

Public Comments are in bold.

Planning Board responses are in plain text.

1. ADOPTION OF PLAN.

Adoption is critical to developing consistency in future development of the town. Annual updates are proposed and will be added as a component of plan adoption. This will ensure that community goals remain up to date and appropriate and that the land use map remains reflective of community goals.

2. DEPTH OF MAJOR ARTERIAL ZONE

Encourages a more substantial development as long as that depth does not negatively impacts upon existing residential areas.

3. MASS TRANSIT

The plan does not promote or discourage development of mass transit alternatives. The plan does encourage, through development of the bike path master plan, increased pedestrian access to existing mass transit facilities. In the past, mass transit, in the form of bus routes to Harris Hill Road were not received favorably by the community. Convenience nodes, accessible via walkway or bike path will encourage a lesser dependence on vehicles for non-commuting activities.

4. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

While there is no explicit plan for development of affordable housing in Clarence, there is promotion of a mixed-use hamlet zoning classification, which potentially will offer a variety of housing alternatives. The use of clustering, encouraged within the plan, will allow for a greater variety of housing types as an alternative to traditional suburban style large lot development.

5. TOLL BOOTH RELOCATION.

Relocation of the Thruway Toll Barrier to the east will have an impact on traffic dynamics within the town, especially if the Transit Road exit will be a toll-free access point.

If a relocation of the barrier were to occur, The Town of Clarence more fully would support the barrier as far to the east as feasible. Currently the relocation process is developing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement to fully identify all potential environmental concerns associated with the relocation.

In terms of relevant issues identified in the Town master plan review process, a major concern with relocation to the east is the impact on development. The further east the barrier, the further east the non-toll access to the Thruway will move, providing additional incentives for potential development to move east, away from the city center. This works in opposition to many of the concepts identified by the region as being important. Also, the development of any additional access points to the thruway will have a significant impact on traffic dynamics within the town.

6. CHANGES TO PLAN IN FUTURE

A summation will be added to the plan, which will require an annual update with public input to review community goals as well as the land use map.

7. PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

In addition to the traditional methods of utilizing the local print media and bulletin boards, the plan itself will be a main feature of any future town website. Currently the Town is utilizing the school district's website to host information on the master plan update. It has been the goal and will continue to be important in reviewing any future site plans to inform all land owners within 500 feet of any proposed changes in the use of land.

8. IMPACT ON HARRIS HILL ROAD.

Harris Hill Road has been identified as an existing road with an unacceptable level of service. Projects in the future must be sensitive to this issue. Meetings with County Highway officials have progressed to set up a proactive approach to mitigating the existing concerns on Harris Hill Road and requiring any developer of land that has a potential impact on Harris Hill Road to contribute to any necessary upgrade.

Overall, the Town will need to improve upon its north/south corridors to provide more efficient traffic flows, especially during peak hours. The Land Use Access Management Study for Transit Road should aid in developing techniques, which can be utilized in other north/south corridors within the Town.

9. SEWER COST ESTIMATES.

The cost of "hooking in" to any new sewer district will vary with individual circumstances. The plan identifies potential areas where sewers may be extended into the future. Prior to any extension, a district will need to be formed and appropriate environmental reviews conducted to ensure that extensions of services are not creating an economic or environmental hardship to the area and to residents.

10. REQUIRING POLICE AGENCY DEVELOPMENT

There exist no magic thresholds, which automatically require that a municipality create a police force. Currently, the State Police, Erie County Sheriffs Department and local code enforcement personnel service the Town of Clarence. The plan development does not identify the need or any thresholds to trigger additional enforcement capabilities within the Town.

11. WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

The Town of Clarence is currently working on developing a website. In the interim, the Planning Department is utilizing the Clarence Central Schools website to house planning documents developed in the Comprehensive Planning process. In addition, the Town is working with the Town of Amherst and the local school districts to generate planning curriculum within the schools and on sharing Geographic Information Systems on the Internet.

12. LOT SIZES.

It was recommended that lot sizes be increased to one acre minimum lot size in sewer areas and 2-5 acre minimum lot size in unsewered areas. The Planning Board has spent several years reviewing the lot size issue with recommendations ranging from reducing lot size to substantially increasing lot size. Specific site conditions and access to infrastructure will dictate appropriate lot size development and the Planning Board has recommended as a part of the plan that residential lot sizes be amended as follows:

- *increasing minimum lot size in Agriculture zone to 1.33 acres and 150' frontage.
- *increasing unsewered residential lot size to ¾ acre and 100' frontage
- *eliminating "B" lots
- *encourage clustering in any new subdivision proposal to preserve green space
- *encourage agriculture land preservation

13. HODGE PODGE DEVELOPMENT

It will be important to tie all land use recommendations together to identify the overall town plan. The preservation of open space and consistent enforcement of all land use regulations will work to preserve the town character.

14. PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION/PROCESS

Notification procedures on individual site development projects will continue to be stressed for every project. A more detailed public information campaign on the process employed by the town in reviewing any project will be developed. In addition, Master Plan 2015 will recommend upgrades to existing land use regulations, which will ensure that the goals of the plan are upheld in reviewing all applications for development. This will ensure that the local decision makers are guardians/stewards of the plan.

15. TRAFFIC IMPACTS ON LOCAL ROADS.

It will be necessary to take a more proactive approach to identifying infrastructure upgrades. Land use decisions should more clearly define necessary upgrades and develop a system for developing an equitable payment method for upgrades. This system must involve many layers of government, as Erie County and New York State own a majority of impacted roads while land use decisions are the sole domain of the local municipality.

16. HOLISTIC APPROACH TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Plan must work to create desirable neighborhoods with connections between neighborhoods and convenience services. The Town will work to create walkable/bikeable connections to discourage automobile use for convenience type uses and access to community and public services. Future neighborhoods should be designed to fit into the planned trail systems and existing neighborhoods should be retrofitted with trail opportunities to the greatest extent feasible. The existing hamlets should act as the service centers or nodes for convenience type facilities and should act to facilitate the trail development system. This should include public facility development including sidewalks, parking facilities and the like to encourage trail utilization and development. The proposed land uses will work to encourage maintenance of the existing community character and development of nodes and connectivity between neighborhoods will create a more holistic community design.

17. COMMUNICATION/EDUCATION ON THE SITE PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

The Planning and Zoning Department will work to develop an educational process to outline process for review of any future site plan development. Educational brochures and flow charts can be further refined as educational tools to applicants as well as the public. As the technology within the Town develops, a website can be used to further educate the public on the review process.

18. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK DEVELOPMENT.

One of the recommendations in the Plan is to encourage park development associated with individual neighborhood development. Alternatively, access to the trail system should be developed to ensure that future residents have a walkable/bikeable connection to recreational facilities.

Park development does not necessarily create a hardship on the local government in terms of development and maintenance. Community associations and future residents may be encouraged to become involved in future development to reduce the costs to the overall community. Park development adds value to any neighborhood.

19. CORNER OF ROLL/SHIMERVILLE.

Concern has been raised over the inclusion of a portion of the land at the northwest corner of this intersection in a future industrial zone. The Plan has identified that it will be important to the long-term financial health of the community to provide business park space to encourage light industrial and business park development. The area surrounding the former National Gypsum Plant has always been identified, through previous Master Planning development, as an area, which could accommodate light industrial growth. This is further supported by the fact that this area is accessible to a sewer line extension in fairly close proximity. The Plan further recommends that business park areas should be developed so as not to create a negative impact upon existing residential development. A definitive line should be developed to identify the location of this future zone that will meet the goals of the community and preserve the integrity of the existing residences.

20. GEOGRAPHY OF THE TOWN AS CRITICAL INPUT FOR DEVELOPING FUTURE LAND USES.

The Town has developed a Geographic Information System which identifies all natural and man made features within the Town overlaid over existing parcels in the Town. This information serves as a tremendous tool in refining land use decisions to ensure compatibility with community goals. In terms of ideas expressed by the Partners for a Livable Western New York, many of these concepts will be incorporated into the Plan. There must be some allowance for the fact that Clarence is a suburban community and that many of the urban/new urbanism concepts promoted by the Partners are not appropriate in some instances. Large estate type lots are in demand within the community and will continue to be the desired residential growth within the community. While subdivision design can and will be amended to incorporate clustering and new urbanism concepts, large tract single lot development will continue as the market warrants.

The plan identified the full build out potential of the town under current land use regulations. The proposed plan attempts to reduce the maximum full build impacts by encouraging more balanced growth and a maintenance of the existing open character.

21. WALKABLE/BIKEABLE COMMUNITY.

A critical element of the plan is the Bike Path Master Plan, which works to develop an interconnecting trail system within the Town. Future developments should be required to provide a connection and the town should work to retrofit existing communities into the system and to provide walkable/bikeable access to recreational and service nodes. Existing community facilities should develop access to the base trail system. The overall system should be coordinated through the GBNRTC and connections provided to adjoining Towns.

22. TRANSIT ORIENTED

No extension of existing mass transit access is proposed within the Town. However, as described, the Bike Path Master Plan should be fully developed to provide links to the existing mass transit facilities.

23. RETROFITTING DEVELOPMENT.

The concept of providing a connection to existing neighborhoods should be pursued through the development of the Bike Path Master Plan. This will serve to provide a more cohesive community. Future projects of both a residential and commercial nature should provide connectivity to the base plan. Connectivity should be a concept reviewed and considered as a part of any site plan review.

24. COMMERCIAL SITE DEVELOPMENT UPGRADES

Recommendations of the Plan will require that additional landscaping requirements be designed into every project. This will include, as is currently practiced, grass areas that serve as parking overflow areas. In existing hamlets/commercial nodes, the Town should develop municipal parking areas, tied to the trail system, to allow for the continued use of historic buildings. Also, as previously discussed any opportunities for trail extensions to service new commercial developments should be required and established in the review process.

The Land Use Access Management Plan, being incorporated as a component of the comprehensive plan shall work to provide appropriate land use regulations along the major arterial. Additionally, access to the trail system should be considered in all reviews and tools developed in the LUAMP can be utilized along other thoroughfares in the Town.

25. RIPARIAN PRESERVATION.

The plan recommends land use regulations be upgraded to require appropriate setbacks along all creek banks and stream corridors. The Town will continue to provide strict enforcement of the floodplain regulations, especially within the density floodplain area in the north part of Town. The plan recommends that a park area be developed along Tonawanda Creek, providing access to this regional recreational opportunity. Preservation of the Escarpment and the Tillman Road Natural Area continue to be important to the community.

26. GROWTH CONSTRAINTS/HOLISTIC APPROACH

Existing and future sewer extensions have provided a constraint to growth within the Town and this will continue. Future growth within subdivisions can be pinpointed to identify the total amount of development that can occur over the next 15 years. This amount of development can be further governed by the Town to allow a maximum number of permits per year. As discussed, subdivision and zoning laws will be amended to ensure that future subdivision growth is more pedestrian friendly and better reflects the open character of the Town.

Industrial development in the future will be limited to those areas where services may be extended and where existing residential development is not negatively impacted.

Commercial development of a large scale will be strictly limited to the Transit Road corridor and the LUAMP will aid in identifying future uses as well as preserving the corridor as a regional thoroughfare. Main Street and the existing hamlet areas will work to preserve the existing character while allowing for increased investment to sustain these areas.

An open space preservation plan will be generated through the plan adoption and a model will be adopted to preserve lands into the future. Large lot estate development will continue and can be controlled via setting annual limits on this type of growth.

The bike path master plan will be developed to provide the connectivity required to ensure a sustainable community.