

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

**VILLAGE OF LANCASTER &
VILLAGE OF DEPEW**

October 2025

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

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01. INTRODUCTION

WHY UPDATE THE 2018 JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The existing Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, and Village of Depew Joint Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2018 to address evolving community needs and align with broader regional goals. The plan emphasized high-quality services, vibrant community centers, managed growth, and strong neighborhoods. It also introduced strategies for transportation, environmental protection, and housing diversity. Since then, the villages have experienced significant changes, necessitating an update to incorporate new priorities and challenges identified through public engagement and recent studies.

This update aims to reflect the significant changes and emerging priorities that have arisen over the past seven years. Since the plan's adoption, the villages have experienced shifts in population dynamics, housing demands, infrastructure needs, and revitalization efforts. Additionally, regional and statewide priorities, such as climate resilience, sustainability, and smart growth, have evolved, requiring alignment with new policies and funding opportunities. Feedback from recent public engagement activities has highlighted community aspirations for improved walkability, expanded green spaces, diversified housing options, and enhanced downtown vitality. By updating the plan, the villages can address these pressing issues, better coordinate with regional initiatives, and ensure that their strategies remain relevant, actionable, and reflective of the current needs and values of residents and stakeholders.

PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A comprehensive plan serves as the foundation for municipal decision-making, establishing a shared vision for the community's future. Guided by state and local laws, the plan provides a framework for zoning, land use regulation, infrastructure improvements, and environmental stewardship. Moreover, it strengthens the community's eligibility for state and federal funding by demonstrating a commitment to planned and collaborative development.

Comprehensive plans tend to include information on the following topics:

- Existing and proposed location and intensity of land uses
- Agricultural uses, historic and cultural resources, natural resources, and sensitive environmental areas.
- Population, demographic and socio-economic trends and future projections.
- Existing housing resources and future housing needs
- Public and private utilities and infrastructure, transportation facilities, and public services
- Existing and proposed recreation facilities and parkland
- Local economic development and business activity

A comprehensive plan outlines a municipality's goals related to these different topic areas and includes recommended actions to achieve these goals.

ROLES IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

The **Steering Committee** develops the plan.

They oversee outreach efforts and the development of the plan. They provide a draft plan to the governing board for adoption.

The **Public** participates in the planning process.

They provide feedback to the Villages on the plan's goals, objectives, and strategies to ensure the document accurately reflects the needs and vision of the community.

The **County Planning Board** reviews the plan.

Prior to adoption, the governing body refers the proposed plan to the county planning board for review and recommendation in accordance with general municipal law.

The **Village Board** adopts and implements the plan.

New York State Village Law §7-722 states that "Among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a village government is the authority and responsibility to undertake village comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens." As the Village's governing body, the Village Board takes action to adopt and implement the comprehensive plan, as well as conduct the SEQRA review.



APPLYING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This plan serves as a living document to guide decision-making and prioritize community investments. It is intended for use by:

- **Residents and Community Members:** To understand the vision and strategies for their villages and to actively participate in implementation efforts.
- **Elected Officials and Municipal Staff:** To inform policy decisions, capital planning, and infrastructure projects.
- **Developers and Businesses:** To align proposals with community priorities, ensuring compatibility with local goals.
- **Regional and State Agencies:** To coordinate resources and programs with local objectives.

0.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

VILLAGE OF LANCASTER

The Village of Lancaster, located in Erie County and encompassing 2.7 square miles, blends historic character with ongoing growth and change. The population has remained stable at approximately 10,027 residents with a median household income of \$61,646 (2022) and an aging demographic (median age rose to 45.6). The village has a high educational attainment rate (26% with a bachelor's degree or higher) and a declining poverty rate (5.5% in 2022).



Place

Lancaster village, New York

Lancaster village, New York is a city, town, place equivalent, and township located in New York.

Total Population: 10,027

Median Household Income: \$61,646

Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 26.0%

Employment Rate: 71.7%

[View Profile](#)

Total Housing Units: 4,879

Without Health Care Coverage: 0.8%

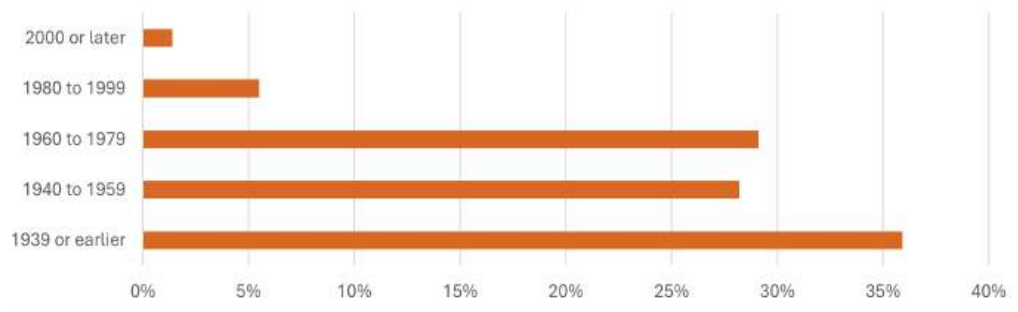
Total Households: 4,947

Hispanic or Latino (of any race): 301

HOUSING

Lancaster has approximately 4,947 housing units with over 72% owner-occupied. Much of the housing stock dates to pre-1940 (39%) or between 1940–1969 (42%) reflecting its historic character. New construction has been limited. Single-family detached homes dominate, though recent trends show a small increase in two-or-more-unit structures.

Village of Lancaster, Year Structure Built (2022)



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

NATURAL RESOURCES

The village includes Cayuga and Plum Bottom Creeks, floodplains, and state-regulated wetlands. Hydric soils and occasional steep slopes can present development challenges at times. However, these features can also offer opportunities for green infrastructure and habitat preservation.

INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES

Lancaster is fully served by a public sewer system and receives water through the Erie County Water Authority. Recreational assets include Cayuga Creek Park and Hadsall Park Splash Pad. Public services are provided in coordination with the Town of Lancaster and local fire/EMS departments.

MOBILITY

Lancaster is served by major east-west corridors including Broadway and Walden Avenue. Transit options include NFTA Metro Bus routes, though bicycle infrastructure is limited. The Lancaster Heritage Trail offers four miles of rail-to-trail recreational access.

LAND USE & ZONING

The Village's zoning code emphasizes preservation of historic scale and walkability. Mixed-use districts are concentrated downtown, with updated design standards promoting architectural consistency. Recent plans (e.g., NY Forward, Downtown Strategy) call for infill housing, improved streetscapes, and mixed-use redevelopment.

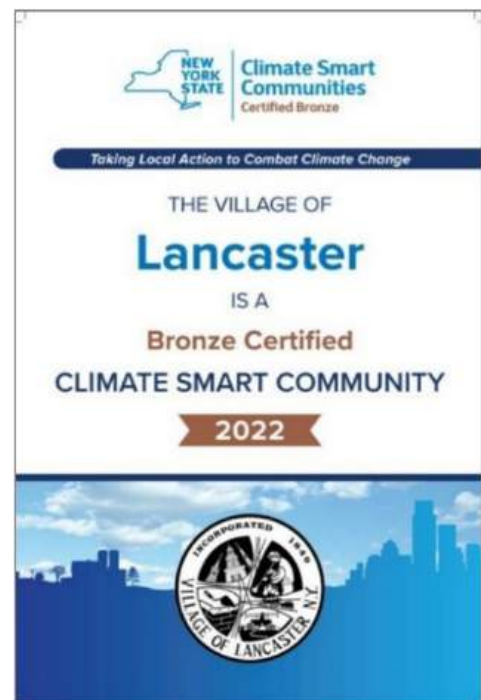


ENVIRONMENTAL & CLIMATE INITIATIVES

Lancaster has made major strides toward resilience and sustainability. It holds Climate Smart Communities Certification, has implemented a tree management plan, and completed energy audits and emissions studies. The village is actively pursuing stormwater upgrades, climate education, and sustainable land use practices.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

The Village's strengths include its historic fabric, strong civic identity, and walkable core. However, an aging population, limited new construction, and flooding vulnerabilities remain ongoing challenges. Future efforts should balance growth with conservation, mobility improvements, and downtown reinvestment.



VILLAGE OF DEPEW

The Village of Depew resides between the Towns of Lancaster and Cheektowaga and covers approximately 5 square miles. Its population has declined slightly, from 15,325 in 2017 to 15,141 in 2022. Median household income rose to \$68,856 but the poverty rate for households with children remains elevated (15.4% in 2022). Depew is characterized by a mix of residential neighborhoods and legacy industrial areas near the rail corridor.



Place

Depew village, New York

Depew village, New York is a city, town, place equivalent, and township located in New York.

Total Population: 15,178

Median Household Income: \$68,856

Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 22.2%

Employment Rate: 62.5%

[View Profile](#)

Total Housing Units: 7,270

Without Health Care Coverage: 2.7%

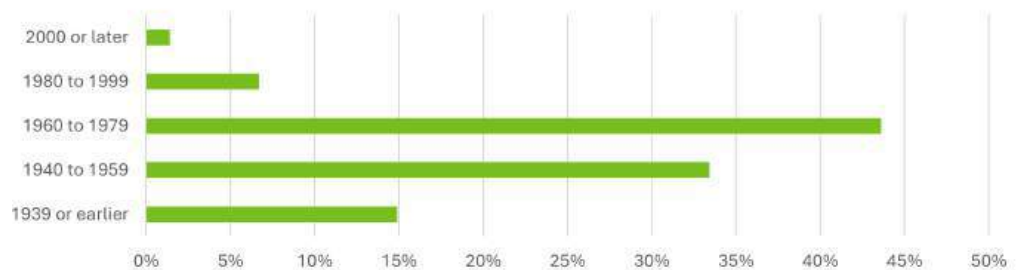
Total Households: 6,745

Hispanic or Latino (of any race): 529

HOUSING

Depew contains around 6,745 occupied housing units with vacancy rates fluctuating between 5–6%. Housing is predominantly single-family detached with much of it built between 1940–1960. Only 1.4% of units were built post-2000 indicating a constrained market for new development. The housing stock remains stable but aging.

Village of Depew, Year Structure Built (2022 Data)



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

NATURAL RESOURCES

Key environmental features include Scajaquada and Cayuga Creeks, state and federal wetlands, and flood-prone areas. Scajaquada Creek is impaired (Class B stream), affected by phosphorus and silt. Hydric soils, flat topography, and historical filling increase flood vulnerability.

INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES

Depew shares sanitary sewer and water service systems with Lancaster, managed through Erie County districts (Sewer District No. 4). Stormwater infiltration remains a concern. The Village maintains facilities such as Fireman's Park and Veterans Memorial Park, both offering active recreation and event spaces. Public safety is provided by Depew's own police and fire departments.

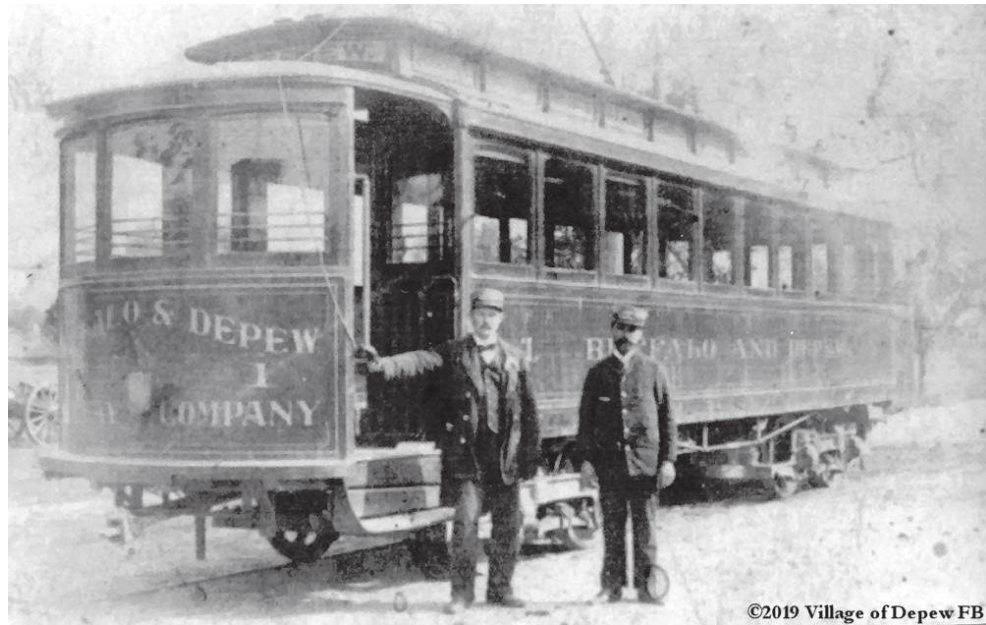
MOBILITY

The village benefits from regional roadways such as Transit Road, Broadway, and Walden Avenue. However, it is physically divided by the Transit Road viaduct. NFTA bus routes serve the area, but walkability and bike infrastructure are limited.



LAND USE & ZONING

Depew's zoning code defines low- and medium-density residential (R-1, R-2), commercial (C-1, C-2), and industrial (M-1, M-2) districts. The M-1 zone, near the railroad, remains vital for economic use but presents compatibility challenges with nearby residential areas. The village's Land Conservation overlay protects flood-prone and environmentally sensitive areas.



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COMMUNITY FACILITIES & HISTORY

Depew's identity has been shaped by its industrial roots and its role as a key transportation hub in Western New York. The village developed around major rail lines and manufacturing centers which continue to influence its land use and infrastructure today.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

The village's strengths include its industrial base, park system, and community institutions. However, its aging infrastructure, physical fragmentation, and limited pedestrian connectivity pose challenges. Future planning must emphasize revitalization, housing quality, infrastructure upgrades, and improved environmental resilience.

0.3 RELEVANT REPORTS & STUDIES

The Villages of Lancaster and Depew are supported by a range of local, regional, and state plans that provide guidance for growth, sustainability, and community development. The Villages' previous comprehensive plan, the 2018 Joint Comprehensive Plan, emphasized vibrant village centers, strong neighborhoods, managed growth, and expanded transportation options. Key goals included neighborhood revitalization, historic preservation, mixed-use development, and watershed protection.

Town of Lancaster Village of Lancaster Village of Depew

Joint Comprehensive Plan

May 2018



LANCASTER-FOCUSED MATERIALS

- [NY Forward Strategic Investment Plan \(2023\)](#). This plan awarded \$4.5 million to revitalize downtown Lancaster. It prioritizes mixed-use development, senior housing, a mobility hub, and enhancements to public landmarks like the Opera House. The plan was developed through extensive community engagement and aligns with regional economic development goals.
- [Climate Resilience Plan & Extreme Weather Vulnerability Report](#). These documents assess risks from flooding and extreme weather and recommend infrastructure and land use strategies to mitigate impacts. They highlight the importance of green infrastructure, emergency preparedness, and inter-municipal coordination. The reports guide stormwater upgrades and sustainable development practices.
- [The Tree Management Plan \(2020\)](#) provides an inventory of Lancaster's urban tree canopy and outlines best practices for species selection, planting, and maintenance. The [Local Government Greenhouse Gas Emissions Study \(2021\)](#) benchmarks energy use across municipal operations and recommends strategies like lighting upgrades, HVAC improvements, and fleet efficiency measures. These initiatives directly support Lancaster's climate goals and its certification within the [Climate Smart Communities program](#). In 2022, the Village achieved Bronze Certification by completing actions like energy audits, policy adoption, and tree planning initiatives. The certification reflects the village's commitment to sustainability and enhances its eligibility for grants.
- [Historic Preservation Guidelines & Downtown Development Strategy \(2018\)](#). These design standards protect the village's historic character and govern materials, signage, alterations, and new construction within designated districts with the aim to preserve architectural integrity while supporting adaptive reuse. The Downtown Development Strategy outlines projects like the West Main Street extension, mixed-use infill, and improved streetscapes. It recommends zoning updates to support historic preservation and walkability.
- [Lively Lancaster \(UB Planning Studio\)](#). Developed by graduate students, this plan focuses on housing diversity, trail connectivity, and infill development. It proposes "missing middle" housing types and greenway expansion. The plan reinforces complete streets principles and sustainable growth.

DEPEW-FOCUSED MATERIALS

- [Annual Budget 2024-2025](#). The budget allocates resources to public safety, infrastructure, recreation, and community development. It includes investments in fire and police services, road improvements, and park maintenance. The budget reflects Depew's priorities and fiscal responsibility.
- [Zoning Code \(Chapter 260\)](#). The code defines residential, commercial, industrial, and overlay districts with clear dimensional and use standards. It supports low-density neighborhoods and defines higher-intensity commercial and motor-service areas. The Land Conservation district protects environmentally sensitive areas.
- [Historic Documentation and Histories of Veterans Park, Fire Alarm, and Water Systems](#). These narratives detail Depew's origins as a railroad hub and its evolution into a suburban village. They focus on early infrastructure like the water supply and fire alarm systems. These narratives contribute to Depew's identity and inform preservation efforts.

REGIONAL PLANS

- [Erie County Community Action Plan \(2023\)](#). This countywide plan offers strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building climate resilience. It addresses energy, transportation, land use, and waste management. Municipalities within the county are encouraged to align local actions with these goals.
- [Buffalo Niagara Priority Climate Action Plan \(2024\)](#). A federally funded strategy focused on regional greenhouse gas reduction and environmental justice. It outlines pilot programs and funding opportunities for municipalities. The plan supports equitable decarbonization and regional collaboration.
- [Moving Forward 2025 Transportation Plan \(GBNRTC, 2023\)](#). This long-range plan promotes multimodal transportation, safety improvements, and complete streets. It sets funding priorities for transportation investments across Erie and Niagara Counties. The plan's regional strategies support local priorities for pedestrian safety, bike infrastructure, and transit access.
- [Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis \(2021\)](#). This HUD-funded study evaluates housing supply, affordability, and demand across the Buffalo-Niagara region. It identifies barriers to housing production and recommends policy changes. It underscores the need for diverse housing in first-ring suburbs like Depew and Lancaster.

These plans reinforce themes of smart growth, environmental stewardship, resilient infrastructure, economic vitality, and community character providing a strong foundation for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update.



04. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PUBLIC INPUT



The community planning process for the Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew Comprehensive Plan Update was designed to ensure engagement and collaboration. By engaging residents, stakeholders, and community leaders, the process aimed to gather diverse perspectives to create a shared vision for the villages' future. Through the work of this public engagement, the plan aims to reflect both current priorities and future goals.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee, comprising representatives from both villages, municipal staff, and community leaders, played a pivotal role in guiding the planning process. Committee members reviewed drafts, validated findings, and conducted public outreach. Committee meetings also served as an opportunity to reflect on feedback and refine planning strategies. Their collaboration ensured alignment with each village's values and goals.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation was central to the planning process to ensure that the plan reflects the voices of residents and stakeholders. Engagement opportunities were provided to allow community members to share ideas, express concerns, and help prioritize community goals.

Public Survey

A comprehensive public survey, conducted from July to September 2024, gathered input from over 500 respondents, including residents, business owners, and visitors. The survey captured perceptions of community character, key issues, and future opportunities. In Lancaster, respondents emphasized downtown vibrancy, walkability, and maintaining a balance between growth and small-town identity. One respondent shared, "Let's be the blueprint for how historical communities can modernize while keeping their character."

Other priorities that emerged included affordable housing, more playgrounds near the village center, and green infrastructure. In Depew, participants focused on improving tree cover, pedestrian safety, and preserving green spaces like Dawson Fields.

**WANT TO HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF
THE VILLAGE OF DEPEW?**

TAKE THE SURVEY!

**WE WANT
TO HEAR
FROM YOU!**

**HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R
/LANCASTERDEPEWCOMPLAN**

Open House

Two open house events (one in each village) were held in September 2024 to present initial findings and gather additional community feedback. Attendees reviewed informational displays, shared comments, and engaged in discussions with Advisory Committee members. Key themes from the events included preserving historic charm, promoting sustainable growth, and improving pedestrian safety.

In Lancaster, 29 residents attended the session at the Municipal Building. Boards featuring prompts such as "What are your biggest hopes for the future?" received dozens of responses including:

- "Become a premier Western New York destination."
- "Growth with character."
- Connect Como Park to downtown."

In Depew, the event drew a small but focused group of residents, who shared priorities like tree planting, pedestrian safety, and expanding park amenities. Additional details can be found in Appendix C.

Across both communities, themes of connectivity, small-town character, sustainable growth, and green infrastructure repeatedly emerged. The planning process prioritized transparency and inclusion ensuring the Comprehensive Plan Update reflects the shared vision and priorities of the Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew.



Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were conducted to gather insights from various community representatives, including municipal staff, local business owners, law enforcement, and community organizations. These interviews provided qualitative data on the village's strengths, challenges, and priorities.

Key themes included a desire for improved housing options, sustainable infrastructure, and stronger collaboration between local government and the businesses community. Many participants emphasized the importance of maintaining the historic charm of both villages while addressing modern needs like walkability, connectivity, and parking.

In Lancaster, several stakeholders emphasized the importance of fostering a broader understanding of housing and climate resilience, framing it not as a political issue but as a matter of long-term preparedness. Others identified opportunities to enhance downtown aesthetics and pedestrian safety through thoughtful redesign of corridors like Central Avenue, while suggesting that certain properties like gas stations may benefit from redevelopment strategies that align with the community's downtown vision.

Business owners expressed enthusiasm for community events and partnerships while also highlighting opportunities to improve coordination and communication to strengthen their impact.

In Depew, stakeholders shared concerns about aging infrastructure and declining rates of homeownership particularly in neighborhoods near Transit Road. Participants suggested that targeted revitalization efforts in these areas especially around the viaducts could help restore vibrancy and support long-term neighborhood stability.



05. VISION

VISION STATEMENT

A Vision Statement describes the desired future state of a community and provides a picture of what the community is working towards. It serves as the organizing feature of the goals and recommendations.

When community members are approached with difficult or contentious decisions, they can ask themselves, "how does the proposed action support or detract from residents' vision for the community?" The Vision Statement can serve to reorient decision makers in times of uncertainty. The following Vision Statement was developed by the Advisory Committee.



The Villages of Lancaster and Depew aspire to be vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable communities where history is cherished, businesses flourish, and residents enjoy a high quality of life.

Guided by a shared vision, the villages aim to balance preservation and progress, creating a safe, walkable, and resilient environment that reflects the deep commitment and pride of those who call these communities home.

Together, these communities will thrive as regional destinations for commerce, culture, and recreation while fostering environmental stewardship and economic vitality.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Preservation and Progress: Honoring the villages' historic & cultural character while embracing innovation & smart growth. Efforts focus on maintaining architectural integrity while encouraging thoughtful development that addresses current and future needs.

Inclusivity and Engagement: Fostering a sense of belonging & collaboration among all residents and stakeholders. Through open communication & participatory decision-making, the villages strive to ensure every voice is heard & valued.

Connectivity and Accessibility: Enhancing walkability, bikeability, & public transportation to connect people to destinations within & beyond the villages. Investments in planning & infrastructure will prioritize safety, efficiency, & universal access for all users.

Economic and Community Vitality: Supporting local businesses, creating job opportunities, & providing community amenities that enhance quality of life. By fostering a strong local economy & vibrant social spaces, the villages aim to become a hub of activity & prosperity.

Sustainability and Resiliency: Promoting environmentally sustainable practices while strengthening the villages' ability to adapt to climate & economic challenges. Initiatives focus on reducing emissions, improving energy security, & fostering public health and resilience.

06. GOALS

The Comprehensive Plan Update identifies a set of ten goals that reflect the shared vision and values of the Villages of Lancaster and Depew. These goals were shaped by community input, technical analysis, and guidance from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. While the goals are presented as a unified framework, they are not listed in order of priority and may apply more strongly to one village than the other depending on local context and need. Organized around key themes, these goals serve as the foundation for future land use decisions, infrastructure investment, policy development, and program implementation. These objectives chart a path toward a more vibrant, inclusive, and resilient future for both communities.

PRESERVATION & PROGRESS

Goal 1: Promote Smart Growth and Sustainable Land Use

Goal 2: Expand and Improve Parks, Recreation, and Public Spaces

INCLUSIVITY & ENGAGEMENT

Goal 1: Foster Civic Engagement and Inclusive Governance

Goal 2: Expand Housing Options

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESSIBILITY

Goal 1: Enhance Transportation and Mobility for All Residents

Goal 2: Improve Public Transit and Multimodal Connectivity

SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCY

Goal 1: Protect Natural Resources and Enhance Sustainability

Goal 2: Invest in Resilient Infrastructure



07. STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

HOW TO USE THE GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS SECTION

This section of the Comprehensive Plan presents a framework of ten goals that reflect the shared vision and values of the Villages of Lancaster and Depew. Each goal is accompanied by strategies, potential actions, and potential funding sources to guide decision-making, support local priorities, and provide direction for future investments and policies.

WHAT ARE STRATEGIES?

Strategies describe the overarching approaches or methods that the Villages can use to achieve each goal. They are broad in scope and reflect long-term priorities that align with community values and existing conditions. Strategies help guide how decisions are made and how resources should be allocated.

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

Actions are suggested implementation steps designed to support the strategies above. Not all actions may be applicable or feasible in every context. Implementation will depend on community priorities, available resources, site-specific constraints, and coordination with other projects. These actions are intended to be flexible and adaptable over time.

Actions may include:

- Updates to zoning or development regulations
- Planning or design studies
- Public infrastructure projects
- New programs, partnerships, or administrative initiatives

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

For each goal, a list of potential funding sources is provided to illustrate how the Villages might pursue implementation. These sources include local, state, federal, and private programs. While grant funding is an important tool, it is not always reliable year to year. Creative approaches like partnerships with non-profits, land banks, or private developers should also be considered.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

This section is designed to serve as a toolkit for implementation. Municipal leaders, staff, community organizations, and residents can use these goals and strategies to:

- Guide decision-making and capital improvement planning
- Apply for grants or technical assistance
- Prioritize public infrastructure and policy updates
- Foster partnerships across agencies and community groups

It is understood that not every action will be pursued or implemented immediately. The plan is intended to be adaptable and should evolve based on available resources, shifting priorities, and new opportunities.

GOAL 1:

PROMOTE SMART GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

STRATEGIES

- Support compact, walkable neighborhoods by encouraging a mix of land uses, housing types, and pedestrian-scale design.
- Encourage infill development and adaptive reuse of underutilized parcels, particularly in areas with existing infrastructure and transit access.
- Preserve open spaces, natural features, and environmentally sensitive areas to maintain community character and ecological health.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

1. Update zoning maps and development regulations to allow compact, mixed-use development by right in targeted locations while discouraging fragmented, low-density development.
2. Rezone underutilized M-1 industrial areas, such as along Palmer Place in Lancaster and near the rail corridor in Depew, to support mixed-use development that enables a mix of residential, commercial, and community uses in a walkable environment.
3. Conduct a build-out analysis to evaluate development potential under current zoning and guide future growth and infrastructure investment.
4. Develop a Land Use Suitability Map to help inform local decision-making by identifying appropriate areas for infill and redevelopment (e.g., former industrial parcels in Depew or underutilized corridors in Lancaster) and distinguishing them from areas better suited for conservation or low-impact development (e.g., flood-prone areas along Cayuga Creek or Plum Bottom Creek). Note: suitability analysis will need to consider potential conflicts with NY Forward project scopes.
5. Identify and evaluate redevelopment opportunities in the northern portion of the Village of Lancaster particularly between the railroad tracks as a focus area for infill development and infrastructure upgrades.
6. Explore redevelopment potential in Depew's central rail-adjacent area including parcels east of the Amtrak Station and near the BOCES K-12 facility.
7. Explore concept plans for key redevelopment sites to illustrate desired outcomes and support coordinated planning efforts. While the Villages do not market private property, visual materials may help guide private investment and support grant applications for public infrastructure improvements.
8. Incorporate form-based or hybrid zoning approaches in key nodes to regulate physical form and walkability.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Program
- NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program
- NY Forward / Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)
- Local capital improvement budgets and tax increment financing (TIF)
- Erie County Smart Growth funding opportunities
- Partnerships with land banks or community land trusts
- Public-private partnerships and developer incentives



SMART GROWTH IN ACTION: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN LANCASTER & DEPEW?

Smart Growth is about building in places where infrastructure already exists, encouraging walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods, and protecting open spaces and natural resources.

Core Principles for Local Decision-Making

- Grow in, not out: Encourage infill, reuse, and redevelopment of vacant or underutilized sites before expanding into undeveloped areas.
- Mix uses wisely: Support development that combines housing, small businesses, and services near existing village centers to reduce car trips and strengthen downtown activity.
- Preserve character: Maintain the historic scale, architecture, and walkability of neighborhoods through appropriate design standards and lot sizes.
- Use infrastructure efficiently: Prioritize development in areas already served by water, sewer, transit, and road networks to minimize long-term maintenance costs.
- Support variety: Allow a mix of housing types (e.g., duplexes, townhomes, Accessory Dwelling Units) so seniors, young adults, and families can find options that meet their needs.

Tools the Villages Can Use

- Zoning Updates: Adjust allowable uses and development standards to promote mixed-use and village-scale housing in targeted areas.
- Design Guidelines: Ensure new infill development is compatible with existing neighborhood character.
- Land Use Suitability Maps: Identify areas best suited for conservation vs. redevelopment and use them to guide decision-making.
- Site Plan Review: Shape private developments so they include sidewalks, street trees, stormwater features, and quality building scale and design.



GOAL 2:

EXPAND AND IMPROVE PARKS, RECREATION, AND PUBLIC SPACES

STRATEGIES

- Enhance parks, trails, and recreational facilities including the expansion of parks and greenways and connection to regional trail systems.
- Ensure equitable access to public spaces by evaluating the distribution, walkability, and ADA accessibility of parks and recreation facilities.
- Identify and preserve environmentally sensitive or natural areas within the Village for passive recreation, conservation, and flood mitigation.
- Support small-scale projects such as murals, landscaping, signage, public art, and seating areas that enhance civic identity and create welcoming, accessible public spaces in key locations like pocket parks, intersections, and downtown entry points.
- Promote public health by improving access to active recreation and evaluating opportunities for healthy food access and air/water quality in park environments.



POTENTIAL ACTIONS

1. Develop a Parks and Greenway Master Plan for both villages aligned with Erie County's Lake Como Park Plan and regional trail connectivity goals.
2. Conduct a parks and equity access analysis to identify gaps in distribution, walkability, and ADA accessibility of recreational resources.
3. Create a mapped inventory of protected lands and natural areas to inform future conservation, recreation, and climate resilience efforts.
4. Incorporate health-promoting infrastructure such as drinking fountains, shade structures, community gardens, and nature-based cooling strategies in park design.
5. Install interpretive signage and public art in pocket parks and key civic spaces to reflect local history, culture, and environmental themes.
6. Retrofit existing parks and civic spaces (e.g., Veterans Park, Broadway Plaza greenspace) with native landscaping, pollinator gardens, permeable pathways, and additional benches.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) grants
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Erie County Parks Partnership Program
- NYS Department of Health Creating Healthy Schools & Communities (CHSC)
- Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation

GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY - LINKING PARKS, PEOPLE, AND PLACES

A well-connected greenway system offers safe, scenic, and sustainable routes for walking, biking, and recreation. In the Villages of Lancaster and Depew, investing in greenway connectivity can strengthen access to parks, schools, business districts, and transit while also enhancing flood resilience, biodiversity, and quality of life.

Key Greenway Benefits

- Environmental Stewardship: Greenways along creeks and wooded edges help preserve natural buffers, manage stormwater, and protect habitat.
- Mobility & Access: Connected trails offer safe, low-stress routes for commuting, recreation, and access to amenities especially for those without cars.
- Community Connection: Greenways bring people together across neighborhoods and can become focal points for social events, wellness programs, and civic pride.
- Economic Development: Greenway trails can support local business by increasing foot traffic and attracting visitors, especially near downtowns and commercial corridors.

Priority Opportunities

- Connect Firemen's Park, Como Lake Park, and West Main Street via a Cayuga Creek Greenway Trail
- Extend greenway links to schools, libraries, senior centers, and regional transit stops
- Use flood-prone or underused land to create dual-purpose green corridors for resilience and recreation
- Incorporate interpretive signage, benches, and wayfinding to enhance the user experience



GOAL 3:

FOSTER CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

STRATEGIES

- Strengthen public participation in local decision-making through accessible and inclusive engagement strategies. Provide multiple ways for residents to provide input, such as digital surveys, neighborhood-based forums, and outreach at community hubs like the Lancaster Public Library and Depew Senior Center.
- Build partnerships between residents, local businesses, school districts, religious institutions, and civic groups such as the Lancaster-Depew Rotary, Boys & Girls Club, Lancaster Village Merchant Association, and local PTAs to co-lead community planning and improvement initiatives.
- Expand youth engagement in civic life by partnering with Lancaster and Depew High Schools and youth organizations to create community-led initiatives, internship opportunities, and student advisory roles.
- Ensure planning and policy processes are inclusive of underserved populations, including low-income residents, non-English speakers, people with disabilities, and seniors.
- Connect residents to local and regional resources, programs, and educational opportunities by serving as a trusted hub for community information and referrals.
- Promote inclusive cultural programming by supporting artists, makers, and performers as part of community events and civic life.
- Maximize use of existing public facilities such as schools, libraries, and community centers to deliver services, host programming, and meet emerging needs in a cost-effective manner.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

1. Launch a civic engagement portal on both villages' websites with project updates, public comment features, and accessible formats for all devices and users.
2. Hold youth planning workshops in partnership with local schools, libraries, and civic organizations.
3. Evaluate opportunities for co-location of services, after-school programming, adult education, or shared use agreements within underutilized public facilities.
4. Translate outreach materials and key plan documents into commonly spoken languages in the villages and offer large-print and screen-reader compatible versions.
5. Track equity-focused metrics like accessibility of public meetings, engagement by neighborhood, and representation on boards or committees.
6. Develop a centralized "community resource guide" to be shared digitally and in print helping residents access services such as electronics recycling, housing programs, senior resources, and small business support.
7. Launch an Arts Grant Program or microgrant fund to support local art, music, and culture-led projects.
8. Encourage civic events such as Village Landscaping Days or Park Beautification Days that combine environmental stewardship with artistic expression (e.g., community mosaic benches, painted planters, garden art installations).

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- NYS Smart Growth Community Planning grants
- Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation (community engagement initiatives)
- National Endowment for Democracy
- Local foundations (e.g., Oishei Foundation, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo)



CENTRALIZED COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE CONNECTING RESIDENTS TO WHAT MATTERS

Residents often aren't aware of the wide range of services, programs, and local organizations available to support their daily lives. A centralized Community Resource Guide can provide residents with information that is accessible, up-to-date, and easy to navigate.

What Would It Include?

The guide would serve as a single point of reference for:

- Housing repair and energy assistance programs
- Volunteer opportunities and civic groups
- Parks, trails, and recreation schedules
- Arts and cultural events
- Youth and senior services
- Recycling and environmental resources
- Transportation services and NFTA access
- Local small businesses and service providers

Format & Accessibility

The guide can be distributed both digitally and in print, made available at Village Halls, libraries, schools, and senior centers. It can also be embedded into municipal websites, translated into commonly spoken languages, and formatted for accessibility (e.g., screen-reader compatible, large print).

Why It Matters

A centralized guide builds civic connection, increases awareness of available programs, and promotes equitable access to services especially for seniors, new residents, low-income households, and those without reliable internet access. It's also a tool for public engagement, education, and community resilience.



GOAL 4:

EXPAND HOUSING OPTIONS

STRATEGIES

- Support a variety of housing types to meet the needs of young adults, families, seniors aging in place, and residents with disabilities in both Lancaster and Depew.
- Explore options for “missing middle” housing like townhomes, duplexes, upper-story apartments, and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in locations that can accommodate moderate density while preserving the Villages’ historic scale and walkable character.
- Prioritize infill development and adaptive reuse of vacant lots and underused commercial properties, particularly near downtown Lancaster, Depew’s Broadway corridor, and sites adjacent to NFTA bus routes, for affordable, transit-connected housing.
- Encourage compact development by promoting smaller lot sizes and reduced setbacks in zoning districts, especially where homes already reflect historic village-scale design.
- Align new housing initiatives with proximity to major employment centers, schools, and essential services to reduce transportation costs and promote equitable access.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

These actions are intended to guide implementation by the Villages of Lancaster and Depew in collaboration with county, regional, and nonprofit partners. While some actions may be directly led by Village staff (e.g., zoning changes or local incentive programs), others may require coordination with housing agencies, developers, and funding organizations. Implementation will depend on local priorities, available capacity, and access to resources.

1. Village Boards should evaluate zoning regulations to identify potential barriers to moderate-density housing and ADUs, explore allowing ADUs by right in appropriate residential districts, and assess parking, setback, and lot coverage standards for alignment with village-scale design.
2. With support from consultants and regional partners such as Erie County, explore the feasibility of conducting a housing needs assessment to better understand affordability gaps and housing demand, using findings (as resources allow) to guide zoning updates and incentive programs.
3. Assess undeveloped land south of St. Mary’s Cemetery in Lancaster for its potential to support higher-density housing especially in proximity to transit corridors and downtown amenities.
4. Monitor the status of St. Martha’s Church property in Depew as a potential strategic site for future housing development if the property is sold or repurposed.
5. In partnership with nonprofits and housing agencies, collaborate with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Belmont Housing, and HOME Buffalo to rehabilitate vacant homes, particularly within older housing stock areas.
6. Acting as outreach partners, the Villages should connect residents to regional resources by promoting grant programs and home repair assistance for low- and moderate-income households, supporting CDBG and NYS HOME fund applications to address lead, critical repairs, and energy inefficiencies, with implementation carried out by nonprofit agencies and utility service providers.
7. Pursue funding and partnerships to support home weatherization, energy retrofits, and accessibility modifications, particularly for seniors in neighborhoods with aging homes and limited mobility, by working with regional providers such as PUSH Buffalo, WNY Independent Living, and PathStone, with implementation handled by nonprofit service providers and utilities.)
8. Provide letters of support and, where feasible, identify other funding sources to strengthen competitive funding applications submitted by developers of desired housing types.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- NYS Homes & Community Renewal (HCR)
- PATH and RESTORE programs for seniors (via NYS HCR)
- Federal CDBG and HOME programs (via Erie County)
- Local Housing Trust Funds
- NYS Climate Smart Communities or Clean Energy Communities for energy-efficient retrofits
- Enterprise Community Partners (technical assistance and grants for affordable and mixed-income housing)
- NYSEDA EmPower+ Program (weatherization and energy efficiency for income-qualified households)

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADUS): SMALL HOMES, BIG BENEFITS

What are ADUs?

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are small, independent residential units located on the same lot as a primary home. Also known as in-law suites, backyard cottages, garage apartments, or carriage houses, ADUs can be attached to the main home, located above a garage, or built as standalone structures in the rear yard.

Why do they matter?

ADUs are a powerful housing tool that provide:

- Gentle density – They add housing options in walkable neighborhoods without changing the existing streetscape.
- Affordability – ADUs tend to be smaller and more cost-effective to build and rent, making them ideal for young adults, retirees, and small households.
- Flexibility for homeowners – Residents can use ADUs for extended family, rental income, or aging-in-place.
- Smart land use – ADUs make better use of existing infrastructure and housing stock, supporting sustainability and housing diversity.

Fitting into the Neighborhood

When thoughtfully designed, ADUs can integrate seamlessly into existing residential areas. Local design guidelines and zoning updates can ensure they respect neighborhood character while increasing housing supply. By enabling ADUs, the Villages can expand housing choices, support intergenerational living, and advance affordability without large-scale redevelopment.



GOAL 5:

ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY FOR ALL RESIDENTS

STRATEGIES

- Advocate for Complete Streets improvements, such as high-visibility crosswalks, curb extensions, and protected bike lanes, on key corridors (e.g., Broadway, Central Avenue, Walden Avenue) in coordination with NYSDOT, Erie County, and regional transportation partners to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety.
- Develop and adopt an access management policy for major corridors such as Transit Road, Walden Avenue, and Broadway, where multiple curb cuts and uncoordinated access points create congestion and crash risks.
- Promote transit-supportive development along NFTA Metro Bus Route 46 (Lancaster-Depew Loop) and near potential future mobility hubs by encouraging higher-density residential and mixed-use zoning in walkable, infrastructure-ready areas.
- Identify and close sidewalk and trail gaps, especially those limiting access to Depew Middle School, Como Lake Park, and Firemen's Park with a focus on ADA accessibility and public safety.
- Coordinate closely with NYS DOT and regional agencies to ensure that local transportation needs and priorities are meaningfully incorporated into all state-led infrastructure projects.
- Improve communication and navigation by installing coordinated wayfinding signage and developing strategies to connect peripheral parking with local destinations.

3. Advocate for early and continuous coordination with NYS DOT on any improvements to state-owned roadways such as NY Route 78 (Transit Road), NY Route 20 (Broadway), and Walden Avenue, and emphasize the importance of local input, pedestrian safety, aesthetic character, and multimodal infrastructure.
4. Retrofit key corridors (e.g., Central Avenue, Broadway, Walden Avenue) with traffic calming features, wayfinding signage, crosswalks, bike lanes, and shade trees.
5. Evaluate current and future parking needs through data analysis and identify strategic parking areas with clear signage to key downtown destinations.
6. Explore revitalizing a trolley-style circulator to link parking areas, Como Park, major downtown destinations, and trailheads.
7. Create a bicycle and pedestrian master plan map that aligns with regional plans from GBNRTC and identifies feasible trail extensions and safer crossings at challenging intersections (e.g., Transit/Broadway and Gould Avenue).
8. Evaluate and improve pedestrian infrastructure near high-volume and sensitive land uses including schools, senior facilities, and transit stops. Add lighting, curb ramps, buffers, and rest areas with attention to air quality near major corridors like Walden Avenue.
9. Coordinate with GBNRTC and NFTA to explore regional mobility improvements including first/last mile connectivity, microtransit feasibility, and improved access to existing NFTA bus routes that serve downtown Buffalo and the airport corridor

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

1. Conduct a sidewalk and trail gap analysis and prioritize improvements using an equity and safety lens, focusing on areas with seniors, children, schools, and limited vehicle access.
2. Adopt a Complete Streets policy with an implementation plan that includes standards for lane widths, street trees, crossings, and traffic-calming design in coordination with Erie County and NYSDOT.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- NYSDOT Transportation Alternatives (TAP) and Congestion Mitigation (CMAQ)
- USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
- NYS DOH Creating Healthy Schools & Communities (CHSC)
- NYS DEC Climate Smart Communities - Transportation Grants

STATE ROADS, LOCAL PRIORITIES: PARTNERING WITH NYSDOT

This Comprehensive Plan establishes the following **transportation infrastructure priorities**:

- **Pedestrian safety** improvements, including safer crossings and complete sidewalks.
- **Traffic calming** to reduce speeding and support walkability.
- **Multimodal access** for cyclists, public transit riders, and people of all ages and abilities.
- **Aesthetic improvements** that reflect village character (landscaping, lighting, signage).
- **Access management strategies** that reduce curb cuts, manage turning movements, and improve safety and circulation along busy corridors.
- **Early engagement** in all transportation project planning and design.
- **Context-sensitive design** tailored to village-scale development patterns.

The Villages expect NYS DOT and other agencies to:

- Engage in **early, meaningful, and continuous coordination** with village officials and the public.
- Design state projects that **respect and enhance** the village context, not bypass or overrule it.
- Integrate **access management best practices** into project designs to enhance safety, reduce congestion, and support long-term corridor vitality.
- **Incorporate local goals** into grant applications and funding strategies.

VIADUCT UNDERPASS IMPROVEMENTS: COORDINATING WITH NYSDOT FOR SAFER VILLAGE MOBILITY

Although Transit Road is not locally owned, the Villages can play a key advocacy role in shaping future improvements to the viaduct underpass by working closely with NYSDOT and Erie County.

Advocate for Enhancements Such As:

- Safe pedestrian paths, continuous sidewalks, and ADA-accessible crossings
- Improved lighting, signage, and wayfinding for visibility and user comfort
- Traffic-calming features appropriate for a village context
- Beautification (landscaping, murals, public art) to make the space more welcoming and less of a perceived barrier

Why it Matters:

- Reconnects neighborhoods on both sides of the viaduct
- Improves access to local destinations
- Helps ensure state-led transportation projects support safety, mobility, and quality-of-life goals

COMPLETE STREETS: SAFER, HEALTHIER VILLAGE STREETS

Complete Streets are local streets designed for people of all ages and abilities. Adopting a Complete Streets approach helps Lancaster and Depew build safer, more accessible village-scale streets that support active living and vibrant downtowns.

What Complete Streets Look Like Locally:

- Narrower travel lanes to slow vehicle speeds
- Consistent sidewalks with ADA-compliant curb ramps
- Safe crossings near key destinations (e.g., schools, parks, bus stops)
- Bike facilities on village streets where feasible (e.g., shared-lane markings, bike racks, dedicated lanes in wider ROWs)
- Street trees, lighting, and street furniture that support comfort and walkability

Why it Matters:

- Improves safety and walkability in residential neighborhoods and downtowns
- Encourages healthy, active transportation
- Supports local businesses by increasing foot traffic
- Enhances quality-of-life and village character

Taking Action in the Village:

- Adopt a Complete Streets policy and street-design checklist for all local street work.
- Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle features into local capital projects.
- Use zoning and site plan review to ensure new development supports walkable, multimodal street design.

GOAL 6:

IMPROVE MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY

STRATEGIES

- Collaborate with NFTA and GBNRTC to improve the frequency, reliability, and amenities of Route 46 Lancaster-Depew Loop and surrounding service areas, particularly to better connect residents to downtown Buffalo, the airport corridor, and local job centers.
- Enhance the safety, comfort, and accessibility of multimodal infrastructure (e.g., transit stops, bike facilities, pedestrian routes) through improved site design, lighting, signage, and ADA-compliant features with priority placed near Central Avenue, Broadway, Penora Street, and Columbia Avenue.
- Integrate EV charging stations, secure bike parking, and micro-mobility infrastructure at key destinations like Lancaster Village Hall, Depew Library, near Como Lake Park, and Broadway commercial areas.
- Support transit-oriented development near stops by enabling mixed-use, walkable development patterns that serve residents without vehicles.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

1. Advocate for upgrades to transit stops, including signage, bus shelters, real-time arrival info, and crosswalk improvements at high-use locations such as Broadway & Penora, Central Avenue, and near plazas like D&L.
2. Complete key trail extensions and linkages to the Erie County Greenway and Como Park closing key gaps at municipal boundaries.
3. Map and prioritize improvements in sidewalk and bikeway connectivity along Transit Road, Columbia Avenue, and Central Avenue, and at major intersections like Broadway at Transit Road where pedestrian infrastructure is currently missing or fragmented.
4. Develop a bicycle and pedestrian network map identifying preferred alignments for shared-use paths, safe crossings, and multimodal corridors connecting housing to jobs, schools, and transit, while recognizing the need to be adaptable

to new and emerging technologies such as e-bikes, scooters, and other forms of micro-mobility.

5. Extend the Heritage Trail and explore trail connectivity along Cayuga Creek creating continuous non-motorized connections between parks, neighborhoods, and regional trails.
6. Conduct feasibility study on the northern extension of Walter Winter Drive north to Walden Avenue to improve vehicular and emergency access in northwest Lancaster and relieve pressure on parallel corridors
7. Create multimodal mobility hubs in downtown Lancaster and Depew, and near civic spaces like Veterans Park, the Depew Recreation Center, and the Lancaster Opera House, integrating rest areas, transit access, public art, landscaping, and EV/bike infrastructure.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- NYS Parks and Trails Grant
- Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- NFTA Mobility Enhancement or Regional Transit Service Grants
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
- NYSERDA Clean Mobility Program



KEY ELEMENTS OF MULTIMODAL SITE DESIGN

- Pedestrian Infrastructure
 - » Continuous, ADA-compliant sidewalks
 - » Safe mid-block and signalized crosswalks
 - » Curb ramps, bump-outs, and pedestrian refuges
 - » Lighting, shade trees, and benches for comfort
- Bicycle & Personal Transportation Access
 - » Protected or buffered bike lanes on key corridors
 - » Clearly marked bike crossings at intersections
 - » Ample secure parking and charging facilities at civic buildings, parks, & businesses
 - » Integration with regional trail systems and greenways
 - » Design guidance that ensures the Villages are prepared to adapt to new and emerging transportation options such as e-bikes and scooters
- Transit Amenities
 - » Well-placed shelters near major bus stops
 - » Sidewalk connections between stops and destinations
 - » Real-time signage, seating, and lighting for safety
 - » Site design that orients entrances toward transit access
- Vehicle Access & Parking
 - » Rear or side-lot parking to preserve front-facing walkability
 - » Shared parking arrangements where appropriate
 - » EV charging stations in visible, accessible locations
 - » Thoughtful curb cuts and access management to reduce conflicts between users
 - » Wayfinding signage to guide people from parking areas to destinations
 - » Opportunities for partnerships with private institutions (e.g., schools, churches) to utilize underused parking during peak demand

GOAL 7:

STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESSES

STRATEGIES

- Position downtown Lancaster and the Broadway corridor in Depew as vibrant local business districts by promoting small business development, historic preservation, and a diverse mix of retail, dining, and service uses.
- Encourage small business growth and entrepreneurship through financial incentives, streamlined permitting, and economic development programs.
- Connect local business owners and entrepreneurs to county, regional, and state resources including the Lancaster-Depew Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Development Center (SBDC), and Launch NY.
- Support workforce readiness for residents by partnering with training providers such as Employ Buffalo Niagara, Northland Workforce Training Center, and local school districts to align skill-building with job opportunities in healthcare, skilled trades, building electrification, and advanced manufacturing.
- Facilitate the adaptive reuse of vacant or underused commercial and industrial sites like the former retail plazas on Transit Road and Broadway as well as industrial sites in and near VOL Central Business District prioritizing businesses into shared workspaces, incubators, or community-oriented businesses that support local economic resilience.
- Support local arts and cultural programming as a tool for economic development, downtown revitalization, and community pride.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

1. Establish a Small Business Resource Hub (physical or virtual) in collaboration with the Lancaster-Depew Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) providing technical assistance, business plan coaching, and help with grant or loan applications.
2. Continue to implement façade and streetscape Improvement programs for the Central Avenue and Broadway corridors in historically underserved or visually deteriorated areas, using Erie County CDBG and façade funding.
3. Consider creating a Revolving Loan or Microgrant Fund for small businesses and startups located in or relocating to priority downtown areas with a focus on minority- and women-owned businesses funded through the SSBCI, ECIDA, or other state-supported programs.
4. Partner with regional workforce development organizations to offer job readiness programs and certifications for youth and underemployed adults in high-demand sectors including clean energy trades, eldercare, and manufacturing.
5. Promote business retention and succession planning by connecting legacy businesses in downtown Lancaster and Depew to transition support services, estate planning assistance, and new ownership models (e.g., employee-owned businesses or co-ops).
6. Designate priority mural locations on highly visible buildings or infrastructure (e.g., underpasses, utility boxes, blank commercial walls) and develop a public art framework that outlines installation processes, artist selection, and maintenance.
7. Activate public spaces with temporary or rotating art (e.g., pop-up sculpture displays, painted crosswalks, interactive installations) to draw foot traffic and strengthen village identity.



POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- NYS Main Street Program (mixed-use & commercial building revitalization)
- SBA Community Advantage Loan Program (financing underserved entrepreneurs)
- Erie County Façade Improvement and CDBG Programs (business district enhancements)
- State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) (microloans & capital access)
- Empire State Development (ESD) (workforce & entrepreneurship initiatives)
- Launch NY and PathStone Enterprise Center (mentorship & microlending)
- NYS Council on the Arts
- National Endowment for the Arts
- Arts Services Inc. of WNY
- Erie County Cultural Funding
- Local business sponsorships and BID support



GOAL 8:

CULTIVATE A DISTINCT LOCAL IDENTITY & TOURISM ECONOMY

STRATEGIES

- Expand local festivals, parades, and markets including the Lancaster Fall Fest and Depew Fall Festival, Fourth of July Celebration, and Depew Founder's Day Celebration to attract visitors, increase foot traffic downtown, and enhance civic pride.
- Invest in public art installations, historic preservation of buildings, and unified wayfinding signage to create a recognizable identity and welcoming visitor experience.
- Position downtown Lancaster as a regional destination for heritage tourism, boutique retail, and dining, while highlighting Depew's accessibility to regional assets like Reinstein Woods, Ellicott Creek Trailway, and the Broadway commercial corridor.
- Align with Erie County's Cultural Plan and Greater Niagara Tourism Region campaigns to secure visibility in regional and state promotional materials, and to tie local initiatives to broader visitor economy trends.
- Encourage tourism investments that benefit residents year-round such as improved public spaces, attractive streetscapes, and cultural programming creating community destinations that serve both locals and visitors year-round.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

1. Develop a Lancaster-Depew Heritage Tourism Trail mobile app featuring landmarks such as the Lancaster Opera House, historic fire halls, local churches, Amtrak Train Station, and the Cayuga Creek corridor, with links to regional trail systems and Erie Canalway marketing.
2. Implement coordinated downtown branding and placemaking improvements including wayfinding signage, interpretive markers, public art, and façade enhancements on Central Avenue and Broadway to highlight the villages' unique identity.
3. Apply for inclusion in tourism promotions such as "I LOVE NY," Market NY, and the Greater Niagara Region's digital travel guides and itineraries emphasizing themes of history, outdoor recreation, arts, and family-friendly

events.

4. Advance a Main Street Vision Plan for Depew emphasizing façade improvements, infill development, and mixed-use buildings with ground-floor commercial and upper-story residential.
5. Create an annual cultural programming calendar featuring events like the Depew Summer Concert Series or historic house tours, developed in collaboration with historical societies and civic organizations.
6. Develop a local tourism asset inventory and data dashboard tracking metrics such as visitation, event attendance, and retail sales to better target investment and partnerships.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- Market NY Tourism Grant Program (marketing & tourism capital projects)
- Erie County Cultural Funding Program (events, public arts, & history-based tourism)
- NY Forward/DRI implementation funds (downtown revitalization & placemaking)
- OPRHP Heritage Area System or Canalway funding (historic interpretation and trail development)
- National Trust for Historic Preservation or Humanities NY (heritage trails, cultural programming, & interpretation)



STRENGTHENING IDENTITY THROUGH ART, PRESERVATION, AND SIGNAGE

Creating a consistent, welcoming experience across Lancaster and Depew starts with visible cues that reflect local pride and heritage.

- Public Art: Install murals, utility box art, and sculptures in high-visibility areas like downtown corridors, parks, and public plazas to celebrate community identity and attract foot traffic.
- Historic Preservation: Prioritize the restoration of architecturally or culturally significant buildings. Promote their reuse as storefronts, galleries, or community spaces to maintain local character.
- Unified Wayfinding: Develop a coordinated signage system with consistent branding to direct visitors to key destinations like Village Hall, parks, business districts, and event venues.



GOAL 9:

PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENHANCE SUSTAINABILITY

STRATEGIES

- Implement targeted climate adaptation strategies to address known hazards such as flooding along Cayuga Creek and Plum Bottom Creek, stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces, and rising summer temperatures exacerbating the urban heat island effect.
 - Expand the use of green infrastructure (e.g., rain gardens, bioswales, tree plantings) on municipal sites such as parking lots near Village Halls, Firemen's Park, and Veterans Park to reduce runoff, recharge groundwater, and cool surface temperatures.
 - Support energy-efficient development and incorporate climate-responsive design into public spaces by providing shade, passive cooling, and drought-resistant landscaping at civic centers, trailheads, and public parks.
 - Preserve critical natural features such as wetlands, creeks, floodplains, and steep slopes through overlay districts and conservation easements.
 - Develop a Natural Resources Inventory and Conservation Priority Map that informs zoning and project review identifying sensitive areas such as riparian zones, wooded edges, and urban tree canopy loss areas.
 - Expand greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation goals and align climate actions with the Erie County Climate Action Plan, NYSEDA programs, and NYS Climate Smart Communities guidance.
2. Install rain gardens, bioswales, and native landscaping in parks, parking lots, and rights-of-way particularly at Village Hall, Firemen's Park, the Depew Recreation Center, and near library and school sites
 3. Partner with local institutions such as Buffalo State College, UB, and local high schools to conduct urban tree canopy assessments, habitat mapping, and water quality monitoring especially in zones downstream from development and near culvert crossings.
 4. Create a Natural Resources and Conservation Priority Map highlighting parcels adjacent to Cayuga Creek floodplain, wooded parcels near North Aurora Street, and land connecting to the Erie County Greenway as targets for protection or low-impact development.
 5. Adopt a GHG reduction target and local climate action roadmap building off of Erie County's 2030 Climate Action Plan and Smart Climate Communities frameworks.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- NYS DEC Climate Smart Communities grants
- Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP)
- FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)
- NYS Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)
- NYSEDA EmPower+ (for residential energy efficiency outreach and improvements)

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

1. Adopt a riparian buffer ordinance to regulate development and vegetation removal within a defined distance of Cayuga Creek and Plum Bottom Creek. This should be paired with a community education campaign to help residents and businesses understand the importance of riparian areas and how they can implement similar best practices (e.g., native plantings, buffer maintenance) on their own properties.



GOAL 10:

INVEST IN RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGIES

- Prioritize investments in critical infrastructure upgrades to reduce risk from flooding along Cayuga Creek and Plum Bottom Creek, address aging sewer and water systems, and improve system resilience during severe weather events and power outages.
- Upgrade water, sewer, stormwater, and energy systems to increase capacity, efficiency, reliability, and resilience to extreme weather events.
- Continue to implement measures that reduce inflow and infiltration (I&I) in the sewer system, building on past infrastructure upgrades and ongoing maintenance efforts
- Utilize smart technologies like advanced metering infrastructure (AMI), leak detection systems, and remote sensors to improve utility management, emergency response, and climate risk monitoring.
- Integrate green and nature-based infrastructure solutions including bioswales, flood benches, rain gardens, and permeable surfaces into planned upgrades of municipal properties, trails, and public right-of-way areas.
- Align local investments with regional climate adaptation strategies such as the Erie County Community Climate Action Plan and flood risk assessments for the Ellicott and Cayuga Creek watersheds.

4. Assess opportunities for EV charging stations and municipal fleet transitions in partnership with NYSEDA and utility providers.
5. Coordinate with utility providers and regional agencies to support long-term infrastructure resilience, including periodic assessments of broadband, water, and energy systems to accommodate future growth and technology shifts.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- NYSEDA Clean Energy Communities (clean energy upgrades, mobility projects)
- Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (broadband, EV infrastructure, water systems, and climate resilience)
- WIIA/IMG Water Infrastructure Improvement Grants (critical water, wastewater, and stormwater upgrades)
- Green Innovation Grant Program

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

1. Prepare a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan for both villages that prioritizes upgrades to at-risk infrastructure with a focus on downtown Lancaster, Transit Road, and Depew's Rowley Road corridor.
2. In Depew, support targeted flood mitigation measures in known high-risk areas:
 - a. Old DPW Landfill/Rowley Road Bridge area (remove hydraulic constrictions, stabilize creek bank)
 - b. Broadway/US-20 Shopping Plaza and Penora Street Bridge area (expand culverts, install flood benches)
3. Evaluate the feasibility of solar-powered, smart LED street lighting on municipal buildings and select corridors as technology and funding allow. Continue improving street lighting efficiency through phased upgrades.



08. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

PURPOSE

The Future Land Use Plan translates the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan into a physical framework for the Villages of Lancaster and Depew. It provides a long-term guide for the location, type, and design of future development, conservation, and public investment. Building on the Goals and Strategies outlined previously in the plan, the Future Land Use Plan identifies desired land use patterns, establishes guiding principles for each category, and illustrates these through the Future Land Use Map. This framework will serve as the foundation for zoning updates, infrastructure planning, and other actions detailed in the Implementation section, ensuring that future growth is coordinated, sustainable, resilient, and reflective of community values.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES & DESCRIPTIONS

The Future Land Use Map identifies the intended distribution of land uses across the Villages of Lancaster and Depew. These categories are designed to promote compact, connected, and context-sensitive growth while protecting community character and environmental resources.

Village Center Mixed-Use

Purpose

To reinforce downtown areas as vibrant, walkable hubs of commerce, culture, and housing. To preserve historic character while encouraging compatible infill and redevelopment.

Characteristics

- ▶ Two- to four-story buildings with active ground floors.
- ▶ High pedestrian activity supported by wide sidewalks, benches, and lighting.
- ▶ Mix of uses including retail, dining, upper-story residential, and civic functions.
- ▶ Parking located to the rear or side with emphasis on shared parking.

Description

Lancaster: Centered on West Main Street, Central Avenue, and Broadway, encompassing the historic core and NY Forward investment area

Depew: Focused around the Terrace Boulevard corridor, the possible revitalization of Main Street, historic commercial block, and adjacent civic buildings.

Strategies

- ▶ Implement form-based or design-overlay zoning to protect scale & character.
- ▶ Incentivize adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
- ▶ Improve pedestrian safety at key crossings

Example uses include retail shops, cafés, offices, civic buildings, and cultural venues.



Neighborhood Mixed-Use

Purpose

To provide neighborhood-scale commercial and mixed-use development at key intersections and corridors, serving daily needs within walking or biking distance of surrounding homes.

Characteristics

- ▶ One- to three-story buildings with small-format retail or services.
- ▶ Sidewalk connections and bike parking.
- ▶ Building design compatible with adjacent residential character.

Description

Lancaster: Located at secondary commercial corridors such as Broadway east and west of the Lancaster village core.

Depew: Strategically located at secondary commercial corridors and intersections such as Transit Road at local cross streets.

Strategies

- ▶ Establish neighborhood commercial overlays to set design and scale standards.
- ▶ Encourage a mix of small businesses and housing options.
- ▶ Require streetscape improvements and pedestrian connections in redevelopment.

Example uses include corner stores, coffee shops, small offices, & neighborhood markets.

Traditional Residential Neighborhood

Purpose

To preserve and enhance the character, stability, & livability of established neighborhoods.

Characteristics

- ▶ Predominantly detached homes with porches and landscaped yards.
- ▶ Sidewalks and mature street trees.
- ▶ Low to medium density.

Description

Lancaster: Extensive areas including residential blocks north and south of the village core.

Depew: Extensive areas including established neighborhoods west of Transit Road and east toward Dawson Field.

Strategies

- ▶ Maintain historic patterns through compatible infill standards.
- ▶ Expand tree canopy through street tree programs.
- ▶ Support accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to increase gentle density.
- ▶ Enforce property maintenance codes to sustain neighborhood quality.

Example uses include single-family homes, duplexes, ADUs, and neighborhood parks.

Multifamily & Infill Residential

Purpose

To diversify housing options, meet changing needs, & provide access to services & transit.

Characteristics

- ▶ Townhouses, small apartment buildings, and senior housing
- ▶ Located near employment, transit routes, and commercial districts.
- ▶ Design standards to ensure compatibility with nearby neighborhoods.

Description

Lancaster: Near the village center's periphery (e.g. Broadway corridor).

Depew: Along Transit Road & near the rail corridor where infrastructure capacity exists.

Strategies

- ▶ Consider providing density bonuses for affordable or senior housing.
- ▶ Require pedestrian & bicycle connections to adjacent neighborhoods & parks.
- ▶ Encourage reuse of underutilized sites for housing.

Example uses include townhomes, small apartment buildings, and senior living facilities.

Employment & Light Industrial

Purpose

To maintain and modernize employment areas that support the local economy while ensuring compatibility with adjacent uses.

Characteristics

- ▶ Light manufacturing, warehousing, research, and distribution facilities.
- ▶ Landscaping, screening, and buffering from residential areas.
- ▶ Efficient access to major roadways and freight corridors.

Description

Lancaster: Smaller pockets in Lancaster along key arterials.

Depew: Primarily along the rail corridor & near Broadway/Transit Road intersections.

Strategies

- ▶ Incentivize adaptive reuse of obsolete industrial buildings.
- ▶ Enhance landscaping and stormwater management to improve site aesthetics.
- ▶ Support infrastructure upgrades to maintain competitiveness.

Example uses include light manufacturing, business parks, tech hubs, and logistics facilities.



Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

Purpose

To preserve and enhance the villages' parks, trails, and recreational facilities for public health, community identity, and environmental resilience.

Characteristics

- ▶ Public parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and community centers.
- ▶ Accessible by foot and bicycle.
- ▶ Often connected to natural features like creeks or greenways.

Description

Lancaster: Includes Cayuga Creek Park in Lancaster and village-maintained trail segments.

Depew: Firemen's Park, Veterans Memorial Park, and Dawson Field.

Strategies

- ▶ Expand trail connections to regional networks.
- ▶ Require parkland dedication in new development.
- ▶ Improve park amenities and accessibility.

Example uses include sports fields, splash pads, playgrounds, and multi-use trails.



Environmental Conservation & Greenway Corridors

Purpose

To protect floodplains, wetlands, riparian corridors, and other sensitive environmental areas while allowing compatible recreation.

Characteristics

- ▶ Natural vegetation, habitat areas, and scenic views.
- ▶ Minimal structural development.
- ▶ Integrated stormwater management and habitat restoration.

Description

Along Cayuga Creek, Plum Bottom Creek, and Scajaquada Creek, as well as state and federal wetlands throughout both villages.

Strategies

- ▶ Establish Environmental Protection Overlay Districts (EPODs).
- ▶ Implement green infrastructure for flood mitigation.
- ▶ Link conservation areas with trails and parks.

Example uses include nature preserves, open space, and environmental education sites.



Civic & Institutional

Purpose

To provide accessible locations for government, education, cultural, and community facilities.

Characteristics

- ▶ Public buildings integrated with surrounding neighborhoods.
- ▶ Often paired with civic plazas or green space.
- ▶ High visibility and accessibility.

Description

Includes village halls, libraries, schools, public safety facilities, and major cultural sites.

Strategies

- ▶ Incorporate shared-use community spaces in public projects.
- ▶ Ensure facilities are accessible by multiple modes of transportation.
- ▶ Use civic buildings to anchor mixed-use areas.

Example uses include village halls, schools, fire & police stations, and libraries.



Design & Development Guidelines

Parking

Locate to the side or rear, encourage shared parking, and minimize large surface lots.

Connectivity

Require connected street networks and pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure in all new development.

Environmental Integration

Preserve trees, protect wetlands, and incorporate green infrastructure for stormwater management.

Form & Scale

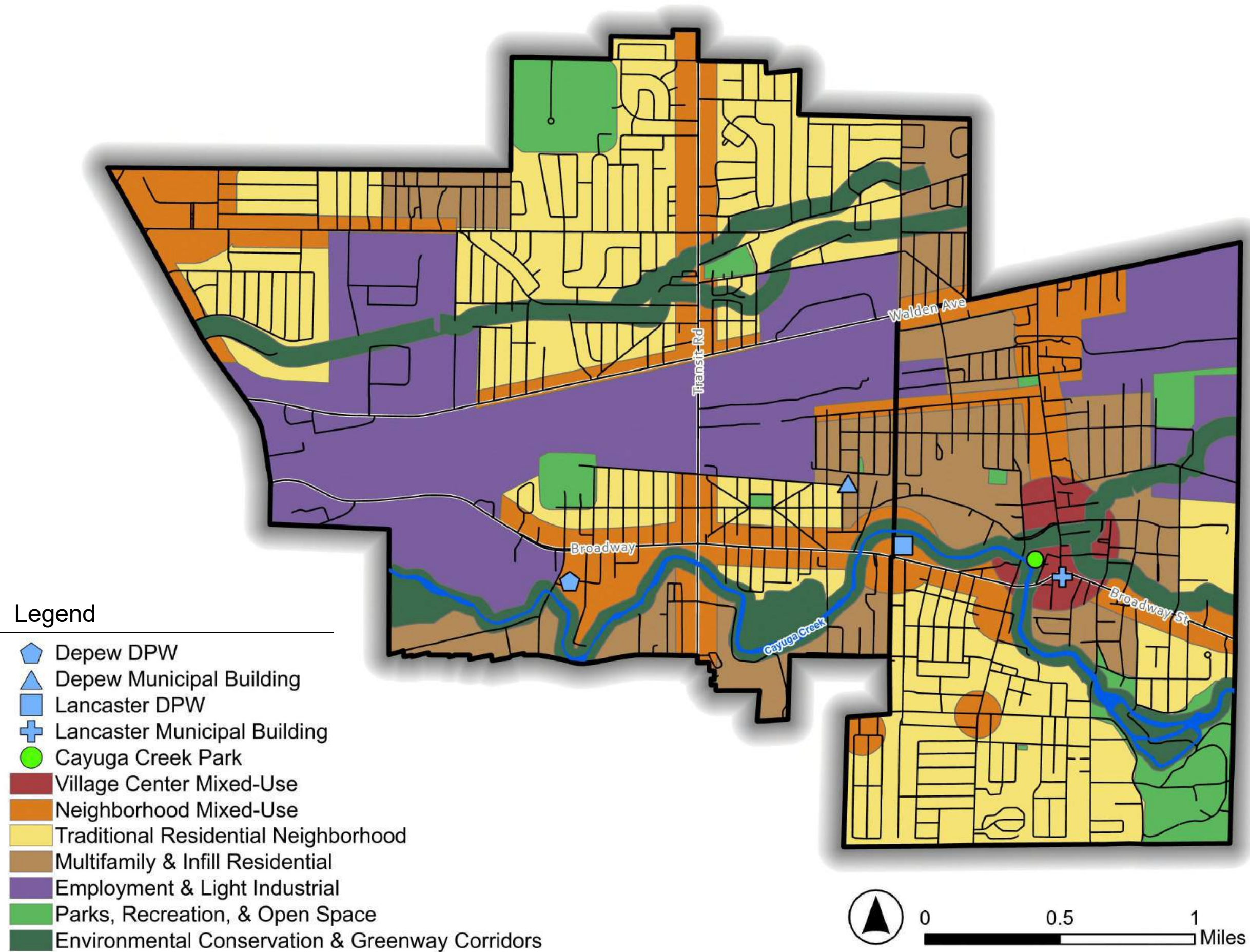
Match building height and massing to surrounding context, with transitions between uses.

Community Identity

Use design, landscaping, and signage to create attractive gateways and distinctive public spaces.



VILLAGES OF LANCASTER AND DEPEW, FUTURE LAND USE MAP



09. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation section serves as a practical and forward-looking roadmap to help the Villages of Lancaster and Depew realize the shared vision and goals outlined in this Comprehensive Plan. While the plan reflects common values and collaborative intent, each village will maintain its own set of priorities, timelines, and available resources. As such, implementation strategies are meant to be flexible, scalable, and adaptable to evolving needs, opportunities, and leadership transitions.

Importantly, some elements of this plan are aspirational, offering long-term ideas and innovative solutions that may require future coordination, capacity-building, or funding to achieve. Others are actionable in the short term based on existing conditions and partnerships. The longevity and success of this plan will rely on proactive stewardship by future leaders with clear mechanisms to track progress and revisit priorities over time.

Where priorities intersect between the two villages such as flood mitigation, regional mobility, and economic revitalization, there are clear opportunities to collaborate, pool resources, and act as regional partners. Joint efforts in these areas will amplify impact and maximize access to funding and technical support.

DRIVERS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Key drivers that will shape the success of implementation include:

- Leadership and succession planning, ensuring the plan remains relevant and supported even as elected officials and committee members change.
- Dedicated organizational structure, such as an Implementation Committee or Planning Board subcommittee.
- Funding access and budget alignment through local, state, and federal sources.
- Cross-sector collaboration involving municipal staff, local organizations, businesses, and residents.
- Transparency and accountability to sustain public trust and participation.

STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. ORGANIZE AND PRIORITIZE

- a. Categorize and sequence actions by short-, medium-, and long-term timelines based on local impact, feasibility, and resource availability. Each village should identify which actions are most applicable to their context.
- b. Establish or designate a standing Implementation Committee or assign oversight to existing bodies such as the Planning Board or Village Board of Trustees.
- c. Integrate the Comprehensive Plan into ongoing planning activities including zoning amendments, annual budgeting, and Capital Improvement Plan development

HOW TO PRIORITIZE ACTIONS

When deciding which actions to implement first consider:

- Impact: Will this action meaningfully advance one or more goals?
- Feasibility: Is it achievable with current staffing, funding, and resources?
- Readiness: Is the action supported by existing plans, partnerships, or funding opportunities?
- Equity: Does this action benefit underserved or vulnerable populations?
- Community Support: Was this a top concern during public engagement?

2. DEVELOP & LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS

- a. Formalize partnerships with entities like the Lancaster-Depew Chamber of Commerce, GBNRTC, Erie County Planning, ECIDA, and regional housing, arts, and sustainability organizations.
- b. Coordinate cross-jurisdictional initiatives, including trail connectivity and flood mitigation, and assertively engage NYS DOT as a required partner in achieving village transportation goals. The Comprehensive Plan shall be used as a reference document to justify community requests and guide project decisions on state-owned corridors.
- c. Engage schools, libraries, and historical societies in youth civic initiatives, sustainability education, and heritage tourism promotion.

3. PURSUE AND ALIGN FUNDING

- a. Align priority action items with annual budgets and Capital Improvement Plans in each village.
- b. Apply for applicable grants, technical assistance, and philanthropic support based on identified funding sources listed throughout the plan.
- c. Leverage regional plans like the Erie County Hazard Mitigation Plan and Climate Action Plan to strengthen applications and demonstrate alignment with broader regional goals.

STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

4. COMMUNICATE AND ENGAGE

- a. Provide regular updates through Village websites, social media, newsletters, and public bulletin boards.
- b. Host annual implementation forums or planning open houses to share milestones, gather community feedback, and foster ongoing public engagement.
- c. Foster continued community ownership of the plan's vision through community sharing, co-led projects, and recognition of local contributions.

5. MONITOR, EVALUATE AND REFINE

- a. Schedule biannual or annual reviews led by the Implementation Committee or Planning Board designee to assess progress
- b. Track measurable indicators across categories such as land use, housing, infrastructure, environment, and public engagement.
- c. Adjust priorities, timelines, and strategies as funding opportunities, regulations, or community needs evolve. Allow for strategic adjustments as conditions change.

6. CELEBRATE SUCCESS

- a. Recognize achievements such as the completion of new trails, façade programs, or stormwater projects through ribbon cuttings, community events, or media coverage.
- b. Document successful initiatives to create an institutional memory and provide templates for future leaders.
- c. Build a culture of plan stewardship by linking implementation to board transitions, annual reports, and civic education.

REFINING GOALS & PIVOTING WHEN NEEDED

When to Reevaluate

When deciding which actions to implement first consider:

- New state or federal regulations are introduced
- Funding priorities shift or unexpected resources become available
- Local needs change
- An action proves unfeasible or ineffective
- Community feedback suggests a new direction

How to Refine or Pivot

- Revisit goals annually
- Use performance data and resident feedback to identify what's working
- Reprioritize actions based on feasibility, urgency, and new conditions
- Retire outdated actions & propose alternatives
- Communicate changes to the public

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

Preservation and Progress

Action Item	Timeframe	Cost	Partnerships
Update zoning maps and development regulations to accommodate smart growth.	Short-term	\$\$	Village Boards, Planning Boards, Municipal Attorneys, Erie County DEP
Rezone underutilized M-1 industrial areas to support mixed-use development.	Short-term	\$\$	Village Boards, Property Owners, Local Developers
Conduct a build-out analysis to evaluate development potential under current zoning.	Short-term	\$\$	GBNRTC, Erie County GIS, Planning Consultants
Develop a Land Use Suitability Map.	Short-term	\$\$	Erie County DEP, GBNRTC, Local Universities (UB Planning Studio)
Identify and evaluate redevelopment opportunities as a focus area for infill development and infrastructure upgrades.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	Village Boards, Property Owners, NY Forward/Empire State Development
Explore redevelopment potential in Depew's central rail-adjacent area.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	Property Owners, Rail Companies, Erie County IDA, GBNRTC
Explore concept plans for key redevelopment sites.	Ongoing	\$\$\$	Private Developers, Village Boards, UB Regional Institute, ESD
Incorporate form-based or hybrid zoning approaches in key nodes to regulate physical form and walkability.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	Village Boards, Planning Boards, Municipal Attorneys, Consultants
Develop a Parks and Greenway Master Plan.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	NYS Parks, Erie County Parks, Local Land Trusts, Community Organizations
Conduct a parks and equity access analysis.	Short-term	\$\$	Erie County DEP, Community Groups
Create a mapped inventory of protected lands and natural areas.	Short-term	\$	Erie County DEP, NYSDEC, Land Trusts
Incorporate health-promoting infrastructure in park design.	Ongoing	\$\$	Erie County Health Department, DPW
Install interpretive signage and public art in pocket parks and key civic spaces.	Short-term	\$-\$	Local Artists, Historical Societies, DPW
Retrofit existing parks and civic spaces with native landscaping, pollinator gardens, permeable pathways, and additional benches.	Medium-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	NYSDEC, DPW

Inclusivity & Engagement

Action Item	Timeframe	Cost	Partnerships
Launch a civic engagement online portal.	Short-term	\$\$	Village Boards, IT Dept., Local Universities
Hold youth planning workshops.	Ongoing	\$	Schools, Youth Councils, UB Planning, Nonprofits
Evaluate opportunities for co-location of services within underutilized public facilities.	Medium-term	\$\$	Village Boards, Erie County Agencies, Community Organizations
Translate outreach materials and key plan documents.	Ongoing	\$\$-\$	Cultural/Language Organizations, Erie County DEP
Track equity-focused metrics.	Ongoing	\$	Erie County DEP, GBNRTC, Regional Data Hubs, Universities
Develop a centralized community resource guide.	Short-term	\$	Community Groups, Libraries, Senior Centers, Nonprofits
Launch an Arts Grant Program or microgrant fund.	Medium-term	\$\$	NYS Council on the Arts, Local Arts Councils, Chambers of Commerce
Encourage civic events that combine environmental stewardship with artistic expression.	Ongoing	\$	Schools, Arts Groups, Environmental orgs, Local Businesses
Evaluate zoning regulations to identify potential barriers to housing supply and affordability.	Short-term	\$\$	Village Boards, Erie County DEP, Housing Nonprofits
Explore the feasibility of conducting a housing needs assessment.	Short-term	\$\$	Erie County DEP, Housing Nonprofits, NYS HCR
Assess undeveloped land south of St. Mary's Cemetery in Lancaster for its potential to support higher-density housing.	Medium-term	\$\$	Property Owners, Erie County DEP
Monitor the status of St. Martha's Church property in Depew as a potential strategic site for future housing.	Ongoing	\$	Diocese/Property Owners, Housing Nonprofits
Collaborate with organizations to rehabilitate vacant homes.	Ongoing	\$\$-\$-\$-\$	Nonprofits (Habitat for Humanity), Land Banks, Erie County, Local Contractors
Promoting grant programs and home repair assistance for low- and moderate-income households.	Ongoing	\$	Erie County DEP, NYS HCR, Local Nonprofits
Pursue funding and partnerships to support home weatherization, energy retrofits, and accessibility modifications.	Medium-term	\$\$-\$-\$-\$	NYSERDA, Erie County, Energy Utilities, Housing Nonprofits
Support competitive funding applications submitted by developers of desired housing projects.	Ongoing	\$	Developers, NYS HCR, Erie County IDA, GBNRTC

Connectivity & Accessibility

Action Item	Timeframe	Cost	Partnerships
Conduct a sidewalk and trail gap analysis.	Short-term	\$\$	DPW, Erie County DEP, GBNRTC
Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.	Short-term	\$	Village Boards, NYS DOT, GBNRTC
Advocate for early and continuous coordination with NYS DOT on any improvements to state-owned roadways.	Ongoing	\$	NYS DOT, Erie County, GBNRTC
Retrofit key corridors with traffic calming features, wayfinding signage, crosswalks, bike lanes, and shade trees.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	DPW, NYS DOT, Erie County, GBNRTC
Evaluate current and future parking and identify strategic parking areas.	Short-term	\$\$	Village Boards, Local Businesses, Erie County DEP
Explore revitalizing a trolley-style circulator.	Long-term	\$\$\$	NFTA, GBNRTC, Developers, Tourism Agencies
Create a bicycle and pedestrian master plan map.	Short-term	\$\$	Village Boards, Erie County DEP, GBNRTC
Evaluate and improve pedestrian infrastructure near high-volume and sensitive land uses.	Medium-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	Schools, Senior Centers, DPW
Coordinate with GBNRTC and NFTA to explore regional mobility improvements.	Ongoing	\$	GBNRTC, NFTA, Erie County DEP
Advocate for upgrades to transit stops and crosswalk improvements.	Ongoing	\$\$	NFTA, GBNRTC, Erie County, Local Businesses
Complete key trail extensions and linkages.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	Erie County Parks, NYS Parks, Land Trusts, Local Trail Groups
Map and prioritize improvements in sidewalk and bikeway connectivity.	Short-term	\$\$	Erie County DEP, DPW, GBNRTC
Develop a bicycle and pedestrian network map.	Short-term	\$\$	GBNRTC, Erie County DEP, Cycling Groups
Extend the Heritage Trail and explore trail connectivity along Cayuga Creek.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	Erie County Parks, NYS Parks, Land Trusts, Local Trail Groups
Conduct feasibility study on the northern extension of Walter Winter Drive north to Walden Avenue.	Short-term (study); Long-term (build-out)	\$\$-\$\$\$\$	Erie County, Village Boards, NYS DOT, Emergency Services
Create multimodal mobility hubs in downtown Lancaster and Depew, and near civic spaces.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	NFTA, GBNRTC, Erie County, Local Developers

Economic & Community Vitality

Action Item	Timeframe	Cost	Partnerships
Establish a Small Business Resource Hub.	Short-term	\$\$	Erie County IDA, Small Business Development Center
Continue to implement façade and streetscape Improvement programs for the Central Avenue and Broadway corridors.	Ongoing	\$\$\$	NY Main Street Program, Business Owners, NY Forward/ESD
Consider creating a Revolving Loan or Microgrant Fund for small businesses and startups.	Medium-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	Erie County IDA, ESD
Partner with regional workforce development organizations to offer job readiness programs and certifications.	Short-term	\$\$	Erie Community College, Workforce Development Boards, Nonprofits
Connect legacy businesses in downtown Lancaster and Depew to transition support services.	Ongoing	\$	Small Business Development Center
Designate priority mural locations and develop a public art framework.	Short-term	\$-\$\$	Local Artists, NYSCA (Arts Council), Arts Nonprofits, Village Boards
Activate public spaces with temporary or rotating art.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$	Local Arts Councils, Schools, Community Groups
Develop a Lancaster-Depew Heritage Tourism Trail mobile app.	Medium-term	\$\$	Historical Societies, Tourism Agencies, Local Universities
Implement coordinated downtown branding and placemaking improvements.	Medium-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	NY Forward, Erie County
Apply for inclusion in tourism promotions.	Short-term	\$	Visit Buffalo Niagara, Erie County Tourism Agencies
Advance a Main Street Vision Plan for Depew.	Medium-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	Erie County DEP, NY Forward
Create an annual cultural programming calendar.	Short-term	\$	Arts Groups, Historical Societies, Local Nonprofits
Develop a local tourism asset inventory and data dashboard.	Short-term	\$\$	Erie County DEP, Visit Buffalo Niagara, UB Regional Institute

Sustainability & Resiliency

Action Item	Timeframe	Cost	Partnerships
Adopt a riparian buffer ordinance and conduct an associated community education campaign.	Short-term	\$\$	Village Boards, Erie County DEP, NYSDEC
Install rain gardens, bioswales, and native landscaping in parks, parking lots, and rights-of-way.	Medium-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	DPW, Erie County Soil & Water Conservation District, NYSDEC
Conduct urban tree canopy assessments, habitat mapping, and water quality monitoring.	Short-term	\$\$	Erie County DEP, NYSDEC, Local Universities
Create a Natural Resources and Conservation Priority Map.	Short-term	\$\$	Erie County DEP, NYSDEC, Land Trusts, UB Regional Institute
Adopt a GHG reduction target and local climate action roadmap.	Short-term	\$\$	NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities, Erie County Climate Action, Local Utilities
Prepare a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan for both villages that prioritizes upgrades to at-risk infrastructure.	Short-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	Village Boards, Erie County, GBNRTC, Engineering Consultants
Support flood mitigation projects in high-risk areas.	Medium-term	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$	FEMA Hazard Mitigation, Erie County DEP, NYSDEC, Army Corps of Engineers
Continue improving street lighting efficiency through phased upgrades and evaluate the feasibility of solar-powered, smart LED street lighting on municipal buildings and select corridors.	Short-term (upgrades;	\$\$-\$\$\$	NYSERDA, Local Utilities (National Grid/NYSEG), DPW
Assess opportunities for EV charging stations and municipal fleet transitions.	Short-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	NYSERDA, US DOE Clean Cities, Erie County
Participate in periodic assessments of broadband, water, and energy systems to accommodate future growth and technology shifts.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$	Erie County, Utility Providers, Telecom Companies, GBNRTC

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT



VILLAGE OF LANCASTER & VILLAGE OF DEPEW
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

**COMMUNITY PROFILE &
EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT**

OCTOBER 2, 2025

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INTRODUCTION

An inventory and analysis of existing conditions is a critical component of the comprehensive planning process, establishing a baseline to guide future community policies and actions. This report details the characteristics of both villages, offering insight into their current state and historical changes.

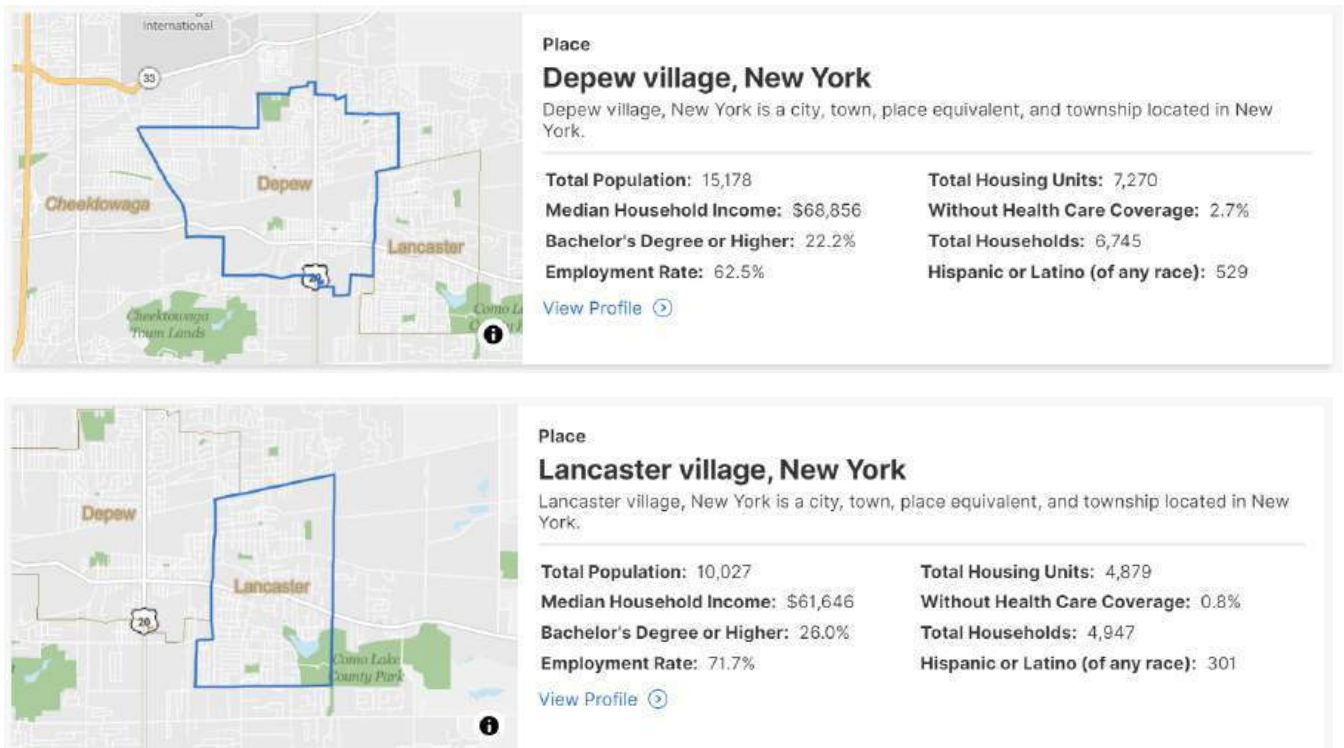
This report not only provides a snapshot of current conditions but also places them in the context. Understanding the community's evolution is vital for addressing Village assets and challenges in the comprehensive plan. This summary lays the groundwork for the goals, vision, strategies, and recommendations of the comprehensive plan which will aid in shaping both villages' futures.

FORMAT

As this comprehensive plan update is focused on two separate municipalities, each topic area is split, providing a distinction between the Village of Depew and Village of Lancaster. Much of the demographic data is sourced from the United States Census Bureau. In an update from the 2018 comprehensive plan, the entirety of the Village of Depew has been included in this analysis.

UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU PROFILES

Below is a snapshot of each Village's U.S. Census profile, based on 2020 Decennial Census data, including the geographic boundaries of each municipality and key statistics.



GEOGRAPHY AND NATURAL FEATURES

In planning for resilient and sustainable communities, it is essential to consider the interconnection between natural systems and the built environment. Throughout human history, the suitability of places for human habitation has been shaped by natural features like slopes, soils, watersheds, and vegetation. The built and natural environments are not separate entities but, rather, dynamic, interconnected systems that must be planned in harmony to sustain community health and resilience.

This section of the report provides an inventory of the natural features and resources within the villages, which provide critical services and benefits to people and other living species. As communities face the growing challenges posed by climate change, the role of natural resources in supporting resilience becomes increasingly vital.

GEOGRAPHY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Village of Depew

Located in Erie County, the Village of Depew is approximately 10 miles east of downtown Buffalo. Part of the village falls within the Town of Cheektowaga and the other part within the Town of Lancaster. Covers approximately 5 square miles.

Village of Lancaster

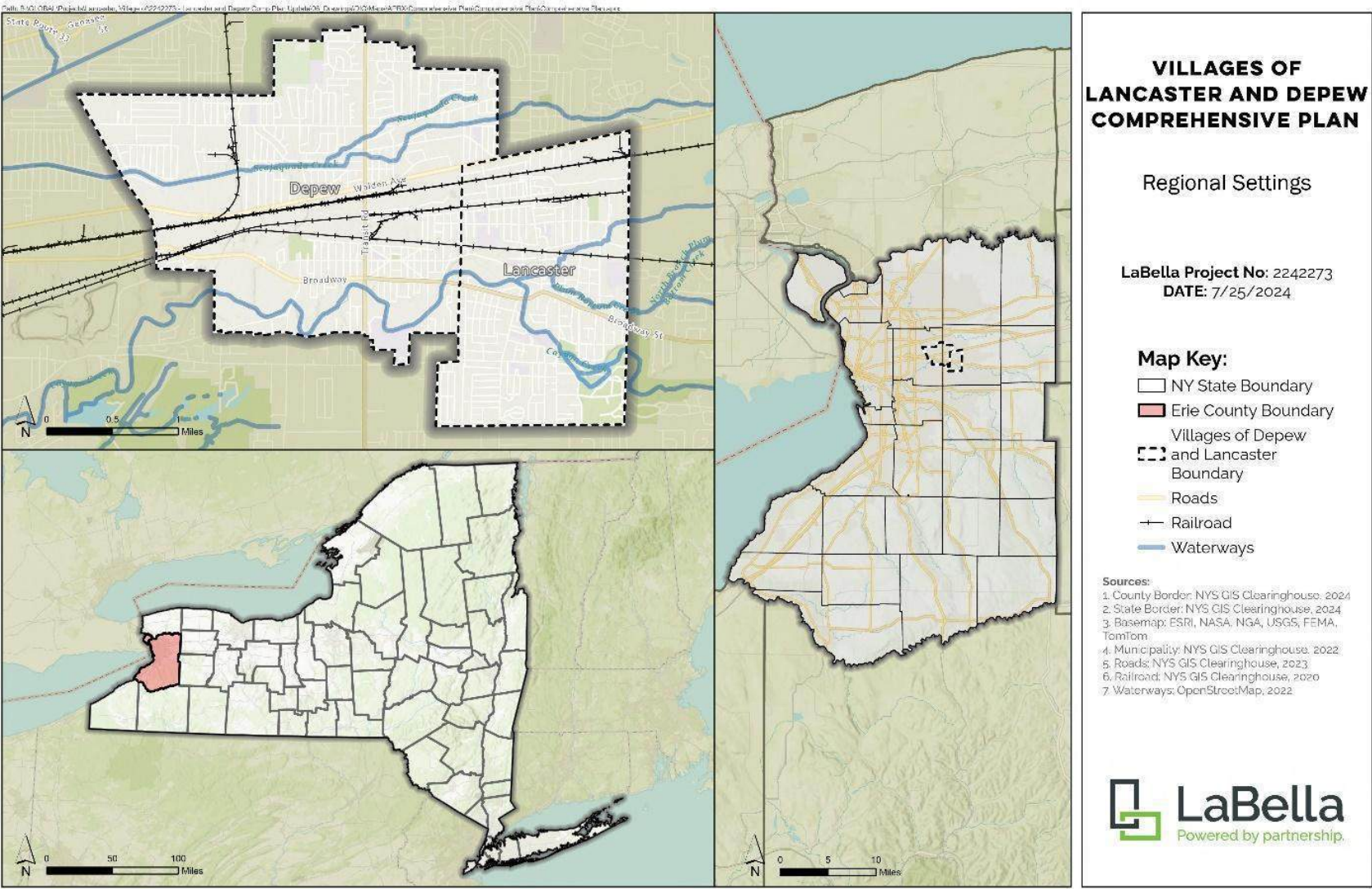
Also located in Erie County, the Village of Lancaster is directly east of the Village of Depew, sharing a municipal boundary. The Village lies within the Town of Lancaster and covers about 2.7 square miles.

Both villages play a significant role within the greater regional context, contributing to the area's economic development, community vitality, and long-term planning.

Strategically located, the villages benefit from proximity to major transportation routes such as Interstate-90 and key commercial corridors like Walden Avenue and Broadway. This connectivity supports local and regional mobility as well as facilitates access to jobs, services, and amenities across the county. Additionally, both villages contribute to the region's green infrastructure through parks, greenways, and recreational trails.

The Village of Depew has historical significance as a railroad center, which has led to the development of industrial and manufacturing zones that continue to support the regional economy. The Village of Lancaster's downtown area serves as a commercial hub that attracts local businesses and contributes to the economic vibrancy of the region. The historic and architectural character of these villages contributes to the livability and appeal of the region.

The villages are active participants in regional planning efforts, including economic development strategies and climate resilience initiatives. Their collaboration with Erie County and other agencies ensures that local developments align with broader regional objectives.



NATURAL FEATURES AND RESOURCES

Village of Depew

Village of Lancaster

Major Environmental Features

The natural environment of both villages includes various streams, floodplains, and wetlands.

Scajaquada Creek and Cayuga Creek are notable waterways, with the former running through the village.

Key water bodies include Cayuga Creek and Plum Bottom Creek, important for open space, drainage, fish and wildlife habitat, and aesthetics.

Floodplains & Wetlands

Federal and state wetlands exist in both villages which are regulated by NYSDEC and the Army Corps of Engineers to prevent adverse impacts from development

Flooding concerns are particularly evident along Scajaquada Creek.

Significant flood hazard areas primarily found along Cayuga Creek.

Hydric Soils & Topography

Both villages contain hydric soils which require careful planning to manage drainage & erosion.

The village's topography is characterized by flat to gently rolling land, with some areas of steep slopes.

The land is generally flat to gently rolling, with some areas of steep slopes exceeding 15%, especially near stream corridors.

Flora and Fauna

Important habitats present within the villages include wetlands, woodlots, and grass fields. These require protection to preserve local biodiversity.

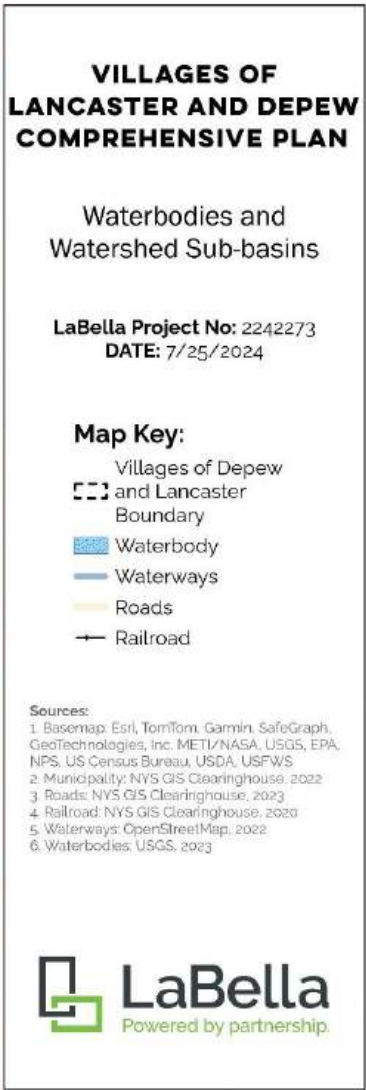
Impacts on Water

Scajaquada Creek is classified as a Class B stream, while other streams in the area are mostly Class C. Water bodies like Ellicott Creek and Scajaquada Creek are listed as impaired due to pollutants such as phosphorous and silt.

The region falls within the Niagara River watershed, with Cayuga Creek as a sub-watershed. Cayuga Creek is a significant waterway flowing through the village. It is a tributary of the Buffalo River.

Key Takeaways

1. **Local creeks** are critical natural features that play a role in managing stormwater, reducing flood risks, and supporting local ecosystems. The floodplains and wetlands associated with these creeks are essential for absorbing excess water during heavy rainfall, which helps prevent flooding in developed areas.
2. **Green spaces** including wetlands and parks provide important ecological services, aid in environmental resiliency, and promote community well-being.



HISTORY

Reviewing the origins and history of the villages is important in the comprehensive planning process because it can reveal long-term trends and patterns as well as identify significant landmarks and resources that contribute to each village's character and identity.

Village of Depew

Village of Lancaster

History

The villages have evolved from their early agricultural & industrial roots to become developed suburban communities with various historic & cultural assets. The strategic proximity to Buffalo & development spurred by the railroad played key roles in shaping their growth & character.

Incorporation of the Village (1894)

The Village of Depew was officially incorporated in 1894, named after Chauncey Depew, who was the President of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad.

Establishment as a Railroad Hub

In the late 19th century, Depew became a key railroad hub with the New York Central Railroad establishing major facilities in the village.

Opening of the Depew Post Office (1895)

The opening of the Depew Post Office in 1895 was a crucial development in establishing the village's identity and infrastructure.

Expansion of Industrial Base

Throughout the early 20th century, Depew expanded its industrial base with the establishment of various factories and manufacturing plants.

Impact of World War II

Depew's industrial facilities played a vital role in the war effort, producing materials and goods essential for the military.

Transition to Suburban Community

Following World War II, Depew experienced a shift from an industrial-focused community to a more suburban residential area. The post-war housing boom led to the development of new residential neighborhoods.

Incorporation of the Village (1849)

The Village of Lancaster was incorporated in 1849, marking its official establishment as a municipal entity.

Establishment of the Central Avenue Historic District

The creation of this district recognized the architectural and historical significance of this area within the village. The district includes many buildings dating back to the 19th and early 20th centuries (approx. 1860 – 1935).

Railroad Development

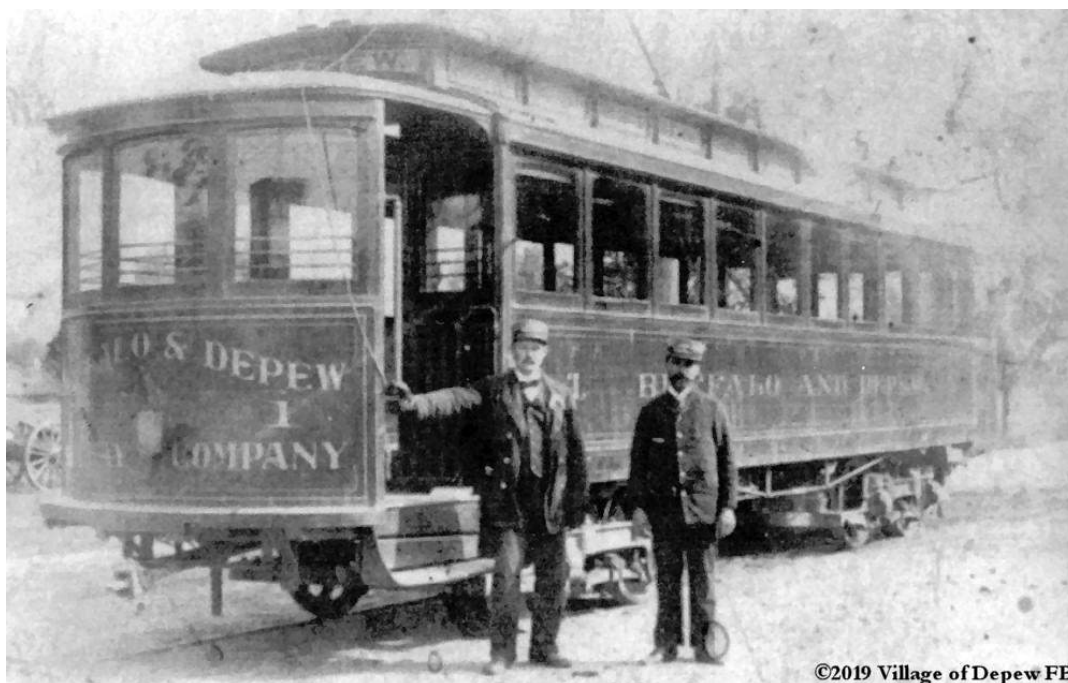
The arrival of the railroad in the 19th century was a pivotal event that spurred economic growth and population expansion in the Village of Lancaster.

Establishment of Lancaster Opera House (1897)

The Lancaster Opera House, built in 1897, became a central cultural and social hub for the village. Originally functioning as both a theater and a village hall, it hosted performances, political meetings, and community gatherings.

Growth of the Industrial Sector

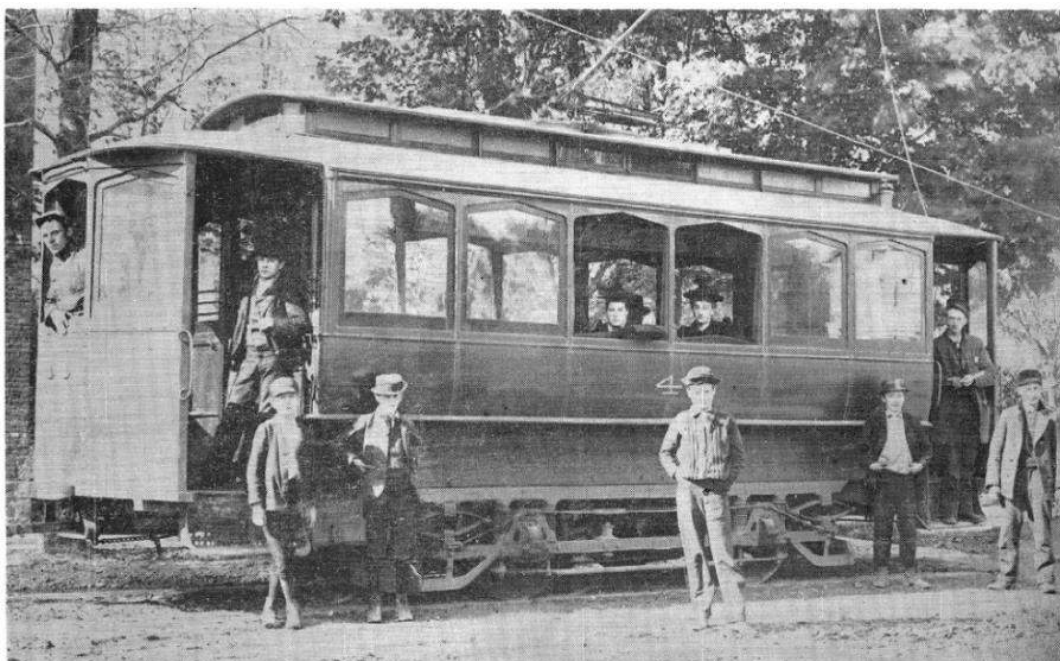
The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw significant industrial growth in Lancaster, with the establishment of various manufacturing businesses.



©2019 Village of Depew FB

Caption: In 1897, Buffalo businessman Herbert P. Bissell and partners obtained a charter for the "Buffalo & Depew Electric Railway" which would be double tracked for efficiency both east and westbound. Construction began in 1899 and opened for passengers on May 8, 1901.

Source: <http://www.trainweb.org/wnyrhs/CDepew.htm>



Caption: The first Lancaster-Buffalo trolley, which began its local run in October 1893. Shown in the open window at the right is Mrs. Joseph Scheier. Photo was taken at the corner of Church Street and Broadway.

Source: <https://archive.org/details/1949centennialhistorylancasterny/page/66/mode/1up>

PREVIOUS PLANS

Reviewing previous local, county, and regional reports and studies is necessary in the development of a comprehensive plan as it allows the municipality to build upon existing knowledge and ensure relevant findings from past initiatives are incorporated into future strategies.

Comprehensive planning is most effective when it is consistent with existing local, county and regional plans. Reviewing these plans helps ensure the comprehensive plan update aligns with the broader regional goals, policies, and regulations. This alignment is crucial for securing funding, gaining approvals, and fostering cooperation among various levels of government.

For the sake of efficiency, summaries of each reviewed plan can be found in Appendix A. The section below lists the plans reviewed as well as the major themes within these plans.

LIST OF PLANS

- **Town of Lancaster, Village of Lancaster, & Village of Depew Joint Comprehensive Plan (2018)**

Village of Depew

- Adopted Budget 2024-2025
- Village Code, Chapter 260, Zoning
- The Fire Alarm System, Village of Depew, New York
- A History of the Water Supply, Village of Depew, New York, 1898-1961

Village of Lancaster

- Budget 2024-2025
- Village Code, Chapter 350, Zoning
- Village of Lancaster Extreme Weather Vulnerability Report 2020
- Village of Lancaster Climate Resilience Plan
- Lively Lancaster, A Plan for Housing, Greenways, and Downtown Vitality
- Local Government Greenhouse Gas Emissions Study, Village of Lancaster
- Preserving the Historic Scale and Character of the Village Center
- Tree Management Plan, Village of Lancaster, New York (2020)
- Updated Traffic Analysis Report on Lancaster Village Center Development Plan
- Village of Lancaster Climate Smart Communities Certification (2022)
- Village of Lancaster NY Forward Strategic Investment Plan (2023)
- Village of Lancaster Downtown Development Strategy (2018)

County & Regional Plans

- Engaging the Future of Housing in the Buffalo-Niagara Region: A Preliminary Exploration of Challenges that Lie Ahead
- Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis, Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls, New York
- Erie County Community Climate Action Plan 2023

County & Regional Plans Continued

- Buffalo Niagara Priority Climate Action Plan (2024)
- Erie County NY Recovery Plan – State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (2022)
- ECIDA Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2022-2026)
- Lake Como Park, Erie County Parks Master Plan (2018)
- Moving Forward 2050 Update: A Regional Transportation Plan for Buffalo Niagara (2023)
- GBNRTC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Federal Fiscal Years 2023 – 2027
- A Strategy for Prosperity in Western New York, WNY Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan (2011)
- Erie County Business Park Report (2016)
- Erie County-Wide Shared Services Plan (2020)
- Bike Buffalo Niagara Master Plan (2021)

MAJOR THEMES

Regional Themes

- **Smart Growth and Sustainable Development.** Encourage compact, mixed-use development that maximizes the use of existing infrastructure and minimizes urban sprawl.
- **Transportation and Connectivity.** Improve transportation options and connectivity, including public transit, pedestrian pathways, and bike infrastructure.
- **Economic Revitalization and Small Business Support.** Support economic growth through the revitalization of downtown areas, attraction of new businesses, and support for existing small businesses.
- **Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change.** Promote environmental sustainability through the protection of natural resources, adoption of green infrastructure, and preparation for climate change impacts.
- **Housing Diversity and Affordability.** Ensure a diverse and affordable housing stock that meets the needs of all residents, including families, seniors, and low-income individuals.
- **Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.** Improve public safety services, emergency preparedness, and response systems for both natural disasters and public safety events.
- **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space.** Improve public open spaces, recreational opportunities, and promoting physical and mental well-being for residents.
- **Economic Equity and Workforce Development.** Ensure economic opportunities for all, promote workforce development, and support historically disadvantaged communities.

Village Themes

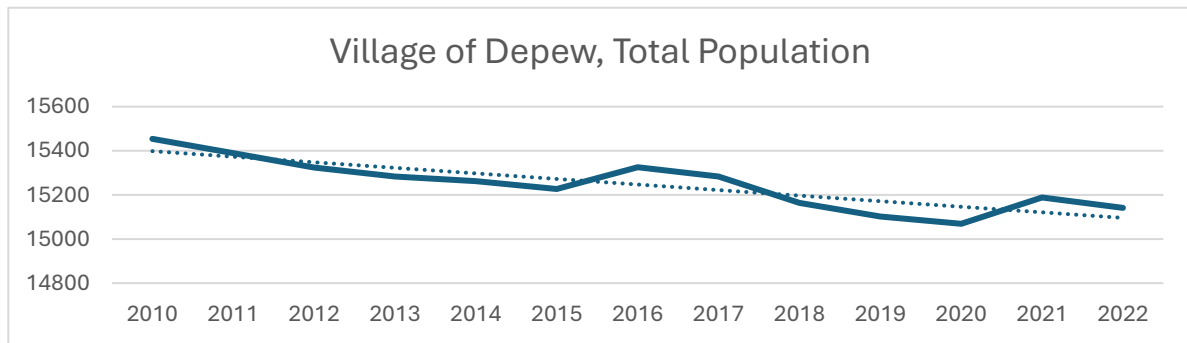
- **Economic Development.** Both villages aim to foster economic growth, support local businesses, and create opportunities for entrepreneurship.
- **Infrastructure Improvements.** Continuous investment in infrastructure such as roads, public facilities, and utilities.
- **Environmental Sustainability.** Projects focused on green infrastructure, waste management, and sustainability practices.
- **Community Resilience and Climate Preparedness.** Plans to enhance community resilience against extreme weather and climate-related challenges. Implementation of green infrastructure and improvements in stormwater management systems.
- **Transportation and Mobility.** Goals to improve walkability and enhance public transit options.
- **Housing and Community Development.** Addressing diverse housing needs and promoting community development initiatives.
- **Historic Preservation and Community Character.** Preserving the historic character and unique community identity.
- **Cultural and Civic Engagement.** Promote cultural assets and encourage civic engagement. Focus on fostering community events, enhancing public spaces, and preserving cultural landmarks.
- **Health and Wellness.** Promote health and wellness by enhancing walkability, improving recreational spaces, and fostering active transportation methods like biking.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic data and trends are crucial for understanding community characteristics and ensuring that the comprehensive plan addresses the specific needs of the current and future population. The section below covers demographic updates since the 2018 joint comprehensive plan.

Village of Depew Population Trends

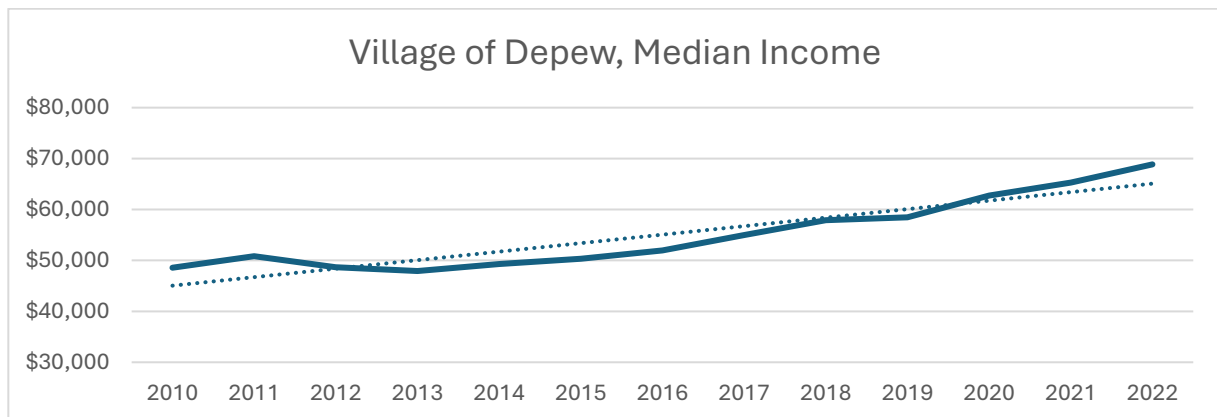
2018 Plan	Today
The entire Village of Depew's population has been declining, from 22,158 in 1970 to an estimated 15,227 in 2015, representing a decrease of approximately 31%.	Over the last five years, Depew's population has shown a slight decline, with the population decreasing from 15,325 in 2017 to 15,141 in 2022. This reflects a general trend of gradual population reduction in the village.



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Household Income

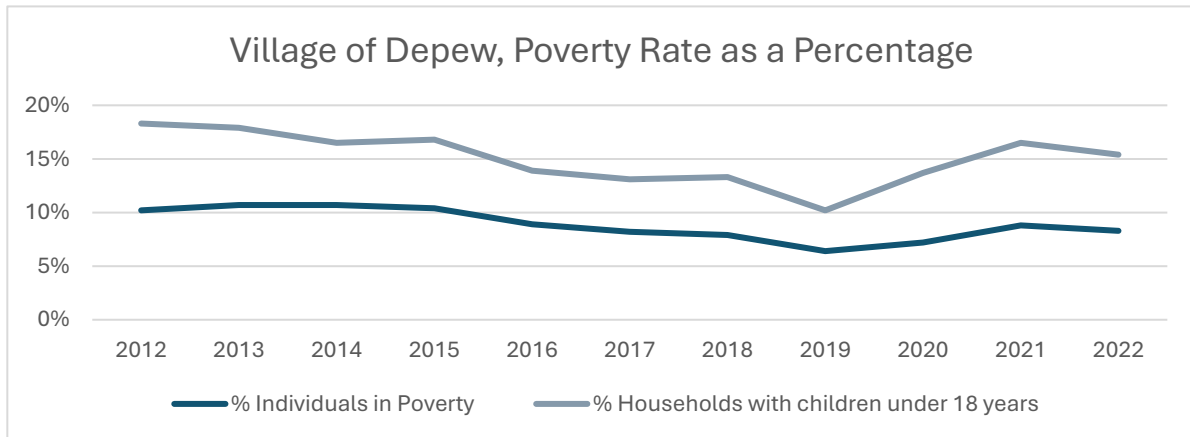
2018 Plan	Today
Median household income for the entire Village of Depew was estimated at \$50,317 in 2015, up from \$48,558 in 2010.	The median household income has increased steadily, rising from \$58,458 in 2019 to \$68,856 in 2022. This trend indicates a significant improvement in household earnings.



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

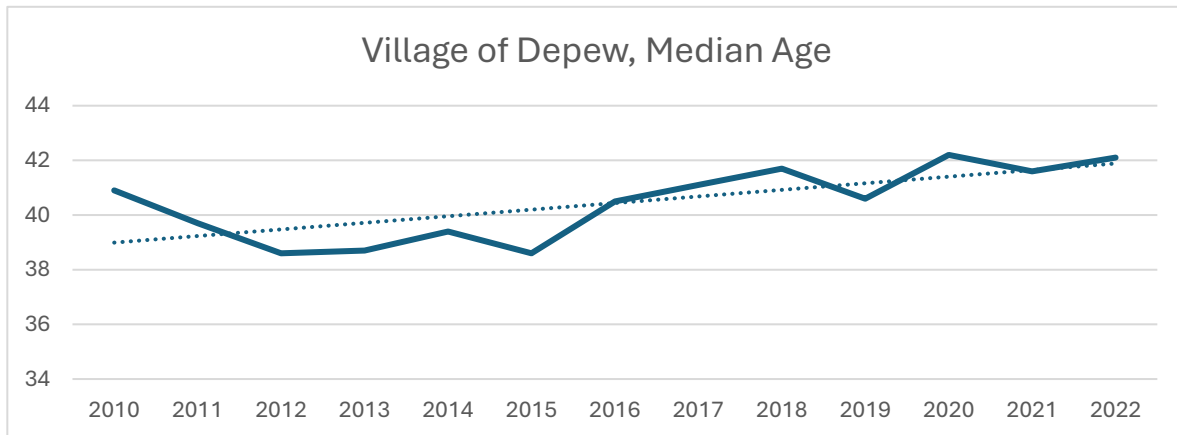
Village of Depew Poverty Levels

2018 Plan	Today
Poverty rates in the Village of Depew increased for families from 5.0% in 2010 to 7.1% in 2015, and for individuals from 6.4% to 10.4% during the same period	The percentage of individuals in poverty in Depew increased slightly from 7.9% in 2018 to 8.3% in 2022. During the same period, the percentage of households with children under 18 years in poverty fluctuated, starting at 13.3% in 2018, peaking at 16.5% in 2021, and then decreasing to 15.4% in 2022.



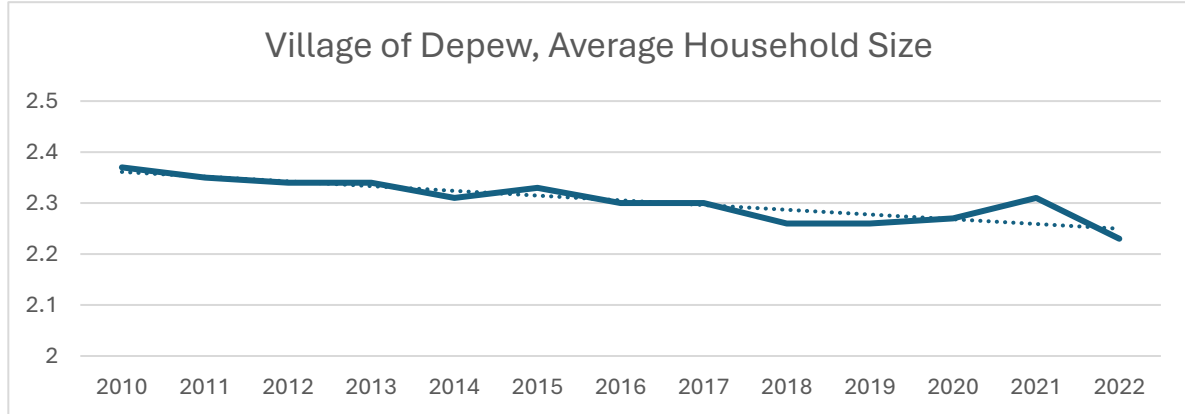
Age Distribution

2018 Plan	Today
In the Lancaster portion of the Village of Depew, seniors (65 and over) accounted for 14% of the population in 2010. The percentage of residents aged 17 and under was 19.4%.	From 2018 to 2022, the median age of Depew's population has slightly increased, moving from 41.7 years in 2018 to 42.1 years in 2022. This indicates a gradual aging of the population over the five-year period.



Village of Depew Household Composition

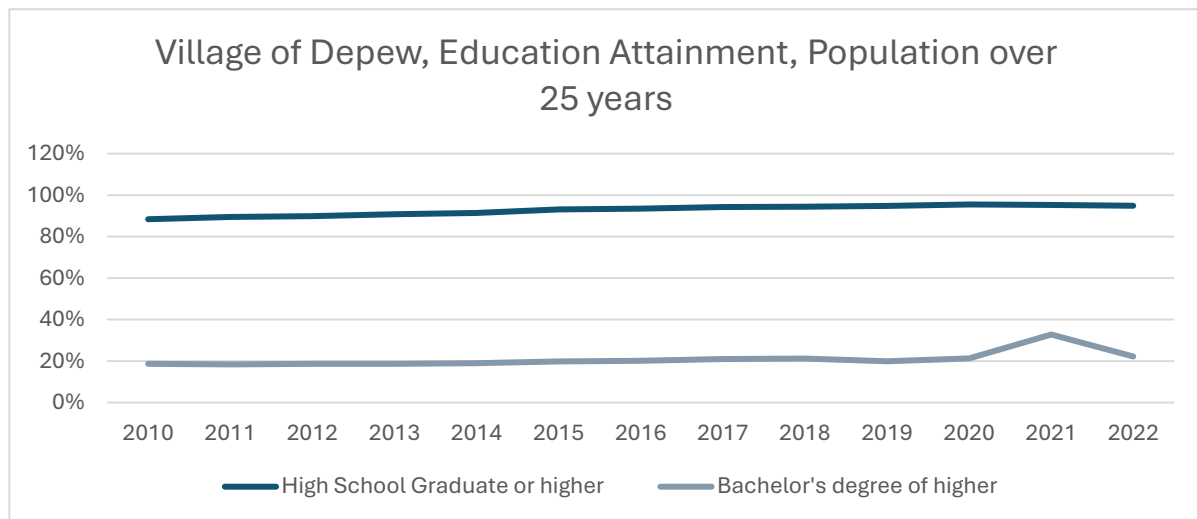
2018 Plan	Today
<p>The average household size in the Lancaster portion of the Village of Depew is 2.27 persons. About 33.1% of households consist of one person.</p>	<p>From 2018 to 2022, the average household size in Depew saw a slight decrease from 2.26 to 2.23, indicating a trend towards smaller households.</p>



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment

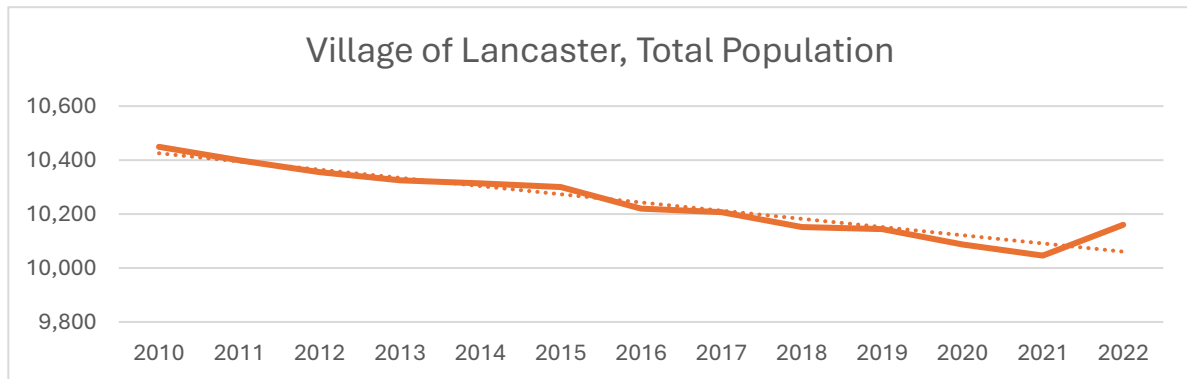
2018 Plan	Today
<p>Approximately 93.1% of residents aged 25 and over are high school graduates, and 19.8% hold a bachelor's degree or higher.</p>	<p>The percentage of residents with a high school diploma or higher remains consistently high (94.9% in 2022). The percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher has slightly fluctuated over time (21.2% in 2018, 32.8% in 2021, & 22.2% in 2022).</p>



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Village of Lancaster Population Trends

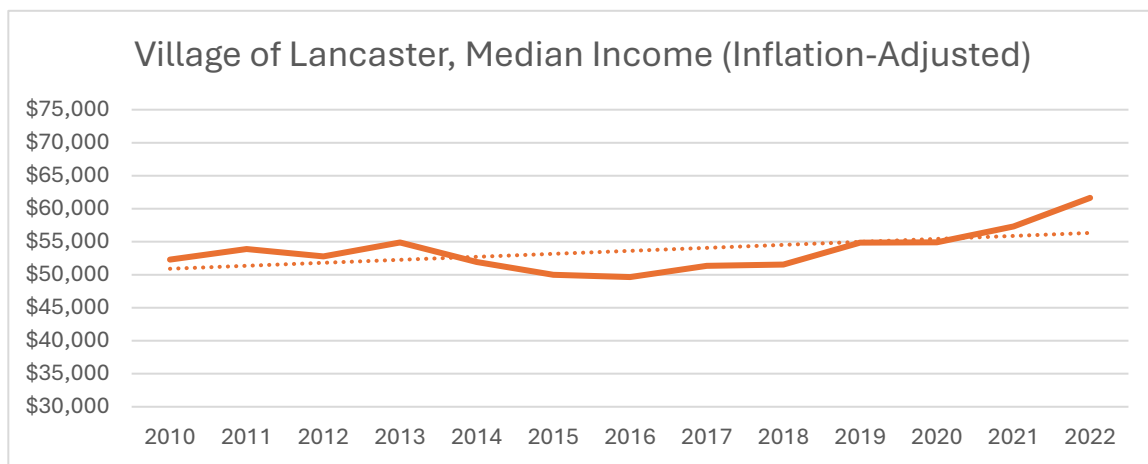
2018 Plan	Today
<p>The population of the Village of Lancaster has been declining over the past 35 years, though this trend began to stabilize. Between 2000 and 2010, the population decreased by 836 residents, from 11,162 to 10,326 (a 7.5% decrease). However, between 2010 and 2015, the population remained essentially the same, holding steady at around 10,326.</p>	<p>Over the last five years, Lancaster's population has experienced a slight increase, starting from 10,152 in 2018 and ending at 10,160 in 2022 based on ACS 5-year estimates. This reflects a generally stable population with minor fluctuations during this period.</p>



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Household Income

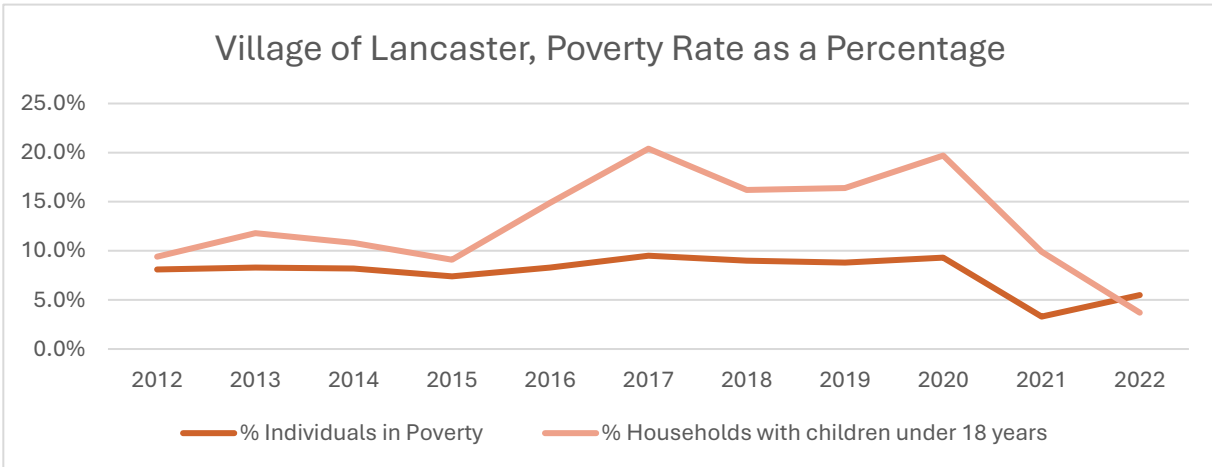
2018 Plan	Today
<p>The median household income in the Village of Lancaster was estimated at \$49,991 in 2015, down from \$52,305 in 2010.</p>	<p>Over the last five years, Lancaster's median household income has steadily increased, rising from \$54,875 in 2019 to \$61,646 in 2022. This growth indicates an improving economic situation for households within the village.</p>



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

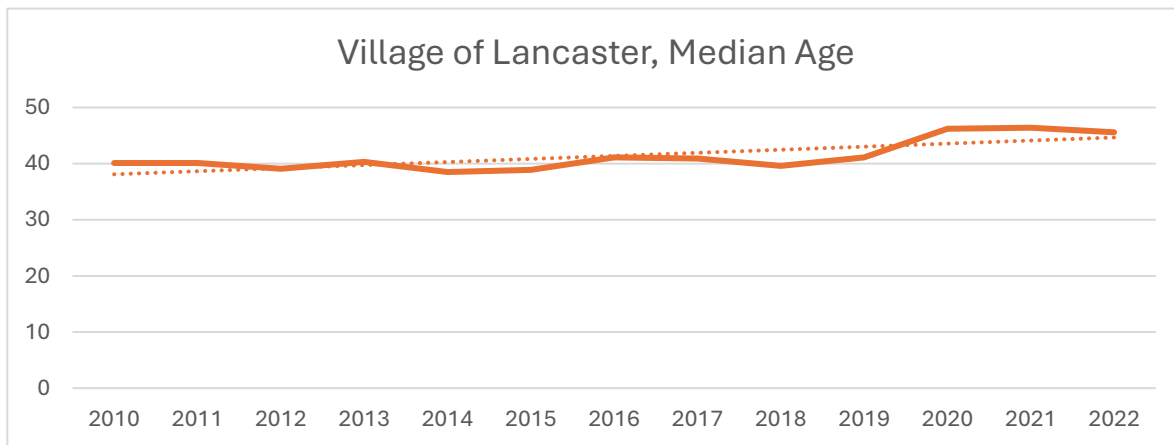
Village of Lancaster Poverty Levels

2018 Plan	Today
<p>Poverty rates in the Village of Lancaster increased slightly for families from 6.1% in 2010 to 6.8% in 2015, while the percentage of persons under the poverty line decreased from 8.4% to 7.4%.</p>	<p>The percentage of individuals in poverty has slightly fluctuated over time (9.0% in 2018 to 5.5% in 2022). During the same period, the percentage of households with children under 18 years in poverty also declined significantly, from 16.2% in 2018 to 3.7% in 2022.</p>



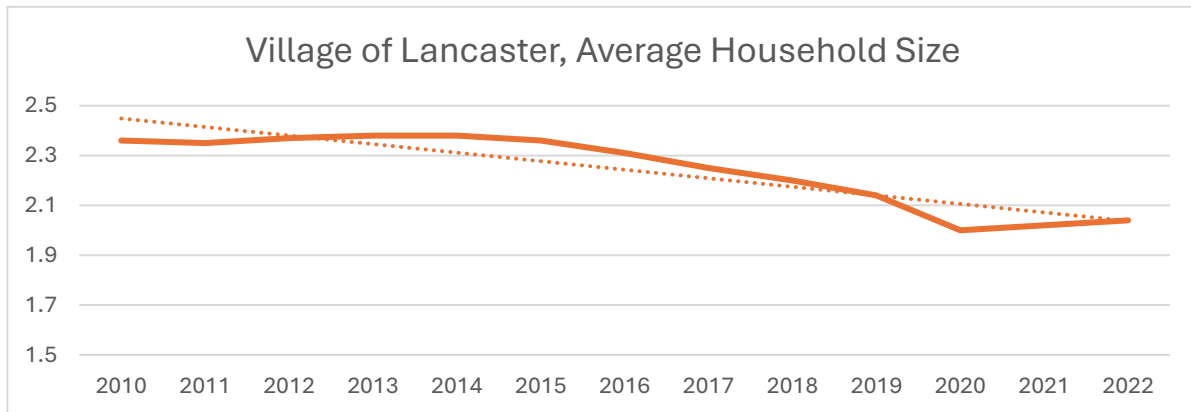
Age Distribution

2018 Plan	Today
<p>Seniors (65 and over) accounted for 16.1% of the population in 2015. The largest share of the population is young adults aged 25 to 44, who make up 28% of the village's population.</p>	<p>From 2018 to 2022, the median age in Lancaster increased, starting from 39.6 years in 2018 and rising to 45.6 years in 2022. This trend suggests an aging population within the village over this period.</p>



Village of Lancaster Household Composition

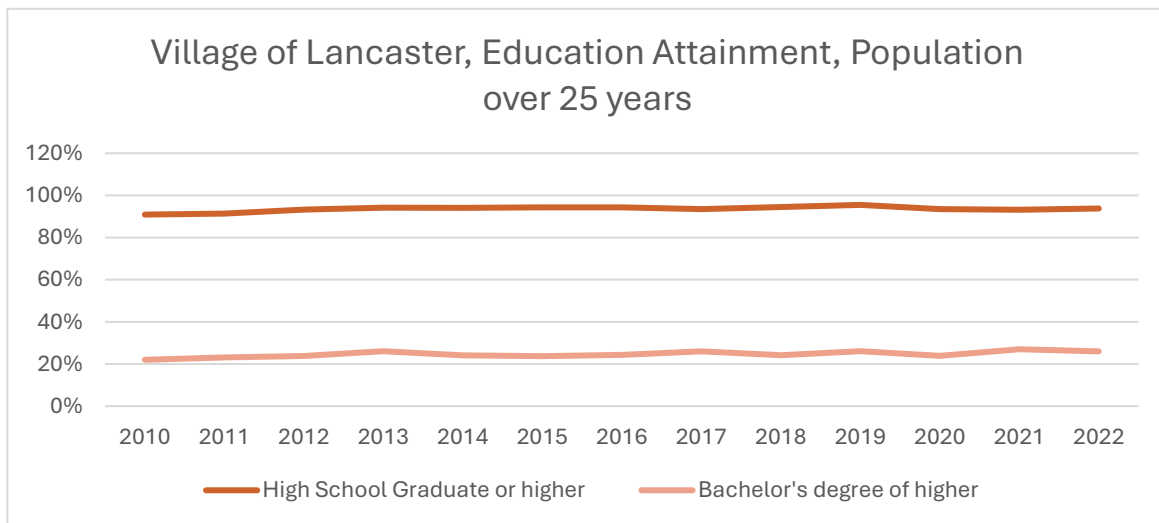
2018 Plan	Today
<p>The average household size is 2.24 persons, with family households accounting for 61% and non-family households for 39%. About 30% of households consist of one person, and 25% of households are families with children under 18.</p>	<p>From 2018 to 2022, the average household size in Lancaster decreased slightly, moving from 2.20 in 2018 to 2.04 in 2022. During the same period, the percentage of households with members aged 65 and over increased, indicating an aging population within households.</p>



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment

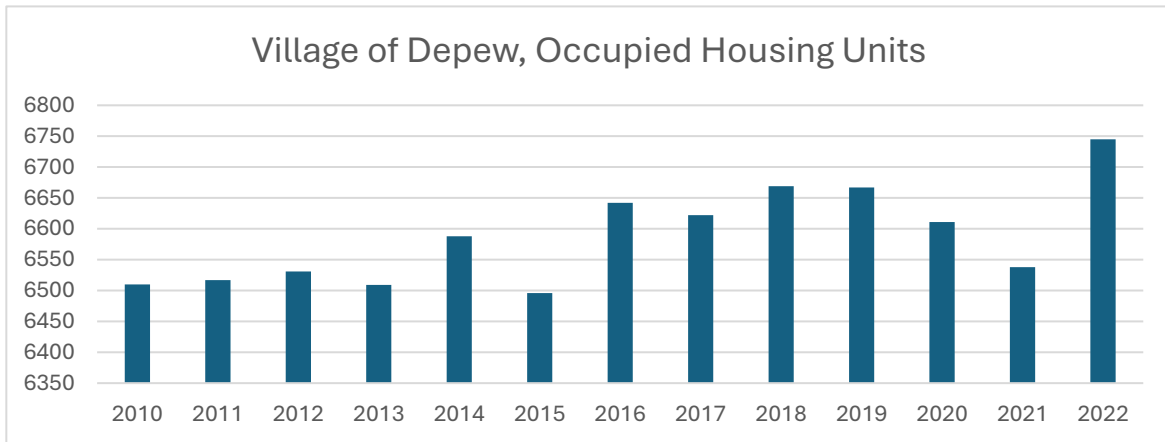
2018 Plan	Today
<p>Approximately 94.3% of residents aged 25 and over are high school graduates, and 23.7% hold a bachelor's degree or higher.</p>	<p>Approximately 93.8% of residents aged 25 and over are high school graduates, and 26% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Rates have remained fairly stable over time.</p>



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

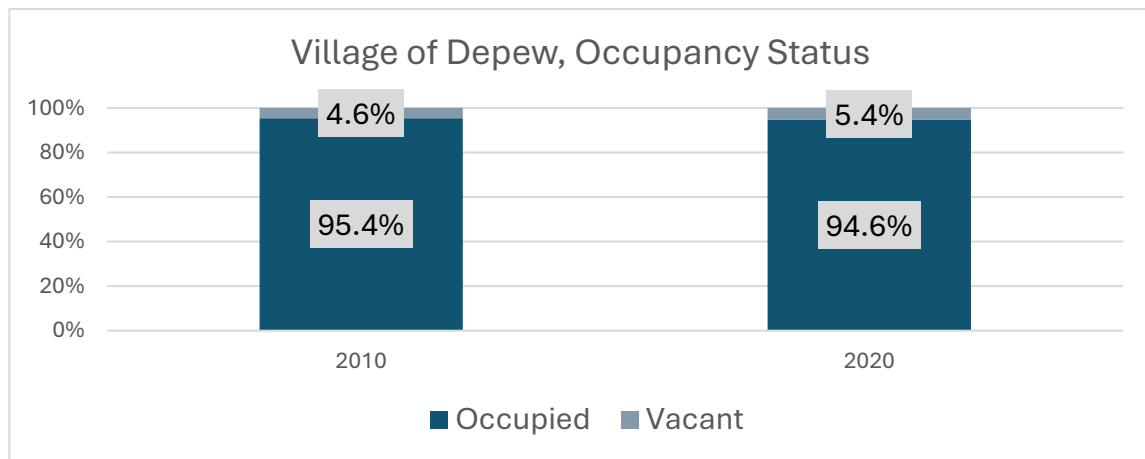
Village of Depew Housing Stock

2018 Plan	Today
<p>In 2015, the entire Village of Depew had an estimated 6,906 housing units. Approximately 40% of these units were located in the portion of the village within the Town of Lancaster. The majority of the housing stock consists of single-family detached homes.</p>	<p>The number of occupied housing units in Depew fluctuated slightly, starting at 6,669 in 2018, decreasing to 6,538 in 2021, and then increasing to 6,745 in 2022. These variations suggest some movement in housing occupancy levels during this period.</p>



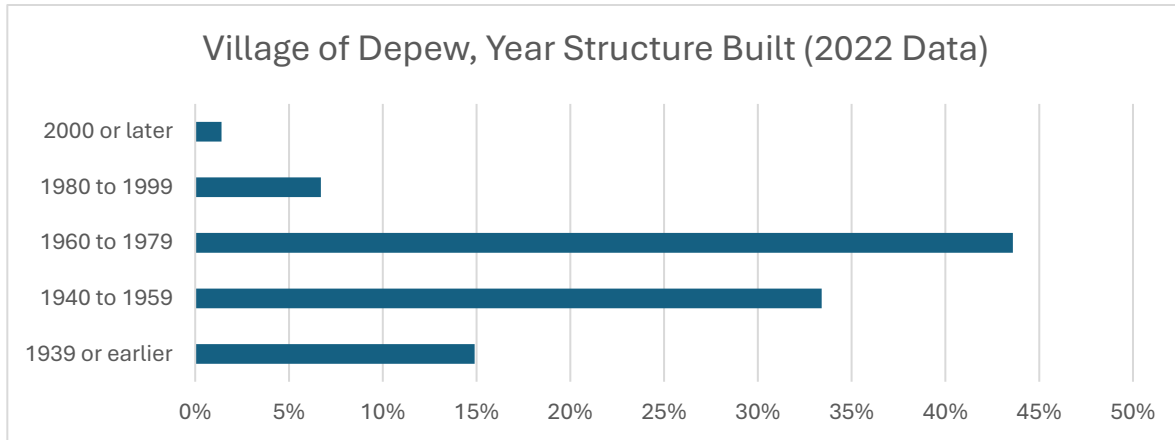
Vacancy Rates

2018 Plan	Today
<p>The vacancy rate in the Lancaster portion of the Village of Depew was 6.5%, while the entire village had a vacancy rate of 5.9%.</p>	<p>Vacancy rates show some fluctuation. The data for 2020 indicated a vacancy rate of approximately 5.36%, up from 4.65% in 2010, reflecting an increase in the proportion of vacant housing units over the decade.</p>



Village of Depew Construction Dates

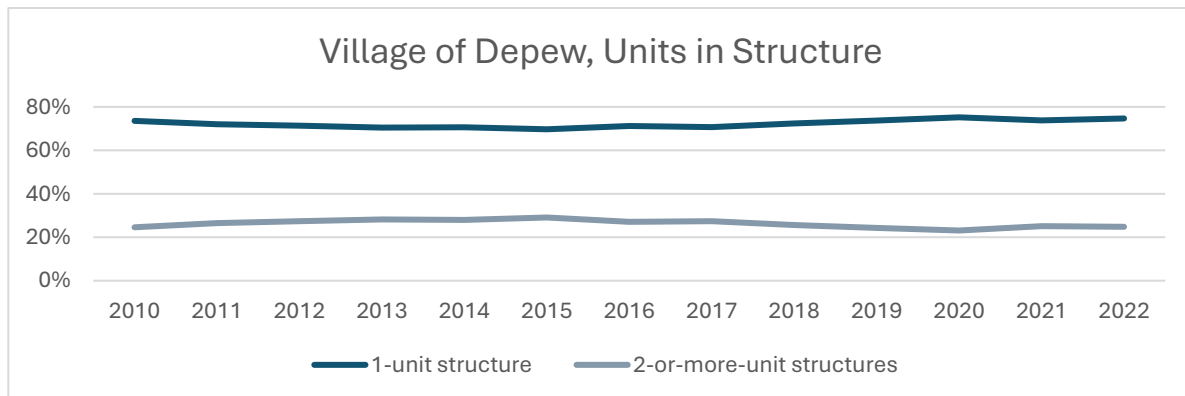
2018 Plan	Today
64% of the housing stock was built between 1940 and 1960. Approximately 20% of the housing units were built before 1940. Less than 1% of the housing units were built since 2000, indicating very little new construction.	From 2000 to 2022, a small percentage of Depew's housing stock was built, with 1.4% of structures constructed post-2000, including 0.9% built between 2020 and 2022, reflecting limited new construction in recent years.



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Characteristics

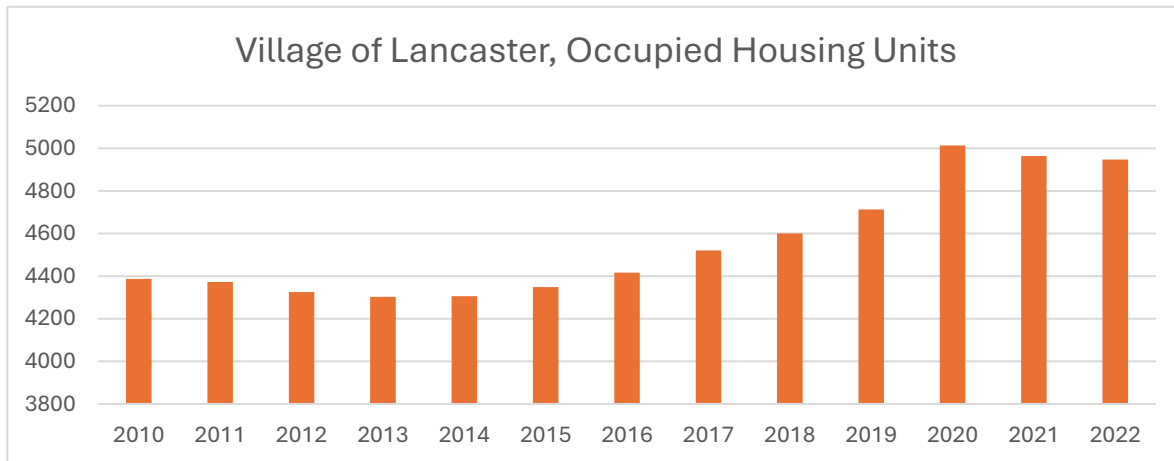
2018 Plan	Today
Depew has seen investment in the existing building stock, with several permits issued for residential & commercial additions between 2013 and 2017. The village's housing stock is predominantly composed of single-family homes, reflecting the post-WW II era.	The majority of the house stock remains single-family homes. The percentage of single unit structure and percent of two-or-more unit structures has remained fairly consistent over time at a ratio of roughly 3:1.



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Village of Lancaster Housing Stock

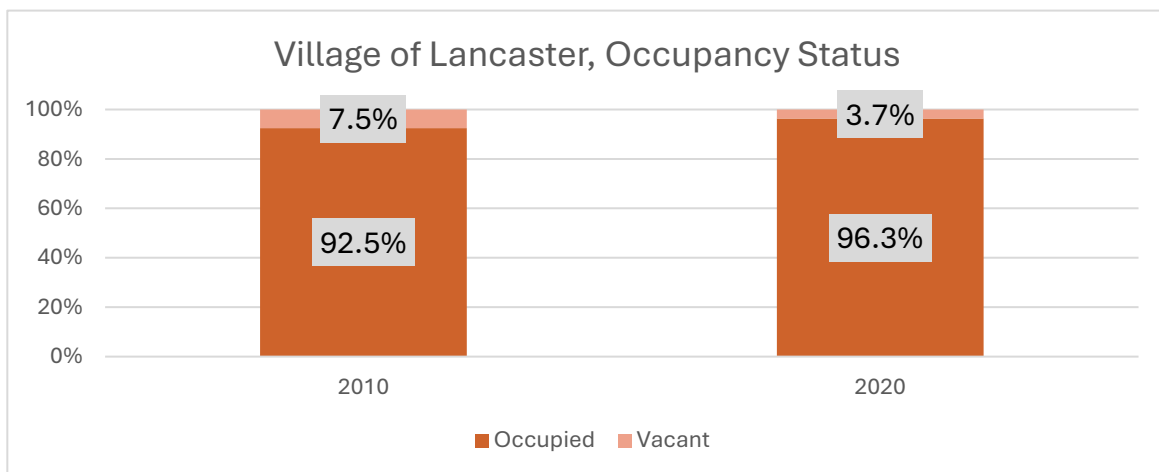
2018 Plan	Today
<p>In 2015, the Village of Lancaster had an estimated 4,724 housing units. The majority (66%) were single-family detached homes. Other types included single-family attached homes (4%), two-family homes (10%), and structures with three or more units (15%).</p>	<p>In 2022, the village had an estimated 4,947 occupied housing units. From 2018 to 2022, the number of owner-occupied housing units in Lancaster increased from 68.8% to 72.5%, while the number of renter-occupied housing units decreased from 31.2% to 27.5%.</p>



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Vacancy Rates

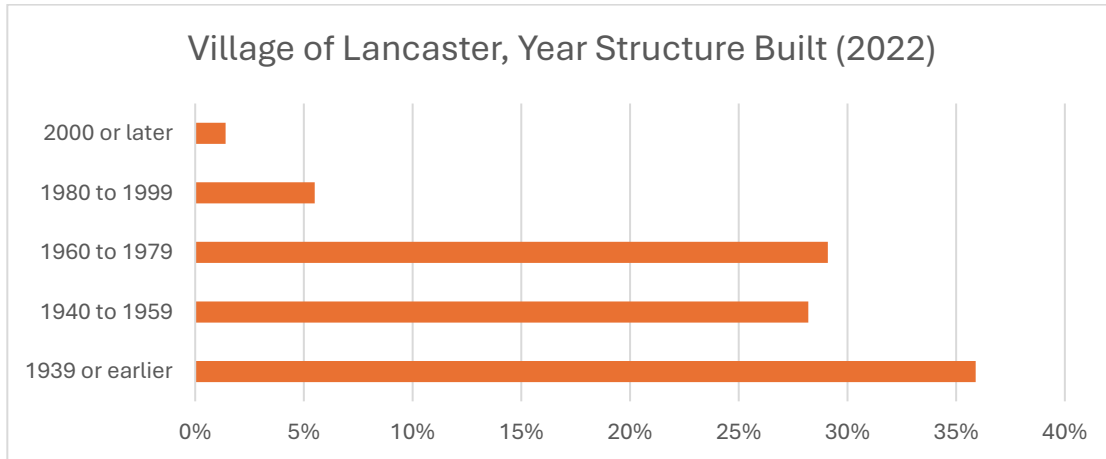
2018 Plan	Today
<p>Approximately 8% (357 units) of the housing stock were vacant in 2015.</p>	<p>Approximately 3.7% (357 units) of the housing stock were vacant in 2020. While the number of vacant units remained the same, the total housing stock increased, resulting in a lower vacancy rate.</p>



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Village of Lancaster Construction Dates

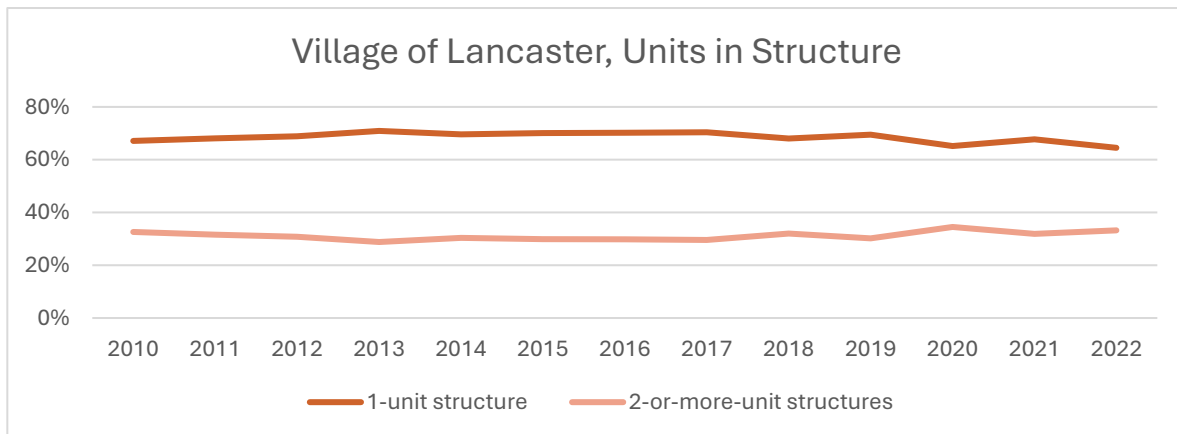
2018 Plan	Today
About 39% of the housing units were built before 1940. 42% were constructed between 1940 and 1969. Only 2% of the units were built since 2000, indicating limited new construction in recent years.	From 2000 to 2022, Lancaster experienced minimal new housing construction, with only 0.3% of units built between 2000 and 2009, and no significant construction occurring in the 2020s, as reflected by a 0% construction rate for 2021 and just a 1.1% rate in 2022.



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Characteristics

2018 Plan	Today
The village is known for its historic and cultural character, with over 80 buildings in two historic districts that could qualify for the National Register of Historic Places based on their distinctive architecture.	From 2018 to 2022, Lancaster saw a slight decrease in the proportion of single-unit structures, from 68% in 2018 to 64.5% in 2022, while the proportion of structures with two or more units increased from 32% to 33.2% over the same period.



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates

INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES

Understanding the current state of municipal services, infrastructure, and facilities helps in identifying areas where upgrades, expansions, or new facilities and services may be needed to meet the community's evolving needs. This information is essential for making informed decisions about how to allocate resources effectively and prioritize investments.

Village of Depew

Village of Lancaster

Sanitary Sewer

Both villages are served by the Erie County Sewer District No. 4 which provides conveyance services including pumping stations, a flow management facility, and collector and interceptor sewers. Sanitary sewage is carried to the Buffalo Sewer Authority for treatment.

Less than a dozen properties rely on individual septic systems due to restrictive physical conditions and pumping requirements.

The village is fully sewerred with no reliance on individual septic systems.

Water

Water is supplied by the Erie County Water Authority sourced from Lake Erie (Sturgeon Point Treatment Plant) and the Niagara River (Van De Water Treatment Plant).

Water lines are present on every publicly owned road in the village. Developers are responsible for constructing new water lines for developments, which are then maintained by the village.

In 2003, the Village of Lancaster upgraded its water system to Erie County Water Authority standards prior to transferring control.

Stormwater

Stormwater infiltration and inflow issues occur during heavy rain events or snow melts, leading to stormwater entering sanitary sewer lines. Both villages are working under a Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) consent order to address these issues.

General Findings from the 2018 Plan

1. The infrastructure in both villages **supports high-density development**, particularly in areas with existing sewer and water services.
2. Emphasis on maintaining and **improving existing infrastructure** rather than extending new lines.

These findings underscore the importance of maintaining and upgrading existing utility and infrastructure systems to support sustainable growth and high-quality municipal services in both the Village of Lancaster and the Village of Depew.

Key Public Recreation Facilities

Fireman's Park: Located at 90 Gould Avenue, the park offers a memorial to Depew Firefighters, an indoor ice pavilion, a full-size swimming pool, a gazebo, a picnic shelter, playgrounds, baseball diamonds, and basketball and volleyball courts.

Veteran's Memorial Park: A park area dedicated to honoring veterans, offering green space and facilities for public use. The Village hosts their Summer Concert Series in Veterans Park from June through August.

Cayuga Creek Park: To provide desirable green space, the Village of Lancaster created Cayuga Creek off West Main Street. This space includes roughly 1,370 feet of paved trail along the creek, connecting pedestrians and bicyclists to nearby sidewalks and trails.

Hadsall Park Splash Pad: Located on Richmond Ave, this is a popular summer destination for families that features interactive water elements like sprayers and fountains.

Public School Facilities

Most students in the Village of Depew attend the Depew Union Free School District, with some northern residents attending the Lancaster Central School District

The Village of Lancaster is primarily served by the Lancaster Central School District, with some students in the southwestern corner attending the Depew Union Free School District

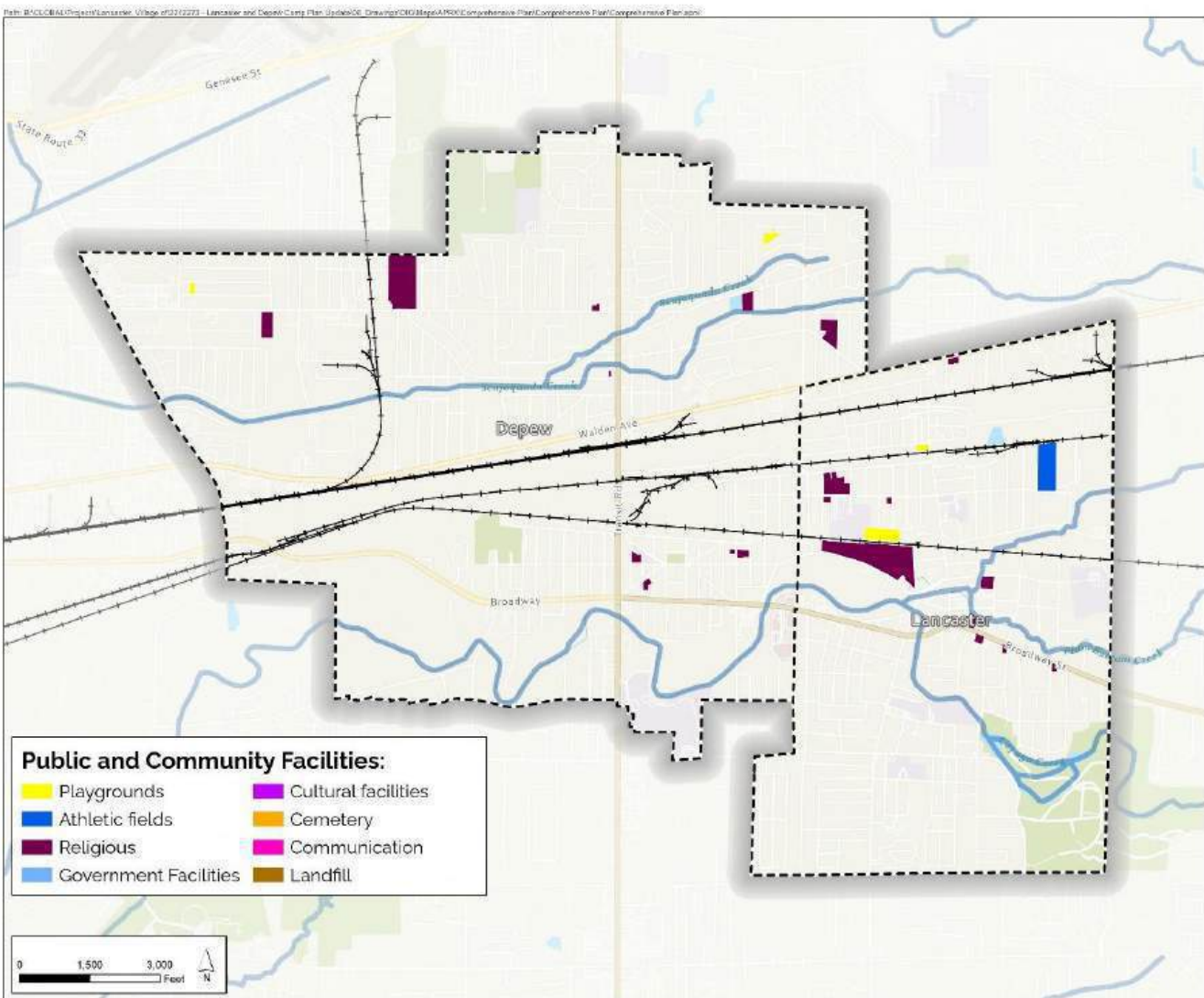
Emergency Services

Depew has its own police department and volunteer fire department, supported by mutual aid agreements and regional emergency services coordination

Emergency services are provided by the Lancaster Village Volunteer Fire Department, with police services shared with the Town of Lancaster. The Town's Emergency Management Services (OEM) and mutual aid agreements offer additional support, while the Lancaster Volunteer Ambulance Corps (LVAC) handles emergency medical services under a town agreement.

Public Library

Both the Depew Public Library and Lancaster Public Library provide a range of services including book lending, internet access, community programs, and events.



VILLAGES OF LANCASTER AND DEPEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Public and Community Facilities

LaBella Project No: 2242273
DATE: 7/29/2024

Map Key:

- Villages of Depew and Lancaster Boundary
- Roads
- Railroad
- Waterways

Sources:

- Public and Community Facilities: Regrid, 2024
- Basemap: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS
- Municipality: NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2022
- Roads: NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2023
- Railroad: NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2020
- Waterways: OpenStreetMap, 2022



TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

Transportation and mobility are foundational elements of a functional municipality, enabling residents to access jobs, education, healthcare, and other essential services. It is important to review existing transportation systems and infrastructure to ensure that the comprehensive plan includes strategies that improve safety, connectivity, and accessibility.

Village of Depew

Village of Lancaster

Major Roadways

Key east/west routes: Interstate-90 (I-90), NYS Route 33 (Genesee Street), NYS Route 952Q (Walden Avenue), and U.S. Route 20 (Broadway).

Key north/south routes: Transit Road (NYS Route 78), Harris Hill Road/Central Avenue, Aurora Street, and Bowen Road.

Transit Road serves as a major north/south corridor that divides the Village of Depew between the Town of Lancaster and the Town of Cheektowaga.

Walden Avenue serves as a boundary between the Village of Lancaster and the Town of Lancaster

Public Transit

Served by NFTA Metro Bus routes, including Route 46 (Lancaster), Route 69 (Alden), and Route 103 (East-Suburban).

Bicycle & Pedestrian Infrastructure

The Lancaster Heritage Trail extends approximately 4 miles, offering a rail-to-trail conversion for recreational use. Bicycle routes are limited, with the Online Bicycle Map noting only one marked bicycle lane on Walden Avenue between Transit Road and Central Avenue

Rail & Air Travel

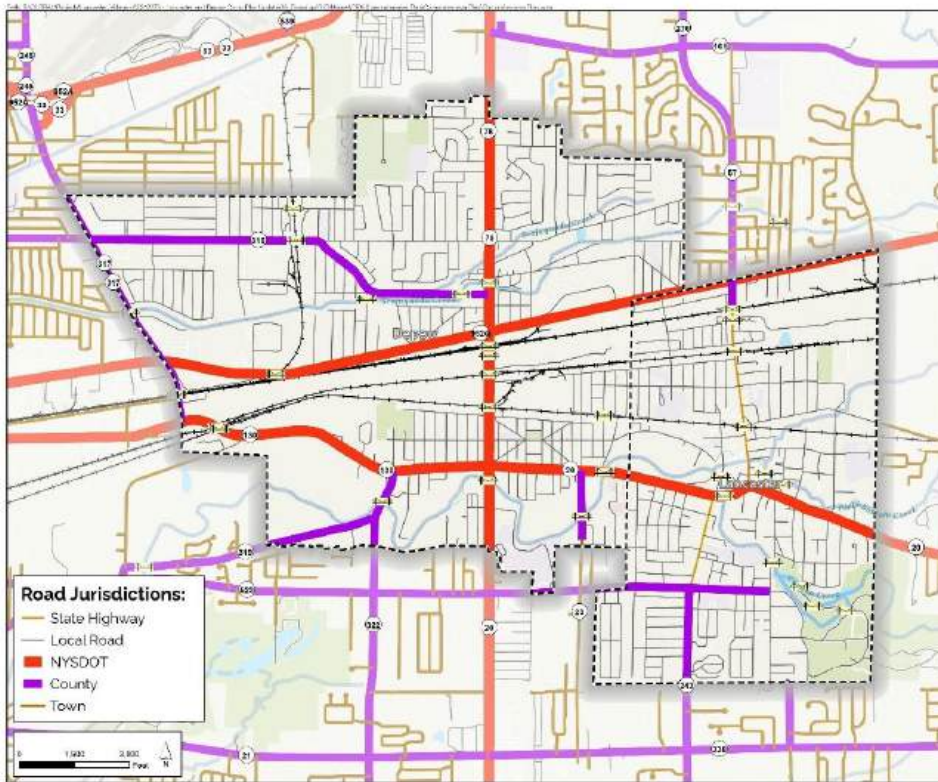
Passenger rail service is accessible at the **Buffalo-Depew Amtrak Station**, offering connections to various destinations.

Freight rail services are also provided by CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern Corporation, and Depew, Lancaster, and Western Railroad.

Buffalo-Lancaster Regional Airport provides a range of services including refueling, parking, flight training, and maintenance.

Traffic & Safety

Traffic volume is significant on major roads, such as Transit Road with an estimated 29,949 vehicles per day



VILLAGES OF LANCASTER AND DEPEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Roads and Bridges

LaBella Project No: 2242273
DATE: 7/25/2024

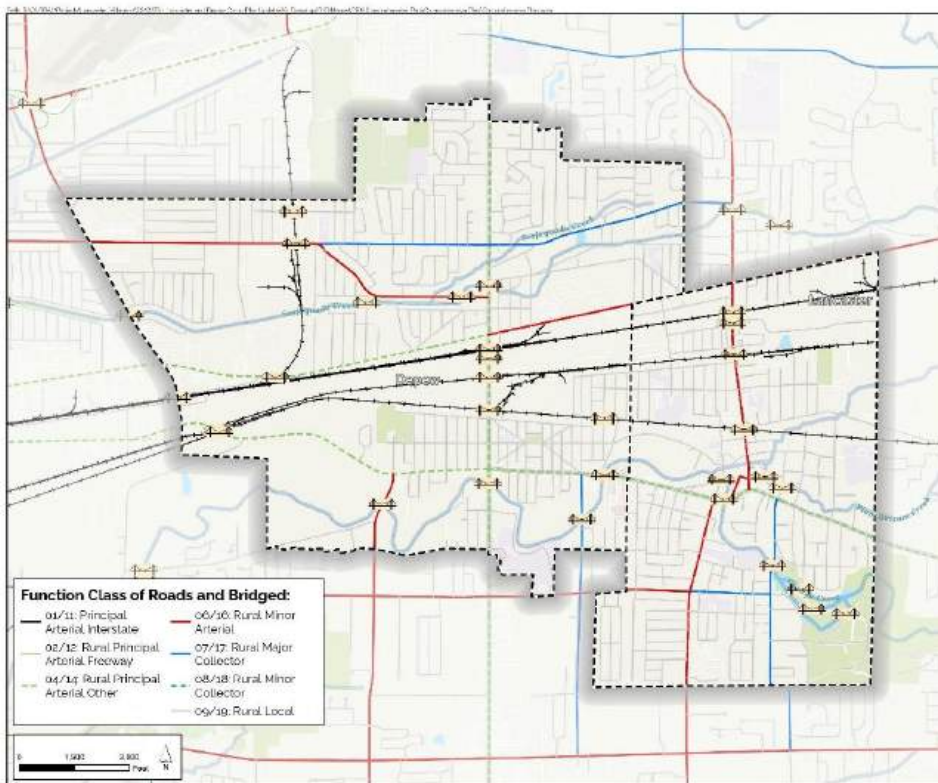
Map Key:

- Villages of Depew and Lancaster Boundary
- Bridge
- Railroad
- Waterways

Sources:

1. Base map: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, GeoGraph, GeoPach, GeoPach, Inc. MET/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS, a Municipality, NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2022
2. Roads and Bridges: NYSOGT, 2020
3. Railroad: NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2020
4. Waterways: OpenStreetMap, 2022

LaBella
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VILLAGES OF LANCASTER AND DEPEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Function Class of Roads and Bridged

LaBella Project No: 2242273
DATE: 7/25/2024

Map Key:

- Villages of Depew and Lancaster Boundary
- Bridge
- Railroad
- Waterways

Sources:

1. Base map: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, GeoGraph, GeoPach, GeoPach, Inc. MET/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS, a Municipality, NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2022
2. Roads and Bridges: NYSOGT, 2020
3. Railroad: NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2020
4. Waterways: OpenStreetMap, 2022
5. Roads and Bridges: NYSOGT, 2020, 2021

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ECONOMIC VITALITY

Understanding the local economy while developing a comprehensive plan ensures economic development strategies are targeted and relevant. These strategies can support existing businesses, attract new industries, and foster job creation, thereby enhancing the community's economic resilience and growth potential.

Village of Depew

Village of Lancaster

Economic Basis

Depew's origin is tied to its establishment as a railroad center. The village has a mix of residential, civic, and institutional uses, particularly around the Veteran's Park area.

Historically a rural, agriculturally focused community with the village serving as the town's rural center. The economy has diversified over time, integrating more into the regional economy.

Key Assets

The **proximity to Buffalo** and its position within the Buffalo-Niagara Falls metropolitan area is advantageous to both residents and businesses, especially those that are looking to serve a larger regional market.

Good **transportation routes**, rail access, and a local airport are considered key assets.

Downtown Lancaster is a **central business district** with a mix of retail, residential, office, and civic uses.

The Walden Avenue **industrial corridor** is a significant asset, providing jobs and contributing to the tax base.

Revitalization efforts including Lancaster's \$4.5 million in NY Forward funding aids in implementing projects that enhance walkability, attract visitors, and support local businesses.

Challenges

Older municipalities tend to face challenging with **aging infrastructure**. This especially becomes a problem if the population grows and demands on these systems increase.

Balancing growth and development with the **preservation of historic character** can be challenging, particularly as new businesses and housing developments emerge.

There is a need for **revitalization** of older housing stock and commercial areas.

The villages may encounter difficulties in sustaining job growth and economic stability without **diversifying their economic base**.

LAND USE

Comprehensive plans analyze land use to understand how land is currently being utilized and identify areas suitable for future development and change. These plans ensure that growth is managed in a way that aligns with the community's goals.

Village of Depew

Village of Lancaster

Current Land Use

The Village of Depew is primarily residential, with a significant number of single-family homes and some multi-family housing units.

Commercial activities are concentrated along Broadway and Transit Road, with additional commercial uses along Walden Avenue.

The Village of Lancaster has a mix of residential, commercial, and public service uses. The majority of land is categorized as residential, with single-family homes being predominant. There are also multi-family housing options available.

Commercial development is concentrated along Broadway and Central Avenue, featuring retail and service-oriented businesses.

Key Land Use Characteristics

Both villages have community services including schools, parks, and other public facilities which are integral to the existing land use patterns.

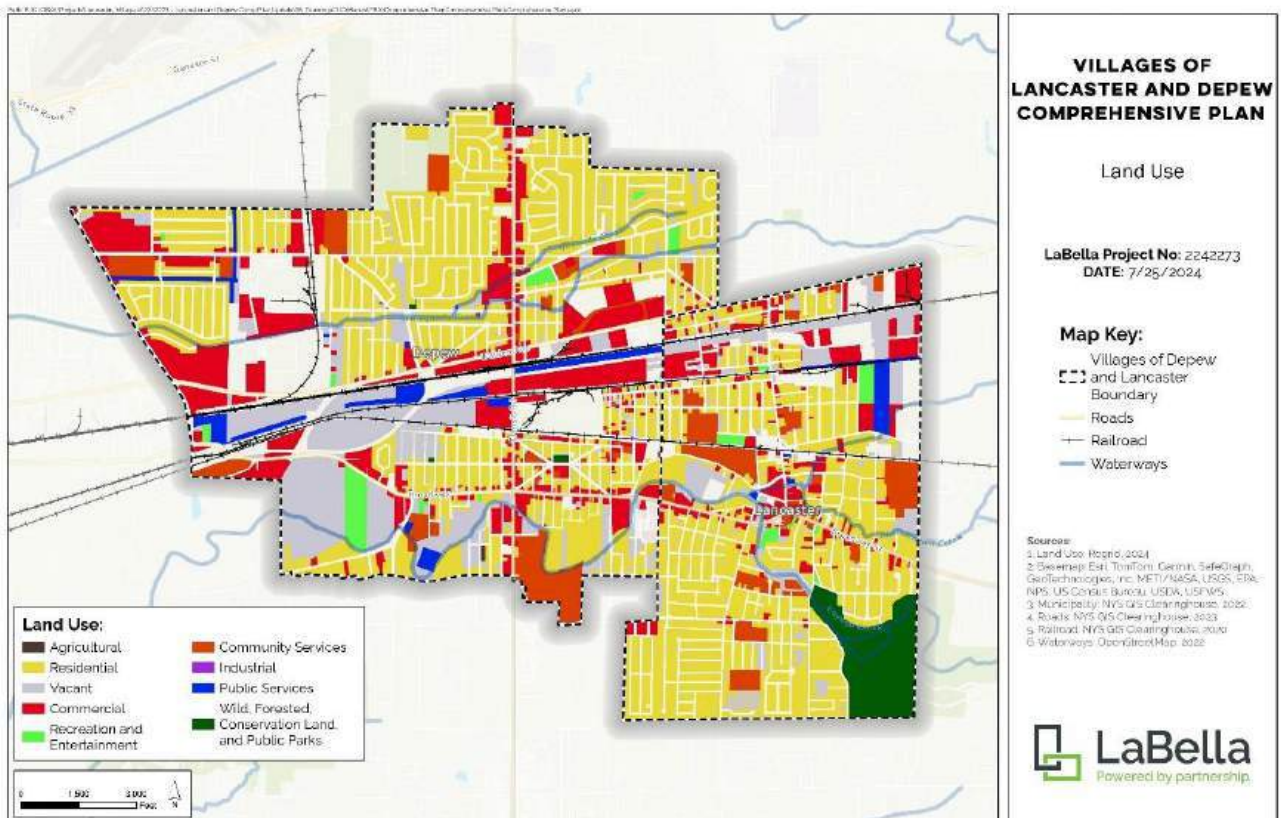
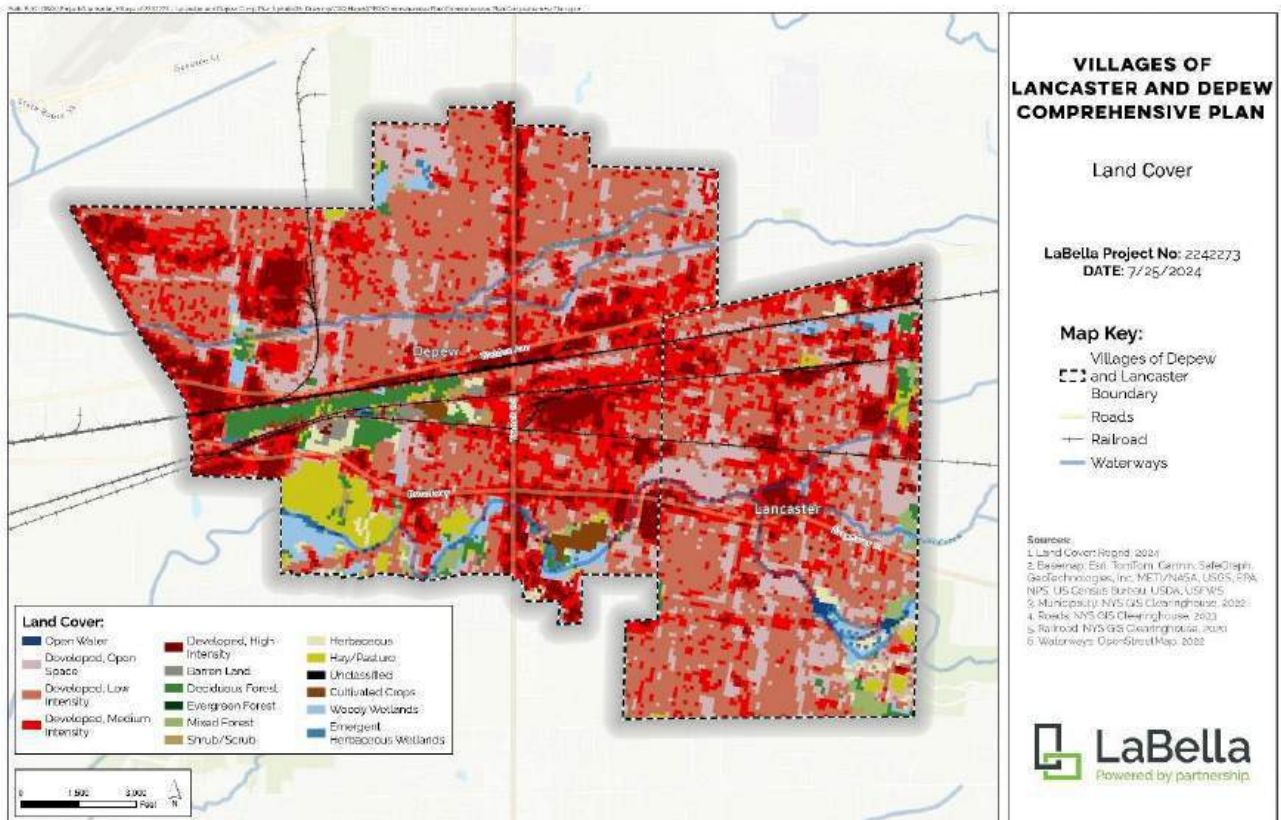
The village includes a mix of industrial and light manufacturing uses, particularly along the rail corridor south of Walden Avenue. Depew's industrial areas play a crucial role in the local economy, providing employment opportunities and contributing to the tax base.

The village is largely built out with limited vacant land available for new development. Historic districts, such as the Central Avenue Historic District and the Broadway Historic District, are significant for preserving the architectural and historical character of the area.

Progress since 2018 Comprehensive Plan

- Maintenance and upgrades to existing public facilities and parks
- Continue to prioritize the preservation of historic and architectural character throughout the village.
- Work to balance development with infrastructure improvements and historic preservation.

- Continued revitalization of downtown Lancaster to strengthen the commercial core.
- Mixed-use development and the promotion of historic character.
- Improvements and development of design standards are recommended to enhance the visual appeal and functionality of the village center.



LOCAL ZONING

A municipality's comprehensive plan acts as the legal basis for their zoning regulations. In New York State, zoning regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan. This requirement is established under New York State law (General City Law § 28-a, Town Law § 272-a, and Village Law § 7-722), which emphasizes that zoning laws should be consistent with the municipality's comprehensive plan. The goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan will inform the content of any future zoning re-write.

Village of Depew

Village of Lancaster

Residential Districts

R-1 Single-family Residential: This district is intended for single-family homes, providing a residential environment with low population density.

R-2 Two-family & Multifamily Residential: This district accommodates both two-family homes and multifamily dwellings, allowing for a higher residential density compared to the R-1 district.

R-1 Residence: The R-1 District is primarily residential, allowing for single-family homes with regulations that ensure low-density development and a suburban character.

R-2 Residence: permits higher density residential development compared to R-1, allowing for single-family homes and possibly two-family dwellings.

R-2A Residence: Similar to the R-2 District, R2A allows for residential development with a focus on accommodating slightly higher densities, often with additional regulations or allowances specific to the area's needs.

Village of Depew

Village of Lancaster

Business/Commercial Districts

C-1 General Commercial District: This district supports general commercial activities, including retail, service, and office uses that serve the needs of the community.

C-2 Shopping Center District: This district is designated for larger commercial developments, such as shopping centers, that offer a variety of retail and service establishments in one location.

C-1 Business District: The C-1 District is intended for commercial and business activities, with regulations that support retail, service, and office uses while promoting accessibility and integration with surrounding areas.

Industrial Districts

M-1 Light Industry District: This district permits light industrial activities that are compatible with nearby residential and commercial areas, typically involving manufacturing, processing, and warehousing operations with minimal environmental impact.

M-2 Heavy Industry District: This district is designated for heavier industrial uses, which may involve more significant environmental impacts and are generally separated from residential areas.

M-1 Manufacturing District: The M-1 District is designated for manufacturing and industrial uses, ensuring that such activities are conducted in a manner that minimizes impacts on surrounding properties and the environment.

M-1P Industrial Park District: The M-1P District is a specialized industrial zone designed to accommodate light manufacturing, research, and office uses within a park-like setting, often with specific landscaping and design standards to enhance the area's aesthetic quality.

Other Districts

MS Motor Services District: This district is intended for uses related to motor vehicles, including service stations, repair shops, and other automotive-related businesses.

Land Conservation (LC): This district is aimed at conserving natural resources and open spaces, limiting development to protect environmentally sensitive areas.

MU-Core (Mixed Use Core District): This district encompasses the Village's historic downtown area, aiming to preserve its character and density while promoting a vibrant, pedestrian-centric environment with mixed-use developments.

MU-1 (Mixed Use 1 District): The MU-1 District includes areas with a mix of residential and commercial uses, characterized by moderate density and buildings positioned near the street, enhancing walkability and connectivity.

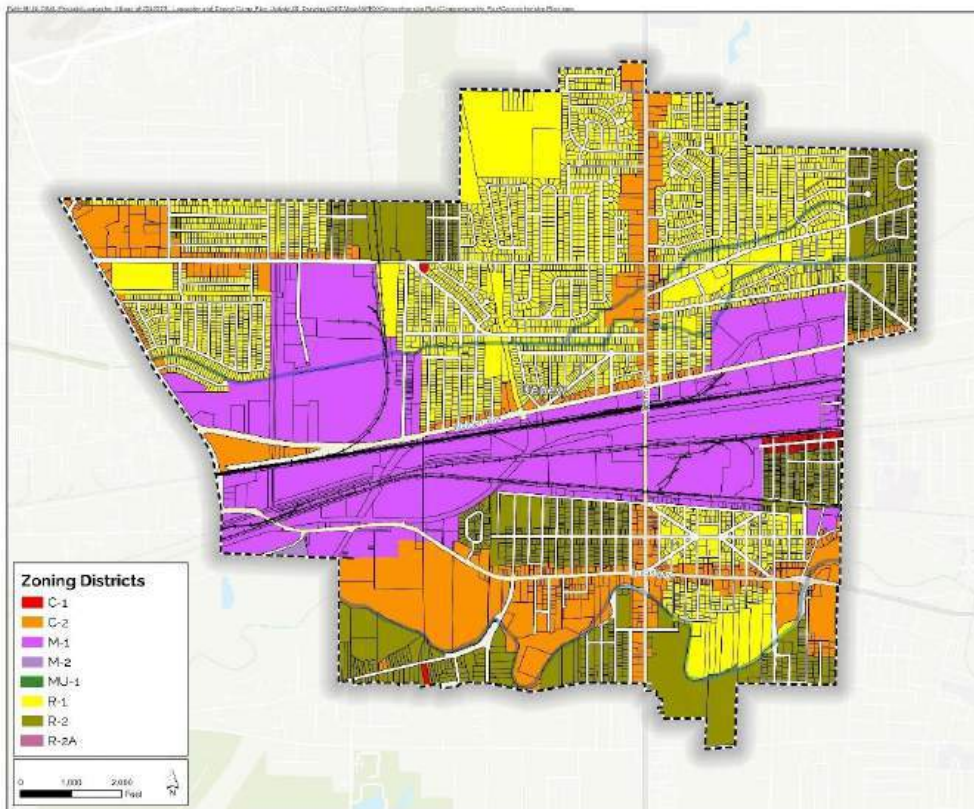
MU-2 (Mixed Use 2 District): The MU-2 District features a lower density with residential and commercial uses intermingled, designed to complement the scale of large traditional houses and maintain a modest, historic character.

OS (Open Space Zone): This zone is designated for public parks, recreational areas, and natural open spaces, aimed at preserving green areas for community use and environmental protection.

Key Zoning Features

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The zoning map for Depew was last amended in September 2012. The most prominent zones are R-1 and R-2 residential districts. • A significant portion of the village abutting the railroad is zoned M-1 Light Industry. • Commercial zones, such as the Shopping Center (C-2) district, are focused around major roadways like Broadway and Transit Road. • The village's zoning regulations include detailed bulk regulations, off-street parking, landscaping, fencing, and other supplementary requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Village of Lancaster's zoning map was last amended in March 2023, which included the creation of mixed-use zones. • R-1 and R-2 residential are the most prominent districts. • Business, Commercial, and Manufacturing districts are primarily located along Broadway, Central Avenue, West Main Street, and Walden Avenue. • The village has sign ordinances and off-street parking regulations to manage development impacts |
|--|--|

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VILLAGES OF DEPEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Zoning Districts

LaBella Project No: 2242273
DATE: 9/24/2024

Map Key:

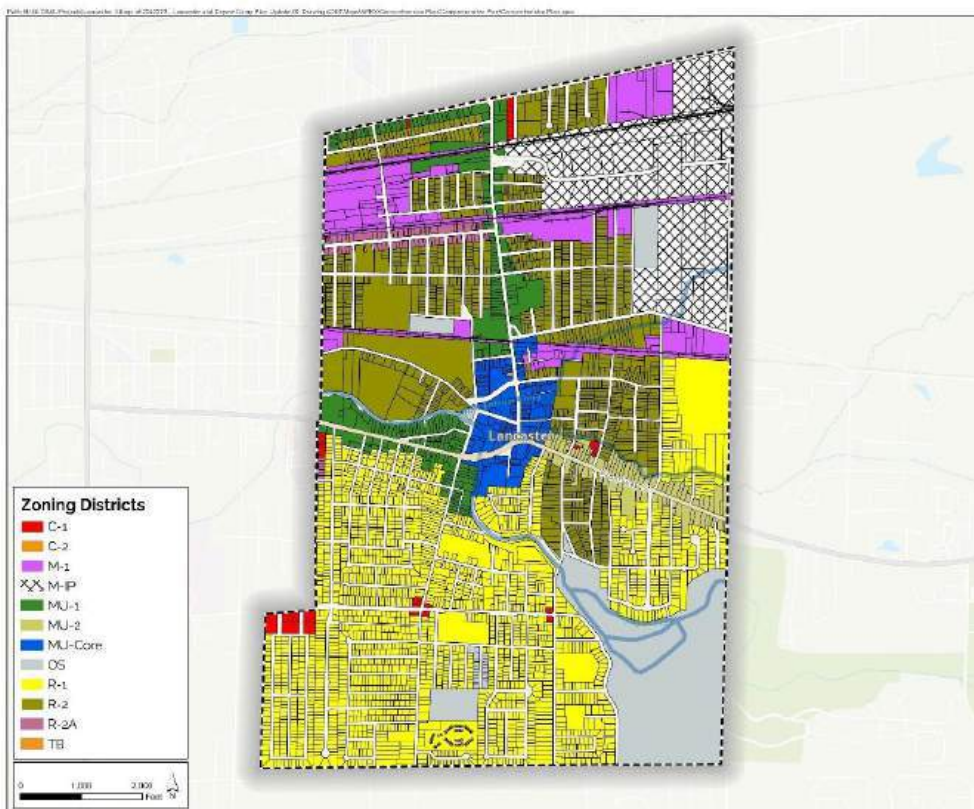
- Village of Depew
- Tax Parcels
- Roads
- Railroad
- Waterways

Sources:

1. Zoning Village of Depew, 2009
2. Basemap: Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc. METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS
3. Municipality NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2022
4. Roads: NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2023
5. Railroad: NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2020
6. Waterways: OpenStreetMap, 2022



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VILLAGE OF LANCASTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Zoning Districts

LaBella Project No: 2242273
DATE: 9/24/2024

Map Key:

- Village of Lancaster
- Tax Parcels
- Roads
- Railroad
- Waterways

Sources:

1. Zoning Village of Lancaster, 2009
2. Basemap: Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc. METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS
3. Municipality NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2022
4. Roads: NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2023
5. Railroad: NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2020
6. Waterways: OpenStreetMap, 2022





APPENDIX B

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

SURVEY RESULTS REPORT

Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew Comprehensive Plan Update

September 2024

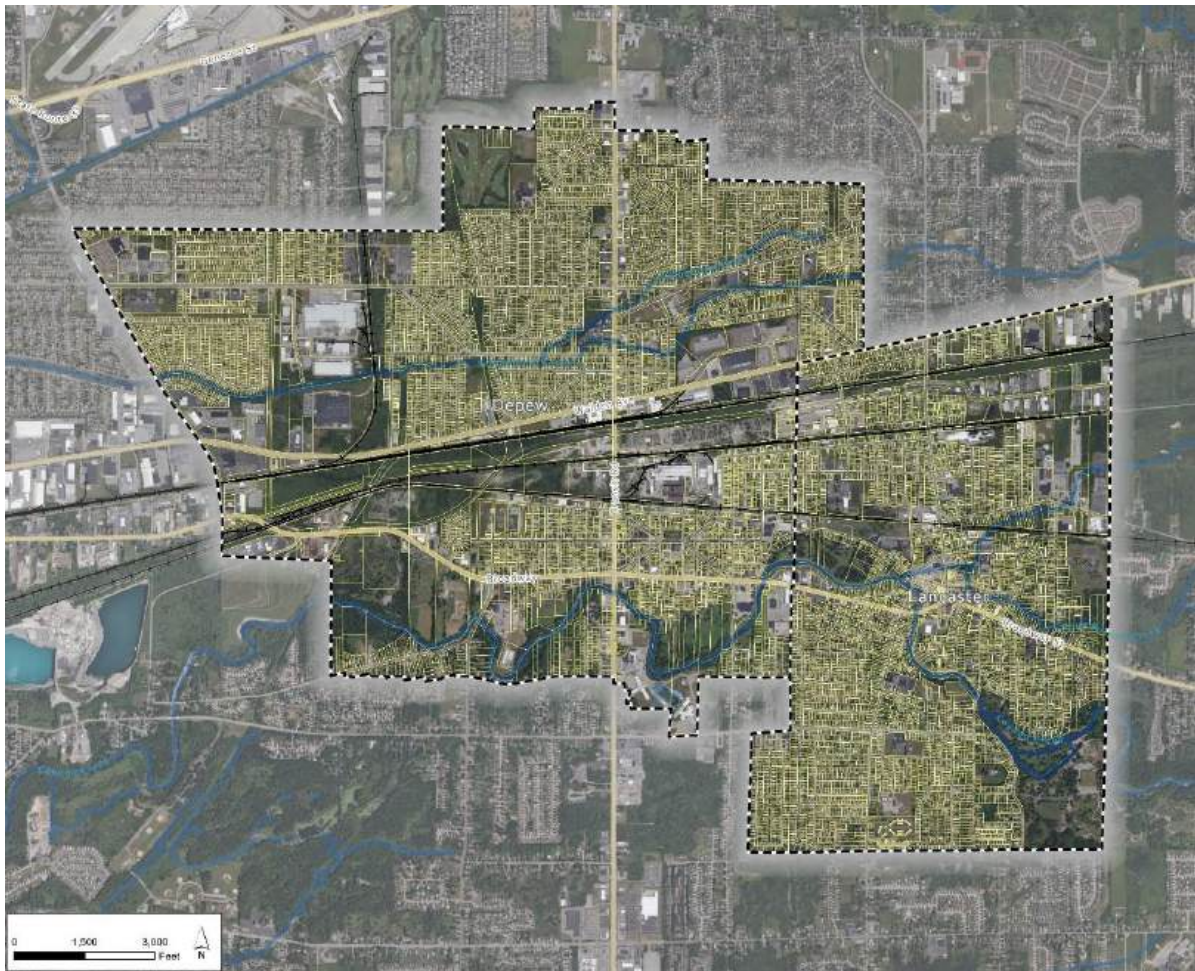


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VILLAGE OF LANCASTER & VILLAGE OF DEPEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

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INTRODUCTION

This public input survey, conducted from July 1, 2024, to September 13, 2024, as part of the Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew's comprehensive planning process, gathered a total of 579 responses from residents, visitors, and other stakeholders. The survey aimed to capture perceptions, concerns, and priorities regarding the future of the villages. The insights collected provide a valuable snapshot of community satisfaction with current conditions and aspirations for the future of the villages. This report summarizes the key findings from the survey, offering a foundation for informed decision-making as the villages work to ensure their comprehensive plan update accurately reflects the needs and priorities of residents.

QUESTION 1. FAVORITE VILLAGE ASPECTS

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE VILLAGE OF LANCASTER?

Overall, the community values the combination of modern improvements and amenities with the preservation of historic charm and small-town feel in the Village of Lancaster. Respondents highly value the following village characteristics:

- Walkability
- Small Town Feel
- Revitalization
- Community
- Historic Charm
- Safety
- Events & Activities
- Proximity to Amenities

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE VILLAGE OF DEPEW?

Respondents appreciate the small-town charm, safety, community engagement, and efficient services, while also valuing the Village of Depew's location and recreational opportunities.

Respondents highly value the following village characteristics:

- Small Town Feel
- Proximity and Location
- Safety
- Community Events
- Services
- Recreation
- Affordability
- Heritage and History
- Personal Connection and History in the area

QUESTION 2. AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT THE VILLAGE OF LANCASTER?

Respondents want to see improvement to the village's infrastructure, parking, and business diversity, as well as more family-friendly and community building events. There is also a desire to maintain the village's charm while balancing development and modernization. Respondents would like to see the following elements changed or improved.

- More diverse businesses especially restaurants and retail
- Noise and traffic control
- More community-building activities & family-oriented events/spaces
- Village aesthetic improvements including older buildings and current streetscapes
- Lack of parking especially as new businesses are being added to the community
- Desire improved government transparency and communication

- Better maintenance of public infrastructure
- Concern with overdevelopment and its impacts on the community
- Improved pedestrian safety

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT THE VILLAGE OF DEPEW?

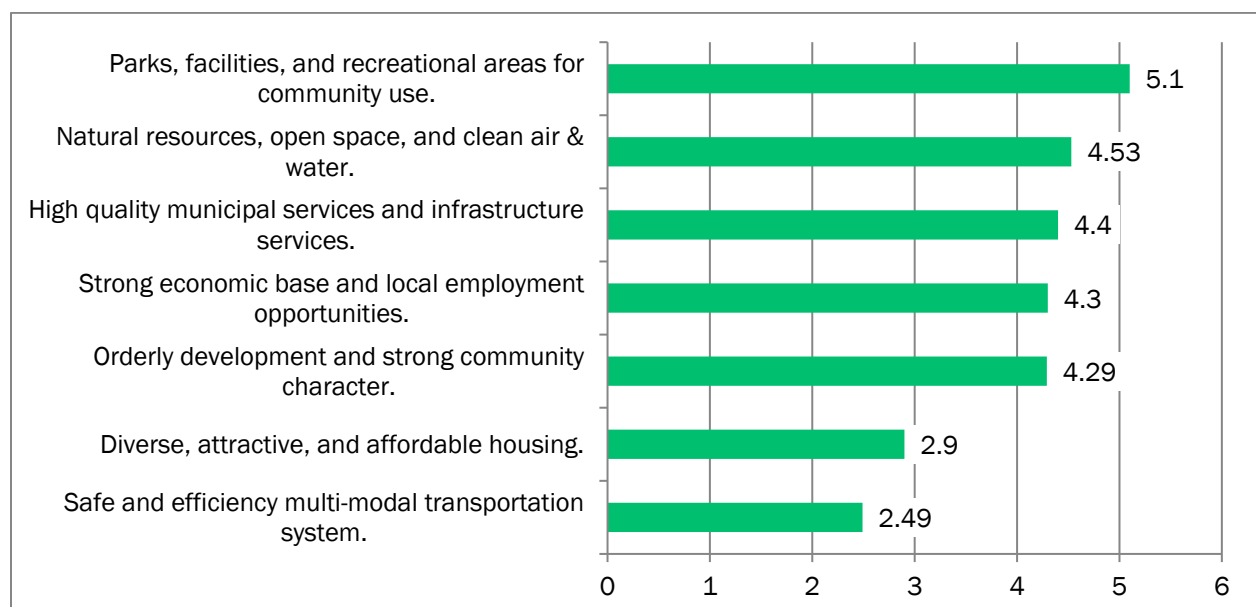
Feedback from respondents highlights a strong desire for lower taxes, more efficient services, improved leadership, and enhanced community amenities. There is also a call to balance development with maintaining green spaces and preserving the village's character. Respondents would like to see the following elements changed or improved.

- Desire for lower taxes and higher return on services
- Consolidation of services to reduce tax burden and eliminate redundancy
- Concern with overdevelopment
- Improved beautification and maintenance
- Better enforcement of local laws specifically leash laws, noise ordinances, and speed limits
- More community events and local amenities
- More effective and transparent government
- Improved infrastructure and government services
- Preserve more green space

QUESTION 3. IDEAL VISION

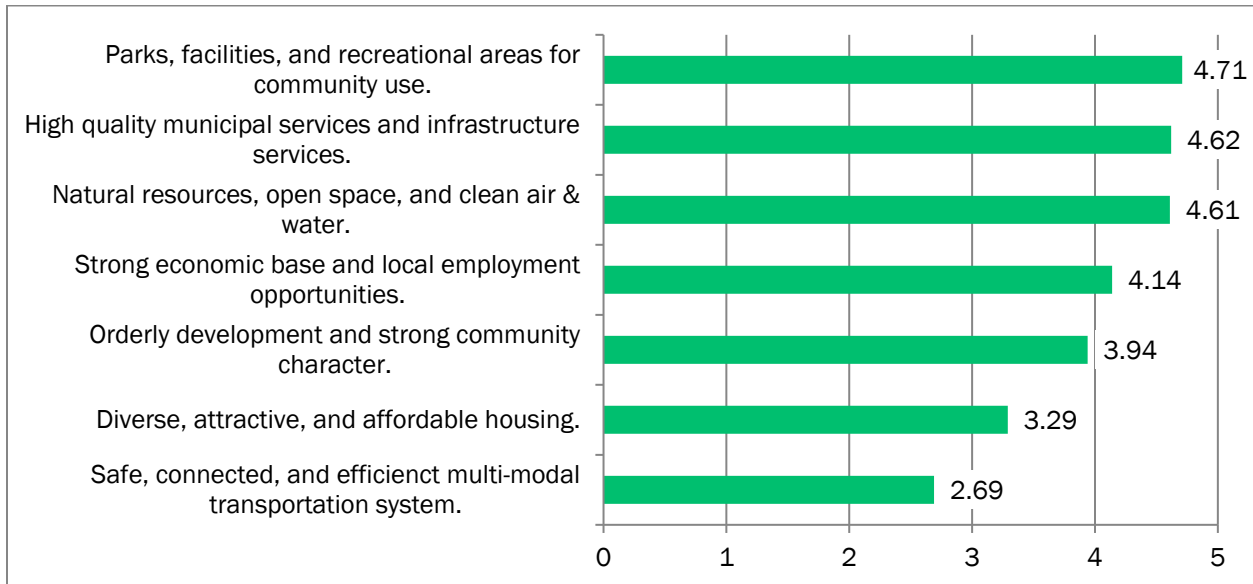
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS WOULD BE INCLUDED IN YOUR IDEAL VISION FOR THE VILLAGE OF LANCASTER IN THE NEXT 20 YEARS?

Respondents prioritize creating a vibrant, sustainable, and well-managed community with a strong local economy, while ensuring that future development of the Village of Lancaster aligns with their environmental and communal values. When looking at the chart below, the higher the score, the higher in importance an element was ranked by respondents.



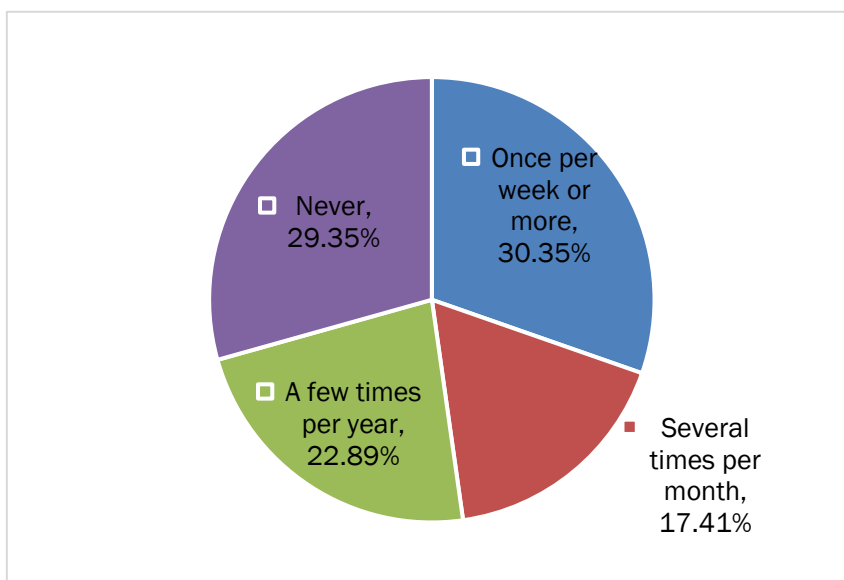
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS WOULD BE INCLUDED IN YOUR IDEAL VISION FOR THE VILLAGE OF DEPEW IN THE NEXT 20 YEARS?

Respondents prioritize enhancing community life through parks and recreation, maintaining high-quality services, and ensuring environmental sustainability, while also supporting thoughtful growth and economic opportunities. When looking at the chart below, the higher the score, the higher in importance an element was ranked by respondents.



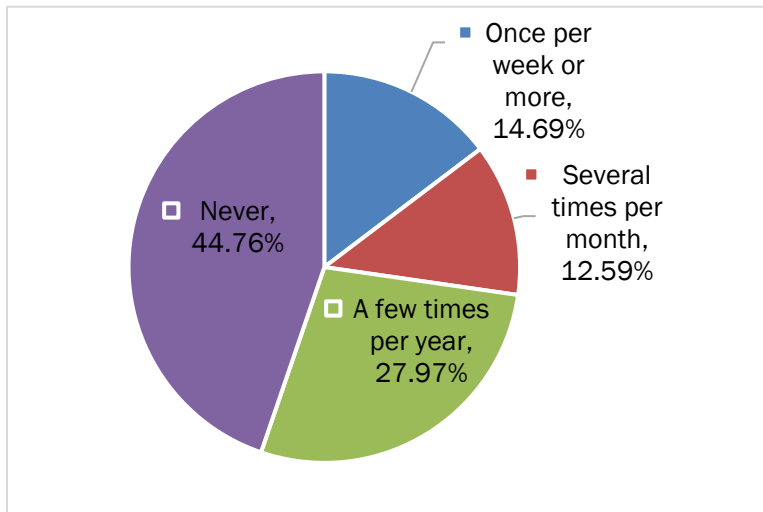
QUESTION 4. FREQUENCY OF ALTERNATIVE TRANSIT

IN THE PAST YEAR, HOW OFTEN DID YOU WALK, BIKE, TAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, OR USE AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF TRANSPORTATION (SKATING, SCOOTERING, ETC.) TO GET TO A DESTINATION IN THE VILLAGE OF LANCASTER?



These results suggest that Lancaster has a strong base of regular users for alternative transportation, but there is room for growth in both occasional and non-users.

IN THE PAST YEAR, HOW OFTEN DID YOU WALK, BIKE, TAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, OR USE AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF TRANSPORTATION (SKATING, SCOOTERING, ETC.) TO GET TO A DESTINATION IN THE VILLAGE OF DEPEW?

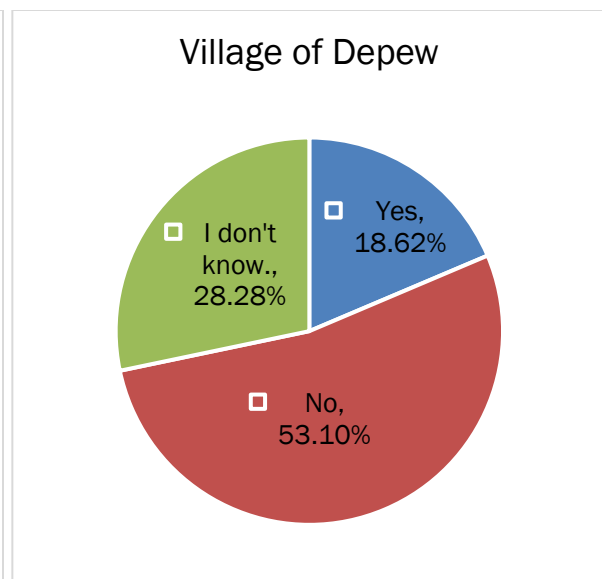
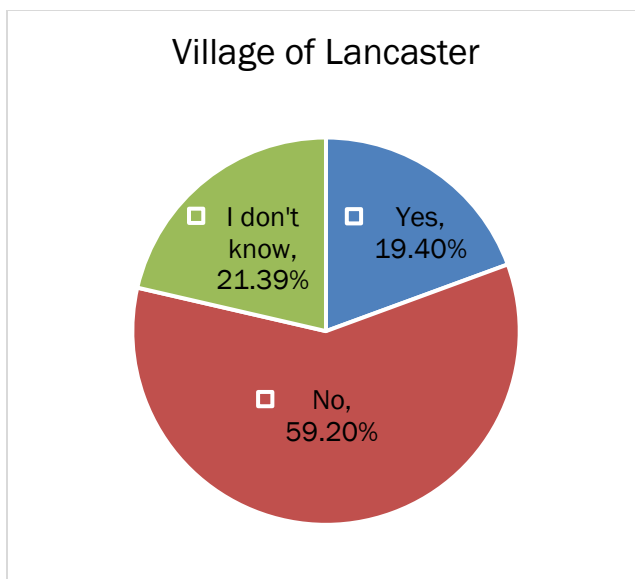


These results suggest that the Village of Depew has a low regular use of alternative transportation, and there may be a need for infrastructure and community initiatives to encourage greater adoption of these transportation options.

QUESTION 5. DESIRE TO UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

IF EASILY AVAILABLE, WOULD YOU TAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MORE OFTEN?

The majority of respondents in both the Village of Lancaster (59.20%) and the Village of Depew (53.10%) would not take public transportation more often, even if it were easily available. A significant portion of respondents in both areas were unsure, with 21.39% of Lancaster respondents and 28.28% of Depew respondents selecting "I don't know." Only a small percentage—19.40% in Lancaster and 18.62% in Depew—indicated they would use public transportation more frequently if it were more accessible. These results suggest that there may be hesitancy or uncertainty surrounding public transportation options in these areas.



QUESTION 6. INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY CONCERNS

PLEASE IDENTIFY ANY ROADWAYS, SIDEWALKS, OR OTHER SIMILAR INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE VILLAGE OF LANCASTER WHERE YOU FEEL THERE ARE SAFETY CONCERNS.

The safety concerns in the Village of Lancaster focus on improving sidewalk conditions, controlling speeding, making crosswalks safer, and addressing issues with roundabouts and bike lanes. Further details on these responses are outlined below.

- **Sidewalk Conditions**
 - Issues with uneven, cracked, or lifted sidewalks specifically along Central Ave, Aurora St, Court St, and Erie St.
 - Snow and ice removal from sidewalks is inconsistent
- **Traffic and Speeding**
 - Speeding along Lake Ave, Broadway, Aurora St, and Laverack Ave and through residential areas and near schools
 - Roundabouts at Central Ave and Aurora St were frequently mentioned as problematic, with concerns about cars not yielding, speeding through them, and pedestrian safety when crossing.
- **Crosswalks and Pedestrian Safety**
 - Dangerous crosswalks especially at intersections like Broadway & Central, Aurora St, and Como Park Blvd.
 - Lack of street and sidewalk lighting
 - Low visibility on Erie St and Central Ave
- **Bike Lanes and Pedestrian Infrastructure**
 - Cars often park in bike lanes or disregard them altogether, specifically on Central Ave.
 - Several respondents called for more bike lanes/paths, as well as better pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods and parks (e.g. connections to Como Park).
- **Parking Issues**
 - Concern on West Main Street and around businesses in the village
 - Insufficient parking spaces
 - Cars blocking bike lanes, parking too close to intersections
- **Roundabouts and Traffic Flow**
 - Concerns about the roundabouts on Central Ave and West Main St.
 - Confusing for drivers, pedestrians not given the right of way, hazardous
- **Specific Intersections and Road Concerns**
 - Specific problem intersections mentioned include Como Park Blvd and Aurora St, Broadway and Central, and Court St.
 - High risk due to poor visibility, lack of stop signs, and confusing traffic patterns

PLEASE IDENTIFY ANY ROADWAYS, SIDEWALKS, OR OTHER SIMILAR INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE VILLAGE OF DEPEW WHERE YOU FEEL THERE ARE SAFETY CONCERNS.

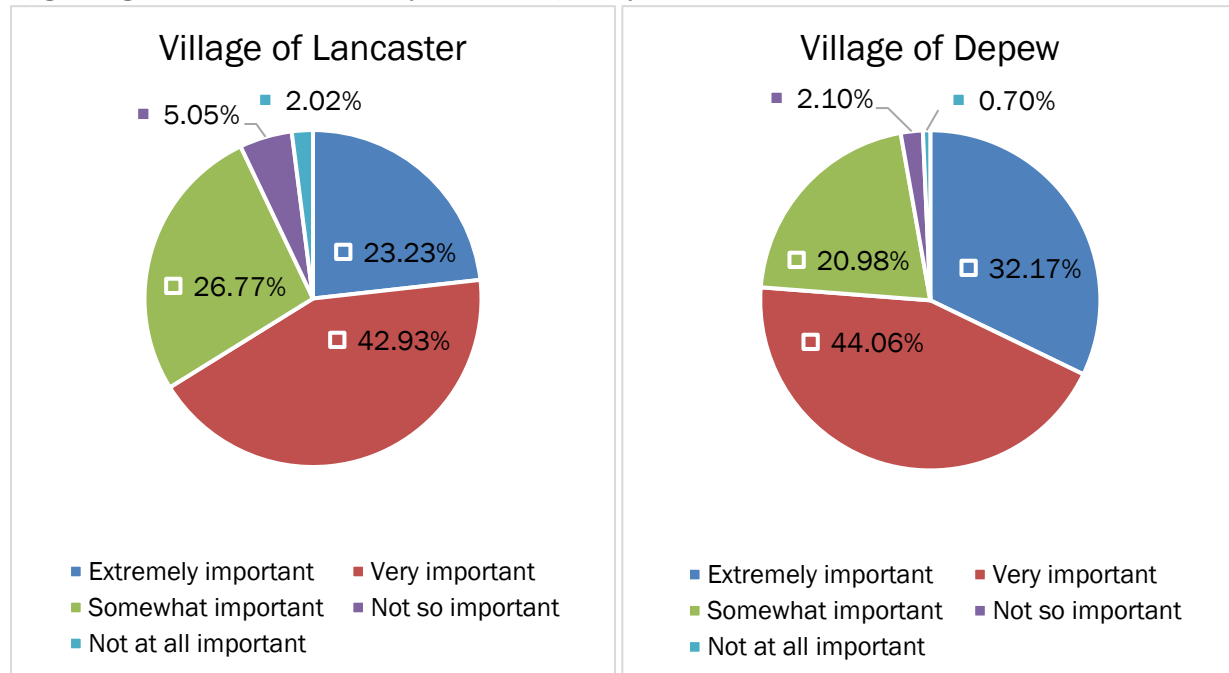
Respondents suggest a need for significant infrastructure improvements to sidewalks, roadways, and pedestrian safety measures in the Village of Depew to address safety concerns. Further details on these responses are outlined below.

- **Sidewalk Conditions**
 - Sidewalk disrepair – uneven, cracked, crumbling – along Walden Ave, Transit Rd, George Urban Blvd, and Columbia St
 - Lack of snow removal on sidewalks
- **Traffic and Speeding**
 - Speeding along Transit Rd, Broadway, Walden Ave, George Urban Blvd, and St. James Pl
 - Excessive speeding in school zones – Depew High School and George Urban Blvd
- **Railroad Bridges and Narrow Roads**
 - Railroad bridges on Transit Rd were cited as dangerous due to narrowness, difficult access for emergency vehicles
 - George Urban Blvd – poor lighting and narrow lanes
 - Transit Rd under the railroad bridges is hazardous due to the tight space and lack of sidewalks.
- **Lack of Sidewalks**
 - No sidewalks along parts of Walden Ave, Transit Rd, Losson Rd, and Columbia St.
 - Absence of sidewalks near elementary schools, such as Lee St
- **Poor Drainage and Flooding**
 - George Urban Blvd reported to have poor drainage, leading to flooding during heavy rains.
- **Pedestrian Safety and Crosswalks**
 - Need for more crosswalks and improved pedestrian infrastructure, particularly on Transit Rd, Broadway, and George Urban Blvd.
 - Some existing crosswalks lack proper signage or visibility
 - Areas near schools and parks, such as Fireman’s Park and Preston St near the Boys and Girls Club, need better pedestrian crossings
- **Lighting Issues**
 - Poor street lighting on Darwin Dr, George Urban Blvd, and Main St.

QUESTION 7. INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

IN YOUR OPINION, HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO UPGRADE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES IN OLDER AND SUBSTANDARD AREAS?

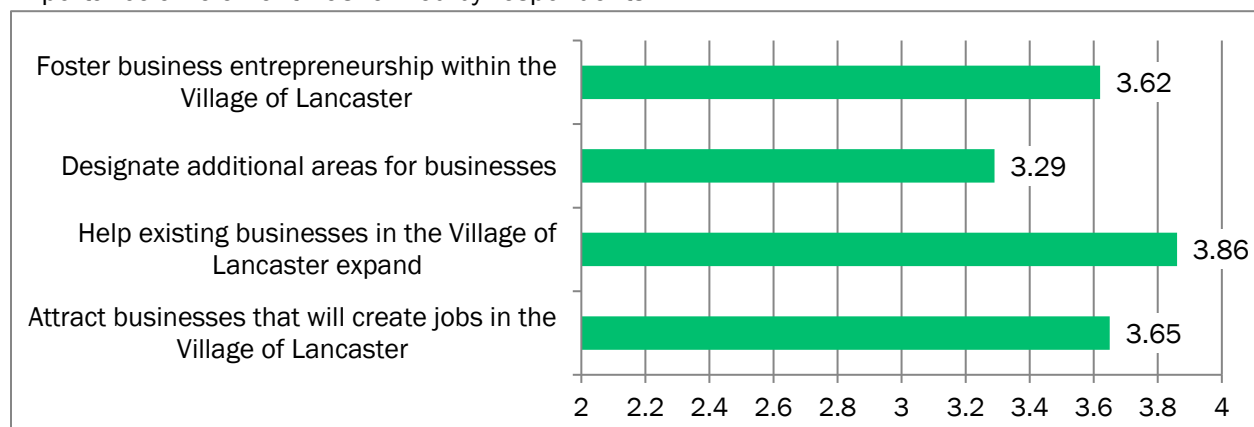
Survey results indicate that a strong majority of residents in both Lancaster and Depew believe it is important to upgrade infrastructure and facilities in older and substandard areas. This suggests that upgrading infrastructure is widely seen as a priority in both communities.



QUESTION 8. BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

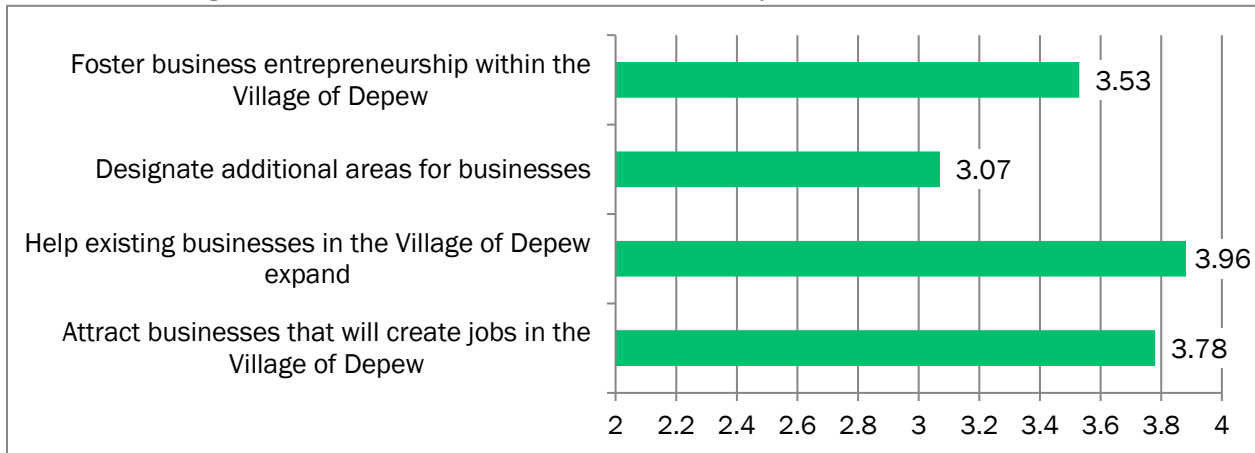
IN GENERAL, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE VILLAGE OF LANCASTER?

Respondents indicated that economic development is highly valued for the future of the Village of Lancaster. There is strong support for helping existing businesses expand and attracting new businesses that create jobs. When looking at the chart below, the higher the score, the higher in importance an element was ranked by respondents.



IN GENERAL, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE VILLAGE OF DEPEW?

The survey results show that economic development is a significant priority for the future of the Village of Depew. Respondents were most concerned with creating job opportunities and sustaining the businesses that are already part of the community. When looking at the chart below, the higher the score, the higher in importance an element was ranked by respondents.

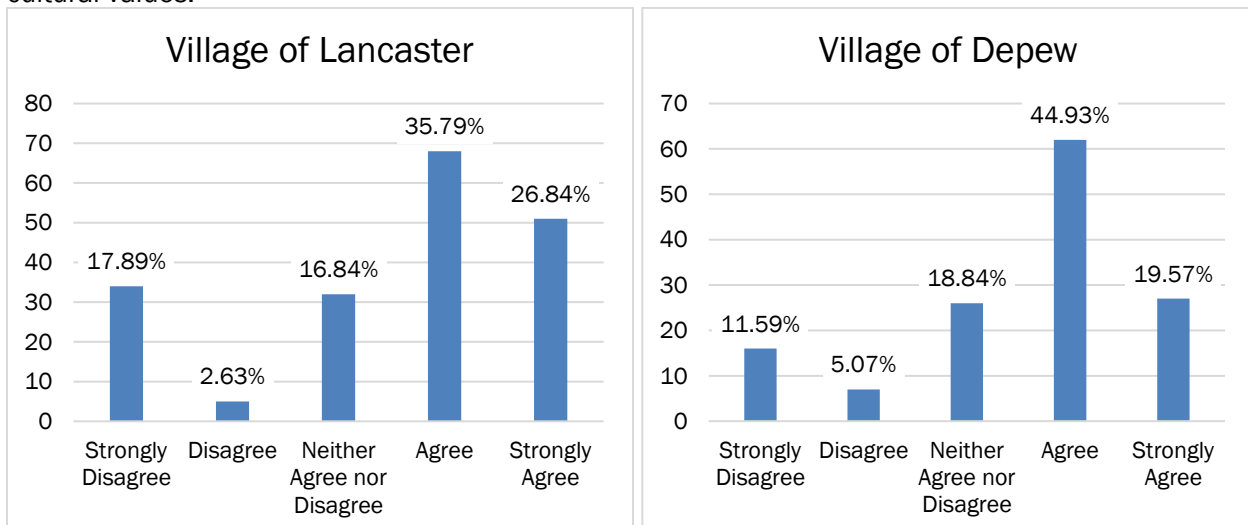


QUESTION 9. COMMUNITY-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT?

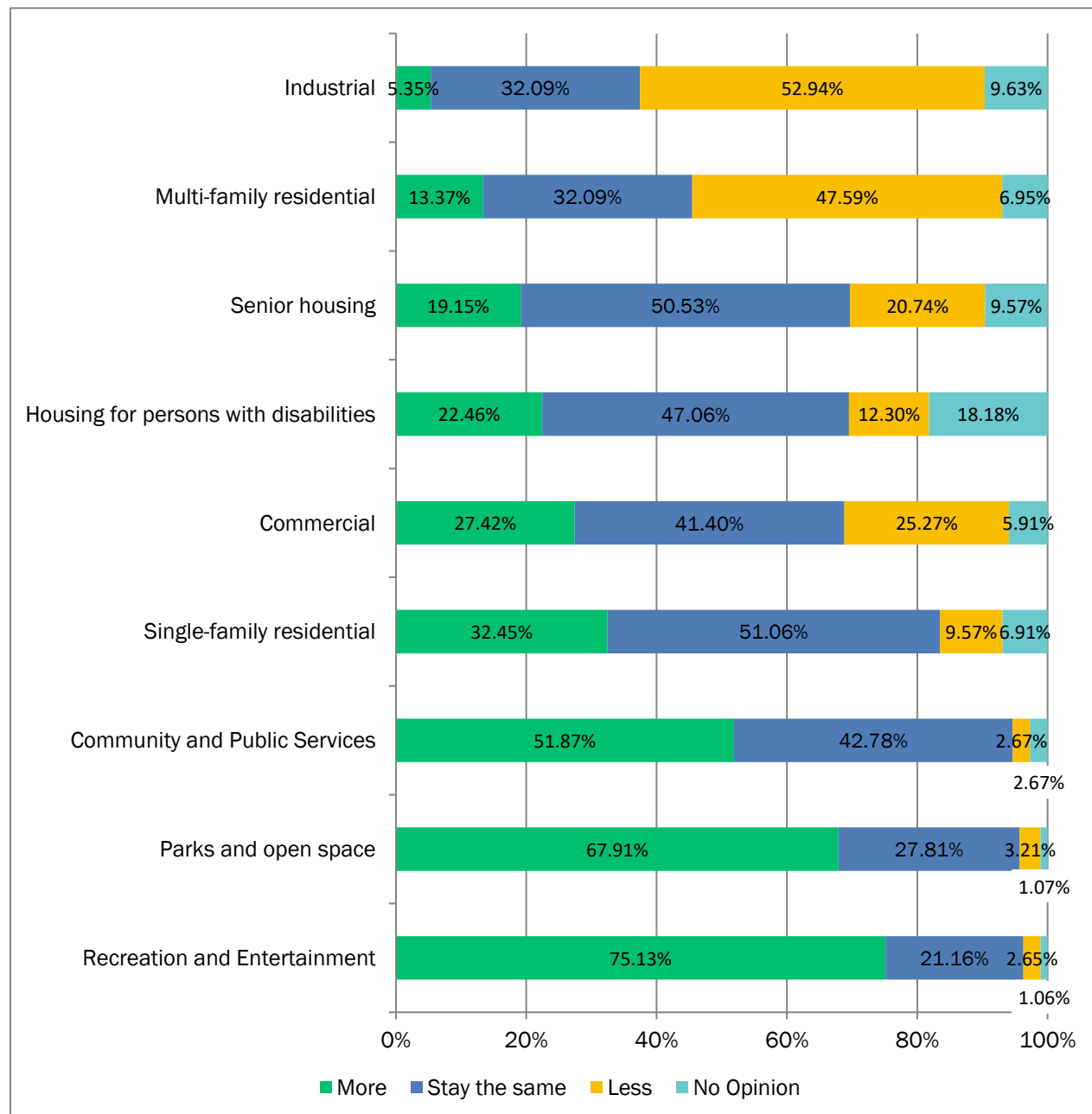
THE VILLAGE SHOULD ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REVITALIZATION. COMMUNITY-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS DEVELOPMENT THAT PROMOTES, SUPPORTS, AND INVESTS IN BUSINESSES THAT SERVE LOCAL NEEDS AND ARE COMPATIBLE WITH THE VISION, CHARACTER, AND CULTURAL VALUES OF THE COMMUNITY.

The survey responses indicate that both the Village of Lancaster and the Village of Depew residents generally support community-based economic development and revitalization. Both villages reflect a majority that sees value in promoting local businesses aligned with community character and cultural values.



QUESTION 10. LAND USE PREFERENCE

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OR LESS OF THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF USES IN THE VILLAGE OF LANCASTER?

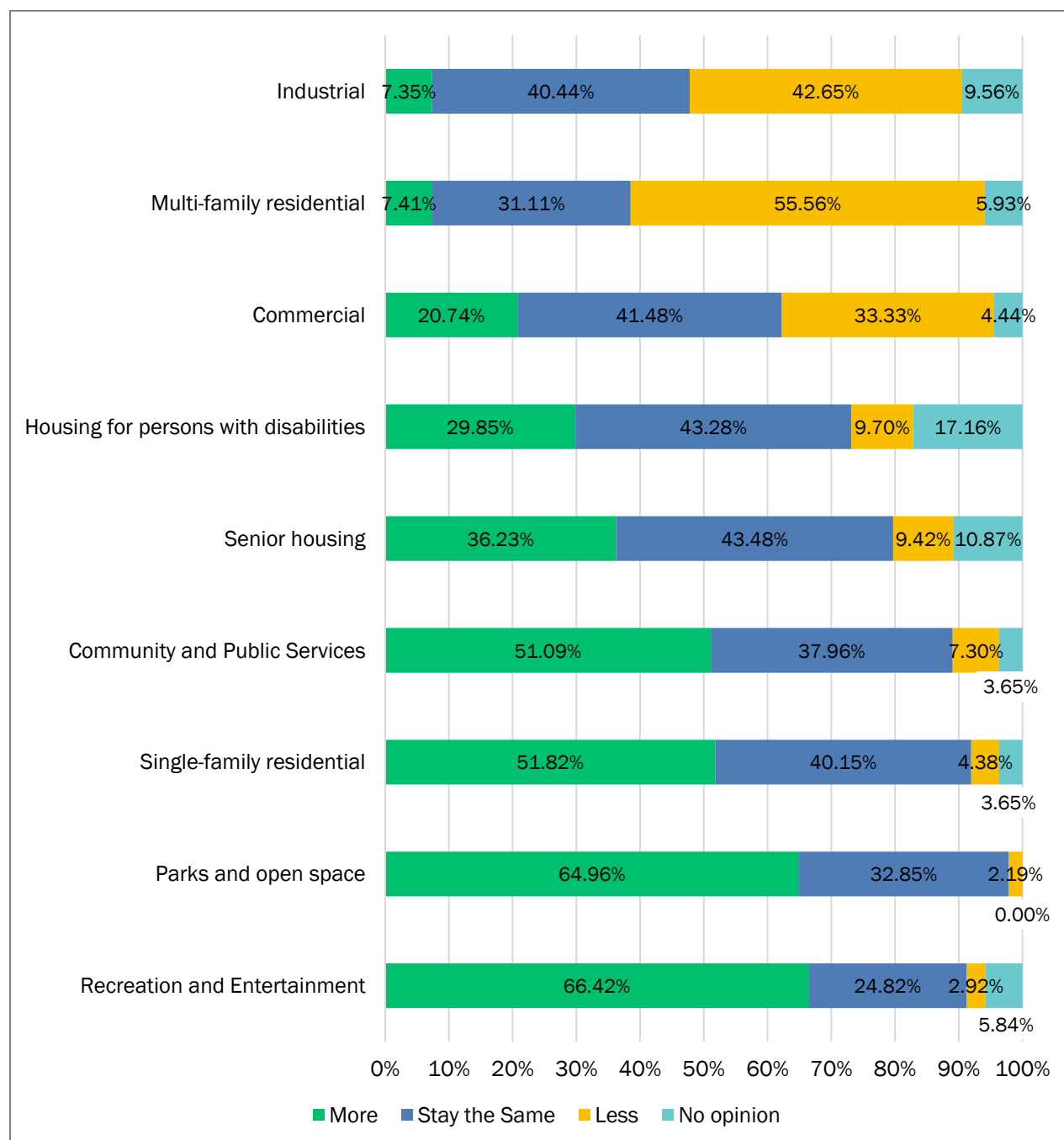


In general, respondents would like to see **more** of the following uses: recreation and entertainment, parks and open space, and community and public services.

Respondents would like to see the **same** amount of the following uses: single-family residential, commercial, housing for persons with disabilities, and senior housing.

Respondents would like to see **less** of the following uses: multi-family residential and industrial.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OR LESS OF THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF USES IN THE VILLAGE OF DEPEW?



In general, respondents would like to see **more** of the following uses: recreation and entertainment, parks and open space, single-family residential, and community and public services.

Respondents would like to see the **same** amount of the following uses: senior housing, housing for persons with disabilities, and commercial.

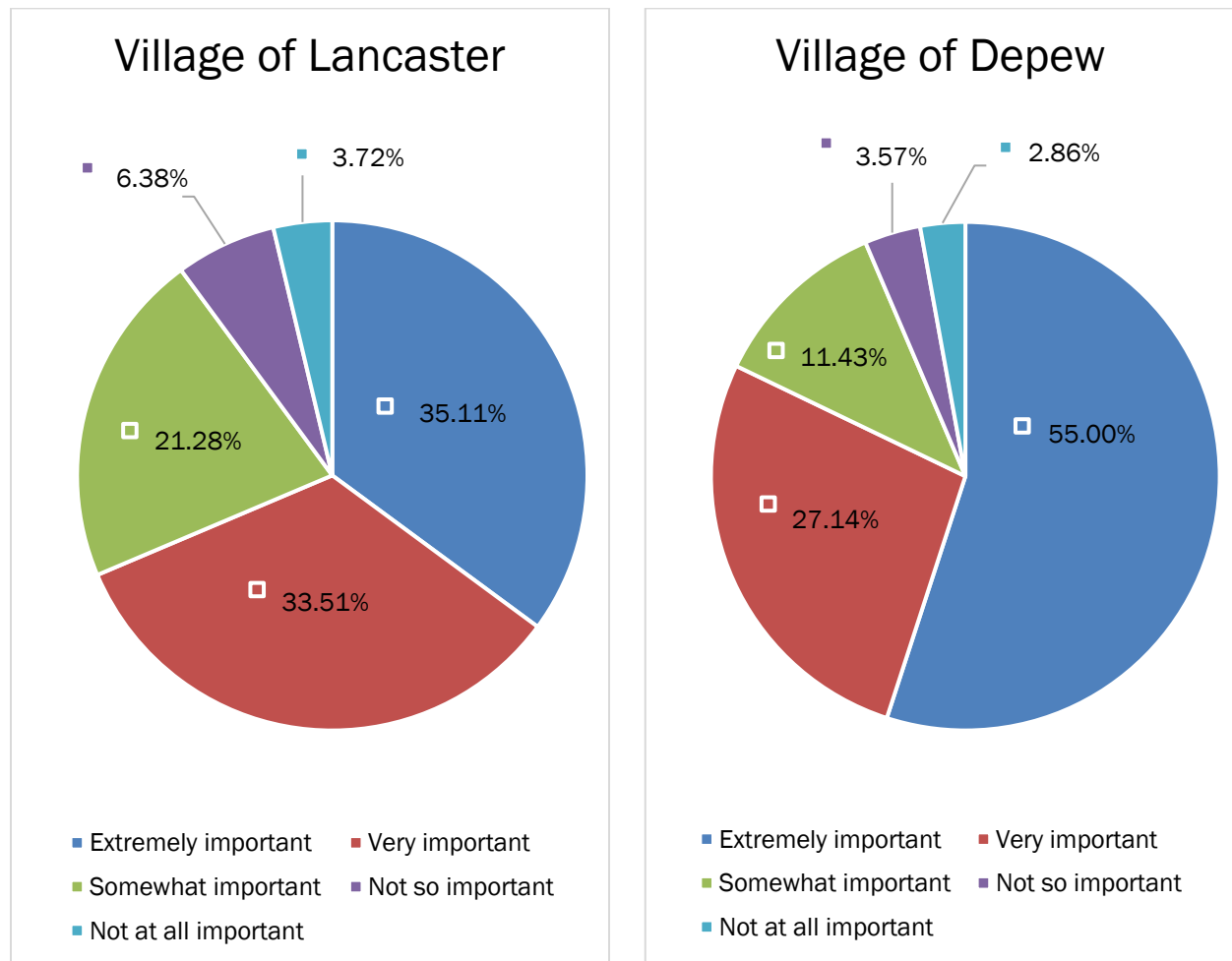
Respondents would like to see **less** of the following uses: multi-family residential and industrial.

QUESTION 11. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT HOUSING IS AFFORDABLE TO THE AVERAGE VILLAGE RESIDENT?

A clear majority from both communities view housing affordability as a priority.

In Depew, 82.14% of respondents find affordability a major concern (55% of respondents rated affordability as "extremely important" and 27.14% rated it as "very important"). In Lancaster, 68.62% of respondents find affordability a major concern (35.11% of respondents rated affordability as "extremely important" and 33.51% rated it as "very important").



QUESTION 12. NEIGHBORHOOD AND HOUSING CONCERNS

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST CONCERN ABOUT NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING IN THE VILLAGE OF LANCASTER?

The main concerns for Lancaster residents revolve around housing affordability, maintenance, overdevelopment, and ensuring the village retains its small-town charm. Key themes that emerged from the responses can be found below.

1. Maintenance & Upkeep

- a. Deteriorating conditions of homes, especially older homes
- b. Lack of accountability for property upkeep, lack of effective code enforcement
- c. Absentee landlords and poorly maintained properties lead to declining neighborhood aesthetics and safety
- d. Deteriorating infrastructure including sidewalks, sewer systems, and utility upgrades

2. Affordability

- a. Rising cost of housing and property taxes
- b. Village becoming unaffordable, especially for seniors and young families
- c. Rising housing process pushing out long-term residents and making homeownership unattainable for new buyers

3. Overdevelopment

- a. New development, particularly apartments and subdivisions, leading to overcrowding, increased traffic, and strain on infrastructure and services
- b. Would like to see more emphasis on preserving green spaces and limited further large-scale development

4. Community Character

- a. Importance of maintaining the village's character, ensure new development aligns with the existing neighborhood aesthetics
- b. Concern about the presence of low-income housing and its impact on the village's appeal

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST CONCERN ABOUT NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING IN THE VILLAGE OF DEPEW?

the primary concerns for Depew residents revolve around housing maintenance, overdevelopment, rising taxes, and ensuring neighborhood safety, with a desire for more robust code enforcement and revitalization efforts. Key themes that emerged from the responses can be found below.

1. Property Maintenance

- a. Declining maintenance of homes, particularly those rented by absentee landlords
- b. Call for stricter code regulations and enforcement on property upkeep and improved aesthetics in certain areas

2. Overdevelopment and Housing Density

- a. Concern with the construction of too many apartment complexes and multi-family units
- b. Feel this has led to overcrowding, increased traffic, and a loss of the village's small-town character
- c. Concern about the presence of low-income housing and the impact it might have on the village

3. Taxes and Affordability

- a. Rising property taxes and housing costs, especially for long-time residents
- b. Concern regarding being “double taxed” (paying both town and village taxes) and whether that services provided justify these costs.

4. Vacant Properties and Infrastructure

- a. Presence of abandoned or "zombie" homes and vacant commercial properties
- b. Respondents feel these buildings should be repurposed or demolished, as they negatively impact neighborhood appearance.
- c. Calls for improved infrastructure, such as sidewalks, parks, and street maintenance.

5. Safety and Crime

- a. Concerns about crime, particularly drug activity and vehicle break-ins.
- b. Call for better police presence and neighborhood patrols to help ensure safety in residential areas.

QUESTION 13. USE OF EXISTING RECREATIONAL OFFERINGS

GENERALLY, HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY UTILIZE THE FOLLOWING OFFERINGS? (VILLAGE OF LANCASTER RESPONDENTS)

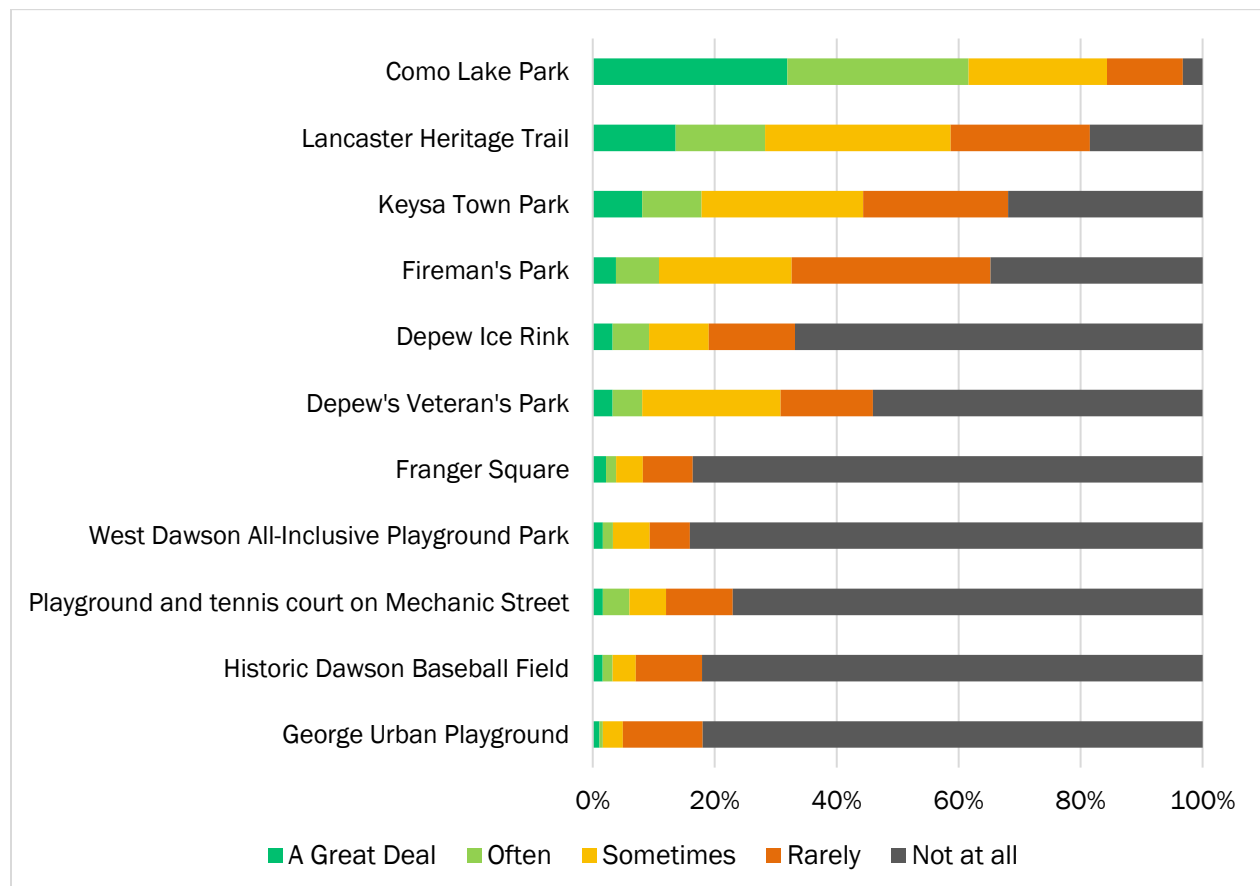
For Lancaster respondents, **Como Lake Park** is by far the most frequently used recreational area, with a majority of respondents (61.62%) utilizing it "A Great Deal" or "Often." Only a small percentage (3.24%) reported never using it.

Fireman's Park and **Lancaster Heritage Trail** see moderate use, with around 25-30% of respondents using them "Sometimes," but a significant portion (over 30%) never using Fireman's Park at all.

Keysa Town Park and **Depew's Veteran's Park** have lower usage, with around 26% using Keysa Town Park "Sometimes" and 22% using Veteran's Park at the same frequency. However, a large percentage of residents (over 50% for Veteran's Park and nearly 32% for Keysa Town Park) do not use these parks at all.

Parks like **George Urban Playground**, **Mechanic Street Playground** and **Tennis Court**, **Franger Square**, **West Dawson All-Inclusive Playground Park**, and the **Historic Dawson Baseball Field** are used very rarely. The majority of respondents (over 75%) reported never using these facilities.

The **Depew Ice Rink** also sees limited usage, with 66.85% of respondents reporting that they never use it, although around 9.78% use it "Sometimes."



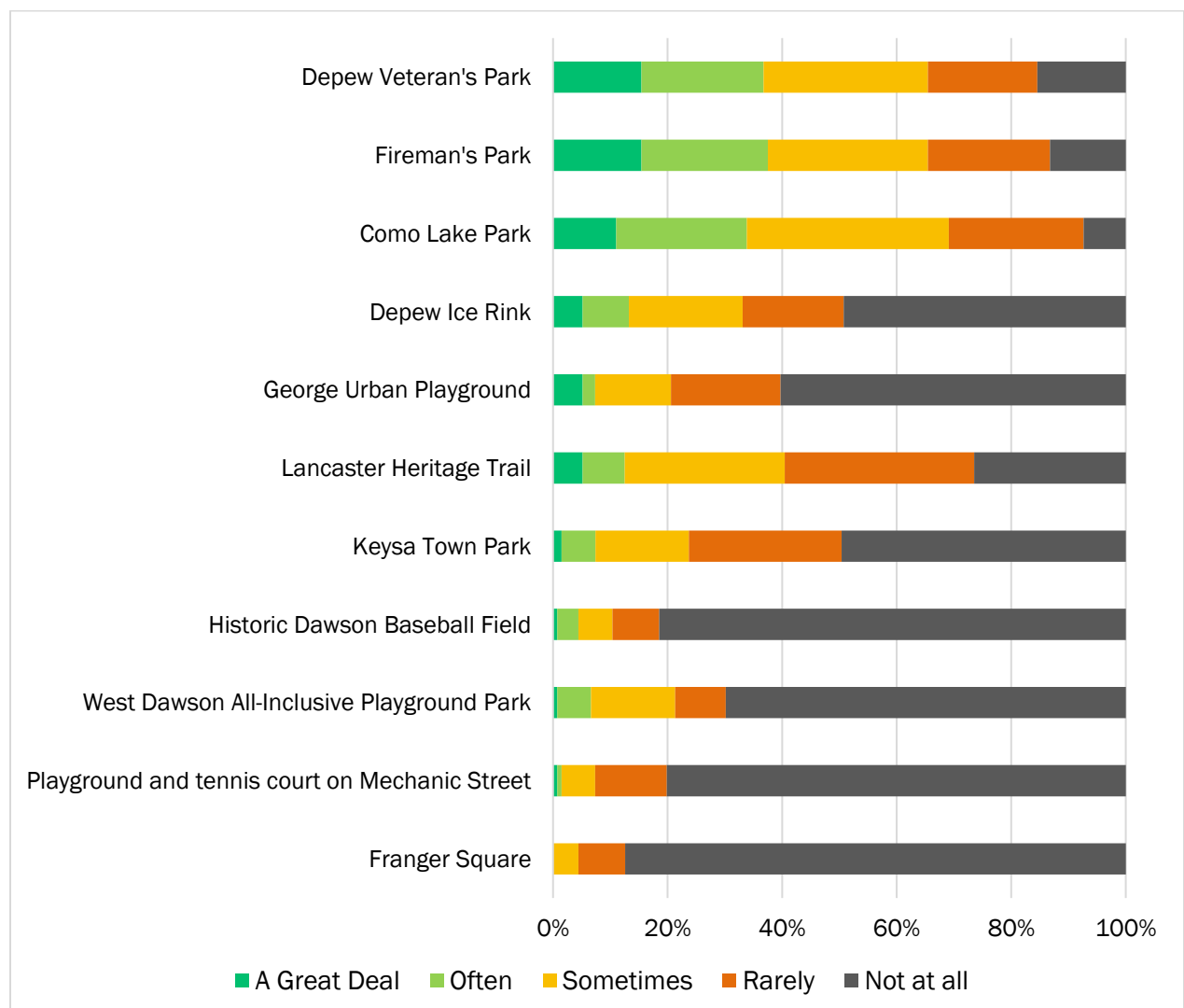
GENERALLY, HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY UTILIZE THE FOLLOWING OFFERINGS? (VILLAGE OF DEPEW RESPONDENTS)

For Depew respondents, **Depew Veteran's Park**, **Fireman's Park**, and **Como Lake Park** are the most frequently utilized. Over 65% of respondents utilize these recreational locations at least "Sometimes."

The **Depew Ice Rink** has a more moderate usage rate, with about 33% of respondents using it "Sometimes" or more frequently, but nearly half of the respondents (49.26%) never use it.

Parks like **George Urban Playground** and the **Lancaster Heritage Trail** see limited use. A majority of respondents (60% for George Urban Playground and 26% for the Trail) reported never using these spaces.

The remaining recreational locations are among the least utilized facilities, with the majority of respondents reporting that they "Never" use these spaces. Over 80% of respondents "Never" use Franger Square and the Historic Dawson Baseball Field, and nearly 70% for West Dawson All-Inclusive Playground Park.



QUESTION 14. ADDED OR EXPANDED RECREATIONAL OFFERINGS

WHAT KINDS OF RECREATIONAL AMENITIES AND PROGRAMMING WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ADDED OR EXPANDED IN THE VILLAGE OF LANCASTER?

Recurring Themes

1. Parks and Trails

- a. Desire for more walking and biking trails, both in nature and around the village
- b. Better maintenance of existing parks
- c. Calls for additional playgrounds, splash pads, and expanded green spaces
- d. Create more family-friendly amenities in the parks

2. Youth and Family Programming

- a. Desire for more activities for children and young families, including sports programs for young children, better playgrounds, and family-focused events
- b. Desire for activities like craft nights, outdoor movie nights, and community festivals that are less centered around adult activities like beer tents

3. Adult and Senior Recreation

- a. Some respondents want more options for adults, like exercise classes, pickleball courts, and community fitness programs
- b. Interest in recreational activities that center to seniors, such as walking areas and more fitness options for older adults

4. Event Expansion

- a. Suggest expanding community events such as farmers markets, food truck events, or concert series
- b. Outdoor movie nights, roller skating, and performance spaces were mentioned as desired additions

5. Facility Improvements

- a. Significant interest in improving or upgrading existing facilities
 - i. Make Cayuga Creek Park more attractive and usable
 - ii. Add new pickleball courts
 - iii. Update pool areas
- b. Call for the preservation and better maintenance of existing parks, like Como Lake Park

WHAT KINDS OF RECREATIONAL AMENITIES AND PROGRAMMING WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ADDED OR EXPANDED IN THE VILLAGE OF DEPEW?

Recurring Themes

1. Parks and Trails

- a. Desire for more nature trails, bike lanes, and walking paths
- b. Suggest the creation of a dog park, better playgrounds, and improving existing parks like George Urban Playground and Fireman's Park which were noted as being underutilized or outdated

2. Family and Children-Oriented Programming

- a. Strong interest in more family and children-focused events and facilities, such as splash pads, upgraded playgrounds, and movie nights for kids.
- b. Want the return of community events and summer programs for children

3. Sports and Fitness

- a. Several respondents want more sports leagues, both for kids and adults, and more pickleball courts were frequently requested.
- b. Fitness activities like yoga, tai chi, and other low-impact programs, especially for seniors, are in demand

4. Community Events and Festivals

- a. Expand the summer music series and create more community festivals and events, including for holidays
- b. Food truck events, holiday celebrations, and family-friendly festivals that cater to the entire community

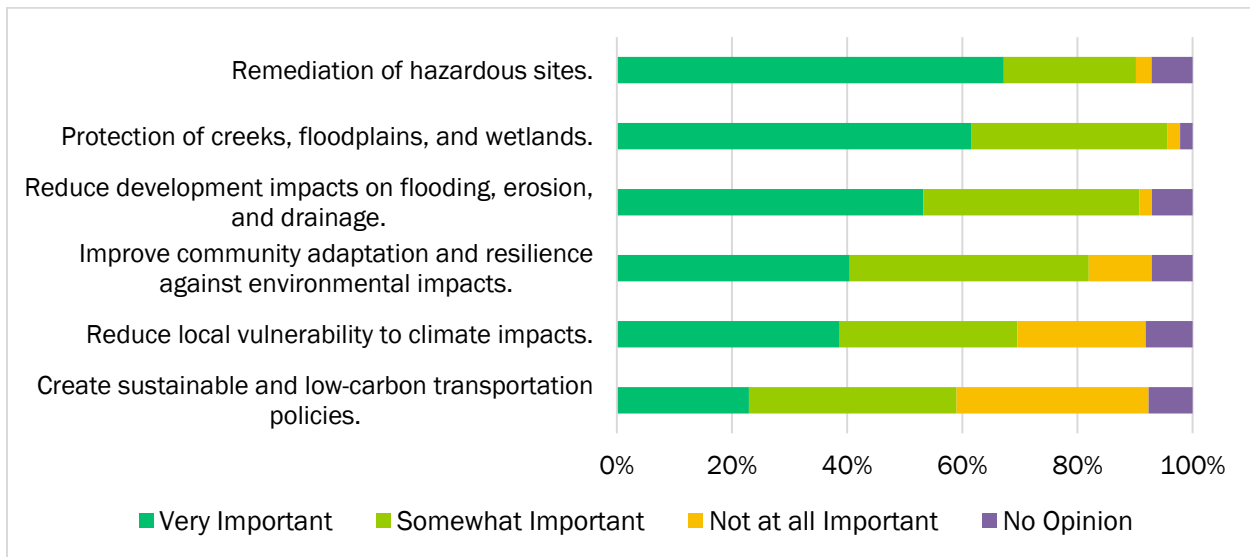
5. Facility Improvements

- a. Improving the pool, adding senior-friendly facilities, and expanding the senior center's activities
- b. Some respondents mentioned the need for better maintenance of existing recreational spaces, particularly playgrounds and the pool facilities

QUESTION 15. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND INITIATIVES

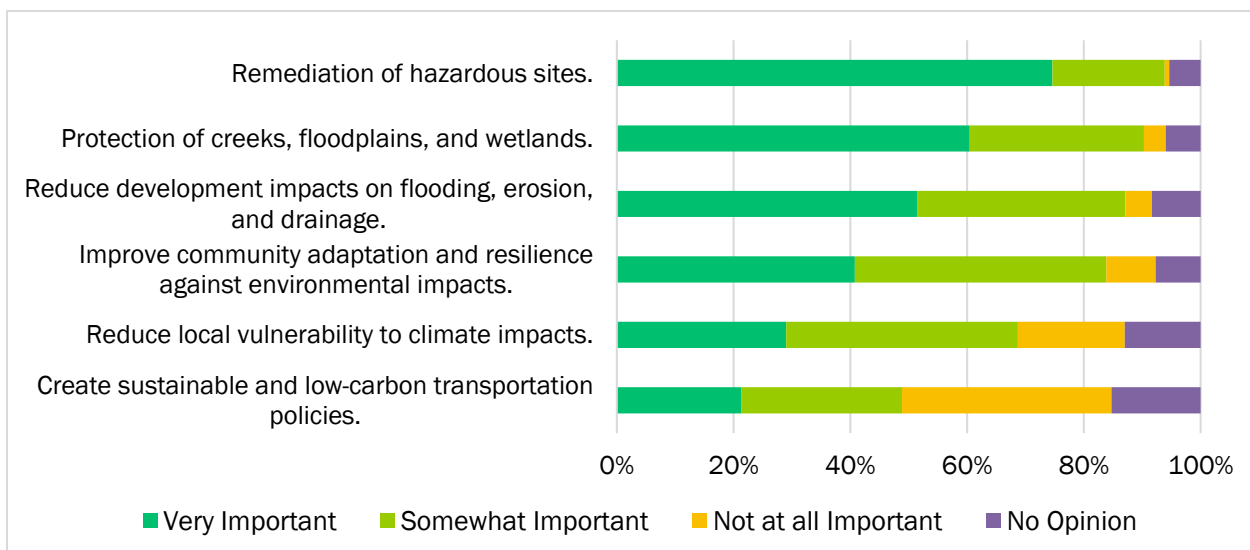
IN GENERAL, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE VILLAGE OF LANCASTER?

The survey responses indicate that Village of Lancaster residents strongly prioritize environmental protection and remediation efforts. There is broad concern for environmental sustainability and mitigation of development impacts, with transportation policies being the most debated topic.



IN GENERAL, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE VILLAGE OF DEPEW?

The survey responses indicate that Village of Depew residents indicate a strong emphasis on environmental protection and remediation. This data shows that Depew residents are particularly focused on hazardous site cleanup, water protection, and managing development impacts, with less emphasis on climate policies and transportation.



QUESTION 16. BIGGEST CHANGE OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHANGE YOU'VE SEEN IN THE VILLAGE OF LANCASTER IN THE LAST 5 YEARS?

- 1. Downtown Revitalization and Development**
 - a. Many respondents praise the development of West Main Street, the influx of new businesses, restaurants, and shops, and the increase in foot traffic
 - b. Beautification and revitalization efforts, including the addition of roundabouts and improved streetscapes, were noted as significant positive changes.
 - c. Sense of pride in the new vibrancy downtown, enjoy the new spaces and events.
- 2. Concerns about Overdevelopment**
 - a. Concern with development of apartment complexes and housing developments leading to overcrowding, loss of green space, and higher traffic congestion.
 - b. Strain on infrastructure
 - c. Loss of the small-town charm and agricultural spaces that once defined the village.
- 3. Mixed Feelings on Village Events**
 - a. Divided opinions on village events, particularly the 4th of July festivities.
 - b. Some were disappointed with the perceived reduction in family-friendly events and the increased focus on adult-oriented activities like beer tents, while others appreciated the liveliness of new events.
- 4. Infrastructure and Public Services**
 - a. Frustrated with ongoing issues such as poor street maintenance, traffic problems, power outages, and noise pollution.
 - b. Concerns about increased taxes and the perception that village services were declining in quality, especially regarding code enforcement and the upkeep of public spaces.
- 5. Community Feel**
 - a. Positive shift in the village's community feel, with more people walking around, enjoying the local businesses, and participating in events.
 - b. Some expressed concern about the loss of the village's close-knit, family-friendly atmosphere due to new development trends.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHANGE YOU'VE SEEN IN THE VILLAGE OF DEPEW IN THE LAST 5 YEARS?

- 1. Improvement in Community Spaces**
 - a. Appreciation of upgrades made to Fireman's Park and other community spaces
 - b. This has fostered community engagement through events and improved amenities.
- 2. Population and Housing Changes**
 - a. Increase in population, with more renters moving into the Village

- b. Concerns about unkept properties, absentee landlords, and low-income housing developments affecting neighborhood quality.

3. Economic Shifts

- a. Perceived decline in local businesses, with more empty storefronts on Transit Road
- b. Concern about the growing number of vape shops and similar establishments
- c. Some residents feel that property taxes have increased without corresponding improvements in services.

4. Traffic and Urbanization

- a. Traffic congestion worsening due to increased development
- b. Concerns about poor community planning and loss of green spaces

5. Crime and Safety

- a. Concern regarding the increase in crime and the perceived lack of police presence, particularly in neighborhoods that have seen demographic changes.

QUESTION 17. VISION FOR THE FUTURE

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE VILLAGE OF LANCASTER (NEXT 20 YEARS)? WHAT THINGS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CHANGE AND WHAT THINGS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE PRESERVED?

The overarching vision for Lancaster is to balance growth and development with the preservation of its small-town charm and historical elements. Respondents want more businesses, community activities, and modern amenities while maintaining the village's green spaces and quaint character. There is also a strong emphasis on improving infrastructure and creating a more family-friendly, walkable, and environmentally conscious community.

Key Themes:

1. Desire for Controlled Development

- a. Support the continued revitalization of the downtown area, particularly the growth of businesses and entertainment along Main Street and Central Avenue.
- b. Desire that Lancaster become a destination spot similar to East Aurora, with more restaurants, retail stores, and walkable areas.
- c. Concerns about overdevelopment - additional housing complexes, loss of green space, loss of small-town feel

2. Preservation of Historical and Small-Town Charm

- a. Desire to preserve Lancaster's historical architecture, including the Opera House and Clock Tower
- b. Importance of maintaining the village's quaint, small-town character
- c. Need to balance modernization with historical preservation, retain charm while becoming more accessible and walkable.

3. Community Engagement and Family-Friendly Environment

- a. Call for more family-friendly events and activities, such as farmers' markets, community festivals, and recreational opportunities for children and teenagers.
- b. Concerned the village is becoming too adult-oriented with an overemphasis on bars and beer tents, want more activities for families, children, and non-drinkers.

4. Infrastructure Improvements

- a. Better sidewalks, road improvements, and safer pedestrian access
- b. Repair existing sidewalks to increase walkability, especially for families, the elderly, and people with disabilities.
- c. Request for better parking solutions, particularly as the village attracts more visitors.

5. Environmental Consciousness and Green Spaces

- a. Preservation of green spaces, such as parks and natural areas
- b. Worried about losing Lancaster's green spaces to development, want to see more effort put into maintaining and improving parks.
- c. Desire for more nature trails, bike paths, and outdoor activities

6. Desire for Modern Amenities

- a. Calls for modern amenities like more diverse retail options, a gym, a swimming pool, and entertainment venues like a theater or additional dining establishments.
- b. Would help boost Lancaster's profile as a vibrant community, keep residents engaged locally

7. Focus on Small Businesses and Local Economy

- a. Support and expand the local economy, particularly small businesses.
- b. Appreciate the village events that help local businesses thrive and hope for more initiatives that encourage residents to shop locally.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE VILLAGE OF DEPEW (NEXT 20 YEARS)? WHAT THINGS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CHANGE AND WHAT THINGS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE PRESERVED?

Respondents envision a balance future that preserves the village's charm while addressing modern needs such as infrastructure, business development, and public safety. There's a significant push to ensure the village remains an attractive, affordable, and safe place to live while being cautious about overdevelopment and maintaining its identity as a close-knit, small community.

Key Themes:

1. Preservation of Green Spaces and Small-Town Charm

- a. Desire to maintain the village's green spaces and prevent overdevelopment.
- b. Strong preference to preserve the village's "small-town feel," including safe, close-knit neighborhoods where people know each other.
- c. Historic preservation, retention of older buildings and the village's historical character.

2. Concerns about Housing Developments

- a. Concern with new housing developments, particularly those involving low-cost housing, and express fears that these may lead to increased crime or strain on infrastructure.
- b. Call for a reduction in large apartment complexes, more focus on single-family homes and homeownership.

3. Lower Taxes and Improved Infrastructure

- a. Lowering taxes, especially for seniors
- b. Sentiment that residents pay too much for services they feel are insufficient or mismanaged.
- c. Request improved infrastructure, including roads like Transit Road, sidewalks, and the village's downtown area

4. Increased Community and Family-Oriented Events

- a. More community events like music in the parks and family-oriented programming.
- b. Desire to see more activities that bring the community together, including programs and services that cater to both young families and seniors.

5. Business Development and Revitalization

- a. Need for business development, especially the filling of vacant storefronts and revitalizing certain areas like Broadway and Urbandale Plaza.
- b. Call for more locally owned businesses, such as restaurants and shops, to give residents more options and to help boost the local economy.

6. Public Safety and Police Presence

- a. Improved police presence, concerns about increasing crime in the village
- b. More patrolling officers, community policing, and initiatives to reduce crime in neighborhoods.

7. Walkability and Connectivity

- a. Need for a more walkable community with better infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.
- b. Calls for connecting parks and commercial areas through sidewalks and bike lanes, emphasis on creating a safe, pedestrian-friendly village.

8. Environmental Sustainability and Infrastructure Updates

- a. Better environmental stewardship, such as burying electric lines, using green energy solutions, and preserving wildlife habitats.
- b. Importance of improving utility infrastructure, addressing issues like drainage, sewer systems, and flood prevention.

9. Calls for Village Dissolution

- a. Suggestion that the village dissolve and merge with the Town of Lancaster or Cheektowaga to reduce the tax burden and improve service efficiency.

QUESTION 18. FINAL COMMENTS

DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER COMMENTS, IDEAS, OR CONCERNS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN? (VILLAGE OF LANCASTER RESPONDENTS)

The feedback reflects a strong desire to balance growth with preservation, ensuring that the village remains a charming, connected, and family-friendly community without overburdening infrastructure or losing its identity.

1. Village Growth and Development

- a. Respondents are divided on growth – some support smart, aesthetic growth while others are concerned about overdevelopment and loss of community character
- b. Preference for local, small businesses rather than big chains or more housing developments
- c. Importance of preserving green spaces, concerned with its loss to housing developments

2. Infrastructure and Connectivity

- a. Improvements to roads, sidewalks, and sewer systems
- b. Suggest the addition of bike paths, road safety improvements (e.g. new roundabouts), and connection of development to surrounding residential areas.
- c. Call for enhanced infrastructure (e.g., water and sewer systems, sidewalks)

3. Community and Walkability

- a. Desire to increase walkability within the village
- b. More paths, parks, and community gathering spaces
- c. Envision a vibrant downtown, residents/visitors walk, shop, and enjoy local attractions
- d. Expand and revitalize community events

4. Taxes and Fiscal Responsibility

- a. Reduce taxes especially for seniors
- b. Want to ensure the efficient use of tax dollars, call for more transparency and accountability in government spending
- c. Slow down development and focus on maintaining existing infrastructure

5. Preserving History and Character

- a. Preserve village's historic nature
- b. Village's charm and quaintness are key attributes that need to be protected especially as more modern development occurs
- c. Maintain older properties, improve aesthetic of commercial spaces esp. on Central Ave

6. Safety and Public Service

- a. Calls for more police presence and measures to address speeding in certain areas like Broadway.
- b. Need to maintain or improve public services, such as trash collection, internet connectivity, and the overall upkeep of public spaces

7. Coordination with Surrounding Areas

- a. More coordination between the Village of Lancaster, Town of Lancaster, and Village of Depew to make the area a more cohesive and thriving place to live
- b. Perception that municipalities operating in siloes, could benefit from more collaborative planning efforts

8. Event and Business Diversity

- a. Desire for more diverse businesses that are inclusive to several different groups
- b. Events that cater to all age groups, something for everyone

9. Aesthetic Improvements

- a. Importance of maintaining an attractive, walkable downtown
- b. Improve unsightly properties like the Sunoco station
- c. Beautification of public spaces and commercial areas

DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER COMMENTS, IDEAS, OR CONCERNS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN? (VILLAGE OF DEPEW RESPONDENTS)

Respondents want a balance between growth and preservation, ensuring that the village remains safe, well-maintained, and appealing, with a focus on community, walkability, and sound governance. There is a clear desire for economic development that doesn't compromise the village's character or overburden its infrastructure.

1. Zoning and Regulations

- a. Fix zoning laws particularly in relation to non-conforming lots and outdated regulations that don't reflect current village conditions

2. Infrastructure and Walkability

- a. Need for better sidewalks, lighting, and general walkability in the village
- b. Improve existing sidewalks that are poorly maintained and hazardous

3. Safety and Policing

- a. Request for a larger law enforcement presence
- b. Install surveillance cameras to deter crime
- c. Concerned with emergency vehicle access issues due to double-sided parking and narrow streets

4. Village Maintenance and Beautification

- a. Maintain village character, encourage upkeep of residential properties
- b. Desire for beautification efforts and more trees in neighborhoods, like what is seen in East Aurora
- c. Complaints about lack of property maintenance by business owners, especially concerning dumpsters

5. Consolidation and Governance

- a. Suggest dissolving village and consolidating services with the Town of Lancaster or Cheektowaga to lower taxes and improve efficiency.
- b. Some oppose consolidation, preferring for the village to maintain a separate identity

6. Revitalization and Economic Development

- a. Call for revitalization to attract younger families and new businesses, emphasis on economic development that enhances the tax base
- b. Utilize vacant land to add value and bring in commercial capital
- c. Preference for business spaces and recreational activities over more apartment buildings

7. Transparency and Communication

- a. Desire for local government to be more accountable and responsive to resident concerns
- b. Some expressed hope for positive changes as a result of the comprehensive planning process

8. Community Resources and Recreation

- a. More recreational spaces and trails that connect Depew to other areas
- b. Concern about large expenditures on rarely used facilities

9. Concerns about Rentals and Apartments

- a. Opposition to additional apartment buildings, duplexes, and Airbnb/short term rental properties, fear they will negatively impact the character of the village
- b. More attention paid to managing rental properties and ensuring tenants respect property and community standards

10. Revitalizing Aging Areas

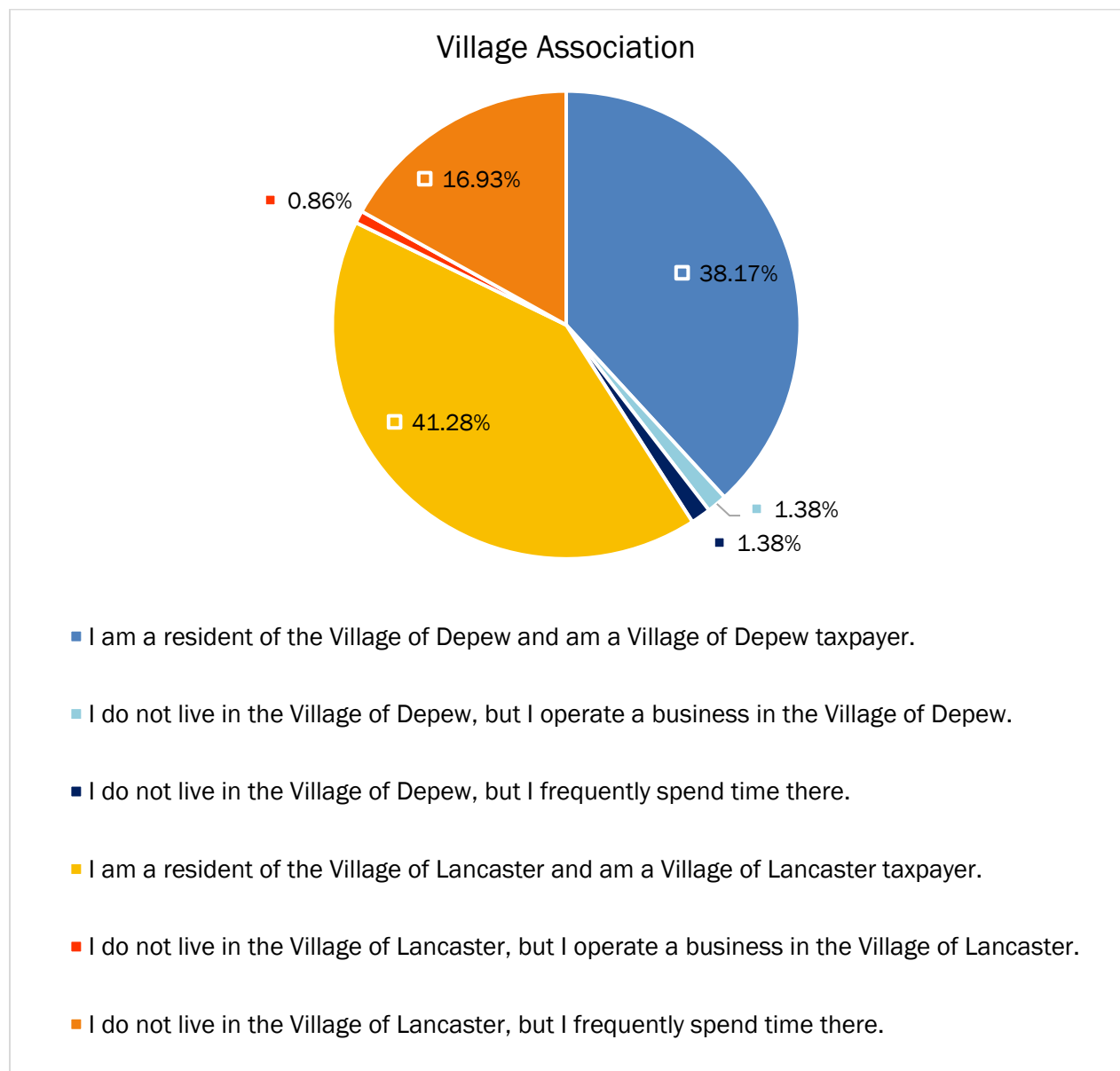
- a. Concern about aging infrastructure and neighborhoods
- b. Call to focus on revitalize older areas rather than add new development
- c. Repurpose vacant or underused land for businesses or community-enhancing projects.

DEMOGRAPHICS

VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

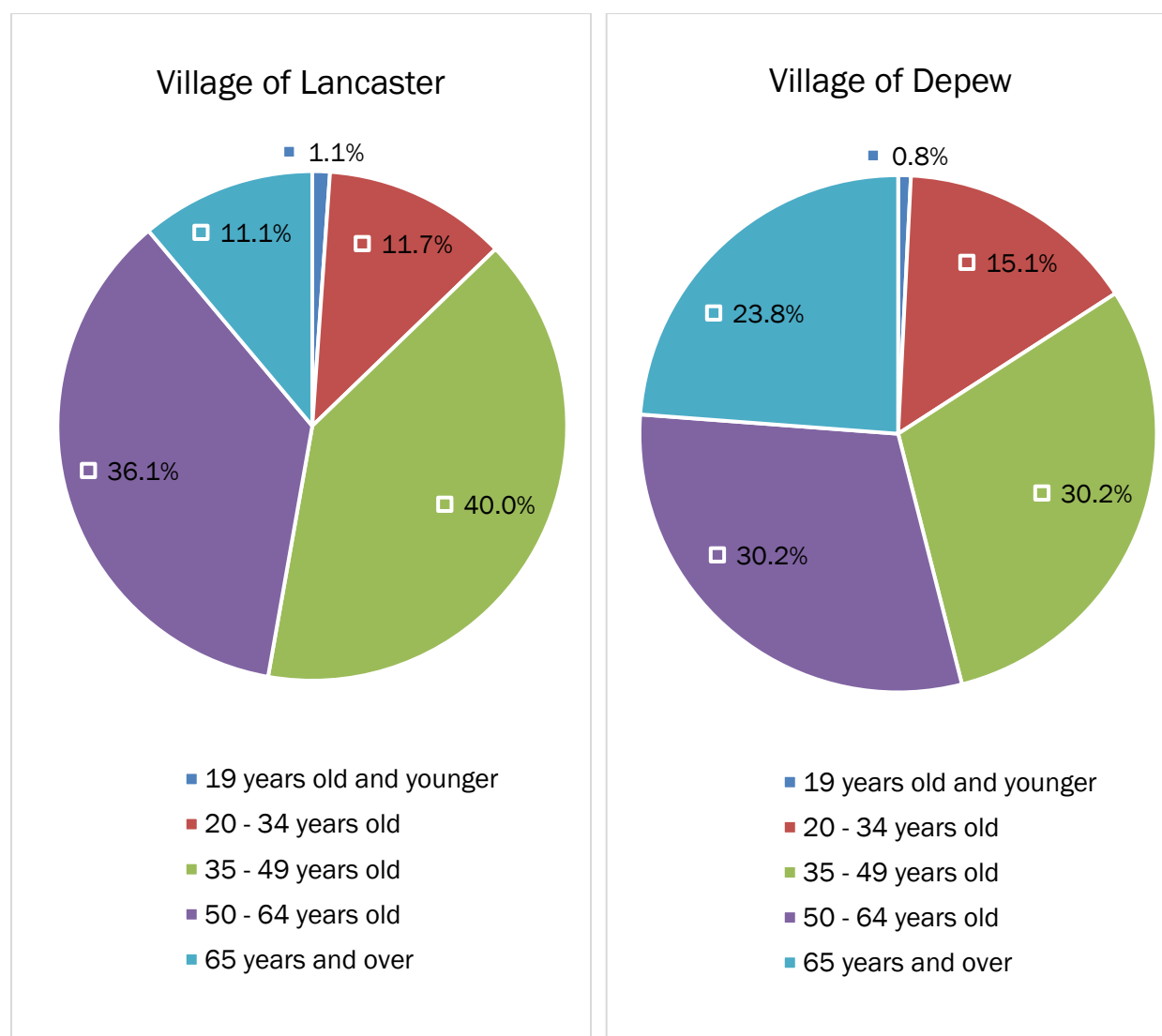
The majority of respondents were village residents with 41.28% of respondents (239 people) being residents and taxpayers of the Village of Lancaster and 38.17% of respondents (221 people) being residents and taxpayers of the Village of Depew. This indicates that most feedback came from people directly invested in their respective villages as both residents and taxpayers.

A combined 18.31% of respondents do not live in either village but frequently spend time there -- 1.38% (8 people) frequently visit Depew and 16.93% (98 people) frequently visit Lancaster. As these respondents regularly spend time in the villages, they can provide valuable insight into the experiences of non-residents who interact with local businesses and amenities.



AGE GROUP

- Middle-aged and older adults dominate the survey responses from both villages, with the 35-64 year age groups making up the majority.
- There is limited participation from younger adults and almost none from teenagers, which could imply a need for targeted outreach to these groups in future planning efforts.
- Seniors (65+ years) make up a larger percentage of respondents from the Village of Depew which may impact the content of survey responses, which may prioritize senior services or concerns about cost of living.

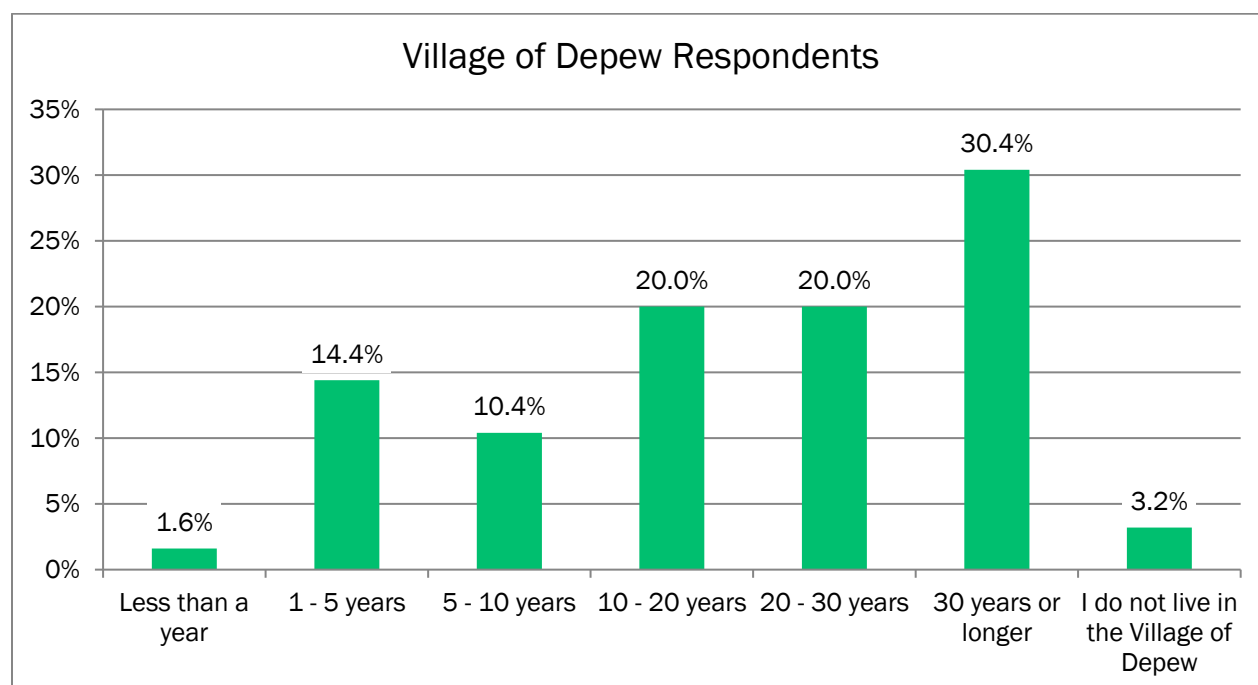
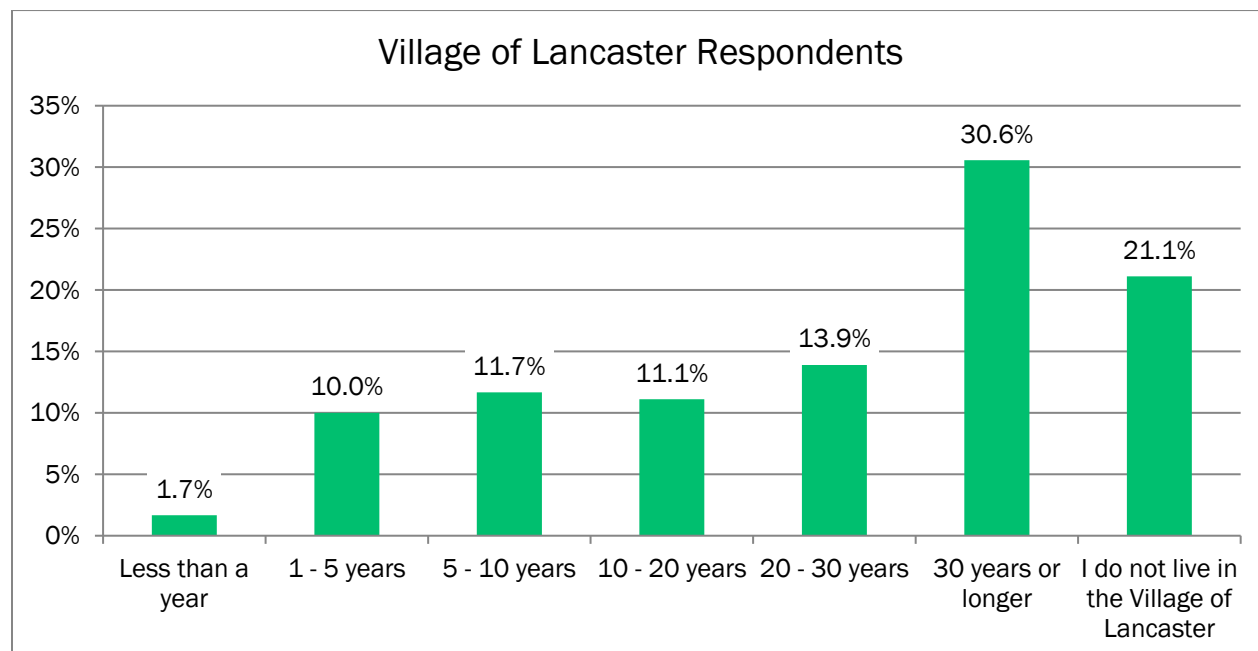


LENGTH OF RESIDENCY

There is strong input from long-time residents – both villages have solid base on long-term residents (over 30 years), with about 30% in each location.

There was notable input from non-residents that frequented the Village of Lancaster with 21.1% of Lancaster responses.

Both villages have a balanced mix of newer and more established residents, with Depew showing a slightly higher presence of mid-range residents (10-30 years).



CONCLUSION

The results of the Village of Lancaster and Village of Depew Comprehensive Plan Public Input Survey provide a reflection of the priorities, concerns, and hopes of both long-term and newer residents of each villages.

The data shows that maintaining the unique village character, ensuring public safety, and preserving green spaces are key concerns. Respondents from both villages are looking for improved infrastructure, more community events, and a strategic approach to growth that minimizes tax burdens.

Overall, the survey indicates a strong commitment to community preservation while welcoming smart, sustainable growth. These insights can help guide the development of the comprehensive plan update that aligns with the needs and aspirations of the residents, ensuring both villages continue to thrive in the coming decades.

APPENDIX C
OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC INPUT

VILLAGE OF DEPEW AND VILLAGE OF LANCASTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE **PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY**

Village of Lancaster

Open House Details:

Date: 09/26/2024

Time: 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Location: Lancaster Municipal Building, 5423 Broadway, Lancaster, NY 14086

Number of Attendees: 29

Board: The Future of the Village of Lancaster

Question: How would you describe the Village of Lancaster?

Attendees view the Village of Lancaster as a small-town, family-oriented community that is welcoming, friendly, and walkable. Many emphasize its historical charm, modern appeal, and ongoing, appropriately paced growth. The village is described as vibrant and evolving, with a focus on its strong community spirit, thriving downtown, and diverse commerce, positioning itself as an emerging destination for both residents and visitors.

Question: What are your biggest hopes for the future of the Village of Lancaster?

Attendees hope to see the Village of Lancaster maintain its small-town charm while supporting continued growth in housing, small businesses, and varied retail options, particularly in the downtown area. Many are interested in smart growth, with an emphasis on building upward in the village center, increasing walkability, and preserving the community's identity. There is also a strong desire for the village to become a premier destination in Western New York, with sustainable development, economic engagement, and enhanced community amenities like playgrounds and green spaces.

Board: Village of Lancaster's Regional Context

Question: Looking ahead, what role would you like the Village of Lancaster to play in the region?

Attendees envision the Village of Lancaster as a regional leader in smart growth and sustainability, serving as a destination for visitors, events, and family activities. They hope to see the village as a model for how historical communities can modernize while preserving their character, becoming a blueprint for sustainability and economic development. Additionally, the village is seen as a hub for tourism, historic preservation, and community engagement, with strong walkability and connectivity through biking and walking trails.

Board: Village of Lancaster's Land Use

Question: What are the Village of Lancaster's biggest opportunities?

Attendees highlighted several key opportunities for the Village of Lancaster, including expanding the downtown area with mixed-use development, increasing retail options, and drawing more residents and visitors. There is strong support for developing green initiatives, expanding the village's trail system, and modernizing zoning to encourage accessory residences and new business ventures. Additional suggestions include preserving green space, adding community

amenities such as pickleball courts and dog parks, and expanding the downtown district to foster economic growth and sustainability.

Question: What are the Village of Lancaster's biggest obstacles?

The biggest obstacles identified for the Village of Lancaster include limited space for growth and high housing costs, which constrain development to infill and reuse. Traffic, pedestrian safety, particularly at the Broadway and Central intersection, and the urban heat island effect make walkability challenging. Additional barriers include a lack of public support for densification, resistance to change, balancing new development with traditional character, and addressing nonconforming or underutilized properties that don't contribute to the community.

Board: Public Amenities

Prompt: Which public amenities would you like to see added or expanded within the Village of Lancaster?

Value	Count
Green Space and Sustainability Initiatives	20
Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure	16
Community Spaces	14
Parks and Rec Facilities	7
Senior and Youth Services	5
Public Transit Access	4

Attendees expressed strong support for expanding green space and sustainability initiatives, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and community spaces within the Village of Lancaster. Additional public amenities requested include affordable housing, downtown playgrounds, fiber optic cable

development, and improved connectivity to Como Lake Park and Cayuga Creek through trails and pedestrian bridges. Enhancements like bike lane markings, dog-friendly spaces, and improvements to the Heritage Trail were also suggested.

Board: Community Values

Prompt: Which of the following community values should be a top priority in the Village of Lancaster?

Value	Count
Economic Vitality	21
Environment and Sustainability	10
Open Space and Recreation	10
Neighborhood Revitalization	10
Historic Preservation	10
Growth and Change	9
Connectivity and Accessibility	8
Health and Safety	4

Attendees emphasized economic vitality as a top priority for the Village of Lancaster, receiving the highest number of responses. Other important values include environment and sustainability, open space and recreation, neighborhood revitalization, and historic preservation, all of which received equal support. Connectivity and accessibility, as well as growth and change, were also recognized but ranked lower in comparison.

Village of Depew

Open House Details:

Date: 09/25/2024

Time: 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Location: The Pavilion at Fireman's Park, Terrace Boulevard and Erie Street, Depew

Number of Attendees: 3

Board: The Future of the Village of Depew

Question: How would you describe the Village of Depew?

This question received the following comment: "growing and developing."

Question: What are your biggest hopes for the future of the Village of Depew?

This question received the following comment: "Improvement of street tree plantings."

Board: Village of Depew's Regional Context

Question: Looking ahead, what role would you like the Village of Depew to play in the region?

This question received the following comment: "Improving complete street initiatives."

Board: Village of Depew's Land Use

Question: What are the Village of Depew's biggest opportunities?

This question received the following comments:

1. "Connectivity to green spaces"
2. "Dawson Fields; Northside; Keep green space"

Question: What are the Village of Depew's biggest obstacles?

This question received the following comments:

3. "Lack of tree canopy"
4. "Pedestrian/cyclist safety"

Board: Public Amenities

Prompt: Which public amenities would you like to see added or expanded within the Village of Depew?

Value	Count
Green Space and Sustainability Initiatives	6
Parks and Rec Facilities	3
Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure	2
Senior and Youth Services	1
Community Spaces	0
Public Transit Access	0

Attendees prioritized the expansion of green space and sustainability initiatives as the most desired public amenity. Other notable interests include improvements to parks & recreation facilities and bike & pedestrian infrastructure. There is less demand for community spaces, public transit access, or senior and youth services.

Board: Community Values

Prompt: Which of the following community values should be a top priority in the Village of Depew?

Value	Count
Open Space and Recreation	4
Environment and Sustainability	2
Neighborhood Revitalization	2
Health and Safety	1
Historic Preservation	1
Economic Vitality	1
Growth and Change	1
Connectivity and Accessibility	0

Attendees highlighted open space and recreation as the top priority for the Village of Depew, receiving the most support. Other notable values include environment & sustainability and neighborhood revitalization, which also garnered attention.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES

Village of Lancaster Open House

Prompt	How would you describe the Village of Lancaster?
Comments	<p>Evolving for the better</p> <p>Small Town Community</p> <p>Small town friendly community</p> <p>Growing at a good pace</p> <p>True community</p> <p>Community, exciting growth, walkable</p> <p>Beautiful historic character, welcoming</p> <p>Growing</p> <p>Village on the rise</p> <p>Family focused village</p> <p>Hidden gem</p> <p>Historic village with modern appeal</p> <p>A community on the rise working to establish itself as a destination for residents of Erie County and beyond</p> <p>Great village center!! Love the shops and amenities</p> <p>Fresh atmosphere. Diversity in commerce.</p> <p>Delightfully happening</p> <p>Vibrant, prideful</p> <p>Community</p> <p>Inviting and exciting</p> <p>Downtown vibrant</p> <p>Community driven and walkable</p> <p>smartly growing</p>

Prompt	What are your biggest hopes for the future of the Village of Lancaster?
Comments	<p>Walkable hub of America's greatest values</p> <p>Vary the retail options, more restaurants</p> <p>Continued addition of new residential housing and new small businesses</p> <p>Keep the "village and community feel"</p> <p>Growth - building up (in height) since everywhere else is developed; playground in downtown areas - lots of young families; connect Como Park to downtown via Gar Galvin trail</p> <p>Keep its true identity</p> <p>Working with Moose Club and Elks for the good of the community</p> <p>Become a premier WNY destination</p> <p>Playground near village center so families can enjoy village shops longer!</p> <p>Activate downtown with retail and building up (in height)</p> <p>Village for everyone, all ages, all economic classes</p>

Prompt	What are your biggest hopes for the future of the Village of Lancaster?
Comments Continued	<p>Great job on porchfest! Just better grouping for future - we're very far apart some porch spots</p> <p>smart growth</p> <p>Continued growth, age in place</p> <p>growth and character</p> <p>A model community that serves as a blueprint for other similar small villages who seek to redefine themselves while preserving their distinct, historical character</p> <p>Growth with economic and community engagement</p> <p>Veterinary office. To continue to bring events in.</p> <p>Sustainability. Finding ways to build longevity for residents/businesses.</p> <p>Access to all the new and exciting things in downtown</p> <p>Playground downtown would be great. Small business incubators. Green initiatives.</p> <p>More growth in small business opportunities and more community driven development</p> <p>Build up (height) in core. Infill of vacant lots. Maximize highest and best uses for core parcels.</p> <p>Continue the revitalization of downtown.</p>

Prompt	Looking ahead, what role would you like the Village of Lancaster to play in the region?
Comments	<p>Let's use our smart growth to be an economic powerhouse</p> <p>Destination for visitors</p> <p>Leader in smart growth and sustainability</p> <p>Leader in Sustainability</p> <p>Be known for our great family village center</p> <p>Blueprint to show how historical communities can modernize, redevelop, and become more sustainable while keeping their character</p> <p>A destination within the region</p> <p>Leadership. Providing ways to achieve goals. Show residents "how."</p> <p>Development and special events host</p> <p>Leader in sustainability tourism</p> <p>Dense residential and commercial village core with walkability and a draw to the whole region</p> <p>Historic and tourist destination</p> <p>A destination people want to visit through our historic buildings to shops, merchants, and events</p> <p>Continue to lead in smart growth</p> <p>Family destination. NY has great villages with so much character and ours happens to be in a large metro. Let's build on the success of businesses like Fattey Beer Co!</p>

Prompt	Looking ahead, what role would you like the Village of Lancaster to play in the region?
Comments Continued	<p>Demonstrate what can be accomplished together</p> <p>Continue connecting walking and bike trails to the east and west</p> <p>Leader in historic preservation</p> <p>Great place to start and raise a family</p>

Prompt	What are the Village of Lancaster's biggest opportunities?
Comments	<p>Semi-dense suburban village center (a draw to surrounding towns)</p> <p>Gar Galvin Trail; Heritage Trail.</p> <p>Build up to create more retail, maybe north on central; Connect our best park to village center via Gar Galvin Trail.</p> <p>North of Broadway towards Walden for development or re-development</p> <p>Green initiatives. Central development - it's not just about W. nah</p> <p>Awesome downtown</p> <p>Mixed use development</p> <p>Downtown growth and drawing in residents from the town</p> <p>Extend the downtown character west on Broadway and North on Central Avenue</p> <p>Adapting current spaces</p> <p>Modernize zoning to allow accessory building residences and mixed use beyond the central business district</p> <p>Making a community hub with lots of ways to attract residents and consumers</p> <p>Please do not take any more green space away. Develop Central north of Pleasant.</p> <p>Forward thinking leadership</p> <p>North on Central west on Broadway new development. Masonic temple. Palmer Place.</p> <p>Pickleball courts!! In village. look at Mang Park in Kenmore</p> <p>Large fenced in dog area - Know Farm. Only a small in como so far I believe</p> <p>Expanding the downtown district boundaries</p> <p>Education of climate smart initiatives</p> <p>Retail downtown is a big draw. Let's capitalize!</p> <p>Mexican restaurant</p> <p>Expanding the awesome downtown area!</p> <p>Expanding on the downtown area mixed use</p> <p>Maintain green space. Smart housing and business in business district</p>

Prompt	What are the Village of Lancaster's biggest obstacles?
Comments	<p>Traffic. Urban heat island. Both make walking unpleasant.</p> <p>Limited space for growth. High cost housing.</p> <p>Traditional beliefs in community.</p> <p>Developer interest</p> <p>Housing cost. Broadway and Central intersection - dangerous for pedestrians, lighting.</p> <p>Size - we are only limited by our own boundaries</p> <p>Village is built out so development must be infill-based or through reuse</p> <p>Developing available land while keeping downtown green and walkable</p> <p>Limited free space for development</p> <p>communication</p> <p>Lack of additional spaces for further development.</p> <p>Public support for continued residential densification of the village core</p> <p>Folks that are resistant to any kind of change</p> <p>Funding sources</p> <p>Prime lots are nonconforming uses (verizon, PAC, Sunoco)</p> <p>Balancing new development and traditional community character</p> <p>The light and Broadway and Central is a hazard for pedestrians</p> <p>Dead buildings that don't contribute to residents - Pac always closed, verizon, travel agency, etc.</p> <p>People who don't see the vision the majority share and trying to go backwards</p>

Prompt	Which public amenities would you like to see added or expanded within the Village of Lancaster?	
	Amenities	Count
	Parks and Rec Facilities	7
	Community Spaces	14
	Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure	16
	Public Transit Access	4
	Senior and Youth Services	5
	Green Space and Sustainability Initiatives	20
Prompt	What public amenities are missing from this list?	
Comment	<p>Introduction and development of fiber optic cable opportunities</p> <p>Affordable housing. Downtown playground.</p> <p>Affordable housing and other opportunities for new/young families</p> <p>Playground near village center so families can enjoy the shop and food while kids play!!</p> <p>More bike/shared lane markings. Connection to Como Park.</p> <p>Cayuga Creek shoreline trail to encourage residents and visitors to access out greatest natural resource.</p>	

Prompt	What public amenities are missing from this list?
Comments Continued	<p>A playground downtown. There are so many young families with kids in fattey, it'd be nice to have a proper place for our kids to play.</p> <p>Heritage Trail is infested with ticks - it want to be dog friendly a tick treatment?</p> <p>Playground near Central Business District (Municipal lot behind town hall?)</p> <p>A pedestrian bridge across Cayuga south of Broadway Colonial and Garfield? Near the Elk Club</p>

Prompt	Which of the following community values should be a top priority in the Village of Lancaster?
Amenities	Count
Health and Safety	4
Environment and Sustainability	10
Open Space and Recreation	10
Neighborhood Revitalization	10
Historic Preservation	10
Economic Vitality	21
Connectivity and Accessibility	8
Growth and Change	9

Village of Depew Open House

Prompt	How would you describe the Village of Depew?
Comments	Growing and developing

Prompt	What are your biggest hopes for the future of the Village of Depew?
Comments	Improvement of street tree plantings

Prompt	Looking ahead, what role would you like the Village of Depew to play in the region?
Comments	Improving complete street initiatives

Prompt	What are the Village of Depew's biggest opportunities?
Comments	<p>Connectivity to green spaces</p> <p>Dawson Fields. Northside. Keep green space.</p>

Prompt	What are the Village of Depew's biggest obstacles?
Comments	Lack of tree canopy Pedestrian/cyclist safety

Prompt	Which public amenities would you like to see added or expanded within the Village of Depew?														
	<table> <tr> <th>Amenities</th><th>Count</th></tr> <tr> <td>Parks and Rec Facilities</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr> <td>Community Spaces</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr> <td>Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr> <td>Public Transit Access</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr> <td>Senior and Youth Services</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Green Space and Sustainability Initiatives</td><td>6</td></tr> </table>	Amenities	Count	Parks and Rec Facilities	3	Community Spaces	0	Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure	2	Public Transit Access	0	Senior and Youth Services	1	Green Space and Sustainability Initiatives	6
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Comment	<i>No comments</i>														

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