

## Acknowledgements

---

### Recreation Plan Advisory Committee

Laura Andruski  
Rick Amico  
Gerald Burr  
Michael Campisi  
Becky Carman  
Michelle Cravetz  
Eric Hamilton  
Kwang Pai  
James Romano

### Town Board

Phil Barrett, Town Supervisor  
Scott Hughes  
Tom Paolucci  
James Romano  
Lynda Walowit

### Clifton Park Town Staff

John Scavo, Jr. Director of Planning  
Jen Viggiani, AICP, Open Space Coordinator  
Myla Kramer, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Affairs  
Josh Westfall, Planner

### Consultant



---

4 Computer Drive West • Albany, New York 12205  
[www.labergegroup.com](http://www.labergegroup.com)

© 2010 Laberge Group, Project #2009014

# Table of Contents

<b>Clifton Park’s Recreation Vision Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>What is a Recreation Plan? .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning Process Overview .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Public Participation Overview .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Overview of Community Recreational Resources.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Clifton Park’s Opportunities &amp; Challenges .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>I. Goals, Action &amp; Implementation .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Recreation Policy Statements.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Recreation Vision Statement.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>High Priority Action Items.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Healthy Living Goals &amp; Actions .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Access &amp; Awareness Goals &amp; Actions.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Arts &amp; Culture Goals &amp; Actions .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Stewardship of Resources Goals &amp; Actions.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Open Space &amp; Natural Resources Goals &amp; Actions.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Parks &amp; Recreational Facilities Goals &amp; Actions .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Waterfront Goals &amp; Actions .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Facility Improvements.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Implementing the Plan .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Funding Sources for Parks &amp; Recreation Projects.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>II. Existing Conditions: Inventory &amp; Analysis.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Community Profile .....</b>	<b>25</b>
Location.....	25
History.....	26
Demographic Profile .....	28
Population .....	28
Age .....	29
Households.....	30
Housing .....	32
Education.....	33
Income.....	34
Topography .....	35
Natural Resources .....	35
Park Districts .....	36
Agricultural Resources and Agricultural Recreation.....	37
Recreational Tourism .....	37
Existing Land Use .....	38
Existing Plans and Studies .....	40
<b>III. Inventory and Assessment: Parks, Recreation &amp; Cultural Resources .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Public Recreational Resources.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b><i>Parks &amp; Recreation Facilities .....</i></b>	<b>48</b>
Barney Road Park & Pool .....	48



Beechwood Pocket Park .....49

Bernini Drive Park .....51

Boyack Road .....52

Burning Bush Park & Pool.....53

Clifton Common.....54

Clifton Gardens Park .....56

Clifton Park Action Park .....57

Compton Road Park .....57

Crescent Estates South (CES) Park .....58

East Haystack Road Play Lot (unofficial name) .....59

Garnsey Park .....60

George C. Smith Park.....60

Haystack Road Play Lot (unofficial name) .....61

Huntwood Park.....62

Locust Lane Park & Pool .....62

Martin Jewett Park .....64

Mary Jane Row Dog Park .....65

Nottingham Way South Park.....66

Parkside Trail Fields.....66

Parkwood Drive Park (unofficial name).....67

Spirit Park.....68

Presidential Estates Play Lot (unofficial name) .....68

Shirewood Play Lot I (unofficial name) .....69

Shirewood Play Lot II (unofficial name).....69

Sugarbush Road Park (unofficial name).....70

Stony Creek Park (future).....71

Veterans Memorial Park at Elks Trail .....71

Village Green Tennis Court .....72

Westchester Drive Tennis Courts .....73

William K. Collins, Jr. Park .....74

**Historic Resources.....75**

    Grooms Tavern.....75

    Mohawk Valley Grange .....75

**Nature Preserves .....76**

    Dwaas Kill Nature Preserve .....76

    Kinns Road Park/Saratoga County Forest .....76

    Mohawk Landing Nature Preserve .....77

    North Woods Nature Preserve.....77

    Ushers Road State Forest .....77

    Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve.....78

**Trails.....79**

    Trails in Clifton Park: Connecting our Community .....79

    Trails Vision.....80

    Trails History.....80

    Completed Trails, Pathways and Sidewalks in the Town of Clifton Park .....81

    Trail Projects in Progress by the Town of Clifton Park.....83

    Neighborhood Trails in Progress by Private Developers.....84

    Key Trail Gaps .....84

**Park Districts .....85**

    Calico Colony Park District .....85

    Clifton Gardens Park District .....86

    Clifton Knolls Park District.....86

    Dwaaskill Park District .....86

    Longkill I Park District.....87

    Longkill II Park District .....87

    Meadow Estates & Addison Estates Park District.....87



Riverview I Park District ..... 88

Settlers Hill Park District ..... 88

Sherwood Forest Park District ..... 88

Stony Creek I Park District ..... 88

Stony Creek II Park District ..... 89

Wyncrest Park District ..... 89

**Arts, Culture & Entertainment Resources ..... 91**

**Shenendehowa School District Recreational Resources ..... 92**

**Private & Not-for-Profit Recreational Resources ..... 93**

**IV. State & National Recreational Needs Assessment ..... 95**

**State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) ..... 96**

*Evaluating Park and Recreation Resources ..... 98*

    Park and Open Space Service Area for Clifton Park ..... 99

    Facility Standards for Clifton Park ..... 100

    Overall Facility Needs Analysis ..... 100

**Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines (NRPA) ..... 104**

*Multi-Step Park Planning Process ..... 104*

    Identifying Users ..... 104

    Obtaining Public Involvement and Developing Relationships ..... 105

    Assessing Need ..... 105

    Developing the Strategic Plan ..... 105

*NRPA Classifications ..... 105*

*Evaluating Park and Recreation Resources Using NRPA Standards ..... 107*

**V. Community Outreach Process ..... 109**

**Community Survey ..... 110**

    Demographics of Survey Respondents ..... 110

    Preferred Parks & Recreation Facilities ..... 111

    Preferred Recreational Activities ..... 112

    Recreation Spending ..... 114

    Overall Quality of Recreational Programs & Facilities ..... 114

    Future Recreational Programming and Amenities ..... 117

**Public Workshops ..... 118**

    Recreation Needs Public Workshop #1 ..... 118

    Recreation Needs Public Workshop #2 ..... 119

    Public Workshop #3 ..... 120

    Public Workshop #4 ..... 122

**Stakeholder Interviews ..... 124**

    Challenges ..... 124

    Recommendations ..... 126

**VI. Mohawk River Recreational Access ..... 129**

**Mohawk River Recreational Activities ..... 129**

**Mohawk River Recreational Access ..... 130**

**Potential Recreational Opportunities ..... 131**

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Population Trends ..... 28

Table 2: Age Distribution, 2000 ..... 30

Table 3: Households by Type, 2000 ..... 31




---

Table 4: Housing Inventory, 2000 .....	33
Table 5: Educational Attainment, 2000 .....	34
Table 6: Household Income, 2000 .....	34
Table 7: Public Park and Recreational Facilities .....	47
Table 8: Clifton Park Trails .....	82
Table 9: Shenendehowa Central School District Recreational Resources .....	92
Table 10: SCORP Recreational Facility Design Guidelines* .....	97
Table 11: SCORP Facility Development Standards .....	98
Table 12: SCORP Park and Open Space Classifications for Clifton Park .....	99
Table 13: SCORP Facility Needs for Clifton Park .....	103
Table 14: NRPA Parks and Open Space Classifications .....	106
Table 15: NRPA Pathway Classifications Table .....	107
Table 16: NRPA Park and Open Space Classifications for the Town of Clifton Park .....	108

---

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Age Distribution, 2000 .....	29
Figure 2: Household Composition in Clifton Park, 1990 & 2000 .....	32
Figure 3: Gender of Respondents .....	110
Figure 4: Geographic Representation of Respondents .....	111
Figure 5: Public Rec. Resources in Clifton Park (by % of respondents who use resource) .....	112
Figure 6: Frequency Respondents Participate in Recreational Activities .....	113
Figure 7: Amount Spent on Recreation per Year .....	114
Figure 8: Level & Scope of Recreational Programs, Parks, Trails & Recreational Facilities .....	114
Figure 9: Quality of Parks & Recreation Facilities .....	115
Figure 10: Quality of Parks & Recreation Programming & Facilities .....	116
Figure 11: Reasons that Deter Household Members from Using Town Parks .....	116
Figure 12: Desired Future Recreation Programs .....	117

---

**LIST OF MAPS**

Map 1: Regional Context .....	27
Map 2: Parks, Preserves & Trails .....	50
Map 3: Park Districts .....	90
Map 4: SCORP - Pocket Parks, Play Lots & Neighborhood Parks .....	101
Map 5: SCORP - Community Parks .....	102

---

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

- Appendix A: Park Inventory & Assessment
- Appendix B: Community Outreach
- Appendix C: Stakeholder Interviews
- Appendix D: Public Workshops
- Appendix E: Funding

## Clifton Park's Recreation Vision Summary



### What is a Recreation Plan?

Community recreational resources, such as parks, open space, and trails, provide an important means for protecting valuable natural resources and preserving safe, scenic areas for resident use and enjoyment. In this increasingly busy, technological era, there has also been a growing recognition of the important physical and mental health role that recreation plays in the lives of residents. Recreation is known to provide a healthy outlet for everyday pressures, as it provides residents with opportunities for social interaction, exercise, and decompression from stress. For this reason, it is considered a vital quality of life asset.

Recreation is defined by Merriam-Webster's Dictionary as "a way of refreshing the mind or body." Therefore, a successful Recreation Plan must promote healthy bodies *and* healthy minds by providing access to a diverse selection of recreational opportunities year-

round, encouraging active transportation options, and supplying residents with the tools necessary to regularly make healthy choices. Working in collaboration with municipal and community stakeholders, a community can foster healthy lifestyles and active living through sponsoring education and community programming; increasing community connectivity; providing infrastructure that supports alternative means of transportation; preserving open space; and providing safe, attractive, and accessible recreational facilities.

Together We Can...

Healthy  
Eating  
Active  
Living

A Recreation Plan is an important community planning tool. A community develops a Recreation Plan to evaluate the existing condition of its parks and recreational resources, as well as identify desired improvements for the future. Through an ongoing public participation process, community residents are invited to provide feedback on the types of recreational resources they would like to see developed and where. A Recreation Plan can function as a blueprint to guide future recreational development.



---

## *Planning Process Overview*

---

Through its *Recreation Plan*, the Town of Clifton Park assessed the conditions of its community parks, identified current and future needs, and established a planning framework to meet those needs. This framework included partnerships and funding sources that will minimize taxpayer investment. During these difficult economic times, the Town will strive to maintain its commitment to the goals of the plan, however, implementation will largely be contingent on the availability of funding. It is important to remember that the *Recreation Plan* is intended to serve as a vision or guiding document for future recreational development rather than a direct mandate for action.

The Town initiated the planning process by identifying the existing recreational issues and concerns through the recreation needs survey, stakeholder interviews, and detailed analysis of the existing recreational resources. Next the Town's recreational facilities, parks, and programs were compared with State and National standards to understand trends and community needs. The result of this analysis, as well as recreational goals and strategies identified in previously completed plans, was a clear set of guidelines regarding the level and standard of recreation services, programs, and facilities to be provided for Clifton Park residents and property owners. Although the Plan originally began as a traditional parks analysis, the scope of the project was broadened to include cultural recreation as well.



The Recreation Plan Advisory Committee was charged with oversight of the Plan. Tasks included reviewing draft documents, collecting information on parks and recreational facilities, and serving as a point of contact for community members within the Town. In addition to multiple Advisory Committee meetings dedicated solely to the Plan's development, the Town conducted four public workshops to engage participants in the creation of a community-driven vision for the future of Clifton Park's recreational assets. The Advisory

Committee served as a community advocate for the ideas and topics that were addressed during the workshops, affirming that the goals and strategies of the *Recreation Plan* reflected the community's vision.



---

## ***Public Participation Overview***

---

The foundation of a good plan is the incorporation of public input early and often throughout the Plan's development. To ensure that a plan is founded upon common goals and objectives, it is imperative that feedback be obtained from the community. Three methods were used to solicit community input during the Town of Clifton Park recreational planning process: a recreation needs survey; stakeholder interviews; and four public workshops. The feedback obtained through these public outreach efforts formed the basis for the recommendations developed as part of this planning process.



---

## ***Overview of Community Recreational Resources***

---

The inventory of Clifton Park's recreational resources was conducted using a variety of methods in order to ensure the most comprehensive list of parks and trails possible. Resources were identified through the review of previous plans and studies, interviews with Park District Chairpersons, GIS data, and satellite images. Once all Town recreational resources were identified, an inventory of amenities and a conditions assessment was conducted through site visits. Park inventory sheets, found in **Appendix A**, were used to evaluate resources in a consistent and objective manner.

---

## ***Clifton Park's Opportunities & Challenges***

---

The Town of Clifton Park and its neighboring municipalities have experienced upward growth trends in the past 20 years that defy significant population losses in the rest of Upstate New York. Clifton Park's population increased from 30,115 in 1990 to 32,995 in 2000, a 9.6% increase. It is anticipated that the population growth trend will be reflected in the results of the 2010 U.S. Census, expected in 2011. Many of these new residents are families (74.4%), which require diverse recreational facilities and programs. As of the 2000 Census, 28.2% of the total population of Clifton Park was under the age 19. The Town's senior population is also growing with 20.8% over the age of 55.





Residential growth and the increasing conversion of agricultural lands and natural areas to neighborhoods has prompted the Town Board to protect water quality, preserve open space, conserve farmland, and enhance parks and trails. The Town of Clifton Park contains many natural features that together make it a beautiful place to live and visit, such as Vischer Ferry Nature and



Historic Preserve and the Mohawk River. The Town also provides three major community parks, six nature preserves, and an extensive network of trails. A proposed community park on Route 146, Garnsey Park, will provide expanded recreational access to residents in the western portion of Clifton Park.

The majority of the Town's active recreational facilities are provided at Clifton Common and Veterans Memorial Park. Other facilities are provided at community and neighborhood parks located geographically throughout the Town. The Town of Clifton Park Town Board, in consultation with the Open Space, Trails and Riverfront Committee, has also succeeded in preserving over 850 acres and 15 miles of trails. In addition, the Parks, Recreation and Community Affairs Department offers a diverse schedule of passive and active recreational programs for residents of all ages.

When analyzing the parks and recreation system within the Town of Clifton Park, it was important to compare the existing facilities to the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). The SCORP and NRPA guidelines produce separate, yet, equally important standards from which to develop recreational facilities on the local level. According to the SCORP analysis, the Town of Clifton Park provided 61.5% of the recommended recreational facilities to residents in 2000, and indicated that the greatest deficits were in pool and field game facilities. This assessment was based on all Town-owned parkland, preserves, and facilities in the Town of Clifton Park.

The SCORP and NRPA assessments do not include guidelines for arts and cultural resources and waterfront access. However, through the public outreach process, residents identified the need to expand investment into facility space for arts and culture programs and inadequate public access to the Mohawk River.



## I. Goals, Action & Implementation

---



### *Recreation Policy Statements*

---

A good recreation plan builds upon a framework that ties broad ideas and specific activities together, identifying the community’s short- and long-term needs. Effective policies that will guide community investment and decision making in the Town of Clifton Park over the next decade often require a multi-level approach. The Plan’s framework is very much like the blueprint of a building. All of the components, from the largest to the smallest, must fit together in a logical way for the structure to stand and function well for years to come.

This document is the base upon which the community’s future direction, development and success will be built. The Town of Clifton Park *Recreation Plan* has the following key elements:

***Community Vision Statement:*** A general statement about the future condition or state of parks and recreational resources in the community; it is the end toward which all actions are aimed.

***Goal:*** A statement of measurable activity to be accomplished in pursuit of the policy, which is reasonably attainable. Consider broad actions or aspirations, such as “increase,” “develop,” or “preserve.”

***Action Item:*** A specific proposal to do something that relates directly to accomplishing a Goal, which usually takes the form of a plan, activity, project, or program.



## Recreation Vision Statement

### Town of Clifton Park’s Recreation Vision

*“Expand and maintain Clifton Park’s park and recreation system to provide all residents with quality facilities, trails, programs, and open space that are not only safe and attractive, but provide diverse active and passive recreational opportunities that support healthy lifestyles.”*

## High Priority Action Items

As part of the planning process, an attempt was made to identify priority strategies that best reflect the community’s needs, desires, and long-term success of Clifton Park’s *Recreation Plan*. These key strategies were identified to provide maximum impact, while providing a substantial approach to improving and balancing the recreational needs of Town.

**Vision Ideas for Tomorrow**

The following action items were identified by Clifton Park as high priority “next steps” towards implementation:

**Healthy Living Action 1.1:** *Encourage programs, services, policies, plans, and incentives that enhance the general health and wellbeing, as well as promote healthy lifestyles, of all Clifton Park residents.*

**Arts and Culture Action 2.1:** *Inventory underutilized sites in the Town to determine which sites could most feasibly be upgraded to accommodate arts and culture activities. Sites such as the Grange provide unique opportunities for the Town. Conduct a subsequent cost analysis of the identified sites in order to prioritize.*

**Stewardship of Resources Action 1.1:** *Conduct a feasibility study to evaluate the organizational structure of the Town’s park districts to continually improve the utilization of the Town’s recreational resources and the delivery of recreational services.*

**Parks and Recreational Facilities Action 1.1:** *Complete a Recreation Demand Analysis of each of the Town’s recreational facilities and programs; obtain 10-year historical, current and projected enrollment or usage numbers in order to understand current and future recreational needs. Periodically update the analysis to ensure recreation facilities and programs are optimally used and provided. To further determine demand, a central coordinator internship position could be*



*created for a period of two years to manage facility scheduling and to monitor field utilization. Based upon the results of the demand analysis, expand the Town's recreation fields appropriately.*

***Parks and Recreational Facilities Action 1.2:*** *Continue to coordinate with the Shenendehowa Central School District for shared use of facilities by conducting regular meetings to discuss how to maximize existing resources.*

***Parks and Recreational Facilities Action 2.2:*** *Continue to connect existing trails and neighborhoods throughout the Town. Trail connections should be extended along, but not limited to, Moe Road, Route 146 West, Vischer Ferry Road, the Mohawk Towpath Byway corridor, MacElroy Road, and south of Clifton Park Center Road.*

***Waterfront Action 1.1:*** *Support a multi-use facility with access to the Mohawk River; such facility many include a rowing facility, public safety access, amphitheater, and water access for small/large boats. Public/private partnerships should be formed to leverage funds for building and operating the facility.*

It should be acknowledged that historical enrollment data was not available for the Town's recreational leagues; such data is necessary to evaluate and compare past and current enrollment trends. Therefore, specific recommendations and strategies related to the needs and demands of the Town's leagues have not been determined at this time. It is recommended that the Town begin to collect and track enrollment to accurately assess the needs of the Town's many recreational leagues.



## Healthy Living Goals & Actions



### **HL Goal 1: Promote healthy living and lifestyles for all ages and residents in Clifton Park.**

*HL Action 1.1: Encourage programs, services, policies, plans, and incentives that enhance the general health and wellbeing, as well as promote healthy lifestyles, of all Clifton Park residents.*

*HL Action 1.2: Encourage and promote programs to educate residents about healthy living choices and encourage easy access to information about activity and nutrition.*

*HL Action 1.3: Promote a variety of low-cost, low impact, lifetime sports and activities, in which residents can participate at any age.*

*HL Action 1.4: Consider additional recreational programs that target middle school and high school-aged students.*

*HL Action 1.5: Explore camps and before-and-after school programs, in collaboration with the Shenendehowa Central School District and other partners, for kids during all seasons to promote active lifestyles year-round.*

*HL Action 1.6: Continue to enhance and publicize the process for residents to submit their interests and needs for park/recreation facilities and public programming, in concert with park districts.*

*HL Action 1.7: Create a "Healthy Living" column in the Town's newsletter and/or on the Town's website to promote health in Clifton Park and inspire individuals and organizations to create a culture of healthy living.*

*HL Action 1.8: Establish designated smoke-free boundaries within parks, playgrounds and other outdoor public places.*



*HL Action 1.9: Support public/private partnerships to provide low-cost recreation equipment to increase residents' access to new and life-long sports and activities.*

*HL Action 1.10: Collect 10-year historical, current and projected enrollment data for each of the Town's recreational leagues to determine current and future recreational needs.*



### Access & Awareness Goals & Actions



**AA Goal 1: Improve access to and awareness of the Town’s resources for recreational and cultural enjoyment.**

*AA Action 1.1: Build information kiosks and uniform way-finding maps for all Town parks and trails.*

*AA Action 1.2: Add content to the Town's recreation website to include events, maps, and general information on parks and recreational programs.*

*AA Action 1.3: Encourage and support special events, programs, and activities such as concerts and family days, at the Town's various parks.*

*AA Action 1.4: Ensure adequate parking at each recreational facility and trailhead. Examine parking and traffic flow of the Town’s recreation facilities as part of future highway safety studies.*



*AA Action 1.5: Establish a town-wide system to reserve fields and facilities through the Town’s website.*

*AA Action 1.6: Evaluate the need for lighting to encourage longer use of the Town’s recreational facilities and to enhance safety where appropriate.*

*AA Action 1.7: Encourage and support adult daycare programs.*

*AA Action 1.8: Encourage an increase in recreation opportunities to serve the demands and needs of the senior population.*



*AA Action 1.9: Complete a self-evaluation of all the existing Town-owned recreation facilities and trails to gauge compliancy with the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Upgrade facilities when appropriate so to continue to meet the needs of residents with disabilities and special needs. Encourage private recreation facilities to also evaluate and improve facility space to adhere to the current ADA standards.*



*AA Action 1.10: Continue to integrate children/adults with disabilities into recreational activities and programs and support complimentary recreational programs for residents with disabilities.*



## Arts & Culture Goals & Actions



### AC Goal 1: Promote arts in the civic realm.

*AC Action 1.1: Provide a diversity of opportunities for residents to participate in cultural and artistic events.*

*AC Action 1.2: Incorporate the work of local artists into the fabric of the Town’s activities, throughout the built environment, and at special events.*

*AC Action 1.3: Increase exposure of students to arts and cultural events by working with the Shenendehowa Central School District to develop partnerships with arts organizations and higher education institutions.*

### AC Goal 2: Encourage the development and maintenance of facilities to support diverse cultural and artistic activities.

*AC Action 2.1: Inventory underutilized sites in the Town to determine which sites could most feasibly be upgraded to accommodate arts and culture activities. Site such as the Grange provide unique opportunities for the community. Conduct a subsequent cost analysis of the identified sites in order to prioritize.*

*AC Action 2.2: Raise funds for the construction or improvement of an arts and culture facility by encouraging arts and culture organizations to charge a fee for premium seating at events.*





## Stewardship of Resources Goals & Actions



**SR Goal 1: Enable the Town to successfully achieve its recreational vision through public and private partnerships that promote stewardship of the Town’s resources.**

- SR Action 1.1: Conduct a feasibility study to evaluate the organizational structure of the Town’s park districts to continually improve the utilization of the Town’s recreational resources and the delivery of recreational services.*
- SR Action 1.2: Explore and promote public/private/not-for-profit collaborations for recreational purposes.*
- SR Action 1.3: Encourage the creation of a stewardship plan to clarify the responsibilities for the Town’s recreational resources and to prioritize funds for capital improvements related to recreation.*
- SR Action 1.4: Continue to partner with sports leagues to maintain recreational facilities.*
- SR Action 1.5: Continue to recruit community volunteers and non-profit organizations to maintain recreational facilities and trails. Create standards to be used in the stewardship of the Town’s recreational resources.*
- SR Action 1.6: Continue to partner with Saratoga County to improve parks and trails on County forest lands.*
- SR Action 1.7: Continue to support and evaluate alternative funding sources/budgeting opportunities for recreation, which may include grants, fundraising, user fees, loans, private/public partnerships, or a bed tax.*
- SR Action 1.8: Continue to enforce fines for vandalism and littering in parks.*



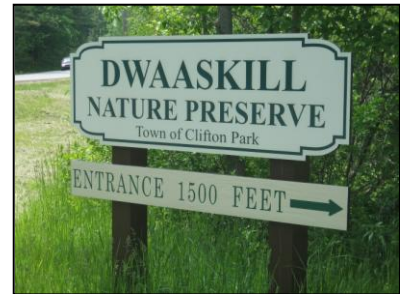
## Open Space & Natural Resources Goals & Actions



**OS Goal 1:** Continue to support the preservation, protection, and accessibility of the Town's open space and natural resources.

*OS Action 1.1:* Continue to pursue the acquisition of Stony Creek Reservoir to enhance the Town's Open Space resources and passive recreation opportunities, consistent with the goals of the Open Space Plan.

*OS Action 1.2:* Continue to acquire additional land for passive and active recreation in accordance with the SCORP and NRPA results. For example, the recreation needs and service area assessment identified a need for a community park in the southeastern portion of the Town, as well as facilities to accommodate field games.



*OS Action 1.3:* Continue to preserve and protect open space resources in Western Clifton Park, consistent with the goals of the Open Space Plan.



## Parks & Recreational Facilities Goals & Actions



**PRF Goal 1: Continue to support the development and maintenance of a park and recreation system that meets the year-round needs of current and future Town residents.**

- PRF Action 1.1: Complete a Recreation Demand Analysis of each of the Town's recreational facilities and programs; obtain 10-year historical, current and projected enrollment or usage numbers in order to understand current and future recreational needs. Periodically update the analysis to ensure recreation facilities and programs are optimally used and provided. To further determine demand, a central coordinator internship position could be created for a period of two years to manage facility scheduling and to monitor field utilization. Based upon the results of the demand analysis, expand the Town's recreation fields appropriately.*
- PRF Action 1.2: Continue to coordinate with the Shenendehowa Central School District for shared use of facilities by conducting regular meetings to discuss how to maximize existing resources.*
- PRF Action 1.3: Consider a shared services study with Shenendehowa Central School District to address field management and field utilization.*
- PRF Action 1.4: Work with the neighboring Towns of Malta, Halfmoon, Niskayuna, Waterford, and Glenville to identify opportunities to share recreational facilities and programs to improve delivery of recreational services to the region.*
- PRF Action 1.5: Sponsor annual workshops on field utilization for all teams.*
- PRF Action 1.6: Work with the Southern Saratoga YMCA to explore the expansion of their facilities and collaborate for the use of existing facility space.*



- PRF Action 1.7: Conduct a feasibility study to evaluate a business plan for the development of a mid-sized, multi-purpose community center. The feasibility study should compare public, private, and not-for-profit operation and maintenance costs. Activities accommodated by the facility will be determined through the feasibility study. The facility could accommodate space for the Town's recreational and cultural needs.*
- PRF Action 1.8: Explore public/private partnerships for additional storage space for the equipment of Town recreation leagues based on demonstrated need.*
- PRF Action 1.9: Incorporate a new dog park into an existing/new facility in the northern section of the Town.*
- PRF Action 1.10: Consider providing a seasonal outdoor skating facility.*
- PRF Action 1.11: Encourage park districts to modernize outdated or vandalized park equipment.*
- PRF Action 1.12: Upgrade the Town's parks to include drinking fountains, restrooms, additional pavilions, benches, and lighting where necessary.*
- PRF Action 1.13: Continue to increase the variety or diversity of activities available at Town parks.*
- PRF Action 1.14: Allow for public input on the design of all new recreation facilities and playgrounds.*
- PRF Action 1.15: Utilize and refine criteria to rank and evaluate potential parkland and open space purchases and/or donations. Such conditions may include an evaluation of wetlands, steep slopes, access, and linkages to the existing park and trail systems to ensure resources are both usable and beneficial for the Town's residents.*
- PRF Action 1.16: Consider the development of a sound business plan, which would consider allowing pool fees to include a "pay-per-visit" option for Town residents.*
- PRF Action 1.17: Consider additional town-owned outdoor public pools and/or indoor pools to increase access for the Town's residents based upon SCORP and NRPA analysis.*



**PRF Goal 2: Continue to promote and enhance the Town’s multimodal transportation network.**

*PRF Action 2.1: Explore the development of a “Complete Streets” town policy to guide the development and redevelopment of transportation networks that are safer, more livable, and welcoming. This policy would ensure that roadways are newly designed and operated with the safety of all users in mind, including: pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation vehicles and riders. Elements of Complete Streets include, but*



*are not limited to, trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, frequent crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, and curb extensions. The policies of this plan can be further incorporated into site plan and subdivision design guidelines, and codified as warranted.*

*PRF Action 2.2: Continue to connect existing trails and neighborhoods throughout the Town. Trail connections should be extended along, but not limited to, Moe Road, Route 146 West, Vischer Ferry Road, the Mohawk Towpath Byway corridor, MacElroy Road, and south of Clifton Park Center Road.*

*PRF Action 2.3: Continue to work with neighboring municipalities to connect regional trail systems at the Town’s borders and enhance recreational opportunities along these trails.*

*PRF Action 2.4: Continue to work with Saratoga County and New York State to widen shoulders on County roads for pedestrian and bicycle safety.*

*PRF Action 2.5: Consider providing comfort stations with benches, garbage cans, and/or drinking water at key locations near major trails in the Town.*

*PRF Action 2.6: Create additional multi-use trails (i.e. cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, etc.). Explore the potential to create fitness trails with obstacles and challenge stations.*



## Waterfront Goals & Actions



**W Goal 1: Promote awareness and access to the Town’s many water resources for water-related recreational activities.**

*W Action 1.1: Support a multi-use facility with access to the Mohawk River; such facility many include a rowing facility, public safety access, amphitheater, and water access for small/large boats. Public/private partnerships should be formed to leverage funds for building and operating the facility.*

*W Action 1.2: Provide additional picnic areas and pavilion(s) near the Mohawk River.*

*W Action 1.3: Provide historical and environmental interpretation centers near the riverfront in cooperation with the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway Coalition, Inc and other applicable partners.*

*W Action 1.4: Continue to create convenient and safe access to the Mohawk River, streams, and water bodies for launching canoes, kayaks, skulls, and/or motorboats.*

*W Action 1.5: Secure additional land on the riverfront for future public access to the Mohawk River when opportunities present themselves.*



## Facility Improvements

The following recommended facility improvements are based upon the results of the park inventory and interviews with Town staff, park district chairpersons, and other stakeholders. These recommendations seek to remedy the issues identified at each Town-owned recreational facility and are focused on enhancing access, safety, and aesthetic appearance of each facility. The recommended improvements should serve only as a guide for prioritizing future park improvements. Each recommendation will require further objective study. The park districts finance capital improvements via revenues from the annual Park District Levy.

### Barney Road Park & Pool (Clifton Knolls Park District)

- *Improve pedestrian access to the park by providing sidewalk access on South Barney Road.*

### Beechwood Pocket Park (Clifton Knolls Park District)

- *Promote alternative modes of park access by adding bicycle racks or a walking path to the pocket park.*



Beechwood Pocket Park

### Bernini Drive Park (Dwaaskill Park District)

- *Resurface uneven tennis courts.*
- *Improve the ball field by adding bases.*
- *Improve the volleyball court by adding court boundaries and reseeding.*
- *Utilize appropriate protective ground cover under the play equipment.*
- *Replace play equipment that is covered with graffiti.*
- *Improve the picnic area by replacing broken and/or vandalized grills and picnic tables.*



Vandalism at Bernini Drive Park

### Boyack Road Park (Riverview I Park District)

- *Replace play equipment that is covered with graffiti.*
- *Replace rusty merry-go-round and swings.*
- *Replace deteriorating tennis nets.*



Vandalism at Boyack Road Park



**Burning Bush Park & Pool (Longkill I Park District)**

- *Paint lines on the basketball court.*
- *Repave and restripe parking lots.*

**Clifton Common (Town & Leagues)**

- *Increase pedestrian connectivity between different sections of the park by extending the trail at the park entrance.*
- *Encourage biking to the park by providing bike racks.*

**Clifton Gardens Park (Clifton Gardens Park District)**

- *Improve ball field by adding bases and field markings.*
- *Replace warped and cracked tennis and basketball courts.*
- *Utilize appropriate protective ground cover for play area.*

**Collins Park (Town)**

- *Update playground equipment in the play area.*
- *Replace dirt and sand pathways with a more lasting surface.*
- *Improve park appearance by adding additional landscaping.*

**Compton Road Park (Stony Creek I Park District)**

- *Replace graffiti-covered basketball hoop.*

**Crescent Estates South Park (Riverview I Park District)**

- *Replace deteriorating tennis nets.*
- *Utilize appropriate protective ground cover under play equipment.*
- *Improve ball field by adding bases and field markings.*
- *Replace graffiti-covered basketball hoops.*
- *Improve park appearance with new landscaping.*



Tennis courts at Clifton Gardens Park



Pathways at William K. Collins Park



Playground at CES Park



Tennis courts at CES Park



**George C. Smith Park (Longkill II Park District)**

- *Resurface and upgrade basketball and tennis courts.*
- *Replace wooden play structure.*
- *Utilize appropriate protective ground cover under play equipment.*

**Haystack Road Play Lot & Shirewood Play Lots I & II (Stony Creek I Park District)**

- *Add wayfinding signage to alert residents of park locations.*
- *Replace outdated equipment.*
- *Remove or replace overgrown basketball court at Shirewood I.*



Overgrown vegetation at Shirewood I.

**Huntwood Park (Stony Creek I Park District)**

- *Utilize appropriate protective ground cover under play equipment.*



Drainage issue at Locust Lane Park

**Locust Lane Park & Pool (Clifton Knolls Park District)**

- *Resurface and paint lines on the basketball court.*
- *Improve the volleyball court by adding court boundaries, replacing nets, and reseeding.*
- *Improve ball field by adding bases and field markings.*



Northwoods Nature Preserve

**Mary Jane Rowe Dog Park (Town)**

- *Improve park appearance by adding additional landscaping.*

**Northwoods Nature Preserve (Town)**

- *Add signage to alert residents of location.*

**Parkside Trail Fields (Town)**

- *Utilize land for additional athletic fields.*



Parkside Trail Fields



**Parkwood Drive Park (Riverview I Park District)**

- *Update or paint playground equipment in the play area.*
- *Paint lines on the basketball court.*

**Sugarbush Park (Stony Creek I Park District)**

- *Improve the volleyball court replacing nets and reseeding.*
- *Implement a “Carry-in Carry-out” policy or add trash cans.*

**Veterans Park (Town)**

- *Improve ball field by adding field markings.*
- *Consider paving the parking area near the pavilion.*
- *Add landscaping and amenities.*

**Village Green Tennis Court (Stony Creek I Park District)**

- *Resurface cracked tennis courts.*

**Westchester Drive Tennis Courts (Riverview I Park District)**

- *Resurface cracked tennis courts.*
- *Replace weathered and vandalized play equipment.*
- *Utilize appropriate protective ground cover for play area.*



Volleyball court at Sugarbush Park



Westchester Drive Tennis Court



### ***Implementing the Plan***

---

The *Recreation Plan* sets the framework for recreation initiatives going forward. The mere statements of goals and actions included in this Plan will not produce the desired results unless the Town of Clifton Park implements the concepts through land use regulations, public investment and cooperation, and/or the formation of partnerships with other institutions, private entities, and/or adjacent municipalities.

Once the *Recreation Plan* is adopted, the Town Board may choose to designate a Recreation Committee to assist with the implementation of the vision, goals, and actions of the plan. The Town Board should consider appointing Town citizens to the Recreation Implementation Committee, which may also include other staff members from the Town Planning Department or the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Affairs. The Committee should meet at the request of the Town Board to assist with Recreation Plan's implementation activities, which may include but are not limited to grant writing, staffing volunteer boards, and coordinating community projects. The Recreation Implementation Committee should help develop priority projects to recommend to the Town Board. The Recreation Plan should be reviewed about every five years and amended as necessary to ensure the recreational needs of the community are being met.

### ***Funding Sources for Parks & Recreation Projects***

---

Meeting the goals of a *Recreation Plan* will require careful investment of public resources, whether implementation requires further planning and analysis, construction, expansion of services, or facility maintenance and improvements. To ensure the Plan's success, the Town of Clifton Park should identify and capitalize on available local funding sources and work closely with the park districts to coordinate a number of the goals. In many communities, recreation projects are typically funded through private donations, bonding and/or in-lieu-of fees, as well as grants from state, county, and federal programs. However, the Town of Clifton Park has traditionally relied upon its own resources for recreation projects. It should be noted, however, that as opportunities arise to expand recreational opportunities the Town Board should weigh public interest against immediate costs.

State and federal agencies are also potential sources of funding for local parks and recreation projects. Funding programs support a range of actions including land acquisition, planning and design, construction, and maintenance. State grants are administered through various funding agencies including the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS), and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP). Most State funding programs stem from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), which was established to provide a dedicated source of funding for vital environmental programs.



Federal grants are generally available through the National Parks Service, the Federal Highway Administration, the Department of Education, and National Resource Conservation Services. Federal funds are commonly administered by the State to the localities.

A list of potential, applicable state and federal grants are identified in **Appendix E**. State and federal grants are extremely competitive and can be difficult to secure without a Recreation Plan in place. Project eligibility, the supported action, and project elements vary depending on the grant program. If the project meets eligibility requirements, a community must then ensure that the project is aligned with the funding source's priorities and ranking criteria. Funding priorities are established each year and are based on a point system. Most grant cycles are announced on an annual basis and the opportunity to apply ranges from several weeks to several months. Towns must keep abreast of available funding opportunities and be cognizant of application deadlines.

## II. Existing Conditions: Inventory & Analysis

---

### *Highlights: Opportunities & Challenges*

- *The Town of Clifton Park's population is predicted to increase by 17.9% between 2000 and 2013.*
- *Approximately 28.2% of the Town's population was between the ages of 0 and 19 as of the 2000 Census. Over a third of Clifton Park residents are between the ages of 35 and 54.*
- *The Town's senior population is also growing with 20.8% of the population over the age of 55.*
- *In 2000, 37% of Clifton Park's households were households with children.*
- *According to the 2000 Census, vacant housing units comprise only 3.7% of the total housing stock in Clifton Park.*
- *The median household income in Clifton Park is projected to reach \$102,704 by 2013.*

### **Community Profile**

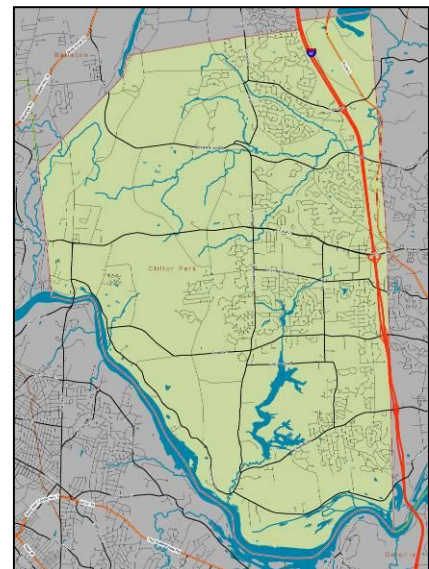
---

**T**his section provides background information on the Town of Clifton Park and will serve as the foundation for the rest of the Plan. A demographic profile provides information on population, education, housing, and income trends for the Town. Additionally, programs related specifically to parks and recreation, including the Park Districts, agricultural recreation, and recreational tourism are discussed. Existing plans and studies are summarized to highlight recreational opportunities.

### **Location**

The Town of Clifton Park is located in the southern portion of Saratoga County, New York. Upon its inception in 1828, Clifton Park encompassed 50 square miles. However, the Town experienced a loss of land along its southern edge after the construction of the New York State Barge Canal due to a rise in the river level.

Clifton Park is bordered to the east by the Town of Halfmoon, to the north by the Towns of Ballston and Malta. The Town is bordered to the southwest by the Town of Glenville in Schenectady County. The Mohawk River forms the Town's entire southern border. Across the Mohawk River from Clifton Park are the Towns of Niskayuna and Colonie, located in Schenectady County and Albany County respectively. Clifton Park is situated in the Capital Region, approximately 12 miles north of Albany and 10 miles south of Saratoga Springs.





Interstate 87, the Northway, provides north-south access to Clifton Park and has heavily influenced development patterns in the Town since its construction. US Route 9 and New York State Route 146 are major thoroughfares through Clifton Park. See **Map 1: Location Map**.

### **History**

The Town of Clifton Park was first settled in 1672 at Fort's Ferry, on the riverbank below present-day Vischer Ferry. Early settlements in Clifton Park, such as Vischer Ferry and Rexford Flats, developed along the river in order to access the chief mode of transportation. As the population expanded, the hamlets of Jonesville, Clifton Park, and Grooms Corners developed along newly constructed roads and turnpikes. The Town of Clifton Park was officially formed in 1828 and was the last town to be organized in Saratoga County. Previously, the Town had been included within the Town of Halfmoon and Albany County.



The construction of the Erie Canal through Clifton Park began in 1822. The 12-mile segment through the Town was officially completed in 1825, providing a water route that spanned from the Hudson River to the Great Lakes. The canal brought an influx of population and economic development opportunities to the region, especially for the hamlets of Vischer Ferry and Rexford.

Today, development in Clifton Park is focused primarily in the eastern half of Town, near Interstate 87. The western half of Clifton Park remains largely rural and undeveloped. Historic hamlets located in present-day Clifton Park include Rexford, Vischer Ferry, Grooms Corners, Ballston Lake, Jonesville, Elnora, and Clifton Park Center.



## Map 1: Regional Context



## Demographic Profile

The Demographic Profile section highlights a number of trends within the Town of Clifton Park including population, age, housing, education, and income. In addition to data from Clifton Park provided in this section, comparisons to Saratoga County and New York State have been made where appropriate. These comparisons will provide the necessary context required to assimilate an understanding of past and future estimated growth patterns for the Town of Clifton Park. Comparisons to the neighboring Towns of Halfmoon and Malta have also been included since some children from these Towns attend school in the Shenendehowa School District and are likely to utilize afterschool recreational programs in Clifton Park. The information is gathered primarily from 2000 U.S. Census. Data from the 1990 Census and population estimates for 2008 and 2013 are also utilized to show the progression of trends over time.

### Population

Local population growth and decline is dependent on several factors including economic expansion, environmental capacity, housing suitability, age-driven needs, and regional desirability. According to U.S. Census data, the Town of Clifton Park's population increased from 30,115 in 1990 to 32,995 in 2000, a 9.6% increase. During the same period, population increased at a rate of 33.1% in the Town of Halfmoon and 11% in the Town of Malta. Saratoga County and New York State population also increased at rates of 10.7% and 5.5% respectively. These upward growth trends in Clifton Park, its surrounding towns, and Saratoga County stand in stark contrast with significant population losses in the rest of Upstate New York.

Population estimates by ESRI Business Analyst Online for 2008 predicted an 11.2% growth rate from 2000 for the Town, as shown in **Table 1**. Conversely, growth rates between 2000 and 2008 for Saratoga County and New York State as a whole are predicted to be less strong with a 10.4% growth rate for the County and 3% growth rate for the State. Projections into 2013 estimate a 6% growth rate for Clifton Park.

**Table 1: Population Trends**

Year	(T) Clifton Park		(T) Halfmoon		(T) Malta		Saratoga County		New York State	
	Number	Growth	Number	Growth	Number	Growth	Number	Growth	Number	Growth
1990	30,115	NA	13,879	NA	11,711	NA	181,276	NA	17,990,455	NA
2000	32,995	9.6%	18,474	33.1%	13,005	11.0%	200,635	10.7%	18,976,457	5.5%
2008	36,705	11.2%	20,178	9.2%	14,696	13.0%	221,528	10.4%	19,554,879	3.0%
2013	38,907	6.0%	21,307	5.6%	15,665	6.6%	234,121	5.7%	19,865,996	1.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, & ESRI Business Analyst Online



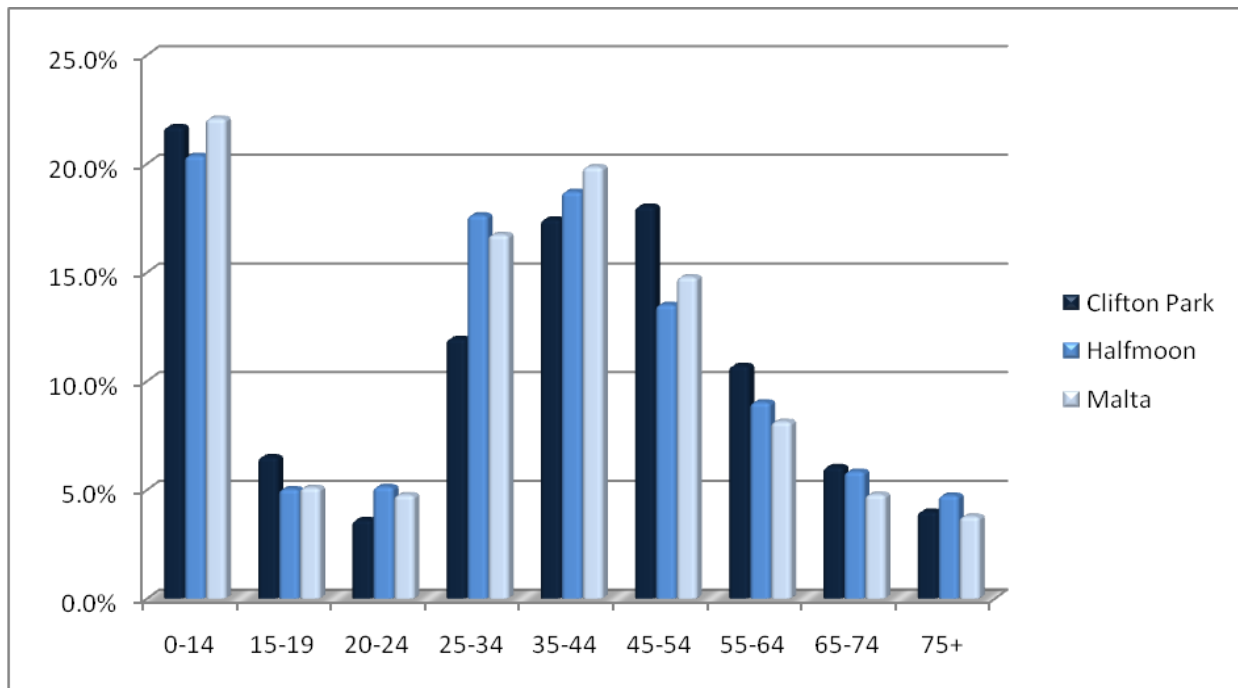
### Age

As shown in **Figure 1**, 28.2% of the total population of Clifton Park is under age 19. In the neighboring Towns of Halfmoon and Malta, 25.4% and 27.2% are under the age 19, respectively. These numbers are significant because portions of the Towns of Halfmoon and Malta are located within the Shenendehowa Central School District. Therefore, a considerable number of school-aged children, who live outside of Clifton Park but attend school in the Shenendehowa School District, could participate in Clifton Park’s recreation programs.

**Table 2** indicates that over a third of Clifton Park residents are between the ages of 35 and 54 (35.4%). It is important to note that the number of Clifton Park residents in the 45-54 age cohort (18%) is significantly higher than in Saratoga County (15%) and New York State (13.5%). In contrast, the 20-34 age cohort in Clifton Park (15.6%) is significantly smaller than in Saratoga County (19.1%) and New York State overall (21.1%).

The median age for the Town of Clifton Park (38.7) is slightly higher than the median ages for Saratoga County (36.9) and New York State (35.9).

**Figure 1: Age Distribution, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1



**Table 2: Age Distribution, 2000**

Age	(T) Clifton Park		(T) Halfmoon		(T) Malta		Saratoga County		New York State	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
0-14	7,157	21.7%	3,763	20.4%	2,872	22.1%	41,909	20.9%	3,923,707	20.7%
15-19	2,147	6.5%	930	5.0%	663	5.1%	13,277	6.6%	1,287,544	6.8%
20-24	1,193	3.6%	949	5.1%	619	4.8%	10,636	5.3%	1,244,309	6.6%
25-34	3,943	12.0%	3,257	17.6%	2,176	16.7%	27,771	13.8%	2,757,324	14.5%
35-44	5,755	17.4%	3,457	18.7%	2,581	19.8%	35,429	17.7%	3,074,398	16.2%
45-54	5,950	18.0%	2,496	13.5%	1,923	14.8%	30,179	15.0%	2,552,936	13.5%
55-64	3,532	10.7%	1,667	9.0%	1,058	8.1%	18,450	9.2%	1,687,987	8.9%
65-74	1,997	6.1%	1,079	5.8%	622	4.8%	12,285	6.1%	1,276,046	6.7%
75+	1,321	4.0%	876	4.7%	491	3.8%	10,699	5.3%	1,172,306	6.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,995</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>18,474</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>13,005</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>200,635</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>17,976,457</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>38.7</b>		<b>35.9</b>		<b>35.6</b>		<b>36.9</b>		<b>35.9</b>	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

### Households

As shown in **Table 3**, the total number of households in Clifton Park was 12,581 at the time of the 2000 Census. Families comprised the majority of all households at 74.4%, while non-families made up 25.6% of all households. The adjacent Towns of Halfmoon (62.5%) and Malta (66.8%) both had a smaller percentage of family households than the Town of Clifton Park. The Town also had a higher percentage of family households than Saratoga County (68.7%) and New York State (65.7%). The Census defines a family as “a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together.<sup>1</sup> A non-family is defined as two or more unrelated individuals living together or individuals living alone.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Current Population Survey (CPS) – Definitions and Explanations. <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cps/cpsdef.html>. Last modified 11-18-2008. Last visited 5-20-09. [com/bpafiles/SCGIP/SCGIP\\_workshop1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/bpafiles/SCGIP/SCGIP_workshop1.pdf)



**Table 3: Households by Type, 2000**

	(T) Clifton Park		(T) Halfmoon		(T) Malta		Saratoga County		New York State	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Family Households	<b>9,358</b>	<b>74.4%</b>	<b>4,859</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>3,538</b>	<b>66.8%</b>	<b>53,738</b>	<b>68.7%</b>	<b>4,639,387</b>	<b>65.7%</b>
<i>Married-couple Families</i>	8,293	65.9%	3,879	49.9%	2,942	55.6%	43,915	56.2%	3,289,514	46.6%
<b>With Related Children</b>	4,037	32.1%	1,797	23.1%	1,463	27.6%	20,909	26.7%	1,600,827	22.7%
<b>With No Related Children</b>	4,256	33.8%	2,082	26.8%	1,479	28.0%	23,006	29.5%	1,688,687	23.9%
<i>Other Family (No Spouse)</i>	1,065	8.5%	980	12.6%	596	11.3%	9,823	12.6%	1,349,873	19.1%
<b>With Related Children</b>	649	5.2%	658	8.5%	402	7.6%	6,514	8.3%	830,592	11.8%
<b>With No Related Children</b>	416	3.3%	322	4.1%	194	3.7%	3,309	4.3%	519,281	7.3%
Nonfamily Households	<b>3,223</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>2,919</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>1,757</b>	<b>33.2%</b>	<b>24,427</b>	<b>31.3%</b>	<b>2,417,473</b>	<b>34.3%</b>
<i>Householder Living Alone</i>	2,592	20.6%	2,260	29.1%	1,300	24.6%	19,135	24.5%	1,982,742	28.1%
<i>Householder not Living Alone</i>	631	5.0%	659	8.5%	457	8.6%	5,292	6.8%	434,731	6.2%
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>12,581</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7,778</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>5,295</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>78,165</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7,056,860</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

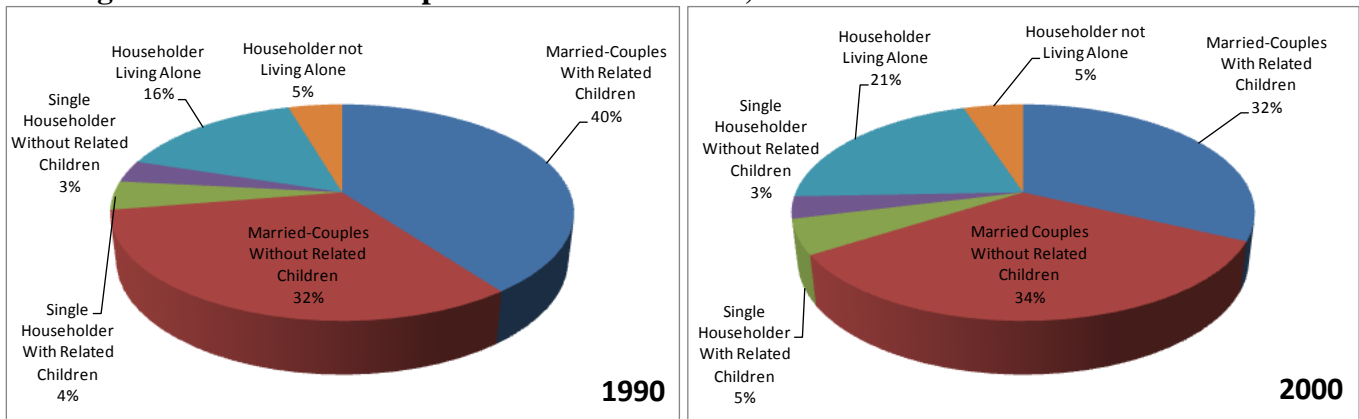
**Figure 2** indicates that the number of families in Clifton Park decreased from 80% in 1990 to 74.4% in 2000. The decline in family households can be attributed to the decrease in the number of married-couples with related children, which fell from 40% in 1990 to 32% in 2000. The decline in family households resulting from the decrease in married-couples with related children was mitigated by an increase in the percentage of married-couples with no related children from 32% in 1990 to 34% and an increase in the percentage of single householders with related children from 4% to 5%. The percentage of single householders without related children remained the same in 1990 and 2000 at 3%.

The number of non-families in Clifton Park increased from 20% in 1990 to 25.6% in 2000 due to the rise in percentage of householders living alone. The percentage of householders not living alone remained steady at 5% in 1990 and 2000.

The average household size in Clifton Park decreased from 2.89 persons in 1990 to 2.62 persons in 2000.



Figure 2: Household Composition in Clifton Park, 1990 & 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Housing

As of Census 2000, the Clifton Park housing stock consisted of 13,069 total housing units. As shown in **Table 4**, occupied housing units comprised the majority (96.3%) of the housing stock. This figure was higher than both the State (91.9%) and Saratoga County (90.2%). Approximately 75.3% of occupied homes were owner-occupied while 20.9% were rented. It is important to note that Clifton Park had a much higher percentage of owner-occupied housing units than did the State (53%) and Saratoga County (65%).

Vacant housing units comprised only 3.7% of the total housing stock in Clifton Park. The majority of vacant homes were for rent (35%) or for sale only (21.9%). The percentage of vacant housing units for seasonal, recreation, or occasional purposes in Clifton Park (14.5%) was significantly lower than for Saratoga County (54%) and New York State (37.8%). Housing for seasonal, recreation, or occasional purposes is defined by the Census as “vacant units used or intended for use only in certain seasons or for weekend or other occasional use throughout the year.”



**Table 4: Housing Inventory, 2000**

Characteristics	(T) Clifton Park		Saratoga County		New York State	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Housing Units	<b>13,069</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>86,701</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7,679,307</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	12,581	96.3%	78,165	90.2%	7,056,860	91.9%
<b>Vacant housing Units</b>	488	3.7%	8,536	9.8%	622,447	8.1%
<i>Seasonal, recreation, or occasional</i>	71	0.5%	4,607	5.3%	235,043	3.1%
Occupied housing units	<b>12,581</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>78,165</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7,056,860</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Owner-occupied housing units</b>	9,847	75.3%	56,316	65%	3,739,166	53.0%
<b>Renter-occupied housing units</b>	2,734	20.9%	21,849	25.2%	3,317,694	47.0%
Vacant housing units	<b>488</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>8,536</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>622,447</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>For rent</b>	171	35.0%	1,427	16.7%	158,569	25.5%
<b>For sale only</b>	107	21.9%	793	9.3%	59,405	9.5%
<b>Rented or sold, not occupied</b>	56	11.5%	450	5.3%	40,439	6.5%
<b>Migrant workers</b>	2	0.4%	6	0.1%	750	0.1%
<b>Seasonal, recreation, or occasional</b>	71	14.5%	4,607	54.0%	235,043	37.8%
<b>Other vacant</b>	81	16.6%	1,253	14.7%	128,241	20.6%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000

**Education**

In comparing the Town, the County, and the State, it is evident that the Town of Clifton Park has a tremendous number of educated residents (**Table 5**). As of the 2000 Census, Clifton Park had a significantly higher percentage of residents with a bachelor’s and/or graduate degree (52.8%) than did Saratoga County (30.9%) and New York State (27.4%). Additionally, over 25% of Clifton Park residents possess an associate degree or have completed some college.

The Town also has an extremely low percentage of residents with a high school diploma or less. Only 20.8% of Clifton Park residents have a high school diploma or less compared to 40.8% in Saratoga County and 48.7% in New York State.



**Table 5: Educational Attainment, 2000**

Attainment Level	(T) Clifton Park	Saratoga County	New York State
Less than 9th grade	1.2%	3.1%	8.0%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	2.9%	8.7%	12.9%
High School graduate	16.7%	29.0%	27.8%
Some college, no degree	16.1%	18.0%	16.8%
Associate degree	10.3%	10.3%	7.2%
Bachelor's degree	30.2%	18.5%	15.6%
Graduate or professional degree	22.6%	12.4%	11.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000

**Income**

**Table 6** demonstrates that the median household income in Clifton Park has consistently been higher than Saratoga County and New York State median household incomes. In 2000, the median household income in Clifton Park was \$69,349, while Saratoga County’s was \$49,423 and New York State’s was \$43,393. The median household income in Clifton Park is projected to reach \$102,704 by 2013.

According to the Census, only 10.8% of Clifton Park households earn less than \$25,000 per year. This figure is small in comparison to Saratoga County (21%) and New York State (29.6%) percentages. Most Clifton Park households earn in the top salary ranges with 27.9% earning more than \$100,000 per year.

**Table 6: Household Income, 2000**

Income in 1999	(T) Clifton Park	% of Total	Saratoga County % of Total	New York State % of Total
Less than \$25,000	1,358	10.8%	21.0%	29.6%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	2,757	21.9%	29.6%	26.2%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	2,705	21.5%	22.7%	18.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2,250	17.9%	13.4%	10.6%
\$100,000 or more	3,519	27.9%	13.3%	15.3%
<b>Households</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Median HH income - 1990</b>	<b>\$55,712</b>		<b>\$36,635</b>	<b>\$32,965</b>
<b>Median HH income - 2000</b>	<b>\$69,349</b>		<b>\$49,423</b>	<b>\$43,393</b>
<b>Median HH income - 2008</b>	<b>\$93,413</b>		<b>\$64,992</b>	<b>\$58,692</b>
<b>Median HH income - 2013</b>	<b>\$102,704</b>		<b>\$75,811</b>	<b>\$68,886</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, & ESRI Business Analyst Online



## ***Topography***

The topography of Clifton Park was largely shaped by glacial thaw, which occurred nearly 10,000 years ago. Flooding, caused by melted ice, forged streams and rivers throughout Clifton Park. Erosion from the deluge of water carved slopes in the areas now occupied by streambeds and wetlands. Slopes in excess of 15 percent are most common near these natural drainage areas. The effects of glacial runoff are best evidenced today by the cliffs at Rexford Flats and the Mohawk River gorge located between the hamlets of Vischer Ferry and Rexford. The remainder of the land in Clifton Park is generally flat with gentle slopes interspersed throughout the Town's land area. Elevations in the Town range from 160 feet near Round Lake to 440 feet in the northwestern portion of the Town southeast of the intersection of Balltown Road and Dubois Lane. The flattest portion of Clifton Park is the Jonesville-Elnora area of the Town. Rougher terrain can be found in the wooded sections of Town.



## ***Natural Resources***

The Town of Clifton Park possesses abundant natural resources. The Mohawk River is the Town's most valuable resource, providing transportation, recreation, and a natural habitat for indigenous flora and fauna. The Town's major wetlands are located along the river, namely in the Vischer Ferry Nature Preserve. The river extends approximately 12 miles within the Town borders. Additional bodies of water that flow through the Town include the Dwaas Kill, the Long Kill, the Cooley Kill, the Anthony Kill, Bear Brook, and Alplaus Creek.



The Stony Creek Reservoir is another major natural resource in Clifton Park. The reservoir was created by damming Stony Creek, a tributary of the Mohawk River. Besides providing a backup drinking water supply to the Town of Colonie, the reservoir also supplies an important wetland habitat. Currently, Clifton Park is in discussions with the Town of Colonie to purchase the reservoir. Under Town of Colonie ownership, and in accordance with public health law, the reservoir is restricted from public use. Clifton Park would like to open the 1,012-acre preserve to the public for recreational purposes. Potential uses include fishing and non-motorized boating. Ballston Lake is also an important natural resource for Clifton Park. The natural water body, however, is only



partially located in northwestern section of the Town. A portion of the Town is situated in the lake's watershed.

### **Park Districts**

The Town of Clifton Park has 13 Park Districts. Each district is affiliated with its respective surrounding neighborhoods. The 13 districts include Calico Colony, Clifton Gardens, Clifton Knolls, Dwaaskill, Longkill I and II, Meadow Estates, Riverview I, Settlers Hill, Stoney Creek I and II, Sherwood Forest, and Wyncrest. For the most part, the Park Districts are concentrated in the eastern half of Clifton Park.



The purpose of the Park Districts is to meet the recreational needs of the neighborhood residents that they serve. In order to ensure the proper maintenance of local parks, residents within each park district are required to pay a nominal annual Park District Levy on their yearly tax statement. It is important to note that the amount per household varies across the Park Districts depending on the needs and projects per district. The fee mainly goes toward grass cutting, painting of playground equipment, spring clean-up, lighting, fencing, and signage in each taxpayer's respective Park District.



In order to better represent the interests of all Park District residents, individual Park District Committees were established to oversee expenditures and to ensure the proper maintenance and operation of local parks. Each committee is comprised of representatives from neighborhoods within the Park District. In 1995, the Town Board assigned the following duties to the Park District Committees including: regularly assessing and monitoring recreational issues within the Town; insuring all park facilities are open and useable; holding regular meetings; and communicating with

their respective Park District residents relating to district activities (including budget items). The Committees also provide valuable insight and guidance to the Town Board during the final review of park initiatives.



## ***Agricultural Resources and Agricultural Recreation***

Agricultural recreation and tourism has been increasingly recognized in the United States as an effective mechanism for providing supplemental income to local farmers and economic stimulus to rural communities. Recreational opportunities on agricultural lands include hunting, fishing, horseback riding, petting zoos, and other farm-based activities. With over 2,600 acres of farmland, Clifton Park possesses the appropriate resources to capitalize on this trend. Clifton Park enjoys a wide variety of agricultural operations including orchards, vegetable farms, small animal farms, horse farms, cattle farms, and nurseries. Farm products are made available to local residents through farmers markets, on-site farm stands, and seasonal pick-your-own fruit and vegetable operations. The majority of active farms and agricultural lands are located in the western half of town, west of Vischer Ferry Road and Route 146A. In the fall, the Town holds the annual weekend Farm Fest event which includes farm tours, apple picking, hayrides, animals, horse rides, country food, and music.

The Town has shown support for local agriculture with the creation of an Agricultural District and the adoption of ordinances designed to decrease the economic burden on farmers through tax abatements. As of 2010, the Town has permanently protected three farms through a purchase of development rights program (PDR) and purchase of conservation easements. The permanent easements are held by the Town of Clifton Park and were funded through Town funding and County grants based upon real estate appraisals. The three permanently protected farms are: King Crest Farm on Grooms Road (41 acres), Riverview Orchards on Riverview Road (87 acres), and Cloverdale Farm on Hubbs Road (59 acres). In addition, the Town protects agricultural and open space lands through Term Conservation Easements where properties are protected for a period of 15 to 25 years as well as through the subdivision process under the Conservation Residential (CR) and Open Space Incentive Zoning Districts.



## ***Recreational Tourism***

Clifton Park's vast recreational resources and parks can be harnessed to promote recreational tourism. Recreational tourism encourages the creative use of passive or active recreational activities to draw visitors and economic development to the area. A number of lands in Clifton Park are of regional, state, and federal significance and could be capitalized on for the purpose of recreational tourism. A portion of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, which is a federally-designated heritage corridor, is located in Clifton Park. The canalway offers a variety of scenic hiking, cycling, and boating opportunities. Visitors can learn about the history of the Erie Canal while experiencing the vast recreational activities the canalway has to offer. Clifton Park is



also located on the path of the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway, which runs from Waterford to Schenectady. The Byway is both a State and Federal Scenic Byway. Clifton Park currently offers a self guided bicycle tour from Vischer Ferry to Rexford that highlights historic points of interest along the trail. Clifton Park has also recently joined the Hudson River Valley Greenway and the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, which includes portions of Albany, Rensselaer, Columbia, Green, Ulster, Dutchess,

Orange, Putnam, Westchester, Rockland, and Saratoga counties. The heritage area represents a regional effort to protect and preserve significant natural and cultural resources. Involved municipalities could spearhead a regional effort to promote recreational tourism in the heritage area.

### ***Existing Land Use***

The Town of Clifton Park is primarily residential in character. The highest concentration of residential land use in Clifton Park is located in the section of Town east of Vischer Ferry Road, where the presence of sewer and water lines and highway access make this area favorable for development. In addition to residential land uses, the eastern portion of Clifton Park contains a diverse mixture of commercial, industrial, public, and institutional uses. Commercial development in Clifton Park is typically situated at major



thoroughfare exits and in and around various hamlets. Significant commercial centers are located near the Route 146 and Northway Exit 9 area as well as Northway Exits 8 and 10. Industrial land uses are confined to the Light Industrial Zones, which is in the vicinity of Northway Exit 10. Rural and agricultural land uses are predominately located in the western half of Clifton Park. There are limited commercial land uses in western Clifton Park with a small area of concentration around the hamlet of Rexford. Low-density residential land uses can also be found in the western half of the Town. Development of western Clifton Park has historically been slower due to its distance from I-87 and the limited access to central sewer and water systems.

A number of community planning mechanisms and land use techniques directly affect parkland and open space preservation in Clifton Park. The Town Code outlines the requirements for parkland and/or open space dedication through the subdivision process in terms of the amount required, if any, and the use of that land. Developers can be required to dedicate up to 50 percent of the subdivision tract as permanent open space to the Town depending on the zoning district.



The Planning Board may request an in lieu of payment for parkland in the amount of 500 dollars per building lot.<sup>2</sup> Alternatively, Cluster Subdivisions and Conservation Development Subdivisions require the preservation of open space through conservation easements or fee simple dedications to the Town of Clifton Park. The open space preserved through these subdivisions has the potential to be used for passive and active recreation (including trail use), forestry, and agriculture.<sup>3</sup>

The Conservation Residential Zoning District (CR) was created to preserve the rural character of Western Clifton Park by promoting and supporting ongoing open space and agricultural uses and activities.<sup>4</sup> In order to ensure that the traditional settlement pattern is protected, CR zoning requires that 50 percent of a new subdivision tract in this zone be set aside for permanent open space. Permitted uses for the permanent open space within the CR District include agriculture and forestry uses, nature preserve uses, and park uses.



Open Space Incentive Zoning is an option for landowners within the Conservation Residential (CR), Hamlet Residential (HR), and Hamlet Mixed-Use (HM) zoning districts in Western Clifton Park. Through Open Space Incentive Zoning, landowners can achieve density bonuses in exchange for providing the public benefit of open space protection in Western Clifton Park. Density bonuses can be achieved by providing a “community benefit or amenity”, which could include a permanent conservation easement, permanent protection of land in fee simple for conservation and other community benefit purposes on Town-identified open space parcels within Western Clifton Park, cash paid to the Town of Clifton Park’s dedicated open space fund, or a combination of the three.<sup>5</sup> Community benefits or amenities can only be located in the CR District.

The Town of Clifton Park has many other tools available to residents wanting to retain their land for agricultural use or open space. A few of these tools include conservation easements, sale or donation of development rights, and property tax relief for farmers and owners of historic structures.

---

com/bpfiles/SCGIP/SCGIP\_workshop1.pdf

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Current Population Survey (CPS) – Definitions and Explanations.

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/cps/cpsdef.html>. Last modified 11-18-2008. Last visited 5-20-09.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Current Population Survey (CPS) – Definitions and Explanations.

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/cps/cpsdef.html>. Last modified 11-18-2008. Last visited 5-20-09.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Current Population Survey (CPS) – Definitions and Explanations.

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/cps/cpsdef.html>. Last modified 11-18-2008. Last visited 5-20-09.



### **Existing Plans and Studies**

Below is a brief summary of relevant plans and studies to this planning process listed in chronological order.

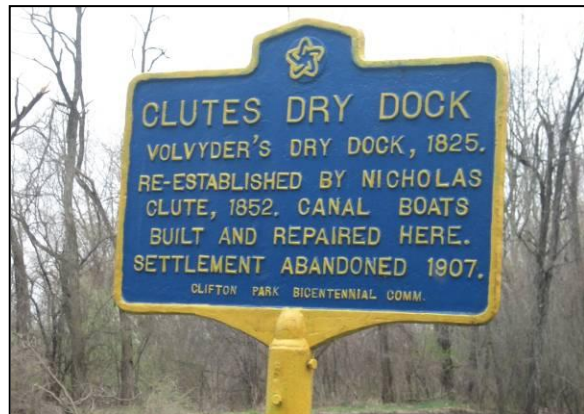
#### **Master Plan of Development Clifton Park, New York**

In 1989, the Town of Clifton Park adopted the Master Plan of Development. The Plan called for the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and the preservation of open space for ecological, aesthetic, and recreational purposes. It also recommended that a conservation/open space/ agricultural plan be developed throughout Clifton Park. The plan included an inventory and description of the Town recreation areas and facilities and their operation. The study also looked at the need and demand for future recreational needs of the Town.

#### **Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve Master Plan**

In 1996, the Town of Clifton Park adopted the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve Master Plan. The Plan was developed by the Town of Clifton Park's Office of Parks, Recreation, and Community Affairs, the Clifton Park Historic Preservation Commission, and the Saratoga Land Conservancy.

The purpose of the Master Plan was to enhance the recreational, historic, and ecological resources of the Preserve for members of the community and for wildlife. Planned recreation projects included a canoe launch for access to the Canal and Mohawk River, towpath maintenance, trail creation, installation of interpretive signage, and the extension of the Preserve boundary from 450 acres to 500 acres. The Master Plan also intended for the maintenance and interpretation of the six historic sites on the preserve, which



include the Vischer Ferry section of the Erie Canal, Double Lock 19, Clute's Dry Dock, Forts Ferry, Lock 7 Dam, and Ferry Drive. Site improvements, construction of farmer's bridges, and repairing Canal walls were planned as well. The Master Plan sought to maintain the ecological features of the preserve by adjusting the water level in ponds, decreasing vegetation growth in ponds, construction of bird blinds, and maintaining clearings to provide diversity of wildlife habitat. Recommendations for achieving the overall goals included:

- The creation, maintenance, and improvement of trails
- Extending the boundaries of the Preserve to incorporate additional features
- Providing a safe and pleasant canoeing experience along the Canal and providing access to the Mohawk River
- Maintaining and interpreting the historic sites within the Preserve



- Maintaining and interpreting the terrestrial communities within the Preserve
- Maintaining and interpreting the aquatic community within the Preserve
- Preparing and distributing educational materials about the Preserve's features so to increase the public's understanding of the Preserve
- Developing an educational center
- Obtaining private funding for the restoration, maintenance, and enhancement proposals for the Preserve's features

### **Town of Clifton Park Trails Master Plan**

The Town of Clifton Park Trails Master Plan was developed by the Town of Clifton Park's Trail Advisory Committee in 1999. The purpose of the Plan was to identify opportunities for an interconnected network of trails and trail facilities throughout the Town.

The Plan provides design guidelines, direction for project execution, and discusses proposed trails including: the Moe Road Trail, the Grissom Connection, the Riverview Trail, the Trevor Court Connection, Kinns Road to Smith Park, the Vischer Ferry Corridor Trail, the Jonesville Connection, Van Patten Drive, Connections to Halfmoon, North-South Links, Zim Smith Trail, and the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway. As of 2009, a number of the proposed trails have been completed. Completed trails include: Zim Smith Trail, Moe Road Trail, Riverview Trail, Kinns Road to Smith Park, Vischer Ferry Corridor Trail, Jonesville Connection, Van Patten Drive, and the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway.



### **Join Us...A Master Plan for the Historic Erie Canal Towpath Trail**

The Master Plan for the Historic Erie Canal Towpath Trail was developed by the Clifton Park Trails Advisory Committee and the Town of Halfmoon Historical Society Trails Committee in 2002. The purpose of the Plan was to improve and maintain the Towpath Trail, between New York Route 9 at Crescent in Halfmoon and New York Route 146 in Rexford in Clifton Park, for bicycle and pedestrian use by identifying preliminary routes and establishing design standards. The Plan divided the Trail into 10 segments for the purposes



of the study and identified needs and alternatives as well as provided recommendations for each segment. The Plan also identified potential partnerships, constraints, and cost estimates. The Plan implements the recommendations of the 1975 Saratoga County Bikeway Study, the Mohawk



Towpath Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan, and revisions to the Town of Halfmoon Comprehensive Plan.

### Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan

The Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan was developed in 2003 with the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Committee. The Plan was developed in response to a strong community desire to protect the Town’s open space for the fortification of drinking water resources and to enhance the quality of life of Town residents. According to the results of a fall 2002 survey, a majority of Clifton Park property owners would support a Town initiative to acquire additional open space even if it resulted in higher property taxes. The Plan set a goal to secure permanently-protected land, namely in the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve. Acquisition of land would be conducted on a “willing buyer–willing seller” basis and would only be sought to enhance the quality of life for Clifton Park residents. The Plan identifies goals and implementation strategies. The five concepts outlined by the plan include:



- Protection of wildlife nature preserves and watersheds
- Farmland protection program
- Enhanced recreational parkland and ball fields
- A Town-wide, comprehensive trails system
- A scenic roads, cultural resources and historic preservation program

### Mohawk Riverfront Concept Plan



The Mohawk Riverfront Concept Plan was finalized in 2005 by the Mohawk Riverfront Committee. The purpose of the Plan was to provide a framework for new policies and plans that would make the riverfront a unique recreational, educational, and ecological destination. A goal was set that by the bi-centennial of the Erie Canal in 2025, the Town of Clifton Park would have one of the most publically accessible and historically accurate segments of the Erie Canal found in all of New York State. The Plan supports a public boat



launch to the Mohawk River, the completion of the Tow Path Trail, and refurbishing landmarks to their 1825 condition. The Plan recommended a phased action plan based on the Clifton Park Riverfront Concept Plan:

- Phase I: Immediate Improvements (2006)
- Phase II: Recapturing the Waterfront (2007)
- Phase III: Developing the Riverfront (2007-2011)
- Phase IV: Completing the Transformation in 10 Years (2015)

### **Western Clifton Park Design Guidelines**

The Draft Western Clifton Park Design Guidelines were developed in 2004 in order to address Western Clifton Park's conservation goals in new development. Major themes include:

- Conservation of the distinctive, scenic landscape character visible to the public including cultural and historic resources
- Protection of active farmland and working landscapes
- Preservation of water, watersheds and significant ecological areas for water quality and wildlife habitat
- Provision for future park and trail opportunities

### **Western Clifton Park Land Conservation Plan & Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

The Western Clifton Park Land Conservation Plan and Generic Environmental Impact Statement of 2005 discusses the potential impacts of a build-out on recreation facilities in Clifton Park. The document indicates that Clifton Park's recreational facilities are rapidly approaching their maximum use levels. Therefore, at build-out, additional facilities would be required to accommodate a larger population. However, the proposed Western Clifton Park Land Conservation Plan would reduce the build-out potential and could alleviate the burden on current recreational facilities. Another effect of the potential build-out discussed in the Plan would be an increase in traffic volume. To mitigate the effects of increased traffic, the Plan calls for the expansion of the trail system in order to provide an alternative to vehicle use.

### **Mohawk Towpath Byway Corridor Management Plan**

The Mohawk Towpath Byway Corridor Management Plan was prepared by the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor, the Mohawk Towpath Byway Advocacy Committee, and the Capital District Regional Planning Commission in 2005. The Mohawk Towpath Byway follows the Mohawk River, Erie Canal, and the New York State Barge Canal from the Village of Waterford to the City of Schenectady. The Management Plan was created to formally nominate the Mohawk Towpath as a New York Scenic Byway. The Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway overall goals are: to encourage preservation, visitor accommodation and intermodal access; coordinate interpretation, promotion,



and signage; and emphasize the important historic transportation role of the river valleys and resultant cultural/industrial development. The Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway Coalition, Inc. is implementing the Plan. As mentioned previously, the Mohawk Towpath is designated as a State and Federal Scenic Byway.

### **Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Clifton Park**

The Clifton Park Comprehensive Plan, last amended in 2006 by the Town Board, reinforces the goals outlined in the Clifton Park Open Space Plan. The Comprehensive Plan highlights land use tools such as conservation easements, land acquisition, and purchase of development rights, which support the Open Space Plan goals. The Comprehensive Plan promotes the Town's acquisition of additional lands for the protection of water resources, open space, and preservation and also provides a mechanism for implementing the Open Space Plan's stated goals.

### **Saratoga County Green Infrastructure Plan**

The Saratoga County Green Infrastructure Plan was developed in 2006 for Saratoga County. The purpose of the Plan was to identify Saratoga County's most vital ecological resources and to discern how these local resources fit into the regional vision for green infrastructure. The Stony Creek Reservoir located within the Town of Clifton Park is specifically referenced in the Plan as a vital resource. The Plan focused land preservation, recreation, tourism, and economic development. The Plan called for ecologically important areas to be linked by a network of trails, parks, and greenways. The Plan encouraged greater cooperation between Saratoga County and local municipalities in order to attain green infrastructure goals.

### **A Vision and Plan for Clifton Park's Riverfront**



The Draft Plan was developed in 2008 by the Riverfront Subcommittee of the Open Space, Trails, and Riverfront Committee. The Draft Plan encourages increased public use and access to the Mohawk River. In particular, the Draft Plan discusses enhancing existing publicly-owned lands to improve usability for public use; increasing and enhancing public access to the riverfront and canalfront; improving facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists on Riverview Road; and connecting shared riverfront features/canalfront features of public interest. In addition, the Draft Plan discusses enhancing opportunities for scenic views of the River; providing information through signage and way-finding of River and Canal features; developing a nature center/environmental education/visitor interpretation center; exploring opportunities for motorized boat public access; enhancing rowing, canoe, and kayak opportunities



along the River; developing a community rowing center; and providing/enhancing public safety facilities and emergency services access to the River/Canal.

### **Dwaas Kill Nature Preserve Management Plan**

The Dwaas Kill Nature Preserve Working Group prepared the Dwaas Kill Nature Preserve Management Plan. The Management Plan addresses protecting and managing the unique habitat of the property while allowing passive recreation opportunities through a network of trails and observation areas. Goals include creating a trailhead entrance to the Preserve, restoration of riparian habitat, and creation of a trail system. The plan was adopted by the Town Board in 2009.

### III. Inventory and Assessment: Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources

---

#### *Highlights: Opportunities & Challenges*

- *The Town of Clifton Park owns 36 parks and preserves for active and passive recreation.*
- *There are 3 outdoor pools in Clifton Park.*
- *There are 18 tennis courts and 11 basketball courts owned by the Town of Clifton Park.*
- *The Town of Clifton Park has 13 park districts.*
- *Park Districts maintain 24 of the 36 Town-owned parks.*
- *The majority of park district parks lack adequate signage.*
- *There are 4 regional parks and open spaces located within Clifton Park.*
- *Only the amphitheater in Clifton Common is dedicated exclusively for arts and culture.*
- *There are 15 miles of trails, pathways, and sidewalks throughout the Town.*
- *Four trail projects are currently in progress by the Town: The Library Trail, Moe Road Trail, the Crescent Road Multi-Use Bike Path, and the Mohawk Towpath Connector.*

#### **Public Recreational Resources**

---

**T**he Town of Clifton Park is rich in recreational resources. Over 100 Town-owned parcels, which total more than 1,000 acres, have been designated for recreation according to the most recent assessor's data. Many of these parcels were acquired through the subdivision process, which requires developers to dedicate "usable land" equal to 10% of the subdivider's tract to the Town for recreation. Parkland in Clifton Park ranges from active parks with amenities to natural open space. This section of the plan will focus solely on Clifton Park's active public recreational resources, as well as the major passive or open space recreation areas. Recreational resources owned by New York State, Saratoga County, and other public entities that exist within the boundaries of Clifton Park will also be explored. All parks and recreational facilities that will be examined in this section are listed below in **Table 7**.



This section will also provide a detailed inventory of the Town's recreational resources and their amenities. Resources to be inventoried include Town-owned parks, indoor and outdoor recreation



facilities, pools, and/or open space. A physical conditions assessment will be provided for existing Town-owned recreational resources. The inventory and assessment will be used to evaluate and prioritize future recreation improvements in the Town.

**Table 7: Public Park and Recreational Facilities**

Park/Facility Name	Owner	Acres	Accessibility	Baseball/ Softball Field/Backstop	Basketball Hoop	Dog Park	Golf Course	Ice Rink	Grills	Multi-Purpose Field	Parking	Picnic Tables/Shelter	Play Equipment	Restroom	Soccer Field	Swimming Pool	Tennis Court	Trails/ Walking Paths	Volleyball Court
<b>Parks &amp; Pools</b>																			
Barney Road Park & Pool	Town	24.9		X						X	X		X	X		X			
Beechwood Pocket Park	Town	8.76										X	X						
Bernini Drive Park	Town	18.44		X	X				X		X	X	X				X	X	X
Boyack Road Park	Town	3.56		X	X						X		X				X	X	
Burning Bush Park & Pool	Town	10.15	X		X					X	X	X	X	X		X			X
Clifton Common	Town	81	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X				X
Clifton Gardens Park	Town	11.75		X	X						X	X	X				X	X	
Clifton Park Action Park	Town	1.95	X								X								
Compton Road Park	Town	9.35	X		X			X		X			X						X
Crescent Estates South Park	Town	11.43		X	X					X	X		X				X	X	
East Haystack Road Play Lot	Town	1.13											X						
Garnsey Park	Town	154																	
George C. Smith Park	Town	9.56			X				X	X	X	X	X				X	X	
Haystack Road Play Lot	Town	0.53											X						
Huntwood Park	Town	3.51			X								X						X
Locust Lane Park & Pool	Town	9.47		X	X					X	X		X	X		X	X		X
Martin Jewett Park	Town	13.3	X	X	X					X	X	X	X		X		X	X	
Mary Jane Row Dog Park	Town	18.92				X					X	X							
Nottingham Way South Park	Town	3.25	X	X						X	X						X		
Parkside Trail Fields	Town	13									X				X				X
Parkwood Drive Park	Town	3.56			X								X						
Presidential Estates Park	Town	1											X						
Spirit Park	State	0.93																	X
Shirewood I Play Lot	Town	9.35											X						X
Shirewood II Play Lot	Town	9.35			X								X						X
Sugarbush Road Park	Town	4.96			X								X						X
Stony Creek Park (future)	Town	47.7																	X
Veterans Memorial Park	Town	141	X	X							X	X		X					
Village Green Tennis Courts	Town	1.62																X	X
Westchester Dr. Tennis Courts	Town	0.67																X	
William K. Collins Jr. Park	Town	8		X					X	X	X	X	X	X					X
<b>Public Preserves</b>																			
Dwaas Kill Nature Preserve	Town	248																	X



Park/Facility Name	Owner	Acres	Accessibility	Baseball/ Softball Field/Backstop	Basketball Hoop	Dog Park	Golf Course	Ice Rink	Grills	Multi-Purpose Field	Parking	Picnic Tables/Shelter	Play Equipment	Restroom	Soccer Field	Swimming Pool	Tennis Court	Trails/ Walking Paths	Volleyball Court	
Kinns Road Park	County	64				X			X		X	X							X	
Mohawk Landing	Town	6																	X	
North Woods Nature Preserve	Town	80																	X	
Ushers Road State Forest	State	117.8	X								X								X	
Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve	State	450									X								X	
<b>Historic Places</b>																				
The Grange	Town																			
Grooms Tavern	Town																			

**Parks & Recreation Facilities**

**Barney Road Park & Pool**

The Barney Road Park is located at the intersection of Barney Road and South Barney Road in the Clifton Knolls neighborhood. Park amenities include a backstop, a large multi-purpose recreational field, and a children’s play area. The play area includes a set of swings, a rock climbing wall, and a multi-station play structure. Benches line Stony Creek, which is adjacent to the park.



The Barney Road Pool and Community Center are also located on the site. The pool was built in 1972 and is owned and operated by the Town of Clifton Park. There is a large main pool, a diving well, and a wading pool for young children. The Community Center provides restrooms and community rooms. The pool is open Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day from 12:00 to 8:30 P.M. The pool requires a yearly membership fee and a photo ID. Membership is open to residents and non-residents on a first-come-first serve basis.

**Conditions Assessment:** The Barney Road Park is in overall good condition. The terrain of the park is flat and grassy. The trees and lawn areas on the site are well manicured. The play equipment at Barney Road Park appears to be new and the surface beneath the play structures is gravel. Although built in the 1960s, the community center at the park is in excellent condition.



**Accessibility:** The park is ADA accessible, providing handicapped parking spaces and ADA accessible restrooms in the community center. Parking is available in a large paved and lined lot in front of the community center. Bike racks located in front of the community center encourage community members to bike to the park. Walking access to the park could be improved by adding a sidewalk on South Barney Road.



**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Barney Road Park is owned by the Town but is maintained by the Clifton Knolls Park District.

**Classification:** It is identified as a *Neighborhood Park* under the SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

### ***Beechwood Pocket Park***

The Beechwood Pocket Park is located on Beechwood Drive across from the Clifton Knolls Executive Golf Course. The park provides an array of play equipment including a see-saw, a stationary train, swings, climbing equipment, and a slide. Benches and a picnic table are also available at the park.



**Conditions Assessment:** The Park is in good condition. All of the equipment appears to be relatively new. The park is located close to the road, but an adequate buffer is provided by landscaping.

**Accessibility:** There is no parking lot or street parking at the Beechwood Pocket Park. The park is most conveniently accessed on foot. A trail leading to the park or bike racks could improve accessibility.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Beechwood Pocket Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the Clifton Knolls Park District.

**Classification:** It is identified as a *Play Lot* under the SCORP classification guidelines and a *Mini-Park* under NRPA guidelines.



## Map 2: Parks, Preserves & Trails



### ***Bernini Drive Park***

The Bernini Drive Park is located in the Dwaaskill Park District. Park amenities include 2 lighted tennis courts, a lighted basketball court, an unlighted ball field with a backstop and benches, poles for a volleyball net, a children's play area, and a picnic area. The playground includes swings, toddler swings, and a multi-station play structure. The surface under the swings is gravel and the surface under the play structure is a mixture of grass and dirt. In the picnic area there is a pavilion, 7 picnic tables, and 2 grills. There are no trash cans due to a carry-in carry-out policy.



**Conditions Assessment:** The amenities in the Bernini Drive Park are in varying conditions. The tennis and basketball courts are in fair condition. The courts were built at an incline, so storm water drains to the area between the net and the service line of the tennis courts. The courts should be resurfaced so to create a smoother playing area. The baseball field is in fair condition for non-league play. Its condition could be improved by adding bases.



The volleyball court and net are in poor condition. At the time of the inventory the net was missing and there were no lines indicating the court's boundaries. The grass court also needs to be mowed and re-seeded in sections. The playground equipment at the park is dated, but appears to be in decent condition. The Park District is planning to install new playground equipment in the near future. The dirt and grass surface beneath the equipment

should be replaced by proper protective ground cover. The picnic area at Bernini Drive Park is in fair condition. Benches are missing on 3 of the picnic tables and one of the grills is broken. Paintball splatters on the playground equipment and grills indicate that the park is a target of vandalism. The trail at the park is in good condition and is free of debris and barriers.

**Accessibility:** Parking is available in a large paved, unlined parking lot at the park entrance. The park can also be accessed by the unpaved trail that connects the park to Appletree Lane. The lack of paved or unpaved trails throughout the park coupled by the terrain makes it difficult for handicapped residents to access the park.



**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Bernini Drive Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the Dwaaskill Park District.

**Classification:** It is identified as a *Neighborhood Park* under the SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

### **Boyack Road**

The Boyack Road Park is located on Boyack Road north-west of the intersection of Boyack Road and Jamison Drive. Park amenities include a tennis court, a basketball court, a gravel-surfaced playground, and a ball field. The playground offers a swing set, a merry-go-round, and a multi-station play structure. The park has 2 benches located behind the backstop of the ball field and a trash receptacle.



**Conditions Assessment:** Boyack Park is in poor condition and requires a number of repairs and upgrades. Currently, the playground is covered with graffiti, the basketball nets are deteriorating, and the ball field lacks lines and bases. The condition of the park could be improved by replacing the equipment covered with graffiti and updating the old, rusty merry-go-round and swings. The park provides barrier-free access and is generally handicap accessible. The basketball court is in fair condition despite one hoop with a deteriorating net. The surface of tennis court is uneven and discolored due to drainage issues. The tennis court and the basketball court should be resurfaced.

**Accessibility:** There is a large unpaved parking lot on the site. The park can also be accessed by a trail leading off of Boyack Road. There is no sign that indicates the name of the park or the location of its entrance. The park has security lights on both ends of the basketball court. The park is buffered from the road by a wooded area. However, the trees limit the park's visibility from the road, which could encourage vandalism.



**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Boyack Road Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds from the Riverview I Park District.



**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Neighborhood Park* under SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

### ***Burning Bush Park & Pool***

Burning Bush Park is located on Burning Bush Boulevard in the Country Knolls neighborhood. The Park has a sand volleyball court, bocce and shuffleboard courts, a cement basketball court, playground equipment, and a large field that can be utilized for a variety of recreational activities. The playground offers a metal jungle gym, swings, a zip line, and a large multi-station play structure. The surface beneath the equipment is composed of gravel. Other park amenities include picnic areas and benches.



The Country Knolls Pool is located on the same site as the Burning Bush Park. The pool was constructed in 1962 and is owned by the Longkill I Park District and operated by the Town of Clifton Park. The 150-foot pool has 3 diving boards of varying heights. There is also a separate wading pool for young children, a picnic area, and a community center. The community center provides restrooms and community rooms. A church rents out rooms of the community center for church activities, limiting the availability of the community rooms. The pool operates on a daily basis from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day from 12:00 to 8:30 P.M. The pool requires a yearly membership fee and a photo ID. Membership is open to residents and non-residents on a first-come-first serve basis.



**Conditions Assessment:** Burning Bush Park is in overall good condition. A minor improvement could include putting lines on the cement basketball court. There were no observable drainage issues on the site and there was an ample amount of trash receptacles. Recent landscaping near Burning Bush Boulevard creates a buffer between the open recreation field and the road. No lights currently exist around the park, which could create a security issue.

**Accessibility:** A sign at the entranceway of the park clearly identifies the park as part of the Country Knolls neighborhood. Two paved parking lots and bike racks serve to accommodate alternate transportation options. However, no sidewalks exist on the roads



leading to the park, which could dissuade pedestrians. Possible improvements could include repaving or restriping the parking lots.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Burning Bush Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by funds from the Longkill I Park District.

**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Neighborhood Park* under SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

### **Clifton Common**

Clifton Common is located on Vischer Ferry Road on a site adjacent to Town Hall. The 81-acre park, built in the 1980's, offers an array of recreational activities including soccer, baseball, softball, ice hockey, and basketball. The park has 14 ball fields, 4 basketball courts with 2 additional hoops, and 7 soccer fields. There is also a multi-purpose field located in front of the Shenendehowa Adult Community Center. The availability of recreational fields and courts makes Clifton Common a prime venue for local and regional tournaments.



The Clifton Park Ice Arena is located in Clifton Common. The year-round rink offers figure skating and public skating sessions in addition to hosting adult and youth hockey tournaments. The arena also has a snack bar and a video arcade.



Another indoor facility in Clifton Common is the Shenendehowa Adult Community Center. The facility offers a large mirrored activity room, a multi-purpose room with a folding wall, a game room, a craft room, and office suites. The facility is primarily used for senior programming but welcomes other Town-sponsored organizations.

The park also provides a playground area for children. Currently the playground equipment is a castle-like wooden structure that was built in 1989. The equipment was repainted in 2009.



Due to the park's central location and the presence of an outdoor stage, many Town events, such as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration, are held at Clifton Common. The park is open year-round from dawn until dusk.

**Conditions Assessment:** Clifton Common is in overall good condition.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** Clifton Common is owned by the Town but is largely maintained by the organizations that utilize the fields. The Clifton Park Baseball League Inc., is responsible for the maintenance of 8 baseball fields, 2 clubhouses with concession stands and restrooms, and a pavilion with picnic tables. Two of the fields are lighted and all have bleachers and dugouts. There are trash and recycling receptacles at all of the fields.



Miss Shen, the softball league, is responsible for the maintenance of 6 softball fields, a clubhouse with a concession stand and restrooms, and a pavilion with picnic tables at Clifton Common. One of the fields is lighted and all have bleachers and dugouts. There are trash and recycling receptacles at all of the fields.

The 7 soccer fields are maintained by the Clifton Park Soccer Club. Two of the fields are lighted for evening use and all of the fields have bleachers. Soccer also maintains a clubhouse with concessions and restrooms and a pavilion with picnic tables. There are additional port-a-potties at the fields. There are trash and recycling receptacles at all of the fields.



**Accessibility:** Although the park has multiple paved parking lots, an inadequate number of parking spaces exist for all of the leagues that play and practice at the Common. One improvement that could be made to Clifton Common is to increase the connectivity between different sections of the park. Presently, the park lacks marked pedestrian paths along its internal road. This issue could be corrected by expanding the trail located near the park entrance throughout the entire park.

**Classification:** Clifton Common is identified as an *Urban Park* under the SCORP classification guidelines and a *Sports Complex* under NRPA guidelines.



### **Clifton Gardens Park**

The Clifton Gardens Park is located at the intersection of Elm Place and Ivy Court. The park is surrounded by residential development and forested land. Park amenities include a ball field, 2 tennis courts, a lighted half-size basketball court with 6 basketball hoops, and a children's play area. The play area offers swings, toddler swings, climbing equipment, a multi-station play structure, a tire swing, a backhoe, spring animals, a merry-go-round, a rock climbing wall, and slides. There are also numerous benches and picnic tables located throughout the park.



**Conditions Assessment:** The conditions of Clifton Gardens' amenities vary. The ball field has no definitive markings or bases, indicating that the field is used for practice or pick-up games. Two benches behind the backstop provide seating for observers. The basketball and tennis courts are in poor condition. The courts are warped and cracked with grass growing in the crevices. The Park District has put the court resurfacing out to bid because the cracks and indentations have become a safety hazard. The play area in the park is overall, in fair to poor condition. Some equipment is brand new while other equipment is over 20 years old. The older equipment is still serviceable but could be updated. The playground was constructed in a wooded area, so the surface beneath the play structures is relatively bumpy. Proper protective ground cover, such as mulch or rubber chips, should be placed under the play structures. The Park District recently removed a number of trees from the play area to make it brighter and more inviting. The play area is often a target of vandalism due to its secluded nature.



The older equipment is still serviceable but could be updated. The playground was constructed in a wooded area, so the surface beneath the play structures is relatively bumpy. Proper protective ground cover, such as mulch or rubber chips, should be placed under the play structures. The Park District recently removed a number of trees from the play area to make it brighter and more inviting. The play area is often a target of vandalism due to its secluded nature.

The play area is often a target of vandalism due to its secluded nature.

**Accessibility:** The parking area at Clifton Gardens Park consists of an unlined, paved area at the park entrance. The parking lot is small and can accommodate approximately 6 vehicles, if double parked. Two bike racks are available for patrons accessing the park via bicycle. The park can also be accessed by a trail that enters the park near the tennis courts. A sign near the parking lot clearly identifies the park; however, neither the sign nor the park is visible from the road. A sign at the park's entrance would greatly aid patrons in locating the park. The only light in the park is located next to the basketball court.



**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Clifton Gardens Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but maintained by the Clifton Gardens Park District.

**Classification:** The Park is identified as a *Neighborhood Park* under the SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

### **Clifton Park Action Park**

The Clifton Park Action Park is located next to the Clifton Park Center on Clifton Park Center Road. The Action Park provides a safe skating venue for skateboarders and inline skaters. The park consists of a 100-by-100 foot paved area outfitted with 20 pieces of concrete and modular equipment. The park offers memberships and day-passes for interested users. A membership is \$60 for Clifton Park residents and \$180 for non-residents. A day pass is \$6 for Clifton Park Residents and \$12 for non-residents.



**Accessibility:** Parking for the Action Park is shared with Clifton Park Center. The parking lot provides ample parking spaces, therefore parking is not an issue.

**Ownership:** The Clifton Park Action Park is owned and maintained by the Town of Clifton Park.

**Classification:** The Action Park is identified as a *Play Lot* under SCORP guidelines and as a *Special Use* park under the NRPA classification guidelines.

### **Compton Road Park**

The Compton Road Park is located to the east of Compton Road. The park's amenities include an unlighted basketball court with a third children's hoop, a zip line, and a children's play area. The play area is equipped with swings, toddler swings, rocking animals, a see-saw, a backhoe digger, and a multi-station play structure with a slide and climbing equipment. During the winter months, a grassy rectangular area in the park becomes the Shirewood Rink. There is another grassy space at the park entrance that could be used for open recreation. Three benches scattered around the playground and the ice rink provides seating for park patrons.





**Conditions Assessment:** The equipment in the children’s play area appears to be relatively new. The area beneath the play structures is covered with gravel. The basketball court was in good condition, except for the children’s hoop, which was covered with graffiti.

**Accessibility:** The Park is visible from the road, but is predominantly hidden by large pine trees. The pine trees and the large grassy area at the park entrance provide an adequate buffer from the street. There is no parking available at the park.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Compton Road Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds from the Stony Creek I Park District.



**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Play Lot* under SCORP classification guidelines and as a *Mini-Park* under NRPA classification guidelines.

### **Crescent Estates South (CES) Park**

The CES Park is located at the intersection of Grant Hill Road and Algonquin Road. The park can also be accessed from Southbury Road. Park amenities include 2 tennis courts, a basketball court with an extra hoop, and a children’s play area. The play area has a multi-station play structure and several individual pieces of play equipment including swings, slides, and a jungle gym. The park also provides a large open field and backstop with a pitchers mound. The field is connected to the rest of the park by a short walking trail. The larger Mohawk Trail also runs adjacent to the park.

**Conditions Assessment:** The CES Park requires a number of repairs and upgrades to improve its condition. The playground equipment is dated with structures made of mostly metal and wood. The surface beneath the play area is composed of weeds and soil. In some areas the uneven ground could cause injury or act as a barrier to accessibility. The surface should be replaced by proper protective ground cover. The ball field, lacking baselines and bases, is in poor condition but is suitable for pick-up games or batting practice. The surfaces of the tennis courts are in adequate condition but need to be swept regularly to ensure that debris from the trees above do not impede play. The





nets on both courts also need to be replaced. The basketball court needs to be swept and graffiti needs to be cleaned off of the hoops. Areas of the park are also overgrown with weeds. Regular maintenance could vastly improve the quality of this park.

**Accessibility:** The CES Park has a small paved parking lot on Southbury Road with approximately 2 parking spaces. There is no sign indicating the name of the park. Neither the tennis courts nor the play equipment are visible from either of the entrances. The basketball court is visible from Algonquin Road and the large open field is visible from Southbury Road. The secluded nature of this park could encourage vandalism. CES Park is also not handicap accessible due to a lack of parking, the lack of paved paths connecting one end of the park to the other, and the bumpy terrain in the play area.



**Ownership/Maintenance:** The CES Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds from the Riverview I Park District.

**Classification:** The Park is identified as a *Neighborhood Park* under SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

### ***East Haystack Road Play Lot (unofficial name)***

The East Haystack Road Play Lot is located on East Haystack Road in the Aspenwood neighborhood. Park amenities include rocking animals and a climbing structure.

**Conditions Assessment:** The equipment at the play lot is old and made of metal. It is intended for young children. No safety issues were observed, but the park could be updated to provide more interest. There is no seating available at this play lot.

**Accessibility:** There is no parking available at this play lot.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The East Haystack Road Play Lot is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds from the Stony Creek I Park District.





**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Play Lot* under SCORP classification guidelines and a *Mini-Park* under NRPA guidelines.

### **Garnsey Park**

The Clifton Park Open Space Plan of 2003 called for the identification of a parcel of 150-acres or more for a future Town park. The creation of the park would address an increasing demand for recreational facilities. Two parcels, equaling a total of 154 acres, was identified and purchased on Route 146 near Waite Road for the future Town park. The location of the new park is optimal for serving the western half of the Town. The park is planned to be for passive recreational use. The preliminary design includes an open recreation area, a playground, an ice skating pond, an extensive trail system, 2 pavilions, and picnic areas. Restrooms and parking areas will also be available in the park.



**Ownership/Maintenance:** The park is owned and will be maintained by the Town of Clifton Park.

**Classification:** Garnsey Park is anticipated to be a *Community Park* under the SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

### **George C. Smith Park**

The George C. Smith Park is located at the intersection of Main Street and Carlton Road. Amenities include 2 tennis courts, a basketball court, a picnic area with benches and grills, and an open recreational field. The children's play area has 8 individual pieces of play equipment and 2 sets of swings. The surface beneath the play equipment is composed of grass and sand. A nature trail also winds through the park's wooded area.



**Conditions Assessment:** The amenities at the George C. Smith Park vary in condition. The tennis and basketball courts are aging, but are in decent condition. The Park District recognizes the condition of the tennis courts and plans to upgrade and resurface the tennis courts in the future. The majority of the equipment in the play area is over 20 years old,

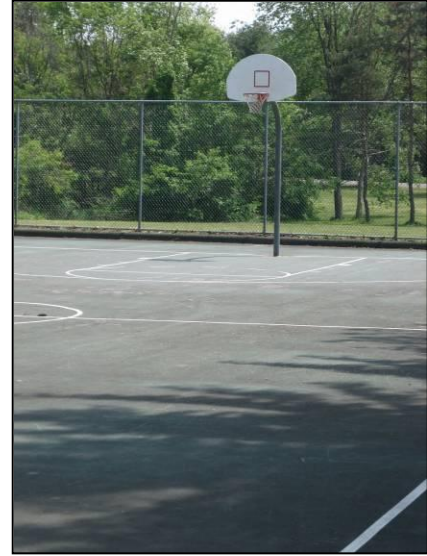


but is mostly still serviceable. One of the structures was replaced 7 years ago, but the older wooden structure still needs to be replaced. The dirt and grass surface beneath the play equipment should be replaced by proper protective ground cover. Due to its location in a wooded area, the park is well shaded.

**Accessibility:** The George C. Smith Park has one small unpaved parking lot. Bike racks are also present for park patrons who wish to access the park via bicycle. A trail also exists that leads to the Park from Torrey Pines Road. There is no sign that identifies the park.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The George C. Smith Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds of the Longkill II Park District.

**Classification:** It is identified as a *Neighborhood Park* under SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.



### ***Haystack Road Play Lot (unofficial name)***

The Haystack Road Play Lot is located on Haystack Road in the Aspenwood neighborhood. Amenities include swings, toddler swings, climbing equipment, a slide, and spring animals. There is also a bench provided for park patrons.

**Conditions Assessment:** The play lot is in moderate condition. The equipment is old, but useable. The play lot is located in a wooded area, so it is well shaded. The area under the play area is a mix of dirt and grass.

**Accessibility:** The play lot is difficult to find because the entrance is not marked by a sign. It is also located behind private homes and the trail that leads to the park is not well defined. The play lot is a neighborhood park and has no designated parking provided.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Haystack Road Play Lot is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds from the Stony Creek I Park District.





**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Play Lot* under SCORP classification guidelines and as a *Mini-Park* under NRPA guidelines.

### **Huntwood Park**

Huntwood Park is located on Huntwood Drive. Park amenities include multiple pieces of play equipment and a basketball court. Play equipment includes swings, 2 toddler swings, 4 climbing structures, a multi-station play structure, and a slide. There are 2 benches for the comfort of park patrons. There is also a trail system that connects the park to the surrounding homes.

**Conditions Assessment:** The park is in moderate condition. The equipment is old, but useable. The park is located in a wooded area, so it is well shaded. Under the play area is a mix of dirt and grass. The basketball court is asphalt and lined, but the lines are wearing from age.



**Accessibility:** The Park must be accessed by a trail and is not visible from the road. However, there is a sign that clearly marks the entrance to the park. The park has no designated parking provided.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Huntwood Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds from the Stony Creek I Park District.

**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Play Lot* under SCORP guidelines and as a *Mini-Park* under NRPA classification guidelines.

### **Locust Lane Park & Pool**

The Locust Lane Park is located at the intersection of Locust Lane and Birchwood Drive in the Clifton Knolls neighborhood. The park is surrounded by residential neighborhoods and is in close proximity to the Shenendehowa Central School District Campus. Park amenities include a multi-station wooden play structure with a rock climbing wall, 2 tennis courts, a half-size basketball court, a ball field, 1 volleyball court, ball field, and a multi-purpose field. Park benches are scattered around the play area.





The Locust Lane pool is also located on the site. The pool was built in 1978 and is owned and operated by the Town of Clifton Park. The pool has a diving well, a separate children’s pool, and a community center. The community center provides restrooms and community rooms. Unlike the Country Knolls and Barney Road pools, Locust Lane opens for weekends only from May 24<sup>th</sup> to mid-June before beginning daily operations. The pool is open from 12:00 to 8:30 P.M and requires a yearly membership fee and a photo ID. Membership is open to residents and non-residents on a first-come-first serve basis.



**Conditions Assessment:** The conditions of Locust Lane’s amenities vary. Drainage issues exist on the open asphalt area near the basketball court, but not on the court itself. The basketball court lacks lines and one of the basketball rims is bent. The tennis courts are in overall good condition. In the play area, the swings and the climbing wall appear to be brand new and the wooden multi-station play structure, though older, is in good condition. The surfaces beneath the play structure and the swings are gravel. The park’s volleyball court requires a new net and the grass court has also become worn to the point that it is mostly dirt. There is an ample amount of grass on the multi-purpose field, but the grass near the play area is thin in some spots. The ball field is appropriate for batting practice and pickup games only.

**Accessibility:** Parking at Locust Lane Park is limited to a small gravel parking lot that, at times, is inadequate for the number of park patrons. However, trails do exist to encourage access to the park on foot.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Locust Lane Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the Clifton Knolls Park District.

**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Neighborhood Park* under the SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.





### **Martin Jewett Park**

The Martin Jewett Park is situated in the Country Knolls neighborhood along Longkill Road. The park's recreational facilities include 3 unlighted ball fields with bleachers, 3 unlighted tennis courts, and a basketball court. The park also has a variety of playground equipment for young children including swings, a merry-go-round, and three multi-station play structures. Additionally, there are a number of individual pieces of play equipment and a sandbox. Mulch covers the ground beneath the play structures. There is a large drainage basin in the park that could be utilized for Frisbee or other activities.



**Conditions Assessment:** The Martin Jewett Park is in good condition. The playing fields and courts are all well maintained and the playground equipment appears to be relatively new. Fields 1 and 2 have in-ground sprinkler systems and a sprinkler system will be installed in Field 3. Field 3 is also in the process of being rehabilitated. There are plenty of trash receptacles and signs that indicate the carry-in-carry-out policy. Benches and 2 sheltered picnic tables are located near the children's play area. The only restroom on-site is a port-a-potty near the park's entrance. Future projects planned for the park include a pavilion with restrooms and an ice skating rink.



**Accessibility:** The Park is made accessible to pedestrians by a crosswalk and sidewalks leading to the park. There is also a walking trail behind Field 3 that leads to Blue Spruce Lane. The trail is planned to eventually connect to Longkill Trail. There is a sign at the entrance to the park, which clearly identifies the park as "Martin Jewett Park." A small parking lot is located at the entrance, which needs striping and repaving.





**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Martin Jewett Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds of the Longkill I Park District.

**Classification:** Martin Jewett Park is identified as a *Neighborhood Park* under SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

### ***Mary Jane Row Dog Park***

The Mary Jane Row Dog Park is located off of Vischer Ferry Road approximately 0.5 miles south of Grooms Road. A gravel parking area is provided off of Ray Road and a gravel path leads to the play area. The park allows dogs to roam “leash free” in the fenced-in exercise area. Currently, only two picnic tables and solar-powered lights exist within the fenced area. There is also a waste collection area with a box and tools included. Obstacle challenges for the dogs are planned for the park in the future. Before accessing the park, dog owners must obtain a permit from the Town. Permits must be purchased annually for a fee of \$30 per household. The permit must be clearly displayed on the owner’s car while on park grounds. A permit tag must also be worn on every dog’s collar while in the exercise area. The park is open from 5:30 A.M. to 10:00 P.M.

**Conditions Assessment:** The terrain of the park is relatively flat, providing easy access to the play area. There are a few trees and bushes scattered within the fenced area. The grass is worn down in some areas of the park revealing large patches of dirt, which often turns to mud during heavy rain. Minor landscaping could vastly improve the appearance of the park. However, maintaining the landscaping could prove difficult due to heavy dog traffic.



**Accessibility:** The Dog Park has a small, unpaved parking lot. There are no sidewalks or trails on Ray Road near the Dog Park, therefore, it is challenging for pedestrians to access the park.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Mary Jane Row Dog Park is owned and maintained by the Town of Clifton Park.

**Classification:** The Mary Jane Row Dog Park is identified as a *Special Use Park* under the NRPA classification guidelines and a *Play Lot* under SCORP classification guidelines.



### ***Nottingham Way South Park***

The Nottingham Way South Park is located at the intersection of Nottingham Way North and Nottingham Way South. Park amenities include 2 lighted tennis courts, a backstop, and an open recreational field. There is also a bench and several birdhouses in the park.



**Conditions Assessment:** The Nottingham Way South Park is in overall good condition. The park is well landscaped and the tennis courts are in excellent condition.

There is no formal ball field to accompany the backstop, but the area is suitable for batting practice or pick-up games.

**Accessibility:** Parking on the site is limited to a small paved pull off. There is no sign indicating the name of the park.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Nottingham Way South Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds from the Riverview I Park District.

**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Neighborhood Park* under SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

### ***Parkside Trail Fields***

The Parkside Trail Fields are located on Parkside Trail, just north of Martin Jewett Park. There are currently 2 soccer goals on the site and 2 small storage buildings. There is also a large unpaved parking lot across from the fields.



**Conditions Assessment:** The fields are underutilized due to their poor condition. The lack of field markings and the sloping terrain of the fields make them unsuitable for league play. Nets are also missing from the soccer goals. The condition of these fields restricts their use to practice only.

**Accessibility:** A large unpaved parking lot is located across the street from the fields.



**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Parkside Trail Fields are owned and maintained by the Town of Clifton Park.

**Classification:** The Parkside Trail Fields are identified as a *Community Park* under the SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

***Parkwood Drive Park (unofficial name)***

The Riverview I Park District maintains a playground at the intersection of Parkwood Drive and Irene Drive. The park’s amenities include a basketball hoop and a children’s play area. The play area consists of a new multi-station play structure, swings, and an assortment of older individual pieces of play equipment.



**Conditions Assessment:** The Park’s multi-station play structure is made of plastic and appears to be in good condition. The metal playground equipment in the park is dated, but still appears to be useable. Updating or repainting the metal equipment would add to the appeal of the park. The surface beneath the play equipment is a gravel and sand mix. The basketball hoop and blacktop are in fair condition. Adding lines to the blacktop and sweeping the area would improve the basketball pad. One trash receptacle exists at the park.

**Accessibility:** The Park is best accessed by walking or biking due to the absence of a parking lot. A medium-sized grassy area creates an adequate buffer area between the playground and the road. There is no sign indicating the name of this park.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** This Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds from the Riverview I Park District.

**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Play Lot* under SCORP and as a *Mini-Park* under NRPA classification guidelines.





### ***Spirit Park***

The New York State Department of Transportation owns a pocket park at the intersection of Moe Road and Clifton Park Center Road. Park amenities include 3 benches and a short walking path. The park is well landscaped and provides excellent shade to patrons. The landscaping also creates an adequate buffer between the park and the road.

**Conditions Assessment:** The park is in overall good condition.

**Accessibility:** Access to the park is granted by the Moe Road Trail. The park is more difficult to access from Clifton Park Center Road because the trail is on the opposite side of the road from the park.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** Spirit Park is owned by the New York State Department of Transportation.

### ***Presidential Estates Play Lot (unofficial name)***

The Presidential Estates Park is located north-west of the intersection of Lincoln Avenue. Amenities at this park include swings, toddler swings, a jungle gym, a slide, a backhoe digger, and a wooden multi-station play structure. The park also offers a tire swing and a tetherball. A bench provides park patrons with a place to rest.

**Conditions Assessment:** The park is in overall good condition. The surface beneath the play structure is gravel and the surface beneath the swings is sand. The equipment is made of wood and metal, and is a bit dated, but no safety issues were observed on the site.

**Accessibility:** The park does not have a parking lot, but bike racks are available.



**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Presidential Estates Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds from the Stony Creek I Park District.

**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Play Lot* under SCORP classification guidelines and a *Mini-Park* under NRPA guidelines.



### ***Shirewood Play Lot I (unofficial name)***

Shirewood Play Lot I can be accessed by trails off of Moe Road, Earl Court, and Greenwood. Park amenities include 2 swings, 2 toddler swings, climbing equipment, and a slide. A basketball pad with one hoop is also located on a trail that leads to the play lot. A bench is provided for park patrons.

**Conditions Assessment:** The metal equipment at the play lot appears to be over twenty years old. The equipment is useable but could be updated. The asphalt area beneath the basketball pad is overgrown with grass.

**Accessibility:** Accessing the park is difficult due to a lack of signage at the trail entrances. Because the park is not visible from the road, Clifton Park residents may be unaware of the play lot's existence. There is also no parking lot, so the park must be accessed by foot or bicycle.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** Shirewood Play Lot II is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds from the Stony Creek I Park District.

**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Play Lot* under SCORP classification guidelines and as a *Mini-Park* under NRPA guidelines.



### ***Shirewood Play Lot II (unofficial name)***

Shirewood Play Lot II can be accessed by trails off of Moe Road, Earl Court, and Greenwood Drive. Park amenities include swings, climbing equipment, pull-up bars, a slide, and a merry-go-round. There is also a bench in the park to provide seating to park patrons.

**Conditions Assessment:** Most of the equipment in the park appears to be over twenty years old. The equipment is useable, but could be updated. All of the play lot's equipment is made of metal.

**Accessibility:** Accessing the play lot is difficult due to a lack of signage at the trail entrances. Because the lot is not visible from the road, Clifton Park residents may be unaware of the play lot's existence. There is also no parking lot, so the play lot must be accessed by





foot or bicycle. The play lot is well shaded due to its location in a wooded area.

**Ownership/Accessibility:** Shirewood Play Lot I is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds from the Stony Creek I Park District.

**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Play Lot* under SCORP classification guidelines and a *Mini-Park* under NRPA guidelines.

### ***Sugarbush Road Park (unofficial name)***

The Sugarbush Road Park is located on Sugarbush Road in the Aspenwood neighborhood. The 4.96 acre park offers amenities including a basketball court, 2 grass volleyball courts, and a children’s play area. The playground includes swings, toddler swings, climbing equipment, a slide, rocking animals, and a merry-go-round. Another play area with two jungle gyms is located closer to the basketball court and the second volleyball court. There is also seating provided.



**Conditions Assessment:** The Park District recently replaced some of the Park’s playground equipment with a brand-new multi-station play structure. Most of the other park equipment, however, is aging and could require upgrading in the near future. The



surface beneath the playground equipment is sand. One of the park’s volleyball courts is missing a net and requires grass seed to cover dirt patches in the center of the court. The other court, located on a trail, lacks a net and boundaries. The asphalt basketball court is old, unlined, and not of regulation-size. The court is also located along a trail, which is littered with trash. A trashcan or a stricter carry-in-carry-out policy could abate this issue.

**Accessibility:** The Sugarbush Road Park does not have a parking lot, making the park easiest to access on foot or by bicycle. Trees at the entrance limit the park’s visibility from the road. More trails or sidewalks and a sign indicating the whereabouts of the park entrance could improve the accessibility of the park.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Sugarbush Road Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds from the Stony Creek I Park District.



**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Neighborhood Park* under SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

### ***Stony Creek Park (future)***

The concept plan for the future Stony Creek Park was recently developed by Stony Creek Park District I. The planned 47.7 acre park will be located on the east side of Moe Road just south of the Huntwood Estates subdivision. The concept plan for the park includes trails, a playground, and multi-use sports fields.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Future Stony Creek Park is owned by the Town of Clifton Park and will be maintained by the Stony Creek I Park District.

**Classification:** The Stony Creek Park is anticipated to be a *Neighborhood Park* under SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

### ***Veterans Memorial Park at Elks Trail***

Veterans Memorial Park at Elks Trail is located on MacElroy Road. The 141-acre park offers 3 softball fields, a pavilion, and a shaded comfort station. The comfort station located near the ball fields provides handicap-accessible restrooms, a water fountain, and a small shaded seating area. The pavilion is located near the park entrance before the ball fields. The pavilion provides a shaded picnic area with tables and parking. The pavilion may be reserved with Office of Parks, Recreation, and Community Affairs. Rates are \$10 an hour for both not-for-profit organizations and town residents and \$15 an hour for businesses. A wetland area is located behind the ball fields in the park.

**Conditions Assessment:** The softball fields at Veterans Memorial Park are in fair-to-poor condition for league play, but are suitable for practice and pickup games. The fields can be improved by adding baselines and preventing grass from growing in the infield. Seating at the fields is provided by a set of bleachers on Field 1 and picnic tables on the rest of the fields. The pavilion with the restrooms appears to be in good condition. There are 2 port-a-potties located behind the pavilion





indicating additional restrooms may be needed. The main pavilion is small and is situated on a dusty, gravel area. The location of the pavilion isolates the picnic area from the rest of the park. The park also provides few amenities for picnickers to utilize.



**Accessibility:** Veterans Park offers 2 parking lots for park patrons. The larger lot, located near the softball fields, is gravel and provides handicap parking spaces. The second parking lot is smaller and is located near the picnic pavilion. This parking lot is made of gravel and is very dusty. The park is primarily accessible via automobile due to the park's location in the rural western half of the Town.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** Veterans Memorial Park is owned and maintained by the Town of Clifton Park.

**Classification:** Veterans Memorial Park is identified as a *Community Park* under the SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

### ***Village Green Tennis Court***

The Village Green Tennis Court is located off of Weston Drive in the Village Green neighborhood. There is a chain link fence surrounding the single, unlighted court on the site. In addition, there is a bench inside of the fence for spectators or the players. The court is well shaded due to its location in a wooded area.

**Conditions Assessment:** The Village Green Tennis Court is in fair condition. The net sags in areas and the court needs to be swept on a regular basis due to the surrounding trees. The court itself has a couple of small cracks and some discoloration that could be fixed by resurfacing. The cracks do not appear to pose a safety issue at this time. The court could also benefit from a trash receptacle.



**Accessibility:** The court cannot be seen from the road because it must be accessed by a short, heavily wooded trail. A sign is present at the trail's entrance to alert residents of its



location. There is no parking lot available for patrons at the Village Green Tennis Court. However, a sign at the entrance instructs patrons to park on the path.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Village Green Tennis Court is owned by the Town of Clifton Park but is maintained by the funds from the Stony Creek I Park District.

**Classification:** The park is identified as a *Play Lot* under SCORP and as a *Mini-Park* under NRPA classification guidelines.

### **Westchester Drive Tennis Courts**

The Westchester Drive tennis courts are located off of Westchester Drive in southeastern Clifton Park. Two lighted tennis courts and a wood and metal multi-station play structure with swings, a slide, and climbing equipment are located in the park. The tennis courts are surrounded by a chain link fence. There is a single trash receptacle on the site.



**Conditions Assessment:** The Westchester Drive Tennis Courts are in fair condition. The courts appear to be recently painted, but the court will need to be resurfaced due to large cracks that run through the courts. If left untended, these cracks could pose a safety risk in the future. The nets of the tennis courts are tight and in good condition.

The multi-station play structure at the back of the site is in poor condition. The wood looks old and weathered and could use a new coat of paint and sandblasting. The metal equipment is covered with rust. The play structure has also experienced some vandalism on the underside of the slide and on the climbing equipment. The surface underneath of the play equipment is grass, which is worn in areas, especially beneath the swings.

**Accessibility:** The Westchester Drive Tennis Courts has a gravel driveway that can be used for parking.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** The Westchester Drive Tennis Courts are owned by the Town of Clifton Park but are maintained by the Riverview I Park District.





**Classification:** The tennis courts are identified as a *Play Lot* under SCORP and as a *Mini-Park* under NRPA classification guidelines.

### **William K. Collins, Jr. Park**

The William K. Collins, Jr. Park (“Collins Park”) is located at the intersection of Route 146 and Moe Road. The 8-acre park offers an unlighted ball field, volleyball court, playground, a low and high ropes course, nature trail, picnic areas, and a pavilion. The pavilion provides numerous picnic tables and grills for park users. Additional grills, benches, and trash receptacles are scattered throughout the wooded sections of the park. Collins Park also has large open spaces, which can be used for sports or gatherings. The pavilion and open space areas may be reserved for group functions for a fee of \$10 per hour for residents and \$15 per hour for businesses.



**Conditions Assessment:** Collins Park is in fair condition. The multi-station play area requires upgrading and safety issues need to be addressed by replacing the sand under the play structures with mulch or rubber. The wooden bleachers near the ball field are also in need of improvement. The ball field itself is in fair condition for non-competitive use. Only one paved pathway exists in the park and it runs from the parking lot to the pavilion. The rest of the paths consist of dirt and sand, which may cause erosion issues in the future. Accessibility is also an issue due to the hilly terrain of the park. The main play structure sits on top of a hill and can only be accessed by a steep dirt path. These access issues could be problematic for handicapped park users. The park grounds are in adequate condition but could use additional landscaping. The park has two security lights, which is adequate since the park closes at dusk.





**Accessibility:** The Moe Road Trail runs adjacent to the park providing neighborhood residents with easy and safe walking access. For residents who prefer to drive to the park, there is a paved parking lot. ADA-compliant restrooms are also conveniently located onsite.

**Ownership/Maintenance:** Collins Park is owned and maintained by the Town of Clifton Park.



**Classification:** William K. Collins, Jr. Park is identified as a *Community Park* under the SCORP and NRPA classification guidelines.

---

### **Historic Resources**

#### **Grooms Tavern**

Grooms Tavern was constructed in 1820 and has served as the center of activity in Clifton Park ever since. The tavern is located at the intersection of Grooms Road and Sugar Hill Road. Grooms Tavern was purchased by the Town of Clifton Park for permanent protection and is now operated by the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Affairs. The Town was granted \$80,000 in 2002 from New York State to restore the former residence and store as a historical and cultural resource. The tavern is currently utilized for Town events and community group meetings.



#### **Mohawk Valley Grange**



The Mohawk Valley Grange is located on Sugar Hill Road in Clifton Park. The Grange has historically served as a social center for the Town of Clifton Park. The Grange has a small auditorium and restrooms. The site has a small dirt area for parking, which would need to be expanded if the Grange were to be used for recreational purposes.



## **Nature Preserves**

### **Dwaas Kill Nature Preserve**



The Dwaas Kill Nature Preserve is a 248-acre parcel located north of Kinns Road in Clifton Park. The site is situated nearly adjacent to Kinns Park. The Preserve was acquired in 2006 by the Town from the Van Patten family. The preserve is one of the largest intact natural areas in the Town of Clifton Park. Known for its diverse plant and animal life, the Town plans to respect the preserve's natural habitat by promoting passive recreation including trails, observation areas, and educational uses. Internal trails could potentially

be connected to the recently constructed Kinns Road trail to encourage trail connectivity. The entrance to the Preserve is located off of Pierce Road. There is an unpaved parking lot and a sign indicating whereabouts of the trail entrance.

### **Kinns Road Park/Saratoga County Forest**

Kinns Road Park is located along the south side of Kinns Road in Clifton Park. While the park is owned by Saratoga County, it is managed by the Town of Clifton Park and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Community Affairs. The majority of the park's 64 acres are forested. The park offers mainly passive recreational opportunities including hiking trails and picnic areas. In the winter, cross country skiing trails are open to the public. Kinns Road Park is one of two parks in the Town that allows dogs to roam "leash free."



Before accessing the park, dog owners must obtain a permit from the Town. Permits must be purchased annually for a fee of \$30 per household. The same permit can be used at the Mary Jane Row Dog Park. The permit must be clearly displayed on the owner's car while on park grounds. Parking is provided off of Kinns Road by an unpaved parking lot. The park is open from dawn until dusk.



### ***Mohawk Landing Nature Preserve***

The Mohawk Landing Riverfront Park is located east of Riverview Orchards off of Riverview Road. Construction on the 6-acre preserve commenced in the Fall 2008 and was completed in the Spring 2009. The site includes a nature trail with boardwalks and a scenic overlook along the Mohawk River. Mohawk Landing offers a small picnic area with 3 picnic tables. A boat launch was also constructed for small boats such as kayaks and canoes. There is a small unpaved parking area on the south side of Riverview Road between Riverview Orchards and Brian Drive. The park has appropriate signage indicating park hours and the direction of parking and picnic areas.



### ***North Woods Nature Preserve***

The North Woods Nature Preserve is a “forever wild” parcel located in northeast Clifton Park off of Shadow Wood Way. The 80-acre parcel, formerly known as the Round Lake Reservoir, was acquired by Clifton Park from the Village of Round Lake. Funding for the acquisition was provided by a grant from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund.

A small pond and stream are presently located on the site, which could be utilized for recreational purposes. Additionally, former logging roads and herd paths that wind throughout the heavily forested preserve serve as informal trails for public users. At this time, the Town of Clifton Park has not made any improvements to the site, but potential uses have been discussed.

### ***Ushers Road State Forest***



Ushers Road State Forest is located in the north eastern section of Clifton Park along Ushers Road and English Road. More than 100 acres of the State forest is located within the bounds of Clifton Park. The remainder of the forest’s estimated total 118 acres is located in the adjacent Town of Halfmoon. The Town of Clifton Park and the Town of Halfmoon have worked cooperatively with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to develop a nature trail loop complete with trail markers in the state



forest. The nature trail can be accessed off of Ushers Road in the Town of Halfmoon. In a presentation entitled *Local Understanding: Emerging Resources and Opportunities*, the need to improve access to Ushers Road State Forest was identified.<sup>6</sup>

### **Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve**

Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve is located in the southern portion of the Town between Riverview Road and the Mohawk River. It is jointly maintained by New York State, the New York State Department of Transportation, and the Town of Clifton Park. The 450-acre preserve is the largest open space resource in the Town of Clifton Park. The New York State Canal Corporation actively uses the acreage immediately west of the Preserve for dredging of the Mohawk River. This land occupies the same 785-acre parcel as the Preserve. Vischer Ferry is an important ecological and cultural resource. The preserve is situated on the site of the first settlement in Clifton Park and contains a segment of the Erie Canal. Wetlands in the preserve also provide a habitat for many species of native birds and animals.



The preserve provides an array of passive recreational activities including hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, fishing, canoeing, and bird-watching. The Preserve is closed to recreational users the first seven days of Duck Hunting Season every year. Only registered hunters are permitted to access the Preserve during those days. Vischer Ferry is part of a major trail system, which extends from Sugar Hill Road to N.J. Clute's Dry Dock. Historic markers are located along the trail to provide hikers with historical information dating back to the early 1900s. Hikers pass landmarks such as the Old Whipple Bridge and Old Lock 19 along the trail.



<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. [Current Population Survey \(CPS\) – Definitions and Explanations](http://www.census.gov/population/www/cps/cpsdef.html). <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cps/cpsdef.html>. Last modified 11-18-2008. Last visited 5-20-09. [com/bpafiles/SCGIP/SCGIP\\_workshop1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/bpafiles/SCGIP/SCGIP_workshop1.pdf)



## Trails

### ***Trails in Clifton Park: Connecting our Community***



Trails are an essential part of Clifton Park’s parks and recreation system as well as an integral part of the whole transportation system. The trails, pathways and sidewalks provide safe on-road and off-road paths for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Trails are the oldest connection between homes, communities, farms and the market and beyond. As such, they are part of our shared heritage. For centuries, they have provided the most practical route from one place to another. To pass this heritage on to future generations of residents, the Clifton Park Open Space, Trails, and Riverfront Committee and its Trails Subcommittee are continuing to support the Town of Clifton Park in developing the Town’s trail system.

Trails enhance the quality of life in the community. In Clifton Park there are a variety of trails and paths to move across the community. It is envisioned to not only continue this pattern of diverse types of trails and paths, but also to emphasize the interconnection of primary or trunk trails with secondary or feeder pathway segments.

Within close-knit neighborhoods, there are secondary or feeder pathways (and footpaths) and in some cases, multi-use paths that connect one residential neighborhood to the next. Additionally, there are direct primary or trunk routes, such as separated trails along town, county, and state roads. These wider, paved, multi-use trails provide for greater use by more residents because their width can accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists at the same time.

In the Town’s commercial centers, such as near Exit 9, there are sidewalks connecting shoppers from their cars to the stores, restaurants and other attractions. Here, cyclists share the roads or use the wider shoulders where provided.

Along some roads there are just wider shoulders – for safer travel by bicyclists.





### ***Trails Vision***

The trails vision for the Town of Clifton Park is to create an integrated town-wide, neighborhood-based trail and path system that will:

- Link people safely to and from the places they want to be: their homes, workplaces, shopping and business destinations, parks, playgrounds and nature preserves, schools, and other community facilities
- Improve access to parks, recreation facilities and programs, open spaces, waterways, wildlife habitat, and historical and cultural sites which are critical to the quality of life for all residents of Clifton Park
- Reduce automobile dependency and enhance alternative transportation opportunities by providing a connected system of inviting trails and bikeways for true alternative transportation, including creating connections to park and ride areas for bus routes and carpooling options
- Contribute to the overall, improved environmental health and reduced carbon use, and improved air quality of this community with more biking and walking, and less vehicle use
- Promote physical fitness and support healthy living for a variety of users including disabled persons
- Encourage social interaction and community pride
- Provide opportunities for outdoors experience, rest and relaxation within natural settings through trail-related recreation
- Provide ‘outdoor classroom’ opportunities for environmental education



### ***Trails History***



Trail-building has been in the forefront of local planning since the 1990s. Plans for a “Good Neighbors Trail Network” were announced publicly in 1998. This plan included a conceptual map of collateral infrastructure for non-automotive transportation. The hub of the network linked the Clifton Common with the Clifton Park – Halfmoon Public Library and the shopping area district via the Shenendehowa Central School District’s main campus and undeveloped landholdings. The plan called for extending the hub westward with future development and northward and southward as resources and resolve were mustered. Primary, or “trunk” trails served as a major connecting links between the hub and secondary



pathways. Secondary or “feeder” pathways, constructed as part of the design of future neighborhoods and commercial developments, are to be tied to primary pathways. Also, designated low traffic streets and road shoulders are to be part of the system and may be utilized as trunk or feeder pathways depending on purpose and location, to help people navigate through neighborhoods and commercial centers on low traffic streets.



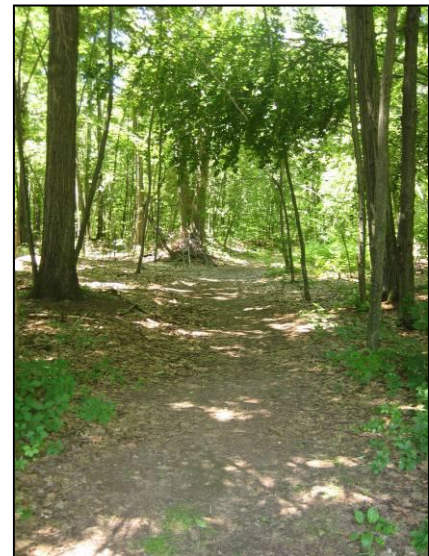
On September 29, 1993, the Clifton Park Town Board created a citizen advisory committee on multi-purpose pathways called the Clifton Park Trails Advisory Committee.

In 2006, the Town appointed a Clifton Park Open Space, Trails, and Riverfront Committee that includes a dedicated Trails Subcommittee as the current organizing framework whose members advise the Open Space, Trails and Riverfront Committee, and from there, the Town Board on recommended future trails projects.

The Town of Clifton Park Town Board conducted a town-wide survey in 2001 as part of the Open Space Plan process, and again in 2007 to query residents on their values for and interests in open space and trails. Creating trails was a number one response in the 2007 survey. Residents called primarily for “closing the gaps” in the trail sections which exist.

***Completed Trails, Pathways and Sidewalks in the Town of Clifton Park***

The Town of Clifton Park has been successful with partners in private development, Saratoga County and the State of New York to secure approximately 15 miles of trails, pathways, and sidewalks throughout the Town. An additional six miles of trails and footpaths are located along the Historic Erie Canal Towpath trail and within the Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve. Of these trails, the main east-west historic towpath trail will be restored and a crossing will to be constructed across Wager’s Pond. The crossing will be completed as part of an intermunicipal project with Halfmoon in 2010-2012. A list of completed trails, pathways, and sidewalks can be found in **Table 8**.



Sidewalks are located in the commercial areas of Town, including the Exit 9 commercial area, along NYS Route 146 west towards Vischer Ferry Road, and in a small section of the Jonesville Hamlet.



Multi-use trails are located along major corridors such as Moe Road, Vischer Ferry Road, and NYS Route 146A. Multi-use trails are for pedestrians and cyclists. Many of these trails are paved along major corridors. Additional pathways criss-cross between neighborhoods, linking residential areas to Clifton Park’s schools, library, YMCA, recreation resources, shopping areas, and other neighborhoods. A few such connections include Meadow Estates, Summerhill, The Oaks, Wishing Well, and Addison Way – a neighborhood network collectively known as Clifton Park Center Trail.



Nature trails exist within Kinns Road Park, Mohawk Landing, Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve, and Ushers State Forest. These trails generally have unpaved surfaces, intended for passive recreation.

**Table 8: Clifton Park Trails**

<b>Major Trails</b>	
Hatlee Road	Hubbs Rd. to Willowbrook Ln. (wide shoulders)
Hubbs Road	Hatlee Rd. to Dutch Meadow Dr. (wide shoulders)
Ushers Road Trail & Sidewalks	Longkill Rd to NYS Rte 9
Longkill Road Sidewalk	Main Street to Longkill Park
Van Patten Drive Trail	Ushers Road to Carlton Road
Sherwood Dawson Multi-Use Trail	Route 146A
Kinns Road Multi-Use Trail	Nottingham to Carlton Rd
Moe Road Trail	NYS Rte 146 to Englemore Rd.
Grooms Road Trail	Wildberry Ct to Lincoln Ave.
Vischer Ferry Road Trail	Route 146 to Clifton Park Center Road; Grooms to Four Leaf
Crescent Road Trail	Brighton Dr. to Van Vranken Rd.
Van Vranken Road Trail	Crescent Rd. to Ashford Dr.
Boyack Road Trail	Crescent Rd to Jamison Dr. (wide shoulders)
Erie Canal Towpath Trail	End of Sugar Hill Rd to end of Ferry Drive; End of Ferry Drive to Vischer Ferry Preserve
<b>Major Sidewalks</b>	
NYS Route 146 Sidewalks	Vischer Ferry Road to NYS Route 9
Maxwell Road Trail & Sidewalks	
Clifton Country Road Trail & Sidewalks	
Crossing Boulevard Sidewalks	
<b>Parks &amp; Nature Preserves with Trails</b>	
Kinns Road Park	
William K. Collins Park	
Ushers Road State Forest	
Mohawk Landing	
Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve	



Neighborhoods with Paths	
Country Knolls (boy scout trails)	
Temple Hills	Dakota Trail: Temple Hills, Cider Mill Dr., Appletree Ln.
Sherwood Forest	
Falcon Ridge	
Emerson	
Woodland Hills	
Park Lane	
Meadow Estates	
Addison Estates	
Cortland Manner Estates	
The Oaks	
Summerhill Estates	
Wishing Well	
Settlers Hill	
Clifton Gardens	On-road trail markers
Countryman Estates	
Presidential Estates	
Wildberry Court	
Village Green	
Crescent Neighborhoods	
Southwick Meadows	

***Trail Projects in Progress by the Town of Clifton Park***

- **Library Trail.** This is a proposed east-west pathway to close a gap between Moe Road and Wall Street, connecting the public library, schools and the local YMCA. This is an anticipated 2010 construction project.
- **Crescent Road Multi-use Path.** This is an intermunicipal project with the Town of Halfmoon to enhance bike and pedestrian safety by creating a multi-use paved trail along Crescent Road from about Okte School to Dunsbach Road in the Town of Halfmoon. This project will cross the bridge over the Northway at Exit 8. The design is anticipated to begin in 2010.
- **Mohawk Towpath Connector.** This is an intermunicipal project with the Town of Halfmoon primarily to restore the historic Erie Canal towpath along the canal for enhanced bike and pedestrian use from the east side of Ferry Drive, on an east-west path into the Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve, and includes along with bridging a gap over Wager’s Pond and creating a new length of trail into Halfmoon, under the Northway’s bridge at the Mohawk River, to connect with Halfmoon’s riverfront trail system. The design is anticipated to begin by 2010.
- **Moe Road Trail.** The 2010 budget included \$50,000 to study extending the trail on Moe Road to the southern portion of Clifton Park.



### ***Neighborhood Trails in Progress by Private Developers***

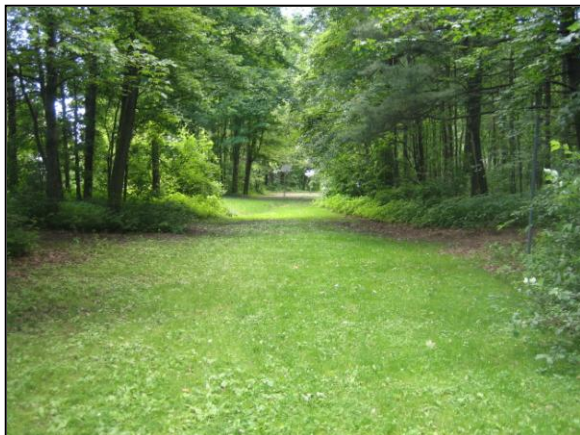
Several neighborhood paths are under construction in new neighborhoods that will be conveyed to the Town at the completion of each subdivision. Below are the new neighborhoods slated to include pedestrian/bike paths:

- Fairway Woods, off of MacElroy Road
- Southwick Meadows
- Addison Estates
- Carlson Farms Subdivision
- West Sky Court (Tanglewood Subdivision)
- Brookhaven Farms (off Route 146)
- Vischer's Landing (former Oronacah Farms)
- Waite Meadows (off of Waite Road)

### ***Key Trail Gaps***

Because the trail network in Clifton Park is ever-evolving, there are significant gaps in the trail system town-wide. The incomplete network impedes trail users from using walking or biking as an alternative mode of transportation. Some of the most crucial gaps in the trail system that were identified include:

- Moe Road Trail (in progress)
- Route 146 West
- Vischer Ferry Road (south of Clifton Park Center)
- MacElroy Road





## Park Districts

The Town of Clifton Park has thirteen Park Districts, which are shown on **Map 3: Park Districts**. The Park Districts are listed below:

- Calico Colony
- Clifton Gardens
- Clifton Knolls
- Dwaaskill
- Longkill I
- Longkill II
- Meadow Estates & Addison Estates
- Riverview I
- Settlers Hill
- Sherwood Forest
- Stony Creek I
- Stony Creek II
- Wyncrest

Each Park District is responsible for maintaining Town-owned land within its bounds. Park districts are accountable for maintaining municipally-owned land, ranging from neighborhood entranceways, cul-de-sacs, drainage basins, right-of-ways, ponds, trails, and community parks with numerous amenities. Park district land is acquired by the Town typically through the subdivision process. Some Park Districts have multiple parks and pocket-parks while other Districts have limited amenities and responsibilities. Park District lands are maintained by community volunteers, private contractors, and the Town of Clifton Park. The Park Districts finance maintenance costs with the revenues from the annual Park District Levy.



Many of the older Park District parks are underutilized due to dated equipment, lack of proper signage, and failure to meet ADA standards. These facilities must be updated to meet current standards in order to remain viable.

### **Calico Colony Park District**

The Calico Colony Park District is located south of Route 146 and east of Vischer Ferry Road. The District is in close proximity to Clifton Common and the Shenendehowa Central School District campus. The Park District includes the Calico Colony neighborhood. The Park District maintains a parcel of land at the intersection of Denim Drive and Damask Drive. The park consists of open space and scattered trees. The Town of Clifton Park provides mowing and occasional tree trimming for a fee.



### ***Clifton Gardens Park District***

The Clifton Gardens Park District encompasses the neighborhoods east of Moe Road, north of Grooms Road, and South of Clifton Park Center Road. These neighborhoods include Clifton Gardens, Kings Court, and Springhill Estates. The Park District is bounded to the east by I-87. Clifton Gardens maintains one park, known as the Clifton Gardens Park. The Park District is also responsible for the maintenance of trails, drainage basins, cul-de-sacs, and Town right-of-ways within its bounds. In sum, the Park District maintains 11.75 acres of land. The Town of Clifton Park's Buildings and Grounds Department provides maintenance, such as mowing, for a fee.



### ***Clifton Knolls Park District***

The Clifton Knolls Park District includes the Clifton Knolls neighborhood, which is north of Grooms Road, south of Clifton Park Center Road, east of Vischer Ferry Road, and west of Moe Road. The Clifton Knolls Park District maintains the Locust Lane Park, the Barney Road Park, and the Beechwood Pocket Park. The Locust Lane and Barney Road parks have Town owned and maintained pools and clubhouses along with other amenities.



In addition to the parks, the Park District is responsible for the maintenance of trails and neighborhood entrance markers. Park district lands are maintained by community volunteers, private contractors, and the Town of Clifton Park.

### ***Dwaaskill Park District***

The Dwaaskill Park District encompasses most of the neighborhoods south of Kinns Road, north of Route 146, and west of I-87. These neighborhoods include Country Knolls South, Woodcliff, Glenbrook, Florentine, Renaissance, Northcrest, Dwaaskill, Robinwood, and Innisbrook. Dwaaskill maintains one neighborhood park on Bernini Drive. The District is also responsible for the maintenance of trails and other Town-owned lands within its bounds. Park district lands are primarily maintained by the Town, but seasonal workers are occasionally hired.





### ***Longkill I Park District***

The Longkill I Park District serves the Country Knolls, Country Knolls Ashley Section, Dutch Meadows, Knollwood Hollow, Stonegate, Van Wyck Estates, and Windsor Point neighborhoods in the northern portion of Clifton Park. The boundaries of the District span from I-87 into the western portion of Town. The Longkill I Park District maintains 2 neighborhood parks, Martin Jewett Park and Burning Bush Park, which has a Park District-owned swimming pool. The Park District is also responsible for trail maintenance. The parks in the Longkill I Park District are maintained by a private contractor.



In the mid-1990s the Longkill I Park District developed a master plan, which can be viewed at Town Hall.

### ***Longkill II Park District***



The Longkill II Park District is located in the northern portion of Town just south of Longkill I Park District. Longkill II serves 2 developments, totaling over 800 residences. The District maintains the George C. Smith Park and trails located within the District's bounds. The District is in the process of building a more extensive walking and biking trail that lead out to Torrey Pines. There is also an open-space area located near one of the new developments that could be used for passive recreation.

### ***Meadow Estates & Addison Estates Park District***

The Meadow Estates and Addison Estates Park District is located west of Vischer Ferry Road, south of the Stony Creek II Park District. The District is responsible for maintaining all Town-owned open space and trails within its bounds.



### ***Riverview I Park District***



The Riverview I Park District is located in the southeastern portion of Clifton Park. Its boundaries are composed of Vischer Ferry Road to the north, Riverview Road to the south, Vanvranken Road to the west, and the Town boundary to the east. The Park District serves the neighborhoods of Amity Point, Crescent Estates, Crescent Estates South, Crescent Point, Forest Point, Fox Hollow, and Foxwood Apartments. The

District maintains 3 parks within its bounds including the Boyack Road Park, the Crescent Estates South Park, and a play-lot on Parkwood Drive.

### ***Settlers Hill Park District***

The Settlers Hill Park District is located in the western portion of Clifton Park west of Miller Road. The Park District serves the Settlers Hill neighborhood. There are 79.17 acres of Town-owned open space within the bounds of the Settlers Hill Park District. The Park District is responsible for maintaining Town-owned open space and trails within its boundaries.

### ***Sherwood Forest Park District***



The Sherwood Forest Park District encompasses the Sherwood Forest, Emerson, and Sterling Heights neighborhoods. The District straddles Route 146A and is south of Kinns Road and North of Route 146. Sherwood Forest Park District is responsible for maintaining the Town-owned parkland and open space within its boundaries. The only park equipped with amenities in the Sherwood Forest Park District is the Nottingham Way South Park. The Park District also maintains

neighborhood entranceways and the median on Nottingham Way South.

### ***Stony Creek I Park District***

The Stony Creek I Park District is the largest park district in the Town of Clifton Park. It serves the neighborhoods of Annondale, Aspenwood, Berkshire Estates, Birch Knolls, Countrymen Estates, Crescent Estates North, Englemore Landing, Grooms Pointe, Huntwood, Mapleleaf Estates, Oakwood, Presidential Estates, Shirewood, Stony Creek, Tremont Estates, Woodcrest Pointe, and Village Green. The District is located South of Grooms Road and North of Crescent Road.



Stony Creek I is responsible for maintaining the Town-owned parkland and open space within its boundaries. There are 10 parks and approximately 13 trails in the Park District. Existing parks include a play lot in Presidential Estates, Huntwood Park, the Village Green Tennis Court, a play lot on Haystack Road, a play lot on East Haystack Road, a park on Sugarbush Road, 2 play lots in Shirewood, and a park on Compton Road.



The proposed Stony Creek Park will also be located in the Stony Creek I Park District on Moe Road. The park has been in progress for a few years and was recently granted approval by the State of New York. The Park District is currently building a walking trail in the proposed park. The District hopes to build more walking paths to provide access to the new park.

The Park District is maintained by community volunteers and the Town of Clifton Park. The Town assists with fixing equipment and general landscaping. Summer help is also hired by the Park District to maintain the parkland.

### ***Stony Creek II Park District***

The Stony Creek II Park District is located west of Vischer Ferry Road. The Park District is responsible for maintaining one parcel of Town-owned open space. The parcel is located on Vischer Ferry Road across from Clifton Common. The Park District is unique because the District's parkland is located outside of the Oakhurst and Park Lane Estates developments, which the Park District serves. The land is a large grassy field bordered by trees and shrubs. There are no recreational amenities on the parcel. The land is used twice a year as overflow parking for Clifton Common. Maintenance of the parkland is contracted out to private companies.

### ***Wyncrest Park District***

The Wyncrest Park District is the smallest Park District in the Town of Clifton Park. The District currently serves 53 houses in the Wyncrest subdivision, which is located off of Vischer Ferry Road. The Park District is responsible for the maintenance of 3 parcels of land. Only one of these parcels is owned by the Town of Clifton Park. The other 2 parcels are owned by the Clifton Park Water Authority. The Park District also maintains the Wyncrest cul-de-sac, the neighborhood entranceway, and a short trail, which connects the Wyncrest subdivision to the former Oranacah Farm. The trail was recently built by the developer of the future subdivision located to the south of Wyncrest. The Town provides most of the maintenance for the Park District; however a private contractor is occasionally hired by the District.



### Map 3: Park Districts



## ***Arts, Culture & Entertainment Resources***

---

The Town of Clifton Park offers a variety of arts, culture, and entertainment resources to its residents. The Town recognizes that arts, culture, and other entertainment are vital to the quality of life of Town residents. To affirm the importance of arts and culture in Clifton Park, the Community Arts and Culture Commission was established by Town ordinance in 2007. The Commission was formed to advise and assist the Town Board in development, coordination, promotion, and support of the arts. Members of the Clifton Park Community Arts and Culture Commission include Clifton Park citizens with a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. The Commission co-sponsors various arts programs with the Town of Clifton Park Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Affairs. The Commission also accepts applications for grants that support the local artistic community.

A number of arts and cultural organizations are active in the Town of Clifton Park. One of the most active organizations is the Not-So-Common-Players. This theater group has drawn over 35,000 people to 122 performances from 2000 to 2009. Their productions are held three times a year in the spring, summer, and fall. Summer productions are held at the Clifton Common outdoor amphitheater and fall and spring productions are held at the Shenendehowa High School theater. The Clifton Park Community Chorus and the Clifton Park Community Orchestra are also active in the Town. The multi-generational Chorus holds annual spring and winter concerts, as well as performing at the Town's Winter Block Party, Sundays in the Park, Saratoga First Night, and Shopper's World Holiday Event. The group sings seasonal songs, show tunes, classics, and contemporary songs. The Orchestra was reinstated in 2009 following a two-year hiatus.

The Office of Parks, Recreation and Community Affairs, the Shenendehowa Adult Community Center, and the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Library also provide opportunities for residents to take part in a variety of artistic and cultural activities. Provided activities and programs include, but are not limited to staged readings, painting classes, ceramics, and dance.

The Saratoga County Arts Council is a valuable resource for Clifton Park artists hoping to secure grant funding. The Council is a non-profit organization that is devoted to promoting the arts in all Saratoga County communities, including the Town of Clifton Park. In addition to sponsoring classes, public performances, workshops, and exhibits, the organization awards grant funding for activities related to arts and culture. Over \$300,000 in grant funds have been awarded by the Council to support programming and local artists in Saratoga County.<sup>7</sup>



---

<sup>7</sup> Saratoga County Arts Council at the Arts Center in Saratoga Springs, NY. <http://www.saratoga-arts.org/about.htm>. Accessed November 6, 2009.



**Shenendehowa School District Recreational Resources**

The Shenendehowa Central School District’s main campus is located off of Route 146. The campus consists of Shenendehowa High School, Koda Middle School, Acadia Middle School (East and West), Gowana Middle School, Karigon Elementary, Orenda Elementary, Skano Elementary, and Tesago Elementary. On campus grounds there are 18 tennis courts, 2 baseball fields, 2 softball fields, 7 fields for soccer and lacrosse, and an outdoor basketball court. The School District completed a turf football field with an 8-lane track in 2009. There are also 2 practice football fields and a number of multi-purpose fields and multi-station play structures on the campus.



In terms of indoor recreation facilities, the Shenendehowa Central School District has 8 elementary school gyms, 2 middle school gyms, 1 gym at Shenendehowa High School West and 2 gyms at Shenendehowa High School East. The School District constructed an indoor pool at Shenendehowa High School that opened in 2009. The 25-yard pool has a maximum bathing capacity of 304 people. There are four competitive diving boards; two one-meter boards and two 3-meter boards. The pool is available for public use only during specified times.



Four elementary schools are part of the Shenendehowa Central School District but are not located on the main campus. These schools include Arongen Elementary School, Chango Elementary, Okte Elementary School, and Shatekon Elementary. All four elementary schools have playgrounds. Okte Elementary School has two tennis courts.

**Table 9: Shenendehowa Central School District Recreational Resources**

School Name	Acres (Total School District Land Holdings)	Accessibility	Baseball/Softball Field	Basketball Hoop	Gymnasium	Multi-Purpose Field	Parking	Play Equipment	Restroom/ Comfort Station	Soccer Field	Swimming Pool	Tennis Court	Track	Trails/ Walking Paths	Volleyball Court
Shenendehowa Central School District	338	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X



**Private & Not-for-Profit Recreational Resources**

In addition to public recreational resources, there is also a wealth of private and not-for-profit recreational resources located within the boundaries of Clifton Park. Many of these private and not-for-profit recreational resources offer services that are not provided by the Town, such as golf, riding stables, and indoor fitness equipment.



Because private facilities can be used and enjoyed by Clifton Park residents, it is important to acknowledge them in the park inventory. A selection of private recreational resources is listed below:

*Private Facilities:*

- Van Patten Golf Club
- Edison Club
- Mohawk River Country Club
- Clifton Knolls Executive Par 3 Golf Club
- Eagle Crest Golf Club
- Clifton Park Golf
- Northway 8 Golf Center
- Planet Fitness
- The Dance Department
- Kniskern Music House
- Creative Dance Arts
- Hilltop Stables
- On-Again-Off-Again Stables
- Clifton Park Elk’s Lodge
- Sportsmen’s Club of Clifton Park
- Southern Saratoga YMCA
- Health Plex Fitness -Wellness Center
- Gold’s Gym
- Pai’s Academy of Taekwondo

Within Town boundaries are also private open spaces protected by permanent conservation easements or deed restrictions. These lands include agricultural land, open natural areas, and forest. The open space parcels are owned by either private owners or such land trusts as Saratoga Preserving Land and Nature (P.L.A.N.). The mission of Saratoga P.L.A.N. is to conserve natural lands via donation, purchase, or conservation easement. The organization has partnered with the Town of Clifton Park to assist with open space protection and management. The land trust owns or has easement interests on nearly 200 acres in the Town. The two most significant land trust parcels in Clifton Park are on Waite Road and Tanner Road.





The Town of Clifton Park, through active implementation of its Open Space Program, has permanently protected 128 acres of farmland/open space land through securing permanent conservation easements. The three farms protected to date are King Crest Farm on Grooms Road, Riverview Orchards on Riverview Road, and Cloverdale Farm on Hubbs Road. These private lands with easements, held by either Saratoga P.L.A.N. or the Town of Clifton Park, permanently protect the public's conservation values. Although permanently protected farmland is generally not open for public use, some of P.L.A.N.'s parcels may be opened to the public in the future.

*Permanently Protected Private Open Space:*

- King Crest Farm (41 acres)
- Riverview Orchards (87 acres)
- Cloverdale Farm (59 acres)
- Saratoga P.L.A.N parcels (195.6 acres)

## IV. State & National Recreational Needs Assessment

---

### *Highlights: Opportunities & Challenges*

- *Play lots and pocket parks are mostly clustered in the southeastern section of Town in the Riverview I and Stony Creek I Park Districts.*
- *Neighborhood parks serve residents principally to the east of Route 146A, although some residents west of Route 146A fall into the ½ mile service area.*
- *All Clifton Park residents are within 3 miles of a community park, except for those living in the southeast corner of Town.*
- *Clifton Park has an overall shortage of recreational facilities according to the SCORP.*
- *The Town has approximately 6,900 square feet of pool space compared to 27,525 square feet as recommended by SCORP guidelines.*
- *The Town has approximately 60 acres (33 fields) for field games compared to 110 acres recommended by SCORP guidelines.*
- *Residents in the western part of the Town currently have an abundance of rural open space, but have limited access to parks and playgrounds.*

Following the inventory and conditions assessment of Clifton Park's parks and recreational facilities, Town-owned recreational resources were compared with New York State and National recreation standards. Town recreational resources were analyzed using the criteria of the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and the National Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines (NRPA). These State and National guidelines will enable the Town to determine the extent of the Town's recreational need and to identify areas that are currently underserved by existing parks and recreational facilities. This analysis included only Town owned and operated recreational facilities. Therefore, the recreational resources in Clifton Park owned by the Shenendehowa Central School District, New York State, Saratoga County, and private land owners were not included in the SCORP or NRPA assessments.





## ***State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)***

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) establishes comparative standards that provide guidance to communities focused on assessing recreational resources. SCORP provides suggested guidelines on the approximate number of acres needed to support the recreational opportunity, the minimum population density needed to support a specific recreation opportunity, the recommended standard size per 1,000 population, the maximum travel time of a potential user, and the appropriate means of



accessing the resource. SCORP also provides suggestions on how recreational resources may be further enhanced. The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP) developed these guidelines through researching the various recreational activities, working with the public through a public participation process, and obtaining feedback from other government agencies that have a vested interest in recreation and open space. SCORP standards are designed to be evaluated at the local level.

These standards can be used as a guide by communities looking to develop additional recreational facilities. The SCORP guidelines look to maximize the social and economic benefits of recreation while minimizing the adverse impacts to the resource. These standards provide communities with information to assist them in developing specific recreational resources and ensuring the success of the resources or facility. Through comparing the community's characteristics, population density, and land availability with the SCORP standards, communities can better identify the likely need for a proposed resource. If the community specifics differ greatly from the recommended standards, and fall short of the SCORP minimum standards, the potential success of that proposed resource is questionable. However, each community should take into account community demand for a recreational resource in addition to SCORP guidelines before making major decisions.

The two tables that follow are the SCORP standards for Recreational Facility Design and Facility Development.

**Table 10** and **Table 11** describe the different facility types identified by SCORP, and their associated standards. Each recreational facility provides different opportunities for residents, and based upon population and square miles, communities should facilitate the development of all or some of these parks. These tables are generalized tables that are used by all of New York State and not all of the items listed in these tables will apply specifically to the Town of Clifton Park.



**Table 10: SCORP Recreational Facility Design Guidelines\***

Facility Type	Service Area	Approx. Size In Acres	Max. Travel Time	Means of Access	Comments
Play lot	0.2 sq. mi.	2,500 sq. ft. to 1 Ac	10 min.	By foot or By bicycle.	Similar to a Pocket Park but typically combined with residential development, may have some play equipment.
Pocket park	0.2 sq. mi.	2,500 sq. ft. to 1 Ac	10 min.	By foot or by bicycle.	Primarily passive recreation areas for office workers and shoppers.
Neighborhood Park	0.8 sq. mi.	5-10	20 min.	By foot or by bicycle.	Should contain a balance of passive areas with landscaping, and active areas such as play fields, court games, tot lots, etc.
Community Park (serves multiple neighborhoods)	0.8 sq. mi. To 28 sq. mi.	20-50	30 min.	Automobile, mass transit, bike, hiking or trail.	Offers both passive and active recreational opportunities. Not intended for scheduled or organized athletic events. May include play structures, game courts and fields, swimming pools or beaches, trails, individual and group picnic areas, landscaping and gardens, and/or areas for concerts or plays. Support facilities such as parking and comfort stations would be needed.
Urban Parks (serves entire city)	28 sq. mi. to 50 sq. mi.	50-150	30 min.	Automobile, charter bus, mass transit, or trail.	Extensive day use areas; may include play structures, game courts and fields, swimming pools or beaches, trails, individual and group picnic areas, landscaping and gardens, and/or areas for concerts or plays. Support facilities such as parking and comfort stations would be needed. Provides 4-season activities and may accommodate organized athletic leagues or events.
Large Regional Parks (serves a county)	50 sq. mi. +	40+	1-2 hrs.	Automobile, charter bus, mass transit, or major trail.	In addition to activities mentioned for Urban Parks, these parks may include camping, picnicking, water access and selected winter activities such as ski touring or snowmobiling.
Metro	28 sq. mi. to 50 sq. mi.	25	30 min.	Limit vehicle access. Promote non-motorized modes of access.	Urban parks emphasizing special recreational cultural or historical themes and activities, day and evening operation during all seasons.

Source: Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2009-2013. Appendix I: Recreation Facility Design Guidelines. Standards and Development Guidelines.

\* Partially derived from National Recreation and Parks Association



**Table 11: SCORP Facility Development Standards**

Facility Type	Instant Max. User Density	Standard Per 1,000 Pop	Comments
Skating Areas (natural)	500 users/acre	1 site/2,500	This category includes non-refrigerated rinks.
Camping	20 users/acre	N/A	Density figures based on 5 sites per acre, 4 users per site.
Picnicking	35 users/acre	N/A	Density figures based on 10 tables per acres, 3.5 users per table.
Boating	6-8 acres/boat	N/A	This figure is used for both powered and sail boating. There are generally 3 users in each boat.
Skiing	30 users/acres of developed slope	N/A	
Big Game Hunting	1 hunter/5 acres	200 acres/1,000	
Fishing (Stream)	5 users/mile	0.5 mi. stream/1,000	
Golf Course	8 users/hole	0.5 holes/1,000	
Field Games (Baseball, Softball, Football, Soccer)	15 users/acre	3 acres/1,000	The following may be provided through off-peak use of school facilities.
Swimming Pool	1 user/25 sq. foot	750 sq. ft./1,000	The following may be enclosed to extend seasonal use.
Tennis Courts	4 users/court	1 court/2,000	The following can be lighted and converted for ice skating.
Basketball (Courts)	16 users/court	1 court/1,999	

Source: Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2009-2013. Appendix I: Recreation Facility Design Guidelines. Standards and Development Guidelines.

**Evaluating Park and Recreation Resources**

Based on the SCORP standards, Clifton Park has 13 play lots, 12 neighborhood parks, 7 community parks, and 1 urban park. The acreage listed in **Table 12** below represents the size of the parcel on which the park is located. In some cases, the acreage of the park does not encompass the entire parcel. Acreage plays an important role in determining the SCORP classification but other factors such as maximum travel time, means of access, and the classification description must be taken into account when selecting the appropriate SCORP classification.





**Table 12: SCORP Park and Open Space Classifications for Clifton Park**

Resource Name	Acreage	SCORP Classification
<b>Town-Owned Parks &amp; Pools</b>		
Barney Road Park & Pool	24.9	Neighborhood Park
Beechwood Pocket Park	8.76	Play Lot
Bernini Drive Park	18.44	Neighborhood Park
Boyack Road Park	3.56	Neighborhood Park
Burning Bush Park & Pool	10.15	Neighborhood Park
Clifton Common	81	Urban Park
Clifton Gardens Park	11.75	Neighborhood Park
Clifton Park Action Park	1.95	Play Lot
Compton Road Park	9.35	Play Lot
Crescent Estates South Park	11.43	Neighborhood Park
East Haystack Road Play Lot	1.13	Play Lot
Garnsey Park	154	Community Park
George C. Smith Park	9.56	Neighborhood Park
Haystack Road Play Lot	0.53	Play Lot
Huntwood Park	3.51	Play Lot
Locust Lane Park & Pool	9.47	Neighborhood Park
Martin Jewett Park	13.3	Neighborhood Park
Mary Jane Row Dog Park	18.92	Play Lot
Nottingham Way South Park	3.25	Neighborhood Park
Parkside Trail Fields	13	Community Park
Parkwood Drive Park	3.56	Play Lot
Presidential Estates Park	1	Play Lot
Shirewood I Play Lot	9.35	Play Lot
Shirewood II Play Lot	9.35	Play Lot
Sugarbush Road Park	4.96	Neighborhood Park
Stony Creek Park (future)	47.7	Neighborhood Park
Veterans Memorial Park	141	Community Park
Village Green Tennis Courts	1.62	Play Lot
Westchester Drive Tennis Courts	0.67	Play Lot
William K. Collins Jr. Park	8	Community Park
<b>Town-Owned Preserves</b>		
Dwaas Kill Nature Preserve	248	Community Park
Mohawk Landing	6	Community Park
North Woods Nature Preserve	80	Community Park

***Park and Open Space Service Area for Clifton Park***

Both the NRPA and SCORP recognize the need to provide parks and open space within a certain service area of a community’s residents. Identifying areas outside the current service area will help prioritize potential acquisitions. A review of each park’s service area utilizing ¼ mile for play lots and pocket parks, ½ mile for neighborhood parks, 1 mile, 2 mile, and 3 mile increments for community parks indicate that a higher concentration of parks and open spaces exist in the eastern portion of the Town. However, it is important to note that a majority of the Town’s population and the all of the park districts are located in this half of the Town.



**Map 4** shows the service areas of pocket parks and play lots. The ¼ mile service areas include only the portions of neighborhoods that are directly adjacent to the pocket parks and play lots. Play lots and pocket parks are mostly clustered in the southeastern section of Town in the Riverview I and Stony Creek I Park Districts. **Map 4** also shows the service areas of neighborhood parks. The ½ mile service areas typically serve an entire neighborhood and sometimes extend into surrounding neighborhoods. Neighborhood parks serve residents principally to the east of Route 146A, although some residents west of Route 146A fall into the ½ mile service area.

**Map 5** shows the service areas of community parks. All Clifton Park residents are within 3 miles of a community park, except for those living in the southeast corner of Town. The majority of residents are also within 2 miles of a community park, except for those in the northwest and southeast corners.

### ***Facility Standards for Clifton Park***

New York State's Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), through its SCORP standards, in addition to recommended parkland acreage estimates, also provides recommended Facility Development Standards. Based on average usage and availability, the SCORP recommendations identify a standard number of resources that should be available per 1,000 residents. This standard seeks to establish a baseline measure to ensure the amount of local resources available is adequate to meet resident need.

The per capita acreage figures in **Table 13** below will be used to evaluate the Town's needs for certain recreational facilities. Ultimately, these per capita figures are intended to be guidelines and such calculations do not take into account whether school facilities are also used.

### ***Overall Facility Needs Analysis***

The Town of Clifton Park has an overall shortage of recreational facilities according to the SCORP. According to the analysis, the Town experienced a shortage in recreation facilities in 2000 of 38.5%. The shortage increased in 2008 as the Town's population grew to 44.1% as of 2008. As Clifton Park's population continues to grow, it is projected that by 2013 the shortage will have increased to 47.3%. As previously noted, this analysis did not include the Shenendehowa Central School District's facilities, private facilities, or not-for-profit facilities because they are not directly owned and operated by the Town.





**Map 4: SCORP - Pocket Parks, Play Lots & Neighborhood Parks**



**Map 5: SCORP - Community Parks**



The Town has the greatest deficits in pool and field game facilities. According to the SCORP, a community should have 750 square feet of pool space for every 1,000 residents. Currently, the Town only has approximately 6,900 square feet of pool space based on Town facilities only. Based upon 2008 population estimates, the Town should have 27,525 square feet of pool space. If the population continues to grow as projected, the Town will need 29,175 square feet of town-owned pool space by 2013 in order to satisfy SCORP standards.



The Town is deficient in the amount of facilities for field games, which include baseball, softball, soccer, and football. According to the SCORP a community should have 3 acres of land devoted to field games for every 1,000 residents. The Town has approximately 60 acres for 33 fields at present. Based on 2008 population estimates the Town is recommended to have approximately 110 acres for field games.

The Town also has fewer natural skating rinks and outdoor basketball courts than recommended by the SCORP. The deficit for basketball courts, however, is relatively minor. The SCORP inventory of basketball courts did not include free-standing hoops. Currently, there are an adequate number of tennis courts in Clifton Park. However, if the population continues to grow as projected, a deficit will occur.

**Table 13: SCORP Facility Needs for Clifton Park**

			2000 Needs Analysis		2008 Needs Analysis		2013 Needs Analysis	
Facility Type	SCORP Standard Per 1,000 Pop	Existing Condition	32,995 Residents	Estimated Surplus or Shortage	36,705 Residents	Estimated Surplus or Shortage	38,907 Residents	Estimated Surplus or Shortage
Skating Area (natural)	1 site/2,500	1	13	-12	15	-14	16	-15
Field Games (Baseball, Softball, Football, Soccer)	3 acres/1,000	20	33	-13	36.7	-16.7	38.9	-18.9
Swimming Pool	750 sq. ft./1,000	9.2	33	-23.8	36.7	-27.5	38.9	-29.7
Tennis Courts	1 court/2,000	18	17	1	18	0	19	-1
Basketball Courts	1 court/1,999	15	17	-2	18	-3	19	-4
<b>Total Facilities Developed</b>		62	113	-43.5	124.4	-54.9	131.8	-62.3
<b>Needs Analysis (%)</b>				-38.5%		-44.1%		-47.3%



### ***Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines (NRPA)***

---

Since 1983, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has published the *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenways Guidelines* to assist communities in developing park and recreation plans. The most recent version was published in 1996. Through this publication, the NRPA looks to ensure that communities know how to secure “the right kind of land” to meet their community needs. To ensure that this occurs, the NRPA recommends a systems approach be used in planning a community park network. A systems approach emphasizes addressing the recreation system as a whole rather than providing strict acreage formulas for the amount of park, recreation, and open space. The NRPA approach stresses using a Level of Service analysis, which considers users of the facilities rather than per capita figures to evaluate recreational need. Several steps of the NRPA’s multi-step planning process have been undertaken as part of this planning effort. These efforts are described in further detail below.

---

#### ***Multi-Step Park Planning Process***

Under the systems planning model, the NRPA has identified a multi-step process that results in effective parks and recreation planning. The first four steps, which are directly related to developing a parks plan, are described in the following paragraphs.

##### ***Identifying Users***

**Step #1 involves identifying users.** According to the NRPA guidelines, this includes Participant Users (individuals that participate in a structured manner, i.e., sports leagues); Direct Users (those that use a facility in an unstructured manner, such as hiking or picnicking); and Non-Users (those that do not use the park directly and may or may not recognize the benefits the park system brings to the community.) Non-users may also represent a latent need for specific types of resources, including, for example, facilities that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

As part of this planning process, the consultants met with the Clifton Park Recreation Plan Advisory Committee to discuss expressed community needs. The Advisory Committee was comprised of Town officials and local recreation stakeholders. A demographic profile was developed, providing a synopsis of the Town’s population. Specific characteristics analyzed included population trends, age, income, household composition, housing trends and education.

In addition, a recreation needs survey was conducted. Town residents were invited to complete the survey electronically or by hand. The survey was accessible online during June and July 2009. A total of 1,130 surveys were completed, resulting in a response rate of approximately 3 percent. Feedback from the survey was instrumental in helping the plan consultants develop an overview of both user as well as non-user populations in the Town.



### ***Obtaining Public Involvement and Developing Relationships***

**Step #2 includes obtaining public involvement and developing relationships.** In order to meet the actions required of this step, four public workshops open to all Clifton Park residents were held in June and October 2009. The goal of these public forums was to obtain feedback from users and non-users on what they would like to see at the various parks and recreational facilities, including improvements to existing resources and development of new amenities, both now and in the future.

### ***Assessing Need***

**Step #3 involves assessing need.** Once the information from the public workshops and the recreation needs survey had been compiled and summarized, this information was integrated into a usable form. Common themes regarding potential inadequacies in the system were identified. The plan consultants then evaluated the community's resources in the context of residents' expressed desires, as indicated through the public forums. Through interaction and communication with the Advisory Committee, the plan consultants attempted to balance customer perceptions and feedback with information about ongoing recreation activities and programs.

### ***Developing the Strategic Plan***

**Step # 4 is developing the strategic plan.** Using the feedback obtained through the various public forums, a community vision for the Town's parks and recreation system was identified. Based on the values and ideals residents have identified throughout the public participation process, as well as the critiques and shortcomings identified, the strategic plan will provide viable solutions to rectify inadequacies in the park and recreation system for the Town of Clifton Park. The Park and Recreation Plan that has been developed as part of this process will include a matrix of appropriate implementation techniques to facilitate the development of the Town's park system.

---

### ***NRPA Classifications***

As shown in **Table 14**, NRPA has broken the classification of parks and open space into several categories. Each category is based upon features, size, location, need and expected use. The NRPA has established a set of location criteria to be used when analyzing existing park system patterns. The guidelines give specific distances that each park should be located in reference to neighborhoods and development. For example, the placement of neighborhood parks in communities should address existing transportation and/or physical barriers. These standards allow for park planners to design more interconnected, active, and passive recreational facilities to serve community members.



**Table 14: NRPA Parks and Open Space Classifications**

Classification	General Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria
Mini-Parks	Used to address limited, isolated, or unique residential needs.	Less than ¼ mile distance in residential setting.	Between 2,500 sf and 1 acre
Neighborhood Parks	Basic unit of the park system & serves as the recreational & social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	¼ to ½ mile distance and not interrupted by non-residential roads or other physical barriers.	> 5 acres and <10 acres is optimal
School Park	Depending on circumstances, pursuing joint opportunities can fulfill space requirements for variety of park classification needs (e.g., neighborhood, community, or sports complex).	Determined by location of school district property.	Variable, Depends on function
Community Parks	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood parks. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes & open space.	Determined by quality & suitability of site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods at ½ to 3-mile distance.	As needed. Often 30- 50 acres
Large Urban Parks	Serve a broader purpose than community parks and are used when smaller parks are inadequate. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as unique landscape/open space preservation.	Determined by quality & suitability of site. Usually serves entire community.	> 50 acres and <75 acres is optimal
Natural Resource Area	Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, landscapes, and open space.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable
Greenways	Effectively tie the park system components together to form a continuous park environment.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable
Sports Complex	Consolidates heavy programmed athletic fields & associated facilities to large multipurpose sites.	Strategically located in community-wide facilities.	Min.: 25 acres Optimal: > 40 acres and < 80 acres
Special Use	Area for specialized or single purpose recreation activities such as campgrounds, golf courses etc.	Variable depending on specific use.	Variable
Private Park/ Recreation Facility	Privately owned facilities that contribute to the public park and recreation system.	Variable depending on specific use.	Variable

Source: National Parks Recreation Association, Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines. (1996)

The NRPA Pathway Classification is a new feature to the 1996 guidelines. This update reflects the recognition of the growing importance in park planning to include a well linked, multi-modal transportation path for active and passive recreation. As communities realize that more people are using trails, bicycle lanes and other types of recreational paths, it is important for planners to identify potential opportunities for multi-modal transportation linkages. **Table 15** outlines the NRPA classification system for existing pathways.



**Table 15: NRPA Pathway Classifications Table**

Classification	General Description	Description of Each Type Size Criteria
Park Trail	Trails located within greenways, parks, & natural resource areas. Focus is on recreational value and harmony with nature.	Type I: Separate/single-purpose, hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians/cyclists/ skaters. Type II: Multi purpose hard surface trails. Type III: Nature trails for pedestrians. Hard or soft surfaced.
Connector Trails	Multipurpose trails emphasizing safe travel for pedestrians throughout community. Recreation & transportation focus.	Type I: Separate/single-purpose, hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians/cyclists/ skaters located in independent ROW. Type II: Separate/single-purpose hard surface trails typically in independent ROW.
On-Street Bikeways	Paved segments of roadways that serve as a means to safely separate cyclists from cars.	Bike Route: Designated portions of the roadway for preferential/exclusive use of cyclists.
All-Terrain Bike Trail	Off-road trail for all-terrain (mountain) bikes.	Single-purpose loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas.
Cross Country Ski Trail	Trails developed for traditional and skate-style cross-country skiing.	Loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas.
Equestrian Trail	Trails developed for horseback riding.	Loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas. Sometimes developed as multipurpose with hiking and all-terrain biking where conflicts can be controlled.

Source: National Parks Recreation Association, Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines. (1996)

***Evaluating Park and Recreation Resources Using NRPA Standards***

As shown in **Table 16**, based on the NRPA standards the Town of Clifton Park has 11 mini-parks, 12 neighborhood parks, 4 community parks, 1 sports complex, two special use parks, and 3 natural resource areas. As mentioned previously, the acreage listed in Table 16 below represents the size of the parcel on which the park is located. In some cases, the acreage of the park does not encompass the entire parcel. Acreage plays an important role in determining the NRPA classification but other factors such as location criteria and the general description must be taken into account when selecting the appropriate NRPA classification.





**Table 16: NRPA Park and Open Space Classifications for the Town of Clifton Park**

Resource Name	Acreage	NRPA Classification
<b>Town-Owned Parks &amp; Pools</b>		
Barney Road Park & Pool	24.9	Neighborhood Park
Beechwood Pocket Park	8.76	Mini-Park
Bernini Drive Park	18.44	Neighborhood Park
Boyack Road Park	3.56	Neighborhood Park
Burning Bush Park & Pool	10.15	Neighborhood Park
Clifton Common	81	Sports Complex
Clifton Gardens Park	11.75	Neighborhood Park
Clifton Park Action Park	1.95	Special Use
Compton Road Park	9.35	Mini-Park
Crescent Estates South Park	11.43	Neighborhood Park
East Haystack Road Play Lot	1.13	Mini-Park
Garnsey Park	154	Community Park
George C. Smith Park	9.56	Neighborhood Park
Haystack Road Play Lot	0.53	Mini-Park
Huntwood Park	3.51	Mini-Park
Locust Lane Park & Pool	9.47	Neighborhood Park
Martin Jewett Park	13.3	Neighborhood Park
Mary Jane Row Dog Park	18.92	Special Use
Nottingham Way South Park	3.25	Neighborhood Park
Parkside Trail Fields	13	Community Park
Parkwood Drive Park	3.56	Mini-Park
Presidential Estates Park	1	Mini-Park
Shirewood I Play Lot	9.35	Mini-Park
Shirewood II Play Lot	9.35	Mini-Park
Sugarbush Road Park	4.96	Neighborhood Park
Stony Creek Park (future)	47.7	Neighborhood Park
Veterans Memorial Park	141	Community Park
Village Green Tennis Courts	1.62	Mini-Park
Westchester Drive Tennis Courts	0.67	Mini-Park
William K. Collins Jr. Park	8	Community Park
<b>Town-Owned Preserves</b>		
Dwaas Kill Nature Preserve	248	Natural Resource Area
Mohawk Landing	6	Natural Resource Area
North Woods Nature Preserve	80	Natural Resource Area

## V. Community Outreach Process

---

### *Highlights: Opportunities & Challenges*

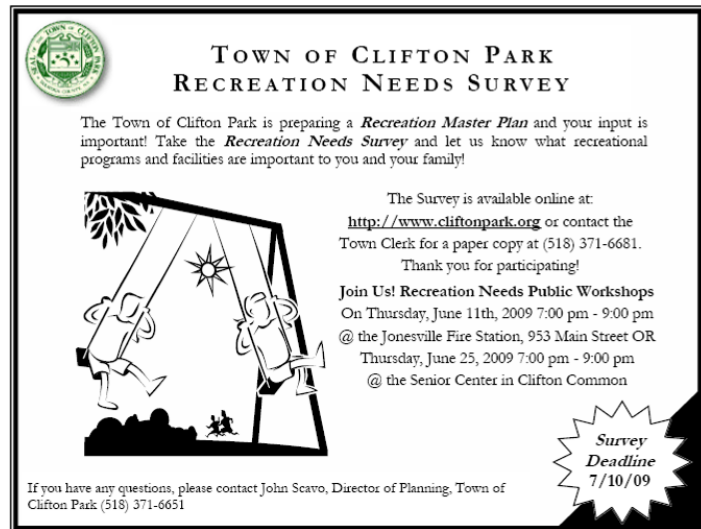
- *The park used by the majority of respondents to the Recreation Needs Survey was Clifton Common.*
- *Resources identified as “excellent” included: baseball fields (33.9%), soccer fields (34.7%), and swimming pools (28.7%).*
- *Resources identified as “unsatisfactory” included: restrooms (36.3%), biking trails (28.2%), picnicking facilities (21.8%), walking trails (21.5%), and canoe/kayak launches (20.4%).*
- *Reasons that deter residents from using Town parks and facilities on a regular basis include lack of knowledge of facility locations (48%), lack of desired program or facility (32%), and the use of private facilities (31%).*
- *Respondents indicated the following additional recreational programs were needed: concerts (54%), family events (53%), environmental/nature programming (40%), and adult athletics (40%).*
- *Clifton Park residents support additional access and amenities to the Mohawk River. Desired amenities include a boathouse to be used by Shenendehowa Crew, recreational boaters, and emergency services.*
- *The Arts and Culture Community needs a facility specific to their needs.*
- *Community recreation stakeholders would like to encourage greater cooperation between the Town and the Shenendehowa School District.*
- *Residents are most satisfied with the cleanliness of Town recreational facilities, the quality of facilities, the variety of parks, the abundance of trails and open space, convenient location of the facilities, and programming.*
- *Residents are least satisfied with the poor condition of neighborhood parks, plans to replace Castle Playground in Clifton Common, lack of parking at facilities, lack of access and equipment for residents with special needs, incomplete trail network, lack of water access, and unequal representation of all recreational activities.*
- *Recommended improvements include updated park equipment, interconnected trail system, improved park maintenance, improved signage, more restrooms, and ADA compliancy.*

**T**he foundation of a good Plan is the incorporation of public input early and often throughout the Plan’s development. To ensure that a plan is founded upon common goals and objectives, it is imperative that feedback be obtained from the community. Three methods were used to solicit community input during the Clifton Park planning process: an online recreation needs survey; stakeholder interviews; and multiple public visioning workshops. The feedback obtained through these public outreach efforts formed the basis for the recommendations developed as part of this planning process.



## Community Survey

The Town of Clifton Park conducted a Recreation Needs Survey designed to better understand the recreation needs of community residents. The survey asked 18 multiple choice and open-ended questions pertaining to the Town's recreational resources. The survey was available electronically on the Town's website and in hard copy at Town Hall and the Library during the months of June and July. A total of 1,130 residents completed the survey. Responses to the survey were tabulated and the full results can be found in **Appendix B**. The following pages highlight the key findings of the Recreation Needs Survey based upon the responses of participants.

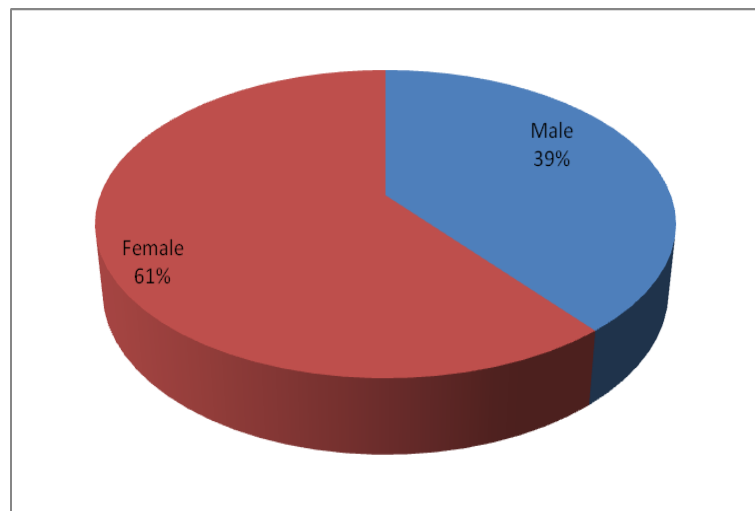


### Demographics of Survey Respondents

Survey respondents were asked to answer a series of demographic questions to determine how closely the sample replicates the Town's known population and, if necessary, to allow analysis of sub-groups. Respondents were asked to indicate their gender, age, and zip code. These questions were instrumental in determining what types of residents responded to the survey.

An overwhelming majority of survey respondents were female. As shown in Figure 3, approximately 61% of respondents were female and 39% were male. The bulk of survey respondents (65.4%) were between the ages of 35 and 54. The high response rate from the 35 to 54 age cohort can be attributed to a greater likelihood of school-aged children in these households. Of the other survey participants, approximately 5% were under the age of 20, 12 percent were 20 to 34, and 17% were over 55.

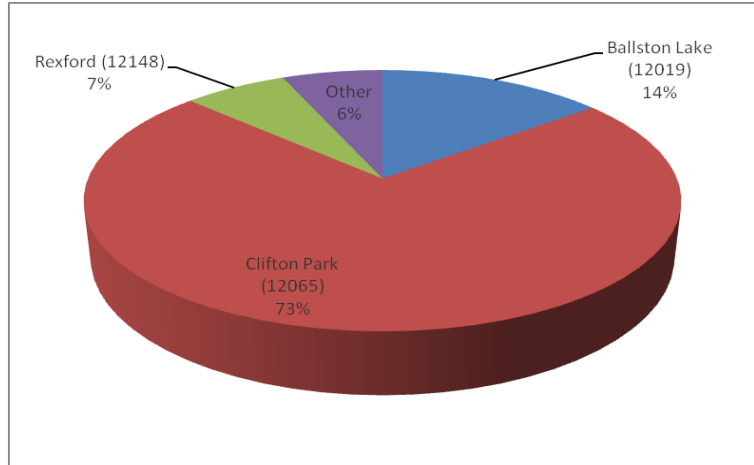
**Figure 3: Gender of Respondents**





Survey respondents were asked to indicate where they live in the Town of Clifton Park by identifying their zip code. Options included Ballston Lake (12019), Clifton Park (12065), and Rexford (12148). A write in box was also available for respondents who reside outside of these three zip codes. As indicated in **Figure 4**, the majority (72.5%) of survey respondents live within the Clifton Park zip code. Approximately 14.4% of respondents live in the Ballston Lake zip code and 6.6% live in the Rexford zip code.<sup>8</sup> Approximately 6.4% of respondents indicated that they live in a zip code other than the three listed. Of these, the highest numbers of respondents live in the Waterford (12188) and Mechanicville (12118) zip codes.

**Figure 4: Geographic Representation of Respondents**



***Preferred Parks & Recreation Facilities***

Respondents were asked to identify all the public parks and recreation facilities in the Town of Clifton Park used by members of their households. As shown in **Figure 5**, the park most frequented was Clifton Common, which was used by 80.5% of respondents. Other parks and facilities used by a high percentage of respondents were Kinns Road Park (38.6%), the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve (36.3%), and the Barney Road Pool (28%).

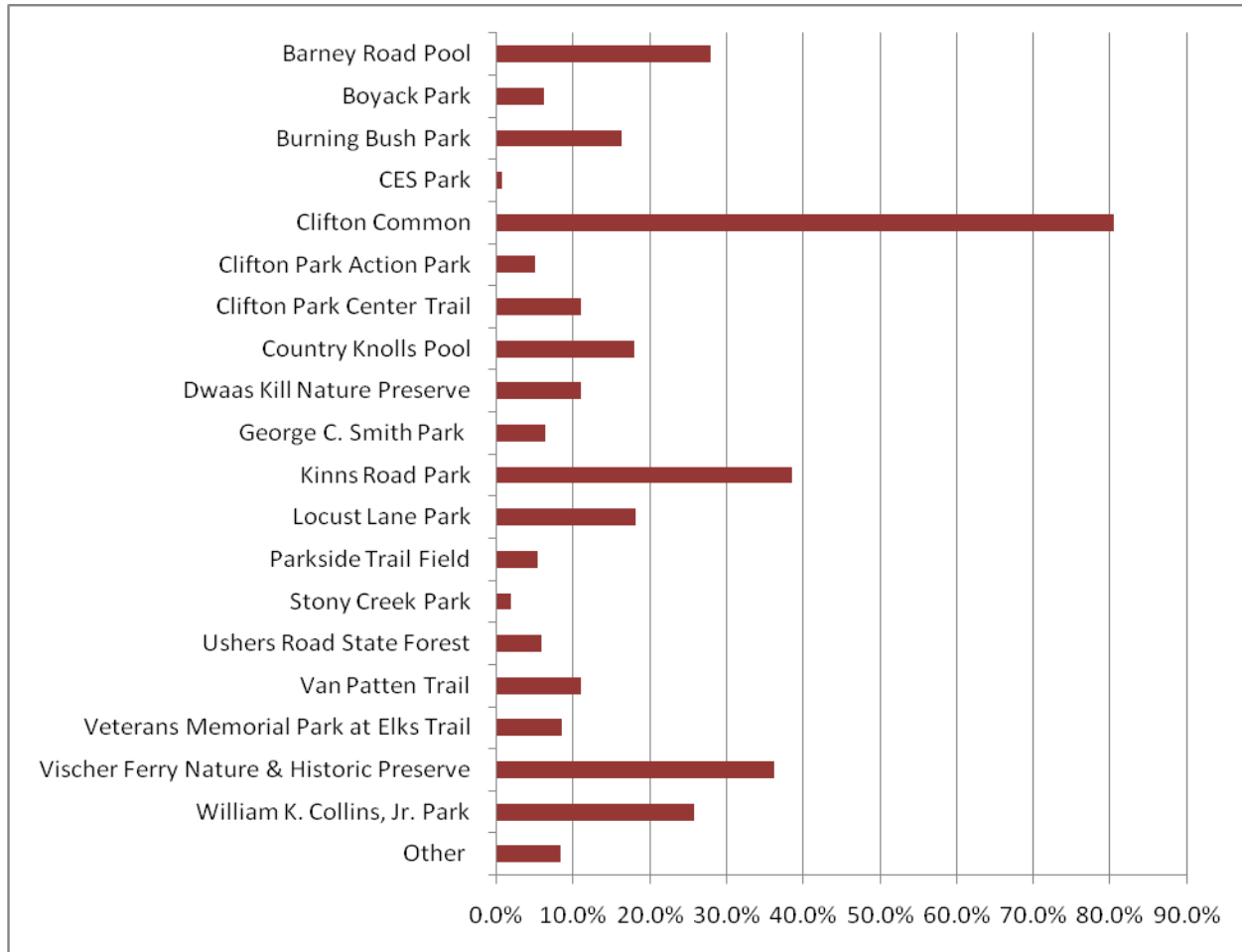
Respondents were also asked to identify public parks and recreation facilities outside of Clifton Park used by members of their households. The park visited by the most respondents was Saratoga Spa State Park (69.3%) followed by Moreau Lake State Park (39.2%), Saratoga National Historical Park (38.8%), and The Crossings (37.7%).

Private outdoor and indoor recreational facilities used by the most respondents were golf courses (47%) and the YMCA (41%). Approximately 24% of respondents reported that members of their household do not utilize private indoor recreation facilities and 45% do not utilize private outdoor recreation facilities.

<sup>8</sup> Approximately 1.8% of residents in the Clifton Park zip code responded to the survey, while 1.04% of residents in the Ballston Lake zip code responded and 2.19% of residents in the Rexford zip code responded.



**Figure 5: Public Rec. Resources in Clifton Park (by % of respondents who use resource)**



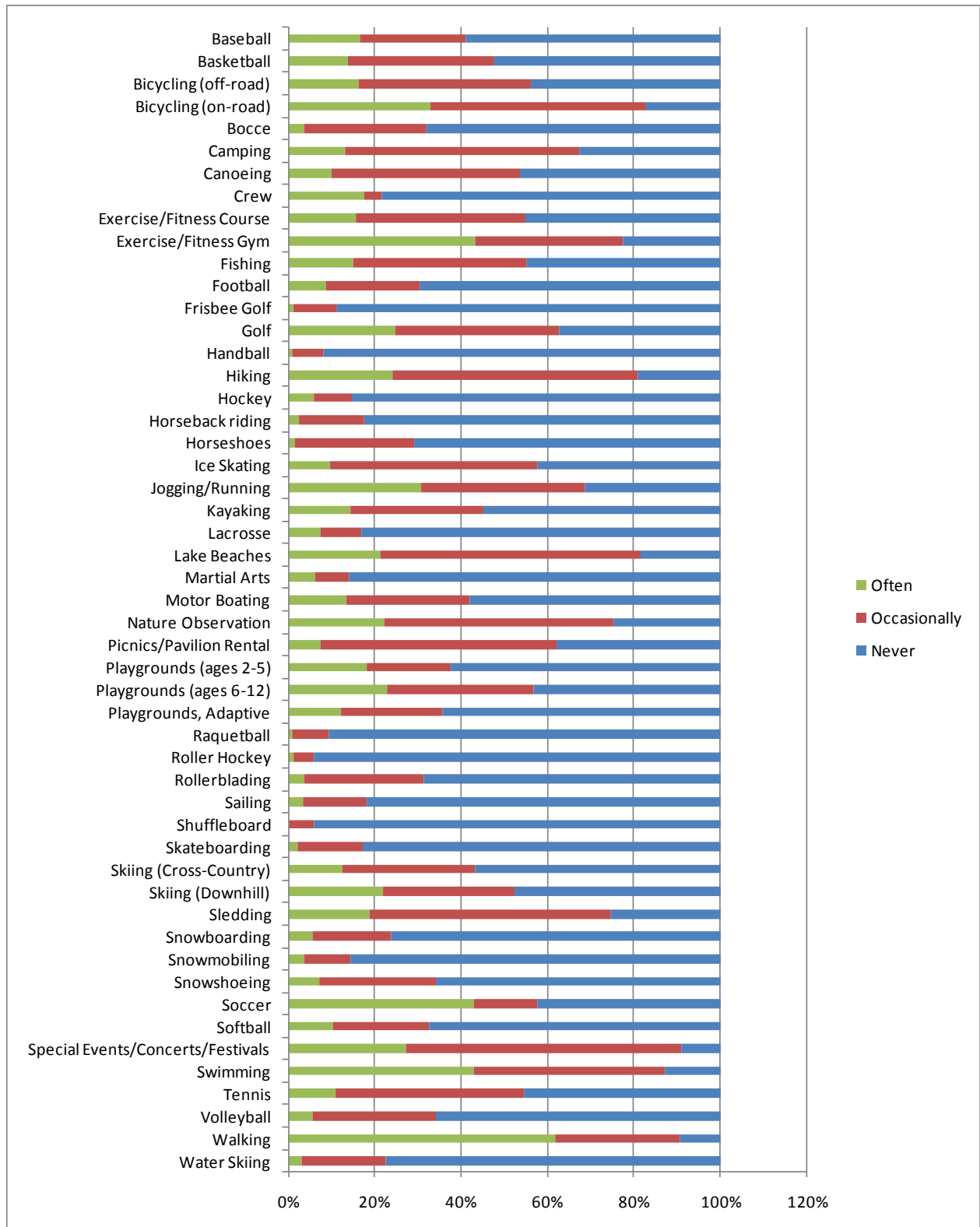
**Preferred Recreational Activities**

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they participate in a number of recreational activities. As shown in **Figure 6**, the highest percentage of respondents indicated that activities they participate in often include exercising in a fitness gym (43.2%), playing soccer (42.9%), and walking (61.9%). It is important to note that the Town of Clifton Park does not own a public fitness gym, so respondents must be utilizing other fitness facilities. It is also important to note that the question asked how often the *respondent* participated in a given activity rather than *members of their household*. It is much more likely that a respondent in the 35-55 age group would select walking or exercising in a fitness gym as an activity that they participate in more often than a child in the 0-10 age group. For this reason, it is important to take into account the demographic profile of the average respondent.

The greatest percentage of respondents indicated that activities they participate in on occasion include special events/concerts/festivals (63.6%), going to lake beaches (60.5%), and hiking (56.8%). A majority of respondents indicated that they never participate in roller hockey (94%), shuffleboard (94%), and racquetball (90.6%).



Figure 6: Frequency Respondents Participate in Recreational Activities

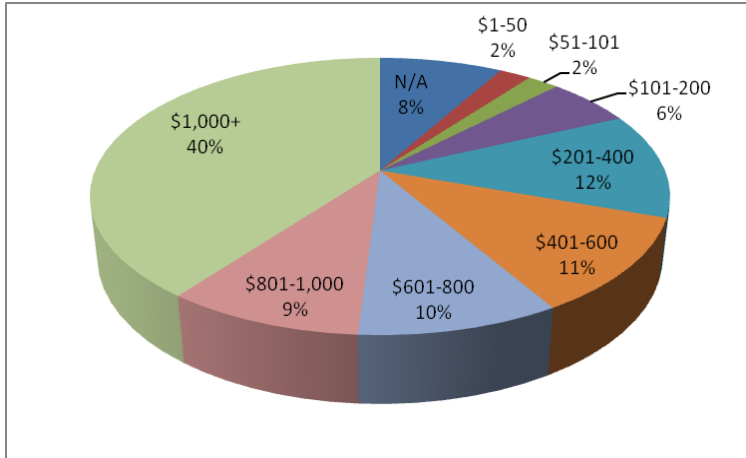




### Recreation Spending

Survey respondents were asked to estimate the amount their household spends on recreation each year. As shown in **Figure 7**, over 39% of respondents reported that their household spends over \$1,000 a year on recreational activities. Approximately 10% spent \$200 or less per year and 42% spent between \$200 and \$1000 per year. Approximately 8% did not spend any money on recreation.

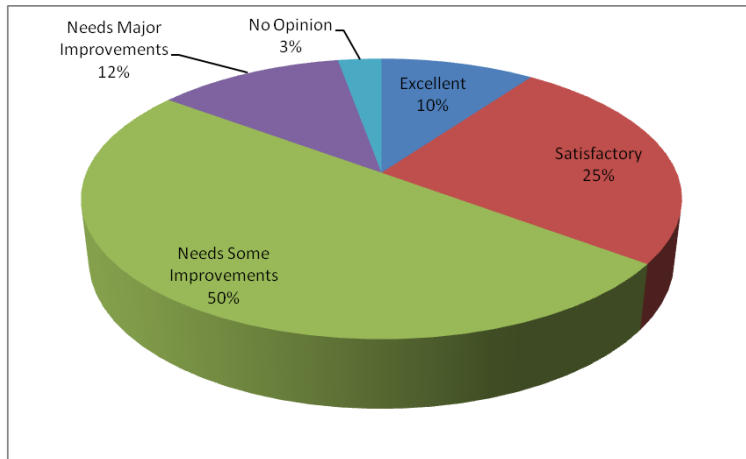
**Figure 7: Amount Spent on Recreation per Year**



### Overall Quality of Recreational Programs & Facilities

Respondents were asked to describe the Town’s overall level and scope of recreational programs, parks, trails, and recreational facilities available. As shown in **Figure 8**, approximately 50% of survey respondents described the Town’s overall level and scope of recreational resources as in need of some improvements. Approximately 10% described the Town’s recreational resources as excellent, 25% described them as satisfactory, 12% described them as needing major improvements, and 3% had no opinion.

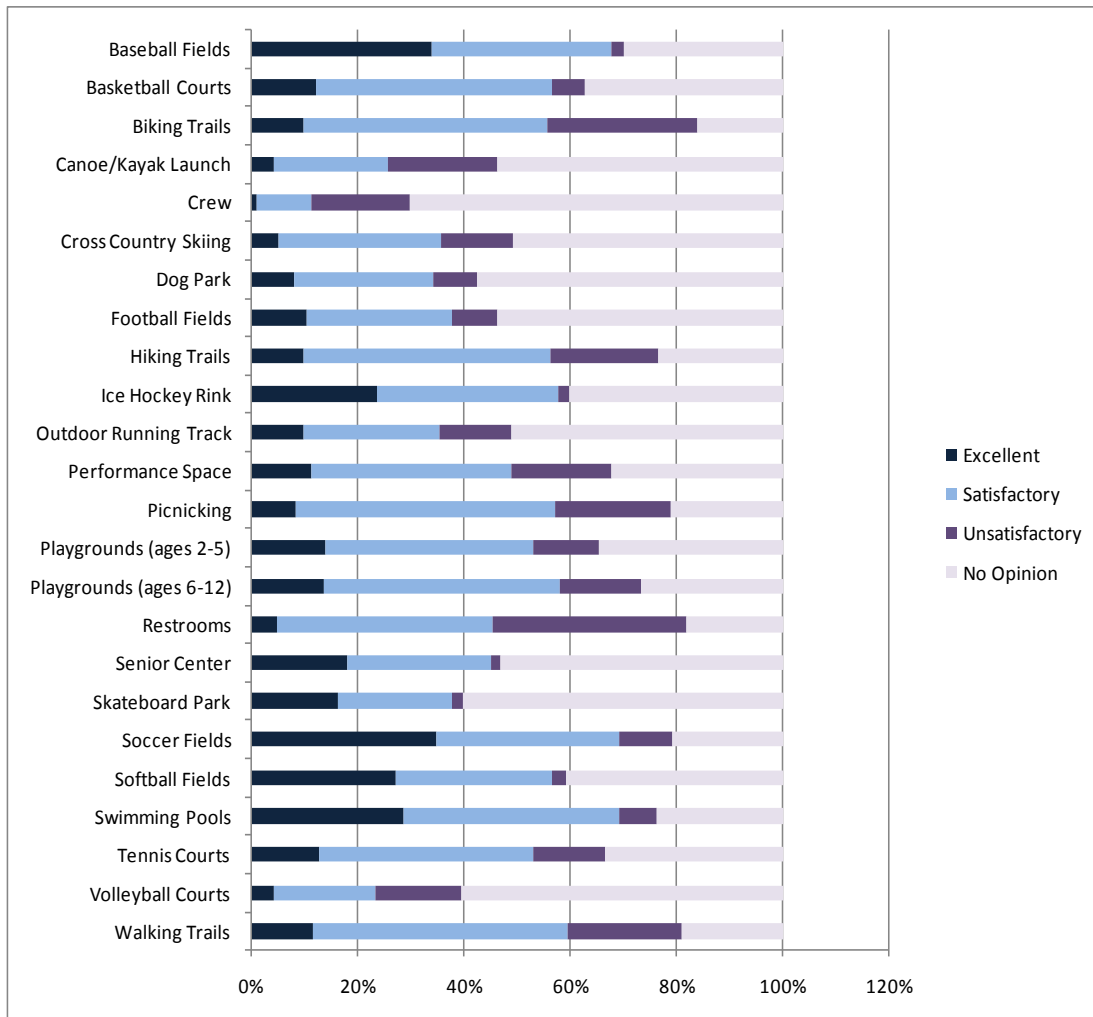
**Figure 8: Level & Scope of Recreational Programs, Parks, Trails & Recreational Facilities**





Respondents were also asked to identify the quality of a number of the Town’s parks and recreation facilities. As shown in **Figure 9**, a majority of respondents described the quality of most of the Town’s recreation amenities as satisfactory. Resources described by a high percentage of residents as “excellent” were baseball fields (33.9%), soccer fields (34.7%), and swimming pools (28.7%). Resources described by the highest number of respondents as “unsatisfactory” were restrooms (36.3%), biking trails (28.2%), picnicking facilities (21.8%), walking trails (21.5%), and canoe/kayak launches (20.4%).

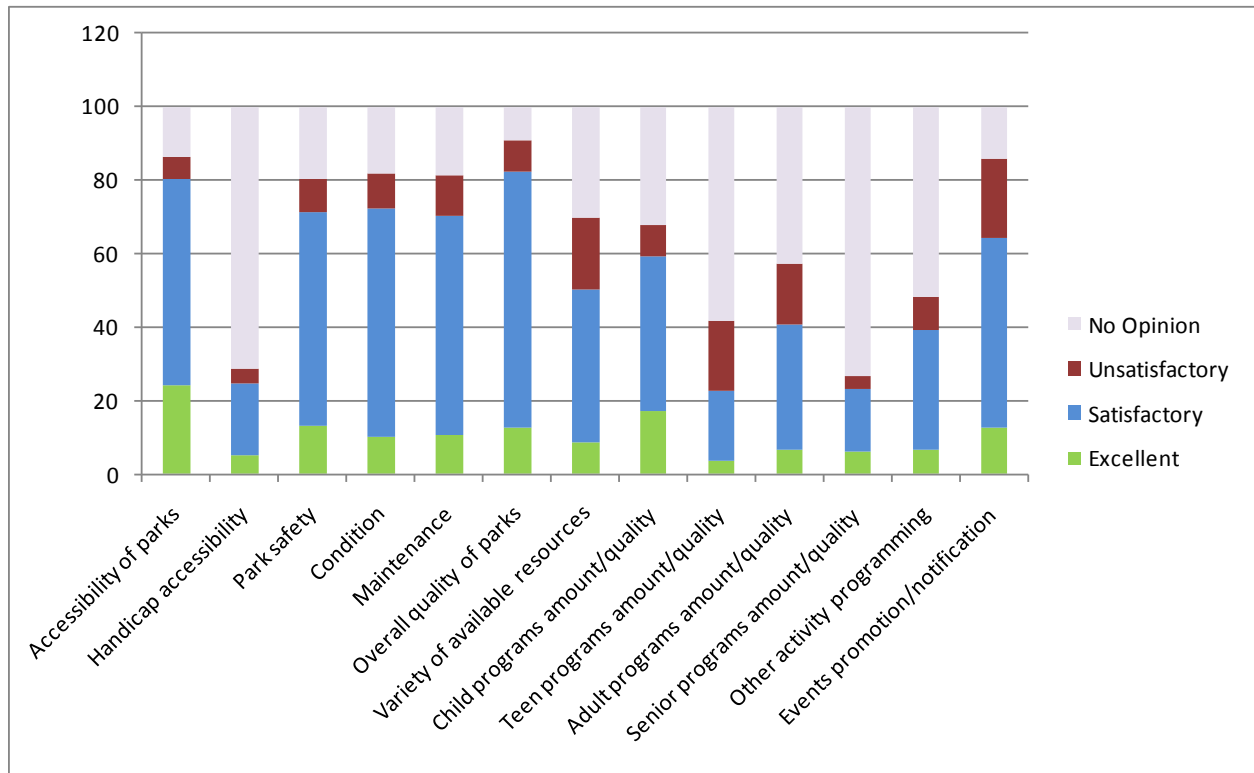
**Figure 9: Quality of Parks & Recreation Facilities**



As shown in **Figure 10**, additional aspects of Town parks and recreation facilities, such as accessibility, children’s programs, condition, events promotion/notification, maintenance, overall quality of parks, park safety, and variety of available resources were also described as satisfactory by a high percentage of survey respondents. Most respondents had no opinion about the amount and quality of adult programs, handicap accessibility, the amount and quality of senior programs, the amount and quality of teen programs, and other activity programming.

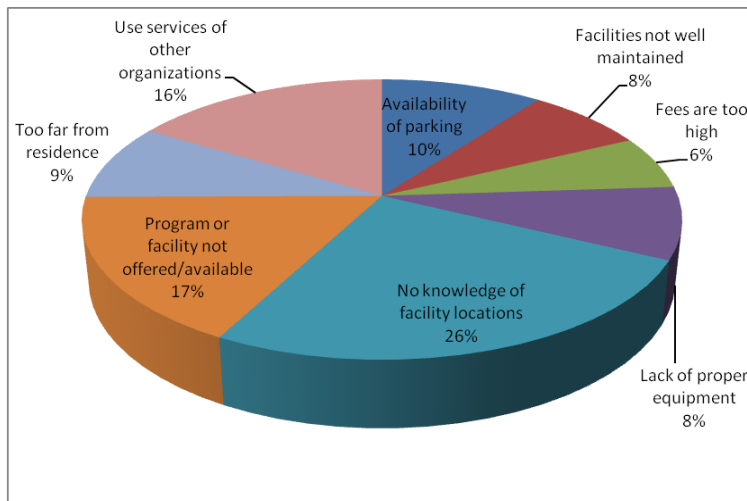


**Figure 10: Quality of Parks & Recreation Programming & Facilities**



When asked to select all reasons that deter household members from using the Town’s parks on a regular basis, the highest number of respondents cited the lack of knowledge of facility locations (47.6%). As shown in **Figure 11**, other top reasons included the lack of a desired program or facility (32%) and the use of private organizations (30.5%). Many respondents also wrote in separately that pool fees were too high and a daily rate should be offered.

**Figure 11: Reasons that Deter Household Members from Using Town Parks**

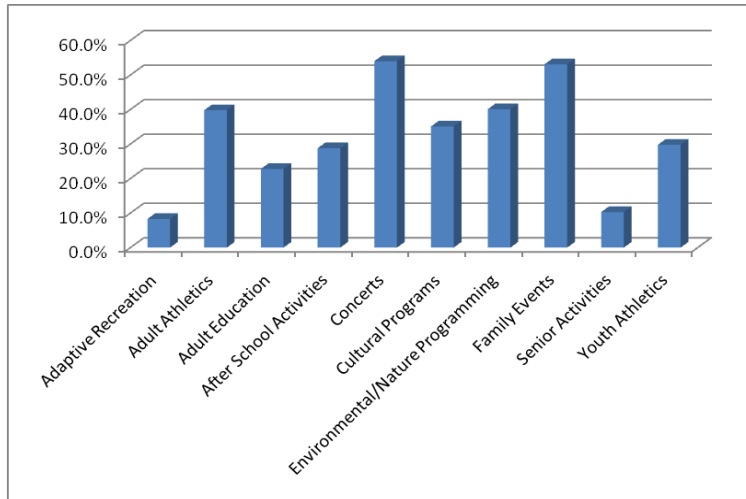




### ***Future Recreational Programming and Amenities***

Respondents were asked to select the types of additional recreation programs that they would like to see in Clifton Park. As **Figure 12** shows, programs selected by the highest percentage of respondents were concerts (54%), family events (53.1%), environmental/nature programming (40.1%), and adult athletics (39.8%).

**Figure 12: Desired Future Recreation Programs**



In addition, the majority of respondents (88%) also support additional public access and amenities to the water. Possible amenities, as suggested by respondents, include a community boathouse, a riverfront park, Stony Creek Reservoir access, public restrooms for facilities near the water, and passive recreation.



---

## **Public Workshops**

---

In order to engage the largest number of citizens possible and to invite their input and opinions on the Recreation Plan, four public workshops were held. Two workshops were held in June and two were held in October.

The June public workshops each opened with a presentation to educate the public about the purpose of the plan and to provide an overview of the process. Each presentation was followed by a small group exercise to engage the community in brainstorming exercises to identify issues, concerns, and recreational needs of the community's citizens. Attendees at each workshop were actively involved in the exercises and identified a wide range of potential ways to enhance the Town's current recreational resources.

The October workshops also consisted of a brief presentation followed by a public input component. The presentation provided an overview of the planning process to date for those unfamiliar with the project. The presentation was also instrumental in showing how the Town's recreational needs were determined objectively, through technical evaluation and subjectively, through public outreach. Following the presentation, attendees were separated into break-out groups to review sample strategies related to seven topics including: 1) Access and Awareness, 2) Arts and Culture, 3) Healthy Living, 4) Open Space and Natural Resources, 5) Parks and Facilities, 6) Stewardship, and 7) Waterfront Access. The strategies were based on the recreational needs identified through the inventory and assessment of resources and public input. Through this exercise, participants were able to express agreement or disagreement with specific strategies and identify which strategies were most important to them.

### **Recreation Needs Public Workshop #1**

The first Recreation Needs Public Workshop was held at the Jonesville Fire Station on June 11, 2009. A group of more than 100 residents attended the session. The meeting began with a brief presentation on the purpose of the plan, and the process that the Town will undertake to complete the plan. After the presentation, participants were broken into eleven groups, providing insights and perspectives on existing recreation facilities and the potential for any future facilities. Each group was composed of a diverse range of residents including Town officials, property owners, members of civic groups and recreation stakeholders. The groups were asked to answer seven questions pertaining to recreation in Clifton Park. The full results of the workshop can be found in **Appendix B**.





The results of the workshop showed that the residents of Clifton Park are very active individuals, participating in a variety of recreational activities. While most recreational needs are currently being met by the Town of Clifton Park, it is still necessary for some residents to travel outside of the Town or join a private facility to participate in certain activities.



Overall, Clifton Park residents attending Workshop 1 were most satisfied with the quality of the Town's active recreation facilities, the variety of parks, the convenient location of facilities, and the abundance of trails and open space. Residents were least satisfied with the poor condition of neighborhood parks, lack of access and equipment for those with special needs, lack of a contiguous trail system, lack of water access, and the unequal representation of

all recreational activities, especially arts and culture.

Potential new facilities identified by participants were a community boathouse, a center for arts and culture, a community center, an indoor recreation facility, more passive and active recreation areas, and the Stony Creek Reservoir. Improvements to the Town's recreation system recommended by residents included new park equipment, an interconnected trail system, improved park maintenance, better signage, more restrooms, and ADA compliancy.

### ***Recreation Needs Public Workshop #2***

On June 25, 2009 the second Recreation Needs Public Workshop was held at the Shenendehowa Adult Community Center, attended by approximately 75 residents. The meeting began with a brief presentation on the purpose of the plan, and the process that the Town will undertake to complete the plan. Following the presentation, attendees were broken into eleven groups and contributed suggestions on recreational needs in a brainstorming exercise. Each group contained a diverse range of residents including Town officials, property owners, members of civic groups and recreation stakeholders. The groups were asked to answer six questions pertaining to recreation in Clifton Park. Following Workshop #1, one of the questions was determined to be repetitive based on responses; therefore, the number of questions was reduced to six. The full results of the workshop can be found in **Appendix B**.





The results of the workshop showed that the residents of Clifton Park participate in a wide variety of recreational activities. While most recreational needs are currently being met by the Town of Clifton Park, it is still necessary for some residents to travel outside of the Town or join a private facility to participate in certain activities. Residents were most likely to travel outside of Town to participate in activities that require water-access.



Clifton Park residents attending Workshop 2 were most satisfied with the cleanliness of the Town’s recreation facilities, the variety of parks, the convenient location of facilities, recreational programming, and the fact that the parks are free. Residents were least satisfied with the lack of water access, the plan to replace the Castle Playground in Clifton Common, the lack of parking at the parks, the incomplete trail network, the lack of trails in the southern portion of Town, and the lack of a permanent facility for arts and culture.

Potential new facilities identified by participants were a community boathouse, a center for arts and culture, an indoor recreation facility, more fields for active recreation, and the Stony Creek Reservoir.

### **Public Workshop #3**

The third public workshop was held on October 26, 2009 at St. Edwards Church and was attended by 27 interested persons. The workshop began with a presentation, which provided an overview of the planning process to date. The results of the demographic analysis, the park inventory and assessment, and the SCORP and NRPA analyses were summarized for the public. The results of community outreach efforts, including the recreation needs survey, stakeholder interviews, and the June public workshops were also reviewed. Following the presentation, attendees were separated into break-out groups to review sample strategies related to seven topics. The topics included Access and Awareness, Arts and Culture, Healthy Living, Open Space and Natural Resources, Parks and Facilities, Stewardship, and Waterfront Access. Each table was assigned one topic sheet with 20-to-30 related sample strategies. Participants rotated between the seven tables and indicated with a sticker if they “agreed” or “disagreed” with each strategy. Participants were also asked to select three “Top Priority” strategies under each topic with stickers.





Overall, workshop participants agreed with the sample strategies. The majority of participants agreed with 60 out of 92 strategies; full workshop results are included in **Appendix B**. The top priorities identified by workshop participants in each category are listed below:

*Access & Awareness*

- Coordinating with Shenendehowa Central School District for shared use of facilities.
- Improving the Town's recreation website.
- Building information kiosks and way-finding maps for Town parks and trails.

*Arts & Culture*

- Developing a facility devoted to arts and culture.
- Promoting the arts in Clifton Park.
- Upgrading existing arts and culture facilities.

*Healthy Living*

- Promoting a variety of low-cost lifetime sports/activities.
- Supporting public/private partnerships to provide low-cost recreation equipment.
- Supporting Clean Outdoor Air Policies by prohibiting smoking at parks, playgrounds, and outdoor public places.

*Open Space & Natural Resources*

- Connecting existing trails.
- Acquiring Stony Creek Reservoir.
- Encouraging open space conservation in Western Clifton Park.

*Parks & Facilities*

- Building and upgrading restrooms at Town parks.
- Adding drinking fountains at Town parks.
- Allowing pool fees to be pay-per-visit.



### *Stewardship*

- Exploring and promoting public/private/not-for-profit collaborations for recreational purposes.
- Creating bylaws that clarify park district responsibilities and outlining proper uses for park district funds.
- Imposing fines for vandalizing Town parks.

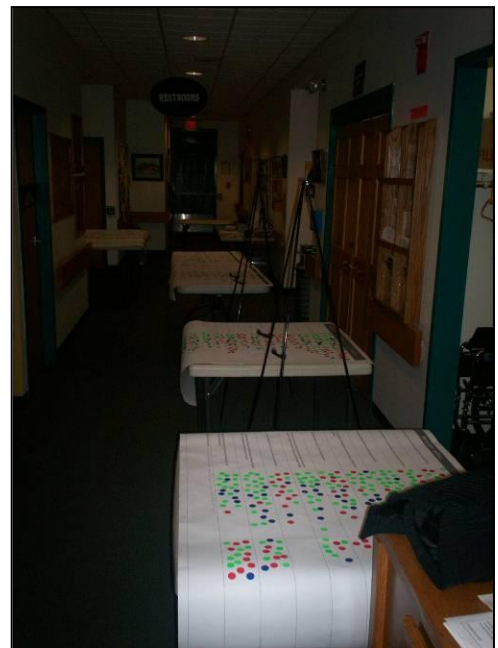
### *Waterfront Access*

- Acquiring additional land on the riverfront.
- Creating additional public access to the Mohawk River.
- Creating a multi-use facility with access to the Mohawk River.

### **Public Workshop #4**

The fourth public workshop was held on October 29, 2009 at the Shenendehowa Adult Community Center. A group of over 40 people attended the workshop. The same presentation that was presented at the October 26<sup>th</sup> meeting was presented on October 29<sup>th</sup>. Participants again rotated between the seven tables and indicated with a sticker if they “agreed” or “disagreed” with each strategy. Participants were also asked to select three “Top Priority” strategies under each topic with stickers.

Overall, workshop participants agreed with the sample strategies. A majority of participants agreed with 68 out of 92 strategies. Many of the top priorities chosen by participants at Workshop 4 were similar to those chosen by participants at Workshop 3. The only major differences were in the Parks & Facilities category. The top priorities identified by workshop participants in each category are listed below:



### *Access & Awareness*

- Coordinating with Shenendehowa Central School District for shared use of facilities.
- Improving the Town's recreation website.
- Expand parking at Clifton Common.



### *Arts & Culture*

- Developing a facility devoted to arts and culture.
- Promoting the arts in Clifton Park.
- Creating a system to announce available arts and culture opportunities.

### *Healthy Living*

- Promoting a variety of low-cost lifetime sports/activities.
- Supporting public/private partnerships to provide low-cost recreation equipment.
- Supporting Clean Outdoor Air Policies by prohibiting smoking at parks, playgrounds and outdoor public places.

### *Open Space & Natural Resources*

- Connecting existing trails.
- Working with neighboring municipalities to connect trails at Town borders.
- Adding pedestrian and bicycle trails south of Clifton Park Center Road.

### *Parks & Facilities*

- Building an indoor athletic facility with a gym.
- Building a teen activity center.
- Allowing pool fees to be “pay per visit.”

### *Stewardship*

- Exploring and promoting public/private/not-for-profit collaborations for recreational purposes.
- Partnering with sports leagues to maintain athletic facilities.
- Imposing fines for vandalizing Town parks.

### *Waterfront Access*

- Acquiring additional land on the riverfront.
- Building a rowing facility.
- Creating a multi-use facility with access to the Mohawk River.



## **Stakeholder Interviews**

---

This report summarizes Stakeholder Interviews conducted in June, July and August of 2009 with members of the Clifton Park community. The group of stakeholders was identified by the Recreation Plan Advisory Committee based on their diversity, as well as their affiliation with park districts and recreational groups, leagues, facilities and organizations throughout the area.

Thirty-nine stakeholders were interviewed during the process, answering questions regarding existing recreation facilities and the Town's future recreation needs. The interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes, providing insight and perspective on topics and issues in Clifton Park from recreational groups. The stakeholders represented special interest groups and organizations. The special interest groups and organizations were broken into categories: Park Districts, Arts and Culture, Town, School District and Community Organizations, Residents with Special Needs, Clubs, Adult Sports, and Youth Sports.

The results of the Stakeholder Interviews were compiled into lists of challenges and recommendations. Overall, the greatest challenge for stakeholders was finding available, affordable facility space. Many organizations rent space from the Shenendehowa Central School District. However, a number of stakeholders expressed that School District facilities have become increasingly difficult to rent due to rising rental costs, limited facility space, and restrictions. Many stakeholders expressed that more Town-owned indoor and outdoor active recreation facilities could alleviate the demand for facility space.

The following are the challenges and recommendations from the Stakeholder Interviews:

### **Challenges**

*Park Districts: Calico Colony, Clifton Gardens, Clifton Knolls, Dwaaskill, Longkill I, Longkill II, Meadow Estates and Addison Estates, Sherwood Forest, Stony Creek I, Stony Creek II, Wyncrest*

- Interfacing with the Town.
- Obtaining Town approval and funding assistance for new projects.
- Maintaining park district lands with limited funds.
- Building trails through existing developments.
- The Town's limited maintenance resources for park district lands.
- Upgrading and modernizing park equipment.
- Lack of standardized signage for park district parks.
- Keeping parks and trails safe and free of vandalism.
- Lack of guidelines or by-laws regarding the use of park district funds and park district responsibilities.



***Town, School District, and Community Organizations:*** *Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Affairs, Department of Community Development, Southern Saratoga YMCA, Shenendehowa Central School District, Shenendehowa Adult Community Center*

- Indoor facility space large enough to accommodate indoor parks and recreation programs is limited.
- Coordinating with the Shenendehowa Central School District.
- Rising cost of renting School District facilities.
- More space is needed for seniors to recreate and interact.
- More facility space is needed at the Senior Center.
- The Town does not have an adult daycare program.
- Meeting State physical education mandates with limited space, staffing, and resources.

***Arts and Culture:*** *Community Arts and Culture Commission, Not So Common Players, Clifton Park Community Chorus, Clifton Park Community Orchestra*

- Current Town facilities available do not meet the needs of the arts.
- The Town lacks consistent performance and practice space.
- The Town lacks a multi-purpose community gathering space.
- The Town website offers limited information about arts and culture and charges an extra fee to put up photos.
- The arts and culture budget is limited.

***Residents with Special Needs:*** *Sports are for Everyone, Children with Autism*

- Parks and recreation programs are not inclusive of kids with developmental disorders.
- Facility space for programming is limited and expensive.

***Clubs:*** *Trout Unlimited, Table Tennis, Shenendehowa Nordic Club, Charlton Snowmobile Club, Cub Scouts*

- Table tennis needs a larger space to accommodate more tables.
- Conflicts exist between dog walkers and cross-country skiers at Kinns Road Park on trails that are specially maintained for cross-country skiing.
- Connecting snowmobile trails in the Town of Halfmoon to the statewide trail network by building trails in Clifton Park (Zim Smith Trail is the only existing snowmobile trail in the Town of Clifton Park).



***Adult Sports: Adult Tennis, Senior Softball League***

- Finding adequate field time for adult softball.
- Lack of formalized scheduling system for the Shenendehowa Central School District Tennis Courts.

***Youth Sports: Clifton Park Baseball, Youth Basketball, Clifton Park Youth Hockey Association, Field Hockey and Lacrosse, Knolls Swimming and Diving Club, Plainsmen Junior Cheerleading, Plainsmen Junior Football, Clifton Park Soccer Club, Shenendehowa Youth Lacrosse***

- Inflexibility and expense of School District facilities.
- Fees of some sports are expensive due to the high cost of renting Town and School District facilities.
- Difficult to schedule games and practices at Shenendehowa School District Facilities around high school sports.
- The Town does not have enough indoor facility space for basketball and cheerleading.
- The Town does not have enough baseball fields to accommodate demand.
- Limited parking at Clifton Common
- The Town does not provide enough storage space needed for sporting equipment.
- Lack of a Town rowing facility on the Mohawk River.
- The Town needs additional indoor and outdoor soccer fields to meet the demands of the growing sport.
- Four fields are needed that are specifically dedicated to field hockey and lacrosse.

***Recommendations***

***Park Districts: Calico Colony, Clifton Gardens, Clifton Knolls, Dwaaskill, Longkill I, Longkill II, Sherwood Forest, Stony Creek I, Stony Creek II, Wyncrest***

- The Town and the park districts should regularly communicate and coordinate on park district projects, equipment purchasing, and Town open space acquisition.
- The Town should increase Buildings and Grounds staff to provide better quality maintenance to park districts.
- A standardized signage system, including way-finding maps and information kiosks on trails, should be implemented for park district parks and trails.
- The Open Space Plan should be used as a model for park district stewardship.
- The Town should implement a system that governs park districts by code.



***Town, School District, and Community Organizations:*** *Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Affairs, Department of Community Development, Southern Saratoga YMCA, Shenendehowa Central School District, Shenendehowa Adult Community Center*

- Parks and Recreation should lessen dependence on school district facilities.
- The Town should build a multi-purpose indoor facility to accommodate parks and recreation programs.
- Satellite senior center locations should be established to make the amenity more accessible to all seniors. Regular meetings between School District and Town representatives to brainstorm about how to maximize and be creative with the limited resources that they have.

***Arts and Culture:*** *Community Arts and Culture Commission, Not So Common Players, Clifton Park Community Chorus, Clifton Park Community Orchestra*

- The Town should build a facility that accommodates ceramics, photography, theater, dance, artists, musicians, writers, and the like.
- The Town should institute a bed tax and 1% could go to the arts.

***Residents with Special Needs:*** *Sports are for Everyone, Children with Autism*

- The Town should take steps to include children with developmental abilities in recreation programs by hiring trained staff to provide extra attention.
- All new facilities should be ADA compliant.

***Clubs:*** *Trout Unlimited, Table Tennis, Shenendehowa Nordic Club, Charlton Snowmobile Club, Cub Scouts*

- The Town should build a multi-purpose indoor facility that can accommodate multiple activities.
- Signs should be put up at trailheads that instruct dog walkers to not use cross-country skiing trails while snow is on the ground or the County should designate a separate area of the Park for dog walking.
- Designate more pedestrian and bike trails as multi-use to allow for snowmobiling.

***Adult Sports:*** *Adult Tennis, Senior Softball League*

- New softball fields should be built large enough to accommodate adult leagues
- Work with the school district to formalize a scheduling system for the Shenendehowa tennis courts.



***Youth Sports:** Clifton Park Baseball, Youth Basketball, Clifton Park Youth Hockey Association, Field Hockey and Lacrosse, Knolls Swimming and Diving Club, Plainsmen Junior Cheerleading, Plainsmen Junior Football, Clifton Park Soccer Club, Shenendehowa Youth Lacrosse*

- The Town should build a multi-purpose indoor recreation facility.
- The Town should build a rowing facility on the Mohawk River.
- The Town should build more baseball, soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey fields.
- The Town should alleviate parking issues at Clifton Common.

## VI. Mohawk River Recreational Access

---

### *Highlights: Opportunities & Challenges*

- *Twelve miles of the Mohawk Riverfront form the southern boundary of Clifton Park.*
- *The majority of land on the Clifton Park Riverfront is privately owned.*
- *The Clifton Park Riverfront is bisected by the New York Power Authority Dam at Lock 7.*
- *Opportunities for improving public access to the Mohawk River include improving pedestrian and bicycle trails in the vicinity of the riverfront, creating opportunities for enhanced scenic views, educational and interpretive signage, and wayfinding.*
- *Opportunities for recreational facilities on the riverfront include motorized and non-motorized boating access, a community boathouse, public safety/emergency services facilities, and an environmental education center.*

The Mohawk River is one of Clifton Park's most valuable recreational resources. The river forms the entire southern boundary of the Town, extending approximately 12 miles between the Town of Halfmoon to the east and the Town of Glenville to the west. The riverfront encompasses a broad array of truly unique historical and environmental locations, beautiful farmland, and scenic views of the Mohawk River gorge.



In 2007, the Clifton Park Town Board charged the Clifton Park Open Space, Trails and Riverfront Committee with the task of developing concepts to enhance public access and enjoyment of the Mohawk River. A Riverfront Subcommittee was formed as direct response to the *Mohawk Riverfront Concept Plan* of 2005, which called for the establishment of a permanent Riverfront Committee to work on maintenance, improvements, and preservation of the riverfront. The Riverfront Committee synthesized their analysis along with the findings of previous studies and planning efforts in order to create a basis for future public decision-making for the Clifton Park riverfront.

### ***Mohawk River Recreational Activities***

---

The Mohawk River in Clifton Park is ideal for water recreation activities due to the damming of the river at Cohoes and Erie Canal Lock 7. The dams create two impounded lakes that maintain a constant water elevation, which is optimal for boating, fishing, and other water-related activities.



The river draws large and small boats, water skiers, personal watercraft, and non-motorized craft such as kayaks, canoes, rowboats, rowing shells, sailboards, and sailboats.



The lands along the river also provide vast recreational opportunities. Many walking and biking trails are located in the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve along the Erie Canal Towpath. In the winter, many of these trails are maintained for cross-country skiing. For one week each fall, the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve closes to the public for duck hunting. Both Mohawk Landing and Vischer Ferry provide opportunities for picnicking.

The Mohawk River waterfront is also a valuable resource for ecological and historical tourism and education due to a diversity of native flora and fauna and rich Erie Canal history. The Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve provides many opportunities for bird watching, observation of native wildlife, and nature walks. The river's designation on the national level as part of the Erie Canalway Natural Heritage Corridor and on the state level as the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor also provide unique opportunities for innovative educational activities.

### ***Mohawk River Recreational Access***



Despite the recreational, cultural, and historical importance of the Mohawk River, public access to the riverfront in Clifton Park is extremely limited. Much of the land on the riverfront in Clifton Park is privately owned, restricting public access for recreational boaters, fishermen, and other water-loving residents. These privately-owned lands are primarily occupied by residences and farmland.

A few public entities do, however, own and manage portions of the riverfront in Clifton Park.

The New York State Canal Corporation is the largest landowner and manager of riverfront and canal resources in the State. The NYS Canal Corporation owns and controls approximately 90 percent of the land immediately along the Mohawk riverfront and the modern canal system in Clifton Park.<sup>9</sup> The Canal Corporation's largest land holding in Clifton Park is the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve and the acreage immediately west of the Preserve used for dredging. The Town of Clifton Park holds three permits from the Canal Corporation for operating public access within the Preserve. The riverfront in the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve is

<sup>9</sup> Draft "A Vision and Plan for Clifton Park's Riverfront." March 25, 2008.



only accessible by walking and biking trails that run through the preserve. The preserve can also be accessed by the historic towpath at the end of Ferry Drive. There are a few boat launches for canoes and kayaks located throughout the preserve, including Clute's Dry Dock.



The NYS Canal Corporation also leases lands near the historic Rexford Aqueduct crossing, east of the Route 146/Balltown Road, and historic Locks 21 and 22 at the Rexford Bridge crossing to the Schenectady Yacht Club for private marina use.

The New York Power Authority also manages land along the Mohawk River. The New York Power Authority operates the Vischer Ferry Hydroelectric Power Plant and Dam in the middle of Clifton Park's riverfront, at the very end of Sugar Hill

Road, to the south of Riverview Road. The site is connected to the former towpath and currently has a public overlook site. The PASNY Dam is limiting to recreational boating in Clifton Park because it bisects the Town's riverfront. Any future rowing facility should ideally be located west of Lock 7 so that crew shells do not have to navigate through the lock to reach regional boathouses and racecourses.

Finally, the Town of Clifton Park owns two parcels of land along the Mohawk Riverfront. The Town-owned parcels are the 25-acre former Jacobsen parcel and the 6-acre Mohawk Landing parcel. The Jacobsen parcel is mostly wetlands and can only be accessed by a Canal Corporation access road. The recently constructed Mohawk Landing Park provides direct access to the Mohawk River. The site includes a scenic overlook of the Mohawk River and a boat launch constructed for small boats, such as kayaks and canoes.

### ***Potential Recreational Opportunities***

---

The Riverfront Subcommittee identified a number of concepts intended to enhance recreational opportunities along the Mohawk Riverfront in Clifton Park. The Committee's concepts were drawn largely from ideas and recommendations generated during previous planning efforts. The following planning concepts support and enhance existing passive recreation and strategically create new public access opportunities.

- **Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve:** Enhance the Preserve by organizing a permanent management structure to review current land uses and desired future land uses within the Preserve. The management structure will also conduct necessary assessments and oversee repairs and landscaping improvements. Recent interests, such as enhancing the site as a Bird Conservation Area, should be incorporated.



- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails:** Enhance and improve Riverview Road and local roads within the vicinity of the riverfront for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Scenic Views:** Enhance opportunities for enjoying scenic views of the river and surrounding landscape by enhancing existing overlook sites and creating new overlook locations. Existing overlooks that can be enhanced include the end of Ferry Drive and the New York Power Authority Power Plant. New overlook locations can be created along Riverview Road in the vicinity of Nott Road and near the sewer pump station along Riverview Road.
- **Educational and Interpretive Signage and Way-Finding:** Create cohesive, comprehensive signage to ensure that visitors to the riverfront understand scenic views and historic, cultural, ecological, geological and environmental features. Three interpretive kiosks have already been developed in partnership with the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway Coalition to provide historical perspective and connective information.
- **Environmental Education Center:** Explore the possibility of an environmental education center. The main site could be housed within the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve or at any potential boating/rowing center.
- **Motorized Boating Access:** Explore locations and secure appropriate arrangements for motorized boat access to the river and canal. Appropriate sites could be identified inside of Clifton Park or partnerships could be explored with neighboring municipalities.
- **Rowing, Canoe, and Kayak Opportunities:** Enhance rowing, canoeing, and kayaking opportunities. Appropriate locations could include locations within and around the Vischer Ferry Historic and Nature Preserve, Mohawk Landing, future community rowing center, or NYS Canal Corporation Lands at Rexford Bridge.
- **Community Boathouse:** Develop a community rowing center for utilizing the river and canal for crew shells, kayaks, and canoes. The boathouse could potentially be combined with the environmental education center.
- **Public Safety Facilities/Emergency Services:** Provide and enhance public safety facilities/emergency services access to the river and canal. Access would be provided for the Vischer Ferry Fire District, New York State Troopers and/or US Coast Guard. The Vischer Ferry Fire District currently has one location west of Lock 7 and a private launch at the end of Camp Road. The Fire District would like to have an additional launch site west of Lock 7. The site would need to allow access to the river with a 19-foot fire and rescue boat with a trailer and an appropriate turn-around for the crew cab pickup truck used to pull the boat. A small substation office space would also need to be provided for emergency services personnel.