



Village of Manchester, NY Comprehensive Plan



Adopted November, 2005

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Manchester, NY August 1966 Photo: Chuck Graham

Manchester, NY August, 1966 Photo: Chuck Graham

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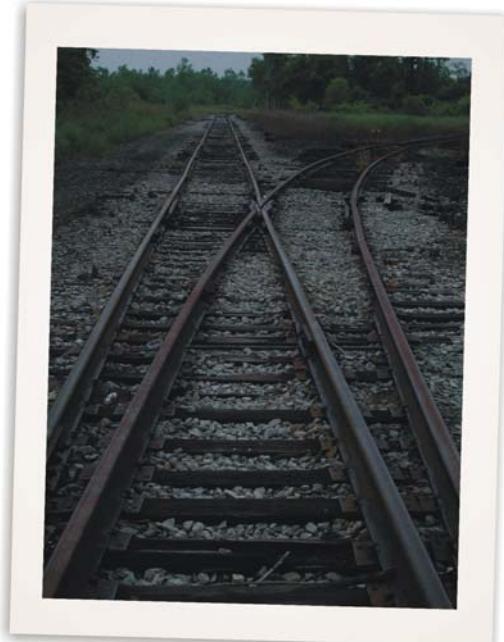
The Planning Process

In 2001 the Village Board directed the Planning Board to draft a comprehensive plan for development in the Village to replace the “General Plan” and related documents adopted in 1967.

In the fall of 2001, the Planning Board assembled a special Master Plan Update Committee comprised of the five Planning Board members and six local volunteers. This committee has met regularly for the last three years to review existing documentation, share ideas, and hammer out a common vision for the future of the Village.

Committee Activities:

- Collected and reviewed model plans and guidance documents that had been successfully implemented in other communities.
- Developed a list of priority development concerns.
- With assistance from the [Northeast Rural Community Assistance Program](#), completed a comprehensive “Diagnostic Survey of Current Conditions and Public Opinion”. Surveys were sent out to 520 households in the Village. The 136 responses formed the basis of a final report published in May of 2002.
- Reviewed and discussed all elements of the “Planning Policy Chart” from the 1967 General Plan.
- Held a public informational meeting in May of 2004.



Community based planning must continue after adoption of the plan. Similarly, ongoing public involvement in the development, review, and redevelopment of these policies is an essential part of any healthy planning process. This plan shall be formally reviewed and, as needed, updated once every two years from the date of adoption.

Finally, this document will serve only as the first phase in the planning process and is intended to establish an overall vision for the future of the Village by identifying key issues and related goals. It stops short of laying out all the details of implementation. A more specific work plan to fund and facilitate implementation through program development, local law amendments, grants, and other means will be needed to realize the goals described herein.

A Comprehensive Vision

Manchester is a small rural community of working families, deep heritage and earnest and capable government. Due to the nearby NYS Thruway exit it also serves as a primary gateway to the Finger Lakes Region.

The Fundamentals – Our vision is to preserve and protect Manchester’s vital resources and basic community character and at the same time capitalize on significant opportunities for economic growth and social advancement. The goal is to build a **livable** and **sustainable** community that is positioned to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.



A Livable Community – Manchester is founded on the principles of strong families, nurturing the potential of our youth, care and respect for our elderly, residential tranquility, and social and economic opportunity for all. These are some of the basic ingredients of any livable community. Activities related to land use, infrastructure, transportation, environmental protection, recreation, and economic development must be planned in a way that promotes and respects these basic principles.

A Sustainable Community – Sustainability over the long term will depend on such factors as creating local job opportunities, maintaining a proper balance between municipal revenues and the provision of municipal services, maintaining a sustainable natural and built environment, and safe and efficient transportation and infrastructure.



The Village of Manchester – Then & Now

The Village, founded in 1811, is the oldest settlement in the Town of Manchester and has served as a hub of transportation from its earliest days. It was founded around “The Landing”; the farthest point along the Canandaigua Outlet that the “Durham Boats” could travel. The Landing had been in use since the late 1700’s and for more than 20 years was the head of navigation for the outlet and an important port on the frontier.

By the early 1800’s the Village and surrounding area boasted mills for grain, lumber, wool and paper. Even after construction of the Erie Canal ended commercial boat travel along the outlet, the Village continued to play a major role in local commerce. By the 1890’s the population had grown to 365 and the Village voted to incorporate.

In 1892, after 80 years as a small quiet mill town, Manchester saw the arrival of the Lehigh Valley Railroad. It changed the face of the Village for decades. As the railroad yards grew, so did the Village in the form of sidewalks, a public water supply, street lighting and improved roads. By the 1940’s the railroad yards in Manchester were the largest transfer facility in the world. But by the 1960’s traffic slowed considerably and the rail yards finally saw their last train pass through on March 31, 1976.

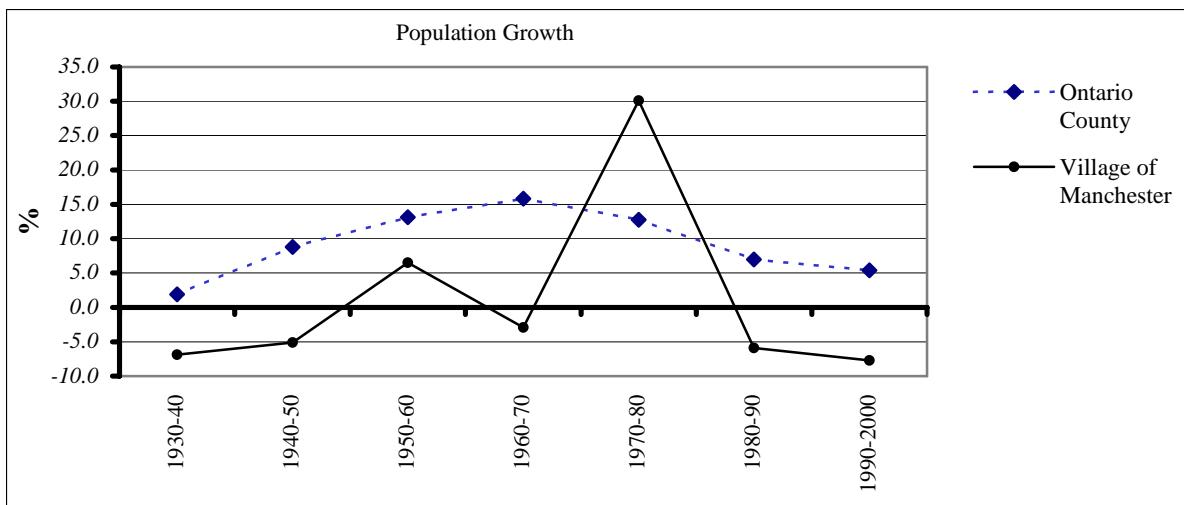
Today Manchester, with its exit to the NYS Thruway, has become one of the gateways to the Finger Lakes area. It is only minutes from several Lakes, the Erie Canal, [Hill Cumorah](#) (home of the Mormon Church) and the Village of Newark and the cities of Canandaigua and Rochester.

This quiet little village, with it's blend of residential and commercial areas, small but outstanding schools and caring neighbors is the kind of place families come to and stay for a long time.

Population

The table and chart below show that over the last 70yrs Ontario County has experienced consistent growth in population. However, despite sporadic increases, the population in the Village of Manchester is only slightly higher than in 1930. (*Source: US Census Bureau*)

	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Ontario County	54,275	55,307	60,172	68,070	78,849	88,909	95,101	100,224
Village of Manchester	1,428	1,330	1,262	1,344	1,305	1,698	1,598	1,475



School District

The [Manchester Shortsville Central School](#) (Red Jacket) is roughly 25 square miles and includes a K-5 elementary building and a 6-8 middle school and 9-12 high school on a centralized campus. The district draws its students primarily from the Villages of Manchester and Shortsville though it includes parts of the Towns of Manchester, Farmington, and Hopewell. According to the [NYS Department of Education](#) Red Jacket is a school in “good standing” with a graduation rate well above the State average.

Population

Number of Students 969
Students with Disabilities 134
Number of Teachers 96
Number of Support Staff 78

Average Class Size

grades K-3	21
grades 4-6	19
grades 7-8	20
grades 9-12	18

Issues and Action Steps

Transportation

Manchester is ideally located at the intersections of two state highways with an entrance to the NYS Thruway at the north end of the Village. An active line of the [Ontario Central Railroad](#) with access to the national railroad network through the Finger Lakes Railway runs through the Light Industrial zone on the south side of the Village. The “Ontario County IDA Airport at Canandaigua” is less than 8 miles from the center of the Village with plans to build a 5,500’ runway to accommodate corporate jets.

The Village is currently served by the [County Area Transit System \(CATS\)](#) that has fixed bus routes to Canandaigua, Manchester Clifton Springs, and the City of Geneva. Dial-A-Ride service is available to areas not served by a fixed route.

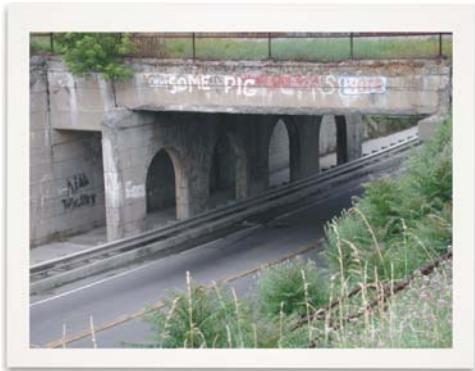
There is currently a Village owned gravel parking lot in the downtown area .

8 miles of sidewalks provide pedestrian access



throughout most of the Village. Unfortunately that pedestrian system, including crosswalks is incomplete in a state of disrepair, creating a danger to pedestrians.

State Rt 21 provides direct access to the NYS Thruway to the north and the City of Canandaigua to the south. It accommodates an enormous amount of through traffic including commercial trucks that often travel at excessive speeds. This traffic rarely patronize local businesses.



Safety issues include inadequate visibility at intersections throughout the Village and reduced sight distance at the railroad overpass on State Rt 21. Beyond that commercial trucks often travel along secondary residential streets on the way to the light industrial zone at the south end of the Village. Visibility at intersections throughout the Village needs to be improved. The railroad overpass also creates sight distance problems.

The maintenance & appearance of Village entrances, the public parking lot, and the State Rt 21 right-of-way at the railroad overpass also need to be addressed.

Action Steps

1. Assess where speed reduction would improve safety or possibly encourage drivers to stop and patronize local businesses.
2. Through budgeting and amendments to local law, systematically implement speed reducing measures such as bump outs.
3. Upgrade and maintain the Village's system of sidewalks to meet current ADA guidelines.
4. Extend public sidewalks the full length of Lehigh Avenue.
5. Work with the Towns of Farmington and Manchester to create a truck bypass to the industrial areas between State St and the Railroad. Reducing such traffic on Village streets would also improve pedestrian safety.
6. Inventory vehicular sight distances at intersections throughout the Village.
7. Implement a plan to improve or modify conditions (reduced speed limits, signage, etc) at those intersections that do not have acceptable sight distances.
8. Formally document problems with the appearance of the primary entrances to the Villages and address them.
9. Create and implement a plan to improve the appearance of main roads in the Village by installing and maintaining better lighting, better pedestrian access and landscaping.
10. Repair and upgrade the Village parking lot with landscaping and proper signage.
11. Work with other bus services to create a Park & Ride area at the north end of the Village to take commuters into Rochester. This may encourage commuters to patronize local businesses while they wait for the bus.

Other Infrastructure

The Village benefits from the Manchester-Shortsville joint public sewer system as well as public water supplied from Canandaigua Lake through the Canandaigua-Farmington Water District. The general perception is that both water and sewer systems are at capacity and unable to

accommodate additional development. Moreover the Villages' water distribution system is aging and in need of upgrade and repair.

Storm drainage facilities are not available throughout the Village. It is believed that the sanitary sewer system is subject to significant inflow of groundwater and surface runoff. Heavy rains and snowmelt put the wastewater treatment past capacity. Certainly a properly designed public drainage system would help address this problem.

Electricity is available throughout the Village.

Action Steps

1. Formally identify and assess sources of infiltration into the sanitary sewer system.
2. Remove direct sources of inflow such as roof drains, sump pumps and floor drains and redirect to minimize indirect inflow through ground infiltration.
3. Amend local law to ensure that undue impacts development proposals may have on public water, sewer, and drainage systems are mitigated.
4. Create and implement a program, including an organized storm water management plan for the Village, to minimize improper infiltration.
5. Create and implement a Capital Improvement Program to replace aging and undersized waterlines and create opportunities to extend service into under serviced areas.



Economic

Although aging and overburdened infrastructure is seen as the primary limiting factor to new development in the Village, other issues have impacted the growth and overall economic health of the local economy.

Like many small villages in New York, inexpensive commercially zoned land outside of the Village center has contributed greatly to the decline of the downtown business district. That area has taken on a dilapidated appearance with a disjointed mix of architectural styles. At this point commercial development is insufficient to draw significant numbers of customers into the Village.

There are a number of vacant buildings downtown and throughout the Village. A limited amount of vacant land is available for commercial development around State Route 96 and 21 and NYS Thruway.

A significant amount of land is available within the light industrial district at the south end of the Village. Property around the former rail yard (Round House) is in the midst of a multi-year NYSDEC assessment for contamination and potential remediation. However, it is unclear how much, if any, available sewer water and other infrastructure capacity exists in this area. Limited direct access to the rail line and improper road layouts are also hindrances to additional development.

In the end, limited commercial and industrial development has resulted in the vast majority of residents traveling outside the Village for jobs and services.



However there are numerous grants and programs to assist in redevelopment of such areas. Various incentives can be used to encourage redevelopment. Codes can be updated to give current and future business owners and developers the needed direction to rebuild and revitalize the Village. The Village is certainly not alone in wanting to rebuild its commercial and industrial base.

Issues:

- The Village Board sees a direct positive link between development of a walkable, pedestrian friendly community and economic health.
- The appearance of the central commercial district needs to be improved.
- The Village needs to create more employment and business opportunities.
- A strategy to ensure efficient vehicular access to unused land would promote redevelopment.
- A strategy is also needed to stimulate redevelopment of the numerous vacant buildings throughout the Village.
- Promotion of the Village as a destination for developers, potential resident's and customers will also help improve the morale of Village residents.

Action Steps

1. Create a pedestrian friendly village through use of proper lighting, sidewalk upgrades and landscaping.
2. Create architectural codes with a singular theme aimed at improving the appearance of downtown.
3. Formally consider creation of an Architectural Review Board
4. Work with the Village of Shortsville to develop architectural codes, zoning regulations, and promotion strategies that will create a single vision for the area.
5. Work with the local Chamber of Commerce, County Agencies and others to implement strategies such as low interest loans, matching grants, volunteer help, etc., to help building and business owners improve their properties
6. Enforce existing codes and zoning to clean up the Village (*this is not limited to business)
7. Encourage new small service-based businesses to locate in the downtown district instead of in the Thruway interchange area, by 1) joining the downtown commercial district with the

commercial district at the north end of the Village and 2) Within the newly formed district, prohibiting the types of retail facilities (strip plazas) that would directly compete with redevelopment of village historic commercial.

8. Examine the feasibility of rezoning some of the vacant light industrial zone area between State St and the railroad to commercial or residential.
9. Research ways to promote the Village, highlighting factors such as the close proximity to major transportation routes, the historical setting, as well as the natural beauty of the region.
10. Work with the local Chamber of Commerce to promote development opportunities in the Village.

Main Street

The convenient location of Main Street and the historical business district is both a strength and weakness. Consider that the Village is only 15 minutes from Eastview Mall as well as several other major retail districts.

At the north end of the Village there is vacant, commercially zoned land around the intersection of State Rt 96 and 21. Lastly, many of the essential services that anchor a downtown business district have relocated to a plaza just south of the Village. One of the high priority goals of this plan is to limit internal competition for commercial development and create a scenario in which the various commercial areas complement and strengthen each other instead of simply drawing development from Main Street.



The public opinion survey showed a clear desire for reinvestment and revitalization of the downtown business district.

Residents called for some minimal level of “neighborhood business activities”. They want more local, neighborhood type, services such as a bakery, coffee shop, and hardware store that would otherwise require a trip to Canandaigua where they currently do most of their shopping.

The deteriorating appearance of the downtown business district was also an issue. It is highly visible to everyone in the Village and those who pass through on State Rt 21. Furthermore, because it is a gateway, it creates a first impression for travelers visiting Ontario County and the larger Finger Lakes Region. Residents consistently stated that a downtown area comprised primarily of old, poorly kept, buildings that are mostly up for sale, is a detriment to civic pride. There is a strong desire among residents to have the buildings in this block restored to their former beauty and vitality. Business owners certainly share that desire but are reluctant to individually invest in improvements or expanded services that may not result in increased business.

Action Steps:

1. Encourage new small service-based businesses to locate in the downtown district instead of in the Thruway interchange area, by 1) joining the downtown commercial district with the commercial district at the north end of the Village and 2) Within the newly formed district, prohibiting the types of retail facilities (strip plazas) that would directly compete with redevelopment of village historic commercial.

2. Increase available commercial space and options for small scale development by modifying local law to allow commercial uses on the first floor of residences on the fringe of the business district. Consider extending this to apartment buildings.

Recreation

There are several small parks and recreation areas within the Village limits including two playgrounds owned and maintained by the Village as well as a small park with a bandstand at Main St & Clifton St.. The Manchester Family Park contains a basketball court, baseball field, tennis court and various playground equipment.

There are several ball fields adjacent to the Manchester Family Park on property owned by the Manchester Fire Department. A small park behind the Village Hall has a basketball court.

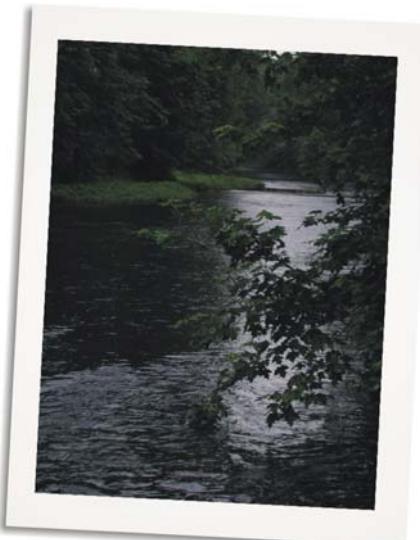
The local Boy Scouts, maintain a short hiking trail along the Canandaigua Outlet. Otherwise the Outlet is an undeveloped recreation resource. It serves as a natural link between the two Villages, Bud Park, Friendly Village, and other features such as Bliss grocery store. There have been discussions about using this to create a pedestrian link between all of these points.

Beyond that the Finger Lakes area offers many different opportunities for active and passive recreation: Canandaigua lake, Lake Ontario, Canandaigua Water Park, numerous hiking trails on public lands, historical sites, Finger Lakes Wineries, local festivals, etc.

Sadly, most of the Village facilities including the bandstand are underutilized and in need of repair and maintenance.

Action Steps

1. Fund and implement repairs and upgrades to the Village Parks.
2. Consider creation of a “Tot Lot” specifically for preschool age children.
3. Extend and connect the Boy Scout hiking trail to the Parks in Manchester and Shortsville.
4. Market the ball fields to area sports leagues to improve usage.
5. Develop and implement a plan to more fully utilize the Canandaigua Outlet for recreation.
6. Create a strategy to fund and rehabilitate the bandstand.
7. Investigate the feasibility of creating joint recreation and community center.



Senior Housing

According to the 2000 US Census, the percentage of the residents in the Village of Manchester over 65 years of age is the highest in Ontario County at 23.7%. The average for county as a whole is 13.2%. Friendly Village Mobile Home Park serves as affordable housing for many retired seniors. Even so, there are no housing facilities specifically designed for seniors in or near the Village.

Action Steps

1. Typically senior housing is placed in densely developed areas (villages & cities) with safe pedestrian access to essential services. The Village should investigate and identify areas suitable for senior housing.

Consolidation

Should the Villages of Manchester and Shortsville be consolidated into one municipality? Close proximity, and shared services such as the school district and sewer district, has fueled that debate. A formal study needs to be done to show the costs and benefits of such a merger. It should also describe strategies, that could be implemented short of an actual merger, for sharing and consolidating additional services.

