

PART 5 PLAN CONCEPTS

A. Introduction

The open space plan concepts can be easily understood by recognizing basic open space resources and land use patterns. In considering the existing and proposed open space resources, the physical landscape of the town was evaluated first as individual areas, then as larger sections.

The natural landscape—the Mohawk River, Stony Creek Reservoir, the various streams and wetlands throughout town, and the hemlock-covered ravines and sand plains in the northeast part of town are distinguishing features that shape Clifton Park – and in turn have shaped how the town has developed to date. The productive soils have sustained agriculture for generations. The man-made environment has also been influential in shaping the land use patterns in the town. The railroad system that runs throughout the northwest and into the northeast areas of town is a barrier of sorts for trail connections, with limited sites for railroad crossings. Likewise, Interstate 87 (the Northway) is a significant physical barrier along the eastern border of town cutting off people and wildlife from the Town of Half Moon and Round Lake except for the rail underpass, four exits off the Northway, and a few other local roads that overpass the interstate highway.

Each of the open space resources of the town reflects human and natural values. Certain areas contain multiple resources that are important to the community. When a large number of important open space resources co-occur in an area, that area is of highest value for protection. As a result, the plan identifies key areas where resource values are greatest for future conservation efforts.

Five major plan concepts are developed herein. Special recognition is also given to the enhanced protection for ***drinking water resources*** as an overall theme. The five major elements of the open space concept plan include:

1. Protection of ***wildlife nature preserves & watersheds***;
2. A ***farmland protection*** program;
3. Enhanced ***recreational parklands and ballfields***;
4. A town-wide, comprehensive ***trails and pathways system***, and;
5. A ***scenic roads, cultural resources and historic preservation*** program.

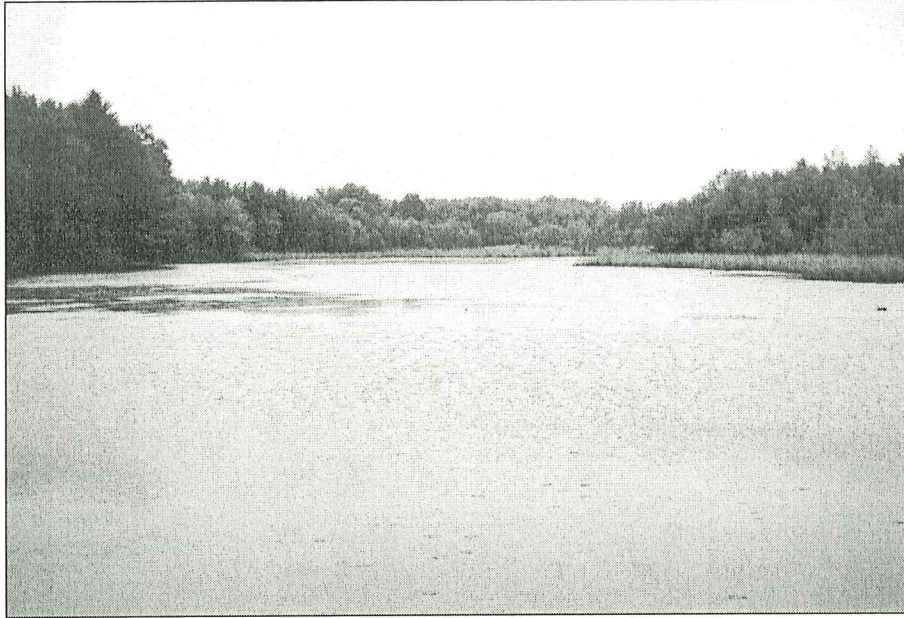
The plan concepts—narrative and map (both detailed within this section)—reflect areas in town with resource values important to the community. The community should know that the general philosophy of the open space program proposed is for the town to work with property

owners to find the best way to protect the open space resources on any particular property. It is the plan's intent that a balanced set of techniques be used to conserve and protect the natural resources with values important to the community. In fact, the plan concepts rely a great deal on continued stewardship of resources by private property owners.

The development community has been a partner in open space conservation, as well as private and nonprofit conservation organizations. Public ownership of land, if required, will be recommended to further enhance the quality of life in the town and expand the utilization, in a sensitive manner, of the town's open space resources. If public ownership is sought, it will be based on a "willing buyer—willing seller basis." In all, this partnership approach is the most cost-effective, fair, and prudent way to achieve the open space plan envisioned herein. An overview of key conservation tools and general strategies is provided in Part 6 of this plan, while Part 7 is the recommended specific strategies for the Town of Clifton Park.

B. Special Note on Drinking Water Resources

Notably, in developing the major plan concepts, it was recognized that the community's interest in protecting drinking water supplies is a major priority for residents. Water quality and quantity protection is an issue that touches many lands throughout town – and is not limited to one site. Water resources cross property lines and even town boundaries. Lands that contribute to the protection of aquifers are lands immediately above aquifers, as well as lands that contain wetlands that filter surface water – part of the water cycling that contributes to aquifer supplies. The town has a number of sites that currently supply drinking water through wells and underground aquifer sources. It is these current supplies that the town seeks to continue to protect as well as to conserve future water supply sources in town.¹



Stony Creek Reservoir is a source of drinking water for the Town of Colonie.

In Clifton Park, aquifer resources are located in some instances on lands with potential for nature preserves. Some aquifers are located among agricultural properties. Thus the means to protect aquifer resources may also address natural area conservation or farmland protection. For example, Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve contains not only significant wildlife habitat and historic landmarks such as the Erie Canal, but the existing preserve and additional adjacent property also contains significant town drinking water supply resources. Hence this is an area with multiple resources of importance to the community. Goals to protect nature preserve lands and agricultural heritage lands will also help to protect lands that hold aquifer recharge areas as well as drinking water supplies.

Recommendations:

1. The town should protect its key, year-round well sites. Acquire the lands around the key well fields as wellhead protection areas in the areas that are not permanently protected already.²
2. Protect the secondary water supply sources used during times of drought including well systems.³
3. As a long-term goal, protect Stony Creek Reservoir as a future, emergency water supply source for the town and/or public open space area.⁴

C. Five Major Plan Concepts

All of the following plan concepts are proposed as short term goals for the Town of Clifton Park to pursue within approximately a suggested two-to-five-year time frame.

1. Wildlife Nature Preserves & Watersheds

As the town grows with new roads and development, contiguous areas of natural land become fragmented. Increasing development is fragmenting vital ecological areas and habitats that rely upon large, contiguous natural areas and smaller areas that provide connectivity. To protect such areas, the nature preserve concept is proposed for key sections of largely undeveloped areas. These areas possess significant environmental and geological features, water resources and wildlife habitat. While some natural areas such as stream corridors and wetlands have some level of existing regulatory protection, others, such as significant uplands areas and smaller wetlands need more protection solutions from the community. The existing Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve on the Mohawk River exemplifies the best attributes of an existing large-scale nature preserve in town.

Protection Goals for Nature Preserves

- A. Potential large nature preserve areas to protect:
 - i. Create a Dwaas Kill Natural Area and tributary stream corridor greenways to supplement the limited existing protected area in this ecological area. This proposed nature preserve would supply residents in the northern half town with a significant sized resource that would complement the Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve at the most southern edge of town.

The proposed nature area would include lands listed in the New York State Open Space Plan – known as the Dwaas Kill Natural Area, and watershed lands including lands in the Van Patten/Pierce Road area. The proposed unique habitat area includes trout stream corridor protection & riparian habitat along three tributaries out to tributary headwaters (see open space concepts map); trout fishing opportunities; environmental education opportunities; active recreation (hiking and canoeing) opportunities; and hemlock forest and steep ravines. The unique

area would be an ideal location for an environmental education center. **Protection goal for the next 2 to 5 years, 300 to 600 acres.**

ii. Additional lands in the vicinity of the existing Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve may be warranted; particularly lands that protect a major town drinking water supply aquifer. **Goal for next 2 to 5 years: 50 – 100 acres.**

iii. Stony Creek Reservoir and its watershed is an open space opportunity in the developed eastern part of town (area between Crescent Road and Englemore Road). The area's special features include a large waterbody and wetlands; aquifer recharge lands; fish and wildlife habitat; and opportunities for passive recreation. Some temporary easements and opportunities for open space connections exist in the vicinity. Stony Creek's headwaters are west of Village Plaza to Moe Road north of Wall Street to Route 146. Clifton Park's protection of Stony Creek Reservoir itself is a long-term goal, however, some adjacent lands not owned by the Town of Colonie may be available sooner for conservation by the Town of Clifton Park. **Goal for protecting adjacent lands for the next 2 to 5 years: 50 to 100 acres.**

B. Acquire/obtain smaller nature preserves accessible to all neighborhoods:

- i. A small preserve within roughly a one-mile radius of the intersection of Moe Road and Grooms Road.
- ii. Unique natural areas and habitats and travel corridors for wildlife, such as mature forests, uncommon plant communities, wetlands, fishing-quality streams, significant shorelines, rock outcroppings, steep slopes, or open fields and meadows. Also protect lands that support known endangered or threatened species, including but not limited to the Karner Blue Butterfly habitat or travel corridors.
- iii. Small areas of wildlife observation, that may help connect to larger open space resources.⁵

Town-wide goal for smaller nature preserves, located throughout town at various locations: Next 2 to 5 years; 100 to 200 acres.

Nature Preserve Implementation:

1. Secure landowner interest in voluntary participation in an acquisition program. Partner with the State of New York and others for potential funding of acquisitions. Secure local financing as necessary and appropriate. Acquire key, selected, critical parcels that are valuable for wildlife, and for public access and educational opportunities, starting with the priority areas.
2. Develop and implement open space incentive zoning to create increased opportunities for the development community to provide additional nature preserves in new projects. This code would be best accomplished with a town-sponsored set of "Design Guidelines for Protecting Open Space in New Development" in collaboration with the builders and environmental community for their use in designing conservation-friendly development.
3. Pursue a long-term intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Colonie for the future disposition of Stony Creek Reservoir, such as an agreement regarding first refusal. In the short term, seek willing sellers to protect the lands adjacent to the Stony Creek Reservoir.

2. Farmland Protection Program

Fortunately, Clifton Park still enjoys strong working farmlands and a sense of rural agricultural heritage along many of its rural roads. These working farm properties often include other environmental resources such as wetlands and aquifer recharge areas, and are thus worthy of a higher level of consideration for open space resource protection. However, as agricultural land prices and carrying costs continue to increase it is becoming difficult to maintain economic viability of farmland under these conditions.

Difficulties in passing land onto the next generation becomes a key factor is farmland conversions. There is tremendous pressure on farmers and farm families to convert the equity in their farmland by selling their land for development. Losing the remaining active farmland and working farmland, losing the remaining farm economy, plus losing the scenic rural agricultural heritage would be a loss for not only the farm families, but the entire town—in particular when there are more suitable areas in town to build new housing and commercial developments.

The primary reason that beautiful, productive farms will convert to residential and commercial developments is because the community currently does not have permanent protection options to offer farmers. Using grants and local funding, the town's purchase of agricultural conservation easements will be a fair method for town residents, property owners and farmers to secure all of the benefits of protecting these important resources for current and future generations.

Plan Concepts:

- A. Focus initial efforts on active farmlands with some type of existing temporary protection (such as farms with temporary term easements, agricultural assessment, and/or participation in the agricultural district program).
- B. Offer willing farmland owners options for permanent farmland protection, working out with each owner a fair appraisal, and individual family's estate planning needs.
- C. Partner with state and federal programs for permanent easements. One such permanent farmland protection option that has been used successfully across New York State and the nation is the purchase of agricultural conservation easements (PACE). (See the Glossary and Part 6 for more information on PACE.)
- D. Protect the most valuable working landscapes and active farmland most valuable for the community.⁶

Core Farming Areas to Consider for Permanent Protection:

Core farms and orchards are found in the "west to southwest quadrant" of town:

- From the Mohawk River to Vischer Ferry Road;
- Farm parcels along the western half of Grooms Road;
- Sugar Hill Road including from Kings Farm to Bowman's Orchard,
- Ray Road;
- Farms and orchards along the length of Riverview Road;
- Farms along the western end of Route 146, including Beck Farm; and,
- Farms along MacElroy Road (both sides) and Hubbs Road.

Any future action related to farm protection will depend upon the voluntary interest and participation by property owners and their families, and the opportunities set forth by the town with other partners.

Implementation:

- 1. Evaluate and include farmers' priorities and interest in a voluntary program for permanent agricultural conservation easements. Perform a farmer-specific survey and other

- individualized outreach. Scale funding to balance landowner interest with community resources.
2. Offer farmers the opportunity to participate in a voluntary purchase of permanent agricultural conservation easements (PACE) program and provide incentives for participation.
 3. Encourage participation in Saratoga County's agricultural economic development assistance programs, including with marketing, training, and strategies.
 - a. Continue support of, and expand programs such as Farm Fest
 - b. Add a Farm Tour concept – that could link to and be co-sponsored by neighboring towns, or link to a county-wide farm tour.
 - c. Tap into county, state and federal programs and resources.
 4. Review the term conservation easements law to make sure its enforcement policy is clear and the administration mechanisms are in place.

Goal for the next 2 to 5 years: Set up permanent easement program in partnership with the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets and American Farmland Trust; secure participation by several farmers and farmland owners. Approximately 300 to 600 acres near term.

3. Parkland and Ballfields

Existing park facilities for active recreation are highly utilized and reaching maximum use levels. As population continues to increase, the need for new large areas for active recreation is becoming more apparent, as well as to ensure smaller parks are close to dense residential neighborhoods. This plan concept addresses the need for new parks serving town-wide, and neighborhood-wide needs.

Plan Concepts:

The major plan concepts related to parks are to:

1. Obtain one large area of significant acreage (approximately 150+/- acres) for a new townwide park. The general location would be roughly within 1.5 mile radius of the intersection of Nott Road and Appleton Road. (Actual site should be selected as part of a separate siting study.)
2. Obtain one to two small-to-moderate sized active park areas (approximately 10-20 acres) in underserved developed areas of town.

Recreational, greenway, and trail resource opportunities valued by the community for future park expansion consideration are:

- Existing parks, trails, recreational areas, and golf courses;
- Access to areas for water-based recreational opportunities such as land contiguous to the Erie Canal, Mohawk River, Ballston Lake or along creeks and streams, including additional canoe boat access and other public boat access at the Mohawk River.
- Expanding the Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve.
- Public access to the Stony Creek Reservoir.

Implementation:

1. The town should establish a task force of the presidents of the different recreational leagues, the head coaches of those sports in high school and the designees from the planning and parks boards to map out the recreational sports needs of the community for the next 20 years. This task force can help prioritize open space acquisition for ball fields and other recreational facilities needs, and ensure that they are done with the support and involvement of community leaders.
2. Update the Town Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
3. Conduct a siting study and recreation needs assessment.
4. Secure options for future park sites.
5. Secure funding for land acquisition and facility development; both state and federal grants and local resources.

4. Town-Wide Trails & Pathways

A town-wide path system will help knit the community together by allowing people a safe, alternative transportation system to reach activity centers as well as quieter nature preserves. The idea is for residents to leave their homes and safely travel to most places in town along a pedestrian/bicyclist trail system.

A Clifton Park Pathways System is envisioned as a comprehensive network of various types of paved and unpaved trails for pedestrians and non-motorized use. This system will enhance existing town-wide connections through appropriate multi-purpose trails, designed to fit the different types of roads and corridors. The major plan concept is to ensure that pedestrians and bicyclists (non-motorized vehicles) can access the community's neighborhoods, schools, and parks, open spaces and other activity centers by walking or biking—a safe alternative to cars. The Clifton Park Pathways System would build upon and further coordinate with the existing town and neighborhood trails and proposed trails per town's existing trails master plan.

Pathways through sensitive natural areas may require special design considerations and be constructed with materials appropriate for the site. In other settings, the path systems may include marked, road shoulders for pedestrians and bicyclists to use "Class I" paved, off-road paths, and all types of trails in between. New projects would be designed and discussed through a public process in order to address neighborhood concerns.⁷



Clifton Park needs additional, safe, well-designed and attractive multi-purpose trails protected from vehicular traffic. (Photo credit: Eric J. Hamilton)

Plan Concepts:

- A. To continue to achieve success with new trails and parks development, develop an improved approach for additional public process with potential adjacent landowners.
- B. Identify priority trail corridors in town and pursue funding for acquisition of necessary rights-of-way and trail improvements.
- C. Consider working more closely with individual willing park districts on a voluntary basis to share parks and trails resources. Develop an improved dialogue and process for any desired connections, arrangements, or shared services with individual park districts.

Implementation:

- 1. Obtain grants and local funding for design of priority trail corridors.
- 2. Involve landowners and neighbors in trail layout and design.

3. Obtain grants and capital funds for trail construction.
4. Working closely with the Clifton Park Trails and Recreation Committees, create a highly graphic, user-friendly, up-to-date community trails and recreation map that is widely published and distributed for community members. Make such a map available at a broad number of locations and within schools. Develop a signage system and a "you are here" orientation sign map for trails and destinations throughout town – coordinated with historic and cultural resources.
5. Update the existing trails master plan.

5. Scenic Roads, Cultural Resources, and Historic Preservation

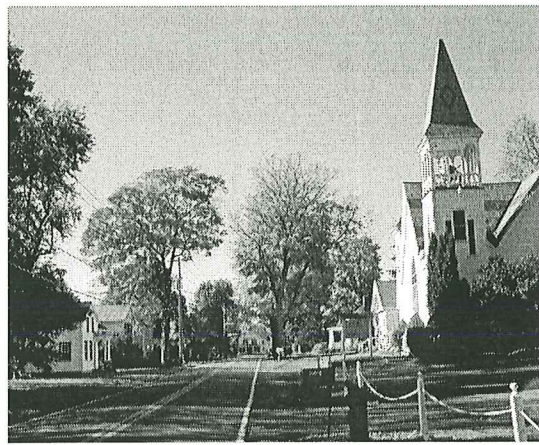
Clifton Park has a bounty of scenic roads. These roads offer travelers wonderful glimpses of the history and beauty of the town. They pass historic hamlets, attractive farmsteads and fields, meadows and orchards, the Mohawk River, streams, ponds and marshlands. These roadsides tell a story of the community's agricultural beginnings--and that give the community its unique look. Historically, canal and train transportation that shaped the community brought opportunities for commerce. These are important stories to recognize and share. These resources seem at times lost in the shadow of the new commerce near Exit 9.



The community needs to cherish and protect its unique qualities – its historic and cultural resources that give the community its sense of place. It is well-recognized that communities that preserve their historic hamlets, buildings, farms, taverns and hotels, train depots, schoolhouses, churches, cemeteries, and other historic sites as

landmarks are also those that have high property values and can support strong local economies. Preservation is an economic development tool as well as a resource conservation tool.

Awareness of the town's cultural setting and community traditions of the history and agricultural community in town can continue to be strengthened. For example, by building on the town's accomplishment of acquiring Grooms Tavern Complex at Sugar Hill Road and Grooms Road, this one site serves as a spring board for other similar efforts. The historic hamlets of Rexford, Vischer Ferry and Jonesville are readily accessible to the eye, while the history of Elnora, a former train depot, and other farm homesteads may not be as obvious to residents.



Historic Grooms Tavern at Sugar Hill Road and Grooms Road, is pictured on the left, and the scenic, historic hamlet of Vischer Ferry is shown on the right.

Cultural landscape resources that help give Clifton Park its distinctive character include:

- Land with unusual scenic beauty or character, or that is part of a larger scenic viewshed.
- Rural character corridors.
- Large, undeveloped parcels – related to the distribution of open space throughout the town.
- Institutional landholdings.
- Significant historical or archeological resources.
- Buffer lands in and around residential areas.
- Gateways into town, and in and around hamlets and the town center area.

Scenic, historic and cultural resources should be enjoyed by the community by various means of conveyance or arrangements with private landowners. Selected key open scenic roads, cultural and

historical resources and sites to consider for conservation and protection are:

- Historic sites (approximately 40 total) including:
 - The red school house at the intersection of Moe Road and Grooms Road;
 - Clifton Park Center/Miller Road area.
- The community-identified “Pumpkin Patch” area at Moe Road near the Route 146 intersection, just south of Collins Park.
- Scenic roads (or portions of these roads) and vistas to consider protecting are:
 - West on Route 146 at the rise in the road at Miller Road facing west;
 - Riverview Road;
 - Englemore Road;
 - Grooms Road;
 - Ashdown Road and Route 146A facing west;
 - Bradt Road west towards Glenridge Road;
 - End of Hubbs Road and Schauber Road facing west at Broken Arrow Ranch;
 - Moe Road.

Plan Concepts:

- A. Recognize and celebrate Clifton Park’s bounty of scenic roadways.
- B. Help preserve locally important historic sites and working landscapes.
- C. Create a “Scenic Roads of Clifton Park” system of interpretive signs and roadside conservation design guidelines.
- D. Goal to identify and protect 4 to 6 roads/historic sites in the next 2 to 5 years.

Implementation:

1. Expand educational opportunities for residents to learn the town’s history and cultural resources. Develop and implement a town-wide historical and cultural interpretation program, including the mapping of historic places, and design and installation of wayfaring interpretive signage throughout town. Coordinate with the existing or potential new programs at the school districts.
2. Seek out grants to secure project funding to help conserve important structures and scenic landscapes in the area. Support the designation of Riverview Road as a state-designated scenic byway.

3. Develop a voluntary program for the purchase of conservation easements for landowners of important open space areas that offer special cultural resources, historic resources and scenic views.
4. New growth in the vicinity of historic hamlets should reflect the community's heritage of settlement patterns. Therefore, the town's several historic hamlets of Vischer Ferry, Rexford, Jonesville, Grooms Corners, Clifton Park Center, and Elnora, should receive special recognition so that developers building in and around the hamlets have guidelines and real incentives for designing and constructing new buildings that complement the historic context. (Note, this is more about fostering sensitive site planning and contextual design—not about dictating architectural standards.)
5. Develop design guidelines for managing change along Clifton Park's country roads. These guidelines should address the roadside character comprehensively—from highway design and improvement recommendations, to roadside character resource conservation.

Town of Clifton Park Open Space Concept Plan

The open space plan concepts addressed above are graphically summarized in the plan shown separately on the following page. The plan is intended to show the ideas for open space protection, but not all the specific, finally determined sites that may comprise the future Town of Clifton Park Open Space Protection Program. In the development of the open space plan concepts, the open space committee wanted to be sensitive to property owners as this program is intended to be one of voluntary participation in nature. Thus, additional conversations and solicitation of interest from willing property owners is a critical part of implementing this open space plan, and is inherently necessary prior to the defining of any and all individually involved parcels.

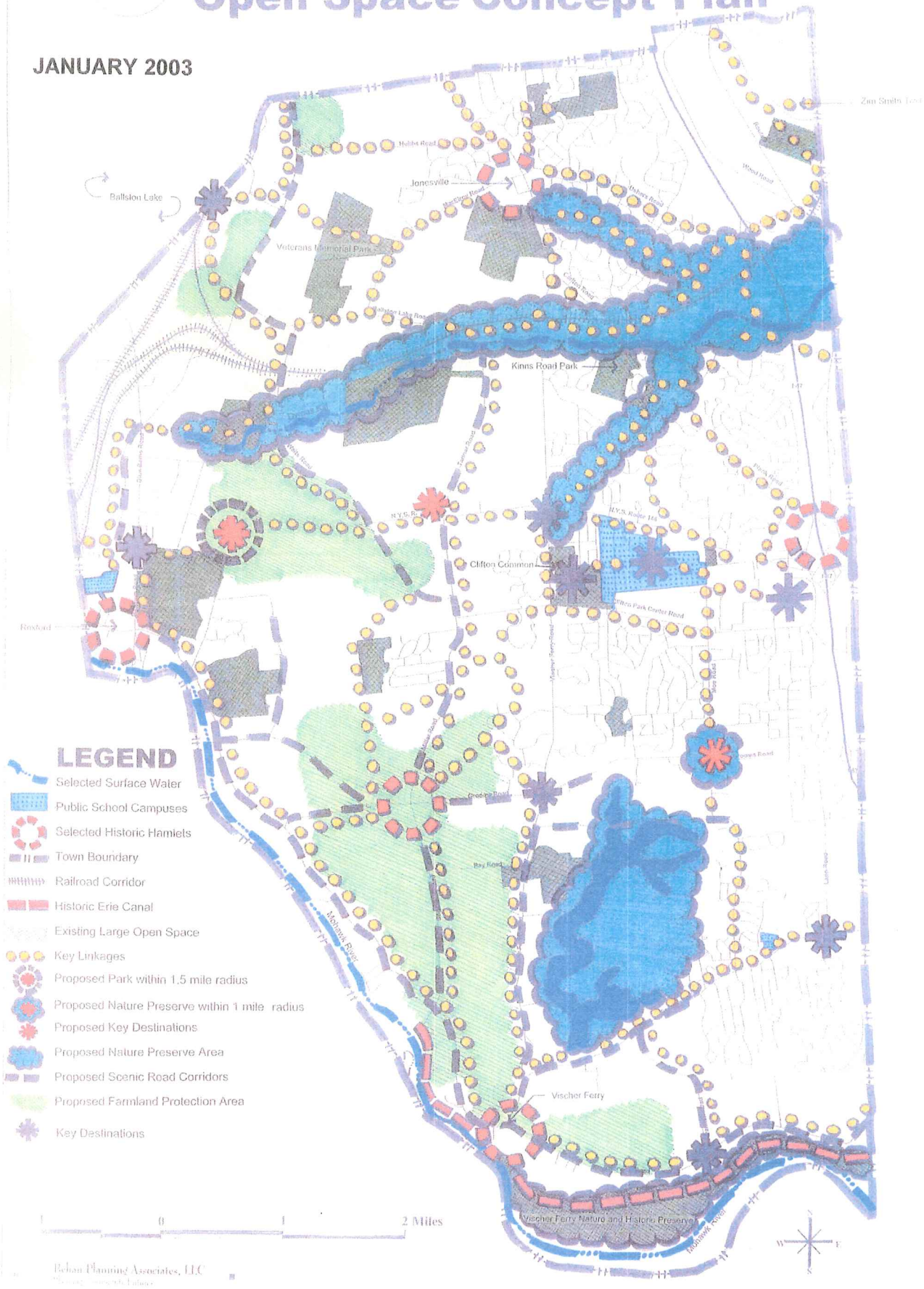
Plan's Depiction of Open Space Concepts

This map identifies general areas which have open space resources that may be part of a future land conservation program. This map is intended to show potential areas for open space protection, trail development, etc. However, importantly, the map is not intended to represent a definitive proposal for any particular property. It is intended that the plan should serve as a general guide to establishing priorities for the open space program.



Town of Clifton Park Open Space Concept Plan

JANUARY 2003



LEGEND

- Selected Surface Water
- Public School Campuses
- Selected Historic Hamlets
- Town Boundary
- Railroad Corridor
- Historic Erie Canal
- Existing Large Open Space
- Key Linkages
- Proposed Park within 1.5 mile radius
- Proposed Nature Preserve within 1 mile radius
- Proposed Key Destinations
- Proposed Nature Preserve Area
- Proposed Scenic Road Corridors
- Proposed Farmland Protection Area
- Key Destinations

Open space land protection would be carried out in partnership with property owners based on a willingness to participate.

Plan Orientation

To orient the reader in reading the open space plan graphic, a description of the plan's legend is found below.

Overall, what is shown is the entire town. Notably, the town enjoys a southern border with the Mohawk River, and although no specific location is depicted, there is a public desire for improvements to public access to the Mohawk River for diverse recreational use, as well as for different types of boating access. The historic Erie Canal is located in town along the northern shore of the Mohawk River, and is depicted as a pink dashed line.

The plan shows some of the key existing, permanently protected open space areas and parks in a dark olive green color with criss-crossed lines, such as the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, Kinns Road Park, Veterans Memorial Park, Round Lake Reservoir property – the rectangular area directly north of Ushers Road, state forest land at Route 9 in the northeast corner of town, Clifton Common, and parcels under conservation easement held by the Land Trust of the Saratoga Region. In addition, for this map, the golf courses in town are depicted as existing open space with the dark olive green color – but it should be noted that these would not be considered permanently protected open space.

A light blue color enhanced with black dots shows existing school and educational institution properties as a reference. School lands often include recreational facilities and open space.

The light green color with black diagonal slanted lines depicts generalized areas of potential farmland protection areas – and again, is not intended to define final site-specific parcels.

A medium green color with thick wavy black edge treatment shows potential proposed, desired nature preserve areas. The “green fingers” of the Dwaas Kill show the desired Dwaas Kill Natural Area of 500+ acres plus convey the idea of protection along the stream banks as a greenway connection across town. Notably, the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve currently exists – but there is an interest in some expansion of this preserve area, hence the black wavy lines around this preserve area. The Stony Creek Reservoir is a desired area for permanent protection – although it is anticipated to be only reachable in the long term. The idea of creating a “small-size” preserve is indicated by a roughly circular shape green area with a black wavy line around it and a red asterisk – to show a preserve could land roughly in a one-mile area in the vicinity of the

asterisk shown. The idea was to give a sense for a rough area of likely where a small preserve would be desirable – and where there is some small, limited remaining opportunities.

Key destinations (different types of activity centers where people are attracted) are noted with a black asterisk symbol. In general, residents want to reach commercial areas, schools, park facilities as key activity centers. Proposed key destinations indicated by a red asterisk are recognized as future destinations – such as future office park development at Tanner Road and Route 146, and a future new, large-size park in the western part of town.

Selected, key historic hamlets are shown as red-broken line circles, open in the middle. A plan concept is to protect the historic hamlets using for example, historic hamlet design guidelines for new development and rehabilitation.

The plan concept of proposed scenic road corridors is shown as a thick black, dash line effect. It is not meant to be all inclusive or definitive of all potentially scenic roads, but does mean to show key, major scenic roadways. Again, the designation of scenic roadways and any guidelines for scenic corridor development would need to be developed as part of plan implementation.

The concept for a new, larger size park is depicted as a thick, black, broken line circle symbol, with a thick, red asterisk symbol in the middle. This symbol combination is meant to convey the need for siting a park area in the western area of town, roughly within 1 ½ miles of the symbol shown. The final siting of a large park anywhere in town would require willing landowners and additional site-level planning and public process, including processing with adjacent landowners.

Finally, the idea that pedestrians and bicyclists should be able to connect east and west across town, north and south throughout town, and connect to key destinations, including parks, preserves and historic hamlets, spread out throughout town, is shown by the yellow circles outlined in black on the plan. Some on-road paths, and some off-road trails exist, and the idea is to continue to support the linking the parts of town for pedestrians and bicyclists. As particular segments of trails, paths and links are proposed, these pedestrian features will require site-specific public planning and design processes, with particular, sensitive concern to landowners and neighbors.

Summary of Conservation Targets

The table on the page following provides a summary of each of these conservation categories, near term (next five year) conservation targets,

and an a partnership goal that suggests target acreage levels for protection by private developers, non-profit, state and federal agencies, and the Town of Clifton Park.

Next Step: Mapping & Analysis for Parcel-Level Resource Rating

A five-step process resource evaluation model was developed by the consultant for the committee, town staff and consultant to use and collaborate upon to evaluate and prioritize potential open space resources to be conserved in Clifton Park. The Clifton Park Resource Evaluation Model is located in Appendix C.

This resource model was set up to establish priorities for action by the Town of Clifton Park Town Board. These types of criteria and understanding will be used to identify the places of highest resource value on and to finalize a future priority parcel list for resource conservation. For example, a working farm with historic farm buildings along a scenic road with a trout-fishing stream that runs on the property would likely be evaluated as a highly important property. For more information on the priority ranking system to be used for future parcel identification and priority, please refer to Appendix C.

Conclusion

The Clifton Park Open Space Concept Plan will help protect critical elements of the community's natural and cultural heritage. With a plan and its shared investment, we will be able to pass these resources on to future generations. With community support and partnership, this open space legacy of natural resources for the future will benefit the lives of current and future generations. All of this may be achieved within a context of also ensuring that an adequate base is available for continued growth of the town. Given this balance, the community is enriched.

CLIFTON PARK OPEN SPACE PROTECTON TARGETS
January 2003

CONSERVATION CATEGORY	NEAR TERM (NEXT 1-5 YEARS) CONSERVATION TARGETS			> COOP AGREEMENT (LAND TRUST & INTERMUNICIPAL) > STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS > DEVELOPMENT SET ASIDES	TOWN INVESTMENT (PURCHASE/ PERMANENT EASEMENT/ FINANCIAL SUPPORT)
	Acres	Miles	Sites/ Roads		
WILDLIFE NATURE PRESERVES & WATERSHEDS	500 -1,000			250 - 500	250 - 500
FARMLAND PROTECTION	300 - 600			150 - 300	150 - 300
PARKLAND & BALLFIELDS	100 - 200			50 - 100	50 - 100
TOWN-WIDE PATHS & TRAILS	6 - 10 miles			3 - 5 miles	3 - 5 miles
SCENIC ROADS, CULTURAL RESOURCES, & HISTORIC PRESERVATION	4 - 6 sites/roads designated and interpreted			2 - 3 sites/roads	2 - 3 sites/roads
PHASE I -	Acres	Miles	Sites/ Roads	450 - 900	450 - 900
2-to-5-YEAR ACTION PLAN SUMMARY	900 - 1800	6 - 10	4 - 6		

End Notes

¹Water resources recognized as valuable for protection include:

- Wetlands, streams, lakes and a buffer of adjacent lands
- Water supply surface reservoirs, and a buffer of adjacent lands
- Public water supply wellheads and wellhead protection areas
- Aquifers and aquifer recharge areas
- Floodplain protection areas

Wetlands floodplains, and streams for example, benefit from some regulatory protection. While other resources, such as aquifers are not necessarily protected.

² Year-round well sites to ensure that adequate protection is in place for are the following:

- a. Vischer Ferry Preserve
- b. Boyack Road Well system
- c. Berry Farm
- d. Park Lane
- e. Plank Road
- f. Kinns Road

³ These secondary systems are located at:

- a. Lapp Road
- b. Park Lane
- c. Oakwood
- d. Barney GC
- e. Meadows
- f. Roosevelt Ct
- g. Moe Road

⁴ Continue dialogue to find an arrangement with the Town of Colonie (Latham Water District) for the Town of Clifton Park to gain interest in or outright acquire the Stony Creek Reservoir lands in the event that Colonie no longer has a need for the reservoir. In addition, protect land parcels at the headwaters and along the Stony Creek for water quality protection. Protect areas immediately adjacent to the Stony Creek Reservoir for future public access and water quality protection.

⁵ Additional Areas to Consider for Future Conservation / Additional Potential Open Space Opportunities for Nature Preserves (large to small):

- "Triangle" of key agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive (wetlands) lands in the southwest quadrant of town.
- Waite Road woodlands area (north and south woodlands). Could link this open space corridor to Rexford.
- Increased public access opportunities on the Mohawk River
- Create increased public access opportunities in Clifton Park along the shores of Ballston Lake.
- Public access at creekside along Tanner Road just off of Route 146A.
- Opportunities for environmental education:
 - Vischer Ferry Preserve
 - At a location in the Dwaas Kill Natural Area
 - Kinns Road Park
 - Round Lake Reservoir lands

-
- o Historic site Taurusa at Grooms Road

⁶ . Farmland protection priorities would include:

- i. Farms with soils of statewide significance, and agricultural importance.
- ii. Farms that have scenic or historical significance.
- iii. Farms that have environmental significance as a buffer or that include ecological or habitat areas.
- iv. Farms that use sound environmental management practices.
- v. Farms under threat of development pressure and conversion.
- vi. Contiguous agricultural parcels and operations.

⁷ Activity Centers identified on the Open Space Concepts Map (June 2002) (desirable destinations for residents) include:

- 1. Historic Hamlets
 - a. Jonesville
 - b. Clifton Park Center
 - c. Elnora
 - d. Rexford
 - e. Vischer Ferry
 - f. Grooms Corners
- 2. Large-scale activity centers:
 - a. Clifton Commons
 - b. Shenendehowa Central School District properties
 - c. Commercial center – shopping mall area west of Exit 9 along both sides of Route 146.
- 3. Small-scale activity centers:
 - a. Glencliff School
 - b. Okte School
 - c. Intersection of Schauber Road (Route 80) and Ballston Lake Road where it becomes Main Street
 - d. Intersection of Blue Barns Road and Route 146 (small commercial area)
 - e. Intersection of Route 146 and Vischer Ferry Road (small commercial area)
 - f. Intersection of Vischer Ferry Road and Grooms Road (small commercial center)
 - g. Small commercial area east of Lapp Road along Crescent Road up to Exit 8.