

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A Comprehensive Plan is designed to provide a community with guidelines to use in assessing current and future policy decisions. Under New York State Town law, a Comprehensive Plan, while not required, is recommended as the basis for making land use and zoning decisions. An adopted Comprehensive Plan provides a community with a rational foundation for decision-making. It helps provide clear direction for residents, developers and other stakeholders. An effective Comprehensive Plan provides a municipality with powerful tools to shape their future and enhance the quality of life for Town residents.

The Town of Lewiston’s existing Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2000. This 2011 Comprehensive Plan Update is intended to serve as a companion document to the 2000 Plan. It reconfirms and updates that document to ensure its continued relevancy for the Town. It reaffirms the community’s commitment to a shared future vision. The Update also provides the Town with additional tools and new perspectives that reflect more accurately the current state of the Town. It is based on more current planning theories and concepts and the recommendations reflect current realities and opportunities.

This document, as noted above, is a companion document to the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. It does not recreate the exhaustive inventory of the Town contained within that document. Instead, it focuses on the aspects of the Town that have changed, or where a new approach is indicated.

Chapter 2 reframes and restates the vision for the Town. Chapter 3 highlights the aspects of the Town where change has occurred and updates relevant information in the Town’s “Environmental Setting,” which depicts existing conditions in the Town. Elements where there has been little to no change, such as topography, are not addressed. Readers should refer to the 2000 Plan for information on those topics.

Chapter 4 in this Update summarizes recommendations for the Town of Lewiston. It is organized by substantive topic areas and should be considered a replacement to Chapter 4 of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, which was focused more narrowly on land use alternatives. The Vision Map included in Chapter 4 replaces the “Preferred Land Use Plan.” In both instances, the intent of the Update is to broaden the scope of the Comprehensive Plan and to incorporate other concepts rather than focusing so strictly on land uses within the Town. The Vision Map approach provides guidance on appropriate land uses while enabling significantly flexibility to deal with new situations as they arise. The Vision Map is used as a reference and a visual depiction of the concepts recommended in this Update. It is not a land use map that *directly* relates to zoning. While it cannot be used by itself to make any land use decisions, it does provide guidance regarding the types of land uses that may be appropriate in a specific area of the Town.

Chapter 5 of this update deals with implementation. The approach for implementation in this document is process-based. This Chapter replaces Chapter 6 (Plan Implementation) in the 2000 Plan.

2.0 VISION STATEMENT AND GOALS

Vision for the Town of Lewiston

The Town of Lewiston has an excellent quality of life for residents. Attractive neighborhoods, historic character, large areas of open space, working farms and scenic vistas make the Town an appealing location. High quality standards and design excellence result in development that preserves and enhances the rural character of the community. The heritage of Lewiston is respected and new development is compatible with the existing community fabric. Growth is directed to areas where there are existing utilities and roadways to serve it, and more rural areas are designated for agricultural and open space uses. The community's vision is to maintain this essential blend by promoting agriculture on the productive soils to the east, while accommodating some low-density home sites, and encouraging a greater variety of densities and housing types in the corridor along the Niagara River and surrounding the Village.

Lewiston has a high quality recreational system that includes excellent parks, trails and programs. A strong, vibrant village center is the focus of commercial, service, and community cultural activities, supplemented at a smaller scale in the hamlet of Sanborn. In addition to agriculture, waste management provides an economic base. Strong development standards minimize the environmental and visual impacts associated with more intensive activities. Future economic opportunities include tourism based on the Town's rich historic resources, the Niagara River, the performing arts and strong recreational assets; and cross-border commerce linked to the national accessibility of locations near the interstate highway system.

2.1 Vision Statement

One of the most important roles of a Comprehensive Plan is to establish a shared Vision for the community. This Vision is a statement of the community's preferred future. The goals, the recommendations and the Action Steps set forth in this Comprehensive Plan Update were based on direction set forth by the Vision Statement.

The Vision Statement at the beginning of this section serves as a standard against which decisions can be made when new issues arise. It is impossible to anticipate all the challenges or opportunities that may arise for the Town in the future. A clear and succinct Vision Statement, along with the goals for the Town, help decision makers assess new opportunities and take action in a manner that helps move the Town of Lewiston closer to that preferred Vision.

2.2 Goals

The Goals of a Comprehensive Plan further articulate the Town's vision for the future. They represent the values and priorities of the community and serve as a guide for evaluating future land use and planning decisions. The shared vision articulated in the community's goals also provides guidance for decision makers at the local, County and State levels. Like the Vision, the goals in the Comprehensive Plan are general in nature, so they can remain relevant on an extended basis.

The Goals and Objectives set forth in the Town of Lewiston Comprehensive Plan (2000) remain generally relevant, with some minor changes in emphasis or direction. The following section, which updates the goals from 2000 Plan, represents the goals for the Town of Lewiston.

Residential Land Use:

The Town of Lewiston supports stable neighborhoods with a range of housing types to accommodate a variety of age groups and income levels of residents. The Town will encourage residential development that is compatible with adjacent uses; where adjacent uses are non-residential, there will be adequate buffers between uses. Residential development should occur in areas with adequate services, such as transportation, water, and sewer. Residential development near the Village should be in character with the Village: streets should continue the existing street grid and at a similar density as adjacent neighborhoods. Residential development in rural areas of the Town should seek to preserve and design around significant open space, natural features and agricultural lands in order to maintain the Town's rural character.

Commercial Land Use:

The Town of Lewiston supports the continued economic vitality of the businesses in the Village business district and the hamlet of Sanborn. The Town encourages the stability of existing convenience retail outlets close to residential concentrations, along with limited additional commercial development at other appropriate locations in the Town, as identified in the Vision Map. Commercial development should exhibit quality design, have buffers to protect any adjacent residential uses, and be carefully planned to minimize impacts of parking, deliveries, storage and other support activities. Signage, facades and landscaping of commercial facilities should all contribute to the high quality of the built environment in the Town of Lewiston.

Economic Land Use (Economic Development):

Economic development contributes to the creation of local jobs for area residents and helps diversify the local tax base. The Town of Lewiston supports new industry and businesses. Industrial development should be carefully planned to ensure adequate buffers (setbacks and landscaping) and to minimize any negative impacts.

Agricultural Land Use:

The Town of Lewiston supports agriculture as an important component of the Town. It contributes to rural character and is a significant element of the Town's economy. Policies should discourage converting active agricultural lands to non-agricultural use and encourage the maintenance of State Agricultural Districts established under Agriculture and Markets Law Article 25AA as tools in support of farming. The Town supports owner/grower roadside stands to foster economic diversity, and private efforts, such as land trusts, to protect agricultural lands.

Institutional Land Use:

The Town of Lewiston is committed to providing appropriate levels of accessible public services for our residents. These services include education, health care, social service, and public safety (police and fire).

Recreational Land Use:

The Town of Lewiston benefits from unique scenic, physical, historical and cultural assets. The Town will develop an open space and recreation network that preserves these important features. The Town should develop a recreation plan that accommodates a diversity of active and passive recreation facilities addressing a range of recreational needs. The Town will provide for the sustainability of recreation in the Town, taking into consideration maintenance of existing facilities and capital costs of expanding recreational opportunities. The Town will encourage public-private partnerships where appropriate.

Transportation:

The Town of Lewiston supports a safe and balanced transportation system that accommodates automobile, bicycle and pedestrian safety and access. The Town will seek to address transportation hazards, such as blind intersections, multiple driveways and pedestrian/ vehicular conflicts. Local connections between neighborhoods will be encouraged while discouraging through-traffic through residential areas. There will be adequate emergency vehicle access throughout the Town.

Environmental:

The Town respects its unique environmental features, including significant open space areas, woodlands, wildlife habitats and watercourses. New development must be sensitive to these features and seek to minimize environmental impacts and avoid impacts to ecosystems. Extremely sensitive areas should be protected from encroachment by development. Scenic, environmental and aesthetic qualities of the coastal zone along the Niagara River should be protected. The Town should establish guidelines to ensure that development adjacent to waste disposal sites addresses environmental concerns.

Historic:

The Town of Lewiston benefits from a rich heritage and has a number of historically significant structures, settlements, sites and vistas. The Town should establish development guidelines to encourage sensitive redevelopment and reuse of these structures, and to ensure that surrounding development is complementary to the character of historic sites. The Town should explore means to promote the sustainability of its heritage sites through fiscal and regulatory mechanisms.

Governmental Services:

The Town of Lewiston will provide governmental services in a fiscally responsible manner, assessing the fiscal impacts of major development projects. The Town will discourage extension of municipal infrastructure capacity into sensitive areas, such as agricultural lands. Capital improvements will be based on community need, balanced with a consideration of long-term impact to municipal finances. The Town will seek to foster improved communications with the school districts, authorities and adjacent Towns, and will seek to maximize costs savings through shared services and cooperative agreements.

3.0 Environmental Setting

This Section of the Comprehensive Plan Update provides a summary of the changes that have occurred to the Town of Lewiston since the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. In general, the information in that document remains relevant, and if a topic is not addressed here, it is presumed that there are no significant changes. This section concentrates only issues that merit an updated approach or discussion. For users' convenience, the format of this section parallels the structure of the existing plan.

3.1 Regional Influences

The Town of Lewiston is subject to regional influences that can affect development and plans. Generally, regional plans and influences support a number of policies consistent with the goals of the Town of Lewiston. Regional Plans support development located primarily in and adjacent to developed areas such as the Village, the City of Niagara Falls and the hamlet of Sanborn. Certain natural resources in the Town, such as the Niagara riverfront and the escarpment, are regionally important and merit conservation. Better connections and trails are supported. There are opportunities for enhanced economic development in Lewiston, particularly along the Niagara River corridor, but also along regional features such as the Niagara Wine Trail.

3.1.1 Plans and Programs

Niagara County Communities Comprehensive Plan: Niagara County recently completed a county-wide comprehensive plan. The plan focuses on land use, transportation, economic development, county services and facilities, infrastructure, educational institutions and health and safety issues for the county. Lewiston, along with Porter and the Villages, is classified as a “Lower River Community.” These communities are identified as having untapped potential for tourism. Opportunities for development are seen along the western portion of the Town, while the eastern portion is seen as staying more rural in nature.

Power Authority Relicensing: the Robert Moses Power Plant in Lewiston was granted a new 50-year federal license for continued operations in 2007. As part of the agreement for the relicensing, the Power Authority established a number of funds, including “Host Community” funds and “Greenway Funds”. The Host Community Funds are fixed annual payments to the communities, such as Lewiston, that host Power Authority facilities.

Niagara River Greenway Plan: the Niagara River Greenway Plan encompasses the length of the Niagara River from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. The intent of the Plan is to establish a unified vision for the greenway area and to help guide investments in the corridor. Greenway funds set up as part of the relicensing agreement for the Robert Moses Power Plant must be spent in a manner consistent with the principles and goals of the Niagara River Greenway Plan. The Greenway Plan also identifies potential partnerships, linkages and priority projects for the Greenway, as well as recommends system-wide strategies for the development of the Niagara River corridor. There are a number of recommendations and concepts in the Niagara River Greenway Plan that have direct relevance to the Town of Lewiston. These concepts include an implementation project recommending trail connections along the riverfront, recommendations for ecological projects (e.g. restoration of wetlands in Joseph Davis State Park) and the recognition of Lewiston’s importance in the establishment of Gateways (e.g. Lewiston-Queenston Bridge) and Centers (interpretive, historic, cultural and ecological).

Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth: The Framework for Regional Growth is a regional plan for the two counties. It is intended to be a policy document that encourages redevelopment of urban areas and conservation of natural and cultural resources in order to support a cost efficient and sustainable means of revitalizing the region. The Plan divides the region into “Rural,” “Developed” and “Developing” areas. The Town of Lewiston’s eastern areas are categorized as rural, while the western portion of the Town falls into the “Developed” area, with a “developing” area zone between the two halves of the Town.

Niagara County Brownfields Program: Niagara County has aggressively pursued cleanup efforts for underutilized lands suffering from potential contamination from prior uses. The County has received six grants from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

and one grant from New York State. Funds have been used to pay for Phase I or Phase II Environmental Audits, establish a Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund, and conduct other activities designed to address remediation needs in the County.

Niagara County Business Development and Commercial Revitalization Study: Villages of Lewiston, Youngstown and Wilson: this study promotes revitalization of the three villages, with a focus on tourism. The report recommends a number of enhancements for the Villages, such as special events, promotions, physical improvements and transportation improvements.

Regional Tourism Efforts: Several studies have addressed tourism, with a focus on heritage tourism, particularly for Niagara Falls, and cultural tourism throughout the region. There have been strides in pursuing tourism development in Niagara County. Attractions such as the Niagara Wine Trail are growing. The City of Niagara Falls, immediately to the south of Lewiston, has a number of tourism –related initiatives underway. Artpark hosts two very popular concert series. The facility is attracting growing crowds and is planning improvements to the outdoor amphitheater to better accommodate attendance with fewer impacts to neighboring residents. The Niagara Falls International Airport is being developed to greater use, and is now offering limited passenger service in addition to its air cargo functions.

3.1.2 Existing Regional Influences

A number of regional influences affect the Town of Lewiston.

- Tuscarora Indian Reservation: this sovereign territory is located in the center of the Town of Lewiston.
- Niagara Falls, New York: a major tourism center.
- Power Authority of New York: Power Authority lands occupy significant portions of the Town of Lewiston.
- Lewiston-Queenston Bridge: a major international crossing.
- Joseph B. Davis State Park: potential for additional recreational programming.
- Artpark: major regional destination with popular concert series.
- Seaway Trail: national scenic byway passes through the Town of Lewiston.
- Modern Disposal: this major waste facility influences the northern central portion of the Town.

3.2 Natural Environment

The natural environment in the Town of Lewiston is a major asset for the Town. Generally, the conditions of the natural environment are similar to the conditions stated in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. Issues associated with topography and slopes remain relevant, with significant areas of the community where steep slopes merit special protection. The escarpment and the Niagara River gorge are important natural features that also contribute to the Town's character. Bedrock geology is unchanged. There may have been changes to the extent of wetlands in the Town. New mapping of wetlands should be consulted if information on wetlands is needed.

FEMA has remapped floodplains throughout Niagara County, and there is much greater confidence about the extent of floodplains within the Town. Since the 2000 Plan, erosion of the Niagara River shoreline was studied as part of the relicensing of the Robert Moses Power Plant. Erosion remains a concern in specified locations. Hydrology and soils remain essentially similar. The Town's water features, including the Niagara River, are important features that should be protected. The Town's excellent clay soils represent both an opportunity, but it is important to carefully control this activity to avoid adverse impacts to the Town. Agriculture remains an important economic element of the Town and development should be discouraged on prime agricultural soils.

3.3 Existing Land Use Characteristics

3.3.1 Land Use

Land uses in the Town have not changed dramatically since 2000. The Town remains largely rural, residential and agricultural. There are significant areas dedicated to large single users, including the New York Power Authority, Niagara University, the schools and the landfill.

There is limited commercial development within the Town outside the Village; the hamlet of Sanborn has the largest concentration of commercial outside the Village.

There has been new development in the Town. Niagara University has been undergoing significant expansion, and many of the lands adjacent to the University are now in use by the college. The Sanborn Area Historical Society has purchased a 56-acre farm adjacent to its Schoolhouse Museum site to help establish an expanded farm museum. Modern Disposal has

also had expansions in uses, including the construction of two large greenhouses, fueled with methane gas naturally resulting from the landfill. The Niagara Falls Bridge Commission built a new facility in the Town of Lewiston near the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge, and the Seneca Nation of Indians constructed the Hickory Stick Golf Course in Lewiston north of the village. In addition, there have been several large clay mines developed in the Town of Lewiston.

3.3.2 Subdivisions

A number of new subdivisions have been built in the Town over the past 10 years. The Town Building Department estimates that approximately 30 new homes are built each year in the Town of Lewiston.

Subdivision		# Units Approved	Status
Oak Run	Single-family	66	Approximately half built out
Sattleberg	Single-family	21	Approximately one-third built out
Riverwalk	Single-family	161	Approximately one-third built out (three of nine phases completed)
Waterford Heights	Single-family	15	Three units completed
Chicora	Single-family	21	Approximately 5 lots remaining
Big & Little Vista	Single-family	34	Three units completed
Legacy	Townhouses	10 bdgs	One building completed (approximately 8-16 units/ building)
Country Club Trails	Single-family	45+/-	15 – 20 lots remain available.

The Town of Lewiston has over 200 approved single-family residential building lots available, plus the townhouses at Legacy. At the Town’s typical building pace (approximately 30 units per year), this represents 7 to 10 years of supply.

3.3.3 Building Permit Trends

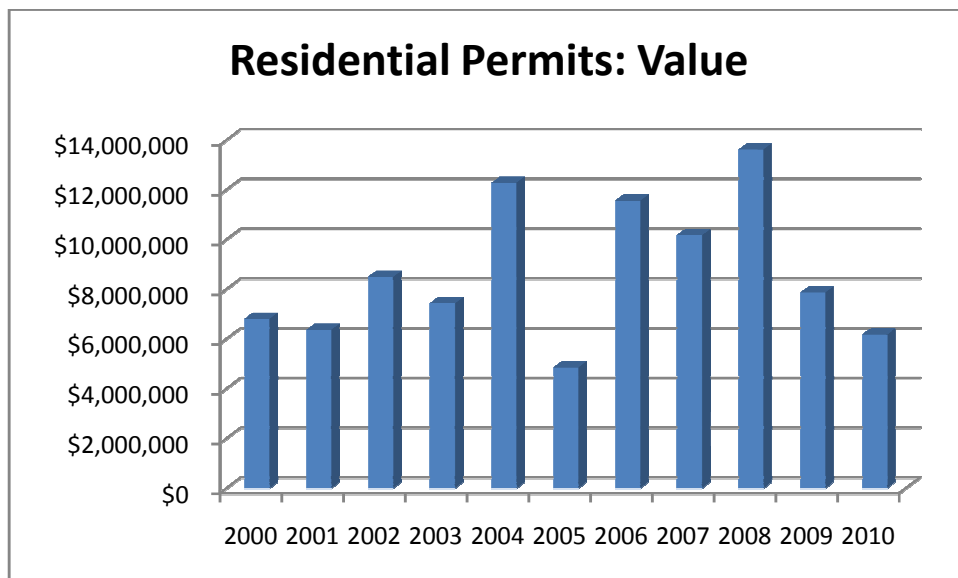
Building permit trends indicate that the number of single-family homes permits issued each year has remained relatively stable, ranging from 18 to 44 units per year since 2000, and averaging 30 units per year. There was a drop off in the number of permits for single family homes issued in 2010, most likely as a result of the poor economy. At the same time, there been a trend toward an increase in the value of investments residents are making in their homes. The number of

permits issued for residential improvements (additions, pools, fences, etc.) increased from 205 in the year 2000 to a high of 314 in 2008. The total value of these permits had generally been increasing until the last two years, when value dropped off. The shift in focus from new home construction to improvements accounts for some of the decrease in dollar value.

**Residential Building Permits, Town of Lewiston
2000 – 2010**

	One-unit	Two-Unit*	Multi-family*	Additions, Pools, etc.	Total Permits	Total Units	Total Value
2010	18	-	-	314	332	18	\$6,183,133
2009	31	-	-	277	308	31	\$7,872,838
2008	21	-	4 (41)	272	297	62	\$13,624,508
2007	44	-	-	197	241	44	\$10,181,746
2006	32	-	3 (10)	205	240	42	\$11,569,134
2005	22	-	-	178	200	22	\$4,857,988
2004	38	1 (2)	3 (10)	187	229	50	\$12,291,643
2003	35	-	-	221	256	35	\$7,443,393
2002	35	-	4 (18)	221	260	53	\$8,503,308
2001	23	-	-	208	231	23	\$6,372,713
2000	31	-	1(24)	205	237	55	\$6,815,452
Total	330	1(2)	15 (103)	2,485	2,831	435	\$95,715,856

* Total Number of permits (Total Number of Units)



There are relatively few non-residential permits issued on an annual basis in the Town of Lewiston. Over the past eleven years, the number of non-residential permits ranged from as few as one to as many as 14. In contrast to residential permit trends, however, there has been an increase in commercial permits in the past two years in Lewiston, with a significant increase in the value of the commercial permits issued.

**Non-Residential Building Permits, Town of Lewiston
2000 – 2010**

	Commercial	Industrial	Schools	Other Public Buildings	All Other	Total	Value
2010	14	-	-	-	6	20	\$ 21,367,617
2009	14	-	-	-	4	18	\$3,728,124
2008	-	1	4	1	4	10	\$5,557,864
2007	4					4	\$1,760,000
2006	-		1			1	\$14,330
2005	2	1	1		1	5	\$4,008,000
2004	1					1	\$12,291,643
2003	1				3	4	\$1,321,508
2002	1		2	2	4	9	\$5,066,500
2001	1		8	1	3	13	\$43,821,925
2000	2	1	1	1	-	5	\$5,292,800
Total	40	3	17	5	25	90	\$104,230,311

3.4 Recreation and Open Space Inventory

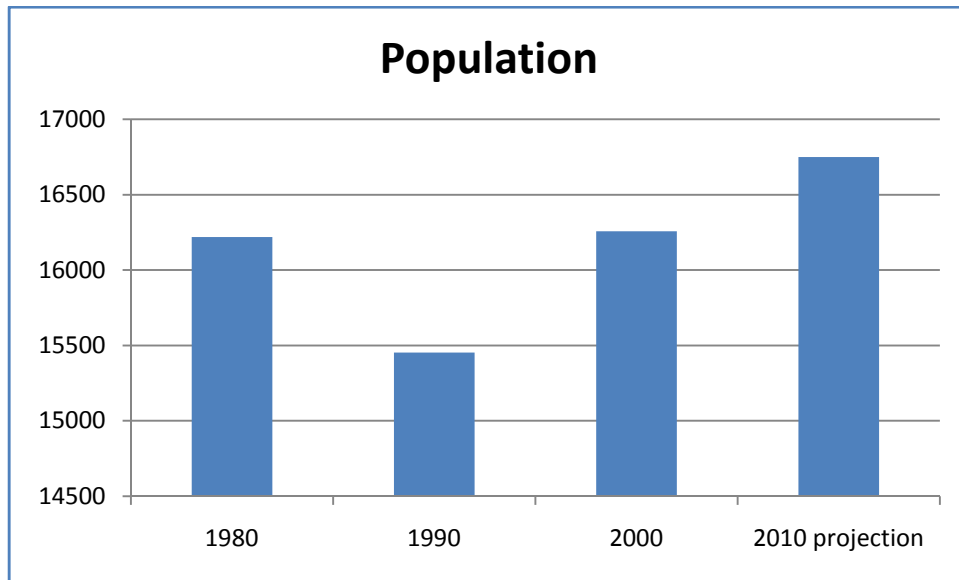
The Town of Lewiston has a significant amount of open space and public recreational areas. There are four State Parks (Joseph Davis, Artpark, Reservoir and Devil's Hole) and a County park (Bond Lake). There are also several private recreational facilities in Lewiston, including two golf courses (Niagara Falls Country Club and Hickory Stick Golf Course) and two Conservation Clubs (Fin, Feather & Fur Conservation Club and Niagara County Sportsman's Club). There are also recreational facilities associated with school properties in the Town, which include the Lewiston-Porter High School and Middle School campus in the northwest area

of Town on Creek Road, and the Niagara-Wheatfield campus on Saunders Settlement Road in the southeast area of Town.

There are some trails in the Town, although there are significant gaps in the system, particularly along the Niagara River. The Niagara River Greenway Plan presented segments of a trail system for Lewiston as two of the five “Implementation Concepts” for trails contained in the document. There are important opportunities for tourism development and public access associated with trails improvements in the Town of Lewiston. While the Town has large acres of parkland, they are primarily state-owned, which limits town control over facilities and programming. There are limited indoor recreational facilities in the Town, associated primarily with the school districts.

3.5 Population and Housing Characteristics

Unlike many communities in Niagara County, the Town of Lewiston did experience some modest population growth between 1990 and 2000. Current Census estimates suggest this modest growth trend continued over the past 10 years.



Source: US Bureau of the Census

3.6 Cultural and Historic Resources

The Town of Lewiston has a rich history dating back to pre-historic times. During the modern period, the Town was an important transportation center due to the portage around the Falls. In more recent years, cultural assets such as Artpark have played a major role in the Town. As a result, Lewiston has a wealth of cultural and historic resources. There are several archaeologically significant areas within the Town, and one property, in the Village, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Many other properties within the Town are locally and regionally significant. This historic and cultural character is a competitive advantage for the Town, which makes it a favored destination for tourists and visitors. Development patterns should be carefully planned to complement and integrate these assets, and not detract from the inherent character of the Town.

3.7 Community Facilities

The Town of Lewiston maintains the Town Hall facility on Ridge Road, the Town Highway Garage on Swann Road and the Wastewater Treatment Plant on Pletcher Road. Village Hall is located on Fourth Street in the Village. Lewiston is home to two separate school districts and Town residents have excellent access to schools from elementary through high school within the Town borders. Niagara University and Niagara Community College also have facilities in and just adjacent to the Town.

There are two libraries in the Town: one in the Village of Lewiston and another in the hamlet of Sanborn. Residents benefit from a New York State Police Station and five separate fire stations within the Town's borders. Mount Saint Mary's Hospital, an important asset to the region, is also located in Lewiston.

3.8 Traffic Circulation and Infrastructure

New York State Route 31(Saunders Settlement Road) and the eastern portion of Route 104 (Ridge Road) provide east-west access through the Town of Lewiston, while New York State Routes 18, 18F, 265, 429 and the western portion of Route 104 (Lewiston Road) provide north-south access. This interstate provides access to Canada to the west via the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge, and to Niagara Falls and Buffalo to the south. There is also a network of county and

local roads throughout the Town. I-190 cuts across the southwest corner of the Town. The State is currently studying options for reconfiguring the Robert Moses Parkway, a limited access parkway connecting Lewiston to the City of Niagara Falls. New road development in the Town of Lewiston has been limited to local roadways serving local residential developments. While there are some problem intersections, the roadway infrastructure in the Town is generally suitable.

Waterlines are provided throughout the Town of Lewiston along all major roadways. Since 2000, the Town has replaced approximately 15 miles of old watermains. There are areas of Town serviced with less than 8-inch diameter pipe, which presents concerns for fire flow purposes.

There have been no major changes to sanitary sewer service in the Town of Lewiston over the past 10 years. The Town has completed some improvements to reduce inflow and infiltration. In 2005 and 2006, the Town converted a substandard 28-inch diameter sanitary line running from Creek Road to the Niagara River to a drainage line that helped drain Creek Road. There have also been upgrades to the Town's wastewater treatment plant.

3.9 Growth Management/ Land Use Regulations

The Town of Lewiston is in the process of undertaking significant changes to the Town's zoning code. A number of changes are being adopted as part of this Comprehensive Plan Update. A number of additional changes to the code are being developed. Generally, the existing code can be confusing and not user-friendly, with regulations contained in multiple chapters. There is currently no site plan review and there are issues with the current procedures regarding special use permits. This Plan Update includes a number of recommendations regarding zoning regulations.

3.10 Key Development Sites/ Vision Map

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Lewiston included a section identifying key development sites, although the Town did not have direct control of those sites. The 2000 Plan also provided a "Preferred Land Use Plan" that resembled a future zoning map, identifying

specific uses for all areas of the Town. This approach provided clear guidance for the type of development that the Town preferred in different locations, but discouraged creative thinking and limited future flexibility. Therefore, the Town is replacing those maps with this update of the Comprehensive Plan.

The approach of this Comprehensive Plan Update is to provide a more general “Future Vision Map.” The vision map in this document provides sufficient guidance to direct the type of development that is envisioned for different areas of the Town while remaining flexible enough to accommodate changing circumstances. It is *not* a zoning map, and the focus is on the character of an area more than its use category. The Vision Map is intended to identify opportunities and priorities for sectors of the Town so the character of those areas remains true to the Town’s vision for them. For example, residential uses would be allowed in various areas of the Town, but the character of residential development within the hamlet of Sanborn should differ from the character of residential development in areas designated as rural / agricultural in character.

The Future Vision Map contained in this Comprehensive Plan Update (Map 1) replaces the “Key Development Sites” and the “Preferred Land Use Plan” maps from the 2000 Comprehensive Plan (Figures 21 and 22). Those two figures are no longer in effect.

In general, the eastern sector of the Town is identified as Rural/ Agricultural in character. Development in the eastern portion of the Town (generally, east of Porter Center Road) should strive to maintain that rural atmosphere. For example, design should work around natural features and attempt to preserve these features where feasible. Agricultural and rural residential uses are preferred over commercial uses, except in areas, such as the Sanborn hamlet, where designated. The Town should carefully consider whether to retain the commercial zoning district currently located on Route 104 within the rural/ agricultural area of the Town.

The Village of Sanborn is called out as a hamlet area. Development should be at a denser, hamlet or village scale. Mixed uses are appropriate. Neo-traditional styles of development are preferred: development should have a traditional street grid rather than cul de sacs, and housing styles should emulate existing traditional housing in the area. Actions that promote the vitality of the hamlet are a priority, as outlined in the recommendation section. A hamlet expansion area

is shown to accommodate future growth, but initial efforts should focus on the existing hamlet core. Pekin is also called out as a “hamlet” on the map, but it is acknowledged that the majority of development within Pekin is in the Town of Cambria. Any new development within the Pekin area should be compatible with the small scale character of the hamlet.

The area north of the Village of Lewiston is considered the Village expansion area. Development in this area of Town should match the Village is scale and design. Again, neo-traditional development along a grid street pattern is preferred. The area should be pedestrian friendly. It is envisioned the Village expansion area will be primarily residential in nature.

Areas of major open space are noted on the Vision Map. These areas include Joseph Davis State Park, Artpark, Devil’s Hole State Park, Power Authority lands surrounding the Power project, including Reservoir State Park, Niagara Falls Country Club, the Hickory Stick Golf Course, Bonds Lake County Park and the cemeteries north of the Power Authority forebay. Some of these areas are available for public recreational use. Others are important open space resources but not available for recreational use. In addition, the Niagara River shoreline and the Robert Moses Parkway are designated as greenway corridors; where feasible, additional open space features should be designated along their length, even if just along the rights-of-way.

The area south of Pletcher Road and east of Creek Road is designated as a conservation area. Current land uses in the area include the Three F Conservation Club and the Our Lady of Fatima Shrine.

Certain areas are highlighted as acceptable for expanded commercial use. These include lands along Model City Road south of Swann, and sections of Routes 31, 104 and 18. Most of these areas are not currently zoned for business use, and this depiction is *not* meant to suggest that all these areas should be rezoned. Rather, these are the areas to look to in the event that the Town determines that additional business areas should be considered. Re-zoning of all the designated business areas would likely result in an oversupply of such properties, and the Town should carefully consider where, within these designated areas, expansion of business uses are most workable. Business uses in the Town outside the Village or the hamlet should be focused on

offices, service businesses and similar uses. Retail uses, except for a limited amount of convenience retail, are best located in or adjacent to the Village or in the Sanborn area.

The north central portion of the town is designated as economic development / industrial uses. This area is dominated by Modern Landfill, which is a long-term use. Additional business-oriented uses would be appropriate within this vicinity of the Town.

The remainder of the Town is designated for continued residential character. Areas that are yellow on the Vision Map are predominately suburban residential, and developed at a more suburban density. These areas are in the western portion of the Town, and consist primarily of stable neighborhoods. Areas that are white (uncolored) on the Vision Map are predominately rural residential in character. There are some pockets of residential development, while other areas are relatively undeveloped. Development within these areas should continue to project a rural character.



TOWN OF LEWISTON

Vision Map



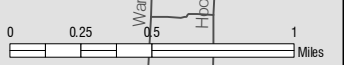
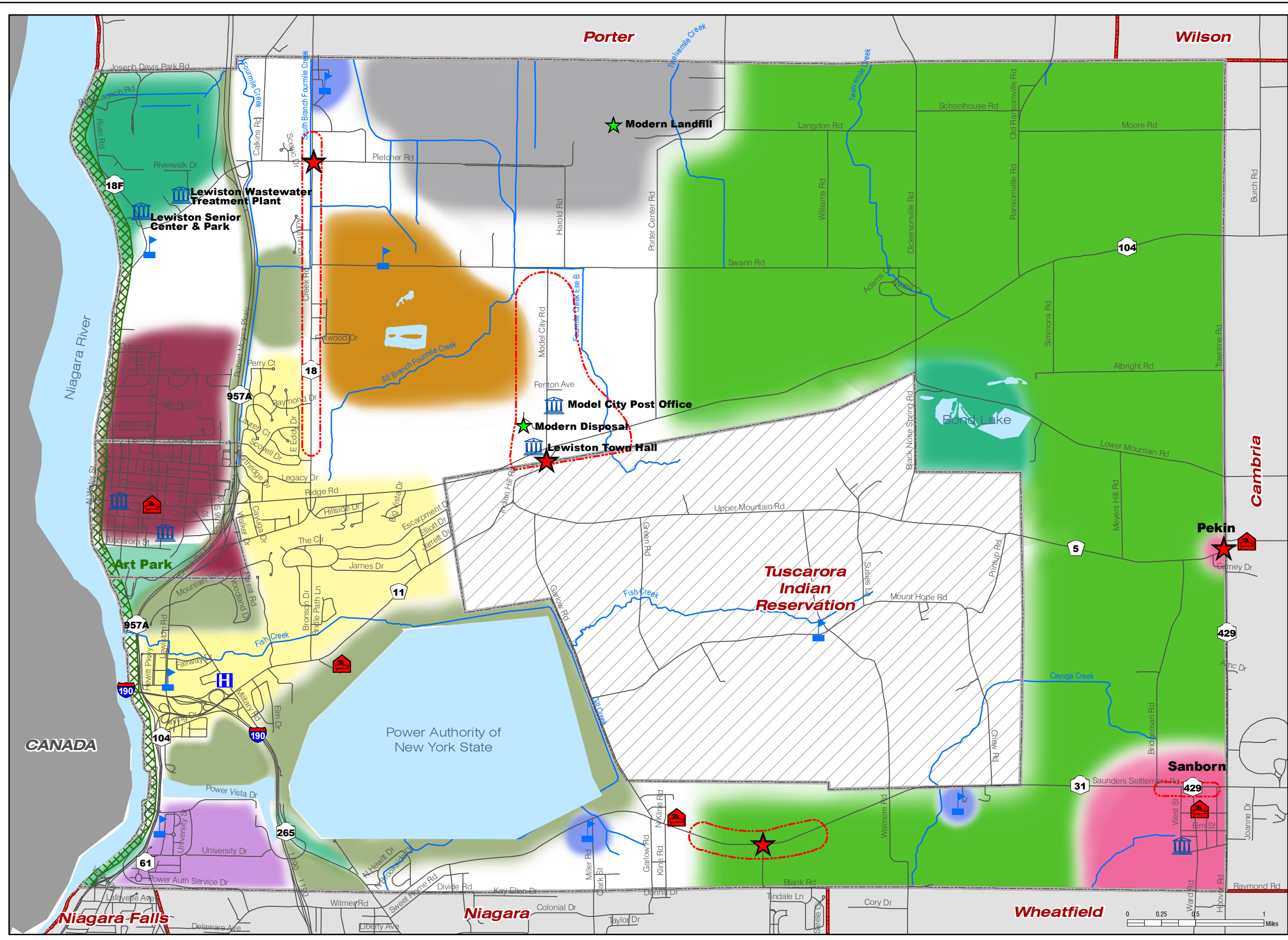
NIAGARA COUNTY - NEW YORK

LEGEND	
	Municipal Boundary
	Street Centerline
	Pond / Water Body
	Hydrography
	Riverfront Area
	Potential Commercial Areas
	Rural Agriculture
	Industrial
	Suburban Residential
	Rural Residential
	Conservation Area
	Park / State Park
	Open Space / Recreation
	Niagara University
	Hamlet Area
	Village Expansion
	School
	Fire Company
	Public Building

This figure is not a future land use map or directly related to zoning. It is to be used only as guidance in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan Update document.



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4.0 Recommendations

4.1 Development Regulations

4.1.1 Zoning

A major emphasis of this Comprehensive Plan Update is a focus on zoning for the Town. The Town underwent a major initiative after the adoption of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan to develop recommendations that would have made significant changes to the Town’s Zoning Code. These changes included revisions to general procedures and improvements to provisions and processes, as well as more ambitious whole-scale changes to the Town’s zoning districts. There was general support behind many of those changes, but they were never officially adopted.

A number of zoning changes are being adopted concurrently with the Comprehensive Plan Update. A discussion of these proposed changes are included in Section 5.0: Zoning. The recommendations in regard to the Town’s zoning include:

- Future establishment of new districts (not included with initial zoning revisions)
- Updated Cluster Development Law
- Addition of a new Planned Unit Development (PUD) District to replace the existing Planned Development Districts
- Retention of the Riverfront Overlay and Publicly Owned Districts
- Updated Supplementary Regulations
- Future rationalization of the ordinances addressing manufactured home parks, house trailers, camping parks and mobile homes.
- Updated sign regulations
- Future revisions to the religious uses law to make it in conformance with the federal “Religious Land Uses and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA)”
- Updated Administration and Enforcement clauses
- Restoration of Site Plan Review
- Updated sections on Interpretation of Ordinance and Standard Clauses

Updated Cluster Development law (and/or Conservation Subdivision Regulations)

This revision will help encourage compact development and the preservation of open space and natural features in rural areas of the Town. Typical subdivision plans disperse homes evenly across a parcel without taking the natural landscape into consideration. The cluster development law will encourage developers to site homes in order to preserve attractive natural features on the site, such as streams, woodlots, meadows, etc. The first consideration is the maintenance of attractive and valuable common spaces; the individual home parcel is smaller, which enables the remaining lands to be left undeveloped. The presence of valuable and attractive common areas adds value to the development. This approach helps the environment by preserving habitat and natural features; it also helps retain Lewiston’s rural character.

In Lewiston, the cluster development law is designated for larger parcels (minimum of 10 acres) and does not apply within the Rural Residential district (eastern portion of the Town). While not part of the current rezoning effort, the Town should consider establishing rural development guidelines to better direct new development within that area.



Cluster Development (top) vs. Standard Development (bottom) helps preserve open space and natural features

Site Plan Review

The new zoning provisions will also reinstate site plan review in the Town, which the Town of Lewiston currently does not have. Without site plan review, the Town has no authority to control new development if it meets zoning. Site plan review powers will enable a careful assessment of the site's layout, including placement of the buildings, parking, access drives, landscaping, accessory structures, loading docks, infrastructure, stormwater management features, etc. These controls are useful tools to minimize the impacts from development to the surrounding neighborhood. For example, the placement of parking and drives can have significant impacts on neighborhood character, traffic congestion, safety, accommodation of pedestrians and even drainage issues. Recommended procedures, forms and checklists will be provided to the Town to facilitate the process of site plan review.



Site Plan preserving trails, contours, common areas

Revisions to the Planned Development Districts

The Town of Lewiston currently has four Planned Development Districts (PD1, PD2, PD3 and PD4). It is recommended that these designations remain in effect for parcels with that designation, but a new Planned Unit Development District (PUD) be established for future parcels. This district will be a “floating district” that would be applied to a property through a rezoning process to allow for mixed use development on an appropriate site.

Additional Zoning Changes (Immediate)

Sign Law: The zoning changes proposed to be adopted as a part of this Comprehensive Plan Update include a revised signage law. The new sign law is designed to be legally defensible and to meet federal guidelines regarding protected speech.

New District Designations: The proposed new zoning draft includes new zoning districts that could be adopted without affecting current zoning districts. These include the Open Space Preservation and Recreation District (OSPR) and a mining overlay. Future consideration could include a manufactured homes overlay and a landfill overlay.

Supplementary Regulations: The zoning changes will also update the Town’s Supplementary Regulations, replacing the existing regulations with a new section on Supplementary Regulations that is more comprehensive.

Administration & Enforcement Clauses: The zoning changes will provide greater clarity in the administration and enforcement clauses. This will help the Code Enforcement Officer with administering and enforcing the laws of the Town, and facilitate interpretation of the law’s intent.

Additional Zoning Changes (Future)

Zoning Districts: The next challenge for the Town of Lewiston is to address the question of the Town’s zoning districts. The existing zoning districts do not effectively guide development in the Town toward the Town’s preferred vision. At the same time, it is always a controversial issue to change a parcel’s zoning; changing all districts in the Town needs to be handled carefully, with a great deal of public outreach and input to address concerns. The Vision Map contained within this Comprehensive Plan Update is intended to help the Town determine the

type of zoning that should apply within different areas of the Town. While the Vision Map provides guidance, additional study will be required to assign specific zoning districts.

Split Zoning Districts: The Town needs to address how to approach parcels that fall into two or more zoning districts. There are many parcels with split zoning. In many communities, parcels in more than one zoning district receive the zoning category that covers the largest proportion of the parcel. However, in the Town of Lewiston, many of the parcels that currently are zoned for Commercial/Business use are large parcels which typically are designated either residential or agricultural on the back lands which often represent the majority of the site. In effect, this approach would remove much of the business zoning within the Town, by classifying these parcels the same zoning district as the backlands. The Town will need to address this issue in implementing new zoning language.

Special Use Permits: The Town's code currently does not have a section that authorizes special use permits. It is recommended that the proposed new Special Use Permit Law be adopted. In addition, the code should include language in each of the Town's districts identifying which uses would be allowed with a special use permit in that district. At a minimum, there should be standards and criteria established for what uses would be allowed. These criteria provide the Town with greater control over the implementation of problematic uses, facilitating the ability to institute buffers or other controls to minimize impacts from development to neighboring uses. These standards would also provide guidance for the Zoning Board of Appeals so they can issue defensible decisions regarding whether to allow a Special Use Permit for a particular parcel. It is also recommended that the Town sponsor training for the members of the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals on how to legally enforce the use of special use permits.

Mobile Home/ Camping: Smaller scale changes to address in the future are also recommended. The Town has several ordinances that deal with manufactured home parks, house trailers, camping parks and mobile homes. These ordinances are located in different places in the code and there is some confusion created by these overlapping regulations. It is recommended that the current regulations be repealed and consolidated in one location.

Religious Uses: The Town has a Religious Uses law. Since the passage of the federal “Religious Land Uses and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA)” this law may no longer be enforceable. The Town should review this law and either repeal or revise it to be consistent with federal law.

Rural Residential: As noted above in the discussion on cluster development, the Town should consider adopting rural development guidelines to help direct new development within the rural residential area in a manner that preserves its rural character and natural features. Subdivision regulations should strongly encourage maintenance of rural features, such as woodlots, and allow creative site design to promote their preservation.

Summary of Zoning Recommendations from 2000 Plan

Several zoning recommendations were contained in the Town’s 2000 Comprehensive Plan. Some of these recommendations remain relevant, while others are either no longer priorities, or are subsumed under more current recommendations cited above. The following table summarizes the 2000 zoning proposals, along with their status.

Zoning Recommendation from 2000 Plan		Status
D-1	Draft & adopt specific zoning provisions for Coastal Zone Management	
D-2	Draft & adopt major revisions to zoning consistent with Comp Plan	In progress
D-3	Draft revised ordinance requiring 50% to 70% new text:	In progress
	1. Slope protection provisions (Niagara Escarpment, Niagara River shoreline)	Supported
	2. Provisions for Assisted Living Facilities (in proximity to Village, medical facilities)	Future Action
	3. Provisions for Senior Housing Facilities (non-assisted) (in areas with sewers)	Future Action
	4. Reduce number of R-1 zones; provide for wider array of housing types, at densities cited in plan	Future Action
	5. Facilitate adaptive reuse of historic properties while preserving authentic character	Supported – not zoning
	6. Review & update floodplain management provisions; require floodplain boundaries to be defined in major projects	See new FEMA regulations
	7. Reorganize code to make it "user-friendly"	In progress
	8. Review roles of each board & agent responsible for administering code to ensure clarity	Supported – not zoning
	9. Minimize need for cross-referencing but provide cross references where needed	Supported
	10. Provide for a single unified development application & checklist of required submissions	Supported – not zoning
	11. Require submission of engineering plans in CADD & GIS readable format at application and "as-built" stages	In progress

Zoning Recommendations from 2000 Plan		Status
12. Provide regulations for soil mining consistent with NYS DEC regulations	In progress	
13. Develop specific language for manufactured homes consistent with Comp Plan	In progress	
14. Provide for site plan approval regulations	In progress	
15. Provide full range of development definitions	In progress	
16. Integrate the environmental review requirements of SEQR	In progress	
17. Section 30 (Cluster Housing Zone) should be revised to reflect the requirements of NYS Town Law Section 278	Not zoning	
18. Revise language and application procedures for review of projects and actions taken by each of the Boards that administers the zoning code and other development regulations	Future Action	
19. Reformat the code by employing a matrix or tabulation of provisions with columns for Permitted uses, accessory uses, special permit uses, lot sizes, required setbacks and densities	Future Action (with new zones)	
20. For ZBA, provide explicit criteria for area & use variances (consistent with NYS Law)	In progress	
21. Front yard setback provisions in Commercial districts should vary with the function of the roadway, not by zone designation alone	Future Action (new zones)	
22. Landscape, parking & setback provisions in Commercial districts should be updated to reflect contemporary practice & needs of business development	Future Action (new zones)	
23. Revise Planned Development District to provide linkage between land use and intensities and recommendations of Comprehensive Plan. The four variations of this district should be combined into one district, to be used only in areas with public water & sewer	In progress	
24. For Planned Development Districts, revise the application procedure to include Sketch Plan phase	In progress	
25. Eliminate pyramidal zoning in Industrial districts	Future Action (new zones)	
26. Eliminate provisions in code that provides Planning Board with authority for allowing uses in industrial zones not specifically provided in zoning	In progress	
27. Revise supplementary regulations to provide guidance on greater range of uses and update regulations to bring them into closer conformance with current needs & practices. Specific attention to "Home occupation" and "parking" provisions.	In progress	
28. Provide specific language to permit "neo-traditional" design for housing projects within "Suburban Village Residential, Sanborn and Village Residential" areas	Future Action (new zones)	
29. Provide Town Planning Board with blanket authorization to mandate cluster subdivisions in all residential districts	New Cluster law in progress	
30. Include provisions for mandating combined driveways from collector roads and interior connections for all parking lots in non-residential developments	Future Action	
31. Include provisions for "Manufactured Housing" as an overlay district in the "Rural Residential" areas defined in plan	In progress	
32. Provide list of permitted uses in "Rural Agriculture" area with flexibility in ag-related uses. Promote the use and economic viability of agricultural uses consistent with NYS Ag& Markets law.	Future Action (new zones)	
33. Provide for low density residential development on smaller lots within the "Rural Ag" area	Future Action (new zones)	

Zoning Recommendations from 2000 Plan		Status
	34. Provide specific provisions in "Industrial" areas for contouring, revegetation of waste disposal areas	Future Action (new zones)
	35. Research the legal basis for reverting of zoning to original district when no development occurs (reverter clause)	Future Action (new zones)
D-4	Undertake significant community review	In progress
D-5	Produce revised draft based on public comment	In progress
D-6	Produce EAF to assess compliance with Comp Plan	In progress
D-7	Hold Public Hearings & adopt revised zoning code	In progress
D-8	Development fee reference in zoning & fee schedule; "in-lieu" rec fees	In progress
P-7	Produce landscaping, lighting & access management guidelines	Future action

4.2 Recreational Planning

Recreational planning is a priority for the Town of Lewiston. The Town envisions a mix of passive open space and active recreational facilities available for its residents. These facilities would help maintain healthy lifestyles and improve quality of life. An effective trails plan can increase transportation options and support tourism activity in the Town. The Town is host to three State Parks, but has no direct control over the development of facilities within these parks. The following recommendations pertain to recreation in the Town of Lewiston.

Recreation Program Plan: The Town should develop a Recreation Program Plan. The Recreation Program Plan would inventory existing recreational facilities available to residents by type, location, services offered, condition, etc. It would determine an estimate of recreational demand, through recreational standards supplemented with direct input from residents (survey, public meetings, etc.) and from stakeholders involved in recreation in Lewiston (representatives from the Town, from sports organizations, schools, etc.) Based on this information, the report would determine a recreational facilities program that made sense for Lewiston, along with initial conceptual costs.

Trails Plan: Either in conjunction with the Recreation Program Plan or as a separate effort, the Town should investigate a rational Trails Plan. The Trails Plan would provide the Town with a series of recommended trails projects that would help tie together key destinations and activity centers in the Town, and link to the wider trail systems in Niagara County, including the Niagara River Greenway, the Erie Canalway Trail and the Seaway Trail. Having a Trails Plan completed

would give the Town a competitive advantage in seeking funding for trails projects and facilitate filling in gaps in the regional trail system.

State Parks Coordination: There are three State Parks in the Town of Lewiston: Artpark, Joseph Davis State Park and Reservoir State Park. These represent assets for recreational use for residents of the Town. The Town should work with State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to preserve and enhance the recreational and open space resources at these State Parks. In particular, there are significant opportunities for enhanced facilities associated with Joseph Davis State Park. The Town has made an offer to the State of New York to cooperate, allowing increased town involvement in the operations of the park.

Community Center: The Town supports the establishment of a community center for the Town. The Town should consider sponsoring a study to determine appropriate location, programming and design of the facility.

Summary of Recreation Recommendations from 2000 Plan

The Town’s 2000 Comprehensive Plan contained several implementation items relating to recreation. The following table summarizes the 2000 recreation action items, along with their status.

Recreation Recommendations from 2000 Plan		Status
R-1	Support proposed ferry link (Youngstown to N-O-L)	No longer valid
R-2	Prepare and update Recreation Facilities Plan	Supported
R-3	Prepare a joint recreation facilities plan with V. Lewiston, V. Youngstown, T. Porter	Supported
R-4	Initiate a site acquisition process for a community golf course	No longer valid
R-5	Initiate a trail development program & apply for grants for priority segments	Supported
R-6	Initiate acquisition activities for a Community Center site	Supported
R-7	Continue "acquisition" activities for J.B. Davis State Park as a community recreation facility	Supported

4.3 Environmental

The Town of Lewiston has important environmental resources that merit protection and preservation. The Niagara River Gorge, the Escarpment, the Town's stream corridors and significant areas of open space add to the rural character of the Town, enhance environmental quality, promote habitats and contribute the quality of life.

Open Space Greenspace inventory: It is recommended that the Town undertake a comprehensive inventory of the Town's open space and greenspace. Ideally, the inventory would evaluate the importance of each feature, based on its inherent quality (e.g. old growth vs. new growth woodlots) and its relationship to other open spaces in support of creating an integrated, connected network of open space in the Town. The inventory would provide guidance and priorities in regard to preserving particularly important parcels. Once priority parcels are identified, options for their protection include purchase, either directly by the Town or by a partner such as the Western New York Land Conservancy, or conservation easements. The inventory would also be a useful tool in assessing subdivisions and site plans; in many cases, a well-designed site plan can preserve natural features while allowing them to remain in private ownership.

Critical Environmental Area: if particularly sensitive or important areas are identified in the Open Space/ Greenspace inventory, the Town could consider pursuing a designation as a Critical Environmental Area (CEA). This designation provides a more stringent level of scrutiny for any development within the CEA.

Stream corridor overlay: It is recommended that the Town consider adopting a general stream corridor overlay district. Similar to the existing Niagara River Overlay, this district would apply along important drainageways within the Town. It would not affect the underlying zoning of the affected parcels, but it would establish standards, such as set back requirements, to protect these important stream corridors from erosion and encroachment. These best practices would also have the effect of better protecting surrounding properties from flooding.

Escarpment protection: The Town should establish policies and regulations to discourage inappropriate development on the steep slopes of the escarpment. The Province of Ontario has developed best practices guidelines for development along their portion of the escarpment. The

Town should explore adopting similar protections. These policies could also be used to protect important view sheds of and from the escarpment.

Summary of Environmental Recommendations from 2000 Plan

The Town’s 2000 Comprehensive Plan contained several implementation items relating to recreation. The following list summarizes the Environmental Action Items from 2000 Comprehensive Plan.

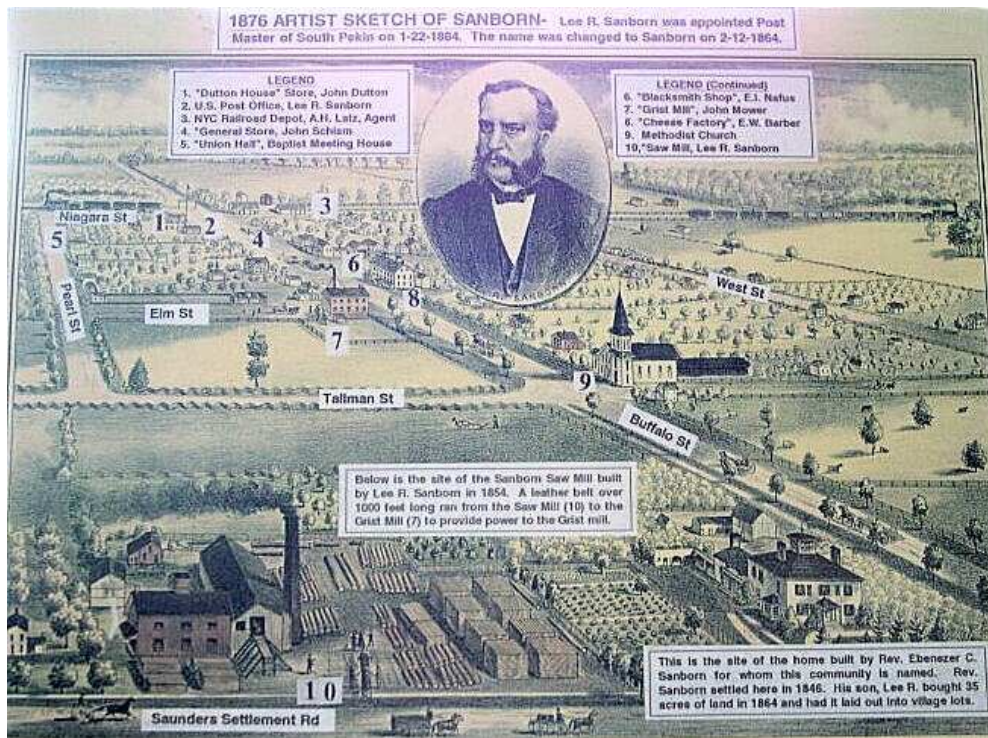
Environmental Recommendations from 2000 Plan		Status
N-1	Re-delineate floodplains* and modify Open Space overlay	Supported
N-2	Adopt "watershed" for drainage planning, assessing runoff implications of development	To be considered
N-3	Draft & implement an Ag conservation easement program	Future action
N-4	Initiate program of monitoring, documenting coastal erosion along the Niagara River	Supported
N-5	Design "development guidelines" brochures for shallow soils, depth to bedrock	Future Action
	(1) Recommendations on structures constructed on grade	
	(2) recommendations on drainage structures required for structures with deep foundations and cellars including structures such as footing drains, sumps and sump pumps	
N-6	Prepare floodplain mitigation plans for Cayuga, Gill and Four-Mile Creeks	Supported
N-7	Develop a purchase of development rights program for "rural agricultural" area	Future Action

* NOTE: FEMA has recently remapped floodplains in Niagara County

4.4 Sanborn Redevelopment

Sanborn is the major hamlet area in the Town. It provides services for surrounding, more rural areas and is a center of identity for that area of the Town. The Town of Lewiston has been making improvements in the hamlet of Sanborn, including streetscaping. The Town should build upon these efforts so that Sanborn remains a vital, attractive place to live. Recommended improvements for the hamlet of Sanborn include:

- Sanborn Redevelopment Plan:** The Town should consider preparing a mini-master plan for the Sanborn area. The Sanborn Redevelopment Plan would address design, landscaping, business development, tourism, parking, pedestrian access and other elements that could strengthen the hamlet area. It would focus on tourism opportunities, including how to take advantage of the existing local features, such as the museum, as well as how to establish stronger physical and conceptual linkages to area attractions, including the Village of Lewiston, the Niagara River Greenway and the Niagara Wine Trail. These improved ties could include improved signage, enhanced marketing and possible trail linkages.



Map of historic Sanborn from the Sanborn Area Historical Society website

- **Heritage:** The hamlet has historic character. The presence of the Town’s History Museum and their improvements adds to the heritage of the area. The Town should consider developing design guidelines so that any improvements complement and do not detract from the historic character of the hamlet. These guidelines would be a resource for residents and business owners, not mandatory.



Sanborn Schoolhouse Museum (from Sanborn Area Historical Society website)

- **“Wayfinding”** The Town should consider establishing better signage and design features to improve visual and physical connections to the hamlet off Route 31 and to Niagara County Community College.
- **Zoning Changes:** A new hamlet district is proposed as a next stage of zoning implementation. The Town should ensure that the new hamlet zoning district is supportive of mixed uses and promotes the historic, traditional character of the area. It should explicitly allow “Neo-traditional” design, supporting a more traditional development style over standard suburban styles.
- The Town should also consider establishing a zoning overlay district for Route 429 and possibly Route 31 to establish better design standards for this area.

The 2000 Plan did not include any specific recommendations or implementation actions for the Sanborn hamlet.

4.5 Village of Lewiston

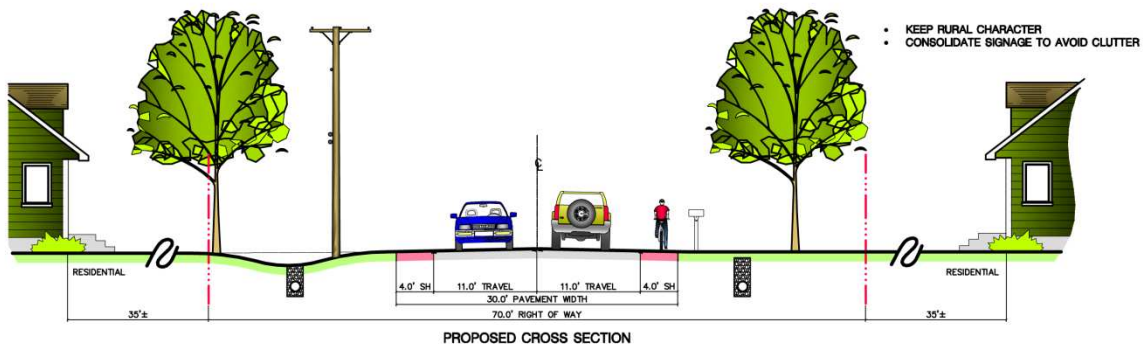
The Village of Lewiston is an important aspect within the Town of Lewiston. While acknowledging that the Village is an independent municipality with its own development regulations and Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Lewiston should adopt policies and standards that complement and support the integrity and vitality of the Village. Development in the Town adjacent to the Village of Lewiston should mirror Village development patterns. Street layout should blend into the existing village grid of streets, and unconnected cul-de-sacs should be avoided.

The 2000 Plan did not include any specific recommendations or implementation actions for the Sanborn hamlet.

4.6 Transportation

There are a number of transportation recommendations the Town of Lewiston should consider addressing.

Rural Roadway Standards: There is increasing understanding in transportation planning for the importance of what is known as “context sensitive design.” What this means is that the design of a roadway should reflect its location, or context. Urban streets should have sidewalks, curbs and streetscaping improvements. Rural roadways, on the other hand, should reflect their more naturalized context. Swales are preferable to curbs and gutters for directing stormwater. Travel lanes for cars can be narrower to accommodate a wider shoulder for bicyclists. Street trees are planted in a more naturalistic fashion, rather than in formal rows at standardized distances.



Sample of roadway with rural character from *Town of Amherst Context Sensitive Design report*.

Problem Intersections: The Town should work with the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council and the State Department of Transportation to get problem intersections addressed.

Bike lanes: Where feasible, there should be wide shoulders along rural roadways in the Town to accommodate bike lanes. Bicycle tourism is an increasingly popular pastime, and there are significant numbers of long-distance bicyclists taking advantage of the attractive scenery and attractions accessible by bike in Niagara County. Roadways should be appropriately designed to accommodate these bicyclists safely.

Access management: Access management advocates for limiting and controlling access to major roadways through carefully planning where driveways occur and facilitating access between commercial properties on busy streets. There are areas within the Town of Lewiston that could benefit from access management standards. These standards can be implemented on a case-by-case basis through improved site planning standards, or more comprehensively through zoning overlays in targeted areas of the Town. Areas likely to benefit from these standards include Route 104 (Ridge Road) and Route 31 (Saunders Settlement Road) and possibly Route 429, Route 265 and Hoover Road.

4.7 Agriculture

Agriculture is important in the Town of Lewiston. It contributes to rural character and is an important element of the Town's economic base. It provides employment opportunities on farms, at road-side stands, at wineries and at agricultural support businesses. The Town should support agricultural uses and users and avoid policies that directly disadvantage farming in the Town. The Town should encourage the continued designation of lands within State Agricultural Districts under Agriculture and Markets Law (Article 25AA). Development on actively farmed lands (lands under cultivation) should be avoided. As long-term tools, in the event of stronger pressures on agricultural lands, more aggressive tools, such as the purchase of agricultural easements, should be explored.

4.8 Niagara River Greenway corridor

The Village of Lewiston is host to a significant portion of the Niagara River Greenway, a segment that includes significant views and ecological, historic and cultural importance. This river frontage contributes to the Town's character and also has potential for cultural and ecological tourism.

Greenway Projects: The Town has access to Niagara River Greenway funds to help support regionally important projects associated with the Niagara River that are consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan. Such projects would include some of the concepts listed below, such as coastal protection, a regional trail system, and a waterfront park. To have the greatest local and regional impact, projects should be designed to complement other activities along the Greenway.

Coastal Protection: The Niagara River Gorge is a regionally important environmental feature. The Town should consider working with adjacent communities and non-profit partners, such as the Buffalo-Niagara Riverkeeper, on a program of monitoring erosion, improving ecological conditions and fostering the stewardship of the gorge.

Improve Riverfront Trail: It is a regional priority to establish a Riverfront Trail along the length of not only the Niagara River, but the Lake Ontario and Lake Erie shorelines as well. This trailway would link a wealth of regional assets, ranging from historic sites, recreational resources, cities and villages and tourism attractions. The Town of Lewiston should work with other communities to implement and improve the Riverfront Trail. Improvements would include better physical conditions in areas where it is substandard (e.g. inadequate widths, not preferred routing, gaps), as well as improved support facilities along its length (e.g. overlooks, rest areas, signage, etc.)

State Parks: Joseph Davis State Park represents significant opportunities for improvement, and could be a much greater asset for local residents than it currently is. The Town should work with New York State Parks Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to develop appropriate plans for this facility. Reservation State Park and Artpark are also assets for residents, and the Town should remain involved in plans for these facilities as well.

Scenic overlooks: The views along the Niagara River gorge in the Town of Lewiston are dramatic. Scenic overlooks are available in some locations along the length of the River. These viewing opportunities should be preserved. There may be opportunities for better support facilities (e.g. parking) in some locations, although these improvements must be carefully planned to avoid negative impacts to neighbors.

Connections: The Town should explore ways to develop connections east from River into Town. This will help build greater access for local residents and will also open tourism opportunities into the Town. For example, there should be ties to the Niagara County Wine Trail from the waterfront through the Town of Lewiston. Access to Bond Lake Park, Sanborn, Niagara Community College and other local assets could also be explored.

Riverfront Park: The Town owns a small parcel on the Niagara River in the vicinity of Stella Niagara. This site could be redeveloped as a small trailhead park, which would enhance the riverfront trail system in the Town.

Summary of “Planning” Recommendations from 2000 Plan

The Town’s 2000 Comprehensive Plan had limited input on this issue. The following table summarizes the 2000 action items for “planning”, which correspond most closely to the Niagara River Greenway.

Recommendations for “Planning” from 2000 Comprehensive Plan		Status
P-6	Negotiate with NYPA for host community funds (projects listed)	
	A. 18-hole golf course tied to a community center	NA
	B. Artpark Festival Center (yr-round)	NA
	C. Reservoir Office Park land	
	D. Waterfront Park	Supported
	E. Trailway system: Gorgeview Trail, link to Canadian trail system, Robert Moses trailway, 5 th Street Trailway	Supported

4.9 Economic Development/ Industrial Development

Economic and industrial development provide tax base for the Town that helps alleviate pressures on residents. It also provides an employment base for local residents. At the same time, it is important to carefully plan for economic and industrial development to minimize impacts on surrounding uses.

Design Standards: To minimize the potential from adverse impacts to neighboring properties, the Town should institute standards for commercial and industrial development. Sites should be required to have adequate buffers, either through landscaping or distance, to protect neighbors from activities on site, such as parking, loading docks, storage and dumpsters. Land use regulations should enforce appropriately scaled development. The Town should consider implementing design standards for commercial development to control architectural features, landscaping, and other character-related factors.

Zoning: In the future re-zoning of districts in the Town, the Town should designate priority lands for commercial or industrial development. The district boundaries should reflect market-realities: they need to have adequate road frontage, adequate depth and be appropriately sited.

Roadway Capacities: As a parallel consideration, land that is designated for industrial or larger-scale economic development should be located on roadways with sufficient capacity to handle anticipated traffic. The roadways need to be able to adequately handle expected traffic volumes. For industrial development, they need to be built to a standard that can handle truck traffic. Failure to meet these standards will result in higher costs to the Town for road improvements to address deficiencies.

Summary of Economic Development Recommendations from 2000 Plan

The Town's 2000 Comprehensive Plan contained several implementation items relating to recreation. The following table summarizes the 2000 action items pertaining to economic development, along with their status.

Recommendations for Economic Development in 2000 Comprehensive Plan		Status
E-1	Actively participate in the development of the Niagara County Strategic Plan	Supported
E-2	Strategic relationship with NCIDA to fund enhanced marketing of economic assets, incl. agriculture	Supported
E-3	Undertake an Artpark expansion feasibility study	NA
E-4	University/Lewiston Task Force to explore a "University Research Park"	
E-5	Initiate process of acquiring and developing the "Reservoir Office Park"	
E-6	Determine availability of funding for Town projects under various sources	Supported
E-4	Involve Power Authority, City of Niagara Falls, NYS Thruway Authority	Supported
E-5	Acquire & develop Reservoir Office Park	

4.10 Infrastructure

In general, the Town has maintained adequate water and waste water infrastructure. The Town should continue to pursue general maintenance activities to maintain the integrity and efficiency of the systems. It is recommended that the Town provide sanitary sewer to the entire hamlet of Sanborn, particularly on the north side of Route 31, where there is increased development pressure but no sewer service. The Town should also evaluate whether it makes sense to upgrade the capacity rating of the Town’s treatment plant. Relative to waterline, it is recommended that the Town continue, over time, to replace the older sections of watermain that are less than 8-inches in diameter.

The following table summarizes implementation items relating to infrastructure in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendation for Infrastructure in 2000 Comprehensive Plan		Status
I-1	Initiate preliminary engineering to resolve pressure & fire flow problems	Completed*
I-2	Implement program to identify cross connections between sanitary and storm sewers	On-going
I-3	Initiate conceptual design for providing sewer service to proposed industrial areas	Future
I-4	Begin negotiations to bring landfill leachate to WWTP via a pipeline (avoid trucking)	NA
I-5	Continue regular sampling of water quality for lead, copper & asbestos	Continue
I-6	Initiate a program for systematic replacement of undersized waterlines	Continue

Recommendation for Infrastructure in 2000 Comprehensive Plan		Status
I-7	Renegotiate agreement for cost sharing for maintenance of transmission mains	NA
I-8	Revise Chapter 21 of Code re sewer service extension outside Town	Future

* initial areas completed; Town will continue to monitor and address this issue

4.11 Heritage

Lewiston is a Town rich in heritage. It has many locally significant buildings. The Frontier House, in the Village of Lewiston, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There are also numerous areas throughout the Town that have archeological significance.

Local Designation: In support of heritage efforts, the Town could consider creating an inventory of locally significant buildings. “Heritage Homes” could obtain a local designation or plaque highlighting their historic character.

Consideration in Development Review: The Town could adopt a local requirement that development adjacent to properties with local historic significance must consider potential impacts to these properties.

Best Practices: As a resource for local property owners, the Town could explore working with the Village to establish a set of “best practices” for property maintenance of historic homes. It would provide information about how to maintain historic character when making improvements.

Private-Public Partnerships: There are many residents who are actively involved in heritage issues through a variety of private, non-profit organizations. The Town should be supportive of efforts within their jurisdiction from these organizations, such as the Sanborn Historical Society.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

5.1 Introduction

A Comprehensive Plan is classified as a Type 1 action under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). As such, a full assessment of the potential environmental impacts associated with the document is required. The Town of Lewiston conducted an assessment of Environmental Impacts on the 2000 Comprehensive Plan and accepted the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement.

Rather than prepare a separate Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) for this Update, this Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan Update has been set up to represent a Supplemental GEIS for the plan. This format simplifies the review of the document and streamlines the SEQRA process. Chapter 3 provides a description of changes to the environmental setting of the Town of Lewiston since the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. It provides information on the following:

- Natural Environment (Chapter 3.2)
- Existing Land Use characteristics (Chapter 3.3)
- Recreation and Open Space Inventory (Chapter 3.4)
- Population and Housing Characteristics (Chapter 3.5)
- Cultural and Historic Resources (Chapter 3.6)
- Community Facilities (Chapter 3.7)
- Traffic Circulation and infrastructure (Chapter 3.8)
- Growth Management Regulations (including zoning) (Chapter 3.9)

5.2 Potential Significant Adverse Environmental Impacts

The intent of the Comprehensive Plan Update is to enhance environmental conditions and control growth in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts in the Town. It is intended to promote appropriate land uses, improve conditions in the Town and lead to beneficial impacts. The original document was found to meet these intentions.

The Town of Lewiston Comprehensive Plan Update will have no direct impact on the physical environment of the community. It does not require the approval of any development activity, either private or public. Overall, the plan is expected to have a beneficial impact on the community. Nevertheless, it is important to discuss potential adverse impacts that may arise from changes between the 2000 Comprehensive Plan and this Update.

5.2.1 Short Term, Long Term and Cumulative Impacts

The Comprehensive Plan is designed to properly guide growth in the Town to lessen the negative impacts of land use and development decisions. Based on the environmental setting of the Town of Lewiston, the following potentially significant adverse environmental impacts could occur if the community did not plan adequately and did not provide the proper tools for the management of growth and development. The discussion follows the format of the Full Environmental Assessment form (SEQR Areas of Review). The following are the potential short term and long term impacts due to present growth patterns and how they may be affected by the actions of this Plan:

A. Impacts on Land

- This Plan Update is consistent with the 2000 Plan in regard to impacts on land. It recommends development occur primarily in areas where there is infrastructure capable of supporting it, and recommends the protection of important conservation lands from inappropriate development, especially sensitive environmental lands, such as the escarpment and the gorge.

B. Impacts on Water

- This Plan Update is consistent with the 2000 Plan in regard to impacts on water. It recommends protection of floodplains, areas of Federal and State wetlands, the Niagara River corridor and creeks within the Town.
- The Plan Update is consistent with the 2000 Plan in regard to public water. It is recognized that improper planning and development activity could adversely impact municipal water and sewer systems and cause capacity issues.

C. Impacts on Plants and Animals

- This Plan Update is consistent with the 2000 Plan in regard to protection of habitats for plants and animals.

D. Impacts on Agricultural Land Resources

- This Plan Update is consistent with the 2000 Plan in regard to agricultural lands in the Town.

E. Impacts on Aesthetic Resources

- This Plan Update is consistent with the 2000 Plan in regard to aesthetic resources. It advocates protection of important scenic view. It promotes protection of cultural and heritage resources in the Town.

F. Impacts on Historic and Archaeological Resources

- The Town is home to several important historic and archeological resources. This Plan Update, like the 2000 Plan, promotes their protection.

G. Impact on Open Space and Recreation

- The Town has major areas of open space that are important for rural character. This Plan Update, like the 2000 Plan, promotes protection of these assets.
- The Plan Update recommends improvements to the Town's park and trail systems, improving recreational resources in the Town.

H. Impact on Transportation

- This Plan Update is consistent with the 2000 Plan in regard to transportation resources.

I. Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood

- This Plan Update is consistent with the 2000 Plan in regard to growth and character.

5.3 Adverse Environmental Impacts That Can Not Be Avoided

With or without the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Update, the Town will continue to have new development and redevelopment that will affect the environment and the character of the Town. The adoption of this Plan will allow the Town to better manage growth and development and reduce potential negative environmental impacts. It is emphasized that this assessment is limited to the potential impacts from the adoption of this Update, and does not constitute endorsement of any specific projects that may be recommended in this document. All future physical improvements arising from this document will be subject to SEQR based on their individual merits.

5.4 Growth Inducing Aspects of the Plan

Most of the recommendations outlined in this Plan Update will help to better direct growth within the community. Certain implementation actions will act to encourage certain types of development or redevelopment in specific areas of the Town. The preferred vision outlined in this Update was designed to accommodate growth in appropriate areas, based on a desire to minimize adverse environmental impacts associated with new development in the Town.

5.5 Mitigation Measures

The recommendations contained in this Update are intended to reduce the potential negative impacts that could be caused by improper planning and development in the community. A range of techniques and tools are outlined to help promote good planning in the Town of Lewiston. To the greatest extent possible upon, the Town's zoning code should be used to direct development to appropriate areas and to provide controls to minimize adverse impacts from development. Specific requirements for development within flood-prone areas should be developed, consistent with FEMA guidelines. Sediment and erosion control measures should be designed to limit run-off, consistent with State standards.

5.6 Evaluation of Alternatives

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan included an extensive evaluation of several alternatives. This Update is consistent with the selected alternative. Throughout the planning process, alternatives were evaluated, and the recommendations in this Plan represent the concepts that best help the Town to achieve its preferred vision. Recommendations and implementation alternatives were evaluated for not only their desired results, but also their impact to the environment, the needs of local residents, private property rights, and the vitality of the community.

6.0 Implementation

6.1 Introduction

A Comprehensive Plan is of limited use unless it is implemented. A primary role of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide guidance for how to deal with future land use decisions and actions. This Update explicitly builds upon the work of the prior Plan and includes a number of zoning changes within the Town, demonstrating clearly that the Town of Lewiston is taking a proactive approach to implementation. An effective Comprehensive Plan, however, is not solely focused on zoning. The Plan should also be considered a foundation for future decision-making on a range of actions. By using the Vision Statement as guidance, the Plan provides town leadership with direction for addressing major priorities and issues for the Town. The recommendations also suggest a number of projects or activities for the Town to undertake to appropriately direct growth and redevelopment, preserve the character of the Town and improve the local quality of life.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan Update establishes initial steps the Town should undertake to facilitate implementation of the Plan.

6.2 Getting Started: First Steps

The first steps in beginning to implement the Town's Comprehensive Plan Update involve official adoption of the Update and distribution of the document to local decision-makers. The following discussion outlines an implementation framework for the Town of Lewiston over the next year and beyond.

Adoption: The Town Board will pass a resolution to formally adopt the Comprehensive Plan Update. This action gives the Comprehensive Plan the force of law.

Distribution: Copies of the final Comprehensive Plan should be provided to Town leaders such as the Town Board, the Town Department Heads, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals members, and members of other relevant Committees or organizations. This action ensures that all decision-makers are informed about the Town's goals and vision.

Coordination: The Town must work to coordinate actions with other governmental agencies, such as Niagara County, the Village of Lewiston and the adjoining Towns. It is also important to maintain open lines of communication with various State agencies; Lewiston is particularly influenced by State lands, including three State Parks and the Power Authority lands. Strong communication with the Town’s legislative delegation can also be helpful in generating support for specific projects. These state and local partners are potential supporters, either organizationally or financially, for specific actions recommended in the Plan.

Annual Action Plan It is the responsibility of the Town Board to move forward with implementation of the plan. This entails as a first step, the development of an Action Plan for the next year. The Comprehensive Plan contains many recommendations, and not everything can be accomplished at once. The Town Board should formulate a targeted list of activities to be accomplished in the first year. This list should reflect the current priorities of the Town, and it should be based on a realistic assessment of existing capacities in terms of budget and personnel. The goal is to select a few issues where the Town can make significant progress. The Action Plan should include the items that the Board feels most strongly about, because there is more likely to be progress on items that are Board priorities. The list should also include a few items that can be easily accomplished to help build a sense of momentum and a list of successes.

Assignments: In developing the Action Plan, the Board should decide how to best allocate assignments. For each item in the Action Plan, the Board should assign a sponsor or “champion” who will take responsibility to keep the issue moving forward. This can be a Board member, a staff person, a Planning Board member or a local citizen. Having an assigned “champion” greatly increases the likelihood of success.

6.3 Moving Forward – Next Steps

After adoption and distribution of the Update, the next step is to ensure there are adequate resources behind the implementation of the plan.

Budgeting: The Town Board should establish a budget for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The budget should address funds for capital expenditures on specific projects, the funding

of implementation activities such as studies, and administrative costs associated with implementation, such as legal assistance or match requirements for grant programs. Many recommended actions can be accomplished with little to no cash investment, but there needs to be a realistic assessment of actions that do require resources, particularly capital investments. Strategic phasing of certain projects may be required. Proactively budgeting for these activities helps ensure progress is made.

Partnering: The Town Board should identify potential partners to help accomplish their goals. These can be private organizations who are championing a specific cause, partner municipalities, such as the Village or the County, or State agencies, depending on the nature of the activity. For example, the Sanborn Historical Society would be a valuable partner for any activities associated with the hamlet and should be involved in Town activities in that neighborhood.

Communication: The Town Board is the central clearinghouse for issues in the Town. The Board should seek out ideas and recommendations from Town residents and staff, and, as noted above, actively coordinate with and other organizations and groups that are addressing similar issues.

Tools: The Town should consider reviewing existing procedures ensure their consistency with the Comprehensive Plan Update. It may be beneficial to develop forms, checklists or other tools to help guide local decision making.

Monitoring: On an annual basis, the Town Board should assess progress toward implementation actions and develop a new Action Plan allocating priorities and assignments for the upcoming year. This monitoring helps the Town keep track of progress made – or not made, and revalidates that the list of activities on the Action Plan remains the most important issues to address. It is likely that the Action Plan items will need readjustment periodically to reflect available resources, interests of active volunteers, local priority issues, etc.

Milestones: It is important to recognize and celebrate successes on a regular basis. This recognition helps maintain momentum and enthusiasm, and provides a sense of accomplishment. The Board should establish milestones to help maintain accountability. Large projects may need

to be broken into achievable components to help make them more manageable. These targets help keep the plan on track.

Advocacy: The Town Board has standing to advocate for the projects recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. The Town Board’s advocacy of the Plan and its recommendations demonstrates commitment which can be very helpful in applying for grants and other support. Continued advocacy with County, regional and State representatives will keep them aware of the Town’s priorities and vision, and may lead to assistance toward achieving the Town’s goals.

Committees: Designated committees to concentrate on specific implementation actions can facilitate implementation. Committees can compile and organize necessary information. They can bring a fresh range of perspectives and expertise to a problem, and they enable the Town to tap the assistance of committed individuals.

Intergovernmental Relations: As stated in New York State Town Law, if any other governmental agency has plans for a capital project within the Town, it must take the Town’s Comprehensive Plan into consideration in its planning. This provides the Town with greater leverage in seeking to guide actions by other agencies in a manner that best supports its goals.

Comprehensive Plan Updates: The Town of Lewiston has been very proactive about evaluating and updating its Comprehensive Plan. This policy should be continued into the future.

6.4 Funding Resources

The Town will need to seek outside resources to accomplish all the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. It is important to stay informed about potential funding sources for implementation efforts. There are a number of federal and state programs that offer funding for planning, design and/or capital projects. Funding programs have different protocols and criteria, and proposed projects should be structured to target the grantors priorities and requirements. Identifying and taking advantage of funding opportunities can be a very effective means of implementing the Plan and achieving the Town’s goals for the future. The following outlines some available funding resources.

- **Niagara River Greenway Funds:** The Town of Lewiston is one of the members of the Standing Committee and is eligible for these funds. Projects must be consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan, which specifies a number of criteria. The types of projects that would be consistent include ecological projects, regional trail connections, and wayfinding, among others.
- **Parks Development Program (Environmental Protection Fund):** This program offers matching grants through the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for planning, designing or constructing parks and recreation projects. These grants are useful for achieving parks and trails design, renovation and development.
- **Recreational Trails:** This program is funded through the Federal Highway Administration, with applications managed by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. It funds acquisition, development, rehabilitation, and/or maintenance of trails for recreational use. Projects must be consistent with the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), but a wide variety of trail projects are included in that document.
- **Historic Preservation Program:** New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation also offers a matching grant program to improve, protect, preserve, rehabilitate or restore historic properties. Properties must be listed on the National and/or State Registers of Historic Places. Applicants must be municipalities or not-for-profits with an ownership interest in the property.
- **Parks Acquisition Grants:** The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation will provide funds for municipalities to acquire or obtain permanent easements for lands intended for parks, recreation or conservation uses.
- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG):** The Town of Lewiston is eligible for CDBG funding through the New York State Office of Community Renewal. Grants are in support of affordable housing, improved living environments and expanded economic opportunities, particularly for residents with low- to moderate incomes. Eligible projects include project to eliminate slums or blight, public infrastructure

improvements that benefit low- to moderate income households, or projects that address serious threats to public health or safety. The CDBG program also offers a Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) that can be used to help evaluate the community development needs of the municipality.

- **Local Government Efficiency Grants:** These grants offer funding to explore or accomplish shared services, cooperative agreements and other means of streamlining governmental services. They are designed to promote lowered costs through cooperation in providing services between two or more municipalities.
- **Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program:** There have been two rounds of this federal grant program and future rounds are possible. Grants were available for planning, designing or implementing surface transportation projects, such as streetscapes, bridge repair, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and highway reconstruction. They are highly competitive, and grants with the greatest chance of success show evidence of strong community support, promote sustainability and livable communities, and increase economic competitiveness.
- **U.S. Housing and Urban Development Sustainable Communities funding:** This highly competitive program is aimed at fostering neighborhood redevelopment. The program is focused on reducing barriers to achieve affordable, economically vital and sustainable communities.

This list is not all inclusive and there are other programs that provide potential sources of funding for implementation efforts. The Town should also actively investigate member item grants through their New York State representation, as well as private foundation funding for specific projects that fall within the interests of those sources.