

WESTERN CLIFTON PARK

Land Conservation Plan & Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement



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Town of Clifton Park Town Board

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WESTERN CLIFTON PARK LAND CONSERVATION PLAN

& DRAFT GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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SECTION I.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. PROJECT OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

The western portion of the Town of Clifton Park is the last remaining area of rural land use and active farming in the community. The lack of water and sewer services and the current rural zoning have kept development at a slow pace and have generally precluded major subdivisions. However, both water and sewer services are in close proximity to the western part of Town and development interest and pressure are increasing, especially with the current demand for new housing.

Recognizing the importance of Town's remaining open space to the character of the community, the Town prepared an Open Space Plan with the assistance of the Open Space Plan Committee and Behan Planning Associates. This process led to several recommendations for land conservation and in particular the use of permanent conservation easements to preserve open space in perpetuity. The Open Space Plan was adopted by the Town Board in 2003.

With the understanding that western Clifton Park is the last frontier for development, the Town retained the planning and engineering services of Clough Harbour & Associates LLP to prepare a Generic Environmental Impact Statement. The purpose of this study would be to identify the growth potential of the study area (western Clifton Park), identify mitigation, and potentially collect mitigation fees to equitably distribute the costs of community infrastructure and services. However, the first phase of the study, a build-out analysis based on current zoning, painted a grim picture for the future rural character of the area. Such a development scenario was considered by the Town Board as inconsistent with the Open Space Plan and the vision expressed in the Town's Comprehensive Plan update. As a result, the focus of the GEIS evolved through community outreach, the preparation of a Land Conservation Plan, and the development of new zoning and subdivision regulations.

Therefore, the primary purpose of this GEIS is to present a new plan and growth management tools to mitigate development potential within the western part of the Town to conserve land resources and to preserve rural character.

The study area comprises approximately 13,900 acres of land, which is almost half of the total Town land area. The study area consists primarily of rural lands that include large lot residential, farms, environmentally constrained lands, and undeveloped land, as well as the historic hamlets of Rexford, Vischer Ferry, and Grooms Corners. The primary transportation corridor through the study area is NYS Route 146, extending from the Rexford Bridge eastward across the Town.

STUDY AREA BUILD-OUT

A build-out analysis was conducted for the study area to identify the development potential under current zoning and development patterns. Build-out is defined as the maximum development potential of a study area based on pre-determined land use regulations and density. The intent is to establish an overall order of magnitude of growth. Therefore, build-out is typically performed using readily available planning information. Advances in computer technology and broader availability of land use data have facilitated the process for performing build-out analysis, allowing for more accurate estimates.

The build-out analysis identified the development potential for residential and commercial uses within the study area. The results are summarized below:

Approximate area included within the GEIS study area:	13,900 acres
Approximate area of potentially developable land:	6,200 – 7,700 acres
Approximate number of homes that could be built:	4,200 – 5,300
Approximate amount of office space that could be built:	2,200,000 – 2,500,000 s.f.
Approximate amount of retail space that could be built:	600,000 – 700,000 s.f.

These results were then analyzed for the effect on major community issues that can have significant impact on community character and quality of life. Therefore, the scope of this analysis was limited to utilities, traffic, fiscal resources, and land use. The results of this analysis led to a conclusion on the part of the Town Board that the density and pattern of development under current zoning is not appropriate for

the study area and would lead to significant impacts to the community that could not be reasonably mitigated, if at all.

LAND CONSERVATION PLAN

The Town Board rejected build-out under current zoning as a preferred growth scenario and authorized a planning study to develop recommendations to cut density, preserve rural character, and respect the property rights and investment of the Town's farming community and other long-standing landowners.

The Land Conservation Plan utilizes innovative zoning recommendations with a permanent easement program to achieve the Town's vision for the study area; a combination of regulatory and incentive based growth management.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS & MITIGATION

TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY, SOILS

Soils within the study area consist primarily of silt loam, silts and clays and are generally very deep. Depth to bedrock is greater than 60 inches across the area. Drainage capabilities vary. Depth to water table varies across the study area as well, generally from 0.5 to 3 feet.

Hydric and other somewhat poorly drained soils can be major constraints to development in the study area. Some of the lands identified as poorly drained have been identified as State wetlands or as potential federal wetlands, thereby limiting the extent of development in these areas. In order to fully protect identified and potential wetlands, on-site wetlands investigations should be required.

Development that would impact productive farmland is contrary to the vision articulated in the Land Conservation Plan. Therefore, prime and statewide important farmland should be considered in any site plan review process to protect these lands to the greatest extent practicable.

WATER RESOURCES

The primary drainage courses in the Western Clifton Park study area are the Mohawk River, Dwaas Kill, Stony Creek, Alplaus Kill, Long Kill, Cooley Kill and their tributaries.

Three groundwater recharge areas have been identified in the study area: Clifton Knolls, Sugar Hill Road and Riverview Road. Currently, the majority of study area residents rely on individual, private wells. The Town of Clifton Park provides public water to a small portion of the study area, primarily properties within newer residential development.

Unmanaged stormwater runoff has physical, chemical and biological effects on receiving streams and waterbodies. Soil disturbance increases the potential for erosion and sedimentation. Impervious surfaces accumulate pollutants deposited from the atmosphere, vehicle fluids, roadway de-icing materials and windblown materials.

The primary mitigation to address both stormwater quality and quantity is stormwater detention and retention and the use of water quality basins in accordance with the State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES). Low Impact Development (LID) is a recently developed comprehensive alternative technology for stormwater management and environmental protection that use site design techniques called integrated management practices (IMP's) that store, infiltrate, evaporate, and detain runoff.

ECOLOGY

The study area is typified by a mixture of natural and cultural open field, shrubland and forested terrestrial (upland) and palustrine (wetland) communities as well as developed and agricultural lands. Land use of the developed portions of the study area is largely of an agricultural and residential nature with minimal commercial development. Areas that have not been developed either residentially or commercially and that are not in use for agricultural purposes are comprised of natural terrestrial and palustrine communities.

Build-out under current zoning could impact 6,200 to 7,700 acres of land. This constitutes approximately half of the study area and does not include existing development.

Under the Land Conservation Plan, density would be reduced by half and, more importantly, a conservation subdivision process would be required. The conservation subdivision would require a minimum of 50 percent open space and would involve an interactive process between the Town and the applicant to determine what portion of the land should be considered for development and what portion should remain open space. Based on this approach, it may be possible to limit the impact to ecological communities to approximately 3,000 to 4,000 acres. With a conservation approach to siting development, there is greater opportunity to protect important ecological communities and to lessen the potential for habitat fragmentation.

LAND USE AND ZONING

The western lands of Clifton Park today are best characterized as exhibiting a predominantly rural character of visible, rolling farm fields and pastures, punctuated by farm houses and barns; individual houses along local, county, and state roads; and a few residential subdivisions, including planned unit developments such as Old Nott Farm.

The most important potentially significant adverse impacts of a built-out landscape of conventional or cluster residential development are the loss of the rural character, loss of the agricultural working landscape, and the loss of the scenic qualities of the western lands.

The preservation of rural character can be addressed through design using a conservation/resource based approach. Modifications to both zoning and subdivision regulations are necessary to reduce development potential (density) and establish flexibility and promote creative design.

Hamlets within and adjacent to the study area provide opportunities to recreate the traditional rural patterns of development. Most of the available commercial land within the study area occurs within the hamlets of Rexford and Ballston Lake. There may be

significant opportunity to focus development within the hamlets in a manner that respects and enhances the hamlet style.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES & OPEN SPACE

Agricultural resources within the Town have been inventoried and evaluated as part of the Town's Open Space Plan (adopted 2003).

Current zoning and land use policies in the Town coupled with or without the potential for the extension of water and sewer services have set the stage for the elimination of agriculture as a viable use in the study area.

The primary means of conserving agricultural resources is the implementation of the Town's Open Space Plan. This process has already begun with the continued efforts of the Open Space Committee to reach out to interested farmland owners in partnership with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the American Farmland Trust.

RECREATION RESOURCES & TRAILS

Recreational facilities are typically categorized as active and passive. Active recreation requires formal spaces and equipment and includes such facilities as baseball diamonds, soccer fields and playgrounds. Passive recreation requires few, if any, facilities and are not formal but intended for such activities as hiking, biking, and relaxing. They are often left to the imagination of the user. Within the study area, the Town owns and operates Veterans Park on MacElroy Road that provides softball fields. The Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve provides 400 acres of passive recreational opportunities including hiking, biking, birding, hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, and canoeing.

Existing trails within the study area are limited to those within the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, along the Mohawk River to Riverview Road at Sugar Hill Road, and an on-road bike segment along Route 146A west to MacElroy Road. This last trail originates on Maxwell Drive at Plank Road and extends west along Route 146 to Route 146A.

The Town's Open Space Plan calls for the identification of a large area (150 acres or more) for the development of another Town-wide park within an approximate radius of 1.5 miles from the intersection of Nott Road and Appleton Road. Two additional "small-to-moderate sized active parks (10-20 acres) should be considered in underserved, developed areas of the Town.

VISUAL RESOURCES

The study area has many locations of scenic interest, which include distant views of the Mohawk River and countryside to views of the pastoral landscape along some of the Town's country roads. Development under current zoning could result in the loss of significant views for the public. The potential to develop within viewsheds will be strong if water and sewer service become available.

The lack of significant development in the area provides an opportunity to preserve the views through design and land conservation. Mitigation for the potential loss of visually significant areas is partially addressed in the requirements for conservation subdivisions. Significant views can be identified during the initial stage of the conservation subdivision review process.

TRANSPORTATION

The current land uses within the Town of Clifton Park generate approximately 14,420 vehicle trips during the afternoon peak travel hour. This number is projected by the Capital District Transportation Committee to increase by approximately 55% by the year 2025, totaling more than 22,360 peak hour vehicle trips.

However, as a result of the proposed Land Conservation Plan, the project area should not significantly impact the transportation system beyond that already accounted for by the Capital District Transportation Committee's regional transportation planning recommendations.

In addition to traffic generation, site design can impact the system by causing points of conflict with the traffic flow along a corridor. As a result, the recommendations for access management within the study area should be incorporated so as not to create unintended conflicts.

AIR QUALITY

The Albany Area was designated as a one hour ozone marginal non-attainment area, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency Green Book. No portion of the study area is zoned for manufacturing uses and there are no uses that would generate major sources of air pollution. Localized air pollution concerns can occur in congested areas where vehicles are backed up and idling.

Future development in the study area under current zoning could result in a significant increase in traffic volume, which could lead to localized air quality concerns. The Land Conservation Plan would decrease development potential in the study area and should decrease the potential for localized air pollution concerns relative to vehicle emissions.

NOISE

Heavily traveled roads within the study area that generate traffic noise are primarily Route 146 and Route 146A. However, ambient noise levels are affected by other heavily traveled corridors and congested areas that surround the study area.

Under the current zoning build-out scenario, the study area would convert from rural to suburban residential and the ambient noise levels would increase accordingly. Noise sources would include traffic, property maintenance activities, and recreation. However, the Land Conservation scenario would help to maintain rural character and should result in less density and less noise potential.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

A variety of services are provided to residents in the Town including local government, police protection, emergency medical services, fire protection, and education.

The various districts servicing the study area were contacted to assess the impacts of projected development. The Town Emergency Services Advisory Board determined that the volume of calls would increase, but not to an extent they cannot handle.

Increased residential development within a particular school district would result in an increase in students, which would impact the existing facilities. Beyond the physical constraints, increased school enrollment within a district would impact the student/teacher ratio, perhaps requiring additional teachers. Also, an increase in enrollment would directly increase transportation demands.

UTILITIES

Water and sewer service have a profound impact on the rate of growth and density of development. They can also provide opportunities to cluster development and create projects that do not sprawl across the landscape. Under current zoning, there is a continued potential to extend water and sewer out Route 146 and along Route 146A to increase the development potential of R-1 zoned lands and those lands currently within the sewer district. This potential still exists under the Land Conservation Plan but for specific projects that require clustering.

The provision of water to a large majority of the Town is a Town Board interest. The reduction of density under the Land Conservation Plan may decrease the opportunity for such extensions but would also reduce the future need. It is anticipated that some development will be served by utilities in the future. If this occurs, there may be opportunity to include those homes along the water main route within the new water district boundaries.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

A Phase 1A Cultural Resource Survey was conducted to investigate the potential occurrence of historic and prehistoric cultural resources within the study area. Historic resources include properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NR) including register eligible (NRE) site, State Register of Historic Places (SR), and the

local Clifton Park Register of Historic Places (CP). Several properties are within the National Register Vischer Ferry Historic District (VFHD). The district encompasses 246 acres and includes items representing over two centuries of historical development.

Items that represent over two centuries of historical development in the area include a section of the original Erie Canal, cut stone remains of a canal drydock, abutments from two farm bridges that spanned the canal, a section of road established in the colonial period, the sites of Fort's Ferry landing and cellar holes and sites of dwellings and outbuildings associated with the settlement and subsequent development of the area around Vischer Ferry during the 18th and 19th century.

Based on the results of the cultural resources survey for the study area, each future project within the study area should be required to update the base study performed for this DGEIS with site specific information and may require further site-specific field work (Phase 1B) to determine the presence or absence of cultural resources.

FISCAL RESOURCES

Fiscal impact analysis compares the public cost and revenue associated with residential and commercial growth along with land conservation, and estimates the relative impact on future property taxes between different future land use scenarios.

This fiscal analysis is designed to predict the relative impact of future alternative land use scenarios on the taxes paid by Clifton Park property owners. The three alternatives considered in this process are build-out under current zoning, Land Conservation Plan (zoning only), and Land Conservation Plan (zoning & some permanent easements).

The results of the fiscal impact analysis of the build out of this portion of Town projected school taxes to increase relative to current taxes by approximately 12 percent. The net costs of town services were projected to remain relatively stable. This proposed zoning scenario cuts the development density approximately in half and therefore reduces costs, particularly to the school district.

The zoning and permanent easement scenario included the proposed zoning and public financing of approximately half of the lands recommended for open space conservation. The results of this analysis revealed a similar fiscal impact as projected for the current zoning scenario. However, the benefit to the community is that a significant land conservation effort could be realized.

C. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Almost all of the scope issues identified and evaluated in this GEIS could result in some level of unavoidable impact despite the implementation of mitigation measures. If implemented, the Land Conservation Plan could significantly reduce density and preserve important open space such that the study area will maintain its rural character. Nevertheless, some level of development will continue to occur within the study area and there will be a loss of land, community, and cultural resources. Based on the analysis provided in this DGEIS, the proposed mitigation, including the identified impact thresholds and future site specific studies, will reduce the potential future impacts to tolerable levels such that the quality of life and the quality of the environment will not be significantly impacted.

D. ALTERNATIVES

This section of the GEIS provides a discussion of the various alternatives considered during the preparation of this document. Since the projection of future growth is an important component of the GEIS, different growth scenarios were explored including full build-out under current zoning, land conservation through new zoning, land conservation with new zoning and permanent easements (implementation of the Open Space Plan), and the no growth scenario. Alternative land uses are also discussed. These include incorporation of multi-family uses, commercial uses, and mixed development associated with hamlets. The no-action alternative is also identified which in this case would be the rejection of the Land Conservation Plan and other GEIS recommendations in favor of current development trends and procedures.

SECTION II.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. PROJECT OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

The Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) for the western portion of the Town (study area) will serve two purposes. The primary purpose is to establish a new plan and zoning to address the concerns of build-out under current zoning on land conservation and community character. The second purpose is to evaluate the cumulative impacts of future development on land use/community character, the natural environment, infrastructure, and services. The GEIS is an excellent tool to look at the major issues of growth and to put the Town in a position to be proactive in guiding future development and maintaining a preferred level of service, so as to preserve a high quality of life for Town residents.

The GEIS provides communities with the opportunity to evaluate a growth scenario and adjust that scenario as necessary in response to significant impacts that arise during the analysis. Clifton Park has been proactive in their management of growth through the preparation of GEIS' in other areas of the Town, revisions and updates to their comprehensive plan, preparation of trails and recreation studies, and the recent adoption of an open space plan. This work has emphasized the need to evaluate impacts in an area of the Town that is in transition. It has also led to a realization that the rural character of Western Clifton Park is desirable yet vulnerable to suburbanization based on current zoning and land use patterns. Knowing this, the approach to this GEIS process is somewhat different than past studies in the community. Development of a plan that defines and preserves the rural character of Western Clifton Park has become the primary mitigation goal.

The need for this study stems from development pressure created by low interest rates, the desire to be located in a quiet rural area, and the potential for a future expanding regional job market. The recent extension of water and sewer west along Route 146 to the Corporate Commerce Park brings these utilities to the doorstep of the study area and along with it the potential for growth.

The need for the study also stems from past planning efforts in the Town that have begun to define the character of this area. The most notable work is the Town's Open

Space Plan. Although open space needs were addressed Town-wide, the most meaningful opportunity to preserve agriculture and other open space resources is within the study area.

B. LOCATION

The study area comprises approximately 13,900 acres of land in the western portion of the Town of Clifton Park, which is almost half of the total Town land area. The study area is primarily comprised of rural lands that include large lot residential, farms, environmentally constrained lands, and undeveloped land, as well as the historic hamlets of Rexford, Vischer Ferry, and Grooms Corners. The primary transportation corridor through the Study area is NYS Route 146, extending from the Rexford Bridge eastward across the Town.

The Study area boundaries are provided on Figure II-1.

C. DESCRIPTION

The project involves the preparation of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) to establish a plan for the conservation of land resources and the preservation of rural character and to evaluate the cumulative impacts of future development in the Study area in order to proactively plan for and mitigate growth.

A GEIS is a tool, provided under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR), that allows for the evaluation of broad land areas or programs effecting land use and the environment. It has many practical applications, the most common of which are the evaluation of alternative sites for various uses, the evaluation of large land areas where detailed information cannot be collected cost effectively, and for the adoption of land use plans. The technical difference between generic and site specific EIS' is the level of detail provided in the supporting documentation.

The most common EISs are those prepared for development projects on specific sites. In these cases, the applicants are required to prepare detailed studies on a range of issues that are also typically required for site plan review. Since the project area is of



Western Clifton Park

Generic Environmental Impact Statement

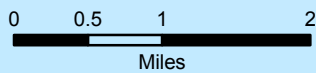
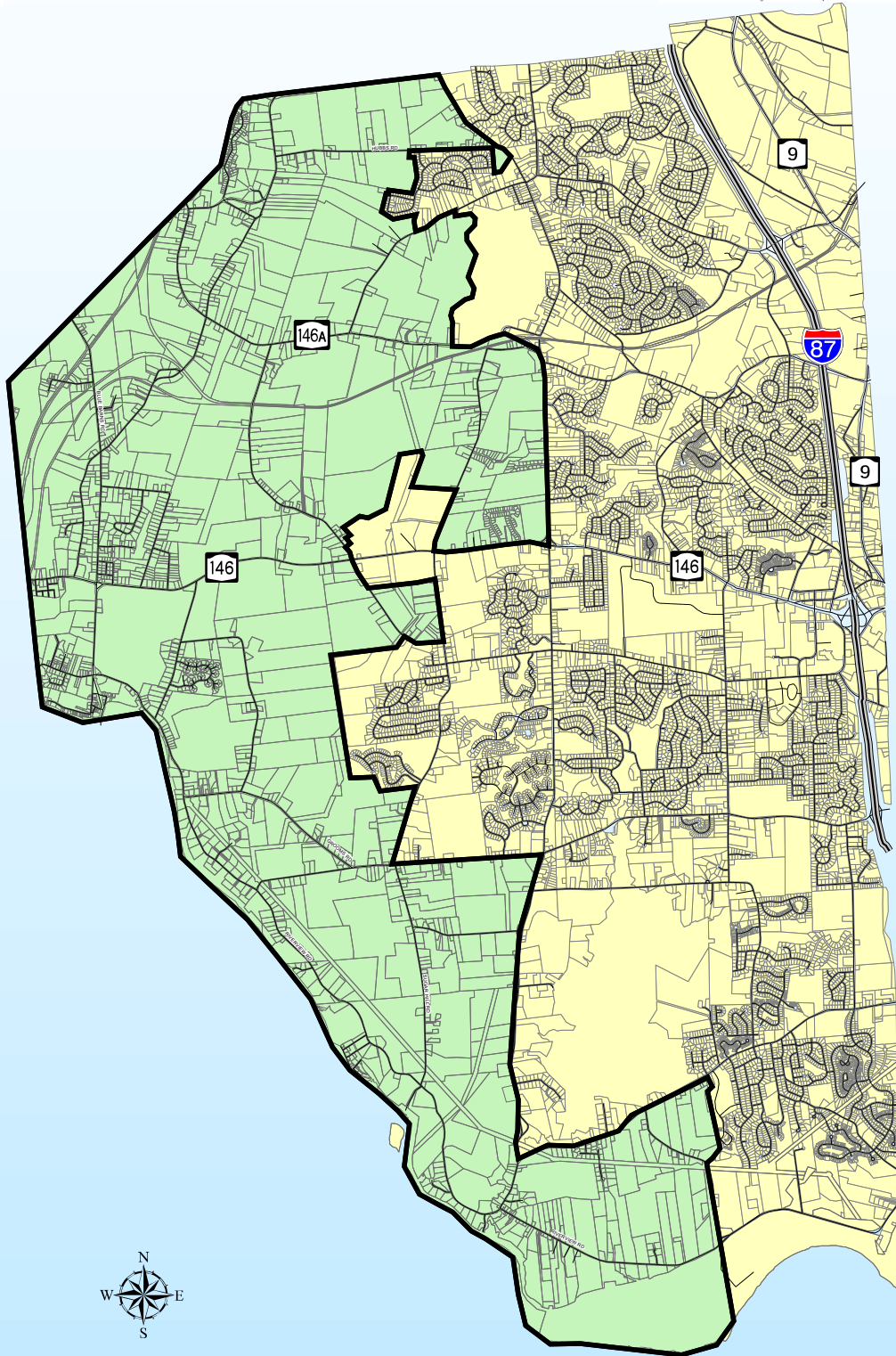


Figure II-1: Study Area Boundary

a manageable size, the level of detail required for the EIS must be sufficient to clearly identify construction and operation related impacts.

The level of detail for a GEIS is usually at a planning or concept level; meaning that site details are not necessary. This allows the preparer of the GEIS to focus on broader issues and cumulative impacts. The evaluation of cumulative impacts is seldom achieved in the preparation of site specific EIS' and is a major benefit of a GIS. Over time, cumulative impacts can have significant and often irreversible impacts on community character and resources.

The level of detail also varies within the GEIS framework depending on the type of action and the desired outcome. For example, the adoption of a community's Comprehensive Master Plan generally does not include detailed engineering and related studies to evaluate the impacts of the plan on community character and growth. Conversely, if a community decides to evaluate the potential cumulative impacts of future growth on a given area, then a greater level of detail is required, especially if the desired outcome is the identification of appropriate growth rates.

This GEIS process for western Clifton Park involves a three-phase approach. The first phase was to identify development potential under current zoning, which is discussed in greater detail in DGEIS Section II.D. This development scenario (build-out) is used as the basis for evaluating impacts to community resources. Due to the significance of the potential impacts, this scenario was rejected by the Town Board (Lead Agency) as a viable growth scenario, which led to the second phase; the creation of a plan to conserve resources and rural character.

The planning phase involved some community visioning and the formulation of a plan to reduce density and conserve land resources, referred to as the Land Conservation Plan. This plan includes recommendations for new zoning and the implementation of the Town's Open Space Plan. Details of the planning phase are discussed in DGEIS Section II.E.

In addition to providing a more reasonable growth scenario, the Land Conservation Plan serves as the future growth scenario upon which some of the technical

evaluations can be performed for the DGEIS. Build-out of the Town, whether under current zoning or the proposed Land Conservation Plan, will require community resources. Infrastructure improvements (roads and utilities) can be very costly. Current policy in the Town dictates that developers must pay for those improvements necessary to achieve their projects. As long as the incremental improvements are commensurate with the level of development, this scenario works fine. However, at some point capacity is diminished to a point where major improvements are necessary. The developer may then be faced with extraordinary costs that are not manageable. The GEIS process provides the opportunity to identify the need for major improvements and proactively plan for them by creating a mitigation fund into which all new development, subject to this process, must pay. Since build-out under current zoning is undesirable, it is necessary to identify a desirable growth scenario upon which to base the technical evaluation in support of the mitigation and associated costs.

The third phase of the process is the actual evaluation of impacts and mitigation, presented initially for public review in the form of a draft GEIS (DGEIS). As previously mentioned, build-out under current zoning serves as the basis for most of the impact evaluation. The Land Conservation Plan serves as mitigation for many of these impacts but also serves as the preferred growth scenario under which the impacts to transportation, water service, and open space will be addressed.

D. STUDY AREA BUILD-OUT

A build-out analysis was conducted for the Study area to identify the development potential under current zoning and development patterns. As the first phase of the 3-phase GEIS process, the analysis of build-out under current zoning was necessary to determine if build-out would suffice as the preferred growth scenario or if further planning work would be necessary. Build-out is defined as the maximum development potential of a study area based on pre-determined land use regulations and density. There are various levels of analysis that can be used to predict build-out, depending on the level of accuracy desired. The intent is to establish an overall order of magnitude of growth. Build-out analysis is typically performed using readily

available planning information. Advances in computer technology and broader availability of land use data have facilitated the process for performing build-out analysis, allowing for more accurate estimates. Details with regard to build-out methodology and results are provided in DGEIS Appendix C.

Once the development potential is established, it is then possible to predict a growth scenario for a given time period based on past rates of development. A 10 or 20-year period is often used as the planning period. The problem with this in some communities is that growth rates may be highly variable. Low interest rates and a desirable location have sparked significant growth in the Capital District/Saratoga region over the past 3-4 years. Additionally, the potential for a major high-tech manufacturing facility in the region could have significant future residential and commercial growth implications. More importantly, having a limited planning period prevents the Town from understanding the long term impacts of development. Given these concerns, it was determined that it would be more appropriate to evaluate the impacts of complete build-out for the study area rather than trying to project growth over a given period of time.

The build-out analysis identified the development potential for residential and commercial uses within the Study area. Available mapping was used to identify development constraints, which were excluded from the potential developable area. Density was defined by the Town Zoning Code and refined by current development practices. The results are summarized below:

Approximate area included within the GEIS Study area:	13,900 acres
Approximate area of potentially developable land:	6,200 – 7,700 acres
Approximate number of homes that could be built:	4,200 – 5,300
Approximate amount of office space that could be built:	2,200,000 – 2,500,000 s.f.
Approximate amount of retail space that could be built:	600,000 – 700,000 s.f.

These results were then analyzed for the effect on major community issues that can have significant impact on community character and quality of life. Therefore, the scope of this analysis was limited to utilities, traffic, fiscal resources, and land use.

Expansion of municipal water and sewer services to the western part of the Town would be costly. Build-out analysis was conducted as a function of current zoning and did not assume that water and sewer would be available everywhere. The future availability of utilities within the Study area would probably have a greater impact on density and community character. For example, the concept of extending sewer service throughout the Study area would open the area to the potential for many more units than that evaluated in the build-out analysis.

The build-out analysis indicates that traffic would increase significantly, changing the character of rural roads and requiring some significant improvements. It is estimated that traffic volume on the section of Route 146 in the study area would be comparable to the 30,000 vehicles per day that are on Route 146 in the eastern section of the Town. Traffic volumes at key intersections, such as the intersection of Route 146, Route 146A and Vischer Ferry Road, and the intersection of Route 146, Glenridge Road and Blue Barns Road are estimated to reach the order of magnitude of volumes that occur now at the intersection of Route 146 and Clifton Country Road. Peak hour congestion on local collector roads would be anticipated as a result of the traffic generated by new development. These impacts to the existing transportation system would require a comprehensive program for creating and managing additional roadway capacity to accommodate the increased demand.

The results of the fiscal impact analysis identified a relative potential 50 percent increase in overall value of the tax base of the town (increasing from about \$2.064 billion to approximately \$3.0 billion). However, the number of school-aged children was estimated to increase by about 4,000 new students. Consequently, school taxes were projected to increase relative to current taxes by approximately 12 percent, which may very well be a conservative estimate of the impact. Factors outside of the model which may have an impact on these findings include potential relative changes to the town's share of county sales tax revenues, continued growth of communities outside of the Study area, and changes to the state aid formula for schools, among others.

Finally, the character of the Study area will change significantly under the build-out

scenario since rural character will be lost to primarily suburban residential uses and rural roads will become suburban collectors. The farming community will be lost. Natural resources will be consumed and impacted through the consumption of land, removal of forest, culverting and channelizing streams, loss of wetlands and other important habitat, increased runoff, increased air and water pollution, culminating in the degradation of quality of life.

E. LAND CONSERVATION PLAN

The potential impacts of build-out under current zoning are not consistent with the Town's current vision for the Study area, which is to maintain rural character and low density development. As a result, the Town Board rejected the build-out as a preferred growth scenario and authorized a planning study to develop recommendations to cut density, preserve rural character, and respect the property rights and investment of the Town's farming community and other long-standing large landowners.

Although the focus of the planning effort was set by the impacts of build-out and the Town Board's concerns, further discussion of the vision for the Study area with the community seemed to be an appropriate starting point. To prepare for this, the Open Space Concept Plan map contained in the Town's Open Space Plan was refined to create the Land Resources maps (DGEIS Figures II-2, II-3 & II-4), which were used as resource materials for the community workshop held on May 12, 2004. The workshop attracted approximately 150 people participating in small groups. The input and insight was excellent and was an essential element in formulating plan recommendations. A summary of the workshop results is provided in the attachments to the "Proposed Land Conservation Plan Recommendations" (DGEIS Appendix D).

Details of the Land Conservation Plan are provided in DGEIS Appendix D and summarized below. DGEIS Figure II-5 illustrates the plan recommendations.

The Land Conservation Plan combines zoning recommendations with a permanent easement program; a combination of regulatory and incentive based growth



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LEGEND

- ACTIVE FARMLAND & KEY OPEN SPACE PARCELS
- ACTIVE FARMLAND WITH EASEMENT
- DISTANT VIEW
- HAMLET AREA
- PUBLIC PARKS
- ROUTE 146 CORRIDOR
- VIEWS FROM RURAL ROAD
- WETLAND AREA

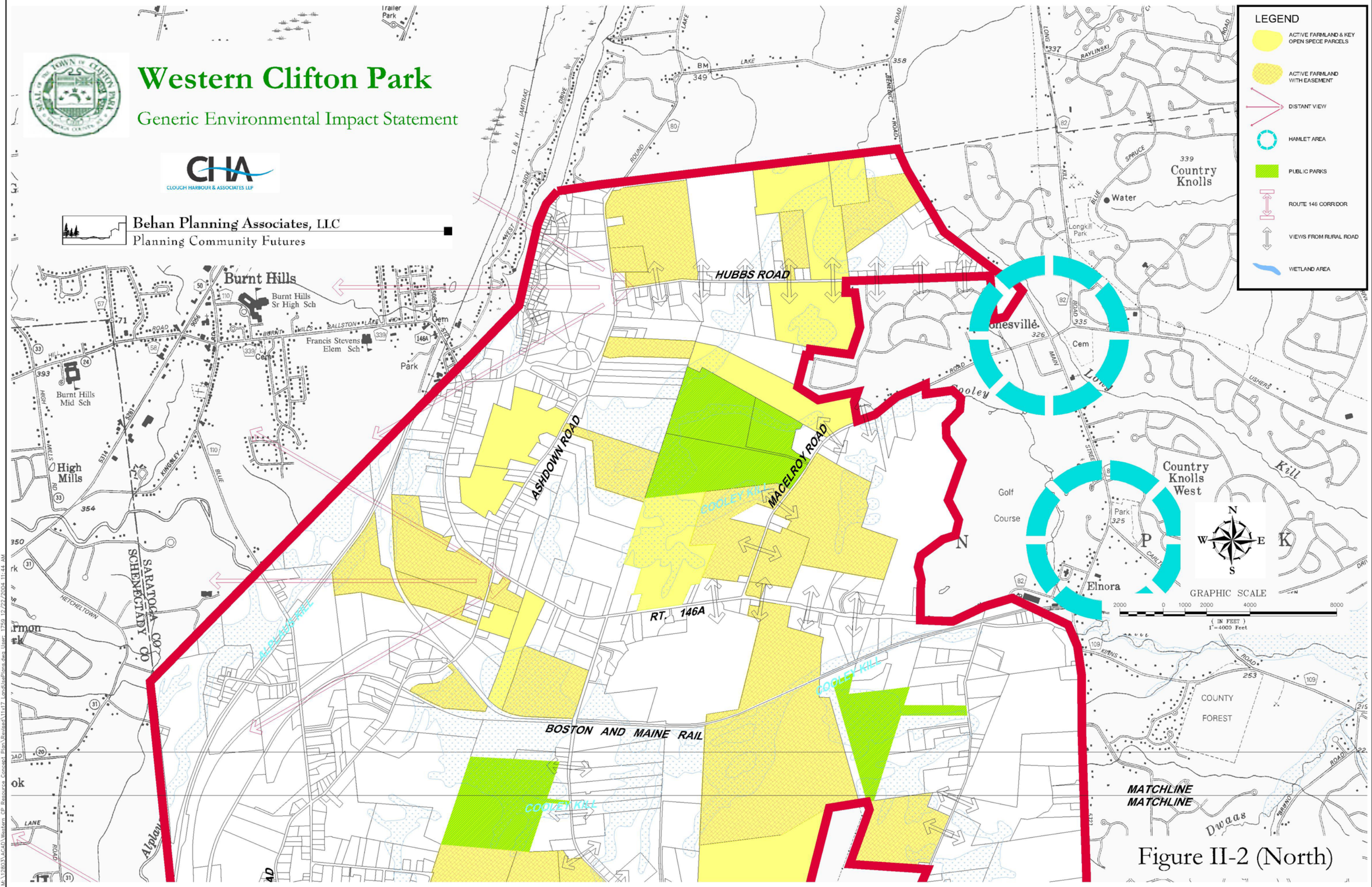










Figure II-2 (North)

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LEGEND

-  ACTIVE FARMLAND & KEY OPEN SPACE PARCELS
-  ACTIVE FARMLAND WITH EASEMENT
-  DISTANT VIEW
-  HAMLET AREA
-  PUBLIC PARKS
-  ROUTE 146 CORRIDOR
-  VIEWS FROM RURAL ROAD
-  WETLAND AREA

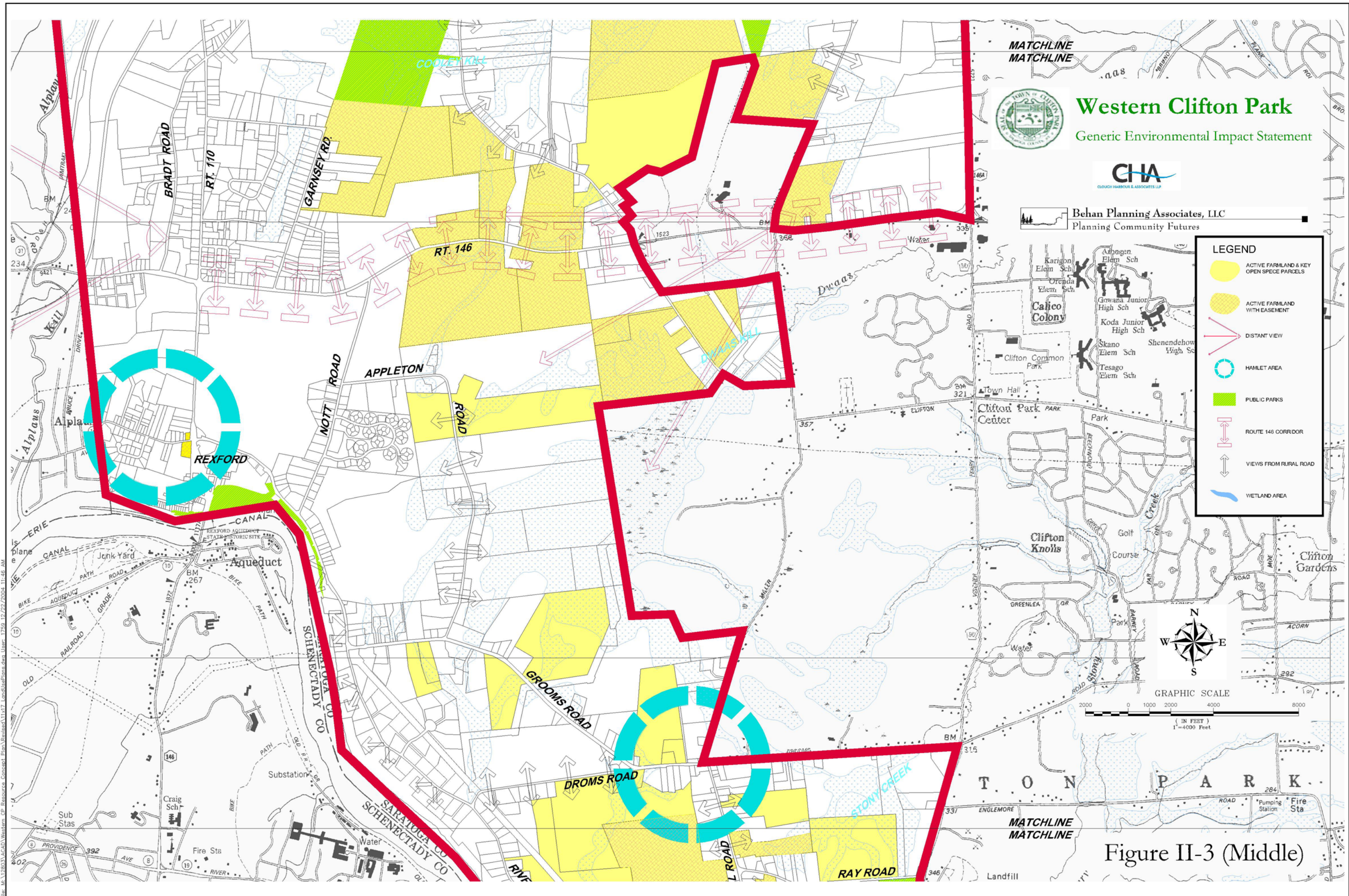
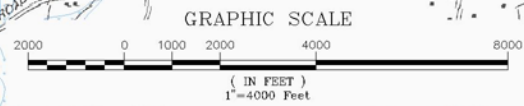


Figure II-3 (Middle)

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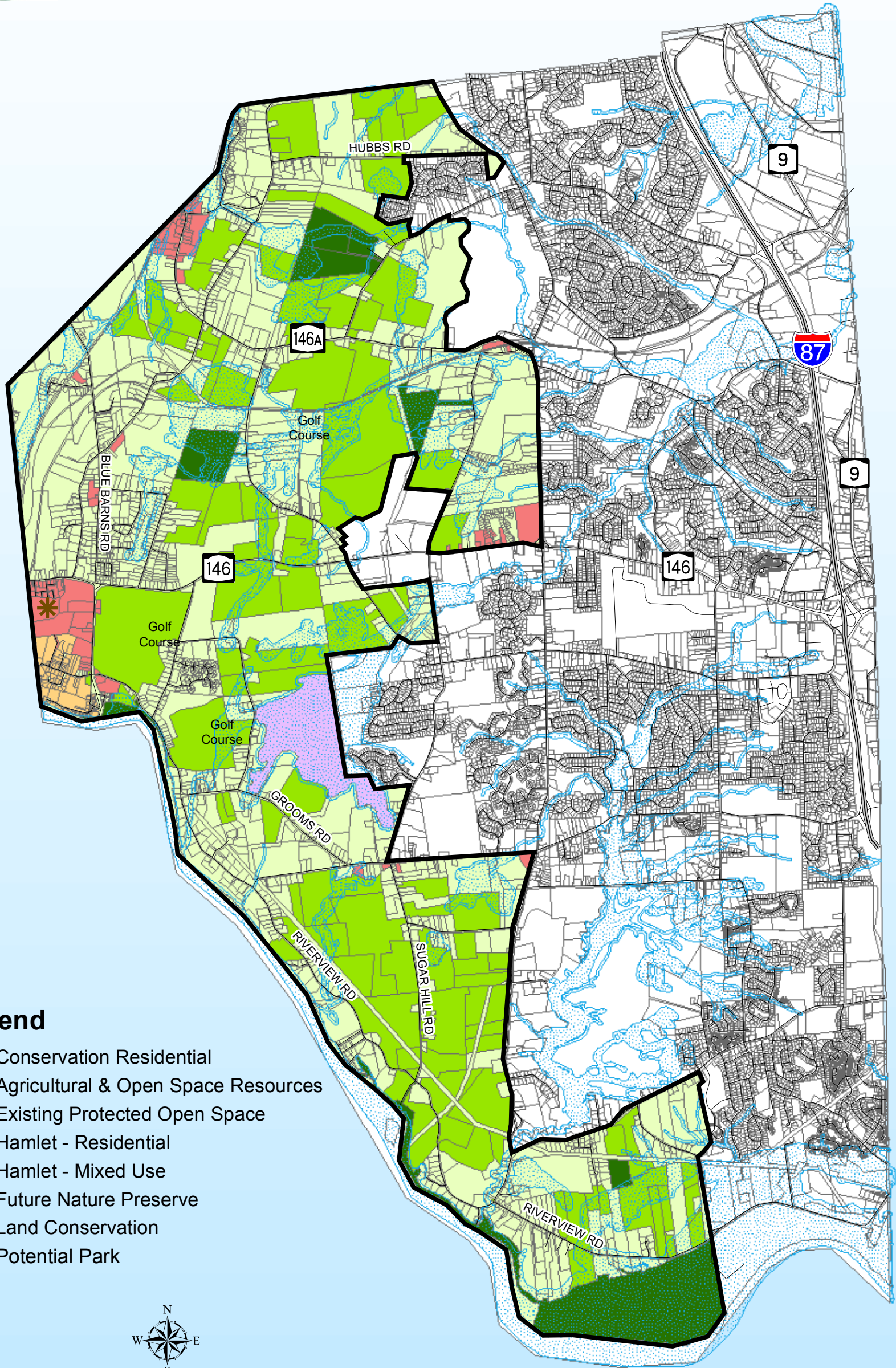


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Legend

- Conservation Residential
- Agricultural & Open Space Resources
- Existing Protected Open Space
- Hamlet - Residential
- Hamlet - Mixed Use
- Future Nature Preserve
- Land Conservation
- ✱ Potential Park

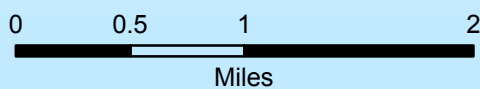


Figure II-5: Land Conservation Plan

management. The basic elements of the plan are as follows:

- Rezone all residentially zoned lands in the Study area to Conservation Residential (CR). This new zone would establish an average density for the Study area of 1 home per 3 developable acres. All projects in this zone would be designed as conservation subdivisions; a refined form of clustering that protects important natural and cultural resources and is based on specific adopted design guidelines. This new zone would also include the opportunity to increase the development potential of a given site in exchange for the purchase of development rights on a designated open space parcel.
- Rezone the residential portion of Rexford to Hamlet Residential (HR) to preserve the character of this area.
- Rezone all existing commercially zoned areas to Hamlet Mixed Use (HM) to promote uses more in tune with the rural character of the Study area. Reduce underlying development density to a maximum of 4,000 gross square feet of office space per developable acre or 2,000 gross square feet of retail space per developable acre.
- Conduct design workshops for the potential infill and enhancement of existing hamlets (particularly Rexford) to better understand growth potential and land use issues.
- Establish a purchase of development rights (PDR) program and funding mechanisms to permanently protect agricultural and open space resources in accordance with the Town's Open Space Plan and subsequent refinements to mapping provided herein.

Although design parameters may change with more detailed analysis and further public scrutiny, the primary intent of this plan is to establish an appropriate growth and conservation scenario that can be used to evaluate technical impact issues such as traffic, schools, water service, etc.

Based on the recommendations to control density, the build-out for the Town was re-evaluated. Two scenarios were considered. The first is build-out potential based on the proposed new zoning only and the second evaluates both zoning and permanent

conservation easements. The reason for this is that the proposed permanent conservation easement recommendations are voluntary and therefore there are no guarantees as to how much of the land will be permanently protected.

Land Conservation Scenario – New Zoning Only

- Approximate number of homes that could be built: 2,500
- Approximate amount of office space that could be built: 715,000 s.f.
- Approximate amount of retail space that could be built: 125,000 s.f.

Land Conservation Scenario – New Zoning & Permanent Easement Program

- Approximate number of homes that could be built: 1,400
- Approximate amount of office space that could be built: 715,000 s.f.
- Approximate amount of retail space that could be built: 125,000 s.f.

The Land Conservation Plan would significantly reduce the growth potential within the Study area. The zoning recommendations alone reduced the residential growth potential by approximately 50 percent with similar significant reductions in commercial development. Further reductions in density, through the establishment of permanent open space easements, would be beneficial to rural character, traffic and fiscal issues, as well as many other environmental and cultural resources.

After careful consideration by the Town Board, the preferred growth scenario was determined to be the development potential under the implementation of new zoning only for the purpose of evaluating impacts, such as traffic and water service, in this DGEIS. This scenario cuts the development potential in half and can be readily implemented through regulations. Therefore, it was considered achievable and enforceable. However, it is recognized that additional reduction in density would benefit the community and is encouraged in this DGEIS and the Open Space Plan through efforts to establish permanent conservation easements.

Another important assumption is the distribution of growth within the Study area. This is difficult given the overwhelming public consensus from the public workshop that there is no great place to concentrate growth. Nevertheless, the same workshop also recommended significant land conservation efforts be focused in the southern half of the Study area. Based on these results and current patterns of development, the northern half of the Study area was assumed to be the most likely portion to accept future development, however, this is not a mandate for growth. There are several important agricultural and open space parcels within the northern portion of the Study area that warrant conservation. Additionally, the rural character along Route 146 was identified by the community as a valuable resource. Design parameters discussed in the Land Conservation Plan (DGEIS Section III.D and Appendix D) address rural character and visual impact, especially along roads.

F. SEQR PROCESS & SCOPE

The SEQR process began with the identification of the Study area boundaries and the Town Board's establishment of a moratorium on development within the Study area in October 2003. A Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) was prepared and coordinated review was conducted with Involved Agencies. The Town Board was established as Lead Agency on December 15, 2003, without objection from the Involved Agencies. A Positive Declaration stating there is a potential for significant development impacts within the study area was also filed on December 15, which authorized the preparation of the GEIS. A Draft Scope outlining issues to be addressed in the GEIS was prepared and made available to the public and Involved Agencies for comment. A public scoping session was held on January 12, 2004 to solicit public comment on the Draft Scope. The scope remained a draft while both the Build-Out Analysis and Land Conservation Plan processes were undertaken. The build-out analysis was presented to the Town Board on February 11, 2004. After consideration of the build-out results by the Town Board and public, it was determined that the planning phase should be undertaken to revise zoning and development patterns in the Study area to reduce density and conserve land resources.

A community workshop was held on May 12, 2004 to help establish a vision for the Study area. Planning recommendations followed and the Land Conservation Plan

was presented to the Town Board on June 25, 2004. A public hearing on the Land Conservation Plan was held on August 16, 2004. Based on the results of the planning process and community outreach, the Final Scope was prepared and filed with the Town and Involved Agencies on October 4, 2004. A copy of both the Draft and Final Scope are provided in Appendix A for reference. The Final Scope is the framework for the studies and other documentation provided in this Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS).

SECTION III.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

A. TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY, SOILS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Topography

The Study Area is located within the Hudson-Mohawk Lowlands physiographic region. The landscape is generally flat with some rolling hills. Steep slopes (Figure III-1) are limited to the banks of the Mohawk River and Alplaus Kill in the southern and western portions of the Study Area.

Geology

Topographic conditions in the Study Area are the result of several glacial events. The latest glacial advance was the Wisconsin Glaciation that covered the area from 70,000 to 16,000 years ago (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service (SCS), 1992). The predominant surficial deposit is glacial till, unconsolidated material deposited by the receding glaciers. There are small areas of lacustrine sand, till, dunes and kame deposits scattered throughout the Study Area.

Based on a review of the Geologic Map of New York, Hudson-Mohawk Sheet (NYS Education Department 1970), the bedrock underlying the Study Area is Canajoharie Shale.

Soils

Soils within the Study Area consist primarily of silt loam, silts and clays and are generally very deep. Depth to bedrock is greater than 60 inches across the area. Drainage capabilities vary. There are pockets of soils in the Study Area that are well drained and moderately well drained, which are suitable for standard septic systems. However some areas are somewhat poorly drained, such as the Mosherville silt loams, and would therefore require specialized septic system design. The depth to water table varies across the study area, generally from 0.5 to 3 feet.

Development is often influenced by soil type; poorly drained soils with seasonal high water tables, often associated with wetlands and steep slopes, are normally less desirable areas for development. Hydric soils occur when soils are flooded or saturated long



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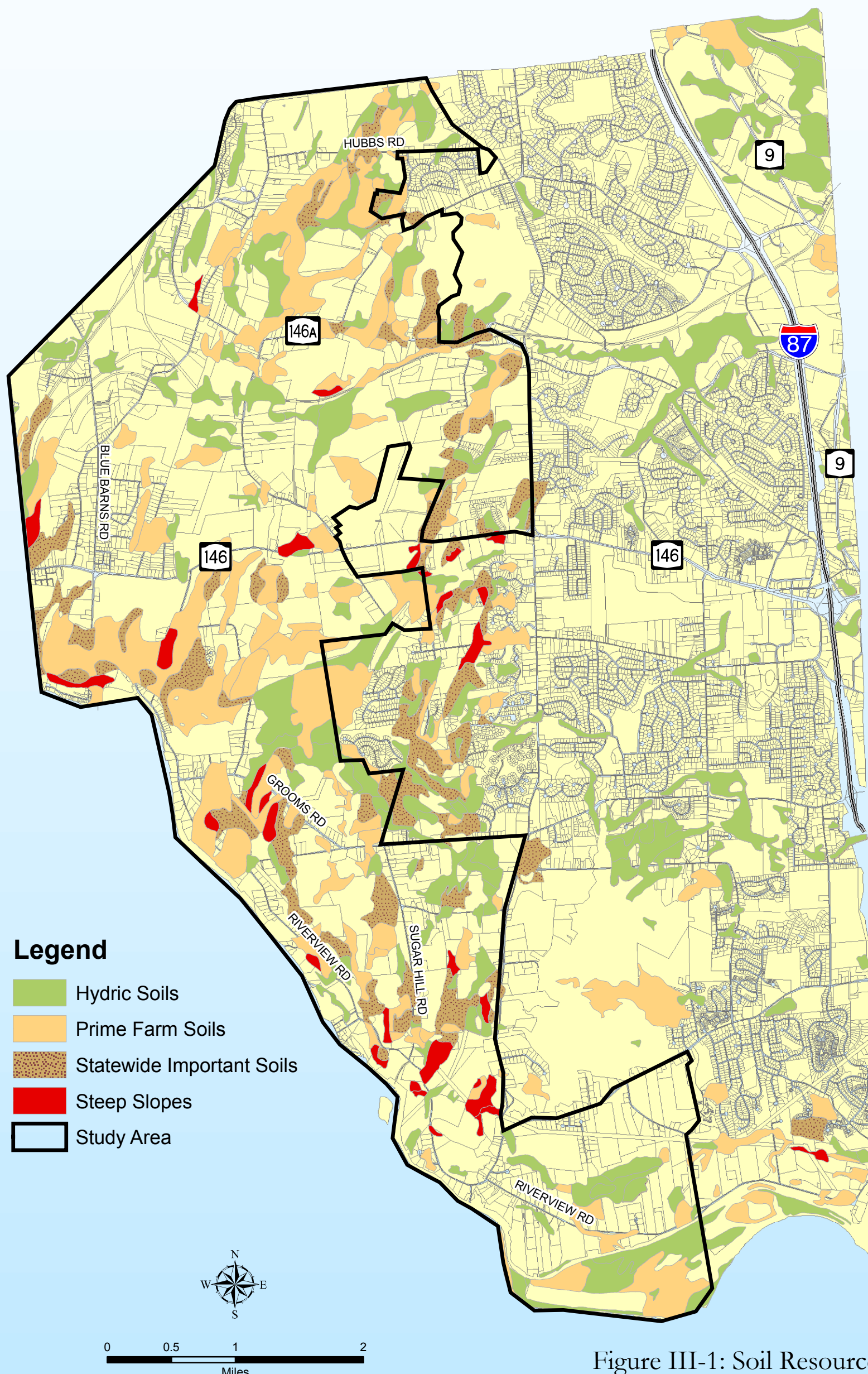


Figure III-1: Soil Resources

enough during the growing season to create anaerobic conditions. Evidence of these conditions are found in the soil layers. A common indicator of hydric soils is a dull, grayish color in the B-horizon (soil layer beneath the topsoil). The National Technical Committee for Hydric Soils (NTCHS) defines hydric soils as “...*soil that is saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part*” (SCS 1989). Hydric soils are identified on Figure III-1. NYSDEC and federal wetlands are discussed in Section III.C.

Hydric soils are one of the three parameters used to define federal jurisdictional wetlands. Based on the NYS hydric soils listing the following hydric and potentially hydric soils occur in the Study Area: Allis (As), Cheektowaga (Cg), Ilion (In), Saco (Sa), Madalin (Ma), Palms (Pm,Pp), Raynham (Ra), Shaker (Sh), Sun (Sn), Wareham (Wa). Hydric soils are mapped on Figure III-1.

Steep slopes also present limitations to development. Steep slopes were identified using the Saratoga County Soil Survey and defined as 15% or greater. These areas are lightly scattered throughout the study area and primarily associated with stream corridors (Figure III-1). However, site specific topographic information may reveal other areas that were not identified through USGS topography or soil survey mapping.

Another important soil consideration relates to agricultural resources. Based on their potential productivity, soils are classified as Prime Farmland, Unique, or Soils of Statewide Importance. Prime Farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, forage, feed, fiber, and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation and a favorable temperature and growing season. The soils are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time and do not flood frequently. In the Study Area, prime farmland soil includes Claverack loamy fine sand (CIB), Cosad fine sandy loam (Cs), Hudson silt loam (HuB), Nunda silt loam (NuB), Raynham silt loam (Ra), Shaker very fine sandy loam (Sh), and Teel silt loam (Te).

Statewide important farmland includes lands that are nearly prime farmland if conditions are favorable. Statewide important soils within the Study Area includes: Allis silt loam

(As), Burdett silt loam (BxB), Sun loam (Sn), and Wareham loamy sand (Wa) (See Figure III-1).

Unique farmland includes soil with special characteristics that are particularly important to farming. An example would be the “black dirt” farms. These are highly organic soils typically associated with wetlands. Use of this land requires considerable drainage, but if successful, can be very productive. No unique soils have been identified in the study area.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Hydric and other somewhat poorly drained soils can be major constraints to development in the Study Area. Soil wetness can be overcome through engineering practices of varying cost and effectiveness. However, some of the lands identified as poorly drained have been identified as State wetlands or as potential federal wetlands, thereby limiting the extent of development in these areas. Wet areas are typically problematic for septic systems, requiring special design.

Soils identified as poorly drained or excessively drained often present a variety of engineering problems related to the design and construction of septic systems. The provision of sewer service would mitigate potential impacts resulting from poorly drained or excessively drained soils, however, it is not anticipated that sewer will be available throughout the study area due to the land use goals of land conservation. Areas that do not have municipal sewer should be investigated prior to development to ensure that an appropriate septic system design is employed.

Soil erosion is a potential adverse impact that could occur during clearing, grading, and construction activities. Based on a review of the Saratoga County Soil Survey, there are a number of soils in the Study Area with the potential for erosion. Steep Nassau soils present a severe erosion hazard. Hudson (Hu) and Oakville and Windsor (Oe) soils vary from moderate to severe as slope increases. Hoosic (Ho), Unadilla (Un), and Chenango (Ch) soils represent moderate erosion hazards. Some areas of Oakville soils (Oa) also can present moderate erosion hazards. Generally soils containing silts can present erosion hazards particularly as the slope increases.

Erosion control is required for the State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit for the disturbance of 1 acre or greater of undeveloped land (refer to Section III.B for details).

A soil erosion and sedimentation control plan based on New York Guidelines for Urban erosion and Sediment Control (SCS 1989) and Town approved guidelines (Town code §208-114) should be provided to the Town prior to commencement of site work. Some typical erosion control techniques include:

- Installation of silt fences or silt fences in combination with staked hay bales, at the toe of slopes around the construction area.
- Utilization of temporary drainage swales with hay bale or silt dike check dams to direct water away from the construction area.
- Seeding all areas with a quick germinating grass or other cover species upon completion of final grading.
- Staging site development to minimize disturbed area.

Other special conditions may be imposed as final design plans are developed to ensure protection of sensitive environmental areas such as wetlands.

Soils that have been identified as prime farmland or soils of statewide importance generally also have characteristics that make them attractive for development. The combination of soils suitable for development and the availability of municipal sewer and water adjacent to the study area will result in development pressure in this area. Development that would impact productive farmland is contrary to the vision articulated in the Land Conservation Plan. Therefore, prime and statewide important farmland should be considered in any site plan review process to protect these lands to the greatest extent practicable. This is not to suggest that all such lands will be protected as part of this GEIS. Specific zoning and land conservation recommendations have been identified to achieve the vision in a manner that is respectful of land owner rights and investment, particularly the long-time Clifton Park farm families. A discussion of agricultural land conservation is provided in Section III.E Agricultural Resources and Open Space.

B. WATER RESOURCES

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Surface Water

The primary drainage courses in the Western Clifton Park Study Area are the Mohawk River, Dwaas Kill, Stony Creek, Alplaus Kill, Long Kill, Cooley Kill and their tributaries. These streams are identified on Figure III-2. The Stony Creek, Alplaus Kill and their tributaries generally drain in a southwest direction to the Mohawk River. The Cooley Kill and Long Kill generally drain southeast toward the Dwaas Kill where the Dwaas Kill and tributaries generally drain in an easterly direction toward the Hudson River.

Surface water features in New York are designated with a water quality classification for the purposes of regulating discharges into these water bodies in accordance with the State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES). These classifications refer to the suitability of a given water feature (lake, pond, river, stream) for human use. The higher the classification (A) the better the water quality. For example, Class A water is suitable for “primary contact” (swimming) and for a drinking water supply.

Classifications include water supply designations (AA-S, A-S, AA) and normal designations ranging from A (suitable for most uses) to D (unsuitable for primary contact). Each water quality classification carries with it a set of discharge limitations (standards) designed to protect or improve the water quality. A "T" modifier is used for those streams that have a breeding trout population. Streams with a classification of C(T) or higher are regulated pursuant to Article 15 of the NYS Environmental Conservation Law (“Protection of Waters”) and its implementing regulations (6 NYCRR 608).

Stony Creek, Dwaas Kill and Long Kill are classified as C(T) for most of their length within the Study Area. In addition the Long Kill is classified as C(TS) indicating that it may support trout spawning. The Mohawk River is Class A. The Alplaus Kill and Cooley Kill are classified as B and C respectively. Figure III-2, illustrates the NYSDEC classification for each stream within the Study Area.

Construction activities regulated under Article 15 include:

- Stream bank or stream bed disturbance;
- Construction of artificial obstructions in or across a natural watercourse when the drainage area of the watercourse is greater than one square mile, the dam exceeds 10 feet in height, or there is an impoundment of one million gallons (approximately 3 acre feet);
- Placement of fill in navigable waters; and
- Any activity that may result in discharge of runoff into navigable waters (NYSDEC 1991).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulates all “waters of the U.S.,” therefore, almost any water body (streams, ponds, and lakes) falls under federal jurisdiction. The exception to this are those water bodies that are determined (by USACE on a case by case basis) to be isolated as required by the January 2001 Supreme Court decision (see DGEIS Section III.C for more information regarding this decision).

The extent of regulatory involvement depends on many factors. In general, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act regulates the discharge of dredged or fill materials into all waters of the U.S. Within the Study Area, all of the streams identified on DGEIS Figure III-2 are likely to be considered jurisdictional.

The need for and the extent of permitting under Section 404 would depend on the type and extent of impact. Several activities have been identified by USACE as presenting minimal impacts and may be authorized under a series of Nationwide Permits. In general, activities that impact one-tenth of an acre or less may proceed under a Nationwide Permit without prior notification to USACE. Projects that exceed one-tenth acre but are less than one-half acre may also meet the Nationwide Permit criteria but must first undergo review and authorization by USACE. Mitigation is generally required. Furthermore, impacts to streams must be less than 300 feet in length to be authorized under a Nationwide Permit; otherwise, an individual Section 404 permit is required.



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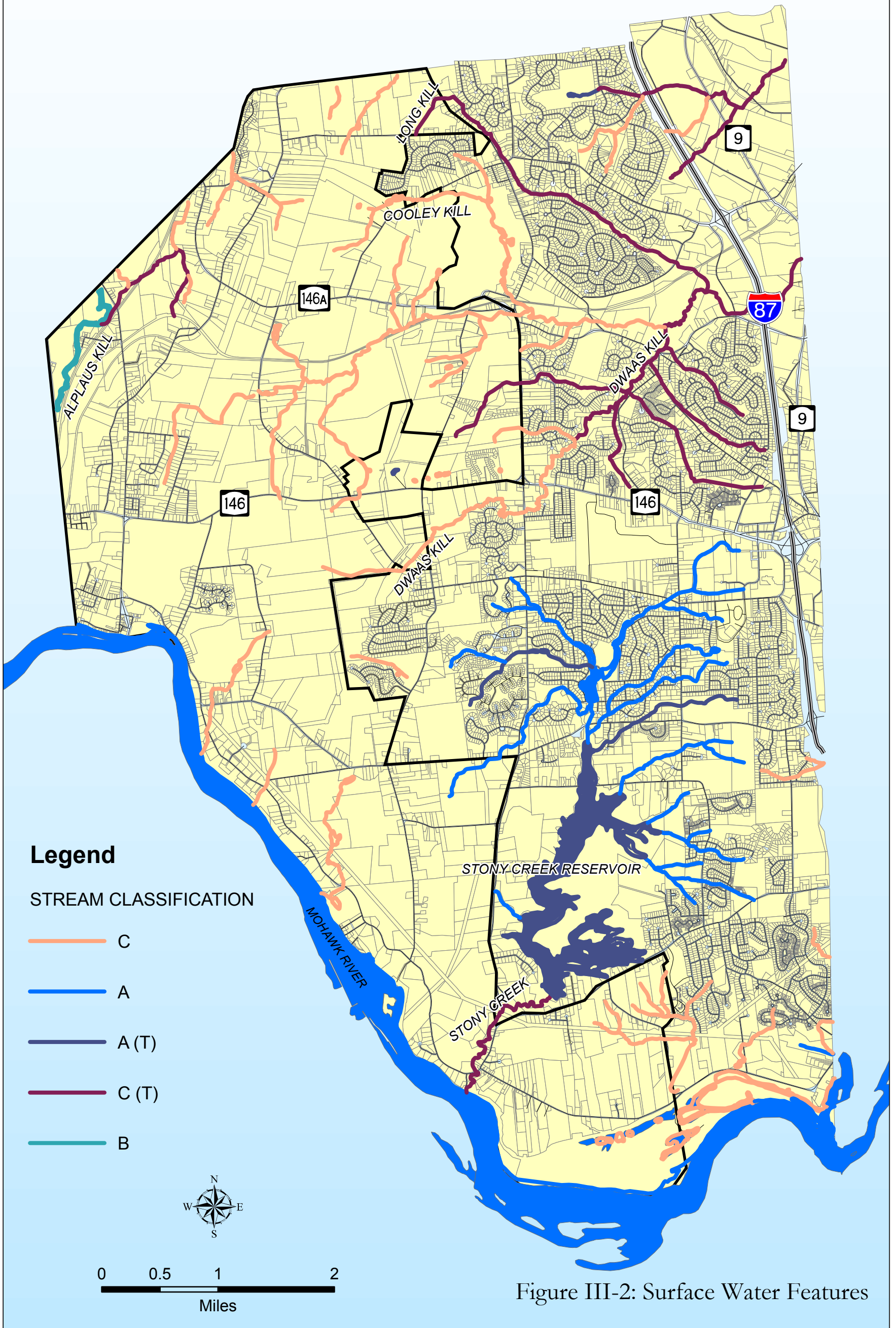


Figure III-2: Surface Water Features

Section 401 of the Clean Water Act regulates water quality impacts from Section 404 discharges. The intent is to ensure that the material used to fill jurisdictional waters will not result in water pollution or increased turbidity (sediment in water) and sedimentation (settling out of sediment). This federal regulation, referred to as Water Quality Certification (WQC), has been delegated to NYSDEC for implementation. Water Quality Certification is typically required from NYSDEC in conjunction with Section 404 permits.

The NYSDEC is also responsible for the administration of the State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) that addresses both point and non-point sources of pollution. Point sources include direct discharges from factories, wastewater treatment facilities, and other similar sources.

Non-point sources of pollution, particularly urban runoff, are regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the NYSDEC. Under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), projects involving an acre or more of disturbance are required to provide water quality treatment for runoff in accordance with established guidelines. States are offered the opportunity to administer this program, provided the regulations they promulgate are the same as, or more stringent than, the federal regulations. New York has adopted this program and requires that all projects disturbing 1 or more acres of land comply with the SPDES General Construction Permit. The two primary elements of the SPDES regulations are stormwater management and water quality. To comply with SPDES, projects must provide stormwater detention (in most cases) as well as a means to improve water quality. Details of these requirements as they relate to potential development within the Study Area are addressed in “Potential Impacts and Mitigation.”

The new SPDES regulations also call for municipalities to be aware of and in control of their stormwater systems. This is referred to as the Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) program.

Floodplain

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) prepares flood insurance studies and floodplain boundary maps for communities throughout the country. These maps are used by the various communities to administer the National Flood Insurance Program. The Town of Clifton Park participates in the National Flood Insurance Program and as such complies with all FEMA regulations regarding flood prevention.

A check of FEMA maps for the Town of Clifton Park indicates that, within the Study Area, the Mohawk River, Stony Creek, Alplaus Kill and a portion of the Dwaas Kill corridors contain 100-year floodplain. In general, 100-year floodplain does not extend significantly beyond the banks of these streams.

Groundwater

Groundwater is an important natural resource for most communities, providing drinking water for residents through individual wells or through centralized private or municipal systems. The eastern portion of the Town (including the eastern portion of the Study Area) is part of the Clifton Park- Halfmoon Aquifer, which is highly productive. Three groundwater recharge areas have been identified in the Study Area: Clifton Knolls, Sugar Hill Road and the Riverview Road areas. According to the Town Comprehensive Plan, the Clifton Knolls recharge area is classified as being in heavy use while the other two are used to a limited extent. This area recharges the aquifer which contains the Clifton Knolls well field.

Currently, the majority of Study Area residents rely on individual, private wells. The Town of Clifton Park provides public water to a small portion of the Study Area, primarily properties within newer residential development.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Surface Water

During construction of various projects within the study area, clearing and grading activities could expose soils to erosion. If the soils erode, the sediment-laden stormwater

eventually would decrease in velocity and deposit the material (sedimentation) in surface waters. As with any construction activity, sedimentation can occur downstream within the floodplain, wetlands, and other portions of the stream corridor. This could impact the aquatic environment and may also change the physical characteristics of the stream.

A reduction in development density from what could occur under current zoning would provide significant mitigation of potential impacts on surface water. However, the following site specific measures are also necessary to protect water resources as future development occurs in the study area.

Stormwater discharges from construction activities involving one acre or more of land are regulated under SPDES General Permit GP-02-01. The discharges authorized under this general permit must neither cause nor contribute to a violation of the water quality standards contained in Parts 700 through 705 of Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York.

To obtain coverage under this general permit, the project sponsor must submit a “Notice of Intent” (NOI) to NYSDEC. Prior to submission of the NOI, the project sponsor must prepare a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) that complies with the permit requirements and technical standards. To assure compliance with these standards and NYSDEC acceptance of any deviations therefrom, the NOI should be submitted at least 60 days prior to the initiation of any construction activities. Proposed erosion and sediment control measures for this project would be implemented in such a way as to reduce the risk of soil loss from disturbed areas and to prevent sedimentation within existing drainage channels. Erosion control measures for future development within the Study Area should include the following:

- Construction and maintenance of erosion and siltation control measures in accordance with the New York State Guidelines for Urban Erosion and Sediment Control.
- Prompt vegetative stabilization of disturbed areas with topsoil, seeding and mulch.

- Use of stone riprap at culvert inlets and outlets and proposed drainage channels in excess of 5% longitudinal slope.
- Stabilization of proposed pavement areas by compaction and the application of gravel base as soon as all utilities are installed.
- Excavation work not to be carried out during periods of extreme inclement weather.
- Protection of all areas of the project site disturbed during construction, by sediment basins, providing at a minimum 1,800 cubic feet of storage per acre drained. The use of polymers shall be evaluated to aid in the “settling-out” of smaller-sized sediment particles in proposed sediment basins.
- Use of rock check dams along proposed drainage channels in excess of 5% longitudinal slope.
- Use of sediment filter dams at sediment basin outfalls, as well as other critical locations of concentrated stormwater discharge locations.

Unmanaged stormwater runoff has physical, chemical and biological effects on receiving streams and waterbodies. Soil disturbance increases the potential for erosion and sedimentation. Impervious surfaces accumulate pollutants deposited from the atmosphere, vehicle fluids, roadway de-icing materials and windblown materials. During storm events, pollutants quickly run off impervious surfaces and are delivered to downstream waters. Increased impervious surfaces can also increase stormwater runoff and decrease natural groundwater recharge rates.

The New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual, issued in October 2001, was prepared under a joint effort between the DEC, the Soil and Water Conservation Committee and the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board. The Manual provides standards for design of Stormwater Management Practices (SMPs) that are part of the SWPPP. The purpose of the manual is threefold:

- To protect the waters of the State of New York from adverse impacts of urban stormwater runoff.
- To provide design guidance on the most effective stormwater management practices for new development sites.
- To improve the quality of SMPs constructed in the State, specifically with regard to their performance, longevity, safety, ease of maintenance, community acceptance and environmental benefit.

As previously noted, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) must be prepared for each site development activity involving an acre or more of land. In general, the SWPPP should include the following:

- An erosion and sedimentation control plan that addresses specific site concerns, such as wetlands, watercourses and other sensitive features;
- Storage and treatment of the Water Quality Volume (WQ_v). This is the volume of stormwater runoff from the site that typically contains the highest concentration of sediment and pollutants. In Albany County, this volume equates to the runoff generated by a 1.0-inch rainfall event. The actual volume of runoff to be treated is also based on the amount of impervious cover created at the site. Impervious cover is defined as all impermeable surfaces and includes: paved and gravel road surfaces, paved and gravel parking lots, building structures, paved sidewalks, and other miscellaneous impermeable surfaces. Guidelines for the treatment of the WQ_v involve the creation of sediment basins and wetland areas designed to collect sediment and remove nutrients from the water by vegetative uptake.
- Protection of stream channels from erosion by providing extended stormwater detention (holding back storm flow) for the 1-year, 24-hour storm event. A 1-year storm event is defined as a storm that occurs once a year, on average.
- Protection from flooding through detaining storm flow on site such that the developed conditions of the site do not result in more frequent and/or larger flood events. This also includes protection from extreme events, typically defined as

the 100-year storm event. This is generally accomplished by storing the excess water as determined through hydrologic modeling.

In addition to the above SPDES related requirements, the Town of Clifton Park's Municipal Code includes sections regulating soil disturbance under Chapter 86, Construction and Design Standards and Chapter 208, Town Zoning, under Land Conservation and Site Plan Review and Approval.

Another consideration for the conservation subdivision process and other site plan review procedures is the use of Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management methods.

Low Impact Development, (LID) is a recently developed comprehensive alternative technology for stormwater management and environmental protection that incorporates an advanced philosophy in landscape design and environmental protection. It was pioneered in 1997 by Prince George's County, Maryland to help address the growing economic and environmental limitations of conventional stormwater management practices. LID focuses on how the developed site is planned and designed to minimize hydrological impacts. The goal of LID is to restore important ecological functions in a watershed, such as the hydrologic regime by using site design techniques called integrated management practices (IMP's) that store, infiltrate, evaporate, and detain runoff.

Using LID can result in construction and maintenance costs reduction of 20 % to 30% compared to conventional approaches. Pollutant removal approaches 95%. Property values and sales velocity are significantly enhanced.

LID practices are applicable to new development and the retrofit of homes, neighborhoods, campuses, and business sites. They can be integrated into every part of a residential or commercial site design to create a more hydrologically functional lot. Trees and native vegetation provide for natural storage of rainfall. Permeable pavement, grass swales along roads, rain gardens and amended soils store, filter and infiltrate runoff. Rain barrels and other cisterns provide additional water storage. The design of

each lot can then be incorporated into the larger overall site plan to create a “functional” landscaped neighborhood community within the built environment.

Some management practices that could be incorporated into the final design of new buildings and parking areas could include:

- Bioretention facilities (also known as rain gardens) - Consist of a porous soil covered with a thin layer of mulch and planted with various grasses and shrubs. Runoff from an impervious area is directed into the facility where water infiltrates through plant/mulch/soil providing treatment.
- Dry Wells (also known as infiltration basins) - Consist of a small pit filled with pea-sized gravel or stone. They are used to control runoff from rooftops or pavement.
- Filter/buffer strips and other manufactured landscape areas - Consist of bands of close growing vegetation, usually grasses. They direct water into vegetated detention areas or special sand filters that capture pollutants and gradually discharge water over a period of time.
- Infiltration trenches - Consists of a shallow trench that is backfilled with stone to create an underground reservoir. Stormwater runoff is diverted into the trench and gradually infiltrates into the soil.
- Permeable pavers - Consist of a pavement block containing regularly interspersed void areas, which are filled with pervious materials such as gravel or sod. The gravel or sod acts like a reservoir storing water so that it may be infiltrated.
- Roof Gardens - In addition to government incentives and beautification of the building, the roof garden has been proven to reduce energy costs, extend roof life, and provide excellent stormwater management capabilities. In doing so, the roof garden eliminates toxic runoff from rain and lessens the amount of immediate runoff through absorption and percolation, thereby limiting peak runoff and sewer overflows.

Rain barrels offer similar benefits that could compliment the above, such as: reducing demand for water supply and therefore saving on water rates, reducing flooding by providing temporary storage for rainwater, reducing wet weather sewage overflows, and reducing the amount of pollutants entering water bodies. Although use of rain barrels would require maintenance, the benefits could compliment the already suggested strategies toward stormwater mitigation.

Floodplains

The portion of the floodplains associated with the Mohawk River, Dwaas Kill, Stony Creek, and Alplaus Creek also contains hydric soils and NYSDEC regulated wetlands. Any development that does occur in the 100-year floodplain must adhere to FEMA regulations and to Chapter 119, Flood Damage Prevention, of the Town of Clifton Park's municipal code.

The application of existing FEMA, NYSDEC and Town law regulations regarding floodplains provide protection from flooding on-site and downstream. This, combined with the limited area that is in the 100-year floodplain, effectively limits the potential impacts to the floodplain as a result of development. However, given the importance of floodplains in the process of natural stormwater management, any impact to a floodplain is considered inconsistent with this GEIS. Possible exceptions to this might be a stream crossing necessary to access a parcel or portion thereof, or the installation of outfalls. The Planning Board must be provided with sufficient information on the potential impacts and mitigation for these encroachments to be considered.

Groundwater

Shallow aquifer systems associated with sands overlying finer grain material, such as silt or clay have a greater potential for contamination from development than deep aquifers. Poorly drained soils with high water tables are the most easily impacted by contamination. In the Study Area the following soils are poorly drained and have a high water table (2 feet or less from the ground surface): Madalin, Raynham, Rhinebeck, and Shaker. In these soils, poorly designed or poorly functioning septic systems have the

potential to pollute groundwater. Construction should be kept above the water table to limit potential pollutant sources.

Mitigation measures for construction projects should include the items identified for surface water. Proper drainage control and consideration of the elimination of pollutants, such as salts and pesticides, would decrease the potential for contamination.

The Town might consider the establishment of a Critical Aquifer Recharge Area (CARA) ordinance to protect ground water quality and ensure that sufficient aquifer recharge occurs to maintain the quantities necessary to support ground water's use as a potable water source.

A potential strategy is an overlay zone or Aquifer Protection District to ensure a present and future safe supply of drinking water. The intent is to prohibit land uses which may have the potential to contaminate or down-grade existing and potential ground water supplies.

In addition to any other application requirements, an Aquifer Impact Review could be required, where a professional with special expertise and is familiar with ground water modeling supplies a written aquifer impact assessment. A hydrologic budget may be necessary in certain cases where runoff will be greatly affected by a new subdivision. The budget will present the amount of available water for consumptive use in the event future development of the site is anticipated. Components of a water budget are: Precipitation (P), Runoff (R), Evapotranspiration (ET), and Deep Percolation/Recharge (DP).

Water withdrawals from the sites could affect groundwater recharge in each of the three recharge areas. Therefore, other factors that should be considered when reviewing development plans include the identification of areas that would require excavation below the water table and the identification of land uses that could have the potential to store contaminants on-site.

When potential impacts to groundwater are identified, specific mitigation measures should be employed. These measures could include:

- Slab-on-grade construction in areas of high groundwater,
- Fill systems meeting NYS Department of Health regulations, if standard septic system construction is not feasible in areas of high groundwater,
- Underdrains in appropriate areas to maintain road integrity,
- Verification of groundwater quality and quantity from on-site testing if private water supplies are to be utilized,
- Proper containment for contaminants associated with new development during pre- and post-construction periods, (i.e. containment for above ground tanks and proper design for underground tanks in accordance with NYSDEC standards.

C. ECOLOGY

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The ecology of a given area includes all the biological communities and their interactions. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the ecological communities within the Study area and to identify the potential impacts associated with future development.

The ecology of the Study area is reflective of past and present agricultural practices. As noted in DGEIS Section III.M.(Cultural Resources), the Town of Clifton Park was once prized hunting grounds for native Americans both before and after European contact and settlement. The early conifer forests that dominated the land immediately following glacial retreat provided habitat for many large mammal species including caribu, giant beaver, and the mastadon.

As meteorological conditions warmed, the mixed conifer forest became a spruce climax forest that was less valuable as wildlife habitat. Further warming caused the development of a northern hardwood forest that once again provided habitat for many species and was heavily utilized by Mohawk and Algonquin tribes. Increased contact

with the Europeans resulted in heavy hunting that decimated New York's beaver population.

The Town remained forested throughout the pre- and post Revolutionary War periods when decades of warfare turned the Town into a war path, preventing settlement of the area. Eventually, the Town was settled and logging began, soon followed by farming. Most of the land that was once forested is now cleared and has remained in this condition for two centuries.

The investigation of the natural resources primarily involved a review of relevant literature and mapping to identify natural and cultural communities within the study area. The literature review was supplemented with a roadside field survey to further verify major natural and cultural communities. Resources reviewed as part of the literature review included:

- NYSDEC Natural Heritage Program
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Database
- Ecological Communities of New York State (Edinger 2002)
- Orthophotoquadrangles
- Saratoga County Soil Survey
- National Wetland Inventory mapping
- NYSDEC Freshwater Wetland mapping
- NYS Amphibian and Reptile Atlas
- NYS Breeding Bird Atlas

Existing Community Types & Associated Wildlife

The literature search revealed that there are a number of community types that are likely to occur within the study area. For the purposes of this analysis, the existing features have been generalized as "Agricultural Land," "Developed Land," and "Natural Communities." These communities are illustrated on Figure III-3, III-4, III-5 - General Ecological Communities Map. In addition, Table III-C-1 identifies the land area within each of these general communities.



Western Clifton Park

Generic Environmental Impact Statement



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Planning Community Futures

General Ecological Communities Map Legend

-  Natural Land
-  Agricultural Land
-  Mostly Developed Land
(Mostly Residential)

TOTAL COMMUNITY AREAS:
NATURAL LAND: 7,179± ACRES
AGRICULTURAL LAND: 3,648± ACRES
DEVELOPED LAND: 3,073± ACRES

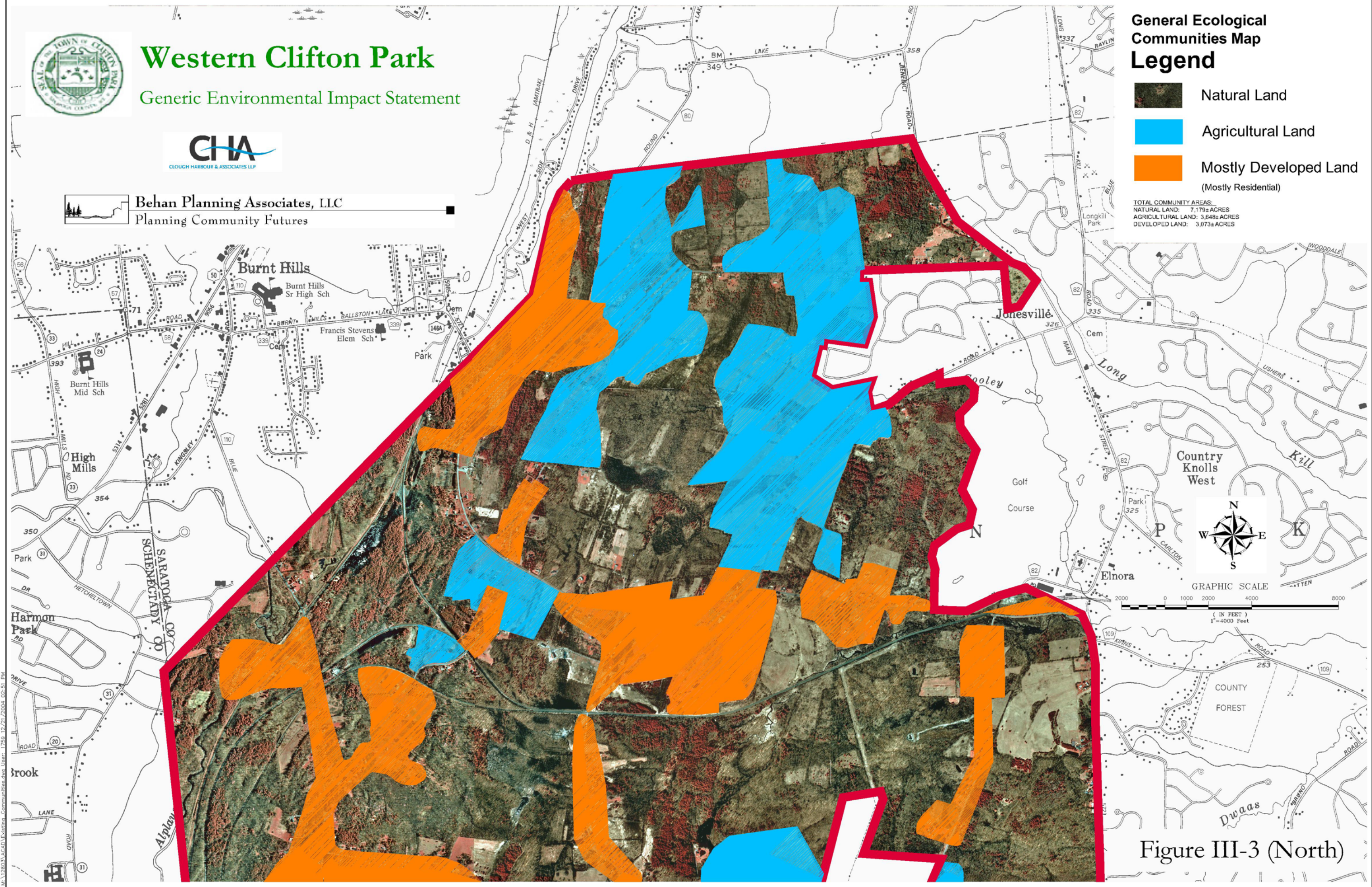
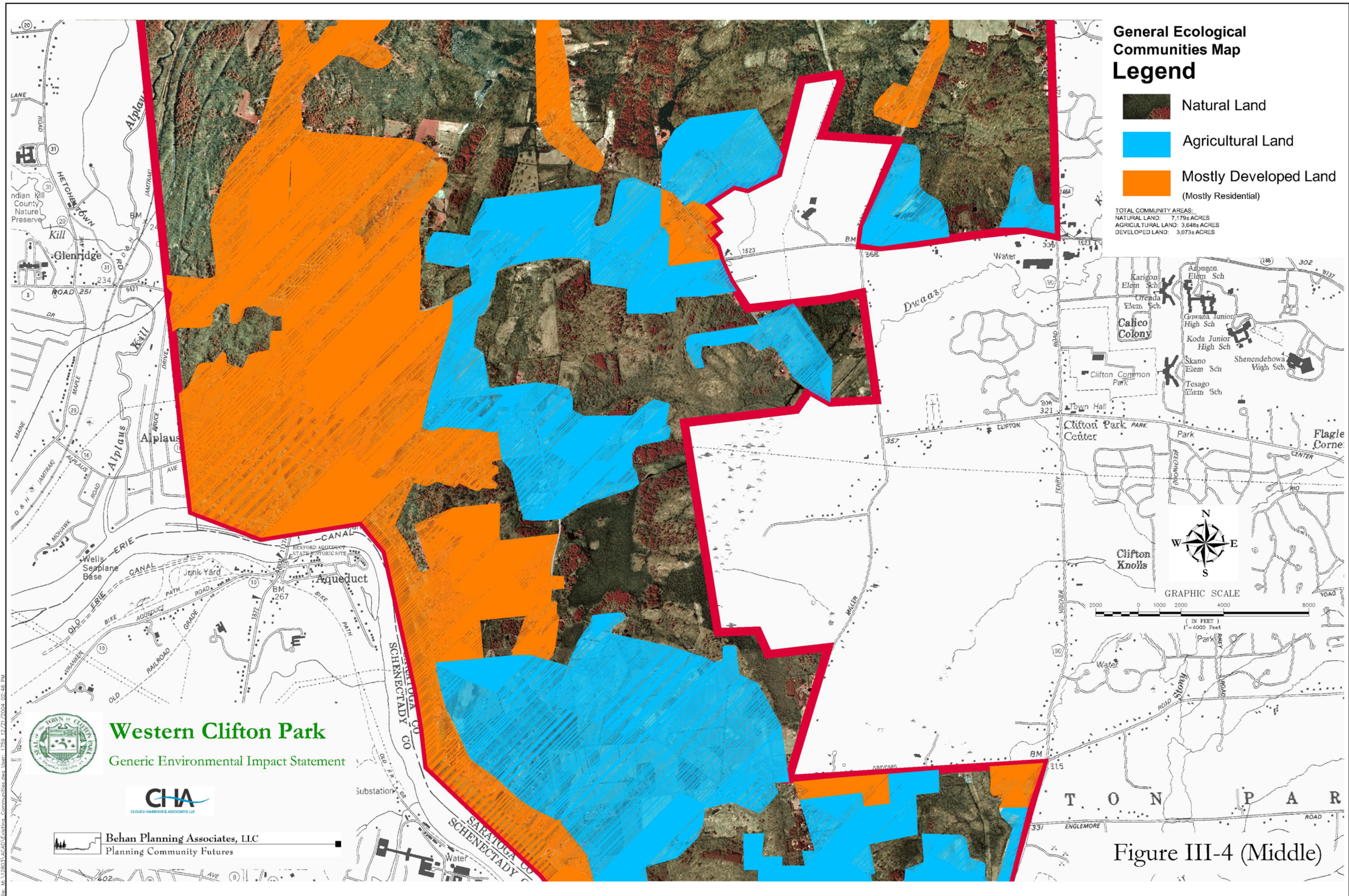


Figure III-3 (North)



General Ecological Communities Map Legend

- Natural Land
- Agricultural Land
- Mostly Developed Land (Mostly Residential)

TOTAL COMMUNITY AREAS:
 NATURAL LAND: 7,179± ACRES
 AGRICULTURAL LAND: 3,648± ACRES
 DEVELOPED LAND: 3,073± ACRES



GRAPHIC SCALE
 2000 0 1000 2000 4000 8000

(IN FEET)
 1"=4000 Feet



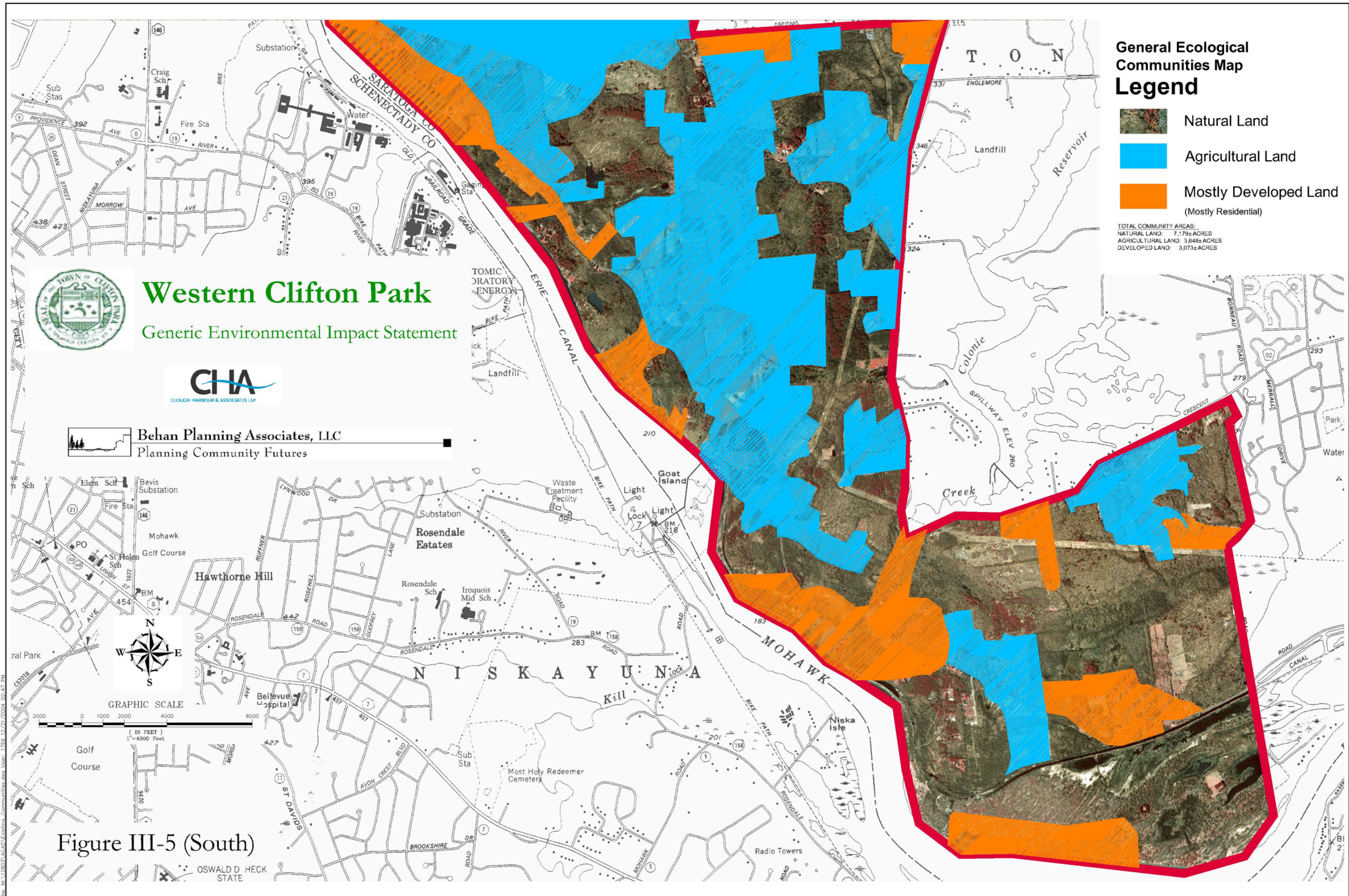
Western Clifton Park
 Generic Environmental Impact Statement



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 Planning Community Futures

Figure III-4 (Middle)

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General Ecological Communities Map Legend

-  Natural Land
-  Agricultural Land
-  Mostly Developed Land
(Mostly Residential)

TOTAL COMMUNITY AREAS:
 NATURAL LAND: 7,179± ACRES
 AGRICULTURAL LAND: 3,648± ACRES
 DEVELOPED LAND: 3,073± ACRES



Western Clifton Park
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GRAPHIC SCALE
 (IN FEET)
 1"=4000 Feet

Figure III-5 (South)

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**Table III-C-1
Vegetative Cover Type**

Cover Type	Area (Acres)
Agricultural Land	3,648
Developed Land	3,073
Natural Land	7,179
Total	13,900

Agricultural Land

The “Agricultural Land” designation represents land that has been manipulated and maintained by human activities primarily for the purposes of growing crops and raising animals. Vegetation of such land predominantly consists of species that have been planted for future harvest. It should be noted that the “Agricultural Areas” illustrated on Figures III-3 through III-5 were indicated as such because the predominant land use of that specific area is of an agricultural nature; however, these areas may contain portions of residential land and/or natural communities.

A variety of wildlife species are typically found utilizing agricultural land due to the abundance of food sources in these areas. Planted crops attract everything from insects to large herbivorous mammals that graze on the planted crops and naturally occurring herbaceous species surrounding the planted areas. *Orchards* provide excellent food and nesting opportunities for a variety of species. A characteristic opportunity associated with orchards is providing nesting cavities for birds such as New York State’s designated bird, the eastern bluebird (*Sialia sialis*). Tree farms also provide valuable nesting and

foraging habitat for many wildlife species. In turn, predators are attracted to these areas due to the abundance of prey species.

In addition to the major communities associated with “Agricultural Land”, minor communities may occur as a result of the structures that are present in these areas. *Interior of barn/agricultural building* is a community described by Edinger that occurs as a result of the construction of buildings associated with agricultural lands. This community provides shelter and foraging opportunities for a variety of wildlife species such as bats, cats, rodents and birds as well as the original intent to provide shelter for livestock.

Appendix E provides a list of wildlife species which have the potential to occur in these communities.

Developed Land

The “Developed Land” designation indicates areas that have been manipulated and maintained for the construction of businesses and residential homes and their maintained lawn areas. In Western Clifton Park, the majority of “Developed Land” is residential. Commercial properties occur at certain major intersections, as identified on DGEIS Figure III-9 (DGEIS Section III.D.).

Typical trees occurring in this community include sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), red oak (*Quercus rubra*), black oak (*Quercus nigra*), paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*), gray birch (*Betula populifolia*), white pine (*Pinus strobus*) and Norway spruce (*Picea abies*). Shrubs typically include common ornamentals such as Canada yew (*Taxus canadensis*) and Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata*) with naturally occurring native shrubs such as dogwood, tatarian honeysuckle and willow (*Salix alba* and *S. nigra*) usually occurring along the periphery of the mowed areas in transitional areas associated with changes in community type. Herbaceous species generally include introduced grasses, common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), English plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), northern bedstraw (*Galium boreale*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*).

A variety of wildlife species occupy residential lands and associated buildings due to an abundance of nesting and denning sites as well as a variety of food sources in close proximity. Ornamental shrubs and mature trees provide excellent nesting, foraging and cover opportunities for numerous songbirds, raptors and mammals. The availability of food in these areas due to bird feeders, berry-producing shrubs and garbage also helps to attract wildlife. Characteristic wildlife species of *mowed lawn with trees* as described by Edinger include gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), American robin (*Turdus migratorius*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*) and mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*). Characteristic wildlife species of *mowed lawn* as described by Edinger include American robin, killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) and the state listed threatened species upland sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*).

Appendix E provides a list of wildlife species that have the potential to occur in this community type.

Natural Land

Natural Land is land that is predominantly undisturbed by human influence and is in a natural state or land that has been previously altered but has since been allowed to naturally revegetate. The Natural Land communities as denoted on Figures III-3, III-4, III-5 indicate areas of open field, shrubland and forested terrestrial and palustrine vegetative communities.

Natural Terrestrial Communities

Natural terrestrial communities are composed of vegetation adapted for life in the upland portions of the study area. Based on resource review, a general understanding of the study area and limited field reconnaissance, natural terrestrial communities identified or which are likely to occur within the study area as described by Edinger (2002) include the following:

- riverside sand/gravel bar,
- successional old field,
- successional shrubland,
- successional northern hardwoods,
- successional southern hardwoods,
- Appalachian oak-hickory forest,
- beech-maple mesic forest,
- hemlock-northern hardwood forest, and
- pine-northern hardwood forest.

The following provides a general description of each community. Lists of characteristic species for each community are provided in Appendix E.

Riverside sand/gravel bar communities occur along or within river channels. This meadow community is likely to be found in association with the Mohawk River or the larger streams of the Study area and the abundance of vegetation is dependant on the deposition rates of sand and gravel. Wildlife likely to be associated with the *Riverside sand/gravel bar* communities of the Study area include waterfowl, songbirds, various shorebirds and water birds, American toad (*Bufo americanus*), Fowlers toad (*Bufo fowleri*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) and other scavenging mammals.

Successional old field is defined by forbs and grasses that occur on sites that have been cleared and plowed (for farming and development), and then abandoned. Shrubs are typically found scattered randomly throughout this community but they occupy less than 50 percent cover.

Numerous wildlife species are likely to occupy this community type due to the abundance of food sources in the form of berry and seed-producing shrubs and herbs, insects and the animals that are attracted to these food sources.

Successional shrubland is a community that occurs on previously cleared land and is composed of at least 50 percent cover by shrubs. This community type is found scattered throughout the Study area. The variety and density of herbaceous species is

dependant on the density of shrub cover. In areas of dense shrub cover the herbaceous layer is usually sparse. In areas of less dense shrub cover, the herbaceous layer is more developed and species are characteristic of the successional old field communities.

Wildlife likely to occupy *successional shrublands* is vast. Most shrubs produce berries which are a critical food source for songbirds, game birds and numerous mammals.

Successional northern hardwoods is described by Edinger as a hardwood or mixed forest that occurs on sites that have been cleared or otherwise disturbed. Tree species in this geographic locale are likely to include aspen, birch, red maple, elm, and pine.

Edinger describes characteristic birds as chestnut-sided warbler, Nashville warbler (*Vermivora ruficapilla*) in young forests with aspen and birch seedlings, and yellow-bellied sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) in mature aspen forests. Ruffed grouse and wild turkey are likely to be observed in this community foraging for aspen seeds and insects.

Successional southern hardwoods is also described by Edinger as a hardwood or mixed forest that occurs on sites that have been cleared or otherwise disturbed. The vegetative species composition differentiates this community from the *successional northern hardwoods* community. Boxelder, silver maple, sassafras, and black locust are some of the dominant species.

Wildlife likely to occupy this community includes chestnut-sided warbler, American robin, gray catbird (*Dumatella carolinensis*) and gray squirrel.

Appalachian oak-hickory forest is described by Edinger as a hardwood forest that occurs on well-drained sites, usually on ridgetops, upper slopes or south- and west-facing slopes. The soil structure is usually loams or sandy loams. Characteristic trees include oaks, hickories, and ash.

Wildlife possibly occurring includes red-bellied woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*), wild turkey, gray squirrel and the NYS listed special concern species, whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*).

Beech-maple mesic forest, as it may occur in this geographic locale, is dominated by American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) and sugar maple. Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), American elm and red maple typically occur as codominants in the transitional areas between this community and wetland areas.

Numerous wildlife species are likely to occur, as described by Edinger. Of these, the Wood turtle (*Clemmys insculpta*), eastern box turtle (*Terrapene c. carolina*), Jefferson salamander complex (*Ambystoma jeffersonianum x laterale*), northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) and sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) are all NYS special concern species that have the potential to nest or occur in this community.

Hemlock-northern hardwood forest is a mixed forest community comprised of eastern hemlock trees with codominant species of hardwoods such as maple and oak. Numerous rare or exploitably vulnerable vegetative species are identified as occurring in this community.

Wildlife species likely to occur in this community include songbirds, game birds such as wild turkey and ruffed grouse and common mammals such as porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*), white-tailed deer and red squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*).

Pine-northern hardwood forest is dominated by white pine and red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) with scattered occurrences of hardwoods such as quaking aspen, birch, and red maple. The NYS exploitably vulnerable star flower (*Trientalis borealis*) and painted trillium (*Trillium undulatum*) can occur within this community type.

Edinger lists pileated woodpecker (*Drycopus pileatus*) as a common associate of this community as well as pine warbler (*Dendroica pinus*).

Natural Palustrine Communities

Natural palustrine communities are composed of vegetation adapted for life in the wetlands of the study area. Based on resource review, a general understanding of the study area and limited field reconnaissance, natural palustrine communities identified or which are likely to occur within the study area as described by Edinger (2002) include the following:

- shallow emergent marsh,
- deep emergent marsh,
- shrub swamp,
- sedge meadow,
- floodplain forest,
- red maple-hardwood swamp,
- vernal pool and hemlock-hardwood swamp.

Descriptions of each of these communities are provided in DGEIS Appendix E. Some of the more common communities within the study area are described as follows:

The *shallow emergent marsh* communities of the study area are wetlands that occur on mineral soils with water depths likely to range from 1” to 3.0’ during flood stages. By mid to late summer the water is likely to drop and the substrate may be exposed. These wetlands are dominated by herbaceous species with shrubs possibly occurring but at less than 50 percent cover. This community type is highly productive when not dominated by invasive species such as purple loosestrife. Many species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians live in or utilize this community including several rare and threatened species

Deep emergent marsh communities are described by Edinger as a wetland community that occurs on mineral soils or fine-grained organic soils (muck or well-decomposed peat); the substrate is flooded by waters that are not subject to violent wave action. Water depths can range from 6 in to 6.6 ft (15 cm to 2 m); water levels may fluctuate seasonally, but the substrate is rarely dry, and there is usually standing water in the fall.

These wetlands are comprised of emergent and floating-leaved vegetation such as cattail and water lily.

Edinger lists red-winged blackbird, marsh wren, bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) and painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta*) as well as rare species such as American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), Virginia rail (*Rallus limicola*), and piedbilled grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) as inhabiting this community type.

Shrub swamp in this geographic locale usually occur on mineral soils or muck and are dominated by shrub species of dogwoods, alders, and willows. Numerous wildlife species utilize this community.

Red maple-hardwood swamp is a forested community that occurs in poorly drained depressions and is typically dominated by red maple with codominants such as green ash, silver maple, yellow birch, American elm and swamp white oak. This community is also very attractive to many wildlife species.

Cultural Palustrine Communities

Cultural palustrine communities consist of wetlands that have been created or modified and sometimes maintained by human activities in such a way that the soil properties, hydrology or biological composition are that of an unnatural state and different than what occurred naturally. Based on resource review, a general understanding of the study area and limited field reconnaissance, cultural palustrine communities identified or which are likely to occur within the study area as described by Edinger (2002) include *reedgrass/purple loosestrife marsh* and *water recharge basin*.

Edinger describes *reedgrass/purple loosestrife marsh* as a marsh that has been disturbed by draining, filling, road salts, etc. in which reedgrass (*Phragmites australis*) or purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) has become dominant. This community is common along highways and railroads. Reedgrass/purple loosestrife marshes are likely to be found throughout the Study area in areas of recent disturbance such as highways, roadways and human influences/manipulated drainage areas.

Wildlife species likely to be encountered in this community include red-winged blackbird, northern leopard frog, green frog, common garter snake, muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*), white-tailed deer and meadow vole.

Water recharge basin is described by Edinger as the aquatic community of a constructed depression near a road or development that receives runoff from paved surfaces and allows the water to percolate through to the groundwater, thereby recharging the groundwater. These basins are intermittently flooded during periods of heavy precipitation.

Waterfowl such as Canada goose and mallard are likely utilize this habitat while it is flooded after storm events. Recharge basins that are flooded for durations long enough during the spring may attract certain reptile and amphibian species listed as characteristic vernal pool breeders because of the similarity of hydrology characteristics of this community and vernal pools.

Rare, Threatened & Endangered Species

Letters of inquiry were sent to the NYSDEC Natural Heritage Program (NHP), and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for information regarding the known occurrence of any rare, state-listed or federally-listed animals or plants, significant natural communities, or other significant habitats within or adjacent to the study area.

A response letter from the New York Natural Heritage Program, dated November 2, 2003, indicated three vegetative species either occurring or likely to occur within the study area. These include side-oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), hoary puccoon (*Lithospermum canescens*) and hooker's orchid (*Platanthera hookeri*).

Side-oats grama is a vascular plant listed as endangered by the NHP. The species is listed with a ranking of G5, S1, indicating that it is globally secure but critically imperiled in New York State because it is either extremely rare or extremely vulnerable to extirpation from New York State due to biological factors. The species was documented in 1932 on the dry banks along the Mohawk River, east of Niskayuna in the Town of Colonie. Habitat of this species in the eastern states includes dry woods and dry open areas where it flowers from August through September.

Hoary puccoon is a vascular plant listed as unprotected by the NHP. The species is listed with a rank of G5, SX, indicating that the species is secure globally but apparently extirpated from New York State with a very low probability of rediscovery. The NHP record of the species is from Jonesville and indicates to check lupine locations. Habitat of the species includes dry or sandy soils in prairies or open woods where it flowers from April to June.

Hooker's orchid is a vascular plant listed as endangered by the NHP. The species is listed with a rank of G5, S1, indicating that it is globally secure but critically imperiled in New York State because it is either extremely rare or extremely vulnerable to extirpation from New York State due to biological factors. The NHP documented occurrence of the species is from 1902 in the Rexford Flats area in the vicinity of the golf course located on River View Road. Hooker's orchid is a woodland species that flowers from June through July.

A response letter from the FWS, dated November 4, 2003, indicated that except for transient individuals, no federally-listed or proposed endangered or threatened species are known to exist in the study area. In addition, no habitat in the project impact area is currently designated or proposed "critical habitat" in accordance with provisions of the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

It should be noted that with the exception of the request letters to NHP and FWS, the study area was not evaluated for the presence of rare, threatened or endangered fish or invertebrates. Other available sources were consulted to determine whether the habitat for rare, threatened or endangered species might occur.

As discussed in the previous section regarding general ecological communities, the publication "Ecological Communities of New York State" (Edinger, 2002) was used to describe general ecological communities. In addition, the publication often lists rare, threatened, or endangered species that can occur within each community type. Whenever this occurred, the species were noted and listed within each community description and in Appendix E.

Species lists and distribution maps provided in the New York State Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Project (1990-1999) were also reviewed for information pertaining to reptile and amphibian species potentially occurring within the study area. This information was further analyzed by identifying habitat requirements of each species to determine if a species could be excluded due to the lack of its known habitat within the Study area. According to this information four herpetofaunal special concern species have been previously identified within the Study area. They include the eastern hognose snake (*Heterodon platirhinos*), wood turtle (*Clemmys insculpta*), eastern box turtle (*Terrapene c. carolina*) and spotted turtle (*Clemmys guttata*). A brief description of the habitat requirements of each species is provided in Appendix E.

The Amphibian and Reptile Atlas was reviewed for areas surrounding the Study area to identify species that have the potential to occur within the Study area due to their documented occurrences nearby. According to this list two additional herpetofaunal species of special concern, Jefferson salamander (*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*) and blue-spotted salamander (*Ambystoma laterale*), were identified as having the potential to occur within the Study area. A brief description of the habitat requirements of each species is provided in Appendix E.

Information pertaining to bird species known to occur within the breeding blocks of the study area was obtained from the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas' 1980-1985 and 2000-2004 list of species. These lists were reviewed to identify any rare, threatened or endangered species that have been previously identified within the study area or its immediate surrounding areas. According to these lists, no endangered species; one threatened species and ten species of special concern have been previously identified within the Study area or in its immediate surrounding areas.

The threatened species is the least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*). Species of special concern include sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), common nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*), whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*), horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris*), grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*), vesper sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*), American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), red-

shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) and northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*). Their habitat requirements are summarized in Appendix E.

Wetlands

The study area consists of silts, silt loam, and clays; the remnants of glacial Lake Albany. The silts and clays are typically somewhat poorly drained to poorly drained, which means that where topography is flat or where depressions occur, water persists. This topography creates ideal conditions for the development of hydric soils (defined in DGEIS Section III.A). Hydric soils are one of the three parameters that define federal wetlands. The other two criteria are vegetation adapted to wet conditions (hydrophytes) and the presence or evidence of water during the growing season (hydrology).

From an ecological perspective, it is generally recognized that if hydric soils are present, the other two parameters are also present. If they are not, then the area has been disturbed and evidence of these wetland parameters has been removed. Wetland mapping for the study area includes mapped State wetlands, National Wetland Inventory mapping and hydric soils that reflect potential federal wetland areas. Since the definition of federal wetlands has no size restriction (unlike the NYS Freshwater Wetlands Act), there are no official maps. National Wetland Inventory Maps (NWI) prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are useful tools in identifying potential wetland areas. However, the Corps of Engineers does not recognize the NWI maps as any type of official mapping.

Federal Wetlands

By virtue of their administrative role in implementing and enforcing Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the 1899 Rivers and Harbors Act, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) has jurisdiction over all waters of the United States, including wetlands. Section 10 waters are defined as navigable or historically navigable.

Within the Study area, the Mohawk River and old Erie Canal are Section 10 navigable waters. The old Erie Canal is considered historically navigable. Wetlands that are adjacent to the Mohawk River and old Erie Canal may also be subject to Section 10 regulations. Other wetlands within the Study area are subject to Section 404 regulations

that are limited to the discharge of dredged or fill materials into federal wetlands and other waters of the U.S. Federally regulated wetlands are defined by USACE as:

“Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas (33CFR 328.3).”

Figures III-6-III-8 provide a representation of potential federal wetland areas. These include the mapped hydric soils, State wetlands and NWI wetlands. The actual identification of federal wetlands and their boundaries requires a wetland delineation, usually conducted on a case by case basis due to the cost and time limitations placed on jurisdictional determinations.

State Wetlands

New York State regulates all wetlands that are 12.4 acres (5 hectare) or greater in size pursuant to the Freshwater Wetlands Act (Article 24 of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) of 1975). These wetlands are mapped and classified by NYSDEC. The State classifications are based on variations in cover type, ecological associations, special features (critical or fragile resources), hydrological and pollution control features, and distribution and location that affect wetland benefits (6 NYCRR 664.5). The highest classification is I, which is afforded the greatest amount of protection and the lowest class is IV.

A 100 foot buffer zone is extended around the wetland boundary perimeter to protect the wetland from encroaching development and other impacts. Any work to occur within the buffer zone or wetland would require a permit from NYSDEC. Figures III-6-III-8 indicate that there are approximately 19 State regulated wetlands within the Study area.

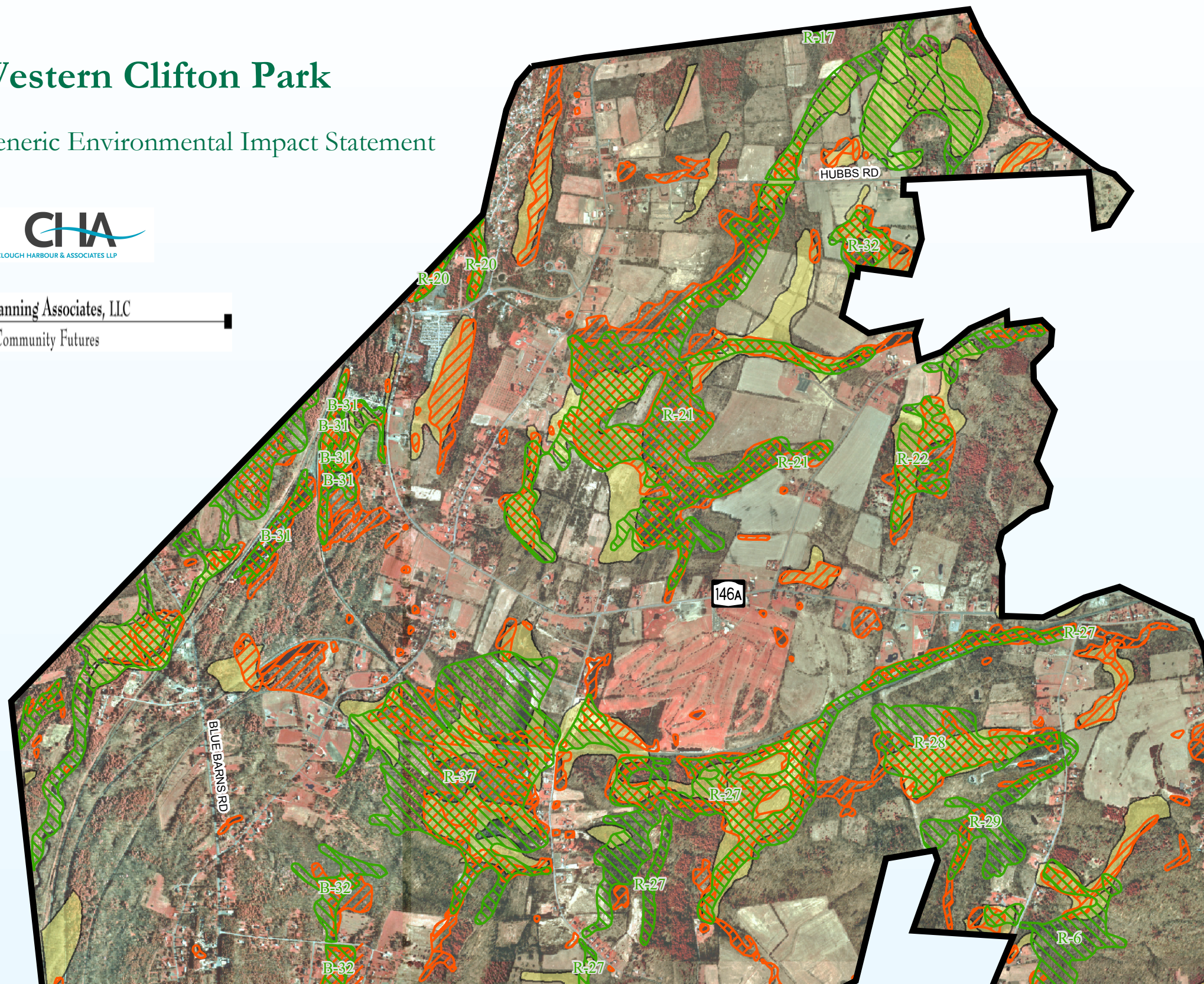


Western Clifton Park

Generic Environmental Impact Statement



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Planning Community Futures



Legend

-  DEC Wetland
-  National Wetland Inventory
-  Hydric Soil

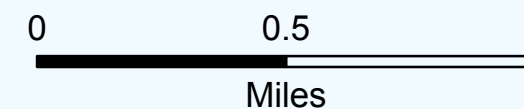
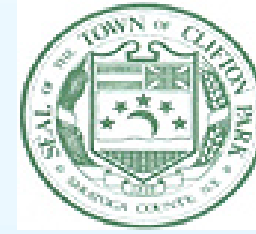
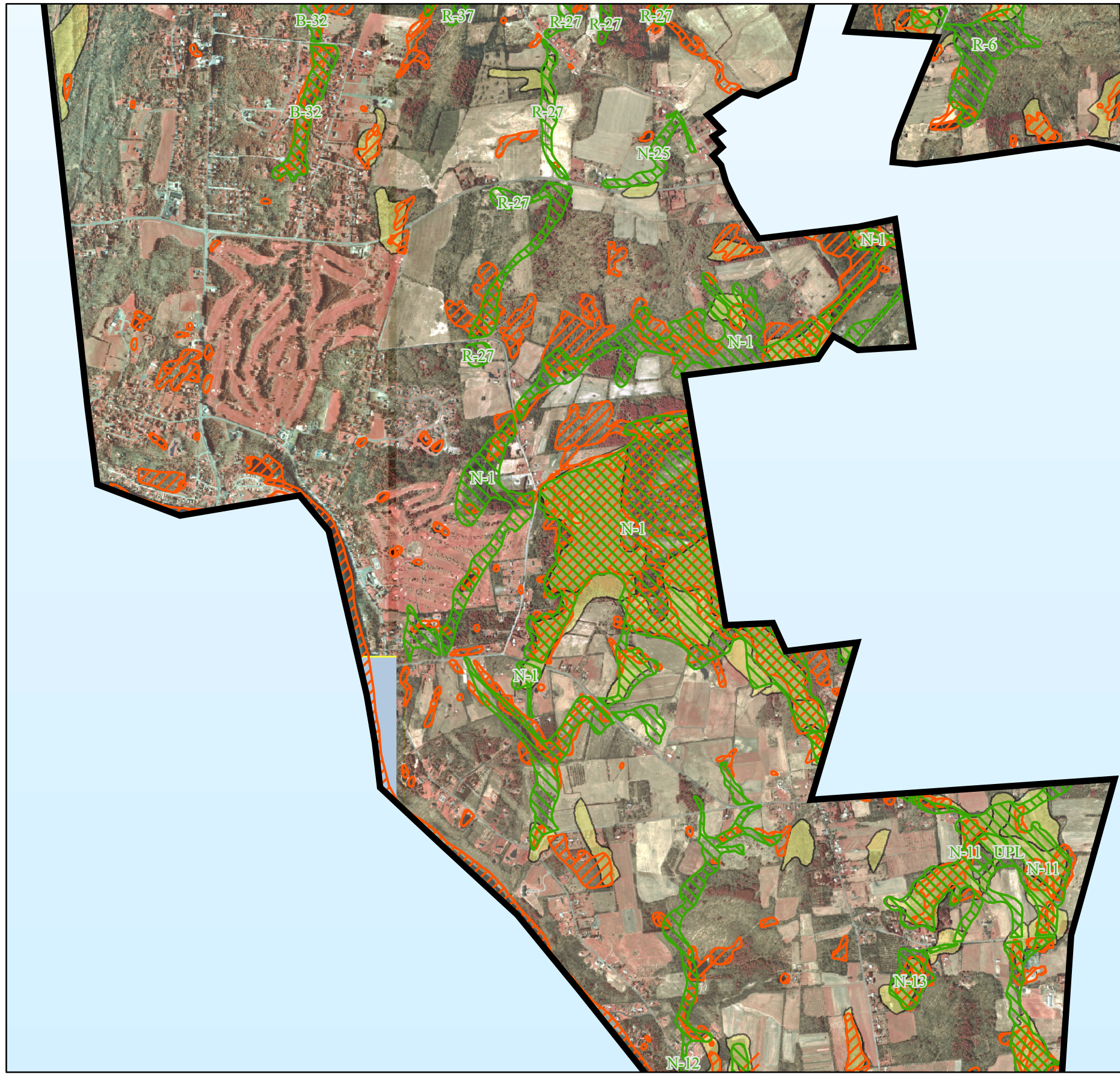


Figure III-6: Wetland (North)



Western Clifton Park

Generic Environmental Impact Statement



Legend

-  DEC Wetland
-  National Wetland Inventory
-  Hydric Soil

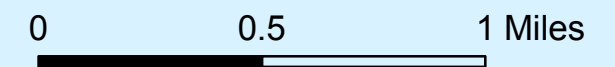
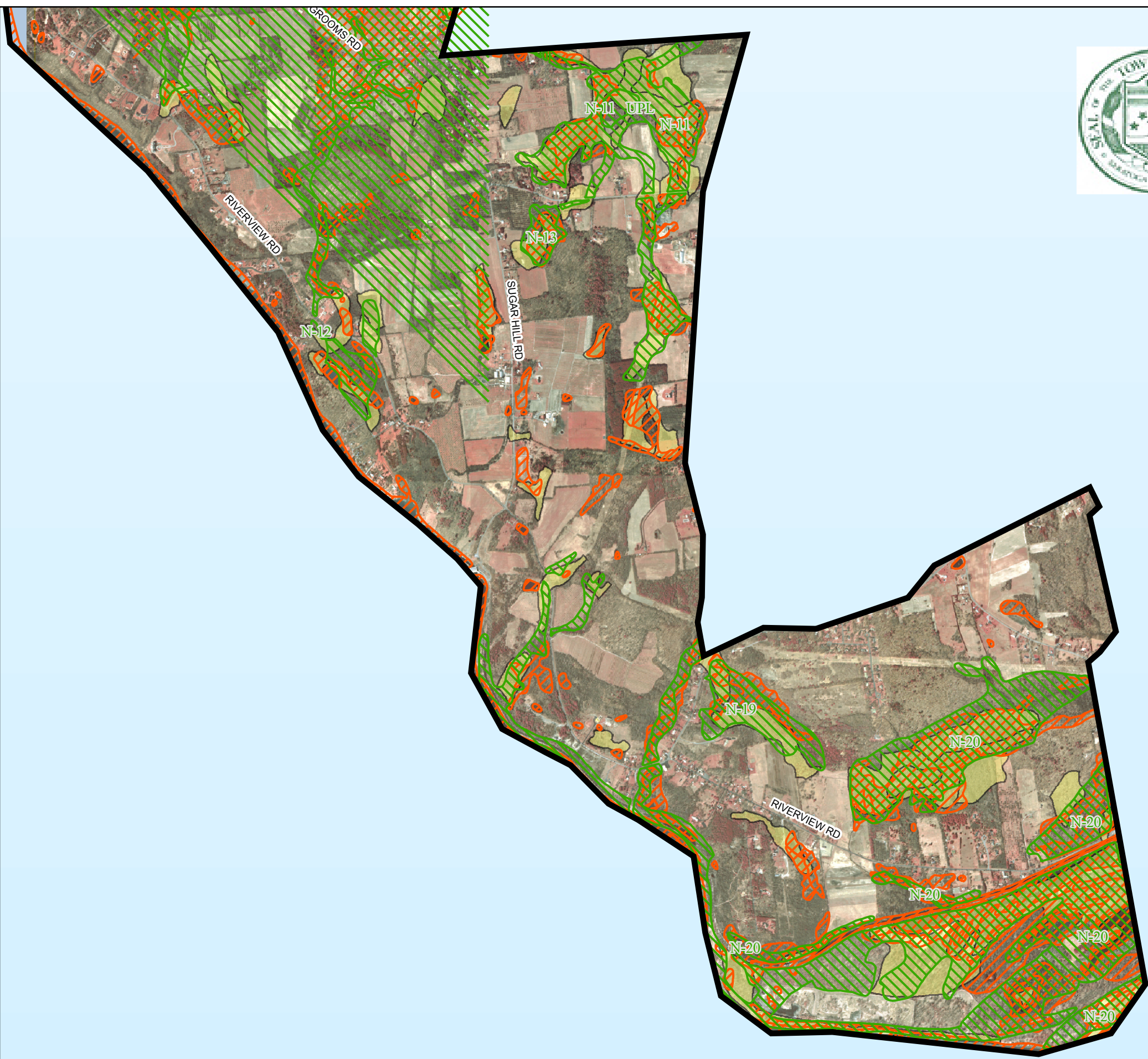


Figure III-7: Wetland (Middle)



Western Clifton Park

Generic Environmental Impact Statement



Legend

-  DEC Wetland
-  National Wetland Inventory
-  Hydric Soil

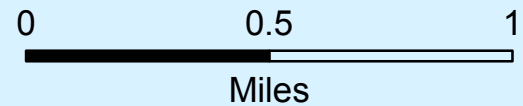


Figure III-8: Wetland (South)

National Wetland Inventory

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has used aerial photography to identify potential wetland areas through a process referred to as photo interpretation. Figures III-6 – III-8 identifies numerous potential wetland areas. The potential for the actual presence of federal wetland increases as the mapping overlap increases; a combination of hydric soils, State wetlands, and NWI wetlands in the same area suggests a high probability of federal wetlands..

The NWI wetlands are classified in accordance with the *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States* (Cowardin et al. 1979). Five major categories are used: marine, estuarine, riverine, lacustrine, and palustrine. Most wetlands within the study area are identified as palustrine, which is defined as “[a]ll nontidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses or lichens...” There are numerous subcategories of palustrine wetlands within the Study area related to the vegetative cover, the most common of which are forested (PFO), scrub-shrub (PSS), emergent (PEM), and open water (POW). This information is very important when identifying the significance of wetland impact. In the absence of any formalized wetland evaluation method acceptable to USACE, forested wetlands are afforded the greatest value due to the length of time necessary to establish these wetland systems. For more information on the other modifiers used in the Cowardin/NWI classification system please refer directly to the NWI map legends provided on the Niskayuna, Schenectady, Burnt Hills, and Round Lake NWI quadrangles. Copies can be viewed at the Saratoga County Planning offices or obtained by contacting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Build-out of the study area under current zoning will have a significant impact on the amount and quality of habitat within the study area. This could include significant loss of wetland, potential impact to the habitat of threatened and endangered species, and the loss of habitat for common wildlife species. It should be noted that the build-out evaluation process excluded mapped wetlands from the developable area, therefore, direct wetland impacts could be limited, even under current zoning. However, indirect

impacts such as loss of buffers, discharge of stormwater, and fragmentation can significantly reduce the viable functions of the wetlands and impair their value.

The availability of wildlife habitat in the Study area has changed over the years due to both natural and anthropogenic processes. As previously mentioned, the Town of Clifton Park was prime habitat and hunting grounds for Native American tribes. Once the area was settled, the habitat was soon eliminated and farming dominated the landscape. This land use practice continues today although significantly fewer farms are active, resulting in more fallow fields that are providing for a diversity of wildlife. This is a regional trend as exemplified by the return of healthy coyote and wild turkey populations, reintroduction of the lynx, and in some areas, the wolf. Moose and black bear are also beginning to move further south. Although this GEIS focuses on the impacts to current conditions, it is important to understand that agricultural uses had a profound impact on forested wildlife habitat, which may have been as significant as the impact of other major land use trends such as suburbanization. This by no means validates the impact from development but suggests that the encouragement of farming (cultivating currently fallow fields and previously uncultivated areas) in the study area would also have an impact on habitat composition.

Vegetative Cover Types & Associated Wildlife Habitat

Build-out under current zoning could impact 6,200 to 7,700 acres of land. This constitutes approximately half of the study area and does not include existing development. Based on the three general community/land use types (agricultural, developed, and natural), most of the impact would be expected to occur within the agricultural and developed land community types. The developed land area includes a mixture of developed, underutilized, and smaller undeveloped parcels, so development opportunities do occur within these areas. The build-out scenario excludes wetlands, which in turn removes a large proportion of the “natural land” community type. This scenario assumes that wetland regulations will remain consistent with today’s regulations and that the development community will respect these regulations.

In addition to the direct impact on ecological communities, there is a much greater potential for indirect impacts under the current zoning scenario. The primary reason for

this is that the zoning calls for specific lot sizes and setbacks. Although provisions for cluster subdivisions exist, it is likely that standard subdivisions will predominate, especially where water and sewer is not available or feasible to extend. This type of development maximizes the developable land, extending lot lines to the project boundaries. Many times, wetland buffers and federal wetlands become a part of backyards; in some instances, quite close to the home. The result is increased potential for water quality impacts, reduced habitat value, increased stormwater runoff, fragmentation of habitat, and the general imposition of humans and human activity within/near wildlife habitat. The tendency is to drive out those species that require large areas of undisturbed land or are generally more shy and cannot cope with human presence. Conversely, those species that thrive off of human activities become more prevalent and are often referred to as nuisance species. Some species that would prefer to be removed from human occupation but have nowhere to go must adapt. They do so by sharing the habitat with humans and again causing damage to property as they forage for food.

Under the Land Conservation Plan, density would be reduced by half and, more importantly, a conservation subdivision process would be required. The conservation subdivision would require a minimum of 50 percent open space and would involve an interactive process between the Town and the applicant to determine what portion of the land should be considered for development and what portion should remain open space. Developed areas would be clustered and by eliminating some of the typical lot regulations found under current zoning, a more environmentally sensitive project can be designed. Based on this approach, it may be possible to limit the impact to ecological communities to approximately 3,000 to 4,000 acres. With a conservation approach to siting development, there is greater opportunity to protect important ecological communities and to lessen the potential for fragmentation.

Mitigation measures identified in this section are intended to become part of the development guidelines for future development in the study area. This mitigation includes both procedures for future evaluation of habitat and specific measures that should be taken.

Site specific mitigation measures include the following:

- Preserve stream corridors and associated wetland to maintain and improve water quality and habitat and to preserve natural buffers between incompatible land uses. A minimum setback of 100 feet from the ordinary high water mark on each side of the stream should be required. This should apply to all mapped streams as identified on USGS 7.5 minute quadrangles (quads for the study area include Niskayuna, Schenectady, Burnt Hills, and Round Lake). The buffer should be natural and no clearing or other maintenance should be allowed. Unmapped streams as identified during on-site investigations should have a minimum setback of 50 feet from the ordinary high water mark. This buffer may be extended to 100 feet if the stream exhibits natural characteristics or other high quality attributes that warrant further protection. This should be at the discretion of the Town. The 50 foot buffer should also be natural and protected from development and maintenance.
- Require all projects to contact both the NYSDEC and the USFWS to request information on rare, threatened and endangered species. Although the DGEIS includes correspondence from these agencies, it must be updated since new information could arise that would change the species list.
- Require all project sites to undergo a habitat resource investigation by a qualified wildlife biologist to be presented to the Town during the process of identifying lands to be included in the minimum 50 percent open space. This DGEIS provides much of the background data in order to perform the analysis. The work must include identification of actual vegetative community types on the site, which can then be compared to those listed in this document. The habitat of any federal or State protected species of plant or animal must be identified.
- Maintain contiguous habitat and open space to prevent habitat fragmentation both internally and between parcels/projects.
- Minimize clearing in forested areas.
- Phase development in order to utilize previously/currently disturbed lands first, leaving natural areas for later phases.
- To the extent practicable, avoid construction in natural areas until denning and nesting are complete and young wildlife are mobile.
- Utilize native vegetation for landscaping and, when possible, specify vegetative

species that produce berries, seeds and nuts that have high wildlife value. This is often referred to as conservation planting.

Wetlands

The impact to federal and State wetlands is contrary to the intent of this GEIS. It is recognized, however, that some impacts may be unavoidable, even with the most environmentally sensitive projects, due to wetland corridors and other protrusions that constrain access. Therefore, for the purpose of establishing an impact threshold, wetland (federal and State) impacts that will require an individual permit will require further SEQR review to determine the significance of the impact. In most cases, this threshold is equivalent to one-half acre of fill. However, by using the individual permit as the threshold rather than a specific acreage, this GEIS recognizes the special circumstances that could lead to an individual permit as a result of the following: potential for changes in future wetland regulations; the current general and regional conditions that, in special cases, require an individual permit regardless of the area of impact; and USACE discretionary authority over projects. Should federal and State wetland regulations change significantly (eg., new federal wetland laws coincident with or replacing Section 404), the threshold established herein should be re-evaluated to be consistent with the new regulations.

Existing wetland regulations will significantly limit the amount of wetland that is disturbed since State and federal regulations require applicants to modify design concepts to avoid wetlands. If this is not possible, the next alternative for consideration is minimization of wetland impacts and mitigation. The likelihood of receiving a permit for impact to a State wetland depends on the quality of the wetland; it is far more difficult to get a permit for a Class I wetland than for a Class III wetland.

Current federal regulations implementing Section 404 of the Clean Water Act authorize the filling of up to one-half acre of non-tidal waters of the U.S. (wetlands, lakes, rivers, streams, ponds). This authorization requires prior notification to USACE when the extent of fill exceeds one-tenth acre. This allows USACE and other reviewing agencies to determine the significance of the impact.

Generally, mitigation is required for wetland impacts involving greater than one-tenth acre. Projects involving impact to greater than one-half acre of wetlands and other waters of the U.S. or impact to greater than 300 lineal feet of stream require authorization as an individual permit. The USACE general and regional conditions also identify instances where an individual permit is required regardless of the amount of impact.

Protection of wetlands would preserve significant open space and habitat and provide crucial linkage between upland and aquatic communities.

Site specific mitigation measures include the following:

- Encourage the preservation of wetland areas and stream corridors through conservation easements and other methods of protection. This would be aided by State and federal regulations, however, easements, deed restrictions and other local controls would compensate for the uncertain future of wetland regulations.
- If wetland and stream impacts are permitted, project sponsors will limit impacts to less significant portions of the wetland and will avoid fragmentation (splitting wetland into parts, isolating the parts through impervious areas and other barriers.)
- Require wetland delineations pursuant to State and federal regulations. The project sponsor will be responsible for confirming the wetland boundaries with USACE and NYSDEC and providing documentation to the Town prior to site plan approval.
- Wetlands and streams will be protected from erosion and sedimentation through the use of temporary and permanent erosion control measures. Such measures may include silt fence, staked hay bales, diversion swales, vegetated mats, and check dams. Limited use of rip-rap can be beneficial in protecting wetlands and streams from stormwater discharges. Further information regarding stormwater management and erosion and sedimentation controls are provided in Sections III.A (Soils) and III.B (Water Resources).
- All non-impacted, federally regulated wetlands should be buffered from development. The magnitude of the buffer should be consistent with the type and quality of the wetland to be preserved, however, a minimum buffer of 50 feet from

the wetland boundary to any impervious surface or septic systems should be provided. The same criteria apply to State wetlands except that the buffer must be 100 feet. All other NYSDEC criteria and permit requirements also apply.

- Require compliance with the special and general conditions of permits issued by USACE or NYSDEC, including conditions of Nationwide Permits, as applicable.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Any impact to threatened or endangered species is considered inconsistent with this DGEIS and should undergo further review to determine the significance of the impact. Based on correspondence with NYSDEC and FWS, two endangered plants (side-oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) and hooker's orchid (*Platanthera hookeri*) may be present in the study area based on historical reports. Additional research revealed other species that may be present depending on the actual vegetative community types occurring on any given site.

The process for site-specific habitat resource investigations was previous identified. Should the habitat for State or federally protected species be identified, further site-specific and species specific investigations will be required to confirm the presence or absence of such species. In most cases, the final determination on impact to protected species will be from NYSDEC.

D. LAND USE AND ZONING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Historically, Clifton Park was a farming landscape and a rural, predominantly natural setting of woodlands, wetlands and wildlife habitat, punctuated by rural roads and regional crossroads. The settling of the Town was influenced by the agricultural economy and settlement patterns of farm families. The evolution of transportation technologies also greatly influenced land use patterns. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1827, the development of the railroad network, and less than 50 years ago, the creation of the Adirondack Northway (I-87) connecting the Capital District and the New York

State Thruway system to Canada, have all contributed to the growth and development of Clifton Park.

The western lands of Clifton Park today are best characterized as exhibiting a predominantly rural character of visible, rolling farm fields and pastures, punctuated by farm houses and barns; individual houses along local, county, and state roads; and a few residential subdivisions, including planned unit developments such as Old Nott Farm.

The Town of Clifton Park has a rich agricultural heritage from its earliest settlement to modern times and was the dominant land use and industry up until about 1950. Today, active farms and orchards, pastures and fields remain significant landscape features intermittent throughout the western portion of the Town. Riverview Road, Sugar Hill Road, Appleton Road, Ashdown Road, Blue Barns Road, Hubbs Road, Tanner Road, Waite Road and Route 146 are a few of the key roads offering an agricultural landscape setting. The core of active farming is in the southern part of the study area from the Grooms Road corridor south to the river.

The historic development patterns in the western half of the Town have been centered on the hamlets of Rexford, Vischer Ferry, and Grooms Corners. Grooms Corners is an historic crossroads with houses, civic buildings, and small businesses close to the intersection of Grooms Road, Miller Road and Sugar Hill Road. Historic Grooms Tavern at Grooms Corners was the site of the first town meeting of the Town of Clifton Park in 1828, more than 175 years ago, and is the focus of a preservation initiative by a partnership between the Town of Clifton Park and the Friends of Grooms Tavern.

In the northern part of town, the historic hamlets of Jonesville and Elnora are located just outside the study area, with distinctive “main street” character amidst residential subdivisions, a golf course, and otherwise rural countryside character and agricultural lands along Hubbs Road and MacElroy Road. The hamlet of Ballston Lake is another settlement of residences and businesses in the furthest northwest corner of the Town and study area.

Outside of the historic hamlets, most development to date has been of agricultural or rural residential patterns: farmsteads with barns and fields and single-family homes located intermittently along rural roads. However, a few residential subdivisions and large lot “estate homes” have been developed as well.

This part of Town has several roads with high scenic value. Riverview Road follows the Mohawk River and the historic Erie Canal (built in 1827) and merges with Grooms Road, which provides some spectacular views towards Niskayuna to the south. The scenic beauty and tremendous history of this Riverview Road corridor earned it recent designation as part of the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway. As part of the open space inventory in 1998, the community recognized that there is a network of scenic roadways throughout the Town. Those in the study area include: Riverview Road, Grooms Road, Appleton Road, Nott Road, Waite Road, the western core of Route 146, Sugar Hill Road, Ray Road, Vischer Ferry Road, Crescent Road, Van Vranken Road, Ballston Lake Road, Eastside Drive and Schauber Road.

The Town’s Trails Advisory Committee has created a scenic tour in and around Rexford – the Rexford Ramble – for pedestrians, bicyclists and motor traffic -- that includes the hamlet of Rexford, Nott Road, Riverview Road, Grooms Road, Droms Road, Sugar Hill Road, Vischer Ferry Road, Crescent Road, and along the Erie Canal Towpath in the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve. The Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve is more than 400 acres at the southern end of Town along the Mohawk River – a state-owned but Town-managed preserve of ecological and historical importance. It is designated by the National Audubon Society as an Important Bird Area.

In addition to bicycling, walking, canoeing, kayaking and skiing in the Study area, other active recreational uses include the Eagle Crest Golf Course in the northern part of town, and Mohawk River Country Club and Edison Club Golf Course in Rexford. The Town of Clifton Park operates the Veterans Memorial Park at Elks Trail on MacElroy Road, which contains softball fields and passive recreation areas.

In addition to the permanently protected Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, several private parcels are under permanent conservation easements held by Saratoga

PLAN (formerly the Land Trust of the Saratoga Region). Areas within some cluster subdivisions have also been donated to the Town and are permanently protected from future development.

As the eastern half of Town becomes closer to build-out, the pressure on the Study area to supply land for additional development is increasing. Water and sewer is being extended to the corporate commerce zone on Route 146 – bringing this infrastructure closer to the study area. Route 146 through Rexford is an important regional connection from Schenectady and Niskayuna into Clifton Park and from Clifton Park to other points in Saratoga County. The Rexford Bridge on Route 146 is a heavily traveled crossing of the Mohawk River for regional commuters.

Other features in the Study area include railroad lines and major utilities. In the southern part of the study area, in a pattern somewhat parallel to the Mohawk River and Riverview Road, are major electric utility power lines (Niagara Mohawk-National Grid) that cut swaths through agricultural land and orchards, woodlands and wetlands. A dam and hydroelectric power plant is located on the river just south of Riverview Road at its intersection with Sugar Hill Road. Rail lines bisect the study area in an east-west direction, south of Route 146A, crossing Waite Road, Ashdown Road, and Blue Barns Road.

DGEIS Figures II-2, II-3, and II-4 illustrate the landscape discussed above.

Comprehensive Plan

The Town's Comprehensive Plan was initially adopted in 1995, undergoing updates in 1997, 1999, 2001 and 2003. The latest revisions identify the study area as Area 2 and recognize the rural character of the area. The plan identifies numerous goals and strategies that apply to the study area including the adoption of an Open Space Plan Overlay Zone, water supply and protection of recharge areas, natural resource protection, and agricultural land protection.

The purpose of an Open Space Plan Overlay Zone is to conserve natural resources and recognize their importance, protect farmland, increase parkland, provide trail linkages and other pathways, and preserve scenic country roads and historic features.

The goals and strategies for utilities include the general goal of providing an adequate potable water supply for all residents. Opportunities to expand the municipal and private water systems are encouraged. Currently, most of the study area is not served by municipal water but rather by individual wells, except for the Rexford Water District.

Natural resource protection goals and strategies focus on the requirement that “all future development be carried out in an ecologically sound manner...” (*Town of Clifton Park Comprehensive Plan* 1995, last amended 2003, p. 11). Some of the measures proposed to implement this goal include expanded use of clustering, use of SEQR in the planning process, using effective erosion control measures, protecting sensitive areas and corridors, and coordinating and cooperating with Town, State and federal environmental agencies.

Agricultural land protection is mentioned numerous times within various goals and strategies. It is recognized as an important component of the Town that provides farm products to the community, is a viable business use, and preserves the rural character of the western portion of Town. The Plan promotes the continued use and encouragement of the Town’s term easement program and proposes the establishment of permanent conservation easements, especially for the Town’s most viable farms.

Many of these goals and strategies can be implemented through the proposed Land Conservation Plan and associated growth management tools expected to result from this SEQR-GEIS process.

Adjacent Municipalities

The study area is bounded by the Town of Ballston (Saratoga County) to the north, the Town of Glenville (Schenectady County) to the west and the Town of Niskayuna, separated from Clifton Park by the Mohawk River, to the southwest.

Major development to the north, in the Town of Ballston, includes primarily residential and supporting commercial and public service development in the hamlet of Burnt Hills.

Major transportation corridors through this area include NYS Route 146A and NYS Route 50. Zoning in this area includes both rural and residential districts. The minimum lot size for rural areas without water and sewer is 80,000 square feet and for areas that have either water or sewer is 40,000 square feet. The minimum lot size for the residential areas is 40,000 square feet without water or sewer hook up and 20,000 square feet for areas that have both water and sewer hook up.

Land use along Clifton Park's border with Glenville consists primarily of low density residential development. The Alplaus Kill flows south to its confluence with the Mohawk River in close proximity to the border. Glenville Road is the primary east-west corridor in this area, extending east to the intersection of Route 146 and Blue Barns Road. Zoning in this area includes mainly Suburban Residential with an area of Land Conservation buffering the Alplaus Kill. The minimum lot size for areas with sewer is 15,000 square feet and without sewer is 20,000 square feet. Other allowed uses include: two family homes, day care centers, home occupations and cemeteries.

Uses along the Town of Niskayuna's border with Clifton Park include the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory, a wastewater treatment facility, a water intake and treatment facility, a capped landfill (Blatnick Park), undeveloped/vacant land, and residential and commercial development to the north near the Rexford Bridge. Some of these uses would normally be considered in conflict with the primarily rural residential development along Riverview Road and Grooms Road in the study area, however, the Mohawk River presents a significant buffer between these uses.

In general, existing land uses and zoning between the various communities do not create any significant land use conflicts, however, each community contains within it a major transportation corridor that links to Route 146 in Clifton Park; the primary corridor for access to the Northway. Significant pass-thru traffic originates in these communities and utilizes the Route 146 to Exit 9 corridor (see DGEIS Section III.H for further discussion of the transportation network). This traffic contributes to that generated within Clifton Park, exacerbating congestion, delay and back-up on intersecting collector roads along

the corridor. Increased traffic increases noise and air pollution and can degrade the quality of life for residents living along Route 146 and adjacent roads.

Zoning

The existing zoning districts (see DGEIS Figure III-9, Existing Zoning) provide options for the future use of the land. Zoning districts within the Study area and allowable uses include:

R-1 Residential – Intended primarily for suburban residential uses and to accommodate relatively dense residential development. Permitted uses generally include agriculture, single-family homes, and “cluster” style residential developments. Minimum lot size is 20,000 square feet (2.17 units per acre) with water and sewer, 40,000 square feet (1.09 units per acre) without water and sewer.

R-2 Residential – Intended primarily for agricultural or exurban residential uses in an area with special or unique characteristics. Permitted uses are similar to R-1. Minimum lot size is 80,000 square feet (0.54 units per acre) with water and sewer, 100,000 square feet (0.44 units per acre) without water and sewer.

R-3 Residential – Intended for agricultural or very low density residential uses that are appropriate with environmentally limiting conditions and that will protect the rural character of those areas. Permitted uses similar to R-1. Minimum lot size is 80,000 square feet (0.54 units per acre) with water and sewer, 100,000 square feet (0.44 units per acre) without water and sewer. If a cluster subdivision is used, the minimum lot size with water and sewer is 20,000 square feet based upon a maximum density of 40,000 square feet per acre of useable land.

B-1 Business Non-retail - Permitted uses generally include offices. Retail uses are not permitted. Maximum building size 4,800 square feet. Minimum 50% greenspace.

B-2 Business Non-retail – Same uses as B-1. No maximum building size. Minimum 50% greenspace.



Western Clifton Park

Generic Environmental Impact Statement



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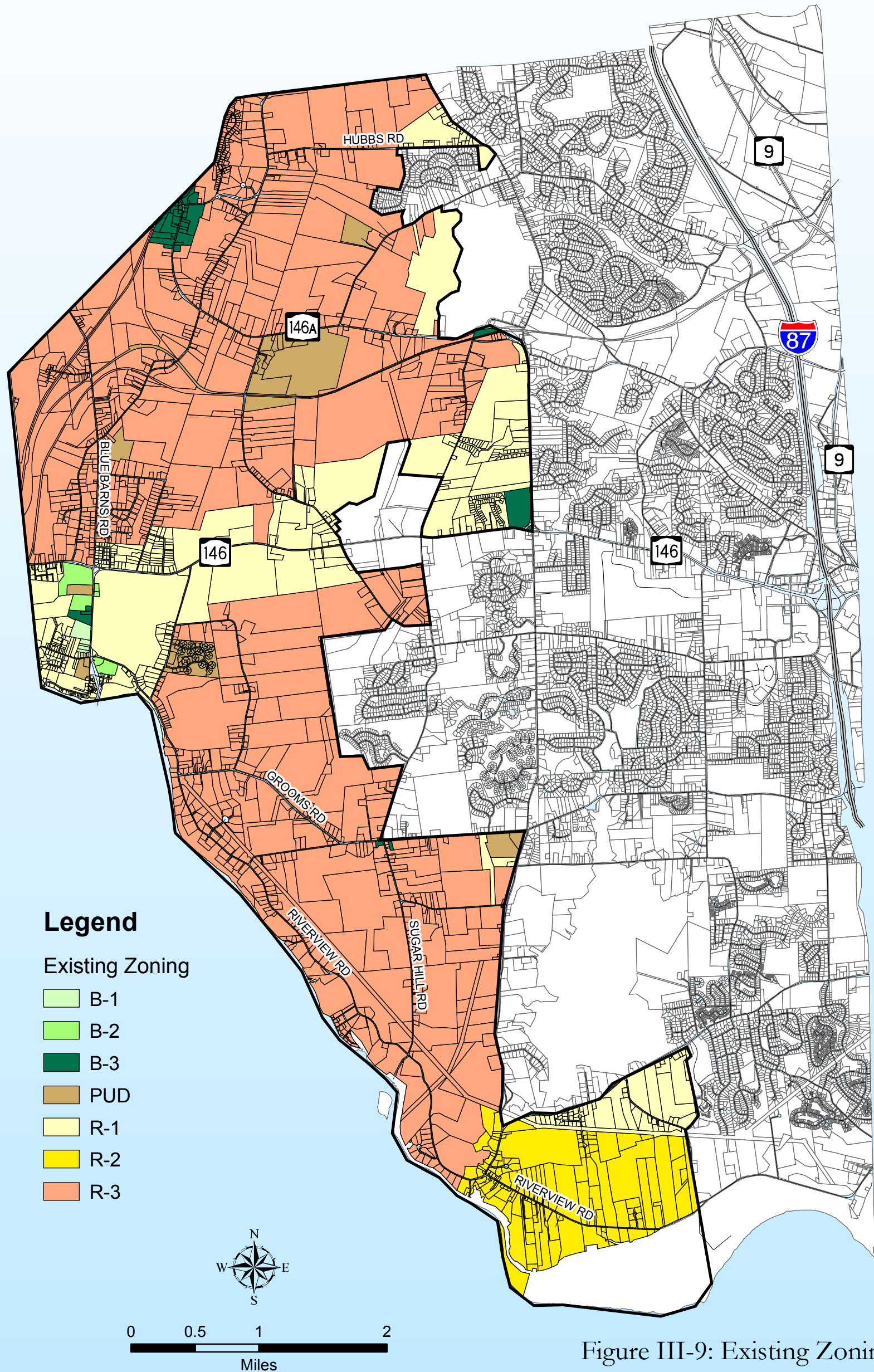


Figure III-9: Existing Zoning

Map Notes: Does not include Land Conservation Zone.

B-3 Neighborhood Business – Permitted uses generally include small retail facilities and uses permitted in the residential and B-1 and B-2 zoning districts. Minimum 35% greenspace.

PUD Planned Unit Development – Permitted uses and densities are dictated by site specific analysis and zoning amendment.

LC Zone – The purpose of this zone is to preserve, protect, and conserve wetlands and streams and their respective regulated adjacent areas. It includes all NYSDEC classified wetlands and mapped streams and associated buffers. Permitted uses include park, residential boat launch, nature preserve, utility work and repairs, and roadway or driveway crossings.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

The potential impacts on land use are evaluated based on build-out of the Town under current zoning. The study area is currently experiencing growth along the Route 146 corridor and in the eastern part of town and is anticipated to continue to spread into the study area. The corridor of lands along Route 146 and Route 146A is zoned for R-1 residential development, while the remainder of the study area is primarily zoned R-3 residential. An area along Riverview Road, including the hamlet of Vischer Ferry, is zoned for R-2 residential development.

An important influence on the future character of the western lands is the Corporate Commerce zone and future development on Route 146 adjacent to the study area. The study area wraps around the Corporate Commerce area and the build-out scenario assumes that sewer will be available within the current sewer district boundary that extends along Route 146 into the study area.

Residential subdivisions that were approved prior to the temporary moratorium are currently under construction within the study area.

Several locations in the study area are zoned for B-1, B-2, and B-3 commercial development, with the largest being the Route 146 corridor due south of the intersection with Blue Barns Road to the intersection with Grooms Road. Other areas include the hamlet of Ballston Lake, Grooms Corners, and the Northwest intersection of Route 146 and Vischer Ferry Road. Commercial growth is expected to continue along Route 146 in Rexford based on proposals submitted prior to the moratorium. A few other individual parcels are zoned commercial in the study area.

While some of the farmlands in Town are in active agricultural districts, receive agricultural assessments, and are enrolled in the Town's temporary agricultural easement or open space easement program, it is anticipated that some of the existing farmlands will be developed in the future. The build-out scenario assumes that all of these lands (minus constraints) will be developed. Where water and sewer is not accessible, conventional low-density patterns of 2- to 3-acre lots would be anticipated for the R-3 zone.

The most important potentially significant adverse impacts of a built-out landscape of conventional or cluster residential development are the loss of the rural character, loss of the agricultural working landscape, and the loss of the scenic qualities. Individual site plans may be created that protect open space and better master planning may result in more connected open space between adjacent subdivisions, however, large-scale imprinting of the landscape with wholesale residential development patterns will result in the cumulative loss of rural community character. Illustrations of conventional development patterns and their impact on the community are provided in the Build-Out Analysis (DGEIS Appendix C).

Residential subdivisions will permanently convert agricultural crop fields, pastures and orchards to non-agricultural uses. Loss of active farmlands and orchards will result in a loss of the contributions of the agricultural economy of sales taxes, local jobs, farm market outlets, and the agri-tourism economy.

The change in character of the study area can also be portrayed through street-level photos. The images provided in the Build-Out Analysis (DGEIS Appendix C) illustrate what can be expected at build-out when driving along what are currently rural roads. Not only will the character of these roads change as a result of increased traffic and associated roadway improvements, but the views of farm fields and wooded lands will also change to suburban residential. The examples provided include the Emerson subdivision on Vischer Ferry Road within the Study area and The Oaks, also on Vischer Ferry Road, but outside the study area. The Emerson subdivision was carved into a wooded area while much of the frontage of The Oaks was farm field.

It is interesting to note that The Oaks is a cluster subdivision, which is intended to preserve more open space. However, unless more emphasis is placed on views from the road corridor, such clusters do little to preserve the rural setting.

Adjacent Municipalities Impacts

The rural character of the study area is not only a resource to Town of Clifton Park residents but also to those in adjacent communities. Many folks from outside the Town come to the Study area for the views and particularly for the farm produce. Orchards in Town are a great attraction in the fall with their combination of high quality fruit and activities for the whole family, which generate crowds on nice fall afternoons.

Suburbanization of the study area will bring with it many of the impacts discussed in this GEIS, including increased noise, stormwater runoff, erosion, and degradation of water quality. The character of lands in Glenville and Ballston, adjacent to the study area, could be impacted by this change. For example, development within the watershed of the Alplaus Kill could increase flooding potential and degrade water quality thus impacting the ecology of the stream and those who use it in the Town of Glenville.

Water quality is also an important issue for the Stony Creek Reservoir. Should development increase significantly in the southern portion of the study area, the potential for degraded water quality would increase. Since the reservoir serves the Town of Colonie, development in the study area could have a direct impact on this community as well.

Increased residential development will increase the demand for goods and services to be in close proximity. Depending on the type of commercial facilities that would be constructed within the study area, residents might seek shopping elsewhere, which could increase traffic within the adjacent communities.

Water and sewer extensions up to municipal boundaries could induce growth in the adjacent communities. Once utilities are in close proximity, it becomes feasible for developers to extend the utilities to serve their prospective projects.

Land Use Mitigation

The Town of Clifton Park has undertaken various planning efforts over the last several years to address growth issues and reduce the impact on land resources. Two of the more significant efforts were the 2003 Comprehensive Plan update and the 2003 Open Space Plan. The Comprehensive Plan update established the Town's goals and strategies to address growth and other town-wide issues. The Open Space Plan identified the Town's open space resources and proposed goals and implementation strategies for land conservation. One of the key elements of the Open Space Plan was community outreach and education that introduced the options for land conservation and began a dialog on what would work best for the Town.

Having undertaken these planning efforts, both Town officials and residents understand the implications of sprawl development. The build-out analysis for the study area revealed the potential impacts of current zoning, emphasizing the need to implement new zoning and growth management tools to achieve the visions expressed in the Comprehensive Plan update and the Open Space Plan. As a result, the Land Conservation Plan was developed (DGEIS Appendix D).

The Land Conservation Plan is based on two primary goals: reduction of density and preservation of rural character. To achieve these goals, a comprehensive growth management approach was taken that employs both regulatory and incentive based tools.

DENSITY

The build-out results clearly indicated that the potential development density under current zoning is too high; therefore, new zoning requires a reduction of density. Density reductions had to be balanced with a third goal, to respect the rights and investment of long-standing land owners. Since the majority of residentially zoned land within the study area is currently zoned R-3 and water and sewer are not available, a 3-acre average density across the study area seemed appropriate.

The impact of this change in density is most significant within the currently zoned R-1 districts along Route 146 and 146A (DGEIS Figure III-9). Most of these areas do not have water and sewer and would not be eligible for the R-1 minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet unless the utilities were extended. The new zoning will provide much greater flexibility in layout than is currently possible. By refocusing development thresholds in terms of density rather than minimum lot size, it is possible to achieve more creative projects. Recognizing that some parcels may be more conducive to development than others with regard site capacity and the concerns related to rural character, amenity zoning is proposed that would allow an increase in density on a given site providing the overall density of the study area is balanced. Essentially, this would provide a developer with the opportunity to transfer development rights from an important open space parcel (defined by Town goals, Open Space Committee input, and a willing seller) to a parcel that is more conducive to development. To be fair, this option would apply across the board. However, the Town would have discretion as to the appropriateness of the transfer of development rights based on such criteria as impact to rural character and other issues addressed in this DGEIS and the open space value of the preserved parcel.

By applying the 3-acre density to developable land within the study area, density was cut in half from approximately 5,000 single-family homes under current zoning to approximately 2,500 homes under the proposed Conservation Residential (CR) zone. Since this density can be achieved through regulatory means, it was considered the most reasonable growth scenario to use for evaluating traffic and other technical issues.

However, further reductions in density are recommended and encouraged through implementation of the Town's Open Space Plan. DGEIS Figure II-5 advances the work

of the Open Space Plan by identifying key parcels that may be considered for preservation. This a completely voluntary and incentive based plan that provides opportunities for the purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights via amenity zoning, and acquisition. The primary goal is to establish permanent easements on the identified parcels to prevent further development. In exchange for the easement, the landowner is compensated for the lost development rights. The land remains in private ownership and can be utilized for agricultural and open space purposes and can also be sold. The easement remains in perpetuity with the land.

The Open Space Plan is currently being implemented through the efforts of the Open Space Plan Implementation Committee. This volunteer group is continuing discussions with landowners and seeking funding. Priority parcels include viable farms, primarily within the southern portion of the Town, especially those currently under the Town's term easement program.

RURAL CHARACTER

The preservation of rural character can be addressed through design using a conservation/resource based approach. Modifications to both zoning and subdivision regulations are necessary to establish flexibility and promote creative design. As previously discussed, the proposed CR zone will be based on a 3-acre average density. The density is based on what would be considered the developable portions of the land, unconstrained by wetlands, streams, steep slopes, etc. This is consistent with how the 3-acre density was applied in the build-out model.

Clustering will be required in the CR zone, which will prevent carving lots into 3-acre parcels and allow for more meaningful open space. Minimum lot size will depend on the availability of water and sewer. Bulk regulations will be replaced or supplemented by development guidelines intended to assist the developer and Planning Board in determining appropriate lot configurations.

The subdivision regulations will be revised to include conservation subdivisions. This is a refined form of clustering that is based on the conservation of important land resources. The subdivision process begins with the identification of site features. A site features

map is submitted to the Planning Board and a collaborative process between the developer and the Planning Board begins to identify the most appropriate areas for development and open space.

A conservation subdivision will require a provision for 50 percent open space. There are many purposes for providing this open space. At a broad planning level, the primary purpose is to protect rural character, especially as it is experienced from adjacent roadways. Therefore, it is primarily an issue of visual impact. However, once site-specific analysis is conducted there may be important habitat, wetland impacts, flood damage prevention, linkages and other issues that will help to dictate the location of the open space. Unlike the density requirement, the open space requirement can include constrained lands.

The disposition of open space within developments can be addressed several ways. A common method is to maintain the land through a homeowners association. Another option would be to create a homestead lot whereby one of the subdivision lots would include all of the open space land and would remain in private ownership. A permanent deed restriction or easement would be placed on the land that would preclude any further subdivision or any use beyond that specified by zoning. If the land is currently used for agriculture and the landowner wishes to continue this use, it would be permitted. All other open space would be required to remain in its natural condition. Unlike the homeowners association scenario, public use of the open space in private ownership would be at the discretion of the land owner.

Open space might also be acquired by the Town or land conservancy (third party) if it is deemed significant or if a specific use is intended, for example as a buffer to a Town trail. This DGEIS identifies stream and other natural corridors that can be considered when addressing development proposals. Opportunities to piece portions of these corridors together through the development planning process could be beneficial.

Details of the proposed zoning are included in DGEIS Appendix G and proposed development guidelines are provided in DGEIS Appendix F.

HAMLET ZONING

Hamlets within and adjacent to the study area provide opportunities to recreate the traditional rural patterns of development when hamlets were the focal points of the agrarian landscape, providing housing and goods and services. As suburbanization has expanded, these communities have often lost their focus and have been impacted by increased traffic and loss of their traditional boundaries. However, these communities still offer amenities and housing options that are desirable. They can often be redefined to enhance their qualities and once again provide a focal point. The role of hamlets in western Clifton Park can be an important one. Most of the available commercial land within the study area occurs within the hamlets of Rexford and Ballston Lake. There may be significant opportunity to focus development within the hamlets in a manner that respects and enhances the hamlet style. This is of particular importance to the control of commercial uses since current zoning would permit shopping centers and other “big box” facilities that would be inconsistent with the hamlets and rural surroundings. Build-out of the commercially zoned land would generate significant traffic. Therefore, all commercially zoned land should be rezoned to Hamlet Mixed Use (HM).

The HM zone calls for a maximum density of 4,000 gross square feet (gsf) of office per acre and 2,000 gsf of retail per acre. This is half of the current maximum density, resulting in a potential build-out of 715,000 gsf of office and 125,000 gsf of retail. The intent of the HM zone is not to increase open space. Rather, the reduced density will provide for a more reasonable scale of development to fit the hamlet setting and significantly reduce potential traffic impact. Hamlet design guidelines are provided in DGEIS Appendix F to establish interim guidance. However, a concept plan based on community input (especially the input of those living in the existing hamlet) is recommended to provide clear illustrations of design concepts and architectural themes. The mixed use zone is recommended instead of a pure commercial zone to provide flexibility, increased housing opportunities, and potentially higher value projects.

Opportunity to increase the density of both commercial and residential development within the HM zone should be considered in order to create a more viable, walkable hamlet community. As with the amenity zoning proposed for the CR zone, density increases should be balanced with land preservation elsewhere. Since all of the land

within the designated land preservation areas are zoned residential (current and proposed), equating residential development rights with commercial density presents a challenge. The primary issue of concern with hamlet development is not rural character but rather the impact of increased traffic on the road network. One of the primary reasons for decreasing the density within the commercially zoned portions of the study area was to decrease the traffic impact.

One method of equating residential and commercial density is through trip generation. Table III-D-1 below identifies trip generation rates for the three major uses.

**Table III-D-1
Trip Generation Rates**

Use	Trips
Office	1.48 trips/1000 gsf
Retail	2.86 trips/1000 gsf
Residential	1.02 trips/unit

Based on DGEIS Table III-2, a project on a one-acre parcel that proposed 50 percent building lot coverage at two stories with a series of shops at street level and offices above would generate approximately 43,560 gsf of building. The proposed HM zone allows only 2,000 gsf of retail per acre or 4,000 gsf of office per acre. Therefore, the total additional square footage requested would be 19,780 gsf retail and 17,780 gsf office. This equates to approximately 83 additional peak hour trips. Based on the residential trip rate of 1.02 trips/unit, it would be necessary for this project to purchase the development rights of approximately 81 residential units. At an average density of one unit per 3 acres, this would equate to 243 acres of unconstrained (developable) land. Those units must come from Town-identified open space parcels within the study area.

Due to the anticipated cost of purchasing development rights, this scenario does not provide a sufficient incentive for a developer to consider hamlet-style development. The result could be several wide-spread offices and shops that would cater more to a suburban residential environment than the hamlet and rural character envisioned for the study area. Therefore, it is recommended that the incentive be enhanced as provided in Table III-D-2 (see also “Draft Open Space Incentive Zoning” – Appendix G).

Table III-D-2
Proposed HM Incentives

Proposed Use	Density increase	Amenity land required
Office	1,000 sf	2 acres unconstrained land
Retail	1,000 sf	4 acres unconstrained land
Two-family, semi-detached, and multi-family	1 unit	2 acres unconstrained land

Based on the same development scenario discussed for the trip generation example, this alternative approach to calculating incentives would require the purchase of 38 residential lots or 115 acres of unconstrained land.

Recognizing that traffic is not balanced by this approach, the Town should monitor traffic increases and perhaps more aggressively implement land preservation initiatives (purchase of development rights) to compensate for the traffic increase. It may be that the type of commercial uses in the HM Zone will not generate the traffic anticipated in Table III-3. The intent of the HM Zone is to serve the study area and not act as a town-wide or regional draw.

Hamlet Residential (HR) zoning is proposed for those undeveloped, residentially zoned lands within the Rexford Hamlet. The intent of this zoning is to prevent impacts to the character of the developed Rexford Hamlet. The proposed zoning keeps the 3-acre density proposed under the CR zone but could allow for higher densities per parcel that are carefully planned and consistent with existing patterns of development within the hamlet. Amenity zoning would once again be employed to balance the overall density of the study area.

EXISTING HAMLETS

Four hamlets occur within the study area. They include Vischer Ferry, Rexford, Grooms Corners, and Ballston Lake. Hamlets just outside of the study area include Jonesville and Elnora. Of these areas, Vischer Ferry and Grooms Corners should probably not be considered for further development since both are historic hamlets with little room for expansion. Ballston Lake contains commercially zoned land that is proposed to be rezoned to HM, as previously discussed.

Hamlets outside the study area provide additional opportunities to act as centers for growth in exchange for land conservation elsewhere. These areas have not been studied as part of this GEIS process and would require further consideration to identify development potential, issues to be corrected, opportunities for enhancement, and visioning.

Through the future identification of growth areas, such as hamlets, the Town could consider establishing true transfer of development rights to conserve open space. Open space parcels identified on the Land Conservation Plan (DGEIS Figure II-5) would become “sending zones” (where development rights would be removed) and the growth areas would be the “receiving zones” (where the development rights end up).

E. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES & OPEN SPACE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Agricultural resources within the Town have been inventoried and evaluated as part of the Town’s Open Space Plan (adopted 2003). The purpose of this section of the DGEIS is to summarize the results of the Open Space Plan and to implement the plan by recognizing the importance of the Town’s open space resources and requiring that these resources be thoroughly evaluated on a site specific basis as future development is proposed.

The Open Space Plan defines open space as “...farmland, woodland, and other ecological, recreational, and scenic land that helps to define the character of a community, and buffers residential and other land uses” (Part 5-12). The primary focus of this section is agriculture. Other open space resources such as ecologically important areas and recreational and visual resources are discussed separately. The goals and concepts expressed in the Open Space Plan for each of those resources will be discussed in their respective sections.

Agricultural resources throughout the State are dwindling as a result of many economic reasons. Still, New York ranks third in the nation for the production of dairy products. Most agricultural activity in Saratoga County occurs in the towns of northumberland, Saratoga, Stillwater, Charlton, and Ballston. Farming in Clifton Park has been heavily impacted by suburbanization, with the western portion of Town still holding on to its rural character. DGEIS Figure III- 10 (Agricultural Resources Map) identifies those parcels that are receiving an agricultural exemption for the purposes of tax assessment and those that are currently enrolled in the Town's term easement program.

Saratoga County Agricultural District No. 6 was formed in 1994 by certain landowners within the Town of Clifton Park (mostly within the study area). The district was originally comprised of 146 lots consisting of 3,186 acres of land (Behan Planning 2003; Saratoga County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board 1997). Most of these properties occur in the southern portion of the study area, although a few parcels occur to the north.

The Agricultural Districts Law (Article 25AA of the Agriculture and Markets Law) provides for the establishment of Agricultural Districts to protect farmland and farm businesses. Some of these protections address unreasonable local regulation, eminent domain, and advancement of public funds. The law was supplemented in 1992 by the Agricultural Protection Act that introduced right-to-farm protection, disclosure requirements for real estate transfers, and the creation of agricultural and farmland protection programs, among other provisions.

Despite tax incentives and the protections afforded by the law, farmland continues to disappear. Today the total land area included in the agricultural district and taking the agricultural exemption (viable active farms) is 1,622 acres (DGEIS Figure III-10), a loss of 1,564 acres or almost 50 percent since 1994. Some of this loss can be attributed to the Town's enactment of the Conservation Easements Law that offered term easements for those landowners willing to keep their land in agriculture, open space, or as an historic resource. For those willing to encumber their land for a period of time, the conservation easement provided a greater incentive.

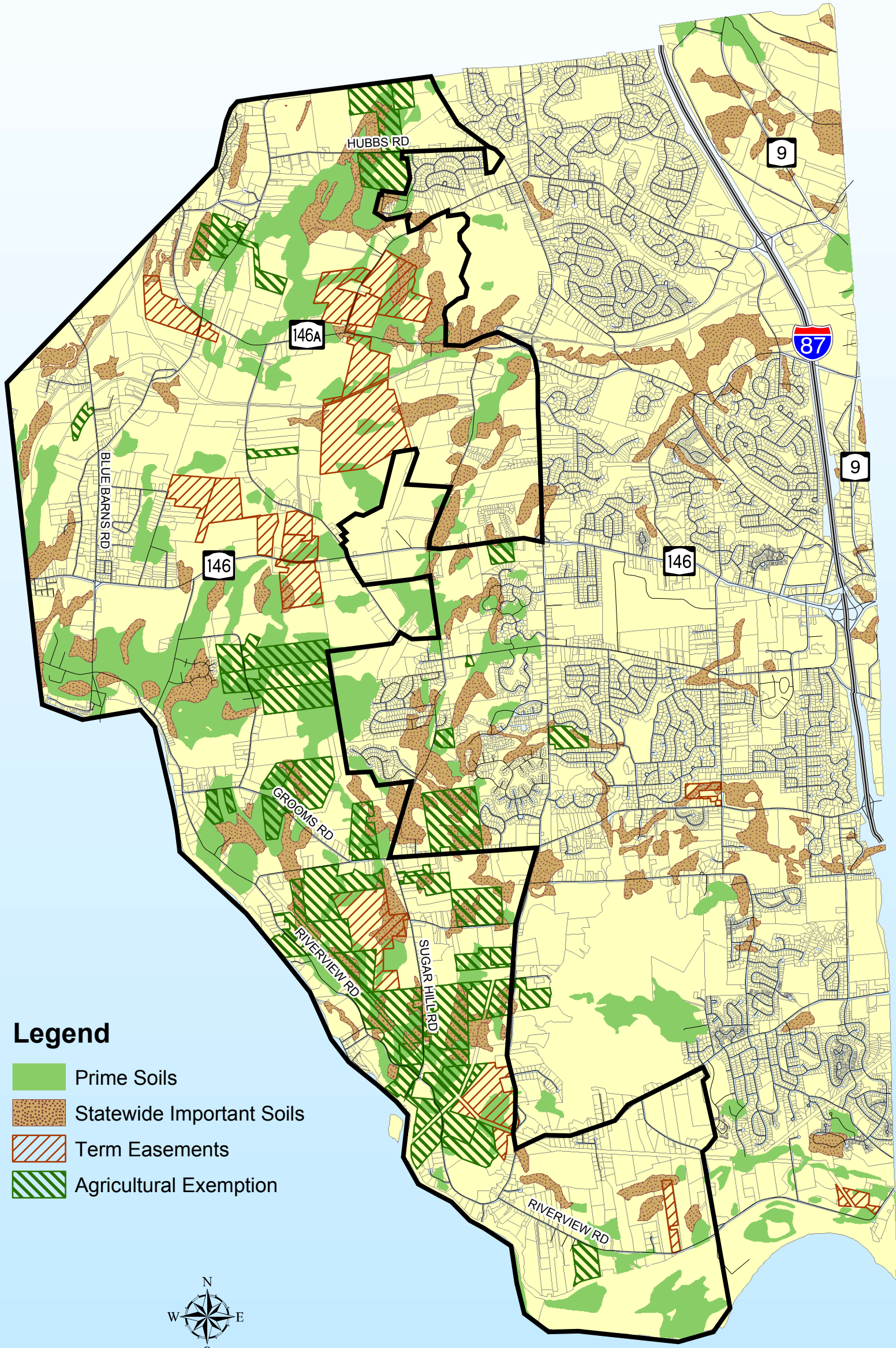


Western Clifton Park

Generic Environmental Impact Statement



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Legend

- Prime Soils
- Statewide Important Soils
- Term Easements
- Agricultural Exemption

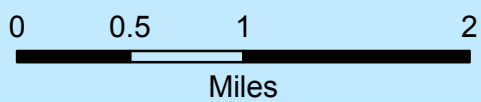


Figure III-10: Agricultural Resources

Term easements are tax-abatement mechanisms that allow a community to provide a landowner with relief from a portion of their taxes providing the landowner places an easement on the property for a given period of time. Clifton Park's conservation easement program requires a minimum lot size of 15 acres (except for the historic easement) to be considered eligible for the easement and further requires a minimum term of 15 years. To date, there are approximately 1,125 acres of land under the conservation easement program. Not all of this land is in active agriculture.

The Town also prepared an Open Space Plan (adopted 2003) that is partly the subject of this SEQR process. The Land Conservation Plan incorporated the recommendations of the Open Space Plan and further refined the mapping. Key recommendations of the Open Space Plan include the following:

- Establish permanent conservation easements with willing landowners, focusing first on active farmland with temporary easements (term easements, agricultural assessments).
- Work with each willing farmland owner to identify a fair appraisal and address estate planning needs.
- Establish a partnership with state and federal programs for permanent easements.
- Protect those parcels that are most highly valued by the community.

The last recommendation is based on the establishment of farmland protection priorities. They include:

- Farms with prime and statewide important soils,
- Farms with scenic or historic significance,
- Farms with significant environmental/ecological features,
- Farms incorporating sound environmental management practices,
- Farms under pressure for development, and
- Farms that are part of contiguous agricultural lands/operations.

Based on the above recommendations and criteria, the focus of agricultural land

conservation is the study area. Implementation of the plan calls for the evaluation of farmer's interests and priorities in a permanent easement program through a farmer-specific survey and other outreach, offering the opportunity to participate in a permanent conservation easement program, encouraging participation in Saratoga County's agricultural economic development assistance programs, reviewing the Town's existing conservation easement law to make clear enforcement policy, and ensuring administration mechanisms are in place.

Finally, the plan presents a land conservation goal for farmland of 300 to 600 acres in the next 2-5 years. This work is underway in the Town thanks, in large part, to the continuing efforts of the Open Space Committee.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Current zoning and land use policies in the Town coupled with or without the potential for the extension of water and sewer services have set the stage for the elimination of agriculture as a viable use in the study area. This potential impact was identified during the build-out analysis and was determined by the Town Board and residents to be unacceptable. Therefore, measures to mitigate the potential loss of agricultural land were investigated in the form of a new plan and zoning for the study area (DGEIS Section II).

The primary means of conserving agricultural resources is the implementation of the Town's Open Space Plan. This process has already begun with the continued efforts of the Open Space Committee to reach out to interested farmland owners in partnership with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the American Farmland Trust.

The Land Resources Map (Proposed Land Conservation Plan Recommendations, DGEIS Appendix D) identifies important farmland parcels within the study area, which is a refinement of the Open Space Concept Plan (Open Space Plan).

The Proposed Land Conservation Plan Recommendations call for a combined regulatory and incentive-based approach to land conservation. This is explained in great detail in DGEIS Section III.D and Appendix D). Relative to farmland protection, the regulatory approach includes amenity zoning that would allow for an increase in development potential in exchange for the purchase of development rights by the developer. This is a form of transfer of development rights that can be written into the new zoning. This potential would apply to all proposed zoning but would be subject to Planning Board or Town Board review and discretion.

All new residential zoning, outside of the hamlets, would be required to design a conservation subdivision whereby important land features are identified and site layout is accomplished in such a manner to conserve open space. A minimum of 50 percent common open space is recommended. Depending on the size of the project area, this approach could allow continued farming on the remaining open space.

This aspect of the Land Conservation Plan Recommendations is primarily intended to address rural character, especially from a visual perspective from adjacent roads. The purchase of agricultural conservation easements (PACE), also known as the purchase of development rights, remains the primary recommendation for farmland protection.

The PACE program provides a community with the opportunity to enter into a voluntary legal agreement with a landowner to permanently restrict the use and development of the property in exchange for financial compensation. This compensation generally equates to the difference between the appraised value of the land if subdivided per current zoning and the value if development is restricted. The process of arriving at the appropriate compensation requires close contact with the land owner to create the best plan for everyone.

Funding for PACE can come from municipalities, counties, and state and federal grants. Currently, the primary funding source for Clifton Park is a matching grant from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. This is a competitive grant requiring the municipality to match the grant amount. Several communities in Western NY and along the Hudson River Valley have bonded significant funds for land conservation. One of

the reasons for purchasing development rights in this manner is the ability to have a meaningful impact on land conservation and a future beneficial impact to the taxes. In numerous cases, the results of a fiscal model analysis revealed that overall taxes would be less if land is preserved rather than developed with homes. This is particularly true for school taxes, which tend to be the most significant component of property taxes.

Fiscal impacts are discussed in DGEIS Section III.N.

F. RECREATION RESOURCES & TRAILS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

RECREATION

Recreational facilities are typically categorized as active and passive. Active recreation requires formal spaces and equipment and include such facilities as baseball diamonds, soccer fields, and playgrounds. Passive recreation requires few, if any, facilities. These spaces are not formal and are intended for such activities as hiking, biking, and relaxing. They are often left to the imagination of the user.

The Town of Clifton Park has numerous active recreation parks in the Town, the largest of which is Clifton Commons. Within the study area, the Town owns and operates Veterans Park on MacElroy Road that provides softball fields. The other active recreational facilities are golf courses that are privately owned. They include Eagle Crest, The Edison Club, and Mohawk River Country Club.

The Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve provides 400 acres of passive recreational opportunities including hiking, birding, fishing, cross-country skiing, and canoeing.

PATHWAYS

In 1999, the Town prepared a Trails Master Plan (Town of Clifton Park Trails Advisory Committee, November 8, 1999). The premise of the Trails Master Plan is that “trails are an essential part of Clifton Park’s parks and recreation system that enhances the quality of life in the community” (p. 5). The primary goal of the plan is to provide an interconnected system of trails that link parks and open space to homes, workplaces, community facilities, and other Town amenities. The overall vision of the plan is to create a trail system that includes:

- Bikeways and bicycle lanes on public roadway,
- Off-road bikeways and walkways on utility and canal corridors,
- Hiking and nature trails,
- Cross-country ski trails, and
- Equestrian trails.

As it relates to the study area, the Trails Master Plan proposes primarily on-road bike routes, utilizing Riverview Road, Vischer Ferry Road, Miller Road, Grooms Road, Waite Road, Route 146A, MacElroy Road, Hubbs Road, Ashdown Road, Bradt Road, and a portion of Route 146 in Rexford. Existing and proposed trails are identified on DGEIS Figure III-11. The plan also identifies existing powerline right-of-ways and railroad corridors that may present opportunities for off-road multi-use trails in the future.

Existing trails within the study area are limited to those within the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, along the Mohawk River to Riverview Road at Sugar Hill Road, and an on-road bike segment along Route 146A west to MacElroy Road. This last trail originates on Maxwell Drive at Plank Road and extends west along Route 146 to Route 146A.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

RECREATION

Build-out of the Town under current zoning would create significant demand for additional recreational facilities. As noted in the Town's Open Space Plan, existing recreational facilities are "highly utilized and reaching maximum use levels" (p. 5-66). Due to the current low density of development in the western part of Town, recreational need and facilities are limited and, at build-out, the need would grow significantly. Given the limited capacity at existing Town facilities, it is evident that additional facilities would need to be constructed.

The Open Space Plan generically addressed recreational need as it applies to land acquisition. The plan concepts call for the identification of a large area (150 acres or more) for the development of another Town-wide park within an approximate radius of 1.5 miles from the intersection of Nott Road and Appleton Road. Two additional "small-to-moderate sized active parks (10-20 acres) should be considered in underserved, developed areas of the Town.

To address the actual active recreational program needs, the Open Space Plan recommends the establishment of a task force comprised of coaches and designated individuals from the Town's Planning and Parks boards. An update to the Town Parks and Recreation Master Plan is also recommended.

The proposed Land Conservation Plan would significantly reduce the build-out potential in the study area. However, given that current recreational facilities are at or near capacity, the additional development will have an impact. Additionally, the development of hamlets or other suitable growth areas in exchange for land conservation elsewhere could create recreation need in specific areas. It is difficult to project exactly where growth will occur based on the new zoning. A priority area for land conservation is the grouping of agricultural lands in the southern portion of the study area. Therefore, it can be assumed that future development projects will be primarily located in the northern portions. Should additional development in the Rexford hamlet be considered, a park

should be considered in the area, as identified on DGEIS Figure III-11. The park should provide both active and passive recreational uses; however, the needs of the residents of this area should be investigated further through the development of concept plans and community outreach.

All new major development projects within the study area should be required to address recreational need either through the provision of pocket parks or the establishment of appropriate trail linkages to existing facilities.

TRAILS

Trails are an important factor in decreasing dependence on motor vehicles for transportation, as well as a key element in efforts to promote a healthier lifestyle. Development of the study area will increase traffic volume and associated impacts, even under the Land Conservation Plan (see DGEIS Section III.H). Trails can provide a good alternative to vehicular use when they are properly linked to important destinations.

The Trails Master Plan proposes the use of some rural roads in the study area for on-road bikeways. Build-out under current zoning would make these bikeways less desirable. However, implementation of the Land Conservation Plan would help to reduce density and preserve the integrity of these roads and the potential for successful shared use with bicyclists.

Design of future on-road bikeways should occur with the rural character of the road in mind. The creation of a wide, paved shoulder could have significant impacts on the corridor. In addition to creating wider road pavement and the loss of character that could have, there may be significant environmental impacts such as the loss of mature trees and the need to fill wetland.

As development occurs within the study area, there will be an increasing need for multi-use trails. Opportunities to create multi-use trail linkages between residential areas and destinations, such as parks and commercial areas, should be explored. Potential routes are illustrated on DGEIS Figure III-11. Linkages between subdivisions and major trail



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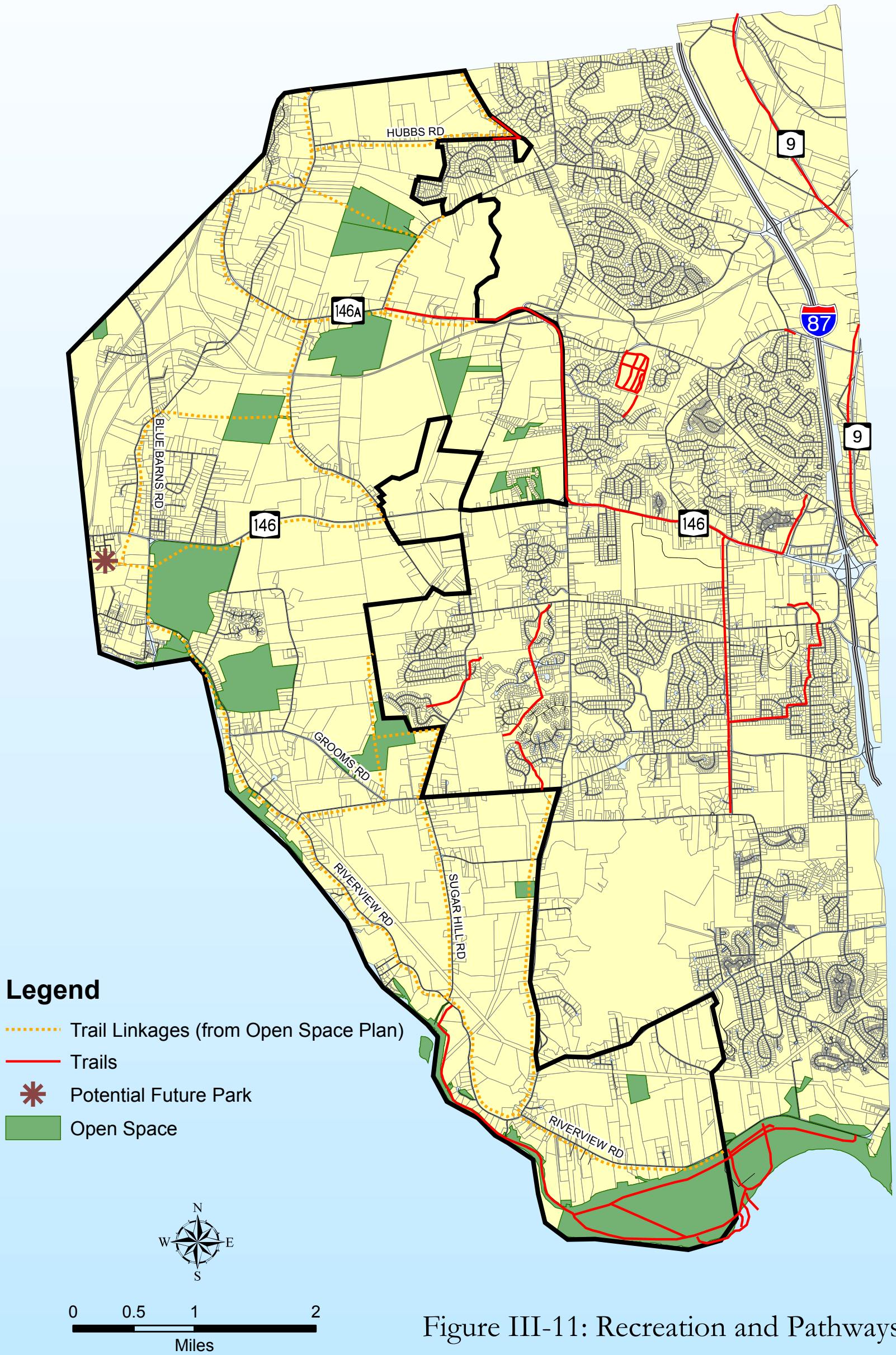


Figure III-11: Recreation and Pathways

corridors should be incorporated into all new projects and retrofitted to existing subdivisions whenever possible.

Trailheads should be located at road crossings and locations central to population clusters. Each trailhead should provide information on trail destinations and options as well as small parking areas. They should also be coordinated with the local emergency services to ensure quick and easy access when necessary.

The multi-use trails presented on the DGEIS Figure III-11 are conceptual routes. Flexibility will be necessary to allow future developers to create desirable and successful projects under the guidelines and thresholds established in this GEIS.

The following SEQR guidelines/thresholds should serve as the required mitigation for future development impacts of trails.

- Utilize conservation subdivision review procedures to preserve constrained lands and to accommodate greenways and trails.
- Lands dedicated for trails should be suitable for trail construction and not significantly constrained by environmental features that would cause excessive permitting or high cost construction and maintenance.
- For projects outside the main trail system, require developers to incorporate trail linkages to the main trail system to provide the greatest opportunity possible for residents to access the trails. Each neighborhood or cluster within a development should have ample trail access.
- All trails must undergo review to identify important environmental resources, as specifically identified for each issue in this DGEIS (such as wetlands) and must avoid any significant environmental impact that cannot be addressed through appropriate mitigation.

G. VISUAL RESOURCES

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The study area has many locations of scenic interest. They include distant views of the Mohawk River and countryside to views of the pastoral landscape along some of the Town's country roads. Specific locations and corridors of visual importance were identified in the Town's Open Space Plan and are illustrated on DGEIS Figures II-2, II-3, and II-4.

The purpose of this section is to initially identify views from public places, primarily roadways, within the Study Area that are exceptional and warrant consideration for protection. Views are often characterized by their foreground, mid-ground and background. The background is the farthest point at which a person can see. Typically, only major characteristics of the landscape (mountain peaks, ridgelines, etc.) are recognizable, therefore, small changes to the background landscape are seldom noticeable. The mid-ground is the midpoint from the viewer to the farthest visible object. Greater detail can be observed. Small changes in the landscape, such as the construction of a subdivision or the placement of a tower are noticeable. Their impact on the view may not be significant unless the change is significant (e.g., 5-lot subdivision vs. 200-lot subdivision). The foreground is that area immediately in view and where details are very noticeable. Small subdivisions, even the construction of a single home, can have profound impacts on the view.

The Study Area has many characteristics that create some significant viewpoints. The rural or pastoral landscape is highly valued by many communities. Early feedback from the community recognizes that Clifton Park is no different in its valuation of open space. It is the rural landscape that comprises much of the valued views within the Study Area. The aesthetic quality of the Study Area is, in and of itself, pleasing to those who live there and those who pass through.

Riverview Road follows the Mohawk River and the historic Erie Canal (built in 1827) with some spectacular views towards Niskayuna to the south. The scenic beauty and tremendous history of the Riverview Road corridor earned it recent designation as part of the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway. The community recognized that there is a network of scenic roadways throughout the study area as part of an open space inventory in 1998 that identified: Riverview Road, Grooms Road, Appleton Road, Nott Road, Waite Road, the western core of Route 146 in the study area, Sugar Hill Road, Ray Road, Vischer Ferry Road, Crescent Road, Van Vranken Road, Ballston Lake Road, Eastside Drive and Schaubert Road. In addition, the town's Trails Advisory Committee has created a scenic tour in and around Rexford – the Rexford Ramble – for pedestrians, bicyclists and motor traffic -- that includes the hamlet of Rexford, Nott Road, Riverview Road, Grooms Road, Droms Road, Sugar Hill Road, Vischer Ferry Road, Crescent Road, and along the Erie Canal Towpath in the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Development under current zoning could result in the loss of significant views for the public. The potential to develop these areas will be strong if water and sewer service become available. Homes in these locations will likely be of high value to the views. Frontage development may have the most significant impact on public views, since they result in a direct visual barrier built at the same elevation as the viewer.

The significance of the potential impact will depend on the intensity of development and partly on the number of people impacted by the loss of views. It is unknown how many people might enjoy these views. However, regardless of the numbers, these views are still Town resources and part of the character of the Study Area. Views such as these are not common place and should be respected for both their current and potential future value as designated viewsheds.

The lack of significant development in the area provides an opportunity to preserve the views through design and land conservation. Otherwise, unconstrained areas with frontage development likely will effectively block or significantly reduce most views.

Mitigation for the potential loss of visually significant areas is partially addressed in the requirements for conservation subdivisions (DGEIS Section II & Appendix F). Significant views can be identified during the initial stage of the conservation subdivision review process whereby the environmental constraints are identified. This would be a cooperative effort between the Planning Board and the developer. The intent of this effort and the design work that follows will be to avoid significant loss of the view and/or loss of the quality of the view. Therefore, views should be respected in the design of new projects. The design should require all utilities be placed underground (e.g., electric, cable, telephone).

The conservation subdivision procedures should result in visually compatible projects. The establishment of permanent conservation easements to protect open space and farmland are even more effective in preserving visual resources and should be encouraged. All future projects within the study area should be required to consider visual resource concerns through the design process in accordance with the conservation subdivision review process and associated development guidelines discussed in DGEIS Section III.D and Appendix F.

H. TRAFFIC

This section describes the existing transportation system serving the study area, evaluates the potential impacts of traffic generated by development, and identifies strategies for maintaining mobility and preserving the function of the study area's roadway network.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Current and Background Traffic

The current land uses within the Town of Clifton Park generate approximately 14,420 vehicle trips during the afternoon peak travel hour. This number is projected by the Capital District Transportation Committee to increase by approximately 55% by the year 2025, totaling more than 22,360 peak hour vehicle trips. The FGEIS for the Route 146 Corporate Commerce Zone completed in 2001 further identified the potential for an

additional 1,500 peak hour vehicle trips to be generated by the year 2025, or 23,860 total peak hour vehicle trips. Figure H-1 in Appendix H, Traffic Data, illustrates the existing PM peak hour vehicle trips in the Town, while Figure H-2, also in Appendix H, illustrates the projected vehicle trips in 2025 in the PM peak hour in addition to existing vehicle trips.

EXISTING ROADWAYS

The transportation system within the GEIS study area includes the following network of State, County and Local Collector roadways:

New York State Routes:	NYS Route 146 NYS Route 146A Glenridge Road (Route 914V)
Saratoga County Routes:	CR 80 (Schauber Road CR 82 (Longkill Road/Main Street) CR 91 (Grooms Road) CR 110 (Blue Barns Road)
Local Collector Roads:	Ashdown Road Bradt Road Hubbs Road MacElroy Road Miller Road Nott Road Riverview Road Sugar Hill Road Van Vranken Drive Waite Road

NYS Route 146 is a principal arterial and the primary east-west transportation corridor through the Town. This roadway carries the highest volume of traffic in the Town and provides important linkages to the Town's commercial district and to adjacent communities. This roadway also connects to the region's principal north/south expressway, Interstate Route 87 (Adirondack Northway), at Interchange 9. East of the study area, NYS Route 146 carries approximately 30,000 vehicles per day, which is about twice the volume carried on this route in the study area.

The local collector roadway system is comprised of two-lane roadways that have generally rural characteristics of narrow pavement and low traffic volume. These roadways generally carry fewer than 2,500 vehicles per day.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

The annual average daily traffic (AADT) provides a measure of typical daily traffic on a road segment for all days of the week, Sunday through Saturday, over the period of one year. The estimate is probably the most commonly used highway traffic statistic, since it provides a quick indication of the average usage of a road. The current annual average daily traffic volumes for state, county and local roads within the study area are listed in Table III-H-1 below.

**Table III-H-1
Daily Traffic Volumes**

Road Authority	Road	AADT
New York State	NYS Route 146	16,000
New York State	NYS Route 146 A	8,000
New York State	Glenridge Road	9,500
Saratoga County	Blue Barns Road (County Route 110)	8,700
Saratoga County	Grooms Road (County Route 91)	6,000
Saratoga County	Main Street/Longkill Road (County Route 82)	4,500
Saratoga County	Schauber Road (County Route 80)	4,000
Clifton Park	Local Town Roads	< 2,500

TRAFFIC DATA COLLECTION

Manual turning movement traffic counts were conducted in early June 2004 at the following twenty intersections within the study area:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Schauber Rd (CR80) & Hubbs Rd | NYS Route 146 & Nott Rd |
| Schauber Rd (CR80) & Ashdown Rd | Blue Barns Rd (CR110), Bradt Rd & Ashdown Rd |
| Schauber Rd (CR80) & NYS Route 146A | Riverview Rd & Grooms Rd (CR91) |
| Longkill Rd (CR82) & Ushers Rd | Grooms Rd (CR91) & Droms Rd |
| Main St (CR82), Hatlee Rd & MacElroy Rd | Grooms Rd (CR91), Miller Rd & Sugar Hill Rd |
| Main St (CR82) & NYS Route 146A | Grooms Rd (CR91) & Vischer Ferry Rd (CR90) |
| NYS Route 146A & Kinns Rd (CR109) | Riverview Rd & Sugar Hill Rd |
| NYS Route 146/NYS Rte 146A/Vischer Ferry Rd | Vischer Ferry Rd (CR90) & Crescent Rd (CR92) |
| NYS Route 146, Tanner Rd & Miller Rd | Crescent Rd (CR92) & Riverview Rd |
| NYS Route 146 & Waite Rd | |

This count data was collected during the weekday AM peak period of 7:00 – 9:00 a.m. and weekday PM peak period of 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. to identify peak hour traffic flow patterns. Traffic volume data was also compiled for the weekday AM and PM peak hours for the following locations:

- Ashdown Road & NYS Route 146A¹
- NYS Route 146, Glenridge Road & Blue Barns Road¹
- NYS Route 914 (Glenridge Road) & Bradt Road¹
- NYS Route 146 & Riverview Road (CR91)¹
- MacElroy Road & NYS Route 146A²

¹ data source: unpublished traffic counts – NYSDOT

² data source: Van Patten Subdivision Traffic Impact Study – CME, 2002

The 2004 existing AM peak hour and PM peak hour traffic volumes are presented on Figures H-3 and H-4 in Appendix H. The 2004 AM peak hour and PM peak hour roadway link volumes are illustrated in Figures H-5 and H-6, also in Appendix H.

OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS

Roadway conditions in the study area were inventoried to verify features such as lane widths, intersection traffic control, speed limits, and roadway improvements. Table III-H-2 identifies the existing traffic control at key intersections within the study area.

**Table III-H-2
Study Area Intersections & Traffic Control**

Intersection	Traffic Control
Schauber Road (CR80) and Hubbs Road	Stop Sign
Schauber Road (CR80) and Ashdown Road	Stop Sign
Schauber Road (CR80) and NYS Route 146A	Stop Sign
Ashdown Road and NYS Route 146A	Traffic Signal
Longkill Road (CR82) and Ushers Road	Stop Sign
Main Street (CR82), Hatlee Road and MacElroy Road	Stop Sign
Main Street (CR82) and NYS Route 146A	Stop Sign
MacElroy Road and NYS Route 146A	Stop Sign
NYS Route 146A and Kinns Road (CR109)	Stop Sign
NYS Route 146/NYS Route 146A/Visher Ferry Road	Traffic Signal
NYS Route 146, Tanner Road and Miller Road	Stop Sign
NYS Route 146 and Waite Road	Stop Sign
NYS Route 146 and Nott Road	Stop Sign

**Table III-H-2
Study Area Intersections & Traffic Control**

Intersection	Traffic Control
NYS Route 146, Glenridge Road and Blue Barns Road	Traffic Signal
NYS Route 914 (Glenridge Road) and Bradt Road	Stop Sign
Blue Barns Road (CR110), Bradt Road and Ashdown Road	Traffic Signal
NYS Route 146 and Riverview Road (CR91)	Traffic Signal
Riverview Road and Grooms Road (CR91)	Stop Sign
Grooms Road (CR91) and Droms Road	Stop Sign
Grooms Road (CR91), Miller Road and Sugar Hill Road	Stop Sign
Grooms Road (CR91) and Vischer Ferry Road (CR90)	4-Way Stop Sign
Riverview Road and Sugar Hill Road	Stop Sign
Vischer Ferry Road (CR90) and Crescent Road (CR92)	Stop Sign
Crescent Road (CR92) and Riverview Road	Yield Sign

The operations of intersections in the study area were analyzed for the 2004 AM peak hour and PM peak hour design traffic conditions using the procedures of the *Highway Capacity Manual 2000*. The results of these analyses quantify the operations based on a level of service scale from A to F, with “A” the best conditions and “F” the worst. A level of service D generally represents the lower threshold of acceptable peak hour operations.

The results of the operational analyses of the 2004 AM peak hour and PM peak hour are summarized in Tables III-H-3 through III-H-6. The intersections generally operate at acceptable conditions in the 2004 AM peak hour and PM peak hour. However, some local road approaches to collector roads at STOP-controlled intersections operate at LOS E or F.

**Table III-H-3
Western Clifton Park 2004 AM Operational Analyses: Signalized Intersections**

Intersection	EB	WB	NB	SB	Overall
NYS Rte 146A/Ashdown Road	B	B	B	B	B
Ashdown Road/Blue Barns Road/Bradt Road	B	D	B	B	C
NYS Rte 146/NYS Rte 146A/Vischer Ferry Road	D	D	C	C	D
NYS Rte 146/Glenridge Rd/Blue Barns Rd	D	D	C	C	D
NYS Rte 146/Riverview Road	D	F	C	F	F

**Table III-H-4
Western Clifton Park 2004 AM Operational Analyses: Stop-Controlled Intersections**

Intersection	EB	WB	NB	SB	Overall
NYS Rte 146A/Schauber Road		B		A	<i>See Note</i>
NYS Rte 146A/Main Street	A			C	
NYS Rte 146A/Kinns Road		C		A	
NYS Rte 146/Nott Road		A			
NYS Rte 146/Waite Road	A	A		E	
NYS Rte 146/Tanner Rd/Miller Rd	A	A		D	
NYS Rte 146A/MacElroy Road	A			B	
Grooms Road/ Vischer Ferry Road	B	B	B	B	B
Crescent Road/Riverview Road	A	A		A	<i>See Note</i>
Vischer Ferry Road/Crescent Road	A	A		A	
Riverview Road/Sugar Hill Road	A	A		A	

NOTE- Overall level of service for two-way, stop-controlled intersections is not given since major street traffic typically experiences free flow (LOS A) conditions.

**Table III-H-5
Western Clifton Park 2004 PM Operational Analyses: Signalized Intersections**

Intersection	EB	WB	NB	SB	Overall
NYS Rte 146A/Ashdown Road	B	B	C	B	B
Ashdown Road/Blue Barns Road/Bradt Road	C	D	B	A	B
NYS Rte 146/NYS RT 146A/Vischer Ferry Road	D	D	D	C	D
NYS Rte 146/Glenridge Rd/Blue Barns Rd	D	D	C	C	D
NYS Rte 146/Riverview Road	D	D	E	B	D

**Table III-H-6
Western Clifton Park 2004 PM Operational Analyses: Stop-Controlled Intersections**

Intersection	EB	WB	NB	SB	Overall
NYS Rte 146A/Schauber Road		B		A	<i>See Note</i>
NYS Rte 146A/Main Street	A			D	
NYS Rte 146A/Kinns Road		C		A	
NYS Rte 146/Nott Road		A	C		
NYS Rte 146/Waite Road	A	A	F	F	
NYS Rte 146/Tanner Rd/Miller Rd	A	A	F	E	
NYS Rte 146A/MacElroy Road	A			B	
Grooms Road/ Vischer Ferry Road	E	C	B	B	D
Crescent Road/Riverview Road	A	A	A	A	<i>See Note</i>
Vischer Ferry Road/Crescent Road	A	A	A	A	
Riverview Road/Sugar Hill Road	A	A	A	A	

NOTE- Overall level of service for two-way, stop-controlled intersections is not given since major street traffic typically experiences free flow (LOS A) conditions.

Figures H-7 and H-8 (Appendix H) illustrate the LOS of the AM peak hour and PM peak hour for the analyzed intersections.

Planned Transportation Improvements

Several roadway improvement projects within the study area are programmed in the current Transportation Improvement Program, administered by the Capital District Transportation Committee. Projects on the State Highway System include the following:

- Reconstruction and widening of the Rexford Bridge (NYS Route 146 from Aqueduct Road to Riverview Road)
- Balltown Road (NYS Rt. 146) between Riverview Road and Glenridge Road
- Reconstruction of Glenridge Road

These projects are in various stages of planning and/or preliminary design by the New York State Department of Transportation.

The section of Vischer Ferry Road from NYS Route 146 to Clifton Park Center Road is also scheduled for reconstruction. This project, which was among the improvements identified in the Vischer Ferry Road Corridor GEIS (completed by the Town in 1991), includes the installation of turn lanes, a shared-use path, and a traffic signal at the

intersection of Vischer Ferry Road and Clifton Park Center Road. This project is scheduled for construction to begin in 2005.

Another project scheduled for construction in 2005 is the rehabilitation of Ushers Road and Longkill Road. While these roadways are outside the boundary of the study area, they provide an important linkage from the study area to the interstate highway system. This project involves the structural rehabilitation of the roadway, improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Longkill Road and Ushers Road. The design effort for this project also investigated signal warrant conditions at the Longkill Road/MacElroy Road/Main Street/Hatlee Road intersection. These analyses indicated that traffic signal control at this location is not warranted at this time.

Other transportation improvements have also been identified for the study area as a result of other GEIS studies for development adjacent to the study area, including the Vischer Ferry Road Corridor GEIS and the Corporate Commerce GEIS.

VISCHER FERRY ROAD CORRIDOR GEIS

The Vischer Ferry Road Corridor GEIS was completed by the Town in 1991. This study resulted in recommendations for a variety of transportation improvements, some of which are located within this current study of the western section of the Town. The Findings of the Vischer Ferry Road Corridor GEIS included the following improvements in addition to those described above:

- Installation of traffic signals (when warranted) at the intersections of:
 - ⇒ Grooms Road & Vischer Ferry Road
 - ⇒ Grooms Road & Miller Road
 - ⇒ NYS Route 146 & Tanner Road
- Construction of left-turn lanes on the intersection approaches at Grooms Road and Vischer Ferry Road.
- System of collector road connections for access management and to facilitate mobility and circulation.

CORPORATE COMMERCE GEIS

The GEIS prepared in 2000 for the Route 146 Corporate Commerce District identified the following recommended improvements to accommodate the development's projected traffic generation:

- Widen NYS Route 146 between Route 146A and Tanner Road to provide a three-lane section and sidewalks or shared use trail.
- Geometric and traffic control improvements at the intersections of:
 - ⇒ NYS Route 146 & NYS Route 146A
 - ⇒ NYS Route 146 and Tanner Road
 - ⇒ NYS Route 146 and Waite Road
- Implementation of access management strategies to limit direct access to Route 146 from abutting properties and to create parallel collector roadways linking adjacent parcels.
- Continued local and regional progress in implementing the CDTC New Visions regional transportation plan, which calls for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) actions, such as flexible work hours, increased transit and ridesharing, walking, bicycling and creating shorter trip length through proximity of activity centers, to reduce the trend of traffic growth.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

The first step in projecting future traffic conditions is to assess the development potential of vacant lands within the study area. As such, a build-out analysis was conducted based on current zoning and development constraints. The analysis identified the development potential for residential and commercial uses (retail and office) within the Study Area. Development constraints factored into the analysis included state wetlands and associated 100-foot buffer, federally classified wetlands, hydric soils, and 100-year floodplains. Once the development potential of vacant lands was identified, the number of trips generated from each land use were examined.

The number of vehicle trips generated by the potential future commercial and residential development in the study area was estimated for the weekday AM peak hour and PM peak hour. These estimates were based on data and procedures contained in the 7th Edition of *Trip Generation*, published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). This resource provides industry accepted trip generation data for various land uses based on studies conducted throughout the United States and Canada.

Existing Zoning Alternative

The build-out analysis under current zoning regulations identified the potential development of residential units and, office and retail square footage. Table III-H-7 lists the development potential under existing zoning, and the associated trips generated by these land uses.

**Table III-H-7
Estimated Trip Generation: Existing Zoning**

Land Use	Size	Peak Hour Trips (PM)	Daily Trips
Residential	5,300 dwelling units	5,400	50,700
Office	2,500,00 square feet	3,700	27,000
Retail	700,00 square feet	2,000	22,500
TOTAL		11,100	100,700

As shown in Table III-H-7, the development potential of vacant parcels under existing zoning regulations will generate 11,100 vehicle trips in the PM peak hour. Currently, the entire Town experiences 14,420 vehicle trips during the PM peak hour. Under current zoning conditions, the development potential in the study area could produce a 75% increase in traffic generated within the Town, when built out. This would result in additional vehicle miles traveled, traffic congestion and travel delays, and stress on the existing roadway infrastructure, which could require a substantial investment in improvements of the transportation system within the study area to provide the capacity to accommodate this level of new traffic demand. This level of new travel demand in the Town is also likely to impact traffic operations within the Town outside the boundaries of the study area.

Land Conservation Zoning Alternative

Traffic generation estimates were also developed for the land conservation zoning alternative. The land conservation zoning alternative is designed to protect important natural and cultural resources and consequently reduces the development potential within the study area. Table III-H-8A compares the development potential of the Land Conservation Zoning alternative to the potential development under current zoning.

**Table III-H-8A
Comparison of Alternative Development Potential**

Land Use	Unit	Existing Zoning	Land Conservation Zoning	Difference
Residential	Dwelling units	5,300	2,500	2,800
Office	Square Feet	2,500,000	715,000	1,785,000
Retail	Square Feet	700,000	125,000	575,000

As shown in Table III-H-8A, the land conservation zoning alternative reduces the number of potential future residential units by approximately 50%, and the amount of commercial development by nearly 75%.

To analyze the impacts of a reduction in development potential for residential and commercial land use, the location of potential development was identified in relation to the Traffic Analysis Zones used for regional transportation planning. Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) are delineated by state and/or local transportation officials for tabulating census and traffic-related data, such as journey-to-work and place-of-work statistics. A TAZ usually consists of one or more census blocks, block groups, or census tracts. Figure H-9 (Appendix H) identifies the Traffic Analysis Zones in the study area of the western section of Clifton Park.

The boundaries of the TAZ's were used to geographically identify the locations of potential growth and the associated traffic impacts within the western part of the Town. Table III-H-8B summarizes the development potential of the Land Conservation zoning alternative for each TAZ within the study area.

Table III-H-8B
Development Distribution by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ)
Land Conservation Zoning Alternative

Traffic Analysis Zone	Land Use		
	Office (Square Feet)	Retail (Square Feet)	Residential (Dwelling Units)
433			109
434A			45
444	73,717	9,625	136
446	16,928		392
447	217,153	10,814	104
448	137,742	35,201	788
449	268,906	68,720	816
449A			110
TOTAL	714,446	124,360	2500

The traffic generated by future development based on this Land Conservation Zoning alternative was estimated using the ITE *Trip Generation* data. Table III-H-9 summarizes the estimated trip generation for this land use alternative, based on TAZ locations.

**Table III-H-9
Estimated Trip Generation : Land Conservation Zoning Alternative**

Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ)	Dwelling Units ITE Land Use 210	Trips		Office (SF) ITE Land Use 710	Trips		Retail (SF) ITE Land Use 820	Trips		AM Peak Hour Total Trips per TAZ	PM Peak Hour Total Trips per TAZ
		AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour		AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour		AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour		
443	109	86	116	0	0	0	0	0	0	86	116
434A	45	41	52	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	52
444	136	104	141	73,717	147	162	9,625	37	128	288	431
446	392	283	367	16,928	45	98	0	0	0	328	465
447	104	82	111	217,153	430	480	10,814	42	146	554	737
448	788	562	688	137,742	243	233	35,201	83	313	888	1,234
449	816	581	709	268,906	414	380	68,720	125	490	1,120	1,579
449A	110	86	117	0	0	0	0	0	0	86	117
Total Trips per Land Use	2,500 (DU)	1,825	2,301	714,446 (SF)	1,279	1,353	124,360 (SF)	287	1,077	3,391	4,731

As shown in Table H-9, the land conservation scenario generates 4,731 PM peak hour trips. This is approximately 55% less traffic than is estimated to be generated by future development in the study area under existing zoning. Figure H-10 in Appendix H, Traffic Data shows the percentage of trips generated by land uses within the study area. As shown on the figure, half of the future trips generated in the study area is estimated to be from residential growth.

Comparison of Estimated Build-out to Regional Projections

The Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) produces regional forecasts of development within the Albany-Saratoga-Schenectady-Rensselaer metropolitan area based on census data and local demographic and land use trends. Currently, their projected forecasts extend to the year 2040. These growth projections are also used in the long-range regional transportation planning efforts of the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), which forms the basis for the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

Figure H-11 in Appendix H, Traffic Data, shows the potential residential growth produced from the proposed zoning build out analysis compared to the CDRPC’s forecasted residential growth in 2040.

The comparison in Figure H-11 shows that the residential growth potential associated with the Land Conservancy zoning at build-out is lower than CDRPC’s forecasted dwelling unit growth. This indicates that development according to this land use plan is also consistent with CDTC’s regional transportation planning efforts. Figure H-12 in Appendix H shows a comparison of the total number of trips generated within the Town of Clifton Park for build-out conditions under existing zoning and the Land Conservancy zoning alternative. This figure also shows this growth in the context of general town-wide growth projections for the 2025 planning horizon.

Travel Patterns

Future travel flow patterns in the study area were estimated based on a review of current patterns and U.S. Census journey-to-work data. The distribution of existing journey-to-work trips originating from Clifton Park are shown in Table III-H-10. As shown, most employment-based trips are oriented to the south towards communities in Albany and Schenectady Counties. Figure H-13 in Appendix H, provides a graphic illustration of the primary distribution of journey to work trips within the Capital District region.

Table III-H-10
Journey to Work Trips
Trips from the Town of Clifton Park

Albany County	7091
Rensselaer County	1034
Saratoga County*	1035
Schenectady County	2581

** Excluding trips internal to the Town of Clifton Park
Source: CDTC, Corporate Commerce Area GEIS*

As shown in Table III-H-10 and on Figure H-13, the majority of journey-to-work trips are oriented to Albany County from the Town (50%). Saratoga County and Rensselaer County receive 5% of the Town’s journey to work trips, while Schenectady County receives 20%. Approximately 20 percent of the Town’s work trips remain within the town. The potential for new employment opportunities in the Capital Region, such as at

the Luther Forest Technology Park in the Town of Malta, may cause a shift in the overall distribution of future work-based trips. However, CDTC's regional model of future conditions continues to indicate the historic orientation of peak hour trips within the Town.

Future travel demand generated by development according to the Land Conservancy zoning alternative was assigned to the area's roadway system to identify the estimated future traffic volume conditions. This estimate was based on the PM peak hour condition, in order to provide a correlation to CDTC's regional transportation model, which is based on this peak hour. The trip generation estimates for development also indicates that the relevance of examining this peak hour, as the traffic generated in the PM peak hour is approximately 40 percent higher than the volumes estimated for the AM peak hour. This is largely due to the fact of increased commercial (office and retail) traffic in the afternoon. The estimated future traffic demand on the roadways within the study area at build-out of the western part of the Town is summarized in Table III-H-11.

**Table III-H-11
PM Peak Hour Traffic Demand**

Facility	2004 Existing		2025 without Study Area Development ¹		With Build-out of the Study Area ¹	
	Two-Way (vph)	Peak Direction (vph)	Two-Way (vph)	Peak Direction (vph)	Two-Way (vph)	Peak Direction (vph)
NYS Route 146						
NYS Rte 146A to Miller Rd	1490	750	2600	1560	3350	2015
Miller Rd to Waite Rd	1520	785	2100	1080	2765	1450
Waite Rd to Balltown Rd	1455	820	1960	1040	2685	1435
NYS Route 146A						
NYS Rte 146 to Kinns Rd	855	500	1380	860	1895	1120
Kinns Rd to Ashdown Rd	715	400	1000	560	1765	995
Ashdown Rd to Town Line	515	285	720	400	980	540
Waite Road						
NYS Rte 146A to NYS Rte 146	75	45	210	140	810	455
NYS Rte 146 to Miller Rd	85	55	145	105	235	155
Miller Road						
NYS Rte 146 to Waite Rd	95	50	650	325	820	425
Waite Rd to Grooms Rd	205	115	560	370	745	475
Tanner Road						
NYS Rte 146 to NYS Rte 146A	85	60	860	675	1190	855
MacElroy Road						
NYS Rte 146A to Main St	225	125	350	195	960	515
Blue Barns Road						
NYS Rte 146 to Ashdown Rd	795	500	1200	755	1800	1115
Grooms Road						
Vischer Ferry Rd to Riverview Rd	650	405	1100	705	1300	825
Riverview Road						
NYS Rte 146 to Grooms Rd	700	465	1050	695	1456	924
Grooms Rd to Crescent Rd	140	80	210	120	406	229
Sugar Hill Road						
Riverview Rd to Groom Rd	50	25	75	35	285	155

¹ includes traffic generated by planned growth in the Route 146 Corporate Commerce District.

Transportation System Operations

CDTC’s capacity analysis procedures were used to identify the performance of the roadway system in the build-out condition and to determine the general sufficiency of the system to accommodate the estimated traffic increases. These procedures are generally based on the traffic engineering standards of the *Highway Capacity Manual*, published by the Transportation Research Board, but also consider local conditions used in the development of CDTC’s regional transportation (STEP) model.

The CDTC procedures define values for the maximum acceptable service flow volume and the maximum capacity for peak directional flow on arterials and collector roads. These values are shown in Table III-H-12.

**Table III-H-12
CDTC Mid-Block Service Volume Thresholds**

Roadway Type	Maximum Acceptable Service Flow Volume	Maximum Capacity
Arterial and Collector Roadways		
Single Lane (each direction)	1,000 vph	1,300 vph
Two Lane (each Ddirection)	2,800 vph	3,500 vph

A review of the estimated peak hour traffic demand on the study area transportation system shows that the local roadway system will operate within acceptable levels of service with build-out of the study area based on the Land Conservancy zoning alternative. These analyses indicate a long-term potential need for improvements to the NYS Route 146 corridor, which might include widening the roadway to provide additional travel lanes. It is noted that this improvements was also identified in the Vischer Ferry Road Corridor GEIS as a long-range improvement. However, it is also noted that analysis of this corridor by CDTC for the Corporate Commerce District indicated that these improvements would not be needed within the 2025 Planning Horizon based on a reduced density land use plan for the western area of the Town, such as the Land Conservancy zoning alternative.

Other roadway segments are noted to exceed the threshold of acceptable service flow volumes during the peak hour condition at build-out. These locations are:

- NYS Route 146A: from NYS Route 146 to Kinns Road
- Blue Barns Road (CR 110): from NYS Route 146 to Ashdown Road

These conditions indicate that congestion may develop in these corridors as this section of the Town builds out. Other localized improvements will also be required to provide signal control at key intersections. Some locations for future traffic signal have previously been identified as part of other studies, and were described in Section H-2. Other locations for signal control may also be required to address future intersection operations, and upon meeting the signal warrant criteria of the New York State Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NYSMUTCD).

The long range regional transportation plan includes general recommendations for system improvements that are applicable to the study area. These include actions to promote multi-modal accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit to reduce the volume of peak hour automobile traffic demand. Travel Demand Management programs are also recommended to reduce travel demand during peak periods.

Access management strategies are also recommended to maintain the functional hierarchy of the transportation system and the efficiency of available infrastructure capacity. Traffic calming strategies could also be employed to deter through traffic from local roadways that are not conducive to higher traffic volumes and redirect this traffic to the Town's collector and arterial roadways.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Purpose

An access management strategy presents a holistic approach to providing the infrastructure to support development in the study area and to provide multi-modal accessibility and mobility. An access management system of integrated secondary collector roads and access connections reinforces the primary arterial functions of New

York State Route 146 and New York State Route 146A, while providing a street network that is accessible to all travel modes.

The basic objectives of the access management plan are to:

- Maintain the integrity of the State, County and local roadway systems.
- Promote multi-modal facilities for pedestrian and bicycle.
- Provide sustainable system capacity within the study area to accommodate economic development within the Town.

Access Management Benefits

The extensiveness of a secondary circulation system provides multiple alternate routes for traveling between origins and destinations within or beyond the Town's limits, without relying on major arterial roadways, such as NYS Route 146. A primary benefit of developing a secondary circulation system for western Clifton Park is that it provides linkages between areas of commercial activity, office establishments, and residential neighborhoods. The transfer of short-distance, in-town trips away from the arterial system also reduces the future pressure to make near-term capacity improvements to the major arterials as a response to congestion demands. Among the advantages of a functionally connected system of secondary streets for access and circulation within the Study Area are:

- reduces vehicle miles traveled
- decreases congestion on the primary arterial routes
- provides alternative routes for short local trips
- improves efficiency of movement
- reduces penetration of through traffic on local residential streets
- facilitates walking and biking
- provides safer school bus routes
- fosters a sense of community cohesion

A system of access roads can also integrate pedestrian/bicycle facilities in conjunction with the proposed linkages for these modes.

Proposed Secondary Access/Circulation Roads

Secondary circulation roads should be considered as an alternative means for the connection of neighborhoods and commercial activity centers within the study area. The introduction of secondary circulation roads preserves the rural character of the community by accommodating future traffic within the study area. These potential connections allow existing roadways to maintain their current design, and should be designed to represent the community's rural character.

Implementation of additional connections can divert trips away from NYS Route 146 and NYS Route 146A, thereby improving operations at these locations. Based on potential growth areas as identified by the traffic analysis zones, potential secondary circulation corridors are conceptually illustrated on Figure III-12. Secondary circulation corridors are recommended for north-south and east-west connections. They include,

- Waite Road to North Road or Appleton Road (1)
- Waite Road to NYS Rt 146A (2)
- Clifton Country Road to Appleton Road (3)
- Grooms Road to Riverview Road (4)

The purpose of Figure III-12 is to emphasize the importance of secondary circulation roads and to keep the issue on the forefront of future site planning and development in the study area. It is unknown where exactly future development will occur and it will be important to consider circulation issues for all development projects. There may not be a need for secondary circulation roads in all cases. However, careful consideration should be given to these roads, especially where routes are illustrated.

One of the challenges of developing secondary circulation roads is cost. Mitigation costs spread over all future development are justified by the fact that the secondary circulation roads would reduce the impact to NYS Route 146, which would benefit the entire study area.

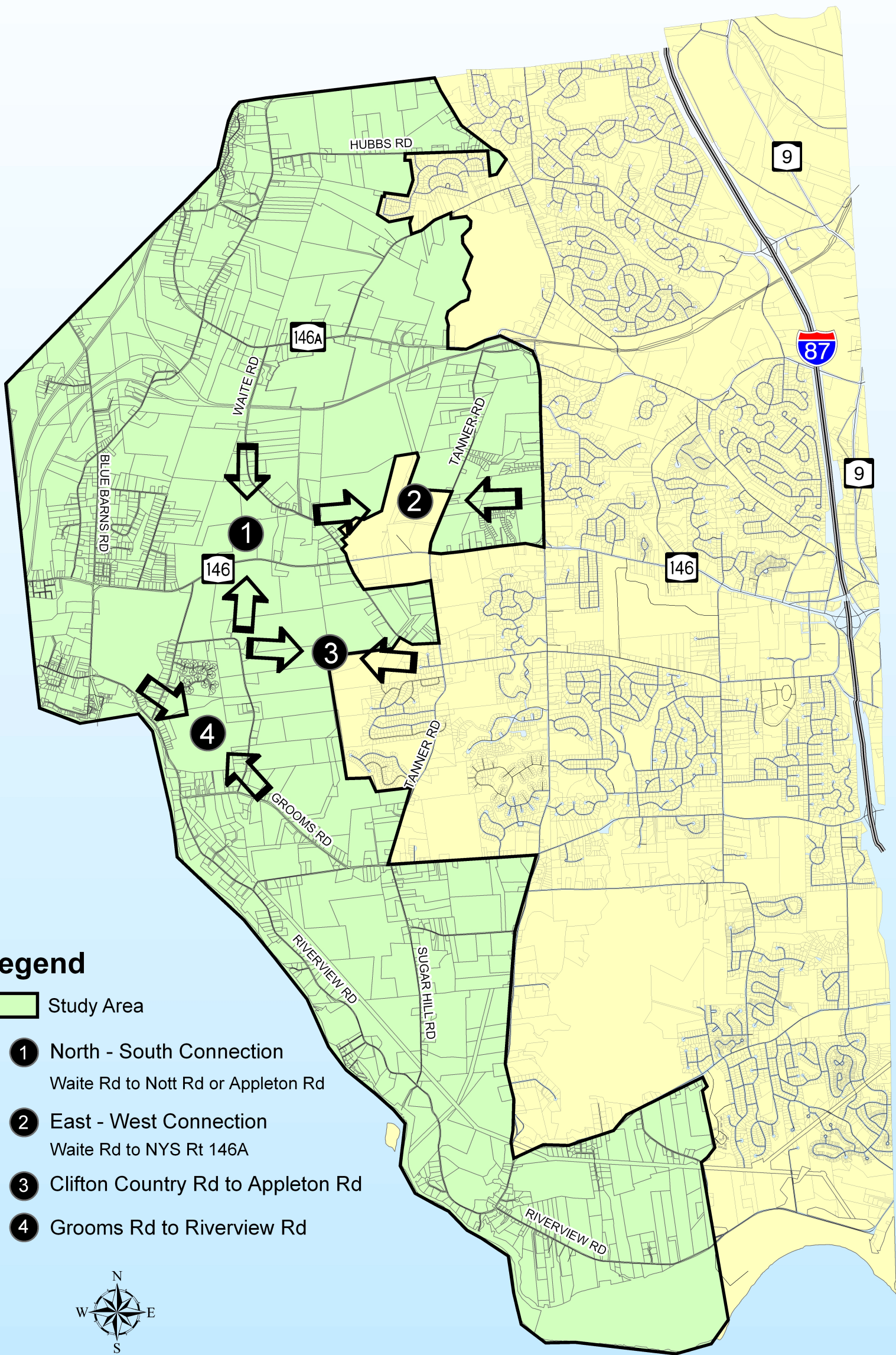


Western Clifton Park

Generic Environmental Impact Statement



Behan Planning Associates, LLC
Planning Community Futures



Legend

- Study Area
- 1 North - South Connection
Waite Rd to Nott Rd or Appleton Rd
- 2 East - West Connection
Waite Rd to NYS Rt 146A
- 3 Clifton Country Rd to Appleton Rd
- 4 Grooms Rd to Riverview Rd

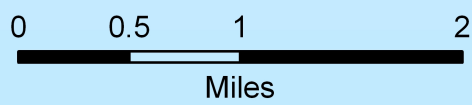


Figure III-12: Recommended Access Connections

The specific environmental impacts of road construction have not been identified consistent with the GEIS approach to environmental impact evaluation. When proposed, each road corridor should undergo an alternatives analysis to establish a preferred route with the least impact. All the development thresholds and procedures identified in the DGEIS would apply to road construction. If a threshold is exceeded, additional SEQR evaluation may be necessary at that time.



Picture A above illustrates the rural character of the local roads in the western section of the Town. The planning of secondary circulation connections would ease the potential for traffic congestion (Picture B) that could occur on the Town's western roadways.

Sidewalks

Secondary access connections should accommodate the circulation of pedestrians, in addition to vehicles. Sidewalks provide the paths for pedestrians to access commercial establishments, and travel within areas of denser development, such as hamlets. An interconnected, continuous network of sidewalks and/or multi-use facilities that link proposed commercial and hamlet areas to the Town's existing and planned trail system is recommended. The Town of Clifton Park Trails plan identifies several areas for multi-use facility connections.

Future commercial development should be encouraged to provide sidewalks that connect to, and expand upon the existing multi-use trail system. Crosswalks and pedestrian

signal heads should be clearly designated at signalized intersections to inform pedestrians of the proper locations to cross the roadway.

Access Improvements to Existing Land Uses

DRIVEWAY ACCESS STANDARDS

New York State standards for driveway design are published by the NYS DOT in “Policy and Standards for Entrances to State Highways”. These standards govern access to the arterial system within the Study Area and include specifications for the layout of residential and commercial driveways, including pavement width and corner radii. These specifications are also applicable to the design of access to the Study Area’s secondary collector street system.

These standards are recommended to be complemented by local standards for driveway spacing, shared spacing and cross access. Access spacing standards help improve safety and operations of the transportation system by controlling the points of conflict of through vehicles and vehicles entering or exiting the adjacent land uses. Factors affecting the recommended minimum spacing include the function of the roadway (arterial, collector, etc.), speed, and the amount of traffic generated by the land use. The recommended guidelines are summarized in Table III-H-13.

**Table III-H-13
Recommended Minimum Driveway Access Spacing**

Street Type	Posted Speed Limit	Small Generator (0-100 PHT) ¹	Medium Generator (101-200 PHT) ¹	Large Generator (>200 PHT) ¹
Arterial	< 45 mph	225 feet	350 feet	500 feet ²
	≥ 45 mph	350 feet	450 feet	650 feet ²
Collector	≤ 35 mph	100 feet	175 feet	225 feet ²

Notes:

¹ PHT = Peak Hour Trips at the access (includes new, pass-by and diverted trips)

² Site-specific engineering analyses should be performed to verify access spacing requirements for large traffic generators.

Driveway spacing at corner properties present the additional consideration of the conflicts created by vehicles entering and exiting the site in close proximity to vehicle movements through the adjacent street intersection. These interactions become particularly complex when the adjacent intersection is controlled by a traffic signal. These conditions have an adverse effect on both safety and traffic operations. For these reasons, driveways should not be permitted to be located within the functional area of an intersection, and particularly within the boundaries of turn or merge lanes.

Access requirements to corner properties are also affected by the location of the access (i.e., access on the near or far side of the intersection with respect to approaching traffic) and the type of facility. The recommended minimum distance from an intersection for full access to a corner property is shown in Table H-14. For properties that cannot meet these standards, turn restrictions (right-turns in and/or out) should be required. It is recommended that no access be permitted within 100 feet of an adjacent intersection.

Table III-H-14
Corner Clearance at Intersections

Street Type	Access Location	
	Near Side	Far Side
Arterial	400 ft.	350 ft.
Collector	200 ft.	200 ft.

The following conditions should also be considered when determining driveway locations for specific properties:

1. Driveways generating high volumes of trips should be spaced to exceed minimum spacing requirements.
2. Driveways should not be permitted within the functional area of an intersection, especially within the boundary of turn or merge lanes.
3. At locations where the minimum standards cannot be met, shared access and/or cross access with abutting properties should be provided. Otherwise, turn restrictions (right-turns only in and/or out) should be required.

For properties where initial shared access/cross access arrangements are not practicable for short-term implementation, it is recommended that the access be designated as temporary with provisions incorporated in the site plan for future shared access and/or cross access connections.

DRIVEWAY CONSOLIDATION PLAN

Internal connections between neighboring properties allow vehicles to circulate and access business activities without having to re-enter the primary street network. These shared and cross accesses provide a benefit similar to those associated with the secondary collector system in that they divert short local trips away from the arterial street system, thereby preserving roadway capacity.

Shared driveways are driveways serving two or more abutting properties that may or may not be comprised of land from each property. Shared driveways allow for reduced access points onto the primary system, increased driveway spacing and improved management of traffic entering and exiting the developments.

Cross access connections interconnect the parking facilities of two or more abutting properties and are always comprised of land from each property. Cross access driveways permit internal movement between the properties, thereby reducing the traffic volume and turning conflicts on the adjacent roadway.

DEVELOPMENT ALONG COLLECTOR ROADS

The functional classification of a roadway and its operating characteristics influence the determination of access location and development design. An important principle of access management is to avoid connecting directly to a roadway of a much higher classification. For example, site design should avoid direct driveway access to collector roads. Development planned along a collector road should be required to have access via local roads. The objective of this initiative is to reduce the number of and separate conflict points, by reducing the number of driveways from a development to the collector. Basically, a locally classified road should connect to the collector road to serve as the main access to development. Figure H-15 in Appendix H, illustrates the inappropriate and appropriate development locations of access driveways.

Walkability and Traffic Calming

Three hamlet areas were identified in the western part of the Town of Clifton Park that have the infrastructure to support dense residential and mixed use development. They include lands in Rexford, Ballston Lake, and at the intersection of NYS Route 146 and NYS Route 146A.

Hamlets represent the design principles of traditional neighborhood developments (TND), which include the following:

- Scale
- Bicycles
- Street Space
- Connectivity
- Pedestrian Networks

SCALE

The principle of design scale in a TND is that of the pedestrian. Designing these types of developments for pedestrians and vehicles accommodates multiple modes of transportation.

BICYCLES

Bicycle travel should be encouraged in hamlet areas. Bicycle accommodations should be considered to facilitate this transportation mode, such as bicycle lanes, storage facilities, and racks.

STREET SPACE

The TND street begins at the front of a vertical element, such as a building or fence on one side of the street, and runs to the front of a building on the other side of the street.

This is referred to as the streetscape, which includes sidewalks, planting strips, street furniture, and lighting fixtures designed to human scale to facilitate walkability.

CONNECTIVITY

TND streets are interconnected, which is central to TND design. Connected streets provide continuous and more comprehensible routes that serve to enhance non-vehicular travel. Where it is difficult to provide full through streets due to topography conditions, non-vehicular or pedestrian connections should be attempted.

PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS

Networked, safe, and convenient street connections are important to pedestrians. As such, all lots and sites should have pedestrian connections. TND street usually have sidewalks of five or more feet in width along both sides of the street. In addition to sidewalks, pedestrian networks can be formed with connections across wetlands, slopes, and forested areas that may not be crossed by streets. In the center of developments, pedestrian networks may also be formed by additional walks between buildings.

I. AIR QUALITY

The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA), enacted on November 15, 1990, authorized the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to designate areas as non-attainment for air quality and to classify them according to severity of non-attainment. A non-attainment area is an area, which does not meet, or contributes to the air quality in a nearby area that does not meet, the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for a given pollutant. NAAQS are health-based standards established by the EPA for air contaminants, which specify permissible levels of a given pollutant in the air. Non-attainment areas are classified, in increasing severity, as: marginal, moderate, serious, severe or extreme non-attainment. These classifications are based on the number of exceedances per year and the average pollutant design values obtained from monitoring data in various regions.

Two pollutants common to motor vehicle use are carbon monoxide (CO) and ozone (OZ). Carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless byproduct of incomplete combustion of fossil fuels. Ozone is the primary constituent of smog. It occurs when nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds react when catalyzed by high temperatures and ultraviolet light. According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), ozone pollution is the most serious type of air pollution.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Current Status

The Study Area lies within “The Albany Area” which includes the following counties: Albany, Saratoga, Green, Montgomery, Rensselaer, & Schenectady. Before 1997, EPA had a one-hour standard for ozone measurement. The Albany Area did not meet the standard and was classified as a “Non-attainment Area.” In 1997, the one-hour standard for ozone was replaced with an 8-hour standard. The Albany Area was able to meet that standard and was classified as an Attainment Area. However, the one-hour standard was reinstated and as of August 3, 2004 the Albany Area was designated as a one hour ozone marginal non-attainment area, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency Green Book. In addition, the Albany Area was designated as an eight hour ozone Subpart 1 non-attainment area.

Air Monitoring- Ambient Air Quality

The “**New York State Air Quality Report,**” (2000) published by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) was consulted to obtain air quality data for this EIS. The two closest stations to the Town of Clifton Park: the Stillwater site at the Saratoga Monument in Saratoga County, and the Loudonville Reservoir Station on Shaker Road in Albany County. The Loudonville Station monitors Ozone levels, Sulfur Dioxide, Carbon Monoxide, Inhalable Particulates and Lead concentrations. The Stillwater station monitors Ozone only. The 8-hour ozone standard is 0.08 parts per million (PPM) averaged over the eight hours and the one- hour ozone standard is less than 0.12 PPM. (The .08 PPM standard is not exceeded unless the average of the 4th highest values of maximum 8-hr concentrations is more than .084

PPM.) Ozone concentrations recorded at the Albany monitoring facilities were in compliance with the ambient air quality standards with a 0.080 average from 1992 – 2002. Ozone concentrations recorded at the Stillwater monitoring facilities were in compliance with a 0.083 average from 1992 – 2002.

Potential Sources of Pollution

The two major sources of air pollution are industrial emissions and automobile exhaust.

Industrial Pollution: No portion of the study area is zoned for manufacturing uses. Land uses reflect the zoning classifications. For the most part, the Study area is comprised of rural residential areas and open spaces. There are no uses that would generate major sources of air pollution.

Automobile Exhaust: The study area is surrounded by development and the traffic generated by this development may have some localized impacts. The Study Area itself contains local and collector roads with relatively light traffic volume except for Route 146. At present, development in the study area has been limited and therefore traffic along Route 146 generally moves through the area without significant delay. Localized air pollution concerns can occur in congested areas where vehicles are backed up and idling.

In July of 2002, the first statewide ozone advisory in three years was issued; the last one being in the summer of 1999. The “advisory season” typically runs from May 15 until September 15. If ozone levels in outdoor air are predicted to be greater than 0.08 PPM when averaged over an 8-hour period, an ozone health advisory will be issued.

Automobile exhaust is the primary cause of ground level ozone and the most serious air pollution problem in the northeast. To help reduce ozone, you can refrain from driving and use public transportation if available.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Automobile Emissions

Future development in the study area under current zoning could result in a significant increase in traffic volume. The traffic implications of build-out are discussed in the Build-out Analysis (DGEIS Appendix C).

The Land Conservation Plan would significantly decrease development potential in the study area and should decrease the potential for localized air pollution concerns relative to vehicle emissions.

In general, concentrations of CO and OZ should continue to decrease as a result of the implementation of stricter federal vehicle emission controls, including the continued use of reformulated (oxygenated) gas and new measures to ensure proper function of catalytic converters.

Future Construction Projects

Construction of individual projects in the study area may result in the potential for propagation of dust. Dust will be generated as a result of vehicle movement on construction sites and grading and excavation activities. Relative to other pollutants, dust is heavier and settles out quickly. Typically, dust is limited to the project site. However, under dry and windy conditions, dust can travel off-site. When this occurs, adjacent land uses can be impacted, depending on the sensitivity of the use. Most land use in the Study Area is residential or agricultural.

Several measures are available to limit the amount of dust generated during construction, depending on the atmospheric conditions and the nature of the site. Recommendations for future construction include:

- ◆ Minimize the area exposed at one time by seeding and mulching disturbed areas as soon as possible.

- ◆ Wet the surface of unpaved portions of the site as often as needed.
- ◆ Sweep/clean dirt tracked onto adjacent streets by construction vehicles each day, as necessary.
- ◆ Maintain vegetative buffers (trees and hedges) between disturbed areas and adjacent development and other significant off-site receptors.
- ◆ Wind screens installed perpendicular to prevailing winds may be useful, especially when other measures are not feasible.
- ◆ Under conditions of prolonged drought and/or high winds it may be necessary to suspend clearing and grading operations.

Once a site is redeveloped with buildings and landscaping, dust will no longer be a concern.

J. NOISE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Noise Fundamentals

Three specific attributes are significant in the study of the amount and the nature of noise:

- The frequency distribution of the noise
- The intensity of the noise
- The time varying pattern of the noise

The overall sound we hear is composed of a summation of separate sound waves, each with a different frequency. Human hearing is more sensitive to sound in the higher frequencies than to sounds in the lower frequencies. An electronic adjustment called the “A-scale weighting network” has been devised to measure noise in a way that closely resembles human hearing. Through the A-scale network, a noise level meter electronically adjusts some of the higher, middle, and lower frequencies when noise is measured, placing a greater emphasis on the middle to high frequencies. This overall sound, or frequency distribution, is what is measured in noise analysis.

The second property of sound or noise levels is the intensity; a measure of the magnitude of the sound pressure level (SPL) expressed in units called decibels (dB). When noise is measured with A-scale weighting, the magnitude of the sound is expressed as dBA. Changes in noise levels of 3 dBA or less are barely perceptible by human hearing. Common indoor and outdoor noise levels are shown in Table III-J-1.

The third property of noise is the time varying pattern of the intensity of the noise. The equivalent sound level, Leq, has been developed to quantify the time varying pattern of noise. The Leq descriptor is used to quantify the average energy content of sounds over a selected period of time, with the most common time period being one hour for noise studies. The Leq descriptor is used to quantify the noise levels used in this report.

**Table III–J-1
Common Noise Levels**

Common Outdoor Noise Levels	Noise Level (dBA)			Common Indoor Noise Levels
Jet Fly over at 1000 Ft.	---	110	---	Rock Band
Gas Lawn Mower at 3 Ft.	---	100	---	Inside Subway Train (New York)
Diesel Truck at 50 Ft.	---	90	---	Food Blender at 3 Ft.
Noisy Urban (Daytime)	---	80	---	Garbage Disposal at 3 Ft. Shouting at 3 Ft.
Gas Lawn mower at 100 Ft.	---	70	---	Vacuum Cleaner at 10 Ft.
Commercial Area Heavy Traffic at 300 Ft.	---	60	---	Normal Speech at 3 Ft.
Quiet Urban (Daytime)	---	50	---	Large Business Office
Quiet Urban (Nighttime)	---	40	---	Dishwasher Next Room
Quiet Suburban (Nighttime)				Small Theatre (Background) Library

Quiet Rural (Nighttime)	---	30	---	
	---	20	---	Bedroom at Night Concert Hall (Background)
	---	10	---	Broadcast and Recording Studio
	---	0	---	Threshold of Hearing

Existing Conditions

For the most part, the study area is comprised of rural residential areas and open spaces that are either farmlands or vacant vegetated areas. There are few uses which would generate noise. Noise sources within the Study Area can be classified into two categories: noise generated by traffic on the roadways and sources that are site specific. Examples of site specific sources are: operation of farm machines, operation of construction equipment, operation of manufacturing equipment, children in a school playground, or music played too loudly in a backyard.

Heavily traveled roads within the study area that generate traffic noise are primarily Route 146 and Route 146A. However, ambient noise levels are affected by other heavily traveled corridors and congested areas that surround the study area.

Since one of the important land uses in the Study Area is agriculture, noise is generated from the operation of tractors and other farm equipment, however, there are no other major sources of noise generated by land uses within the study area.

Both the western and eastern portions of Clifton Park are in the direct flight path for Albany International Airport's primary runway (Runway 19), with the Stony Creek Reservoir as the centerline. Both arrivals and departures pass over the Town. Under the provisions of the Aviation Safety and Noise Abatement Act of 1979, the Albany County Airport Authority prepared an FAR Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study, which was updated in April 2003 (Landrum & Brown, Inc. and Edwards and Kelcey, 2003).

The 2003 study provides a “Noise Exposure Map” showing noise contours measured as the day/night average sound level (DNL). The “Marginal Impact” DNL noise contour for existing and future conditions extends into the study area, effecting lands along Riverview Road. This contour represents a 60-65 DNL. Land uses in this area include the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve and rural residential.

The study area and other portions of the Town are likewise impacted by the Air National Guard at Stratton.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Albany International Airport and the Air National Guard will continue to be the primary noise generators for the study area. Noise impacts are addressed by airports in accordance with federal regulations. Mitigation for areas of significant impact (65 DNL and higher) can include land acquisition and general coordination and cooperation with local governments to properly zone these areas. Based on federal regulations, impacts on the Town of Clifton Park are not consider significant (less than 65 DNL) and do not warrant direct interventions, such as land acquisition. Current low density uses are typically considered consistent with the noise levels experienced within the Marginal Impact contour (60-65 DNL).

DGEIS Table III-4 identifies ambient noise levels in a rural setting as 20-30 dBA. Given the number of arrivals and departures occurring at Albany and the use of Runway 1-19 as the primary runway, it can be generally concluded that the Airport is a major noise contributor in the study area and Town. It is important to note that this is not a recent impact. Albany Airport has been operating for many years and provides an important and essential service to the region. They have instituted an aggressive land acquisition program to protect people from prolonged exposure to significant noise levels in accordance with federal regulations. Future mitigation is likely to depend on future legislation and technology. In general, new technology has reduced noise levels on newer planes. As older planes are taken out of service, there will be a gradual decrease in noise levels. Presumably this trend will continue.

Future projected development within the study area is expected to generate noise during construction of specific sites, operation of equipment pertaining to new businesses, daily activity at residences, and from increased traffic. The specific locations of noise sources and noise generated by increased traffic will depend on where development occurs.

Construction

Noise levels are expected to increase over existing levels periodically during construction within the Study Area, particularly during clearing and grading operations that will require heavy earth moving equipment.

Construction noise differs from traffic noise in the following ways:

- ◆ Construction noise only lasts for the duration of the construction contract.
- ◆ Construction activities are usually limited to the daylight hours when most human activity takes place.
- ◆ Construction activities are generally short term.
- ◆ Construction noise is intermittent and depends on the type of operation.

Under the current zoning buildout scenario, construction-related noise could become a common occurrence. This would depend on the pace of development, which hinges greatly on the availability of water and sewer. The Land Conservation Plan would significantly reduce development potential and place a greater emphasis on rural character and an associated reduction in the potential for ambient noise level increases.

Construction activities that may cause noise impacts primarily include clearing and earthwork. However, other activities associated with construction can generate noise, including the everyday truck deliveries and hauling. Although construction noise is unavoidable in its entirety, it can be mitigated and controlled. Mitigation measures should be incorporated into the contract documents to reduce construction noise impacts in the Study Area. The following example mitigation strategies should be considered:

SOURCE CONTROL:

- ◆ Use of properly designed and well-maintained mufflers in all internal combustion engines, engine enclosures, and intake silencers.
- ◆ Regular equipment maintenance. Use of new equipment subject to new product noise emission standards.

SITE CONTROL:

- ◆ Placement of stationary equipment as far away as possible from particularly sensitive receptors. For example: generators or air compressors should be placed at the farthest point away from these receptors while operating.
- ◆ Strategic choice of waste disposal sites.
- ◆ Coordinate work operations to coincide with time periods when people would least likely be affected.
- ◆ Limit work hours. Special consideration should be given to the residential characteristic of the surrounding community and night work should be avoided when possible.
- ◆ Elimination of "tail gate banging."
- ◆ Reduction of backing up procedures for equipment with backup alarms.

Site Specific Noise Generated by Development Operation

Potential sources of site specific noise include the following:

- ◆ operation of machinery
- ◆ playground, amphitheater, outdoor malls or other outdoor attractions
- ◆ traffic in and around development

Within the study area, site specific noise during “operation” includes the normal activities of residential uses. Under the current zoning build-out scenario, the study area would convert from rural to suburban residential and the ambient noise levels would increase accordingly. Noise sources would include traffic, property maintenance activities, and recreation. Overall, the Land Conservation scenario would help to maintain rural character and should result in less density and less noise potential. However, the Land Conservation Plan is not a “no-growth” policy. Additional development in the study area is expected and some areas will experience an increase in traffic as a result.

K. COMMUNITY SERVICES

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Municipal services are an important part of daily community life. A variety of services are provided to residents in the Town including local government, police protection, emergency medical services, fire protection, and education. This section includes discussion of community services within the Study Area and impacts which may result from future development.

Police Protection

Police protection is provided to The Town of Clifton Park by the Saratoga County Sheriff's Department and the New York State Police. Routine patrols are conducted within the Study Area to insure protection of both public and private properties. The closest State Police installation is the Clifton Park Satellite office, which is located in the Public Safety Building, 5 Municipal Plaza, Clifton Park. This satellite office presently has three (3) Sergeants and twelve (12) Troopers assigned. Also, one (1) Senior Investigator, who supervises five (5) Investigators, works out of the satellite office. Currently there are no plans for a new station for the State Police. (See communication dated September 23, 2004 in Appendix B).

The Saratoga County Sheriff's Department also patrols the County roadways in the Study Area. There are substations at Clifton Park Center, in Halfmoon, and one at Malta Commons. The County Sheriff has been contacted and informed of the build out scenario. The Sheriff reports that they will respond to all calls received. (See correspondence dated September 1, 2004 in Appendix B).

Fire Protection

There are four fire departments that service the Study Area on a volunteer basis. They are: the Jonesville Fire Department, which is located on Main Street, the Vischer Ferry Fire District located on Riverview Road, the Rexford Fire Department located in

Rexford, and the Clifton Park Fire Department which is located on Old Route 146, near the intersection of Routes 9 and 146. Fire district boundaries are illustrated on DGEIS Figure III- 13. The four districts were consulted to ascertain current readiness and future capabilities if growth were to happen in the Study Area. The Rexford Fire District indicated that they had no issues and supported the Town's attempt to control growth and maintain rural character within the Study Area. In addition, the Vischer Ferry Fire District responded stating that they are prepared for growth in the Study Area at least over the next ten years as long as it is residential in nature.

As with the Vischer Ferry Fire District, the Town Emergency Services Advisory Board responded to the inquiry on the impacts of the growth scenario. The Board determined that the volume of calls would increase, but not to an extent they cannot handle. The main concern was if industrial growth occurred in the area, it might call for special apparatus to handle potential threats (See Appendix B for correspondence).

Emergency Medical Services

Clifton Park/Halfmoon Emergency Corp, located at 15 Crossings Boulevard in Clifton Park provides emergency medical services (EMS) in the Study Area. The private/not for profit agency offering ambulance service only is staffed with a combination of paid staff and volunteers. Presently there are 37 paid paramedics and other EMS staff, and approximately 30 – 35 active riding volunteers. The agency has been in business for the last fifty years, and they have been at their present location for the past three years. (See communication dated September 23, 2004 in Appendix B). In addition, the Ballston Lake Emergency Squad serves the northern portion of the study area. District boundaries are illustrated on DGEIS Figure III-14.

Education

There are three public school districts that provide education to the students who reside within the Study Area: the Shenendehowa Central School District, Niskayuna Central School District, and the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central School District. The district boundary for each school district does not coincide with the Town boundary lines, therefore, each school district includes a portion of the Study Area. District boundaries



Western Clifton Park

Generic Environmental Impact Statement



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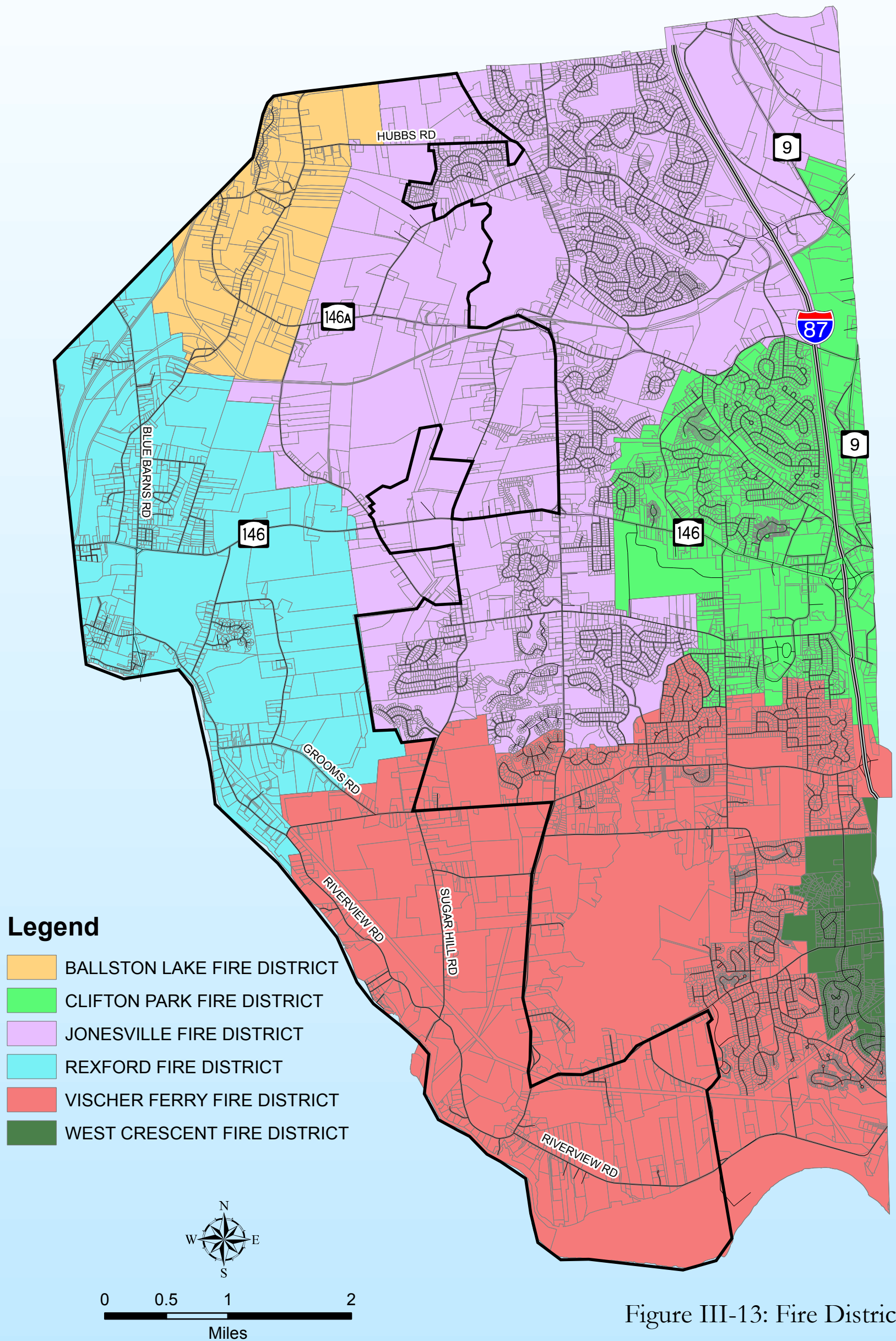


Figure III-13: Fire Districts

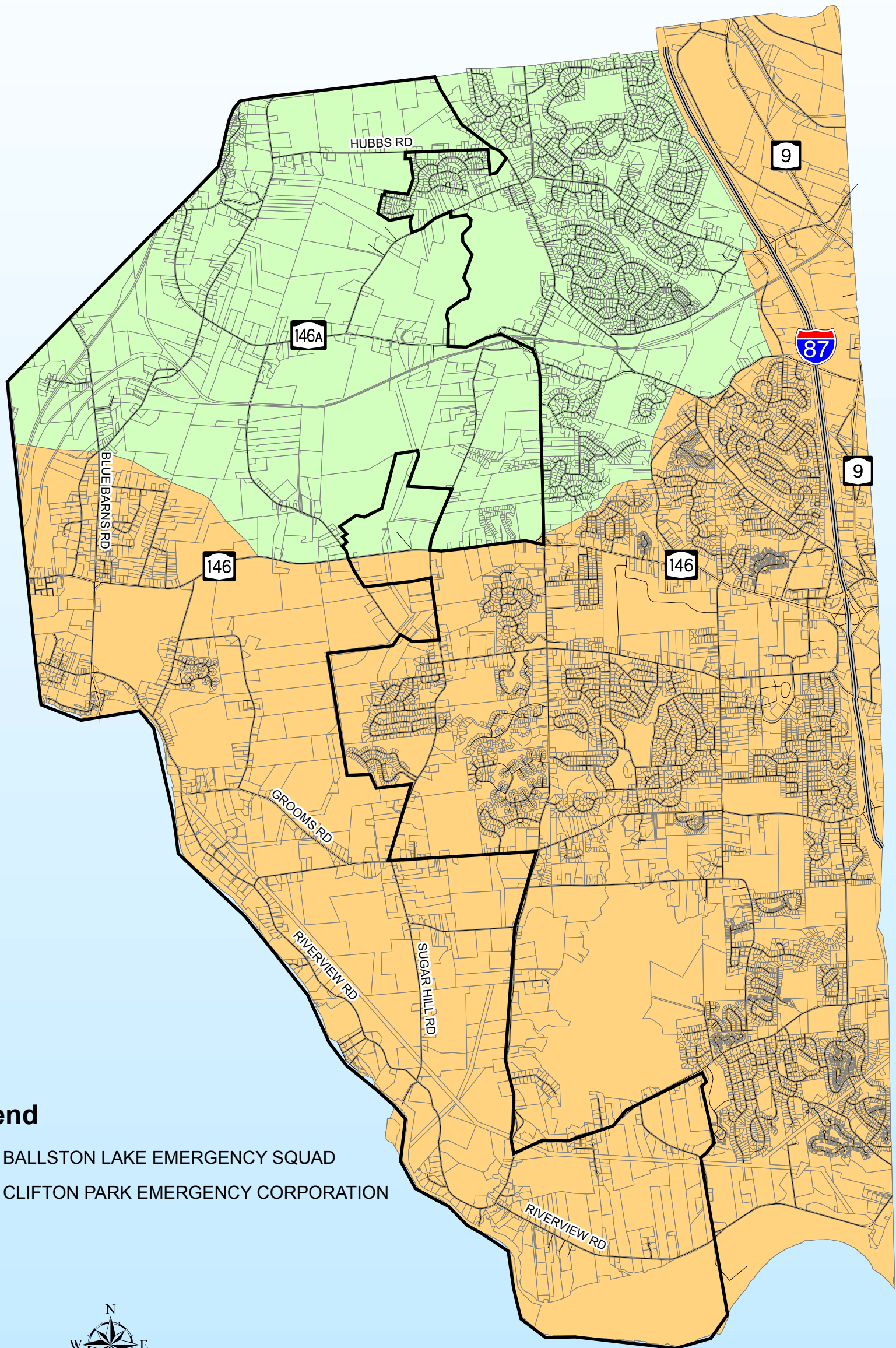


Western Clifton Park

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Legend

- BALLSTON LAKE EMERGENCY SQUAD
- CLIFTON PARK EMERGENCY CORPORATION



Figure III-14: Emergency Medical Services Boundaries

are shown on Figure III-15. Glenclyff Elementary School of the Niskayuna Central School District is the only school within the Study Area. It is located at 961 Riverview Road, Rexford.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Police Protection

Neither the New York State Police nor the County Sheriff have identified any significant impact to their operations as a result of the projected development. (See correspondence and communication in Appendix B.)

Fire Protection

The four districts servicing the Study Area were contacted to assess the impacts of projected development. The Town Emergency Services Advisory Board responded to the inquiry on the impacts of the growth scenario. The Board determined that the volume of calls would increase, but not to an extent they cannot handle. The main concern was industrial growth, however, no industrial uses can be developed under current or proposed zoning. (See Appendix B for correspondence) Since no industrial growth is permitted under current zoning or the Land Conservation Plan, no impacts are anticipated.

Emergency Services

The level of service required as a result of new development depends on the type of development that occurs. For instance, senior housing and nursing homes require a significant number of emergency calls. Likewise, medical facilities have patients that may need to be picked-up. Retail is another land use which generates an increased number of emergency calls. Improperly designed road and access systems could result in an increase in auto accidents.

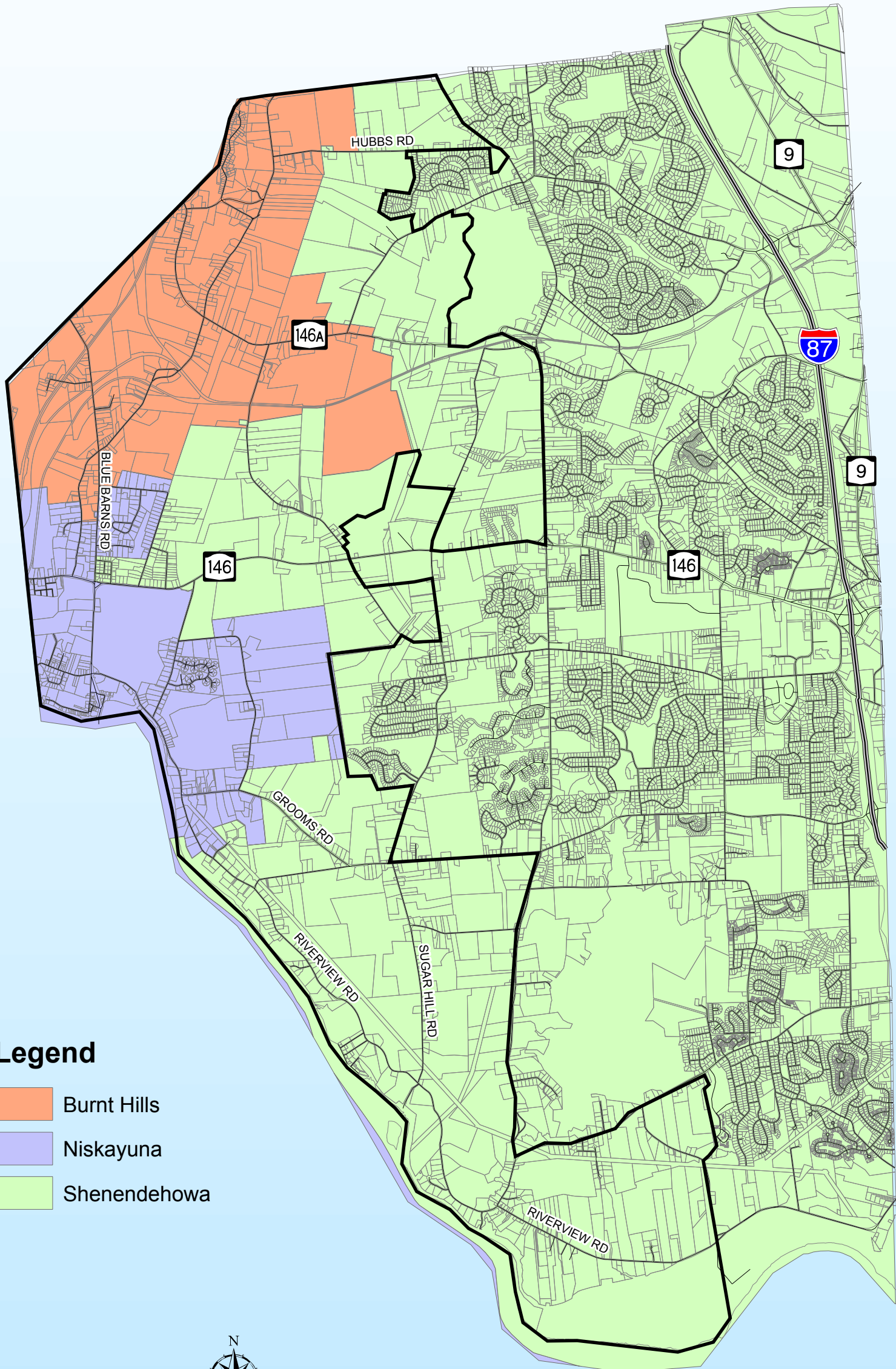


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Legend

- Burnt Hills
- Niskayuna
- Shenendehowa

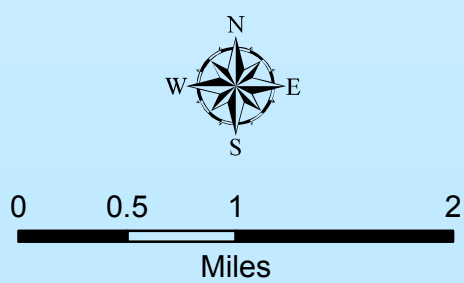


Figure III-15: School Districts

The impact of development in the study area can be expected to increase call volume. The type of housing offered might also impact Emergency Services. If housing is targeted for new families, the impact on services will grow with the aging of the population. If housing is targeted to the retiring community, impact will be felt almost immediately.

The Town Emergency Services Advisory Board responded to the inquiry on the impacts of the growth scenario. The Board determined that the volume of calls would increase, but not to an extent they cannot handle.

Education

Increased residential development within a particular school district would result in an increase in students, which would impact the existing facilities. Beyond the physical constraints, increased school enrollment within a district would impact the student/teacher ratio, perhaps requiring additional teachers. Also, an increase in enrollment would directly increase transportation demands. The ability for a school district to absorb an increase in the student population would depend upon the relationship between the projected rate of growth in student population and the capacity of the school facilities (including buildings) and transportation demands.

There are many factors that impact the change in student population, from a change in the age of residential homeowners (young couples with children vs. senior couples without children) to an increase in number of residential properties within the district boundaries. An increase in the residential population in the Town of Clifton Park will have an unavoidable impact on the three school districts.

To combat this, school districts typically plan five years in advance to accommodate projected increases or decreases in student enrollment. Shenendehowa has adequately planned for the projected student increase over the next 5 years. The school district just opened a new wing of the Shenendehowa High School East Building, which houses all of the district's students in grades 10-12. The High School West Building now houses all of the district's grade 9 students. The school district is continuing with its \$8.8 million

Capital Improvement Project that was approved in 2003 to repave, reroof, and upgrade electrical service, sidewalks, exterior building work and make field renovations.

Presently, the middle schools and elementary schools are at or near capacity. In January 2004, the School Board voted to finalize, design and construct a new elementary school, provide a middle school addition, pool reconstruction and improvement of transportation facilities over the next two years.

To keep the district informed, the town copies the school district on all of the Planning Board meeting minutes.

The Burnt Hills Ballston Lake School District has expressed concern over development within their district, which includes lands within and outside of the Study Area. Depending on the type and intensity of additional development within the Study Area, the potential to affect capacity issues is great. Therefore, the District will possibly commission a similar study assessing growth impacts (see correspondence in Appendix B).

L. UTILITIES

EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section describes the municipal water and sewer service within the study area. Although it is recognized that other utilities, particularly electric and telephone, are required for development, they are generally available throughout the study area and do not typically present development constraints.

Water

The GEIS study area is predominantly unserved by municipal or community water supply systems. The Clifton Park Water Authority (CPWA), which provides municipal water supply to much of the eastern portion of Clifton Park, does not have significant existing infrastructure in the study area. There are, however, some municipal systems

within or adjacent to the study area including the Rexford Water District, the Miller Road Water District (North & South), the Ballston Lake Water District (proposed), the Appleton Road Water District (proposed), and the Corporate Commerce Zone Water District . The existing water system is illustrated on DGEIS Figure III-16.

SUPPLY, TREATMENT AND FILTRATION

The Town's source of water supply is from groundwater well fields located throughout the Town in such areas as the Vischer Ferry Nature Preserve, Lapp Road, Plank Road and Boyack Road.

Water within the Town's water supply system currently meets all of the water quality requirements of the New York State Public Health Code Part 5 with respect to maximum contaminant levels (MCLs). The Town's groundwater supplies are treated at water treatment plants such as the Lapp Road and Boyack Road facilities prior to discharge to the transmission distribution system. Approximately 60 to 80 percent of the town's water comes from the Boyack Road facility.

Saratoga County, with the support of many of its Towns and Villages, is currently pursuing the development of a new water supply system with water being drawn and filtered from the Upper Hudson River in the Town of Moreau. A water transmission network will be installed that extends southerly through the Town of Malta and into the Town of Clifton Park. The currently planned connection point into Clifton Park is to an existing water main on Longkill Road north of Ushers Road. The Town of Clifton Park has entered into agreement with Saratoga County for the purchase of water to serve its residents. The implementation of the system will allow Clifton Park to retire any aging or uneconomical water source and treatment systems as deemed appropriate and will provide additional supply capabilities to support both existing unserved properties as well as new development.

STORAGE

There are a number of existing water storage tanks that serve the Town's distribution system. The tanks include a 330,000 gallon elevated storage tank at the top of the



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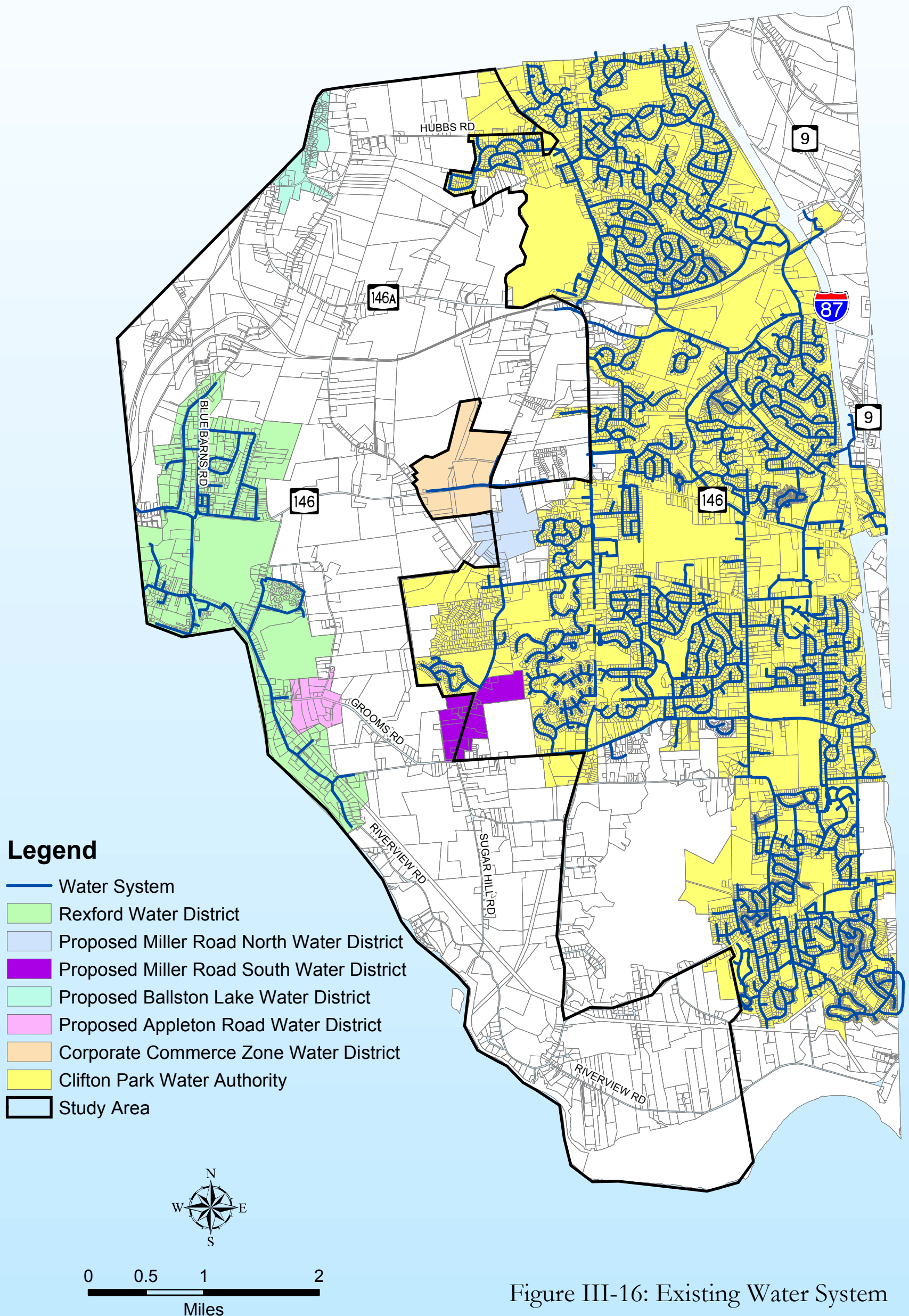


Figure III-16: Existing Water System

Knolltop Subdivision on Kinns Road, a 1.5 million gallon storage tank near the Cortland Manor Subdivision and a 2 million gallon storage tank on Blue Spruce Lane.

Sanitary Sewer:

The majority of the Study area is rural and currently uses onsite wastewater disposal systems for sanitary service. The study area is predominantly unserved by municipal or community sanitary sewer systems (DGEIS Figure III-17). Although the Saratoga County Sewer District (SCSD) collects and treats wastewater flows from most of the eastern portion of the Town, much of the study area, except the northeast corner, is located outside the SCSD district boundary. The SCSD has indicated that there are no plans to extend the district boundary and future extensions are unlikely. The SCSD's policy regarding sewer service is that they will allow sanitary service to any property within the district boundary and will own and maintain any municipal sewer system within the boundary as long as it also owns everything it discharges to downstream. The SCSD will not own or maintain a sewer system that is outside the district boundary. Therefore, any community sewers outside the district boundary would need to be owned by a private transportation corporation or turned over to the Town for ownership and maintenance. Other sewer systems within or adjacent to the study area include the CK Sanitary Transportation Corporation that serves the Clifton Knolls and Country Knolls residential developments, the Corporate Commerce Zone Sewer District, which is currently under construction, the Old Nott Farm and Riverview Landing Sewer Districts which are small formerly private sewer systems that have been accepted by the Town for ownership and maintenance within the Study Area. The existing sanitary sewer system and the limits of the existing sewer service areas are illustrated on DGEIS Figure III-16.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Water

Options for water supply for future development within the study area include individual privately owned drilled wells on a parcel by parcel basis, creation of a new transportation corporation which would be responsible for ownership and maintenance of the respective system, or expansion of the service area of an existing municipal system.



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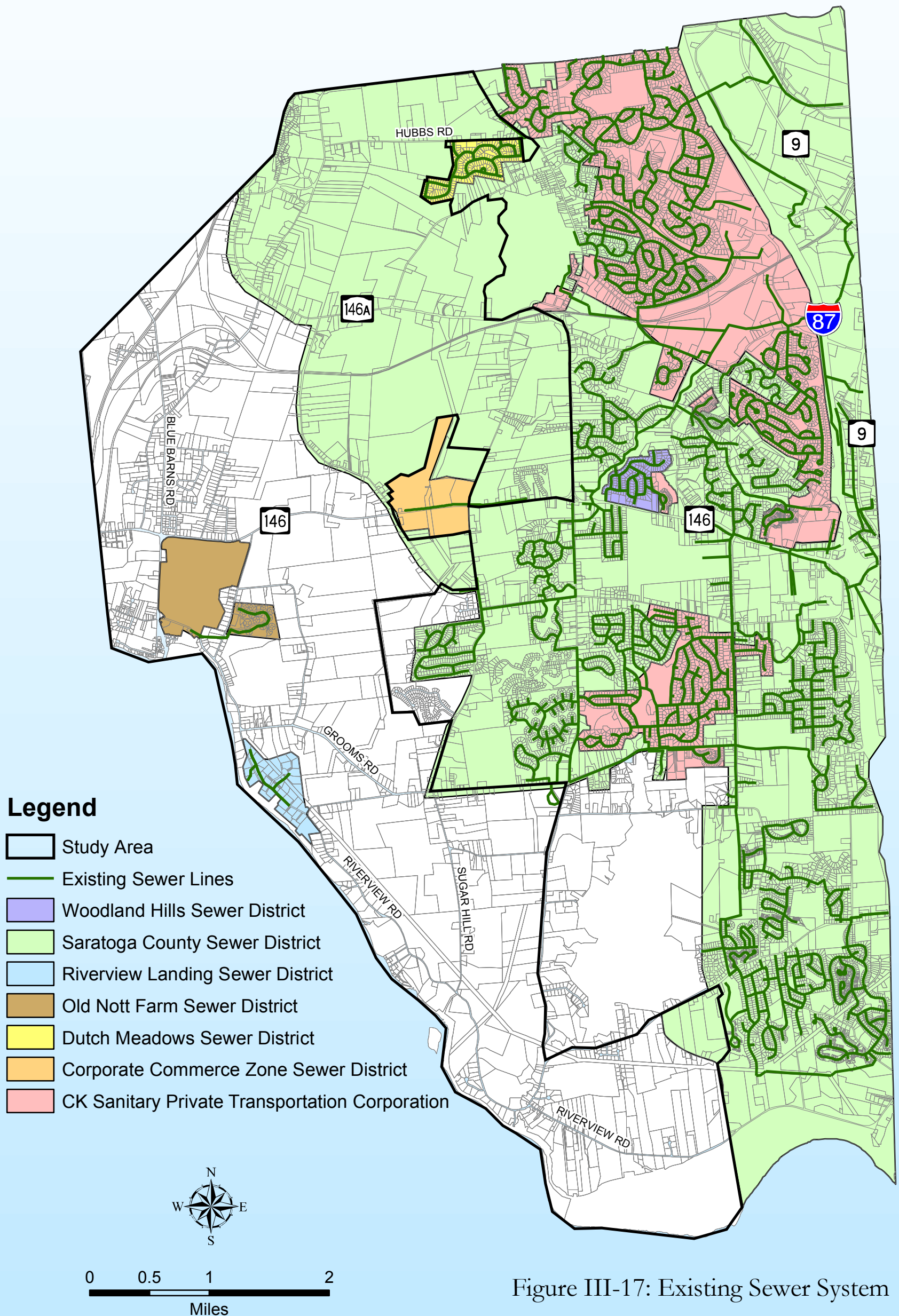


Figure III-17: Existing Sewer System

Continued use of existing individual wells as well as development of new individual wells is not likely to have a significant effect on the availability of groundwater. Due to the relatively low withdrawal rates, it is not typically an issue of concern in rural areas. Each property would be required to meet NYS Department of Health requirements both in terms of capacity and quality. It is possible that some properties would not develop to their maximum potential (1 unit per 3 developable acres) as a result of poor well yields. As new development projects go through the subdivision and site plan review process at the Town level, it is typical for applicants to be required to show proof of the likelihood of adequate water supplies before municipal approvals are granted. This is typically done through the development of representative test wells.

One scenario that could potentially affect the availability of groundwater is the development of relatively dense “clustered” subdivisions. As an example, a subdivision that would have traditionally occurred over 100 acres with home lots spread out over that area, could be concentrated within 25 acres, preserving the remaining 75 acres. The more dense 25 acre development could consequently have wells in much closer proximity to each other. This potential impact needs to be addressed as part of the subdivision review process.

Another scenario that could also affect the availability of groundwater resources in the study area would be the development of new municipal water supply sources. However, there are no plans to develop such systems and through the implementation of a County water supply system the potential for development of additional municipal water sources becomes more remote.

Transportation corporations are similar to municipal water districts in that they provide service to a given area in which all users typically pay a fee for the infrastructure, their consumption of water, and operation and maintenance of the system. The difference is that the transportation corporations are privately run and generally serve a small area associated with a particular development or grouping of developments. Because they are privately owned, these systems can become a complex problem in the future if the Town is required to take ownership over a potentially aging and underperforming water system that requires significant improvements.

Advantages of both transportation corporations and municipal water supply include more stable water supply flow and pressures, typically improved water quality and availability of adequate fire flows for fire suppression.

Municipal water service can be provided by different means. The system can be left to develop by private developers as projects are constructed and the need for municipal water is present. Also, the Town could incrementally increase the reach of the system through small district extensions funded by existing development through district taxes, through the implementation of capital improvement programs, or Town sponsored actions. Funding is a critical issue regardless of the mechanism chosen for improvements. In fairness to those in the Town who have paid their fair share of the capital costs of waters system improvements over the years, the typical source of funding for water extensions has been the developer of a large development project in an area not served by municipal water. If a project is outside of a water district and the developer desires or is required to service to the project with municipal water, then it is the developer pays for the infrastructure. Once in place, the infrastructure is dedicated to the owner of the municipal water system (authority or district). This is a reasonable means of funding improvements until a threshold in service is met and major system improvements (such as a new water tank or increased water treatment capacity) are required in order to serve the next development that comes along. If the project is to move forward, the developer must pay for these major improvements.

A more equitable means of paying for improvements is the development of a capital improvement plan and the establishment of mitigation fees as part of the GEIS. Under this scenario, the capital improvement plan is based on a growth projection and improvements are identified to serve an anticipated development area. The improvements generally include major system infrastructure that benefit all within the district or within a specified area, such as the GEIS study area. The total cost of the improvements are apportioned to existing and future development (often referred to as the public and private share). The public share monies are typically provided by the Town, and the private share monies are provided by new development applicants as the projects go through the local site plan or subdivision plan approval process. Besides the

equitable nature of the cost apportionment, a major benefit of this approach is that the system is properly planned as opposed to project-driven, reactive improvements.

Within the option of providing municipal water for the study area by use of capital improvement plans and/or mitigation fees, there are primarily two varying degrees of service that should be evaluated. The first alternative includes the development of a complete water supply system with municipal water along all existing public roads throughout the Study area. Generally, all existing and new development within the Study area would be able to connect to the improvements. The second alternative is to only provide water mains along a few major corridors throughout the study area that will allow for connection to the existing Rexford Water District and the water supply systems of the neighboring municipalities such as Glenville and Ballston. Primary benefits of such a system include overall strengthening of the water supply system and ability to provide service from multiple locations which becomes critical during emergencies or water main breaks. Municipal water supply service, although not provided to every parcel within the study area, would be more readily available for future extension and connection to the entire study area. Once service is provided along the major corridors, smaller district extensions could be formed to further the expansion of the water service to homes and areas not along the major corridors. These smaller improvements, with service already provided along the major corridors, becomes much more affordable. The future district extensions are funded by the properties within the respective water district with funds typically being bonded and paid for by district users and water connection fees.

The possible infrastructure improvements associated with these two alternatives for municipal water supply are illustrated on DGEIS Figure III-18.

UTILITY IMPROVEMENT COSTS APPORTIONMENT

The following is a summary of two possible alternatives for the development of the water system within the study area. The first scenario involves the development of a system throughout the entire study area while the second scenario is to provide a system through only a few major corridors to allow for the connection to adjacent municipal water systems.



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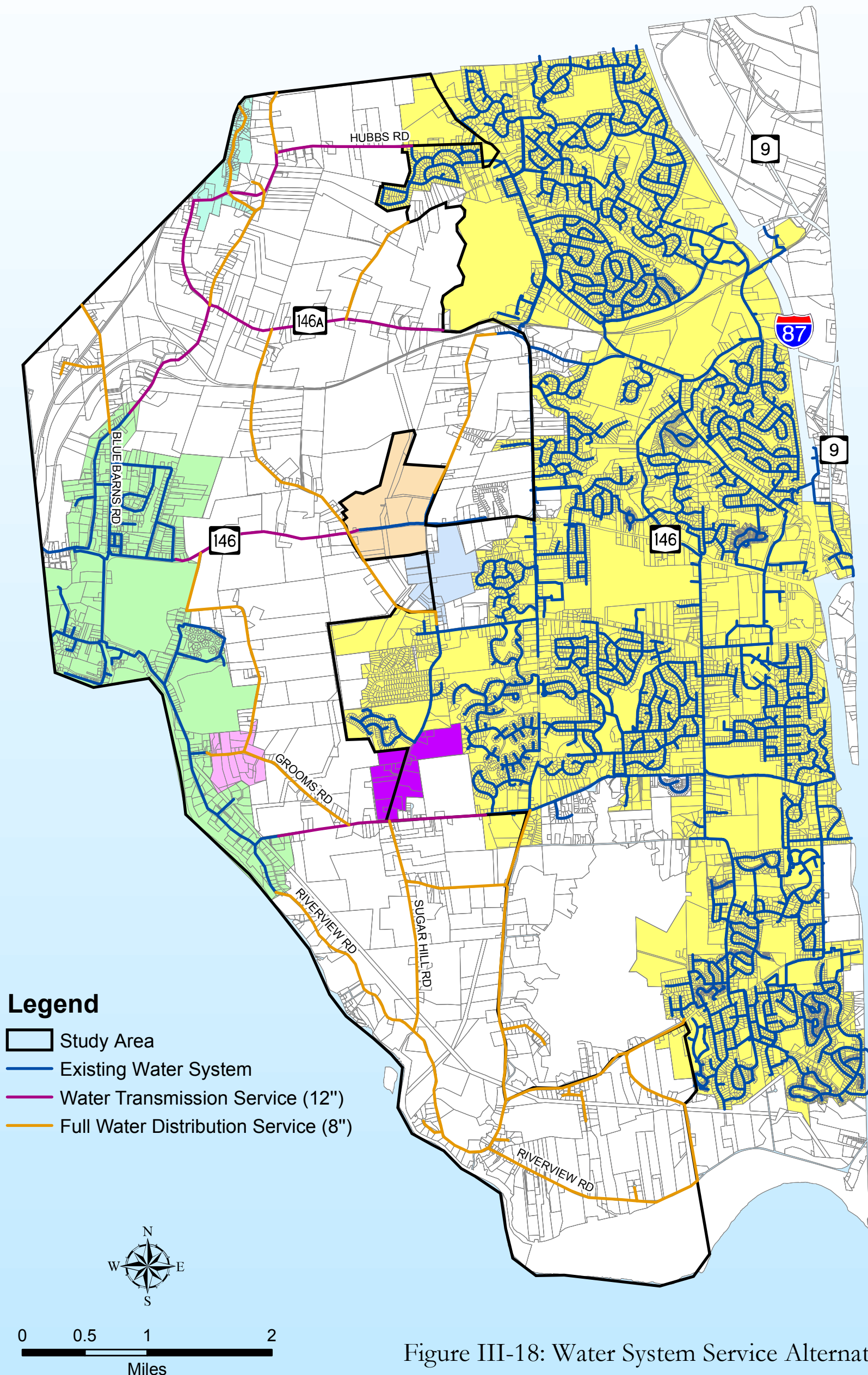


Figure III-18: Water System Service Alternatives

Developers and the public in the study area would share the cost for the water supply system capital improvements described above. As envisioned, the developers would fund a portion of the improvements through mitigation fees. The public's portion would require funding by the Town or through water supply connection fees. A potential problem that requires addressing is the tracking of contributions so that new development pays its "private" share when the development gets approved and then pays again when the connection to the system is actually made.

The mitigation fees and public share costs are calculated based upon the sum of the capital improvement plan costs divided by the total equivalent dwelling units (EDU's). The study area currently consists of 1,155 EDU's and the development projections are for an additional 2,881 EDU's (developers share). Thus, 28.6% of the capital improvement costs would be borne by the public and 71.4% by the developers.

The capital improvement costs of servicing the entire study area with 12" and 8" watermain would be approximately \$16,100,000. This cost represents only the watermain and does not include potential treatment and storage upgrades required by the increased service area.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Mitigation Cost} &= \text{Developers share} \\ &= \$16,100,000(71.4\%) \\ &= \$11,495,400 / 2881 \text{ EDU's} \\ &= \$3,990/\text{EDU} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Mitigation Cost} &= \text{Public share} \\ &= \$16,100,000(28.6\%) / 1155 \text{ EDU's} \\ &= \$4,604,600 \end{aligned}$$

The capital improvement costs of providing only service along a few major corridors would be approximately \$4,500,000. This cost represents only the watermain and does not include potential treatment and storage upgrades required by the increased service area. As in the scenario above, the public share includes all existing development with

in the study area. However, with water being provided only along a few major corridors, the number of connections made to the improved water system is difficult to estimate. Although all parcels will not be able to make a connection to the water system it is assumed that public water will be advanced closer to all parcels for further privately funded extensions or water district extensions and as such is a benefit to the entire study area. As a result, a fee could be charged over the entire study area to fund the improvements and or a portion of the public share could be provided by Town funds.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Mitigation Costs} &= \text{Developers share} \\ &= \$4,500,000(71.4\%) \\ &= \$3,213,000 / 2881 \text{ EDU's} \\ &= \$1,115/\text{EDU} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Mitigation Costs} &= \text{Public share} \\ &= \$4,500,000(28.6\%) \\ &= \$1,287,000 \end{aligned}$$

Sanitary Sewer:

As indicated above, the SCSD has indicated that there are no plans to extend the district boundary and future district extensions are unlikely. For those areas within the SCSD service area, any large scale development proposals should be required to connect to municipal sewer service. It will not be practical for low density developments to absorb the infrastructure costs associated with extension of municipal facilities, and it is expected that this type of development will continue to use individual on-site wastewater disposal systems. Given the environmental impacts associated with failing individual wastewater disposal systems, and more importantly private sewer systems (transportation corporations), the local regulatory agencies (Town Board or Planning Board) should have greater authority over the use of individual wastewater disposal systems and the establishment of new or expansion of existing transportation corporations to serve new development.

Because of the unlikelihood of the SCSD to extend its service area to cover the entire Study area and the inability to accurately predict the pace and location of development in the study area, it is beyond the scope of this GEIS to prepare a master plan or capital improvement plan for municipal sewer service for the Study area at this time.

M. CULTURAL RESOURCES

A Phase 1A Cultural Resource Survey was conducted to investigate the potential occurrence of historic and prehistoric cultural resources within the Study Area. The report content and format follow the standards adopted by the New York Archaeological Council and the recommendations of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP). A full copy of the report is provided in Appendix I.

The Phase 1A investigation involves a review of data files kept by the NYSOPRHP and the NYS Museum, as well as other resources such as historic maps. Based on the presence of recorded historic and prehistoric sites, the topography of the area and the proximity to travel corridors and food and water sources, the sensitivity of an area to contain cultural resources can be determined. A site walkover is also conducted for site specific projects to identify areas that have been significantly disturbed and are unlikely to contain resources. No site-specific field work was conducted for this study due to the size of the study area and the scope of the GEIS.

The following is a synopsis of the report, including the identification of archaeologically sensitive areas and recommendations for further investigation.

Brief History

The western half of the Town of Clifton Park occupied a very strategic location. Located at the north shore of the Mohawk River, the corridor from Niskayuna to the Saratoga area had been a focus of trade, transportation and warfare. Consequently, a number of historic sites and structures are concentrated along the Mohawk River.

Avenues of trade and warfare between the Mohawk tribe of the Iroquois and the Algonquin were the first man-made transportation routes of the region. The Iroquois name for Saratoga was Sarachtogue, meaning hillside of a great river. An early Indian trail was called the Kayderosseras Trail extending from Lake George to the Mohawk River. Before this area was converted to mostly agricultural lands it was a favorite hunting ground of the Mohawk Indians.

After the Kayaderosseras Patent was ratified in the 18th century, settlement by newly immigrated Europeans proceeded quickly. Later, in the 19th century, the canal era contributed to the development of towns along the canal routes. The Town of Clifton Park was annexed from the Town of Halfmoon in 1828 and was formally named in 1829. In 1832, the nation's second railroad was constructed to carry passengers and freight between Schenectady and Saratoga. The hamlet of Jonesville developed as a result of the improvement in rail transportation.

Continuing for the next 100 years with relatively little growth, even a decrease in a population, the Town's rural character and hamlets were completely intact up to the mid 20th century when a new period of unprecedented growth began. Since the 1950s, the Town has been growing increasingly to what we see today.

Nevertheless, the agricultural nature of much of the western lands of Clifton Park has been a stable feature since the earliest days of settlement. As such, many historic homesteads and farm buildings have been preserved through continuous usage. These represent the majority of cultural resources in this portion of Clifton Park. Many of these structures are represented in the "Photographs" section of the complete report which is presented in its entirety in Appendix I.

Documentary Research

**OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC
PRESERVATION (OPRHP) AND NYS MUSEUM**

Archeological Sites

An examination of the archeological site files at NYSOPRHP and the NYS Museum indicated that there are 30 archeological sites within the Study Area. Properties include National Register of Historic Places (NR) recognition or eligibility (NRE), State Register of Historic Places (SR), and the local Clifton Park Register of Historic Places (CP). Several properties are within the National Register Vischer Ferry Historic District (VFHD). The district encompasses 246 acres and includes items representing over two centuries of historical development.

Building-Structure Inventory

The NYSOPRHP computer inventory identified 22 properties that have been determined eligible for the National Register located within or adjacent to the Study Area. This includes 4 historic archeological sites and 18 structures.

State and National Registers

According to the files at NYSOPRHP, there are two National Register properties including one district, the Vischer Ferry Historic District (VFHD) located within the southeastern portion of the Study Area. Items that represent over two centuries of historical development in the area include a section of the original Erie Canal, cut stone remains of a canal drydock, abutments from two farm bridges that spanned the canal, a section of road established in the colonial period, the sites of Fort's Ferry landing and cellar holes and sites of dwellings and outbuildings associated with the settlement and subsequent development of the area around Vischer Ferry during the 18th and 19th century.

The other National Register property is Grooms Tavern located at the intersection of Grooms Road and Sugar Hill Road. This was the site of the first Town Board meeting.

Riverview Road is a designated Federal Scenic Byway referred to as the Mohawk Towpath Byway.

HISTORIC MAP REVIEW.

Maps dating from 1756 to 1993 were examined to research historic places, names and geological features. The first structures indicated occur along the Mohawk River, with one structure located near the Alplaus Kill. The next stages of development are shown on the nineteenth-century maps and include development of and along the old Erie Canal and new roads built along former Indian trails. Railroads were built from Schenectady to Saratoga and roads eventually are shown to be upgraded or improved. Hamlets increased in density with decades.

PRECONTACT AND HISTORIC OVERVIEW

The original Indian occupants of the Clifton Park area were the Algonquins. The Iroquois Indians gained control of the territory and called Saratoga, Sarachtogue, meaning hillside of a great river, and was part of a greater area called Kayaderosseras. The area is ideal for potential precontact resources due to the numerous waterways in the study area. Post-contact settlement occurred at the ferry crossings and the dense hamlets of Vischer Ferry and Rexford, along with the Erie Canal, giving the Study Area various points of archeological sensitivity.

WINDSHIELD SURVEY.

A windshield survey was conducted on June 16, 2004 by a staff archeologist and architectural historian to identify current land uses, to assess the degree of historic preservation in the hamlets and along the roadways, and to document the open spaces of the Town of Clifton Park. Photographs of the study area are included after the Map section of the Phase 1A survey.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

The general nature of this cultural resource investigation has not included extensive investigations of any specific location within the study area. The historic maps provided in the Cultural Resources Survey (DGEIS Appendix I) give a good idea of the location of historic structures within the study area. It should be noted that this does not preclude the need for standard archeological investigation related to any future development.

The Phase 1A identifies those parcels within the Study Area that could produce historic or prehistoric cultural resources. Development of these parcels without further archeological research could result in the destruction of cultural resources. To mitigate the potential impact to cultural resources, a Phase 1B field investigation should be conducted prior to site development. If this research reveals significant cultural resources, additional archeological work would be necessary to identify and protect the resource. In general, site development can proceed on a site with cultural resources providing the resource is preserved through avoidance or data recovery. The latter would involve the preparation of a detailed mitigation plan. Since the Town is not in a position to review the results of archeological investigations, it is recommended that the Town rely on the expertise of the NYSOPRHP to review and provide their determination as the measure for approval of projects relative to cultural resources.

With the help of Mr. John Scherer, Town Historian, the Town has been proactive in its resource preservation. The Phase 1A Survey indicated areas of sensitivity might be found overlooking waterways in the Study Area. According to the report, elevated areas overlooking wet areas are ideal for precontact resources. Although structures have been built in many of these ideal areas, intact archeological sites may still be present in such locations. In addition, historic district designations have been proposed for the hamlets of Rexford, Grooms Corners, and Clifton Park Center just outside the Study Area.

N. FISCAL RESOURCES

Fiscal impact analysis generally compares the public cost and revenues associated with residential growth, commercial growth and land conservation, and estimates the relative impact on future property taxes between different future land use scenarios.

The purpose of this fiscal impact analysis is to evaluate the potential fiscal impacts of build-out under current zoning within Western Clifton Park (from Build-Out Analysis – DGEIS Appendix C) and compare the results to two potential mitigation alternatives within the same area. Each alternative incorporates the same new zoning (Conservation Residential – CR), but are coupled with different levels of conservation investment.

The model is based on data from recent Town and school district budgets and includes important assumptions such as the future population of school-age children, value of new construction, costs of acquiring land for conservation, and the proportion of future land uses in residential, commercial, and land conservation uses.

MODEL DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

This fiscal analysis is designed to predict the relative impact of future alternative land use scenarios on the taxes paid by Clifton Park property owners. The three alternatives considered in this process are:

1. Build-out under current zoning,
2. Build-out under the potential Land Conservation Plan and potential new zoning changes, with no expenditure on open space,
3. Build-out under the potential Land Conservation Plan and potential new zoning, with the costs to purchase permanent easements/development rights to protect approximately one-half of the desired open space land (approximately 1,700 acres).

Expenses & Revenues

The fiscal analysis considers current expenditures and revenues from the base year and estimates future expenditures and revenues. The expense side and the non-tax revenue in the model uses a per-capita method to translate the population/new construction growth into the projected expenses and non-tax revenues to the Town and the school district. The per-capita cost is the average current cost per person to the Town, and per pupil for the school district.

As the Town and school district grow and change, so too will costs and revenue capacity. These future figures are initially estimated proportionally to the amount of change to the population and service area. The model then accounts for the fact that not all costs and revenues are necessarily proportional to the amount of change in population and service area, since certain types of costs and revenues are more fixed than others. For example, the costs of running the Supervisor's office will not rise as quickly as that of more labor and service-intensive departments such as the Town highway department.

Data Collection

Updated data was collected for the Town of Clifton Park and the school district, including interviews with Town staff and with the school district as needed to properly understand facility and capital capacity, and how future growth may be accommodated. An estimated proportion of costs that are relatively constant and those that are variable, including approximate levels of service where major new capital costs may be expected, were identified through these interviews. This information was used to model expenses relative to future capital and operating needs.

Cost and Revenue Estimate Adjustments

Existing facilities and service areas may have additional capacity or, on the contrary, may have inadequate existing capacity. After the per-capita costs and revenues were estimated, the per capita costs and non-tax revenue were adjusted by the municipal service area to account for fixed costs, existing excess capacity, or existing inadequate capacity. These adjusted costs and revenues for the Town are then multiplied by the increased population caused by the proposed land use scenario.

The revenue side of the model is primarily based on increased property taxes that are generated by the proposed land use scenario. When the area for each land use scenario is changed, they increase or decrease the assessed value from which the Town generates its revenue. Other non-tax revenue sources are also inputs to the model.

In addition to the increased assessment, other local and school revenues were generated using the per capita method described above in the expense side of the model. Other revenues include local fees and charges such as interest, rents, licenses, permits, service charges, fines, and inter-governmental aid--perhaps most relevant to the school district.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Under current zoning build-out, changes to the property tax base include increases in residential and commercial development in the study area. New homes were estimated at an average of \$370,000 in the R2 and R3 zoning districts and an average of \$220,000 for the R1 zoning district. New commercial development was estimated ranging in value (land and buildings) for an average of \$200,000 per acre in the B-3 zoning district to \$150,000 per acre in the B-1 and B-2 zoning districts. Using figures from the U. S. Census and the Capital District Regional Planning Commission, there are 2.6 persons on average per household with one school-age child per household on average (noting that some will have more, some less or none).

For the new zoning scenarios, in general, the multipliers/assumptions remained the same as current zoning build-out. New homes were estimated at \$370,000 average value for residences in the Conservation Residential (CR) zoning district, and an average of \$220,000 for residences in the Hamlet Residential (HR) zoning district. Potential new commercial values in the Hamlet Mixed Use (HM) zoning was estimated to be an average of \$200,000 per acre.

Scenario 1. Build-out Under Current Zoning.

The results of the fiscal impact analysis of the build-out under current zoning of this portion of Town noted a relative potential 50 percent increase in overall value of the tax base of the Town. The number of school-age children was estimated to increase by about 4,000 additional new students. School taxes were projected to increase relative to current taxes by approximately 12 percent. The net costs of Town services were projected to remain relatively stable.

Scenario 2. Build-out Under Proposed Zoning

This scenario is a mitigation alternative to the potential build-out under current zoning. Under this scenario of implementing the potential new zoning, significantly less development of all types would be allowed in Western Clifton Park.

The major conclusion of the implementation of the new zoning and the reduced growth potential is that the new zoning will have a beneficial fiscal impact on Clifton Park's future tax base, as the tax base will continue to grow as a relative potential increase in the overall value of the tax base of the town. This growth in tax base would be somewhat less than that projected for current zoning since the proposed zoning would cut density approximately in half.

The impacts to both town and school costs under the proposed zoning would be less than current zoning. The number of school-age children was estimated to increase only by about 2,500 students, or about 37% fewer students than potential build-out under current zoning. With fewer potential students, there is estimated to be less future school taxes compared to the scenario of build-out under current zoning. However, there are some contingencies regarding this estimate: relative to the unknown factors of growth outside of the Town of Clifton Park and its effect on growth in the school district; and the factor of the potential savings due to potentially fewer school-age kids may be affected by the timing of those future school-age students.

In summary, the net costs of town services alone, the net costs of school services alone, the combined town and school costs and the combined town and school costs with capital construction costs factored in were estimated all to be proportionally less than the potential build-out under current zoning. Overall, the implementation of new zoning is a beneficial fiscal impact to taxes, by approximately three percent less than build-out under current zoning.

Thus the implementation of the new zoning with its reduced growth potential offers a modest tax savings in avoided costs for both town and school district costs.

Implementing the potential new zoning offers several beneficial impacts, but the new zoning alone would not fully address the goals to protect significant acres of larger blocks of open space and farmland in Western Clifton Park as recommended by the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan.

Scenario 3. Build-out Under Proposed Zoning + Protection of 1,700 Acres of Open Space

This scenario is another mitigation alternative to build-out under current zoning. Under this scenario of implementing potential new zoning, less development would be allowed for all types of development in Western Clifton Park. Additionally under this scenario about 1,700 acres would be permanently protected. For the purposes of the model, about 1,400 acres would be protected through the purchase of the development rights/permanent easements, and approximately 300 acres would be purchased fee simple.

This scenario would result in a relative proportional increase in the overall value of the tax base of the town. The amount of potential future tax base growth under this scenario would be less than the potential build-out under current zoning.

The net costs of Town services were projected to increase slightly related to the cost of conservation investment, compared to the potential build-out under current zoning. Under this scenario, the cost to protect open space through purchase of development

rights and fee simple is estimated to be in the ballpark of \$15 million, and would secure approximately 1,700 acres of open space land.

Over the long term, based on findings from studies of the value of land conservation investments in other communities, it would be expected that property values would rise in value due to the amenity value of the open space. This value increase would tend to offset and could surpass the effect on the slight loss of tax base. In the fiscal impact analysis done for the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan 2003, it was estimated that a major open space conservation program could boost real property values two percent or more, all other things being equal, due to the amenity value of a comprehensive open space system being in place as an amenity to the community.

With fewer potential residential units to be built-out under this scenario, the number of school-age children was estimated to increase only by about 1,850 new students or about 54% less potential school-age children compared to build-out under current zoning. School costs, and school costs with construction factored in as well, were estimated both to decrease compared to build-out under current zoning.

When the town and school taxes with construction were combined, they were projected to be nearly the same costs with no significant difference, as the costs of potential build-out under current zoning.

In summary, the new zoning coupled with a moderate level of conservation investment (about 1,700 acres) is estimated to cost approximately the same today in terms of fiscal impact as the potential build-out under current zoning.

To date, the Town of Clifton Park has protected or is close to permanently protecting nearly 400 acres of open space lands throughout Town through town efforts, with a cost value at about \$1 million. A recent success was New York State Governor George Pataki announcing a grant award of about \$320,000 to the Town of Clifton Park towards protecting open space lands in the Dwaas Kill Nature Area – in the eastern area of Clifton Park, to be acquired by the Town in October 2004. Also in October 2004, the Town applied for a New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets grant

towards the purchase of development rights/permanent easement on 85 acres of farmland in Western Clifton Park.

As Clifton Park moves forward in continuing its progress to date in permanent land conservation, and when and if the town is ready to take a more substantial step in additional conservation investment in the open space lands of Western Clifton Park to protect some additional key farmland and open space outlined in the Land Conservation Plan, the preferred mitigation to the current zoning may be this scenario of the new zoning coupled with this moderate conservation investment to secure protection of 1,700 acres. As discussed above, the estimated cost of protecting approximately 1,700 acres through fee simple and purchase of development rights/permanent easement would be an estimated \$15 million today. The cost of borrowing \$15 million today at a 5% interest rate for a 20-year loan term would be approximately \$1.2 million per year for 20 years.

Overall Conclusions

The land use and fiscal analysis of these potential scenarios developed for this GEIS show the relative impact of the current zoning pattern compared to the mitigation or recommended land use pattern -- the Land Conservation Plan development pattern -- on the town and the school district as a whole.

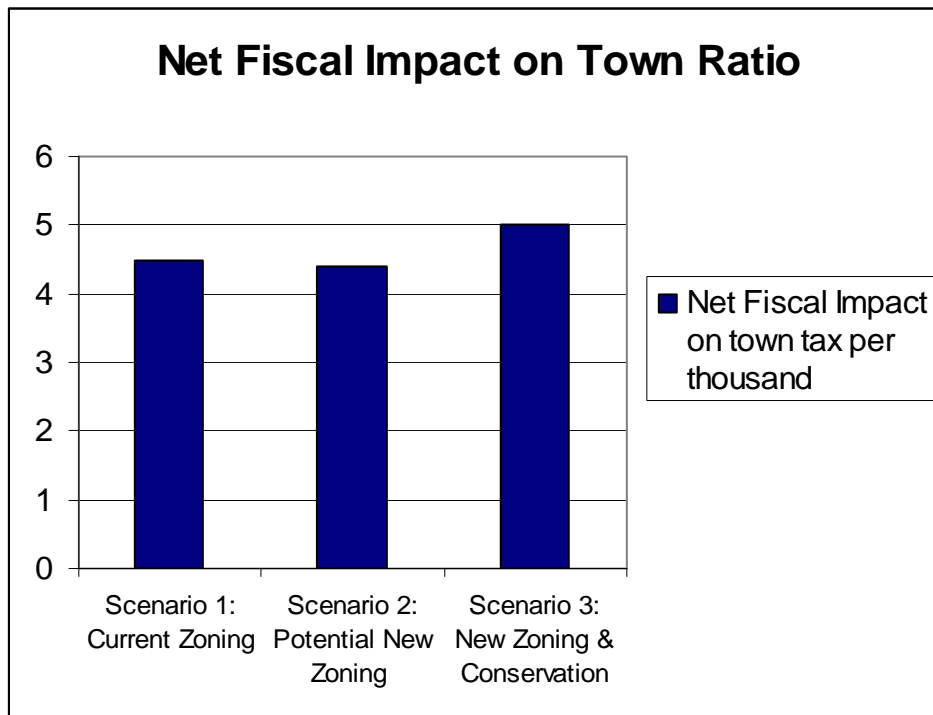
Factors outside of the model which may have an impact on these findings include potential relative changes to the Town's share of county sales tax revenues, continued growth of communities outside of the study area, and changes to the state aid formula for schools, among others.

Notably, the development pattern that will actually occur in the town can not exactly be predicted as this depends on some factors beyond the control of the town. These factors include individual landowners' decisions on whether to sell and/or develop property, decisions by the development community on where and what to develop, and any new future policy decisions by the town on regulating land use and development, and other policies and tools, as well as regional and national growth and economic trends, among other factors.

The major conclusion reached in the fiscal impact analysis is that the implementation of the new zoning will have a beneficial fiscal impact on the tax base of the Town of Clifton Park.

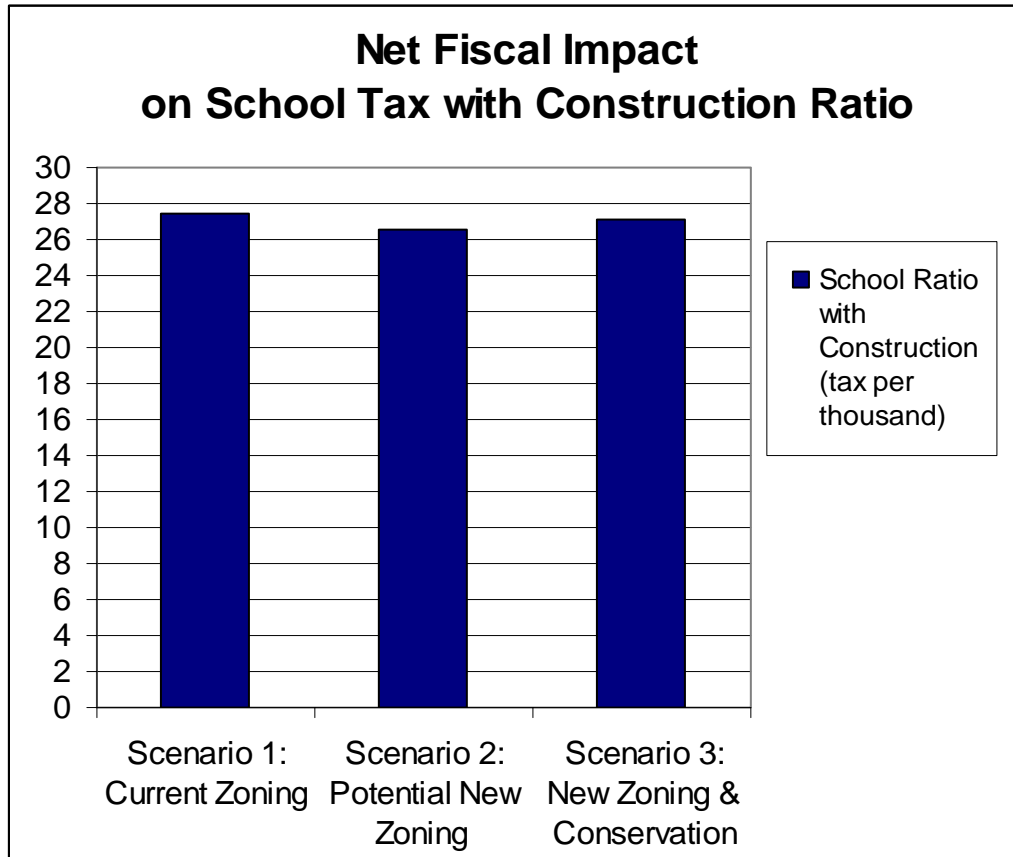
Per the fiscal impact on potential Town costs for services, build-out under the potential new zoning would have less impact on future Town costs than build-out under current zoning, as shown in Table III-N-1 below.

Table III-N-1
Comparison of Fiscal Impact on Town Ratio Relative
to Potential Future Build-Out Scenarios



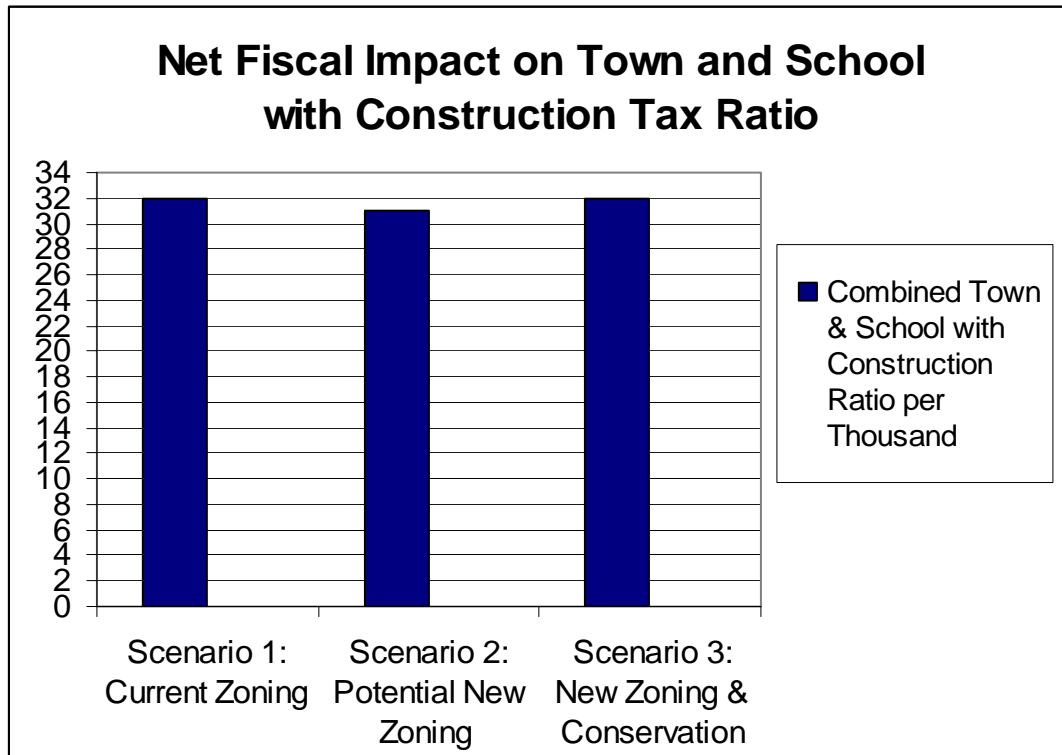
In comparing build-out under current zoning to build-out under the potential new zoning, the net fiscal impact on school tax ratio with construction is less than under the current zoning scenario as depicted in Table III-N-2 below. Implementing new zoning plus conservation investment will not significantly impact the school taxes with construction, in fact this scenario is still slightly less impact than build-out under current zoning.

Table III-N-2
Comparison of Fiscal Impact on School Ratio with Construction Relative to Potential Future Build-Out Scenarios



Finally, in a comparison of all three scenarios combining the Town and school tax with construction ratio, build-out under new zoning with no conservation investment is less than build-out under current zoning (with no conservation investment) as shown in Table III-N-3. Notably, build-out under current zoning compared to the new zoning with conservation investment is estimated to have about the same fiscal impact on town and school taxes combined.

**Table III-N-3
Combined Town and School Tax Ratio with Construction
per thousand**



Implementing the potential new zoning offers several beneficial impacts related to reducing potential development build-out and future town and school costs, but the new zoning alone likely would not fully address the goals to protect significant acres of larger blocks of open space and farmland in Western Clifton Park from the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan or the Town of Clifton Park Comprehensive Plan. An important consideration upon implementing potentially the new zoning without any additional future conservation investment is that the potential exists for the significant loss of working farms, active farmlands, and the loss of large areas of contiguous farmland and habitat. Likely, if it is important for the town to protect large acreages of open space and farmland in Western Clifton Park, some level of conservation investment would still be needed -- coupled with the new zoning.

Another major conclusion of this fiscal impact analysis is that implementing the new zoning with a moderate-level conservation investment of the cost of protecting about

1,700 acres would be about the same fiscal impact as the current zoning, all other things being equal, with the additional amenity benefits of protecting land for the future and expected moderate increase in property values.

In many growing communities such as Clifton Park, land values have risen faster in the past few years than the cost of borrowing. As time goes by, any conservation investment would be expected to increase in present value and cost more over time if investment is deferred further out in the future, as the land values would likely continue to rise, all other things being equal, and likely the land supply within the Town of Clifton Park would continue to decrease over time. Also, the opportunities to protect priority lands in the Land Conservation Plan may change over time depending upon individual landowners timing of decisions and needs over time. Given the likely continuation of rising land values and active real estate market in areas of Clifton Park, the costs and benefits of moving forward with additional conservation investment warrant further exploration by the town.

Finally, the above fiscal impact analysis compares the public conservation investment cost and revenues associated with residential growth, commercial growth and land conservation, and estimates the relative impact on future property taxes between different future land use scenarios. However, a notable distinction of the proposed new zoning is the opportunity for open space incentive zoning, which would allow for transfer of development rights within Western Clifton Park on the major condition that development rights are purchased from priority open space and farmlands identified in the Land Conservation Plan. Thus, within the new zoning proposed, there are opportunities for private conservation investment to the degree that it is economically valuable and desirable to individual developers and landowners. Thus, the potential exists for public conservation investment to be decreased as private conservation investment increases to meet the demands of the development community to potentially transfer some development within Western Clifton Park. Thus, the potential exists for less fiscal impacts on taxes from the costs of conservation investment if the private sector is induced to engage in the purchasing of easements/development rights for the benefit of transferring development rights (up to maximum caps per new zoning districts) within Western Clifton Park.

SECTION IV.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

A. TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY, & SOILS

The Study Area does not contain any unique land features that would warrant special consideration. Soil erosion is likely to increase as a result of development activity in the Study Area. It may be argued that some agricultural operations could result in greater loss of soil and subsequent siltation in streams and other water bodies than what is anticipated from development. The difference, however, is that it is generally in the best interest of the farmer to employ erosion control practices that limit this loss, since soil is the lifeblood of the operation.

Numerous erosion control methods and products are available to the development community. Most projects employ these methods and are generally requirements of site plan approval. However, very often the erosion control systems are not maintained or properly installed. When this occurs, sediment-laden water is released from the site, impacting areas downstream.

B. WATER RESOURCES

Development will bring both an increase in runoff and a decrease in water quality. Development will increase impervious surfaces and will decrease natural storage areas. Residential uses typically increase the potential for the contamination of runoff from overuse of fertilizers and pesticides and spills of vehicle fluids and household chemicals. This is further confounded by the desire of individuals to clear up to stream edges, reducing the buffering capacity of the adjacent lands. Buffering provisions for both streams and wetlands will help to address this issue. The conservation subdivision process will further recognize and buffer water resources that may significantly reduce water quality impacts. Furthermore, adherence to the SPDES General Construction permit, construction of water quality basins and the use of low impact development stormwater measures will contribute to the efforts to prevent significant impacts. Key to the success of the recommendations will be enforcement and proper maintenance.

C. ECOLOGY

Development within the Study Area will impact a significant amount of habitat including several ecological communities. As much as 7,700 acres of natural and agricultural land could be impacted under current zoning and subdivision regulations. Some of this impact may be to sensitive ecological systems such as wetlands and streams. The mitigation measures for this impact are significant. They include cutting potential buildout of the study area in half and incorporating conservation subdivision procedures for all new residential development that will cluster development and provide for quality open space. Included with this is the potential option for landowners to participate in a purchase of development rights program that is intended to establish permanent land conservation easements in accordance with the Town's Open Space Plan.

Despite the proposed new land use regulations, some development will occur within the study area that will impact ecological communities. Approximately 3,000-4,000 acres of land could be impacted in some manner. It is intended that the conservation subdivision process will help to identify important ecological areas so that the loss of land will include the less valuable habitat. It is important to note that some species have broad habitat requirements. The loss of any land, even tilled farmland and large mowed or hayed fields, could impact certain species. Habitat loss is a key factor in the reduction of various wildlife populations and the listing of species as rare, threatened and endangered.

D. LAND USE AND ZONING

The Land Conservation Plan offers an opportunity to preserve the rural character of a large portion of the study area through the implementation of the Open Space Plan and carefully crafted zoning, subdivision regulations, design guidelines, and incentives. The purchase of development rights and other measures to provide permanent conservation easements is considered a critical part of the plan. If the Town is unable to implement land conservation then there will be an unavoidable loss of open space that may impact the character of the study area and the goals of the Open Space Plan.

E. AGRICULTURE & OPEN SPACE

The potential unavoidable adverse impacts to agriculture and open space have been identified above in terms of the conversion of farmland to other uses (land use perspective). However, there is also an impact to the agricultural community. This impact would be felt locally through a reduction of locally grown farm products located a short drive from populated areas of town. As viewed from a county level and even a regional level, the loss of agricultural land (both active and inactive or abandoned) will have an unavoidable impact on agricultural activity and potential future activity in the region. This is contrary to the Saratoga County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.

Programs that will reduce taxes and/or pay the farmer up-front for the permanent loss of the development potential of their land may be sufficient to encourage some folks to remain in farming or to simply hold their land as open space. This is not expected to preserve all the agricultural land and, as exemplified by current development trends and proposals, some agricultural land will be lost.

F. RECREATION & TRAILS

In the western part of Town, open space and trails will be important components of the recreational program. Active recreational needs will have to be assessed based on future development patterns. The demand for recreational resources will be less under the Land Conservation scenario than what would be anticipated for build-out under current zoning.

G. VISUAL RESOURCES

Some visual resources may be lost within the Study Area due to development. Some areas exhibit exceptional views and should be preserved to the greatest extent possible. Through the provisions of the conservation subdivision, Town boards will have the opportunity to review the importance and the impact to viewsheds and the best way to

preserve them. Mitigation for build-out under current zoning is the reduction of density through the Land Conservation Plan coupled with the conservation subdivision process and the potential to place permanent conservation easements on some properties. The ability to preserve all important views in the study area may be difficult, especially when considering that the placement of one home can dramatically alter views. Some unavoidable adverse impacts to views are anticipated. The proposed land conservation tools are intended to provide the appropriate regulations and incentives so if these impacts occur there will be a trade-off in terms of some other public benefit of equal or greater importance to the community.

H. TRAFFIC

The comparison of the growth potential under the proposed Land Conservation Plan with the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) 2040 growth estimate for the area reveals that there will be less growth under the Land Conservation Plan. As a result, the project area should not significantly impact the transportation system beyond that already accounted for by the Capital District Transportation Committee's regional transportation planning recommendations.

In addition to traffic generation, site design can impact the system by causing points of conflict with the traffic flow along a corridor. As a result, the recommendations for access management within the study area should be incorporated so as not to create unintended conflicts.

I. AIR QUALITY

Probably the largest source of air pollution will be emissions from motor vehicles, including construction vehicles. Vehicle use/traffic will increase in the study area but significantly less than what would occur under current zoning. As a result, no significant increase in localized air pollution is anticipated.

J. NOISE

Implementation of the Land Conservation Plan should maintain the rural character of the study area and, as a result, there should not be a significant increase in the ambient noise levels. Localized or site-specific noise may increase within new subdivisions and in areas where development might concentrate in exchange for the preservation of more open space elsewhere. Construction noise will occur and may impact individuals on a temporary basis.

K. COMMUNITY SERVICES

Based on communication with the emergency services (fire, ambulance, police), the Land Conservation Plan will have no significant impact on these services. Volunteer services will continue to struggle with the continued need to recruit.

No significant impacts to the school districts are anticipated as a result of the Land Conservation Plan. The plan will significantly reduce the potential population of school-age children and growth will likely occur at a manageable pace.

L. UTILITIES

Water and sewer service have a profound impact on the rate of growth and density of development. They can also provide opportunities to cluster development and create projects that do not sprawl across the landscape. Under current zoning, there is a continued potential to extend water and sewer out Route 146 and along Route 146A to increase the development potential of R-1 zoned lands and those lands currently within the sewer district. This potential still exists under the Land Conservation Plan but for specific projects that require clustering.

The provision of water to a large majority of the Town is a Town Board interest. The reduction of density under the Land Conservation Plan may decrease the opportunity for such extensions but would also reduce the future need. It is anticipated that some

development will be served by utilities in the future. If this occurs, there may be opportunity to include those homes along the water main route within the new water district boundaries.

M. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources, particularly prehistoric archaeological sites may be impacted as a result of future development. If the procedures identified in DGEIS Section III.M are followed with sign-off from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, then the resources will be avoided or thoroughly mitigated.

N. FISCAL RESOURCES

The results of the fiscal impact model on build out under current zoning suggest a relative potential 50 percent increase in overall value of the tax base of the Town (increasing from about \$2.064 billion to approximately \$3.0 billion). The number of school-aged children was estimated to increase by about 4,000 new students. School taxes were projected to increase relative to current taxes by approximately 12 percent.

Two additional scenarios were evaluated, drawn from the proposed Land Conservation Plan and zoning. The first is the proposed new zoning only. Under this scenario, no public purchase of open space was considered. This scenario cuts the development density approximately in half and therefore reduces costs, particularly to the school district. There will be a relative increase in school taxes but at approximately 3 percent less than the current zoning build-out scenario.

The second scenario included the proposed zoning and public financing of approximately half of the lands recommended for open space conservation. The results of this analysis revealed a similar fiscal impact as projected for the current zoning scenario. However, the benefit to the community is that a significant land conservation effort could be realized.

SECTION V.

ALTERNATIVES

A. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

The three primary development (build-out) scenarios considered in this process are 1) current zoning, 2) Land Conservation Plan (new zoning only), and 3) Land Conservation Plan (new zoning & permanent easements). All three are discussed in DGEIS Section II and III.D. The process of developing these three scenarios was based on the results of a detailed build-out analysis on current zoning and subsequent discussions with Town officials and the public. During this planning period, various scenarios were considered including a no growth policy, cutting density in half, and converting all term easements into permanent easements. However, the overwhelming preferred approach was a decrease in density to prevent the impacts cited in the Build-out Analysis (DGEIS Appendix C).

BUILD-OUT

Build-out of the Study Area under current zoning could result in 4,200 - 5,300 new residential units and approximately 2.8 - 3.2 million gross square feet of office and retail space. The impacts of this growth are discussed in the Build-Out Analysis (DGEIS Appendix C) but can be easily summarized as a loss of open space, agriculture and overall rural character.

Planning for build-out would result in greater impacts on almost every environmental issue included in the scope of this GEIS. Under the current development trends, the Study Area would become similar in character to the eastern part of town, and contrary to the vision for conserving open space. Traffic increases would require the creation of additional arterials and/or collector roads and other roadway improvements far beyond the improvements discussed in DGEIS Section III.H. Impacts to the natural environment would also be much greater. The significant increase in impervious area would increase runoff and decrease water quality. Wildlife habitat would be relegated to the wetlands and steep slopes, which would significantly impact wildlife diversity and would eliminate several community types. Air quality would decrease and ambient noise would increase.

Mitigation for these impacts would be very costly and incomplete. Some impacts would be unavoidable, such as the change in character of the study area and the consumption of open spaces and habitat.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT SCENARIO

All of the alternative scenarios to build-out under current zoning focused on growth management. The most difficult part of this process was how to identify an appropriate density that would maintain the resources and character of the area. Another important consideration was the impact of land use decisions on the rights to and investment in the land by long-time farmers and residents.

Initial considerations applied general density reductions to the CommunityViz build-out model to provide an understanding of the sensitivities of the system. These considerations included changing the R-1 zoning to R-3 and removing the term easements from the developable land calculations (assume they would be converted to permanent easements). These scenarios provided some significant reductions in density that seemed reasonable under the current circumstances where few parcels in the study area are served by water and sewer.

However, this approach alone would not address the character of the area but rather would promote further sprawl. Additionally, the impact to property investment, at least as it applies to R-1 zoned lands, was not properly addressed. This led to further planning efforts, community outreach and discussion, and a Land Conservation Plan.

RURAL CHARACTER SCENARIO (LAND CONSERVATION PLAN)

There are some important factors that support a land conservation plan to protect rural character and reduce the impacts of build-out. First, there is overwhelming support for the implementation of the Town's Open Space Plan and the preservation of rural character in the study area. This has been exemplified by the comments from residents during the build-out, community workshop, and Land Conservation Plan forums.

Second, utilities are not a big factor in the study area. It is because of this that development has been slow and many farms remain.

The opportunity to achieve all of the land use goals for the study area (reduced density, rural character, open space, & balance with land owner investment) can be realized through the Land Conservation Plan that establishes new zoning, promotes the establishment of permanent easements through implementation of the Open Space Plan, and provides incentives that will help certain projects achieve a higher return in exchange for the preservation of more open space elsewhere. Details of the plan are provided in DGEIS Section III and Appendix D. This SEQR process provides the opportunity to confirm the elements of the plan with the community, establish new zoning and subdivision regulations and development guidelines, and place the Town in a position to immediately implement the new regulations and guidelines through local law.

NO GROWTH

The no growth alternative is a different scenario than the no-action alternative. The no growth alternative is not possible under current zoning. To achieve this scenario, the Town Board would have to impose significant regulatory constraints that would not allow any further development in the study area. It is highly unlikely that the Town could impose such regulations and survive legal challenge.

A possible, equitable means of implementing a no growth policy would be for the Town to use permanent easements or outright land acquisition. This has already been proposed in the Open Space Plan and the Land Conservation Plan but not to the extent that would satisfy a no growth scenario. This would be a costly proposition that over the long term could pay off; however, time could become an issue. A moratorium or other legal means of stopping development would be necessary during the land preservation process. The Town would either need to raise all the money in a short period of time or extend the moratorium over a long period of time. Either scenario would be problematic and probably not feasible.

Another potential solution is continued farming. This scenario is encouraged in the Land Conservation Plan and the Open Space Plan and, from that perspective, supports a no growth policy, but only at a voluntary level. A very restrictive set of agricultural zoning regulations would have to be established to support farming and prevent other uses from being developed. There has been no indication of support for such zoning by landowners within the study area. Therefore, a more appropriate approach is to provide farmers and other landowners with options that could lead to permanent easements. Greater success for land conservation is envisioned through flexibility, amenity zoning, and some level of development as proposed in the Land Conservation Plan.

B. ALTERNATIVE LAND USES

RESIDENTIAL USES

Current residential zoning in the study area primarily allows for single-family homes. The provision of multi-family housing would have to occur as a rezoning through the Town's Planned Unit Development (PUD) process. Unless water and sewer are extended, it is unlikely that mixed residential development would occur. Multi-family development located away from development centers and major transportation routes is not in keeping with good planning practice. Multi-family development outside of hamlets is, in general, not consistent with maintaining rural character and not a viable alternative.

COMMERCIAL USES & HAMLETS

Currently, the types of commercial uses are dictated by the B-1, B-2, and B-3 zoning districts. The B-1 and B-2 districts permit office uses but not retail uses. The B-3 district allows both office and retail uses. With the exception of the B-1 district, the remaining two districts do not have significant constraints on building size. Therefore, there is a potential to generate a significant amount of commercial development within the study area even with limited developable land area, as noted in the Build-Out Analysis (DGEIS Appendix C). Such large scale uses would be out of character with both rural areas and existing hamlets.

The proposed Hamlet Mixed Use zoning begins to address scale and design for the commercial areas that is more in keeping with rural character. However, as discussed in the Land Conservation Plan (DGEIS Appendix D), more work is necessary to develop a vision and conceptual plan for the hamlet areas. If properly conceived and designed, apartments as second floor uses in commercial buildings may be an appropriate alternative housing option on a limited scale.

Hamlet areas also provide opportunities for redevelopment and infill or expansion. The hamlets, both within and outside of the study area, could become the growth centers, taking pressure off the rural areas and even requiring land conservation of rural lands through amenity zoning.

AGRICULTURE

Farming is a desirable use within the study area and one of the best ways to maintain the rural character of the Study Area. This is the heritage of the area and should be encouraged to continue. Not only does it maintain the character but it is also important economically by generating profits that are used within the community and region. A major goal of the Open Space Plan is to protect agricultural lands in order to perpetuate the use.

Opportunities to increase the value of farm products by allowing other farm-related uses within the zoning could be considered. These uses typically involve some form of processing the product to create a “value-added” product, such as making and selling pies and juices or having a small “country café.”

C. NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

This alternative is a specific SEQR requirement that calls for the evaluation of not implementing the proposed action. In this case, the action is the adoption of the Land Conservation Plan and associated zoning and the evaluation of the cumulative impacts of development at build-out.

Under the no-action alternative, the analysis and recommendations provided in this GEIS are rejected in favor of the Town's current zoning and system of land use management. This is not to suggest that the current land use regulations are significantly flawed. However, the Build-Out Analysis pointed out some significant impacts that could result from the current zoning. These impacts were determined by the Town not to be consistent with the vision for the study area expressed in the comprehensive plan update and in the Open Space Plan.

Should the no-action alternative be adopted, land use patterns will continue in the same manner as in the past. The most significant development will center on areas where water and sewer service can be reasonably extended by developers. Standard subdivisions at half-acre lots will continue the sprawl of suburbia. The significance of this development pattern on land use is expressed in the Build-Out Analysis (DGEIS Appendix C), the Land Conservation Plan (DGEIS Appendix D) and in DGEIS Section III.D.

SECTION VI.

CUMULATIVE & GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

A. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The purpose of preparing an area-wide GEIS is to evaluate the cumulative impacts of future development. Therefore, the previous sections of the GEIS provide a detailed analysis of these impacts and provide the mitigation measures to ensure orderly growth in conjunction with a vision for future land use in the Study Area.

The scope of the GEIS and the boundaries of the Study Area impose limitations on how broadly the cumulative impact analysis can be carried out. Undoubtedly, there are impacts beyond the established boundaries. This section identifies some of these potential impacts that have become evident through the GEIS process.

WATER RESOURCES

The increase in development under current zoning will increase runoff. This is generally accommodated by Town and State requirements to detain runoff to essentially pre-development runoff conditions. However, there are likely to be other impervious areas created by small projects that do not require stormwater detention, which could increase runoff to a point where the cumulative impact is significant. The downstream impact of an increase in runoff would be compounded by undersized culverts that act as restrictions and cause flooding on adjacent property.

Increased runoff could also impact various streams and tributaries in the study area, causing scour and bank erosion. Definitive statements on the significance of an increase in cumulative runoff cannot be made with the current level of analysis. Watershed analysis should be considered prior to making improvements to culverts in streams that are tributary to the Dwaas Kill, Stony Creek, Alplaus Kill, Long Kill, and Cooley Kill. It can be stated, however, that the Land Conservation Plan would significantly decrease the potential build-out density of development and should have a beneficial impact on stormwater management.

LAND USE AND ZONING

The potential impact of land use and zoning on adjacent land uses, both within and outside the Town, were evaluated using current zoning regulations and available land use mapping and land use plans. This analysis did not identify any significant land use conflicts and therefore no significant cumulative impacts with adjacent communities are anticipated as a result of future development under the Land Conservation Plan and zoning. Any specific concerns could be raised during the comment period, but the Town might consider additional coordination with the Town of Glenville, the Town of Ballston, and the Town of Niskayuna as future planning occurs within the Study Area. A coordinated planning effort might be particularly beneficial for open space and trail planning.

TRAFFIC

The traffic analysis provides detailed information of traffic impact within the Study Area and addresses problem areas. However, the evaluation of the impact on pass-thru traffic, particularly along the State roadways (Route 146 and 146A) is much more difficult to project. Future corridor planning initiated by the State may prove useful in managing growth and maintaining traffic flow.

B. GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

Both residential and non-residential growth often induces other types of growth to service these uses such as convenience stores or small restaurants. These are typically referred to as secondary impacts because they do not occur during construction nor do they typically happen immediately after construction and are often very difficult to predict.

Significant residential development that could result under current zoning could also result in a need or demand for nearby goods and services. The build-out analysis projects a significant increase in both residential and commercial development based on available land area. However, the Land Conservation Plan would significantly reduce this potential and would shift the focus of the area from a suburban development orientation to a land preservation and rural character theme. As such, no significant growth inducing impacts are anticipated.

REGIONAL GROWTH

The potential for development of the Luther Forest Technology Campus (LFTC) is likely to have major regional implications on growth. As a result, many of the Saratoga County communities and beyond could be impacted by increased demand for housing and the inducement of other technology, office and retail growth. Such growth has the potential to change commuting patterns within Clifton Park and increase the rate of growth.

SECTION VII.

IRREVERSIBLE & IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

The construction of 5,300 residential units and 3.2 million gross square feet of commercial space under build-out for current zoning would result in the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of a variety of resources. The greatest local commitment of resources would be the transformation of undeveloped or farmed land to a developed state and the associated loss of rural character. The Land Conservation Plan may still result in some loss of agricultural land and other open space but much less than that under current zoning. Furthermore, the conservation subdivision review process will provide further opportunities to protect valuable resources on a site by site basis. The land use implications of future development in the Study Area have been thoroughly discussed in Section III.D.

Construction of new buildings and related site improvements would require building materials, equipment, energy, and human resources. During and after construction, these new developments would require utilities, such as water, sewer, electricity, natural gas and telecommunications. They would also require services such as solid waste disposal, and police and fire protection.

In general, the results of Section III suggest that resources are available to support growth under the Land Conservation Plan. Conversely, the impacts of build-out under current zoning are too significant to continue to permit growth in this manner. Significant land, social-cultural, and fiscal resources would be lost and therefore not considered acceptable by the community.

It is difficult, however, to predict the future availability of certain resources and what impact any development scenario might have on them. The availability of petroleum products and natural gas are extremely important in today's methods of construction and operation. History suggests that these resources are limited (naturally or artificially). A sudden lack or perceived lack of petroleum products and natural gas would have significant impacts on the rate of construction.

SECTION VIII.

FUTURE SEQR ACTIONS

The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) provides guidance on the preparation of GEIS's and the review of subsequent proposed actions. According to 6NYCRR 617.10(c) of SEQR:

Generic EISs and their findings should set forth specific conditions or criteria under which future actions will be undertaken or approved, including requirements for any subsequent SEQR compliance. This may include thresholds and criteria for supplemental EISs to reflect specific significant impacts, such as site specific impacts, that were not adequately addressed or analyzed in the generic EIS.

In response to the above, this section of the DGEIS outlines the general criteria under which future SEQR actions will take place within the Study Area. As stated in 6NYCRR 617.15(c)(1):

No further SEQR compliance is required if a subsequent site specific action will be carried out in conformance with the conditions and thresholds established for such actions in generic EIS or its findings statement.

Therefore, to satisfy these requirements, future development proposals should be consistent with the criteria specified in the future findings statement prepared for this GEIS. These criteria are provided in a draft form in Section III and include the mitigation measures discussed for each environmental issue. Failure to provide mitigation for potential adverse impacts will require further SEQR action to justify the lack of mitigation.

In the event subsequent proposed actions were adequately addressed in the GEIS but not adequately addressed in the findings statement, an amended findings statement must be prepared. If subsequent proposed actions were not addressed or not adequately addressed in the GEIS and the subsequent actions will not result in any significant environmental impacts, then SEQR requires only that a negative declaration be prepared. However, SEQR requires a supplement to the final generic EIS if:

...the subsequent proposed action was not addressed or was not adequately addressed in the generic EIS and the subsequent action may have one or more significant adverse environmental impacts.

As future development is proposed within the Study Area, the lead agency for each proposed action will be responsible for carrying out the requirements of 6NYCRR 617.10 of SEQR. This will require the Lead Agency to interpret the Statement of Findings prepared for the Study Area, as it specifically relates to the development project being proposed. To provide the Lead Agency with sufficient documentation to compare the parameters and impacts of a site specific project with the Findings Statement, each project that is subject to SEQR (Type 1 or Unlisted Action) must prepare a Full Environmental Assessment Form.

SECTION IX.

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SECTION X.
APPENDICES

