

## II. INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of the inventory and analysis section is to describe existing conditions within the Village and identify opportunities, as well as constraints, to waterfront development. In addition, the analysis identifies natural features and resources which should be preserved as part of the management program developed by the Village. The inventory and analysis includes the following items:

- Regional Setting and Community Characteristics
- Historic Setting
- Demographic Profile
- Land Use
- Circulation Patterns
- Public Service Capacity
- Major Waterfront Land Parcels
- Vacant Waterfront Parcels
- Public Land Ownership Patterns
- Recent and Proposed Capital Improvements
- Overview of Marketing Factors

The LWRA, as defined in Section I, includes the entire Village. In some instances, it was necessary to include a wider study area to ensure that all possible factors which might influence water development are addressed. For example, the level of activity at Fort Niagara State Park, in terms of land use and visitor traffic, has been examined to better determine the Park's impact on the Village. A specific delineation of the study area as opposed to the waterfront area has not been defined. In cases where the study area extends beyond the LWRA, the area was defined and discussed further within the text.

As noted earlier, a thorough analysis of these factors will permit an understanding of those opportunities and constraints that exist within the Village. It should be stressed, however, that the technical analysis has been strongly complemented by information received from Village officials, as well as local residents, through both public meetings and the Waterfront Advisory Committee meetings. Finally, the information gathered in this section will be used to formulate shoreline policies that influence future development throughout the Village. In addition, the data will be used to prepare guidelines for the Village to use in order to review waterfront actions and ensure their consistency with the policies.

### **A. Regional Setting and Community Characteristics**

The Village of Youngstown is located in the northwest corner of Niagara County approximately 9 miles north of the City of Niagara Falls. It is situated at the confluence of Lake Ontario and the Niagara River, and immediately east of Niagara On-the-Lake, Ontario. The Town of Porter borders the Village on the northeast and south, with the Niagara River serving as the west boundary. Figure 2 shows a graphic illustration of the Village's regional location.

Youngstown is within the Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area and had a population of 1,935 according to the 2010 decennial census. The Census Bureau estimated that the

Village's 2010 population dropped to 1,935 or 11% since the 1980 Census. Table 1 shows the historic population of the Village compared to Niagara and Erie County.

Table 1 – Historic Population

Census Year	Youngstown	Niagara County	Erie County
1960	1,848	242,269	1,064,688
1970	2,169	235,720	1,113,491
1980	2,191	227,354	1,015,472
1990	2,075	220,756	968,532
2000	1,957	219,846	950,265
2010	1,935	216,469	919,040

Table 2 shows the historic housing units in the Village compared to Niagara and Erie County.

Table 2 – Historic Housing Units

Census Year	Youngstown	Niagara County	Erie County
1960	***	70,113	316,460
1970	667	74,695	360,893
1980	734	85,209	389,038
1990	831	90,385	402,131
2000	863	95,715	415,868
2010	878	99,120	419,474

The Village comprises approximately 687 acres. Tax parcel data obtained from Niagara County Real Property indicate that approximately 29% is vacant land and able to accommodate new development. However, recent population trends and economic projections for the area do not indicate a great demand for additional construction in the Village.

Since the majority of Village residents commute into the City of Niagara Falls or other areas of Niagara County for employment, the economic decline suffered by the County has indirectly affected Youngstown. Although unemployment figures are not available solely for the Village, a good indicator of regional conditions is shown in Table 3. The continued decline of basic manufacturing is the major reason for the high unemployment rates in Niagara County when compared to the nation as a whole. Local officials hope that a continued transition to a more diversified economy will offset the negative impacts that historical plant closings have had on the area.

Table 3 – Historic Unemployment Rates

Census Year	Niagara County	Erie County	United States
1950	***	***	5.2
1960	6.5	6.7	5.4
1970	5.4	4.7	4.8
1980	9.7	9.5	7.0
1990	5.7	5.2	5.6
2000	4.7	4.2	4.0

2010	9.6	8.3	9.6
2014	6.9	6.1	6.2
Source: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics			

**B. Historic Setting**

The Village of Youngstown has a rich past. Prior to 1650, the area was claimed by the Neuter Indians. Wars with the Iroquois, however, forced the Neuters out and allowed the Iroquois to occupy the land. The first Europeans to occupy the area were the French. In 1726 the French founded Fort Niagara and it remained in French possession until the French and Indian War started in 1754. In 1759 France lost the Fort to the British at the Battle of LaBelle Famille. The British occupied the Fort throughout the Revolutionary War of 1776 and ceded it to the Americans in 1796, twelve years after the war had ended.

During the British occupation, a settlement of Iroquois existed near the present location of the Village. In the period after the Revolutionary War, the settlement consisted of a few buildings including several taverns. Since its inception, the Village’s history has been intertwined with that of the Fort and was most likely founded to serve the needs of the Fort. Cattle driving emerged as one of the first industries in Youngstown as cattle was transported from the east to be used at the Fort.

The Village derived its name in 1808 from John Young, who was the first businessman of the community. Previous to this time, the Village had no name. John Young was said to be an empire loyalist who resided across the River in Newark, now known as the Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada. In Canada he used the surname Tice, but used Young in America. He owned much of the land in the Village during its early history.

During the War of 1812, several outlying batteries of Fort Niagara were located along the River bank in the Village (Fox Point, Salt Battery) and artillery duels were fought with the British across the River. In 1813 the entire Village, as well as every other municipality on the Niagara Frontier was burned to the ground in retaliation for the American’s burning Niagara-on-the-Lake (then called Newark).

By 1823, the Village had rebuilt but there were still not more than a dozen frame houses along Main Street. The area around Youngstown was heavily wooded so lumbering became an important industry. Later flour, fishing and the fruit trade flourished in the area as well.

During the 1840’s, industry in Youngstown prospered. The Old Grist Mill was just one of the structures built to accommodate business. By now, Youngstown’s relationship with Fort Niagara was strong and business with the Fort flourished. The mill, however, went into decline when the Erie Canal opened and the flour trade was usurped by communities in and around the Buffalo area.

The Village was incorporated in 1854 and elected George Swain as its first mayor. Around the turn of the century, Youngstown acquired a reputation as a fine resort area. The El Dorado Hotel, then located at the corner of Main and Water Streets, was very popular and served many guests until its demise in 1930. Today, the Village is a quiet community with a small business district. Many of the older, historic structures are still standing and in use today.

As is shown by the above paragraphs, the Village has been historically and economically linked to the water and Fort Niagara. Although the River and Lake no longer serve as a commercial trade route out of Youngstown, new opportunities exist for the Village to capitalize on its shorefront location. This includes

the development of sport fishing support services, recreational boating and as a destination point for area travelers wishing to enjoy the scenic beauty of the Village location.

A 500 acre State Park has now developed around Fort Niagara with immediate access to the area off the Robert Moses Parkway. The latter is a State road running north-south, east of Youngstown. Tourists can now enter the Park without driving through the Village. This has reduced opportunities for capturing spin-off retail or tourist dollars by Village establishments and has diminished the economic link between the Fort and Youngstown.

**C. Demographics and Socio-Economic Factors**

The demographic and socio-economic factors were determined using census data. This information is presented in a comparative table format in order to gain a sense of Youngstown’s characteristics relative to Niagara County and various communities along the Niagara River. In 2010, there were approximately 1,935 people residing in 801 households in the Village. Youngstown encompasses approximately 1.07 square miles giving the Village a population density of approximately 1,808 people per square mile. The average household size was estimated at 2.42 people and a household density of 748 households per square mile. The median age in Youngstown was 45.1 years and the population was distributed with 21.7% under the age of 18, 59.8% from 18 to 64 and 18.5% who were 65 years of age or older. A summary of the population factors is shown in Table 4.

Table 4 – Population Factors

Municipality	Population	Households	Average Household Size	Median Age	Percent Under 18	Percent 18 to 64	Percent 65 and older
V. Youngstown	1,935	801	2.42	45.1	21.7%	59.8%	18.5%
T. Porter	6,771	2,782	2.43	45.9	21.2%	61.6%	17.2%
V. Lewiston	2,701	1,289	2.01	48.3	16.5%	57.3%	26.2%
T. Lewiston	16,262	6,253	2.33	45.2	17.2%	61.5%	21.2%
Niagara County	216,469	90,556	2.34	41.9	21.5%	62.6%	15.9%

Source: 2010 decennial census.

According to the 2010 decennial census, Youngstown had approximately 878 housing units within the Village that included houses, apartments and various other living units. The vacancy rate was estimated to be 8.8% with approximately 77 units considered vacant. There were approximately 801 occupied housing units of which 75.4% were estimated to be occupied by the property owner. A summary of the housing factors is shown in Table 5.

Table 5 – Housing Factors

Municipality	Housing Units	% Owner Occupied	Vacancy Rate	% Built 1939 or earlier <sup>(1)</sup>
V. Youngstown	878	75.4%	8.8%	24.4%
T. Porter	3,103	80.1%	10.3%	27.0%
V. Lewiston	1,372	62.6%	6.0%	22.2%
T. Lewiston	6,610	79.0%	5.4%	15.6%

Niagara County	99,120	69.1%	8.6%	34.1%
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Source: 2010 decennial census and 2013 American Community Survey <sup>(1)</sup>

The 2013 median income for a household in the Village was \$56,136. Approximately 6.9% of the population was living below the federal poverty line, including 4.4% of those under the age of 18 and 7.2% of those 65 or over. Approximately 95.8% of the population had completed high school with approximately 32.7% earning a bachelor's degree or higher. A summary of the economic factors is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 – Socio-Economic Factors

Municipality	Median Household Income <sup>(1)</sup>	Poverty Rate <sup>(1)</sup>	% High School <sup>(1)</sup>	% Bachelor's Degree <sup>(1)</sup>
V. Youngstown	\$56,136	6.9%	95.8%	32.7%
T. Porter	\$61,820	6.6%	93.0%	27.4%
V. Lewiston	\$53,011	9.5%	94.2%	40.4%
T. Lewiston	\$62,779	4.4%	94.2%	37.1%
Niagara County	\$47,955	13.7%	89.9%	22.2%

Source: 2013 American Community Survey.

An analysis of the demographic and socio-economic factors illustrates some basic conclusions that include:

- The Village has a small but growing elderly population which, when examined in combination with the declining household size of the community, will create a demand for housing types different from the traditional single family home.
- The Village is well educated, and well off in comparison to the County as a whole. This reflects a stable population base and a citizenry concerned about community issues

**D. Land Use**

The Village comprises approximately 687 acres of land, of which 71 percent is currently developed. Both residential and commercial development originally occurred along Main Street in the vicinity of Hinman and Lockport Streets. Subsequent development created a radial pattern of residences going northeast along Lockport Street (State Route 93) and southeast along Church Street. Figure 3 illustrates land uses within the Village as categorized by tax parcel data. A summary of the acreage by land use is shown in Table 8.

Table 8 – Land Use Acreage Summary

Land Use	Acreage	Percent of Total
Single Family Residence	313.40	45.6%
Multi-Family Residence	12.60	1.8%
Apartments	20.20	2.9%
Commercial	8.00	1.2%
Community Services	19.20	2.8%

Recreation and Open Space	34.00	5.0%
Transportation	100.2	14.6%
Vacant	179.40	26.1%
Total:	687.00	100.0%

Source: 2014 Niagara County Tax Parcel Database

### Residential

Single family residential use is the largest single land use within the Village. It occupies 313.40 acres at a density of 2.2 dwellings per acre. Single-family residences are common in all areas of the Village, except for the commercial district centered on Water Street, Main Street and Lockport Street.

Multi-family residences comprise a minor land use in the Village. Multi-family residences include dwellings with two or three individual living units in each dwelling. Most are located in a twelve block area bounded by Main Street, Jackson Street, Third Street and Swain Road. Multi-family residences primarily consist of two-family residences and occupy approximately 12.60 acres of land. The majority of these dwellings are located in older homes that have been converted to two-family homes.

There are 16 apartment buildings with a total of 150 rental units encompassing approximately 20.20 acres of land in the Village. They are generally located in the western portion of the Village between Third Street and the Niagara River. A summary of the apartment buildings is shown in Table 9.

Table 9 – Apartment Building Summary

Location	Name/Type	Units
1 Main Street	Villa Apartments	32
308 Main Street	Minor Apartment Building	4
343 Main Street	Converted Residence	4
409 Main Street	Converted Commercial Building	9
420 Main Street	Converted Commercial Building	4
434 Main Street	Converted Commercial Building	4
445 Main Street	Converted Commercial Building	2
461 Main Street	Converted Residence	4
560 Main Street	Presbyterian Church	4
501 Second Street	Converted Residence	3
414 Third Street	Minor Apartment Building	10
329 Oak Street	Minor Apartment Building	4
233 Lockport Street	Converted Residence	4
310 Lockport Street	Converted Residence	8
90 Lake Street	Youngstown Village Apartments	20
Jackson Street	Townhouse of Youngstown, Inc.	29
Water Street	Minor Apartment Building	5
Total:		150

### Commercial

Almost all commercial development is located in the area bounded by Water Street, Main Street and Lockport Street. These include marine services along Water and Main Streets; seasonal and tourist facilities also on Main Street and businesses along Lockport, Third and Church Streets (bank, pharmacy,

food). A mixture of other services is also present to serve the local population. Older structures often are of mixed use with residential units above commercial units. Many of the older commercial structures are also of historic interest. An inventory of the existing business in the Village is shown in Table 10.

Table 10 – Inventory of Existing Business

Category	Quantity	Notes
Accommodations	8	Several bed and breakfasts
Dining Establishments	7	Most have limited hours with periods when no establishment is open.
Motor Vehicle Services	2	Gas station and auto repair shop.
Professional Offices	6	Banking and medical offices.
Professional Services	3	Real estate office and electrician.
Retail Services	11	Grocery store, gift shop, pharmacy, dance studio, art studio, liquor store, barber and salons.
Waterfront	3	Private marinas and boat fuel dock.

### Community Services

Community Services within the Village comprises a small portion of the Village and encompasses approximately 19.20 acres of land. Community service land uses vary in nature and include cemeteries, church land, government offices and public utilities.

### Recreation and Open Space

There are five public parcels reserved for recreation and open space within the Village.

- Waterfront Park

Waterfront Park encompasses approximately 0.40 acres of land along Water Street. The park contains a single boat launch (public), parking for ten non-trailer vehicles, a shoreline wall for fishing, transient boat tie-ups, and benches for passive recreation.. Access to the waterfront is available by motor vehicle, boat or from Main Street using a public staircase.

- Constitution Park

Constitution Park encompasses approximately one acre of land between Main Street and the Niagara River in the northwestern portion of the Village. The park provides scenic views of the Niagara River from a Gazebo on the bluff and benches along a pedestrian staircase that provides direct access to the waterfront. Improved linkage with Falkner Park should be explored. The latter is an active recreation area immediately across Main Street from Constitution Park. Currently, the road serves as a barrier to free movement between the Two public areas.

- Falkner Park

Falkner Park encompasses approximately 2.50 acres of land along Main Street between William Street and Lockport Street. The park extends through the block to Second Street and contains both passive and active recreation uses. Specific facilities include a wading pool and playground equipment.

- Veterans Park

Veterans Park encompasses approximately 26.6 acres and is located on Nancy Price Drive with an additional outlet to Church Street. It is the largest of the Village parks with both active and passive recreation facilities. Specific facilities include tennis courts, baseball diamonds, picnic tables and a covered picnic shelter. In addition, the Park houses the Village Youth Recreation Program which is operated from a temporary mobile structure. The park is bordered by large vacant parcels and it is important to maintain a low intensity type use on this private land to insure compatibility with recreation activity occurring at the Park.

- Lions Park

Lions Park encompasses approximately 2 acres of land and is located in the center of a single-family housing development bounded by Applewood Drive, Westwood Avenue, Parkside Place and Brampton Road. The park serves as a neighborhood park with playground equipment and opportunities for passive recreational activities. Three twenty-foot wide rights-of-way allow public access to the playground.

### Vacant

Vacant land is the second largest land use in the Village behind single-family housing. There is approximately 179.20 acres of vacant land located primarily along the northern, eastern and southern edge of the Village boundary. The remaining vacant property consists of small undeveloped parcels located throughout the Village. The amount of vacant land is significant as it lends itself to a variety of development possibilities.

### Transportation

The only other use in the Village is roads, which occupy approximately 100 acres of land. One important aspect of the street system is the vacant, waterfront street ends. Some of these could be used for scenic overlooks of the Niagara River and promoted as a point of interest for tourists visiting the area. It should be noted that the street ends off Main Street can only be used for road purposes. Any attempt to erect structures or develop the property in any other manner is not within the purview of the Village property rights. This provision is included in the original deeds outlining Village ownership.

### Major Adjacent Land Uses

The proximity of adjacent land uses can have a significant impact on the Village's ability to achieve its economic and community development goals. State parks provide desired amenities for residents that the Village otherwise may not be able to provide on its own. Also, rural subdivisions, tourist attractions, recreational events and campgrounds create a demand for goods and services that the Village may leverage to support economic development. Figure 4 illustrates the location of major adjacent land uses. A discussion of each is provided below.

- Fort Niagara State Park

Fort Niagara State Park is located on the northern border of Youngstown and encompasses approximately 500 acres of land. The Park is situated at the confluence of Lake Ontario and the Niagara River, and has two boat launches that provide access to the Niagara River and Lake Ontario. The Park also has an interpretive nature center, a swimming pool and water slide, playgrounds, picnic facilities, soccer fields and hiking trails. In addition, the Park contains Old Fort Niagara (17th Century Fort and French Castile), and the U.S. Coast Guard Station/Naval Reserve Headquarters. Once an integral part of Village commerce, the Park has little or no ties with the Village today.



The Park features regularly scheduled activities that attract patrons from throughout the State. Youth soccer clinics and state competitions, special entertainment, concerts, and nature programs are scheduled during the season and help attract over one million visitors annually.

Despite its extensive use, the historic interdependence between the Park and Village has diminished over the years to the point that most of the visitors to the Park are unaware of the existence of the Village's existence. The lack of signage on the Robert Moses Parkway and the lack of promotional and economic coordination with the Park have further compromised Village retail and services. In fact, while Park attendance has grown significantly since 1970, their effect on Village business has declined due to the Robert Moses Parkway and a lack of visibility to area traffic. A consolidated effort is needed to recapture part of the lost tourist trade in order for Village commerce to survive.

- Four Mile Creek State Park

Four Mile Creek State Park is located approximately 4 miles northeast of Youngstown along the shores of Lake Ontario. The Park encompasses approximately 248 acres and includes 275 camp sites for tent and trailer camping. In addition to camping facilities, the park provides passive recreation activities that include hiking, fishing, nature trails and recreation programs. The close proximity of this recreational resource creates an opportunity for retail and food establishments in Youngstown.

- Joseph Davis State Park

Joseph Davis State Park is located approximately 1.5 miles south of Youngstown along Route 18F in the Town of Lewiston. The Park encompasses approximately 388 acres and includes a 27-hole Frisbee disc golf course. In addition, the park provides a wide variety of recreational activities that include nature trails, picnic facilities, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling. The park has a fishing dock and canoe launch along the Niagara River as well as a bass pond near the entrance of the park. The proximity of the Park to the Village allows it to serve as a community resource and helps address the recreational demands of Village residents.

- Adjacent Subdivisions:

Collingwood Estates and Youngstown Estates are single family residential subdivisions in the Town of Porter. They have access to Route 18F and are immediately adjacent to the Village's south boundary. The estimated number of units is approximately 246, which house to approximately 500 to 600 residents. Due to the proximity of Youngstown, retail and other support services offered in the Village are utilized by this population group.

## **E. Village Harbor and Water Uses**

The waters of the Niagara River associated with the Village of Youngstown extend between the northern and southern Village boundaries, from the riverbank to the international border at the centerline of the River. Figure 5 illustrates the surface waters encompassed by the Village Harbor.

There are three special anchorage areas that are located in the River adjacent to the Village. The anchorage areas encompass approximately 90 acres of water surface area associated with the Village. These anchorage areas were established for safety of navigation and allow regulated mooring in each designated area. In accordance with 33 CFR 11.85, the Youngstown Harbor Commission controls the location, type and assignment of mooring placed in these areas. Permitting jurisdiction is reserved for the

U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACOE) and the U.S. Coast Guard under the River and Harbors Authorization Act for navigable waterways.

The U.S. Coast Guard also has permitting jurisdiction within the mooring and anchorage areas and regulates activities such as boating safety. The Coast Guard occupies a permanent station at the northwest tip of the Fort Niagara property, whose docks provide home bases for Coast Guard, Niagara County Sheriff, U.S. Customs & Border Protection and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service vessels. Activities at and from Coast Guard Station Niagara are primarily limited to law enforcement and immigration enforcement and interdiction.

The Youngstown Yacht Club has over a hundred moorings and an approximately 150-foot dock reserved for visiting boaters. Youngstown Harbor Corporation Marina, formerly Fox Boyz Marina, has approximately 75 moorings, and up to 26 slips. Youngstown Harbor Corp. is a private corporation and is not associated with the Village of Youngstown.

The Village waterfront and boat harbor provide unique scenic vistas for Youngstown residents. The harbor area is a landmark scene which is synonymous with the Village of Youngstown to non-residents. The harbor features prominently in Youngstown promotional materials and on the Village's web site, and a web camera located at the Youngstown Yacht Club provides vistas toward the mouth of the Niagara River which appear frequently on Buffalo-area television weather casts including WIVB.

The Youngstown Yacht Club, and marine contractor RCR Yachts, Inc., provide transient mooring and berthing, launch (*i.e.*, water taxi) service from moorings to land, water, ice, electricity, pump-out, marine supplies, a launching ramp, a mobile boat lift to 20 tons, and hull and engine repairs. The Boat Works, Inc. of Blairville Road in Youngstown, operating from the Youngstown Yacht Club docks, provides marine engine and system service and repairs, as well as limited marine towing services.

The nearest publically-accessible marine fuel docks exist seven miles upriver in Lewiston, New York, and also across the Niagara River from Youngstown at the Niagara-On-The-Lake Sailing Club in Ontario, Canada. Since 2014, Youngstown Harbor Corporation Marina is also home to a for-profit private enterprise which operates high-speed sightseeing boats (known as "jet boats") on the Lower Niagara River.

The harbor area does not itself create any negative impacts, and contributes substantially to the waterfront ambience of the community and Villages residents' quality of life. In 1999, the Village established a safe boating zone along the Niagara River to address safety concerns related to the increase in pleasure boating at that time. The safe boating zone extends between the southern and northern Village boundary, between the eastern shore of the Niagara River to the international boundary. The local law requires vessels traveling within the safe boating zone not to exceed 6 miles per hour during the period of May 1 thru November 1 of each year.

A seasonal passenger ferry used to operate between the Village Dock and Niagara-on-the-Lake, but has been discontinued. A trial ferry operation was operated for one weekend in 2007 between Youngstown and the Niagara-On-The-Lake Sailing Club docks in Ontario. For that occasion, temporary customs and immigration stations were set up on both sides of the River. Based on the numbers of residents and tourists who made use of the ferry service during that trial weekend, it was seen that there is demand for such a service, at least locally. However, despite evidence of such demand, plans for a cross-river ferry

are hampered by the substantial regulatory burdens imposed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and its counterpart agencies in Canada in the post-9/11 security environment.

#### F. Water-Dependent and Water-Enhanced Uses

Water-dependent uses would not exist without a waterfront location and include uses that require direct access to the Niagara River as an integral component of the use. Water-enhanced uses do not require a waterfront location to function, but frequently involve support services for water dependent-uses or receive added value or importance because of proximity to the shoreline. Water-dependent uses play an essential role in determining a shoreline’s economic importance, and public acceptance of its worth as a public resource. Figure 6 illustrates the location of water-dependent uses and water-enhanced uses.

The Youngstown waterfront extends approximately 7,600 feet along the eastern shore of the Niagara River between the southern and northern Village boundary. The waterfront is composed primarily of residential uses that sit atop a steep embankment lining the River. This embankment is excellent for scenic vistas of the Lower River, but prohibits general access to the water. Only those residents who have invested in stairways and/or docks have utilization of the waterfront. The dominant land uses along the shoreline are single-family residences, commercial, community services and public parks. A summary of the land use along the shoreline is shown in Table 11.

Table 11 – Waterfront Land Use

Land Use	Shoreline Length (feet)	Percent Total
Single Family Residence	4,140	54%
Community Services	1,150	15%
Apartments	755	11%
Recreation and Open Space	625	8%
Commercial	375	5%
Transportation	245	3%
Vacant	245	3%
Multi-Family Residence	65	1%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>100%</b>

Although the Youngstown waterfront is mainly used by boaters, there is some onshore fishing activity at Waterfront and Constitution Park. The area, however, is not considered an onshore fishing hotspot, so demand for more onshore fishing space is not high.

- Public Waterfront Parks

The south Village Waterfront Park on Water Street was recently refurbished and significantly improved. Waterfront Park now features a modern concrete seawall for transient boaters, as well as park benches, lighting, grass lawn and reconstructed concrete boat launching ramp. As seen on Figure 8, Waterfront Park is located between the Youngstown Yacht Club and Youngstown Harbor Corporation Marina properties.

During the boating/tourist season, Waterfront Park is used as a waiting area by patrons of the jet boats debarking from tour buses on Water Street. The refurbished Waterfront Park is equipped with attractive park benches and convenient rest rooms adequate in number for the intended use of the park by residents and non-resident day tourists. These facilities are inadequate to accommodate the large numbers of tour bus passengers using the park as a waiting area before boarding jet boats. The use of Waterfront Park as a waiting area for jet boat patrons can, depending on how many busloads of passengers are present at a given time, limit the accessibility of the park to residents and non-jet boat patrons.

The Village Waterfront Park also features a U.S. Immigration videophone checkpoint at which Canadian visitors can complete their immigration process on arrival at the Village. This facility also includes the only public rest rooms in the Village of Youngstown.

Constitution Park is a small parcel located at the water's edge beneath the Village Gazebo park at the top of the embankment near the northern extent of the Village of Youngstown. This park has an associated finger pier and seawall which can be used by transient boaters with smaller vessels. Constitution Park has as yet not been significantly developed, but in its current state the park provides a pleasant location from which to fish or simply enjoy sunsets as well as vistas of the Canadian shore, fireworks displays, and the mouth of the Niagara River during all seasons. Future development of Constitution Park will be limited by its restricted vehicular access. There is no road as such leading to Constitution Park. Instead, limited vehicular access to Constitution Park from Water Street can only be made via a narrow, privately-owned gravel driveway. Pedestrian access to Constitution Park is provided primarily by way of a stair from the Village Gazebo Park at the top of the bluff. This stairway is not A.D.A.-compliant.

In theory, Waterfront Park and Constitution Park could be connected by some means, at least for pedestrians if not for vehicle traffic. Such a connection is complicated by the location of privately-owned properties between the two parks, and the absence of an actual road linking Constitution Park with Water Street. It is hoped that a limited pedestrian walkway, linking Constitution Park with Water Street, could be developed by the Village over part of the existing private gravel driveway in cooperation with the private property owners, but the Village and private property owners would need to be shielded from resulting potential injury liability by appropriate agreements and insurance.

- Impact of Jet-Boat Operations on Youngstown's Waterfront and Adjacent Waters

The introduction of jet boat operations has significantly altered the water-dependent uses on the Village waterfront. This private business was introduced in competition with the Whirlpool Jetboat Company, which operates from Lewiston, New York and from Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. Whirlpool Jetboat was previously the sole operator of high-speed sightseeing boat tours of the rapids on the Niagara River. The jet boat company operating from Youngstown converted a number of boat slips previously rented by boaters at the Youngstown Harbor Corporation Marina into berths for its fleet of custom-designed and built high-powered sightseeing boats.

Through connections with down-state tour operators, the jet boats bring a large number of very large motor-coach-size buses of tourists to Youngstown for jet boat trips nearly every day. Prior to the introduction of the jet boats, large motor coaches were rarely if ever seen on the Village's streets. While no actual statistics are yet available, anecdotal evidence indicates that the introduction of large numbers of bus passengers for the jet boats has resulted in no measurable economic benefit to the

Village. The jet boat tour bus passengers are typically kept by their tour operators on a tight time schedule which does not allow the passengers to spend significant time patronizing Village businesses. Additionally, tour bus passengers who opt not to go on jet boat tours generally remain in or around Waterfront Park or walk around public and private property in the Village taking photographs, rather than shopping or dining in the Village's business area. Business interaction with the tour bus passengers can be complicated due to language barriers, as all or nearly all of the jet boat bus passengers present as non-English speaking.

The jet boat operations have brought significant changes to the Village waterfront and adjacent waters. Village waters were previously used and occupied primarily by private sailboats, powerboats, canoes, kayaks, rafts, personal watercraft (e.g., Jet Skis), and individually-operated charter fishing boats. These boats and their operations on the Youngstown waters of the Niagara River typically had little or no impact on the Village waterfront or on use of Village waters by residents and other boaters. The operation of high-powered jet boats onto Village waters impacts the Youngstown waterfront and riverside properties in several ways, including speed, wake, noise and frequency.

Unlike the jet boats operated from Canada by the Whirlpool Jet, which maintain idle speed in the Niagara River while adjacent to the waters of the Village of Youngstown, jet boats operating from Youngstown do not moderate their speed on the River adjacent to Village waters. By making use of the Canadian side of the River, the jet boats are able to avoid the 6-mph speed limit law in Village waters and accelerate to high speed and perform high-speed maneuvers while still adjacent to Youngstown Village waters. Due to the frequency of the jet boat transits in the River adjacent to Village waters, operators of un-powered vessels (sailboats, kayaks, tubes, etc.) must be constantly prepared to take evasive action to avoid collision or being swamped by jet boat wakes.

Jet boats arriving at and departing from Youngstown at high speeds create large waves, or "wake," which proceeds down river and eastward and impacts heavily on the Youngstown waterfront, as well as on boats moored at the Village waterfront. Boaters at moorings and docks in Village waters are often unaware of the wake's approach. Boaters must now maintain vigilance in Village waters to prepare for the impact of jet boat wakes which, given the high frequency of jet boat operations, present an almost constant hazard. While no confirming data are yet available, it seems highly likely that the now-constant impact of wake from the jet boats will result in, or accelerate, damage to or deterioration of the Village shoreline and parks, as well as privately-owned properties and waterside structures.

The jet boat engines generate significant noise, which echoes in the River gorge between the Canadian shore and the Village of Youngstown, and can be clearly heard in areas of the Village several blocks inland from the shoreline, beginning at or before 8:00 a.m. and continuing throughout the day. In addition, nearer to the waterfront, the impact of the wake generated by jet boats has the effect of slamming together the docks and floats of the Youngstown Harbor Corp. marina. This generates a loud metallic crashing noise which can be heard along the Village shoreline. Residents and owners of property along the Village waterfront are continually impacted by this noise during jet boat operations.

Prior to the onset of jet boat operations, issues of boat speed, wake and noise were limited to sporadic instances involving isolated vessels. Since full-time jet boat operations began, often running three or more boats at a time throughout the day, these issues have become nearly constant in and

around Youngstown Village waters. Persons using, or living near Village waters are affected by some or all of the above issues on most days starting at or before 8:00 a.m. and continually throughout the day.

Jet boat operations in Youngstown have brought about a sea-change in the use, safety, comfort and character of the waters of the Village of Youngstown. Efforts to discuss these impacts with the jet boat operator or their lawyers have met with some verbal assurances but no improvements. It is envisioned that the above impacts will continue to pose challenges for the Village and waterfront property owners, as well as resident and non-resident boaters.

- Water Street

The Water Street area is seasonally active with recreational boaters, fishermen, and tourists. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic crowd the area on summer weekends and find limited services to complement marine facilities. Marine commercial services are available from RCR Yachts, Inc. at the Youngstown Yacht Club, and from The Boat Works, Inc.

Water Street is physically separated from the rest of the Village by the Niagara River embankment. Water Street is narrow, features limited diagonal parking, and can be accessed by a long set of pedestrian stairs leading from Main Street near Hinman Street to the north end of the Village Waterfront park and south end of the Youngstown Yacht Club property. Water Street is technically a two-way road, but its two accesses to Main Street, at Water Street's north and south ends, are one-way only, that is, north to south. There is no parking available on Water Street for vehicles with trailers, although such parking is available above the embankment on Hinman Street. From a traffic use perspective, Water Street is effectively saturated, serving the Village Waterfront Park and boat launch, jet boat tour buses, the Youngstown Yacht Club, RCR Yachts, Inc., The Boat Works, Inc. and residents of condominium apartments located along the embankment adjacent to the north Water Street access. Physical constraints and existing uses mean that no expansion of Water Street itself is possible. Recent changes in Village parking regulations limit the use of diagonal parking spaces in the southern portion of Water Street to 2 hours. This change was made with the intention of improving residents' and visitors' access to the Village's Waterfront Park.

The addition of jet boat operations at Youngstown Harbor Corp. marina has added to the congestion of Water Street. On a typical day, dozens of very large long-distance tour buses transit Water Street to deliver passengers to the jet boats at the southern end of the street. The large size of these buses, compared with the narrow constraints of Water Street, occasionally create safety issues for pedestrians and other drivers.

The tour buses serving the jet boats frequently park at the southern end of Water Street and wait there for passengers to return. It is not uncommon to see five or more tour buses parked at one time in front of and near the Youngstown Harbor Corp. marina. The tour buses often completely and illegally occupy the designated emergency vehicle parking area adjacent to Waterfront Park. The nearly constant presence of large tour buses parked end-to-end in front of Waterfront Park creates a tall barrier between Water Street and Waterfront Park. This detracts from the visual appeal of the park, which was recently completely refurbished by the Village at taxpayer expense. In addition, the parking of large tour buses adjacent to Waterfront Park often interferes with, and sometimes prevents outright, the use of the Village's boat launch ramp by residents and visitors. In addition, jet boat

patrons waiting in Waterfront Park often enter without permission onto nearby private properties, including the boarding of visitors' boats docked at the Park.

The safety, parking, obstruction and trespass issues posed by large tour buses transporting jet boat patrons are expected to pose continuing challenges to the Village's efforts to increase the use of Water Street and Waterfront Park by residents and visitors.

- Youngstown Village Business District

Although addressed extensively in other sections of this Plan, the features of the Youngstown Village commercial district are essential to consideration of waterfront uses and future enhancement of water-dependent uses in the Village. Increases in future water-based economic development depend heavily on concomitant increases in the availability of retail services in the Village generally. Providing enhanced transient mooring and marine services to sail boaters, power boaters, fishermen and sport-fish tour operators at the River's edge in Youngstown will yield little economic benefit to the Village if there are not sufficient shops and restaurants and lodgings to attract those visitors.

The Village commercial center is located at Lockport and Main Streets, immediately adjacent to Water Street. This is the hub of Village retail activity and runs from the Village Park on Main Street to Hinman Street. It contains mostly residential/neighborhood retail facilities (grocery, pharmacy, wine & liquor store, laundry, post office, bank, etc.) with only a few services oriented toward tourist or the waterfront (gas station, a few restaurants, a gift store). While functionally isolated from the business district, adjacent areas are residential to the north and south and are significantly different in character from the waterfront and its patrons. Some of the storefronts within the Village Center are vacant, and many are in need of facade improvements. In addition, the few restaurants which operate in the Main Street corridor have only limited opening hours. Improving these aspects would increase the area's attractiveness as a commercial corridor for residents and seasonal visitors. It should be noted in this regard that Village Zoning laws currently impose a restriction on the west side of Main Street requiring that businesses so located have a "nautical" character. This restriction, if not modified or lifted, may create future barriers to development of storefront commercial activity on Main Street.

The Main Street commercial area is characterized by high, overhead utility lines, limited landscaping between Hinman and Lockport Streets, limited signage, and no public rest rooms. The structures along Main Street are generally 2-3 story brick facade buildings with mixed use tenants. Some wood frame buildings are interspersed. A few buildings date from the early and mid-19th century.

Additional retail outlets for fishing equipment, as well as restaurants, could find a welcome market in the Village. As the Village becomes more popular and the recommendations noted in Section IV are carried out, it is likely that fishermen and get-away weekenders will create a market for "bed and breakfast" establishments and inn type lodgings. These are oriented toward recreational boaters who use or visit the 200+ moorings in the harbor. On-shore fishing is present in the area, but is limited by the lack of near-shore docks, public launches and trailer parking. Sport fishing represents a significant revenue opportunity for waterfront development. Sport-fish operators, and particularly their patrons, often need lodging, dining and fishing equipment. Government stocking of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario with farm-grown salmon creates demand for sport-fish operations and related services, which in turn creates real economic opportunities for the Village of Youngstown. A concerted effort by Village government and commercial interests to specifically lure sport fishermen,

and even sponsored fishing tournaments, would almost certainly yield economic benefit for the Village as a whole.

- Waterfront Events

Youngstown’s waterfront plays host to a number of individual events, including sailboat and powerboat regattas of different sizes, as well as charity events and street parties. Each of these events, to differing degrees, provides economic opportunities for Village stores and restaurants. Adding sport fishing tournaments as noted above would add to these economic benefits.

The Youngstown harbor and waterfront are closely linked with the Village’s image and brand; indeed, the image of a sailboat features prominently on the Village’s flag and municipal crest. Youngstown’s waterfront is the Village’s most important single asset, and the manner in which it is used and occupied has and will continue to have far-reaching effects on the quality of life of Village residents.

The recent onset of full-time jet boat operations, and the associated introduction of unprecedented numbers of tour buses and tour-bus passengers, has significantly altered the appearance, sound, use, comfort and character of the Village’s waterfront and adjacent waters. Going forward, Village government will be challenged to maintain the positive public image of Youngstown – that of a quaint, historic and peaceful haven of fishing, pleasure boating and beautiful vistas.

**G. Inventory of Vacant Lands**

A key part of the analysis is the identification of all vacant land within the Village. Vacant lands include all parcels without structures or other significant man-made improvements. These areas represent locations where the greatest opportunity for development may occur. Furthermore, large tracts of vacant land often serve as anchors for development and influence future land use patterns. Therefore, the identification of these areas is useful in determining opportunities for future private or public investment. Figure 7 illustrates the location of vacant parcels in the Village.

According to tax parcel data, there are 137 vacant parcels encompassing approximately 166 acres of land within the Village. Approximately 96% of the vacant parcels are less than 5 acres in size and have an average lot size of approximately 0.50 acres. Approximately 4% of the vacant parcels are greater than 5 acres in size and account for 60% of the total vacant land area. A summary of vacant land is provided in Table 12.

Table 12 Vacant Land Summary

Category	Count	Total Area (Acres)	Average Lot Size (Acres)
Vacant Land (< 5 Acre)	132	66.10	0.50
Vacant Land (>= 5 Acre)	5	100.60	20.11
Total:	137	166.70	1.22

Approximately 130 parcels (162 acres) are considered residential vacant land due to underlying zoning and the proximity to residential areas. For general land allocation purposes the standard of 4 units per acre is an appropriate guide. By applying this standard to the total vacant land area, it is estimated the Village can accommodate 664 additional housing units. However, the potential for development is based



on adjacent land use, parcel size, location, environmental factors and public utility access. These factors were used to evaluate the development potential for each parcel. Vacant parcels that were assigned a medium or high development potential were considered buildable and generally conformed with zoning requirements. Vacant parcels that were assigned a low development potential did not meet zoning requirements or development was constrained based on limiting site factors. A summary of the development potential is provided in Table 13. Figure 8 illustrates the development potential of vacant lands within the Village.

Table 13 – Development Potential Summary

Development Potential	Count	Total Area (Acres)	Average Lot Size (Acres)
Low	30	70.30	2.34
Medium	79	41.40	0.52
High	28	55.00	1.96
Total:	137	166.70	1.22

In summary, development by the Year 2025, will likely consist of modest residential growth to accommodate the expected influx of 40 new households. The projected residential development is expected to be divided among various housing types. By applying the general land allocation standard to the projected household increase, it is apparent that approximately 10 acres of land will be needed for future residential development. Based on parcels with a medium or high development potential, the Village has sufficient buildable land to accommodate the projected residential development. As Figure 8 notes, six major land parcels have been assigned a high or medium potential for development. These are as follows:

1. Parcel SBL 45.15-1-1. This parcel is approximately 40.34 acres in size and is located in the north-central section of the Village. The potential for future multifamily housing in the western portion of the property is good given the surrounding land use pattern which includes the Youngstown Village Square area and the townhouses located on Jackson Street. Utility and vehicle access along South Lake St. is also good in this area. The eastern portion of the property can be accessed from Carrollwood Drive and is zoned for larger single family residences with minimum lot sizes of approximately 1 acre.
2. Parcels SBL 59.07-2-3 and 59.07-2-9. These parcels encompass approximately 17.35 acres and are located between Church and Oak Streets. Good access to any of the above streets can be provided by the parcels. Utilities are accessible and their development would begin a concept of infill development whereby land closer to the Village Center would be encouraged for land development prior to the outlying areas.
3. Parcel SBL 45.18-1-36. Although small in total size (0.28 acres), this parcel is located on the northwest corner of Main Street and Water Street. This parcel is the site of the former El Dorado Hotel and is situated on top of the bluff overlooking the Niagara River. The potential for future commercial development is good given its location along Main Street and the proximity to the waterfront area. The property is zoned Waterfront Commercial and permitted uses include restaurants, ship supply, boutiques and craft studios.
4. Parcel SBL 45.18-3.43. Although small in total size (0.64 acres), this parcel is located along Main

Street between Lockport Street and Faulkner Park. The potential for future commercial development is good given its location along Main Street the proximity to Constitution Park where the North Dock is located. The property is zoned Waterfront Commercial and permitted uses include drugstores, convenience stores, bait and tackle shops, restaurants, ship supply, boutiques and craft studios.

5. Parcel SBL 45.18-3-31. Although small in total size (0.45 acres), this parcel is located on the northeast corner of Main Street and Hinman Street. The potential for future commercial development is good given its location along Main Street and its proximity to the pedestrian staircase which leads to Waterfront Park and the South Dock area. Currently, public parking is available along Hinman Street for use by the public to park vehicles and boat trailers while using the boat launch at the South Dock. The property is zoned Waterfront Commercial and permitted uses include drugstores, convenience stores, bait and tackle shops, restaurants, ship supply, boutiques and craft studios.

## H. Zoning

The original Village zoning ordinance was adopted in 1962 to regulate land use in order to promote and protect public health, safety, comfort, convenience, prosperity and other general aspects of the general welfare of the Village. The zoning classifications included residential, agriculture, commercial and public uses reflecting the prominence of single-family housing at various densities. Since this time the zoning code has been amended and now includes two waterfront commercial districts, a bluff overlay protection district and a senior citizens housing district. A summary of the zoning districts is provided in Table 14. A detailed description of the bulk regulations and permitted uses for each can be found in Appendix B. Figure 9 illustrates the location of each zoning district in the Village.

Table 14 – Zoning Classifications

Zone	Description	Permitted Uses	Mapped	Area (Acres)
A	Agriculture	Single family residences, churches and agricultural related activities.	No	0
R-11	Single-Family Residence	Single-family residences, churches, schools, fire stations, cemeteries, and principal uses permitted in agricultural districts.	Yes	205.63
R-15	Single-Family Residence		Yes	83.21
R-20	Single-Family Residence		Yes	79.78
R-40	Single-Family Residence		Yes	197.55
R-8	Two-Family Residence	Two-family residences and permitted uses found in R-20.	Yes	17.58
R-8A	General Residence	Multi-family dwellings and permitted uses found in R-8.	Yes	49.36
RCL-3	Cluster Residence	Cluster housing with single-family residences, townhouses or garden apartments.	Yes	14.71
PF	Public Facilities	Parks and other Village owned/operated facilities.	Yes	13.27

C	Commercial	Business establishments, personal services and restaurants.	Yes	13.17
W	Waterfront	Public and private water dependent activities.	Yes	4.66
WC-1	Waterfront Commercial	Public and private water enhanced activities.	Yes	3.34
WC-2	Waterfront Commercial	Public and private water enhanced activities.	Yes	4.77
SCH	Senior Citizens Housing	Senior citizen dwelling apartments and related uses.	No	0
BO	Bluff Overlay District	Same as underlying district with restrictions.	Yes	6.50

The following outlines key problems areas with the Zoning Ordinance as relates to the Village's ability to plan properly for future growth, as well as implement LWRP recommendations.

- There is approximately 15 acres of land zoned for residential cluster housing. However, a majority of this land has been developed with single-family residences and only 4.50 acres of vacant land remain for cluster housing. The preference for single-family housing and the availability of vacant land for single-family residences has reduced the potential for cluster housing development.
- There is approximately 42 acres of vacant land zoned for multiple-family housing. However, only 1 parcel has more than 1 acre of land suitable to accommodate high density housing. Thus, any new multi-family housing would have to occur through single- family conversions. This is inappropriate and does not recognize the changing demographics and smaller household sizes in the Village.
- The Main Street area is zoned Waterfront Commercial and requires businesses and new development to comply with design standards that creates a connection with the Village waterfront. These standards are general in nature and restrict development to a scale consistent with the Main Street area. New development is required to be consistent with a maritime theme. There is a need to expand the existing design standards that will continue to enhance the character of the Village.
- The Waterfront Commercial Districts allow most any type of commercial use to promote economic activity along the Main Street area and in conjunction with the waterfront. However, residential uses and parking lots are listed as permitted uses within these districts.
- There is approximately 24.50 acres of land zoned Commercial, and are primarily located along Main Street, Water Street and Lockport Street. Currently, design standards apply to new development in waterfront districts only. This allows a mix of architectural styles and development patterns that may have an adverse impact on the character of the Village.. A need exists to develop design standards to all commercial oriented districts in the Village.

#### **I. Environmental Conditions**

An inventory of environmental conditions within the waterfront area is an essential component when determining opportunities for, and constraints to, future development. For the purpose of this analysis, the following factors were examined: topography, soils, vegetation, fish and wildlife habitats, drainage, water quality, cultural resources, aesthetics and river characteristics. It should be noted that there are no State regulated wetlands or serious erosion problems within the Village. There are narrow sections of

shoreline that are designated as flood hazard areas and only two structures are located within these areas. Furthermore, the Village is in attainment with all State air quality standards.

1. Topography

Elevation within the Village decreases northwesterly from the southeast boundary beginning at 308 feet above sea level down to approximately 240 feet at lake level. The Village is generally at an elevation of 290 feet, with approximately 15 feet of elevational difference from Ulrich Lane in the southeast to Jackson Street in the northwest. West of Main Street, the mean elevation rapidly falls from approximately 290 feet at the rear building line of properties with frontage on Main Street to the elevation at lake level. This change in elevation of 45 feet takes place in a horizontal distance of 70 feet along the Niagara River embankment. These elevations and distances create a slope of 65%, while a more uniform slope of about 23% exists from Elliott Street north to the northern tip of Fort Niagara Park at Old Fort Niagara. The topographic elevation of the Village is shown on Figure 10.

2. Soils

The dominant soil types within the Village are Niagara Silt Loam and Ovid Silt Loam. The former has a generally low bearing capacity for use as a foundation for low buildings, while the latter has a moderately high capacity. The Ovid Silt Loam type has a high water table which can cause drainage problems. A summary of soils in the Village is provided in Table 14. The location of each soil type is illustrated on Figure 15.

Table 15 Soil Summary

Soil Type	Series	Description	Area (Acres)
OvA	Ovid	Silt Loam	369.20
NaA	Niagara	Silt and Very Fine Sandy Loam	118.50
Md	Madalin	Silt Loam	52.60
RbA	Rhinebeck	Silt Loam	32.70
Cu	Cut and Fill	Cut and Fill	28.00
CnA	Collamer	Gravelly and Silt Loam	27.50
HsB	Hudson	Silt and Silty Clay Loam	25.00
ApA	Appleton	Gravelly and Silt Loam	15.70
HtC3	Hudson	Silt and Silty Clay Loam	12.60
Ma	Madalin	Silt Loam	3.50
RbB	Rhinebeck	Silt Loam	1.20
HoB	Howard	Gravelly Loam	0.50

3. Vegetation and Wildlife

The Village is largely considered urbanized and the most common types of vegetation in the area is composed of grasses, legumes, wild herbaceous upland plants, hardwood plants and strands of coniferous trees. The wooded areas are primarily hardwood trees that include beech, white ash, oak, basswood, tulip, poplar, hickory, red maple and elm. It should be noted that the wooded areas are located in the outlying sections of the Village and are situated within interior lots.

Much of the embankment along the River consists of naturally wooded areas and low brush land that supports some small scale wildlife. The vegetation also serves to stabilize the embankment by absorbing water during storms and drainage from upland areas. The other wooded areas vary in size with the largest being a thirty to forty acre parcel directly east of the Glenvale/Brookshire Road intersection east to the Robert Moses Parkway. A second parcel of about ten acres lies just to the south of the Robert Moses Parkway interchange between Elm Street and the Parkway. Two smaller wooded parcels of less than five acres are located in an area bound by Oak, Third, Lockport and Northfield.

There are no significant wildlife habitats in the Village. Areas offering characteristics sympathetic to wildlife cover include wooded areas and brushland. These areas located in isolated woodland stands, vacant undeveloped land and along the Niagara River. Figure 12 illustrates local wildlife habitats that include wooded areas and fish habitats.

The most evident population of waterfowl in and around the Village is gulls. The placid stretch of Niagara River from Lewiston to Lake Ontario provides feeding conditions for hundreds of gulls. Most numerous are the Herring, Ring-billed and Bonapartes. Less numerous species include the Great Black-backed, Glaucous, Iceland, Little, Black-headed and Franklins.

4. Fish

The Lower Niagara River between Water Street in Youngstown and Old Fort Niagara is considered a good fish habitat. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has engaged in a comprehensive fish stocking program for many New York State waterways. For the Niagara River, the numbers are significant. The River was stocked with 25,000 Rainbow Trout (Steelhead Strain) 4.75 inches in size and 292,000 Chinook Salmon 3 and 3.25 inches in size (NYSDEC, 1985). This program augments an excellent sport fishing business in the area. Benefits to local business in and around Youngstown are significant. Table 16 lists the fish species known to exist in the Niagara River and Lake Ontario.

Table 16 List of Fish Common to the Niagara River

Lonose Gar	Barred Killifish
Sawbelly	Perch
Sucker	Bass
Carp	Darter
Dace	Common Sunfish
Notropisd-stramineus	Sheepshead
Shiner	Sculpin
Catfish	Stickleback
Bullhead	Salmon
Stonecat	Sturgeon
Pickeral	Pike
Muskellunge	Eel

Source: NYSDEC

Unlike some Lake Ontario shoreline communities, the salmon stocking program has not created any congestion problems in the Village. Due to the physical limitations of the shoreline, fishermen utilize the launching and on-shore fishing facilities at Artpark and Fort Niagara State Park. However, efforts to capture some of the spending dollars generated by sport fishermen for supplies, food, and lodging needs to be capitalized by Village merchants.

## 5. Drainage

The Village is located in two watersheds, both of which empty into Lake Ontario. The western portion of Village is located in the Niagara River sub-basin of the Niagara River/Lake Erie Watershed. This area of the Village encompasses approximately 415 acres of land area that empty into the Niagara River. The eastern portion of the Village is situated in the Twelve Mile Creek sub-basin of the Lake Ontario/Minor Tributary Watershed. This area of the Village encompasses approximately 272 acres of land area that empty into Lake Ontario. Figure 13 illustrates the location of watersheds and drainage features in the Village.

There are approximately 72 acres of freshwater wetlands in the Village. These wetlands do not meet the criteria to be considered State-regulated wetlands and are therefore under the jurisdiction of the United States Army Corp of Engineers. A permit is required for any activity that takes place in or in close proximity to a navigable waterway or wetlands adjacent to a navigable waterway. Under these permits, mitigation measures may be required for activities that impact wetland areas that include clearing, excavation, or other development activities.

The 100-year floodplain is flat or nearly flat land located along narrow sections of the Niagara River between the shoreline and steep embankment areas. The floodplain encompasses most of the waterfront area and small portions of Water Street. The Federal Government's Emergency Management Agency provides floodplain boundary maps for communities throughout Niagara County. Major buildings currently located within the floodplain boundary include the Youngstown Yacht Club and the Youngstown Harbor Corporation. Flooding and subsequent erosion from the Niagara River is minor. However, marine debris frequently collects along the River's edge and impacts the aesthetic value of the Village's shoreline.

The main drainage problems for Youngstown are caused by the unique topography within the Village. Some sections are relatively flat with minimal change in elevation. This results in ponding from storm-runoff that occurs after a storm event. Water typically remains for several days following a rainstorm. This condition is typically noticeable in the area bounded by Church Street, Lockport Street, Third Streets and the east Village line.

## 6. Water Quality

Youngstown's main surface water resource is the Niagara River. It is designated a Class A Special stream by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. This means that the river is suitable for a wide range of uses, that include water supply, bathing and fishing. Pollution discharge is severely restricted and must meet minimum NYSDEC standards. These classifications set limits on the type, quality and quantity of effluents that can enter the various streams. Untreated sewage or water is not allowed to be discharged into the river and no noticeable color or odor is permitted.

An unclassified intermittent stream also runs through the south section of the Village before emptying into the River. In such circumstances the NYSDEC places a "D" classification on the stream. This indicates its suitability for agricultural drainage purposes only.

The 1984 report of the Niagara River Toxics Committee outlined the current, critical issues facing the public relative to toxic chemical intrusions into the River. Water quality in the Lower Niagara River was sampled along with biota and sediment. Such samples revealed that 24 chemicals having serious or potentially serious health risks were significantly concentrated within the Lower River. Levels of contaminants occasionally surpassed the strictest water quality criteria as noted in the 1978 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) between the United States and Canada. Compounds that exceeded the standards in the GLWQA once or more included aluminum, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, silver, zinc, hexachloro-cyclohexane, chlordane and total recoverable phenols. The source of such chemicals likely occurs upstream of the Lewiston area at various toxic waste sites, sewage treatment plants and chemical plants along the River.

Fish (i.e. Young-of-the-year spottail shiners) were also analyzed off the banks of the Lower River and found to have PCB and mirex levels which exceeded certain GLWQA levels. In addition, other sport fish species in this area exceeded State and provincial levels for PCB and mirex. This has caused certain restrictions to be placed on the size and quantity of fish which can be taken for human consumption.

These are serious problems for the Village. Although solutions for this issue are beyond the jurisdiction of the Village, it is important that local officials take an active role in seeing that higher levels of government take action to clean up the River. This is a critical issue since the Niagara River and Lake Ontario are so closely intertwined with the quality of life in the Village.

## 7. Historic and Cultural Resources

There are four locations in the Village that are considered to have significant historic value to the community. These locations include one structure that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and three locations with roadside markers showing areas of State importance. The location of each site is illustrated on Figure 14 and a description of each is provided below.

- St. John's Episcopal Church (NR# 91PR02553) – This structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is located on the northeast corner of Main Street and Chestnut Street. The building is a one-story gothic revival style church that stands on the original site in which it was constructed.
- Salt Battery - This site is located along Main Street near William Street and is identified by a road side marker. The area served as an American artillery battery during the War of 1812. Remnants can be seen and the site currently serves as a Constitution Park.
- Fox Point Battery - This site is located in the Bloody Run area on Main Street, south of Campbell Street. The area served as an American battery during the War of 1812 and is located on a dame (glacial feature). The site is so named because at the time of the battle the area was infested with foxes.

- Battle of LaBelle Famille – This site is located adjacent to Bloody Run and was the location of a significant battle between the French and British during the French and Indian War. The British defeated the French at this battle and were subsequently able to control the Youngstown area and Fort Niagara.

There are many structures and sites within the Village that are considered to have local historic significance. Many single-family homes and commercial buildings have circa plaques on them describing the date on which the building was constructed. Structures are buildings that are still in existence today while sites are locations of structures that once existed at that location but are no longer present. There is a need for a reconnaissance level survey of historic resources to identify properties eligible for listing on the national register. Table 17 lists the historic sites and structures in the Village.

Table 17 Local Historic Sites and Structures

Structure/Site	Circa	Location	Remarks
Father Virot Monument	1759	Swain/Mary's	Killed at Battle of Labelle Famille
Ferryboat Service	1790	Pierce Marine	Passengers to Canada
Iroquois Home Site	1800	Unknown	***
First School	1806	Unknown	Oldest Building In Village
Ulrich Residence	Early 1800	Main/Campbell	First House Post 1812
Falkner Home	After 1812	Main	Post 1812
Davis Block	Before 1823	Main/Water	Merchants in 1830's
Ship Yard	1830	Main/Chestnut	1800's Ship Building
Swain Residence	1830	914 Lower River Rd.	Cobblestone House
First Presbyterian Church	1837	Church/Main	Enlarged in 1897
Grist Mill	1840	Water Street	First Floor Remains
School Building	1840	Main/Church	Site of Log Cabin School
Ontario Hotel	1842	Main/Lockport	Site of Old Hathaway Tavern
St. Bernard's Catholic Church	1846	Hinman/Second	Parish Began in 1830's
Community Cemetery	1840	Church/Second	---
Underground Railway	Early 1800	Church/Main	Smuggling to Canada
Steam Vessel Harbor	1845-1855	Bloody Run Creek	Small Boat Dockage
Methodist Church	1852	Main Street	now used for apartments
Iron Flume	1830-1900	Church Street (Foot)	Loaded Grain on Ships
Canandaigua Railroad	1856	Bloody Run Creek	Used Once; Abandoned
Elbridge Residence	1860	Main/Elliot	***
Palkner Monument	1875	Main Street	Father/Son Doctors
St. John's Episcopal Church	1878	130 Main St.	Gothic revival
El Dorado Hotel	1890	Main/Water	Torn Down 1935
Red Brick School	1892/1819-1927	Lockport/Third	Village Office and Museum
Electric Strap Railroad	1896	Third Street (End)	Operated by Youngstown Cold Storage (1950)



St. John's Lutheran Church	1900	Third/ Oak	Formed in Bairsville
Villa St. Vincent	1902	Fort Niagara	Formed in Orphanage
Guild Hall	1902	Fort Niagara	With St. Vincent
Volunteer Fire Company	1911	Hinman/Second	---
Source: Porter Historical Society, Niagara County Planning Department.			

There are several areas in the Village that are identified by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation as archaeologically sensitive. This determination is based on known sites within the Village and indicates the potential presence of artifacts, fossils or other archaeological items of significance. These areas may include prehistoric sites as well as locations associated with the War of 1812 and the French and Indian War. Development activities in these areas which have the potential to significantly disturb land may require the completion of Phase 1A archaeological assessment. The sensitive archaeological areas are illustrated on Figure 14.

The southern Village gateway extends along a tree-lined road that is canopied by large shade trees and well-kept large single family homes. The corridor extends through the commercial center and on through another stately residential area to the entrance of Fort Niagara State Park. Many of the wood frame homes are circa 1800's and feature large front porches and entrance lawns. These areas reflect the historic identity of the Village and complement the small town character of the community. There is a need to preserve this corridor in order to maintain a pleasing gateway to the Village Center and Fort Niagara State Park.

#### 8. Aesthetics Resources

The most important aesthetic resource in the Village is the Niagara River and adjoining embankment along the shore. Visual access to the waterfront is limited by Main Street development and dense bank foliage. Panoramic views of the River are available in all seasons with the opposite Canadian shore offering outstanding views as well. To the north, Niagara-on-the-Lake can be viewed, to the west the Canadian shore and to the south the beginnings of the steep gorge walls in Lewiston. In the summer numerous sailboats can be viewed either at mooring or under sail in the summer and the winter offers spectacular ice views. The fall offers the changing colors of the leaves and the spring features melting ice and budding leaves.

Public access in the Village to these spectacular views is only available in a few places. The Church, Elliott and Campbell Street ends are obstructed with dense foliage. Waterfront Park and Constitution Park allow the most complete view of the waterfront. However, the view from Waterfront Park is somewhat limited since it is at water level and does not include a panoramic view from the top of the bank. Other views of the River are available from between buildings along Main Street and a vacant lot that is located on the northwest corner Main Street and Water Street. Scenic views are also available along the southern end of Main Street near the Village line where the bank foliage decreases and allows limited viewing of the River from the Road. Figure 15 illustrates the location of scenic views in the Village.

The view of the shoreline from the River is equally impressive. The heavily wooded embankment and beautiful homes make for spectacular vistas. The many boats moored in the harbor during the summer also create a pleasing sight. Boat storage structures (docks, storage, etc.) directly to the

north of the harbor, however, detract from the view. Wherever possible, efforts should be made to screen structures from view to preserve the visual quality of the waterfront.

## 9. Niagara River Characteristics

After passing through the Niagara Falls and rapids system between the City of Niagara Falls and Lewiston, the Niagara River enters a rather placid stretch that continues to Lake Ontario. Numerous stretches include flats and shoals that line both sides of the River. The topography of the River's bottom varies. Generally the slope of the bottom follows a short stretch (less than 100 feet) of relatively shallow water (less than 18 feet) before it falls away rapidly at 100 to 150 feet to about 30 to 40 feet and then slopes away at a steady rate to a maximum depth of 60 to 75 feet at mid-river. At Youngstown, shallow river depths are more prevalent in the northern section of the River. As the River approaches Water Street, the depths increase rapidly and then moderate toward the south Village limits. Sedimentation and River currents are constantly changing the contours of the River bottom.

## J. **Public Services**

### 1. Water Supply

The availability of a safe and secure supply of water is key factor in determining public health. The Village water system facilities include a distribution pipe network and one water storage tank. The water supply is provided by the Niagara County Water District (NCWD) through three interconnections that create a redundant source of supply. The Village also has a dry line from the Niagara River for emergency fire protection. The only access to this line is through a dry hydrant located on the west side of Main Street across from Hinman Street. The Village water system is illustrated on Figure 16.

During the spring of 1984, the Village commissioned a feasibility study to evaluate the construction of a new water treatment plant in order to replace the NCWD as a source of supply (Nussbaumer and Clarke, Inc., "Preliminary Report on the Water System for the Village of Youngstown, N.Y."; May, 1984). The report concluded that the initial annualized cost of construction combined with the protected operation and maintenance cost, was more expensive than purchasing water from NCWD. Potential problems cited in the report included public concern regarding potential odors generated from water treatment plants and the lack of suitable land along the waterfront to buffer adjacent uses.

The report also noted several deficiencies in the existing system that included insufficient fire flow pressure. The Village initiated an improvement program to correct this issue and transferred fire hydrant laterals from 4 inch watermains to larger diameter watermains.

The water distribution system serves most areas of the Village and adequate capacity to meet the needs of the Village. The system includes 415,000 gallon water storage tank and approximately 52,000 linear feet of pipe. The water storage tank was constructed in 1986 to insure a reserve system of capacity however it is not being used today. The pipe network was constructed in phases as the Village developed over its history. Deteriorating pipes are replaced on as needed basis to minimize water system loss and maintain the integrity of the system.

The Village is expected to replace approximately 3,200 feet of waterline along Lockport Street between the eastern edge of the Village Boundary and the 400 block of Lockport Street. This waterline has significantly deteriorated and experienced a growing number of watermain breaks in

recent years. The Village has also implemented hydrant flushing program as part of its preventive maintenance program. These improvements are expected to minimize water loss and maintain the integrity of the system.

Adequate capacity currently exists within the NCWD treatment plant, which is operating at 67% of capacity. Fort Niagara State Park has undergone a major waterline replacement project that has significantly reduced their water usage due to water loss.

## 2. Sanitary Sewers

The availability of sufficient sanitary sewer capacity is often a major factor when determining the suitability of land for development. The sewer facilities include a trunk sewer network that carries waste water to a treatment plant located in the Town of Lewiston. This system helps to insure the water quality of the River and must be adequate to meet the needs of development in the Village. The Village sanitary sewer system is illustrated on Figure 17.

The sanitary sewer collection system includes approximately 48,400 linear feet of pipe and serves most areas of the Village. The sewer collection system possesses no significant capacity problems. Previously, groundwater and infiltration was an ongoing problem within the collection system. However, the Village implemented an aggressive maintenance program to repair mains, close off ground water inflow and separate storm and sanitary water. This program has been successful and is presently being continued as part of an ongoing preventative maintenance program.

Wastewater is transferred from the Village to the Town of Lewiston Water Pollution Control Center on Pletcher Road. This facility was constructed in 1978 and utilizes technologically proven methods for water treatment. The design flow of the plant is 2.75 million gallons per day (MGD) and has sufficient capacity to handle the current average daily flow of approximately 2.2 MGD. Approximately 550,000 gallons per day of surplus is available for anticipated future demand which is the equivalent of approximately 800 additional households.

While the collection network in the Village is sound, structural problems have occurred in individual house laterals in Bonwyn Acres subdivision (Cherry Street, Applewood Drive, Parkside Place, Northfield Drive, Westwood Avenue, and Brampton Road). This subdivision was built in 1958 to house families working on the New York State Power Project. The laterals were made of mixed asbestos/concrete material and have universally failed from soil shear, lack of seals, and poor installation. Replacement is the principal solution, but is currently beyond either Village or homeowner means. Recently, sewer laterals in the Carrollwood/Wingate/Brookshire area have exhibited similar issues but to a lesser degree.

New inflow and infiltration (I&I) regulations are also being required for any sanitary sewer extension or subdivision construction. The new regulations require that I&I be removed at a rate of 4 times the peak average daily flow. New CMOM (Capacity, Maintenance, Operation and Management) regulations require a sanitary sewer permittee to demonstrate compliance with the regulations. The Village is able to comply with these regulations by documenting repairs, maintenance and other system improvements that may be required to operate the collection system efficiently.

## 3. Storm Sewers

One of the principal problems in the Village is storm water run-off. Storm run-off cannot be drained by natural means due to poor soil permeability and the relatively flat topography of the land.. This results in the frequent ponding of water after major rainstorms. This condition, as highlighted

previously, is evident in the area bounded by Church Street, Third Street, Lockport Street and the east Village line. The subsequent need for drainage ditches, storm sewers and other manmade means of storm water removal is imperative. The Village's storm sewer system is illustrated on Figure 18.

The three major outlets for storm water in the Village are the Niagara River, the road ditch system along the Robert/Moses Parkway and the north drainage ditch that traverses across vacant land. Drainage from Bonwyn Acres flows north to a pond at the Village Line. This area is overgrown and silted, resulting in storm water back-up and ponding. The solution to both of these problems lies beyond the Village boundary.

New development potential on vacant land coincides mostly with areas of storm water problems. The parcels north of Carrollwood Drive and east of Elm Street receive storm water from other areas, compounding drainage flows. Besides continuing efforts to improve the outlets north of the Village and along the parkway, new development will need to retain upstream water and properly manage its flow into downstream receivers. This will require retention ponds to hold water until the system can accept excess storm water.

In addition, Bonwyn Acres and the Carrollwood area may need storm sewers with restricted outflows to detain water from its eastward and northward flow. The ditch east of Glenvale Road should be closed and piped to avoid current problems of infill and cleaning between existing residences. The establishment of a maintained pond north of Carrollwood within the Village would provide some measure of storm water control.

The Village is a member of the Western New York Stormwater Coalition which provides assistance with maintaining compliance with stormwater regulations and preparing an annual stormwater report. A comprehensive storm drainage plan is needed to better analyze drainage issues and recommend standards for Village officials when evaluating subdivisions or new construction proposals within the community.

#### 4. Transportation

The circulation system in the Village should provide adequate access for land development and provide for the movement of goods and people in a safe, efficient manner. Access should not diminish the use of the transportation system or create impediments to existing traffic flow. The Village transportation system is illustrated on Figure 19.

Primary vehicle access to the Village is provided by the Robert Moses Parkway (Parkway) on the eastern edge of the Village and Youngstown-Lockport Road (NYS Route 93) in the east-west direction. Lower River Road (NYS Route 18F) provides additional north/south access into and out of the Village. Secondary access is provided along Church Street which connects Main Street (NYS Route 18F) and Creek Road (NYS Route 18) in the Town of Porter. Village collectors are Church, Third, William and Lake Streets. These streets guide residential traffic in a safe and efficient manner to the more heavily traveled minor arterials. Local streets provide adequate circulation for existing and anticipated residential development.

NYS Route 18F is part of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail National Scenic Byway (Seaway Trail). The Great Lakes Seaway Trail (Seaway Trail) is a 518 mile scenic driving route that follows the shores of Lake Erie, the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River in New York and Pennsylvania. The Seaway Trail is a National Scenic Byway that includes historic sites, cultural

heritage locations as well as views and scenic vistas. The Seaway Trail connects unique destinations, cities and waterfront communities in order promote economic growth through tourism. The Seaway Trail in the Village is situated along Main Street bringing tourists along the Niagara River and through the Village's waterfront commercial area. This creates a unique opportunity for the Village to promote the community and local businesses to capture the subsequent tourism.

Due to the Village's location along the River and its circumvention by the Parkway, little thru-traffic is generated. The Parkway permits visitors to Fort Niagara State Park to bypass the Village. Local and boating traffic are the most frequent generators. Table 18 depicts selected traffic counts for the major roads serving Youngstown and its immediate vicinity.

Table 18 Selected Traffic Counts

Segment Name	Segment Location	Year	Average Daily Traffic
Robert Moses Parkway	Pletcher Road to Lockport Street (Route 93)	2009	4,631
Lockport Street (Route 93)	Main Street (Route 18F) to Village Line (Parkway)	2013	2,402
Lower River Road (Route 18F)	Town Line (Porter/Lewiston) to Village Line	2011	2,369
Lower River Road/Main Street (Route 18F)	Village Line to Lockport Street (Route 93)	2011	1,541
Main Street/ Jackson Street/ Lake Road (Route 18F)	Lockport Street (Route 93) to Village Line	2013	1,147
Blairville Road	Creek Road (Route 18) to Village Line (Church Street)	2012	1,418
Church Street	Village Line to Main Street (Route 18F)	2012	1,085

Source: NYSDOT Data Traffic Viewer

Parking is a growing problem along Main Street and in the waterfront area. Seasonal demand for waterfront-related services periodically causes problems during peak summer weekends. In addition, tour buses bringing tourists from Niagara Falls for Jet Boat excursions have created additional congestion along Water Street.

Finally, although the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority has jurisdiction in the Village, there is no public transportation service in Youngstown. Given the needs of the area residents, this has not created a problem.

#### 5. Municipal Services

- Fire Protection - The Youngstown Volunteer Fire Company (YVFC) has approximately 50 volunteer members that provide emergency services to the Village. The YVFC provides fire protection, EMS services and fire stand-by at community events. The YVFC fire station is located at the corner of Elliott Street and Nancy Price Drive. In case of emergency, units from Ransomville, Lewiston, and Wilson can be called in to provide additional protection.
- Police Protection – Year round full-time law enforcement is provided by the Niagara County Sheriff's Office (NCSO) and the New York State Police (NYSP). The NCSO is located in Lockport

and a deputy is assigned to patrol the area responding to calls and providing mutual aid. The NYS SP operates a barracks in Lewiston and responds to calls on an as needed basis. The Village also maintains a part time police force with varying hours of operation as needed by the community. The Village Police headquarters is located at the Village Office on Lockport Street and Third Street.

- Solid Waste – Garbage disposal in the Village is provided exclusively by private contractor to the Modern Landfill located at Model Cities in the Town of Lewiston. The site operates under a permit from New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. No disposal sites are located in the Village. The Village also provides recycling of household materials through the service with Modern Disposal. The Village initiated a recycling program through a grant obtained from the NYSDEC.
- Coast Guard – For water safety, a Coast Guard search and rescue station is located at Fort Niagara State Park.

## **K. Overview of Previous Land Use Documents**

### **1. Local Waterfront Revitalization Program**

Village of Youngstown, 1990

A projected 2000 population of 2,300 was used as the basis for recommending a variety of public improvements and land use designations for Village land. Figure 20 illustrates the 1990 proposed land use plan. The major problem with the LWRP is the projected 2000 population of 2,300. This is 17.5% more residents than actually occurred in 2000 and 19% more than actually occurred in 2010. Given the decline in population over the last twenty-five years, the proposed land uses noted in the 1990 Plan are not appropriate.

### **2. Erie and Niagara Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan**

Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), 2008

The 2008 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan is Buffalo-Niagara's vision to make bicycling and walking an integral part of daily life in the region. The plan recommends projects, programs and policies to improve the bikeway network in the Buffalo-Niagara region. Specific proposals to provide bicycle trail linkage between the Youngstown area and Niagara Falls include:

- Proposed off road bike path along Lower River road between Town of Lewiston and the Village.
- Proposed bike path and local connectors along the Robert Moses Parkway right-of-way.
- Proposed bike path along an abandoned rail line between the Town of Lewiston and Village.

### **3. Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan (NCCP) 2030**

Niagara County, 2009

The NCCP was prepared by Niagara County to emphasize a multi-municipal approach to planning. The purpose of the plan is to provide a framework in order to prioritize capital improvements, improve the delivery of services, strengthen the local economy and encourage appropriate development. The Plan identified the Youngstown Free Library, Fort Niagara State Park and Old Fort Niagara as destinations in the Youngstown Area. The plan recommends mixed use development, capitalizing on

tourism opportunities and consistency with local waterfront redevelopment plans for waterfront villages along the River.

4. Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Niagara County Center for Economic Development, 2015

The 2015 CEDS was prepared by the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency and the Niagara County Department of Economic Development. The CEDS identified the Youngstown area as part of a larger tourist circuit in the County. The circuit would link scenic areas such as the Niagara Gorge, Barge Canal, and Lake Ontario boating sites. Specific objectives and implementation strategies include:

- Develop the Niagara River Corridor Greenway, the Niagara Falls Heritage Area, the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area, the Niagara Wine Trail, and continue development of the Seaway Trail.
- Support development of a cross-river ferry service between Niagara-On-The-Lake, Ontario, and Youngstown, New York.
- Implement the Niagara River Greenway Plan to improve outdoor amenities.
- Expand water-related activities, fishing derbies, boating, etc.
- Promote fishing, boating, marina and waterfront projects to take advantage of current high market demand for water-related activities.
- Support Niagara River Greenway projects including upland trail connections.

**L. Marketing Factors and Economic Development**

Over the past twenty years, the communities surrounding the Village have experienced dramatic shifts both demographically and economically. The Village has transitioned to become a bedroom community with an aging population. With no large scale employers and only a handful of small local businesses, the Village does not have a need for extensive local support services. These changes have had a significant impact on the economic needs and development potential of the Youngstown community. A more detailed discussion of these factors and opportunities are provided below.

1. Parkland

The Village currently has approximately 34 acres of public park land. A standard of 5 acres per thousand population is recommended in the New York State Outdoor Recreation Plan (1983). Based on the current population, it is estimated that approximately 9.7 acres of parkland are needed to support the open space recreational needs of Village residents. When applying this standard to the Village, it can be seen that Youngstown has adequate park space to serve their population now and into the future. Furthermore, the low need for more park space is even more evident when the State facilities at Fort Niagara, Four Mile Creek and Joseph Davis State Parks are taken into account.

Improving existing parks in the Village and developing a dedicated bike path network that links neighborhoods, shopping areas and parks could create a positive environment for younger families

and outdoor enthusiasts. Connecting to the lake, agricultural areas and neighboring communities would be an incentive for families to locate in Youngstown and promote tourism.

## 2. Housing

The total population of the Village is estimated to remain relatively stable for the next fifteen years. This is due to an aging population and younger families choosing to reside in areas closer to employment opportunities. Current demographics indicate that the demand for alternative housing to accommodate an aging population will increase during this timeframe. Based on housing unit trends it is estimated that an additional 36 residential units will be needed by 2030. For planning purposes a 10% planning factor was added to this projection which would increase the expected units by 4, bringing it to a total of 40 units. This is not significant and can easily be accommodated on existing vacant parcels within the Village.

There is an increasing trend in younger families toward green living and eco-friendly activities. The Village has the opportunity to capitalize on this trend with respect to marketing housing to such families. The whole-foods, buy-local and organic growing trends make Youngstown a prime housing location because of moderately priced homes, proximity to locally grown products and accessibility to outdoor recreational activities. New families to the community will be necessary to maintain the population and purchase existing homes.

## 3. Retail

Population growth in southern Niagara County and northern Erie County has generated significant development in these areas. This development has created extensive dining, retail and other shopping opportunities for many residents in the Youngstown area. With the proximity of the Robert Moses Parkway, families are accustomed to traveling greater distances to obtain goods and services rather than shopping locally. This has had a negative impact on small community retail businesses and dining establishments. Existing businesses in the Village reflect this trend and significant retail development is not expected to occur.

However, local tourism will most likely increase the demand for restaurants, camping and water related activities in the coming years. Recreational improvements at surrounding state parks, combined with a modest increase in tourist traffic for waterfront activities, will create opportunities for new commercial enterprises within the Village. The Village can leverage this opportunity with streetscape improvements and design standards intended to preserve the small town historic character while promoting new businesses. Furthermore, the signage, suitable parking and public restrooms will enhance the viability of existing businesses.

## 4. Marinas and Boat Launch

Market conditions and public demand suggest that additional recreational boat slips and launching facilities are needed in the Youngstown area. The physical constraints posed by the steep river shoreline and limitations of existing traffic patterns, however, rule out the feasibility of such uses within the Village.



## **M. Summary of Key Findings and Issues**

The following provides a brief summary of opportunities, constraints and problems in the Village.

1. Niagara River water quality has been severely threatened by toxic chemical intrusions. Although the solutions are beyond Village jurisdiction, it is critical that Youngstown officials be active in remedial plan development.
2. Although Village population will not grow to a great degree through the Year 2030, the increase in elderly population coupled with the decrease in household size will create some need for multiple family housing units.
3. The modest population growth projected for the Year 2000 will create few market opportunities for new residential, and commercial growth. However, fishing and tourism activities generated by the River and adjacent State Parks will create retail opportunities for businesses catering to the needs of outside visitors.
4. During the peak tourist and boating season vehicle congestion is a problem along Water Street and Main Street.
5. Public access to the River is limited for Village residents. This includes physical and visual access of the river.
6. Vehicle access to Waterfront Park is hampered by the adjacent Yacht Club congestion, steep slope of the riverbank, small size of the parcel, and limited parking.
7. Storm drainage is a problem in the outlying areas of the Village east of Third Street.
8. Due to the Village's location near Fort Niagara and the confluence of the Niagara River with Lake Ontario, it has a rich history. This is reflected in area landmarks and structures. Opportunities exist to promote the historic flavor of the Village while at the same time, safeguarding these same resources from deterioration due to age or structural changes.
9. The existing Local Waterfront Revitalization Program was prepared in 1990 and based on inflated population projections. This has reduced the document's usefulness to Youngstown officials as a planning guide.
10. Since 26%, or 179 acres, of Village land is vacant, Youngstown can easily accommodate the future growth. However, planning is required to insure that such development occurs in an economic and environmentally sound manner.
11. A major impediment to waterfront development is the steep slope. However, this feature also creates spectacular views for residents and visitors to Youngstown. The challenge is to provide accessibility to these visitors wherever possible. The embankment also requires protection from development which would hasten unwarranted erosion.
12. The Village has four stub streets going from Main Street toward the River. These provide opportunities for physical or, at a minimum, visual access to the water from Main Street. A serious constraint, however, is the fact that the property can only be used for transportation purposes.
13. The North Dock is underutilized due to limited public access along a stairwell from Constitution Park. Vehicle access is restricted by a private drive and has limited parking. Opportunities exist to upgrade the boating facilities and promote its use by small watercraft.

14. The Village has a sufficient amount of public parkland for open space and passive recreation activities. Opportunities exist for the Village to improve park facilities to meet the recreational needs of the community.

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