

# **BRIDGING THE FUTURE**



## **TOWN OF GRAND ISLAND 2018 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 17, 2018**



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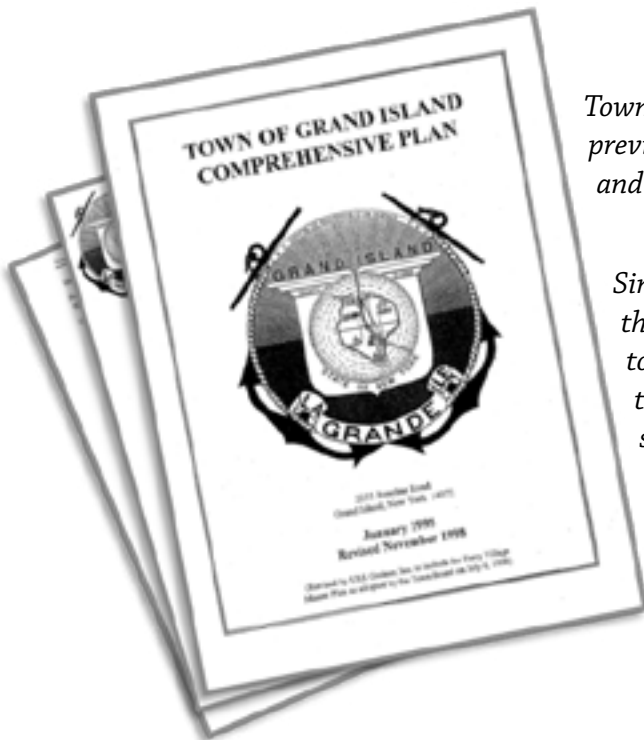
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## Why Plan? Why Now?

Grand Island's previous Comprehensive Plan (also referred to as a Master Plan) was completed in 1995 and subsequently revised in 1998. Since that time, many things have changed not only in the Town, but also the region as a whole. The 1998 Plan contained a wealth of valuable information about Grand Island and progressively guided land use and community decisions over the past 20 years. Though many of the physical elements of the Town have remained much the same, changing demographics (i.e. population and age groups), shifting economic and market dynamics, and other social factors can change the future vision for the Grand Island community.

Typical Comprehensive Plans have a "shelf life" of 10-15 years, upon which time good planning practice includes an in-depth review of the community's vision statement and subsequent policies and actions. Similar to the 1998 Plan, this update



*"is to address the future land use of the Town of Grand Island and to refit many of the previous planning elements to meet today's needs and challenges."*

*Since community planning is a proactive exercise, the time has come for the Town of Grand Island to examine its past and present and re-evaluate their approach to **BRIDGING THE FUTURE** for a stronger community.*

## Purpose of the Plan

As stated in the 1998 Plan:

*“The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to define the community’s vision for the Town of Grand Island in the form of a physical plan to organize and control natural growth and to provide the framework for achieving the community’s goals and objectives. It is designed to be used by the community as a tool for reviewing proposed projects and as a guide in determining the best use of a piece of property.”*

A Comprehensive Plan is a blueprint, a guidance document for local leaders, board members and steering committees; most importantly, it represents the desires and vision of the residents of the community. The plan is based on a review of existing assets (natural and man-made), economic and demographic conditions, community input to develop goals and recommendations for achieving the shared vision of the future of Grand Island.

While the Plan is itself not a regulatory document, it is a tool used by local leaders and Town Boards to implement policies and regulations to act upon development applications that are in the best interest of the Town. New York State Town Law provides local government the authority and power for long-range planning as “*among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to town government...*” for the purpose of protecting public health, safety and general welfare.

In addition to local land use regulation, a Comprehensive Plan provides other benefits, including:

- **Guidance** for local boards and special committees
- **Collaborative** efforts for the community to work together and to build inter-municipal partnerships
- **Marketing** for the Town, outlining assets and opportunities for development and preservation
- **Capital improvement** tool for identifying programs, initiatives, and projects that are prioritized by the community
- **Funding support** for grant opportunities, outlining a collective vision and strategy for plans and projects



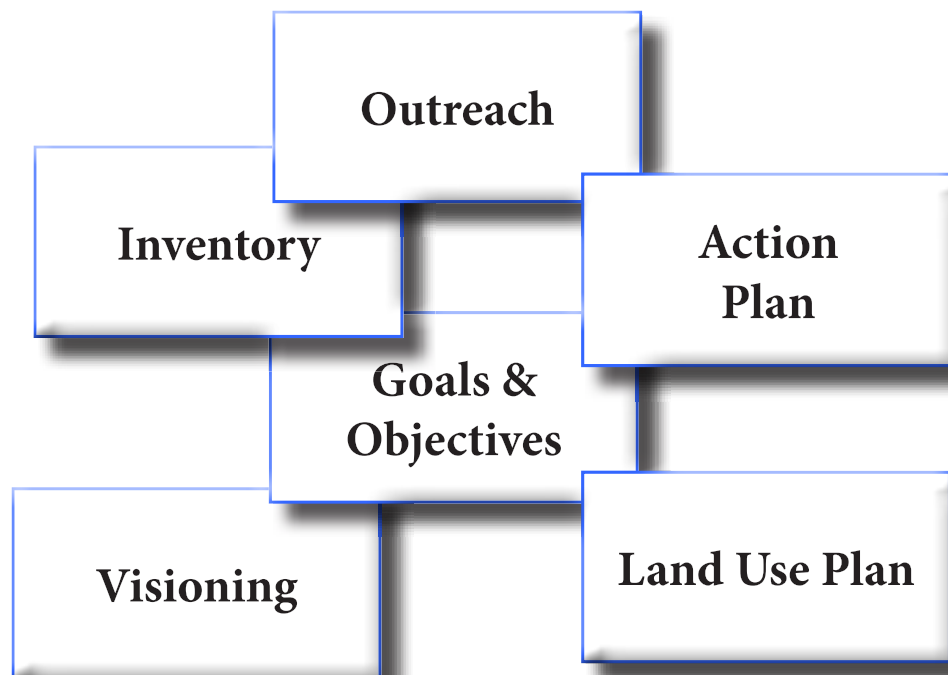
## Plan Outline

This document is organized into several sections that provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the Comprehensive Plan.

1. **Introduction** : How a planning process relays importance to the Grand Island community, and the various public outreach methods used to solicit feedback/input.
2. **Our Community** : A profile of the Town of Grand Island that includes demographics, economic conditions, and physical conditions/assets. This provides information on trends and general characteristics of the community.
3. **Vision for the Future** : How does the community view its Town in the future? Where do we want to be over the next decade? This section contains a forward-looking statement that outlines how the community can visualize the future of Grand Island.
4. **Goals & Objectives** : This section provides more detailed actions on how the Town can achieve the vision for the future.
5. **How We Get There** : The implementation section of the plan for how to carry out the objectives and actions including priorities, strategies, partnerships, key contacts, and funding opportunities.

## The Process

The development of the Comprehensive Plan update involved various players and a distinct planning process that included the following elements:



Overall, the planning process involves key steps beginning with an inventory of necessary background information on physical, social, environmental and economic aspects of the Town. Input from the community is also an important component to gathering information. Their vision

for the future would affect the direction the Town Board would take. Individual goals/policies were then identified, which are narrowed in scope or address a particular issue within the community. An action/implementation plan settles the process, building upon the goals/policies and identifying detailed recommendations to take, along with strategies for implementation. As part of the action plan, future land uses and development strategy areas (such as the Town Center) are mapped out to highlight priority projects, possible investment properties, or potential zoning changes.

Leading this entire process was a Town-appointed long-range planning (steering) committee that included representatives from advisory boards, local government organizations, Town staff, local residents and business owners, County representatives, community groups, and the School District (noted on page 7). The planning and design consulting team, Clark Patterson Lee, worked closely with this steering committee to facilitate the creation of the plan. The committee met monthly between March 2017 and March 2018 to direct and manage the development of the Plan as well as providing direction and feedback to the planning consultant team.

## Community Outreach

As an important component to the planning process, we achieved this phase through various collaboration methods in order to gather ample feedback from the residents. A full summary of feedback is located in Appendix A.

- **Steering Committee meetings** : As noted, these monthly meetings provided direct interaction with community representatives throughout the process. They were open to the public and advertised monthly.
- **Community Kickoff** : A public meeting was held on August 9th, 2017 to introduce the community to the project, educate them on the process, share some of the preliminary information that was gathered, and most importantly, to gather initial feedback. Approximately 50 people participated in the event at the Grand Island High School. A brainstorming exercise was given to identify past, present, and future values from residents.

## Branding the plan

A unique part of the planning process involved a branding effort to bring life to the project and make it more easily identifiable within the community. Development of a logo and plan title/tagline took into account the history of the Town, its unique characteristics, and the overall desire to improve the community. The logo and tagline will be used on subsequent actions, documents, and projects so they can be easily related back to the plan and process.



*The first public meeting provided residents an opportunity to express their thoughts on the future of the Town.*



A sample of some of the visual preference survey during the second public meeting. Specific design elements such as pedestrian amenities, decorative street lighting, and a larger public realm are all observed in the higher ranked streetscape images (right).

With signage (left), natural building materials and simpler design are encouraged. This same approach and character could be reflected in signage throughout the Town.

- **Town-wide survey** : Based on the information gathered from the committee and the public kickoff meeting, a follow-up survey was developed and distributed. It included more detailed questions on development preferences, community character, economic patterns, growth, and conservation. In the end, over 900 residents responded, providing additional information for development of the Plan.
- **Second Public meeting** : A second public meeting was held on October 17 , 2017 with more of an emphasis on community design preferences. Residents were provided various images related to architecture, gateway and wayfinding signage, trails, streetscapes (developed areas within the right-of-way along road corridors), sustainability measures, and waterfronts as a means to identify desirable design elements in the various categories. The preferred images would help develop specific recommendations related to site development, general character, density, access, and other development components in the future. "A picture is worth a thousand words."
- **Third Public meeting**: A presentation of final graphics and report content, including the goals and objectives, was reviewed with the community at the third public meeting on February 28, 2018. Time was allowed for the audience to ask questions and presentation boards were set up for further understanding of the proposed projects and maps.



## Acknowledgements

**BRIDGING THE FUTURE**, the Town's Comprehensive Plan update, was guided by a steering committee of volunteers that provided valuable insight throughout the process. In addition to these members, the committee and the Town Board would also like to thank the community at large, especially those that attended meetings and other events, who contributed to the plan through their feedback and comments.

### TOWN BOARD

NATHAN D. McMURRAY ..... Town Supervisor  
BEVERLY A. KINNEY ..... Councilwoman  
MICHAEL H. MADIGAN ..... Councilman  
JENNIFER L. BANEY ..... Councilwoman  
PETER MARSTON JR. .... Councilman

### LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

#### VOTING MEMBERS ..... REPRESENTING

JAMES R. SHARPE ..... Deputy Supervisor, LRPC Chairman  
BEVERLY KINNEY ..... Town Board/Planning Board liaison  
DR. BRIAN GRAHAM ..... Grand Island Central Schools, Superintendent  
ELIAS REDEN ..... Erie County Planning, DEP  
DAVE BRUNO ..... Planning Board, Chair  
PAUL LEUCHNER ..... Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Chair  
DIANE EVANS ..... Conservation Advisory Board, Chair  
MARY WEST ..... Economic Development Advisory Board, Chair  
BETTY HARRIS ..... Traffic Safety Advisory Board  
MARION FABIANO ..... Zoning Board of Appeals, Chair  
STEVE BIRTZ ..... Local Farmer Representative  
ERIC FIEBELKORN ..... Chamber of Commerce, President  
DR. MARTHA LUDWIG ..... Citizen Member  
PETER COPPOLA ..... Citizen Member  
DEBORAH BILLONI ..... Citizen Member  
DAN DREXILIUS ..... Citizen Member  
SHARON OSGOOD ..... Citizen Member

#### NON-VOTING MEMBERS ..... REPRESENTING

JACQUELINE MCGINTY ..... Secretary to the Committee  
PETE MARSTON ..... Town Board/Planning Board, Chair (Past Chair)  
JASON MASKER ..... Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, (Past Chair)  
ROBERT STARZYNSKI ..... Planning Board, (Past Chair)  
SHARON NICHOLS ..... Historic Preservation Advisory Board  
WILLIAM KOCH ..... Historical Preservation Advisory Board, Chair



## Brief History

The Town of Grand Island is nestled between two iconic cities in the Western New York Region, sitting 20 minutes north of the City of Buffalo and 10 minutes south of the City of Niagara Falls. This immense island, at 33 square miles in size, divides the Niagara River in half prior to where the river cascades over the Falls further north.

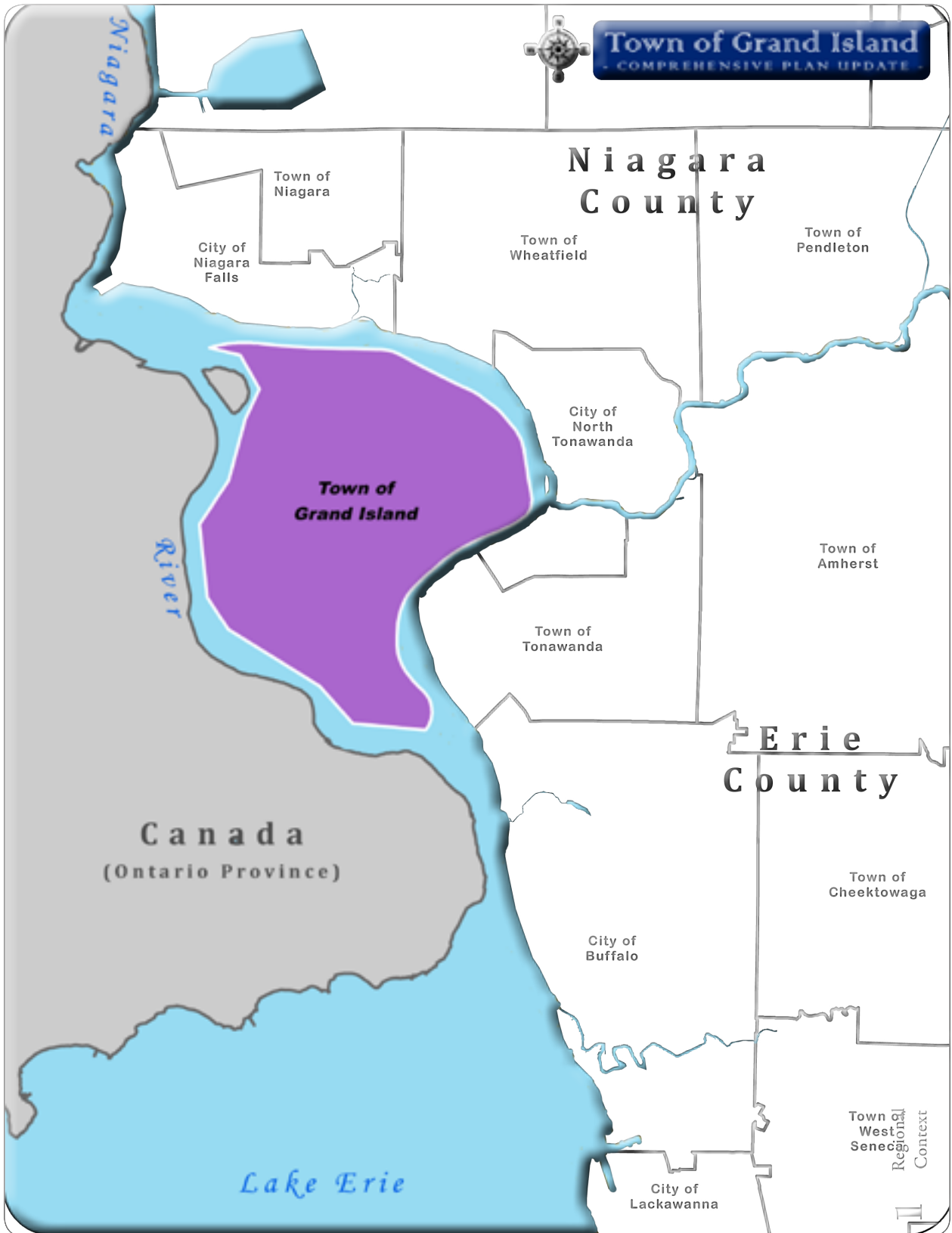
Grand Island as a land mass has been a staple of the Niagara River as the largest island of the Niagara River community. Like many regions in this bi-national area, the roots of Grand Island's settlements can be found in the indigenous culture of the Seneca Nation, which took control of the island from another American Indian nation in 1651. In 1763, Seneca Natives attacked a British supply wagon train in what was known then as the Devil's Hole Massacre. After expressing regret for the incident, an "olive branch" of good faith was extended in the granting of all islands on the Niagara River above the Falls to Sir William Johnson. The treaty was signed at Fort Niagara in August of 1764 and immediately transferred to the King of England. Following the end of the War of 1812, the land was deemed to have been transferred back to the Seneca Nation. The State of New York purchased Grand Island along with other various islands on the Niagara River for one thousand dollars in September of 1815.

After the purchase of these islands, boundaries amongst the United States and Canada were not clear amongst the nations. In 1822, a boundary commission defined the west branch of the Niagara River as the main channel, as it was the deeper portion of the waterway. The Treaty of Ghent dictated that the international border would be midstream of the River, and thus, the official boundary was established, leaving all islands in US possession except for Navy Island, which was left to Canada. Shortly after the purchase, the government declared free land available on the Island; the population soon grew to 150 people. The Island was officially surveyed first by Silas D. Kellogg, then by his assistant, James Tanner, following the death of Chief Surveyor in 1824. On January 25, 1825 Simeon DeWitt, the first Surveyor General of the State of New York, reported



*Grand Island's history is intimately tied to the water, from an economic, ecotourism, and transportation perspective.*

*Images courtesy of Grand Island Historical Society*



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Our Community

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**Town of Grand Island : BRIDGING THE GAP**



the results of that survey to the Speaker of the New York State Assembly. The 17,382.20 acres comprising the Island had an aggregate value of just over \$48,000. In 1825 the Island was sold to four individuals—Samuel Leggett, John B. Yates, Archibald McIntyre and Peter Smith—for \$76,230. The land purchased by Samuel Leggett, made at the behest of Major Mordecai Manuel Noah, marked the beginning of a plan to create a community that would become a haven for members of the Jewish faith and a thriving trade center on the Niagara River. This grandiose plan lost support over time and eventually was abandoned.

Later in 1825 Grand Island was connected to the mainland by a ferry; shortly thereafter the East Boston Company purchased 16,000 acres of land for the purpose of harvesting timber from the mature white oak forests that blanketed the Island. The timber was milled at the Whitehaven Settlement, loaded on barges and transported to New York City via the Erie Canal. From there it was delivered to various coastal shipyards, where it became the keels and ribs of the hulls of the large sailing clippers engaged in the China tea trade.

By 1852 the Town of Grand Island was officially incorporated, combining the larger Grand Island with Buckhorn Island to the north, Beaver Island to the south and nearby Frog Island (situated in the east branch of the Niagara River). Buckhorn Island and Beaver Island are located within established state parks managed by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Frog Island was renamed Motor Island in 1910, when it was purchased by William “Fingy” Connors and became a prominent Niagara River yacht club. In 1983 Frog Island was purchased by a group of investors who sought to establish a river-oriented campground. At that time the island was officially known as Pirates Island. On February 19, 1998 the island was subsequently purchased by the State of New York and officially designated the Motor Island Wildlife Management Area. The island is home to the only heron rookery on the Niagara River. Public access to this island is prohibited.

In 1993, a federal lawsuit was filed by the Seneca Nation of Indians who sought to have Grand Island returned to native ownership along with an unspecified amount of monetary compensation. After almost a decade, the basis for the case was found to be null and void, leaving the ownership of the island in the hands of the United States. The decision was appealed multiple times following the 2002 decision, most recently in 2006, but the case never moved forward in the courts.

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## Grand Island Today

This section of the Plan documents the demographic conditions of the Town, identifying patterns of community change and trends that influence planning for the future. This demographic inventory, along with an analysis of physical features and public input, form the basis for recommendations and strategies for the Town.

- The data on the following pages provides a “snapshot,” a demographic baseline of the Town from when the plan was developed that can be used to determine progress and changes as the community moves forward. Additional details are found in Appendix B.
- The population is and has been steadily increasing, though at a slower rate since 2010 (compared to the County, which is declining).
- Median age is decreasing (41.6 from 42.1), unlike many other communities in the region.
- The majority (70%) of the land is assessed as residential, though only 41% of the actual land/acreage is dedicated to residential uses, followed by vacant land (33%).

# GRAND ISLAND COMMUNITY PROFILE SNAPSHOT



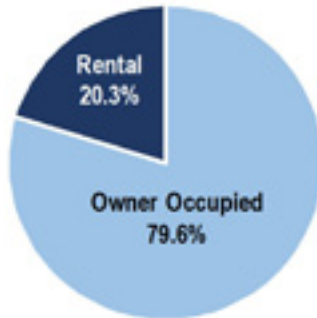
**33.3 20,976 742**

**SQUARE  
MILES**

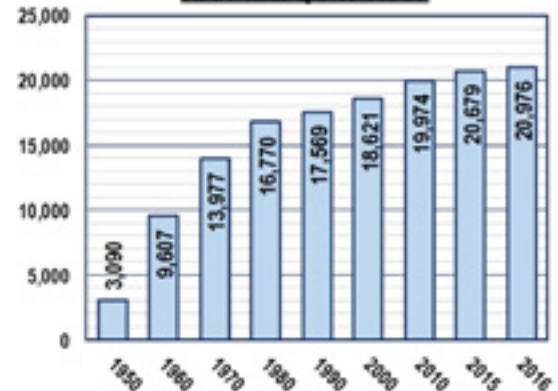
**TOTAL  
POPULATION**

**PERSONS PER  
SQUARE MILE**

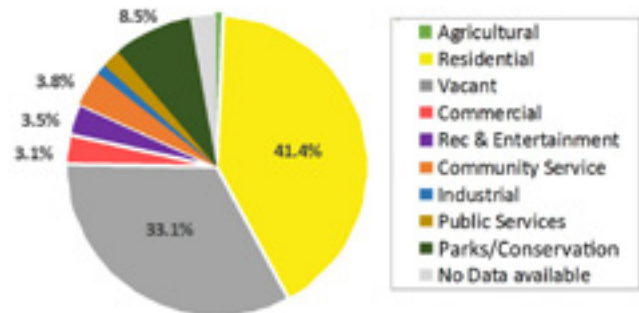
Dwelling Occupancy



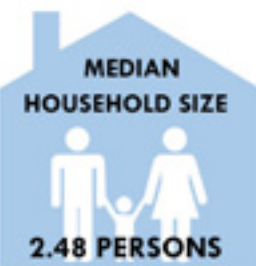
Total Population



Share of Total Land Use (acreage)



Median Income



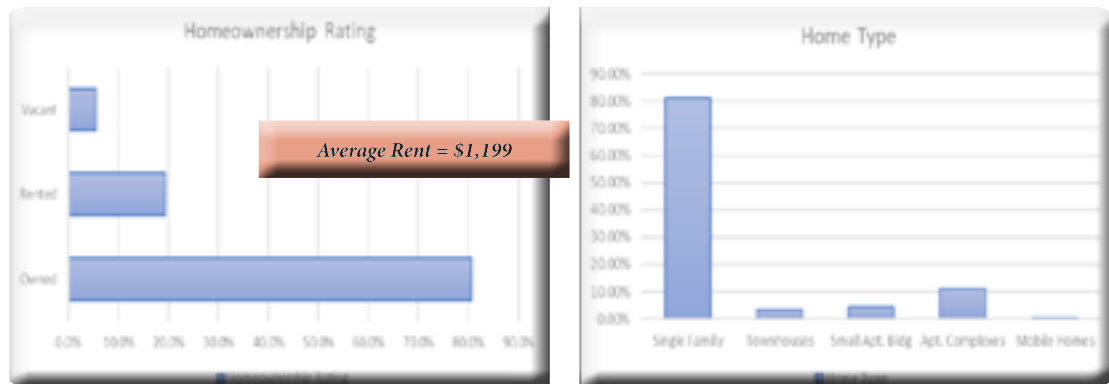
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Our Community

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**Town of Grand Island : BRIDGING THE GAP**

- Nine percent of the total land area is zoned for commercial business and five percent for industrial uses; the majority is zoned for residential.
- Thirty-three percent of the land in the Town (by acreage) is classified as vacant.
- Housing construction has increased by 14% since 2000, though the rate of annual growth has been declining.
- The majority (79%) of homes are owner-occupied; the rest are rentals, though the latter has been on the rise since 2000.
- Home values are increasing and sales have been stable.
- Median household incomes have increased since 2000, as have the number of higher-educated residents.



- The size of the workforce (over 16 years old) has remained stable since 2010, but decreased since 2000; unemployment remains below 4%.
- The majority (80%) of the workforce work outside of Grand Island; 82% of those work within Erie County (20 minute average commute time).

## Demographic Implications

Demographics are more than just numbers; they provide a window into future trends and provide insight into potential community issues or priorities. For Grand Island specifically:

- A **growing population** indicates that the Town needs to accommodate growth with housing, demands on services, school enrollment projections/class sizes, and other community issues. Growth is a positive impact, but requires good planning to ensure that the Town is proactive in addressing the many facets that go along with it.
- Similarly, a **decreasing median age** means that millennials or Gen Z generations are moving in, though the **household size is declining**, which indicates they are not families with children, which is necessary for long-term sustainability.
- An increase in **empty-nesters and seniors** translates into the need for more community services, affordable housing, alternative modes of transportation, community events, and spending options.
- The rise in **rental housing** correlates to empty-nesters who are looking to downsize but remain in the Town. Single-family, owner-occupied is still in the majority. **Housing variety** is key to attracting new residents, increasing the tax base and overall attractiveness of the Town.

- An increase in median income is seen as an indicator that there is more **spending power** for residents, though it can be overshadowed by inflation and expenses. Keeping money local is the priority for Grand Island.
- In terms of economic development, a **well-educated workforce** is viewed favorably for attracting potential high-wage employers, though this is counterintuitive since a high percentage of the **workforce commute outside** of the Town. Grand Island will need to **expand business development opportunities and invest in the community** to make it more attractive and keep the workforce local.
- The Town cannot create jobs, but they can “set the stage” with zoning, **investment, and marketing** to encourage new business ventures.

## Natural Assets

In addition to the people that make up Grand Island, the natural assets and associated amenities of the Town have a significant impact on economic development and overall quality of life. These assets consist of natural features (waterbodies, forests, open spaces, etc.) as well as man-made features (roads, trails, marinas, buildings, etc.) as noted in the following maps. This section provides a brief overview of the various elements highlighted on each of the maps and illustrates any significant changes since the 1998 Plan; in many cases, there have been few changes.

## Current Land Use (Map 1)

The Town consists of more than 8,900 parcels on over 16,000 acres of land, which include various land uses, but predominantly residential in nature. The chart below outlines the breakdown of lands in the Town based on local tax records and describe the **primary** use of each parcel of real property on an assessment roll. These land classifications are uniform codes that are used throughout New York State. There may be instances, for example, where large residential lands are partially farmed through leases with farmers, but the primary use of the property is residential in nature; though by appearance these lands appear agricultural, they are taxed as residential. While the chart and corresponding map may appear misleading and not give a “true” breakdown of lands, it does, in fact represent an accurate portrayal of how property is officially used and classified.

Residential lands are the largest land use and are found throughout the Town. In addition to modern subdivisions and rural frontage lots, the Town also contains several established hamlets,

Code	Property Class	No. of Parcels	% Total	Acreage	% Total	Assessed Land Value	% Total	Assessed Total Value	% Total
100	Agricultural	5	0.1%	108.94	0.7%	\$380,400.00	0.1%	\$525,700.00	0.0%
200	Residential	7,073	79.3%	6,805.86	41.4%	\$267,345,391.00	70.4%	\$1,333,230,116.00	81.2%
300	Vacant	1,439	16.1%	5,445.08	33.1%	\$35,444,870.00	9.3%	\$36,238,870.00	2.2%
400	Commercial	172	1.9%	514.64	3.1%	\$15,963,200.00	4.2%	\$106,741,920.00	6.5%
500	Recreation & Entertainment	51	0.6%	576.03	3.5%	\$8,882,300.00	2.3%	\$20,486,900.00	1.2%
600	Community Service	38	0.4%	631.03	3.8%	\$7,475,500.00	2.0%	\$61,192,100.00	3.7%
700	Industrial	21	0.2%	184.75	1.1%	\$3,185,540.00	0.8%	\$30,302,400.00	1.8%
800	Public Services	26	0.3%	316.07	1.9%	\$2,034,600.00	0.5%	\$11,233,664.00	0.7%
900	Forest, Parks & Conservation	7	0.1%	1,403.15	8.5%	\$39,227,600.00	10.3%	\$42,005,500.00	2.6%
0	No Data available	84	0.9%	469.81	2.9%	\$0.00	0.0%	\$0.00	0.0%
TOTAL		8,916	100.0%	16,455.36	100.0%	\$379,939,401.00	100.0%	\$1,641,957,170.00	100.0%



established places or mixed-use neighborhoods that have village-like characteristics, but are not officially incorporated areas. Hamlets have been a key component of Grand Island land use throughout its history. Before the first bridge joined Grand Island with mainland Western New York, waterborne commerce drove development with small areas of commercial and residential development that proliferated at the waterfront around these centers. Hamlets became the points through which the largely agrarian community shipped out produce and took in supplies. Among the oldest of the hamlets are the Whitehaven Settlement and Ferry Village with others including Sandy Beach, the area around Love Road and Staley/Ransom Road - these areas are generally identified on Map 1.

These hamlets still exist today, and others will grow over time. Hamlets are subject to—as the Island is as a whole—zoning, Town policy, and other legal requirements. Hamlets never stand alone; they are a part of the community fabric, existing in clusters that share commercial, civic, and recreational resources.

Behind residential lands, vacant lands are the second highest use, followed by conservation and parkland. The Town is anchored at the north and south by two state parks: Beaver Island and Buckhorn Island. The high percentage and extent of vacant lands scattered throughout the Town indicate potential opportunities for development, or for conservation if the natural features dictate otherwise.

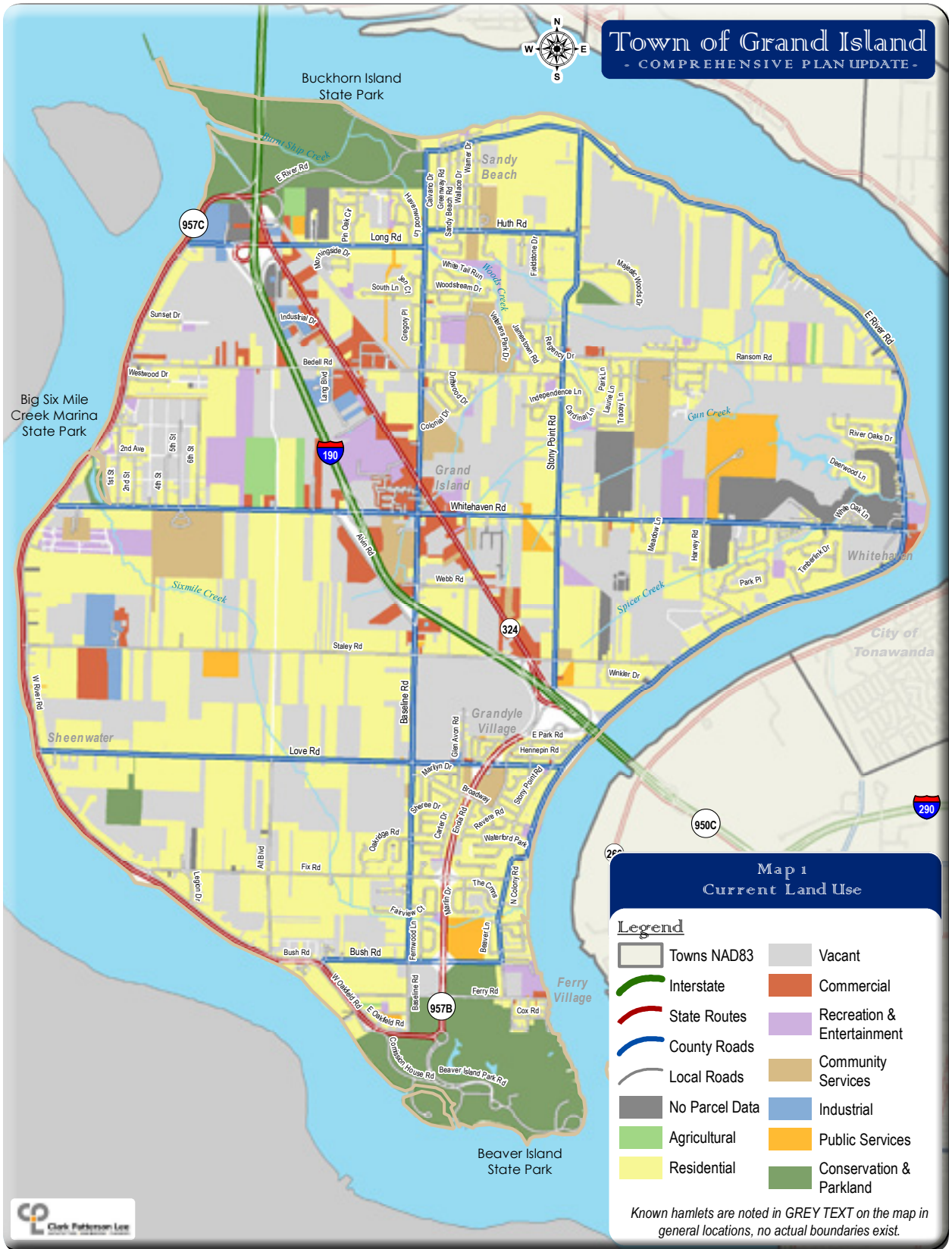
Grand Island has some of the largest tracts of forest within the Niagara River watershed, bolstered by extensive areas of wetlands found throughout the Town as well as the two state parks, Beaver Island and Buckhorn. Additionally, the Western New York Land Conservancy has stewardship over three new tracts of Island land, including Bush Road Woods, Gun Creek Preserve, and the new Margery Gallogly Nature Sanctuary.

Commercial and industrial uses are found throughout the Town, with smaller pockets in the hamlets; however, these uses are primarily located along the Grand Island Boulevard corridor with a slightly higher concentration around the intersection of the Boulevard and Whitehaven Road, the intended center of Town. This central business area also contains several municipal buildings, including Town Hall, courts, and the fire

and police departments. In addition, Grand Island is also home to several large-scale recreation and entertainment venues, including Fantasy Island and the Grand Island KOA campground. Outside of the Town Center, businesses are found on the west end of Staley Road, marine-focused business in Ferry Village, a business node on Love Road near South Parkway and a hotel, marina, and golf course on the east end of Whitehaven. Most of these are seasonal attractions during the warmer months that provide valuable venues for ecotourism and entertainment.



*Grand Island Boulevard by Long Road has a much greater density of industrial uses and could be further developed as the “industrial node” of the Town.*





## Cost of Community Service

*Cost of Community Services (COCS) studies are a case study approach used to determine the fiscal contribution of existing local land uses. COCS studies are a snapshot in time of costs versus revenues for each type of land use. They do not predict future costs or revenues or the impact of future growth. They do provide a baseline of current information to help local officials and citizens make informed land use and policy decisions.*



## Land Use - Why it Matters...

One of the core tenants in Comprehensive Planning is land use; understanding how the existing land is used and distributed in the Town helps to determine development patterns. In many instances, the actual uses vary from the existing zoning and plan recommendations, providing an opportunity to reconcile zoning districts or re-examine their intent to what the community would like to see happen in the future. In addition, the distribution of land uses not only have implications on overall community character, but also on tax burden and economic development.

While most communities, like Grand Island, rely on residential growth to boost tax revenue, it is not the preferred method. Only 40% of the land area of the Town is classified as residential, but it constitutes over 80% of the overall **value** of the Town. This translates into a greater reliance on property taxes to fund the Town, and a higher burden on residents.

As shown in the graphic above, cost of community services studies across the nation have shown that tax revenue generated by residential uses is **less** than the cost for the Town to supply/maintain public services (water, sewer, police, fire, etc.). By comparison, commercial/industrial and working/open lands typically require less public services and therefore, have a **greater** return with tax revenue to the Town. Creating a greater balance of residential and non-residential lands will provide a more sustainably economic environment for the Town and yield greater tax revenue.

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Our Community

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Town of Grand Island : BRIDGING THE GAP

## Transportation Network (Map 2)

Prior to 1935, transportation options to and from the island were limited, with access to Grand Island via Ferry boat to either Ferry Village or the eastern end of Whitehaven Road adjacent to Niawanda Park in the City of Tonawanda. Construction of the north and south bridges started in 1933, and ended with a dedication of the bridges in 1935. The population steadily increased and the arrival of the NYS Thruway in 1957 posed a need for additional bridges. The second south bridge was completed in 1962 and the second north bridge opened in 1965. This route has become a primary thoroughfare for residents and commuters between Niagara and Erie County, which is a benefit in terms of greater access to the Island, but also a detriment in that the Island is seen as a “pass through” rather than a destination.

Three exits from the I-190 provide access into the town at Grand Island Boulevard, Whitehaven Road, and Long Road. Grand Island Blvd., which runs parallel less than half a mile to the east of the Thruway, is the “main street” of Grand Island. The remainder of the street network is built on a traditional grid system and occasional curvilinear, suburban-style roads in some of the more recent subdivisions. Major roadways that provide north-south connections are Baseline Road and Stony Point Road; east-west connections are Whitehaven Road, Staley Road, Love Road, Fix Road. The Town maintains a total of 76 miles of roadway, while the County maintains approximately 33 miles.



*The South Grand Island bridge is an iconic image associated with the Island*

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Our Community

Roadway layouts catered to agriculture since it was the original, predominant land use on Grand Island; to this day, most of the farming properties remain on the west side. A perimeter road along the outer edge of Grand Island provides a scenic view of the unique waterfront homes and the Niagara River shoreline. On Grand Island Boulevard, the Niagara Frontier Transit Authority (NFTA) features two routes (40 & 60) that provide service from Niagara Falls to Buffalo and beyond. Route 60 is an express route only to Fashion Outlets of Niagara Falls USA. There is yet to be public transportation available for destinations off this road, but there is great interest for it in the future.

Public trails are limited and consist of a variety of styles, from on-street to paved paths to stone dust trails, generally providing a loop around the Island. In April 2018, the West River Parkway will be converted from a road to a dedicated, multi-use bike/pedestrian trail connecting Island parks and the regional Niagara River Greenway Trail system.





## Transportation - Why it Matters...

An effective transportation network is critical for the movement of people, productivity, and overall safety of the residents, especially for an island community. Safe and efficient streets are vital to daily activities and require regular maintenance and upgrades to meet the demands of the population. In addition, public roads typically occupy a significant percentage of most community budgets due to the materials, equipment, and staff required to maintain them. Looking beyond just passenger vehicles, the transportation network also includes trails, sidewalks, bike paths/routes, rail, and bus. Current trends locally and nationally show that residents and businesses desire a greater variety of these other forms of transportation, providing local leaders the impetus to expand upon them.



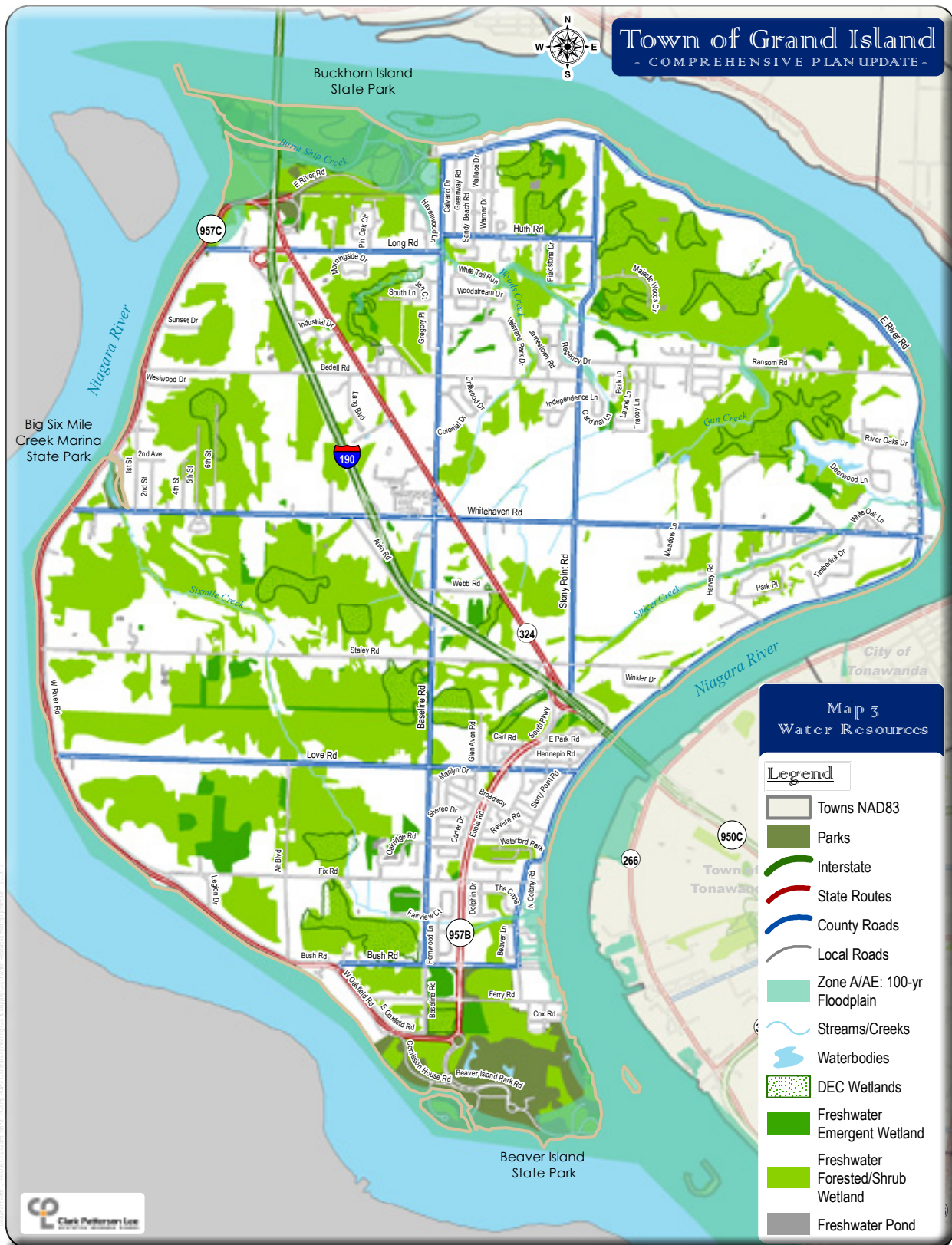
## Water Resources (Map 3)

The shoreline of Grand Island has and will continue to be a source of economic opportunity. Within the Town there are boat launching facilities for motor boats and paddlecraft (canoes and kayaks), marinas, fishing jetties, waterfront trails and access points, public observation areas and overlooks. The natural setting of Grand Island is also a significant economic driver for ecotourism. For example, Grand Island and the Niagara River serve as the host habitat for a variety of birds, many of which come from other parts of the world. The unique assemblage of gulls, wading birds, ducks and other species found locally has earned the Niagara River corridor the designation "Important Bird Area of International Significance" by the National Audubon Society. The presence of rare and unusual birds within and around Grand Island has even launched business enterprises that cater to ecotourists. The recognition of the ecological importance of Grand Island, together with the entire Niagara River corridor, has prompted its nomination to the Ramsar List of Wetlands of Importance.

Flood plains are natural features of the landscape that store and slowly release flood waters. Flood plains exist all over Grand Island primarily because of the



*Migratory birds use wetlands as stopovers, providing birders an opportunity to see species not native to WNY. Wildlife viewing, especially birding, in wetlands is a \$41 billion industry nation-wide.*





prevalence of poorly-draining clay soils and lack of topographic relief. Development, for the most part, has encroached minimally on the important drainage courses of Grand Island. However, preservation of those important hydrologic features has an economic benefit since replacement with conventional storm water infrastructure is costly and far less efficient than natural systems. The Town should strive to continue to preserve the natural functions of flood plains as development progresses.

Equal in prominence to floodplains are the various kinds of wetlands found on Grand Island. Wetlands perform a variety of cost saving functions that are beneficial to the public. They filter pollutants from surface runoff, prevent shoreline erosion, store floodwaters and serve as a habitat for species of recreational, and thus economic, importance. They also add to the quality of life, providing opportunities for passive activities. Their vulnerability to development has led to the strict regulation of these water resources by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The existence of these natural resources limits development; however, the value provided to the Town far outweighs this limitation.

### **Water resources - Why it Matters...**

The Town of Grand Island waterfront, its tributaries, floodplains, ponds and vernal pools are unique and unlike other communities that have been comprised by development. These resources in a very large way define the quality of life in the Town, both for residents and visitors. Collectively, these resources provide diverse opportunities for ecotourism, recreational boating, hunting, fishing, bicycling, and hiking. National studies have shown that capitalization of nature oriented and outdoor recreational pursuits can have a 3:1 return on investment by supporting businesses.

### **Community Resources (Map 4)**

Resources provided by the local government and community-at-large contribute great quality to the life and general prosperity of the Town. Some of these resources are located in and around the Whitehaven and Baseline Road area (the unofficial "Town Center") where the most activity exists, while others are scattered throughout the town. The Town Hall, Fire Department,

### **Ecotourism?**

Ecotourism - a term that is referenced within the Plan, but might not be fully understood by all is used in various industries, and refers to the integration of the natural environment with economic development, conservation efforts, tourism, and marketing. According to the Nature Conservancy:

*"Ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel to natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (including cultural features past and present) in a way that promotes conservation, has a low visitor impact and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people."*



*Nike Base Park*





and Police Department are housed in the same relative location with the Highway Department located close nearby; only the Parks and Recreation Departments are outside of the Town Center, sharing space at Nike Base Park to the west and Veterans Park in the northeast. Encompassing its own school district, Grand Island maintains four public school campuses. In addition to the two state parks, several community and neighborhood parks are found throughout the Town, some of which include:

- Veterans Park
- Nike Base Park
- Tower Park
- Ed Ball Park
- Havenwood Park
- DeGlopper Memorial Park
- Scenic Woods
- Ransom Village
- Fairview Court Playground

Nike Base Park is the most developed of the local parks and is the de facto community recreation center, though it is located at the western portion of the Island. Several tennis courts, a baseball diamond, a nine-hole golf course, Community Center, and the Senior Center (Golden Age Center), along with the Town Recreation Department, are found at the Park. The age and condition of many of the buildings at the park, given their original purpose as military facilities, has been a concern of local leaders for some time.

Four private marinas are located on the eastern channel of the Niagara River, while Big Six Mile Creek, the only public marina, is on the west channel of the Niagara River. Private homeowner docks are found on both sides of the Island, although there are instances where those constructed in the past on the west side of the Island, as the main channel of the River, may have been done so in violation of State law.

### **Community Resources - Why it Matters...**

These facilities are assets to the community, providing valuable services (e.g. emergency services and education) and enhancing the quality of life (e.g. parks and water access) not only for current residents, but to future residents as well. Continued investment and improvement will make the Town more attractive to not only homeowners, but also to businesses looking to expand or relocate to areas that are attractive to their employees.

### **Agricultural Lands (Map 5)**

Grand Island has been home to farming since the land was discovered, so it is no surprise that this is an important and meaningful topic for the community. Keeping a large percentage of the properties zoned appropriately for farming has proven to be beneficial for the local farmers market over the years. Due to the continuous expansion of commercial and residential properties, poor drainage has led to wet soils or flooded areas.

In this case, wetlands seem to be a helpful resource in alleviating this type of pressure from crop lands. On an island wetlands and flooding are common, but can be limited through proper maintenance and modifications. Even though soil types may not be a limiting factor for farming, the existence of regulated wetlands will impose limitations when attempting to expand agricultural production. Amendments to soils could be required, but raising poultry







or livestock could establish growth anywhere; similar to urban farms, like hoop greenhouses. There are approximately 80-90 active farmers in the Town and include commodities (hay/corn), landscaping plants, eggs, vegetables, and beef/goat/pork/lamb. As recently as 2016, the Town established Right-to-Farm Laws and became part of the Amherst Agricultural District #17.

### **Agriculture - Why it Matters...**

Agriculture presents another form of open space protection and conserving natural lands while actively maintaining them for economic benefit. National trends have pushed communities to work together for the production of local and homegrown foods. Much like “small business shopping,” encouraging agriculture is good for economic growth and building a self-sustaining community.

## **Zoning, 2017 (Map 6)**

Zoning in the Town of Grand Island is made up 22 different districts, including three overlays, with over 68% of the land catered to residential-centered districts. The remaining districts are a mix of business, commercial, and industrial-related districts, located along the 190/Grand Island Boulevard corridor, and open space at the northern and southern ends. The following provides a general outline of the various districts, categorized by their predominant uses or district intent. Zoning provides the regulatory means for development in the Town in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan—the plan provides the guidance and direction, while the zoning code is the legal document that reflects the plan.

### **Residential**

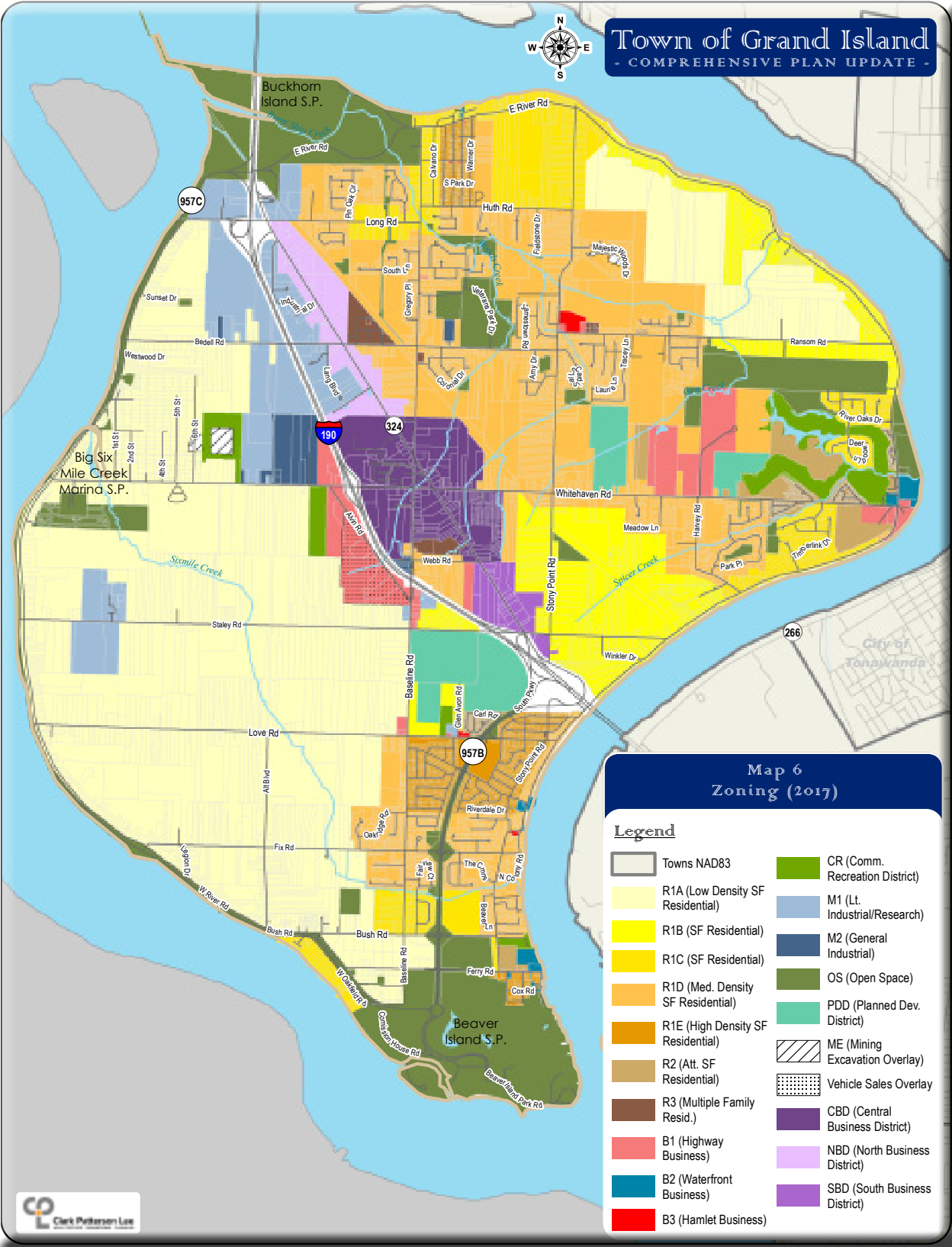
*Low Density Single Family (R1A), Single Family (R1B), Single Family (R1C), Medium Density Single Family (R1D), High Density Single Family (R1E), Attached/Detached Single Family (R2), Attached/Detached Waterfront Single Family (R2A), Multiple Family (R3)*

Development in the R1A district is primarily catered to maintaining the rural character of Grand Island: larger properties and low density. In general, development density increases with each progressive district, though the extent of permitted and specially permitted uses generally remains the same—single family detached residential, public uses, and limited home business. The R2 and R2A districts fall in the same category as the previous zones, but at a higher density and a variety of housing. Typical examples include patio homes, townhouses, duplexes, apartment buildings, and uses that would not be otherwise known as “traditional residential.” The R3 district is the only one that allows mobile homes.

### **Business**

*Town Center Central (CBD), Town Center North (NBD), Town Center South (SBD), General (B1), Waterfront (B2), Hamlet (B3)*

The Town’s general Business Districts range in the way that uses interact with the user over approximately 4 miles of Grand Island Boulevard from Staley Road to Long Road and are subdivided into three categories, North, Central and South. The northern and southern districts catered to automobile-centric uses such as gas stations, drive-through businesses, smaller retail plazas, and motels, as well as various community and recreational uses. The central district, while mirroring many of these same uses, aims to be centered more on pedestrian-friendly uses



and fewer automobile centered uses (e.g. car washes and convenience stores), though larger retail plazas exist and are permitted. Limited design standards exist for any of these districts.

The General Business district further expands on the North and South Town Center Districts with the inclusion of additional automobile-oriented uses such as dealerships, larger retail and restaurants, hotels, amusement enterprises, campgrounds, car repair, dance studios, etc. The North Business District includes apartments, nursing home facilities, senior housing and a light industrial park. The start of the South Business District is the most-traveled entrance to the Town and begins from the traffic circle and first exit ramp off the South Grand Island Bridge and thruway. A medium density apartment community exists just before entering the CBD.

The Waterfront Business District is intended to provide uses that are waterfront-related, recreational in nature, and in conformance with the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP). The LWRP is similar to a municipal Comprehensive Plan except that it is specifically centered around the waterfront, providing a framework within which critical waterfront issues can be addressed. Promoting access to the Niagara River for residents and attracting tourists are also key objectives of the district, taking advantage of the primary natural resource of the Town. The smallest business district, Hamlet Business, is limited in its extent in the Town as well as its permitted uses to maintain the character of surrounding residential neighborhoods while providing local services.

## **Industrial**

*Light Industrial and Research (M1), Industrial (M2)*

Both districts provide uses that are indicative of their designation under the conditions that they are non-polluting (i.e. heavy industry or manufacturing) and are generally light industrial in nature. Typically, zoning efforts are made to distant residential neighborhoods and in close proximity to or along the thruway where sewer is available. Commercial uses are allowed provided they are supportive and contribute to the primary industrial enterprises. The primary difference between the two districts is that the latter also permits contractor yards and adult uses; residential uses are not permitted in either district. Specific design standards or criteria for these more intensive uses are not provided outside of general regulations pertaining to landscaping, parking, and outdoor storage.

## **Recreation and Open Space**

*Commercial Recreational Facilities (CR), Open Space (OS)*

The Commercial Recreational Facility caters to businesses with large swaths of developed land on the Island, including amusement parks, golf courses, and campgrounds, among others. As its names implies, the Open Space district delineates those areas of the Town that have severely limited development due to environmental features or are otherwise designated as public parklands. Development is generally limited to recreational amenities for public uses and non-livestock agriculture.



## Overlay and Special Districts

*Enhanced Environment (EED), Mining/Excavation (M/E), Planned Development (PDD), Vehicle Sales (VSO)*

The overlay districts add another level of regulation to underlying districts, typically in the form of design standards or additional regulations pertaining to a specific use or set of uses. Enhanced Environment Districts add an additional layer of protection to the Town's six designated ecosystems from the previous Comprehensive Plan as well as the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP). Disturbance to these resources require an additional level of review by the Town to ensure minimal impact and to identify, where appropriate, mitigation measures that will offset adverse side effects.

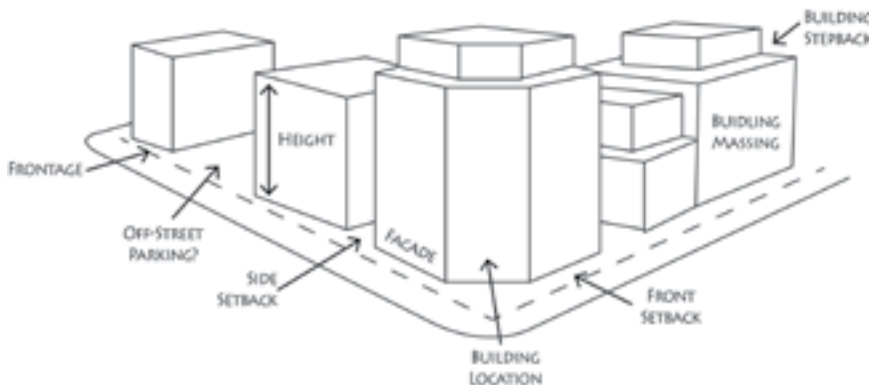
The Mining/Excavation Overlay District is a floating district, intended to be used where a mining/excavation venture is proposed and approved by the Town. The district gives the Planning Board the ability to minimize potential adverse impacts that such activities may produce.

Vehicle Sales Overlay District was developed to help define, regulate, retain, expand and standardize the appearance and general site characteristics for distributors of motor vehicles, large equipment (agriculture and construction), and similar merchandise.

Similar to the Mining/Excavation district, Planned Development is a floating district as well. In general, a Property-Driven Development/Design (PDD) allows the Town of Grand Island to amend the current zoning code for a development that meets a minimum acreage and is developed in accordance with a specific Master Plan for the property. Several of these districts exist in the Town.

## Zoning - Why it Matters...

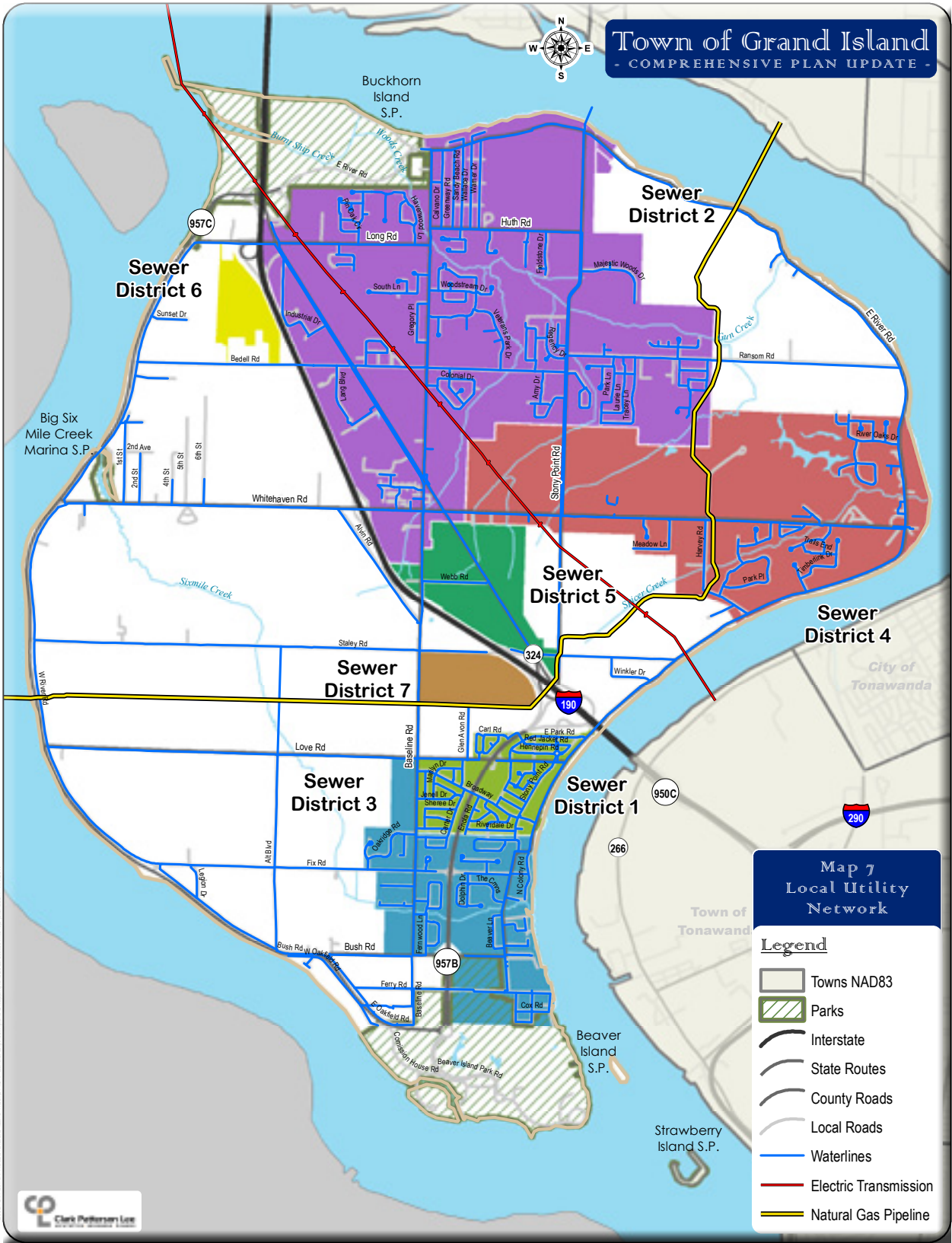
Zoning regulates how lands are used and provides the necessary regulations to enact policies and land use/design recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. Consistency between zoning and the Plan are important not only to carry out the vision and goals of the community, but also to provide greater legal support to any land use decisions in the future.



*Zoning dictates the intensity of use of land along with a number of building constraints on height, distance between structures, etc. to provide adequate space and separation of uses.*

## Local Utilities (Map 7)

The Island is serviced by public utilities including natural gas and electric, the latter due, in great part, to the Niagara Falls hydroelectric project to the north. Transmission corridors for each of these facilities traverse the Town, connecting with Erie and Niagara County as well as the neighboring Canadian province of Ontario. The Town operates an independent water treatment facility on the Island, servicing almost all roads through over 150 miles of pipeline.



The only utility that is limited in its extent is the municipal sewer system. East of the 190, the majority of the Town is contained within three sewer districts; areas west of 190 primarily rely on private septic systems with the exception of the hamlets of Ferry Village and Grandyle Village. The extent of public sewers is another limiting factor for development in the Town, in addition to other natural features previously discussed. Currently, the Town's wastewater treats 3.5 million gallons per day (GPD). While development is encouraged in areas that are currently serviced by public utilities, upgrades



*The Town's existing wastewater treatment facility (WWTF), located at the north end of the Island, treats sewage from approximately 50% of the land area in the Town, with the remainder relying on private septic systems.*

to the treatment facility would need to be considered should additional development occur in areas outside of districts that warrant district expansion, a considerable expense to the Town and existing users.

### **Utilities - Why it Matters...**

Though the mantra "location, location, location" for land use is still important for determining where and how to grow, the extent of available utilities, especially water and sewer, play an even greater role. Water and sewer dictate the density of development and typically make it easier to grow in certain areas when compared to the extra costs/time for constructing private systems. By today's standards, proximity to and availability to broadband internet could be considered equally as important as well. In the end, public utilities are a very important factor for identifying areas for appropriate growth.

## **2**

### **Other Planning Initiatives**

In addition to the 1998 Plan, the Town has been involved in other numerous planning projects and initiatives that have helped to shape the community. These other documents were reviewed and pertinent information was incorporated where necessary and relevant to this plan update, including:

- Town of Grand Island Comprehensive Plan 1995/Revised in 1998
- Town of Grand Island Park and Recreation Open Space Plan 1992
- Rethinking the Niagara Frontier: A Report on the Continuing Bi-National Forum 2001
- Revealing Niagara: A Citizen Vision for Heritage and Cultural Tourism in the Bi-National Niagara Region 2002
- Town of Grand Island Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan- 2006 (LWRP)
- Niagara River Greenway Plan, 2005.
- Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Phase 1 and Phase 2- 2013 and 2017
- Niagara River Habitat Conservation Strategy 2014





## Grand Island's Vision

The vision for the future of Grand Island is a statement for how to manage and direct changes to shape the community in the years ahead. This statement helps to provide context to and clarity for goals; an end towards which all actions are aimed. The vision statement was developed through input from the community, stakeholders, and steering committees, as well as background on the Town itself.

*Grand Island is the “**heart of the Niagara**” - a unique community unlike any other in western New York combining a relaxed, **island lifestyle** with small town living. We will capitalize on our natural assets; enhance our **Town Center**; and create opportunities for **growth to sustain** our community for the future while striving for harmony between the natural environment, development, and our heritage.*

## Community Values

Throughout the planning process, several key characteristics of the community emerged that were generally shared by all who call Grand Island home. These characteristics provide a glimpse into what Islanders value in their community; elements that identify opportunities as well as challenges.

While the vision lays out how residents view Grand Island in the future, these community values inform the goals that support the vision. Together with the vision statement, these community values have guided the preparation of the Plan and provide a framework for goals, policies, and actions in the following sections.

- “Natural resources are our biggest asset”** - A significant portion of the Town is made up of open space containing parks, wetlands, wildlife management areas, woodlots, and other natural resources. In addition, the extensive shoreline offered by being an island community makes Grand Island a genuinely unique community in the region. Capitalizing on these assets includes not only supportive business, but also trail and greenway connections between them as well as to various community/activity areas. Together these resources can be used to the Town's advantage to bolster the local economy and market Grand Island.



*A view Beaver Island State Park  
(@ GI Chamber of Commerce, Paul Leuchner)*

- “We are a unique island community”** - Towns established on islands are a rarity in New York State. Grand Island being one of the few and the only one of its kind in upstate New York, it presents challenges (e.g. room to grow, connections), and provides vast opportunities for waterfront access, recreation rehabilitation, natural resource conservation, ecotourism, and similar assets. Coupled with a rural feeling and compact neighborhood communities, Grand Island has a lifestyle of its own with “room to breathe” compared to the hustle and bustle of surrounding mainland communities.



*South Grand Island Bridge  
(@ Nathan Holth)*

- **“We’re more than just a pass through”**

- Interstate 190 has been both a benefit and a hindrance to the Town in terms of exposure to motorists; it has brought many people to the Island, but also makes it easy to pass right through without blinking an eye. Taking better advantage of this resource is critical to getting people to stop, take a look around, and spend more time enjoying the amenities that the Island has to offer.

- **“Gateways make the first impression”**

- How a community presents itself can “make or break” the desire for visitors to stop and explore. Since Interstate 190 is the main avenue for bringing people in, ensuring that these gateways and the corridors leading from them into Town Center are inviting and enticing are the key to drawing not only visitors, but also potential residents to Grand Island.



*The current view of Whitehaven Road approaching Grand Island Boulevard, while lacking the attributes of a true Town Center, has the framework for transformation.*

- **“We desire a true Town Center”**

- Most of the commercial and civic activity on Grand Island is found along the Boulevard, but centered at the intersection with Whitehaven Road. Although Town Hall and other municipal facilities are located here, there is no defined identity or sense of place. Residents of the Town desire a true Town Center—a walkable, active environment with a mix of uses, public spaces, and development style that is as unique as the Island itself is.



*Grand Island welcome sign on south end of the island.*

- **“Establish a more prominent identity” -**

- As noted, Grand Island is a unique community in the region, given its physical nature as an island. However, that uniqueness fades away when traveling along Grand Island Boulevard and other major thoroughfares that have the look and appearance of “Anywhere USA.” This is especially evident to those traveling along Interstate 190. Greater investment in the gateways, marketing the assets of the Town, and establishing a cohesive identity or theme throughout the community can elevate the presence of the Town to travelers.



*Attractive, walkable public spaces such as this corridor in Castro Valley, CA bring out a variety of users and visitors, contributing to vibrant, sustainable communities. (© WRTDesign)*

- **“Future lies in diversity”** - While the local economy may be geared towards recreation and ecotourism, other industries should be encouraged, including, but not limited to, local agriculture, light industry, and hospitality/services. Economic diversity helps encourage year-round activity and provides residents with a variety of needs within the confines of the Island. Diversity not only means economic diversity, but also social diversity. A mix of younger and older residents are needed to sustain the future and root the community in our past. Making attractive places in the Town that foster activity and vitality will attract young and old alike.





# Goals & Objectives

How does Grand Island build on and address their community values? Goals and objectives provide more specific direction, a foundation for future actions, and act as a benchmark for measuring success. They are not in any particular order or priority, but rather need to be viewed as a whole that is balanced over the life of the Plan—one goal shall not be pursued at the exclusion of others.

Although this Comprehensive Plan for the Town is a much different format and look compared to the previous version, it is still an update from that effort and the information contained within it. As a consequence, some of the goals and objectives may have been carried over and “refreshed” or updated to account for changes in the community and the desired vision for the future.

## Community Values

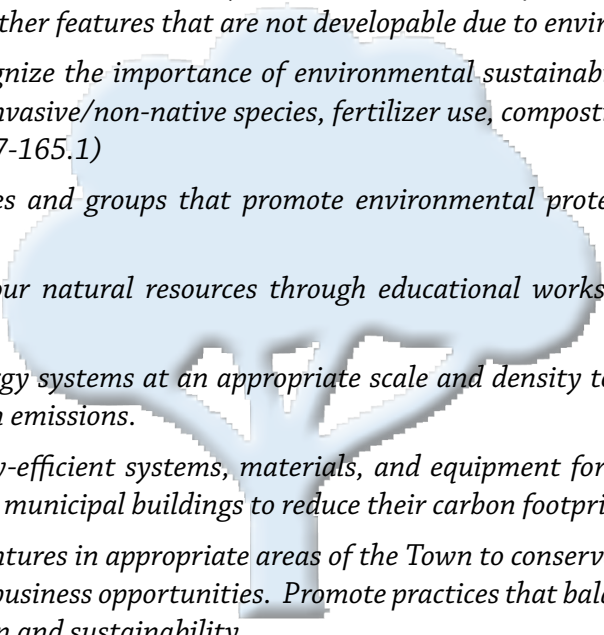
- Natural resources are our biggest asset
- We are a unique island community
- We’re more than just a pass-through
- Gateways make the first impression
- We desire a true Town Center
- Establish a more prominent identity
- Future lies in diversity

## Natural Resources

Support the preservation of Grand Island’s many natural resources due to their contribution to the overall character of the Island as well as the numerous economic opportunities they can provide.

### Objectives to carry out the goal:

1. *Determine the breadth and extent of available natural resources in the Town with an inventory of assets, including forested trees, wetlands, grasslands, shorelines, wildlife, and historical/cultural sites.*
2. *Prepare an inventory/map of open space in the Town. Create a plan for protection of selected natural areas with ecological significance.*
3. *Work with land trusts and property owners to protect natural areas.*
4. *Promote the conservation of trees by preparing an inventory of trees on Town-owned streets, parks and public spaces. Create a management plan for care and maintenance of these trees. Educate residents and developers about the potential invasive species that threaten trees.*
5. *Capitalize on the economic potential of natural resources by encouraging uses that relate to and actively engage with them rather than isolating them, including recreation, ecotourism, cultural education/interpretation, and supporting business ventures.*
6. *Ensure that buffer areas are created and maintained around water bodies and water courses to protect water quality, reduce erosion, and preserve aquatic ecosystems. Develop and implement a program to monitor water quality.*

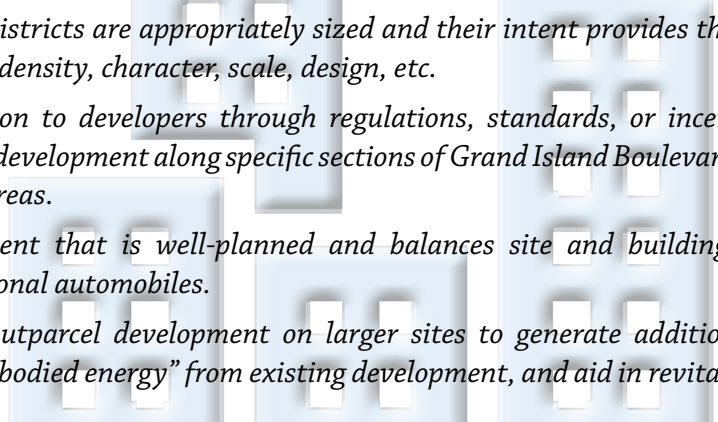
- 
7. *Adopt environmental practices and policies that promote the conservation of birds, wildlife, and wildlife habitat.*
  8. *Encourage trails or other public access for any non-residential development that contain streams, wetlands, floodplains, or other features that are not developable due to environmental constraints.*
  9. *Promote efforts that recognize the importance of environmental sustainability such as recycling, clean energy, controlling invasive/non-native species, fertilizer use, composting, etc. (Refer to local law #1 (2017) chapter 407-165.1)*
  10. *Engage with local agencies and groups that promote environmental protection and restoration initiatives.*
  11. *Promote stewardship of our natural resources through educational workshops, pamphlets, and outdoor events/activities.*
  12. *Encourage renewable energy systems at an appropriate scale and density to decrease local utility loads and minimize carbon emissions.*
  13. *Promote the use of energy-efficient systems, materials, and equipment for private development; consider a requirement for municipal buildings to reduce their carbon footprint.*
  14. *Encourage agricultural ventures in appropriate areas of the Town to conserve rural landscapes and support local agricultural business opportunities. Promote practices that balance farm productivity with green space protection and sustainability.*
  15. *Seek reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and the overall carbon footprint of the Town and identify potential mitigation measures, starting with municipal operations, processes, and facilities.*
  16. *Encourage the development of a local Farmland Protection Plan to support agricultural businesses and farms on Grand Island. The intent is to create an environment in which the community and agriculture can coexist.*

## **Economic Development**

4

Maintain a strong and diverse economy that capitalizes on the existing assets of the community (built and natural), provides a business environment that retains and attracts new ventures, and complements the “Island character” that is unique to Grand Island.

### **Objectives to carry out the goal:**

- 
1. *Ensure that zoning districts are appropriately sized and their intent provides the direction for the desired development density, character, scale, design, etc.*
  2. *Provide more direction to developers through regulations, standards, or incentives in order to encourage mixed use development along specific sections of Grand Island Boulevard and Whitehaven Road, among other areas.*
  3. *Encourage development that is well-planned and balances site and building design for both pedestrians and personal automobiles.*
  4. *Promote infill and outparcel development on larger sites to generate additional revenue, take advantage of the “embodied energy” from existing development, and aid in revitalization efforts for mixed use areas.*

5. *Target businesses and industries that provide year-round activity, taking advantage of existing entertainment and recreational assets.*
6. *Reinforce Town Center as the primary activity and social center for Grand Island with a greater emphasis on design to enhance its function, quality, and character with a distinctive identity for residents and visitors alike.*
7. *Encourage high-quality design for new development and redevelopment to ensure that businesses remain safe and attractive places for public use.*
8. *Establish land use regulations that focus more on design over specific land uses, especially for commercial areas.*
9. *Build on State, County, and regional projects to promote Grand Island to visitors and travelers, highlighting the assets of the Town and opening up opportunities for new economic pursuits.*
10. *Encourage agricultural pursuits within the Town to continue to build up existing local farms and support new economic opportunities.*
11. *Evaluate the retail supply and demand on the Island to identify and target key markets/businesses that support residents as well as make Grand Island a more attractive location for new families.*
12. *Maintain the unique Island character while balancing growth in strategic locations, most notably where utilities support additional development.*
13. *Coordinate economic development efforts, including potential Ferry crossings, along the waterfront with the Town's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP).*
14. *Encourage development and redevelopment of commercial and industrial sites that are visually attractive through landscaping and high-quality design elements to create a positive investment environment and attract additional ventures.*
15. *Encourage an innovative business environment and invest in an infrastructure by establishing a skilled and educated work force.*

## 4

### **Transportation and Accessibility**

Provide a safe and reliable multi-modal transportation system that balances the movement of people and goods through and within Grand Island, seeks to minimize congestion, supports economic development, and is visually engaging to users.

#### **Objectives to carry out the goal:**

1. *Develop and adopt a Complete Streets policy to address the needs of all users of the roadway system and provide clear direction for street improvements.*
2. *Develop an active transportation plan that identifies issues and opportunities related to walking, trails, biking and ferry connections to the mainland.*
3. *To increase and promote greater walkability, initiate a program to ensure that adequate pedestrian connections exist, especially between residential neighborhoods, public parks, school campuses, municipal facilities/areas, and community buildings.*
4. *Establish streetscape design standards on private and public roads that provide adequate landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, drainage, bike facilities (as applicable), and other features as appropriate to provide a positive experience for users.*

5. *Ensure existing road, sidewalk, and trail systems are and continue to be adequately maintained for accessibility of all users.*
6. *Expand sidewalks and/or trails in Grand Island, especially in new developments and where existing contiguous facilities exist. If new sidewalks/trails are documented as being planned nearby but not yet constructed, future connections should be considered.*
7. *Manage parking and speed on roadways where pedestrian movements are higher to protect the rights and safety of these users and encourage more walking.*
8. *Establish connections between existing trails and sidewalks and community/municipal facilities.*
9. *Incorporate bike lanes into roadways where adequate pavement width exists or where road reconstruction is proposed.*
10. *Consider access management initiatives for reduction of existing or future curb cuts onto major roadways to minimize conflict points, improve safety, and provide opportunities for landscaping and other visual improvements within the right-of-way.*
11. *Encourage shared parking strategies with new development or redevelopment in conjunction with access management initiatives.*
12. *Ensure that the “presence” of Grand Island is well identified and marketed to visitors and through traffic on high-volume roadways with wayfinding and other signage to encourage people to stop and explore the Town further.*
13. *Engage with other transportation agencies to find ways to effectively deal with and minimize congestion at the south end of the Island and identify solutions to minimize this to the greatest extent practical.*
14. *Maintain adequate traffic flow through Town Center to support the local economic base while providing wayfinding and parking measures that encourage people to stop and walk to destinations.*
15. *Build upon existing recreational, entertainment, and ecotourism assets that are unique to Grand Island with design and land use regulations that focus on supporting these resources in a holistic manner.*
16. *Establish a trail system that links neighborhoods, the Town Center, recreational nodes, and the regional Greenway trail system.*

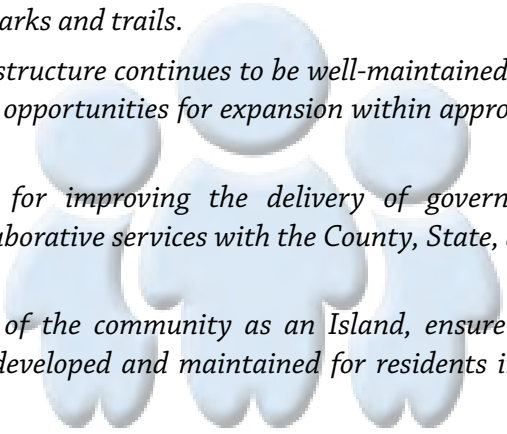
## **Community and Social Capital**

Provide facilities and services that meet the physical, social, and cultural needs of Grand Island residents, builds community, and provides an attractive and inviting environment for current and future residents.

### **Objectives to carry out the goal:**

1. *Develop the Town Center as a true Town Center using this plan as a guide for development and public improvements to transform the area into a walkable, active, vibrant place with a mix of uses for residents and visitors to shop and explore.*
2. *Encourage the participation and engagement of local residents, businesses, community groups, and key organizations in activities of the Town, continuing to use traditional and non-traditional means such as outreach events, surveys, Facebook/social media, etc.*
3. *Provide links between Town facilities that are safe for pedestrians as well as automobiles.*

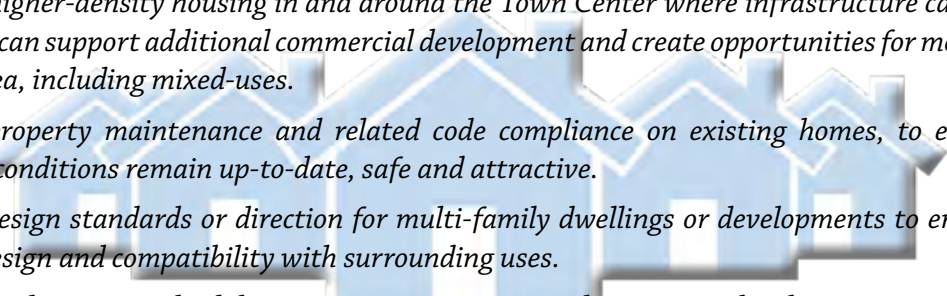


- 
4. *Seek opportunities for expanding and improving upon available recreational resources in the Town, especially local and state parks and trails.*
  5. *Ensure that existing infrastructure continues to be well-maintained and adequate for current and future residents. Examine opportunities for expansion within appropriate areas to support future growth.*
  6. *Determine opportunities for improving the delivery of government services and facilities management through collaborative services with the County, State, and neighboring communities, where feasible.*
  7. *Given the unique nature of the community as an Island, ensure that adequate planning and mitigation measures are developed and maintained for residents in response to climate change, hazards, and emergencies.*
  8. *Continue to support renewable energy initiatives in the Town, where appropriate, and balanced with the community.*

## **Neighborhoods and Housing**

Grand Island supports residential growth that provides a variety of housing choices, styles and, types while continuing to maintain the unique “Island character,” especially within existing neighborhoods and “urban villages.” Encouraging housing that is well-designed, affordable, and multi-generational helps ensure the possibilities for potential homeowners to live in Grand Island.

### **Objectives to carry out the goal:**

- 
1. *Develop appropriate neighborhood plans that build upon the characteristics and design qualities found throughout Grand Island.*
  2. *Encourage appropriate and aesthetic housing developments, as well as strategizing methods of mobility for travel assistance that support “aging in place” on Grand Island.*
  3. *Support higher-density housing in and around the Town Center where infrastructure capacity (i.e. rooftops) can support additional commercial development and create opportunities for more activity in this area, including mixed-uses.*
  4. *Enforce property maintenance and related code compliance on existing homes, to ensure that property conditions remain up-to-date, safe and attractive.*
  5. *Provide design standards or direction for multi-family dwellings or developments to ensure high-quality design and compatibility with surrounding uses.*
  6. *Ensure development and subdivision requirements in rural areas provide adequate space for private systems while responding to market trends with a mix of larger lots and smaller, more manageable lots (i.e. “too small to farm, to big to mow”) where appropriate.*
  7. *Coordinate growth initiatives with the School District to provide consistency and cooperation between long-range planning efforts.*

## Hamlets and Grand Island

As noted on page 14, the neighborhoods of Ferry Village, Grandyle Village and Sandy Beach are considered hamlets within the Town - smaller, neighborhood-level communities within a larger community that are not incorporated, but are identifiable due to history or resources. Another similar term is “urban village,” and while this may typically be equated with a city, it broadly refers to places that are walkable/pedestrian-friendly, contain denser development than surrounding areas, contain a mix of uses, have greater emphasis on public spaces, and are more active/attractive areas. This type of environment is especially evident in Ferry Village. Continuing to support and maintain these hamlets in this manner is important in Grand Island from a historical perspective, but also for housing choices, tourism, and to diversify the local economy, offering a much different character compared to other areas of the town.

4

## Goals & Objectives



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# How we get there...

Previous sections of the Comprehensive Plan have outlined the community's assets and constraints, issues and opportunities, and the desired vision of Grand Island's future. This section outlines the various tasks that are needed, including policies and physical action, to guide the Town to a successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by **BRIDGING THE GAP** between now and the future.

These tasks include:

- **Future Land Use and Design** - where/how we encourage growth
- **Action Plan** - recommendations for policies, regulations, programs, etc.
- **Key Initiatives/Projects** - conceptual projects to act as a catalyst for action
- **Implementation Strategies** - how the plan will be used

## Future Land Use

A Comprehensive Plan not only addresses community issues and opportunities, but also growth (and preservation). This section provides a graphic illustration of the preferred future land use patterns in the community, giving direction to residents, business owners, and developers on the proposed form and framework for land uses. Basically, it answers a simple question:

### ***What do we want Grand Island to look like in the future?***

Existing land use patterns and targeted development areas serve as the basis for the future land use map, providing a more realistic view of what exists in the Town, as well as, potential trends and opportunities. The map not only corresponds to growth, but a number of valuable, natural and cultural resources within the Town that contribute to community character and a catalyst for economic development. Prime agricultural lands, recreational areas, and sensitive environmental features are also shown on the map for preservation and limited growth.

The intent of the future land use map is to focus development into the Town Center and transform it into a true Town Center. This serves several purposes: balancing rural character within a more concentrated development area, creating a more attractive and walkable core activity area, and taking advantage of existing infrastructure. Surrounding Town Center would be a mix of high- and medium-density residential housing, providing the necessary rooftops to support the area.

Existing residential neighborhoods would continue to be supported with investments encouraged in both the private and public realms to provide stability. Additional residential growth is encouraged around these areas where utilities exist or extensions could be implemented as necessary and feasible.

The remaining areas of the Town will continue to be more rural in nature, taking advantage of the natural resources (and the development constraints that go along with them) and offering a variety of growth options.



*This graphic illustrates a general change in land use intensity and development between the rural/country portions of Grand Island (left) moving into the medium-density residential neighborhoods (middle) and then into Town Center.*

While a future land use map illustrates areas for general land uses, one item to keep in mind is that this is NOT a zoning map. It provides guidance on long-term decision-making about land uses, including zoning changes, that implement the goals, policies, and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Changes that occur to existing zoning districts in the Town, whether simply regulations and intent or actual boundary changes, will need to be consistent with the Plan. This is a critical connection that is supported and upheld by the courts.

The land uses shown on the future land use map are broken down into the following categories:

### **Recreation/Conservation**

This category includes public parks and recreation areas as well as important natural/conservation areas that need to be preserved for local and regional enjoyment. For these areas, development should be limited to passive recreational pursuits such as trails, parking areas, overlooks, pavilions, picnicking facilities, etc. as well as existing active uses including golf courses and athletic fields. Supportive conservation-based developments such as nature centers and other similar endeavors could be considered as well.

Accessibility and proper identification/wayfinding of the resources contained within these areas is also encouraged to capitalize on them for marketing and economic/tourism-related pursuits. Maintaining buffers adjacent to important natural resources such as riparian areas, wetlands, floodplains, extensive woodlots, etc. is key in these areas, while allowing for development noted above to occur in more appropriate areas (i.e. open lands with limited environmental resources).



*Representative image*





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**Town of Grand Island : BRIDGING THE GAP**

## Rural Residential

For the rural residential category, development is primarily lower density (2-3 acres), similar to the current R1A zoning district, to account for the need for private septic systems. This area seeks to maintain the “country character” that exists outside of the more developed areas of the Island, providing lands for agriculture, larger private lots, and conservation. While more development is encouraged compared to the recreation/conservation areas, maintaining buffers adjacent to natural resources is still critical to keeping this rural character intact as well as providing interconnected greenways and habitat corridors.



*Representative image*

## Medium-Density Residential

The medium-density residential category includes lands that are either within existing sewer districts or adjacent to sewer districts where expansion could occur. Residential growth is encouraged in these areas due to their proximity to public utilities and major corridors, though movement is still dependent primarily on automobiles, sidewalks and other pedestrian connections are encouraged, especially where networks already exist. These areas typically have a slightly higher density (smaller building lots) and serve as a transition between rural and more suburban land uses. Cluster or conservation subdivision techniques are encouraged where natural resources are prevalent. While mainly residential in nature, any commercial development should be nodal (as opposed to strip-style) on major roadways, incorporate buffering between different uses, and have a consistent design with adjacent uses.



*Representative image*

## Hamlet Residential

The hamlet residential areas encompass the existing neighborhoods of Ferry Village, Grandyle Village, Sandy Beach and Whitehaven at East River Road, where density is much higher and a mix of uses is found. Residential development consists of a variety of housing styles, from single-family to townhouses and equal emphasis is placed on pedestrian movement as personal vehicles. Commercial uses can be integrated with residential uses, providing personal and professional services as well as neighborhood services. Building form and site design are important aspects to maintain and enhance neighborhood character, providing greater direction on development over a strict interpretation on uses provided by standard zoning practices. In addition, streetscape, landscaping, and other urban design elements should also be contributing factors to enhancing local character and overall focus visual appeal. Many of the guidelines and goals related to architectural and urban design from the 1998 plan likely still apply to these areas



*Representative image*

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How we get there...

beyond Ferry Village. These types of land uses are also identified around the Town Center area, providing additional rooftops at a higher density to support the mixed-use commercial activity that is encouraged here.

## Town Center

Municipal and community services, as well as a number of commercial businesses, are located in the area encompassing Grand Island Boulevard, Whitehaven Road, and Baseline Road, acting as the Town Center for residents. This area will continue to be the focal point of the Town, and will provide a variety of services to the community and promote more pedestrian activity, but will need additional enhancements and improvements to truly transform it.

According to the Urban Land Institute, developing a successful Town Center includes ten key principles (summarized and adapted for Grand Island):

- **Create an enduring and memorable public realm** - A true public space is one where social activity, commerce, and engagement freely mix in an environment that is pedestrian friendly and flexible in its use. Town Commons has potential to be this space with additional enhancements to create a more engaging experience. Moving beyond a central gathering space, the areas between the buildings and the roadway should be equally as engaging with materials, amenities, and landscaping that shape and frame the space.
- **Respect market realities** - A thriving Town Center is not created in a vacuum based solely on a dream; it is well-planned and develops according to market demands, adapting to demographics and trends in the local community. The unique characteristics of Grand Island, since it is an island, lend itself even more to the need for a market analysis to determine the appropriate types of development that can be supported here.
- **Share the risk, share the reward** - These include public/private partnerships and cooperative efforts with the community at-large.
- **Plan for development and financial complexity** - Transforming a space into a true Town Center requires a long-term commitment from developers and financiers, sometimes including a variety of sources to achieve it through to completion. Planning needs to include not only physical plans, but also a financial structure that includes public and private investments.



*Montgomery Inn Plaza, Dublin, OH (above and below) show us an ideal use of space on site. Planted and well lit pedestrian promenades are carefully laid out through the parking lot. A variety of facades provide an interesting appeal to such large building structures.*





- **Integrate multiple uses** - Mixed use is an important component, providing the level of activity necessary to “live, work, play” environments day and night. In addition to residential and office uses, other complementary uses are encouraged including hospitality and civic buildings, which Grand Island already have in place to an extent. Mixed uses may be within the same building, but may also be within walking distance of one another as well, making the public space that connects them an important component. To achieve this walkability, parking must also be considered, whether through a central parking area, on-street parking, joint/shared parking agreements, or some other mix of accommodations.



- **Balance flexibility with a long-term vision** - Having a long-term vision carries the momentum forward, but providing for flexibility along the way allows changes according to the market and other internal or external factors.
- **Capture the benefits that density offers** - Critical mass is necessary to support social activity and commercial businesses. Mixed uses in the core and outlying higher-density residential within walking distance can contribute to the success of a Town Center. This also takes advantage of existing utilities and other infrastructure in the area and protects the valuable open space and natural resources found outside the Town Center area on Grand Island that help to define the community.
- **Connect to the community** - A Town Center should not just be centered around commerce and shopping, but should be an area that integrates and connects residents and visitors on a variety of levels. Town Hall, Town Commons, various commercial businesses, and other uses already exist here; improved connections would likely center on creating more engaging streetscapes and pedestrian networks. While the existing roadways provide sufficient connections for vehicular traffic, focusing on a more “complete streets” approach through road diets, landscaping, sidewalks and walkways, and bike lanes can connect the area to outlying neighborhoods.



*Ample sidewalks, curb bumpouts, landscaping, and shared bike lanes provide a complete transportation experience that is inviting to a variety of users.*

- **Invest for sustainability** - Sustainability means more than just “green;” it refers to the ability of something to last and retain its usefulness over time. For Grand Island’s Town Center, this includes grey and green infrastructure that adapts to local weather patterns and climate changes, utilizing infill and underutilized spaces, incorporating a variety of transportation choices, efficient use of resources (e.g. energy systems), using high quality materials that last, and maintaining aesthetic.



- **Commit to intensive on-site management and programming** - As noted, maintenance is key to ensuring sustainability, but continued programming and management play an equal role. Grand Island has numerous events that are held on the Boulevard as well as Town Commons throughout the year and as the Town Center is built up and transformed, this will likely increase. Ensuring that adequate resources are dedicated to this area will help in it's long term success.

\*\*Conceptual graphics for Town Center are provided in later sections of the plan



*Green infrastructure is one of the more prevalent methods for incorporating sustainability measures in street projects and higher-density areas. Image courtesy of EPA.*

## Commercial Corridor

The commercial corridor land use category radiates out from Town Center and extends to the south Grand Island Bridge along Grand Island Boulevard. As the name implies, this area would continue to be focused on commercial development, though predominantly cater towards auto-oriented uses such as gas stations, car washes, businesses with drive-throughs, or chain stores that require larger amounts of parking. However, emphasis on quality building and site design and limited frontage parking are still important to provide users with a positive experience upon entering the Town from the Interstate. Well-designed signage, landscaping, and a consistent design theme along the corridor are encouraged. As this area forms the gateway into Grand Island, signage, landscaping, attractive design, and maintenance are critical to welcome residents and visitors.

## Entertainment/Hospitality

Adding to the uniqueness of Grand Island is Fantasy Island Amusement Park as well as a KOA Camping Resort and other recreational businesses/amenities, which provide a seasonal draw to the region and create another activity center in the community. Much like the Town Center, this area would focus on user experience, with the intent of encouraging multi-seasonal activity. Additionally, promoting greater connections to Town Center (especially sidewalks and trails), encouraging supportive businesses (lodging, family dining, smaller entertainment ventures, etc.), high-quality building and site design, and appropriate activity levels (i.e. respectful of neighbors by limiting excessive lighting, noise beyond the area).



*Representative image*

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## **Industrial**

Though industrial by name, these areas would be predominantly more light industrial in nature, designed to fit inconspicuously with the surrounding land. Design standards such as landscaping, buffering, and building design would be established to promote sound development and protect nearby areas from undesirable aspects that often accompany more intensive land uses. The existing industrial areas of the Town are the primary locations for this land category, utilizing the proximity to the Thruway and international corridors as well as existing infrastructure that is available for infill and expansion. Additional investment, marketing, and visual improvements can further bolster the attractiveness of these areas.



*Representative image*

## **Neighborhood Commercial Node**

As highlighted on the future land use map, these areas reflect the more prominent hamlets or other commercial nodes in Grand Island. As opposed to the major commercial corridors and Town Center, which serve the greater Grand Island community, visitors, and beyond, these nodes are intended to serve surrounding neighborhoods within a more walkable radius (1/4 mile). Uses typically include a mix of residential and commercial businesses and provide everyday and niche needs to residents. Buildings can be located in a more pedestrian-friendly, village-like setting in the case of hamlets; areas geared more towards commercial can also be more densely sited. In either case, quality design and a compact nature are encouraged.



*Representative image*

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How we get there...

## Design Principles

In addition to encouraging and influencing land use patterns, the Comprehensive Plan also promotes land and building design improvements for private and public properties. To preserve natural landscapes that contribute to Grand Island's character, growth is encouraged in a nodal fashion with multi-modal corridors connections between them. The following key design principles can be utilized to foster this style of development:

- **Planning for more dense nodal and corridor development.**

*Land use planning in areas of already-developed lands will help promote the preservation of the Island's natural and scenic resources, in turn capitalizing on existing infrastructure and creating a higher tax yield per acre. Changes in zoning and the development of design standards can promote growth in these spaces. Key aspects include:*

- **Compact Growth:** Encouraged within existing nodes of development and corridors with an emphasis on non-residential development, though mixed-use development is beneficial as well. Sprawling development is discouraged as it disturbs both natural resources and the quality of well-established residential properties.
- **Targeted Infrastructure Investments:** Priority should be given to investment in infrastructure projects that enhance the capabilities of existing developed areas.
- **Sustainable Development:** From a reliability and long-term investment perspective, sustainable practices should be encouraged in all public and private projects, including, but not limited to renewable energy systems, water conservation, and storm water management.
- **Balanced Uses:** A mixture of retail, business, public, and residential uses should be supported within established developed areas and corridors to promote greater activity and vitality; this is the essence of what defines "mixed-use" whether it be contained within a single structure (e.g. retail on first floor, residential above) or multiple, adjacent structures (e.g. professional office next to retail).
- **Adaptive Re-use:** Utilizing the "embodied energy" of existing structures, whether historic or not, re-use capitalizes on vacant commercial space and other facilities.
- **Supporting the enhancement of a multi-modal system that is pedestrian and cyclist friendly.**

*Maintaining and enhancing a multi-modal system that currently caters to the both motorized and non-motorized users provides opportunities for movement as well as generating more social activity. Utilizing complete streets practices, connections among various spaces and places can be accomplished through pavement markings, dedicated paths, and wayfinding and gateway signage; the latter directing residents and visitors to commercial/business districts, parks, trails and recreational facilities.*

- **Gateway Signage & Improvements:** Implementing a consistent design theme and style that best captures the quality and character of Grand Island as a destination can help to draw in visitors and entice future residents.

- **Wayfinding Signage:** Building on a central design theme, a consistent signage system can be developed that directs residents and visitors to the various points of interest, amenities, and resources on the Island.
- **Connectors (Multi-modal & Trails):** Connections within the community can be identified, developed, or enhanced as separate projects or coinciding with infrastructure investment. This can create more opportunities, as well as a safer environment, for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Creating a sense of place within the community.**

*This includes elements to consider that build upon existing neighborhoods and places to help create a more prominent identity. The intent is to create a greater connection between residents and their neighborhoods, building social capital and increasing local pride.*

- **Priority Projects:** While improvements and enhancements can be made throughout the Town, identifying those areas in greater need of revitalization can stem further decline and “level the playing field.”
- **Preserve and Promote Assets & Resources:** Continuing to promote growth and development that is mindful of the natural environment will enhance and preserve these natural settings which contribute to the Island’s character.
- **Preserve the Quality of Residential Life:** Supporting existing residential development can help to prevent undesirable sprawl.
- **Streetscape/Infrastructure:** Incorporating green infrastructure and visual improvements in the streetscape can lead to safer movement of pedestrians and motorists, create more aesthetically-pleasing views, and can lead to more efficient construction when done early on.





## Action Plan

While the earlier sections of **BRIDGING THE GAP** provided background on Grand Island, including demographic trends, and goals and objectives for the future, this portion of the Plan outlines specific recommendations for the community to take action - without them, results would be difficult to realize.

These recommendations do not make an attempt to address and identify EVERY action that is required nor the exact method for carrying it out. As much as this plan is itself a guidance document for local leaders, Boards, and the community-at-large, the recommendations provide direction for action; how the Town ultimately fulfills it is within its own discretion.

**BRIDGING THE GAP** is intended to be an active working document that addresses the various goals and objectives in section 4. To assist in that effort, the action plan was developed and laid out in the following manner, with several important elements.

1. **Goal** - This ties the recommendations back to the original goal statement in Section 4 as well as the various objectives noted within it.
2. **Recommendation (Task)** - The specific recommendation to carry out objective(s) within that goal. These recommendations can include policies, programs, regulations, projects, and/or planning tasks.
3. **Lead Partners** - Identified those who have a stake in or the potential to influence an action through funding, review, permitting, technical assistance, etc., including internal (e.g. appropriate advisory boards or departments) and external entities (e.g. State or County agencies). This may not include all of those who could be involved, but at least provides a preliminary idea of those who should be “at the table” to coordinate efforts.
4. **Priority** - Some actions can be achieved right away, while others could amount to a multi-year effort and others would be ongoing. Categorizing these actions in this manner provides the Town with a preliminary idea of level of effort and timeframe for how long it could take to achieve certain actions. As part of the annual review of the plan (outlined in later pages), this priority level may change based on funding and/or other initiatives. Timeframes include:

- **Short-Term** (1 to 2 years)
- **Mid-Term** (2 to 5 years)
- **Long-Term** (5 to 10 years)
- **Ongoing**

Natural Resources			
1	Support the preservation of Grand Island's many natural resources due to their contribution to the overall character of the Island as well as the numerous economic opportunities they can provide.		
Recommendation (Task)		Lead Partners	Priority
2			
If not formally developed, prepare a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) following guidelines of NYS Department of Conservation. (See item 1 on pg. 27)		Conservation Advisory Board	Mid-Term
Utilize the information in the NRI to update the natural resources section of the Comprehensive Plan or develop a dedicated Open Space Plan that includes specific conservation and open space implementation tasks.		Conservation Advisory Board	Mid-Term

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Town of Grand Island : BRIDGING THE GAP

## Natural Resources

*Support the preservation of Grand Island's many natural resources due to their contribution to the overall character of the Island as well as the numerous economic opportunities they can provide.*

Recommendation (Task)	Lead Partners	Priority
If not formally developed, prepare a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) following guidelines of NYS Department of Conservation. (See item 1 on pg. 36)	Conservation Advisory Board	Mid-Term
Utilize the information in the NRI to update the natural resources section of the Comprehensive Plan or develop a dedicated Open Space Plan that includes specific conservation and open space implementation tasks, including zoning and land use regulations.	Conservation Advisory Board	Mid-Term
Prepare educational information regarding conservation easements, property acquisition, deed restrictions, and other avenues for land conservation by private landowners. (See item 3 on pg. 36; see item 11 on pg. 37)	Conservation Advisory Board	Short-Term
Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that provides a thorough inventory of existing public recreational assets and includes long-term improvements and enhancements.	GI Parks and Recreation Advisory Board	Short-Term
Examine existing zoning regulations and expand uses where feasible to include a variety of conservation and recreation-based uses to take advantage of available assets in an environmentally-conscious manner.	Planning Board	Short-Term
Ensure that existing and future regulations are protecting and preserving sensitive natural features that define the character of the Island, including but not limited to wetlands, floodplains, and wildlife habitat are followed. (See item 2, 4 and 6 on pg. 36; see items 13 on pg. 37)	Conservation Advisory Board	Mid-term
Adopt a town-wide tree ordinance. (See item 4 on pg. 36)	Conservation Advisory Board	Ongoing
Where farming is encouraged, ensure zoning regulations that allow for flexibility in agricultural operations, in conjunction with NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets guidelines. The intent is to create an environment in which the community and agriculture can coexist. (See items 14 and 16 on pg. 37)	Town Board	Short-Term
Establish greenways and other conservation corridors through the Island to provide connections between significant conservation areas. (See items 6 on pg. 36 and 7, 10 on pg. 37)	Town Board	Long-Term
Engage with the NYS Parks Dept. and Erie County to ensure that local, County, and State planning efforts for these shared assets are aligned, providing the most benefit to residents of Grand Island and visitors.	Town Board	Long-Term

**Short-Term** (1 to 2 years) **Mid-Term** (2 to 5 years) **Long-Term** (5 to 10 years) **Ongoing**

Develop a Farmland Protection Plan to guide farmers and provide direction for an agricultural economy on the Island. (See items 14 and 16 on pg. 37)	Town Board	Short-Term
Make Grand Island a "Climate Smart Community" through NYS, which requires certification and environmental commitments. (See items 9, 10, 12, 13 and 15 on pg. 37)	Town Board	Ongoing
Support larger conservation efforts of the Niagara River and the watershed and provide local assistance where feasible. (See item 2, 6 on pg. 36; see items 7 , 10 on pg. 37)	Conservation Advisory Board	Ongoing

## Economic Development

*Maintain a strong and diverse economy that capitalizes on the existing assets of the community (built and natural) and provides a business environment that retains and attracts new ventures, complementing the "Island character" unique to Grand Island.*

Recommendation (Task)	Lead Partners	Priority
Incorporate form-based zoning regulations where appropriate (e.g. Town Center) to focus on building design and relationship to the street rather than just the use itself. (See items 1,2,3, on pg. 37; see item 6, 14 on pg. 38)	Town Board	Short-Term
Develop design standards in conjunction with the zoning revisions to provide greater directions on desired visual outcomes of future development and redevelopment. (See items 1, 4 on pg. 37 and 11 on pg. 38)	Town Board	Short-Term
Ensure that an appropriate mix of commercial and residential uses are permitted in Town Center to provide the necessary activity to transform it into a true Town Center. (See items 6, 9 , 11 and 15 on pg. 38)	Economic Development Advisory Board	Short-Term
Develop a detailed streetscape plan and associated guidelines for major corridors in Grand Island, focusing on roadways that lead into Town Center and major gateways. (See items 1 on pg. 37 and 7 on pg.38)	Economic Development Advisory Board	Ongoing
Develop a market analysis report to determine and target specific businesses, as well as housing types, that the market could support in Grand Island, especially in Town Center and hamlets/urban villages. (See item 5 on pg. 37)	Economic Development Advisory Board	Ongoing
Work with County and State agencies on regional plans and projects to ensure that local assets are promoted and signed for travelers. (See item 14 on pg. 38)	Economic Development Advisory Board	Ongoing
Continue to reach out and develop coordinated projects with the neighboring communities of Tonawanda, City of Tonawanda, Wheatfield, Niagara Falls, and Buffalo, including, but not limited to, those associated with the waterfront. (See items 13 and 15 on pg. 38)	Town Board	Short-Term
Identify the extent of underutilized industrial lands/buildings and work with Erie County IDA to ensure they are included on all available marketing materials.	Town Board	Short-Term

**Short-Term** (1 to 2 years) **Mid-Term** (2 to 5 years) **Long-Term** (5 to 10 years) **Ongoing**

Prepare an infrastructure assessment that includes water and sewer services in all areas to ensure that adequate capacity exists and to identify any deficiencies that could hamper economic development potential.	Town Board	Ongoing
Identify opportunities for new businesses in agrotourism that are valuable to residents and visitors. (See item 6 on pg. 38)	Economic Development Advisory Board	Ongoing
Focus commercial growth in central (high traffic) activity areas to conserve green space and take advantage of existing infrastructure. (See item 3 on pg. 37; see item 15 on pg. 38)	Planning Board	Long-Term
Identify opportunities and promote new commercial businesses that build on ecotourism (ecotourism does not include or relate to tourist homes).	Economic Development Advisory Board	Mid-Term
Recruit reinvestment/revitalization of existing commercial plazas and retail areas with infill development and aesthetic improvements. (See items 10 and 11 on pg. 38)	Economic Development Advisory Board	Long-Term

### Transportation and Accessibility

*Provide a safe and reliable multi-modal transportation system that balances the movement of people and goods through and within Grand Island, seeks to minimize congestion, supports economic development, and is visually engaging to users.*

Recommendation (Task)	Lead Partners	Priority
Develop an access management plan for Grand Island Boulevard, Baseline Road, and Whitehaven Road, among others, to increase vehicular and pedestrian safety, manage congestion, and improve service. (See items 2, 3, on pg. 38 and 5 on pg. 39)	Town Board	Long-Term
Develop and adopt a complete streets policy.	Traffic and Safety Advisory Board	Mid-Term
Revise zoning and site plan standards to ensure that pedestrian sidewalks and/or trails are incorporated into all new and redevelopment, especially where existing networks exist. (See trails map) (See items 3 and 4 on pg. 38)	Planning Board	Long-Term
Establish and enhance dedicated gateways into Grand Island as well as the hamlets/urban villages to create a better sense of place and identity. (See items 1, 4 on pg. 38 and 5 on pg. 39)	Town Board	Short-Term
Establish opportunities for and expand and corridors (snowmobile trails, multi use trails, sidewalks) where feasible to connect resources and provide alternative modes of transportation. (See item 8 on pg. 39)	Town Board	Long-Term

**Short-Term** (1 to 2 years) **Mid-Term** (2 to 5 years) **Long-Term** (5 to 10 years) **Ongoing**



Promote the use of green infrastructure to manage storm water runoff and improve water quality wherever possible.	Planning Board	Long-Term
Promote connectivity between neighborhoods, commercial areas, community assets, the waterfront, and Town Center where feasible.	Town Board	Long-Term
Work with NYSDOT and NYS Parks to proceed with plan to remove the commercial vehicle restriction that exists on the South Parkway (Beaver Island Parkway)	Town Board	Short-Term
Identify major intersections of interest to conduct traffic studies, especially around Town Center or other areas of potentially higher pedestrian activity, such as Baseline Road and Grand Island Blvd.	Traffic and Safety Advisory Board	Mid-Term

### Community and Social Capital

*Provide facilities and services that meet the physical, social, and cultural needs of Grand Island residents that builds community and provide an attractive and inviting environment for current and future residents.*

Recommendation (Task)	Lead Partners	Priority
Develop and implement a community outreach plan to continue resident engagement on implementation of this plan and others, encouraging volunteer efforts with action items.	Long Range Planning Committee	Ongoing
Create a central municipal parking areas for Town Center to provide opportunities for walking, window shopping, etc. and ease traffic. (See item 10, 11 on pg. 39; see items 7 on pg. 40)	Town Board	Long-Term
Provide pedestrian amenities within Town Center, including landscaping/planters, decorative street lights, benches, etc. to encourage walkability and activity.	Town Board	Ongoing
Ensure that community services available to residents are commensurate with population growth.	Town Board	Ongoing
Develop a plan for a community center in Grand Island that caters to the needs of all age groups, providing high-quality, flexible space in a central area that is accessible to the greatest number of residents.	Town Board	Ongoing
Continue to coordinate social and recreational programs and projects with the School District to provide the most efficient use of resources. (See item 2 on pg. 39; see item 7 on pg. 40)	GI Parks and Recreation Advisory Board	Ongoing
Ensure that development on the Island does not negatively impact the unique, small-town, island character that makes the Town attractive through design standards and associated policies.	Architectural Review Board	Ongoing

**Short-Term** (1 to 2 years) **Mid-Term** (2 to 5 years) **Long-Term** (5 to 10 years) **Ongoing**

Ensure that there is an adequate amount of community services for both youth and seniors to attract and retain families and long-term residents.	GI Recreation	Ongoing
Ensure proper hazard and emergency mitigation plans are in place and updated, taking into account development patterns, long-term climate trends, and other elements.	Town Board	Ongoing
Improve efforts to increase/improve recycling and reuse, use of clean energy, and reduce carbon emissions. (See items 9 and 15 on pg. 37)	Town Board	Ongoing
Promote boating, paddle sports, first aid and CPR education programs that will enable residents and visitors to safely enjoy water and land resources.	GI Parks and Recreation Advisory Board	Ongoing
Establish other community recreation activities, such as but not limited to water features, field house, dog parks, and waterfront access.	GI Recreation	Ongoing
Establish a Historic Preservation Commission in accordance with the guidance and policies of the NYS Historic Preservation Office.	Town Board	Mid-Term
Recommend historically significant structures and sites for inclusion on the State/National Register to protect local assets and open avenues for funding improvements/investments.	GI Historic Preservation Board	Ongoing
Conduct a local tax study to identify avenues for efficiency, service/program improvements, etc.	Town Board	Mid-Term

### **Neighborhoods and Housing**

*Grand Island supports residential growth that provides a variety of housing choices, types, and styles while continuing to maintain the unique “Island character,” especially within existing neighborhoods and “urban villages.” Encouraging housing that is well-designed, affordable, and is multi-generational can help ensure residents both young and old live in Grand Island throughout future years.*

<b>Recommendation (Task)</b>	<b>Lead Partners</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Research and include provisions in the zoning code for accessory dwelling units and other similar options to provide aging-in-place and other housing opportunities. (See items 4 and 5 on pg. 40)	Town Board	Short-Term
Encourage residential development, by way of zoning, that provides a variety of housing styles in the Town, focusing on affordable housing for seniors and starter families as well as mid-level market homes.	Town Board	Short-Term
Ensure that property maintenance is enforced in conjunction with existing NYS Standards.	GI Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing
Create a Task Force for an active code enforcement on the decline of properties.	Town Board	Short-Term

**Short-Term** (1 to 2 years) **Mid-Term** (2 to 5 years) **Long-Term** (5 to 10 years) **Ongoing**

5

How we get there...

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**Town of Grand Island : BRIDGING THE GAP**

<b>Neighborhoods and Housing</b>		
<b>Recommendation (Task)</b>	<b>Lead Partners</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Review existing exterior conditions of older neighborhoods in the Town and identify areas where property maintenance and/or building vacancies may be a concern.	Task Force	Ongoing
Establish programs to plan and finance the revitalization, sustainability, and redevelopment of housing and business properties in residential areas.	Town Board	Mid-Term
Develop neighborhood plans for the existing hamlets in a similar fashion to the 1998 Plan. Identify specific issues and opportunities to address in conjunction with this plan. (See item 1 on pg. 40)	Town Board	Short-Term

**Short-Term** (1 to 2 years) **Mid-Term** (2 to 5 years) **Long-Term** (5 to 10 years) **Ongoing**



5

How we get there...

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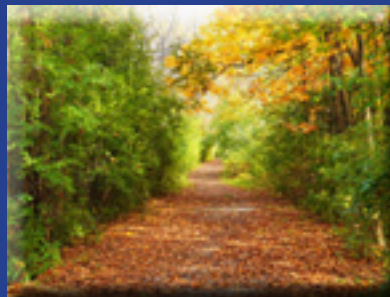
**Town of Grand Island : BRIDGING THE GAP**

## Key Projects

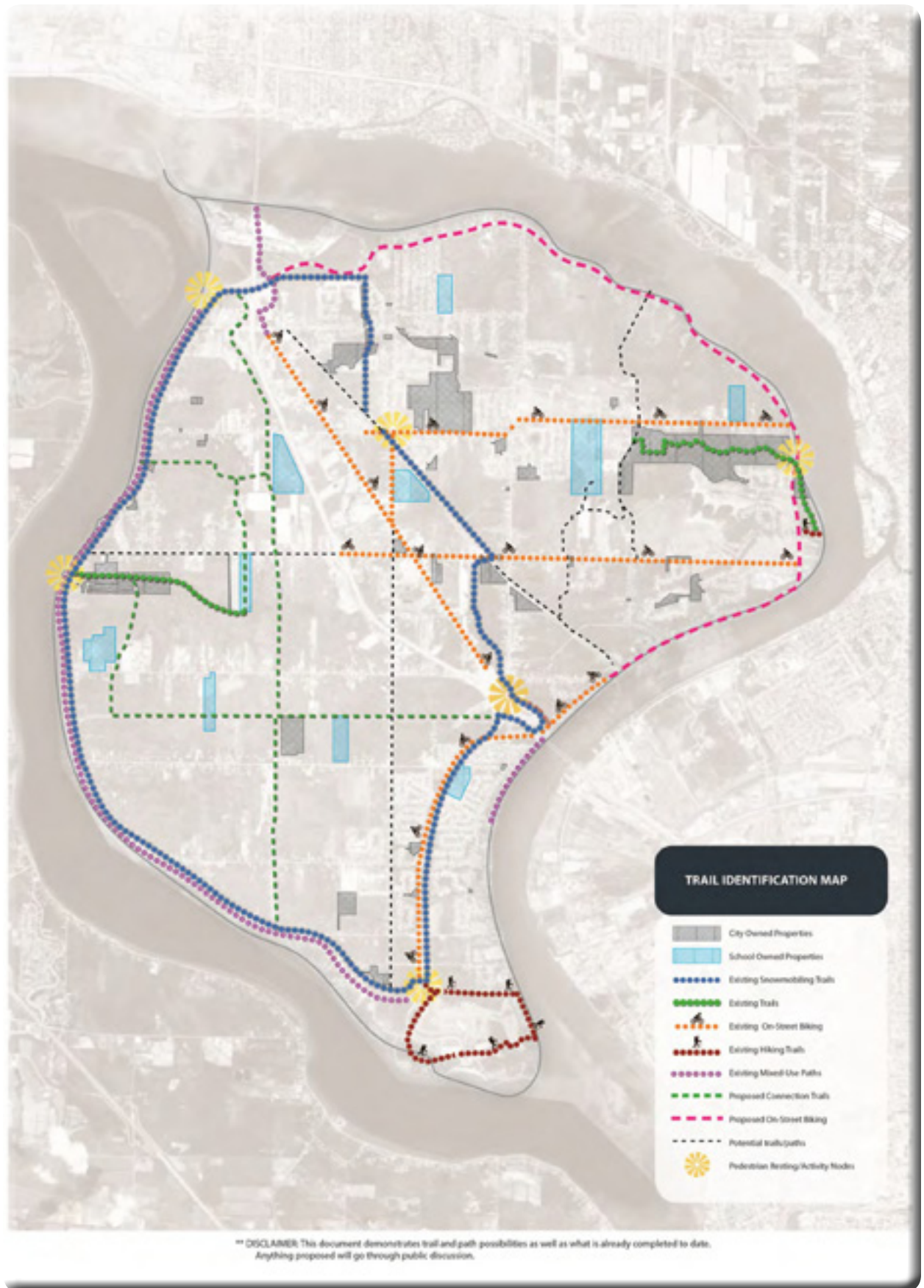
Throughout the planning process, in discussions with the steering committee and Grand Island residents/business owners, several ideas were brought up that spurred additional discussion. In turn, these project ideas were transformed into preliminary graphics and concept drawings. Although this by no means includes all of the projects that were discussed, the primary intention of these ideas are to be “catalyst” projects or initiatives to provide momentum needed to get implementation of the Plan underway. It should be noted that these projects are conceptual in nature and will likely require much more refinement and further work to fully bring them to fruition, including separate studies, planning, and engineering.

### GRAND ISLAND TRAIL CONNECTIONS

The Town currently has a number of trails that traverse the Island, ranging from snowmobile to hiking to biking paths. Some of these trails connect existing community resources (i.e. parks, schools), but opportunities exist to further extend or create new connections. The graphic on the following page shows several potential trails and multi-use paths that could be considered in the Town through easements, improvements to existing corridors, or other means. As part of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan or any other additional active transportation or recreational planning project, trail connections should be further explored to link features and resources in the Town and provide alternative modes of transportation to residents. Trails are assets that can be utilized by the town to promote tourism and economic development.







## Town Center

Utilizing the principles for a successful Town Center in earlier pages, several alternative concepts for revitalizing and transforming the Whitehaven/Grand Island Boulevard/Baseline intersection into a Town Center are provided on the following pages. A number of existing buildings are retained with some infill development potential noted to increase the density of the area. The intention is that further mixed use multi-story development will occur in the area, adding to this density. Combined with streetscaping and road diets, the area can take on a “closer-knit” character with buildings that further engage the road, as shown in the renderings below. Further details on each of the concepts are highlighted on the following pages.

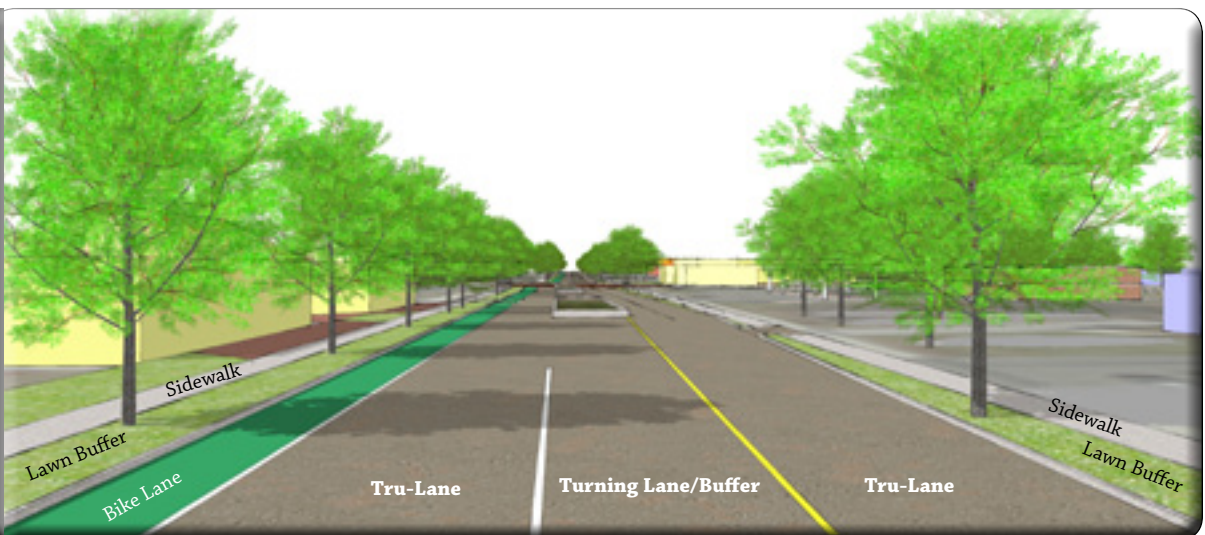
GRAND ISLAND BOULEVARD EXISTING...



5

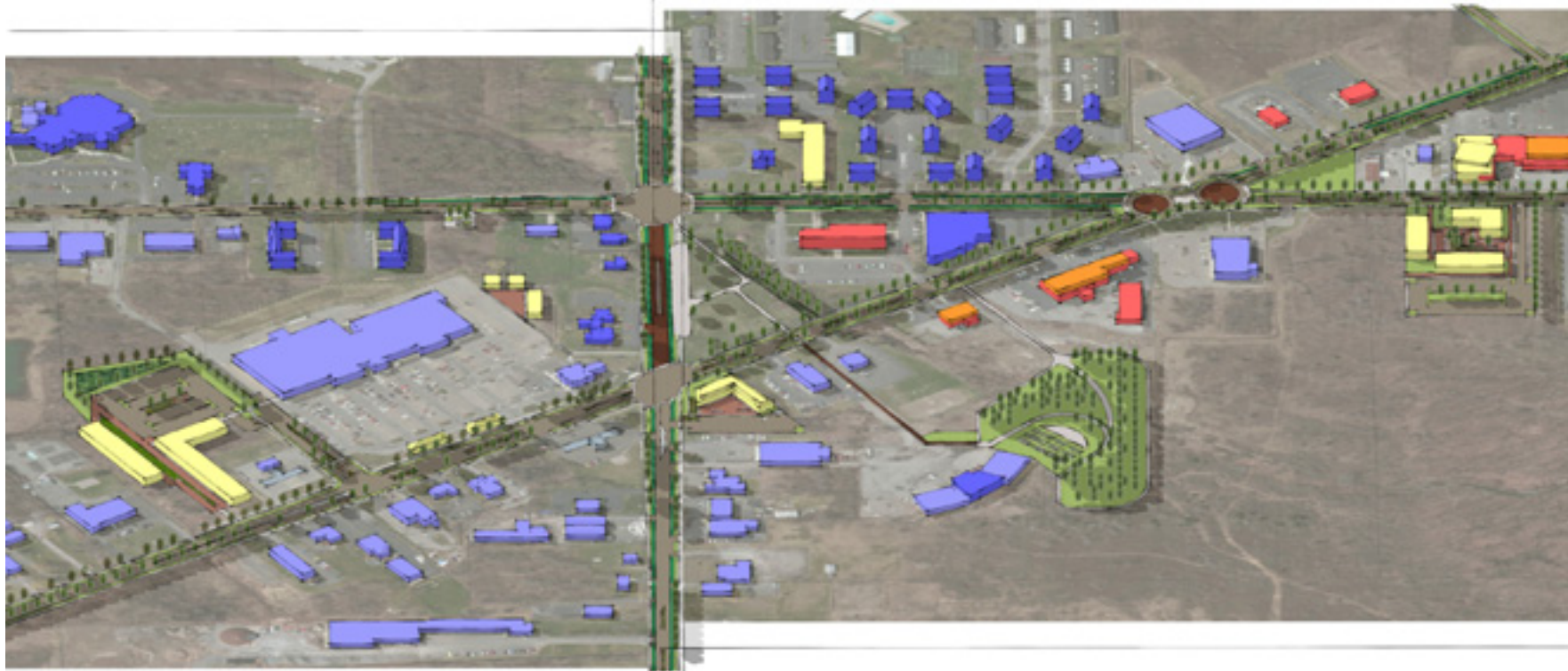
How we get there...

CONCEPTUAL VIEW WITH IMPROVEMENTS











## OTHER KEY LOCATIONS

Several other key corridors and activity areas are highlighted on the following pages, with various site development, landscaping, streetscaping, land uses, transportation access, adaptive reuse, and other improvements noted. These are conceptual ideas illustrating potential opportunities in these areas, with a number of elements that could be transferred to other areas of the Town.

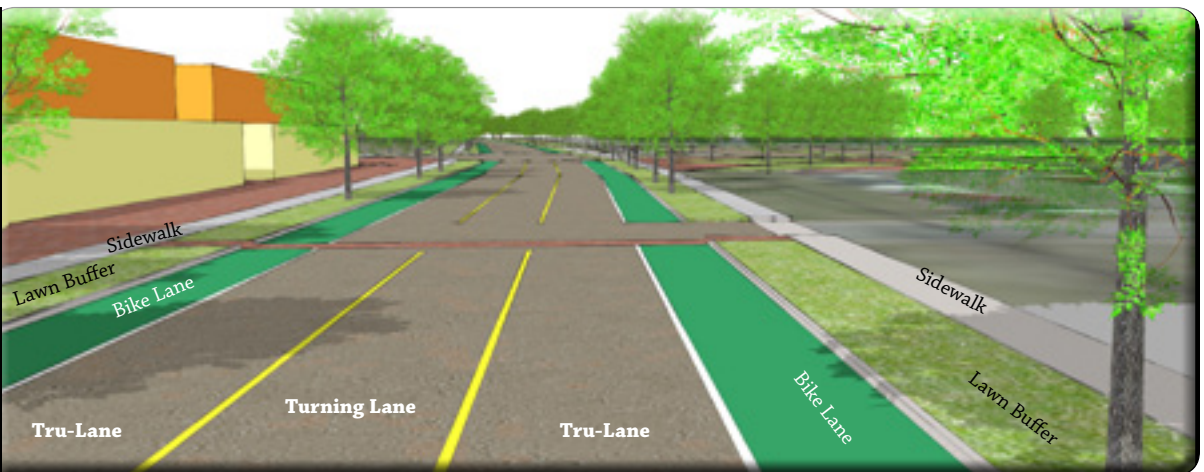
The project areas include:

- Long Road and Grand Island Boulevard - Industrial and commercial business expansion with trail connections, infill development, and clustering of buildings in a park setting.
- East River hamlet (two concepts) - Building up an activity node centered at the intersection and anchored by the hotel and waterfront.
- Love Road hamlet - Utilizing open space for trail connections while increasing development density at the intersection; creating an activity node while maintaining buffers and separation from the existing residential neighborhood(s).
- Nike Base Park - Limited infill development, focusing on transforming and improving upon existing recreational amenities to expand community use.

EAST RIVER ROAD EXISTING...



CONCEPTUAL VIEW W/IMPROVEMENTS...



5

How we get there...

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**Town of Grand Island : BRIDGING THE GAP**









Town of Grand Island : BRIDGING THE GAP

5

**How we get there...**

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#### LEGEND

- Existing Building (2 story)
- Existing Building (1 story)
- Proposed Commercial
- Proposed Residential

#### Notes

- ① Continuous street trees with extended green space with sidewalks and bike lanes.
- ② Closer setbacks with green space between buildings and street.
- ③ Parking in rear, trees shade parking areas, typical
- ④ Shared access drives
- ⑤ Enhanced public plazas with mixed-use functions
- ⑥ Building arrangements to provide community and private spaces.
- ⑦ Existing trail locations and connections
- ⑧ Surface change for attention to pedestrian use in park.



Love Road Hamlet - Potential  
Build-out





NO

Existing Building (2 story)

Existing Building (1 story)

Proposed Commercial

Notes

- ① New bike lane and sidewalk along driveway entrance connect to West River Trail.
- ② Community plaza space for all ages.
- ③ Parking moved to accommodate building and site facilities.
- ④ Building addition connects existing Parks & Rec and Golden Age Center.
- ⑤ Main road remains and loops around campus.
- ⑥ New outdoor amenities for public use.
- ⑦ Existing buildings remain for future restoration and reuse.
- ⑧ Enhance hiking trail and connection.
- ⑨ Restored golf greens and tee's for a six hole practice course.



Nike Base - Potential Build-out



5

How we get there...

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Town of Grand Island : BRIDGING THE GAP

## Plan Implementation

Grand Island's Comprehensive Plan update, **BRIDGE THE GAP**, serves as the policy and guidance document for growth and investment in the community over the next 10-12 years, including local decision-making, zoning, budgeting, grants, and coordination with other entities. Making the vision for the Town a reality will take time, but it cannot be done without a plan for how to implement it. This section outlines various strategies, tools, and implementation actions that need to be considered moving forward with not only local government and elected officials, but also other boards, groups, organizations, and the community-at-large.

### Strategies...

- **Daily use** - The plan should be used on a regular basis by the Town government as well as local boards (Planning, Zoning Board), committees, and other Town departments to evaluate plans, prioritize initiatives and projects, encourage investment, seek grants, and other related actions. Continued use and dialogue helps to ensure that service and delivery of actions are in line with the goals of the plan.
- **Alignment** - This plan will not be the only one that guides the community on land use, community policies, investments, projects, and other initiatives/efforts. As a result, there will likely be some overlapping elements or additional details that build on other plans. The Town should continue to reference and coordinate long-term efforts and actions with current or new planning documents to ensure consistency between planning them, working towards realizing the community vision and identifying the most appropriate actions to achieve goals.
- **Community Engagement** - All local government boards and committees act as stewards for the plan, emphasizing its importance, building capacity and community support, and, more importantly, keeping the community engaged in the process. Although Grand Island residents and other stakeholders were involved in the update of the plan, involvement should not stop there. Maintaining an open dialogue and interacting with the community is key for successful implementation.
- **Plan review/evaluation** - Annual reviews of the plan should be undertaken with respect to progress, completion of actions, current conditions, and setting priorities for the coming year. This review can be done by a number of entities, including the Planning Board, Town Board, a joint board, the existing Long Range Planning Committee, or a special implementation committee (see Tools... section). A progress report to the community should be prepared that includes, at a minimum:



*Meeting of the planning committee.*



*A public planning event.*



- A list of implemented projects/programs/initiatives that have been completed during the previous year;
- The status of any actions that are currently underway and not yet completed and an evaluation as to whether the action is working or not;
- An evaluation of potential changes to be made to any actions not working and the identification of ways to make it better;
- Recommendations for priority action items to be considered for implementation for the next year.
- **Amendments** - A Comprehensive Plan is a living document; it is intended to guide the community, but also respond to changing needs and conditions over time. As changes occur and new issues arise, the plan should be reviewed and revised as necessary, taking into account a thorough analysis of immediate needs and long-term effects of any revisions. In some cases, a slight modification to an action item could be all that is required while the overall goal still applies.

### **Tools...**

- **Plan Adoption** - One of the first actions that the Town must undertake is the official adoption of **BRIDGE THE GAP**. This will ensure that the Town fully supports the goals, objectives, and actions contained within it and can begin to implement it using a variety of approaches as outlined on these pages.
- **Implementation Committee(s)** - As outlined under Strategies... Annual Review/Evaluation, various entities can be responsible for leading the charge on plan implementation, review, and evaluation. One such method is through the use of an implementation committee, which can be made up of past/present board members, residents, stakeholders, and/or other community volunteers who can assist the Town in the process. In addition to an annual review of the overall status of the plan, smaller, individual committees could be formed to tackle certain topics, providing a more fine-tuned approach and spreading responsibility out to the broader community. Ultimately, the Town Board will be responsible for determining the best course of action for implementation; this is just one example among many.
- **Local Regulations** - One of the most effective means of implementing the objectives of any plan is through zoning and other local regulations. Following adoption of the plan, the Town should perform a thorough review of the existing zoning code, subdivision regulations, site plan, and other development standards for consistency, paying attention to specific actions within the plan that pertain to regulations, and considering amendments to carry out the goals of the plan as appropriate.
- **Town Budget** - From the perspective of the Town Board, reference to the plan when developing the budget and capital expenditures is one of the more critical connections to carrying out the goals and strategies. Communities have a variety of sources of revenue for community improvement projects, primarily from local property taxes, but also other tax funds, grants, receipts, fines, and other fees. When developing the budget, the Town budget should coordinate its efforts with the Comprehensive Plan as it provides a framework for decision-making and identifies specific actions that could be incorporated into the budget each year.



- **Capital Program** - As with many efforts, **BRIDGE THE GAP** identifies a number of projects/actions that relate to public improvements that can only be carried out by the Town. Financial resources will always be limited and public dollars must be spent wisely; therefore, the use of a capital improvement program allows the Town to prioritize their long-term spending for public improvements, typically over a 3-5 year time frame, for the most desirable or effective projects/actions that while remaining within budget constraints. The objectives and action items in **BRIDGE THE GAP** should be referenced when developing the capital improvement program to ensure higher priority projects are incorporated where appropriate.
- **Economic Development Professional Position** - The Town currently has several boards, committees, and advisory groups that provide unofficial review and recommendations to legal Boards (Town, Planning, Zoning). As development increases over time and planning documents are developed to guide the community, the Town may consider a dedicated economic development position.

## Funding Opportunities

In addition to local funding, various other sources exist for the Town to carry out the projects, programs, and other actions contained within the plan. The current nature of grant funding in New York State, administered through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA), changes yearly, though the grants listed below are generally available each cycle, beginning in late spring. As these funding sources become available, the Town should review the list of action items and identify the potential grants that could be utilized.

### Consolidated Funding Application (CFA)

- Empire State Development – Strategic Planning and Feasibility Studies, Grant Funds,
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program
- New York Main Street Program
- Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation – Environmental Protection Funds, Recreational Trails Program
- Department of State – Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Local Government Efficiency
- Department of Environmental Conservation/Environmental Facilities Corp. – Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering/Planning Grant
- Environmental Facilities Corp. – Green Innovation Grant Program
- Climate Smart Communities Program
- State Council of the Arts – Arts and Culture Initiatives
- Department of Agriculture and Markets - Farm to School, Waste Storage and Transfer System Program, Amendments to Local Laws



## **NYS Department of Transportation**

- Consolidated Local Street & Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS)
- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)
- Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP)
- BRIDGE NY

## **Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC)**

- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

## **Niagara River Greenway (NRG)**

- Funded by the NYPA as a condition of license renewal for the Lewiston Hydro power project
- Funds are allocated by Standing Committees once projects are found to be consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

Submitting grant applications requires significant effort by the Town and any consultants utilized in preparation and delivery. The plan update provides the important first step in laying out the goals, objectives, and desired actions that can easily be used to support any application. In fact, many applications provide additional scoring points to those communities that have updated plans as they clearly show direction for actions. In addition, highlighting partnerships for each action identifies potential joint efforts and application, which can also increase scoring for grants. Prior to any grant application, the Town should:

- Discuss joint opportunities with other communities and/or organizations
- Ensure adequate funding can be dedicated to the project; some grants require the Town to front the entire project cost and then submit the final project to be reimbursed a percentage. Local matches range from none to 75%, with a 50/50 match most common, and a certain amount in the form of cash.
- Discuss and involve any stakeholders, especially if it involves non-Town-owned lands. Formal letters or memorandums of understanding should be prepared.
- Reach out to local representatives, community organizations, regional groups, and other influential entities for letters of support for the project.
- Solicit a grant writing consultant if applicable (service fee may apply).
- Assemble background information including finances and government organizational structure.
- Prepare a resolution of support noting dedication of local funds.
- Begin outreach of the project to the Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC) and other influential organizations to increase visibility.

While this information is not required for all grants, understanding the level of effort and documentation puts the Town on solid footing, better prepared to write a successful grant.

# **APPENDIX A**

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY**



## Town of Grand Island Comprehensive Plan Update Public Kickoff Meeting Highlights/Raw Data

### **Past** (*historic elements/characteristics you value, things you should not change*)

- More familiar retail businesses (mom and pop style, multiple grocers, hardware, overall variety)
- Greenspace and overall open feeling
- Better maintenance and quality of public landscape and open spaces
- Agriculture had bigger presence
- Fishing and hunting access/recreation
- Wildlife was more present
- Social events/activities, general community socialization (family oriented)
- Lower traffic

### **Present** (*things you currently value*)

- Quality school district
- Green space (conservation, habitats, state parks)
- Water access (visual & physical)
- Community character (rural, privacy, island-feel)
- Town programs (though room for improvement)
- Access (maintain, improve, expand potential)

### **Future** (*core values, priorities, goals for community*)

- Stronger conservation efforts
- Mixed-use development
- Niche businesses
- Controlled development
- Community center (pool/ice rink)
- Expand capabilities for other modes of transportation (pedestrian, bikes)
- Green infrastructure
- Sculpture/theme garden
- Better design of buildings, sites, landscaping (guidelines or standards)

### **One thing!** (*change, improve, implement, create one thing*)

- Maintain the “sense of place” (Ex: conservation of the natural environment / don’t develop rural land)
- Strengthen the Town Center (walkable and cycle friendly / density)
- Central area that allows for gatherings, activities, youth engagement and public meetings.
- Infrastructure improvements (roadways, lighting, boat and kayak launches, etc.)

## RAW DATA

### Past

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mowed lawns (Parkway)</li> <li>• Road maintenance</li> <li>• Two nice plazas / small shops (visual quality of shops “fit the character”) / some competition</li> <li>• Many larger farms</li> <li>• Roads were safer</li> <li>• Ruralness of community</li> <li>• Good schools, pedestrian safety</li> <li>• Beaver Island, lower taxes</li> <li>• Balanced tax base, Could Hunt</li> <li>• Always near water</li> <li>• Access to hunting and fishing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical facilities</li> <li>• Low crime rate</li> <li>• Wild life visible</li> <li>• Welcome wagon</li> <li>• Many restaurants/saloons on river</li> <li>• Traffic</li> <li>• Trees on Baseline Road</li> <li>• Dino-mart</li> <li>• Low taxes</li> <li>• Roller skating/hardware</li> <li>• Grand Island Plaza</li> <li>• Two grocery stores</li> </ul> |
|--|---|



- Better access for hunting/fishing
- Dooleys
- W. Front Restaurant with dock access/ Bedell House
- Specialized shops "tax"
- Tear plaza down/ re-do
- Reality Café
- Bring back Historic Bldg

- More retail
- Keep green space / remove condos
- Capacity (traffic) can't be handled on GI
- Community theater
- Shuttle bus
- Agrarian/rural
- Coffee shop

## **Present**

- Fantasy Island (fireworks)
- In-fill development
- Recreation programs and schools (Town)
- Good schools / balance academic and character
- State parks (Beaver)
- Green space
- Parade
- Golf courses
- Access to water
- Open land with proximity to city service
- Excellent fire service
- Low crime rate
- Drug issues
- Veterans Park- all those programs
- Good senior programs
- Conservation efforts / activism
- More farms (farm markets)
- Good Interest
- "Mr. Huge"
- No welcome wagon
- Domestic violence
- Illegal drug use
- Keep general character of GI
- Upkeep of Town Commons
- Conservation/parkland
- West River Parkway
- Resident discount for Beaver Island
- Library
- Festivals/parades/concerts
- Keep Golden Age Center at Nike Base
- What property Town owns to make use of
- Keep cooks on at Golden Age Center / food on premise
- Stop bashing each other more / respect amongst government officials

- Undeveloped land / rural character
- Sense of community
- Relatively safe
- Add a bridge
- Veterans Park is not user-friendly
- No more apartments (density/transient style)
- Don't emphasize tourism
- Recreation options are limited
- Nonsense of village
- Best kept secret
- Character of Islanders
- Beaver Island & Buckhorn (except by car in paint time)
- Senior Center (activities and campus atmosphere)
- River access
- Farmers market
- Keep tolls or keep GI rates
- Update Blvd (better road care)
- Community gatherings
- Green focus
- Govt. issues
- Private enterprise
- Small ice cream place not open
- Boardwalk or Blvd concession
- Secure paths (hard, ADA)
- Enough trails
- Preserve conservation / habitats
- Scenic Woods (basic / miles of trails)
- More people on trails could hurt quality of trails
- Town is not enforcing laws
- More presence in farm / agriculture community
- Unsafe on roads for ped. / bikes
- Increase in ethnic diversity (students/adults)
- Open housing maintained
- Farmers market and sense of community
- Slower speed on main roads

## **Future**

- No tolls / improve Roads
- Lewiston-like?
- Focus commercial activity (central)
- Retain Beaver Island
- Yes, we want business
- Good schools
- Medical facilities (MASH-type)
- Reduce domestic violence
- Veterans Park

- Conservation efforts
- Water quality
- Discounts tag for state parks
- Conservation efforts activism (fair share to GI)
- Create public town beach
- Maintain farm character
- Maintain good internet
- Employment opportunities for young people
- Mixed-use development

- Promote business
- Recreate welcome wagon
- Restaurants on river / saloons
- Commercial (zoning)
- Activities for kids
- Conservation / tree policy
- Expanding agriculture
- Community shuttle
- Restaurant / niche businesses
- Public water access / residents-only beach
- Dog park
- Bike bath on Baseline
- Additional grocery store
- Slower / less development
- No tolls for residents / increase speed / 20m
- Traffic circle at Whitehaven / Grand Island Blvd.
- Fronts of business more attractive (Grants / benches / walkability)
- More affordable senior housing
- Neighborhood watch / support from Town
- Community pool
- Substation / youth outreach / crisis center / all ages
- Better communication / advertising
- Multi-level senior community
- Dedicated public water access
- Attractive space (like Lewiston) / Town Center
- Utilize river
- Vacant waterfront re-use
- Design standards enforced
- HUB/ Need Architectural Charm
- Town Center
- Center walkability
- Conservation easements
- Restroom facilities
- Connect trails
- Hunting options
- Sidewalks
- Ped. lights
- Green arrow (traffic patterns)
- Plaza
- Restrict wind turbines
- Update recreation around perimeter of Island docks
- Community center (all ages / art / health benefits)
- Art festival (productive)
- Sculpture garden
- Theme garden

### One thing!

- Strengthen Town Center
- Friendly zoning (appropriate)
- Put density in the right place
- Better maintained infrastructure amenities for pedestrians (safety, walking, biking)
- Visual quality entrance and throughout Town
- Conservation with Town appearance
- Walkable attractive town central area
- Maintain existing rural character and sense of community
- Improve what we already have/ sustainability for future
- Preserve green space
- Town Center, walkability (pedestrian safety, open park space, retail, and traffic pattern)
- Community center

### Side notes

- Isolated neighborhoods? (individual spaces and areas)
- Doesn't foster communication / follow national trends
- Communications
- Youth / families with young kids have easier time
- Inability to ride / walk because of traffic
- "Zoning allows it" and zoning by expectation / don't change the plan
- No variances
- Find draws to get residents into center
- Grants / economic development
- Port-transient
- Tourist balance (no increase to state parks / infrastructure gets maxed out / selling)
- 1- Destination farmers market / agritourism / farmhouse / nautical / bridge off
- 2- Business district (uniquely Grand Island / small local)
- 3- More greenspace
- 4- Trail system connecting all space and Baseline
- 5- Gateway / East River-residential areas
- 6- Public water access / cohesion in design

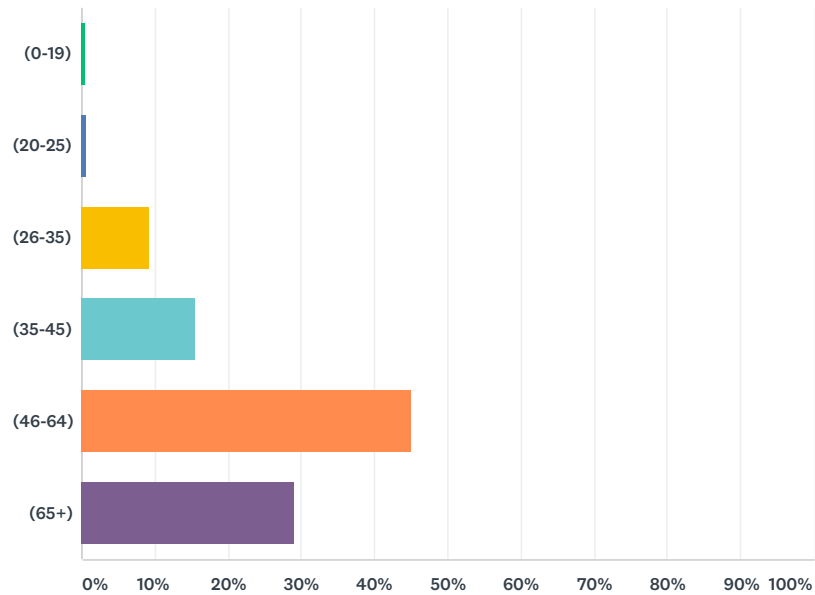
## **SURVEY SUMMARY**

October 11, 2017

1. 98% of responses were from the Town, 1% from the GI work community and 1% from surrounding community members
2. Island shopping habits consist of more personal or convenience goods as well as fast food. Residents typically drive 10-15 minutes for a majority of their other needs including home furnishings, medical, clothing, sit-down restaurants, and entertainment/recreation. This data provides a rough idea of sales leakage and potential opportunities for future economic development.
3. “First impression” responses of the Island were generally poor—rundown, shabby, a “truck stop” appearance, traffic [volumes], empty, needs work/maintenance, too busy looking (signage). About 10% did provide a positive outlook nice, welcome, or small-town feel, or “home.”
4. Mid-level homes (established families) and starter homes (young families) were marked as the top residential priorities followed by affordable (seniors, college grads) and “downsizing homes.” Apartments/condos were least desirable.
5. Top choices for other programs/resources available to youth include recreation, and social gathering space. Social support/counseling and substance abuse support yielded a significant response as well.
6. Slightly more respondents felt there were insufficient programs/resources available for seniors (52% vs. 48%).
7. Much the same as for youth, recreation and social activities were ranked highest for senior programs/resources. Suggestions made included mentoring with school kids and a medical facility.
8. Over 75% feel that new commercial development should be placed on Grand Island Blvd. between Fantasy Island and Whitehaven Road followed by exit 20 (Long Road area). Little support was shown to develop around the schools.
9. The top three desired commercial development in town include grocery, recreation/entertainment (indoors), and restaurants (sit-down/family).
10. Economic growth interests focused towards recreation, agriculture and tourism.  
A number of comments specified no more growth or maintaining green space.
11. Desirable recreational resources include a pool / splash pad followed by more waterfront access, an ice rink, and dog park. (Year-round interest is key)
12. The top five problem roads named are Ransom, East River, Stony Point, Baseline, and Whitehaven. Concerns include traffic volumes, shoulder width (bikes or pedestrian use), sidewalks, and speed. (Complete streets!)
13. About 60% of GI residents work off the Island and 12% don’t work at all; 28% make up the Island work force.
14. Revitalizing our existing plazas / commercial areas garnered the highest priority respondents followed by creating a true Town Center focused on pedestrian spaces and a business district. (Respondents may have misread question and ranked higher number for higher priority.)

Q1 What is your age range?

Answered: 426    Skipped: 670

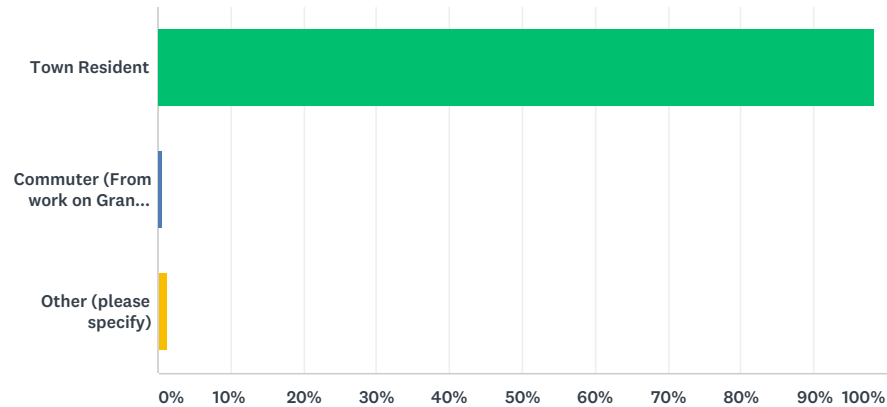


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
(0-19)		0.47%	2
(20-25)		0.70%	3
(26-35)		9.15%	39
(35-45)		15.49%	66
(46-64)		45.07%	192
(65+)		29.11%	124
TOTAL			426



Q2 Are you a...

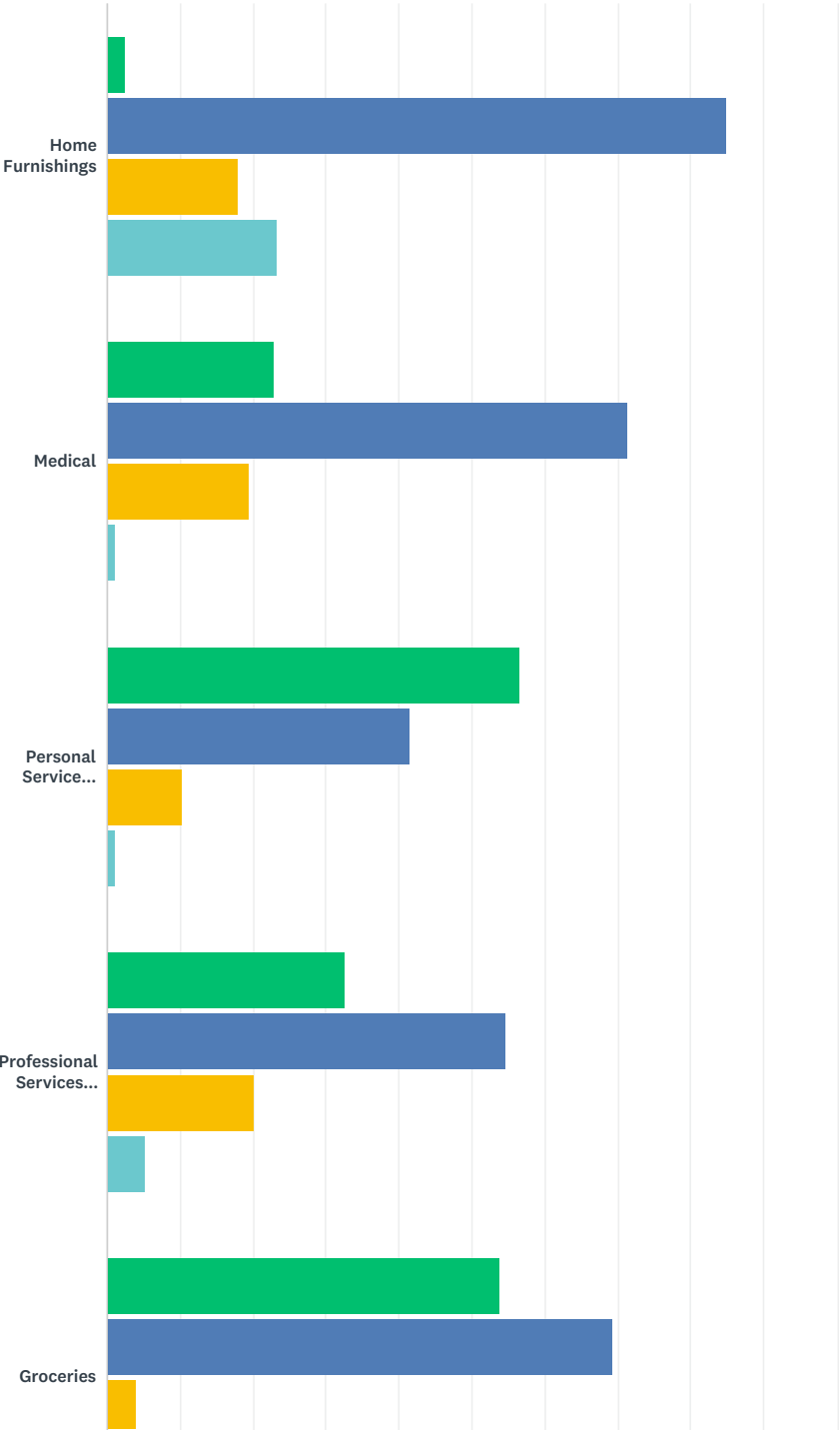
Answered: 1,088    Skipped: 8

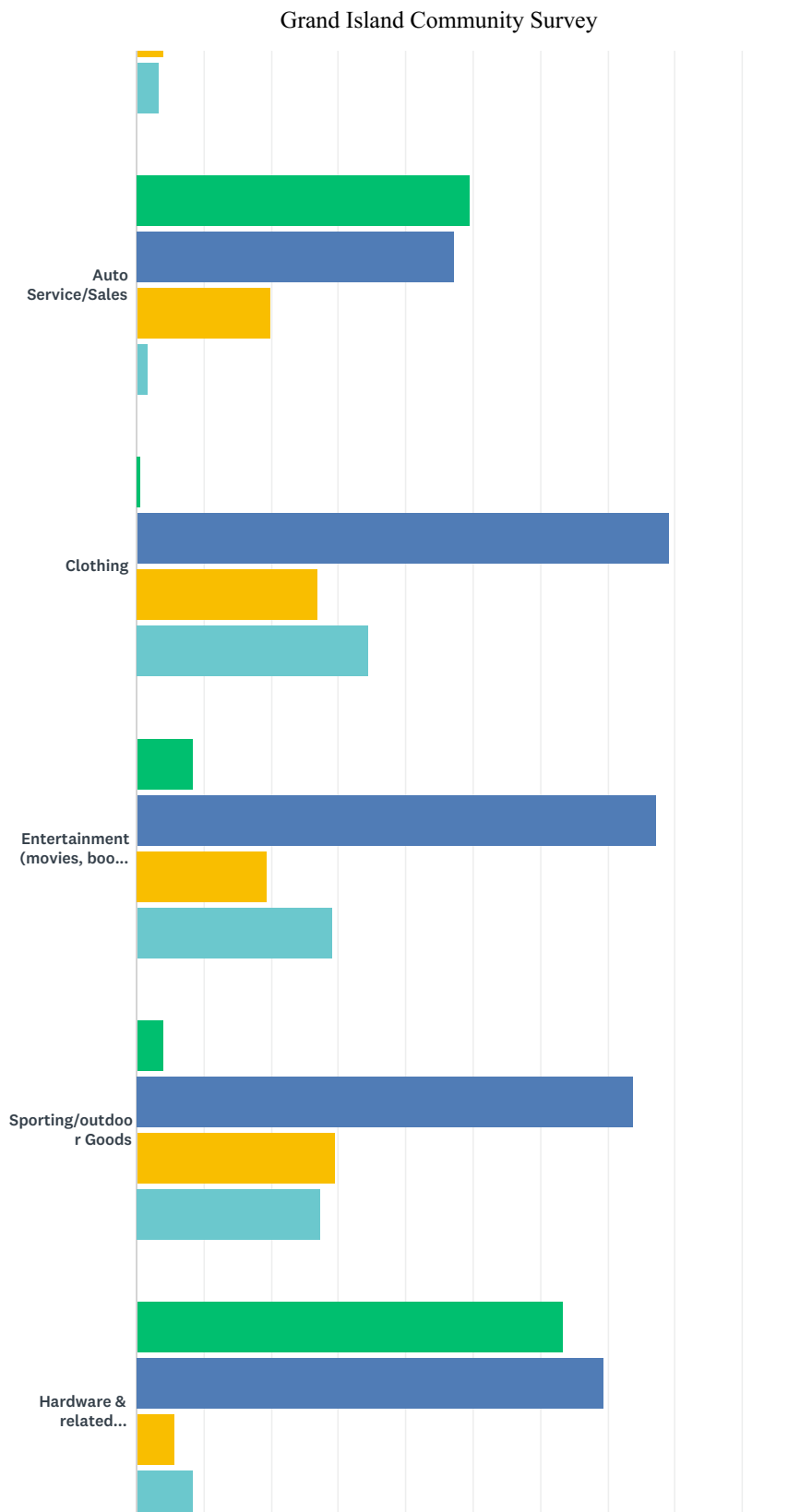


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Town Resident		98.25%	1,069
Commuter (From work on Grand Island)		0.55%	6
Other (please specify)		1.19%	13
TOTAL			1,088

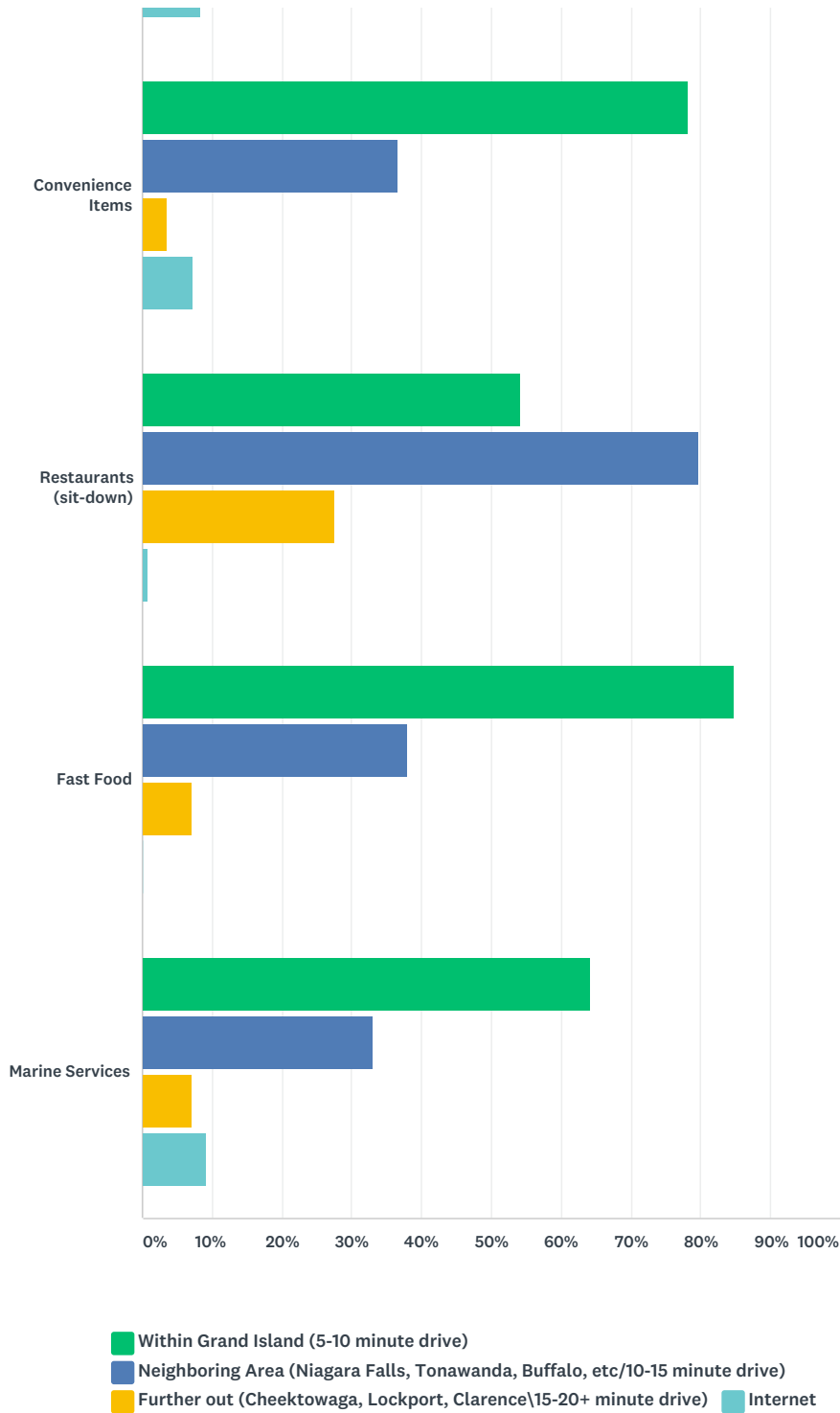
Q3 Where do you predominantly shop for the following:

Answered: 1,080 Skipped: 16





Grand Island Community Survey





# Grand Island Community Survey

	WITHIN GRAND ISLAND (5-10 MINUTE DRIVE)	NEIGHBORING AREA (NIAGARA FALLS, TONAWANDA, BUFFALO, ETC/10-15 MINUTE DRIVE)	FURTHER OUT (CHEEKTOWAGA, LOCKPORT, CLARENCE\15-20+ MINUTE DRIVE)	INTERNET	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Home Furnishings	2.52% 27	84.89% 910	17.91% 192	23.23% 249	1,072
Medical	22.73% 240	71.31% 753	19.41% 205	1.04% 11	1,056
Personal Service (laundry, salon, etc.)	56.57% 594	41.33% 434	10.29% 108	0.95% 10	1,050
Professional Services (taxes, attorney, real estate, etc.)	32.54% 342	54.61% 574	20.17% 212	5.33% 56	1,051
Groceries	53.76% 579	69.27% 746	3.90% 42	3.34% 36	1,077
Auto Service/Sales	49.53% 529	47.19% 504	19.94% 213	1.69% 18	1,068
Clothing	0.56% 6	79.00% 839	26.93% 286	34.46% 366	1,062
Entertainment (movies, books, etc.)	8.28% 88	77.23% 821	19.38% 206	29.16% 310	1,063
Sporting/outdoor Goods	4.02% 42	73.75% 770	29.41% 307	27.49% 287	1,044
Hardware & related supplies	63.31% 680	69.55% 747	5.59% 60	8.38% 90	1,074
Convenience Items	78.21% 829	36.60% 388	3.49% 37	7.26% 77	1,060
Restaurants (sit- down)	54.21% 579	79.68% 851	27.62% 295	0.75% 8	1,068
Fast Food	84.76% 812	38.10% 365	7.20% 69	0.31% 3	958
Marine Services	64.23% 413	32.97% 212	7.15% 46	9.18% 59	643

## PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY

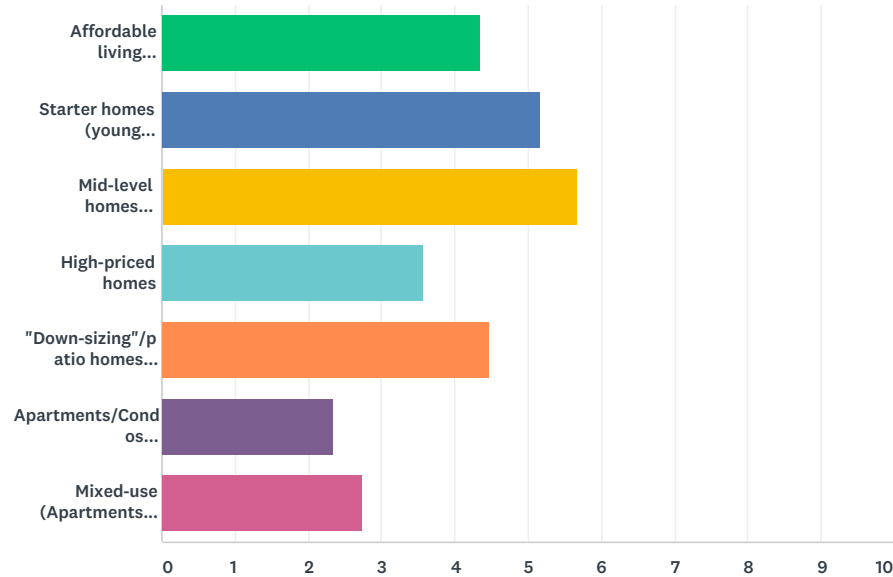
Q4 When you enter Grand Island from the 190, the first impression is?

Answered: 990    Skipped: 106



Q5 In terms of priority, what types of residential development is needed over others? (Number 1 being the most important and 7 being the least)

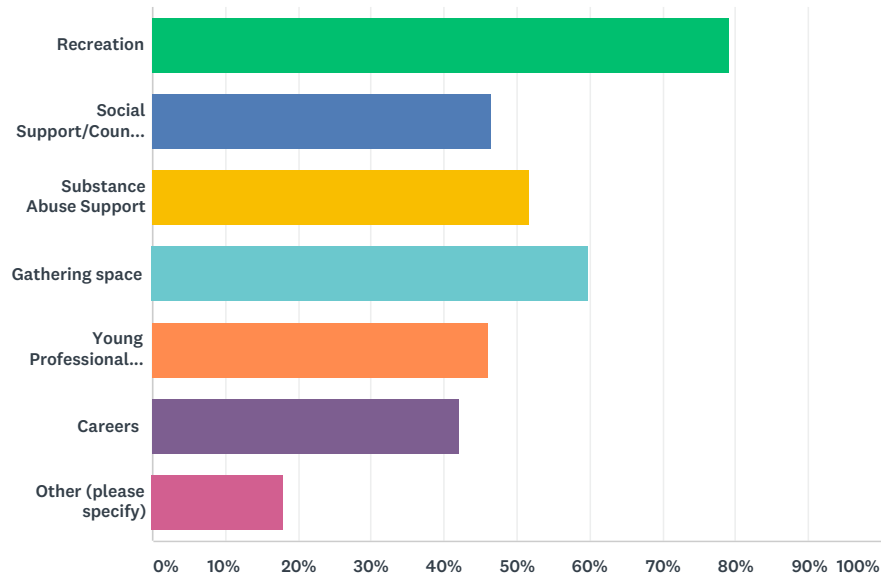
Answered: 992 Skipped: 104



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	SCORE
Affordable living (seniors, college graduates)	17.29% 144	15.25% 127	14.77% 123	16.09% 134	20.17% 168	7.68% 64	8.76% 73	833	4.35
Starter homes (young families)	21.95% 185	27.05% 228	20.52% 173	15.30% 129	7.95% 67	5.46% 46	1.78% 15	843	5.16
Mid-level homes (established families)	38.68% 333	23.69% 204	17.89% 154	10.57% 91	4.41% 38	2.90% 25	1.86% 16	861	5.66
High-priced homes	9.05% 74	12.10% 99	14.67% 120	12.22% 100	17.97% 147	11.61% 95	22.37% 183	818	3.58
"Down-sizing"/patio homes (empty nesters)	10.94% 95	14.17% 123	21.66% 188	28.69% 249	15.67% 136	6.57% 57	2.30% 20	868	4.47
Apartments/Condos (multi-floor, managed common areas)	2.81% 23	2.93% 24	3.79% 31	8.56% 70	15.77% 129	30.81% 252	35.33% 289	818	2.35
Mixed-use (Apartments above retail)	7.53% 65	4.98% 43	6.03% 52	7.53% 65	14.25% 123	29.90% 258	29.78% 257	863	2.75

## Q6 What other types of programs/resources should there be for youth?

Answered: 1,054 Skipped: 42

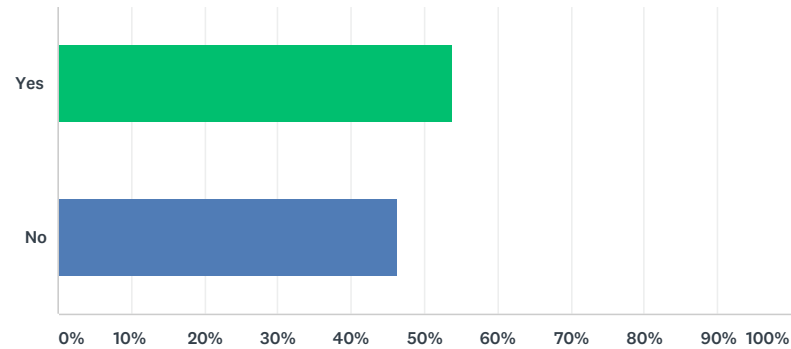


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Recreation	79.13%	834
Social Support/Counseling	46.49%	490
Substance Abuse Support	51.61%	544
Gathering space	59.87%	631
Young Professionals/Entrepreneurs	46.02%	485
Careers	42.03%	443
Other (please specify)	17.93%	189
Total Respondents: 1,054		



Q7 Do you feel there are enough programs/resources available for the Adult Community?

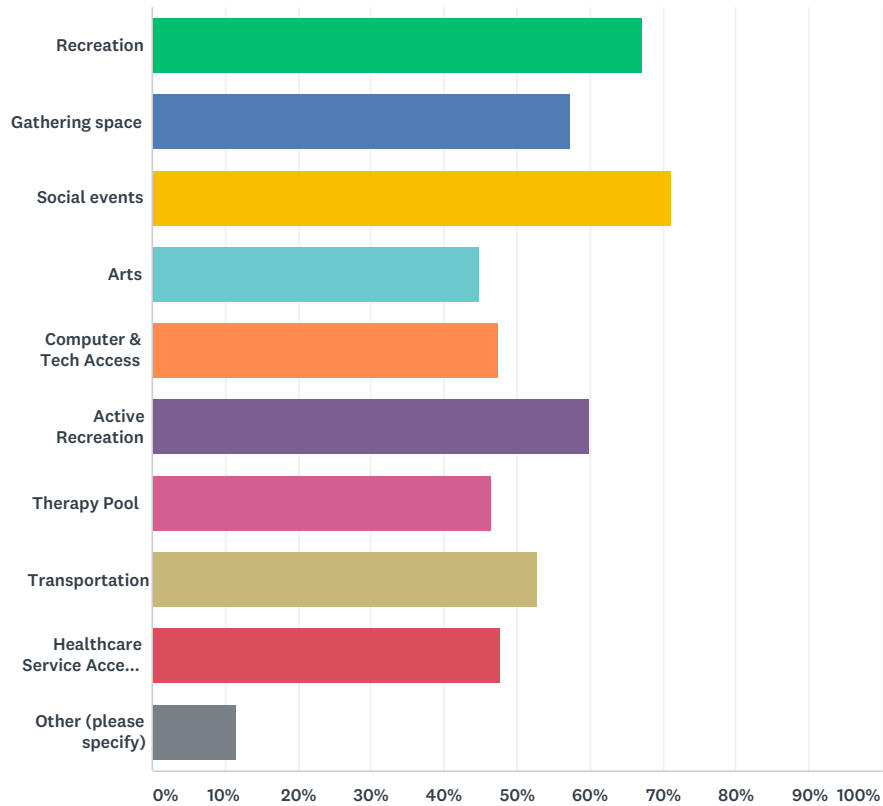
Answered: 1,060    Skipped: 36



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		53.87%	571
No		46.13%	489
TOTAL			1,060

## Q8 What other types of programs/resources should there be for seniors?

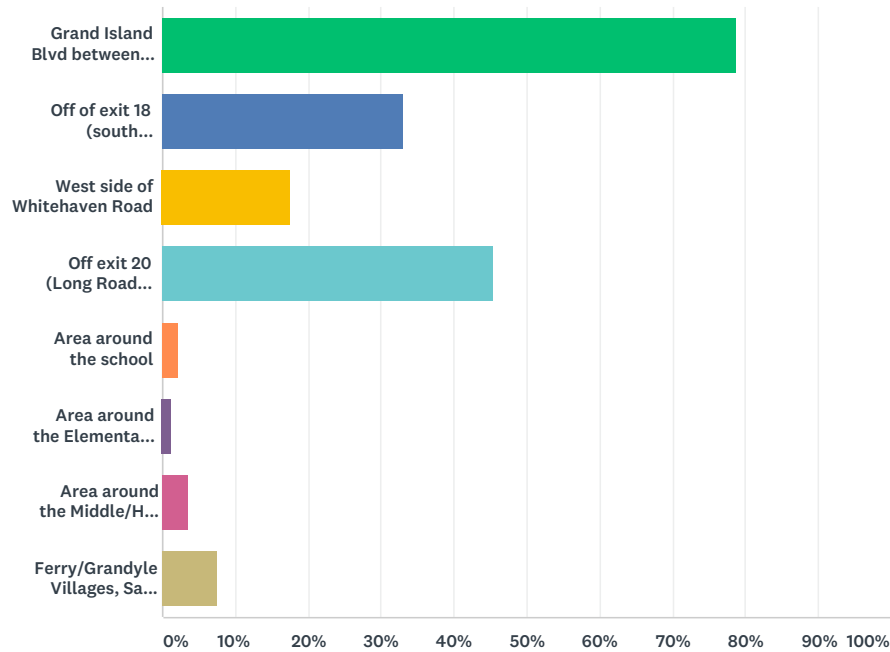
Answered: 476 Skipped: 620



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Recreation	67.23%	320
Gathering space	57.35%	273
Social events	71.22%	339
Arts	44.75%	213
Computer & Tech Access	47.48%	226
Active Recreation	59.87%	285
Therapy Pool	46.43%	221
Transportation	52.73%	251
Healthcare Service Access/ Referrals	47.69%	227
Other (please specify)	11.55%	55
Total Respondents: 476		

## Q9 Where should new commercial development be encouraged?

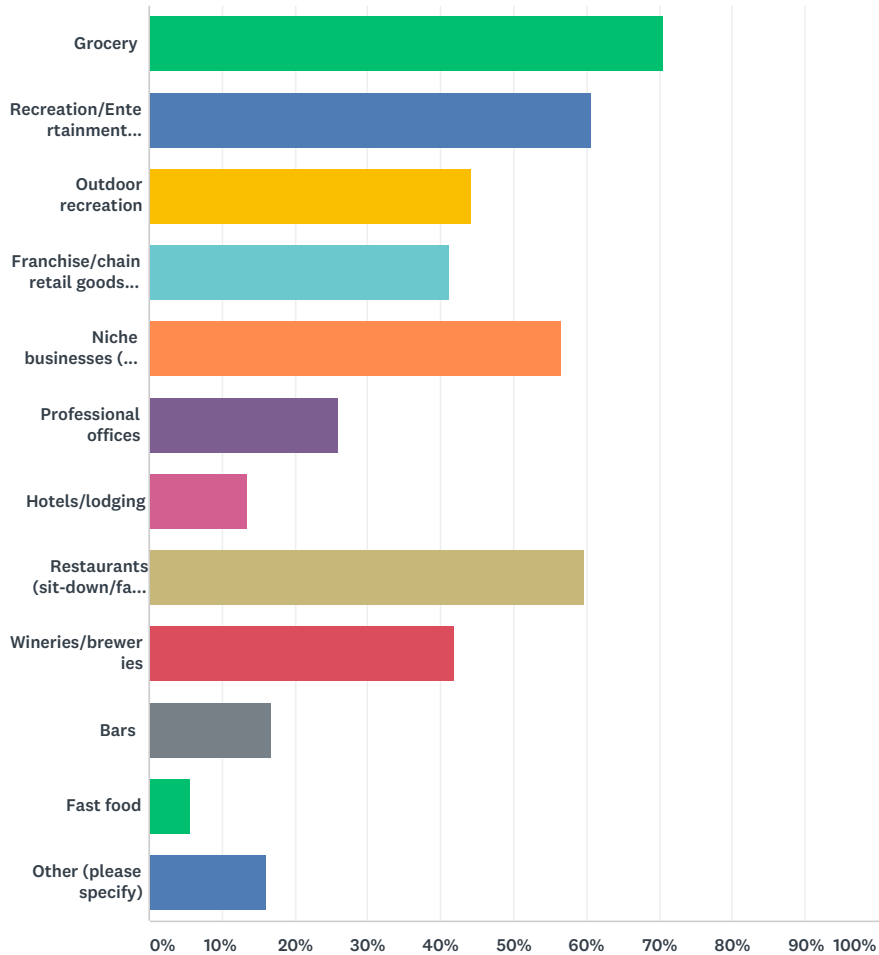
Answered: 994 Skipped: 102



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Grand Island Blvd between Fantasy Island & Whitehaven Road	78.57%	781
Off of exit 18 (south entrance)	33.10%	329
West side of Whitehaven Road	17.51%	174
Off exit 20 (Long Road area)	45.47%	452
Area around the school	2.11%	21
Area around the Elementary schools	1.31%	13
Area around the Middle/High school	3.52%	35
Ferry/Grandyle Villages, Sandy Beach	7.55%	75
Total Respondents: 994		

Q10 Regardless of where its located, what type of commercial development should be encouraged in the Town? (Check All That Ap

Answered: 1,017 Skipped: 79



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Grocery	70.40%
Recreation/Entertainment (inside)	60.67%
Outdoor recreation	44.15%
Franchise/chain retail goods stores (non-food)	41.20%
Niche businesses (one of a kind, local, unique goods)	56.54%
Professional offices	25.86%
Hotels/lodging	13.47%

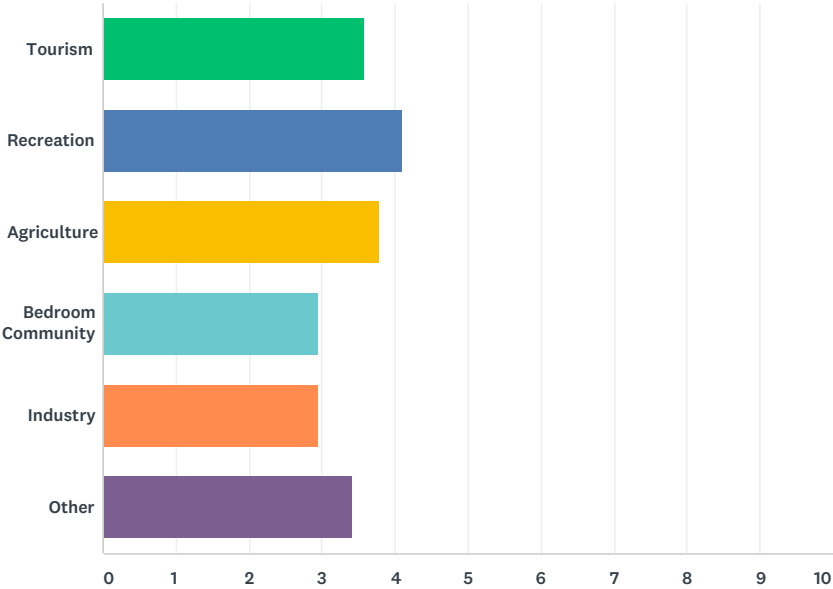


## Grand Island Community Survey

Restaurants (sit-down/family)	59.59%	606
Wineries/breweries	41.89%	426
Bars	16.81%	171
Fast food	5.60%	57
Other (please specify)	16.03%	163
Total Respondents: 1,017		

Q11 What is the future of economic growth in Grand Island?

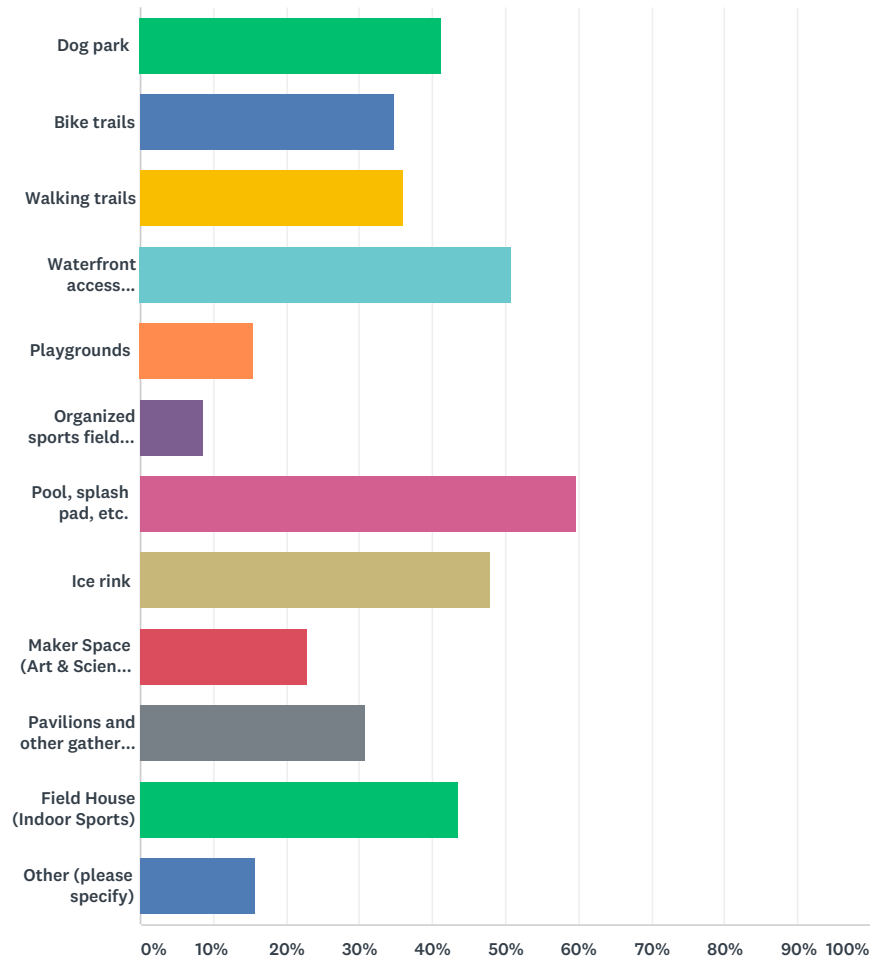
Answered: 1,017    Skipped: 79



	LESS OF1	2	WE HAVE ENOUGH OF3	4	NEED MORE5	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Tourism	9.15% 91	5.03% 50	32.26% 321	26.73% 266	26.83% 267	995	3.57
Recreation	1.92% 19	2.93% 29	19.98% 198	32.69% 324	42.48% 421	991	4.11
Agriculture	3.58% 35	4.60% 45	29.11% 285	34.63% 339	28.09% 275	979	3.79
Bedroom Community	15.78% 148	10.34% 97	46.16% 433	17.80% 167	9.91% 93	938	2.96
Industry	19.98% 196	9.58% 94	38.43% 377	19.06% 187	12.95% 127	981	2.95
Other	17.47% 47	3.35% 9	35.32% 95	8.18% 22	35.69% 96	269	3.41

## Q12 What type of community recreation is lacking in the Town?

Answered: 1,004 Skipped: 92



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Dog park	41.24%	414
Bike trails	34.66%	348
Walking trails	36.06%	362
Waterfront access (overlooks, trails, non-motorized access)	50.90%	511
Playgrounds	15.54%	156
Organized sports fields (football, soccer, baseball, etc.)	8.57%	86
Pool, splash pad, etc.	59.56%	598
Ice rink	47.91%	481

## Grand Island Community Survey

Maker Space (Art & Science Shop)	22.81%
Pavilions and other gathering spaces	30.68%
Field House (Indoor Sports)	43.53%
Other (please specify)	15.64%
Total Respondents: 1,004	



Grand Island Community Survey

Q13 \_\_\_\_\_ Road is a concern because \_\_\_\_\_.

Answered: 735 Skipped: 361

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
ROAD	99.00%	734
WHY	97.60%	718

ROAD...

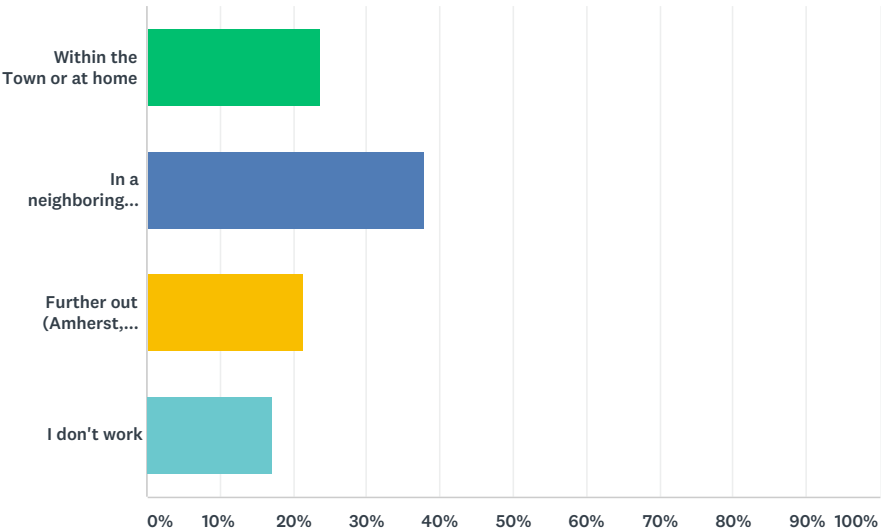
Fix Pkwy Bedell South Parkway West River Alvin  
 Whitehaven Island Boulevard Baseline Love  
 Ransom Stoney Point East River GI Blvd  
 Road Beaver Island Stony Point Lane  
 Island Blvd Ferry Staley Huth

WHY...

Town Hard Stop Signs Intersection Drive Not Safe Poor  
 Speeders Speed Run Side Walks Drivers  
 Shoulder Pot Holes Traffic Exits Needs  
 Business Road Not Pedestrian Dangerous Going  
 Lane Development Paving Safe Place to Walk Bike Path

Q14 I live in Grand Island and commute (for work)...

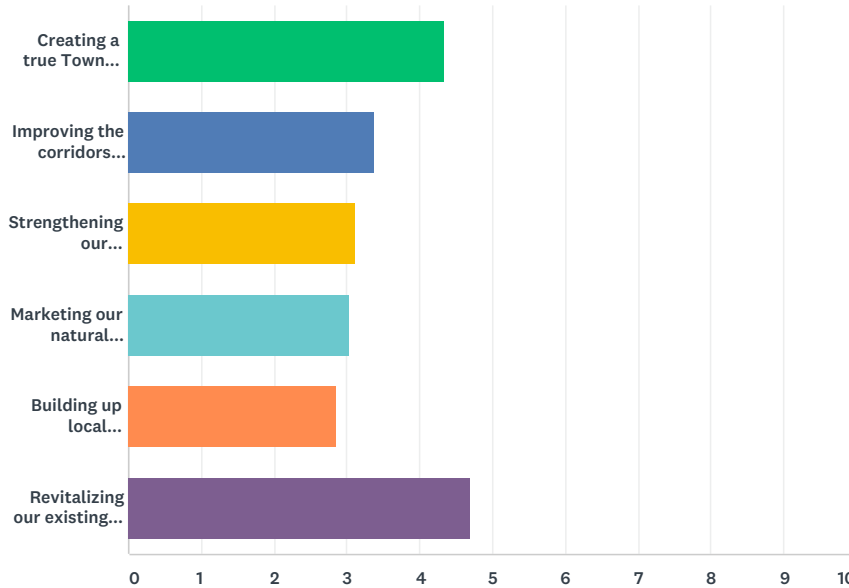
Answered: 1,011    Skipped: 85



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Within the Town or at home		23.74%	240
In a neighboring Town/City (ToT, CoT, NT, NF, Buffalo)		37.78%	382
Further out (Amherst, Cheektowaga, Lackawanna, etc.)		21.27%	215
I don't work		17.21%	174
TOTAL			1,011

**Q15 To improve the Town, efforts should be directed towards (Number 1 being most important and 6 being the least):**

Answered: 991 Skipped: 105



	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	SCORE
Creating a true Town Center (Pedestrian Spaces & Business District)	36.17% 306	21.16% 179	13.36% 113	9.81% 83	7.33% 62	12.17% 103	846	4.33
Improving the corridors coming into the center of Town	7.55% 63	20.14% 168	21.70% 181	17.63% 147	18.47% 154	14.51% 121	834	3.37
Strengthening our neighborhoods	10.20% 85	12.24% 102	15.97% 133	20.53% 171	22.69% 189	18.37% 153	833	3.12
Marketing our natural resources/recreation	7.35% 62	11.39% 96	18.98% 160	21.47% 181	21.59% 182	19.22% 162	843	3.04
Building up local agriculture	7.90% 68	10.45% 90	14.75% 127	20.09% 173	19.16% 165	27.64% 238	861	2.85
Revitalizing our existing plazas/commercial areas	38.62% 363	25.96% 244	16.17% 152	8.72% 82	5.11% 48	5.43% 51	940	4.68

## Future Land Use Exercise

### Group Melanie

- Preserve
- Slow Traffic
- Connect Trails
- Sharrows
- Kayak/Canoe Launches

### Group David

- Rustic Signage
- Amphitheater at beaver island park on the water
- Grow Agriculture business
- Signage
- Traffic
- Get people off the Thruway and into the community of Grand Island
- Splashpad
- Streetlights with flowers
- Scenic area & Bike Path
- Walkable Restaurants
- Grand Island Blvd.: Traffic slow down, curbing, lights, make a town center feel, nice landscape, quaint shops, boutique & restaurants
- Entrance Arches
- Wayfinding issues
- Business district
- Sustainable power/ criteria for wind power, solar panels on public bldgs.

### Group Brian

- Community Center
- Highlight the History of the Island
- Increase the quality of the road system
- Allow access to the HS Pool for the Public
- Walkable and Bike-able
- Sidewalks

### Group Ingrid

- Connect existing trails and/or add more bicycle trails
- Strong development along Grand Island Boulevard including density, 2-story and better zoning enforcement
- Gateway and Wayfinding signage that is uniquely Grand Island
- Solar Farms that meet a set of standards/regulations designed by the community





# Design Standards Results

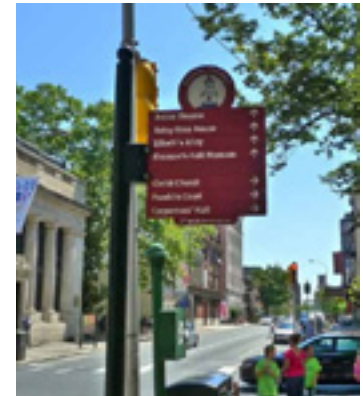
## Priority 01



**Architecture**  
Multiple styles, enclose sidewalk



**Gateway Signage**  
Brick columns with sign



**Wayfinding Signage**  
Traditional style, overhead - mounted



**Trails**  
Boardwalk trail



**Streetscapes**  
Raingardens, Benches, mixed paving materials



**Sustainability**  
Residential Scale Solar Panels



**Waterfront**  
Natural Edge, No Development

**PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY**



# Design Standards Results

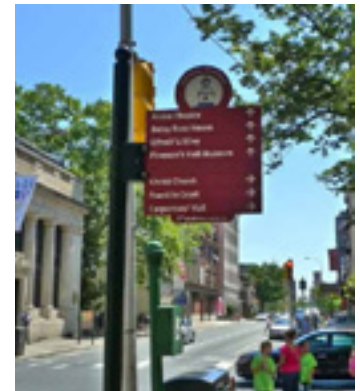
## Priority 02



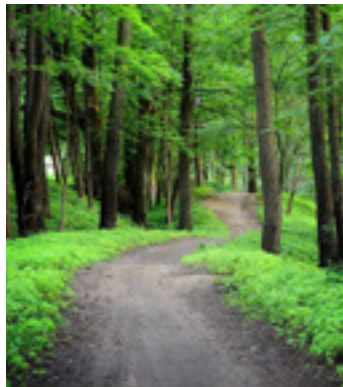
**Architecture**  
Contemporary Style, Mixed-use



**Gateway Signage**  
Stone pedestal style with plantings



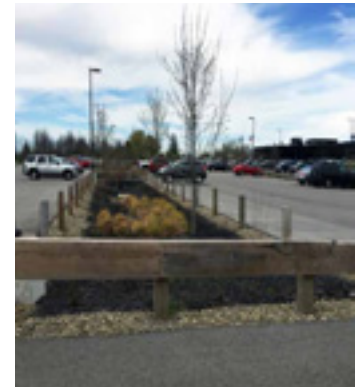
**Wayfinding Signage**  
Traditional style, overhead - mounted



**Trails**  
Natural surface trail



**Streetscapes**  
Outdoor Dining



**Sustainability**  
Pervious Parking , Green Infrastructure



**Waterfront**  
Hardscape Park on water

**PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY**

## SPOKE 1

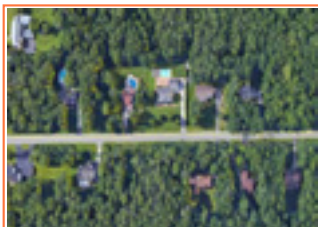
EXISTING CONDITIONS



WEST RIVER WATERFRONT ACCESS

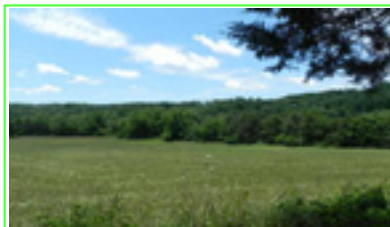
- ▶ Allow public access with respect to private users
- ▶ West River Trail and water front access
- ▶ Connection to new hotel/ north gateway
- ▶ Pop-up business (refreshment stands/concession)
- ▶ Restrooms
- ▶ Link neighborhoods to West River bike path

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION



BEVELL ST. RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD

- ▶ Preserve low-density residential
- ▶ Restore shoulder conditions
- ▶ Establish neighborhood connection to major bike/pedestrian trail



DENSE VEGETATED OPEN SPACE

- ▶ Promote for agricultural use
- ▶ Right - to - farm
- ▶ Allow livestock
- ▶ Farmers Market
- ▶ Restrooms
- ▶ Farming enterprises to supply demand
- ▶ Ag. tourism and interpretation farm museum
- ▶ School tours
- ▶ Farm-to-table restaurant and brewery



FANTASY ISLAND

- ▶ Leverage interaction with community, focal point for events
- ▶ More walkable, provide crosswalk on GI Boulevard
- ▶ Connect with businesses and residents
- ▶ Update streetscape appeal to follow zoning standard
- ▶ Supplies jobs to teens
- ▶ Parking improvements: lighting and screening
- ▶ Partnered with KOA, upgrade connection and campground
- ▶ More public events: concerts, theater, performances



TOWN HALL TERRACE APARTMENTS

- ▶ Wayfinding for visitors/residents
- ▶ Needs building improvements



### LEGEND:

	Active Open space		Residential		Commercial		Business/Office Park		Educational Training Center
	Passive Open Space		Light Residential		Heavy Industrial		Water Dependent Use		Alternative Energy Farm

## PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY



## SPOKE 2

EXISTING CONDITIONS



BLUE WATER MARINA

- Reestablish bike ferry at Ferry Rd and East River
- More restaurants
- Attract Fishermen & start charters
- Bed and breakfast opportunities
- Pop ups (seasonal businesses)
- Bike rentals/repairs and snowmobile in winter, cross-country, skiing, snow shoeing
- Nature trails and environmental interpretation
- Maintain historic character without over development
- Bait and tackle shop for fishing and boating

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION



KEGEIBEIN NEIGHBORHOOD

- More sidewalks throughout neighborhood
- Wayfinding signage to connect to GI downtown
- Good community with playgrounds, sports courts and fields, all on nearby school campus



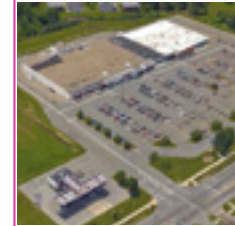
HIGHWAY FORESTED OPEN SPACE

- Maintain greenspace
- Natural resource education
- Hiking/walking trails with observation towers
- Protect natural forested habitat
- Provide "wildlife bridge" for safe crossing of animals



WEBB RD. HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD

- Add pedestrian/bicycle multi-use trails connecting to town center
- Protect and maintain nearby wetland
- Preserve quality and character of low-density neighborhood



TOPS PLAZA

- Establish look of destination (density, facilities (food, fuel) and other amenities
- Wayfinding, phone app's for island activities
- Take drivers of thruway and into town center
- More landscaping, sidewalks, lighting, benches and banners.
- More shops, boutiques and restaurants
- Walkable downtown
- Establish sense of place
- Businesses that support recreational activities
- Multi-Use out door space for: Performances, Ice Skating, Concerts and Adult Outings
- Follow a certain set of Design Standards



LEGEND:



NORTH



Active Open space



Passive Open Space



Residential



Light Residential



Commercial



Heavy Industrial



Business/Office Park



Water Dependent Use



Educational Training Center



Alternative Energy Farm



# SPOKE 3

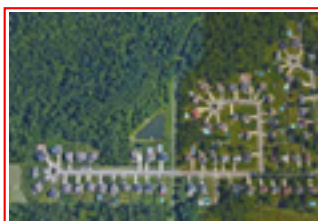
EXISTING CONDITIONS

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION



BUCKHORN STATE PARK

- Informative signage for habitat and restoration efforts
- Year-round restroom facilities
- More, centralized parking
- Wider shoulder for bikers, walkers and parking
- Boating accommodations
- Observation towers or bird blinds for bird watching



SOUTH LANE CUL-DE-SAC NEIGHBORHOOD

- Extend Bedell Trail to Town Center
- Existing housing pattern and style to remain as is



TOWN PLAZA ON GRAND ISLAND BOULEVARD

- Hotel opportunity for tourists/visitors
- Bike rentals
- Enhance streetscape to favor pedestrian utilization
- Redevelop plaza and encourage more shopping
- Plaza storefronts should also be open to Baseline
- Increase density of Town Center
- Follow Design Standards set by Town



SIDWAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- School is beautiful, could use more streetscaping
- Lower speeds
- Soccer Tournaments
- Fencing around playground
- Provide sidewalk
- Widen shoulder for bikers



DEGLOPPER VETERANS MEMORIAL

- National War Memorial Site
- Contributing space for Adrienne's
- Needs seating for visitors
- Traffic Circle point
- Outfitter
- Traffic calming



LEGEND:

- |                    |                   |                  |                      |                             |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Active Open space  | Residential       | Commercial       | Business/Office Park | Educational Training Center |
| Passive Open Space | Light Residential | Heavy Industrial | Water Dependent Use  | Alternative Energy Farm     |

# SPOKE 4

EXISTING CONDITIONS

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION



BEAVER ISLAND STATE PARK

- ▶ Better maintenance with golf course
- ▶ Year-round restroom facilities
- ▶ Convert marina back to transient status
- ▶ Free access to park for Island residents
- ▶ Boutique hotel/lodge
- ▶ Camping
- ▶ Restaurant
- ▶ More water access by foot, bike, or boat
- ▶ Boat Launch
- ▶ Visitor center/place to advertise Town events



FIX RD. SUBURB NEIGHBORHOOD

- ▶ Well established neighborhood
- ▶ Sidewalks on both sides of street
- ▶ Provide more, safe ped crossing the Beaver Island Pkwy
- ▶ Quality of neighborhood is excellent
- ▶ Could open access for public to access water on East River at end of Fix
- ▶ Family parks with playgrounds and dog run areas



POWERLINE R.O.W

- ▶ Natural Space to remain
- ▶ Conserve forest and wetland/ protect water quality



WEBB RD. HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD

- ▶ Add pedestrian/bicycle multi-use trails connecting to town center
- ▶ Protect and maintain nearby wetland
- ▶ Preserve quality and character of low-density neighborhood



BASELINE MIXED-USE COMMERCIAL AREA

- ▶ Update streetscape; add sidewalks, lighting and vegetation
- ▶ Rotate stores more frequently & advertise
- ▶ Sidewalks connecting to Town center
- ▶ Update plaza buildings to follow design standards
- ▶ Provide screening and fenced in park space for residents of apartments
- ▶ Provide bicycle parking and bike maintenance kiosks



TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Need better use of large parking lots with too much parking
- ▶ Utilize land to its fullest potential while still being economically friendly
- ▶ Continue with the use of shared entry driveways
- ▶ Incorporate design standards into facades and site design



LEGEND:

NORTH

Active Open space	Residential	Commercial	Business/Office Park	Educational Training Center
Passive Open Space	Light Residential	Heavy Industrial	Water Dependent Use	Alternative Energy Farm

## PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY

## SPOKE 5

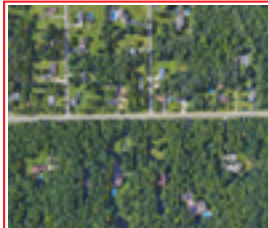
EXISTING CONDITIONS

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION



WEST RIVER OVERLOOK/BIKE PATH

- Needs wayfinding signage
- Duck hunting blinds & designated locations
- Boat launch: kayak, canoe, motor boat
- Big Six marina connection
- West River bike path implementation
- Use Whitehaven as major connection between East and West River
- Restaurant/ concessions/ refreshments



WHITEHAVEN RD. RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD

- Low density housing to remain
- Update shoulder for pedestrians



NIKE BASE

- Continue trails behind nearby cemetery
- Connect to Big Six marina
- Add a dog park
- Update buildings on site
- Restrooms all year-round
- Highly activated with recreation use
- Update and maintain small golf course



FOREST TRAIL LAND

- Maintain and add nature info along trail
- Provide benches
- Keep natural, don't over develop
- Carry-out connection to Whitehaven



BRANCHES OF NIAGARA CAMPGROUND

- Well-known Campground
- Good access from thruway
- Could become primary campground once visitor center is built
- Variety of activities - should be advertised if open to public



TOWN HALL TERRACE

- Control amount of these units
- New properties take value away from existing units
- Update existing units
- Target millennial and senior age groups
- Provide playground and dog park on campus
- Sidewalks to keep people off road and separate from drivers
- Market apartments in town center as incentive for living



### LEGEND:

	Active Open space		Residential		Commercial		Business/Office Park		Educational Training Center
	Passive Open Space		Light Residential		Heavy Industrial		Water Dependent Use		Alternative Energy Farm

## PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY

## SPOKE 6

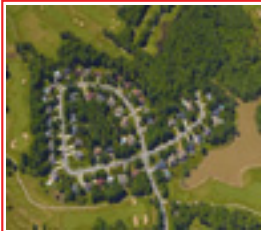
EXISTING CONDITIONS

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION



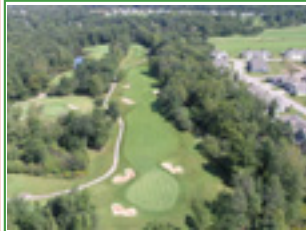
### RIVER OAKS BOAT MARINA

- Ferry entrance near hotel
- Bicentennial park nearby - provide connection
- Boat launch: kayak, canoe, motor boat
- Need to stripe road to indicate shared use of drivers, cyclists and walkers
- Marina in fairly good shape- could renovate docks
- Highly used by many



### DEERWOOD LN. GOLF COURSE CUL-DE-SAC

- "Resort-like" housing to remain



### RIVER OAKS GOLF COURSE

- Private golf course
- Beautiful course - used frequently
- Banquet and catering available for public or private events



### GRAND ISLAND ROD & GUN CLUB

- Hosts family friendly events all year-round
- Provides fishing, trap shooting, and training courses
- Has opportunities and land to expand: Rezone Fox 29 land use
- Great outdoor pavilion for private or public events



### WHITEHAVEN RD. LOW DENSITY NEIGHBORHOOD

- Low density residential layout to remain
- Capitalize on nearby powerline ROW for recreational use
- Provide sidewalks on both sides of street - busy road



### TOWN CENTER

- Enhance streetscape - increase tree canopy: use a variety of trees; avoid monoculture diseases
- Remove/convert old gas station
- Town Commons - great place for community
- Walkability - sidewalks, road diet, site furnishings
- Promote and encourage desired variety of stores, cafe's, restaurants, and services
- Update parking lots to have more vegetation: providing better curb appeal
- Slowing traffic - could deter visitors from leaving thruway



#### LEGEND:

	Active Open space		Residential		Commercial		Business/Office Park		Educational Training Center
	Passive Open Space		Light Residential		Heavy Industrial		Water Dependent Use		Alternative Energy Farm



## SPOKE 7

EXISTING CONDITIONS

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION



FIX OVERLOOK

- Bike path connections
- Currently working on updated options for the overlooks
- Heavily used for quick access to water
- Allow easier access to water for small boats, people and dogs
- Maintain landscaping; clear cut and mow lawn



FIX ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD TYPOLOGY

- Agriculture developed properly - remain and maintain
- Find a community effort to support their efforts
- Grid doesn't allow solar panels, enough wind for turbines. However, it takes away from the agriculture land and prime growing soil
- Sub-station to Staley Rd. good option for solar panels
- Promote solar on Town buildings and Schools



STALEY ROAD NATURAL LANDSCAPE

- Snowmobile trail cuts through - keep and maintain.
- Horse stalls/farm use road as trail; should be maintained and fixed to accommodate this use - promotes diverse activities
- Biking, Four-wheeling and motorcycles also use snowmobile trails, should maintain these trails to keep the use in a concentrated space
- Nature and habitats should be left untouched; should not be taking away these natural settings from animals. Island culture should be promoting the efforts to restore them



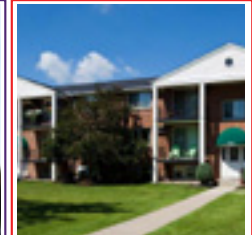
ALT BOULEVARD + FUCCILLO DEALERSHIP

- Road Improvements; build up shoulder
- Wetlands are mitigated in the area
- Add more to the existing "business park" at intersection of Baseline Road and Alvin Avenue.
- Road frontage there for protecting sewer line
- Maintain landscaping; clear cut and mow lawn



TRINITY CHURCH + CHURCH AREA ON BASELINE ROAD

- Be careful of setbacks - frontage for churches are part of the historic characteristics
- Toward Webb Street on Baseline Road, utilize vacancy
- Keep the mixed use business area on Baseline Road
- Leave Churches alone



TOWNHALL TERRACE APARTMENT CAMPUS

- Wonderful addition to GI - beautiful campus
- Commercial development in close proximity is a plus
- No more apartment complexes like this
- Hotel potential for visitors
- Whitehaven Road has opportunities for connecting tourists to the town center
- Opportunity for mixed use retail



LEGEND:

- |                    |                   |                  |                      |                             |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Active Open space  | Residential       | Commercial       | Business/Office Park | Educational Training Center | Places of Worship |
| Passive Open Space | Light Residential | Heavy Industrial | Water Dependent Use  | Alternative Energy Farm     |                   |

## SPOKE 8

EXISTING CONDITIONS

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION



RESIDENTIAL BOATS DOCKS ON EAST RIVER ROAD

- ▶ Heavy bike use/riders and pedestrians walking
- ▶ Larger shoulder to allow for safer pedestrian travel
- ▶ Leave residential use/homes alone
- ▶ Adds to the special character Grand Island offers
- ▶ Well maintained homes are a sight to see; could act as tourist attraction



LONG ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD TYPOLOGIES

- ▶ Private gun club in the area
- ▶ Neighborhood runs on natural gas
- ▶ Free space behind and between homes is unique to Grand Island
- ▶ Keep parcels large to divide development and keep pattern
- ▶ Scenic woods trail near here



GRAND ISLAND MIDDLE AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

- ▶ Needs better connection to Veteran's Park
- ▶ Needs updates to the Tennis courts
- ▶ Opens the pool every day in the summer; open to public
- ▶ Looking for improvements to the security system
- ▶ Provides afterschool programs; could develop more
- ▶ Optimal space for a diverse group activities for students and the community
- ▶ Could use a "hang-out" spot close to school but off campus a coffee shop, cafe, diner or smoothie lounge could be beneficial for the social status of these generations



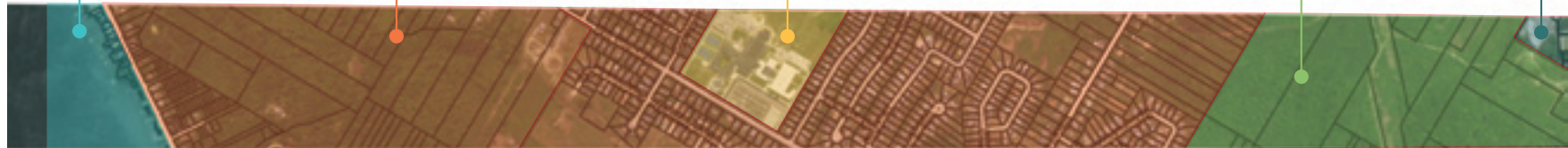
POWER LINES THROUGH WHITEHAVEN ROAD

- ▶ Trail opportunities
- ▶ Snomobile trail currently uses this thoroughfare - could use updates to vegetation and bridges
- ▶ Bridges are not pedestrian friendly - need to make accommodations
- ▶ Opportunities for developing habitats for those removed
- ▶ Open space with existing habitats and natural green space - leave it



TOWN CENTER

- ▶ Do we have the critical mass to support a larger town center?
- ▶ Should introduce specialized shops (local, not chain)
- ▶ Diversify shops based on interest, age, hobby and visitor purpose
- ▶ No more apartments in or around the Town Center - need the space to develop more businesses
- ▶ Visitor Center might help bring more people into the Town Center
- ▶ Leave Town Hall where it is; development of Community Center should be separate



### LEGEND:

	Active Open space		Residential		Commercial		Business/Office Park		Educational Training Center
	Passive Open Space		Light Residential		Heavy Industrial		Water Dependent Use		Alternative Energy Farm

## SPOKE 9

EXISTING CONDITIONS

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION



LONG ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD TYPOLOGIES

- ▶ Private gun club in the area
- ▶ Neighborhood runs on natural gas
- ▶ Free space behind and between homes is unique to Grand Island
- ▶ Keep parcels large to divide development and keep pattern
- ▶ Scenic woods trail near here



WHITEHAVEN RD. LOW DENSITY NEIGHBORHOOD

- ▶ Low density residential layout to remain
- ▶ Capitalize on nearby powerline ROW for recreational use
- ▶ Provide sidewalks on both sides of street - busy road



GRAND ISLAND MIDDLE AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

- ▶ Needs better connection to Veteran's Park
- ▶ Needs updates to the Tennis courts
- ▶ Opens the pool every day in the summer; open to public
- ▶ Looking for improvements to the security system
- ▶ Provides afterschool programs; could develop more
- ▶ Optimal space for a diverse group activities for students and the community
- ▶ Could use a "hang-out" spot close to school but off campus a coffee shop, cafe, diner or smoothie lounge could be beneficial for the social status of these generations



BEDELL ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD TYPOLOGIES

- ▶ Close to Veteran's Park
- ▶ Cul-de-sac development occurs sporadically around Grand Island; that's OK!
- ▶ Parcels are medium in size; enough to divide development and keep pattern
- ▶ Trail access nearby



GRAND ISLAND SIDWAY SCHOOL

- ▶ Needs better roadway connection to Veteran's Park
- ▶ Looking for improvements to the security system
- ▶ Provides afterschool programs; could develop more
- ▶ Optimal space for a diverse group activities for students and the community
- ▶ Town Center could provide more amenities for families attending/visiting the school



### LEGEND:

	Active Open space		Residential		Commercial		Business/Office Park		Educational Training Center
	Passive Open Space		Light Residential		Heavy Industrial		Water Dependent Use		Alternative Energy Farm

# **APPENDIX B**

## **COMMUNITY PROFILE DETAILS**





## 2018 Town of Grand Island Community Profile Supporting Information

### 1. Population

As of July 2016, the Town of Grand Island population was reported at 20,976 persons. The population in the Town has been steadily increasing since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Suburban housing growth resulted in significant increases in the Town's population after 1950, with the population growing by almost 17,000 persons between 1950 and 2010. Although the rate of growth has slowed since 2010 (with gains of between 100 and 150 persons per year on average), the Town's population is still increasing in size. Between 2010 and 2015; the population increased by approximately 4.8% (or about 1,000 persons). The population in the region has also experienced growth since 2010, but at a much slower rate than the Town. Between 2010 and 2015, Erie County's population grew by less than 1%. Although very modest increases were seen at the regional level from 2010 through 2014, the County's population appears to again be on the decline. Hence, population growth in the Town is going against this trend.

Population Trends -- 2010 to 2016

Year	Town Population	Erie County Population
2010	19,974	919,220
2011	20,120	920,088
2012	20,324	920,792
2013	20,469	922,150
2014	20,580	923,702
2015	20,679	922,957
2016	20,976	921,046

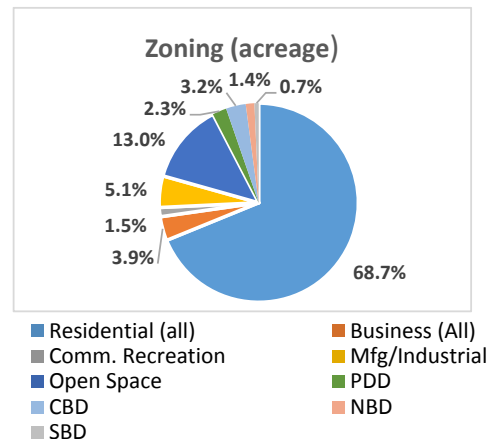
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The average household size in the Town has been declining, which is also a regional and national trend. The average household size decreased from 2.68 persons per household in 2000 to 2.51 persons per household in 2016. The percentage of family households has remained stable; 75.7% in 2000 vs. 73.0% in 2015. The population also lacks racial diversity, with 95.8% reported as white in 2000 vs. 93.7% in 2015. While the median age of the Town's population is stable, declining slightly from 42.1 years old in 2010 to 41.6 years old in 2015, the percentage of people over the age of 65

is increasing (from 11.3% in 2000 to 15.3% in 2015), which could be an indication that new residents coming into the Town are younger.

### 2. Land Use and Zoning

According to current Real Property Service data, the majority of the land in the Town is assessed as residential (70.4%). This coincides with existing zoning patterns, wherein approximately 68.7% of the acreage in the Town is zoned for residential use. However, only 41.4% of the total land acreage is actually in residential use; approximately 33% of the land in the Town is vacant. Some of this land is zoned for residential use; 8.5% is forest, parks and conservation lands. The amount of land used for commercial activity is 3.1%; the amount of land zoned for business use (all districts) is 3.9%. This would indicate that land area for future commercial use is limited. Although 5.1% of land is zoned for industrial use, actual industrial activity accounts for 1.1% of total land use.



### 3. Housing

A total number of 8,587 housing units were reported as of July 1, 2016. This represents a 7.5% increase in the number of housing units since 2010, and a 14.3% increase since 2000. The data also indicate that although housing growth has increased annually, the overall rate of growth has declined. In 2015, the majority of the housing stock in the Town is comprised of single-family, detached homes (83.0%); 3.4% was reported as single-family attached housing and 13.3% were structures with two or more apartment units. The

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder 2000 – 2015; Town of Grand Island Comprehensive Plan

## 2018 Town of Grand Island Community Profile Supporting Information

remaining 0.3% was reported as mobile homes or other types of housing.

As of July 2016, approximately 96.7% of the housing stock was occupied; 282 units or 3.3% of housing was vacant. Of the occupied units, 6,615 units (79.6%) were owner occupied and 1,690 units (20.4%) were rentals. The percentage of renter occupied housing has slowly increased since 2000 (16.7%) and 2010 (18.8%). The age of the housing stock is mixed, with approximately 77.6% of the homes being built prior to 1990, and 22.4% built between 1990 and 2014. The number of homes being built annually in the Town has decreased, with a high of 141 reported in 2003 and a low of 33 in 2013.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

### Average New Build Cost

Yr. Built	Median Value*	Avg. Cost**
2000	\$95,000	\$141,000
2010	\$173,800	\$232,600
2014	\$181,500	\$250,700

Source: \*U.S. Census Bureau; \*\*City-Data, 2017.

Housing values in the Town have been on the rise. The median value of a home in 2000 was reported at \$95,000 and \$181,500 in 2014, an increase of approximately 52% in value. Average home costs reflect similar increases, with the average cost of a home reported at \$141,000 in 2000 and \$250,700 in 2014. Home sales between the first quarter of 2012 and the third quarter in 2014 have been relatively stable, with an average of 35 homes

selling per quarter and a median sale price of approximately \$140,000. Annual home sales in the Town are stable, with between 50 and 100 homes selling annually during 2012 through 2014.

#### 4. Income and Education

In 2015, the median household income on Grand Island was \$78,597; median family income was reported at \$92,039. The Census data indicate that income for both individual households and families in the Town has been on the rise over the past several decades. Median household income in the Town increased by 23.1% since 2000, when it was reported at \$60,432. Median family income increased by a similar rate (23.4%) during that same time period. Grand Island has a well educated workforce, with over 95.6% of persons over 25 years of age earning a high school diploma in 2015 and 42% earning a bachelor's degree or higher. This is an increase of 3% and 9.6%, respectively, since 2000.

#### 5. Economy

In 2015, approximately 67.7% of the Town's population (or an average of 3,940 persons over the age of 16 years old) was reported to be in the civilian workforce, and the unemployment rate was reported at 3.9%. The percentage of people employed in the workforce has remained stable since 2010, but has decreased since 2000, when 69.7% were reported to be in the workforce vs. 63.8% in 2015 (the unemployment rate in 2000 was 2.2%). There have been no significant changes in number of persons employed in the various occupations and industries in the Town, with a few exceptions.

#### 6. Commuting Patterns

In 2015, approximately 80% of persons over the age of 16 who were in the work force worked outside of the Town (no significant difference since 2010). Almost 82% work in Erie County; 17.8% work outside the County. Approximately 88.3% of the workforce drove to work alone; 7.0% carpooled, 3.2% work at home, and less than 1% use public transportation, which also hasn't changed significantly over the past two decades. Average travel time to work is 20 minutes.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder 2000 – 2015; Town of Grand Island Comprehensive Plan



*Planning Consultant services provided by the design team of:*

Clark Patterson Lee | WWS Planning | Foit-Albert Associations



*WWS Planning*



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