

Town of Tonawanda

2014 Comprehensive Plan Update

January 2015



Town Board Public Hearing – May 4, 2015

Purpose of the Comp Plan

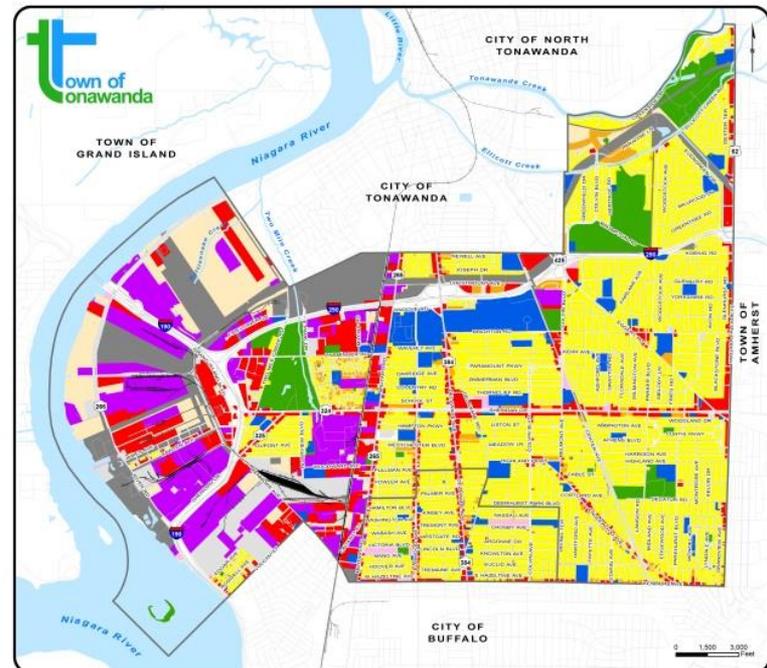
- The Comprehensive Plan serves as a blueprint for future development
- The Comprehensive Plan is the basis for zoning decisions
- The Comprehensive Plan identifies priority projects for the next 10 to 15 years to achieve community goals
- The 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update incorporates the findings and recommendations of recent planning studies.

Purpose of the Comp Plan

The Town's Roadmap for the Future

Guides Town policies and decisions related to:

- Population Changes
- Economic Development
- Housing Needs
- Environmental Resources
- Public Infrastructure Projects
- Walkability, Connectivity and Trail Systems
- Public Transportation and Roads
- Recreation and Town Services
- Land Developments



Background

- Original Plan 1955
- Updated in 1960
 - The Town Boards were "planning conscious" long before they had a Planning Board.*
- Continuous strategic planning efforts
- 2003-5 new Comprehensive Plan
- 2014 Update

Background

- 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update
 - Considers recent zoning and area plans since
 - Old Town Neighborhood Plan and Rezoning
 - Adult Uses rezoning
 - Solar Farm and Solar installation zoning
 - Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area - Step 1
 - Local Waterfront Revitalization Program updated
 - Tonawanda Waterfront Land Use Plan Update
 - Tonawanda Parks and Recreation Master Plan
 - Delaware Avenue and Commercial Corridors Rezoning
 - Sheridan Parkside Village Redevelopment Plan
 - North Youngmann Commerce Center

Steering Committee

- Steering Committee – established October 2013
 - Town Board:
 - Bargnesi and Emminger
 - Planning Board:
 - Frank, Morris, Swanekamp and Uminski
 - School Boards:
 - Day, Mondanaro and Mirand
 - Department Representatives:
 - Dimmig, Hartz, Jones, Kaiser and Wiles
- Nine meetings between October 2013 and December 2014
- Planning Board updates, review and recommendation

The Process

- Kick-Off, Review Previous Documents
- Inventory and Mapping
- Visioning, Goals & Objectives
- Public Information Meeting
- Analysis, Findings and Recommendations
- Public Focus Meeting
- Implementation Strategy
- Preliminary Draft / Generic EIS
- Committee Accepts and Sends to Planning Board
- Planning Board Review and Recommendation
- SEQR Coordinated Review and 239 Referral
- Public Hearing / Adoption

Vision and Goals

“Where we want to be”

- The 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update is centered on an updated Vision Statement and Goals & Objectives
- The Vision Statement and goals from the 2005 Plan were revised based on the findings and public input
- Updated goals were organized under **themes**:
 - Building a Sustainable Community
 - How We Live
 - Environmental Stewardship
 - Where We Work
 - How We Move
 - Services We Need to Live, Work and Play
 - Public Policy

Visioning and Goals

- Updated Community Vision:

“To improve quality of life and create a vibrant and sustainable community in which the environmental, social, economic, built and human capital collectively make the Town one of the most attractive suburbs in Erie County and New York State, through strategic improvements to natural resources, neighborhoods and housing, commercial and industrial buildings and sites, and essential infrastructure, services and amenities”.

Where We Want To Be

- Goals

Building a Sustainable Community

- Goal 1: Maintain the safety, high quality of life, public health and sustainability of our community

Stewardship of the Environment

- Goal 2: Support the preservation of environmental features and the continued remediation of former waste sites

How We Live

- Goal 3: Maintain and enhance the vitality of neighborhoods and neighborhood centers, and retain a diverse stock of residential properties that meets the needs of all residents

Where We Work

- Goal 4: Promote smart, sustainable and well-planned economic development opportunities

Where We Want To Be

- Goals

How We Move

- Goal 5: Promote a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system

Services We Need to Live, Work, and Play

- Goal 6: Ensure coordinated, high quality, well-maintained and cost effective facilities and services that are required by residents and businesses in a sustainable community

Public Policies

- Goal 7 – Enhance the efficiency and efficacy of Town government and planning, and strive to improve interaction with other communities and agencies

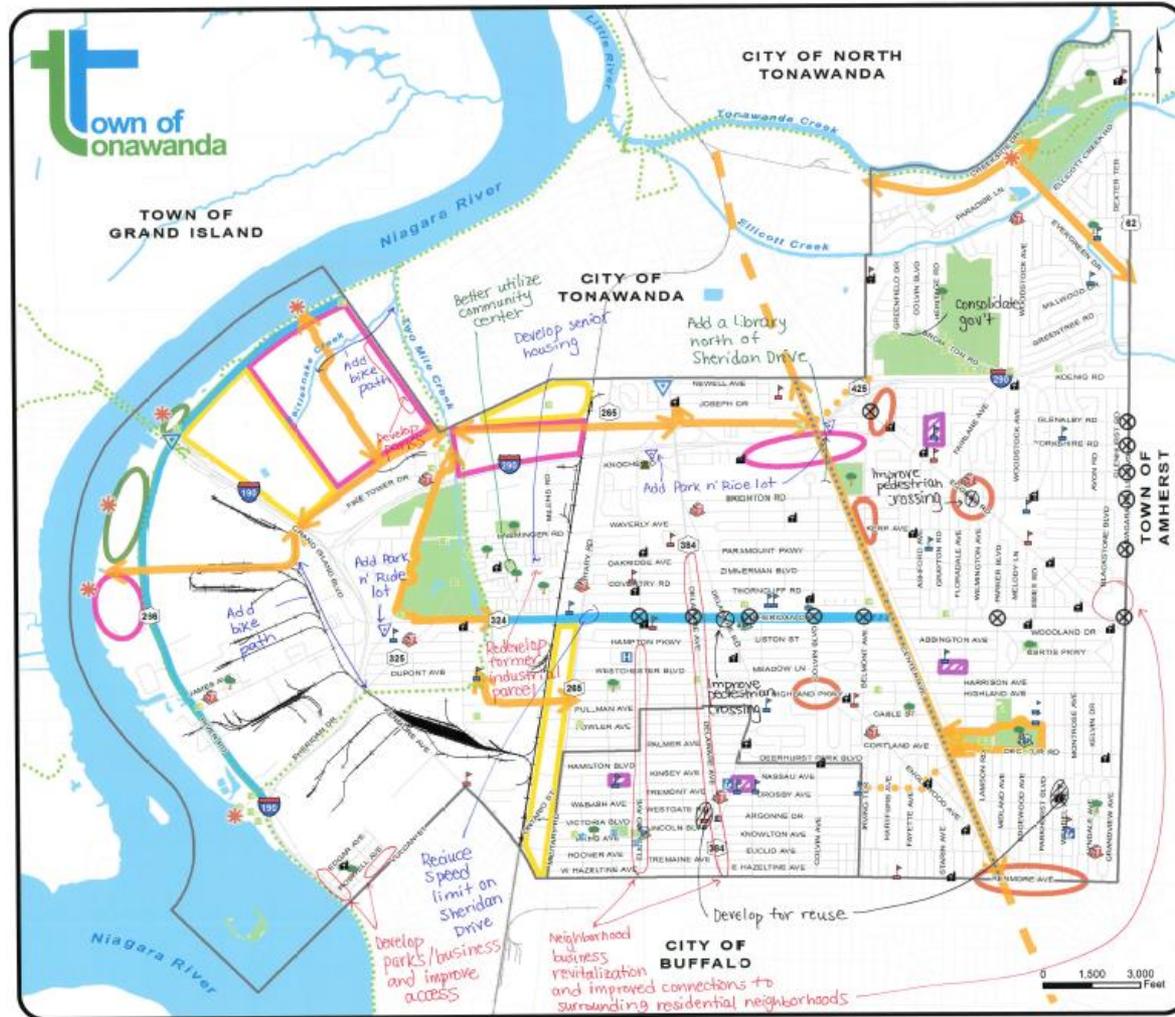
Public Participation:

- Public Information Meeting
 - November 26, 2013

- Public Focus Meeting
 - April 22, 2014

- Town Board Public Hearing
 - May 4, 2015

Public Focus Meeting



PUBLIC FOCUS MEETING
APRIL 22, 2014
TOWN OF TONAWANDA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

- PRELIMINARY VISION MAP:**
- ⊗ Improved Pedestrian Crossing
 - ▽ Proposed Park n' Ride Lot
 - ★ Improved Waterfront Access
 - "Complete Streets" Treatment
 - ↔ New Trail Connection
 - ⋯ Neighborhood Connection
 - Build Out of Business Park
 - Industrial/Commercial Revitalization & Brownfield Redevelopment
 - Neighborhood Business Revitalization
 - Parks Development
 - Reuse of Closed School

Bike + Pedestrian safety

- People need to feel safe using bike paths.
- Provide communication points along paths.

Need a balance between environmental concerns and industrial development.

- Enviro. concerns cannot drive away industry.
- Industry must work on air quality, noise, and dumping issues.
- Residential areas should not be built next to industrial sites.

more regulations for absentee landlords to keep up the quality of neighborhoods.

Legend

Water	Multi Use Trail	Trans Facility	Proposed	Senior Center
Road	Trail	Fire Station	Police Station	Day Facility
Railroad	Swimming	Police Station	Police Station	Day Facility
Municipal Boundary	Swimming	Police Station	Police Station	Day Facility
Park	Swimming	Police Station	Police Station	Day Facility
	Swimming	Police Station	Police Station	Day Facility



Summary of Findings

“Where we are and Where we have been”

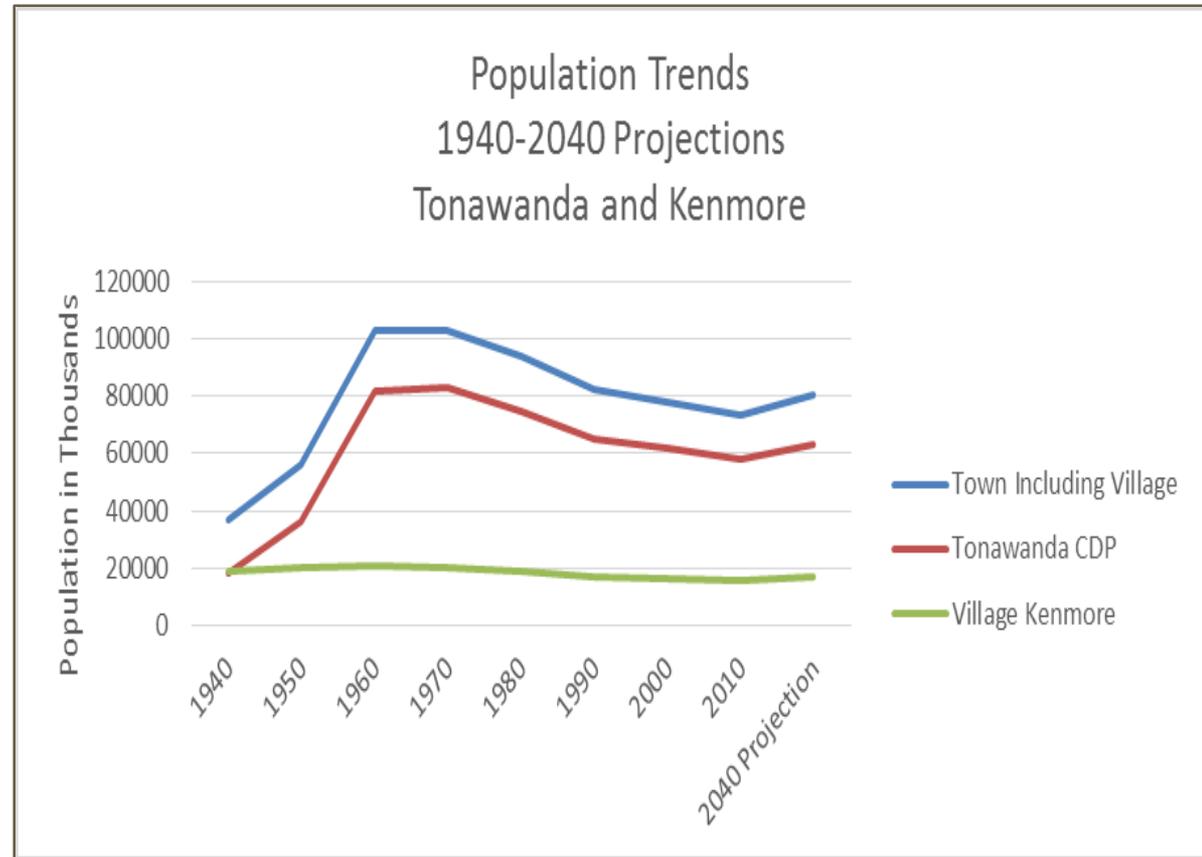
INVENTORY and ANALYSIS lead to FINDINGS:

- Population
- Land Use and Zoning
- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Environmental Stewardship
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Community Facilities
- Infrastructure

Findings: Population

- Who We Are

- **2010:** 73,567
Town 58,144
Vil.: 15,423
- **2000–2010:**
6% decrease
- **2040:**
projected
increase of
approximately
9% to 80,580



Findings: Population

- Who We Are

- The number of households has increased but the average household size has decreased to 2.27 persons
- 40% of all households in the Town are single-person households
- Median age is 43.1 years (higher than the Erie County median age of 40.4 years)
- The number of residents under 18 and over age 65 is decreasing
- The proportion of non-elderly adults (ages 18 to 64) is increasing (from 56% to 62% in 2000)

Findings: Our Community

- Land Use and Zoning

- Land use patterns have remained relatively unchanged
- The Town has two distinct areas:
 - West of Military Road: Industrial/Waterfront
 - East of Military Road: Residential and Commercial
- Zoning is the primary means of regulating land uses in the Town
- New Zoning Districts since 2005:
 - Along commercial corridors
 - Waterfront Priority District

Findings: Housing and Neighborhoods



- Majority of housing stock is in good condition and well-maintained.
- Existing Housing Serves:
 - Seniors who prefer to age in place
 - Empty nesters who want to downsize
 - First time homebuyers who want to be close to the City
 - Young families with children



Findings: Housing and Neighborhoods

- Existing housing remains desirable – with a 1% vacancy rate
- There is a rising demand for larger homes for growing families, as well as a trend to remodel and expand existing homes
- Median value of owner-occupied homes in the Town was \$113,500 in 2012 (versus \$123,400 in Erie County)
- Average sale price of housing (2013): \$120,405

Findings: Environmental Resources

- Water Resources
 - Niagara River
 - Tonawanda Creek
 - Ellicott Creek
 - Two Mile Creek and Rattlesnake Creek
- Niagara River and tributaries provide opportunities for public recreation and waterfront access
- Floodplains
 - FEMA Floodplain maps were created in 1981
 - An update is pending
- Wetlands
 - Improve water quality, attenuate flooding, create habitat
 - Regulated at the State and Federal level



Findings:

Environmental Opportunities

- Brownfields/Inactive Hazardous Waste Sites
 - Industrial legacy has left some environmentally-constrained properties
 - Many sites have been investigated and cleaned up, and are ready for redevelopment
 - Brownfields Opportunity Area (BOA) studies are in progress, and will provide:
 - Inventory of vacant, underutilized or abandoned sites
 - Redevelopment plan that meets each site's potential
 - Continued monitoring and clean up of brownfield properties is essential for successful redevelopment

Findings: Economic and Business Development

- Diverse workforce
- Median household income: \$52,300 in 2009
- There are many modern, well-maintained business properties in the Town
- There is a stable base of major private sector employers
- Commercial development is situated in a strip pattern – and in neighborhood nodes
- There are some commercial and industrial properties that are under-utilized

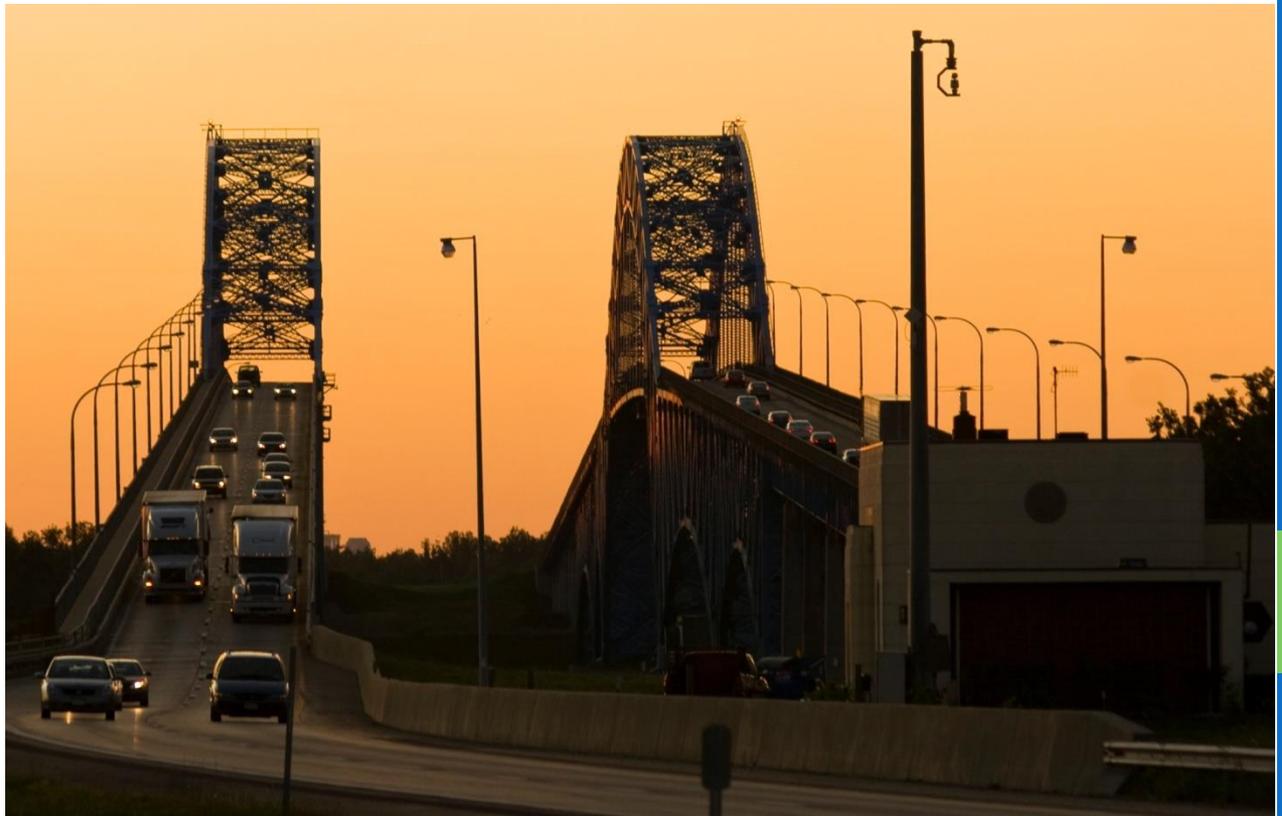
Findings: Economic and Business Development

- New Commerce/Industrial Parks:
 - Praxair Technology Campus
 - Colvin Woods Business Park
 - Riverview Solar Technology Park
 - North Youngmann Commerce Center



Findings: Transportation

- Strong roadway and highway network in place
- Good access to major arterials and the interstate highway system



Findings: Transportation

- Good access to public transit service
- NFTA is studying alternative options to enhance rapid transit service
- Bike and pedestrian trail network is an important asset. Projects underway will eliminate gaps



Findings: Transportation

- Pedestrian bridge over Sheridan Drive requires repair to meet safety standards
- There are opportunities for to improve linkages in multi-use trail system
- There are neighborhoods where walkability and connections to adjacent services can be improved
- There is a need for certain roadways in the Town to better accommodate additional modes of travel. Plan introduces “complete streets” and “road diets”

Findings: Community Facilities and Infrastructure

- Good water supply system with no major capacity issues
- The Town is undertaking efforts to address aging infrastructure with sanitary sewer overflows and infiltration and inflow into the sanitary sewer system
- The Town is undertaking efforts to address drainage problems in the community

Findings: Community Facilities and Infrastructure

- The Town offers a variety of services and programs for seniors and youth
- Over 700 acres of parkland
 - including 300 acres in golf courses
- Many recreational and community amenities including:
 - Pool complexes
 - Golf courses
 - Ice rinks
 - Senior Center
 - Sheridan Parkside Community Center



Key Recommendations

“How Do We Get There”

Tied to the themes identified in the Goals and Objectives:

Building a Sustainable Community –

- Keeping programs and services aligned with demographic trends,
- Redeveloping the waterfront,
- Zoning revisions for better land use management

How We Live “Neighborhoods and Housing” –

- Maintaining “complete” neighborhoods
- Improving access, walkability and connections to nearby commercial and activity centers

Key Recommendations

“How Do We Get There”

Tied to the themes identified in the Goals and Objectives:

Stewardship of the Environment –

- Continue clean up of brownfields
- Coordinate with State and Federal agencies on air, soil and water quality issues
- Optimize open space preservation in Site Plan Review

Where We Work: Business Environment and Economic Base –

- Strengthen commercial / industrial (re)development
- Revitalizing neighborhood business districts
- Improve access to development areas (ped./car/bus)

Key Recommendations

“How Do We Get There”

Tied to the themes identified in the Goals and Objectives:

How We Move “Transportation” –

- Complete Streets Policy
- Trails and improved connections
- Improved pedestrian accommodations and walkability

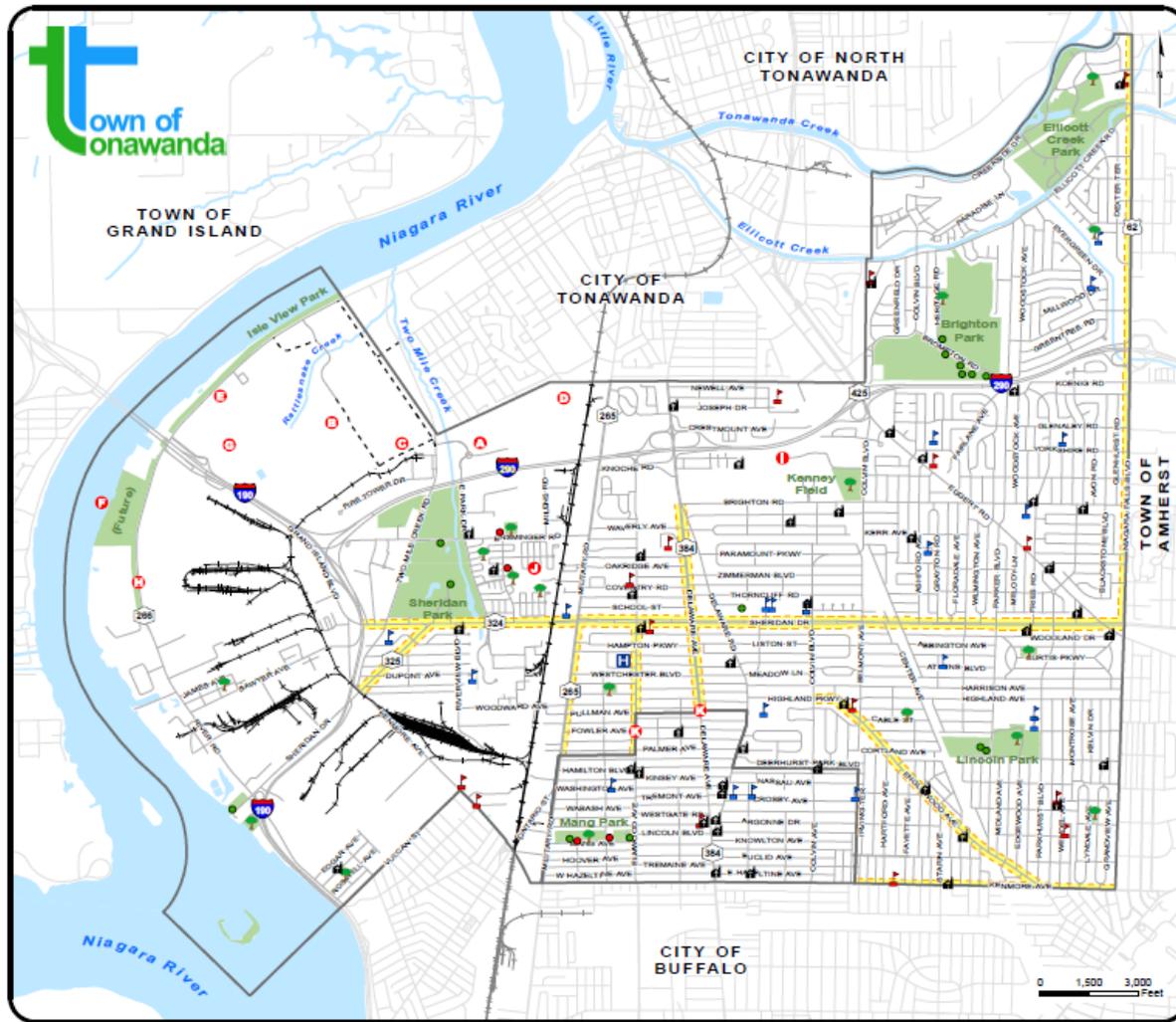
Services We Need to Live, Work and Play –

- Waterfront access
- Assess services and needs to provide quality amenities
- Roadway and drainage improvements

Public Policies and Cooperation –

- Improve cooperation and coordination

IMPLEMENTATION



**MAP 12
PROJECTS**
TOWN OF TONAWANDA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2014
OCTOBER 2014

Legend

- Water
- Proposed New Road
- Road
- Railroad
- Municipal Boundary
- Park
- Commercial Corridor

Town Facility:

- Community Facility
- Recreation Facility
- Hospital
- Playground
- Religious
- School (Private)
- School (Public)

Recommendations:

- Business/Industrial Park at North Youngmann Commerce Center
- Build-out of New Office/Light Industrial Park at Riverview Solar Technology Park
- Continue Riverwalk Parkway to connect to Two Mile Creek Road
- Re-use of the Town Landfill for a recreational use
- Niagara River Greenway: Continued improvements to the Riverwalk, River Road Corridor, and other trails in the waterfront area
- Cherry Farm Park & River Front Park
- Mixed use development near Grand Island Bridges
- Small business redevelopment in River Road Corridor between Grand Island Boulevard and Sheridan Drive
- Continue build-out of Colvin Woods
- Sheridan Parkside Village
- Support Village shopping district - use appropriate zoning and design standards for a "Main Street" setting
- Commercial Corridor: Access management standards, corridor zoning, and other techniques to help reduce congestion and improve appearances along commercial corridors

NOTES AND/OR SOURCES:

Project No. 2885.1
 Square
 Town of Tonawanda

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IMPLEMENTATION

- Land Use and Zoning
 - LU-3: Initiate a comprehensive review and amendment of the Zoning Ordinance to incorporate a schedule of uses and landscaping, parking, site design guidelines and other aesthetic standards.
 - LU-5: Adopt a new “Community Facilities” zoning district to encompass all lands currently designated Schools-Park-Cemetery.
 - LU-7: Initiate zoning studies for amendments (use, standards and districts) for the Sheridan and Niagara Falls Boulevard commercial corridors .

IMPLEMENTATION

- Waterfront
 - W-1: Adopt and Implement the recommendations of the 2014 Waterfront Land Use Plan.
 - W-4: Incorporate the River Road Zoning Overlay district design standards into a new Waterfront Mixed Use zoning classification.
 - W-6: Acquire Cherry Farm Park property and develop as a recreation amenity.

IMPLEMENTATION

- How We Live – Neighborhoods and Housing
 - N-1: Address “problem properties” through land banking and/or adherence to Town regulations.
 - N-2: Continue to focus on revitalizing low and moderate income neighborhoods.
 - N-5: Collaborate with owners of key neighborhood assets (schools, churches, institutions, etc.) to plan for potential future closure or re-use.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Stewardship of the Environment
 - E-1: Continue to remediate and reuse contaminated sites.
 - E-2: Inventory existing regulated wetlands for priority development areas.
 - E-10: Collaborate on a strategic plan to address the potential closure of large industrial facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Workforce and Business Environment
 - ED-1: Complete construction, and market the North Youngmann Commerce Center.
 - ED-5: Prepare a Marketing Package to enhance the Town image and attract businesses.
 - ED-8: Require adequate parking and pedestrian access, and landscaping along edges and within commercial parking lots.
 - ED-12: Encourage private investment in neighborhood businesses through loan programs and/or targeted community development funding.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Transportation – Highways and Traffic
 - H&T-1: Implement the River Road Streetscape Improvements.
 - H&T-7: Study and implement roadway improvements including “road diets”.
 - H&T-10: Develop a comprehensive sidewalk connectivity plan to identify gaps and necessary upgrades, including ADA compliance.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Transportation – Connectivity and Complete Streets
 - C&C-1: Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.
 - C&C-4: Brighton Park Connector- design and construction to link Brighton Park with Tonawanda Rail Trail, Crestmont Trail and Ellicott Creek Park Trail.
 - C&C-8: Provide/improve pedestrian and bicycle accommodations to increase connectivity of neighborhoods with retail areas and the waterfront.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Services We Need to Live, Work and Play
 - L-2: Prepare a Capital Improvements Plan and coordinate infrastructure project planning and design for all projects within the public right-of-way.
 - L-6: Improve Aqua Lane Park to increase and expand recreational usage.
 - L-8: Evaluate attendance/usage and operating costs to determine the fiscal feasibility for maintaining recreational amenities and facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Policies and Cooperation
 - P-1: Collaborate with the school districts to better assess trends and changes in the community.
 - P-3: Continue to coordinate with the Village of Kenmore for infrastructure services, fees and capital improvements.
 - P-8: Work with City of Buffalo and Village of Kenmore to establish Delaware Avenue as a “Main Street”, by encouraging development that brings physical upgrades and creates economic development.

Next Steps –

- Steering Committee Accepts Plan
- Planning Board Resolution Recommending Adoption to TB
- SEQR Environmental Review
- County Section 239 Referral
- Town Board Public Hearing
- **Adoption**

Thank You!

