

VIII Town Services & Schools

The Town of Brighton provides or contracts for provision of numerous services that enhance the quality of life of Brighton residents. Among these are:

Town Library - the Brighton Memorial Library, a member library of county-wide Monroe County Library System and governed by the Library Board of Trustees, directly provides services that are paid for primarily through property taxes but also through library fines and fees as well as interest earned on investment of library funds.

Police Protection - the Brighton Police Dept. directly provides services on a town-wide basis that are paid for through property taxes and user fees.

Road Maintenance and Snowplowing -the Highway Dept. directly provides services on a town-wide basis that are paid for through property taxes and State aid as well as State and County reimbursements for costs incurred in plowing State and County roads running through the Town.

Yard Debris Removal - the Highway Dept. directly provides services on a town-wide basis that are paid for through property taxes.

Town Parks and Recreation Programs - the Parks and Recreation Dept. directly provides facilities and services on a town-wide basis that are paid for through property taxes and user fees.

Sanitary Sewer Service - The Consolidated Sewer (Special) District directly provides services in the District. The District's boundaries do not encompass the entire Town. District operations and facilities are supported through special assessment charges.

Storm Water Drainage - The Highway Dept. constructs and maintains storm water drainage systems in most of the Town. The systems are paid for through property taxes.

Refuse Pickup - The Dept. of Public Works contracts for refuse pickup in those neighborhoods where a Refuse (Special) District has been created in response to a petition of the residents for such a district and subsequent action by the Town Board. Contract costs are supported through special assessment charges.

Street Lighting - The Dept. of Public Works manages residential street lighting facilities provided by Rochester Gas and Electric where a Lighting (Special) District has been created in response to a petition of the residents for such a district and subsequent action by the Town Board. Facility costs are supported through special assessment charges.

Sidewalks - The Dept. of Public Works manages both a Consolidated Sidewalk District which encompasses a number of neighborhoods in central Brighton, as well as a network of sidewalks outside the District. Construction and maintenance costs of sidewalks are supported through special assessment charges in the District and are paid for through property taxes levied on a town-wide basis for sidewalks outside the boundaries of the District.

Sidewalk Snowplowing - The Dept. of Public Works contracts for sidewalk snowplowing in those neighborhoods where a Sidewalk Snow Removal (Special) District has been created in response to a petition of the residents for such a district and subsequent action by the Town Board. Contract costs are supported through special assessment charges.

Fire Protection - The Brighton Fire District, an autonomous municipal corporation with its own tax levying authority, provides services in the eastern and central portions of the Town. Services are supported by property taxes levied by the Fire District. Fire protection is provided in western Brighton through the West Brighton Fire Protection (Special) District which contracts with the West Brighton Fire Dept. to provide services. Services in the West Brighton Fire Protection District, for which the Town Board serves as Fire Commissioners, are supported by District property taxes.

Ambulance Service - The Town Board contracts with Brighton Volunteer Ambulance, Inc. for services provided in the Ambulance Service (Special) District. The District serves the entire Town, and services are supported by District property taxes.

In September, 1999, a day-long workshop was held by the Community Character focus group of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to identify those elements of life in Brighton that were most valued and those for which improvement was needed. One of the elements most often mentioned as being valued was the quality of Brighton's town services.

While, based on these comments, it appears that Brighton's services are working well to meet the needs of residents, interviews with department/organization representatives revealed several issues in the provision of sanitary sewer and safety services that could affect service provision in the future. These are discussed next.

Sanitary Sewer Systems

Sanitary sewer service in the town is provided by either the Brighton Consolidated Sewer District or Brighton Sewer District 87A, Special Districts established by the Brighton Town Board. Sewer service is paid for by special assessments on properties within the sewer districts and collected with property taxes. The Van Lare sewage treatment plant in Irondequoit, managed by Monroe County, serves all of Brighton that is on sanitary sewers. All of the sewer facilities within the Town are owned by the Sewer District, with the exception of sections east of Clover St. and south of Allens Creek Rd. These sections, along with a longer section in Pittsford, are jointly owned by Brighton and Pittsford.

Issues:

- 1) Western Brighton: Much of the area west of W. Henrietta Rd. is open space. What development is present is primarily single family residential, using individual septic systems. Much of the soil in this area has poor leaching quality, the ground water is high, and many of the lots are quite small. Consequently, there is considerable difficulty in obtaining safe and sanitary sewage disposal. Sewage overflows and discharges constitute potential health hazards. In addition, most of this area is within the 100 year floodplain of the Genesee River, Red Creek or smaller creeks. This poses development problems because Health Department regulations, which

require leach fields to be above the 100 year flood level, force many septic systems to be raised above existing grade, add expense to projects and create drainage and location problems for proposed structures. Because of the topography of the area between W. Henrietta Rd. and the Genesee River, it is likely that much of any sewer system constructed in the area would have to be force-flow (as opposed to gravity feed - the flow moving downhill). In 1998-'99, sewers were installed along the length of Brighton- Henrietta Town Line Rd. west of W. Henrietta Rd., and in the spring of 1999, a study will be conducted to determine the feasibility of installing sewers in the residential/industrial area between Western Dr. and W. Henrietta Rd.

The future installation of sanitary sewer lines west of W. Henrietta Rd. will depend on: 1) the cost of installation and maintenance imposed by physical constraints; and 2) the desire of current residents and property owners to be included in the Brighton Sewer District, which would mean that district assessments would be imposed to pay for installation and maintenance of the lines.

Many of the past and present residents of Brighton west of W. Henrietta Rd. have been opposed to the installation of sanitary sewers because they assume that the availability of sewers would increase the rate and density of development of that area. This has also been a concern of environmentalists. As mentioned previously, much of this area is located in a 100 year floodplain which, combined with significant wetlands and woodlots, makes this area an important natural flood control, habitat and groundwater regeneration area. The importance of the area in these regards is heightened because of its location in an urban area.

2) Monroe Community College: Initial plans for Monroe Community College were used to determine the size of sanitary trunk line to install in central Brighton. The construction of the ESL Sports Complex at the MCC campus in 1998, which was not a part of those plans, has raised concerns regarding the availability of sufficient capacity in the central Brighton trunk sewer to accommodate future development at MCC and/or the development of central Brighton. It is possible that future development on the campus will necessitate the trunk line being upgraded.

3) The age of the sanitary sewer system will result in a gradually increasing need to repair or replace it.

Safety Services

Brighton is served by its own police department, an ambulance company and 2 fire districts.

The Brighton Police Department (BPD) is staffed by 40 sworn officers and 12 full and part-time civilians. The number of officers has remained constant for the last 15 years. BPD has a well-earned reputation as a professional police force that is responsive to the needs of Brighton residents and businesses and has instituted numerous programs to interact with, educate and inform the Brighton community. These include: DARE; Citizen Police Academy; National Night Out; House, Home and Business Security Surveys; FAIR and many others. In 1998, more than 6,000 residents and merchants were involved in one or more of these programs.

Brighton Volunteer Ambulance (BVA) is staffed by 60 volunteers and 3 full-time-equivalent paid staff. Approximately 51% of BVA's 1998-'99 budget was provided through special

assessments on Brighton properties. In addition to providing emergency medical response service, BVA also provides: first aid to walk-in patients at their base at Westfall Rd. and Winton Rd.; the free loan of crutches, wheelchairs and walkers; free blood pressure checks and classes in first aid and CPR.

Brighton is divided into two fire protection areas: the Brighton Fire District covers the area north and east of the Erie Canal; the West Brighton Fire Protection District covers the remainder of Brighton. The Brighton Fire District, with 33 paid and 85 volunteer personnel, is governed by an independent Board of Commissioners. The West Brighton Fire Protection District, with 40 volunteer personnel, 15 of which are currently active, is governed by the Town Board, acting as commissioners of the district.

Issues:

- 1) All three services are experiencing high rates of calls from senior housing developments. Medical response calls are more frequent from these developments than from other residential uses, particularly when no on-site medical facilities are provided. For example, the Brighton Police Department responded to 83 calls for service from St. John's Meadows senior facility in 1998, even though the facility was not totally completed, nor open for the full year. This contrasts with projections reported in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for St. John's Meadows of 65 calls/yr for the fully-occupied facility. Similarly, Brighton Volunteer Ambulance reports responding to 88 calls to St. John's Meadows between September, 1998 and February, 1999 (versus 39/yr projected by the DEIS).
- 2) The overall volume of calls has increased for all 3 services as well. In the 11 years between 1988 and 1998, Brighton Police calls for service (for all reasons) increased 80%, to 36,341 calls in 1998. In that same period, Brighton Fire District (serving eastern and central Brighton) calls increased 146%, to 2,514 calls in 1998. In contrast, West Brighton Fire Protection District, serving a less developed area, experienced 335 calls in 1998.
- 3) As Brighton develops, both Brighton Volunteer Ambulance and West Brighton Fire Protection District are experiencing increasing difficulty in attracting volunteers. Both of these organizations require highly skilled and dedicated service response personnel. The time necessary for initial and ongoing training is one factor that limits the number of potential volunteers. In western Brighton, the lack of new, affordable, single-family development, which is typically the biggest generator of volunteers, is another factor. Recognizing the difficulties faced by both of these organizations, the town has established the Fire-Rescue Study Task Force to determine the manpower and equipment needs of the West Brighton Fire District and Brighton Volunteer Ambulance. The task force report, along with findings and recommendations, should be completed by the end of 2001.
- 4) As development in Brighton and surrounding areas increases, the impacts of traffic on residential streets is also increasing. In addition to police department responses to this situation - increased traffic enforcement, including the deployment of motorcycles to target traffic enforcement needs, and the use of radar speed-notification signs - the town has used, to a limited

degree, speed humps to control traffic. Speed humps, however, can interfere with fire response times, because the weight of the trucks forces them to slow almost to a stop for the humps.

Brighton's Public Schools

While Brighton's public schools are not controlled by the town and the update will not presume to recommend policies for them, their importance to Brighton warrants a discussion of them in the Plan.

Within Brighton are located 5 public school districts: Brighton Central Schools, Rush-Henrietta Central Schools, Penfield Central Schools, Wheatland-Chili Central Schools and Pittsford Central Schools. It is commonly known that families with school age children choose to live in Brighton to afford their children the opportunity of attending one of the Brighton schools. In particular, Brighton Central School District has historically had, and continues to have, a great impact on the continued success of Brighton as a residential community, and has recently received national recognition for its educational achievements.

With the exception of a small field located at Indian Landing Elementary School (Penfield School District), Brighton Central Schools is the only public school district within Brighton to offer recreational facilities for Brighton residents. Those fields, courts and areas - including soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, football, softball, baseball, tennis and playground facilities - play an important role in providing active recreation opportunities for Brighton residents. The Town of Brighton also currently leases space at Brighton Schools' Brookside School for the town's recreation department. In addition, Brighton Central School District supplies indoor recreation and social activity areas, including gymnasiums and a swimming pool, that are sometimes available to residents.

There are no significant issues regarding Brighton's schools that can be addressed through this Plan. However, given the interdependency between the town and its schools and the impact that town land use review decisions can have on its school districts, it should be town policy to communicate the nature of proposals for residential development within the town to the school districts as early in the review process as possible, so that they can plan effectively for possible future enrollment increases.