CHAPTER 4: TECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Based upon the goals and objectives of the plan and the evaluation of the existing conditions of the Town and Village, the following section completes technical investigations of specific targeted topics (as identified by the Town, Village, and Erie County in their original project planning) and provides overall findings for the existing conditions topic areas with an eye towards the vision of the communities. For the technical investigations, the plan provides a summary of the comments received on these topic areas, how the issue was analyzed, and the results of that analysis. These findings help to frame the recommendations of the plan.

The “Comments/Feedback” section found under each topic heading below were derived from extensive communication with the Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) and through the feedback provided by the general public, primarily through the public information meeting process, but also through letters/e-mail correspondence.

4.1 Neighborhood Revitalization

Comments/Feedback

1. Comments Received (Village):

- The Village is not really divided into different neighborhoods.
- The Central Business District has different characteristics from the rest of the Village and the Town.
- Are there specific funds available for improvements in the Village and Central Business District?
- The Plan for the Village should focus on clean-up and maintenance of existing structures, facilities, and infrastructure.
- The Village performed a Central Business District study, but it is very outdated.
- The number of cars on private property is a concern.
- Travelers on Route 5 should be made aware of the Village and its CBD (signage at the intersection of Route 5 and Route 93).
- Improved public transportation opportunities and “connectivity” will help with the revitalization of the Village and CBD.

2. Comments Received (Town):

- The Town has some historically referenced neighborhoods, but none of which the community currently references.
- The Plan for the Town needs to focus on rehabilitation of existing structures and buildings.
- The general maintenance of property throughout the Town should be a primary focus.
- A specific recommendation would be the maintenance of historic buildings and structures.
- Improvements to infrastructure (roads, drainage and potentially sewer additions)
could help with revitalization.

3. Comments Received (Both)

- Keep the recommendations and ideas simple.

Analysis Results

The Town and the Village do not have specific neighborhoods that are in need of revitalization. However, both the Town and Village had individual properties that are suffering from deferred property maintenance and are in need of economic re-investment. The Village should focus on those buildings located within the Central Business District. A vibrant Central Business District will help compliment and support the surrounding areas of the Village and the Town.

The Town and the Village do not have a lot of “zombie” homes (homes that have been abandoned by their property owners, whether those owners are individuals or financial institutions/banks). Vacancy rates are below local, state, and national averages. Of 1,312 housing units in the Village of Akron, it is estimated that 45 of those units are vacant. In the Town of Newstead, of 3,785 housing units, it is estimated that 164 are vacant.

The Town has some small areas that would qualify, under the federal definition, as “low-income” areas and the Village is completely located in a census tract that is identified as meeting HUD criteria (see the Appendix for a map of these areas). These areas could potentially qualify for Housing and Urban Development grants/monies.

Recommended Direction (Village)

- The Village should build off of (and update) the recommendations for the Central Business District that were in their previous Central Business District study.
- The Village should consider the need for improved design standards in the Central Business District.
- The Central Business District needs to be targeted for grant monies for improvements.
- Connections to the Central Business District need to be expanded.
- Gateway features at entrances to the Village/Central Business District and the Village itself are very important and should be added (see Vision Map).
- Incentives and enforcement methodologies for building improvements/property maintenance within the Central Business District. An example of an incentive could an expanded 485-b program, which would allow for target areas to receive additional tax incentives for re-investment in buildings. An example of enforcement would be adoption and subsequent enforcement of a more stringent property maintenance laws.
- Pursuit of residential revitalization and growth in the immediate vicinity of the Central Business District, which will support local businesses.
- Connectivity within the Village and to areas outside the Village are important to the community’s vitality.
Recommended Direction (Town)

- There are really no specific neighborhoods in the Town (some areas referred to by general historic names). General recommendations for neighborhood revitalization should not be specifically tied to one area. Some areas of the Town do have common issues that should be addressed. For example, some areas may specifically meet the criteria, under the federal guidelines, for “low-income areas” that allows for use of community development monies through Housing and Urban Development.
- The Town should look into and evaluate programs for the protection and rehabilitation of historic structures.
- The historic neighborhoods will be shown on the Vision Map to help with community/neighborhood pride and to provide geographic context to some of the recommendations. Neighborhood outreach could help to establish specific needs for these areas.
- Incentives and enforcement methodologies for building improvements/methodologies for the Town’s existing commercial and residential building stock could be explored. Example incentive could be property tax credit for the rehabilitation of a building/structure or the establishment of a façade improvement program. Example enforcement could include the adoption and subsequent enforcement of more stringent property maintenance laws.

4.2 Major Thoroughfares

Comments Received

- The residents and Village officials are concerned about trucks using Route 93 through the Village.
- A potential Thruway interchange was discussed many years ago, but not raised recently. Should the Town plan for this potential interchange, oppose it in the Plan or just state that if it was proposed again, the Town and the Village would need to update their Comprehensive Plan.
- Concerns were raised about the volume and speed of vehicles on Route 5.
- The appearance/aesthetics and future land uses along Route 5 are a major concern.
- Are there any other roads considered major thoroughfares and have any concerns? Some intersections were noted as needing improvements.
- A park and ride facility could help the community.

Analysis Results

There are two main thoroughfares for east/west automobile transit for the Town of Newstead and the Village of Akron: Interstate-90 (I-90) and New York State Route 5 (Main Street/Road). Route 5 (Main Street/Road) in the Town of Newstead is a NYS highway that is categorized as an arterial. It has AADT of between 5,997 and 11,260. This section of Route 5 is not considered to have traffic exceeding the capacity of the road. Review of the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Traffic Council’s TIP (Traffic Improvement Program) does not show any planned improvement projects. Some intersections along Route 5
corridor have problems, but none have the level of problems that warrant “mitigations” or improvements.

I-90 (Principal Arterial Interstate) runs diagonally to/from Newstead’s southwest corner to/from the Town’s southeast corner. The nearest I-90 exit is located to the east of the Town, in the Town of Pembroke (New York State Thruway Exit 48A). The other nearest interchange is located to the west on Transit Road. With no interchanges in the Town, the I-90 has only a small impact on the Town (good and bad).

NYS Route 5, a Principal Arterial, cuts diagonally to/from Newstead’s southwest corner (the Town of Clarence) to just north of Havens Road, where it straightens and follows a generally consistent trajectory across the Town and into the neighboring Town of Pembroke (NYS Thruway interchange). NYS Route 5 is connected to the Village of Akron via Route 93 which has a signalized intersection on Route 5. NYS Route 5 runs east west connecting the City of Buffalo to Genesee County and beyond.

Other minor roads (Rapids, Hunts Corners, Clarence Center, Stage road, etc.) connect the Town and Village to the Town of Clarence and beyond.

Continuous, north/south automobile transportation corridors are more limited in the Town of Newstead and the Village of Akron. Route 93 connects the Town and Village to Niagara County (Royalton, Lockport, etc.). Crittenden Road/Scotland Road (Major Collector) is located near the eastern edge of the Town and runs north/south from New York State Route 33 in the south (Town of Alden) to Skye Road in the north (Tonawanda Indian Reservation), becoming Scotland Road north of East Avenue in the Village of Akron.

Access to the Village of Akron is provided by a number of local roads including McNeely Road, Clarence Center Road, and Lewis Road from points west; Maple Road, Cedar Street, and Bloomingdale Road from points north; Bloomingdale Road, Indian Falls Road, and Knapp Road form points east; and Crittenden Road, Buell Street, and Cummings Road from points south (please see Map X for an illustration of the Town and the Village’s transportation network).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Where to Where</th>
<th>2015 AADT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interstate-90</td>
<td>West of Transit Road (Town of Cheektowaga) to Genesee County Line</td>
<td>39,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Road (NYS Route 5)</td>
<td>Barnum Road to Buell Street</td>
<td>11,269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buell Street</td>
<td>Main Road to Cedar Street</td>
<td>7,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crittenden Road</td>
<td>Main Road to Skyline Drive</td>
<td>4,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomingdale Road</td>
<td>Scotland Road to Wesley Drive</td>
<td>2,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Road</td>
<td>Hake Road to John Street</td>
<td>2,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence Center Road</td>
<td>East of Hake Road to Buell Street</td>
<td>2,577</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: New York State Department of Transportation*

The Route 93 corridor through the Village does present some problems with truck movements and extra traffic through the Village. Main Street in the Village runs through
the heart of the CBD and, not only represents a major transportation feature, but also an important multi-modal and aesthetic component of the Village.

**Recommended Direction (Village)**

- Support re-routing trucks on Route 93 out of Village.
- Main Street in the Village needs investment.

**Recommended Direction (Town)**

- Route 5 is an extremely important component of the Town (and Village). There is a need to protect this roadway; access management, improvements, aesthetic/design requirements, etc.
- The Town needs to encourage, direct, and regulate how development takes place along the Route 5 corridor.
- Streetscape and other features are needed.
- Uses on Route 5 in the Route 93 area must not compete with Village CBD.
- The public, the Town, and the Village do not in general, support a Thruway interchange, continue to voice this perspective to the NYSDOT.

### 4.3 Zoning

**Comments Received**

- Character of community is a major priority in the Town and the Village.
- There should be targeted development areas.
- The development and use of Route 5 (Main Road) versus Main Street uses has been, and continues to be, a point of concern.
- The protection of agricultural lands is important to the future of the community.
- Explore the transition of uses between the Town and Village.
- Zoning should support continued targeted and controlled growth at Route 5 and Route 93 area.
- Need to properly control residential development.
- More diverse housing is needed (young adults, seniors, etc.). This needs to be carefully planned so as to not impact the character of the community.

**Analysis Results**

The Town has completed the following zoning actions over the course of the last 10-years:

- Adoption of wind energy conversion systems (WECS) law.
- Adoption of solar systems law.
- Adoption of “Right to Farm” law.
- Amendment of existing subdivision law.
- Adoption of home-based business and daycare law.
- Amendment of C-1 zone and C-2 zone laws (eliminated residential uses).
• Adoption of accessory building provisions.
• Adoption of new sign law and amendments to Route 5 overlay.
• Amendments to the RA district.

It appears the Town’s Zoning Code is still primarily focused on uses and bulk requirements (Euclidean in nature). Zoning in the Town also needs to focus on community character, the protection of resources and other goals and objectives of the Town.

Zoning in the Town (which is primarily un-sewered) has led to development focused on strip frontage residential development. Most lands are zoned “Rural Agricultural”, and mainly focus on single family home development.

Almost all of Route 5's frontage is zoned Commercial (C-2). Route 5 across the Town has many different characteristics and should be treated differently. These characteristics should be addressed through an improved Overlay district (with different requirements for different areas) or through creating new districts for some different areas.

Industrial areas of the Town are located in a few areas off of Route 5 and around the Village (utility service). The Industrial area running out of the northeast corner of the Village along the “railroad line” should probably be readjusted as the focus should not be the rail line. Continued Industrial development to the north of Perry’s Ice Cream is limited by environmental restrictions. Continued cooperation between the Town and Village in the Clarence Center road Industrial areas will be necessary.

The Village has completed some minor zoning updates over the course of the last 10-years. Like many Villages, Akron is fairly built-out and zoning amendments will not make a large impact to the Community. Focus for any zoning updates should be on the Central Business District (design oriented) and in the western end of the Village (Industrial/Business growth areas and transitions into the Town).

**Recommended Direction (Village)**

• Clarification of areas for businesses/industrial development in the western part of the Village.
• Continued improvements of community character design issues for Main Street.

**Recommended Direction (Town)**

• The Town needs additional subdivision controls. Addressing road frontage developments and adding requirements concerning the protection of important features and rural character. This could be augmented by Rural Development Guidelines. The subdivision update should also address soil conditions and septic systems.
• Community character issues throughout the Town (new construction) need to be addressed through regulation improvements (overlays and/or general site plan regulation updates).
• Continue to rezone properties along Route 5 to bring them into conformance with
the community’s vision. Consider the creation of new zoning districts (East end of Route 5, west end, area around Route 93 intersection, etc.).

- There is a need for additional protection techniques for agricultural lands. These can be as simple as creating a new Agricultural District, an Ag Overlay or as complicated as Incentive zoning or TDR’s.
- Need to amend the zoning map to target appropriate development areas (Industrial and denser residential areas).
- Environmental Protection Overlay Districts (EPOD) should be created.

4.4 Transportation

Comments Received

- Remove trucks from the Village (Route 93 from the north).
- Some residents expressed the need for public transportation (also a Park and Ride).
- Sidewalks should be provided in specific/targeted areas.
- New paths/trails need to be continued/expanded to connect community facilities and surrounding areas.
- Existing bike path should be extended to Akron Falls Park.
- Some roads and intersections are in need of improvements (County roads are especially in poor shape).
- Route 5 needs focus; traffic, intersections, access, etc.

Analysis Results

The Route 93 issue has been discussed for many years. It was brought up that a bridge repair project in 2018 will re-route traffic from Route 93. This project will offer the opportunity for the NYSDOT and the Town and Village to observe new traffic patterns and potentially develop a new truck route around the Village (this needs to be a priority and focus).

Community officials will need to form and support a committee to look into public transportation and alternative transportation methods. They will need to work with NFTA officials and County representatives to determine demand, whether improved Transit can be obtained, and how other services could meet the needs of the community (public/private ventures).

The Town and Village should continue to work together on improvements and expansions to paths, trail ways and bike paths in the community. Connecting features such as Akron Falls Park, other parks and recreation areas and the CBD should be a focus.

The Village should update their sidewalk conditions inventory and identify other areas of the Village in need of sidewalks. The Village could use Community Block Grant monies for these projects.
As to roadway conditions, the Town and Village could work together through a committee to identify these problem areas and work with the Legislative Boards to petition the County and State to make improvements.

**Recommended Direction (Village)**

**Recommended Direction (Town)**

### 4.5 Watershed Based Planning

**Comments Received**

- Drainage problems in areas of the Town.
- Protecting resources will protect our streams and creeks.

**Analysis Results**

See attached report in Appendix.

**Recommended Direction (Village)**

- See attached report in Appendix.

**Recommended Direction (Town)**

- See attached report in Appendix.

### 4.6 Food Systems Planning

**Comments Received**

- Desire for a new supermarket/grocery store located within the Town.
- Is a local farmers market needed?

**Analysis Results**

Food systems planning is a critical component to this comprehensive plan update, as food production and access are increasingly looked at as indicators of healthy, sustainable community.
The recommendations made within this section rely heavily on the information provided in One Region Forward’s Growing Together: Ensuring Healthy Food, Strong Farms, and Prosperous Buffalo Niagara, which was published in February 2015.

Designed to be a technical report, Growing Together was authored by the University at Buffalo Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab and is, in part, highlighted by a series of 38 “Ideas for the Future,” which are intended to be “familiar and novel ways to strengthen Buffalo Niagara’s food system and to make the most our regions assets.”

The Town of Newstead is an Erie County “Right-to-Farm” municipality. The “Right-to-Farm” law was passed to ensure that an explicit legal basis was established for farming/agriculture to remain a by-right use in areas in which there was risk of farmland being converted to other uses or instances in which farmers were at risk for private nuisance suits being filed against them. Since the Town’s founding in 1823, has been the cornerstone of Newstead’s economy and, perhaps more importantly, its rural way of life. Similarly, the Village of Akron has served as a rural village, primarily serving the residents of Newstead for nearly 200-years.

Farming and agriculture are priorities in the Town of Newstead. Agricultural lands within the Town of Newstead account for roughly 50% of the Clarence-Newstead Agricultural District and contain some of the highest rated soils (as defined in the Erie County, New York Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan). In 2001, it was estimated that approximately 51% of the Town’s land was dedicated to agriculture (assessed as such). In the subsequent 16-years, that number has fallen to approximately 40% as commercial development pressures on NYS Route 5 and rural residential growth have increased. The Town has two designated agricultural districts, Erie County Agricultural District #14, which encompasses virtually all of the northern portion (north of Village) of the Town and Erie County Agricultural District #1, which encompasses nearly all of the southern portion (south of the Village) of the Town.

The majority of lands in the Town of Newstead have been classified by the tax assessor as either residential or agricultural. In some instances, the reality of the situation is that the parcels may be both, with a residential use (i.e. farmhouse) being surrounded by an agricultural use (i.e. barns and crop fields). So under representation and over representation of what lands are actually being farmed are issues that should be taken into account. The assessed Land Use Classifications can be seen on Map X. It also should be noted that the Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan identifies Newstead as having clusters of parcels with high agricultural soils values (this can be seen Soils Map found within the County’s plan).

**What’s Grown and Where to Buy?**

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1 University at Buffalo Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab, Growing Together: Ensuring Healthy Food, Strong Farms, and Prosperous Buffalo Niagara, 2015, 89.
Crops grown in the Town of Newstead include, but are not limited to: corn, beans, and grains. Animal farming the Town includes, but is not limited to: dairy, poultry, and beef. All of these products provide vital links in the regional food system.

Roadside stands and on-site (farm) sales are currently the only opportunities afforded to Newstead and Akron residents to buy locally produced food products within municipal limits. Although, Jamminjoes Farm Market and Clarence Hollow Farmers Market are both located within in relatively close proximity to the west (in the Town of Clarence).

At one point in time, the Village of Akron would have served as a critical component of the Town’s food distribution network, providing the farmers with the critical services they needed on a day-to-day basis, while at the same time, providing those farms with a market to distribute their products.

This relationship began to change during the second half of the 20th century, as the economics of the region dictated that many Town and Village residents seek employment opportunities in and around the City of Buffalo, effectively making the communities suburbs in terms of economic functionality.

There is one grocery store located with the Village of Akron (and the Town of Newstead). Pixley’s Shur Fine Food Mart is located at 81 Buell Street. There are numerous convenience stores located throughout the Town and the Village, some inside service stations, others as standalone stores. These convenience stores provide residents with “essential” food items such as milk, eggs, bread, and water.

The Town of Newstead is blessed to be an area that has rich agricultural soils and to have large amounts of land dedicated to food production. Many of the Town’s needs, in terms of food production (especially fruits and vegetables) could be met through locally sourced products. In addition, the Town provides agricultural products to the County and the greater Buffalo Niagara region, helping sustain the food system at large.

Based on the existing condition of the Town of Newstead’s food system, to include the Village of Akron, the following recommendations for improvement are being proposed:

**Recommended Direction (Town and Village)**

- Many food needs, in terms of food production, could be met through locally sourced products, the Town and the Village should seek to make these products available within municipal limits.
- Continue to support farmers by keeping the Town a “Right-to-Farm” community;
- Seek opportunities to expand the existing Agricultural Districts (Erie County Agricultural Districts #1 and #14);
- Work to establish a purchase/conservation easement program and a transfer of development rights program to protect prime farmland;
- Coordinate with the Village of Akron to establish downtown (Akron) farmer’s market to provide further opportunities for farmers to sell their products to local residents;
• Work with elected officials to identify weaknesses and deficiencies in the Town’s food system to include food production and food access;
• Educate Newstead youths in farming and agriculture best practices to ensure that existing farms will have an educated workforce going forward;
• Evaluate the level of fruit and vegetable self-reliance within the Town of Newstead (i.e. what percentage of the Town’s fruit and vegetable needs could be met with only those fruits and vegetables grown within the Town);
• Look at zoning laws to ensure that the roadside farm stands are permitted by-right on properties zoned for agricultural use.
• Encourage, and potentially provide incentives, to grocers and markets within the Town that sell locally produced products and/or market locally produce products in a unique way (i.e. specially designed displays, signage, etc.);
• Work with local school districts to source school meals with fruits and vegetables grown locally, look at providing school districts that comply a financial incentive; and
• Work with local school districts to establish experiential nutrition and farming education in the classroom through the establishment of school gardens.

4.7 Agricultural Planning

Comments Received

• Agriculture is extremely important to the community.
• The Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan identifies Newstead as having important agricultural lands.
• Town has been actively planning agricultural “preservation” over the last 20-years; various reports have been completed by the Town.
• Agriculture is important to the economy of the Town and Village, it represents an important component of the rural character, and it helps to protect the environmental features of the Town.
• There is a farm in the heart of the Village and it should be protected.

Analysis Results

Agriculture has and continues to be one of the centerpieces of life in the Town of Newstead. The commercial development seen along NYS Route 5 and the increasing numbers of single-family detached homes being constructed are both relatively recent phenomena. For the nearly 200-years prior, since the Town’s founding, agriculture and a “rural way of life” were mainstays in the community and, based on the feedback received from the public during the public meetings as part of this comprehensive planning process, agriculture remains an important part of and priority for the community.

Good Land
Today, over 50% of the Town’s land is located in either Erie County Agricultural District #1 or #14 and, as displayed on Map X, the vast majority of the Town’s remaining agricultural parcels are classified as “Prime Farmland,” “Farmland of Statewide Importance,” or “Prime Farmland if Drained.” According to the Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, the agricultural parcels located within the Town of Newstead have some of the highest soil ratings in Erie County, with the majority of agricultural lands having soils that rate between 40.01 and 400.00 (the soil rating is based on the total acreage within the parcel of cropland in each of the soils category multiplied by a weighting factor of: 2 for prime soils, 1.5 for prime soils when drained, and 1 soils of statewide importance).

The Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan also noted that virtually all of the parcels within the Town of Newstead that are classified as agricultural have at least some cropland located on them - meaning that they are being actively utilized for farming. It should be noted that in many instances, some of the lands that are currently classified by the assessor as residential are actually both residential and agricultural. The distribution of land use types can be seen on Map X, which illustrates that agricultural and residential are the two most dominant land use types in the Town of Newstead.

An Economic Pillar

Agriculture continues to play a vital role in the Town of Newstead’s economy, both directly through the active production of fruits, vegetables, grains, and livestock and indirectly/secondary through the sales of the machinery, tools, equipment, etc. necessary for farmers to operate on a day-to-day basis.

Newstead’s farms not only provide the farmers and landowners with employment/livelihood, they also employ seasonal field hands, providing a source of income and employment.

Those farms in the Town that are located in Erie County Agricultural District #1 and #14 are offered a number of financial incentives that they otherwise would not normally receive, namely the agricultural district designation allows landowners the opportunity to receive real property assessments based on the value of their land for agricultural production rather than on its development. Participating in the agricultural district is completely voluntary. These tax incentives put more economic capital back into the hands of the farmers, strengthening their ability to continue farming and putting more money directly back into the Town of Newstead’s local economy.

Environmental/Rural Character Protection

Farming also serves to protect two of the Town’s defining characteristics: its pristine natural environment (wide-open landscapes, numerous uninterrupted views of the Onondaga Escarpment, forested lands, creeks/streams, etc.) and its rural character.

Farming/agriculture has guided development in the Town of Newstead throughout its history. Where farms exist - sprawling residential subdivisions with curvilinear streets and massive commercial developments characterized by in descript, box stores surrounded
by large swaths of concrete and asphalt do not and, based on the feedback received from the general public, this is a good thing.

Newstead residents place a high value on their rural way of life, with many of them deliberately choosing to reside within the Town to avoid living in the typical suburban setting found further west/closer to the City of Buffalo. In fact, it’s exactly those types of developments that residents cited as examples of what they don’t want in their community.

Erie County Agricultural Districts #1 and #14, which encompass much of the undeveloped land in the Town, includes large portions of the stream corridors of Murder Creek and Tonawanda Creek. Rural landscapes such as farm fields, woodlands, picturesque farmhouses create an identity for the community. Taking steps to preserve and protect agriculture in the Town of Newstead is, by extension, taking steps to ensure that a way of life is being preserved, an economic pillar remains structurally sound, and the ability of the Town to continue to contributing to meeting the food access needs of the Town, the County, and the region is being sustained.

**Recommended Direction (Town)**

- The Town should apply to NYS Agriculture and Markets for a grant to complete an agricultural protection plan (build upon the County Ag Plan).
- This Plan would help with identifying the tools needed to successfully help protect agricultural land and the farming taking place on that land; such tools as PDR’s, PACE, TDR’s and others. This Plan will help to identify impediments to farming in the Town and also help farmers with markets and planning to keep their lands being farmed.
- A voluntary Agricultural easement program could be investigated (would need State Legislation to accomplish).
- The Town can investigate zoning revisions that would allow certain commercial activities that may be compatible with agricultural uses, by special use permit and site plan review, within the Rural Agricultural zoning district. Agricultural tourism could be formally allowed by this zoning update.
- An Agricultural Protection Overlay District may also be needed; to protect agriculture from incompatible adjoining uses.
- The Town and County could help investigate grant programs and opportunities for farmers.

**Recommended Direction (Village)**

- Continue to find ways to link the Town’s agricultural products to the services/markets located within the Village.
- Protect and promote the existing Farm in the Village (work with the farm owner to help devise ways to keep this farm in business).
4.8 Vacant Parcels/ Development Patterns

In reviewing information and mapping about the Town and noting that the Town has investigated vacant lots within the Town, it was determined that this Plan should further evaluate this issue.

Issues/Conditions/Data

- See map of large vacant parcels (spread through the Town and some in the Village). Most vacant lands in the Town are zoned Rural Agricultural. Most vacant lands in the Village are zoned residential.
- Many areas of environmental restrictions: wetlands, floodplains, etc. are associated with these lots.
- Residents want to retain rural character and not have “suburban sprawl”.
- Pressures for development are coming from Clarence and may in the future come from Industrial development in the Town of Alabama.
- Sewers are in very little areas of the Town. The Village’s recent wastewater study states that sewer could be extended into the Town.
- Most of the residential development in the Town is large lot, road frontage type development.
- Route 5 also has development pressure and development has taken place in areas throughout the corridor and in many different forms.

Analysis Results

- There are a large number of large lots (greater than 10 acres in size) within the Town that are vacant, farmed or have only a single family home located on them. Those lots would be available for subdivision and could result in a large increase in the number of houses in the Town (most are zoned RA).
- When evaluating the environmental restrictions and Agricultural Districts locations as they relate to these large lots and understanding the desires of the Town to remain rural, there are very few areas that should be targeted for development (see map created). Those areas would logically be in areas near the Village but not in areas that have environmental restrictions, are farmed or would conflict with the existing development pattern.
- Residential road frontage development could continue to rise and its affects will begin to change the character of the Town.
- Frontages along Route 5 will continue to be targeted for development and the Town will need to amend regulations to better regulate the type and appearances of this development.
Those areas in the Town, around the Village, that would be appropriate to target for development must be incentivized to ensure that it takes place in those areas and in the form desired. Investments will be needed in infrastructure (sewers) to accomplish.

Development in the Village is very limited (typical for Villages). Most development should be focused on existing developed sites and include expansions and rehabilitation of those sites. In those “vacant” areas that may be suitable for development, the Village will need to ensure that the development does not adversely affect surrounding properties. One of those large parcels is the property at the western side of the Village that was proposed for dense residential development in the past. The large farm within the Village also adds to the character of the community and should be encouraged to remain.

Recommended Direction for the Town

- See map created and the new Vision map.
- Create laws (Overlays, updated environmental restrictions, Ag protection laws, etc.) that restrict development in the places not suitable for development and that do not meet the Goals and Objectives of the Town. These areas include the Ag districts and the areas which have the environmental restrictions.
- Amend the Town’s subdivision regulations and/or create an Overlay District to restrict and regulate the creation of road frontage lots.

Recommended Direction for the Village

- Encourage revitalization of the existing CBD.
- Protect the existing farm in the Village from development (work with landowner).