

Village West

Revitalization in Amherst



Western New York
September 15, 2021



Downtown
Revitalization
Initiative

Table of Contents

	Page
INTRODUCTION	3
Basic Information	3
Downtown Vision	3
JUSTIFICATION	4
Amherst - Village West	4
DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION	6
Proposed DRI Boundary	6
Past Investment & Future Investment Potential	8
Recent or Impending Job Growth	10
Quality of Life	11
Supportive Local Policies	13
Public Support	17
Transformative Opportunities & Readiness (Projects)	19
1. West Spring Street Redevelopment	21
2. Main Street HAWK Crossing	24
3. Main Street Building Reuse	26
4. South Long Street Redevelopment	28
5. NFTA Park & Ride Mobility Hub	31
6. Plaza Redevelopment & Trail Access	33
7. Main Street Infill	35
8. Reist Street Roundabout	37
9. Park Club Lane Bypass Road & Multi-Use Trail	39
10. Royal Park Entrance Road & Land Preparation	41
11. Main Street Complete Street	43
12. Main Street Building Improvement Program	45
DRI Project Allocations	47
Administrative Capacity	48
Other/Conclusion	49

Introduction

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council: Western New York

Municipality: Town of Amherst

Downtown Name: Village West

County: Erie

Point of Contact: Angela Rossi

Title: Director of Economic Development

Phone: 716-631-7035

Email: arossi@amherst.ny.us

DOWNTOWN VISION

The Town of Amherst envisions growing our already vibrant downtown corridor located in the Village of Williamsville to enrich the quality of life, create wonderful spaces for our residents and visitors to enjoy, and to ensure our built environment is not only maintained but improved. Through supporting catalytic projects, and increasing connectivity and accessibility from the western end of the Town to the Village of Williamsville, we envision a more vibrant, mixed-use downtown corridor continuing west to build off of our rich heritage and extending a walkable, welcoming feel throughout Amherst.

The expanded downtown corridor, "Village West", will be a focal point for residents and visitors. It will become a unique place for people to live and work, small businesses to thrive, and will offer a variety of experiences for all to enjoy such as expanded dining, shopping, art, entertainment, trails, and more. With its easy access to the region via Main Street, established and active business community, and desirability and availability of sites for redevelopment, the Town of Amherst is ready to strengthen its connection to the Village while also creating its own identity as a sustainable, inviting, and livable community. Village West will embrace both its historic roots and modern desires for revitalization.

Justification

AMHERST - VILLAGE WEST



Located just northeast of the City of Buffalo and south of Niagara Falls, the Town of Amherst is both a local and regional destination in the Western New York region. Amherst is the fourth largest municipality in New York State with a population of over 129,000 residents and a daytime population that swells to over 180,000 people who commute to the Town for work. It is the largest town in Upstate New York and has one of the biggest economic anchors in Erie County. Over the past 50 years, Amherst has become a desirable place to live with its abundance of housing, its highly ranked school districts, and its bustling economy and job offerings.

Amherst is home to the State University of New York at Buffalo North Campus (UB), the largest public university in New York State. Located less than three miles from the proposed DRI boundary, UB enrolls over 32,000 students (as of Fall 2020) and offers a variety of degree programs. UB's vision over the next 15 years proposes to add approximately 10,000 students, 750 faculty members and 600 staff, increasing its size by about 40%. UB's contribution to the surrounding region includes approximately \$1.7 billion being invested into the local economy. Amherst is also home to the SUNY Erie Community College (ECC) North Campus east of the Village of Williamsville, a public community college with three campuses serving Erie County, and Daemen College west of the Village, a private college that serves roughly 3,000 students.

Amherst has emerged as a center of activity for the region that includes significant commercial and office development. It has a mix and pattern of land uses reflecting the varied influences that have shaped the Town's growth. Much of the commercial and office uses are located in the southern half of the Town, and there has been a significant comprehensive planning focus in this area of Town over the past five years. The Village of Williamsville continues to be an anchor and is helping to spur revitalization on either side within the Town. Because the DRI program this year can award up to \$20 million, Amherst is applying for \$20 million but in two separate applications of \$10 million each. Both proposed DRI areas, Village West and Village East, enhances the Main Street corridor in the Town. We feel revitalization

is vital in both areas; however, each proposal also can stand alone as they both contain separate catalytic projects and a vision for revitalization.

The Village West corridor, including Main Street connecting to the Village, is a highly traveled area for both vehicles and pedestrians. It attracts residents and outside visitors due to its ideal location and variety of retail, restaurant, grocery, office, and medical uses, and mixed-use developments. Although the area contains such range in economic activity, it also contains numerous vacant or underutilized parcels. Because of this, there is a lack of connections necessary to revitalize Village West to its full potential. Many of these vacant and underutilized parcels have a great deal of potential for redevelopment that would create a more vibrant and cohesive Main Street in Village West.

Existing assets within the Village West area include:

- **Three public parks that are located less than a half mile from Main Street: Royal Park, North Forest Park and South Long Park**
- **Adjacency to Town and Village halls which provide services to residents**
- **A medical corridor providing access to healthcare needs**
- **An NFTA Park & Ride providing a variety of bus route options for those who utilize public transportation**
- **Successful and long-standing small businesses, retail, and hotel space**
- **A rich history and historic character to build from**

These community assets can be enhanced to support to mission of revitalization of Village West, creating walkability and connections to spur increased investment in the area.

Recent and future impactful projects are bringing a positive momentum to the proposed DRI area. Continuing to revitalize the Village West corridor by utilizing a multi-faceted approach is intended to improve both the experience of visitors and to the quality of life of residents and workers. These techniques focus on improving the built environment within the area, creating events and beautification programs that stimulate the local economy by emphasizing the elements of community that promote walkability thereby improving the quality of life of residents and visitors. A thoughtful and strategic transformation of the area is necessary to accelerate the plan to create a more vibrant, walkable Village West and to align with the Town's initiative to improve quality of life, enhance transportation connectivity, safety and accessibility, and improve walkability. It also prioritizes job creation and



focuses on economic development strategies and initiatives.



Key visions to spark revitalization through access include: the creation of a multi-use trail which will provide increased access and connectivity to retail, restaurants, medical offices, and three public parks; a HAWK crossing, a Complete Street initiative, and creation of a Mobility Hub to promote safe access for all modes of transportation. In addition, a Building Improvement Program to create a more cohesive aesthetic and spur small business attraction and retention is also proposed. Additional transformative projects have been identified to include redeveloping vacant properties, creating mixed-use building opportunities, and expanding space for growing businesses.

Downtown Identificiation

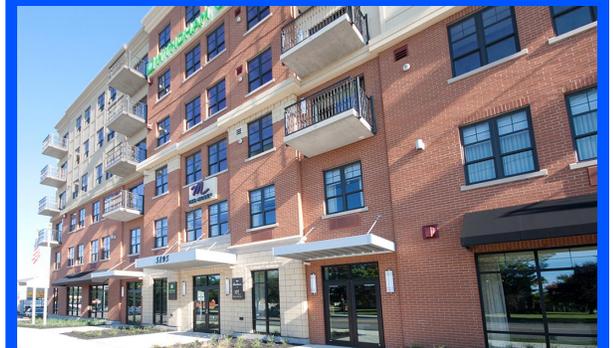
PROPOSED DRI BOUNDARY



The Village West area in the Town of Amherst is easily identifiable by many different establishments and roadways, but mostly due to its direct adjacency to the western border of the Village of Williamsville. Many people, both visitors and residents, likely do not realize that this area is actually not part of the Village of Williamsville. The DRI boundary of Village West in Amherst starts at approximately North Union Road at its eastern border, where the Village of Williamsville ends. It continues north following North Union Road, turning back south down North Forest Road and moves further west/north utilizing the old Leigh Valley Railroad right-of-way. It then hugs the eastern side of the interstate (I-290) down to Main Street and continues south to include Royal Park. It also encompasses a small portion of development on Main Street just west of the I-290. Moving east, the boundary includes many of the non-residential parcels along Main Street until it reaches South Union and the Village of Williamsville. The portion of the DRI boundary in the Village of Williamsville includes parcels along Main Street, South Long Street and the Leigh Valley right-of-way, and as far east as Grove Street (see boundary map).

The major highways within the boundary include historic Main Street, running west and east throughout the entire area, and the I-290 at its western border. These act as the major access roads to this area and beyond for visitors and employees. Other local roadways that are heavily utilized by vehicular traffic include Park Club Lane, North Forest Road, North Union Road, Reist Street, and South Long Street.

Extending approximately seven blocks, Village West is a compact historic and business area. However, it is large enough that it includes a number of economic and community development assets that are sufficient to support a vibrant downtown. Distinguishable establishments, especially to local residents, include Tops Markets, the Tony Walker Center, The Mosey, Elderwood, Univera, Roswell Park, North Forest Park and Royal Park in Amherst. In the Village of Williamsville, Spot Coffee, Panera, Rite Aid, the Village Square Apartments, the Williamsville Cemetery, and South Long Park are popular destinations. The medical "spine" along Park Club Lane, containing Roswell, Univera, Trinity Medical Orthopaedics, and WNY Imaging employ a multitude of people from the region who travel to work every day through the DRI boundary. Both the Town Hall Municipal Building and the Williamsville Village Hall are located directly to the east of the boundary, offering a centralized spot of services in close proximity. There are also various underutilized properties that are ripe with future redevelopment potential to bolster this area's economy and walkability.

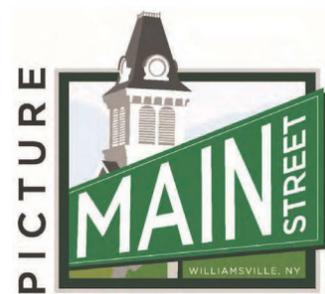


PAST INVESTMENT & FUTURE INVESTMENT POTENTIAL

The Village West area has benefited from significant public and private investments in recent years, which has established an environment conducive to further growth. While the Town of Amherst is rife with private investment throughout, the following past and anticipated investments are within or will expand redevelopment of the Village West area:

Past Public and Private Investment

The East Spring Street redevelopment project in the Village of Williamsville was completed in 2016. With a focus on green infrastructure and storm management, this multi-million dollar project transformed an area in the Village, directly adjacent to this DRI area, into a small walkable and vibrant street which continues to invite more visitors to the successful businesses along the thoroughfare. This investment along the East Spring Street corridor transformed the street into a vibrant village square of activity, boasting a destination candy and ice cream shop, reuse of historic buildings, incredible dining, and access to Glen Falls Park. In addition, the community came together to build a new playground at Island Park and improve this greenspace.



The \$4.2 million Picture Main Street project completed in 2018, was an initiative led by the Village of Williamsville. This successful venture created a safer corridor for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers which boosted access to Main Street businesses within the project boundary. With new bustling activity in the heart of the Village, a HAWK crossing was also added, significantly improving walkability and pedestrian safety. A DRI investment in Village West has potential to enhance and extend the Picture Main Street initiative, creating a true downtown area throughout more of the Main Street corridor and sparking economic development while enhancing safe access to businesses and public amenities.

Other private investment has occurred along Main Street in the past several years. This includes expansion of the existing Irishman restaurant which added an outdoor bar and patio area and a new brewery and restaurant next door along Ellicott Creek called Britesmith which rehabilitated old medical office space and opened in 2020, becoming a popular new destination for residents. There is also another mixed-use building currently being constructed at 5712



Main Street just a few blocks east of these developments.

The Mosey was constructed and opened in 2013 in response to the demand for more housing specifically near the Village of Williamsville. Located in the DRI area, the Mosey is a mixed-use building constructed by Ellicott Development which offers hotel space, apartments for rent and condominiums along with a spa and a restaurant on the ground floor. The developer worked with the Town to address zoning and planning approvals to develop a building more in line with a walkable vision.

This helped facilitate just one small piece of the evolving vision for this area. Two hotels have also recently been constructed/rehabilitated directly adjacent to Village West, west of the I-290 and another mixed-use development similar to the Mosey is being proposed half a mile down Main Street in Snyder.

Future Public and Private Investment

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has plans to reconfigure the I-290 entrance and exit ramps along Main Street in the proposed DRI Village West area. With reconfiguration, the southern clover portion of the ramps will be removed, creating space that could be utilized by the Town for future recreation purposes. This future investment would also create improved access for pedestrians and bicyclists to the DRI area, generating new efficient traffic patterns and encouraging investment with the increased accessibility. Additionally, this future investment by the NYS DOT supports the Town's planned Royal Park improvements, which include a private/public partnership between the Town of Amherst and Daemen College to create a new sports field for their programs.



LaBella
Powered by partnership

199 Park Club Lane
Campus Expansion

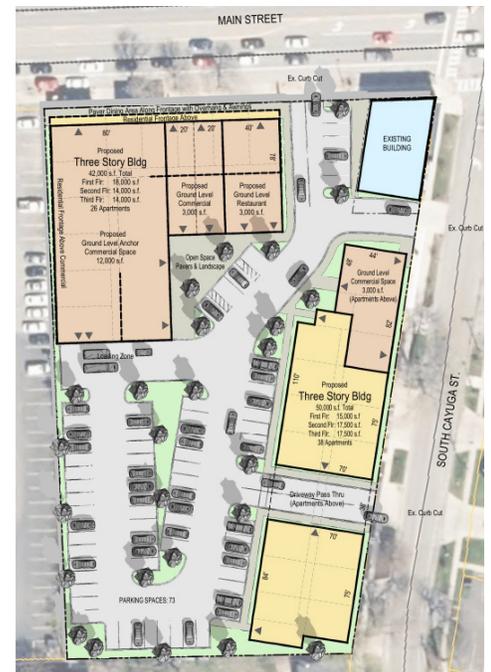
Ciminelli
REAL ESTATE CORPORATION

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has announced plans for a 26,000 square-foot expansion of their Amherst campus, currently located within the DRI area along Park Club Lane. The expansion will create a hub for cancer patients in and around Amherst and neighboring communities by expanding the services currently available at Roswell Park's satellite site on College Parkway. This public investment in a critical medical facility is slated to increase the number of visitors to the proposed DRI area and creates more jobs, all of which supports planning efforts to spark additional investment in Village West. It is expected to

attract anchor tenants to support the vibrancy and continuing services in this area.

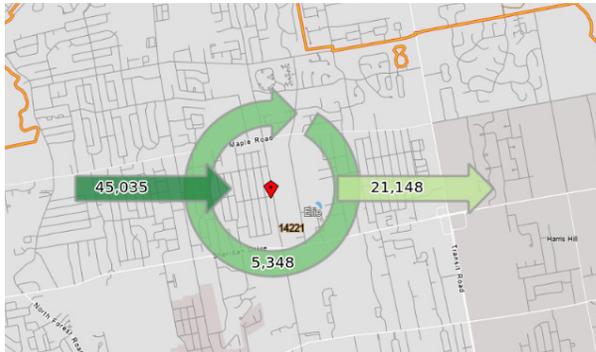
Another mixed-use development being proposed is adjacent to the existing Bank of America building, half of a mile east down Main Street adjacent to the Village West DRI area, at the corner of Cayuga Road. Slated to include 36,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space with approximately 64 apartments above, this development will be created in multiple, three-story buildings. These buildings will have a built-in customer base to stimulate business activity within, and will be massed and located following the design criteria set forth in the Village's Form Based Zoning Code - adopted specifically to facilitate developments of this type.

Successful past investments along with proposed and completed projects prove the capacity the Village West area has for a continued positive transformation. DRI funding will intensify these efforts, bring together private and public initiatives, improve connectivity and give this area the renewal it is striving to achieve.



RECENT OR IMPENDING JOB GROWTH

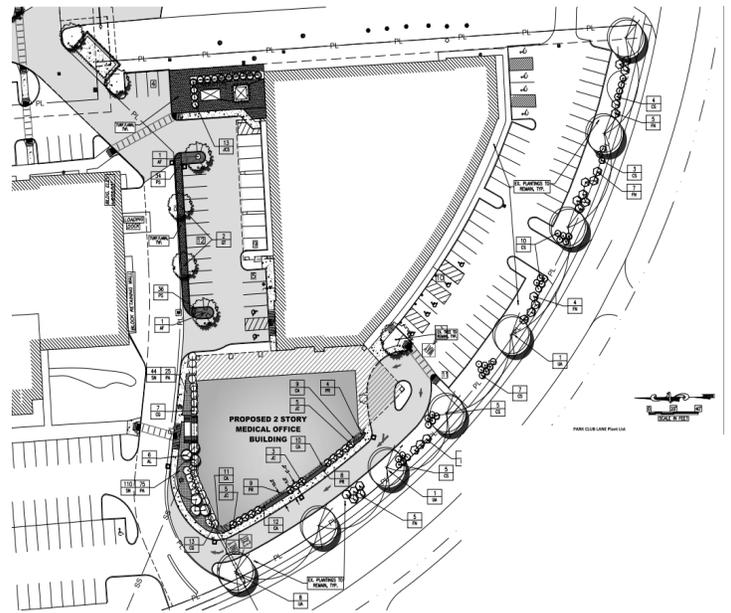
The Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) maintains estimates and forecasts of population, housing, and employment change for all Census Block Groups in Erie and Niagara counties. The current set of forecasts are for 2050, based on 2015 estimates. From 2021 to 2050 the Town of Amherst is expected to solidify its position as a major regional employment center, with a forecasted increase of 13,033 jobs. By 2050 the Town is anticipated to be the location of more than 135,000 jobs.



The DRI area mostly encompasses the Williamsville 14221 zip code, which attracts approximately 45,035 employees from outside this zip code each day who live elsewhere but come to this area of Town to work. Approximately 5,348 residents both live and work in the 14221 zip code, making the total people employed and working in this area approximately 50,383 (per the 2018 United States Census Bureau Inflow/Outflow Analysis). It is vital to capitalize on these workforce numbers through continued public and private investment and DRI funding will accelerate this initiative.

Job growth in Village West can be attributed to recent developments including the Mosey mixed-use development which created 39 new full-time jobs and 11 part-time employment opportunities upon opening. This catalytic project sparked growth through reinvestments at businesses along the corridor and sparked new businesses to open nearby including the Hi-Fi Hits store adjacent to the property and the relocation of a Starbucks adjacent to it, which created additional jobs.

Impending job growth can be seen through up-coming development projects including Roswell Park who has announced plans to expand its Amherst location to create the Roswell Park Scott Bieler Amherst Center, which is located within the DRI area boundaries. Additionally, a mixed-use development which will include 36,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space is proposed to be located just outside the DRI boundary on the corner of Main Street and South Cayuga.



These developments will attract a diverse workforce through its assortment of job offerings to be created between the medial facility expansion and a mixed-use development. The impending growth of specialized industry along with entry level positions will provide a balanced and sustainable job forecast for Village West. Significant opportunities exist throughout Village West to build upon job growth initiatives. As more professionals desire a live-work-play environment, the Town of Amherst continues to focus on enhancing its assets to promote a vibrant downtown area. Through recent and proposed mixed-use developments, the Town is working with developers to ensure the impending job growth from projects, including the proposed Roswell Park expansion, is met with the ability to attract the diverse workforce to an active and sustainable downtown.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Village West in Amherst has all the tools necessary to be an attractive and livable downtown for diverse populations of all ages and socioeconomic status. It does, however, need support to enhance these tools and accelerate its revitalization to reach its full potential. This is a prime location to implement smart growth policies to create a more densely developed, walkable community that will be a destination for business, working, living and public enjoyment. The goal is to extend the Village of Williamsville character into Amherst to enhance the quality of life and offer a wider array of land uses, services, amenities, housing options and job opportunities.

The Village of Williamsville, directly adjacent to the east, prides itself as being both walkable and bikeable. Main Street in the Village (the main thoroughfare) has many Complete Street elements such as continuous sidewalks, on-street parking, vehicular lanes, pedestrian amenities (benches, trash cans, landscaping) and a crosswalk infrastructure which makes it safer for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel. Despite a solid foundation of walkability in the Village of Williamsville, the continuation of these Complete Street elements on Main Street west through the Town only continues in the form of sidewalks and vehicular lanes - the walkable feel diminishes. As can be noted in the picture below, Main Street, the major thoroughfare through this area, is a wide automobile-oriented roadway.



There are a lot of opportunities to further improve upon Village West's walkability and accessibility and attract residents into this area by enhancing the Main Street corridor with similar walkability elements as the Village has, adding connections to the neighborhoods, and providing an attractive mixed-use environment. The vision is to transform its the Village West area's livability into an inviting and aesthetically pleasing center of dynamic activity and economic vitality. The goals for improved quality of life include:

- **Extend the aesthetic qualities from the Village of Williamsville into the Town**
- **Extend walkability to improve health and well being**
- **Develop enhanced pedestrian connections**
- **Encourage mixed-use development to enable a live, work, play environment**
- **Increase safety for all modes of transportation**
- **Provide multi-modal transportation choices**

One major component to the development of the Village West area, and a tremendous asset to the community, is the inventory of vacant or underutilized mixed-use properties that could have a great contribution to the future of Amherst if their full potential is reached. The majority of these are beautiful, historic, architecturally significant properties, located in a walkable community with lots of amenities, that young professionals are searching for when selecting where to live. There is also a significant demand for residential units in the Village and in the Town, as evidenced by the current housing market. With underachieving and vacant mixed-use properties that make intriguing prospects for residential units, and a demonstrated demand for new units in place, Amherst is in a position to greatly enhance the vibrancy of the community by bringing new apartments online that are geared towards those searching for market-rate, affordable, and even luxury residential units. The Town has the demand and the potential to increase the stock - all that is needed now is to help spur the investment necessary to create new units so they are available for individuals searching for a place to live.



Another aspect that makes Amherst attractive is the commercial and retail businesses located here. People working or living in this DRI area can walk to an ice cream shop, a comic book store, several restaurants and bars, a grocery store, two municipal buildings, a public library, banks, churches, and professional services of a wide variety. The Village of Williamsville has many planned events including Old Home Days, Music on Main Street, and a farmer's market at Village Hall in the summer which could be expanded to include the Village West area should it be revitalized. A pedestrian-friendly focus as part of the overall vision of this area will create improved mobility and gathering places, allowing more time for shopping, eating, socializing and enjoyment of what the

Village West area has to offer, which is something millennials and generation Z wants as an aside to work. Increased opportunity for walking and biking can help improve resident health and well-being as well.

Retrofit of the Village West area will induce redevelopment with a greater variety of uses, public greenspace and amenities, opportunities for improved mobility (walking and biking) and healthy living that will satisfy and enhance the current and future needs of residents on the site and in the nearby community. The availability of a wider range of jobs and goods and services, as well as a more enticing public realm, will contribute to the overall attractiveness, sense of place and vibrancy of this area. It is intended to become a new and more vital downtown center for Amherst.



SUPPORTIVE LOCAL POLICIES

Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan provides guidance and defines the desired vision for the future of the Town. The vision statement is derived from three fundamental attributes:

- **Livability**
- **Community Character**
- **Shared Direction**

These three attributes speak to the Village West area which aims to create a pedestrian-friendly, interconnected, mixed-use area, balancing economic growth and revitalization with maintaining an older commercial corridor. The Plan established goals to support this vision and policies for land use and development and economic development.

These land use goals and policies in the Plan envision a Town with a strong tax based and ample economic opportunities for a diverse base of employers and employees in attractive commercial developments in convenient and accessible locations. Promoting the redevelopment of walkable, high density, mixed-use centers, targeting capital improvements to leverage private investment, coordinating with public transportation and the location of community facilities, and enhancing community appearance are key land use objectives in the Plan that fully support the objectives and projects listed for the Village West area. A recent amendment to the Town’s Comprehensive Plan focused on the revision of policies that would promote investment in more sustainable forms of mixed-use

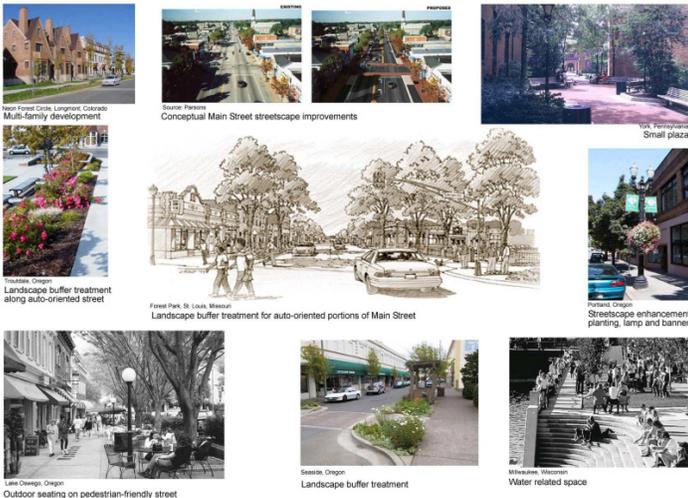
development to improve quality of life. A primary objective for economic development is to advance the redevelopment and revitalization of underutilized, obsolete and vacant properties for economically viable uses. The Plan recommends reinvestment, adaptive reuse and partial to full redevelopment where market conditions, site location and other factors warrant it.

The Plan also outlines goals and objectives for providing an expanded and enhanced open space and greenway network, developing a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian network; respecting history and heritage by preserving historic resources and showcasing them for future education; and creating an active community life through recreation, senior,

and other programs. There is also a Williamsville Focal Planning Area in Chapter 10 of the Plan which includes the following initiatives and strategies:

- **Improve the streetscape on Main Street and create guidelines**
- **Encourage traditional forms of development**
- **Create a cohesive village center focus**
- **Develop enhanced pedestrian connections**
- **Encourage mixed-use**
- **Initiate physical improvements to the intersection of the I-290 and Main Street**
- **Reinforce neighborhood connections to local amenities**
- **Consolidate and redevelop underutilized or vacant properties**

The revitalization of Village West will enable some of these goals and policies to come to move forward.



Amherst Mixed-Use Zoning Districts

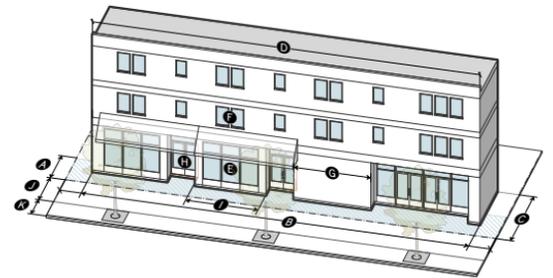


The land use objectives in the Comprehensive Plan recommended improvements to the Town's Zoning Code to encourage mixed-use development and improved site and building design in a more context-sensitive manner. This resulted in a Comprehensive Plan Amendment in 2017 which included revisions to the existing goals, objectives and policies, specifically focused in Chapter 3: Land Use and Development, to support future updates to the zoning regulations.

A majority of the Town's commercial centers are zoned as General Business (GB) or Shopping Center (SC). These districts were originally crafted to promote suburban growth and development located along large, commercial corridors. While the GB and SC zoning districts may have generated suitable results in a suburban setting, the Town has come to realize they are not appropriate for use in areas embedded in existing neighborhoods or located along traditional, historic streets such as in Village West. Over time it became clear that the "one-size fits all" approach was ineffective and new zoning tools were needed to manage new development and keep pace with current and future development trends. Subsequently, in 2019, the Town amended its Zoning Code and created new Mixed-Use Zoning Districts.

The new mixed-use district involve a more form-based approach with a focus on building form and design rather than use. These provisions address building materials and transparency, height transitions to neighborhoods, and landscaping requirements, and also establish smaller street grids within larger developments. New streets are intended to improve vehicular connections, access, and traffic flow both within properties and on adjacent roadways. Various street types are proposed, with a Core Street requirement for the Center Districts which incorporate Complete Street principles such as pedestrian amenities, bike lanes, landscaping, and on-street parking. Since the Town approved the new Mixed-Use Zoning Districts in Fall of 2019, it has successfully applied the mixed-use districts to approximately 200 commercial parcels in its Boulevard Central District, and most recently applied them to 35 parcels within Snyder, another, similar historic hamlet on Main Street west of Village West.

5A-2-4. Village Frontage



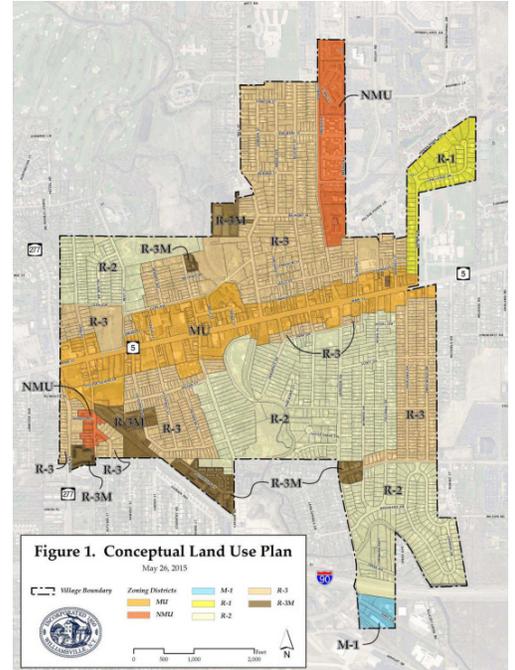
It is the Town's intention to continue these rezonings to encourage a mix of land uses that combine to make working, shopping, recreation, and living more convenient. Village West has been a top priority and is slated as the next area to be rezoned with mixed-use districts in order to correspond to and complement its historic context with the Village of Williamsville to the east. This will also help to create a desirable downtown district for Amherst. Through the implementation of the new zoning, redevelopment will induce a traditional, human-scale "Main Street" environment, activate street life, provide for walkability, and generate increased interest from developers to reimagine and redevelop their properties. Initial phases of redevelopment on a few key sites can begin to introduce new, walkable mixed-use areas.

Village of Williamsville

The historic Village of Williamsville occupies a unique niche within the Buffalo-Niagara area. Within easy commuting distance to Buffalo, regional shopping destinations, and transportation infrastructure including the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport, the Village is both an attractive place to live and in which to do business. The demands of the automobile, however, have had the biggest impact on Village fabric and the very character and qualities that make Williamsville special. As traffic on Main Street increased, improvements such as road widening and turning lanes were made to avoid gridlock. Unfortunately, these changes came at a cost to pedestrians and Village character. Surrounded today by suburban malls and big box retail developments, the Village desires to continue its heritage and history into Amherst to transform this area of the Town.

The Village’s Community Plan, last updated in 2015, provides a series of strategies that can be implemented to mitigate traffic impacts, focus on future land use and small businesses, and leverage the potential of the Village’s pedestrian environment to its fullest. Early on in the public process, it became clear that Village residents valued the historic character of Main Street and the mix of uses that are the hallmarks of a vibrant village center. The plan recommends the following qualities of a walkable, mixed-use environment:

- A mix of uses at a higher density and in closer proximity to one another than what is typically found in surrounding, lower density areas
- Urban design amenities such as sidewalks, landscaping and other elements to create pedestrian-friendly environments
- A concentration of public and community facilities, including schools
- Vehicular and pedestrian/bicycle connections to surrounding neighborhoods
- Transit service



The Plan sets forth land use classifications that derive from this vision for the Village. Such land use classifications help to guide decision making and action by the Village, and set the stage for possible future changes to Village regulations and policies. The Village’s Zoning Code also provides provisions to bolster and enhance the existing mixed-use, walkable fabric along Main Street while preserving neighborhoods. Two special “Focus Areas” were also identified during the course of the project: South Long Street and “Village Square,” both of which present unique opportunities and challenges and desire a deeper level of analysis. The Plan also presents economic development strategies that will help make the land use vision for Williamsville a reality. Understanding Williamsville’s role in the larger economic setting of the

Buffalo-Niagara metropolitan area is key. Their Plan charts a course that advances the Village’s vision for itself within the context of these economic realities and that can be continued outside the Village boundaries.

Regional Plans and Goals

There have been various regional plans undertaken by various regional entities including the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA). They, along with other organizations in the region, created a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development entitled "One Region Forward: A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara" which weaves together nearly three years of research, community engagement, partnership building and planning by over 5,000 citizens and more than 700 local organizations. The plan explores ideas and potential strategies to align actions to regional values, and provides a basic framework for moving the region towards a more sustainable, resilient, prosperous and opportunity-rich future. It offers insights on the future impacts of various approaches to regional development and provides guidance on how the region can work together to create a sustainable, livable Buffalo Niagara of the future.

The GBNRTC has updated its Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) "Moving Forward 2050," a primary tool for laying out significant, long-term improvements in the regional transportation system. It looks at creating a fully connected region with more options and opportunities, such as new micro-mobility options, enhancements to transit, Smartly Enhanced Multi-Modal Arterials (SEMAs), a regional bicycle network, and more. Chapter 5 identifies a Main Street Knowledge Corridor because of its connection of commercial development, educational institutions and access to public transit. In addition, the GBNRTC recently completed a Regional Bike Master Plan entitled "Bike Buffalo Niagara." The Plan includes priority corridors to close gaps in the network and design guidelines that support bicycling as a safe, comfortable, and healthy form of transportation, recreation and physical activity. It identifies the Lehigh Valley trail



Main Street Knowledge Corridor:
Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC) to Erie Community College North

as a future Tier 1 off-road greenway trail which connects to the existing Lehigh Memorial Trail in the Village of Williamsville.

In 2018, the GBNRTC and the NFTA jointly published a Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Plan which demonstrates that the proposed investment of an extended public transit system will not only enhance mobility options for the community but also serve to support broader social and economic goals by promoting Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). The study shows that a Metro Rail expansion not only enhances regional mobility, but is part of a larger regional investment strategy to leverage economic and community development opportunities associated with transit investment.

TAKING ACTION

Leverage university and college connections to act as a "living lab" for transportation innovations like:

- 
Vehicle to Infrastructure technology
- 
Connected Vehicles
- 
Autonomous Vehicles (particularly in snow)
- 
Data collection and management
- 
Equity and technology
- 
Mobility hubs
- 
Electric Vehicle charging
- 
Smart lighting
- 
Smart sensors to detect pedestrian, cyclists, vehicles and real-time road conditions
- 
Testing sustainable materials
- 
Coordinated and priority signals for transit, pedestrians and cyclists

PUBLIC SUPPORT

Amherst's neighborhoods form the foundation of our community and the building blocks to the Town's continued success. It is important to reach out to neighborhoods and residents to understand the valued characteristics, current issues, and future opportunities in various areas of Town; this is essential for effective community planning. Amherst has always been diligent in collecting community input with each project or initiative it carries out.

Recently, the Town conducted a series of Neighborhood Visioning Forums in 10 neighborhoods throughout the Town; this effort won a New York Upstate American Planning Association (NY Upstate APA) award for Community Outreach. These forums provided an opportunity for Town representatives and staff to meet with residents and property owners to discuss existing conditions, examine local concerns, and recognize opportunities for improvement and future desires in each of the 10 neighborhoods. This provided the Town with extensive neighborhood level data to help shape future Town planning.

The forum held in the Williamsville area had five breakout tables, each of which participated in an exercise to list historic and current assets, and opportunities within the neighborhood. Residents were also asked the question "If you could change, improve, implement or create one thing moving forward, what would it be?" The following depicts the assets and common themes from each of those breakout groups within the Williamsville neighborhood. Residents and property owners understand the important benefits of a revitalized Village West in terms of the goods and services, quality of life, jobs and economic prosperity it could offer for years to come. This information was instrumental for shaping a vision for Village West and identification of projects in this application.

Williamsville Forum Summary

COMMON THEMES:

- Less traffic congestion / more traffic calming on Main Street
- Pedestrian safety improvements
- Complete Streets elements & walkability
- Sidewalk and street lighting improvements
- Interconnected parks and additional recreational and trail options
- Appropriately scaled mixed-use development with small businesses
- Increased housing options
- Reuse/redevelopment of vacant sites

HISTORIC ASSETS:

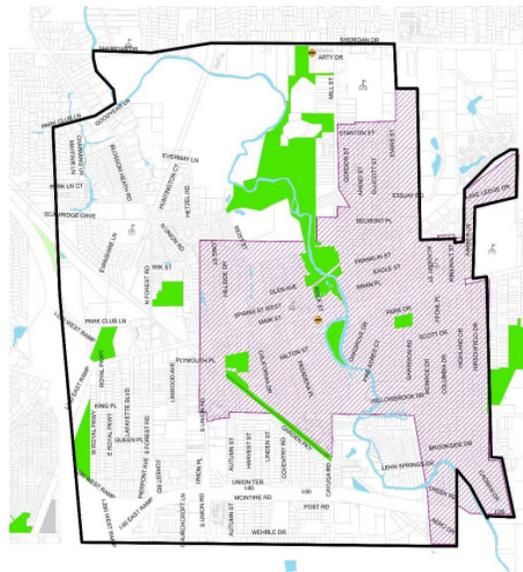
- Sense of neighborhood/community character
- Good schools
- Large, mature trees
- Safe community
- Small, locally-owned businesses
- Rich culture and history

CURRENT ASSETS:

- Availability / access to parks
- Strong / safe neighborhood
- Reuse and preservation of historic buildings
- Strong business retention



Another piece to the public forums included a Visual Preference Survey. Residents were shown a series of images of different types of development and asked to rate them on a scale of 1 to 10 depending on whether or not they represent the character and scale that should be in their neighborhood (two different examples are shown below). As expected, the images depicting a denser, mixed-use development garnered a higher ratings than those of more rural or suburban development, indicating that this neighborhood is more comfortable with the commercial character located along Main Street in the Village of Williamsville and may desire that to continue into Amherst in the future.



As evidenced by the letters of support attached to this application, reinvestment and renewal of Village West is viewed as significant for the Town, the Village of Williamsville, and region, and is supported by local leaders and other stakeholders for a number of reasons including job creation, business opportunities, additional housing, connections and walkability, enhancement of amenities, and overall improved quality of life. Although the Town is submitting this DRI application, the Village of Williamsville has been working diligently over the past several years to come up with different improvements and visions for their residents and fully supports the projects listed that would fall under their jurisdiction. Local leaders, small business owners, property owners, and local developers familiar with this area of Town are ready to start the planning process with the Town to ensure that the vision for their properties comes to life.

Transformative Opportunities & Readiness

The Town of Amherst has taken a comprehensive approach to the revitalization of Village West by developing and showcasing a diverse mix of projects in the following categories.

1. Continuation of the Village of Williamsville's walkability, small business success, and historic aesthetic. The following projects (see full list on the Projects Map page) in this category are:

- 1 West Spring Street Redevelopment
- 3 Main Street Building Reuse
- 4 South Long Street Redevelopment

2. Investment in public and municipal spaces to promote enhanced walkability, improved physical connectivity for a variety of modes of transportation, enhancing community aesthetics, and inspiring place-making. The following projects in this category are:

- 2 Main Street HAWK Crossing
- 5 NFTA Park & Ride Mobility Hub
- 8 Reist Roundabout
- 9 Park Club Lane Bypass Road & Multi-Use Trail
- 10 Royal Park Enhancements
- 11 Main Street Complete Street
- 12 Main Street Building Improvement Program

3. Support for private investment consistent with the scale of the Town's vision. The following projects in this category are:

- 6 Plaza Redevelopment & Trail Access
- 7 Main Street Infill



PROJECTS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 West Spring Street Redevelopment
Private Development - Iskalo Development Corporation</p> | <p>7 Main Street Infill
Private Development - Ellicott Development</p> |
| <p>2 Main Street HAWK Crossing
Public - Village of Williamsville</p> | <p>8 Reist Roundabout
Public - Town of Amherst</p> |
| <p>3 Main Street Building Reuse
Private Development - The Cheesy Chick</p> | <p>9 Park Club Lane Bypass Road & Multi-Use Trail
Public - Town of Amherst</p> |
| <p>4 South Long Street Redevelopment
Private Development - Uniland Development Company
Public - Village of Williamsville</p> | <p>10 Royal Park Entrance Road & Land Preparation
Public - Town of Amherst</p> |
| <p>5 NFTA Park & Ride Mobility Hub
Public - Town of Amherst and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA)</p> | <p>11 Main Street Complete Street
Public - Town of Amherst and Village of Williamsville</p> |
| <p>6 Plaza Redevelopment & Trail Access
Private Development - Benchmark Development
Public - Town of Amherst</p> | <p>12 Main Street Building Improvement Program
Public - Town of Amherst</p> |

Project 1

West Spring Street Redevelopment

Private Development

Estimated Project Cost:
\$4,000,000



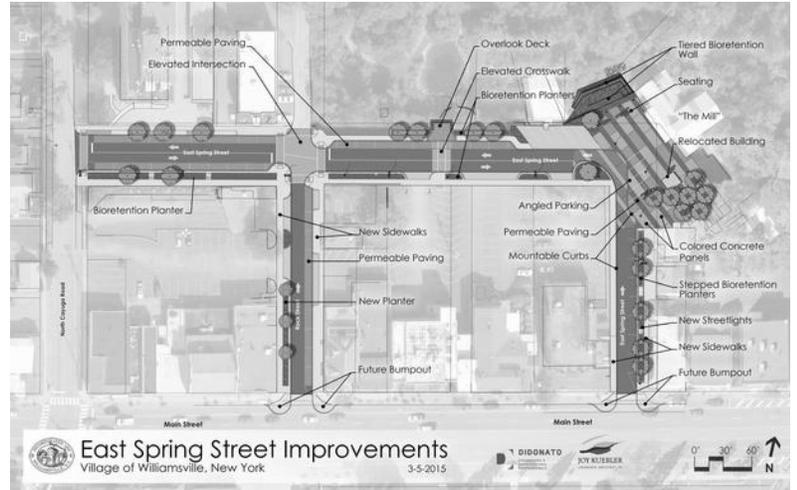
Existing Conditions view

Project Goals

- Create another popular destination in the Village, similar to East Spring Street nearby
- Reconfiguration of interior space, facade improvements, building system upgrades, and additions to the buildings to enable reuse for retail and/or hospitality
- Maintain and enhance a historic landmark
- Create inviting outdoor space and street life
- Provide more accessible parking in the area
- Streetscape enhancements to improve walkability

Iskalo Development has acquired a handful of contiguous properties from multiple owners in the Village of Williamsville area historically known as “Brewery Hill”. Bounded by West Spring Street, Grove Street and Glen Avenue, the centerpiece of the property assemblage is 34 West Spring Street which consists of a commercial building, a portion of which dates back to 1845 with the founding of the Urban & Blocher brewery. Though ownership changed, the building continued to be used as a brewery until 1891. Thereafter, the building had a variety of uses including a cement block business. An addition to the original stone building was constructed circa 1930 increasing its overall size to approximately 14,600 square feet. The Village designated the 34 West Spring Street building as a local historic landmark in 2018. Prior to acquiring the 34 West Spring property, Iskalo acquired 26 West Spring Street which is the adjoining westerly property.

Improvement of the West Spring Street “corridor” has been a community priority as it is viewed as a continuation of the revitalization completed on East Spring Street including the Williamsville Mill property and Glen Park. Now that the key commercial parcels on West Spring Street have been assembled under single ownership, the opportunity exists to make community priority a reality. In this regard, Iskalo has studied the 34 West Spring Street building and site extensively to better understand how it could be adapted for a retail and/or hospitality re-use that would contribute to the vitality and character of the Village as well as become a tourism draw.

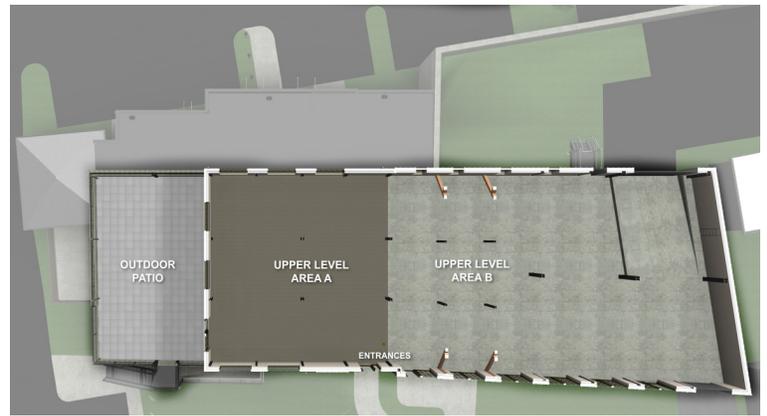
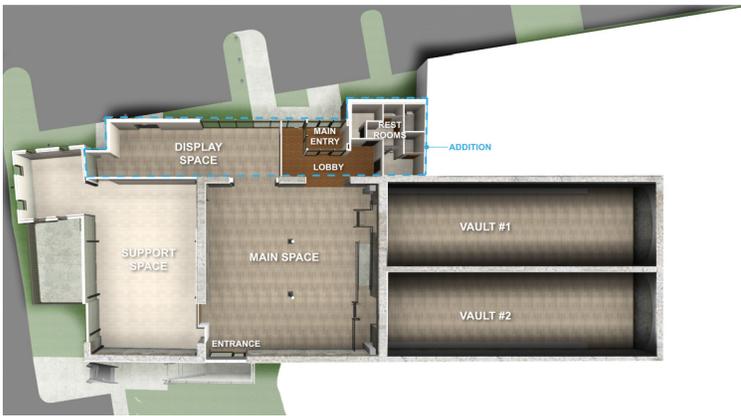


As it presently exists, the building and site have considerable challenges that must be addressed for it to be suitable for re-use. The 34 West Spring Street building is effectively two-story, disconnected buildings situated on different levels of the site. The original stone building (circa 1845) sits on the lower level of the site. It contains approximately 8,000 square feet of gross space but nearly half of that space is comprised of two vaults, each roughly 85 x 22 in. The vaults are a unique feature of the building that, for the right use, can offer some interesting possibilities. However, enhancement of the remainder of the original stone building is necessary to adapt it for re-use. The upper level building (circa 1930) was constructed as a light industrial addition to the original stone building. It has more usable floor area than the original stone building but is lacking in exterior appearance, is grade separated from the main parking area, and has no distinct front entrance. Despite these challenges, it has a commanding presence

on Grove Street that, with some architectural enhancement and creative site planning, has the potential to be a true landmark and destination in the Village. Iskalo Development is also currently trying to acquire 27 West Spring Street, across from this development, which would add another redevelopment opportunity and further enhancement of West Spring Street.

The renovation strategy that Iskalo has prepared to address these building limitations includes:

- **Original Stone Building** – Construction of an addition to the west side of the original stone building that would provide (a) an inviting entry and lobby area; (b) additional floor space for operations; and (c) restrooms
- **Upper Building** – Construction of an enclosed addition and covered patio (for outside dining) to the south end of the upper building (constructed over the top of the stone building). Construction of a distinctive retail entry on the Grove Street side of the building. Installation of large windows in the presently windowless high-bay section of the upper building and enlargement of existing windows in the lower-bay section to add desirable transparency
- **Site** – Re-configuration and reconstruction of the existing parking lot to include retaining walls between the upper and lower levels. Construction of new/additional patron parking, landscaping and walks on the presently unimproved 42 Spring Street parcel (fronting Grove Street). Addition of paved employee parking for employees adjacent to the upper building from the upper Glen Avenue driveway.
- **Building Systems** – In addition to the above improvements, the building will need to be furnished with entirely new electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems including a new, upsized electric service.



Above are photorealistic exterior renderings of the building together with three-dimensional floor plans for the original stone building and upper building. With completion of the proposed additions, the overall building size (including vaults) would increase from 14,600 square feet to approximately 16,800 square feet. The Village visualizes this space to be utilized as a small business such as a bakery, market, or brewery (etc.) based on the market, desires of the community, and discussions with Iskalo Development. The two buildings controlled by Uniland Development Company at 72 South Long Street are currently embedded between South Long Park and the Leigh Valley Railroad right-of-way. These could be transformed to allow for utilization of the park, the trail and the Train Depot / Section House. Patrons would be able to utilize both the park and trail when waiting for a table or to rest after shopping.



Project 2

Main Street HAWK Crossing

Village of Williamsville

Estimated Project Cost:
\$560,000



Existing Conditions view

Project Goals

- Extend walkability west along Main Street from the Village into the Town of Amherst
- Provide a safe crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists which is currently missing in this section of Main Street
- Utilize modern technology such as a HAWK signal to notify motorists of pedestrians
- Connect existing small businesses
- Enhance and bolster various redevelopment opportunities

Currently, the Village of Williamsville is considered a very walkable place for people to live, shop, and work. Its continuous sidewalks, identifiable crossings, benches, and landscaping provide adequate pedestrian amenities within the Main Street right-of-way. In late 2018, the Village obtained a HAWK signal (High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk). This was part of the \$4.2 million project, "Picture Main Street," to enable the Village to become even more walkable. The HAWK signal is located directly in front of the Williamsville Library Branch and crosses to connect near the Amherst Bee building. It is designed to warn drivers that someone is waiting to cross, and alert pedestrians when it is safe to move. It is heavily utilized on a daily basis and is especially beneficial during Village events such as the annual Old Home Days carnival at Island Park and the Music on Main Street series every Thursday during the summer months.



As you move west along Main Street, there are other identifiable crosswalks at the Cayuga Road and Los Robles Street intersections that are highly trafficked by pedestrians. From Los Robles west to the Village boundary though (about 1,500 ft), there are no safe pedestrian crossings and therefore pedestrians are forced to walk a long distance to cross at a traffic signal or jaywalk dangerously across a busy Main Street. This gap in safety for pedestrians could be solved by installing a new HAWK signal near Reist Street and the Williamsville Cemetery. According to the Federal Highway Administration, a crosswalk with a HAWK signal could have up to 69 percent fewer accidents than one without any traffic control. As both vehicular drivers and pedestrians are now accustomed to stopping and utilizing the existing HAWK signal, a new signalized pedestrian crossing and striping would have a smooth transition and be recognized easily by everyone.

A new HAWK signal provides enhanced connections between the existing, thriving small businesses on Main Street such as Leon Studio One, Communita, and Capello on the north side and Newbury, Squeeze Juicery, and D'Avolio Kitchen on the south side. The Village Square Apartment complex located at the proposed signal, one of the largest multi-family residential developments in the Village, would also benefit from its residents having a safe crossing right outside their doors. A new crossing location would also bolster the redevelopment of several other projects mentioned in this application such as enhanced streetscape and new retail/hospitality space on West Spring Street along with the building reuse for restaurant space just west of the proposed HAWK signal.

Because this section of Main Street is already walkable on either side, with recent streetscape improvements and desirable businesses, making the connection across this major thoroughfare provides the last pedestrian amenity that is currently missing.



Project 3

Main Street Building Reuse

Private Development

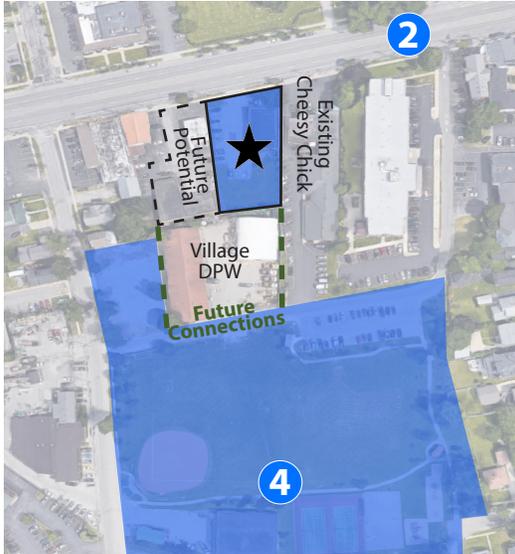
Estimated Project Cost:
\$500,000



Existing Conditions view

Project Goals

- Beautify and improve the property and extend the "village" feel down Main Street
- Provide additional jobs
- Provide better service to customers and delivery drivers with more space for parking, to-go/delivery, and pick up
- Spark other redevelopment projects on adjacent or nearby properties
- Provide commissary space for other food truck owners



The Cheesy Chick Cafe & Food Trucks first began with one food truck, which was bought by the current owners from the past owner after only one year in business. After its success, the business expanded to two and then three trucks along with establishing a brick and mortar location in the Village of Williamsville. The business now has over a dozen employees. Its popularity brings in a wide range of customers of all different ages from the adjacent neighborhoods, the City of Buffalo and other surrounding communities.

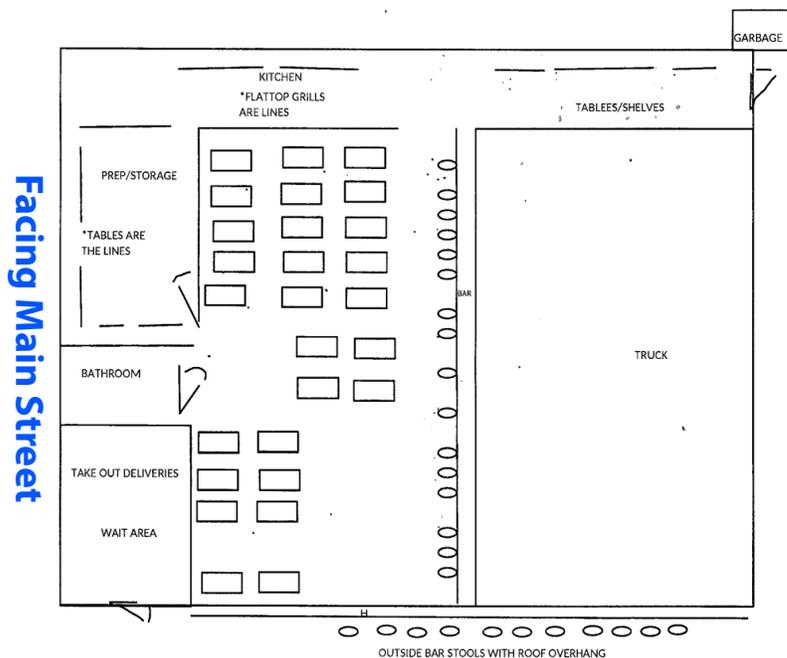
Cheesy Chick currently operates at 5385 Main Street as one tenant in a small multi-tenant building. The owner is interested in expanding to a larger location to meet an increased demand for indoor and outdoor dining and bar space,



additional storage, and a larger kitchen area. Additional parking is needed for both customers and their food trucks. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, its popularity has grown, bringing in a wide range of customers of all different ages both from the surrounding neighborhoods along with the City of Buffalo.

Located directly adjacent to Cheesy Chick's current location is the vacant Monro Auto Service and Tire Center (5365 Main Street), which was recently put up for sale. This presents a unique and convenient opportunity to reimagine this parcel and building as an inviting and vibrant small business destination. Current demand is causing existing building space to become too small for employees and customers. A preliminary floor plan is illustrated below and displays the various desires and requirements of business expansion within the 5365 Main Street building reuse

such as increased dining space, an area for take out and deliveries, and more kitchen and storage space. This would also include a covered outdoor space with stools or tables and chairs for people to enjoy their food when the weather is optimal.



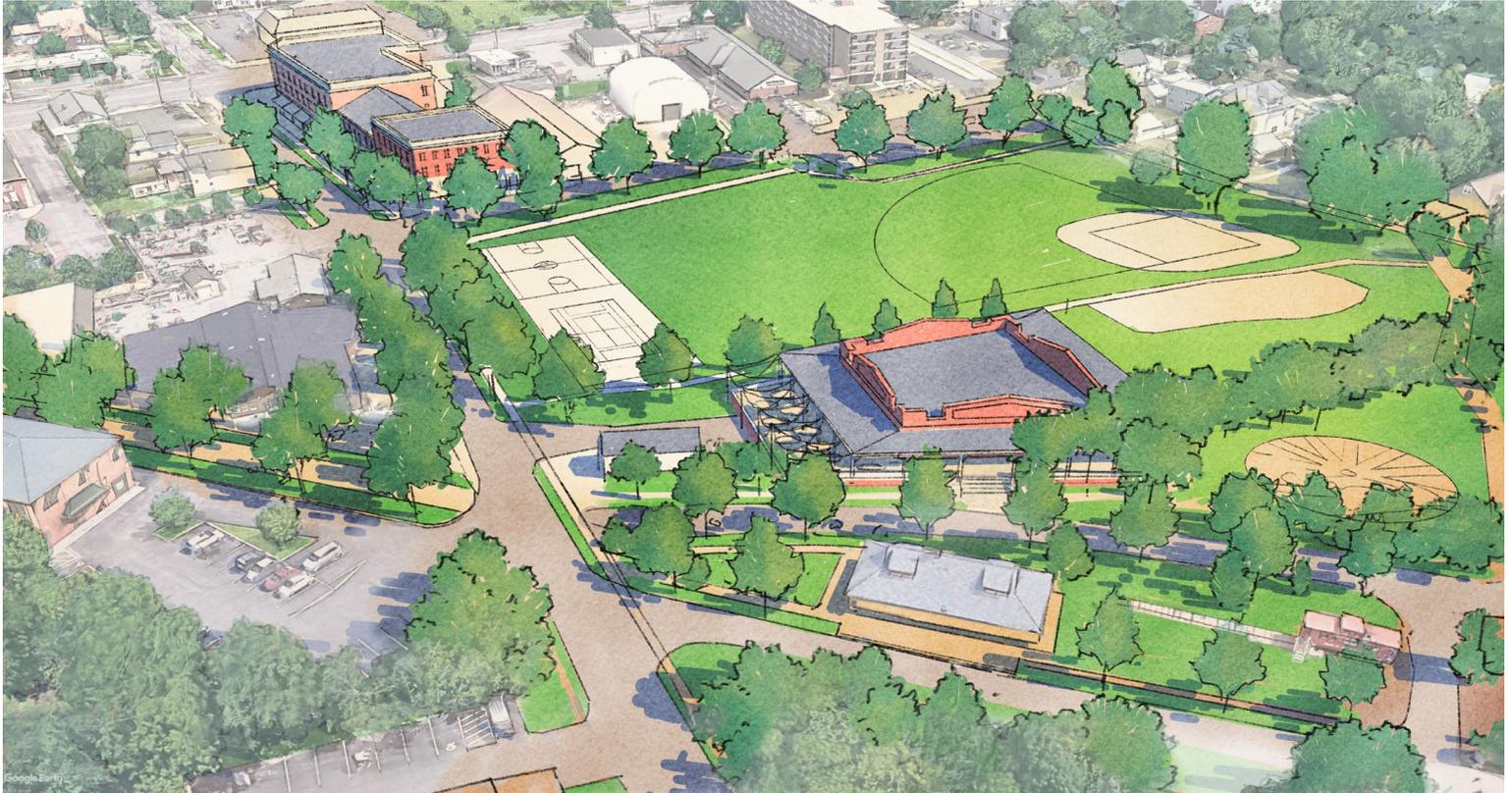
Not only is the adjacent Monro Auto Service building available, but just to the west of that is another one-story building that recently became vacant due to a business closure. Combining these two properties into a larger-scale redevelopment project could provide for even more small business attraction, increasing jobs and contributing to the local economy. These properties are also just north of the proposed project on South Long Street. Redevelopment for Cheesy Chick could provide a connection from South Long Street to Main Street and enhance this area of the Village further for resident and visitors.

Project 4

South Long Street Redevelopment

Village of Williamsville
Private Development

Estimated Project Costs:
Section House - \$150,000
South Long Park - \$1,300,000
Uniland - \$10,000,000



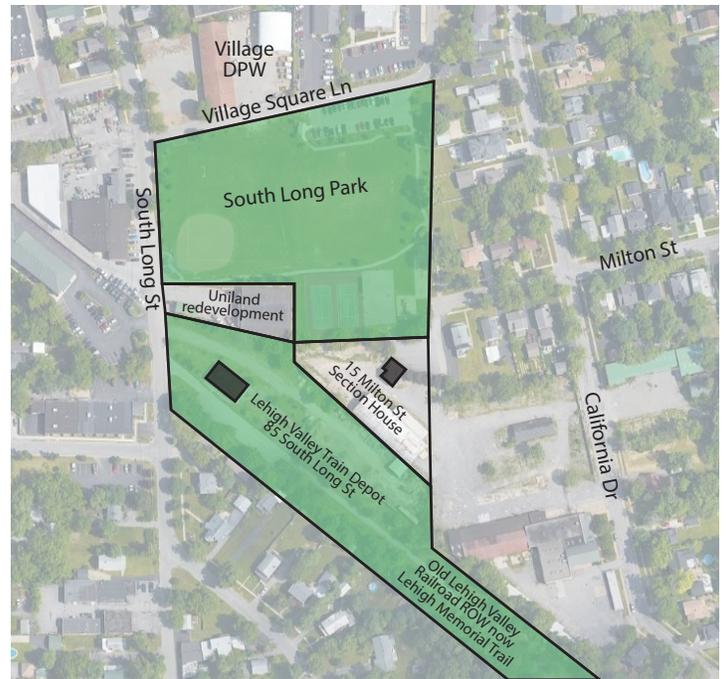
Existing Conditions view

Project Goals

- Improve existing parkland
- Provide additional jobs
- Provide better service to customers and delivery drivers with more space for parking, to-go/delivery, and pick up
- Spark other redevelopment projects on adjacent or nearby properties
- Provide commissary space for other food truck owners

The Long Street Recreation Area, located in the southwest portion of the Village of Williamsville, roughly bounded by Village Square Lane to the north, California Drive to the east, Union Road to the west, and the Lehigh Valley Railroad right-of-way to the south represents an exciting opportunity to greatly improve parkland, capitalize on existing businesses on Main Street along with new housing and commercial opportunities, and preserve historic structures to feature the history of the area. Each piece can be woven together to create a vibrant, compatible neighborhood that complements the existing Village scale and development pattern and provides improved places to recreate and relax.

The proposed project in this DRI application includes South Long Park, a private property owned by Uniland, the old Section House and extension of the Lehigh Memorial Trail. Existing industrial uses prevent the trail, a well utilized and valued Village resource, from connecting with South Long Park. Yet it is the presence of these industrial uses that provide a prime redevelopment opportunity. Including the Village DPW property and a vacant lot to its west, there are nearly 10 acres of industrial land in the neighborhood.



The Lehigh Valley Section House, constructed in 1907, is set back from Milton Street within a former industrial yard just south of and adjacent to South Long Park. The Section House was historically associated with the former Lehigh Valley Railroad Depot that stands to the west along the former railbed adjacent to South Long Street. A "section house" was where the supervisor of a portion ("section") of a railroad line, lived. The Section House is a Designated Local Landmark due to its representation of the Village's transportation and development history. Passenger service on the railroad ended in the mid-1940s, while freight service continued until the tracks were pulled up in the mid-1970s. Around this time it and the surrounding property were in use as

the offices and equipment yard for Amherst Construction Company who renovated/modernized the building. Then in 2015, it was purchased by Natale Development and has been vacant and unused since. A Building Conditions Report was completed in 2018 and concluded that the building is stable and salvageable if short-term measures are taken to secure the building and if long-term structural and mechanical improvements can be made to restore the building to its original historic character. Since then, measures have been taken to secure it and start exterior work on the building. This building could be reused as a historical asset to teach the community about the Lehigh Valley Railroad or could even be used for ancillary recreational or programming activities for South Long Park.

Along with restoring and building upon historic assets, a new multi-family residential complex called Asher Crossing was recently developed adjacent to and south of the Section House. This development along California Drive contains approximately three larger three and a half story buildings containing a total of 90 apartment units, and several other smaller two and a half story buildings with a combined total of 30 townhouse units. This new concentration of housing and residents offers new life to this area who would benefit from improved park amenities and historic assets.

This proposed project has several different elements that contribute to an overall improved vision for a small, walkable neighborhood with various amenities. The two buildings owned by Uniland Development Company at 72 South Long Street are currently embedded between South Long Park and the Leigh Valley Railroad right-of-way. These could be transformed into small retail shops or a restaurant space with outdoor dining that overlooks both the park and the Train Depot and Section House. Patrons would be able to utilize both the park and trail when waiting for a table or to rest after shopping. Space for similar uses may also be feasible on the vacant lot on South Long Street adjacent to the Village DPW, acting as a more visible connection to this area from Main Street. Streetscape improvements to South Long Street and Village Square lane would also enhance walkability and connections for residents and users of the park.

South Long Park would be extended to capture some of the vacant industrial land to create a larger and more integrated space with the Train Depot and Memorial Trail. Renovations and enhancements include (see image below):

- **New parking south of the Train Depot and near the Section House (1 & 13)**
- **A rail spur for displaying rail cars, engines, and a caboose (3)**
- **Train Depot outdoor improvements and addition of an outdoor terrace for events (4 & 5)**
- **A master walk/greenway from the Train Depot towards Milton Street and north to Main Street (7 & 19)**
- **A new playground (8)**
- **A new picnic shelter (11)**
- **A plaza with an interactive human sundial and perimeter seat walls (12)**
- **Flex field space or a "great lawn" (14)**
- **Relocation of the tennis courts and replacing one with a basketball court/ice rink in the winter (15 & 16)**
- **Relocation of the gazebo (17)**
- **Relocation of the baseball field (18)**

Increased green space and connections within the site, to adjacent amenities, and to the neighborhood will create a unique and inviting space for residents and visitors.



Project 5

NFTA Park & Ride Mobility Hub

Town of Amherst
NFTA

Estimated Project Costs:
Trail - \$200,000
Mobility Hub - \$422,000



Existing Conditions view

Project Goals

- Create a small mobility hub for various modes of transportation including vehicles, buses, bicyclists and pedestrians
- Enhance access to micro-mobility options
- Encourage small-scale transit-oriented development via addition of new buildings and small tenant spaces
- Create connections between streets, trails, and businesses to enhance overall walkability of the area

The NFTA maintains a Park and Ride at Main Street and Union Road. This is a key transportation gateway between the Village of Williamsville, the Town of Amherst, and the region as a whole but currently only provides parking and is in need of enhancement to better connect with new mobility options and the surrounding streetscape and development. It is centrally available for people using bus Route 47 "Youngs Road" which travels down portions of Main Street, Wehrle Drive, Youngs Road, and south to the Buffalo Niagara International Airport, along with Route 48 "Williamsville" which travels along the entirety of Main Street in Amherst and around the Erie Community College's North Campus. This Park and Ride also services Express Route 66 "Williamsville" which takes riders from the Eastern Hills Mall to the Allen Medical Campus in Buffalo.

The Park and Ride can be transformed into a mobility hub that will connect various mobility services such as:

- **Pickup/parking space for Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) that provide users with transportation through an online platform that connects them to drivers that are nearby**
- **Carshare parking for companies such as Zipcar where people can book cars on demand by the hour or day**
- **Bikeshare docking stations such as the existing Reddy Bike in Buffalo**
- **A bike repair station and bike parking/racks**
- **Parking for the existing public transit**
- **Public charging stations for electric vehicles (*upper bound of 5 spaces)**
- **Additional amenities including Wi-Fi, on-demand travel information, electric route maps, and enhanced waiting areas for connections**



Because this parking lot is located on a former Lehigh Valley Railroad right-of-way, it makes it a perfect place to include a multi-use trail for instant access to safe biking and walking. It would connect to the existing Lehigh Memorial Trail to the south (crossing South Union Road) in the proposed South Long Street project and would also connect north (crossing Main Street) through the proposed Plaza Redevelopment project and to the proposed Park Club Lane Bypass Road multi-use trail, detailed later in this application. This would finish the connection of the Lehigh Trail which is identified in the GBNRTC's Regional Bicycle Master Plan. One final aspect to the redevelopment of this site could include small ancillary buildings to house mobility services, bathrooms, and retail in waiting areas for those looking to make transportation connections.

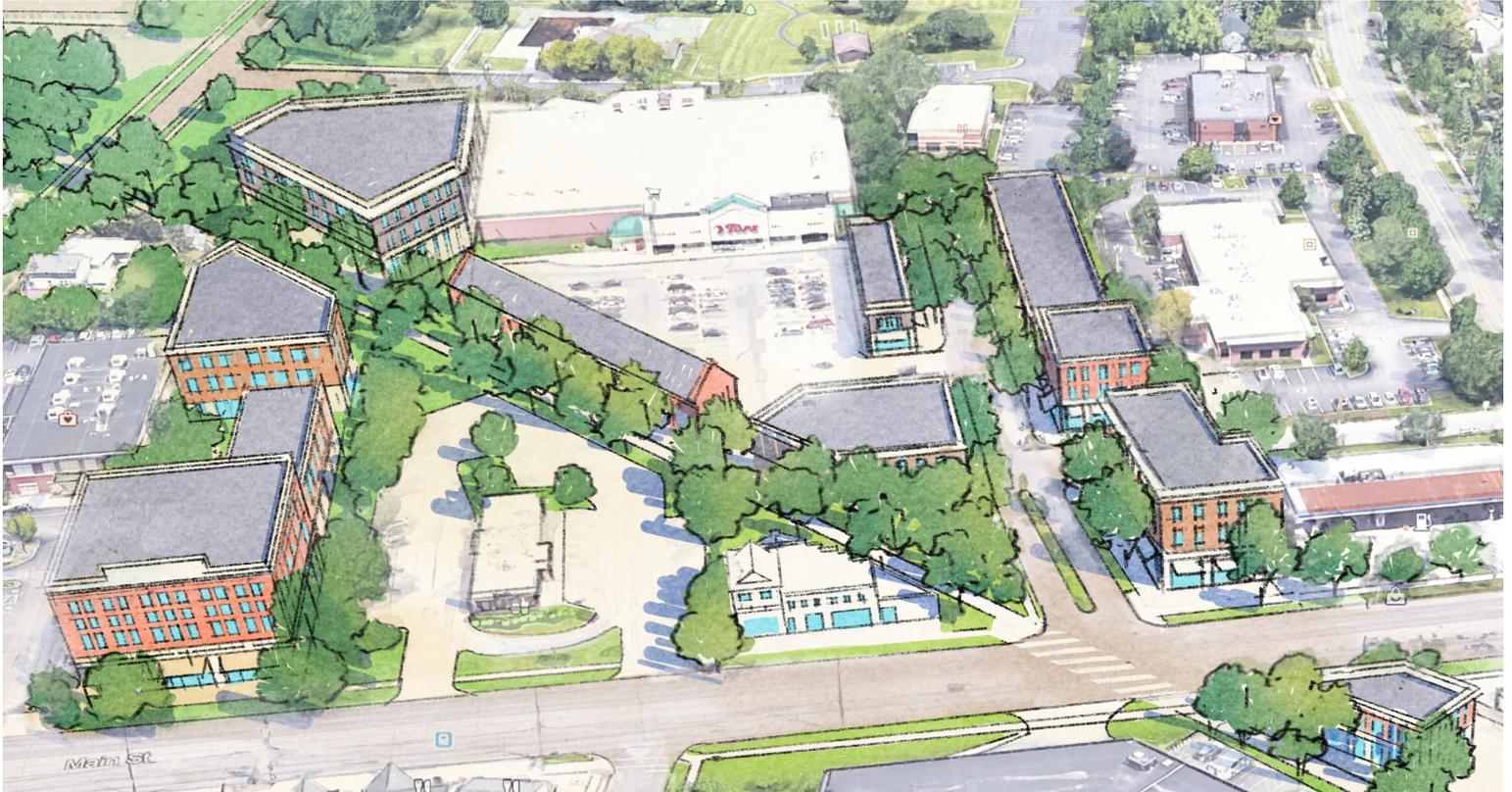


Project 6

Plaza Redevelopment & Trail Access

Private Development
Town of Amherst

Estimated Project Costs:
Trail - \$200,000
Infill Building - \$4,000,000



Existing Conditions view

Project Goals

- Utilize the Town's new zoning districts to create a mixed-use redevelopment area for various users and businesses
- Extend the Leigh Trail through the site for increased walkability and access
- Encourage infill of buildings to capitalize on economic opportunities and reduce excess parking
- Create a pedestrian connection to the North Forest Park and Pool to the north
- Install a crossing over South Forest Road to connect to a new multi-use trail extending north west along the new Park Club Bypass Road

Within Village West is a large suburban plaza development, set far back from Main Street with a large parking lot in front of the anchor tenant, Tops Markets. It is not very visible from the Main Street, and this large setback this does not align with the vision for Village West nor does it continue the walkable aesthetic from the Village of Williamsville. Access to the site is purely vehicular, as there are no direct pedestrian connections to the building.

Because of its large parcel size, this site presents a unique opportunity to create a large scale redevelopment project. The entry drive off of Main Street could be continued north as a small, walkable street with infill buildings lining it for an extended "village" feel with trees and transparency into small shops. Infill buildings could also be located along the new multi-use trail and up to Main Street itself. While Tops is likely to remain, its building facade could be revitalized and included in a Main Street facade program, as described in a later project in this application. The attached small plaza building to the west is largely vacant, but with an upgraded facade along with additional businesses on the site in new buildings and a multi-use trail, the building could be filled or expanded to capitalize on additional business. On the eastern edge of the Tops building, a connection north to the North Forest Park and Pool has been envisioned

in the past and could be made a reality with revitalization of this plaza. This is only one of two public pools in Amherst and is heavily utilized by residents in the Village of Williamsville and Amherst in the Village West area. The park also contains a playground, tennis courts, and a pavilion to host events.



This plaza also contains a portion of the old Lehigh Valley Railroad right-of-way and is another piece of the missing link to create the new Lehigh Trail extending from the existing trail in the South Long Street project up through the NFTA Park and Ride and then north to the new multi-use trail adjacent to the proposed Park Club Bypass Road.



The owner, Benchmark Development Company, envisions a Town trail and expansion of their existing building adjacent

to Tops in the short term. The Town desires to work with Benchmark in the future to further the redevelopment of the site. Should the plaza be redeveloped with infill buildings and additional businesses/tenants, this new trail along with the connection to the North Forest Park would be nice amenities for employees to have access to for lunch or breaks. It would also serve as a walkable development for people to shop and provides a more direct and safe access off of major roadways to access North Forest Park.

In a scenario where no infill development occurs, the Town still envisions creating the multi-use trail within the parcel to connect the various projects outlined in this DRI application. The trail would be a feature that both the Village West area in Amherst and the Village of Williamsville could pride themselves on and to create lacking off-road connections for better walkability and accessibility.

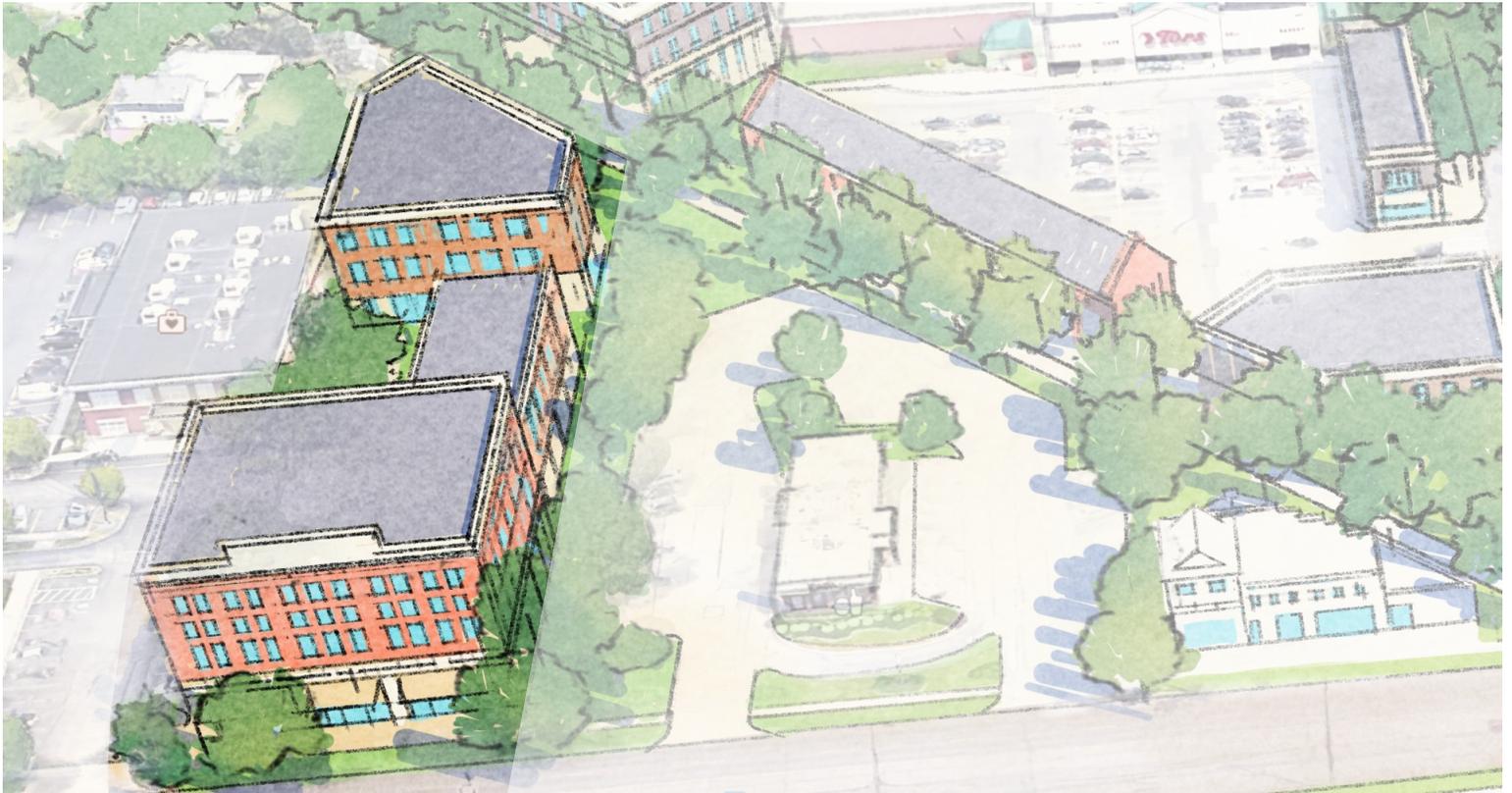


Project 7

Main Street Infill

Private Development

Estimated Project Cost:
\$17,000,000



Existing Conditions view

Project Goals

- Utilize the Town's new zoning districts to create a mixed-use redevelopment site
- Extend the "retail at the street" aesthetic further into the Town to improve walkability
- Provide quality space for small-scale businesses to locate and thrive
- Create connections between this site and the redevelopment of the Tops Plaza via site access and the new trail



Located on the north side of Main Street between North Union Road and North Forest Road, the proposed project at 5226 Main Street can be considered part of the gateway to the Village of Williamsville. The area surrounding the site is made up of a diverse mix of building types, styles, and uses. This site is within walking distance to many existing stores and restaurants and benefits from convenient access to the I-290, Main Street, and public transportation.

Currently comprised of three detached and vacant structures, formerly used as a garden center, the plan envisions densification of the underutilized site with vertical development, adding critical mass, and contributing to increased vibrancy on Amherst's Main Street commercial corridor. Following demolition of all existing structures, construction of a 5-story mixed-use building with retail space on the ground floor fronting on Main Street and four floors of multi-family housing on the upper levels is proposed. The building would have a minimal setback from Main Street, engaging the street and actively encouraging activity for tenants and visitors to and from the property.

In total, the project would generate approximately 5,000 square feet of retail space along with 40 market-rate residential units. In addition, a portion of the ground floor area screened from the street (behind the retail space and covered by the new residential), would be utilized for covered tenant parking. The tenant parking, along with additional surface parking at the rear of the site, would be accessed by a two-way drive lane along the site's east property line. This proposal will energize this underutilized site and its redevelopment will bolster the vibrancy of Amherst's Main Street commercial corridor contributing to an improved sense of place.



Project 8

Reist Street Roundabout

Town of Amherst

Estimated Project Cost:
\$1,300,000



Existing Conditions view

Project Goals

- Creating a safer intersection for all modes of transportation including vehicles, school buses, bicyclists and pedestrians
- Increase efficiency for vehicular traffic that currently backs up during morning and afternoon school hours
- Creating a focal point for the neighborhood
- Create a safe crossing for children arriving at and leaving Forest Elementary School

Located on the northern border of the Village West DRI area is a busy neighborhood intersection containing three roads: Reist Street, North Forest Road (which turns into South Forest) and North Union Road. All three of these roads connect to Main Street and are accustomed to filtering much of the traffic heading north and south in the Town, particularly North Forest Road. South Forest Road and Reist Street tend to be cut-through streets from those looking to avoid traffic on North Forest Road and Main Street.



This intersection is located within an established residential neighborhood and contains several major establishments including Forest Elementary School, North Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Village at North Church, a senior living residential complex. The driveways for these establishments are currently close to the intersection, especially Forest Elementary School's which essentially acts as another street filtering into the intersection. When school is in session, cars are backed up along South and North Forest Roads during morning drop off and afternoon pick up hours as the current parking area near the school's front door (facing South Forest Road) cannot accommodate the number of arriving parents. Buses for the school also frequent these roads and this intersection. School children who live close by utilize the intersection to walk to and from school and therefore the school has two crossing guards at South Forest Road and North Union Road to ensure they can cross safely. As North Forest Road is

a major north/south roadway in the Town, AM and PM peak hours for those traveling to and from work cause the road to become busy and traffic to come to a standstill.

The current configuration of the intersection along with its heavy pedestrian use from the senior living facility and elementary school students warrants the need for a roundabout to enable more efficient vehicular traffic flow along with safer pedestrian access and crossings. The school's driveway would be slightly reconfigured to enter the roundabout at an acceptable angle. This may also allow the school to add additional parking or to reconfigure their current parking lot. The greenspace in the center of the roundabout could contain public art or additional landscaping which is currently lacking at this large, asphalt-covered intersection and within the large open front lawns at the church and the school. Sidewalks would be continuous around the roundabout could be separated from the roadway by landscaping as well, providing a better aesthetic and more protection for pedestrians. North Forest Road and North Union Road are owned and maintained by the NYS DOT and therefore the Town would work with them to enable this vision to come to fruition.



Project 9

Park Club Lane Bypass Road & Multi-Use Trail

Town of Amherst

Estimated Project Costs:
Trail - \$600,000
Road - \$1,800,000



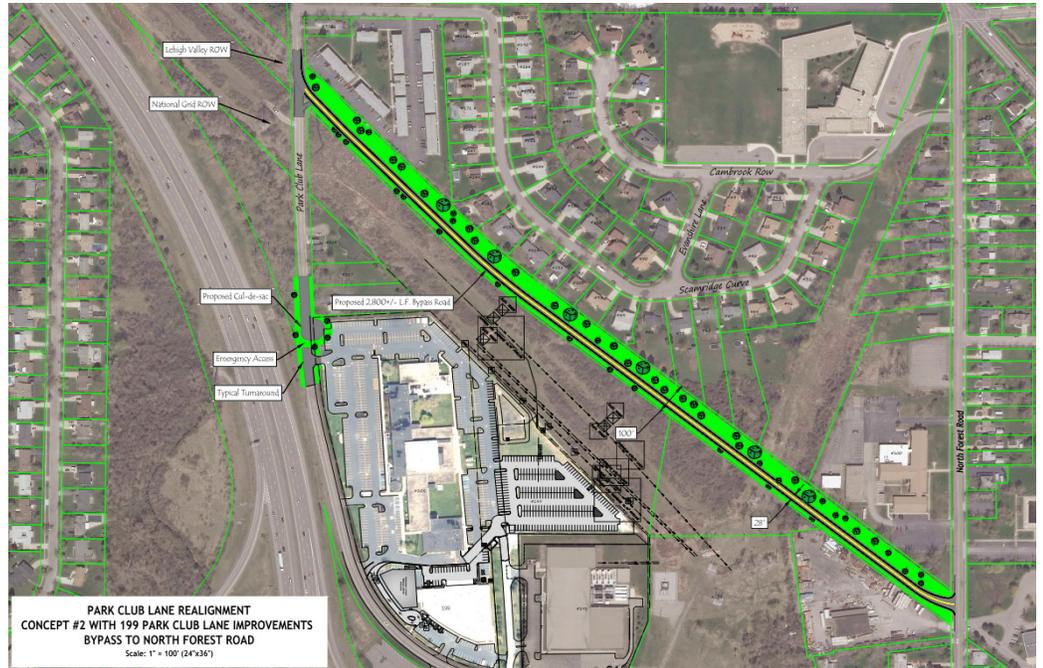
Existing Conditions view

Project Goals

- Reduce large traffic volumes through local, residential neighborhoods
- Improve connectivity
- Provide a second access to Main Street for residents and businesses
- Create a separate multi-use trail to extend the the existing Leigh Trail in the Village, creating increased access for Town residents
- Maintain or improve vegetation & screening

Park Club Lane is a two-lane connection between North Forest Road and Main Street. At its southern end connecting to Main Street, this roadway is the major thoroughfare for a number of commercial and medical office buildings such as Univera, Roswell, Trinity Medical Orthopaedics, and WNY Imaging along with the Tony Walker Center which contains a variety of retail and restaurant uses. The northern end of this roadway passes through an established neighborhood with the majority of single-family homes. As Park Club Lane contains a variety of commercial and offices uses to the south, which have grown immensely

in recent years, the road has become busier with traffic now increasing through the residential neighborhood in the north. Employees and visitors use the road to avoid traffic on Main Street and North Forest. Roswell is proposing a new building to expand their operations, as can be seen in the image above, and so even more traffic is anticipated to use Park Club Lane.



Residents have raised concerns about cut through traffic in their neighborhood from the commercial properties and medical buildings. Two traffic counters had been placed on Park Club Lane and the results of the counter placed in the more residential area indicated that the 85th percentile speed is 35 MPH with a posted speed limit of 30 MPH. The speed counts taken in the less residential area increased to 44 MPH with a posted speed limit of 30 MPH, confirming a speeding problem. Additional issues are caused by vehicles parking along the roadway when parking lots for the medical buildings exceed capacity. Residents have asked for traffic calming measures to be implemented or for other roadway alternatives to be explored.

Creating an approximately 2,800 linear foot bypass road along the former Lehigh Valley Railroad right-of-way could help solve many of the current issues. The bypass road would cut off thru-traffic from the commercial and medical uses and direct them back to Main Street, avoiding the residential neighborhood to the north. The bypass road would also create an additional way for residents to access South Forest Road and then Main Street. Included as part of this project would be the continuation of the multi-use trail from the NFTA Park and Ride and Plaza Redevelopment projects from the existing trail in the Village of Williamsville all the way up to this residential neighborhood. It is the intent that this trail would be off-road, adjacent to the bypass road but separated by landscaping to provide a buffer for pedestrians and provide additional trees and landscaping. This would create increased connectivity for this neighborhood to the Main Street in Village West and to the Village of Williamsville itself via a safe, pedestrian-only, off-road trail. A trail connection over the National Grid right-of-way, which runs adjacent to the proposed bypass road, to the medical office buildings would provide even more walkability and access to employees.

Project 10

Royal Park Entrance Road & Land Preparation

Town of Amherst

Estimated Project Cost:
\$1,500,000



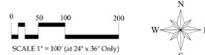
Existing Conditions view

Project Goals

- Utilize land from removal of I-290 on- and off-ramps for recreation and development
- Construct a NCAA 2 regulation size synthetic field for Daemen College
- Enhance existing park amenities like the playground and basketball court for residents
- Addition of new park amenities such as a splash pad, pavillion, and additional tennis courts and parking
- Creation of a new access road to avoid additional traffic into the neighborhood



6
ase
n is
or
re



The planned removal of the I-290 exit ramp by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT) will create new space for enhancements to Royal Park, a 9.4 acre public park in the Town. Currently, the only access to the park is through the adjacent neighborhood to the east. With a focus on creating better access, a new entrance road is planned which would connect to Main Street through this future vacant land following ramp removal and under a National Grid right-of-way. This road will be beneficial for ease of entering the park and it will divert some of the park traffic from the residential neighborhood. The new entrance road will be approximately half of a mile, constructed to accommodate motorists along with bicyclists and would include sidewalks for pedestrians.

The Town of Amherst has been working with Daemen College on an overall Royal Park improvement plan to include a variety of park enhancements along with a turf field which will be used for multiple sports including soccer and lacrosse. With the planned removal of the I-290 exit ramp, the additional space will allow for reconfiguring of the park to include the planned enhancements. Grading and preparing the space to accommodate the future turf field and other enhancements will advance this public/private investment and will fit into the vision for the park, which is based on feedback received during a community meeting held on July 15, 2021. An enhanced park provides additional recreational amenities for improved quality of life for residents.



Project 11

Main Street Complete Street

Town of Amherst

Estimated Project Cost:
\$1,100,000



Existing Conditions view

Project Goals

- Extend walkability west along Main Street from the Village to the Town and ultimately to Snyder and Eggertsville
- Provide on-road bike lanes and safe crossings for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Continuation of the Picture Main Street improved streetscape elements such as bump outs, landscaping and amenities
- Encourage various redevelopment opportunities & connectivity between them



Main Street is the primary east-west traffic corridor for the Town as well as a main commuter route for people living both east and west of the Village and in neighboring communities. The volume of traffic traversing Main Street through the Village of Williamsville and the Town is among the highest of any similar highway in New York State and higher traffic volumes are typically constant throughout the day. During the morning and afternoon peak hours, many of the intersections approach or exceed capacity. During peak commuter times the traffic on Main Street backs up and is congested creating difficulty for both drivers and pedestrians in the corridor. This congestion, in turn, impacts pedestrian circulation and parking throughout the Village and in the Town, adversely affecting the quality of life for residents and vitality for businesses.

Main Street is wide (approximately 72 ft), and the long crossing combined with high traffic volumes and vehicle speeds makes crossing Main Street difficult for pedestrians. A reduction in the number of lanes at the intersections without reducing the existing traffic volumes would result in over-capacity conditions and significantly greater congestion throughout the corridor. Pending changes to regional traffic patterns or reduction of traffic volumes along Main Street, it would be challenging to undertake significant changes to roadway width and lane configurations to better accommodate pedestrian traffic. Instead, the Complete Street approach focuses on consideration of improvements to both the roadway and the roadside as a means of improving conditions for pedestrians, businesses and motorists.

The Picture Main Street project in the Village of Williamsville was completed in 2018 and included a variety of pedestrian improvements. Sidewalks were reconstructed and improved with bump out at key intersections, including benches and landscaping, creating a more inviting and safe pedestrian realm. A HAWK signal was also installed to create a safe crossing near the municipal buildings and public library. Unfortunately, there are still no provisions on Main Street for bicyclists other than to travel with the motor vehicles sharing the travel lanes and bicycle trails exist throughout the Village currently exist but with no connection to Main Street. The Town desires to continue the improvements made to Main Street with the Picture Main Street project along with improving bicycle infrastructure and other pedestrian amenities. These include the following:

Plant trees along the corridor where they are currently lacking

Plant appropriate landscaping to beautify the corridor

Install green medians for pedestrian refuge and additional landscaping

Use Bulb-Outs to shorten and make safer crossings where feasible

Create wayfinding through banners, signs and gateway features

Provide for separate on-road bicycle lanes or better bicycle signage

Re-envision street furnishings and lighting for aesthetics

Lower the speed limit to 30 MPH along the whole corridor

Install continuous sidewalks where gaps are evident

Project 12

Main Street Building Improvement Program

Town of Amherst

Estimated Project Cost:
\$500,000



Project Goals

- Provide a cohesive design aesthetic throughout the entire area
- Create a more desirable Main Street corridor by encouraging additional private investment
- Increase the tax base by attracting new small businesses and tenants
- Provide design guidance to ensure compliance with the surrounding character
- Enhance connectivity and walkability

Within the proposed Village West boundary, several properties were identified as vacant or underutilized and in need of investment to facilitate appropriate redevelopment. The Town of Amherst is proposing a Main Street Building Improvement Program that would assist property owners and businesses to make interior and or exterior renovations or improvements. The funding requested for this proposed program will be used to leverage private investment in such buildings to allow for their redevelopment or rehabilitation with a preference for revitalization of vacant or underutilized buildings that need façade improvements, ADA compliance upgrades, exterior building improvements, walkway improvements, sign replacement and projects that will enhance the aesthetic quality of the Village West corridor.



Improvements covered under the grant fund would include:

- Capital improvements, including purchase of machinery and equipment
- Interior and exterior renovations, including façade and site improvements
- Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing infrastructure for vacant spaces
- Signage for buildings
- ADA compliance upgrades



Staff from the Town's Economic Development Department will be the administrator for this grant fund. Staff will solicit applications from Village West property owners that meet the basic criteria of the program. Applicants will be required to submit evidence of compliance with program guidelines as well as documentation of appropriate criteria, such as SHPO approval and bank financing to be eligible for funding. A formal written scope of work will be required from property owners that include elements to address immediate health and safety concerns, correction of existing code violations, installation of energy conservation measures, accessibility for persons with disabilities and consistency

with any design and preservation guidelines. The Town had proposed a similar program for Eggertsville in the past. With the success of this grant fund in Village West, the Town desires to implement the program further down Main Street to its most historic neighborhoods of Snyder and Eggertsville in the future to also encourage revitalization in these areas to create an even more cohesive and vibrant Main Street.



DRI PROJECT ALLOCATIONS

The following table depicts the Town's proposed DRI project allocations for each of the proposed projects listed in the above section. It also lists the total cost for each of the project, which may include other public or private funding sources.

	Village West Projects	Total Project Cost	Proposed DRI Award
1	West Spring Street Redevelopment	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
2	Main Street HAWK Crossings	\$ 560,000	\$ 560,000
3	Main Street Building Reuse	\$ 500,000	\$ 200,000
4	South Long Street Redevelopment		
	Section House	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000
	South Long Park	\$ 1,300,000	\$ 650,000
	Uniland	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 2,000,000
5	NFTA Park & Ride Mobility Hub		
	Trail	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000
	Mobility HUB	\$ 422,000	\$ 168,800
6	Plaza Redevelopment		
	Trail	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000
	Infill Building	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
7	Main Street Infill	\$ 17,000,000	\$ 2,000,000
8	Reist Street Roundabout	\$ 1,300,000	\$ 1,300,000
9	Park Club Lane Bypass Road & Multi- Use Trail		
	Trail	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000
	Road	\$ 1,800,000	\$ 1,800,000
10	Royal Park Road & Land Preparation	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000
11	Main Street Complete Street	\$ 1,100,000	\$ 1,100,000
12	Main Street Building Improvement Program	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000
		\$ 45,132,000	\$ 14,928,800

ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY

Amherst is known for its professionalism and for delivering on its commitments. The Town has demonstrated its ability to hire professional firms and contractors, acquire property, and otherwise advance planning and construction projects. Planning and Engineering staff have successfully managed Federal and State projects and all aspects of planning (scoping, preliminary design, detailed design, construction and inspection). The Town has a working knowledge of New York State's Procedures for Locally Administered Federal Aid Projects (LAFAP) to assure that projects are developed, designed, and constructed in accordance with specific Federal and State requirements. Amherst has an exemplary record of managing Federal and State grants, having received various DOT, EPA, CFA, HUD and other grants over the years.

The Town's Planning staff includes 15 people: eight planners with various levels of experience, one landscape architect, four community development staff, and two administrative assistants. The robust Engineering staff includes six engineers and two GIS analysts, each with various expertise in different areas such as stormwater management, site plan review, and traffic and transportation. The Town also has extensive Highway and Building Departments, along with a new Economic Development Department that is the main liaison to Federal and State agencies.

Key Town of Amherst staff to be involved with administering a DRI grant include: Angela Rossi, Director of Economic Development, Emily Melski, Federal & State Aid Programs Coordinator, Daniel Howard, Planning Director, Daniel Ulatowski, Assistant Planning Director, Kimberly Amplement, Planner, Jeffery Burroughs, Town Engineer, and Christopher Schregel, Project Manager. In addition, the Town Supervisor, Brian Kulpa and the Chief Finance Officer will provide oversight. As this proposal includes projects described within the and by Village of Williamsville, the Town will work with and assist the Village with approved projects as necessary. In addition the Town will provide oversight to project proposed by private developers.

The Town has its own Chamber of Commerce that remains dedicated to responding to the needs of the diverse and ever changing needs business community, maintains an open dialogue with its members and offers a variety of services that are market driven and well received. It is the mission of the Amherst Chamber of Commerce to nurture a strong economic environment in Western New York while providing members the tools to ensure their success. The Town also closely works with the Amherst Industrial Development Agency which has four full-time staff members and qualified professionals to assist in carrying out its mission "to promote economic diversity, quality employment opportunities and to broaden the tax base of the Town of Amherst and Village of Williamsville in order to reduce the tax burden on homeowners, while helping to maintain and enhance a high quality living environment." Both of these entities can assist with the proposed DRI projects should the Town be granted it.



OTHER/CONCLUSION

The Town of Amherst's two downtown areas, Village West and Village East, each provide unique opportunities for revitalization and can help expand of the existing walkability and livability of the Village of Williamsville into two vibrant and desirable areas of Town. Each of the two submitted DRI applications can stand alone in shaping a brighter future for the downtown areas of Town. Village West contains a variety of both public and private future projects that can be catalytic for the transformation of this area including mixed-use development, building reuse, streetscape and pedestrian improvements, and recreation expansion opportunities. All of these will help to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety, create a more cohesive aesthetic, bring small businesses and job growth to the area, contribute to the Town's tax base, and increase the livability and overall quality of life for both residents and visitors. This will become even more of a destination for the Western New York region. Enabling these projects to occur will be enhanced with the help of funding from a DRI grant, as neither the Town nor private developers alone can realize this entire vision without assistance. The Town, the Village of Williamsville, and various private developers are ready to work together to revitalize Amherst, continuing its current desirability and moving towards an improved and vibrant future.



Village of Williamsville

716-632-4120
FAX: 716-632-6009
www.walkablewilliamsville.com



5565 Main Street
Williamsville, New York 14221

Sept. 10, 2021

WNY Regional Economic Development Council
Co-chairs: Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner and Mr. Eric Reich
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, NY 14203

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant for Amherst's Village West Proposal

Dear Dr. Conway-Turner and Mr. Reich,

As a partner of the Town of Amherst, I fully support the Village West Downtown Revitalization application. The historic Village of Williamsville has so much potential to further grow into a destination spot. I know that this can be achieved through a series of improvements and investments.

In recent years the Village has undergone incredible improvements. Our East Spring Street corridor was transformed into a vibrant village square of activity, boasting a destination candy and ice cream shop, reuse of historic buildings, incredible dining and access to the famous Glen Falls and its park. Also, our community came together to build a new playground at Island Park and improve this greenspace. With this new bustling activity in the heart of the village, a HAWK crossing was added, significantly improving walkability and pedestrian safety.

Village West DRI builds on that success, expanding walkability down Main Street through added safety measures, including a second HAWK crossing; updated retail and dining spaces; expanded housing opportunities; and expanded park access. It also accounts for the needs of both commuters and residents coexisting in the same space. The Village West proposal would efficiently use the DRI funding award to its full potential to jumpstart a redesigned, vibrant district.

I am proud to share these goals with both the Town of Amherst leaders and private developers. Together, our vision can transform not only this specific area, but help build WNY. This unique proposal has the charm of the village while being centrally located in Western New York. Extending Main Street's walkability will further enhance that appeal, while growing existing businesses and bringing in new development.

A DRI award would build out from the center hub of the village, expanding the many benefits of the Williamsville/Amherst community. Thank you for your consideration for this most deserving project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah Rogers".

Hon. Deborah Rogers
Mayor
Village of Williamsville

David S. Mingoia
Executive Director



September 13, 2021

Co-chairs: Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner & Mr. Eric Reich
WNY Regional Economic Development Council
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, NY 14203

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant for Amherst's Village West Proposal

Dear Dr. Conway-Turner & Mr. Reich,

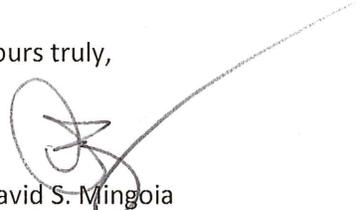
The Amherst Industrial Development Agency and Amherst Development Corporation support the Town of Amherst's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Application to Empire State Development and the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council. The Town of Amherst's Village West Proposal strengthens the connection to historic Williamsville and meets the tenets of contemporary development by catalyzing projects that improve livability, sustainability and employment opportunities.

The Amherst IDA and Development Corporation has assisted with over 300 projects totaling \$3 billion in investment since its inception, and is committed to continuing to build on that record of excellence in partnership with the Town. A DRI grant supporting this application continues collaborative efforts to transform the traditional suburban form into a walkable, mixed-use environment assisting innovation in commerce and healthy and environmental resiliency.

At about seven (7) blocks in total area and at the nexus of major transportation infrastructure, Village West is an accessible district with assets to leverage and property to transform. Just west are the Town and Village Halls and retail, restaurant and office establishments that would support new development on underutilized and vacant parcels that would provide quality jobs. This area is a part of the "Medical Spine", which stretches along the I-290 and Main Street and is home to innovative medical service providers and device companies.

For decades, the IDA has partnered with Amherst and Williamsville and private investors to ensure the town had smart development to ensure long-term success. This application fits into that mission. Thank you advance for your review and attention to this correspondence and the overall application for funds.

Yours truly,



David S. Mingoia
Executive Director, CEO & CFO



September 10, 2021

WNY Regional Economic Development Council
Co-chairs: Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner & Mr. Eric Reich
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, NY 14203

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant for Amherst's Village West Proposal

Dear Dr. Conway-Turner & Mr. Reich,

Iskalo Development supports the Town of Amherst's Village West Downtown Revitalization Initiative application and intends to be part of this comprehensive proposal. The Village West proposal would efficiently use the DRI funding award to its full potential to jumpstart a redesigned, vibrant district.

Included within the Village West boundary is Iskalo's proposed adaptive reuse project at 34 West Spring Street, a locally designated historic landmark. Improvement of the West Spring Street "corridor" (historically known as Brewery Hill) has been a community priority as it is viewed as a continuation of the revitalization project completed on (East) Spring Street several years ago. The tired and underutilized 34 West Street building is the center piece of the West Spring Street corridor. Now that the key commercial parcels supporting 34 West Spring Street have been assembled under single ownership, the opportunity exists to make this community priority a reality. The rehabilitation of the (circa 1845) 34 West Spring Street building will add to the visual character of the Village of Williamsville and Town of Amherst, and its re-use for retail and hospitality will attract visitors, thereby contributing to the community's tourism economy.

The strong partnership between town and village governments with private developers is a tremendous benefit to the entire community. With so many stakeholders on the same page, sharing the same vision and goals for success, the DRI award would go far beyond the initial investments. This would significantly launch new investment in the Village West footprint.

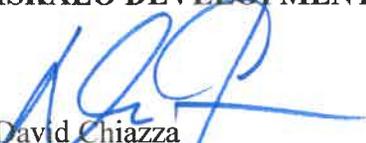
In recent years there has been a coordinated effort to revitalize the center of Williamsville. Improved community spaces, reconstruction of commercial space and additional housing have set the stage for another phase of improvements. The DRI award would build out

from the center hub of the village, expanding the many benefits of the Williamsville/Amherst community.

Iskalo is committed to the DRI proposal and the critical role that the West Spring Street Redevelopment has in revitalizing Village West.

Sincerely,

ISKALO DEVELOPMENT CORP.



David Chiazza
Executive Vice President



September 14, 2021

WNY Regional Economic Development Council
Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner, Co-Chair
Mr. Eric Reich, Co-Chair
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, NY 14203

RE: Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant for Town of Amherst's Village West Proposal

Dear Dr. Conway-Turner & Mr. Reich,

Uniland Development Company is in support of the Town of Amherst's Village West Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and fully intends to work with the town on its proposal. We are proud to be a part of this comprehensive plan through the proposed redevelopment of parcels at South Long Street and Main Street.

Located in the heart of Williamsville, the development project provides a mix of uses by taking the current underutilized land and promoting various options including residential or office on the upper floors and ground-floor retail/restaurants along with outdoor space. Proposed parking will not only benefit the development but also Williamsville residents utilizing the Main Street commercial uses and the South Long Park and recreation area located across the street.

For nearly 50 years, Uniland has been proud to be a partner with the Town of Amherst and the Village of Williamsville community. We know the great potential this region has and how vital the South Long Street Redevelopment would be for the success of Village West. The Village West DRI would efficiently use the DRI funding award to its full potential to jumpstart a redesigned, vibrant district and it would be critical to implementing this redevelopment. Thank you for considering this application and its many benefits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kellena L.W. Kane".

Kellena L.W. Kane

Director of Development

BRIAN HIGGINS
26TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

ASSISTANT WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3226

2459 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3306
(202) 226-0347 (FAX)

726 EXCHANGE STREET
SUITE 601
BUFFALO, NY 14210
(716) 852-3501
(716) 852-3929 (FAX)

800 MAIN STREET
SUITE 3C
NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14301
(716) 282-1274
(716) 282-2479 (FAX)
higgins.house.gov

September 15, 2021

Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner
Mr. Eric Reich
Co-Chairs
Western New York Regional Economic Development Council
95 Perry St.
Buffalo, NY 14203

Re: Support for the Town of Amherst's DRI submissions

Dear Dr. Conway-Turner and Mr. Reich:

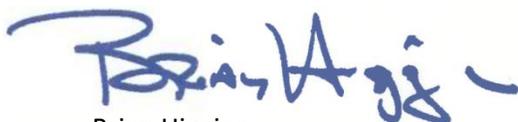
It has been conveyed to me that the Town of Amherst, NY will today submit two proposals under the Downtown Revitalization Initiative program: The Village West proposal and the Village East proposal; I write to convey my support for both submissions.

Each submission would leverage existing community strengths and assets to enhance economic vitality and quality of life by making strategic, targeted investments in things like infill development, walkability enhancements, and other mobility enhancements.

Under the leadership of Supervisor Brian Kulpa and the Town Board, the Town of Amherst, Buffalo's largest suburb and one of the largest municipalities in the State of New York, is reimagining what a first-ring suburb could be and is demonstrating concrete strategies to reverse the trends of blight and disinvestment seen in first-ring suburbs nation-wide. These submissions continue that important and necessary work, and I am pleased to support them.

Thank you very much for your leadership and your consideration.

Sincerely,



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress