

Topic: Healthy Communities; Pedestrian Oriented Development; Bicycle Infrastructure
Resource Type: Policy Statements and Planning Documents
State: New York
Jurisdiction Type: County
Municipality: Niagara County
Year (adopted, written, etc.): 2009
Community Type - applicable to: Urban; Suburban
Title: Reduce Dependency on Automobiles by Promoting Walking and Bicycling
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Abstract

Niagara County, New York's Public Health and Safety Chapter of their Comprehensive Plan outlines their goal to create safe, healthy, and walkable communities. They recognize health and safety of communities as one of the most important but overlooked aspects of a high quality of life. It stimulates the local economy and increases the variance and character of a community.

One objective to accomplish this goal is to reduce the community's dependency on automotive transportation by increasing the network of pedestrian and bicycle trails. To optimize this network, they plan to place the non-motorized trails between public space destinations. They've stated that all future residential and commercial development should be encouraged to implement sidewalks and trails that lead to existing non-motorized networks.

Resource

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Goal – Create Safe, Healthy and Walkable Communities

To facilitate and encourage the creation and maintenance of safe and healthy communities and recognize health and safety as perhaps one of the most important, but often overlooked aspects to enjoying a high quality of life that stimulates local economic benefits and maintains community vibrance and character.

Objectives

- Encourage the establishment of countywide land use and environmental policies and project review procedures, specifically through the SEQRA process, that prioritize natural resource protection and sustainable management practices including, but not limited to land, air and water quality.
- Work with local communities in encouraging more “eyes on the street” types of community planning initiatives and site design requirements for safety enhancement and as potential crime prevention techniques.
- Create opportunities for increased walkability and physical exercise, social interaction, and reduced reliance on automotive forms of transportation by establishing opportunities for safe, connected networks of non-motorized trails, pedestrian pathways, bikeways and public space destinations.

Chapter IX

Public Health & Safety

Background and Trends

The general trend towards increasingly complex and technologically dependent lives, the aging of the “baby boom” generation, a general decline of healthy lifestyles of large segments of the population in the United States, concerns over natural disasters, terrorism, food contamination, transportation-related accidents involving hazardous materials, and other potential emergency situations increases the importance of the role that County and local governments play in protecting public health and safety. Some of Niagara County’s population that is disadvantaged or has special needs, including many seniors and the disabled, are among the most vulnerable of society and rely on government for their protection and safety, particularly in emergency situations. However, all residents of Niagara County need to be assured that their health and safety are a priority and so communicating new and ongoing initiatives that are undertaken to protect the public’s health and safety is more important than ever.

It is estimated that by the year 2030, approximately one-fifth of the population in the U.S. will be 65 years of age or older. Upstate New York is expected to experience a 40 percent increase in its population of those who are 65 years old and older during the same timeframe, more than double the rate of increase for the same demographic segment during the period between 1980 and 2005 (Deitz and Garcia 2007). As the population continues to age it is important that policies and procedures are in place to anticipate future needs not only in the event of an emergency, but in meeting daily needs as well such as health care, affordable housing and access to transportation.

Estimates like those noted above are important considerations when planning for the future at any level of government, but they are especially important at county and local levels because these numbers translate into potentially large segments of the population that may need special attention and quick response in the event of a local emergency. The problem of response is further complicated during widespread emergencies, for example during severe storms and power outages, when potentially dispersed and vulnerable populations need to be reached efficiently and effectively.

Residents of Niagara County need to be assured that their health and safety is a priority and so communicating new and ongoing initiatives that are undertaken to protect the public’s health and safety is more important than ever.

Nationwide the number of volunteer firefighters decreased by 8%, or approximately 74,000 between 1984 and 2006. The number of EMT's declined by more than 15,000.

The Firemen's Association of New York estimates that it would cost local taxpayers more than \$5 billion annually to replace volunteers with paid fire and ambulance services.

Response to emergencies is complicated by the fact that fewer individuals are volunteering their time and skills as emergency responders due to a variety of reasons including time commitments required and other individual and family needs that must be met. It is estimated that Nationwide the number of volunteers fell by 8 percent, or approximately 74,000 between 1984 and 2006. In New York State volunteer firefighters declined from 140,000 in the early 1990's to fewer than 90,000 at the present time (New York Legislative Commission on Rural Resources 2008).

The number of Emergency Response Technicians declined by more than 15,000 volunteers to a current total of about 35,000. The Firemen's Association of New York estimates that it would cost local taxpayers more than \$5 billion annually to replace volunteers with paid fire and ambulance services (New York Legislative Commission on Rural Resources 2008).

Many issues related to an aging population and those with special needs in social services, public health, health care, child care and related services, are addressed in Chapter VII under County Services. This chapter focuses on the role of Niagara County and local governments in providing emergency preparedness, police protection, fire coordination, emergency response, and homeland security.

Niagara County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

One of the primary roles of County government is preparing for emergency situations and each year emergency responders across Niagara County review procedures outlined in the Niagara County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMP is prepared by County officials working in collaboration with Federal, State and local agencies and emergency responders under the coordination of the New York State Emergency Management Office, as part of a statewide emergency management program.

The purpose of the CEMP is to minimize or prevent the impacts of disasters, and to enhance the efficiency of response and recovery operations in Niagara County. Niagara County Emergency Services is responsible for maintaining and updating the CEMP with input from the Niagara County Local Emergency Planning Committee, County Manager, County Attorney, County government officials, New York State Disaster Preparedness Commission, other appropriate department heads, and the citizenry of Niagara County. Niagara County and its cities, towns, and villages are part of this multi-jurisdictional planning process.

Niagara County Emergency Services is the coordinating office for all emergency management activities. According to the CEMP, Emergency Services is "responsible for assisting individual towns and villages within Niagara County if they have fully committed their resources and are still unable to cope with any disaster." When local departments or agencies are unable to adequately respond, Emergency Services may be asked to assume a leadership role. The CEMP is intended to enhance Niagara County's ability to manage emergency situations if a local municipality is unable to handle an emergency.

The CEMP consists of three components:

1. Disaster Prevention and Mitigation. This component involves identifying and prioritizing likely hazards as well as response resources at risk and the appropriate measures to take to prevent or mitigate the effects of disasters;
2. Disaster Response. Effective response requires stipulating effective processes and policies for responding to potential disasters through the utilization and coordination of all of the County's response capabilities; and

3. Disaster Recovery. Recovery requires providing processes and policies for recovery and redevelopment after disasters, including the utilization of State and Federal programs for emergency recovery.

The CEMP defines roles and responsibilities in prevention, response, and recovery, including a detailed chain of command to be followed during an emergency. Emergency management responsibilities for County departments and agencies are outlined in the plan and assignments have been made within the framework of current department and agency capabilities and existing organizational responsibilities. Together, local government agencies and County departments work together to prevent, respond, and facilitate the recovery process for significant disasters.

The CEMP is an all-hazards management plan. Briefly summarized, the CEMP provides the following:

- Identifies, assesses, and prioritizes local vulnerabilities to emergencies or disasters and the resources necessary to prevent, mitigate, respond and recover from them
- Outlines measures to improve the County's ability to manage hazards
- Provides that County government will take appropriate actions to prevent, mitigate, respond and recover from disasters
- Provides for the efficient use of all available resources
- Provides for the use and coordination of County, State, and Federal programs to assist disaster victims and prioritize responses to the needs of the elderly, disabled, low income and other groups that may be affected, and
- Provides for coordination of State and Federal programs for recovery from a disaster

Niagara County Local Emergency Planning Committee

In 1996, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed regulations requiring facilities that use, make, or store more than certain amounts of regulated chemicals to make information available about their risk management activities to local emergency responders, Federal and State officials, and the public. The Niagara County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) was formed in response to those regulations. The LEPC is made up of member groups representing communities, government, and industry. The LEPC monitor activities of companies that store, use or transport hazardous chemicals.

LEPC members work to promote the health, safety, and economic well being of local community residents and company employees under risk management procedures. Risk management is intended to prevent chemical releases, improve company plant safety, and protect the public by collecting information to encourage community discussions in four key areas:

- The potential effects of chemical releases,
- A five-year history of the facility's accidental chemical releases,
- The facility's program for preventing accidents, and
- The facility's program for responding in an emergency.

LEPC members serve on technical and communications committees. The technical committee assists companies in gathering hazard, prevention, and emergency response information. The communications committee develops ways to effectively communicate risk management information to employees and local citizens.

The CEMP defines roles and responsibilities in prevention, response, and recovery, including a detailed chain of command to be followed during an emergency.

Risk management covers all aspects of a facility from its design and construction through start-up and operation, as well as maintenance and training procedures. It is an ongoing process requiring continuous monitoring and testing of equipment, management systems, and training personnel to ensure the safety of employees and community members as well as protecting the environment.

Risk management provides for the following:

- Eliminate or reduce hazards
- Prevent occurrences of incidents
- Minimize or contain impact of incidents
- Prepare the public and employees for possible incidents
- Respond promptly and professionally to emergencies, and
- Serve as a resource to other emergency agencies

Safety procedures that may be implemented include the following:

- Specially designed vehicles and rail cars for transport and storage of bulk chemicals
- Site lighting to provide for employee safety during operation and maintenance
- Messages over loud speakers describing plant activities
- Bells or sirens signaling an incident or drill, and
- Emergency response agencies operating at a plant for the purpose of familiarization or for training exercises

A number of Federal, State and local agencies require risk management activities. In particular, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires companies to maintain safety programs that review processes, equipment, training, and plant procedures on a regular basis.

Some of the issues and concerns raised by the public and industry in the past with regards to these types of emergencies include:

- Trucks transporting products through residential streets
- Noise abatement
- Notification methods of the community during an incident
- Effects of weather (e.g., high winds, tornadoes, snow storms) on plant operations
- Potential incidents involving trucks, rail cars, or pipelines
- Nuisance odors
- Emergency response training and preparation
- Plant inspection, testing, and maintenance
- Plant design safety
- Plant operations safety
- Accident prevention/risk reduction
- Community dialogue, and
- A Community Alert Network

County Fire Service

Niagara County communities are well covered to provide quick response to emergencies. The County includes 31 fire districts. Fire districts are political subdivisions established to provide fire protection and emergency response. A fire district has an elected governing body, administrative officers and limits on expenditures, and has the powers to incur indebtedness and require the levy of taxes which are collected at the same time as other municipal taxes.

The County is divided into four Mutual Aid areas. County Fire Services provides emergency response and coordination, training and instruction in fire and emergency response, as well as public informational materials to adults and children on fire-safety and emergency services.

County fire personnel include the following key positions that are responsible for emergency response, mutual aid coordination, communications, investigations, hazardous materials coordination, and training.

- Fire Coordinator and Director of Emergency Services
- Assistant Director of Emergency Services
- Mutual Aid Deputies (each of the four Mutual Aid areas of the County)
- Communications Deputy
- EMS Deputy
- Fire Investigations Deputy
- HazMat Deputy Coordinator

Office of the Sheriff

The Niagara County Office of the Sheriff provides a variety of public safety and security services to residents of Niagara County through its primary divisions and support units. Corrections, the largest division is responsible for operation of the County Jail. This division is also responsible for the inmate work program, inmate education program, corrections emergency response, jail medical services and facility maintenance.

The Civil Division includes a variety of services including road patrols, crime scene investigations, 911 communication and computer operations, criminal investigations, juvenile investigations, Western NY Joint Terrorism Task Force, Drug Task Force, forensics lab, property evidence, law enforcement academy and County Court/building security.

Special units and teams within the Sheriff's Office include: Marine Unit, Underwater Recovery Team, Aviation Unit, Emergency Response Teams and Firearms Training, Traffic Safety and Stop DWI, Domestic Violence, K-9 Unit, Warrants, Drug Awareness and Resistance (DARE), Victim's Assistance, and Welfare Fraud.

Additional information on County Emergency Services, County Fire Coordination, the County Sheriff's Office, and the LEPC is available at www.niagaracounty.com. Additional information is also provided in Chapter VII County Services.

Issues and Opportunities

During the planning process, community representatives and other project stakeholders involved in emergency preparedness and response were asked to provide insight into local issues and concerns relative to public health and safety. Individuals were asked to identify what they consider some of the most important public health and safety assets and opportunities that exist in Niagara County. This information is summarized according to the five planning subregions of the County.

Eastern Communities Subregion

Town of Hartland, Town of Royalton & Village of Middleport

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- A need for more speed zones and a caution light at NYS Route 104 & Checker Tavern Road
- Slow emergency response times by police – little or no Niagara County Sheriff or NYS Police presence in the area
- Need for a health and wellness center
- Perceived health issues and a lack of education - related to FMC
- Concern over a possible lack of mobility or access to routes in emergency situations in Hartland, Middleport, Gasport
- Need for local disaster plan and training in Royalton, especially with regard to increased train traffic in the area and FMC

Key assets and opportunities of the communities in this subregion include:

- Local police force presence
- Safe communities with low crime
- Present number of fire companies (5 in Royalton) – all working well together
- Local ambulance services

Central Communities Subregion

Town of Cambria, Town of Lockport, City of Lockport, Town of Pendleton

Only two representatives from these communities were present at this meeting, so these individuals merged with other subregions.

Lakefront Communities Subregion

Town of Somerset, Village of Barker, Town of Newfane, Town of Wilson, Village of Wilson

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- Police – lack of quality coverage in the area
- Fire – increasing demands on the volunteer fire service/ambulance services/ EMT status – regulatory actions are a constant threat and concern to volunteers. Training and regulation standards are a demand on the time of volunteers. We couldn't afford a paid service.
- Health care network – ICMH serves areas very well along w/volunteer ambulance service – they know when to refer people elsewhere
- Demand on ambulance vs. fire trucks, but readiness of both – too much concentration on fire trucks in relation to their degree of use.
- Border security concerns – telephone reporting system (is an honor system) doesn't work
- Border security/Water rescue – means an additional strain on local volunteer fire companies – need to be ready for water rescue/increases boat maintenance costs
- Border is porous and means there are many “targets”
- Appear to be no viable major routes for access/emergency evacuations

Key assets and opportunities of the communities in this subregion include:

- Border – Border Patrols mean a little extra police force is available in the area
- Coast Guard & County Sheriff's Water Patrol provides an extra layer of policing

on the water

- Volunteer fire companies provide more interaction with the public than in cities with paid fire companies
- Disaster preparation seems pretty good
- Area has strong volunteer fire forces

Lower River Communities Subregion

Town of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Village of Lewiston, Village of Youngstown

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- Concern with long response times from the Sheriff's Department
- Concerns w/ LOOW site, Chemical Waste Management and Modern Disposal in the community
- Sewer plant is reaching capacity

Key assets and opportunities of the communities in this subregion include:

- Sheriff's Patrol Boat is on the water frequently along with the Coast Guard
- Presence of Border Patrol, helicopters, State Troopers and local police
- Volunteer fire companies provide fire protection and ambulance services
- "We leave our doors unlocked."
- Abundance of EMS & health care facilities (St. Mary's Hospital, Our Lady of Peace, Fairchild Nursing Home, etc.)
- Community police force
- Very active volunteer fire depts. – mutual aid is often utilized during the day

Upper River Communities Subregion

City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Town of Wheatfield, City of North Tonawanda

Primary issues and challenges identified include:

- Safety of tourists
- Traffic circulation – under and over-utilized roads – plenty of roads in some areas and not enough in others
- Niagara Falls – experiences a continual stream of tourists and a large percentage of underprivileged residents who need services
- As communities change, the County seems slow to change w/public health and safety services
- Overabundance of infrastructure in Niagara Falls no longer needed or used
- Proliferation of services: multiple fire departments, school districts – requires a "need-based" analysis
- County as a whole: not producing students w/an appreciation of other people and property
- "Brain drain" issue - youth leaving the area
- Outmigration of population
- Poverty related issues
- Multiple school districts
- Population down, infrastructure in abundance, costs increasing
- Border crossing relationships
- Business, quality of life needs in general
- Multiple fire and ambulance districts
- Social services – large part of County budgets
- Abundance of older adults requiring services

- Noise pollution, abundance of dogs – stress levels are high
- Heart disease and obesity higher in the County than downstate
- Concern about increasing waste imports to the County
- Politicians tend to “politick” rather than legislate

Key assets and opportunities of the communities in this subregion include:

- Military presence in the area – serves as a secondary public safety support in emergencies
- Need to encourage development for military to be maintained and supported in the area
- Array of medical facilities
- Military airbase – in a central location (provides supplemental fire fighting services, if needed)
- Local fire departments – have specialized training
- Fresh water is an important asset
- Sewage treatment is effective
- EMTs, Fire, Police – respond quickly in Niagara Falls

Strategies

An important part of County efforts to prevent or reduce the impacts of future emergency situations is to anticipate and recommend, through the CEMP, LEPC and other forums, supplemental recovery information relative to economic development, community development, land use, and transportation systems. These recommendations may address recovery measures from natural or man-made disasters relative to replacement priorities of public facilities and infrastructure, as well as to providing for private sector redevelopment and reinvestment.

Risk reduction is an important responsibility of Niagara County in protecting its citizens, property owners, businesses and taxpayers from the physical and financial impacts of emergencies and disasters. The County CEMP states that Niagara County may effectuate risk reduction in two ways:

1. Identifying, developing and implementing policies, programs and projects for County-owned resources and assets under its direct control, and
2. Advising and supporting local jurisdictions as necessary in reducing local risks, as authorized under NYS General Municipal Law, or as requested by local jurisdictions or private entities.

Furthermore the CEMP states that risk reduction activities include:

- Complying with local land use regulations when siting new County facilities;
- Adhering to State and Federal regulations (i.e., building and safety codes, floodplain and wetland regulations) when constructing new County facilities; and
- Advising and assisting local jurisdictions in the County with preparation of comprehensive plans, local waterfront revitalization plans, and subdivision zoning ordinances.

Land use management policies are key to preventing or mitigating the adverse effects of natural and man-made emergencies. The CEMP cites several examples, including:

- Adopting a land use management policies to promote the control of private development in floodplains at local levels of government, and to assure that County construction activities comply with State floodplain regulations;
- Encouraging lending institutions to withhold funding of projects in areas prone to disasters
- Promoting underground utility lines in new subdivisions to prevent power outages due to destruction of overhead lines during storms;
- Promoting the development of building regulations at local levels of government
- Developing compliance and code enforcement programs, including designation of officials to implement policies focused on risk reduction

Consistent with its role and the land use and environmental focus of this Comprehensive Plan, County government has the ability to take a proactive approach to facilitate and assist municipalities in preparing for and preventing or mitigating emergency situations, perhaps as multi-jurisdictional or subregional plans for response, recovery and redevelopment. Funding for such localized planning initiatives may be available from Federal and State programs, such as Quality Communities and/or Shared Municipal Services.

In 2003 a self assessment of the County's readiness to respond to emergencies was undertaken as part of the process to prepare the CEMP and identify future needs relative to emergency preparedness. That assessment of strengths and weaknesses identifies four readiness capabilities that were rated at less than 55 percent of full capability. Weaknesses included:

- Public Education & Information
- Exercises, Evaluations & Corrective Actions
- Direction, Control & Coordination
- Planning

During the comprehensive planning process, the issue of information dissemination prior to and during emergencies was identified by stakeholders in discussions about concerns over what needed to be done at local levels that might, for example, require implementation of evacuation routes. Although the County has made great strides in emergency preparedness in recent years, additional collaboration and information sharing with local officials and the public may be warranted, perhaps through local public information sessions, community meetings, and via County and local websites.

With regard to public health, safety and emergency preparedness, Niagara County needs to enhance communication and collaboration with local municipalities and other jurisdictional agencies involved in public health and safety in educating citizens, assisting in developing detailed local emergency plans, planning for disaster prevention through local land use policies, and establishing policies that facilitate recovery and redevelopment.

Improvements in information sharing between the County and other jurisdictional agencies, for example among the Sheriff's Office, local and State Police agencies, will



**Enhance
Information
Sharing**

also foster greater coordination among those agencies. Although this coordination now exists in data management for example, an expanded use of Countywide GIS mapping and databases could be produced from information collected by all police agencies to map and visually track concentrations of various types of crime throughout the County. This could enhance law enforcement capabilities and pinpoint potential problem areas that might require increased police presence or perhaps highlight where response times need to be improved. These same mapping and information sharing capabilities could be used to map and share information on flood prone areas, evacuation routes in the event of a rail accident, identifying high priority evacuation sites, and similar information that can be quickly accessed during an emergency.

Goals, Objectives & Recommendations

Goal – Educate the Public on Emergency Preparedness

To increase public education opportunities and communication among communities to expand public awareness of Countywide and local efforts in preparing for potential emergencies and large-scale disasters.

Objectives

- Increase the flow of information from the County level to and among local governments and communities about disaster preparedness issues, plans and strategies.
- Integrate local emergency preparedness information into County and local plans, such as identifying local evacuation routes and alternative routes in response to local emergencies. For example, concern has been expressed about what would need to be done in the event of a train derailment in which streets might be blocked or inaccessible. Although these procedures may be in place, information should be made readily accessible to the public as part of the preparation and updating of local community comprehensive plans and Countywide emergency planning initiatives and decision-making.

Recommendations

- Update emergency preparedness information on the County's website, including actions to be taken in the event of an emergency, maps and information on emergency responders, maps of potential evacuation and alternative transportation routes, and links to local emergency plans as they are developed.
- Allow for increased stakeholder and public input on the preparation of local and regional emergency plans, and increase the dissemination of information through County and local websites and public educational materials.
- Include emergency service providers and responders as key stakeholders in the decision-making processes that involve or may affect their ability to fully execute their responsibilities to protect the health and safety of the public. For example, during the project planning and decision-making process for construction or reconstruction of County infrastructure and/or public facilities, include emergency responders in the process, especially during the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) process. The same consideration should be afforded for project reviews of private sector actions.



Goal – Create Safe, Healthy and Walkable Communities

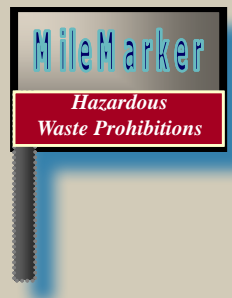
To facilitate and encourage the creation and maintenance of safe and healthy communities and recognize health and safety as perhaps one of the most important, but often overlooked aspects to enjoying a high quality of life that stimulates local economic benefits and maintains community vibrance and character.

Objectives

- Encourage the establishment of countywide land use and environmental policies and project review procedures, specifically through the SEQRA process, that prioritize natural resource protection and sustainable management practices including, but not limited to land, air and water quality.
- Work with local communities in encouraging more “eyes on the street” types of community planning initiatives and site design requirements for safety enhancement and as potential crime prevention techniques.
- Create opportunities for increased walkability and physical exercise, social interaction, and reduced reliance on automotive forms of transportation by establishing opportunities for safe, connected networks of non-motorized trails, pedestrian pathways, bikeways and public space destinations.

Recommendations

- Encourage countywide implementation of local land use and environmental policies that protect and conserve natural resources including, but not limited to air quality, water quality, significant wildlife and aquatic habitats, woodlands and unique natural features. Priorities need to be established at County and local levels to enhance protection, conservation and restoration of natural buffer areas and contiguous greenways and blueways along stream corridors, wetlands, and other significant drainageways.
- The County and communities working in collaboration should establish clear policies and project review procedures and criteria with the intent of placing restrictions and/or prohibitions on the development and/or expansion of specific types of land uses that may have significant adverse health, safety and environmental implications.
- Given past and ongoing environmental problems faced by Niagara County and its communities resulting from the operations of former and existing industrial hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities, as defined in New York Environmental Conservation Law Section 27-1101(5), and consistent with an equitable distribution of such facilities throughout New York State, Niagara County should continue to work with local communities as well as State and Federal agencies to establish prohibitions to the future development and/or expansion of any industrial hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facility within the County consistent with the policies established by the Niagara County Legislature via numerous resolutions passed in recent decades. Niagara County should also work with these and other stakeholders to ascertain liability for existing negative environmental impacts resulting from past and ongoing industrial hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities, including but limited to adverse impacts on natural resources, public health, property



values, public perception and quality of life. Niagara County should also continue to work with these stakeholders to ensure that sites contaminated with hazardous industrial waste are remediated for future use, or at a minimum, stabilized to prevent further adverse environmental impact.

- The County should support and assist with implementation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and similar techniques which have shown to be an effective planning technique in creating safer neighborhoods and communities. CPTED initiatives can take many different forms of community action based on local needs and opportunities, ranging from detailed consideration of safety and security issues during site plan and project review processes; incorporation of traffic-calming measures; building and site security; landscaping techniques that create more visible public spaces; and increased policing to reduce opportunities for illegal activities.
- Encourage the addition of sidewalks, pedestrian trails and similar neighborhood amenities in new residential and commercial developments that link to existing or planned pedestrian networks.

Goal – Encourage Volunteerism and Shared Services

To foster an atmosphere of greater commitment to community throughout the County by encouraging volunteers to participate in local emergency planning and response, public health and safety programs, and initiatives to investigate opportunities for shared services.

Objectives

- Stabilize and then increase the number of groups and individuals that participate in local volunteer efforts to protect public health and safety by increasing incentives for volunteering and removing some of the obstacles that hinder the volunteer spirit.
- Investigate opportunities for the consolidation and/or sharing of services among the various emergency service providers and districts within Niagara County.

Recommendations

□ County and local governments, institutions, organizations and groups need to work together to identify incentives to stabilize and then increase volunteerism. For example, as identified by the New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency & Competitiveness, new incentives need to facilitate the recruitment and retention of volunteers, such as appealing to the needs of young firefighters by perhaps providing tuition assistance to NCCC, providing for some form of college loan assistance or tuition reimbursement, or financial assistance with vocational training through BOCES and similar programs. Similar incentives have been passed by the NYS Legislature allowing local governments to implement property and income tax credits for active volunteer firefighters and ambulance corps members (New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency & Competitiveness. 2008.).

□ According to the New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources Rensselaer County, NY has established an emergency response program in which



Sheriff deputies in road patrols in rural locations are now certified by the State and cross trained as emergency response technicians. Niagara County should investigate the feasibility of instituting a similar program to enhance responsiveness in rural areas.

□ Niagara County should encourage through public education and the promotion of intermunicipal agreements that reduce costs through consolidation for the sharing of emergency services related functions that may include combined training, combined maintenance of equipment/facilities or joint dispatching of the nearest responders to emergency scenes. According to the NYS Department of State consolidation can take two forms. The first form is considered “operational” in which there is a sharing of services, equipment, apparatus and staffing through intermunicipal agreements. The second form is “jurisdictional” in which fire districts, for example combine operations into a new single district. As the numbers of volunteers continues to decline existing emergency providers should consider investigating the first or both forms to make more effective use of limited resources.

Funding Opportunities

Projects and needs identified in this chapter and elsewhere within this Comprehensive Plan, as well as projects that may be identified in other plans and reports, including the annual Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, require funding assistance to be implemented due to the fiscal constraints, such as budget limitations, of Niagara County and its communities. A variety of funding opportunities exist at local, regional, State and Federal levels of government as well as potential sources of assistance from the private sector. Often the amount of funding needed to implement a project, however may be in excess of what may be available from one source so combinations of funding sources may be needed to finance a project. Funding mechanisms may include earmarks/appropriations/member items, bonding, direct grants, competitive grants, general fund items, foundation monies, corporate assistance and so forth.

Funding opportunities change as economic conditions change, particularly at State and Federal levels. Currently the nation is experiencing a deep economic downturn. Increased funding opportunities exist at this time through the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This Federal Stimulus Bill is intended to stimulate the economy and employment by providing funding to undertake projects at local levels. In many cases the Federal Stimulus Bill appropriates funding above typical annual Federal spending levels, such as what may be authorized through the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009. Funding will be distributed through existing Federal programs and through new programs or may be passed through existing State programs.

The information provided below identifies Federal Stimulus funding opportunities and projects that have been identified to date at the time of preparing this document. The projects identified below are listed because they relate directly to this chapter and this particular focus area of the Comprehensive Plan. These projects are considered crucial to the health and well being of the communities in Niagara County and for improving the functioning of County government in providing services to the residents and businesses of Niagara County.

The following list of projects may be revised as projects are undertaken and new projects are identified and as local, State and Federal conditions change. Therefore this list of projects should not be considered to be inclusive of all potential projects that may be in need of funding assistance. Also, combined funding assistance for some of these projects may be available from other Federal, State, regional, local and private sector sources.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes funding provisions in Health that include, but not limited to:

- \$19 billion, including \$2 billion in discretionary funds and \$17 billion for investments and incentives through Medicare and Medicaid to ensure widespread adoption and use of interoperable health information technology (IT)
- \$1 billion for prevention and wellness programs
- \$10 billion to conduct biomedical research
- \$1.1 billion to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, NIH and the HHS Office of the Secretary

Niagara County Projects include:

Health Information Technology

Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Real Time Bed Management System	\$ 200,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Integrated Financial Accounting Software	\$ 140,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wireless Network on all Nursing Units with Medication Carts	\$ 505,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pharmacy System with Drug Interaction and Point of Care Medication Administration Checking	\$ 582,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enterprise-Wide Picture Archiving and Communication System	\$ 500,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Voice Recognition for Radiology	\$ 142,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Computerized Provider Order Entry w/ Nursing Documentation	\$ 3,800,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interactive Education Delivery System for Patients and Staff	\$ 210,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Preventative Care and Chronic Disease Management	\$ 200,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Laboratory Information System	\$ 735,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vitrea Enterprise-wide Advanced Visualization Software	\$ 207,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intesys Clinic Suite G2	\$ 102,000

Mount Saint Mary's Hospital:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Clinical Electronic Medical Record (EMR) - Hospital Facilities	\$ 6,500,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clinical Electronic Medical Record (EMR) for Doctors Offices	\$ 1,000,000

Prevention and Wellness Fund

Niagara County Office for the Aging

<input type="checkbox"/>	Chronic Disease Self-Management Program	\$ 50,000
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Niagara County Public Health

<input type="checkbox"/>	Childhood Lead Prevention Program	\$ 25,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asthma Education/Intervention Program	\$ 60,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Prevention Agenda	\$ 50,000

Mount Saint Mary's Hospital		
<input type="checkbox"/>	School Health Literacy Program for Grades 3, 4, 5	\$ 20,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pre-Diabetes Education Program	\$ 20,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peri-Natal Mood Disorders Program	\$ 20,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hospital Employee Health Education Program	\$ 50,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Afternoon Reading All Stars Program for Underserved Children	\$ 10,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Summer Fitness and Nutrition Program - Underserved Children	\$ 5,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nutrition for Good Health Program for Impoverished Children	\$ 10,000

Healthcare Effectiveness Research
Niagara County Office for the Aging

<input type="checkbox"/>	Four Pillars of Care Model	\$ 50,000
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Community Health Centers

Mount Saint Mary's Hospital

<input type="checkbox"/>	Expanded Construction of Shovel-Ready 6,500 SF Community Health Clinic in Underserved Section of Niagara Falls	\$ 1,500,000
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Rural Community Facilities

Niagara County Emergency Services

<input type="checkbox"/>	Construction of Emergency Operations Center	\$ 1,250,000
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Nuclear Waste Cleanup

Niagara County Public Health

<input type="checkbox"/>	Niagara Falls Storage Site Risk Assessment Rep. Expert Review	\$ 25,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Project Continuance	\$ 50,000

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