

Meeting Summary

The discussion group with the consultants included residents from various neighborhoods in the Town, Town staff, Steering Committee members, and some representatives from a local real estate agency. This focus group met to discuss the makeup and general condition of the Town's various neighborhoods and housing. The results of this meeting are summarized below.

The group represented various neighborhoods or areas throughout the Town, including Merchants/Empire, Norton/Culver, Deerfield (Association), Oakridge Drive, Orchard Park, Coronado Drive, and Belhurst Drive.

What are some of the good and bad points about the Town's neighborhoods and homes?

Good

- Diverse housing stock
- The neighborhoods are well-established (you know what is next door to you since there is little open, developable land)
- There are sidewalks that connect to various areas in the Town
- The sidewalks are utilized by school kids
- Proximity to waterways (great potential)
- Neighborhood schools
- Tree lined streets in many areas

Bad

- No room for growth or expansion
- The sidewalks are limited in some areas, not all of them connect (sidewalks go to nowhere)
- Ignorance – lack of acknowledgement that there are other great neighborhoods in the Town
- Deteriorating neighborhoods/homes in some areas
- Conversion of homes from residential to commercial use
- Some schools/neighborhoods are fragmented
- Not replacing trees when they are removed (sometimes by property owner request, even though tree lawn is in the right-of-way).

Good and Bad

- Affordable housing – people only think of Irondequoit as a place to start and there aren't "step-up" housing options
- Older neighborhoods, especially the housing stock
- Smaller lots and close neighbors ("eyes on the street" for safety, but sometimes a lack of privacy)

What is the general feeling and condition of the housing stock in the Town?

- Overall the homes are in fair to good condition.
- There are pockets of lower quality housing stock throughout the Town. A lot of these homes are lower quality because they were built that way years ago, they require substantial improvements that the owners cannot afford, or just due to owner apathy.
- Complaints or violations about property maintenance are split pretty evenly between renter-occupied and owner-occupied housing. But there is a negative perception about rentals
- In addition, the number of complaints the Town receives are equally shared between property maintenance issues and tenant issues.
- Owner/renter apathy and lack of pride in one's house is an issue – and may be the reason for the deteriorated look/complaints
- A dated zoning code and a lack of enforcement (numbers of officers available) adds to the property maintenance issue.
- In some complaint cases, the size of the lots restricts modern day conveniences that have caused the complaint in the first case. (i.e. cars parking on the grass, when the driveway is full and the lot is too small to have a larger driveway. The lot was designed and built for a family with one car, yet today most homes have a minimum of two and designed for such.)

How are some of the neighborhoods in the Town designated or defined?

- Defined by proximity to a school
- Neighborhood associations
- Subdivisions
- Fire districts
- Proximity to churches
- Sports
- East vs. west; sometimes on the west side it is also a case of north vs. south of Titus Avenue

What are some of the similarities in the neighborhoods?

- Tree-lined streets
- Sidewalks
- Kids
- Athletic organizations

What are some improvements or issues that you believe should be addressed?

- There should be better transitions or buffers between residential and commercial areas; however, the proximity of residential and commercial areas is an asset too.
- An increase in access to public transportation within the Town, not just into the City.
- More “quaintness”
- Walkable communities
- There are not a lot of places for kids to “hang out”

- Competition is hard for mom & pop stores vs. the larger chain stores
- The number and variety of restaurants is sporadic and limited to certain areas.
- Lack of senior patio homes or upscale apartments
- Perception of the schools may drive people out of the town, or in some cases to one side of town or another
- The town needs a strong program for tree replacement; and other agencies (state/county) should have to replace or install new trees when they do a street project.
- The neighborhoods are turning over (from seniors to younger families or singles) and the new residents don't have the same ties to the neighborhood that the older residents did. As a consequence, there isn't as much appreciation or connection to the community.
- General lack of neighborhood "values"
- Due to the amount of turnover in the Town (between 1990 and 2000, 19% of the Town moved out or in), people do not know what services are available. Also, some people who have lived here for a long time may not know what is available in the Town.

Building on the last question above, some of the reasons given as to why people have moved out of the Town include the schools/perception of schools, the need for more upscale housing, or senior housing opportunities. It was also noted that, in general, people who move out of the Town follow this pattern: residents on the west side move to Pittsford and east side residents move to Webster.

Map-based Notes

Identifiable Neighborhoods:

- Summerville (area encompassing north of Pattonwood Drive and the west half of Rock Beach Road)
- White City (in general the area north of Rock Beach Road within Summerville)
- Silver Coast (east half of Rock Beach Road)
- Gold Coast (Rock Beach Road extension)
- Flats (Seneca Park Avenue to Sagamore Drive, west of St Paul Blvd)
- Titus-Cooper-Hudson (St Paul Blvd, Titus Avenue, Oakview Drive)
- East Parkway (Titus Ave, Winona Blvd, Maplehurst Road, St Paul Blvd)
- Southeast Neighborhood Association (Norton Street, Town line, Pardee Road, Empire Blvd)
- Laurelton (Whittington Road, Empire Blvd, Town line, North Winton Road)
- Orchard Park (Route 590, Empire Blvd, Irondequoit Bay, Bay Shore Blvd)
- Bayfront (Newport Road, Bay Shore Blvd)
- Bay View (Route 590, Bay Shore Blvd, Bay View Road)
- Huntington Hills (Hoffman Road, west side of Culver Road)
- German Village (Route 590, Point Pleasant Road, Irondequoit Bay)
- Sea Breeze (Culver Road, Town line, Lake Shore Blvd)

Areas of Concern:

- Sea Breeze
- Van Lare WWTF (odors especially)
- Ridge Road East
- Area around Kings Highway, south of East Ridge Road
- Small area west of Culver Road, south of Echo Street
- West end of Empire Blvd near the Town line
- Southwestern corner of Town near Merchants & Culver Road in the City (a lot more rental properties that are spilling over from the City)

Areas of Opportunity:

- Cooper\Titus intersection
- Sea Breeze area

Buffer areas:

- Titus Avenue & Oak Ridge Drive
- West of the Cooper-Titus intersection
- Hudson Avenue near the Town line
- Portland Avenue near the Town line