

## **A. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

As a result of the public input process, a series of general goals and objectives for the future of the Town of Tonawanda emerged. These goals and objectives represent the “big picture”, and are intended to provide guidance toward the general priorities and issues facing the Town.

### **The Town of Tonawanda will strive to maintain a high quality of life and high level of services for its residents.**

The motto of the Town of Tonawanda is “A Great Place to Live, Work and Play”. It is clear from public input that residents value a high quality of life and expect a high level of town services. It is important to work to preserve a high quality of life in the Town for its residents. Issues related to “quality of life” include:

- Achieve improved maintenance and upkeep of privately owned property
- Maintain the high standards of maintenance at neighborhood parks and other public facilities
- Maintain the high quality of Town services, including highway, waste collection, recreation, police, libraries and other public services.
- Be supportive of school district activities to maintain the high quality of the educational system and schools
- Ensure continued tree maintenance and tree replacement policies in order to preserve community character, quality of life and property values
- Integrate quality of life issues consciously in Town decision-making actions, looking at impacts on local residents as well as on the built and natural environment

### **The Town of Tonawanda will work to ensure the continued vitality of its neighborhoods**

Neighborhoods in Tonawanda help contribute to the character of the Town. They provide a sense of community, and neighborhood schools, parks and business areas contribute to the vitality of the Town and the quality of life for residents. As a Town that is essentially “built-out”, continued improvement and tax base will depend on ensuring the Town’s neighborhoods remain vital and attractive.

- Encourage investment and reinvestment in the existing homes, buildings and neighborhoods in the Town of Tonawanda
- Ensure that local policies and actions encourage activities and actions that make neighborhood shops attractive places for local residents
- Encourage the continued use of schools as neighborhood centers and a source of community identity and pride
- Encourage the adaptive reuse of underutilized or vacant commercial properties
- Work to keep neighborhood business districts vital, active and attractive
- Encourage private and public actions to improve the appearance of the Town through investment in landscaping and infrastructure such as sidewalks and roadways
- Encourage the development of neighborhood identities through methods such as coordinated activities and neighborhood watch groups
- Establish security provisions that identify risks, establish protective measures and provide for emergency responses coordinated with Countywide actions
- Ensure adequate, efficient public services, such as libraries, parks, recreational activities, police and fire protection, schools and youth and senior services

### **The Town of Tonawanda will encourage a well-maintained, diverse stock of housing that meets the needs of all residents**

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The housing stock in the Town of Tonawanda is generally in good condition. However, there is a need for greater variety in the types of housing available for area residents. This includes both larger, more modern homes for growing families, as well as housing targeted at the growing number of seniors, smaller families and non-traditional households in the Town.

- Encourage the provision of a greater variety of housing styles and types to accommodate a wider range of housing preferences, income levels and household types Encourage redevelopment that enables the provision of a wider variety of housing types, styles and sizes.
- There are no large residential building lots- need “step-up housing”
- Maintain and protect residential property values.
- Encourage investment in the existing housing stock to maintain its quality.
- Develop housing that is attractive to seniors and empty nesters
- Encourage home improvements and investments in existing homes

**The Town will promote attractive and well-planned economic development opportunities**

Economic development is important to balance the tax base, to provide job opportunities for local residents, and to contribute to the Town’s continued vitality. One asset of the Town of Tonawanda is its large supply of available vacant lands for light industrial and business development. At the same time, it is important to ensure that existing developed areas remain attractive places to do business.

- Establish high standards for development that will minimize negative impacts and ensure a high quality of economic development that will attract potential commercial or industrial users.
- Promote the establishment and growth of new business enterprises.
- Encourage reinvestment in and revitalization of the existing economic base of the Town, including the expansion and improvement of existing businesses.
- Maintain programs and economic development efforts that keep the Town an attractive location for local industries and businesses.
- Capitalize on the Town’s assets, in particular the waterfront area, for new industrial and business development.
- Support the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites.
- Encourage private investment to strengthen existing businesses

**The Town of Tonawanda will promote a safe and efficient transportation system for all modes of transportation**

Transportation and traffic issues have significant impacts on the community, in terms of economic development, quality of life, and community development. There are specific areas where transportation improvements are needed to alleviate traffic congestion or unsafe conditions. There is also support for alternatives to automobile travel, including walking, bicycling and public transit.

- Encourage access management techniques where needed
- Improve and expand opportunities for bicyclists and pedestrians where appropriate
- Support traffic improvements that reduce congestion and promote greater safety
- Work with the surrounding communities, Erie County, New York State Department of Transportation and the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) to coordinate transportation issues and improvements.
- Strive to maintain existing levels of public transportation service, and expand transit opportunities where feasible
- Support continued improvements to rail facilities in the Town

**The Town of Tonawanda will support increased intermunicipal cooperation where appropriate**

The Erie-Niagara region is increasingly recognizing the importance of intermunicipal and regional cooperation. The Town of Tonawanda influences and is influenced by the Village, the adjoining communities, the school districts and the County. These interrelationships present certain limitations, but also represent a source of opportunity for improved planning and cooperation. It is critical to consider the adjacent communities—especially Kenmore, but also the City of Buffalo, the City of Tonawanda and the Town of Amherst—in planning efforts by the Town.

- Investigate areas where shared services and/or costs between two or more communities are appropriate, and encourage joint efforts in these areas.
- Work cooperatively with the County in regard to economic development efforts
- Promote intermunicipal cooperation and coordination with the Village of Kenmore, adjacent communities and Erie County.
- Encourage greater collaboration and coordination of efforts with the school districts in the Town.
- Explore the potential for joint public service activities, and participate where benefits result
- Stay involved in regional planning efforts
- Work with local, state and national agencies on issues, such as the Niagara River and the Erie Canal, with regional impact.

**The Town of Tonawanda supports the preservation of environmental features and the continued mitigation of environmental concerns**

Natural resources in the Town of Tonawanda contribute to the character of the Town and provide important environmental benefits. The creeks, the riverfront and the parks and other areas of open space and natural features merit protection. It is also a priority of the Town to remediate environmental issues.

- Support and encourage continued progress toward the clean up of environmental issues
- Encourage the preservation of waterways in the Town, including the Niagara River, Ellicott Creek, Tonawanda Creek and Two Mile Creek, and maintain and improve public access to these assets.
- Provide attractive public parks, riverwalks, streetscapes, linear parks and waterfront facilities that take advantage of the environmental features of the Town.

## B. VISION STATEMENT

These goals stated above represent big picture guidance to the Town and help the visioning process for the community. Based on continued community input, the analysis of the data, and the needs, desires and concerns of the public, a written vision was established for the Town of Tonawanda. This vision for the future sets an ideal goal of how the community will develop over the next 20 years.

### VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE TOWN OF TONAWANDA:

- The waterfront area of the Town will see a revitalization and rebirth of its business base. This area will see improved access (new roads, better access to the interstate system, etc.), continued light manufacturing and office development, improved aesthetics, and a strong re-investment in the existing manufacturing companies.
- Accessibility and public enjoyment of the waterfront region will also continue to grow. The connection of the RiverWalk to other trails, bikeways, businesses and features of the Town will provide tremendous opportunities for the public. Development of Cherry Farm Park and other public access projects, along with supportive commercial development in appropriate areas will also help to bring people to the area.
- The Town will improve its aesthetic image, through streetscape projects along major corridors, enhanced landscaping and design standards and targeted projects designed to increase the attractiveness of the Town. Such projects would include targeted upgrades of commercial centers through façade programs, creation of gateways and/or pocket parks, public artwork and other efforts to improve appearances, upgrade property maintenance standards and encourage continued private sector investment in the Town.
- The Town and Village, through cooperative planning, will see the improvement of the Delaware Avenue, Elmwood Avenue and Kenmore Avenue corridors in and around the Village. Aesthetic improvements, through streetscape projects and improved design standards, will create an overall improved appearance of these areas. With these improvements and through targeting economic development efforts, these areas will serve as important commercial and community backbones for Kenmore and Tonawanda. Cooperative planning efforts with the City of Buffalo for Kenmore Avenue and the Town of Amherst for Niagara Falls Boulevard improvements will also improve the attractiveness and functionality of these corridors.
- The Town will continue to improve walkability and interconnectivity for both automotive and non-automotive traffic. Neighborhoods and important public features will be accessible, and residents will be able to easily walk, bike or drive to local destinations such as parks, schools and neighborhood shopping. The creation of new multi-use trails connecting to the Riverwalk will create an interconnected network of trails that improve access throughout the community, connecting parks, neighborhoods, the Village, commercial centers, schools and other public facilities.
- Niagara Falls Boulevard will continue to be a major commercial destination supporting both the Town of Tonawanda and Amherst, with “big box” style retailers on the Amherst side of the roadway, and smaller, supporting retail and commercial uses on the Town of Tonawanda side. Congestion and traffic problems will be addressed through access management techniques that reduce the number of driveways and encourage shared access between parcels. Aesthetics will be improved with more landscaping and stronger design standards. More creative approaches to site design, including expansion from the rear of properties along Niagara Falls Boulevard may occur.
- Sheridan Avenue will remain the Town’s major east/west corridor, and a commercial center of the Town. Access management initiatives, design standards, and investments in this corridor will help to improve the success of this area. The Town envisions a community focal point in the area of

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Sheridan Avenue and Delaware Avenue. This area, the geographic center point of the Town, will contain a mix of offices, retail, and public uses, with attractive gathering areas to enhance the sense of community. Improved pedestrian crossings across Sheridan Drive, connections to schools and surrounding residential areas, and design standards, will also help to create a sense of place.

- Sheridan Drive between Parkside Avenue and Two-Mile Creek will be redeveloped to become more of a community focal point supporting the Sheridan Parkside and Riverview neighborhoods, and improving the image of the Town and capitalizing on the presence of the Sheridan Park golf course.
- Neighborhood retail centers, such as the plazas at Brighton/Eggert and Brighton/Colvin, will be attractive commercial centers, accessible to neighborhood residents by car, foot or bike. A mix of uses will be encouraged, with appropriate buffers and screening to minimize negative impacts on surrounding residents. The focus will be on convenience retail uses such as convenience stores, restaurants, and personal services. Façade programs and landscaping/design standards will help ensure they are “good neighbors”.
- Neighborhoods will be re-invigorated by strategic investments in neighborhood facilities, re-establishment of strong neighborhood associations, improved communications, and continued homeowner investments in their properties. All neighborhoods will have a community focal point, such as a park, playground, school or shopping district. To reinforce neighborhood features and improve the quality of life in Tonawanda, neighborhood groups and organizations will become a larger force in decision-making concerning their neighborhoods.
- The Town’s high quality municipal services will continue to be a strong asset of the Town. The Town’s services will adjust to meet the needs of changing demographics, as the demographics of the Town shift towards younger families, but still with a high percentage of seniors.
- Strategic investments in Town water and sewer infrastructure will allow the Town to continue to efficiently provide services to its existing customer base and new customers, while addressing environmental considerations and concerns.
- Housing revitalization will occur in targeted areas, and in certain areas will see housing removed with replacement housing meeting younger family requirements. Sheridan Parkside will be the focus of continued redevelopment for affordable housing, but market-rate housing will also be built as the character of the neighborhood changes. Homeowner improvements and additions to existing housing throughout the Town will help further diversify the housing stock.
- Economic development efforts will invigorate the commercial and industrial areas of the Town. The Town’s strategic location in the region and its excellent interstate highway access via the Youngmann highway will create demand for the large amounts of vacant, developable commercial and industrial lands in the western portion of the Town. With strategic improvements in infrastructure such as access roads, the Town will be a demand community for business investment.
- The Town will solidify an identity as an attractive, convenient, affordable place to live. It will attract younger families that will continue to invest in the Town. Some see the Town creating its own new identity as the Town of “Ken-Ton.”