

Town of Lancaster
Village of Lancaster
Village of Depew

A Comprehensive Plan...A Common Future
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1.0 A Comprehensive Plan: A Common Future

1.1 A Regional Approach to the Future

The Regional Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew celebrates the interdependence of the communities, presents a shared vision for their future, and encourages a cooperative approach to achieving community land use, development and transportation goals.

The Lancaster-Depew communities are closely linked through location, culture, transportation and economics. Individual development and transportation decisions such as Town of Lancaster residential subdivision developments, the Village of Lancaster CBD Revitalization Plan, and the Broadway streetscape initiative in Depew exert influence throughout the communities. When coordinated as components of a regional development plan, the projects complement each other, improving the quality of every resident's experience.

A regional comprehensive plan identifies shared goals for community land use, economic development, service provision and environmental protection. It presents an "inventory" of existing land uses, environmental resources, community services, programs, and facilities. In addition, it examines both local and regional growth trends to project future resident and business needs. Finally, it provides a strategy for achieving community goals through a detailed list of recommended actions.

The Lancaster-Depew Regional Comprehensive Plan will

- ⇒ document regional characteristics and trends regarding resident population composition, land use, the natural environment, economic development and service provision;
- ⇒ provide a benchmark for evaluating the compatibility of individual development proposals with the long range development objectives of the communities;
- ⇒ reveal future service needs and explore the potential for regional facility and utility management, including land acquisition and the construction of public improvements;
- ⇒ serve as a comprehensive source of current information that can be used by the Town and Villages in their efforts to secure state and federal funding and marketing the area to potential developers;
- ⇒ provide leverage for obtaining state and federal funding by expanding the scope of intended beneficiaries to include residents of all three communities;
- ⇒ promote open space conservation and recreation opportunities designed to preserve the rural heritage of the communities and enhance the overall quality of life in the region;
- ⇒ attract potential developers to the Town and Villages through the identification of community goals and objectives through the year 2020;
- ⇒ lay the foundation for future cooperative efforts between the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew.

1.2 The Process in Developing the Plan

In developing the plan, a comprehensive and coordinated approach was used to ensure all aspects of each community were considered. This section outlines the various tasks that were completed for the Comprehensive Plan.

Steering Committee Meetings - A series of 9 meetings were held with the steering committee. The Committee offered guidance and direction for the Plan. A visioning session was held with the Committee to help define the ideal future of the Town and Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew. The Steering Committee reviewed mapping and documentation, provided contacts and determined the groups that would participate in a series of focus group sessions.

Goals, Policies and Actions – Goals, policies and actions for the study were developed based upon the visioning meeting. These goals, policies and actions were revised throughout the study as additional information became available from focus group meetings, public presentations, and telephone/personal interviews. Goals, policies and actions have been developed for each section of the plan: Residents and Public Services, Land and Environment, and Economy and Growth.

Data Collection & Analysis – An extensive data collection process was completed for the Comprehensive Plan. With the aid of numerous local officials and local staff members, information was obtained regarding population, housing, community services, local land uses, environmental considerations, local laws and ordinances, economic development and employment, and municipal services. Data for individual communities was collected and assessed on a regional basis. Maps from the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning were used as appropriate to illustrate land uses, location of municipal services and transportation corridors. The data set is presented in the Comprehensive Plan.

Regional Perspective - As part of the data collection and analysis process, surrounding communities were considered. During the windshield survey of land uses, surrounding communities were inventoried and the future land use plan takes the surrounding uses into consideration. Studies being completed in surrounding communities were also reviewed and appropriate information was included in the Plan; this is especially true for the Town of Cheektowaga because half of the Village of Depew is located within the Town. Information and data gathering was conducted outside the three communities to appropriate agencies and organizations. While no formal coordination was conducted with communities outside of the Town of Cheektowaga, regional concerns are considered in the Plan. In addition, surrounding communities were sent a copy of the final Comprehensive Plan and Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement as part of the SEQRA process and asked for comments as interested parties.

Telephone and Personal Interviews – A series of telephone and personal interviews were conducted to obtain additional information. Discussions with several public, not-for-profit and private organizations provided valuable insight into the issues being addressed in the plan and topics that had not yet come to light. A complete list of individuals and organizations that were interviewed is included as Appendix A1.0 – List of Contacts.

Random Community Survey – A survey of residents in each community was conducted in Fall of 1998 to gauge resident attitudes regarding community identity, community services, transportation, land use regulations, recreational activities, housing, growth and development, growth rates, and government structure. The results were tabulated and analyzed and are presented in Section 6 of the Comprehensive Plan.

Public Meetings/Open Houses – A public meeting was held early in the process to introduce the project to the public. Nine public meetings/open houses were conducted (three in each community) to both inform residents of the Comprehensive Plan process and provide an opportunity for public comment. The regional inventory and analysis results were presented in July of 1999. Plan recommendations were presented in August. Public Hearings were also held in October 1999.

Recommendations – Based upon the regional inventory and data analyses, policy statements and implementation strategies were developed regarding residents and community services, land and the environment and economy and growth. These policy statements were designed to guide the region's development through 2020. The implementation strategy provides a framework for executing the plan with specific actions, delegations of responsibility and time frames.

1.3 Using the Comprehensive Plan

The adoption of the Regional Comprehensive Plan illustrates the three communities' commitment to a coordinated vision for their future. The success of the Regional Comprehensive Plan will be measured of its service to local, regional, county and state politicians, municipal employees and residents.

Politicians will use the regional plan to learn about their resident's vision of the community's future and alter or adopt local codes and ordinances to support those goals. The plan's extensive analyses and policy statements will provide both background information and political leverage as politicians negotiate inter-governmental agreements and leverage or dedicate financial and administrative support for identified plan objectives.

Zoning and planning boards will measure the desirability of development applications by their conformity with plan goals and objectives. In addition, they should adopt policies and procedures that actively assist those projects that comply with Plan goals and objects and discourage those projects that fail to honor the community's vision. Working closely with developers, local Boards will target investment to projects that promote plan objectives, reduce the need for excessive variance hearings and inefficient development patterns.

Municipal employees will use the plan when interpreting legislative mandates, making administrative decisions, enforcing development related codes and prioritizing work efforts.

Finally, local residents will use the plan as a reference when making residential location choices, evaluating the effectiveness of local government, lobbying for financial or legislative support and when choosing political representatives.

The future of the three communities should conform with this Comprehensive Plan. As with any plan, this document should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis; a three to five year time frame is recommended for updates of most Comprehensive Plans. As the Plan is updated, adjusted population projections from the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) should be considered as should updated Census information.

1.4 History of the Communities and Region

The Town of Lancaster was first settled by members of the Erie Indian tribe and later by the Seneca Nation of Indians. Through the Treaty of Big Tree, the Senecas transferred the land to the Holland Land Company. The land was surveyed and sold to Americans moving north and immigrants from Europe. The boundaries set by the Holland Land Company in 1789 remain in effect today.

In 1808, the first road from Buffalo to Alden was laid and the Town began to grow slowly but steadily for several years. The 1825 opening of the Erie Canal spurred more rapid settlement as the Canal allowed local farmers to ship their crops to cities like New York. In the late 1830's, large numbers of German immigrants moved into the area. They were joined in the late 1840's by immigrants from Ireland and Britain seeking work on the railroad.

In 1849, the state legislature granted formal powers to the populated areas around Cayuga Creek, creating the Village of Lancaster. Desiring a more rural community, the officers of the New York Central Railroad formed a new company and hired a firm to survey and lay out a new village. The state legislature approved the new Village of Depew, named after the railroad president, in March of 1893. It was located in part in the Town of Lancaster and partly in the Town of Cheektowaga. A new Town Hall was constructed to house the Town Council and several Town businesses in 1896.

As the century came to a close, the area experienced rapid growth. Almost all of Lancaster's land had been cleared for farming and the majority of its residents were farmers. The Depew-Lancaster area became a center for heavy industry, was attracted by the five different rail lines running through Depew to Buffalo. In turn, the growing industrial community attracted immigrants from eastern and southern European countries such as Poland, Italy, Greece and Lithuania.

The roads running through both Villages and the Town of Lancaster were unpaved making travel during the spring thaws very difficult due to mud. The construction of trolley lines from the Town's rural areas to the Village centers in the early 1900's alleviated this problem. Churches, schools, and hundreds of new homes were built along the new routes.

During the 1920's, the population of Lancaster and Depew grew as the community prospered. However, the growth rate quickly fell to zero with the onset of the Great Depression. In 1930, the federal census recorded a population of 15,260 people for the area. With the Second World War, the economy was quickly revived as factories in and around Lancaster were employed for the production of war materials.

By 1950, the Lancaster population had reached 18,471 with the majority of development located in the southern portion of the Villages. The communities continued to grow throughout the fifties reaching a population of 25,605 by the time of the 1960 census. By 1970, the population climbed to 30,634 as City residents moved to the larger lot developments of the suburbs. In the 1980's, the population growth slowed. Slow growth continues today in all three communities.

Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
A Comprehensive Plan...A Common Future

2.0 Goals, Policies and Actions

2.1 Residents and Public Services

POPULATION

- ❖ Goal 1 – To recognize projections showing that the Town and two Villages are growing communities and plan for these changes

⇒ Policy 1.1 – To attract and retain industries that create long-term employment for existing and future residents of the Town and two Villages

- Action 1.1.1 – Population projections show that the Town of Lancaster and Villages of Lancaster and Depew could experience growth over the next twenty years. To ensure the population receives the necessary services, the three communities should work together in the supply of recreation/park lands, sewer, water and other services; consolidation of services should be considered for services when appropriate. This regional approach could result in cost savings for residents and increase the level of service.
- Action 1.1.2 – The Town and two Villages should continue to work with the Lancaster IDA and Erie County IDA to attract new industries to the region. As outlined in the comprehensive plan, the supply of industrial space in the three communities is a significant asset. These lands are serviced, have good access to transportation networks (both road and rail) and are essentially clean sites. In promoting Erie County as a whole, the area along Walden Avenue (through the Town of Cheektowaga) is an important feature that could be promoted through promotional material to industries throughout the world.

⇒ Policy 1.2 – To recognize the impacts of further development in the three communities and develop appropriate policies for the future

- Action 1.2.1 – The three communities should continue to work with surrounding communities and promote a regional image and approach to future development; this would include the efforts such as the recent workshops and joint meetings held in Lancaster and Amherst. The Town and two Villages are not isolated from the region and should promote cooperation with surrounding communities. This would allow decisions to be made in a way that is best for all residents of Erie County and thus, the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew.

❖ Goal 2 – To develop a regional identity within Erie County to promote the three communities and the Town of Cheektowaga

⇒ Policy 2.1 – To develop a “community theme” for the three communities and the Town of Cheektowaga and promote this theme in future development

- Action 2.1.1 – The Town and two Villages should develop a “theme” and marketing package that promotes the three communities as one without losing the individuality of the separate municipality; because Depew is also in the Town of Cheektowaga, they should be included in this effort. This theme could focus on the opera house or Olmsted park/road system and other historic/architectural features of the Villages, the many parks in the communities or the agricultural history of the region. A professional marketing theme and package would help increase local and state public awareness of the unique attributes of each community and would also offer an identity for residents of the community. In addition, this promotional information should be on display with the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau to help promote the communities.

- Action 2.1.2 – The three communities should develop a regional web site that can be linked with other sites developed for the region (i.e. Erie County, City of Buffalo, Greater Buffalo Partnership, Lancaster IDA, historic/architectural sites, etc.) to promote the resources of the Town and two Villages. This site should focus on the unique characteristics of the communities including the historic context, the potential for industrial development, the quality of life, the park system, housing opportunities, the school system and other attributes that are attractions.

⇒ Policy 2.2 – To support community activities within the three communities

- Action 2.2.1 – Special events in each community should continue to be offered, and when possible, should be expanded to attract people from around the region. This would include events such as Last Night Lancaster, 4th of July Celebration, 3 on 3 basketball and the Taste of Lancaster that are currently held in the Village of Lancaster CBD.
- Action 2.2.2 - In addition to single community events, new events should be sponsored that would promote the three communities as one and increase their profile in Erie County and the entire region. A regional committee could be established to develop programming, complete fund raising and organize events. This could include historic/architectural walking tours, community picnics at Como or Westwood Park, ethnic festivals celebrating community, diversity, garden walks or development of a farmers market that capitalizes on the agricultural assets of the region.
- Action 2.2.3 – The three communities should sponsor and host yearly welcoming picnics for new residents in the region. Special mailings should be sent to new home-owners to welcome them to Lancaster or Depew and outline the advantages of living in the community.

HOUSING

- ❖ Goal 1 - To ensure safe, affordable housing to all residents in the Town and Villages
 - ⇒ Policy 1.1 – To develop land use regulations that allow for a variety of affordable and handicapped-accessible housing opportunities to meet the housing needs of residents
 - Action 1.1.1 – The communities should implement incentive zoning for special housing, which grants density bonuses in return for the provision of identified benefits to the community. Density bonuses could be provided in designated zoning districts for developers who provide a specified minimum percentage of affordable or senior housing units. The communities could also permit the use of density bonuses to achieve identified benefits to the community. These benefits include increasing affordable, handicapped-accessible, or senior housing opportunities, providing major infrastructure improvements of benefit to the community as a whole, providing public recreational and open space facilities, and preserving historic/architecturally significant structures.
 - Action 1.1.2 – The communities should implement multi-family apartment districts in areas of the Villages and Town closest to transportation corridors and services. Dimensional requirements (i.e., unit size, setbacks, parking requirements, etc.) should be designed to ensure affordability in these areas.
 - Action 1.1.3 – The Town should zone areas in sewer districts with a higher density than those that are outside the district. This would promote development around the Villages and protect the rural character of the eastern portion of the Town.

- Action 1.1.4 – The Town should permit traditional neighborhood development, which allows predominantly residential with ancillary commercial and community service uses, in appropriate locations in the Town; these areas could include commercial nodes outlined on the future land use plan. Residential density should be higher than permitted in typical subdivisions in these areas. Including convenience retail and community service uses in predominantly residential developments could reduce unnecessary vehicular trips and enhances quality of life for residents in the three communities.
- Action 1.1.5 – The Town should consider conservation density housing provisions in their zoning and subdivision laws. The regulations should ensure that residential density in a clustered subdivision does not exceed the density that would be permitted with a traditional subdivision layout. In addition, the subdivision should be designed to minimize its visual impacts, preserve open space areas and provide usable, accessible, and linked recreational land that meet the needs of residents.
- Action 1.1.6 – The Town should develop residential design guidelines to promote housing that has minimal impacts on the landscape and environmental features. The design guidelines, focusing on the number of units and requirements for similarities/dissimilarities, could also help to ensure that future development is high quality and enhances the quality of life in the communities.

⇒ Policy 1.2 – To provide additional senior and affordable housing to those with a specific need

- Action 1.2.1 – The region should estimate the specific demand for market-rate and/or below market-rate housing among senior citizens of the three communities by completing a market study. The market study should identify the number of units needed and the preferred timetable for construction and occupancy, unit type (rental, condominium, etc.) and size, number of bedrooms in the units, amenities, and monthly rents, or purchase price and carrying costs. If there is support for some form of new low cost, low-maintenance senior housing, the communities could actively promote construction of below-market rate housing by donating an appropriate parcel of Village- or Town-owned land.

- Action 1.2.2 - The communities should establish a regional task force to identify specific affordable housing needs in the community. The task force should include members of Town and Village boards, non-profit affordable housing organizations, affordable housing developers, and interested citizens. The task force should quantify the demand for below-market housing for municipal employees, fire department and other municipal volunteers, school district employees, and young and senior households in the three-community region. This information can be used to determine the specific needs for affordable housing in the three communities. If substantial unmet demand for affordable housing is indicated, create site criteria and evaluate potential sites for affordable housing development. Criteria should include proximity to public transit, shopping and municipal services and facilities, parcel size and potential density, and traffic impacts to the surrounding neighborhood. Suitable parcels could be offered to developers with relevant experience in affordable housing. Sites for affordable senior citizen developments should be evaluated against criteria that would include, at a minimum, proximity to shopping, public transportation, community facilities and services, appropriateness of the site for the preferred development and size, and contextual fit with the surrounding neighborhood.
- Action 1.2.3 - The communities should consider creating a floating senior citizen development zone in the Town. This zone should include a minimum lot size of 10 acres in which health care and residential opportunities for elderly persons would be allowed, and in which a specified percentage of units would be required to be affordable to persons of moderate income. To ensure neighborhood compatibility, criteria for siting the floating zones would require locations adjacent to higher density areas with sewer availability and along major corridors and transportation centers.

⇒ Policy 1.3 – To encourage owners to upgrade and maintain their properties

- Action 1.3.1 – The communities should advertise and promote housing rehabilitation programs available through Erie County and the Town of Cheektowaga (for Village of Depew residents within the Town of Cheektowaga). In addition, the three communities should encourage absentee landlords to participate in the programs to rehabilitate properties in need.
- Action 1.3.2 – Each community should develop property maintenance codes. A property maintenance code would allow building inspectors to more easily enforce and issue “tickets” for violations to bring buildings up to code. Property maintenance codes should target residential, commercial and industrial uses.

❖ Goal 2 - To diversify the housing stock by offering choices in the Village cores

⇒ Policy 2.1 – To encourage the development of affordable and handicapped-accessible housing in village areas and near transportation corridors

- Action 2.1.1 – The Villages should encourage rental apartments over commercial uses in village central business districts. Each community can accomplish this through new land use regulations and design guidelines. Incentive zoning or density bonus provisions could be used to encourage this type of development.
- Action 2.1.2 - Accessory housing units provide affordable housing and specifically allow for the development and/or conversion of accessory housing units; this type of use should be allowed in the Village zoning laws. In district(s) where accessory housing units are allowed, occupancy, size, exterior changes, and parking should be specified. An approval procedure should be created for enforcement and detection of illegal units; consideration should be given to an amnesty period for property owners in violation during which they would bring the units up to code.

⇒ Policy 2.2– To Maintain the basic residential character and pattern of density in the communities which includes a mix of higher density areas in the Villages and lower density suburban and rural areas in the Town

- Action 2.2.1 – The Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew should evaluate underutilized and deteriorating older buildings in the Village cores for the potential re-use as affordable and/or senior housing apartments. This type of infill development would meet a specific housing need and concentrate residential development within the Village and near needed services.
- Action 2.2.2 – The Town and two Villages should work with non-profit affordable housing agencies to secure public funding and to redevelop suitable properties. These groups can supply revolving loan funds, façade improvement programs or labor assistance in upgrading homes in the Villages.

❖ Goal 3 - To determine where additional land subdivision should occur in the Town of Lancaster

⇒ Policy 3.1 – To encourage additional land subdivision to locations closest to developed areas such as those surrounding the Villages

- Action 3.1.1 – The Town should ensure zoning regulations encourage development to occur within sewer districts and areas closest to the Villages. Much of the development in the Town is occurring near the two Villages and future development should be encouraged in this portion of the Town.
- Action 3.1.2 – The Town should not allow additional large-scale land subdivision within agricultural districts. Larger subdivisions consume land and require servicing that can be costly to the community. The agricultural land in the Town, especially in the south eastern portions of the community, are a valuable resource that once developed, will be lost. This land should be preserved for agricultural uses and development should be focused in the serviced portion of the Town.

- Action 3.1.3 – The Town should encourage the development of approved, uncompleted subdivisions prior to subdivision of additional land. This can be encouraged by revising the subdivision law to make final plat approval conditional on completion of public improvements. As per State law, the applicant would have 180 days to comply with the conditions or the approval expires. The period in which the public improvements must be completed may be extended by a maximum of up to 180 additional days. Requiring outlay of funding for public improvements prior to final approval and mapping of the subdivision should reduce the number of speculative subdivisions.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

- ❖ Goal 1 - To capitalize on the unique historic/architectural character of the Village of Lancaster, Town of Lancaster and Village of Depew
 - ⇒ Policy 1.1 - To take advantage of existing marketing efforts to publicize the area's assets
 - Action 1.1.1 - The Town of Lancaster and Villages of Lancaster and Depew should pursue publicity opportunities with regional and State tourism efforts ("I Love NY" literature, AAA of Western and Central New York literature, regional magazines, etc.). Including information about Lancaster and Depew in regional and state literature will stimulate interest in these communities for those in the immediate area and beyond, contributing to their tourist appeal.
 - Action 1.1.2 - The Town of Lancaster and Villages of Lancaster and Depew should contact the Preservation Coalition of Erie County to arrange tours of the historic/architecturally significant areas. The Coalition publicizes and arranges historic/architectural tours throughout the region; the Lancaster-Depew area warrants inclusion on the tour list due to the large number of historically/architecturally significant structures as well as the Olmsted-designed Veteran's Park in Depew.
 - Action 1.1.3 – Historic places that have local or county significance should be protected in the three communities. This would include the Hull House at Genesee/Pavement, the US Post Office on Broadway, and the Opera House in the Lancaster CBD. State and/or federal designation could be sought for these structures as they are protected.

⇒ Policy 1.2 - To highlight the location of the historic/architectural resources in the three communities

- Action 1.2.1 - The Village of Depew should inventory its resources to determine their historical/architectural significance. In addition to historic Veteran's Park, the inventory could highlight buildings with local, regional or state significance. Having a knowledge of these structures would encourage their preservation and enable the Village to take part in regional historic preservation efforts (see Policy 1.1, above).
- Action 1.2.2 - Many important historic/architecture landmarks in the Town of Lancaster and the Villages of Lancaster and Depew do not have the accompanying signage to identify them. The signage should be designed in a uniform character to tie the structures together. A program should be developed to distribute uniform historic markers to owners of historic buildings in these communities. The markers would be attached to the buildings and identify them by name if appropriate and the date of construction. Further, signage could be installed to designate the location of the Lancaster Historic District and Veteran's Park in Depew.

❖ Goal 2 - To protect and enhance the historic/architecture features of the three communities

⇒ Policy 2.1 - To pursue national historic designation for additional properties in the Lancaster-Depew area

- Action 2.1.1 - The Village of Lancaster Historic District Commission is currently pursuing designation of 12 buildings on Broadway on the National Register of Historic Places. The Commission should expand its efforts to obtain this designation for historic/architecturally significant buildings in other areas of the Village. This designation will ensure the protection of the individual buildings and further enhance the historic/architecture character of the area.

- Action 2.1.2 - The Village of Depew should seek designation of the Olmsted-designed Veteran's Park and adjacent street network on the National Register of Historic Places. This designation would spark local and regional interest and could strengthen the historic Olmsted legacy throughout the greater Buffalo area.

⇒ Policy 2.2 - To highlight the historic/architectural character of the Hamlet of Bowmansville

- Action 2.2.1 - The Hamlet of Bowmansville possesses a historic/architecture flavor that should be highlighted. This could be done with signage on Genesee Street denoting entrance in "The Historic Hamlet of Bowmansville" and/or banners that designate the location of the hamlet. Other measures to unify the area could include standardized signs for individual commercial uses and historic markers on historic buildings.
- Action 2.2.2 - An historic overlay district should be designated for the Hamlet of Bowmansville to protect it from incompatible uses and site designs that could destroy its historic/architectural character. The Village of Lancaster is in the process of revising the zoning for the central business district to include a Traditional CBD Zone to preserve the integrity of the historic downtown. The Town of Lancaster could develop a similar zone for Bowmansville.

❖ Goal 3 - To provide quality education in a cost effective manner

⇒ Policy 3.1 - To ensure that school district boundaries reflect recent and projected development patterns

- Action 3.1.1 - Officials at the various school districts should regularly assess the location of their district boundaries to ensure they are cost-effective in terms of number of students and bus service. Although the changing of school district boundaries is rare in New York State, it can be done if both affected districts (the one giving up the land, the one receiving it) are in agreement. The change originates at the local level and is approved by the State Education Department.

- Action 3.1.2 - Officials at the various school districts should keep informed of planned development projects by attending Planning Board meetings or reviewing the meeting minutes. At this time, the Town of Lancaster informs the school boards of subdivision plans and this practice should be continued and expanded in all three communities. Planning Boards should develop a procedure of informing their respective school districts of planned new residential developments so the districts can assess the expected impact of additional residents. This will enable the schools to influence the decisions that could bring about changes in use of their facilities.

⇒ Policy 3.2 - To reduce operating costs for the Lancaster and Depew school systems

- Action 3.2.1 - The Lancaster and Depew school districts should continue to explore the sharing of equipment, programs and personnel to reduce operating costs. This could occur between these two districts as well as among other neighboring districts.
- Action 3.2.2 - The Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Lancaster School Districts are jointly creating and operating a Geographic Information System (GIS). A GIS system will enable the districts to maintain an up-to-date database of information on its students, its facilities and bus routing. Other districts and communities should be added to the system once it has been established.

⇒ Policy 3.3 - To provide educational services that meet the specialized needs of the population

- Action 3.3.1 - The Lancaster Central School District should continue to pursue a collaborative community education program with neighboring districts that do not have such a program, such as the Depew, Iroquois and Alden School Districts. Having the chance to further one's education as an adult can make the difference in career opportunities or advancement; it can also increase the overall quality of life for residents seeking to develop an interest or hobby.

- Action 3.3.2 - The Lancaster and Depew school districts should consider implementing additional programming for gifted and talented children to allow these students to fully advance in their education. This could include additional programs with the universities or other school districts in the area.
- ❖ Goal 4 - To ensure all residents have continued access to high-quality library services
- ⇒ Policy 4.1 - To maintain high-quality, accessible library service to Lancaster and Depew residents
- Action 4.1.1 - Lancaster and Depew residents should actively participate in the meetings sponsored by the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library to discuss the Strategic Plan for the library system. It is important that residents make their opinions known as to the future roles recommended for the Lancaster and Depew Libraries.
 - Action 4.1.2 - The Lancaster and Depew libraries should continue to assess the needs of community residents in planning for additional programs. Reviewing changes in community demographics could reveal if more programs are needed for pre-schoolers, youth, teens, families or seniors. Specific programs (crafts, contests, special reading clubs, guest authors, etc.) could then be tailored to those areas of the population that are increasing.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

- ❖ Goal 1 - To ensure residents of the three communities are adequately protected
 - ⇒ Policy 1.1 - To increase community-based programs that educate and inform the public about emergency services
 - Action 1.1.1 - Neighborhood watch programs should be encouraged to increase safety and security in the Lancaster and Depew communities. Neighborhood watch programs develop close relationships with police departments; this could help to increase the profile of police in the community.
 - Action 1.1.2 - The police and fire departments in Lancaster and Depew should continue to offer emergency education programs in the local schools to inform children about emergency procedures and safety. These programs could also be offered in libraries and youth centers to increase the exposure of this important information.
 - ⇒ Policy 1.2 - To provide efficient, cost-effective emergency services to Lancaster and Depew residents and consider consolidation of emergency services where appropriate as a cost-saving measure
 - Action 1.2.1 - The Town and Village of Lancaster and the Village of Depew should evaluate the provision of police and fire services and determine whether consolidation or sharing of personnel or equipment can be done without sacrificing the quality of service. Cost savings could be realized in administration, support staff, purchasing of supplies, etc. and should be further studied by the three communities.

RECREATION AND PARK RESOURCES

❖ Goal 1 - To create a linked system of open spaces and recreation opportunities for all residents in the three communities

⇒ Policy 1.1 – To develop a comprehensive trail system in the three communities

- Action 1.1.1 – There is a limited trail system at both Como Lake Park and Westwood Park in the Town and Village of Lancaster. As the primary open spaces in the three communities, these parks should be linked with a trail system to encourage users at both facilities.
- Action 1.1.2 – The Villages of Lancaster and Depew should create a trail along Cayuga Creek linking the downtown areas of the two Villages with Como Lake Park. This creek is an attraction and asset to both Villages and a trail system along the corridor will encourage residents to use the County Park. In addition, the three communities should consider extending the proposed Cayuga Creek trail north along Cemetery Road, then east following the North Branch of Plum Bottom Creek to Westwood Park in the Town of Lancaster. This would link many of the major open spaces in the three communities.
- Action 1.1.3 – The three communities should link trails and bikeways to stream corridors. The creeks are unique assets to the Town and two Villages and can become important parts of the overall recreation system in the communities.

- Action 1.1.4 – The Town and Villages should establish a bike path connecting the region's major recreational, municipal, shopping and school facilities with residential areas. This comprehensive system would allow people to use alternative forms of transportation in a safe environment. In addition, the overall supply of recreation in the communities would increase. When appropriate, the Town and two Villages should build sidewalks connecting public parks, schools, municipal facilities, shopping districts, and residential areas. Conceptually, the bicycle path would run primarily along Broadway. Linkages would be established in Depew to create connections to Firemen's Park and other community facilities. The path would continue east along Broadway through the Village of Lancaster with linkages to Como Lake and Keysa Parks and other community facilities. The trail would then continue east to Schwartz Road where it would extend north to connect with Westwood Park. It would continue along Erie Street or Westwood Road to Ransom Road where it would extend north to link with Walden Pond Park. Additional connections are recommended to link the path with schools in all three communities.
- Action 1.1.5 - The communities should provide bicycle parking at public parks, historic sites, in central business districts and at other appropriate locations. To encourage people to use the trail system to reach their destination, parking for bicycles must be provided to ensure the safe storage of the vehicle.
- Action 1.1.6 – The three communities should endorse the bicycle master plan developed by Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC and former NFTC). The communities should expand upon this plan to include additional trails that are both off and on road. This system would link the unique features of the region including the Lancaster CBD, Transit Road, Westwood Park, Como Park and other parks. The communities should also develop a system that links them with surrounding communities including the Town of Cheektowaga and Amherst systems.

- Action 1.1.7 - The communities should lobby the County, the GBNRTC and the State to include bikeways and bicycle parking when improvements are made to roadways or parks. Many of the current road improvements being completed in the region do not include provisions for bicycles; to encourage this mode of transportation, planning must consider this alternative. In addition, the Town and two Villages should jointly apply for government grants to enhance the bicycle system.

⇒ Policy 1.2 – To protect important open space areas that are critical to quality of life, visual character, and environmental resource protection

- Action 1.2.1 – The Town should identify and prioritize a list of critical open spaces to preserve the Town’s important environmental features such as stream corridors, wetlands and forested lands. Preservation can occur through a variety of tools from acquisition to conservation easements.
- Action 1.2.2 - Where applicable, the Town should encourage developers of housing projects to reserve, as required open space, any critical lands identified on the open space protection plan. This type of development allows developers to maintain densities while protecting critical open space and recreation opportunities. Conservation density provisions in the Town’s zoning ordinance will allow this type of development.
- Action 1.2.3 – Lancaster should enact a Town open space protection easement law; a model for the Town to consider is the law enacted by the Town of Pittsford, New York.
- Action 1.2.4 – The Town should preserve the Penora Woods area either through acquisition or easements. This area offers an opportunity to create a conservation area in the Town.
- Action 1.2.5 – The Town of Lancaster should provide for public access for fishing along Ellicott Creek; in addition, the Town should consider providing public access for canoes along Ellicott Creek. Funding could be sought from the County, NYS OPRHP or NYS DEC to develop this area. This would increase recreational opportunities for residents as they utilize this asset.

- Action 1.2.6 - The communities should invite the participation of land trusts to help obtain the preservation of valuable land; this could include the Penora Woods area. Land trusts may also play an important role in the acquisition of public access along stream corridors or conservation easements to protect other sensitive environmental or aesthetic features. Land trusts could also play the role of facilitator in negotiations with developers, as in the Town of Amherst.
- Action 1.2.7 – The Town, Villages and County should jointly determine of the kind of improvements desired by the community at Como Lake Park. This determination should consider needs for specific recreational facilities in the region identified in the Parks and Recreation inventory analysis (e.g., tennis courts, volleyball courts, soccer fields, football fields, archery, track, rollerblading facility). Once the desired improvement are determined, the communities should lobby the County to improve Como Lake Park and upgrade it in ways to better meet the needs of Town and Village residents. Future development surrounding the park should be sensitive to the overall plan and resident groups, such as the Friends of Como Lake Park, should be encouraged to improve conditions in the park.
- Action 1.2.8 – The Town and Villages should work closely with the County and GBNRTC to develop a trail system connecting Village, Town, and County recreational facilities and open spaces. In creating a regional trail system through the three communities, they will be able to link with surrounding community trail systems such as the comprehensive system in the Town of Cheektowaga. The trail system should complement the GBNRTC bicycle master plan.

⇒ Policy 1.2 – To integrate new residential subdivisions into the overall regional open space plan

- Action 1.2.1 – The Town and two Villages should require, or provide incentives to, developers to construct trails linking recreational facilities in residential subdivisions with the larger proposed trail system. As a minimal alternative, developers should be required to provide easements allowing the public to walk on trails through the property to access municipal or County parks.

- Action 1.2.2 – Each community should require or provide incentives to developers of residential subdivisions to develop on-site active recreational facilities such as pools, playgrounds and ball fields. If active recreational facilities are not constructed within the subdivision, developers should be requested to make a payment in lieu of providing these facilities. The Town of Lancaster currently has a requirement for recreational lands from developers and the two Villages should explore the potential of developing similar policies.
 - Action 1.2.3 - To preserve residential character and preserve residential property values, the communities should require developers of large-scale commercial uses directly adjacent to or opposite residential uses to maintain a wooded or landscaped buffer adjacent to residential districts.
- ❖ Goal 2 - To ensure the equitable delivery of recreational services in the three communities
- ⇒ Policy 2.1 – To Meet current and future recreational needs through land acquisition and/or dedication of existing municipal land as parkland
- Action 2.1.1 - Based on parks and recreation planning standards, there is a deficiency of larger community-sized parks serving the region, with a current shortfall of about 70 acres and a projected shortfall of nearly 150 acres by 2020. The communities should work together to develop a regional open space acquisition plan to meet these needs.
 - Action 2.1.2 - Based on parks and recreation planning standards, there is an existing deficiency of smaller, neighborhood parks in all three communities. This deficiency is expected to increase as population increases. Particular needs for neighborhood parks were identified in the southwestern, southeastern, and north central portions of the Town of Lancaster; the western half of the Village of Lancaster; and the southern and western edges of the Village of Depew. These areas should be given priority in earmarking future sites for neighborhood park development. An example of an available municipally-owned sites is the Town-owned parcel off Aurora Street.

- Action 2.1.3 – The communities should continue to develop active recreational facilities, potentially in conjunction with the schools, to ensure that active recreation needs are met for residents throughout the community; this could include specific sports fields, tennis courts, basketball courts or other active recreation facilities. This partnership with the schools will enable the three communities to meet future recreational needs for existing and new residents.
- Action 2.1.4 - Park facility planning standards indicate a deficiency in several active recreational facilities in the region: tennis, volleyball, soccer, football, track, golf, archery, field hockey and rollerblading. There is also a considerable shortfall in the length of public trails in the region. These potential deficiencies should be further assessed and addressed if warranted by community demand. Public participation should be an integral component in planning for new recreational facilities. It is recommended that a questionnaire be sent out to residents to help determine the types of recreational facilities that are most in demand.
- Action 2.1.5 – The communities should consider reconfiguring combined use ball fields into separate baseball and softball fields. Similarly, combined use soccer and football fields should be redesigned and/or separated to better accommodate the needs of each sport.
- Action 2.1.6 – The communities should consider joint ownership and management of the entire park system in the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and portion of the Village of Depew in Lancaster. This could result in a more efficient supply of recreational services, better maintenance of the facilities and cost savings for each community.

⇒ Policy 2.2 – To determine funding needs for municipal parks and include this need in the Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) of each community

- Action 2.2.1 - Funding for upgrading of municipal park equipment and landscaping should be earmarked in the CIP of each community over a period of time. In addition, monies needed for the acquisition or development of new municipal parks should be included in the CIP. By including improvements to parks in the capital budget, long term maintenance can be accomplished without single large expenditures when something fails.
- Action 2.2.2 – There is a need to bring municipal buildings into ADA compliance in several instances (e.g. Depew Library and Lancaster Library in particular). In addition to funds allocated in the CIP, the communities should consider applying jointly for State or County funding to bring facilities into ADA compliance. This is especially true for the municipal buildings in all three communities. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds could be sought to make these improvements.

⇒ Policy 2.3 – To support the high level of cooperation between the municipalities, schools, and places of worship to provide recreational opportunities for youth

- Action 2.3.1 – The communities should work cooperatively with private recreational facilities such as golf clubs and skating rinks to expand recreational opportunities for residents. These private facilities offer many of the recreation functions in the three communities and people should be encouraged to support these services.
- Action 2.3.2 – The Town and two Villages should support the development of enhanced active recreational/fitness programming at senior centers in Depew and Lancaster.

LOCAL LAWS, CODES AND ORDINANCES

- ❖ Goal 1 – To coordinate land use regulations among the three communities and improve the efficiency of development
 - ⇒ Policy 1.1 – To develop an efficient land use development process that streamlines the approval process in all three communities
 - Action 1.1.1 – The Town and two villages should adopt this Comprehensive Plan to guide future development in the three communities. Each community has participated in a comprehensive planning process to develop a common blueprint for the future; this Comprehensive Plan, as a summary of the process, incorporates the goals of elected and appointed officials, staff and the public. By adopting the Comprehensive Plan, the three communities will illustrate a commitment to a common future that will benefit the entire region. The Plan should also be re-visited every 3-5 years to ensure the direction of the communities is considered in future actions.
 - Action 1.1.2 - As the Town and two Villages update its land use regulations, and in particular the zoning ordinance, the communities should utilize a process that is agreed upon by all three. This would include application forms, filing deadlines, SEQRA and the approval process for any development that occurs in the communities.

- Action 1.1.3 - The Town of Lancaster should update its zoning ordinance and zoning map. The zoning should reflect the changes outlined in the future land use plan and protect historic/architecturally significant areas of the three communities. This would include:
 - Walden Avenue, within the existing sewer district, reserved for future industrial uses
 - Designation of the Genesee Street corridor for business/light industrial uses
 - Designation of Transit Road regional commercial with adequate depth along the corridor for appropriate development
 - Development of neighborhood commercial nodes near Broadway/Bowen, William/Aurora, Pleasant View/Pavement and Broadway/Lancaster and Alden municipal boundary.
 - Higher density residential development surrounding the Villages
 - Preservation of the eastern most portions of the Town as agricultural and rural residential

- Action 1.1.4 – The Village of Lancaster should update its zoning ordinance to reflect the findings in the Comprehensive Plan. The Village is currently updating its CBD zoning to implement the Revitalization Study completed by the Lancaster Partnership. This commercial area, which includes Central Avenue between Broadway and Walden Avenue and Broadway between Central and the Lancaster/Depew line, will become the central neighborhood commercial area of the three communities. An overall update of the zoning ordinance is important to ensure all future land use decisions are made in conformance with this plan.

- Action 1.1.5 – The Village of Depew should update their zoning ordinance to reflect the changes in the future land use plan. Like the Village of Lancaster, Depew is primarily a residential community with several commercial corridors. In particular, the following should be included in the updated zoning:
 - Dick Road should be designated as commercial; this area would be more regional commercial uses.
 - Broadway between the Lancaster/Depew boundary and Transit Road should be designated as neighborhood commercial.
 - Main Street should be further studied to determine its future uses. At this time, Main Street has lost its commercial identity and is mainly residential. The Village should review this area to determine future land uses that could support surrounding industrial areas and result in a rehabilitated corridor.
 - Residential areas should be protected in the Village’s updated zoning ordinance.

⇒ Policy 1.2 – To minimize land use conflicts among the communities by coordinating land use regulations

- Action 1.2.1 – The three communities should develop a regional review committee to review all proposals for conformity to the Comprehensive Plan; surrounding communities should also be invited to sit on this committee. This committee, with an equal number of representatives from each community, would review development proposals and make recommendations to the approval authority. A member from the County could also be included on the committee. Surrounding communities could be asked to attend appropriate meetings.
- Action 1.2.2 - The Town and two Villages should update their zoning to have consistent zone/district definitions. In developing zoning districts, the three communities could have consistent residential, commercial and industrial districts. This would help streamline the development process and could minimize conflicts across boundaries.

- Action 1.2.3 – Design guidelines should be developed for the three communities to outline the regulations and restrictions developed in the common zones/districts. To ensure that development in the Town and two Villages, particularly along municipal boundaries, conforms to this Plan and to the future vision, specific design standards should be developed for buildings, streetscapes, landscaping, parking, etc.. Surrounding communities should be asked to participate in their development as appropriate.

2.2 Land and Environment

LAND USE

- ❖ Goal 1 – To establish a mix of residential, commercial and industrial land uses in the Town of Lancaster and Villages of Lancaster and Depew that recognizes the principles of “Smart Growth”

⇒ Policy 1.1 - To maintain the diverse residential character of the three communities

- Action 1.1.1 – In the Town of Lancaster, higher density residential development should be focused near the two Villages. This area includes several residential subdivisions that have been either approved or fully developed. New residential development should be steered to this portion of the Town (i.e. within the existing sewer district boundaries). Outlying areas of the Town should be preserved as agricultural or rural residential development. The sewer district boundaries SHOULD NOT BE EXTENDED to service further residential subdivisions in the eastern portion of the Town.
- Action 1.1.2 – In the Village of Depew and the Village of Lancaster, housing rehabilitation and infill housing should be encouraged. The Village character in these two communities is an asset that should be stressed to future residents and will attract a specific market in the future. By ensuring that housing is in good condition, the Villages will provide a necessary residential type for the three communities.
- Action 1.1.3 – The residential character of Bowmansville should be protected in the future. This area offers a unique character surrounded by commercial potentials; through the use of an overlay district in the zoning, the Town can protect the character of this portion of the community.

- Action 1.1.4 - Demographic shifts in the labor force and evolutionary changes in work patterns have resulted in increasing numbers of persons nationwide who work out of their homes. Municipal regulations should reflect the changing needs of residents, while continuing to preserve residential neighborhoods. The three communities should develop comprehensive, performance-based home occupation regulations that allow home offices in specified zones if they are legal and meet neighborhood preservation criteria. The standards should address customer, visitor, and delivery traffic; parking coverage and on-site parking of commercial vehicles; signage; exterior alterations to the home; number of on-site employees; maximum square footage of the home floor area that could be devoted to the business; and permitted equipment. There can be general standards that apply to a particular zone.

⇒ Policy 1.2 – To recognize that the three communities have an important regional role in providing industrial land and designate areas for industrial development that will be most beneficial to the three communities

- Action 1.2.1 – Because much of the regional industrial land is located in the Town and two Villages, the three communities should work with surrounding Towns, Villages and the City to encourage new industry to locate in the region rather than relocating from other communities. The movement of industry from one community to another may not be beneficial to the region and creates an artificial sense of job creation in all of Western New York.
- Action 1.2.2 – The Village of Lancaster is currently completing a grant application to acquire funds to develop an industrial access road into the industrial park. The Town of Lancaster and Village of Depew should support this application as the lands lie within the designated industrial area of the three communities. Large industrial parcels should be protected as development of these lands continues.

⇒ Policy 1.3 - To encourage development in the downtown cores that capitalize on the character of the Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew

- Action 1.3.1 - Broadway in the Village of Depew is essentially “Main Street” and should be developed as such. The Village is completing a streetscape improvement plan in conjunction with the NYS DOT and the Village of Lancaster. These improvements should be implemented to create a gateway into the Village and enhance the commercial experience in the Village.
- Action 1.3.2 – In the Village of Lancaster, the CBD should be developed in an historical/architectural context. New development should reflect the character of Central Avenue and the historic features along this corridor. The CBD should offer smaller scale retail and personal services for people throughout the three communities. This area should not be developed to compete with the regional commercial uses along other corridors in the region.
- Action 1.3.3 – The streetscape plan developed for Central Avenue should be implemented by the Village of Lancaster. This plan outlines improvements that will enhance the overall character and scale of Central Avenue and create an attraction to residents throughout the region. Programming in conjunction with the Lancaster Opera House will help draw people downtown as they enjoy the improvements made in the Village.
- Action 1.3.4 – The Village of Depew should strive to revitalize Main Street; a market study and urban design plan should be completed to determine if this is feasible. The current development along Main Street has resulted in a loss of character because of development of residential units on the first floor; the “street activity” that is characteristic of successful Main Streets has been lost. Main Street could be revitalized as a commercial district to service area residents and the industries surrounding the corridor. Commercial uses should be encouraged on the first floor with residential units on the second. This can be accomplished through the revisions in the zoning ordinance and the development of strict design guidelines for this area.

⇒ Policy 1.4 – To develop nodes of commercial uses throughout the Town of Lancaster

- Action 1.4.1 – For the convenience of residents in the eastern portion of the Town, specific commercial nodes should be developed throughout the Town of Lancaster. These nodes, designed as commercial neighborhoods that limit “strip” characteristics, can serve residents throughout the Town and minimize the need for extensive traveling to meet everyday shopping needs (milk, paper, etc.).
- Action 1.4.2 - The Town of Lancaster should develop strict design guidelines for future development in these designated commercial nodes. Because of the potential to develop “strip plazas” in these areas, the Town should set the standard for future development by outlining specific restrictions and regulations for future development. This will help ensure that the commercial nodes are developed with consideration for the neighborhoods where they are located.
- Action 1.4.3 – The Town of Lancaster should develop the Townline/Broadway area as a gateway into the communities. The Broadway corridor is an important entry into the Town and should be developed as a welcoming feature to people coming into the community. This could include streetscape improvements, signage and landscaping to create an attraction.

❖ Goal 2 – To recognize the inter-relationship among land use development, transportation corridors and infrastructure in the three communities

⇒ Policy 2.1 – To contain intensive development within the existing sewer districts

- Action 2.1.1 – The sewer district boundaries should not be extended to accommodate future growth. This boundary should act as the “growth limit area” for the three communities; intensive development should be targeted in this area. This would include residential, commercial and industrial development proposed within the Town of Lancaster.

⇒ Policy 2.2 - To recognize the limits of the transportation network in the communities

- Action 2.2.1 – The three communities should continue to work with the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) to determine the best route for the north-south connector and any additional east-west road improvements. The need for a north-south connector has been documented by the GBNRTC in the recently completed study and should be further pursued so funding can be secured.
- Action 2.2.2 - As the communities continue to grow, the need for additional roads will increase. In the Town of Cheektowaga, the William/Losson corridor is congested. While some of these vehicles originate in the Town of Lancaster or the two Villages, the specific impacts should be examined to determine potential alternatives. Alternative routes may minimize some traffic impacts on this inner ring suburb. The Town and two Villages should continue to work with the Town of Cheektowaga to determine potential mitigating measures for increased traffic on this corridor. Potential solutions include creating zoning ordinance changes that promote "transit friendly" development. This includes providing mixed uses districts near key nodes of activity such as near current bus stops and future multi-modal nodes. These nodes of activity should follow suggestions in the actions outlined under the Local Laws, Codes, and Ordinances section above.
- Action 2.2.3 – Smart growth principals should be utilized first and foremost before commitments are made to widen roadways simply to accommodate increased traffic volumes. Before any roadway is widened, it should first be determined if the widening is needed to meet basic safety standards. If there are no safety concerns, then alternative forms of development should be pursued before a commitment is made to widening the road. A second alternative to relieve traffic congestion would be to examine the use of the abandoned railroad lines as opportunities to relieve some of the areas traffic congestion. Some of these areas may be able to be converted to roadways, truck routes, lightrail rapid transit, or industrial railroad spurs.

AGRICULTURAL LAND

- ❖ Goal 1 - To recognize the importance of agricultural land on the rural character of the eastern part of the Town of Lancaster.
 - ⇒ Policy 1.1 - To develop a comprehensive agricultural and farmland preservation plan.
 - Action 1.1.1 - The Town of Lancaster should identify key agricultural lands for protection as a part of the farmland preservation plan. Qualities for consideration should include those lands with prime agricultural soils, actively farmed land and land with high scenic value. Agricultural lands within the existing agricultural district, in the Ransom Road-Schwartz Road area in particular, should be protected.
 - Action 1.1.2 - As a part of the comprehensive farmland preservation plan, the Town should work in conjunction with the Cornell Cooperative Extension and Erie County to maintain a "critical mass" of farming uses within the Town of Lancaster. This "critical mass" can help to ensure continued viability, particularly in the southern portion of the agricultural district.
 - Action 1.1.3 - The farmland preservation plan should consider implementing a Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) Program to prevent development on identified key farmlands. There is a matching fund component of this program. This approach is currently being implemented in the Town of Marilla.
 - Action 1.1.4 - The Town of Lancaster should request first right of refusal on sale of key agricultural lands identified for protection in the farmland preservation plan.
 - Action 1.1.5 - The farmland preservation plan should include a resolution from the Town Board to re-certify the Lancaster-Alden Agricultural District.

⇒ Policy 1.2 - To recognize the potential value of farmland preservation grants for the Town of Lancaster.

- Action 1.2.1 - The Town of Lancaster should work with their grant writer to seek available New York State farmland preservation funds; these funds could be used to establish a purchase of development rights (PDR) program.
- Action 1.2.2 - The Town, in conjunction with their grant writer, could also seek farmland preservation planning grants under the Rural New York Grant Program of the New York Planning Federation.

⇒ Policy 1.3 - To recognize the importance of the regional Farmers Market in the Village of Lancaster

- Action 1.3.1 - The Village of Lancaster should continue to provide an adequate amount of Village land for the Farmers Market. In addition, the Village of Lancaster should maintain a positive dialogue with representatives from the Farmers Market to ensure their needs and concerns are met. The Village should also consider enhancing advertising of the Farmers Market in local and regional publications.

⇒ Policy 1.4 - To recognize the importance of potential historic/architectural resources on farm properties

- Action 1.4.1 - Future historic/architectural resource inventories conducted for the Town of Lancaster should include farm homesteads, barns, and other farm structures.
- Action 1.4.2 - The Town of Lancaster should encourage the listing of eligible historic farm properties on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

❖ Goal 2 - To protect agricultural lands for agricultural uses especially in the agricultural districts

⇒ Policy 2.1 - To recognize the potential value of working with land trusts to preserve farmland and promote agricultural uses in Lancaster.

- Action 2.1.1 - The Town of Lancaster, in conjunction with Erie County, should invite representatives of local, regional, and national land trusts which support and facilitate farmland preservation to speak to local farmers, decision makers, and the public about agricultural protection strategies.
- Action 2.1.2 - The Town of Lancaster should follow the land trust recommendations discussed for open space preservation outlined in Parks and Recreation Policy.

⇒ Policy 2.2 - To adopt land use regulations that are more supportive of agricultural uses.

- Action 2.2.1 – The communities should consider the adoption of a Town of Lancaster "Right to Farm" law. This law would be in compliance with the Erie County law and would protect farmer's rights.
- Action 2.2.2 - The Town of Lancaster zoning ordinance could be amended by adding agricultural protection zoning (APZ) in the southern portion of the agricultural district in the Schwartz-Ransom Roads area, the most vital and active farming area in the Town. APZ designates farming as the primary land use and discourages other land uses. For example, residential use would be allowed in the APZ, but would be restricted to one house per 20 or more acres.
- Action 2.2.3 - The Town of Lancaster zoning ordinance should be amended to require residential developments in the agricultural district to maintain a sufficient wooded buffer area from agricultural uses to avoid conflict between uses.

- Action 2.2.4 - The Town of Lancaster zoning ordinance should be amended to require conservation density housing development in the agricultural district outside the APZ with housing located off prime soils and as far from active farming uses as possible. Agricultural conservation easements could be placed on active farmlands preserved as the open space component.
- Action 2.2.5 - The Town of Lancaster zoning ordinance should be amended to offer density bonuses to projects that permanently protect active farmlands.
- Action 2.2.6 - The Town of Lancaster zoning ordinance should keep lot sizes as small as septic systems permit within the agricultural district outside the APZ. In addition, there could be a maximum building setback with flexibility to permits smaller building setbacks.

⇒ Policy 2.3 - To maintain sewer-free agricultural districts

- Action 2.3.1 - The Town of Lancaster should limit public sewer infrastructure to the boundaries of existing County and Town sewer districts.
- Action 2.3.2 - The Town Planning board should deny applications for individual sewage treatment plants in the agricultural district.
- Action 2.3.3 - The Town Planning Board should limit industrial and commercial development in the eastern portion of the Town to Walden Avenue and small pockets of Broadway.

⇒ Policy 2.4 - To recognize the importance of providing economic incentives and opportunities to agricultural concerns

- Action 2.4.1 - The Town should consider working in conjunction with the Lancaster Industrial Development Agency (LIDA) to extend eligible LIDA funding and financing programs to suitable agricultural enterprises.

- Action 2.4.2 - The Town should continue to use differential assessment practices (also known as current or farm use valuation) which assesses agricultural land at its value for agriculture instead of for residential subdivision. This equitable assessment practice recognizes that a farm demands far fewer municipal services than a residential subdivision would on the same land area. As stipulated in the State legislation, farmers may aggregate smaller parcels to achieve the minimum land area for agricultural assessment.
- Action 2.4.3 - The Town of Lancaster should specifically authorize and encourage the development of on-site commercial agricultural activities, such as farm stands, that can enhance farm profitability.
- Action 2.4.4 - The Town of Lancaster should work in conjunction with interested farmers to promote farm tours and other special activities through advertising and cooperation with any required permits.

TRANSPORTATION

- ❖ Goal 1 – To determine the most efficient way to move people in and around the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew

⇒ Policy 1.1 - To continue work with GBNRTC as a policy to continually monitor changes in transportation movements throughout the study area and region.

- Action 1.1.1 - To better address transportation issues and to monitor the growing impact on the study area's transportation network, the communities should establish an ad hoc Transportation Committee. Committee members should be made up of officials from each of the communities in the study area and should have a consistent meeting schedule; representatives from surrounding communities (Amherst, Clarence, Cheektowaga, Alden) should also be included on the Committee.
- Action 1.1.2 - The Transportation Committee should coordinate with Erie County Department of Environment and Planning (ECDEP) as they interface with GBNRTC to update the 2010 Transportation System Plan for the Erie and Niagara Region. The overall focus of suggested roadway improvements should be ones that increase mobility while minimizing land use impacts, expanding the quality of life, and preserving the natural rural beauty.

⇒ Policy 1.2 - To promote public transportation as a viable means of transportation.

- Action 1.2.1 - The Transportation Committee should monitor and contribute to the development of NFTA's HUBLINK program that focuses on redefining public transit to improve mobility. Secondary hubs, or "suburban centers", should be defined so that new rural bus routes are efficiently linked to both existing suburban development and planned development.

- Action 1.2.2 - The Transportation Committee should work with NFTA's HUBLINK program to define "community circulatory routes" which are designed to link within the local area as well as to the urban and regional bus network and Metrorail. Planned stops should include local community destinations such as neighborhood commercial districts, employment centers, and shopping malls.

⇒ Policy 1.3 - To support area airports as a means of continuing economic development.

- Action 1.3.1 – The communities should continue to support, through land use regulations, existing privately owned and publicly run airports as cost effective options for private air transportation for area businesses. These airports offer an alternative for some commuters and also provide a needed service in the area.

❖ Goal 2 – To recognize the impacts of traffic, especially truck traffic on Broadway, in the Village cores

⇒ Policy 2.1 - To ensure that roadway improvements are completed in a timely and sufficient manner so as to alleviate impact of truck traffic on the village centers.

- Action 2.1.1 – The Town and two Villages should consider a signed truck by-pass to avoid Village streets. The communities should use the north-south transportation corridor, if constructed, to allow trucks an alternative route that would not impact the residential streets in the three communities.
- Action 2.1.2 – The Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew should continue to work with the NYS DOT to implement the streetscape improvements that have been developed for Broadway. These improvements include landscaping, paving and street furniture recommendations to create an attractive corridor through the two communities. Additional funding should be sought to implement further improvements along the corridor in the future.

- ❖ Goal 3 – To improve the overall transportation system, thus minimizing the impacts of “commuters”, in the three communities

⇒ Policy 3.1 - To work with GBNRTC to endorse the Lancaster North-South Corridor Preservation Study and concept

- Action 3.1.1 - Each of the communities should endorse the concept of the modified North-South Corridor. The specific corridor location may not be appropriate and a new corridor should be determined to minimize land use conflicts. The corridor should open industrial development potentials; the exact location should be determined with this in mind. The corridor should not bisect Como Park and consideration should be made to end the road at Broadway. The Transportation Council should advocate that any such construction be done in an environmentally sensitive manner that does not change the character of the area it passes through; the corridor must be sensitive to existing natural features, agricultural uses and recreation facilities. This corridor should also be a limited access road with nodes of development allowed near future interchanges.
- Action 3.1.2 – The communities should monitor the impacts of moving the toll barriers on the Thruway. The Future Land Use Plan has classified this area as Office/Research and Development, which is a classification that fully supports and benefits from a new Thruway toll barrier. Moving the toll barrier to an area near Gunville Road will make the lands more attractive for future industrial development along Walden Avenue. The GBNRTC North-South Corridor study has noted that moving the toll barrier and removing the tolls at Exit 49 does not significantly impact the base traffic conditions. However, it is expected that by the very nature of adding a new toll barrier, traffic to and from the interchange will increase.

⇒ Policy 3.2 – To include future land use and zoning recommendations that limit the potential for strip development along the new corridor and encourage a development pattern in the eastern portion of the Town that preserves the existing rural character.

- Action 3.2.1 – The Town of Lancaster should implement design standards for commercial development along the new corridor proposed to link the Thruway with William Street. The standards should require that new development construct shared parking to limit the number of curb cuts, locate parking at the side or rear of the facility, preserve the greenspace along the roadway frontage, and limit height, color and material types on signs. These design standards should create “neighborhoods” of development that will not negatively impact the quality of the community or negatively impact the role of the new corridor as a bypass.

⇒ Policy 3.3 – To work with GBNRTC to support alternative means of transportation as a method of reducing commuter traffic.

- Action 3.3.1 – The Town and Villages should explore the potential for developing park and ride facilities for residents. These facilities could offer express bus service in the eastern portion of the Town to provide a faster means for traveling within the region.
- Action 3.3.2 – The three communities should include guidelines for transit features within new development. These guidelines can be required in the zoning or through design guidelines established for the Town.

⇒ Policy 3.4 - To monitor the effects of recent road improvements to Transit Road on the surrounding transportation system.

- Action 3.4.1 - As the character of Transit Road changes from a service oriented facility to a regional commercial facility, the communities should work with GBNRTC and surrounding communities to monitor the adverse impacts on the surrounding road network. People will continue to seek alternative routes as Transit Road continues to be a regional commercial destination.
- Action 3.4.2 - Traffic calming techniques should be used on Transit Road and linked with the efforts in Clarence and Amherst. By developing a parallel service road, the number of curb-cuts and traffic lights on the corridor could be reduced. In addition, the aesthetic quality of the corridor would be improved and will help attract further patrons.

- Action 3.4.3 – The Town and two Villages should work with the Town of Cheektowaga as they complete a corridor study for the Transit/French Road area (near W. Seneca town line); the communities should request input into the overall study and assist the Town in the study. This study should be tied with other efforts that are currently being pursued to improve the traffic carrying capacity of Transit Road and the overall quality of this regional destination. The placement of non-residential driveways should be considered for their potential impacts to surrounding residential development. Consideration should be given to the impacts of volume, traffic type, hours of operation, etc. that could impact residential development.

- ❖ Goal 4 – To improve the pedestrian and cycling transportation system while linking the three communities
 - ⇒ Policy 4.1 - To ensure that roadway improvements and new commercial and subdivision development integrate features that enhance the pedestrian and bicycling environment.
 - Action 4.1.1 – The three communities should include bus, pedestrian and bikeway provisions in all road improvement projects. This can be implemented through zoning restrictions or other land use regulations. Standards for walkways and bicycle lanes should be established to ensure new development is “linked” and people can use alternative forms of transportation in the region.
 - Action 4.1.2 – The Town and two Villages should support local road construction standards that incorporate traffic calming (speed reduction) principals. These can be used on certain heavily traveled corridors to enhance the aesthetic quality of these streets and improve the safety of the roads.
 - Action 4.1.3 – The Town and two Villages should strive to develop a comprehensive bicycle transportation network that can be linked with the system of surrounding communities (e.g. Cheektowaga, Amherst). These systems will offer an alternative mode of transportation for those interested. The GBNRTC bicycle plan should be used as a guide for the future bicycle plan in the three communities.

⇒ Policy 4.2 - To ensure that communities offer an adequate pedestrian system and develop a high quality pedestrian circulation system.

- Action 4.2.1 – The communities should provide adequate signage at pedestrian crossings to alert motorists and ensure safety of pedestrians. Streetscape improvements could include a change in paving patterns, flashing lights, bump-outs or other safety measures to clearly mark the area designated for pedestrians.
- Action 4.2.2 – The Town and two Villages should solicit funding to study the feasibility of constructing a trail along Cayuga Creek. The trail could begin in the Village of Depew and continue east into Como Lake Park. Once at the eastern edge of the park, the trail could follow existing roadways and eventually link to Westwood Park in the Town of Lancaster. Trail development along Cayuga Creek should link back into the surrounding neighborhoods via tree lined streets with sidewalks.
- Action 4.2.3 – The Town and Villages should maintain comprehensive maps of the trail system and update the literature annually. This information can be included on the website developed for the communities and mailed to residents with water or tax bills. Promoting the trail system will attract both residents and people from around the region; commercial areas that include restaurants, ice cream parlors or other tourist attractions should be linked with the trail to serve trail users.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

❖ Goal 1 - To provide adequate servicing for future development in the three communities

⇒ Policy 1.1 - To maintain, enhance, and expand the water distribution system in the three communities

- Action 1.1.1 - Plans are currently underway for the Erie County Water Authority to take over control of water services in the Villages of Lancaster and Depew. Inclusion of these vital Village services in the Erie County system should ensure that the smaller Village systems are maintained and expanded where needed, thereby increasing the quality of service to residents.
- Action 1.1.2 - The water distribution system in the Town of Lancaster's Pleasant View tank zone should be improved to provide adequate pressure and supply. This is especially true for emergency uses.

⇒ Policy 1.2 - To maintain, enhance, and expand the sewer system in the three communities

- Action 1.2.1 - Areas in the Town of Lancaster that lie within the Erie County Sewer District but do not currently have public sewers should be connected to the County system. Consistent with land use recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan, higher density residential development in the Town (and the necessary sewer extensions) should be focused in areas adjoining the two Villages. Additional new development and sewer extensions in the Town should be steered to other areas within the existing sewer districts. Sewer district boundaries should not be extended to accommodate new development in eastern portions of the Town which lie outside sewer district boundaries.
- Action 1.2.2 - The Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew's sewer system management plans should continue to be enforced.

- Action 1.2.3 - Sewer improvements planned within the three communities should take place concurrently with State or County roadway and other projects. Doing this work concurrently will minimize the environmental impacts of construction (soil removal, airborne dust), the inconvenience to residents, and the overall costs of the project.

⇒ Policy 1.3 - To take advantage of State, County, and Federal funds available for infrastructure improvements

- Action 1.3.1 - The three communities should apply jointly for grant or loan monies available for infrastructure improvements through various governmental agencies including U.S. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Many agencies look favorably on such regional efforts because it shows that resources will be used to benefit a larger geographical area. One grant writer for the three communities could prepare such applications.

❖ Goal 2 - To determine potential consolidation of municipal services that would result in cost savings for the Town and two Villages

⇒ Policy 2.1 - To consolidate solid waste collection and disposal services in the three communities and, if appropriate, surrounding communities

- Action 2.1.1 - The Town of Lancaster and Villages of Lancaster and Depew should conduct a study to determine the feasibility of municipal consolidation of solid waste services, including trash, recycling and yard waste. Considerable cost savings for the communities and the residents could be realized in the short and long term with consolidation.
- Action 2.1.2 - The potential of developing a regional facility to compost or reuse organic matter in the three communities should be studied. As recycling becomes a larger part of solid waste management, creation of a new facility would be a proactive approach to handling and processing of this type of matter. Service to neighboring communities in central Erie County should also be explored. The Amherst facility is currently nearing capacity, but the Town should be contacted as a source of information.

⇒ Policy 2.2 - To explore ways of increasing the quality of service and the cost-effectiveness of existing utilities

- Action 2.2.1 - The feasibility of creating a public access cable television station for the three-community region should be considered. The public access channel could be used to broadcast local board meetings (Town Board, Village Board, school board) as well as local events (parades, concerts, recitals, etc.). This could serve to raise community pride and increase residents' awareness of community activities.

⇒ Policy 2.3 - To cooperatively address the issues of storm water drainage and flooding

- Action 2.3.1 - The Town of Lancaster and Villages of Lancaster and Depew should consider developing a coordinated storm water management plan for the three communities. Because of the regional nature of these issues, the plan should extend beyond the boundaries of the three communities to cover the areas in adjoining municipalities, especially the Town of Cheektowaga.
- Action 2.3.2 - Storm water drainage plans for proposed new developments should be reviewed by representatives of all potentially affected communities. Development activity at one location along a creek path will impact the creek's flow downstream. This review will allow neighboring municipalities to comment on the proposed design and location of the new development so that drainage patterns are not adversely affected.
- Action 2.3.3 - Existing storm water problem areas should be jointly addressed. Such areas include erosion problems along Zurbrick Road in Depew, siltation problems along Scajaquada Creek and seasonal overflows of tributaries to Cayuga Creek. The Zurbrick Road area has recently received funding to improve the erosion problems and additional funding should be sought.

- ❖ Goal 3 - To incorporate existing sewer district boundaries in land use decisions
 - ⇒ Policy 3.1 - To ensure that any expansion of sewer infrastructure is consistent with and supports the land use objectives of the Regional Comprehensive Plan
 - Action 3.1.1 - The existing boundaries of County and Town sewer districts should constitute the limit for higher density development in the Lancaster-Depew region. This growth limit supports the overall land use objectives identified by the communities in the Comprehensive Plan and ensures the most efficient use of land resources.
 - Action 3.1.2 - Any expansion of sewer infrastructure should be consistent with the agricultural preservation objectives of Erie County and New York State.
 - ⇒ Policy 3.2 - To incorporate existing Town of Lancaster sewer districts into Erie County Sewer District #4
 - Action 3.2.1 - Necessary improvements, including upgrades to older sewer lines, should be made to the Town of Lancaster sewer districts to enable them to be incorporated into Erie County Sewer District #4. Connection to the larger Erie County system should increase the efficiency of the Town system and produce cost benefits to Town residents.

ENVIRONMENT

❖ Goal 1 - To preserve natural resources in the Town and Villages

⇒ Policy 1.1 - To protect the creeks and streams flowing through the Lancaster-Depew area

- Action 1.1.1 – As outlined in the 1988 Ellicott Creek Improvement Program, the Town of Lancaster should establish a minimum 100-foot greenway easement along both banks of Ellicott Creek in order to maintain the natural condition of the creek bank. This guideline should also be considered for the other creeks in the area (Scajaquada, Cayuga, Spring, Plum Bottom, Little Buffalo and Slate Bottom).
- Action 1.1.2 - The Town and Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew should continue to include an assessment of creek cresting patterns when reviewing new development. The cresting patterns determine the expected timing of floods and will enable the communities to plan for flooding situations. This information will also enable the communities to provide appropriate storm water detention for creek waters.

⇒ Policy 1.2 - To protect significant wooded areas in the Town and Villages

- Action 1.2.1 - The wooded areas within the Town of Lancaster and Villages of Lancaster and Depew as shown on the Regional Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map should be preserved to the greatest extent possible. Local boards should discourage unnecessary tree clearing as development proposals are reviewed.
- Action 1.2.2 - Local Planning Boards should require developers to provide a plan to show wooded areas that will be removed for site development. When possible, wooded areas should be protected as new development occurs. Where deemed necessary, wooded areas should be restored by developers so that these significant natural resources are not unduly diminished in the communities.

- Action 1.2.3 - The Town of Lancaster and Villages of Lancaster and Depew should consider implementing an enhanced tree-planting program. Currently, the Town has a Tree Master Plan and plants approximately 900 trees per year in all three communities. The Villages could concentrate on getting street trees planted and the Town could concentrate on park and public open space areas. The Town of Cheektowaga should be included in the program to work with the portion of the Depew within their border. The planting of additional trees in these communities will help ensure the attractiveness of the area and replenish some of the vegetation lost through development.
- ❖ Goal 2 - To protect the quality and integrity of natural ecosystems including areas of inherent biological diversity
- ⇒ Policy 2.1 - To ensure that development does not occur in areas which the natural environment can not support
- Action 2.1.1 - The Town of Lancaster should consider soil conditions, topography, floodplains and other environmental conditions when it reviews new development projects. An engineering report verifying that the environmental conditions can sustain the proposed development should be required.
 - Action 2.1.2 - The Town of Lancaster should consider purchasing properties north of Pleasant View Drive close to Stony Road that is owned by M&T Bank for creation of a wilderness protection area. These properties are small and unlikely to be developed for other uses; they are also adjacent to State and federal wetland areas. Their designation as a natural area is an appropriate use for this land.

⇒ Policy 2.2 - To incorporate drainage information in land use decisions

- Action 2.2.1 - A regional drainage plan should be developed for the creeks within the Town of Lancaster and Villages of Lancaster and Depew, as well as neighboring towns. Similar to the information in the Ellicott Creek Improvement Project prepared in 1988, plans should be prepared for all creeks to show the timing of cresting patterns after rainstorms occur to enable the communities to locate and design new developments appropriately. The regional drainage plan could be developed with assistance from the Erie County Division of Environment and Planning, where much of the drainage information is maintained.
- Action 2.2.2 - The Town of Lancaster and Villages of Lancaster and Depew should require a drainage plan and detention/retention ponds as appropriate before approving individual site developments. The communities should ensure that site drainage will not adversely affect the property or adjacent properties before granting approval.

⇒ Policy 2.3 - To provide additional areas for public enjoyment and education of the natural environment

- Action 2.3.1 - The Town should develop a preservation strategy for land located at the end of Penora Street south of William Street. This land consists of several small lots that are not likely to be developed; its use as a conservation area will preserve the natural character of this spot and provide a refuge for the surrounding residential properties. The Town should explore funding to purchase the land or permanent easements in this area.
- Action 2.3.2 - The Town should consider establishing public fishing areas, similar to the north bank of the creek between Transit Road and Main Street in Bowmansville, at locations along Ellicott Creek:
 - (1) near Stony Road
 - (2) at Pavement Road
 - (3) at Ransom Road

Issues of maintenance and liability must be addressed prior to establishment of these areas.

❖ Goal 3 - To ensure that the environmental quality of former industrial sites is maintained

⇒ Policy 3.1 - To assess the location and quality of brownfield sites in the Town and Village of Lancaster and the Village of Depew

- Action 3.1.1 - The Town and Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew should undertake an inventory of former industrial sites (brownfields) within their boundaries. The inventory should contain the location, size, owner, contamination (if any) and required clean-up.
- Action 3.1.2 - The communities should market their brownfield sites with the goal of returning them to productive use. Brownfield redevelopment is an important way to "recycle" land in the three communities; returning them to tax-generating properties will bolster the local economy and provide employment for residents.

⇒ Policy 3.2 - To ensure that mined areas are returned to an appropriately developable state

- Action 3.2.1 - The Town of Lancaster should monitor former mined sites so that it is knowledgeable as to whether the reclamation plan is being followed. If not, the Town can report any problems to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation which approves the reclamation plans.
- Action 3.2.2 - The three communities should be involved in the development of any future reclamation plans developed for quarries in the Town of Lancaster. The Town and two Villages can impact the future redevelopment of properties to ensure these areas become attractive features rather than blighted areas in the Town of Lancaster.

2.3 Economy and Growth

ECONOMIC BASE

- ❖ Goal 1 - To expand the existing economic base within the three communities and increase local employment opportunities for residents

⇒ Policy 1.1 - To take advantage of the Town's status as a "Corporate Headquarters" location in Western New York

- Action 1.1.1 - Future promotional information produced within the three communities should stress the diversity of companies that have chosen to make this region their home. Positive quotes and comments from Human Resource representatives of these companies should be used to enhance this promotional literature.
- Action 1.1.2 - Future light industrial/office development should be directed toward the locations outlined in the Future Land Use Plan. These locations have been deemed appropriate for many reasons: compatibility with surrounding land uses, transportation access and infrastructure capacity. By guiding new development to appropriate locations, a high level of business efficiency and satisfaction is more likely.
- Action 1.1.3 - Planning Boards within each community should pay strict attention to the level of quality and attention to design standards for future light industrial construction projects. High quality development can contribute to attracting prestigious firms requiring high profile "Headquarter" locations.

⇒ Policy 1.2 - To maintain regular communication with the existing businesses and industries within the three communities to determine their existing and future needs

- Action 1.2.1 - The three communities should complete regularly scheduled telephone interviews with the Human Resource Departments of existing industries. These interviews could be completed by the existing Chamber of Commerce or by representatives from the Lancaster Industrial Development Agency.

- Action 1.2.2 - In addition to telephone interviews, regularly scheduled surveys should be mailed to industries within the three communities. Even if the return rate for these surveys is low, the effort will impress local industry and foster an environment of caring and concern. These surveys will enable the three communities to remain abreast of current employment opportunities and general needs of regional industry.

⇒ Policy 1.3 - To maintain a diversified industrial base, in terms of size and type, in the three communities

- Action 1.3.1 - To market employment sectors where opportunities currently exist within the three communities and encourage educational skill that can help to meet these needs. Specifically, there is a demonstrated current need for high level professional "inside" sales specialists, high-tech machinists, metalworkers and tool & die operators.
- Action 1.3.2 - The three communities should work together, potentially through the Industrial Forum of Eastern Erie County (IFECC) and the Lancaster IDA, to attract small businesses that employ 10-50 people. Small businesses comprise more than 80% of the total United States business environment.

⇒ Policy 1.4 - To foster business entrepreneurship within the three communities

- Action 1.4.1 - The three communities should establish sources for financing, market research, training and facilities to encourage entrepreneurship and the creation or attraction of small industries (10-50 employees) where negotiations can occur directly with owners to facilitate the decision making process.
- Action 1.4.2 - The three communities should work with the Lancaster IDA to apply for funding from the Erie County Industrial Development Agency's (funded through Erie county CDBG Urban County Consortium) "Revolving Loan Fund" for entrepreneurs seeking to start a business enterprise. This program can handle loans from start up to \$500,000.

- Action 1.4.3 - The three communities should use the Village of Lancaster CBD Revitalization Plan as a tool to foster entrepreneurship within the Central Business District.
 - Action 1.4.4 – Local banks should be contacted to determine their potential role in attracting businesses to the Town and two Villages. Bank input is essential to determine the type of development that could be supported and to illustrate their commitment to the three communities.
- ❖ Goal 2 - To foster opportunities for coordinated industrial and commercial development
- ⇒ Policy 2.1 - Promote retail core development within the Village of Lancaster along Broadway in the Village of Depew
- Action 2.1.1 - The Planning Boards of all three communities should adopt and promote the concept that small retail development should be directed toward the Village of Lancaster CBD and the Broadway "Main Street" corridor in Depew. The Future Land Use Plan should be used as a rationale for supporting this land use decision.
- ⇒ Policy 2.2 - To promote appropriate portions of the Walden Avenue corridor for industrial development in the three communities
- Action 2.2.1 - The Planning Boards of all three communities should adopt and promote the concept that the Walden Avenue corridor is appropriate for future industrial development. The Future Land Use Plan should be used as a rationale for supporting this land use decision.

- Action 2.2.2 - Particular attention should be given to the area bounded by the Village of Lancaster line on the west, Erie Street on the south and Cemetery Road on the east. This area is part of the largest block of industrially zoned Greenfield in Erie County, is well separated from most residential or conflicting land uses, is accessible by rail, has a county-owned rail line as the western edge of the area, has a former rail corridor through the center that is publicly owned, is within Erie County Sewer District #4 and is fully serviceable. This type of fill-in development is important to minimize further sprawl in the communities and promote job growth for the entire region.
- Action 2.2.3 – Care should be taken to ensure that future land use conflicts are avoided as development occurs along Walden Avenue. Through the use of design guidelines and other land use regulations (buffers, setbacks, transfer of development rights, etc.), the communities should protect non-industrial uses from potential conflicts with future industrial development. For example, the new subdivision just west of Stony Road should be protected and buffered from future industrial development to ensure a minimal of land use conflicts.

⇒ Policy 2.3 - Promote further expansion of the existing Lancaster Industrial Park within the Village of Lancaster limits

- Action 2.3.1 - The three communities should continue their efforts to increase the number of businesses in the existing Lancaster Industrial Park. The Village is currently extending the access road further into the park to promote further development. New light industrial and office development should be directed toward this Park.

⇒ Policy 2.4 - To use the Lancaster Industrial Development Agency to promote economic development within all three communities

- Action 2.4.1 - The Lancaster IDA should adopt a more "regional" focus by promoting commercial and industrial development in all three communities. The IDA should adopt, in principle, the Future Land Use Plan prepared for the Joint Comprehensive Plan and direct development to the locations recommended in the Plan.

⇒ Policy 2.5 - To support the completion of joint funding applications for infrastructure and economic development

- Action 2.5.1 - The three communities should share the services of a grant writer who can help to procure funding for Joint Economic Development and Infrastructure projects.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

- ❖ Goal 1 - To attract new commercial and retail businesses to the three communities
 - ⇒ Policy 1.1 - To attract new business rather than businesses relocating from other areas of Western New York
 - Action 1.1.1 - The three communities, in cooperation with the Lancaster IDA, should strive to attract new regional businesses as opposed to businesses locating from an adjacent community by offering tax incentives and low interest bonds. Priority should be given to smaller "start-up" businesses driven by entrepreneurs. Canadian companies seeking a U.S. presence, as well as companies seeking relocation from out of the area.
 - ⇒ Policy 1.2 - To direct commercial and retail growth to appropriate locations within the three communities
 - Action 1.2.1 - New retail development should be directed toward the Village of Lancaster Central Business District and/or the Broadway ("Main Street") corridor in the Village of Depew
 - Action 1.2.2 - Transit Road, Dick Road and George Urban Boulevard should be recognized as regional commercial corridors; new commercial development should be directed to these areas. Surrounding communities should be consulted on developments that border two municipalities.
- ❖ Goal 2 - To promote positive and regular communication among the existing municipal and business organizations in the three communities

- ⇒ Policy 2.1 - To promote the adoption, in principle, of the Joint Comprehensive Plan by all existing municipal and business organizations within the three communities
- Action 2.1.1 - The Joint Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee should hold regularly scheduled meetings to actively promote the recommendations of the Joint Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use Plan. These meetings should be held with the Chamber of Commerce, the Lancaster IDA, the Industrial Forum of Eastern Erie County (IFECC), and the municipal departments of all three communities.
- ⇒ Policy 2.2 - To keep existing municipal and business organizations within the three communities apprised of the Joint Comprehensive Plan's progress as it occurs.
- Action 2.2.1 - As the Joint Comprehensive Plan evolves over time, the Joint Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee should keep municipal and business organizations apprised of changes and accomplishments. This action will help keep momentum at a high level and foster a spirit of community involvement.

EMPLOYMENT

- ❖ Goal 1 - To provide job training to underemployed and unemployed residents within the three communities
 - ⇒ Policy 1.1 - To encourage educators and employers to provide job training opportunities in the region
 - Action 1.1.1 - Evening training courses should be offered to the under-employed and unemployed within the three communities. Special programs, designed in conjunction with local industries and/or the WNY Metalworking Institute, could be sponsored by BOCES or the Private Industry Council.
 - Action 1.1.2 - Evening training courses should be advertised through channels that will reach the most people possible. These channels could include the Lancaster Bee, the Lancaster/Depew Public Library, the NYS Department of Labor and other federal and state agencies.
 - ⇒ Policy 1.2 - To institute training at the high school level that will enable students to meet current employment deficiencies within the three communities
 - Action 1.2.1 - The three communities should work with BOCES and the Western New York Metalworking Institute to establish training courses for high school students that can meet current employment deficiencies.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- ❖ Goal 1 - To provide a "one stop shopping" environment to streamline the development and approval process in the three communities

⇒ Policy 1.1 - To adopt complementary land use legislation within the three communities

- Action 1.1.1 – The three communities should create a position and hire a planner that can be shared by the Town and two Villages. The planner would be responsible for reviewing proposals before the various Town and Village Boards, Planning Boards and Zoning Boards. Implementing the recommendations of the comprehensive plan and working to attract new interests into the community could also be handled by the planner. The planner could create and update GIS mapping, rewrite land use regulations, liaise with various state and federal agencies to acquire funding, etc..
- Action 1.1.2 - The three communities should follow the recommendations presented in the Comprehensive Plan to update and amend existing zoning ordinances. The purpose is to create a streamlined development process and a land use "language" that can be easily translated between the three communities.

⇒ Policy 1.2 - To establish a "Regional Planning Center" within the three communities that would house offices from all development interests (IDA, Planning, Economic Development, Building Inspection, etc.)

- Action 1.2.1 - Regional planning services that are responsive to community needs should be explored. A detailed study should be conducted to clearly illustrate offices that could be consolidated and services that could be shared by the three communities. The study should also focus on the mechanisms necessary to implement these regional services. The regional services could employ people or agencies offering any development approval (planning, zoning, building inspectors, economic development) and result in a regional approach to economic development; the Lancaster IDA could be consolidated as a part of the regional services.

- Action 1.2.2 - Representation and "community identity" should be maintained on the municipal level. Positions within the regional organization could be created to represent "neighborhoods" which, at present, are municipal boundaries.
- ❖ Goal 2 - To determine effective ways of maximizing services in the three communities while minimizing tax rates
- ⇒ Policy 2.1 - To continually seek ways to consolidate government services wherever possible
- Action 2.1.1 - The three communities should consider contacting the Office of the State Comptroller to undergo the "\$mart Review" and the FAST (Fiscal Analysis Stress Test). These services can be provided free of charge and can help the three communities accomplish the following:
 - to determine if cash balances are monitored and idle cash is invested until needed
 - to determine if interest earnings are maximized
 - to determine if the costs of bank services are considered in determining the banking structure and the number of bank accounts maintained
 - to determine if available technology is used to increase efficiency and enhance cash management without substantially increasing costs
 - Action 2.1.2 - The three communities should carefully examine the budgets expended by the Police Departments and the percentage of the budget this service comprises relative to the remaining budget items. These departments comprise a large portion of the communities' overall budget and a study should be considered to determine if some consolidation of administration, central dispatching (which could also include fire departments), space or supplies could be implemented.

- Action 2.1.3 - Town/Village Board members within the three communities should liaise with the New York State Comptrollers Office to become educated regarding the four basic ingredients involving the investment of public monies: legality, safety, liquidity and yield. A well informed Town Board will make competent and efficient decisions that are best for the entire community.

⇒ Policy 2.2 - To continually seek ways to share services within the three communities wherever possible

- Action 2.2.1 - The three communities must remain apprised of the most current initiatives within New York State and the United States to share services amongst municipalities. There is no need to "reinvent the wheel"; following in the successful footsteps of others will generate additional success in the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, and Village of Depew.

Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
A Comprehensive Plan...A Common Future

3.0 Residents and Public Services

3.1 Introduction

This chapter assesses the characteristics of the people in the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew. Each of the three communities, Erie County and New York State are evaluated based on the Census information. The Census population information for the Town of Cheektowaga is also reviewed to fully consider the portion of Depew that is located within the Town.

The ultimate goal of any regional planning venture is to improve the quality of life for residents within the planning area. This chapter describes the Lancaster-Depew community of residents and evaluates the service infrastructure available to meet their health, safety, education, recreation, and housing needs. The inventory and analysis is divided into six sections addressing the region's population, housing, community services, emergency services, recreation/historic/cultural resources and local laws, codes and regulations.

The chapter opens with a description of the demographic characteristics of residents in the Lancaster-Depew region. The age structure, ethnicity, educational attainment, income levels, employment, occupation and poverty status of the region's residents are discussed. A survey of regional housing resources including the quantity and quality of local housing stock follows.

The Community and Emergency Service Sections describe the nature and scope of the education, health, social, and emergency, resources available to Lancaster-Depew residents. Municipal, proprietary and not-for-profit service providers are listed for each service type and community.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of local laws, codes and ordinances affecting land use and development for the three municipalities. By identifying existing resources, the chapter provides the foundation for an evaluation of future service needs and the housing, service provision, and regulatory recommendations presented in Chapter 7.

3.2 Population

Over the past five years, population in Western New York has generally remained steady. While some counties have experienced slight growth in population, Erie County has lost the highest percentage of population in this five-year period. A breakdown of the Western New York County populations include:

1990-1995 Population and Percent Change Western New York Counties

Location	1990 Population	1995 Population	Percent Change
NEW YORK	17,990,778	18,136,081	0.8%
Allegany County	50,470	51,390	1.8%
Cattaraugus County	84,234	85,596	1.6%
Chautauqua County	141,895	141,677	-0.2%
Erie County	968,584	962,046	-0.7%
Genesee County	60,060	61,316	2.1%
Niagara County	220,756	222,006	0.6%
Wyoming County	42,507	44,083	3.7%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

As the table above illustrates, Erie County lost almost one percent of their population between 1990 and 1995: a total of 6,538 residents. According to the Census, the County's population in 1996 was 960,314; this represents a decrease of 1.5% between 1990 and 1996.

According to the Census estimates, this trend has been mirrored in the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew. This information may not be completely accurate because the Census estimates the population for the entire County and then disaggregates the overall County estimates into the various Towns and Villages. This method is based on past trends known to the Census and may not reflect the true growth patterns that are being experienced by a region.

An analysis of building permits illustrates that in the Town, the number of residential building permits has declined over the past three years. In 1996, 297 building permits were issued; this dropped to 206 in 1997. Between January and July 1998, 100 building permits were issued so the number of residential permits could reach the 1997 level. Over the past five years, the high for residential building permits in the Town occurred in 1994 when 338 were issued.

In the Village of Lancaster, there were no new building permits for residential development in 1998. In 1997, there were three permits: one for a single dwelling and two for double dwellings. There were 11 permits issued in 1996 in the Village of Lancaster for both single and multi-dwelling units.

In the Village of Depew, there were two residential building permits issued in 1998, five in 1997 and eight in 1996. Several demolition permits were issued but the information obtained from the Village does not specify if the buildings demolished were residential or commercial. Many of these demolition permits were for the Walden and Transit corridor so the assumption could be made that houses were demolished for new commercial development.

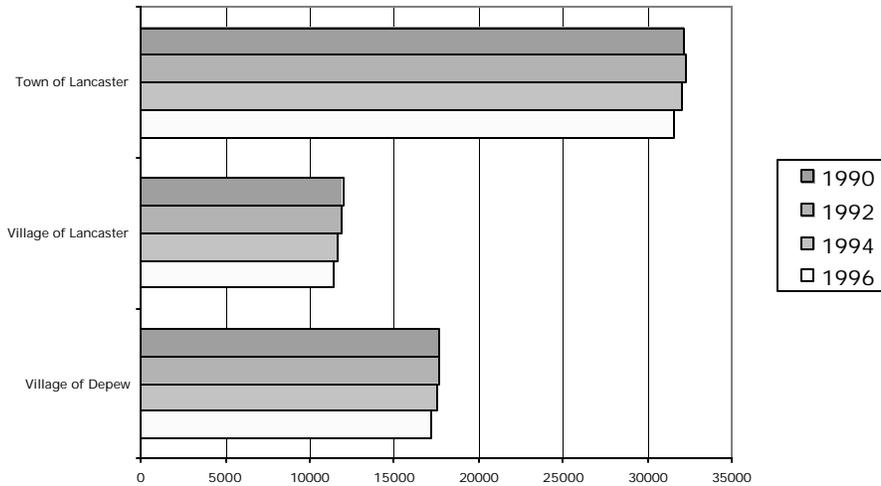
According to the US Bureau of Census, the 1996 population in the Town of Lancaster was 31,580 compared to a 1990 population of 32,181. This is a decrease of 2.5% in population.

In the Village of Lancaster, the 1996 population was estimated at 11,406. The 1990 population of the Village was 11,940 for a decrease of 4.4%.

In the Village of Depew, the 1996 population was estimated at 17,164 while the 1990 population was 17,673. This is an estimated decrease of 4.3%. The Town of Cheektowaga's 1996 population was estimated at approximately 99,561 while the 1990 population in the Town of Cheektowaga was 99,300; this is an estimated increase of approximately 1%.

The following chart illustrates the decrease in population for the three communities from 1990 through 1996.

Change in Population – 1990-1996 Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew



Source: US Bureau of the Census

Several population characteristics of the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew illustrate the composition of residents in these three communities. This information is helpful in assessing trends and potential growth that may impact their future. The most up-to-date census information is from the 1990 count. The overall characteristics have remained generally the same in terms of percentages.

This section assesses population characteristics of each community; characteristics assessed include age, ethnicity, education levels, unemployment rates, poverty level and homeownership. The evaluation includes Census information for the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew, Town of Cheektowaga, Erie County and New York State.

3.2.1 Existing Characteristics

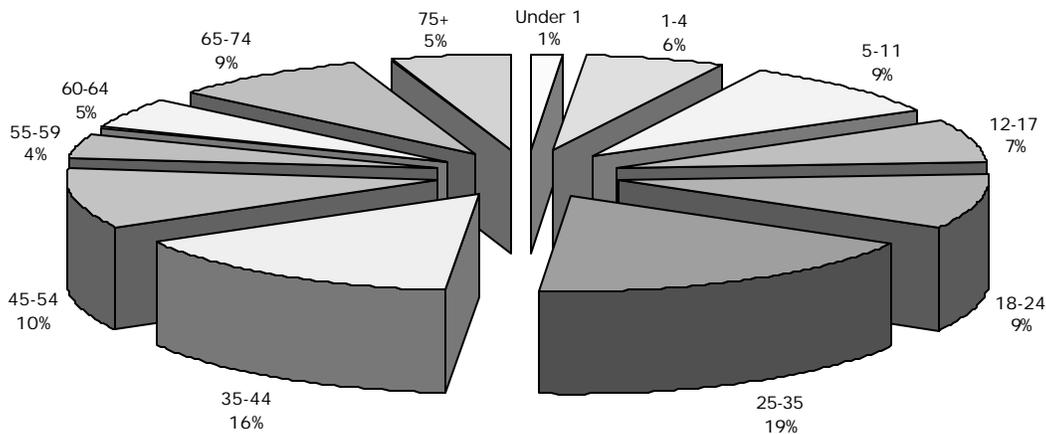
Age

The age of the population in Erie County has similar characteristics when compared to New York State as a whole. The population under the age of four is 7% in both the State and County. School aged children (5-17) includes 17% of the State population and 16% of the County's. "College-aged" residents in the State (18-24) include 10% in the State and 11% in the County. Young professionals (24-44) include 31% of both the State and County populations. Residents aging from 45-59 include 16% in the State and 15% in Erie County. Residents over 60 in the State represent approximately 18% of the total population. In Erie County, this percentage is approximately 20%.

Town of Lancaster

The Town of Lancaster age distribution represented in the pie chart below.

1990 Population Distribution by Age
Town of Lancaster



Source: US Bureau of the Census

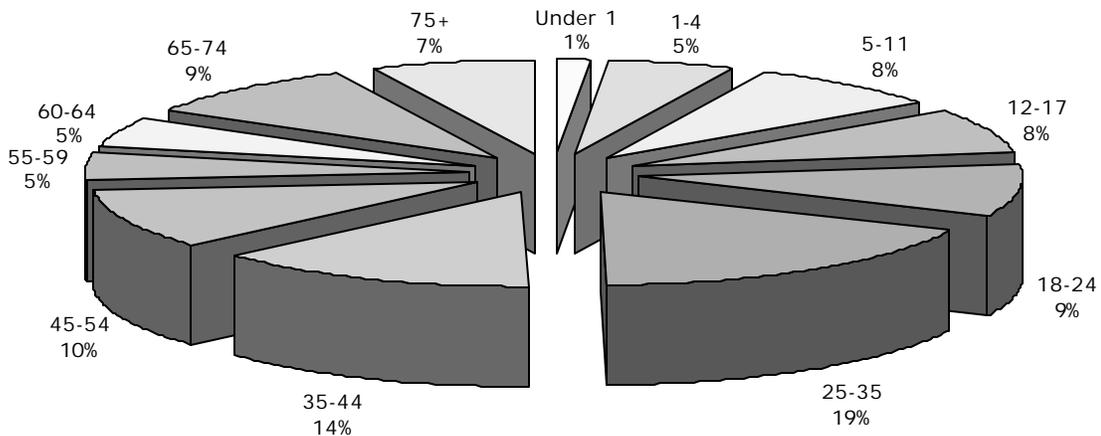
When compared with the State and County, the Town of Lancaster has similar age characteristics; overall, the population may be slightly younger than the remainder of the County and State.. The population in the Town under 4 years of age is approximately 7%. Residents between 5 and 17 include approximately 16%; this is similar to the County's percentage. College-aged residents include 9% of residents which is slightly lower than the County and State.

In the Town, residents aged 25-44 includes approximately 35% of the population that is slightly higher than the County and State percentages. Residents aged 45-59 include 14% of the population which is slightly lower than the County and State.. Residents over the age of 60 include 19% of the Town's population that is slightly lower than the County.

Village of Lancaster

The age distribution in the Village of Lancaster is illustrated in the chart below.

1990 Population Distribution by Age
Village of Lancaster



Source: US Bureau of the Census

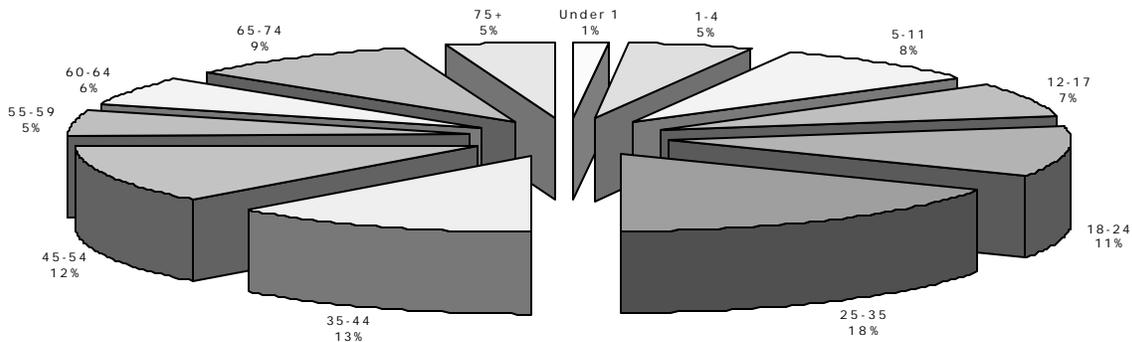
The Village of Lancaster age distribution is similar to the County and State. Residents under the age of four are approximately 6%; this is slightly lower than the County and State. percentage. School aged children in the Village represent approximately 16% of the overall population. Residents between 18 and 24 represent a slightly smaller percentage of the overall population in the Village when compared with the County and State: 9%.

Residents between 25-44 in the Village represent 33% of the overall population; this is slightly higher than both the County and State percentages of 31%. In the 45-59 age group, the percentage of population in the Village of Lancaster is approximately 15%. Residents over 60 in the Village represent approximately 21% of the population; this is higher than both the State (18%) and County (20%) percentages.

Village of Depew

In the Village of Depew, the age distribution in 1990 is represented in the chart below.

1990 Population Distribution Village of Depew



Source: US Bureau of the Census

The breakdown of population in the Village of Depew is similar to that of the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Town of Cheektowaga, Erie County and New York State; overall, the population appears to be slightly older than the other communities. Residents under the age of four include approximately 6% of the overall population. School-aged children include approximately 15% of the overall population in Depew; this is slightly lower than the County and State.

Residents between the ages of 18-24 account for 11% of the population; this is similar to the Town of Cheektowaga's percent of 10%. In the 25-44 age group, the population percentage is approximately 31% which is slightly higher than Cheektowaga's 29%. Residents in the 45-59 age group include approximately 17% of the population; this is slightly higher than the County and State. Residents over the age of 60 include approximately 20% of the Village's population that is higher than the State, but somewhat lower than the Village of Lancaster and Town of Cheektowaga.

Ethnicity

Determining the ethnicity of the population can assist communities in determining the types of services that could be required. Special needs of minority populations can be determined in comparing ethnic breakdowns with the County and the State. Some discrepancies may exist in the information because often respondents do not wish to include information on their ethnicity; the total population shown may not equal the population of the community.

In New York State, approximately 75% of residents are White; this is considerably lower than Erie County's percentage of White population that is 86%. 16% of the overall population in the State and Erie County is Black. American Indian (less than one percent), Asian (4%), and Other Races (4%) comprise the remainder of the population in the State. In Erie County, the percentage of American Indian is 1%, Asian is 1% and Other Races is 1%.

The population in the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew is essentially White. In the Town of Lancaster, approximately 99% of the population is White; the other 1% of the population includes 113 Black, 118 American Indian and 87 Asian residents. In the Village of Lancaster, 99% of the population is white. There are also 21 American Indian and 28 Asian residents in the Village; this accounts for the remaining 1% of the Village population (NOTE: the Census shows no Black residents in Lancaster for the 1990 Census – this is known not to be accurate). The Village of Depew also has a population that is almost all White: 99%. The remaining 1% of the population includes 83 Black, 75 American Indian and 46 Asian residents.

The following table illustrates the breakdown of population in each community:

1990 Population by Ethnicity
Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
Town of Cheektowaga, Erie County and New York State

	Town of Lancaster	Village of Lancaster	Village of Depew	Town of Cheektowaga	Erie County	New York State
White	31857	11891	17469	97760	832129	13398003
Black	113	0	83	994	109668	2860590
American Indian	118	21	75	119	5380	59081
Asian	97	28	43	316	9852	689262
Other Race	0	0	0	111	11353	98519
TOTAL	32185	11940	17670	99300	968382	17105455

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Education

Education levels are classified in the US Census according to the highest level of school completed or the highest degree received. In determining potential a community's growth potentials, especially in terms of employment opportunities, the level of education indicates the type of industry or employment that should be targeted.

In New York State in 1990, approximately 10% of the population had completed elementary school and 15% had completed high school but not received a diploma. 29% of residents in the State had completed high school and 16% completed some college. 7% of the New York State population has completed an Associates Degree while 13% have completed a Bachelor Degree. 10% of the population has completed Graduate or Professional Degrees.

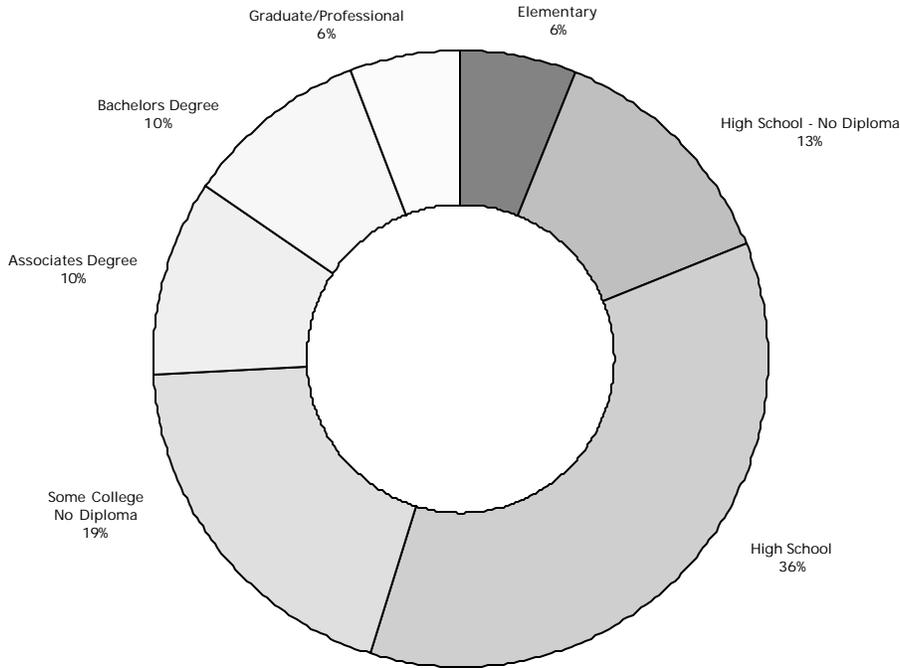
In Erie County, approximately 8% of the population completed elementary school and 15% had some high school education. 31% of Erie County residents completed high school and 19% completed some college. Approximately 7% of residents have an Associates Degree and 12% have a Bachelor Degree. Approximately 7% of County residents have completed a Graduate or Professional Degree.

Town of Lancaster

Approximately 19% of the Town of Lancaster population have some elementary or high school education, but have not received a diploma; in Erie County, this percentage is 23%. 36% of Lancaster residents have completed high school and 19% have some college education. 10% of residents have an Associates Degree and 10% have Bachelor Degrees; this is similar to the County percentages. 6% of Town residents have a Graduate or Professional Degree.

The following chart illustrates the percentages for the Town of Lancaster educational attainment.

1990 Educational Attainment Town of Lancaster



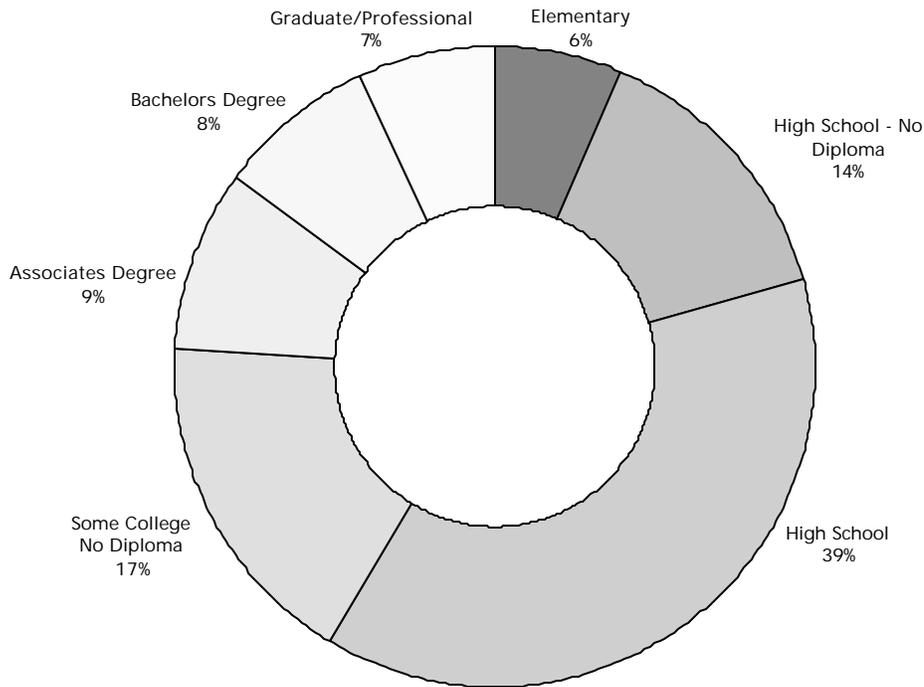
Source: US Bureau of the Census

Village of Lancaster

In the Village, the breakdown of educational attainment is similar to the County and Town percentages. Residents that have completed elementary school and have not received a high school diploma include approximately 20%. 39% of Village residents have completed high school and 17 have completed some college. Approximately 9% of residents have completed an Associates Degree and 8% have completed a Bachelors Degree; this percentage is slightly lower than the Town's percentage of 20%. 7% of Village residents have completed a Graduate or Professional Degree.

The following chart illustrates the percentages of educational attainment in the Village of Lancaster.

1990 Educational Attainment Village of Lancaster



Source: US Bureau of the Census

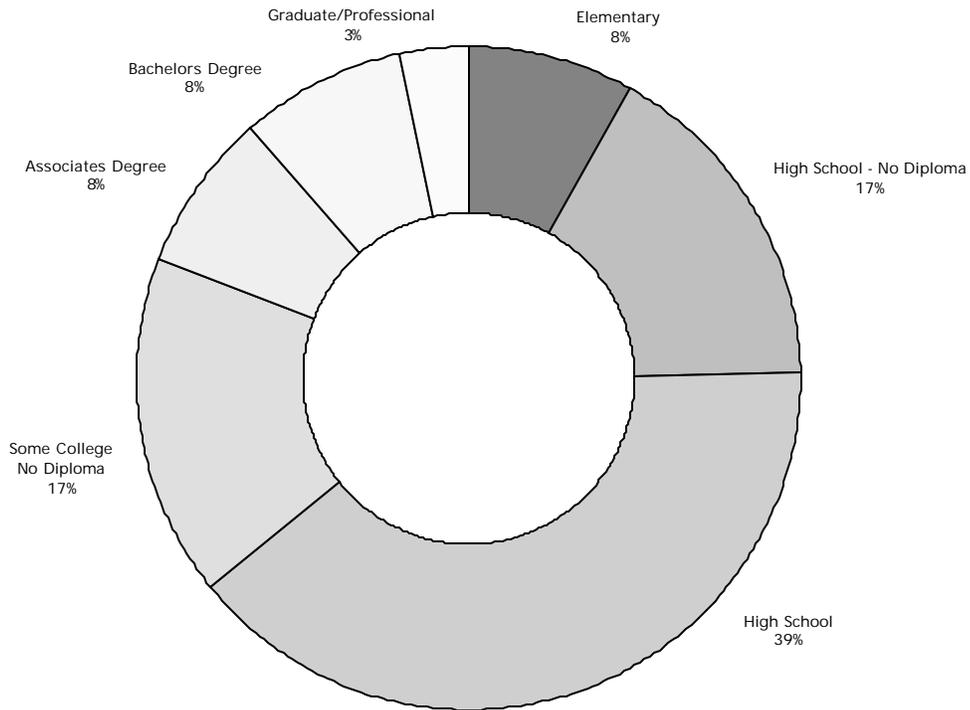
Village of Depew

In the Village of Depew, approximately 25% of residents have completed elementary school and some high school. This is somewhat higher than the Town of Lancaster (19%) and Village of Lancaster (20%); the Town of Cheektowaga has approximately 28% that have completed elementary school and some high school. Approximately 39% of residents in the Village of Depew have completed high school and 17% have completed some college. 8% of residents have completed an Associates Degree and another 8% have completed a Bachelors Degree. In the Town of Cheektowaga, 37% have completed high school, 15% have completed some college, 9% have completed an Associates degree and 7% have completed a Bachelors Degree.

In Depew, 3% of residents have completed a Graduate or Professional Degree; this is slightly lower than the Town of Lancaster (6%) and Village of Lancaster (7%); this is similar to the Town of Cheektowaga which has 4% of its population that have completed Graduate or Professional level.

The following graph illustrates the percentages of each level of educational attainment in the Village of Depew.

1990 Educational Attainment Village of Depew



Source: US Bureau of the Census

Income Levels

The median income in New York State is \$32,985; this is considerably higher than Erie County's median income of \$28,005. The Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew have median incomes higher than the County, but still somewhat lower than the State. The Town's median income in 1990 was the highest at \$32,767. The Village of Lancaster's was slightly lower at \$29,618 and Depew's median income was \$30,637 in 1990.

Income levels in the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew vary from the State and Erie County in many ways. Generally, the percentages of residents in the three communities are middle income. The percentage of residents with income below \$12,499 is much lower in the three communities (ranging from 15.7-19.4%) than the State percentage (19.7%) and the County percentage (22.9%). Similarly, the percentage of residents with an income of over \$75,000 in the three communities is lower than the County and State percentages; these range from 3.6% in the Village of Lancaster to 5.9% in the Town of Lancaster. In Erie County, this percentage is 7.1% and the State is 13.7%.

Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
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The following table illustrates the breakdown of income levels in each community, the Town of Cheektowaga, Erie County and New York State..

1990 Income Distribution
Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew,
Town of Cheektowaga, Erie County and New York State

	Town of Lancaster	Village of Lancaster	Village of Depew	Town of Cheektowaga	Erie County	New York State
Less Than 5000	3.7%	4.4%	3.2%	2.6%	6.2%	6.1%
5000 – 9999	8.1%	10.0%	8.7%	6.9%	11.6%	9.5%
10000 – 12499	3.9%	5.0%	3.8%	5.2%	5.1%	4.1%
12500 – 14999	3.5%	2.8%	3.9%	4.9%	4.2%	3.4%
15000 – 17499	3.6%	3.6%	5.4%	5.2%	4.5%	3.9%
17500 – 19999	4.7%	4.7%	4.3%	5.1%	4.4%	3.6%
20000 – 22499	4.4%	4.8%	4.9%	5.5%	4.8%	4.2%
22500 – 24999	4.7%	5.0%	5.4%	5.0%	4.2%	3.4%
25000 – 27499	4.7%	5.8%	5.4%	5.1%	4.4%	4.0%
27500 – 29999	3.7%	4.8%	3.6%	4.6%	3.7%	3.2%
30000 – 32499	4.5%	5.3%	5.4%	5.1%	4.4%	4.1%
32500 – 34999	4.2%	3.5%	4.3%	4.4%	3.3%	2.9%
35000 – 37499	5.1%	5.4%	5.5%	4.7%	3.8%	3.6%
37500 – 39999	3.5%	2.8%	4.3%	4.0%	3.1%	2.7%
40000 – 42499	5.2%	3.9%	4.5%	4.1%	3.5%	3.5%
42500 – 44999	3.3%	3.3%	2.6%	3.1%	2.6%	2.4%
45000 – 47499	3.0%	2.9%	3.5%	3.4%	2.9%	2.8%
47500 – 49999	2.9%	2.0%	2.5%	2.5%	2.3%	2.2%
50000 – 45999	4.6%	3.7%	4.1%	5.0%	4.4%	4.7%
55000 – 59999	4.9%	4.9%	4.1%	3.7%	3.3%	3.7%
60000 – 74999	7.8%	6.1%	7.1%	6.3%	6.4%	8.4%
75000 – 99999	4.1%	3.7%	2.9%	2.8%	4.2%	6.9%
100000 – 124999	1.3%	1.4%	0.6%	0.4%	1.4%	3.0%
125000 – 149999	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%	1.3%
150000+	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	1.0%	2.5%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Employment

Employment characteristics illustrate the specific types of employment for residents within a community. In New York State, the significant employment industries include Retail Trade (15.7%), Health Related (10.7%), Education (10.1%) and Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (FIRE – 9.8%). In Erie County, significant employment sectors include Retail Trade (19.4%), Health Services (11.7%), Educational Services (10.2%) and Manufacturing – Durable Goods (11.2%).

The Town of Lancaster's significant employment sectors include Retail Trade (20.3%). This is somewhat higher than the County's percentage and significantly higher than the State's. Manufacturing – Durable Goods (13.8%) is the second highest employment sector in Lancaster; the County's percentage is 11.2% and the State's is 8.8%. The third highest employment Sector in Lancaster is Health Services (9.8%) which is lower than both the County (11.7%) and State (10.7%) percentages. Other significant deviations from the State percentages include FIRE that includes 5.6% of the Lancaster population but 9.8% in the State. Construction sectors account for 7.2% of the employment in Lancaster while in the State this percentage is only 5.4%.

The Village of Lancaster has major employment sectors that include Retail Trade (17.3%), Manufacturing – Durable Goods (13.2%) and Educational Services (9.7%). This is similar to the Town of Lancaster's major employment sectors with the exception of Educational Services. Educational Services in the Town account for 8.2% of the employers.

In the Village of Depew, major employment sectors include Retail Trade (23.4%), Manufacturing – Durable Goods (13.2%) and Health Services (9.0%). The major sectors are similar to the Town of Lancaster and the Town of Cheektowaga. In the Town of Cheektowaga, the major employment sectors are Retail Trade (22.3%), Manufacturing – Durable Goods (13.5%) and Health Services (9.8%).

The following table summarizes the major employment sectors in the three communities, the Town of Cheektowaga, the County and State.

1990 Employment Sectors
Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
Town of Cheektowaga, Erie County and New York State

	Town of Lancaster	Village of Lancaster	Village of Depew	Town of Cheektowaga	Erie County	New York State
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.9%	1.2%
Mining	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Construction	7.2%	7.2%	6.4%	4.2%	4.9%	5.4%
Manufacturing, Non-durable	7.6%	8.6%	7.8%	8.6%	6.9%	6.6%
Manufacturing, Durable	13.8%	13.2%	12.9%	13.5%	11.2%	8.8%
Transportation	5.2%	5.9%	5.4%	6.1%	4.7%	5.4%
Communications/Public Utilities	3.2%	3.2%	1.9%	2.0%	2.4%	2.9%
Wholesale Trade	5.1%	5.5%	5.7%	5.1%	4.7%	4.4%
Retail Trade	20.3%	17.3%	23.4%	22.3%	19.4%	15.7%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	5.6%	5.7%	5.8%	7.1%	7.4%	9.8%
Business and Repair Service	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.3%	4.3%	5.5%
Personal Services	2.6%	2.5%	3.5%	2.7%	2.5%	3.1%
Entertainment and Recreation	1.2%	1.4%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.6%
Profession and Related						
Health Services	9.8%	8.1%	9.0%	9.8%	11.7%	10.7%
Educational Services	8.2%	9.7%	7.3%	7.1%	10.2%	10.1%
Other	5.1%	6.6%	5.2%	5.6%	7.4%	8.6%
Public Administration	4.5%	4.8%	3.4%	3.8%	4.6%	5.3%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

The US Bureau of the Census also tracks occupations in a community. Overall, the percentages of Managerial/Professional Occupations in the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew are lower than the County and State as a whole. This is similar in several of the Technical/Sales occupations although Administrative Support percentages are comparable to the State and County.

Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
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Precision Production occupations in the three communities is significantly higher in the Town and two Villages and Town of Cheektowaga when compared to the County and State; this is true of Machine Operators and Transportation occupations.

Occupations in each of the three communities, Town of Cheektowaga, County and State are outlined in the following chart. This includes residents over the age of 25 years that are employed in that occupation.

1990 Occupation
Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
Town of Cheektowaga, Erie County and New York State

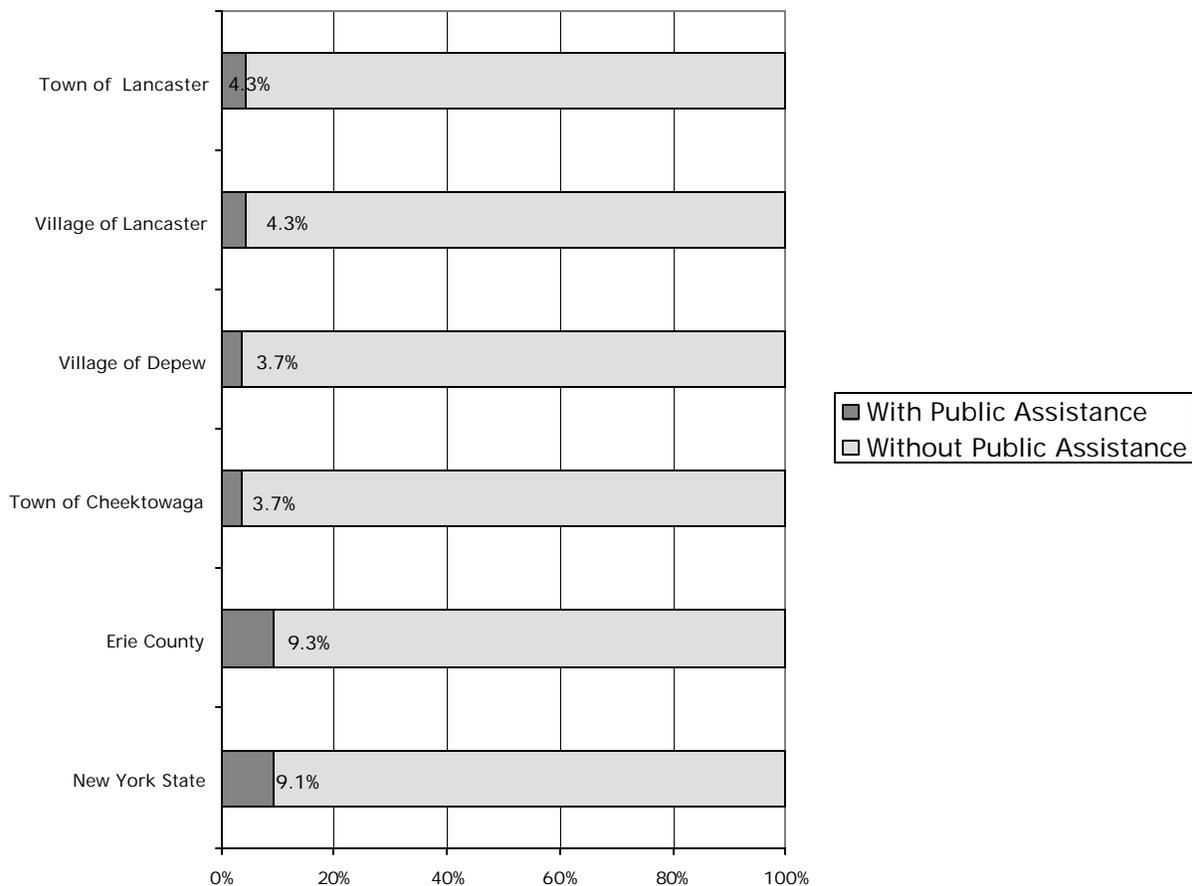
	Town of Lancaster	Village of Lancaster	Village of Depew	Town of Cheektowaga	Erie County	New York State
Managerial/Professional						
Executive	10.6%	8.8%	9.8%	9.7%	11.4%	13.3%
Professional Specialty	13.7%	12.3%	10.0%	9.2%	15.5%	16.7%
Technical/Sales						
Technicians	2.9%	2.6%	3.0%	3.6%	3.6%	3.5%
Sales Occupations	13.1%	13.1%	13.1%	12.9%	12.7%	11.2%
Administrative Support	16.9%	17.9%	19.6%	21.4%	17.1%	18.4%
Service						
Private Household	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%
Protective Services	2.3%	2.3%	1.8%	2.2%	2.1%	2.5%
Service Occupations	11.5%	10.9%	12.8%	11.5%	12.1%	11.4%
Farming/Forestry	0.6%	0.8%	0.2%	0.5%	0.8%	1.1%
Precision Production	14.6%	15.9%	13.7%	12.3%	10.4%	9.4%
Operators/Fabricators						
Machine Operators	6.5%	6.7%	7.5%	7.8%	6.3%	5.1%
Transportation	4.0%	4.6%	4.1%	4.7%	3.8%	3.7%
Handlers	3.3%	3.7%	4.2%	4.2%	3.9%	3.2%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
A Comprehensive Plan...A Common Future

The percent of residents that receive public assistance income in New York State is 9% compared to Erie County where 9.3% of residents receive public assistance. The Town of Lancaster and Villages of Lancaster and Depew have a significantly lower percentage of residents that receive public assistance. In the Town and Village of Lancaster, 4.3% of residents receive public assistance while in Depew and the Town of Cheektowaga, only 3.7% of residents receive public assistance. These percentages are reflected in the table below.

1990 Households with Public Assistance
Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew,
Erie County and New York State



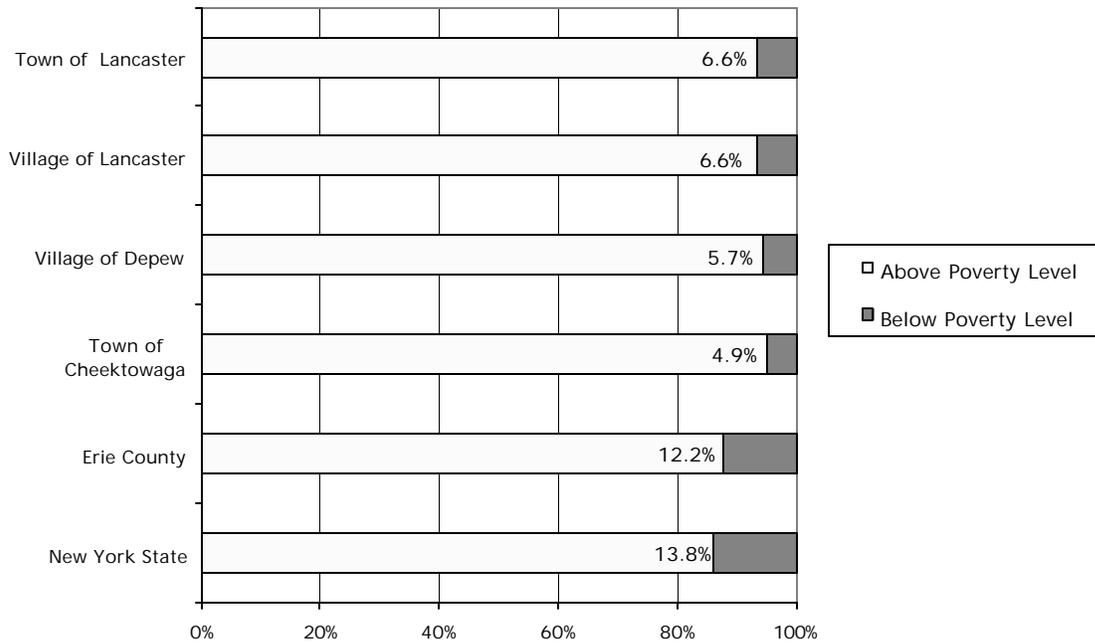
Source: US Bureau of the Census

Poverty Status

Poverty status helps a community identify its economic well being. The higher the percent of people living below poverty level, the more likely that community is suffering from lack of employment opportunities, low education levels or a high number of residents with special needs (e.g. seniors, single parent families, seasonal workers).

In New York State, the percentage of residents below poverty level is 13.8%; in Erie County, this percentage is 12.2%. Again, the three communities boast considerably lower poverty rate than both the State and County. The Town and Village of Lancaster have approximately 6.6% of their residents below poverty level. The Village of Depew has the lowest poverty rate at 5.7% and the Town of Cheektowaga has a poverty rate of 4.9%. The following chart illustrates the various poverty level status for the three communities, Town of Cheektowaga, Erie County and New York State.

1990 Poverty Level Status



Source: US Bureau of the Census

3.2.2 Projections and Trends

Population projections are important to a community as they begin to plan for their future. While no population projection can be guaranteed, there are methods of projections that are acceptable and assist for planning purposes.

In Western New York, the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) has completed population projections through the year 2020. These regional forecasts were prepared for population, households and employment for both Erie and Niagara County. Population ranges for the region were prepared in 1994 by a consultant hired by the GBNRTC. Projections were based on trends in population in the region between 1980 and 1990. The GBNRTC's Study Review Team and GBNRTC Planning and Coordinating Committee reviewed projections that included a high and a low estimate for the region. A single set of estimates were agreed upon for the region.

In 1995, the GBNRTC commissioned a consulting team to "disaggregate" the regional totals into municipal level estimates. Through numerous site visits, data gathering and following an extensive analysis process, estimates were prepared for each of the cities and Towns in the Region. The study shows that the Region is in a "zero sum" game and that growth will occur in the suburban and rural third ring communities. "The growth will most undoubtedly follow the current form of low density sprawl".¹

The GBNRTC projections have not been updated since 1995 and these projections could vary tremendously. The Erie County Department of Environment and Planning is recommending that the GBNRTC update their projections every 3-5 years to reflect current building permit trends, census projections/information, etc.. As more accurate Census information becomes available, the Town should re-assess these population figures and adjust the plan accordingly.

The GBNRTC projections show that the communities could experience growth into the year 2020. This is based on the growth that has occurred in the three communities since 1990; these first ring suburbs offer affordable housing, lower taxes (when compared to other suburbs) and quality schools. In the Town of Lancaster alone, there are over 2,000 approved subdivision lots that were also considered as projections for the three communities were developed.

¹ NRTC Phase 2 Economic/Demographic Overview Study Final Report.

When compared to the 1996 Census estimates of population for the three communities, there appears to be some discrepancy on what could occur in the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew. The GBNRTC projections are based on local expertise and knowledge of the region while the Census projections are based on trends of the region. While the GBNRTC projections may be somewhat high, some growth should be expected based on growth over the past few years.

The school districts are also projecting growth over the next few years. Lancaster School district is one of the fastest growing school districts in the region according to a recent article in the Buffalo News.² Based on this article, the school enrollment at Lancaster has grown over 26% since 1990 and is expected to grow another 5% in the next year. The Depew School district, in contrast, has experienced an 8% decrease and is not expected to decline over the next year.

When reviewing the population projections, the potential for growth appears evident but should be viewed as a projection only. The GBNRTC projections were prepared for transportation purposes to allow the organization to plan future transportation needs. While the real growth may not be as significant as projected in the GBNRTC projections, some growth should occur in the three communities and should be directed to appropriate areas.

In the Town of Lancaster, the population in 2020 is projected (high-end) by the RTC at 45,500; this is significantly higher than the 1990 population of 32,181 and could result in an increase of approximately 40%. The low-end RTC projection for the Town of Lancaster is 36,416; this would represent an increase of 14%. The 1996 Census estimate of population is 31,580.

For the Town of Lancaster, the population should be expected to increase somewhere within this range (14-40%). Many variables will impact the true growth in the community.

² Enrollment at Schools Reflects Shift in Suburbs. Buffalo News, September 8, 1998.

In the Village of Lancaster, the RTC population projections show that the 2020 population is projected at approximately 12,213 (high-end); this represents an increase of 273 people from the 1990 Census population estimate of (11,940). This represents an increase of approximately 2.2%.

In the Village of Depew, according to the RTC, the population is expected to decline slightly into the year 2020; the expected 2020 population is 17,987 up slightly from the 1990 population of 17,673 and represents a potential growth of approximately 314 people. This is an increase of approximately 1.7%.

The GBNRTC population projections were prepared to facilitate transportation planning in the Erie-Niagara Region. These projections were used for this plan based on the regional approach taken in determining growth. The estimated populations may be higher than the actual future population in the three communities, but a range has been used for planning purposes. In any case, some growth should be expected in the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew over the next twenty years.

3.3 Housing

3.3.1 Existing Characteristics

1990 Census Characteristics

Total Housing Units

Between 1980 and 1990, the total number of housing units in Erie County increased by 13,093 units, a modest 3.4 percent increase. In sharp contrast, the 1980's were a period of strong growth in the Town of Lancaster, where the housing stock increased by nearly 18 percent or five times the County rate. This predominantly reflects the large number of residential subdivisions built in the eastern portion of the Town during the period. Growth in the housing supply of approximately 2 percent in the largely-developed Villages of Lancaster and Depew was below the County average. Together, the communities comprise roughly 6 percent of the County's housing stock.

Total Housing Units – 1980 and 1990

Community	1980	1990	Change: 1980-1990	
			Number	Percent
Town of Lancaster	10,801	12,708	1,907	17.7
Village of Lancaster	4,804	4,885	81	1.7
Village of Depew	6,755	6,892	137	2.0
Erie County	389,038	402,131	13,093	3.4

Source: US Bureau of the Census – 1980 and 1990

Occupancy Rates and Tenure

As shown in the following table, census data on unit occupancy in the indicate that the communities have higher housing occupancy rates (and therefore lower vacancy rates) than Erie County. The Villages had particularly tight housing markets, with about 2.6 percent of the units vacant in 1990. In comparison, the Town of Lancaster and Erie County had vacancy rates of 4.6 percent and 6.2 percent, respectively.

Housing in the communities is primarily owner-occupied, with the percentage of owner-occupied units ranging from 68 percent in the Village of Lancaster to 72 percent in Depew. In comparison, the County as a whole has a larger proportion of rental units, resulting in an owner-occupancy rate of about 60 percent.

Occupied and Owner-Occupied Housing Units - 1990

Governmental Unit	Total Housing Units	Occupied Units	Occupied Units as Percent of Total Units	Owner-Occupied Units	Owner-Occupied Units as Percent of Total Units
Town of Lancaster	12,708	12,117	95.4	9,057	71.3
Village of Lancaster	4,885	4,760	97.4	3,313	67.8
Village of Depew	6,892	6,707	97.3	4,972	72.1
Erie County	402,131	376,994	93.8	240,179	59.7

Source: US Bureau of the Census - 1990

Number of Units in Structure

As shown in the following table, most of the housing units in the communities are single-family houses. The Town of Lancaster has the highest proportion of single-family homes (69 percent), followed by Depew (67 percent) and the Village of Lancaster (about 65 percent). Two-family homes comprise about 15 percent of the Town's housing stock and about 18 percent of housing in both Villages. Apartments, those units in buildings containing three or more units, account for the remainder of the housing in the communities—about 15 percent in Depew, 16 percent in the Town of Lancaster, and 17.5 percent in the Village of Lancaster.

In comparison, in Erie County as a whole, the City of Buffalo and other more urban portions of the County bring the proportion of single-family down to about 56 percent. Apartments represent about 20.5 percent of the County's housing stock. Two-family homes comprise the remainder (23.5 percent) of the County's housing.

Units in Structure – 1990 Housing Units

	1 Unit		2 Units		3 to 9 Units		10 or More Units and Other		Total Units
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Town of Lancaster	8,775	69.1	1,868	14.7	1,390	10.9	675	5.3	12,708
Village of Lancaster	3,154	64.6	873	17.9	508	10.4	350	7.1	4,885
Village of Depew	4,636	67.3	1,230	17.8	797	11.6	229	3.3	6,892
Erie County	225,152	56.0	94,590	23.5	46,008	11.4	36,381	9.1	402,131

Source: US Bureau of the Census - 1990

Units by Year of Construction

In Erie County, about 38 percent of the housing units in 1990 were built in 1939 or earlier. The communities have smaller proportions of pre-1940 housing stock than the County—this older housing accounted for 36 percent of the housing inventory in the Town of Lancaster, 29 percent in the Town, and just 20 percent in Depew. Not surprisingly, among the communities, the Town had by far the highest percentage of its housing constructed between 1980 and 1990 (17 percent of the total housing stock). This period of construction accounted for 3.6 percent of the housing inventory in Depew and only 1.3 percent of the inventory in the Village of Lancaster.

Year of Construction – 1990 Housing Units

Area	Built 1939 or Earlier	Built 1940 to 1959	Built 1960 to 1979	Built 1980 to March 1990	Total Units
Town of Lancaster	3,673	3,379	3,486	2,170	12,708
Village of Lancaster	1,744	1,579	1,500	62	4,885
Village of Depew	1,397	2,219	3,026	250	6,892
Erie County	152,376	126,175	96,480	27,100	402,131

Source: US Bureau of the Census - 1990

Housing Costs and Affordability

Owner-Occupied Housing

The median value of owner-occupied housing in Erie County in 1990 was \$74,000³. Housing values were about 4 percent higher in the Town of Lancaster (\$77,000) than for the County as a whole. Housing values were about 7 percent lower than the County figure in the Village of Lancaster (\$69,000). In Depew, the median housing value of \$70,500 was about 5 percent lower than the County median. Higher housing costs in the Town reflect at least in part the large number of new units added to the housing supply during the 1980's.

³The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all urban consumers in the Northeast region of the United States rose by 31.3 percent between 1990 and 1998. It is noted that housing prices are affected over time by inflation as well as by other factors such as supply and demand.

Median Value and Housing Costs as a Percentage of Income - 1990 Owner Occupied Housing Units

Area	Median Value, 1990 Dollars	% of Households in Specified Owner-Occupied Units Spending 30% or More of Income on Housing
Town of Lancaster	\$77,000	20.2
Village of Lancaster	\$69,000	21.3
Village of Depew	\$70,500	16.4
Erie County	\$74,000	16.5

Source: US Bureau of the Census - 1990

According to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines, spending 30 percent or more of household income on housing expenses is burdensome. As seen above, a sizable proportion of homeowners spend an excessively high proportion of their income on housing in the communities and the County. The Village of Lancaster contains the highest proportion (21.3 percent) of households spending 30 percent or more of their income on home ownership costs.

Rental Housing

As seen in the following table, median housing rents were about 9 to 12 percent higher in the communities than the County median of \$292 per month⁴. As the data indicate, housing costs as a percentage of total income are much higher among renters than owners. For elderly renters, many of whom have fixed incomes, housing costs are particularly burdensome.

⁴As stated above, the overall CPI in the Northeast rose by 31.3 percent between 1990 and 1998. It is noted that housing rents are affected over time by inflation as well as by other factors such as supply and demand.

Fully 55 percent of elderly tenants in the County spending more than 30 percent of their incomes on rent. The proportions are similar to the County figure in the Town and Village of Lancaster (both of which have publicly subsidized senior housing developments). In Depew, which contains no affordable senior housing developments, nearly two-thirds of elderly renters devote an excessive proportion of their incomes to housing costs.

Median Contract Rent And Rent as Percentage of Income – 1990 Renter-Occupied Housing Units

Area	Median Contract Rent, 1990 Dollars	% of Households in Specified Renter-Occupied Units Spending 30% or More of Income on Housing	
		Householder Aged 15-64 Years	Householder Aged 65 Years and Over
Town of Lancaster	\$323	32.3	56.1
Village of Lancaster	\$319	28.6	56.0
Village of Depew	\$328	33.2	65.0
Erie County	\$292	31.4	55.1

Source: US Bureau of the Census - 1990

Substandard and Crowded Housing

The census also provides an estimate of the degree of substandard or overcrowded housing in the Town. The Census estimates substandard housing by counting housing units with incomplete plumbing. The 1990 Census counted 47 such units (0.4 percent) in the Town of Lancaster, 18 units or 0.4 percent in the Village of Lancaster, and 15 units or 0.2 percent in Depew. Countywide, 1,588 or 0.4 percent of the units were considered substandard.

Similarly, only 50 units, or 0.4 percent of the total for the Town of Lancaster were identified as overcrowded (defined as any housing unit with more than one person per room). The comparable figures for the Villages were 6 units or 0.1 percent in the Village of Lancaster and 74 or 1.1 percent in Depew. For Erie County as a whole, 1.4 percent of the units were crowded according to the census definition. Thus, substandard and overcrowded housing does not seem to be a significant issue in the communities.

Recent Housing Trends

U.S. Census Housing Unit Estimates, 1996

U.S. Census County level housing estimates broken down by municipality suggest that the Town of Lancaster experienced a percentage increase in total housing units (5.6 percent) between 1990 and 1996 that was twice the estimated Countywide growth rate (2.8 percent). The estimates indicated that the total housing unit count in the Village of Lancaster was basically unchanged during the period. According to the estimates, Depew grew at a slower housing growth rate (1.6 percent) than the County between 1990 and 1996.

Building Permit Activity

Between January 1991 and November 1999 building permits were issued for an estimated 2,289 new housing units in the Town of Lancaster outside the Villages, an average of 229 permits per year. This is based on a review of Town building permit records. Most of these units have been built. The information shows that the vast majority of the building permits were issued for single-family houses, predominantly in new subdivisions on previously undeveloped tracts of land such as Bowen Road Square and the Stony Brook and Hunters Creek developments. The 2,289 new housing units represent an 18% increase over the 1990 housing stock of 12,708 units.

Residential Building Permits Issued – 1991-1998
Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew

Total Units			
Year	Town of Lancaster (outside Villages)	Village of Lancaster	Village of Depew
1991	192	6	4
1992	347	0	29
1993	333	0	6
1994	338	6	8
1995	262	19	6
1996	297	11	8
1997	206	5	5
1998	100	2	2
1999*	214	0	2
Total	2,289	49	70

Source: * Through November 1999. Town of Lancaster Engineer, Village of Lancaster Building Department, Village of Depew Director of Community Development

In the Village of Lancaster, building permits were issued for an estimated 49 residential units between 1991 and November 1999. The majority of these units were double dwellings, many of which were part of the Kelly Court development. This development, unusual in the communities, includes "zero lot line" double dwellings. The affordable, privately-built dwellings sold quickly at less than \$100,000 per unit. Others represent infill housing development at scattered lots throughout the Village.

In the Village of Depew, 35 single-family and 35 multi-family residential building permits were issued between 1991 and November 1999. Most of the 70 permits were issued for infill housing construction on the limited remaining vacant lots in the Village.

Uncompleted Subdivisions

The Western New York real estate market has experienced a contraction in recent years. As a result, according to Town officials, a large number of units in approved subdivisions in the Town of Lancaster have not been completed. According to data collected by the Town Engineer, 28 subdivisions in the Town of Lancaster are only partially built out, with a total of 677 approved units remaining to be developed. Furthermore, construction was never begun on another six approved residential subdivisions: an additional 369 single-family homes could be built under these pre-existing approvals, which have not yet expired. This brings the number of new homes that could be built under existing approvals to 1,046 units. Finally, the proposed Fairway Hills development on William Street, included approvals for over 400 additional homes.

Cost of Housing

Recent sales information obtained from the Multiple Listing Service (Greater Buffalo Board of Realtors) was analyzed to compare the cost of housing in the communities with the County as a whole. The latest data available, for the first half of 1998 (January through June), are presented in the following table.

It is important to note that Multiple Listing Service (MLS) data typically reflect housing resales and not units sold in new subdivisions, which are often handled directly by the developer or his agent. As a result, the housing values reflected in the following table do not include the sales prices of most new housing units in subdivisions, many of which are more expensive homes on larger lots than the older housing stock.

The average sales price for a single-family dwelling in the Town of Lancaster sold through the MLS was \$135,100 in the first half of 1998, nearly 39 percent higher than the County average. The average MLS sales prices in the Villages were considerably lower than in the Town, reflecting the older age of the housing stock and the smaller village-sized lots. The average MLS sales price of \$80,700 in the Village of Lancaster was 17 and 40 percent lower than the County and Town averages, respectively. The average MLS sales price of \$71,900 in the Village of Depew was 26 and 47 percent lower than the County and Town averages, respectively.

Single Family Home Sales (MLS) January-June 1998

Community	Number of Sales	Average Sales Price
Town of Lancaster (outside the Villages)	89	\$135,100
Village of Lancaster	30	\$80,700
Village of Depew	54	\$71,900
Erie County	3,791	\$97,300

Source: Multiple Listing Service, Greater Buffalo Board of Realtors - 1998

The construction of new housing in the Town of Lancaster has been dominated by single-family detached housing. Many of these houses were built on relatively large lots at a cost considerably higher than the existing housing base. Several of the subdivisions are also considered "luxury" developments, with very large dwelling areas and amenities such as fully applianced kitchens, fireplaces, cathedral ceilings, designer windows and cabinets, extra-large garages, etc. In addition to luxury homes, also approved is the 84-unit Brookhaven luxury apartment development off Broadway east of Bowen Road.

Sales prices for a new construction are generally in the \$150,000-170,000 range. An exception to this price level is the more affordable developments like Belmont Creek and Walden Trace which are built on 60-foot-wide lots (as opposed to the standard 75-foot width), where sales prices average \$110,000-120,000. These developments have required Town rezoning actions to permit the narrower lot sizes. According to conversations with Town officials, sales of these narrower lot developments have been brisk, indicating a demand for more affordable single-family housing.

Condition of Housing

The housing stock in the communities is generally in good condition. An exception is pockets of older homes in the Villages of Depew and Lancaster which receive larger numbers of building code violations as a result of the need for major repairs to plumbing and electrical systems, roofing, foundations, or other critical items. In Depew, the Main Street/North Penora Street area contains a number of buildings in need of rehabilitation; some of these are mixed-use structures with boarded-up ground-floor commercial space. In Lancaster, scattered homes in need of repair are found among the older housing stock in the northwestern section of the Village (generally bounded by St. Mary's Street and Brady Avenue to the south, Vandenberg Avenue to the east, Walden Avenue to the north, and the Village of Depew border to the west).

3.3.2 Suppliers

The need to provide affordable housing is an important goal of the Comprehensive Plan, and the ability of young families and working-class people to live in the communities is needed for the diverse labor pool needed to sustain economic growth in the region. Also, the ability of elderly residents to remain in the community is a concern in the communities. A number of government-sponsored housing programs have been utilized in the communities to enhance affordable housing opportunities. These are described in the following section.

Publicly Assisted New Housing Construction

Publicly Assisted Housing Developments

As shown illustrated, approximately 229 units or 1.8 percent of the housing stock in the Town of Lancaster (including the Village) were built with some form of public assistance. All publicly assisted housing developments in the communities provide affordable housing to the elderly; there are no publicly assisted developments for families. Subsidized housing in Lancaster is private (owned and/or operated by not-for-profit corporations or other private entities with the help of government funds). The Village of Depew contains no housing units constructed with government assistance.

Publicly Assisted Housing Construction

Name	Location	Housing Type	Program	Number of Units	Vacancies/ Waiting List
Town View Apartments	Town of Lancaster	Senior	HUD 202	50	None/200
Colonial Meadows	Town of Lancaster	Senior	FmHA	24	None/1 year
Lancaster Towers	Village of Lancaster	Senior	Sec. 236	155	None/250-300
Total				229	

The following discussion describes subsidized housing programs utilized to date to construct affordable housing in the communities.

All publicly funded housing in the communities are one-bedroom units targeted for the elderly or disabled. All of the developments have a sizable waiting list, as seen in the table above. Housing under the Section 236 program is privately owned and managed but receives federal funds to reduce mortgage costs. Through Section 236 of the National Housing Act, HUD insured multifamily mortgages and paid interest subsidies to lenders which allowed the mortgage to be paid off by the project owner at very low interest rates.

Rent subsidies are provided for Lancaster Towers tenants under the program. To be eligible, tenants must meet low-income limits set by HUD. Similarly, the HUD Section 202 program was a below-market interest program; the Town View units constructed under the program provide affordable housing to eligible low- and very-low income elderly or disabled tenants. Colonial Meadows, which was constructed under the former Farmers Home Administration's (FmHA) Section 515 rural development housing program, provides rent subsidies to eligible low-income elderly households.

Community Development Block Grant Program

In addition, Erie County has funds available for new housing construction and rehabilitation through the administration of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. CDBG funds may be used to meet community development and housing needs principally for low and moderate income persons and/or for the prevention or elimination of slums and blight. Municipalities in the Erie County CDBG Consortium may apply for funding for community-initiated new housing construction, acquisition of property, property conversion for permanent affordable housing, or housing rehabilitation projects. County funds must be matched by other grant funding. The County does not undertake the housing construction directly; but provides grants to not-for-profit affordable housing corporations as discussed under "Suppliers," below. To date, no new housing has been constructed in the communities under the CDBG program.

Other Housing Assistance Programs

In addition to direct government funding of new housing construction, a number of other programs are available to homeowners and landlords which are designed to reduce housing rehabilitation and acquisition costs. The Town of Lancaster and the Villages of Lancaster and Depew do not operate their own housing programs, but direct people to County (and in the case of the western side of Depew, Town of Cheektowaga) housing programs. Often the referrals to the rehabilitation programs discussed below are made after complaints have been made or building permit violations have been issued.

The County programs are administered by the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning and are available to residents and landlords in the Town of Lancaster, including the Village of Lancaster and the Lancaster side of Depew. The following table indicates the number of units in the three communities that have been assisted by County housing programs. Housing assistance programs available on the Cheektowaga side of Depew are administered by the Town of Cheektowaga Office of Economic and Community Development. The availability of CDBG funds for housing rehabilitation and conversion has been discussed above. Other programs are described below.

Units Assisted by Specified Erie County Housing Programs Program Inception to 1998

Area	Number of Units Assisted Since Program Inception		
	Housing Rehab	Rental Rehab	First-Time Homebuyer
Town of Lancaster	61*	3*	5**
Village of Lancaster	64	2	
Village of Depew***	63	16	1
Total	188	21	6
* Outside the villages -- **14086 zip code -- ***Town of Lancaster side only			

Source: Erie County Department of Environment and Planning

Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program

The County's Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program provides low-interest loans (0 to 3 percent fixed rates) to eligible low income homeowners to make needed housing repairs and to bring their properties into compliance with applicable housing codes. To be eligible, properties must be owner-occupied one- to four-family dwellings. The program is administered by the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning (ECDEP), Office of Community Development and funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The Town of Cheektowaga has its own housing rehabilitation loan program, for which eligible homeowners on the Cheektowaga side of the Village of Depew may apply. A total of 82 units in the Village of Depew have been assisted by the Town of Cheektowaga's Housing Rehabilitation Loan program since 1989.

Rental Rehabilitation Loan Program

The County's Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program provides financial assistance in the form of no interest loans to rental property owners to bring their properties into compliance with applicable housing codes. Financial assistance is available for a maximum of eligible rehabilitation costs up to a maximum of \$6,500 for 1-bedroom units, \$7,500 for 2-bedroom units, and \$8,500 for 3- or more bedroom units. Any size structure is eligible, as long as rehabilitated units are occupied by low to moderate income tenants for at least 7 years after the work is completed. If the property is sold or transferred, the loan must be repaid. The program is administered by ECDEP and funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

First-Time Homebuyer Program

The County's First-Time Homebuyer Program provides deferred loans for eligible low and moderate income home buyers that can be forgiven after 10 years of occupancy. Financial assistance of up to \$7,500 per dwelling is available to assist with closing costs, down payment, or mortgage reduction. To be eligible, properties must be owner-occupied, one- or two-family dwellings. The program is administered by ECDEP on behalf of the Erie County Community Development Consortium and funded by the County's HOME Investment Partnership Program.

Suppliers

According to the ECDEP, the three major suppliers of affordable housing in Erie County are Belmont Shelter Corp., Delta Development Corp., and People, Inc. All are not-for-profit agencies which construct and manage affordable housing developments. The not-for-profit affordable housing corporations apply to state, federal, and local grant programs for funding and apply to local municipalities for project approval. The organizations also provide other housing assistance services such as home ownership counseling, rental housing referrals, and administration of the County's HUD Section 8 housing program for the Erie County Consortium. The Belmont Shelter Corp. has been the most active supplier of affordable housing in Lancaster.

Zoning Analysis

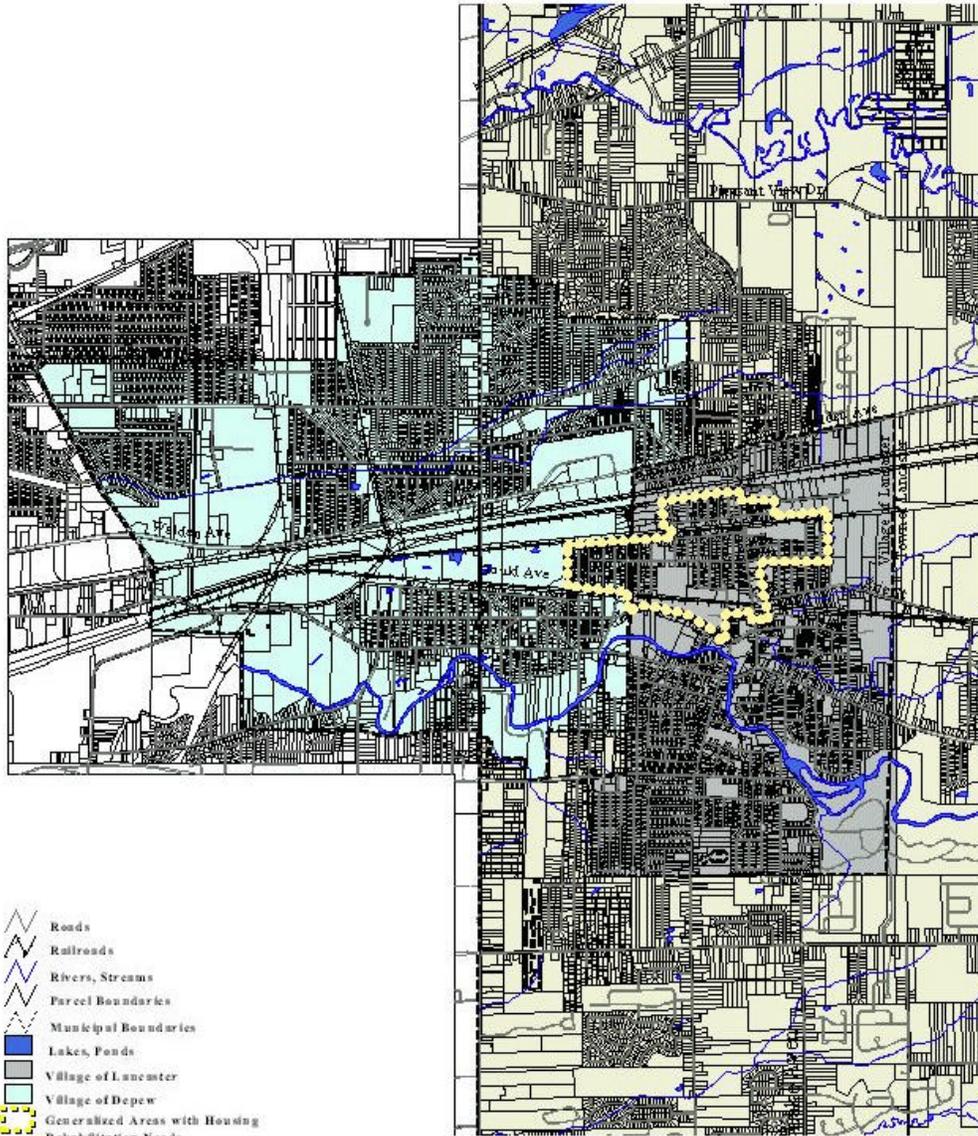
Local zoning regulations can either encourage or discourage the construction of affordable housing with respect to the ability to build multi-family rental units; to build one- and two-family housing on smaller lots and/or with reduced setback or parking requirements; and to allow for the creation of accessory apartments. Accessory units are particularly appealing to elderly residents or young families who wish to live near family members, while maintaining their own units.

A review of the zoning laws of the Town of Lancaster and the Villages of Lancaster and Depew was conducted to determine the ability to build affordable housing in the communities under existing regulations.

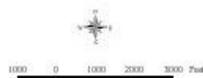
Multi-Family Apartments

The Town of Lancaster has two multi-family districts: Multifamily Residential Districts Three and Four (MFR-3 and MFR-4). The districts are zoned in small scattered locations in the central and southern portion of the Town. However, these districts permit a maximum density of 8 and 14 dwelling units per acre and a maximum height of 35 feet, respectively, which generally allows for townhouse-type development. Dormitories and fraternity/sorority houses are allowed by special permit, but the districts do not permit high-rise apartment buildings.

Town of Lancaster and Villages of Lancaster and Depew Regional Comprehensive Plan



Housing Conditions



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Buffalo, NY Port Jervis, NY
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THE SARATOGA ASSOCIATES
1000 STATE ST. SUITE 2000 ALBANY, NY 12203
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The Village of Lancaster's R-2AH high-rise Apartment District is mapped in locations north of the central business district, permitting the development of multi-family apartments. In Depew, the R-2 two-family and Multi-Family Residential District permits two-family and townhouse development at a density of up to 12.4 units per acre and with a maximum height of 30 feet. The Village of Lancaster is currently preparing revisions to its zoning law. These revisions would replace current zoning classifications in the central business district (CBD) with a combination of traditional CBD, new development, and open space zone designations (see Chapter 4.0, "Land Use" for a detailed discussion).

Dimensional Requirements

Dimensional requirements in the Villages of Lancaster and Depew reflect typical village-style development patterns. In the Village of Lancaster, single- and two-family residential typically require 6,000-square-foot lots, lot widths of 60 feet, front yard setbacks of 25 feet, and minimum side yards of 4 feet (11 feet total for two). Special regulations apply to the high-rise Apartment District. Parking requirements are generally one space per one- and two-family unit and 1.5 per multi-family unit (except on special appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals).

In Depew, minimum lot areas per unit range from 6,600-square-feet for one-family units to 3,500-square feet for multi-family units. Minimum setbacks are 25 feet (front) and 6 ½ feet (each side). Two parking spaces per unit are required for single- two- and multi-family units.

In the Town of Lancaster, the Agricultural Residential District (A-R) requires a minimum lot area of one acre and a 60-foot front yard. The widely-mapped R-1 district requires 9,375-square-foot lots, 35-foot front yards, and generally a 75-foot lot width. Regulations in the R-2 district are similar, with somewhat smaller lots (7,500 for sewered lots) and a minimum width of 60 to 70 feet.

Accessory Residential Units

A review of the zoning laws indicates that the Town of Lancaster allows as an accessory use or structure "rooming and boarding for not more than three persons" in all its residential districts. The only accessory residential use permitted in the Village of Lancaster are "quarters for servants employed on the premises". The Village of Depew does not specifically allow for the creation of residential units accessory to the principal dwelling unit.

3.3.3 Resident Survey

Residential Growth

The resident survey conducted in the communities in November 1998 was analyzed for opinions on housing-related issues. For the Comprehensive Plan region as a whole, the majority of respondents (58 percent) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with a statement that more residential growth is needed in the community. Less than one-quarter of the respondents throughout the region believed that more residential growth is needed, and the remainder held no opinion. More growth was most strongly favored by residents of the Village of Depew, where the statement received approval from 31 percent of the respondents.

In response to a question concerning the appropriate location for new housing, nearly 46 percent of the region's residents agreed that new housing should be concentrated in the Villages to protect the rural character of the eastern part of the Town. This opinion was most strongly held by residents of the Town of Lancaster; 57 percent of Town respondents believed that new housing should be concentrated near the Villages.

Housing Type

With regard to the need for specific housing types, 42 percent of the region's respondents felt that additional subsidized senior housing opportunities should be available in the communities. The need for subsidized senior housing was most keenly felt in Depew (which has no affordable senior housing developments), with 57 percent of respondents supporting this type of housing development in the community. Of the region's survey respondents, 58 percent agreed with a statement that affordable housing should be offered in the communities. A higher proportion of respondents in the Villages—67 percent in Lancaster and 62 percent in Depew—agreed with the statement than did respondents in the Town.

About one-third of the respondents believed that high-end residential housing should be encouraged. This opinion was held by approximately 48 percent of residents of the Town of Lancaster. In contrast, less than one-quarter of Village of Lancaster respondents expressed a desire to encourage more high-end housing in the communities.

3.3.4 Proposed Development and Projections

Proposed Development Activity

New proposals for residential development have declined in recent years as a result of the contracting real estate market and the already-approved subdivisions in the Town of Lancaster which have not been completed. Active proposals include the Summerfield Farms single-family home development proposed across from Bowen Square and a planned addition to the GreenField Health & Rehabilitation Center on Broadway near Bowen Road. The GreenField project would involve the construction of 106 independent-living apartments and 50 assisted-living apartments.

A rezoning was recently proposed which would allow 26 single-family homes off Pavement and Nichter Roads in the central portion of the Town. Currently, there are no active major residential development proposals in the Villages of Lancaster or Depew.

Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council Projections summarizes projections of occupied housing units (i.e., households) in the county and the communities in the year 2020 prepared by the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (see Section 3.2.2, above, for a discussion of the methodology used by the Council to prepare the forecasts).

As the table indicates, the Council projects the number of occupied housing units in the Town of Lancaster to increase by nearly 44 percent between 1990 and 2020. This contrasts sharply with the forecast for the county as a whole, where a much more modest 6 percent increase is anticipated. Housing growth in the Villages is expected to be somewhat less than the countywide growth rate.

The projected Town of Lancaster housing growth rate represents a 14.5 percent increase in occupied housing units each decade. This compares with the 18 percent growth in housing units the Town experienced between 1980 and 1990. As shown above, building permits for 2,075 units were issued in the Town between 1991 and 1998, virtually all of which have been built. While there are currently only three active new residential development proposals, the Town of Lancaster is likely to continue to develop new housing units over the next 20 years, particularly as the more than 1,000 units in already-approved but uncompleted or unbuilt subdivisions are developed.

Occupied Housing Units 1990 and Projected 2020

Community	Occupied Units		Projected Percent Change, 1990-2020
	1990	2020 Projected	
Town of Lancaster	12,117	17,400	43.6
Village of Lancaster	4,760	4,971	4.4
Village of Depew	6,707	6,829	1.8
Erie County	376,994	399,900	6.1

Source: US Bureau of the Census and Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council

3.4 Community Services

This section provides information on those services that benefit the populations of the Town and Village of Lancaster and the Village of Depew. These services include historic/cultural resources, educational facilities, library services, health care facilities, social services and animal control.

3.4.1 Historic and Cultural Resources

The Town and Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew offer some of the richest historical resources in all of Erie County and Western New York. The communities have preserved many structures that illustrate this heritage. The Village of Lancaster's Historic Commission has taken an active role in preservation of these buildings and is working to obtain designation of several of them on the National Register of Historic Places.

Inclusion of this section in the Regional Comprehensive Plan is aimed at strengthening preservation efforts and ensuring that the quality of these significant resources is not sacrificed as future development occurs.

3.4.1.1 Historic Resources

Information for this section was obtained from interviews with historic preservation officials and from written sources. Two written materials were used: Erie County's Architectural Legacy, 1983, Austin M. Fox, Ed., published by the Erie County Preservation Board; and Village of Lancaster Central Business District Redevelopment Plan, Historic Preservation Component, 1998, Taylor & Taylor Associates, Inc., Brookville, PA.

Town of Lancaster

Numerous historical buildings can be found throughout the Town of Lancaster. The buildings represent a variety of architectural styles and include residential, institutional and farm structures. Each of the buildings listed below appears in the publication Erie County's Architectural Legacy.

National Register of Historic Places:

Hull-Peterson House, 5976 Genesee Street - c. 1810. One of the oldest buildings in Erie County, this building was used to hide and feed slaves moving along the Underground Railroad.

Local Historic Significance:

Frisbee House, Ransom Road - c. 1840. This house is apparently one of the only Greek Revival ones in Erie County designed with a hip roof having a flat section enclosed by a balustrade (widow's walk).

Schoolhouse Museum, Bowen Road at William Street - 1868. This building served as a one-room school from 1869-1948. The interior has been completely restored and the building is now available for tours and meetings.

Koopman-Hoffeld House, 5615 Broadway - c. 1865. Made from brick from the local brickyard, this house has five chimneys and thus a fireplace in every room.

Lewis House, Sacred Heart Parish Rectory, 5337 Genesee Street (Bowmansville) - c. 1870. Characteristic of this structure is a pagoda-like tower that contains a cistern to collect rain water.

Sacred Heart Shrine, 5337 Genesee Street (Bowmansville) - 1926-27. The shrine was constructed of stone along with an ornamental stone wall.

Grambo Bungalow, 5818 Broadway - 1917. Concrete blocks for this home were made one at a time in a machine by newlyweds Frank and Grace Grambo.

Roll Barn, 502 Pavement Road. This barn has a geometric vent design in its gable characteristic of early barns.

Clinard Barn, 3566 Bowen Road. This early two-level barn has a man-made ramp with original doors that are still in place.

Gipple Barn, southwest corner Harris Hill Road at Wehrle Drive. This is an early variation of the Yankee barn type, with rafters that are very heavy and widely spaced.

Square Barn, Broadway (opposite entrance to Lancaster Rural Cemetery) - c. 1850s. Originally constructed with an eight-foot-square cupola, this barn was possibly built as a hops barn, since breweries were located nearby in the Village.

Huff Barns, 1700 Bowen Road at southwest corner of William Street - c. 1880. Along with a large Queen Anne Style home, these barns form part of a summer estate built by a Buffalo hotel owner.

Village of Lancaster

The Village of Lancaster has maintained much of its historical flavor and boasts a rich assortment of historic structures within its boundaries. Although there is just one structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a dozen other buildings are considered eligible for listing, and the Village Historic District Commission is pursuing this designation. In addition, there are several structures that are considered locally significant.

The Village Historic District Commission plays an important role in historic preservation in Lancaster. The Commission meets monthly to hear petitions for changes to the exterior of buildings that are eligible for the National Register (the NYS Historic Preservation Office reviews changes to the building interiors). The Historic District Commission's role is not simply advisory in nature; rather, it has the legal authority to enforce its recommendations.

The historic buildings are listed below.

National Register of Historic Places:

United States Post Office, 5406 Broadway - c. 1938. This building was constructed of brick and trimmed in limestone, reflecting both Colonial and Neo-Classical Revival styles. The building has remained very well preserved.

Eligible for National Register:

Lancaster Presbyterian Church, Broadway and Lake Avenue - 1832. One of the oldest religious buildings in Erie County, this church is primarily Federal in style with some Greek Revival and Gothic Revival-style features.

Brick Rowhouses, 5481-5485 Broadway - c. 1855. Erected by wealthy Dutch immigrants of locally-made red brick, the sections are two and one-half stories tall.

Clark-Lester House, 5454 Broadway - 1891. This house displays many features associated with a Queen Anne-style residence.

Liebler-Rohl Gas Station, 5500 Broadway - c. 1935. This Tudor Revival-style gas station shows the variety of uses for Revival styles between WWI and WWII.

Lancaster Village Hall/Municipal Building, 5423 Broadway - 1940. Situated at a prominent focal point at the head of Central Avenue, this Art Deco-style building was built from designs by the prominent Buffalo architectural firm of Hudson & Hudson.

Miller-Mackey House, 5440 Broadway - c. 1895 - 1900. This large-scale, three-story residential building now houses the Depew-Lancaster Boy's and Girls' Club.

Zuidema-Idsardi House, 5556 Broadway - c. 1860. Combines Italianate and decorative Eastlake features and includes a wrap-around porch and turned porch spindles.

Masonic Temple of Depew Lodge, 5497 Broadway - 1916.

St. Elizabeth's Home for the Aged, 5539 Broadway – 1929.

John Richardson House, 5653 Broadway – c. 1840 (1868 wing).

Potter's House of Lancaster Presbyterian Church, 5477 Broadway – 1924.

Herman Van Peyma House, 5565 Broadway – c. 1890.

Local Historic Significance:

Potter-Eaton House, 40 Clark Street - 1894. Originally located on Broadway near the northeast corner of Central Avenue, this building now houses the Lancaster Historical Society.

Lancaster Town Hall and Opera House, 21 Central Avenue - 1894-97. Combining elements of the Romanesque and Colonial Revival styles, this building met the need for a Town Hall with the opera house on its second and third floors.

Thayer-Ely-Keysa House, 5453 Broadway - 1831. This house is basically Federal in style but shows transitional features to the Greek Revival style.

Carpenter-Marafino Cottage, 19 Church Street - c. 1837. This cottage is characterized by pointed or lancet windows, heavily carved vines on the door and the barge boarding, and a pendant at the peak of the gable that are typical of the Gothic Revival style.

Historic District

All of the historic properties profiled above are included within the Village of Lancaster Historic District. The District boundaries include all properties along Broadway from the U.S. Post Office east to the Village/Town line; Central Avenue from Broadway north to Brookfield Street; Clark Street from Central Avenue east to School Street; Lake Avenue from Broadway north to Clark Street; and Church Street from Broadway south to Franklin Street.

Village of Depew

While there are no structures on the National Register of Historic Places in the Village of Depew, the overall layout of Veteran's Park and its surrounding village streets were designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, considered the father of the American park movement due to his strong influence in establishing parks throughout the nation. As part of his park designs, Olmsted often designed a series of parkways and streets to serve the need for open space of the neighborhoods through which they passed. The Village of Depew is fortunate to have a park and streets that were designed by Olmsted.

Veterans Park, located in central Depew east of Transit Road on land purchased from the Holland Land Company, was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. Along with the design for the park, a series of five streets was planned that would converge at the park in a 'spoke' layout: Westfield Avenue, Litchfield Avenue, Suffield Avenue, Bloomfield Avenue and Terrace Boulevard. This historic design illustrates the grand scheme of Olmsted to create a pastoral public space that is easily accessible to Village residents.

3.4.1.2 Cultural Resources

The focus of cultural life in the Lancaster-Depew area is the historic Lancaster Opera House located at 21 Central Avenue in the heart of the Village of Lancaster. Constructed in the years 1894-97, architect George Metzger designed the building in the Romanesque style with Colonial Revival style elements. The building was constructed of red brick and Medina sandstone as a Town Hall for Lancaster with the opera house on its second and third floors. The opera house is characterized with a suspended balcony, raked stage, proscenium arch and main floor with moveable seating.

The Town Hall/Opera House has served a variety of community functions throughout its history. From 1897 until 1932, the building hosted many plays, musical productions, dances, and shows. During the Great Depression, the Opera House was a distribution center for food. During World War I and World War II, the site was used for recruiting and bandage rolling. After World War II, the building housed the Erie County Civil Defense Headquarters. During the 1960s and 1970s, the building was used mainly for storage.

The restoration of the Opera House was started as a Bicentennial project and was completed in 1981. Since then, the facility has enjoyed an increasingly active role in the cultural life of the community and the region. The Opera House currently stages approximately 44 different productions a year (roughly 170 shows annually) between mid-September and mid-June. The Opera House strives to offer the widest variety of productions possible; productions normally include musicals, theatre, variety shows, children's shows, dance and classical concerts. Attendance at all shows for the 1997-98 season totaled approximately 43,000.

In addition to the public performances, the Opera House can also be rented for special functions such as wedding ceremonies and organizational meetings. The Lancaster Youth Bureau uses the facility for its yearly show held in the summer.

Funding for the Opera House is provided through private, governmental and fund-raising sources. The majority of funding is obtained through ticket sales. The Opera House holds a yearly campaign drive as well as a craft show to supplement funding. Governmental assistance is provided by the New York State Council on the Arts and Erie County.

3.4.2 Education

The majority of students in the Lancaster-Depew region attend the Lancaster Central School District or the Depew Union Free School District. A smaller number attend Cheektowaga Central Schools, Maryvale Central Schools, Alden Central Schools or Clarence Central Schools. The districts are profiled below.

Lancaster Central School District

Among the 28 school districts in Erie County, the Lancaster Central School District experienced the highest percentage increase (26%) in student enrollment between 1990-91 and 1997-98. The Lancaster Central School District serves students in the Town and Village of Lancaster and the Village of Depew. The district boundaries include nearly the entire Town and Village of Lancaster with the exception of the easternmost area of the Town between Ransom and Townline Roads and in the northeastern corner. The district extends beyond the Town's western boundary to include a portion of the Town of Cheektowaga north of the Village of Depew.

The eight school buildings in the Lancaster Central School District house approximately 5,600 students. The buildings and their enrollments as of September 1998 are as follows:

School Enrollment – September 1998
Lancaster Central School District

SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADES	ENROLLMENT
Elementary Schools: Central Avenue	149 Central Avenue	K-4	272
Como Park	1985 Como Park Boulevard	K-4	462
Court Street	91 Court Street	K-4	397
Hillview	Transit Rd. & Pleasant View Dr.	K-4	503
John A. Sciole	86 Alys Drive, Depew	K-4	473
William Street	5201 William Street	5-6	918
Aurora Middle School	148 Aurora	7-8	853
Lancaster High School	1 Forton Drive	9-12	1714
TOTAL			5592

Source: Lancaster Central School District

The William Street Elementary School was opened for the 1998-99 school year. With a cost of \$17.9 million, the new building was constructed to house fifth and sixth grades throughout the district and thereby ease overcrowding at the other elementary schools. Based solely on rollover figures from current student enrollment, the District projects a decrease in total enrollment of 8.4% by the school year 2002-03; however, this calculation does not include recent census projections, cohort survival ratios or redistricted numbers.

The District employs a total of 390 teachers and 17 administrators. Average class sizes range from a high of 25.2 at William Street Elementary School to a low of 19.9 at Central Avenue Elementary School. In addition to the school buildings, the District's Administrative Building is located in the Village of Lancaster at 177 Central Avenue.

Depew Union Free School District

With a loss of 216 students (-8%) between the 1990-91 and 1997-98 school years, the Depew Union Free School District experienced the largest percentage decrease in overall student enrollment of the 28 school districts in Erie County. The boundaries of the Depew Union Free School District include most of the Village of Depew with the exception of the western portion of the Village located in the Town of Cheektowaga. The district also extends south beyond the Village boundary to Marrano Drive. The Depew school district contains three school buildings with a total enrollment of 2,552 as shown below.

**School Enrollment – September 1998
Depew Union Free School District**

SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADES	ENROLLMENT
Cayuga Heights Elementary	1780 Como Park Blvd	K-4	990
Depew Middle School	South Transit Road	5-8	792
Depew Senior High School	South Transit Road	9-12	770
TOTAL			2552

Source: Depew Union Free School District

The District employs 205 teachers, five of which are BOCES teachers. In addition to the school buildings, the Depew Board of Education building is located at 591 Terrace Boulevard in the Village.

Cheektowaga Central School District

A small number of students in the western portion of the Village of Depew attend the Cheektowaga Central School system. This area is generally south of Scajaquada Creek and west of Chateau Court. There are no school facilities in the Village; most of the Depew students attend BOCES classes in Cheektowaga.

School Enrollment – September 1998
Cheektowaga Central School District

SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADES	ENROLLMENT
Pine Hill Primary Center	1635 East Delavan	K-1	363
Union East Elementary	3550 Union Road	2-6	793
Junior-Senior High School	3600 Union Road	7-12	1169
TOTAL			2325

Source: Cheektowaga Central School District

Maryvale School System

Village of Depew students in the northwestern corner of the Village attend the Maryvale School System. The area served by Maryvale is generally bounded by Claudette Court to the north and Scajaquada Creek to the south. Attendance by school facility is summarized below.

School Enrollment – September 1998
Maryvale School System

SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADES	ENROLLMENT
Maryvale Primary	1 Nagel Drive	K-2	597
Maryvale Intermediate	1050 Maryvale Drive	3-5	600
Maryvale Middle School	1050 Maryvale Drive	6-8	563
Maryvale Senior High	1050 Maryvale Drive	9-12	758
TOTAL			2518

Source: Maryvale School System

Alden Central School System

Students in the Town of Lancaster west of Ransom Road attend Alden Central Schools. The student distribution among the school buildings is as follows:

School Enrollment – September 1998
Alden Central School System

SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADES	ENROLLMENT
Primary	11197 Broadway	K-2	462
Intermediate	1648 Crittenden Road	3-5	464
Middle School	1648 Crittenden Road	6-8	520
High School	13190 Park Street	9-12	651
TOTAL			2097

Source: Alden Central School System

Clarence Central School System

The Clarence Central School District extends into the Town of Lancaster in the area north of Walden Avenue between Ransom and Town Line Roads. Currently, there are two students in Lancaster attending Clarence schools. The District's 4,183 students are distributed as follows:

School Enrollment – September 1998
Clarence Central School System

SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADES	ENROLLMENT
Elementary: Clarence Center	9600 Clarence Center Rd.	K-5	655
Harris Hill	4260 Harris Hill Road	K-5	342
Ledgeview	5150 Old Goodrich Road	K-5	581
Sheridan Hill	4560 Boncrest Drive East	K-5	386
Clarence Middle School	10150 Greiner Road	6-8	968
Clarence High School	9625 Main Street	9-12	1251
TOTAL			4183

Source: Clarence Central School System

Iroquois Central School District

Although there are no students from the Town of Lancaster currently attending the Iroquois Central School District, the district does extend into the southern part of the Town near the intersection of Hall and Schwartz Roads.

Erie 1 BOCES

Nineteen component districts, including all those mentioned above, participate in the Erie 1 BOCES program. With administrative offices located on Harlem Road in West Seneca, BOCES supplements local school district programs by offering instructional programs in such areas as Career Development Services, Management Services, Alternative Learning Programs, Information Services, and Learning and Technology Services. The total number of BOCES in the seven districts serving the Lancaster-Depew area is shown below.

School Enrollment
BOCES

SCHOOL DISTRICT	STUDENTS ENROLLED
Alden	76
Cheektowaga	148
Clarence	97
Depew	117
Iroquois	13
Lancaster	194
Maryvale	151

Source: BOCES

Private and Parochial Schools

In addition to the public schools, there are several private and parochial schools in the Lancaster-Depew area and within the greater Buffalo metropolitan region from which to choose. These include St. Mary's Diocesan High School (Lancaster), St. Barnabus (Depew), St. Peter and Paul (Depew), Our Lady of Pompeii (Lancaster) and Our Lady of Blessed Sacrament (Depew).

3.4.3 Library Service

Library services for Lancaster-Depew residents are provided through two branches of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System: the Lancaster Library and the Depew Branch Library.

Located at 5466 Broadway in the heart of the Village of Lancaster, the Lancaster Library coordinates the administration of both the Lancaster and Depew facilities. The Depew Library is considered a branch of the Lancaster Library and is located at 321 Columbia in the Village of Depew. The two libraries employ 10 full-time persons (five librarians, four clerks and one maintenance) and five part-time persons (four Senior Pages and one maintenance). The libraries also employ approximately 14 Pages on a part-time basis; these are high school and college students who assist with desk responsibilities and shelving books.

The Lancaster and Depew libraries together contain a total of 61,374 volumes, 6,878 audio-visual materials, 211 magazine subscriptions and over 5,000 paperbacks. In 1997, more than 300,000 materials were checked out and nearly 169,900 visits were recorded at the two facilities. Both libraries have a Community Room available for use by the general public.

The two libraries offer a variety of children's programs including toddler and pre-school programs. The Depew Library also offers an adult book discussion program that meets once a month. The Depew Library won a national award for its Friendship Garden which was planted with the help of pre-school children. Depew was the first library in the area to begin a "Junior Friends of the Library" group which enables middle school and high school students to assist with library projects and fund-raising.

The Lancaster Library is open seven days a week (57 hours) from Labor Day to mid-June; the library is closed Sundays during summer. The Depew Branch is open 39 hours a week from Labor Day to mid-June and is closed Thursdays and Sundays; the library is closed Saturdays during summer.

Funding for the two libraries is administered through the Lancaster Library, as the Depew branch does not have its own budget. The bulk of the funding comes from the Buffalo & Erie County Library System which provides more than \$500,000 per year for their operation. The Town of Lancaster owns the two library buildings and is responsible for their maintenance; this accounts for approximately \$25,000-30,000 per year. The Lancaster library building was constructed in the 1970s and the Depew facility in the 1960s. There are no plans for upgrading either building at this time.

A Strategic Plan was recently prepared by a consultant for the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library system to identify measures that could be taken to keep the system cost effective and efficient. The Plan is currently being reviewed by Library officials and will be subject to extensive public review before implemented. In the Plan, the Lancaster Library is recommended to become a community library; its services will either be maintained as is or enhanced. The Depew Library is recommended to become a specialty library; it will still have basic library services but emphasize a special service to the community (i.e. children, seniors, job training). Lancaster-Depew residents should make sure to participate in the public input process and let their opinions be known for the future planning for their libraries.

3.4.4 Health Care and Dental Services

With a location in central Erie County, residents of Lancaster and Depew have several health care facilities from which to choose. There are full-service hospitals located in the City of Buffalo and its surrounding suburbs that are easily accessible to Lancaster-Depew residents. A sampling of these facilities is provided below:

- **St. Joseph Hospital**, 2605 Harlem Road, Cheektowaga - The hospital is part of the Catholic Health System in Erie County. St. Joseph Hospital is a 208-bed acute care facility offering a complete range of inpatient and outpatient health services including physical therapy, surgery, ultrasound and mammography, a digestive health center and cardio-pulmonary center.

- **Millard Fillmore Gates Circle Hospital**, 3 Gates Circle, Buffalo - In addition to inpatient and outpatient services and ambulatory surgery, the hospital operates a Diabetes-Endocrinology Center, an Eye Center, a Hand Center and physical rehabilitation services.
- **Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital**, 1540 Maple Road, Williamsville - This facility is located in the adjacent Town of Amherst and a short distance from the Lancaster-Depew area. The hospital offers inpatient and outpatient services including ambulatory surgery, cardiology and mammography. The facility also has a cancer care clinic.
- **Erie County Medical Center**, 462 Grider Street, Buffalo - This full-service hospital provides inpatient and outpatient services including complete mental health services and alcohol and drug detoxification programs. The hospital also has a skilled nursing facility on the premises.
- **The Buffalo General Hospital**, 100 High Street, Buffalo - In addition to inpatient services and surgery, the hospital operates several on-site clinics including ear-nose-throat, eye and dental. Other services include CAT scanning, cardiac rehabilitation and a Women's Health Center.
- **Primary Care Centers**, 571 Terrace Boulevard, Depew; 4917 William Street, Lancaster - The Catholic Health System operates 24 Family and Primary Care Centers throughout the county including one in Depew and one in Lancaster. Two physicians staff the Depew facility, and three are at the Lancaster facility. Both centers are open Monday through Friday to provide outpatient care; both centers also operate an on-site laboratory.
- **Mercy Diagnostic Center**, 4845 Transit Road, Depew - This center is affiliated with Mercy Hospital of Buffalo and offers a wide range of health services including EKG testing, routine X-ray, mammography, ultrasound, vascular ultrasound and pre-admission testing. There are three private groups that operate from this site: Buffalo Family Practice Medical Associates, OB-GYN Associates of Western New York and Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Associates of Western New York. The center is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- **Forestream Plaza Medical Building**, 4711 Transit Road, Lancaster - This building houses several medical groups providing a wide range of services including Lancaster Radiology Group, Aurora Medical Group and Academic Medicine Services, Inc. (12 specialties). Dental offices are also located in this facility.
- **Medical Specialties** - Several offices are located within the Lancaster-Depew area including:
 - Physical Therapy: **Western New York Physical Therapy Group** - 6301 Transit Road, Depew; **Lancaster Physical Therapy**, 5478 Broadway, Lancaster
 - Sports Medicine: **Sport Rehabilitation Physical Therapy** - 5102 Transit Road, Depew
 - Eye Care: **Atwal Eye Care/Buffalo Eye Care Associates** - 4721 Transit Road, Depew
 - Orthopedics: **Suburban Orthopedic Group** - 2301 George Urban Boulevard, Depew
- **Medical Offices** - In addition to the medical facilities and clinics profiled above, there are several dozen private medical offices within the Lancaster-Depew area.
- **Dental Offices** - There are at least 35 private dental offices located within the Lancaster-Depew boundaries, including the specialties of endodontists and orthodontists. Numerous other dental services are available within the greater Buffalo metropolitan area.

3.4.5 Social Services

There are numerous social service agencies available to serve residents of the Lancaster-Depew area. While an exhaustive inventory of these services cannot be provided here, a sampling of area agencies is profiled below according to the populations they serve -- youth, adults and seniors.

Youth Services

- **Town of Lancaster Youth Bureau and Drug Abuse Prevention Council**, 200 Oxford Avenue, Lancaster - The Town operates a very active Youth Bureau which serves young people and their families from the Town and Village of Lancaster and the Village of Depew east of Transit Road. Programs offered at the site include counseling (for children and their parents), Red Cross babysitting courses, parenting courses, after-school tutoring, a health & wellness program for 7th-8th graders. The facility also operates a "Children's Clothes Closet" for residents of the larger community. During summer, the Bureau offers scholastic programs in math, reading, theatre, science, archaeology and creative writing. The Bureau also sponsors a Youth Court to handle juvenile first-time offenses.

The Youth Bureau also includes the Drug Abuse Prevention Council which sponsors various programs for middle school and high school students to provide accurate information regarding drugs and alcohol and help them make informed decisions and deal with peer pressure.

The Youth Bureau and Drug Abuse Prevention Council is staffed by eight persons and funded by Town of Lancaster funds with partial funding from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services and the Division of Criminal Justice Services. Most services at the facility are free for residents of Lancaster-Depew, although some programs are available to non-residents. In cases where a fee is charged, non-residents pay double the required amount.

- **Cheektowaga Youth & Recreational Services**, 275 Alexander Avenue, Cheektowaga - Youth services for Depew residents west of Transit Road are provided through the Town of Cheektowaga. Programs are held at both the Alexander Community Center and the Dartwood Community Center. Youth programs include Wee Three, Pre-K and Tiny Tumbler Gymnastics. The Recreation Club and Kids Club provides crafts, snacks, games, physical exercise, parties and field trips for area youth.

Special programs offered through the department include youth and family counseling and the Be-A-Friend Big Brother/Big Sister program. The YES (Youth Engaged in Service) program is a volunteer program available to young people between the ages of 12 and 21.

- **Lancaster-Depew Boys and Girls Club**, 5440 Broadway, Lancaster and 60 Preston, Depew - The club offers membership to youth between the ages of 7 and 19 years. An alumni organization is available to those over 20 years of age. Yearly dues of \$15 enable unlimited use of the facilities. Both facilities are open throughout the year and provide gym activities, arts & crafts, ceramics and weight rooms. The club also sponsors boys' and girls' traveling basketball teams. The Depew facility offers sessions in photography and woodshop.

Though primarily serving Lancaster and Depew, residency in these locales is not required for membership. Other area groups and sports teams may also use the facilities. The buildings are open from 1 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. Monday through Friday and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. The club currently has a membership of 850 boys and girls and 250-300 alumni. The facilities are staffed by 6 full-time and 5-8 part-time employees.

The club receives funding from a variety of sources including the Town of Lancaster, the United Way, Erie County and New York State, although it raises a substantial amount of money through its own fund-raising activities (races, dinner, telethon, golf tournaments).

- **Booster Clubs** - Booster clubs in the Lancaster-Depew area include the Depew Wildcat Boosters at Depew High School and the Lancaster Redskins Booster Club at Lancaster High School.

Adult Services

- **Depew and Lancaster Lions Clubs** - The Lions Clubs are very active social organizations in the Depew-Lancaster area. The purpose of the clubs is to provide assistance to sight-impaired and hearing-impaired residents of their respective communities. The clubs have provided large print books and books on tape as well as TTY telecommunications for hearing impaired persons to read and type messages on the telephone. The clubs also provide eye examinations and glasses for qualified residents of the community. The Lions also operate a 'loan closet' where needy persons can obtain equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, crutches and hospital beds free of charge. Various fund-raising events are sponsored by the Lions Clubs to help special causes in the community.
- **Veterans Organizations** - Veterans organizations and facilities in the Lancaster-Depew area include the Amvets Buddy Knaus Post No. 14 at 4721 Broadway in Depew; Lancaster VFW Post 7275 at 3741 Walden Avenue in Lancaster; and the Twin Village VFW Post No. 463 at 97 Litchfield Avenue in Depew.
- **Garden Clubs** - Garden clubs in the area include the Bowmansville Garden Club and the Lancaster Garden Club.
- **Southeast Community Work Center, Inc.**, 181 Lincoln Street, Depew - The center offers a wide variety of services throughout Erie County to adults with developmental disabilities. Employment services include sheltered employment and supported employment. Thirty persons participate in a day treatment program which contains training in social, personal and work skills. Support is also provided to individuals preparing to live independently in the community. Other services include a recreation program and a remedial academic program in which participants are instructed using computers in association with the Maryvale School District.
- Other clubs in the Lancaster-Depew area include the **Depew Masonic Lodge, Depew-Lancaster Sertoma Club, Polish Falcons Club, Ladies Auxiliary Polish Falcons Society, Lancaster Elks BPOE No. 1478, Lancaster-Depew Rotary Club, Lancaster Women's Civic Club, Loyal Order of Moose Club of Lancaster and Zonta Club of Cheektowaga-Lancaster.**

Senior Services

Most services for senior citizens in the Lancaster-Depew area are provided through the municipal governments, as described below:

- **Lancaster Senior Citizens Center**, 100 Oxford Avenue, Lancaster - With hours of operation 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, the center provides numerous services and activities for area seniors. Physical activities include aerobics classes; line dancing, square dancing and ballroom dancing; and swimming at the Lancaster and Depew High Schools. Lessons are offered in art, arts and crafts and quilting. Other activities include trips, card-playing, dinner/dance parties and bingo. The center also schedules monthly visits from Como Park Elementary School students and summer picnics at Como Casino. In addition, hot meals are available to all Erie County residents through the center's Meals-on-Wheels program.
- **Depew Senior Citizens Center**, 85 Manitou, Depew - Located in the Village's Municipal Building, the Senior Citizens Center provides a variety of services to Village residents. Activities include arts and crafts, ceramics, bingo, birthday celebrations, local trips and an exercise program. The Center operates with funds from the Village of Depew; the Village recently purchased a van for transporting handicapped persons or those without their own transportation to and from the Center. The Center is staffed entirely by volunteers. The current active membership is 192.
- **Twin Village AARP** - With a membership of close to 300 persons, the Twin Village AARP donates services to various groups and organizations for special causes. The organization assists the Lions Club during elections, and participates in parades with veterans groups on Veterans Day and the Fourth of July. The organization also raises money for needy families that is donated at Christmas time. The AARP actively lobbies in Albany for legislation relating to seniors. The group meets at the Elks Hall on Legion Parkway in Lancaster.

3.4.6 Senior Nursing Facilities

The number of residential facilities for seniors, including skilled nursing facilities and assisted living facilities, has grown over the past few decades. This can be attributed to the general 'aging' of the population as the post-WWII baby boom generation grows older, and the availability of improved health care which has allowed more people to live longer.

Within the Buffalo metropolitan area are numerous skilled nursing or assisted living facilities for seniors. Four facilities are located within the Lancaster-Depew area:

- *Linwood Health Care Center* - 1818 Como Park Boulevard, Lancaster. This facility has 89 skilled nursing beds. The center has a sister facility, *Maplewood Health Care Center*, at 225 Bennett Road in Cheektowaga, which has 160 skilled nursing beds, 24 of which are sub-acute beds (for short-term, intensive rehabilitation).
- *Greenfield Health & Rehabilitation Center* - 5949 Broadway, Lancaster. This facility has 160 skilled nursing beds and is part of the Niagara Lutheran Health System.
- *St. Elizabeth's Home for the Aged* - 5539 Broadway, Lancaster. This facility has 117 beds and is considered an adult care, non-medical facility. Nursing care is available around the clock for residents, but it is not considered a skilled nursing residence.
- *Bethany Adult Home* - 5528 Broadway, Lancaster. This facility is an adult residence for people with physical and mental handicaps. The facility is not limited to seniors but serves adults 18 years of age and older.

3.4.7 Animal Control

Animal control for the Town and Village of Lancaster and the portion of the Village of Depew east of Transit Road is provided by the dog shelter located at 3789 Walden Road. The shelter provides 24-hour service by one full-time employee and four on-call staff persons. The shelter picks up dogs that are strays or for which complaints have been received. Dogs are held for 7-10 days. Most dogs are picked up by the owner; those not claimed are sent to the SPCA. The Town also takes deceased dogs from the Town of Cheektowaga. During summer months, 3-4 calls per day can come in; calls are reduced to 5-6 per week at other times of the year. The dog shelter is funded entirely by Town of Lancaster funds.

The Town of Cheektowaga provides animal control services to the portion of the Village of Depew west of Transit Road. The Dog Warden is located behind the Town Police Department at Union and Broadway and is funded by Cheektowaga funds. One full-time and two part-time staff persons operate the facility. Primarily responsible for dog control, the Warden also works with the County Health Department on cat bite incidents and wildlife nuisance calls. The Warden is under contract to arrange adoptions from the facility and to destroy animals if not claimed or adopted.

There are four animal hospitals within the Lancaster-Depew area:

- **Broadway Veterinary Clinic**, 5915 Broadway, Lancaster
- **Suburban South Veterinary Hospital**, 1230 French Road, Depew
- **Transit Animal Hospital**, 6020 Transit Road, Depew
- **Lancaster Small Animal Hospital**, 5156 Genesee Street, Bowmansville

For emergency veterinary care, animals can be taken to facilities located in the Towns of Amherst, Tonawanda or Orchard Park, or transported to an emergency facility in Rochester.

3.5 Emergency Services

This section summarizes the emergency services (police, fire and ambulance) available to residents of the Lancaster-Depew area.

3.5.1 Law Enforcement

Town of Lancaster

The Town of Lancaster Police Department operates from the headquarters located at 525 Pavement Road. The department is staffed by a total 40 people, 33 of who are officers, and maintains a fleet of 11 vehicles for their use. The yearly number of calls responded to by the department exceeds 10,000.

The Police Department's staff of six Dispatchers not only coordinate the service of the Town Police Department but also the Lancaster Volunteer Ambulance Corps (LVAC) and eight volunteer fire companies: Lancaster (Town), Depew, Alden, Millgrove, Townline, Bowmansville, Crittendon and Twin District. The Dispatchers handle all emergency calls within this region.

Village of Lancaster

The Village of Lancaster Police Department serves the entire Village population. The department has a staff of 22 persons (16 officers, four dispatchers and two secretaries) who work at the Police Headquarters building located at the Municipal Building, 5423 Broadway in the Village. The department owns six vehicles.

Village of Depew

Located at 85 Manitou Street, the Village Police Department employs 39 staff persons; this figure includes a Chief, Captain 6 Lieutenants, 3 Detectives and 20 Patrolmen. The department maintains a fleet of nine vehicles for their use. The department operates special educational programs upon request including programs on drug awareness, crime prevention and neighborhood watch. The department also sponsors school visits and National Night-Out events for residents.

3.5.2 Fire Protection

Town of Lancaster

The Twin District Volunteer Fire Company serves a large portion of the Town of Lancaster, with company office located at 4999 William Street in Lancaster. The company is made up entirely of volunteers, with approximately 50 currently serving. There is a five-member Board overseeing the company's operation. Vehicles that serve the firefighters include a heavy rescue vehicle, a command vehicle, Engine 1, Engine 2 and a fire police vehicle.

The Bowmansville Fire Company, 36 Main Street, Bowmansville serves the northern sections of the Town of Lancaster and the Village of Depew. This area is bounded by Wehrle Drive, Transit Road, Walden Avenue and Ward Road. There are 52 active volunteers that handle approximately 550 calls per year. The company has eight vehicles for its use: 3 pumpers, 2 light rescue, 1 heavy rescue, a fire police vehicle and a Chief's vehicle.

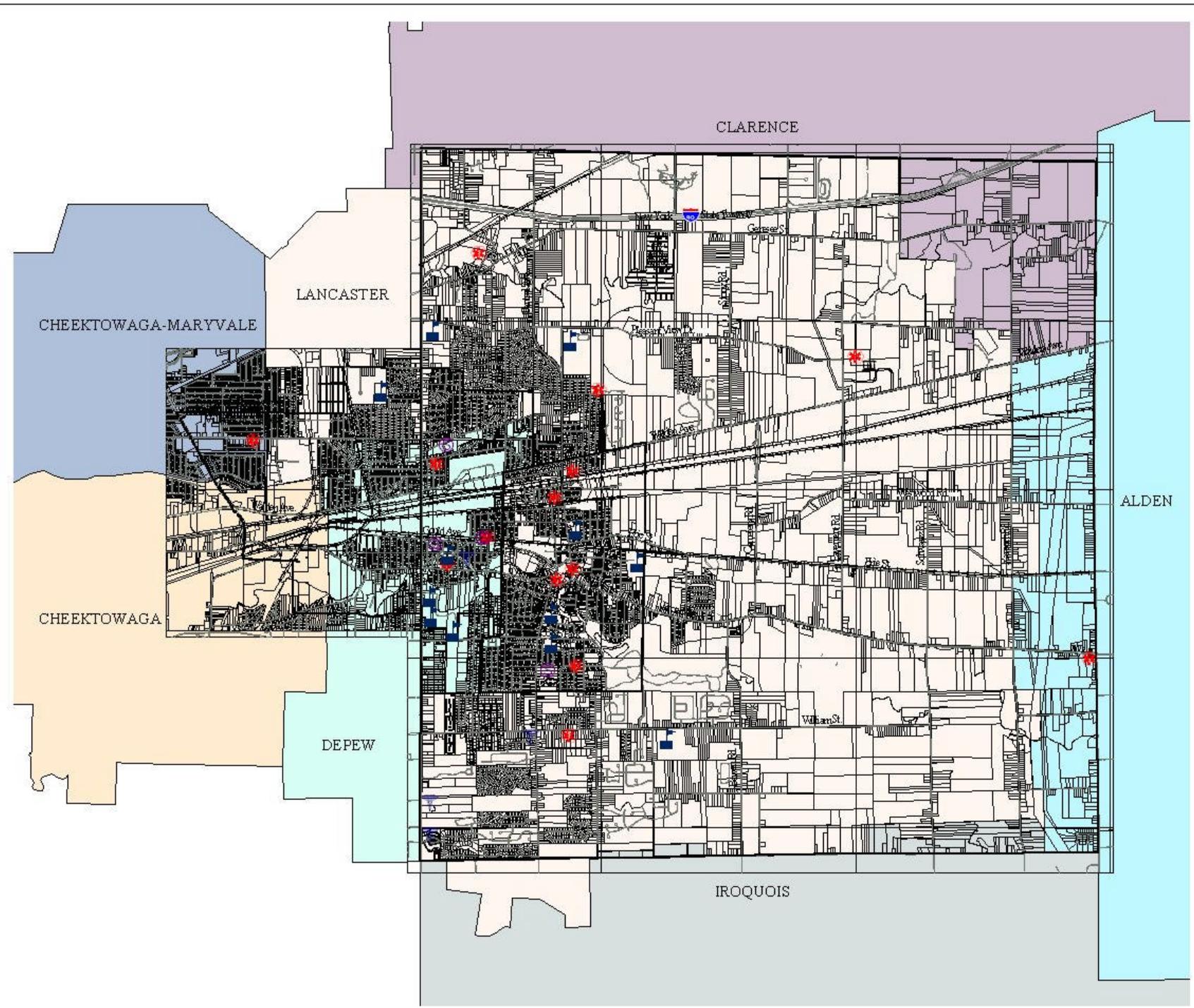
Other fire departments serving the Town are the Town Line District Fire Company, 6507 Broadway near the Alden Town line and the Millgrove Fire Department in the Town of Alden that serves the northeast portion of the Town of Lancaster.

Village of Lancaster

The Village's Fire Department is located in the Municipal Building at 5423 Broadway. The department is made up entirely of volunteers, with 145 volunteers currently active. The department maintains seven vehicles including three pumpers, ladder truck, rescue truck, utility vehicle and chief's vehicle. While responding to all emergencies, the fire fighters do not provide first aid but rather contact the Lancaster Volunteer Ambulance Corps (LVAC), which is described in the Emergency Services section. The Fire Department also conducts fire prevention programs in local schools.

TOWN OF LANCASTER
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REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Community Facilities



- School Districts
- ALDEN
 - CHEEKTOWAGA
 - CHEEKTOWAGA-MARYVALE
 - CLARENCE
 - DEPEW
 - IROQUOIS
 - LANCASTER

- Town and Village Boundaries
- Parcel Boundaries

- Public School
- Health Services
- Municipal Building
- Emergency Services
- Social Services
- Public Library



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Village of Depew

The Village maintains an all-volunteer fire department. Three fire halls are operated within the Village boundaries; these are located on Brewster Street, George Urban Boulevard and Meridian Street.

3.5.3 Ambulance Services

The Lancaster Volunteer Ambulance Corps (LVAC) provides emergency services for the entire Town and Village of Lancaster and the Village of Depew. The LVAC office is located at 40 Embry Place in the Village of Lancaster and currently has 96 staff persons including Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). With the expertise of the EMTs, LVAC operates at the paramedic level. Calls for assistance within the service area are received through 911 and transferred to the Town of Lancaster Police Department, which in turn transfers them to LVAC. Billing for service is done through third-party (insurance) sources. LVAC is funded through Town of Lancaster funds; a fund drive is also conducted by the company.

3.6 Recreation and Park Resources

Residents, workers, tourists, and other visitors to the Town of Lancaster and the Villages of Lancaster and Depew are served by a variety of parks and recreational facilities. The following provides an inventory of existing parks and recreational facilities and assesses the adequacy of existing facilities to serve the population.

The evaluation of park and recreational facilities in the three communities includes the following elements:

- a summary of the type and quantity of existing parkland;
- a discussion of national park planning standards;
- an estimate of recreational demands;
- a summary of the condition of the facilities available to the community; and
- a general identification of deficiencies and possible enhancements to the park system.

Definition of Publicly Accessible Open Space

"Public open space" is land that has been specifically dedicated or reserved for active or passive recreational use by the public, or for conservation purposes. No such restrictions have been placed on "undeveloped" or "vacant" land, and it can be assumed that all or part of this land will eventually be developed for some other use. Designated open space in the region falls into the following categories: Town and Village parks and recreational facilities, a County park, and recreational facilities on school property. There are no state parks located in the three communities.

Functions of Open Space

Open space serves many different purposes in the communities. It provides recreational opportunities for Village and Town residents, protects wildlife habitat, preserves important scenic features and a visually pleasing landscape, and serves to maintain critical environmental resources, such as groundwater.

Recreational resources in the Town and Villages include such active use facilities as ball fields, tennis courts, pools, and playgrounds; and such passive use facilities as picnic and seating areas. The Town of Lancaster also contains a larger regional open space area—Como Lake Park—which provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities throughout the year. This and other large County and state park facilities in Erie County supplement the municipal facilities available within the three communities.

Open space is an integral component of maintaining the character of the communities and the quality of life. As remaining undeveloped land becomes scarcer, it is important to assess the region's current and future open space needs and plan now for the preservation and enhancement of essential open space areas.

3.6.1 Existing Inventory

An inventory of existing public and private recreational facilities within the three communities was conducted. Existing facilities included: all parks and open spaces which are currently owned and operated by the Town and Villages; open spaces owned by public or parochial schools or fire companies that are maintained, leased or programmed for public use; and publicly-owned facilities that are not owned or leased by the Town or Villages but are used by residents either free of charge or on a fee basis.

Site visits were conducted by The Saratoga Associates in the fall and winter of 1998-99. These field visits provided two types of information about the existing park system. First, the visits identified the current mix of community recreational facilities. Second, the visits provided insight to the overall physical condition and an understanding of the type and quantity of functional activities that occur at each recreational facility.

The location of the public and private recreational facilities are illustrated in the following table listing and description of the type of activity within each park facility and the acreage are presented in the following table. A total of 19 different facilities are included in the inventory.

Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
A Comprehensive Plan...A Common Future

Municipal and County Designated Parklands

Ownership/Name	Acreage ¹	Type	Features
<i>Town of Lancaster</i>			
Westwood Park	149.0	Community	Baseball/softball diamonds (8), football/soccer fields (2), playground, picnic shelters (8), walk/bike path (2 miles), nature trail, garden, fishing pond, pavilion/community room, picnic tables
Walden Pond Park	56.0	Community	Softball diamonds (8), volleyball courts (4), football/soccer field (1), playgrounds, fishing pond, picnic shelters (8), picnic tables
Keysa Town Park ²	10.0	Neighborhood	Swimming pool, wading pool, basketball courts (3), tennis courts (2), baseball/softball diamonds (2), horseshoe pits, playground equipment, picnic shelter (1), picnic tables
Meadow Lea Park	8.0	Neighborhood	Wading pool, softball diamond (1), basketball court (1), picnic shelter (1), picnic tables, playground equipment
Subtotal	223.0		
<i>Village of Lancaster</i>			
Mechanic Street Courts	0.5	Neighborhood	Tennis courts (2). Not in use: gated and closed.
North End Playground	1.0	Neighborhood	Playground equipment, picnic table, basketball court (1)
Third Ave. Spray Pool	1.0	Neighborhood	Spray pool, picnic shelter (1)
Subtotal	2.5		
<i>Village of Depew</i>			
Firemen's Park	18.0	Neighborhood	Baseball/softball diamonds (3), soccer field (1), tennis courts (2), basketball courts (4), swimming pool, wading pool, indoor ice arena, picnic shelters (4), picnic tables, playground
Warner Estates Park	2.0	Neighborhood	Basketball court (1), picnic shelter (1), playground equipment, picnic tables
George Urban Park	1.0	Neighborhood	Basketball court (1), picnic shelter (1), playground equipment, picnic tables
Enez/Evane Park	1.0	Neighborhood	Basketball court (1), picnic shelter (1), playground equipment, picnic tables
West Dawson Park ³	0.5	Neighborhood	Fitness center, playground, picnic shelter (1), picnic tables
Veteran's Park	0.5	Neighborhood	Gazebo, benches
Southside Park	1.0	Neighborhood	Playground equipment, picnic table

Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
A Comprehensive Plan...A Common Future

Ownership/Name	Acreage ¹	Type	Features
James E. Dawson Athletic Field ³	4.0	Neighborhood	Baseball diamond (1), soccer field (1)
Terrace Playground	0.5	Neighborhood	Playground equipment, picnic table
Subtotal	28.5		
<i>Town of Cheektowaga</i>			
Rehm Road Park ⁴	30.0	Community	Softball diamonds (4), hardball diamond (1), football field (1), tennis courts (3), basketball court (1), playground equipment, picnic shelter (1), picnic tables
Golf Course ⁵	24.0	Regional	18-hole golf course under construction Spring 1999. 185 total acres, including 24 acres within the Village of Depew
<i>Erie County</i>			
Como Lake Park ⁶	337.0	Regional	Tennis courts (4), basketball courts (2), baseball/softball diamonds (5), volleyball courts (2), skate pond, casino, picnic shelters (59) and tables, nature trail, senior center, horse shoe pits (2)
TOTAL	645.0		

Notes:

¹ All figures rounded up to nearest half acre.

² Located entirely within the Village of Lancaster.

³ The Village of Depew has a long-term lease with the school district for the unrestricted use of these parks.

⁴ Located entirely within the Village of Depew.

⁵ Reflects acreage in Depew only, 24 acres were formerly part of Rehm Road park. Under construction Spring 1999.

⁶ Developed park land only; acreage does not include 197 acres of wooded lands east of Bowen Road.

Sources: *Village of Depew Parks and Recreation 5-Year Master Plan, 1997*; Town of Lancaster Recreation Department; Village of Lancaster; Town of Cheektowaga Building Department; field surveys by the Saratoga Associates, various dates fall/winter 1998-99.

Town of Lancaster Facilities

The Town of Lancaster has about 223 acres of municipally owned, developed parkland which provide a mix of passive and active recreational activities. A total of 213 of these acres are located in the Town outside of the Villages and 10 acres (Keysa Town Park) is located fully within the Village of Lancaster. The Town's recreational facilities are well-varied, including football/soccer fields, tennis courts, swimming pools, basketball courts, playgrounds, softball/baseball fields, picnic areas, and fishing ponds.

The largest Town-owned open space resource is Westwood Park, a 149-acre year-round recreational facility located on Pavement Road between Broadway and Walden Avenue that offers opportunities for a wide array of sports. The park has active facilities including ball diamonds, multi-use fields for football and soccer, playground equipment, and a hiking/biking trail. It also offers an educational nature trail and a memorial garden, picnic shelters and an enclosed pavilion/community room, and a stocked fishing pond.

Walden Pond Park (56 acres) located at the corner of Walden Avenue and Ransom Road features fields for softball, football, and soccer; volleyball courts, picnic shelters, playground equipment, and a fishing pond. Keysa Town Park, a 10-acre park at the corner of Brady and Vandenberg Avenues in the Village of Lancaster, provides active recreational facilities for swimming, basketball tennis, softball/baseball, and horseshoe throwing as well as a playground and picnic area. , Meadow Lea Park, located on Broezel Avenue near Ronald Drive, provides 8 acres of recreational space, with a softball diamond, a basketball court, a wading pool, playground equipment, and a picnic shelter. Town of Lancaster recreational facilities are generally in good to excellent condition. No major capital improvements are currently planned.

The Town of Lancaster Parks and Recreation Department offers a full range of organized recreational activities throughout the year at the Town parks and Lancaster Central School District facilities. Activities include arts and crafts, swim lessons and aquatic activities, tennis lessons, league sports and fitness activities, and instructional sports camps. Interviews with Town Parks and Recreation Director indicate a high level of participation.

The Town of Lancaster Senior Center is an indoor recreational facility at 100 Oxford Avenue off Aurora Streets which opened in 1995. The Center offers fitness programs and tournaments; dance, art, computer, and music lessons; arts and crafts activities; a hot meals program; and a wide variety social activities for Lancaster residents aged 60 and older. The Center currently has about 2,500 registered members. The Town of Lancaster Youth Bureau, located in a new building at 200 Oxford Avenue, provides a variety of youth development and delinquency prevention programs.

The Town of Lancaster also owns an approximately 9-acre undeveloped parcel of land in the south end of Town off Aurora Street near Old Post Road. The property has been earmarked for recreational purposes, although no recreational use plan has been created to date. The site is adjacent to residential uses.

Although not a recreational program per se, it is noted that the Town of Lancaster has a tree planting program. Under the program, the property owner must pay a tree planting fee and the Town must plant a street tree in the public right-of-way before a Certificate of Occupancy is granted for a new home. Funds derived from the tree-planting fees are also used to plant trees in Town of Lancaster parks. In total, 1,400 trees were planted under the program in 1997, 900 trees were planted in a 1998, and an estimated 1,000 trees will be planted in 1999.

Village of Lancaster

The Village of Lancaster owns approximately 2.5 acres of smaller neighborhood parks. These include the North End Playground at Central Avenue and West Drullard Avenue and the Third Avenue Spray Pool in the south end of the Village. The Village also owns two tennis courts on Mechanic Street which are in poor condition and currently gated and closed. Other facilities are generally in good condition. No major capital improvements are currently planned.

Village residents are eligible for and utilize the Town's extensive recreational facilities and recreational programming, including parks and pools, the Senior Center, and the Youth Bureau. The Village of Lancaster does not operate a separate recreation program.

Village of Depew

The Village of Depew owns and operates a variety of recreational facilities totaling some 27 acres. As shown below, above, the largest park is 18-acre Firemen's Park, a year-round facility including an ice arena, ball fields, pools, tennis and basketball courts, playground equipment, and picnic areas. Mature trees provide shade to park visitors.

In the northwest quadrant of the Village two smaller neighborhood parks— George Urban Park and Enez-Evane Park—provide basketball courts, playground equipment, and picnic areas. In the northeast part of the Village, Warner Estates Park and West Dawson Park provide playgrounds and picnic areas. Warner Estates also includes a basketball court and West Dawson has an outdoor fitness station; the adjoining James E. Dawson Field contains and a baseball diamond and a soccer field. In the southern half of the Village are Terrace Playground on Terrace Boulevard between Meridian and Marengo Streets and Southside Park, located at St. James and Penora Streets, the newest Village of Depew playground.

The Village of Depew Parks and Recreation Department operates a wide variety of organized recreational activities throughout the year at the Village parks and playgrounds and public and parochial school facilities. Activities include arts and crafts, field trips, swim lessons, children's theater, basketball programs, ice skating lessons and activities, and league sports. Concerts are held regularly in the summer months at the Veteran's Park gazebo.

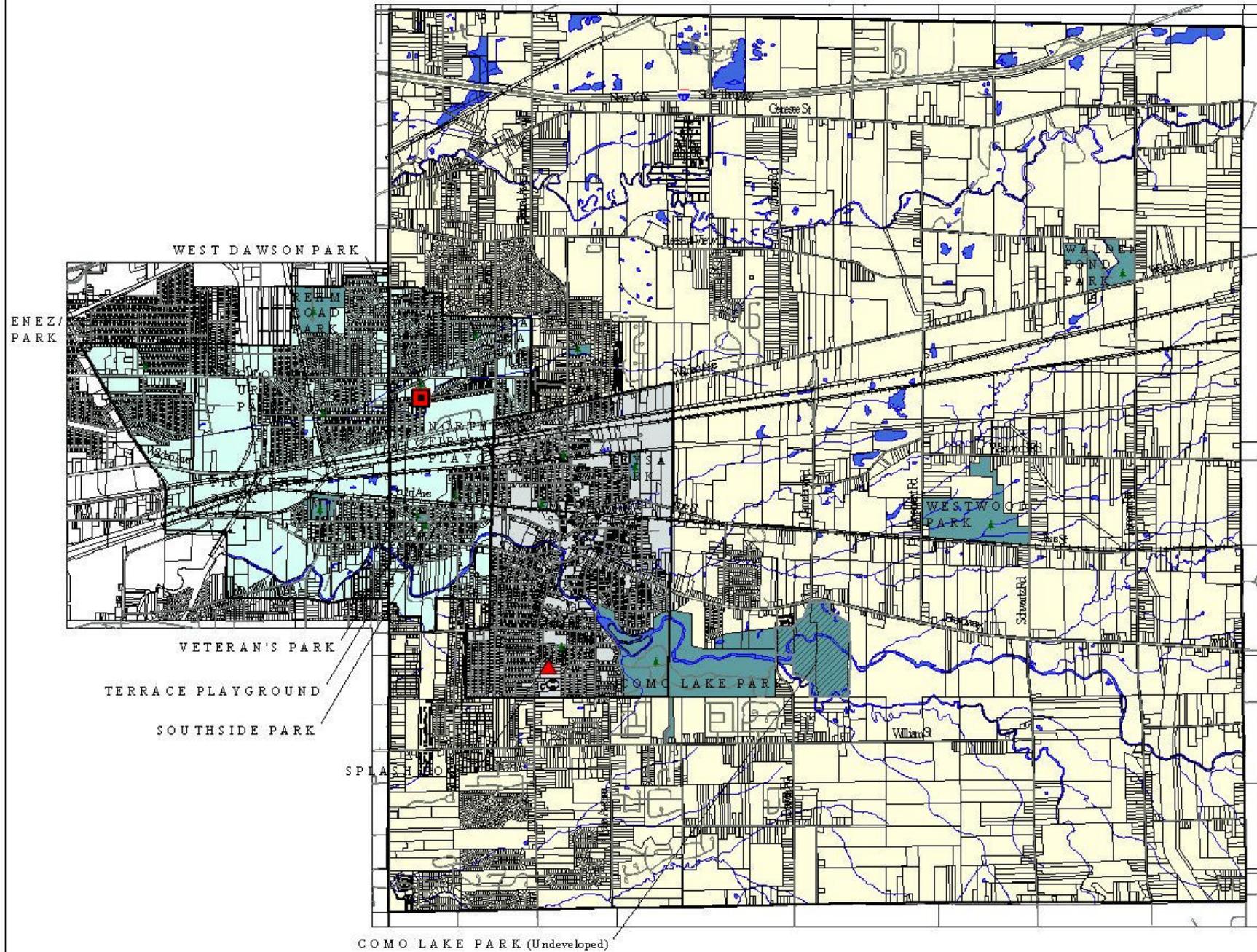
The Depew Senior Citizens Group has weekly activities for seniors at its location adjoining the Depew Municipal Building. Interviews with the Village of Depew Parks and Recreation Department Director and staff indicated a high level of participation in Village recreation programming. Firemen's Park is the most heavily utilized recreational facility on a year-round basis and during the summer months, the facility often is overcrowded.

Although Village recreational facilities are generally in good condition, facilities at Firemen's Park including the pool house, ice rink/office building, and other equipment are in need of repair.⁵ In addition, many of the smaller playgrounds lack shade trees, landscaping, and screening. The pavilion at George Urban Park collapsed after heavy snow and will be replaced. No major capital improvements are currently underway, although the Village is seeking funding to implement capital improvements at Firemen's Park. The Village proposes to develop a trail around the park's edge, improve the soccer fields, and construct a Youth Center.

⁵Village of Depew Parks and Recreation 5-Year Master Plan, September 1997.

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Public Parks
and
Recreational Facilities



- Roads
- Rivers, Streams
- Parcel Boundaries
- Municipal Boundaries
- Lakes, Ponds
- Public Parks
- Village of Depew
- Village of Lancaster
- Town of Lancaster

Other Public Recreational Facilities

- Southeast Community Work Center
- Lancaster Senior Citizens Center and Youth Bureau



January 2000

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Town of Cheektowaga Facilities

The Rehm Road Athletic Area is a 30-acre recreational facility owned by the Town of Cheektowaga and located in the Village of Depew on Rehm Road at the northern edge of the Village. The facility contains four softball diamonds, one hardball diamond, three tennis courts, a basketball court and playground picnic facilities.

Construction of a public golf course, scheduled to begin in the Spring of 1999, reduced the size of the park from 54 to 30 acres. However, according to the Town of Cheektowaga Building Department, all existing active recreational facilities, including ball fields and courts, will be maintained or relocated within the new boundaries of Rehm Road park. The Village of Depew's Parks and Recreation Department utilizes three softball diamonds for men's softball programming. The new 18-hole public golf course will total 185 acres upon completion, including the 24 acres within the Village of Depew which were formerly part of Rehm Road park.

Erie County Facilities

Como Lake Park is a 534-acre County-owned and operated year-round regional recreational facility located on lands adjoining Cayuga Creek in the southeast corner of the Village of Lancaster and the south central portion of the Town. The park is heavily utilized, particularly in the summer. The park serves a wider regional population base beyond the three communities and draws visitors from throughout Erie County. Como Lake Park had an estimated annual attendance of 141,500 persons in 1998. The park includes a dam and artificial lake at its western end.

The developed portion of the park comprises approximately 337 acres and includes playgrounds, tennis courts, ball fields, basketball and volleyball courts, a casino with a food concession, a sledding hill, an outdoor ice skating facility, a nature trail along Cayuga Creek, picnic tables and shelters, horseshoe pits, and a senior citizens center. The Friends of Como Lake Park is a not-for-profit group which works cooperation with the Erie County Department of Parks and Recreation to support the park. The group provides volunteers to help with maintenance of the Cayuga Creek Nature Trail, sponsors park events, and established a successful memorial tree-planting program.

A total of approximately 197 acres of County-owned wooded lands comprising the undeveloped portion of Como Lake Park extend to the east of Bowen Road. These undeveloped park lands provide wildlife habitat and opportunities for nature study. However, because they are not readily accessible to the public nor contain any recreational facilities, these undeveloped lands were not included in the park land acreage in the analysis below. The County Parks Department currently proposes major renovations to the maintenance buildings and office complex in the park.

School District and Parochial School Facilities

School facilities, such as ball fields, basketball courts, and playgrounds, are also extensively utilized by residents of the three communities on a limited and seasonal basis when not in use for school activities. The Town of Lancaster and the Village of Depew have long-standing agreements for the use of public and parochial school recreational facilities.

School facilities utilized for Village of Depew Parks and Recreation Department programs include the Cayuga Heights Elementary School playground and athletic area, the John A. Sciole Elementary School playground and athletic area, the Hillview Elementary School athletic area, the St. Barnabus playground and athletic area, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament playground and athletic area, and the Saints Peter and Paul playground. The Town of Lancaster utilizes playground facilities at the following school district properties: Aurora Middle School, Como Park Elementary School, Hillview Elementary School, and William Street School. The Town sponsors recreational programs at playgrounds owned by the Bowmansville Fire Company and the Twin District Fire Company. Running tracks are available to the public at St. Mary's High School, Depew High School, and Lancaster High School.

It is important to note that although the school district, parochial school, and fire company facilities are utilized for Town and Village recreational programs, these facilities are not controlled by the municipalities and are available only on a limited basis. As a result, they are not included in the municipal parkland acreage utilized in the needs assessment below and are considered supplemental facilities.

3.6.2 Recreation and Park Standards

Planning organizations have formulated open space standards to guide decision-makers in determining how much open space is needed or desirable in an area. The standards are based on the type of open space provided (i.e., community or neighborhood) the size of the population to be served, and distance from the open space. A standard measure of access to open space is provided by the ratio of available open space acreage per 1,000 residents.

As discussed above, open space serves many different purposes. These standards apply to the amount of open space for recreational purposes. Passive open space or preservation of site-specific features or natural resources cannot be similarly quantified and these decisions must be based on a site-specific evaluation. In order to evaluate the existing park and recreational facilities, national standards were used to project the probable demand for park facilities. For the purposes of this study, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) general parkland acreage standards were used. This study addresses the adequacy of neighborhood parks and community parks.

The factors provided by NRPA which help to define each type of parkland and include typical site criteria for each type of parkland are listed below. This information was used to help examine the adequacy of the supply of the communities' public recreational facilities. In addition, the study used NRPA population-based standards to determine the amount of neighborhood and community parkland potentially required in the communities.

General Parkland Criteria

Neighborhood Park

- Generally 2-20 acres in size.
- Serves people most desirably within a one-half mile radius, with 1.7 acres minimum available per 1,000 persons.
- Preferably located near an elementary school or near the center of a population concentration.
- Usual facilities are for unsupervised sports, play equipment, multi-use playing areas, turf area, tree plantings, some passive area, and minimal allocations for auto parking. With a summer playground program, a small shelter is desirable.
- May include the following types of facilities:
 - Ballfields - Examples include softball or little league field only; bleachers, team benches, backstop and fences.
 - Tot Lots - Generally less than one acre in size. Usual facilities include play apparatus for small children only; benches, sand area, small wading or spray pool, landscaped areas, and shaded areas for supervising parents.
- May include alternate facilities such as quiet game areas, multipurpose court, or other features.

School Recreational Facilities

- May be considered a neighborhood park, yet serves most of the people within the community through normal school activities.
- Usual facilities include children's playground areas, multi-purpose courts, school athletic playing fields, off street parking and related uses.

Community Park

- Generally 50-100 acres, or more, in size.
- Serves the whole community, but most desirably located within a three mile radius, with seven acres minimum available per 1,000 persons.
- Location depends on availability of appropriate sites. However, community parks should be located as close to the population centers as possible.
- Usual facilities include active athletic areas similar to playing fields, with at least half of the area left more natural in character, with picnicking, hiking, camping, archery, golf, fishing, boating, ice skating and water sports, if appropriate, included.
- Interior roadways with area parking are required.
- Shelters, swimming pools and quiet areas are desirable.

Facility Planning Standards

In addition to the general parklands acreage standards, NRPA standards were used to establish the number of units of functional activity (i.e., baseball fields and tennis courts), which on average, should be provided within the region's park system.

The types of activities include a broad range of facility types, including baseball, softball, volleyball, skiing, nature trails, areas for picnicking, tennis courts, playground equipment, ice skating, swimming pools, fishing, basketball, football, soccer fields, archery, golf, and horseshoes. The recommended NRPA standards for each activity are listed below.

NRPA Facility/Activity Planning Standards

Facility	Standard/ 1,000 Population
Badminton	.2 courts
Tennis	.5 courts
Volleyball	.2 courts
Basketball	.2 courts
Baseball	.2 fields
Softball	.2 fields
Football	.05 fields
Soccer	.1 fields
Ice Skating/Hockey	.01 rink
Field Hockey	.05 field
400 Meter Track	.05 track
Archery Range	.02 range
Golf: 9 Hole	.04 course
18 Hole	.02 course
Swimming Pool	.05 pool
Trails (biking, walking, x-country, equestrian)	.25-.5 mile
Picnic Shelters	.5 shelters
Rollerblading/Rollerskating	.05 rink
Tot lots	.1 acres

3.6.3 Adequacy of Open Space Resources

Quantitative Analysis

Total Acreage

This section addresses the adequacy of general types of parkland—neighborhood parks and community parks. In total, the three-community region contains 235 acres of community park land and 49 acres of neighborhood parks. The extent of these facilities is shown in the table above. The area has three community parks—Westwood Park, Walden Pond Park, and Rehm Road Athletic Area⁶. For community parks, which serve a larger area, the analysis below applies the NRPA standards to the Lancaster-Depew region as a whole and not to the individual municipalities.

There are approximately 8 acres of existing neighborhood parks located in the Town of Lancaster outside the Villages and 12.5 acres of neighborhood park land located within the Village of Lancaster, including the Town-owned Keysa Town Park. The Village of Depew has 28.5 acres of neighborhood parks.

Comparison of Recommended and Existing Acreage

Region

According to the National Recreation and Parks Association standards, the Lancaster-Depew region should have about 376.5 acres of total community and neighborhood park land based on its 1990 Census population of 43,249 persons. The region's total park land acreage of 284 acres is 92.5 acres less than the recommended minimum levels. The standards recommend 303 acres of community parks for the region as a whole based on the 1990 population.

⁶ Based on size and activities, Rehm Road is classified as a community park. The park serves community needs in the Village of Depew.

In comparison, the region contains 235 acres of community parks, 68 acres less than the recommended minimum. For the region as a whole, the standards also indicate a shortfall of neighborhood parks. The NRPA standards recommend about 73.5 acres of neighborhood parks, 24.5 acres more than the current inventory of 49 acres. It is noted that the regional, County-owned Como Lake Park, the soon-to-be constructed Town of Cheektowaga public golf course (partially located in the Village of Depew), and public and parochial school and fire company facilities throughout the communities supplement the municipal parks.

Based on its projected population in the year 2020 of about 54,500 residents, the recommended combined community and neighborhood park acreage for the region should grow to about 478 acres by 2020, substantially more than its current inventory of 284 acres. Based on the NRPA standards, the region should have approximately 381.5 acres of community parkland and about 96.5 acres of neighborhood parks by 2020. As stated above, the current inventory includes 235 acres of community and 49 acres of neighborhood park land. No new parks are currently planned in the communities. As a result, the analysis indicates that the shortfall in neighborhood and community park acreage will increase with projected future population growth.

Recommended Acres of Parkland Relative to Population

	Neighborhood	Community	Total
National Standard (Acres/1,000 Persons) ²	1.7	7.0	8.7
Acres Required by National Standard Applied to 1990 Population			
Town of Lancaster ³	23.0		
Village of Lancaster	20.5		
Village of Depew	30.0		
Region	73.5	303.0	376.5
Acres Required by National Standard Applied to 2020 Population ⁴			
Town of Lancaster ³	45.0		
Village of Lancaster	21.0		
Village of Depew	30.5		
Region	96.5	381.5	478.0
Existing Acres			
Town of Lancaster ³	8.0		
Village of Lancaster	12.5		
Village of Depew	28.5		
Region	49.0	235.0	284.0
Notes:			
¹ Acreages of all required and existing parks rounded up to nearest 0.5-acre.			
² National Recreation and Parks Association standards.			
³ Town outside the Villages.			
⁴ Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation 2020 population projections for 2020 of 26,286 persons in the Town of Lancaster outside the Villages, 12,213 persons in the Village of Lancaster, and 17,987 persons in the Village of Depew.			

Town of Lancaster

Application of the quantitative standards to municipally-owned facilities only indicates that the Town of Lancaster lacks sufficient neighborhood parkland. These parks are defined as being 20 acres or less in size and typically the active-use facilities in or near residential neighborhoods such as playgrounds and basketball courts, which are heavily used by children. Included in the inventory of neighborhood parks in the Town was 8-acre Meadow Lea Park.

Applying the standards to the Town's 1990 population (outside the Villages) indicates a need for a total of 23 acres of neighborhood parks in the Town, compared to the 8 acres it provides. Based on the projected 2020 population of the Town, the NRPA standards recommend 45 acres of neighborhood parks, 37 acres more than the current inventory. However, school district facilities supplement the municipal facilities and are extensively utilized for Town recreation programs. In addition, the County's Como Lake Park is also located in the Town of Lancaster, although it serves a much broader population.

Village of Lancaster

The Village's population is projected to remain relatively stable through 2020; as a result, recommended park acreages are very similar in the two analysis years. In 1990 and 2020, 20.5 and 21 acres of neighborhood parks are recommended, respectively. The Village contains 12.5 acres of neighborhood parks, about 8 acres less than the recommended amounts.

Village of Depew

The NRPA standards recommend 30 acres of neighborhood parks in the Village of Depew based on population size in 1990 and 30.5 acres by 2020. The Village's current inventory of 28.5 acres is slightly below these recommended acreages. It is noted that 18-acre Firemen's Park serves some community park functions because of its special swimming and ice skating facilities, but based on size and overall character was defined as a neighborhood park.

Park Distribution

The distribution of the region's park system is another major planning consideration. The location of the region's facilities were examined to determine whether there are areas that are not adequately served by the existing neighborhood parklands or playgrounds. The NRPA recommends that each neighborhood park serve a surrounding area of approximately 0.5 mile radius. For purposes of this study, given the generally low-rise scale (i.e., relatively low density) and higher auto ownership rates of the region compared to many more urbanized areas included in the national standards, the recommended service area for neighborhood parks was extended to a 1.0 mile radius.

As shown on the Recreation Map, recreational facilities are generally well distributed throughout the three communities. The larger community parks serving the region as a whole—Westwood Park, Walden Pond Park, and Rehm Road Athletic Area—are located in the eastern and western portions of the region within a short drive of all locations in the three communities. Generally, park goers are willing to drive 3 to 5 miles to utilize a larger recreational facility serving the broader community. Como Lake Park, which draws from a much wider area, is centrally located in the Town of Lancaster.

The southwestern and southeastern corners and the north central area of the Town of Lancaster are located in close proximity to neither neighborhood nor community parks. (Community parks often serve the functions of a neighborhood park to nearby residents.) Of these sections, the southwestern corner of the Town is the most densely populated indicating a higher level of demand for recreational facilities. Population densities in the southeastern corner of the Town are low, reducing the relative need for neighborhood parks in the area compared to other sections of Town.

The western half of the Village of Lancaster is less well-served by recreational facilities than the eastern half. The northwestern portion of the Village contains only the small North End Playground and the Mechanic Street tennis courts, which are in poor repair and closed. The southwestern quadrant of the Village contains only the Spray Pool off Third Avenue, a seasonal facility for young children. Although not an outdoor recreation facility, the Senior Center/Youth Bureau complex is located in the southwestern portion of the Village. The northeastern portion of the Village is well-served by 10-acre Keysa Town Park, which includes a swimming pool and varied recreational facilities. Particularly in the off season when it is less crowded, Como Lake Park serves some neighborhood park functions for nearby residents in the southeastern quadrant of the Village.

Neighborhood park lands are well distributed in the Village of Depew. The largest facility, Firemen's Park, is also centrally located. Residents at the southern and western edges of Village are generally located the furthest distance from the Village parks, but virtually all are within a mile of a neighborhood park.

Facility Standards

The following table compares the number and type of recreational facilities recommended for the region by the park planning standards (based on the standards described in Section 3.6.3, above) and the actual facilities currently provided by the communities. As the table indicates, based solely on the quantitative park standards, the communities are well served in many recreational activities and require additional facilities for other activities.

The communities provide a well-balanced set of recreational facilities that includes swimming pools, tennis courts, athletic fields for a variety of sports, basketball courts, trail ways, and playgrounds for the young. However, there are some deficiencies in how the recreation facilities meet needs for specific sports activities.

Regional Facility Needs Assessment

NRPA Facility/Activity Planning Standards	Facilities Needed		Existing Municipal Facilities
	1990	2020	
Badminton Courts	8.6	10.9	0
Tennis Courts	21.6	27.2	9
Volleyball Courts	8.6	10.9	4
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	8.6	10.9	13
Baseball Fields	8.6	10.9	28 combined
Softball Fields	8.6	10.9	
Football Fields	2.2	2.7	1
Soccer Fields	4.3	5.4	2
Multi-Use Soccer/Football Fields	NA	NA	3
Ice Skating/Hockey Rinks	0.4	0.5	1
Field Hockey Fields	2.2	2.7	0
400 Meter Track	2.2	2.7	0
Archery Ranges	0.9	1.1	0
Golf: 9 Hole Public Course	1.7	2.2	0
18 Hole Public Course	0.9	1.1	1
Swimming Pools	2.2	2.7	2 Full-Size, 3 Wading, 1 Spray
Trails (miles)	10.8	13.6	2
Picnic Shelters	21.6	27.2	28
Rollerblading/Rollerskating Rinks	2.2	2.7	0
Tot Lots/Playgrounds (Acres)	4.3	5.4	8-10

The analysis below was prepared with information gathered from both site investigations and information from Town and Village officials:

Badminton: There are currently no badminton courts in the three communities. Quantitative standards indicate the need for 11 courts by 2020. Public demand for this type of facility is unknown and should be assessed prior to development of facilities.

Tennis: The standards indicate a shortfall in the number of courts, with 22 currently required and 27 required by 2020. Currently there are 9 courts, including 2 at Mechanic Street which are in unusable condition. Municipal courts are supplemented by County and school district tennis courts.

Volleyball: There are currently 4 volleyball courts at Walden Pond Park, compared to the estimated need for about 9 courts now and 11 courts by 2020. Supplementing the municipal facilities are 4 courts at Como Lake Park and a grass court on school district property.

Basketball: The quantity of basketball courts available for use by residents of the three communities exceeds standards based on 1990 population. The courts are also well distributed throughout the area and are generally in very good condition. Based on population projections through 2020, the quantitative standards indicate that needs will continue to be met. Municipal facilities are supplemented by basketball courts at Como Lake Park and public and parochial school properties.

Baseball/Softball: Most fields in the region are combined softball/baseball diamonds, an arrangement which does not work very well for either sport in many cases. Combined use ball diamonds do not meet minimum recommended dimensions for both sports and safety concerns can arise from shared use of outfielders. The standards indicate a current need for about 9 softball and 9 baseball fields, for a total of 18 ball diamonds. The existing inventory of 28 fields, most of them combined use fields, exceeds the recommended amount of total fields. By 2020, projected population levels indicate a need for 11 softball and 11 hardball fields, for a total of 22 fields. The combined use fields fail to adequately meet the needs of both sports. Thus, based on the quantitative standards, the total number of fields appears adequate, but the configuration and combined use of the fields is problematic. Supplementing the municipal facilities are ball fields in Como Lake Park and on public and parochial school properties. Most of these are also combined use fields.

Soccer: Based on the quantitative standards, 4 soccer fields are required based on 1990 population and about 5 will be required by 2020. Two fields dedicated to the needs of soccer are currently available in Depew at Firemen's Park and Dawson Athletic Field. The standards indicate a potential need for another soccer field in the region by 2020. Soccer is also accommodated at 3 multi-use football/soccer fields at Westwood and Walden Pond Parks. However, as with combined use softball/hardball fields, the multi-use fields for soccer and football do not adequately meet the needs of both sports. Supplementing facilities in the municipal inventory are soccer fields on school district property.

Football: Based on the quantitative standards, there is a shortage of fields dedicated to football. The quantitative standards indicate a current need for about 2 football fields. There is one dedicated football field in the Town of Cheektowaga-owned Rehm Road Athletic Area; this facility serves residents of Depew. As stated above, 3 multi-use fields are also currently available, although there are existing problems with the shared use of these facilities. The standards suggest a potential need for up to 3 football fields by 2020. Demand on football facilities created by the Lancaster men's football league demonstrates the community need for a dedicated field.

Ice Rink: The Village of Depew has an indoor ice skating rink. Current facilities in the region more than meet the need indicated by the quantitative NRPA standards. It is noted, however, that ice skating and hockey are extremely popular in Western New York, and the Depew rink is very busy in the winter months. Ice skating is also available on a seasonal basis at the outdoor Skate Pond facility at Como Lake Park.

Field Hockey: Based on the standards applied to the region's population, there currently is unmet demand for 2 formal field hockey fields, with an additional field needed by 2020. Field hockey is most commonly played at school and needs may be met by fields at schools throughout the region. One or more fields could be warranted if the communities receive an indication of strong demand from residents.

Track: Quantitative standards indicate unmet demand for 2 to 3 competitive running tracks in the region. The development of a track at Firemen's Park is currently being considered by the Village of Depew. Also, as described above, tracks at three area high schools are available to residents.

Archery: There are currently no public archery ranges in the three communities. Quantitative standards indicate the need for about one range to serve the region. It is recommended that public demand be assessed prior to the development of a facility.

Golf: The quantitative standards indicate current demand for either one 18-hole or two 9-hole public golf courses in the region. As described above, the Town of Cheektowaga is developing a new 18-hole public golf course utilizing a portion of Rehm Road Park. This course will be available to residents of the tri-community region. In addition, a public course is available at nearby Elma Meadows. However, this County-owned golf course is very heavily-utilized.

Swimming: The quantitative standards indicate a need for 2 swimming pools based on the 1990 population and 3 swimming pools by 2020. The current municipal inventory of 2 full-sized pools (one in the Village of Lancaster and one in Depew), 3 wading pools, and 1 spray pool meets current needs. In addition, there is a new full-sized pool at Lancaster High School which is utilized extensively for Town recreational programming. As a result, including the high school pool, the projected need for 3 pools by 2020 appears to be met by current facilities.

Trails: Linear parks or greenways are a popular form of parkland which serve many important functions by providing trail ways for walking, biking, cross-country skiing, and other activities; and by protecting natural resources. Westwood Park contains an approximately 2-mile walk/bike path and a short nature trail. However, the total length of public trails in the region falls far short of the 11 to 14 miles recommended by the quantitative standards between 1990 and 2020. Supplementing municipal trails is Cayuga Creek Nature Trail in Como Lake Park, which extends approximately two miles in length along the creek. The communities should explore opportunities for developing a recreational trail along the length of Cayuga Creek connecting the Village of Depew, the Village of Lancaster, Como Lake Park, the eastern portion of the Town and north of the creek up to Westwood Park.

Playgrounds: The communities provide an adequate amount of playground space based on the quantitative standards. The municipal playgrounds are also supplemented by County, school district, parochial school, and fire company playgrounds. As discussed above, with the exception of the western half of the Village of Lancaster and the southwestern corner of the Town, the playgrounds are generally well-distributed. Town-owned recreational lands off Aurora Street near Old Post Road could be utilized for the development of a playground and neighborhood park to serve the southwest portion of the Town.

Shelters: Based on the quantitative standards, there appears to be a more than adequate supply of picnic shelters in the region through 2020. The size of the picnic pavilions at many of the parks are large enough to allow group functions to occur.

Rollerblading: There are currently no indoor or outdoor rollerblading rinks in the region. Based solely on the quantitative standards, about 2 to 3 such rinks are warranted. This sport is currently very popular.

3.7 Local Laws, Codes and Ordinances

Several local laws, codes and ordinances in the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew will impact the future character of the three communities. The following summarizes the land use regulations in the three communities:

Town of Lancaster

Comprehensive Plan - The Town of Lancaster prepared its first master plan in 1959. Most of the plan's information was updated in 1968 and an Interim Development Plan was prepared for 1970 to 1975. In 1995, the Town commissioned the first comprehensive review of land uses in 35 years, however, the document was not adopted. The 1968 Comprehensive Plan remains in effect.

Zoning Ordinance - The primary purpose of the Lancaster Zoning ordinance, most recently adopted by the Town Board in 1989, is to promote and protect the environment, public health, prosperity and general welfare of the Town through the regulation of land uses and designation of zoning districts. The plan is intended to protect the character and values of land use and to ensure their orderly and beneficial development. It also purports to provide adequate open space, prevent excessive densities, avoid land use conflicts, minimize traffic congestion, ensure adequate public service provision and prevent visual pollution.

The ordinance divides the community into fourteen districts: six residential districts, five business districts and three industrial zones. The majority of the land located west of Pavement Road and surrounding William Street is zoned agricultural residential. Single and multiple family housing is located in the Eastern portion of the Town along the Transit Road boundary. Business and commercial uses are concentrated within the Villages and along the Broadway Avenue and Transit Road corridors. The Town's industrial districts, particularly the Sand, Gravel and Aggregate zone, have been located north of the New York State Thruway and adjacent to the Town's rail corridor.

Subdivision Regulations - Subdivision regulations for the Town of Lancaster were adopted in 1990. The regulations seek to promote the orderly development and redevelopment of land to obtain harmonious and stable residential, commercial or industrial areas. The regulations provide the procedure for the submission of plats, or drawings showing the proposed plan of a subdivision.

No plat may be recorded in the Erie County Clerk's Office or have any validity until it has been approved in the manner prescribed in the subdivision regulations and is in full compliance with them.

Property Maintenance Code - The Town of Lancaster has not adopted an official Property Maintenance Code. However, the Town Zoning Ordinance attempts to limit property damage due to fire through the separation of buildings. Section 50-29 (F) requires that landscaped areas permitted or required by the statute be maintained. In addition, Section 50-31 regarding Nonconforming Uses addresses the restoration of damaged structures and the maintenance of nonconforming structures.

Design Guidelines - A separate document outlining specific design standards in the Town of Lancaster has not been prepared. However, the Zoning Ordinance specifies landscaping and design requirements in several sections. Minimum lot size, structure location, structure height, minimum floor areas, maximum lot coverage, landscaping and signage are addressed for each designated District.

Solid Waste Management - The Town of Lancaster has not prepared legislation addressing the disposal of solid waste.

Local Law Regulating Mobile Homes and Mobile Home Courts - Chapter 50 of the Zoning Code, Article II, section 50-15 outlines regulations for the development of mobile home parks within the Town. The code outlines permitted structures and uses, and provides regulations for the design, arrangement and access standards for parks.

Automobile Junkyard Compliance Law - Chapter 4 of the Lancaster Town Code establishes a licensing requirement for the operation of salvage yards within the Town of Lancaster. Initial license applications are subject to public hearing and must comply with several locational provisions. Additional public hearings may be required where evidence of illegal activity, non-compliance or public nuisance exists.

Floodplains - Chapter 21 of the Lancaster Town Code provides development permit application and variance procedures for any development within special flood hazard areas. It outlines general standards for flood hazard reduction including provisions for anchoring, construction materials, utilities, subdivisions and encroachments.

Tree Planting Program - The Town of Lancaster has a tree-planting program in place. Under the program, the property owner must pay a tree-planting fee and the Town must plant a street tree in the public right-of-way before a Certificate of Occupancy is granted for the new home. Funds derived from the tree-planting fees are also used to plant trees in the Town's parks. In total, 1,400 trees were planted under the program in 1997, 900 were planted in 1998 and an estimated 1,000 trees will be planted in 1999.

Village of Lancaster

Comprehensive Plan - The Village of Lancaster adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1964. The Plan discussed public service provision, transportation, capital improvements, regulatory controls and neighborhood analysis. The plan remains effective to date.

Zoning Ordinance - The Amended and Revised Zoning Ordinance of the Village of Lancaster was adopted in 1981 to provide for adequate light, air and convenience of access; prevent overcrowding of land; lessen congestion in the streets; secure safety from fire, flood, panic and other dangers; and to facilitate adequate service provision.

The Village is currently updating the zoning ordinance and developing specific regulations for the Central Business District. This zoning separates the CBD into three zones: Traditional, New Development and Open Space. The zoning has been written to reflect the findings of the study completed for this area of the Village.

The Ordinance divides the community into four residential districts, two commercial or business districts and two industrial or manufacturing districts. The majority of the land is zoned for single family residential development with high-rise apartment development along Broadway, Central Avenue, and Sawyer Avenue. Commercial areas are located at several intersections and along Broadway. Manufacturing and Industrial zones have been designated for the land surrounding the Village's rail corridors. Performance standards for manufacturing and industrial uses are included in Article II, section 152-25.

Subdivision Regulations - Chapter 135 of Village Code provides application and variance procedures for the development of residential subdivisions within the Village. The regulations provide requirements for both preliminary layouts and final subdivision plats. In addition, the regulations outline required infrastructure improvements and design standards for streets, easements, blocks, and lots.

Property Maintenance Code - The Village relies upon the New York State Building Code for property maintenance standards. In addition, Article VI of the Zoning Ordinance addresses non-conforming uses including repair, alteration, restoration, and abandonment. No separate Property Maintenance Code has been prepared for the Village.

Design Guidelines - Article III and Article IV of the Village Zoning Ordinance provide bulk and sign regulations for development within the Village. In addition, Article II provides additional landscaping, storage, and utility location for manufacturing and industrial uses. There is no separate document outlining architectural design detail standards for the Village.

Solid Waste Management - The Village of Lancaster Zoning Ordinance does not address issues of solid waste disposal, nor is there a separate prepared Solid Waste Disposal Law.

Local Law Regulating Mobile Homes and Mobile Home Courts - The Village does not have any regulations pertaining to mobile homes or mobile home courts.

Automobile Junk-Yard Compliance Law - Chapter 97 of the Village Code prohibits unlicensed junk dealers from operating within the Village of Lancaster and sets forth application requirements for such operating permits. Chapter 152, Article VI, section 152-52 addresses fencing requirements for nonconforming uses including junkyards.

Floodplains - Chapter 81 of the Village Code outlines Flood Damage Prevention regulations for the land within the community's floodplains that are subject to a one-percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year. It outlines the responsibilities of the Superintendent of Public Works with regard to granting or denying development permit applications; and sets forth anchoring, construction material and method, utility and subdivision proposal standards for development in areas of special flood hazard.

Village of Depew

Comprehensive Plan - The Village of Depew adopted a General Plan in 1971. The plan presented policy guidelines designed to guide development in the Village through the year 1990. It had four components: Concept Plans, Land Use Plans, Major Thoroughfare Plan, and Objectives and Standards. The plan has not been amended or revised.

Zoning Ordinance - The Village of Depew Zoning Ordinance was recodified in 1994. It purports to establish comprehensive controls for the development of land in the Village of Depew, based upon the General Plan for the Village. The Ordinance divides the Village into seven districts: two residential, two commercial, two industrial and a land conservation district.

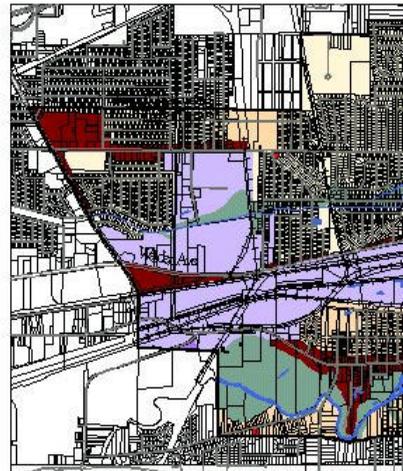
The land conservation district exists as a buffer along the Scajaquada and Cayuga Creeks. Residential districts abut the conservation areas. Commercial districts have been designated along the Transit Road, Walden Avenue and Broadway Avenue corridors. Industrial districts are located along the Walden Avenue rail corridor. Performance standards for industrial uses have been included.

TOWN OF LANCASTER
AND
VILLAGES OF LANCASTER
AND DEPEW
REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Zoning

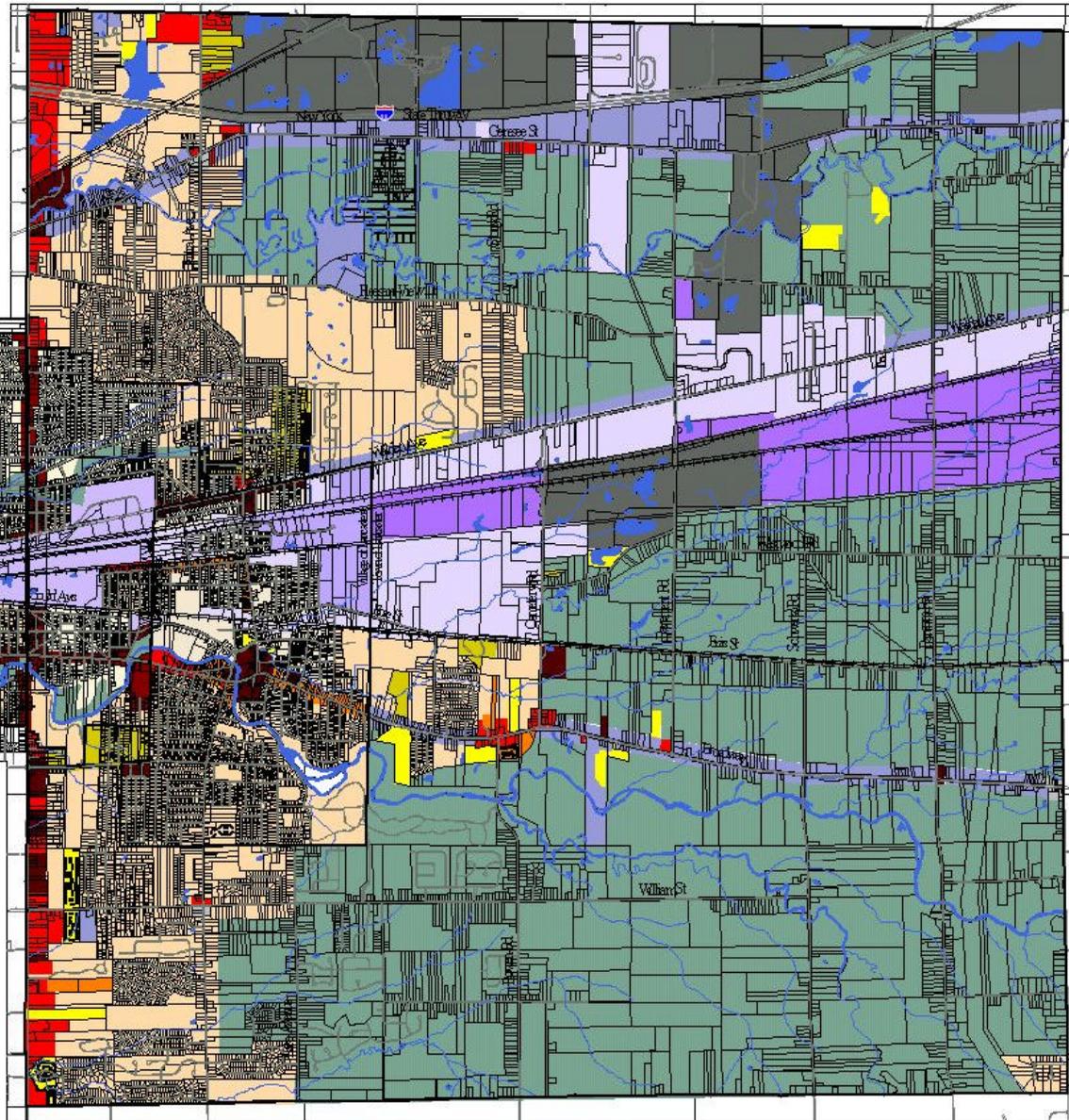
Village of Depew Zoning

- R-1 Single-Family Residential
- R-2 Multi-Family Residential
- Land Conservation
- C-1 General Commercial
- C-2 Shopping Center
- M-1 Manufacturing
- M-2 Heavy Industrial



Village of Lancaster Zoning

- R-1 Residence
- R-2 Residence
- C-1 Business
- R-2AH Residence/High Rise
- C-2 General Commercial
- M-IP Industrial Park
- R-2A Residence
- M-1 Manufacturing



- Parcel Boundaries
- Municipal Boundaries
- Rivers, Streams
- Railroads
- Lakes, Ponds

Town of Lancaster Zoning

- AR-Agricultural/Residential
- CMS-Commercial&Motor Service
- GB-General Business
- GI-General Industrial
- LI-Light Industrial
- MFR-3-Multi-Family Residential District 3
- MFR-4-Multi-Family Residential District 4
- NB-Neighborhood Business
- R-1 Residential District 1
- R-2 Residential District 2
- RCO-Residential/Commercial Office
- SGA-Sand, Gravel, Aggregates



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Subdivision Regulations- Subdivision regulations for the Village of Depew are outlined in Appendix 1 of the Depew Village Zoning Ordinance. The regulations include specifications for subdivision streets, sanitary sewers, storm sewers, water lines, sidewalks and tree planting. Instructions for the submission of improvement and subdivision plans are also provided.

Property Maintenance Code - The Village Zoning Ordinance Article V, Section 30.56(D) and Article VI, Section 30.65 (A)(3) addresses the maintenance of fences, landscaping, or parking installed in accordance with those sections. The Village has not prepared an official Property Maintenance Code.

Design Guidelines - The Village of Depew has not adopted specific architectural design standards. However, the Village Zoning ordinance specifies bulk and coverage standards, landscaping and building relationship guidelines.

Solid Waste Management - Chapter 62 of the Village of Depew Municipal Code addresses garbage and rubbish disposal. Section 62.08 mandates that solid waste transfer stations and landfill sites be restricted to the M2/Heavy Industry Zoning District. Sections 62.12-62.16 provides preparation, collection and penalty information for residential, business and industrial refuse collection.

Local Law Regulating Mobile Homes and Mobile Home Courts - Article VI, section 30.68 regulates the development of mobile home parks within the Village. In addition, the parks, planned as a unit, must comply with Village Subdivision Regulations.

Automobile Junkyard Compliance Law - Article VI, section 30.69 of the Village Zoning Ordinance addresses outdoor storage areas, including junk yards and automobile wrecking. The section addresses location, fencing and setbacks, wastes and hazardous materials.

Floodplains - Flood Damage Prevention regulations for the Village of Depew are outlined in Chapter 31 of the Depew Municipal Code. For areas of special flood hazard, the code provides elevation, flood proofing, anchoring, construction materials and methods, utility and subdivision proposal and encroachment standards. Variance procedures are outlined in section 31.61.

3.8 Conclusion

The Residents and Public Services chapter explores the demographic characteristics of the Lancaster-Depew region population and the service infrastructure available to meet their educational, medical, emergency, recreation and cultural needs. In doing so, the chapter identified some of the numerous amenities that have contributed to the region's attractiveness in recent years: quality housing stock, extensive educational resources, convenient health care and exceptional recreational opportunities. By linking the discussion of community services to expected population growth trends, the chapter highlights opportunities for targeted investments or coordinated service delivery arrangements designed to ensure high levels of service to the region's residents far into the future.

4.0 Land and Environment

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the physical characteristics of the Lancaster-Depew region communities. These characteristics include natural resources (air, soils, topography, hydrology, and vegetation), infrastructure (transportation and municipal services), and the "built" environment (agriculture, housing, commercial and industrial development.)

The chapter opens with a discussion of land use patterns within the Lancaster and Depew communities. After describing the general character of each municipality, the section provides a detailed analysis of current land use dedications and an examination of future land use patterns that should be targeted for the region. The land use section is followed by an analysis of the Lancaster agricultural economy and Erie County agricultural preservation efforts.

The Transportation and Municipal Services sections of the chapter discuss existing pedestrian, automobile, rail and air travel infrastructure as well as local utility service areas. The last section provides an inventory of the communities' natural resources including soil types, topography, water courses, woodlots and fields, air quality and noise conditions.

Based upon the land use and environmental data discussed in the earlier sections, the chapter concludes with land use and policy recommendations for the region. Developed with a regional focus, the recommendations are designed to promote complementary land use patterns throughout the region.

4.2 Land Use

Land use development patterns are a long-term commitment by a community of a non-renewable and very valuable resource. Once land is developed, land use changes seldom occur. In general, land will change from an undisturbed, open character to a residential, commercial or industrial development. The importance of making good land use decisions will impact not only immediate "neighbors" but the entire community; land use decisions should complement adjacent users rather than create conflicts.

In the Town of Lancaster and Villages of Lancaster and Depew, there have been many changes in land use over the past decade. This section reviews the past and current land use patterns of the three communities. This includes an assessment of urban vs. rural areas, strategically located development areas, environmentally sensitive areas and lands that should remain vacant.

In the community survey distributed throughout the three communities, residents were asked several questions on future development and growth. In general, residents believe the Town and two Villages are a good place to live (58%) and would like to see additional growth in "appropriate" areas of the communities. Most respondents wanted to see residential growth focused in and around the Villages (62%); 43% wanted to see a slow population growth (450-1000 people) over the next ten years. Commercial growth should be focused on main corridors according to 71% of respondents. Residents also believe that industrial development should be focused along Walden Avenue (98%). Agricultural land preservation was a priority for 82% of respondents. To accomplish these goals, 78% of respondents believe that stricter land use controls should be developed and enforced to protect the character of the region.

In the Lancaster North South Corridor Preservation Study⁷ recently completed by the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), a land use analysis was completed; only the portion of Depew in Lancaster was included in the GBNRTC study. Information supplied by the Erie County Water Authority was used for the portion of Depew outside the Town of Lancaster. The land use categories used in this 1993 analysis were based on tax assessor information and does not necessarily reflect the "apparent" land use on a parcel. According to the 1993 information, the predominant land uses in the three communities were vacant and residential. This included over 9,000 acres of vacant land and over 7,800 acres of residential development.

⁷ Lancaster North South Corridor Preservation Study. p. 11.

Mapping from the GBNRTC and the Erie County Water Authority that included land use information was used to develop an updated generalized land use plan. In addition, the portion of the Village of Depew in the Town of Cheektowaga was added to the map and the land use calculations. The entire Town and two Villages were driven to verify the information on the land use map provided. Each parcel was given only one land use based on the predominant use of the lot.

Town of Lancaster

The Town of Lancaster has seen a tremendous amount of growth over the past ten years. Once a rural, agricultural community, the Town is now characterized by residential growth; this is especially true in areas south of the Village of Lancaster and Depew along Siebert Road, Lake Avenue and Aurora Street. Other areas that have seen significant residential development include the Walden Avenue/Pleasant View Drive areas.

Transit Road in the Town of Lancaster is a thriving commercial corridor. Both small and large-scale retail/service establishments characterize this major north-south corridor.

New industrial development is also evident in the Walden Avenue corridor of the Town of Lancaster. This has occurred because of the good transportation network of roads and rail. New industrial development is also occurring along Genesee Street between Shisler Road and Gunnville Road. There are several aggregate mining industries located in the north east portion of the Town north of the New York State Thruway.

Agricultural land is most evident in the southeast portion of the Town of Lancaster. These areas have an older housing stock with larger lots surrounded by agricultural land.

There are several parks and recreation areas in the Town that enhance the overall "green" character of the community. These include Como Park, Westwood Park, Walden Pond and several golf courses. The Lancaster Speedway is also located in the northeast portion of the Town north of the New York State Thruway.

Village of Lancaster

The Village of Lancaster is essentially a residential community. Some new residential development is evident in the Village but the housing stock is generally older, established "village" neighborhoods.

Most new growth in the Village of Lancaster has been commercial uses along the Broadway corridor. Central Avenue in the Village's core is a significant commercial area that offers local service type uses for residents in the Village.

Industrial development is located along the rail lines and Erie Street in the Village of Lancaster. These areas are in close proximity to the industrial development in the Town.

Green space in the Village is dominated by Como Park on the southeast corner. Smaller neighborhood parks and schools provide recreation space to the residents in the Village.

Village of Depew

In the Village of Depew, the overall character is residential with areas of commercial growth along major corridors. Essentially, the Village is characterized with a well-established housing stock that creates distinct neighborhoods.

Transit Road is the major commercial corridor in the Village of Depew; this corridor separates the Village at the Town of Lancaster and Town of Cheektowaga border. Broadway has also seen commercial growth that carries into the Village of Lancaster. The west boundary of the Village on Dick Road has also experienced recent commercial growth, although residential land still makes up a significant portion of the uses.

Industrial development in the Village of Depew is evident along Walden Avenue and along the rail lines; there are some older, established residential land uses along Walden Avenue in the Village of Depew. This development carries into the Village of Lancaster and Town of Lancaster along the rail lines.

In Depew, open space and recreation lands are provided primarily by schools and churches in the Village. Veteran’s Park was formed through the design of the Village streets; Frederick Olmsted’s firm designed this layout which is evident in the Village today.

4.2.1 Existing Land Use and Characteristics

The Erie County Department of Environment and Planning provided a generalized land use plan for the entire county. In the larger context of the County, the west portion of the Town of Lancaster is the “edge of growth” for substantial new development from the City of Buffalo; this area includes the Villages of Lancaster and Depew. Along the Walden Avenue corridor and north of the New York State Thruway, there is a substantial amount of industrial development in the Town of Lancaster that is outside this “edge of growth” area of development.

Each of the three communities have very distinct land use characters that lend to their quality of life. The following summarizes the acreage and percentage of land use categories for each of the three communities in 1999 based on a “windshield survey” of land use.

Generalized Land Use Categories – 1999 Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew

Existing Land Use	Town of Lancaster		Village of Lancaster		Village of Depew		TOTAL	
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%
Agriculture	1684	8.5	0	0.0	6	0.3	1690	7.3
Residential	6961	35.0	737	51.3	476	23.8	8174	35.1
Vacant	5817	29.3	135	9.4	385	19.2	6337	27.2
Commercial	621	3.1	86	6.0	306	15.3	1013	4.3
Parks and Recreation	1132	5.7	130	9.1	15	0.7	1277	5.5
Community Service	672	3.4	147	10.2	158	7.9	977	4.2
Industrial	1600	8.1	111	7.7	522	26.0	2233	9.6
Public Service	640	3.2	90	6.3	136	6.8	866	3.7
Wild and Forested	740	3.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	740	3.2
TOTAL	19867	100.0	1436	100.0	2004	100.0	23301	100.0

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc. and The Saratoga Associates

This table illustrates the various percentages of land uses in the three communities and in the region as a whole. Changes in these land uses are discussed in the following section.

The 1993 figures included in this analysis are based on the information supplied by the GBNRTC study on the north-south corridor preservation study and mapping from the Erie County Water Authority; acreages and percentages in this study are based on tax assessor codes.

The 1999 figures used in the following analysis are based on a "windshield survey" of land uses that verified the 1993 tax assessor information. Please note that there could be some discrepancies in the information because of the difference in the way land uses were categorized.

4.2.1.1 Agricultural

At one time, the Town of Lancaster was characterized as a rural, agricultural community. Preservation of this character, especially in the eastern portion of the Town, has been identified as an important consideration. Agricultural land is an important non-renewable resource in any community; once this land is developed, there is little chance of the land reverting back to the original use. Without the proper land use controls and a vision for the region, the agricultural land could forever be lost.

These agricultural lands are, and will continue to, face pressure for development. Because they offer an inexpensive development opportunity, residential growth will probably be the most pursued land use for most of these agricultural areas. The character of the Town of Lancaster, and the Villages of Lancaster and Depew, and the quality of life for its residents could be affected if agricultural lands continue to be built out as residential, commercial or industrial uses.

During the "windshield survey" to verify land uses, agricultural land was identified based on the vegetation and "land patterns" evident on the parcel. An assessment was made as to whether the land was actively farmed; only active agricultural lands were included in this category.

Most of the agricultural land is located in the Town of Lancaster although there was a minimal amount found in the Village of Depew. Approximately 780 acres were used for agricultural uses in the Town in 1993. The Village of Depew also has a minimal amount of agricultural land (approximately 6 acres); this makes up only 3.4% of the total land area in the three communities.

In 1999, the total land area in agricultural uses is approximately 1,690 acres or 7.3%. The "increase" in agriculture land is explained because the information was based on a visual assessment of the land use and not the assessors tax code. This offers a truer picture of the overall physical character of the three communities. Almost all agriculture land is located in the Town with a small percentage in the Village of Depew.

This valuable resource enhances the overall quality of life in the three communities. Its protection is important to maintain the rural, open space character, especially in the Town of Lancaster.

4.2.1.2 Residential

Residential development in the region is mostly clustered in and around the Villages. Residential development includes single family, two family and apartment units in the three communities. Mobile homes in the three communities are also included in this category. In cases where the land had been subdivided and residential development was occurring, all lots were considered to be residential.

In general, residential development has been made up most of the growth in the region. Most of this growth is occurring outside the Villages because most of the land area has been developed. In the Town, residential activity has included over 5,000 units⁸ between 1994 and 1996; not all lots have been developed, but the potential for their development exists.

⁸ Lancaster North South Corridor Preservation Study. p. 14.

In 1993, approximately 7,900 acres of the region were residential; this includes approximately 34.1% of the total land area for the region. In the Town, there were approximately 6,600 acres of residential development (33.9%). The Village of Lancaster has over 700 acres (49.4%) of residential development and the Village of Depew has 512 acres or 25.5% of residential development.

In 1999, there were approximately 8,200 acres of residential development in the three communities (approximately 35.1%). Most of this growth has occurred in the Town of Lancaster which saw an increase of approximately 300 acres used for residential development. The Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew saw a small increase in residential acreage.

Lancaster is known as a good place to live in Western New York which is evident in the increase in residential development. By balancing residential growth with other growth in the three communities, the region can remain a desirable place to live.

4.2.1.3 Vacant

For the land use analysis, vacant land was identified as such because there were no "built" forms and the land no longer appeared to be used for agricultural purposes.

Most of the vacant land found in the three communities is located in the Town of Lancaster; this is especially true in the eastern portion of the region. There is some vacant land located in the Villages of Lancaster and Depew, but these parcels are primarily smaller, residential lots. There is also some vacant land located along the rail lines in both communities.

In 1993, this land use occupied approximately 9,000 acres of the region; this is approximately 39% of the total land area. Vacant land accounts for 41.9% of Town land, 12.5% in the Village of Lancaster and 28.9% in the Village of Depew.

Much of the land categorized as vacant in 1993 has been subdivided and is now residential in character. Vacant lands along Aurora Street, Lake Avenue, Seibert Road and William Street are now residential subdivisions. Vacant land along Walden Avenue has also been subdivided for residential or industrial development.

In 1999, the number of acres that were classified as vacant includes approximately 6,400 acres or 27.2%. The significant change is again due to the verification of land uses during a "windshield survey" rather than the use of assessor tax codes. Most of the change occurred in the Town of Lancaster which saw a decrease of almost 2,500 acres; most of this is now residential or industrial development. In the Villages, the vacant land use category saw changes also. The Village of Lancaster dropped from 12.5% to 9.4% and the Village of Depew dropped from 28.9% to 19.2%. Most of this new industrial growth has occurred along the rail lines.

4.2.1.4 Commercial

Commercial land uses were identified during the "windshield survey" as uses with offices, retail and other commercial type services.

Commercial development is most evident on major corridors in the three communities. This includes Transit Road, Dick Road and Broadway; to a lesser extent, commercial development is also evident along Genesee Street and Walden Avenue.

Bowmansville in the Town of Lancaster offers several commercial uses along Transit and Genesee Street. Commercial development along Broadway also extends into the Town of Lancaster from the Village.

In the Village of Lancaster, the central business district is located along Central Avenue at the intersection with Broadway. Walden Avenue also has some commercial development in the Village.

The Village of Depew has no defined "central business district", but Broadway offers a substantial amount of these types of services and acts as the Village's "main street". Transit Road, which bisects the Village, also offers a considerable mixture of commercial uses for residents. Dick Road and George Urban Boulevard are commercial corridors on the west side of the Village of Depew.

In 1993, commercial uses accounted for approximately 970 acres of land in the region; this includes approximately 4.2% of the total land area. The Village of Depew has approximately 17.1% of its land as commercial; this is significantly higher than the Town (2.6%) and Village of Lancaster (7.9%). New commercial growth in the past five years has been concentrated on the major commercial corridors in the three communities.

In 1999, commercial land accounted for almost 1,000 acres; this is approximately 4.3% percent of the total land area. The Town increased commercial land by approximately 80 acres. Both Villages saw a decrease in the acreage of commercial land with Lancaster going from approximately 114 acres to 86 acres and Depew going from 343 acres to 306. Changes in use will account for this difference. Also, during the "windshield survey", residential uses with more than one unit were classified as residential rather than commercial uses.

4.2.1.5 Parks and Recreation

Park and recreation land is identified as municipal or county parks and outdoor recreation uses such as a golf course. Protection of these lands is important for the overall quality of life and the aesthetic character of a community.

There are several large-scale parks in the three communities that enhance the recreational opportunities. Como Lake Park, located in the Town and Village of Lancaster, is a significant open space that offers both active and passive recreation opportunities. Westwood Town Park is another large park that offers a variety of activities. Other parks in the Town include Walden Pond Park on Walden Avenue and Ransom Road and Meadowlea located north of the Village. There are several golf courses and driving ranges located in the eastern portion of the Town of Lancaster. The Lancaster Speedway is also located in the northern portion of the Town.

In the Village, Keysa Town Park is located in the northeast portion of Lancaster. Brookfield Park is located on Central and Fireman's Park is located near the Village water tower. Other recreation areas in the Village are located at schools or churches or in small neighborhood playgrounds.

In the Village of Depew, Fireman's Park and Rehm Road Park are the major recreation areas. There are schools and churches that provide recreation space for residents in the Village of Lancaster.

In 1993, parks and outdoor recreation accounted for approximately 1,268 acres or 5.5% of the total land area in the region. In the Town, approximately 5.8% of land is designated as parks and recreation. The Village of Lancaster has approximately 8.3% of its area designated as parkland and the Village of Depew has 0.7% of land categorized as parkland. The newest park development includes the Town's recently completed Westwood Park.

In 1999, approximately 1,277 acres are classified as recreation; this includes approximately 5.5%. There has not been a significant increase or decrease in recreational acreage over the past five years in any of the three communities.

4.2.1.6 Community Service

Community service uses include municipal buildings, land and service areas, fire halls, churches, schools, cemeteries and other "semi-public" type uses. These uses were identified and verified during the "windshield survey" of land uses.

Community services are located in various areas throughout the three communities. The Town and Village of Lancaster municipal halls are located in the Village of Lancaster. The Village of Depew Village Hall is located on Manitou Street in the Village. The Town has office buildings and services on Pavement Road outside the Villages.

There are several cemeteries located on Cemetery Road and along Broadway in the Town of Lancaster; there is also a small historic cemetery on Genesee Street. The Knights of Columbus are also located on Broadway in the Town. Fire halls, churches and schools are located in various locations throughout the Town. The newest school is the William Street school that recently opened near Seibert Road in the Town.

In the Village of Lancaster, there are several fire halls, schools and churches located throughout the community. This is also true in the Village of Depew. These are further discussed in the community service section of this Plan.

In 1993, community services accounted for approximately 860 acres of land; this is approximately 3.7% of the total land area for the region. This includes 3.0% of the Town, 10.4% in the Village of Lancaster and 5.7% in the Village of Depew.

970 acres of land are categorized as community service in the Town and two Villages in 1999; this is approximately 4.2%. The changes in this category are due to the reclassification based on the "windshield survey". This includes an additional 50 acres classified with this land use in both the Town of Lancaster and the Village of Depew. Some of these uses may be new (such as the William Street School) uses that provide additional services to the residents of the region.

4.2.1.7 Industrial

Industrial uses tend to require large land areas for office and manufacturing purposes. Land uses were verified during the “windshield survey” and include those that could be identified as both light and heavy industry.

Industrial uses are expanding in the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew. Most of this development is occurring on the Walden Avenue corridor.

In the Town of Lancaster, there are several areas of industrial development. These areas have very distinct characters. North of the New York State Thruway and in the northern portion of the Town, most industries are “heavy”. This includes several large gravel-mining industries that are still active in the Town. In addition, the Tops warehouse is located on Genesee Street near Gunnville Road. Along Walden Avenue, there are several “light” manufacturing industries in the Town of Lancaster. The location of the rail in this area makes this an excellent location for such uses.

The industrial character of the Town along Walden Avenue extends into the Village of Lancaster. Industrial uses tend to be concentrated in the northeast portion of the Village along Erie Street and along Walden Avenue. These uses are located near the rail line in the Village.

In Depew, industrial uses are concentrated along Walden Avenue and the rail line. This industrial area is an extension of the industrial uses from the Town and Village of Lancaster. There are also some industrial uses in the Village of Depew along Gould Avenue; again, these uses have good access to the rail lines running through the Village.

In 1993, industrial land uses accounted for approximately 1,400 acres or 6.2% of the total land area. In the Town, there were approximately 1,000 acres (5.4%) of industrial land. The Village of Lancaster had approximately 74 acres (5.2%) and the Village of Depew had approximately 294 acres (14.7%). Most of the industrial growth is occurring along Walden Avenue although some is developing in the northeast portion of the Town of Lancaster although the Villages have also seen an increase in industrial development

In 1999, industrial land uses accounted for approximately 2233 acres or 9.6%. This is a significant increase of almost 1,000 acres now in this land use category. Many of these are new industries in the three communities, although some of the increase could be due to the "windshield survey" classification. The Town saw an increase of almost 600 acres in this land use category while the Village of Lancaster saw an increase of 40 acres and Depew saw an increase of almost 200 acres. This industrial development is important for the financial stability of the three communities.

4.2.1.8 Public Service

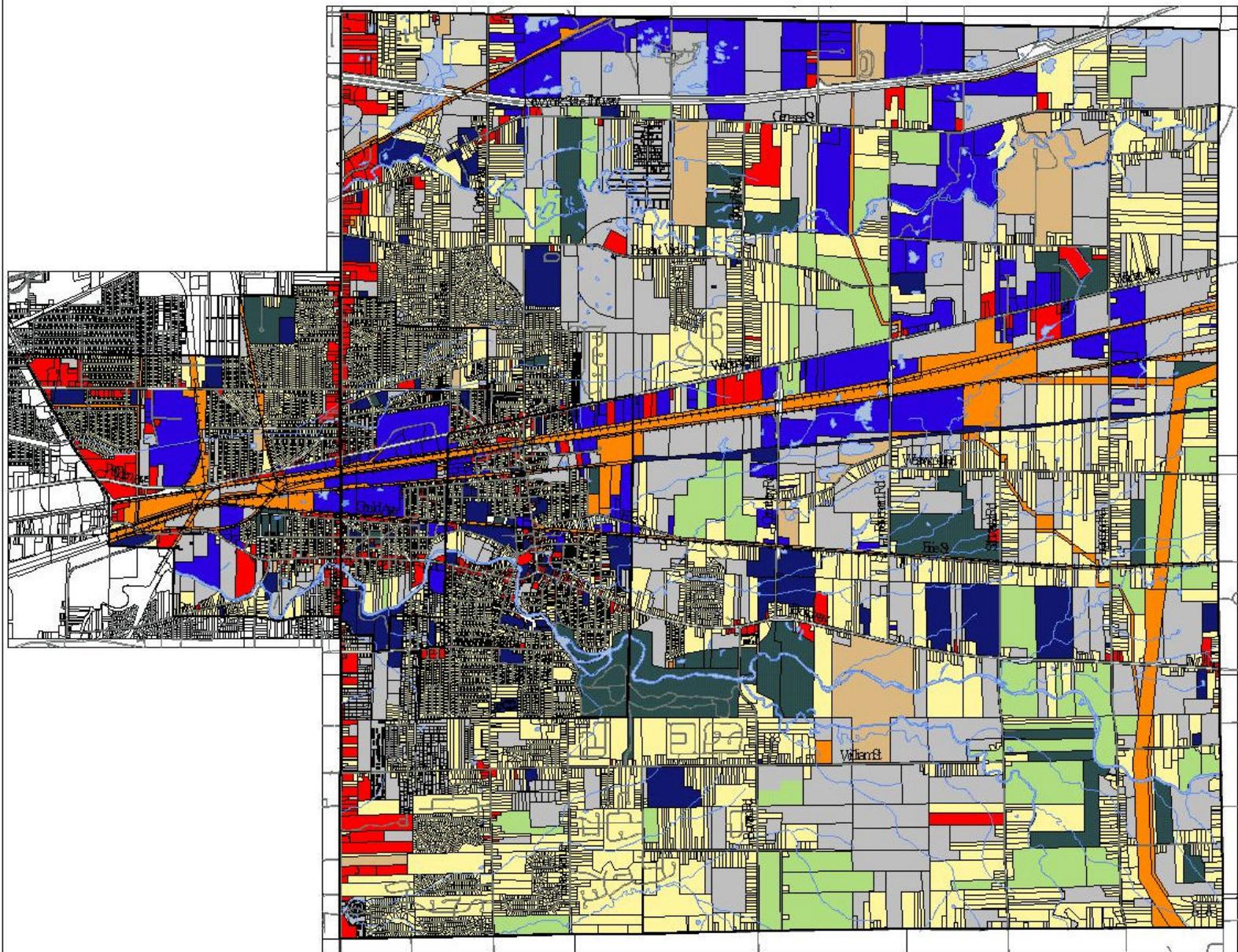
Public service land use categories include utility, rail and other "infrastructure" type uses. These uses provide valuable services to the community in which they are located and also link them with valuable resources.

In the Town of Lancaster, there are several rail lines that run south of Walden Avenue. There are also large easements for power lines through the east portion of the Town; these extend to the southern and northern boundaries of the Town.

In the Village of Lancaster, rail lines are located south of Walden Avenue. There is also a large New York State Electric and Gas office located in the northeast portion of the Village on Erie Street.

TOWN OF LANCASTER
AND
VILLAGES OF LANCASTER
AND DEPEW
REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

1999 Land Use



Landuse Classifications

- Agriculture
 - Residential
 - Vacant
 - Commercial
 - Recreation & Entertainment
 - Community Services
 - Industrial
 - Public Services
 - Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands & Public Parks
 - Lakes, Ponds, Rivers
-
- Rivers, Streams
 - Roads
 - Railroads
 - Parcel Boundaries
 - Municipal Boundaries



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THE SARATOGA ASSOCIATES
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, ARCHITECTS, PLANNERS AND ENGINEERS
SARATOGA SPRING, NEW YORK

Several rail lines are located in the Village of Depew. These lines bisect the Village and are located south of Walden Avenue. The Amtrak Rail Station is also located in the Village of Depew near the western boundary.

In 1993, the public service land use category accounted for approximately 890 acres or 3.8% of the overall land use. In the Town, this percentage is 3.3% while the Village of Lancaster is 6.3% and the Village of Depew is 7.0%.

In 1999, public services accounted for 870 acres or 3.7% of the total land use. There have been no significant changes in this land use category over the past five years.

4.2.1.9 Wild and Forested

Wild and forested lands include those areas that, through the "windshield survey" verification, have a wooded or forested character. In 1993, these were categorized as public lands that are natural; the 1999 classification changes these to include both public and private lands. Most of these lands are located in the Town of Lancaster in the eastern portion of the community. There are no lands in the Villages of Lancaster or Depew with this classification.

In 1993, approximately 16 acres were classified with this land use; this is less than 1% of the total land area all of which is located in the Town of Lancaster.

In 1999, based on the "windshield survey", the percentage of land in this category was 740 acres or 3.2%. The increases in this category occur in the Town of Lancaster only. These lands contribute to the open, rural character and should be protected.

4.2.2 Future Land Use Projections

Determining future land use needs is important to assist a community in developing a vision for their future. A “balance” of residential, commercial and industrial uses, combined with essential services and green space, helps to create an attractive community; more important, the community can ensure that they are able to support the new development in terms of infrastructure and other service costs.

In general, the percentages of various land uses in the three communities includes:

Generalized Land Use Categories – 1999 Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew

Existing Land Use	TOTAL	
	Acres	%
Agriculture	1690	7.3
Residential	8174	35.1
Vacant	6337	27.2
Commercial	1013	4.3
Parks and Recreation	1277	5.5
Community Service	977	4.2
Industrial	2233	9.6
Public Service	866	3.7
Wild and Forested	740	3.2
TOTAL	23120	100.0

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc. and The Saratoga Associates

The following summarizes the acreage needs for residential, commercial, industrial and parklands in the three communities. Because the region is being viewed as a whole, the analysis looks at the three communities as one entity.

TOWN OF LANCASTER
AND
VILLAGES OF LANCASTER
AND DEPEW
REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Future Land Use

Landuse Classifications

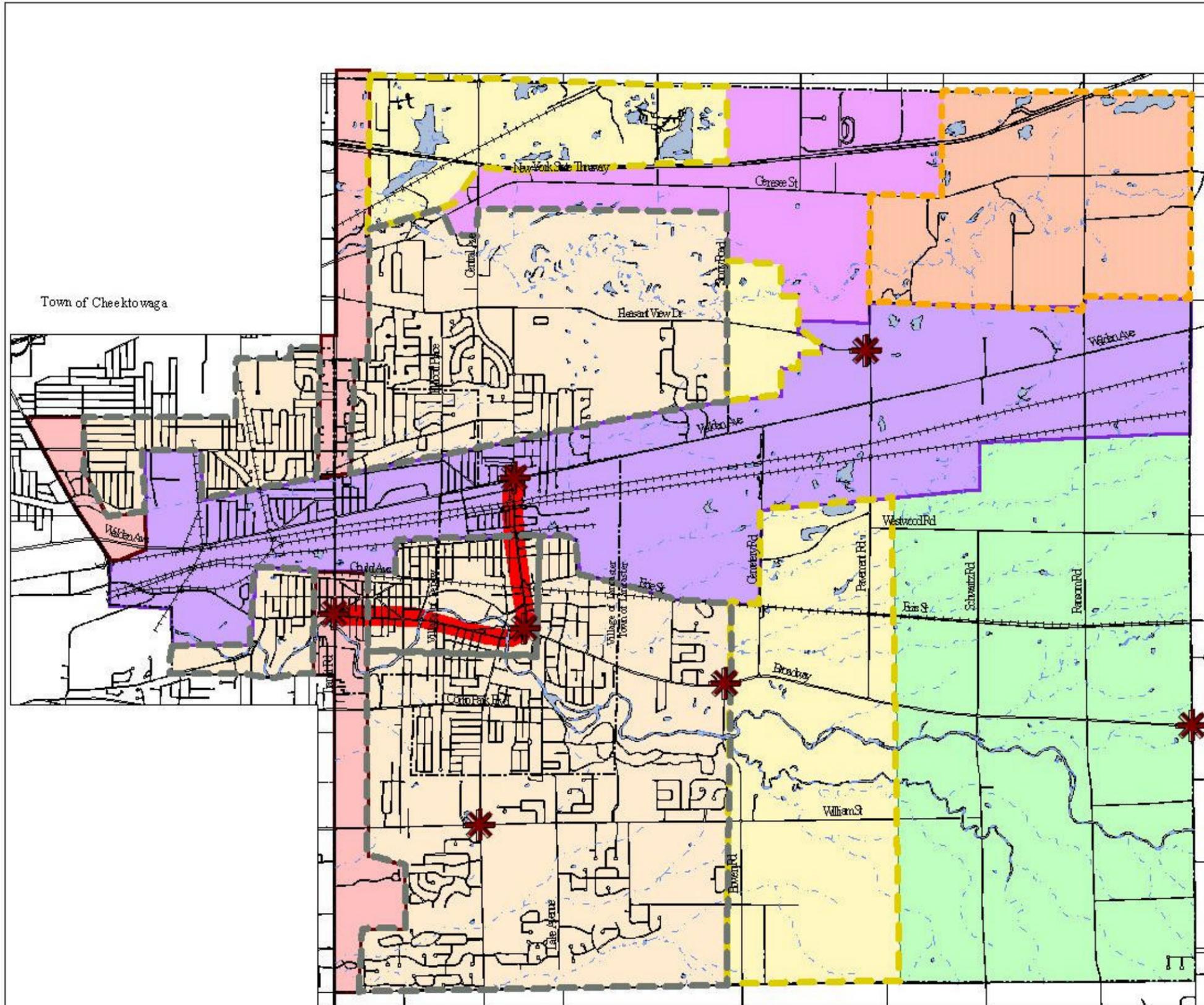
-  Agricultural / Rural Residential
-  Rural Residential
-  Low Density Residential
-  High Density Residential
-  Broadway / Central Main Street
-  Regional Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Office / Research and Development
-  Lakes, Ponds
-  Commercial Node - Neighborhood Services
-  Roads
-  Railroad
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Streams, Rivers



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4.2.2.1 Residential

Number of Units

To determine the number of housing units needed in the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew, an analysis of the existing housing units and the need for additional units was completed. The Greater Buffalo Regional Niagara Transportation Council projected population figures for 2020 were used for the analysis.

The GBNRTC projects the population of the Town could increase to 36,416-45,500 by the year 2020 while the Village of Lancaster population could increase to 12,213 and the Village of Depew population could increase to 17,987. For this analysis, the Town's projected population will be estimated at 40,000 which is approximately the mid-point of the GBNRTC projections. Overall, the region's projected population would be 70,200 residents.

As part of the analysis, the project population was divided by the average household size for the three communities in 1990. According to the 1990 census information, in the Town of Lancaster, the average household size was 2.5 while the Village of Lancaster was 2.4 and the Village of Depew was 2.6. For this analysis, the assumption was made that the household size of 2.5 will remain relatively the same into the year 2020.

The following formula was used to determine the number of residential units that could be required to meet projected population growth in the three communities:

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

Using this formula, the housing need in 2020 is estimated to be approximately 28,000 units.

According to the 1990 Census information, there were approximately 24,500 housing units in the three communities. Recent building permit activity illustrates that since 1990, there have been approximately 2,000 building permits issued in the Town, 50 in the Village of Lancaster and 70 in the Village of Depew; this is a total of approximately 2,120 new units built in the three communities since 1990.

This illustrates that there are approximately 26,600 housing units in the planning region.

Many of the structures in the two Villages are older and may face demolition in the near future. The total number of housing units in the two Villages in 1990 was 11,777. Assuming a demolition rate of 1% over the next twenty years, approximately 2,300 units could be lost in the two communities. This brings the number of housing units that would exist in 2020 down to 24,300 units.

The projected need is 28,000 over the next twenty years or 3,700 new units by the year 2020.

Rental

The rental rate for the Town of Lancaster is approximately 28% while the Village of Lancaster is 30% and the Village of Depew is 26%. In Erie County, the rental rate was 33% which is higher than any of the three communities. Each of the three communities should consider developing more rental units to provide a more diverse opportunity for housing in the three communities. These units would be part of the estimated 3,700 new housing units required by the year 2020 and could include senior, affordable and market rate units.

Senior Housing

In the Town and two Villages, there are approximately 230 subsidized senior housing units and there is an extensive waiting list for these units. This is less than 1% of the total housing stock in the three communities. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development offers no standard for the number of senior units that should be available in a community, but they recommend that approximately 10% of seniors should have access to subsidized housing.

The population over the age 65 in the three communities is approximately 8,500. Of the seniors in the three communities, approximately 800 or 9.5% live below poverty level. If subsidized housing were available to 10% of all seniors, 850 should have access to special housing.

Assuming a household size for seniors of approximately 1.1, there should be approximately 775 senior units in the three communities. There would appear to be a need for approximately 545 additional senior housing units in the Town and two Villages; these units should be located in or near the Villages to enable access to the necessary services.

Affordable Housing

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development has a standard definition for affordable housing based on a formula. Current guidelines for eligibility state that the total rent/mortgage payment plus utilities should be no more than 30% of the total gross income.

According to the 1990 census, the median family income in the three communities ranged from \$32,767 in the Town to \$29,618 in the Village of Lancaster and \$30,637 in the Village of Depew. An average of these median incomes is approximately \$31,000.

Median rent for the three communities includes \$323/month in the Town, \$319/month in the Village of Lancaster and \$328/month in Depew. An average rent in the three communities is \$323/month or \$3,880/year. Assuming annual utility payments of approximately \$1,800/year, the housing cost could be estimated at \$5,680/year for a renter. This is approximately 18% of the median income for the three communities.

According to the 1990 census, the monthly owner costs, as a percentage of household income, for those holding a mortgage includes 21% for the Town of Lancaster, 19% for the Village of Lancaster and 18% for the Village of Depew.

These figures would suggest that, overall, housing is affordable in the three communities.

Residential Acreage

To determine the acreage that is required to meet the need of current and future residents in the three communities, a residential acreage analysis was completed. The three communities should encourage conservation density housing provisions to protect open space and agriculture land in the Town. New development should be concentrated in and around the two Villages. The following guidelines are recommended for new residential development:

Single Family Housing	3.2 units/acre
Apartment/Senior Housing	10 units/acre

The previous analysis suggests that there is a need for approximately 3,700 new housing units; 545 of these would be senior housing.

In the Town of Lancaster, there are approximately 1,000 units that are part of approved subdivisions; these units would help meet the projected single family housing need of 3,125 units. Therefore, only 2,155 units of housing would require additional approvals from the Town or Villages; this would require approximately 675 acres of land at a density of 3.2 units/acre.

The following acreages would be necessary to accommodate future residential development into the year 2020:

Projected Residential Acreage Need - 2020 Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew

Housing Type	Projected Units	Projected Acreage
Single Family	2155	675
Apartment/Senior	545	55
TOTAL	2700	730

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

4.2.2.2 Commercial

The amount of commercial land that should be available in each community varies considerably. Changes in land use patterns over the past decade have a great impact on the percentage of land that is designated for commercial use.

Retail malls and plazas include extensive parking lots to meet the needs of their customers. The acreage required for commercial uses seems inflated because of the large amount of space needed for parking areas at these uses.

In 1992, the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) adopted updated land use ratio information for communities. According to this information, approximately 10% of all land in an urban or suburban community could be 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.

In 1993, the percentage of land designated as commercial was approximately 4.2% for the region. In comparison, the Town of Cheektowaga had 21% of its land designated as commercial in 1993 based on mapping supplied by the Erie County Water Authority. In the Town of Amherst, commercial land uses accounted for approximately 10% (3,271 acres) of the overall land use according to information obtained from the Town.

The deficiency appears to be in the Town of Lancaster which has only 2.6% of land categorized as commercial. The Village of Lancaster has 7.9% of land designated as commercial and the Village of Depew's percentage is 17.1%; Depew and the region should carefully consider the addition of new commercial growth because saturation may occur.

In the three communities, there are approximately 1,000 acres designated as commercial uses in 1999; this is approximately 4.4% of the total land area. The Town of Lancaster saw a slight increase of approximately 100 acres. The Village of Lancaster and the Village of Depew saw a slight decrease. Depew's percentage is current 15.3% which is still higher than the "standard".

In using these figures to determine where new commercial growth should occur, the individual character of each community should be considered. The proposed commercial development should be viewed as an asset and improvement to the overall quality of life for residents in the community; the aesthetic quality should also be considered. The Town and two Villages should concentrate commercial uses in designated areas and each new development should be viewed on an individual basis.

4.2.2.3 Industrial

The American Planning Association and the Planning Advisory Service provided information on industrial land use percentages. These guidelines are based on various communities throughout the country to create a balance of uses. Standard industrial guidelines recommend 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.

Using this standard as a guideline, the Town and two Villages, with a population of approximately 62,000 in 1990, should have approximately 744 in current reserve and 744 acres for future reserve specifically targeted for industrial growth. Based on a projected population of 70,200, the region should have 842 acres of current reserve and 842 acres of future reserve. In summary, the three communities should have approximately 1,500-1,700 acres of industrial land that is both developed and undeveloped.

In 1993, there were approximately 1,400 acres of industrial land in the three communities. This acreage increased to 2,200 acres in 1999. These figures can be somewhat misleading because much of the industrial uses in the Town are gravel-mining industries which make up over 500 acres of industrial land in the Town of Lancaster. These uses tend to be land intensive and are "temporary" in nature.

An analysis completed by the Erie County Department of Planning shows that approximately 40-45% of the County's total vacant industrial land is located in the Town and two Villages. There are approximately 3,000 acres county-wide that are zoned for industrial development; approximately 1,500 acres are located in Lancaster. Other acreages include approximately 90 acres in the Town of Tonawanda, 600 acres in the City of Buffalo, 600 acres in the City of Lackawanna, 300 acres in West Seneca, 100 acres in Hamburg and 100 acres in Orchard Park. The sites in the City of Buffalo and the City of Lackawanna are brownfield sites that will require clean-up to develop. The other communities have greenfield sites.

On a regional basis, the Town and two Villages will play an important role in industrial development and job creation for all of Erie County; this industrial land is a critical regional asset that should be promoted and pursued. Future industrial land use decisions for the three communities must consider their regional role. Additional industrial development in the three communities should focus on areas with good transportation links to both rail and highway to meet the guidelines set forth in this section.

4.2.2.4 Parks

According to standard recreational guidelines, the following are recommended standards for parks and recreational facilities in a community:

Standard Park Needs
Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew

Park Type	Recommended Acreage (1000 residents)	1990 Need (Acres)	2020 Need (Acres)
Playground	1.5	93	105
Neighborhood Park	2.0	124	140
Play Field	1.5	93	105
Community Park	3.5	217	245
TOTAL		527	595

The amount of parkland is unlikely to see major changes over the next twenty years; private recreational uses could increase, but public parklands are not likely to change significantly.

In 1993, the three communities had approximately 1,000 acres dedicated to park and recreational uses. This includes Como Park which is a significant County Park located in the Town and Village of Lancaster. The developed portion of the park is approximately 250 acres and would be categorized as community park; there are approximately 250 undeveloped acres of this park. Westwood Town Park encompasses another 140 acres.

This leaves approximately 360 acres in other recreational uses which includes golf courses, driving range and other private recreation uses; these uses are land intensive and account for much of the remaining park acreage in the three communities.

Based on the 1990 census information, the three communities should have approximately 310 acres for playgrounds, neighborhood parks and play fields. By 2020, they should have approximately 350 acres. There appears to be a shortage of these types of parks and recreational opportunities in the three communities. The churches and schools supply much of this need, but the three communities should consider the development of more neighborhood parks and playgrounds.

4.2.3 Future Land Use Plan

The future land use plan developed for the Town and two Villages presents a concept of how future land use decisions should be made in the three communities. The plan lays out, generally, future residential, commercial and industrial areas for the region. This plan was developed in the overall context of Erie County and land uses in surrounding communities. Each area is described below.

Residential Uses

Residential uses in the three communities include several different densities and types of development. Outside the sewer serviced areas in the Town of Lancaster, the land use would remain agricultural/rural residential. This would include primarily agricultural uses and larger lot development. This area is located primarily south of Walden Avenue. Rural residential uses would be located north of Walden Avenue in the Town of Lancaster; again, this area does not have sewer service. Larger lot residential development would be developed in these areas.

Low density residential development would occur in the Town of Lancaster east of Stony Road and Bowen Road; the western portion of the Town north of the NYS Thruway would also be developed in this manner. These areas have sewer service, and less dense housing would be located here. Through the use of planned unit developments and clustering, the Town can maintain important open space and green areas to create a rural atmosphere.

More intense residential development would be located in the two Villages and immediately surrounding these communities. In the Town, this includes those areas west of Stony Road and Bowen Road. In Depew, rehabilitation of existing, older residential areas should be considered.

Commercial

Several commercial areas are outlined in the future land use plan. The Broadway/Central Avenue corridors are designated for future smaller scale, neighborhood retail/service development. These two corridors are the "Main Street" of the two communities and offer an opportunity to create a pedestrian friendly, smaller scale commercial area.

Transit Road, which is viewed as a regional commercial destination, will continue to serve all of Western New York. Larger scale retail development would be located along this corridor. Dick Road, north of Walden Avenue, would also be developed in this manner.

Several commercial nodes are designated throughout the Town of Lancaster. These commercial nodes would include neighborhood type services for those immediately surrounding the area. These nodes are located at Broadway near the Town line, Broadway near Bowen Road, William Street and Lake Street, Broadway and Transit Road, Central Avenue and Walden and Pleasant View Drive and Pavement Road.

Industrial

Two industrial areas are outlined in the future land use plan. Genesee Street along the NYS Thruway would be designated as office/light industrial. This type of development will likely occur if a new Thruway interchange is developed in this area. As development occurs, the hamlet of Bowmansville should be protected through the development of design guidelines.

The entire Walden corridor in these three communities would be designated for future industrial development. Because of the proximity of the rail lines and with good access to the interstate system, this corridor offers an excellent opportunity for future industrial development for all of Western New York.

Particular attention would be given to the area bounded by the Village of Lancaster line on the west, Erie Street on the south and Cemetery Road on the east. This area is part of the largest block of industrially zoned Greenfield in Erie County, is well separated from most residential or conflicting land uses, is accessible by rail, has a county-owned rail line as the western edge of the area, has a former rail corridor through the center that is publicly owned, is within Erie County Sewer District #4 and is fully serviceable.

4.3 Agricultural Analysis

Agriculture plays an important role in the Town of Lancaster's economy and in shaping the Town's character. Farmland is a virtually irreplaceable natural resource and agriculture continues to be a viable industry in Erie County. However, the pressures of suburban expansion have played a role in diminishing the numbers of working farms in the Town. Based on the results of the community survey, agricultural preservation is very important to residents of the three communities. Fully 81 percent of respondents in the region as a whole believed that agricultural lands in Lancaster should be better protected. Town residents felt even more strongly about the issue, with an overwhelming 94 percent indicating that they supported greater protection of the Town's agricultural resources.

4.3.1 Existing Inventory

4.3.1.1 Agricultural Districts

Erie County

Erie County has 17 agriculture districts approved by the Erie County Legislature which encompass some 234,000 acres of land (1992). The total enrolled acreage includes approximately 146,000 acres of active farmland, other viable agricultural lands, and buffer areas. According to 1992 statistics from the U.S. Census of Agriculture, there are an estimated 1,220 farms in the county, 99 percent of which are family farms.

The agricultural industry employs an estimated 3,800 permanent employees as well as an additional 5,000 seasonal employees in the spring, summer, and fall. Countywide gross receipts in the farm industry totaled \$70.9 million in 1992. The industry's total spending of \$61.6 million in turn generated secondary expenditures in local businesses and their suppliers that service the agriculture businesses.

Under the 1971 New York State Agricultural Districts Law, agricultural districts provide certain benefits and protections to farming uses. The law allows for an agricultural exemption for active agricultural operations. In addition, public utility taxes are based only on the ½ acre of the farm which is devoted to housing. Also, municipalities may not pass laws which have the effect of inhibiting farming practices and public agencies must notify the Department of Agriculture and Markets before they proceed with condemnation proceedings to purchase agricultural lands.

In addition, if public dollars are to be spent for utilities, housing, and commercial and industrial facilities within an agricultural district, a Notice of Intent must be filed with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. The report must show how any potential loss or effects on farmland will be mitigated. The Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, comprised of 15 members, plays an important role in reviewing and recommending the agricultural districts for recertification, comments on Notices of Intent, and deals with a multitude of agricultural issues that need resolving.

The County has found that agricultural district assessments, recommendations, and notification requirements have not been evenly interpreted or implemented by municipalities. Agricultural Districts are required to be recertified by Erie County and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets every eight years.

Lancaster-Alden Agricultural District

The eastern side of the Town of Lancaster contains a large portion of the Lancaster-Alden Agricultural District. According to 1991 data collected by the County, the Lancaster-Alden district contained 24 farms and 9,175 enrolled acres, with an average farm size of approximately 380 acres. These farms had estimated gross sales of roughly \$2 million in 1991. Secondary and indirect spending generated by these direct sales were estimated at roughly an additional \$5 million.

The Lancaster portion of the agricultural district is comprised of two separate zones north and south of Walden Avenue. The irregular westerly boundaries of the district roughly follow Stony, Pavement, Bowen Roads; the westerly boundaries within Lancaster extend east to Town Line Road. The Lancaster portion of the agricultural district totals 7,100 acres, including 2,000 acres in the northern section and 5,100 acres in the much larger southern section. Approximately 31 percent of the Town of Lancaster's total land area is included in the agricultural district.

The Lancaster portion of the agricultural district is defined as a “transition zone” between the urban/suburban core of the county and the “agricultural reserve zone” further away from population centers. County policy recommends preventing the premature conversion of farmland within the transition zone and providing assistance to agricultural land owners.

The Lancaster-Alden Agricultural District is currently being reviewed by the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning (ECDEP) and the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board to determine the viability of agriculture within the district and modifications to the boundaries, if any. As discussed above, each agricultural district in the state must be reviewed every eight years.

4.3.1.2 Prime Farmland

Prime farmland is the land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics, growing seasons, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields with proper management. Prime farmland tends to be flat and well-drained, both characteristics that also make it particularly desirable for development. The distribution of prime agricultural soils in the Town of Lancaster is shown on the Agricultural Map. As the map indicates, Lancaster contains particularly rich farmland. Virtually all the land included in both the northern and southern portions of the agricultural district contains prime agricultural soils or soils of statewide importance. “Important” soils are nearly prime farmlands that are capable of producing high yield crops when managed with modern farming practices.

In the Town of Lancaster, the best soils are particularly concentrated along stream corridors, including Cayuga Creek, Little Buffalo Creek, Ellicott Creek, and smaller tributaries. As shown on the map, much of the land in the Town containing prime agricultural soils has already been developed with residential and commercial uses.

4.3.1.3 Active Agricultural Uses

Consistent with county trends, agricultural land use has declined in the Town of Lancaster in recent decades, with suburban residential and commercial land uses replacing rural farming uses in much of the Town. Countywide, total land in farming use declined from 222,215 acres in 1969 to 164,500 acres in 1993. Development pressures have been particularly strong in the Town of Lancaster, as discussed above in Section 4.2, "Land Use".

As part of the review of the Lancaster-Alden Agricultural District, in December 1998 the ECDEP distributed an agricultural survey to farmers and other agricultural property owners within the district to determine the extent to which land is in agricultural use. In the Town of Lancaster portion of the agricultural district, all parcels of 10 acres or more that are in agricultural use are included in the agricultural lands total.

Active agricultural uses are concentrated in the southern portion of the agricultural district. The survey data show that a total of 1,515 acres of land in the Town of Lancaster is currently in agricultural use. Thus, active farming uses represent about 21 percent of the total land area in the Lancaster portion of the agricultural district. Sixty-one percent of the total land area in active agricultural use is land that is rented by farmers; the remaining 39 percent is owned and operated by the farmer.

Twenty active agricultural operations are located on the 1,515 agricultural acres, for an average property size of 76 acres. Principal agricultural enterprises in Lancaster are diverse and include livestock (8), cash crop (4), horticulture (4), orchard (2), and dairy (1) operations. A total of 1,206 acres of the agricultural land is in crops, including (in order of total acreage): hay, corn, soybeans, horticulture and nursery stock, pasture, grains, fruits and vegetables, strawberries, and Christmas trees. Livestock operations (in order of total acreage) include hogs, heifers and calves, horses, beef cattle, poultry, and cows. In addition, the district contains 34 greenhouse structures totaling about 59,000 square feet.

In addition, a "windshield survey" of agricultural uses in the Town of Lancaster was conducted by The Saratoga Associates in November. The most vital farming area in the Town of Lancaster is located in the portion of the agricultural district south of Walden Avenue and the New York Central rail line and east of the county sewer district boundary, especially in the vicinity of Ransom and Schwartz Roads.

Active agricultural uses in this area include Aldinger's Farm on Ransom Road which produces a wide variety of vegetables. The farm also sells vegetables, seeds, beef, pork, and other commodities directly to the community from its barn. Other agricultural uses include the Nuwer farm on Erie Street



Aldinger Farm - Ransom Road



Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
A Comprehensive Plan...A Common Future



Farm – Schwartz Road



Farm – Schwartz Road

Along Schwartz Road south of Broadway is the Bednarski nursery, the Pletscher dairy farm, and a recently-constructed horse stable. Farms on Schwartz Road are illustrated in this Chapter. There is also farmed land along Town Line Road immediately north of Cayuga Creek, and in other locations scattered throughout the agricultural district. Leased land in the Bowen and Didion Road area and in other parts of the agricultural district (including some behind shallow residential lots) is also rented to farmers growing corn, soybeans, and other crops.

Agricultural uses in the northern section of the district are scattered and include the Adams Nursery on Genesee Street near the Tops distribution center and crop land leased to farmers from other areas. Farms, stables, places of worship, recreational and open space areas, and related uses are also allowed in the AR zone. The Town's zoning districts are shown on the Zoning Map and discussed in Chapter 2, above.

The northern portion of the agricultural district is covered by a wide variety of zoning districts. The largest areas are mapped with the AR district, the Light Industrial (LI) district, and the Sand, Gravel, and Aggregates (SGA) district. There are also two small areas zoned Multifamily Residential District 3 (MFR3).



Horse Stable – Schwartz Road

The Town of Lancaster has no specific legislation designed to preserve agriculture and agricultural lands. Land values in the Town's agricultural district are generally based on the residential land value derived from the zoning instead of the agricultural land value. These high land costs currently prohibit many farmers from continuing farming operations or from purchasing additional land in Lancaster.

4.3.2 Trends and Projections

4.3.2.1 Erie County Farmland Policy

Farms for the Future

In 1996, the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, in cooperation with the Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, prepared *Farms for the Future: An Agricultural and Farmland Preservation and Protection Strategy*. The primary goals of the study are:

- To protect agriculture and farmland using the resources available to allow the industry to be profitable and flourish.
- To preserve farmland and associated agricultural lands using techniques which assure that these lands are kept in that state as long as possible.
- To secure the support of the community and governments through education and the promotion of agriculture as a neighbor and as a major economic contributor.

TOWN OF LANCASTER
AND
VILLAGES OF LANCASTER
AND DEPEW
REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Agricultural District Features

-  Agricultural District Boundaries
-  Railroads
-  Watershed Boundaries
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Rivers, Streams
-  Parcel Boundaries
-  Lakes, Ponds
-  Quarry

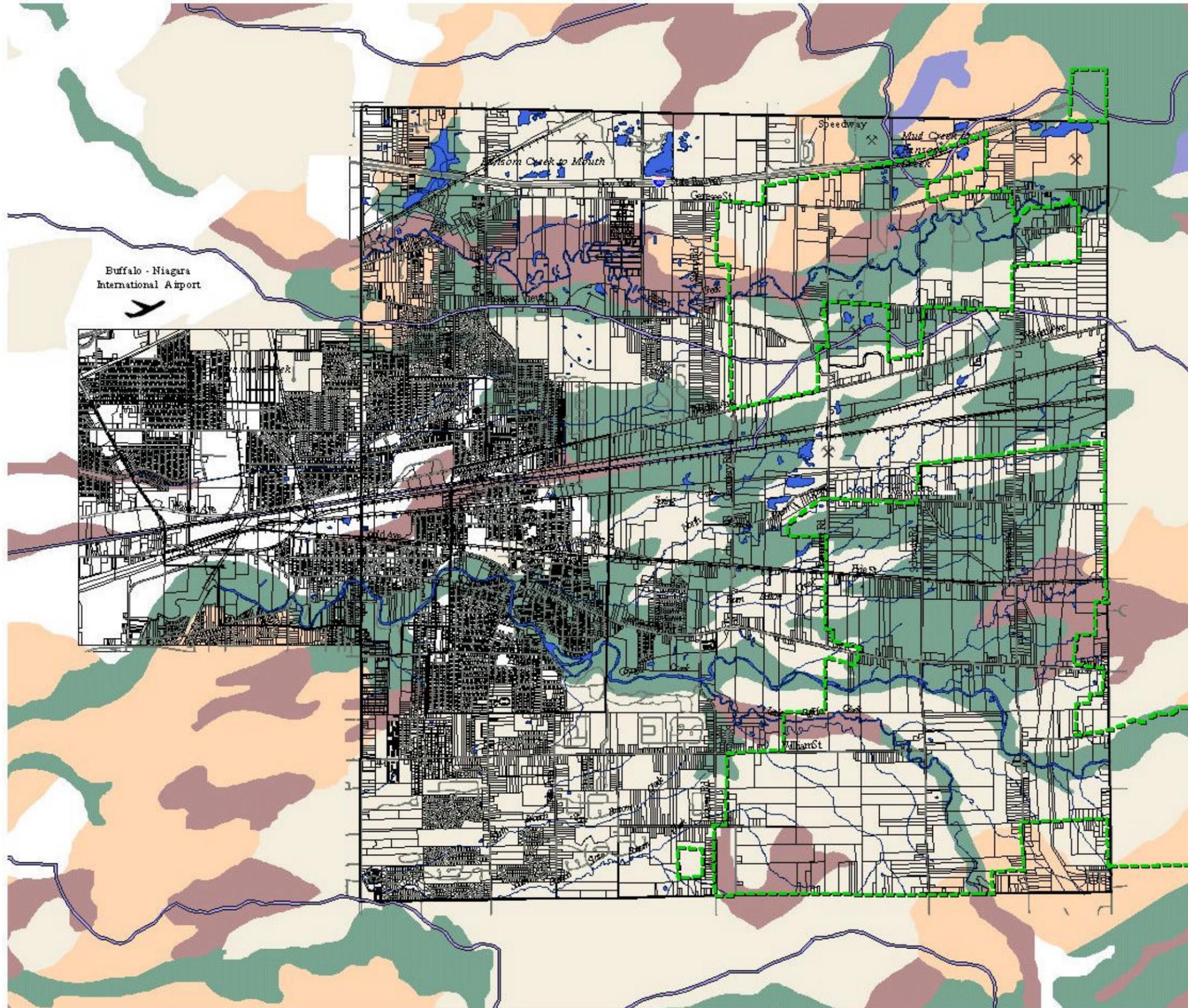
- Generalized Soils
-  Prime: 75 - 100%
 -  Prime: 55 - 70%
 -  Prime: 30 - 50%
 -  Important
 -  Unique



January 2000

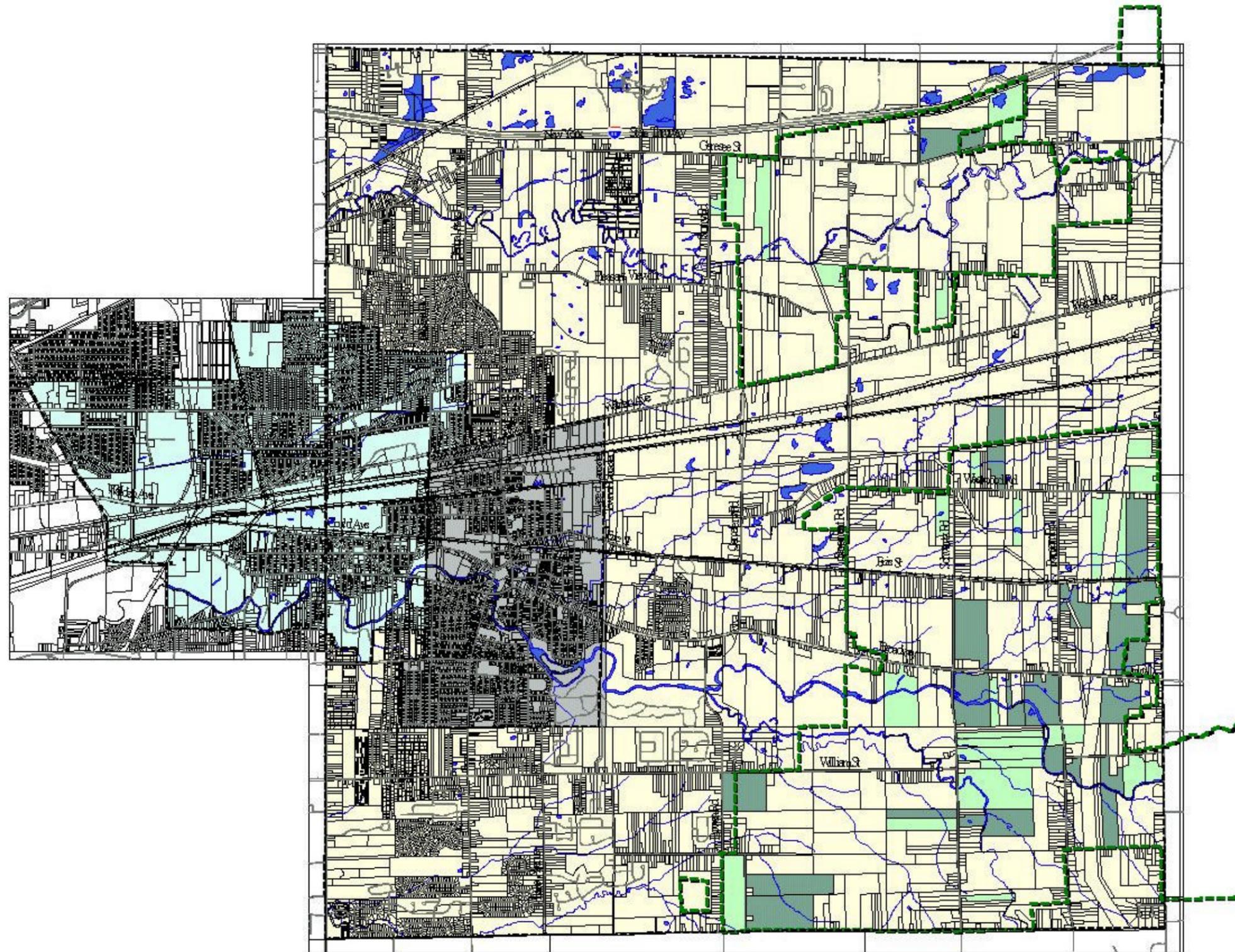
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TOWN OF LANCASTER
AND
VILLAGES OF LANCASTER
AND DEPEW
REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Town of Lancaster
Active Farmlands



- Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers, Streams
- Parcel Boundaries
- Municipal Boundaries
- Agricultural District Boundaries

- Lakes, Ponds
- Village of Depew
- Village of Lancaster
- Town of Lancaster

- Active Farmlands
- Rented
 - Owner Operated Land

Source: Erie County Department of Environment and Planning



January 2000

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Farms for the Future documented the rapid rate of agricultural land conversion to urban uses and demonstrated the need for an orchestrated farmland protection strategy to prevent the continued decline of agriculture in the county. The study also found that agricultural preservation also satisfies many commonly held community and economic objectives including:

- preserving the local economic base (farming, as a primary extractive industry which fuels local support services, has a multiplier effect which generates a much higher impact to the local economy than the gross farm production value);
- maintaining open space;
- preserving natural resources and natural processes such as stream corridors, wetlands, and wildlife habitats;
- preventing sprawl; controlling public costs associated with sprawl development patterns;
- promoting economic self-sufficiency;
- maintaining local specialty crops; and
- conserving energy by using prime soils for the crops most suited to them and keeping the supply of farm products close to the county's urban centers.

The study's five point strategy for agricultural preservation includes identifying agricultural uses in need of preservation; encouraging the immediate implementation of agricultural preservation strategies; identifying high priority areas; developing a model approach for town-level preservation of agricultural uses; and establishing a working group to execute the plan.

Right to Farm Legislation

In January 1999, the Erie County Legislature adopted the “Erie County Right to Farm Law”. The legislation is designed to protect the county’s farmers, farm activity, and agricultural land against encroachment by residential development. The legislation recognizes the economic and sociological value of agriculture to local communities. It stipulates that farmers have the right to engage in generally accepted agricultural practices and requires all purchase and sales contracts for residential properties in Erie County to include a disclosure notice. The notice will serve to advise potential home buyers of what to expect from normal farm activities such as the operation of machinery, application of pesticides and fertilizers, and to limit conflicts between agricultural and residential uses, and to reduce the number and effects of nuisance lawsuits brought by non-agricultural neighbors against farm operations.

4.3.2.2 New York State Policy

New York State has enacted strong legislation in the last three decades to protect agriculture, the state’s single-largest industry. The 1971 Agricultural Districts Law, discussed above, provides the basis for the state’s agricultural and farmland protection efforts by creating agricultural districts and associated protections and benefits. The 1992 Agricultural Protection Act strengthened farmers’ right to farm, required increased scrutiny of the impacts of public projects on agriculture, and provided the framework for the development of county agricultural and farmland protection strategies. In 1994, New York State started to provide funding for counties to develop agricultural and farmland protection plans. Approval of such plans enables counties and municipalities to apply for federal and state funding of farmland development rights in the form of easements. The 1996 Farm Preservation Act created a refundable income tax credit for school taxes paid by farmers. Also in 1996, the state established a matching grants program for farmland protection implementation projects.

4.3.2.3 Farming and Public Infrastructure

In Lancaster, the county sewer district is bounded on the east by the north-south line that runs about 1000 feet east of Pavement Road. The boundaries of the sewer district were established prior to the creation of the agricultural district. There is also extended sewer service area along Walden Avenue where a sewer line runs east from the sewer district boundary to the Town of Alden (see section 4.5, "Infrastructure"). In addition, three small Town of Lancaster sewer districts are located to the east of the county sewer district boundary: two of these are located outside the agricultural district along Walden Avenue. The third Town sewer district (#8) is located within the agricultural district immediately south of Ellicott Creek: this district was approved but the sewer infrastructure has never been installed. Erie County policy prohibits new sewer extensions into agricultural districts unless the sewer district was created prior to the formation of the agricultural district. The entire Town, including lands within the agricultural district, is served by public water supplied by the Erie County Water Authority.



Former Brunk Farm – William Street

Roughly 2,000 acres or about one-third of the Lancaster portion of the agricultural district lie within of county sewer district. The remaining agricultural district lands to the east including most of the active farms, do not have public sewer. The lack of public sewer has a restraining effect on development pressures compared with the rest of the Town. The western, sewerred portion of the agricultural district has experienced more recent development pressure than the eastern, unsewered portion. Examples include recent and proposed residential development in the William Street-Bowen Road area, which depicts the sale of the former Brunck farm, where a 400-lot residential subdivision was approved) and industrial development along Genesee Street, including the Tops distribution center.

4.3.3 Benefits of Agriculture

4.3.3.1 Economic

In 1990, the agricultural sector employed over 3,800 persons in Erie County on a year-round basis⁹. In addition, the industry employed an additional 5,000 persons as seasonal workers. In 1993, direct sales of Erie County's leading agricultural products totaled \$71 million dollars.

⁹Erie County Farms for the Future, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, March 1996.

As a primary extractive industry and a net exporter of goods, agriculture also generates substantial indirect and secondary economic effects. As a result, its total economic impact is estimated at three to four times its gross farm production value.

In the Lancaster-Alden Agricultural District, preliminary agricultural survey 1998 data from the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning indicates that agricultural operations in the Town of Lancaster have annual gross farm sales of \$1.2 to \$2.0 million. As stated above, the total economic impact of these agricultural operations is estimated at three to four times the gross sales figure. In addition, the survey data indicate that the farms have made substantial recent investments in equipment, structures, and land to continue and enhance their operations. An estimated \$1 million to \$2 million has been made in agricultural investments in Lancaster in recent years. Agricultural investment also has a multiplier effect, by supporting equipment suppliers, construction trades, and related industries throughout the region.



Farm Landscape – Didion Road

4.3.3.2 Open Space

Farmland consists of cropland, pastureland, and non-tillable land such as woodland and wetlands. Agricultural lands and adjoining buffered wooded areas constitute areas of private open space, providing a visual resource to the community and important wildlife habitat. The Town of Lancaster has a generally flat topography and limited number typically scenic natural features such as hills, valleys and related views and vistas, large water bodies, and rock outcroppings. As shown in the photographs above and below, the Town of Lancaster's farm fields and meadows, barns, homesteads, outbuildings, and adjoining wooded buffer lands contribute significantly to the visual and cultural character of the community.



Farm Landscape – Didion Road

Also contributing to the visual character of the Town are the major stream corridors, large portions of which are located in the agricultural district and adjoin farms. Distinctive red brick silos topped by "pepper pot" roofs and impressive homesteads of various architectural styles dot the landscape. These places contribute to the unique rural character of the eastern portion of the Town. Scenic views of farm landscapes are particularly abundant along Town Line (south of Broadway), Ransom, Schwartz, and Didion Roads. The farm homesteads, barns, and silos may also include potential historic resources.

4.3.3.3 Environmental

Much of the Town's farm land borders Ellicott, Cayuga, and Little Buffalo Creeks. The adjacency of open agricultural land as opposed to urbanized land is an important factor in maintaining the water quality of these water courses. For example, as noted in Section 4.6, "Environment," the water quality rating of Cayuga Creek is Class B in the eastern portion of the Town, while in the more urbanized Village areas, its rating decreases to Class C. In addition, these streams and adjacent lands provide important habitats and migration corridors for wildlife. Associated agricultural lands also include wooded areas which provide habitat to plants and animals.

State and federal designated wetlands are also located in the agricultural district. The undeveloped wetlands in the agricultural district function to control runoff and erosion. Extensive floodplains, which are prone to flood damage and therefore less suitable for development, cover large portions of the agricultural district adjoining the creek beds. Prime farmland is a virtually irreplaceable environmental resource. Some estimate that it takes 500 to 800 years to create one inch of topsoil.

4.4 Transportation

As stated in the Land Use chapter, the Town of Lancaster and the Villages of Lancaster and Depew have seen tremendous changes in land use over the past decade. Because much of the vacant land is located in the Town of Lancaster, it is this community that has witnessed the most dramatic changes. More specifically, the development can be characterized by residential growth with some increases in industrial expansion. Although the focus of this section is on transportation, it is important to understand the land use changes over the past year as the type and location of new development can have a tremendous effect on the road system.

Lancaster North South Corridor Preservation Study

In January 1999, the Draft Lancaster North South Corridor Preservation Study was completed by the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC). This study was completed in response to Town officials and resident's desires to recognize the need to accommodate the significant growth being experienced in the Town, to provide for future access needs and to relieve growing traffic congestion¹⁰.

The overall objective of the study was to identify and define potential land corridors for future transportation facility improvements. A Study Review Team (SRT) was established to oversee the process and was made up of representatives of the Town of Lancaster, and the Villages of Lancaster and Depew, the surrounding towns of Elma, Clarence and Cheektowaga and staff representation of the Erie County Department of Environmental Planning, GBNRTC, NYSDOT, and the NYS Thruway Authority. In addition to the SRT, there were three public meetings where participants were asked to actively participate in selecting a preferred alternative.

¹⁰ Lancaster North South Corridor Preservation Study, Executive Summary
peter j. smith & company, inc.
The Saratoga Associates

A wealth of data was collected and used to analyze 16 initial alternatives. The initial alternatives were reduced to nine feasible alternative options that were presented to the public for critical review in a workshop setting. At the completion of the public and SRT review a Preferred Alternative option was identified, an arterial facility building on the existing County roadway Cemetery Road. The Preferred Alternative was initially defined as a five-lane roadway facility. After public review and concerns over the environmental impact, this was changed to a four-lane facility, which is now referred to as the Modified Preferred Alternative.

One of the primary purposes of this chapter is to review the north-south study, understand the final recommendation, and relate it to the overall Comprehensive Plan process. It is not only important to understand the impacts on traffic circulation, but it is also important to understand the implications a new arterial road can have on the land use patterns along its edge and in the eastern portion of the Town. Therefore, this chapter will examine the Modified Preferred Alternative from a transportation perspective and its potential impact on the growth and development of the Town.

4.4.1 Vehicular System

Road Classifications

Currently in Lancaster there are two principal arterials which include U.S. Route 20/Broadway and Route 78/Transit Road. A principal arterial, as designated by the Federal Government, serves major centers of activity, carries the highest traffic volume and the longest trips and the highest proportion of total urban area travel. In addition, significant intra-area travel, such as between central business districts and outlying residential areas, or between major suburban centers are served by principal arterials.

Walden Avenue and Genesee Street function as principal arterials through the Town of Cheektowaga and switch to minor arterials in the Town of Lancaster. Minor arterials provide service trips of moderate length at a somewhat lower level of travel mobility than principal arterials. Other minor arterials in the Town include portions of Central Avenue, Harris Hill Road, Ransom Road, Bowen Road, and William Street.

The NYS Thruway, I-90, is the only Interstate designated highway facility within the Town and serves as a primary regional route with an access facility provided at the Transit Road Interchange (Exit Number 49).

Local collector roads penetrate identifiable neighborhoods, distributing trips from the arterials to the ultimate destination, providing access and circulation within the neighborhood. The collector system collects traffic from local streets and channels it to the arterials. Examples of collector roads in the study area include Aurora Street, Central and Harris Hill Roads, Pavement Road, Schwartz Road, and Lake Avenue.

Recent Travel Patterns¹¹

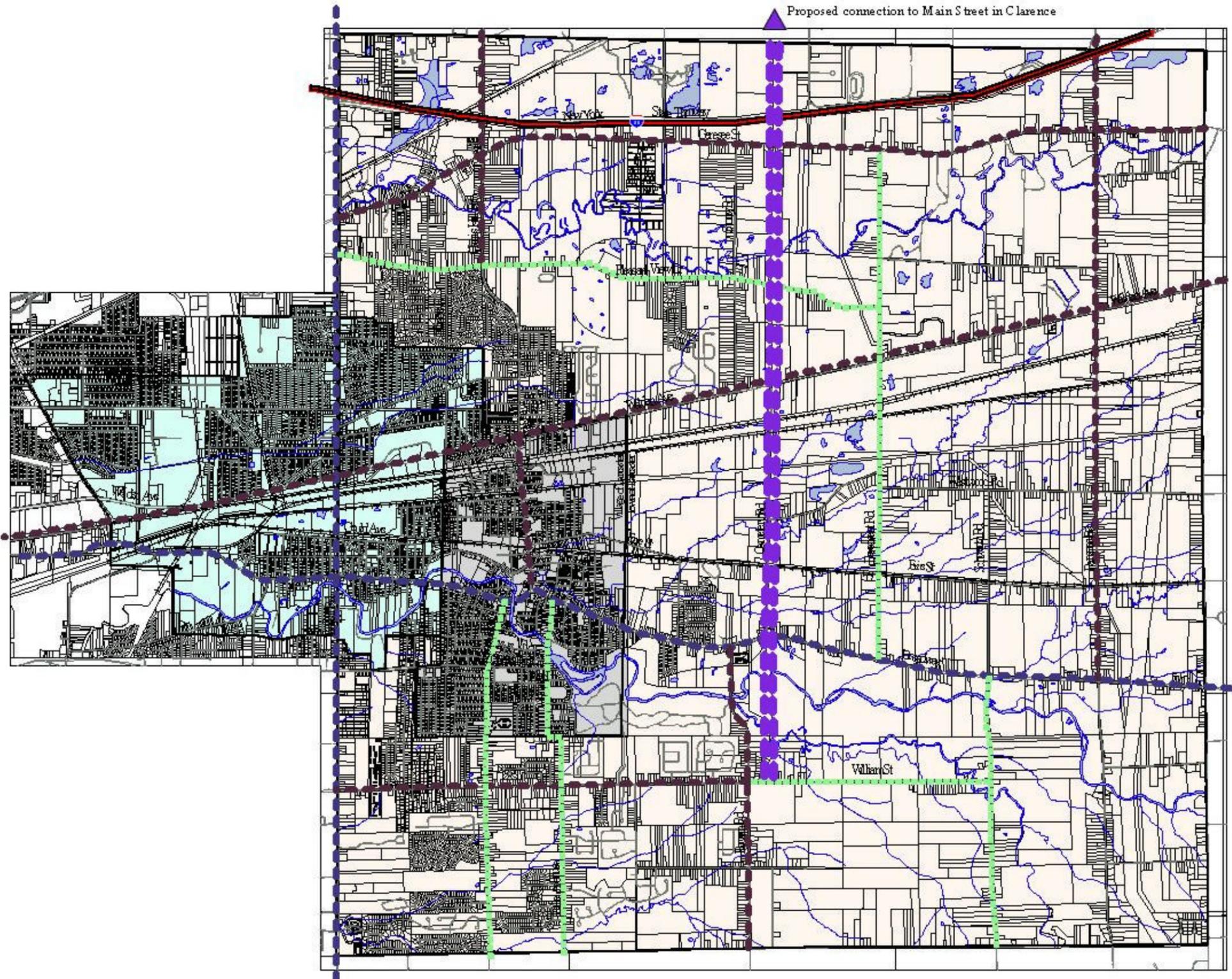
Since the draft Lancaster Master Plan was prepared in 1995, traffic volumes have generally increased and have continued to place increasing pressure on Town roadways, resulting in increased congestion and diminished levels of service. Although commuting to and from Buffalo from the suburbs still exists today, new travel patterns have emerged as commuters are also traveling from suburb to suburb. The result has placed more traffic on roadways crossing the study area, in both the north-south and east-west direction.

In addition to a change in commutation patterns, the function of some principal arterials, such as Transit Road, is changing from service oriented commercial activity to regional commercial activity. The result is increased traffic congestion forcing travelers to seek alternative routes. Recently, alternative routes have included local collector roads such as Aurora Street, Central and Harris Hill Roads, which are not designed for such high volumes of traffic. Overall, the result has created traffic congestion in certain areas of the Town and in both Villages.

¹¹ Lancaster North South Corridor Preservation Study, p. 9.

TOWN OF LANCASTER
AND
VILLAGES OF LANCASTER
AND DEPEW
REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Roadway Classifications



- Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers, Streams
- Parcel Boundaries
- Municipal Boundaries
- Local Collector
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Interstate
- Proposed North-South Corridor *
- Lakes, Ponds
- Town of Lancaster
- Village of Depew
- Village of Lancaster

Proposed connection to Main Street in Clarence

* Source: Draft Lancaster North-South Corridor Preservation Study, January 1999



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1997 Traffic Characteristics and Operations¹²

As part of the North South Study, the GBNRTC analyzed traffic volumes on the roadways and at certain major intersections. As described above, the change in commutation patterns has forced travelers to seek alternate routes onto roadways that were not designed to carry such volumes. The following discussion illustrates this point from an analytical perspective. All volumes are based on 24-hour traffic counts obtained by the GBNRTC in 1997.

The highest traffic volume in 1997 occurred on Transit Road between I-90 north and Wehrle Drive with 36,500 vehicles a day. The second highest traffic volume in the study area is along I-90 between Route 78/Transit Road and the Genesee County line with approximately 33,600 vehicles.

Based on these traffic counts, Levels of Service (LOS) for roadway segments and intersections were calculated. With regard to roadway segments, LOS is a qualitative measure that describes motorist satisfaction with factors influencing the degree of traffic congestion. These include travel time, speed, maneuverability, safety and delay. Levels range from "A" to "F", with "A" describing traffic operations with little or no delay and "F" describing conditions with substantial delay. Base on GBNRTC analysis LOS thresholds were identified. LOS greater than "D" are perceived to introduced mobility concerns with LOS "E" or "F" define undesirable traffic conditions and deficient capacity.

LOS analysis can also be applied to intersections. Although it is much more detailed process, the resulting classification is similar to roadway segments. Level "A" represents conditions under which no traffic is delayed by congestion and "F" level represents totally congested conditions.

¹² Lancaster North South Corridor Preservation Study, p. 21.

LOS – Roadways

In 1996, a short section of U.S. Route 20/Broadway in the Village of Lancaster and sections of Route 78/Transit Road were identified as LOS "E" or "F." Other sections of Broadway between Central Avenue and Transit Road, Transit Road between Broadway and Walden Avenue and a section of Genesee Street between Transit and Harris Hill Road were determined to operate at LOS "D." All other roadways operated at a "C" or better.

In 1997 there were significant changes resulting in further deterioration in the LOS of certain roads. Traffic volumes increased on Central Avenue between Walden Avenue and Pleasant View Drive and on Genesee Street between Transit Road and Harris Hill Road. As a result, the LOS fell into the deficient "E" and "F" range.

LOS – Intersections

Of the 30 intersections analyzed, six or 18% were LOS "F" in the AM peak, three or 9% were at LOS "F" in the Mid-Day, and eight or 24% were at "F" in the PM peak. Level "E" and "F" intersections include: Transit Road and Walden, Wehrle, Genesee, and the I-90 ramp. An additional "F" intersection include Pleasant View at Harris Hill Road.

It is important to understand where deficiencies occur as the communities look to their future. Not only will new roadways affect traffic patterns and congestion, but, as in the case of Transit Road, land use patterns will directly affect future traffic patterns.

2010 Traffic Forecasts

GBNRTC forecasted traffic growth to 2010 for each of the road segments and intersections in the study area. The results indicated that many additional segments will deteriorate to a LOS "D", "E", or "F" from the 1997 situation.

In terms of applying the projections to the intersections, 69 percent were determined to operate at a LOS "F" in the AM peak, 56 percent would operate at LOS "F" in the Mid-Day peak, and 86 percent would operate at LOS "F" in the PM peak. This is an increase over 18% (AM peak), 9% (Mid-Day), and 24% (PM Peak) in 1997.

Development of the Alternative Improvement Concepts

After the initial data was collected and analyzed, GBNRTC analyzed 16 different alternatives which were later reduced to nine feasible options. The primary intent of the analysis was to consider (1) benefits derived from constructing a new north-south roadway, (2) effect of reducing future traffic congestion, and (3) effect of improving development in the southeast portion of the Town of Lancaster. It was also shown that some of the alternatives presented will also reduce the traffic demand along the east-west travel routes.

Each alternative was evaluated against a set of criteria in comparison to the Base/Null (Do Nothing) Alternative. The following table summarizes the corridor goals and evaluation criteria for each proposed alternative.

Lancaster North South Corridor Preservation Study Evaluation Matrix

Goals	Evaluation Criteria	ALTERNATIVES									
		A	B-1	B-2	C-1	C-2	D-1	D-2	D-3	E	Local Rd. Ext.
Transportation Performance											
	Improve Level of Service - In Town	m	u	u	m	m	u	i	u	u	u
	Improve Level of Service - In Region	m	u	u	u	u	i	i	u	u	m
	Improve Accessibility - In Town	m	u	i	m	u	u	u	u	u	u
	Improve Accessibility To/From Region	m	u	u	u	u	i	i	i	i	i
	Reduce Traffic Volumes on Major Highways	m	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
	Reduce Traffic Volumes on Local/Town Roads	m	m	m	m	m	u	u	u	i	i
	Potential to Reduce Travel Time	m	u	u	u	u	i	i	i	i	i
	Potential to Improve Safety -										
	For Vehicular Traffic	m	u	i	u	u	i	i	i	i	i
	For Bicyclists	m	u	i	u	u	i	i	i	i	u
	For Pedestrians	m	u	i	u	u	i	i	i	i	u
	Potential to Improve Air Quality	m	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	i
	Transportation Related Noise Impacts	m	u	u	m	u	m	m	m	m	i
Economic Development											
	Improve Access to Existing Businesses	m	i	i	u	i	u	i	u	i	i
	Improve Access to Future Development	m	i	i	u	i	i	i	i	i	i
	Encourage Development	m	i	i	u	i	i	i	i	i	i
Environmental Impacts											
	Water Quality Impacts	i	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
	Floodplain Impacts	i	i	i	u	m	m	m	m	m	u
	Wetland Impacts	i	i	i	i	m	m	m	m	m	l
	Limit Protected Habitat/Species Impacts	i	i	i	i	u	u	u	u	u	i
	Community/Neighborhood Cohesion Impacts	m	i	i	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
	Historical/Archeological Resource Impacts	i	i	i	i	u	u	u	u	u	i
	Parkland/Recreation Impacts	i	i	i	u	u	i	u	u	i	i
	Agricultural Lands Impacts	i	i	i	i	m	m	m	m	i	l
	Visual Resources Impacts	i	i	i	u	u	u	u	u	u	l
	Minimize Property Displacements	i	i	i	u	m	m	m	m	m	M
Local and Regional Planning											
	Support Local Plans and Programs	m	i	i	u	u	u	u	u	i	l
	Support Regional Plans and Programs	m	i	i	u	u	u	u	u	u	l
	Support Regional (NFTC) Transportation Plans/Programs	m	i	i	u	u	u	u	u	u	i
Cost Considerations											
	Reasonable Benefit to Cost Comparison	m	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	m	u
	Funding Potential vs. Alternative Cost	m	u	u	u	u	u	m	m	m	u
	Potential to Reduce User Costs	m	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
	Potential to Reduce Operation/Maintenance Costs	m	u	i	m	u	u	u	i	u	u
KEY											
i	Meets Criteria; is Compatible with or Enhances Factor										
u	Meets Criteria with Mitigation; Minimal or no discernible(neutral) Impacts										
m	Does not meet Criteria; Inconsistent with or detracts from Factor										

SOURCE: Lancaster North South Corridor Preservation Study, p. 42., Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council

The general goals included in the evaluation matrix included the following: Transportation Performance, Economic Development, Environmental Impacts, Local and Regional Planning and Cost Considerations. As stated earlier, the selected alternative was D-2 which is Cemetery Road extended from William to Broadway as a five lane facility with widening to five lanes from Broadway to Walden along Cemetery, then extending as a five lane facility Walden to Main Street in Clarence with a new I-90 Thruway interchange connection. The advantages and disadvantages of this alternative include¹³:

Advantages:

- Significant access improvement to and from the Town and region;
- Improved LOS along road segments;
- Fully supports 1993 plan for improved facility in the corridor;
- Connection with Main Street, William and I-90; and
- Encourages economic development.

Disadvantages:

- Additional right-of-way for the full extension to Route 5;
- Negative impact on flood plain and wetlands;
- Negative park land impacts; and
- Increased noise levels and traffic safety concerns.

As mentioned earlier, the Preferred Alternative was modified from a five-lane facility to a four-lane facility in an effort to reduce the environmental impacts on the floodplains and wetlands. Further analysis of the four-lane versus the five lane indicated that the intersection LOS for the four-lane facility was actually better than the five-lane facility. It was anticipated that a five-lane facility would attract more traffic along certain roadways in the Town and, as a result, higher traffic volumes were seen entering into certain intersections in the study area.

¹³ Lancaster North South Corridor Preservation Study, p. 54.

Land Use Impacts

Although the north-south study concluded that the Modified Preferred Alternative would relieve traffic congestion and improve access to and from the Town and region, it did not fully consider the land use impacts of a new road. Because both the Modified and Preferred Alternative include the construction of a new roadway and, perhaps more important, a new Thruway interchange, the resulting land use impacts can be tremendous.

In addition to relieving traffic congestion, a new roadway facility and interchange will provide easier access to residential, commercial, and industrial land thereby encouraging more scattered development. In addition to new development in the eastern portion of the Town, new development will certainly occur along a four-lane facility. It is likely that new development could result in a commercial land use pattern that will service the residents in the eastern portion of the Town. Finally, the proposed southern extension of the roadway may interfere with planned expansions of Como Lake Park.

As mentioned above, economic development is an advantage of the new facility. Although a new roadway facility is necessary to relieve traffic congestion, a potential disadvantage of the new facility can be development that will rapidly consume land in a haphazard manner.

It is also important to note that the GBNRTC 2010 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP) noted additional road configurations to help alleviate traffic congestion in Lancaster. Within the 2010 plan there were, in addition to the north-south corridor recommendation, two other recommendations that related directly to Lancaster. The first was the construction of a new road from the Transit Road/Broadway area south/southeast to Bowen Road. It was concluded that this would relieve congestion in the southwestern portion of the town. A second recommendation was to widen Harris Hill Road from Walden to Pleasant View Road. The intent was to increase the capacity of the roadway to relieve congestion.

GBNRTC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

As will all NYSDOT regions in the state, the GBNRTC maintains a listing of potential projects, and current project listings. Following is a current listing from the most recent TIP.

Transportation Improvement Program
Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew

Project Location	Work Description	Costs	Status	Construction Let Date
Route 20 (Broadway): Transit Rd.- Park Boulevard. Lancaster (V), Lancaster (T), Depew (V)	Pavement Reconstruction and Bridge Replacement	Total: \$17 million	Remaining sections: construction and investigation	06/00
Route 78 (Transit Road): I-90 to Rt. 5. Amherst (T), Clarence (T), and Lancaster (T)	Safety - Reconstruction and Widening	Total: \$15 million	Remaining sections: construction and investigation	11/01
Walden Avenue: Conrail Or to Cemetery Rd. Lancaster (T), Cheektowaga (T)	Pavement Resurfacing	Total: \$4.6 million	Remaining sections: construction and investigation	12/99
Cemetery Rd./Erie Street and Conrail. Lancaster (T)	Bridge Replacement	Total: \$1.4 million	Preliminary engineering, design, construction and investigation	03/99, 04/00,07/01
Pavement Rd./Conrail and Abandoned RR. Lancaster (T)	Bridge Replacement	Total: \$1.3 million	Scoping, preliminary engineering, design, construction and investigation	08/99, 03/00, 04/01, 07/02

Source: Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council

4.4.2 Air Service

Buffalo Niagara International Airport (BNIA), operated by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA), is the major commercial airport for the Greater Buffalo Metropolitan area and has recently completed a major expansion project. The following information was collected from Buffalo Niagara International Airport (BNIA) on April 1, 1999.

In November 1997, the airport completed the first major expansion phase which resulted in a total of 15 gates at a total cost of \$187 million. They are currently in the middle of an expansion project to add two additional gates. This project is expected to be complete in the Fall of 1999 giving the airport a total of 17 gates. In addition, four additional gates will be added to the terminal in the near future.

Another major project currently underway is the demolition of the Westinghouse Building at a cost of \$4.3 million. The site that will be created will serve a variety of purposes including making room to shift the secondary runway to create a larger safety zone. Also, the site may serve a new development including a business complex and golf course.

Currently, there are seven major airline carriers and eight regional carriers. The total operations for Jan 1, 1998 to December 31, 1998 was 159,149 or 436 per day. This figure includes all passenger airline, general aviation, military, and cargo operations. In addition to major commercial activity, the BNIA houses a fixed base operator.

Prior Aviation, the Fixed Base Operator (FBO), serves non-commercial aircraft, especially private and corporate charters. The company offers charter airplane service to anywhere, as well as provide a full array of passenger services (hotel and lodging reservations, etc.), flight instruction, and storage and maintenance for up to fifteen jets.

Other Area Airports

Buffalo Airfield Corp. is located at 4500 Clinton Street West Seneca, NY. This is a privately owned/public-use airport with a 2665 foot- long paved runway, and parallel taxiway. The airport houses 55 private aircraft and provides a repair shop, rental aircraft, fuel and supplies sales, and flight instruction. The runway was paved in 1990, the taxiway was added in 1992, and the runway light system was added in 1995.

Lancaster Airport is located on Walden Rd in Lancaster, NY 14043. This is a privately owned/public-use airport with a 3200 foot- long paved runway. The airport houses 16-22 private aircraft and has a small terminal building, on older hangar, fuel and supplies. The Lancaster Airport was first opened in the 1960s and as such, many of the facilities need upgrading. The airport has received \$450,000 grant from the federal government to construct a 10-bay hangar to replace the older one. This project is known as the terminal area development project. Long term the airport would like to relocate the runway and install a lighting system.

Akron Airport is located at John Street, Akron NY 14001. It is a private public-use airport with a 3300 foot- long paved runway, and a grass cross- wind runway. The airport houses 55 private aircraft and provides a full maintenance facility, four rental aircraft, fuel and supplies sales, and flight instruction.

Angola Airport Premier Airways is located at 1526 Eden Evans Center Rd, Angola NY 14006. This is a private public-use airport with a 3280 foot- long paved runway with pilot- controlled lighting. The airport provides both hangar and tie- down storage of private aircraft, as well as a full maintenance facility, fuel, maps, and supplies.

Hamburg Airport is located at S6765 Heltz Rd Lakeview, NY 14085. This is a private public-use airport with a 2500 foot- long paved runway. The airport houses 18 private aircraft in hangars, and provides outside tie- down for a limited number of airplanes, as well as an engine and frame maintenance facility, rental aircraft, fuel and supplies sales, and flight instruction.

4.4.3 Rail Service

Residents in the study area have access to Amtrak at 55 Dick Road in the Village of Depew. Amtrak's Empire Service route stops at the Depew station and offers connections to Toronto and NYC. From these two destinations, passengers can connect to virtually all of Amtrak's service areas across the country.

4.4.4 Pedestrian System

Sidewalks

The pedestrian environment is an important feature in sustaining a high quality of life for local residents. Having the ability to walk along a sidewalk, rather than in the street, not only provides a safe and pleasant environment but also provides a functional connection to traditional neighborhood centers. For example, residents may walk to the local corner store or even to the downtown area. The Villages of Lancaster and Depew are no different.

Although the newer subdivisions in the Town of Lancaster have some sidewalks, pedestrian movement occurs primarily in the Villages of Lancaster and Depew. These are established, predominantly developed, areas of the study area and as a result much of the Villages are covered with sidewalks. Although the sidewalks provide a safe and pleasant environment for the pedestrian, many are old and are in need of repair.

Officially, each of the Villages and the Town have an ordinance stating that the property owner on which the sidewalk is located is responsible for maintenance and repair. Although this is an official ordinance, it is difficult to enforce especially for elderly and low income citizens. The issue, therefore, is the maintenance and repair to ensure that the existing pedestrian circulation system remains in place.

With regard to the Town, regulations for new subdivisions require sidewalks to be installed. However, the sidewalks are not required when the road is constructed, rather they are required when the housing lot is developed. The result is a system of non-continuous sidewalks rather than one continuous system.

Recreational Trails

Currently, many local residents use an informal trail system along the Cayuga Creek in both Villages and into Como Lake Park in the Village and Town of Lancaster. Although a more detailed discussion will occur in the recreational chapter of this plan, the trails are worth noting here as they can be a primary means of pedestrian circulation from the adjacent neighborhoods to a large recreational facility (Como Park).

It is very logical to consider improving the trails on top of the levee as well as any trails at the creek's edge. Connections can be made from the center of Depew, to the Village of Lancaster's Central Business District to Como Lake Park. A long term goal may be to extend the trail along Cayuga Creek in the Town, connect to Pavement Road, and eventually connect to Westwood Park.

4.4.5 Public Transit

Regional transit service for the study area is provided by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) Metro Bus system which provides public transit service along several routes within the Town and Villages. The Metro Bus #6 (the Sycamore) route travels from Buffalo, east out Walden Avenue, circulating south on Central Avenue and then returns from Lancaster to Buffalo on Broadway. The Metro Bus #24 "Genesee" route travels to and from Buffalo through the Town of Lancaster to the Wende Correctional Facility in Alden. Metro Bus #69 "Alden" is an express route between Buffalo and the Village of Alden by way of Broadway in Lancaster. According to NFTA, these routes carried a combined daily ridership of approximately 360 passengers during the weekdays of 1998.¹⁴ Although not entirely within the study area, Metro Bus #68 "George Urban" provides a connection from Genesee Street at Transit Road to the Buffalo Niagara International Airport then to Buffalo.

¹⁴ Lancaster North South Corridor Preservation Study, p. 10.

NFTA's HUBLINK¹⁵ program is exploring various transit system improvements by redefining public transit in an effort to improve mobility and provide more efficient access throughout the region. The concept includes developing "secondary hubs" to serve as focal points for local suburban trip making. These hubs would be served by suburban and rural bus routes connecting back to the primary hubs within the system. Parking facilities would be provided to encourage park-n-ride commuting.

In addition, the HUBLINK initiative proposes "local circulators" or "community circulator routes" which are designed to links within the local area as well as to the urban and regional bus network and the Metrorail. Stops would include local community destinations such as neighborhood commercial districts, employment centers, and shopping malls. Using smaller buses and vans, they would travel along neighborhood streets and may be designed to carry the elderly and disabled as the primary passengers.

The secondary hub and local circulator concept for Lancaster is currently scheduled for 2003.

4.5 Municipal Services

4.5.1 Water

Supply of adequate water for the residents and businesses is a critical community need. The Town and Villages obtain water from the Erie County Water Authority. As shown on the Infrastructure Map, each community has its own water district; the districts are not connected. All public roads in the communities are served by public water. A very limited number of private wells exist on properties where owners elected to retain private wells after public water became available.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Currently, the Erie County Water Authority system has considerable excess water supply and treatment capacity. As a result, the availability of public water service is not a critical factor in determining the potential density for new development in the communities in the foreseeable future. There are localized issues related to low water pressure in certain areas. These issues reflect localized distribution, not supply, problems.

Town of Lancaster

Existing Facilities

The Town of Lancaster obtains its water supply from the Erie County Water Authority. The Town purchases an estimated average of about 4.0 million gallons of water per day from the Water Authority. The Town water district, the Consolidated Master Water Improvement Area, owns the Town's water mains, which are operated and maintained by the Erie County Water Authority (ECWA) under a lease-management agreement. The agreement with the ECWA stipulates that the water authority is responsible for providing adequate water supply and pressure to major water lines in the Town. Public water services are available throughout the community along all existing Town roads. A handful of property owners elected to keep their wells when public water became available in the late 1960's; as a result, a limited number of private wells still exist. The Town system is not linked to the Villages' systems which are much older.

The water district includes two water storage tanks-one on Transit Road at Pleasant View and a new four million-gallon tank on the north side of Broadway and just east of Schwartz Road.

The Sturgeon Point treatment plant on Lake Erie and the Van De Water treatment plant on the Niagara River provide water to the district. The plants have a combined permit capacity of 120 million gallons per day (gpd). The combined current demand at the plants averages 65 mgd, with peak demand of close to 100 mgd. The system's water quality meets or exceeds all applicable standards. The Water Authority has a virtually unlimited source of water and considerable excess production capacity.

The Town water district is a gravity-based system working off pressure controlled by several water tanks that are filled by pumps. The water district is a looped system, but the two storage tanks have separate pressure zones. Particularly during the summer months, when water usage is high and tank water levels are low, the eastern portion of the Pleasant View tank zone experiences periods when water pressure is at the low end of acceptable levels, or about 24 to 25 pounds per square inch (psi).

Private property owners are responsible for the expenses associated with the extension of water lines to service new developments in the Town. Developers generally turn the lines over to the Town, which assumes responsibility for operation and maintenance.

Ponds and creeks throughout the Town serve as emergency water sources for fire purposes in the event that a water line is not functioning.

Recent and Planned Improvements

Some of the water lines in the Town are getting old, the oldest sections being in Bowmansville. Within the past three years, a number of 6- to 8-inch mains with a high break history were replaced along Aurora, Glendale, Parkdale, Steinfeld, and Genesee Streets.

Increasing pressure in low-pressure areas, particularly the Pleasant View zone, is currently under review by the Water Authority and the Town. There is a long-term goal to improve water pressure in the Pleasant View tank zone.

The Water Authority is currently undertaking a \$27 million upgrade at the Sturgeon Point treatment plant to create additional capacity to store water treated at the plant. This work is expected to be complete by 2000. This will not expand the plant's daily water treatment capacity, but will create more storage capacity for treated water.

Village of Lancaster

Existing Facilities

Like the Town, water for the Village of Lancaster is supplied by the Erie County Water Authority from its Sturgeon Point and Van De Water treatment plants. All properties in the Village are served by public water. The Village obtains water from the Water Authority through two-meter pits that allow water to flow into the Village. These are located on Como Park Boulevard at the west Village line and on Central Avenue at the north Village line. The system also contains about 200,000 linear feet of pipe and a one million-gallon elevated water tank on North Aurora Street immediately north of Cayuga Creek.

In addition to owning the water infrastructure, the Village of Lancaster maintains and services the water system. The water system is fully metered and customers are billed directly by the Village.

According to a recent study¹⁶, the Village purchased an average of 1.5 million gallons of water per day from the Water Authority but sold about 1.0 mgd to its customers, leaving about 0.5 mgd as “unaccounted for water” indicating substantial water system leakage.

Recent and Planned Improvements

The 1994 study conducted for the Village recommended a series of upgrades to the system.

The Village is currently implementing the study recommendations, and approximately 75 percent of the work has been completed to date. Work includes replacing small (i.e., 4- to 6-inch diameter) mains that are inadequate for fire protection purposes with larger diameter lines; repairing or replacing old, deteriorating water lines with ongoing leaking/maintenance problems; abandoning seven of the meter pits; constructing interconnections with the Erie County Water Authority system and eliminating dead-end sections and unlooped mains. It also contains recommended improvements at the Industrial Park on Walden Avenue and an ongoing monitoring and control system.

¹⁶Comprehensive Water System Study, Village of Lancaster, N.Y., Donald Gallo, P.C., November 1994.

After the recommended work is complete, the Village plans to propose a takeover of the Village water system by the Erie County Water Authority, similar to the agreement in place with the Town of Lancaster. One problem with the Water Authority takeover is the issue of bonded indebtedness, or the heavy debt load and resulting higher levels of taxation that would likely be attributable to the takeover.

Village of Depew

Existing Facilities

Like the Town and Village of Lancaster, water for the Village of Depew is supplied by the Erie County Water Authority from its Sturgeon Point and Van De Water treatment plants. All properties in the Village are served by public water. The Village obtains water from the Water Authority through eight-meter pits that allow water to flow into the Village. These are located on Rehm Road, Olmsted Avenue, Warner Road, Columbia Avenue, Rowley Road, Zurbrick Road, Cloyes Avenue, and Borden Road. The system contains about 97,000 linear feet of pipe. The Village of Depew maintains and services the water system. The water system is fully metered and customers are billed directly by the Village.

According to a recent study¹⁷, the Village purchased an average of roughly 500,000 gallons of water per day from the Water Authority but sold about 400,000 gallons per day to its customers, leaving about 100,000 gallons per day as "unaccounted for water" indicating water system leakage. In addition, at the time of the study, a number of hydrants did not meet fire flow criteria.

¹⁷Water System Study, Village of Depew, N.Y., Donald Gallo, P.C., July 1996.

Recent and Planned Improvements

The 1996 study conducted for the Village recommended a series of upgrades to the system. The Village is currently implementing the study recommendations and the work is expected to be complete by early 2000. Work includes replacing small (i.e., less than 8-inch diameter) mains that are inadequate for fire protection purposes with larger diameter lines; repairing or replacing old, deteriorating water lines with ongoing leaking/maintenance problems; and eliminating dead-end sections and unlooped mains. After the recommended work is complete, the Village of Depew also plans to propose a takeover of the Village water system by the Erie County Water Authority.

4.5.2 Sewer

The disposal of domestic and commercial sewage is an important municipal concern. Wastewater can be treated by public sewage collection and treatment systems, individual septic systems, or local private collection and treatment. As shown on the Infrastructure Map, roughly three-quarters of the Lancaster-Depew study area is served by public sewers. The eastern portion of the Town of Lancaster relies on individual septic systems for sewage treatment. Sewage treatment directly affects the potential density of development because dependence on septic systems requires substantially lower densities to minimize health risks and groundwater pollution that can be attributable to septic failure. There are no private sewer district or private wastewater package treatment plants in the three communities.

Town of Lancaster

Existing Facilities

Most of the Town of Lancaster is located within the Erie County Sewer District #4. This district extends from Transit Road at the western boundary of the Town to a north/south line that runs about 1000' east of Pavement Road. There is also an extended out of district sewer service area along Walden Avenue where a county owned (ECSD) sewer line runs east from District #4 to the Town of Alden. Residential users along Walden Avenue can tie into this system, as can commercial and industrial users in the area. Within the sewer district, the area along Ellicott Creek from Harris Hill Road to Stony Road lacks public sewers. Much of this area is identified in the Town zoning law as a "Flood Plain/Wetlands Conservation District".

Effluent from Sewer District #4 is transferred for treatment to the Bird Island sewage treatment plant, owned by the Buffalo Sewer Authority. On its way, flows are also picked up from County Sewer District #1. The trunk line handling these flows has a maximum capacity of approximately 20-mgd. Currently, average dry weather flows are about 7 mgd and peak dry weather flows are 10.9 mgd. Thus, the present system maintains a substantial amount of excess capacity.

There are also six small Town of Lancaster sewer districts remaining that pre-dated the establishment of Erie County Sewer District #4. Three of the Town sewer districts (#1, #2, and #4) are located within the boundaries of Erie County Sewer District #4 along both sides of Central Avenue running north of Walden Avenue and south of Broadway in the Glendale/Parkdale area. The remaining three Town sewer districts (#6, #7, and #8) are located in the north part of Town east of the Erie County sewer district: two are located north and south of Walden Avenue and one is located just south of Ellicott Creek.

The Town owns the sewer lines and contracts with Erie County Sewer District #4 for maintenance and distribution. The older Town sewer districts contain older sewer lines that must be upgraded to meet County standards. The long-term plan of the Town is to incorporate these districts into Erie County Sewer District #4.

Property owners are responsible for the expenses associated with the extension of sewer lines to service new developments in the Town. Erie County Sewer District #4 reviews plans, which also inspects construction of approved plans. After the lines are completed, they are turned over to Erie County Sewer District #4, which assumes responsibility for operation and maintenance.

Planned Capital Improvements

The Buffalo Sewer Authority currently has no major capital improvements planned for the Bird Island treatment plant, which is currently operating under capacity. A major trunk sewer is currently being extended along Broadway to the eastern edge of Sewer District #4. Sewer line extensions within the county sewer district have also been approved for the Brookhaven Apartments project at Broadway and Cemetery Road and for the Summerfield Farms project on William Street in the southeastern corner of the sewer district. No capital improvements are currently planned in the three Town sewer districts.

Septic Systems

East of the Sewer District #4 boundary, the Town relies on individual septic systems for sewage treatment. According to the Town Engineer, there are no known areas of chronic septic failure to date. However, there are sporadic failures because of ground conditions (i.e., poorly drained soils with slow permeability) or the age of the individual septic system. Often, problems with septic systems are detected at the time of a transfer of property ownership, when septic testing is required.

There are also a number of individual septic systems remaining in operation in the Town within the boundaries of Sewer District #4. Property owners within the sewer district that do not currently have public sewers pay reduced sewer taxes for trunk lines for future service. Areas within the district which currently do not have public sewers include Pavement Road, Peppermint Road, and Westwood Road, sections of Genesee, William Street; Brunck, Hall, and Broadway. It is the intent of the Town to connect these properties to the County system in the future.

Because surface and ground water eventually flow to a low point, septic effluent may eventually accumulate in streams, ponds, and groundwater. If the density of septic systems is too high or systems are built in particularly unsuitable locations for the safe disposal of effluent, pollution of these water resources can occur. A general rule of thumb is that septic systems should be used on a minimum lot size of one acre, although with optimum slope and soil conditions, septic systems can be utilized on smaller lots of about half acre. In the Town of Lancaster, septic systems are routinely located on lots ranging in size from ½ acre to one acre.

Village of Lancaster

Existing Facilities

The Village of Lancaster has one sewer district which covers the entire Village. The Village operates and maintains the wastewater collection system, which is separate from the storm water system described below. The systems function independently with the exception of sewers that are used as "overflows" during occasional wet weather and high groundwater events. The original wastewater collection system dates back to 1905-1910. In 1974 the Village became part of Erie County Sewer District #4. As described above, sewage from Erie County Sewer District #4 is transferred to Bird Island for treatment, which is currently operating well under capacity. According to the Superintendent of the Department of Public Works (DPW), there are no known individual septic systems remaining in the Village of Lancaster.

The Village wastewater collection system contains about 35 miles of sanitary sewer lines ranging in size from 6 to 24 inches in diameter and three operating gravity overflows. The Village is currently under orders from the NYS DEC to remediate and eliminate these overflows. The Buffalo Sewer Authority Broadway Pump Station carries excess storm water load to an overflow retention facility where it receives primary treatment during periods of wet weather. The Broadway Pump Station has a capacity to handle 23 mgd; current discharge is estimated at roughly 15 mgd, well below the design capacity. As in the Town, property owners are responsible for constructing sewer extensions. After completion, the sewer lines are turned over to and maintained by the Village.

The existing Village wastewater collection system has had a recurring problem with infiltration and/or inflow. Since becoming part of the Erie County sewer district in 1974, the Village has aggressively made improvements to the system and has substantially reduced the overflows and infiltration. Infiltration is the transmission of groundwater into the sanitary sewer system through leaks in the pipes, joints and other structures. During periods of high groundwater flow, the additional water that infiltrates the sewer system causes added demand so that flows can exceed the Village's collection system capacity. Inflow occurs when storm water overflows into the sanitary sewer system. Some of the overflow during periods of snow melt comes from areas in the Town of Lancaster that are tributary to the Sewer District #4 trunk lines that come through the Villages.

Recent and Planned Improvements

To continue to address the infiltration and inflow problem, the Village is undertaking a sewer system management plan that involves ongoing flow monitoring, elimination of sanitary sewer overflows, replacement of deteriorating sewer lines and manholes, television inspection, smoke testing, and sewer cleaning¹⁸.

¹⁸Sanitary Sewer System Management Plan, Village of Lancaster, N.Y., Wm. Shutt & Associates, P.C., August 1997.

Village of Depew

Existing Facilities

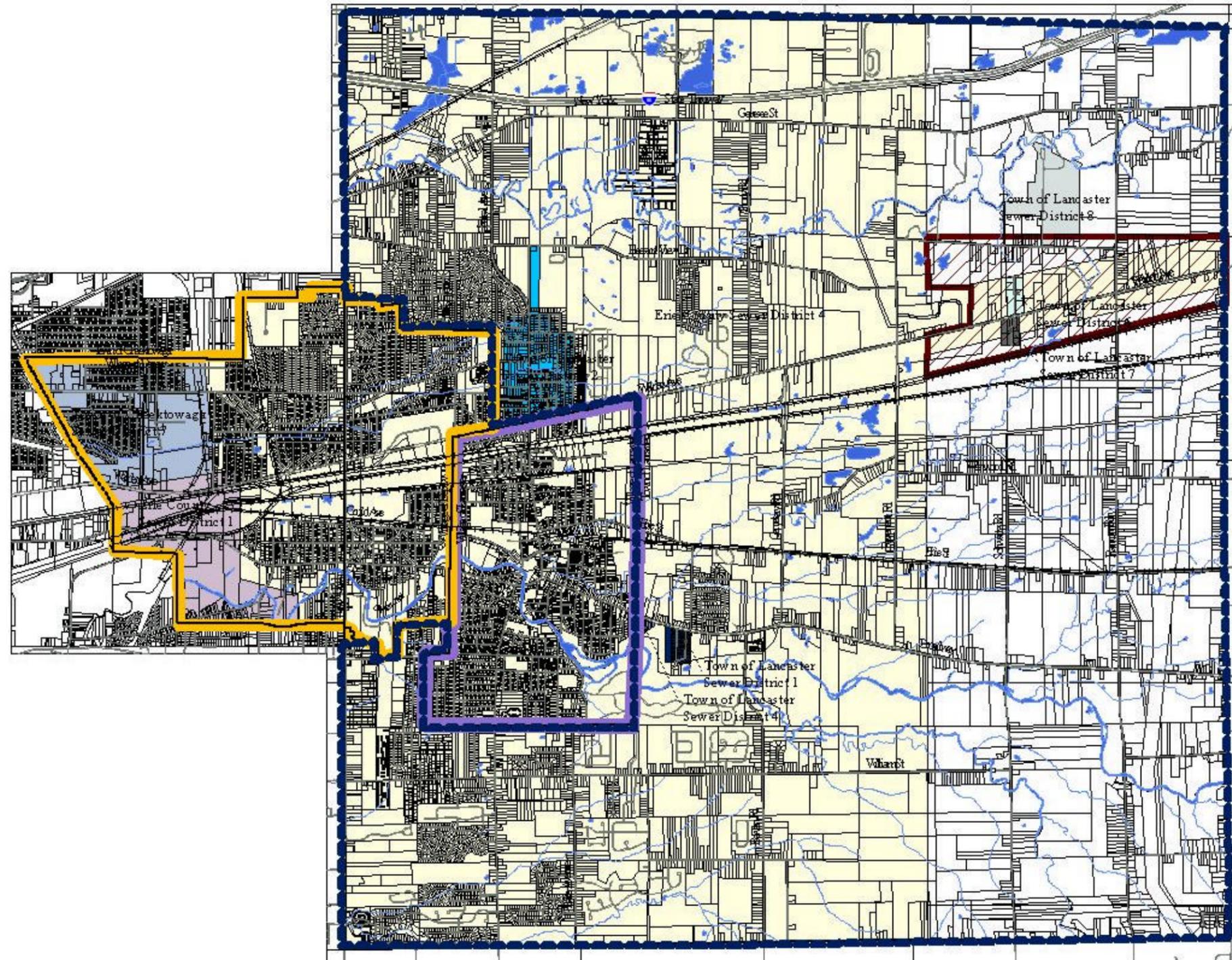
The Village of Depew operates and maintains separate wastewater collection and storm sewer systems. The Village of Depew's wastewater collection system, like that of the Village of Depew, dates back to the early 1900's. Nearly 85 percent of the Village falls within Erie County Sewer District #4; the remaining 15 percent of the Village falls within Erie County Sewer Districts #1 and Town of Cheektowaga Sewer District #7. The Village of Depew maintains sewer lines within Sewer District #4. Sewage is treated by the Buffalo Sewer Authority at the Bird Island treatment plant. The Town of Cheektowaga maintains sewer lines in the Village of Depew within Town Sewer District #7. As in the Town, property owners are responsible for constructing sewer extensions. After completion, the sewer lines are turned over to and maintained by the Village.

According to the Superintendent of the Department of Public Works (DPW), there are a few remaining individual septic systems in the Village of Depew. These include approximately half a dozen homes on Rehm Road, about half a dozen small businesses on Burkhardt Avenue off Walden Avenue, about 6 properties on Broadway west of Chateau Court to Indian Road, and two homes on Indian Road. The Village is currently in the process of trying to get funding to construct public sewer lines to service these areas.

The existing Village wastewater collection system is an older system that has had problems with infiltration and/or inflow. Since becoming part of the Erie County sewer system, the Village has made improvements to the system and has substantially reduced the overflows and infiltration.

TOWN OF LANCASTER
AND
VILLAGES OF LANCASTER
AND DEPEW
REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Sewer and Water Districts



- Roads
 - Railroads
 - Parcel Boundaries
 - Municipal Boundaries
 - Rivers, Streams
 - Lakes, Ponds
- Water Districts
- Village of Depew Water District
 - Village of Lancaster Water District
 - Erie County Consolidated Master Water Improvement Area
- Sewer Districts
- Erie County Sewer District 1
 - Erie County Sewer District 4
 - Erie County Sewer District 7
 - Town of Lancaster Sewer District 1
 - Town of Lancaster Sewer District 2
 - Town of Lancaster Sewer District 4
 - Town of Lancaster Sewer District 6
 - Town of Lancaster Sewer District 7
 - Town of Lancaster Sewer District 8
 - Service by Erie County-Owned Home and Infirmary Line via an Out-of-District Customer Agreement



January 2000

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS, AND DESIGNERS
SARATOGA COUNTY, NEW YORK

Recent and Planned Improvements

The Village of Depew DPW has an ongoing monitoring program for the wastewater collection system and is always looking to update and upgrade the system. Most recently, the Village has applied for New York State Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) and Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) monies to undertake capital improvements to the sewer system along Broadway from Calumet to Transit Road. This work would occur concurrently with the planned New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) improvements along Broadway (see Chapter 4.4, "Transportation".)

4.5.3 Storm Sewer System

The Town and Villages have extensive storm water drainage systems that include gravity pipe systems and detention basins. Underground storm sewers, particularly in the Villages, serve many areas. Storm pipe in the Villages dates back as far as the turn of the century, while pipe in the Town is typically much newer. Those areas without underground pipes usually contain catch drains at the end of the street to collect storm water that is conveyed via roadside ditches and open culverts. The storm sewers are tributary to streams in the three communities, with much of the storm water flowing into Cayuga Creek.

The Town of Lancaster requires the installation of separate storm water pipes for new subdivisions and has standards for storm water detention ponds and rear yard drains. The Town periodically cleans cross-country ditches to maintain storm water flow and prevent flooding.

There have been problems in the Village of Lancaster with high water levels in tributaries to Cayuga Creek during storm events and thaws. Part of the problem is attributable to development in the Town, which has affected the volume of water flowing through the Villages during storm events via the streams, particularly tributaries to Cayuga Creek.¹⁹This could indicate the need for future improvements to the regional drainage system as the Town continues to develop.

¹⁹Because of flood protection levees along Cayuga Creek, the creek itself has very large channel capacities. As a result, runoff does not exceed Cayuga Creek's capacity.

The Village of Depew has an ongoing erosion problem along Zurbrick Road, which it is working with the Army Corps of Engineers to resolve. According to the Village of Depew DPW Superintendent, a study is also needed to address the recurring siltation problem along Scajaquada Creek.

Maintenance and improvements to the storm water system are ongoing in the three communities include the repair of catch basins and the installation and repair of underground storm sewers.

4.5.4 Electricity, Cable and Gas

Electricity

New York State Electric & Gas Corp. (NYSEG) supplies electricity to the three communities. The company is part of the New York State Power Pool, which distributes power throughout the state through a state power grid. Electricity for the three communities is generated primarily by power plants in Niagara Falls and on Lake Ontario. According to the NYSEG Engineering Manager for the Lancaster/Cheektowaga operating area, there is adequate capacity to meet additional electricity demands in the three communities in the foreseeable future. NYSEG maintains five electrical substations in the three communities-these include the Cemetery Road, Pavement Road, Erie Street, Tyler, and Depew substations.

Cable

Adelphia Cable provides cable service to the Town of Lancaster and the Villages of Lancaster and Depew. There are currently no public access channels serving the three communities. The municipal agreements with Adelphia stipulate that the company is required to provide public access service if requested.

Gas

Gas lines owned and maintained by National Fuel Gas serve the three communities. According to National Fuel, no capacity problems exist in the area and there is substantial additional capacity available to accommodate future development. As discussed in Section 4.6, the communities are also a source of gas production.

4.5.5 Solid Waste

Town of Lancaster

The Town of Lancaster contracts with a private hauler, CID Refuse Service, Inc., for solid waste disposal services for residential properties. Commercial uses contract separately with private haulers, typically CID or BFI. Private haulers under contract with the Town or with commercial owners also pick up recyclable materials including newspapers, catalogs and magazines, cartons, cardboard, glass, plastic, and metal. Refuse is taken to the North American Refuel incinerator in Niagara Falls. Recyclables are taken by the private haulers to transfer stations.

Village of Lancaster

The Town of Lancaster solid waste management district includes the Village of Lancaster, and residential solid waste collection is handled under the Town's contract with CID as described above. The Village of Lancaster DPW handles the disposal of tree waste and leaves. Commercial uses contract separately with private haulers.

Village of Depew

The Village of Depew Department of Public Works (DPW) provides residential pick-up of solid waste. Commercial uses contract with private haulers, primarily BFI. There are two transfer stations in the Village of Depew; a CID operation on Walden Avenue east of Transit Road and a BFI facility on Indian Road off Broadway. As with the Town and Village of Lancaster, refuse is taken to North American Refuel incinerator.

4.5.6 Community Survey Results

The community survey described in Chapter 6, provided information on how residents view the adequacy of municipal utilities and services. In the Lancaster-Depew region as a whole, the overwhelming majority of residents found water services and solid waste collection to be adequate (74 percent and 94 percent of residents, respectively). Opinions were more divided on the issue of whether sanitary sewers should be expanded: 40 percent agreed or strongly agreed, 34 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 26 percent had no opinion.

Residents of the both Villages and the Town indicated consistently high levels of satisfaction with solid waste collection services (between 93 and 95 percent of respondents in each community agreed that services met needs). A higher proportion of Town residents (85 percent) were satisfied with water services than residents of the Village of Lancaster (81 percent) and Depew (71 percent). A higher proportion of Town residents (41 percent) and Village of Lancaster residents (46 percent) believed that the sanitary sewer system should be expanded, compared to residents of Depew (36 percent). At the same time, the Town also had the highest proportion of residents (41 percent) who felt that the sanitary system should not be expanded. Proportions of those who thought the system should not be expanded were 23 percent in the Village of Lancaster and 36 percent in Depew.

4.5.7 Ability of Infrastructure to Accommodate Growth

As described in Chapter 3.2, "Population", increases in population are projected in the communities. Between 1990 and 2020, a total increase of 13,906 persons is projected in the three communities; with most of the increase (13,319 persons) attributable to the Town and smaller gains in the Villages (273 and 314 persons in Lancaster and Depew, respectively).

Based on the projected population increase of 13,319 residents using 130 gallons per day (gpd), the communities could have an aggregate increase in demand for water of approximately 1.7 mgd. Similar increases in the sewage flows would be anticipated. Additional commercial and industrial development would add to the increased demand.

As described above, the sewage treatment and water supply systems serving the study area currently have considerable excess capacity. Based on current conditions, this level of increased demand should be able to be accommodated by existing county sewage treatment and water supply systems. However, new water usage and sewage collection demand would require extensions and/or upgrading of the local distribution systems to physically accommodate demand.

Future development would require installation of additional storm water pipes and detention basins in the communities. As discussed above, additional development in the Town could result in the need to upgrade storm water systems to reduce the problem of high water levels in tributaries of Cayuga Creek during storm events.

As discussed above, other utility services-including electricity, gas, cable, and solid waste disposal-have the capacity to accommodate additional growth in the Town and the Villages.

4.6 Environment

In this section, information is provided on the characteristics of the natural environment of the Town and Village of Lancaster and the Village of Depew. Components of the environment included here are soils and minerals, topography, hydrology (wetlands, floodplains, water bodies), woodlots, air quality and noise impacts. These features are important to the planning process because they determine the type, scale and intensity of development that is most appropriate for the land.

While environmental concerns have lesser impact on urbanized areas such as the Villages of Lancaster and Depew, the future shape and density of the Town of Lancaster will depend on the environmental features that characterize it. Sound planning will require careful documentation and consideration of the natural environment to ensure the natural features are not destroyed or degraded.

Planning decisions in the Lancaster-Depew area must also take into account the impact of new development on neighboring communities. Of particular concern for the adjacent Town of Cheektowaga is the impact that changes in the watersheds of Ellicott Creek, Scajaquada Creek, Cayuga Creek and Slate Bottom Creek could have on drainage and flooding in the Town. Future planning decisions should carefully consider the impacts on adjacent communities. Since 1977, the Town of Lancaster has required the installation of stormwater detention ponds for all new development occurring near several of the creeks. This is discussed in greater detail in Section 4.6.3 below.

4.6.1 Soils and Minerals

4.6.1.1 Soils

Information in this section was obtained from the *Soil Survey of Erie County, New York* prepared in 1986 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service in cooperation with Cornell University.

The soils in the Lancaster-Depew area are typical of those in the northern portion of Erie County. Most of the soil types found in this area have limitations for urban uses due to seasonal wetness, slow permeability and/or frost action. The general characteristics of each soil type are described in more detail below. Each site should be examined in greater detail prior to development to ensure the specific soil qualities are suited to the type of development being proposed.

Soils in the Village of Depew and most of the Village of Lancaster are classified as Urban Land. The eastern portion of the Village of Lancaster also contains Odessa-Schoharie-Rhinebeck soils. The Town of Lancaster is composed of six different soil types:

<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Percentage of Town</u>
Odessa-Schoharie-Rhinebeck	55%
Churchville-Ovid-Lima	20
Wassaic-Benson-Farmington	10
Niagara-Canandaigua-Cosad	5
Blasdell-Farnham-Alton	5
Darien-Remsen-Angola	5

Odessa-Schoharie-Rhinebeck - These soils are the most predominant in the Town of Lancaster and are found in the central part of the Town. They are nearly level, deep, somewhat poorly drained and high in clay content. These soils were formerly the bottoms of glacial lakes. From December through May, Odessa soils have a perched water table in the upper part of the subsoil, causing slow permeability and runoff. Bedrock is at a depth of 5 feet or more. These characteristics pose serious limitations for many urban uses. Septic tanks absorption fields need to be specially designed and installed; basements are difficult to keep dry. Without adequate drainage this soil is best suited to hay, pasture and wood crops.

Churchville-Ovid-Lima - Churchville soils are found in the northern part of the Town of Lancaster along the path of Ellicott Creek. These soils consist of deep, somewhat poorly drained soils that formed in glacial till deposits. Churchville soils have a perched seasonal high water table in the upper part of the subsoil from December through May. Seasonal wetness, slow or very slow permeability, a clayey subsoil, and danger of frost heaving are serious limitations for many urban uses. The soil is moderately suited to farming; most of the acreage is in pasture, hay or woodland.

Wassaic-Benson-Farmington - A small section of these soils is found in the northern portion of the Town of Lancaster. Wassaic soils are moderately deep, well drained and moderately well drained. The soils formed in glacial till deposits and are predominantly level. In March and April this soil has a perched seasonal high water table above the bedrock in some areas. Permeability is moderate or moderately slow in the subsoil. This soil is suitable for farming and wood crops but has serious limitations for some urban uses. Where the soil is used for septic tank absorption fields, contamination of the ground water is a hazard because of the jointed and fractured limestone bedrock.

Niagara-Canandaigua-Cosad - The southeastern corner of the Town of Lancaster is made up of Niagara soils. This soil is used for residential, commercial, farming and woodland, its suitability is limited by seasonal wetness, moderately slow permeability and low soil strength. If storm sewers or other outlets are available, drains can be installed around foundations to minimize the seasonal wetness. Because this soil has a high silt content, frost may damage roads and dwellings without basements.

Blasdell-Farnham-Alton - A very small portion of the Town of Lancaster, in the northeast corner surrounding the Interstate-90 path, is made up of Blasdell soils. This nearly level soil is deep and well drained, formed in glacial outwash deposits. The soil has few limitations for urban uses, and it is well suited to most cultivated crops and hay crops.

Darien-Remsen-Angola - This soil type covers the least of any of the soils in the Town of Lancaster. Found in the southeastern corner of the Town, the soil is deep and somewhat poorly drained. The seasonal high water table, high risk of frost damage, and slow permeability in the substratum are serious limitations for most urban uses of this soil. The soil is moderately suited to farming and cultivated crops, if properly drained.

4.6.1.2 Minerals

Information for this section was obtained from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The DEC has mapped all oil and gas fields in the state and provided specific data on the production of these resources.

The Town and Village of Lancaster and the Village of Depew are included in the Alden-Lancaster Field. This active field also extends into the Towns of Amherst, Cheektowaga, Clarence, Elma, Marilla and Newstead in Erie County and into western Genesee and Wyoming Counties. There is no oil production within the Alden-Lancaster field. In the Town of Lancaster in 1995, the field yielded 78,150,000 cubic feet of gas which is produced from Medina sandstone. Over the past 10 years, gas production has ranged from a high of 100,186,000 cubic feet to a low of 43,970,000 cubic feet.

The latest data from the State Department of Environmental Conservation's Division of Mineral Resources reveals a total of 173 gas wells in the Town of Lancaster; this data includes the Village of Lancaster and the portion of the Village of Depew east of Transit Road. The vast majority of these wells are located in the eastern part of the Town. The total number in the Town of Cheektowaga, which includes the western portion of the Village of Depew, is 32. The State DEC cautions that these numbers may under represent the actual number of wells; this is due to the age of some of the wells and the difficulty in tracking the historical data.

4.6.2 Topography **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

The topography of the Lancaster and Depew communities is characterized as generally flat or gently sloping. The majority of the land area has slopes ranging from 0-8%. The area surrounding various creek beds in the Town of Lancaster, however, has slopes greater than 15% which are classified as steep. These locations include Ellicott Creek in the northeastern corner of the Town, and Little Buffalo Creek and Cayuga Creek in the southeastern corner. The local streams and creeks drain from the east to the west.

In general, development in the Lancaster-Depew area should not be limited by steep slopes.

Error! Bookmark not defined.4.6.3 Hydrology

4.6.3.1 Water Bodies

The land within the Lancaster-Depew communities, along with most of Erie County, is located within the Lake Erie watershed. Several creeks traverse this area, generally flowing in a westerly direction toward Lake Erie. Ellicott Creek, crossing the northern section of the Town of Lancaster, is the main drainageway into the Towns of Cheektowaga and Amherst. This stream flows in a westerly direction and empties into the Niagara River in the City of Tonawanda. Cayuga Creek, flowing through the southern part of the Town of Lancaster as well as the Villages of Lancaster and Depew, drains some of the central part of the county and enters the Buffalo River in the Town of West Seneca.

Most of these creeks continue to flow in a westerly direction into neighboring municipalities. Of particular interest to the Town of Cheektowaga, located directly west of the Lancaster-Depew region, are the watersheds of Scajaquada Creek, Cayuga Creek, Ellicott Creek and Slate Bottom Creek. Activity occurring near these major water bodies could potentially impact drainage patterns in Cheektowaga. The Town of Lancaster has required stormwater detention ponds in all new developments since 1977. Runoff is limited to a 10-year storm in the undeveloped condition while detaining the runoff from a 100-year storm. Future developments in Lancaster and Depew should therefore be evaluated for impacts due to flooding prior to receiving approval.

The Ellicott Creek Improvement Project (ECIP) is a regional watershed program begun in 1988 aimed at protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. Ellicott Creek drains a 110-square mile area within the Lake Erie-Niagara River Basin, flowing through 10 Towns, two cities and two Villages. The ECIP was a three-year program sponsored by the NYS Legislature with the specific objective of creating greenways along the 47-mile Ellicott Creek for recreation, buffering, habitat protection and flood damage prevention. The project was coordinated by the Erie and Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board.

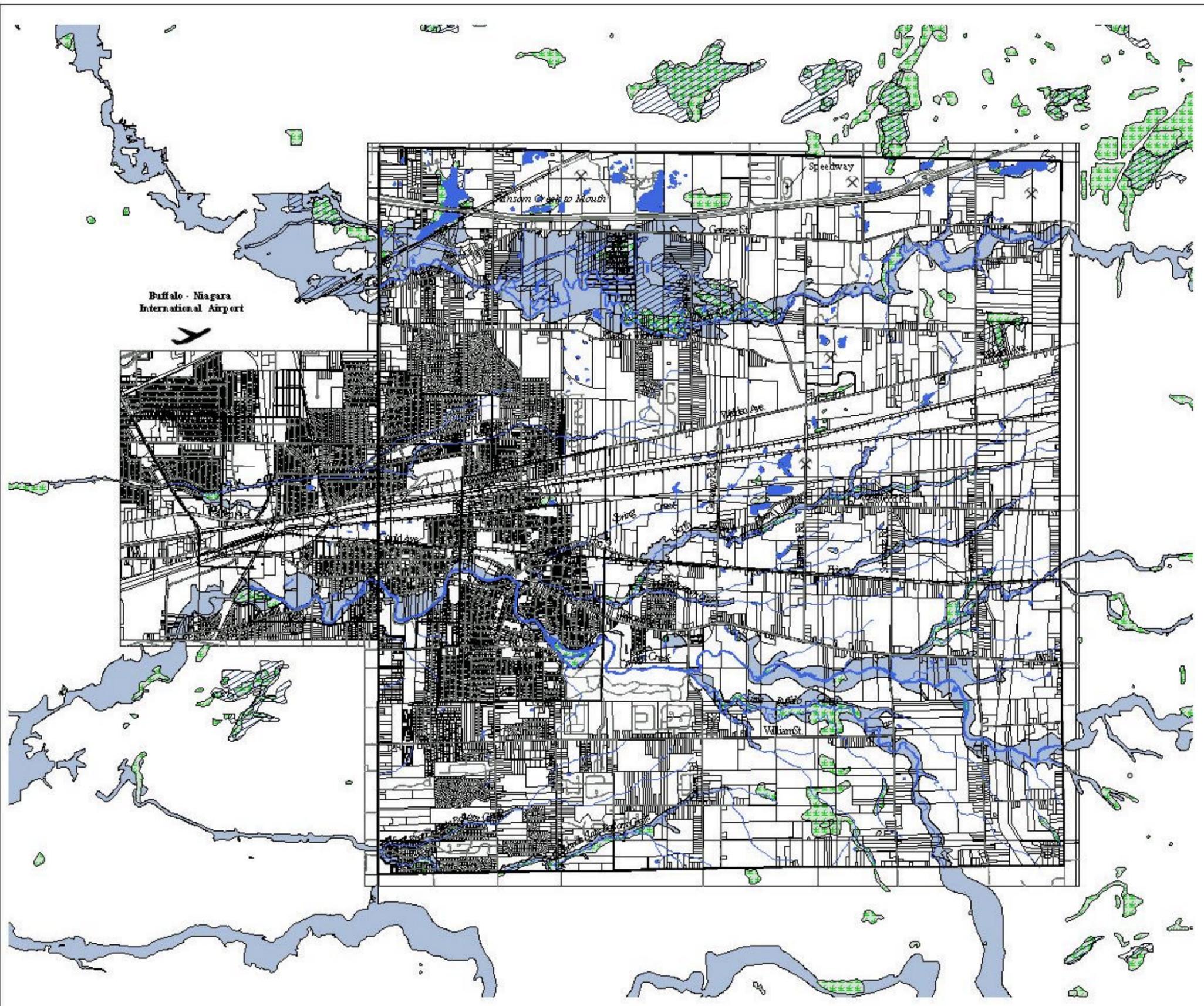
TOWN OF LANCASTER
AND
VILLAGES OF LANCASTER
AND DEPEW
REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Environmental Features

-  Rivers, Streams
-  Roads
-  Railroads
-  Parcel Boundaries
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Quarry

-  Lakes, Ponds
-  Floodplains (FEMA)

- Wetlands**
-  N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation
Delineated Wetlands
 -  U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Delineated Wetlands



January 2000

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Specific recommendations included in the ECIP Final Report for the Town of Lancaster include:

- establishing a 100-foot greenway easement along both banks of the creek (this guideline could be used as a minimum width and applied to other area creeks)

- establishing fishing access at the following locations:
 - north bank of the creek between Transit Road and Main Street in Bowmansville (Voluntary Firemen's Association property) - completed
 - near Stony Road
 - at Pavement Road
 - at Ransom Road

- purchasing designated properties between Stutzman and Harris Hill Roads for creation of a Town recreation center

- purchasing designated properties east of Harris Hill Road for creation of NYS wilderness protection areas

- purchasing designated wetland areas (LA-14 and LA-15) for wildlife protection

- establishing canoe access and designating a 4-mile canoe route from Stony to Ransom Roads.

Surface water resources are assigned classifications by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation due to their direct link to the health and sustenance of the population and plant and animal life. The fresh surface water classifications range from A (highest) to D (lowest), with a sub-classification (T) denoting those streams that are capable of supporting trout, and (TS) indicating trout-spawning streams. The streams classified from A to C(T) are "protected," meaning a DEC permit is needed to disturb the bed or banks of the stream.

The classifications are further described below.

Class A - The best usages of Class A waters are as a source of water supply for drinking, culinary or food processing purposes, primary and secondary recreation and fishing. The waters shall be suitable for fish propagation and survival.

Class B - The best usages of Class B waters are as primary and secondary contact, recreation and fishing. These waters shall be suitable for fish propagation and survival.

Class C - The best usage of Class C waters is fishing. The waters shall be suitable for fish propagation and survival and primary and secondary contact recreation, although other factors may limit the use for these purposes.

Class D - The best usage of Class D waters is for fishing. These waters shall be suitable for fish survival, although they will not support fish propagation. The water quality shall be suitable for primary and secondary contact recreation, although other factors may limit the use for these purposes.

The streams and creeks in the Lancaster-Depew area are listed below, along with the DEC classification:

<u>Water Body</u>	<u>Classification</u>
Ellicott Creek	B
Scajaquada Creek	B
Cayuga Creek	B & C*
Spring Creek	C
Plum Bottom Creek	C
North Branch Plum Bottom Creek	C
Little Buffalo Creek	C
North Branch Slate Bottom Creek	C
South Branch Slate Bottom Creek	C

(*Cayuga Creek is class C from Plum Bottom Creek through the Village of Depew and Village of Lancaster; it is class B from Plum Bottom Creek to its source.)

Several small lakes and ponds are found in the northern half of the Town of Lancaster. These are located primarily on both sides of the NYS Thruway and near the center of the Town between Cemetery and Pavement Roads.

4.6.3.2 Wetlands

State-Regulated Wetlands

Wetland areas are regulated by both the federal government (U.S. Department of the Interior) and the state (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation). Federal wetlands can be areas of any size that are characterized by wetness; state-designated wetlands are those areas measuring 12.4 acres or more in size, or smaller wetlands of unusual local importance.

There are seven State-designated wetlands in the Lancaster-Depew study area, most of which are located in the lands between Genesee Street and Walden Avenue in the Town of Lancaster, generally following the path of Ellicott Creek. The majority of these wetlands are concentrated in the section of Town bounded by Genesee Street, Harris Hill Road, Pleasant View Drive and Pavement Road. A portion of a State-designated wetland is located in the southwest corner of the Village of Depew adjacent to Cayuga Creek.

The State assigns classifications to wetlands ranging from Class I (highest) to Class IV (lowest). Since Class I wetlands are the most valuable, disturbance of these areas is prohibited. A permit for activity within Class II wetland areas may be issued if the State determines that the need for the proposed activity outweighs the loss of or detriment to the Class II wetland. The six wetlands in the Town of Lancaster are Class I or Class II.

State wetland regulations require that all development be set back 100 feet from the wetland boundary.

Federal Wetlands

The federal government, through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, regulates wetlands regardless of size in accordance with the Clean Waters Act. Mapping of these wetlands has been prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These areas are designated as wetlands if they include three features: hydric soils, wetland vegetation and specific hydrologic conditions. In the Lancaster-Depew study area, federal wetlands are located primarily adjacent to creeks: Ellicott Creek, Cayuga Creek, Plum Bottom Creek, Little Buffalo Creek, North and South Branches Slate Bottom Creek.

While there is no setback required from federal wetlands, a permit must be issued by the Army Corps of Engineers if development is proposed within the wetland areas.

4.6.3.3 Floodplains

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. Where development does exist within designated floodplain areas (flood zones), flood insurance is usually required before banks will finance the sale of such properties.

By far, the most extensive floodplains in the Lancaster-Depew study area surround Ellicott Creek and its tributaries in the north portion of the Town of Lancaster. This floodplain follows the entire length of the Creek through the Town but extends to 1,800 feet in width between the west Town line and Stony Road. This entire area is in the Ellicott Creek watershed, with the exception of a small area in northeast Lancaster which drains to Mud Creek and then Ransom Creek.

A second area with substantial floodplains follows Cayuga Creek through the Village of Depew, Village of Lancaster and Town of Lancaster. This area is generally south of Broadway except for a portion in the Villages of Depew and Lancaster where the creek flows north of Broadway. The Little Buffalo Creek, which flows into Cayuga Creek south of the Broadway/Bowen Road intersection, also has a substantial floodplain.

Less extensive floodplains follow the smaller creeks in the area, such as Spring Creek, Scajaquada Creek, Plum Bottom Creek, North Branch Plum Bottom Creek, North Branch Slate Bottom Creek and South Branch Slate Bottom Creek. The threat of extensive flooding from these creeks is not as great as that of the larger Ellicott and Cayuga Creeks.

The cresting patterns of these streams must be considered to determine the flooding potential to lands within the Lancaster-Depew study area and the neighboring communities. A study of the cresting patterns reveals the expected timing of floods and enables communities to plan for flooding situations. This information will also enable communities to provide appropriate stormwater detention for creek waters.

To determine when a stream will crest, it is important to determine the origin of the stream. The names, locations and origins of the creeks in the Lancaster-Depew study area are summarized below.

Creek Origin
Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew

CREEK	LOCATION	ORIGIN
Ellicott Creek	Lancaster Town	Darien Lake (Genesee County)
Scajaquada Creek	Depew Village Lancaster Village Lancaster Town	Intersection of Walden Ave. and Pavement Rd.
Cayuga Creek	Depew Village Lancaster Village Lancaster Town	Town of Java (Wyoming County)
Spring Creek	Lancaster Village Lancaster Town	Town of Lancaster East of Cemetery Road
Plum Bottom Creek	Lancaster Village Lancaster Town	Town of Lancaster North of Town Line Road
North Branch Plum Bottom Creek	Lancaster Town	Town of Lancaster North of Town Line Road
Little Buffalo Creek	Lancaster Town	Town of Lancaster Southeastern portion
North Branch Slate Bottom Creek	Lancaster Town	Town of Lancaster
South Branch Slate Bottom Creek	Lancaster Town	Town of Lancaster

Source: Erie County Department of Environment and Planning

The seven creeks originating in the Town of Lancaster -- Scajaquada, Spring, Plum Bottom and its North Branch, Little Buffalo, and North and South Branch Slate Bottom Creek -- will crest within the Lancaster-Depew area and are therefore subject to flooding **while a rainstorm is happening**. For development in the floodplains of these creeks, stormwater detention areas should be created on the development site with the detained water released over a 24-hour period. This practice is consistent with the guidelines set forth in the Storm Drainage Design Manual for Erie and Niagara Counties.

The remaining two creeks, Cayuga Creek and Ellicott Creek, originate outside the Lancaster-Depew area and crest in the study area **after a rainstorm passes**. Cayuga Creek crests at the Como Park Lake dam 12 hours after a storm passes Lancaster; Ellicott Creek crests at Bowmansville 24 hours after the storm passes. Development within 1/4 mile of these creeks should not use detention ponds but should allow stormwater to discharge immediately to the creeks. While this practice is actually contrary to the Storm Drainage Design Manual, it has been adopted as a local guideline for Erie County because of its success in preventing floods.

4.6.4 Woodlots

Although the Town of Lancaster is currently experiencing an influx of new residential and commercial developments, much of it can still be characterized as rural. Large tracts of vacant, wooded land are found throughout the Town. According to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation publication 'The Forest Resources of New York,' approximately 20-25% of the total land area of the Town is considered rural forest cover (exclusive of Village tree cover).

The most common forest type is comprised of Elm-Red Maple-Northern Hardwoods. The species composition of the American Elm-Red Maple type is predominantly Black Ash, American Elm and Red Maple with lesser species including white ash, slippery and rock elms, yellow birch, blackgum, sycamore, hemlock, bur oak, swamp white oak and silver maple. This type would be found occupying moist to wet muck or shallow peat soils, in swamps, gullies and small depressions of slow drainage. This forest type would be considered climax (stable; not succeeded by others) in some large areas along sluggish streams.

The species composition of the Northern Hardwoods type is predominantly American Beech, Yellow Birch and Sugar Maple. Lesser species include Red Maple, Basswood, Northern Red Oak, Black Birch, American and Rock Elms, White Pine, White Ash, Black Cherry, Eastern Hophornbeam and Hemlock. This type occupies areas of loamy soils of good fertility and moisture conditions and would be considered a climax type because of the shade tolerance of the major species.

There may also be some areas of Allegheny old growth northern hardwood forest.

4.6.5 Air Quality and Noise Impacts

4.6.5.1 Air Quality

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation monitors air quality throughout the state using its Ambient Air Monitoring System. Data summaries of air pollutants for which standards have been established are included in the reporting system for sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, total suspended particulates, inhalable particulates and lead. The latest report covers the period between 1986 and 1996.

The State maintains 23 air monitoring stations in Erie County. The closest site to the Lancaster-Depew area is located at Cheektowaga Town Hall at Broadway and Union Streets. This location is a sampling site for inhalable particulates only, which is measured in micrograms per cubic meter (ug/m^3). Annual concentrations throughout the state are well below the state/federal air quality standard of $50 \text{ ug}/\text{m}^3$ and have averaged $20.3 \text{ ug}/\text{m}^3$ between 1986 and 1996. The Cheektowaga site showed an average over the last three years of $21 \text{ ug}/\text{m}^3$ of inhalable particulates, roughly the same as the statewide average. All other measured air pollutants, measured at nearby Buffalo or Amherst monitoring sites, also fall below state and federal standards.

4.6.5.2 Noise

Excessive noise can impact the environment by adversely affecting the residents' quality of life. In the Lancaster-Depew study area, the largest potential noise generators include the Buffalo Niagara International Airport, Lancaster Speedway, train traffic through the Village of Depew, and operational noise from quarries.

Airport - The Buffalo Niagara International Airport is located at a sufficient distance from the study area so that noise generated there does not significantly impact Lancaster-Depew residents. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) measure aircraft noise using the Day-Night Average Sound Level (Ldn) methodology. The Ldn measurement procedure takes into account flight path, number of operations and flyover noise. Contours are developed by connecting points of equal Ldn values. The contours reflect the cumulative average noise exposure due to aircraft takeoffs and landings during an average 24-hour period. For determining impact on land use, Ldn 65 and Ldn 75 are used.

The 1995 Ldn 75 noise contour extends 5,100 feet past the southwest end of the main Airport runway and 4,600 feet past the northeast end, with a width of about 3,000 feet for most of its length. As mapped, these contours do not cover land within the Town or Village of Lancaster or the Village of Depew, indicating that airport noise in these areas does not fall within the measurements deemed to be significant by the FAA and the EPA.

Lancaster Motor Sports Park (Lancaster Speedway) - The Speedway has been operating as a regional attraction for 40 years at its site on Gunnville Road just north of the NYS Thruway in the Town of Lancaster. Due to the nature of its operation, the facility generates a level of outdoor noise associated with automobile racing. The season extends from mid-April to Mid-October; races are conducted on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays between the hours of 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. The Speedway offers two types of racing: National Hot-Rod Association drag racing (Tuesdays and Fridays) and stock car racing (Saturdays). Attendance at the Speedway is approximately 15,000 per week.

The Speedway has tried to be sensitive to the noise levels produced on the grounds. It complies with the Town agreement to end racing at 11:00 p.m., and it requires mufflers on all cars. When a special Sunday show is scheduled, the Speedway does not allow high-performance cars before noon.

Train Noise - The Village of Depew, originally developed as a railroad center, experiences the passage of numerous trains each day. Recently, the train activity has generated a concern on the part of Depew residents that the train whistles pose an excessive amount of noise.

The Village conducted a survey of train activity in September 1997 to determine if a new Children's Park would be adversely affected by train whistle noise. The study found that the actual duration of each train passing averaged between one and two minutes, and that only westbound trains were utilizing their whistles. The Village obtained approval from the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning to pursue the park project after determining that mitigation of the noise impacts "is not economically or technically feasible."

Despite this determination, Village residents will continue to monitor the train whistle noise for increases or changes that affect their quality of life.

Quarries - The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Mining Division regulates quarries in accordance with the Mined Land Reclamation Law. Each commercial mine must obtain a mining permit from DEC and prepare a mining and reclamation plan which DEC approves. The plans describe how the mining operation will control erosion, blasting, noise and dust; the plan also must stipulate the hours of operation.

The DEC inspects commercial mines once or twice per year or upon receiving a complaint. If a company's blasting exceeds the thresholds established in its DEC permit, the DEC can take enforcement action.

There are at least three quarries registered with NYS DEC that operate entirely or partially in the Town of Lancaster:

- *Buffalo Crushed Stone Quarry* - south side of Wehrle Drive (part of this quarry is located in the Town of Clarence)
- *Pine Hill Materials Corp.* - Genesee Street & Shisler Road
- *Lancaster Stone* - Barton Road (partially in the Town of Clarence)

4.7 Conclusion

The Land and Environment chapter explores the many factors which influence physical development patterns in the Lancaster-Depew region: its environmental features, existing land designations, the communities' agricultural heritage and economy, regional transportation networks, and municipal infrastructure systems. The assets that made the region attractive to agricultural communities in the late 1800's contribute to its lure as a location for new development 200 years later: gently sloping land linked to existing urban centers such as Buffalo and, more recently, Cheektowaga and Amherst, by extensive transportation networks. By recognizing the link between community goals such as open space and agricultural preservation and decisions regarding municipal service extensions and road construction or improvements, the region can preserve the unique character of the Villages of Lancaster and Depew and the rural character of the Town of Lancaster while offering new and existing residents an attractive living, working and recreating environment.

5.0 Economy and Growth

5.1 Introduction

The Economy and Growth chapter provides an economic inventory and analysis of the Lancaster/Depew region. It includes an economic history as well as an assessment of the state of the current economy. An Economic Base Profile lists those employers that have a significant impact on the local economy; provides detailed descriptions of the region's service, manufacturing, and retail sectors; and highlights commute to work trends in the area.

The following economic inventory and analysis of the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew represents an overview of existing conditions, organizations and institutions in the region. The information will be used to establish regional economic policy for the 3 communities and to determine potentials for future partnerships, development and economic expansion within the region. The purpose of this section is to illustrate the complementary relationship of the three communities; an inventory of strengths highlights the areas in which the region can build upon and establish economic policy for the twenty-first century.

The Employment Characteristics section discusses income and poverty characteristics for the region as well as existing constraints on local economic growth. Future economic development potential is explored through the Industrial and Commercial Institutions and Initiatives section. A brief description of existing economic development organizations and initiatives is followed by a discussion of the Village of Lancaster Central Business District Revitalization Plan and a discussion of current efforts to enhance the appearance and economic viability of the Broadway corridor. Impacts of local government tax policy and budgeting on the regional economy are also discussed.

The inventory and analysis provided in these sections lay the foundation for the regional economic development strategies presented in the Conclusion. Drawing upon each community's economic strengths and encouraging coordinated development efforts, the plan's recommendations will guide and promote local economic development efforts through the next twenty years.

5.2 Advantages of the Region

Research prepared to complete this chapter helped to establish specific industrial and commercial strengths that can be built upon as economic policy is created for the region. A brief outline of strengths within the 3 communities include, but are not limited to:

Industrial Strengths

- Most local industries interviewed report steady growth and employment - Strategic regional location relative to WNY
- Convenient access/egress to Interstate for truck traffic
- Proximity to major rail lines
- Close proximity to Buffalo-Niagara International Airport
- Fully serviced industrial areas available for future development; industrial electric capacities, sanitary sewer, gas; existing Lancaster Industrial Park can accommodate future growth
- Existing industrial base on Walden Avenue establishes "critical mass" of industry to expand upon
- Positive balance of semi skilled, skilled and "white collar" opportunities available to regional residents
- Highly skilled labor manufacturing opportunities available within the region; particularly high tech machinists, metalworking and tool & die operators
- High-level professional sales opportunities available within the region
- Home to several "Corporate Headquarters" locations
- Strong base of existing economic development organizations including: Lancaster IDA, Industrial Forum of Eastern Erie County, and Depew/Elma/Lancaster Chamber of Commerce

Commercial Strengths

- Specific economic potentials from the Lancaster CBD Revitalization Plan: retail, recreation, culture and entertainment
- Broadway potential to become the new "Main Street" of Depew with focus on small scale retail and commercial development
- Large base of families with incomes to support future commercial development in the region
- Critical mass of retail development in Cheektowaga can spur future growth within the 3 communities

The basis for determining the preceding strengths are detailed in the following chapter. The chapter contains a Regional Economic Base Profile, a Profile of Local Industry By Sector, a summary of existing institutions and initiatives by sector, and an overview of the budgeting process of the 3 communities.

5.3 Economic Base Profile

The Lancaster/Depew economy is fortunate to offer a diverse mix of skilled, semi-skilled and "white collar" jobs in all 3 communities. Chapter Three - Residents and Public Services provides a general overview of Income Distribution, Employment Sectors and Occupations within the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew. This section offers an overview of Major Employers and a Profile of Employees by Sector.

5.3.1 Major Employers

During the course of preparing the Regional Comprehensive Plan, representatives from the most significant industries within the 3 communities were personally interviewed. The purpose of the interviews was to gather basic information relative to the function and size of the business. More specific questions were also asked regarding specific skills required for employment, positive and negative aspects of a Lancaster/Depew location, and the future prospects of the company. A complete questionnaire is illustrated in the Appendix of this report.

The following chart provides information for many of the most significant employers within the 3 communities. This list is not exhaustive, and includes mainly those businesses which employ more than 20 people; both industrial and service employers are included.

Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
A Comprehensive Plan...A Common Future

Major Employers
Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew

Name of Company	Function	Number of Employees	Notes
Advanced Thermal Systems, Inc.	Manufacturer of piping products, expansion joints, flexible joints	24	Anticipate constant level of growth; proximity to airport noted as a convenience; will remain in Lancaster
Aim Corrugated	Manufacturer of corrugated boxes	85	No comment
Bauer Radiator	Manufacturer of automotive radiators, heaters and gas tanks	20	Anticipate constant level of growth; will expand existing square footage; will remain in Lancaster
Colecraft Manufacturing	Manufacturer of office furnishings, laminated panel products to rail industry	70	Anticipate 10% growth in 1999; proximity to Canada noted as convenience; plan to expand in Lancaster and possibly in Syracuse
Ecology and Environment	Environmental Engineering and Consulting Services	325	Anticipating growth of 15-20 people this year; proximity to Airport noted as a convenience; will remain in Lancaster
FBC Chemical Corporation	Distributor of industrial chemicals	45	Anticipate slow future growth; highway access a convenience; new building constructed 1995 w/IDA assistance; high taxes noted as an issue; will remain in Lancaster
Gary Holland Sales	Manufacturing representative for industrial heating equipment	15	Anticipate future growth of 20%; will build and relocate to Town of Lancaster; would like to see a plan for Main Street in Depew
Harper International Corporation	Manufacturer of industrial furnaces and kiln systems	95	Have grown recently and anticipate steady future employment; location a positive for trucking/shipping activity; will remain
Harlequin Distribution Center	Distributor of paperback novels	100+	No comment
Henry & Henry, Inc.	Specialty food manufacturers	103	Employment has grown and future growth is expected; access to Interstate a convenience; will remain in Lancaster
Jiffy Tite Company, Inc.	Quick connect manufacture - automotive and plastics industry	100	No comment

Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
A Comprehensive Plan...A Common Future

Lancaster Steel Services	Steel warehousing and distribution	150	Employment has declined recently but will remain steady; difficult to find qualified people; positive relationship with LIDA; Canadian competition fierce; want to stay in Lancaster if economics remain feasible
Manitoba Corporation	Scrap metal processing	50	No comment
NYSEG	Consumer electrical service	250	Employment levels have remained steady over the past 3 years and should remain steady; electric industry deregulating which could impact NYSEG
Palma Tool and Die, Inc.	Precision machining, special machine metal stamping - design and engineering	75	No comment
PCB Piezotronics	Manufacturer of sensors for measurement and monitoring of vibration, shock and force	350	Plan to add 200 jobs over next 3-5 years; worked w/IDA to expand building 35,000 square feet; central location for employees noted as an issue; will remain in Lancaster
Quebecor Printing	Commercial printing	900	No comment
Scott Aviation	Manufacturer of protective breathing equipment and emergency oxygen	400+	3 locations - Lancaster is headquarters; employment will remain constant; 2% turnover rate; seeking highly skilled metal workers and machinists; trades should be promoted as alternative to college
Sealing Devices	Distributor and fabricator of industrial and electronic seals, gaskets and sealants	130	Future growth anticipated; received IDA package to expand; positive relationship w/Town officials noted; will remain in Lancaster
Tops Distribution Center	Distribution of food and food products	N/A	No Response to Request for Interview
United Silicone, Inc.	Manufacturer of plastic decorating systems and supplies	250	No comment

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

5.3.2 Profile of Employees By Sector

5.3.2.1 Profile of Service Sector

The following chart illustrates the characteristics of the Service Industry within the 3 communities based on information provided by the US Bureau of the Census. According to the Census, Service industries include the following: personal and business services (including engineering, accounting and management services), auto and general repair, health, legal, educational, social and recreation services. The communities of Cheektowaga, Amherst/Williamsville, Clarence, West Seneca and Erie County as a whole are also illustrated for the purposes of comparison and contrast. Note that 1997 are not yet available for publication; these figures should be included in the inventory as soon as they become available.

Profile of Service Sector Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew

Location	# of Establishments		Annual Receipts (\$1000)		Annual Payroll (\$1000)		# of Personal Services		Personal Receipts (\$1000)		# of Business Services		Business Receipts (\$1000)		# of Automotive Repair Services		Auto Receipts (\$1000)	
	'92	'97	'92	'97	'92	'97	'92	'97	'92	'97	'92	'97	'92	'97	'92	'97	'92	'97
Lancaster	43		43140		22109		3		n/a		12		5625		6		805	
Lancaster (V)	65		12649		3979		10		1312		8		795		11		1204	
Depew	124		50160		23325		24		3242		11		8549		26		6922	
Cheektowaga	660		380169		124756		81		12913		75		42602		63		101603	
Amherst/ Williamsville	990		766362		307335		168		38929		269		201678		63		27331	
Clarence	231		37092		14288		16		5745		22		4983		10		5738	
West Seneca	278		146583		49109		45		8729		51		18595		44		17945	
Erie County	6453		3556958		1424261		754		163070		1095		705751		733		332421	

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Number of Establishments - Service Sector

An establishment is defined as a single physical location at which business is conducted. It is not necessarily identical with a company or enterprise, which may consist of one establishment or more.

In 1992, there were a 108 Service Establishments within the Town and Village of Lancaster and 124 establishments in the Village of Depew; this figure is equal to approximately 3.5% of the total Erie County figure of 6453. In comparison, Cheektowaga has 660 or approximately 10% of the Erie County total, Amherst/Williamsville has 990 or about 15% of the County total, Clarence has 231 or about 3.5% of the County total. West Seneca has 278 establishments, or about 4% of the Erie County total.

Total Annual Receipts - Service Sector

Annual receipts include the total money received by services in 1992 regardless of when the actual services were performed. These receipts also include the total receipts for services performed for Foreign Parent firms, rental receipts from operating leases, the total value of service contracts, amounts received for work subcontracted to others and member dues. Receipts do not include any local, State or Federal taxes collected, proceeds from the sale of real estate or other investments, interest and/or dividend income, installment payments or receipts of foreign subsidiaries.

1992 total annual receipts in the Town and Village of Lancaster were approximately \$55.8 million and \$50.1 million in the Village of Depew. The combined total is equivalent to approximately 3% of the Erie County total of approximately \$3.6 billion. Cheektowaga reported approximately \$380 million in annual receipts; this figure is approximately 11% of the Erie County total.

Amherst/Williamsville reported 21.5% of the County total (\$766 million), Clarence has 1.4% of the County total (\$37 million) and West Seneca has 4.1% of the County total (\$14 million).

Total Annual Payroll - Service Sector

Total payroll includes wages, salaries, tips, vacation allowances, bonuses, commissions and other compensation paid to employees during 1992.

Total payroll for the Town and Village of Lancaster in 1992 was approximately \$26.1 million and \$23.3 million in the Village of Depew. There is a significant discrepancy between the Town of Lancaster total service payroll (\$22.1 million) and the Village of Lancaster total service payroll (\$3.9 million). The combined total of the 3 communities is equivalent to approximately 3.4% of the Erie County total payroll of \$1.4 billion.

Total Number of Personal Services - Service Sector

Personal services include establishments primarily engaged in providing services to individuals. These services generally include barber and beauty shops, dry cleaning and laundry, and photographic studios.

In 1992 the total number of personal services in the Town and Village of Lancaster was 13 and 24 in the Village of Depew. The combined figure is approximately 5% of the reported Erie County total number of 754.

Total Receipts for Personal Services

Total receipts include receipts from customers or clients for services rendered, from the use of facilities, and from the merchandise sold in 1992 whether or not payment was received in 1992.

Total receipts for personal services in the Town and Village of Lancaster were not available in the Census data, while the Village of Depew reported approximately \$3.2 million. The combined total of the 3 communities represents approximately 2% of the Erie County total of approximately \$163 million.

Number of Business Services

Business services includes establishments primarily engaged in providing services, not elsewhere classified, to business establishments on a contract or fee basis. Temporary agencies are an example of a business service.

The total number of business services in the Town and Village of Lancaster was 20 and the total for the Village of Depew was 11. The combined total of the 3 communities is equivalent to approximately 3% of the Erie County total of 1095 reported business services.

Total Receipts for Business Services

Total receipts include receipts from customers or clients for services rendered, from the use of facilities, and from the merchandise sold in 1992 whether or not payment was received in 1992.

1992 business receipts in the Town and Village of Lancaster were \$6.4 million and \$8.5 million in the Village of Depew. There is a significant variation between total business receipts in the Town of Lancaster (\$5.6 million) and the Village of Lancaster (\$.8 million). The combined total of the 3 communities is equal to approximately 2% of the Erie County reported total of approximately \$70.5 million.

Number of Automotive Repair Services

Total receipts include receipts from customers or clients for services rendered, from the use of facilities, and from the merchandise sold in 1992 whether or not payment was received in 1992.

The total number of automotive repair services in the Town and Village of Lancaster was 17 and was 26 in the Village of Depew. The combined total of the 3 communities is equal to approximately 6% of the Erie County reported total of 733.

Total Receipts for Automotive Services

Total receipts include receipts from customers or clients for services rendered, from the use of facilities, and from the merchandise sold in 1992 whether or not payment was received in 1992.

Total auto receipts in 1992 in the Town and Village of Lancaster were approximately \$2 million and \$7 million in the Village of Depew. The combined total of the 3 communities is equal to approximately 3% of the Erie County reported total of approximately \$33 million.

5.3.2.2 Profile of Manufacturing Sector

The following chart illustrates the characteristics of the Manufacturing Sector within the 3 communities based on information provided by the US Bureau of the Census. The communities of Cheektowaga, Amherst/Williamsville, Clarence, West Seneca and Erie County as a whole are also illustrated for the purposes of comparison and contrast.

Profile of Manufacturing Sector Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew

Location	Total Establishments	Number of Employees	Payroll (millions)	Value Added By Manufacture (millions)	Value of Shipments (millions)	New Capital Expenditures (millions)
	1992	1992	1992	1992	1992	1992
Lancaster (Town and Village)	37	1300	42	72.8	139.5	2.5
Depew	31	2300	64.3	132.3	204.1	7.7
Cheektowaga	104	6500	198.4	425.6	860.6	28.1
Amherst/Williamsville	77	2500	74.7	138.9	255.2	8.5
Clarence	19	1000	30.6	64	102.1	7.6
West Seneca	32	900	26.4	113.3	153.3	11.8
Erie County	1326	70800	2319.1	5597.7	11332.6	399.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Total Number of Establishments - Manufacturing Sector

An establishment is defined as a single physical location where manufacturing is performed. A separate report was required for each manufacturing establishment with one employee or more.

In 1992, there were a 37 Manufacturing Establishments within the Town and Village of Lancaster and 31 establishments in the Village of Depew; this figure is equal to approximately 5% of the total number of establishments in Erie County (1326). In comparison, Cheektowaga has 104 or approximately 8% of the Erie County total, Amherst/Williamsville has 77 or about 6% of the County total, Clarence has 19 or about 1% of the County total. West Seneca has 32 establishments, or about 2% of the Erie County total.

Total Number of Employees - Manufacturing Sector

Total number of employees includes all full-time and part-time employees on the payrolls of operating manufacturing establishments during any part of the pay period which included the 12th of the months specified on the report form. Included are all persons on paid sick leave, holidays, and paid vacations during these time periods.

In 1992, the total number of manufacturing employees within the Town and Village of Lancaster was 1300 and 2300 were reported in the Village of Depew. The combined total of the 3 communities is equivalent to approximately 5% of the Erie County total number of manufacturing employees of 70,800.

Total Payroll - Manufacturing Sector

This item includes the gross earnings of all employees on the payroll of operating manufacturing establishments paid in the calendar year 1992. The definition of payroll used for calculating the Federal withholding tax was used.

In 1992, total manufacturing payroll in the Town and Village of Lancaster was \$42 million and was \$64.3 million in Depew. The combined total of the 3 communities is 4.5% of the Erie County total manufacturing payroll of approximately \$2.3 billion.

Total Value Added By Manufacture

This measure of manufacturing activity is derived by subtracting the cost of materials, supplies, containers, fuel, purchased electricity, and contract work from the value of shipments. The result of this calculation is adjusted by the addition of value added by merchandising operations plus the net change in finished goods and work-in-process between the beginning and end-of-year inventories.

In 1992, total value added by manufacture in the Town and Village of Lancaster was \$72.8 million and was \$132.3 million in the Village of Depew. The combined total of the 3 communities is equivalent to 3.6% of the Erie County total which was \$5.6 billion.

Total Value of Shipments - Manufacturing Sector

This item covers the received or receivable net selling values of all products shipped, both primary and secondary, as well as all miscellaneous receipts bought and resold without further processing.

In 1992, the total value of manufacturing shipments in the Town and Village of Lancaster was \$139.5 million and was 204.1 million in Depew. The combined total of the 3 communities was approximately 3% of the Erie County total value of shipments reported at \$11.3 billion.

Total New Capital Expenditures - Manufacturing Sector

The totals for new expenditures include expenditures leased from non-manufacturing through capital leases. Expenditures used for plant equipment, expenditures for land, and cost of maintenance and repairs charged as current operating expenses.

In 1992, the total of new capital expenditures in the Town and Village of Lancaster was \$2.5 million and was \$7.7 million in Depew. The combined total of the 3 communities is equivalent to 2.5% of the Erie County total of approximately \$399 million.

5.3.2.3 Profile of Retail Sector

The following chart illustrates the characteristics of the Retail Sector within the 3 communities based on information provided by the US Bureau of the Census. The communities of Cheektowaga, Amherst/Williamsville, Clarence, West Seneca and Erie County as a whole are also illustrated for the purposes of comparison and contrast. Note that 1997 are not yet available for publication; these figures should be included in the inventory as soon as they become available.

Profile of Retail Sector Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew

Location	Total Establishments	Number of Paid Employees	Annual Sales (\$1,000)	Annual Payroll (\$1,000)
	1992	1992	1992	1992
Lancaster	37	420	38713	5606
Lancaster Village	53	344	32257	3742
Depew	169	2862	261883	28722
Cheektowaga	660	11409	977290	119657
Amherst/Williamsville	990	17714	1558765	190451
Clarence	231	3059	264811	31751
West Seneca	278	4209	363985	42502
Erie County	6047	84657	7244316	889158

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Total Number of Establishments - Retail Sector

An establishment is defined as a single physical location at which business is conducted. It is not necessarily identical with a company or enterprise, which may consist of one establishment or more.

In 1992, there were 37 retail establishments in the Town of Lancaster, 53 in the Village of Lancaster, and 169 in the Village of Depew. The combined total of the 3 communities is equivalent to approximately 4% of the Erie County reported total number of establishments of 6047.

Total Number of Paid Employees - Retail Sector

Paid employees consist of the full and part time employees, including salaried officers and executives of corporations, who were on the payroll during the pay period including March 12th.

In 1992, there were 420 paid retail employees in the Town of Lancaster, 344 in the Village of Lancaster and 2862 in the Village of Depew. The combined total is equivalent to approximately 4% of the Erie County reported total of 84657 paid employees.

Total Annual Sales - All Retail Services

Sales include merchandise sold for cash or credit at retail and wholesale by establishments primarily engaged in retail trade; amounts received from customers for layaway purchases; receipts from rental or leasing of vehicles, equipment, instruments and tools etc..

In 1992, total annual retail sales were \$38.7 in the Town of Lancaster, \$32.2 million in the Village of Lancaster and \$2.6 billion in the Village of Depew. The combined total is equivalent to approximately 5% of the Erie County reported total retail sales of \$72.4 billion.

Total Annual Payroll - Retail Sector

Payroll includes all forms of compensation such as salaries, wages, commissions, bonuses, vacation allowances, sick-leave pay, employee contributions to qualified pension plans, and the value of in kind services paid during the year to all employees. Tips and gratuities received by employees and patrons and reported to employers is included.

In 1992, total annual retail payroll was \$5.6 million in the Town of Lancaster, \$3.7 million in the Village of Lancaster and \$28.7 million in Depew. The combined total is equivalent to approximately 4% of the Erie County reported total retail payroll of \$88.9 billion.

5.3.3 Employee Profile Conclusions

According to the U.S. Census, total economic activity of the 3 communities is equivalent to approximately 4% of total Erie County economic activity in 1992. The 1997 figure for the 3 communities is probably higher than 4%, but the information is not available for consideration at this time.

These statistics indicate that the Town and Village of Lancaster are primarily residential communities with fairly healthy manufacturing, service and retail bases. Nearby communities of Amherst and Cheektowaga reported higher values than Lancaster in all 3 sectors. Recent demographic projections, however, indicate that population growth in the Town of Lancaster can realistically support more retail and service activity. Interviews completed with the local manufacturing sector indicate that slow growth in the manufacturing/industrial sector of the Town of Lancaster is also realistic.

The Village of Depew reported higher overall Retail and Service sector figures than either the Town or Village of Lancaster. Reported manufacturing figures for Depew are also slightly higher than the Town and Village of Lancaster. Based on recent demographic projections, the Village of Depew will probably not grow appreciably in population, but could increase in economic activity as the residential base declines in aging neighborhoods near commercial strips.

5.4 Industrial and Commercial Institutions and Initiatives

The purpose of this section is to illustrate existing institutions and initiatives related to economic development within the 3 communities. The following information can serve as a "base" for future collaboration efforts between the communities as regional economic policy is created for the Comprehensive Plan.

5.4.1 Industrial Development

Walden Avenue Industrial Corridor/Lancaster Industrial Park

Walden Avenue bounded by Dick and Town Line Roads is currently an industrial-based corridor that is home to many of the most significant industries in the Lancaster/Depew region. Existing businesses include Aim Corrugated Box, American Sales Company, Bauer Radiator, Colecraft Mfg., Ecology and Environment Lab, FBC Chemical, Henry & Henry, Inc. and Lancaster Steel Services, to name just a few. This "critical mass" of industries, in conjunction with strategic location and convenient transportation, can serve as a catalyst for future industrial development opportunities within the region.

Directly proximate to the Walden Corridor (bounded by Walden Avenue, Central Avenue and Erie Street) is the existing Lancaster Industrial Park. This land area is home to several existing industries and has potential for future expansion.

Lancaster Industrial Development Agency (IDA)

The Lancaster IDA conducts economic development initiatives using the bonding authority of the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA). The Lancaster IDA maintains its own Board of Directors, however, and represents a more "personal" face to industries seeking expansion in the Lancaster region. Major IDA financing mechanisms include the State and Local Exempt (SALE) bond and Lease Programs, Payment-in-Lieu-of -Taxes (PILOT) program for property tax exemptions, Sales Tax Exemption, and Mortgage Recording Tax Exemption. The IDA can also complete loans for working capital, new machinery and equipment. The Lancaster IDA has recently completed funding projects for companies that include Scott Aviation, FCB Chemical and PCB Piezotronics.

Industrial Forum of Eastern Erie County (IFECC)

Many of the existing industrial businesses in Lancaster/Depew belong to the Industrial Forum of Eastern Erie County. The overall goal of the Industrial Forum is to create and maintain a healthy community. The purpose of the Forum is multifold; their mission statement highlights the following objectives:

- To communicate with all segments of our community promoting greater understanding of our principles
- To develop and carry our programs that will aid the competitiveness of existing and new industry
- To enlist the support of government and labor in carrying out our programs
- To maintain contacts with governmental, educational and service organizations within the community
- To learn about more local enterprises and assist them wherever possible

The Industrial Forum meets on a regular basis to discuss current issues and the regional business climate of Western New York. Membership is always open and all businesses are encouraged to participate.

Lancaster/Depew/Elma Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber is a not-for-profit organization, incorporated in 1987, which serves an existing membership of over 500 businesses and professionals in the region. The purpose of the Chamber is to actively support business and industry in an effort to enhance the quality of life for the Business Community and the residents of Lancaster, Depew and Elma. 1998 marks the first year that an Executive Director has been hired to take over the administration of Chamber activities. The Chamber holds open meetings monthly to keep members informed about current business and marketing strategies. The newsletter available to members communicates current information related to business enhancement opportunities.

Lancaster Village Partnership

The Lancaster Village Partnership is a local development corporation that focuses on the redevelopment of the Village's downtown. They are currently implementing a master plan for the Village CBD to improve the Village core. The Partnership is working closely with other economic development agencies to implement this project.

5.4.2 Downtown Development

Village of Lancaster CBD Revitalization Plan

The Village of Lancaster, spearheaded by the Lancaster Village Partnership, has prepared a comprehensive Economic Revitalization Plan for their Central Business District. The Plan included a physical Master Plan for the CBD, a retail market analysis to determine the type and size of stores that could be supported within the CBD, and Design Guidelines for the historic preservation of buildings within the District. A new Central Business zoning district has been prepared to implement the recommendations in the Plan.

Implementation of the Physical Master Plan for the Lancaster CBD will involve the following components:

- Develop a Detailed Streetscape Plan for Broadway Improvements
- Create a Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning District
- Create a Street Level Commercial Ordinance
- Adopt Architectural Streetscape Design Guidelines for the CBD
- Establish CBD Gateways and Improve Signage
- Improve Circulation in the CBD
- Improve Pleasant and Central Avenue Pedestrian Streetscapes
- Create Additional Parking Opportunities
- Establish New Gathering/Recreation Areas for the Town and Village

Implementation of the Economic Plan will involve the following steps:

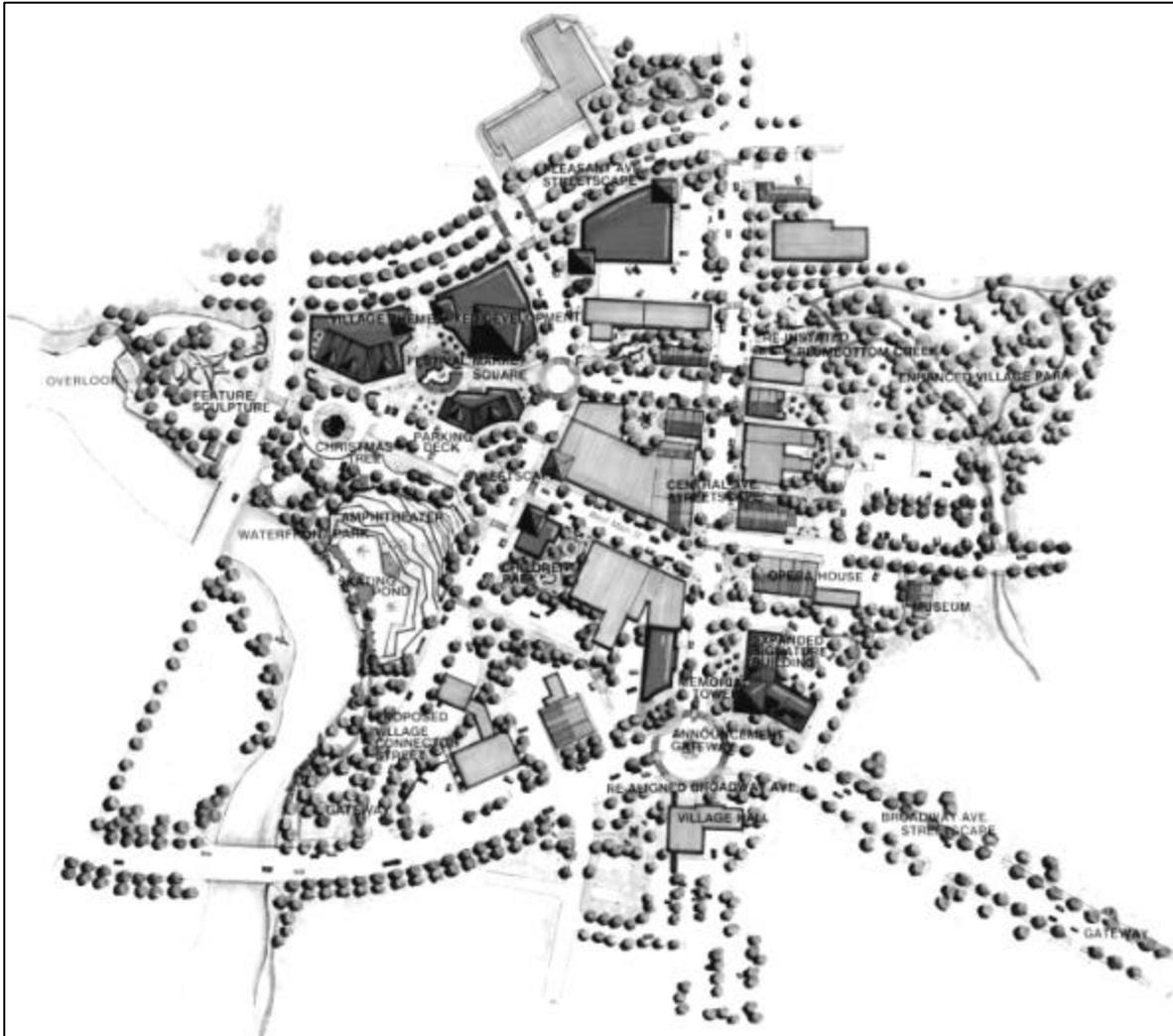
- Pursue New Retail Opportunities
- Pursue Special Opportunities for Entertainment in the CBD
- Pursue Residential and Commercial Opportunities in the CBD
- Utilizing the County's Revolving Loan Program For Business and Building Owners in the CBD

Implementation of the Administrative Concept will involve the following steps:

- Expand the Responsibilities of the Lancaster Village Partnership
- Form a Public-Private Partnership for CBD Mixed-Use Development
- Hire a Main Street Manager

As economic policy is established for the Regional Comprehensive Plan, the findings realized in this Plan should be fully integrated into policy development.

Village of Lancaster Central Business District Improvement Plan



Source: Lancaster Village Partnership
Prepared by: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Village of Depew Improvements to Broadway

The Village of Depew is currently undertaking initiatives to enhance the appearance and economic viability of Broadway (Route 20). Streetscape design guidelines have been prepared by the Village for presentation to NYSDOT; the street is currently in the process of redesign and construction by NYSDOT with construction scheduled to begin in 2000.

The philosophy behind the Broadway initiative is to establish a new "Main Street" in Depew that can serve as a center for small scale retail and commercial activity. Broadway is currently a major population/traffic center for the region and exhibits a level of commercial and retail economic health. Future plans for Broadway will seek to enhance this existing economic base and make the area more amenable to both automobile and pedestrian traffic.

Depew's existing Main Street has deteriorated considerably over the past decade; many former storefronts have been converted into low income residential properties owned by absentee landlords. The location of the existing Main Street is also no longer located near a major population and/or traffic center of the region.

5.5 Municipal Budgets

The function of a local municipality as collector and distributor of public funding is one of its most important roles. The following section outlines some of the most relevant information related to the Municipal Budgets of the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, and Village of Depew. The information in this section is intended to provide a general illustration of the similarities and differences in the budgeting process between the communities that comprise the region.

Every municipality must be cautious about overburdening certain sectors of the economy and certain segments of the population with taxes. For example, an issue that affects the Town of Lancaster in particular is the taxation of agricultural land. Approximately three quarters of the property taxes paid in conjunction with agricultural and forested land support education and social services. Tax pressures on agricultural land often force the break-up of property into smaller operating units or destroys economic incentive for the continuation of these lands. Once lost and subdivided, these lands are lost forever and cannot contribute to the tax base in the same manner. The Villages of Lancaster and Depew, on the other hand, must be particularly sensitive to the growing elderly populations in both communities; tax assessment procedures must reflect the inability of those who live on a fixed income to support services.

The following chart illustrates some of the most significant budgetary expenditures within the 3 communities for the 1998-1999 fiscal year.

Selected Budgetary Expenditures 1998-1999 Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew

	Town of Lancaster (Total Town)	Village of Lancaster	Village of Depew
Total Appropriations	14,777,855	6,593,142	9,648,076
Estimated Revenues Other Than Real Property Taxes	4,240,272	3,266,280	3,358,457
Amount to Be Raised By Property Tax Levy	9,745,583	3,326,862	5,031,752
Tax Rate Per \$1000 of Taxable Full Valuation	8.16 (not including refuse, water, sewer district charges)	11.12	13.79
Total Police Expenditures	2,405,668	1,140,994	1,924,282
Total Fire Expenditures	1,743,214	69,715	111,245
Total Snow Removal Expenditures	611,912	264,854	148,300
Total Debt Service	950,795	614,275	690,000

Source: Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew

5.6 Conclusion

Based on the preceding inventory, the 3 communities are fortunate to have one of the healthier economies in the Western New York region. Most local industries are pleased to report steady growth and employment opportunities; most also express a sincere desire to remain in Lancaster for the long term. Specific employment needs, both skilled and semi-skilled, were reported by local industry: high-tech machinists, metal workers, tool & die operators, and high level sales professionals. The strong base of existing economic development organizations including the Lancaster IDA, the IFEEC, and the Depew/Elma/Lancaster Chamber of Commerce can work together to ensure these high-paying employment opportunities can be filled by local residents.

The 3 communities enjoy a strategic location in Western New York. Proximity to major rail lines, access to the New York State Thruway and a close proximity to the Airport make the area desirable for commercial and industrial growth. Large tracts of fully serviced land remain available for future development; there is no other area in Western New York that can offer such a quantity of "clean" land for industrial and/or commercial growth.

Finally, the 3 communities are fortunate to have a large base of families with the income to support significant retail and commercial growth. Efforts are already in place to establish a revitalized Central Business District in the Village of Lancaster that can serve as a "meeting place" for local residents and visitors. The CBD can be complemented by the creation of the proposed new "Main Street" along Broadway in Depew. The vital combination of health local industry, strategic location and strong demographics indicate that the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew can look forward to a positive economic future.

6.0 Public Input

6.1 Community Survey

A random community survey was completed throughout the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew in November of 1998. The purpose of the survey was to gauge public opinion regarding various issues and conditions within the 3 communities. The survey was also undertaken to understand the type of future residents envision for their community. Questions were divided into the following categories: Community Identity, Community Services, Transportation, Land Use Regulations, Recreational Activities, Housing, Growth and Development.

The survey was distributed randomly to ensure a representative sample of households was selected to provide opinions. In total, 601 surveys were distributed among the communities; this number allowed for a 95% confidence interval +/-4%. The number of surveys distributed within each community was based on population information obtained from the US Census; communities with more population were given more surveys. The number of surveys distributed in each community includes: Town of Lancaster (192), Village of Lancaster (168) and Village of Depew (241).

A regional response rate of 31% was obtained for the survey; 189 out of 601 surveys were returned by the evaluation deadline. Response rates in the individual communities included: Town of Lancaster (31%), Village of Lancaster (32%), and Village of Depew (32%). The response rate was very good. For a random survey to be considered statistically significant, a response rate of 15% to 20% is required. The survey analysis is representative of the beliefs and ideas of the 3 communities in general.

The majority of survey respondents were homeowners, although a small percentage of renters (3%) did answer the survey. Respondents came from a wide variety of age groups ranging from 23 to 87. The average age of a survey respondent was approximately 46. More than 70% of respondents reported living in their community for longer than 15 years. Approximately 8% of respondents reported living in their community for less than 5 years, and 21% of respondents reported living in their community for 6-15 years.

The following is a brief analysis of survey results. This analysis includes a selected regional and individual community evaluation of the survey results.

Community Identity

This portion of the survey was intended to determine how residents believe their community should strive to develop economically over the next 20 years. The questions also sought to gauge how satisfied local residents are with the state of their community and the image the community presents to Western New York.

When asked how each of the communities should focus their development efforts, 62% of respondents believed that the Town of Lancaster should focus on encouraging residential, commercial and economic growth to become a balanced suburban community where people can live and work. 32% of respondents believed that the Town should remain a rural community and not promote future growth. Reaction was mixed in the Village of Lancaster. 49% of Village residents believe that the Village should encourage development in the Central Business District (CBD) to become the economic center of activity for Lancaster and Depew, while 40% believed that the Village should strive to become a balanced community that offers both residential and economic opportunities for residents. In Depew, 49% of respondents think that the Village of Depew should strive to become a self-sufficient community that offers both residential and economic opportunities for residents while 40% believe that Depew should encourage development along Broadway to become the economic center of Lancaster and Depew.

The majority of respondents believed that their community was a good place to live (36% strongly agreed and 58% agreed). Most also were pleased with the image that the 3 communities present to Western New York (18% strongly agreed and 57% agreed). When asked whether they would like their community to remain the way it is over the next 20 years, however, the following answers were received:

I Would Like My Community To Remain The Same Over the Next 20 Years

Municipality	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
T/Lancaster	31%	17%	7%	39%	7%
V/Lancaster	14%	28%	14%	32%	12%
V/Depew	19%	24%	13%	36%	8%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

The results of this question illustrate a mixed reaction from residents of all 3 communities. Residents seem clearly split on their vision for the future of their community. When asked if the 3 communities should be promoted as one, the following responses were tabulated:

The 3 Communities Should Be Promoted As One

Municipality	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
T/Lancaster	15%	34%	17%	20%	13%
V/Lancaster	33%	21%	21%	21%	4%
V/Depew	34%	23%	13%	13%	17%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Again, residents appear divided on the manner in which they would like to see their communities developed and promoted over the next 20 years. As the Comprehensive Plan is developed, these opinions will be given serious consideration; the goal of the Plan is to develop goals, objectives and policy that all residents will find acceptable.

Community Services

This portion of the survey was intended to gauge satisfaction with the delivery of municipal services and resident opinion related to potential consolidation of services. Responses in this section help determine areas that should be targeted for improvements as the plan is developed. Questions include satisfaction with police, fire, water, sewer, schools and garbage collection. Overwhelmingly, residents of all 3 communities are satisfied with the quality and level of existing community services.

When questioned about considering the consolidation of police and fire protection within the 3 communities, the following responses were tabulated:

**Police and Fire Should Be Consolidated Where Appropriate
(Percentages Listed Respectively)**

Municipality	Strongly Agree		Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F
T/Lancaster	39%	34%	26%	29%	13%	12%	17%	19%	6%	7%
V/Lancaster	52%	46%	26%	16%	7%	14%	9%	18%	6%	6%
V/Depew	37%	29%	17%	21%	8%	13%	15%	20%	24%	17%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

As illustrated above, the 3 communities have a strong disposition toward considering the consolidation of both police and fire services even though they are thoroughly pleased with the level and quality of the service. The Village of Lancaster responded most strongly to the potential for consolidation.

Transportation

The issue of transportation has become vital to the 3 communities over the past decade. As population in the Town of Lancaster has increased dramatically, new Town residents use existing Village roads to reach their destinations. Increased usage increases maintenance costs in both Villages and creates congestion problems. 56% of respondents are concerned with the overall level of truck traffic within the 3 communities, and 74% of respondents have a serious concern with overall traffic congestion in their communities.

When residents were questioned regarding their opinion on whether a new North-South connector road should be developed the following responses were tabulated:

A New North-South Connector is Necessary in Lancaster

Municipality	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
T/Lancaster	33%	26%	24%	12%	5%
V/Lancaster	25%	37%	25%	8%	6%
V/Depew	19%	29%	33%	6%	12%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

As illustrated by the responses, public opinion regarding a new North-South connector road is strong. Sentiments were strongest in the Village of Lancaster, where congestion is a problem, and in the Town of Lancaster, where residents must commute through the Village of Lancaster to get to their homes.

In other transportation related issues, approximately 57% of respondents in the 3 communities would like to see greater development of bike and pedestrian paths. Only 24% of total respondents thought that additional bus routes should be added; 33% of Village of Depew residents thought that more bus routes were needed. 40% of respondents thought that additional parking was needed in downtown Lancaster; 45% of Village of Lancaster respondents would like to see additional parking in downtown Lancaster.

Land Use Regulations

The land use portion of the survey focused on gauging public opinion on the location of future land uses and the protection of existing agricultural land and open space. Nearly 93% of respondents believe that future industrial development in the 3 communities should be concentrated along Walden Avenue. Nearly 78% of respondents think that stricter land use regulations should be developed and enforced (zoning, sign, landscaping) to protect the residential character of the 3 communities. Almost 82% of respondents would like the remaining agricultural land in Lancaster to be better protected. When questioned about the protection of open space and natural resources, the following responses were received from the individual communities:

Open Space and Natural Resources Should Be Better Protected

Municipality	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
T/Lancaster	53%	36%	7%	3%	0%
V/Lancaster	45%	43%	8%	4%	0%
V/Depew	38%	42%	13%	4%	3%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

The responses illustrated in the table above indicate that protecting valuable open space in the 3 communities is a priority as the future land use plan is developed for the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Recreational Activities

Questions posed to residents on this portion of the survey centered on the level and quality of recreational activities for children, teens and senior citizens within the 3 communities. As a region, only 25% of respondents believed that more parks and/or playgrounds were needed. Specifically, in the Village of Depew, 29% of respondents believed that more parks and/or playgrounds were needed. 62% of respondents thought that children had a wide variety of activities from which to choose. On the other hand, approximately 53% of respondents think that more activities should be offered for teens. 42% of respondents think that there is adequate programming for senior citizens. 62% of respondents would like to see more structured activities offered similar to Last Night Lancaster and Taste of Lancaster.

When questioned whether the Lancaster Opera House should be more aggressively promoted to create a "destination", the following individual responses were tabulated:

**The Lancaster Opera House Should Be
More Aggressively Promoted As a Visitor "Destination"**

Municipality	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
T/Lancaster	22%	54%	22%	2%	0%
V/Lancaster	35%	43%	17%	4%	2%
V/Depew	27%	52%	18%	2%	2%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

Residents of all 3 communities are united in their opinion that the Lancaster Opera House is a valuable resource that can be used to anchor a comprehensive visitor experience. Most believe that the Opera House should be more aggressively promoted as a visitor "destination".

Housing

The Housing portion of the survey questioned residents about the diversity of housing within the 3 communities and if there are unmet housing needs that should be addressed. Nearly 42% of respondents think that additional subsidized senior housing should be established within the 3 communities. 57% of residents in the Village of Depew believed that additional senior housing was needed. As a region, nearly 60% of residents thought that more affordable housing options should be offered within the 3 communities.

When questioned whether new housing development should be concentrated near the Villages of Lancaster and Depew, the following responses were tabulated:

New Housing Development Should Be Concentrated Near the Villages

Municipality	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
T/Lancaster	19%	38%	19%	22%	2%
V/Lancaster	11%	22%	32%	22%	13%
V/Depew	12%	34%	29%	17%	8%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

As a region, approximately 33% of residents think more "high-end" residential housing opportunities should be offered; 47% of Town of Lancaster respondents think more high-end residential opportunities should be offered.

Growth and Development

The Growth and Development portion of the survey questioned residents about the type and level of growth they would like to promote within the 3 communities: residential, commercial and industrial. As a region, 23% of respondents would like to see additional residential growth within the 3 communities; only 17% of Town respondents promote additional residential growth. Nearly 48% of regional respondents think additional commercial growth and development is needed in their community. Nearly 54% of respondents believe that additional industrial development should be promoted.

When respondents were asked whether additional business incentives should be offered to attract development, the following individual responses were tabulated:

More Business Incentives Should Be Offered to Attract New Development

Municipality	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
T/Lancaster	12%	32%	15%	19%	22%
V/Lancaster	6%	43%	19%	20%	13%
V/Depew	9%	24%	20%	29%	18%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

The table above indicates that opinion is divided whether additional business incentives should be offered to attract industrial development within the 3 communities.

Nearly 71% of respondents believe that new Commercial development should be concentrated along heavily traveled roads such as Broadway, Walden and Transit; only 24% of respondents believe that more "big-box" type development should be further encouraged.

Residents were asked what level of economic change they would prefer to see over the next 10 years. Nearly 80% of residents would like to see slow economic change. When asked what level of population change they would like to see, 43% of respondents said they desired slow population growth (450-1000 people), and 32% said they would like to see moderate population growth (1000-2500 people).

When residents were asked if they thought the 3 governments should consolidate, merge or remain separate the following responses were tabulated:

The Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew Government
Should...

Municipality	Remain Separate	Consolidate Services Where Appropriate	Merge Into One Municipal Entity
T/Lancaster	24%	48%	29%
V/Lancaster	24%	48%	28%
V/Depew	28%	42%	30%

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

The above table indicates that respondents of all 3 communities show a willingness to consolidate municipal services where appropriate. While a significant amount of respondents choose to remain completely separate, almost 30% of total respondents would be receptive to merging the 3 existing governments into one.

6.2 Focus Group Sessions

Focus group sessions are generally held with special interest groups to facilitate discussion among all key players related to a special topic. Focus groups are held to approximately 8-10 people and dialogue is encouraged to determine the specific areas of concern that should be addressed as the plan is completed. The focus group topics and attendees was discussed among the committee to ensure the specific issues in the Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew were addressed in the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Eight focus group sessions were held with interested parties in education, transportation, agriculture, local development issues, business development, recreation/open space, housing and elected officials. The following outlines the attendees and summarizes the focus group sessions held to complete the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Focus Group #1 - Education - September 16, 1998

Attendees:

- Joseph Girardi, Superintendent, Lancaster Schools
- Lorraine Bona, Trustee, Education Committee, Town of Lancaster
- Patricia Connor, Erie 1 BOCES
- Robert Olczak, Superintendent, Depew Union Free
- Doreen Espinoza, VP Lancaster School Board
- Ed Myszka, Asst. Superintendent, Lancaster
- Bob DeFelippo, Asst. Superintendent, Depew Union Free
- Michelle Kavanaugh, Director of Curriculum - Lancaster

A Focus Group discussion was held to discuss relevant issues related to the 3 communities and the Regional Comprehensive Plan. The following comments represent the highlights of the conversation and the issues that should be considered as the Plan is completed.

Comments:

- ◆ Programming is comprehensive and has improved greatly over past several years
- ◆ Needs of handicapped students are well met
- ◆ Technology available to all students and teachers
- ◆ Internet available within all districts
- ◆ Good coordination with Town recreation programs; recreation buildings used often by public
- ◆ School to work program a success
- ◆ Lancaster the first school district to mandate Regents program
- ◆ Safe transportation
- ◆ Communication needs to be improved between school boards and planning boards; school boards need to be informed about new subdivisions and developments to plan for students
- ◆ BOCES an invaluable service; heavily used by all districts
- ◆ General public does not understand the budgetary process and therefore does not support decisions; education of public necessary; voter apathy
- ◆ Evening education program for residents needs to be improved and expanded; Depew has no adult education program
- ◆ Bad press is a problem; all newspapers publish incorrect information
- ◆ Need more programming for gifted/talented
- ◆ Should consider sharing between districts: staff development programs, software licenses, and technology
- ◆ School districts should have a seat on the Lancaster IDA

Focus Group #2 - Transportation - September 16, 1998

Attendees:

- Richard Reese, T. Lancaster Highway Superintendent
- Bill Natalzia, V. Lancaster Public Works
- John Wojcik, V. Depew Public Works
- Nicholas Sherwood, Chair, Public Works Committee
- Holly Maietta, Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council
- Bill Leslie, NYS Thruway Authority
- Tom Romano, NYSDOT Planning Department
- Michael Fabian, NFTA Service Planning Dept

A Focus Group discussion was held to discuss relevant issues related to the 3 communities and the Regional Comprehensive Plan. The following comments represent the highlights of the conversation and the issues that should be considered as the Plan is completed.

Comments:

- ◆ Depew has parking problems on narrower streets; emergency vehicles often cannot get down the road
- ◆ North-south traffic a major issue; secondary roads in both Villages are overloaded; congestion a problem in Villages
- ◆ Harris Hill, Wehrle, Central Avenue have peak-time D and F ratings by NFTA
- ◆ Bottle necks on Transit Road, too many traffic lights
- ◆ Level and speed of traffic on Genesee Street unsafe
- ◆ Hub-link for buses should improve NFTA efficiency; smaller buses would be used; Lancaster should develop a hub-link center similar
- ◆ DOT improvements should be coordinated with Lancaster CBD study and Comprehensive Plan recommendations for Depew
- ◆ Divert truck traffic around the Villages
- ◆ Transportation improvements raise some drainage concerns; site plan review procedure should change to include this consideration
- ◆ Should consider development impact fees to support a tree and/or recreation fund
- ◆ Broadway construction is scheduled to begin in summer of 2000
- ◆ Bikeways/pedestrian walkways should be developed
- ◆ William/Losson Road – Cheektowaga Study – Bottleneck at peak traffic

Focus Group #3 – Agriculture - September 16, 1998

Attendees:

- Chet Jandzinski, County Agriculture Board
- Dave Weaver, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Gerald Aldinger, Local Grower and Landowner

A Focus Group discussion was held to discuss relevant issues related to the 3 communities and the Regional Comprehensive Plan. The following comments represent the highlights of the conversation and the issues that should be considered as the Plan is completed.

Comments:

- ◆ Overlapping of agriculture and sewer districts
- ◆ Erie County recognizing agriculture as a form of economic development; remains a major industry in New York State
- ◆ Economic impact of agriculture difficult to gauge but it is far greater than most people would think; individual investments are staggering
- ◆ Protecting the remaining agricultural land important even though most of the remaining land will probably not be farmed in the near future
- ◆ Agriculture District law should not allow for speculation, shouldn't be watered down
- ◆ Small farming businesses can still survive in Lancaster if they are diversified and have strong management
- ◆ Local community capable of supporting local farms; Hamburg used as an example
- ◆ Consider purchase of development rights
- ◆ Send message to landowners - preserve small pockets of agriculture land, doesn't have to remain all agricultural land
- ◆ Perhaps an exclusive agricultural zone?
- ◆ Current lot sizes too large, puts pressure on agriculture land; clustering and/or smaller lot sizes should be considered
- ◆ Pay particular attention to protecting land where the soils are most fertile; Cayuga Creek area an example
- ◆ Town should consider adopting a Right to Farm law
- ◆ Assessors could work with farmers to get reduced rates on some items; fire protection an example

Focus Group #4 - Local Development Issues - September 23, 1998

Attendees:

- Shelley Au, Lancaster Village Partnership
- Michael Wozniak, V. Depew Building Inspector
- Dan Baccari, V. Lancaster Director of Development
- Richard Young, V. Lancaster Planning Board Chair
- James Keysa, V. Lancaster Historic Commission
- Kenneth Delzer, V. Lancaster ZBA
- Matthew Filipowicz, V. Depew Planning Board Chair
- Henry Komanski, V. Depew ZBA

A Focus Group discussion was held to discuss relevant issues related to the 3 communities and the Regional Comprehensive Plan. The following comments represent the highlights of the conversation and the issues that should be considered as the Plan is completed.

Comments:

- ◆ Land use should be set aside for highways
- ◆ Plan for schools - establish impact fees; public needs to be aware that regulations & fees have a benefit
- ◆ Keep megastores out of the downtown
- ◆ Consider a bypass on Transit Road
- ◆ Use railroad right-of-way corridors as roads
- ◆ The zoning map is only a land use plan - it's not directing growth
- ◆ Too many approved and uncompleted subdivisions
- ◆ Depew maxed out for residential; lot sizes are substandard; buffer problems exist
- ◆ Strengthen property maintenance code
- ◆ Have an intermunicipal court to deal only with code issues
- ◆ Sidewalks inconsistent in all the communities
- ◆ Centralized parking needed in Depew
- ◆ Consider a Regional Planning Commission with one regional code and Ordinance
- ◆ Preserve individual characters of 3 communities

Focus Group #5 - Business Development - September 23, 1998

Attendees:

- Joseph Barnhardt, Lancaster IDA
- Frank Falkiewicz, Lancaster IDA
- Sheldon Kurtzman, Downtown Business Association
- Kathy Konst, Depew Lancaster Chamber of Commerce
- John Latello, Depew Lancaster Business Association
- Rob Benzel, Industrial Forum of Eastern Erie County
- Paul Leone, ECIDA
- Joseph Cipolla, V. Depew Director of Development
- Bob Giza, T. Lancaster Supervisor
- Rachel Buchanan, NYSEG/Industrial Forum of Eastern Erie County

A Focus Group discussion was held to discuss relevant issues related to the 3 communities and the Regional Comprehensive Plan. The following comments represent the highlights of the conversation and the issues that should be considered as the Plan is completed.

Comments:

- ◆ Lancaster has an excellent diversity of small/mid-size industrial businesses
- ◆ No real industrial "theme", but the variety protects against the impacts of one major plant or industry shutting down
- ◆ Lancaster IDA was formed to diversify the economic climate; has been very successful to date
- ◆ Need to focus on smaller retail/commercial "mom n' pop" local stores; this growth should be concentrated in the Village CBD's
- ◆ There is a very limited Entertainment sector in Lancaster
- ◆ Depew has lost its Main Street retail hub; Broadway should become Depew's "Main Street" retail hub
- ◆ Industrial development should be encouraged along the Walden Avenue corridor
- ◆ Consider widening Walden Avenue
- ◆ Depew is forced to grant too many variances due to insufficient lot sizes
- ◆ Historic preservation can sometimes be too restrictive
- ◆ Traffic problems need to be addressed; no north-south connector
- ◆ Broadway improvements will really hurt local businesses; traffic will move by faster and won't stop
- ◆ Marketing and advertising are essential

Focus Group #6- Recreation, Parks and Open Space - September 23, 1998

Attendees:

- Neil Connelly, T. Lancaster Councilmember
- Joseph McIntosh, V. Depew Trustee & Recreation Chair
- Rev. John Swanson, Chair Youth Bureau
- Representative, Friends of Como Park

A Focus Group discussion was held to discuss relevant issues related to the 3 communities and the Regional Comprehensive Plan. The following comments represent the highlights of the conversation and the issues that should be considered as the Plan is completed.

Comments:

- ◆ Planned new fieldhouse at Lancaster High School will offer opportunities for golf, more volleyball
- ◆ Lancaster needs more hockey rinks, but the cost is too prohibitive
- ◆ Additional basketball courts are needed in existing parks
- ◆ Depew has a lack of greenspace
- ◆ Senior Centers in both Lancaster and Depew are of very high quality; could offer activities that are more physical
- ◆ Consider cooperative efforts with private facilities to expand opportunities
- ◆ Retain the wooded buffer between Como Park Boulevard and Transit Road
- ◆ Wetland protection issues extremely important
- ◆ Collaboration between groups to provide youth programming is excellent
- ◆ Promote intergenerational programming
- ◆ Churches in Depew have playgrounds that the children in the community can use
- ◆ Consider Rails to Trails as a potential opportunity

Focus Group #7- Housing - September 24, 1998

Attendees:

- Tom Dearing - EC Department of Environment and Planning
- Dan Grabowski - Eastwood Homeowners Association
- Tom Van Nortwick - NYS Department of Housing and Community Revitalization
- Walter Ferry - Ferry Builders
- Harry Konst - Senior Housing Representative

A Focus Group discussion was held to discuss relevant issues related to the 3 communities and the Regional Comprehensive Plan. The following comments represent the highlights of the conversation and the issues that should be considered as the Plan is completed.

Comments:

- ◆ Lancaster has much more of a housing supply than other communities; far too many subdivisions not completed
- ◆ It no longer costs less to live here than other areas
- ◆ Taxes have gone up as demand has gone down
- ◆ Market study should be done to determine where the market is
- ◆ Lancaster and developers in general are not sensitive to the prices that people can afford
- ◆ Attention should be paid to older housing in the 2 Villages; make use of the existing County Revolving Loan Fund to help people get into a home
- ◆ Take R1 zoning and turn it into multiple home zoning
- ◆ There are no freestanding patio-style homes
- ◆ There is a heavy demand for senior housing within the 3 communities
- ◆ There is significant diversity in housing prices between the 3 communities; Villages offer some affordable housing options
- ◆ Comprehensive Plan needs to address the reasons why people no longer want to move here
- ◆ Housing market in Lancaster inextricably tied to Buffalo and Western New York

Focus Group #8 - Local Political Representatives – December 1, 1998

Attendees:

- Bob Giza, Town of Lancaster
- Bill Cansdale, Village of Lancaster
- Bob Kucewicz, Village of Depew
- Jeff Stribbing, Village of Lancaster
- Mark Montour, Town of Lancaster

A Focus Group Session was held to discuss policy that should be created as part of the Regional Comprehensive Plan that can help elected officials achieve their goals. The following highlights some of the comments and issues that were raised by attendees of the session:

- ◆ Revitalization of the Lancaster CBD is vital for the health of the entire region; revitalizing the Broadway corridor of Depew can establish a "feeder" to the Village of Lancaster CBD
- ◆ Local government should strive to maintain a high level of service at the lowest possible cost; lower taxes while maintaining or improving service
- ◆ Intermunicipal agreements have been successful in Lancaster; should continue to do more
- ◆ Plan should address a way to balance commercial and residential growth
- ◆ Overall land use plan for the 3 communities is essential to determine where future development should be concentrated
- ◆ Transportation network needs to be addressed; the 3 communities must determine a method to finance the improvements
- ◆ Cooperation with the Lancaster IDA must be sought; expanding the existing industrial park is a major issue
- ◆ Plan should consider creating policy to establish a "clearinghouse" or central Purchasing Agent for the 3 communities
- ◆ Plan should consider creating policy to hire a planner for the 3 communities who can use the Comprehensive Plan as a tool

6.3 Public Forums and Public Hearings

During the development of the Comprehensive Plan, public meetings were held in the three communities to solicit input into the process and project. Initially, meetings were held in the three communities to introduce the consultant and review the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan. A slide presentation was held in each of the three communities during late September and early October 1998. An issue session followed and the public was encouraged to discuss issues they believed should be considered in the plan. Three public hearings were also held in October (Village of Lancaster – October 11, Village of Depew – October 12 and Town of Lancaster – October 18). The following summarizes the initial public meeting comments that were obtained at the meetings:

Town of Lancaster – September 30, 1998

Attendance: 21 people

Issues:

- ◆ What will happen to the Town Comprehensive Plan and the Information Gathered
- ◆ Consolidation and Cutting Taxes a Priority
- ◆ Survey – Number Distributed – Is this Enough?
- ◆ Make up of the Committee – Contact Dan for Listing
- ◆ Village of Depew – Two Towns – Must Address Issue
- ◆ Consolidate and Slow Down Development of Homes
- ◆ North South Connector – Impacts on Residents
- ◆ Drainage and Floodplain Concerns
- ◆ Protection of Open Space and Agricultural Lands
- ◆ Bussing for Schools – Chaotic
- ◆ Traffic on Genesee Street is an Issue

Village of Lancaster – October 7, 1998

Attendance: 14 people

Issues:

- ◆ NFTC Projections – Will They Be Used?
- ◆ How Important is Field House to Education
- ◆ Agricultural Lands Almost Gone – Soils Should be Considered in Recommending Protection
- ◆ Drainage and Wetlands
- ◆ Widening of Transit over 8 Year Period
- ◆ Potential Exit at Ransom Road
- ◆ Bypass from Depew to Hamburg – Bypass Buffalo
- ◆ Plumb Bottom Creek Pollution
- ◆ Walden Corridor – 4 lanes to Town Line Road
- ◆ Broadway Improvements – Character of Depew
- ◆ RR Right of Way for Roads?
- ◆ Genesee Street Near Ransom – Safety Issue

Village of Depew – October 8, 1998

Attendance: 14 people

Issues:

- ◆ Depew in Two Towns – How will This Be Handled
- ◆ Consideration Must be Given to Two Towns
- ◆ GEIS – address Historic Districts, Environment, Open Space
- ◆ A Joint Juvenile Officer for Three Communities
- ◆ Preservation of Agriculture Lands
- ◆ Moratorium on Building Possible?
- ◆ Harris Hill – Traffic is Unbearable
- ◆ Cheektowaga Information Must Be Incorporated Into Plan
- ◆ Consolidation of Services – Will They Be Considered
- ◆ High Taxes, Utility Costs – Consolidation
- ◆ No New Layers of Government are Needed
- ◆ Population Projects – NFTC
- ◆ Mapping – Erie County Department of Environment and Planning

In July 1999, three public meetings were held to discuss the Comprehensive Plan and receive input from residents. These were held on July 13 (Town of Lancaster), July 21 (Village of Depew) and July 29 (Village of Lancaster). The following summarizes the most frequently asked questions and the answers to these questions:

- ***Who comprises the project Steering Committee?***

The Committee is comprised of representatives from the 3 communities who have expertise and/or daily dealings with planning and development issues. The Town Supervisor, 2 Town Board members, and the Town Engineer represent the Town of Lancaster. The Mayor, the Director of Community Development, and a Village Trustee represent the Village of Lancaster. The Mayor, the Director of CDBG Funding, the Superintendent of Public Works and a Village Trustee represent the Village of Depew. The Committee also includes representation from the Erie County of Environment and Planning.

- ***Were Steering Committee decisions made by formal vote?***

No. All decisions made by the Steering Committee were made by consensus. All Steering Committee members without exception approved the Final Draft Report.

- ***How was this Plan funded?***

The Erie County Department of Environment and Planning has provided all of the funding for this initiative

- ***Where can I get a copy of this Plan to read or copy for myself?***

The Plan is on file in 9 locations throughout Lancaster, Depew and Cheektowaga. The Village/Town Clerks of all municipalities (including Cheektowaga) have copies on file. In addition, the Depew and Lancaster Public Libraries, the Depew and Lancaster Senior Centers, the Village of Lancaster Dept. of Community Development and the Lancaster Opera House have copies on file. These copies can, in many of these locations, be borrowed for a short time to photocopy.

- ***What happened to the Town of Lancaster Comprehensive Plan that was completed by Saratoga Associates in 1995?***

While the Town of Lancaster did not adopt this plan, the document contains valuable information; much of this information was incorporated into the current Regional Comprehensive Plan. Because the new Plan also includes the Villages of Lancaster and Depew, a great deal of new information was added and considered as policies were developed. The end result is a Plan that considers the 3 communities as a whole and includes policies that are sensitive to planning for the region.

- ***How many public meetings were held and how were residents notified about the Public Meetings?***

There were six public forums held during the planning process; two public forums were held in each of the three communities. Three forums were held in September of 1998 (one per community) and three were held in July of 1999. The Steering Committee Chair sent direct mailings of meeting notices to attendees of past meetings held in the Village of Lancaster. The meetings were also advertised in the Lancaster Bee a minimum of 10 days prior to meeting dates. Flyers advertising the meetings were placed in various public locations throughout the 3 communities.

- ***What other types of public input were included in the planning process?***

Other types of public input completed during the planning process included: focus group sessions, a random community survey, and personal/telephone interviews with people of various expertise. Please refer to Chapter 6 to view the complete Public Input section of the report.

Focus Groups

Eight focus group sessions were held to gather information for various aspects of the Plan. Focus groups were held in the following subject areas: Education, Small Business, Economic Development, Open Space/Parks and Recreation, Transportation, Agriculture, Local Politicians, and Housing.

Random Community Survey

A random community survey was completed within the three communities in November of 1998. A total of 601 surveys were distributed and approximately 200 completed surveys were returned to the consultant for analysis. This response rate of approximately 30% is considered statistically to be excellent. A response rate of 12% is considered minimum response rate for statistical accuracy.

Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews were held with representatives from most of the major employers within the 3 communities. Useful information regarding the current number of employees, satisfaction with current location, employment deficiencies, and future plans were gathered during this process.

- ***How does this Plan fit in with what is happening throughout Western New York? Does it take the region into account?***

This Regional Comprehensive Plan is the first to be funded by the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning. There are many other communities in Erie County that will also be completing regional plans. Ultimately, the County will create a County-wide Comprehensive Plan based on the individual plans completed throughout the County.

- ***How was the Town of Cheektowaga involved in the planning process?***

The Town of Cheektowaga was included in the demographic analysis that was completed for the Plan. The Town Building Inspector attended informational meetings about the Plan as it was being completed. The Draft Plan was also sent to Cheektowaga representatives for their approval, input and comment.

- ***Why are population projections completed by the GBNRTC (formerly NFTC) used for planning purposes instead of the US Census population projections?***

After much discussion and consultation with the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning and the Project Steering Committee, it was determined that the projections completed by the GBNRTC were more thorough, comprehensive, accurate and timely than US Census projections. Both the Census figures and the GBNRTC figures are included in the document (please refer to Section 3.2 in the Plan for reference). When the 2000 Census is completed, the 3 communities should examine the new figures and compare them to the work completed by the GBNRTC. If the results differ greatly, the Plan should be amended to reflect the new Census figures. The Plan can easily be amended to incorporate the new Census figures.

- ***Is the Comprehensive Plan actively promoting 40% population growth in the Town of Lancaster?***

No. According to the GBNRTC, population growth could increase up to 40% in the Town over the next 20 years. The Plan is an attempt to direct development appropriately. The Plan does not attempt to create this growth but rather determine the best course of action if this growth occurs.

- ***Have the future housing needs of local senior citizens been taken into account? Are affordable housing options proposed for the future?***

Yes. The housing analysis completed for the Plan indicates a need for the construction of affordable senior housing options. Section 3.3.4 of the Plan illustrates these findings.

- ***How was the projected demolition rate for older Village structures determined?***

The Steering Committee worked with the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning to establish a demolition figure of approximately 1% over the next 20 years. Section 3.3 of the Plan documents the rationale for using this figure.

- ***Were areas for upscale housing identified as a part of the Plan? Upscale housing will contribute more to the tax base than affordable housing will.***

The Future Land Use Plan in Chapter 4.2 of the Comprehensive Plan designates future areas for low density "upscale" residential development. Based on demographic research, the 3 communities are also in need of affordable housing options that must be addressed over the next 20 years.

- ***What is the benefit of this plan to the three communities if new residential development will happen mainly in the Town of Lancaster?***

Population projections do indicate that the majority of population growth will occur in the Town. However, new commercial and industrial growth can occur in all three communities. The area should be looked at as a region; new residents and businesses to employ and serve these residents will ultimately benefit to all 3 communities.

- ***Does the Plan illustrate the effect that "big box" retailers will have on other types of retail in the area?***

"Big box" development cannot be eliminated from a community. The Future Land Use Plan created as a part of the Comprehensive Plan designates the most appropriate locations for future land uses; "appropriate" is defined as having the least impact on surrounding land uses. These land uses include residential, commercial, industrial and open space. The Future Land Use Plan and supporting information can be found in Section 4.2 of the document.

- ***When was the Depew Zoning Ordinance last amended?***

The Village of Depew Zoning Ordinance was last updated in 1994.

- ***Will buffer zones be addressed to minimize the effects of commercial/industrial zones near residential areas?***

Buffer zones are zoning issues that will be more fully addressed when the Zoning Ordinances of all 3 communities are amended to coordinate with the Comprehensive Plan.

- ***To what depth will Transit Road be zoned for commercial development?***

Specific lot depths area zoning issues that will be addressed as the Zoning Ordinances of all 3 communities are updated to coordinate with the Comprehensive Plan.

- ***If Genesee Street is designated for light office/industrial (as the Draft Plan states), what will happen to historic Bowmansville?***

As Genesee Street continues to develop as an economic corridor, the 3 communities can implement specific design guidelines to establish attractive development that will minimize negative impact on historic Bowmansville.

- ***Does the Plan outline methods of protecting agricultural land in the Town of Lancaster?***

Yes. In fact, Section 4.3 of the document includes a comprehensive agricultural analysis. The Future Land Use Plan for the Town of Lancaster (See Section 4.2) is also sensitive to protecting agricultural land, particularly in the southeast corner of the Town.

- ***The Plan states that it takes 500 years to create one inch of topsoil. Is this true?***

The Cornell Cooperative Extension provided this statistic for the Agriculture Chapter of the document (Chapter 4.3). To the best of our knowledge, this statistic is accurate.

- ***Schools in the region offer excellent recreational facilities; were they considered when the analysis was completed?***

Yes. Tennis and basketball courts, soccer fields and pool facilities were noted as valuable assets to the region. However, the recreation analysis indicated deficiencies in other areas that cannot be met by the school system. Some of these include the number of public walking/cycling trails, football fields and ice hockey pads. Chapter 3.6 of the Plan contains an analysis of recreational needs.

- ***Will the existing Olmsted-designed park in Depew be preserved?***

The Plan recommends preservation of all historic structures and parks. Section 3.4.1 of the Plan provides a detailed overview of Historic and Cultural Resources within the 3 communities.

- ***Have environmental issues, including the flooding of Ellicott Creek, been identified and considered as a part of the Plan?***

Yes. Section 4.6 of the Plan is devoted entirely to environmental issues within the 3 communities. All environmentally sensitive areas have been mapped and future land use policy considers the location of these areas.

- ***Why wasn't a formal Scoping Session for the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) conducted?***

There were numerous public meetings held during the planning process. The public had the opportunity to provide input on their environmental concerns at any of these meetings. Therefore, it was not necessary to conduct a formal Scoping Session.

- ***What position does the Plan take with regard to the development of a new North-South Transportation Connector?***

Based on research completed by the GBNRTC, the Comprehensive Plan stands in favor of developing a new connector road to ease congestion problems. However, the Plan does not support the location of the Preferred Alternative currently being explored by the GBNRTC. While the Plan does not select a specific preferred location, the Plan does support a location that would have fewer impacts on surrounding land uses. Section 4.4 of the Plan documents transportation-oriented research and findings

- ***Does the Plan address truck traffic problems on Broadway?***

The Comprehensive Plan does not "solve" the problem of truck traffic on Broadway. However, a separate project completed in both the Village of Lancaster and the Village of Depew does address this important issue. As the NYSDOT completes their widening of Broadway, specific design guidelines will be implemented to help reduce the vehicle speed. Physical improvements that will make Broadway a more pedestrian-friendly place have also been completed.

- ***How will the Plan deal with increased traffic on Walden Avenue if more businesses locate there?***

Walden Avenue is a major transportation corridor that was designed to handle a large amount of traffic. However, the development of a new north-south connector road or a new Thruway interchange at Gunville Road could impact the overall impact of traffic on Walden Avenue.

- ***It appears that the Future Land Use Plan indicates the location of new high-density residential development in areas where the infrastructure is in poor repair. How will existing servicing be upgraded to handle new capacities?***

Any location proposed for high-density residential development in the Future Land Use Plan is located within the existing Erie County Sewer District #4. These sewer district lines have the capacity for additional development.

- ***The Plan states that Town water pressure is 30 pounds per square inch – is this too low?***

Water pressure in the Town can vary from 35 pounds per square inch (psi) to 80 psi. The average water pressure under most circumstances is between 50 and 60 pounds per square inch. The water pressure at the lower end is considered acceptable by the Town Engineering Department.

- ***Were the parochial schools addressed in the Plan?***

The parochial schools within the 3 communities were inventoried as an educational resource in the Plan. Because these schools function as private organizations, their decisions are not a part of the public process nor do taxpayers fund them. The policies developed on the Plan will not directly affect the private decisions of parochial schools.

- ***Were all major employers contacted during the course of the planning process?***

All major employers were contacted at least twice (once by letter, up to two times by telephone) for the opportunity to provide input. Some of these industries did not respond to letters or telephone calls and, therefore, are not included in the Plan. Please refer to Section 5.3.1 in the Plan for a table of all employers interviewed.

- ***How do the 3 communities implement this Plan?***

The most effective way to implement the recommendations of the Plan is by amending the zoning ordinances of each community to correspond with the land uses proposed in the Comprehensive Plan. Each of the communities plan to adopt this Plan and the policy statements within it. These policy statements will assist each Town/Village Board to make future planning decisions.

- ***Can this Plan be placed on the Web?***

At this point, the Plan is in Draft form and will not be placed on the Web. After the 3 communities adopt the Plan, the Plan could be placed on the Web.

- ***Is there funding available to support the recommendations of this Plan?***

There are federal, state and local sources of funding that can be used to implement the recommendations. Federal sources could include Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) moneys and/or US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development funds. State funds could include the NYS Department of Transportation, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the NYS Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the NYS Department of Agriculture. Locally, there are improvements that can be made based on the Capital Improvements Program for each community.

A1.0 List of Contacts

Akron Central Schools
Baccari, Dan, Village of Lancaster Director Community Development
Bauchle, Karen, Maryvale School District
Becker, Paul, Erie County Water Authority
Benzel, Rob, Colecraft Manufacturing
Brown, Jack, Department of Environment and Planning, Erie County
Buffalo Sand – Pine Hill Concrete Mix Corporation
Cansdale, William, Village of Lancaster Mayor
Copobianco, Greg, NYS DOS
Castle, Dan, Ecology and Environment
Carroll, David, PCB Piezotronics
Cheektowaga School District
Cheektowaga Youth and Recreational Services
Cipolla, Joe, Director of Development – Village of Depew
Courtney, Barb, Greater Buffalo Regional Transportation Council
Craiglow, Robert, Henry & Henry, Inc.
Curcio, Donato, United Silicone, Inc.
Curry, Keith, Twin District Volunteer Fire Company
Davis, Patricia, Department of Environment and Planning, Erie County
Dearing, Thomas, Department of Environment and Planning, Erie County
Depew Police Department
Depew Public Schools
Dwyer, Irene, Lancaster Youth Bureau
Erie County Health Department
Erie County Highway Department
Fachko, Annette, Greater Buffalo Board of Realtors
Francis, Linda, NFTA
Frey Concrete
Gabryszak, Jerome, Community Development, Town of Cheektowaga
Gary Holland Sales, Inc.
Galley, Debbie, Clarence School District
Giallanza, Mike
Giza, Bob, Town of Lancaster Supervisor
Goellner, Mark, FBC Chemical
Hipneronski, Jamie, Buffalo Crushed Stone Quarry
Hock, Dave, Lancaster-Depew Boys and Girls Club
Holland Engraving
Iroquois Central School District
Jandzinski, Chet, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning
Jarmuz, Rita, Twin Village AARP
Jarnot, Beverly, Lancaster School District

Keysa, Stan, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning
Kildoff, Bob, Department of Environment and Planning, Erie County
Koszelak, Thomas, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Kuscewicz, Bob, Village of Depew Mayor
L&M Stone and Topsoil, Ltd.
Lad Hudac, FBC Chemical Corp.
Lancaster Motor Sports Park (Speedway)
Lancaster Police Department (Town)
Lancaster Police Department (Village)
Lancaster School District
Lancaster Steel Services, Co.
Labenski, Bob, Town of Lancaster Engineer
Lee, Mark, Planner, Department of Environment and Planning, Erie County
Linwood Health Care Center
Marback, Ann, Lancaster Public Library and Depew Public Library
Marchewka, Paul, Parks and Recreation, Town of Cheektowaga (to date -
phone calls not returned)
Marten, Ron – Town of Cheektowaga Building Department
Mazur, Dave, Village of Depew Trustee
McCracken, Terry, Town of Lancaster Recreation Department
Mercy Hospital
Meyer, Mike, Harper International
Miller, Bob, GBNRTC
Miller, Linda, Friends of Como Lake Park
Montour, Mark, Councilperson Town of Lancaster
Natalzia, William, Department of Public Works, Village of Lancaster
NYS Department of Environment
NYS Department of State
NYS Department of Transportation
O'Brien, Bill, Bauer Radiator
Paradowski, Dave, NYS DEC
Pfohl, Larry, Buffalo Sewer Authority
Polka, Jr., John, National Fuel Gas
Ramsey, James, Department of Parks and Recreation, Village of Depew
Rawey, Jim, GBNRTC
Reiner, Cathy, Alden Central Schools
Ruscitto, David, Advanced Thermal Systems
Scofield, Spencer, Department of Environment and Planning, Erie County
Scott, Judy, Project Manager, Belmont Shelter, Corp.
Sealing Devices, Inc.
Shine, Paul, AIM Corrugated
St. Elizabeth's Home for the Aged
St. Joseph's Hospital
Stanchio, James, Department of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, Erie County
Stempniak, Donna, Town of Lancaster Councilmember

Stribing, Jeff, Village of Lancaster Trustee
Stewart, Corey, Ciminelli Development
Stevenson, Ruth, Scott Aviation
Townline Volunteer Fire Department
Web, Marion, BOCES
Wegot Top Soil
Wegst, Don, Bowmansville Volunteer Fire Department
John Whitney, United States Department of Agriculture
Wilde, Homer, Engineering Manager, New York State Electric & Gas
Wojcik, John, Village of Depew Public Works Superintendent

A2.0 Random Survey

November 8, 1998

Dear Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew Residents:

The Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew are currently working together to complete a regional **comprehensive plan** for our three communities that will provide us with a direction for future growth through the year 2010. A comprehensive plan documents the existing conditions and trends in our communities to help us plan for future changes.

As part of the planning process, we request that you take a few moments to fill out the attached survey to let us know **your** opinion on issues within the Town and Villages. As you fill out the survey, please include any issues you believe have been omitted so we can include them in our analysis. Please return the survey in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope by:

Wednesday, November 22, 1998.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us develop a comprehensive plan for the Town and Village of Lancaster and the Village of Depew. We will be hosting several public forums through the yearlong planning process; this will include open houses, public presentations and public hearings. We hope you are able to attend at least one of the many forums we will host; the presentations will be announced in the Buffalo News. Again, thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Town of Lancaster

Village of Lancaster

Village of Depew

Community Survey

Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew Comprehensive Plan

Please read the following statements and circle the number that corresponds to your opinion:

1-Strongly Agree 2-Agree 3-No Opinion 4-Disagree 5-Strongly Disagree

Community Identity

Please answer **EACH** of the following:

The Town of Lancaster should (select one):

- Encourage primarily residential growth and become a bedroom community.
- Encourage residential, commercial and industrial growth to become a balanced suburban community where people can live and work.
- Remain a rural community that should not promote further growth.

The Village of Lancaster should (select one):

- Promote the residential character of the community and become a bedroom community.
- Encourage development in the central business district to become the economic center of activity for Lancaster/Depew .
- Strive to become a balanced community that offers both residential and economic opportunities for residents.

The Village of Depew should (select one):

- Promote the residential character of the community and become a bedroom community.
- Encourage development along Broadway to become the economic center of activity for Lancaster/Depew.
- Strive to become a self-sufficient community that offers both residential and economic opportunities for residents.

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | My community is a good place to live. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I am happy with the image our communities present to WNY. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I wish my community to remain the way it is over the next 20 years. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | We should do more to promote the three communities as one. |

Community Services

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | We should consider consolidating police forces in the Town and Villages. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | The fire protection & emergency rescue squads should consider consolidation. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Water service is adequate in my community. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Sanitary sewer service should be expanded to encourage further development in the Town. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our schools offer a good learning environment.
School District: |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Garbage collection in my community meets my needs. |

Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
A Comprehensive Plan...A Common Future

Transportation

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I am concerned with the level of truck traffic in my community.
Problem area(s): |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | There are traffic congestion problems in my community.
Problem area(s): |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | A new north-south connector should be developed in Town of Lancaster. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Additional bikeways and walkways should be developed to link our communities. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | We should consider extending the Rail Passenger System into our communities. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | There is a need for additional bus routes in our community.
Location: |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | There is a need for additional parking in the Village of Lancaster downtown. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | There is a need for additional parking along Broadway in the Village of Depew. |

Land Use Regulations

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Commercial growth should be promoted in the downtown areas of the Villages and restricted from the Town. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Industrial growth should be encouraged along the Walden corridor in all three communities. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Stricter land use regulations (zoning, sign, landscaping, etc.) should be developed & enforced to protect our community's residential areas. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Agricultural lands in Lancaster should be better protected. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our community's open space and natural resources should be better protected. |

Recreational Activities

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | More neighborhood parks/playgrounds are needed in our community.
Specific areas: |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Children have a wide variety of recreational activities in our community from which to choose. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Additional recreation programs are needed to address the needs of our teen residents. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | There are adequate senior citizen's activities available for our residents. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | A user fee should be required for municipally operated recreational facilities and programs. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | More structured recreational activities (such as Last Night or the Taste of Lancaster, 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament) are needed in our community. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | The Lancaster Opera House should be better promoted by the municipalities to create a destination in our communities. |

Housing

Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, Village of Depew
A Comprehensive Plan...A Common Future

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Additional subsidized senior citizen housing opportunities should be available in our communities. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our community should offer affordable housing. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | High-end residential should be encouraged to diversify our population. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | New housing development should be concentrated near the Villages to protect the rural character of the eastern portion of our Town. |

Growth and Development

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | More <u>residential</u> growth and development is needed in my community. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | More <u>commercial</u> growth and development is needed in my community. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | More <u>light industrial</u> growth and development is needed in my community. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | We require additional business/tax incentives to attract new industries. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Commercial pockets, including the Village cores, should be further developed in our communities to meet neighborhood residents needs.
Location: |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Commercial development should be encouraged along heavily traveled roads such as Broadway, Walden and Transit Roads. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Large-scale development (e.g. Big-Box Retail) should be encouraged. |

What level of economic change would you prefer to see in the area over the next 10 years?
(Circle One) a. Decline b. No Change c. Slow Growth d. Rapid Growth

The current population of the Town and two Villages (including the Town of Cheektowaga portion of Depew) is approximately 43,000. What type of population growth would you prefer to see over the next 10 years: (Circle One)

- a. Minimal Growth 0-1% growth (0-450 people)
- b. Slow Growth - 1-2% growth (450-1000 people)
- c. Moderate Growth - 3-5% growth (1000 – 2500 people)
- d. Moderately Fast Growth – 6-9% (2500-4300 people)
- e. Rapid Growth – 10% plus growth (over 4300 people)

The Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew government should: (Circle One)

- a. Remain as separate entities
- b. Consolidate selected services where appropriate
- c. Merge into one municipal entity

Personal Information

Number of people in your household: _____ Please list **your** age (respondent)
Do you own or rent your home? Own _____ Rent
How long have you lived in the community? a. 0-5 years b. 6-15 years c. 16+ years

Is there anything else you believe we should be aware of as we develop the Comprehensive Plan the Town of Lancaster and the Villages of Lancaster and Depew? Please explain:

Thank you! We will use your input to create a Comprehensive Plan that will benefit all residents of the Town of Lancaster and the Villages of Lancaster and Depew.

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Exhibit 1 – Generic Environmental Impact Statement

A Generic Environmental Impact Statement was completed as part of the Comprehensive Planning process. Copies of the GEIS are available at each of the municipal offices.