

Chapter VII

County Services, Facilities & Infrastructure

Background and Trends

Niagara County Budget

Niagara County provides a multitude of services to County residents which fall under the jurisdiction of various County departments, offices and staff. The following information on County services is presented according to five tiers of County government. This tiered approach is used to organize departments and services for budgeting and other management purposes, including the allocation of funds under the County's annual budget. Each tier of County government generally identifies the types of services provided by that tier. These tiers are described below along with many of the services provided. Also provided are the 2008 County budget appropriations for each tier.

The provision of services and budgeting for those services is a complex process performed on an annual basis. The County operates on a fiscal year that runs concurrent with the calendar year from January 1st to December 31st. The budgeting process is well documented and the results are published each year as the County's Annual Budget. Details of the County's budget are beyond the scope of this Comprehensive Plan, so the budget is discussed in mostly general terms. Detailed information on the County's 2008 budget is available at www.niagaracounty.com/CountyBudget.asp.

Niagara County's 2008 adopted budget was \$262,945,025. This total does not include \$39,880,000 of revenue which is offset by corresponding appropriations of \$39,880,000 from sales tax revenue shared with other government entities. The County's 2008 budget represented a 2.74% decrease from the 2007 budget. The County's 2008 property tax levy of \$67,893,843 represented a 7.6% decrease from 2007.

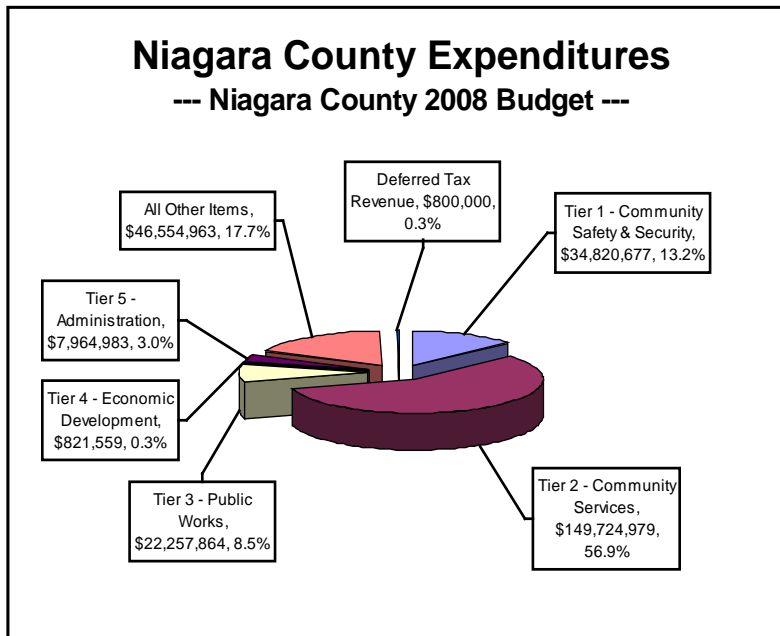
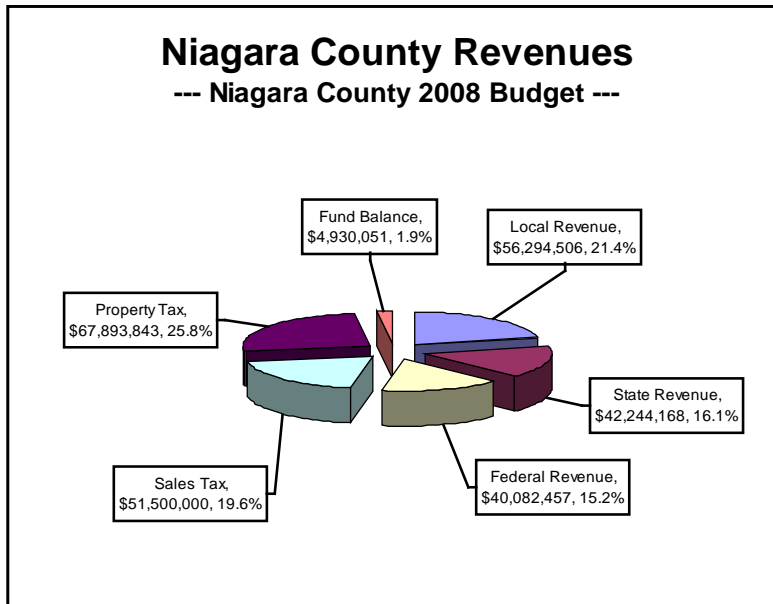
Detailed information on the County's 2008 budget is available at www.niagaracounty.com/CountyBudget.asp.

The County's 2008 property tax levy of \$67,893,843 represented a 7.6% decrease from 2007.

Niagara County receives revenues from the State and Federal government through direct allocations, competitive grants, and other public funding. The County's budget revenue sources are summarized as follows:

- 15% from Federal Government
- 16% from State Government
- 21% from Local Revenue
- 26% from Property Taxes
- 20% from Sales Taxes
- 02% from Appropriated Fund Balance

Revenues and expenditures under the County budget are illustrated in the following charts. The expenditures chart identifies allocated funds to each of the five tiers of County government as well as other items, including employee benefits, debt service, CD fund and special items.



Niagara County Services

Tier 1 - Community Safety & Security

Office of the Sheriff

The Niagara County Office of the Sheriff is one of the largest departments within Niagara County government, and is directly responsible for the safety and security of County residents. The Sheriff's Office is located in Lockport, NY. The Office of the County Sheriff is an elected position, and the Sheriff is supported by a staff of 348 professionals including deputy sheriffs, correction officers, dispatchers, and civilian support personnel.

The Corrections Division is the largest division of the Office of the Sheriff. It operates with a staff of approximately 145 correction officers and 40 civilian support personnel. The County Jail annually houses more than 6,000 inmates, and on a daily basis the Jail houses approximately 500 inmates. In 2006, the County Jail generated approximately \$2.7 million in revenue for the County, primarily from sources such as the housing of inmates from Federal and State law enforcement and corrections agencies.

The Civil Law Enforcement Division is the law enforcement arm of the courts and serves divorce and eviction notices, as well as warrants and other court appearance orders. The Law Enforcement Division provides the police services that may be best known to the public in general, including the County's Road Patrol, Crime Scene Identification Unit, the Communications Center, Criminal Investigation Bureau and others listed below. The Sheriff's Office includes a number of specialized support units and teams which are also identified below.

Dispatchers answered more than 98,731 calls for police, fire, and emergency services in 2007, and the number of calls for emergency service continues to trend upward each year. The County Communications Center dispatches appropriate emergency personnel from the Sheriff's Office, five local police agencies, twenty-eight volunteer fire companies, the North Tonawanda Fire Department, two ambulance services and other organizations as needed. The Communications Center averages over 250 calls per day. In recent years Deputies assigned to law enforcement duties have responded to more than 60,000 calls for service annually, which represents an increase of greater than 35% since 2002.

One of the newest divisions within the Sheriff's Office is the Field Intelligence Division, which collects data on crimes and other incidents and includes crime analysis as one of its primary functions. This division works to identify crime patterns, trends and problems throughout the County, and facilitates the dissemination of information and intelligence used to develop strategies and tactics to combat crime. The Sheriff's Office has begun using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data and mapping techniques to track reported incidents.

A number of the highly specialized services provided by divisions and support units of the Sheriff's Office are as follows.

Emergency 911 Communications

Field Intelligence Division

Civil Law Enforcement
Civil Division

Law Enforcement

Road Patrol
Crime Scene Identification Unit
Communications Center
Computer Operations Division
Criminal Investigation Bureau
Juvenile Investigation Bureau
Western NY Joint Terrorism Task Force
Welfare Fraud Bureau
Drug Task Force
Court/Building Security
Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy
Forensic Laboratory
Property/Evidence Office

Corrections/Jail

Corrections
Sheriff's Work Program
Inmate Education Program
Corrections Emergency Response Team (CERT)
Jail Medical Department
Facility Maintenance

Support Units/Teams

Marine Unit
Underwater Recovery Team
Aviation Unit
Emergency Response Team/Firearms Training
Office of Traffic Safety and Stop DWI
K-9 Unit
Warrants Division
Drug Awareness and Resistance (DARE) Unit
Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP)
Victim's Assistance Unit

District Attorney

The Niagara County District Attorney is the County's chief prosecutor. Staff includes 3 Deputy District Attorneys, 20 Assistant District Attorneys, 5 Criminal Investigators, 12 Support Staff, and 2 Crime Victim Advocates. The District Attorney's Office is responsible for investigating and prosecuting all criminal activity within Niagara County. In addition to prosecuting felony cases at the County Court level, the District Attorney prosecutes cases in all 3 of Niagara County's City Courts (Niagara Falls, Lockport & North Tonawanda) and all 12 of the County's Town Justice Courts.

The District Attorney's Office also argues appeals and post-conviction matters, institutes forfeiture proceedings, oversees the extradition of fugitives, and litigates habeas corpus petitions in both State and Federal courts.

The District Attorney's Office has specific bureaus which target areas of crime, including:

- Violent Crimes
- Narcotics
- White Collar Crime & Fraud
- Crimes Against the Elderly, Children & Special Victims
- Domestic Violence
- DWI & Vehicular Crimes

Homeland Security & Emergency Management Office

The Homeland Security & Emergency Management Office is responsible for maintaining and updating a Countywide Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) with input from the Niagara County Local Emergency Planning Committee, the County Manager, the County Attorney, County government officials, NY State Disaster Preparedness Commission, NY State Emergency Management Office, other appropriate departments and the citizenry of Niagara County. The CEMP is discussed in more detail in Chapter IX Public Health and Safety.

Niagara County and its cities, towns, and villages are part of a multi-jurisdictional emergency mitigation planning process, responsible for participating in risk reduction activities with the Niagara County Director of Emergency Management and the Niagara County Local Emergency Planning Committee. The office coordinates all emergency management activities and is responsible for assisting individual towns and villages within Niagara County that have fully committed their resources, but still unable to cope with a disaster of any type.

Probation Department

Services provided by the County's Probation Department include the preparation of pre-sentence investigations and reports for the criminal courts, and the supervision of criminals sentenced to probation. The Local Conditional Release Commission provides investigation and supervision functions for criminals released from jail. Intake, investigation and supervision services are provided for Family Court, and any discretionary services for pretrial and alternative sentencing are also available.

The Probation Department also administers the Intensive Supervision Program, which provides an alternative to incarceration. The Department provides eligibility assessments, court-ordered restrictions, monitoring, field supervision and intensive supervision services. Probation administers the Pre-Trial Services, Treatments Alternatives to Street Crime, and Community Services programs.

Public Defender

The County's Public Defender provides legal counsel to individuals unable to afford their own legal services. Unlike many other states, in New York the cost of providing this legal counsel is the responsibility of the County. The Public

Defender's Office is located in the County Courthouse in Lockport.

Tier 2 - Community Services

Department of Health

The Niagara County Department of Health (NCDOH) is responsible for providing a healthy, disease-free environment to the citizens of Niagara County. The NCDOH includes a staff of approximately 118 employees and operates from its offices located in the Shaw Building at the Mountview Campus in Lockport and in the Trott Building in Niagara Falls. Detailed information on the services provided by the County Department of Health is available at www.niagaracounty.com/Health/.

The NCDOH provides a variety of very important functions in protecting the health of residents and visitors in Niagara County. On an ongoing basis, Environmental staff monitors the quality of public water supplies, inspects septic systems, issues permits, inspects public pools and beaches for water quality, enforces no-smoking regulations in public places, and evaluates food service facilities. The Department's highly-skilled staff has been nationally recognized with awards for the "Healthy Neighborhoods Program" administered through the Environmental Health Division. This program offers the underserved of the County with home safety assessments, checks for lead-based paint and functioning smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and provides public health referrals when needed.

Under the Department's Nursing Program, Public Health Nurses provide skilled services to those recently discharged from the hospital or a directly referred from a physician's office. Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Audiology service, medical social work, respiratory therapy, home-delivered meals, nutritional counseling and social day care are also coordinated through the Nursing Division. Nursing staff operate immunization, flu, rabies, STD/HIV, Tuberculosis and outbreak vaccination clinics, and plan for potential disasters with other emergency providers. The Department's "Healthy Living Partnership" Program has been recognized as No. 1 in New York State for providing breast and cervical cancer screening and services to uninsured and under-insured women.

The Public Health & Emergency Preparedness Division coordinates local health disaster planning with the National Center for Disease Control Preparedness Strategic National Stockpile, the National Response Plan and the Great Lakes Cross Border Initiative. This Division also provides Public Health Alerts and trains local Health Emergency Response Teams to be able to respond to local emergencies.

Some of the key services provided, and programs administered by the Department of Health, are listed below. In general, the largest percentage (about 90%) of the Department's annual budget goes to services and programs mandated by the State and Federal governments.

Environmental Health

- Healthy Neighborhoods Program
- Disease Surveillance & Protection
- Community Environmental Health

Public Health Emergency Preparedness

Public Health Education

Public Health Nursing and Home Care Services

- Public Health Services
- Certified Home Health Agency
- Long Term Home Health Care Program

Children with Special Health Care Needs

- Early Intervention Program
- Preschool Special Education Program
- Physically Handicapped Children's Program

Children with Special Healthcare Needs Program

Department of Social Services

The Department of Social Services is the largest of all County departments. A staff of 424 employees works from offices in Lockport and Niagara Falls, and a satellite office is located in North Tonawanda. The primary purpose of the Department is to administer social service programs mandated by the State and Federal governments.

The Department consists of five Divisions: Administration, Services, Program Eligibility, Financial Recovery & Support, and Legal.

The Administration Division consists of personnel assigned to the internal management of the Department: Payroll, Accounting, Information Technology, and Staff Development.

The Services Division includes a number of specialized internal units and "case workers" that administer mandated programs and services to clients, including: Child Protection, Child Welfare, Adult Protection, Home Care, Day Care, Nursing Home Care, Medical Transport, and Managed Care.

The Program Eligibility Division includes specialized internal units and "eligibility workers" that administer mandated programs and services to clients, including: Employment, Transitional Opportunities Program, Temporary Assistance, Food Stamps, and Medicaid. At any given time throughout the year, each individual eligibility worker may be handling an average of 350 individual client cases. Assigned cases typically fall under one of three programs, and are distributed as follows: 54 % Medicaid; 32 % Food Stamps; and 14 % Temporary Assistance. All adults deemed work-eligible are scheduled to participate in employment-related activities until they achieve self-sufficiency.

The Financial Recovery and Support Division has specialized units, including: Child Support, Fraud, Resources, and Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). The Legal Division includes attorneys dedicated to legal services needed by clients in the administration of Department services and programs.

Office for the Aging

The Office for the Aging provides a number of services directly to the citizens

of the County, including not only seniors (defined as those 60 years and older), but also their caregivers. Services such as Congregate and Home Delivered meals have been provided for over 30 years, along with transportation to medical appointments and dining sites, information and assistance, non-medical homecare including housekeeping and chore assistance, help with Medicare and other insurance questions, caregiver training and education, help with HEAP applications and home weatherization issues, and legal advice and assistance using a local elder law attorney.

In addition to providing many services directly, the office also supports and serves as the central referral hub for services such as: Caregiver Respite and Support, Adult Day Care, the Long Term Care Ombudsman program, programs for the visually and hearing impaired, early intervention programs to help combat memory loss, and physical fitness and nutrition counseling and education.

Youth Bureau

The Youth Bureau contracts with not-for-profit agencies throughout the County to address the needs of young people under the age of 21. Funding for its programs comes from the NYS Office of Children & Family Services through several funding streams. Monies spent to support Youth Development is Delinquency Prevention (YDDP), Youth Initiatives (YI), YDDP Recreation, and YDDP Services require a 50% match from funding agencies. Runaway, Transitional Living, and Special Delinquency Prevention Program (SDPP) monies are 60 to 100% funded. The Youth Bureau and three United Way agencies have developed a unique joint funding process to distribute available funds. The cost to the County for these services was less than 1% of the Bureau's \$1.2 million budget in 2008, or approximately \$16,760. State and Federal grants provide 99 % of the Bureau's funds. Any program within the agency that is funded by the Bureau is offered free.

The Youth Bureau has three direct service programs that are Federally funded. These include:

- The Abstinence Commitment by Teenagers (ACT)
- The Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
- The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

The Youth Bureau is a grant-driven department and is subject to concerns regarding funding reductions for the programs offered. Some State and Federal grants are awarded to schools rather than these funding agencies, and practically speaking, it may be more cost efficient for funds to be granted directly to the agencies through the Youth Bureau system. This source of inefficiency is a concern to funding agencies. The Bureau provides high-quality youth programs through a variety of venues including recreation through resolution of high risk behaviors. In the long term, the Bureau would like to offer high-end programs that provide job training and community arts activities, modeled after programs of the Manchester Craftsman Guild in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.

Department of Mental Health

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) is the administrative division for Local Government and the Community Services Board responsible for the

execution of mental health, developmental disabilities, alcoholism and drug abuse service plans. DMH has operated under a business and professional service model since 1995, and emphasizes responsibility, accountability, and transparency in its work.

Services are provided through 10 different program categories in the direct services County-operated group, and through a system of 12 community agencies under contract management. Access to care and early intervention are emphasized, with a special emphasis on family involvement. The Department encourages patient treatment at the lowest level of appropriate care in the continuum of treatment. Community residents are encouraged to call Crisis Services, available 24/7, in critical situations. Crisis Services provides on-site response to emergencies. Single Point of Access (SPOA) provides streamlined entry to mental health case management and residential services for children and adults, and residents may call for assistance.

Since 1995, DMH has reduced its County funding by 67% by aggressively pursuing grant opportunities and other revenue sources, in combination with close management of expenses. Approximately 94% of the DMH revenues come from non-County sources, including Federal and State government funds. Additionally, DMH has been recognized by NYS Audit Division as being “exceptionally well operated in its direct services and overall administration.”

Employment and Training Department

The Employment and Training Department provides employment services for job seekers such as on-the-job training or vocational classroom training, and also provides business services to employers seeking workers. This program is 100% Federally funded under the Workforce Investment Act. Services include: job opening information, skills and aptitude testing, resume assistance, career counseling, interview coaching, vocational training, workshops, and meetings with employers. The Employment and Training Department provides services to approximately 10,000 residents each year. Additional information is available at www.worksource1.com.

Office of the County Clerk

County Clerk is an elected, four-year position. The County Clerk is a NYS Constitutional Office with a statutory responsibility to serve as Clerk of the New York State Supreme and County Courts. The office administers the County Recording Office which is responsible for the recording of deeds and other land-related documents, and also serves as the local agent for the NYS Commissioner of Motor Vehicles by managing three local DMV offices throughout Niagara County.

The Office of the County Clerk provides services to the general public. These include indexing and recording land records, filing business certificates, military discharges and court-related documents, issuing pistol permit licenses, passport acceptance and maintenance of judgment dockets. The County Clerk serves as Records Management Officer for the County, overseeing the proper retention, storage and disposition of the inactive, permanent & archival records of over 40 departments, and administers the Niagara County Veteran’s Service Agency and the Historian’s Office as County Clerk Partner Agencies.

Niagara County Veteran’s Service Agency

Staff of the Niagara County Veteran’s Service Agency counsel veterans and their dependents to ensure that they have access to any benefits to which they may be eligible as the result of the veteran’s active duty military or naval service. Benefits due to Reservists and National Guardsmen are determined on an individual basis.

Topics most frequently counseled by the Niagara County Veterans Service Agency include:

- Service-Connected Disability Compensation
- Nonservice-Connected Disability Pension
- Widows Dependents Pension
- Montgomery G.I. Educational Bill
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Home Loan Guaranty
- Request for military records & service medals
- Recording of DD214/Separation papers w/County Clerk
- NYS Alternative Property Tax Exemption
- NYS Medals for Certain Active Duty Service
- Discharge Upgrade
- Burial Benefits

Niagara County Historian Office

The Niagara County Historian Office is housed in Niagara County’s most historic government building, which is located in Lockport and dates to circa 1856. This office serves as part of New York State’s network of officially appointed local municipal historians. The office is a resource to the community, offering research and writing on Niagara County history and interpreting community history through work with teachers, schools, and civic organizations.

The Historian’s office organizes and delivers public programming, assists in commemorative events, advocates for historic preservation of the built environment, preservation of manuscripts and recordkeeping documenting Niagara County history. The office aids in the promotion of Niagara County tourism, especially heritage tourism, and allows the public to view historic public records for research purposes. The Historian’s office houses a diverse collection of diaries, photos, letters, maps, blueprints, and scrapbooks of yesteryear.

Niagara County Community College

Niagara County Community College (NCCC), established in 1962, is a locally sponsored college supervised by the State University of New York (SUNY). Niagara County Community College is authorized by the Board of Regents of the SUNY to award the Associate in Arts Degree (AA), the Associate in Science Degree (AS), the Associate in Applied Science Degree (AAS) and the Associate in Occupational Science Degree (AOS) to regularly matriculated students upon successful completion of curriculum requirements. NCCC receives annual appropriations from the County for a variety of purposes.

Tier 3 - Public Works

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works is responsible for the operation, repair and maintenance of the County's highways, bridges, County-owned office buildings & grounds, 5 County parks, and the County's vehicle fleets. The Department is staffed by 140 full time employees plus 46 seasonal employees and one part time employee. The number of staff has declined considerably since 1998, when 237 individuals were employed by the Department.

The Department is divided into a number of divisions working out of five different locations. These divisions reflect the variety of services provided by the DPW, and include Administration, Engineering, Buildings & Grounds, Power Management, County Parks, Solid Waste (recycling), Highway Administration & Maintenance, Road Construction, Bridge Maintenance, Drainage, Snow Removal, Vehicle Maintenance, and County Golf Course.

The Highway Division has jurisdiction over the County's 283 miles of highway, 89 bridges and approximately 1,100 drainage culverts. Most of the County's bridges were built in the 1940's and 50's, and some wooden timber bridges remain intact under the Highway Division's purview. Due to age these require regular maintenance. Approximately 15 bridges have been replaced since 2001, and another 4 or 5 are scheduled for replacement before 2011.

The Highway Division is staffed by 29 full time maintenance personnel, 6 seasonal employees and 4 administrative staff. Responsibilities include highway maintenance, road construction under the State's Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) program, drainage improvements, snow removal, waste reduction and composting activities. Snow and ice removal and road maintenance responsibilities are shared through formal agreements with local municipalities. Approximately two-thirds of the County's roads are plowed on a reimbursement basis by local towns.

The Department participates in the County's "work fair program" in conjunction with the Department of Social Services. Under this program, able-bodied individuals receiving public assistance may work 10 days per month assisting Public Works crews in yard repair and clean-up activities at no additional cost to the County. The Department has also participated for the past 13 years in the "Safety Fair" with other agencies and utilities. The Safety Fair focuses on teaching youth about the dangers of driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

During the next few years, Public Works will consolidate its services under one roof in a modern facility replacing the current outdated buildings currently in use. It is anticipated that this new facility will be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified and built to energy efficient standards to reduce operating and maintenance costs. Department operations currently housed in five separate buildings will be consolidated into a single facility, resulting in substantial cost savings to County residents. Costs will be controlled internally through shared office space and centralized vehicle and parts storage, resulting in greater efficiency.

The DPW maintains nearly the entire County-owned fleet of vehicles. About one-third of the fleet of approximately 200 cars and trucks belongs to the Sheriff's Department, and

the fleet requires constant maintenance by the DPW due to extremely heavy use. Public Works also maintains the County's five public parks as well as the County Golf Course.

Weights & Measures

Wherever commodities are sold by some type of measure, County Weights and Measures staff members work to ensure the accuracy of what is measured and sold to the public. Services include inspecting supermarkets, convenience stores, specialty retailers like butcher and fish markets, hardware stores, drug stores, gas stations, feed mills, taxis and many other everyday service providers.

Tier 4 - Economic Development

Department of Economic Development

The Niagara County Department of Economic Development & the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency became the Niagara County Center for Economic Development (NCCED) in 2003, a one-stop center for comprehensive business services designed to help new and existing businesses become more successful in Niagara County.

It is the mission of the NCCED to actively retain, attract, and develop economically sound commerce and industry in order to foster job opportunities and economic prosperity for all residents of Niagara County. Detailed information about economic development services and activities is provided in Chapter VI.

The NCCED facilitates economic growth through financial incentives and support services such as providing information to businesses & the public including demographic, economic, land use, zoning, and environmental information, as well as providing technical assistance through project planning, site assessment, graphic design and mapping, grant support, etc.

Programs and services provided through the NCCED include:

Niagara County Department of Economic Development:

- Niagara County Business Growth and Retention Program Canadian Marketing program for attracting new businesses
- Marketing Campaign targeting "Water-Starved States"
- Empower Niagara low-cost power allocation incentive
- Local Affiliate Data Center for the U.S. Census Bureau
- Staff Coordinator for Niagara County Planning Board
- Coordinating Center for the Niagara County Economic Development Alliance (NCEDA)
- Administration of State and Federal Brownfields planning, assessment and remediation programs including the Niagara County Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) support
- Planning/technical assistance

Niagara County Industrial Development Agency:

- Industrial Revenue Bonds and Leaseback Transactions
- Revolving Loans through the Niagara County Development Corporation and Niagara Economic Development Fund
- Microenterprise Assistance Program

- Foreign Trade Zone #34 and other site location assistance
- Coordination of State and Federal economic development programs

Tier 5 – Administration

The services provided under the Administration tier of County government are diverse and include the policy-making, administrative support and staff services needed to manage the day-to-day operations of the County. Administration represents approximately 2.6 % of County spending and includes the following types of services:

- Licenses, public records, elections, and property tax administration
- Business services, including budgeting, information and communication
- Economic Development Fund
- Human Resources Management & Civil Service Administration and oversight
- Employee benefits, such as insurance and retirement programs
- Contingency funds for unanticipated expenses
- Debt service on the County's outstanding debts

Office of the County Manager

The County Manager is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of County government. The County Manager is a four-year contract position appointed by the County Legislature. The County Manager prepares the County's annual budget and appoints individuals as heads of the various County departments. The County Manager in Niagara County is one of only nine similar County Manager positions among the 57 counties of New York outside of New York City's five boroughs.

County Treasurer

The County Treasurer is one of four elected positions in Niagara County government. The other elected positions include the County Sheriff, the District Attorney and the County Clerk. The County Treasurer is the Chief Fiscal Officer of Niagara County and is responsible for managing and accounting for the County's financial resources. Among the services provided by the office are administering the County's payroll, implementing investment strategies, and directing the County's cash flow. The Treasurer office assists local municipalities in the collection of property and school tax payments. The office also collects delinquent tax payments from residents and may get involved in tax foreclosure procedures.

Clerk of the Legislature

The Clerk of the Legislature serves the support needs of the County Legislature and is staffed by three individuals. The Clerk and staff attend Legislative meetings, prepare agendas, prepare resolutions and correspondence, records proceedings, provide media releases and public notices, provide referrals to appropriate committees and coordinates on issues with various local, State and Federal agencies on matters that pertain to legislation affecting Niagara County.

In addition to being support staff to the 19 County Legislators the Clerk also provides daily assistance to the County's four Coroners. The office maintains the fiscal accounts and records, including payroll and expense accounts for the Legislators and Coroners. The Clerk also supervises and arranges for printing, binding of proceedings and other materials, including the meeting minutes for Yearly Journals. The County's mailroom and Print Shop are part of the Department under the supervision of the Clerk.

County Board of Elections

The Niagara County Board of Elections is responsible for executing and upholding the New York State Election Law within the County ensuring that the electoral process is conducted fairly and efficiently in a bipartisan manner. The Board maintains a website at www.elections.niagara.ny.us that identifies County Legislature representatives by district location as well as other election related information including polling locations and voter registration. The Board is responsible for registering eligible voters, maintaining necessary public records, assisting individuals seeking public or party office, and certifying the results of all elections within its jurisdiction.

Office of Management and Budget

The Office of Management and Budget provides a variety of services that basically fall under two primary functions that include budgeting and purchasing. Budget functions include: Financial Planning and Reporting; Capital Improvement Plans; creating the County's operating and capital budget; monitoring and managing budgets; providing financial analyses to all County service lines; and engaging in special projects as assigned by the County Manager.

The second primary function is purchasing. This function entails preparation, opening, analyzing and awarding sealed bids and requests for proposals; managing requisition processes; issuing purchase orders for goods and services; maintaining fixed inventory records; and coordinating surplus auctions, asset disposition and disposal, including innovative services such as online auctions to dispose of surplus inventory.

Real Property Tax Services

The Department of Real Property Tax Services responsibilities include tax mapping, real property tax administration, and assessment administration assistance. The Department includes a staff of seven individuals including the Director, Real Property Information Clerk, Senior Account Clerk, Computer Coordinator and three tax map technicians. The Department is responsible for the tax levy apportionment for the County's general tax and County special districts, including sewer and water district levies.

The Department also prepares the tax rolls and tax bills for Niagara County, all 12 towns including all special districts, County villages, all Central School Districts, the City of Lockport (school and City purposes), and the City of North Tonawanda (school and City purposes). Services provided include tax rate calculations and verification, NYS Real Property System assessment data file organization, printing tax rolls and tax billings, tax roll assembling and Tax Warrant preparation. Additional administrative assistance is provided to local governments and the public and includes technical support and computer program and data file maintenance under the State's Real Property System, property valuation, reassessment planning and public information, training assistance to the Board of Assessment Review and Assessor Orientation for all newly appointed assessors.

Additional services provided under this tier include:

- Human Resources & Civil Service
- Risk Management
- Central Printing & Mailing
- Central Data Processing
- GIS Mapping

County Facilities

Buildings and Grounds

Niagara County's operations and services are currently provided from a number of buildings and service facilities that are located in several communities across the County, including the City of Lockport which is the County Seat, City of Niagara Falls, City of North Tonawanda and the Town of Wheatfield. Following are the addresses of major County buildings and facilities. These locations are identified in Figure VII-1:

- *Niagara County Courthouse*

175 Hawley Street, Lockport NY 14094-2740

Houses Courtrooms; Legislative Office; County Clerk's Office; Pistol Permit Office; District Attorney's Office

- *Philo J. Brooks County Office Building*

59 Park Avenue, Lockport, NY 14094

Houses the Treasurer's Office; Budget and Management Office; Audit Office; County Manager; Public Works Office; Data Processing Office; Engineering Office; Purchasing Office

- *Civil Defense Building*

139 Niagara Street, Lockport, NY 14094

Houses County Historian's Office; Public Defender's Office

- *Mount View Campus*

5467 Upper Mountain Road, Lockport, NY 14094

Houses Mental Health Office; Speech & Hearing Office; Public Health Office; Print Shop; Housed Mount View Health Facility (no longer exists).

- *Davison Road Campus*

100 Davison Road, Lockport, NY 14094

Houses Parks Maintenance Office

- *Golden Triangle Building*

111 Main Street, Lockport, NY 14094

Houses Veteran's Office; Probation Office; Office for the Aging; Board of Elections; Department of Motor Vehicles; Risk Management Office; Human Resources; Civil Service Office

- *Civic Building*

775 Third Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14302

Houses courtrooms

- *Human Resources Building*

301 Tenth Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14302

Houses Social Services Office; Youth Bureau's Office

- *Trott Access Center*

1001 11th Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14301

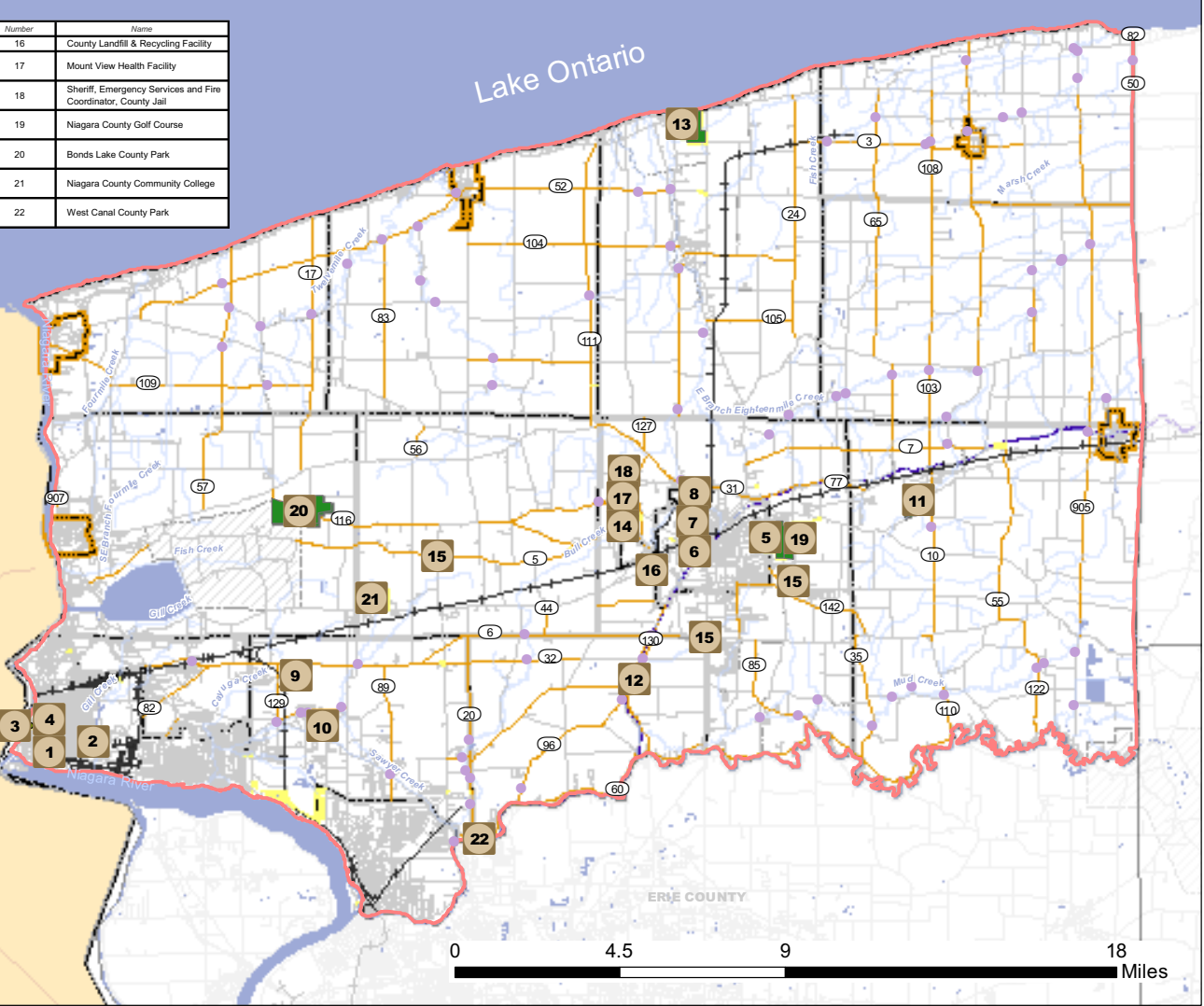
Houses Social Services Office; Mental Health Office; Public Health Office; Employment & Training Office; Department of Labor; Probation Office

| Number | Name | Number | Name | Number | Name |
|--------|--|--------|--|--------|---|
| 1 | Human Resources Building | 9 | Vantage Centre | 16 | County Landfill & Recycling Facility |
| 2 | Community Vocational Rehab Center | 10 | Oppenheim County Park | 17 | Mount View Health Facility |
| 3 | Civic Building | 11 | Royalton Ravine County Park | 18 | Sheriff, Emergency Services and Fire Coordinator, County Jail |
| 4 | Trott Access Building | 12 | Niagara County Sewer District | 19 | Niagara County Golf Course |
| 5 | Public Works - Parks & Recreation Division | 13 | Krull Park | 20 | Bonds Lake County Park |
| 6 | Civil Defense Building | 14 | Public Safety Training Facility | 21 | Niagara County Community College |
| 7 | Philo J. Brooks County Office Building | 15 | Niagara County Water District (3 properties) | 22 | West Canal County Park |
| 8 | Niagara County Courthouse | | | | |

Legend

- County Bridges
- Niagara County
- Lakes and Rivers
- County Properties
- Building / Land
- Park
- Railroad
- County Routes
- Erie Canal
- Villages
- Rural Centers
- Cities
- Reservations
- Towns

| County Parks | Observation Points | Soft Course | Picnic Tables | Pavilions | Beach | Pool | Hiking | Nature Trail | Playground | Tennis | Fishing | Basketball | Launch Site | Volleyball | Ice Skating | X-County Skiing |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|---------------|-----------|-------|------|--------|--------------|------------|--------|---------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Bond Lake Park | 2571 Lower Mountain Road, Ransomville | x | x | | | | x | | x | x | x | | | | | x |
| West Canal Marina | 4670 Tonawanda Creek Road, North Tonawanda | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Krull Park | Lake Road, Getz | | x | | x | | x | | x | x | x | | | | | |
| Niagara County Park & Golf Course | 314 Davison Road, Lockport | | x | | | | | | x | | | | | | | |
| Oppenheim Park | 2713 Niagara Falls Blvd., Wheatfield | | x | | | | | | x | | | | | | | |
| Royalton Ravine Conservation Park | Gasport Road, Gasport | | x | | | | x | | | | x | | | | | |



County Routes, Bridges
Parks and Buildings

Figure VII.1

- *County Building*

500 Wheatfield Street, North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Houses Probation Office; Courtrooms; Department of Motor Vehicles

- *NCCED Vantage Pointe*

6311 Inducon Corporate Drive, Sanborn, NY 14132-9099

Houses Niagara County Center for Economic Development; Department of Economic Development; Niagara County Industrial Development Agency

Niagara County Parks

Niagara County owns and maintains five County Parks as well as the Niagara County Golf Course, which is a public facility. Information on each park is summarized below. More detailed information, including maps, is also available on the County's website at www.niagaracounty.com/Parks. Park locations are identified on Figure VII-1.

- *West Canal Marina*

4070 Tonawanda Creek Rd., North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Located in the Town of Pendleton, this marina includes more than 27 acres of land located along the Erie Canal. The marina is open from mid-May until the end of September. Facilities include two large shelters and three small shelters, all of which are rentable, playground and restrooms facilities, a boat dock and fishing pier, and boat launch access to the Erie Canal.

- *Bond Lake Park*

2571 Lower Mountain Rd., Ransomville, NY 14131

Located in the Town of Lewiston, this 532-plus acre park is located along the Niagara Escarpment and encompasses five small lakes. The park site was formerly an early 20th Century quarry. The park's natural features are available for enjoyment year-round. Facilities include two large shelters and picnic tables, 13 miles of cross-country ski trails also available for hiking, biking and bird watching, plus a Warming House available for rental from mid-March through mid-November, a tubing hill, a large skating rink, and a small ice hockey rink. The Bond Lake Nature Center is located in the Warming House and is staffed year-round on Sunday afternoons by members of the Bond Lake Environmental and Beautification Committee.

- *Royalton Ravine Park*

Gasport Road, Gasport, NY 14067

The Royalton Ravine Park is located along Gasport Road in the Town of Royalton. This 146-acre park accommodates both active and passive forms of recreation. Several miles of nature trails exist along both sides of the Royalton Ravine. The park also provides three rentable picnic shelters, a fishing pond, a baseball field and restrooms. The park is open from Memorial Day Weekend through September. Trails provide access to features including a wooden suspension bridge, a waterfall and the ruins of an historic homestead. The historic homestead was the 1830 birthplace of Belva Lockwood, the first woman to run for President of the United States and the first woman to practice law before the U.S. Supreme Court. More detailed information on the homestead and Belva Lockwood is

available on the County's website at www.niagaracounty.com/Parks/royaltonravine.asp .

- *Krull Park*

6108 Lake Road, Olcott, NY 14126

Krull Park is located along Olcott Beach in the Town of Newfane. This 325-acre park is used for a variety of year round activities. The park is open during the traditional summer season from Memorial Day weekend through September. The park includes a beach, four large rentable shelters, several smaller rentable shelters, a band shelter, five softball diamonds, soccer fields with shelters, a sprinkler pool, basketball courts, horseshoe pits, two playgrounds, tennis courts, two large skating rinks, a warming house, restrooms and a model airplane field.

Special events held at the park include:

- Pirates Festival
- Celtic Festival
- Independence Day celebrations and fireworks
- Labor Day Weekend Car Show
- Town of Newfane Sunday concerts
- Newfane Lions Club Swim for Sight - Polar Bear Plunge
- Dog shows

- *Oppenheim Park*

2713 Niagara Falls Boulevard, Niagara Falls, NY 14304

Oppenheim Park is a 92-acre park located in the Town of Wheatfield. Facilities include 3 large rentable picnic shelters, 14 small rentable shelters, a rentable band shelter, basketball courts, volleyball courts, tennis courts, a sprinkler pool, a small lake stocked for fishing, playgrounds and restrooms. The park is open from Memorial Day weekend through September.

- *Niagara County Golf Course*

314 Davison Road, Lockport, NY 14094

The Niagara County Golf Course is a 380-acre public golf course located in Lockport. This course is a par 72 totaling 6,400 yard course from the blue tees, and a par 73 course totaling 5,200 yards from the red tees. A driving range and full service pro shop are provided on site. The course also includes Caddy Jack's Restaurant. Although the facility receives funds appropriated by the County through the Department of Public Works, the facility generates a significant portion of its operating funds through greens fees, advertising revenues and profits made through its restaurant operations.

County Infrastructure

Roads, Highways & Bridges

Niagara County owns and maintains approximately 283 miles of County roadway, 89 bridges and approximately 1,100 drainage culverts along its road rights-of-way throughout the County. County roads are identified in Figure VII-1. The County Highway Department is responsible maintenance of County roads and for inventorying all local bridges over 20 feet in length and designating them for upgrades and repair. The County is also responsible for maintaining its drainageways and ditches along its rights-of-way.

County Water District

The Niagara County Water District (NCWD) supplies water to 12 towns and 5 villages in Niagara County as shown in Figure VII-2. Water is drawn from the West Branch of the Niagara River, and the water quality is rated as excellent. The water system serves over 150,000 residents through 108 service connections located in Niagara County as well as Erie and Orleans counties. In 2007, the NCWD completed upgrades at several of its facilities including the rehabilitation of the Filter Waste Valves at the Water Treatment Plant, rehabilitation of the Traveling Screen at the Raw Water Pump Station, and commencement of a filter controls upgrade at the Water Treatment Plant.

In 2007, the total amount of water delivered to customers by the Water District was 6.15 billion gallons; the daily average of water treated and pumped through the system was 16.50 million gallons per day. The highest usage was recorded on June 25, 2007 at 27.02 million gallons. In 2007, water customers were charged \$0.75 per 1,000 gallons of water.

County Sewer District

The Niagara County Sewer District No. 1 is responsible for the treatment and disposal of wastewater in the south-central portion of the County. Its service area completely covers the Towns of Wheatfield and Pendleton, and covers portions of the Towns of Niagara, Lockport, Cambria, and Lewiston as shown in Figure VII-3.

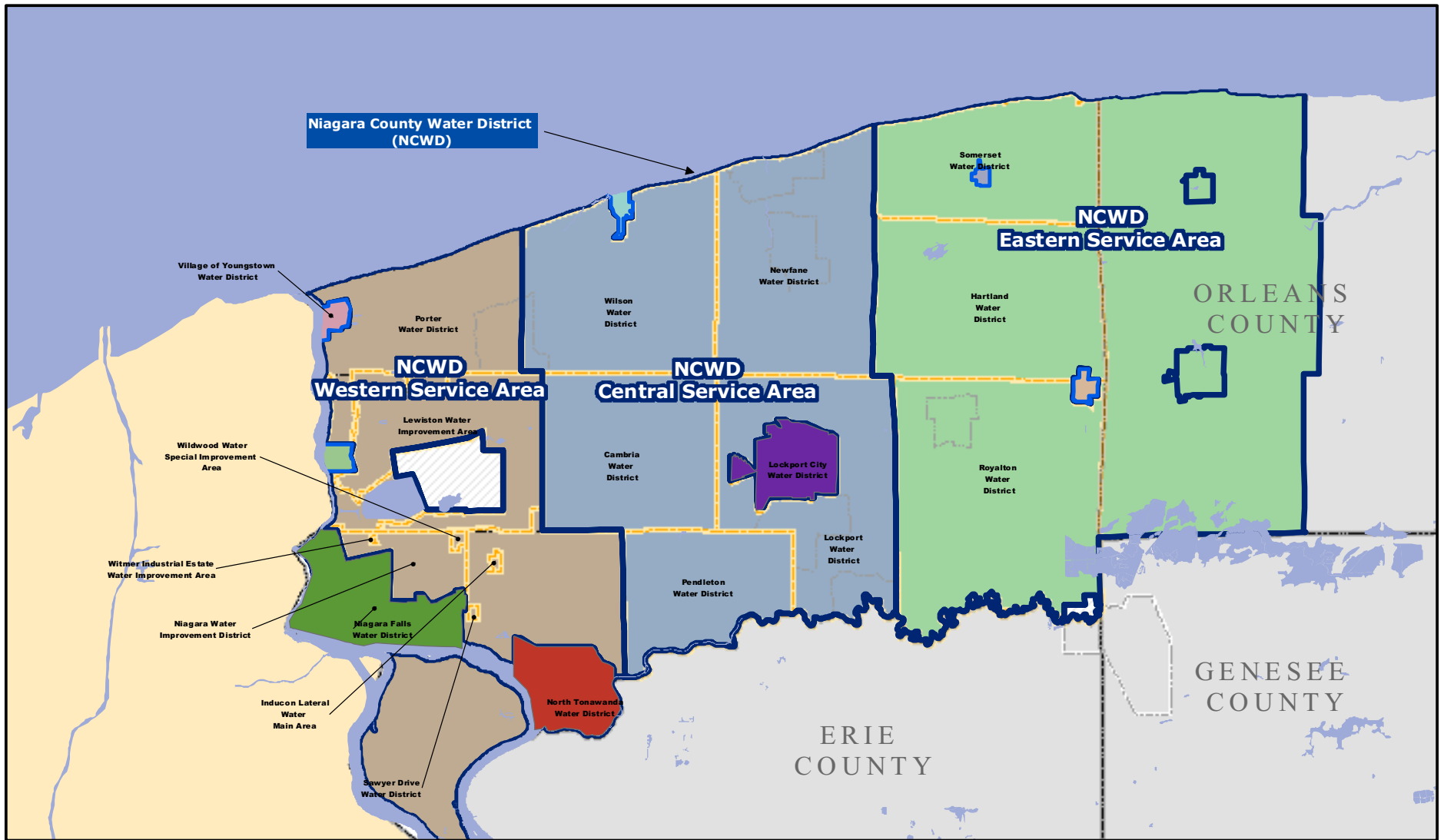
The Sewer District's wastewater treatment plant is located in the southwestern corner of the Town of Wheatfield, and has sufficient capacity for an average daily flow rate of 14 million gallons of water daily (MGD). The actual average daily flow rate is approximately 5 MGD, but heavy rains may increase the flow of water into storm sewers with peak flows on the order of 30 MGD.

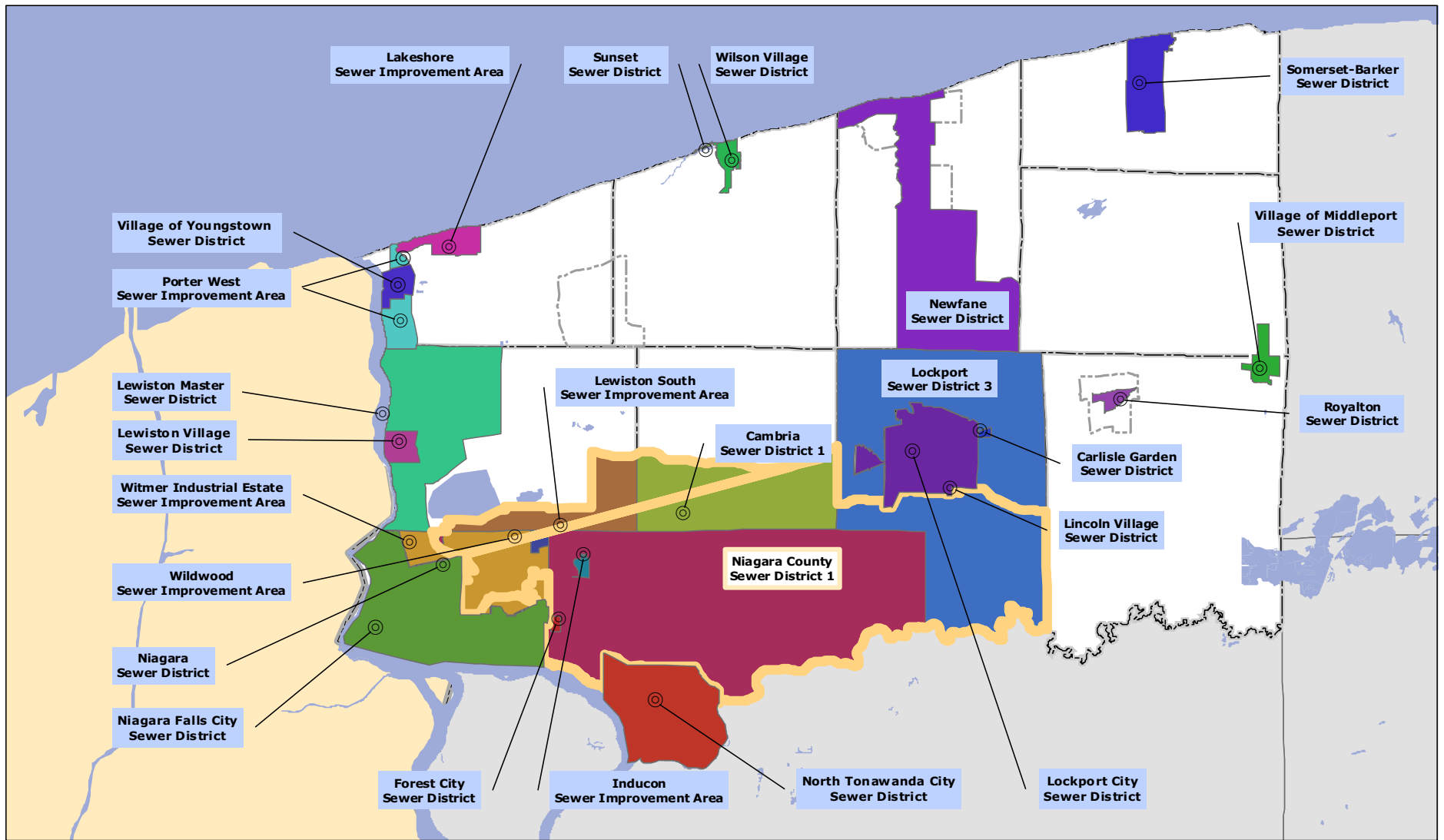
The Niagara County Sewer District operates approximately 61 miles of sewer interceptor lines and six pump stations. Niagara Sewer District No. 1 is the largest, but not the only, sewer district in the County. Many of the areas not served by the District operate under local sewer districts. Each of the three cities in the County and many of the communities north of the Niagara Escarpment are served by local sewer districts. Niagara Sewer District No. 1's interceptor lines do not run north of the Escarpment.

County Refuse District

The Niagara County Refuse Disposal District, operating under the title of "Niagara County Landfill and Recycling", was established under a State Charter as a special district that covers all municipalities in Niagara County except Cambria, Newfane, Niagara and Wilson. The Refuse Disposal District is a special district with taxing powers, which are levied as a refuse tax within the municipalities that are part of the district. Tax revenues cover the cost of remedial activities related to State or Federally designated hazardous waste sites (Superfund sites). The purpose and intent of the district is to regionalize household hazardous waste disposal and municipal green waste disposal (composting), recycling and all other pertinent solid waste management activities.

The Niagara County Refuse Disposal District provides environmental services which are not readily conducted by private sector businesses due to the relatively low revenue generating capacity of these services. Funding assistance is provided in the form of grant monies from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Solid waste reduction, landfill remediation and household hazardous waste collection days are partially reimbursed by state grant funding. These County initiatives satisfy solid or hazardous waste mandates and the recommended waste recycling responsibilities





typically provided by New York State municipalities.

Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District

The Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District provides technical assistance, public education services and advice to local farmers, landowners and municipalities with regard to natural resources, particularly local information on soil and water best management practices, drainage assistance and conservation measures. The District is a partner agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The District has provided these services to Niagara County residents for more than 50 years. District offices are located at the Niagara County Fair Grounds. More information is available at www.niagaraswcd.com.

Some of the specific services offered by Niagara County Soil and Water include:

- Agricultural assistance provided to local farmers focused on controlling point and non-point sources of pollution.
- Partnering with local farmers, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Farm Service agency to deliver USDA Farm Bill Programs. The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) have been successful programs in Niagara County. The WRP provides landowners the opportunity to establish long-term conservation and wildlife habitat improvement on their property. The EQIP is a voluntary program that promotes agricultural production and environmental management practices including assistance, installation and implementation of structural and non-structural management practices.
- Assisting landowners with pond site analyses, including evaluation of pond locations, water sources, soils and drainage features. Ponds are important for fish production, fire protection, livestock water supply, and landscape enhancement.
- Providing annual pond stocking aquatic wildlife and trees seedling sales that total approximately 85,000 seedlings each year.
- Providing assistance with agricultural assessments and map information to landowners. Eligible landowners can receive reduction in property tax bills for land in agricultural production by obtaining a reassessment of their property based on the soils located on the property.
- Serving as a repository for County Flood Insurance Rate maps, NYS DEC and NWI wetland maps, soils surveys, topographic maps and Geographic Information System (GIS) maps and information.
- Providing assistance and technical expertise with regard to water quality monitoring and streambank stabilization. In 2003 the District teamed with County Planning, the Town of Newfane, the NYSDEC and the Army Corps of Engineers on the Eighteen Mile Creek Restoration Project to improve water quality, fish habitat and fishing enhancement. The NCSWCD is the lead agency for the Remedial Action Plan Coordination and Management program designed to delist Eighteen Mile Creek as an Area of Concern as designated by

Issues and Opportunities

During the comprehensive planning process, Niagara community representatives and other stakeholders identified a variety of issues and opportunities with regard to the County Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Plan Element. These issues/challenges and opportunities/assets that have been identified are summarized below by planning Subregion.

Eastern Communities Subregion

Town of Hartland, Town of Royalton, & Village of Middleport

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- A sense of isolation from the rest of the County
- A need for better emergency service, including improved response times and greater police visibility and presence
- A desire by some communities to be included in more projects and decision-making at the County level

Key opportunities that should be considered by the County include:

- The possibility of utilizing a mobile Department of Motor Vehicles unit, providing monthly visits to outlying communities. Similar mobile units could be made available for election/voter services [e.g., voter registration], social services, health and nutrition services, etc.
- Identifying opportunities for more shared services and improved efficiency among municipalities and the County, for example grass mowing of County properties could be done by local municipalities with reimbursement by the County
- Consideration of decentralizing other County services down to the towns and villages

Central Communities Subregion

Town of Cambria, Town of Lockport, City of Lockport, Town of Pendleton

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- A general need for consolidation of redundant services
- Recognition that being the County seat presents both pros and cons for the City of Lockport
 - Being County Seat provides great access to services
 - It also translates into a lot of non-taxable, public properties
- Evaluation of the present size of the County Legislature, with many districts/legislators as compared to other counties in New York State
- A need for greater efficiency in service delivery needs to be considered
 - For example, the Financial Recovery Division of County Social Services may be able to perform functions that are better left to State-level agencies
 - There may be other areas of the County and State where services overlap that need to be examined

Key opportunities that should be considered by the County include:

- Evaluation of the potential for service consolidation, specifically of local water districts

Lakefront Communities Subregion

Town of Somerset, Village of Barker, Town of Newfane, Town of Wilson, Village of Wilson

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- The general lack of County services in this subregion
- Some of the subregion’s communities are geographically distant from various services in Lockport, Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda
 - Given gas prices, driving distance becomes a more serious obstacle
 - Everything is a half-hour drive away
- Police coverage is insufficient
 - Improved coverage is needed for the towns
 - Slow response times to emergencies have been noted in the past
- There seem to be “imaginary lines” running east-west along the escarpment, and north-south just east of the City of Lockport, which separate these communities from the rest of the County.

Key assets and opportunities that should be considered by the County include:

- There is a need for County bus service and/or van service for seniors in the area – more services are needed for the elderly and the rural population
- Service sharing exists now: Town of Somerset is served by the Village of Barker’s police
- More service consolidation is possible
 - Local water district consolidation is needed
 - Tough decisions need to be made to use tax dollars wisely

Lower River Communities Subregion

Town of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Village of Lewiston, Village of Youngstown

Primary issues, challenges, assets and opportunities identified include:

- The County Sheriff’s patrols are sparse in the area; Village of Youngstown has a part-time police force
- The general problems associated with this area’s distance from County services in Lockport / Niagara Falls
- An asset of the area is that “We try to take care of ourselves” – Services are available locally when needed

Upper River Communities Subregion

City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Town of Wheatfield, City of North Tonawanda

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- The general condition of the area’s road infrastructure is poor – not much County highways in this area; County roads are “just as bad” as town roads.
- Existing County buildings and facilities in this area need work
 - Buildings are in poor condition
 - County properties should be setting a higher positive standard for the area, but instead they reflect their negative surroundings
 - More volunteer activity by the County is needed

- The County’s Oppenheim Park is a “run-down” facility
 - o There was a proposal to sell this facility to the Town of Wheatfield; the Town may still be interested in the park,
 - o The park is accessible to tourists and visitors to the area given its location along Niagara Falls Boulevard, and could be a major attraction – this seems to be a missed opportunity right now
 - o County should consider selling the park or making a greater investment in it
- Water & sewer infrastructure
 - o Cities have their own water and sewer services
 - o Providing this type of infrastructure could become a model of “competitive cooperation” – from a more inter-regional perspective, without giving up local sovereignty
- Aging population
 - o There is a general need for more services & better access to existing services
 - o This seems to be a larger issue in Wheatfield
- Robert Moses Parkway
 - o Replacement is needed for this highway prior to its removal
 - o There is a need to improve commuting time from outlying areas and an opportunity to capture more commuter and tourist business traffic in the area
- LaSalle Parkway
 - o This is essentially a “parkway to nowhere”

Key assets and opportunities that should be considered by the County include:

- With regards to local roads
 - o Cities could use help from the County in maintaining and improving local roads
- Oppenheim Park
 - o The park could be a major asset, given its location on Niagara Falls Boulevard
 - o The park could be a possible site for a zoo
- There is a surplus of low-income housing in the area, especially the cities – and insufficient newer moderate or higher-income housing development that would make the area more competitive with the suburbs
- The Niagara Falls Airport holds a great deal of potential, especially because of its long runway and capability to handle large cargo loads
 - o There needs to be improved connectivity between Niagara Falls International Airport and Buffalo Niagara International Airport
- Multi-modal center/transportation alternatives are needed in Downtown Niagara Falls
- Old railroad rights-of-way present opportunities for trails and/or revival of the rail system in some areas
- Vantage Centre – the facility is filling up; could be marketed more effectively
- The County’s current Brownfields coordinator has been a major asset to Niagara Falls and Wheatfield, and should be recognized as such
- The aging population in the subregion could be an asset and should be viewed from that perspective

Strategies

Niagara County provides a range of services, facilities and public infrastructure that contributes to the area's high standard of living and Niagara County remains committed to meeting its responsibilities by providing the most cost-effective services possible to its residents and taxpayers. It is imperative that existing services, facilities and infrastructure are maintained in a manner that retains their public investment value as well as keeping pace with the changing needs of County residents and businesses.

The task of providing financially-effective and fiscally responsible services are increasingly complicated by changing demographics, aging infrastructure and financial constraints throughout Niagara County. An aging population requires new and expanded services, including health care, affordable housing and transportation needs at a time when municipal budgets are under increased strain themselves. Aging public facilities and infrastructure also require consistent maintenance and upgrading.

Resolving the issues identified in this Plan relative to the provision of services and infrastructure will take a cooperative and collaborative approach between the County and local municipalities to find opportunities for cost savings and enhanced services. Among the key strategies Niagara County needs to consider are limitations on providing new or expanded infrastructure in areas of the County where the result may be further sprawl and undesirable development patterns.

In lieu of new infrastructure, continuing maintenance and upgrading existing water, sewer, drainage, road and bridge systems needs to be a high Countywide priority as a quality of life issue and as an important land use decision-making tool. This emphasis on directing limited resources to maintain and upgrade existing systems is particularly important when such actions will help facilitate and direct development and redevelopment to those areas of the County identified by this Plan as being most suited to further growth and development. These include the County's three urban municipalities, already developed suburban areas and highway corridors, and the existing developed centers of population in rural areas, including villages, town centers and hamlets. The County needs to identify infrastructure needs in the various subregions of the County and aggressively seek its share of State and Federal funding assistance to bring important public projects and services on line.

The County and local communities cannot control the aging process of its populations, but working in a cooperative fashion sprawling populations over wider and wider areas as opposed to concentrated areas inevitably increase demands on services, facilities and infrastructure as they age. The provision of cost efficient services, including social, health care and educational programs can be more effectively managed in existing population centers as outlined in this Plan.

Opportunities for the enhanced sharing of municipal services, joint facilities, and the possible consolidation of services and facilities through intermunicipal agreements between the County and local municipalities and among municipalities themselves need to be investigated further. Such arrangements already exist in some communities. Feasibility studies should be encouraged by the County. These studies are often supported at State levels under shared services incentive grant programs. Although some of the more obvious studies often include police, fire, shared court systems, and emergency services, other less obvious alternatives need to be explored such as intermunicipal



***Maintain
Existing
Infrastructure***

stormwater management, joint parks and recreation facilities, shared school facilities, joint training programs, and intermunicipal planning initiatives.

Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

Goal – Maintain and Upgrade Existing Infrastructure

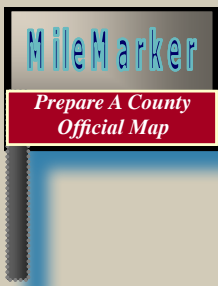
To prioritize the maintenance and upgrading of existing County-owned public infrastructure in developed urban areas and centers of population of the County as a high priority over the construction and/or expansion of new infrastructure in areas determined by the County and local communities as unsuited to future development.

Objectives

- Limit the construction of new County-owned road, water and sewer infrastructure in undeveloped areas of the County unless issues of public health and safety are involved.
- Maintain and upgrade existing County-owned road, water and sewer infrastructure in developed areas of the County to facilitate and direct new development and redevelopment of existing population centers where public infrastructure, services and facilities are already in place.

Recommendations

- Prepare an up-to-date County Official Map of Niagara County consistent with Sections 239-e and 239-f of NYS General Municipal Law for the purpose of facilitating the planning and development of roads and drainage systems; sites for public development; and the protection of rights-of-way that may be needed for future road and highway modifications, the upgrading of water, sewer and drainage systems, and sites that may be developed for future public use.
- Require the consultation and review of the County Official Map and elements contained within this Comprehensive Plan consistent with NYS General Municipal Law by project reviewing agencies which include the County Planning Board, County Department of Health, County Department of Public Works and others as necessary prior to any decisions affecting project approval to ensure that private and public sector projects are consistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan, the Official Map and local municipal comprehensive plans.
- Prioritize the continued maintenance and upgrade of existing road, sewer, water and drainage systems in developed urban communities and population centers over the construction and/or expansion of new infrastructure in undeveloped areas and areas determined by local communities as not suited to development, except in cases involving public health and safety.
- Partner with NYS DOT and GBNRTC on long-term planning initiatives of major highway corridors under their jurisdictions within Niagara County that provide linkage to existing and future centers of development and redevelopment to ensure the set aside of undeveloped lands as possible future rights-of-way for roads and utilities and potential parallel service roads to manage highway access in residential and commercially developing areas.



Goal – Enhance County Open Space, Parks and Recreation Resources

To encourage the preservation of open space resources, conservation of fish and wildlife habitats, increase public access to natural resources, and promote the development/enhancement of parks and recreational opportunities to serve the diverse needs of County residents and foster an environmentally sensitive approach to preservation, conservation and stewardship of natural resources.

Objectives

- Identify the County’s short and long-term parks, recreation and open space needs for the next 20-year planning horizon. Prepare a County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan as a blueprint for the provision of green infrastructure, recreational services, facilities and programs at the County level. The Plan would address necessary upgrades of existing facilities; potential acquisition/disposition of properties; development, construction and maintenance of parks, trails, bikeways, recreation facilities, historic resources and open space/environmentally sensitive resources. The process should also explore opportunities for green infrastructure and shared services relative to parks and recreation within Niagara County.
- Develop an interconnected network of trails, pedestrian paths and bikeways throughout the County with linkages to and among the existing and planned networks Countywide, such as the Niagara Greenway and the Erie Canal system. The trail network would connect County population centers, tourist destinations, community facilities, schools, employment centers, residential neighborhoods, recreational facilities, parks, and public open space resources.

Recommendations

- Identify and seek funding opportunities for preparation of a Countywide Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan founded upon inter-municipal cooperation and collaborative partnerships with other State, regional and local governmental agencies, as well as private sector entities. Potential partners in such a project include the Niagara River Greenway Commission, Niagara County Environmental Management Council, Erie Canal Heritage organizations among others.
- Prepare a County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan that includes the following tasks:
 - Perform an inventory and create a GIS database of parks, facilities, open space and historic resources including State, County, local, and school facilities within the County
 - Survey and assess public attitudes regarding demand, supply, needs and deficiencies of the County’s existing parks, recreation facilities and programs
 - Establish a public participation and stakeholder involvement process
 - Establish project priorities, capital improvement plans and design / development “green building” and “green infrastructure” standards for outdoor recreation facilities and grounds to include, but not be limited to: greenways, blueways, parklands, trails, bikeways, pedestrian networks, and special destination features
 - Identify projects and seek funding to connect existing trail networks to new multi-use trails, pedestrian paths, bikeways and green infrastructure to eliminate “gaps” in existing trail systems



- Design and construct recreation facilities and pursue recreational opportunities that ecologically benefit the County’s riparian corridors, floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands

Goal – Enhance County-owned Public Facilities, Buildings and Grounds

To enhance the appearance and functionality of County-owned public facilities, buildings and grounds to achieve a higher standard of quality in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of properties, which are appropriate to – and consistent with – the setting and desired aesthetic character of surrounding neighborhoods and communities.

Objectives

- Examine the potential to establish architectural, engineering and site design guidelines and standards for County-owned facilities, buildings and grounds. These guidelines should address neighborhood aesthetics and site feature requirements to be considered and/or implemented in the design, construction and maintenance procedures for County facilities.
- Enhance the long-term environmental quality, sustainability and energy conservation of County facilities and buildings to decrease operating and maintenance costs and enhance the environment.

Recommendations

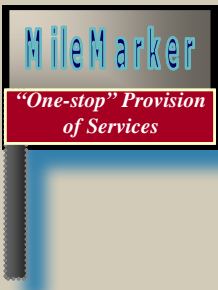
- The County should investigate and prioritize its long term service and facility needs to determine the potential for further consolidation of services and facilities “under one-roof” or at locations that can best meet the needs of County residents, but at the same time realizing cost savings and enhanced service delivery. Previous initiatives that can serve as models include the success of locating the services of the Niagara County Center of Economic Development under one roof and current plans to consolidate the facilities and services of County Public Works at one location.
- Establish best management practices for implementing context-sensitive site design, building construction and landscaping techniques for County development projects.
 - Encourage the use of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and techniques in County projects and other public sector projects in the County including schools, libraries, health facilities, etc.
 - Incorporate Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles and certification requirements into the design and construction process of new County projects and encourage the use of these principles in all public projects.

Goal – Improve Communication among County Departments

To improve communication among and between County Departments and related service providers and agencies in the provision of public services.

Objective

- Investigate ways to facilitate greater communication and increased efficiency through the sharing of information and the provision of services to the public among County Departments and other public service agencies and municipalities.
- Encourage more team-oriented approaches to the provision of County services based upon the experience and knowledge gained from the 2003 combination of



Niagara County's Economic Development Department and the County Industrial Development Agency into a "one-stop shop", the Niagara County Center for Economic Development. This model has increased operational efficiency and resulted in cost savings to the taxpayer through the sharing of staff, office space and other business resources.

- Investigate the feasibility and potential benefits and savings in the establishment of a customer service system such as a 311 or similar non-emergency telephone communication system, which would allow public access to local government information and services.

- Expand the sharing of current land use and other pertinent planning and service data, including community-oriented planning information, through the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) databases and mapping services. This includes, for example sharing recent aerial photographs and similar sources of data/information with local communities to facilitate updating of local comprehensive plans and land use regulations.

- Investigate the feasibility of utilizing creative approaches to bring County-provided services to residents who may otherwise find it difficult to access available services or transportation, such as seniors living in rural areas of the County.
 - Determine the need for providing various services via state-of-the-art information-sharing technologies via computer networks and linkages and explore the possible use of mobile service facilities, for example, mobile DMV units, mobile health clinics, or other social services to access greater numbers of residents.

Funding Opportunities

Projects and needs identified in this chapter and elsewhere within this Comprehensive Plan, as well as projects that may be identified in other plans and reports, including the annual Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, require funding assistance to be implemented due to the fiscal constraints, such as budget limitations, of Niagara County and its communities. A variety of funding opportunities exist at local, regional, State and Federal levels of government as well as potential sources of assistance from the private sector. Often the amount of funding needed to implement a project, however may be in excess of what may be available from one source so combinations of funding sources may be needed to finance a project. Funding mechanisms may include earmarks/appropriations/member items, bonding, direct grants, competitive grants, general fund items, foundation monies, corporate assistance and so forth.

Funding opportunities change as economic conditions change, particularly at State and Federal levels. Currently the nation is experiencing a deep economic downturn. Increased funding opportunities exist at this time through the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This Federal Stimulus Bill is intended to stimulate the economy and employment by providing funding to undertake projects at local levels. In many cases the Federal Stimulus Bill appropriates funding above typical annual Federal spending levels, such as what may

be authorized through the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009. Funding will be distributed through existing Federal programs and through new programs or may be passed through existing State programs.

The information provided below identifies Federal Stimulus funding opportunities and projects that have been identified to date at the time of preparing this document. The projects identified below are listed because they relate directly to this chapter and this particular focus area of the Comprehensive Plan. These projects are considered crucial to the health and well being of the communities in Niagara County and for improving the functioning of County government in providing services to the residents and businesses of Niagara County.

The following list of projects will be revised as projects are undertaken and new projects are identified and as local, State and Federal conditions change. Therefore this list of projects should not be considered to be inclusive of all potential projects that may be in need of funding assistance. Also, combined funding assistance for some of these projects may be available from other Federal, State, regional, local and private sector sources.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes funding provisions in Environmental Clean-up, Water and Waste Disposal; Help for Workers and Families Hardest Hit by the Economic Crisis; and Energy that include, but not limited to:

- \$6 billion towards environmental clean-up of former weapon production and energy research sites
- \$6 billion for local clean water and drinking water infrastructure improvements
- \$1.2 billion for EPA's nationwide environmental clean-up programs, including Superfund
- \$1.38 billion in loans and grants for needed water and waste disposal in rural areas

- \$19.9 billion for additional Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- \$2 billion for Child Care Development Block Grant
- \$2.1 billion for Head Start & Early Head Start
- \$4 billion for State and Local Law Enforcement
- \$555 million for Department of Defense Homeowners Assistance Program

- \$4.5 billion for repair of Federal buildings
- \$3.4 billion for Fossil Energy research and development
- \$11 billion for smart grid related activities
- \$6.3 billion for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Grants
- \$5 billion for Weatherization Assistance Program
- \$2.5 billion for energy efficiency and renewable energy research
- \$2 billion in grants for manufacturing advanced batteries systems
- \$6 billion for new loan guarantees
- \$1 billion for other energy efficiency projects

Niagara County Projects include:

Reliable, Efficient Electricity Grid

Mount Saint Mary's Hospital

- | | |
|--|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated High Efficiency/Solar Panel-Lined Roof | \$ 750,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Replace 180 Windows with Energy-Efficient Windows | \$ 300,000 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Local Government Energy Efficiency | |
| Niagara County Sheriff's Office | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctional Facility Appliance Efficiency Upgrade \$ 430,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sherriff's Building Energy Efficiency Upgrade \$ 750,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Energy Efficiency Conservation Upgrade \$ 140,000 |
| Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Back-up Emergency Power Generators \$ 740,000 |
| Niagara County County Clerk | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Niagara County Inactive/Archival Records Storage Facility \$ 5,152,000 |
| Home Weatherization | |
| Niagara County Social Services | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Weatherization Revitalization Assistance Program (WRAP) \$ 100,000 |
| Modernization of public buildings: | |
| Niagara County Public Works | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Department of Public Works Facility - Town of Cambria \$ 38,000,000 |
| Niagara County Data Processing | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Financial and Payroll Systems for Niagara County \$ 1,200,000 |
| Clean Water | |
| Clean Water State Revolving Fund | |
| Niagara County Sewer District No. 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Upgrade Tonawanda Creek Forcemain \$ 1,700,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Wastewater Treatment Plant Modifications and Collection System Improvements \$ 10,000,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Extension of Cambria Interceptor \$ 5,300,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Extension of Pendleton Interceptor \$ 3,500,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Water Tower Rehabilitation \$ 650,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tonawanda Creek Slope Stabilization \$ 500,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Clearing of Interceptor Right-of-Ways \$ 600,000 |
| Drinking Water State Revolving Fund | |
| Niagara County Water District | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Clearwell Upgrade \$ 7,500,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Transmission Line Upgrade \$ 16,000,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Electrical Upgrade \$ 200,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | High Service Pump Station VFD Upgrade \$ 750,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sludge Lagoon Rehabilitation \$ 325,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Pump Coating Upgrade \$ 50,000 |
| Niagara County Public Health | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Water Tank Removal \$ 150,000 |
| Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center: | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Drinking Water and Wastewater Treatment System for Tuscarora Indian Health and Community Center \$ 885,000 |
| Niagara County Refuse Disposal District | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Niagara County Landfill Cap \$ 9,000,000 |

| | | |
|---|--|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Construction of Three Household Hazardous Waste Collection and Storage Facilities | \$ 175,000 |
| Niagara County Social Services | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Home Run Program | \$ 150,000 |
| Employment | | |
| Mount Saint Mary's Hospital: | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Certified Nursing Assistants Training for 60 Individuals with Guaranteed Job Placement | \$ 200,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Phlebotomist Training for 12 Individuals with Guaranteed Job Placement | \$ 27,600 |
| Community Services Block Grant | | |
| Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Establish Federally Qualified 330 Comm. Health Care Center | \$ 1,420,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Construct Tuscarora Nation Health and Community Center | \$ 2,200,000 |
| Mount Saint Mary's Hospital | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Expand Services at Food Pantry/Soup Kitchen | \$ 500,000 |
| Niagara County County Manager | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Smart Permitting Regional Online Permitting System | \$ 250,000 |
| Emergency Food and Shelter | | |
| Niagara County Social Services | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Food and Shelter Assistance | \$ 100,000 |
| Centers for Independent Living | | |
| Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center: | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Construct Assisted Living Facility in Niagara Falls | \$ 15,000,000 |
| Temporary Assistance for Needy Families | | |
| Niagara County Social Services | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Safe Dates Program | \$ 70,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Child Protective Services/Domestic Violence Collaboration | \$ 200,000 |
| State and Local Law Enforcement | | |
| Niagara County District Attorney | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Project Safe Childhood Program | \$ 85,000 |
| Niagara County Sheriff's Office | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Vehicle/Evidence Storage Facility | \$ 2,500,00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Computer Equipment Upgrade | \$ 222,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sheriff's Office Facility Security Upgrade | \$ 1,090,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Interoperable Communications Equipment | \$ 1,700,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mobile Command Center | \$ 150,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tactical Communication Vehicle | \$ 80,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Automated External Defibrillator | \$ 60,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Firearms Training Simulator | \$ 75,000 |

Niagara County County Attorney's Office

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--|----|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Niagara Falls Gang and Gun Prevention Program | \$ | 372,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | North Tonawanda/Lockport Sexual Abuse Prevention Program | \$ | 409,500 |

Reference

United States Congress. 2009. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 - Federal Stimulus Congressional Press Summary. Washington, D.C.