



**Planning for Success:
Advancing Ulysses toward a Unified Community Vision
Comprehensive Plan – 2025 2045**

*Presentation to Selection Committee
April 18, 2024*

MRB | *group*

 **HIGHLAND** PLANNING

The MRB Group / Highland Team

MRB | group

- Diverse services firm; supporting communities in infrastructure and planning for a century
- Local Government Services Division – a practitioner-based, multi-disciplinary team that supports local government in planning, economic development, and operational challenges
- Longstanding relationship with Ulysses



HIGHLAND PLANNING

- Planning services firm with heavy focus on public engagement
- Developed Instant Input – a social media platform designed to support project-based community engagement

Foundational Planning Approach

- Grounded in actionable data
- Shaped by public engagement
- Anchored to unified community vision
- Relentless focus on implementation



Why We Love Comprehensive Plans



- Represents an infrequent opportunity to move beyond the day-to-day
- Engages the entire community in discussions about what's most important
- Communicates your intention to the market
- Serves as a decision-making tool to drive you toward your vision

Why We Love Ulysses

- Commitment to intentionality and planning
- Meaningfully engages residents and stakeholders
- Environmental stewardship focus
- Unmatched rural setting and quality of life

Ulysses Strengths

- Well-preserved rural landscape
- Destinations like Taughannock Falls, Grassroots Festival, Cayuga Lake, and more
- Proximity to urban amenities
- Professional local government services approach



Ulysses Challenges

- Escalating cost of infrastructure and facilities
- Ensuring management of growth pressure in alignment with community vision
- Protecting the health of Cayuga Lake

Case Study:
Town of Ontario, NY





Alignment with Ulysses Approach

- Diverse set of stakeholders and corresponding engagement challenges
- Community focused on sustainability and smart growth principles in plan development
- Strong planning base on which to build recommendations
- Implementation focus

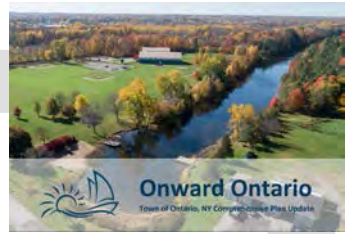


Community Profile

- Largely rural community on the Lake Ontario shoreline
- Tradition and active economy centered on agriculture
- Growth pressure from regional urban centers
- Engaged residents with diverse opinions as to vision

Project Governance

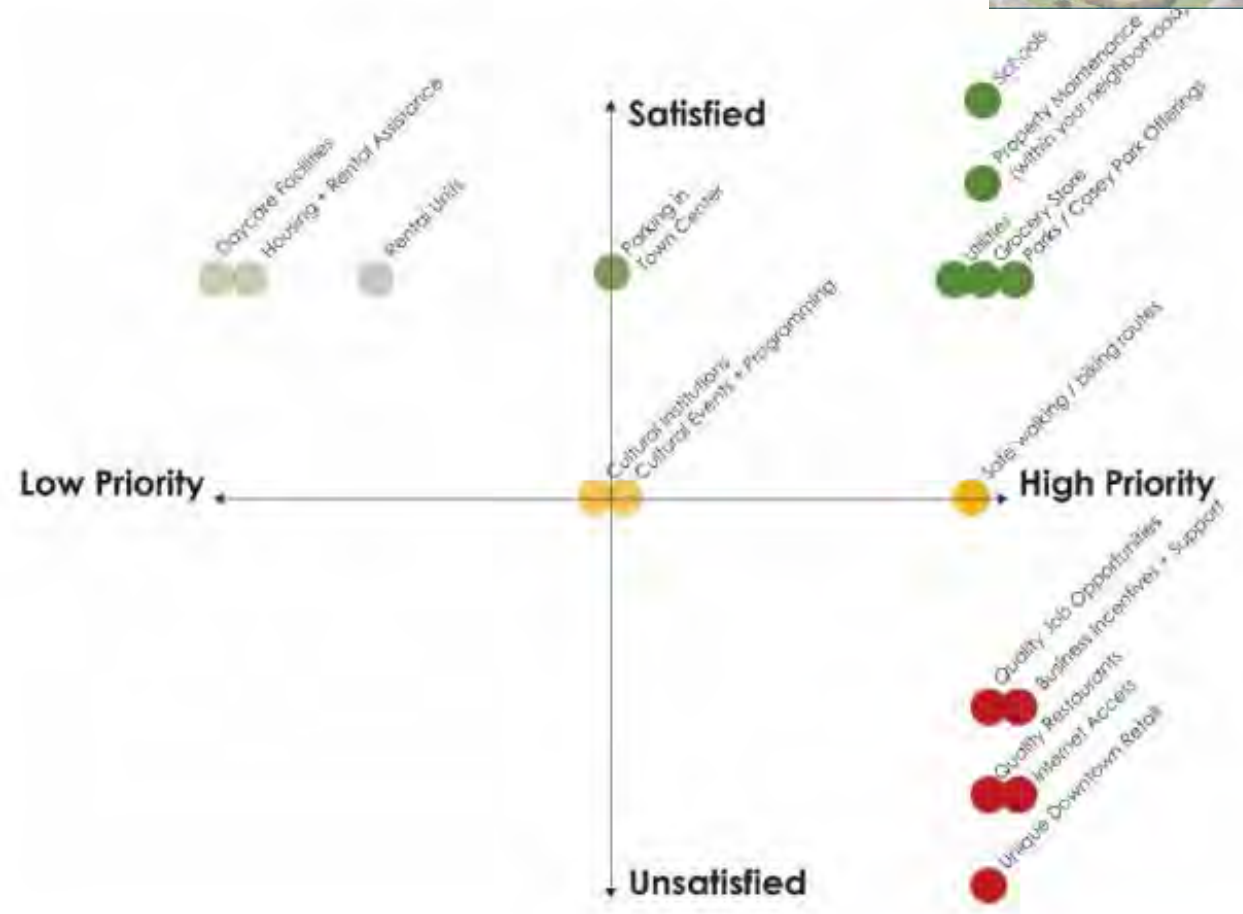
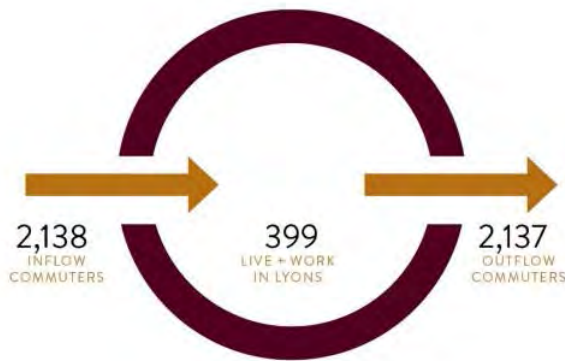
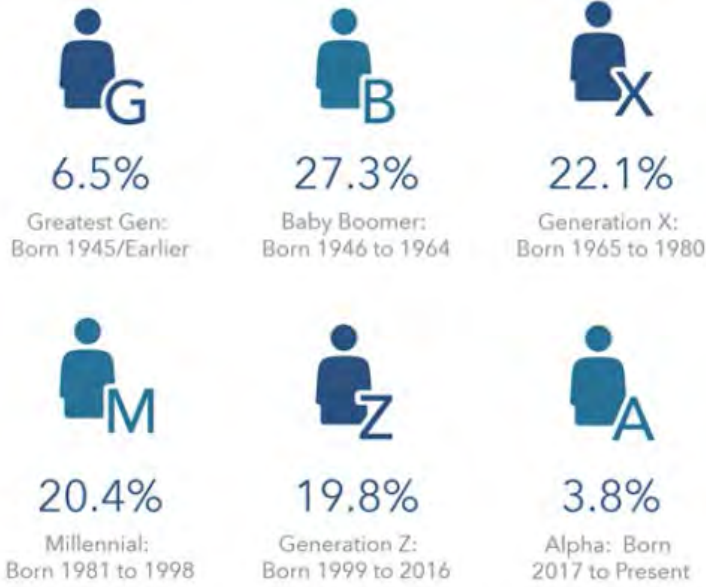
- Managed by a diverse steering committee, drawn from community stakeholders
- Committee designed unique public engagement strategy
- Met monthly to review data and information, and to prioritize planning challenges



Leveraging Data for Mythbusting

- Community leadership and steering committee had pre-conceived notions about current conditions
- Our data team leveraged prior plans and our deep data assets to level-set understanding of the state of the community
- Communicated issues to community to assist in problem solving





Immersion for Qualitative Assessment

- The entire planning team met in Ontario early in the planning process
- Met with elected leaders, County leadership, department heads, local stakeholders, and the general public to learn as much as possible
- Toured the community and key sites to get lay of the land



Tailor-Made Engagement Strategy

- Steering committee identified key engagement targets and tactics
- Focus groups with key community stakeholders
- Larger community forums designed to “roll up your sleeves and plan”

Connecting Vision and Priorities



Plan Foundation

We synthesized your input from the community survey and the March 2021 virtual community dialogues to define collective core values, a community vision and goals for the future of Ontario.

OUR VALUES

Civic Connectivity: Ontario benefits from strong neighbor-to-neighbor connections and a sense of welcome. We will continue to foster civic connectivity through physical, programmatic and digital means and by prioritizing equity and affordability.

Rural Restfulness, Urban Accessibility: Ontario enjoys the best of both worlds as a scenic rural community that has direct access to the bustle of the City of Rochester in under 30 minutes. We will preserve this sense of rural restfulness while leveraging regional connectivity.

Stewardship of Nature: Ontario's streams, wetlands, parks, agricultural lands and Lake Ontario waterfront are invaluable natural assets. We will steward these ecological resources through responsible development decisions and environmental education for the benefit of future generations.

Healthy + Active Living: Ontario's parks, natural assets and location along the Great Lakes Seaway Trail, a National Scenic Byway, support opportunities for active and healthy living--for our children to play, for our seniors to exercise, for our neighbors to walk and bike. We will continue to preserve and enhance opportunities for healthy and active living.

Local Agriculture: Ontario's history is rooted in agriculture - fruit, dairy and grain farms and the canning, freezing and drying operations that supported them. Today our local farms and agribusinesses support livelihoods, provide access to fresh produce, and define the stunning backdrop of our community. We will continue to protect and support Ontario's agricultural industry.

Historic Roots: Ontario's history - rooted in agriculture, iron ore mining, and commerce as a port and rail hub - tells a story about our unique cultural, economic, and geological roots. It also informs our future potential. We will continue to celebrate and learn from Ontario's historic roots.

OUR VISION

Ontario is a family-friendly community supported by an engaging business district, quality schools, dynamic employment opportunities and exceptional municipal services. Ontario's enthusiasm for environmental stewardship balanced with thoughtful growth demonstrates our commitment to a healthy and sustainable future for all generations.

OUR GOALS



Ensure Ontario is a Place to Call Home



Cultivate Local Livelihoods + Thriving Businesses



Harness Route 104



Transform our Streetscapes



Nurture nature



Bolster Civic Connectivity



Moving to Action

- Created five-year implementation strategy designed to “activate the plan”
- Focused on key capital investments, policy changes, continued engagement efforts, and organizational realignment needed to move plan elements forward
- Remained “on-call” to support Supervisor and staff in implementation efforts



Implementation Activity

- Conducted a comprehensive zoning update to align land use allocation with comp plan goals
- Collaborated with County on business park analysis to identify sites for future growth
- Investing in infrastructure enhancements designed to direct growth to targeted geography

Why MRB Group?

- Practitioner-based team focused on delivering actionable plans
- Longstanding relationship with Ulysses
- Focused nearly exclusively on local government
- Proven record of success in activating strategies toward community vision





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