

## SECTION IV Proposed Land and Water Uses and Proposed Projects

This section of the LWRP describes the proposed land and water uses for the Town of Wheatfield waterfront area. Proposed projects are also briefly described in this section. The Proposed Land Use and Projects maps ([Map 8A](#) and [Map 8B](#)), illustrate the proposed land use patterns and identifies the general location of proposed projects within the LWRP area.

### 4.1 Proposed Land Uses

Land uses in the Wheatfield LWRA are proposed in a manner that will continue the general patterns of existing development in each sub-area. Any proposed land use changes are recommended to protect waterfront resources, maintain the existing character of the community, increase public access and properly accommodate future development. In addition, the proposed land uses take into account the vision set forth in the Town of Wheatfield's Comprehensive Plan. The generalized land use recommendations and the proposed projects shown on [Map 8A](#) and [Map 8B](#) are intended to support the Coastal Management Policies contained in Section III.

Recommendations have been included to improve opportunities for future public access to the shoreline, wherever possible. The Town's long range goal for the waterfront is to make necessary improvements for residents to maintain and improve the quality of life, enhance public access in appropriate places, and revitalize certain areas to bring about economic development in Sub-Area 1.

#### Sub-Area 1

Sub-Area 1 is primarily developed with a stable mix of residential and commercial uses, with limited areas of open space. Current land uses should be continued with minor changes in a few locations to accommodate additional residential uses or commercial development along River Road (primarily in-fill development).

There is one area at the western end of Sub-Area 1, south of River Road, where wider-scale change could bring about land use improvements that would benefit the area as a whole. There are two properties, which comprise almost 30 acres combined and have the potential for development and redevelopment with a mix of uses. The western-most property is vacant land (former industrial landfill) that would need some remediation for reuse; the other site presently supports a mobile home park, which is not the highest and best use for the land. Future redevelopment of these lands could provide opportunities for the development of a mix of commercial and residential uses, as well as public access along the waterfront (which is something that is lacking in this area). Any large-scale redevelopment of this area should include a component and/or provisions for public access along the riverfront to address this need. Furthermore, the Town of Wheatfield owns approximately 4.2 acres of land to the immediate

west of the aforementioned vacant land that is intended for passive recreational use and could compliment any future development on the larger properties and enhance public access and passive recreational opportunities. The Town land is a listed inactive hazardous waste site and the Town is currently working with Niagara County to investigate the need for remediation to enable the reuse of the site as planned.

In addition, the town also owns three contiguous vacant properties, totaling approximately 0.6 acres, which are located immediately to the west of the 4.2-acre Town-owned site, with frontage along River Road. It is proposed that these four Town-owned properties, along with additional privately-owned vacant properties that are situated west of the Town land, extending to the City of Niagara Falls border, could comprise a continuous area of open space. These lands would provide a connection to the adjacent lands in the City of Niagara Falls that are planned for future passive recreational use. This could ultimately provide a connection to the City's parklands (Griffon Park and Jayne Park) located further to the west.



The Town of Wheatfield owns a stretch of land along the north side of River Road, which is situated between two narrow parcels that are owned by Niagara County. Ultimately, this land should be combined with the County-owned parcel and utilized, along with additional Town and County-owned properties that run east of Liberty Drive, for the development of a multi-use pathway for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, providing a trail connection with the neighboring Cities of Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda. This pathway would allow the Town to become a visible portion of the Niagara River Greenway system.

Finally, there is a one-acre parcel owned by Niagara County Sewer District No. 2, located south of River Road, which is utilized for routing the outfall for the wastewater treatment plant. This property is situated immediately west of the York Road residential community and could provide an opportunity for public access to the Niagara River. This area could be minimally improved for local residents for passive recreation and shoreline viewing. It is one of only two publicly-owned parcels that front along the river. The other is the Town-owned property located to the west (noted above), near the City of Niagara Falls boundary, which is also proposed to provide waterfront access and passive recreation opportunities.

#### Sub-Area 2

Sub-Area 2 primarily contains single-family residential uses. These uses are stable and should remain. The vacant parcel located at the northeast corner of Connecting Blvd. and Lockport Avenue will likely transition to residential use. The parcel situated along the border with the City of North Tonawanda is a commercial use and should remain as such.

### **4.2 Proposed Water Uses/Harbor Management**

Recreational boating and fishing is the primary water use along the Wheatfield waterfront. As described in the Inventory and Analysis section (Section II), due to shoreline conditions, there is no suitable and economically feasible location for a marina in the Town. There are no permanent public docking or boat launch facilities in the LWRA. There are no designated channels or other navigational infrastructure in the area, other than the federal navigation channel that extends through the center of the Niagara River, which is delineated by navigational lights and buoys. Access to the Niagara River and Erie Canal (Tonawanda Creek) is limited to private docks; public access can only be gained at park and marina facilities in nearby Niagara Falls or North Tonawanda in Sub-Area 1 and the Town of Pendleton in Sub-Area 2. There are no plans for improving surface water usage or for the creation of harbor management infrastructure in the Town; emphasis is placed on opportunities for improved public access to the waterfront.

### **4.3 Proposed Town Projects and Studies**

There are a small number of projects proposed along the Town of Wheatfield waterfront to improve opportunities for public access and recreation. As noted in the previous discussion, much of the shoreline is developed with private residential uses, limiting the potential for the general public (particularly residents living in inland areas of the Town) to enjoy the waterfront.

Projects proposed along the Town of Wheatfield waterfront include the following.

- Waterfront Parkland – develop the 4.2-acre parcel in Sub-Area 1, as appropriate, for passive recreation (picnicking, shoreline viewing, etc.). Perhaps an interpretive trail could be constructed through the upland, with wooden walkways through wetland areas that may exist

on the site (which would have to be formally delineated to determine the full extent of potential wetlands). This property could be used in conjunction with the additional 0.6 acres of property that is located immediately to the west, along the south side of River Road, which is also owned by the Town.

- Great Lakes Seaway Trail Recognition - River Road in Sub-Area 1 is a segment of the New York State Great Lakes Seaway Trail and a State-designated Scenic By-Way. Gateway features at the east and west entrances to the Town should be improved to recognize this distinction. Furthermore, the Town should investigate opportunities to install additional interpretive signage that acknowledges the status of this roadway. Furthermore, the Town should restrict signage that is not in conformance with the scenic by-way designation in an effort to eliminate existing billboard structures and other advertising that impacts the visual quality of this roadway corridor.
- Niagara River Greenway Trail - River Road is a State-designated bicycle route, but this roadway accommodates a large volume of commuter traffic which can make pedestrians and bicyclists feel unsafe and discourage use. The Town desires to construct a multi-use pathway that would be a segment in the regional Niagara River Greenway system and provide a safe location for walking, biking and other recreational use. This trail is presently proposed to be constructed on lands located north of River Road that are owned by the Town and Niagara County. This trail would be a collaborative effort with assistance and consultation provided by the County, the NYSDOT and the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council.
- Baisch Park Improvements - Undertake improvements to Baisch Park to improve drainage in this area of Sub-Area 2. Consideration should be given to developing a pathway connection from the park to Lockport Road and the waterfront (even if this was done by way of a sidewalk or improved roadway shoulder).
- Future Land Acquisition - At present, there is very little publicly-owned land along the Wheatfield waterfront. As a long-term strategy, the Town should develop a plan or policy to acquire waterfront land that may become available along the Niagara River and Tonawanda Creek that could offer future public access and recreation opportunities.