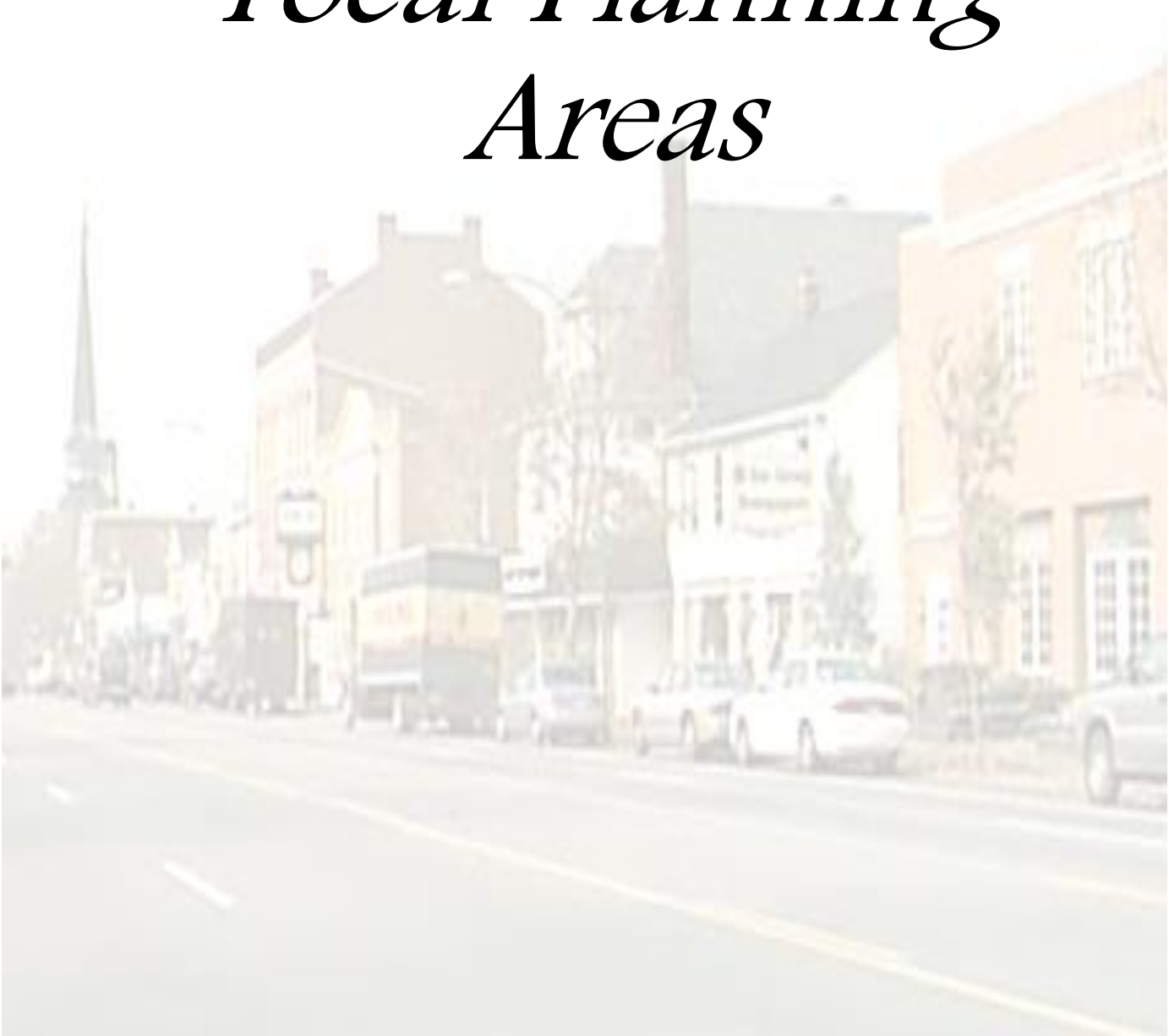


*Focal Planning  
Areas*



# 10 *Focal Planning Areas*

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## 10.0 Focal Planning Areas

**Focal planning areas** are smaller geographic areas within the Town that present special planning challenges.

The preceding chapters of the Comprehensive Plan lay out a series of town-wide goals and policies designed to guide the Town of Amherst as it works to achieve the Vision Statement. This chapter examines smaller geographic areas within the Town (referred to as “focal planning areas”) for opportunities to apply the town-wide policies in more detail, with a particular emphasis on urban design.<sup>14</sup> Focal planning areas present special planning challenges as defined by the following criteria:

- Are experiencing or are likely to experience significant change, suggesting the need for more specific analysis and strategies to influence the direction of change
- Have significant planning opportunities or issues that could be positively influenced through targeted actions by the Town
- Are or could be a focus of community activity and identity

Seven focal planning areas were selected by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee using the above criteria (Figure 13):

1. Northwest Amherst
2. North Amherst
3. University
4. Eggertsville
5. Snyder
6. Williamsville
7. Boulevard Central District (*Amended 12-14-20; BCPA-2020-03*)

The following process was used to address the seven identified areas:

1. Existing conditions and key issues for each area were evaluated and documented in the Comprehensive Plan *Inventory and Analysis Report*.
2. Following completion of the town-wide Comprehensive Plan elements in draft form, workshops were conducted with local stakeholders to discuss the Inventory and Analysis findings and to explore how the town-wide policies might be applied to each area.

---

<sup>14</sup> Urban design seeks to influence the physical form of a municipality and the day-to-day role it plays in community activities. Urban design typically addresses three overlapping systems that, together, generally shape the physical environment of cities and towns: the fabricated (streets, buildings, etc.); the social (land use locations and relationships), and the environmental (topography, water, etc.).

3. Based upon the results of the previous two steps, a conceptual urban design plan and strategies to address key issues were developed for each area.

### Structure of This Chapter

The discussion of each focal planning area consists of two components:

1. An “Overview and Urban Design Analysis” section that summarizes some of the key issues and opportunities for each area.
2. A description of an overall Concept Plan for each area and accompanying strategies that provide a direction for the area’s future.

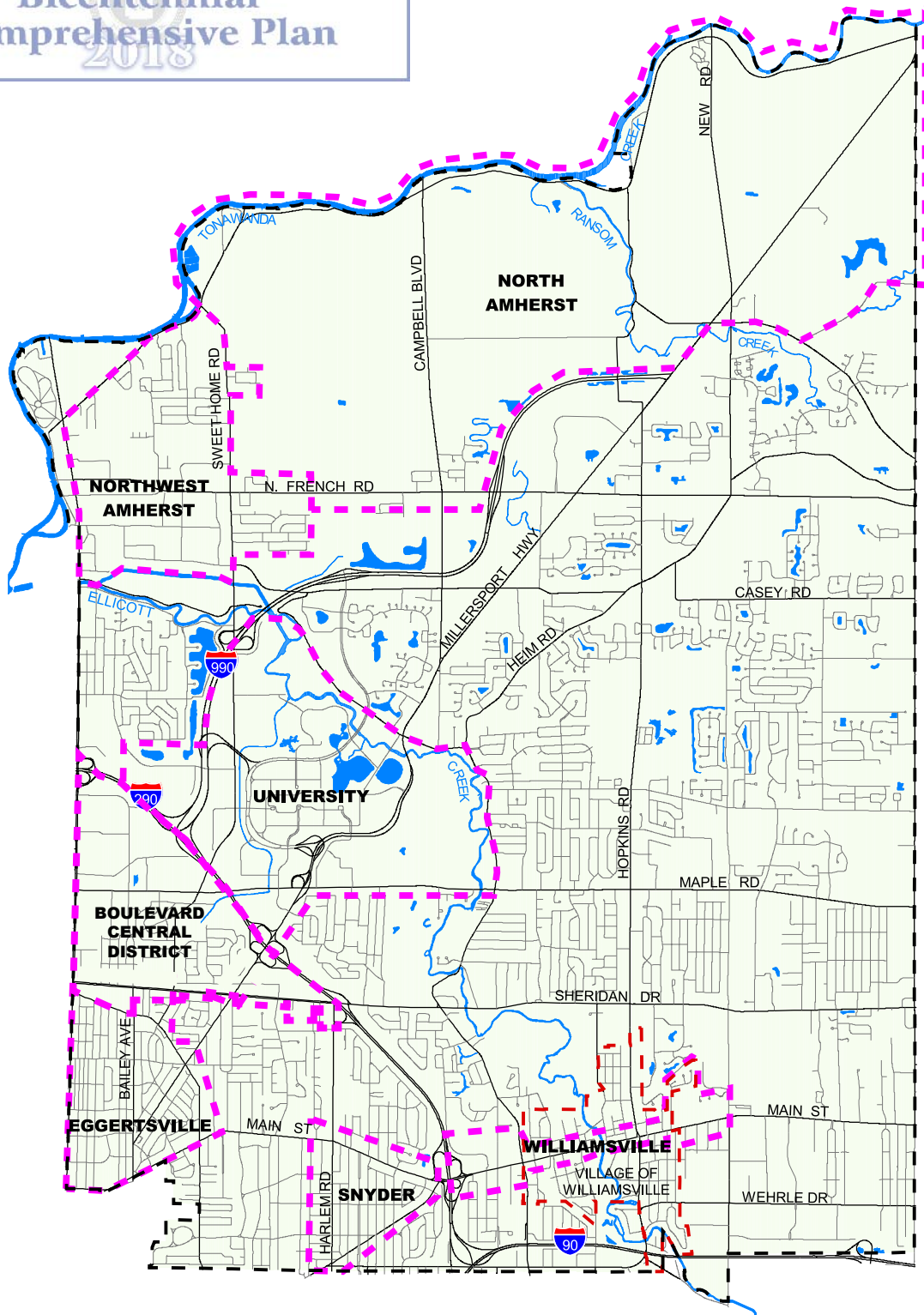
Three figures are provided for each focal planning area to help illustrate the ideas set forth in the text:

1. The first figure consists of an aerial map with representative photographs depicting existing conditions in the focal planning area.
2. The second figure is a map depicting the overall concept and recommendations for each area. Conceptual and diagrammatic in nature, the graphics are intended to communicate the overall direction and location of possible initiatives rather than providing specific plans or detailed renderings. The locations of specific land uses are similarly conceptual and illustrative in nature and are not meant to supersede the Conceptual Land Use Plan and Map Figure 6-A (*Amended 12-11-17; BCPA-2017-01*), which should be used as the official Comprehensive Plan guide to future land use.

The concept plan maps identify specific locations of concepts addressed at a town-wide scale elsewhere in the plan, such as arterial roadways, commercial areas, multi-use and natural trails, and urban or village centers. Several new concepts are shown as well, including:

- **Gateways** (see discussion below under Relationship to Town Urban Design Structure)
- **Neighborhood connectors** are local streets that should be maintained or enhanced through tree plantings, sidewalks, or other improvements to provide pleasant and safe pedestrian connections within neighborhoods.
- **Neighborhood anchors** are existing or potential focuses of neighborhood activity and identity, such as parks and schools.
- **Waterfront activity areas** are locations along the Erie Canal where mixed-use development is encouraged that celebrates the waterfront and the area’s heritage, attracts local residents and visitors, and provides access to the water, including boating services. These locations are as

1818  
**Town of Amherst  
 Bicentennial  
 Comprehensive Plan**  
2018



**FIGURE 13**

**FOCAL PLANNING AREAS**

**LEGEND**

- - - Focal Planning Area Boundary
- - - Village of Williamsville Boundary
- - - Municipal Boundary
- Surface Water Body

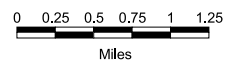
**SOURCE NOTES**

Original Source Data Provided by the Town of Amherst

Focal Planning Area Data provided by Wallace Roberts & Todd LLC.

Map Compiled by Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC.

Date: December 2020



defined in the Joint Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (JLWRP) for Amherst and Pendleton.

3. The third figure consists of representative photographs drawn from examples elsewhere in the country to illustrate the ideas presented in the concept plan. These photographs have been chosen to reflect the potential character of, but not the final result, of any recommendation contained in this chapter. In other words, they should be viewed as possibilities that provide examples of what is meant by specific ideas contained in the concept plans and strategies.

### **Relationship to Town Urban Design Structure**

Before considering each individual focal planning area, it is useful to consider how the areas relate to the overall urban design structure of the Town. Amherst, like many communities, contains multiple neighborhoods, employment, commercial and mixed-use centers, parks, and community facilities and services. These uses are connected by a system of roads and highways whose character varies depending upon their location and adjacency to specific uses. The complex experiences created by these land use and roadway networks highlight the need to establish a positive “image” and perception of Amherst’s developed character and infrastructure as a basis for marketing the Town’s quality of life advantages in an increasingly competitive, “place-based” environment.

The focal planning areas constitute a step in this direction by recognizing that portions of the Town should be considered in more depth to elicit specific themes and concepts that will help guide their future development. Strengthening the identity and image of specific districts and neighborhoods will reinforce the strengths of the Town as a whole.

The focal planning areas provide opportunities for *physical enhancements to gateways* as part of a town-wide initiative to strengthen Amherst’s identity and image.

One opportunity to reinforce the focal planning area component of the Comprehensive Plan is to engage and orient residents and visitors to important locations within the Town by defining and marking **gateways**. Gateways can be physical entries to the Town or to specific neighborhoods, commercial corridors and districts, or even “social” gateways where access to services, training, and community functions are available. As Amherst is a diverse physical environment, each gateway should not only represent the Town as a whole but the local context in which it is located. On the concept plan for each focal planning area, specific gateways are identified as opportunities for physical improvements that should be considered as part of a Town-wide effort to improve these critical transitional points. This concept supports and is a more detailed application of Land Use and Development Policy 3-11 (target capital investments to improve the aesthetic character of key locations within the Town.)

Reviewing the location of major service and employment concentrations as well as major arterials and other important

corridors, the following specific opportunities exist to enhance the image of the Town through treatment of gateways and corridors:

- Along Millersport Highway as an entry to the Town and a connecting road between the University at Buffalo's (UB) south and north campuses
- Along Niagara Falls Boulevard and Transit Road as highly traveled edges to the Town
- Along Sheridan Drive as an east-west major arterial street that draws people for its commercial services
- Along Maple and North French Roads from Niagara Falls Boulevard to I-990, where large-scale uses such as commercial activities, the Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital, and access to the Audubon Industrial Park are located
- Along Sweet Home Road abutting UB, as a critical north-south collector road and potential location of university-related housing, commercial and research activities
- Along Main Street, including traditional commercial and mixed-use centers in Eggertsville, Snyder, and Williamsville (the Town's traditional "village center")

The above is an initial list of opportunities that recognizes the need to prioritize investments and initiatives to reinforce and strengthen the opportunities presented by highly traveled and visited areas of the Town. A number of the opportunities (for example, commercial and mixed-use centers along Main Street) are located within focal planning areas. Gateway treatments in these areas should seek to reinforce the special character of places such as Eggertsville, Snyder, and Williamsville while relating to a unifying design concept for the Town as a whole.

Another theme that permeates the concept plans and strategies for all of the focal planning areas is that of integration and mixing of land uses. The gateways noted above, as well as other important institutions, amenities, and districts, should be mutually reinforcing. If the "on the ground" expression of various uses is one of physical separation and fragmentation, each use or district is by necessity self-sufficient and does not directly benefit from nearby, potentially supportive uses. The idea of integration and mixed uses recognizes that most uses benefit from seamless physical connections, offering residents, shoppers, and users more choice and services in each location within the Town. This principle is represented in the focal planning areas by proposed improvements to specific streets, pathways, or other forms of physical connections.

Planning studies are underway or have been completed for a number of the areas that are discussed below (e.g., the Joint Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (JLWRP), Eggertsville Action Plan, Harlem-Kensington-Cleveland Economic Development Strategy, Village of Williamsville Community Plan, and the Snyder Action Plan). The concepts and strategies set forth in this chapter reflect the principles of many of these efforts. Thus the focal planning

area concepts and strategies should be viewed as another step in the planning process to achieve the vision of the future set by the Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan. Local community organizations, which have been actively involved in planning efforts in places such as Eggertsville and Snyder, should continue to be involved as partners in implementing the focal planning area strategies.

## **10.1 NORTHWEST AMHERST**

### **10.1.1 Overview and Urban Design Analysis**

Northwest Amherst is located in the northwest part of the Town in the general area defined by Tonawanda Creek to the north, Sweet Home Road to the east, the North Diversion Channel of Ellicott Creek to the south, and Niagara Falls Boulevard to the west. Key issues identified in the *Inventory and Analysis Report* for this focal planning area include:

- Condition, ownership, and value of housing stock, particularly in the vicinity of the Water Pollution Control Facility (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)
- A fragmented land use pattern, including the proximity of some residential uses with higher intensity, non-residential development
- A lack of pedestrian connectivity to centers of activity
- A lack of community identity and focus on a clearly defined activity center
- The availability of vacant parcels for development, suggesting the potential for change

In relationship to the rest of the Town of Amherst, Northwest Amherst is relatively isolated by large physical boundaries located at its edges (Figure 14). These boundaries – Tonawanda Creek, Nature View Park, Niagara Falls Boulevard, and the North Diversion Channel of Ellicott Creek – create a distinctive set of urban design issues to address in the Northwest Amherst focal planning area.

As noted in the *Inventory and Analysis Report*, Northwest Amherst lacks a defining center. In addition to the local population, commercial uses on Niagara Falls Boulevard serve commuters who use the corridor daily to reach regional employment centers and destinations further south. The lack of sufficient mass of housing units in the immediate area has negatively impacted the ability to create a small center that caters to the established neighborhoods.



Northwest Amherst is comprised of two primary neighborhoods: Bucyrus Heights east of Sweet Home Road and the Creekwoods neighborhood west of Sweet Home Road. These neighborhoods are separated from one another by the Audubon Industrial Park and Northpointe, which together comprise one of the Town's main employment centers. Due to the intensity of employment and the large commercial uses along Niagara Falls Boulevard, local roads such as Sweet Home Road and North French Road exhibit high traffic volumes, and local residents have noted problems with traffic congestion.

Internal neighborhood streets in the Creekwoods neighborhood surrounding the Town's Water Pollution Control Facility do not yet form a coordinated network with multiple access points to major roads. Their construction over time in conjunction with individual housing subdivisions has limited the ability to create an integrated, neighborhood street system. *(Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01)*

The key opportunities that can positively impact the future of Northwest Amherst relate to open space and recreation and the form and scale of new development. As noted above, Northwest Amherst is isolated by its physical boundaries. However, it is these boundaries that provide some of the strongest civic amenities the Town has to offer. Specifically, the historic Erie Canal (Tonawanda Creek) and Nature View Park are regional scale open space assets and are both on the doorstep of Northwest Amherst. The JLWRP will play an important role in the development of these recreational assets. Access ways to recreational and open space resources should be strongly considered in new housing developments and the designs of additional streets. Open space should be considered as a theme for the future development of the area through the provision of new open spaces and greenways, buffers from uses such as the Water Pollution Control Facility, strong neighborhood connections, and a marketable identity. *(Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01)*

As new development or revitalization occurs in Northwest Amherst sensitive designs are warranted to reinforce the established neighborhoods. These should include appropriate densities, physical form, and scale in relation to established uses; strong physical access to open space and recreation; and appropriately scaled commercial uses located in centers to serve residential development.

The Northwest Amherst concept plan emphasizes ***enhanced access for residential neighborhoods*** to parks, recreational facilities, and pedestrian networks.

### **10.1.2 Concept Plan and Strategies**

The concept plan for Northwest Amherst is based on integrating parks and pedestrian networks with existing and future housing developments and providing enhanced access to open space and recreation amenities. Neighborhood-based improvements relating



Sweet Home Road



Sweet Home Road and North French Road



Audubon Industrial Park



Robinson Road



Sweet Home Road



Sweet Home and Dodge Road



Creekwood Park



North French Road



Sweet Home Road and Glenhaven Drive



Dodge Road



Wastewater Treatment Plant



North French Road



Pheasant Run Road



Sunshine Drive



Sundridge Drive

**NORTHWEST FOCAL PLANNING AREA - EXISTING CONDITIONS**

TOWN OF AMHERST BICENTENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**Figure 14**

WALLACE ROBERTS & TODD, LLC

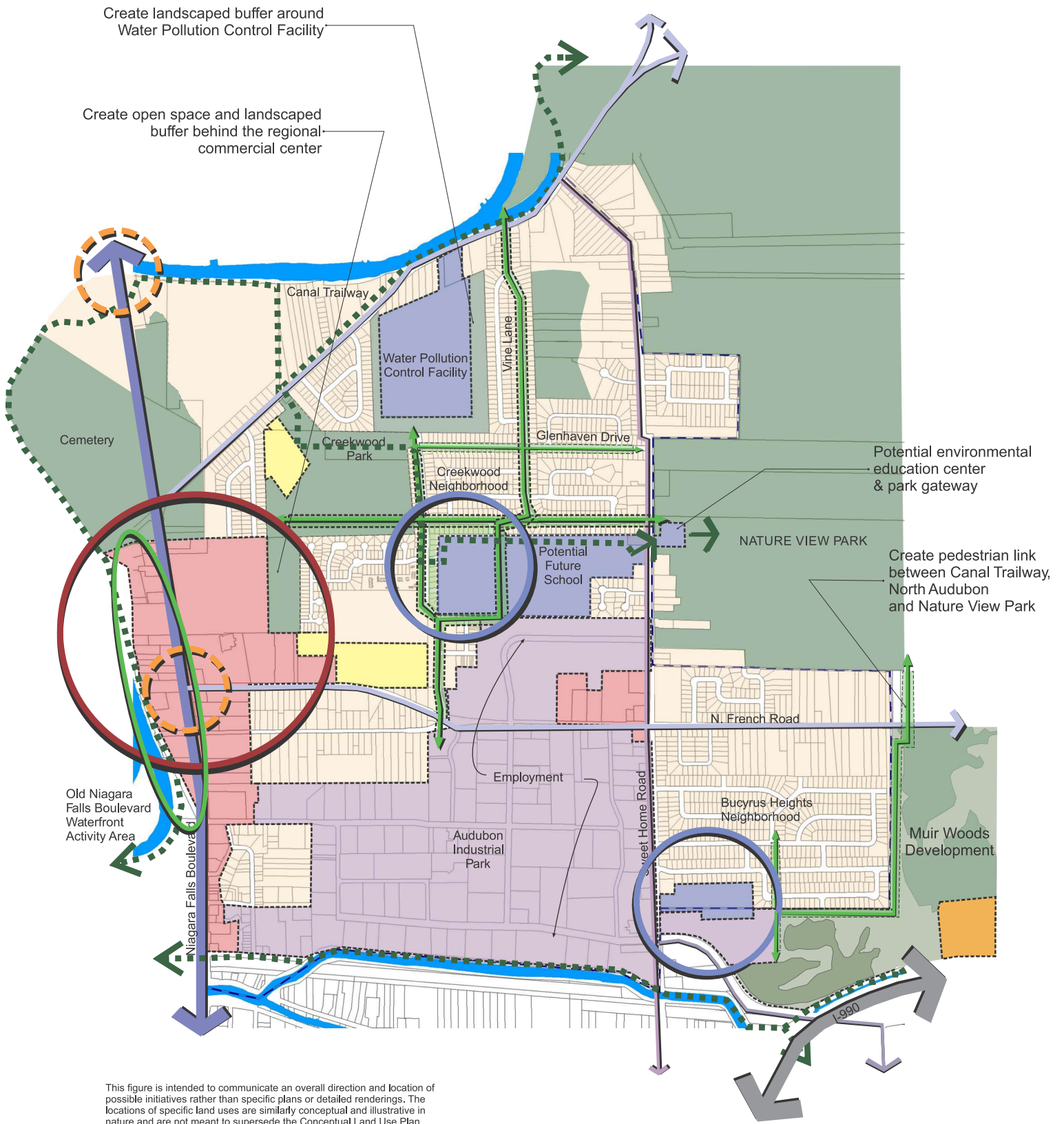


to parks and schools should serve as the foundation for the area's future, increasing the attractiveness and marketability of the area for a mix of incomes.

In the Bucyrus Heights neighborhood, steps should be taken to buffer the area from the North Audubon Parkway development to retain its character, while enhancing access to Nature View Park and the Ellicott Creek Trail. Traffic calming measures on Sweet Home and North French Roads should be implemented to improve the pedestrian experience and the overall safety of the area.

Specifically, the concept plan for Northwest Amherst includes the following initiatives and strategies (Figures 15 and 16):

- Improve connections to Creekwoods Park, the potential entry to Nature View Park, North French Road, Sweet Home Road, and Tonawanda Creek Road. These “neighborhood connector streets” should receive priority consideration for tree planting and other improvements.
- Continue to focus resources on improving Creekwoods Park, an important neighborhood resource and focal point
- Extend a trail connection from Cascade Drive and Sundridge Drive along the stub streets into the Sweet Home School District property to connect areas west of Sweet Home Road with Nature View Park. Over the long term, a park could be developed in this area.
- Create a system of landscaped “buffers” that protect housing values and provide passive open space for neighborhood residents. These buffers should be considered surrounding the Water Pollution Control Facility and behind the commercial uses on Niagara Falls Boulevard.
- Better control noise, odor, and visual impacts on nearby residences caused by the Water Pollution Control Facility. This should include enhancing and extending the existing berm as part of the landscaped buffer system.
- Develop connections to fill-in gaps for links missing along the Canal Trailway.
- Establish site design guidelines for enhanced landscaping in conjunction with improved access management for commercial uses along Niagara Falls Boulevard to enhance the entry to Amherst from the north. To be implemented over time as uses are introduced/redeveloped, or through public/private partnerships with existing property owners, the guidelines should specify the location and amount of landscaping, appropriate locations for signage, pedestrian facilities, and the number and location of curb cuts.
- Per the JLWRP, develop Old Niagara Falls Boulevard along the Erie Canal as a Waterfront Activity Area. Streetscape/pedestrian improvements should be implemented to take advantage of this waterfront location. Redevelopment of appropriately scaled commercial uses should be encouraged



**NORTHWEST AMHERST FOCAL PLANNING AREA - CONCEPT**

May 2017

Figure 15

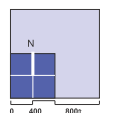
Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan

**LEGEND**

- ← Expressway
- ← Major Arterial
- ← Minor Arterial
- ← Collector
- ← Neighborhood Connector
- ← Multi-use Trail

- Industrial / Office
- Stabilize and maintain existing residential fabric
- Commercial / Mixed-Use Area
- School / Community Facility
- Recreation / Open Space / Greenways
- New Housing
- Office

- Gateway
- Neighborhood Anchor / Community Service
- Commercial Center
- Waterfront Activity Area





Landscape buffer treatment



Radburn, New Jersey  
Landscape buffer (residential area)



Traffic calming feature (bump out)



The West End, Hagerstown, Maryland  
Central park in neighborhood



Pattern Book, Celebration, Florida  
Neighborhood street: pedestrian oriented



Residential development along neighborhood street

(e.g., rehabilitation of the Lighthouse Point restaurant and boating oriented services).

- Initiate traffic calming measures and combine with character corridor design guidelines for arterial and collector streets, including North French Road, Sweet Home Road, Robinson Road, and Tonawanda Creek Road. Typical traffic calming measures include “bumpouts” at intersections, changes in pavement texture at pedestrian crossings, increased planting, re-stripping of the road to delineate on-street parking areas if applicable, and potential reduction of lane widths. Depending upon the character of each street, a traffic study may need to be completed to arrive at the appropriate solution.
- Explore the potential development of an environmental education center and park entry to Nature View Park along Sweet Home Road near the intersection with Pheasant Run Road.
- Create a landscaped buffer surrounding the Bucyrus Heights neighborhood to the east and south, with a public right-of-way extending south to the Ellicott Creek Trail. Pedestrian and bicycle only connections into the North Audubon Parkway mixed-use center should be established.
- Develop lands directly south of the Heritage Heights Elementary School into appropriately scaled housing that takes wetland boundaries into consideration.
- Apply a neighborhood conservation program to stabilize and improve housing conditions, per Housing and Neighborhoods Policy 8-7. The program should address both increasing homeownership and encouraging enhanced property maintenance by landlords. Specific strategies that should be considered include enhanced code enforcement; low interest mortgages or assistance on closing costs for first-time homebuyers; grants or low interest loans for property repairs and improvements; and possible consideration of a licensing and inspection program for rental units (would need to be applied as a town-wide code). In a related strategy to improve the area’s attractiveness as a place to live, opportunities for infill development should be pursued to introduce quality housing, extend existing street patterns, and create more coherent neighborhoods. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

## **10.2 NORTH AMHERST**

### **10.2.1 Overview and Urban Design Analysis**

The largest of the seven focal planning areas, North Amherst extends east from the Northwest Amherst focal planning area to Transit Road generally north of North French Road, the Lockport Expressway, and Dann Road. Key issues identified in the *Inventory and Analysis Report* for this focal planning area include:

- Rural/“green” character, as defined by undeveloped land, open spaces, and agricultural uses
- Presence of extensive natural resources and floodplain areas
- Potential growth in Northeast Amherst (projected to experience the greatest percent increase in population of any part of Amherst over the next 20 years)
- Growth of designated wetlands by approximately 37% to 1,382 acres. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)
- Role of public sewer as a primary determinant of new development (much of North Amherst is not served by public sewer)

The physical image of North Amherst is very different from other portions of the Town. Its low density housing, rural roads, farms and open spaces stand in contrast to the denser, more urban or suburban uses and commercial services found in the southern portions of the Town (Figure 17).

Low-density housing in a rural setting extends along Tonawanda Creek Road, New Road, Schoelles Road, Hopkins Road, and Campbell Boulevard. Denser, suburban housing developments are located along and just north of North French Road west of I-990. The remainder of the area is primarily open space, parkland, and agricultural land. There are few commercial or mixed-use centers in this focal area. A few small stores are located at the intersection of Millersport Highway and Transit Road, which does not currently present the best overall image as an entryway to Amherst. The “village hamlet” of Swormville, located near Smith and Transit Roads, and contains some commercial uses in a traditional form. Swormville, however, serves a specific niche with antique stores and associated shops. Basic daily commercial uses and services are located further south at Transit Road and North French Road.

The Oakwood Golf Course, Tonawanda Creek, North Amherst Recreation Center, Glen Oak Golf Course and Nature View Park represent the primary public amenities in the area, encompassing large amounts of land. Existing and new trails following Tonawanda Creek and along Hopkins Road north of I-990 could greatly help to physically connect these assets (see Land Use and Development Policy 3-13). The North Amherst Recreation Center is relatively isolated from housing and, due to its location adjacent to Millersport Highway, is difficult to access except by automobile. As part of the Town of Amherst and Town of Pendleton Joint Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (JLWRP), three waterfront activity centers are proposed in the area.

The majority of the roads in North Amherst are rural in character. As scenic roadways, many are narrow with closely planted landscaping and trees. In some cases, surface drainage systems are located at the edge of the roadway in the form of ditches with

standing water. These characteristics should be considered when evaluating any street improvements or potential addition of bicycle lanes (see Transportation Policy 6-1 re. context-sensitive roadway design).

Major arterials include Millersport Highway, which is designed for high traffic speeds and creates a large physical barrier. This condition is most problematic at the intersection with New Road, due to the presence of the North Amherst Recreation Center on the west side of Millersport and a private day care facility on New Road. This area represents an opportunity to provide services in a smaller, traditional form that maintains the area's overall rural character. (*Amended 12-11-17; BCPA-2017-01*)

### 10.2.2 Concept Plan and Strategies

As noted above, the majority of the North Amherst focal planning area is comprised of low-density, single-family residential, agricultural, or park/open space uses. These characteristics contribute to a physical environment that is unique and an essential part of Amherst's character. As noted by residents, the rural character and low density housing in North Amherst reflects the ability to choose between radically different styles of living all within one town. A variety of lifestyle and housing choices ranging from urban to suburban to rural is one of the cornerstones of the Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement.

The North Amherst concept plan emphasizes *preservation of rural character*.

Thus the concept plan for North Amherst emphasizes stabilization and preservation of rural character. Major strategies include controlling the location and density of new development, initiating context-sensitive improvements (where applicable) to maintain the visual character of rural roads, and providing easy physical connections between the recreation amenities in the area through an extended network of pedestrian and bicycle lanes. Growth is directed to the intersection of New Road and Millersport Highway and east of Millersport Highway to Transit Road where sewer service can be extended.

Specifically, the concept plan for North Amherst includes the following initiatives (Figures 18 and 19):

- Create an E-Commerce/Logistics Center north of the Dockside Village residential community and adjacent agricultural parcels to provide opportunity for e-commerce development that can be separate from residential areas and can accommodate the new trend in consumer activity that requires large distribution facilities and good transportation access to efficiently reach surrounding regions. These lands should not contain prime agricultural soils in order to preserve this valuable resource. Providing opportunities for e-commerce/logistics businesses will position Amherst to take





Tonawanda Creek Road



Boat launch on Tonawanda Creek



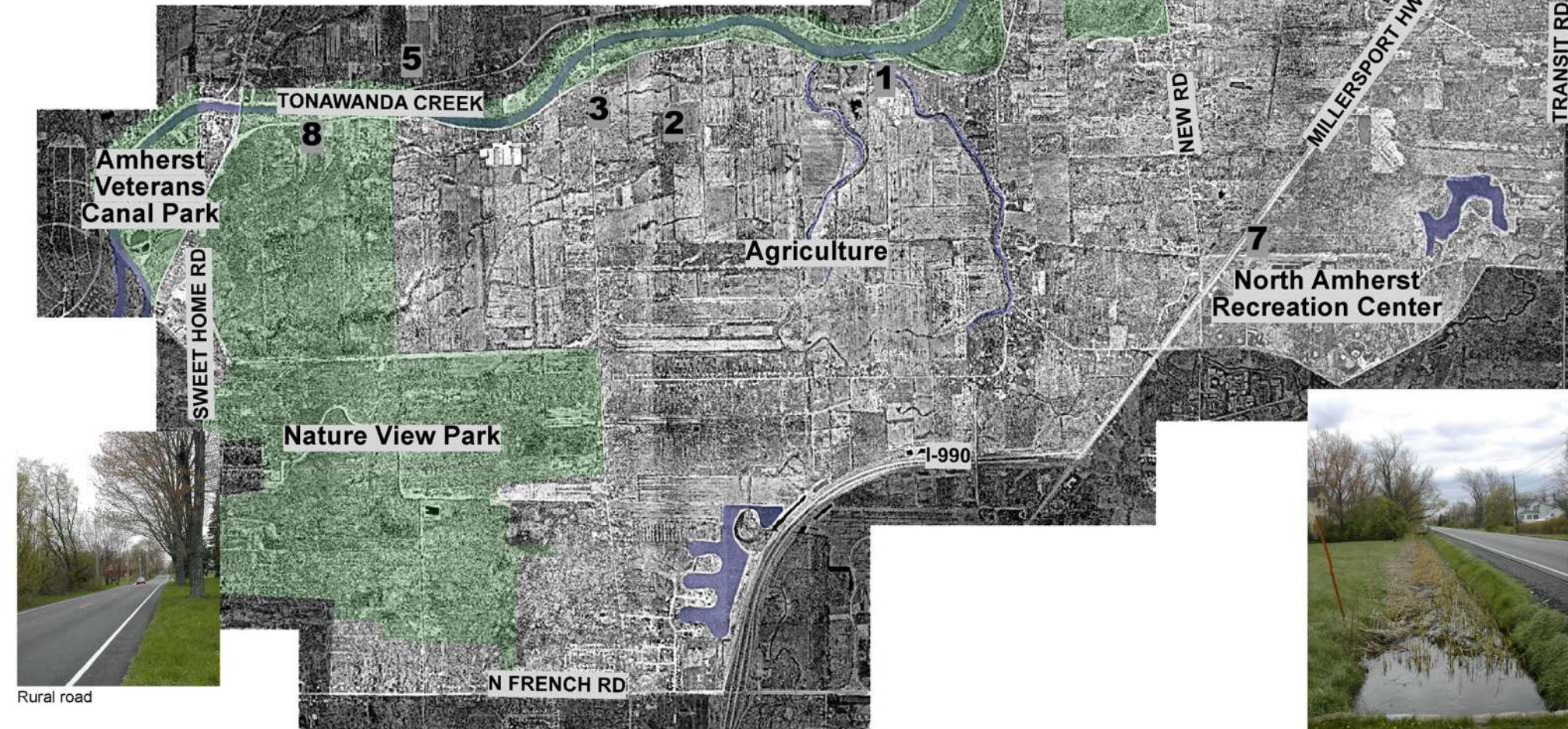
North Amherst Recreation Center



Agricultural field



Agricultural landscape



Rural road



Rural road / drainage ditch



Millersport Highway / Transit Road



Amherst Museum



Rural landscape



Rural road



Ransom Creek

**NORTH AMHERST FOCAL PLANNING AREA - EXISTING CONDITIONS**

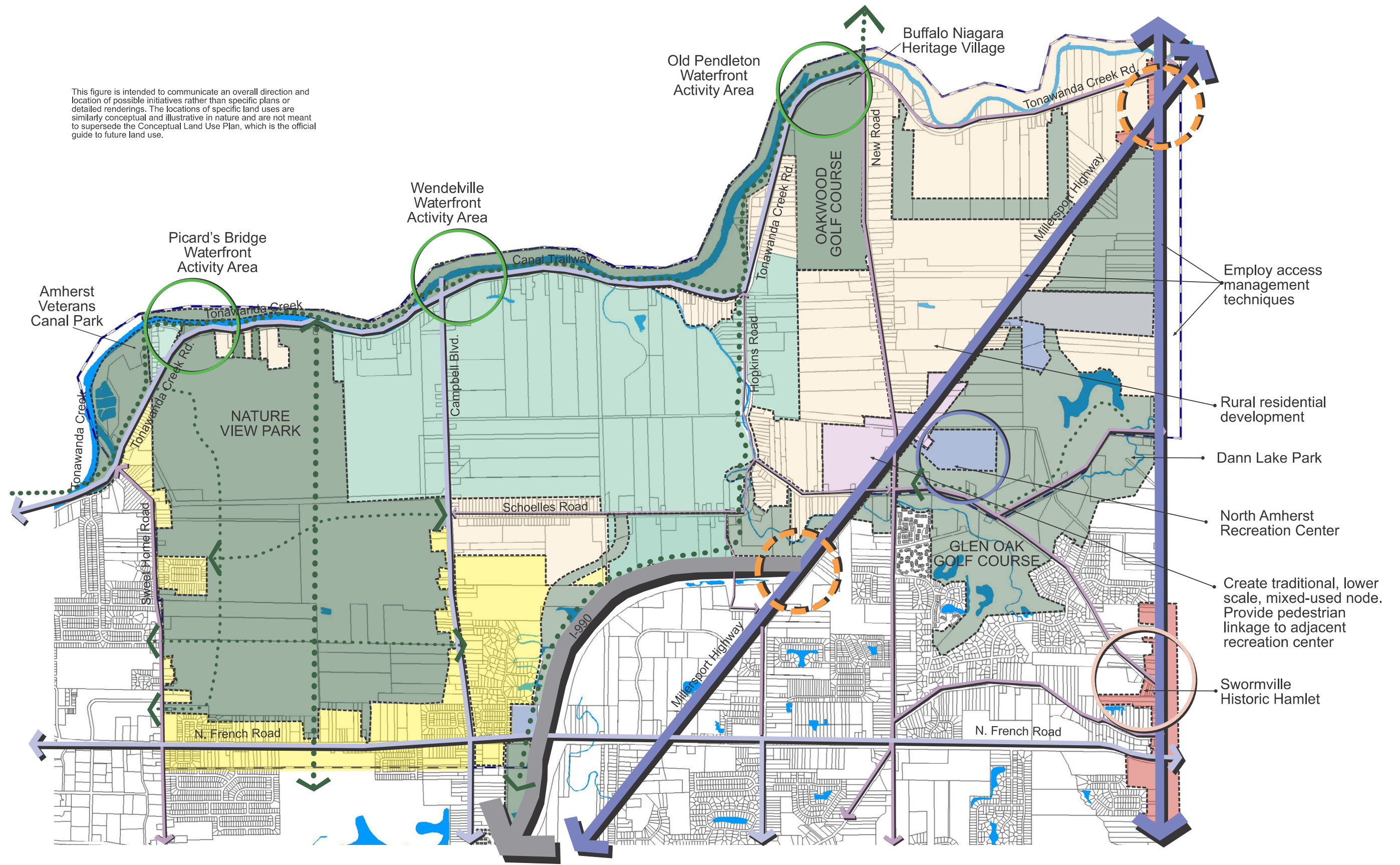
TOWN OF AMHERST BICENTENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**Figure 17**

WALLACE ROBERTS & TODD, LLC

This figure is intended to communicate an overall direction and location of possible initiatives rather than specific plans or detailed renderings. The locations of specific land uses are similarly conceptual and illustrative in nature and are not meant to supersede the Conceptual Land Use Plan, which is the official guide to future land use.



### North Amherst Focal Planning Area - Concept Plan

Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan

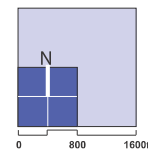
#### LEGEND

- ↔ Expressway
- ↔ Major Arterial
- ↔ Minor Arterial
- ↔ Collector
- ↔ Major Recreational Trail
- ↔ Minor Recreational Trail

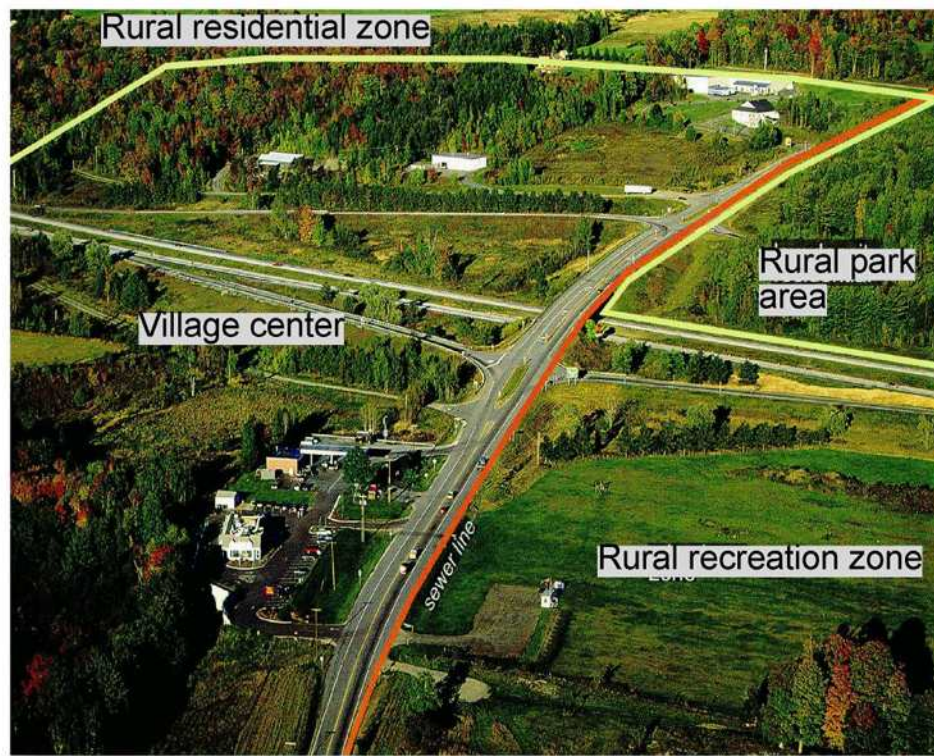
- Rural residential
- Stabilize and maintain existing residential fabric
- Community Use
- E-Commerce / Logistics Center
- Special Use Center

- Recreation / Open Space / Greenways
- Agricultural land
- Commercial / Mixed-Use
- Neighborhood anchor / community service

- Gateway
- Waterfront activity area
- Rural "village" center



December 2020 **Figure 18**



Village center in rural setting



Waterfront trail



Greenway along stream



Randall Arendt, Rural by Design  
Conservation development



Randall Arendt, Rural by Design  
Low-density residential development



Rural road



Rural road / farmland



Champion Park, Winnebago, Illinois

Conservation development overlooking open space



Village center

advantage of evolving consumer patterns and be proactive in a changing retail economy. Any development will need to give special consideration to providing substantial buffers to the surrounding area to maintain the overall rural character of North Amherst. (*Amended 12-14-20; BCPA-2020-04*)

- Create a mixed-use traditional development at the intersection of New Road and Millersport Highway within the existing parcels that are zoned Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) and include smaller commercial buildings, clustered residential development, and significant open space (see “Conservation Development” as a strategy, policy 3-14). The overall scale of the development will provide a small, traditional area for North Amherst, a recognizable gateway to Amherst from the north, and services closer to the existing population than currently available.
- Initiate traffic calming measures on Millersport Highway at the intersection of New Road to provide enhanced pedestrian accessibility and safety between the potential village center and the North Amherst Recreation Center. These measures could include stop signs or a stoplight, designated crosswalks, enhanced landscaping, and “bumpouts.”
- Limit the area to the immediate north and west of the village center to rural residential uses.
- Extend trails along Tonawanda Creek and Tonawanda Creek Road. Mile markers and a signage program should be integrated within the system to guide users to specific amenities and uses.
- Establish a new trail along Hopkins Road from Tonawanda Creek to the I-990. This trail should be integrated into a larger system that connects water features such as Tonawanda Creek, with a major element of the town-wide system along the north side of the I-990. Mile markers and a signage program should be integrated within the system to guide users to specific amenities and uses.
- Develop “Rural Character” roadway standards for the area’s rural roads (Comprehensive Plan Policy 6-1). These should include coordinated guidelines for landscaping and tree cover, building setbacks, site drainage, limited road widths, and potential bicycle lanes where applicable. Conservation development through clustering of homes (consistent with soil limitations on on-site sewage disposal) should also be explored to preserve views and open space.
- Initiate bicycle lanes and improvements to New Road, Hopkins Road, Campbell Boulevard, and Schoelles Road. These improvements should reflect the “Rural Character” roadway standards.
- Create a redevelopment plan for the Millersport Highway and Transit Road intersection to reinforce smaller commercial activities and enhance the gateway to the Town.

- Enhance the signage and streetscape treatments along Millersport Highway and I-990 to orient visitors and commuters to the Town's amenities. These should include landscaping, traffic calming (where appropriate), paving, signage and lighting.
- Incorporate recommendations from the JLWRP to improve the Waterfront Activity Areas near the Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village (Old Pendleton), Wendelville, and Picard's Bridge near the Amherst Marine Center.
- As recommended by Natural and Cultural Resources Policy 4-13, develop a management plan to enhance the Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village as an educational/interpretive resource for residents and visitors. This plan should address connection of the museum to an area-wide trail system and to the Old Pendleton Waterfront Activity Area recommended in the JLWRP. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)
- Work with Clarence to preserve and strengthen the established village character of Swormville. Any future improvements to Transit Road should be designed to maintain this traditional form and character.
- Develop design standards for the replacement of bridges over the Erie Canal.

## 10.3 UNIVERSITY

### 10.3.1 Overview and Urban Design Analysis

The University focal planning area is located in west-central Amherst centered on the North Campus of the University at Buffalo (UB). Key issues identified in the *Inventory and Analysis Report* for this focal planning area include:

- Impacts of the ongoing expansion of the North Campus student population on the area surrounding the campus (increased traffic, demand for off-campus housing and services geared towards students)
- Need for coordination between the Town and University on growth/edge issues
- Potential for research/economic development spin-off from University activities
- The vacant property owned by the University east of Millersport Highway is one of the largest vacant properties in the Town potentially available for development

The University focal planning area and surrounding development contain some of the largest economic engines in the Town of Amherst (Figure 20). Most notably, the University at Buffalo's North Campus is in the heart of the focal area and is expecting a significantly larger student population due to internal restructuring of the academic programs and the locations where they are offered.



1  
Ellicott Creek trailway



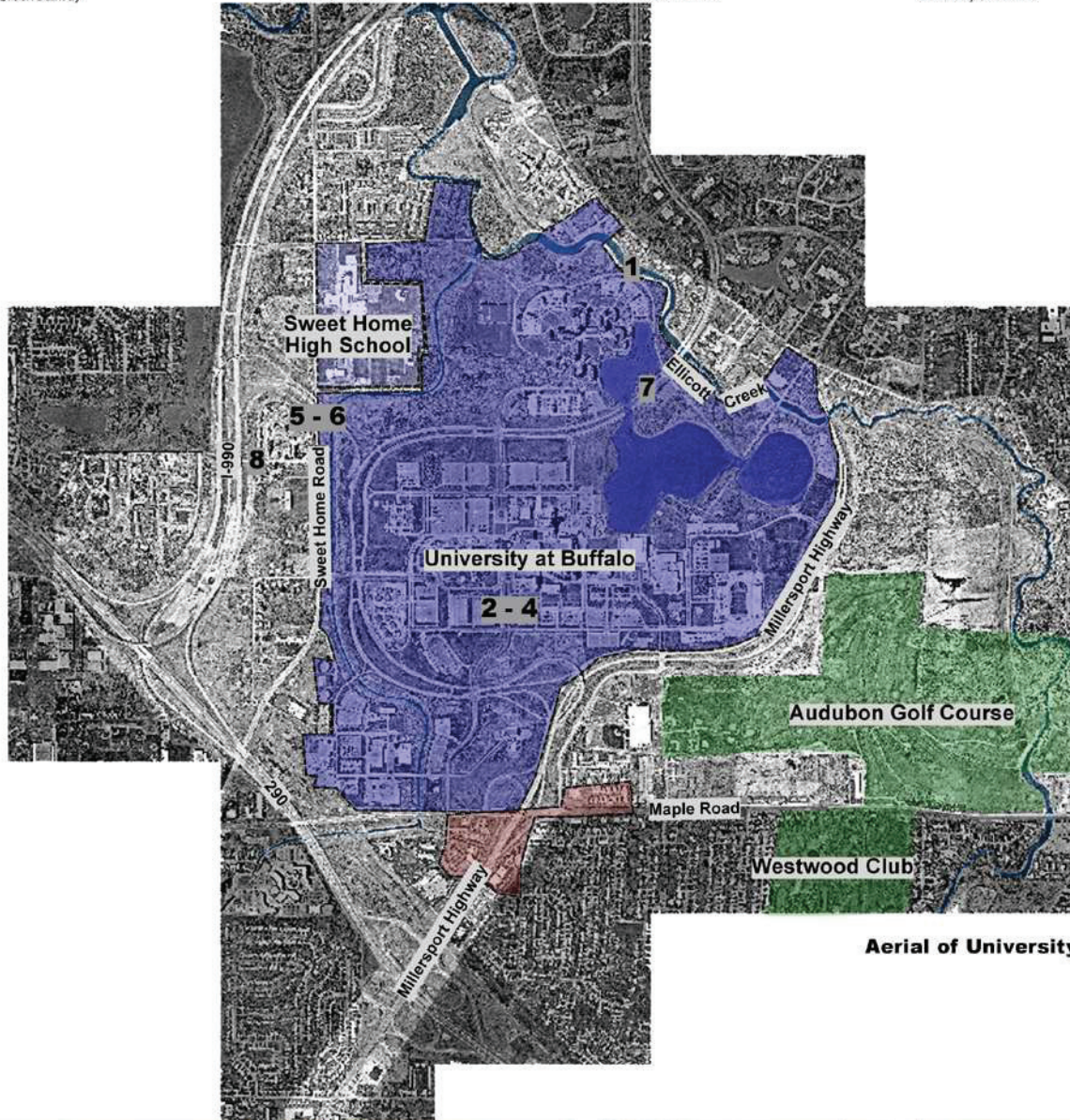
2  
University housing



3  
University at Buffalo



4  
University at Buffalo



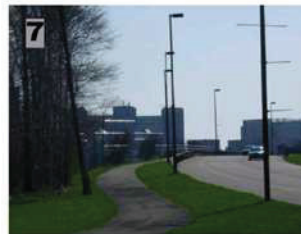
**Aerial of University**



5  
Sweet Home Road



6  
Sweet Home School



7  
Audubon Parkway



8  
Chestnut Ridge

**UNIVERSITY FOCAL PLANNING AREA - EXISTING CONDITIONS**

TOWN OF AMHERST BICENTENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**Figure 20**

To accommodate these changes, the University is implementing a master plan with the objective of increasing housing on the North Campus by 40%. This effort is reflected in new housing developments at the periphery of the traditional campus core adjacent to the academic spine and sports stadiums. Recognizing the need for additional commercial services for the students, the University is also planning a redevelopment initiative concentrated on Lee Road with a mix of housing, retail venues, a recreation and wellness center, and a hotel and conference center to create a new campus “Main Street.” Thus the once insular campus is slowly extending to its edges, which provides the opportunity for more interaction and shared services with the Town of Amherst. This expansion is providing the potential for the development of student housing not accommodated on-campus and student-related retail/personal services in close proximity to the campus. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

Surrounding the University is a number of other uses that provide employment and services, many of which serve the Western New York Region and the local community:

- The Ramada Hotel and Conference Center and Weinberg Campus for assisted living are located along North Forest Road.
- A Town municipal complex is located along Audubon Parkway.
- A concentration of commercial services is located to the south along Maple Road.
- The Audubon Recreation complex, the Audubon Golf Course, and Northtown Center are located east of Millersport Highway and north of Maple Road.
- Condominium complexes are located to the west of I-290 along Chestnut Ridge Road.
- Approximately 3,000 beds of student housing located along Sweet Home and Chestnut Ridge Roads directly west of the North Campus are either developed, under construction, or have received site plan approval.
- Sweet Home High School located on Sweet Home Road adjacent to the University. This facility provides adult education in the evenings and the School District is looking to expand its programs to become more of a community center.
- The Audubon Industrial Park (described in further detail above in the context of the Northwest focal planning area) and several other employment/business parks are located within and adjacent to the University focal planning area.

(*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

While all of these uses are viable and critical to the economic prosperity of the Town, they currently do not benefit from their proximity to one another. Instead they are relatively isolated from other uses and assets. There is limited physical or social networking

within this area, which impacts the possibility of it becoming an integrated, mixed-use district.

Connecting the uses is a somewhat disjointed network of roads and highways. Millersport Highway directly connects the north campus to the University's south campus to the southwest. John James Audubon Parkway is a main link into the north campus, but neither the parkway nor Millersport Highway is distinguished as a campus loop road or gateway as they pass through the University. Sweet Home Road exhibits peak hour traffic problems as a collector road. Finally, there are few connections through local streets to adjacent neighborhoods, many of which house students attending the University. The present state of the road network only furthers the limited physical connections between uses in the area and encourages automobile travel to fulfill daily needs.

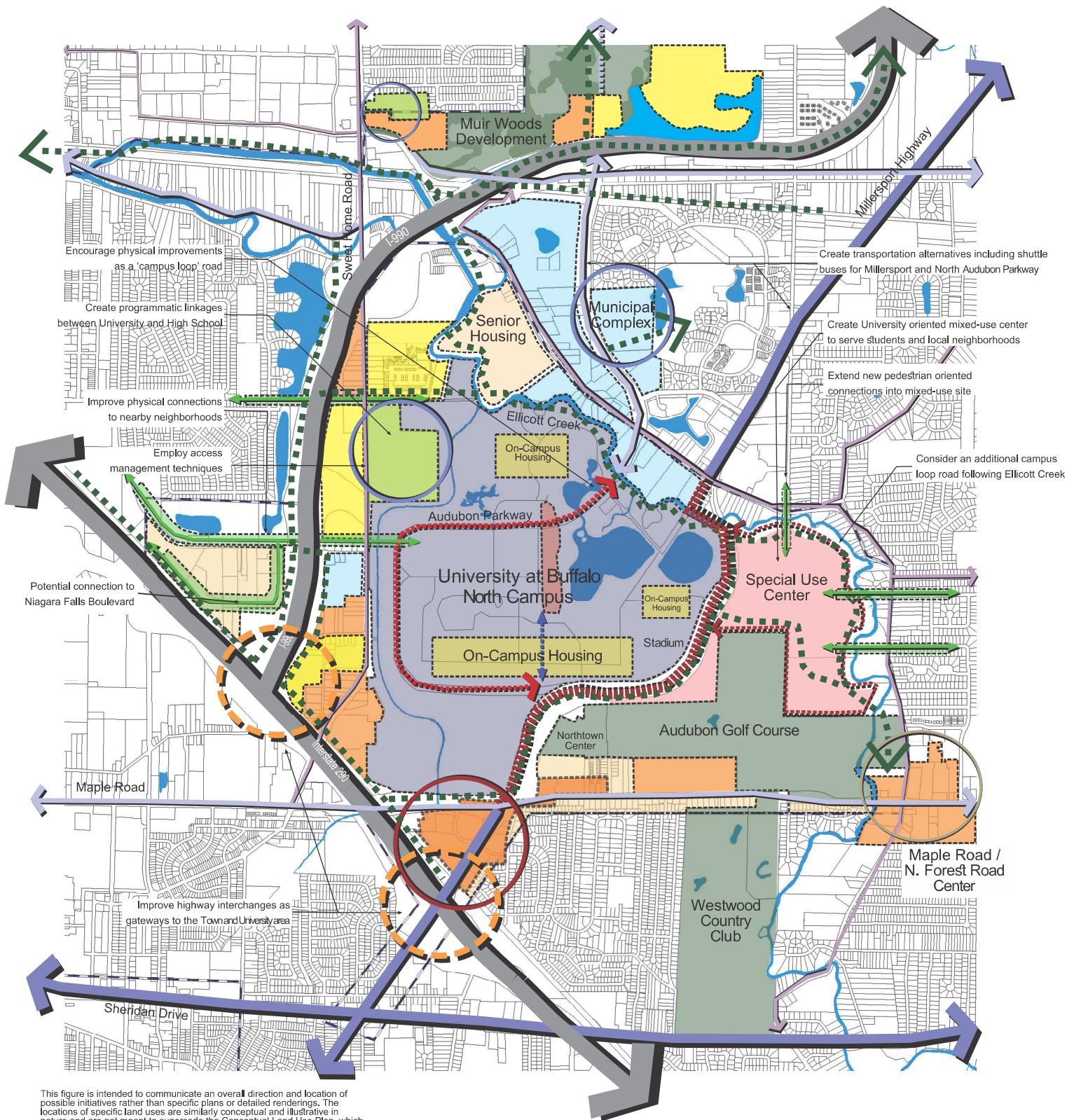
Although much of the area is fully developed, there is no center for commercial services adjacent to the University. An opportunity to create a mixed-use center on the large University-owned parcel east of Millersport Highway currently exists. Its location along Ellicott Creek and near adjacent neighborhoods creates the potential for a center on this site to draw from both University students and employees as well as neighborhood residents. Approved in September 2009, the University adopted a new physical master plan to implement the recently completed "UB 2020" academic plan. This effort, called "BuildUB," is seeking to implement many of the concepts recommended above. Preliminary discussions with the University indicate they are seeking to soften the hard edges of the north campus to better integrate it into the Amherst community. The existing commercial-retail, student/senior housing, and research-development uses currently planned along the Sweet Home Road corridor in the area directly west of the North Campus may present a real opportunity to integrate populations of varying ages in the Town with University planning and private efforts to create a second University related mixed use center. This concept may be explored with the University as their physical planning efforts progress and considered as part of future annual plan reviews. (see discussion of this proposed "University Village" in Section 3.3). (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

### 10.3.2 Concept Plan and Strategies

The concept plan for the University focal planning area is centered on physical networking and shared resources. All of the existing institutions, offices, and neighborhoods can be viewed as "portals" that offer amenities and services that can potentially benefit the entire area. The objective is to find the physical linkages between them that will promote mutually reinforcing initiatives and social networks.

The University concept plan emphasizes *physical and programmatic connections*.





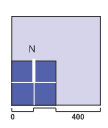
## UNIVERSITY FOCAL PLANNING AREA - CONCEPT PLAN

December 2020 **Figure 21**

Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan

### LEGEND

- |  |                        |  |  |  |   |
|--|------------------------|--|--|--|---|
|  | Expressway             |  | Special Use Center                                 |  | Gateway                                 |
|  | Major Arterial         |  | Stabilize and maintain existing residential fabric |  | Neighborhood Anchor / Community Service |
|  | Minor Arterial         |  | Medium Residential / Student Housing               |  | Regional Commercial Center              |
|  | Collector              |  | Commercial / Mixed-Use                             |  | Neighborhood Commercial Center          |
|  | Neighborhood Connector |  | Office / Research                                  |  |   |
|  | Campus Loop            |  | School / Community Facility                        |  |   |
|  | Multi-use Trail        |  | University at Buffalo                              |  |   |
|  | Natural Trail          |  | Recreation / Open Space / Greenways                |  |   |





Bethesda, Maryland  
New mixed-use center



Greenway trail



Open space



Greenway trail



Industrial / research development - pulled close to street



Centennial Park, Sydney, Australia  
University gateway statue



Street treatment: signage, wayfinding and banners



Neighborhood connector street:  
pedestrian oriented

A long-term objective should be to set up a coordinating council among area entities (the Town, UB, and other major uses) to discuss ways of sharing services that benefit multiple institutions or uses. These services could be administered in existing facilities or in new, publicly accessible centers of community activity that are integrated with other commercial uses. The proposed “University Village” mixed-use center would be a good location for a facility of this kind. A coordinated marketing and outreach program should also be considered.

In the short term the concept plan encourages the physical improvement of the area’s roads and gateways. This strategy includes finding new connections between nearby neighborhoods and the University, providing alternative methods of transportation (transit, bicycle, and pedestrian), and extending the greenway trail along Ellicott Creek. Key physical gateways, such as critical intersections and highway interchanges, should be improved to reflect the dynamic mix of uses present in the area.

Specifically, the concept plan for the University focal area includes the following initiatives and strategies (Figures 21 and 22):

- Enhance pedestrian and physical connections to the University from surrounding neighborhoods by improving Chestnut Ridge Road, Rensch Road and Willow Ridge Drive. These “neighborhood pedestrian connectors” should receive priority consideration for tree planting and other improvements. Connections should be made to the pedestrian and multi-use facilities recently developed along Sweet Home Road.
- Employ access management techniques and traffic calming measures on Sweet Home Road.
- As part of development of a more integrated pedestrian/bicycle network, enhance safety for pedestrians and bicyclists at entrances to the UB campus from Maple Road, Millersport Highway, and North Forest Road. Pedestrian and bicycle access to the UB campus should be enhanced by the creation of a linkage between the proposed University West Multi-use Trail to the academic spine via Rensch Road.
- Research-oriented facilities related to the University should continue to expand along Sweet Home Road in proximity to the Baird Research Park. The introduction of the START-UP - NY program in June 2013 offers incentives to encourage new development in this area.
- The corridor along Sweet Home Road between Ellicott Creek and Maple Road is the focus of major off-campus university-related activities. Mixed-use, moderate density offices and university related residential uses have evolved within this corridor. This pattern is punctuated by a small commercial center centered on the Skiddersville Road Extension.
- Work with UB to promote development of a new, mixed-use “University Village” east of Millersport Highway (see discussion in Section 3.3). Uses should include research and

office, University-related activities, housing, open space, and public trails and rights-of-way along Ellicott Creek. Housing should be designed to appeal to members of the academic community and “knowledge workers” drawn to an attractive, stimulating environment with a mix of activities.<sup>15</sup> A secondary campus “loop road” should be considered adjacent to the creek but outside of the floodplain to organize the main activities along an attractive environmental feature.

- Enhance physical connections to the University from surrounding neighborhoods by establishing a linkage or linkages across Ellicott Creek from North Forest Road. Klein Road could be extended across North Forest to provide a means of access to the proposed mixed-use center from the east, while extensions of Stahl Road and Heim Road would provide additional pedestrian and possibly vehicular linkages to the center.
- Designate Millersport Highway and the Audubon Parkway from North French Road to Maple Road as a Campus Boulevard. Streetscape, landscaping, and signage should be distinctive and high quality, reflecting UB and its programs and services.
- Extend the Audubon Parkway north to the North Audubon Parkway property Research and Development Park, thus increasing the accessibility of this center to UB and other surrounding uses.
- Work with UB and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority to encourage alternative transportation systems to better serve and connect uses in the area. Transit service should be explored that links the University at Buffalo’s North and South campuses. Similarly, expanded services should be explored for the Weinberg Campus to extend the mobility of resident senior citizens.
- Encourage re-use or redevelopment of properties in the Maple Road/North Forest Road commercial center and other locations along Maple Road and Millersport Highway. The Amherst IDA should be involved in these revitalization efforts through programs such as tax abatements.
- Build programmatic connections between UB, Sweet Home High School, and other institutional, governmental, and business resources as part of the “knowledge-based” Comprehensive Plan key initiative. This strategy should link mutually reinforcing existing programs and create new ones in

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<sup>15</sup> If properly planned, this mixed-use center could enhance Amherst’s appeal to what economist Richard Florida terms the “creative class,” which he considers key to a community’s economic vitality. The creative class consists of scientists, engineers, architects, educators, writers, artists, entertainers, and other professionals whose economic function is to generate new ideas, new technology, and new creative content (Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It’s Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, June 2002).

a way that fulfills the educational/training and job placement needs of residents as well as students. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

## **10.4 EGGERTSVILLE**

### **10.4.1 Overview and Urban Design Analysis**

One of the oldest neighborhoods in the Town, the Eggertsville focal planning area is located in the southwest corner of Amherst in the area generally defined by Sheridan Drive to the north, Eggert Road to the east, Main Street to the south, and Niagara Falls Boulevard to the west. Key issues identified in the *Inventory and Analysis Report* for this focal planning area include:

- Viability of older commercial areas, including effects of the predominant “one-size-fits-all” General Business (GB) zoning
- Neighborhood viability, including the impacts caused by the transfer of undergraduate programs and student housing from UB’s South to North Campus
- Need/opportunity for positive collaboration between the Town and University at Buffalo
- Pedestrian character of older neighborhoods and commercial areas is an asset
- Lack of park and recreational facilities and center of community activity

As one of the older portions of Amherst, Eggertsville is characterized by a density and diversity unique to suburban environments. The area contains a number of different uses and institutions and is actively shaped by its relationship to five primary anchors (Figure 23):

- UB’s South Campus across from the Town’s municipal border
- Commercial uses in University Plaza along Main Street
- The traditional form commercial center at Main Street and Eggert Road
- The mixed forms of commercial buildings at Northtown Plaza along Eggert Road and Sheridan Drive
- Community services located in Windermere School located in the heart of the neighborhood

(*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

Due to the increasing ethnic diversity of the area’s population, Windermere School has evolved into a community service center offering special education programs, English as a second language program, and health screenings. The success of the school and access to nearby commercial services has made Eggertsville attractive to many families moving to the area.

The popularity of the school and this area of town for new families has raised some issues with regard to housing in the area. Most notably, two subsidized projects, Allenhurst Apartments and Princeton Court Apartments, are viewed as having a negative physical impact on nearby property values. Allenhurst, the more visible of the two due to location and design, does not fit the character of the neighborhood. In general, the residential area to the east of Bailey Avenue is considered more stable than the area to the west of Bailey Avenue.

Given the density of residential development, a number of the area's commercial nodes have continued to be successful, although in some cases signs of decline are evident. Commercial areas include Bailey Avenue, Main Street and Bailey, Main and Eggert Road, Eggert Road and Bailey Avenue, and Six Corners. Each area is of traditional form and contains a different mix of services and associated issues regarding future land use. Eggert Road, for instance, includes vacant properties with only a few offices remaining. Bailey Avenue has commercial use on the west side of the street only, ranging from small stores and restaurants to a motorcycle dealership. Both located along minor arterial roads, these areas in particular provide the opportunity for introduction of mixed-use and multi-family housing that would actively support nearby commercial services.

Although Windermere Elementary School provides some community services, the needs of the population outweigh the services available. Potential needs that have been identified include a community recreational center; youth, family, and other social services; and possibly some level of a clinical relationship with the University. In 2006, the Town purchased the former church located at 4110 Bailey Avenue and converted it into a community center that is operated by the Boys and Girls Club of Buffalo. *(Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01)*

### 10.4.2 Concept Plan and Strategies

The dynamic social and physical characteristics of Eggertsville provide an opportunity to create a distinctive and socially diverse district in Amherst. The concept plan proposes to “reinforce the diversity” with a long-term strategy to meet the needs of a changing population, encouraging established and new residents to remain and invest in Amherst.

Because the concept is ambitious, it must be followed through with multiple policies and redevelopment initiatives. Examples include regulatory changes to facilitate compatible development, housing programs and development, economic development incentives to small business enterprises, improvements to local streets to encourage people to walk to local services, and new community services in key locations. In addition to the items identified below,

The Eggertsville concept plan emphasizes the **physical distinctiveness and social diversity** of the community as strengths to build on for the future.



1  
Northtown Plaza



2  
Northtown Plaza / Eggert Rd.



3  
Marion Road



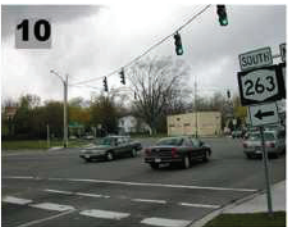
4  
Allenhurst Apartments



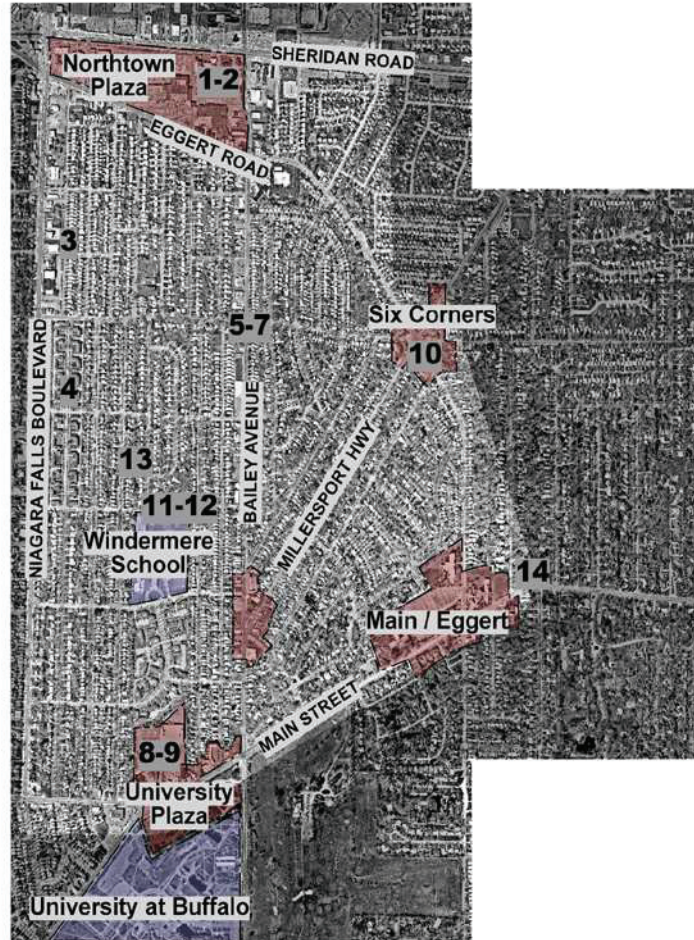
8  
University Plaza



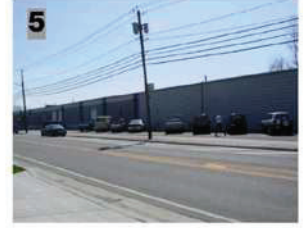
9  
University Plaza



10  
Six Corners



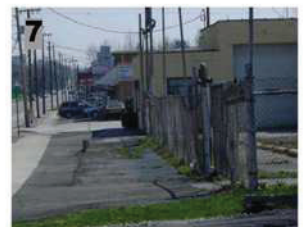
Aerial of Eggertsville



5  
Bailey Avenue



6  
Bailey Avenue



7  
Bailey Avenue



11  
Windermere School



12  
Windermere Boulevard



13  
Springville Avenue



14  
Main Street and Eggert Road

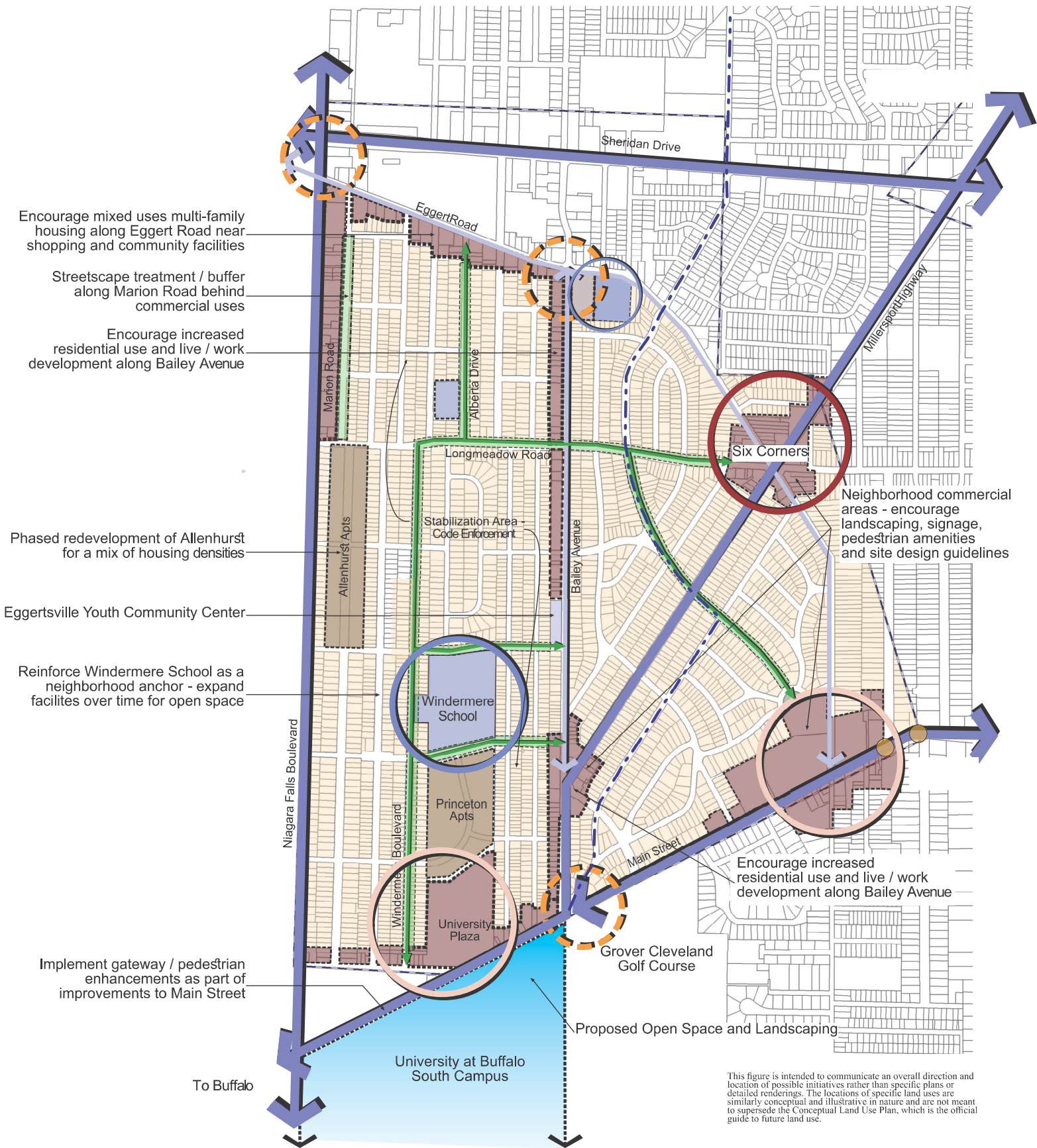
**EGGERTSVILLE FOCAL PLANNING AREA - EXISTING CONDITIONS**

TOWN OF AMHERST BICENTENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**Figure 23**

WALLACE ROBERTS & TODD, LLC



**EGGERTSVILLE FOCAL PLANNING AREA - CONCEPT PLAN**

December 2020 **Figure 24**

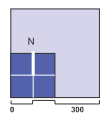
Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan

**LEGEND**

- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Neighborhood Connector
- Inter-campus Bikeway

- Traditional Commercial / Mixed Use Area
- Stabilize and maintain existing residential fabric
- School / Community Facility
- Recreation / Open Space / Greenways
- Multi-family Residential

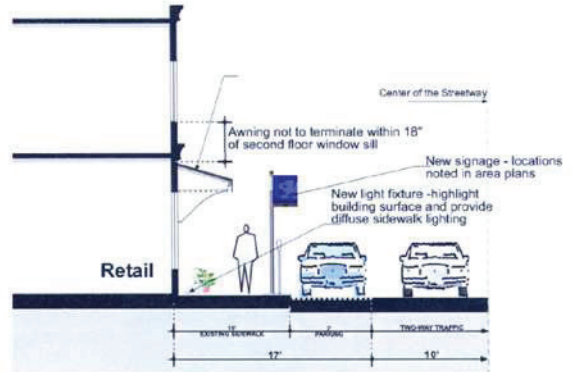
- Gateway
- Neighborhood Anchor / Community Service
- Regional Commercial Center
- Urban / "Village" Center
- Historic Entranceways - restore where applicable & create lighting plan for Main St



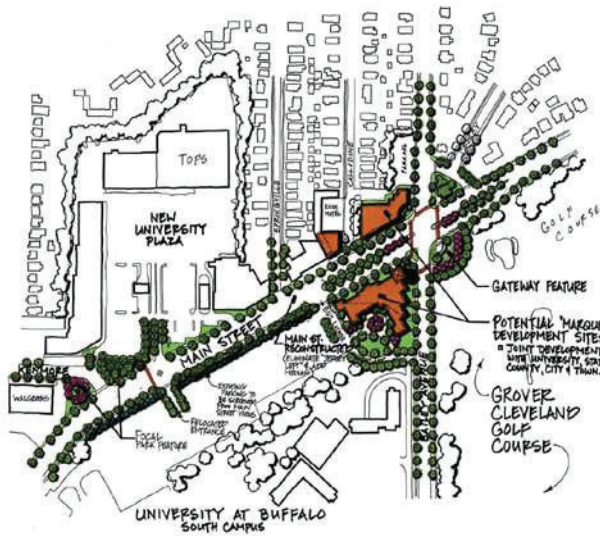




Lake Oswego, Oregon  
 Phased redevelopment for mixed housing density with side parking



Example of design guideline



Source: Parsons  
 Conceptual improvements to Main Street and Bailey Avenue



Lake Oswego, Oregon  
 Landscape buffer treatment



Miller Garden  
 Landscape buffer near university



Traffic calming



Anacortes, Washington  
 Streetscape improvement



Multi-family development with rear parking



Live-work/ mixed-use development with rear parking

some of these strategies are detailed in the Eggertsville Action Plan; others are described in the town-wide policies related to the “Revitalization” initiative. Because of its importance to Amherst’s future, Eggertsville should be a priority location for the application of expanded incentives for reinvestment/revitalization per Priority Comprehensive Plan Action Program #2 (see Chapter 11).

Specifically, the concept plan for the Eggertsville focal area includes the following initiatives and strategies (Figures 24 and 25):

- Encourage commercial and mixed-use development in the area around Northtown Plaza north of Eggert Road. This may occur as a partnership with property owners when redevelopment is considered. For example, a strategy could be pursued to use a portion of the existing parking lot along Eggert Road for other uses in exchange for other assistance to the continued operation of the Plaza. If any redevelopment in this area occurs, a pedestrian connection should be provided to Sheridan Drive and Eggert Road.
- Encourage transition to mixed-use development in a traditional form (*Amended 12-11-17; BCPA-2017-01*) with a significant multi-family housing component along the south side of Eggert Road between Niagara Falls Boulevard and Bailey Avenue. Building and site design for redevelopment of lands along Eggert Road should be sensitive to single family residences adjacent south. Guidelines should be established to encourage this development to be pulled to the front property line with parking facilities located in the rear. Lower floors should be considered for community facilities, housing, and/or office space.
- Encourage increased residential development along Bailey Avenue, including live/work units. Guidelines should be created to promote development that fits into the established neighborhood fabric (build-to lines, rear parking, etc.). Shared parking should be encouraged through more flexible standards that take advantage of the varying parking needs of residential, commercial, and other uses at different times of the day and week.
- Apply new zoning provisions that ensure development of a mixed-use center in the traditional form as discussed in Section 3.3.2 and shown on Map Figure 6-A . (*Amended 12-11-17; BCPA-2017-01*) Appropriate site design guidelines should be created to maintain and enhance the character of these areas, addressing issues such as build-to lines, shared parking provisions, transition and landscaping requirements, signage, streetscape, lighting, and compatible architectural design.
- Stabilize the neighborhood west of Bailey Avenue through code enforcement and an assessment of housing needs and programs directed to the local population, in accordance with Housing and Neighborhoods Policy 8-7.
- Consider options for a phased redevelopment of the Allenhurst Apartments for uses such as senior housing, lower

density housing, or units attractive to “empty nesters” and other non-traditional households. Any redevelopment of the property should incorporate varied housing and architectural styles compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Coordination with potential multi-family housing along Eggert and Bailey should be explored to provide relocation resources for tenants.

- Working with the Amherst IDA, establish a mechanism and management entity to prepare potential redevelopment properties for reinvestment and future development. This mechanism could be used to accomplish such activities as assembling parcels, demolishing existing buildings, and obtaining required regulatory approvals.
- Reinforce the Windermere School as a neighborhood anchor by expansion of facilities over time to provide more recreational opportunities or open space for the area.
- Reinforce neighborhood connections to local amenities by improving key streets as “neighborhood connector streets.” These streets should receive priority consideration for tree planting and other improvements.
- Initiate traffic calming initiatives for Bailey Avenue, Eggert Road, Grover Cleveland Highway, and Main Street. Traffic calming measures include “bumpouts” at intersections, changes in pavement texture at pedestrian crossings, increased planting, re-striping of the road to delineate on-street parking areas if applicable, and potential reduction of lane widths. Depending upon the character of each street, a traffic study may need to be completed to arrive at the appropriate solution.
- Work with NYSDOT to incorporate gateway treatments and pedestrian enhancements into planned improvements to Main Street, which is a major gateway between the City of Buffalo and Amherst.
- Encourage revitalization of aging commercial properties along Sheridan Drive and Niagara Falls Boulevard. The Amherst IDA should be involved in this effort through programs such as tax abatements.
- Consider additional landscaping treatments for commercial uses along Niagara Falls Boulevard between Longmeadow and Eggert Roads to buffer residences along Marion Road from visible loading and parking areas.
- Prioritize needs for community facilities and services as a guide for future initiatives and investments. The development of these facilities and access to services in existing commercial areas should be encouraged and facilitated. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

## 10.5 SNYDER

### 10.5.1 Overview and Urban Design Analysis

Like Eggertsville, the Snyder focal planning area is located in southwestern Amherst and is one of the Town's oldest neighborhoods. It generally corresponds to the triangular area formed by Main Street, Kensington Avenue, and Mt. Vernon Road. Key issues identified in the *Inventory and Analysis Report* for this focal planning area include:

- Deterioration of (two-family) housing stock along the east side of Harlem Road between Kings Highway and Saratoga Road
- Need to revitalize Harlem/Kensington commercial area
- Need to preserve established traditional development pattern and character along Main Street, including the commercial center at Harlem Road
- Lack of park and recreational facilities (other than Harlem Road Community Center)

The Snyder neighborhood is organized around three primary streets: Main Street, Kensington Avenue, and Harlem Road (Figure 26). All three of these streets would benefit from efforts to calm traffic speeds. The three main concentrations of commercial activity are associated with these corridors. The Main Street and Harlem Road intersection supports a viable commercial area with a mix of uses, including Snyder Square, which is notable as a good local example of pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development. Large institutions are located within easy walking distance, providing opportunities for additional uses and programs to further the viability of the commercial center. Daemen College and the Amherst High School are both two blocks east of Harlem Road on Main Street. The Park School of Buffalo is located just to the north.

The Kensington Avenue and Harlem Road intersection also contains a mix of retail uses, including restaurants and shopping. An improvement plan has been prepared for Harlem Road and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has approved a change in the street width to three lanes and included the addition of two roundabouts to better manage traffic. The project was completed in 2008 with additional lighting, signage, and landscaping. Harlem Road's location at a southern entrance to Amherst provides an opportunity to enhance the area as a Town gateway. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

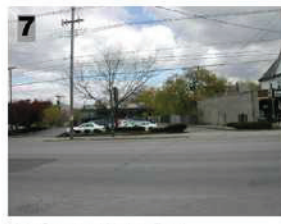
The intersection of Main Street and Kensington Avenue comprises the third commercial center in the Snyder focal planning area. Located adjacent to I-290. The commercial center there is of traditional form and this area represents an opportunity to strengthen a gateway to Amherst coming out of the Village of



1  
Daemen College



4  
Main Street and Harlem Road



7  
Main Street and Harlem Road



11  
Historic gateway on Main Street



2  
Amherst High School



5  
Main Street and Harlem Road



8  
Main Street and Harlem Road



12  
Historic gateway on Main Street



3  
Main Street and Harlem Road



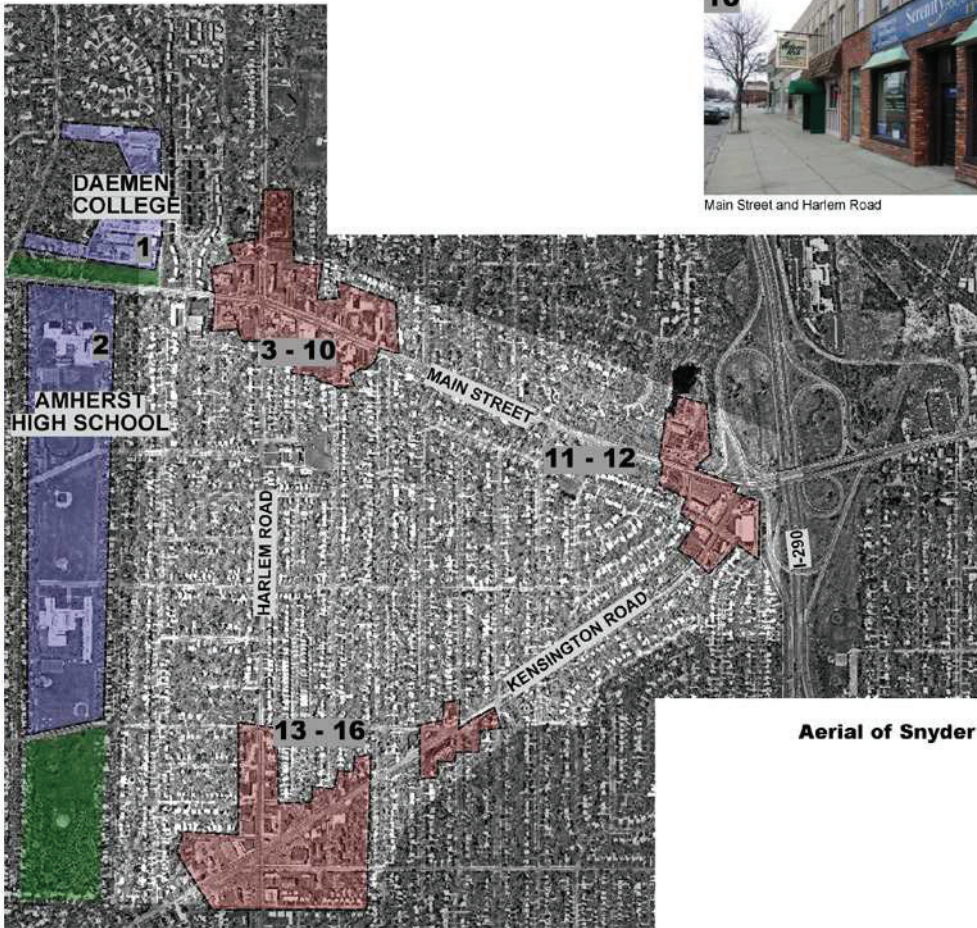
6  
Main Street and Harlem Road



9  
Main Street and Harlem Road



13  
Kensington Avenue and Harlem Road



10  
Main Street and Harlem Road



14  
Kensington Avenue and Harlem Road



15  
Kensington Avenue and Harlem Road



16  
Kensington Avenue and Harlem Road

Aerial of Snyder

**SNYDER FOCAL PLANNING AREA - EXISTING CONDITIONS**

TOWN OF AMHERST BICENTENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**Figure 26**

WALLACE ROBERTS & TODD, LLC

Williamsville along Main Street, Amherst’s traditional commercial corridor. (*Amended 12-11-17; BCPA-2017-01*)

A smaller, fourth commercial area is located at the intersection of Kensington Avenue and Darwin Drive. This area contains a traditional form of commercial uses.

Snyder’s established neighborhood fabric contains physical assets that contribute greatly to the distinctiveness of the area. Along Main Street, the historic neighborhood gates accentuate the area’s relationship to the street. In addition, some of the streets are lined with grand silver maple trees. These silver maples, however, were planted at the same time and due to their short life span and the extensive damage they sustained during the October 2006 storm, will soon be in need of replacement.

All commercial and mixed-use centers in this focal area have been identified as traditional form as discussed in Section 3.3.2 and shown on Map Figure 6-A. (*Amended 9-3-19; BCPA-2017-01A*) The neighborhood fabric is predominantly owner occupied, single-family homes, with the exception of the previously mentioned two-family units along Harlem Road. Fetto Park, a 2.8 acre “pocket park” was recently developed just north of the Park School. In addition to Fetto Park, the Harlem Road Community Center, Saratoga Park and recreation fields associated with the Amherst Middle and High schools located nearby. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

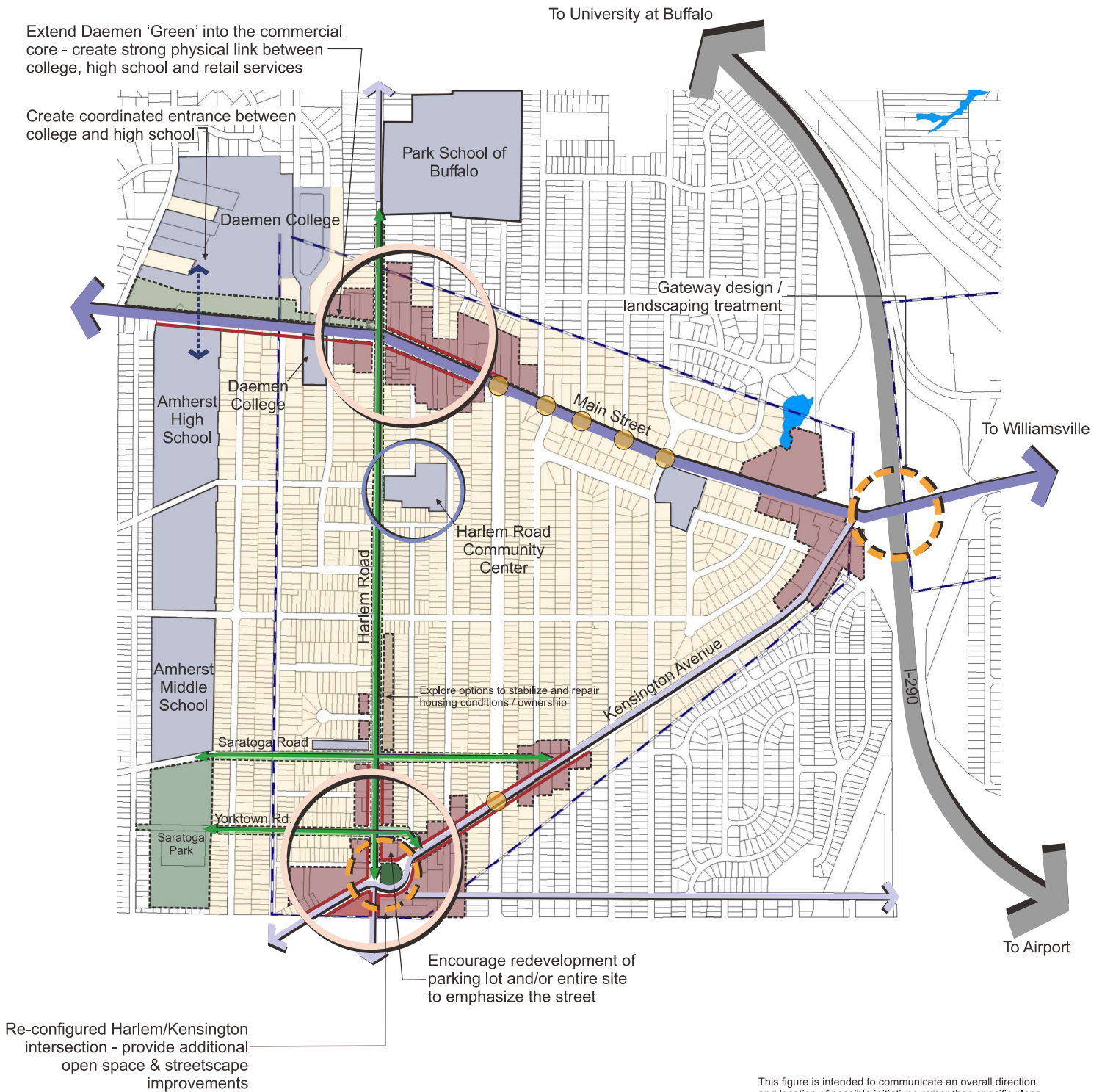
### **10.5.2 Concept Plan and Strategies**

The concept plan for the Snyder focal planning area emphasizes the existing commercial centers and their long-term viability. The approach for these centers is to capitalize on their locations and character to provide the widest array of uses for the local population. The commercial centers on Main Street should be distinguished as part of a larger network of linked commercial services extending across Amherst. Connections to existing parks and institutions should be reinforced as part of this strategy.

The Snyder concept plan emphasizes the ***long-term viability of the established commercial centers.***

Specifically, the concept plan for the Snyder focal area includes the following initiatives and strategies (Figures 27 and 28):

- Similar to the recommendations for traditional commercial and mixed-use centers in Eggertsville, the centers in Snyder should be of traditional form. (*Amended 12-11-17; BCPA-2017-01*) Appropriate site design guidelines should be created that are sensitive to and enhance the character of these areas, addressing issues such as build-to lines, shared parking provisions, landscaping requirements, signage (size, location/configuration, style), streetscape, lighting, and compatible architectural design.



This figure is intended to communicate an overall direction and location of possible initiatives rather than specific plans or detailed renderings. The locations of specific land uses are similarly conceptual and illustrative in nature and are not meant to supersede the Conceptual Land Use Plan, which is the official guide to future land use.

**SNYDER FOCAL PLANNING AREA - CONCEPT PLAN**

May 2017

Figure 27

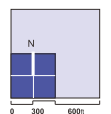
Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan

**LEGEND**

- ← Expressway
- ← Major Arterial
- ← Minor Arterial
- ← Collector
- ← Neighborhood Connector

- Commercial Streetscape Improvement
- Traditional Commercial / Mixed Use Area
- Stabilize and maintain existing residential fabric
- School / College / Community Facility
- Recreation / Open Space / Greenways

- Gateway
- Neighborhood Anchor / Community Service
- Traditional Commercial Area
- Historic Entranceways - restore where applicable & create lighting plan for Main Street

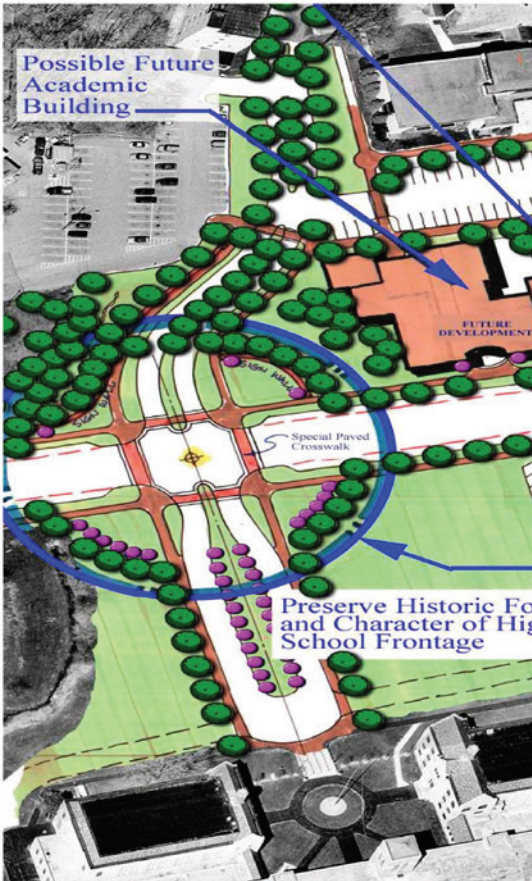




Bethesda, Maryland  
Streetscape improvement



Traditional commercial development:  
building pulled to street, mixed-use



Source: Parsons  
Potential gateway treatment at Daemen  
College / Amherst High School



Street with landscaped "round-about"



Seaside, Oregon  
Green buffer along street



Troutdale, Oregon  
Green buffers and plaza



Troutdale, Oregon  
Bumpout: traffic calming measure



- Create guidelines for streetscape improvements and traffic calming measures along Main Street and Kensington Avenue. Traffic calming measures include “bumpouts” at intersections, changes in pavement texture at pedestrian crossings, increased planting, re-striping of the road to delineate on-street parking areas if applicable, and potential reduction of lane widths. A traffic study may be considered for Main Street across the Town to provide valuable information for Snyder, Eggertsville and Williamsville.
- Reinforce neighborhood connections to local amenities by improving key streets as “neighborhood connector streets.” Saratoga Road and Yorktown Road should be improved to enhance connections between commercial uses and Saratoga Park. Improvements should also be undertaken for Harlem Road, including tree planting, sidewalk repair, signage, and lighting. These streets should receive priority consideration for tree planting and other improvements.
- Create a strong, physical link to Daemen College by conceptually extending the existing “green” on Main Street east to Snyder Square through a consistent landscaping plan for the edge along Main Street. Discussions should be initiated with property owners to determine the landscaping right-of-way possible on the north side of Main Street between the College and Harlem Road. Designs should focus on landscaping as well as usable public space, such as small sitting areas with appropriate signage, lighting, and street furniture.
- Encourage a coordinated entrance between Daemen College and the Amherst High School as a gateway to Snyder and to improve traffic safety. This effort could be integrated into a Main Street traffic study.
- Redesign the Wehrle Drive/Harlem Road/Kensington Avenue intersection for increased pedestrian safety and to create an attractive gateway to the commercial area. Design principles articulated for the Harlem-Kensington-Cleveland Economic Development Strategy should be implemented, including bringing more buildings to the street with rear parking and creating a visual focal point for the area. The landscaped ‘round-about’ being constructed at this intersection will help in creating a visual focal point.
- Encourage the redevelopment of the parking lot at the northeast corner of Harlem and Kensington for new commercial uses. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)
- Consider physical improvements to the intersection of I-290 and Main Street as a gateway to Amherst and Main Street.
- Create a lighting plan for Main Street, including a consistent lighting treatment for the historic gates. An existing survey of the existing lighting and discussion with local neighborhood groups should be the first steps in the process.
- Consider options for addressing the two-family housing units along Harlem Road identified as a housing issue. Enhanced

code enforcement, efforts to increase owner occupancy in the existing structures, or acquisition and redevelopment are options that could be explored.

## **10.6 WILLIAMSVILLE**

### **10.6.1 Overview and Urban Design Analysis**

The Williamsville focal planning area is located along Main Street between the I-290 interchange to the west and Youngs Road to the east. It is unique among the focal planning areas in that it is mostly located within the Village of Williamsville, although it does include areas in the Town of Amherst east of I-290 and west of Youngs Road. Key issues identified in the *Inventory and Analysis Report* for this focal planning area include:

- Character and viability of the traditional village core:
  - Economic positioning of Main Street vis-à-vis regional shopping opportunities
  - Form and type of new development in relation to traditional village fabric (including impacts of automobile-oriented uses)
  - Design treatment of gateway entrances to village
- Geometry and function of Main Street as a major arterial creates “pedestrian-unfriendly” character and impacts small businesses
- Opportunity to relate master plan for Amherst State Park (under development) to other parks and land uses in the Village

The Williamsville focal area is centered on Main Street and its associated commercial activity. Although the focal area encompasses areas within both the Town of Amherst and the Village of Williamsville, the political boundaries cannot be identified “on the ground.”

The two mile stretch of Main Street (State Route 5) located between Interstate-290 and Youngs Road is the civic and social heart of both the Village of Williamsville and the Town of Amherst. Over this relatively short distance, the corridor includes both the Town and Village government buildings, the iconic Williamsville Water Mill, the historical commercial center of the Village, the North campus of the Erie Community College, and Williamsville South High School.

The Village of Williamsville Community Plan (2010) delineates three “context zones” along Main Street that characterize the form and scale of development and its relationship with surrounding places. The Community Plan further cites the need for a balance between mobility and character so that a revitalized Main Street

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1 Parking lot next to Ellicott Creek



3 Rear parking / Village Core



4 Rock Street



2 Ellicott Creek / Island Park



Aerial of Williamsville



10 Main Street



5 Main Street / Union Road



6 Main Street



7 Main Street / I-290



8 Main Street



9 Main Street / Village Core

**WILLIAMSVILLE FOCAL PLANNING AREA - EXISTING CONDITIONS**

TOWN OF AMHERST BICENTENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**Figure 29**

WALLACE ROBERTS & TODD, LLC

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could fulfill its role as a transportation corridor while enhancing its character and sustaining its role as a center for both the Village and Town. To achieve this balance a “context sensitive approach” to transportation planning was employed to form a vision for Main Street and its business district.

As noted in the *Community Plan*, Williamsville’s commercial core along Main Street offers an alternative to surrounding suburban-style shopping areas. The Plan’s vision for Main Street is comprised of three distinct zones which are characterized by their land use. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

The first zone is a Town-Village transition area extending from the I-290 to the Village line. All of this area is traditional in form as discussed in Section 3.3.2 and shown on Map Figure 6-A (*Amended 9-3-19; BCPA-2017-01A*). Its location near the I-290 provides the opportunity for improvements to the zone as a gateway from Amherst to Main Street and the Village.

The second zone can be characterized as the Main Street Commercial Core extending from the western Village line/Union Road to Evans Street/Garrison Road. The character of the commercial uses in this zone is radically different from the typical strip commercial uses and is rooted in its long history as a traditional village “downtown”. Key characteristics of this area include multi-story buildings, a consistent building edge near the street, inviting ground floor facades, and a mix of architectural styles that emerged through Village history. The majority of businesses offer parking to the rear of their properties.

Within this zone is the Village Core-Civic area, located between Cayuga road and Ellicott Creek. This area is the heart of the Village and includes the Town and Village municipal buildings, Island Park, Glen Park, and the historic Williamsville Water Mill. The Village Core’s proximity to Glen Park, Island Park and Ellicott Creek provides a unique opportunity to reinforce the open space and also the commercial activity with enhanced connections to the parks. Pedestrian safety related to heavy through traffic along Main Street and parking are issues that need to be addressed as they are major reasons why retailers choose to leave the area. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

The final land use area extends from Evans Street/Garrison Road to Youngs Road and reflects a transitional mix of uses and forms from some of the tallest buildings in the Village to traditional and suburban forms approaching Youngs Road as shown on Map Figure 6-A. This includes some retail, residential, offices, and Williamsville South High Schools. At Youngs Road is the North Campus of Erie Community College, which potentially provides a student population to support retail services on Main Street given a better walking environment and mix of uses closer to campus.

A primary issue affecting Main Street is the physical design of the street itself and the traffic speeds it promotes. Discussions have been ongoing to address this problem by encouraging the New York State Thruway Authority and NYSDOT to study the development of improved capacity at a toll barrier along the I-90 and improved toll operations at Williamsville. In addition, physical alterations to Main Street could “calm” traffic, particularly through the Village core.

The Village has taken several steps toward maintaining and improving the character of these three zones and calming traffic along Main Street. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)

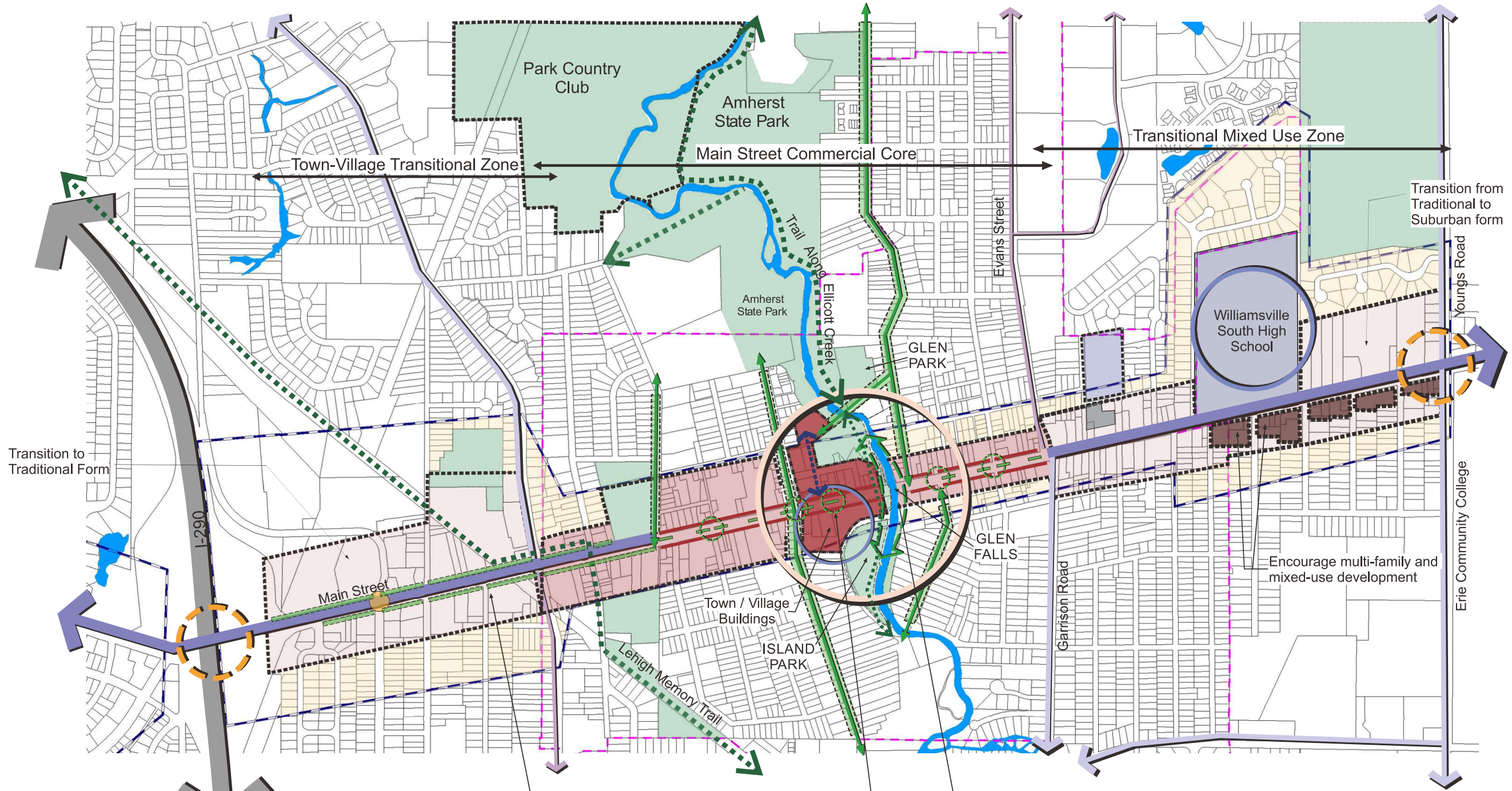
- In 2011 the Village adopted a new mixed-use zoning district for the Main Street corridor. The new district establishes a set of graphic standards to guide development of the corridor.
- In 2013 the Village began an initiative called Picture Main Street. Picture Main Street envisions a revitalized corridor that functions as the center of civic, business, and social life. The Picture Main initiative includes redevelopment of the Spring Street Corridor as the access to an improved and lively Water Mill district. (*Amended 09-08-15; BCPA-2014-01*)
- The Town, Village and Amherst Industrial Development Agency collaborated to complete the Main Street Corridor Market study in 2013. The Study indicates that the Village is poised for higher-density redevelopment over the next two decades; stressing the future market strength for housing and related commercial development.

### 10.6.2 Concept Plan and Strategies

Given the three distinctive character zones of Main Street, the concept for the Williamsville focal area is to strengthen Main Street as a backbone that connects different uses and developments while recognizing that each area has its own issues and opportunities for future development.

At the heart of the concept is to position Main Street as a destination for persons attracted by the village ambience and sense of place, “niche” shopping experiences, and restaurants. Connecting Ellicott Creek, Glen Park, Amherst State Park, and Island Park to Main Street is a key opportunity that will help to reinforce Main Street’s attractiveness. The bridge over the creek and adjacent uses provide the most obvious opportunities to “imprint” the park physically upon the character of the street, thus enhancing its distinctive character. This can be accomplished through landscaping; new and visible pathways that connect to the creek and parks; site design guidelines that ensure the sensitive layout of uses, parking, and loading; small plazas for sitting that provide space to take in the views; and changes in the texture of

The Williamsville concept plan seeks to ***strengthen Main Street as destination*** for persons attracted by its sense of place, while recognizing the difference between distinctive “character zones” along the street.



Transition to Traditional Form

Town-Village Transitional Zone

Main Street Commercial Core

Transitional Mixed Use Zone

Transition from Traditional to Suburban form

Williamsville South High School

Encourage multi-family and mixed-use development

I-290

Main Street

Town / Village Buildings

ISLAND PARK

Lehigh Memory Trail

GLEN FALLS

GLEN PARK

Trail Along Ellicott Creek

Amherst State Park

Park Country Club

Evans Street

Garrison Road

Erie Community College

Youngs Road

Soften the street edge with landscaping - encourage site design guidelines for new development

Improve pedestrian safety with new landscaped 'islands' on Main Street - these should be designed to work with existing curb cuts

Improve streetscape on Main Street to strongly mark the location of Ellicott Creek and park system through traffic calming and landscaping

This figure is intended to communicate an overall direction and location of possible initiatives rather than specific plans or detailed renderings. The locations of specific land uses are similarly conceptual and illustrative in nature and are not meant to supersede the Conceptual Land Use Plan, which is the official guide to future land use.

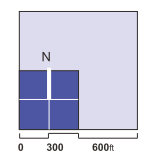
**WILLIAMSVILLE FOCAL PLANNING AREA - CONCEPT PLAN**

May 2017

Figure 30

Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan

**LEGEND**





Neon Forest Circle, Longmont, Colorado  
Multi-family development



Source: Parsons

Conceptual Main Street streetscape improvements



York, Pennsylvania  
Small plaza



Troutdale, Oregon  
Landscape buffer treatment  
along auto-oriented street



Forest Park, St. Louis, Missouri

Landscape buffer treatment for auto-oriented portions of Main Street



Portland, Oregon

Streetscape enhancement:  
planting, lamp and banners



Lake Oswego, Oregon

Outdoor seating on pedestrian-friendly street



Seaside, Oregon

Landscape buffer treatment



Millwaukee, Wisconsin

Water related space

Main Street itself through different paving to slow traffic in the area. These initiatives need not be limited to the Village core and the bridge over the creek. A consistent landscaping approach and signage system can conceptually extend the idea along the length of Main Street through traffic islands created to slow traffic, “bumpouts” at key intersections, and other streetscape improvements.

Although the emphasis should be focused on the Village core to retain and enhance its character, improvements are also warranted to the other zones to create a more consistent, pedestrian-friendly image along the length of the Main Street corridor. These improvements should include landscape improvements along the edges of automobile-oriented commercial uses to soften their edge at the street and improved pedestrian connections to Main Street through new trails and designated neighborhood streets.

Specifically, the concept plan for the Williamsville focal area includes the following initiatives and strategies (Figures 30 and 31):

- Improve the streetscape on Main Street and the bridge in the Village core to strongly mark the presence of the creek and park system. Bumpouts, small plazas, and improved pathways to the parks should be considered to enhance the potential for the area as a civic gathering space.
- Similar to the recommendations for traditional commercial areas in Eggertsville and Snyder, encourage traditional forms of commercial and mixed-use development/redevelopment. Appropriate site design guidelines should be established to address issues such as build-to lines, shared parking provisions, transition and landscaping requirements, signage, streetscape, lighting, and compatible architectural design.
- Create a cohesive village center focus around the Williamsville Water Mill (“Mill Village”). This concept includes a restored Water Mill to include public uses, appropriately-scaled redevelopment of the area surrounding the Mill and along Spring Street, and links to Glen Falls and Park, Island Park, and historic Main Street.
- Encourage shared parking in the Village core to increase the parking supply.
- Designate public parking lots and provide a signage and marketing system to guide shoppers to these locations. The lots potentially include the Township parking lot, lots surrounding Rock Street, the lot used for Glen Park at the base of Rock Street, and the lot just east of Evans Street on the north side of Main Street.
- Develop enhanced pedestrian connections along Rock Street between the parking lot, parks, and Main Street. A sidewalk, railing, lighting, and signage should be considered.
- Create guidelines for streetscape improvements and traffic calming measures along Main Street. These should include consideration of traffic “islands” that function as medians but

are not continuous, allowing opportunities for left turns into businesses while providing pedestrian refuges for safe crossings of Main Street. These features will also help to visually reduce the width of the roadway and contribute to slowing traffic.

- Revise local codes to encourage outdoor seating for restaurants.
- Encourage upper floor residential and office use above stores.
- Promote compatible infill development along Main Street and Spring Street with defined standards for building and parking locations; building height, scale, and mass; and streetscape treatment.
- Initiate physical improvements to the intersection of I-290 and Main Street as a gateway to Amherst and Main Street. Similarly, implement enhanced signage and lighting at Youngs Road and Evans/Garrison Road as entries to Williamsville and the Village core.
- Create design guidelines for the western zone along Main Street from I-290 to Los Robles/Grove Streets. These guidelines should address the location of buildings and parking, site layout, and landscaping requirements along the frontage to Main Street.
- Reinforce neighborhood connections to local amenities by improving key streets as “neighborhood connector streets.” These streets should receive priority consideration for tree planting and other improvements.
- Consolidate underutilized properties over time and encourage multi-family and appropriately scaled mixed-use development east of Evans Street along Main Street. This development should be planned to be sensitive to land uses adjacent to the Main Street corridor while reinforcing Williamsville as an activity center. Appropriate uses include upper floor residential above ground level stores and offices and residential buildings of a size and scale that fit into the local context. Guidelines should be created that encourage new development to be pulled towards the front property line with parking facilities located in the rear.

## **10.7 BOULEVARD CENTRAL DISTRICT (BCD)**

*(Amended 12-14-20; BCPA-2020-03)*

### **10.7.1 Overview and Urban Design Analysis**

Located in the western side of the Town and home to many of its largest commercial centers, the Boulevard Central District Focal Planning Area is bounded on the west by Niagara Falls Boulevard, on the north by Interstate 290 (I-290) and on the south by Sheridan Drive. The area has been designated as a Federal Opportunity Zone, and many of its non-residential land parcels

have been rezoned in accordance with the Town's mixed-use zoning regulations. The Town envisions the revitalization of the Boulevard Central District (BCD) as a walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented district, with its existing suburban commercial areas retrofitted incrementally over time to more effectively meet contemporary retail commercial demands.

The Town has collaborated with urban designers to formulate redevelopment concepts for several sites, recommendations for transportation enhancements, and improvements to major highways in the area. Concepts and transportation recommendations are described and depicted in more detail in the Boulevard Central District Action Plan (2020). The Action Plan and other materials related to the District are available on the Town's website.

Key issues and opportunities identified for the Boulevard Central District's planning efforts include:

- Employ mixed-use zoning and financial incentives to foster a predictable development review path to encourage investment.
- Redevelop aging traditional plazas and big box retail sites emblematic of suburban retail development through the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Re-imagine a declining suburban mall (Boulevard Mall) into a new mixed-use center with buildings of varying scales, walkable streets and open spaces that serve as hubs of activity and vibrancy for the area.
- Introduce new street connections to provide more ways to circulate, and encourage 'complete street' treatments to enhance mobility.
- Expand market rate and mixed income residential offerings to support future neighborhood vibrancy and a base for area workforce and commercial markets.
- Several major highways traverse the BCD and play a key role in defining its identity. Major arterials such as Niagara Falls Boulevard, Sheridan Drive and Maple Road serve important transportation functions, but their design, physical size and design speeds make them inhospitable to bicycle or pedestrian travel. If the BCD is to transform from an automobile oriented area to a walkable live, work, and shop destination, measures to transform segments of these major highways are necessary.
- The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) is planning a future light rail or bus rapid transit extension corridor that will traverse the BCD. The corridor will connect the three University at Buffalo campuses, downtown Buffalo and the Buffalo waterfront.
- The future transit corridor has three planned enhanced transit stops identified within the BCD. The corridor and stops will feature improved multi-modal transportation mobility and



Niagara Falls Boulevard



Boulevard Shopping Center



Sweet Home Road



Harlem Road and Sheridan Drive



Senior Housing



Boulevard Towers



Meyer Road Senior Apartments



Imperial Drive and Windsor Avenue



Station 12



Emerson Drive and Manser Drive



Recreation field behind the Middle School



Eggerstville Community Park

Boulevard Central District Focal Planning Area - Existing Conditions



support mixed use centers by allowing greater connectivity within and outside of the BCD.

The Town and other agencies have undertaken several planning initiatives to advance the revitalization of the BCD:

- The Town has prepared a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) to determine potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of new development under the mixed-use zoning regulations. Two advantages of the GEIS are to anticipate potential impacts and mitigation measures, and to serve as the basis for the developer's required environmental review. By accepting the Town's environmental review findings, the developer may pay pre-determined mitigation costs. This approach provides the development community predictability and the Town assurance that impacts can be mitigated. Future potential impacts identified through the preparation of the environmental impact statement and application of mitigation fees include:
  - Transportation impacts that result in impacts to various road intersections and road segments that may require improvements.
  - Impacts to utilities – projected growth will impact existing potable water distribution infrastructure and sanitary sewer infrastructure that may require upgrades.

The GEIS will be an enduring tool to assist with revitalization in the BCD.

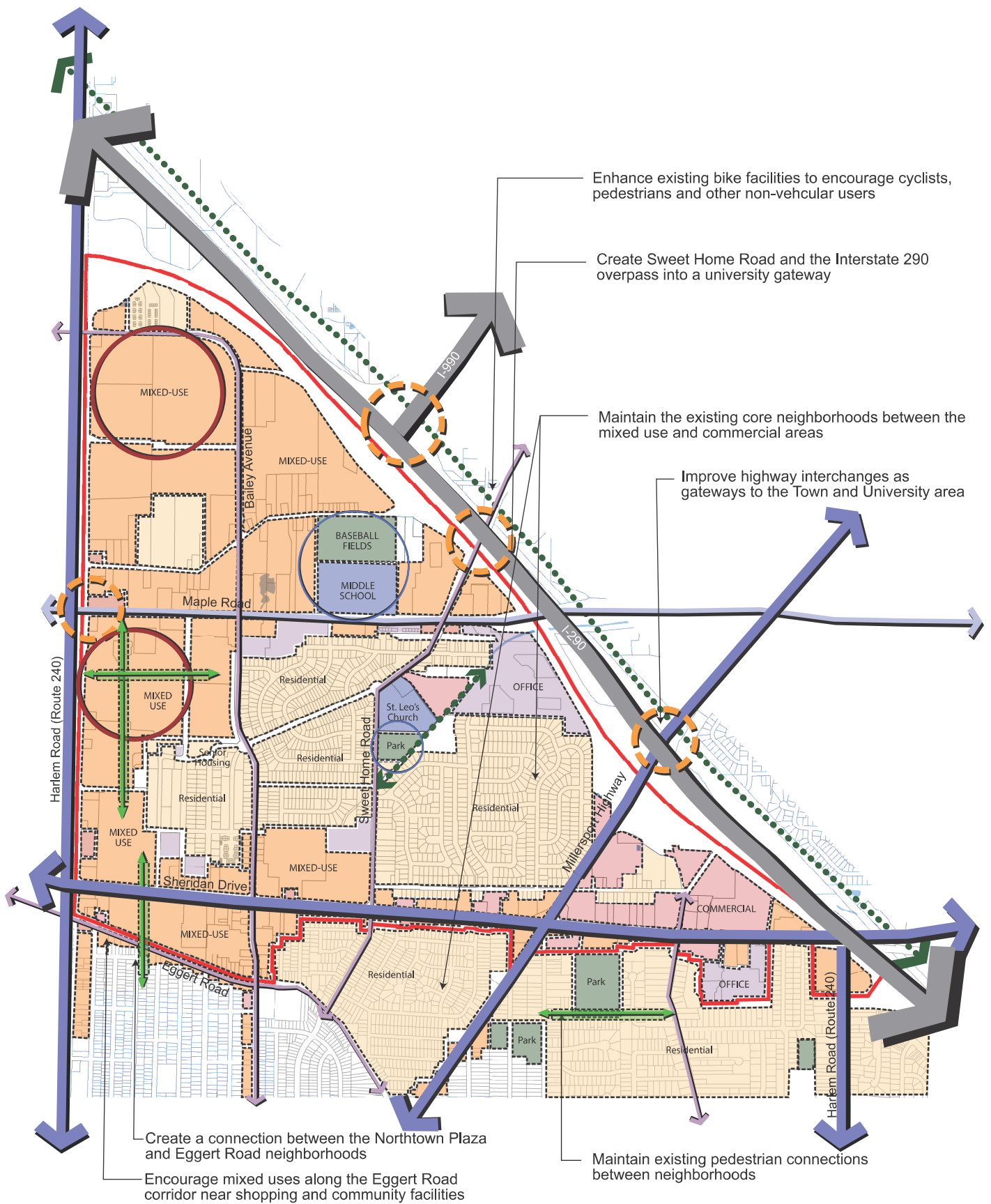
The Town recently adopted new mixed-use zoning regulations. The majority of land within the Boulevard Central District is now CTR-2.5, CTR-5 and CTR-8; these account for 445.41 acres or 88% of the land area. The center mixed-use district regulations require the formation of traditional blocks by introducing internal streets on a north-south and east-west grid pattern and the creation of open space as organizing features. Over time the large expanses of existing land developed for big box retail and its parking spaces will be reshaped into a traditional block structure with greater connectivity and opportunities for pedestrian mobility and social gathering.

- The Boulevard Central District area is located within Census Tract 92, which has been designated as a Federal Opportunity Zone, making qualified development projects eligible for certain incentives. These Zones are a tool designed to spur economic development and job creation in distressed communities. Under certain conditions, investors and developers may be eligible for preferential tax treatment.

### 10.7.2 Concept Plan and Strategies

The Town has established a vision for future development in the Boulevard Central District. The vision proposes a walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented district, with its existing commercial areas retrofitted over time. In addition, adopted building standards promote objectives such as improved visual character. The Plans and conceptual renderings shown in Figures 33 and 34 illustrate what the Boulevard Central District could become.

- Several concept plans illustrate how incremental change could occur. Concepts for sites are illustrated in Figure 34 for the following areas:
  - The northwest corner of Maple and Sweet Home Roads (Maple Ridge Center)
  - Bailey Avenue and Ridge Lea Road (Ridge Lea)
  - The northwest corner of Sheridan Drive and Sweet Home Road (Sheridan Center)
  - The Boulevard Mall site
- Streets play a significant role in shaping redevelopment, and the existing context can be reshaped by introducing a new, more connected street network framed by building frontages that creates an environment with smaller, walkable blocks. Public open spaces such as parks and community gathering places are integrated into the overall pattern of development. Enhanced transit travels along tree-lined multi-modal thoroughfares. A future conceptual street network is illustrated in Figure 34.
- The District's large blocks and limited alternatives for circulation result in the need for extra-wide streets and an auto-oriented street design that is counter to Town goals for pedestrian safety and connectivity of other modes (such as transit, bicycles and other micro-mobility devices). Introducing new street connections on future redevelopment sites provides more ways to circulate.
- The design of streets should be guided by the overall vision for the future land use and urban design. Streets should be "Complete Streets" that support a safe environment and network connectivity for users of all modes (walking, biking, driving and transit).
- The rights-of-way for Niagara Falls Boulevard, Maple Road and Sweet Home Road may need to be adjusted to accommodate transit and appropriately-sized sidewalks and bikeways that should be separate from moving vehicles. The Town should coordinate with NFTA on the sizing and configuration of transit facilities to confirm that the right-of-way needed to ensure ultimate street design accommodates all users. This includes the southeastern corner of Maple Road and Niagara Falls Boulevard as a potential future transit station



## University Focal Planning Area - Concept Plan

December 2020

Figure 33

Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan

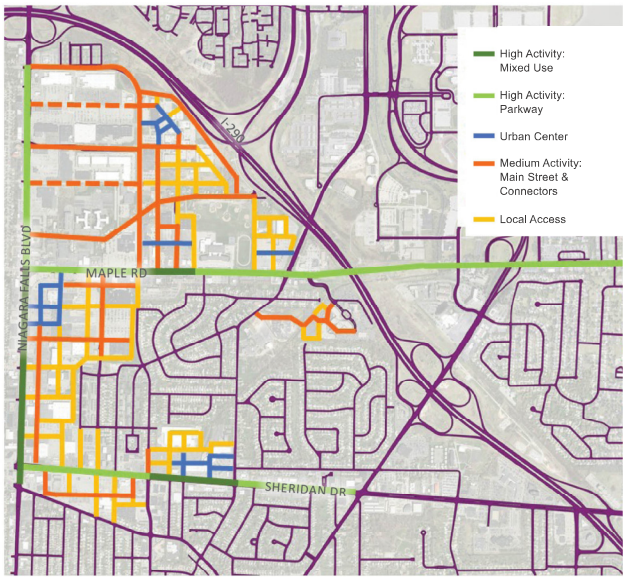
### LEGEND

- Expressway
- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Neighborhood Connector
- Recreational Trail
- Boulevard Central District

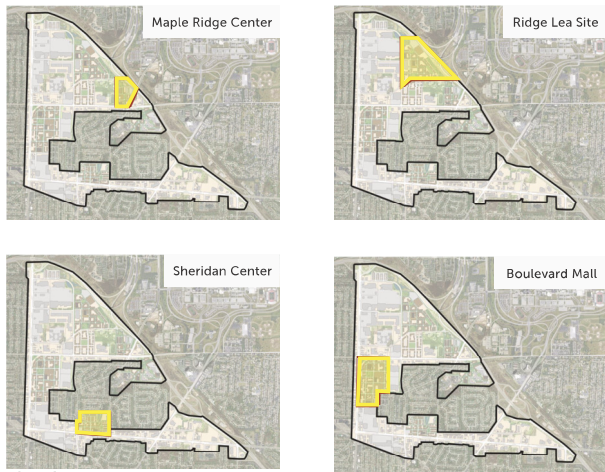
- Institutional Use / Research / Office
- Stabilize and maintain existing residential fabric
- Business / Commercial Area
- School / Community College / University of Buffalo
- Park / Green Space
- Mixed-Use Development

- Gateway
- Neighborhood anchor / community service
- Regional commercial center





Street network



New mixed-use areas



Mixed-use Town Center



Street treatment: facades, planting, lighting, art, site furniture and park space

or multi-modal interconnection point for transportation infrastructure.

- To fully realize the development potential of the District the Town will have to pursue some major infrastructure projects. The Town must continue its emphasis on reducing inflow and infiltration (I/I) in existing sewers. Sanitary sewer capacity needs to be upgraded and diversion facilities may be necessary. Water lines will have to be replaced to improve network pressures and flow. The Town will need to use a combination of its capital improvement program, mitigation funds, its I/I relining program and grant funding to make these improvements.
- To capitalize on investments in transit and infrastructure, and implement the multi-modal, connected vision for this part of Town, a parkway design is envisioned for Maple Road that extends east to the area of the proposed Amherst Central Park. Maple Road is a 5-lane auto-oriented street that can be unsafe and uncomfortable for pedestrians and bicyclists. A multi-modal design should be implemented on the segment of Maple Road between Sweet Home Road and Ellicott Creek providing a better approach to the park site that could be extended further east.
- Increased residential development with a variety of market offerings are necessary in the District to ensure success of the desired transformation and support the preferred commercial and office markets, plus serve anticipated workforce demands. Mixed use developments with residential upper floors, condo complexes, and multifamily complexes providing mixed-income units, interspersed with lower-density townhomes, can provide the variety of housing offerings necessary to serve the neighborhood.
- Redevelopment of the BCD will require successful public-private cooperation and financing. The Town must work with public entities such as New York State, Erie County and public authorities to make needed improvements to infrastructure. The Town and Amherst Industrial Development Agency must also work with developers, financial institutions and the State's economic development agencies to identify strategic investments and key catalytic projects that advance the Town's vision for revitalization of the area.

## Visualizing Incremental Change

Revitalization and redevelopment of large commercial sites in the District are expected to occur incrementally through public and private efforts, the largest of which is the Boulevard Mall site.

Changing retail formats and consumer shopping habits have made large indoor malls less successful or obsolete.

The Boulevard Central District Action Plan and Figure 34 illustrations model how recently adopted zoning and transportation infrastructure can guide incremental change leading to significant transformation. Figure 34 specifically includes an illustrative example of how change might occur at the Mall site (illustrations 1-4). Mixed-use zoning districts establish standards and set rules to meet the preferred transformation through:

- A network of pedestrian-oriented streets
- A variety of building uses of varying height and placement
- Public open spaces
- Different parking locations and quantities
- Standards that can deliver a walkable mixed-use environment
- Introduction of enhanced transit service

Incremental redevelopment of the Boulevard Mall site will need coordinated actions among property owners and consideration of timing for portions of the Mall and its outparcels to be replaced. Timing and implementation of enhanced transit on Niagara Falls Boulevard and Maple Road could also play a key role. (*Amended 12-14-20; BCPA-2020-03*)

