further involvement with Transit North. The general public took advantage of the opportunity to comment and offer their name for further involvement in Transit North. A copy of the Visual Preference Survey and results is provided in the appendix.

C. Website

In an effort to reach more citizens and advertise Transit North, the committee secured the rights to a website. The website allows the general public to stay up-to-date with the work of the committee, and provide them with feedback regarding the project. The website is provided jointly by the member municipalities and can be located at www.transitnorth.com.



D. Marketing

To ensure that the vision of Transit North is realized, an intensive marketing campaign has been developed. This effort includes a comprehensive Market Report, which is included in the appendix. Retail marketing research showed that there is extensive growth capacity for additional retail businesses within our market trade area. This research also identified market segments that represent specific retail businesses that have opportunities to grow in the Transit North corridor. In addition, residents have expressed direct interest and support to bring in new retail businesses. The Market Report will be published and distributed to potential developers, retailers, and organizations with the ability to foster the mission and vision for the corridor. Utilizing retail conferences, direct mail, e-mail and developer contacts, the committee will direct solicit preferred retailers into the corridor.

V. Transit North Committee/Sub-Committee Results

The result of the efforts of Transit North can be seen in the development of databases and graphics to visualize the corridor. The database has been integrated into the ArcGIS software, allowing for maps to be created from various queries of corridor attributes. This technology provides the committee with a modern, working catalog of all the land that comprises the corridor. This resource is continuous and is maintained as the basis for the corridor data.

A. Zoning and Land Use

From the work performed by the Transit North Committee to date, it has been determined that the zoning and land uses within the corridor are complimentary and generally conducive to supporting the type of growth and uses desired. The following items are general corridor wide desires and comments from the public meetings held in 2007.

- (1) Human scaled development
- (2) Median with trees to beautify area and slow traffic; appropriate in some areas of the corridor
- (3) Encourage shared facilities, (parking and connected green areas)
- (4) Less parking, more green (especially in the front yard areas)
- (5) Pararell service road on either side of Transit Road
- (6) Access management for new developments and redevelopments
- (7) Bury utilities or relocate to less visible areas on Transit (behind buildings)
- (8) Create a theme/symbolism/signage plan for the corridor
- (9) More uniform and restrictive light standards are needed (light pollution)
- (10) Restrict turn access in areas on Transit Road
- (11) Traffic signal coordination
- (12) Existing uses be capped (i.e. auto uses)
- (13) Tax and assessment - identify incentives for existing and new businesses
- (14) Road is existing - how do you blend town center and pedestrian concepts with a NYS highway?
- (15) Incorporate agricultural-tourism

- (16) Better development can cost the community less if properly implemented

B. Design Issues

The Transit North committee along with the general public has determined that the design is at the heart of the Transit North project.

- (1) Develop a solid base for the design standards
- (2) Account for the developed parcel and how they fit into the future plans
- (3) Approach existing development regarding implementation of new ideas
- (4) Approach approved, but not yet built development regarding implementation of new ideas
- (5) Acknowledge that business have to comply with franchise requirements, but they are local business people who have a stake and want to enhance the commercial landscape
- (6) Use public art to enhance area
- (7) Develop a tree plan (preservation, conservation and re-treeing)
- (8) Agricultural history should be preserved and exploited to benefit the corridors
- (9) Incorporate land preservation
- (10) Design landscape (around sidewalks, in front of buildings, through and around parking lots)
- (11) warm color scheme for buildings, no grey matter
- (12) Remove the clutter and randomness of the appearance of Transit Road
- (13) Access management is required for safety and enhancement of appeal
- (14) Signage - unification throughout the corridor

VI. Recommendations

A. Short Range

1. Zoning

The Zoning codes from the three municipalities will ultimately govern what happens in the Transit North

corridor. As determined through study by a sub-committee, most zoning is complementary between municipalities and will allow for nearly all desired development. There are some differences that exist in the permissive structure of the codes.

Due to the variations in the zoning codes of each municipality, the committee has developed design guidelines which each community can tailor to meet their individual needs. This will be further discussed in a later section.

2. Transportation

The committee understands that transportation within the corridor is a significant component of the future of Transit North. At the present time the corridor is centered on NYS Rte 78 that varies from two to five lanes. This is an inflexible feature of the corridor and as a result creates a very automobile dependent area. The committee is looking towards options to relieve traffic congestion.

Recommendations include development of alternative routing patterns and further study of traffic congestion points. Alternative routing includes the potential development of parallel access roads on the east and west side of Transit Road. This would be similar to the existing Snyder Drive in the Town of Lockport, where business can locate and be accessed from with side. The benefit of this development is the separation of local and through traffic, creating less congestion at peak hours of the day.

Another recommendation for management and improvement of traffic within the corridor is the development of a transportation network model. This model would represent the entire Transit North corridor and the existing traffic volumes throughout. As development occurs within the corridor the additional traffic generators can be added to the model, allowing the best management practices to be applied and limit the impact development. The model would allow for forecasting and alternative routing to be explored before reaching the design process. In summary, the transportation model would provide a state of the

art tool for Transit North to use in planning their corridor.

3. Design Guidelines

The architecture design guidelines developed by the Transit North committee (contained in the appendix) apply broadly to the areas of the Town of Lockport, Town of Pendleton and City of Lockport which comprise Transit North. Guidelines have been developed as a common starting point for all three communities. Each community will receive a copy of the base guidelines and if they so choose, adopt the guidelines as part of their general municipal code. The format of the guidelines allow for the communities to tailor them to fit the specific needs in a particular area of Transit North. The guidelines will help to create a cohesive sense of place throughout the jurisdictional boundaries of the Transit North corridor.

The short range recommendation is for all communities to adopt the general Design Guidelines into their municipal code. This will allow them to reference the guidelines for any development that is proposed within the corridor. The municipalities should then review the design guidelines and further tailor them to meet their desires and vision for Transit North. Overall, a cohesive theme should be developed in the corridor to create a sense of place, but with the enticement of individual accents applied throughout.

4. Marketing

Transit North has been developing an aggressive marketing campaign that is set to launch in early 2008 and has already had a soft launch in 2007. This marketing campaign is based on demographic data and market research. The main focus of the campaign is to attract and entice a large scale developer to bring a destination style development to Transit North.

Ideally, a commercial establishment that can not be found within 100 to 150 miles from Transit North is desired. The logic is that having a product, service or commodity that no other community in the vicinity

has, will foster Transit North as a destination. Once the ball begins rolling in this direction, development will follow and Transit North will bloom. The committee will need to actively direct the marketing component to have the greatest return. Additional outreach should be given to other agencies and potential funding sources. Tapping local celebrities, historically significant people and drawing on historically significant events linked to the corridor can add to the marketability. Additional funding, teamed with developer dollars will fuel the bloom of Transit North.

5. Objectives for CY 2008-2009

Input from the committee is needed for this section. We want to include this years goals and actions items.

B. Long Range

1. Transportation

Transit North will, without question will be impacted by the traffic that runs through it. In many ways the traffic is a positive feature, as it shows people are coming to the corridor and potentially spending dollars. Future traffic mitigations are recommended and will be required in the future to facilitate and foster a friendly environment for car and driver alike.

One major initiative of long range transportation planning for the corridor involves the development of pararell access roads. These access roads would be developed in existing commercial areas (if land is available) and in undeveloped areas in conjunction with new development. The access road, if pre-planned and designed in a logical manner, will connect in such a way that a person could travel north and south to reach businesses and not have to use Transit Road. In other instances development of the access roads would allow travel from a residential area on the east or west sides of the corridor to a commercial location, without direct utilization of Transit Road.

Other long range transportation initiatives include further development of pedestrian features within

the corridor. This includes adding streetscape elements that are human sized, potentially lowering the speed limit throughout the corridor, developing connective sidewalks, and development that is buffered from the weather elements.

2. Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines complement existing zoning regulations in all member municipalities, serving as the representation of the development that is desired within the Corridor. They are general and may be interpreted with some flexibility in their application to specific projects.

A long range recommendation is that the guidelines will be utilized in conjunction with site plan, subdivision, or special use permit review in accordance with all municipal codes. Each municipality should regularly review the guidelines and update them to reflect recent trends and issues that have arisen with development. Continued modification and update of the guidelines will provide each community with a solid framework to develop their portion of Transit North. Revisions and updates to this document will show that the community is dedicated to being an active participant of Transit North.

3. Infrastructure Improvements

Infrastructure is a large component of the Transit North corridor because it is a highway based commercial corridor. As such every development requires additional use of and connection to water lines, sewer lines, drainage ditches, utility lines and roadways. This creates a tremendous need for services and improvements to existing municipal structures.

Existing conditions in the southern section of the corridor will need to be improved. This includes the enclosing and piping the drainage ditches currently located on the roadway shoulders. This change will present a clear-cut appearance entering the corridor.

The utility features in the corridor represent a significant challenge. The hope of Transit North is to fund the relocation of the utility poles and building feeds to the rear of properties or have the lines buried completely. The impact of this action on the corridor will be monumental and can be previewed in the renderings, where the utility lines were removed from all view sheds. The absence of utility poles cleans up the streetscape and landscape, therefore fostering the other goals and objectives.

VII. Future Vision/Goals

What will the future look like? What does the committee feel they can achieve with the framework that has been set? See included vision map.

A. What the future could be

How will this be a unique destination? What will make it a great place?

B. Committee Dedication

What have you learned from being in this process? What are your personal goals to achieve? Testimonials as to why you want to see this through. How will the momentum be continued?

C. Where the future lies, when will it be realized

What is the projected timeline? (2 year, 5 years, 10 years, 20 years)

VIII. Appendix

- A. Meeting Minutes**
- B. Photos of the Corridor**
- C. Renderings**
- D. GIS Database Examples**
- E. Master Plan/Zoning Sub-Committee Land Use Report**
- F. Visual Preference Survey and Summary Findings**
- G. Market Report**
- H. Summary of Community Meetings**
- I. Design Guidelines**
- J. Project Publicity**
- K. Trails and Connectivity Plan (summary and map)**