

VARNA Community and Commercial Revitalization Plan

Goal: Work with the Town to reexamine zoning in the hamlet so as to focus and limit certain types of development, identify a commercial center and enhance the prospects for more owner occupied single family residences redressing the current imbalance of rental to permanent residences.

A Revitalized Commercial Center

1. Business Opportunities for Pedestrian Traffic
2. There are no commercial establishments such as a food mart, coffee shop or diner which might be located close to residential center and serve pedestrian traffic.

B. Home Ownership vs. the Number of Rental Units

1. Population tends to be mobile.
2. Raising the proportion of single family home ownership Hillside Acres is by far the largest with about 50 percent of the trailers privately owned. The other two smaller parks are located off Forest Home Drive and Freese Rd.

C. Objective:

1. Identify areas where commercial development and mixed use is compatible with existing residential neighborhoods.
2. Designate areas where high density multiple unit housing can be located and areas which are reserved for single family housing development.

Goal: Continue to renovate and make improvements to the Varna Community Center, improve landscaping of its grounds and generally enhance the space for use by the public.

Objectives (completed):

1. Complete renovations of the outside of the building to improve its overall appearance and relandscape areas in the front and rear of the facility.
2. In addition, repair the existing signbase identifying the Varna Community Association and provide signage on the building to identify it as the Varna Community Center; thereby distinguishing it as a separate structure from the adjoining Bell AutoCare facility which occupies the old fire station and shares a common wall with the Center.

Goal: Support trail and sidewalk construction for pedestrian traffic and improve safety for pedestrian and cyclist traffic along Rt 366.

1. Constructed trail connecting the Center playground with the Hillside Acres Trailer Park

2. The old railroad right of way is one which provides a hiking trail through the center of the hamlet, but access is only from Mt. Pleasant Rd and the trail is largely undeveloped with the need for upgrading especially to make it a public right of way.

Objective:

1. Support efforts of the Town to secure funding to develop the portion of the Dryden Trail System which will connect with the Ithaca Town Trail continuing along the old railroad right of way to Rt 13.

2. Explore funding possibilities from DOT, the county MPO and other sources for a sidewalk and curbing in the right of way abutting Rt 366 along the denser portions of the hamlet in the area from Mt. Pleasant Road to the Lucente Apartments near the western edge of the hamlet.

Goal: Work to enhance community pride, beautification and involvement in community affairs.

A. Beautification

1. In general the community has maintained its appearance;

2. There are parts of the area especially along Rt 366 which could stand improvements and enhancements.

3. Many of the oldest structures in the hamlet are located along Rt 366 and many of these have been converted to rental properties. Some of these structures are in need of minor fix ups and painting and/or could use simple landscaping to improve the looks of frontages.

4. Most property owners in the hamlet are very conscious of maintaining lawns, planting flowers and in general trying to provide a pleasant appearance to their properties

B. Public Awareness

Objective:

1. Provide opportunity during election years to candidate forums

2. Enhance the Center programs to better serve youth, seniors and families in the community. Maintaining some kind of an after school program for youth has been a priority for the past three years.

3. Maintain and improve the Center's community playground area and equipment.
4. Plan and implement a beautification program in the hamlet. This may include promoting better landscaping fronting Rt 366; asking the Town to enforce the junk ordinance to remove junk vehicles and assist the community in applying for Main Street funding to help improve appearance of residential and commercial buildings in the community through paint and fix up days.
5. Expand community connections through a regular newsletter

Goal: Support measures to improve public safety

A. Chief concerns in the hamlet include pedestrian safety, speeding vehicles and fire prevention.

1. Citizens watching out for each other is an effective measure to minimize potential criminal activity or vandalism, and organizing such groups is needed.

B. Traffic

1. Speed limit has been reduced to 30mph, the line has been striped for "No Passing", but speed limits must be enforced.

2. Residents leaving or returning by car for or from work, running errands, etc. are often confronted with long lines of cars before being able to pull out of their driveways.

3. Several accidents at the intersection of Freese and Mt. Pleasant Rds with Rt 366. where cars have been hit in one direction or the other while either crossing 366 or turning onto the driving lane.

4. Use of the shoulder by pedestrians and cyclists is still dangerous.

C. Fire Protection

Objective:

1. Support efforts of the Volunteer Fire Company to recruit volunteers to maintain the force.

2. Discuss the possibility of organizing a neighborhood watch to enhance community safety.

Goal: Support enhanced bus and park and ride service to reduce traffic volume and noise along Rt 366.

A. Transportation and Traffic Noise

1. Access to alternative transportation at more frequent and convenient intervals would seem to be able to reduce traffic and provide a needed service to the community.
2. Reducing and calming such traffic would substantially enhance the livability in the community and reduce the likelihood of accidents.
3. One such measure might be the installation of a park and ride service near the intersection of Rt 13 and Rt 366.