

Supervisor Brian Kulpa's April 2022 Column



When I first took office, I immediately recognized that we needed to invest in the west side of Town. This required placing together a lot of puzzle pieces to make a complete image. From updating underground infrastructure to redesigning busy streetscapes, the Town has been focusing on improving West Amherst.

The piece of the puzzle that you don't often see is sanitary and storm sewer upgrades. It's not the most exciting project, but definitely one of the most critical. By improving drainage, we protect people, homes and businesses, roadways, the environment, etc. The Town, through the Engineering Department, has prioritized funding to tackle several issues in the Eggertsville area, including Carmen Road and Hendricks Boulevard storm sewer improvements. We also invested in projects to improve sanitary sewer capacity in the Eggertsville area with the Westside Interceptor Diversion Project and North Bailey/Ridge Lea sanitary sewer project. These improvements address chronic issues in this section of Town and allow for future development potential.

A highly visible piece has been the planning phase of the Willow Ridge-Parkview Action Plan, which focuses on that section along Niagara Falls Boulevard. Wrapping up a series of public participation events last week, the initial phase of this community planning project had a great response and participants from the residential and commercial communities provided great input on initial design concepts. From developing active recreation and trails to reimaging store fronts, and everything in between, the final plan will serve as a guiding document to define future vision, shape Town policy, and guide implementation actions.

There are several issues within this focus area that both the Town of Tonawanda and Amherst want to address, including disjointed connectivity, pedestrian safety, land use and economic revitalization. By engaging residents and stakeholders, we can construct an enduring civic infrastructure to guide and sustain community redevelopment for years to come.

Another Action Plan that was completed is the Boulevard Central District Action Plan, just south of the Willow Ridge-Parkview project. We took a look at the fact that this section of town exhibits typical, outdated suburban development. Think: big box development and a sea of surface parking lots. These models aren't succeeding. We also looked at the sparse network of street thoroughfares (including Niagara Falls Boulevard, Maple Road, Sweet Home Road, Bailey Avenue, and Sheridan Drive) carrying all of the area traffic. Safety

concerns have come to the forefront due to recent vehicle/pedestrian accidents on Niagara Falls Boulevard; interim safety solutions such as improved crossings, lighting and signals, connecting missing sidewalks, and educational efforts are underway. Implementing further suggestions from that plan will be ongoing.

Finally, the new Northwest Amherst Community Center on North Pointe Parkway is a big piece of the whole puzzle. In partnership with the Town's Youth and Recreation Department and Sweet Home School District, we are bringing a much-needed center to this section of Town. Watch for announcements about upcoming open house events to see the new space and learn about upcoming programming.

The West Amherst puzzle is not yet complete, but the pieces are fitting together nicely and we will soon see a greatly improved region of our Town by addressing the many sins of our past and bringing infrastructure and land use into a modern design.