

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

ADOPTED: 04/20/2026

Prepared with the assistance of Lewis County Planning and Community Development.



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I. Introduction

Purpose of the Plan

The Village of Port Leyden aims to create a Comprehensive Planning document to guide future decisions that are sensible and align with smart growth principles and the community's vision for the future.

Planning Process and Community Engagement

The Comprehensive Plan process began with the formation of a Comprehensive Plan Committee, which met monthly to guide development of the document. To ensure broad community participation, both an online and a hardcopy survey were distributed, and an in-person outreach event was held to gather public feedback on the vision and goals for the future of the Village of Port Leyden. The planning efforts were publicized in local publications and on the Village website.

Executive Summary

The Village of Port Leyden envisions a clean, walkable, and family-friendly community that honors its small-town character, natural surroundings, and historic Main Street while encouraging thoughtful growth and reinvestment.

Key Goals:

1. Revitalize Main Street and attract new businesses, including shops, restaurants, and lodging.
2. Improve infrastructure such as water, sewer, sidewalks, and broadband to support growth.
3. Expand recreational opportunities and cultural amenities to enhance the quality of life.
4. Preserve historic character while promoting adaptive reuse and sustainable development.
5. Strengthen partnerships for funding, workforce development, and community engagement.

This Comprehensive Plan provides a roadmap for revitalizing Port Leyden through strategic investments, community partnerships, and policies that balance growth with preservation. It outlines actionable steps to enhance economic vitality, improve housing diversity, modernize infrastructure, and position the Village as a gateway to recreation and tourism in Lewis County.

II. Village of Port Leyden Demographics Profile

Overview and Data Sources

The data used in this Comprehensive Plan come from the US Census Bureau’s decennial censuses from 1950 to 2020, as well as the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates. The ACS is an annual sample-based survey that collects demographic, housing, social, and economic data. Because the ACS uses a much smaller sample size than the decennial census, its results are subject to higher margins of error, particularly in small communities such as Port Leyden. As such, some figures are accompanied by a margin of error (\pm).

Population Trends

The population of Port Leyden has steadily declined since its peak of 898 residents in 1960. By 2020, the population had dropped to 544—a 39.4% decrease over 60 years, according to the 2020 Census. The most significant declines occurred between 1970 and 1980 (-14.15%) and 2010 and 2020 (-17.56%). Population losses in other decades were more modest, generally under 8%. According to U.S. Census data, Lewis County’s population increased steadily from 1950 through 1990, after which growth slowed to less than 1 percent per decade between 1990 and 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, the County experienced a population decline of 1.86 percent.

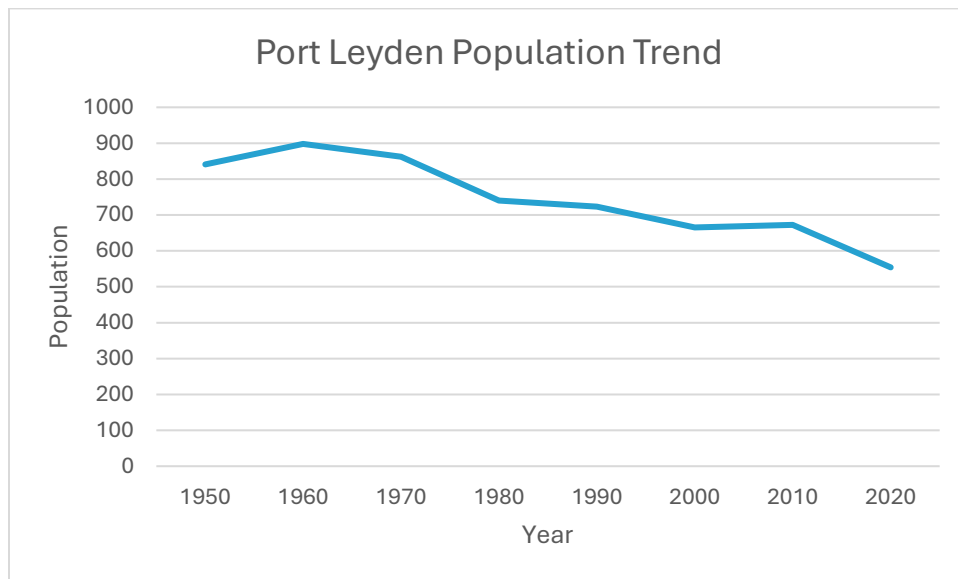


Chart 1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1950-2020 Census

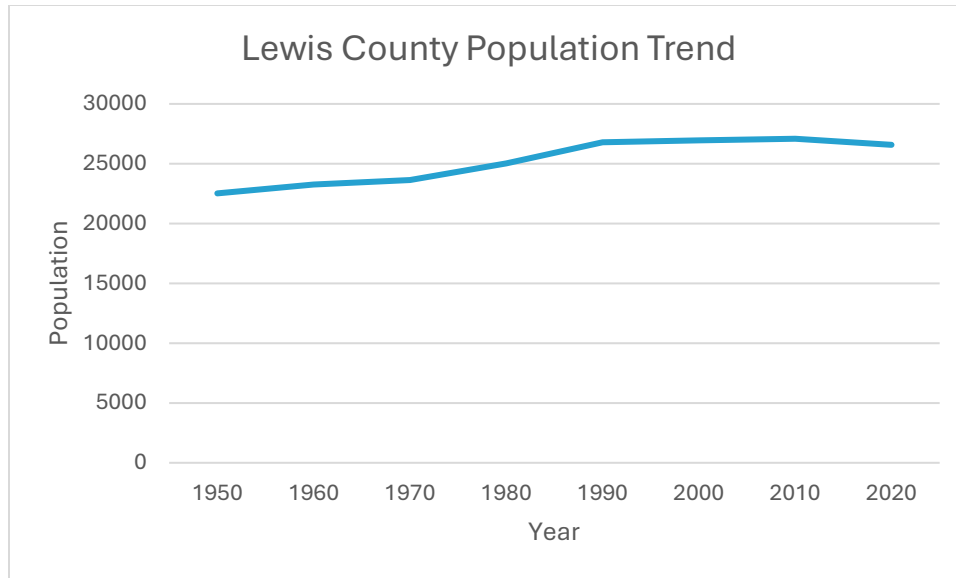


Chart 2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1950-2020 Census

Age and Veteran Status

The median age in the Village of Port Leyden is 41.7, slightly lower than the Lewis County median of 42.7 but higher than the statewide median of 39.0 years. Since 2010, the Village’s median age has increased by 11.8 percent, driven primarily by growth in the population aged 45 and older. The 2023 ACS Estimates indicate that approximately 44 veterans (±25) reside in the Village; however, the large margin of error reflects the small sample size associated with ACS data for small populations.

Household Composition

The age distribution in Port Leyden is even, with a slim majority (26 percent) of residents aged 25 to 44. The next 2 largest groups are 45-64 and 0-19, each being 25 percent of the population. About 20 percent of the population is over 65, higher than the state percentage but lower than the county percentage. This aging trend may have implications for senior services, healthcare, and housing.

According to the 2020 Census, the Village of Port Leyden had 241 households. Of these, 58.9 percent were family households, including 71.8 percent married-couple households and 28.2 percent single-parent households. The remaining 41.1 percent were nonfamily households, primarily individuals living alone. Approximately one-third (33.2 percent) of all households include at least one person age 65 or older. Notably, 56.3 percent of single-person households were occupied by individuals age 65 or older, suggesting a significant number of older adults living independently.

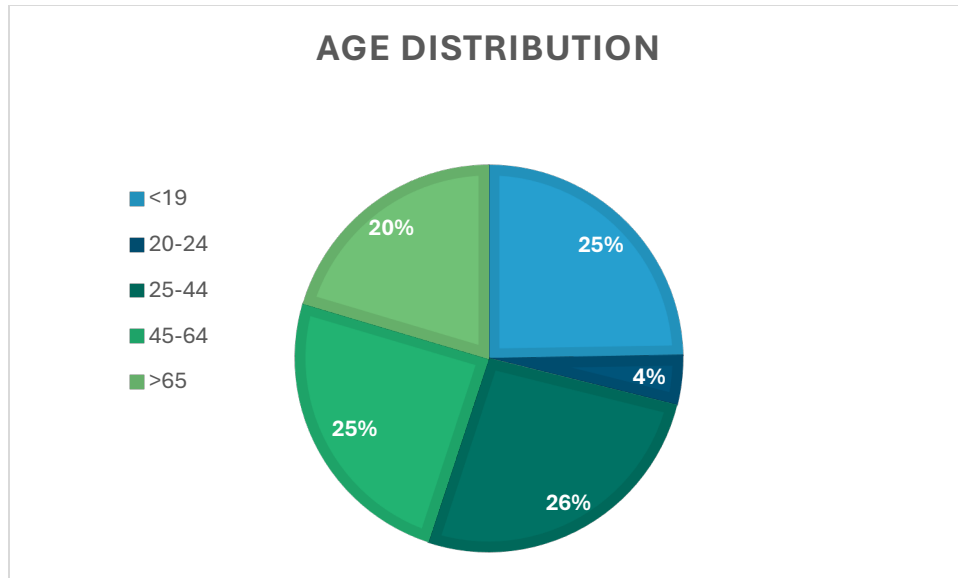


Chart 3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Demographic Profile

Housing Characteristics

The 2020 Census recorded 278 housing units in the Village of Port Leyden, of which 241 (86.7 percent) were occupied and 37 (13.3 percent) were vacant. Of the units occupied, just over three-fifths (61.4 percent) were owner-occupied, and 38.6 percent were renter-occupied.

The Village's relatively high share of renter-occupied housing may reflect limited homeownership opportunities or a more mobile workforce. Additionally, the 13.3 percent vacancy rate may indicate opportunities for housing rehabilitation, reinvestment, or adaptive reuse.

The 2023 ACS Estimates indicate that 67.1 percent (± 12.7) of housing units in Port Leyden are detached, single-unit homes, making this the predominant housing type in the Village. The average household size in 2020 was 2.25 people, reflecting a 7.8 percent decrease since 2010. This decline may be associated with an aging population living alone, fewer families with children, or a shift toward smaller household compositions.

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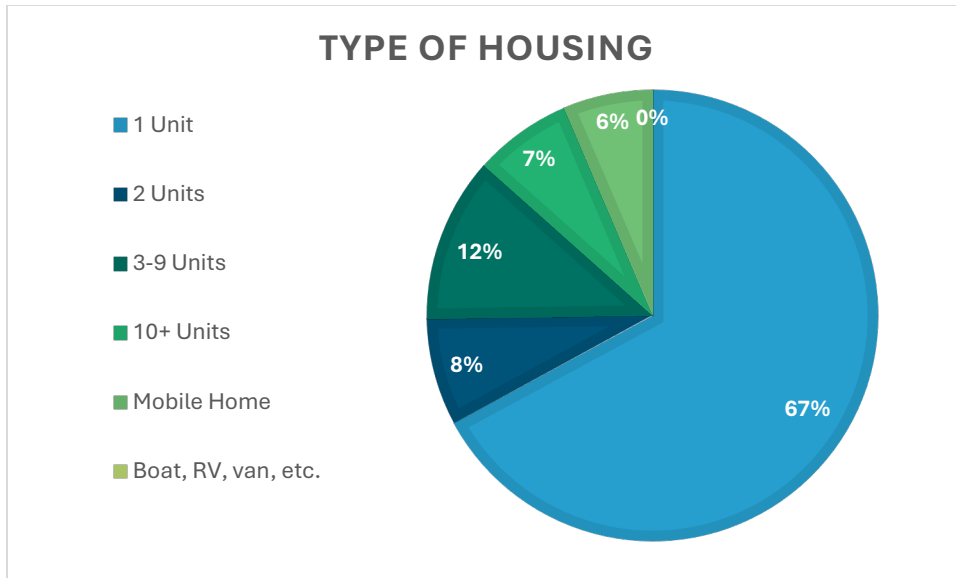


Chart 4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Most housing units in the Village are more than 85 years old, with 64.5 percent (± 12.8) constructed prior to 1939.

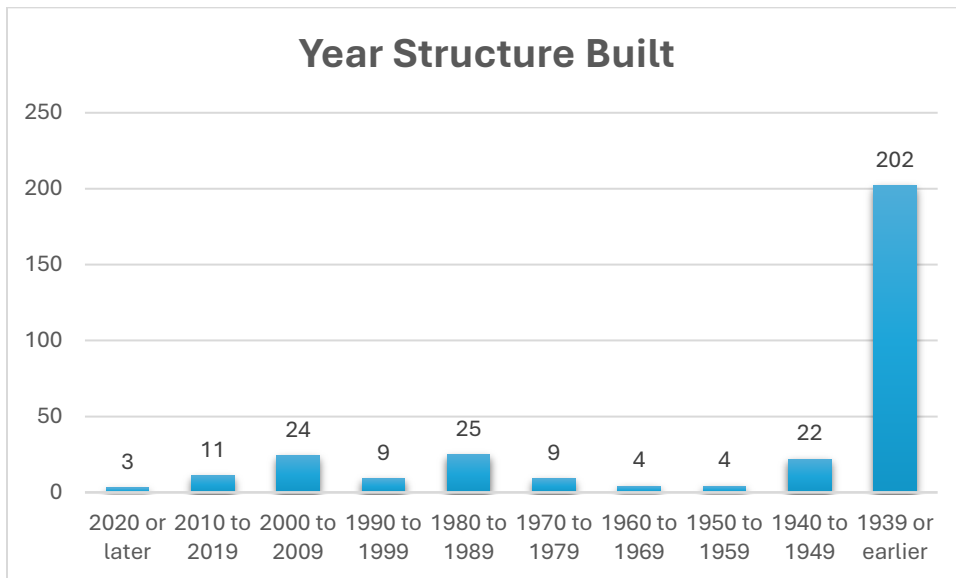


Chart 5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

More than 64 percent (± 12.8) of the Village’s housing units were constructed prior to 1939, indicating a predominance of older housing stock. This aging inventory may pose challenges related to energy efficiency, accessibility, and ongoing maintenance, underscoring the need for continued investment in housing rehabilitation and weatherization programs.

Demographics and Housing Implications

The demographic and housing trends outlined above have important implications for the Village of Port Leyden's long-term planning efforts. Shifts in population size, age distribution, household composition, and housing characteristics influence demand for services, infrastructure, and housing types. Understanding these trends is critical to ensure that future policies and investments align with the community's evolving needs.

1. **Aging Population:** Rising median age and a high percentage of seniors living alone suggest the need for aging-in-place policies, accessible housing, and healthcare access.
2. **Population Decline:** Long-term depopulation may affect school enrollment, local businesses, and municipal revenues.
3. **Older Housing Stock:** A high proportion of pre-World War II housing may require continued investment in maintenance, energy efficiency improvements, and weatherization upgrades.
4. **Household Composition:** Nearly one-third of households include at least one resident age 65 or older, and more than 40 percent are nonfamily households, indicating a diverse range of housing needs and preferences.

Income and Economic Characteristics

According to the 2019–2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, the Village of Port Leyden has a notably lower income profile than Lewis County and New York State as a whole. The median household income in the Village is \$41,250 (\pm \$11,006), which is approximately 60 percent of the Lewis County median (\$68,329) and less than half of the New York State median (\$84,578). Similarly, the Village's per capita income is \$19,567 (\pm \$3,614), compared with \$32,690 for Lewis County and \$44,315 statewide.

These figures indicate limited local economic capacity, particularly when considered alongside the Village's poverty rate of 20.9 percent (\pm 12.1%), which exceeds both the Lewis County rate (12.3 percent) and the statewide average (13.8 percent). While the relatively large margins of error reflect the Village's small population size, the overall pattern suggests that a substantial portion of residents live on incomes well below the county and state benchmarks.

Employment data further reinforces these trends. Although small sample sizes reduce statistical precision, ACS Estimates suggest a labor force participation rate slightly below county and state averages, with many residents working employed in low-wage service, labor, and retail occupations. The Village's distance from major employment centers and limited public transportation options may further constrain economic opportunity.

These indicators reflect the structural challenges faced by many small, rural villages in the region, including an aging housing stock, population decline, and a constrained tax base. Port Leyden's lower-income profile underscores the importance of leveraging external funding sources, including state and federal grants, to support infrastructure improvements, housing rehabilitation, and economic development initiatives. It also highlights the need for accessible workforce training, youth retention strategies, and senior support services, all of which are vital to sustaining long-term community stability.

Economic and Income-Related Implications

The Village's income levels, employment patterns, and poverty rates have direct implications for economic resilience and quality of life. These conditions influence housing affordability, workforce participation, access to essential services, and the Village's fiscal capacity to invest in community improvements. The following considerations identify priority areas for policy development, strategic investment, and potential external funding to strengthen long-term economic stability.

1. **Affordability:** Elevated poverty rates and comparatively low median household incomes underscore the need for affordable housing options and utility cost assistance programs.
2. **Workforce Development:** Economic development initiatives should incorporate job training, support for remote work opportunities, and small business and entrepreneurship programs.
3. **Public Funding:** The Village may be well-positioned to pursue competitive state and federal grant programs targeted at economically disadvantaged rural communities.
4. **Access to Services:** Reliable transportation, healthcare access, and high-speed broadband infrastructure will be critical to enhancing economic mobility and overall quality of life.

Employment Sectors and Occupations

According to the 2019–2023 ACS, Port Leyden residents are primarily employed in the education, health care, and social services sector (27.5 percent), followed by retail trade (16.1 percent), construction (14.9 percent), and manufacturing (12.6 percent). This distribution reflects a workforce that is concentrated in service- and labor-oriented industries. Nearly 29 percent of employed residents work in service occupations, and 26.4 percent in sales and office positions. A smaller share is employed in higher-wage occupations, such as management and professional roles (20.7 percent). These patterns suggest that a local labor force may benefit from expanded access to workforce training, small business development programs, and stronger connections to regional employment opportunities.

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Chart 6. Employment by Industry
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019–2023 ACS 5-Year Estimate

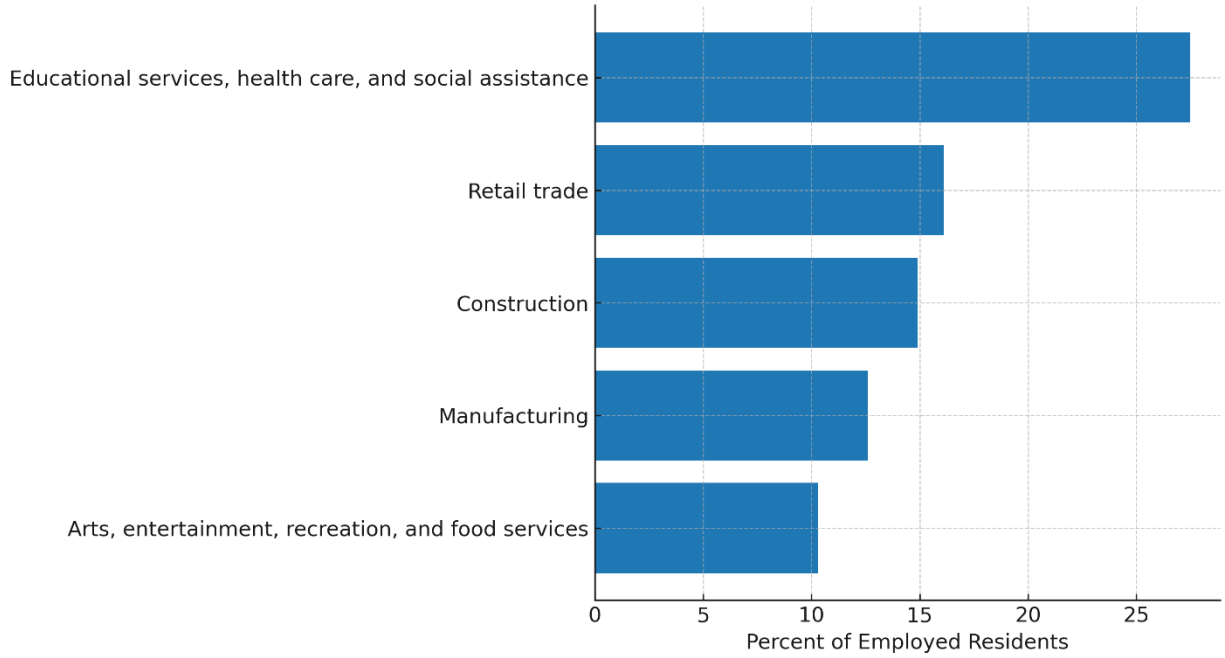
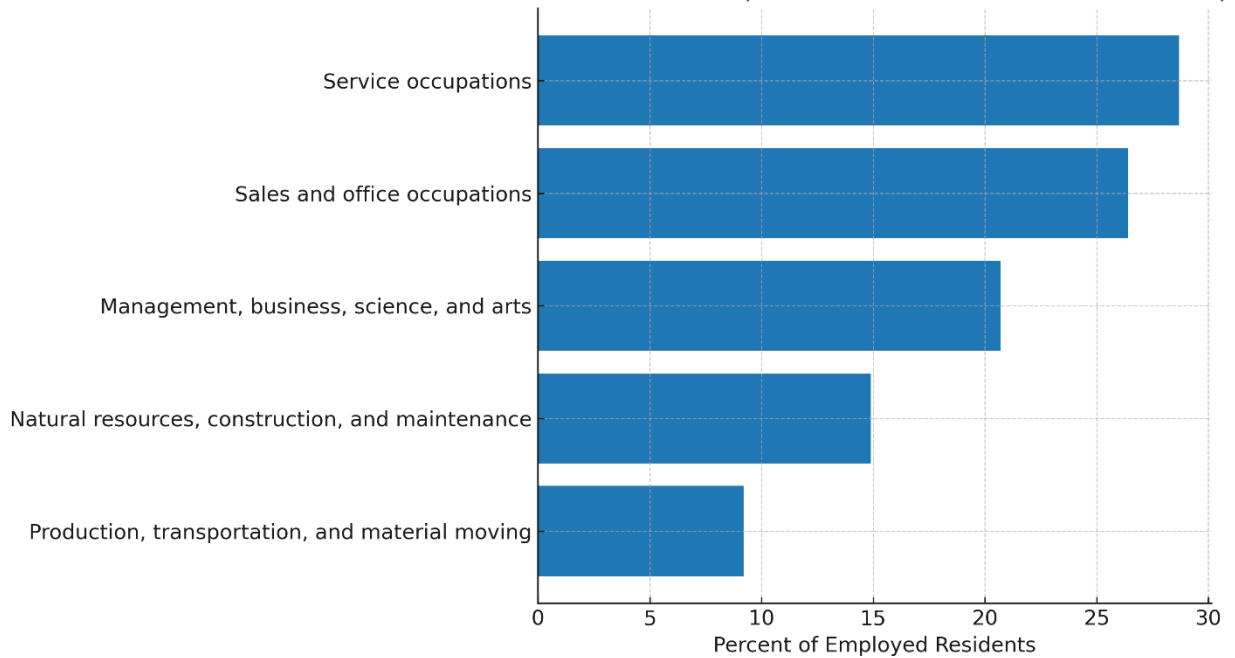


Chart 7. Employment by Occupation
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019–2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates,



Commuting Patterns

Workplace Location: Detailed data on the specific commute destinations of Port Leyden residents is not readily available at the Village level. However, the 2019–2023 ACS Estimates provide commuting data for Lewis County as a whole, which includes Port Leyden. While these countywide figures offer useful contextual understanding, they may not fully capture the Village’s unique patterns.

Transportation Modes: The Lewis County Complete Streets Plan notes that public transportation options are limited in the region, with the exception of a Lewis County Public Transportation (LCPT) route connecting the Village of Port Leyden directly to Old Forge, offering fixed route service five (5) days per week to Lowville, Glenfield, Boonville, and Constableville, and providing service to Utica. This suggests that a significant portion of Port Leyden residents likely rely on personal vehicles for commuting, although specific modal split data for the Village is not available.

Commute Duration: While specific data on average commute times for Port Leyden residents is not available, countywide commute estimates provide a general context. These figures may not precisely reflect the commuting conditions experienced by Village residents due to local factors such as distance to employment centers and transportation infrastructure.

Employment Inferences

1. **Public & Social Sector Dependency:** A substantial portion of the workforce is employed in education and healthcare sectors that are typically funded by public funding or nonprofit institutions. This concentration may create vulnerability to government budget reductions or institutional restructuring. With elementary schools already consolidated, the community may still be adjusting to those changes. Relatively stable population levels also suggest limited new labor inflow, which may constrain growth in these sectors in the absence of immigration.
2. **Limited Local Industry Diversity:** The Village’s economic base remains concentrated in a few lower-wage and seasonal sectors (retail, hospitality). The modest but consistent population turnover (migration) and relatively limited public transit options suggest that many workers commute outside the Village for employment, possibly to nearby towns or regional centers. This commuting pattern highlights a dependence on external economies and limited local job diversification.

3. **Construction is Significant:** A notable share of employment in construction indicates a base of locally available skilled tradespeople that could be leveraged for community development initiatives, including housing rehabilitation, weatherization, and energy efficiency retrofits. Given limited immigration, these jobs may primarily support the existing community’s housing stock and infrastructure.
4. **Potential for Tourism or Services Growth:** Employment in recreation and food services presents opportunities for strategic tourism development, especially considering the Village’s riverfront setting. However, limited public transportation and reliance on personal vehicles may affect visitor access, suggesting that enhancing transportation connectivity and wayfinding could support growth in these sectors.

III. Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles

Community Vision Statement

The Village of Port Leyden envisions a clean, walkable, and family-friendly community that honors its small-town character, natural setting, and historic Main Street while encouraging thoughtful growth and reinvestment. Residents value the Village’s sense of safety, affordability, and neighborly connection, and aspire to strengthen these qualities through improved infrastructure, vibrant public spaces, and a renewed local economy.

The future Port Leyden is a vibrant, welcoming Village that supports local businesses, provides recreational opportunities for all ages, and takes pride in maintaining attractive streets, healthy neighborhoods, and a strong community identity.

Goals for Growth, Preservation, Quality of Life, and Sustainability

The Village will incorporate climate resilience into infrastructure planning, including flood-resistant design, tree canopy preservation, and preparedness for extreme weather events. The following goals were shaped by community feedback gathered through the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Public Survey and initial discussions with the Village Board and residents.

1. Growth and Economic Development

- a. Encourage the development and revitalization of small businesses and local services, particularly along Main Street.
- b. Attract new establishments— such as shops, restaurants, and a grocery or café— to meet daily needs and attract visitors.
- c. Promote adaptive reuse and reinvestment in vacant or underutilized buildings through incentives, strategic partnerships, and code enforcement.
- d. Strengthen the Village’s identity as a gateway to outdoor recreation by leveraging its proximity to the Black River, Adirondacks, and regional trail systems.

2. Preservation and Community Appearance

- a. Strengthen enforcement of property maintenance standards to enhance the appearance of residential and commercial areas.
- b. Partner with property owners and Lewis County to rehabilitate aging, vacant, or underutilized structures.
- c. Undertake beautification efforts—such as tree planting, seasonal plantings, public art, and façade improvements—to enhance Main Street and key gateway corridors.
- d. Preserve and restore the Village’s historic small-town character while accommodating compatible modern updates that support community life.

3. Quality of Life and Public Spaces

- a. Invest in sidewalk and street improvements, prioritizing safety, accessibility, and connectivity between neighborhoods, schools, parks, and local businesses.
- b. Expand family-friendly recreational amenities, including park upgrades, splash pads, or playground enhancements, and additional community events.
- c. Develop and maintain safe walking and bicycling routes that connect to nearby trails, the riverfront, and neighboring communities.
- d. Foster volunteerism and community pride through organized clean-up events, beautification initiatives, and local festivals.

4. Infrastructure and Public Safety

- a. Modernize water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure to support future growth and protect environmental quality.
- b. Enhance street lighting, crosswalks, and traffic calming measures to improve pedestrian safety.
- c. Coordinate with law enforcement and community organizations to reduce nuisance activity and promote a safe, family-oriented atmosphere.

- d. Maintain transparent and accountable governance, through regular communication with residents via newsletters, social media, and public meetings.

5. Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship

- a. Protect the Black River and surrounding natural resources through responsible land use practices, erosion control, and green infrastructure practices.
- b. Encourage small-scale energy efficiency and renewable energy installations (e.g., rooftop solar) while ensuring that larger-scale facilities are appropriately sited and regulated.
- c. Promote walkability and compact, mixed-use development patterns to reduce transportation costs and environmental impacts.
- d. Plan for resilient infrastructure systems capable of adapting to future climate, flooding, or energy-related challenges.

Guiding Principles for Future Development and Planning Decisions

The following principles should guide decision-making by the Village Board, Planning Board, and other officials as they review development proposals, update regulations, and allocate public resources.

1. **Community Character First.** Ensure that all decisions reinforce the Village’s small-town identity, sense of safety, and overall quality of life.
2. **Reinvest in the Core.** Direct growth and capital improvements to the Village center and along Main Street before considering outward expansion.
3. **Partnership and Collaboration.** Work collectively with residents, local businesses, the Town of Leyden, the Town of Lyonsdale, Lewis County, Naturally Lewis, the Fire Department, the Auxiliary, and regional organizations to achieve shared goals. Establish intermunicipal agreements (IMAs), memoranda of understanding (MOUs), and standard operating procedures, as appropriate, to formalize service coordination.
4. **Attractive and Well-Maintained.** Support consistent code enforcement and volunteer initiatives to ensure the Village remains clean, welcoming, and visually appealing.
5. **Accessibility and Connectivity.** Prioritize walkability, safe crossings, and strong connections to trails, parks, and community facilities.
6. **Transparency and Accountability.** Maintain open communication with residents and regularly report progress toward community goals.
7. **Environmental Responsibility.** Protect the Village’s natural setting and promote sustainable development and infrastructure practices.

8. **Inclusive Community Life.** Promote activities, services, and amenities that serve residents of all ages and abilities, thereby strengthening local pride and involvement.
9. **Energy Policy and Local Control.** Support local decision-making in energy infrastructure planning. Advocate for flexibility in state policy to allow communities to pursue energy solutions—such as natural gas—that balance affordability, reliability, and environmental responsibility.

IV. Land Use Plan

Summary of Existing Land Uses and Trends

The Village of Port Leyden encompasses a compact area within the Town of Leyden, with a small portion extending into the Town of Lyonsdale. It is characterized by historic small-town development patterns, a walkable Main Street corridor, and residential neighborhoods clustered around the Village center. Land uses are primarily residential, interspersed with small-scale commercial, civic, and recreational properties.

Historic development followed the Black River corridor and transportation routes, including State Route 12, which continues to serve as the Village’s primary commercial corridor. Industrial activity has largely declined, and many former mixed-use or commercial buildings have transitioned to residential or storage uses. Several properties along Main Street and within older neighborhoods exhibit signs of deferred maintenance or vacancy, reflecting opportunities for reinvestment and adaptive reuse.

A. Key trends identified through public feedback and local observation include:

1. A strong desire to maintain the Village’s small-town character while improving overall property maintenance.
2. A need for additional local businesses and services, particularly restaurants, grocery options, and family-friendly gathering spaces.
3. Opportunities for reinvestment along Main Street and within older residential neighborhoods.
4. Public concern regarding property clutter, consistent code enforcement, and deteriorated properties.
5. Opportunities to enhance sidewalks, public infrastructure, and aesthetics to support walkability and community pride.

The proposed Zoning Law will serve as the principal tool for managing land use, ensuring consistency with these trends, and advancing the community’s long-term vision.

B. The Village intends to develop a zoning law that will incorporate the following existing regulations:

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- LL 5 of 2022- Village of Port Leyden Property Maintenance Law
- LL 1 of 2013- Prohibition of Clutter, Litter, and Debris
- LL 2 of 2022- Domesticated Animals Law of Port Leyden
- LL 7 of 2023- Manufactured Home Law

A unified land use law will ensure all land use regulations align with the Comprehensive Plan's goals for housing quality, neighborhood aesthetics, and fair enforcement.

C. Rodent and Public Health Considerations in Land Use Review

1. Historically, the Village of Port Leyden has experienced periodic issues with rodents and other pests. As the Village develops and updates its land use regulations, it should remain mindful of how certain commercial or industrial uses could contribute to public health concerns if not properly regulated and managed.
2. When reviewing proposed land uses—particularly those involving waste, organic materials, or outdoor storage—the Village should ensure that appropriate performance standards are in place to mitigate potential impacts related to sanitation, odor, and pest attraction.
3. The following land uses, in particular, should be subject to heightened review by the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals to determine their compatibility within a compact village setting:
 - a. Junkyards (as defined by Local Law 3 of 2021 – Lewis County Junkyard Law)
 - b. Livestock processing facilities (e.g., slaughterhouses)
 - c. Dumps or other solid waste handling facilities
 - d. Redemption centers (e.g., bottle and can return centers)
 - e. Commercial-scale renewable energy facilities (e.g., solar arrays, battery storage systems, etc.)

For any such uses, the Village may consider requiring special use permits, site-specific mitigation measures, or restricting their location near residential or higher-density areas to protect public health and neighborhood character.

Future Land Use Map and Categories

Based on the committee survey results, most respondents indicated that a hybrid approach to zoning would be most appropriate for the Village of Port Leyden—consisting of a single zone with multiple overlay districts. Potential overlay districts may include Commercial Renewable Energy, Water Source Protection, Natural Development Constraints, and Historic Preservation.

Overlay Zones Definitions

To implement a hybrid zoning approach, the Village will establish the following overlay zones:

A. Historic Overlay District

Purpose: Preserve the Village’s historic character and architectural integrity, particularly along highly visible corridors such as East and West Main Street.

Standards: Exterior design review for alterations; encourage façade restoration consistent with Lewis County Downtown Design Guidelines.

B. Renewable Energy Overlay District

Purpose: Allow small-scale renewable energy installations while excluding utility-scale facilities.

Standards: Rooftop and community solar permitted; commercial-scale solar and Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) prohibited within Village limits.

C. Water Source Protection Overlay

Purpose: Protect riparian buffers and water quality along the Black River and tributaries.

Standards: Enhanced stormwater controls; setbacks from water bodies; erosion prevention measures.

D. Environmental Constraints Overlay

Purpose: Limit development in wetlands, steep slopes, and flood-prone areas.

Standards: Require site-specific mitigation and compliance with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulations.

Land Use Policies and Recommendations

The following policies will guide land-use decisions, zoning updates, regulations, and project reviews in a manner consistent with the community vision:

1. Adopt Lewis County’s suggested Solar Overlay District Framework.

- a. The Village recognizes the County’s suggested Solar Overlay District as the most appropriate regional approach.

- b. Given the community’s general aversion to medium- and large-scale solar installations, and concerns regarding their aesthetic, environmental, and long-term maintenance impacts, Port Leyden should adopt the County’s suggested Solar Overlay District and associated standards for the Towns of Leyden and Lyonsdale, as the Village spans both municipalities. Given the pace of technological change, this framework should apply not only to commercial solar development but also to other emerging commercial renewable energy technologies.
- c. Small-scale or rooftop solar for individual homes or businesses will remain permitted or encouraged, provided systems are designed to blend with the Village’s character and minimize impacts to neighbors or aesthetics.

2. Prohibit Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) within Village Limits.

Due to the Village’s population density, limited emergency response resources, and the fire and chemical hazards associated with BESS facilities, such systems shall not be permitted in any district.

3. Monitor Evolving Standards.

The Village will continue to monitor regional and state safety standards in the event that future technology advancements warrant reconsideration.

4. Regulate—But Do Not Exclude—Adult Entertainment.

- a. Adult entertainment uses will be strictly regulated to balance business rights with community standards.
- b. Such establishments shall be permitted only by special use permit within clearly delineated non-residential areas, subject to:
 - i. Minimum separation distances from residences, schools, churches, and parks;
 - ii. Exterior signage and screening requirements;
 - iii. Operating hours and conduct standards; and
 - iv. Compliance with all New York State regulations.

This approach maintains constitutional safeguards while protecting the Village’s small-town character.

5. Encourage Compatible Infill and Reuse.

- a. Support small-scale projects that reuse existing structures or vacant lots in ways that complement surrounding development.
- b. Consider easing zoning regulations for infill development within structures where the proposed use is consistent with a previously established use.

6. Preserve Neighborhood Integrity by encouraging improvements consistent with the [Lewis County Downtown Design Guide](#).

7. Continue to enforce the Property Maintenance Law (LL 5-2022) and Prohibition of Clutter Law (LL 1-2013) to maintain curb appeal and housing quality. It may be easier to consolidate into a single comprehensive zoning document that includes these laws.

8. Enhance Streetscapes and Gateways.

- a. Install monuments, decorative signage, and landscaping at key entry points to the Village; consider assigning a Village subcommittee to oversee implementation.
- b. Incorporate public art, planters, benches, and pedestrian-scale lighting to reinforce a sense of arrival and community pride; consider assigning a Village subcommittee for coordination.

9. Reflect Historical Character in Design.

Use design elements that reflect the Village’s historic character and natural surroundings.

- a. Coordinate with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to install directional signage for local businesses (e.g., Cantina, Iron Grill) and designate the Business District along Route 12.
- b. Develop a consistent signage theme for wayfinding, business identification, and community branding.
- c. Consider working with BOCES Visual Communications or Construction programs to develop welcome signs for key Village entrances (Route 12, North Elm, South Elm, Marmon Road/Pearl Street, Moose River Road, River Road, Canal Street, Kelpytown Road).
- d. Add landscaping and pedestrian-scale lighting along Route 12 and Main Street to improve aesthetics and safety.

10. Coordinate Route 12 Improvements.

Implement coordinated signage, landscaping, and lighting improvements along Route 12 and at key Village entrances, in coordination with NYSDOT, to promote new-business location directional signs (Cantina, Iron Grill, etc.) and the Business District. To do this, the Village should establish a subcommittee and timeline to advance the initiatives outlined in Item 9.

11. Support Local Commerce.

Provide flexibility for home-based businesses and small-scale retail uses that generate local employment without disrupting residential neighborhoods.

12. Promote Public Engagement in Land-Use Decisions.

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Encourage resident participation in Planning Board processes and zoning updates through workshops and online communications.

13. Zoning and Subdivision Review

The Village is encouraged to adopt separate local subdivision regulations rather than incorporating subdivision provisions into a comprehensive zoning law or deferring solely to state regulations.

V. Housing

Assessment of Current Housing Needs and Challenges

The Lewis County Housing Needs Assessment and Market Analysis provides important context for understanding the housing conditions affecting all communities within the County, including the Village of Port Leyden. The study indicates that the housing stock in Lewis County is predominantly single-family, with approximately 83 percent of residents living in owner-occupied homes. The typical home is modestly priced, with a median home value of approximately \$150,000, about 25 percent below the national average. While this suggests that homeownership is relatively attainable, the overall housing market remains limited in both supply and diversity of housing types.

More than half of the County's homes are over 50 years old, reflecting an aging housing stock that increasingly requires repair and modernization. Limited residential construction in recent decades has reduced housing turnover, or "churn," within the market. Older residents often remain in larger homes due to a shortage of smaller, accessible, or maintenance-free alternatives. As a result, fewer homes become available to younger families and first-time buyers. Continued aging in place, without reinvestment, may also lead to deferred maintenance and properties that eventually require substantial rehabilitation or public intervention.

Rental housing is particularly scarce and relatively less affordable. Although only about 12 percent of residents rent, nearly half of renters are considered cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Extremely low-income households cannot afford the median rent or home value, and even many moderate-income households struggle to secure quality, affordable options. The shortage of suitable housing further constrains workforce attraction and retention, contributing to regional outmigration and workforce constraints.

The Housing Needs Assessment identifies a clear lack of housing diversity, including senior housing, market-rate options for middle-income households, and supportive or transitional housing for residents with special needs. To address these challenges, the study recommends a multifaceted approach focused on preserving existing housing stock, incentivizing diverse new development, and strengthening coordination among local housing stakeholders.

Specific strategies include strengthening collaboration among Lewis County, Snow Belt Housing, and Lewis County Opportunities to better leverage state and federal housing resources; expanding the local contractor pool through targeted training programs and partnerships with educational institutions; and advancing the development of new senior housing that addresses both market-rate and assisted-living needs. The report also encourages municipalities to modernize zoning regulations to allow for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and small-scale multi-unit housing, thereby increasing affordable, flexible living options for seniors, young adults, and small families.

In addition, the study notes that a balanced approach to short-term rentals can help reinvigorate vacant housing stock and stimulate local economic activity, while thoughtful regulation can preserve neighborhood character. To encourage private housing investment, municipalities should consider incentives such as property tax abatements, reduced infrastructure connection fees, and streamlined permitting for rehabilitation or new construction projects.

Overall, the Housing Needs Assessment underscores that Lewis County's housing market is aging, supply-constrained, and lacking in diversity. Expanding housing choice, particularly for seniors, low- and moderate-income households, and young families, will be essential to sustaining long-term community vitality. For the Village of Port Leyden, this means encouraging a broader range of housing types, prioritizing the rehabilitation of aging homes, and aligning with County-level initiatives that strengthen housing access, affordability, and quality across the region.

Strategies to Promote Affordable, Diverse, and Quality Housing Options

Due to the demand for housing and the Village of Port Leyden's overall income constraints, it may be beneficial to adopt regulations that allow and regulate ADUs and establish clear standards and limits for short-term rentals. Doing so could expand housing options, help stabilize pricing, and ensure appropriate safety standards. The Village believes that once a property is used as a short-term rental, it should meet commercial safety standards.

ADUs offer multigenerational living accommodations that appear desirable as older residents age in place but struggle to maintain larger properties.

Potential Future Zoning Provisions - Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

To expand housing options while maintaining neighborhood character, the Village may consider incorporating the following provisions into future zoning regulations:

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- A maximum of one (1) ADU per lot in residential areas, subject to issuance of a special use permit.
- Require all ADUs to comply with the NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code.
 - Require adequate off-street parking, as defined in the future zoning code.
- Establish a maximum size of 800 square feet or less for any ADU.

Potential Future Zoning Provisions - Short-Term Rentals (STRs)

To balance housing availability with tourism-related economic activity, the Village may consider incorporating the following provisions into future zoning regulations:

- Limit STR use to one- and two-family dwellings to preserve multifamily dwellings for long-term residential occupancy
- Require issuance of a STR permit, subject to renewal every two (2) years, with enforceable occupancy limits.
- Require all STR operators to register with the County and comply with Lewis County Local Law 8 of 2025, as amended.

Potential Property Improvement Incentive Program

Given the Village's elevated poverty rate and comparatively lower household incomes, the Village Board may consider establishing a Property Improvement Incentive Program to encourage exterior property upgrades without triggering an immediate full increase in property tax liability. The program could phase in the taxable assessed value of qualifying improvements over a six-year period, thereby reducing the short-term financial impact on homeowners while promoting neighborhood stabilization and community revitalization.

The following outlines a potential structure for the proposed Property Improvement Incentive Program:

- **Purpose:** Encourage property owners to invest in exterior improvements by easing the tax impact associated with increased assessments.
- **Eligibility:** Applicants must be current on all Village taxes, water bills, and other municipal obligations.
- **Proposed Tax Phase-In Schedule:**
 - Year 1: 50% of the increased assessed value
 - Year 2: 60%
 - Year 3: 70%
 - Year 4: 80%
 - Year 5: 90%
 - Year 6: 100% (full assessment)

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- **Administration:** The Village Board will adopt formal program guidelines, including eligibility standards, application procedures, and compliance monitoring. In developing these guidelines, the Board will consult with the Director of Real Property Services and the Village Assessor to ensure the program is feasible and aligns with assessment practices. The Board may also consider establishing a minimum improvement threshold (such as a dollar amount or percentage increase in assessed value) and determining whether participation in other programs, including those offered by Snowbelt Housing Company, should affect eligibility.
- **Marketing:** Develop a program name and outreach strategy to ensure residents understand the program benefits and requirements (e.g., “Pride in Property Program” or “Port Leyden Pride Renewal Incentive”).
- **Village should “Opt-In” to Real Property Tax Law § 421-f** which provides a partial tax exemption on assessed value increases from residential property improvements
 - **Make a resolution to adopt a Local Law** -The village may adopt a local law or resolution, after conducting a public hearing, to enact the § 421-f exemption for its municipal and school taxes.
 - **Filing and Implementation.** Once adopted, a copy of the local law or resolution must be filed with:
 - **The Commissioner of Taxation and Finance, and**
 - **The local assessor** responsible for preparing the tax rolls
 - Applicants will utilize the already established form as provided on the www.tax.ny.gov site:
 - Form RP-421-F:1/95/ Application

Encouragement of Infill and Rehabilitation

The Village of Port Leyden is committed to promoting sustainable growth and preserving its unique community character by encouraging infill development and the rehabilitation of existing structures. To support this goal, the Village may consider adopting flexible zoning regulations that facilitate revitalization of underutilized or vacant lots and reinvestment in aging housing stock.

Examples of such flexible zoning strategies include:

1. Allowing reduced lot sizes or setbacks in designated infill areas to accommodate context-sensitive new construction.
2. Permitting ADUs or “in-law” suites to increase housing diversity without expanding the Village footprint.
3. Streamlining review and approval processes for renovations and adaptive reuse projects to reduce barriers to rehabilitating historic or deteriorated buildings.

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4. Providing zoning incentives or density bonuses for projects that remediate blighted properties or enhance neighborhood character.
5. Allowing appropriately scaled mixed-use development to encourage revitalization of commercial corridors with compatible residential integration.

Collectively, these measures aim to promote efficient use of existing infrastructure, support local property owners, and foster a vibrant, livable Village for current and future residents.

Potential Solution to Address Dilapidated Residential Structures

Policy Statement:

The Village of Port Leyden is committed to improving neighborhood quality and reducing blight by addressing deteriorated residential properties through a balanced approach of rehabilitation and demolition.

The Village's goals in addressing blight include:

1. Preserving and restoring salvageable housing stock to maintain affordability and historic character.
2. Removing unsafe or unsalvageable structures to protect public health and safety.
3. Promoting productive reuse of vacant lots for housing, green space, or community amenities.

To implement this balanced approach, the Village will pursue the following strategies:

1. Rehabilitation of Salvageable Structures

- a. Partner with Snow Belt Housing Company and similar organizations to assist willing property owners with winterization, weatherization, and rehabilitation programs.
- b. Promote State and Federal funding opportunities for energy-efficiency upgrades, accessibility improvements, and exterior repairs.
- c. Encourage participation in local incentive programs such as the Property Improvement Incentive Program to mitigate tax impacts for homeowners making improvements.

2. Demolition of Structures Beyond Repair

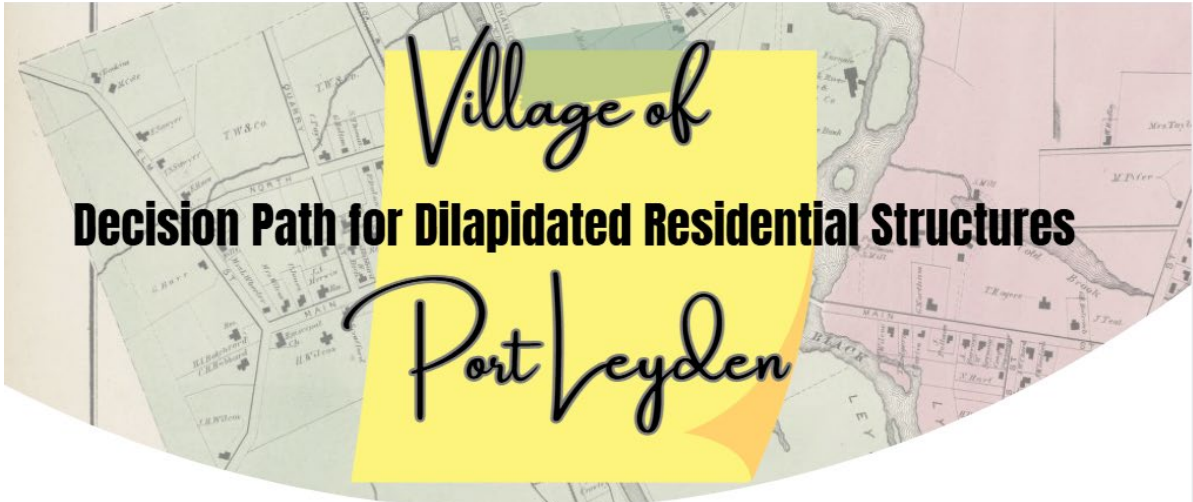
- a. Work with Lewis County to access Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for demolition of imminent threat structures.
- b. Prioritize removal of properties that pose health and safety hazards or significantly detract from neighborhood character.

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- c. Evaluate options for site reuse, including infill housing, green space, or community amenities.

3. Implementation Steps:

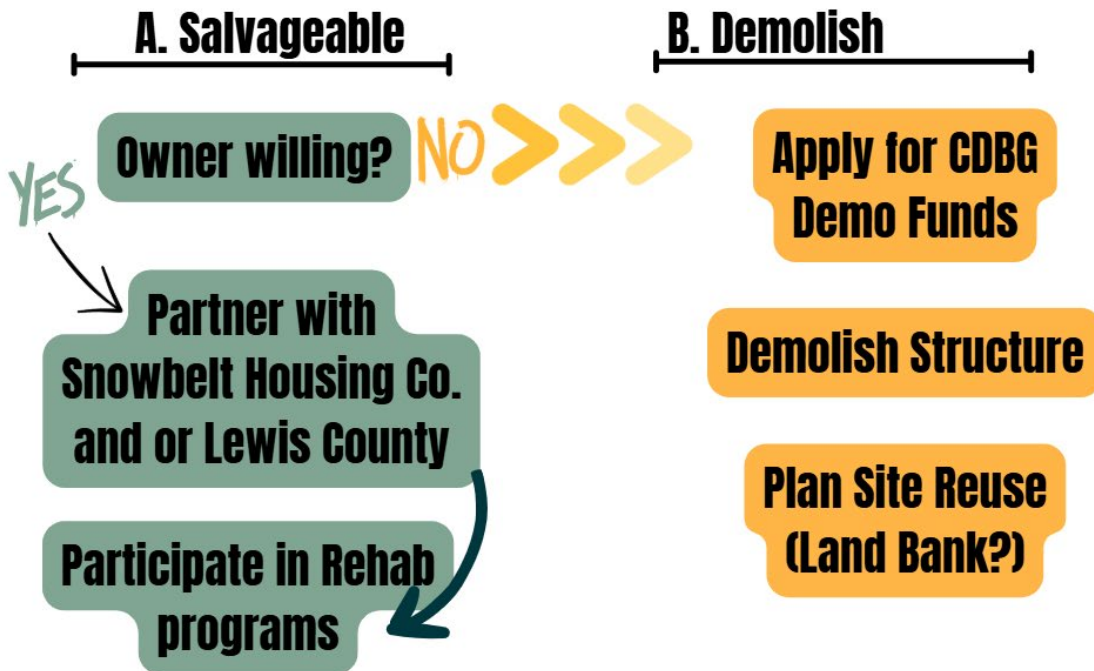
1. Maintain an inventory of blighted properties and update annually.
2. Coordinate with property owners to determine willingness for rehabilitation or demolition.
3. Seek partnerships with housing agencies and County programs to maximize funding and technical assistance.
4. Refer to the following page for a process flow chart illustrating the primary steps (green), rehabilitation pathway (green), and demolition pathway (orange).



Identify Property & Add to the Blighted Property List



Assess Condition



VI. Economic Development

Economic Base Analysis

1. Economic Overview

Port Leyden is a small Village situated in Lewis County, New York, characterized by a predominantly rural setting with a local economy historically anchored in agriculture, small businesses, and limited light manufacturing. The Village's economic base is influenced by its proximity to natural resources and regional transportation corridors.

2. Population and Labor Force

The Village's demographic trends and workforce characteristics shape its economic capacity and future growth potential.

- a) The Village has a modest population, with trends indicating relative stability or slight decline, reflecting broader rural demographic shifts.
- b) The labor force is primarily employed in agriculture, retail trade, education, healthcare, and public administration.
- c) Many residents commute to nearby towns and cities for employment opportunities, highlighting the importance of regional connectivity.

3. Employment and Industry Sectors

Key employment sectors include:

- a) Agriculture and related activities (including dairy and crop production)
- b) Retail and service businesses (small shops, restaurants, personal services)
- c) Education and public sector jobs (local schools and municipal services)
- d) Small-scale manufacturing and construction

Tourism and recreation also contribute seasonally and are linked to nearby lakes and outdoor amenities.

4. Business Environment

The local business environment reflects both the strengths and constraints typical of small rural communities.

- a) Port Leyden features a limited number of small, locally owned businesses serving the community's needs.
- b) Commercial activity is concentrated along main corridors and the Village center, with opportunities for growth in retail and service sectors.
- c) Ongoing challenges include limited access to capital, workforce retention, and the attraction of new businesses.

5. Income and Economic Well-Being

Household income levels and overall economic conditions influence housing stability, consumer spending, and long-term community resilience.

- a) Median household incomes are below State averages, reflecting limited local employment opportunities and part-time or seasonal work.
- b) A significant portion of the population experiences economic vulnerability, with a need for programs supporting affordable housing, workforce development, and small business support initiatives.

6. Economic Development: A Recreation Hub

Port Leyden is uniquely positioned as a gateway to the Adirondacks and a regional hub for all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), snowmobiles, and outdoor recreation. By leveraging its scenic location, trail connectivity, and small-town charm, the Village can attract visitors and entrepreneurs eager to invest in lodging, dining, and adventure-based businesses.

To capitalize on these advantages, the Village may consider pursuing the following strategies:

- a) Expanding lodging options tailored to ATV and snowmobile enthusiasts.
- b) Enhancing trail connections and wayfinding to integrate recreational assets with Main Street commerce.
- c) Branding and marketing Port Leyden as “*Where the Adirondacks Begin*” through digital campaigns and regional partnerships.
- d) Encourage adaptive reuse of historic properties for boutique hospitality and mixed-use development.

These efforts will create a vibrant economy rooted in tourism, local entrepreneurship, and cultural experiences, driving long-term growth and community pride.

7. Strengths and Assets

Port Leyden possesses several inherent strengths and community assets that provide a foundation for future economic development and revitalization efforts.

- a) Strategic location near recreational resources and scenic landscapes that could be leveraged for tourism growth.
- b) Strong sense of community and established local institutions providing
- c) g social and economic support.
- d) Potential for renewable energy projects and small-scale agriculture innovation.

8. Challenges

At the same time, the Village faces structural and demographic challenges that must be addressed to support sustainable economic growth.

- a) Population declines and an aging demographic profile limiting workforce availability.
- b) Limited commercial space and infrastructure constraints hindering business expansion.
- c) Need for enhanced broadband and transportation connectivity to support modern economic activities.

9. Opportunities

Despite these challenges, emerging opportunities exist to strengthen the local economy and diversify income sources.

- a) Encouraging entrepreneurship and home-based businesses through flexible zoning and local incentives.
- b) Developing agritourism and eco-tourism initiatives that leverage natural and cultural assets.
- c) Exploring renewable energy development as both an economic driver and long-term cost-saving strategy.
- d) Strengthening workforce capacity through partnerships with regional educational and training institutions.

10. Data Sources & Next Steps

To refine this analysis, the Village should review:

- a) U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey data for demographic and income trends.
- b) Local business directories and economic development reports.
- c) Regional labor market and industry data from the New York State Department of Labor.
- d) Community surveys and stakeholder interviews

This foundational economic analysis can help guide targeted strategies for Port Leyden's Comprehensive Plan.

Support for Existing Local Businesses

Policy Statement:

The Village of Port Leyden is committed to fostering a vibrant local economy by supporting the retention, growth, and long-term success of existing businesses. Recognizing that local businesses are vital to community identity, economic stability, and quality of life, the Village will pursue policies and programs to cultivate a business-friendly environment.

The following goals establish the framework for strengthening Port Leyden’s local economy:

1. Retain and strengthen local businesses across all sectors.
2. Encourage business expansion and diversification to generate employment and enhance economic resilience.
3. Improve the physical, regulatory, and operational environment to support business operations and customer access.
4. Promote collaboration among businesses, local government, and community organizations.

The following strategies outline practical actions to support local business growth and retention:

1. **Zoning and Land Use:** Establish and update regulations to permit flexible uses, adaptive reuse, and mixed-use development; refine standards related to signage, parking, and site design.
2. **Permitting and Support:** Streamline permitting processes and provide accessible resources on regulations, financing tools, and assistance programs.
3. **Infrastructure:** Maintain and improve roads, sidewalks, lighting, utilities, and broadband infrastructure within commercial areas.
4. **Business Development:** Support local business associations and strengthen partnerships with regional agencies to facilitate training, technical assistance, and grant opportunities.
5. **Community Engagement:** Promote “shop local” campaigns and highlight local business successes through Village communication channels.
6. **Economic Diversification:** Encourage growth in emerging sectors—such as agritourism, renewable energy, and entrepreneurship—that align with Village character and assets.

The Village also recognizes the community’s strong desire for a local grocery store or food market, as reflected in public survey responses. To address this need, the Village will prioritize the recruitment of small-scale grocers, cooperatives, or mobile food vendors that can provide fresh and affordable food options. Partnerships with regional food access organizations and targeted incentives for food-based entrepreneurs will be explored to fill this critical service gap.

Implementation:

The following steps outline how the Village can translate these strategies into measurable outcomes:

1. Consider creating a Village committee or designated coordinator to oversee business support initiatives.
2. Conduct regular outreach and surveys to assess business needs and emerging challenges.
3. Pursue State, Federal, and regional funding to support economic development and infrastructure improvements.
4. Periodically review and update policies to adapt to evolving economic conditions.

Additional Focus Areas:

The Village also recognizes the importance of the following strategic focus areas to strengthen long-term economic resilience:

1. Targeted business attraction and retention strategies.
2. Strategic promotion of tourism, agriculture, and local industry.
3. Workforce development opportunities to build local skills and employment capacity.

VII. Transportation

Existing Conditions

Port Leyden is served by a network of local and county roads that connect residents to nearby communities and major regional corridors. Primary modes of transportation include private vehicles, walking, and limited bicycling. In recent years, Lewis County has developed a Comprehensive Complete Streets Plan for the Main Street corridor within Port Leyden to improve safety, accessibility, and multi-modal mobility. The County is currently exploring funding mechanisms to implement the plan, which may include roadway improvements, sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle facilities. This initiative provides an important framework for future transportation enhancements within the Village.

Survey Findings

Based on the community survey responses, several trends and concerns emerged regarding transportation in Port Leyden:

- **Automobile Dependence:** Most residents rely on personal vehicles for commuting, errands, and access to services.
- **Road Conditions:** Residents expressed concerns about potholes, insufficient street lighting, and limited road maintenance in certain areas.
- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure:** Many respondents noted the lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, and safe bicycle lanes, particularly near schools and community facilities.
- **Public Transit:** There is very limited access to public transportation, which is a challenge for seniors, youth, and residents without personal vehicles.
- **Traffic Safety:** Some intersections and roadway segments were identified as hazardous due to vehicle speeds, limited visibility, and pedestrian conflicts.
- **Off-Road Vehicle Management:** Residents expressed significant concern about the unsafe and disruptive use of ATVs, dirt bikes, and UTVs within Village limits. In response, the Village may consider exploring developing a local ordinance, in coordination with County and State enforcement agencies, to regulate off-road vehicle use. This may include designated routes, signage, speed restrictions, and increased coordination with law enforcement to ensure public safety and protect the neighborhood's quality of life.

Goals and Policies: To improve safety, accessibility, and connectivity, the Village will advance the following transportation goals:

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1. **Enhance Road Safety and Maintenance:** Ensure regular maintenance of Village roads while incorporating principles from the county's Complete Streets Plan, where applicable.
2. **Promote Pedestrian and Bicycle Accessibility:** Collaborate with the County to implement the Complete Streets Plan, creating safe sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle lanes along Main Street and other priority corridors.
3. **Support Alternative Transportation Options:** Explore opportunities to leverage County and external funding programs to improve multi-modal access, particularly for seniors, youth, and residents without personal vehicles.
4. **Encourage Multi-Modal Transportation Planning:** Integrate Complete Streets principles into Village land use and development decisions to promote safe and efficient mobility for all users.
5. **Off-Road Vehicle Management:** Explore the development of enforceable local regulations, in cooperation with appropriate jurisdictional authorities, and consider designated and mapped routes for UTV travel where appropriate.

Recommendations

To translate these policies into measurable outcomes, the Village will pursue the following actions:

1. Conduct a comprehensive road and sidewalk inventory to prioritize maintenance and capital improvements.
2. Implement traffic-calming measures in residential areas to reduce speeds and improve pedestrian safety.
3. Pursue funding through state and federal grants for sidewalk improvements, bike paths, and ADA-compliant crossings.
4. Explore opportunities for community shuttle services or ride-share programs, especially for seniors and residents with limited mobility.
5. Include transportation impact considerations in future development approvals to prevent congestion and safety concerns.

VIII. Community Facilities and Services

Public Safety (Police, Fire, EMS)

Port Leyden relies on a combination of local and regional public safety providers to protect residents' health and safety. Law enforcement services are primarily provided by the Lewis County Sheriff's Office, which patrols the Village and responds to emergencies. New York State Troopers patrol NYS Route 12, which bisects the Village. Volunteer fire protection is offered by the Port Leyden Fire Department, which provides fire suppression, rescue, and limited emergency response services. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are coordinated through local volunteer squads and regional providers, ensuring prompt response times in medical emergencies.

Survey results indicate that residents are generally satisfied with public safety services but expressed concerns regarding response times, staffing levels, and equipment, particularly for the fire department.

This partnership is integral as the fire department operated independently of the Village government; however, the fire station is located on Village property. Changes in leadership have occasionally created governance and coordination challenges.

Recommendation actions include:

1. Continue supporting volunteer fire and EMS services through funding, training, and recruitment programs.
2. Explore opportunities for enhanced coordination with County and regional emergency service providers to improve response efficiency and resource sharing.

Educational Facilities

Port Leyden formerly hosted one of the South Lewis Central School District's elementary schools; however, all educational services are now centralized in Turin. The former Port Leyden School is now a multi-use facility providing housing, with plans for additional short-term lodging and a restaurant. Survey feedback indicates strong community support for the school district, highlighting its role in fostering community identity and engagement.

Youth Engagement and Programming

Survey feedback emphasized the need for expanded structured activities and recreational opportunities for children and teens.

Recommended actions include:

1. Support initiatives that maintain or enhance educational quality and accessibility.

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2. Encourage partnerships between the Village and the school district to expand recreational, cultural, and educational programming for residents of all ages.
3. Consider the integration of school facilities into broader Village planning efforts, such as walking and biking routes for safe student access.
4. Partner with schools and community organizations to develop after-school programs, summer camps, and youth-led beautification or history projects.
5. Enhancing park facilities and creating safe, inclusive spaces for youth will be a priority in future recreation planning efforts.

Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources

Port Leyden offers a range of parks, recreational facilities, and cultural resources that provide residents with opportunities for leisure, social engagement, and physical activity. Village parks include open green spaces, playgrounds, and athletic fields. Cultural assets include historic sites, community centers, and annual events that celebrate and preserve the Village's heritage.

Survey responses highlighted the community's desire for enhanced recreational amenities, improved maintenance of existing parks, and expanded cultural programming—particularly for youth and seniors.

Recommended actions include:

1. Maintain and enhance existing park facilities, prioritizing accessibility, routine maintenance, and safety.
2. Develop additional recreational amenities—such as walking trails, picnic areas, and athletic facilities—in coordination with community input.
 - The Village should pursue local (Naturally Lewis, Iroquois Pipeline, Public Health) and State funding through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) to support proposed enhancements, expansions, and new recreational areas.
3. Support cultural programming and events that celebrate local history, traditions, and arts, thereby strengthening community engagement and identity.
 - The Village should coordinate with the Village Historian for expertise and assistance in pursuing related opportunities and funding sources, using other established partners for letters of support to demonstrate communication, cooperation, and local involvement.
4. The Village Board should pursue ownership of the former Fabric Store parcel, as the Village has been maintaining this property.
 - Redevelopment of this site could support the creation of a multi-purpose gathering space (e.g., bandstand, amphitheater, gateway welcome monument) designed to draw people into the Village and off the State Road.

Utilities and Municipal Services

Port Leyden is served by a combination of public and private utilities, including water, sewer, electricity, and broadband services. Village-operated services ensure that residents have reliable access to potable water, wastewater treatment, and essential municipal functions. Survey responses identified areas for improvement, particularly regarding water infrastructure maintenance and expansion of high-speed internet access.

Recommended actions include:

1. Continue routine maintenance and capital upgrades to water, sewer, and other municipal infrastructure to ensure long-term reliability and regulatory compliance.
2. Explore opportunities to expand broadband access and improve digital connectivity for residents, supporting education, business, and telecommuting.
3. Regularly evaluate municipal service delivery to enhance operational efficiency, sustainability, and responsiveness to community needs.

Natural Gas as a Primary Energy Strategy

The Village of Port Leyden recognizes natural gas as a practical and cost-effective energy source for residents and businesses. While renewable energy technologies offer long-term sustainability, their production and lifecycle impacts are not fully carbon neutral. Given these considerations, the Village may prioritize natural gas expansion as a reliable, affordable option that supports economic stability and energy security.

- **Energy Reliability and Affordability:** Natural gas provides consistent heating and operational efficiency for homes and businesses.
- **Environmental Perspective:** While natural gas is a fossil fuel, its emissions profile is generally lower than that of other traditional fuels, and its infrastructure can serve as a transitional energy source.
- **Balanced Approach:** Renewable energy will remain part of the Village's energy strategy; however, natural gas infrastructure will be prioritized for near-term planning.
- **Community Engagement:** Energy-related decisions will involve public input and coordination with State agencies to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

The Village will evaluate natural gas expansion only if it complements the community character and is feasible for residents.

IX. Natural Resources and Environment

The Village of Port Leyden has a rich history of industrial and canal-related development. While much of the industrial activity has ceased, its legacy remains evident in the Village's built environment, cultural heritage, and historical features. Port Leyden played a key role in the Erie Canal system and contributed to the regional iron production industry, both of which continue to shape the character and identity of the community.

Identification of Key Natural Features

1. **Map II in Section XII** – Appendices of this Comprehensive Plan highlights the Village's key natural features, including the Black River, wetlands, and areas of steep slope. **Map I** indicates that many parcels along the Black River are classified as Public Services, with a few designated as residential and several larger parcels identified as vacant.
2. These larger vacant parcels may present opportunities for the Village to establish planned development areas, if infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints are carefully evaluated. Any future development in these areas should prioritize compatibility with natural features, minimize ecological disturbance, and, where appropriate, enhance public access to open space.

Environmental Constraints and Protection Areas

To safeguard sensitive natural resources, the Village may consider adopting an overlay district or similar zoning mechanism to identify and protect constrained areas, as shown on the Development Constraints Map. This overlay would guide development away from wetlands, steep slopes, flood-prone areas, and other environmentally sensitive lands, ensuring long-term resource protection while supporting sustainable growth.

Strategies for Conservation and Sustainable Use

The Village of Port Leyden encourages conservation and responsible stewardship of natural resources through the following strategies:

1. **Protect Water Resources:** Maintain the quality and natural flow of the Black River and associated wetlands through careful land use planning, riparian buffers, and effective stormwater management.

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2. **Preserve Sensitive Lands:** Limit development on steep slopes, flood-prone areas, and ecologically significant sites.
3. **Promote Green Infrastructure:** Encourage the integration of green space, parks, trails, and low-impact development practices that enhance ecological health and expand recreational opportunities.
4. **Encourage Responsible Development:** Guide to new development and redevelopment to minimize environmental impacts, promote energy efficiency, and support the Village's long-term resilience.
5. **Foster Community Engagement:** Educate residents and developers about the importance of natural resource protection and involve the community in conservation initiatives.

By prioritizing conservation and thoughtful land use planning, Port Leyden can protect its natural resources while maintaining its unique character and supporting sustainable, long-term growth.

Stormwater and Floodplain Management

Port Leyden's proximity to the Black River and other water resources requires careful management of stormwater and flood risks to protect property, infrastructure, public safety, and water quality.

To effectively manage stormwater and flood risks, the Village will consider the following priorities:

1. Identify flood-prone areas and assess the capacity and condition of existing drainage infrastructure.
2. Ensure compliance with federal, state, and county floodplain regulations, including National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards.
3. Promote Low Impact Development (LID) practices and other best management practices (BMPs) to reduce runoff and improve water quality.
4. Maintain and upgrade stormwater infrastructure while preserving natural floodplain functions.
5. Preserve wetlands and riparian buffers to enhance flood storage and ecological resilience.
6. Educate the community on flood risks, mitigation measures, and preparedness.
7. Collaborate with County and State agencies to support comprehensive flood management efforts.

Accordingly, the Village establishes the following stormwater and flood resilience goals:

1. Reduce flood-related property damage and public safety risks.
2. Improve stormwater management and water quality outcomes.
3. Protect and restore natural floodplain functions.
4. Enhance long-term community resilience to flooding.

X. Renewable Energy

Current Renewable Energy Status in Port Leyden

To date, the Village of Port Leyden has not adopted specific regulations governing renewable energy systems, including solar, wind, and battery energy storage systems.

Natural Gas and Renewable Energy Integration

The Village acknowledges that renewable energy technologies—such as solar panels and battery storage systems—require resource-intensive manufacturing processes that are not entirely “green.” Therefore, Port Leyden may pursue a pragmatic approach: prioritizing natural gas expansion to meet immediate energy needs while continuing to explore renewable options that minimize environmental trade-offs.

Renewable Energy Potential Assessment (Solar, Wind, & Hydro)

Solar Energy Potential

Port Leyden is situated in Lewis County, which has been proactive in promoting solar energy development. The County's Planning and Community Development Department has been working to ensure that solar resources are readily available and that projects align with community goals.

Local Considerations: The Village's rural setting offers ample opportunities for solar installations, particularly on residential and commercial rooftops. Community solar projects could also be a viable option, allowing multiple users to benefit from a shared array.

Recommended actions could include:

1. Encourage rooftop solar installations through streamlined permitting and clear zoning guidance.
2. Explore the feasibility of community solar to improve access for residents and businesses.
3. Integrate solar considerations into future zoning and land-use updates.

Wind Energy Potential

Lewis County hosts utility-scale wind energy facilities; however, localized wind conditions and topography within Port Leyden may limit large-scale feasibility.

Local Considerations: The Village's location and landscape may not be ideal for large-scale wind turbines. However, small-scale, residential wind energy systems could be considered for individual properties where site conditions are appropriate.

Recommended actions include:

1. Conduct site-specific wind resource assessments for small-scale wind installations.
2. Consider integrating wind energy into the Village's renewable energy portfolio where feasible.
3. Ensure that any wind energy projects comply with zoning and aesthetic considerations.

Hydropower Potential

Lewis County benefits from significant regional hydroelectric generation resources.

Local Considerations: Port Leyden's access to water bodies may offer opportunities for small-scale hydroelectric projects, such as micro-hydro systems, particularly if there is existing water infrastructure or suitable elevation changes.

Recommended actions include:

1. Investigate the feasibility of micro-hydroelectric systems where appropriate.
2. Collaborate with regional utilities to explore potential partnerships.
3. Ensure that any hydroelectric projects adhere to environmental regulations and preserve local ecosystems.

Port Leyden has the potential to integrate renewable energy in a manner consistent with its scale and character. Solar energy appears to be the most viable option, particularly for rooftop and community-based projects. Small-scale hydro facilities may warrant further evaluation. By strategically planning and leveraging regional resources, the Village can enhance its sustainability and energy resilience.

Suitable Locations and Site Identification for Small-Scale Renewable Energy Installations

1. Rooftop solar and discreetly sited renewable energy systems will provide the most appropriate option within the Village, subject to setback and safety requirements.

2. The Village may consider investing in solar for its municipal buildings and larger structures. Should that prove to be a lucrative endeavor, consider consulting with neighboring municipalities, such as the Town of Denmark, which may offer additional insight.

Considerations on the Siting of Commercial Renewable Energy Facilities

While renewable energy development offers significant environmental and economic benefits, the siting of large commercial-scale renewable energy facilities within Village boundaries can have notable impacts on community character and aesthetics, including:

1. **Visual Impact:** Large installations may dominate the Village landscape, altering scenic views, historic settings, and the overall visual character that residents value.
2. **Compatibility with Village Scale:** Utility-scale facilities may be disproportionate to the Village's small-scale development pattern.
3. **Property Values and Neighborhood Character:** Nearby residents may express concerns regarding property values and neighborhood identity, especially if renewable facilities conflict with established land uses or create perceived nuisances.
4. **Environmental and Noise Considerations:** Large installations may affect wildlife habitat, generate noise (particularly from wind turbines and battery systems), and raise concerns about glare and light pollution.
5. **Infrastructure and Traffic:** Construction and maintenance of commercial renewable facilities can increase traffic, wear on local roads, and demand on utilities, requiring careful planning and mitigation.
6. **Community Engagement and Equity:** Without meaningful community input and equitable benefit-sharing, commercial projects risk creating tension or opposition, particularly if residents feel excluded from decision-making processes and/or benefits.
7. **Policy Implication:** Given these concerns, the Village of Port Leyden may adopt careful siting standards and design guidelines for commercial renewable energy facilities to balance clean energy goals with preservation of community character, visual quality, and overall quality of life. This includes:
 - a) Limiting such facilities within core residential and historic areas.
 - b) Encouraging placement on less visible or previously disturbed sites.
 - c) Requiring buffering, screening, and appropriate site design measures.
 - d) Prioritizing community-scale and rooftop renewable energy projects as preferred alternatives.

Brownfield sites may be an appropriate location for renewable energy installations; however, the Village of Port Leyden currently has no identified brownfield properties.

Renewable Energy Design Standards

To ensure that renewable energy development is compatible with Village character, public safety, and environmental considerations, the Village may establish design and siting standards for small- and community-scale renewable energy systems. The following guidelines can be implemented into zoning regulations to balance clean energy objectives with neighborhood aesthetics, emergency response needs, and overall community well-being.

A. Rooftop Solar

1. Flush-mount panels are preferred to maintain neighborhood aesthetics.
2. Minimum 3-foot clearance from roof edges for firefighter access.
3. Glare mitigation required for installations near public rights-of-way.

B. Community Solar

1. Encouraged on previously disturbed or non-residential sites.
2. Screening and buffering are required to minimize visual and noise impact.

C. Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

1. Prohibited within Village limits due to fire and chemical hazards and limited emergency response capacity.
2. Future reconsideration contingent on NYS and NFPA safety standard advancement

XI. Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a structured framework for translating the goals and recommendations of the Port Leyden Comprehensive Plan into actionable initiatives. It establishes priorities, identifies responsible parties, outlines timelines and funding strategies, and ensures ongoing monitoring and evaluation to guide the Village's long-term growth and development.

Prioritized Action Steps Across All Sections

The implementation of the Comprehensive Plan should be phased based on urgency, feasibility, and community impact. Priority actions include:

- 1. Transportation and Complete Streets Improvements** – Partner with Lewis County to implement the Main Street Complete Streets Plan, improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and enhance traffic safety.
- 2. Community Facilities Upgrades** – Support volunteer fire, EMS, and educational facilities with funding, training, and maintenance initiatives.
- 3. Recreational and Cultural Enhancements** – Maintain and expand parks, trails, and cultural programming to strengthen community engagement.
- 4. Utilities and Municipal Services** – Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure to ensure reliable service and support economic development.
- 5. Land Use and Zoning Implementation** – Enforce zoning and development policies, encourage sustainable growth, and preserve the Village's character.

Further implementation steps will be identified through ongoing review and coordination with the Village Board, Planning Board, and community stakeholders.

Responsible Parties and Partnerships

Successful implementation will require collaboration among multiple entities, including:

- 1. Village of Port Leyden Board and/or Planning Board** – Lead planning, review, and policy enforcement.
- 2. Village Departments and Staff** – Coordinate infrastructure projects, maintenance, and municipal services.
- 3. Lewis County Agencies** – Provide technical support, funding guidance, and coordination for transportation and infrastructure initiatives.
- 4. Local Schools, Volunteer Fire and EMS Organizations** – Support community services and facility improvements.
- 5. Community Groups and Residents** – Provide input, participate in volunteer programs, and support cultural and recreational initiatives.

Estimated Timelines and Milestones

Implementation should follow a phased approach:

1. **Short-term (1–3 years):** Begin priority projects such as road maintenance, sidewalk upgrades, public safety improvements, and initial park enhancements.
2. **Medium-term (3–5 years):** Expand recreational, cultural, and utility infrastructure projects; initiate Complete Streets implementation; evaluate progress on educational facility partnerships.
3. **Long-term (5–10 years):** Complete major capital projects, implement remaining transportation and land use strategies, and ensure the sustainability of municipal services.

Milestones will be defined as individual projects that are approved and funded.

Funding Strategies and Potential Sources

A diverse mix of funding mechanisms will be necessary to implement the Comprehensive Plan, including:

1. **Local Funding** – Village budget allocations, municipal bonds, and capital reserve funds.
2. **County and State Grants** – Lewis County programs, New York State grants for transportation, parks, and municipal infrastructure.
3. **Federal Funding** – Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), USDA Rural Development programs, transportation and safety grants.
4. **Public-Private Partnerships** – Collaboration with local businesses and nonprofit organizations to support recreation, cultural, and infrastructure projects.
5. **Volunteer and In-Kind Contributions** – Community support for fire and EMS, park maintenance, and cultural programming.

Plan Monitoring, Evaluation, and Update Procedures

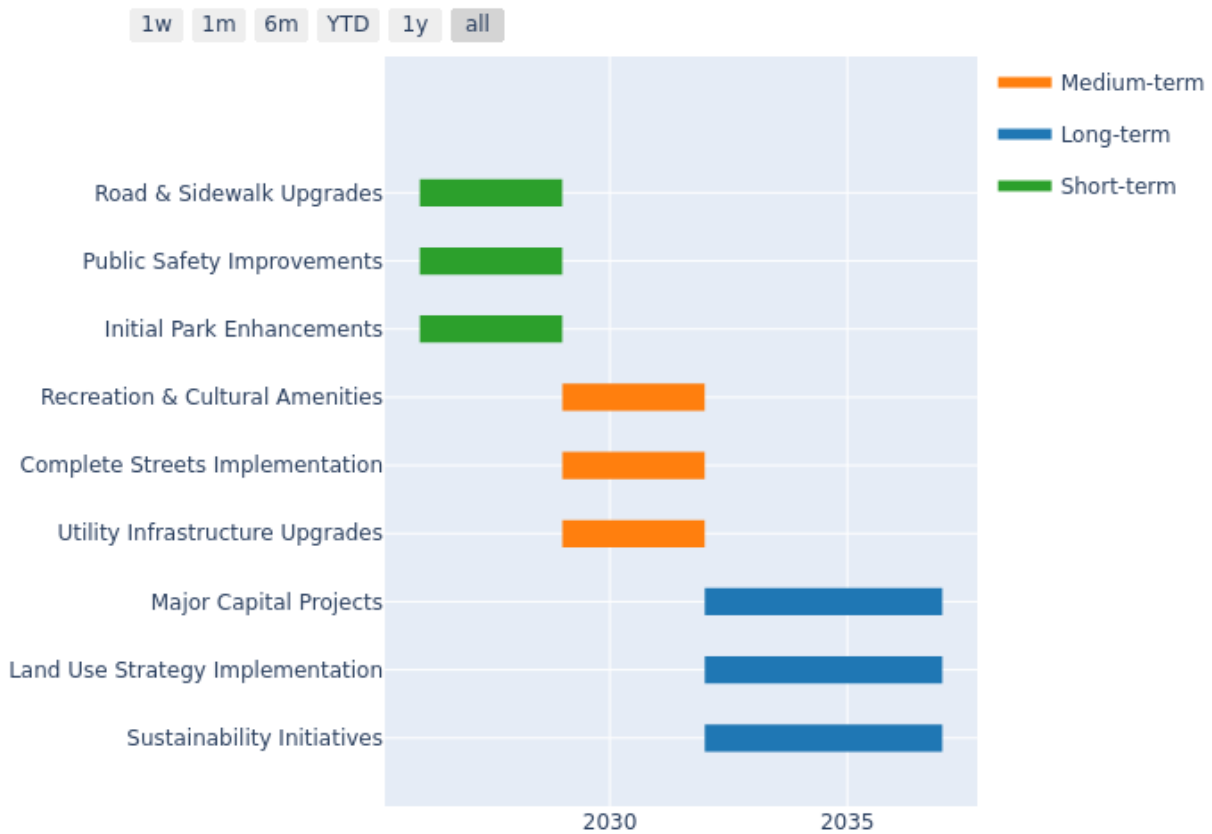
The Comprehensive Plan should be a living document, reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Recommended procedures include:

1. **Annual Review** – Village Board and Planning Board assess progress on action steps and milestones and report findings to the public.
 - a. Given the Village’s limited staffing capacity, progress on the Comprehensive Plan will be tracked through annual updates to the Village Board and shared with the public through meeting minutes, newsletters, or a simple visual summary posted online or at the Village Hall.

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

2. **Performance Metrics** – Track project completion, service improvements, safety outcomes, infrastructure upgrades, and community engagement.
3. **Periodic Updates** – Conduct a full Comprehensive Plan review every 5–10 years, or sooner if significant demographic, economic, or environmental changes occur.
4. **Community Feedback** – Maintain open channels for residents to provide input, ensuring the plan reflects evolving needs and priorities.

Port Leyden Comprehensive Plan Implementation Timeline



Implementation Plan

The following properties represent high-impact, Main Street commercial assets with the potential to serve as catalysts for economic revitalization through adaptive reuse. Their current condition—marked by the loss of historic character, architectural detailing, and overall visual integrity—has contributed to a noticeable decline in community pride and a diminished quality of life for residents. Strategic reinvestment in these structures would not only restore their cultural and architectural significance but also strengthen the community's social and economic fabric.

Organic Commercial Development

The Village of Port Leyden is making waves of exciting progress, fueled by recent redevelopment that has sparked renewed energy and optimism throughout the community. These accomplishments are more than just milestones—they represent a strong foundation for future growth and a clear signal that Port Leyden is open to business. In addition to these successes, the Village has made significant investments in its water and sewer infrastructure, positioning the area for sustainable commercial development and ensuring that future businesses have the resources they need to thrive. These improvements not only support economic expansion but also strengthen long-term resilience and enhance residents' quality of life, creating a community where growth and livability go hand in hand. This positive momentum is creating a ripple effect, attracting interest from entrepreneurs and developers eager to be part of Port Leyden's next chapter of success.

Jon's Auto (formerly Carl's Auto)

After inheriting the property, Jon, the grandson, quickly revitalized the business by removing hundreds of unusable tires and improving the site's curb appeal. He secured funding for the Lewis County Façade and Streetscape Improvement Program, worked with InSite Architecture to redesign the exterior, and invested in internal upgrades, including a vehicle lift. These improvements have breathed new life into the business, which is now thriving and contributing to the area's renewed economic energy.



Before 1 Carls Auto



After Carl's Auto

Former Opera House

After nearly 200 years of varied uses, the historic opera house on West Main Street is being reimagined as a cornerstone of cultural and economic revitalization. Under new ownership, the building is undergoing a substantial transformation that honors its storied past while creating a vibrant future. Plans include a family-friendly Tex-Mex restaurant on the ground floor and a restored stage upstairs for live performances and community events—bringing dining, arts, and entertainment together under one roof. By engaging the public throughout the remodel, the new owners have cultivated a strong fan base and generated excitement that extends beyond the Village. This project is more than a renovation; it's a bold investment in Port Leyden's identity, fostering a sense of permanence and positioning the community as a destination for culture and connection.



Historic photo of the Opera House



Opera House Before



Opera House Cantina Proposed Rendering

Port Leyden Portal (former Elementary School)

Local developers purchased this decommissioned community asset with a vision to transform it into a range of multi-use business endeavors. Thus far, senior market-rate housing has been established at the rear of the property, short-term rentals are being created in the front upstairs, and the front downstairs is currently used as a catering business with plans to establish a dine-in restaurant.

This development also includes plans to expand commercial rental space for shops, offices, and other businesses, creating opportunities for local economic growth. In addition, the project will renovate the existing gymnasium to serve as a community hub for youth and family activities. Proposed uses for the space include:

- Transforming the stage into a movie theater for affordable family nights
- Hosting indoor sports leagues such as soccer, basketball, and volleyball
- Providing space for dance recitals and other community events

The initiative also aims to employ local youth to help manage and operate the facility, fostering job opportunities and community engagement.

Facebook ads demonstrating the interior remodel of the former elementary school.

Infill Development and Strategic Adaptive Reuse

1) The Brickfront-7063 W Main St



The Brickfront historic photo

The Brickfront current conditions

This historic property contains several underutilized and vacant areas that present strong potential for redevelopment into housing or other productive uses. Targeted investments, supported by programs such as the New York Main Street Downtown Stabilization Program or similar initiatives, could enable the reconstruction of the historic porch, the repointing and stabilization of the brick façade, and the remediation of probable lead or asbestos within the structure. Addressing these foundational issues would prepare the building for future adaptive reuse, reduce barriers to private investment, and position the property as a long-term asset within the community’s revitalization strategy.

The Village should pursue strategic partnerships with Lewis County and Naturally Lewis to support the redevelopment of this property. If the current owner is receptive, Naturally Lewis or Lewis County could serve as the applicant or project sponsor for targeted grant funding. This collaborative approach would strengthen the Village’s ability to secure external resources, streamline project coordination, and position the site for successful reinvestment.

2) Hartley's Market- 7090 W Main St



7090 W. Main Historic Photo



7090 W. Main Current Condition

This historic commercial structure, prominently located on the intersection of New York State Route 12 and West Main Street, has experienced significant deterioration but remains a highly visible candidate for reinvestment. The building's second-floor windows are currently boarded, and the original cornice has been obscured by sheets of plywood, masking architectural details that once contributed to the corridor's historic character. An attached addition, constructed with low-grade vinyl siding, has further deteriorated; large sections of siding are missing, exposing the underlying structure and creating a visually disruptive presence along this key travel route.

Despite its current condition, the property retains strong potential for adaptive reuse. Its brick construction, traditional storefront proportions, and strategic location along a major transportation corridor position it as a meaningful opportunity for reinvestment. Stabilization and restoration efforts—such as reopening the upper-story windows, removing the plywood to assess and restore the cornice, and replacing the deteriorated siding with resilient and context-appropriate materials—would significantly improve the building's appearance and contribute to a more cohesive streetscape.

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

To support reinvestment, the Village should pursue collaborative funding strategies like those recommended for other priority properties. Partnerships with Lewis County and Naturally Lewis could help identify and secure external funding for stabilization and remediation. If the property owner is receptive, Naturally Lewis or the County could serve as the applicant or project sponsor for targeted grant programs, positioning the project to access funding for key structural repairs, façade improvements, and environmental remediation. This coordinated approach would reduce financial barriers for the owner, encourage private investment, and advance the Village’s broader revitalization goals.

SCOPE OF WORK:

1. Provide accessible entry to building with a ramp that meets all code requirements, including landings, railings, and maximum slope. Switchback ramp along north side of building. **Estimated: \$38,000 - \$52,000**
2. Replace (7) upper windows at the Main Street facade with aluminum clad wood windows to match the existing historic sill and sash profiles. Windows should be sized to fill existing openings. **Estimated: \$46,000**
3. Repoint and repair masonry as required throughout building exterior. **Allowance: \$8,000**
4. Remove wood siding at cornice and replace with new built-up fiber cement cornice. **Estimated: \$10,500**
5. Repair, scrape and paint existing storefront windows and doors in 3 color scheme shown. Note: All unpainted brick to remain unpainted. **Estimated: \$4,600**
6. New awning with metal roofing and wood brackets at their original locations to provide shelter and shade at storefront. **Estimated: \$24,000**
7. New carved, singled sided signboards mounted to face of railing for two tenants. **Estimated: \$8,000**
8. Provide new stained vertical wood siding on the North side of the building. **Estimated: \$26,000**

FACADE RECOMMENDATION FOR:
 Nicholas Harley | Hartleys Meat Market
 7090 West Main Street
 Port Leyden, NY

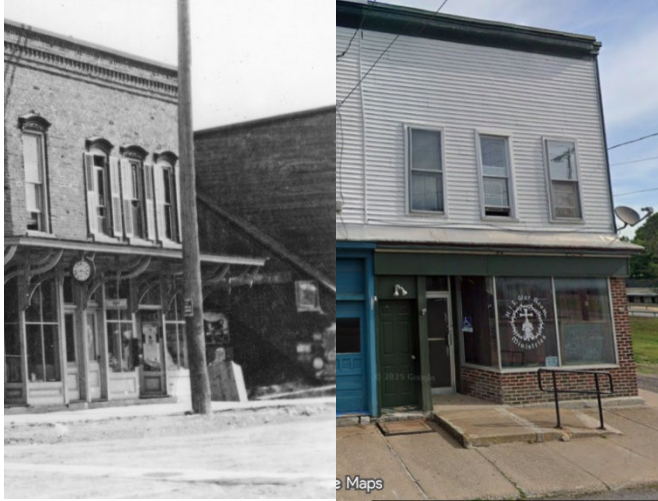
Color palette:
 SW 9125 Almond Roca
 SW 7798 Sierra Redwood
 SW 4210 Brassy

in-site:architecture

*** Estimates provided are preliminary and purely for budget purposes. They were developed and based on assumptions, as the architect did not visit the site and no measurements were taken. These should not be substituted for a local estimate with more accurate labor, material, and equipment pricing from your region.

7090 W. Main rendering provided by In-Site Architecture

3) Former Community Bank- 7087 W Main St



7087 W. Main Historic photo 7087 W. Main Current Photo

This New York State Route 12 commercial property has recently been listed for sale following a series of short-lived commercial tenancies, each of which was unable to sustain operations long term. The building’s physical condition has contributed to these challenges. Code officials have identified potential structural issues, and the historic brick storefront—once a defining architectural feature—has been partially obscured by vinyl siding and undersized vinyl windows installed in the 1990s. These alterations have diminished the building’s historic character and reduced its visibility and appeal along this important commercial corridor.

Despite these concerns, the property retains meaningful redevelopment potential. Its location on a major travel route provides strong visibility, and the building’s internal layout includes a vault, which could serve as a unique asset for specialty retail, secure storage, financial services, or niche commercial uses that benefit from enhanced security features. Restoring the second-floor façade, removing the nonhistorical siding, and addressing structural deficiencies would significantly improve the building’s marketability and help reestablish its role as a contributing property along the New York State Route 12 corridor.

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

To support reinvestment, the Village should pursue a collaborative funding strategy consistent with other priority properties. Partnerships with Lewis County and Naturally Lewis could help identify grant opportunities for structural stabilization, façade restoration, and, if necessary, environmental remediation. If the property owner is willing, Naturally Lewis or Lewis County could serve as the applicant or property owner for targeted funding programs, helping to reduce financial barriers and encourage private investment. This coordinated approach would position the property for productive reuse and advance the Village’s broader goals of strengthening its commercial corridors and enhancing community character.

4) Covey Building-7131 E Main St



7131 E. Main historic photo

7131 Current Photo

This prominently located historic structure, located on the intersection of New York State Route 12 and East Main Street, once featured a traditional commercial façade with large, street-level storefront windows, which contributed to an active and welcoming pedestrian environment. Over time, these defining features have been removed and replaced with sheets of plywood and undersized residential-style windows, significantly diminishing the building’s architectural integrity and its contribution to the character of the Village’s historic core.

The property has remained largely inactive for approximately five years under an out-of-town owner who has expressed interest in converting the building into a steakhouse. Despite this stated intention, no substantive progress has been made toward redevelopment, and the site's limited parking capacity presents a significant barrier to the feasibility of this use. The prolonged lack of investment has resulted in a highly visible gap in the corridor's vibrancy and has contributed to ongoing concerns about potential blight and lost economic opportunity.

The structure, however, retains strong potential for adaptive reuse. Restoring the original storefront proportions, reintroducing transparent glazing at the street level, and removing the temporary plywood coverings would dramatically improve the building's appearance and reestablish its role as a contributing asset within the historic streetscape. Its location makes it a prime candidate for mixed-use redevelopment, small-scale commercial activity, or upper-story housing, depending on market conditions and community needs.

To advance reinvestment, the Village should pursue a collaborative approach consistent with strategies recommended for other priority properties. Partnerships with Lewis County and Naturally Lewis could help identify funding sources for façade restoration, structural stabilization, and, if necessary, environmental remediation. Should the current owner be willing, Naturally Lewis or Lewis County could serve as the applicant or property owner for targeted grant programs, helping to reduce financial barriers and move the property toward productive reuse. This coordinated strategy would support the Village's broader goals of revitalizing its commercial core, enhancing community character, and encouraging additional private investment.

5) Former Central Hotel-7140 E Main St



Historic photo of Central Hotel (PL)

Current photo of Central Hotel (Hunters Haven)

This prominently located historic structure once stood as a proud hotel, featuring a distinctive two-level front porch and architectural details that contributed to the character and vibrancy of the East Main Street corridor. Over time, however, the building has suffered from disinvestment and repeated unsuccessful attempts to repurpose it as a bar or restaurant. These setbacks, combined with prolonged neglect, have led to significant deterioration of its historic character, leaving the property as a visible reminder of missed opportunities near NYS Route 12.

The building has remained largely inactive for several years, and recent code violations for chipping and peeling paint underscore its declining condition. Currently, the owners reside at the property without making substantive progress toward redevelopment, further contributing to concerns about blight and lost economic potential. Despite these challenges, the property retains strong potential for adaptive reuse. Restoring the iconic two-level porch and reintroducing historically appropriate design elements would dramatically enhance its appearance and reestablish its role as a contributing landmark asset along New York State Route 12.

Given its location and scale, the property could be well-suited for lodging or hospitality uses that cater to the region’s booming ATV, snowmobile, and outdoor recreation markets, as well as for mixed-use redevelopment or boutique hospitality. Its proximity to popular trail systems positions it as a prime destination for outdoor enthusiasts seeking accommodation and amenities.

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

To advance reinvestment, a collaborative approach is recommended. Partnerships with Lewis County and Naturally Lewis could help identify funding sources for façade restoration, structural stabilization, and, if necessary, environmental remediation. Should the current owner be willing, these organizations could serve as the applicant or project sponsor for targeted grant programs, helping to reduce financial barriers and move the property toward productive reuse. This coordinated strategy would not only preserve a piece of local history but also support economic revitalization alongside one of the region’s most visible corridors.

Village Opportunities

A) Visiting Center/ Historical Museum

1. **Identify and pursue funding opportunities** to plan and design a Visitor Center and Historical Museum that celebrates the Village’s heritage while supporting future community development.
2. **Identify and secure an appropriate location** for the facility, either through acquisition or partnership with an existing property owner.
3. **Seek additional funding** sources for property acquisition, building rehabilitation, and construction to support the long-term establishment of the museum.

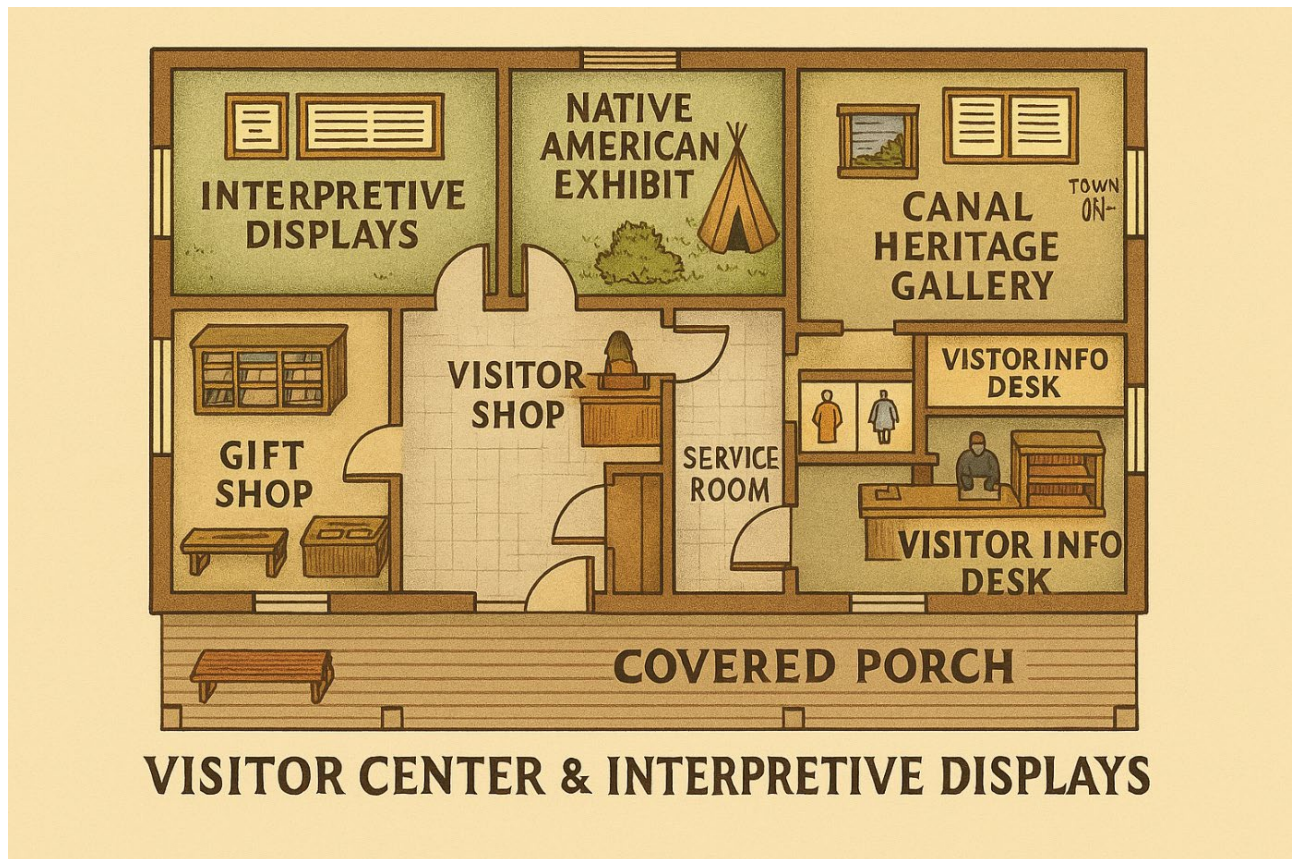
See below a visual illustration of the exterior of the historical museum



Design Features for Visitor Center/Historical Museum

1. Create a historic depot-style architecture design with wood siding, stone foundation, and period-appropriate roof brackets.
2. Include a dedicated gift shop offering local crafts, historical books, a place for photo opportunities, and branded merchandise.
3. Install interpretive signage and exhibits inside and outside the facility, including:
 - a. Native American Heritage Exhibit
 - b. Iron City Exhibit– iron industry history
 - c. Canal Heritage Gallery – canal maps and artifacts
 - d. Railroad Legacy Exhibit– depot and rail timeline
 - e. Town of Leyden Exhibit
 - f. Town of Lyonsdale Exhibit
4. Provide outdoor panels near rail tracks: “From Canal to Rail: How Port Leyden Connected New York.”
5. Consider ADA accessibility, energy efficiency, and integration with trail connections.

See below for a basic layout of potential display areas within the Museum.



B) Trail Development

1. Village Rail Corridor Trail Connection

The Village Board or designated subcommittee should pursue trail development and land-use agreements with the Lewis County IDA and/or Lewis County Parks and Recreation to utilize the existing railroad corridor within the Village. This connection would link Main Street to the rear of the park and Cliff’s Market, reducing pedestrian–vehicle conflicts and improving overall safety. Funding should be pursued for improvements such as:

- a) Installation of solar-powered lighting
- b) Vegetation management, including trimming trees and brush along the corridor
- c) Placement of benches to provide rest areas
- d) Incorporation of historic markers, interpretive signage, and educational elements (e.g., tree identification signage)
- e) Development of a fitness trail along the path



VISITOR CENTER & FITNESSSTOPS

Illustration of a potential foot path with solar lighting, benches, signs, and fitness equipment.

2. Hydroelectric Corridor Trail Opportunities

Additional trail development may be possible through Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensing agreements for the two hydroelectric facilities, which often include recreational requirements that may not yet be fully implemented. The property adjacent to East Main Street is owned by Lyonsdale Hydroelectric Co. Inc., while the lower development accessed from Lincoln Street is owned by Black River Hydro Associates. Potential next steps are:

- a) Verifying public access opportunities by reviewing FERC license requirements and coordinating with the hydro operators to determine whether recreational trails or access points already exist or could be established, along with appropriate signage.
- b) Promoting and marking accessible areas with clear signage, wayfinding, and inclusion on public maps to encourage community use and awareness.

3. Lincoln St/North Street Loop Development

The Village Board or a designated subcommittee should pursue trail development in partnership with Lewis County Department of Forestry, Recreation, and Parks. Given the aging population, the Village should consider creating the trailhead, if permitted, at the end of the dirt road off Lincoln Street, owned by Black River Hydro Associates. Trails could connect the County-owned parcel, the Village-owned parcel (while maintaining an appropriate distance from the Sanitation Plant), and potentially the State-owned parcel across the river. The following could be done:

- a) Proper signage and mapping
- b) Birding opportunities with stationary binoculars, identification sheets, and related materials
- c) An “Almost Heaven” or similar swing overlook (photo opportunity) along the shoreline
- d) ADA-accessible trail development (low maintenance surface, brush clearing, seating areas with chairs and benches for rest, etc.)

4. Park Redevelopment

- a) The Village Board should determine whether State funding and associated benefits would outweigh potential drawbacks for the potential re-establishment of the pool, evaluating residents’ opinions on the matter.
- b) Expand the offerings of the playground area to restore its former capacity, through grant pursuit and installation of the previously purchased equipment that has not yet been installed.

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

- I. The Village may need to hire a playground company to install the equipment according to the manufacturer's specifications for insurance and liability purposes.
- II. Pursuing additional funding to continue improvements to courts, fields, and other shared amenities that help attract visitors and residents.
- III. Consider working directly with food truck vendors and the fire department to host community event nights during the fair-weather months, helping bring the community together and spur economic development, given the park's location along the New York State Route 12 corridor.

Implementation Action Plan

The Implementation Action Plan serves as the primary roadmap for translating the Village's vision and goals into measurable, achievable steps. This table organizes priority actions across all plans: transportation, housing, economic development, community facilities, utilities, and land, using a clear framework that identifies the actions required, responsible parties, anticipated timelines, and potential funding sources.

Intended Use:

- **Guidance for Decision-Makers:** The Village Board, Planning Board, and municipal staff can use this table to prioritize projects, allocate resources, and track progress over time.
- **Grant Applications and Funding:** The detailed breakdown of timelines and responsible parties provides a strong foundation for pursuing state, federal, and private funding opportunities.
- **Community Transparency:** By outlining specific actions and timelines, the table promotes accountability and helps residents understand how the plan will be implemented in the years ahead.

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

Implementation Prioritization Matrix						
Plan Section	Action Steps	Responsible Parties / Partnerships	Timeline	Priority	Estimated Cost Range	Potential Funding Sources
Transportation	Implement the Main Street Complete Streets Plan (sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes)	Village Board, Lewis County, NYSDOT	Medium-term (3–5 yrs)	High	\$500k–\$1.5M	NYSDOT TAP, CFA, NBRC Catalyst
	Improve road maintenance and street lighting	Village DPW, County Highway	Short-term (1–3 yrs)	High	\$50k–\$150k	CHIPS, Village budget
	Develop pedestrian and bike connections to parks and schools	Village Planning Board, School District	Medium-term (3–5 yrs)	Medium	\$100k–\$250k	Safe Routes to School, TAP, CDBG
Housing	Create an inventory of blighted properties	Village Board, Code Officer	Short-term (1–3 yrs)	High	<\$10k	CDBG, NYMS
	Launch Property Improvement Incentive Program	Village Board	Short-term (1–3 yrs)	High	\$10k–\$50k	Village funds, CFA

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

Implementation Prioritization Matrix						
Plan Section	Action Steps	Responsible Parties / Partnerships	Timeline	Priority	Estimated Cost Range	Potential Funding Sources
	Increase housing stock by 10% (ADUs, STR regulation)	Village Board, Planning Board	Long-term (5–10 yrs)	Medium	\$50k–\$200k	CDBG, Restore NY, NYMS
Parks & Recreation	Upgrade playground and courts	Village DPW, Community Groups	Short-term (1–3 yrs)	Medium	\$50k–\$150k	OPRHP EPF, CFA, Pratt Northam
	Develop trail connections (rail corridor, hydro corridor, Lincoln St loop)	Village Board, Lewis County Parks & Rec	Medium-term (3–5 yrs)	High	\$100k–\$500k	NBRC Catalyst, OPRHP EPF, CFA
	Plan Visitor Center / Historical Museum	Village Board, Naturally Lewis, Lewis County	Medium-term (3–5 yrs)	Medium	\$250k–\$750k	USDA RD CF, CFA, NBRC Catalyst
Utilities	Upgrade water & sewer infrastructure	Village DPW, Village Board	Short-term (1–5 yrs)	High	\$1M–\$3M	WIIA, USDA RD, EFC, NBRC Catalyst
	Expand broadband access	Village Board, Lewis County	Medium-term (3–5 yrs)	High	\$50k–\$250k	NYS Broadband Grants, CFA

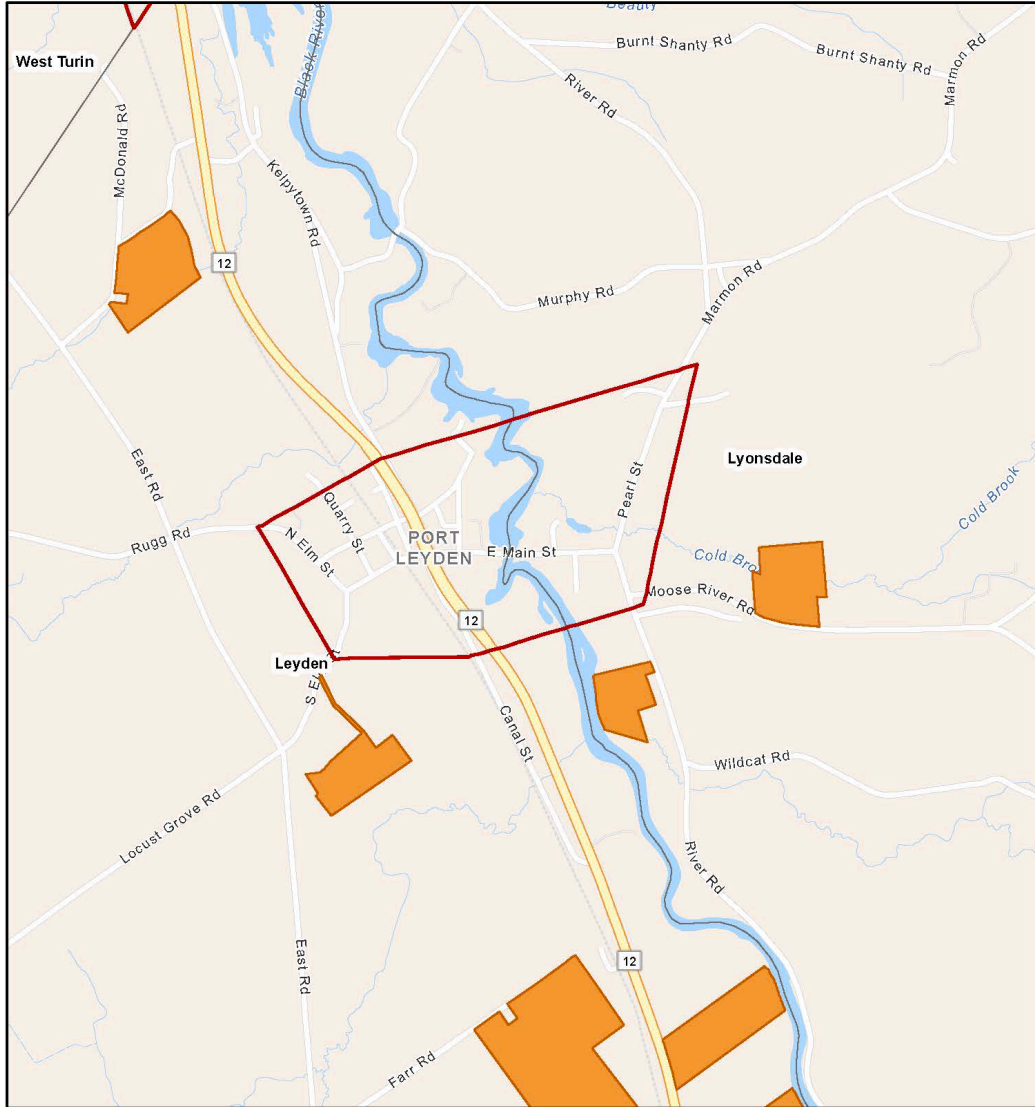
VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

Implementation Prioritization Matrix						
Plan Section	Action Steps	Responsible Parties / Partnerships	Timeline	Priority	Estimated Cost Range	Potential Funding Sources
Economic Development	Façade and Streetscape Improvement Program	Village Board, Naturally Lewis	Short-term (1–3 yrs)	High	\$50k–\$200k	NYMS, Restore NY, CFA
	Recruit grocery/food market and small businesses	Village Board, Economic Development Partners	Ongoing	Medium	\$10k–\$50k	CFA, ESD, USDA RD
Land Use & Zoning	Adopt a comprehensive zoning law with overlay districts	Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer	Short-term (1–3 yrs)	High	\$5k–\$15k	Village funds
	Repeal and replace the ordinance for UTV operation	Village Board, Law Enforcement, LC Forestry Parks and Recreation	Short-term (1–3 yrs)	Medium	<\$5k	Village funds
Overall Implementation	Annual review of plan progress	Village Board, Planning Board	Annually	High	Minimal	Village funds
	Periodic Comprehensive Plan updates	Village Board, Planning Board				

XII. Appendices

Overlay 1- Village of Port Leyden in reference to the Town of Leyden and Town of Lyonsdale Solar Overlay Districts

Village of Port Leyden Solar Overlay

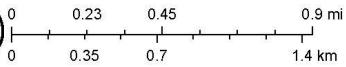


9/15/2025

-  Village Boundary
-  Parcels Most Suitable for Commercial Solar Development
-  Lewis County Boundary
-  Town Boundaries



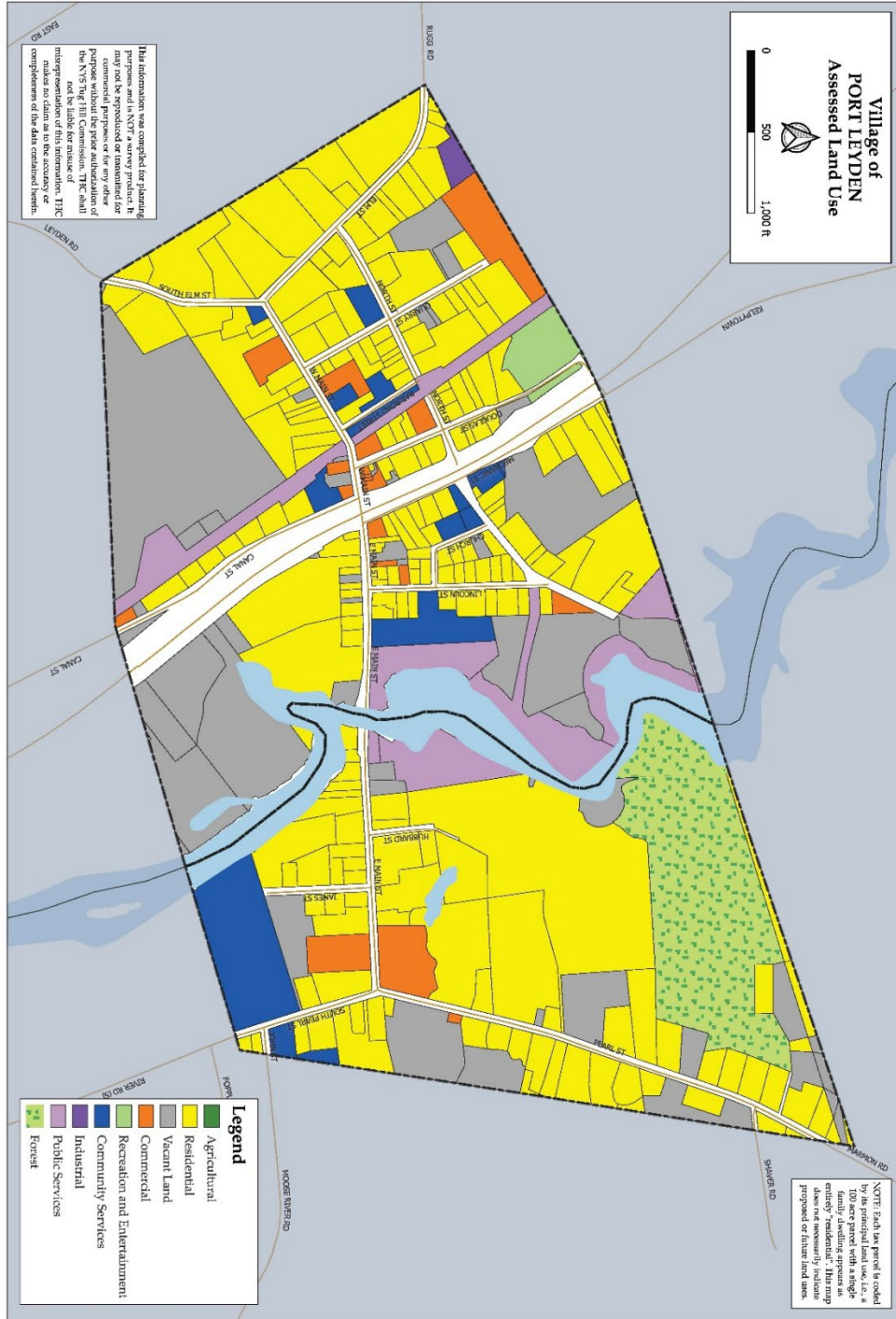
1:36,112



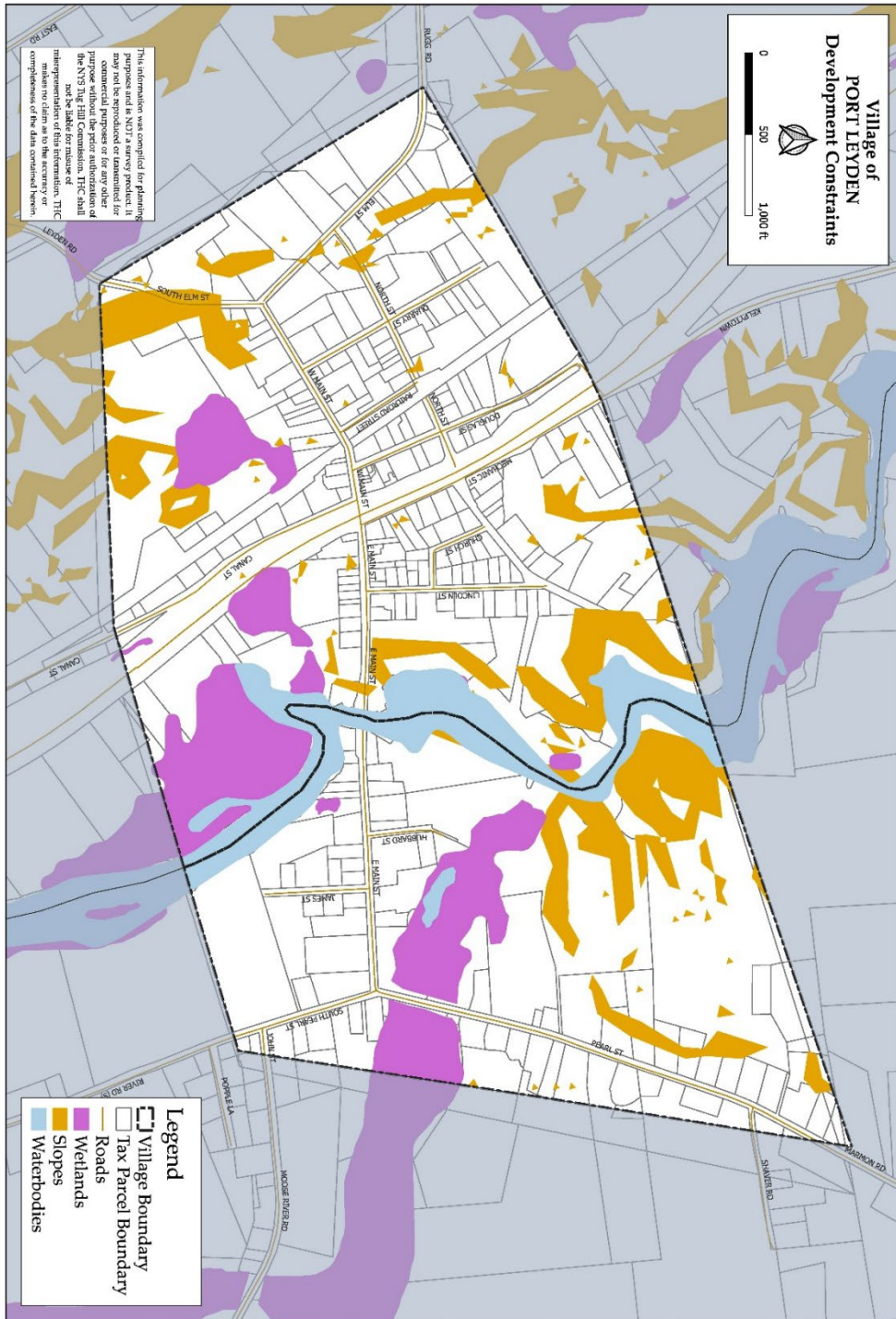
Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

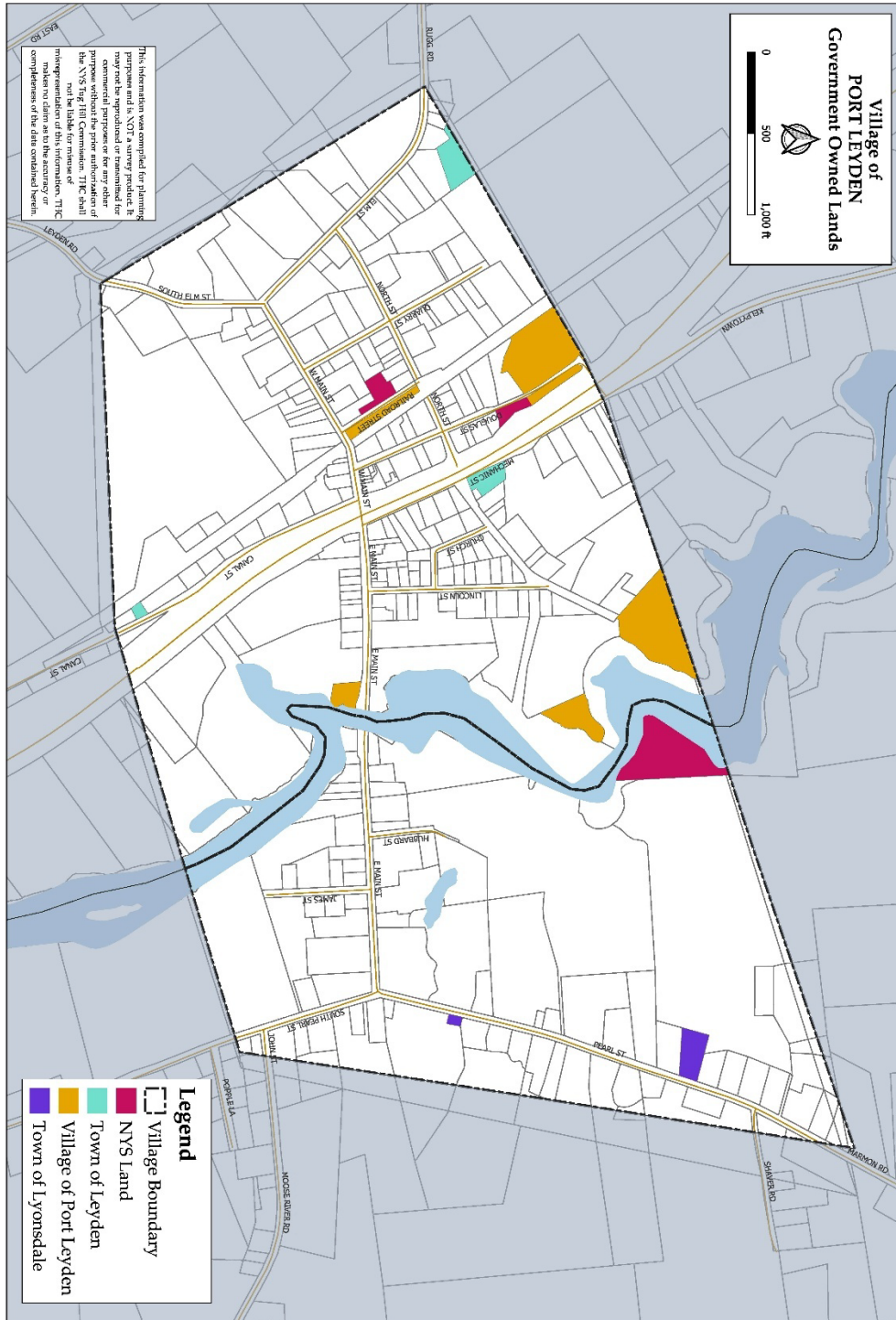
Map I- Assessed Land Use (according to Real Property Records)



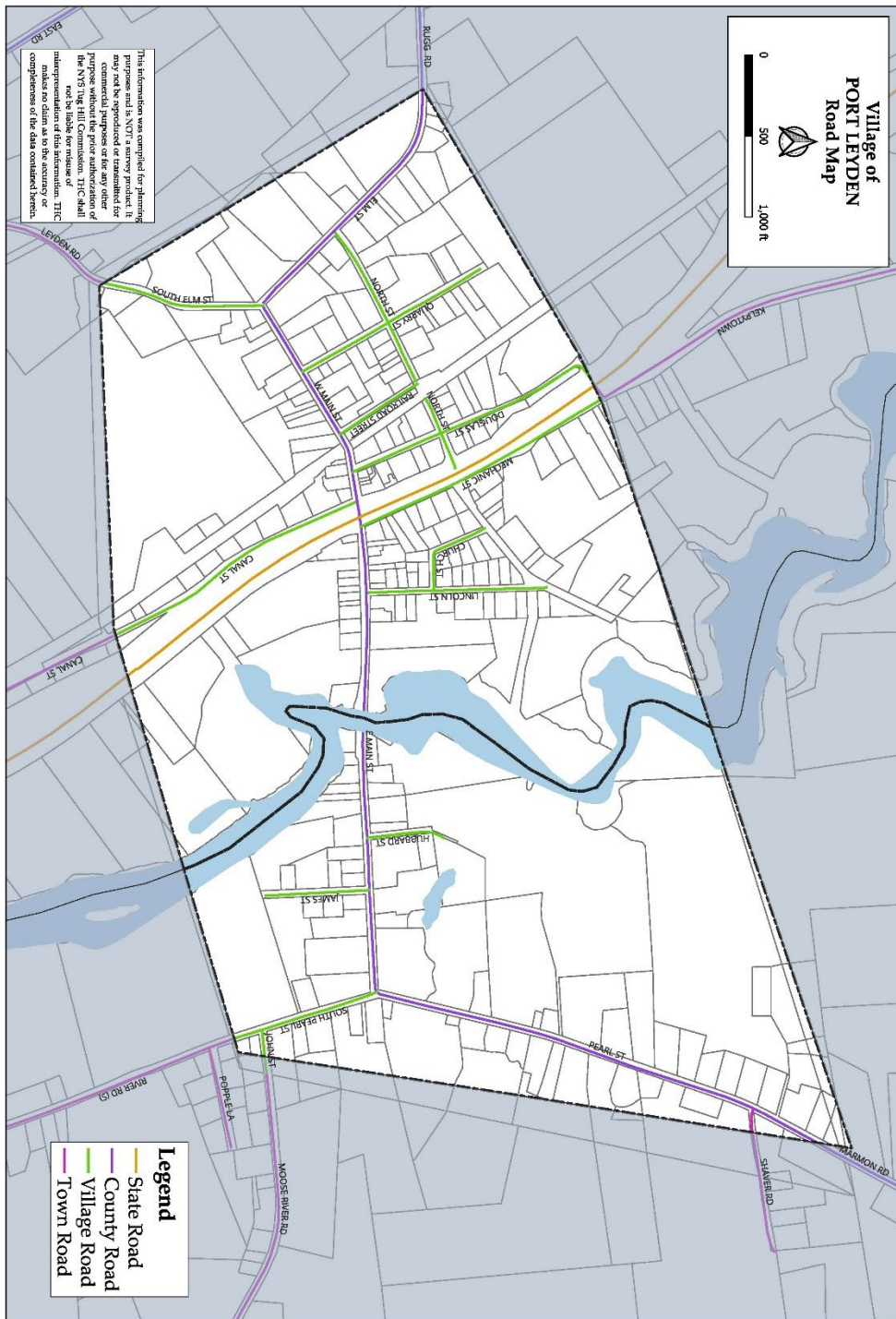
Map II- Development Constraints Map



Map III- Public Land Ownership Map

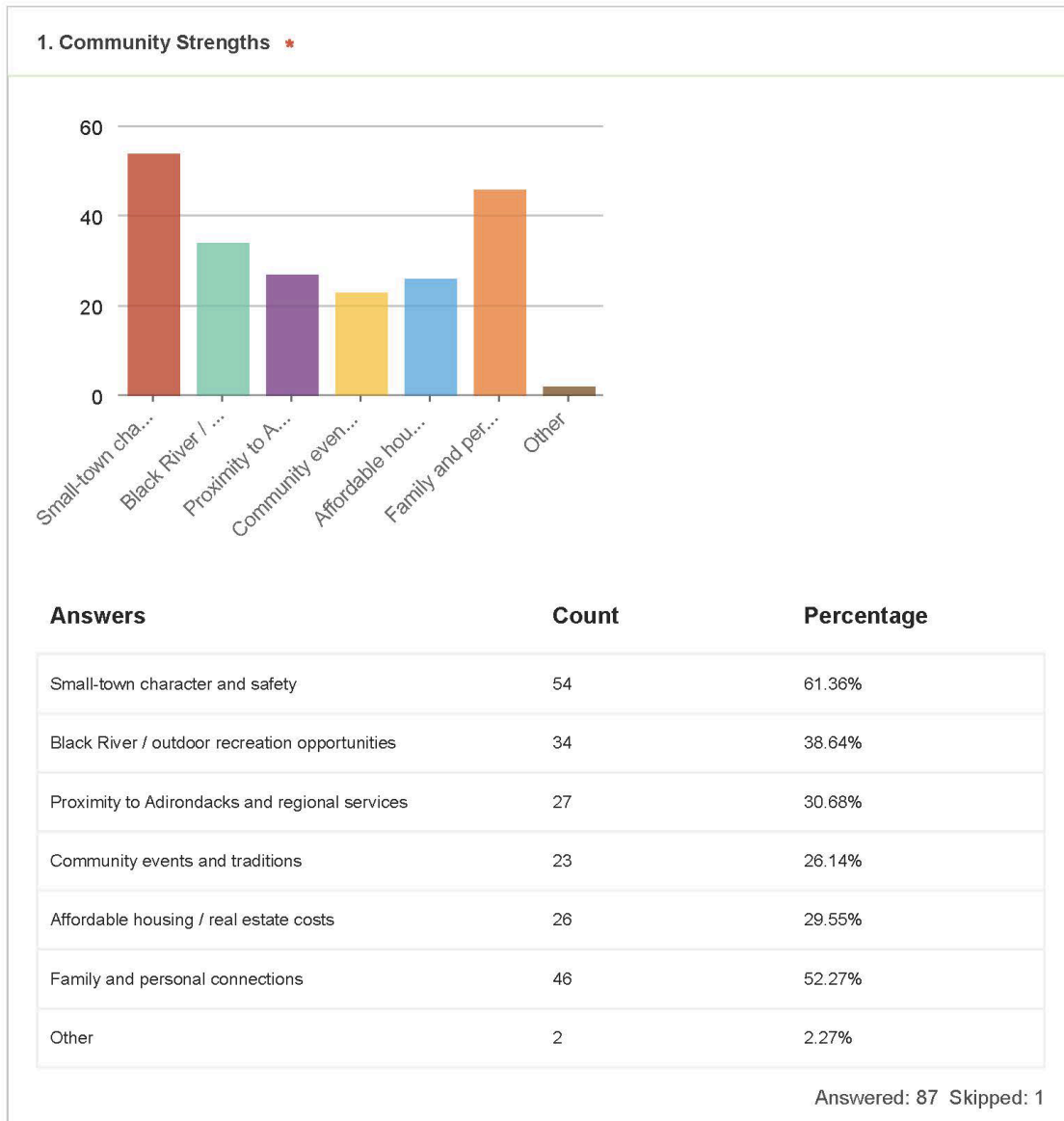


Map IV-Village of Port Leyden Road Map



Community Survey Results.

Village of Port Leyden- Comprehensive Plan Public Survey



Other

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response

Count

need to get county building inspector to pursue property owners to shape up deteriorating property and buildings	1
--	---

	1
--	---

Answered: 1 Skipped: 87

1. If selected other, and you wish to elaborate; please do so here:

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response

Count

Used to enjoy the businesses but have seen decline lately	1
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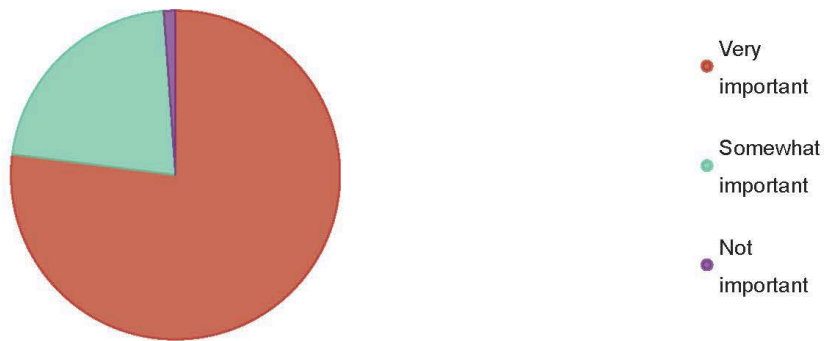
Programs for kids during summer	1
---------------------------------	---

I would like to see more events in or little town and would like to bring softball back to or community and to help or fire department with chicken barbecue when softball tournaments are taking place	1
---	---

Answered: 3 Skipped: 85

2. Community Strengths *

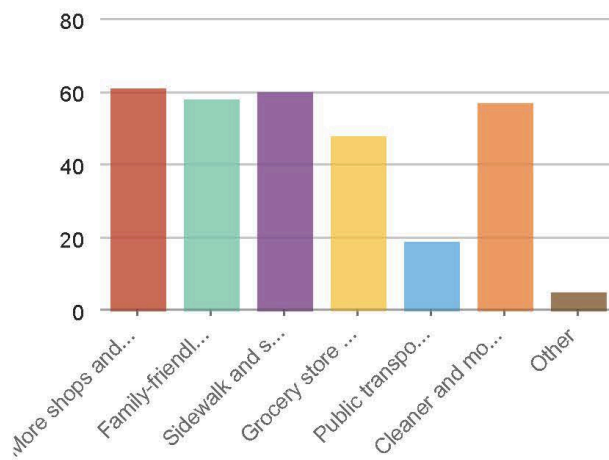
VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)



Answers	Count	Percentage
Very important	67	76.14%
Somewhat important	19	21.59%
Not important	1	1.14%

Answered: 87 Skipped: 1

3. Opportunities for Growth *



VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)



Response	Count
Yes I'm a fan of solar for off grid applications but not a fan of solar for commercial use. I believe water power is better.	1
We need more business	1
Unsafe, and eye sore.	1
Think 3 Mile Island	1
They are an eyesore and six months of the year covered in snow. We have them on our house, half the year they are nearly useless.	1
They are an eye sore, environmental hazard. Port Leyden has enough eye sores.	1
These facilities are NOT appropriate for our rural and agricultural area!! These facilities belong in cities and already developed areas - roof tops, industrial spaces	1
There is too much environmental risk involved with storing batteries. Such as the specific gases vary depending on the battery chemistry but generally include carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, hydrogen, methane, ethane, and other hydrocarbons.	1
There are plenty of other spaces that solar could be done. Also, solar isn't helping anyone or anything. Especially the people in the communities.	1
Takes away from property values and esthetic.	1
Only if residents get low cost power from it	1

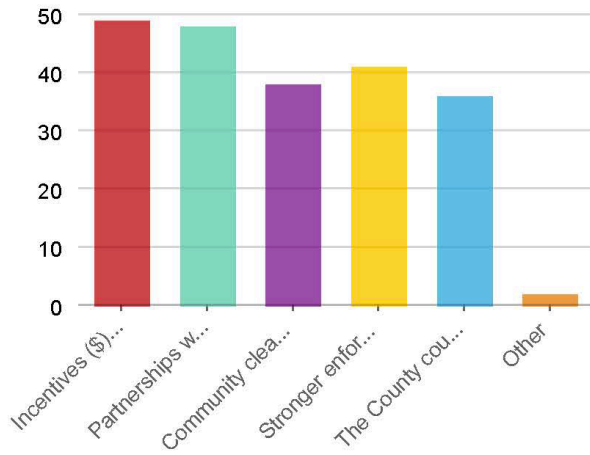
VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

Not enough space.	1
NO NO NO NO NO	1
No more research is needed to be done for the viability for our areas climate and needs, such as weather impact and distance traveled and age of community, science doesn't make sense for our area and individuals to invest in electric viable options	1
Maybe commercial solar but not battery energy storage. It's very dangerous, Raquette Lake was going to be a site for that and the village people said NO, too dangerous	1
It will ruin the town & health of our community.	1
It is not green, energy efficient and it will cause more large trucks and traffic and take over our farmland!	1
It is a family community. I feel that these storage facilities are a waste of valuable space that could be directly utilized by families and the community members.	1
I think it's always good to diversify, I like the idea of solar and battery energy, I just want to make sure we don't lean on it too much, or that other needs are neglected.	1
Because these facilities are known to have problems and there to be fires. That does not belong in a village	1
Battery storage is unsafe and a public healthrisk	1
Absolutely NOT an option for PL! This would make me put my house on the market and move out of the area.	1

Answered: 22 Skipped: 66

7. Aspirations for the Future *

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)



Answers	Count	Percentage
Incentives (\$) for property owners to rehabilitate buildings	49	55.68%
Partnerships with developers to repurpose or reuse abandoned or vacant sites	48	54.55%
Community clean-up or beautification volunteer involvement projects (Port Leyden's Litter and Libations [drinks], Village-wide cleanup day, etc.)	38	43.18%
Stronger enforcement of property maintenance standards	41	46.59%
The County could set up a system to handle vacant or unused buildings to put them back in use	36	40.91%
Other	2	2.27%

Answered: 87 Skipped: 1

Other

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
x	1

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

Along with this should be some kind of standard & violations to excess items in yard: junk yards & hoarders.	1
	1

Answered: 2 Skipped: 86

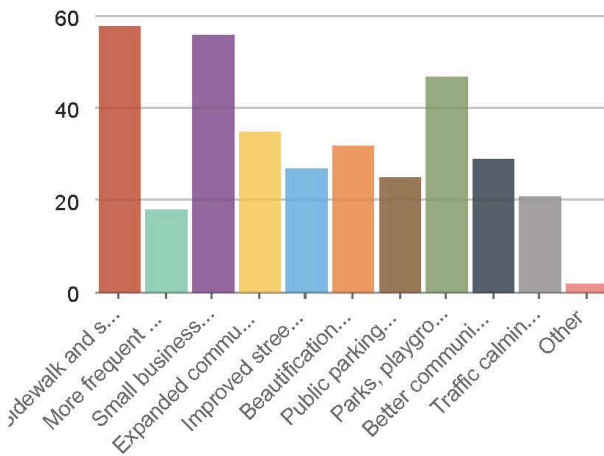
7. If selected other, and you wish to elaborate; please do so here:

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
I would need more information regarding what the impact would be partnering with developers and where money would come from for incentives.	1

Answered: 1 Skipped: 87

8. Results & Accountability *



Answers	Count	Percentage
Sidewalk and street repairs	58	65.91%
More frequent community clean-up days	18	20.45%

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

Small business recruitment (grocery, retail, food)	56	63.64%
Expanded community events	35	39.77%
Improved street lighting and crosswalk safety	27	30.68%
Beautification (flowers, landscaping, tree planting)	32	36.36%
Public parking improvements	25	28.41%
Parks, playgrounds, or recreational upgrades	47	53.41%
Better communication/outreach (website, social media, newsletters)	29	32.95%
Traffic calming / speed control measures	21	23.86%
Other	2	2.27%

Answered: 87 Skipped: 1

Other

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Putting an end to the reckless 4 wheelers/dirt bikes within the village limits	1
A sign near the light where the old building was torn down, with all the local businesses in the town of port Leyden, so passerby's can see opportunities to stop & support small businesses	1
	1

Answered: 2 Skipped: 86

8. If selected other, and you wish to elaborate; please do so here:

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

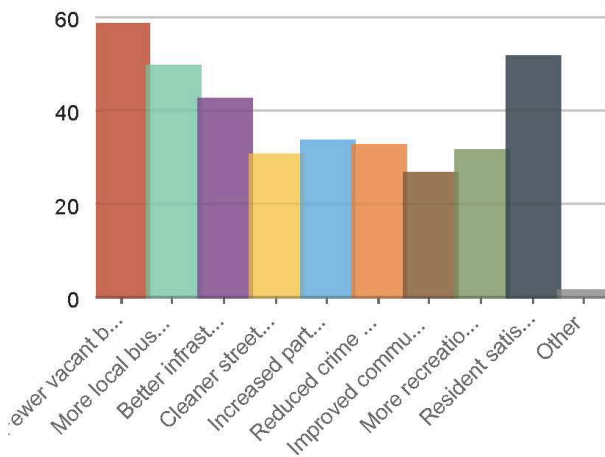
VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

Response	Count
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Stiffer enforcement and penalties need to be implemented to the kids/others that are ruining the quality of life in neighborhoods and public safety with reckless 4 wheelers and dirt bikes	1
More signage welcoming people to Port Leyden, make the town building more attractive (paint the dang roof a single color), larger flagpole for the fire station	1

Answered: 2 Skipped: 86

9. Results & Accountability *



Answers	Count	Percentage
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Fewer vacant buildings and improved storefronts	59	67.05%
More local businesses and jobs	50	56.82%
Better infrastructure (water, sewer, sidewalks)	43	48.86%
Cleaner streets and public spaces	31	35.23%
Increased participation in community events	34	38.64%
Reduced crime rate/ improved public safety	33	37.5%

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

Improved communication and transparency from Village leadership	27	30.68%
More recreational opportunities (parks, trails, riverfront)	32	36.36%
Resident satisfaction and pride in the community	52	59.09%
Other	2	2.27%

Answered: 87 Skipped: 1

Other

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
repeat offenders jail time	1
Getting rid of the reckless 4 wherler/dirt bikes activities within village limits	1
	1

Answered: 2 Skipped: 86

9. If selected other, and you wish to elaborate; please do so here:

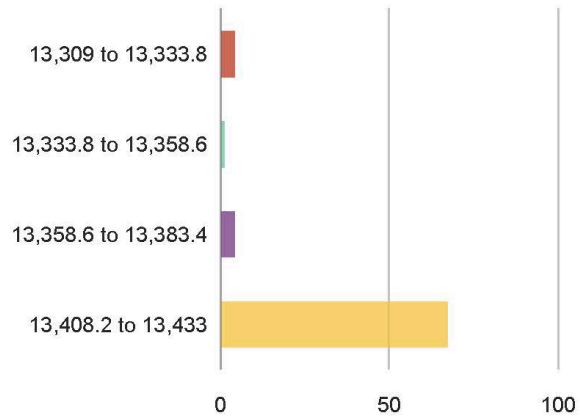
The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Stiffer enforcement and penalties	1
Need to have community work together-- Village, Fire Dept, Aux, Ect.	1

Answered: 2 Skipped: 86

10. Tell Us about Yourself

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)



Stats	Value
Min.	13,309
Max.	13,433
Avg.	13,421.881578947368
Sum.	1,020,063

Answered: 76 Skipped: 12

10. Open Input

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

Over the next 5 years I would appreciate their focus on a park area where people can gather and kids can play.	1
Newsletters giving the public upfront and accurate information about what is going on and what is being planned. Being left in the dark just fuels rumors. Tell it like it is. There is too many people talking with mis-information. It would be nice to have clear, consise information published on a regular basis to minimize the spread of misinformation. Take credit for the hard work being done by the Village and hush the nay sayers.	1
more stores	1
More opportunities for businesses	1
Let's bring Port Leyden back! All the things that we have chosen above.	1
Infrastructure.	1
Improving the park area, change garbages, install the donated playground, create a safe walking path around park.	1
Improved service and facilities	1
I would like to see or park be upgraded for the kids and a walk way around the park and hold more events in or little town	1
I would like the Village Board to focus on repairing and maintaining sidewalks, especially right in the heart of the village (Main Street). I would love if the village could focus on that as well as supporting new businesses that are looking to come to the area.	1
Housing	1
Home owner property clean up!!! Held to a standard	1
Having a place where a family can go to play on a playground, splash pad or pavilion	1
Growing Port Leyden from an abandoned town to an actual community	1
Grants and incentives for affordable housing and landlords ability to improve properties to provide such	1
Getting businesses and things to do in the village	1
Get back to our roots, work together more community activities.	1

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

Fixing the broken roads, sewers, hydrants. Maintaining tax rate, water/sewer. Installed water meters. Putting in purchased playground equipment.	1
Family friendly events/activities and neglected property such as the house across from St. Martin's rectory.	1
Community events	1
Clean up the Main Street and try to boost the economy	1
Clean up business and building forward facing buildings. Create a pride in village life through community engagement through events at park. Village walking trail with historical markers.	1
Clean it up and make it look better	1
Building up the community, supporting small businesses, remodeling store fronts on Main Street, landscaping, new sidewalks everywhere, something new at the park by the firehouse(the pool was so popular when we were kids- it was the place to be!) make a safe place for kids to hang out.	1
Building improvements. Bringing the fire department to 2025 and not having to use old and outdated equipment	1
Building a positive image of the village through infrastructure improvements, retail development, and new social events. The village has potential, the challenge is to rebrand it.	1
Bringing jobs to the area	1
Bring in more sustainable businesses!	1
Bring bring in more kid and family events.	1
Bring back the baseball field kids love to play	1
Better town equipment for the roads	1
basically making everything look better	1
As a mom with a small child improving the safety and security of the town, walking trails better sidewalks safer crosswalks and more well maintained streets would be amazing. More community involvement like when I was a child is what I hope to see. As business owners all of this applies as well.	1

Answered: 44 Skipped: 44

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

11. Open Input

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Would really like to see the restoration and completion of Village pool. Provide swimming instruction for youth to create greater swim and water safety for children.	1
We need to concentrate on infrastructure instead of tourism and utilize funds appropriately. A splash pad is not a wise use of taxpayer funds nor was re-tiling a pool just to fill it in. Our streets are awful especially the railroad crossing.	1
Too much welfare and drugs	1
The removal of the pool was very upsetting. There are so few options for kids to learn how to swim. I think more events like bingo, trivia, and family game nights would be fun.	1
The improvements so far look great! Things are heading in the right direction.	1
Thank you for taking the time to send this out. I hope the feedback is valuable and is put to good use to make the future of Port Leyden great!	1
Recruit more business	1
Please speed up the process of getting the new pavilion built. Having that done will open up a lot of opportunities for the villiage.	1
Make the place behind the old hoages store clean up their yard. Looks horrible. And shouldn't be allowed.	1
Just prioritize cleaning up the abandon houses, junk in peoples yards, make it welcoming to passerby's, new welcome to port Leyden sign with history info on it, sign with all the businesses in port Leyden so people can support small business owners.	1
I'm not sure if this would fall under anything the village can do but the amount of ATVs dirt bikes side by sides that go racing up and down the roads in the village is crazy and they have no regard for others it's really a hazard!	1
I appreciate looking forward, but please fix what is currently broken before reaching for new goals. Thank you.	1

VILLAGE OF PORT LEYDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2026)

i appreciate everything you've done my whole lifr	1
Continued development for improved streets, water and sewer, public recreational spaces, village wide activities. There has been alot of hard work already done in these areas - that is very much appreciated!! Keep up the good work!!	1
Clean up the small towns by focusing on crime reduction	1
Be open, be honest.	1
A sidewalk improvement grant for the entire village. As a resident, I am willing to pay a % for my share of the sidewalk.	1

Answered: 17 Skipped: 71