

155-060

volume 1  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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**T O W N   O F   N I A G A R A**

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**Niagara County**

**New York**



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16. Abstracts  <p>Contained in this report are the first and second phases of the Town's Comprehensive Plan - the background studies and the Comprehensive Plan itself. The Comprehensive Plan was prepared on the basis of information found during the preparation of the background studies and makes recommendations in the form of land use, traffic circulations and community facilities. The background studies, which appear first in the report include information on existing land use, physical features, housing, and circulation and transportation. Also included is a study of Military Road. A list of Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Plan were developed as part of the planning program.</p>			
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Background Studies</u>	
Existing Land Use Analysis	1
Physical Features	13
Circulation and Transportation	23
Military Road Study	47
Housing Analysis	91
<u>Comprehensive Plan</u>	
Introduction to the Plan	103
Purposes of Planning	103
Functions of the Comprehensive Plan	104
Content of the Comprehensive Plan	104
Land Use Plan	106
Circulation Plan	114
Community Facilities	120
Housing	24
Making the Comprehensive Plan Work	25
Regulatory Devices	27
Conclusion	28



## THE NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Since World War II, suburban residential, commercial and industrial growth has been moving steadily outward from the Buffalo-Niagara Falls Metropolitan Area into areas which has heretofore been rural in nature. Within the last five to ten years, this decentralization has been felt in the rural areas of Niagara, Genessee and Orleans counties. Within the next two decades, sustained pressures for growth will be felt in portions of Niagara County once far removed from the major concentrations of development. The increasing consumption of land in the County emphasizes the need for land use policies that will lead to a more prudent employment of our land, water and natural resources, particularly following the development of regional utility systems.

The municipality is fixed to the land. A municipality's only inherent possession is land and certain limited rights to regulate the use of its land. Land is the foundation of a municipality's physical, economic, and spiritual growth. Misuse of the land can become a community liability for decades to come. Similarly, enduring community assets can result from the wise employment of land. It is, therefore, not only important but imperative that the use of land be intelligently planned for the maximum benefit to the Town of Hartland.

Business and industrial firms, as well as individual homeowners, are all engaged in looking into the future from time to time in order to provide some direction to their day-to-day activities. Due to its size and limited flexibility, however, a community should think at least twenty years into the future. The Comprehensive Plan can provide this insight and direction for anticipating and guiding development into the future years.

## ADVANTAGES OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Niagara can help guide day-to-day activities in the following ways:

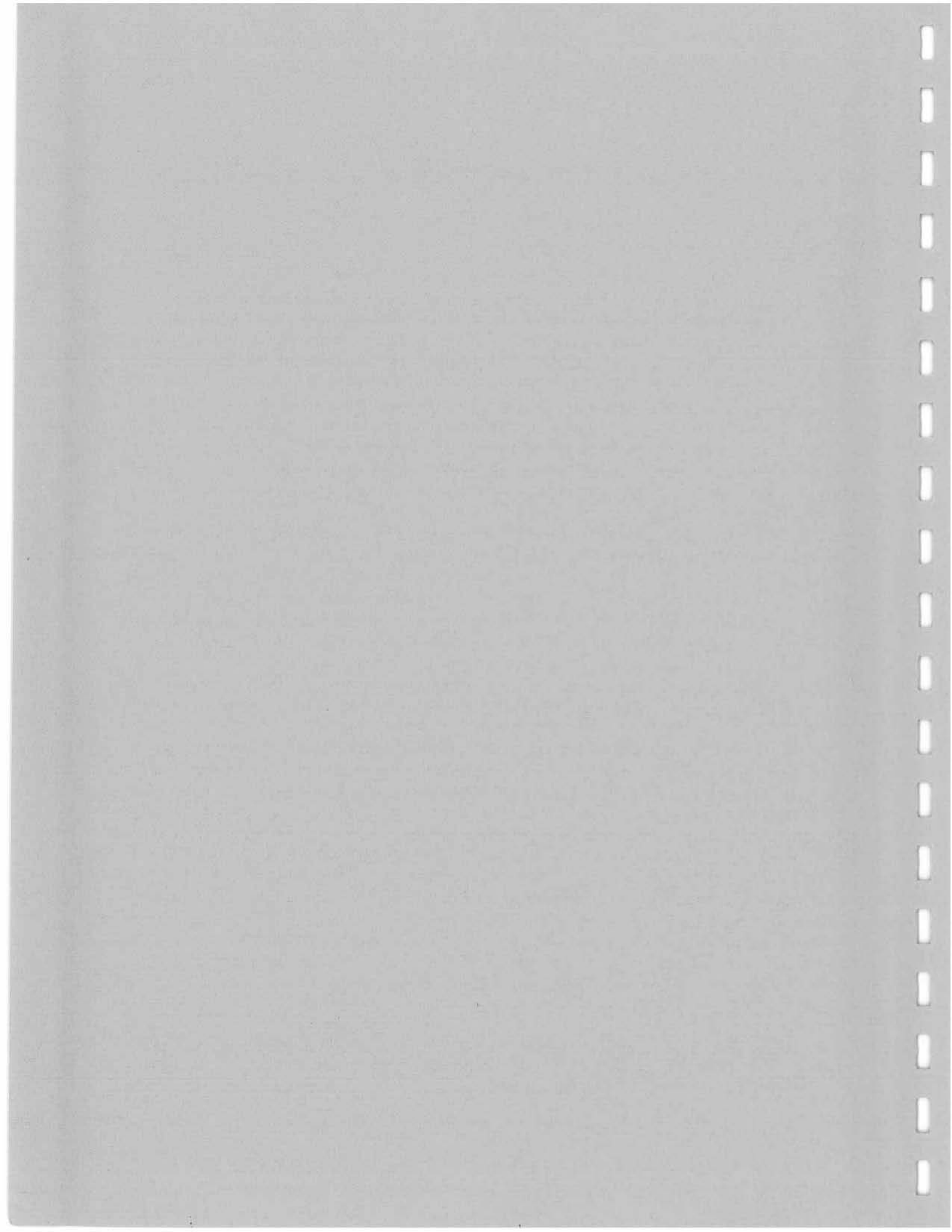
- o By dealing with minor problems so that they do not become major problems in the long-range future,
- o By making the most of recognized opportunities for a better Town in the years ahead;
- o By being prepared thus limiting the impact of changes which can be foreseen which will occur in the future,
- o By shaping new development to fit the Town's character and future needs,
- o By stabilizing public and private investment values in land for future years, and
- o By guiding both public and private action to save money, time and effort.

The short-range and the long-range aim of the Plan is simply to make the Town a better place in which to live.





**BACKGROUND STUDIES**  
Existing Land Use



## EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

Before an analysis for the Comprehensive Plan can begin, an identification of existing uses of land within the Town must be made. Since a primary purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is the recommended designation of areas that can best support various types of additional urban development, an analysis or assessment of the growth that is presently in existence is necessary. The Comprehensive Plan will be effective only if developed from the existing patterns within the community and related to present trends, features and opportunities inherent within the Town. The pressures for more and more development are expected to be as great in the Town of Niagara as anywhere within the Niagara Frontier. It is therefore necessary to determine where the various types of growth should take place to provide the most economically, socially and physically desirable environment possible.

To provide accurate, up-to-date information as background for the Land Use Analysis, a survey of land use patterns was conducted by the consultant in September 1970. This field survey recorded how each parcel of land within the Town of Niagara was utilized, regardless of property ownership. The results of the survey were discussed with the Town Planning Board after being graphically represented on a Town base map. The resulting map is called the Existing Land Use Map. Each land use was placed in one of nine categories or classifications which is discussed in a later section of this report. The classification system with its accompanying identification permits immediate visual analysis of the use and extent of such land use within any area of the Town.

The Existing Land Use Map is one of the foremost tools in the planning process. It illustrates the existing activity centers, areas of potential development, physical problem areas and important land use relationships which must be considered in the anticipated future development of the Town. Because of rapid urban change in the Town of Niagara, the Existing Land Use Map should be retained as a record and as an indicator for later versions of land use as to where growth initially occurred up through 1970 for comparison of growth in later years. It is recommended that subsequent land use changes be continually recorded (mapped) to keep the Existing Land Use Map information current. A transparent overlay placed on top of the original map is suggested.

### LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

As previously mentioned, each use recorded during the land use survey was classified into one of nine categories. By classifying the uses into general categorical breakdowns,

a comparison can be made between various uses to determine the extent of development by each category. A further comparison will be made later in this report between a past land use survey and the present survey. The land use categories are as follows.

### Residential

Single- and Two-Family - A residential building containing one or two dwelling units as the build's principal use.

Multi-Family - A residential building containing three or more dwelling units as the principal use.

Mobile Home Park - A group of two or more individual mobile homes on the same parcel.

### Commercial

A parcel of land or building where goods and/or services are offered for sale to the public. Examples of this type of use include offices, banks, shopping centers, clinics, personal and repair services, retail trade establishments, motels and service stations.

### Industrial

Land and structures used by private enterprise for the manufacture, fabrication, construction, storage and/or assembly of industrial products and material as well as the extraction or removal of natural resources from a site.

### Public and Quasi-Public

Buildings and parcels of land which are used, owned and/or maintained by the State or Federal governments or the Town of Niagara for the general use of its residents. This classification includes schools, parks, military installations, \* airports, fire stations, and other Town buildings. Also included in this classification are institutional uses, i.e., parcels of land used by organizations which are generally open to the public, but some form of membership, association or affiliation is usually required. Examples include churches, cemeteries, fraternal and service organizations.

\*Falcon Manor, the Federal housing project on Tuscarora Road, is included as multi-housing rather than as a military installation because of its use in computing land use quantities.

### Undeveloped Land

Land not directly used for, or by, urban development.

Agricultural - That land and related structures and equipment used for crop production and/or animal husbandry.

Vacant - Includes water and land areas which are idle, not currently being used for any recognizable purpose.

### EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS

The Town of Niagara is located within the northwestern corner of the Niagara Frontier. The Town is easterly of and adjacent to the City of Niagara Falls and approximately ten miles northwesterly of the City of Buffalo. The Town is not uniformly populated, principally because of the proximity of and access to Niagara Falls in the western half of the Town and the accompanying westerly, well-developed street system. The eastern approximately one-half of the Town is predominantly occupied by the Niagara Falls International Airport and its accompanying military installations. Generally, the Town is intensively developed in two areas, west of the west end of the International Airport south of Lockport Road, with the second area located in the west end of the Town, north of Lockport Road and generally west of Military Road.

The Town contains approximately 5,660 acres of land, 54 percent or 3,060 acres of which are developed for urban uses. (See Table 1.) The remaining 2,599 acres (45.7 percent) are used for agricultural production or are unused. The majority of land unused for development occurs throughout the Town, with only limited agricultural production. The northcentral and northeast areas of the Town are the principal remaining significant areas of crop production and rural environment.

### Residential Land

Residential development in the Town accounts for approximately 780 acres of land, or 25 percent of the total developed area. These figures include all forms of residences within the Town as single-family, two-family and apartments, including the housing in Falcon Manor on Tuscarora Road. It also includes houses that were under construction at the time of the field survey.

There were three significant areas of new residential growth identified within the Town at the time of the field survey, being located generally in the (a) southcentral area,

between Military Road and Porter Road; (b) the second in the westcentral portion, bounded by Military, Packard, Haseley and Lockport Roads; and (c) the third area in the north-central part of the Town, generally north of Lockport and east of Military Roads, paralleling Grauer Road and Colonial Drive. A very limited amount of multi-family apartment housing has been constructed thus far in the Town, to an extent of two percent of all developed land. This includes the new Inland Garden project presently under construction, and Falcon Manor, which is a special purpose housing installation.

### Commercial Land

Commercial development has generally developed in two major areas, (a) on Hyde Park Boulevard, adjacent to the City of Niagara Falls; and (b) along Military Road throughout its full length through the Town. Commercial development, to a much lesser degree, is located on Porter and Packard Roads. Commercial land uses account for almost ten percent (9.7) of the total developed area of the Town, which is unusually high for a community in close proximity to a large metropolitan area and its shopping facilities. Part of the reason for this situation is the high number of new or near-new shopping plazas along Military Road, most of which are relatively small, but numerous, and in unusually close proximity to one another. There is evidence from a visual inspection of Military Road of at least three periods of development. The first period was dominated by a mixture of small houses and neighborhood-type shops, many probably operated as part of a residence; the second period saw the development of small, independent retail shops and service buildings, generally built close to the road, with little control of vehicular access and minimal land designed for off-street parking. The third commercial developmental phase is taking place at present, with the design and construction of larger integrated shopping plazas, with deep setbacks for large parking lots and control of access to the highway. Although the present system of plaza construction is superior to the two previous periods, access to one shopping center adjacent to another is difficult, especially without left-hand turning lanes or other control devices.

### Industrial Land

The Town of Niagara has an unusually large amount of industrial land, partially due to the frequency and size of land areas devoted to electrical power transmission easements. Twenty-six percent of the total developed land area within the Town is devoted to all forms of industrial land use, including both extensive uses, such as auto salvage yards, truck terminals, industrial waste and slag piles, to intensive uses, such as concrete and steel fabrication and other heavy industrial processes and products. Also included in the industrial classification is the rock quarrying operation in the northeastern part of the Town.

Industrial development in the Town has been closely related to the City of Niagara

Falls for at least two reasons -- firstly, because of the availability of transportation facilities; and secondly, because of the dependency upon the City as the principal source of labor supply. The extractive industry (quarrying) has developed at the site of its resource from which the raw product is shipped. With most of the other industrial uses in the Town, a finished product is shipped.

Future industrial growth within the Town cannot be expected to take place to a similar degree to past growth, principally because of the lack of large contiguous tracts of open land. When the existing industries were originally located in the Town, developable land was abundant because of the limited growth outside of Niagara Falls itself. Since that time, however, urban growth of residential, commercial and additional industrial activities has covered approximately one-half of the Town's land area. The remaining one-half is in many relatively small scattered pieces, with diminishing major highway access, except for an area west of Haseley Drive bordering both sides of Lockport Road. Both rail and highway access are available in this general location.

#### Public and Quasi-Public Land

In this classification are all land areas, uses and parcels that are operated by public agencies and generally private service organizations. The Town contains an unusually high percentage (17.3) of public and semi-public land, principally because of the location of the Niagara Falls International Airport within the Town. This facility alone accounts for approximately eighty percent of the public and quasi-public land area. All other areas included herein are scattered in relatively small parcels throughout the west half of the Town, in the form of churches, schools, cemeteries, fire stations and a limited number of governmental uses.

#### Parks and Recreation Land

Only a small percentage (2.7) of land area is devoted to park and recreation space within the Town for at least two reasons: (1) the close proximity of State and County recreational areas, either within the Town of Niagara or relatively close by. No less than three State parks (Lower Niagara, Joseph Davis, and Niagara) and one County park (Bond's Lake) are within one-half hour's driving time of the Town. A fourth large park (Reservoir) is partially in the Town of Niagara. (2) The Town has grown at such a rapid rate that acquisition of major open spaces has not been possible. Several small parks are provided, generally in the north and northcentral sections of the Town.

#### Federal Installations

Land directly utilized by the United States Air Force at the Niagara Falls Inter-

notional Airport accounts for the majority of land in Federal use. The New York State Air National Guard area, an allied military function, has been included in this classification. An area of approximately 24 acres utilized by the U. S. Army at the southwest corner of the International Airport has also been included in the classification of Federal installations.

### Street Rights-of-Way

Land used by street and highway rights-of-way accounts for almost 400 acres of land within the Town of Niagara, the largest single area of course being the Niagara Parkway, which contains between 80-100 acres within its right-of-way. All other major highways have a standard right-of-way width of four rods (66 feet). Minor streets have been computed at 50-foot rights-of-way. The majority of the Town's major streets and highway systems is an extension of a grid system developed within the City of Niagara Falls. As major streets were extended easterly, they were built as nearly with the same alignment continuity as possible. Two important diagonals, Porter and Packard Roads, were built which converge within the Town of Niagara and have formed the Town's busiest intersection. The emerging radial or star-shaped major highway system within the Town permits rapid movement in any direction through the Town, but at the same time creates acute angle intersections and some difficulties in land development. The area east of Military Road and north of Packard Road tends toward a more typical street system and should therefore be somewhat easier to develop. Partially because of the existing street system and partially because of past development practices, future development west of the International Airport will be filling in presently small vacant land parcels which were passed over during earlier development.

### Undeveloped Land

Vacant and agricultural land comprise this classification and account for approximately 46 percent of the Town land area. Even though land may be very productive agriculturally, for this study of urban development it is classified as undeveloped. As stated above, a large part of the remaining undeveloped land within the Town is in scattered parcels generally uniformly distributed throughout the western half of the Town. The northeastern quadrant of the Town of Niagara, i. e., north of the International Airport and Lockport Road, westerly to Military Road, is predominantly agricultural. Its agricultural continuity is broken by the Grauer Road-Colonial Drive residential area, the Niagara Stone quarry and the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad right-of-way. Nonetheless, this open area could eventually serve as the most completely planned and controlled urbanized area within the Town because of the Town's ability to guide its growth from vacant land to total urban development. Whereas other areas within the Town have their future already destined, generally, the northeast area can be molded by an overall plan.



## COMPARISON DATA

Several years ago, the Erie-Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Study made land use surveys of the Erie-Niagara Region, including the Town of Niagara. The 1962 survey of the NFTS, Table 2, indicates that the Town has grown in residential land use by 276 acres -- from 507 to 783 acres, while commercial development has increased by 95 acres. Industrial, quarry and transportation categories accounted for approximately 1,250 acres of land in 1962, while the 1970 classifications of rights-of-way and industrial land use, combined, account for 1,180 acres. Undeveloped land was recorded as 3,281 acres in 1962, while the September 1970 survey shows 2,600 acres for the same uses -- a consummation of approximately 650 acres for new growth.\*

Geographically, the Erie-Niagara Counties study indicates growth to have occurred in the industrialized south and west sections of the Town, with principal growth in the residential areas in the central and northcentral Town areas. Commercial growth continued to be developed along both sides of Military Road.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TOWN

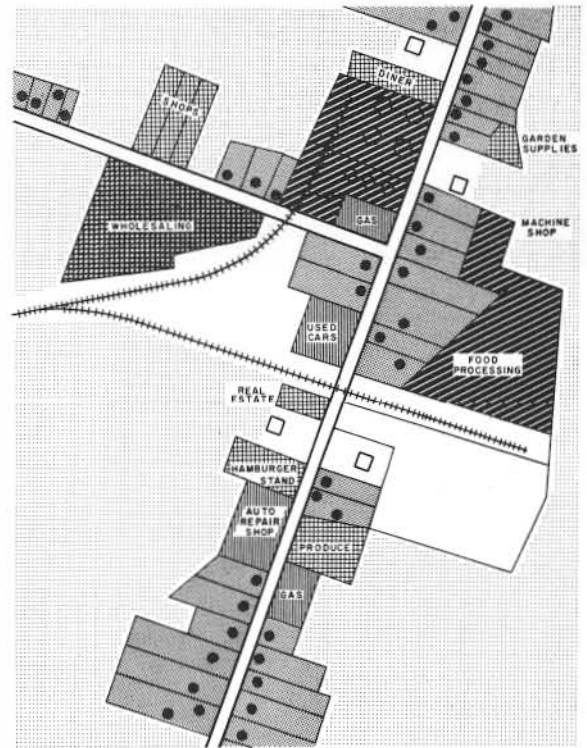
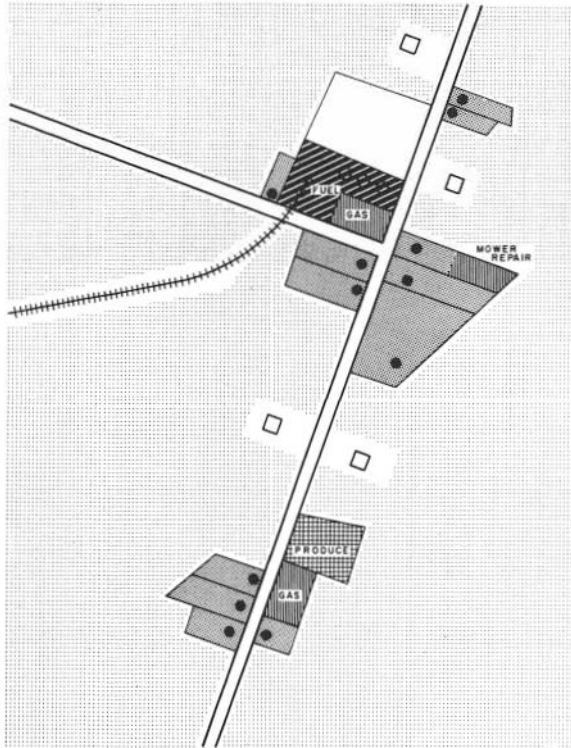
1. The Town of Niagara grew as a semi-industrial community, originally keeping its own residents in the Town to work at local industrial plants. Since the advent of the automobile and greater employment opportunities in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls Metropolitan Area, the Town has become, in part, a commuter community.

2. The generally uniform lack of public sanitary sewers as well as the wide availability of water, good highway access and buildable land has caused urban development to take place over a broad area and generally in an indiscriminant pattern throughout the western half of the Town. Dispersed development, as opposed to concentrated development, has created a vacant land pattern of relatively small detached parcels. Such parcels have their futures dictated because of adjacent existing land use and an existing street system that must be met and extended through new development.

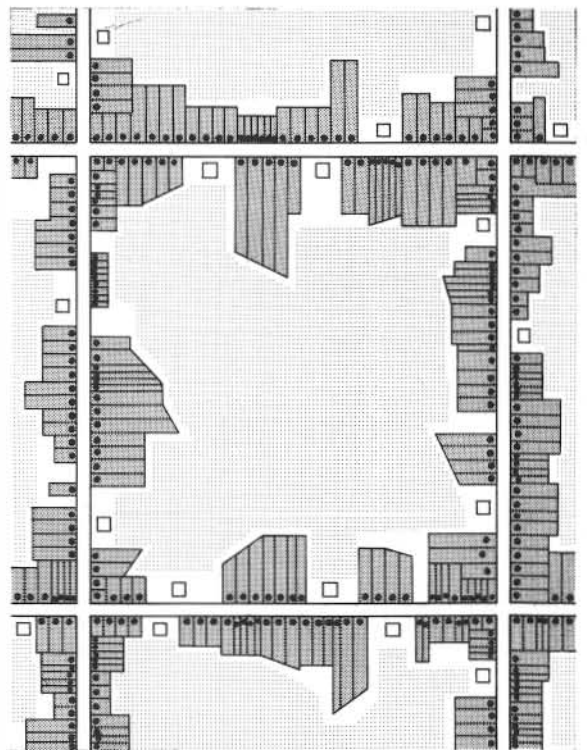
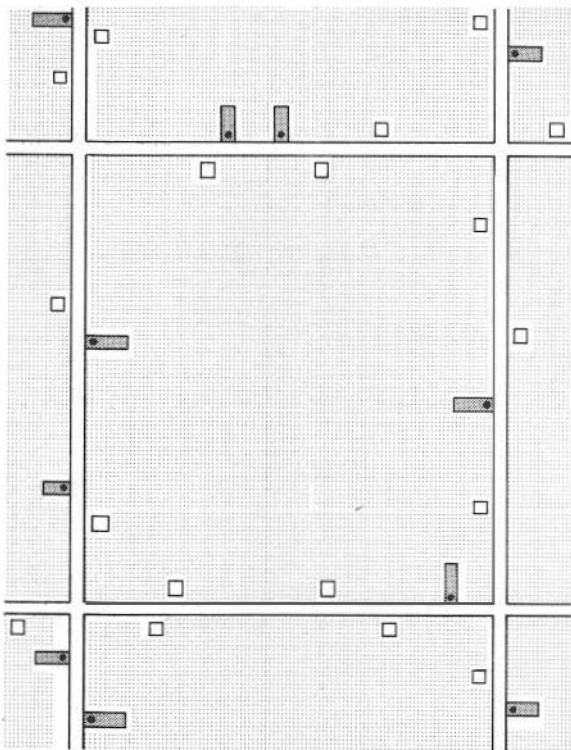
3. Past commercial and especially residential development has been constructed along existing streets and highways to the extent that in several areas interior vacant land has nearly become landlocked, that is, access has become very limited. If frequent access reservations are not made to interior land, such land becomes valueless for development or agricultural production.

\*Summary of Land Use by Municipality; Source: Niagara Frontier Transportation Study, Erie-Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board, 1967

# LAND USE CONFLICTS



mixed land uses create conflicts between neighbors, local and through traffic, depress property values, and often contradict visual attractiveness.



strip development destroys full utilization of block interiors, requires greater service costs.

4. Although a significant amount of recent commercial development has been in the form of shopping plazas, with controlled highway access, too numerous highway-oriented business activities, especially on Military Road, create driving hazards and confusion for the motorist. Military Road should be redesigned to channelize traffic and future commercial activities should be required to have fewer access points and greater setbacks. Major streets that have not yet become commercialized should be maintained without commercial use permanently in some areas, or as long as possible in other areas. A need for additional commercial development should be required by the Town of a prospective developer before permission to build is given.

5. Past growth has, to a great extent, determined the future of development in the south and west sections of the Town. The northcentral and especially the northeastern sections still retain an undeveloped character. In these areas, the Town Planning Board has an opportunity to study and plan for the area's proper development, prior to the pressure of developmental proposals.

Through the Town's continuing planning efforts, coupled with the Comprehensive Plan, tangible goals and objectives can be established to help channel future growth into desirable patterns of density and land use. If development is planned, municipal facilities and services can be provided in location and quantity to serve the projected population with a minimum of expense.

TABLE 1

EXISTING LAND USE  
September 1970Town of Niagara  
Niagara County, New York

	<u>Area in Acres</u>	<u>Percent of Developed Land</u>	<u>Percent of Total Land</u>
Single- and Two-Family	705.0	23.1	13.8
Multiple-Family	78.4	2.6	
Commercial	295.5	9.7	5.3
Industrial	790.0	26.0	13.9
Public and Quasi-Public	527.0	17.3	9.3
Federal Installations	192.2	6.3	3.4
Parks and Recreation	79.3	2.7	1.4
Street Rights-of-Way	393.2	12.3	6.9
TOTAL DEVELOPED	3,060.0	100.0	55.0
TOTAL UNDEVELOPED	2,600.0		45.0
TOTAL LAND AREA	5,660.0		100.0

TABLE 2  
EXISTING LAND USE  
1962\*

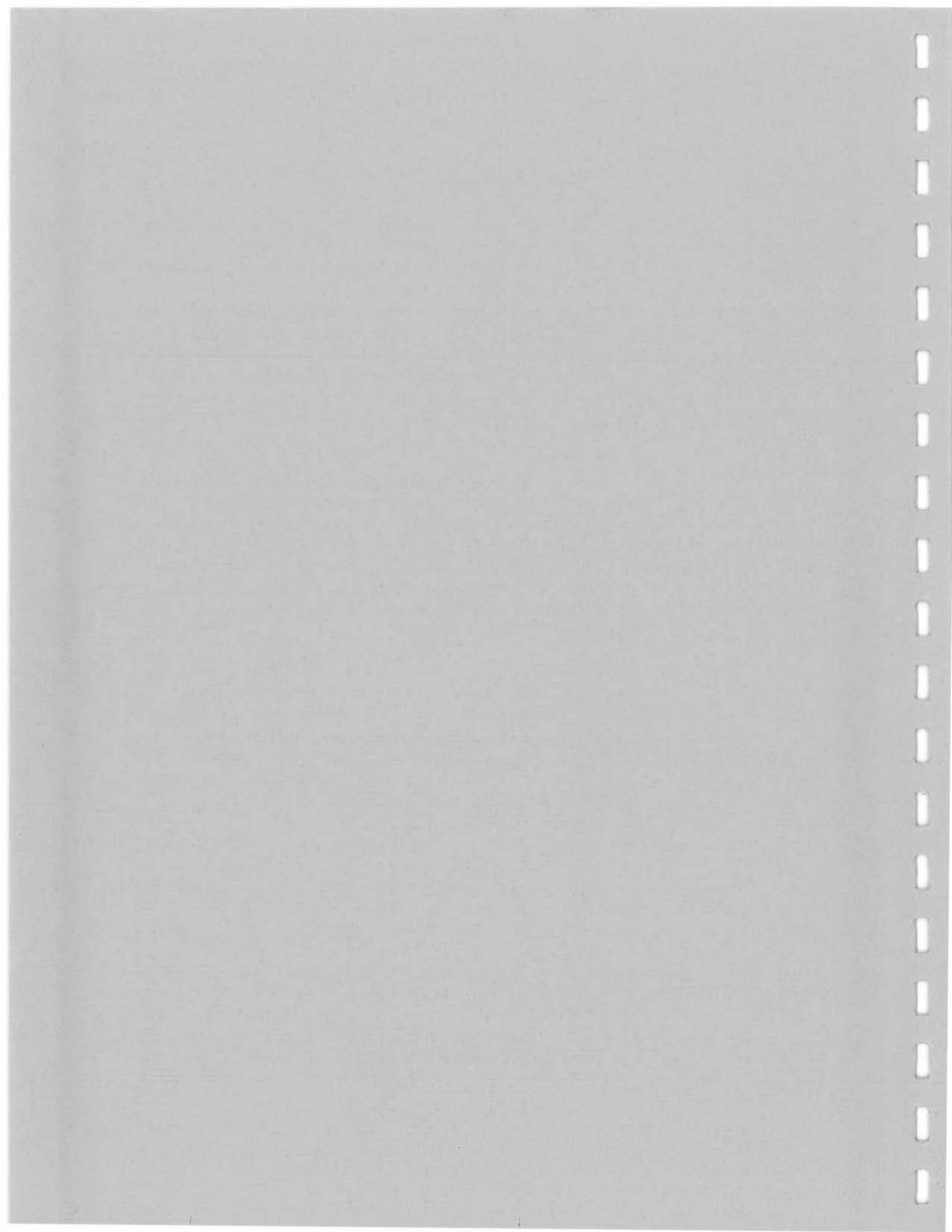
Town of Niagara  
Niagara County, New York

	<u>Area in Acres</u>
Residential	507
Commercial	201
Industrial	357
Public and Quasi-Public	74
Parks and Recreation	141
Quarry	208
Federal Installations	333
Transportation	698
Agriculture and Vacant	3,281
 TOTAL	 5,800
 PERCENT OF DEVELOPED LAND	 43.4

\*Erie-Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board-Niagara Frontier Transportation Study



PHYSICAL FEATURES





## PHYSICAL FEATURES

### INTRODUCTION

The natural physical features that exist within the Niagara Frontier, and especially within the Town of Niagara, have helped to mold the character and growth patterns of the Town. These natural features include topography or the contour of the land; soil conditions and the varying ability of the soils to support urban development; soil drainage characteristics which determine the need for mechanical drainage systems; and finally, the appearance of the Town created by its physical features, both natural and man-made.

Since one of the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, and particularly the Town's continuing planning program, is the identification, delineation, and control of future development areas, it is imperative that the natural features or characteristics of the Town be studied with respect to their capacity and desirability for supporting urbanized development. This report provides a background analysis of physiographic conditions which will be used during the preparation of the Land Use Plan, and zoning recommendations in particular, to recommend future development areas and policies.

### TOPOGRAPHY

An analysis of the Town's topographic characteristics is an important concern in the planning process. The relatively minor differences in elevation are in part responsible for some of the problems of drainage within the Town and can have a direct bearing on the Town's ability to sustain additional development. The intensity of development which an area can support is closely related to the topographic relief of that community. Because of the relatively flat topography of the Town, which helps create natural drainage problems, it is the responsibility of the Town officials and the Town Planning Board to insure that land development is orderly, that the physical limitations of the Town are recognized, and that the natural opportunities of the Town are utilized.

In general, the Town is in the form of a large ridge, with slopes downward in each of two directions. The area to the north of Packard Road and south of Lockport Road encompasses the ridge line. The area to the south slopes toward the airport and Cayuga Creek, while the area to the north of the low ridge slopes gently toward Gill Creek and the City of Niagara Falls. As previously noted, there is very little natural grade difference throughout the Town, especially in an east-west orientation. Eleva-

tional differences are most obvious on Military Road and in the northeastern part of the Town, in the general vicinity of Tuscarora and Lockport Roads where there is a difference in elevation of approximately 20 feet in a horizontal distance of 2,000 feet (one percent).

## NATURAL DRAINAGE

The natural drainage within a community controls the manner in which both storm and sanitary sewer systems will be designed, and it acts as natural service areas for these utilities. As a result, the natural drainage courses within the Town should be included in the basic analysis as one advantageous segment of the physical characteristics of the Town. By retaining and protecting the natural drainage courses, storm runoff can be controlled with a minimum of expense. If such drainageways are not protected and are allowed to be altered or obliterated by urban development, flooding and widespread uncontrolled sheet runoff, which can damage broad areas, may result.

The Town of Niagara falls within the second of four distinct plain or elevational areas which are part of the physiography of the Lake Ontario system. The four areas are the Ontario Plain, which is closest to Lake Ontario; the Huron Plain; the Erie Plain; and the area farthest south, the Allegheny Plateau. Of these four, the Town of Niagara is located within the Huron Plain, which is characterized by an average elevation of 580 to 640 feet. (The low point in the Town is approximately 570 feet above sea level.) The ground elevation slopes generally westward toward Lake Ontario and the Niagara River at about one foot per mile which, because of the flat topography, causes natural drainage ineffectiveness in some areas.

The Town generally is drained by two natural drainage systems, Gill Creek in the northwest and Cayuga Creek in the southeast. Within these two major systems, both of which drain into the storm water system of the City of Niagara Falls, are smaller tributary drainage ditches, swales and some areas of storm sewers, such as in areas where the natural drainage system is piped to cross under the Niagara Expressway and the newly-approved Grauer Road. While flat topography and poorly-drained soils are generally characteristic of the Town, there appear to be only limited areas where, under normal conditions, development is not feasible without elaborate mechanical drainage systems. One such area exists at the west end of the airport and another is near the southwest corner of the Town, where ponding and almost totally impermeable soils are located.

Within the entire Town area, the development of storm sewers can be planned as overall units with major collection mains, just as is being done for the sanitary sewer system by the petitioning developer in accordance with the pre-determined Town sewer

plan. In all drainage areas, streams and their tributaries must be protected to maintain and, where feasible, increase their natural water-carrying capacity. As new development occurs, the amount of surface runoff will increase and the natural ground cover's ability to retain or detain runoff will be lost. As urban development occurs, natural stream courses, unless protected, become filled with debris or are otherwise restricted by excessive grading or adjacent development to the extent that their carrying capacity is greatly reduced. It is therefore recommended that the Town of Niagara adhere to a policy of requiring adequate stream protection and storm runoff planning to be accomplished as one of the requirements for subdivision approval. For stream protection, it is suggested that the Town consider acquisition through required dedication of drainage rights-of-way or easements along streams and major drainage areas. Required improvements and maintenance to such drainageways would thus be possible at all times without encroachment into private property.

Because of the rapid residential growth and a serious drainage deficiency in the northcentral section of the Town, including the area encompassed generally by Lockport Road, Tuscarora Road, the north Town line, and Gill Creek on the west, a major storm sewer system has been proposed. This system consists of three separate major storm sewer trunk lines, one on Graur-Colonial Drive, one on Lockport Road, and the third on Divide Road and Kay-Ellen Drive. All three systems have outlets into Gill Creek. This system, which is recommended to be phased, will ultimately provide drainage for approximately 800 acres of land, part of which is in the southcentral part of the Town of Lewiston. This system is the second of two storm sewer systems proposed for the Town in the recent past. In both cases, the systems recommended are based upon present and future land use based on present zoning districts. These districts undoubtedly will change during the course of the planning program. It is therefore suggested that the Town prepare a comprehensive storm sewer plan for the entire Town, to be based upon the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and the policies determined by the Town of Niagara.

## SOIL CHARACTERISTICS

The analysis of soil characteristics is an important element in planning future urbanized areas. Traditionally, soil surveys were utilized almost exclusively for agricultural purposes, but with increasing urbanization and continued demands for land areas suitable for both agriculture and urban development, the use of soil surveys in determining future development patterns for the Town becomes important. Based on soil characteristics and conditions, land areas can be categorized according to their development capabilities. Through soils analysis, data on drainage and suitability for various types of urban development related to each soil type's ability to support development can be identified.

## Soil Survey

The soils of Niagara County were surveyed and interpretations recently made by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. Detailed soils maps were prepared on aerial photographs. Within the Town of Niagara, there are ten major soils, most of which exhibit problems of wetness and permeability.

Graphic evaluation of the suitability of the various soils for urban development has been made in the Land Capabilities Map. Major emphasis in creating the map was placed on the permeability of the various soils to permit proper drainage, not only of septic tank effluent, but storm water runoff as well. Only minor emphasis was placed on topographic considerations because of the relatively flat contour throughout the Town.

An interpretation of the soils data prepared by the Soil Conservation Service for Niagara County reveals why individual septic system sanitary waste facilities are not recommended for the Town. Septic systems require good soil permeability, i.e., the rate at which water can infiltrate the surface and continue down through the substratum to depths of five feet or more. Less permeable soils must have an expanded leaching area, dependent in area upon their degree of impermeability. Soils in the Town of Niagara exhibit poor to very poor permeability characteristics. As shown in the Land Capabilities Map, only a limited area in the vicinity of Lockport Road, Haseley Drive, Miller Road, and a small area east of Tuscarora Road can be termed primary development areas. The majority of the Town falls within the poor capability areas, because of poor drainage capability coupled with a naturally high water table. Areas shown as having a secondary capability for sustaining urban development have soils characteristics similar to those soils which are included in the poor category but have a slightly lesser tendency toward ponding of storm water runoff due to soil saturation.

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<sup>1</sup> Development potential for the soils of Niagara has been mopped for interpretation through the use of soils characteristics overlaid on aerial photos by the Soil Conservation Service in their technical manual entitled, "Uses of Soils for Community Development and Recreational Use." Evaluation is made of each soil type based upon engineering data pertaining to the performance of septic tanks; homesites; streets and parking lots; picnic and recreation areas for extensive and intensive use; underground utility installation; golf courses and lawns. Data is presented on the basis of the estimated degree of limiting soil properties. Soils were rated as having severe, moderate or light limitations, as shown on Table 3. A composite of these limitations was made and converted into the development capability as described above.

TABLE 3  
GENERALIZED SOIL LIMITATIONS  
TOWN OF NIAGARA  
Niagara County, New York

<u>Soil</u>	<u>Underground Utilities</u>	<u>Disposal of Septic Effluent</u>	<u>Homesite Locations</u>	<u>Streets and Parking Lots</u>	<u>Extensive Recreation</u>	<u>Intensive Recreation</u>	<u>Lawns</u>	<u>Agriculture</u>
<u>Primary</u>								
Hilton (a)(c)	Slight	Severe	Moderate	Moderate	Slight	Moderate	Slight	Suitable
Cayuga and Cozenovia (a)(c)	Moderate	Severe	Moderate	Moderate	Slight	Severe	Slight	Suitable
<u>Secondary</u>								
Ovid (b)(c)	Moderate	Severe	Severe	Severe	Moderate	Severe	Moderate	Suitable
Churchville (b)(c)	Moderate	Severe	Severe	Severe	Moderate	Severe	Moderate	Suitable
Odessa (b)(c)	Moderate	Severe	Severe	Severe	Moderate	Severe	Moderate	Suitable
<u>Poor</u>								
Lakemont (c)(d)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Limited
Fondo (c)(d)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Limited
Modolin (c)(d)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Limited
Conondoiguo (c)(d)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Limited

LEGEND: Major Soil Limitations

- (a) Seasonal high water table 1 1/2 - 2' below surface
- (b) Seasonal high water table 1/2 - 1' below surface
- (c) Moderately slow to slow permeability
- (d) Prolonged high water table and ponding.

Source: United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Niagara County, New York.

Because of the conflict which frequently arises between traditional agricultural interests and advancing urban development interests, a policy should be considered which would clearly define the Town's future development objectives. It is recommended that the Town consider a policy of development only in those areas where adequate drainage and sewer systems are available or are included in the development plans. This would tend to complete development in the areas already developing, where utilities are in or are planned. Land presently in agricultural use could be encouraged to remain agricultural until needed for development, especially the farmed land in the eastern section of the Town. Such consolidation of urban development can aid the Town by reducing the short-range necessity for costly community facilities, e.g., parks, trunk sewers and the like. Coordination of all sanitary sewage proposals should be made with the County's comprehensive sewerage study of 1970. <sup>2</sup>

## PERCEPTUAL ASPECTS

Aesthetics and perceptive observations of the Town of Niagara, or for any community, are basically subjective and personal according to the viewer. Nonetheless, certain visual features within the Town are significant and noteworthy for their value in creating future visual characteristics since such characteristics frequently are the lasting impressions made upon a visitor to the Town. It is the intent of this section of the Physical Features Report to encourage the reader to look at the Town. The ability to see the Town critically and to appreciate its good and bad appearance does not come naturally but must be acquired, just as music or art appreciation are learned. The ability to look at and appreciate the Town can be satisfying at one point and can equally be disturbing because of the discovery of one or more poor visual impressions of the Town. Such disturbances are healthy because they help create a climate for community improvement.

At the present time, the Town of Niagara, as many urban fringe communities, portrays two distinct characters. The northwest and south sections show dynamic commercial and industrial vitality, as well as well-developed residential activity. The northeastern quadrant, in opposition, retains a significant rural environment. Because of the great openness of the International Airport in part, open land or sparsely developed land extends as far south as Porter Road, thus encompassing a major portion of the east half of the Town. Because of the low level of urban development in these areas, adequate development controls, including appearance of proposed development, should be considered to preserve and enhance the Town's visual character.

Many people, especially commuters, know the Town of Niagara only from their view from the Niagara Expressway. It is not wholly a pleasing view. Commercial land which backs up to the Expressway is for the most part fronting on Military Road. Its location and use is convenient to the residents of the Town and the City of Niagara

Falls and is logical in location. Its appearance, however, is in some instances attractive to neither Military Road nor the Expressway. Storage in the rear of commercial buildings and the view of industrial waste and a junkyard are major elements which fall within the driver's sightline. This creates a sharp contrast to the broad, neatly-maintained right-of-way which borders the Expressway in part to provide a scenic character to the highway. On Military Road, the visual impression could greatly be improved by maintaining deeper building setbacks, less frequent access to the Road by commercial uses, a reduction in the number of advertising structures and signs. Redesign of the Road to adequately provide for increasing traffic, as well as the incorporation of street trees and other landscape features to enhance the commercial character of Military Road should be considered by both the Town and the State of New York during the proposed redevelopment of Military Road.

In considering the opportunities and problems of aesthetic qualities of the Town, there are two areas of particular concern, especially in regard to the long-range future of the Town. The stone quarry to the west of Tuscarora Road represents an intensive industrial operation that has a predeterminable life span based on the exhaustion of the natural resource. When quarrying stops, rehabilitation of the quarried-out area should be required.

Quarry rehabilitation may take the form of a landfill site for inorganic waste materials, e.g., construction waste or those industrial wastes now piled adjacent to the Expressway or for other wastes, or as a sanitary landfill site which would require greater care in operation. As another alternative, the quarry, properly sealed, could act as a reservoir for industrial use principally because of its proximity to the railroad, or as an ultimate use, consideration should be given to rehabilitation of the quarry as a recreational water body, after partial filling had taken place. In this event, the nearly vertical walls should be reshaped to a more useful and less dangerous slope.

Because of the increasing pressures for urban land in the Town which will undoubtedly soon surround the location of the quarry, it is essential for the Town to consider the future of quarrying. The characteristics of quarrying operation, e.g., use of explosives, dust, industrial traffic and effect on the water table must be weighed against the value of the industry to the community in employment and tax revenue production as well as the need for the product, in determining the desirability of quarrying to Niagara.

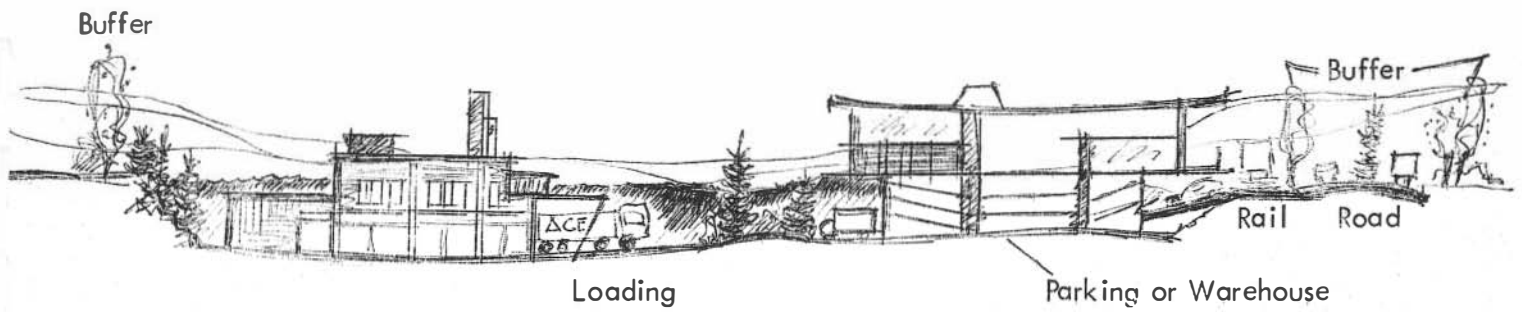
The other area of concern is that of the visual impact created by the electrical transmission lines that cross the Town of Niagara in several east-west and north-south locations. It is strongly recommended that ultimately a practical method be found to place high voltage lines beneath the ground. At such time, the existing power easements can become fingers of greenways through some of our most densely developed urban areas. Until that time, aboveground transmission lines must be reluctantly accepted. The acceptance in any way should be construed as a permanently acceptable solution, but rather

should be understood by both the community and the power authorities as a willingness on the part of the community to cooperate in the continuing search for the mechanical technology necessary to place all future power transmission lines underground. Until such time, the frequency of the metal towers should be questioned in regard to the absolute necessity of their numerous locations and their physical appearance. It is suggested that future installations be considered from the standpoint of visual appearance within the Town as well as to the consumption of otherwise developable land. If future transmissions across the Town are necessary, the design of the support towers should be re-examined toward a less obtrusive appearance and the location and number of towers considered to provide the least disruptive alignment and appearance as possible.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

- o The location of the Town of Niagara in the Huron Plain places it in close proximity to Lake Ontario in an intermediate area of elevation. Topographically, the Town is of very limited slope, generally between 0 and 1 foot per 100 feet, permitting uncomplicated construction in all areas of the Town. Because of a lack of elevation, natural drainage is, however, a construction and developmental problem, especially in the central and northcentral sections of the Town.
- o Soil conditions within the Town are not generally compatible with urban development because of a naturally high water table and generally impermeable soils. Ponding and the creation of wet areas are especially problematic during the winter and early spring when storm water runoff is most common. Although soil conditions indicate large areas that should not be built on because of poor soil permeability, the demand for development space becomes an overriding factor. It is imperative that on such land, sanitary sewer and storm water systems be required as prerequisites to subdivision development, coordinated with County plans.
- o The Town of Niagara presently has two visual characteristics, one of an intensely developing urban area, and one of semi-rural development, unrelated to its urban neighbor. Intense development has created many visual problems which are not apparent in the eastern section of the Town. Guidance of development and methods of regulation should be considered to avoid the problems inherent in the western section of the Town, especially in the vicinity of commercial uses along Military Road and in the industrialized area in the northwest corner of the Town, west of the Expressway.



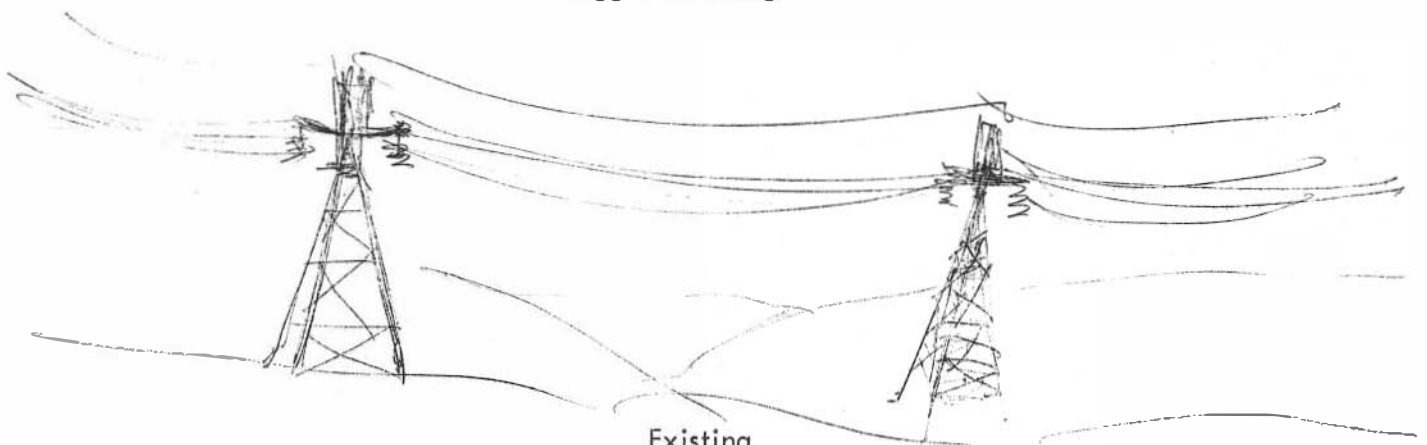


Industrial Use of Below-Grade Excavation

Redesign of an Electrical Transmission Town

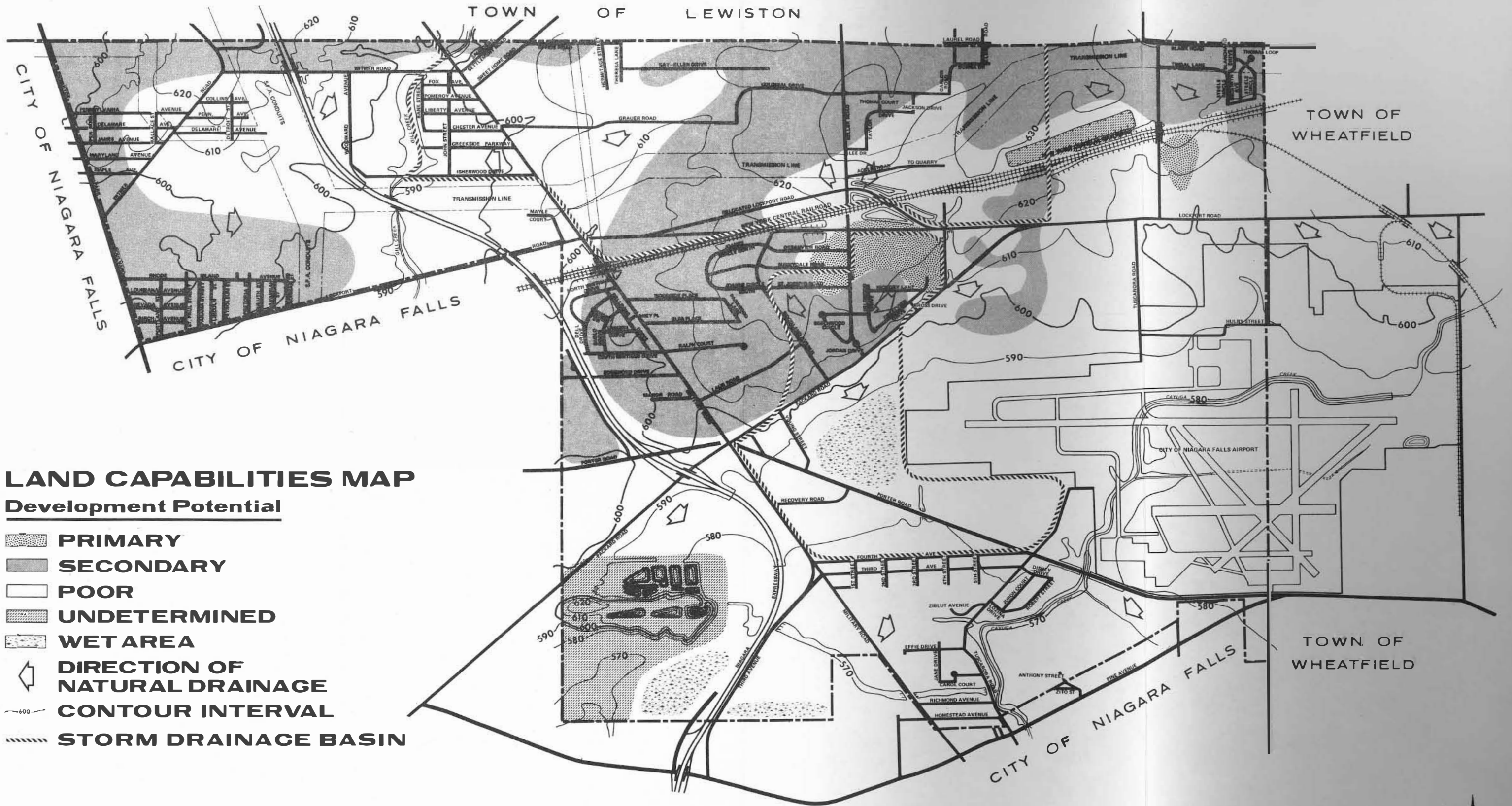


Suggested Design










Existing  
-21-

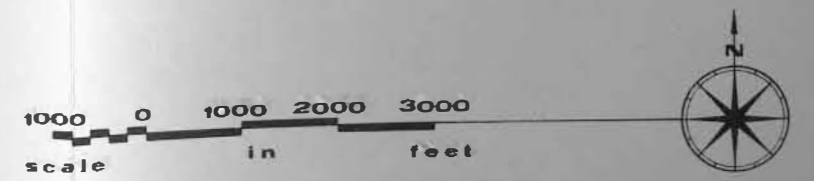




**LAND CAPABILITIES MAP**  
**Development Potential**

-  **PRIMARY**
-  **SECONDARY**
-  **POOR**
-  **UNDETERMINED**
-  **WET AREA**
-  **DIRECTION OF NATURAL DRAINAGE**
-  **CONTOUR INTERVAL**
-  **STORM DRAINAGE BASIN**

**TOWN OF NIAGARA**  
**NIAGARA COUNTY - NEW YORK**

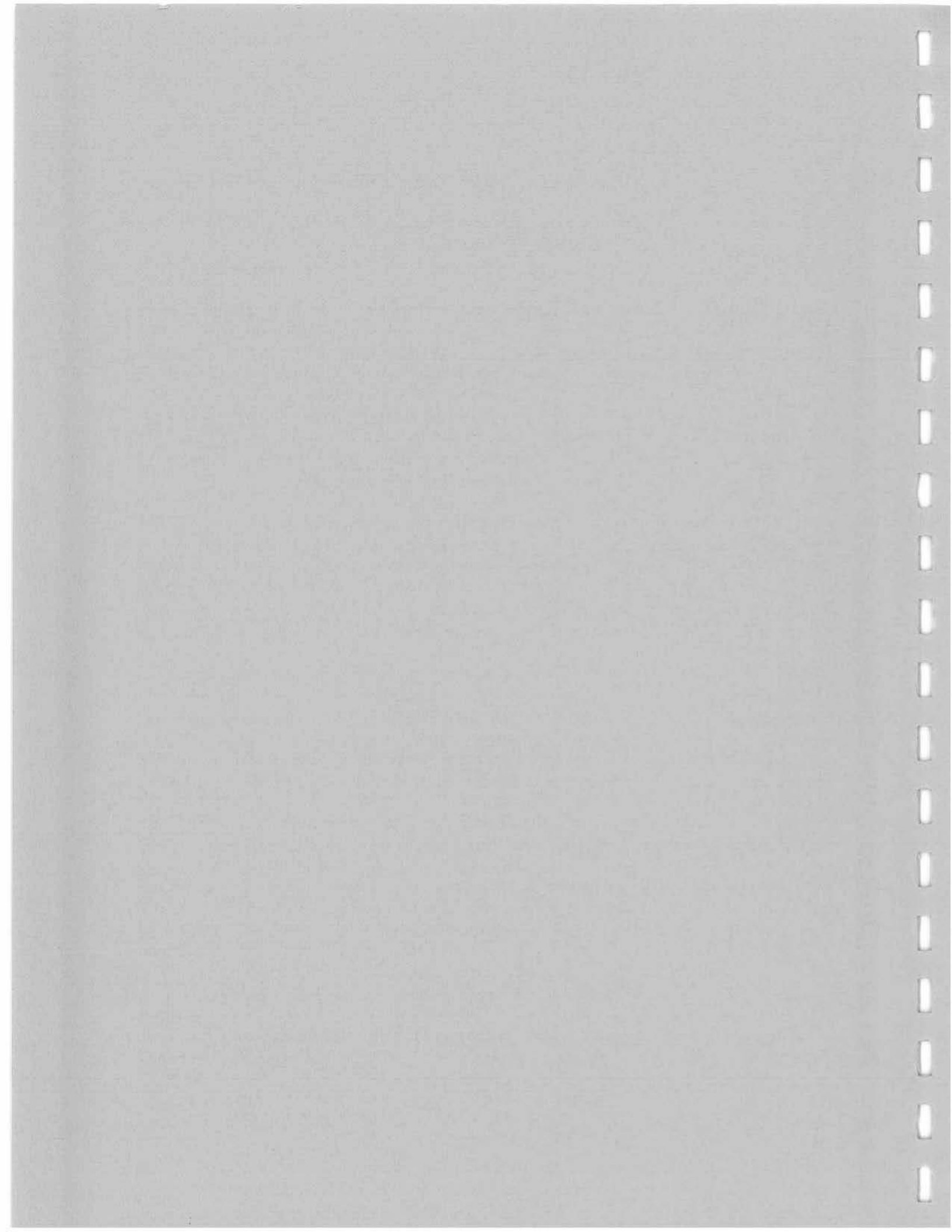


THE PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT FOR THE NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PLANNING SERVICES WAS FINANCIALLY AIDED THROUGH A FEDERAL GRANT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND WAS FINANCED, IN PART, BY THE STATE OF NEW YORK UNDER THE URBAN PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 201 OF THE HOUSING ACT OF 1954, AS AMENDED.

THE MATERIAL CONTAINED HEREON WAS PREPARED SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF LAND USE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS. PROFESSIONAL OPINIONS CONCERNING OTHER RELATED CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDING LEGAL, ENGINEERING, AND ARCHITECTURAL ARE NOT WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION.



CIRCULATION AND  
TRANSPORTATION



## CIRCULATION AND TRANSPORTATION

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of civilization, the circulation and transportation systems, i. e., the streets, highways and means of travel, have shaped the community's land pattern, character, and economic development. Today, the street system determines how a community grows. Because of its importance, the overall pattern and character of the community circulation system are of primary concern in planning future development within the community. To a great extent, growth and development in the Town of Niagara is influenced by access to the Cities of Niagara Falls and Buffalo and their accompanying employment and commercial centers, and by the adequacy of the local transportation systems to meet existing and future user demands.

This study examines local circulation patterns and problems in the Town of Niagara, the conditions and capacities of local streets, and the impact of regional highways and transportation facilities, as information was available. Further, the report investigates such factors as road functions, traffic volumes, road alignments, accident locations and other physical characteristics necessary for analysis of the circulation and transportation systems for preparation of the Comprehensive Plan.

### REGIONAL CIRCULATION PATTERN

An understanding of the regional transportation system is of great importance to the Town in many ways. The suitability and effectiveness of the regional system has a decided impact upon the location and extent of future growth within the Town. Any proposed expansion or improvement will alter not only the local planning program and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, but possibly the entire pattern of development, depending upon the enormity of the change. In an area as dynamic as the Niagara Frontier, such change is possible and therefore must be taken into account in planning for future growth. Close coordination with local, county, state and regional agencies concerned with transportation planning will enhance the future effectiveness of the total circulation system.

The accompanying map entitled "Regional Location" shows the significant trafficways which relate to the circulation system of the Town of Niagara. It is apparent that many regional facilities indirectly affect access to and from the Town, with several of these highways passing through the Town itself.





## Highway Transportation

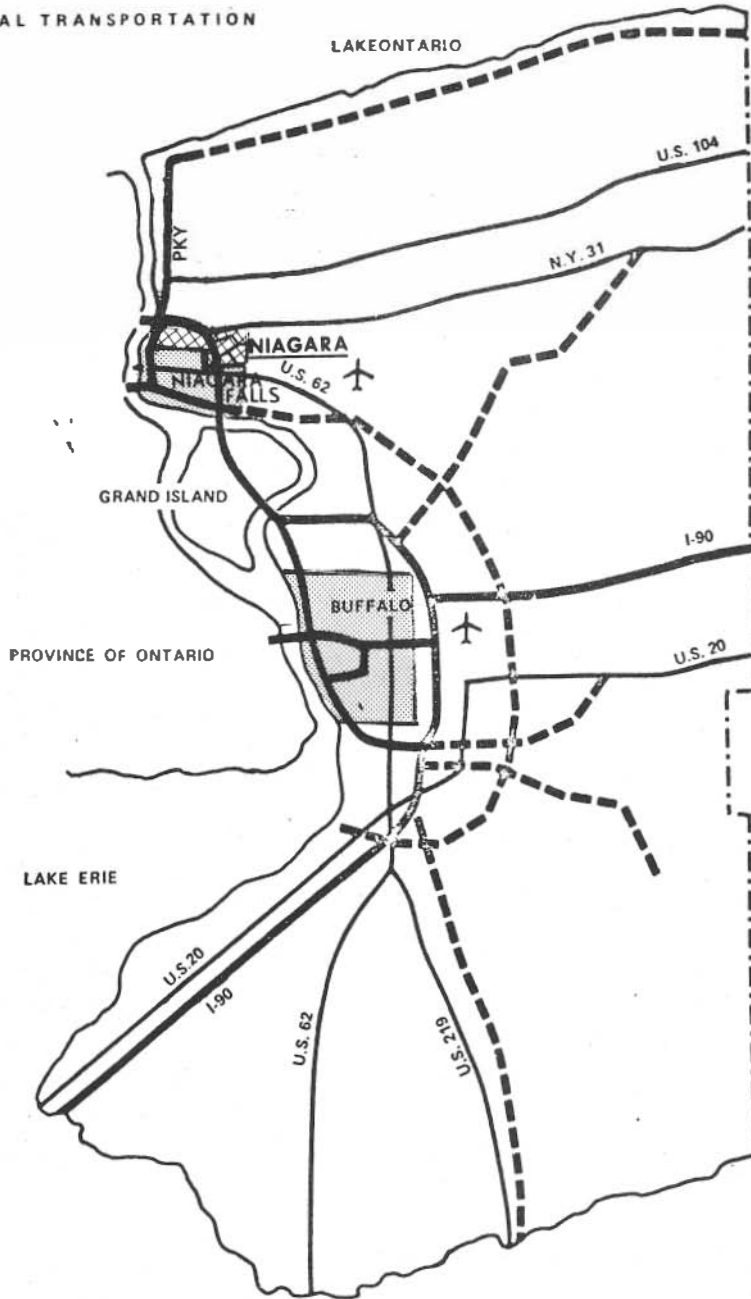
The major east-west traffic arterial of the state, the Governor Thomas E. Dewey Thruway (Interstate 90) passes approximately fifteen miles to the south of the Town of Niagara as it approaches the City of Buffalo from the east. Intersecting with the Thruway is the Youngmann Highway, and further north, the Niagara Expressway (I-190), which passes directly through the Town of Niagara. Two interchanges on the Expressway connect with local traffic, one at Packard Road (CR 82), and the second further north at Witmer Road (NYS 31). A third interchange with Pine Avenue (US 62) occurs adjacent to the south corporate limit. The Pine Avenue interchange serves as access to the south side of the Town and to downtown Niagara Falls. Traffic volumes, as recorded by the New York State Department of Transportation, show average annual daily traffic (AADT) counts of 13,731 and 14,149 just south of the Pine Street interchange in 1970 and 1967, respectively, while a count of 11,172 was recorded approximately one mile south of the Packard Road interchange in 1967. In each area, the traffic volume is well below the Niagara Expressway's carrying capacity. This means that the Expressway is functioning properly and can handle increased future traffic. The condition of the limited access, dual pavement highway is excellent and a lack of conflicting traffic movements reduces travel time between the Town, Grand Island, the City of Buffalo, and points south and east to a minimum for safe travel.

Access through the Town of Niagara on principal arterials is greater in an east-west direction than north-south. The Lockport Road (CR 6), Saunders Settlement-Witmer Road (NYS 31), Packard Road (CR 82) and Porter Road (NYS 182) generally have east-west alignments, while only Military Road (NYS 265) and the Niagara Expressway (I-190) have continuous north-south alignments. This is due in large part because of the traditional access to the City of Niagara Falls and because of the location and east-west extent of the Niagara Falls International Airport. Several local streets carry north-south traffic. Of the east-west roads, Lockport Road is the most heavily traveled, according to the Department of Transportation.

The Niagara Frontier Transportation Study, which was initiated in its present form in the early 1960's and published in 1966, analyzed the transportation needs of Erie and Niagara Counties. In addition to the existing highway network, the study proposes plans for the construction of the following new highways:

- o The Aurora Expressway presently under construction is to be a limited-access expressway connecting New York State Route 16 just outside the Town of Wales with the Thruway in West Seneca. This highway will provide improved access to Buffalo from the center of Erie County and such Towns as Holland, Colden, Wales, Aurora, Elma, Marilla, and West Seneca.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION



- o The Southern Expressway, which is under construction from the Thruway at West Seneca to Orchard Park and in the design stage from Orchard Park to Springville, will run in a north-south direction through the central part of Erie County. When completed, this Expressway will replace U. S. Route 219 as the major carrier of regional traffic through the Towns of Concord and Boston. Furthermore, it may ease the traffic burden on U. S. Route 62 in Hamburg and Lackawanna and New York State Route 277 in Orchard Park and West Seneca.
- o The Outer Expressway, which is still primarily in the proposal stage, will run in a loop from Niagara Falls through Depew and Lancaster and join the Governor Thomas E. Dewey Thruway south of Lancaster. This limited-access highway, when completed, will ease traffic throughout the Buffalo-Lackawanna-North Tonawanda complex by providing a much-needed bypass.
- o The Lockport Expressway, which is primarily in the proposal stage, will connect central Niagara County to Interstate 290 and the Outer Expressway. This limited-access highway will reduce travel time from Lockport and central Niagara County to the Buffalo area. Service to the proposed University of Buffalo campus in Amherst is to be built by 1975, to Niagara County by 1978, and to Route 31 between 1980 and 1985.

- o The Lancaster Expressway, which is in the proposal stage, will connect the Governor Thomas E. Dewey Thruway near the intersection of the Thruway and Interstate Route 190 and U. S. Route 20 south of Lancaster. This limited-access highway will ease traffic on U. S. Route 20 by providing a bypass of Lancaster.
- o The Lake Ontario-State Parkway, which is primarily in the proposal state, will connect the northern tip of the Robert Moses Parkway with Rochester and be built along the shore of Lake Ontario ultimately to Toronto. Construction eastwardly could begin by 1972 to Orleans County Line by 1976.
- o Western New York Jetport; studies will be completed in the near future for the Erie-Niagara region by the NFTA. At present, no information is available about the recommended sites. The nine-county study, including all of western New York, has been divided into a two-county study for Erie and Niagara Counties, and the remaining seven counties under a separate study. The combined nine-county study will be used by the Department of Transportation to select a single site. Partial evaluation is being made at the present time. Information made available during the course of preparation of the Comprehensive Plan will be used in determining the final Plan.

### Air Transportation

The growth of private air travel in this country during the past two decades for transportation, business and recreational purposes has been tremendous. Correspondingly, there has been an increased demand for airport facilities to serve this need. Erie and Niagara Counties are served primarily by the commercial airline facilities at the Buffalo International Airport, with a "back-up" airport at Niagara Falls International Airport. Shown in Table 4 are the figures on passengers, flights, and freight tonnage handled by these facilities over the past few years.

TABLE 4  
AIRPORT OPERATIONS

	Buffalo International			Niagara Falls International		
	Passengers	Flights	Freight Tonnage	Passengers	Flights	Freight Tonnage
1962	498,400	110,600	7,000	NA	NA	NA
1965	NA	NA	NA	3,800	48	NA
1966	NA	NA	NA	3,544	95	NA
1967	882,900	147,800	11,500	21,806	208	NA
1968	2,167,115	NA	21,123	101,633	487	NA
1969	2,258,269	NA	24,558	33,186	200	NA
(est.) 1975	4,373,000		47,800			

These figures show a 3-year increase of 155\* percent in the number of passengers using the Buffalo airport, 37 percent in the number of flights handled in Buffalo, while freight tonnage increased by 64 percent. The Niagara Falls Airport since 1965 has increased the number of passengers handled by over 2,500 percent, while the number of flights has increased by 600 percent. Most of the increase here has been the result of the naming of the facility as an alternate airport for the Buffalo area. It can be seen that both passenger and air freight services are available for Niagara and are increasing rapidly.

Proposals for a new western New York airport are being made by various studies. Although the present airports and possible future airports could increase the accessibility of the Town to other areas of the country, air transportation is likely to have limited impact on future growth and development throughout the entire Town, in that there is little experience to support air-oriented growth away from any major airport facility.

### Rail Transportation

The importance of rail transportation for passengers has declined in recent years. The convenience provided by the New York Thruway, the Robert Moses Parkway and other regional highways has reduced the attractiveness of the railroad for such service in the area. In much the same manner, the railroads have felt increasing competition from the trucking industry in the movement of freight traffic. As mentioned previously, there are many roads in the development stage and with the construction of these, rail passenger service will have even stiffer competition. The Buffalo Metropolitan Region is served by the Baltimore & Ohio, Erie-Lackawanna, Lehigh Valley, Penn Central and the Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo. The Penn Central and the Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo provide passenger service to the area. The Penn Central offers New York-Chicago service, and the TH & B offers connections with Canadian Railways. Lehigh Valley provides freight service in the Buffalo and Niagara Falls Metropolitan areas, while the Town of Niagara is served by the Erie-Lackawanna and Penn Central trackage, with freight service available at the Erie Terminal on Haseley Road.

According to the Niagara Frontier Transportation Study published in 1966, 75 person-trips were recorded for District 60 of that study, which included part of the City of Niagara Falls and all of the Town of Niagara. It is expected that all 75 railroad and plane passengers originated in the City as rail passengers or in the City and Town as air trips.

Approximately 64 acres of land within the Town are devoted to rail rights-of-way and freight terminal yards. The Penn Central track location through the Town traverses approximately one and one-half miles of residential land use before it reaches the easterly industrial section east of relocated Lockport Road. Residential development, especially along Joanne Circle, extends close to the right-of-way but abuts in the rear yards. The

\*Passengers: 1967 through 1969  
Flights: 1962 through 1967

rear yard area provides a buffer to the tracks and lessens the otherwise incompatibility of the tracks. It is anticipated that deeply-buffered residential development will continue and that no additional trackage will be built west of Miller Drive. East of Miller Drive, consideration will be given to the desirability of increased industrial development, which may require additional spur trackage.

### Bus Transportation

Bus service to the Town of Niagara is presently provided by three bus lines, the Niagara Falls Transportation Company, the Niagara Falls Coach Lines, and the Twin Cities Transit Corporation. Of the three, only the Niagara Falls Transportation Company is municipally owned and operated. It is the only line of the three to provide extensive service within the Town. The Niagara Falls Coach Lines makes two trips per day on a flexible schedule. A fourth service available to the Town but almost exclusively used for tourism is the Niagara Falls Scenic bus service. This service operates generally during the tourist season on demand and provides service for the Niagara Falls International Airport.

A three-part study on mass transportation is presently being prepared by a transportation consultant to the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, relating in part to bus service in the Town of Niagara as well as to the Erie-Niagara Region. Recommendations of the mass transit report are expected to be made to the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) within the near future in preliminary form. In preparing the report, difficulty was experienced in gathering ridership data in the City and in the Town of Niagara. It was also found that bus service to the Town was of minimal quality.

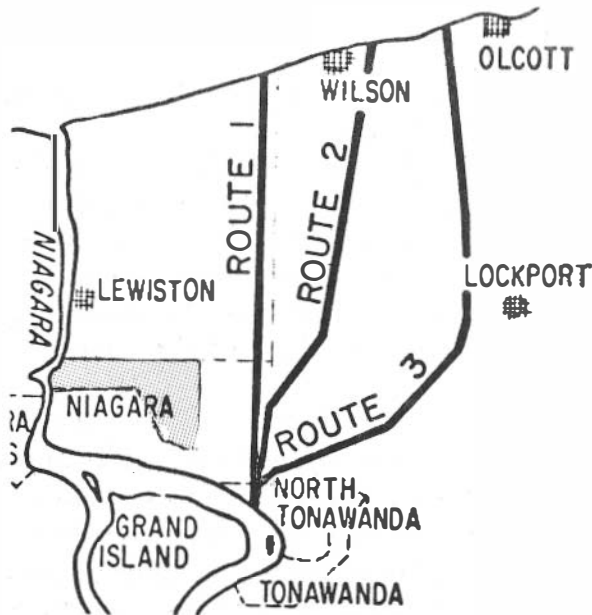
According to the Niagara Frontier Transportation Study, patronage on buses dropped from 103,760,000 revenue passengers in 1930 to 55,278,000 in 1962 and to approximately 47 million in 1963 with a slight increase to 50 million in 1966. In the NFTS study, it was found that high residential densities were needed to sustain bus service. In areas where there were 80,000 persons per square mile or approximately 125 families per acre, there were 200,000 seat miles\* of bus service. When the number of persons per residential acre (density) dropped to approximately 15 families, the bus ridership dropped to below 5,000 seat miles which becomes an uneconomic level for present transit facilities. In the Town of Niagara where existing residential densities range between three and four families per acre, mass transit systems are unlikely to be provided, except at major commercial areas such as Military Road. Unless plans are made to the contrary during the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, the Plan will assume that the automobile will continue to be the major method of transportation for the Town during the planning period of 1970-1990.

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\*Seat miles is the number of miles a bus with a given number of seats travels; example -- 1 mile with 46 seats, 46 seat miles

## Waterway Transportation

Port activity at the Port of Buffalo has no direct influence on the Town of Niagara, except for the employment it may provide to some Town residents. Of greater importance to the Town is the proposed All-American Canal which has been proposed by the Corps of Engineers to be built from Lake Niagara due south to the Niagara River through the Town of Wheatfield to the river on the southwest side of North Tonawanda. If the Canal were built on the westernmost of three alternative routes as presently proposed and as shown on the illustration, it would pass through the easternmost limits of the Town of Lewiston and



proceed south through Wheatfield. The Canal would have a harbor at a point on Lake Ontario near the intersection of NYS 18 and Dickersonville Road. The Canal has been proposed on several occasions in the past to provide an American waterway of larger capacity than that presently allowable by the Welland Canal in the Province of Ontario, Canada. Longer lock space and a capacity to handle larger ships recently being built for Great Lakes use would be served by the proposed Canal which could not pass through the present Canadian canal.

The impact of the Canal upon the Town of Niagara would be in the form of (1) a source of employment for the industrial uses suggested by the Corps of Engineers for the Lewiston harbor area and any

industrial growth which would occur at the south end in North Tonawanda. The steep slopes of the Canal would normally not lend themselves to industrial development along the Canal's north-south course; (2) the Canal would present a major physical barrier to eastward growth from the Town in that only one or two major east-west roads would remain open and be bridged over the Canal; (3) other changes would undoubtedly occur which would necessitate major changes in the Comprehensive Plan if the Canal becomes a reality. Because of the present apparent uncertainty of the proposal's likelihood of implementation during the planning period, the planning program will assume that the Canal and the accompanying expressway as visualized by the Regional Planning Board will not be constructed. If conditions change significantly during the course of Plan preparation, such change will be taken into account.

## LOCAL CIRCULATION PATTERNS

The basic purpose of any road system is to provide for the movement of goods and people into a community and the means by which people and goods move around within the community from one activity to another. In addition, streets serve other important purposes. They provide access to property abutting the public right-of-way, serve as open space between buildings to provide light and air, may serve as storage space for automobiles, and may add to or detract from the visual appearance of the community. Because streets and roads are expensive to build and maintain, they are seldom relocated or altered once they are improved. Poor circulation planning can result in: increased potential for traffic accidents, lower property values along the street right-of-way, higher maintenance costs, and a misuse of otherwise valuable land areas.

The New York State Department of Transportation has developed a functional highway classification system which has been applied to the Town of Niagara whereby each road is classified according to the function it serves. Each road in the Town has been classified as an interstate, a principal arterial street, a minor arterial street, a collector, or a local street.

### Interstate (Limited Access Highway)

A highly specialized, dual pavement, grade-separated system of highways carrying high-speed traffic between the major urban centers of the nation or of the state. Included in this classification is the Niagara Expressway, the only limited access highway traversing the Town. Three access points occur within the Town.

The Expressway is the responsibility of the state and has little direct association with the small municipalities or local circulation system. The Expressway does, however, have several effects on the Town beside that of a major traffic artery. With the exception of the overpasses, the highway is a physical barrier, a barrier which generally separates the industrial part of the Town from the commercial and residential sections.

### Arterials

An entire system of thoroughfares has been designated for the State by the New York State Department of Transportation. This is a network of roads connecting population centers of over three thousand persons by the shortest practical route, each urban center not being a terminal for one of the thoroughfares or arterials.

Included in the classification of arterials, which for the purposes of this study will include both primary and minor arterials as identified by the Department of Transportation are the following:

Primary arterials include Packard Road; Lockport Road, east of Miller Drive; Military Road, north to Packard Road; Tuscarora Road, south of Lockport; and Witmer Road. The minor arterials include Porter; Third Avenue; Military Road, north of Packard; and Lockport Road, west of Miller Drive.

Since the primary function of the arterial is to move traffic in large volumes and at relatively high speeds, it is essential to assure the least amount of friction. Every effort should be made to control development along the frontage to provide for the safe and efficient movement of traffic. Where future intensive uses are proposed along arterials, provision should be made for adequate setback requirements, sufficient off-street parking, and for means of controlled ingress and egress, to facilitate the smooth flow of traffic. There are many areas throughout the Town where development has not occurred to the extent that strip development cannot be discouraged. It should be understood that the practices that encourage the continuation of strip roadside development will in the future be very harmful to the Town's long-range goals and objectives.

### Collector Roads

Collector roads provide connections to the arterial system. Additional collectors should be spaced at intervals consistent with future population density in order to collect traffic from local streets within the newly-forming residential areas.

Based on the definition above and the classification of the New York State Department of Transportation and the Niagara County Department of Highways, the following roads and streets have been designated as collectors: Tuscarora Road, north of Lockport Road; Tuscarora Road, south of Porter Road; Miller Drive, north of Lockport Road. The consultant has added two other streets that have become prominent in the recent past -- Grauer Road and Colonial Drive complex and Woodland Road.

These roads form what may be considered the "backbone" of the existing circulation system and will be of major importance to the future growth of the Town. The function of such roads is to carry traffic from the dispersed residential areas to the arterial system or to the local traffic generators such as schools, churches and shopping centers.

### Local Streets

Although several of the remaining streets in the Town of Niagara perform more than one function, they can generally be classified together as minor or local streets. These serve essentially to provide access to the individual lots which abut them. Local roads have the lowest volume function within the street system classification and should be able to handle the least amount of traffic and may be in the poorest state of general repair of



the system. In the Town of Niagara, most of the local roads have an adequate capacity and are paved. Several local streets in the northwest corner of the Town are unimproved because of the very minor residential use or because they are used for industrial traffic which requires only a low grade road improvement. Representative of this group are Pennsylvania, Delaware and James Avenues, west of the Expressway.

### Implications of the Functional Highway Classification System

An established functional physical hierarchy of roads is a basic fundamental of any road system. The recognition that different streets must perform separate and independent functions is essential. Without the functional separation of streets allowing the routing and regulation of traffic, the efficiencies and economies of a circulation system cannot be realized. Paving width, depth of road base, thickness of paving, curb and gutter designs, intersection designs, street lighting, and other physical features may be varied according to road function. In addition, types of land uses, setbacks, and other standards of development may be varied for roadside properties in accordance with road types.

Local planning for adequate circulation facilities should be oriented toward the achievement of the objectives outlined above. The table on the following page presents recommended development standards for arterials, collectors, and local roads, the three road classes for which the Town could conceivably hold all or partial responsibility. The cross-section accompanying the table is not intended to specify a particular pattern but serves as an aid to the table representing a conceptualization of the recommendations and indicating in greater detail how they may be consistent with the adapted standards for roadway and right-of-way widths. The Niagara County Department of Highways should be asked to help the Town set highway engineering standards and create the functional system.

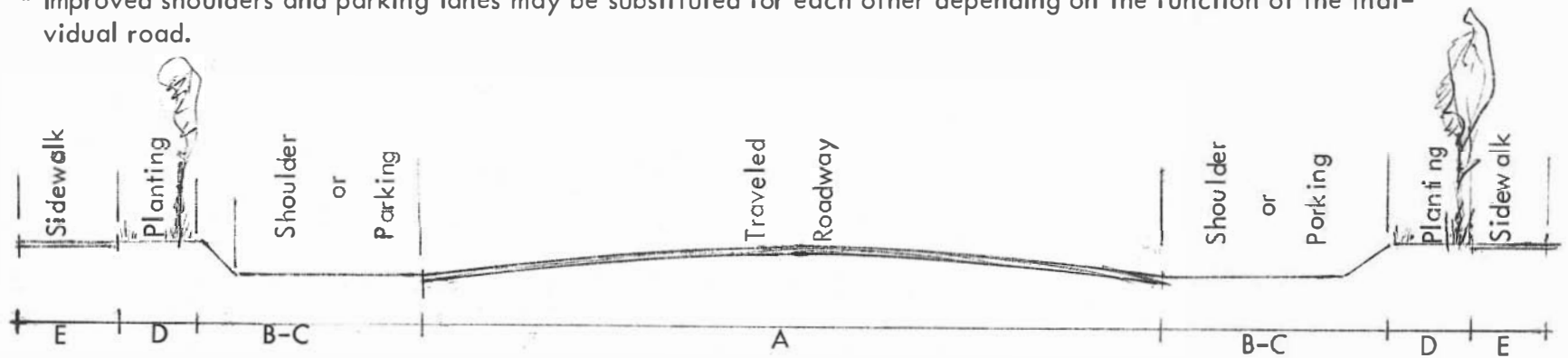
### TRAFFIC VOLUMES

The capacity of any road to carry traffic is determined by the physical character of the road, by traffic regulations and by the type of adjacent land use. The capacity of a road may be increased physically by widening the road to provide extra lanes; by separating lanes of traffic traveling in opposite directions by dividers; by improving pavement conditions, sight distance, grades and curvatures and by reducing the amount and frequency of points of access to the roadway. Regulatory devices can increase the capacity of a highway. Such devices may include restrictions on turning movements, on-street parking, the direction of traffic (one-way movements), and commercial vehicles. In order to increase traffic volumes and reduce overall traffic problems, both physical and regulatory improvements should be investigated.

TABLE 5  
RECOMMENDED STREET DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS  
Town of Niagara

	<u>Arterials</u>	<u>Collectors</u>	<u>Local</u>
A. MOVING TRAFFIC LANES			
Number	4	2	2
Width	44' - 48'	36'	24'
B. PARKING LANES			
Number	None	2*	1
Paved Width	-	-	6'
C. IMPROVED SHOULDERS			
Improved Width (both)	16' - 20'*	16' - 20'*	None
Curb and Gutter Required	Yes	Yes	Yes
D. LANDSCAPING AND UTILITY SPACE (both)	32' - 36'	12' - 14'	10' - 12'
E. PEDESTRIAN WALK AREA (both)	20'	10'	8' - 10'
TOTAL RIGHT-OF-WAY	120'	80'	60'

\* Improved shoulders and parking lanes may be substituted for each other depending on the function of the individual road.



Typical Roadway Cross Section

Throughout the Town traffic volumes are generally well below the design capacity of the streets computed by the New York State Department of Transportation, with the exception of Military Road from the City, on the south, to somewhere north of Pletcher's Corners. Military Road traffic design hour volume of 460 is well under its adjusted rated capacity of 780 north of Witmer Road, indicating that the commercial traffic south of Witmer is the cause of congestion, especially in the K-Mart and Grant Plaza areas. Other Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts in the Town indicate excellent volume to capacity relationships. The Expressway, as described previously, is presently using less than half of its rated capacity of 2,280 and therefore will continue to serve adequately for the foreseeable future. Traffic counts on Porter Road taken in 1966 (7,286) and 1968 (6,197) indicate relatively stable traffic. Witmer Road (NYS 31) east of the Niagara Expressway and west of Military Road has a 1970 count of 7,764 (AADT) which indicates a substantial increase from the 1969 count of 6,000. However, with a design hour count almost thirty percent below its rated capacity, it is not overused.

Traffic counts recorded by the Niagara County Department of Highways for County roads indicate an increase in traffic on Packard Road (CR 82) from 1957 of 4,273 to 6,180 in 1969. Traffic on Lockport Road (CR 6) had a recorded 24-hour count of 1,398 which increased to 7,587 as recorded in 1969. A traffic volume count of 4,133 was recorded on Third Avenue (CR 115) in 1970, indicating its relative importance as an artery connecting the Town with the City of Niagara Falls. The counts enumerated should be considered comparatively with other roads in the Town, rather than as absolute figures. Temporary or unique conditions can cause rapid changes in traffic counts, thus indicating a distorted condition.

Other collector and local traffic volumes are relatively low and do not present any major problems at this time. This should not be construed, however, that there are no local circulation problems within the Town. These problems are discussed in the next section of this report.

#### Future Traffic

The following traffic projections (assignments) have been made by the New York State Department of Transportation for the major streets and highways in the Town of Niagara, for the year 1995, five years beyond the terminal Comprehensive Plan year of 1990.

<u>Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>1995 AADT*</u>
Route 31	Niagara Expressway (I-90)	Military Road	6,840
	Military Road	Miller Road	5,040
Pine Ave. (N.Y. 62)	Packard Road	Niagara Expressway	9,300
Porter Road (N.Y. 182)	Packard Road	Williams Avenue	15,000
Niagara Expressway (I-190)	Witmer Road	Packard Road	28,200
	Packard Road	Pine Avenue	28,200
Military Road	Lockport Road	Packard Road	7,100
	Packard Road	Pine Avenue	12,700
Packard Road	Pine Avenue	Niagara Expressway	7,850
	Niagara Expressway	Military Road	28,700
	Military Road	Porter Road	23,000
	Porter Road	Lockport Road	16,540
Lockport Road	Hyde Park Blvd.	Military Road	3,430
	Military Road	Miller Road	5,820
	Miller Road	Packard Road	5,020
	Packard Road	Tuscarora Road	10,900

## LOCAL CIRCULATION CONDITIONS

The physical condition of the streets and the layout and design of streets are often instrumental in determining the annual outlay of public funds which must be expended for street maintenance. The smooth flow of traffic as well as the speed at which it can move is affected by the condition of a street's underlying bed, shoulders, drainage and surface treatment. A survey was conducted by the consultant in September 1970 to ascertain the condition of all public streets in the Town. The results of this survey are included in the following text summarizing the problems and conflict points which were identified during the survey.

To determine street condition, the consultant graded each public street and road in the Town with the exception of the Niagara Expressway on a scale of excellent through poor. A classification of excellent was given for new or nearly new roads which had a wide pavement of concrete or asphaltic concrete in good repair, with an easily visible alignment without sharp curves or unexpected driving situations. A rating of good indicated an older road, but of similar qualities to a road graded as excellent. Apparent regular maintenance of road surface and shoulder area was considered. A fair rating generally could be described as fair to poor, meaning principally that the road surface needed maintenance, that the pavement may be narrow or otherwise inadequate, or that the alignment was very bad. A designation of poor was given to roads with very poor, unmaintained surface or only gravel surface. Poor occurred only in a small area of the northwest industrial corner of the Town. The following table indicates the number of miles of each classification found by the consultant.

TABLE 6  
STREET CONDITION (MILES)

<u>Excellent</u> 14.4	<u>Good</u> 22.7	<u>Fair</u> 2.6	<u>Poor</u> .7
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From the table, it can be seen that 37 miles (92 percent) of a total of approximately 40 miles of public streets, excluding the Expressway, are in excellent to good condition and capable of continuing good service. Narrow pavements, a diagonal arterial street system, and poorly-defined ribbon commercial land uses created the greatest traffic problems and points of conflict. Specific problems are described below:

1. The most significant area of traffic problems in the Town of Niagara centers around Military Road. This road carries the highest average daily traffic of any street in the Town with the exception of the Niagara Expressway. It is the only street which has a volume greater than its capacity. There are no less than two major problems combining to create traffic congestion on Military Road : (1) Originally, this road was developed residentially but through years of uncontrolled conversions, it has evolved as a commercial strip. Many of the commercially converted properties retain the pre-existing residential front and side yard setbacks which do not allow for adequate off-street parking. These numerous commercial uses each have virtually uncontrolled access to the public street which makes each entrance or undefined parking area a potential point of conflict. (2) The second major problem involves the roadway itself, particularly relating to its narrow pavement in the vicinity of the greatest commercial activity centers. Although the road is as wide as many other Town arteries, Military Road's narrow shoulder space creates the image of a pavement narrower than it actually is, but nonetheless does affect the flow of traffic. A lack of

sufficient shoulder means that through traffic must stack up behind any car making a left turn movement. Left turn movements as well as normal traffic movements become especially difficult during bad weather because of the lack of shoulder space. A recent review of auto accidents within the Town during the first nine months of 1970 tends to bear this out. As an example, twenty of the twenty-eight personal injury accidents occurred on Military Road through September 1970. Similar disproportionately high statistical counts were found for personal damage accidents, according to the Police Department, in the Military Road area as opposed to the rest of the Town.

2. A traffic conflict was noted during the survey involving numerous streets which intersect at less than right angles with other streets. This was found where arterial streets connected with other arterials, e.g., the intersection of Packard Road with the Lockport Road and where the old and new Lockport Roads join. These acute angle intersections are especially numerous along Military Road. Examples are Fourth Avenue, Woodside Place, Ralph Court and all of the streets from Isherwood Drive northward to Witmer Road, west of Military Road. A good example of how normally acute angle streets can intersect with major streets properly can be seen in Veteran Heights. Only three streets intersect with Military Road, and each intersects at right angles, thus giving the driver good vision in both directions.
3. The Town has an abundance of streets that are dead end. Most of these streets are relatively new. Potentially, they will be continued from their present terminal points in the future. At present, however, they are long and end with no provision for public turnaround. It must be anticipated, then, that the abutting private property owners will permit a motorist to turn on his property. This is undesirable, particularly in spring and fall when the earth is soft, for both the property owner and the driver. Such dead end streets, such as Creekside, Edgewood, Theresa and Mayle Court, are especially objectionable for public service maintenance vehicles during snow removal and trash collection. It is recommended that a turnaround of adequate size to serve all public service vehicles be required in all new streets and that existing dead end streets be enlarged to permit turning within public property.
4. In certain areas of the Town, e.g., the residential area bounded by Lockport Road and Hyde Park Boulevard and Rhode Island Avenue, narrow residential lots do not permit adequate off-street parking. This lack of off-street space requires residents to park in the already narrow streets, thereby creating additional congestion and safety hazards for resident children who frequently run into the street from between parking cars. Similar high density residential areas should not be permitted without adequate off-street parking provisions of no less than 1-1/2 parking spaces per dwelling unit.

5. A significant deficiency in the Town's road system is the lack of shoulders on many roadways. Shoulders have a definite bearing on the road's capacity to carry traffic, provide emergency stopping areas, and give lateral support to the road's pavement. Officials recommend that highways in rural areas have all-weather shoulders. Eight to ten feet has generally been accepted as an adequate width.
6. Most of the roads in the Town lack any form of curb or gutter. Curbs and gutters act as safety barriers for properties facing the highway or street. Curbing, concrete gutters or rolled curbs and gutters combined give a crisp definition to the roadway, improving its appearance and making cleaning and maintenance an easier task. Roads without curbs and/or gutters are acceptable in rural areas, but in areas developing as rapidly as the Town of Niagara, some form of curb and/or gutter would be beneficial to new residential areas.
7. To insure smooth, safe, and efficient flow of traffic where the street is offset at an intersection, the offset should be not less than 150 feet. A good "T" intersection, i.e., one that is offset at least 150 feet, can reduce accidents as it reduces the potential number of conflict points. Where cross-traffic is possible, the four-way intersection is more desirable when properly controlled as it permits a flow of traffic without zig-zag or jog movements. Examples of this can be found throughout the Town, particularly where local streets cross Military Road.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Analysis of the regional and local circulation patterns and systems within the Town of Niagara have made a number of factors apparent which should be considered in the development of future planning objectives. The following points serve to summarize the findings of this report.

- o While there will undoubtedly be increased utilization of mass transportation facilities and systems in the future for the Buffalo-Niagara Falls Metropolitan area, it seems most likely that the Town will remain dependent upon private vehicular traffic for the localized movement of people and goods.
- o The principal arterial street system within the Town is well defined as it presently serves all areas of the Town, including those areas remaining to be developed. It is not anticipated that additional principal arterials will be needed under present land use patterns. Limited additional collector

streets may be necessary to be provided in areas not yet developed. This is expected in the northeast quadrant of the Town. It is recommended that an Official Map be adopted which would reserve proposed major street rights-of-way.

- o All of the streets in the Town are presently operating at traffic volumes below their rated capacities, except Military Road. This road is operating up to approximately fifty percent above rated capacity and is badly congested during major shopping periods. A study is being conducted by the New York State Department of Transportation toward the possible widening and channelization of Military Road in conjunction with major sewer construction. It is recommended that the Town require stringent site plan review of all proposed new construction directly relating to or on Military Road to insure future efficient use of the highway in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan of the Town, the County, and the Erie-Niagara Region.
- o To improve the efficiency of the Town's street system, the establishment and adoption of a functional highway classification system is recommended. Goals and standards for new road design should be formulated to correspond with the particular function of the street. Similar standards for engineering and construction should also be created within the functional system, following standards set up by the Town and the Niagara County Department of Highways. Most future streets will be local subdivision streets. Although such streets are privately designed and built, the Town Planning Board, through careful subdivision review, will create the efficiency and design of the future Town street system through its recommendations to the Town Board.
- o Increasing pressures for strip commercial development will be experienced along Military, Lockport, Porter and Packard Roads. Concerted effort should be made by the Planning Board to insure that future development along these arteries is coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan and that adequate means of ingress and egress, off-street parking, and other design features to enable a safe and efficient movement of traffic are assured.



## Air Transportation Related to the Town of Niagara

At the present, two studies are being completed regarding new and/or expanded airport facilities for western New York. Initially, one study was completed for the City of Niagara Falls in which the City's municipal airport was examined to determine its feasibility for increased future use. This study, completed by an air transportation consultant for the City, recommended the airport's expansion as a master transportation center. Since the Bloomquist Associates study, the airport was sold to the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority. The Authority, with the Regional Planning Board and the New York State Department of Transportation, initiated a second study. This study, which is presently near completion, was divided into two parts -- a two-county study involving Erie and Niagara Counties, and a seven-county study encompassing the remainder of western New York. The two parts are being coordinated with each other and with other transportational systems in the planning stage for the regions involved.

Because of the social, political and economic implications involved with the two-part study, little information is presently available from the participating agencies or their consultants. Initial recommendations will be made in the near future to the agencies involved as well as to other concerned agencies before a final report or recommendation is made to the municipalities. Before final recommendations can be made, it will be necessary for the State and/or other sponsoring agency(s) to have "afforded the opportunity for public hearings for purposes of considering the economic, social and environmental effects of the airport location, and its consistency with the goals and objectives of such urban planning as has been carried out by the community."

Because information is not presently available, planning considerations that must be taken into account during the airport planning stages will be discussed herein. As information becomes available regarding the recommendations for the existing Niagara Falls International Airport or about a proposed new site, possibly in the Towns of Pendleton and Wheatfield, the information will be considered in further development of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

The need for additional airport space can be thoroughly documented, as a national growth of airway use since World War II has been phenomenal. Between 1960 and 1965, air passenger service increased from 56.6 million to 82.5 million revenue passengers, an increase of 45 percent, or 5 million passengers per year. It is expected by 1975 that revenue passenger load will increase to 130 million -- about 2-1/2 times the 1960 level. The following table illustrates a forecast by the Federal Aviation Administration for the Buffalo-Niagara Falls airports.

<sup>1</sup> Section 16(d)(1), Airport and Airway Development Act of 1971 (P.L. 91-258)

<sup>2</sup> Aviation Demand and Airport Facility Requirement Forecasts for Medium Air Transportation Hubs through 1980, Federal Aviation Administration, January 1969, U. S. Department of Commerce

TABLE 7  
 FORECAST OF AIRPORT AVIATION ACTIVITY, 1970-1980 <sup>2</sup>.  
 Buffalo-Niagara Falls Hub

<u>Airport Aviation Activity</u>	FY	Actual	Activity Forecasts		
		<u>1965</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>
Aircraft Operations (000)					
1. Total Operations		304	573	773	1,039
a. Itinerant Operations		149	263	378	512
(1) Sched. Air Carrier		60	82	112	152
(2) General Aviation		75	165	248	339
(3) Military		14	16	18	21
b. Local Operations		155	310	395	527
(1) General Aviation		139	289	374	503
(2) Military		16	21	21	24
Enplaned Passengers (000)					
1. Total Passengers		737	1,445	2,273	3,600
2. Sched. Air Carrier		654	1,266	1,983	3,164
a. Domestic		654	1,266	1,983	3,164
b. International		-	-	-	-
3. General Aviation		83	179	290	436
Enplaned Air Cargo - Tons (000)		9	15	25	40

From the table, it can be seen that in the Niagara Frontier alone, enplaning passenger traffic will increase from 737,000 in 1965 to 3,600,000 in 1980, an anticipated increase of approximately 2.8 million passengers during the twenty-year period, or 140,000 additional per year. Air cargo will increase from 9,000 tons in 1965 to 40,000 tons in 1980, an increase of 340 percent.

Because of the increased demand just cited, no less than seven major airport sites are needed by 1976 to serve the growing metropolitan population of the nation. The Buffalo-Niagara Falls area is one of the critical areas for increasing domestic and international air traffic. The on-going study by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority and the Department of Transportation will determine whether (1) a new air transportation terminal is needed or whether existing facilities should be expanded into a coordinated two-system facility (Buffalo and Niagara Falls); (2) if a new facility is needed, where should it be located and concurrently what happens to the existing facilities; and (3) what impact would the various alternatives have on the communities.

Of primary importance in the nine-county air facilities study will be the analysis of how compatibility of the recommended alternative facilities can be achieved with the existing and planned land uses in the proposed airport's proximity. Paramount emphasis will be placed on minimizing the effects of the airport on its surroundings and upon mini-

mizing the restrictions necessary to place on airport operations because of surrounding development.

If the present study indicates that air activities are to be increased at the Niagara Falls International Airport, the development of the Comprehensive Plan will be guided by the following:

1. Land use in the innermost sections of the approach zone should be restricted to open uses, where possible, to serve as buffer area to minimize crash damage and reduce impact of noise.
2. Encourage uses nearest to airport by uses not sensitive to additional noise.
3. Encourage uses where activity is not subject to noise.
4. Encourage uses which are allied to the air transportation industry to locate near the airport.

Within the framework of the guidelines noted above, various uses, activities and industries would be recommended to fit the desired characteristics for the approach zones. Such uses suitable to the Town of Niagara might include:

Natural Air Corridor Uses

Swamps and for areas subject to flooding  
Rivers, lakes and streams

Remarks

West end of main runway  
All American Canal (proposed)

Open Land Uses

Forests  
Cemeteries  
Agricultural uses (nurseries, sod)  
Golf courses  
Recreation areas\*

\*Intensive outdoor recreation facilities, e.g., playgrounds, outdoor theatres, racetracks, etc., are not suitable for airport approach area.

Inherently Noisy Activities Not Greatly Affected by Airport Proximity

Metal fabrication, chemicals, machinery operations  
Lumber yards and wood fabrication  
Trucking terminals and repair; warehousing and distributive industry  
Railroad yards; transit facilities and maintenance

### Indoor Uses Which Can Be Protected by Sound Proofing

Requires closed windows and adequate interior ventilation or air conditioning be provided

- Office buildings, electronic equipment centers
- Manufacturing, fabrication
- Some commercial activities, wholesale especially

### Airport-Allied Uses

Firms and businesses that may rely on aircraft to transport their personnel or products or may be engaged in aircraft-related industry

- Aircraft sales and service, including flying schools, research and testing facilities
- Aircraft manufacture, whole or parts
- Air freight terminals
- Truck, rail and transit terminals and allied services
- Warehousing and distributive centers
- Military air facilities
- Auto storage areas; parking; new car storage
- Airport-oriented personal services: restaurants, motels, hotels, heli-ports

### Anticipated Changes

As activity at the Niagara Falls International Airport increases, as a significantly enlarged intercontinental air terminal or as a principal terminal only until a new facility is constructed, changes will take place. For major airports, as much as ten years is needed to place them in operation. During that period, existing facilities will be used, perhaps with the removal of general aviation facilities to permit temporary expansion of the existing air facility. If the Niagara Falls International Airport is enlarged, additional main runway space will undoubtedly be needed as well as additional terminal activities space, and possibly air cargo space. As plans for the new or expanded facility needs are made known, such plans can be coordinated in the Comprehensive Plan.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the persons and agencies who have contributed to this report.

Erie-Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board

Niagara County Department of Highways

Niagara County Economic Development and Planning Commission

Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority

New York State Department of Transportation

Urban Planning Division

Bureau of Aviation

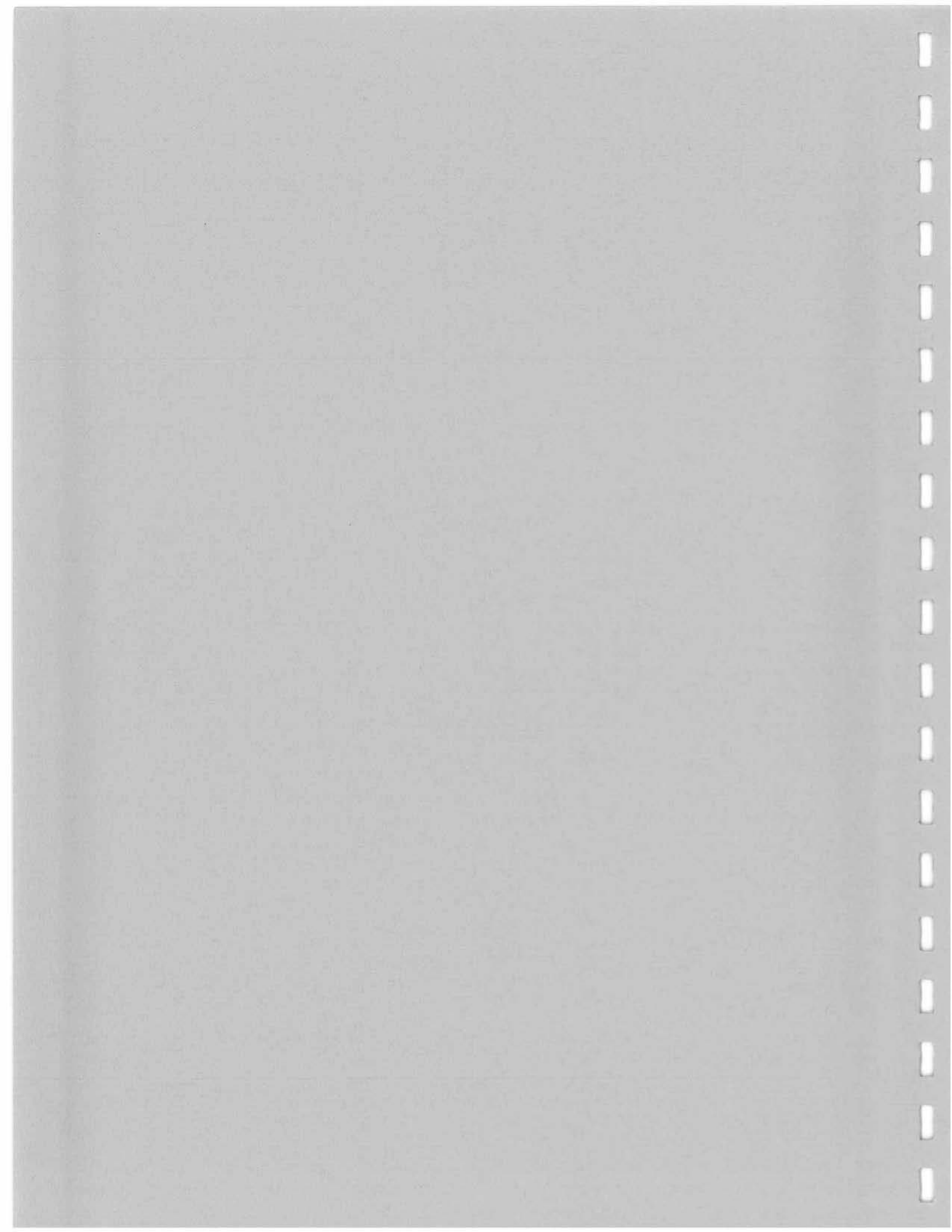
New York State Office of Planning Coordination

W. C. Gilman, Transportation Consultant

Town of Niagara



MILITARY ROAD STUDY





## INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of mankind, people have been dependent upon one another to provide many of their daily necessities. This dependence has increased as simple modes of conveyance have been replaced gradually by more modern means of transportation which enable people and goods to move from one area to another faster and more efficiently. Today, all parts of our country and most of the world are linked together by a highly developed transportation network. This network is one of the primary reasons for our unprecedented standard of living.

Transportation ways in the form of urban highways are vital to any community; without a functional transportation system, life in our cities, villages, and towns would be much different than it is at the present time. Almost all of our early settlements grew as a result of the existence of turnpike, railroad, and water transportation networks. The Town of Niagara exemplifies this fact with its proximity by street and highway to the City of Niagara Falls. By far the greatest effect on the social and economic characteristics of the Town of Niagara has been the development of its modern highway network. The high-speed expressway linking parts of the country are the paths for interstate commerce, industry and a multitude of transportation needs.

The automobile has given our society an unparalleled degree of mobility. Today, a majority of workers in all but the largest cities are dependent upon the private automobile for transportation to work. The majority of workers live in the Town and other suburbs and travel into Niagara Falls or to other areas of employment. This separation of place of work and place of residence has been made possible by the automobile. In addition, the purchasing habits of most Americans have also been changed by the automobile as people no longer mind travelling considerable distances to obtain the quality or quantity of products they demand. To cater to the automobile and the new "suburban way of life", shopping centers and drive-in establishments have proven to be a new American custom. The automobile has also been a prime factor in the rapid increase in land values as the accessibility from one location to another is improved. This new way of life characterizes the rapid urbanization of Military Road.

The number of automobiles has increased at such a rapid pace that besides the benefits and conveniences, they have created many new problems. Military Road, within the Town of Niagara was originally designed to carry light volumes of traffic at relatively low speeds. Such arteries are now inadequate to serve the demands of modern motor vehicle traffic.

Because of the rapid growth of mixed residential and commercial development of Military Road, following World War II coupled with the dramatic increase in automobile ownership, the Road has become inadequate for its present capacity. Because

the congestion is not always caused by an inordinate number of vehicles, but by the uncontrolled design of highway land uses, the following study relating to highway conditions and adjacent land use has been prepared. The study is based on the assumption that if ingress, egress, turning movements and land use can be controlled, proper traffic flow can be provided. Additionally, however, if nothing is done to alter access to the highway by future development concurrent with highway rehabilitation, the problems that are inherent along Military Road today will reoccur in the future. Our major interest in this study is not in highway design, but in how land use can coordinate with a suggested reconstruction of the road.

### History

Military Road is so named because of its importance as a Military highway during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Military Road connected no less than two of four forts stretching along the Niagara River from Fort Tompkins at Buffalo to Fort Niagara, just north of the Village of Youngstown.

The fur trade and the strategic advantage of the mouth of the Niagara River brought early importance and settlement to the Niagara Frontier. Politically the area had been important since it was first settled, but militarily became an issue during the French and Indian War of 1755. At that time a struggle was mounted by the British to wrest the Niagara Portage at Lewiston from the French. All supplies for the French forts as far as Fort Duquesne were supplied by material moving across the Niagara Portage. Destruction of this route of provisions was the aim of the British by their successful attack on Fort Niagara in July, 1759.

Later, Pontiac's War touched Fort Niagara and the Niagara Frontier although this conflict was centered west of the Frontier. During the American Revolution, Fort Niagara housed thousands of British troops and a group of Loyalists known as Butler's Rangers.

The last major war to strike the Niagara Frontier came in 1812 at which time six major battles were fought. By this time, people had settled along the Niagara River and military raids for provender were common. It was during this period that Military Road through the Town became important. Troop movements between Fort Tompkins in Buffalo, Schlosser in Niagara Falls, Gray in Lewiston and Fort Niagara became common. Beside the four American forts, there were two British forts, Erie and George, directly across the River. Raids across the shallow reaches of the Niagara became common, between 1812 and 1814. The few roads that existed at the time became important to troop movement, one of the most important being Military Road. Because of its location and connection with the major east-west route, U.S. 104, its importance to military traffic was established.

### Location

Military Road's southern terminus is located within the south eastern quadrant of the City of Niagara Falls, and in its northwesterly course, traverse the area immediately east of the City between the Niagara River on the south and the Niagara Escarpment in the Town of Lewiston. The northern terminus is very near the location of the Queenstown Bridge crossing into Canada. Its northern terminus is approximately .7 of a mile south of Ridge Road (U.S. 104).

Military Road (NYS 265) provided one of the few north-south routes along the Niagara Frontier for military and trade expeditions which came from the east to participate in the rich fur and Indian trade developing around Niagara Falls, Buffalo and particularly, Fort Niagara. Although the road obtained its name through military use as previously described, its most significant use developed as a trade and farm to market route. As the Niagara Falls area grew into an industrial as well as residential center, roads to Lewiston and to the open farm areas became more important. The road's rural character lasted through the early twentieth century when, with the advent of the automobile, greater numbers of residences and a few small stores began to develop.

After World War II, the movement of people out of the cities into the suburbs provided Military Road with a new role - that of suburban arterial commuter traffic to the central city. In the 1960's when the Niagara Expressway was completed, the commuter traffic characteristic was somewhat diminished while commercialization of Military Road increased. At the present time, Military Road is in a metamorphic stage from predominately residential to predominately commercial land use.

### Existing Land Use

Military Road is generally thought of as being a commercial thoroughfare throughout most of its length. It is, however, made up of no less than five general types of land use including commercial uses, residential, limited industrial uses and public and semi-public uses, eg. churches and public organizational buildings. All of these developed uses account for approximately two-thirds of the 34,000 feet of frontage along both sides of Military Road. The remaining one-third of road frontage is presently vacant and undeveloped.

Table 8 indicates the amount of land use in each of the five categories for three sections of Military Road as follows:

Section A-B: North Town Line to the Penn Central Railroad track, south of Lockport Road;

Section B-C: Penn Central Railroad (south of Lockport Road) to approximately 300 feet south of Recovery Road;

Section C-D: 300 feet south of Recovery Road to the south Town line, just north of LaSalle High School, on the west and Homestead Avenue on the east.

TABLE 8  
EXISTING LAND USE\*  
FOR  
MILITARY ROAD  
TOWN OF NIAGARA  
NIAGARA COUNTY, NEW YORK  
(\*Measured as total lineal feet on both sides of Military Road)

Section	A-B	B-C	C-D	TOTAL
Res.	2240' (18.7%)	3500' (27.7%)	420' (4.5%)	6160' (18.5%)
Comm'l.	3400' (28.3%)	4280' (33.9%)	4820' (51.3%)	12500' (36.6%)
Indl.	100' (.8%)	80' (.8%)	280' (3.0%)	460' (.3%)
P & S-P	1340' (11.1%)	940' (7.5%)	200' (2.1%)	2480' (7.8%)
Vac.	4920' (41.1%)	3800' (30.3%)	3680' (39.2%)	12400' (36.8%)
	12,000'(100.0%)	12,600'(100.0%)	9400'(100.0%)	34,000'(100.0%)

Within the three areas designated, the amount of commercial frontage varies considerably as a portion of total frontage as do both residential and public and semi-public spaces. The most constant space is that which is presently underdeveloped. In each of the three areas, vacant land amounts to no less than 30 percent and in two of the three areas, approximately 40 percent of the total land within the designated area,

Residential land area varies significantly between the three areas. The southernmost section from the south Town line to Recovery Road contains less than five percent of Military Road frontage in residential land use. Approximately 90 percent of all residential frontage is in one contiguous area at the south end of the section, south of Homestead Avenue. Over one-half of the total frontage in this section is commercially used, while an additional 40 percent of the area's frontage is vacant, with the majority of vacant frontage on the west side of Military Road.

In the middle section (B-C), encompassing the area north of Recovery Road to the railroad, residential and commercial frontage is almost equal. Residential land accounts for 3500 feet or 28 percent of Military Road frontage while commercial frontage was measured at 4280 feet or 34 percent. Vacant frontage is the least significant frontage in this section yet it accounted for 30 percent of total frontage, during the land use survey. (Since the survey was conducted, undefined development was initiated in the vicinity of Whitham and Belleng Drives.)

In the middle section (B-C), residential occupancy while apparently more stable by virtue of its appearance than in some other areas, has become intermixed with commercial activities. Many of the individual residences are in very small lot frontages with some of the houses built within close proximity to the highway right-of-way. These lots are particularly susceptible to blight and deterioration in that they have little buffering capability to block out nuisance noise, dust and glare from surrounding uses and the highway. Because of this, at least in part, a significant number of residential structures have become commercial establishments, to the detriment of their residential neighbors.

In the northernmost section (A-B), from the railroad to the north Town line, less development has occurred than in either of the other two sections. Just over 40 percent or approximately 5000 lineal feet of Military Road frontage is yet undeveloped. While the west side of Military Road in A-B, totally developed from Reservoir Park to Isherwood Drive. From approximately Isherwood, south to the railroad then is a total of 3700 lineal feet of Military Road frontage that has not been developed. No less than 1300 feet of this open space occurs in two land areas, one on either side of Military Road, each with at least 600 feet of contiguous frontage.

Commercialization of the northern area has already started within the residential areas even though its appearance is not as obvious as typical business property. In no less than seven properties, the residential use has been modified to permit "home occupation", that is commercial use of residential property. Such commercial uses are generally limited in scope, but because of their capacity to grow and to fluctuate in business activity, little meaningful control can be exercised by the Town. Such semi-commercial uses have a tendency to encourage further commercialization of the residential area in which it is located.

## Developmental Problems of Military Road

While the general character of recent major commercial development along Military Road has been good, heavy traffic generated by these and other smaller uses is having a damaging effect upon the residential areas and a congesting effect upon traffic circulation in general. Listed below are some of the area of problems relating to Military Road as determined by discussion with local officials and observation.

### A. Land Use

1. Certain land uses exist in both side of Military Road which because of their apparently low volume of business activity are considered as marginal. This is especially applicable to those business establishments operating out of converted residential structures. Few of these businesses have provided normal accessory use associated with proper commercial uses such as well defined entrance and exits, adequate off street parking and loading space, dust free parking areas, buffer area between the principal buildings and its neighbors and the highway maintenance of the building and site. Included in this group are those vacant commercial structures at several locations along Military Road.
2. As previously described the intermixing of commercial and residential land uses creates problems particularly for the residential sector. Residential uses have a generally constant pattern of daily activity in which noise, odor, traffic movement etc. is limited in extent and time of day. Intermixing of commercial uses greatly increases the obnoxious nuisance factors of noise, traffic headlight glare, debris, etc. beyond any reasonable compatible limit. Where residential uses are surrounded by commercial land uses with little or no protection buffering, the residential structures tend to show signs of deterioration and lack of maintenance.
3. Structures particularly susceptible to blight are those residences with shallow frontages which place them within too close proximity of the highway's activities. Commercial properties with shallow frontages likewise have great difficulty providing adequate off-street parking, especially if the lot is too narrow to permit parking in the side yard. Where shallow front yard parking is required, automobiles must back out into traffic. Additionally, parking in shallow frontages requires the motorist to slow to almost a stop before leaving the highway. This creates the typical situation for rear end collisions - one of the most prevalent type on Military Road.

B. Traffic and Congestion

1. For the majority of the length of Military Road there is little evidence of restriction placed upon those uses which front on the highways. Within the residential section between Isherwood Drive and Chester Avenue, (Section A-B) there is a driveway every 75 feet. Although only one residential area is described herein, the problem of narrow residential frontages is not unique along Military Road to only this area. The problem repeats itself in no less than three other areas. The problem of narrow frontage is compounded by the fact that on many lots under 70-75 feet in width, the position and design of driveways require the driver to back out onto the highway. Numerous driveways, poor vision of entering the highway in reverse and a high traffic volume at relatively high speed, create conditions for accidents.
  
2. Military Road, as one of the early roads through the Niagara Frontier, was designated many years ago as an important County artery. At that time it was constructed on a 66 foot wide right-of-way (four roads). Later the pavement width was widened to provide a ten or twelve foot driving lane in each direction. The right-of-way and pavement width is constant throughout the length of the highways except for limited intersection widening and a widened right-of-way and pavement at the point of grade separation with the Penn Central Railroad, just south of Lockport Road.

Prior to the movement of both people and shopping facilities to the suburbs, traffic volume and the carrying capacity of Military Road were in balance. Since extensive construction of the shopping areas, however, the narrow pavement is inadequate to handle the presently high traffic volumes. Numerous, uncontrolled left turning movements from Military Road into too numerous parking areas are accomplished in most instances by holding up all traffic behind the turning automobile until the turn is completed. This resultant traffic backup occurs because of pavements and shoulder width which is insufficient for safely passing the turning car. Long delays are frequent and the driver feels unduly harassed.

The deep drainage ditches which parallel Military Road are especially hazardous south of the intersection of Porter and

Packard and Military Roads. The ditches are at their deepest at the most heavily travelled portion of the highway just south of the intersection of Packard and Military Road. Although they constantly present a serious hazard, they are most hazardous during winter weather. The crowned road surface tends to encourage sliding toward the ditch if the pavement is at all icy and secondly, after a heavy snowfall the exact location of the ditch edge is imperceptible, thus creating a blind hazard for motorists.

3. Elements of this report previously described have noted that problems have occurred on Military Road to a great extent because of the high volume of traffic on the existing roadway related to expanding commercialization. Traffic counts made by the New York State Department of Transportation indicate that north of Witmer Road (NYS 31) the traffic volume to road capacity is in proper balance, ie there is greater road capacity than there is traffic. South of Witmer Road, especially in the shopping centers area south of Packard Road the volume of traffic greatly exceeds the road's rated traffic carrying capacity. Traffic counts have not been taken annually in the past, but those which have been taken indicate an increase in average annual daily traffic (AADT) from approximately 9,300 cars AADT from Porter Road (NYS 182) to Witmer Road (NYS 31) to 18,000 cars from the south Town line to Porter Road, and 14,000 AADT just north of Pine Avenue on Military Road.<sup>1</sup>

C. Accidents

1. The problems of Military Road, created at least in part, by over development of commercial uses on an inadequate highway can best be illustrated through the description of accident data as compiled by the Niagara County Department of Highways. The Highway Department's excellent compilation of records of traffic accidents from police reports indicate a total of 506 reported accidents occurring in the Town of Niagara during the period of 1966 through 1970. Of this total, 156 (31 percent) accidents occurred on Military Road during this five year period. Within the reported period the total number of accidents has decreased for the Town as a whole from a high of 123 in 1966 to a low of 74 in 1970. In 1966 Military Road accounted for approximately

<sup>1</sup> Traffic Volume Count, 1969, New York State Department of Transportation.



22 percent of all accidents, while in 1970, Military Road's share was 32 percent. This would tend to indicate a mounting problem on Military Road while other areas are decreasing in accident activity. Two of the four fatalities occurring during the five year period occurred on Military Road, one at the intersection of Lockport Road in 1966 and the second at the intersection of Recovery Road in 1968.

Of the 21 reported accidents that took place in 1970, 11 (50 percent) were rear end collisions and 6 (28 percent) the next highest number, were angle collisions with other cars. These two types tend to indicate the difficulty of turning movements and rapid movements with insufficient braking distance in traffic congested areas. In 18 of the 21 (86 percent) accidents weather conditions were clear and in 62 percent road conditions were dry. In 16 accidents (76 percent) some form of traffic control device was present. Additionally, 76 percent of the accidents occurred after 12 noon and before 12 midnight.

Although none of the accident data analyzed and reported by the County Highway Department, nor discussion with the Town of Niagara Chief of Police indicated a likelihood of roadside signage as being a distracting element in any of the reported accidents, it is nonetheless possible that signage may have been contributory to some of the accidents. The nature and intent of flashing, blinking, moving signs is to attract attention initially to themselves and then, by association, to the business place they represent. While one, or a few signs, may accomplish this intent, too numerous signs do no less than create confusion and in some cases distract the motorists attention and/or "camouflage" traffic signals with their sign colors too similar and too close to the colors of traffic control signals.

### Future Development

There are no less than two distinctly different possible solutions to providing a more workable future for Military Road: (1) allow no more or very limited commercial development on the highway, through restrictive zoning or right of access acquisition; or (2) rebuild the highway to adequately serve the traffic carrying needs of increasing commercialization and possibly multiple dwelling development. By following the negative approach of alternate number one, the potential growth of

Military Road is unduly restricted to low density residential development and/or "neighborhood" type commercial uses in which multiple private drives can intensify traffic problems. Alternative number one would require acquisition of access control which would require special legislation under the Highway Law to permit partial acquisition of access, if this proposal were to be carried out by the Department of Transportation. In opposition to this method, alternative number two suggests an expansion of commercial activities, under controlled sites development rules concurrent with reconstruction and widening of the road and its right-of-way.

#### Recommended Land Use

It is recognized that the anticipated growth within the Town of Niagara will not be large enough by itself to support or justify the present, much less future, commercial growth on Military Road. It is therefore, immediately accepted that Military Road will continue to provide commercial services for a much wider market area than the Town of Niagara. Complete commercialization of the entire length of Military Road could probably be justified, based upon its attraction to the surrounding towns and the City of Niagara Falls. Therefore, the recommendation for less than total commercialization is based upon the objective that where uses other than commercial uses can be developed compatibly or advantageously within each, commercial activity would be excluded. This concept is further explained below in relation to the three areas previously designated.

#### Section A-B

The area from Witmer Road to the area south of Grauer Road on the east side of Military Road is almost totally commercial and should remain so through the planning period (1970 - 1990). As the buildings need replacement, generally during the same period, the use of land to the south and the need for continued commercial development should dictate the area's future use. On the west side present residential use should remain with no more commercial development and future residential only with greater area and setback. South of the new Marine Bank, to Lockport Road, on the east side of the highway multiple family apartment development should be considered because of the proximity to the school, just east of Isherwood Drive. On the west side of the road, south of Isherwood, single family residential uses would be most compatible with the existing residential uses. Access can be gained by an extension of Mayle Court, to the north.

#### Section B-C

Little open frontage exists along Military Road in this section. The use of the few remaining lots should be determined by their neighbor's use. The presently vacant land between Bellreng and Military Road, south of North Whitham Drive can well serve

an office or light commercial function, as initially planned. Adequate buffering is already provided between this area and the homes in intersecting streets only, plus a short connector between Bellring and Elsa, to avoid a jug intersection.

### Section C-D

The section of B-C extending south of the intersection of Packard and Military Road and practically all of the frontage of Section C-D should be given consideration for commercial development. This area is predominately commercial at present and is recommended for expanded commercial land use.

### Recommended Highway Development

Relatively unlimited expansion of concentrated residential land use and major commercial land use will require major redesign and widening of Military Road. Preliminary discussion with the New York State Department of Transportation indicates that future traffic volumes will require an upgrading of road right-of-way from 66 feet to approximately 110 feet. Pavement width will probably increase from 24 feet to 68 feet, including a 16 foot median strip for the area from Pine Avenue (NYS 62) to the Packard-Porter-Military Road intersection. These requirements have no official status at this time in that the Military Road project is not scheduled for consideration until 1975 by the Department of Transportation.

It is not anticipated that control of access to either undeveloped or developed property will be acquired by the Department of Transportation.

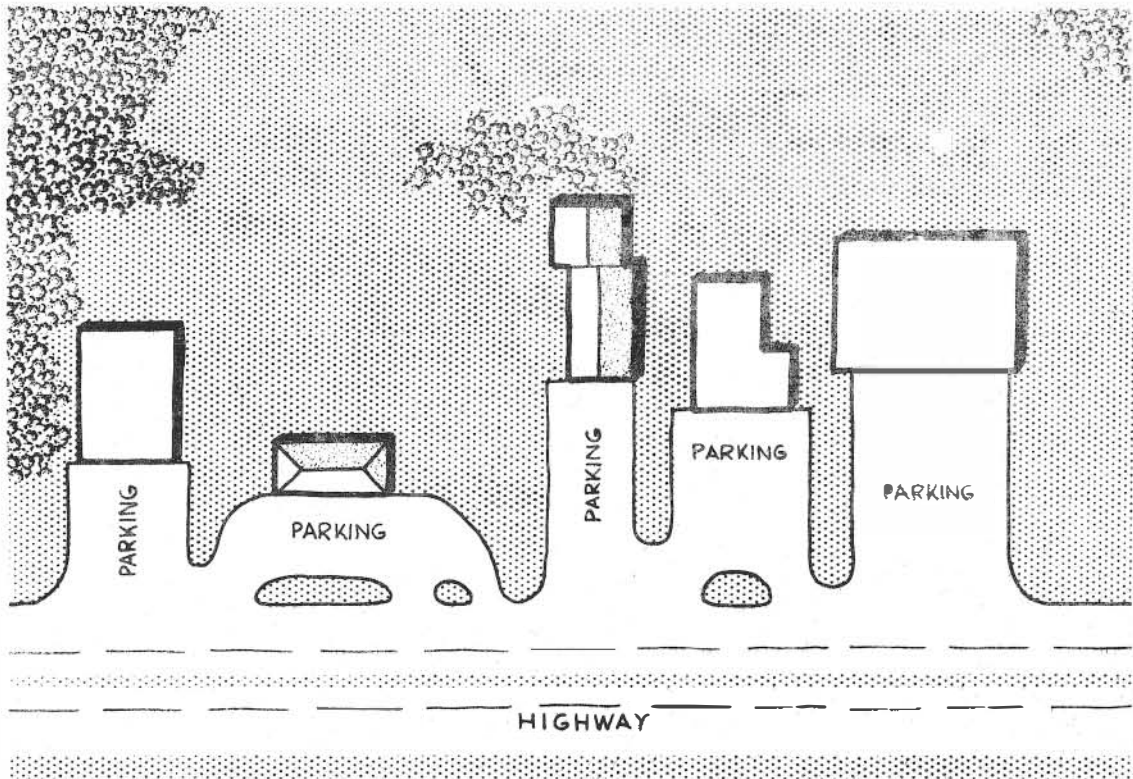
### Access to Expanded Land Uses

The recommendation of expanded residential and commercial land use should not imply a continuation of generally uncontrolled access to potentially commercial property. If the Department of Transportation cannot provide access control beyond limiting driveway sizes and location, the Town should provide access control through zoning and site review controls. Review by Niagara County and the Erie-Niagara Regional Planning Board may also be possible to aid the Planning Board in site design and zoning considerations.

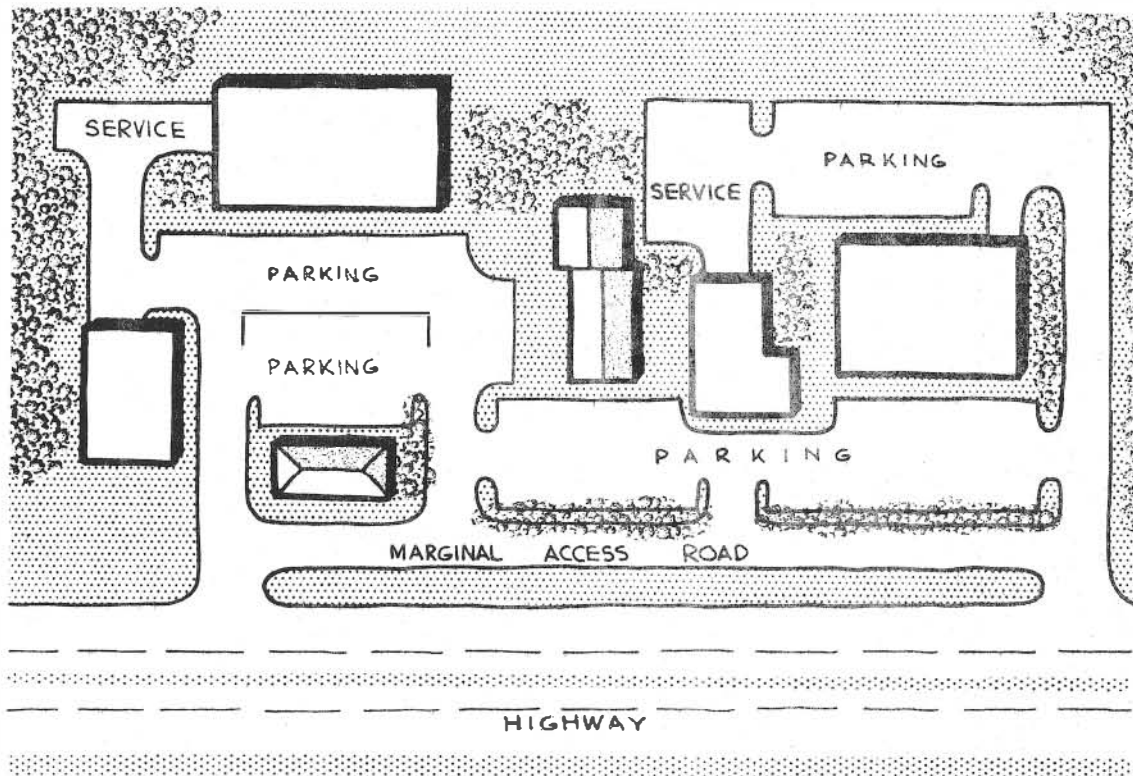
It is recommended that control of access to each property be encouraged by the Planning Board and required for new or expanding proposals for the full length of Military Road. Without it, the same hazardous, congestive conditions will recur that now plague the highway. To promote fewer conflict points, it is recommended that:



# HIGHWAY ACCESS CONTROL



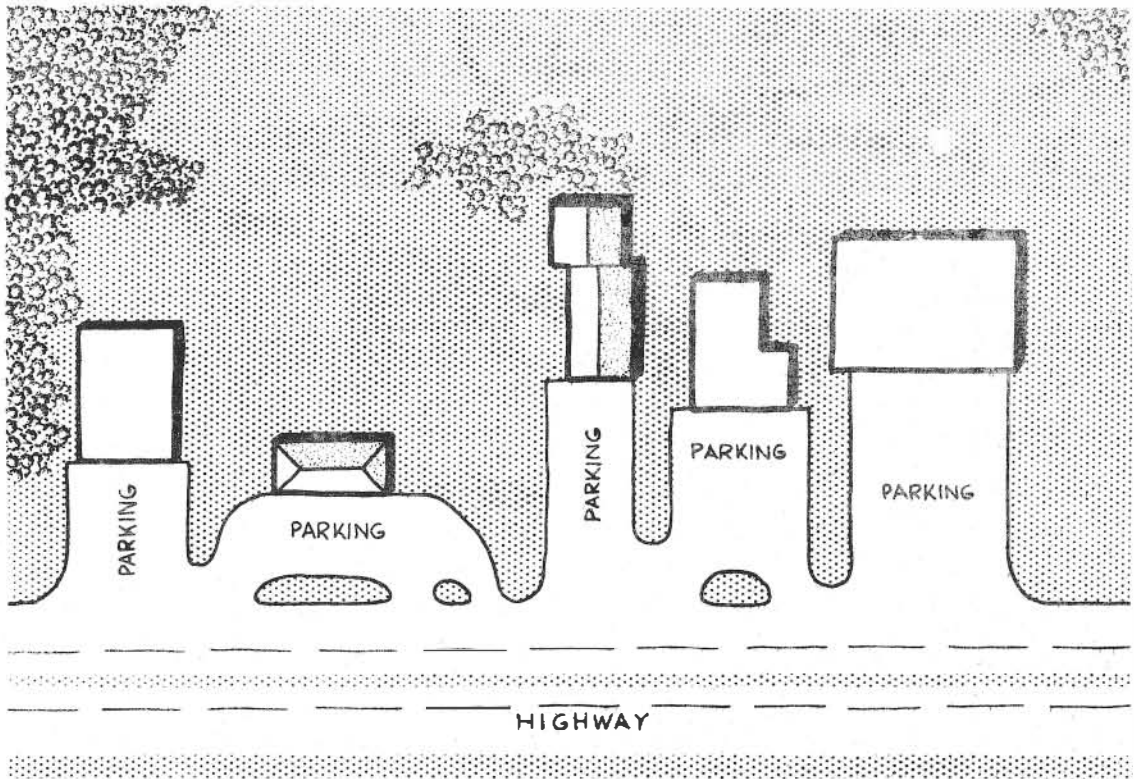
PRESENT PATTERN OF HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT



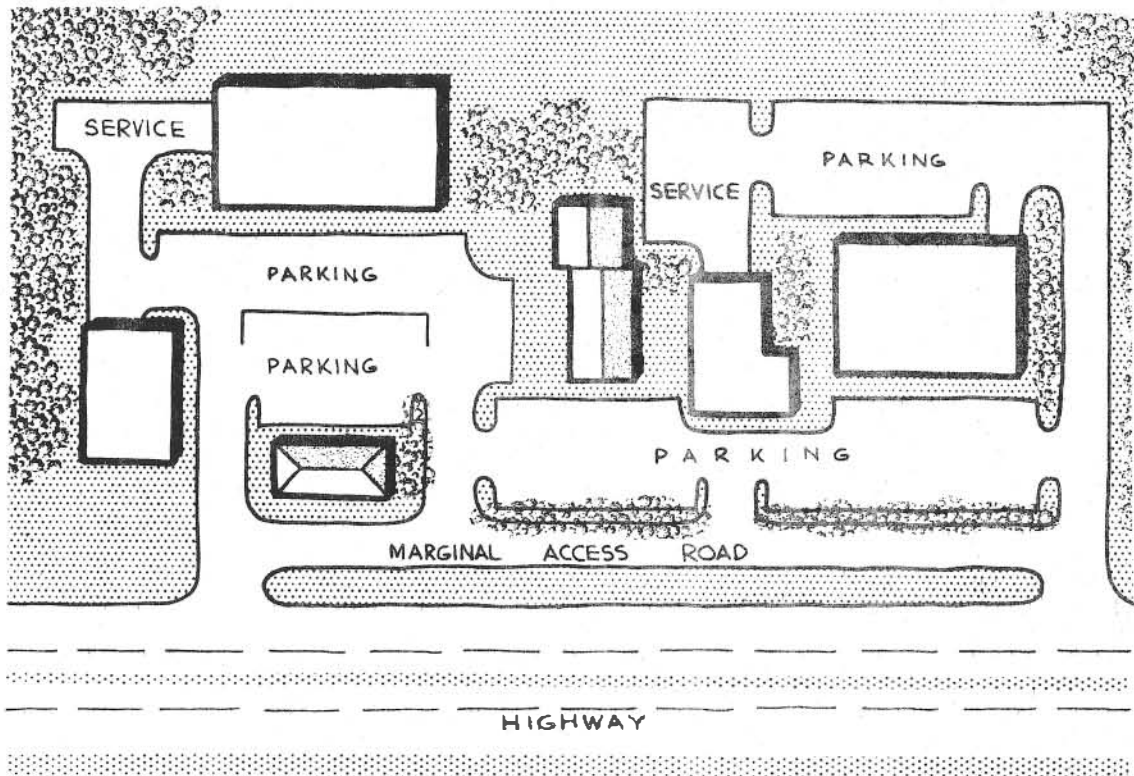
FUTURE PATTERN OF HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT



# HIGHWAY ACCESS CONTROL



PRESENT PATTERN OF HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT



FUTURE PATTERN OF HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT

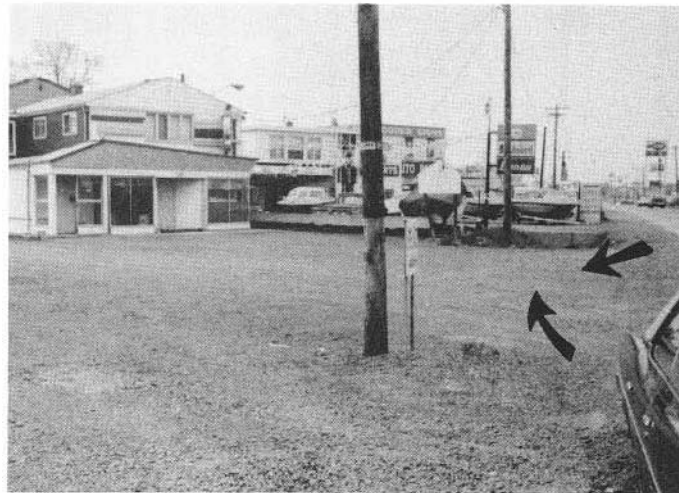






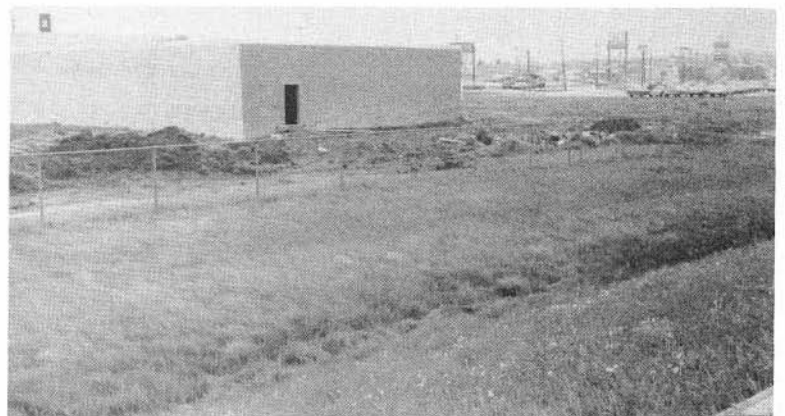
**1**  
OBSOLETE AND UNUSED BUILDINGS  
CREATE A MARGINAL COMMERCIAL  
CLIMATE.

**2**  
UNCONTROLLED ACCESS  
CREATES HAZARDOUS ENTRY  
ONTO AND EXIT FROM  
MILITARY ROAD.

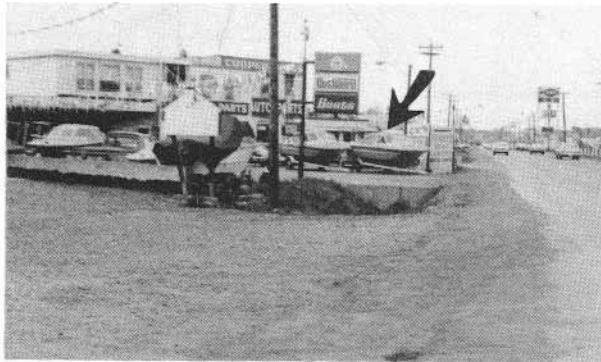


**3**  
SPACE FOR SERVICE ROAD  
SOUTHWARD FROM PACKARD  
ROAD.

**4**  
SPACE BEHIND NEW BUILDING  
AND WITHIN EXPRESSWAY RIGHT-  
OF-WAY FOR SUGGESTED SERVICE  
ROAD.







**5**

LIMITED CUSTOMER OFF-STREET PARKING AREA IN FRONT OF BUSINESS FURTHER LIMITED BY MERCHANDISE DISPLAY (BOATS).

**6**

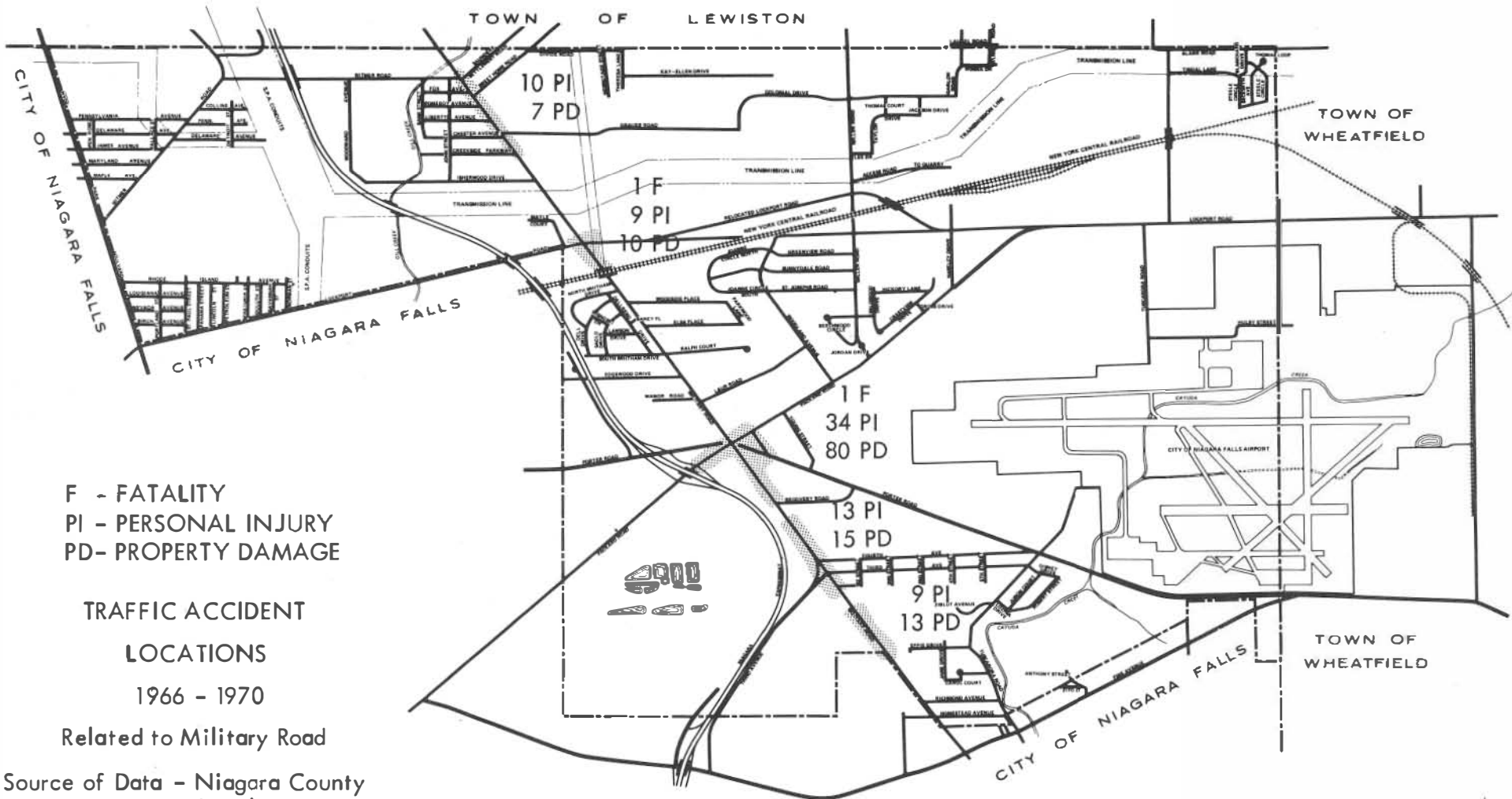
OPEN DITCHES AND LACK OF SIDEWALKS ARE TWO PROBLEMS TO BE RESOLVED ALONG MILITARY ROAD.



**7**

LIMITED FRONTAGE PARKING CAN CAUSE HAZARDOUS RE-ENTRY ONTO STREET.





F - FATALITY  
 PI - PERSONAL INJURY  
 PD - PROPERTY DAMAGE

TRAFFIC ACCIDENT  
 LOCATIONS

1966 - 1970

Related to Military Road

Source of Data - Niagara County  
 Department of Highways

THE PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT FOR THE NEW YORK STATE OF PLANNING GEORGINA TOP AND PLANNING BOARD HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH A FUNDING ASSISTANCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND IS FINANCED IN PART BY THE STATE OF NEW YORK UNDER THE URBAN PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 261 OF THE HOUSING ACT OF 1964 AS AMENDED.

THIS MATERIAL AND HEREIN WAS PREPARED SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF LAND USE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL OPINIONS CONCERNING OTHER RELATED CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDING LEGAL, ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURAL ARE NOT WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION.

# TOWN OF NIAGARA

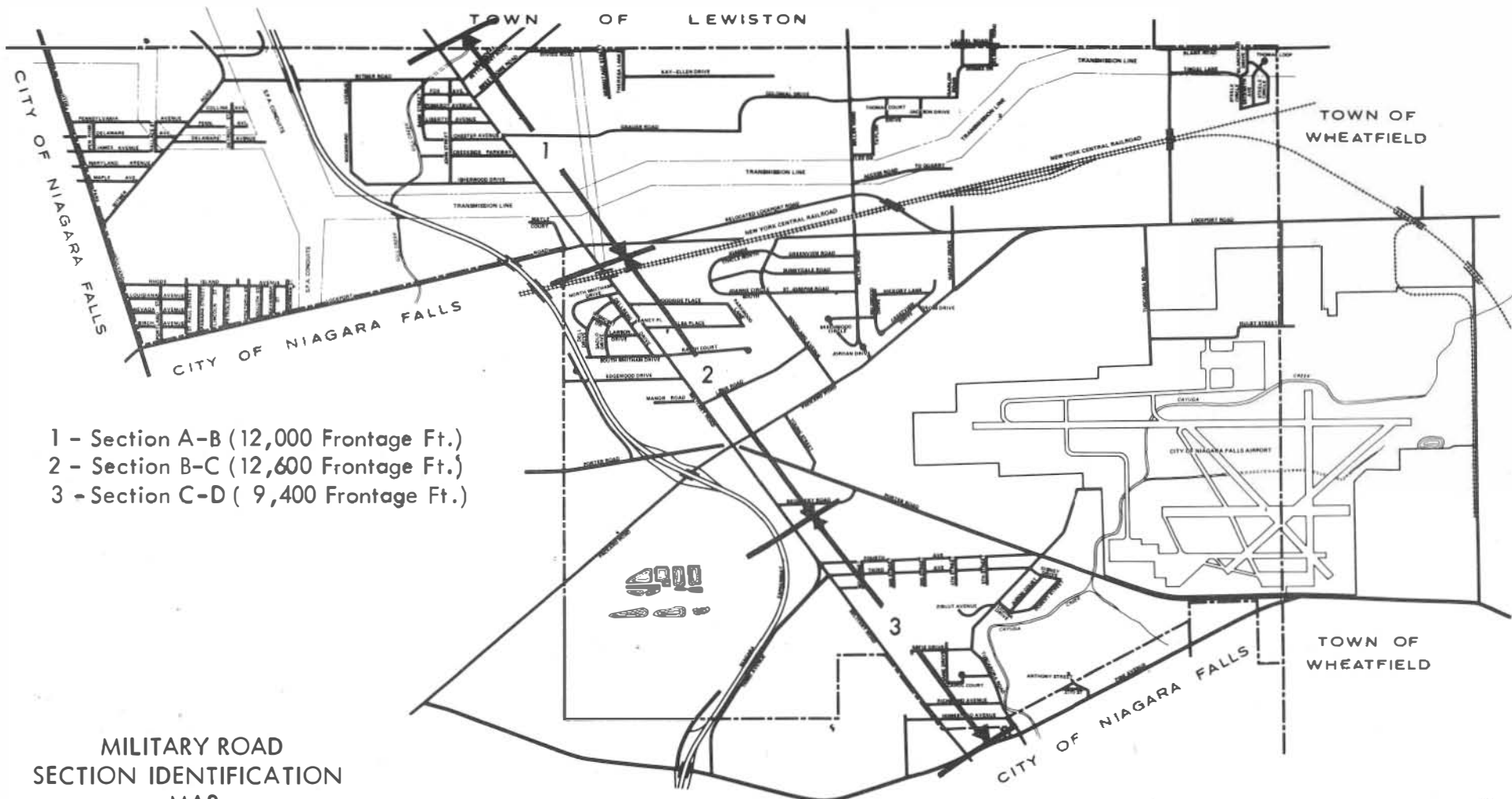
## NIAGARA COUNTY - NEW YORK

1000 0 1000 2000 3000  
 scale in feet



PREPARED FOR THE PLANNING BOARD BY - HERBERT H. SMITH ASSOCIATES - WEST TRENTON, NEW JERSEY





- 1 - Section A-B (12,000 Frontage Ft.)
- 2 - Section B-C (12,600 Frontage Ft.)
- 3 - Section C-D ( 9,400 Frontage Ft.)

MILITARY ROAD  
SECTION IDENTIFICATION  
MAP

THE PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT FOR THE NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PLANNING COORDINATION WAS FINANCIALLY AIDED THROUGH A FEDERAL GRANT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND WAS FINANCED IN PART BY THE STATE OF NEW YORK UNDER THE URBAN PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 101 OF THE HOUSING ACT OF 1964 AS AMENDED.

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**TOWN OF NIAGARA**  
**NIAGARA COUNTY - NEW YORK**

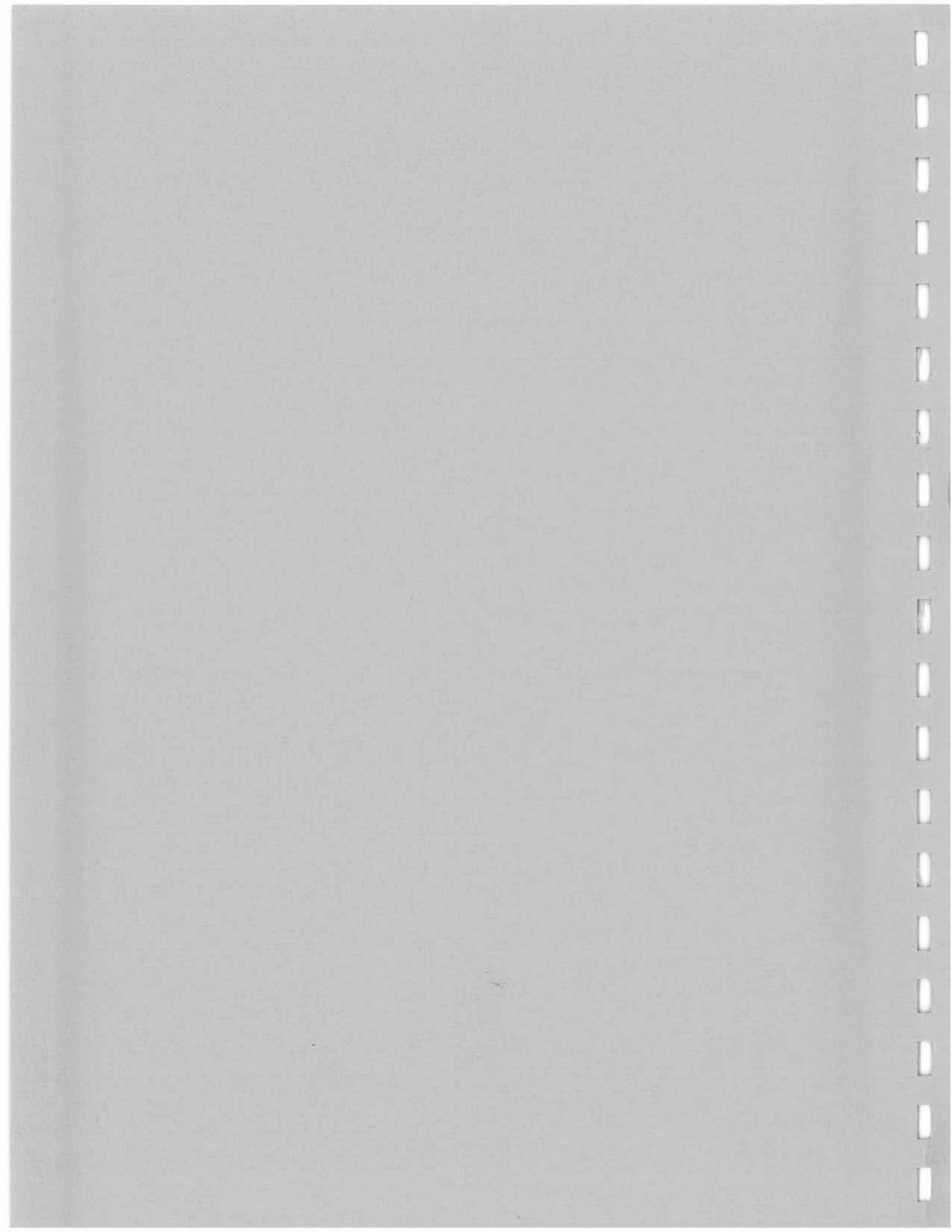


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HOUSING ANALYSIS



## HOUSING ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

A housing analysis may be defined as the community's total housing function including the identification of housing problems, obstacles to the solution of these problems, community housing objectives, previous and future planning activities related to housing, as well as previous and future governmental actions taken to implement housing plans and to alleviate housing problems. The purpose of the housing analysis is to establish and preserve sound housing and to develop planned programs which will provide improved housing in the future. The objective of a housing analysis is to support the national goal of the Housing Act of 1949, as well as subsequent acts, to provide "a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family."

This report reviews and discusses housing conditions in accordance with New York State Office of Planning Coordination and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines.

### HOUSING DATA

Housing data for the Town of Niagara is limited by a lack of current information beyond that which the consultant developed, and by the lack of past Census information available for larger urban places. Information for communities of less than 10,000 residents is sparse and frequently incomplete due to disclosure laws governing the publication of Census data where only a few instances of an element of information are found. To provide current information on housing conditions, the consultant conducted a field survey in October 1970. All houses and other residential units were identified by type and condition. Results of that survey will be discussed later.

Available data such as the total number of housing units in 1960 and 1967, the number of occupied dwellings in 1960 and 1970 and pertinent population characteristics are included. Housing characteristics for Niagara County are included to provide an indication of area wide conditions during the same time periods.

### PLANNING AREA DELINEATION

The Town of Niagara has been separated into a total of six planning areas for the purpose of comparison. Five of the six planning units have residential development within their

borders, while the sixth area has no residential development. Planning Area Six comprises the area of the Niagara Falls International Airport and the surrounding undeveloped land.

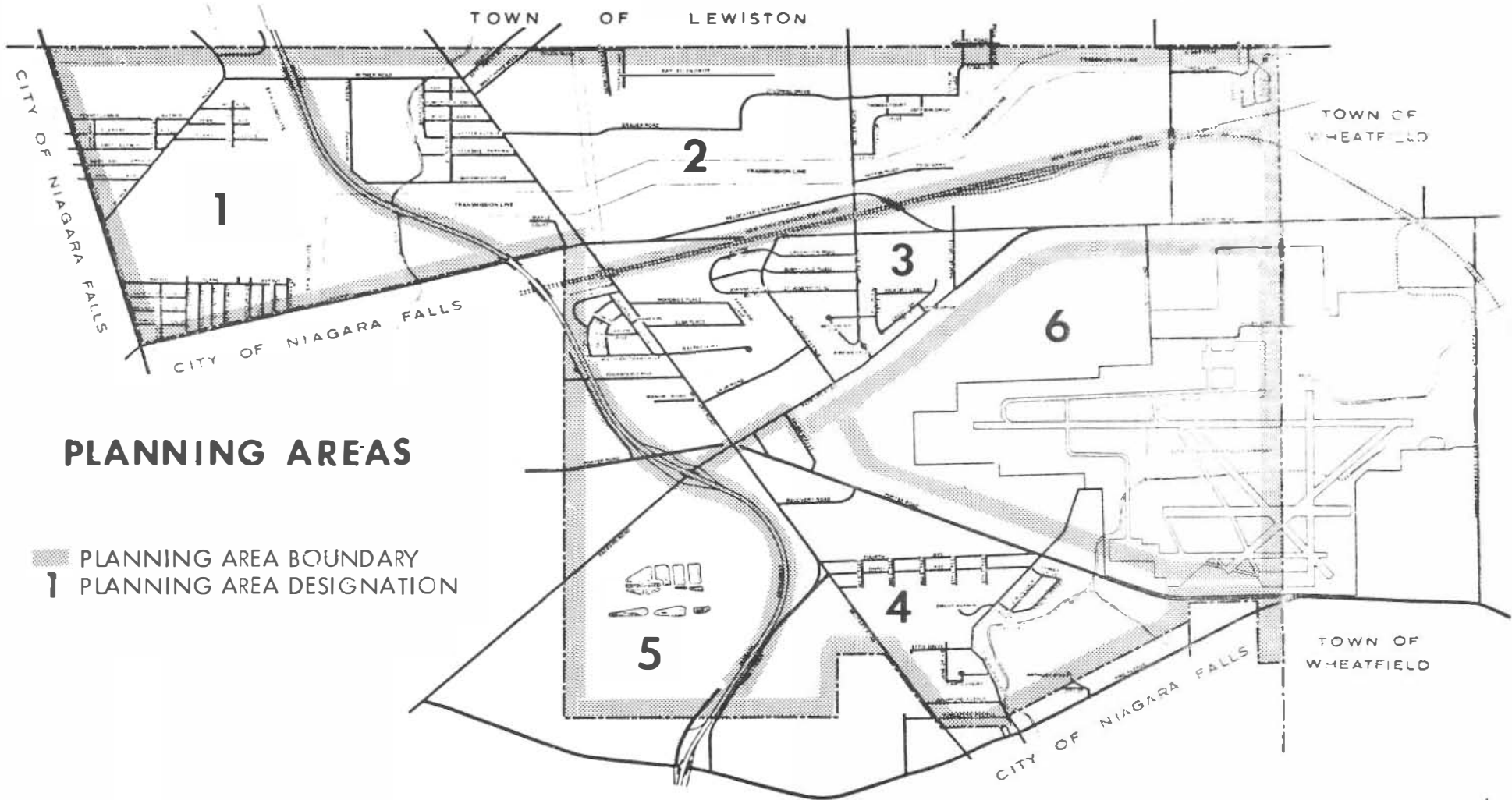
Planning area delineation was based on a general concept of "neighborhood affiliation," on the basis that within certain contiguous areas, residents will form bonds of friendship, attend the same churches and shop in the same local stores. Ties of neighborhood affiliation are frequently formed by the activities initiated by resident children. Because their activities are generally restricted to the church, school and/or home and its general environs, resident participation becomes a neighborhood activity and a center of identification. The formation of these neighborhoods, or planning areas as shown on the Planning Area Map has been based upon the most significant physical barriers surrounding or bordering each area. Naturally, the municipal incorporation lines are followed as the only non-physical delineator. Physical barriers, such as major streets and railroads are utilized as boundaries of planning areas because they are (a) permanent and (b) difficult to cross, and thereby discourage activities from crossing such bounds. In recognition of the major traffic arteries and the Penn Central Railroad as boundaries, the planning areas were formed as follows:

- Planning Area 1 is located in the northwest corner of the Town and includes all land between the north, west, and south corporate boundaries of the Town and the Niagara Expressway, on the east.
- Planning Area 2 includes the area bounded by the Niagara Expressway on the west, the Town Line on the north and the east and the Penn Central Railroad on the south. Although Military Road forms a major barrier it has not been used as a planning area boundary because the area to the west of Military Road and east of the Niagara Expressway is too small to be a separate planning area.
- Planning Area 3 includes the area south of the Penn Central Railroad track, southward to a line 500 feet, plus or minus, south of Packard Road; said line extends eastward to the east Town Line and westward to Young Street, then northward to Packard Road, then westerly to an intersection with the west boundary at the Niagara Expressway.
- Planning Area 4 encompasses all of the south central section of the Town, from a line approximately 500 feet north of Porter Road to the south Town Line, then westerly to the Expressway and then northward to Packard Road. Both sides of Porter Road are included because of the great change in character of the land north of Porter Road. The character of land north of the rear property lines of properties facing Porter Road changes exclusively to open land because of the airport. Residents on either side of Porter Road commonly use Porter Road and are therefore more related to each other than they are to the airport property. For this reason, both sides of Porter Road in Planning Area 4 were included in

one area. The same reasoning caused the developed area south of Packard Road for 500 feet to be included in Planning Area 3.

Planning Area 5 includes the southwest and westerly portion of the Town, west of the Niagara Expressway between the south and west corporate Town boundaries. The vast majority of this area is oriented westerly to the industrial uses within the City of Niagara Falls. Only a limited number of residence are included in this area, which could not be included in Planning Area 3 because of the major barrier created by the Expressway.

Planning Area 6 which includes the International Airport, contains no housing units, and will therefore not be considered in the remainder of the housing study.



## PLANNING AREAS

- PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
- 1** PLANNING AREA DESIGNATION

# TOWN OF NIAGARA

## NIAGARA COUNTY - NEW YORK



PREPARED FOR THE PLANNING BOARD BY

HERBERTH. SMITH ASSOCIATES

WEST TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

## HOUSING TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Town of Niagara contains a variety of housing in terms of age, type, condition and value. Housing structures in the Town range from early farm houses, built before 1900 to suburban housing just completed or under construction at the time of the housing survey in October 1970. Not only do the houses themselves vary widely, subdivision planning varies from poorly planned strip residential development on small lots fronting on Military Road to well planned, attractive and efficient residential development in Veterans Heights with its own park and functional street system. Between these two extremes, a great variety of housing development has taken place. The greatest change in housing started in 1950 when the Town began to develop as a suburban community. More housing was built between 1950, and 1960 than all housing previously built in the Town.

Unlike the County as a whole, the Town of Niagara has experienced 75 percent of its residential structural growth since 1940. The County's growth has been less than half during this same period.

TABLE 9  
AGE OF HOUSING

<u>Year Structure Built</u>	<u>TOWN OF NIAGARA</u>		<u>NIAGARA COUNTY</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
1950 - 1960	1,094	52.6	18,706	25.0
1940 - 1950	461	22.2	8,829	11.8
1939 or earlier	526	25.3	47,289	63.2
	<u>2,081</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>74,824</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Source: 1963 Business Fact Book, N.Y.S. Department of Commerce, pg. 21.

PROBLEMS RELATING TO HOUSING

Condition of Housing

The 1960 Census of Housing, by the U.S. Bureau of Census included a housing conditions survey in which structural defects were noted by visual observation of the enumerator. The conditions observed were generally related to extent of disrepair, hazardous conditions and physical safety of the occupants and makeshift construction. Unlike the Census survey of 1960 which was a sample survey, based on interior conditions of dwelling units, the consultant's survey of structures was done by visual examination of the exterior but of 100 percent of the residential structures within the Town.

Based on the field survey of October 1970, 98.5 percent of the Town's residential dwellings were in "sound" condition. The consultant judged the units on the basis of good, fair, deteriorating and dilapidated. For comparative purposes with the Census data, the Census term "sound" is adopted which includes the consultant's classification of both good and fair. The terms deteriorating and dilapidated are generally similar in both surveys.

TABLE 10  
COMPARATIVE HOUSING CONDITIONS  
TOWN OF NIAGARA  
NIAGARA COUNTY, NEW YORK

	CONSULTANT'S SURVEY			CENSUS OF HOUSING	
	October 1970			1960	
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
SOUND	2,157	98.5	SOUND	1,913	92.6
DETERIORATING	26	1.1	DETERIORATING	128	6.1
DILAPIDATED	8	.4	DILAPIDATED	40	1.3
	<u>2,191</u>	<u>100.0</u>		<u>2,081</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Source: 1960 Census of Housing, U.S. Department of Commerce, pg. 111.



## CONDITION OF HOUSING STRUCTURE RATING

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Description</u>
Good Condition (Sound)	A sound structure from all appearances. Any maintenance needed is of a minor nature, such as those items that need to be done on an annual basis. Generally new or nearly new.
Fair Condition (Sound)	A sound structure, as above, but requiring minor maintenance items which have been allowed to accumulate for a number of years, including environmental deficiencies.
Deteriorating Condition	Still a basically sound structure from outward appearance, but requiring major repairs such as a new porch, new siding, or other repair which would require a major expenditure of money to accomplish. Significant disrepair or environmental deficiencies.
Dilapidated Condition	Some evidence -- such as a crumbling foundation, sagging roof, or building wall -- that the structure is unsound, or in need of major repairs that could involve extremely high expenditures for rehabilitation. Normally, a structure classed as dilapidated would be beyond economic repair in terms of upgrading the structure to sound condition.

The results of the consultant's survey are presented in Table 10. Mobile homes have been included in this breakdown on the basis of new or near new condition. While certain environmental deficiencies were present around some mobile home units, structural deficiencies were not evident.

The 1960 Census of Housing recorded housing of substandard quality to account for almost eight percent of the total housing supply. In 1970, the consultant found that less than two percent of the housing units were substandard in deteriorating and dilapidated condition. This is accounted for in part by (a) a larger total number of housing units in 1970 as a base from which the percentages were derived, (b) a larger base of new housing units which creates an increase in the sound classification and the decrease in the ratio of substandard housing and (c) significant amount of housing rehabilitation. During the decade of the 1960's spendable family income was increasing, and home loan and mortgage funding was readily available, thus encouraging structural maintenance.

TABLE 11  
HOUSING CONDITIONS WITH PLANNING AREAS  
TOWN OF NIAGARA  
NIAGARA COUNTY, NEW YORK

P L A N N I N G   A R E A S

	1		2		3		4		5		6		TOTAL	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	%
<u>Single-Family</u>														
Good	15	5.3	203	39.9	296	47.3	181	23.9	1	7.8	Niagara Falls International Airport -- General Vicinity		696	31.7
Fair	250	89.1	296	58.2	300	47.6	86	11.5	12	92.2			944	43.1
Deteriorating	12	4.3	3	.5	8	1.2	2	.4	--	--			26	1.7
Dilapidated	--	--	1	.2	7	1.2	--	--	--	--			8	.4
<u>Two-Family</u>														
Good	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--			--	--
Fair	--	--	2	.4	2	.3	--	--	--	--			4	.2
Deteriorating	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--			--	--
Dilapidated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--			--	--
<u>Multiple-Family</u>														
Good	--	--	--	--	15	2.4	142*	18.8	--	--		157	7.2	
Fair	3	1.3	4	.8	--	--	6	--	--	--		13	.5	
Deteriorating	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--		--	--	
Dilapidated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--		--	--	
<u>Mobile Homes</u>														
Good	--	--	--	--	--	--	261	34.6	--	--		261	11.7	
Fair	--	--	--	--	--	--	82	10.8	--	--		82	3.5	
Deteriorating	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--		--	--	
Dilapidated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--		--	--	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0</b>			<b>2,191</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Inland Gardens, built, but not occupied.

Data compiled and prepared by Herbert H. Smith Associates.

Substandard Housing

Substandard housing includes any housing which was considered deteriorating or dilapidated during the consultant's survey in which major structural and/or environmental problems were observed. Based on the field survey, 25 structures were found to be deteriorating throughout the Town, and eight structures were found to be dilapidated. Combined, the two groups represent 1.5 percent of the total housing supply in the Town.

Substandard housing is not concentrated in any one area within the Town. As shown in Table 12, Planning Area 1 contains fifty (50) percent of the deteriorated structures, many of which are deteriorating because of their close proximity to scrap metal operations and other heavy industrial uses. Planning Area 3 contains most of the remaining deteriorating structures, as well as the majority of the dilapidated structures. There is no obvious reason for this neighborhood to husband deterioration especially since several of the new homes in this area were built in close proximity to the substandard structures. In all cases, substandard housing occurs in single-family structures.

TABLE 12

DISTRIBUTION OF SUBSTANDARD HOUSING - 1970

PLANNING AREA

Condition	#1	%	#2	%	#3	%	#4	%	#5	%	#6	%	Total	Percent
Deteriorating	13	39	3	8	8	24	2	5	0	0	0	0	26	76
Dilapidated	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>24</u>
Total Substandard	<u>13</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>100</u>

Source: Consultant's field survey, October, 1970

Data Prepared by Herbert H. Smith Associates

## Housing Related Environmental Problems

Although the 1970 survey indicates substandard housing to be limited throughout the Town, numerous instances of neglect relating to exterior appearance were evident such as a need for house painting. Other elements of property deficiencies, not directly related to structural problems but indicating property deficiencies were evident. An example seen in areas where large numbers of children were coincident with small structurally overcrowded lots was the lack of grass in the front and side yards. Where park space is lacking and the residential yard is used for children's play, wear on lawn is extreme to the point of obliteration. Other environmental deficiencies included use of yard space for industrial equipment storage and use of front lawns for parking. The intermixing of residential properties adjacent to incompatible commercial uses tends to create environmental problems of a non-physical nature such as excessive noise, lighting and dust during daylight and/or night hours of operation. The accumulation of wind-blown discarded paper and trash from grocery stores and drive-in restaurants and the like frequently creates significant environmental problems also.

As previously discussed, in the analysis of Physical Features, soils in the Town of Niagara do not readily accept storm water runoff because of poor percolation caused by impervious substrata or a prolonged high water table, lack of drainage and in some instances visible ponding in close proximity to housing creates an additional environmental deficiency not recordable in Table 11.

Other housing or housing related characteristics noted in the field inspection included:

- o Where housing was developed on large lots in generally open areas, toward the east side of the Town housing problems appeared to be less severe and fewer in number from a visual standpoint. Conversely, where housing densities were high, a greater variety of problems were in evidence.
- o Multiple housing in the Town appeared to be uniformly good because of its recent construction or an active maintenance program. At the present time multiple housing accounts for less than one percent of the Town's housing supply. Completion of the Inland Gardens project will increase that level to approximately seven percent.
- o The majority of mobile homes in the Town appear to be in relatively good condition with more than half of the units being no more than two or three years old. Mobile home parks, though relatively well maintained have exceptionally high population densities because of small lots for each unit. Open space is negligible. These deficiencies should be overcome in subsequent mobile home park construction. The Town presently holds approximately 23 percent of all mobile homes in the County.

- o Housing in the northwest corner of the Town will tend to deteriorate faster than in other sections of the Town, if an exceptionally active continuing maintenance program is not achieved. The close proximity of heavy industry and a railyard; a high population count on small residential lots coupled with a lack of off-street parking tend to encourage residential deterioration.

### Population and Housing Characteristics

As previously described the Town of Niagara, unlike Niagara County as a whole, has had approximately three-fourths of its growth since 1940 and about half since 1950. Niagara County development exceeded 63 percent prior to 1940. In the Town, approximately 90 percent of all housing is of standard condition as should be expected with relatively recent construction. County housing is slightly less standard suggesting good continuous maintenance. Almost 90 percent of all housing is single-family in character in the Town, while only approximately 65 percent was single-family in the County in 1960. This reflects the numerous multiple-family units in the City of Niagara Falls. Housing rental in 1960 was approximately \$77 per month in the Town while in the remainder of the County, median rent was \$67. By 1970 contract rent has increased to \$82 per month in the County. An estimated monthly contract rent for the Town would be \$92. Value of owner-occupied single-family housing was \$12,000 in the Town and \$14,000 in the County in 1960. In 1970, the median value was recorded as \$15,000. By proportionate estimate, value of property in the Town would be \$14,000. The majority of the increases noted are caused by an inflationary trend, rather than absolute value. Because of the suburban character of the Town of Niagara and its development in recent years, the average age of residents is 23.5 years while the County's average age is 29.1 years. Older people frequently prefer apartment housing and its accompanying lack of maintenance rather than the predominant single-family character of the Town.

A significant problem in the Town as well as in the County is the number of residents whose income is too low to purchase typical new housing or to affect repairs on existing housing, once deterioration becomes advanced. According to the 1960 Census of Population, which is the latest available data, 34 percent of Town residents had income of under \$5,000. In the County the amount was 39.8 percent. Home ownership for this group in today's real estate market in the Town is almost non-existent. Contributory to the problem of adequate housing is the typical family size in Niagara of 3.9 persons per household. The average family size for the County is 3.2 persons. This high figure, related to overage age of population indicates that young married people come to the Town probably from Niagara Falls, to start their families in a suburban atmosphere.

## Replacement Housing and Housing Demand

Housing requiring replacement would include all dilapidated structures and structures which should be relocated. The dilapidated structures, as pointed out in Table 12 account for 24 percent of all substandard dwelling units. Most of the 26 structures classified as deteriorated on the other hand could be rehabilitated to provide standard housing conditions. All of the ten housing units in the industrialized northwest corner of the Town west of Witmer Road and east of Hyde Park Boulevard should be relocated away from their present location because of the areas incompatible predominance in heavy industrial use.

According to the 1970 Census of Housing, approximately 3 percent of County housing units were vacant during the Census survey. This number, theoretically, can be considered vacant at all times, thus providing the supply of available housing. Applying this average to the Town of Niagara housing supply, at a given time there would be 61 units available for sale and rent. This would provide for the 18 housing units which should be replaced due to dilapidation and the described need for relocation housing out of the industrial northwest corner.

By 1980, with a population increase of approximately 2,300 people,<sup>1</sup> additional housing in the amount of 640 units or an average of 64 new units per year will be needed. By 1990, with an estimated population of 12,300 residents,<sup>2</sup> there will be a need for an additional 450 housing units above the 1980 demand. This creates a total demand of approximately 1,100 housing units during the planning period.

Recent construction in the Town of residential units averaged 90 units per year during 1968 through 1970, which is more than adequate to satisfy the demand for new housing. The majority of units were given building permits in 1968, including 154 apartment units.<sup>3</sup>

Replacement and new sale housing to approximately two-thirds of the future home owners, based upon typical incomes within the Town, should be priced in the \$15,000 to \$20,000 range. Fifty-four percent of the population had a maximum income of \$8,000. Another 12 percent had incomes of less than \$4,000, according to the 1960 Census. This group

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1. Population Projections for Erie-Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board, Cornell Aeronautical Laboratories.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Building Permits; 1968, 1969 and 1970, Building Department, Town of Niagara.

will have great difficulty in obtaining housing in any part of private market since they would be able to pay a maximum of only \$8,000 per unit.

Rental occupancy in the Town accounts for approximately 30 percent of all housing. Future rental housing demand would then be approximately 1/3 of the 640 dwelling unit demand for housing in 1980 or 215 dwelling units. This would require average construction of 22 rental units each year. In the last three years, the Building Department has issued building permits for 154 rental units, or approximately 50 units per year. One hundred and forty-two of these units cannot be occupied until State and County Health Department approval is given upon approved sewer construction. None the less, rental housing construction has achieved a greater number than required by future growth estimates.

### Community Services

There are several areas of inadequate community services in the Town which affects its housing base, some of which have been discussed in previous reports.

### Transportation

No rail transportation is available to the Town of Niagara for commuter service and bus service is limited to approximately two scheduled trips per day to the principal shopping areas, rather than throughout the Town. It is inadequate for commutation by residents to their places of employment, which are mostly outside of the Town but within the metropolitan area. Automobile transportation is the predominant means of transportation. Although the street system generally works well, there are several areas of major traffic congestion, as described in the Circulation and Transportation Report.

### Sewers

One of the major problems relating to housing in the Town is the need for sanitary sewers facilities. Niagara has become a dynamic growth community in the last twenty years which has overtaxed its former ability to rid itself of sewerage successfully by individual septic systems. To correct this condition the Town is participating in a County-wide sanitary sewer study and has engaged engineering consultants for detailed Town sanitary and storm sewers planning and construction in coordination with the County system.

All areas of the Town have public water available, except one. The northeast area is without public water and is the area recommended for displacement because of incompatibility with existing dominant industrial uses. This area, bounded by Witmer Road and Hyde Park Boulevard should be used for industrial purposes exclusively.

### Education

The Town of Niagara is served by the Niagara Wheatfield School District which is undertaking a building program to alleviate space needs. Present site with adjacent land provided adequate space.

### Fire Protection

Fire defense systems within the Town of Niagara are under construction for expansion. A new fire station is being constructed on Lockport Road, within one-quarter mile of Military Road. This station will replace the old fire station on Military Road. The Town is adequately covered through dispersed stationing of its own equipment which, when needed, is supplemented by the Niagara County mutual aid system.

### Police Protection

The Town of Niagara maintains its own police force which is supplemented by the Lewiston station of the New York State Police, within one mile of the north town line. In addition, the Sheriff's Department in Lockport, approximately fifteen minutes to the east, is available for aid and incarceration.

### Falcon Manor

Falcon Manor, located in the extreme northeast corner of the Town of Niagara on Tuscorora Road, was built for the express purpose of housing the families of military families assigned to the various military installations or locations staffed by military personnel on the Niagara Frontier. The Manor contains 290 dwelling units, ranging from single and two family structures through garden apartment buildings. Until recently, military families were housed off-base throughout the Frontier. However, reduction in military operations and accompanying staff, have increased housing availability at Falcon Manor to the point that within the next two to three months, all military families in the Niagara Frontier will be housed at the Manor.

No plans or proposals for expansion are being considered for Falcon Manor.

If, at some time in the future, military housing is no longer needed in the Niagara Frontier, and Falcon Manor is vacated, consideration should be given to re-utilizing the facility for low income or public housing. Housing for the elderly should be closer to shopping and medical facilities.

## OBSTACLES TO SOLVING HOUSING PROBLEMS

There are a variety of obstacles which prevent totally adequate housing from being a characteristic of the Town, part of which was previously described. Additionally, cause is created by relatively young families with low income trying to buy housing in an inflationary period is a typical reason for inadequacy at the present time. In other cases, where housing is already owned, it has fallen into disrepair because of the high cost of rehabilitation and maintenance. These two causes and other related characteristics of the Town will be examined.



## Housing Data and Planning Funds

Housing problems in the Town have been generally described herein. However, information regarding problems related to individual families has not been collected. To this point a lack of legislative authority to make detailed housing inspections has prevented specific identification of family and housing related problems. Because of the immediacy of problems relating to new community growth, the Town has budgeted its revenues toward satisfying the community needs relating to recent growth demands.

Lack of both storm and sanitary sewer facilities mentioned previously create some of the greatest problems to increased development in the Town. A high water table and the demand for relatively intense development preclude further acceptability of individual septic systems and magnify the need for a complete community sewer system. With proper mechanical drainage of sanitary and storm affluent, the Town has sufficient land area to satisfy the demand for development space throughout the planning period, for low, moderate, and high income homes.

As previously described, lack of sufficient annual income to permit home purchase will continue to be a problem for approximately 80 percent of the Town residents who earn less than \$10,000 per year. It will be even more difficult for the approximately two-thirds who earn less than \$8,000 annually. Because of limited income and a high cost of daily living financial obstacles become insurmountable not only for the potential buyer, but for the potential builder-developer as well because of increasingly higher land, labor and materials costs.

## Home Financing

The differences between housing costs (supply) and the ability to afford housing (demand) lies at the heart of the problem of meeting the housing needs of low income families in an open market. The elements of this are analyzed separately:

### 1. Cost/Availability of Money

The money market which has affected all communities in the United States has meant that loans have been more expensive and, therefore, more difficult to acquire. This naturally affects low and moderate income families most of all since they are hard pressed to meet the 20-25 percent down payment locally required on conventional mortgages. This condition has been undergoing a downward change in recent months, to encourage new housing starts. It's effect will not be fully felt until the 1971 construction season production of housing.

Housing construction at all price levels has been affected or slowed down because of the availability of money. New housing construction has fallen far below the desired rate. This is so low that it does not enable the retirement

of obsolete housing nor does it activate the "filtering down process." \*

Under ideal conditions, the open market would supply acceptable housing for all income levels. In practice, this has never been true. What must be recognized is that where housing is not provided through conventional means, other means must be sought.

## 2. Inadequacy of Consumer Purchasing Power

The purchasing power of a family is related to income levels of other forms of income such as pensions and welfare payments as well as to normal income employment. Basically, this limits the amount a family can spend on housing without affecting other necessities. Families in Niagara that have low to moderate incomes include those on fixed incomes and those in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. The problem discussed with respect to housing cannot, therefore, be blamed on the family alone, which may have made strenuous efforts to increase income levels, e.g. two or more members of the family working, but more on the inflationary trends in construction and development.

## 3. Cost of Land

Land cost have been a rapidly-increasing component in the equation which determines the final cost of a home. In Niagara land costs have risen rapidly and can be expected to rise due to the economic development extending north-easterly from the Buffalo-Niagara Falls urbanized area. Construction of the Amherst campus of the University of Buffalo, the proposed airport and normal suburban movement are three factors affecting land costs in the Town.

## 4. Cost of Construction, Maintenance, and Rehabilitation

Construction costs, as with land costs, have risen at a rate higher than that of the Consumer Price Index.\* The cost of repair and maintenance has also been instrumental in slowing down normal repair and maintenance of the existing housing stock. On this basis, therefore, it appears that the private housing market acting alone may not be able to provide adequate low income housing.

These four factors, interacting on one another, have resulted in a problem which tends to perpetuate itself. There is no indication that in the future that low income will increase their income status to any great extent. At the same time, there is every indication that housing costs

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\* A theory based on the assumption that low-moderate income families move (filter) into units vacated by higher income level families. Such a condition can only operate where there is an open housing market, high levels of housing construction on all levels, and a turnover in occupancy.

will continue to rise over and above prices generally. The problem is, therefore, likely to get worse rather than better. For this reason in part, the Federal government initiated Operation Breakthrough to break the barrier of old fashioned slow and expensive construction methods.

### Other Obstacles

There is no local central agency in the Town or elsewhere which can advise residents regarding the availability of rental and/or sale housing especially with subsidies its cost, the value of their present units, its needs in rehabilitation home and family financing, and the other related housing problems, outside of the business lending institutions, banks and self-interested real estate offices. Although these businesses provide an indispensable service, they are not equipped to provide all of the information needed regarding housing demands, especially of low income families. A technical advisory committee on housing e.g. that being promoted by the Regional Planning Board should be created to supply housing and housing related data to agencies and individuals. 4.

Although the majority of homeowners in the Town are relatively young, there undoubtedly are elderly residents who, because of limited fixed incomes and physical age, are not able to provide the necessary continuing maintenance to their homes. As this group increases, deterioration will become a more serious obstacle to the Town's housing supply.

### Low Income and Minority Housing Discrimination

According to the results of interviews with several agencies and officials within, or related to the Town of Niagara, no overt evidence of racial or minority discrimination in housing was found or related to the consultant. A lack of discrimination maybe due in part, to (a) the similarity of economic characteristics that prevail in the Town regardless of race and (b) to the unusually high number of nationalities and second generation ethnic groups represented in the Town, none of which has an over whelming predominance as shown in the following Table.

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4. Technical Report on Housing in the Erie - Niagara Region, First year Study, p. 122. June 1970 Erie - Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board, Housing Committee.

TABLE 13  
 FOREIGN BORN  
 PLACE OF ORIGIN OR RACE - 1960

<u>NATIONALITY</u>	<u>NUMBER OF PEOPLE</u>
Negro	90
United Kingdom	269
Germany	403
Poland	299
Italy	302
Canada	900
Other	<u>178</u>
 TOTAL:	 2,331

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1960, p. 33 (PC1)

## HOUSING OBJECTIVES

Housing and housing related objectives to be carried out through the course of the Comprehensive Planning Program are:

- o. Preparation of a Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which will recommend physical areas for future growth. The Land Use plan will pay special attention to its suggestion of areas in which various types of housing should be located.
- o. To implement the Comprehensive Plan including the Land Use Plan, the Town's present zoning regulations and land subdivision regulations will be reviewed and rewritten, as necessary, to assume continuity between the regulations and the Comprehensive Plan.
- o. A capital improvements program will be prepared through which financial recommendations will be made for providing future needed and proposed community facilities. The purpose of recommending proposed community facilities is primarily to serve existing and future housing needs.

Other pertinent objectives to be acted upon during the first years of a program related expressly to housing implementation may include an investigation of the feasibility of establishing a nonprofit housing corporation to provide housing for: (a) low income and (b) elderly families. Since housing projects under the State Housing programs are to be sponsored by nonmunicipal bodies, other affiliation should be actively sought, such as labor organizations or council of church organizations.

The Erie-Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board in its study of housing and related problems in the Niagara Frontier, has determined a series of housing goals which are recommended for community review and consideration for local adoption. Implementation of community planning objectives would include the carrying out of area-wide goals upon their adoption.

## ERIE AND NIAGARA COUNTIES REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To provide a sufficient amount of housing for all regional residents

- By encouraging private and public development of a variety of housing types in suitable locations for all income, age, and minority groups.

- By coordinating efforts of private and public developers to accommodate regional housing needs.
- By encouraging experimentation in planning, financing, and construction methods to help reduce the cost of housing.
- By encouraging innovation in programs administered by public housing authorities.
- By providing sufficient land areas suitable for new residential growth.
- By encouraging new housing in the downtown areas of the region's cities in order to take advantage of the concentration of cultural facilities, retail shops, and business and personal services.
- By implementing a policy of open housing for all age, income, and minority groups in the Region.
- By encouraging better planning and development of seasonal housing.
- By recognizing the importance of mobile homes and prefabricated construction as significant elements in providing low income housing.
- By encouraging a better standard for the housing of migrant or seasonal laborers.

To preserve and improve the character of residential areas within the region, and halt the spread of further deterioration and blight.

- By encouraging the adoption and enforcement of uniform building codes and other regulations designed to safeguard minimum structural standards and encourage continued maintenance.
- By encouraging the adoption, enforcement, and updating of local subdivision and zoning regulations designed to safeguard minimum property and development standards.
- By discouraging new residential growth in areas affected by air and water pollution.

- By buffering existing residential areas from incompatible uses and activities.
- By discouraging nonlocal traffic from passing through residential neighborhoods.
- By improving the quality of existing housing and maintaining a high standard for new construction.
- By identifying problems related to flooding and storm drainage.
- By analyzing the future role of New Towns in terms of growth alternatives.
- By discouraging the further development of residential lots fronting directly upon major highways.
- By discouraging the expansion of strip nonfarm residential development along major roads and highways in rural areas.
- By encouraging the use of Federal and State Grant - In - Aid Programs designed to eliminate neighborhood deficiencies and create opportunities for new investment.

To provide a full range of public and private facilities and services within urbanized areas at convenient locations.

- By concentrating new residential growth in areas that can easily be served by public utilities and services.
- By encouraging new subdivisions platting only when streets and utilities have been properly planned and constructed.
- By encouraging new residential growth in areas free from objectionable nonresidential uses and to discourage the placement of these objectionable uses in older residential areas.
- By encouraging innovation in the overall design and layout of residential areas.
- By encouraging intensive residential development, such as apartment housing, to locate within development corridors related to mass transit and commercial centers.

To recognize the hazards, limitations, and advantages of the Region's natural physical features in the planning of residential areas.

- By encouraging local community ordinances and regulations to recognize the limitations and problems of natural physical features.
- By restricting residential development in land areas with steep topography and poor soil or subsoil conditions.
- By controlling residential densities in accordance with the soil limitations for areas using septic systems and wells.
- By restricting new residential development in areas subject to flooding.
- By preserving and utilizing natural physical features as assets and scenic attractions within residential areas.

#### Methods of Reducing and Eliminating Substandard Housing

Study and consideration by the Planning Board for (a) adoption and enforcement of a housing code and (b) updating and enforcement of the building code, to include State model provisions are essential for the reduction in deteriorating housing. The State of New York has a model Housing Code which should be utilized in determining an appropriate housing code for the Town. A recommendation for adoption of the State Housing Code is based on the continual updating process by the State of New York. As updates are made by the State, they can automatically be included in the local code. The Housing Code ensures the maintenance of existing housing supply and the quality of future housing, if properly implemented.

Complementary to the Housing and Building Codes are the Property Maintenance Code, as well as the electrical and plumbing and fire prevention codes within the arsenal of regulations available from the State for discouraging deterioration. While all of the codes mentioned are valuable tools for the community, they are all only as good as their enforcement. It is suggested that the Town of Niagara study the various codes for their application and adopt those which can be properly enforced. The following schedule is recommended for consideration of a housing rehabilitation system for the Town. The goal of the schedule is to implement the Comprehensive Plan and a housing program as well. As the planning program progresses, means of reaching the housing and planning goals may change, but the goals themselves of providing adequate housing for all residents should be carefully adhered to and when possible, extended so that the planning process and the efforts toward providing housing are continually upgraded.



Other means of reducing substandard housing and creating new housing include the adoption of some of the federal forms of housing rehabilitation and construction; e.g. provided for in Section 235 of the National Housing Act . The County and Regional Planning Board will review proposals for federally aided housing to determine the proposal's ability to fit in with the regional housing program . Additionally, periodic review of the Town's ordinance relating to housing should be made to advance new ideas and procedures in housing. Town conformity, for instance, to area-wide building code requirements permits less costly housing project preparation on both the public and private levels.

## STATEMENT OF PLANNING ACTIVITIES

### Town Planning Board Activities

In the past, the Town Planning Board has been active in providing development review recommendations to the Town Board for both subdivision requests and rezoning petitions. The Planning Board meets on a regular basis for providing development advice to both the Town Board and to petitioners regarding regulatory development procedures and planning implications. The Planning Board's advice is actively sought by the Town Board.

In addition to the Planning Board's regular advisory role to the Town legislative body, special projects, e.g. the preparation of a complete Mobile Home Ordinance, are undertaken. Upon completion and restudy of the draft ordinance, the Planning Board submits its final recommendations to the Town Board for implementation.

### Suggested Future Activities

Planning Activities, which have been recommended for the Town's Housing plan and program, are included in Table 6. Fulfillment of these recommendations is suggested within the time frame indicated, however, their eventual fulfillment is recognized to be much more important than the actual date of accomplishment.

The following determinations have been made in an attempt to determine various costs in time and manpower needed to produce code and study elements relating to housing problems, to further define local needs beyond the scope of this study. Before such activity could be undertaken, there must be an indication of the time and costs that would be incurred in preparing such studies. Determination of recommended procedures, manpower, and costs are shown on the following pages.

TABLE 14

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND PRIORITY SCHEDULE  
TOWN OF NIAGARA

	<u>1971 - 1972</u>	<u>1973 - 1974</u>	<u>1975 - 1976</u>
Comprehensive Plan	Complete and prepare for adoption by the Town Board of Supervisors. Request commitment to adhere to.	▶ Prepare and implement educational program for general residency.	▶ Planning Board study & review Federal & State Housing programs applicable to the Town. Particular attention to new housing methodology.
Zoning Ordinance	Complete comprehensive revisions and recommend to Town Board for amendment to present ordinance.	▶ Educate public to content. Review procedures for submittal of petitions.	▶ Reconsider zoning ordinance for need of revision.
Land Subdivision Regulations	Complete review and add necessary revisions to bring into conformance with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.	▶ Initiate educational program for area developers.	▶ Review land subdivision regulations in light of changing methods of development.
Housing Code	▶	Study for consideration of a housing code for the Town. Planning Board study & recommend to Town Board. Adopt Housing Code.	▶ Initiate aided rehabilitation housing program. ▶ Initiate systematic Housing Code Enforcement programs.
Property Maintenance	▶	▶ Planning Board study for consideration of recommendation of Town Board.	▶ Initiate Property Maintenance Code.

TABLE 14(CONT.)

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND PRIORITY SCHEDULE  
TOWN OF NIAGARA

1971 - 1972

1973 - 1974

1975 - 1976

Mechanical Codes



Town Board appoint citizens committee to study appropriate needs: electrical, plumbing, fire prevention.

Citizen Participation

Appoint citizens committee to work with County and Region for solutions to housing problems, traffic and commercial development. Study needs.



Citizens committee develop recommendations re: housing and commercial growth. Recommend appropriate action programs.



Enlarge citizen participation committee to include more people & to form subcommittees' for study of other pertinent local problems. Advisory to Planning Board.

### Estimates of Housing Supply and Demand

To be accomplished by subcommittee of Planning Board. It is recommended that the subcommittee be composed of three (3) members. This work would be accomplished by a survey of real estate agents, community leaders, civic groups, and churches. It is estimated that this would be accomplished in three to five months on a part-time basis by subcommittee members. Costs would not exceed \$150 (printing of questionnaires, mailing, typing, etc.)

### Analysis of the Effectiveness of the State Housing Programs

The Housing Subcommittee should meet with representatives of the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal after completing item A above. Evaluation of the minimum criteria for state supported housing programs in comparison to the demands determined above would be necessary. This would take two to four weeks. It is assumed that costs would be minimal- \$25.00 for typing, postage, etc.

### Identification of the Cost, Manpower Needs, and Scheduling of Activities Needed To Produce A Housing Code

A Housing Ordinance will require a thorough review of the Model Housing Code for New York State and of adopted housing ordinances by other communities. The Housing Subcommittee would review the Ordinance, discuss it with appropriate county and state agencies, and determine its applicability to Niagara. The latter could be accomplished, in part, with B above. It is estimated that thorough review of the Housing Ordinance, by the Subcommittee, would take three to four months on a part-time basis. Upon completion of the review, legal counsel would be required to prepare a proposed code. Upon completion of the drafted code, it would be submitted to the Town Board for review and public hearings. This would take approximately three to four months. If adopted, the code would have to be published for citizen use. A housing inspector would be appointed on a continuing basis. Estimated costs for these activities would be as follows:

Code Review, (purchase of codes, typing, postage, etc.)	\$ 50.00
Legal Counsel - Initial Preparation	500.00
Legal Counsel - Final Preparation	300.00
Publication and Public Notices of Proposed Ordinances	150.00

Publication of Final Ordinance	100.00
Housing Inspector Annual Salary Plus Expenses	1,500.00
Potential Legal Fees, Notices, etc. for subsequent condemnations and other enforcement	<u>500.00</u>
TOTAL "FIRST YEAR" COSTS	<u>\$3,100.00</u>

#### Program for the Rehabilitation of Substandard Housing

A rehabilitation program for substandard housing should be evaluated by the Housing Subcommittee. A recommended program would include public informational programs for local residents, code enforcement of housing and building codes, clearance of dilapidated structures, and coordination of local civic group activities related to housing rehabilitation (e.g. Boy Scout paint-up, fix-up for homes of incapacitated senior citizens). For small communities, the rehabilitation of housing will be primarily owner-initiated. Loan program information for rehabilitation is, therefore, of primary importance. Annual estimated cost for a rehabilitation program based primarily upon public information distribution would not be more than \$50 to \$100 if the services of the Housing Inspector are utilized to assist in identification of homes eligible for, and in need of, rehabilitation loan programs.

#### Development of a Workable Program for Community Improvement

The Workable Program for Community Improvement is the vehicle through which the Federal Government provides renewal and public housing funds for a community. Before any funding of these types are allocated, the community must show activity in four broad areas: code enforcement, planning and programming, housing and citizen involvement.

For the Town of Niagara to prepare a Workable Program for Community Improvement, a review of existing codes would be required, as well as a study of the adoption of a housing code and related other codes, as well as the establishment of a code enforcement program. Also required is a programming of the Comprehensive Plan now being prepared of the major physical, social, and economic problems, as well as the establishment of a means of relocating displaced persons and a program of citizen involvement.

To prepare a Workable Program, no less than nine months of concentrated effort on the part of the Town Planning Board and the Town Board would be required, as well as that of the Town attorney.

## STATEMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

### Previous Implementation Activities

Public implementation activities in the past year by the Town Planning Board have included:

1. The development and recommendation of a mobile home ordinance which is presently under Town Board consideration;
2. The planning and construction of storm sewer systems to alleviate poor drainage for two extensive housing areas;
3. Planning of sanitary sewer facilities in coordination with other agencies;
4. Review of land development activities;
5. Initiation of the Town's first Comprehensive Plan.

Steps for future implementation are outlined in Table 14.

### Implementation of Proposed Housing Programs

To specifically determine the (a) costs for preparing and performing a systematic code enforcement program and (b) the costs of conducting the other code and programs recommended in the Schedule in Table 14. When a systematic housing code enforcement program is adopted by the Town, each of the six planning districts should be carefully examined for both interior and exterior deficiencies of the structural members and the physical environment. Once the inspections are completed, compliance with adopted regulations would begin. This process to be effective, would involve more than one full-time inspector. The exact numbers would be dependent upon the thoroughness of the initial inspections and the related enforcement process. This process will require no less than three years to complete.

Upon completion of the initial inspections, detailed data should be compiled to determine the extent and intensity as well as location and type of deterioration and housing needs of the residents. Analysis of this data will help determine the direction and procedures which should be taken to affect proper rehabilitation, and prevent recurrence of housing deterioration. Analysis of both federal and state housing problems should be made by the Planning Board to determine their applicability. Coordination with County, State, and the Regional Planning agencies will alleviate many of the research tasks and the need for independent Town programming.

Publication of Final Ordinance	100.00
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Private activities have been devoted to the construction of housing throughout the Town. Because of a lack of sewer facilities the number of units recently completed is well below previous construction periods. Private developers are beginning to understand the necessity of coordinating their activities with those of the various levels of government and the Town Planning Board. Future private activities could include along with continued speculative housing, sponsorship of a housing project and construction of limited income housing of traditional and/or innovative construction and design.

#### COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES REGARDING HOUSING STUDIES

It is recommended that the Town of Niagara actively coordinate its housing studies and program with the Erie-Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board and other pertinent agencies. The goals and objectives of the Regional Planning Board have been included herein so that coordination of ideas can be initiated at the outset of planning for housing on the Town, as well as regional level. It is strongly recommended that the Town of Niagara discuss possible solutions to local housing problems with the Regional Planning Board, as well as with the Office of Planning Services, the Division of Housing and Community Renewal, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.



APPENDIX FOR  
HOUSING ANALYSIS



TABLE 15  
COMPARATIVE POPULATION AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS  
TOWN OF NIAGARA  
NIAGARA COUNTY, NEW YORK

	TOWN OF NIAGARA		NIAGARA COUNTY	
	1960	1970	1960	1970
Population	7,503	8,368	242,269	235,720
Persons Per Housing Unit	3.9	-	3.2	-
Median Age	23.5	-	29.1	-
Persons 65 Years and Over	2.8	-	8.0	-
Median Income Per Family	\$7,041	-	\$6,692	-
Under \$5,000	34.4%	-	39.8%	-
Number of Housing Units	2,081	-	74,813	74,696
Owner-Occupied	71.8%	-	66.8%	-
Percent Single-Family	87.1%	-	68.1%	-
Median Contract Rent/Month	\$77	-	\$67	\$82
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units	\$12,200	-	\$14,000	\$15,900
Under \$15,000	73.7%	-	57.8%	-
Over \$20,000	23.8%	-	14.5%	-
Number of Mobile Homes	-	343	-	1,477
Percent of County Total		23.2%		

- Indicates information not available at time of Table compilation.

Sources of Data: 1963 Business Fact Book, N.Y.S. Dept. of Commerce  
1970 Census of Population PC (V1) 34, U.S. Dept. of Commerce  
1960 and 1970 Census of Housing, HC (V1) 34, U.S. Dept. of Commerce

HOUSING PROGRAM OF VARIOUS AGENCIES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

<u>Program</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Legal Authority</u>
<u>DEMOLITION OF UNSOUND STRUCTURES</u> Remove dilapidated housing on a planned basis. Must relocate.	Grant	Section 116 Housing Act, 1949
<u>REHABILITATION - LOW INCOME</u> Rehabilitation grants made to individuals in code enforcement areas. May not exceed \$3,000 for improvements.	Grant	Section 115 Housing Act, 1949
<u>PROPERTY REHABILITATION</u> Loans of up to 20 years at 3 percent made for residential and nonresidential property improvements.	Loan	Section 312 Housing Act of 1964, as amended
<u>INTEREST SUPPLEMENTS ON HOME MORTGAGES</u> HUD makes monthly payment to mortgagee to reduce interest costs on a home insured by the Federal Housing Administration. Owner must qualify.	Reduce Interest	Section 235 National Housing Act (Public Law 73-479)
<u>LOW RENT PUBLIC HOUSING</u> Must have local housing authority Assistance to plan, build, and/or acquire and operate low-rent public housing.	Financial & Technical Assistance	U.S. Housing Act of 1937, as amended
<u>RURAL HOUSING LOANS</u> Funds to build, buy, or improve housing for low-income families, who qualify.	Loan	Farmers Home Administration Title 1 of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended .
<u>FARM OWNERSHIP LOANS</u> Farm ownership loans to improve buildings, land, water reserves, establish recreation, etc. to supplement income.	Loan	Formers Home Administration

<u>Program</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Legal Authority</u>
<u>HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY</u> Assistance to nongovernmental sponsors for the provision of housing.	Financial & Technical Assistance	NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal

Note: Programs listed herein are subject to change by the agencies involved as new means of providing better service are found. Because of the characteristics of the national and state economic conditions, not all of the programs listed receive funded appropriations each year.

For additional information, write to:

Farmers Home Administration  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20250  
Field Office: Medina

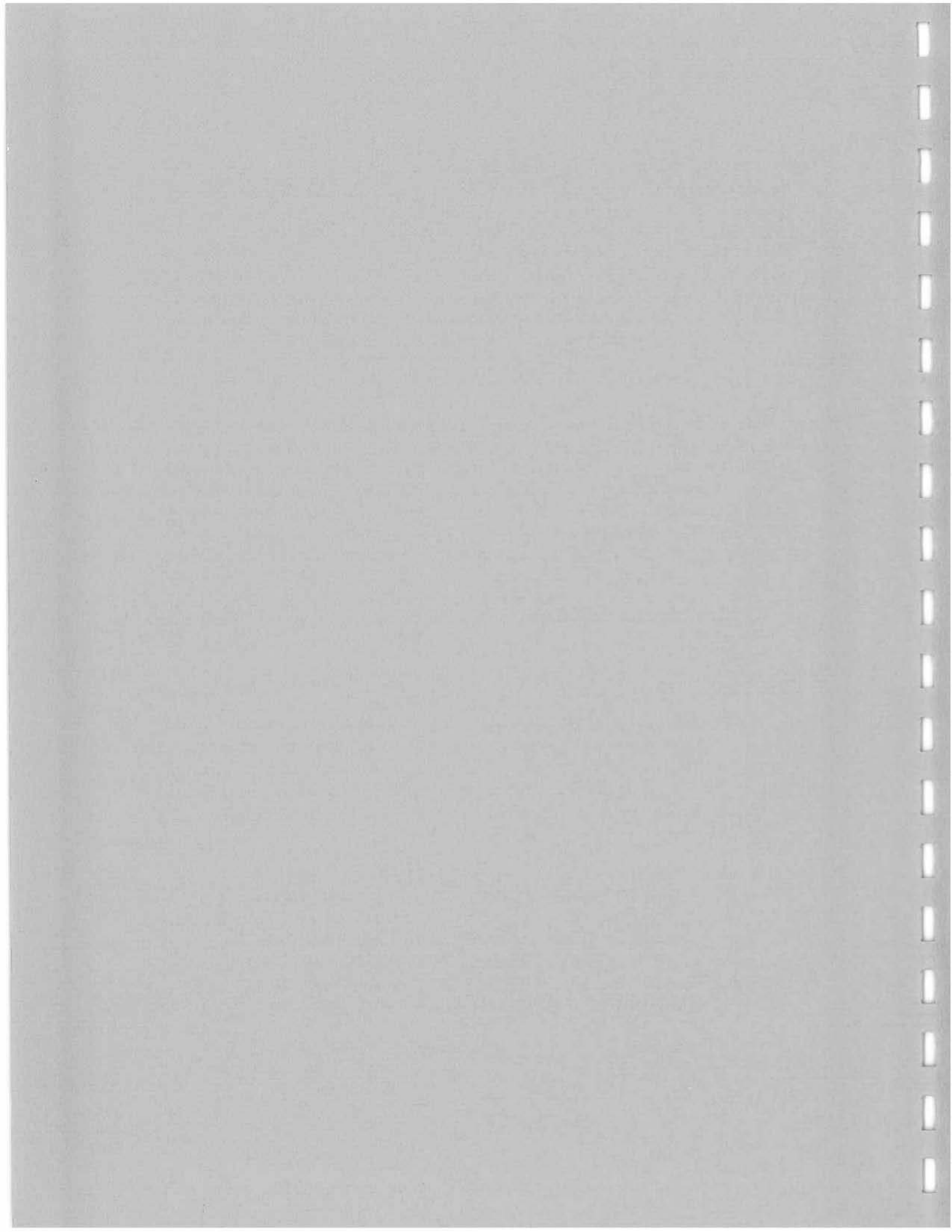
New York State Division of  
Housing & Community Renewal  
393 Seventh Avenue  
New York, New York 10001

Department of Housing and Urban  
Development  
Washington, D.C. 20410  
Regional Office: Buffalo





GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



## INTRODUCTION

Prior to the development of planning goals and objectives for the Town, a brief discussion of planning principles has been prepared. The goals, objectives and implementing policies that the Town will eventually determine to guide future growth should be based upon certain principles developed to establish a sound basis for planning decisions. Following the discussion of these broad principles, specific goals and objectives for the Town are recommended. It is essential that the members of the Planning Board as representatives of all of the residents of the Town, review the preliminary goals and objectives to be assured that they reflect the intent of the Comprehensive Plan and the residents toward future growth.

### Purpose and Use of Planning Principles

The following principles are based upon thorough study and experience in the field of urban planning. They are guidelines for physical planning - particularly for development of the Comprehensive Plan. They are not restrictive in nature; rather they are positive statements reflecting the desirable structure of a well-planned community. They are flexible to the extent that a community is free to decide whether or not they represent local planning goals and the application of each principle to the community structure is determined strictly by local action - both public and private.

Comprehensive planning principles are presented below for general, rather than specific application:

### Principles for Community Planning

1. General - A community should be a physical, social, and economic unit with identifiable boundaries and characteristics. It should be capable of supporting a full cross-section of community services, i.e., a major commercial center, a community park, etc. It should be divided into residential neighborhoods and functional districts, i.e., industrial, commercial, etc.
2. Land Use - Land uses should be grouped and arranged to best serve the population with maximum efficiency. Functionally or physically incompatible land uses should be buffered from one another or separated by distance. A hierarchy of special centers, such as shopping, employment, or major institutions should be strengthened to provide functional activity. The value of amenities, such as streams, parks, and scenic views should be extended and preserved wherever possible.

3. Transportation - An efficient transportation system should connect the community with other nearby communities and cities. The communities should have a convenient internal circulation system between neighborhoods, districts, and special facilities, especially the central business area. Through traffic should be routed around the business area, neighborhoods, and industrial districts, rather than permitted to go through.

#### Principles for Residential Neighborhood Planning

1. General - The neighborhood should be a self-contained area designed primarily for residential use, and should have a population large enough to support certain public facilities e.g. a neighborhood park (1,000 to 5,000 people).
2. Circulation - A safe, pedestrian walk system should connect homes with neighborhood facilities and other residential areas. Through traffic should be routed around the neighborhood on suitably designed arterial streets. A limited number of collector streets should lead from within the neighborhood to the arterial streets at its edge.
3. Housing - Mixed housing types may be permitted in "planned area developments" if desired. Townhouses, garden apartments, and other high density housing are best located near convenient public transportation with good access to shopping areas.
4. Shopping - Every residential area should have convenient access to the central shopping area to provide for the daily needs of residents. The central shopping area should have direct, safe access from local collector streets and should be accessible with a minimum of congestion and conflicting traffic movements.
5. Facilities - A neighborhood park should be centrally located within the residential neighborhood away from arterial streets and within one-half mile walking distance for all children. Where possible, the neighborhood park and playground should adjoin a school to maximize the effective use of each. Small, conveniently located play lots should be provided in high and medium density neighborhoods for children of pre-school age.

#### Principles for Recreation Planning

General principles for guiding recreational planning are as follows:

1. A diversified recreation program for all ages requires a variety of areas, locations and facilities.
2. Cooperation between park and recreation agencies, school boards, and civic organizations is essential in acquiring and providing the necessary facilities in the right place with the least duplication of facilities as possible.
3. Accessibility, beauty, and relaxation should always be prime objectives.
4. All communities should contain a system of play lots, neighborhood parks and playgrounds, playfields, and community parks.
5. A recreation program should also include special sites and facilities wherever they are available or appropriate - - e.g. historic sites, architectural landmarks, scenic lookouts, parkways, roadside picnic areas, stadia, swimming pools, golf courses, etc.

#### Principles for Industrial Planning

1. General - Planned industrial districts or parks should be encouraged where possible. Industrial sites should be located on reasonably level, well-drained, extensive parcels capable of supporting large industrial buildings. Industrial sites should be located within a convenient distance of existing or potential employee concentrations and should be located where there is adequate water supply and room for expansion, storage, parking and site design.
2. Accessibility - Direct access to a major arterial is desirable; optimum location would be within one-half to one mile of a freeway interchange. Arterial routes in direct contact with the site should permit a sufficient number of adequately spaced entrances and exits. For most industries, rail access should be direct or readily attainable; water or air access should also be considered for certain industries.
3. Site Design - All sites should be sufficient size and configuration to afford flexibility of use and potential expansion of facilities; building coverage of 20 to 30 percent is generally desirable. Landscaping should provide sensory satisfaction as well as fulfilling the practical needs of space definition, recreation activities, screening, control, and identity of development. Parking and loading spaces should be allocated generously, a factor of their consideration being the ultimate conversion of some spaces for other purposes or for future expansion

4. Internal Circulation - Various modes of transportation should be planned as an integrated system and designed to minimize conflict. Internal circulation should minimize the movement of individuals, vehicles, goods, materials, etc .

#### Principles for Central Shopping Area Planning

1. The central shopping area should strive to improve its function as:

The symbol of the Town, concentrating, whenever possible, commercial, office and governmental functions; preserving the suburban character of the Town yet fostering an atmosphere of business, social, and civic vitality.

The optimum location for special activities, especially the few-of-a-kind which require a central location .

2. The physical arrangement of central shopping area activities should be guided by the following principles:

Related activities should be grouped according to their own functional and building needs, i.e. group similar uses together, e.g. auto and auto parts sales.

The central shopping area should be a compact, integral part of the Town as uninterrupted as possible by vehicular and other conflicts, with adequate and appropriate non-commercial activity areas, e.g. parking and landscaping .

3. The street and parking facilities throughout the Town should:

Assure improved access to the central shopping area on Military Road from all parts of the Town and as much of the surrounding region as possible.

The street system within the shopping areas should minimize conflicts between vehicular and pedestrian movement, especially movement across Military Road.

Parking within the central shopping area should be located, designed, and priced to serve three types of daily use:

1. Long-term or employee parking;
2. Shopper, business and patron parking; and
3. Short-term or errand parking.
4. The design of the shopping area should be guided by the following principles:

Open spaces and other focal points should provide a basis for the interest and excitement of pedestrian activity and major building siting.

Drives, pedestrian ways and open spaces, including their furniture and landscaping, should be functionally and attractively developed for aesthetics as well as traffic related reasons.

Signs should contribute to, not detract from, the improved appearance of the shopping areas. Business signs should be an integral part of site design.

Creates a town of the future with a focus in which to work, to play, and to live a comfortable life. It provides a standard of living, provides a sense of excitement, and a sense of excitement which is a desirable goal for the town of the future.

PLANNING  
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES  
TOWN OF NIAGARA - NIAGARA COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The image of the Town of Niagara of 1990 and beyond, will be the result of goals and objectives determined now and instituted as policy supported by proper zoning and other land development controls. Citizen participation must be an active process, developed at the outset, from which is formulated a range of policies established to meet the expressed objectives of the Town's residents.

The fundamentals of good planning are established in the Town's goals and objectives. The Town Planning Board, now in the midst of a comprehensive planning program, is charged with the responsibility of formulating goals for the Comprehensive Plan which may be formed into concrete implementation policies. As such, they will give practical focus to the Comprehensive Plan and direct development proposals toward the successful development of the Plan. The setting of goals is a major step in this process that also involves the establishment and application of standards to convert community goals into specific objectives, and the designing of implementation by which these objectives can be realized.

Through the careful preparation of the Comprehensive Plan and the development of reasonable goals and objectives, the Town of Niagara can control its own destiny - if they do not resist change when change is necessary - and if its leaders translate the formulated goals into implementing policies for the common good toward which its residents may strive.

General Goals for the Town of Niagara

Through its continuing planning program, the Town should seek to develop those aspects of local character which will:

1. Allow its citizens to achieve their fullest individual potentials in terms of intellectual, cultural, and economic achievement;
2. Create a Town which is attractive as a place in which to work, to play, and to live; a community with a high standard of living, provides necessary relaxation, yet having an atmosphere of excitement which is stimulating to all of the interests of life which make the Town a desirable home.



3. Provide the Town with a strong and stable economy, capable of supporting all of the social, cultural and municipal facilities and services which create a desirable total environment.

These general goals represent high qualities toward which the Town can and should aspire. From time to time, the Town should evaluate itself in light of these general goals to ensure that the community is moving toward these qualities.

#### Specific Goals for the Town of Niagara

To effectuate these general goals, more specific objectives must be formed which, in turn can be developed into concrete policies of the planning program. The Town should stress the following objectives as it undertakes planning for future development:

1. The Town of Niagara should guide growth and change so that both the present and future population will be benefited. Future growth should be orderly, controlled, and economical and should be encouraged in areas of proposed municipal facilities and services. Disorganized and haphazard development should be discouraged. Because of the scattered pattern of development that has already taken place, new growth should be carefully controlled to ensure reasonable compatibility with its immediate surroundings, including land use and streets.

Because of the scattered pattern of growth in the past, future development of land will be surrounded by existing development. Development proposals will therefore have to exhibit absolute compatibility with its neighbors to protect existing development. To assure compatibility and encourage acceptable relationships of development, the administration of land development regulations will require information on present and future proposals at the time of submission of any land development proposal. Scattered development of differing types of land use in relatively close proximity to each other require that special attention be taken of the effect such proposals would have on surrounding land use, on the physical environment and on the provision of access to adjacent interior land.

2. Development of the area in the north central and northeastern sections of the Town which are presently in agricultural use will be encouraged to provide large planned development of a semi self-sustaining nature. Such development will be sought to provide housing for more than one economic and age group in order to satisfy the need for all forms of housing of the Town's residents. The development of a planned living environment will be encouraged.

3. Preservation of natural drainageways and stream courses will be maintained through required dedication of easements, through Town purchase of rights-of-way, dedication and through other forms of municipal control in order to prevent flooding and to permit proper natural and less costly natural drainage. All plans and proposals for development within the Town must indicate the manner in which storm water runoff is provided.
4. Residents should have the greatest variety of goods, services, and facilities readily accessible to them. They become accessible only if they are logically grouped in the most convenient locations. Incompatible land uses and the mixing of certain activities may not only deteriorate neighborhoods and lower property values, but may prevent the concentration of goods and services which are of benefit to all. Improperly located industry, business, and residences may obstruct each other's accessibility and operations, becoming liabilities to the community rather than assets. Zoning of community areas is an essential control necessary to assure compatibility of land uses.

The primary function of the Town's arterial streets is to provide for safe, relatively rapid, uninterrupted traffic movement. The secondary function of major local streets is to provide access to private property and its attendant uses. Therefore it is essential that the development of residential and business uses adjacent to major streets provide all necessary facilities to permit such streets to provide their primary function as unencumbered as possible.

Development of commercial and business activities within the Town should be concentrated in planned locations to promote a greater availability of goods and services for the Town's residents, while reducing the number of commercial outlets onto major Town roads. While major shopping facilities are to be encouraged, adverse and dangerous traffic conditions which could be caused by improper development will be discouraged. Proper access and traffic considerations will be major requirements in any proposal for the use of property within the Town. The development of strip business uses where access, off-street parking and loading and sight distances in any way impair safe conditions for residents will not be permitted.

5. The expansion of existing industries and the attraction of new industry should be encouraged in order to provide opportunities for the expanding population of the Town, within the limitations of resources and markets. A higher standard of living for all Town residents is an important goal. Total employment, however, should be as important as an increasing family and per capita income. Planned and protected industrial districts are attractive for new industrial expansion as well as a benefit to the community.

Consideration of establishing such districts should be part of the Town of Niagara planning program.

Industrial development which has taken place in various sections of the Town in past years should be constructed in the future in selected areas providing adequate protection to industry itself and adjacent non-industrial uses as well. The effects of proposed industrial activities will be considered in regard to its impact upon the economic and environmental character of the Town. The intermixing of industrial uses with residential uses will be discouraged in all areas of the Town.

7. The Town will encourage the preservation, protection and rehabilitation of residential property to ensure that every resident of the Town has decent and adequate shelter in a desirable residential environment. Special attention should be given to those neighborhoods where land space is shared with or immediately adjacent to, industry or other non-residential uses. The quality of planning, location and site design for all future proposed residential development will be thoroughly examined to insure proper development in harmony with sound planning and environmental concerns.

Enforcement of necessary codes and ordinances will be provided by the Town to preserve and protect standard housing and to provide methods of rehabilitation for substandard housing in areas suitable for continued residential development. Because of the unnecessary tax burden and lower value which results from substandard housing, and structural and environmental blight, the Town will seek all feasible methods to encourage proper housing.

Consideration will be given by the Town to all forms of housing which are feasible for housing all groups within the Town in suitable locations, in relation to employment, transportation, municipal services and facilities as well as shopping. Coordination of housing needs, proposals, and programs will be maintained with the Regional Planning Board and Niagara County. Special encouragement will be given to the development of low-rent housing for the elderly residents of the Town in order that they may continue living in the Town.

8. The Town should coordinate its planning efforts with the Erie and Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board, the City of Niagara Falls, and the Niagara County Economic Development and Planning Commission and the communities in the area in order to facilitate the most feasible economic development, as well as the accomplishment of physical and social objectives of

the community and the region. It is recognized that many decisions affecting the growth of the Town will be decided at the County, Regional, State, and even the Federal levels. It is important, therefore, that the Town work with County and regional organizations to assert its ideas and goals on matters affecting the Town and the Erie-Niagara region.

As increased population and economic changes occur, land use, highway, and community facilities requirements and distributions will increasingly be based on county and regional needs, rather than on limited objectives of the community. Regional transportation facilities, such as the airport and highways should be coordinated with larger political units.

The development of the western New York jetport, while significantly affecting the Town, will be determined at the State and Federal level. It is essential however, for the Town to be aware and capable of determining the effect of major proposals on the Town and to be able to express acceptance or knowledgeable suggestions of alternatives for consideration in the planning stage.

9. The regional planning Goals and Objectives as expressed by the Erie and Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board should be considered by the Town Planning Board for acceptance and incorporation into the Town's overall planning program. Goals which are not presently acceptable should be noted and reviewed with representatives of the Regional Planning Board when local and regional goals are expected to be in conflict for matters affecting the Town.

ERIE AND NIAGARA COUNTIES REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD  
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To provide a sufficient amount of housing for all regional residents

- By encouraging private and public development of a variety of housing types in suitable locations for all income, age, and minority groups.
- By coordinating efforts of private and public developers to accommodate regional housing needs.
- By encouraging experimentation in planning, financing and construction methods to help reduce the cost of housing.
- By encouraging innovation in programs administered by public housing authorities.
- By providing sufficient land areas suitable for new residential growth within the region's capacity to accommodate such growth.
- By encouraging new housing in the downtown areas of the region's cities in order to take advantage of the concentration of cultural facilities, retail shops, and services and to discourage continued sprawl.
- By implementing a policy of open housing for all age, income, and minority groups in the Region.
- By encouraging better planning and development of seasonal housing.
- By recognizing the importance of mobile homes and prefabricated construction as significant elements in providing low income housing.
- By encouraging a better standard for the housing of migrant or seasonal laborers.

To preserve and improve the character of residential areas within the region, and halt the spread of further deterioration and blight.

- By encouraging the adoption and enforcement of uniform building codes and other regulations designed to safeguard minimum structural standards and encourage continued maintenance and ensure environmental quality.
- By encouraging the adoption, enforcement, and updating of local subdivision and zoning regulations designed to safeguard minimum property and development standards and maximum environmental quality.
- By discouraging new residential growth in areas affected by air and water pollution.
- By buffering existing residential areas from incompatible uses and activities.
- By discouraging non-local traffic from passing through residential neighborhoods.

- By improving the quality of existing housing and maintaining a high standard for new construction .
- By identifying problems related to flooding and storm drainage .
- By analyzing the future role of New Towns in terms of growth alternatives .
- By discouraging the further development of residential lots fronting directly upon major highways .
- By discouraging the expansion of strip non-farm residential development along major roads and highways in rural areas .
- By encouraging the use of Federal and State Grant - In - Aid Programs designed to eliminate neighborhood deficiencies and create opportunities for new investment .

To provide a full range of public and private facilities and services within urbanized areas at convenient locations.

- By concentrating new residential growth in areas that can easily be served by public utilities and services .
- By encouraging new subdivisions plotting only when streets and utilities have been properly planned and constructed .
- By encouraging new residential growth in areas free from objectionable non-residential uses and to discourage the placement of these objectionable uses in older residential areas .
- By encouraging innovation in the overall design and layout of residential areas .
- By encouraging intensive residential development, such as apartment housing, to locate within development corridors related to mass transit and commercial centers .

To recognize the hazards, limitations and advantages of the Region's natural physical features in the planning of residential areas .

- By encouraging local community ordinances and regulations to recognize the limitations and problems of natural physical features .
- By restricting residential development in land areas with steep topography and poor soil or sub-soil conditions .
- By controlling residential densities in accordance with the soil limitations for areas using septic systems and wells .
- By restricting new residential development in areas subject to flooding .
- By preserving and utilizing natural physical features as assets and scenic attractions within residential areas .

The goals stated herein are only a part of the complete Goals and Objectives adopted by the Regional Planning Board .

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN





## INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

The Town of Niagara is a suburban community on the northeast sector of the Niagara Falls-Buffalo metropolitan area. The town was originally settled by immigrants from the east looking in some cases for good farmlands and in others, looking for factory employment. During the 1800's industrial development and the railroad provided the basis for commercial and industrial development and expansion. This growth generally took place in Niagara Falls and Buffalo, with some development taking place on the westside of the Town of Niagara.

Niagara remained predominantly rural until the 1950's. The rapid growth of the Town and other suburbs following World War II was part of a national phenomena. Rapidly increasing population and income, expanded personal mobility via the automobile, and growing employment opportunities in the metropolitan area combined to create a large demand for new housing within a greatly expanded commuting distance of major cities. The resulting suburban population increases required extensive alterations to and expansion of public and private facilities and services. These factors of growing population, mobility, and metropolitan employment opportunities continue to cause suburban development at increasing distances from the region's center.

Approximately 45 percent of Town land is either vacant or used for agriculture. The Town's population could double within the planning period (1970-1990). The effects of such rapid growth, if uncontrolled, can be detrimental to a community. Scattered, unorganized, and highly speculative development may lead to unreasonable demands on municipal finances and to a decrease in environmental quality. Municipalities have learned that in order to protect and improve the health, safety, and general welfare of their population, land development should be carried out in accordance with a comprehensive plan.

New York State, in Sections 260-284 of Chapter 62 of Town Law, authorizes towns to establish planning boards and charges them with responsibility for preparing comprehensive plans. This study results from a recognition by the Niagara Town Board and Planning Board of a need to evaluate the Town's resources and potentials, and to establish a sound decision-making framework for guiding future growth.

## PURPOSES OF PLANNING

A municipality may be thought of as being comprised of people, land and a certain community spirit that is manifested as the people and land develop in harmony. But, people may be mobile, and as they come and go, so may community spirit change. The municipality, however, is fixed to the land. A municipality's only inherent possession is land, and the well-being and prosperity of the community is dependent upon the manner in which this land is utilized.

The utility and value of a parcel of land, even in rural areas, are dependent to a great degree upon the manner in which neighboring parcels are managed and on the governmental services and facilities that are available. The availability of water supply and sewage disposal facilities, for example, can be of great importance in determining use of property. The matter of access to a public transportation facility is also an important factor in determining land use. The offensive use of one parcel of land can drastically reduce the value of neighboring lands. Each landowner within the community is at the mercy of his neighbors, and all must cooperate in the common interest if they are to enjoy maximum benefit of the Town and its residents.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan plays a number of important roles in the development of any rapidly growing community. A few of the more direct applications of the Plan are shown below:

### Guide for Private Development

The Comprehensive Plan provides a guide for the private land owner so that his development proposals can be designed compatibly with the Town's stated policies and objectives.

### Decision-Making Framework

In periods of significant growth, Town officials must make numerous decisions with respect to physical development. The Comprehensive Plan provides them with a basis for judging whether a specific proposal is consistent with the long-range development objectives set forth in the plan, and for determining the effect of the proposal on other elements of the plan.

### Basis for Policy Making

The Comprehensive Plan provides the Town Board and Planning Board with a definite set of objectives for guiding future growth, a general physical design for the Town, and methods for carrying out these objectives.

## CONTENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In order to serve these broad functional roles, the Comprehensive Plan includes analyses of the basic factors which affect community growth. These topics, to be discussed prior to the Comprehensive Plan include the following:

- o Gathering basic data and preparation of a base map of appropriate identification of the community, to be used throughout the planning program.
- o Land use determinations from field surveys, mapped on the base map, along with summaries of all land uses and major land use problems.
- o Natural features evaluation of such factors as topography, soils, slopes and other emphasis on the physical characteristics of the community.
- o Population review examining the population of the Town through significant categories as previously projected by various studies prepared by others.
- o Circulation and transportation study of all transportation facilities, including location of roads, traffic volumes, conflict points, and effects of proposed new streets. Special emphasis was given to Military Road.
- o Housing analysis to examine housing on a general basis to determine conditions and areas of housing problems.
- o Preparation of goals and objectives of the Planning Board to determine prior to the preparation of the Plan, the basis for the policies to be taken by the Planning Board in directing proposed new development.

Based upon the findings of the basic studies, a composite of graphic and written proposals constitute the comprehensive development plan. These proposals have evolved out of working sessions with the Planning Board and include the following elements;

- o LAND USE Describes the proposed distribution of future commercial, residential, industrial, public and semi-public development for the Town including the Central Business Area, and some of the characteristics desired of the land use pattern.
- o CIRCULATION Indicates proposals for improving existing streets and highways as well as proposals for the construction of new roadways. The principal purpose of the circulation plan is to permit the interaction of land uses while providing for the optimum flow of traffic.

- o COMMUNITY FACILITIES Discusses generally the public and private facilities and utilities needed to serve the future land use pattern.

Following the development of the basic studies and the Comprehensive Plan, amendments to the Town zoning ordinance were prepared to provide continuity between the Plan and the legal methods of implementing the Plan. The recommended amended zoning regulations will be found in Volume 2, Implementation.

Since the Comprehensive Plan is neither an ordinance nor a regulation, it has no built-in mechanisms for making certain it will be carried out. Its success, therefore, depends upon the degree to which it is actually used as a guide for reaching decisions on specific matters directly affecting the Town's development.

Although the Comprehensive Plan is based on the best information currently available, the plan as a whole should be periodically reviewed in order to incorporate new development patterns and changes in development policies. Such flexibility is necessary for Town planning to be a continuous and effective process during a period of rapid physical and social change.

## LAND USE PLAN

The development of land in the Town of Niagara has undergone a major change in the last twenty years. Prior to 1950, one of the most predominant visual images was of heavy industry, especially in the area west of Military Road. The eastern section was predominantly rural. In the late 1950's through the mid 60's, the Town has undergone major changes in land use from industrial to a residential suburban character. The pressure for developable land, in Niagara, as well as throughout the Niagara Frontier has predominantly been for residential growth. While industrial development continues, the demand for single-family and apartment space will continue, in an effort to house the 85 to 90 percent of families who want to live in a metropolitan area, nation-wide.

In past decades, prior to 1960, the need for developable land in the Town was minor and the marginal uses of land or the lack of any use went unnoticed. In the future, the increasing demand for space near Niagara Falls and Buffalo will cause marginal uses to cease in favor of more profitable land use. Land presently underutilized or vacant will give way to development interests. The manner in which development takes place is the subject of the Comprehensive Plan and the responsibility of the Planning Board.

The Comprehensive Plan consists of a description of the recommended proposals for the physical development of four major categories of land use: residential, commercial, industrial and public uses. The existing development of the Town has greatly influenced the patterns of proposed future land use. In many areas, road frontage has been

developed to the extent that remaining vacant land must be used for similar land use to assure neighborhood compatibility. Because of this predetermination of land use patterns, the proposed Land Use Plan recommends a minimum of major changes in the overall patterns of growth.

### Residential Land Use

One of the major responsibilities of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide recommended areas for varying types of residential growth. In the past, predominant development for housing has been in the construction of single-family units. Recent national and regional trends, however, have been increasingly directed toward the construction of multiple-family housing units. Both forms, as well as mobile home housing is anticipated in the Town's proposed plan for residential growth. An area of major importance toward the actual development of both single and particularly apartment housing will be the availability of adequate public utility systems. Growth in the Town will become too concentrated to rely upon individual waste and water supply systems.

### Low Density Development

Single-family housing at a density of one to three dwellings per gross acre are proposed in the central and northern sections of the Town. The areas proposed are extensions of existing single-family areas, generally. One major new area proposed for low density development is in the vicinity of Tuscarora Road, north of Lockport Road. This area is presently used for agriculture and is expected to be one of the last areas to be developed because of its remote location.

When the area proposed for low density residential development is fully developed, it will contain between 385 and 580 additional housing units, depending whether construction occurs on approximately one-half acre lots or one-third acre (14,000 square feet) lots. If one acre lots are used, 193 families could be housed in the area designated for low density residential development.

### Medium Density Development

Medium density development is characterized in the Town by existing housing units on lots of approximately 7,000 to 10,000 square feet. A good example of well planned medium density housing would be the Veterans Heights area. Other areas include existing housing in the Rhode Island, Hyde Park, Lockport Road area, west of the Niagara Expressway and the area east of Military Road, between Packard Road and Woodside Place. The major medium density area, i.e. the area in which most new medium density development will take place is in the area of Homestead Avenue, north to approximately Fourth Avenue, west of Tuscarora Road.

## High Density Development

Approximately 440 acres of land are presently used for or are proposed for use in high density residential development. The high density areas which are shown in six major locations will account for approximately seven percent of the total Town area of 5,660 acres. During the land use survey of 1970, multiple-family residential land use accounted for less than three percent of the developed area within the Town. The increase in high density land use is divided between new mobile home park areas and areas proposed for other forms of high density residential use e.g. townhouse and apartment development.

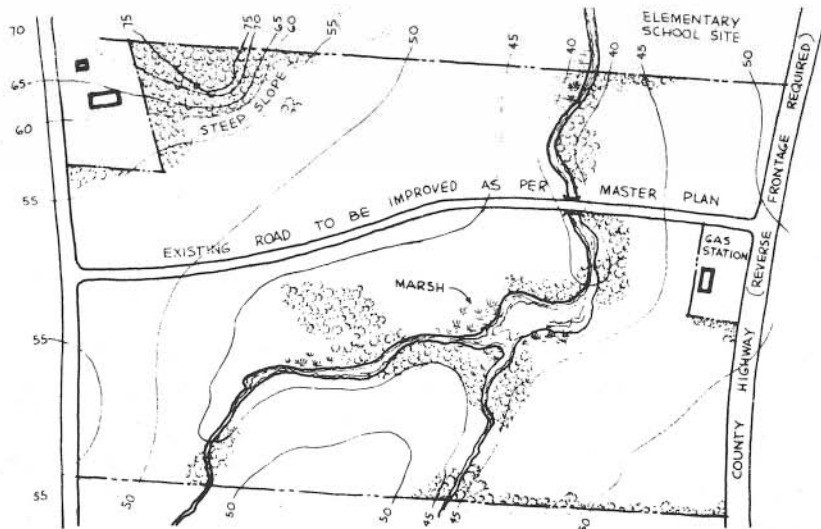
Each of the proposed high density areas has been selected in part because of the areas' close proximity to a major trafficway e.g. Witmer Road, Pine Avenue and Lockport Road. Two areas are proposed because of their relatively close proximity to (1) the State Park, north of Witmer Road and (2) the elementary school east of Military Road at Isherwood Drive.

It can be reasonably expected that the Town's advantageous location to the City of Niagara Falls and Buffalo, will require a strong demand for all types of housing. For this reason, the Comprehensive Plan proposed numerous sites for various housing types which hopefully will encourage imaginative development proposals to be created. Innovative zoning methods, including Planned Unit Development and cluster residential development will also be given consideration as ways of encouraging creative housing. If all of the additional 360 acres of land proposed for high density development were constructed at an average of eight dwelling units per gross acre, an additional 2,880 housing units would be provided. This would house approximately 9,200 additional people in the Town. It is not anticipated that all six high density locations would be developed at an average of eight dwellings per acre within the twenty year planning period of 1970 to 1990. In that all land is shown as developed, the Plan becomes an ultimate growth recommendation. Thus high density growth could ultimately provide an additional population of 9,200 persons.

## Cluster Residential Development

Under the cluster residential or density control concept, the development of a large tract of land is permitted to cluster and reduce the size of building lots providing no more lots are created and certain capital improvements are made with the Town's approval and at no expense to the Town. Instituting the development concept as an alternate to more conventional development standards has several advantages for the community:

- o A basic advantage of the cluster residential and density control is that it provides for a means by which the cost of major facilities such as sewer and water utilities and recreation facilities are provided for by the developer at no cost to the community. In this way, the municipality does not have to levy bonds to pay for these facilities and the taxes from the development itself pays for operating expenses.
- o In addition, the concept provides for the greatest range of community facilities and services for the population living in the neighborhoods developed under a density control policy. It also provides a sounder service and utility base which can be expanded to serve the greater share of the Town.
- o Under the cluster residential and density control concept, emphasis is placed upon the preservation of open space and the development of park and recreation facilities. In this way, streams can be preserved and the Town is in a position to develop an overall park system which is functional to the Town's total population - and at little or no cost to the municipality.
- o The clustering of homes permits the greatest latitude in preserving natural drainageways and considerably reduces the amount of surface water, runoff prevalent in most subdivision development.
- o Cluster development encourages new development schemes which are exciting and aesthetically pleasing. It provides for the opportunity for new subdivision design and could include a range of dwelling unit types integrated together, known as Planned Unit Development, forming a sound ratable base for the municipality.
- o The clustering of homes provides visual relief from the monotony of "sterile" rows of dwellings lined up along residential streets. As an alternative, the "cluster" can provide the opportunity for intimate house groupings which have a character and flavor all of their own.
- o The smaller lots are of greater utility on the part of the homeowner as well as helping to reduce his maintenance problems. Large lots are traditionally difficult to maintain.
- o Clustering of homes considerably reduces the dangers of through traffic by the use of loop streets and cul-de-sacs. The cul-de-sac is especially good for safeguarding playing children.



## ORIGINAL SITE FOR DEVELOPMENT

### CONVENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

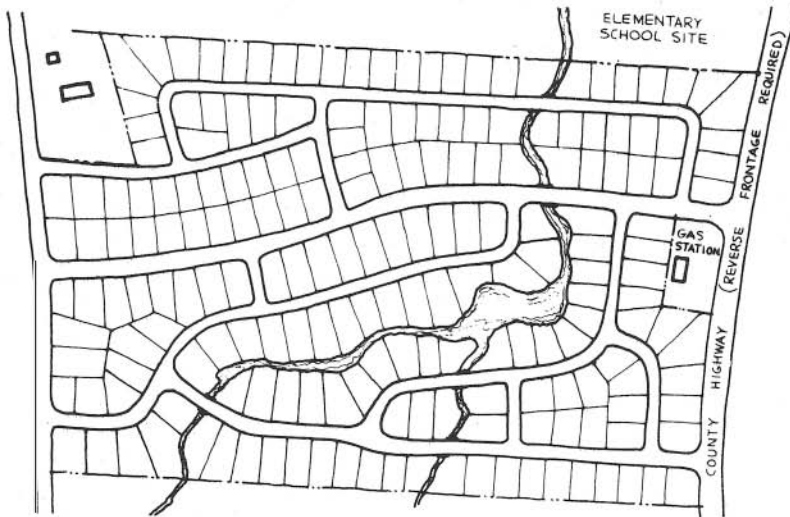
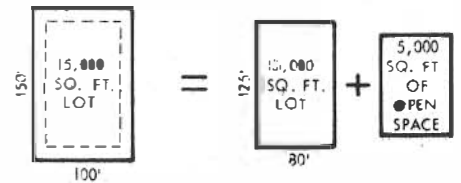
#### Standards

- Minimum lot size 15,000 square feet
- Minimum frontage 100 feet

### DENSITY CONTROL DEVELOPMENT

#### Standards

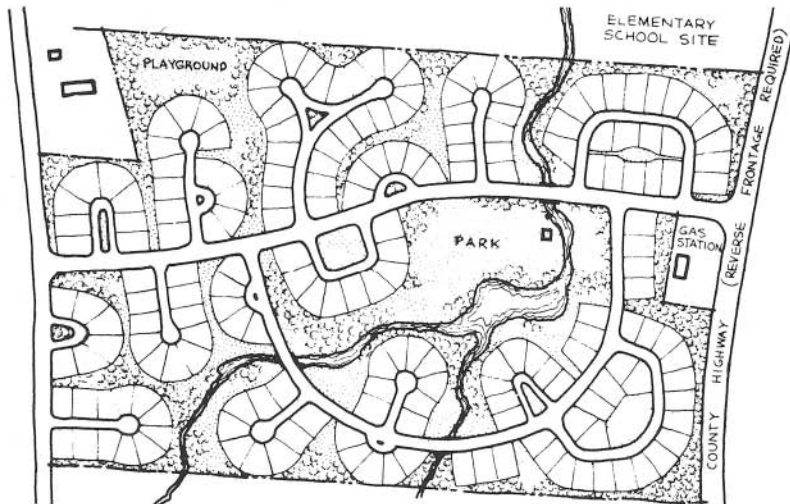
- Minimum lot size 10,000 square feet
- Minimum frontage 80 feet



## CONVENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Maximum lots - 195

- 17 acres of land in streets
- 48,000 square yards of paved street area
- Limited control of through traffic on minor streets
- Total open space - 3 acres of waterways
- No protection of natural stream bed
- Developed lawn and paved areas produce greater storm water runoff - will require an extensive storm sewer system
- Streets and homes must be constructed on steep slopes
- No separation of residential lots from highway, gas station, or school
- No park or recreation areas
- Sidewalks along streets - 28,600 feet
- No direct access to school
- 14,300 lineal feet



## DENSITY CONTROL DEVELOPMENT

- Maximum lots - 195

- 12 acres of land in streets
- 35,800 square yards of paved street area
- Control and elimination of through traffic
- Total open space - 34 acres
- Open space areas absorb most storm water and minimize storm drainage system
- Interesting topography and steep slope areas preserved
- Landscaped open space buffers residential lots from highway, gas station and school
- 6 1/2 acre park
- 2 1/2 acre playground
- 2 play lots
- Sidewalks and interior walkways - 18,700 feet with direct access to park and school
- 11,500 lineal feet



- o A well-maintained clustered subdivision can reduce the costs of construction and annual maintenance by minimizing the length of streets, sidewalks, curbing, sewerage lines, storm drains, water lines and other utilities. Thus both developer and municipality benefit.

### Commercial Land Use

One of the key elements in the recommended growth of commercial uses in the Town is the consideration to concentrate future commercial growth in areas which are presently adjacent to areas of existing commercial development. Historically, business growth began on Military Road as an accommodation to travelers entering the Niagara Frontier moving between Buffalo and Fort Niagara. Military Road was in fact a military road for troops garrisoning the four or five forts south of Niagara Falls, to Fort Niagara. With both military and civilian traffic, commercial activity became a prominent use, mixed with residential settlement. This early beginning prevails on much of Military Road, creating strip business development with all of the problems normally accompanying strip growth.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that areas where commercial development has started, continue to develop. It is strongly recommended that wherever possible, greater depth from Military Road be encouraged to (a) allow future road widening and (b) to permit proper off-street parking. The Town has become a major shopping area for many more people than just the residents of the Town. The central part of the Town has become a regional commercial center. Because of the approximately 200 acres of commercial land area already devoted to retail and service trade, no additional commercial space will be needed to serve Town residents for many years to come. Since additional growth will take place to fulfill a desire for more shopping space, rather than the need for more space, close and determined examination of each proposal is strongly recommended. By thorough review of each building request for its adherence to the zoning ordinance, local planning principles and a high quality of design, a more attractive, safer and more pleasant community can be created. Without a high level of municipal control, no reduction in hazards along Military Road and the encouragement of marginal business uses will result. Adherence to the Plan and careful site plan review can provide a strong yet safe regional shopping area.

The creation of a strong commercial center is recommended for Military Road with particular planned concentration in the area of Porter-Packard and Military Roads - the traditional business area. Smaller areas of commercial concentration are proposed for the area south of Saunders Settlement Road on the east side of Military and north of Packard Road on the east side of Military. South of Packard Road both sides of Military Road to a depth of no less than 200 feet is

delineated for business activity. Other areas include the west side of Young Street south of Packard Road and the area between Packard and Porter west of the Expressway, occupied in part by Twin Fair. With this amount of commercial space, in close proximity and convenient to all sections of the Town, no other areas are needed for major retail commercial development.

### Industrial Land Development

Little change is foreseen in industrial development or is anticipated in the heavy industrial area on the west side of the Town, other than relatively minor consolidation of some presently non-industrial land uses. The major area of change is proposed in the area adjacent to the Niagara Falls International Airport. In the area immediately adjacent to the airport, approximately 700 acres of land are proposed for ultimate light industrial use, in the event that the airport retains its present use.

At the time of writing of the Comprehensive Plan, several sites for a future new airport facility are still under consideration, one of which is for the enlargement of the Niagara Falls Airport facilities. In order to prepare the Plan, an assumption has been made that too extensive relocation capital costs and environmental problems would eliminate the Niagara Falls airport from ultimate selection. On the basis, of generally continuing levels of use at the airport, the Plan recommends discouragement of residential development and the encouragement of light industrial uses. Light industrial activity can be compatible with the airport and other adjacent uses as well as provide the opportunity for industrial air service. Industrial uses including railroad operations and quarrying operations are expected to continue in the northeastern section of the Town including most of the area north of Lockport Road from Miller Street to Tuscarora Road. An important area of concern in the future will be the rehabilitation for reuse of the quarry site. For all industrial uses, including the quarry, it is recommended that buffer areas separating industries from other uses be created to help assure compatibility of use. The buffer of landscaped open space absorbs excessive noise and blocks objectionable views of the industrial uses. Since much of the industrial area will front on major Town streets, effort should be made to require landscaping and an attractive appearance.

### Public Land Development

While there are numerous forms of public land development in any community, the Comprehensive Plan is most immediately concerned with the need for additional recreation space, and how it might be achieved. Two principle concerns include (2) the land immediately adjacent to Gill and Cayuga Creeks and small park spaces within the developing neighborhoods. The streamside areas will be considered as public facilities within the Plan, to be acquired by the Town or

other governmental body e.g. Niagara County, as part of a larger linear park area. The small parks referred to include land to be provided by private development as an integral part of proposed residential subdivisions. These parks in some cases may be accepted in dedication by the Town, while in other cases proposed park areas may be recommended to be retained in private ownership. The main purpose of public recreation space planning is to provide some form of recreation space in each residential area, as efficiently and with as little cost to the Town as possible.

## CIRCULATION PLAN

The necessity of providing improved transportation facilities for the movement of vehicular traffic is one development principle which should be given high priority. Daily life is closely geared to automobile and truck traffic, and failure to provide properly for their movement will reflect directly upon the economic life of the community. It is essential that the location and design of new street facilities be planned well in advance of their need. It is also essential that the traffic-carrying capacity of existing roads is protected to the fullest extent possible.

The circulation system serving the Town of Niagara is comprised of Federal, State, County, and municipal roads and streets. The streets in the function as a public utility in providing for the movement of vehicles, and also serve the private interest by providing for varying degrees of access to land uses along them. Major circulation problems are likely to occur where conflict exists between these two functions.

A concentrated effort to improve the circulation system is essential to encourage growth in an orderly and efficient manner in future years. This objective leads to several other objectives for the future circulation system.

- o Maximize the efficiency of facilities by separating through and local traffic routes, requiring adequate off-street parking in all new developments, and as practical, improve access to business uses on Military Road, in particular.
- o The provision of a functional street classification system where different streets serve different functions, and thus, the right-of-way and pavement widths can be varied to meet the needs of the different streets within the system.
- o Establish an intra-municipal system of collector streets to allow the movement of local traffic free from conflict with through traffic and to create greater community cohesiveness.
- o Coordinate efforts with surrounding communities to establish an organized inter-municipal road system beneficial to all municipalities.

### Street Classification System

The amount of traffic which flows on a street is directly related to the existing land use pattern. Different uses and varying intensities of uses generate different traffic volumes and different kinds of traffic. Each vehicle has a specific use and the roadways should be designed and built to fit these uses.

A functional street classification system involves the establishment of several categories of roads, each having different right-of-way and development standards. The recognition that different streets must perform separate and independent functions is essential. The designation of functionally separated streets allows the regulation and routing of traffic. The efficiencies and economies of a circulation system cannot be realized without functional separation. Paving width, depth of road base, thickness of paving, curb and gutter design, street lighting, and other physical features may be varied according to road function. In addition, types of land uses, set-backs, and other standards of development may be varied for roadside properties in accordance with road types.

Several different types of streets are necessary to serve the future needs of the Town of Niagara. Each class of street should be developed and improved to maintain certain minimum standards to enable each road to properly fulfill its designated function in the overall Circulation Plan. Each type is discussed below.

#### Principal Arterial Freeway

The Niagara Expressway as a four lane limited access arterial freeway serves not only the Town of Niagara, but most of the northern extension of the Niagara Frontier. It acts as the principal connector between the urban area north of Niagara Falls and the interstate system surrounding the Buffalo metropolitan area. At present, its capacity for moving traffic is considerably higher than the average amount of daily traffic using it. It will, therefore, continue to adequately serve the Town of Niagara and surrounding areas throughout the planning period.

#### Principal Arterial Street

Includes Military Road in the Town of Niagara, from the State Park in the north to Homestead Avenue in the south, and Lockport Road. As noted in the basic studies, Military Road has developed a higher traffic volume in some sections than its capacity is capable of serving. The Department of Transportation is aware of the need for rehabilitation of this important street and has begun initial study for its revision. To produce a greater traffic carrying capacity, the road will have to be widened in some areas to provide more lanes for through and turning movements.

It is proposed by the consultant that Military Road be redeveloped as a divided highway with less direct access into individual properties by encouraging greater use of common access to more than one business use. Present day average auto ownership of one to one and one-half cars per family will increase to one and one-half to two cars per family during the planning period will increase traffic on Military Road by approximately 40 percent. Increased traffic from greater

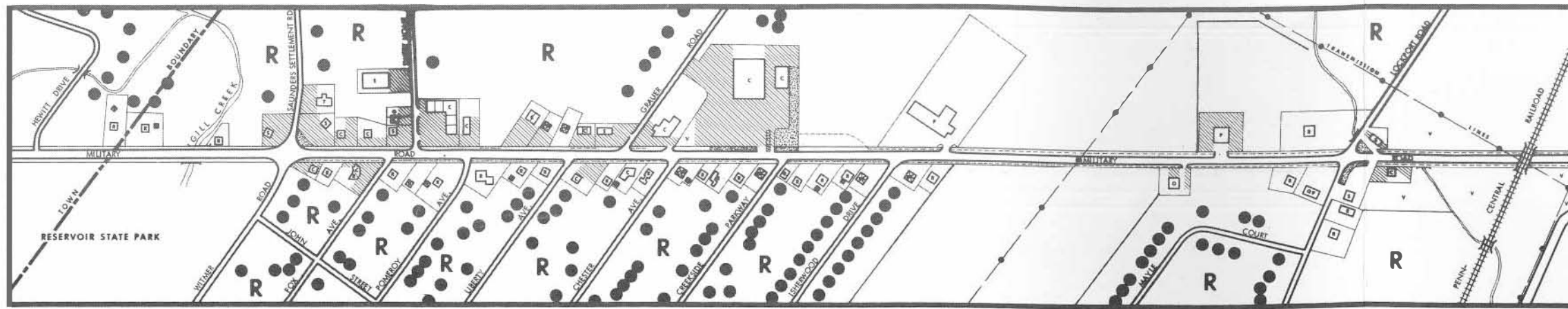
auto ownership as well as increasing development of available commercial land will require redevelopment of this arterial.

It is recommended that where possible a service drive paralleling the Niagara Expressway be constructed for slow moving commercial traffic between Porter Road and a new east-west service street proposed from Third Avenue to Military Road. In addition, it is recommended that new commercial buildings be required to have a greater setback from Military Road in order to provide space for eventual street widening.

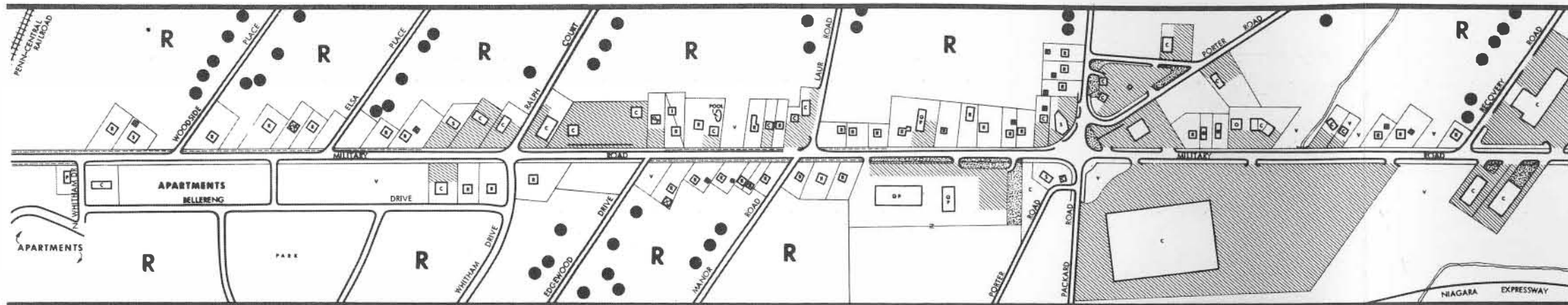
### Military Road

Military Road has always been the backbone in the structural framework of the Town since the Town's earliest history. In recent years when suburban development began changing the face of the Town, Military Road provided a ready-made arterial for suburban commercial growth, serving not only the Town but a major section of the Niagara Falls metropolitan population. This function should continue, but it can only continue if the road undergoes major redevelopment. Otherwise the congestion, high accident rate and confusion that presently prevails will discourage customer and further development interests.

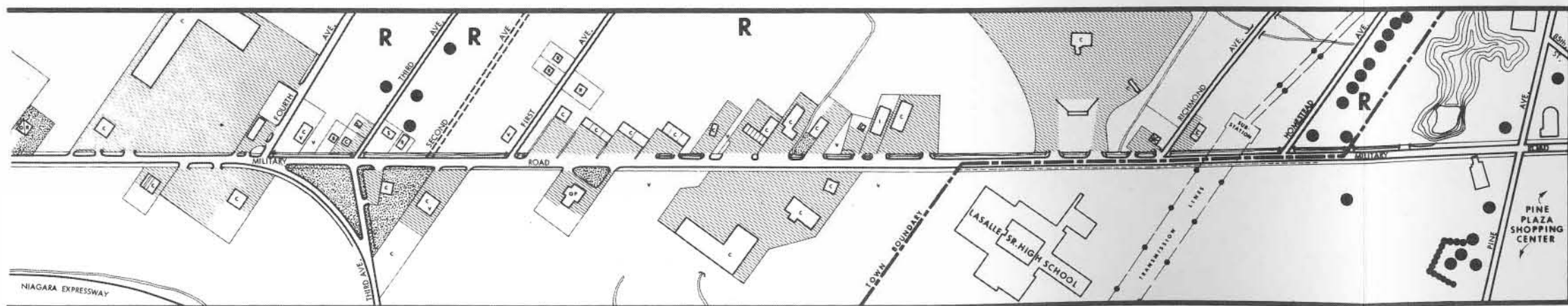
The accompanying sketch plan delineates a preliminarily suggested redevelopment plan for Military Road. The plan includes widening of the pavement and right-of-way to help increase traffic capacity and provide safer movement throughout the length of the road to Pipe Avenue in the south. The plan suggests that wherever practical, access onto Military Road should be controlled, with greatly reduced opportunities for cross movement. While the accompanying plan is in no way final, it provides elements for consideration which the Town can discuss and begin to formulate local recommendations to be given to the State Department of Transportation when it initiates design for the redevelopment of Military Road.



SECTION 'A-B'



SECTION 'B-C'



SECTION 'C-D'

**EXISTING LAND USE - MILITARY ROAD**  
**TOWN OF NIAGARA - NIAGARA COUNTY - NEW YORK**

Herbert H. Smith Associates - Planning Consultants - West Trenton, New Jersey

- O office
- V vacant
- S service
- R residential
- C commercial
- P public
- Q quasi-public
- I industrial
- PA parking area
- SW sidewalk
- B buffer
- AC access control
- CM center median

THE PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT FOR THE NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PLANNING COORDINATION WAS FINANCIALLY AIDED THROUGH A FEDERAL GRANT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND WAS FINANCED IN PART BY THE STATE OF NEW YORK UNDER THE URBAN PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 701 OF THE HOUSING ACT OF 1954, AS AMENDED.

THE MATERIAL CONTAINED HEREON WAS PREPARED SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF LAND USE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS. PROFESSIONAL OPINIONS CONCERNING OTHER RELATED CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDING LEGAL, ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURAL ARE NOT WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION.

DATE OF SURVEY: JANUARY, 1971



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### Minor Arterial Streets

Three streets within the Town have been designated as minor arterial streets, because of their important traffic-carrying functions, between the Town and the City of Niagara Falls. Each of the three streets, Packard, Porter, and Witmer, function in part as commuter corridors to major industrial and commercial centers in the Falls. Within the Town, these roads provide access to major facilities e.g. the Niagara Falls International Airport on Porter Road, the Niagara State Park on Witmer Road and several governmental installations on Packard Road. Each of these highways also serve a major function as corridors to residential streets. At present these roads adequately serve their traffic-carrying function within their existing rights-of-way. When realignment of Military Road is established, the intersection of these roads with Military Road must be given thorough study. It is recommended that these streets be periodically evaluated throughout their length to determine the need for increased traffic capacity, as the Town grows, and the future of the International Airport becomes more clearly defined.

### Urban Collector

Tuscarora Road south of Porter Road has been designated as an urban collector street by the State's Department of Transportation, Functional Street Classification system. The principal purpose of this road is the collection of traffic from the Ziblut Avenue, Effie Drive area for distribution onto Pine Avenue and Porter Road. Two additional streets also will serve a collector function though not designated by the State's systems. Miller Road from Colonial Drive to St. Joseph's Road serves an increasingly important collector function by moving traffic both north and south to Lockport Road. Colonial Drive and Grauer Road which extends from Military Road on the west to Garlow Road on the east, also serves a collector function for the growing north central section of the Town of Niagara. Both the Grauer-Colonial Drive and Miller Road areas have become prime areas for future residential development and will therefore, perform an increasingly important collector function.

### Local Streets

Although many Town streets classified as local serving at present, provide for limited traffic movements, they may in the future become local collector streets as growth fills in presently vacant land. Wherever possible, local residential streets should be discouraged from serving a higher traffic-carrying function. They should be maintained to serve only adjacent residential properties. It is imperative that the future traffic function of all proposed streets be thoroughly reviewed during the preliminary review procedures of proposed development plans.

## Proposed New Streets

Four streets have been proposed in the Comprehensive Plan to facilitate commercial and industrial development. As previously mentioned, a minor service street has been proposed within or immediately adjacent to the right-of-way of the Niagara Expressway to provide local shopping access to the commercial area between Porter Road and the area south of Third Avenue. The second proposed street is recommended to be an east-west minor street connecting Third Avenue to Military Road. Both of the proposed roads described would increase accessibility to present and future commercial uses as well as alleviate traffic on sections of Military Road.

The remaining two proposed roads are both located in the proposed industrial area on the south side of Packard Road northwest of the International Airport. The westerly road would extend Woodland Avenue, north of Packard Road to Recovery Road east of Military Road. This extension would form a bypass around the Porter-Packard-Military intersection area. The second road through the recommended industrial area generally parallels Packard Road from Tuscarora Road in the east to Young Street on the west. This road would essentially serve as access to abutting proposed light industrial uses.

It is also recommended that all dead-end streets be no greater than 400-600 feet in length and that each such street have a circular turnaround at the dead end to permit traffic to turn around with a dedicated right-of-way rather than be forced to use private property.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### INTRODUCTION

Community Facilities may be defined as those services to persons within the community, whether residents or businesses, which cannot be satisfactorily provided on an individual basis but which are provided by the local government, private corporations or semi-public authorities. Generally these facilities and services will provide for the educational, recreational, cultural, administrative, safety, health and welfare needs of the Town.

It is obvious that today's resident is better educated, more aware and more demanding than any previous generations. Standards for public safety education, recreation, utilities service and municipal administration have continuously been expanded and improved. Most notable have been the changes in educational and recreational criteria.

As the Town of Niagara continues to grow, the Town will experience a need for expanded administrative facilities, more complete public works facilities and services, and expanded recreation areas .

The provision of efficient municipal services is essential for the successful development of a growing community, such as the Town of Niagara. Municipal services and community facilities determine, to a great degree the quality of life and urban development that the community will receive in such diverse areas as physical structure and community pride. The level of governmental services and facilities continually molds resident response and reaction which ultimately shapes governmental legislation .

The primary objectives of community facilities planning is to provide the residents with as full a range of community facilities and services as possible. These specific objectives would help in achieving the primary objectives:

- (a) reserve land for future public uses within the Town. Wherever possible, these sites should be acquired before they are actually needed and in advance of development, where feasible .
- (b) utilize standards that would encourage new developments to provide land for the creation of neighborhood recreation facilities .

#### Park and Open Space

The need for recreation is no longer theoretical, but is rapidly being realized as a means of utilizing increasing leisure hours created by the shortening work-day and workweek. Statistics indicate that the average workweek in the United States dropped from 69.8 hours in 1850 to 60.2 hours in 1900, 49.7 hours in 1920, 43.3 hours in 1940 and 39.7 hours in 1960. The average American worker enjoys 30 more hours of free time each week than his great-grandfather did in 1850.

Today the need for recreation space is recognized as one of the essential components of an urbanizing community. The provision of space for people of all age groups to enjoy recreational pursuits is acknowledged as a necessary part of our daily lives, and as such should be provided at the neighborhood, as well as the Town, County and State levels.

At the present time the Town has several small public neighborhood parks in the vicinity of Pomeroy Avenue, Joanne Circle and in Veterans Heights, in addition to the ball field in the vicinity of Young Street. Reservoir State Park north of Witmer Road also provides recreation space for Town residents .

An average population projection prepared from projections prepared by the Regional Planning Board and the New York State Office of Planning Services

indicates a 1980 population of approximately 11,400 residents. Using the standard of recreation space per unit of population, the Town should have approximately 114 acres of recreation space by 1980. However, because of the close proximity of Reservoir State Park, space requirements in the Town could be reduced to a need of approximately 86 acres. Because of growth in other adjacent areas, however, minimal reliance should be placed on the State Park system as a supplement or substitute for local needs.

Each neighborhood within the Town should have access to a playground or park facility. To fulfill this objective, the Comprehensive Plan indicates park acquisition in all areas to be developed, generally centrally located within the neighborhood. Other special areas include either park acquisition or acquisition of conservation easements on both sides of Gill and Cayuga Creeks. The stream-side easements or park acquisition serves a three-fold purpose of (1) providing park and recreation space, (2) providing areas in which stream maintenance can take place without traversing private land, and (3) by acquiring streamside land by purchase of land or development rights, the areas can be preserved in their natural state or enhanced in a planted natural setting. While urbanization continues to consume developable land, these open spaces will help keep greenways in the Town.

As residential development occurs, the developers of residential construction projects should be required to provide park space in partial fulfillment of the Town's overall park and recreation space need. State law governing subdivision of land and urban development permits municipalities to require the provision of park space or the provisions of funds for park acquisition in lieu of the dedication of park space, within a residential development. The Town Planning Board, in keeping records of development proposals can best judge the need and locations for park space in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan.

### Public Utilities

At present the Town is served jointly by the Niagara County Water District and the City of Niagara Falls systems. Both systems have adequate supply to provide for future growth within the Town, which the County water study projects to be approximately 16,500 population to 1990. New distribution lines will be needed to serve developing areas in the Town while the system is planned to be enlarged for service not only to the Town, but to the broader County service area as well. Expansion is necessary to serve expanding non-domestic uses, greater per capita use and principally, expanding residential growth. By 1990, it is anticipated that the Town's domestic need will be approximately 1,650,000 gallons per day.

At present few Town areas have sanitary sewer facilities in place, with the majority of the Town served by individual septic systems. Sufficient development has occurred to require the construction of sanitary facilities. A sanitary sewer system has been studied as several differing alternatives, ranging from a separate Town system, a cooperative system with other surrounding municipalities and more extensive sewer service by the City of Niagara Falls. In the past several years, alternative methods have been prepared to provide a public sewer system for the Town. These studies have included the Town (a) as a separate sanitary sewer entity; (b) as a participating member of a local multi-municipal sewer system and (c) as a member of a larger sub-regional system.

By 1980 the Town will produce approximately 882,000 gallons of waste water per day. By 1990 this amount will have increased by approximately 600,000 gallons to 1.4 million gallons per day, from the projected population of 16,500. Undoubtedly, the entire sanitary sewer system will not be built at one time, but will be constructed where development has occurred and as it continues to occur. It is recommended that the Town's major street system be designed to reflect the need for all forms of utilities easement space in the rights-of-way width and location planning. Between 1972 and the end of the planning period (1990), there will be a need for many new collector streets which should reflect both trafficway and utilities planning in their rights-of-way.

It is recommended that the Town continue its efforts toward storm sewer construction as it has in recent years. Storm drainage implementation of planning such as the Grauer-Lockport Road system and the Fourth Avenue - Porter Road storm drainage system will greatly enhance opportunities for increased development. It is strongly recommended that developers be required to provide not only adequate water distribution and sanitary sewer systems, but that they also be required to provide adequate storm drainage facilities, in coordination with the overall regional storm drainage system. Methods of compliance with the regional system are discussed in the Storm Drainage Manual, published by the Erie and Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board. It is strongly recommended that all developers be required to use this manual and to coordinate all utility systems with the Town and regional systems.

### Administrative Facilities

Within the recent past, the Town has accomplished a major step in administrative modernization through the development of an administrative and public service complex, on Lockport Road. Through construction in 1971 and 1972 of the new administrative building, adjacent to the existing Town garage, all Town services are now based in one central location. As the population of the Town increases, and more equipment, manpower and work area is needed, space is avail-

able for expansion of the combined facilities at the Lackport Raad site. The site has an excellent location in regard to present and future residential development because of good access and its central location. Good road and rail access are major advantages for movement of equipment and for the importing of construction material, road salt and other bulk materials. It is anticipated that the site and buildings of the municipal complex will serve the Town well through the planning period. Consideration should be given to planned expansion for future development on this site as the need arises.

## HOUSING

Housing has become an increasingly important issue in the Town of Niagara in recent years. Traditionally, housing has been of a single-family character, with little deviation. More recently, apartment construction has become prominent, as it has throughout the Niagara Frontier. High land costs and a tightening of the availability of mortgage money has fostered proposals for multiple-family apartment construction. Similarly, mobile home park development has become prominent. While the general supply of housing has been strengthened, each proposal for housing creates the need for careful, thorough review by the Town Planning Board in order to assure compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan and the aims or goals of the Town. The Board realizes that the importance of housing extends not only to new housing, but to existing housing as well.

In partial preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, a generalized housing conditions survey was conducted in October of 1970, and an estimate made of the quantity of housing structures which showed signs of major deterioration. Out of a total of almost 2,200 housing structures in the Town, less than two percent (1.5 percent) were found to be substandard as deteriorating or dilapidated. The survey considered sound housing to range from brand new to older housing which was receiving proper annual maintenance. Ninety-eight and a half percent was found to be in sound condition.

As stated, the general condition of housing was good. In areas where substandard housing was found, it was accompanied by one or more of several problems. In some cases, housing and intensive industrial development were mixed, generally in the north-eastern areas. Here also small lots provide insufficient off-street parking creating conditions for congestion in local streets. Elsewhere, residential and commercial uses were mixed together in a manner detrimental to both. In some cases, maintenance of individual structures was improper.

There have been many population projections for the Town in the past six years which suggest a range of estimates of planning period (1970-1990) population from 19,300 to 16,500. Based on this range, future additional housing demand ranges from 650 units to 2,200 units. The configuration of this demand will be dependent upon the availability of public utilities, family size the continuing character of the Town and particularly the

viability of the Niagara Frontier economy. As costs of housing development continue to rise, it is anticipated that the development of rental housing will, of necessity, if not by choice, become much more prevalent. To maintain compatibility between all forms of housing, a careful project review becomes a necessity.

The Comprehensive Plan indicates approximately 1,800 acres to be ultimately devoted to residential land development. In 1970 there was 780 acres of residential land, 100 acres more than in 1972. Residential land will always be a predominant use of land in the Town and, therefore, must be planned carefully to fit compatibly with other uses. Seven areas have been delineated as possible high density residential areas. Three areas are presently developed or developing for high density residential use. Each area is recommended to provide its own recreation area, or to be planned around other proposed recreation areas.

Before any housing areas are developed, it is strongly recommended that the Town not only require approval of the Health Department for sanitary utilities, but also require a coordinated review by all agencies which will be expected to provide service to the proposed area. The Fire and Town police departments in particular may provide an invaluable service to the proposed by their suggestions for safety. It is recommended that the Planning Board, in its review procedure provide an opportunity for each department to review and comment on all proposals before Board action takes place. In this way only high quality, safe development will be developed in the Town of Niagara.

## MAKING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORK

### INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan has no force in law. There are no rules or regulations which require it to become and remain the policy of the Town. The Comprehensive Plan is a guide, a series of ideas and a statement of intent describing in map and text form, the direction the Town has developed regarding its future growth, and its intent to encourage growth to adhere to the course set in the Comprehensive Plan. While the Comprehensive Plan by itself has no force of law, Chapter 62, Article 16 of the State law empowers the Planning Board to prepare the Plan, and it describes the elements commonly included in a Comprehensive Plan, but the legal affect of the Plan must be implemented through other related codes and ordinances. The Plan has been prepared on the basis that it shall be used as a guide and for policy formulation, with reliance upon the validity of the Plan as its basic argument.

To support the Comprehensive Plan from a legal base, local laws and ordinances governing land development are used, such as the Town zoning ordinance and subdivi-

sion regulations. Both of these are directed toward their own limited objectives, even though they may overlap. It is imperative that these regulations are based on the same set of development objectives, thus forming a facet of the Comprehensive Plan.

In addition to laws and regulations, there are a multitude of daily decisions, both public and private, which affect the development of the Town. These too, must have a common base, which can be found in the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan becomes a documented statement of the Town's intended direction, and, therefore, becomes an invaluable guide to all decision-making. This is another facet of the Comprehensive Plan.

## REGULATORY DEVICES

Once the Plan has been accepted as being the true statement of the Town's development objectives, then the policies and regulatory measures must be consistent with it. Completion of the Comprehensive Plan is but the first step in the implementation procedure. The following devices or tools, must recognize this, and carry realization of the Plan into actual implementation.

### Subdivision Regulations

There are two basic elements to the Town's subdivision control regulations. A procedural section which establishes the contacts that are to be made and the time periods for them, and specific documentation and drawings required. The other section describes the standards that will be applied in judging the subdivision proposal, from precise engineering for streets and structures to the qualitative environmental standards of design and "livability."

By diligent and careful review of subdivision designs, the Planning Board can assist the Town Board in guiding and shaping the area's future environment. The design of new street and utility layouts, lot arrangements, and the provision of parks and open spaces will ultimately determine the public and private costs of maintenance and service and the long-range ability for sustaining property values within a subdivision. The Comprehensive Plan is used as the overall guide within which major development patterns are executed.

### Zoning Regulations

The zoning ordinance is the basic and most familiar regulation governing the development of private land within the Township. Zoning regulates two basic elements: the use of land such as residential and commercial; and bulk or dimensional requirements, such as building heights, setbacks and coverage. It also establishes procedures to be followed in its administration.



The regulation of land within the Town is intended to continue with the present form of zoning regulations, with necessary modification as needed to implement the Comprehensive Plan. As the Comprehensive Plan calls for community improvement and change over a long period of time, zoning can provide the gradual step-by-step, yet comprehensive, means of effecting such change. In this way, orderly growth can be insured. Orderly growth can lessen or avoid future problems and provide a framework so that the best future use of private and public investments can be made.

## CONCLUSION

The end product of the Comprehensive Plan is not rigid certainty, nor should it be. Previous generations did not rigidly prescribe present living patterns, according to their design, nor should the present generation impose a rigid framework upon generations yet to come. To avoid such rigidity, yet provide direction within a foreseeable future, the Comprehensive Plan is created and adopted by resolution by the Town. It can be modified, yet through the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and site plan review procedures, it can be implemented for the health, safety and general welfare of all of the Town residents.



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