



Village of Lancaster NY Forward

Draft Downtown Profile and Assessment
August 15, 2023



NY Forward



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Lancaster NY Forward Boundary.....	4
Regional & Historic Context.....	5
Demographic Overview.....	7
Recent Plans and Investment	13
Physical Setting	19
Environmental Context.....	19
Parks and Recreation Areas	23
Existing Land Use.....	25
Publicly Owned Parcels.....	27
Vacant and Underutilized Sites	27
Zoning	30
Infrastructure Systems	33
Transportation Networks	33
Historic, Cultural, and Artistic Assets	42
Economic Trends and Opportunities.....	46
Synthesis of Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities.....	48



Introduction

A comprehensive profile and assessment of the New York Forward (NYF) area and Village is a valuable tool when developing recommendations regarding proposed projects. This profile and assessment inventories existing and planned conditions in downtown Lancaster, providing a framework for review and analysis of the proposed projects in this Strategic Investment Plan (SIP).

Components of the downtown profile and assessment include:

- A review of the NYF boundary and its context in the region;
- An examination of existing conditions relevant to the NYF strategy;
- A summary of past and ongoing planning efforts and projects and Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) strategies and priorities for the Western New York Region;
- A synopsis of an economic, market, and housing analysis; and
- Identification of critical issues, challenges, advantages, and opportunities.

The profile and assessment highlights key opportunities and limitations on future redevelopment. It also summarizes the trends and data necessary to develop a blueprint for the revitalization of Lancaster.





Lancaster NY Forward Boundary

The Lancaster New York Forward boundary covers approximately 97 acres of land in the heart of the Village, representing approximately 5% of the Village's total land area. The NYF area is mainly comprised of the Village's Central Business District, as well as the Broadway and Central Avenue Historic Districts.

At its southern end, the NYF area encapsulates all properties on the southern half of Broadway between Aurora and Church Streets. Broadway, which is US Route 20, is a major throughfare in Erie County and is the primary route from the Village to the City of Buffalo. At its northern end, the NYF area is bounded generally by the Norfolk Southern Rail Line and a number of the Village's manufacturing businesses. Along the western end, the NYF area borders Cayuga Creek and several properties situated against the Creek's western bank. Lastly, along the eastern end, the NYF area border extends to School Street and Holland Avenue, bordering one of the Village's residential neighborhoods.

NYF Area





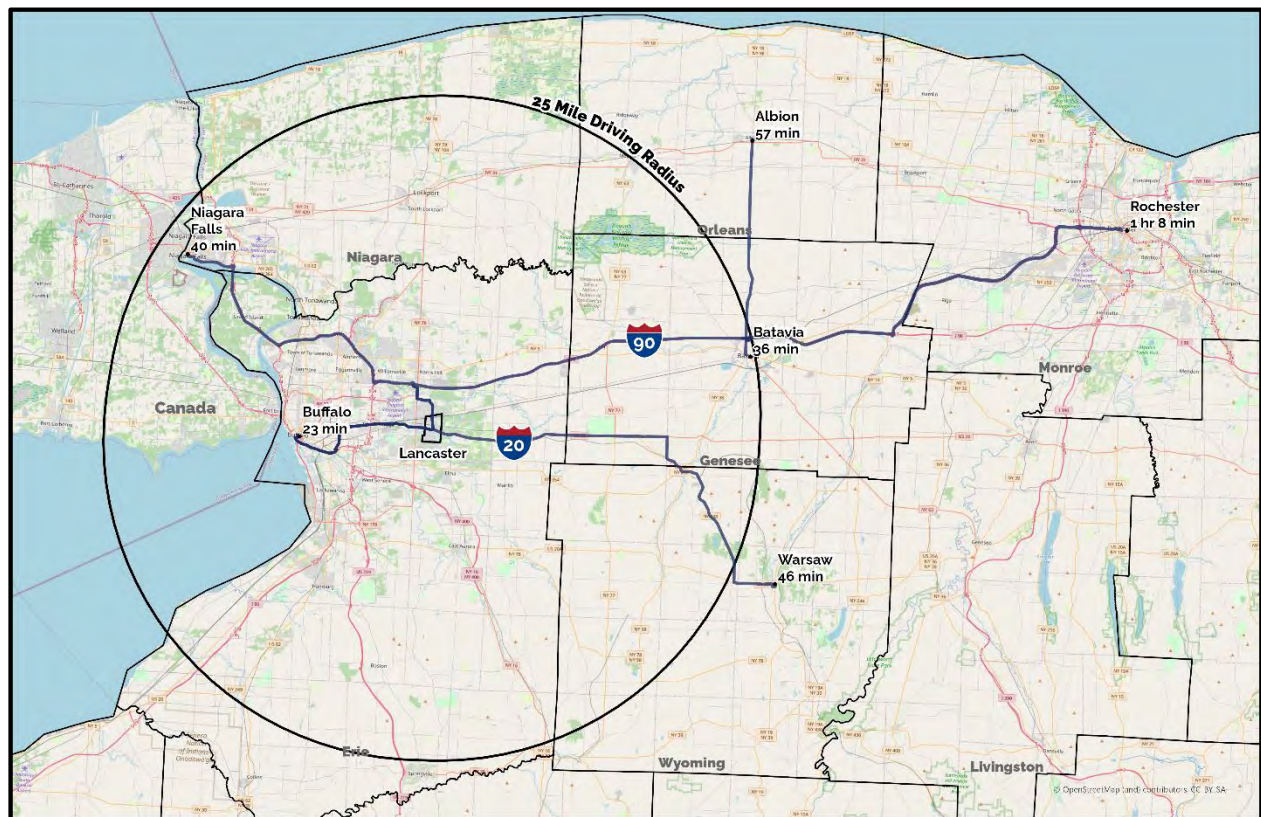
Regional & Historic Context

Regional Context

The Village of Lancaster is in the eastern half of Erie County and is historically considered a streetcar suburb of the City of Buffalo. The Village is enclosed entirely within the Town of Lancaster and shares its western border with the Village of Depew. To the east of the Village, the surrounding landscape is relatively rural with most land in the Town of Lancaster used for large lot subdivisions and agriculture. To the west, the surrounding landscape gradually increases in urbanization as you move towards the City of Buffalo.

Conveniently located in proximity to one of New York's largest cities and employers, and with an abundance of transportation options, the Village of Lancaster is an ideal community for both commuters and those who prefer to live in the same community as they work.

The Village of Lancaster is located approximately 10 miles from Downtown Buffalo and 37 miles from the City of Batavia in neighboring Genesee County to the east. Bisected by U.S. Route 20, residents of Lancaster have direct access to U.S. Interstate 90. The Village is also within a 15-minute car ride of the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport and Buffalo-Depew Amtrak Station.





Historic Context

The land on which the Village of Lancaster sits on today was originally home to the Seneca Indians who were a part of the Iroquois Confederacy. European-American settlers began to settle this land along the Cayuga Creek in 1807. Primarily functioning as an agrarian community, the population of Lancaster and the rest of the WNY region soon began to explode with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the numerous rail lines that were also established. The Village of Lancaster wasn't officially incorporated from the Town of Lancaster until 1849. In the decades following, the Village became a major center of commerce for rural communities surrounding the City of Buffalo. Furthermore, during this period of growth, trolley lines were established between Lancaster and the adjoining Village of Depew, while private automobiles soon became the new normal. Both of these factors made the Village of Lancaster a more accessible and attractive location for city dwellers seeking a quieter place to live.

The Village of Lancaster's history as an economic and commercial hub in Erie County and its modern vision for how the community should function have laid the foundation that will make the NYF investments within the community truly transformational.

Despite the tremendous growth during this period, the Village did not escape the 19th and early 20th centuries unscathed. During the late 19th century, numerous fires ravaged the historic buildings within the downtown area, particularly the Great Fire of 1894, which destroyed most of the wood-framed buildings along West Central Avenue. Additionally, during the 1950s a large flood control project was undertaken for Cayuga Creek, which resulted in the demolition of numerous buildings along West Main Street. Compounded by the effects of urban renewal, many of the buildings were never rebuilt, while those that were followed the patterns of sprawling suburban plaza development.

Spurred by the desire to reinvent their Village center as place for commerce and residential growth, the Village has conducted numerous planning efforts and undertaken various development projects since the 1990s to reclaim the Village Center as a commercial and community hub. Recent shifts in the perception of the Village Center have seen new infrastructure projects aimed at traffic-calming and pedestrian-centered development.



Village of Lancaster circa 1892



Demographic Overview

To produce realistic recommendations for revitalization, it is vital to understand the demographics of the NYF area, the Village of Lancaster, and surrounding Erie County. Demographics such as income, population, educational attainment, and age groups provide insight into the needs of the community and serve as a guide for the downtown's revitalization.

Note: throughout this section, County, State, and Village data is sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census, American Community Survey (ACS), IMPLAN, Envision Tomorrow, and Cornell's Program on Applied Demographics (PAD); NYF area data is sourced from ESRI's Community Analyst tool. In some instances, there are slight discrepancies in dataset years. The closest years are provided for comparison purposes.

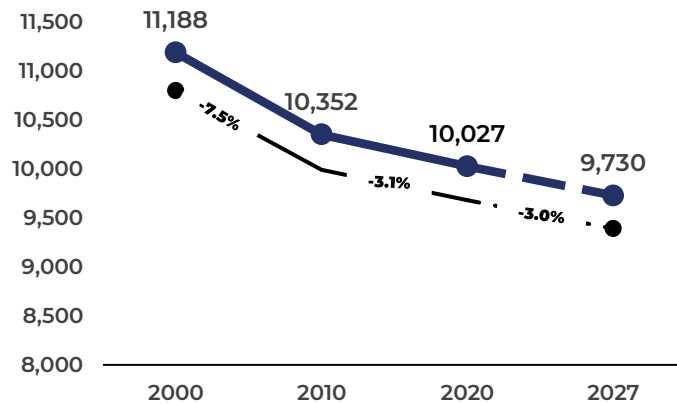
Population Trends

Over 10,000 residents call the Village of Lancaster home, with an estimated 689 residents, or 6.8% of the Village's population living within the NYF area. While the Village of Lancaster is conveniently located and retains a charming downtown, the population has been declining over the past two decades and is projected to keep declining in the coming years. Investments within the NYF area will provide an opportunity to reverse this trend by attracting new residential units and businesses that can support growth of the community's population.

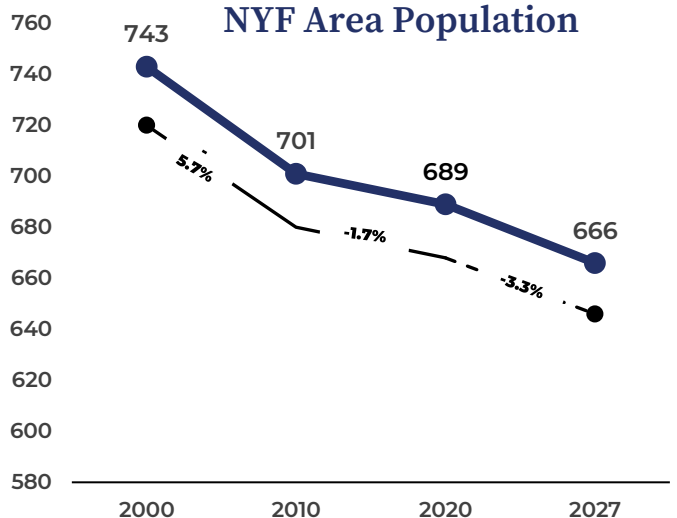
Age Distribution

The median age within the NYF area is 44, which is 2.2 years younger than the median age for the entire Village (46.2). Over the past decade, the median age within the NYF area has increased by 3.5%, while the Village's median age has increased by 15.2% since 2010. This suggests that downtown Lancaster continues to attract younger residents.

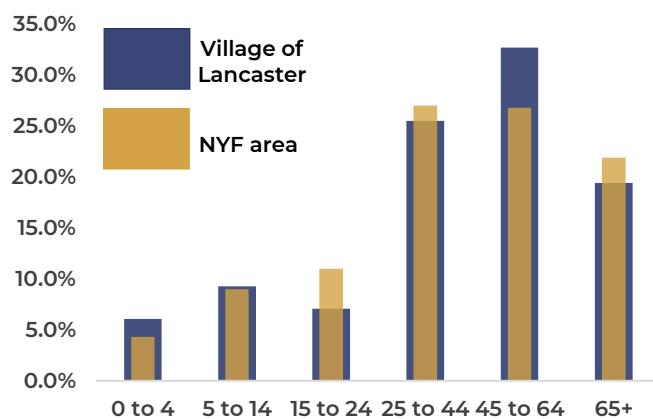
Village Population



NYF Area Population

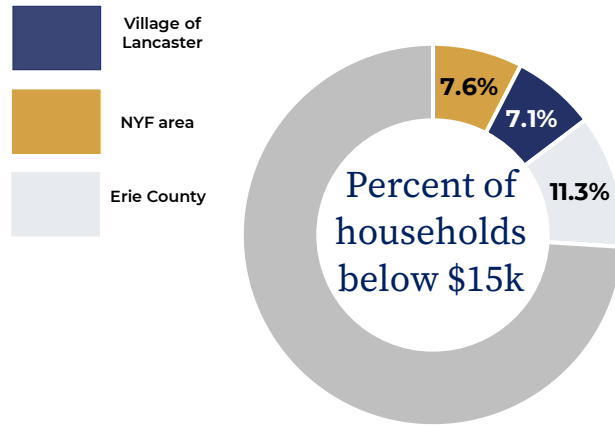


Age Group Distribution



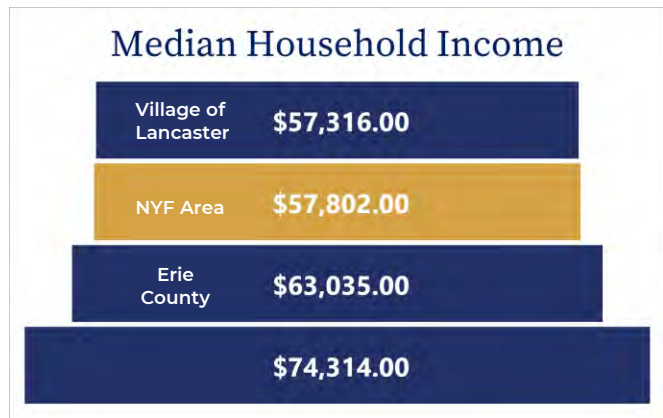


Examining age group distributions, the 25 to 44 age group is the most well represented group within the NYF area. At the Village level, the largest age group is the 45 to 64 age group. Differences seen in the median age and the distribution amongst age groups between the NYF area and the whole Village mimic trends seen in younger populations in general, as they prefer more walkable and mixed-use environments. Further development of the NYF area as an environment that is walkable and has a mix of uses represents an opportunity to further attract young professionals and families to the Village.



Poverty & Household Income

Poverty within the Village and NYF area are relatively low when compared to Erie County. Within the NYF area and Village of Lancaster, only 7.6% and 7.1% of households make less than \$15,000 per year, respectively. This compares to 11.3% of County households that are estimated to make less than \$15,000 per year each.



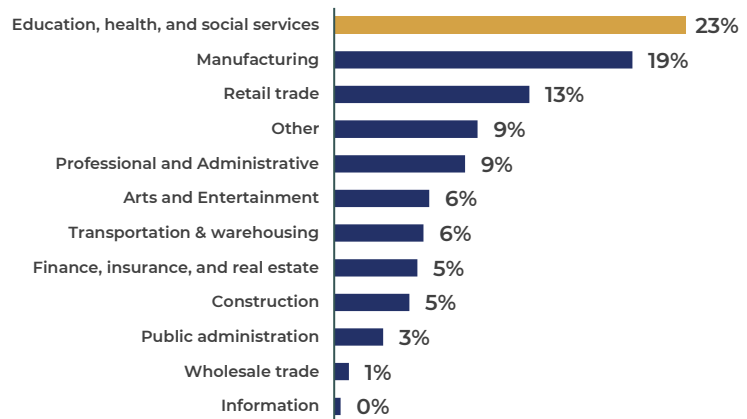
As of 2021, the median household income within the NYF area is approximately \$57,802, which is comparable to the median household income for the Village (\$57,316) but lower than that of Erie County (\$63,035) and NYS (\$74,314). While poverty within Lancaster is relatively low when compared to Erie County, household median income still lags by more than \$5,000. Opportunities exist for NYF projects to attract new businesses with higher paying jobs into the Village and NYF area.



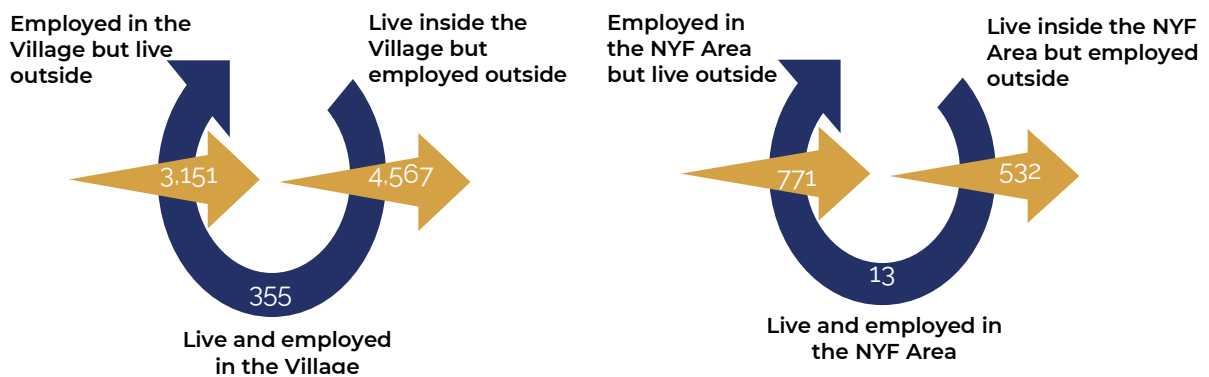
Employment Trends

There are 5,935 employed residents in the Village of Lancaster. The top employment sector for Village residents is education, health, and social services (representing 23%). Other major industry sectors for Village residents include manufacturing (19%) and retail trade (13%). Similarly, the unemployment rate within the NYF area and the Village (3% and 2%, respectively) are significantly less when compared to Erie County (7%)

Distribution of Lancaster Residents' Jobs by Industry



Most Village residents leave the Village for work. Examining commuting patterns, we can see that as of 2020 4,567 Village residents leave the Village for their job, with just 355 Village residents both living and working with the Village. An additional 3,151 workers are employed within the Village but live outside of it. Looking more closely at the NYF area, 532 residents who live within the NYF area leave the area for work, 771 workers who are employed within the NYF area but live outside of it, and only 13 people who live within the NYF area also work there. Examining how Village residents get to their job, 91% travel via car; 85.3% of which drive alone while 5.7% carpool. Only 0.1% of Village residents commute via public transit while 2.5% walk to their job. Lastly, 6.4% of employed residents work from home.

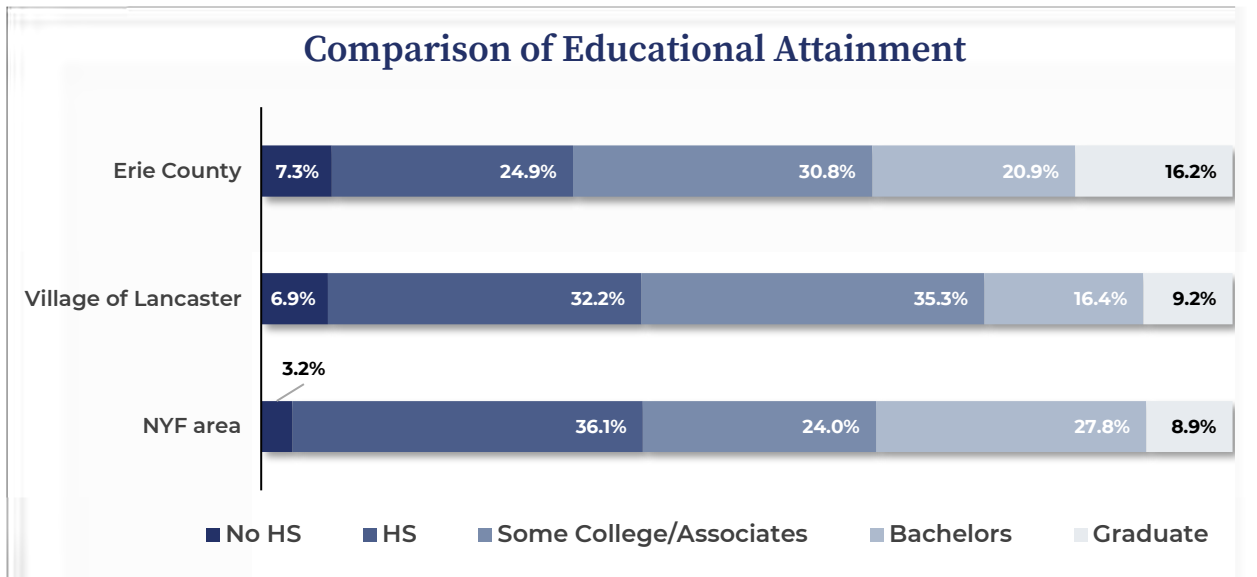


Occupations within the industries of education, health, and social services, as well as retail trade, are often compatible with downtown areas that have mixed-use buildings. NYF investments that will improve the pedestrian environment and reactivate mixed-use buildings within the NYF area represent a key opportunity in attracting employees to live closer to where they work, reducing reliance on private automobiles.



Educational Attainment

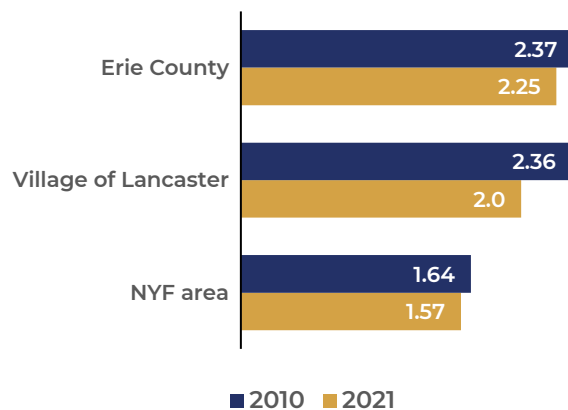
A greater percentage of residents in Erie County have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to residents of the Village, though the NYF area has college attainment rates similar to that of the County. Looking at the NYF area, the most notable difference is the percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree, which is significantly higher in the NYF area (27.8%), compared to the Village (16.4%). The Village and NYF area have a fairly even distribution of residents with a high school diploma, undergraduate degree, or graduate degree. This trend demonstrates that a wide variety of jobs that require various levels of educational attainment could be fulfilled by residents in the Village.



Household Size

Over the last decade, the median household size within the NYF area has decreased by 4.3% from 1.64 to 1.57 persons per household, which is a slower rate of decline than occurred in the Village and County. Over that same period, the median household size within the Village of Lancaster decreased by 15.3% from 2.36 to 2.0 persons per household. At the County level, the median household size decreased by 5.1% from 2.37 to 2.25 persons per household.

Median Household Size



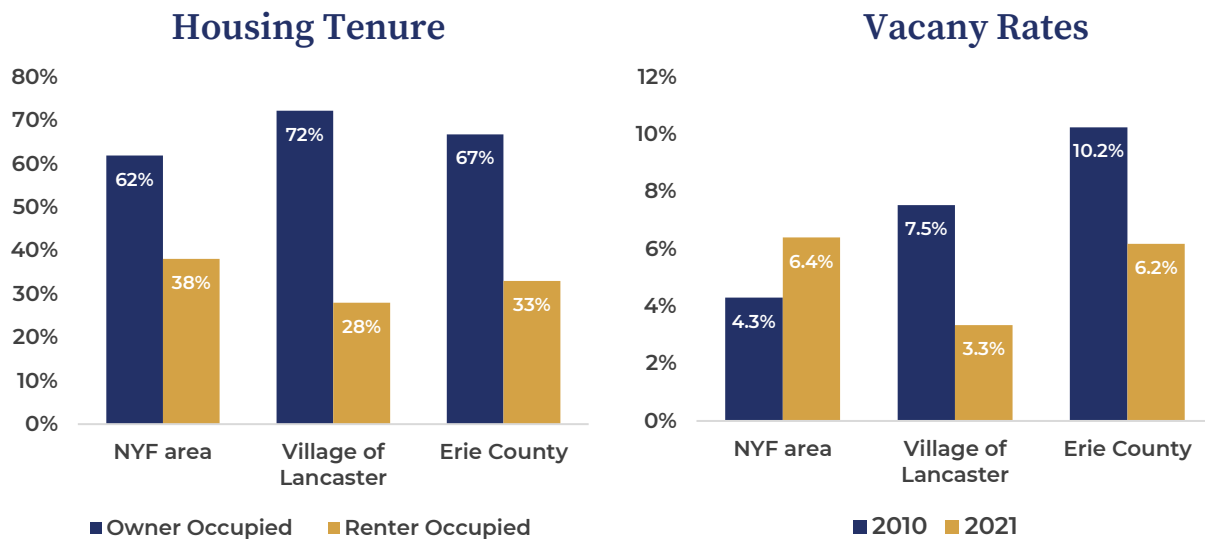


These changes in household size demonstrates that households, on average, are approximately 20% smaller in the NYF area than the Village as a whole. Household size has remained fairly consistent in the NYF area, despite shrinking at a faster rate across the Village. This likely indicates a demand for smaller housing units across the community with smaller units more desirable in the downtown area.

Housing Tenure

There are 455 housing units within the NYF area, 94.7% of which are occupied housing units. Since 2010, the NYF area has seen an increase of 2.9% in occupied housing units. Of the 431 occupied housing units, 61.9% are owner-occupied and 38.1% are renter occupied. At the Village level, there are an estimated 5,217 housing units, of which 96.1% are occupied. Since 2010, the Village has seen a 14.3% increase in the number of occupied housing units. A greater percentage of housing units in the Village are owner-occupied (72.2%), compared to the NYF area.

Examining vacancy rates, the number of vacant homes throughout the Village of Lancaster and Erie County have decreased over the past decade. However, rates of vacancy within the NYF area have increased. NYF projects targeted at improving the NYF area housing stock and increasing the number of amenities and services downtown help to reverse the trend of increasing rates of vacancy in downtown Lancaster.



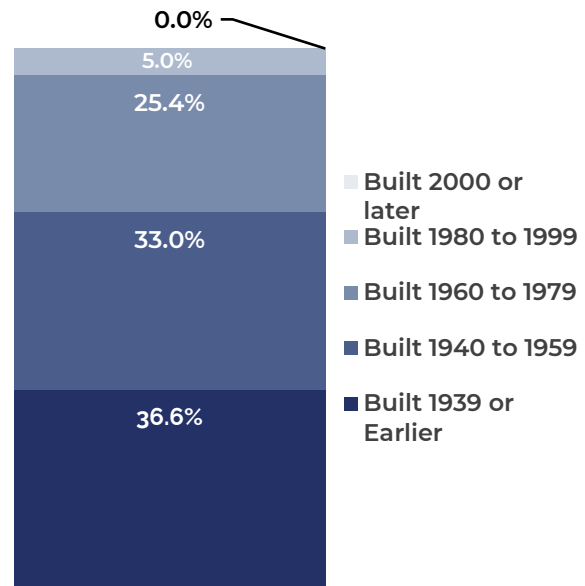
Combined, the relatively small household size and percentage of homes that are renter-occupied within the NYF area, as compared to the Village and County, represent an opportunity for smaller renter-occupied residential units in the NYF Area.



Age of Housing Stock

Approximately 70% of the housing stock within both the Village and NYF area was built prior to 1960, meaning that nearly half of housing within the Village and NYF area is over 63 years old. With minimal new construction since 1980, the recent housing development at 19 West Main Street represents an exception and shift in a decades-long trend. The Village's aging housing stock will lead to increased maintenance costs and added cost burdens for residents, such as energy efficient improvements.

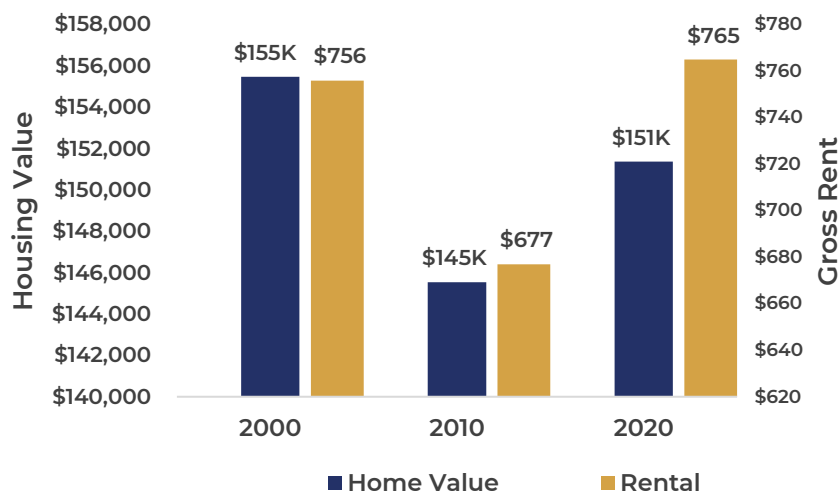
Village Housing Stock Age



Housing Costs

Using inflation adjusted dollars, the median home value in the Village of Lancaster increased by 2.7% from 2000 to 2020, compared to a 15.8% increase County-wide over that same period. Today, the median value of a home in the Village is \$151,373 (vs. \$189,452 in Erie County). In terms of rental units, when using inflation adjusted dollars, the median cost to rent in the Village of Lancaster increased by 1.7% from 2000 to 2020. The median cost to rent in the Village is \$765 per month, which remains less than the County-wide median of \$859 per month. The lower cost of living in Lancaster could be attractive to new families looking to purchase or rent a home.

Village Housing Costs





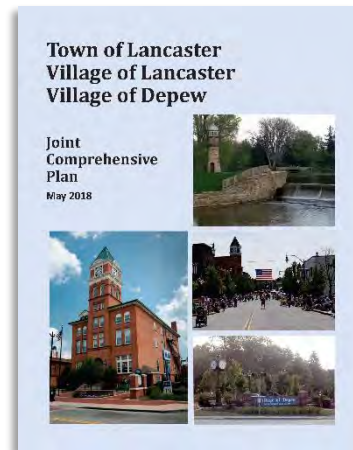
Recent Plans and Investment

The Village of Lancaster has engaged in a series of strategic planning efforts in recent years to ensure initiatives and investments are aligned with an overarching vision for the Village. From these forward-thinking plans, a number of investments have already been actualized within the Village. These prior plans and recent investments provide the context for Lancaster's NYF vision.

Village Planning

Lancaster & Depew Joint Comprehensive Plan (2018)

In 2018, the Villages of Lancaster and Depew together with the Town of Lancaster adopted an update to their Joint Comprehensive Plan, which was initially adopted in 2000. Recommendations relevant to the Lancaster NYF area are shown below, along with their current status of implementation. The number of recommendations that have been completed or are underway in the short five years since the Plan was adopted is a testament to the dedication of the Village to make impactful change.

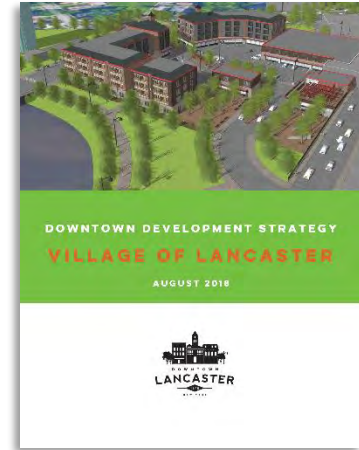


Recommendation Categories	Recommendations	Progress
Neighborhood Revitalization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Streetscape improvements to West Main Street; Infill development along N. Aurora Street; Enhance pocket park along Cayuga Creek; Prepare Design Standards for new development; Encourage mixed-use development; Enhance community gateways; and Sponsor joint events. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Not started Ongoing Completed Ongoing NYF Project Ongoing
Transportation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promote complete streets redevelopments Improve walkability through streetscape enhancements. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Ongoing
Environmental and Watershed Protection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Create zoning overlays to protect environmental features; Daylight and reintegrate portions of Plum Bottom Creek; and Reduce impervious surfaces by reducing parking requirements in the zoning law. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Not Started Not Started Completed
Housing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt a local preservation law to protect historic structures; Permit accessory housing units; and Review zoning to allow for a variety of housing types. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Not Started Completed
Parks and Trails	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a trail along Cayuga Creek to connect Downtown Lancaster to Como Park; Establish dedicated bike lanes; and Provide biking storage/parking in the central business district. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Ongoing NYF Project
Land Use and Zoning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update zoning districts; and Develop and historic district overlay for Broadway. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Completed



Village of Lancaster Downtown Development Strategy (2018)

The Village of Lancaster has taken many crucial steps toward reimagining Downtown Lancaster, one such step was the development of the Village of Lancaster Downtown Development Strategy in 2018. The Downtown Development Strategy report provides the Village and its development partners with a vision and toolbox which will help propel and accelerate downtown’s revitalization. Recommendations related to the goals and strategies of the NYF program are summarized in the table below.



Through actions already taken in the years following this report and through the Village’s selection as a NYF Round 1 community, the Village of Lancaster has demonstrated their continued commitment to revitalizing downtown Lancaster and transforming it into a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood once again.

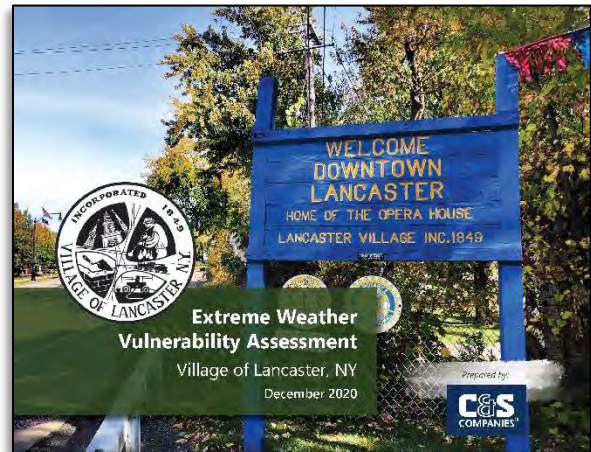
Recommendation Categories	Recommendations	Progress
Promote & Celebrate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop self-guided tours of Downtown Lancaster; 2. Reduce the number of major events and program spaces for smaller activities throughout the year; and 3. Establish a downtown public square. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not Started 2. Ongoing 3. Not Started
Revitalize	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Redevelop urban renewal property into a mixed-use district; 2. Develop 3-5 new restaurants totaling 15,000 square feet; 3. Develop 150 new market-rate housing units; 4. Redevelop upper floors into residential units; 5. Apply for another round of NY Main Street funding; and 6. Develop a marketing portfolio package 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing 2. Ongoing 3. Ongoing 4. Ongoing 5. Not Started 6. Not Started
Transform	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve landscape and streetscape and provide new signage at Village gateways; 2. Extend streetscape improvements along Central Avenue; 3. Give Pleasant Avenue a road diet; 4. Install traffic circles; 5. Adopt a Complete Streets policy; 6. Provide multimodal routes; and 7. Create a park along Cayuga Creek. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing/NYF Project 2. NYF Project 3. Completed 4. Completed 5. Ongoing 6. Ongoing 7. Ongoing

Downtown Development Strategy vision statement: “Downtown Lancaster will be a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood that will leverage its strategic location and historic character to promote business development, downtown living, and a high quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors.”



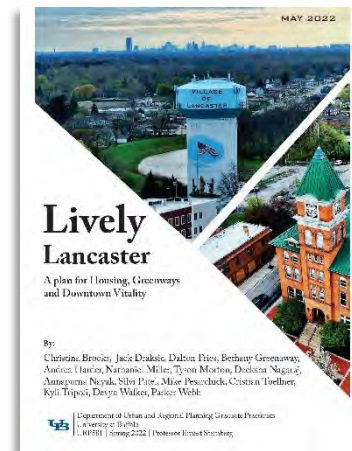
Village of Lancaster Extreme Weather Vulnerability Assessment (2020)

This plan was developed with the purpose of preparing the Village of Lancaster for the effects climate change will have on the local environment. Specifically, this assessment informed the Village which assets are most critical and/or vulnerable to the two biggest extreme weather vulnerabilities for the community: flooding and heavy snowfall. Overall, the assessment found Cayuga Creek to be the biggest threat with the increase of flooding and snowfall. Furthermore, the assessment identified bridge infrastructure and municipal facilities as assets the most vulnerable to these extreme weather events.



Lively Lancaster: A Plan for Housing, Greenways, and Downtown Vitality (2022)

Developed in partnership with the University of Buffalo's Urban and Regional Planning Department, Lively Lancaster sought to assess the current conditions of the Village and developed a proposed direction for its future. This plan focused on four main sections: the Village Center, Housing, Parking and Traffic, and Trail Connectivity.



Village Center: Within the Village Center, nine sites were selected for which concept plans were created showcasing what new development on these sites could look like. Ideas included reusing vacant parcels for housing, improving site circulation, and reimagining the use of the water tower.

Housing: Four sites were selected to showcase what new infill housing development could look like. Additionally, several zoning updates were recommended to promote a wider variety of housing styles. Housing recommendations called for the development of missing middle housing that would provide a modest increase in density. Such housing would include duplexes and fourplexes that would mimic the size and style of a single-family house, mixed-use buildings along busier streets, and the permitting of accessory dwelling units in traditionally single-family neighborhoods.

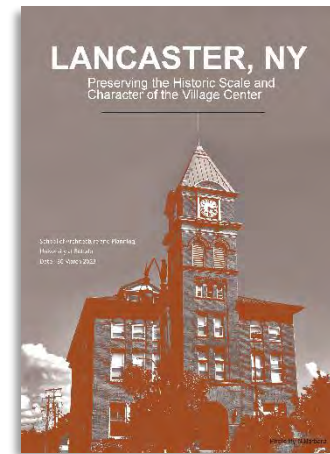
Parking and Traffic: Six sites for new development were selected and for each projected parking arrangements were proposed. While each parking redevelopment would increase traffic during peak hours, the study did note that each development is not significant enough to cause perceptible congestion on Village roadways.

Trail Connectivity: Recommendations included focusing on the incorporation of Cayuga Creek into downtown and connecting Village parks to a regional trail system, all of which are currently underway.



Lancaster, NY: Preserving the Historic Scale and Character of the Village Center (2023)

Developed in partnership with the University of Buffalo's School of Architecture and Planning, this plan expanded on the work done within the Lively Lancaster report by producing urban design guidelines in line with the Village's historic character for three select sites. Design guidelines were produced for environmental features, architecture, landscaping, and streetscapes. Proposed development projects with costs estimates and renderings were also produced.



Recent Investment

Since 2019, there have been over \$16 million in public investments in and around downtown Lancaster to support additional development in the NYF area. These investments have focused on enhancing the multitude of community assets that make downtown a desirable place to live, work, and visit, and include utility, park, roadway, and bike/pedestrian infrastructure improvements. These public improvements have had catalytic impacts, spurring private investment, most notably along West Main Street. With millions of dollars already invested in projects and programs, the NYF program is intended to further community revitalization goals.

Project or Investment	Approximate Investment	Year
West Main Street Power Supply Upgrades	\$83,100	2019
Sanitary Sewer Improvements	\$1,818,000	2019-2020
Central Avenue Bike Lanes	\$317,300	2020
West Main Street Extension	\$3,206,000	2020-2021
Sanitary Sewer Improvements	\$1,307,000	2020-2021
Purchase of Property for Future Infill and Redevelopment	\$175,000	2021
LED streetlighting Conversion	\$1,030,000	2021
West Drullard Outdoor Fitness Center	\$99,300	2021
Hadsall Park Spray Pool Improvements	\$135,000	2020-2022
Downtown Roundabouts	\$3,933,100	2022
Cayuga Creek Park	\$1,780,000	2022
Sanitary Sewer Improvements	\$949,500	2022
Plum Bottom Creek Culvert repairs	\$1,043,140	2023
Firefighters Park Renovations	\$470,000	2023



There has been significant infrastructure investment by the Village in downtown over the past several years. This in turn has attracted new businesses and infill development to the area.

Alignment with Western New York REDC Strategies

The Village of Lancaster's NYF vision and goals are deeply intertwined and well-aligned with the strategic priorities outlined by the Western NY (WNY) Regional Economic Development Council (REDC), collectively contributing to the broader prosperity and sustainability of Western New York. The Village of Lancaster's NY Forward vision statement, goals, and strategies directly correspond to the strategies outlined in the WNY's REDC Strategic Plan in the following ways:



Implement Smart Growth: Lancaster's preservation goal, along with its accompanying strategies, such as the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and the creation of engaging programs highlighting Lancaster's rich history, represents smart growth principles. These strategies promote the efficient use of land and resources, thus reducing the need for urban sprawl. Additionally, the Village's commitment to developing diverse and inclusive housing solutions aligns with smart growth principles of fostering a mix of housing types to meet the needs of a diverse population. The goal of implementing sustainable and environmentally friendly practices further demonstrates a commitment to smart growth by integrating green infrastructure, promoting alternative transportation modes, and encouraging energy-efficient practices.

Foster a Culture of Entrepreneurship: The goal of fostering a thriving local business environment, including prioritizing local development projects and establishing a small business fund, resonates strongly with the REDC's aim to cultivate entrepreneurship. Lancaster's focus on encouraging downtown businesses to collaborate and promoting a mix of uses in historic buildings supports creating a business environment conducive to innovation, risk-taking, and growth.

Prepare Our Workforce: While Lancaster's NY Forward plan does not directly reference workforce development, its goals indirectly support this aim. By promoting a thriving local business environment and providing diverse housing solutions, the Village creates an attractive environment for a broad range of workers. Further, the emphasis on health, wellness, and accessibility implicitly supports the needs of the workforce.

Invest in Target Industry Sectors:

a. Advanced Manufacturing: Lancaster's strategy to establish a small business fund may indirectly support this sector by providing financial support to local businesses, including those involved in advanced manufacturing.



b. Agriculture: While not explicitly stated, Lancaster's commitment to sustainable practices could indirectly support local agricultural industries through initiatives related to local food production or farmers' markets.

c. Bi-national Logistics: The NY Forward plan does not explicitly address this sector.

d. Energy: Lancaster's goal of implementing sustainable and environmentally friendly practices, such as promoting LEED certification, directly aligns with the energy sector.

e. Health & Life Sciences: Lancaster's goal of encouraging health and wellness for residents and visitors, primarily through promoting local medical services, aligns with the health and life sciences sector.

f. Higher Education: While the NY Forward plan does not specifically address this sector, collaboration with local schools and libraries in cultural and historical programming may indirectly engage higher education institutions.

g. Professional Services: The emphasis on fostering a thriving local business environment can support the growth of professional services in the region.

h. Tourism: Lancaster's goal to preserve and celebrate what makes it unique, including strategies like improved signage, arts, culture promotion, and historic preservation, directly supports the tourism sector.

In summary, while not all industry sectors are directly addressed by Lancaster's NY Forward plan, the Village's vision, goals, and strategies align broadly with the REDC's strategic focus on smart growth, entrepreneurship, and investment in target industry sectors. Moreover, they create an environment supporting workforce development and growth.

The Village of Lancaster's strategic NYF objectives demonstrates close alignment and mutual reinforcement with the Western NY REDC and previous planning efforts. The successful implementation of these goals will undoubtedly contribute positively to the overall prosperity and sustainability of Western New York.



Cayuga Creek Park under development



Recently completed Pleasant Ave W Streetscape enhancements



Physical Setting

Physical features, including land use, transportation, and natural and historic resources, shape the character and economy of Downtown Lancaster. These features can provide both opportunities and constraints for revitalization and help identify successful NYF projects to spur revitalization and catalyze investment.

Environmental Context

There are a number of environmental resources located within the NYF area. Many of these resources benefit the community, increase property values, and improve the area's quality of life; however, they can also create constraints for future development. Several of these resources to consider are flood zones, waterways, topography, and parks. The NYF aims to protect, enhance, and leverage these natural resources as part of its revitalization strategy.

Waterways

The Village of Lancaster and the NYF area are bisected by two waterways: Cayuga Creek and Plum Bottom Creek. Cayuga Creek originates southeast of Lancaster in Wyoming County and flows northwest through the Village before connecting with the Buffalo River and ultimately flowing into Lake Erie. Plum Bottom Creek originates in the Town of Lancaster just east of the Village and cuts through the middle of the Village before joining Cayuga Creek along the western border of the NYF area. These two waterways hold significant cultural and historic value in the Village of Lancaster. Development is already underway to reconnect these waterways to the Village through the development of a new park along Cayuga Creek; however, more can be done to improve their ecological health and accessibility for residents and visitors.

Significant portions of the NYF area are within the flood zone or have a unique topography. Both constraints should be considered in evaluating new development, particularly along Cayuga Creek and Plum Bottom Creek.

Flood Zones

While the waterways are an environmental and visual asset, they also can pose risks and constraints that must be considered in new development. According to Flood Insurance Rate Maps developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), there are two separate portions of the NYF area that are within the 100-year floodplain (Zone AE) and the 500-year floodplain (Zone X). Within the 100-year floodplain there is a 1% chance of flooding within a given year, while there is a 0.2% chance of flooding in a given year for the 500-year floodplain.

Along the western edge of the NYF area, the AE flood zone covers the entirety of the Cayuga Creek and its banks, as well as most of the parcels east of Aurora Street and west of W. Main Street. In the eastern portion of the NYF area, a second AE flood zone follows the flow of Plum Bottom Creek. Several parcels along Holland Avenue, Scott Street, School Street, Clark Street, Pleasant Avenue, and Central Avenue are located within this flood zone. Areas covered by the 500-year floodplain are those that generally extend a couple hundred feet from the boundary of the 100-year floodplain. Altogether, approximately 15.3 acres of land within the NYF area is within the 100-year floodplain and 2.9 acres are within the 500-year floodplain. Any future development within the 100-year flood zone must consider the base flood elevations in addition to complying with the Village's floodplain damage prevention ordinance.



NYF Area - Flood Zones





Landcover, Soils, and Topography

The Village of Lancaster's NYF area is a highly developed area as it has experienced several iterations of urbanization over the course of its history. According to the National Landcover Database, land within the NYF area ranges from "developed, open space" to "developed, high intensity". The land cover classification "developed, medium density" is the most common landcover type as it covers over 50 acres of land. Given the amount of development that has taken place within the NYF area, new developments that will take up large portions of open space are unlikely. Instead, new development will likely have to reuse existing structures or demolish structures to develop new ones.

Landcover Type	Acreage
Developed, Open Space	6.8
Developed, Low Intensity	20.3
Developed, Medium Intensity	50.6
Developed, High Intensity	19.5

Examining soil suitability, according to the National Soil Survey Geographic Database, the suitability for the majority of soils within the NYF area for building development is "very limited." Based on factors such as soil material, soil slope, and drainage characteristics, these data illustrate which parts of the NYF area are the most compatible with new development and which parts are not. Overall, 62.5 acres (64%) of the NYF area is "very limited" for development and 26.7 acres (27%) are "somewhat limited". Furthermore, there is also 7.8 acres (8%) of land that has not had its soil suitability for new development determined yet.

In addition to the characteristics of the waterways, landcover, and soil types and their impact on development, land-based characteristics, such as topography, must also be considered. Steep slopes within the NYF area are generally found along Cayuga and Plum Bottom Creek. The implications of these topography changes should be carefully assessed in evaluating new developments.

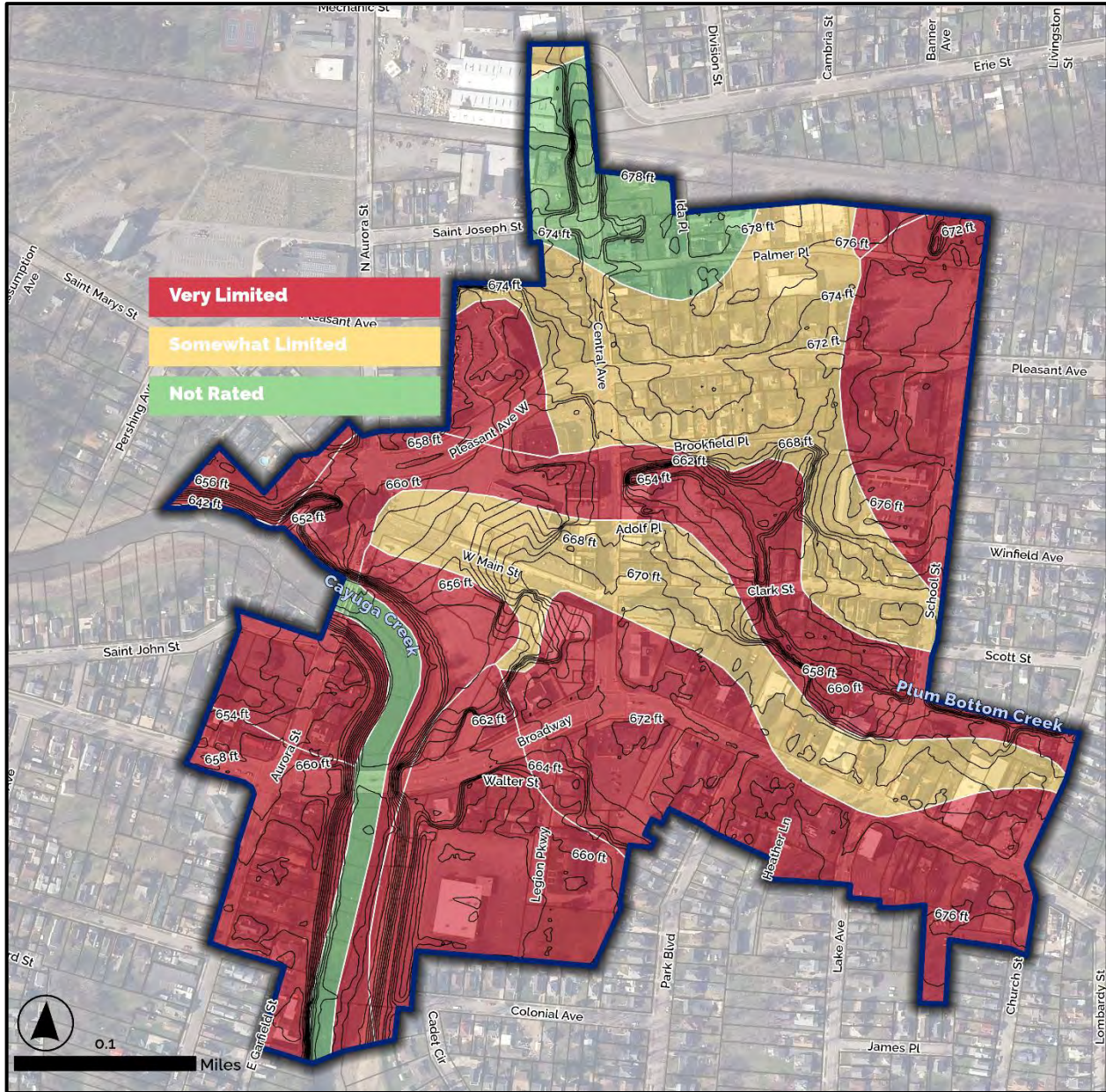
Resilience

With an understanding of the pressures that climate change will have on the Western New York region and the world in the coming decades, the Village initiated the **Village of Lancaster Extreme Weather Vulnerability Assessment** in 2020 to assist the Village with preparing for climate change-related events to come. Overall, the biggest identified vulnerabilities for the Village were related to flooding events on Cayuga and Plum Bottom Creek. Several recommendations were made for projects that would mitigate risks of flooding to municipal infrastructure and buildings, as well as green infrastructure installations on the creeks to prevent future flooding.

Other steps that the Village has taken to improve the resilience of their community and natural resources includes the adoption of various ordinances that establish protections for the environment. These ordinances include (1) environmental quality reviews, (2) flood damage prevention regulations, and an (3) urban forestry advisory board.



NYF Area – Soil Suitability for Development





Parks and Recreation Areas

Parks and other areas for recreation are important assets to have in a community as they not only positively contribute to residents' physical and mental health, but they also make the community more attractive to visitors and new residents and raise property values. There are several parks and a trail within NYF area, as well as a new park currently under construction. Additionally, there are several other larger parks and trails nearby that can be easily accessed by foot or a short car trip from the NYF area.

Plum Bottom Creek Nature Park

Located to the north of the Clark Street Public Parking Lot, Plum Bottom Creek Nature Park covers approximately 0.25 acres of land along Plum Bottom Creek. This pocket park is a hidden gem within the Village of Lancaster. In addition to access to Plum Bottom Creek, the park also has several seating options that offer visitors the opportunity for some respite and to immerse themselves in nature.



Plum Bottom Creek Park

Cayuga Creek Park

Cayuga Creek is one of Lancaster's most underutilized natural resources in downtown. The Village's 2018 Downtown Development Strategy Report called for the development of a new park along the Creek's northern bank to reactivate the Creek and incorporate it as part of the downtown's character. The park is currently under development and, once finished, will cover approximately one acre of land along the western boundary of the NYF area. The park will include landscaping and a walking trail along the Creek, benches, bike racks, and EV charging stations.

Fireman's Park

Located along the western boundary of the NYF area, Fireman's Park covers approximately 0.7 acres of land along Cayuga Creek. The park includes the Village water tower, which has a mural dedicated to firemen, a monument to Village firefighters, and several benches and tables shaded by trees.

Gar Galvin Trail

Constructed in honor of former Village resident and outdoor enthusiast, Garnett Galvin, the trailhead originates at the Broadway bridge that crosses the Cayuga Creek in the NYF area. Overall, the trail offers 0.5 miles of access along Cayuga Creek where residents and visitors can hike, fish, or partake in other water-based recreation. The trail also provides an alternate pedestrian connection between downtown and Como Lake Park, a 524-acre County-owned park located one mile away from the Village Center.



Gar Galvin Trail entrance along Broadway



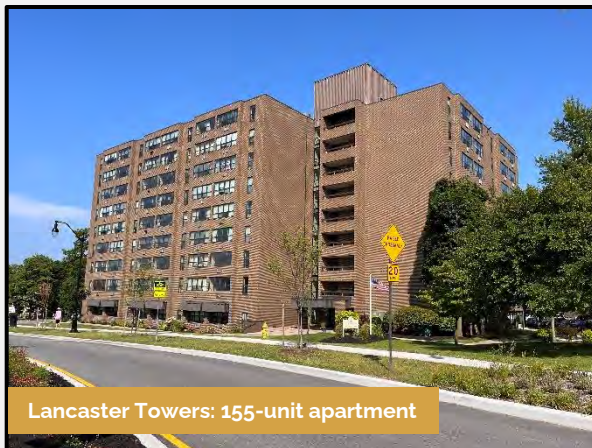
Existing Land Use

The NYF area follows a historic Village development pattern characterized by a main commercial corridor (Central Avenue) with residential uses radiating outwards. Commercial properties account for 30.2% of all parcels within the NYF area. The most common commercial uses in the NYF area are mixed-use downtown row type buildings at 36.9%, closely followed by parking lots at 30.1%.

Nearly a third of land classified as commercial in the NYF area consists of parking lots while more than 50% of housing types are single-family homes. Opportunities exist to redevelop vacant and underutilized sites to increase the diversity of land use types in the NYF area.

Residential properties account for 46% of all parcels within the NYF area. The primary residential use in the NYF area is single-family homes (52.6%); however, duplexes and triplexes also make up a sizeable portion of residential parcels at 36.6%. Apartment buildings make up 8% of residential parcels in the NYF area. Other residential uses in the NYF area include mixed-use residences. The largest concentration of residential parcels is found along Clark and School Streets, located in the eastern half of the NYF area.

Other uses, including industrial, recreation, community services, and public services are also present in the NYF area, and each represent less than 5% of NYF area parcels. Recreation and entertainment uses include the Elks Lodge, the Moose Lodge, and Potter's House. Parcels that are used for community services include governmental buildings, places of worship, and community organizations. The Village Opera House shares a building with the Lancaster Town Hall, so while it is classified as a community service it is also a source of entertainment within the Village. There are four parcels within the NYF area that are classified as public services, including the Village's telecommunication facilities and water tower. In addition to providing an important public service, the water tower is a major visual identifier in the downtown skyline. Lastly, industrial uses owned by PRZ technologies, Seibel Modern Manufacturing, and Manitoba Corporation are also present, concentrated on parcels around the rail lines from the northern border of the NYF area.



Lancaster Towers: 155-unit apartment



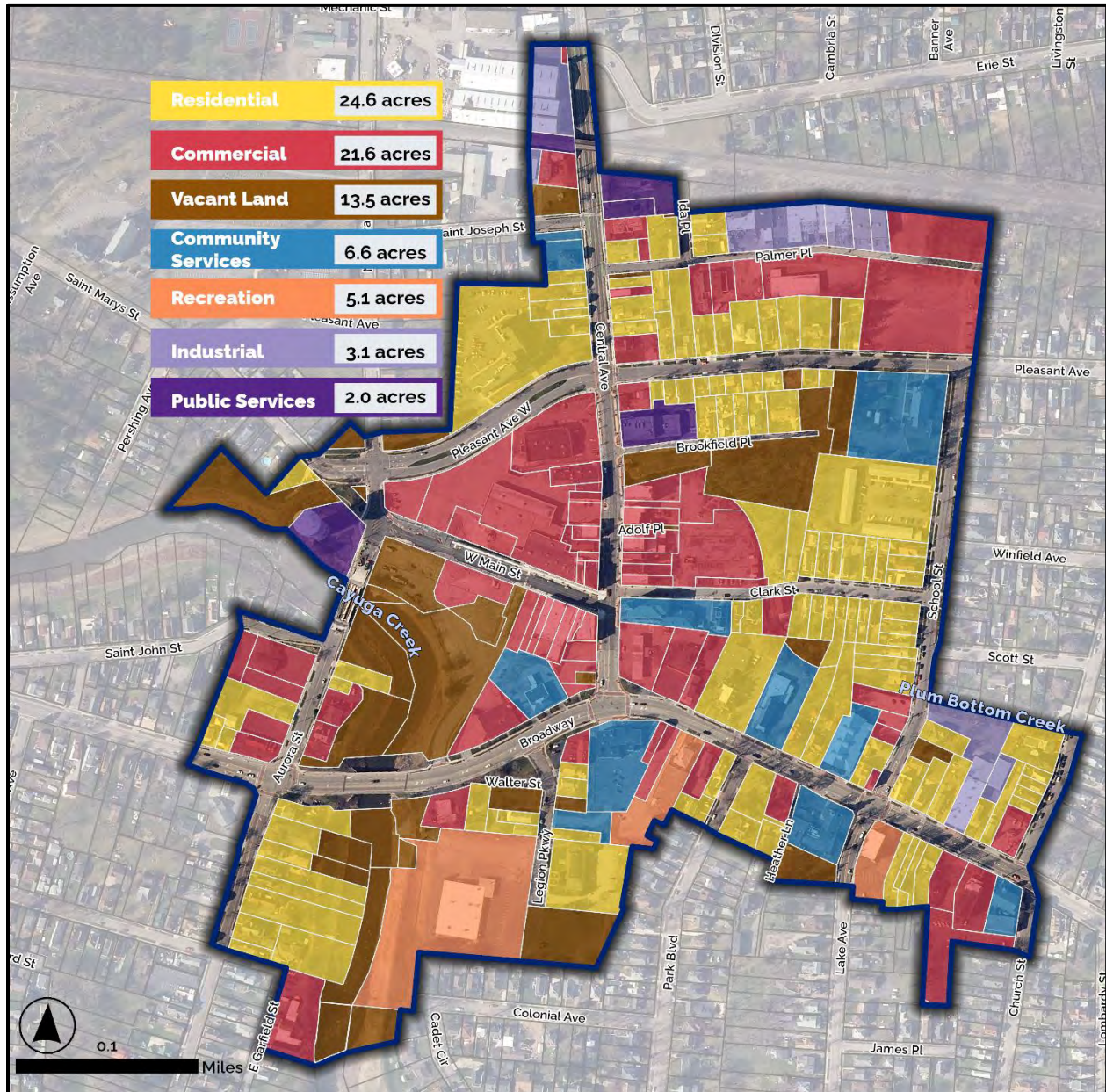
Single family home



Mixed-use residential



NYF Area - Land Use





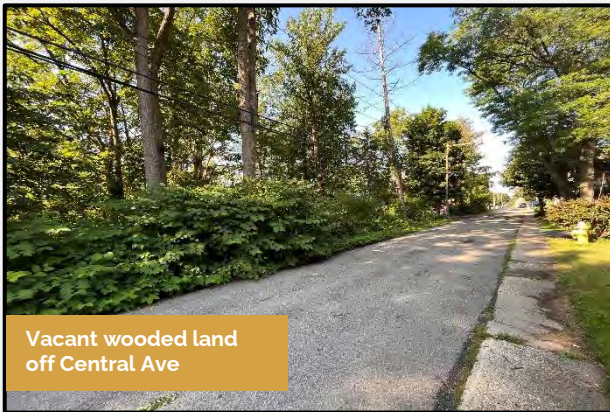
Publicly Owned Parcels

A total of 11.3 acres or 12.9% of all land within the NYF area is government owned. The majority of this land includes properties used for Village and Town municipal services, the U.S. Post Office, several parking lots and vacant properties owned by the Village, and land along Cayuga Creek that is owned by the County and State.

Vacant and Underutilized Sites

Approximately 14% of all parcels within the NYF area are vacant, representing around 13.5 acres. As a sizeable proportion of vacant land within the NYF area is located along the banks of the Cayuga Creek or wooded areas throughout downtown, this land is likely to remain undeveloped due to environmental constraints. There is also a large concentration of land along West Main Street that is currently vacant but is slated for private redevelopment. Additionally, parcels with parking lots also take up a sizeable portion of land within the NYF area that is not being utilized to its full utility in a downtown environment. Overall, Land covered by vacant parcels and parking lots cover 29.8 acres or 30.7% of all land within the NYF area.

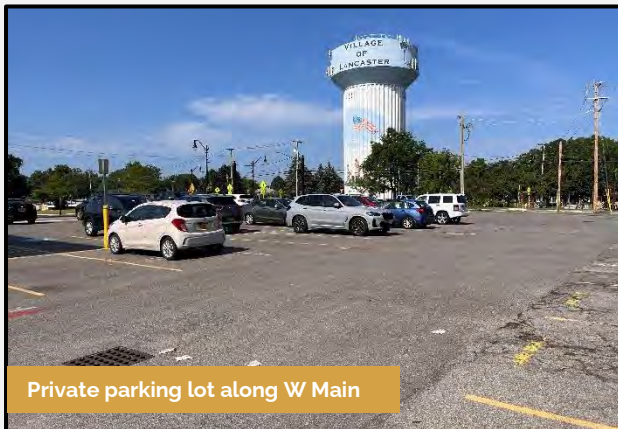
Many of the multi-storied buildings along Central Avenue and other parts of the NYF area are underutilized, as many of their upper floors sit vacant. These vacant upper floors represent a key opportunity for new housing in the NYF area.



Vacant wooded land off Central Ave



Mixed-use building with vacant 2nd floor residential



Private parking lot along W Main



Vacant parcel under development along W Main

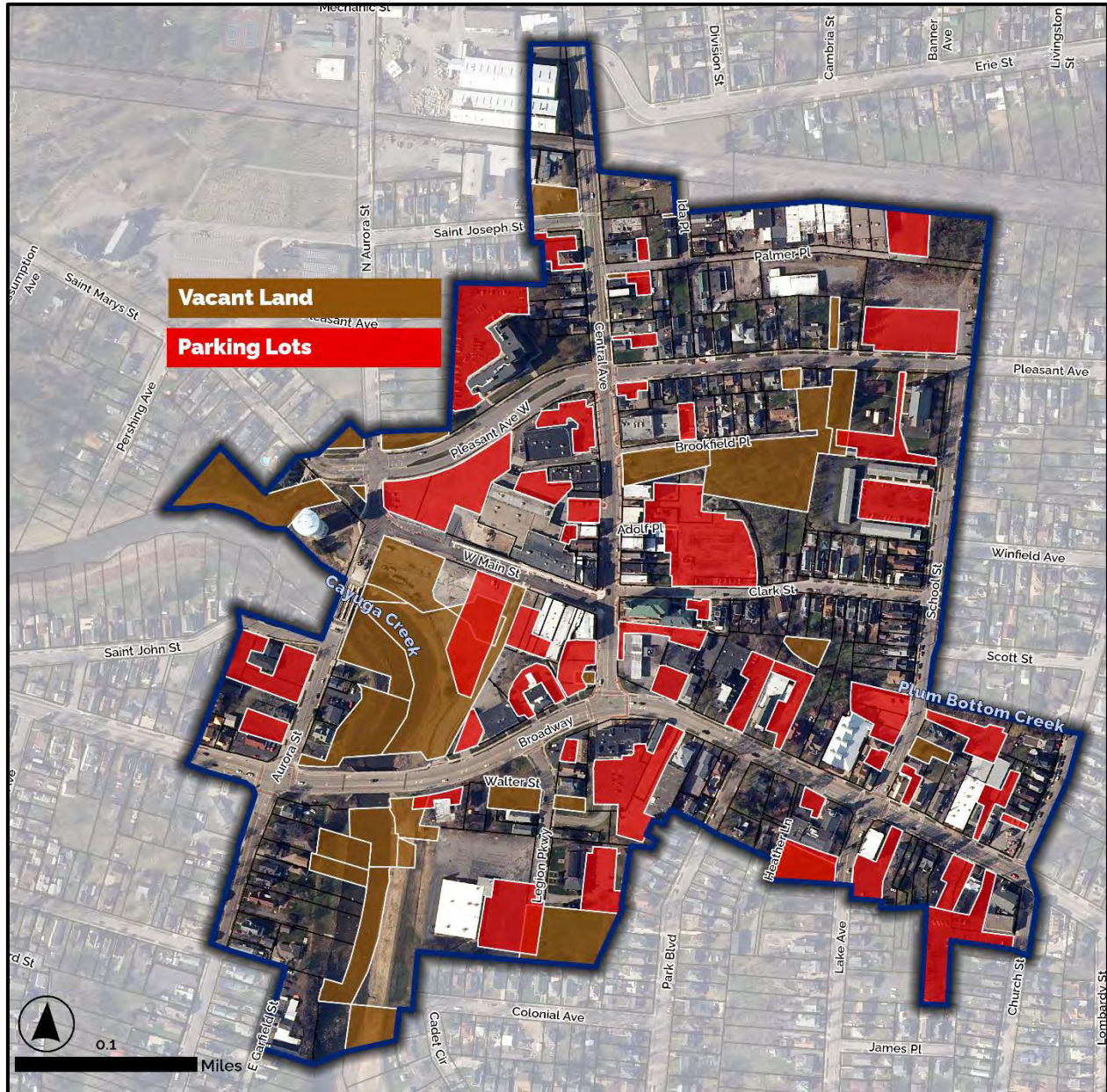


NYF Area – Publicly Owned Parcels





NYF Area – Vacant and Underutilized Sites





Zoning

Land use in Lancaster's NYF area is regulated by the Village's Zoning Ordinance. In March of 2023, the Village amended its Zoning Ordinance, replacing the existing Central Business District overlay and corresponding zoning districts with the newly formed Mixed Use Zoning Districts (1) MU-Core, (2) MU-1, and (3) MU-2. The purpose of the Village's Mixed Use zoning amendments was to make the Village's downtown a vital community center that is vibrant, walkable, pedestrian centric, and preserves its historic character. Within all Mixed-Use Districts, new developments or renovations are required to follow site planning and design, infrastructure, parking, landscaping, lighting, and architectural standards. Zoning districts within the NYF area include:

The recent adoption of the Village's new mixed-use zoning districts further clarifies the Village's intent to activate vacant and underutilized buildings and make the NYF area a dense pedestrian-centered environment with a mix of uses.

Mixed-Use Core District (MU-Core)

The Mixed-Use Core District encompasses the Village's downtown area and the vast majority of the NYF area and permits a range of uses as-of-right, including multifamily and upper-story dwellings, nursing homes and senior housing, public and civic facilities, professional offices, retail sales and services, food/drink establishments, artisan manufacturing, animal care facilities, parking garages, and recreational facilities.

Mixed-Use 1 District (MU-1)

The Mixed-Use 1 District encompasses areas north of the Village Center along Central Avenue and along Broadway west of Aurora Street. This district is not as dense as the MU-Core, however, there is an interspersed of residential and commercial uses throughout. Uses permitted as-of-right within the MU-1 District includes all uses permitted within the MU-Core District in addition to single-family detached home and schools.

Mixed-Use 2 District (MU-2)

The Mixed-Use 2 District runs along Broadway St east of Central Avenue. This district permits for the intermingling of commercial and residential uses that lie within the Village's Broadway Avenue Historic District. Uses permitted within the MU-2 District include all uses permitted within the MU-Core and MU-1 Districts except for drive-through facilities. Although the MU-1 and MU-2 districts do permit for the same types of uses, the two districts differ in site planning and design standards such as frontage dimensions, landscaping, and others.

Residence Districts (R2)

Portions of one of the Villages two residential districts are found within the NYF area. This district, R2, is found within the eastern end of the of the NYF area. Uses permitted within the R2 District include single- and two-family residential dwellings, places of worship, schools, and cemeteries.

Manufacturing (M-1)

Portions of one of the Village's two industrial zoning districts is found within the NYF area. This district, M-1, is found in the northeastern corner of the NYF area along Palmer Place and adjacent to the Norfolk Southern rail line. Uses permitted in the M-1 District include motor vehicle sales and



services, gasoline service stations, car washes, drive-in food establishments, laundry and dry-cleaning, custom shops, lodging, warehouses and auction houses, laboratories, workforce training, contractor's yards, public utilities, manufacturing facilities, lumberyards and mills, and office buildings.

Commercial (C-2)

A portion of the Village's commercial zoning district is found in the southeast corner of the NYF area. Uses permitted within this district include residential dwellings, retail sales and personal services, offices, motor vehicle sales, gasoline service stations, car washes, drive-in and sit-down eating establishments, hotel/motel, theater, bank, and warehousing.

Open Space (OS)

There is one Open Space District currently located in the northwestern corner of the NYF area that sits adjacent to the Cayuga Creek. The purpose of this district is to enable passive recreational opportunities near the Cayuga Creek and to preserve open space within downtown. Uses permitted with the OS District include public parks and playgrounds, pedestrian and bicycle trails, and other similar recreational uses.

Historic Districts

There are three historic districts within the Village of Lancaster: the Central Avenue Historic District, the Broadway Avenue Historic District, and the Village of Lancaster Local Historic Preservation District. Portions of these three districts fall within the NYF area. In addition to the requirements and standards of a given zoning district, development within these historic districts must adhere to supplemental processes and procedures as part of the site plan approval process.



Infrastructure Systems

Water and wastewater, broadband, and utility systems provide important services to residents and businesses. Having resilient and reliable infrastructure supports the development of a robust economy and will further the revitalization of downtown Lancaster.

Water, Wastewater, & Stormwater

All properties in the NYF area and the Village of Lancaster have access to public water (served by the Erie County Water Authority) and wastewater (served by the Erie County Sewer District No. 4). The Village of Lancaster is also serviced by a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) and is a member of the 42-member Western New York Storm Water Coalition (WNYSC). As a member, the Village is required to follow the US EPA's Phase II Stormwater requirements.

Significant investments have gone into improving the NYF area's utilities over the years. These improvements demonstrate the Village's focus on addressing the foundational elements needed to attract private investment and foster economic development. Furthermore, these infrastructure investments are necessary to replace aging infrastructure and ensure the current needs of village residents and businesses are met.

Other Utilities

The Village of Lancaster and areas within the NYF area are serviced by New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG) for electrical supply and National Fuel for gas supply. Spectrum and Verizon provide broadband internet, phone, and cable TV services throughout the Village and NYF area.

Transportation Networks

Transportation systems define how we interact with a place and the surrounding region. In the Village of Lancaster, these transportation systems include roads, on and off-street parking, pedestrian infrastructure, public transportation, and a short commute from an international airport and regional rail system.

Street Network & Conditions

The Village of Lancaster's NYF area is centered around the intersection of US Route 20 (Broadway) and Central Avenue. These two roadways have the highest traffic volumes within the NYF area. Route 20 sees an annual average daily traffic (AADT) volume of 16,500 cars, and Central Avenue experiences an AADT of 15,460 vehicles. Aurora Street and Lake Avenue are two locally managed roads that serve as minor arterials for the NYF area. These two roads experience an AADT of 8,769 and 6,403 vehicles, respectively.

The NYF area has recently undergone several street network projects that have enhanced the area's traffic circulation and safety. These projects include the replacement of signalized intersections along Pleasant Avenue with landscaped roundabouts and the reconnection of Aurora Street to Central Avenue via the extension of West Main Street. The new roundabouts have led to a slower but more uninterrupted flow of traffic and have complete streets features, such as bike lanes, raised crosswalks, and signaling/signage that better serve pedestrians and bicyclists. As for West Main Street, this complete streets extension project has reconnected two major roads within the Village while also reopening much of the underutilized land within NYF area for new infill development.



NYF Area – Street Network and Travel Rates





Parking

Parking in the NYF area includes free municipal on- and off-street parking, as well as private off-street parking provided by some businesses. The off-street parking lots represent a notable portion of the study area land, with public and private off-street lots covering a combined 16.3 acres or approximately 17% of the entire NYF area.

As part of the NYF program, a parking study was conducted to determine the utilization rate of on-street parking and municipally managed off-street parking lots within the NYF area. For the parking study, utilization rates were calculated at three time periods during a typical working day (7 am, 12 pm, and 7 pm).

	On-Street Parking	Off-Street Parking	Combined
Total Capacity	319	219	538
Handicap Parking	0	17	17
Overnight Utilization (7 AM)	9%	12%	11.5%
Midday Utilization (12 PM)	15%	39%	26.5%
Evening Event Utilization (7 PM)	32%	70%	46.8%

Throughout the NYF area, there are approximately 319 permitted on-street parking spots. On-street parking utilization rates on NYF area roadways varied greatly, depending on the time of day and the location of the on-street parking, the overall highest on-street parking demand was during the evening period (7 pm) which also coincided with two events going on in the Village Center. During these times, on-street parking along many of the NYF area's central roadways (e.g., Central Avenue, West Main Street) are fully utilized. However, because parking along many other streets in the NYF area are less utilized (or not used at all), the highest observed overall on-street parking utilization for the NYF area was 32%. The average utilization rate across all three time periods for on-street parking within the NYF area was 22%.

Throughout the NYF area, there are approximately 252 available parking spaces within the six municipally managed parking lots. However, one parking lot is restricted specifically for users of the public library. When taking this parking lot out of consideration, there are only 219 off-street parking spots that are municipally managed. Just as the results of the on-street parking analysis, the highest rate of observed utilization for off-street parking within the NYF area occurred during the evening event (7 pm) time period. During this time, 70% of all parking spaces within the five municipally managed parking lots were being used, and three of the five parking lots had a utilization rate of 85% or higher. Overall, the average utilization rate across all time periods for municipally managed off-street parking within the NYF area was 41%.

With significant variation in the demand for both on- and off-street parking depending on time and location, there are opportunities to improve signage, explore partnerships with private parking lot owners, and redesign lots to distribute demand and serve the growing needs of local businesses more efficiently.



NYF Area - Off Street Parking



NYF Area - Off Street Parking Utilization





NYF Area – On Street Parking



NYF Area – On Street Parking Utilization





Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

The NYF area is supported by a network of sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle lanes with several recent public works projects having further enhanced the pedestrian experience. Streetscape improvements were recently completed along North Aurora Street, Pleasant Avenue West, West Main Street, and Central Avenue. These improvements include the installation of traffic circles with enhanced pedestrian crossings, bump outs to improve the safety of crosswalks, raised crosswalks, street furniture and trees, pedestrian scaled street lighting, and bike lanes. According to Walk Score, an organization that researches the walkability and transit access within communities, the Village of Lancaster has a walk score of 74 and a bike score of 48 out of 100. With a walk score of 74, Village residents can accomplish most of their daily errands by foot. All destinations within the NYF area are accessible within a 10-minute walk or less. During the design of the NYF area boundary, it was designed in such a way that the entire area can be accessed within a five-minute walk from the Village Center. While recent traffic calming projects and the residential character of many of the streets in the NYF area make biking accessible, there are only two dedicated bike lanes within the NYF area, located along portions of Central Avenue and Pleasant Avenue.

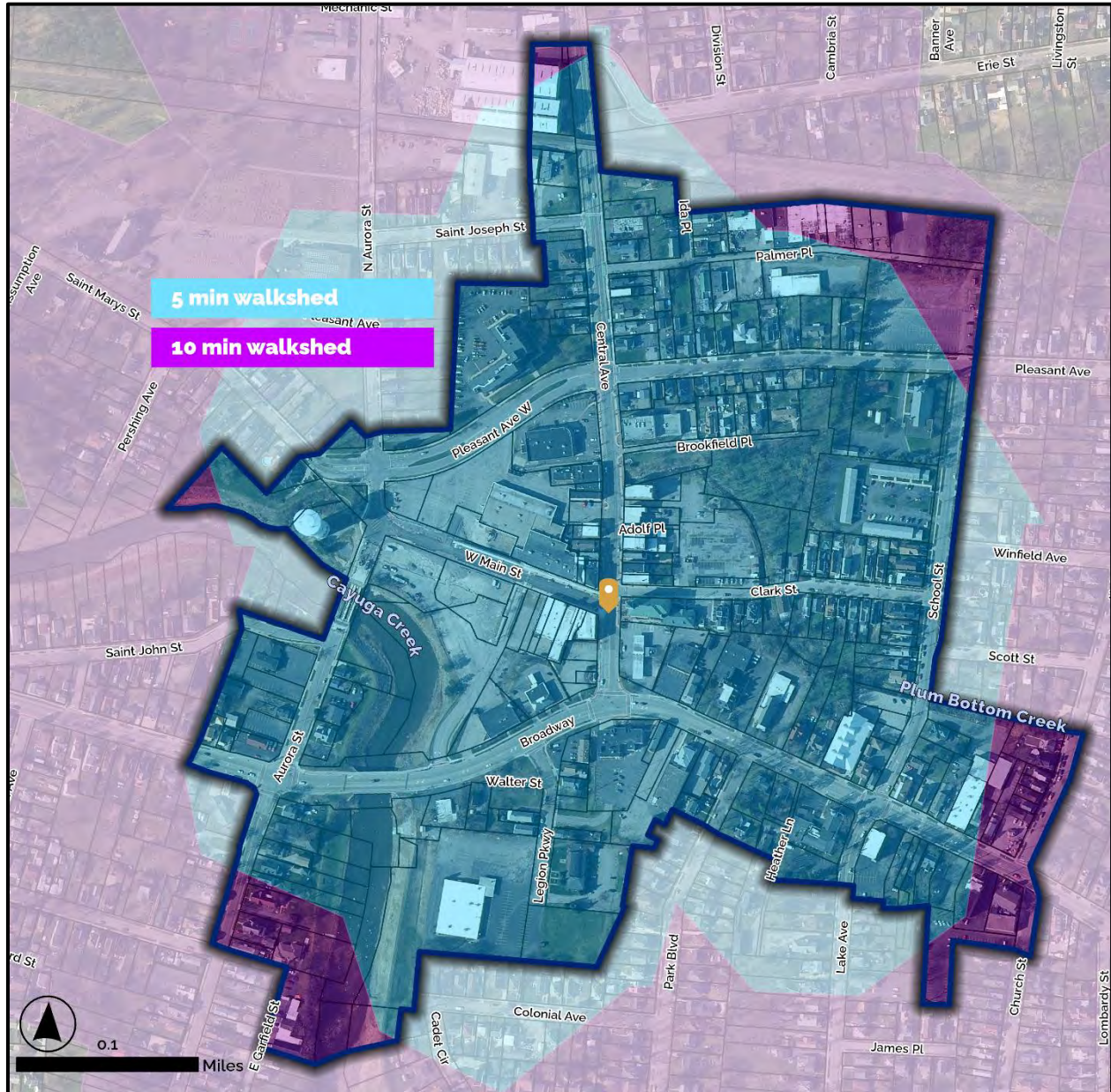


Significant work has been done to improve the roads and pedestrian realm within Downtown Lancaster. However, many of the side streets within the NYF area have not received the same level of investment over the years.





NYF Area - Walkshed





Public Transportation

The NYF area is well connected to the rest of the Village and the surrounding municipalities of Erie County by public transportation serviced by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA). The Village of Lancaster and the NYF area are serviced by two NFTA lines: the Lancaster Express (69) and the Lancaster Line (46). However, these bus lines are not well utilized by commuters, as less than 1/10th of a percent of employed residents commute via public transit.

The 69 Express runs between downtown Buffalo and the Village of Lancaster, with four stops within the NYF area. The Lancaster Express has two departures in the morning from the Village (to Buffalo) and two departures from Buffalo (to the Village) at the end of the workday. Travel time between the NYF area to downtown Buffalo utilizing the 69 Express would take approximately 44 minutes, which is 20 minutes longer than it would take to drive the same distance. While the availability of transit is an asset to those seeking alternative transportation options or for the 472 households (9.5%) in the Village that do not own a car, the added time of traveling by public transit are a hindrance to broader usage.

The 46 line operates on a loop from the Village of Lancaster to the Walden Avenue & Thruway Transit Center, just outside the City of Buffalo, with a bus arriving every 48 minutes. Stops along the 46 line includes the Village of Lancaster and Depew, major commercial centers along Walden Avenue in the Town of Cheektowaga, the Walden Galleria Mall, and the Walden & Thruway Transit Center. From the Transit Center, riders can connect to several other NFTA lines.

While public transportation is available within the Village, it is not as accessible or convenient as driving. Improving alternative transportation options within the Village can help to reduce traffic, improve the Village's carbon footprint, and better support households who don't own a car.





NYF Area - Bus Routes





Airport & Railroad

The NYF area is located within a 15-minute drive of the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport (BNIA), an Amtrak station, and transloading facilities for two of the nation's largest rail line operators. Located one town over, the BNIA is the third busiest airport in New York State with an average of 162 passenger and cargo flights per day.

In the adjoining Village of Depew, Amtrak operates a train station that is part of their Empire Service Line, which provides passengers access from Niagara Falls to NYC. From the Empire Service Line, riders can also find connecting rides to places throughout the Midwest, Northeast, Atlantic coast, and Canada.

Making up the northern border of the NYF area, Norfolk Southern operates a rail line that stretches from New York City to Buffalo. Just north of this rail line is a CSX and Amtrak line that traverse the same stretch of New York State. In Cheektowaga, which is the town just west of Lancaster, both CSX and Norfolk Southern have transloading facilities that can be used by companies from the NYF area to load and unload products and ship goods throughout the country.

Historic, Cultural, and Artistic Assets

The Village of Lancaster is characterized by its concentration of historic districts and buildings, as well as its plethora of cultural and artistic resources and events. These resources have the potential to attract new investment to the NYF area, while supporting a rich and vibrant village experience.

Historic Assets

Historic Districts

Central Avenue Historic District

Placed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 2015, the Central Avenue Historic District embodies that economic growth and prosperity the Village of Lancaster experienced in the decades surrounding the turn of the 20th century. Many of the original buildings within this district were lost in 1890s to fires that devastated the core commercial district. Today this historic district is comprised of 17 contributing and 2 non-contributing buildings, which are primarily late 19th and early 20th century, two- to three-story masonry mixed-use buildings that utilize Commercial Italianate and Queen Anne styles. The district's extent covers approximately 3.8 acres centered along Central Avenue, as well as several properties on West Main Street and Clark Street.



Despite the impacts that historic fires, flooding, and urban renewal have had on the NYF area, the area has been able to maintain many of its historic assets and small-town charm. This historic character helps make the NYF area a unique place that draws residents and visitors alike.



Broadway Historic District

Placed on the NRHP in 2015, the Broadway Historic District is a collection of historic sites that illustrates the metamorphosis of Broadway from a sparsely inhabited transportation route to one of the county's major automobile routes, U.S. Route 20, which stretches from New England to the Pacific Northwest. The historic district is primarily made up of historic residential and institutional properties that were developed in the mid- to late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Architectural styles that are represented in this district include Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, and Italianate, among others. Overall, the district is made up of 85 contributing and 42 non-contributing properties across 43 acres within the Village.

Village of Lancaster Local Historic Preservation District

In addition to the two nationally registered historic districts, the Village of Lancaster has one Local Historic Preservation District. This district covers both the nationally registered districts, as well as additional areas not included in the national districts. These historic districts, as well as historic sites within the Village, are overseen by the Village of Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The HPC has purview over all exterior work done to historic sites and has the ability to designate structures and resources as landmarks.

Historic Sites

Lancaster Town Hall and Opera House

Completed in 1896, the three-story Lancaster Town Hall and Opera House was developed by local architect George Metzger who utilized colonial revival and Italianate styles which were popular at the time. Today the building serves as an example of early American tradition of combining music halls with a town's main governmental building.

Lancaster Municipal Building

Built in 1940 utilizing modern styles, the two-story Lancaster Municipal Building serves as the primary building of operations for the Village and has been listed with NRHP since 1999.

Bruce-Briggs Brick Block Rowhomes

Built in the 1850s for the families of some of the earliest settlers in the Village of Lancaster, the Bruce-Briggs Brick Block Rowhomes is a collection of three brick row houses that were built in Greek Revival and Italianate styles. Listed on the NRHP since 1999, brick rowhomes are an extremely rare style hardly found in urban areas within Western New York, let alone in a small village, such as Lancaster.

Lieber-Rohl Gasoline Station

Constructed in 1935, the Lieber-Rohl Gasoline Station serves as an example of 20th century roadside commercial architecture. Built in the style of Tudor revival, which is reminiscent of the English Picturesque movement, the building served as a gas station into the 1960s. Today, the building is used by the seasonal ice cream shop Frosty's.

The Mook House

Located at 42 Aurora Street, the Mook House was originally built in 1840 as a Queen Anne style Victorian home and flour mill until the late 19th century. A flour mill and grain store sat on the site until being demolished in the mid-1900s for flood management projects along Cayuga Creek. This property was listed by the Village of Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission in 2016 and is the only locally listed landmark within the NYF area. Today, the site is operated by the boutique store Black Sheep and Company.



NYF Area – Historic Resources





Cultural and Artistic Assets

Cultural and Artistic Destinations

Lancaster Opera House

In addition to being a landmark historic structure in the downtown, the Lancaster Opera House is an arts destination frequented by locals and visitors, alike. Occupying the upper two floors of the building, the Lancaster Opera House produces and presents various plays, musicals, dinner theaters, and concerts throughout the year.

Most of the Village's cultural destinations and festivals are focused on Central Avenue. While it is great to have a principal public gathering place, destinations, and events located throughout the NYF area may open opportunities to residents and visitors to explore more of the Village.

Lancaster Historical Society and Museum

Located in a Town-owned building at 40 Clark Street, the Lancaster Historical Society and Museum offers visitors a look back into the history of Lancaster. The museum is open every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month.

Greater Lancaster Museum of Firefighting

Located along West Main Street, the Greater Lancaster Museum of Firefighting is an organization made up of the fire departments of Alden, Bowmansville, Depew, Lancaster, Town Line, Twin District, Crittenden, and the Performance Advantage Company. With the mission of promoting fire safety and the tradition of local fire service, the museum offers a unique look into the history and culture of Lancaster.

Festivals and Events

Lancaster Independence Day Celebration

The Village of Lancaster Independence Day Celebration's is an annual multi-day event commemorating the 4th of July that goes from July 2nd to the 4th. The festival includes musical acts, competitions, a parade, and fireworks.

Lancaster Garden Walk

The Lancaster Garden Walk is an annual event showcasing the beautiful landscaping and historic small-town charm of the Village. The walk is self-guided and takes you through the Village's central business district and residential neighborhoods. At night, several of the gardens also put on a light show.

Lancaster Christmasville Firetruck Parade

Now entering its 16th year, the Lancaster Christmasville Firetruck Parade is held every November featuring 200+ emergency vehicles from throughout New York State and Pennsylvania that are decorated in Christmas lights.



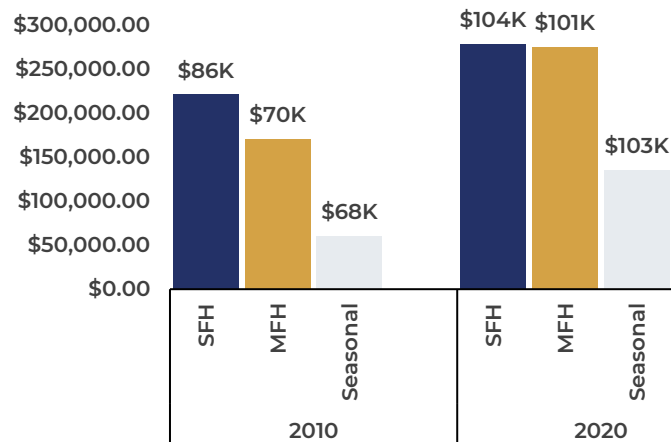
Economic Trends and Opportunities

An economic and market analysis was conducted to identify the area's strengths and potential opportunities to transform the area into a more prosperous downtown. Key findings from the analysis are summarized below.

Residential Market

Like many regions across the nation, Erie County is currently experiencing a housing boom. Sales of existing single-family homes (SFH), multi-family homes (MFH), and seasonal homes have all surged over the past decade. According to Landmax Data Systems, within Erie County (excluding the City of Buffalo), both home sale prices and the number of sales increased between 2010 and 2020.

Home Sale Prices in Erie County
(Excluding Buffalo)



Looking more closely at the affordability of renting and owning a home in the Village, there is a shortage of affordable rental and owner housing for households with very low incomes (below \$15,000). Additionally, there is a shortage of affordable rental units for households with moderate to high incomes (above \$50,000). Furthermore, households making over \$100,000 also have a shortage of affordable owner-occupied housing. What this indicates is that households with very low incomes are often forced to spend more than 30% of their income on housing, which is considered housing burdened.

Based on projections prepared by Cornell University's Program on Applied Demographics (PAD) and utilizing Envision Tomorrow software, the Village is expected to undergo an incremental rise in population until 2040, increasing from the current population of 10,027 to 10,128 by 2040. Translated to housing units, there will be a demand for 624 new housing units in the Village over the next 17 years, 380 of which will be renter occupied and 173 will be owner occupied. This increase can be attributed in part to the trend of smaller housing sizes, which is leading to the formation of more households. Overall, future demand will call for the development of 214 small lot single-family homes, 100 townhomes, 123 multi-family units, and 187 large lot single-family homes. These projections reflect shifting preferences and highlight the evolving housing needs within the community.

Retail Market

The consumer demand for various retail goods and food services by residents of Lancaster in 2021 was approximately \$105.5 million. However, the retail sales (supply) in 2021 for the Village were \$135.7 million, showing a net surplus of \$30.2 million. This suggests the Village is a retail hub for the surrounding area, attracting outsiders such as neighboring communities' residents and tourists, to spend within the Village bounds. Based on spending patterns for the entire County, it is estimated that the Village could help meet surrounding demand with up to approximately 126,232 square feet of new retail space.



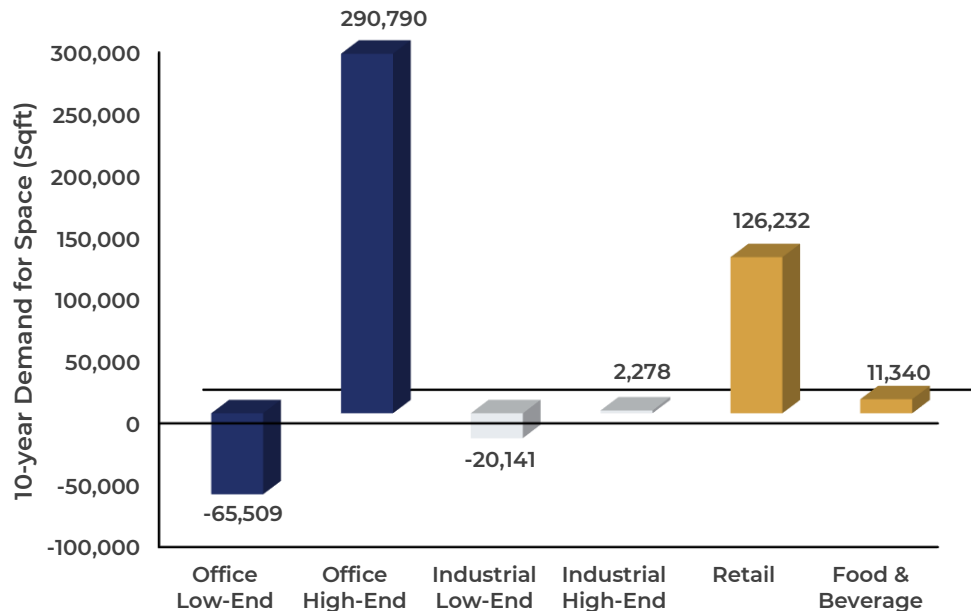
Looking more closely at the food and beverage service industry sub-sector, 2021 sales (supply) in the Village totaled \$4.9 million, compared to a local residential demand of \$13.1M. This shows that Village residents are often leaving Lancaster to meet their demand. It is estimated that the Village could increase its current food and drinking establishments by 11,340 square feet over the next decade to satisfy this demand.

Office Market

Based on an analysis of the market for office space over the next decade, estimates indicate there is demand for more than 1,453,950 square feet annually in the office market for all of the Buffalo-Niagara Falls MSA Region, but a reduction of 16,377 square feet annually in the 14086 ZIP code area, which is the area that includes the Village of Lancaster. Because of the Village's setting and accompanying small building footprints, estimates indicate that the Village could conservatively lose 65,509 or gain 290,790 square feet of new office space over the next decade.

Industrial Market

In contrast to the office market, the market for new industrial space is relatively weaker. Based on an analysis of the market for industrial space over the next decade, estimates indicate there is a relatively small demand of 101,000 square feet annually in the industrial market for all of the Buffalo-Niagara Falls MSA Region and a reduction of 13,428 square feet annually for the 14086 ZIP code area. Considering the factors above, estimates indicate that the Village of Lancaster could lose 20,141 or gain 2,778 square feet of industrial space over the next decade.





Synthesis of Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

Based on the previous analysis of existing conditions, critical issues and opportunities were identified that may affect future development in the NYF area, which are summarized below.

"Challenges (X)" represent either existing needs or gaps in the NYF area or potential limitations to future development, like environmental constraints or limited market potential.

"Opportunities (✓)" represent existing strengths or assets in the NYF area that can be further leveraged or the potential for new development, business creation, or other opportunities. These issues and opportunities provide the basis for the development of actionable goals, strategies, and projects that are recommended by this Strategic Investment Plan.

Regional and Historic Setting

- X Twentieth century urban renewal led to the loss of a number of the Village's historic buildings. Today, many of these sites are still vacant/underutilized.
- X Autocentric development over the past half-century has led to the fragmentation of the pedestrian realm and the transition to auto-dependency.
- ✓ The Village's relation to the City of Buffalo and plethora of transportation options make it the ideal community for commuters seeking an urban area with a small-town charm.
- ✓ The Village's history of being an economic hub for outer Erie County communities is a characteristic that should be capitalized upon.

Natural Environment

- X Historically, flooding of Cayuga Creek has damaged properties and threatened human safety. Flood resiliency must be considered relative to future development.
- ✓ Cayuga and Plum Bottom Creeks are natural and recreational assets. Further work should be done to capitalize on these assets and integrate them into downtown Lancaster.
- ✓ There are a number of parks within the NYF area. These spaces provide a number of benefits to the Village. They provide access to nature and to recreational opportunities, promote health and wellness, filter stormwater, and increase property values. Efforts should be made to connect and expand these spaces within the Village and region.



Built Environment

- ✗ There are several vacant/underutilized sites and a number of private parking lots within the NYF area. These sites disrupt the urban fabric of Central Avenue and Broadway.
- ✗ Most of the housing in the Village consists of single-family homes that are unaffordable to households across a range of incomes, but particularly lower income households. This is a deterrent to growing the Village's population and expanding the diversity of the population.
- ✗ The perceived lack of available public parking can be a deterrent for visitors coming to downtown.
- ✓ A significant number of the Village's historic, mixed-use buildings still exist along Central Avenue. These properties represent opportunities for adaptive reuse and the expansion of the Village's housing stock, particularly in buildings with vacant upper floors.
- ✓ A significant amount of land within the NYF area is owned by public entities. These properties are prime for enhancements and new development.
- ✓ The adoption of the Village's new zoning code is welcoming to a wide array of new housing and mixed-use building types in the downtown area.
- ✓ The Village's recent investments in improving utilities and streetscapes in the NYF area is a great boost to welcoming new development downtown.

Demographics

- ✗ The population of the Village has been declining, while resident median age has been increasing.
- ✗ Most employed residents leave the Village for their job, while the majority of jobs within the Village are occupied by workers who live outside of the Village.
- ✗ The bulk of Village residents commute by car while very few walk, take public transit, or work from home.
- ✓ Unemployment and poverty rates in the NYF area and Village are significantly lower than rates seen at the County level.
- ✓ The 25 to 44 age group is the most well represented age group in the NYF area. This demonstrates an interest by younger residents for a more pedestrian-oriented and mixed-use environment.
- ✓ The NYF area and Village population are highly educated, which is supportive of a wide array of jobs and industries.
- ✓ A younger, well-educated population tends to correlate with higher levels of disposable income for entertainment, dining, and shopping.



Economy

- ✗ The industrial market in Western New York and Lancaster is relatively weak with a predicted reduction in the need for industrial space within the Village.
- ✗ There is a lack of affordable rental housing for households making less than \$15,000 and more than \$50,000. There is also a lack of affordable owner housing for households making less than \$15,000 and more than \$100,000. Since buyer demand is exceeding the supply for available housing this is driving up housing costs across the board.
- ✓ The Village of Lancaster is a retail hub for surrounding communities. Opportunities exist to expand or introduce additional retail offerings within the Village.
- ✓ Within the Village, demand for food and beverage establishment space exceeds supply which presents an opportunity to attract new and more types of dining establishments.
- ✓ The office market is Western New York's strongest market. High-end estimates predict a significant increase in the square footage of office space needed in the region, which the Village could capture.