

CITY OF TONAWANDA

INTRODUCTION

The City of Tonawanda occupies 3.6 square miles of land in Erie County at the junction of the Niagara River and the New York State Barge Canal. The City extends roughly one mile along the south bank of the Canal, and two miles along the east bank of the Niagara River. To the north, the City faces Niagara County and the City of North Tonawanda. The Town of Tonawanda borders the City on the east and south. On the opposite shore of the Niagara River lies the Town of Grand Island. The population of the City is roughly 18,000.

The Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda form one integrated economic and social community of approximately 50,000 residents. These residents share the use of financial institutions, commercial establishments, health facilities, and recreation areas. Many residents of the two Cities are employed in local plants representing a considerable industrial diversity.

Tonawanda lies equidistant from downtown Buffalo and Niagara Falls (each about 10 miles away). Historically, the City's economic base was dependent upon the transportation advantage offered it by the Erie Canal System. More recently, it has become more of a residential community serving the Buffalo and Niagara Falls urban centers. The City retains a viable central business district near the Barge Canal, and has undertaken substantial urban renewal efforts in recent years to assure long-term commercial stability. In addition, virtually its entire three-mile-long shoreline is occupied by public parkland and is among the most attractive waterfronts in Western New York.

Due to the City's physical layout and publicly owned shoreline, the CBD and most of the City's population has immediate access to the waterfront. The City has been ahead of other shoreline communities in Erie County relative to achieving maximum public access to the Niagara River and Barge Canal. The recent surge in recreation and fishing, State investment in the Barge Canal system, \$3.2 million County Riverwalk project, and annual success of the Canal fest in July has caused a refocusing on the waterfront and the opportunities it presents to City residents. Therefore, the overriding goal of the LWRP is to successfully integrate all the disparate elements going on in the City of Tonawanda into a cohesive program for insuring the continued enjoyment of the waterfront by City residents.