

Niagara County Community College is located in the southwestern corner of the Town and provides access to higher education for the entire County.

There are two fire companies physically located in the Town of Cambria. The Cambria Volunteer Fire Company maintains its primary fire hall at 4631 Cambria-Wilson Road. A small station is located on Upper Mountain Road near Thrall Road. The Pekin Fire Company has its hall on Upper Mountain Road, in the hamlet of Pekin. In addition, the southwest corner of the town (Sanborn) is covered by the Sanborn Fire Company, which has its station on Buffalo Street in the Town of Lewiston. Police service is provided by the Niagara County Sheriff's Office and the New York State Troopers.

The Town of Cambria Housing Authority oversees properties designated for seniors aged 55 or older. These properties include single-family homes located on Northway Drive, Southway Drive and Fair View Village, off Eagle Drive. The Housing Authority also oversees Unicorn Apartments, a 28-unit apartment complex located on Unicorn Drive. Rents at Unicorn Apartments are subsidized, and residents must be low- to moderate-income.

### **Community Facilities - Observations**

The Town of Cambria provides a level of service appropriate to a small, rural town. The lack of a Town Park, evident at the last Comprehensive Plan, has been addressed, and the Town continues to develop appropriate programming and facilities at the park. The Community Center is an asset not available to many small towns.

## GOALS and OBJECTIVES

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The goals of a Comprehensive Plan establish what is most important to the community. They represent local values and priorities and provide insight into what the community desires for its future. As such, these goals should be used to help guide future decisions about growth and development in the Town, so that individual decisions are made with an understanding about how they relate to the community's preferred future.

In the 1997 and the 2015 Comprehensive Plans for the Town of Cambria, goals addressed quality of life, economic prosperity and appropriate growth controls. These issues remain relevant in the Town and these goals have been retained and updated. In addition, some additional goals were included to provide clearer guidance and additional and revised objectives were also added. It was determined for the 2020 Update, that a separate Agricultural Goal should be created, and specific objectives incorporated under this Goal. This Goal will not only support the Town's goals for Agriculture, but also support the goals of the Niagara County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, the Regional Economic Development Council's Strategic Plan and the WNY Regional Sustainability Plan (which include major goals of protecting agriculture and its important economic and social considerations). In a recent Niagara County survey (see the County Ag Plan), 91% of respondents in Niagara County responded that farmland is important to the quality of life in their community, and 98% stated that farmland should be preserved or protected.

The following are the Goals and Objectives of the Town:

- A. Protect and Promote Agriculture in the Town and support the recommendations of the County's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, the Regional Economic Development Strategy and the WNY Regional Sustainability Plan**
- Recognize Agriculture as a key component of the Town and Niagara County's economy and that future agricultural-related economic development activities must be protected.
  - Protect Agriculture and Farmland to retain opportunities for economic development and to provide opportunities for jobs.
  - Promote current agricultural activities and future opportunities which will facilitate the long-term viability of Agriculture in the Town (and County).
  - In accordance with this Plan and the Niagara County Plan, zoning and land use controls should protect and promote agriculture, agricultural related businesses and specifically agritourism.

- Recognize and protect agriculture as an important component of Niagara County's and the Town of Cambria's way of life and the character of the region.

**B. Maintain or improve quality of life factors in the Town**

- The Town of Cambria boasts an excellent quality of life for its residents.
- Maintain the rural and agrarian character of the Town
- Promote preservation of rural landscapes: agricultural lands, wooded lots and open space
- Protect the Town from inappropriate growth /projects (type and scale) that adversely impact the Town's character, its environment, and the Town's economy.
- Encourage mixed-use, walkable development surrounding Niagara County Community College
- Promote a range of housing types that meet the rural character of the Town and accommodate changing demographic trends
- Encourage a wider range of transportation options, such as trails, bike lanes, and creative transit options, such as rural transportation services
- Maintain high quality recreation services in the Town to meet local recreational needs
- Support and help plan for the provision of additional infrastructure (natural gas, sewer) in appropriate areas
- Support improved road maintenance and improvements to the road system (to ease traffic issues in certain areas) in the Town for County, State and local roads
- Continue to provide excellent community services to the citizens of the Town
- Accomplish the above in a fiscally responsible manner

**C. Improve the economic conditions of the Town**

- Support agriculture, Agri-Tourism and other related Agricultural pursuits as an important part of the Town's economic base
- Encourage appropriate industrial and/or commercial development in areas identified for this type of development
- Support the establishment of new, convenience related businesses in appropriate areas of the Town
- Encourage development in the designated Cambria Technology Park "Shovel Ready" site on Lockport Road
- Continue to help grow the Niagara Wine Trail and the activities that support this important economic component of the Town
- Promote the proper level of growth in the Town that respects the rural character of the Community, provides the community with basic needs, and achieves a balanced tax structure that keeps taxes low



**D. Implement constructive planning methods for addressing future development or non-development.**

- Identify areas where development is appropriate and direct growth in the Town to those areas
- Protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as the escarpment, from inappropriate development
- Identify areas that should be protected from inappropriate and large-scale growth that could harm the rural nature and agrarian/Ag tourism activities in the Town
- Provide measures to minimize impacts of development
- Address issues such as property maintenance, abandoned housing and trespassing of vehicles

**E. To maximize State and regional support, align local development policies consistent with regional and State policies and documents.**

- Consistent with the Erie-Niagara Counties “Framework for Regional Growth”, the Niagara County Communities Plan, and the Niagara County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan, encourage conservation of agricultural lands and natural systems, such as wetlands, the escarpment and forested lands, to preserve rural character.
- Consistent with the Western New York Regional Economic Development “A Strategy for Prosperity” Plan, encourage projects and actions supportive of targeted industries, including work force training, assistance to local entrepreneurs, and strategic public investment. Also support two of the region’s Key Sectors, Agriculture and Tourism.
- Coordinate Town and Niagara County Planning to help ensure that the Town’s Plans are in accordance with the County’s Comprehensive Plan and that the County is responsive and supportive of the Town’s Planning initiatives.
- Encourage employment-generating development in areas identified for economic development growth, such as the Cambria Technology Park and the College area.
- Support the Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2015) that states that, “Agriculture is a key sector of Niagara County’s economy and contributes to the qualities of life for the people of Niagara County.”

**F. To anticipate the Town’s needs, manage its future and not merely react to the forces of growth and change.**

- Take a proactive approach to determining development patterns in the Town.
- Continue to develop programs, projects and policies that help the Town achieve its goals.
- Make local law revisions that address large scale development that could affect the future of the Town.
- Review this Plan yearly, set goals for each year and implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

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## VISION MAP

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This Plan includes a Vision Map (Map 8), which visually portrays some of the basic concepts and recommendations of the Town and this Comprehensive Plan. This map is not a future land use map or a zoning map. The Map cannot be used independently from the information in this document. The Vision map is intended to communicate the overall vision of the Town. In conjunction with the entire Plan, it can help guide future decisions concerning zoning, other laws, and projects/actions in the Town.

The Vision map was based on information from prior Plans, the existing conditions analysis in this document, input from the Town and its citizens, regional initiatives and the recommendations of this Plan. The major components of the Vision map are as follows:

1. The Economic Development Growth Area represents the growth corridor extending out of the City of Lockport, through the Lockport Industrial Park into the southeastern corner of the Town of Cambria, as illustrated in the *Erie and Niagara County Framework for Regional Growth*. The Town has recently received NYS Shovel Ready designation for the Cambria Technology Park, a light industrial park in this area. There is also existing business development along Lockport and Lockport Junction roads, including the Town of Lockport's industrial park on the east side of the road. This area has infrastructure and planned infrastructure improvements, sufficient power, a railroad, and a large successful industrial park just to the east of this site.
2. The Saunders Settlement/ Former Lockport Air Force Station area is centered on the recently remediated Air Force Base site off Old Shawnee Road. This area has existing infrastructure, and a large medical facility was recently constructed within this area of the Town. This area can accommodate additional growth. Priority should be given to the successful rehabilitation and redevelopment of the former Air Force Base.
3. The Sanborn/ Niagara County Community College area includes the regional hamlet of Sanborn and Niagara County Community College (NCCC). This area has regional significance. Planning for the area needs to be coordinated with the Community College and the Town of Lewiston.
4. The Saunders Settlement Road Connected Development Area connects the above three referenced growth areas. It represents areas that are primarily residential but due to their proximity to these growth areas they are transitional.

5. The Escarpment area represents a large portion of the Niagara Escarpment (as illustrated in the Escarpment Legacy Plan) and portions of it are a special area protected by the Town's Escarpment Zoning Overlay District.
6. The Agricultural/Rural area, which stretches across the northern portion of the Town, represents an area where there are large areas of significant agricultural soils. This area also includes historic hamlets and abuts the agrarian Town of Wilson. This area has special agricultural and rural character significance, and the Town wishes to take extra precautions to protect this area for agricultural purposes and other small uses in the hamlets.
7. The new Escarpment/Ag-tourism/Wine trail area represents the region of the Town that includes portions of the escarpment (overlaps with the escarpment area), components of the Niagara County Wine Trail and other Agricultural, Agricultural-related businesses and Agri-tourism/tourism related facilities. This area is important to the success of Agricultural, Agricultural related business, and Agri-tourism in the Town.
8. The Plan also illustrates the minor hamlets in the Town, which like in many rural communities are primarily areas of slightly higher residential development densities and in some cases minor commercial type uses. They are generally located at intersections of larger roads and are places that historically represented early settlement areas in the Town. These minor hamlets include Drew's Corners, Streeters Corners, Molyneaux, Warren's Corners and Pekin.
9. The Vision Map depicts some other significant features of the Town, including the Town Hall and Town Park, and the growing Niagara Wine Trail. The Town Hall/Town Park area is called out as the Town Community Center and represents the growing area of the Town that provides community services.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

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Based on the review of the existing conditions, the trends occurring in the Community and Region, and the Goals of the Town, the following are the draft ideas/ recommendations of the Plan (framed around the Goals of the Town). These recommendations include ideas generated by the Committee and the public (from 2015) and include items that may or may not be implemented by the Town. These recommendations have some small revisions based on what has occurred over the past 5 years and the updated sections of the Plan. The Implementation section of this Plan provides guidance on prioritization and how these recommendations will be utilized.

## **A. Protect and Promote Agriculture in the Town and support the recommendations of the County’s Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, the Regional Economic Development Strategy and the WNY Regional Sustainability Plan**

### Objectives:

1. Recognize Agriculture as a key component of the Town and Niagara County’s economy and that future agricultural-related economic development activities must be protected.
2. Protect Agriculture and Farmland to retain opportunities for economic development and to provide opportunities for jobs.
3. Promote current agricultural activities and future opportunities which will facilitate the long-term viability of Agriculture in the Town (and County).
4. In accordance with this Plan and the Niagara County Plan, zoning and land use controls should protect and promote agriculture, agricultural related businesses and specifically agritourism.
5. Recognize and protect agriculture as an important component of Niagara County’s and the Town of Cambria’s way of life and the character of the region.

### Recommendations:

- a. Continue to update zoning laws to reflect the changing agricultural market to allow for creative agricultural business opportunities but protecting Town character and the residential community.
- b. Create a new “Escarpment/Agri-tourism/ Wine trail” overlay that would help to establish the importance of this area and to allow for and promote these types of businesses, and to better regulate those uses that would interfere with the goals of this area. (See vision map)
- c. Support and help to provide other opportunities for agricultural landowners to be successful without the need to rent or sell their property for non-agricultural uses.



- d. Restrict large- scale non- agricultural projects from the areas within the escarpment area and areas north of the escarpment (the Escarpment/Ag-Agri-tourism/wine trail and Rural/Ag areas shown on the Vision Map)
- e. In other agricultural areas of the Town, protect agricultural lands by developing zoning regulations that regulate and minimize non-agricultural development patterns.
- f. With respect to the above two recommendations, update the Town's zoning law as it relates to large scale projects that could impact large acreages of farmlands. One specific law is the Town's solar law which must reflect not only the protection of Agricultural soils but also farms, farm related businesses and the expanding agri-tourism activities in the Town.
- g. Continue to update Agricultural Zoning in the Town in anticipation and in reaction to the changing agricultural market and conditions.
- h. Consider the creation of a Town of Cambria Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (funds available through NYS Ag Markets)
- i. Seek funding through the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) to support Agricultural, Agricultural related businesses, Agribusiness and Agritourism in the Town.
- j. Create an Agricultural Committee to guide the above actions and report to the Town Board.

## 6. Maintain or improve the quality-of-life factors in the Town.

1. Continue to invest in the Town Park and investigate creative ways to fund these potential improvements to lessen any burden on taxpayers.
  - a. Obtain community input on the recreational needs of the citizens. At least once a year receive community-wide input.
  - b. Investigate raising the recreation fee charged on new lots in the Town (Funds for helping to pay for improvements at existing facilities).
  - c. Investigate parking needs of the site: restrooms, winter activities, etc.
  - d. Community groups, such as Boy Scouts and recreation leagues can help with the park.
  - e. Continue to look for grants to fund improvements.
2. Investigate simple connective features from the Town Park/Town Hall area to the surrounding community.
  - a. Consider a bike path along Upper Mountain Road.

3. Maintenance and system improvements to the existing water and sewer system should be a primary focus of the Town. Expansion of sewers should only occur in designated areas (mostly restricted by the location of State Agricultural Districts).
    - a. Expand upon the Town's Asset Management Plan by creating a preventative maintenance plan for water and sewer.
    - b. Areas to prioritize for infrastructure improvements are the Sanborn and Cambria Technology Park areas.
  4. Establish methodologies to receive input from the residents on the Town services that are provided. Establish a system for continuous improvements to these Town services.
    - a. Continue receiving input through the Town website.
    - b. Build upon the surveys received from residents for this Comprehensive Plan; follow-up and re-issue updated survey in the future.
    - c. Continue to work with the natural gas suppliers in the Town on potentially expanding service within the Town.
  5. Consideration should be given to improved property maintenance provisions (regulations/laws) in the Town.
    - a. The existing property maintenance law (Local Law #2 of 2013) should be evaluated each year.
    - b. Investigate grant (low interest loan) programs that may be available to assist residents with improving their properties.
  6. Work with Niagara County and NYS DOT on improving road maintenance in the Town. Target road improvement projects, including intersection improvements and signage.
    - a. See roads and intersections referred to by residents in the Town's survey.
    - b. Coordinate this issue with the Niagara County/ Town Shared Services proposal for 2015.
    - c. Focus Town efforts in a way to minimize budget increases in the Town.
  7. Rural character should be considered in the Town's land use decisions. Consideration should be given to updating regulations to include more requirements that reflect rural character.
    - a. Consider creating rural design guidelines for the Town.
    - b. Consider creating rural cluster development regulations.
    - c. Create additional guidelines/restrictions/regulations on the construction of large-scale projects that would impact the rural character of the Town.
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