



TRANSIT NORTH PLAN

Transit North Description

Transit North is the primary business corridor in the Eastern portion of Niagara County. It encompasses both the east and west sides of Transit Road (NY 78). At the southern end of the corridor, Transit North begins at the intersection of Transit Road and Millersport Highway (NY 263) at the Erie-Niagara County border; it extends north to the intersection of Transit Road and Walnut Street (NY 31) at the Triway Bridge, which crosses the Erie Canal. This corridor also represents an important historic entrance into Niagara County; hence, we are an integral component of the 'Historic Canalway Corridor'.

Over the period from 2006-09, the Towns of Lockport and Pendleton and the City of Lockport collaborated on a community-based planning process. The purpose of this collaborative effort was to:

- Develop a unified approach to future community design
- Develop a strategy to promote business within the 3 communities
- Develop a common thematic design for future retail and business development along this predominately commercial corridor.
- Develop uniform ordinances regarding zoning, signage and related development issues
- Enhance transportation safety
- Improve the appearance and aesthetics of the corridor
- Attract new business investment and jobs

Development of the Transit North Plan

In addition to the chief elected officials of the three municipalities, the Transit North Committee consisted of representatives from the municipalities' planning and zoning boards, municipal attorneys, members of the Niagara County Legislature, representatives from the NYS Department of Transportation, Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council and other volunteer organizations from the affected communities. The Transit North Committee developed design guidelines, offered community-wide design charrettes, developed marketing materials and laid the foundation for future development within the corridor.

As a result of the collaborative efforts of all involved, consensus was reached on the goals for the Transit North corridor.

Transit North Plan Components

The Transit North Master Plan consists of the following components:

- Municipal Infrastructure Improvements
- Private Utility Upgrades & Improvements
- Transportation Safety Improvements
- Site Improvements & Beautification
- Private Sector Development
- Architectural Design Guidelines
- Marketing Strategy

Although some elements of the Plan may be undertaken concurrently, other elements are best scheduled on a phased basis. Because of the level of development which has taken place to date, the section of Transit Road, from Robinson Road (NY 93) to the Lockport City Limit is best positioned to attract new private sector investment. It is thus best suited for implementation of Transportation Safety Improvements and Site Improvements and Beautification in the initial phases of the Transit North Plan. This methodology assures that there will be the best return on both the proposed public and private sector investments.

Municipal Infrastructure Improvements

The Town of Lockport maintains public water and sewer service to most commercial users on Transit Road. The Town will maintain a high quality of service, with minimum disruption to businesses in the event of repair or upgrades to existing services.

Private Utility Upgrades & Improvements

Important to the attraction of new jobs and investment to the Transit Road Corridor is upgrading the appearance of the adjacent properties. Investor-owned utilities are significant stakeholders, and NYSEG and National Grid maintain major power transmission facilities that traverse the corridor. The Town of Lockport will work with NYSEG and National Grid to assure that green space located around their transmission facilities is properly maintained. In addition, the Town will work to upgrade the availability of telecommunications services along the Transit Road Corridor, especially high speed internet.

Transportation Safety Improvements

The Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GRNRTC) and the NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) have collaborated with the Town and City of Lockport in undertaking the Lockport Area Transportation Study (December, 2011). The Study identified a number of improvements designed to improve highway safety, including traffic signalization and turning lane configuration.

As a result, the Town of Lockport and DOT have submitted applications for funding through the State Transportation Enhancement Program and the Federal Transportation Enhancement Program. The grant applications were designed to secure funding for the construction of highway medians on Transit Road between Robinson Road and the

Lockport City Limit. The purpose of the highway medians is to promote “traffic calming” and helping to limit left-hand turns to locations that are supported by traffic control devices.

Cost: Estimated cost for the Traffic Medians is **\$480,000**.

Site Improvements & Beautification

In addition to improving traffic safety, the highway medians will include tree and shrub planting and salt-resistant and drought-resistant groundcover in order to enhance the appearance of the Transit North Corridor. These elements will raise awareness to traffic from outside the area that it is arriving at a destination: the Historic Canalway Corridor. Site Improvements along the highway are proposed to be installed on a phased basis.

The first area targeted for the beautification upgrades are the section of Transit Road from Robinson Road to the Lockport City Limit including:

- Gateway Signage – two attractive monument signs promoting ‘Transit North’ will be located on the northeast and northwest corners of Transit and Robinson Roads
- Ornamental tree planting – decorative trees will be planted between the sidewalk and curb
- Flower beds - perennial flowers that are similarly salt and drought resistant will be planted in landscaped flower beds strategically located along the roadway

Cost: Estimated cost for the Site Improvements & Beautification is **\$387,000**

- Installation of Decorative Highway Lighting
Decorative street lighting is proposed for the 2 mile section of Transit Road from Robinson Road to Shimer Drive. The lumen level of the decorative street lighting will be consistent with DOT standards for lighting state highways in urbanized areas.

Cost: The estimated cost for decorative highway lighting is approximately \$346,500.

Future phases of the above-described Traffic Safety Improvements and Site Improvements & Beautification will extend along Transit Road, from Robinson Road south to the Niagara County line. The same elements of hardy, ornamental trees and flowers will be strategically planted within the public right of way, although no sidewalk is currently located south of Robinson Road.

Private Sector Development

The Town of Lockport retained Economic Stewardship, Inc. of Saco, Maine in January, 2010 to prepare an economic analysis of the Transit North market. In its report, “Market & Economic Benefits Assessment of the Transit North Corridor”, Economic Stewardship found that there was a significant excess demand for goods and services within a 5-mile radius. The consultant concluded that this demand will require the following private sector investment:

- Construction of an additional 275,000 SF of retail shopping space
- Re-tenanting and redevelopment of an existing 150,000 SF of retail space
- Construction of an additional 40,000 SF of office space

Subsequent annual retail market analyses by Nielsen Claritas have consistently pinpointed a demand for retail goods and services within a 15-mile radius of Transit Road of over \$1 billion per year.

Leveraging the public sector improvements detailed in the Plan to complement the potential private sector investment is expected to result in **3:1 return on investment** for the Transit North communities, with the following results:

Private Sector Investment	\$30,000,000
Estimated Value of New Construction	\$25,500,000
Annual Increase in State Sales Tax	\$12,600,000
Annual Increase in County Sales Tax	\$12,600,000
Annual Increase in School Property Taxes	\$594,000
Annual Increase in County Property Taxes	\$193,000
Estimated Amount of New Construction	300,000 SF
Full Time Equivalent Jobs Created	570

Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines have been developed by the Lockport Town Planning Board to provide a cohesive theme and to create a sense of place. The Design Guidelines also enable developers of new projects to know prior to Planning Board presentation what the community’s expectations are relative to finish materials as well as building style.

Marketing

The Town of Lockport has created a Retail Market Report, which identifies a significant variance (Retail Opportunity Gap) between the purchasing power within the market area and the current availability of retail offerings. The Transit North Marketing Strategy provides for the distribution of the Retail Market Report and related market area publications at retail trade shows and via direct mail, newsletters, and in-person developer and retailer contacts.