



Onward Ontario

Town of Ontario, NY Comprehensive Plan Update

[SEPTEMBER 2021 DRAFT]

Acknowledgements

Onward Ontario represents a community-driven planning process, driven by an active and engaged steering committee of dedicated residents and stakeholders with a vested interest in the future of the Town of Ontario.

Leadership in the Town, including the Town Board, has invested significant time and resources in development of this plan, showing a strong commitment to ensuring intentional and thoughtful growth and development, and setting the Town on a course toward a sustainably strong and prosperous future.

The individuals and organizations below provided specific contributions to the development of the plan. Their investment of time, energy, and expertise can be clearly felt throughout elements of the plan. In addition to these specific contributors, hundreds of residents, investors, employers, and visitors to the Town also contributed in a meaningful way to this planning effort.

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Wayne County Department of Social Services
New York State Department of Transportation
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Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Commission

Planning exercises facilitated and community thoughts
aggregated and synthesized by:



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Introduction

The Town of Ontario, New York, is nestled along the picturesque shores of Lake Ontario in the northwest corner of Wayne County, boasting exceptional beauty, history and community resources. Situated just fifteen miles east of Rochester and in close proximity to the cities of Canandaigua and Geneva, the Town offers its 10,302 residents small-town living within a stone's throw of larger markets.

The Town of Ontario Comprehensive Plan update, titled *Onward Ontario*, is a timely revisit of the Town's 2006 Comprehensive Plan. Much has changed since then; new parameters, opportunities and pressures warrant a collective revising of our vision for the future of Ontario. This introductory chapter details the purpose of *Onward Ontario* and provides a summary of relevant prior planning initiatives that helped shape the Plan's recommended strategies.



Purpose of the Plan

The **Onward Ontario** plan is a critical step in shaping the next chapter of the Town's future. Grounded in a foundation of over 50 years of planning efforts commencing with the 1967 Town Master Plan, Onward Ontario is the Town's fourth Comprehensive Plan which defines the vision and lays the groundwork for the community's evolution over the next 15 years. Rooted in the collective values and vision defined through this community planning process, the plan will serve to guide decisions about development, policy and programs that impact Ontario's long-term vitality. This plan will function as a critical framework to guide the work that local officials and Town staff engage in to protect the health, safety and welfare of the community, but it will also provide guideposts to inform the work of civic organizations, not-for-profits, businesses, neighborhood organizations and others that influence quality of life in Ontario.

A Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document, but an advisory tool intended to guide future decision making around funding priorities, development opportunities, zoning text and map amendments, subdivision procedures, and other land use and public realm elements. In New York State, Towns are authorized to undertake long-range planning efforts per NYS Town Law 272-A. The

State loosely outlines the general contents of a comprehensive plan, stating that the "town may include the following topics at the level of detail adapted to the special requirements of the town", which gives Ontario the flexibility to tailor the plan to specific community needs and priorities.

While comprehensive plans are not mandatory in New York State, New York's zoning-enabling statutes require that zoning laws be adopted in accordance with a comprehensive plan, should the community choose to undertake the process. By defining a clear intent for development and growth management, the plan serves as the backbone for the Town's regulatory landscape and should drive decision-making during the review of applications for Site Plan Review, Special Use Permits, Planned Unit Developments, subdivisions, and variances.

As the Town continues to change and grow, it will be critical to review the plan objectives for consistency and alignment with the vision. As a values-based plan, Onward Ontario provides the Town with the flexibility to respond to emerging conditions in an intentional and considered way. Changes or amendments to the plan should not be triggered by a single project, and rather should be updated holistically in response to shifts in land use, environmental and socioeconomic factors. It is recommended that the

plan be revised either in part or its entirety every 10-15 years.

The goals of undertaking the Plan can be summarized as follows:

- To identify our collective core values that make Ontario the place we love.
- To define a unified community vision - our “why” – that is reflective of the community’s collective core values.
- To protect and steward our most valued assets and leverage these resources to address our most pressing challenges.
- To define our priorities for where the Town’s resources should be allocated.
- To provide an organized framework to inform policy decisions over the lifespan of the plan.
- To create an action plan that includes metrics for measuring progress.
- To utilize best planning practices as the basis for future land use mapping and regulatory decision-making.
- To create a high-quality, accessible and user-friendly document carefully crafted by the community it serves.

Previous Plans and Studies

This plan builds upon the Town's most recent Comprehensive Plan (2006), as well as a number of subject-specific studies that the Town has undertaken in the recent past. In addition, this plan is informed by a series of strategic plans conducted at the County and Regional level. Collectively, these prior plans and studies provide foundational insights into the opportunities and challenges that Ontario presently faces:

Town of Ontario's 2006 Comprehensive Plan

This plan identified a series of challenges, opportunities and imperatives in Ontario, many of which remain relevant today:

- Address the lack of diversity in housing types
- Create a sustainable business environment, in part by encouraging the reuse of vacant commercial real estate promoting access to properties along Route 104
- Preserve sufficient farmland and the economic vitality of the Town's agriculture industry
- Address the lack of public access to Lake Ontario, and the lack of sufficient green space more generally

From the adoption of the 2006 Plan, the Town has made substantial progress towards addressing these issues, however, emergent and persisting factors require a renewed effort to navigate many of these imperatives. The Onward Ontario plan builds on these identified issues and offers renewed goals, objectives and recommendations consistent with the community's input and collective vision.

1998 Parks and Recreation 5 Year Plan

The primary objective of this plan was to ensure the preservation and enhancement of adequate greenspace and parkland within the Town. The plan projected future space and facility demands and recommended strategies to finance facility and land development. Several capital projects were recommended in this Plan including an additional community park, and a community center, an enclosed lodge at Casey Park. Each of these capital projects eventually came to fruition and were complemented in later park planning.

2004 Parks and Recreation Survey

A survey was distributed to Ontario residents to ensure current parks and recreation programming was meeting the needs of the community. The 232 respondents provided input on existing parkland and facilities in the Town, and the need for a community center. Eighty-four percent of respondents supported the purchase of additional parkland and 86% of respondents supported the development of a new Community Center. This survey served to guide the Town's continued investment in parks and open space infrastructure.

2016 Parks and Recreation Five-Year Plan

This five-year plan included several recommended capital projects ranging from parkland enhancements to community center expansion. Goals outlined in this plan included capital investment goals, programming goals, parkland development principles, process enhancements, and goals to reduce environmental impact.

2021 Parks and Recreation Five-Year Plan

In 2021, the Town moved toward adoption of an updated five-year master plan for parks facilities, programs, and administration. The plan is rooted in three core principles—fiscal responsibility, environmental

stewardship, and responsiveness to resident needs and vision. The plan seeks to balance opportunities to reinforce and maintain existing assets and create new opportunities for capital improvement. Focus is also provided to diversifying programming, and enhancing/streamlining the administration of program and maintenance efforts.

Wayne County Economic Development Strategic Plan (2006)

Through continued input from businesses, citizens, and government, this plan provided strategic direction for economic growth initiatives in Wayne County. Adopted in 2006, the goals set forth in this plan are continually monitored to ensure continued compliance and progress.

A high-level overview of the goals specified in this plan include supporting existing businesses, promoting targeted industry clusters, assessing and investing in infrastructure, expanding workforce capabilities, promoting entrepreneurship, building effective partnerships, and improving communities through downtown revitalization.

The goals outlined in the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan provide relevant regional context for the Town of Ontario. The recommendations outlined in the Onward Ontario plan work synergistically with the County's vision to support agriculture, promote targeted industry clusters, expand workforce opportunities and revitalize the central business district.

Wayne County Agricultural and Farmland Protection plan (2011)

This plan documented the status of agriculture and farmland in Wayne County and provided recommendations for the preservation of both farming and farmland throughout the county. The plan identified the County's western towns including Ontario, which have the highest concentration of prime farmlands in the County, as under the greatest pressure from suburban development. In particular, the plan highlighted the issue of the County's unique orchard lands located closer to the Lakefront as facing rapidly growing pressure from residential development.

Genesee-Finger Lakes Economic Development District - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) (2016 - 2020)

This report was developed by the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, the nine-county joint Economic Development District that encompasses Wayne County. The CEDS report serves as a living document that profiles the changing conditions of the nine-county region and outlines the details of current priority projects of each County to ultimately strengthen the coordination of economic success of the region as a whole.

The CEDS report breaks down development priorities at the County level. The most current iteration of the report outlines 10 priority projects for Wayne County, two of which are infrastructure projects explicit to the Town of Ontario: 1) Various improvements to water, sewer and road infrastructure, including industrial park sites and 2) the Wayne County Industrial Sustainability Park (WISP). The WISP leverages the generation and distribution of renewable energy as a workforce development tool for the County. The long-term goal of WISP is to create a thriving industrial business environment that synergistically generates and shares renewable energy from thermal,

wind, and solar sources that can meet the energy demands of the park's tenants.

Finger Lakes Forward – Upstate Revitalization Plan (2015)

Finger Lakes Forward is the strategic economic development plan created by the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council (FL REDC). This plan outlines the region's economic strengths and greatest opportunities, identifying targets for investment.

The unique strengths identified in this plan include three industry clusters: 1) optics, photonics and imaging, 2) agriculture and food production, and 3) next generation manufacturing and technology. The report concludes that the long-term development of these industry clusters will be contingent on three "economic-enablers" including addressing workforce development and poverty reduction, promoting entrepreneurship and development, and supporting higher education and research.

Ontario Past + Present

Onward Ontario celebrates the Town's rich, unique history and the context it provides for our present day. While this section includes only a brief snapshot of Ontario's origin story, community members are encouraged to visit the Town of Ontario Historical and Landmark Preservation Society's Heritage Square Museum to get fully steeped in our local history.



The Town of Ontario's position on Lake Ontario was central to both its founding and to its growth as a thriving agricultural community and industrial center. From the Town's very first settlement - a lakefront log cabin settled in 1806 by Freeman Hopkins - the Lake has fueled the community's growth from early on, providing a key access point for the export of the region's goods and a microclimate that secured Ontario as a key player in the Great Lakes' fruit-growing region known as the "Fruit Belt."

The discovery of iron ore in 1811 paved the way for a mining and export industry that employed 200 people at its peak, many of them Irish, Dutch, Belgian and Italian immigrants. Ontario's iron ore industry also tied the town to another agricultural legacy: iron ore from Ontario's mines was exported to paint mills around the country, where it was ground into a powder and made into red barn paint used far and wide.

The historic center of Ontario remains the Brick Church Corners, a mid-nineteenth century crossroads located on Ontario Center Road, one mile south of the lake. The crossroads was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 and presently hosts the Heritage Square Museum.

Ontario has historically served as an important North-South and East-West transit corridor. Major thoroughfares and transit lines have traversed the Town since early on, including the Lake Ontario Shore Railroad (est. 1874), a trolley that traveled between Rochester and Sodus Bay (1900-1929) and presently NY Route 104 (est. 1949). These thoroughfares were formative influences on the Town’s land use development patterns, and NY Route 104 bisects and dominates the community to this day.

The Town of Ontario is one of the most sought-after communities in Wayne County. The Town’s location in proximity to Lake Ontario and the City of Rochester provides access to unique scenic and natural resources and a healthy metropolitan job market.

Median Household Income (MHI) is slightly higher in the Town of Ontario (\$71,846) relative to the County (\$61,225). 5% of the population is below the poverty line, relative to 10% within the County [ESRI, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates]. Geographically speaking, there are demonstrated economic disparities between households north and south of Route 104; on

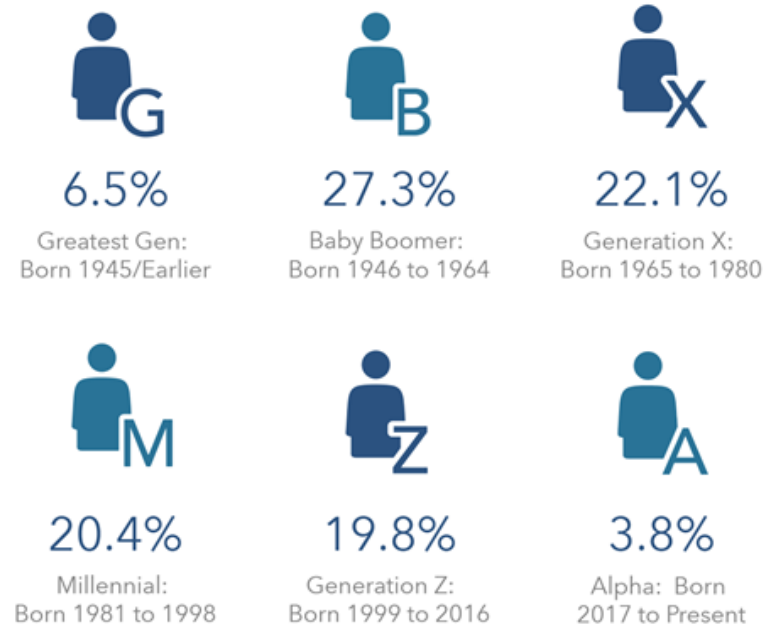
Town of Ontario	Wayne County
 10,302 Population	 92,192 Population
 45.3 Median Age	 43.6 Median Age
 16.2% % Children (Under 15)	 17.0% % Children (Under 15)
 18.0% % Seniors (Age 65 +)	 18.9% % Seniors (Age 65 +)
 \$71,846 2020 Median Household Income (Esri)	 \$61,225 2020 Median Household Income (Esri)
 2.51 Average Household Size	 2.49 Average Household Size
 29.1% % College Educated	 24.0% % College Educated
 9.4% Unemployment Rate	 11.1% Unemployment Rate
 \$173,753 Average Home Value	 \$160,662 Average Home Value
 84.4% % Home Owners	 77.2% % Home Owners

average households south of Route 104 have a significantly lower MHI than those north of Route 104.

The population of Ontario is predominantly White (96.7%), especially in comparison to the County on the whole (86.3%). Nearly half (44%) of Town residents hold a bachelor's degree, compared to 38% of County Residents.

The Town's population trends over the last ten years differ from other rural communities in Upstate New York. While many rural Upstate New York communities have experienced a steadily declining population over the last ten years, due in part to the loss of industry, the Ontario's population has grown slightly over that period at a rate of 1.61% [2010 US Census; ESRI]. The Town's growth over the last decade exhibits some notable characteristics that can inform strategic growth and development opportunities:

The population is aging. The median age of Ontario residents has increased by 7.1%, from 42 in 2010 to 45 in 2020. At 27.3% of the population, Baby Boomers remain the largest age cohort in the Town – which mirrors age distribution in the County. Baby boomers and Gen X'ers comprise the two largest age cohorts within the Town [ESRI].



The makeup of a household is changing: Since 2010, the growth in the number of households within Ontario has outpaced overall population growth, and the number of families. Over the same period, average household size has decreased by 2%. This trend in the makeup of Ontario's households is on par with national trends in small rural communities, and due in part to an increase in empty nesters and to younger generations relocating to stronger job markets. Future housing demand and development opportunities will be determined by the Town's ability to respond to these demographic trends.

Demographic Trends, Town of Ontario

Item	2010	2020	2010 - 2020
Population	10,136	10,302	1.61%
Households	3,960	4,106	3.56%
Families	2,898	2,968	2.36%
Average Household Size	2.56	2.51	-1.99%
Owner Occupied Housing Units	3,328	3,468	4.04%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	630	638	1.32%
Median Age	42.1	45.3	7.06%

Source: 2010 US Census, ESRI

Planning Process

Onward Ontario is intentionally grounded in the community's collective core values and a unified community vision reflective of these values. For this reason, within the planning process significant time and effort was dedicated to engaging the Ontario community in defining these foundational elements and in generating ideas for implementing the vision. To inform specific objectives and to arrive at an action plan grounded in reality, the process also sought out key stakeholders to help identify parameters and constraints that will shape the Town's future.

This engagement and data collection process, summarized below, spanned a 12-month period during which the Covid-19 pandemic was ongoing. The planning process proceeded in accordance with United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and New York State Department of Health (DOH) safety protocols which, for several months at the outset of the process, rendered large in-person gatherings unsafe and infeasible. As a result, the first half of the engagement process was conducted largely on a virtual basis. This "go to them" strategy afforded

opportunities to engage community members who might not have had the time or inclination to attend in-person events, but also presented challenges in facilitating interactive exercises. With a bit of creativity and perseverance, the process was ultimately a robust and engaging experience.

Timeline

- Kick Off
 - September 2020: Steering Committee Kick-off
- Visioning
 - September -December 2020: Steering Committee visioning
 - October 2020: Community Survey launched
 - February – March 2021: Stakeholder Interviews + Roundtable Discussions
 - March 2021: Community Survey closed
 - March 2021: Community Workshops
- Land Use + Action Planning
 - June '21: Community Workshop
 - July '21: Action Planning Survey
- Draft Plan
 - August '21: Draft Plan Released
 - September '21: Presentation to Town Board
 - October '21: Public Hearing / Initiate State Environmental Quality Review Process (SEQR)
- Final Plan
 - November '21: Adoption
 - December '21: Prepare for Implementation

Community Engagement

Steering Committee

The 19-member volunteer Steering Committee served as a driving force behind the Plan. Members attended monthly committee meetings, helped shape community engagement activities and offered feedback on the goals, objectives and action items detailed in the plan. Following plan adoption, the Steering Committee will remain an important vehicle to keep the plan's momentum and to hold the Town accountable in implementing the Comprehensive Plan's initiatives.

Website + Direct Mail

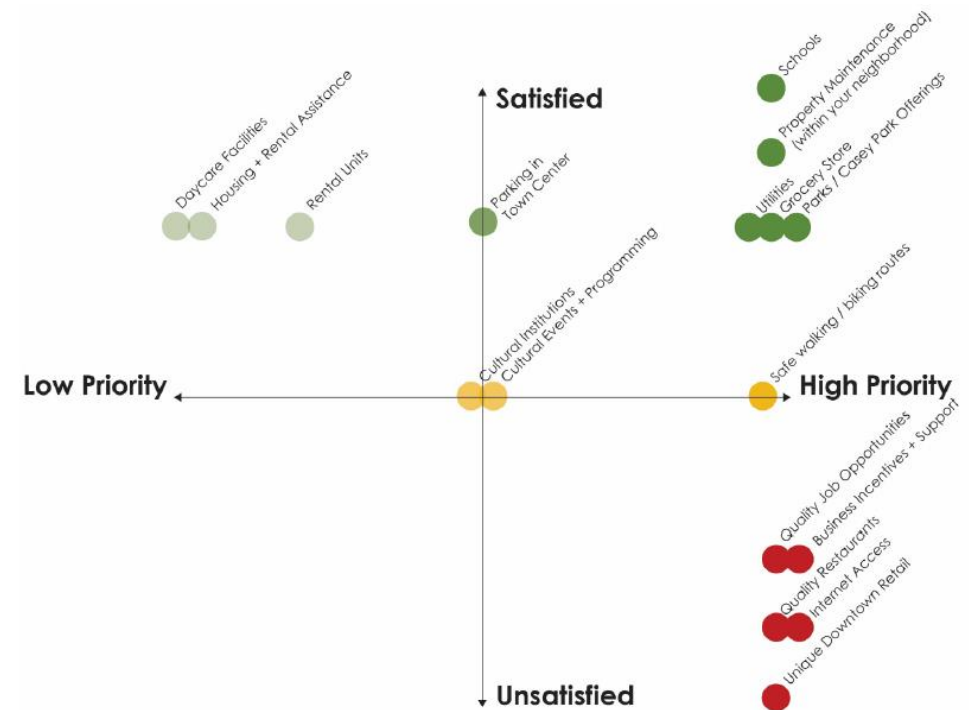
A project website, embedded on the Town's website and promoted on the Town's facebook page, was developed to provide the public with project updates, documents and to host surveys. The Town also published multiple articles in the Town Newsletter, distributed to all Town residents, to engage community members in the planning process.

Community Survey

263 community members participated in a broadly distributed community survey that invited input on community priorities and concerns. Survey questions asked respondents to indicate the importance of, and their satisfaction with, various elements of the Ontario community. Responses were plotted on a spectrum of Low to High Priority, and Unsatisfied to Satisfied, to determine where those priorities are being met and where additional support and resources are needed. The priorities and concerns expressed in this survey informed the discussion topics for the March 2021 virtual workshops. A summary of the survey input is included in this plan's appendix.

Stakeholder Interviews + Roundtable Discussions

The Steering Committee informed the development of a list of community stakeholders that could provide insight on key issues, inform planning parameters, ground truth assumptions and weigh in on potential strategies. These stakeholder groups included staff from local and state government, local business owners, developers and service providers.



March 2021 Virtual Public Workshops

In an effort to foster robust participation while complying with Covid-19 safety and social distancing protocols, the Steering Committee decided to offer the first public workshop as a series of virtual community conversations. The conversation topics were driven by input from the Community Survey, and included:

- *Vibrant Neighborhoods and Local Livelihoods:* Supporting economic development, housing, and downtown revitalization
- *Connect our Community:* Strengthening and diversifying our transportation, cell and broadband networks
- *Lands at Work + Play:* Supporting our Parks, Open Space and Working Farmlands

Using interactive features on Zoom, Participants were asked to participate in a series of thought prompt exercises:

- *Our Reality // Our Vision Lightning Round:* Participants posted one attribute or phrase describing present-day Ontario, and then one attribute or phrase describing the kind of community and place they hope Ontario will be in 2040. A facilitated dialogue followed.

- *Vision Statements:* Participants provided comment on the draft community vision statements prepared by the Steering Committee.
- *Topic Specific Dialogue:* Participants were engaged in a facilitated discussion around community Values, Assets, Challenges and Big Ideas .

These conversations ultimately defined the community's collective core values and vision– the foundational elements of this plan – and generated invaluable insights that formed the basis of this plan's goals and objectives.

June 2021 Public Workshop

A second, interactive public workshop was organized in follow-up to the March 2021 virtual sessions, inviting community members to provide input on the draft community values, vision and goals, to help define a future land use framework, and to refine proposed action items designed to activate the Onward Ontario plan.

July 2021 Action Planning Survey

Attendance at the June 2021 workshop was limited, as COVID-related concerns around larger gatherings remained. However several key insights were gained from this event, and have been incorporated as part of the plan.

October 2021 Public Hearing

[Placeholder]

Plan Organization

Through the interactive and multilayered public engagement described above, the Onward Ontario planning process defined a Community Vision, Core Values, and a series of six interrelated goals. The foundational elements – the Vision and Values – are detailed on the following page. The chapters following are oriented around each of the six interrelated goals, detailing specific objectives and actionable strategies to realize the Community’s vision through targeted investments, programs and policies.

Each goal-oriented chapter is organized into five complementary components:

- **Goal Statement:** A clear statement of the Community’s vision as it relates to a particular topic.

- **Context:** Data and analysis relevant to each goal statement.
- **Objectives:** Specific directives that support the goal and define what success looks like.
- **Action Items:** Actionable recommendations that the Town and its partners can advance to translate the vision, goals and objectives into reality.

Each section contains an implementation matrix, showcasing potential funding sources, relative anticipated costs, and potential implementation partners. Relative timeframe goals include near-term (1st five years), mid-term (5 to 10 years), and long-term (beyond ten years).

While each of these goal-oriented chapters detail strategies related to land use regulation and policy, the last chapter of this plan summarizes these strategies within the context of a future land use framework.

Plan Foundation

We synthesized your input from the community survey and the March 2021 virtual community dialogues to define collective core values, a community vision and goals for the future of Ontario.

OUR VALUES

Civic Connectivity: Ontario benefits from strong neighbor-to-neighbor connections and a sense of welcome. We will continue to foster civic connectivity through physical, programmatic and digital means and by prioritizing equity and affordability.

Rural Restfulness, Urban Accessibility: Ontario enjoys the best of both worlds as a scenic rural community that has direct access to the bustle of the City of Rochester in under 30 minutes. We will preserve this sense of rural restfulness while leveraging regional connectivity.

Stewardship of Nature: Ontario's streams, wetlands, parks, agricultural lands and Lake Ontario waterfront are invaluable natural assets. We will steward these ecological resources through responsible development decisions and environmental education for the benefit of future generations.

Healthy + Active Living: Ontario's parks, natural assets and location along the Great Lakes Seaway Trail, a National Scenic Byway, support opportunities for active and healthy living--for our children to play, for our seniors to exercise, for our neighbors to walk and bike. We will continue to preserve and enhance opportunities for healthy and active living.

Local Agriculture: Ontario's history is rooted in agriculture - fruit, dairy and grain farms and the canning, freezing and drying operations that supported them. Today our local farms and agribusinesses support livelihoods, provide access to fresh produce, and define the stunning backdrop of our community. We will continue to protect and support Ontario's agricultural industry.

Historic Roots: Ontario's history - rooted in agriculture, iron ore mining, and commerce as a port and rail hub - tells a story about our unique cultural, economic, and geological roots. It also informs our future potential. We will continue to celebrate and learn from Ontario's historic roots.

OUR VISION

Ontario is a family-friendly community supported by an engaging business district, quality schools, dynamic employment opportunities and exceptional municipal services. Ontario's enthusiasm for environmental stewardship balanced with thoughtful growth demonstrates our commitment to a healthy and sustainable future for all generations.

OUR GOALS



Ensure Ontario is a Place to Call Home



Cultivate Local Livelihoods + Thriving Businesses



Harness Route 104



Transform our Streetscapes



Nurture nature



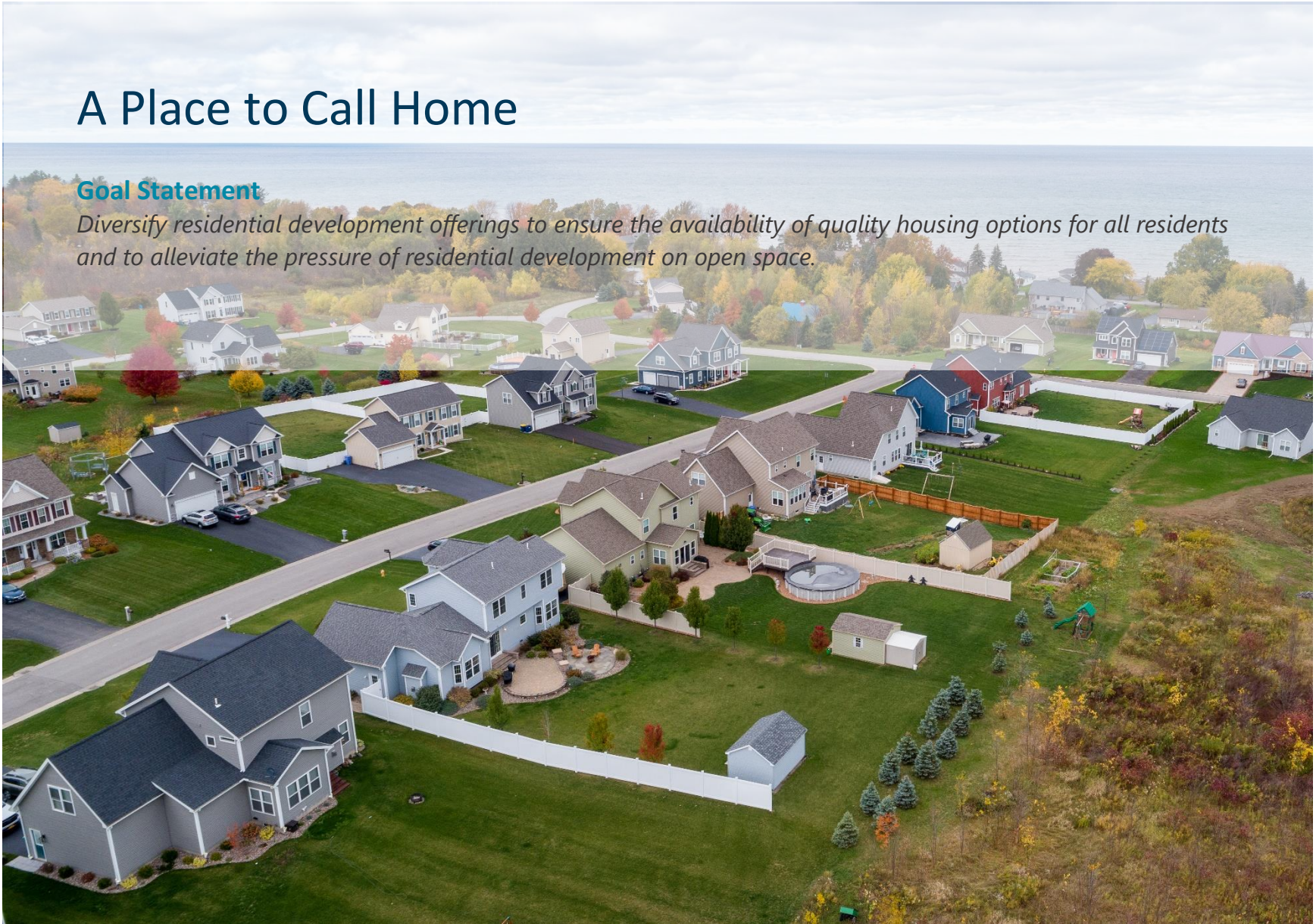
Bolster Civic Connectivity



A Place to Call Home

Goal Statement

Diversify residential development offerings to ensure the availability of quality housing options for all residents and to alleviate the pressure of residential development on open space.



Context

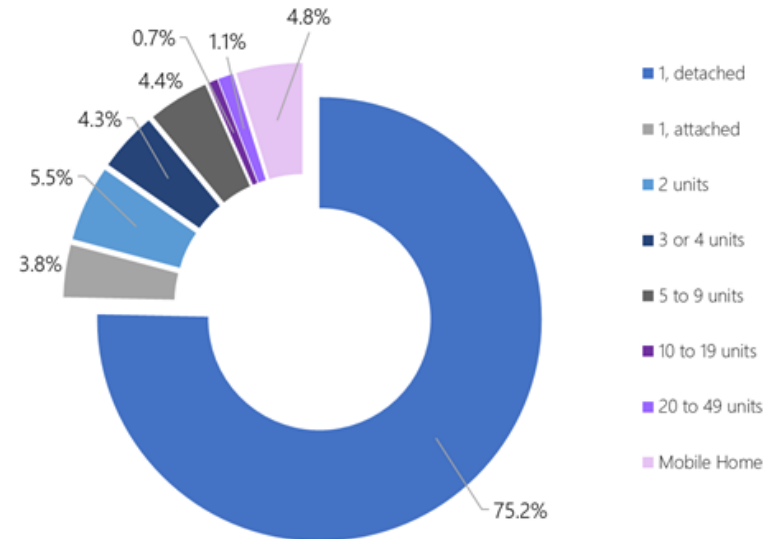
Through the engagement process, community members identified a lack of affordable housing options for Ontario’s workforce, young families and seniors as a potential barrier to community revitalization and sustainability. Though housing prices are considered generally affordable relative to the Town’s current income profile, a lack of housing options may inhibit the Town’s ability to attract and retain new residents.

Residential property is the predominant land use in the Town of Ontario, accounting for 53% of all land (10,445 acres) distributed across town on 3,524 parcels. While apartment complexes and mobile home parks are classified as commercial uses under the New York State Property Class Code, these remain critical components of Ontario’s residential offerings.

Ontario’s housing stock is comprised primarily of single-family detached homes, accounting for 75% of all housing units. These homes are distributed across the Town’s more rural areas and within more concentrated suburban and planned unit developments.

Ontario’s apartment and multifamily housing stock is largely characterized by two housing typologies: Two-story apartment rental complexes with one to three-bedroom units and two-family rental townhouses with two/three-bedroom units. These units account for approximately 13% of all housing units in Ontario, and are largely concentrated along Ridge Road, just south of Route 104, nearby to Wayne Central Schools and town center. Brown Square Village, an independent living community for individuals age 62 and older or disabled

Housing Units by Structure, Town of Ontario



regardless of age, is currently the Town's only rent-subsidized multi-family offering.

There are also three mobile home parks within Town, each flanking Route 104, that account for approximately 4.8% of all housing units.

Relative to Wayne County, the Town has a larger share of owner-occupied housing, amounting to 80% of all housing units in the Town compared to 68% in the County. Ontario's relatively smaller share of renters may contribute, in part, to Ontario's low vacancy rate of 4.8%, in comparison to the County's 12.3% vacancy rate [ESRI].

At a broad look, the Town's score of 183 on ESRI's Housing Affordability Index indicates that the community's housing is generally more affordable relatively to national averages. But it's critical to look at affordability on a more local basis. As a general rule of thumb, households spending more than 30% of their income on housing are considered "cost-burdened." A housing affordability income threshold can be calculated in accordance with this standard, based on the Town's median home value. This threshold represents the income at which a household's monthly housing costs are equal to 30% of the

household's income for a median-priced home. Households earning income below this threshold would be considered cost-burdened by purchasing a home at median value. The 2020 housing affordability income threshold for the Town of Ontario is calculated at \$48,080, of which approximately 67% of the Town's current households earn above. This would suggest that a majority of current households are not presently cost-burdened in terms of housing.

While housing in Ontario is affordable for the majority of current households, it's notable that for 33% of the Town's population, their balance of housing costs to income renders homes within the Town unaffordable by this standard. In other words, 33% of the Town's residents do not have an income sufficient to purchase a home, at the Town's median value, and not be burdened by high housing costs. Additionally, as a function of 2020 MHI among Ontario's existing residents, this finding does not account for the Town's ability to attract new residents of varying income levels or retain Ontario's (majority) senior population navigating a shift to fixed incomes post-retirement. To ensure the availability of quality housing options for all residents, when it comes to housing

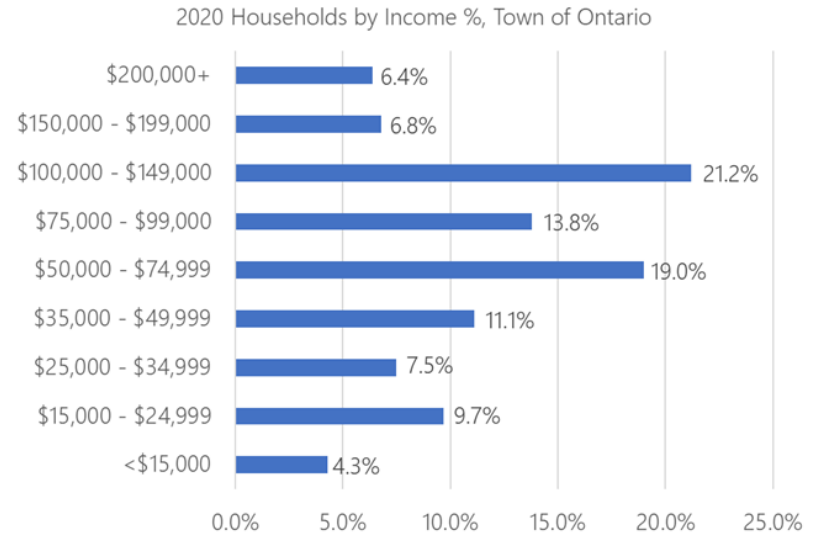
development the Town should continue to encourage more diverse and more affordable housing options.

Applications for significant subdivisions that would add a significant contingent of single-family homes continue to come before the Town.

The Town can accommodate its changing demographics by providing seniors with viable options to downsize into smaller units, to age in place with interconnected, walkable communities, or to move into senior living communities.

The vibrancy and affordability of the Town can also be enhanced through infill development of vacant and underutilized parcels. Existing parcels in the Town’s Center can be converted to mixed-use housing, offering retail amenities and a more urban environment. Utilizing existing structures for adaptive reuse projects will achieve the Town’s joint objectives of expanding housing offerings and preserving prized agricultural and natural lands.

Recent residential development in Ontario has responded to demand for a mix of single-family homes, townhomes and apartments. Some development has incorporated senior living, open space and connectivity to existing



Source: ESRI

Housing Affordability Threshold, Town of Ontario

Item	\$
Median Home Value, 2020	\$162,102
10% Down Payment	\$16,210
Loan Amount	\$145,892
Avg. Mortgage Payment, 30 Yrs. @ 5%	\$783
Est Additional Costs	\$419
Avg Mortgage Payment and Estimated Additional Costs	\$1,202
Housing Affordability Income Threshold	\$48,080
Median Household Income, 2020	\$52,480

Source: ESRI, Zillow, MRB Group

services and commercial areas, which can serve as a case study to inform future development. Community Ridge, a Planned Unit Development for which the Town has granted approvals for Phases 1 and 2 (2017 and 2020, respectively), is situated within a walkable distance to commercial anchors along the Ridge Road and 104 corridors. In its full build out, this development will occupy 53 acres with connectivity to Furnace Road and Ridge Road, between Community Lane and Ridge Road, and include a mix of apartments, townhomes, patio homes, and single-family homes, and a continuum of senior living options from independent and assisted living to memory care units. It will also include community spaces and commercial area.

Objectives

- 1.1 Develop a data-driven understanding of Ontario's housing market relative to key indicators including affordability, and retention of workforce and senior populations.
- 1.2 Facilitate the development of a full spectrum of senior housing options, from independent low-maintenance units that allow residents to age in place, to more cooperative and assisted living communities.
- 1.3 Where there's existing infrastructure capacity, facilitate the development of adaptive reuse and infill multi-family residential units.
- 1.4 Encourage housing development strategies that protect ecological resources, greenways and open space, active farm operations and high-quality scenic resources.
- 1.5 Ensure that the Town's Code and Zoning regulations allow for flexibility in housing types and design.

Action Items

		Timeline	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Leadership + Strategic Partners
1.A	Complete a Housing Needs Assessment & Market Analysis.	Near-term	\$	New York State Community Development Block Grant Program; Local Resources	Wayne County Economic Development & Planning
1.B	Pursue a zoning code update to bring the Town's code into alignment with the community's vision for diversification of residential development, with provisions that can facilitate infill development, adaptive reuse projects, and other creative site development strategies to combat sprawl.	Near-term	\$\$	Local Resources	Town planning and zoning boards
1.C	Identify vacant and underutilized properties that could be repurposed for senior housing development, prioritizing parcels that provide connectivity and accessibility to services. Issue a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) to assess viability and feasibility of senior housing development, inclusive of co-living and other alternative housing models that reduce rent and maintenance responsibilities while increasing socialization, health, safety and services for seniors.	Near-term	\$	Local Resources	Wayne County Regional Land Bank Corp.; Developer roundtables; Town Engineer / Water Utilities Superintendent
1.D	Identify vacant and underutilized properties that present opportunities for infill and adaptive reuse housing developments. Issue a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) to assess viability and feasibility of development.	Near-term	\$	Local Resources	Wayne County Regional Land Bank Corp.; Developer roundtables; Ontario Chamber of Commerce; Ontario Business Improvement District; Town Engineer / Water Utilities Superintendent
1.E	Informed by the RFEI process, develop a capital improvement plan to address the provision of infrastructure where it doesn't currently exist. Where there's development interest, pursue the use of the Town's incentive zoning code to provide critical services.	Near-term	\$\$	Local resources and bond issuances; New York State Community Development Block Grant Program for infrastructure development; various economic development incentive programs if job-creating enterprises will also be served; Incentive Zoning	Town Engineer / Water Utilities Superintendent; Wayne County Economic Development Corporation / Wayne County Industrial Development Agency (WCIDA)
1.F	Informed by the Housing study and RFEI process, work with the development community to facilitate development of additional housing units.	Mid-term	\$	New York State Community Development Block Grant Program; ESD Grant Funds; New York Main Street program; Rural Area Revitalization Program; historical rehabilitation tax credits; Real Property Tax Law exemptions; potential IDA PILOTs	Wayne County Regional Land Bank Corp; Wayne County Economic Development Corporation / Wayne County Industrial Development Agency (WCIDA)

Cultivate Local Livelihoods and Thriving Businesses

Goal Statement

Nurture the growth of small businesses and bolster our industrial anchors so that our economic ecosystem remains innovative, regionally connected and rooted in our local assets. Ensure the availability of quality jobs and growth opportunities for our current and future workforce.



Context

Community Survey responses demonstrated an unmet need for quality job opportunities and business development support, and a significant demand for unique downtown retail and restaurants. Additionally, many respondents expressed concern around the high vacancy rate, property maintenance issues and prohibitively expensive commercial rents within the Ridge Road central business district (for all intents and purposes, “downtown”). This concern was reinforced in dialogue at the March public workshops, where participants noted that there is little drawing them downtown, making clear that there is a strong desire for a revitalized, thriving and unique main street that fosters a feeling of community.

The Town’s future vitality will depend largely on our ability to capitalize on current competitive advantages and to cultivate economic opportunities and experiences for all residents.

To understand the Town of Ontario’s industry composition, the Town was proxied by ZIP code 14519 based on the geographies within the available 2020 data [EMSI]. By job count, Manufacturing comprises the largest

industry for the Town and the second largest for the County. Construction and Utilities are the second and third largest industries within ZIP 14519 – a notably higher concentration compared to the County. The County, on the other hand, has a significantly larger share of employment in the Government, Agriculture, and Healthcare sectors in comparison to the Town. Jobs in those industries are concentrated elsewhere within the County.

The Town’s manufacturing sector, which accounts for over a quarter of jobs in Ontario has grown over the last ten years, preserving and adding hundreds of high-quality jobs. Many of these manufacturing jobs are high-skill, high-tech roles in the optical instrument and glass product manufacturing industry. Optimax Systems Inc., one of Ontario’s larger employers, employs over 300 people within the Town and produces optical equipment for innovative technologies in aerospace, defense, and consumer electronics. Ontario’s Construction sector is more diffuse in nature, with many niche players across the industry, from electrical contractors, plumbing and HVAC, to residential remodelers. The Town’s large Utility industry is largely dominated by operations at the Ginna Nuclear

Power Plant. The Plant's operator, Exelon, has been an anchor institution for the Town for over 40 years. That said, the renewable energy sector also accounts for a portion of these jobs, with firms such as GreenSpark Solar.

The Ginna Nuclear Power Plant, beginning commercial operations in 1970, remains one of the Town's anchor institutions to this day. Ginna has provided hundreds of local high-paying jobs to generations of Town residents. A critical challenge for the Town will be creating an actionable succession plan for when the Plant exceeds its useful life. The plant's current license, administered by the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, is set to expire in September 2029, at which point the plant will need to seek a license renewal or be decommissioned. The Town must be ready for either scenario.

From a land use perspective, Commercial uses account for roughly 4% of the Town's area (742 acres), concentrated primarily along NYS Route 104. It's noteworthy that the largest share (16%) of industrial area within Ontario is comprised of a singular parcel owned by tomato greenhouse operation, Intergrow East – a key industry anchor for the Town .



The Town's industrial and commercial growth capacity is largely dependent on the type and specific location of the development. Current development demand is primarily concentrated on the west side of town, where transportation, sewer, and water infrastructure constraints are tightest, and existing industrial park space is largely at capacity. Adaptive reuse of existing structures, where appropriate, would leverage existing infrastructure capacity and in the context of the Ridge Road central business district could support the revitalization of a thriving and unique main street.

Objectives

- 2.1 Coordinate a pipeline between the School District, Finger Lakes Community College, and local employers so that students can more readily access local, high quality careers.
- 2.2 Revitalize a hyperlocal mixed-use (retail, service, housing) district that complements the 104 corridor.
- 2.3 Define a community vision for the future of the Ginna Nuclear Plant and build an advocacy plan to advance the vision for the site.
- 2.4 Support local agribusinesses in realizing their market potential to ensure that they remain viable.
- 2.5 Support the expansion of Ontario's renewable energy sector (wind, geothermal, solar).
- 2.6 Strategically expand water, sewer, transportation, broadband and cell infrastructure to ensure market readiness.

Action Items

		Timeline	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Leadership + Strategic Partners
2.A	Engage the Wayne Central School District, Finger Lakes Community College (FLCC), Wayne County Industrial Development Agency (IDA), and Ontario's anchor employers in quarterly roundtable meetings to identify training needs, employment opportunities and support college and career readiness.	Near-term	\$	Pathways in Technology (NYS P-TECH) Program; ESD Grant Funds	Wayne County Economic Development Corporation / Wayne County Industrial Development Agency (WCIDA); StriveTogether Network;
2.B	In collaboration with Finger Lakes Community College, assess vacant and underutilized properties within Ontario's Central Business District to identify potential locations for a satellite campus. Work jointly to pursue resources for its buildout.	Mid-term	\$\$	New York State Community Development Block Grant Program; ESD Grant Funds; New York Main Street program; Rural Area Revitalization Program; historical rehabilitation tax credits; Real Property Tax Law exemptions; potential IDA PILOTs	Wayne County Regional Land Bank Corp; Wayne County Economic Development Corporation / Wayne County Industrial Development Agency (WCIDA)
2.C	Establish a microenterprise assistance program to provide capacity building and entrepreneurial / business development resources to central business district storefronts.	Near-term	\$\$	New York State Community Development Block Grant Program - Microenterprise Assistance; Wayne County IDA Tax Incentives and Revolving Loan Fund	Ontario Chamber of Commerce; Ontario Business Improvement District; Wayne County Economic Development Corporation / Wayne County Industrial Development Agency (WCIDA);
2.D	Facilitate a series of community information and visioning sessions for future development scenarios at the Ginna Nuclear Plant that clarifies planning parameters and defines an advocacy plan to achieve the collective community vision for the future of the site.	Near-term	\$	Local resources	Wayne County Economic Development Corporation / Wayne County Industrial Development Agency (WCIDA); National Reactor Innovation Center at the Idaho National Laboratory; Nuclear Regulatory Commission
2.E	Cultivate innovation and entrepreneurship among Ontario's agribusiness community by facilitating connections to local and regional resources including the New York Farm Viability Institute and the Cornell Center of Excellence for Food and Agriculture.	Ongoing	\$	Farm Viability Institute Grant Program; Cornell Center of Excellence for Food & Agriculture matching grants; FuzeHub Manufacturing Grants	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wayne County; Wayne County Ag Development Board; Cornell Center of Excellence for Food & Agriculture
2.F	Survey agribusinesses to identify specific gaps within the value chain and work with Wayne County IDA to strategically recruit those businesses to Ontario.	Ongoing	\$	ESD Grants; Wayne County IDA Tax Incentives and Revolving Loan Fund	Empire State Development; Wayne County Economic Development Corporation / Wayne County Industrial Development Agency (WCIDA); Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wayne County; Wayne County Ag Development Board; New York Farm Viability Institute; Cornell Center of Excellence for Food and Agriculture

		Timeline	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Leadership + Strategic Partners
2.G	Implement the recommendations of the Beh Industrial Park Traffic Optimization Study (slated for completion December 2021) to support the continued growth and development of the Park.	Mid-term	\$\$\$	ESD Grants; Wayne County IDA Tax Incentives; Incentive Zoning	Wayne County Economic Development Corporation / Wayne County Industrial Development Agency (WCIDA)
2.H	Work with the Wayne County Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to identify additional opportunities to realize the Wayne Industrial Sustainability Park concept to develop increased alternative energy (wind, geothermal, solar voltaic) sources for industry and facilitate symbiotic relationships between industries to enhance energy efficiency and innovation.	Ongoing	\$	ESD Grants; Wayne County IDA Tax Incentives; Incentive Zoning	Wayne County Economic Development Corporation / Wayne County Industrial Development Agency (WCIDA)
2.I	Invest in broadband infrastructure to improve connectivity for the entire community and support a 21st century workforce including work-from-home employees. Work with Wayne County Department of Economic Development and Planning to identify service gaps in access to affordable, robust broadband internet service and assess the feasibility of pursuing fiber-optic, 5G wireless or even low-altitude satellite service to address service gaps.	Near-term	\$\$	ESD Grants	Finger Lakes Digital Inclusion Coalition; Wayne County Economic Development Corporation / Wayne County Industrial Development Agency (WCIDA)
2.J	Develop a capital improvement plan to address the provision of critical industrial infrastructure where it doesn't currently exist. Where there's development interest, pursue the use of the Town's incentive zoning code to provide critical services.	Near-term	\$\$	Local resources and bond issuances; New York State Community Development Block Grant Program for infrastructure development; various economic development incentive programs if job-creating enterprises will also be served; Incentive Zoning	Town Engineer / Water Utilities Superintendent; Wayne County Economic Development Corporation / Wayne County Industrial Development Agency (WCIDA)

Harness Route 104

Goal Statement

30,000 cars drive through Ontario on NY-Route 104 every day. Future development should capitalize on this highly-trafficked corridor to transform Ontario from a thoroughfare to a destination.



Context

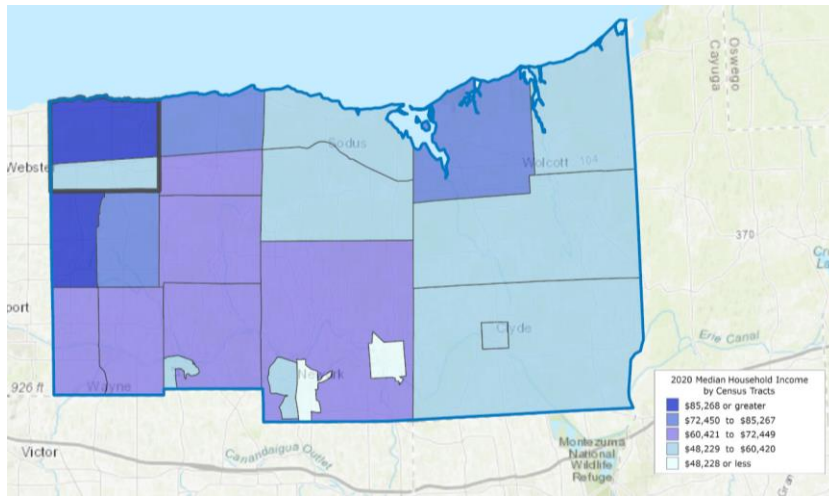
Ontario is bisected by arterial route NY-104, a high-speed limited access highway that spans six counties across upstate New York, as well as a critical rail line.

Route 104 sees an average daily traffic volume of up to 30,000 daily trips on the Town's western border [NYSDOT Traffic Data Viewer; 2019 Annual Average Daily Traffic estimate]. The substantial volume of traffic on Route 104, the streetscape design that supports it, and the route's central location through Town poses significant access and safety challenges for Ontario. As importantly, however, this busy road presents opportunities that the Town can harness to realize its economic potential.

In terms of challenges, the Route currently serves as a major thoroughfare, designed to speed people *through Town* versus *to Town*, bypassing Ontario altogether. Coupled with the lack of wayfinding signage and gateways at the Town lines, drivers are not presented with a sense of arrival or an incentive to stop and spend time in Ontario, further cementing the Route's role as a thoroughfare rather than a destination.

Being one of the most heavily trafficked roads in the County, Route 104 is neither pedestrian nor bike friendly, also posing a significant safety hazard to the community. The four-lane divided highway brings high-speed traffic through the center of Town, with a number of signalized intersections and a high frequency of curb cuts that onboard/offboard vehicles from Route 104 commercial establishments, presenting safety hazards to pedestrians and motorists alike. Mitigating the safety hazards associated with Route 104 will be vitally important to connecting the community and achieving the Town's vision.

Not only does Route 104 bisect the Town geographically, but also economically, with significant disparities on each side of the road. The figure below shows the median household income (MHI) for Wayne County at the census tract level. The Town of Ontario is outlined in a black border at the Northwest corner of the County. The 2020 MHI for the Town's northern census tract is estimated to be over \$92,318, while the MHI for the Town's southern tract is estimated to be \$55,906. Roughly 50% of the Town's population resides in the southern census tract. A variety of economic factors including anchor employers, proximity to the lakefront and the local real estate market



all influence this disparity. To realize equitable and sustainable growth, the Town must account for the geographical and economic division along Route 104.

Though Route 104 presents many challenges, the heavily trafficked road can be harnessed as an economic driver for community revitalization, and the fabric by which we can equitably reconnect the Town to deliver socioeconomic health on both sides of the road.

The north side of Route 104 is bordered by a significant amount of vacant land that is currently zoned for commercial and industrial use, and is ripe for

redevelopment. The close proximity to Route 104, provides potential end users with efficient and quick access to the City of Rochester and the New York State Thruway. However, inefficiencies in access management to Route 104 have led to persistent vacancies among these parcels. There is an opportunity to develop this space into a variety of end-uses including housing, logistics, and/or retail.

Objectives

- 3.1 Establish distinctive gateways at the town lines to communicate arrival and a sense of welcome.
- 3.2 Enhance connectivity between 104, the Ridge Road central business district, the lakefront and other community anchors.
- 3.3 Improve the safety of Route 104 for vehicles and people.
- 3.4 In the longer term, reorient land use and streetscape design along Route 104 to support pedestrian-scale activity. Evaluate opportunities to foster and attract a concentrated business district flanking this corridor.

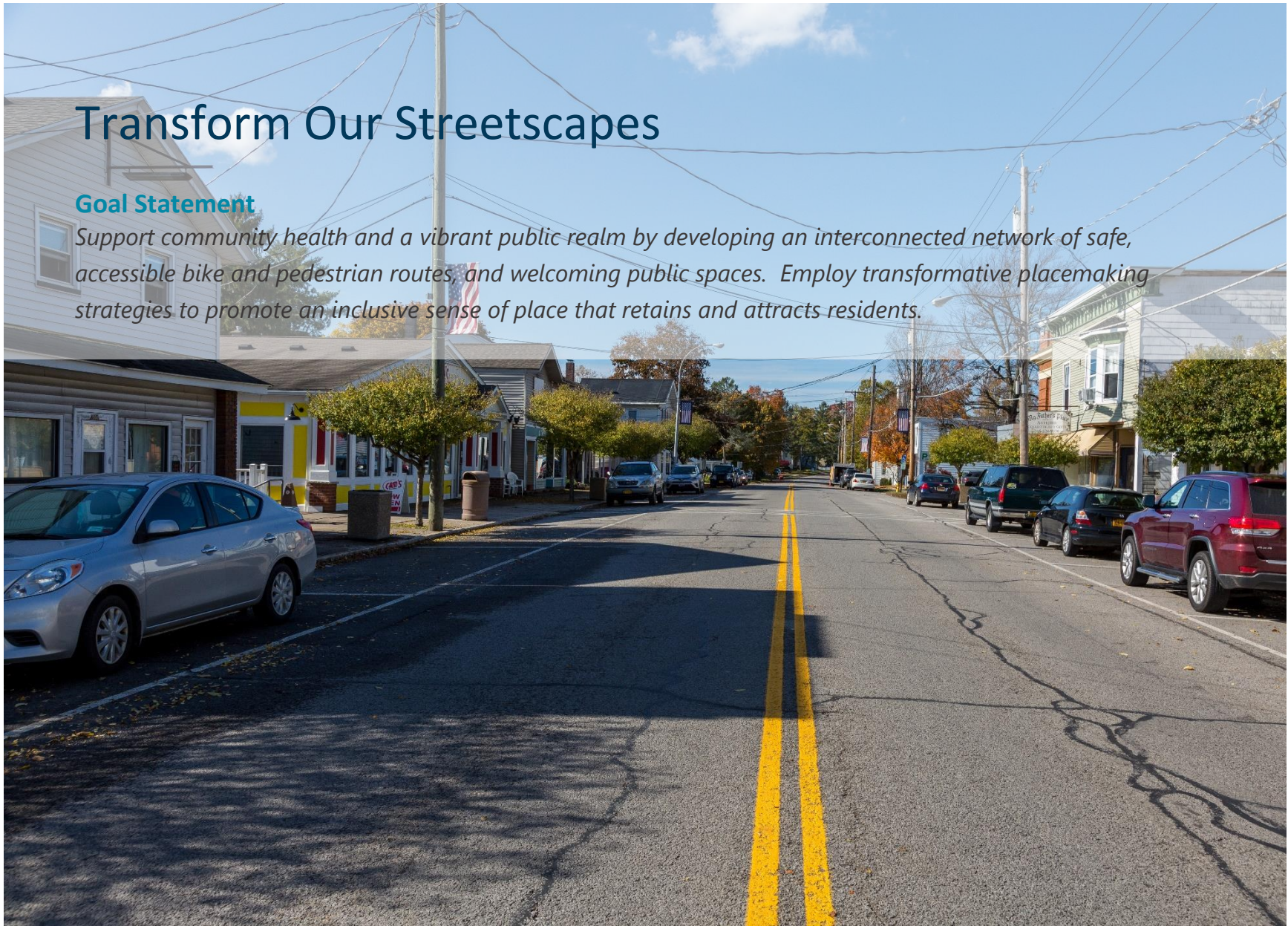
Action Items

		Timeline	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Leadership + Strategic Partners
3.A	Pursue resources to conduct a corridor plan that assesses opportunities to improve safety, mobility and connectivity across the 104 corridor. Identify key intersections for strategic investment in streetscape upgrades.	Near-term	\$\$	Genesee Transportation Council Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); USDOT Federal Transit Administration grants;	Genesee Transportation Council; NYS DOT; Town of Ontario Highway Superintendent
3.B	Initiate a collaborative neighborhood branding initiative that engages residents and businesses in identifying and celebrating distinct subdistricts and develop a corresponding brand identity and wayfinding plan that provides directional signage at key intersections.	Near-term	\$	LISC Creative Placemaking Initiative; IOBY crowdfunding; Cities of Service Love Your Block program; National Association of Realtors Placemaking Grant	Neighborhood associations; Wayne County Tourism
3.C	Engage NYS DOT in quarterly roundtables to identify and evaluate near-term opportunities to improve safety and vehicular access to and between commercial properties along 104.	Near-term	\$	Genesee Transportation Council Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	Genesee Transportation Council; NYS DOT; Town of Ontario Highway Superintendent

Transform Our Streetscapes

Goal Statement

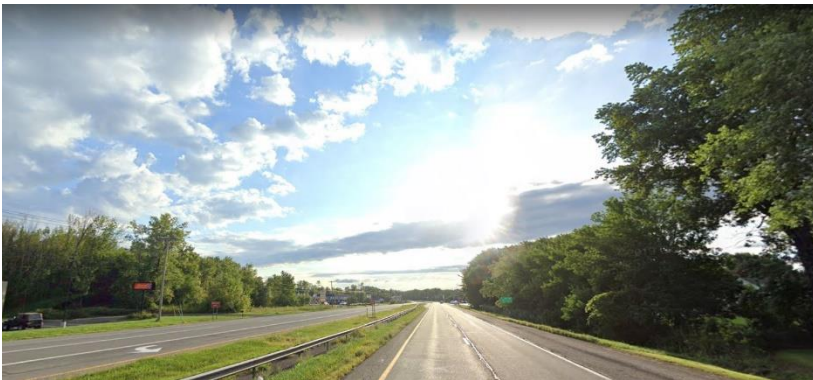
Support community health and a vibrant public realm by developing an interconnected network of safe, accessible bike and pedestrian routes, and welcoming public spaces. Employ transformative placemaking strategies to promote an inclusive sense of place that retains and attracts residents.



Context

Cars reign supreme on Ontario's streets. Throughout the planning process, stakeholders expressed a strong desire to transform Ontario's streetscapes to support safe pedestrian and bike routes, and to incorporate engaging and inclusive public spaces.

Street crossings on Route 104, unavoidable for north-south travel through Town, pose difficult and dangerous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists due to multiple lanes, high-speeds and a multitude of non-signalized vehicular access points.



The Town's existing trail network is largely limited to loop trails located in Casey Park, Ontario Center Greenway Park, and the Maguire Family Wildlife Sanctuary. These trails have a high utilization rate, indicating strong and persistent demand by Town residents. The Town's existing bike lane network is limited, with few dedicated bike lanes and few recognized bike routes.

The Great Lakes Seaway Trail, a 518-mile scenic byway that traverses the southern shore of Lake Ontario, as mapped runs through the Town of Ontario. Currently, hikers and bikers traveling the Seaway Trail share the road with cars traveling at high speeds. By further developing more bike and pedestrian friendly access to the Seaway Trail, the Town can capitalize on this unique resource to improve the Ontario experience for residents and visitors alike.

There is ample opportunity to expand and interconnect the Town's trail and bike lane network to accommodate this demand and capitalize on the Town's existing assets to achieve positive health and quality of life outcomes including fostering active transportation, reducing traffic congestion, and reducing air pollution.

Objectives

- 4.1 Make streets, particularly those closest to the town center, safer for bikes and pedestrians.
- 4.2 Interconnect and extend existing local and regional trail networks.
- 4.3 Provide multiple opportunities for public gatherings and community events.
- 4.4 Prioritize space for and promote electric vehicle infrastructure / charging stations in high-trafficked areas, as well as public facilities (i.e. parks, Town Hall, schools, etc.).
- 4.5 Ensure that local code is aligned with and supportive of active transportation and placemaking initiatives.

Action Items

		Timeline	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Leadership + Strategic Partners
4.A	Identify strategic investments in street designs to provide multimodal mobility, safety and accessibility to all users.	Ongoing	\$\$	Genesee Transportation Council Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	Genesee Transportation Council; NYS DOT; Town of Ontario Highway Superintendent
4.B	As streets are built or re-built, ensure that equal priority is given to varying modes of transportation--particularly pedestrians and cyclists.	Ongoing	\$	Genesee Transportation Council Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); USDOT Federal Transit Administration grants;	Genesee Transportation Council; NYS DOT; Town of Ontario Highway Superintendent
4.C	Within the Business Improvement District, work with the BID to host and promote signature events and placemaking programs within existing public realm facilities.	Near-term	\$	BID Assessment; LISC Creative Placemaking Initiative; AARP Community Challenge Grants; IOBY crowdfunding; Kaboom; Kresge Foundation Arts and Culture Program; National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grants; Cities of Service Love Your Block program; National Association of Realtors Placemaking Grants	Ontario Business Improvement District; Ontario Chamber of Commerce;
4.D	Identify opportunities for strategic investments in new and enhanced walking and biking trails to connect community destinations, link existing anchors and fill gaps in the existing active transportation network. Investigate the potential use of utility easements, paper streets and medians.	Ongoing	\$\$	Genesee Transportation Council Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); USDOT Federal Transit Administration grants;	Town of Ontario Highway Superintendent; Ontario Department of Parks & Recreation; Genesee Land Trust
4.E	Leverage mapping applications to publicize and promote an interactive trail network map.	Near-term	\$\$	New York State Recreational Trails Program	Town of Ontario Department of Parks & Recreation; Genesee Land Trust
4.F	Invest in regional trail connectivity through strategic enhancements to the functionality, safety and awareness of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail.	Near-term	\$	New York State Recreational Trails Program	Town of Ontario Department of Parks & Recreation; Town of Ontario Highway Superintendent; Wayne County Tourism; Genesee Land Trust; Wayne County Economic Development & Planning
4.G	Employ temporary placemaking, tactical urbanism and programming strategies to ensure active and engaging public spaces and to better serve neighborhood residents, visitors, and businesses.	Near-term	\$	BID Assessment; WALL\THERAPY Mini Grants; KABOOM! Grants; LISC Creative Placemaking Initiative; AARP Community Challenge Grants; IOBY crowdfunding; Kaboom; Kresge Foundation Arts and Culture Program; National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grants; Cities of Service Love Your Block program; National Association of Realtors Placemaking Grants	Ontario Business Improvement District

Nurture Nature

Goal Statement

Protect and steward Ontario's natural lands and farmlands that provide critical wildlife habitat, locally grown food, connections to nature and recreational opportunities.



Context

Ontario's natural assets - our streams, wetlands, forests, farms, and of course Lake Ontario - provide tremendous ecological, social and economic value to our community. These spaces provide critical wildlife habitat, access to fresh locally grown food, and connections to nature and recreational opportunities. Throughout the community engagement process, community members regularly identified Ontario's natural areas and scenic viewsheds as the very thing that defines the community, and the characteristic that initially attracted them to Town.

The community's core values of Stewardship of Nature, and Healthy and Active Living make the continued health of this ecosystem an imperative.

Parks + Trails

The Town of Ontario owns and operates a suite of major park facilities:



Casey Park and Community Center

A 93-acre park located centrally within Town approximately one mile north of Route 104 and three miles south of Lake Road, and host to the Ontario Community Center, Casey Park is the heart of the community. The park offers access to nature trails, biking trails, a playground, two open air pavilions and an enclosed lodge, six ball fields and restroom facilities. The park is particularly unique in that it is situated on one of Ontario's old iron ore beds, which was converted into a pond that offers canoes and paddle boats for rent, and a beach and swimming area where a lifeguard is on duty during the summer season. Casey Park is also home to the offices of the Town's Parks & Recreation and

Economic Development Departments, affording community members with the opportunity to engage with Town leadership. The Community Center, opened in 2009, is a full-service fitness and athletic facility that offers programming to residents of all ages. The facility includes an indoor turf arena, a gymnasium and an indoor walking track. Community Center memberships are available to community members at cost ranging from \$10/month for students to \$24/month for families.

Ontario Center Greenway

Based on input from community surveys in 2004 and 2011, which indicated a strong desire for a more extensive trail system within Ontario, the Town developed the Town-owned parcel located at 6581 Ontario Center Road as the Ontario Center Greenway. Directly across the road from Casey Park, this trail effectively extended the Casey Park trail system by a half mile. The future vision is to work closely with residents and commercial properties to continue to extend these trails until a full east to west trail is available through the town. The Greenway is also the site for Ontario's Annual Community Art Project which takes place each Summer.



Thompson Park at Bear Creek Harbor

This 6-acre park spanning the mouth of Bear Creek, located on Lake Road between Knickerbocker Road and Furnace Road, comprises Ontario's sole public access point on Lake Ontario. With a large grassy area, an amazing waterfront view, and an oasis for all kinds of waterfowl and shorebirds, this park is a critical asset for residents to enjoy limited public lakefront. It is also Ontario's most prominent physical marker of the New York State Seaway Trail. The park also encompasses Memorial Point, a memorial dedicated to individuals who have perished while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces,

recognizing the ultimate sacrifice that these individuals gave in service to our nation.

Formerly a port for commercial fishing and the shipping of locally mined iron ore in the late 1800's / early 1900's, Bear Creek Harbor bears an interesting history that is illustrative of Ontario's roots. The navigable outlet channel at Bear Creek Harbor is slated to be dredged in the Summer of 2021 pending issuance of the necessary state and federal permits and authorizations, which will ensure continued boat access to and out of the park.

Agricultural Lands

The majority of the Town of Ontario is designated part of Wayne County Agricultural District Number One, as certified by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Protection Program. The Town's active farmlands are largely concentrated in the area north of NYS Route 104 and closer to Lake Ontario, however there are working farms throughout the town.

The entirety of the Town's land is classified as either "prime" or of "statewide importance" by USDA. Ontario's location on the south shore of Lake Ontario creates a very favorable microclimate for the production of fruit. Wayne

County is the largest apple-producing county in New York, accounting for 40% of the state's total apple production and acreage, and ranks in the top three counties in the nation for the production of both fresh market and processed apples.

15% of land within the Town is dedicated to Agricultural use, encompassing a total of 3,013 acres across 62 parcels. Agricultural lands are distributed relatively evenly throughout the Town. The majority of these parcels (33 parcels across 1,690 acres) are used to grow field crops like potatoes, wheat, hay, dry beans, corn and oats, and measure 51 acres on average. As part of the Great Lakes Fruit Belt, a sizable portion of agricultural lands are also dedicated to growing tree fruits such as apples, pears, peaches, cherries.



Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a tool to conserve significant private lands from future development. It is an agreement that runs with the land in perpetuity which keeps the land from being developed. Specific restrictions can vary depending on the agreement and type of land.

The Genesee Land Trust serves Wayne County in identifying and conserving land that offers natural habitat as well as land with recreational, agricultural, and community value. In the Town of Ontario, Genesee Land Trust has worked with private landowners to permanently protect a total of 619 acres of natural areas and working farmlands in the Town of Ontario:

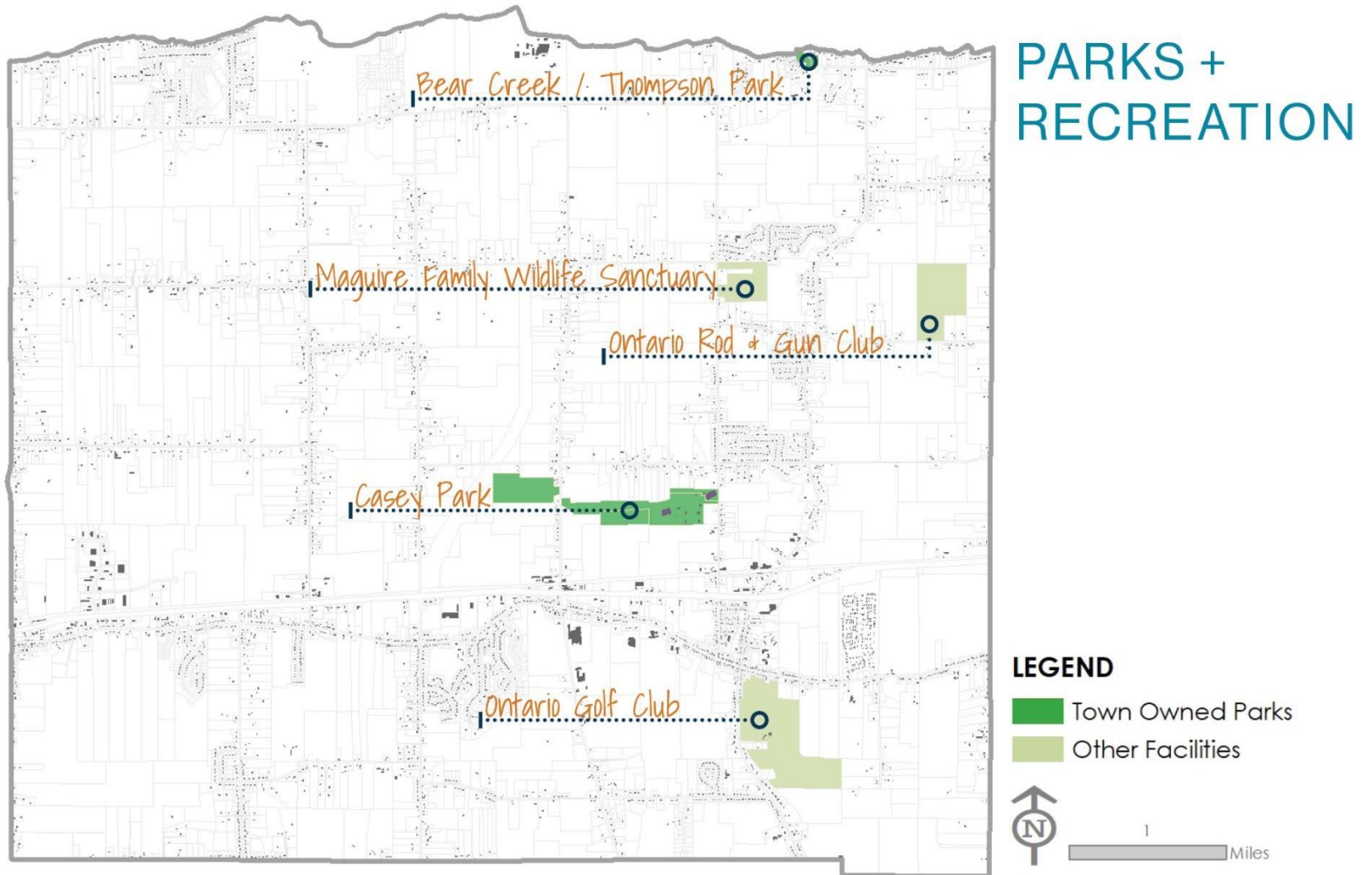
Amy's Ponds/Hundred Acre Wood: 187 contiguous acres of mature woodlands, ponds, wetlands, and a mix of deciduous and evergreen plantations. This land provides critical migratory bird habitat and encompasses more than 1,000 feet of Deer Creek. This conservation easement was granted to the Genesee Land Trust in two installments, in 1994 and 2001 respectively.

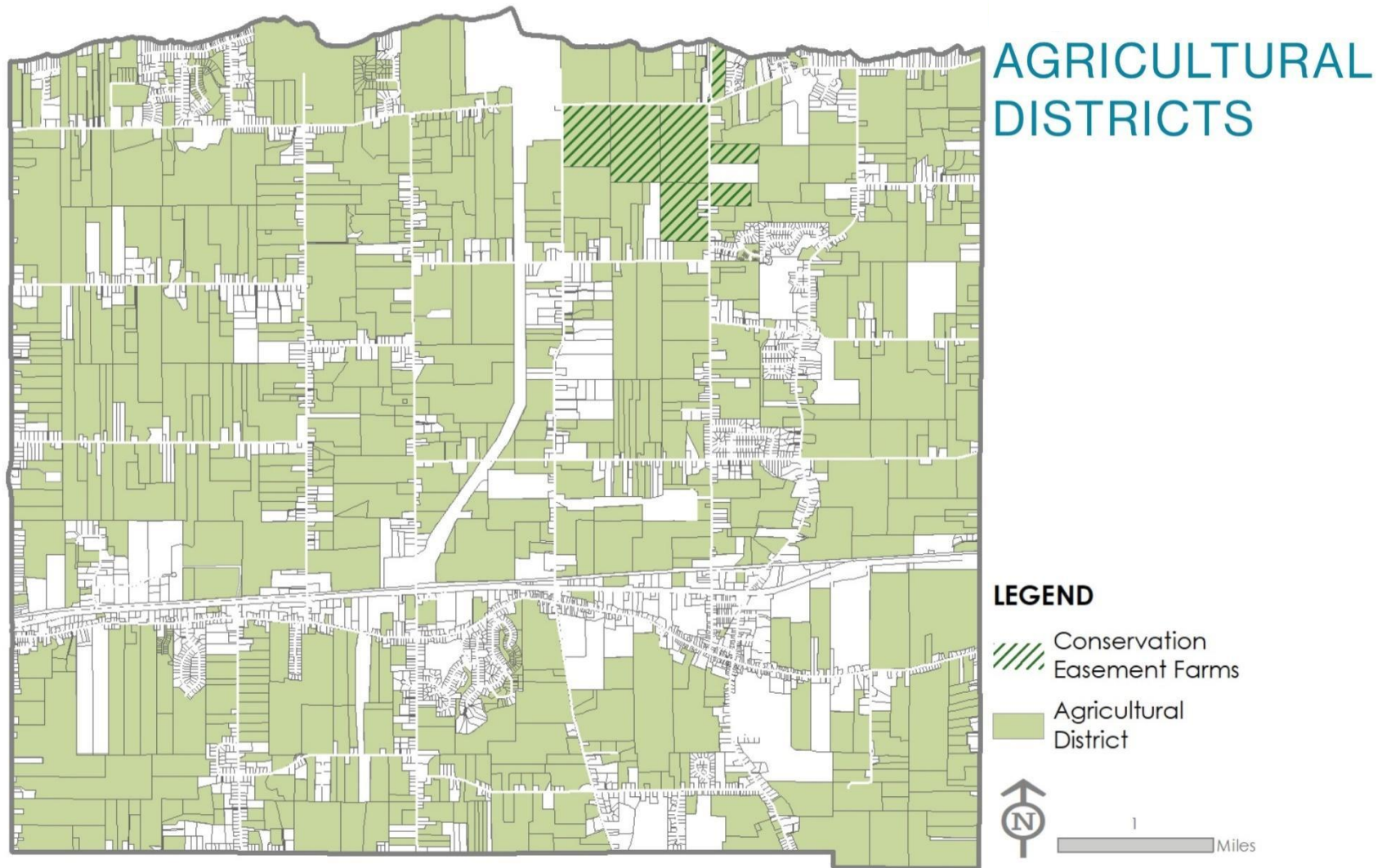
Albright Farms: 339 acres of orchards, row crops and hay, pasture, old-growth forest, and wetlands. It is also crossed by Dennison Creek. Albright Farms granted this conservation easement to the Genesee Land Trust and the Town of Ontario in 2007. The purchase of the conservation easement was funded by grants from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Protection Program and the Federal Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

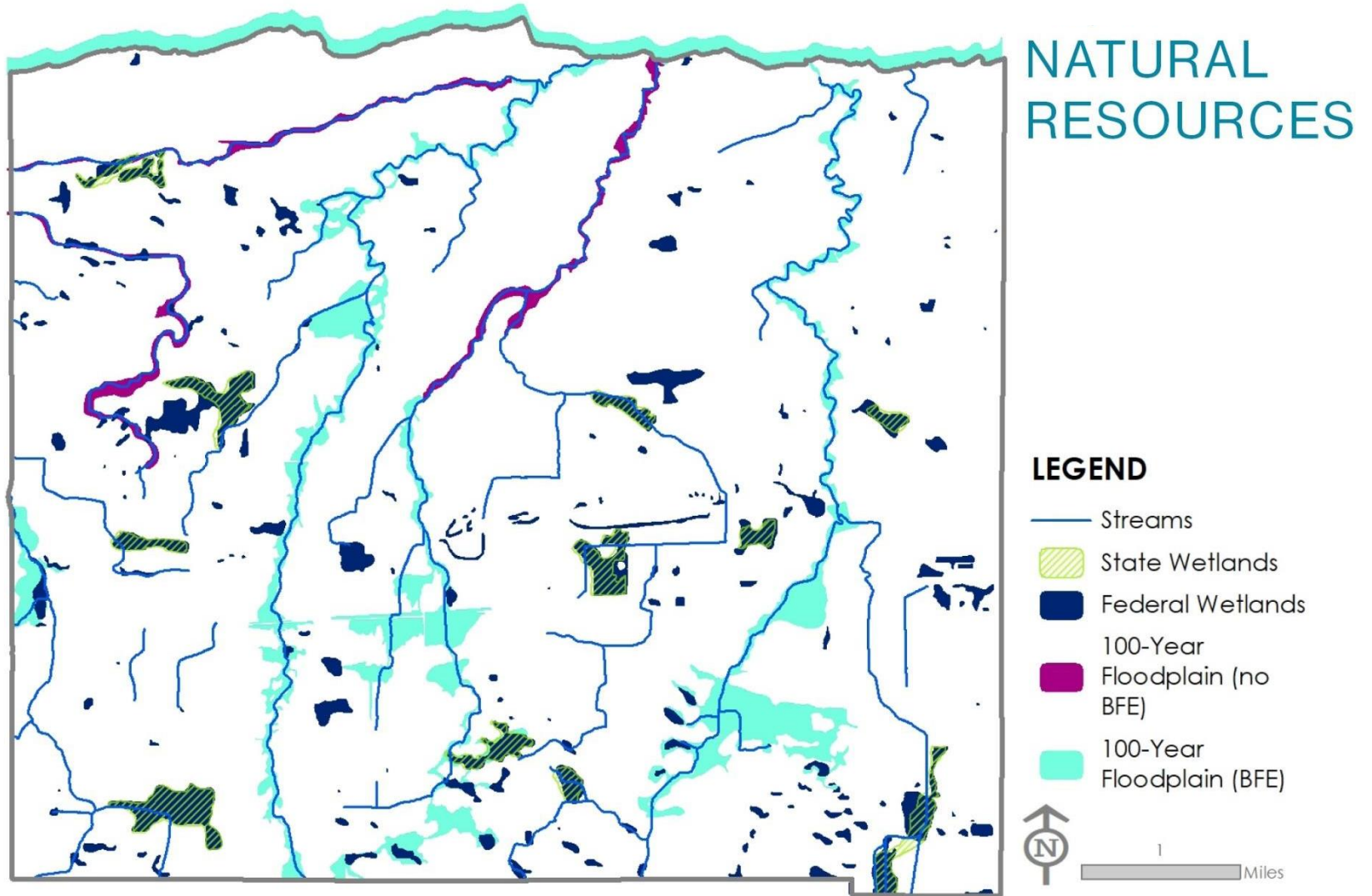
Albright Farms II: 93 acres made up of two conservation easements consisting primarily of row crops, with small portions of woodlands, wetlands, and a former vineyard. Albright Farms, Inc. granted these conservation easements to the Genesee Land Trust in 2016.

Objectives

- 5.1 Expand public access to Ontario's Lakefront.
- 5.2 Diversify and expand recreational opportunities for all ages.
- 5.3 Identify and protect priority open space and wildlife habitat.
- 5.4 Facilitate the long-term viability of farmlands and farming operations through land use planning, policies and programs that reduce farmland conversion rate and farmland fragmentation.
- 5.5 Support environmental education and awareness.







Action Items

		Timeline	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Leadership + Strategic Partners
5.A	Develop a Natural Resources Inventory and accompanying project review guide that serves to describe the Town's significant natural and cultural resources and guide decision-makers in the review of development proposals so that the benefits of these resources are preserved.	Near-term	\$\$\$		Town of Ontario Department of Parks & Recreation; Genesee Land Trust; Wayne County Soil & Water Conservation District; The Nature Conservancy (Central and Western New York Chapter); Wayne County Trail Works, Inc.
5.B	Develop a set of recreational and ecological criteria for expanded lakefront access and identify strategic target acquisition zones. Explore private / public partnership opportunities (e.g. easements, land lease) to deliver expanded access to the waterfront.	Near-term	\$		Town of Ontario Department of Parks & Recreation; Genesee Land Trust; Wayne County Soil & Water Conservation District; The Nature Conservancy (Central and Western New York Chapter); Wayne County Trail Works, Inc.
5.C	Establish a parkland acquisition fund to support the purchase of expansion parcels.	Mid-term	\$\$\$	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation Environmental Protection Fund Grants (Program for Parks, Preservation and Heritage - EPF); NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Climate Smart Communities Grant Program; New York State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program; Local Resources; NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Water Quality Improvement Program	Town of Ontario Department of Parks & Recreation; Genesee Land Trust; Wayne County Land Bank
5.D	Incorporate ecologically beneficial landscape management practices in existing parks and open spaces, including native plantings, connectivity for wildlife corridors, pollinator gardens, and limited use of pesticides and herbicides.	Ongoing	\$\$	Local Resources; NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Climate Smart Communities Grant Program; NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Water Quality Improvement Program	Town of Ontario Department of Parks & Recreation; Wayne County Soil & Water Conservation District; Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wayne County; Cornell Integrated Pest Management Program; Genesee Land Trust
5.E	Continue to support partnerships with local and regional conservation organizations and land trusts such as Wayne County Trails, the Genesee Land Trust and the Nature Conservancy to protect, program and steward open spaces and natural areas.	Ongoing	\$	Local Resources	Town of Ontario Department of Parks & Recreation; Genesee Land Trust; The Nature Conservancy (Central and Western New York Chapter); Wayne County Trail Works, Inc.

		Timeline	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Leadership + Strategic Partners
5.F	Work collaboratively with the Wayne County Ag Development Board to develop and implement a Farmland Enhancement Program.	Near-term	\$\$	New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Protection Implementation Grants Program; Local Resources	Town of Ontario; Genesee Land Trust; Wayne County Soil & Water Conservation District;
5.G	Pursue a zoning code update to bring the Town's code into alignment with the Natural Resources Inventory and Farmland Enhancement Program.	Mid-term	\$\$	Local Resources	Town of Ontario

Bolster Civic Connectivity

Goal Statement

Continue to support a vibrant, cohesive social environment and to promote a sense of inclusivity and welcome.



Context

Throughout the public engagement process community members emphasized a sense of community connectivity and civic engagement as vital to the Town's identity. For this reason, it was recognized as a core value. Continuing to cultivate neighbor-to-neighbor connections through programming, civic engagement opportunities and volunteerism is a key component of Onward Ontario. Ontario is home to several community groups, faith-based groups, fraternal orders, and non-profit organizations that all provide extensive opportunities to get involved.

The Town's Community Center is a critical hub for civic connectivity, offering a variety of fitness programming, summer camps, group exercise programs, recreation and child care. Both the Community Survey responses and public workshop dialogue demonstrated a demand to expand community programming, and to create public spaces that will support community gathering and events.

Objectives

- 6.1 Expand and support community programming to engage a wider spectrum of interests, ages and abilities.
- 6.2 Deliver and widely promote an expanded suite of signature community events throughout the year.
- 6.3 Keep it Local – sustain community connectivity by promoting local retail, restaurants and services.
- 6.4 Continue to facilitate civic leadership and engagement among all Ontario residents.
- 6.5 Formalize opportunities for resident-to-local leadership engagement.
- 6.6 Conduct space assessments for Town facilities (library, courts, Town Hall, etc.) for future needs, and explore opportunities for co-location to reduce costs and provide higher convenience to residents.

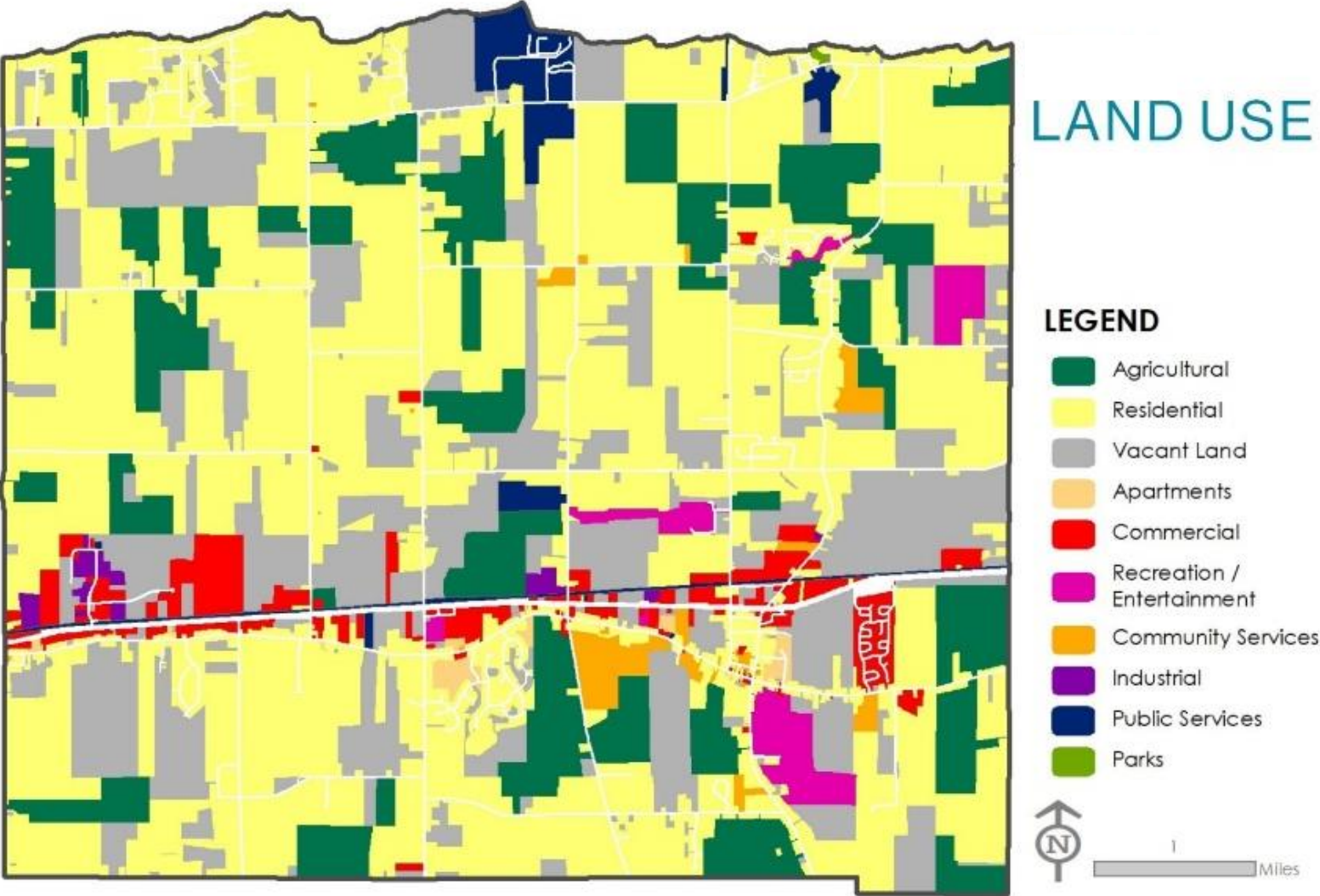
Action Items

		Timeline	Cost	Potential Funding Sources	Leadership + Strategic Partners
6.A	Pursue strategic partnerships with local organizations and businesses to provide desired programming.	Ongoing	\$	Local Resources; BID Assessment; IOBY crowdfunding	Ontario Business Improvement District; Neighborhood + Civic organizations
6.B	Informed by the collaborative neighborhood branding initiative, encourage the formation of community stakeholder committees to advance and steward place-based revitalization initiatives (e.g. the care of parks and public spaces, Gateway treatments, community events, etc.). Dedicate staff resources to facilitating formation and administration of these groups.	Ongoing	\$\$	Local Resources; IOBY crowdfunding	Town of Ontario; Ontario Business Improvement District; Neighborhood + Civic organizations
6.C	Organize a series of "Citizen Academy" programs to create and expand community-based initiatives and ensure open lines of communication between the Community and Town departments.	Near-term	\$\$	Local Resources	Town of Ontario
6.D	Organize quarterly townhall meetings to facilitate expanded resident-to-local leadership engagement.	Ongoing	\$	Local Resources	Town of Ontario

Future Land Use

This plan memorializes our collective values and our community vision for Ontario's future. The above chapters detail specific objectives and action items that detail *how* the Town and its community partners can begin translating the community vision into a reality. Acknowledging that Ontario is poised for continued development, it's also critical that the Plan communicates expectations around *where* future development should take place. The Future Land Use Framework detailed here is intended to provide guidance to regulatory bodies (planning and zoning boards, Town board, etc.) involved in the evaluation of future development applications, and as a guide for the future development of zoning and other regulatory frameworks.





Existing Land Use and Development Capacity

The majority of land within the Town of Ontario is considered viable agricultural land under Wayne County Agricultural District No. 1, which provides the local farming community with certain safeguards to keep productive lands in production. While these lands are considered viable for agricultural production and actively farmed, in some cases these parcels are in reality idle, forested, residential or commercial and the protections under the Agricultural District apply only to active farm operations and land used in agricultural production. §305-a of New York's Agricultural Districts Law (ADL) prohibits the enactment and administration of comprehensive plans, laws, ordinances, rules or regulations by local governments which would unreasonably restrict or regulate farm operations within an agricultural district, unless it can be shown that the public health or safety is threatened. Accordingly, consideration of agricultural uses should be paramount in evaluating the Town's development potential.

Residential area is the predominant land use in Ontario, distributed across town limits. Commercial areas are largely concentrated around the Route 104 and Ridge

Road Corridors, and the bulk of industrial uses are situated along Route 104 accounted for in part by the Town's industrial parks.

Development demand in Ontario is concentrated largely on the west side of town, where infrastructure constraints are tightest. Water distribution mains service nearly all existing roads throughout town, with limited exceptions including the eastern limits of Route 104. At present, only select portions of the Town are served by sanitary sewer, limited largely to parcels outside of Wayne County Agricultural District No. 1 on portions of the Route 104 corridor, the Ridge Road corridor, the Furnace/ Walworth Road corridor, and portions of Knickerbocker Road.

The Town's growth capacity will depend largely on the specific location and type of development; the Town should continue to apply the lenses of infrastructure needs and agricultural protection in interpreting the character areas outlined here and as development proposals area considered. As detailed in the above recommendations, the Town should pursue development of a capital improvement plan to address the provision of critical infrastructure where it doesn't currently exist.

Existing Zoning

The Town's zoning code regulates the types and location of land uses in Ontario. The Town of Ontario Zoning Map (below) was last amended in 2012 and defines ten distinct zoning districts:

Rural (R-1) District

This district spans sections of the north side of town, including limited waterfront parcels, and flanks the Ginna property and transmission lines. The purpose of this district is to foster agricultural operations and primarily rural residential land uses; to maintain an open rural character of the community; and to protect viable agricultural soils.

Rural (R-2) District

This district accounts for the largest share of land in Ontario. The purpose of this district is to promote the orderly development of residential land uses and maintain an open rural character of the community.

Suburban Residential (SR) District

This district is concentrated along the south side of Ridge Road, and along the Knickerbocker and Furnace Road corridors, north of NYS Route 104. This district is primarily designated for single-family residential use at low density. Notably, while the conversion of existing buildings into three or fewer dwelling units is permitted within this district, townhomes are not presently permitted though there is significant development demand and capacity for this dwelling type.

Urban Residential (UR) District

This district is concentrated along the central and western reaches of the Ridge Road corridor, and primarily designated for a variety of residential buildings or structures with mixed density and other uses, including multifamily units and townhomes.

Planned Unit Development

In a planned unit development (PUD), a unified and integrated development plan is substituted for conventional zoning to encourage greater flexibility in the design and development of substantial land area (typically 50 or more acres). This approach is intended to achieve economies in the construction of an adequate and efficient road and utility systems -- thereby lowering

housing and community costs, and to provide and preserve open space the natural environment. Under the Town's current code, a minimum of 15% of the gross site area of the PUD must be devoted to common open space, a maximum of 15% of the gross land area may be used for nonresidential purposes, and the number of dwelling units cannot exceed the maximum number of units permitted by conventional zoning regulations for the district into which the Planning Board determines the particular use would fall. Under the current code, a wide range of uses are permitted either by right, with special conditions or by special permit.

Business (B) District

Concentrated exclusively along the Route 104 and Ridge Road corridors, this district is designated for general retail, service and office activities to provide goods and services, residential and other uses. Notably, a wide range of residential uses are permitted within this district, including single-family, townhomes, multifamily dwellings and dwellings on upper floors of commercial uses.

Business Transitional (BT) District

Concentrated along the central and eastern reaches of the Route 104 Corridor, this district is designated for commercial service, storage and light-industrial processing activities, residential and other uses.

Industrial (I) District

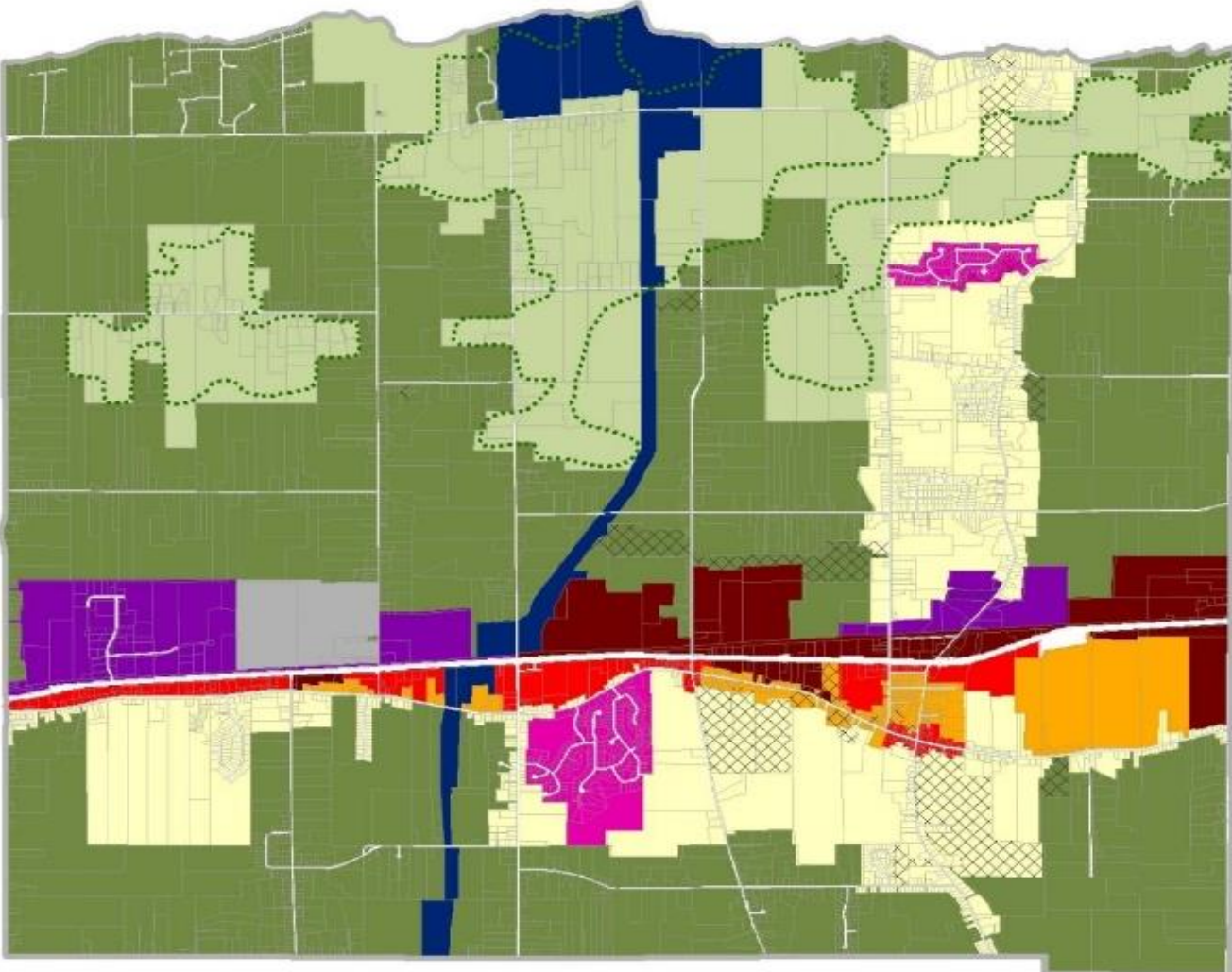
This district is reserved for public utilities, light industrial, heavy industrial and ancillary uses, and largely concentrated within designated industrial parks and the areas flanking them.

Public Utility (PU) District

This district accommodates the Ginna power plant on the shores of Lake Ontario, and the transmission lines that run centrally north-south through Town. This district is established for use by a public utility plant and associated facilities. Notably, uses for permanent hazardous waste storage and disposal are not permitted within this district.

Adult Entertainment/Industrial (AE/I) District

This district, occupying a small portion of the Route 104 corridor, permits public utilities, light industrial, heavy industrial, adult entertainment and other uses.



ZONING

LEGEND

- District**
- Rural (R-1)
 - Rural (R-2)
 - Suburban Residential (SR)
 - Urban Residential (UR)
 - Planned Unit Development (PUD)
 - Business (B)
 - Business Transitional (BT)
 - Industrial (I)
 - Public Utility
 - Adult Entertainment (AE)
 - Community / Open Space
 - Ag
- ↑ N
1 Miles

Incentive Zoning

In accordance with § 261-b of the Town Law of the State of New York, the Ontario Town Board is empowered to provide for a system of zoning incentives. That the use of incentive zoning for any given project must be consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Under the current code, this system is intended to encourage developers to advance the following objectives from the Town's Comprehensive Plan:

- protect highly valued ecological resources and environmentally sensitive areas.
- protect active farm operations.
- preserve greenways and important open spaces, develop the Ontario Trail System, preserve historic and archaeological resources and protect high-quality scenic resources.
- provide a sound mix of housing types.
- promote the provision of neighborhood services in growing areas in a carefully planned manner with a design quality reflecting the values of the community, with a secondary benefit of relieving some traffic congestion in other areas of the Town.
- To secure important public works improvements which would not otherwise be provided, such as

extending sidewalks, connecting residential areas with schools or providing stormwater detention and treatment basins in excess of that necessitated by immediate project demand.

Under current code the Town Board can apply incentive zoning in any zoning district, and can grant the below list of incentives in exchange for the below community benefits and amenities:

Permitted Incentives:

- Increases in residential unit density.
- Development of current residential unit density over a full parcel, as long as an equivalent amount of the open space that would have been required is provided for elsewhere.
- Changes in lot area and dimensional requirements.
- Changes of use.
- Reduction/elimination of the recreation fee required under the Town of Ontario fee schedule.
- Reduction of road construction standards.

Permitted Community Benefits:

- Agricultural conservation, open space, scenic, ecological, historic or other permanent conservation easements.
- Donations of land in fee simple for conservation and other community benefit purposes.
- Construction of recreation amenities, serving a Town-wide need, accessible to the general public.
- Construction or improvement to public works above and beyond that required to mitigate proposed impacts in accordance with SEQRA and this Code.
- Preservation and improvements of historical or cultural sites or structures.
- Other facilities or benefits to the residents of the community, as determined by the Town Board.
- Any combination of the above-listed community benefits or amenities.

Future Land Use Map**How to Use the Future Land Use Map**

The Future Land Use Framework isn't a regulatory document in and of itself but is a conceptual guide for

realizing the community's broad land use priorities for the future of Ontario. It doesn't delimit specific parcels or include an exhaustive list of areas prime for change or development because it's not intended to be a static document – it remains conceptual in order to adapt to emerging conditions, changing needs, and to allow for detailed zoning boundaries, specific permitted uses, dimensions and performance standards to flex.

Accordingly, the map should be considered flexibly, particularly in terms of transitions between each character area. Context is paramount. If, for example, a commercial project is proposed for a location squarely within the agricultural character area with limited relevance or support for agricultural or open space land uses, it is likely not a strategic fit. If the same project were proposed for a location at the edges of the agricultural character area and adjacent to the commercial core character area (a "transitional area"), that project may be more appropriate for consideration. In short, transitional areas should be treated liberally in their interpretation.

Future Land Use Character Areas

Town Center/Downtown

The central span of Ontario's Ridge Road corridor is poised to be a hyperlocal, connected downtown district. This approximately half-mile stretch is anchored by community services and Town-owned buildings, small businesses and buildings that can support commercial uses on the ground floor and multiple family dwellings on upper floors, as well as multiple parcels that could host infill development. Land uses within this character area should provide for diversified residential offerings, additional community anchors that foster civic connectivity, and should cultivate thriving local businesses that generate foot traffic. Auto-oriented uses should be avoided wherever possible. The adoption of design standards should be considered to guide adaptive reuse and infill development, which balance historic preservation efforts with emerging needs, and generally adhere to the mass and scale of the surrounding buildings.

Compatible uses include:

- Mixed-use developments featuring multifamily (attached) residential, retail, and service uses
- Attached, multi-family residential (generally upper-story or as ancillary to freestanding residential buildings such as over-garage units, etc.)
- Infill single-family residential
- Retail, office, and service-oriented uses (exclusive of "big box" development)
- Community services (Government, Health, Education, Libraries, Civic and Religious)
- Cultural uses
- Parks, natural areas, recreation, and associated services (public or private)
- Lodging and tourism-related uses

Neighborhood Residential

Ontario's residential neighborhoods encompass a continuum of historic main street single family homes, to new-build suburban single-family homes, to planned townhome and apartment developments. The consistent theme that future development within this character area should reinforce include connectivity to community assets and services, provision of open space, and

neighborhood-scale infrastructure – all features that contribute to the quality of life in Ontario. Any non-residential uses should be intended and should function to serve the neighborhoods in which they are located, with priority given to pedestrian scale versus auto-oriented development.

Compatible uses include:

- All freestanding residential with lots less than one acre
- Attached residential (townhomes, patio homes and apartments)
- In-home businesses
- Neighborhood-level commercial enterprises, particularly when developed in mixed-use format with multi-family residential
- Community services (Government, Health, Education, Libraries, Civic and Religious)
- Cultural uses
- Parks, natural areas, recreation, and associated services (public or private)

Commercial Corridor

NYS Route 104 traverses the entirety of Ontario. By design, this corridor serves the region as a main East-West arterial road. Accordingly, future development in this character area should capitalize on regional commerce and economic activity. In developing regulatory mechanisms and zoning for this area, stringent access management tools should be considered to ensure pedestrian and vehicular safety, and to mitigate traffic impacts on adjacent Town roads. Design standards should also be considered to reflect community character and not “Anytown, USA,” particularly at gateways, key intersections and areas immediately flanking this corridor.

Compatible uses include:

- Larger-scale commercial enterprises serving the entire Town and surrounding region
- Industrial, manufacturing, research, warehousing, and associated uses
- Multi-family residential development, including townhomes, condominiums, apartment buildings, and other densely developed housing (excluding detached single-family housing)
- Medical and community service uses

- Lodging and tourism-related uses
- Education and cultural uses

Agriculture and Open Space Preservation

The Agriculture and Open Space Preservation character area is defined by active farmlands and scenic open spaces. As reinforced in our community values, Ontario's local farms and agribusinesses support livelihoods, provide the community with access to fresh produce, define the beautiful backdrop of our community and support agritourism in our region. Our future land use plan will continue to protect and support Ontario's agricultural industry. While Wayne County Agricultural District No. 1 covers the majority of Town limits, the existing land use map demonstrates that agriculture continues to face development pressures in Ontario. Accordingly, uses within this character area should be largely dedicated to agricultural and open space uses, and future land use regulations should strongly consider restricting development to these uses, along with supporting uses that preserve or enhance agriculture and open space. Compatible uses include:

- Traditional and modern farming operations
- Agriculture support industries, including processing, storage, logistics and associated operations
- Other operations that are dependent upon agriculture
- Parks, recreation, and associated services (public or private)
- Lodging and tourism uses dependent upon agriculture or open space provision (agritourism)
- Low-density residential (1-acre lots or greater)

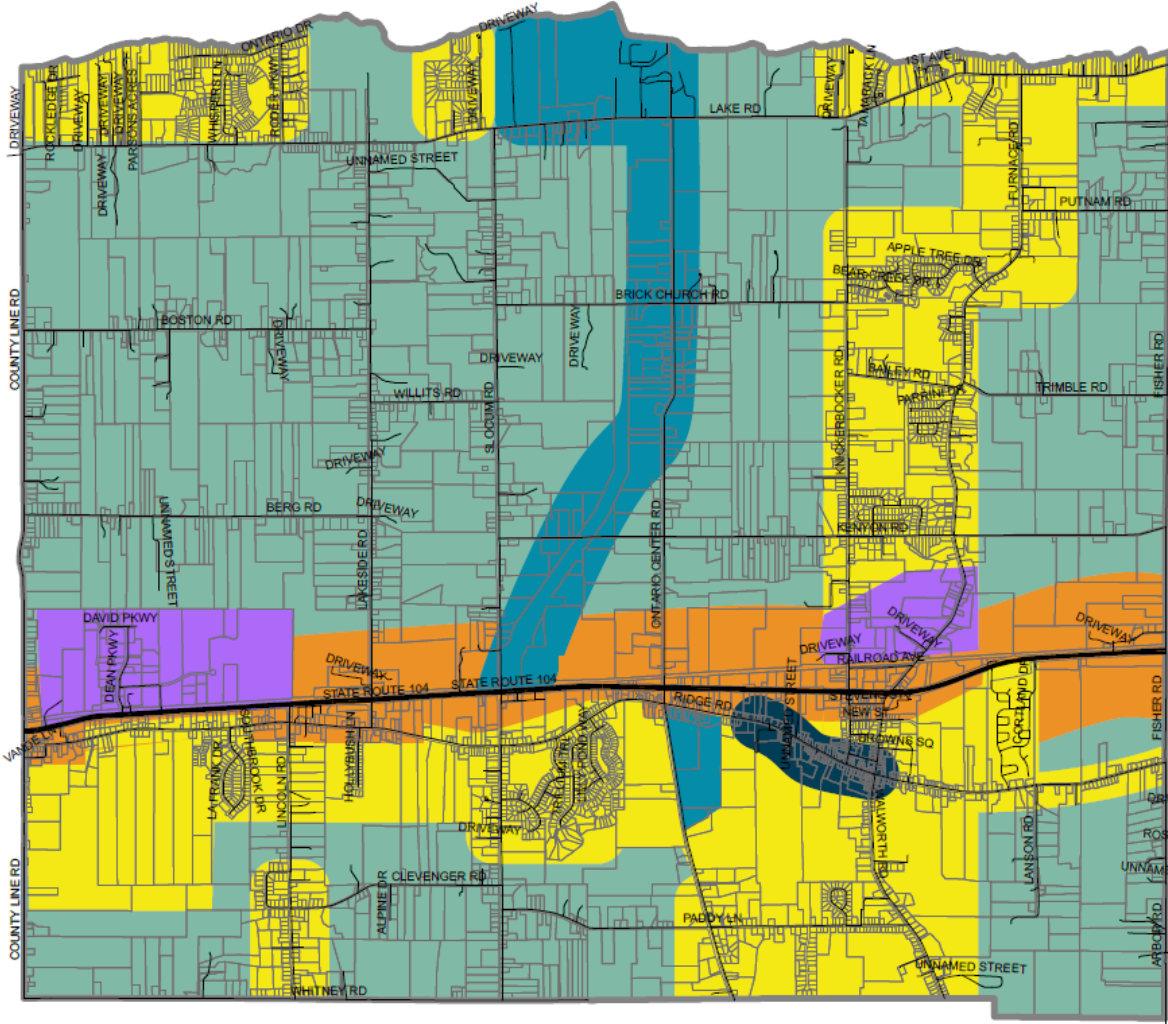
Community Infrastructure

This character area is dominated by the area currently occupied by Ginna Nuclear Power Plant on the shores of Lake Ontario, and the transmission lines that run north-south centrally through Town. The plant's current license, administered by the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, is set to expire in September 2029, at which point the plant will need to seek a license renewal or be decommissioned. In the case of decommissioning, public input collected through this planning process has suggested that any area found to be environmentally suitable for such use be converted to public recreation

space to increase access to the Town's lakefront, and that associated transmission lines, if ever taken out of service, converted to public trails. Accordingly, this character area is designated for community infrastructure, whether it be a nuclear power plant that brings zero-emission energy to the Town and the region, or - the wake of a Ginna decommissioning - community-centered open space.

Compatible uses include:

- Public Utilities and Infrastructure
- Parks, natural areas, recreation, and associated services (public or private)



FUTURE LAND USE

LEGEND

- Town Center / Downtown
- Neighborhood Residential
- Commercial Corridor
- Agricultural / Open Space
- Community Infrastructure
- Industrial

