



Amherst Town Board

5583 Main Street
 Williamsville, NY 14221
www.amherst.ny.us

Francina J. Spoth
 Town Clerk

Meeting: 06/27/22 07:00 PM
 Department: Supervisor
 Initiated by: **Brian J. Kulpa**
 Co-Sponsored by:

DOC ID: 26067

RESOLUTION 2022-610

Amherst Urban Renewal Agency

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING A PORTION OF THE BOULEVARD CENTRAL DISTRICT AS AN URBAN RENEWAL AREA AND THE TOWN BOARD TO ACT AS THE AMHERST URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY

WHEREAS, for some time the Town Board of the Town of Amherst has been concerned with the declining condition of the Boulevard Mall and surrounding neighborhood. The Mall was opened in the 1960s and was the first indoor shopping center in the Buffalo area. Its success led to the growth of the surrounding commercial areas in this part of Town seen today. Over time and especially in recent years, changing retail formats and consumer shopping habits have made large indoor malls like the Boulevard Mall obsolete. Several anchor stores at the site are closed and stores within the mall have begun to move out. The approximately 65-acre site contains an extremely large structure at just over 900,000 square feet and large, underutilized surface parking lots which pose a great challenge to redevelop and utilize this massive site in the heart of the commercial area of Town; and

WHEREAS, the Boulevard Mall and its surroundings, with its location in the busiest commercial area of Town, known as the Boulevard Central District, and major thoroughfares such as Niagara Falls Boulevard and Maple Road serving it, with its declining state and loss of its businesses, and changing national and regional trends, is ripe to become something entirely new. Its overall redevelopment will not only increase the Town's tax base but will also provide amenities, businesses, and transportation options to existing residents while creating a place to attract new residents and visitors. As a large site, the Town and its partners can plan its redevelopment holistically, considering all aspects such as planning, zoning, and infrastructure at one time to enable future plans that stay true to the overall vision for the site; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board has already begun consideration of how to revitalize the Boulevard Central District by creating the Boulevard Central District Action Plan, and amending the Town Comprehensive Plan accordingly, which builds upon previous studies and established a vision for the area that seeks to:

- Implement the Town's Comprehensive Plan vision for land use and development which includes:
 - o Diverse neighborhoods, ranging in character from traditional to suburban to rural
 - o Pedestrian-friendly, interconnected, mixed-use development patterns
 - o Revitalized older neighborhoods and commercial corridors
 - o Open space integrated into the overall pattern of development
 - o Development standards that promote objectives such as improved visual character, revitalization
- Capture future business development and economic growth potential projected to occur within the region along the I-290 corridor. (2016 Town of Amherst Economic Study)

- Build around the concept of transit-oriented development and expand mobility options through the NFTA's Metro Rail Expansion project, an enhanced transit extension to the north of University Station. (Proposed Action by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority Metro Rail Expansion Project, nftametrorailexpansion.com)
- Support the regional vision for strengthening and reinvesting in communities and improving mobility; this includes using new technologies and upgraded street features on multi-modal arterials such as Niagara Falls Boulevard. (Moving Forward 2050: A Regional Transportation Plan for Buffalo Niagara)
- Evaluate existing sites along commercial corridors with underutilized property, and outdated or otherwise obsolete commercial buildings to propose new, mixed-use, infill development. (2019 Mixed-Use Zoning Districts adopted by Town of Amherst for infill and retrofit areas)
- Leverage funding tools available through the Federal Opportunity Zone program, in addition to other available sources of funding. (Amherst Industrial Development Agency, OpportunityZones.hud.gov); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article 15 of the New York General Municipal Law, the Town is authorized to undertake urban renewal programs for the redevelopment of substandard, underutilized, or insanitary areas that are having a blighting influence on the surrounding property; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board desires to employ such powers to improve portions of the Town within the Boulevard Central District; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board further desires to designate itself as the party responsible for carrying out the functions and powers of the Town under Article 15 of the General Municipal Law, acting as the Amherst Urban Renewal Agency;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Town Board of the Town of Amherst, as follows:

1. Pursuant to § 504 of the General Municipal Law, the Town Board hereby finds and designates the "Boulevard Central District Urban Renewal Area" as described in the attached **Schedule A**, as an area appropriate for urban renewal as defined in § 502(3) of the General Municipal Law.
2. Said designation is made because the area is underutilized and having a long-term deteriorating impact on the community, particularly the neighboring commercial properties.
3. The Town Board, acting as the Amherst Urban Renewal Agency ("AURA"), is hereby designated as the Agency, as that term is defined in §502(4) of the General Municipal Law, for the purposes of carrying out the functions vested in that office by Article 15 of the General Municipal Law.
4. AURA will prepare an Urban Renewal Plan, as that term is defined in

§502(7) of the General Municipal Law, for the redevelopment of the Boulevard Central Urban Renewal Area consisting of the Boulevard Mall property and nearby properties as determined by AURA, which shall conform to the comprehensive plan of the Town and the Boulevard Central District Action Plan.

5. Upon completion, the Urban Renewal Plan shall be submitted to the Town Planning Board, which, within ten weeks after receipt of the Plan, shall, after a duly noticed public hearing, certify whether the Plan complies with §502(7) of the General Municipal Law, and conforms to the findings of this Resolution made pursuant to §504 of the General Municipal Law.
6. The Town Board intends to act as the Lead Agency for the redevelopment of the Boulevard Central District Urban Renewal Area under the State Environmental Quality Act. Notice shall be given of the Town's intent to all involved agencies.
7. This Resolution shall be effective immediately.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None.

Urban Renewal Area Description

The Urban Renewal Area is shown on the Urban Renewal Area Location Map and the boundary can be described as follows: Beginning at the southeast corner of the intersection of Niagara Falls Boulevard and Maple Road, the Urban Renewal area extends approximately 2,085 feet east along the centerline line of Maple Road to the centerline of Bailey Avenue, then turns southerly along the centerline of Bailey Avenue for approximately 1,800 feet to the intersection of the centerline of Amsterdam Avenue and the centerline of Bailey Avenue, then turns westerly for 335 feet along the centerline of Amsterdam Avenue, then turns north approximately 60 feet to the south parcel line of a National Grid parcel (SBL- 54.03-1-12.1), then turns west along the National Grid parcel line for approximately 470 feet to the centerline of Alberta Drive, then turns southerly along Alberta Drive for approximately 2,060 feet to the intersection of the centerline of Alberta Drive and the centerline of Sheridan Drive, then turns easterly along Sheridan Drive for approximately 957 feet to the intersection of the centerline Sheridan Drive and the centerline of Bailey Avenue, then turns southerly along Bailey Avenue approximately 1,145 feet to the intersection of the centerline of Bailey Avenue and the centerline of Eggert Road, then turns north westerly along the centerline of Eggert Road for approximately 2,330 feet to the intersection of the centerline of Eggert Road and the centerline of Marion Road, then turns southerly along the centerline of Marion Road for approximately 160 feet, then turns westerly for approximately 275 feet along the southern parcel boundary of (925 Niagara Falls Boulevard SBL-67.39-5-1) to the centerline of Niagara Falls Boulevard, then turns northerly along Niagara Falls Boulevard for approximately 4,387 feet back to the intersection of the centerline of Niagara Falls Boulevard and the centerline of Maple Road (the beginning point).

The Urban Renewal Area totals approximately 194.9 acres and includes 60 parcels.