



Prospectus: Williamsville

A Detailed Look at the Exciting Projects for the Village in 2016

What's Ahead

Feb. 22, 2016

Mayor Brian J. Kulpa will give his annual State of the Village Address at 7:30 p.m. at the Historic Village Meeting House, 5658 Main St., Williamsville, NY 14221.

May 2016:

Weather permitting, the Village will continue construction on the Spring Street Green infrastructure project, which will see the continued revitalization of the area surrounding the Williamsville Water Mill.

In addition, the Village anticipates putting the historic building back on the tax rolls with a sale to the owners of Sweet Jenny's Ice Cream, who have occupied the building on a month to month basis for the last few years.



Photo by H. Cadmus

Village Agenda is Jam-Packed for 2016

- Manage budget within constraints of 0.12 percent tax cap
- Youngs Road interchange at New York State Thruway
- Close out & transfer title to Williamsville Water Mill
- Pathway through Amherst State Park
- Complete Picture Main Street project design (Construction 2017)
- Complete Spring Street green infrastructure project
- South Long Street green infrastructure project
 - Park improvements
 - Stormwater infiltration
- California Drive (Darling) residential project
- Roneker Building (Marty's) historic façade restoration project
- Westwood park creation (with the Town of Amherst)
- Consolidate sewer department with Amherst or Erie County



Photo by E. Dycie



Photo by H. Cadmus

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Picture Main Street

The signature streetscape project of the Village of Williamsville, N.Y.

A Grassroots Movement

Picture Main Street was never just a plan drawn up by Village officials or state representatives who wanted to make Main Street a better place. It was – and remains – a grassroots movement initiated by the citizens of the Village of Williamsville. Inspired by the 2010 referendum to reject dissolution of their beloved Village – and empowered by the creation of a new Community Plan – Villagers pushed their elected leaders to finally do something about the noise, traffic and unsafe conditions on Main Street. What resulted was a coordinated effort among residents, elected officials, state representatives and transportation experts who all had a hand in creating the plan.



Photo by Trey Mosser



Sharon Cavillon/Buffalo News

Picture Main: A Campaign for a Better Way to Live

Picture Main Street started as a streetscape plan.

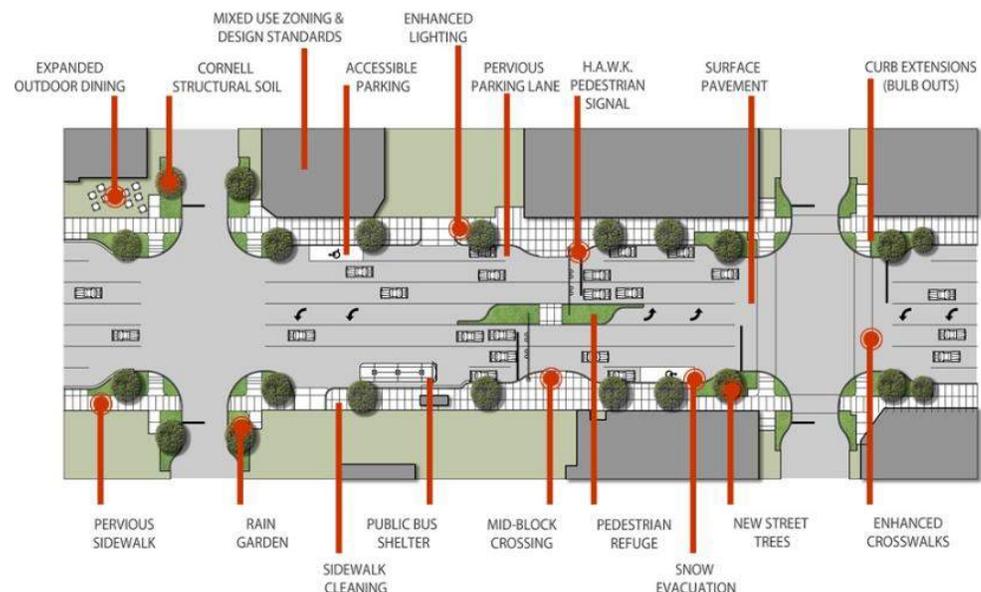
It developed into a mindset.

And then, finally...it became a campaign for a better way to live.

Talk to anyone on Main Street in the bustling Village of Williamsville and it's likely they know about the initiative to improve the pedestrian experience of the busy thoroughfare with \$3 million in upgrades.

The plan includes elements that will:

- Improve the walkability of Main Street.
- Create a safer environment for motorists and pedestrians.
- Support economic development and community life in the Village.
- Create a signature street identity with bulb-outs, pedestrian refuge islands and crossing signals, crosswalks, street greenery and a H.A.W.K. signal – one of the first of its kind in New York State.





Taking Back Main Street for the People



The Village of Williamsville “took back Main Street” Saturday evening.

No torch and pitchforks required – this act of civic upheaval was state-approved and 100 percent family-friendly.

Kids played street hockey and couples wheeled strollers in the middle of the usually busy five-lane street during Picture Main Street Live, a block party thrown in celebration of the pedestrian-friendly changes coming soon.

“It’s kind of amazing to see it come to life right in front of you,” Tricia Browne said.

-The Buffalo News

Village of Williamsville
5565 Main Street
Williamsville, NY 14221

Main Street: A Place for Cars *People*

The Picture Main Street plan includes a “Water Mill Plaza” and second shopping district on Spring Street anchored by the historic and recently restored Williamsville Water Mill and the natural beauty of Glen Park and Glen Falls.

Design work is underway on the majority of the project, while Spring Street construction began in 2015 and Main Street construction will begin in 2017.

The \$3 million project is now fully funded thanks to the efforts of U.S. Sen. Charles E. Schumer, who has championed the project from its inception.

Schumer helped secure funds that will be used to install bulb-outs and curb extensions, which are elements that will make it easier for pedestrians to cross Main Street by lessening the distance between sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Another key element is the pedestrian-activated H.A.W.K. Signal, which will be placed in the Village’s central core. The



H.A.W.K. Signal allows pedestrians to stop traffic mid-block by pressing a button. This will prevent dangerous crossings that happen frequently while also opening up parking areas on both sides of Main Street.

View the full plan at www.PictureMainSt.com.





New Connections to Glen Park



Most people don't realize it, but Spring Street and the Water Mill are physically disconnected from one of Williamsville's most popular attractions: Glen Falls.

That's right: the park that hosts the mighty falls, while contiguous to the Water Mill and Spring Street, offers no simple way for curious pedestrians to venture between the two sites.

The Village would like to acquire funding to help connect these two destinations for pedestrians and to make the attractions more accessible for those with physical limitations and disabilities.

Spring Street: The New Event Space

The Spring Street project includes the Mill Plaza, a hub of activity centered on the restored 1811 Williamsville Water Mill and a "Village Square" pedestrian plaza. The plaza was formerly a "dead zone" of unmarked asphalt that took on the uninviting and unsafe look and feel of a service alley. Now it is a place to gather.

Work began in 2015 and will continue in Spring 2016 on streetscape work that will improve pedestrian safety and accessibility and will serve as a model of green infrastructure and stormwater management. Stormwater collectors will stop polluted water from entering Glen Park.

Most notably, the historic Williamsville Water Mill has been restored with \$500,000 in funding from the New York State Historic Preservation Office.

Public investments are spurring economic development. The Village is selling the Water Mill to Sweet Jenny's, which has opened an ice cream/candy shop and a comic book shop. In addition, Moor Pat craft beer bar and Billybar restaurant have opened nearby.



Funding for the Spring Street project includes grants of \$1.9 million (NYS DEC – Sen. Schumer), nearly \$800,000 (NYS EFC – Sen. Schumer), and \$250,000 (DASNY – Sen. Ranzenhofer).

The Spring Street project has been a template for how construction on the upcoming Picture Main Street project will be carried out. The Village has had regular communication with businesses who have been affected by the temporary changes and the natural disruption of construction. The Village gives businesses updates after every construction meeting and has staff members ready to take any questions that the businesses may have.



Village of Williamsville
5565 Main Street
Williamsville, NY 14221

PICTURE



May 5, 2014

South Long Community

Village of Williamsville, NY

Exploring Opportunities

The Village must improve the appearance and function of park and open space in the South Long Street Area

Land in the South Long Street area that is vacated by industrial uses presents an opportunity to reconfigure and improve existing and potential future parkland. It is critical that the existing acreage devoted to parkland be at the very least maintained, if not increased. Moreover, park improvements could be tied to and made in conjunction with the redevelopment of the area for residential uses.

Improved Gateways

South Cayuga is an impressive street, with stately homes and a lush canopy of trees, but improvements must be made at the Thruway overpass that forms the unceremonious gateway to the Village.



Placemaking

South Long Street Objectives and Actions

Ensure that the Village is Prepared to Meet Change in the South Long Street Area. Substantial amounts of land in the South Long Street neighborhood currently house low intensity industrial uses. With rising land values, it is likely that such industrial uses may eventually relocate outside the Village. Such vacated properties present an enormous opportunity to improve the South Long Street neighborhood and park, for which the Village should be prepared with a vision and a plan to ensure that redevelopment occurs in a manner that creates long-term value and benefits for the Village.

Action 1: Review and Revise Village's Zoning and Development Regulations

Review and, as necessary, revise the Village's zoning to ensure that it is compatible with the long-range vision for the South Long Street neighborhood as expressed in this plan. This can be done separately, or as part of a larger, Village-wide zoning project.

Action 2: Establish an Area Site Plan

Consider establishing a community approved area site plan for the neighborhood that can guide development decisions in the neighborhood and be used to communicate the neighborhood vision to private investors.

Action 3: Develop design guidelines for the South Long Street neighborhood.

Action 4: Prepare a Long Street Park Improvement Plan that can be implemented in phases, as opportunities present themselves. Such a plan could provide a springboard for accessing state grant programs for park improvements and for potentially implementing the park plan via a private-public partnership in connection with new residential development.

Action 3: foster a connection between Long Street Park and the Lehigh Memory Trail.

Action 4: Implement a short-term landscaping plan for Long Street Park, as an initial phase of a longer-term improvement plan.

Revitalization

Creating a Destination **P.1**

Opportunities & Principals **P.2**

Looking to the Future **P.3**

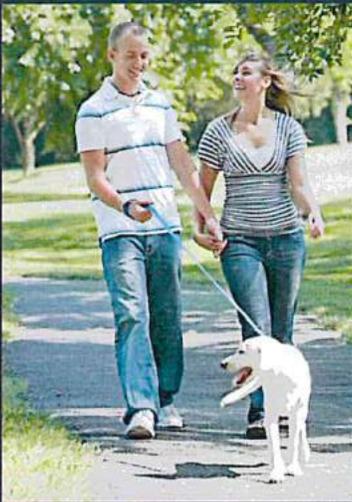
Means & Methods **P.4**



Project Principles

Incorporate Village Character

Buildings, public open spaces, streets, all of the elements that go into making a place, should take their cues from the existing Village. Buildings should be arranged along public streets or usable open spaces. Streets, in turn, should be Village scaled, and connected, where appropriate and feasible, to the existing Village street grid. At their edges, public open spaces should engage the public realm, with clearly defined entrances, attractive landscaping and a well-defined relationship to neighboring structures and land uses, while at their centers.



Provide Dynamic Open Spaces

An improved Long Park would make a significant contribution to the quality of life in the Village.

Create Appealing Living

Changing lifestyles, a maturing population, and smaller household sizes in Williamsville point to demand for new and varied housing alternatives.



The Long Street Recreation Area, located in the southwest portion of the Village, roughly bounded by Village Square Lane to the north, California Drive to the east, Union Road to the west, and the Lehigh Memorial Trail to the south represents an exciting opportunity for the Village to greatly improve existing parklands and to create new housing that is close to and supports the Main Street corridor.

Such housing should be provided in an attractive setting that adds long term value to the Village. Most exciting of all is the way in which housing and parkland can be woven together to create a compatible neighborhood that complements the existing Village scale and develop pattern and provides improved places to recreate and relax.

Currently, the South Long Street area is underutilized, containing a mix of low intensity industrial uses as well as Long Street Park, which, while valued as an open-space within the largely built-up Village setting, could be improved upon in a number of ways. Existing industrial uses prevent the Lehigh Memory Trail, a well utilized and valued Village resource, from connecting with Long Street Park. Yet it is the presence of these

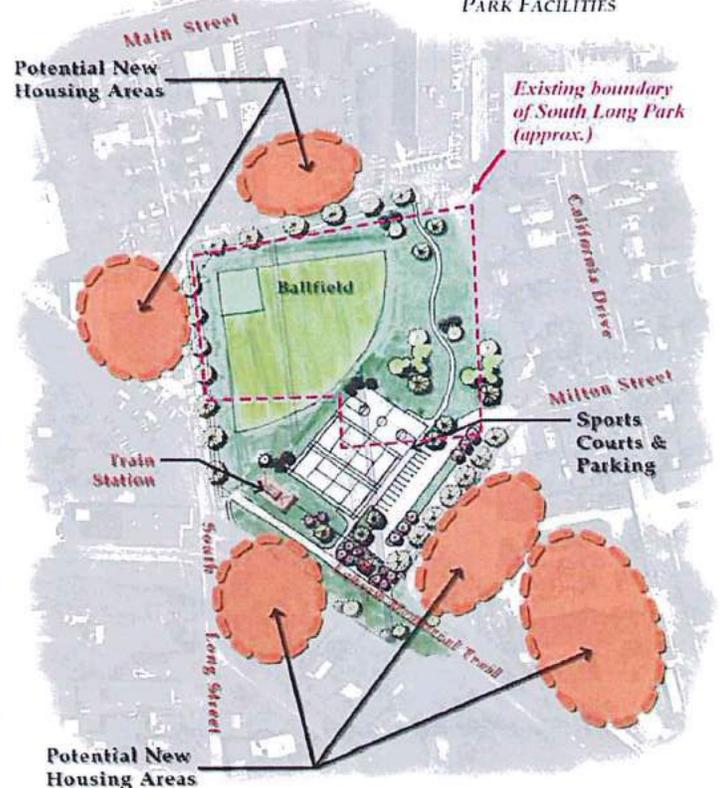
industrial uses that provide the Village with a prime redevelopment opportunity. Including the Village DPW property, there are nearly 10 acres of industrially used land in the neighborhood. With rising land values, it is likely that lower intensity industrial uses, particularly those requiring relatively large areas of land, may someday relocate outside of the Village.

Vacating industrial uses in the South Long Street area would free up substantial areas of land and provide the Village with flexibility and space to develop a more organized, attractive pattern of land use that retains or even augments the current amount of open space, and improves its function and appearance, while also creating new housing choices for current and future residents.

Gateways & Community Centers

Reconciling a history of transportation infrastructure with a Green, Pedestrian culture

IMPROVE AND AUGMENT EXISTING PARK FACILITIES





South Long Community

Village of Williamsville, NY



Rail & Construction

- Darling Construction
Old Lehigh Railroad service yards, now, create impermeable back drop to the Village's South Long Park.
- International Chimney
Multiple Buildings & yards, on prime real estate.



Spread of Asphalt & Poor Storm Water Management



Past Practices have seen the Spread of vast asphalt areas and widening roadways, inhospitable to pedestrians. Those same practices have added to storm water retention and displacement by the existing Village infrastructure.





Planning for a New South Long

The scene is a summer evening. It is still light out. A ballgame is being played in one corner of Long Street Park. From the nearby Lehigh Memorial Trail, cyclists and strollers can hear the crack of the bat and the cheering of the crowd. As the trail approaches the Lehigh Valley Train Station, the landscape "opens up" to reveal an active, attractively landscaped park.

Some trail users take a detour in the park to watch the ballgame, or make the loop on new park trails. Still others stop at the new outdoor café that is anchored by the Lehigh Valley Train Station adjacent to the trail. Tables and umbrellas are set up – the perfect place to sit with an ice cream and watch the people on the trail go by.

Meanwhile, other residents approach on foot from California Drive and Milton Street with no firmer plans in mind than to take a stroll and see whom they might bump into, be it at the game, along a new Village street, or down by the "Station Café." The parkland and pedestrian connections allow these same people to continue on to Long Street, up to Main, and back home again along a route that is safe, stimulating and convenient.

There are new residents too. They live in newly built housing that is both close to the activities and excitement of Main Street, and the improved parkland, upon which they front. Residents of these new homes, coming, or going, or simply sitting out on the front porch, inject the neighborhood with activity and interest. As the light gives way to dusk, the windows of the homes light up, "eyes" on the park that lend a sense of security to the scene.

The ballgame concludes and parents and children make their way home. A good many families have walked to the park and return the same way, some using the Lehigh Valley Trail, others taking the neighborhood streets.

Going Green Electric Car Charging



The Public parking areas throughout the Village provide an opportunity to encourage use of electric cars and ease of access to supporting infrastructure.

Way Finding Public Access

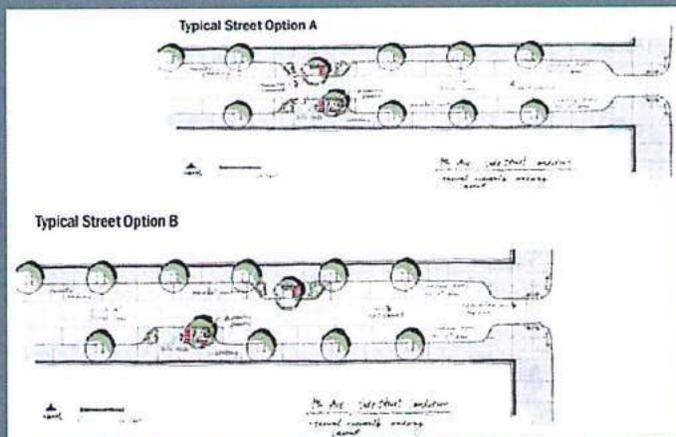


The Village needs to do a better job signaling opportunities for public parking, as well as the presence of parks & landmarks.

Conceptual Streetscape Plans

Create New Complete Streets/Green Streets Design Standards

Pedestrian-centric & green. Village streetscapes should begin to transition from a spread of asphalt that becomes auto-subsidaries, unapologetically to a new model that favors reduced speeds, wider sidewalks, and green infrastructure to handle storm water runoff.



Going Green Storm Water Management



Green infrastructure is a solution that allows for stormwater to be captured and, through natural filtration, released back into the groundwater aquifers through wetlands, bioswales, and retention ponds.

Pedestrian Improvements

Walkable communities that are desirable places to live, work, learn and play are a key component of smart growth. Their desirability comes from two factors. Walkable communities make pedestrian activity possible, thus expanding transportation options, and creating a streetscape for a range of users – pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers. To foster walkability, communities must mix land uses and build compactly, as well as ensure safe

and inviting pedestrian corridors. It is incumbent upon public and private sectors to facilitate development of walkable places. Land use and community design play a pivotal role in encouraging pedestrian environments. By building places with multiple destinations within close proximity, where the streets and sidewalks balance multiple forms of transportation, communities have the basic framework for walkability.



Village of Williamsville
5565 Main Street
Williamsville, NY 14221

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Historic Village Meeting House

A model of preservation in the Village of Williamsville, N.Y.

Timeline

1835 -- The Disciples of Christ establish a chapter in Williamsville at Eagle and North Ellicott streets.

1870 – The Disciples’ local congregation had grown to nearly 200 members.

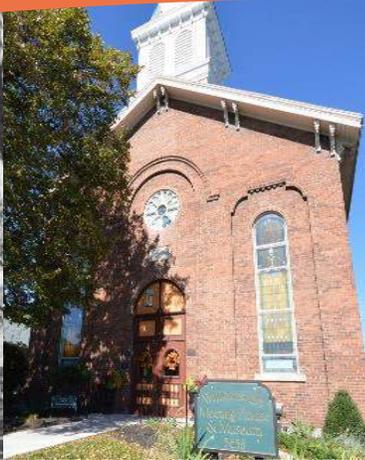
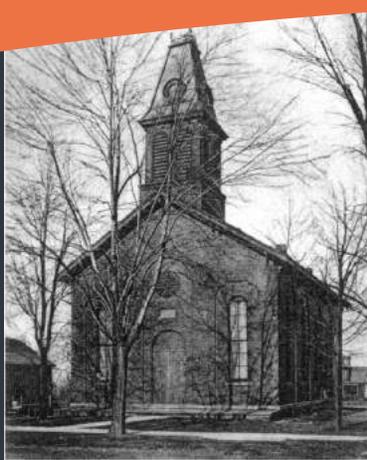
1871 – The Disciples sold the original church to the Lutherans for \$1,000, bought new property on Main Street from Christian Rutt and constructed what is known today as the Williamsville Meeting House.

1894 – Only 116 members of the Disciples remained due to the loss of local manufacturing and exodus to the growing City of Buffalo.

1948 –Weakened roof beams forced removal of the original 40-foot wooden steeple and bell tower.

1976 – The congregation lost membership to the point that it was disbanded and the Village purchased the church for \$1.

1986 -- Meeting House was named a Village of Williamsville Historic Landmark.



Landmark’s Story is the Village’s Story

If only the walls of the Williamsville Meeting House could talk.

They would recall the first prayer of the Disciples of Christ, who in 1871 built the prominent worship hall on Main Street as a beacon of faith for their growing congregation.

The faith and devotion of that first prayer was a welcome respite for the mix of settlers and world-weary travelers who called Williamsville home. The buzzing of sawmills lined up along Ellicott Creek were as much a sign of life as the weekly baptisms the church held in the rushing waters.

Surely, those walls would recall that glorious day, the date since lost to time and memory, that James A. Garfield, who would become the 20th President of the United States, sermonized as a traveling preacher at the Williamsville location.

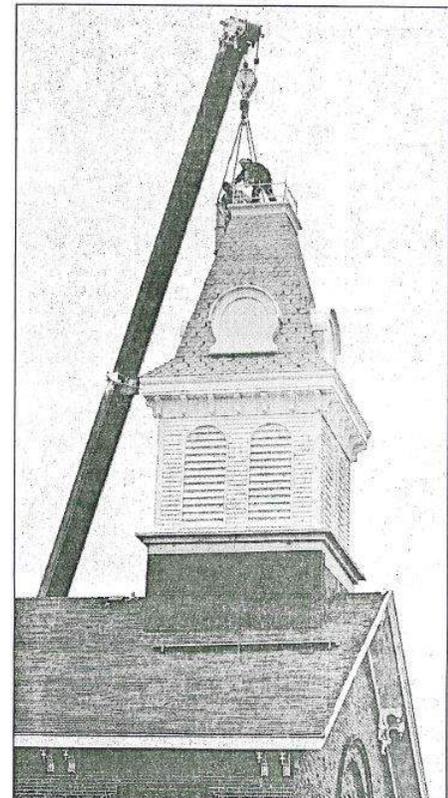
The future never seemed so bright that day, and perhaps it never would be again.

Gradually, the population that made up the vibrant congregation made its way to the up-and-coming City of Buffalo, and when those jobs disappeared, on to greener pastures across the country.

Sadness and neglect took the place of faith and worship as the congregation’s numbers dwindled and the building had to be sold.

Those brick walls couldn’t help but be embarrassed that fateful day in 1976 when the Village of Williamsville bought the Meeting House from the church elders. The final purchase price – some said a generous one – was a grand total of \$1.

Calls to demolish the structure came from many quarters, from business people thirsting for more parking to concerned taxpayers yet uneducated in the value of historic preservation.



SHARON CANTILLON/Buffalo News
 Workmen Jim Nowocien, left, and Gary Suta from International Chimney Corp. secure the final sections of the bell tower on the 1871 Church of Christ, now the Williamsville Meeting House and Museum, on Main Street in Williamsville. Installation of the bell tower, a replica of the original, marks completion of the church’s restoration. The tower, which was built in three sections, cost about \$70,000 and weighs about 8½ tons.



Timeline

1997 – With approval from SHPO, the Village hired International Chimney Corp. to construct and install a replacement steeple and bell tower (\$70,000).

1998 – Ninety-five percent of the Meeting House had been restored to its original 1871 condition.

2002 -- Placed on the National Register of the Historic Places.

2000s -- The building housed the Williamsville Historical Society museum and the lower portion of the building began to hold concerts, weddings, meetings, plays and voting for local elections.

2013 – Chosen as the centerpiece logo of Picture Main Street, the Village's \$6 million pedestrian improvement project.

2014 – New interior paint job, flooring and sound/video system are installed.

2015 – SHPO informs the Village that its application for an EPF Grant was not selected.

Meeting House Has Seen Rebirth, But Needs Funding for Repairs

Slowly, and surely, a smile would return to her face.

First the Williamsville Historical Society, and then the Village government itself, would take steps to restore the Meeting House to its original grandeur.

It was designated a local landmark. Then the bell tower – with help from New York State – was rebuilt, along with the signature steeple that soon towered over Main Street.

By the early 2000s, 95 percent of the Meeting House had been restored to its original 1871 condition with support from the State Historic Preservation Office and village officials applied for the structure to be registered on the National Register of Historic Places.

Soon the public wanted to have a look inside the old beauty.

The Williamsville Historical Museum set up shop upstairs and volunteer committees filled the downstairs each weekend with plays, concerts, weddings, funerals and of course meetings. People began to stream in by the dozens.

With so many people filling up the Meeting House for different events, those old walls – proud as ever but a little worn -- needed a bit of a facelift.

In 2014, a skilled craftsman from the Village Department of Public Works painted the previously off-white trim in the downstairs of the Meeting House. In addition to the new colors, which accentuate the ornate trim and give the rooms a more historical feel, attractive tile was also laid in the rear meeting room.

A new sound system and video projector was donated by the Jolly Boys charitable organization for community events.

The Meeting House is again a joyous symbol of what makes the Williamsville community great.

But once again it is at a crossroads.

The roof is in dire need of repair and the stained glass windows – including the ornate rose window above the main entrance – are in danger of falling out and shattering.

The Village has pumped thousands of dollars into its regular upkeep but requires historic preservation grant funding to ensure a stable future for the grand old building.

If only those old walls could talk, they would have a gem of a story to tell.

The next chapter in that story remains unwritten.



Sources: Village Historian and Former Village Mayor Mary Lowther, National Register of Historic Places application, Direct observation, Village budgets.





Investing in Our History

Roneker Building – 5550 Main St., Williamsville, N.Y. 14221

Basic Facts:



- Built: Mid-1800s
- Materials: Brick
- Height: 3 stories
- Historic uses:
- Carriage shop
- School room
- General store
- Grocery store
- Vintage shoppe
- Men's Wear



Current owner:

Martin E.

Zwierzchowski

Tenants:

Marty's

Formal Wear

Muleskinner

Antiques

Law Offices

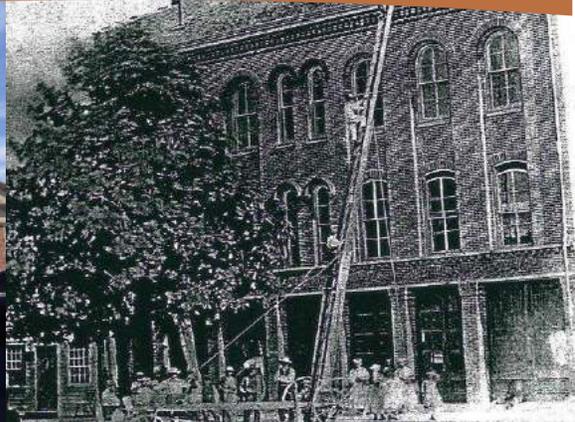
Tonic

Hair Salon

Assessed value in

Town of Amherst:

\$428,700



The Roneker Building – Gateway to Williamsville

History

In 1854, the building at 5550 Main St. -- known as the “Roneker Building” or “Brick Building” -- was the tallest commercial building in Amherst, containing three stories. Originally a carriage shop, this building also housed a school room, E.H. Smith’s general store, Bill Measer’s grocery store, Howard G. Brittings’s general store, Clara Walter’s Village Shoppe, Bancroft’s Village Shop, Roneker’s Mens and Boys Wear, and R.J. Wells Co.

In the early 1900s, this building also housed the telephone switchboard for Amherst’s 40 phones and was the Village Post Office. The second floor was used as a court room, meeting rooms, and housing during a shortage in World War II. The third floor was used as an entertainment hall and later Odd Fellows Hall.

On Feb. 2, 1987, due to its historical significance, the building was designated as a local landmark by the Village of Williamsville. It is one of the most visually significant landmarks on Main Street in the Village today.

Modern Use & Future

In 1997, Mr. Martin E. Zwierzchowski, proprietor of Marty’s Formal Wear, a tuxedo and men’s clothing emporium, purchased the building and has leased it at consistently high occupancy in the heart of the Village. Tenants of the building now include (First floor) Marty’s Formal Wear, Muleskinner Antiques, which sells fine antique wares, (Second floor) law offices, and (Third floor) Tonic Hair Salon, which was recently renovated to include exposed brick walls, modern finishes and antique signage that give the space a “historic downtown feel.” Last summer, leaders of the Congress for the New Urbanism toured Main Street and complimented the Village on its array of historic buildings but said buildings such as the Roneker Building displayed storefronts that looked “old and tired” and were not in keeping with the historic character of the Village’s Main Street.

Since then, Mr. Zwierzchowski has announced plans to “freshen up” the outside of the building by replacing the windows facing Main Street, which are worn and expose peeling paint. This project would cost roughly \$45,000 and Mr. Zwierzchowski intends to finance this himself.

However, after visiting the Amherst Museum and discovering historic photos of the building, Mr. Zwierzchowski realized that much of the historic detail that makes the building unique in the Village is covered up by modern finishes. Mr. Zwierzchowski would like to hire professionals to uncover and restore those details, which include a detailed brick cornice, brick pillars and brick archways above the first floor commercial space. To restore the building to its full grandeur would cost roughly \$150,000, a cost that Mr. Zwierzchowski is not able to bear at this time.



Old building, New uses, bright future



Tonic Hair Salon is a prime example of what historically sensitive redevelopment can do to attract tax-paying businesses that create jobs and contribute to the vibrancy of the local economy. The hair salon recently opened on the “loft level” of the historic Roneker building. Were the building to be restored to its original grandeur, it is likely that building would attract similar interest from the business community while serving as a shining example of the type of historic redevelopment the Village is looking for in its historic central core.

Village of Williamsville
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Comprehensive Strategy for Encouraging Historic Redevelopment

The Village is searching for ways to help Mr. Zwierzchowski – and other owners of historic properties in the Village – to “close the gap” that exists in funding these projects, which are often expensive but contribute greatly to the historic character of the Main Street district and the identity of the Village itself.

Mr. Zwierzchowski has a roughly \$100,000 funding gap to close. This is particularly difficult given the fact that Mr. Zwierzchowski is not a real estate developer and is not capable of taking on these improvements on his own without hiring historic preservation professionals. He is a valued small business owner who simply wants to improve the building he operates in the historic Village core.

Additionally, avenues typically taken by developers of historic buildings – such as historic tax credits -- would likely be of no use to Mr. Zwierzchowski since the building is not likely to garner many credits and Mr. Zwierzchowski would be unable to use these credits himself without selling the credits.

The Amherst Industrial Development Agency has met with Mr. Zwierzchowski and Village officials and is interested in exploring ways to help Mr. Zwierzchowski and other Village property owners to restore their properties, but initial estimates still leave a significant gap in financing.

Most significantly, this project would operate not in a vacuum that benefits one property owner but as part of a comprehensive strategy undertaken by the Village that would benefit multiple owners -- a strategy that has included:

- The upcoming adoption of New York’s latest Model Historic Preservation Law. In the 1980s, the Village Historic Preservation Commission adopted the state’s Model Historic Preservation Law, which has since been revised. The HPC is working with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to adopt the most recent version of the Model Law.
- Proactive steps to preserve historically significant buildings. On November 10, 2014, the Village Board designated 23 structures as local landmarks, which protects them from demolition and showcases them as historical.
- The creation of Historic Landmark Design Standards, a “roadmap” that encourages owners of historically significant buildings to reinvest in their properties. The Historic Landmark Design Standards were created by Flynn Battaglia Architects, with assistance from Julian W. Adams, Coordinator of the Certified Local Government program of the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. On September 30, 2014, they were made available to property owners.
- A more streamlined regulatory process in the Village for owners of historically significant properties who wish to invest in their buildings. In the past, owners of local landmarks were required to seek approval from the Village Planning and Architectural Review Board and the Historic Preservation Commission before commencing a project. The Village modified this unnecessarily complicated process by giving members of the Village Historic Preservation Commission – who have backgrounds in historic preservation -- the full authority to approve or reject modifications to local designated landmarks.



Williamsville to Canalside

Village of Williamsville, N.Y.

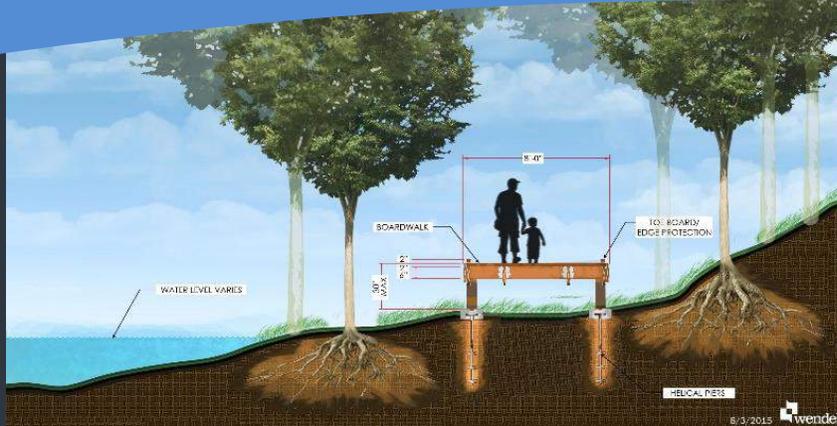
Exploring New Pathways

Williamsville to Canalside caught fire in the media with stories in the Buffalo News, Amherst Bee along with TV and radio coverage. The culture is changing. People want multiuse paths that connect destinations. The current terminus of the Amherst Bike Path at Maple and North Forest does not provide a destination.

Building the final connections to the Village of Williamsville will fulfill a vision to connect Williamsville to Canalside!

Improving Pathways

For over 400 years people have walked a path along Ellicott Creek to the North of Glen Falls. The current dirt path is blocked by fallen trees and difficult to traverse because of exposed tree roots and rocks. It is time to make it accessible to everyone.



Creating Walkable/Bikeable Communities

Williamsville to Canalside Objective and Actions:

Objective: Restore Access to Ellicott Creek

The current path that provides access to Ellicott Creek is rugged and often blocked by fallen trees, roots and rocks. It is a difficult path even for able-bodied persons to hike. The objective is to provide better access to Ellicott Creek for everyone, including walkers, bicyclists, parents and children with strollers, seniors and those with disabilities.

Action 1: Gather stakeholders

The Village of Williamsville is already working with officials from the Town of Amherst, County of Erie and State of New York on this project. It will take stakeholder commitments and action to create real connections through multiuse paths, sidewalks and bike lanes. The Village of Williamsville is prepared to take the lead in connecting Glen Park to the Amherst State Park, which is a first step toward the larger goal of connecting the Village of Williamsville to Canalside.

Action 2: Work with Amherst and New York State to secure land use rights

The land is currently owned by New York State. The Village of Williamsville is prepared to assume responsibility through an agreement similar to the one signed between Amherst and New York State for the Amherst State Park.

Action 3: Secure Grant Funding

The Village of Williamsville will act as lead agency working with the Town of Amherst and the State of New York in securing funding through the CFA to design and build the half-mile path that will run between the Glen Park area and the northern parts of Amherst State Park. The Village of Williamsville will apply before the 2016 deadline.





Williamsville Board Commitment

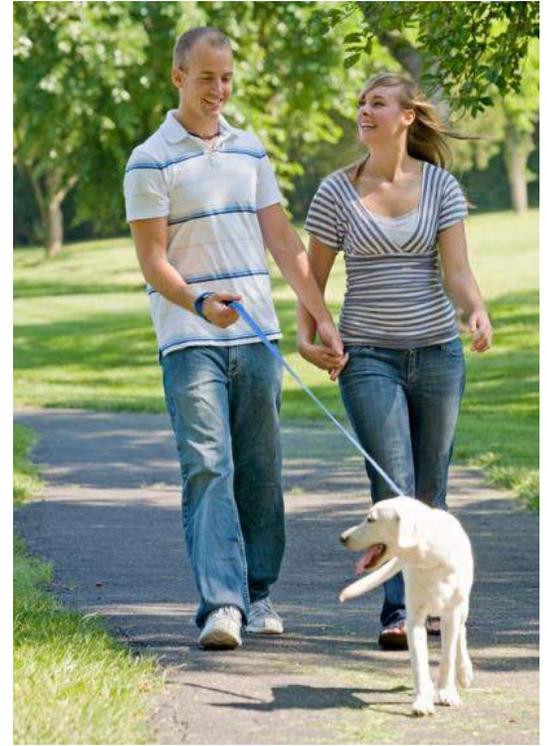


The Village of Williamsville is committed to fulfilling the objectives laid out in our Comprehensive Plan. These objectives are centered on smart growth principles and creating a walkable community. The Village Board unanimously supported the idea of creating a multiuse path between Glen Park and the Amherst State Park at a May 2015 meeting. The Village Board is willing to take the lead on designing and building the multiuse path. The Village Board looks forward to working with the Town of Amherst (above map) and New York State on this project.

Village of Williamsville
5565 Main Street
Williamsville, NY 14221

Walkable and Bikeable Communities

Walkable and bikeable communities that are desirable places to live, work, learn and play are a key component of smart growth. Their desirability comes from two factors. Walkable and bikeable communities make alternative activity possible, thus expanding transportation options, and creating a streetscape for a range of users – pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers. To foster walkability and rideability communities must mix land uses and build compactly, as well as ensure safe and inviting pedestrian corridors. It is incumbent upon public and private sectors to facilitate development of walkable places. Land use and community design play a pivotal role in encouraging pedestrian environments. By building places with multiple destinations within close proximity, where the streets and sidewalks balance multiple forms of transportation, communities have the basic framework for walkability.



The Village of Williamsville's commitment to Picture Main Street, Spring Street and South Long are creating a destination for walkers and riders. New multiuse paths will expand opportunities to create economic opportunity and create a better quality-of-life for our residents.

GLEN PARK TRAIL EXTENSION





Westwood: A Green Future

Creating a “Central Park” at Country Club site in Amherst, N.Y.

Timeline

July 2014: Mensch Capital submitted plans to the Town of Amherst for the \$238 million redevelopment of the Westwood Country Club site.

September 2014: Town officials deem the environmental impact statement for the development as incomplete due to concerns about increased traffic, use of the sanitary sewer system and residential impact.

August 2015: Town Board begins to examine the possibility of negotiating with Mensch Capital to acquire all or part of the former Westwood Country Club property to be used as a town or state park.

November 2015: Amherst Supervisor proposes elaborate land transfer of multiple golf courses that would pave the way for the Westwood property to be turned into a state park.

December 2015: Town Board accepts the environmental impact statement but the future of the development plans are undecided.

Source: Amherst Bee



A once-in-a-generation chance at preservation

The future of Westwood Country Club is a once-in-a-generation opportunity.

Rather than approving a \$238 million mixed-use development of the former country club site, officials from the Town of Amherst have proposed using state funds to purchase the property as part of an elaborate plan to preserve precious green space in the heavily developed town.

The project would greatly benefit from New York State Environmental Protection Fund funding for acquisition costs.

It would create a **continuous greenway** from beyond the southern border of the Town of Amherst, north through Island and Glen parks in the Village of Williamsville, through Amherst State Park and through two Country Clubs (Park and Westwood).

This Greenway would connect to the already existing Town of Amherst and University at Buffalo bike path systems, which connect to the Niagara River Greenway system all the way south to Canalside in downtown Buffalo.

Creating an Amherst/Williamsville greenway would link to the UB system and would allow cyclists to travel to the busy Canalside district in Buffalo – an idea that was wildly popular when proposed in May 2015.

The purchase of Westwood by the Town of Amherst would help make that plan a reality – but it would do so much more.

It would give this suburban center of 122,000 residents the grand **Central Park** it has always lacked – a **bastion of green** in the center of asphalt urbanity. This vision is in keeping with the comprehensive plans of both the Town and the Village.

In preserving Westwood – one of the last large greenfields in the town -- the state would also help **protect the watershed** of the immediate area. The golf course property currently serves as a natural floodplain for rain storms and snow melts – a crucial element of





Investing in the Environment

the viability of the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

While proposed development plans for the Westwood property contain drainage elements for controlling water on site, they do not account for water that floods in from Cheektowaga and other areas that sit above the rushing waterfall of Glen Falls.

At a time when cities across the country are daylighting creeks that are buried beneath developed areas – look no further than Scajaquada Creek in Buffalo – New York has an opportunity at Westwood to not only preserve greenspace but to protect a natural, authentic creekshed area.

Preserving the former country club as green space would also increase the **quality of life** and property values of the surrounding homeowners by preventing increases in vehicle volume in the neighborhoods, on busy arterials like Sheridan Drive and North Forest Road and in the already traffic-clogged Village of Williamsville.

In addition to preventing the overuse of the town's existing sewer system, the preservation of Westwood would allow the buildings on the site to be retrofitted to fill existing needs of the community. Creation of a small banquet or conference center could be an ideal way to make the preservation plan economically viable.

Despite its series of neighborhood parks, the Town of Amherst lacks a grand central location for its hundreds of thousands of residents to gather and enjoy.



Westwood Park could fulfill this gap in the region's current offerings while preserving one of the last few large open parcels of land in the sprawling Town of Amherst.

The vision for a vibrant and protected Westwood as that signature green space meets objectives ranging from preservation of green space to environmental sustainability to smart use of existing infrastructure.

The **Environmental Protection Fund's** mission appears to be very much in line with this proposal and its involvement in a joint funding plan with the Town of Amherst and the Village of Williamsville would help ensure a green – and bright – future for this special place.



Widespread Public Support

Mensch Capital Partners had planned to develop the former Westwood site into a sprawling town center with many of the same offerings that already exist in Amherst and Williamsville.

That plan was met with resistance by Amherst residents, who have pushed instead for the creation of a grand park on the site. In fact, they have created a citizens group supporting the creation of a park. The group, named "Keep Westwood Green," has spread its message through the Amherst area.





Water & Sewer Consolidation

Finding cost savings and efficiencies in the Village of Williamsville, N.Y.

State Partners



Local Government Efficiency

Some local governments see New York State as an adversary when it comes to consolidation, but the Village of Williamsville has experienced just the opposite. Village leaders have met with representatives from the Department of State, Division of Local Government Services, to discuss ways to find short-term and long-term cost savings through consolidation. Village officials traveled to Albany in November 2015 to attend the Local Government Innovation Conference, which provided innovative case studies and new ideas for finding cost savings in Village operations. The Department of State is a great partner.



Photo: Getty Images/iStockphoto

Water Consolidation Complete, Village Looks to Sewer

Times are tough for local governments across New York State.

Gone are the days when taxpayers agreed to pony up each budget cycle to support ever-growing expenses and inefficient service delivery.

Village of Williamsville leaders began to realize this years ago, and while they had already maintained one of the lowest tax rates in Western New York, they began to look for even more savings.

The Water Department was an obvious first choice. It made no sense for a small Village staff to be spending resources to maintain a water system where infrastructure aged and water rates would increase far into the future.

Instead, Village leaders had a desire to prioritize their above-ground infrastructure – which Village residents actually see on a daily basis – and to find economies of scale for its below-ground infrastructure.

The Village made an agreement to consolidate its Water Department with that of the Erie County Water Authority.

Consolidation decreased the water rate that Village users pay from \$5.81 to \$3.00 per 1,000 gallons consumed.

A surcharge of \$1.87 was added to the \$3.00 water rate to cover consolidation and existing debt costs, resulting in a total rate of \$4.87.

Beyond the immediate savings, consolidation will result in lower water rates in the future and the village will save money long-term.

Now, consolidation of the sewer department is the next logical step.





Making New York Affordable



“We’ve made tremendous progress over the past five years to make New York more affordable, and this year we are going to keep that momentum going from the ground up. This competition will help local governments find innovative ways to reduce costs and lower taxes for their constituents – which will make it cheaper to live, work and thrive in their communities. This is about building a stronger and more prosperous New York over the long haul, and I am eager to help our local partners across the state move forward.”

- Governor

Andrew M. Cuomo

Consolidation with Town of Amherst Sewer Would be the Next Logical Step

In the Village of Williamsville’s Sewer System, Inflow and Infiltration (I & I) has caused the sewer rate to be erratic and unpredictable in the past few years. These issues need to be taken care of and consolidation would appear to be a way to achieve this worthwhile goal.

The Town of Amherst has an entire Sewer Department that is much better equipped to handle sewer issues than that of the Village of Williamsville. Currently, sewer issues in the Village are incorporated into the existing Department of Public Works staff, which performs many other tasks, including street repair and maintenance; park maintenance; storm water and sanitary sewer collection; brush pickup; tree maintenance; buildings and grounds and community beautification.

A consolidation of the Village Sewer System would be the first step in finding regional economies of scale when it comes to wastewater treatment.

A recent Inflow and Infiltration study was completed by utilizing a Strategic Planning & Feasibility Study grant from the Empire State Development Corporation. The study found several areas in need of Inflow & Infiltration remediation, including South and North Ellicott streets; Main Street; North Long and Reist streets.

The Town of Amherst is a willing partner with the Village and the long-term goal would be to upgrade the town’s sewer treatment facility.



The Village is already sharing treatment services with the Town through an inter-municipal agreement and this plan would be the next logical step to realize total consolidation, which is a stated and worthwhile goal of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo’s administration.

The consolidation would save Village taxpayers money. Village sewer rates increased 6.8 percent in the most recent fiscal year and the recent Inflow & Infiltration Study determined that the Village system requires \$2.9 million worth of upgrades.





Youngs Road Interchange

Infrastructure improvements will help fix Main Street congestion



Photo: Buffalo News

Thruway
Partners



The New York State Thruway Authority for years has been criticized for the placement of the Williamsville Toll Barrier. Village officials in the past few years have refrained from adding to that criticism and instead have worked to develop a relationship with Thruway officials. That relationship has resulted in better communication, regular meetings and great cooperation. The Thruway Authority has been responsive during the recent bridge painting and landscape improvements on Wehrle Drive and the Village looks forward to continuing this relationship.

Much-Needed Ramp Would Solve Multiple Problems

Williamsville leaders are creating partnerships to work for a Thruway interchange at Youngs Road that would alleviate traffic congestion in the Village while creating direct Thruway access to Buffalo Niagara International Airport.

The game-changing project, the benefits of which would extend to all of Western New York, has been on the area's wish list for years while development has steadily expanded in southeast Amherst – clogging Village streets with traffic and pushing Village leaders to end the inertia.

The Youngs Road-Wehrle Drive area, which is home to large employers such as Ingram Micro, Northrop Grumman and the Erie Community College North Campus, draws thousands of office workers from Buffalo, Cheektowaga and nearby towns. Absent a convenient Thruway exit, they are forced to drive on Village streets, which creates a traffic nightmare at peak rush hour times.

Village officials traveled to Albany in November 2015 to speak with state officials about the possibility of such an interchange at the busy Youngs Road location.

Thruway Authority leaders historically have supported such an interchange but have said the local community – Amherst – and Erie County must support the plan because Youngs Road is a county road.

After returning to the Village, officials created partnerships with Erie County and with the Town of Amherst. The Erie County Executive and the Amherst Supervisor both said they would support such a plan.





Project Has Long History



The Time is Now For a Youngs Road Interchange, officials say

The project to build a Youngs Road interchange may be eligible for funding through airport Passenger Facility Charge funds, which are collected by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority and are only eligible to be used on airport-related projects.

“The Village is not going to throw our hands up and wait for someone else to do this,” Williamsville Mayor Brian J. Kulpa said. “We are going to pull together a team and get to work – we are interested in solutions and we see this as helping a regional traffic problem.”

1996: The Amherst Chamber of Commerce comes out in support of the idea of a new Thruway interchange at Youngs Road.

1997: Consultants were hired not only to look at relocating the Williamsville Toll Barrier but also to build additional interchanges, possibly at Youngs Road.

1997: Town Board agrees to study interchange issue. Opposition begins to surface and the idea is eventually dropped.

Since then: Many more workers have been hired in Wehrle Drive office parks. The Village brings the issue up again.

Suggested solution to traffic woes

Williamsville officials want Thruway interchange at Youngs Road



“(It) is a great idea,” said Amherst Supervisor Dr. Barry A. Weinstein. “The powers that be rejected it many years ago, and it's been on the backburner ever since.”



Village of Williamsville
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Re-Tree Williamsville

Restoring rights-of-way and returning green to the Village



Before



After



A Green Village is a Safe, Healthy, Valuable Village

It's hard to imagine the Village of Williamsville without the lush, towering trees that form canopies over the classic Village neighborhoods.

They are also a ubiquitous part of the landscape on Main Street, providing refuge that has a calming effect on drivers passing by and shoppers walking from store to store.

And nothing beats a beautiful Village home with a mature tree in the front yard.

Just a few short years ago, though, all of this was under attack.

The slow neglect of time was the first factor to blame.

Tree pits lay barren up and down Main Street, one more reminder that the Village's primary economic and social center had undergone a stark transition from a special place to a state highway.

Also forgotten were the value of common street trees, which over the years had been cut down and paved over for additional parking areas on side streets near the business district.

It all added up to a physical landscape that was uninspiring and continued to deteriorate with each passing year.

Then came the wrath of mother nature in October 2006.

The trees that did remain in the Village's neighborhoods and parks were destroyed in one fell swoop when the freak snowstorm descended on the Village, leaving destruction and more than 30,000 dead trees in its wake.

Enter the Village of Williamsville Tree Board.



Tim Abati, left, and Tim Phalen, right, help plant trees in empty tree pits along Main Street.

Main Street trees are taking root

by ERIKA CARLSON
Reporter

Residents of Main Street may have noticed a recent change in the scenery as trees were planted in the empty tree pits lining the street last week.

The tree planting project has been talked about for years and was a recurring topic during the Village Board's election year, said Trustee Dan DeLano, liaison for the Tree Board.

"There haven't been trees in some of these pits for probably close to 10 years," DeLano said. "It always seemed to be a stumbling block with the state, and we were also waiting on a grant for the Cornell Structural Soil."

The project began to gain momentum when the "Picture Main Street" initiative was introduced. "That was when the Tree Board stepped in and really took off with it. Now there are trees going in the ground," DeLano said.

About 54 trees were planted along Main Street last week, transforming the village.

DeLano said the planting will be

DeLano worked through the design and permit process with representatives of the state Department of Transportation in order to plant the trees by September.

"The relationship we have with the DOT and right across the board with the regional engineers and the landscape architect, Mike Kristner, has been fantastic," said DeLano. "They've been nothing but responsive and very helpful in the whole process."

Village residents have expressed their excitement at the new changes.

"Everybody's elated. It's half disbelief and half excitement," DeLano said. "I've heard some people say this is one of the bigger things that's happened on Main Street in years."

Trees will also be planted on side streets as part of the semi-annual planting the Tree Board holds once in May and once in November. The fall planting will take place Saturday, Nov. 3.

Re-Tree Western New York will donate half of the 80 trees that will be placed along side streets this year.

By the Numbers

154

Trees planted on the streets and in parks in 2015.

48

Trees restored to the Village right-of-way in three years.

12,000

Square-feet of green space restored.

1,400

Linear feet of sidewalk area restored.

11

Different species of trees planted in 2015.

74

Municipal ash trees. 27 slated for removal, others treated.



Street trees increase property values

The group, made up of volunteer laborers and dedicated Village officials, decided enough was enough.

In 2007, they began an aggressive tree-planting program to start replacing the trees that were lost during the storm but also to fill in the spots that had become barren over time.

Since then, more than 1,000 trees have been planted and a total of 12,232-square-feet of asphalt has been restored to green space.

That amounts to 1,443 linear feet of sidewalk space – nearly a quarter mile that had been taken away by asphalt.

The reclaimed green space reduces stormwater runoff to prevent flooding in Ellicott Creek, makes the village healthier, more visually appealing and ensures separation between cars and people for a “walkable village.”

There were 154 trees planted on the streets and in the parks in 2015. Twenty-five of those were replacement trees in the scope of the Safe Routes to School project, which added sidewalks to increase pedestrian safety for schoolchildren in the Village.

That figure also includes some replacements of trees on Main Street that didn't make it due to the extreme deep freezes of winter in 2013 and 2014. There were 11 different species planted in 2015.



The Village uses a unique system where the DPW digs the holes for new trees, which are then planted by Village volunteers.

The Tree Board had a tree survey completed by SUNY Buffalo State interns. Every tree on public property has been identified, and data such as size and health were included. The survey, to be completed this year, will also identify areas in need of tree planting.

Educational efforts have also expanded under the guidance of the Tree Board, whose members passed out 120 potted seedlings of six different native species on Earth Day/Arbor Day 2015.

Please feel free to log on to the Village website to browse the tree page or visit <http://www.walkablewillamsville.com/trees.html> to request a tree.



Fighting the Emerald Ash Borer

The Village of Williamsville has taken up the fight against the Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive species that has decimated the population of ash trees throughout the Northeast United States. The Village inoculated 74 municipal ash trees in 2015 and 27 are slated to be removed. Those that are slated to be removed were not inoculated due to their condition and/or location. The Village will save or replace as many trees as possible.

