

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (2023 Update – draft ideas)

1. The Goals and Objectives of a Comprehensive Plan set forth a shared vision for the Town's future. They represent the values and priorities of the community and serve as a guide in making future land use and planning decisions. The shared vision articulated in the community's goals also provides guidance for decision makers at the local, county and State levels. The goals in the Comprehensive Plan are general in nature, so they can remain relevant over the long-term. *These goals remained the same since the 2009 Plan and have only been slightly modified to reflect Regional Planning that has taken place over the past ten plus years and the public input received during the Update process. The objectives under each Goal also reflect regional planning initiatives, the public input received and the changes and new issues that have arisen over the last 10+ years.* These goals form the foundation for the specific actions that the Town will undertake to achieve the vision.

The following represent the goals for the Town of Royalton:

- ***Maintain and enhance the rural character of the Town of Royalton***
- ***Maintain and enhance the agricultural economy of the Town of Royalton***
- ***Protect the environmental resources of the Town of Royalton***
- ***Encourage various types of economic development in the Town of Royalton***
- ***Encourage a balanced transportation system in the Town***
- ***Assure an adequate, well-maintained housing stock while maintaining rural character***
- ***Maintain and enhance public facilities***
- ***Protect the important cultural and historic resources of the Town of Royalton***

*The following builds upon these Community Goals by providing a greater explanation of each Goal and then providing some more specific objectives of the Town.*

### ***Maintain and enhance the rural character of the Town of Royalton***

The Town of Royalton is a rural community. *Many Towns in Niagara County and NYS are rural in nature, but each Town has its unique qualities that set it aside from others and make the community a special place.*

Elements that contribute to the Town's rural character include open fields, forested lands, protected environments such as wetlands, and active farms. The Village of Middleport and the hamlet of Gasport also contribute to the rural character of the Town, as do the scenic views, the escarpment and the Erie Canal.

**It is a priority of the Town to ensure that new development is an asset to the community and does not detract from its rural character.**

- ◆ New development should be sensitive in location and design to surrounding uses.
- ◆ Denser development should be concentrated in the northern portion of the Town, near the historic Canal settlements of Middleport and Gasport, where there is available services and capacity for growth.

- ◆ Important elements in the community’s character, such as the escarpment, farm fields, open space and mature trees, should be preserved where feasible when new development occurs.
- ◆ New development should avoid sensitive lands, such as prime agricultural soils and wetlands.
- ◆ New growth in the Town should occur at an appropriate scale, style and pace, and in locations that are suitable for the type of development being proposed.
- ◆ New development should be compatible with neighboring uses.
- ◆ Preserve and enhance rural viewsheds, particularly from atop the Niagara Escarpment.
- ◆ *Development should reflect the Agricultural qualities of the Town and be in alignment with the Goals and Objectives expressed in the following Agricultural Economy Goals and Objectives.*

### **Maintain and enhance the agricultural economy of the Town of Royalton**

Agriculture is an integral part of the character and economy of the Town of Royalton. It provides employment, preserves open space and is an important element of the Town’s rural character.

### **It is a priority of the Town to support the continued economic viability of agriculture in the Town of Royalton.**

- ◆ Town policies and regulations should not present undue burdens on agricultural operations.
- ◆ Non-agricultural development should be discouraged on prime agricultural soils, particularly soils classified as having Statewide Significance.
- ◆ Maintain the integrity of Agricultural Districts designated under the State Agriculture and Market law.
- ◆ Support “Right-to-Farm” initiatives and manage conflicts between farms and new residents.
- ◆ Business and industrial economic development should not sacrifice viable farmland.
- ◆ The Town should support creative ways to support the viability of farming as an economic activity, such as agricultural related tourism and supporting farm-related businesses.
- ◆ Promote the protection of farms and farming-related activities.
- ◆ Support farming and agriculture activities to provide jobs and economic activity for residents in the Town.
- ◆ Protect and promote farming activity as a priority to *help* preserve open space and scenic vistas that help shape the rural character of the Town.
- ◆ Encourage and allow farm-related businesses as support service to farming.

### **Protect the environmental resources of the Town of Royalton**

The Town is home to several important natural habitat areas and other environmental resources that contribute to the rural character and beauty of the community. *The protection of these systems also help in making the Town a more sustainable community.* The Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area, the Niagara Escarpment, *the Erie Canal National Heritage*

*Corridor*, and Royalton Ravine are some of the more prominent features of the Town that should be preserved. *The Town's southern boundary is the regionally significant Tonawanda Creek.* Additionally, there are numerous wetlands and floodplains that are vital environmental resources. Conversely, former landfills and brownfields should be cleaned up.

**It is a priority of the Town to maintain the quality of its environmental resources.**

- ◆ Protect the Niagara Escarpment, Royalton Ravine, the Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area and other important resources in the Town.
- ◆ Designate and protect important open space.
- ◆ Promote the protection of natural drainage and stream corridors in the Town.
- ◆ Promote the protection of floodplains.
- ◆ Promote sound farming techniques that reduce non-point source pollution.
- ◆ Protect sensitive wetlands.
- ◆ Support the clean-up of former landfills and other brownfield sites.

***Encourage various types of economic development in the Town of Royalton***

Commercial and light industrial growth and other economic development activities help provide jobs, services and a stronger tax base for the community. Specific attention should be paid to the Village of Middleport (*an identified Rural Center in the Erie – Niagara County Regional Plan*) and to Gasport, historic communities that are representative of the settlements that grew up along the Erie Canal and are important assets to the Town.

**Economic development in the Town of Royalton is most appropriately located along State routes, truck routes and near the airport.**

- ◆ Encourage businesses and industries along major transportation corridors, such as Routes 31, 77 and 93, and in areas of the Town with water and sewer service.
- ◆ Encourage redevelopment of vacant, formerly commercial or industrial properties
- ◆ Support activities of existing viable businesses.
- ◆ Develop policies that promote small businesses and encourage entrepreneurial start-ups.
- ◆ Realize economic potential of tourism, agriculture and agriculturally-related tourism.
- ◆ Promote tourism related to the Erie Canal.
- ◆ Encourage reinvestment in Gasport.
- ◆ Focus commercial redevelopment in Gasport.
- ◆ Encourage use of the airport.

***Encourage a balanced transportation system in the Town***

The Town of Royalton has more transportation options than is typically the case with rural communities. The Erie Canalway Trail provides a dedicated bike path across the Town, and the Canal offers recreational boating opportunities. The Town has an airport and an active rail line. The Town's roadway system currently meets vehicular needs, and no new roadways are suggested. At the same time, most roads in the Town are designed to accommodate vehicular travel only. There are opportunities to promote more active transportation opportunities. Also, the Town should work to make sure that the impacts of transportation through the Town are

controlled: trucks are confined to designated truck routes; rural roadways retain their rural character while maintaining safe operations; and there are provisions to protect the public from hazardous freight.

- ◆ Promote mixed use paths and support facilities for bicycling and walking along the Erie Canal.
- ◆ Support the development of scenic byways.
- ◆ Promote development of bicycle access along rights-of-ways for roadways and transmission lines.
- ◆ Support infrastructure, such as sidewalks, crosswalks and trails, that make the hamlet of Gasport more pedestrian-friendly.
- ◆ Continue support for the airport.
- ◆ Control impacts from rail transport through the Town and ensure rail safety.
- ◆ Keep truck traffic to designated state routes.
- ◆ Support needed maintenance to ensure canal bridges remain safe and available. *If bridges are removed, work with NYS, the GBNRTC and the County to ensure that north/south movement is properly maintained in the Town and region.*
- ◆ *Evaluate and potentially improve roadways to accommodate large scale farm equipment.*

### **Assure an adequate, well-maintained housing stock while maintaining rural character**

Royalton needs to make sure its housing stock meets the housing needs of a range of family types, sizes and budgets, while at the same time preserving the rural character of the community.

- ◆ Allow for a range of housing types to accommodate the differing housing needs of seniors, young families and others.
- ◆ Ensure that housing style and density is appropriate for the location.
- ◆ Concentrate denser development and mixed uses in Gasport and around Middleport.
- ◆ Restrict housing density within agricultural districts.
- ◆ Ensure new housing development is aware of right-to-farm policies.
- ◆ *Demolish condemned properties.*
- ◆ *Work with Niagara Orleans Regional Land Improvement Corporation (NORLIC) to return abandoned properties to productive use.*

### **Maintain and enhance public facilities**

The Town of Royalton maintains a number of public facilities, including town buildings, parks, a recreation program, and water and sewer lines. These facilities contribute to the Town's quality of life, but they also require continued investment and support to remain effective.

The Town is responsible for the management of public water and sewer service. The Town's sewer lines are currently near capacity and there are problems with aging infrastructure. There are plans for water line improvements to address issues and improve services. Utility extensions, particularly sewer lines, can have the effect of encouraging growth, and should be carefully planned.

- ◆ Concentrate investments in public utilities on improvements to existing facilities.

- ◆ Control the number of new tap-ins permitted along existing utility lines to avoid exceeding capacity of the system.
- ◆ Concentrate new development in areas already serviced with utilities to limit need for extensive new investments in infrastructure.
- ◆ Continue to support existing Town parks and County facilities in the Town.
- ◆ Build upon the recreational opportunities afforded by the Canal.
- ◆ Consider the development of a centralized community center for adults and children.
- ◆ *Continue working with National Fuel and NYSEG in maintaining and expanding natural gas service within the Town.*

### ***Protect the important cultural and historic resources of the Town of Royalton***

The Town of Royalton has a number of cultural and historic resources that are important to the community. Several of these resources are reminiscent of the Canal age and the growth of the Town in this era. These cultural and historic resources are important to the character of the Town and should be protected.

- ◆ Promote public education of the importance of preserving the Town's cultural and historic resources.
- ◆ Protect historic cemeteries and other historic resources throughout the Town, including cultural and historic resources related to the Erie Canal.
- ◆ Promote the preservation of hamlet areas in the Town.
- ◆ Discourage demolition of historically or culturally significant structures.
- ◆ Support improvements to the Seaway Trail and Canalway Trail systems.