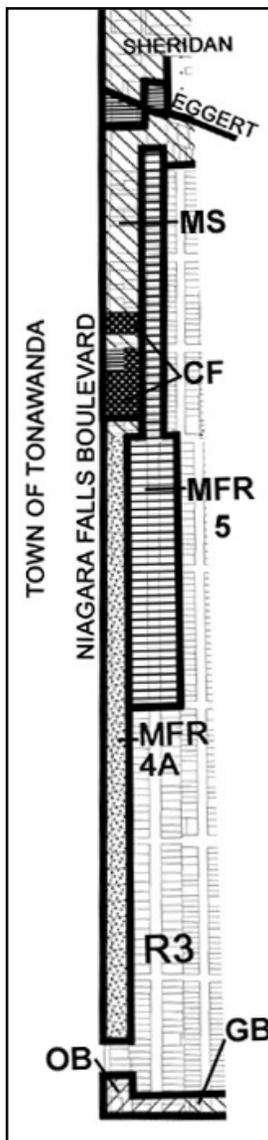


Niagara Falls Boulevard Corridor (Kenmore Avenue to Eggert Road)

Niagara Falls Boulevard is a major north-south arterial that forms the west edge of the Eggertsville community. The Boulevard also serves as the boundary between the Towns of Amherst and Tonawanda (See Key Map at left).

A mix of commercial and residential uses characterizes Niagara Falls Boulevard. On the Town of Amherst side of the Boulevard, residential uses dominate the corridor south of Longmeadow Road. A mix of institutional, professional services, and retail uses comprise the corridor north of Longmeadow Road. The Town of Tonawanda portion of the Boulevard is predominately commercial often fronting residences just across the Boulevard in Amherst.



For zoning codes refer to Appendix C.

Findings

- ❖ Niagara Falls Boulevard, from just north of Kenmore Avenue to Longmeadow Road, is zoned Residential District-4 (R-4) allowing both attached and detached residential development. Zoning from Longmeadow to Sheridan Drive includes General Business (GB), Motor Services (MS), and Community Facilities (CF) *(See Zoning Map at left)*.
- ❖ The depth of land parcels north of Longmeadow Road differs from those to the south. The majority of the parcels north of Longmeadow are the depth of the entire block (+/- 220') whereas parcel depths in the southern residential portion of the corridor tend to be shallower (+/-110').
- ❖ Land uses along the corridor are inconsistent. The lack of inter-municipal land use controls between the Towns of Tonawanda and Amherst is primarily responsible this pattern of development.
- ❖ Large volumes of traffic travel through this corridor from the City of Buffalo (*University of Buffalo / Main Street*) to the I-290 and major commercial centers along the Boulevard north of Eggertsville (e.g., Boulevard Mall, Boulevard Consumer Square). The volume of this traffic has major implications for potential land uses in the corridor especially near the corridor's north end near Eggert Road.

- ❖ Niagara Falls Boulevard has recently been reconstructed and new sidewalks and limited street trees included. However, the newly widened street corridor has taken away the “pedestrian-friendly” aspects such as the buffer once provided by large trees in planting strips between boulevard pavement and sidewalks. The lack of buffering, be it on-street parking or street trees, reduces the comfort for pedestrians.
- ❖ A “*lack of clear character*” may be an easy way to describe this stretch of Niagara Falls Boulevard. Many different types of businesses, uses and architectural styles have given the street a disorganized appearance. Street trees, which often help to unify a street, are lacking.

Portions of the Niagara Falls Boulevard Corridor, such as the residential areas, appear to be holding their own. The current Residential District-4 (R-4) zoning protects the residential fabric from encroachment by non-residential uses. The condition of the public right-of-way is excellent given the recent reconstruction project.

The portion of the corridor north of Longmeadow Road has good access, visibility, and parcel depths for certain types of non-residential uses. It needs, however, a clear sense of direction. The oversupply of retail space, proximity to residences to the east, and location on the fringe of the Town’s premier retail area (growing northward) suggests new uses be considered. Given the Town border issue, decisions regarding new uses should be informed through discussions with the Town of Tonawanda.

Short-term actions for this corridor should focus on revamping the regulatory framework guiding corridor development. Through such actions, this area north of Longmeadow Road, which may be considered to be an “orphan” block, may in the mid-term fill a new role in the Town.

Niagara Falls Boulevard Corridor Recommendations

Action 1

Town Planning and Law Departments prepare a new neighborhood “Office District” zoning classification for application between Longmeadow Road and Eggert Road.

This new zoning classification is to be designed for smaller freestanding office buildings in developed areas rather than an office park in a greenfield setting. Elements of the new zoning classification should at minimum include the following.

- ❖ Minimum building height 2 stories or 26’.
- ❖ Maximum building height 3 stories of 39’.
- ❖ Buildings should not cover more than 50 percent of the lot area.
- ❖ Buildings should not require setbacks from front or side lot lines.
- ❖ Buildings on through block parcels shall be considered to have two street faces (main elevations) warranting similar design treatment.
- ❖ Parking should be located on the sides of the building rather than in front or behind the building.
- ❖ One parking space should be required for every 150 feet of building area.
- ❖ All parking should be screened from public view.
- ❖ All rooftop equipment should be enclosed in building material that matches the structure or is visually compatible with the structure.
- ❖ Pedestrian level lighting should be provided at all building entrances along all walkways.
- ❖ Pole signs should be prohibited.
- ❖ Given the presence of institutional uses with off-peak parking demands, parking requirements may be reduced providing the developer secures a shared parking agreement from the area institution. This agreement should state the number of spaces the institution controls, the number of spaces committed to the development project, and terms and conditions under which the shared parking is used.

- ❖ Existing non-conforming uses would be “grandfathered” so as to avoid the potential taking of property without compensation or acquisition and relocation costs.

Cost: Not Applicable

Action 2

Town of Amherst approaches the Town of Tonawanda to determine whether Tonawanda would be willing to jointly establish compatible zoning treatment for the Niagara Falls Boulevard Corridor. Discuss the potential for jointly drafting design guidelines and access management techniques.

Cost: Not Applicable