

Town of Big Flats

DEVELOPMENT DESIGN GUIDELINES



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PREPARED BY



PREPARED FOR



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I. INTRODUCTION

The Town of Big Flats serves as one of the primary commercial centers for the Elmira-Corning area. The Arnot Mall and Consumer Square shopping centers are located in the eastern part of the town, at the intersection of Interstate 86 and Chambers Road (Exit 51), and are, in combination with the Southern Tier Crossing shopping center in the adjoining Town of Horseheads, the primary shopping destination for the region. West of the Arnot Mall area, in the proximity of Exit 50 off Interstate 86, are the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport and the adjacent Airport Corporate Park. Airport Corporate Park incorporates a variety of office and manufacturing facilities for regional and nationally known companies such as Sikorsky, General Revenue Corporation, and the DeMet's Candy Company facility. The Town Center Area, location of Town Hall, the town's library, and the Big Flats Elementary School, is accessible from Interstate 86 via Exit 49. The Town Center Area, particularly the traditional hamlet area of Big Flats along Main Street (County Route 64) and Canal Street, has been the traditional gathering place of the town's residents for several generations. Finally, there are two emerging corridors in the town. The first is along Route 352 between the Town Center Area and the Chemung/Steuben County line, where several industrial uses are located. Additionally, several retail, light industrial, and service uses are located along a section of Daniel Zenker Drive, north of the Town Center and Exit 49, and west of Airport Corporate Park.

In all of the focus areas, and in other areas of Big Flats, there are several town-wide design concepts that should be utilized. The Town-Wide Design Guidelines shall apply to all areas of Big Flats, although the scale of the utilization of the guidelines will depend on the scale of the use and its location in relation to major roadways such as Interstate 86/NYS Route 17 and other state and county roads. It is important, however, to also consider the unique character of these larger areas individually, in order to better provide guidance to meet the needs of the property owners and the town in these areas. Area design guidelines are intended to apply to particular specified areas. Each of the Area design guidelines should be supplemental to the Town-Wide Design Guidelines.

A. INTENT

The *Town of Big Flats Development Design Guidelines* will help to implement the recommendations of the *Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan* and the *Big Flats Town Center Strategic Plan*. The *Development Design Guidelines* are intended to be closely tied to the existing zoning regulations and are specifically referred to in several sections of the *Town of Big Flats Zoning Law (BFZL)*. The *Town of Big Flats Development Design Guidelines* are attached as an appendix to Article 17 of the *Town of Big Flats Municipal Code*.

The *Town of Big Flats Development Design Guidelines* conveys the community's vision for how development should fit into the landscape and contribute to the character and quality of life of the town. At the same time, the Design Guidelines respect and support the efforts of those proposing to develop properties in the town and those who bear the risks and devote personal time and resources to commercial endeavors. As such, the strength of the Design Guidelines derives from: (1) A clearly

articulated overall design vision for development in the town, and (2) providing room for flexibility and common sense solutions for individual projects.

Successful implementation of the guidelines will require collaboration and cooperation between those proposing commercial projects, and the officials and staff charged with reviewing and approving them. As such, the design guidelines should be viewed as a “framework” for dialogue that sheds light on expectations and opportunities during the development review process, for all parties involved. In the end, the *Town of Big Flats Development Design Guidelines* are about creating high-quality settings in the town that provide for economic opportunity and innovation, while strengthening the town’s quality of life and “pride of place” for years to come.

It is the intent of the *Town of Big Flats Development Design Guidelines* to supplement, not replace, the *BFZL* and other applicable regulations for all development Big Flats, except those mentioned in the following paragraph.

The following uses are exempt from the requirements of the *Town of Big Flats Development Design Guidelines*:

- 1) Construction of a one unit dwelling on an individual lot
- 2) Construction of a two-unit dwelling on an individual lot
- 3) Construction of farm structures such as barns and other outbuildings on an agricultural property within a designated Agricultural District

B. APPLICABILITY

The *Development Design Guidelines* are to be used by property owners, developers, public officials, and town staff with respect to all development projects within the town except those noted in the previous section. In particular, the *Development Design Guidelines* will be utilized by the Planning Board and Town Board in the review of all development projects in Big Flats. The *Development Design Guidelines* are intended to supplement the *BFZL* and other existing development regulations, which should be referred to as necessary and appropriate. As noted above, in addition to providing town-wide design guidelines, the *Development Design Guidelines* look specifically at five focus areas. They are:

- 1) The Business Regional Zoning District, consisting of the Arnot Mall/Consumer Square area, centered around exits 51A and 51B of Interstate 86
- 2) The Airport Business Development Zoning District, consisting of the Airport Corporate Park Area centered around Exit 50 of Interstate 86
- 3) Properties within the Town Center Area, as shown on the map on Page 53
- 4) Properties within the Industrial Zoning District along Route 352 between the Town Center Area and the Steuben County line

- 5) The Daniel Zenker Drive corridor west of Airport Corporate Park and north of Interstate 86

Specifically, the *Development Design Guidelines* envisions development in Big Flats that:

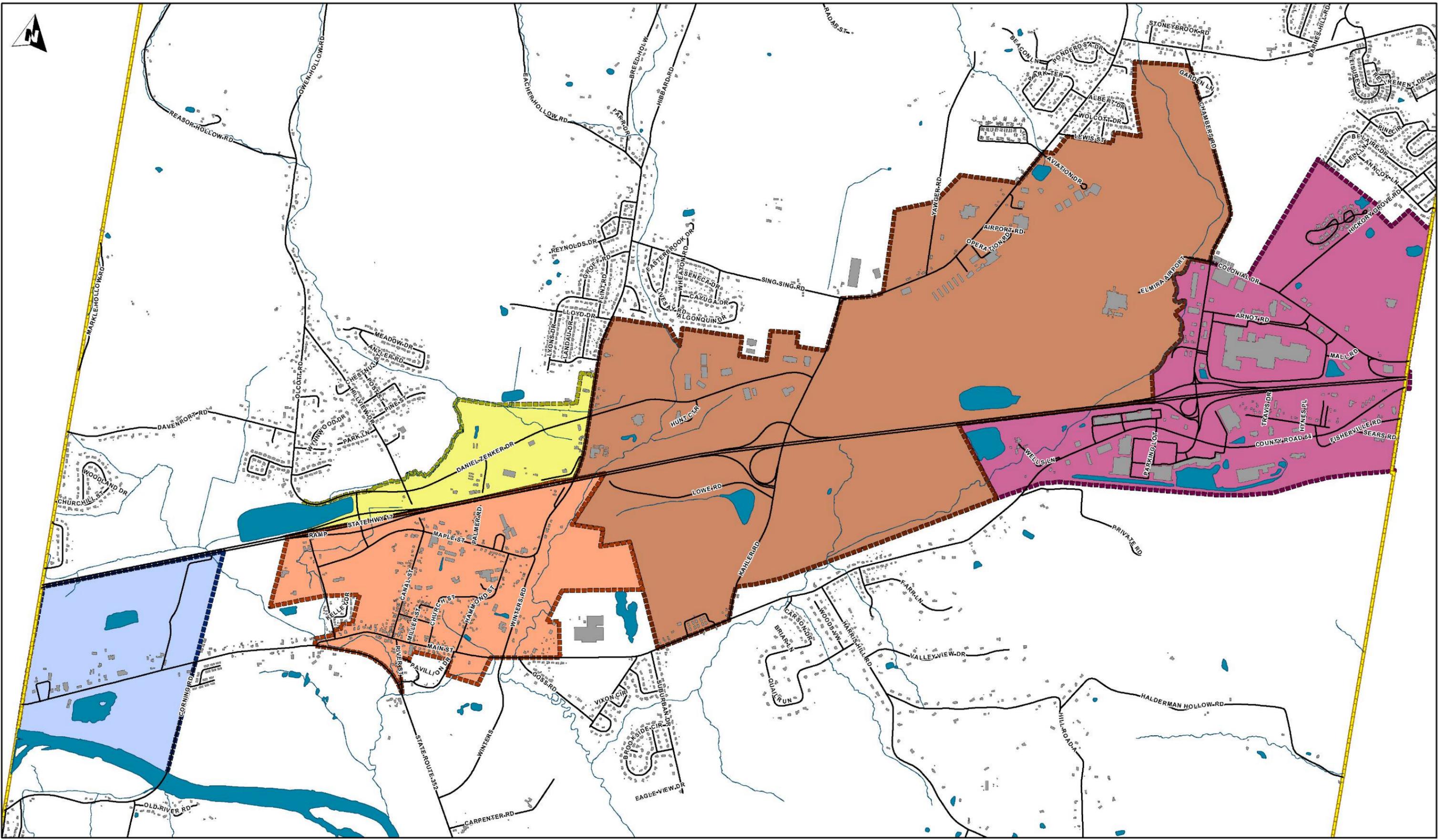
- Respects and complements each area’s unique character and how each of these areas relate to the town as a whole;
- Provides guidance for the redevelopment or reuse of existing commercial areas;
- Strengthens a “sense of place” in areas of the town where there is an established or emerging concentration of activity;
- Utilizes shared parking lots and interconnected service drives to reduce curb-cuts and maintain road safety and function along state and county maintained roadways; and
- Results in well-planned, consistent design and landscaping for a cohesive look and feel, while allowing for creativity and expression on individual project sites.

The following activities within the Town of Big Flats are subject to the provisions of the *Town of Big Flats Development Design Guidelines*:

- 1) **New Construction** - The recommendations included as part of the *Development Design Guidelines* will assist developers and town officials in the design and review of new development, special permit requests, and site plan reviews for development proposed after the implementation of the *Development Design Guidelines*.
- 2) **Alterations to Existing Sites and Structures** - The *Development Design Guidelines* shall apply to projects involving modifications to existing sites and structures that require approval from the Planning Board. Where a change of building occupancy occurs, the primary use is similar, and no significant physical change is made, the guidelines shall not be required. If (1) a change in building occupancy occurs that requires modifications to the site valued at more than fifty (50) percent of the replacement value of the building or (2) through obtaining of an approval from the Planning Board in accordance with Chapters 17.32 and 17.33 of the *Big Flats Zoning Law*, the provisions of the *Development Design Guidelines* shall come into effect. In such cases, opportunities to bring the existing site in compliance with the *Development Design Guidelines* shall be explored. Special consideration should be placed on implementation of those items which are most feasible and would achieve the greatest overall benefit in the appearance and functionality of the site.
- 3) **Town Zoning** - The *Big Flats Zoning Law* establishes the minimum standards and requirements for development within the Town of Big Flats. The *Town of Big Flats Development Design Guidelines* are intended to supplement the minimum requirements of the *Big Flats Zoning Law* (Article 17 of the *Town of Big Flats Municipal Code*).

Adherence to the *Town of Big Flats Development Design Guidelines* is expected to the maximum extent practicable. As such, the *Development Design Guidelines*, in conjunction with the town’s Zoning

Law, should be reviewed at the earliest stages of concept development for proposed development projects and improvements in the town. The *Development Design Guidelines* are meant to convey a richer, more thoroughly articulated vision for development than can be conveyed by “cut and dry” zoning requirements. Because the *Development Design Guidelines* cannot anticipate the unique conditions or opportunities present on individual properties, there may be occasions where a specific element of the guidelines may not apply. In such cases, it is incumbent upon both the applicant and those charged with reviewing and approving the proposed project, to arrive at solutions that meet the spirit and intent of the larger principles of the guidelines. Lastly, the application of the *Development Design Guidelines* should be informed by the scale and scope of proposed projects, including the intensity of the use and the impacts that the proposed project may pose to town character and infrastructure.



-  Business Regional Area
-  Airport Business Area
-  Town Center Area
-  Route 352 Corridor Area
-  Daniel Zenker Drive Area
-  Surface Water

Town of Big Flats
Development Design Guidelines Focus Areas

C. DEFINITIONS

Definitions clarify a number of the terms utilized in the *Town of Big Flats Development Design Guidelines*. Applicants proposing development in Big Flats shall also consult the definitions sections provided in conjunction with the town's Subdivision Law, the *BFZL*, and other applicable local regulations included in the Town Code.

- **Arcade** - an area contiguous to a street or plaza that is open and unobstructed, and that is accessible to the public at all times. Arcades may include building columns, landscaping, statuary and fountains. Arcades do not include off-street loading/unloading areas, driveways or parking areas.
- **Screen** - see also "buffer". The sole purpose of a screen is to block views. A screen shall be constructed of opaque materials and whose height will be effective in obstructing unwanted views.
- **Transition Zone** - location on a site between building and parking areas that serves as a visual buffer between the two uses. Landscaping, the use of different materials, and the provision of seating areas are some of the tools that can be utilized to achieve this effect.
- **Vegetative Strip** - A portion of a lot or property used to visually separate one use from another by utilizing vegetation, distance or, other approved methods.

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