



VISION SHERIDAN Neighborhood Master Plan

SEPTEMBER 2024





A Message from the IDA

Town of Clarence Industrial Development Agency

The Clarence IDA is excited about the Vision Sheridan plan, and is glad to sponsor this plan on behalf of the Town of Clarence. The Sheridan Drive corridor within the Town of Clarence plays a pivotal role in the region, connecting communities from the Niagara River through Clarence and beyond. It is critical to have a guiding plan so future development does not undermine the values of Clarence and the County. Our goal is to provide a document that will guide town zoning laws and public development in a way that is consistent with the communities values and desires. This plan was created with input from business leaders, Town leaders, and many residents. We thank all those that put forth the time and effort to bring this plan to fruition.

Christopher Kempton,
CIDA Chairman

Acknowledgments

The Vision Sheridan report was made possible through the generous funding of the Town of Clarence Industrial Development Agency and the efforts of the Steering Committee:

Town of Clarence IDA

Chris Kempton, Chairman
Clayt Ertel, Vice Chairman
Peter DiBiase, Treasurer

Town of Clarence

Jonathan Bleuer, Director of Community Development
Steve Bengart, Deputy Town Attorney
Peter Dicostanzo, Town Board Member/Deputy Supervisor
Wendy Salvati, Planning Board 2nd Vice Chair
Andrew Schaefer, Junior Planner

Town of Clarence Chamber of Commerce

Amy Engler, Executive Director

Business Representatives

Carl Montante, Jr.
Michael Miranda*

**This report was developed in the Memory of Michael Miranda, for investing in properties along Sheridan Drive, and envisioning a future of vibrant mixed-use places.*

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DOCUMENT GUIDE

Community Development

- Identify grant opportunities and use the **language throughout** for the application.

Planning Board

- **Implementation section** to identify priorities and action items
- **Appendix D** Design Guidelines to assist in reviewing projects
- All other sections and appendices will help support the “why” behind the actions and guidelines

Property Owner & Developer

- **Implementation section** will provide you with a guide for the expectations
- **Appendix D** will provide you with design guidelines

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INTRODUCTION

The Sheridan Drive corridor between Transit Road and Main Street is an important multi-modal arterial within the Town of Clarence. Harris Hill Drive is a more residential/transitional corridor that blurs the line between residential and commercial. Both of these corridors are identified as a “transitional business area” in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the corridors have the potential to be a pleasing and thoughtfully designed gateway for future businesses, public access, and multi-modal connections.

During the spring of 2022, The Town of Clarence IDA, and the Town of Clarence identified this section of the corridor as a priority area for a planning study. Wendel was hired to complete the “Sheridan Drive Economic Redevelopment Plan”, since renamed to “Vision Sheridan”. The goal of this initiative was to enhance this corridor, and build upon momentum created by the recent completion of the “road diet” which introduced bicycle lanes to Sheridan Drive, as well as the sidewalk installation project planned for 2024. This effort also intends to serve as a catalyst for further investment in the community. Along with Harris Hill Road between Greiner Road and Sheridan Drive, this area can evolve from a pass-through corridor to a destination for residents and visitors alike.

A committee was formed for this effort, bringing together business leaders, landowners, and representatives of both the Town of Clarence Industrial Development Agency (IDA), The Clarence Chamber of Commerce, Town Boards and Departments. The team worked closely with the committee at the outset of the project to perform analysis and truly begin to understand the community and the project area. Through this process the following vision statement emerged.

The Project Vision:

“Promote a visually and physically vibrant community corridor that connects to the history of the Town while pursuing sustainable growth, creating destinations, and maintaining a high quality of life for residents and employees.”

Underpinning the above vision statement are six interrelated goals which are further defined in later sections, each having their own actionable measures:

- Economic Growth
- Environmental Quality
- Connectivity and Access
- Public Space and Amenities
- Placemaking
- Harmonious Development

This report presents an analysis of the existing conditions within the corridor, which may include demographic data or other important social, economic, and physical characteristics of the area. It also includes an analysis of internal and external factors that may either contribute to or jeopardize successfully achieving goals along the corridor. This type of “SWOT” analysis outlines the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats currently present or that may emerge.

We then break the report into sections to address each of the identified goals, summarizing the existing conditions and SWOT analysis that relates to each goal, and conclude each section with recommended actions.

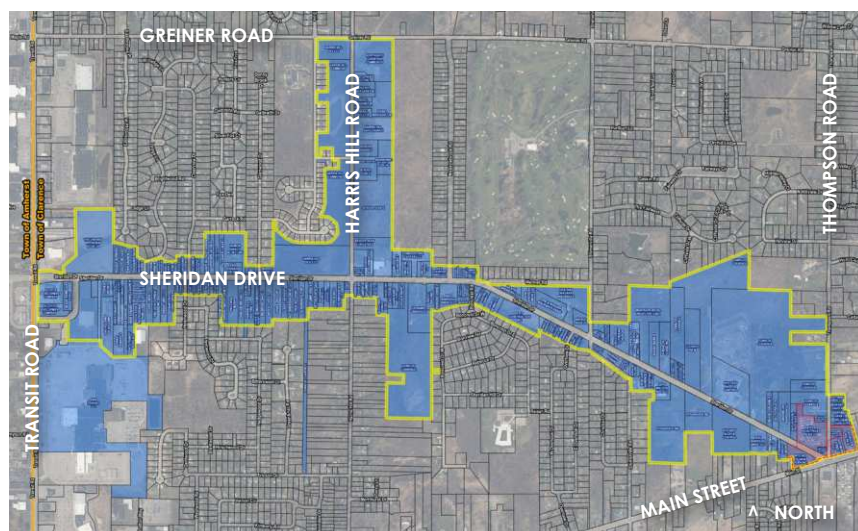
Lastly, this report includes an Implementation section that identifies various strategies to achieve each of the actions. This will provide the Town, IDA, and project stakeholders with a 5-10 year guide to make progress toward the goal.

Included at the end of this document are the Appendices containing supporting information and copies of all maps and assessment graphics shown throughout the report.

PROJECT PROCESS

Since work on the Vision Sheridan Plan began in 2023, a robust master planning process unfolded with a focus on stakeholder and public engagement as well as extensive research on existing conditions, potential development patterns, and best practices, generating a framework for guiding the next chapter of development in alignment with community objectives:

- Monthly project consultant and committee meetings to develop a framework for the plan and review findings.
- Data collection and desktop analysis on demographics, land use, zoning, and environmental data. Tasks included site visits, photographic inventories, the compilation of relevant planning documents (see Appendix A), and a review of recently approved and proposed projects along or near the corridor.
- SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) planning exercises performed with the committee and members of the public. (Refer to appendix for results)
- Review of existing zoning and workshop to identify recommended changes.
- Identification of preliminary goals and recommendations to be included as guidelines in the report for reference in planning and assessing future development.
- Tabling exercises with the public to garner consensus on the six planning goals to be explored in the report and deeper dive into potential opportunities and threats to achieving each goal.
- Hosting a public meeting which was well attended by local residents, business owners, project stakeholders, and documented in the local press. (Refer to appendix for results)
- Drafting an Implementation Plan and Design Guidelines to be utilized during design review for new development or significant redevelopment projects to ensure discussion and deliberation around alignment with the larger vision for this area.
- Developing a Final “Vision Sheridan” Report to summarize project findings and outline baseline standards of quality development to help guide residents, developers, and review commissions towards a transparent, objective, and consistent design review process.



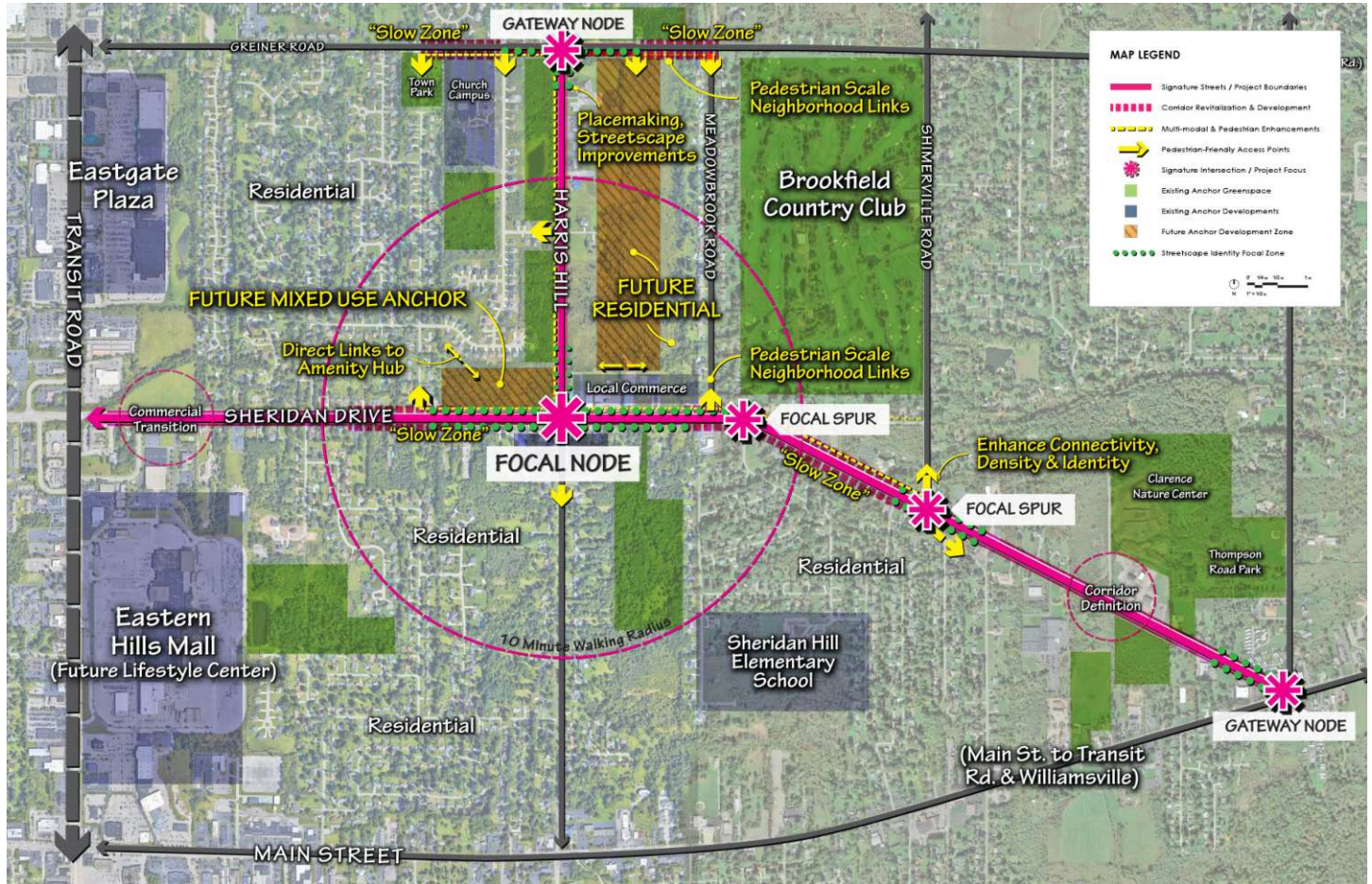
Above: Vision Sheridan Study Area Map (Appendix E - Figure E01)

STUDY BOUNDARY

The geographic area for this study covers all parcels that have frontage on Sheridan Drive between Transit Road and Main St (see blue area outlined in yellow on map to left). It also covers frontage lots on Harris Hill from Sheridan Drive to Greiner Road.

However, as the context map on the preceding page reflects, there is great opportunity to leverage connections and enhancements between these parcels with those outside of the study area.

LOCAL CONTEXT



Above: Vision Sheridan Context & Concept Map (Appendix E - Figure E02)

Economic and community vitality is directly tied to its planning and design. Taking a more contextual view, Clarence and the Sheridan Drive Corridor are home to a vibrant community that has been welcoming to new residents and businesses for decades. The Sheridan Drive corridor is an attractive place for companies to locate because of the Town, a growing population, economic strength and its position within the Buffalo Niagara region.

The opportunity to harness this momentum and articulate a vision for the future will drive new growth with a higher standard of expectations from design and community integration. The Town of Clarence has already taken meaningful steps towards creating a better place for growth. The recent Sheridan Drive road-diet has begun to remake the corridor, reducing the impact of speeding traffic and making way for cyclists and pedestrians in the area.

A “bigger picture” look at the contextual relationship of this corridor to its surroundings, both physically and perceptually, was the first step to help inform ground-level recommendations. We started with a high-level review of existing studies and reports from the Town of Clarence scale up to regional plans that influence circulation and development patterns. A summary this planning analysis can be found in the Appendix.

Some of the most significant studies referenced in this analysis include:

- Clarence 2030: Town of Clarence Comprehensive Plan
- Clarence Parks & Recreation Master Plan
- Bike Buffalo Niagara Regional Bicycle Master Plan
- Vision: Main Street Clarence

A short trip by car along this stretch of Sheridan Drive will reveal that the function and appearance of the road and parcels fronting it varies drastically from Transit Road to Harris Hill Road and onto Main St. The Harris Hill Corridor is less variable, with a much more identifiable rural feel.

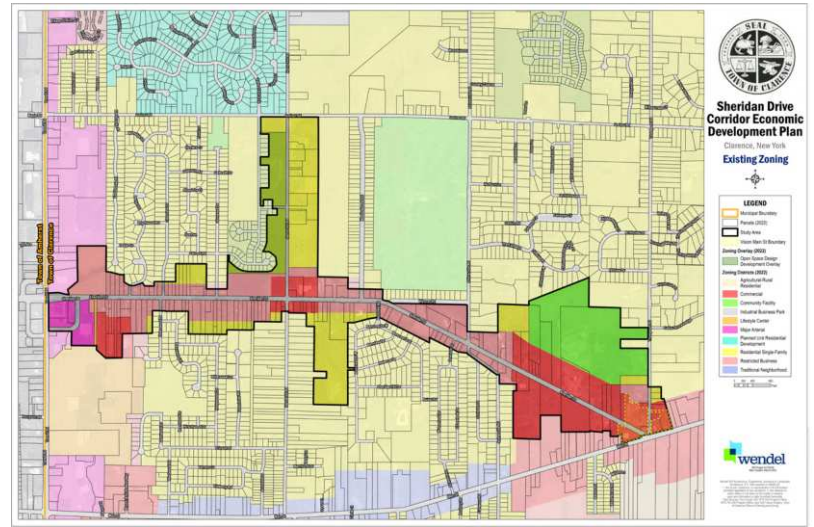
The surrounding area is largely residential and proposed projects show additional growth is likely in the residential sector; making green spaces and proximate public amenities like Sheridan Hill Elementary School an important focus of this study.

With Eastgate Plaza and Eastern Hills Mall on the eastern end of our study boundary, and Clarence Hollow just beyond our study boundary to the west, there is no shortage of major commercial and retail zones within driving distance.

The question begs to be asked whether or not these areas are truly accessible for residents along this corridor and whether the through-traffic those destinations generate is managed effectively to preserve a comfortable residential environment. Are there ways we can improve connectivity and access? What about safety and appeal?

There is currently limited access to sanitary sewers in this area. The Town of Clarence Master Sewer Plan - 2030 identifies the Sheridan Drive corridor as a priority area for sewer access/improvements, however there are no plans at this time to bring sewer to the area. This will limit development to smaller scale projects that would allow for the use of a septic system.

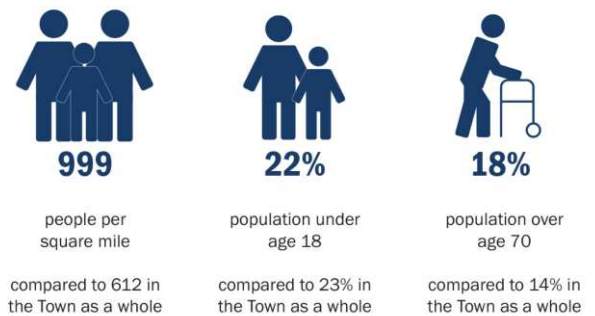
The demographics of the census blocks that include and directly impact the project area (2020 US Census Block data) show a population of nearly 999 people per square mile compared to 612 people per square mile in the Town as a whole, making this a rather dense area of the Town. 22% of the population in this area is children under the age of 18, but at the same time, 18% of the area is individuals aged over 70. This creates a rather diverse population with varying needs.



Above: Vision Sheridan Zoning Map (Appendix E - Figure E03) Existing zoning on the parcels fronting Sheridan Drive are Commercial and Restricted Business with the rear of some parcels being Residential Single Family and Community Facility. The majority of the Harris Hill Corridor is Residential Single Family.



Above: Demographic Analysis Area (Additional Demographic Analysis Mapping in Appendix)

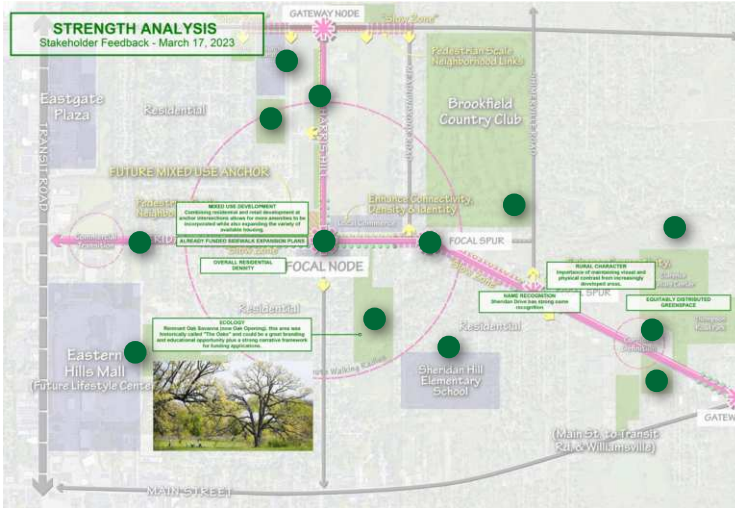


Above: Demographic Stats (Additional Takeaways in Appendix C)

CORRIDOR INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS (SWOT)

Stakeholders performed a preliminary strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat (SWOT) analysis of the project area, enabling us to better understand qualities of the corridor and priorities of the planning effort. **Map enlargements are provided in the appendix as noted.**



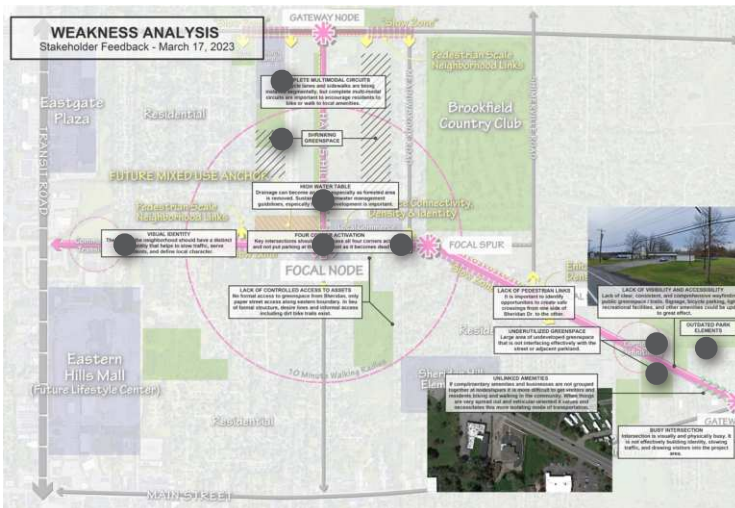
Above: Existing Strength Assessment Map (Appendix E - Figure E04)

STRENGTHS in this context are attributes that can positively impact how this area is viewed by potential investors and other economic agents, including investors, workers, residents, and visitors.

OVERALL STRENGTHS

Strengths include key amenities, location benefits (i.e. safe, quiet, links to goods/services), recreational assets, environmental resources, architectural resources (esp. unique character and style), valuable infrastructure, and beneficial programs/plans/codes.

- Parks, schools, and shops within walking distance to the major residential areas.
- Strategic zoning and planning efforts are helping establish a better balance between residential, commercial, and recreational areas.
- Infrastructure like public cycling paths are improving connectivity, making the area more convenient and attractive to residents.



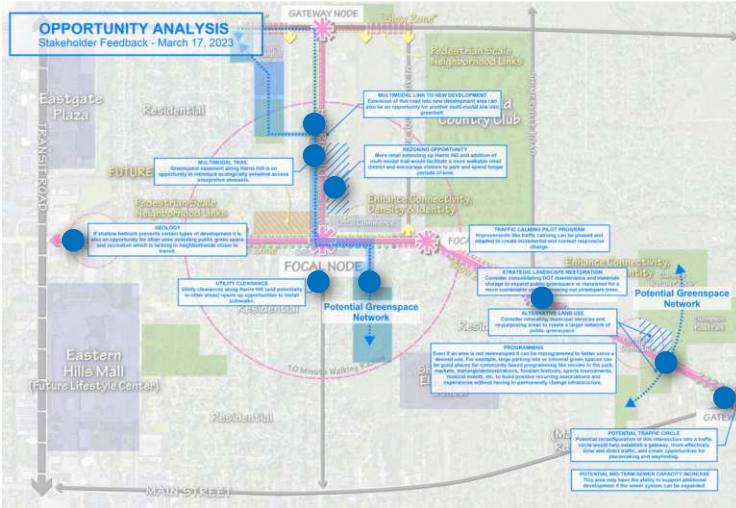
Above: Existing Weaknesses Assessment Map (Appendix E - Figure E05)

WEAKNESSES in this context are attributes that can negatively impact how this area is viewed by potential investors and other economic agents, including investors, workers, residents, and visitors.

OVERALL WEAKNESSES

- Certain zoning and planning regulations may limit flexibility and adaptability to future needs, stifling organic growth or changes in community dynamics.
- Additionally, uncoordinated design and layout can stifle architectural diversity, making the area feel monotonous or placeless.
- Attractive areas to live and work can have over-development pressure, leading to overcrowding and strain on local infrastructure.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS (SWOT), CONT.



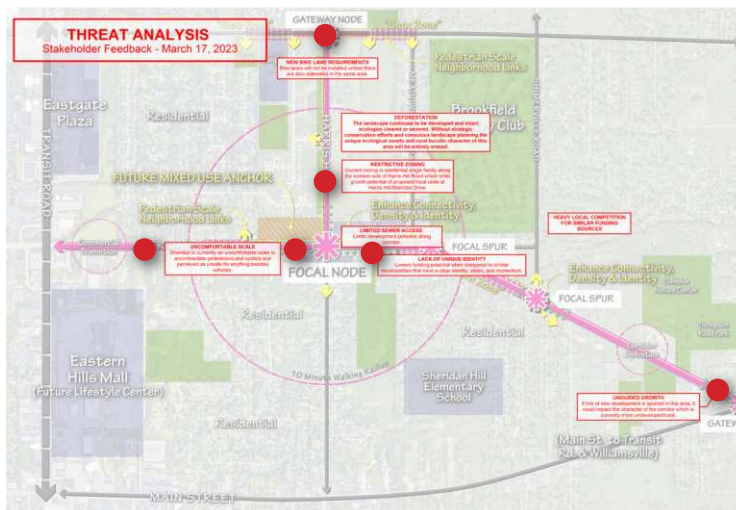
Above: Existing Opportunity Assessment Map (Appendix E - Figure E06)

OPPORTUNITIES in this context are trends, physical features, or policies that could be taken advantage of to create positive change. Opportunities are often broad and strategic like linking smaller parks into a greenway.

OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities include local or regional funding for specific types of improvements, positive overall trends (e.g. growing population = housing = opp. for playgrounds), popular destination links, environmental (e.g. wetland preserve = interpretive trails/boardwalks), and legislative opportunities.

- Mixed use development is a great opportunity to help create a balanced, livable environment despite the corridor's busy nature.
- More strategic pedestrian connections to popular destinations can help reduce actual/perceived need for vehicular commutes to work, shop, and play.
- Adding outdoor dining areas and linking green spaces with trails can improve aesthetics and encourage outdoor activity.
- Noise barriers and smart zoning can enhance residential comfort.



Above: Existing Threat Assessment Map (Appendix E - Figure E07)

THREATS in this context are trends, physical features, or policies that could threaten economic development. These disadvantages could be either real or perceived threats to growth.

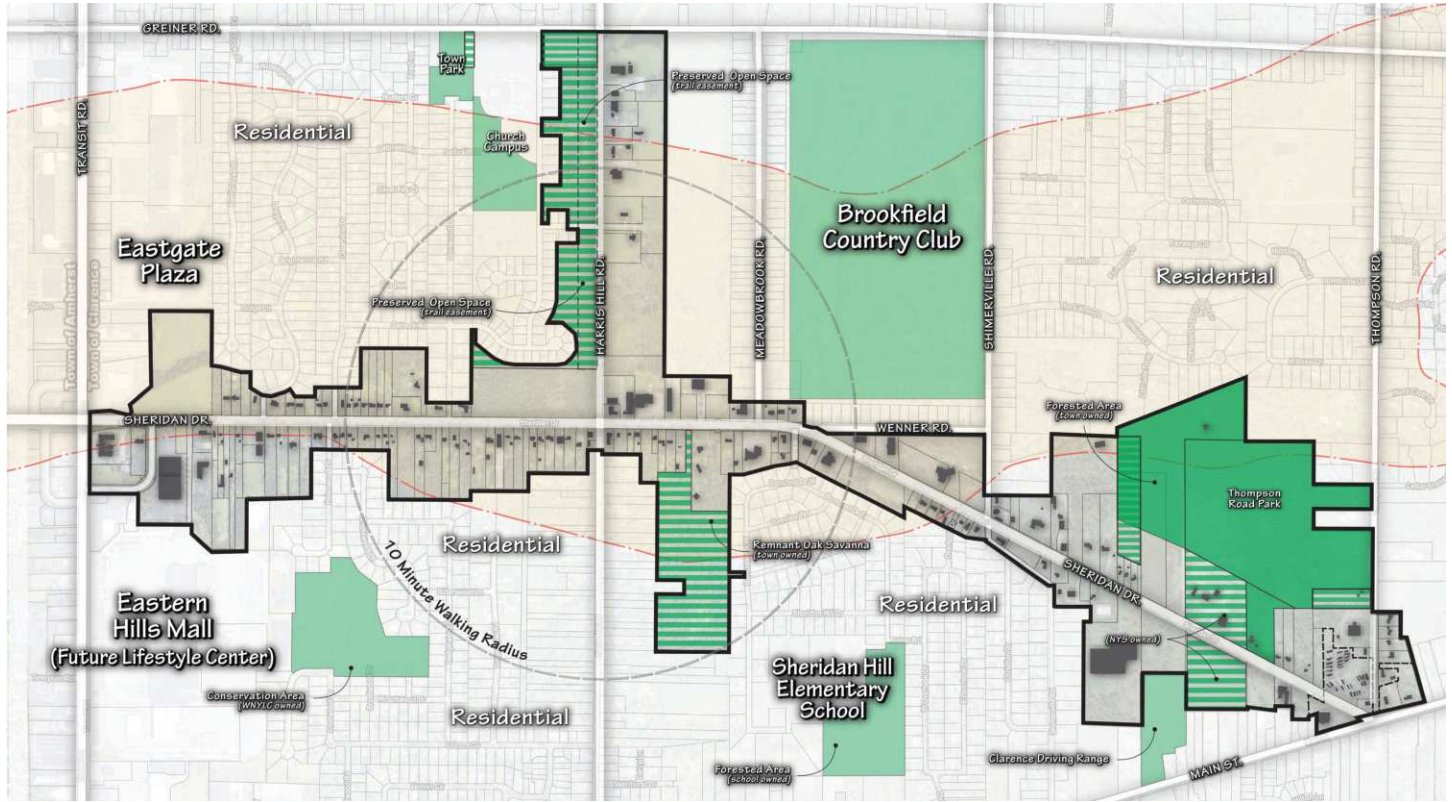
OVERALL THREATS

Positive growth can be threatened by competition or a lack of funding, negative trends (e.g. population loss = less development/vacancy), restrictive policies or tax structure, sensory risks (traffic noise, eyesores), physical risks (safety), or incompatible programming/land use.

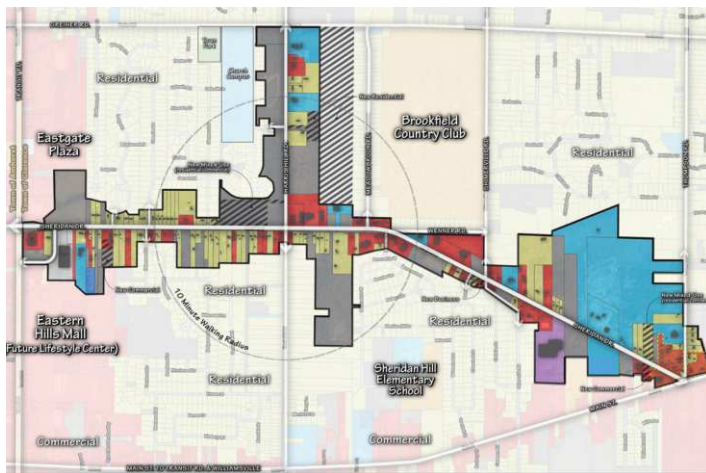
- Overburdened infrastructure, resulting in congestion and decreased quality of life.
- Loss of natural landscapes and agricultural land can reduce the area's appeal, while increased pollution and environmental degradation threaten sustainability.
- A lack of dedicated and thoughtful planning could result in unbalanced residential and commercial development, undermining both economic growth and livability.

SUBJECT AREA ANALYSIS

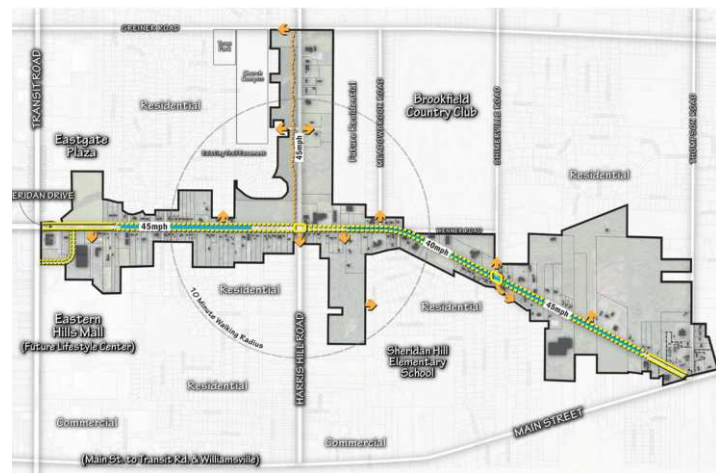
Following the SWOT analysis, the team noticed some areas required additional focus, especially based on the existing land use classifications. The study was separated further into Green Space and Geographic Features, Development Patterns, and Connectivity. This allowed for deeper understanding of the corridor and development of more targeted recommendations.



Above: Public Greenspace & Geographic Assets Map (Appendix E - Figure E08)
Integrated into the above - (Appendix E - Figure E11 - Town Owned Land Map)



Above: Development Patterns Map (Appendix E - Figure E09)



Above: Connectivity & Accessibility Map (Appendix E - Figure E10)

VISUAL INVENTORY - DEFINING IMPORTANT PLANNING AREAS

The subject area analysis helped identify important locations within the corridor: a centralized CORE NODE, GATEWAYS to manage traffic and signal transitions, and SPURS at critical intersections serving as connectors and defined entry points. These sites were prioritized for deeper analysis and tailored planning strategies due to their potential impact on the corridor’s functionality and identity. The team conducted field visits and a photographic assessment to define physical characteristics, spatial relationships, and current usage patterns, contributing to a more nuanced and contextual approach to corridor planning.

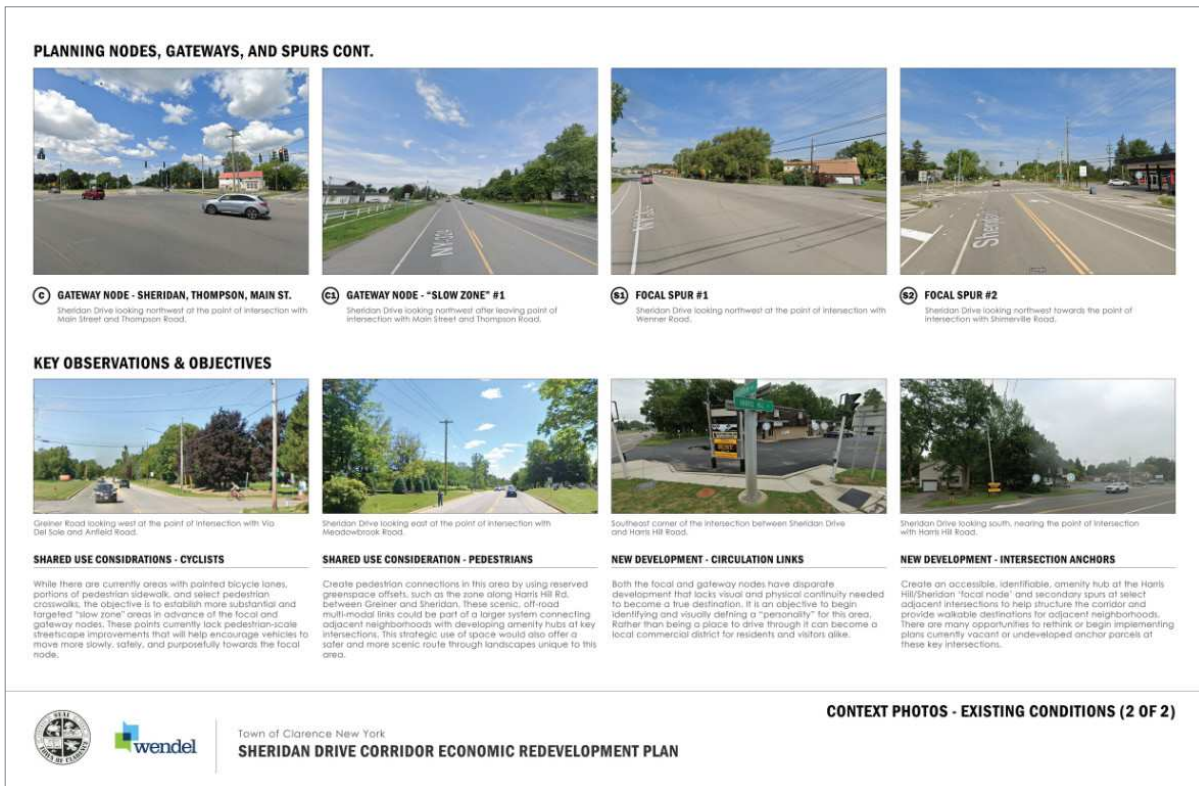


The “CORE NODE” is both the literal center and potential heart of the project area. Focused planning and development here can make this a more accessible, commercially diverse, and uniquely identifiable environment – both in service to the local community and attractive to visitors.

To support realization of that vision, the adjacent ‘GATEWAYS’ announce the core is coming and must start to brand the corridor, slow traffic, serve community priorities/needs, and offer multi-modal access not just along Sheridan Drive but also across and into adjacent residential areas.

The ‘SPURS’ represent key intersections adjacent to the core that can support or suppress it through patterns of development and design that either engage or disengage with the corridor.













Above: Nodes, Gateways, & Spurs Map Pt.1 (Appendix E - Figure E13.1)





Above: Nodes, Gateways, & Spurs Map Pt.2 (Appendix E - Figure E13.2)

PRECEDENT RESEARCH

Gathering input from the committee, stakeholders, and the public was crucial to understand the desired character of the corridor. To capture this collective vision, a curated set of precedent images was presented, showcasing key elements such as pedestrian crossings, wayfinding, placemaking features, streetscape amenities, parking solutions, building facade styles, and the scale and layout of structures. These images helped assess which features resonate most with the community for the project area.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS	WAYFINDING	PLACEMAKING	STREETScape AMENITIES
			
			
			

VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY (1 of 2)

  Town of Clarence New York
VISION SHERIDAN PLAN

Feedback strongly favored enhancing the pedestrian experience to bring more visual interest and unique identity to the area. Recommendations included adding wayfinding signage to highlight trails, parks, and amenities, along with implementing traffic calming measures like bump-outs and HAWK signals to improve pedestrian safety. Suggestions also emphasized incorporating more streetside seating and outdoor dining options, as well as creating bold visual statements through public art or distinctive gateway signage, making the space more inviting and memorable for residents and visitors alike.

OFF-STREET PARKING	TYPES OF RETAIL	BUILDING HEIGHT	OTHER VISUAL PREFERENCES?
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VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY (2 of 2)

  Town of Clarence New York
VISION SHERIDAN PLAN

Participants expressed diverse perspectives on the ideal quantity and placement of vehicular parking, with many favoring incremental changes or innovative, distributed solutions over reductions. Preliminary discussions around retail development revealed a preference for limiting large-scale mixed-use projects, instead favoring smaller, community-focused commercial nodes. However, this topic warrants deeper exploration by the committee and Town. Overall, participants showed a preference for low-rise buildings, with visual assessments indicating a strong favorability for structures 1-2 stories in height.



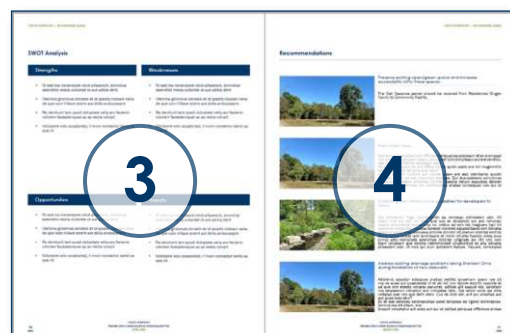
Through the process of studying the Sheridan Drive and Harris Hill Road corridors, Town of Clarence residents and project stakeholders then came together to discuss what they like most about the area and what they believe should be improved, together forming a more cohesive vision for the future. Some key goals emerged from this visioning process, each taking into account present strengths, potential opportunities, and possible challenges to realization. The following six sections outline those goals, and frame the key parameters to consider when new developments or improvements are proposed.

HOW TO USE THE VISION AND GOALS SECTION



1. **GOAL Overview:** Background information outlining the objectives of incorporating the goal in the vision plan and why it is important.
2. **GOAL Background:** For each goal there is a context map that highlights the key assets, obstacles, and objectives in context of the existing site conditions.

3. **GOAL Analysis:** Details the greatest strengths and weaknesses to consider when reviewing this criteria against proposed development and redevelopment plans. Includes select perspectives from residents, business owners, and project stakeholders.
4. **GOAL Recommendations:** Illustrated examples of design strategies for consideration on the project level that can help meet objectives associated with reaching the longer term goal.



HOW THE GOALS WERE DEVELOPED

ESTABLISHING MARKERS OF SUCCESS AND ASSOCIATED DATA

- Vision statement which identifies the goals and prospects of the municipality for its future growth and development.
- Land use plan identifying current land use and designating distribution, location, and relationships between public and private lands.
- Economic development assessment to identify which policies and strategies will be most effective in both the short and long term for achieving sustainable growth.
- Services and facilities assessment which identifies and analyzes existing and foretasted needs for facilities and services used by the public.
- Circulation element which provides an inventory of existing and proposed circulation and transportation systems.
- Implementation program to define and schedule specific municipal actions necessary to achieve the objectives of each element of the master plan.



STAKEHOLDER/COMMITTEE ENGAGEMENT

At the outset of the project, the Wendel team worked closely with the Town of Clarence to establish a committee of stakeholders that would meet with us on a regular basis. These stakeholders included members of the Clarence IDA, Clarence Chamber of Commerce, Town of Clarence Town Board and Planning Boards, the Clarence Community Development team, the Town of Clarence Attorney, and several local business owners. See the acknowledgments section for a complete list of stakeholders/Committee members. This team represented a diverse cross section of citizens who guided the initial vision and goals, and served as a sounding board throughout the process.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A transparent public engagement process is the foundation of a successful plan and in this case was critical to determine community values and goals then identify patterns of development that would be consistent. Meeting with the community revealed several recurring themes regarding how Clarence residents envision the future of the Sheridan Drive corridor.

Residents almost universally suggested they would like to see it become more attractive, active with resident amenities, and accessible. Through the use of visual preference surveys were able to have residents articulate what types of design interventions would help realize their vision. (Refer to Appendix for public meeting notes)



HOW THE GOALS WERE REFINED

In order to achieve desired outcomes, it is important to set clear goals. The following six goals (in no particular order), created with guidance from the Vision Sheridan planning committee, translate the vision statement into actions that will lead to the realization of that vision:

The Project Vision Statement:

“Promote a visually and physically vibrant community corridor that connects to the history of the Town while pursuing sustainable growth, creating destinations, and maintaining a high quality of life for residents and employees.”

ECONOMIC GROWTH GOAL



Attract and retain businesses that serve a variety of needs, enhance the community, balance the Town’s tax base and increase nearby property values, and are aesthetically appealing.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY GOAL



Ensure that new development and redevelopment, when it occurs, is responsive and respectful of natural resources and fosters diverse and beneficial ecosystems.

CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS GOAL



Link public and private resources and connect surrounding neighborhoods to the commercial corridor through safe and efficient circulation of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists that is respectful of surrounding context.

PUBLIC SPACE AND AMENITIES GOAL



Foster high-quality community facilities and services that meet the needs of residents and businesses and improve the overall quality of life.

PLACEMAKING GOAL



Create a sense of identity, by recognizing this unique corridor and supporting the future development of sites in accordance with the character of the community.

HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT GOAL



Promote cohesive and targeted development through updated zoning and design guidelines to provide a more unified direction for future development and existing neighborhoods along the corridor.



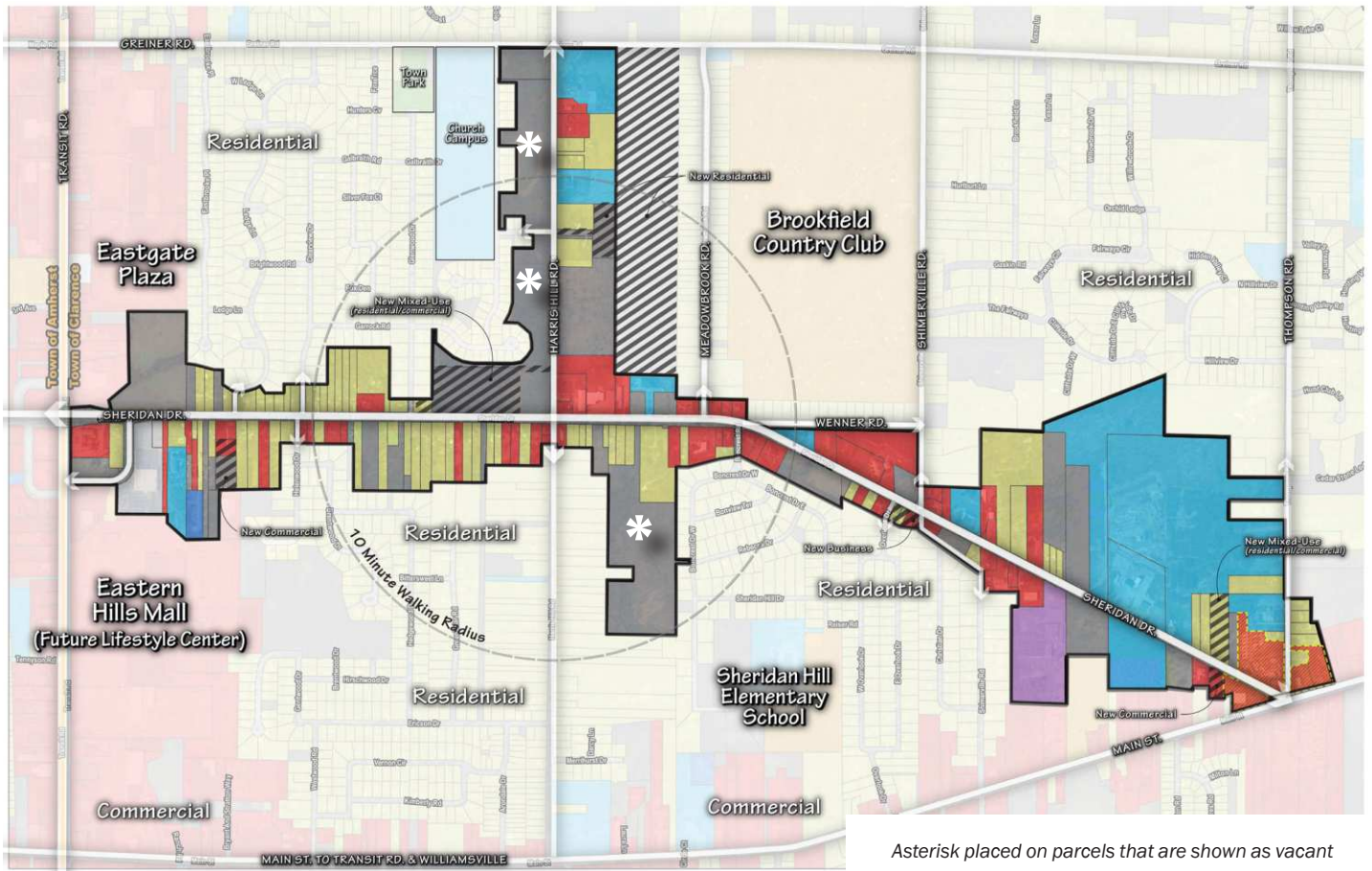
SECTION

ECONOMIC GROWTH GOAL

Attract and retain businesses that serve a variety of needs, enhance the community, balance the Town's tax base, and increase nearby property values.

EXISTING ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

Economic Growth and Development Patterns

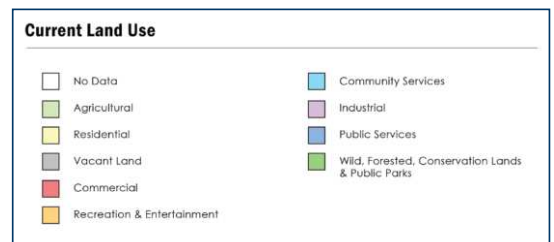


(Appendix E - Figure E09)

Asterisk placed on parcels that are shown as vacant land use but are to be considered "Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands & Public Parks"

When looking at Land Uses (per RPS/Real Property System data) the corridor appears to be primarily residential, with a significant amount of commercial and industrial land along Sheridan Drive. There is also a high amount of vacant land (20 percent of parcels or 29 percent of land area), which presents an opportunity for more commercial or mixed-use development in this area. It should be understood that RPS Land Use data for parcels does not always reflect the real use. This should be reviewed and revised with the Town Assessor.

However, most of the study area is unsewered, which severely limits further development and presents an environmental hazard for local waterways should future development rely on septic systems. Erie County Sewer District #5 and Clarence Sewer Districts #7 and #10 are the only sewer districts servicing the area. Clarence Sewer Districts #7 and #10 are tributaries to Erie County Sewer District #5, which connects to the Amherst sewer system and provides service access to the Town of Amherst Sewer Treatment Plant. The Town of Amherst currently has a moratorium on any additional sewer flows to this system, until upgrades can be made to the system to increase capacity.



ECONOMIC GROWTH CONSIDERATIONS

ECONOMIC STRENGTHS

- A number of new businesses have relocated to the area, such as Long Architecture and the Clarence Community & Schools Federal Credit Union.
- The corridor lies in close proximity to Transit Road and Main Street, two major commercial corridors.

ECONOMIC WEAKNESSES

- The area lacks a strong sense of place.
- The condition/maintenance of existing businesses

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

- A number of new developments include commercial space or new professional offices, with a combined total of nearly 40,000 square feet available for new businesses.
- There is a significant amount of vacant land along the corridor which could be developed
- Focus investment energy on small businesses that do not compete with existing Main St and Transit Road businesses.

ECONOMIC THREATS

- Without expansion of sewers in the study area, development of larger commercial and mixed-use buildings will be precluded.
- Given the close proximity to residential areas, there could be conflicts between some commercial uses (restaurants, bars, etc.) and residential uses. In particular, noise and litter are a concern.

ECONOMIC GROWTH RECOMMENDATIONS



Promote and support commercial activity that complements the existing neighborhood character.

As the corridor continues to develop, it will be important to ensure that this development complements, and does not change, the existing neighborhood character. The Town should encourage context-sensitive design and create a user-friendly code and design guidelines as well as update zoning as needed to ensure commercial parcels do not abut residential zones (see Harmonious Development section). Furthermore, the Clarence IDA could implement tax benefits program (like 485-b) program for this area to offer tax exemption(s) to encourage existing businesses to invest in their properties and new businesses to locate in the area.



Strengthen the area's sense of place through economic vitality and opportunity. *(see placemaking section)*

To encourage passersby to stop and shop, more must be done to draw attention to the commercial nature of this area, such as organizing special events or installing gateways. A Business Development District could be created or Tax Increment Financing could be used to fund these improvements.



Encourage complementary light manufacturing facilities on size-appropriate parcels.

Locating light manufacturing facilities in this area would provide high-quality, well-paid jobs to residents in this area and boost the local economy, without the negative effects associated with traditional industrial facilities. However, there are only a few parcels in the area that are large or deep enough to support this type of development, so it will be important to preserve the zoning of these lots to allow the development of these facilities, as well as work with the IDA to market these lots to appropriate businesses.

SECTION

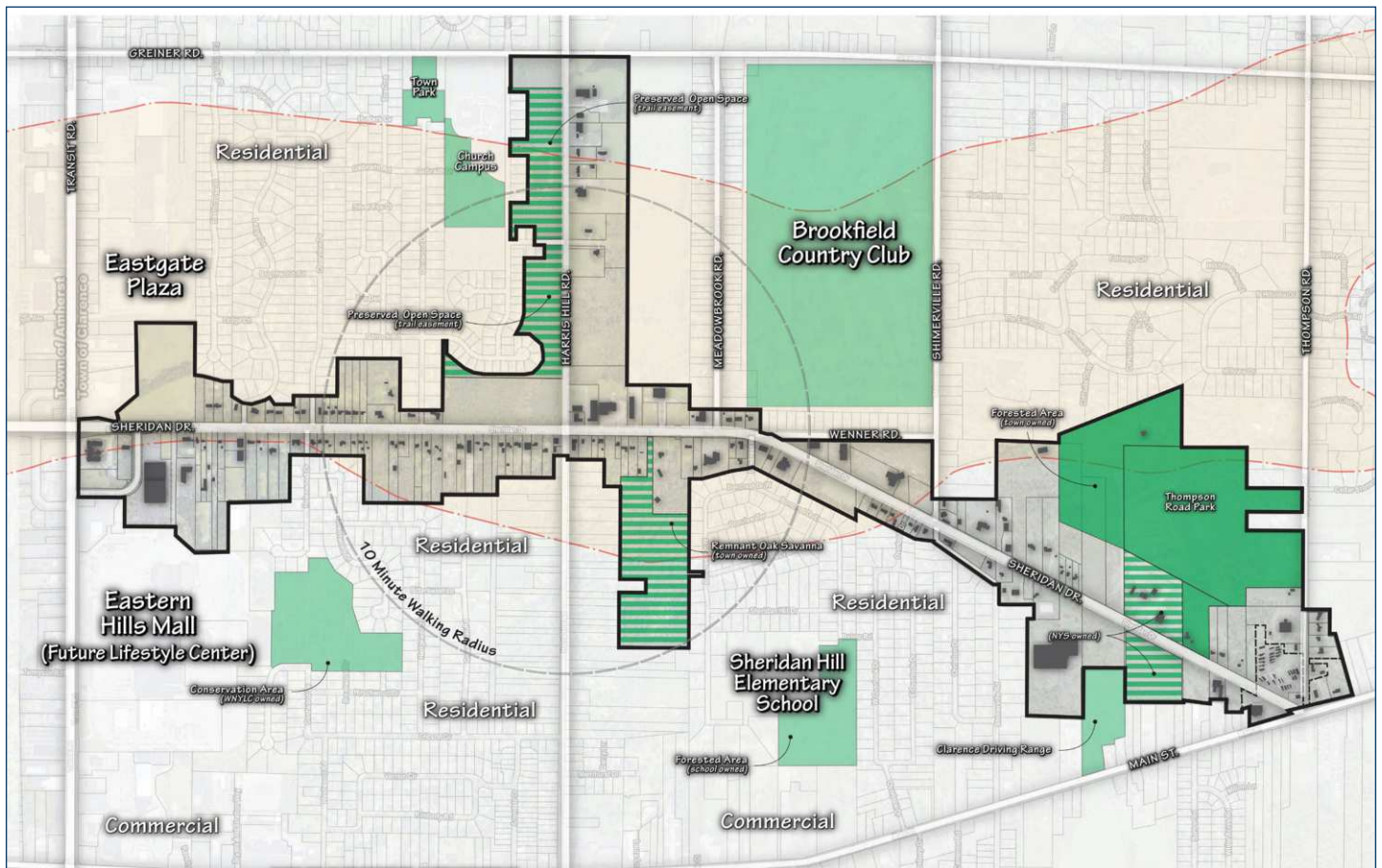
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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY GOAL

Ensure that new development and redevelopment, when it occurs, is respectful of natural resources and responsive to building ecosystem services.

EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

Quality and Condition of Green and Public Open Space



(Appendix E - Figure E08)

The town of Clarence is bolstered by environmental assets ranging from an ecologically rare Oak Savanna to wetlands and outcrops along the Onondaga escarpment. Natural resources contribute to the town’s health and vibrancy by providing crucial environmental and ecosystem services. More than any other environmental asset, Clarence’s open green spaces contribute to the identity and sense of place of a town rooted in its history as an agricultural community. Throughout the inevitable growth and transformation of the Sheridan Drive Corridor, these natural resources will become even more critical to maintain a high quality of life for residents and visitors through intrinsic educational recreational, health, and aesthetic value.



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ANALYSIS

ENVIRONMENTAL STRENGTHS

- There is a strong ecological identity including a rare remnant Oak Savanna (now considered an Oak Opening).
- This area of Clarence was historically called “The Oaks”, branding which could be revived as both an educational opportunity and strong narrative framework for funding applications. Based on public polling that association with “The Oaks” has been lost but there’s great interest in bringing it back.
- Strong community bond with the idea of this area being rural in character and there is still a distinct visual and physical contrast from increasingly developed areas.
- Equitably distributed green space on eastern side of study boundary.

ENVIRONMENTAL WEAKNESSES

- Green and open space is shrinking as development spreads.
- Lack of formalized access to existing greenspace, especially off Sheridan Drive. Currently there are only informal pedestrian access points to assets like the Oak Savanna. Unguided access can threaten the ecological integrity of this system and is also undesirable for adjacent residents.
- Underutilized green spaces including the large area of land currently used by the DOT that is not accessible to the public or interfacing effectively with the street, especially because it blocks a large portion of the public park from view along Sheridan Drive.

ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

- There is a greenspace easement along Harris Hill which is an opportunity to introduce ecologically sensitive access and interpretive elements like an off-road multimodal trail system. It is also a valuable stormwater management area.
- If shallow bedrock prevents certain types of development it is also an opportunity for other uses including public green space and recreation which is lacking in neighborhood areas closer to Transit Road.
- Creating a green space network between public parcels with trails, signage, and street crossings.

ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS

- Continued population growth and unguided development could undermine the semi-rural local character that is distinctly valued by residents.
- Lack of capitalizing on unique local identity. Municipalities with a clear and compelling identity, vision, and momentum have a higher funding potential and draw for residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Restrictive or misaligned zoning designations such as the residential single family zoning in the area where the Oak Savanna is located if it could potentially threaten preservation of this valuable greenspace.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY RECOMMENDATIONS



Preserve Existing Green Open Space and Increase Access

The Oak Savanna parcel should be rezoned from Residential Single-Family to Community Facility. Clarence residents have expressed their concern that further population growth might result in the disappearance of unprotected forested or unforested open spaces, threatening a key aspect of the local character that the residents enjoy.



Establish Tree Planting Guidelines

The intersection of Harris Hill Road and Sheridan Drive, as well as Sheridan Drive approaching Transit Road, are both identified as ever-growing hubs of local commerce and social activity. While they contain assets residents desire, more identifiable landscaping would reinforce these as important nodes along the corridor. Native street tree plantings should become a key component of the corridors aesthetic with the objective being to support redefining this area as “The Oaks”.



Establish Green Infrastructure Guidelines

Encourage the use of low-carbon materials, adaptive reuse, and promoting the addition of permeability to formerly impervious surfaces. Consider environmentally friendly strategies to preserve natural resources and reduce carbon emissions. Development should protect existing trees, plantings, and soils whenever possible. New development should intentionally design green infrastructure into the site and strive to use native plants.



Manage stormwater sustainably. *(Address existing drainage problems along Sheridan Drive during sidewalk installation)*

Throughout the corridor encourage site design that strives to manage water where it falls. Developments can capture, absorb, or store precipitation with native landscaping, trees, bioswales, rain gardens, porous pavers, rain barrels or cisterns, or green roofs. By limiting runoff and lessening the burden on existing infrastructure, these strategies reduce water pollution and help to protect our vital Great Lakes freshwater resources.

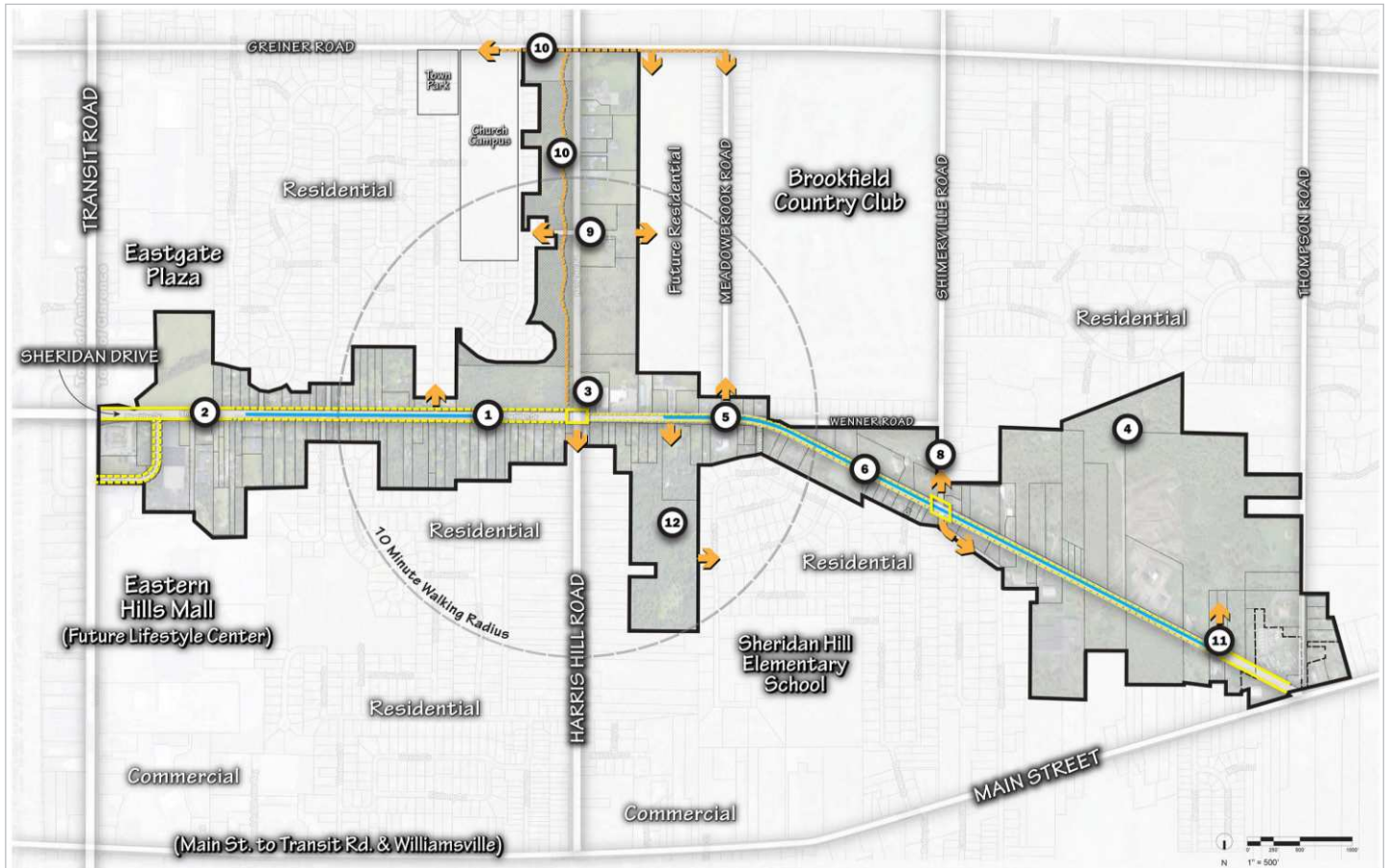
3

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS GOAL

Link public and private resources, connect surrounding neighborhoods to commercial areas, create safe and efficient routes for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists that respect and enhance surrounding context.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Connectivity & Access Patterns



(Appendix E - Figure E10)

Sheridan Drive is a state road that carries between 8,000 and 15,000 vehicles per day. In 2020, a road diet was implemented on Sheridan Drive, which reduced the number of vehicular travel lanes in each direction from two to one, with a center turn lane. The freed-up right-of-way was used to install bicycle lanes along Sheridan Drive, except near the intersections with Harris Hill Road, Main Street, and Transit Road, where there are dedicated left and right turn lanes.

In 2021, the Town applied for Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding to extend sidewalks along Sheridan Drive. Currently, there are sidewalks near Main Street, Transit Road, and the intersections of Sheridan Drive with Harris Hill Road and Shimerville Road. Construction of the sidewalks is expected to begin in 2024. Once completed, these sidewalks will link Transit Road to Main Street and connect to those sidewalk systems.



CONNECTIVITY CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

Connectivity & Access

CONNECTIVITY STRENGTHS

- Following implementation of the road diet, crashes have reduced.
- Proposed new sidewalks will greatly increase safety for pedestrians traveling along Sheridan Drive.

CONNECTIVITY WEAKNESSES

- The speed limit of Sheridan Drive is 45, but despite the road diet that was recently implemented, drivers still speed. Speeding/aggressive driving is particularly prevalent in areas where drivers have to merge from two lanes into one, such as east of Transit Road and near Harris Hill Road.
- The bicycle lane is not continuous; near the intersection with Harris Hill, where there are dedicated left and right turn lanes, cyclists have to use the shoulder or one of the vehicle travel lanes.
- Some cyclists are less comfortable with on-street bicycle lanes and there are not a lot of alternatives.

CONNECTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES

- There is an easement along the western side of Harris Hill Road between Greiner Road and Sheridan Drive. There is potential to develop a multi-use path in this area which would interconnect with other pedestrian and cyclist amenities.
- Approved and planned developments have the potential to increase the density of the area and bring retail and other commercial establishments that new and existing residents may want to walk or bike to.

CONNECTIVITY THREATS

- Without sidewalks in residential areas to connect to, the sidewalk system will continue to be underutilized.
- Without proper transportation demand management, new developments may increase traffic and endanger vulnerable road users.
- Maintenance of sidewalks, including snow removal during winter, will be critical to maintaining pedestrian safety.

SECTION

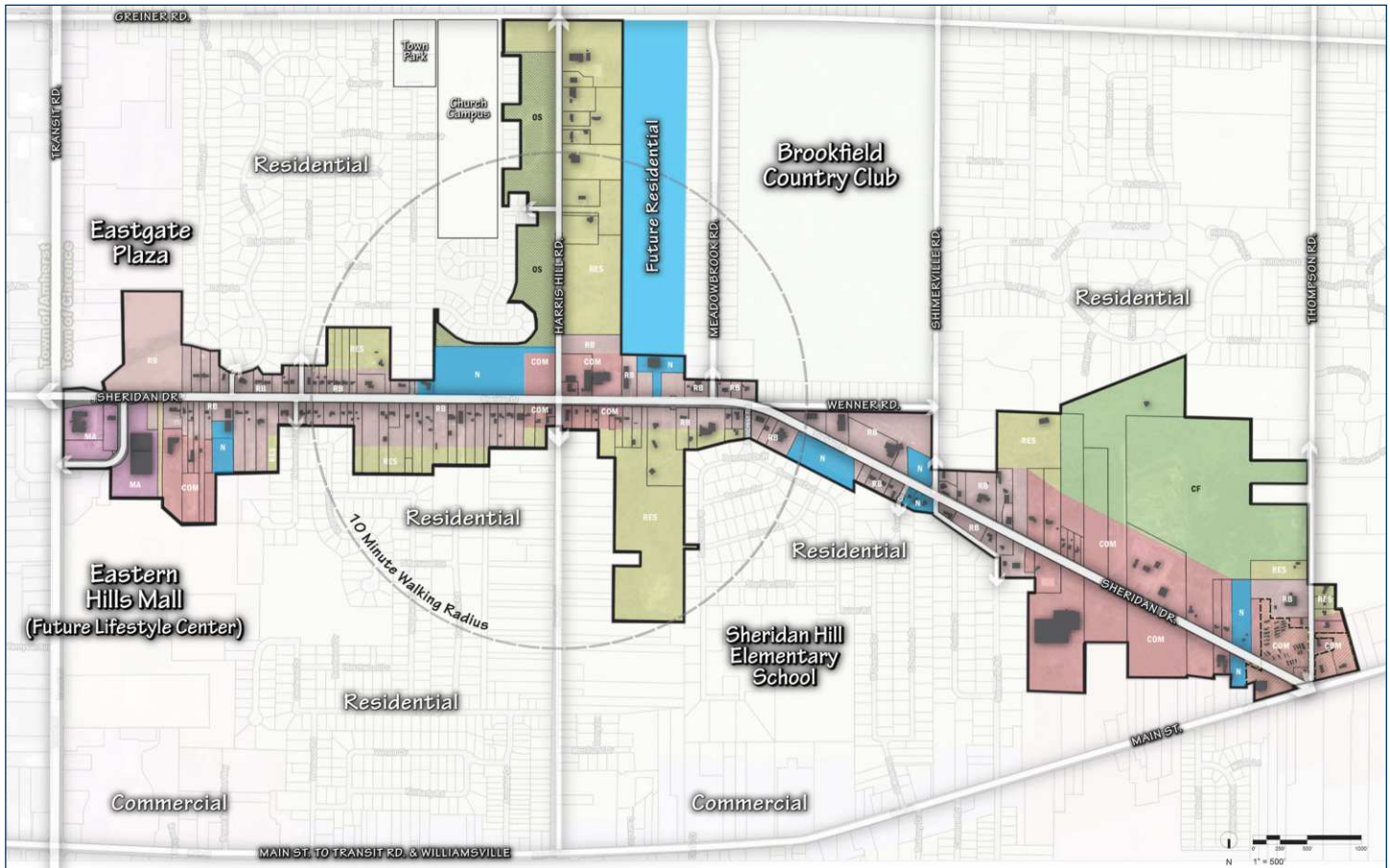
4

PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES GOAL

Foster high-quality community facilities and services that meet the needs of residents and businesses and improve overall quality of life.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Public Space and Amenities



Part of Data Set in Appendix E - Figures E11 & E14

Community assets in the public realm are significant to this study as they represent key resources and spaces that directly contribute to the quality of life and identity of the area. These assets—such as parks, plazas, streetscapes, civic buildings, and public gathering spaces—serve as the foundation for targeted community improvements.

By identifying and mapping these assets, we can better understand how they align with existing community objectives, development patterns, and future growth strategies. This map provides a view of where public realm assets are already integrated into the fabric of the community and where opportunities for improvement exist.



PUBLIC AMENITY CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

Public Space & Amenities

PUBLIC SPACE STRENGTHS

- Many approved and planned development projects along the corridor reflect interest and investment in the area.
- Few buildings above 30' in height exist along the corridor, but those that do anchor larger intersections which helps to define these areas.
- Residential development is already very dense which provides an immediate user group for new resident-focused assets.
- Designated open or community facility space offers critical physical and visual relief to balance increasingly dense development patterns.
- Restricted business zones help to establish a visual and sound buffer from neighborhoods adjacent to Sheridan Drive.

PUBLIC SPACE WEAKNESSES

- Areas that flip flop or transition too abruptly between commercial and residential use dilutes the potential for a strong and identifiable commercial and community core.
- Building setbacks in restricted business areas jump from a 45' min. to a 10' min. as you enter the commercial core. This huge variation weakens the potential for smooth and well defined visual cues between development types that are critical to place making.

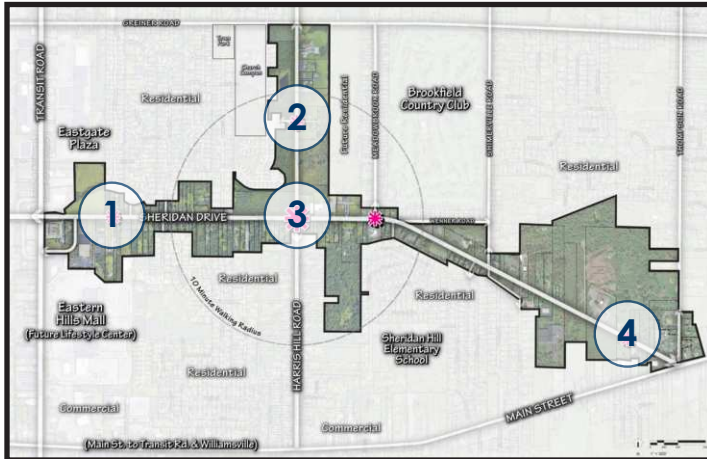
PUBLIC SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

- Creating citizen led groups like a "friends of the oak savanna" or "public art committee" would expand resources and opportunities for improvements in those key areas and ensure the community's collective voice is consistently heard.
- In areas where residential development areas are situated behind commercial and restricted business zones, there are opportunities to develop pedestrian links to commercial resources.
- There is an opportunity to extend restricted business zoning further north to soften the transition from undeveloped/residential use into the commercial core developing at the Harris Hill and Sheridan Drive intersection and expand resources available within walking distance.

PUBLIC SPACE THREATS

- Limited access to utilities, esp. sewer capacity, limits the development potential of areas otherwise planned to become dense commercial sections with more amenities on the corridor.
- Not strategically preserving the unique public assets of this corridor in the longer-term, which still includes the potential for well-connected greenspaces and residential-scale commercial nodes, risks diluting an identity that would otherwise be more marketable and symbiotic with adjacent land uses.

PUBLIC SPACE AND AMENITY RECOMMENDATIONS



KEY PLAN - Recommendation Zones

Recommendations are repeatable in other areas that fit the same contextual parameters.

- 1.) Main access route into a commercial area and key transition point for visitors.
- 2.) Primary entrance or transition point into a neighborhood where zoning is mostly residential.
- 3.) Central hub and the focal point for commercial activity and community interaction.
- 4.) Open area, such as a park or community garden, accessible to the public for recreation, relaxation, and environmental conservation.



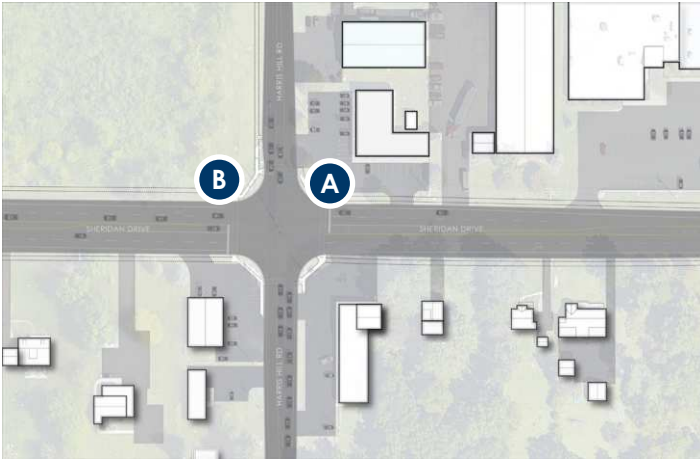
1 Commercial Gateways

- A. Enhance Aesthetic Appeal: Create a visually welcoming and attractive entry point, making a strong first impression for visitors and residents.
- B. Improve Traffic Flow and Accessibility: Ensure efficient and safe access for different modes of transport, such as biking, walking, and public transit.
- C. Integrate Wayfinding Systems: Develop clear, consistent wayfinding signage to guide visitors easily to and from commercial areas and enhance the overall navigation experience.



2 Residential Gateways

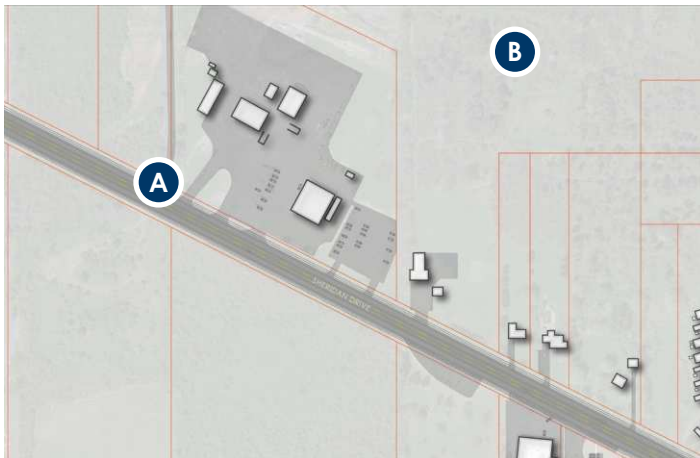
- A. Improve Signage and Lighting: Install clear, attractive signage and street lighting to improve visibility and safety, while also establishing a cohesive look that signals the transition into a residential zone.
- B. Create Pedestrian Links: Add sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes that connect residential areas to key amenities, promoting walkability and enhancing livability of the neighborhood.



3

Community Core

- A. Create Welcoming Public Spaces: Incorporate plazas, small parks, or gathering spaces to invite social interaction, offer rest areas, and foster a sense of community.
- B. Incorporate Public Art or Landmark Features: Use sculptures, murals, or distinctive architectural elements at intersections to create a sense of place and make the core more visually engaging and memorable.



4

Public Greenspace

- A. Enhance Accessibility and Connectivity: Ensure public green spaces are easily reachable for all community members by improving pathways, entrances, and integrating them with public transportation networks.
- B. Diversify Amenities and Facilities: Incorporate a variety of features such as playgrounds, sports fields, walking trails, picnic areas, and community gardens to cater to different interests and age groups.

SECTION

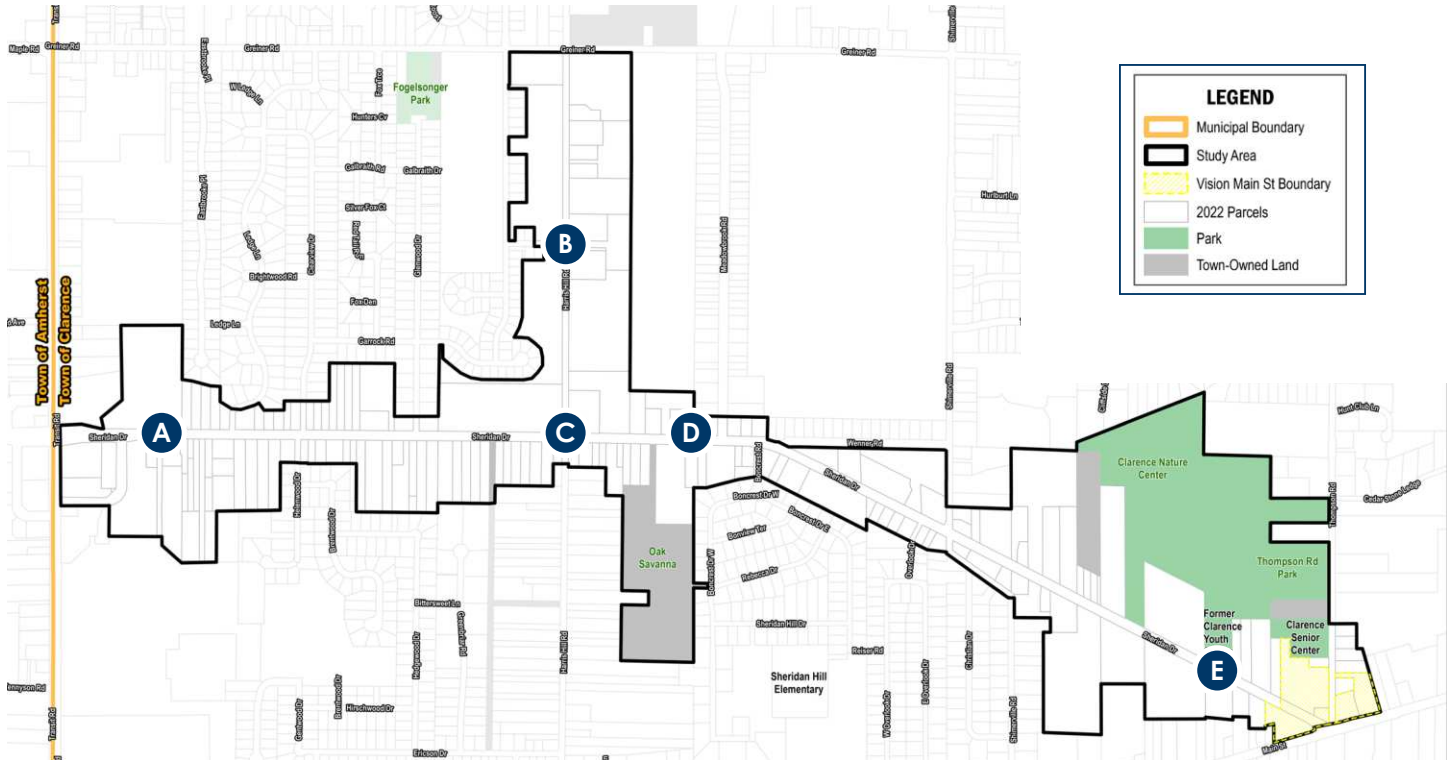
5

PLACEMAKING GOAL

Create a sense of identity, by recognizing this unique corridor and supporting the future development of sites in accordance with the character of the community.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Spatial Identity



(Appendix E - Figure E11)



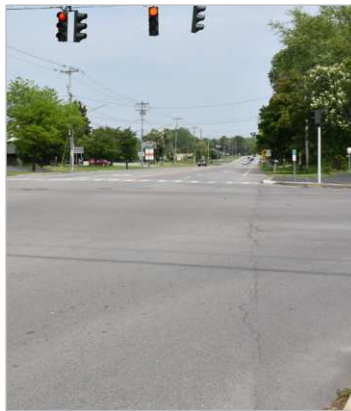
A

Many areas in the corridor are visually dominated by vehicular infrastructure. Even where sidewalks, safe crossings, and mixed-use spaces are scheduled to be built, there needs to be a more comfortable pedestrian scale environment.



B

Residential, commercial, and industrial zones tend to feel like islands unto themselves and even with good commercial anchors mixed-use developments are still limited. This results in fewer accessible amenities and a lack of integrated, dynamic spaces.



C

A lack of vibrant public spaces like parks, plazas, or communal gathering areas reduces opportunities for social interaction, community building, and recreational activities.



D

Spaces along the corridor can feel detached from their natural or cultural context. Local design guidelines and select representation of local culture, history, or geography will make this area identifiable and memorable.

SWOT ANALYSIS

PLACEMAKING STRENGTHS

- With thousands of existing residents, there is an immediate user group for new amenities.
- Unique landscapes such as the remnant oak savanna often shape a community's identity, offering aesthetic value and opportunities for recreation.

PLACEMAKING WEAKNESSES

- Unlike other areas of the Town, such as Clarence Hollow, this area does not have a defined sense of place.
- People visiting the corridor may come to run an errand, eat at a restaurant, etc., but are not currently enticed to stay in the area.

PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES

- New developments have the opportunity to contribute to public art along the corridor, as well as provide outdoor seating and other amenities for pedestrians.

PLACEMAKING THREATS

- New and existing residents may have different preferences for placemaking.

PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS



Strengthen a sense of place through branded identity and a distinctive look and feel.

Installing decorative pedestrian-scale lighting with banner signs will signal to visitors that they are entering a “place.” These signs could be swapped out for holidays or special events as needed, and could help build the “brand” for the area. In addition, the Town should create a community art committee to promote and review public art installations to ensure they contribute positively to the corridor’s brand.



Make it easier for people to locate features of the area and learn more about the corridor.

Developing engaging wayfinding signage will help visitors know what is in the area and how to get there. The wayfinding signage can also inform visitors of the history of the area.



Celebrate entry into the corridor and unique character areas.

The Town should consider installing a gateway feature after the bridge over Transit Road to mark the transition from Amherst to Clarence, from a primarily commercial area to a primarily residential area, and the entrance to the corridor. Street art should also be used strategically throughout the area to identify unique areas along the corridor. In particular, street art could be used to get drivers to slow down near daycares and Sheridan Hill Elementary School.



Consider methods to extend people’s stay in the area.

To encourage people to stay in the area, the Town should place seating and other streetscape amenities in areas with the most pedestrian activity, using low-maintenance materials that will withstand the elements. The Town may also consider adding municipal off-street parking, with restrooms and other public amenities.

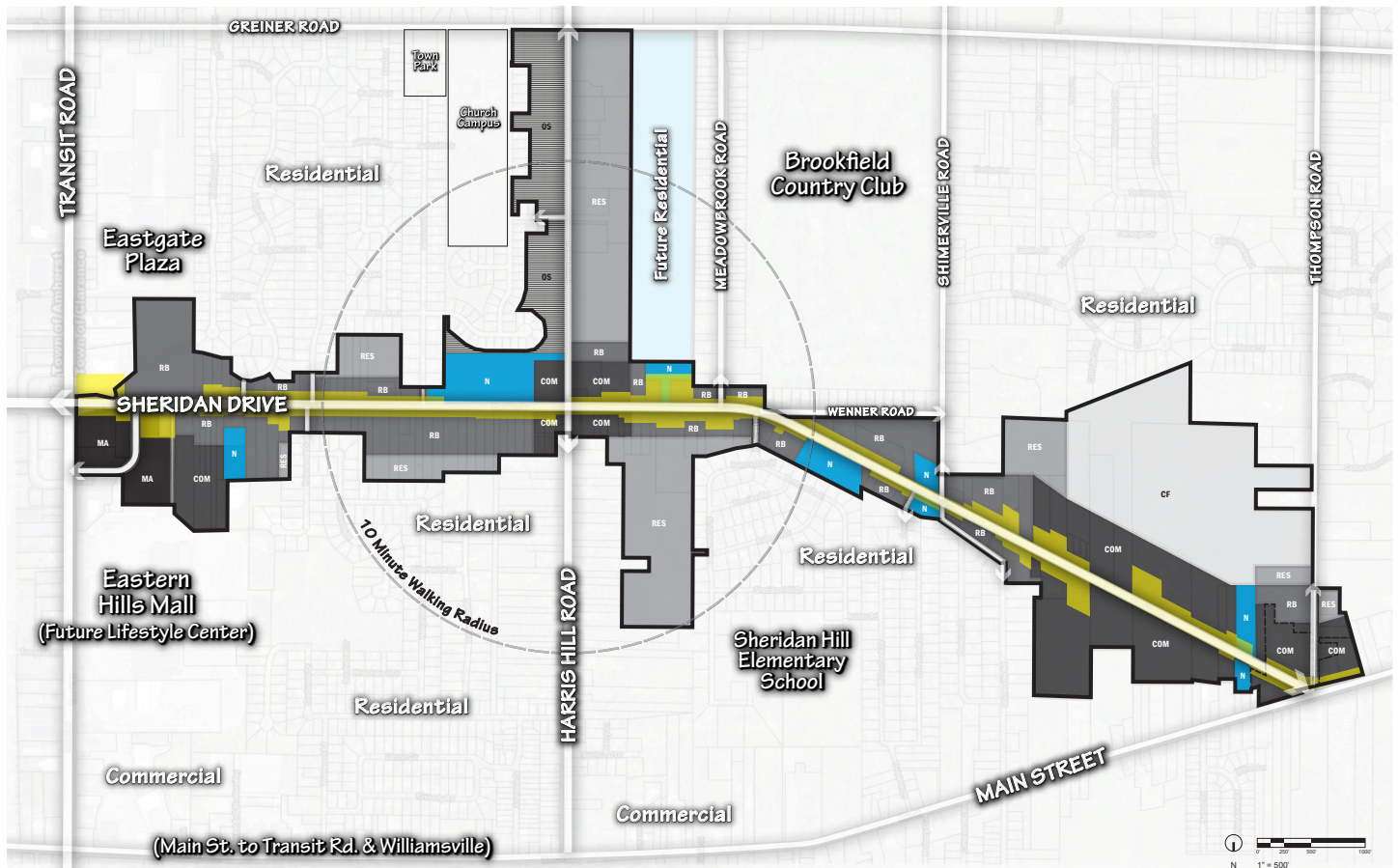


HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT GOAL

Promote cohesive and targeted development through updated zoning and design guidelines to provide a more unified direction for future development and existing neighborhoods along the corridor.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Development Types & Distribution



(Appendix E - Figure E14) Building Layouts & Setbacks

There are a number of zoning districts within the study area. In general, the zoning on lots fronting Sheridan Drive is commercial in nature (Commercial, Restricted Business, and Major Arterial), with rear portions of some of the lots zoned Residential Single-Family or Community Facility. The west side of Harris Hill Road is zoned Residential Single-Family whereas the east side of Harris Hill Road is dedicated open space.

Bulk requirements vary widely between zoning districts. For example, on Sheridan Drive, the allowable maximum height ranges from 35 feet to 45 feet depending on the district. There is a large amount of variation within each zoning district as well. For example, in the Commercial district, front yard setbacks can be as little as 10 feet, or as large as 80 feet.

Map Legend

- Vision Sheridan Project Boundary
- Vision Main Street Project Boundary
- New Devel. (approved or planned)
- Existing Offset to Buildings

Existing Development Allowances

EX. DEVELOPMENT TYPE	MAX BUILDING HEIGHT	REQ. SETBACKS
Major Arterial	45' max.	135' min. from centerline of all public road rights-of-way
Commercial	45' max.	10' min. / 80' max.
Restricted Business	35' max.	80' or est. front setback line (to a min. of 45')
Residential Single-Family	35' max.	45' to 100' min. (equal to or greater than est. front setback line / not more than 10' larger than est. front setback line)
Community Facilities	25' max.	80' min.
Dedicated Open Space	No Structures	

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- The Restricted Business zone allows for a gradual transition to residential areas along the corridor.
- Areas that are zoned Community Facility or dedicated open space offer a counterbalance to increasingly dense development patterns.
- Having taller anchor buildings intentionally consolidated to the ends of the corridor vs. dispersed helps to build identity.

Weaknesses

- Variations in zoning leads to a wide range of development patterns.
- This area is already rather densely developed, primarily with single-family housing, which may lead to conflicts with new commercial uses unless there is special attention to noise and visual buffering.

Opportunities

- New developments along Sheridan Drive have the potential to set a new precedent for the design of buildings and how they relate to the corridor.
- New additions can re-balance the type of development so it's not just housing but also retail

Threats

- Without clear guidelines for developers, development along the corridor could continue haphazardly.

HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS



Facilitate consistent, complementary, and high-quality projects by providing guidance to property owners and developers.

As part of the Town's overall zoning code update, the Town should consider changes to maximum setbacks, maximum height restrictions, and allowable uses within the various zoning districts in the study area. Furthermore, the Town should consider creating a Sheridan Drive overlay zone with its own design guidelines to ensure that new development and redevelopment corresponds to existing community corridor and overall promotes a visually and physically vibrant corridor (see Appendix for draft design guidelines).



Encourage context-sensitive project design between differing and adjacent land uses.

To minimize conflicts between residential and commercial uses, the Town should consider rezoning parcels that are currently zoned Commercial but abut residential parcels to Restricted Business. In addition, throughout the site plan review process, consideration should be given to issues such as noise and light pollution, traffic and parking, and garbage/litter.



IMPLEMENTATION

Without implementation, a plan is just a plan. Specifics on “who” should implement this Plan and “how” are needed to give the Town and the IDA the tools they need to start making progress towards achieving its vision for the Sheridan Drive corridor, together with other partners.

This chapter of the Plan includes a matrix for implementing the recommendations set forth in the previous chapters, identifying the parties that should be involved in implementation, potential funding sources, and prioritizing the recommendations.

It is expected that implementing this Plan will take time. **Perhaps the most critical action to come from this plan, is to establish an Implementation Committee made up of members of the CIDA, Town employees, and business leaders.** Each year, the Committee should review this matrix to identify items that should be requested or pursued during the next fiscal year, and provide recommendations to the Town Board. Additionally, the Committee should make updates and add new strategies annually to continue to meet the goals and objectives of the Plan.

GOAL	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	INVOLVED PARTIES (LEAD PARTY BOLD)	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
ECONOMIC GROWTH	Promote and support commercial activity that complements the existing neighborhood character.	Streamline review process and consider removing discretionary approvals for context-sensitive development (by-right development).	High	Planning & Zoning Department, IDA	
		Create a user-friendly code and guidelines (see Harmonious Development section).	Medium		
		Update zoning so Commercial parcels do not abut Residential (see Harmonious Development section).	Medium		
		Implement a 485-b program for this area (ten-year tax exemption for new construction or improvement) to encourage existing businesses to invest in their properties and new businesses to locate in the area.	Low		

GOAL	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	INVOLVED PARTIES (LEAD PARTY BOLD)	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
ECONOMIC GROWTH CONT.	Strengthen the area's sense of place through economic vitality and opportunity (see Placemaking section).	Gauge interest in creating a Business Development District or using Tax Increment Financing to fund improvements.	High	Chamber of Commerce, IDA	
		Work with the Chamber of Commerce to organize events to draw people to the corridor.	High		
		Consider installing gateway features.	Low		
	Encourage complementary light manufacturing facilities on size-appropriate parcels.	Market the area to appropriate businesses.	Low	IDA, Planning & Zoning Department	
		Preserve the commercial zoning of deeper lots to accommodate light manufacturing development.	Low		
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	Consider flood reduction opportunities during public and right-of-way projects.	Address existing drainage problems along Sheridan Drive during installation of new sidewalks.	High	Highway Department, NYSDOT	
	Preserve and promote existing public open/green space, and pursue expanded access to these spaces.	Rezone Oak Savanna from Residential Single-Family to Community Facility to prevent development of this unique ecological resource and consider how residents might better access this space (trails, parking areas, etc.).	High	Parks Department, Planning & Zoning Department	WNY Land Conservancy, Environmental Protection Fund
		Consider how residents might better access the WNY Land Conservancy preserve behind the Eastern Hills Mall (trails, parking areas, etc).	Medium		
		Provide better connections to Fogelsonger Park (see proposed Harris Hill Multi-Use Trail in the Connectivity and Accessibility section).	Medium		
	Re-establish the street tree canopy through public and private street tree planting.	Develop a street tree palette (approved species list) for Sheridan Drive to contribute towards placemaking efforts.	Medium	Highway Department, Planning & Zoning Department	Arbor Day Foundation
	Encourage the use of green infrastructure standards during project development.	Develop green infrastructure guidelines as part of upcoming zoning code update.	Medium	Planning & Zoning Department	

GOAL	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	INVOLVED PARTIES (LEAD PARTY BOLD)	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY	Support and enhance pedestrian accommodations on Sheridan Drive with additional pedestrian amenities and connections.	Develop a multi-use path along Harris Hill Road between Greiner Road and Sheridan Drive and ensure it interconnects with other pedestrian and cyclist amenities.	High	Highway Department	NYSOPRHP Recreational Trails Program
		Work with GoBike Buffalo and GBNRTC to analyze crash data, count pedestrian traffic, and measure speeding to determine whether additional traffic lights and/or hawk lights are warranted in the area, especially between Transit Road and Harris Hill Road.	Medium	Highway Department, NYSDOT	Transportation Alternatives Program
	Encourage developers to create connections within parcels.	Discourage developers from installing new curb cuts on Sheridan Drive (DOT policy) and require vehicular cross-access where feasible.	Medium	Planning & Zoning Department	
	Advocate for the continued implementation of complete street principles.	Study the feasibility of developing an off-road, multi-use trail along Sheridan Drive, or protected bicycle lanes.	Low	Highway Department, NYSDOT	NYSOPRHP Recreational Trails Program, Transportation Alternatives Program
PUBLIC SPACE AND AMENITIES	Encourage property owners to create and allow public access areas.	Encourage the development of plazas, outdoor dining, etc. via design guidelines (see Harmonious Development section).	High	Planning Board	
		As part of the zoning code update, establish requirements for the provision of open space and public amenities.	High	Planning & Zoning Department	

GOAL	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	INVOLVED PARTIES (LEAD PARTY BOLD)	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
PUBLIC SPACE AND AMENITIES	Utilize and enhance current and future community facilities and spaces.	Improve signage at the driveway to the Nature Center.	High	Parks Department	
		Develop a plan for Nature Center needs including parking, restrooms, and other amenities.	Medium	Parks Department, Planning & Zoning Department	
		Evaluate potential upgrades to existing playground facilities.	High	Parks Department	
		Evaluate whether new playgrounds should be developed.	Medium	Parks Department	
		Release a request for proposals to conduct community engagement and develop conceptual plans for adaptive reuse of the old youth center.	Medium	Parks Department, Planning & Zoning Department	
PLACEMAKING	Strengthen a sense of place through branded identity and a distinctive look and feel.	Install decorative pedestrian-scale lighting and add banner signs to poles.	Medium	Highway Department	
		Develop a community art committee to promote and review public art installations.	Medium	Planning & Zoning Department	
	Make it easier for people to locate features of the area and learn more about the corridor.	Develop wayfinding signage.	Medium	Planning & Zoning Department, Highway Department	
	Celebrate entry into the corridor and unique character areas.	Install a gateway feature after the bridge over Transit Road to show transition to a primarily residential area.	Medium	Planning & Zoning Department	Project for Public Spaces Community Placemaking Grants
		Use street art strategically to get drivers to slow down near daycares and Sheridan Hill Elementary School.	Low	Planning & Zoning Department	
	Consider methods to extend people's stay in the area.	Place benches/seating and other streetscape amenities in areas with the most pedestrian activity, using low-maintenance materials that will withstand the elements.	Low	Highway Department	

GOAL	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	INVOLVED PARTIES (LEAD PARTY BOLD)	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Harmonious Development	Facilitate consistent, complementary, and high-quality projects by providing guidance to property owners and developers	Create a Sheridan Drive Overlay Zone and develop design guidelines.	High	Planning & Zoning Department	
		Consider changes to minimum setbacks, maximum height restrictions, and allowable uses with the Sheridan Drive Overlay Zone.	High		
	Encourage context-sensitive project design between differing and adjacent land uses.	Rezone parcels currently zoned Commercial that abut residential parcels to Restricted Business.	High		

APPENDIX A: SUPPORTING PLAN SUMMARY

Supporting Plan Summary

Following is a summary of plans and reports completed both locally and regionally between 2003 and 2023. Each of these documents outlines guidelines or philosophies that will contribute to the Sheridan Drive Corridor planning approach. An overarching priority is for revitalization efforts to support a multi-modal, mixed-use development approach along the corridor and improve connections to existing or proposed green space and commercial hubs.



Clarence Tree Management Plan (2019)

Part of the Town of Clarence’s comprehensive vision is to preserve and enhance its urban forest. To support this vision, the 2019 Clarence select tree inventory collected data on existing tree stock and identified nearly 2,800 potential planting sites. The identification and analysis of select planting sites was intended to inform future development of the Clarence urban forest and community. Major takeaways from this document include:

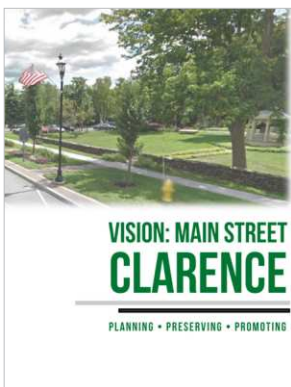
- The presence of trees can provide some physical and mental health benefits
- Trees can reduce street-level air pollution by up to 60%
- On average, consumers will pay about 11% more for goods in landscaped areas, and feel that the quality of their products are better
- Commercial property rental rates are 7% higher when trees are on the property



Town of Clarence Main Street Strategy (2018)

The purpose of the Town of Clarence Main Street Strategy is to provide an overall framework for future public and private investment in the Town of Clarence by focusing on Main Street as a powerful transportation and economic corridor. As Main Street strongly reflects the goals and values of the Town of Clarence, this strategy will be utilized to continuously enhance the Town. Takeaways from this document include:

- Increasing investment along all areas of Main Street, including but not limited to, the community’s financial, civic, and creative resources
- Utilization of smart growth strategies to promote business development
- Promoting walkability, and creating a sense of community on Main Street



Vision Main Street Clarence (2017)

Vision Main Street Clarence describes Main Street as the “heart” of the community, as it serves as a major transportation, economic, and commercial corridor for the Town of Clarence. This plan reflects the desire for Main Street to become more accessible, safe, and beautiful, while also protecting the historic and cultural fabric of the Town. Takeaways from this document include:

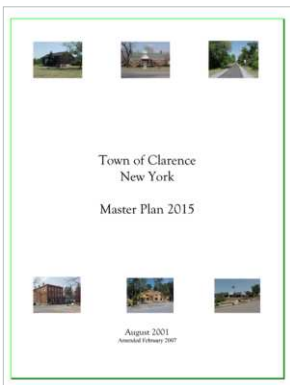
- Developing streetscape and increasing greenery along Main Street
- Adopting a Complete Streets method and ensuring safety for pedestrians and cyclists
- Maintaining the unique cultural features found in each of the four character areas of Main Street, including the intersection with Sheridan Drive



Clarence 2030 - Town of Clarence Comprehensive Plan (2016)

The Clarence 2030 Comprehensive Plan serves as the foundation upon which future planning and policy decisions are to be based. The plan focuses on sustainable growth and maintaining a high quality of life for all residents. A large focus of the 2030 Plan is to promote development while preserving the historic and cultural fabric that the Town of Clarence has maintained for centuries. Takeaways from this document include:

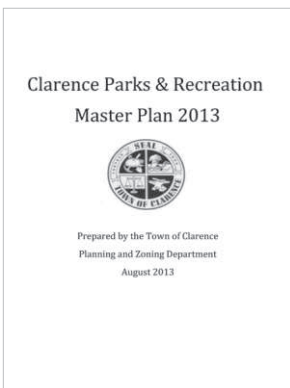
- Promoting smart growth principles and mixed use development to preserve character and limit sprawl.
- Increasing connectivity and access for non vehicular modes of transportation by adopting complete streets methods.
- Maintaining farmland and other greenspace by preserving agricultural land as well as planning for the development of new trails to create connections between parks.



Town of Clarence Master Plan (2015)

The goal of the Town of Clarence Master Plan was to create specific objectives to improve the Town of Clarence, based on the input of Clarence residents. The intent was to determine these objectives as town planning priorities. Takeaways from this document include:

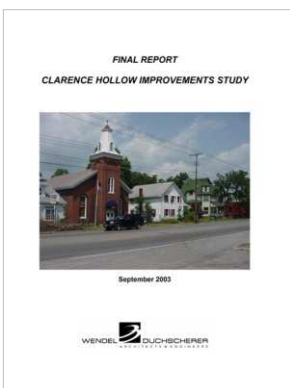
- Adopting an orderly and balanced growth plan which protects existing residential areas.
- Maintaining and promoting the historic character of the Town of Clarence.
- Promoting sustainable growth without losing important green space.



Clarence Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2013)

The Clarence Parks and Recreation Master Plan analyzes the Town of Clarence’s current park system, availability of recreational amenities and facilities within the parks, and youth population and recreational participation. The plan highlights the need for residents of all ages, but especially youth, to have access to passive and active outdoor recreational space. Takeaways from this document include:

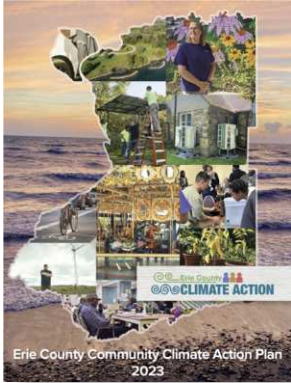
- Dedicating undeveloped green space as passive activity space (without compromising the existing natural landscape).
- Expanding and connecting the existing recreational trails in the Town of Clarence.
- Need for maintenance of existing facilities rather than building new facilities.



Clarence Hollow Improvements Study (2003)

The goal of the Clarence Hollow Improvements Study was to prepare a streetscape concept plan to establish a vision for Clarence Hollow, zoning code revisions to create a new zoning classification to protect the unique character of the Hollow area, and a Hamlet Revitalization Strategy to support and assist businesses. The Clarence Hollow Improvements Study focuses largely on the concept of “placemaking” and how streetscape strategies can be used to create a sense of place in the Clarence Hollow. Takeaways from this document include:

- Promoting walkability and non-vehicular transportation methods such as biking.
- Preserve the character of the Clarence Hollow community as a hamlet, with mixed uses set in an historical context.
- Create a small town, historic style business district that limits large-scale commercial development that is out of character with the area.



Erie County Community Climate Action Plan (2023)

This Plan, which was officially adopted in December 2023, sets goals related to improving equity, quality of living, and the environment in a sustainable way. These goals are related to consumption and waste, transportation, housing and neighborhoods, economic and workforce development, commercial energy conservation and renewable energy, nature-based solutions, and agriculture and food systems, and contain overarching goals of achieving climate justice and climate resilience and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Takeaways from this document include:

- Promote safe, equitable, and accessible multi-modal transportation systems.
- Foster neighborhoods that support the mental and physical health of residents.
- Increase and preserve green infrastructure, tree canopy, and open space.



Bike Buffalo Niagara Regional Bicycle Master Plan (2020)

Developed by the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council, this plan guides the development of a comprehensive network of on street and off-street bicycle facilities in the Buffalo Niagara region, including several in Clarence. In addition to the existing bicycle lanes on Sheridan Drive, the plan recommends the development of other bicycle facilities in the study area, including on Transit Road, Main Street, and Shimerville Road. Takeaways from this document include:

- The need for increased connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, and Townships.
- Promoting safety features and smart design to protect bicyclists and other pedestrians.
- Promoting the connection between non-vehicular transportation and increased physical health.



One Region Forward – Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (2015)

The One Region Forward Regional Plan provides a framework for sustainable development in the Buffalo Niagara region. This plan is centered around five “Big Ideas:” Land use, Transportation, Housing, Food Systems, and Energy and Climate Change. Collectively, all five big ideas are key for promoting sustainable and equitable development in the region. Takeaways from this document include:

- Promoting efficient and sustainable land use, specifically by following Smart Growth principles.
- Increasing the amount and diversity of transportation options in the region.
- Ensuring quality housing that fits within the physical and cultural fabric of its neighborhood.
- Strong food systems
- Preparation for the impacts of climate change



Western New York Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan: A Strategy for Prosperity (2011)

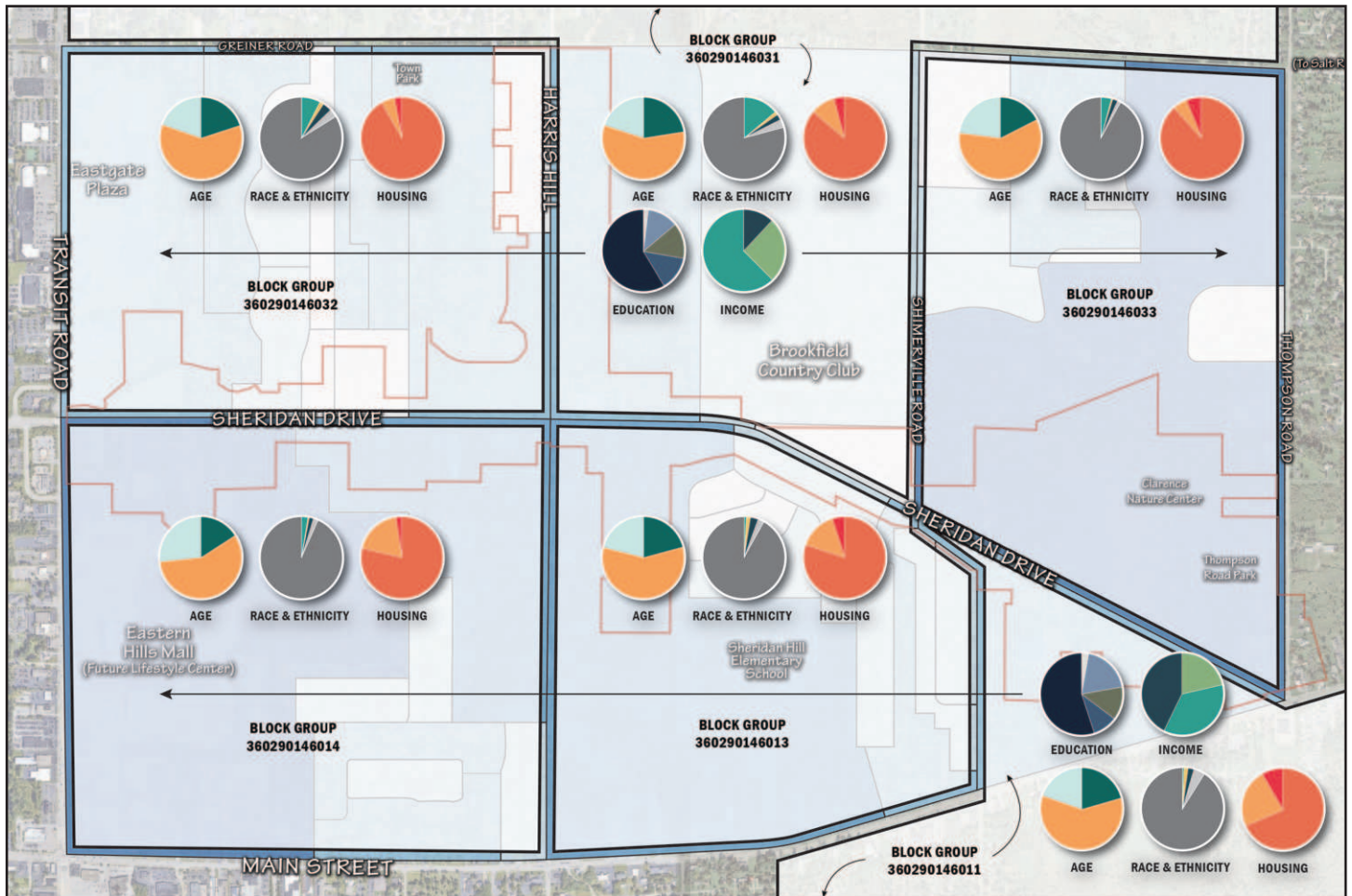
The Western New York Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan: A Strategy for Prosperity plan aims to create a more dynamic and sustainable economy for the region. The Strategy for Prosperity focuses on job readiness, smart growth, and entrepreneurship. This plan aims to help facilitate contributions to the resurgence of the broader economy of New York State. Takeaways from this document include:

- Strengthening fundamentals such as smart growth, job readiness, and entrepreneurship.
- Building target industry sectors such as agriculture and professional services.
- Building upon strengths while maintaining sustainable development.

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHICS

Community Profile & Demographic Study Area

Understanding the demographics of the surrounding population is essential for planning decisions that align with community needs and aspirations. This analysis examines key population characteristics to inform strategies that enhance equitable access to services, address local priorities, and guide sustainable growth along Sheridan Drive.



(Appendix E - Figure E12) Demographic Analysis Area

AGE

- Under 18
- Working Age (18-64)
- 65 and over

HOUSING

- Owner-occupied
- Renter-occupied
- Vacant

RACE & ETHNICITY

- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latin
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Other
- Two or more races
- White

EDUCATION

% Population 25 years and over whose highest education completed is:

- Less than High School
- High School
- Some College
- Associates Degree
- Bachelors Degree or Higher

INCOME

- \$0 - \$34,999
- \$35,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$200,000+

Summary of Demographic Data

- Total Population: 3,986
- Land Area: 3.99 square miles
- Population Density: 999 people per square mile (slightly denser than Erie County as a whole)
- Population Change: +2.6% between 2010 and 2020 (less growth than Erie County overall – 3.8%)
- Race:

White (not Hispanic/Latino)	3,593 (90.1%)
Hispanic/Latino	102 (2.6%)
Black (not Hispanic/Latino)	51 (1.3%)
Asian	146 (3.6%)
Mixed-Race (not Hispanic/Latino)	88 (2.2%)
Other	6 (0.2%)

- Age:

Under 10	13.5%
10 to 18	8.1%
18 to 29	17.9%
30 to 39	7%
40 to 49	9.6%
50 to 59	13.4%
60 to 69	12.6%
70+	17.7%

- Household Size:

1-person	26.6%
2-person	41.8%
3-person	6.8%
4-person	19.9%
5-person	3.1%
6-person	1.7%

- Family Households: 69% of all households
- Households with Children under 18: 51%
- Households without Access to a Vehicle: 6%
- Means of Transportation to Work:

Car, truck, or van	84.4%
Drove alone	79.3%
Carpooled	5.0%
Public transportation	0.8%
Walked	0.06%
Worked from home	14.8%

Sources: 2020 Census, 2017-2021 ACS Five-Year Estimates

Summary of Demographic Data Project Area vs Town of Clarence



2.6%

POPULATION
GROWTH FROM
2010 - 2020



*Compared to 6.7% in
the Town as a whole*



999

PEOPLE PER
SQUARE MILE



*Compared to 612 in
the Town as a whole*



22%

POPULATION
UNDER AGE 18



*Compared to 23% in
the Town as a whole*



18%

POPULATION
OVER AGE 70



*Compared to 14% in
the Town as a whole*



2.3

PEOPLE PER
HOUSEHOLD ON
AVERAGE



*Compared to 2.6 in
the Town as a whole*



11.6%

INCREASE IN
HOUSING UNITS
FROM 2013 - 2021



*Compared to 16.4%
increase across the
Town of Clarence*



95%

HOMEOWNERSHIP
RATE



*Compared to 86% in
the Town as a whole*



3.9%

VACANCY
RATE



*Compared to 5.4% in
the Town as a whole*



94%

HOUSEHOLDS WITH
ACCESS TO A VEHICLE



*Compared to 95% in
the Town as a whole*



38%

PEOPLE PER
HOUSEHOLD ON
AVERAGE



*Compared to 40% in
the Town as a whole*

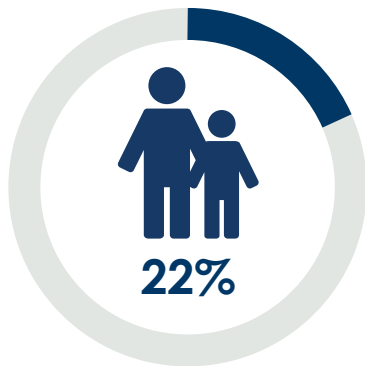
Sources: 2010 and 2020 U.S. Census, 2009-2013 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates

Key Takeaways from Demographic Data Analysis



This area is growing, but slowly.

Between 2010 and 2020, the population in this area increased by 2.6%, less than the Town and the County overall. This is likely due to the lack of sewer infrastructure in the area, which limits multi-family residential development. However, a number of mixed-use projects are approved or under review that would bring over 100 new residential units to the area. This does not include the planned redevelopment of the Eastern Hills Mall, which at full build-out may include as many as 1,400 new residential units. An influx of new residents may increase demand for services and amenities along Sheridan Drive.



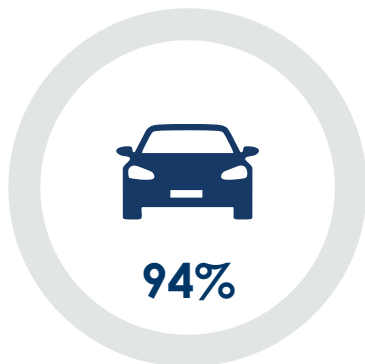
There a lot of children in the area.

22% of residents in this area are under age 18 and of these, 63% are under age 10. Children in this area are well-served by recreational assets such as Sheridan Hill Elementary School, Thompson Road Park, and Fogelsonger Park, but may have difficulty getting to these places safely and independently.



There a lot of seniors in the area.

18% of residents in this area are over age 70. While there is the Senior Center on Thompson Road, there may be a need for increased access to services, increased age-friendly and accessible housing and mobility options, and amenities such as outdoor exercise equipment and public benches, to allow these seniors to age-in-place.



Most households have access to a personal vehicle.

Just 6% of households in this area are car-free. Another 29% are one-car households, though the majority (62%) of these one-car households are also one-person households. Increasing the safety and availability of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in this area may allow more households to become car-free, downsize from two or three cars to just one car, or use their cars less.



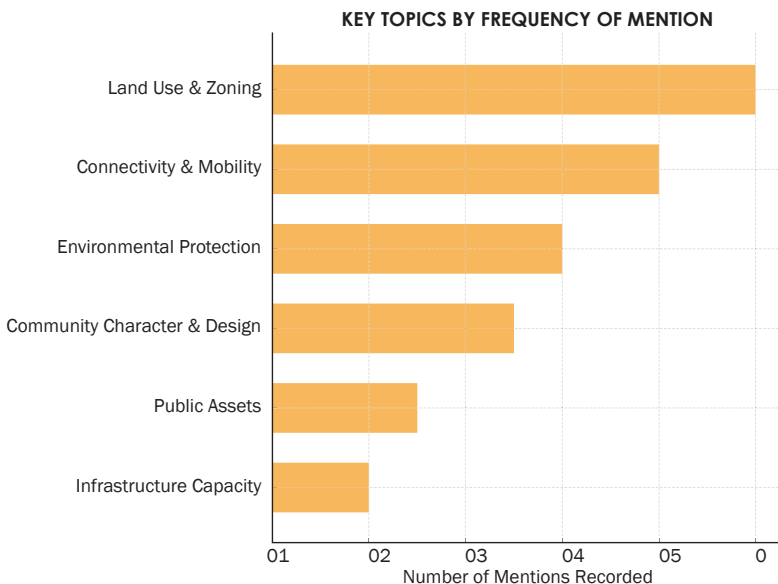
PUBLIC OUTREACH

COMMUNITY MEETING



The following summarizes community feedback received during a recent public meeting on the Vision Sheridan planning initiative. The meeting was organized to understand local perspectives on land use, connectivity, infrastructure, and community character within the Sheridan Drive corridor in the Town of Clarence. Attendees participated in roundtable discussions, shared local knowledge, and identified priority areas for improvement. The team learned community members value Sheridan Drive’s blend of green space, rural character, and the potential for modest, context-sensitive improvements.

GENERAL FEEDBACK



Key discussion points are categorized at left by how frequently they were raised. The following pages illustrate overall level of support or opposition expressed by participants.

- Many residents indicated they moved to Clarence to enjoy a less dense environment, expressing concern about significant new development in traditionally quieter areas.
- Residents felt recommendations should be considered alongside Clarence Hollow and Clarence Center priorities—ensuring that planning for Sheridan aligns with the Town’s overall vision while respecting the established character of each area.

Public Outreach Tabling Results

ECONOMIC GROWTH PERSPECTIVES

Land Use Type	Opposed	Neutral	In Favor
Residential	10%	20%	70%
Small Scale Retail	35%	25%	40%
Professional Offices	20%	30%	50%
Restaurants & Bars	70%	20%	10%
Mixed-Use Buildings	70%	15%	15%

The objective of this table was to illustrate the community’s initial reaction to different types of land use in the project area.

- Residential - Generally acceptable if low impact.
- Small-Scale Retail - Modest acceptance; concerns about noise/traffic.
- Professional Offices - Viewed as relatively benign commercial uses.
- Restaurants & Bars - The majority of attendees opposed due to potential noise, garbage, and traffic.
- Mixed-Use Buildings - Strongly opposed; residents saw this as a threat to maintaining the suburban/rural identity.

Additional Economic Growth Notes

- Zoning Clarifications: Participants requested clarity on where certain uses, such as restaurants, are permitted under current zoning.
- Infrastructure Capacity: Multiple participants questioned whether existing stormwater and sewer systems could support new development. Currently, much of Sheridan Drive relies on septic systems, and there is uncertainty about future sewer expansion. Limited capacity will guide the scale and type of feasible development.
- Bank and Funding Perspectives: Discussion touched on how banks assess and fund projects. While septic development can be more expensive, many feel it remains a viable option. The Clarence Industrial Development Agency (IDA) could potentially explore financial assistance or incentives. Ultimately, banks typically become involved only once the Town has approved a project.

Public Outreach Tabling Results Cont.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVES

Environmental Comment Areas (percentage of total comments written and recorded)							
Access to Greenspace	30%						
Drainage Issues	25%						
Loss of Rural Character	20%						
Ecological Preservation & Restoration	15%						
Other	10%						

The objective of this table was to have participants highlight the types of environmental and greenspace issues of greatest interest to them, paying special attention to areas of concern.

- Access to Greenspace - Desire for more walkable parks, trails, and safe connections.
- Drainage Issues - Localized flooding and unknown or unique subsurface hydrology that can impact and be impacted by development.
- Rural Character - Residents desire to maintain the feeling of open space and balance greenspace with development.
- Oak Savanna & Ecological Restoration - Unique environmental resources need to be celebrated, protected, and restored.
- Other - Includes topics like tree planting, interpretive signage for natural areas, etc.

Additional Environmental Notes

- Greenspace Imbalance - Residents on all sides of the Sheridan corridor voiced interest in greater access to parks and open spaces and feel existing green spaces are not well-connected or easily walkable.
 - Fogelsonger Park - Support for ongoing improvements, potentially adding accessibility for northwest residents.
 - Thompson Road Park - Known escarpment and topographical challenges limit direct access to the nature center.
 - Southeast Area - Lacks close recreational amenities apart from school playgrounds and the Oak Savanna area.
 - WNY Land Conservancy Preserve - Southwest residents noted that this preserve could be a key asset but currently feels inaccessible.
 - Drainage Concerns - Participants identified several problematic drainage areas east of Harris Hill and near Ledge Lane and Newhouse. Some property owners/developers may be unaware of existing stream corridors and hydrologic features.
- “Green but Not Accessible” - Several attendees noted that while Sheridan Drive appears green when driving, few open spaces are safe or comfortable to access without a car. Concerns also arose about underutilized areas, such as the Girl Scout portion of Thompson Road Park, and the need for wayfinding to direct visitors.

Public Outreach Tabling Results Cont.

Additional Environmental Notes

- Oak Savanna & Rural Character - Attendees expressed pride in the Oak Savanna's unique ecology and favored preserving its ecological integrity. Some favored expanding public access through parking, trails, and limited programming, while direct neighbors had concerns about safety and privacy.
- Rural Cues - Many want to preserve the Town's rural aesthetic, balancing it with new improvements and development.
- Bicycling & Connectivity - Organized bicycle rides often use Fogelsonger Park as a staging area. Participants recommended more parks/greenspaces supporting biking, plus scenic connections within and beyond the corridor. Large neighborhoods often lack through-streets, making it difficult to plan direct bike routes.
- New Trail Ideas - A potential off-road multi-use trail along Harris Hill gained traction, but participants emphasized that all trails should have a clear start/end and logical connections to the broader sidewalk/trail network.

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESSIBILITY PERSPECTIVES

Connectivity & Safety Priorities							
Sidewalk Maintenance	35%						
Bicycle Facilities	25%						
Intersection Safety	15%						
Traffic Calming	15%						
Wayfinding Signage	10%						

The objective of this table was to establish which specific connectivity improvements participants felt were most urgent or beneficial.

- Sidewalk Maintenance & Snow Removal - Confusion over who is responsible; desire for town-managed clearing
- Bicycle Facilities - Requests for continuous bike lanes, multi-use trails, and safer neighborhood connections.
- Intersection Safety - Concerns about merge at Harris Hill, blind spots on Boncrest, and speeding near daycares.
- Traffic Calming - Interest in speed limit enforcement, road diets, or additional pavement markings.
- Wayfinding Signage - Directing pedestrians/cyclists to parks, trails, and local amenities.

Additional Connectivity & Access Notes

Intersection & Traffic Concerns -

- Residents find the merge lane at Sheridan and Harris Hill dangerous. While NYSDOT data suggests crashes have decreased, traffic speeds remain high.
- Boncrest Left Turn - Sight lines are poor due to a blind curve.

Public Outreach Tabling Results Cont.

Additional Connectivity & Access Notes

Speeding -

- Areas near Dave & Adams (east) and daycares between Harris Hill and Shimerville emerged as trouble spots.
- Sidewalks & Maintenance -
- Attendees asked who would be responsible for snow removal and repairs. Currently, property owners must maintain sidewalks. Participants supported exploring a Town-managed “Sidewalk Management Area,” particularly where vacant properties exist.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Infrastructure -

- Setback Sidewalks - Many favored placing sidewalks farther from the roadway, possibly adding vegetative buffers.
- Multi-Use Trail - Given the wide right-of-way, a multi-use trail may be possible.
- Safe Crossings - Participants requested additional traffic lights, HAWK signals, or mid-block refuge islands, especially near Clearview or Glenwood, if future development or demand justifies them.
- Internal Connectivity - Connecting driveways internally can help reduce curb cuts, easing congestion and improving safety.

PUBLIC AMENITY PERSPECTIVES

Public Assets

- Indoor Community Facility - While some recalled past interest in a facility near Main Street and Sheridan, the current plan may focus on Goodrich near the highway facility. Adaptive reuse of the old youth center could be a smaller-scale start.
- Art & Festival Space - Participants suggested reusing existing buildings (e.g., the old youth center) near nature centers to promote community arts and cultural events.
- Privately Owned Public Spaces - Ideas included plazas, outdoor dining areas, and church event spaces—particularly if sidewalks along Sheridan enable easier foot traffic.

Public Outreach Tabling Results Cont.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN PERSPECTIVES

Design Element	Opposed	Neutral	In Favor
Decorative Crosswalks	35%	30%	35%
Pedestrian Refuge Islands	20%	40%	40%
HAWK Crossing Signals	10%	25%	65%
Streetscape Lighting	15%	30%	55%
Benches/Seating	25%	25%	50%
Gateway Features & Wayfinding Signage	5%	30%	65%

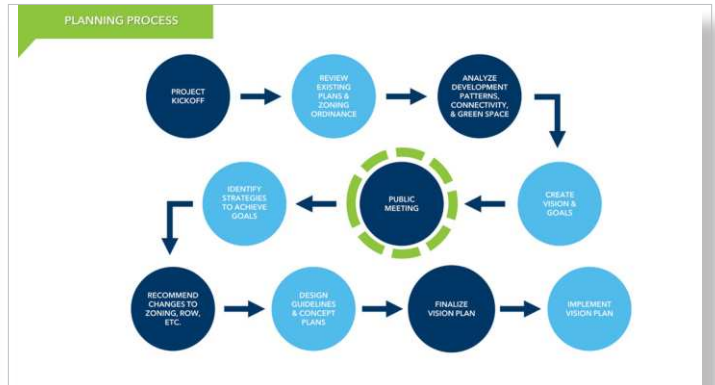
The objective of this table was to collect feedback on potential design treatments along Sheridan Drive in the project area.

- HAWK Signals - Generally well received for pedestrian safety.
- Refuge Islands - Participants were neutral to cautious; questions about traffic flow impacts.
- Benches & Seating - Mixed views; beneficial for mobility impaired residents, but others question the appeal near busy roads. More universal support for increased public greenspace with scenic seating options.
- Gateway & Wayfinding - Wide support to establish identity and highlight local history or natural assets.

Additional Character & Design Notes

- Decorative crosswalks received mixed reviews due to maintenance concerns. A HAWK signal or refuge island at strategic locations is popular and may improve pedestrian safety if properly designed.
- Strong support for signage highlighting bike paths, local history, and connections to parks or nearby towns.
- Gateway features suggested near the Transit Road bridge to signal a transition to a more residential corridor.
- Street art or unique signage near daycares or schools could help slow traffic.
- Low-Maintenance Materials - Participants stressed using durable features that will withstand the elements and maintain a clean appearance over time.
- Parking Location - Attendees were split on whether parking should be front-facing or located behind buildings, reflecting the suburban context. It would be beneficial to consider a mix.
- Retail Preferences - Strong opposition to mixed-use developments and a desire to preserve existing suburban land-use patterns. Mixed-use can preserve open space so it may be worth revisiting this topic.
- Building Height & Materials - Two-story buildings remain the preferred maximum height. A previously approved three-story project generated controversy. Vinyl siding was unpopular, though it is allowed by code; the Planning Board often encourages longer-lasting composite materials like LP Smart Siding.

PUBLIC MEETING PRESENTATION



MISSION

Promote a **visually and physically vibrant** community corridor that **connects to the history** of the Town while pursuing **sustainable growth**, creating **destinations**, and maintaining a high **quality of life** for residents and employees. The corridor must **protect and enhance public, environmental, residential, and commercial assets**.

- GOALS**
- ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY** *Attract and retain businesses that serve a variety of needs, enhance the community, balance the Town's tax base and increase nearby property values, and are aesthetically appealing.*
 - ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY** *Ensure that new development and redevelopment, when it occurs, is responsive and respectful of natural resources and fosters diverse and beneficial ecosystems.*
 - CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS** *Link public and private resources and connect surrounding neighborhoods to the commercial corridor through safe and efficient circulation of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists that is respectful of surrounding context.*
 - PUBLIC SPACES AND ENGAGEMENT** *Foster high-quality community facilities and services that meet the needs of residents and businesses and improve the overall quality of life.*
 - PLACEMAKING** *Create a sense of identity, by recognizing this unique corridor and supporting the future development of sites in accordance with the character of the community.*
 - HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT** *Promote cohesive and targeted development through updated zoning and design guidelines to provide a more unified direction for future development and existing neighborhoods along the corridor.*

- WHERE WE'RE GOING**
- The Vision Sheridan Plan will serve as a guiding document to **direct** future development to align with the community's vision through:
- 1** High-level recommendations for zoning changes, ROW improvements, etc.
 - 2** Design guidelines
 - 3** Concept plans for different "character areas" along the corridor

TONIGHT'S ACTIVITIES

We're here tonight to hear from **you!**
Please join one of the tables for a discussion/exercise on the following topics:

- ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY**
- ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**
- CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS**
- PUBLIC SPACES AND ENGAGEMENT**
- COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND DESIGN**

We encourage you to move between tables to participate in all of the discussions.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

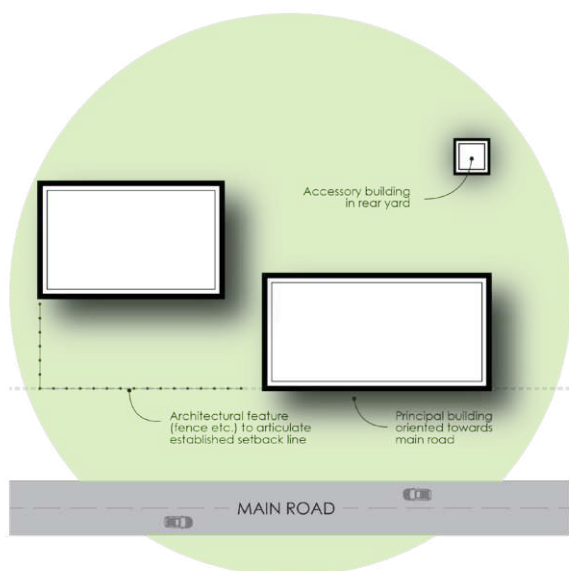
These design guidelines are intended to provide guidance to property owners and developers planning projects in the Sheridan Drive Overlay Zone. Application of these guidelines will ensure that new development and redevelopment in the overlay corresponds to existing community character, contributes to a sense of place and identity, promotes connectivity and access, and overall promotes a visually and physically vibrant corridor along Sheridan Drive.

These design guidelines for the Sheridan Drive corridor are purposefully broader than other documents—such as the 2012 Clarence Center Design Guidelines—because stakeholder discussions emphasized a desire for more global, less context-specific considerations. While Clarence Center’s guidelines can be more precise due to well-defined nodes, gateways, and a clearly established core, these locations along Sheridan Drive have not yet been definitively identified.

As a result, these guidelines aim to strike a balance between encouraging a high-quality development pattern and providing clear, direct instruction for private developers, without prescribing overly specific or localized requirements.

The design guidelines are organized into the following sections:

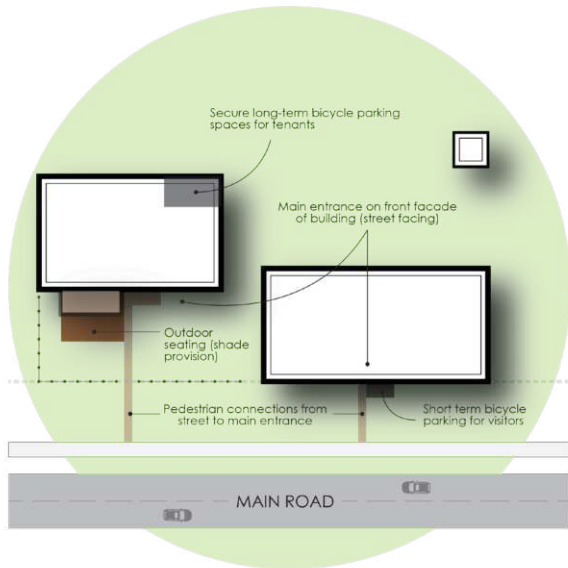
1. Setback and Orientation of Buildings
2. Cyclist and Pedestrian Amenities
3. Vehicular Parking and Access
4. Trees, Landscaping, and Green Infrastructure
5. Signage, Lighting, and Public Art
6. Facade Design and Materials
7. Sustainable Design



1. SETBACK AND ORIENTATION OF BUILDINGS

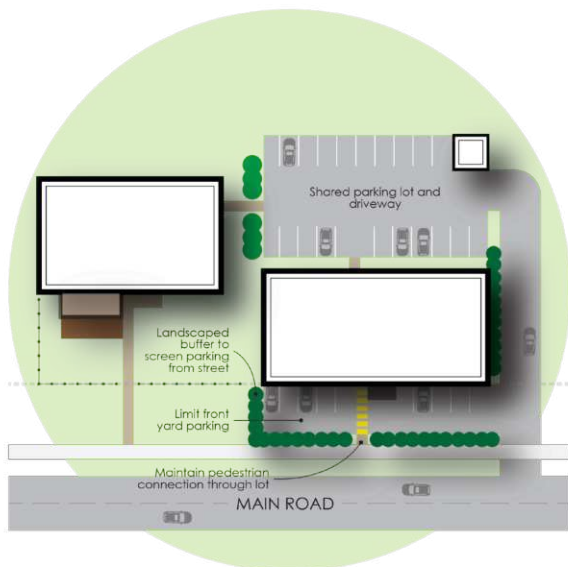
- Principal buildings should be oriented to the main thoroughfare (the road that has a larger volume of vehicular traffic). If this is not possible, then the facade facing the main thoroughfare should be designed to engage with the street.
- For buildings set back further than the established front yard setback line, a stone or brick wall, split-rail fence, or other architectural feature between 2.5 and 3 feet high should be used to separate the public realm from the front yard area.
- Accessory buildings should be sited in the rear or side yards only.

2. CYCLIST AND PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES

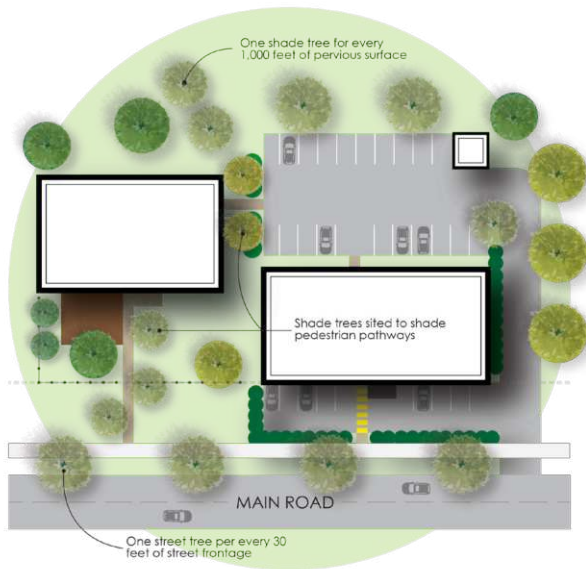


- Cyclist amenities should be provided as follows:
 - One long-term bicycle parking space should be provided for every five residential units (multi-family residential). Long-term bicycle parking should be located indoors, in a secure area only accessible to the building tenants.
 - One short-term bicycle parking space should be provided for every 3,000 square feet of commercial floor area. Short-term parking spaces should be located so as not to hinder pedestrian traffic, but in a highly visible location to prevent theft.
- Pedestrian connections should be provided from the street to the main entrance of the building(s).
- The main pedestrian entrance should be on the front facade of the building(s), or whichever facade faces the street.
- Entryways should be clearly identifiable, marked by an awning, signage, a recess or projection of the building facade, or other architectural elements.
- Pedestrian amenities should be included, such as shade structures and outdoor seating.

3. VEHICULAR PARKING AND ACCESS

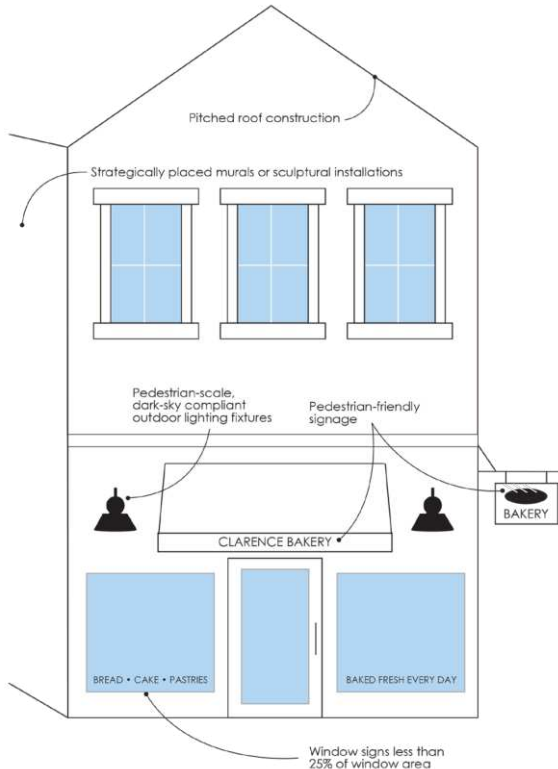


- The number of parking spaces should be the minimum required to meet the needs of the users of the site, based on a transportation demand analysis. The number of parking spaces provided may be less than the minimum parking requirements set forth in Section 229-20 of the Town Code, if the transportation demand analysis shows that there will not be spillover onto surrounding neighborhood streets.
- Front yard parking should not exceed one double-sided aisle. If parking is visible from the street, the perimeter of the parking lot should be landscaped to provide a buffer and screen the parking lot.
- The number of driveways should be the minimum practical to limit conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Opportunities for shared parking and driveways should be explored.



4. TREES, LANDSCAPING, & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- New development should install at least one shade tree for every 1,000 square feet of pervious surface. Parking lot interior and perimeter landscaping as well as existing trees count towards this requirement.
- Shade trees should be sited to shade pedestrian paths and walkways.
- At least one street tree should be planted along the front and corner side lot lines for each 30 feet of street frontage.
- Shade and street trees should be maintained in a healthy, growing condition until fully established or replaced, as necessary. Street trees should be salt-tolerant and irrigated.
- Tree and plant species should be suited to the climate and micro-climate of the site, and native species and low-water species should be used whenever possible. A variety of species should be used to create visual interest and prevent disease.
- Green infrastructure should be installed per the Town’s green infrastructure guidelines (to be developed separately).



5. SIGNAGE, LIGHTING, AND PUBLIC ARTWORK

- New electronic message signs are prohibited in the Sheridan Drive Overlay Zone.
- Window signs and neon signs should not exceed 25 percent of the window area. LED string or rope lights are prohibited.
- Pedestrian-friendly signage is highly encouraged, such as awning or blade signs.
- Outdoor lighting should be pedestrian-scale (less than 12 feet in height), except in loading areas, where lighting may be up to 15 feet in height. Outdoor lighting should also be dark-sky compliant, projecting light into the site and preventing light spillage off-site. Lighting fixtures should contribute positively to the building design, such as soffit or gooseneck lighting.
- Public art, such as murals and sculptures, are highly encouraged.



6. FACADE DESIGN & MATERIALS

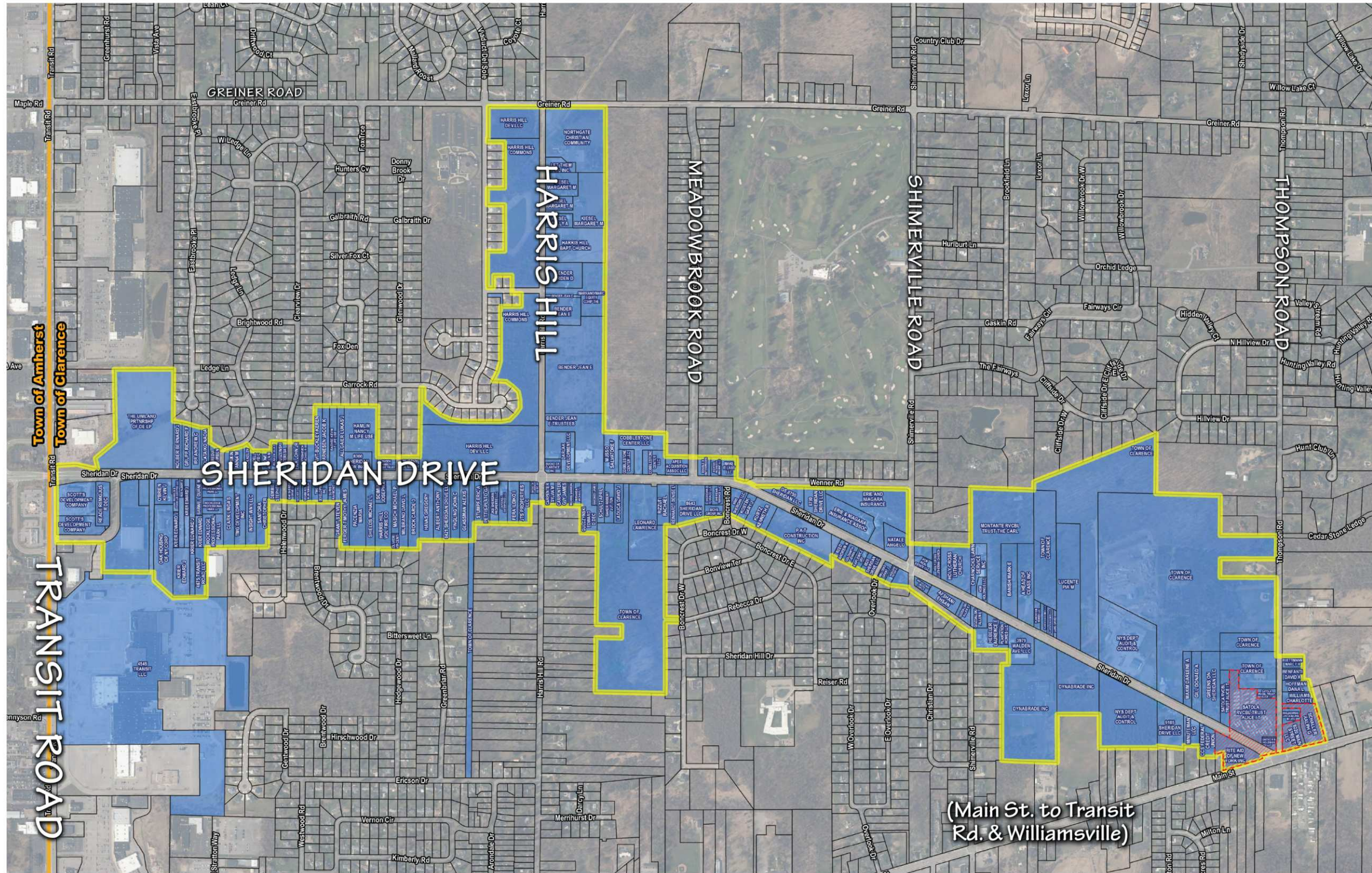
- The front facade and corner side facades of the building(s) should have a ground-floor transparency of at least 75 percent, and an upper-floor transparency for at least 20 percent. Where not feasible, other architectural elements shall be used to limit blank wall width and create
- Pitched roof construction preferred over flat roof construction.
- Facades that engage the street.
- Buildings wider than 50 feet should be articulated or use a variety of facade treatments to visually break up the uniformity of the front and corner side facades.
- Materials should be high-quality and correspond to the character of the neighborhood. A variety of materials should be used to increase interest.

7. SUSTAINABLE DESIGN



- Whenever feasible, incorporate building products made from recycled content or sourced locally and sustainability.
- Encourage the integration of vegetated roofs, rooftop solar panels, solar tiles, and other renewable energy systems.
- Design the building envelope to optimize natural ventilation, daylighting, and thermal performance to reduce reliance on mechanical heating and cooling.
- Incorporate sustainable site design strategies like bioswales, rain gardens, permeable paving, and cisterns to manage storm water on-site.
- Specify water-saving fixtures and sensor-based irrigation systems. Harvesting rainwater for landscaping and non-potable uses helps minimize demand on municipal water supplies.
- Minimize heat absorption with light-colored or reflective roofing materials, shading structures, and tree canopies.
- Landscape with native and drought-tolerant plant species
- Implement dark-sky-friendly exterior lighting, using fixtures designed to minimize light spillover.
- Consider electric vehicle charging stations where appropriate
- Whenever possible, renovate or re purpose existing structures instead of building anew.
- Encourage developers to seek recognized green building certifications or to meet established energy performance benchmarks.

Figure E01 : Vision Sheridan Study Area Map



MAP LEGEND

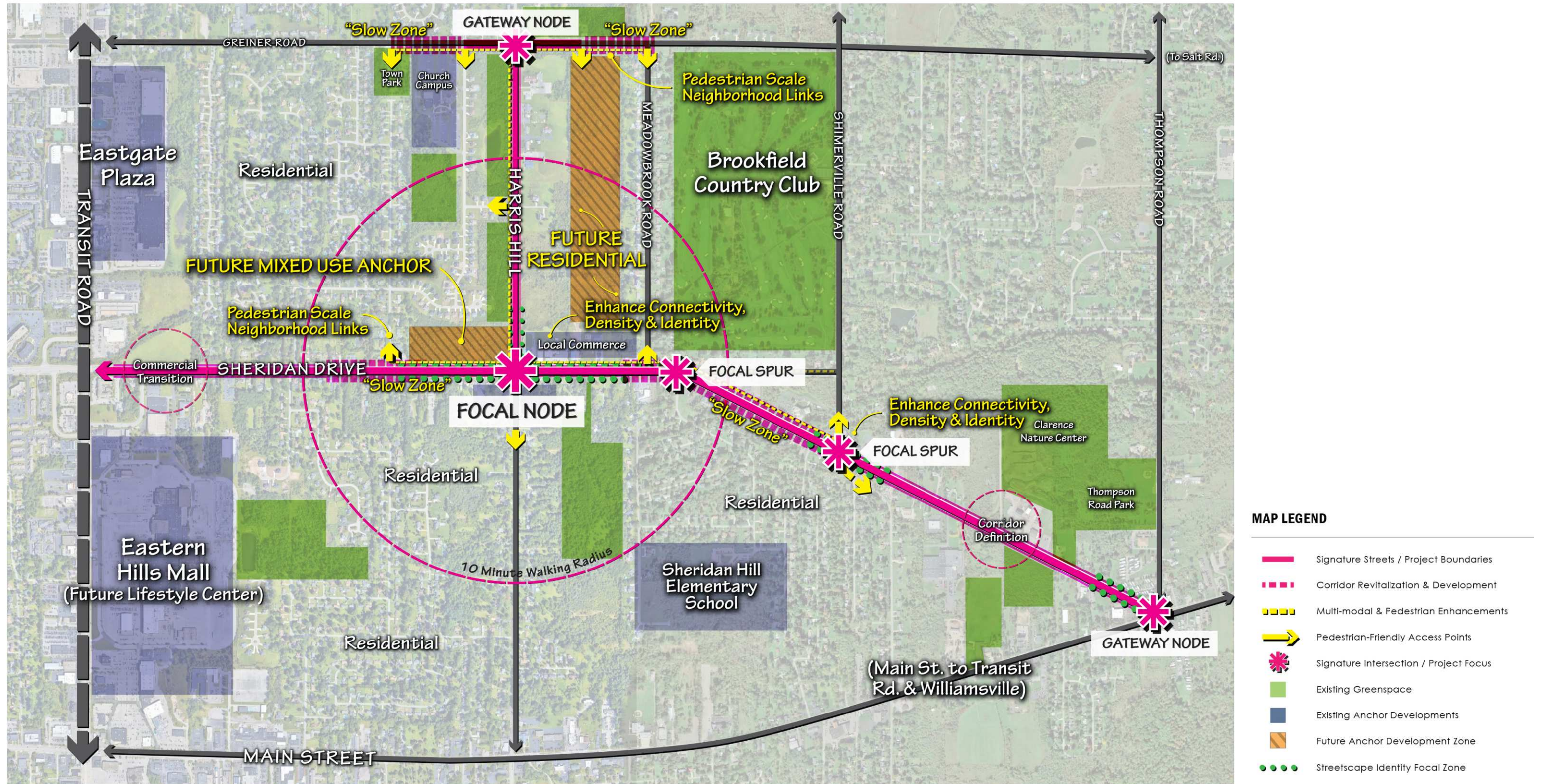
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Parcels (2022)
-  Study Area
-  Vision Main Street Boundary
-  Study Area Parcels (Owner Labeled)

(Main St. to Transit Rd. & Williamsville)



Town of Clarence New York
VISION SHERIDAN PLAN

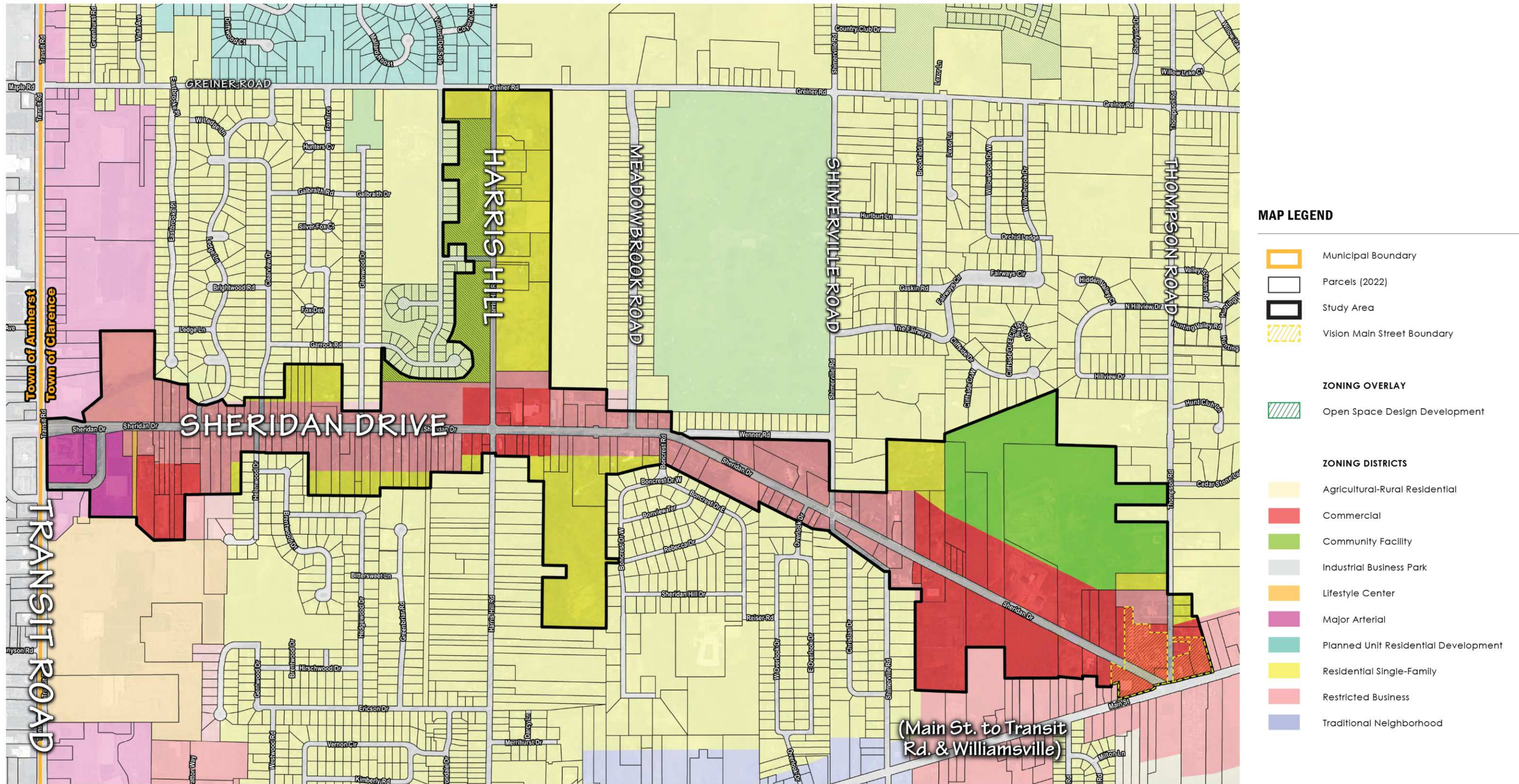
Figure E02: Vision Sheridan Context & Concept Map



Town of Clarence New York
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Figure E03: Vision Sheridan Zoning Map



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Figure E05: Assessment of Existing Weaknesses

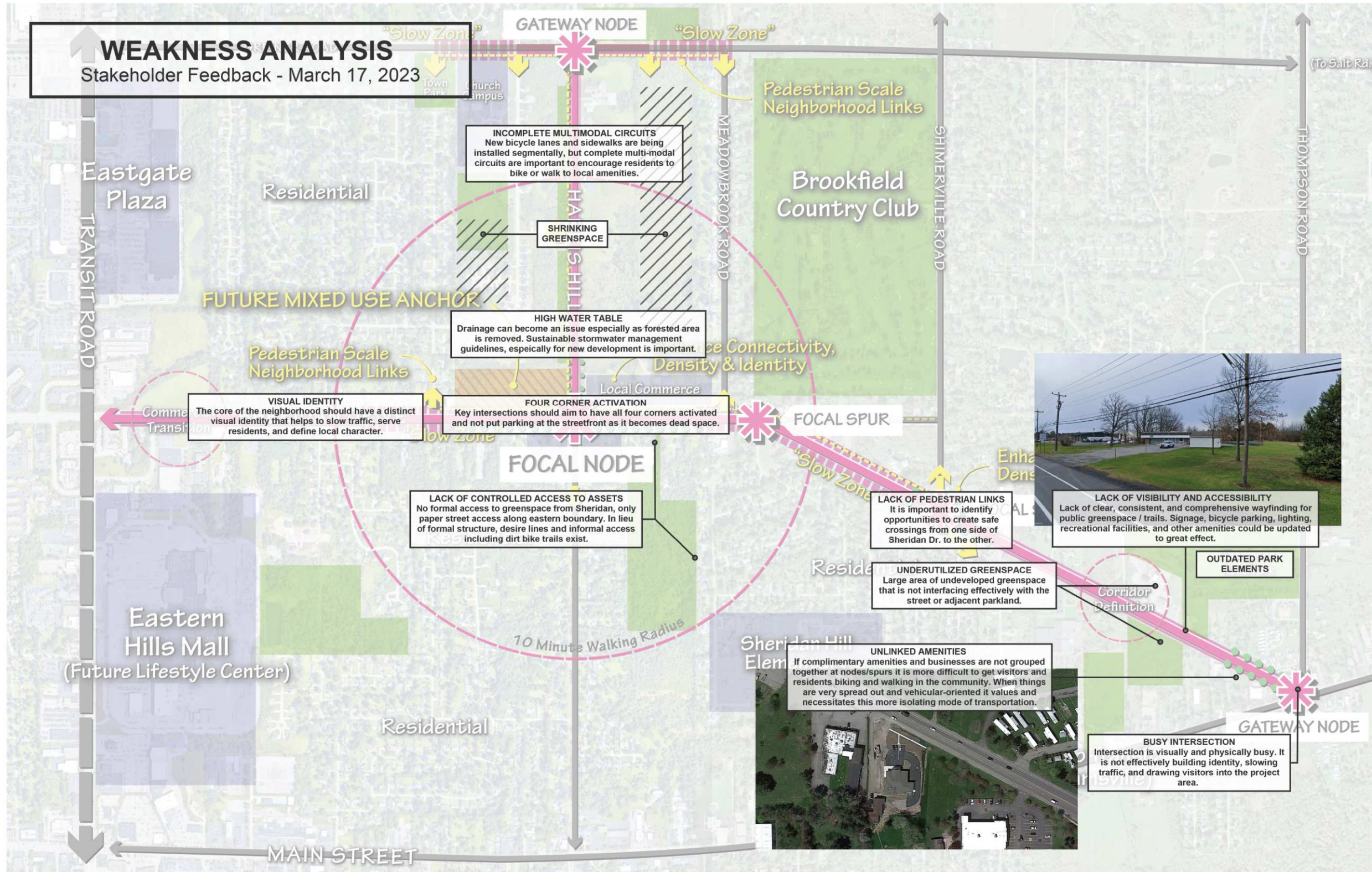


Figure E06: Assessment of Existing Opportunities

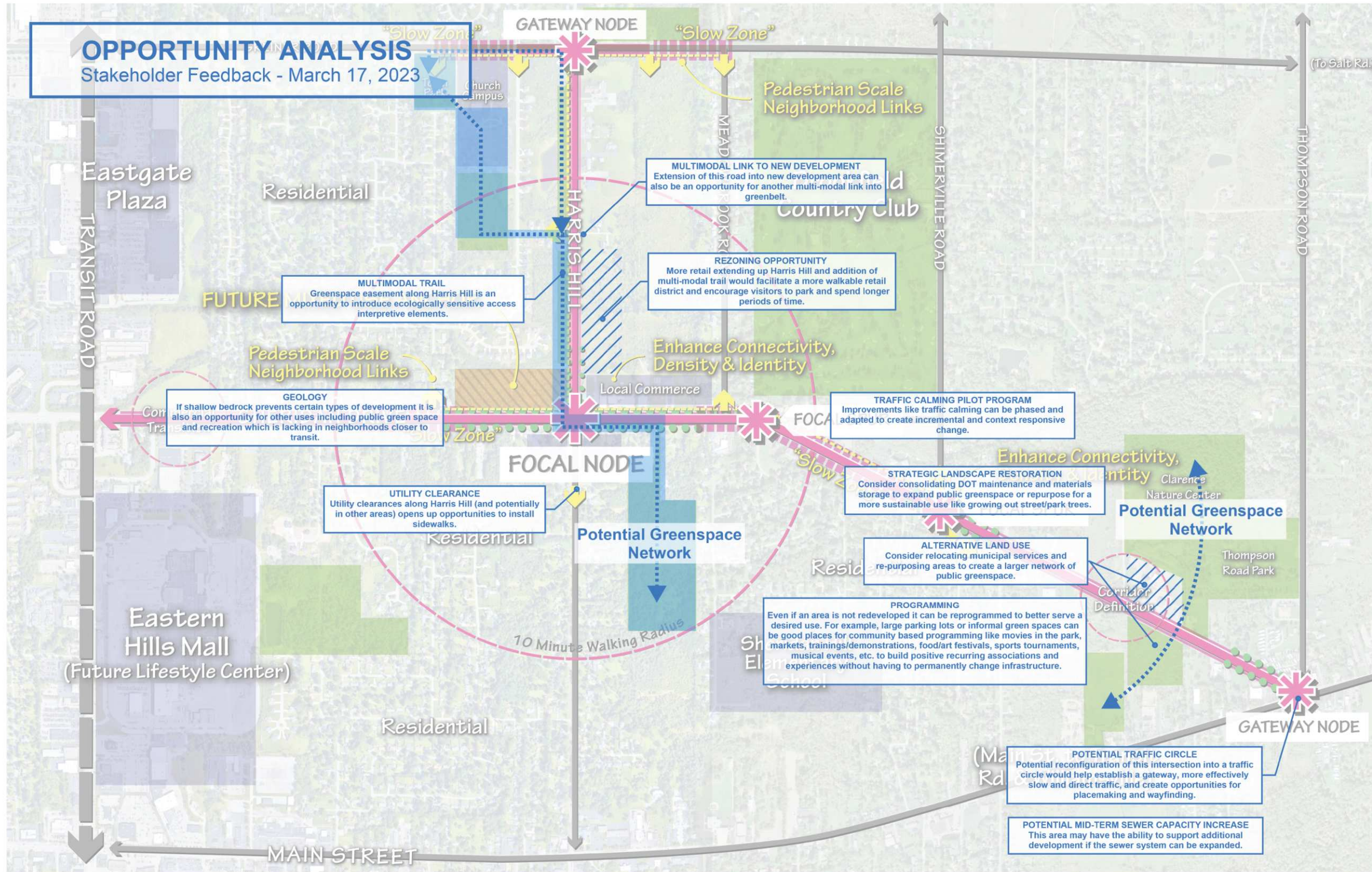
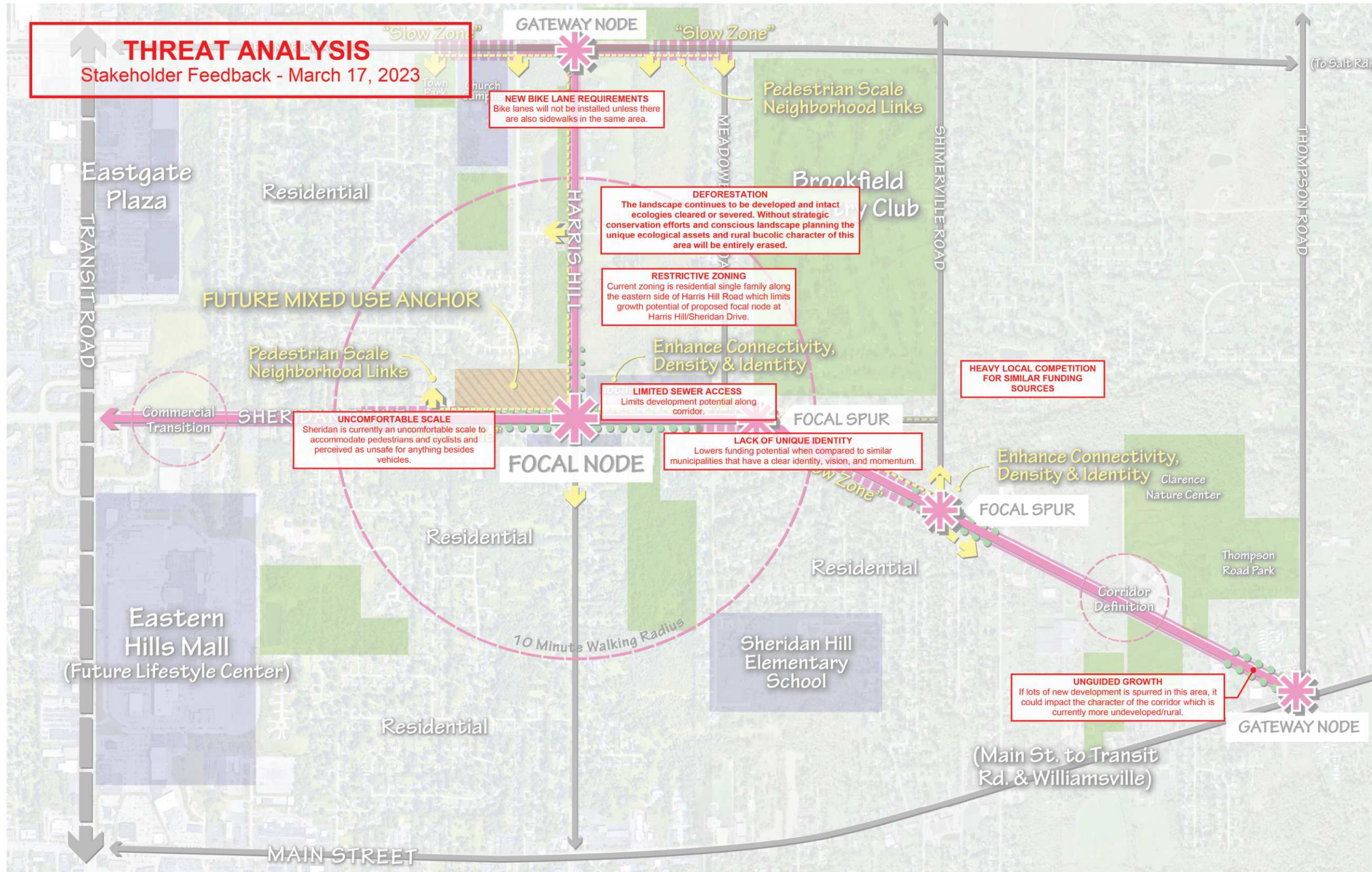


Figure E07: Assessment of Existing Threats



THREAT TAKEAWAYS*

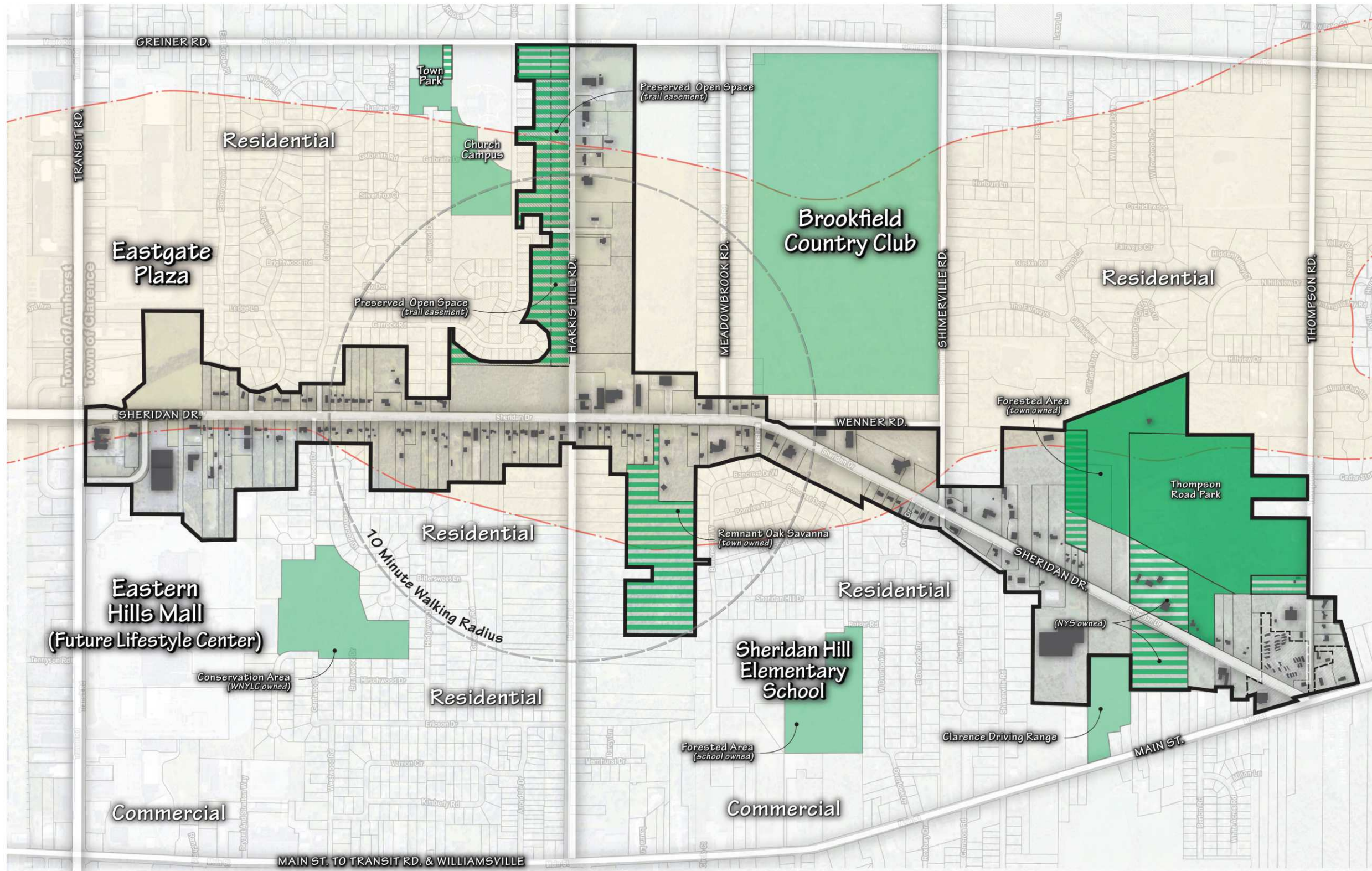
- **OVERPRIORITIZING VEHICULAR TRAFFIC** - Failing to balance the needs of all modes of transportation may discourage walkability and can undermine traffic calming efforts.
- **INEFFICIENT LAND USE** - Sprawling and unguided growth risks less tax revenue per square foot, congestion, and increased service costs. It is important for the health of a growing community to also integrate higher-density, mixed-use developments in order to preserve open space in other areas.
- **INADEQUATE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT** - Lack of community buy-in can hinder long-term success and lead to resistance against proposed changes.
- **INFLEXIBLE SPACES** - Designing public spaces that are too rigid and not adaptable to different uses could limit their appeal. Spaces should be multifunctional to serve various activities and events throughout the year.
- **INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE** - Focusing only on initial design and construction without planning for long-term upkeep of public spaces and infrastructure could result in deteriorating facilities that are underused or unsafe.
- **NEGLECTING UNIVERSAL DESIGN** - A lack of universal design, and especially a lack of experiential consideration for people with disabilities, children, seniors, or those without cars may exclude vulnerable populations from experiencing full benefits of local improvements.
- **UNDERINVESTING IN CLIMATE RESILIENCE** - Failing to incorporate climate-resilient design features, such as flood management, heat mitigation, and sustainable stormwater systems, can leave the community vulnerable to environmental threats and degrade public spaces over time.



*Note these 'threats' are not necessarily being observed, rather they are relevant issues to actively avoid when planning and developing along the corridor.



Figure E08: Public Green Space & Geographic Assets



GREENSPACE CONSIDERATIONS

- How important is green space to this corridor?
- What existing public green spaces do you utilize frequently? Or if not, why?
- What do you think of existing park amenities?
- What are the main concerns regarding environmental quality in this area?
- What environmental features are most important to preserve (Oak Savanna, escarpment, etc.) and how can they best be preserved?
- How important is green infrastructure to this corridor?
- What green design features do you think would help enhance the corridor? (e.g. street trees, planters, stormwater catchment, nature trails, etc.)

MAP LEGEND

- Vision Sheridan Project Boundary
- - - Vision Main Street Project Boundary
- Public Green Space / Open Space Asset
- ▨ Green Space Opportunity Area
- Onondaga Escarpment (NRI Data Service)



Town of Clarence New York
VISION SHERIDAN PLAN



Figure E09: Development Patterns



DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Which areas are experiencing the most growth, and how is this growth impacting local infrastructure?
- Are there optimal areas to increase density without negatively impacting quality of life or character?
- What barriers are there to attracting and retaining desirable development? (zoning, marketing, utilities, customer base, employee base, etc.)
- What gaps are there in community services or resources (e.g., healthcare, education, community centers) along the corridor?
- How are aesthetics, safety, and walkability prioritized in existing and planned developments?
- How are current development patterns contributing to or detracting from a sense of place and identity?
- What role do aesthetics (building design, signage, landscaping) play in shaping the corridor's appeal?
- What community engagement practices can be established to keep the public involved in ongoing development decisions?
- What opportunities exist to incorporate more green spaces, public art, and community gathering areas?

MAP LEGEND & CURRENT LAND USE

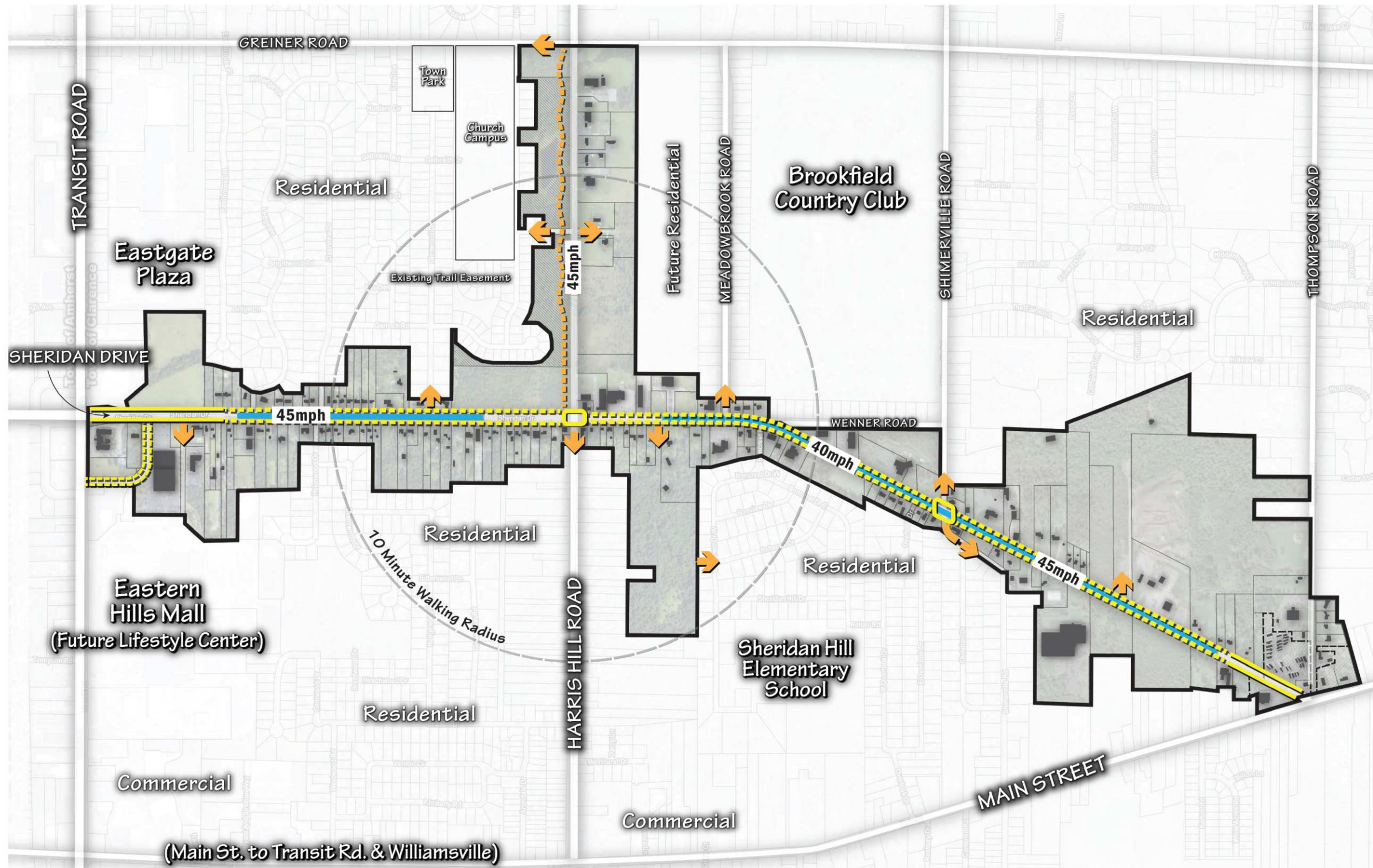
- Vision Sheridan Project Boundary
- - - Vision Main Street Project Boundary
- ▨ New Development (approved)
- No Data
- Agricultural
- Residential
- Vacant Land
- Commercial
- Recreation & Entertainment
- Community Services
- Industrial
- Public Services
- Forested, Conservation, and Public Park Land



Town of Clarence New York
VISION SHERIDAN PLAN



Figure E10: Connectivity & Accessibility



CONNECTIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

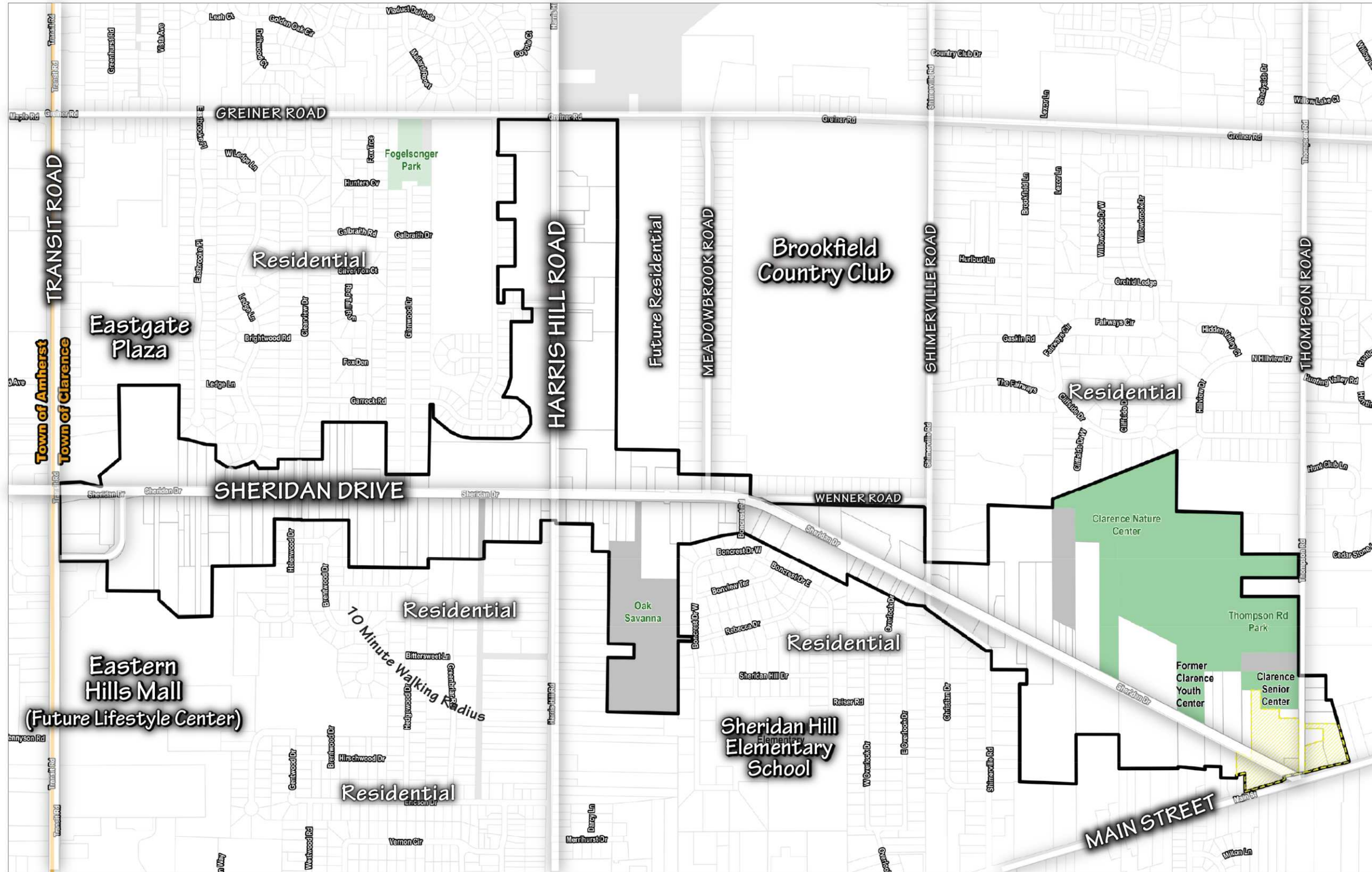
- How accessible and continuous are sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian paths along the corridor?
- Are there adequate street crossings, and are they positioned safely near major pedestrian destinations (e.g., schools, parks, shops)?
- Are sidewalks and pedestrian paths sufficiently wide, well-lit, clear of water/ice/snow, and well-maintained?
- How does the corridor support safe navigation, esp. for vulnerable pedestrians (e.g., children, elderly, individuals with disabilities)?
- Do bike lanes provide adequate separation from vehicular traffic?
- Are there specific vehicular bottlenecks or high-risk areas?
- Are speed limits appropriate, and is speed enforcement visible and effective?
- Are there sufficient visual cues (e.g., signage, road markings) for all types of travelers?
- How well does the corridor connect to nearby residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and green spaces?
- How does traffic noise impact the pedestrian and cyclist experience?
- How can the corridor adapt to anticipated population growth or commercial development?

MAP LEGEND

- Vision Sheridan Project Boundary
- - - Vision Main Street Project Boundary
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Crosswalk
- - - Approved New Sidewalk (to be constructed)
- - - Preserved Open Space - Trail Easement
- Existing Bicycle Route - On Road
- ➔ Multimodal Opportunity - Gateway/Link



Figure E11: Public Space & Town Owned Land



PUBLIC SPACE ASSESSMENT

Maximizing the impact of existing green spaces becomes essential to enhancing community livability and recreational opportunities. By investing in the improvement and expansion of current parks, the town can enrich the recreational and natural experiences offered to residents. This may involve adding more diverse amenities, such as walking trails, picnic areas, community gardens, or natural playscapes, that serve a broader range of ages and interests. Additionally, ecological enhancements—like native plantings and wildlife-friendly habitats—can better support diminishing local biodiversity.

Collaborating with nearby land trusts, nature preserves, and privately owned natural areas also provides a unique opportunity to connect residents with larger conservation and recreational areas. By establishing partnerships, the town can offer support through promotions, coordinated events, or joint programming to enhance the visibility and accessibility of these nearby assets.

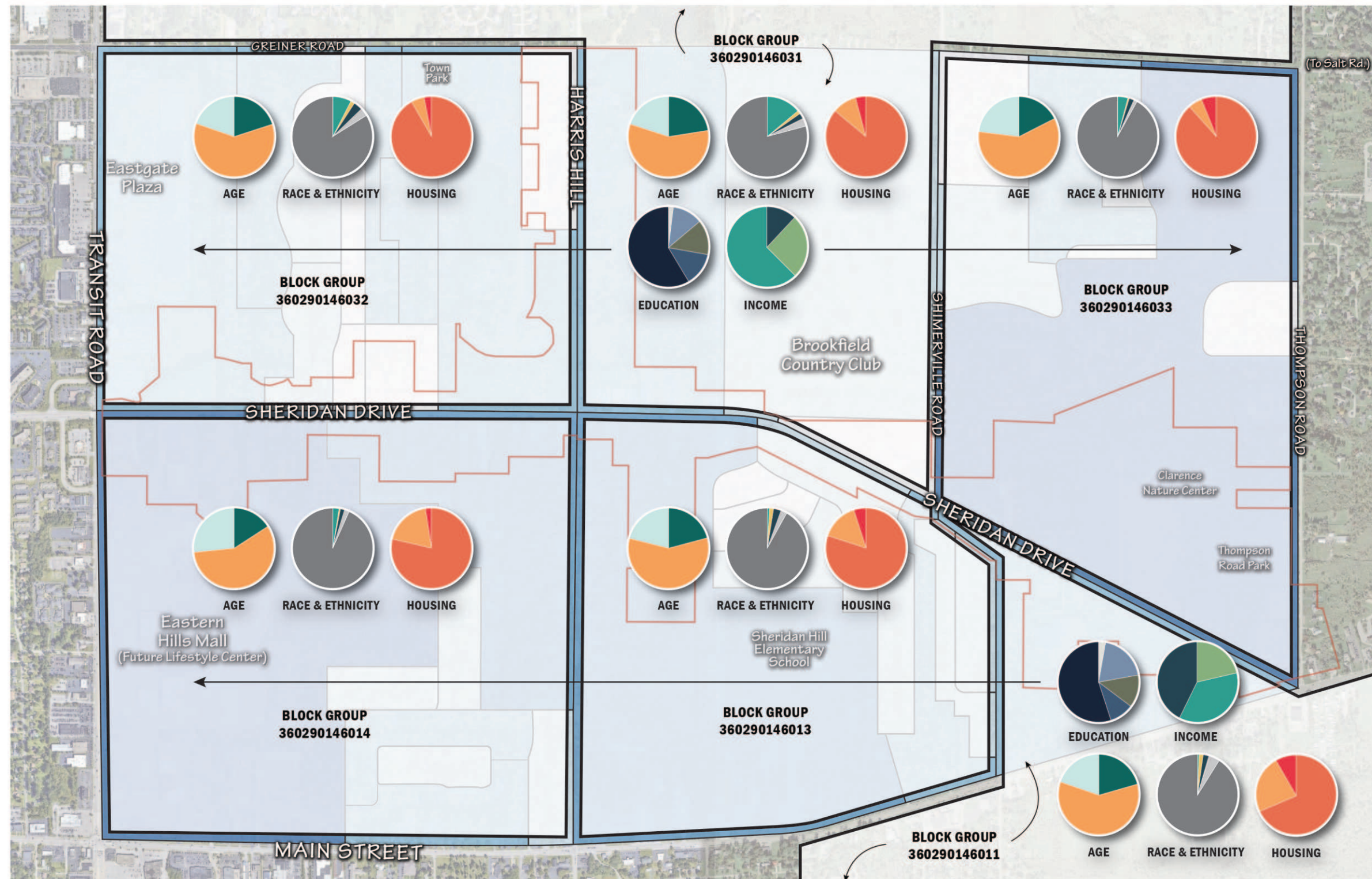
Furthermore, the town might explore opportunities to acquire new parcels of land strategically over time, either through grant funding, donations, or partnerships with local conservation organizations, to incrementally grow public green space, especially West of Harris Hill Road and South of Sheridan Drive.

MAP LEGEND

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Parcels (2022 Data Set)
-  Vision Sheridan Project Boundary
-  Vision Main Street Project Boundary
-  Park Land
-  Town-Owned Land



Figure E12: Demographics Study Area



LEGEND:

AGE

- Under 18
- Working Age (18-64)
- 65 and over

RACE & ETHNICITY

- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Other, not Hispanic or Latino
- Two or more races, not Hispanic or Latino
- White alone, not Hispanic or Latino

HOUSING

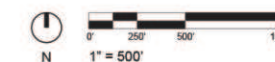
- Owner-occupied
- Renter-occupied
- Vacant

EDUCATION % population 25 years and over whose highest education completed is:

- Less than High School
- High School
- Some College
- Associates Degree
- Bachelors Degree or Higher

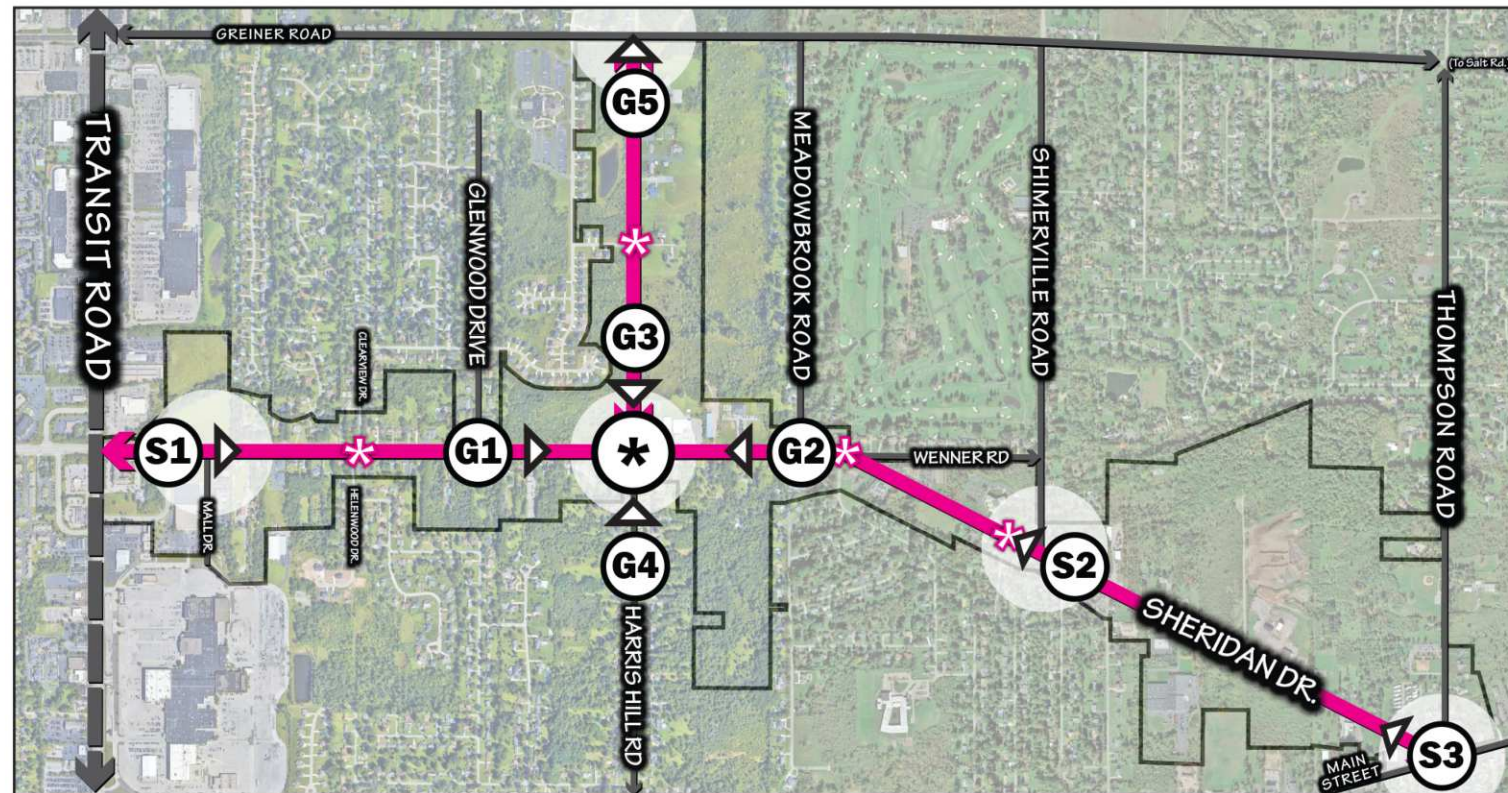
INCOME

- \$0 - \$34,999
- \$35,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$200,000+



Town of Clarence New York
VISION SHERIDAN PLAN

Figure E13.1: Planning Strategies - Node, Gateways, & Spurs



CONTEXT MAP AND PHOTO POINTS

CORE NODE

The CORE NODE should be a central, vibrant area that embodies the identity and heart of the community. This space is envisioned as a lively, walkable district that combines commercial, recreational, and cultural elements to foster a sense of place for both residents and visitors.

Development in the Core Node should prioritize mixed-use spaces, open areas for public gatherings, and distinctive architectural features that enhance its visibility and appeal.

By concentrating resources and design efforts here, the Core Node can become a recognizable destination that serves community needs, promotes economic growth, and enhances the overall attractiveness of the corridor.



CORE NODE
HARRIS HILL RD. & SHERIDAN DR. INTERSECTION
Harris Hill Road looking north towards the focal node point of intersection with Sheridan Drive.

GATEWAYS

GATEWAYS mark a transition into the core area, and should establish a sense of arrival and positive first impression. These areas should act as both functional and visual markers that help define the corridor's identity and brand.

Gateway planning efforts should focus on creating "slow zones" with traffic calming measures, enhanced signage, landscaping, and pedestrian amenities that markedly slow down and guide traffic.

Additionally, gateways should offer multi-modal access points for residents in adjacent neighborhoods to support more seamless movement through the corridor and to the core.

Represent significant access points for adjacent neighborhoods



CORE GATEWAY #1
SHERIDAN DR. W. AT GLENWOOD DR.
Sheridan Drive looking east at intersection with Glenwood Drive towards the point of intersection with Harris Hill Road.



CORE GATEWAY #2
SHERIDAN DR. E. AT MEADOWBROOK RD.
Sheridan Drive looking west at intersection with Meadowbrook Road towards the point of intersection with Harris Hill Road.



CORE GATEWAY #3
HARRIS HILL RD. SOUTH TO SHERIDAN DR.
Harris Hill Road looking south towards the point of intersection with Sheridan Drive (where double yellow line begins).



Town of Clarence New York
VISION SHERIDAN PLAN

Figure E13.2: Planning Strategies - Node, Gateways, & Spurs

GATEWAYS CONT.

REFER TO CONTEXT MAP & PHOTO POINTS ON G12.2



CORE GATEWAY #4
 HARRIS HILL RD. NORTH TO SHERIDAN DR.
 Harris Hill Road looking north towards the point of intersection with Sheridan Dr. (after last residential plots).



CORE GATEWAY #5
 GREINER RD. & HARRIS HILL RD.
 Harris Hill Road looking north towards the point of intersection with Greiner Road.

SPURS

SPURS highlight key intersections and adjacent areas that can influence the success of the core. These spurs directly link to and should complement the Core area by defining the area and encouraging traffic to begin slowing.

Planning in these spaces should focus on compatible land use and more active frontages that begin to engage the street and one another.

Spurs can also help manage the shift from more intensive development within the Core to the lower-density areas on the periphery. Introducing visual cues at the Spurs helps the corridor achieve a sense of unified progression.



SPUR #1
 SHERIDAN DR. & EASTERN HILLS MALL DR.
 Sheridan Dr. looking east towards the point of intersection with the Eastern Hills Mall access drive.



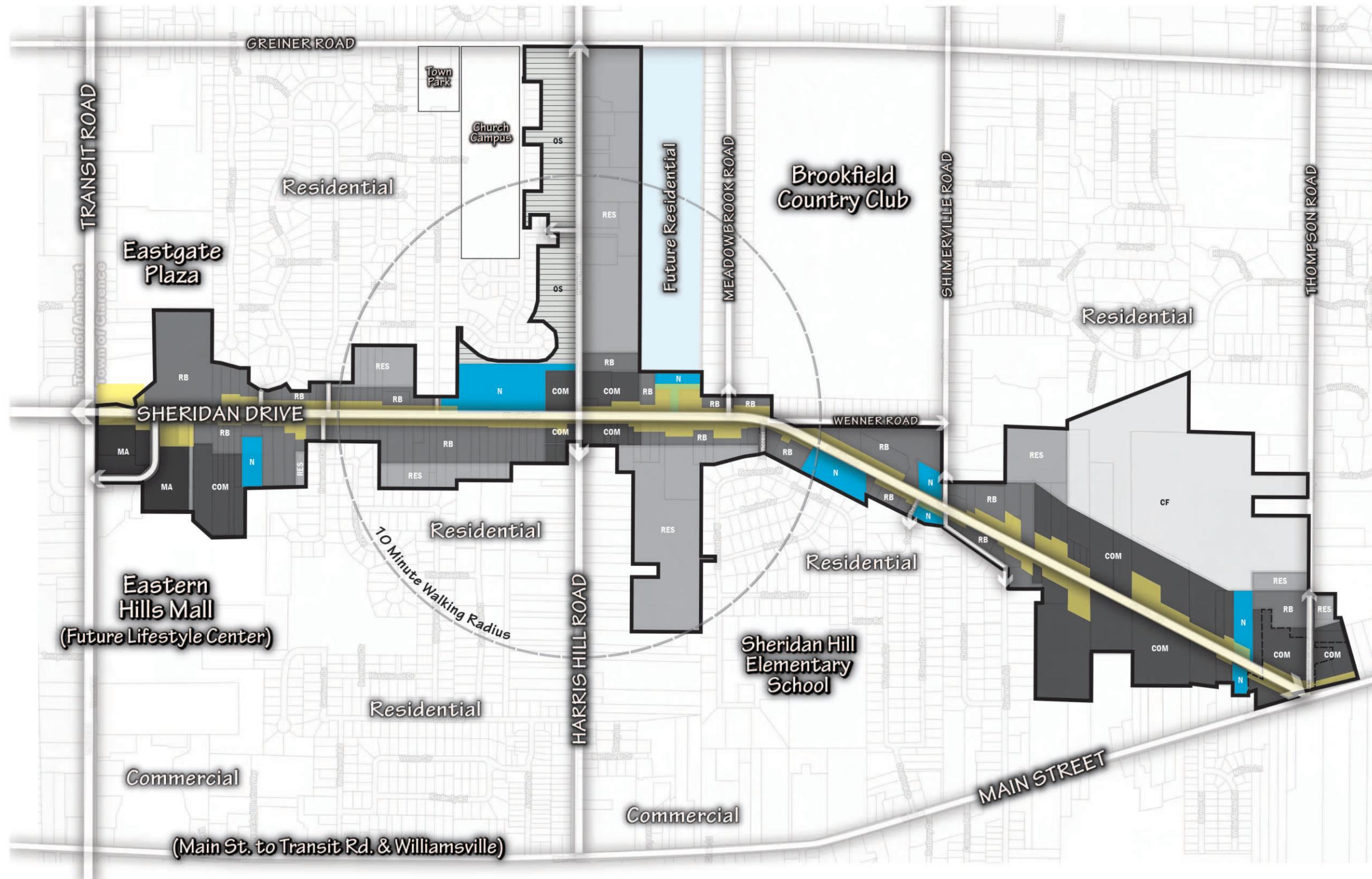
SPUR #2
 SHERIDAN DR. & SHIMERVILLE RD.
 Sheridan Dr. looking west towards Shimerville Rd. intersection.



SPUR #3
 SHERIDAN DR. AT THOMPSON RD & MAIN ST.
 View looking northwest on Sheridan Drive from the point of intersection with Main Street and Thompson Road.



Figure E14: Layout of Existing Structures



MAP LEGEND

- Vision Sheridan Project Boundary
- Vision Main Street Project Boundary
- New Development (approved or planned)
- Existing Offsets to Buildings

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

- Major Arterial
- Commercial
- Restricted Business
- Residential Single-Family
- Community Facilities
- Dedicated Open Space

DEVEL TYPE	MAX BLDG HGT	CURRENT SETBACKS
MA	45'	135' min. from centerline of all public road rights-of-way
COM	45'	10' min. / 80' max.
RB	35'	80' or est. front setback line (to a min. of 45')
RES	35'	45' to 100' min. (equal to or greater than est. front setback line / not more than 10' past est.)
CF	25'	80' min.
OS	No Structures	

