Western Clifton Park
Design Guidelines

Prepared for the:
Western Clifton Park Draft GEIS
for Clough, Harbour and Associates, LLP
and the **Town of Clifton Park**

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Behan Planning Associates, LLC
Planning Community Futures

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I. Introduction

The Western Clifton Park Design Guidelines provide direct, concise guidance on identifying what are the important open space resources to conserve in Western Clifton Park as a key first step in the process of designing site plans, subdivision layouts, roads and access, landscape design in Western Clifton Park. The design guidelines start with an overview of the major conservation concepts for this area of the Town of Clifton Park, and then focus in on site specific considerations depending upon where an applicant is proposing change in the landscape: whether it is in a former field, woodland area, or if change is proposed within or near an existing hamlet settlement area. The design guidelines include design principles outlining how to deisgn for development within the applicable setting.

The overall theme is clear: for applicants to identify and and demonstrate a clear understanding of the unique resources of any site within its context in Western Clifton Park and strive to conserve and design with the uniqueness of the natural landscape, the working agricultural landscape or the unique hamlet setting of the hamlets of Rexford, Vischer Ferry, Grooms Corners, Jonesville, Elnora, and Ballston Lake.

Specifically, the design guidelines show how to conserve open space and design the layout of permanent open space, how to locate and layout new residential development and other development amidst the rural, scenic landscape, and finally, how to blend in new growth in any hamlet setting.

Purpose

The overall purpose of these design guidelines is to address the way conservation occurs as part of a development project, and how new development is designed within Western Clifton Park. Applying these design guidelines will help the planning board and developers accomplish the town's vision and goals for Western Clifton Park. This includes limiting the adverse impacts of growth on the environment, water quality, wildlife habitats, and other natural resources, maintaining active farm areas and prime farm soils, protecting town-identified open space resources, and designing new structures, neighborhoods, and hamlets to be consistent with the rural character of area. All development within western Clifton Park should contribute to the area's unique sense of place and where possible, reinforce the historic characteristics of Clifton Park's hamlets and existing settlements.

In coordination and cooperation with other programs and efforts, these guidelines are intended to accomplish the town's overall vision for western Clifton Park.

The Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan 2003 outlined a vision for resource protection town-wide that has applicable ideas for Western Clifton Park, and is summarized by four major themes that should be considered in the conceptualization of conservation and development in Western Clifton Park. The major themes as applicable for Western Clifton Park are:

1. Conserve the distinctive, scenic landscape character visible to the public including cultural and historic resources
2. Protect active farmland and working landscapes
3. Preserve water, watersheds and significant ecological areas for water quality and wildlife habitat
4. Provide for future park and trail opportunities.

Applicability and Use

The Western Clifton Park Design Guidelines are intended to assist the planning board, applicants and the public in the design and review of development within Western Clifton Park, and the Conservation Residential (CR) the Hamlet Mixed-Use (HM,), and the Hamlet Residential (HR) districts.

Unless otherwise noted, all development projects within Western Clifton Park must continue to adhere to all applicable zoning, site plan, and subdivision regulations and procedures required by the town.

As previously discussed, these guidelines are intented to assist the town, developers, and the community in planning, layout, and review of development projects within Western Clifton Park. In order to assist this process, these guidelines are divided into the following three chapters:

1: Designing for the Rural, Scenic Landscape Character of Western Clifton Park

2: Conservation Design

3: Hamlet Design

II. Designing for the Rural, Scenic Landscape Character of Western Clifton Park

The following principles and design guidelines apply to development within the entire western Clifton Park area. In addition to applicable Town of Clifton Park zoning and land use regulations, the Planning Board shall base its approval decisions for all applications within the Conservation Residential (CR), Hamlet Residential (HR), and Hamlet Mixed-Use (HM) districts on how the applicant meets the following criteria.

New development should build off of the traditional design, character, and unique qualities of rural Clifton Park. Each development should identify sensitive natural, cultural, historic, and scenic features. These resources hould remain free of development and their removal or disruption of should be minimized to the greatest extent possible. New construction should show consideration for local history, including architecture, farming and early economic activity, landmarks and historic sites, and other features that connect the town to its past. For example, wooded areas, mature trees, rolling hills, historic features, streams, and other unique site characteristics should be celebrated and integrated into site design. The visual impacts of urban design and development features in the rural landscape should be minimized.

Criteria for Designing in Western Clifton Park:

A. Conserve the scenic, rural landscape character – the unique setting of Western Clifton Park

B. Protect farms and prime farmland: focusing on the core agricultural areas of Western Clifton Park.

C. Buffer and protect the existing permanently protected open space resources

D. Conserve and protect the town-identified open space, natural and cultural resources that are priorities for future conservation

E. Conserve, buffer and design with respect to the hamlet settlement patterns

F. Preserve natural water features, watersheds and support connected water habitats

G. Protect natural landforms and create connected open lands habitat

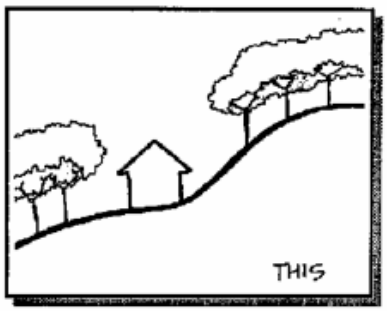
H. Conserve woodland areas and create connected woodlands habitats

I. Connect people to the special resources

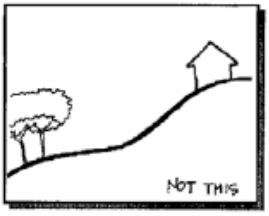
J. Protect dark, night-time skies for the whole community

A. Conserve the scenic, rural landscape character – the unique setting of Western Clifton Park

The scenic resources of open fields and areas, punctuated by farms and farm buildings, woodlands and natural setting, should be conserved to maintain the quality of the rural character of western Clifton Park. By designing with an eye to conserve the town's remaining scenic resources to the extent practicable, the whole community will retain its scenic values and connection to the rural past. Open space and natural areas should be designed to maintain the integrity and character of existing roads and maximize visibility for persons passing the site wherever possible.



The site layout of new development in the countryside should protect public views of the countryside landscapes, particularly the views along roadsides. Scenic resources should be documented and evaluated for careful consideration prior to establishing conservation areas and locating new development. Placing any new development in a location that will minimize impact to the specific scenic resources of an open landscape is the key criteria. There are a range of ways to accommodate how new development can blend into the landscape setting, and there may be no perfect solution when choices need to be made. However, every effort should be made to respect the unique scenic qualities of the natural and cultural setting that offer the scenic qualities and to design in a respectful relationship to them. Instead of protecting scenic resources as being viewed as "in the way" of development, these features should be viewed as the cornerstones and focal points and "given, fixed" conditions of any design process.



Unacceptable design: note how the homes in the background stick out over the ridgeline.

B. Protect farms and farmland: focusing on the core agricultural areas

Overall, protect <u>as intact</u> as many as possible of the active, working farms in Western Clifton Park throughout the Western Clifton Park. As a priority, concentrate on protecting large acreages of contiguous, farms. See the Western Clifton Park GEIS Land Conservation Plan and the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan Vision for the town-identified working farms. Riverview Orchards, shown to the left, is an active farm along Riverview Road, and is part of the agricultural core of working farms in Western Clifton Park that should be protected and buffered from development.

Overall, protect farmland, working farms, fallow open fields and habitats, and agricultural heritage. All effort should be made to limit the impact of development on productive farmland soils that are currently in production or are high quality soils that could be converted into production. Provide adequate buffer to agricultural operations and farm buildings and structures used for production. In particular, avoid locating new homes near existing farms and farmlands, buffer residential uses from active farms, and avoid fragmentation of core agricultural areas.

C. Buffer and protect the existing permanently protected open space resources

The Town of Clifton Park is home to many important open space resources, as identified in the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan 2003. Some of these open space resources are permanently protected. These resources should be identified in relationship to any proposed development.

Erie Canal, Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve

Grooms Tavern, Grooms Corners

Mohawk Valley Grange, Sugar Hill Road, Grooms Corners

D. Conserve and protect the town-identified open space, natural and cultural resources that are priorities for *future* conservation

Through public planning processes, the town has identified agricultural and open space lands within western Clifton Park for permanant protection from development. Development projects, particularly those located within the CR zoning district should contribute to the network of town-wide, permanently protected open space areas and habitat corridors, both within large parcels of land and among parcels throughout the town in accordance with the open space vision and criteria set forth in the Clifton Park Open Space Plan, the Clifton Park Comprehensive Plan, and the Western Clifton Park GEIS.

Active Orchards and Active Farmland

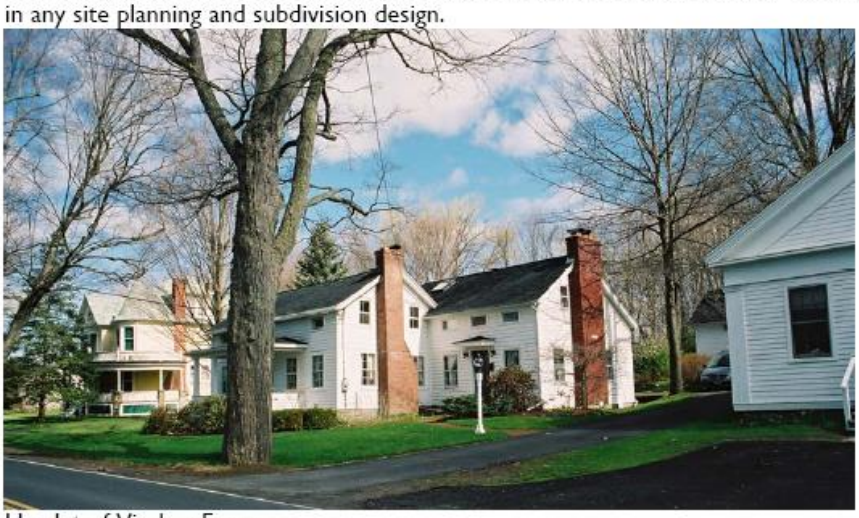
Scenic open fields

Scenic rural landscape views

Historic resources

E. Conserve, buffer and design with respect to the hamlet settlement patterns

The early, existing settlements of Rexford, Vischer Ferry, Grooms Corners, Jonesville, Elnora, and Ballston Lake are special places in Western Clifton Park. These settlements, also referred to as hamlets, contribute to the unique character of Western Clifton Park. Development proposed in or near these hamlets should carefully consider this context in any site planning and subdivision design.



Hamlet of Vischer Ferry

Hamlet of Grooms Corners

F. Preserve natural water features, watershed and water habitats and connections

Protect Water Resources and Wetland Habitats

Western Clifton Park enjoys numerous streams, ponds, wetlands, waterfront along Ballston Lake and extensive waterfront along the Mohawk River. Every effort should be made to protect the naturally-occuring waterbodies and natural drainage conditions, and natural wetlands in Western Clifton Park to protect both the water quality and quantity, and to maintain natural habitats.

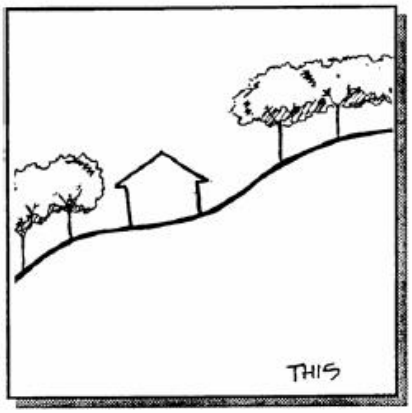
Headwaters of the Dwaas Kill, near Waite Road

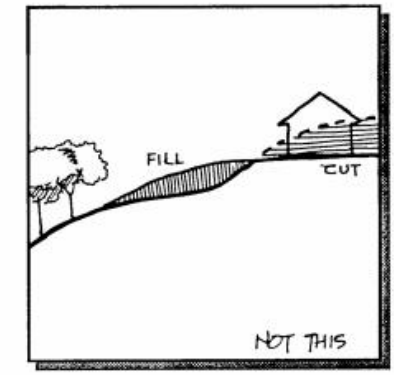
The impact of new development on water resources and quality should be minimized through a variety of measures including but not limited to:

- Natural drainage ways, contours and landforms should be respected and disturbance to these areas should be minimized.
- Buffers and setbacks from water resources such as streams, wetlands, ponds, floodways, and aquifer recharge areas.
- Water quality and stormwater management systems that are compatible to the site and modeled upon naturally occurring systems. Low Impact Development (LID) alternatives should be investigated and implemented to the fullest extent possible.

Riverview Road along the Mohawk River

G. Preserve natural landforms and create connected open lands habitat





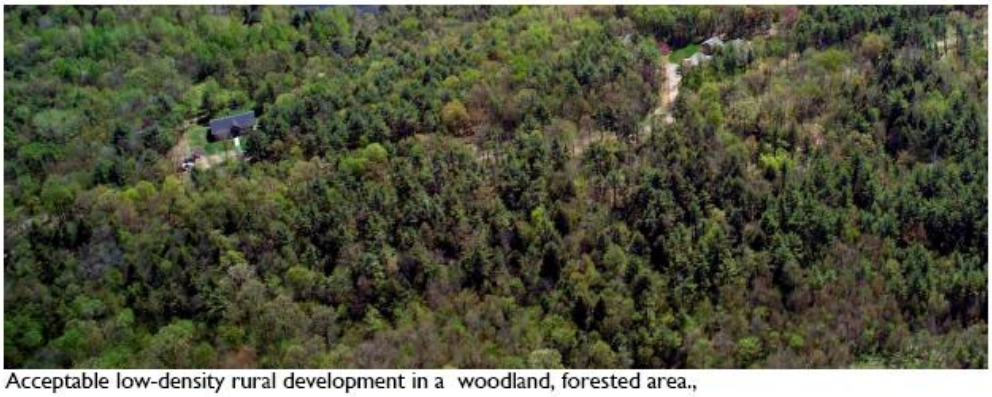
Design with nature during site layout

- Design context-sensitive roads.
- Building and home sites shall conserve the landscape in its natural state, insofar as practicable.
- The orientation of individual building sites shall be such as to maintain maximum natural topography and cover. Buildings should fit into the landscape and should not protrude over hilltops or ridges or be sited in the middle of open fields.
- Development should minimize cut and fill, utilize gentle grading and avoid abrupt grade transitions.
- Any grade changes shall be in keeping with the general appearance of neighboring developed areas.
- Utilize sensitive construction practices and erosion control (limit soil erosion and disturbance)
- Buildings should not be located in open fields. Structures should be placed at the edges of fields along more heavily vegetated areas.

<u>Unacceptable design</u>: These homes are sited in the middle of an open field, destroying rural character and rendering the land unusable for farming. The open space does not contribute to the rural quality of the area.

H. Conserve Clifton Park's woodland and wildlife habitats

Leave large areas of intact woodlands and wildlife habitat. New development should avoid fragmentation of wooded areas and habitat corridors. Efforts should be made to maintain the integrity of these areas as well as connections to surrounding, off-site woodland and wildlife habitat resources. Existing mature trees should be maintained (clear cutting is prohibited) and species selected for planting should be appropriate for this region and microclimate of the setting, preferably native species vegetation. Avoid the introduction of invasive species.



Acceptable low-density rural development in a woodland, forested area.,

Unacceptable design: in this example, large homes are scattered throughout a wooded area. The result is a fragmented woodland.

Acceptable design: This home is sited at the edge of the woodland and blends into the site. As a result, views to and from the site are not harmed and rural character is maintained.

I. Connect people to the special resources

Create pedestrian paths and trails designed to match the character of the setting. Off-road paths are appropriate in a conservation subdivision in and around a permanent open space area. A different type of pedestrian path or sidewalk may be more appropriate in a hamlet setting if a sidewalk exists to connect to.

Likewise, utilize context sensitive roadway design, in order to maintain the special resources (whether it is the open, rural landscape, or the historic portion of a hamlet).

- Streets should be designed based on their function and the character of the area.
- Streets should be designed to maintain and preserve natural topography, significant landmarks, and trees; to minimize cut and fill; and to preserve and enhance views and vistas on or off the subject parcel.
- Road design should reflect the context and characteristics of the area. The use of narrow roads, similar to existing country routes, is encouraged.
- In more dense areas, utilize street trees to provide shade and separate the roadway from pedestrians.
- Minimize the number of curb cuts on existing roads and utilize shared driveways, linked/shared parking where possible.

Unacceptable design: pavement widths typical of suburban neighborhoods are inappropriate within western Clifton Park.

J. Protect dark, night-time skies for the whole community

Ensure that utilities and lighting are appropriate for the setting

Public and private utilities and lighting should be carefully sited so as not to detract from the rural qualities of western Clifton Park. In general, new development should consider the following:

- Locate utilities underground to the furthest extent possible. All above ground utility boxes and similar facilities should be clustered and screened with landscaping.
- Lighting should be appropriate to the rural setting. For example, do not "over light" (too many lights or lights that are too bright), always include full shielding to eliminate glare, and outside of hamlet areas minimize lighting to preserve nighttime, dark skies and avoid regularly spaced lighting.

III. Conservation Design

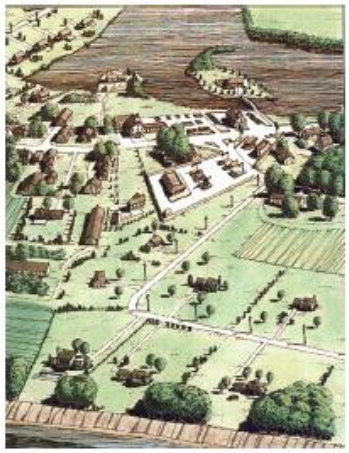
The following design guidelines are required for development proposals within the Conservation Residential (CR) zoning district. The CR district is designed to support the economic viability of farming, and to preserve as many of the operating farms as possible by supporting conservation of the agricultural and rural resources and lands. The district also serves to accommodate low-density residential uses appropriate in scale and intensity, and in a balance with the natural resources and agricultural resources for this rural area of the community.

The primary component of the CR district is utilization of a conservation-design approach to subdivision development and site layout. The conservation approach requires new development to focus *primarily* on the conservation of natural resources while providing landowners with site design flexibility, such as the use of relatively small minimum lot sizes. It is intended that these concepts work together to encourage a high standard of new development. For example, the flexibility in lot sizes and dimensional standards for individual home sites allows for the conservation of open space and other community amenities while encouraging site layout creativity.

The following section is designed specifically to assist the planning board, applicants and the public in planning, site layout, and review of development projects within the Town of Clifton Park's Conservation Residential zoning district. No application for consideration by the Planning Board under Section (number), CR shall be approved without demonstrating compliance with these guidelines and standards.

A Conservation Subdivision example is shown below in these illustrations.

Existing farm area.



Same area after conventional, suburban-style development.

Same area with appropriately scaled and sited development (same number of units).

Conservation Design Layout:

Criteria and Design Process for Establishing the Permanent Open Space and Siting Development on a Parcel

The following text outlines the procedures for conducting a conservation-based design and layout for site plans and subdivision plans in the Conservation Residential zoning district. All proposed development projects within the CR district must adhere to the density, land use, and other standards set forth within § (CR zoning district). Once the allowed base density is determined, the applicant shall utilize the following design and development guidelines for site planning and design of the subject parcel. The conservation design layout procedure is as a four-step process designed to assist the applicant, the planning board and the public in preparing and analyzing the materials for site plan and subdivision applications within the Conservation Residential (CR) zoning district.

The conservation design layout's four-step resource analysis procedure is as follows:

1. Develop an existing resources and site analysis plan of the natural, cultural, and scenic features.
2. Conduct a conservation analysis and develop the conservation concepts.
3. Demonstrate a proposed layout of the development concept that works with and complements the conservation concepts.
4. Prepare a summary preliminary plan that shows the synthesized conservation and development concepts. This step shows the proposed layout of the permanent open space and the development area.

The purpose of conducting such a resource analysis is for the applicant to demonstrate significant application and incorporation of the community resource values for Western Clifton Park as developed and presented in the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan, the Town of Clifton Park Comprehensive Plan, and the Western Clifton Park GEIS.

Step 1. Develop an Existing Resources and Site Analysis Plan of the Natural, Cultural, and Scenic Features.

A conservation analysis shall be conducted by the applicant and submitted to the Planning Board to show and describe constrained lands, the lands of conservation value, and identify comprehensive resources and unique site features. The analysis will include: the preparation of inventory maps and narrative to describe the site's natural, cultural, and historical resources, scenic views, and other special and unique features; and an analysis of each feature's conservation value.

The purpose of this step is to analyze the unique features of the subject parcel. An Existing Resources and Site Analysis Plan shall be prepared by the applicant to provide the applicant and the Planning Board with a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions including the natural, cultural and scenic resources, both on the site in detail as set forth below and describe in more general manner land uses, road systems, and natural and cultural resources within 500 feet of the perimeter of the proposed development site. The applicant and the planning board must identify the existing site conditions and conduct a site analysis to understand the unique landscape features of

the parcel and the relationship of the parcel to the adjoining lands as a basis for advancing any proposed permanent open space and proposed development area concepts for the Planning Board to consider.

The Existing Conditions and Site Analysis process shall include analyses of physical and environmental resources, forest resources, agricultural resources, historic and cultural resources, and potential as passive and recreational resources. The analysis may take the form of several maps and layers of data presented in a meaningful way to the Planning Board for its review and decision-making in conjunction with the applicant.

The following resources must be mapped and illustrated for the review of the Planning Board:

a. All contiguous land owned or under option by the owner and/or applicant.
b. Contour lines at a minimum of two-foot intervals to United State Geological Survey datum within the parcel.
c. Slopes in excess of 20% or more, measured over a 50-foot horizontal distance.
d. Ridgelines, hills, geologic formations including but not limited to rock outcrops and other important land features based on available published information or more detailed data obtained by the applicant
e. Watershed boundaries shall be identified.
f. Groundwater aquifers and/or recharge areas as mapped on the town's Official Aquifer Protection Map.
g. Lakes, ponds, regulated streams, streams, and natural drainage swales
h. Field delineation and survey of both NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Freshwater Wetlands and their associated 100-foot Adjacent Areas, and federal jurisdictional wetlands as regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
i. Watercourses, streams and other drainage corridors as classified pursuant to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Stream Classification System and as mapped on the Town of Clifton Park's Official Stream Protection Map.
j. The Town of Clifton Park land conservation (L-C) zones.
k. Flood hazard areas (from a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood insurance rate map, or site-specific flood elevation determination data if none is available otherwise through FEMA.
l. Vegetative cover conditions on the property according to general cover type, including cultivated land, permanent grass land, old field, hedgerow, significant forest areas, woodlands, wetlands, isolated trees or small groups of trees with a caliper in excess of 12 inches, the actual canopy line of existing trees and woodlands. Vegetative types shall be described by plant community, age and condition.
m. Any designated Critical Environmental Area, and other important unique environmental areas.
n. Habitat areas of rare, threatened or endangered species.
o. Agricultural lands: active farmland within a New York State certified agricultural district in Saratoga County, lands within 500 feet of a New York State certified agricultural district, or soils classified as soils of Statewide Significance and Prime Farm soils as mapped by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service in the Saratoga County Soil Survey.

p. Lands and parcels enrolled in the Town of Clifton Park's term open space, agricultural, or historic resources **term conservation easement** program.
q. Lands identified along scenic road corridors as defined in the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan, Town of Clifton Park Comprehensive Plan, and the Town of Clifton Park Western Lands GEIS.
r. As located on the site, the location and dimensions of all existing and proposed utilities and utility right-of-ways, existing streets, paved and unpaved roads and paths, buildings, agricultural barns, silos and any other agricultural structures, utilities, remains of buildings and structures, stonewalls, fences, and other man-made improvements.
s. Historic resources. Locations of all historically significant sites, or structures on the site and on any abutting site within 500 feet of the site's property boundary, including but not limited to those sites and parcels identified as locally important historic resources in the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan, the Town of Clifton Park Comprehensive Plan and the Town of Clifton Park Western Lands GEIS, and according to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Resources, State Historic Preservation Office that tracks sites, buildings and parcels identified with state register or federal register historic designation.
t. A viewshed analysis showing the location and extent of views into the property from public roads and from navigable waterways, public parks, public forests, other public lands, lands with term conservation easements, and lands with permanent conservation easements.
u. Proximity to nearest hamlet or other existing or proposed neighborhood.
v. Trails: existing and potential trails, bikeways and pedestrian that are in public use or are proposed conceptually in the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan, or specifically on the Town of Clifton Park Town-wide Trails Master Plan Map, on the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway, or other routes of town, state, federal, or Saratoga County significance.
w. Recreation. Lakes, ponds, active public parks, town park district lands, or other town, county, state recreational areas, or opportunities or sites designated in the Town of Clifton Park's Comprehensive Plan.
x. All other boundaries of environmental or other areas to be left undisturbed and/or protected through deed restrictions, conservation easements or other agreements and encumbrances of property which are or have been filed of record with the Saratoga County Clerk's Office shall be shown on the plan.

Step 2. Conservation Analysis and Prioritizing of Conservation Concepts.

Taking the conservation site analysis data prepared in Step 1, the applicant should carefully review the Western Clifton Park Design Guidelines: Chapter 2. "Designing for the Rural, Scenic Landscape Character of Western Clifton Park to understand the town's conservation priorities. In consultation with the Planning Board, the applicant shall apply these conservation principles to the proposed site and identify the site-specific conservation priorities and potential conservation areas.

Once the site analysis has been accomplished and reviewed with the Planning Board, the applicant may develop concepts for prioritizing what of the existing resources should be

conserved and for what proposed future conservation use. Only after this step has been taken may the concepts for development be factored in to the site layout.

Below are the key conservation principles for Western Clifton Park to assist in prioritizing conservation concepts within the CR district:

- Conserve the scenic, rural landscape character – the unique setting of this parcel as it contributes to the unique setting of Western Clifton Park. Conduct creative site planning that maintains residential and pastures and rural character allowing for direct visual access to open land, woodlots, farms, scenic views, etc.

- Protect farms and agricultural lands and uses; protect the core agricultural areas of Western Clifton Park; protect prime farm soils

- Permanent protection of larger contiguous areas of significant open space resources which are visible to the general public including farmlands, woodlands, and other ecological and natural wildlife habitats and corridors.

- Buffer and protect existing protected open space resources: [Design that respects and buffers existing term conservation easements, permanent conservation easements and other permanently protected lands and resources, such as not but not limited to the Grooms Tavern Site, the Vischer Ferry Historic and Nature Preserve including the remains of the Erie Canal, the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway]

- Conserve and protect the town-identified open space, natural and cultural resources that are priorities for future conservation,

- Conserve and design with respect to the existing hamlet settlement patterns, existing neighborhoods and existing residences. Buffer existing residences and public views from new development.

- Preserve natural water features, watersheds and provide for connected water habitats

- Protect natural landforms and conserve open lands habitat

- Conserve woodland areas and connected woodlands habitats

- Support the restoration and adaptive reuse of previously developed landscapes, including the adaptive reuse of farm structures that preserves the agricultural setting and uses such as the farmstead and barns and surrounding fields.

- Connect people to the special resources. Provide trail connections within neighborhoods and link to regional paths.

- Protect dark, night-time skies for the whole community.

Step 3. Development Concept.

Once the proposed conservation lands have been identified in Step 1, and prioritized in Step 2, this Step 3 is to identify the area for development (primarily within the unconstrained land and protective of the priority conservation area(s)) the remaining land area of the site may be focused on for siting the access, circulation for streets and pedestrian paths, and locating the proposed number of residential units and other development.

Step 4. Summary Preliminary Plan of Development and Conservation Concepts.

The proposed subdivision application must follow applicable subdivision regulations as outlined in _____ regarding the submission, timing, review process, etc. This step shows the proposed layout of the permanent open space and the development area. This step involves formalizing the "drawing in" of the lot lines and the preparation on a plan meeting requirements for concept submission pursuant to Chapter 179 of the town code, Subdivision of Land.

IV. Hamlet Design

The following design guidelines are provided to assist the planning board, applicant and public during review of building and zoning applications within the Hamlet Mixed Use (HM) and Hamlet Residential (HR) Districts. Specifically, the Planning Board shall use this section of the design guidelines to review all projects within the HM and HR districts required to comply with the town's site plan approval process.

Application Process

All development projects within the HR and HM districts must adhere to the density, land use, and other standards set forth within § (HR and HM zoning districts reference). Once the allowed base density is determined, the applicant shall utilize the following design and development guidelines for site planning and design of the subject parcel.

Hamlet Guiding Principles

The hamlet design guidelines further elaborate on the goals and objectives of the HM and HR districts and provide guidance on broad issues such as overall hamlet design, concepts for infill and integrating new development into existing hamlet areas as well as specific standards regarding pedestrian amenities, site layout and design, and architecture and architectural treatments. The broad principles/recommendations, discussed within this section, are as follows:

A. **Enhance existing, unique, traditional hamlet settlement patterns within western Clifton Park**

B. **Restore, conserve and enhance the "sense of place" of the hamlet of Rexford through complementary, compact, new development, infill development and redevelopment layout and design**

C. **Foster pedestrian-friendly, walkable environments**

D. **Utilize area master planning, and site plan layouts and architectural styles consistent with the form of traditional hamlet of Rexford**

E. **Support connections within the hamlet of Rexford and vicinity both within the hamlet and outside of the hamlet.**

Enhance existing, unique, traditional hamlet settlement patterns within western Clifton Park

Western Clifton Park's traditional hamlet settlement pattern is a special unique characteristic that ties the town to its historic roots. These small nodes of development, surrounded by working agriculture, woodlands, and natural areas, make up pleasant, walkable neighborhoods, and special places to live and work. The HR and HM districts are designed to celebrate and enhance this traditional development pattern. All design and planning features – for example, site layout, architectural design, and the design and character of streets – should respect and enhance what is already considered special to the community.

- New construction should reinforce the traditional characteristics of Clifton Park's historic hamlets and settlement patterns. Development should respect historic buildings, maintain a scale that is appropriate for the setting, protect and reuse existing buildings to the extent feasible, be of historically compatible architectural character, and generally build upon the existing framework of street networks, lot patterns, and streetscape and landscaping.

- New construction should creatively reflect elements of traditionally styled local architecture, appear as a comprehensive sequence in size and shape, be compatible with adjacent buildings and positively contribute to the overall organization and architectural theme of the hamlets of western Clifton Park.

Restore, conserve and enhance the "sense of place" of the hamlet of Rexford through complementary, compact, new development, infill development and redevelopment layout and design

Compact Design and Infill

Rexford's unique "sense of place" is arguably most closely related to its compact design – for example, lot sizes are generally smaller than what is found in most of today's suburban neighborhoods. Compact design is one of the primary elements of creating walkable, close-knit communities and keeping development from spreading throughout the rural countryside (both the HM and HR districts include an amenity zoning provision which allows for the transfer of development from conservation areas into the hamlet).

Traditional hamlets include features that encourage walking such as sidewalks, benches, and street trees, as well as a mix of civic, residential, and commercial uses along a main street or small center.

- **Compact design** is essential to achieving many of the hamlet district goals including walkability, protection of sensitive natural resources, and enhancement of the hamlet's identity. Small lot sizes (6,000 square feet for residential) are allowed to encourage the continuation of Rexford's existing development pattern.

- **Infill** that respects the traditional hamlet style is encouraged through the subdivision of existing parcels to create new development opportunities, reuse of existing structures, or demolitions and reconstructions of buildings that do not contribute to the character of the hamlet.

This commercial parcel in Rexford may provide an opportunity for redevelopment to contribute to a mixed use hamlet in the future.

- In mixed-use areas, infill may also occur through the **conversion of residential structures** to commercial operations. The primary focus of infill development should be along main streets or the surrounding area to create a continuity of development in the hamlet.

Civic Areas

Another primary component of "sense of place" is the incorporation of public or civic spaces and buildings. Whether the resource provides for casual community gathering or for formal meetings and functions, these places can serve as focal points and contribute to the hamlet's identity and special characteristics. Some of the various types of civic resources that should be included in hamlet development are discussed below:

Focal Buildings: Existing and future institutional buildings, private or public, can be focal points and features of an existing or new hamlet area. These buildings punctuate the neighborhood landscape by providing distinction to the place, as well as serving as a community social function. The scale of such a civic building should be appropriate with the surrounding built environment context.

This church in the Hamlet of Vischer Ferry serves as visual interest as well as social function.

Commons, squares, parks, and plazas within the hamlet should be focal points of the hamlet's center and incorporated into surrounding residential neighborhoods. These resources provide breaks from development and pleasant places to gather, sit and relax.

- **Commons or squares** of anywhere between 10,000 to 60,000 square feet in size should be considered in the hamlet. The common should be located in a prominent location such as the core area and should be framed by surrounding structures.

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- Smaller **neighborhood greens** should be distributed throughout the hamlet's residential areas so that no lot is further away than a 5-minute walk. To accomplish this, it is likely that a series of greens serving small neighborhoods will be dispersed throughout the hamlet.

A cluster of homes organized around a small neighborhood green. The buildings provide a frame for the public space while the small park provides a small recreation and gathering area.

- **Public plazas** are open spaces designed for public use that are "framed" by surrounding buildings and/or streets. The primary functions for plazas within the hamlet districts are to encourage social interaction within developed areas and contribute to the public realm and overall livability of the hamlet. Plazas are generally located within dense areas of the hamlet, are between 500 and 1,000 square feet in size, and should include some or all of the following: areas to sit and relax; opportunities for entertainment (e.g., music performances); amenities to encourage public use (e.g., game tables, information kiosks, open air

cafes, etc.); incorporation of natural elements; management system to ensure for proper maintenance and upkeep of the public space.

Foster pedestrian-friendly, walkable environments

All development within the HR and HM districts should contribute to and enhance the pedestrian environment.

- Development should **create pedestrian-friendly environments** within Clifton Park's hamlet zones by considering ways to incorporate and provide for non-motorized travel. Buildings and streets should be designed in a way typical of traditional villages and hamlets to create an attractive and engaging streetscape and public realm and encourage pedestrian and bicycle uses. New development should include streetscape improvements to encourage safe pedestrian usage and enhance overall "walkability" of the hamlet.

- New construction should contribute to a **pedestrian circulation system** that minimizes conflicts with motorized vehicles. Streets should be bordered by sidewalks and/or a trail system that connects the hamlet with publicly-accessible open space, parks or common areas. Bicycle circulation shall be accommodated on streets or dedicated bicycle paths. Vehicular and pedestrian movement shall be separated through streetscape and traffic calming mechanisms.

- Sidewalks shall be built to acceptable town standards and shall incorporate universal access standards for handicapped individuals where appropriate and necessary.

- Provisions shall be made for bicycle storage within the commercial and mixed-use areas (e.g., bike rack, etc.)

Dedicated bicycle paths should be used to connect residential and commercial areas and bring the public into open space

Utilize area master planning, and site plan layouts and architectural styles consistent with the form of traditional hamlet of Rexford

Another key component of design within the HR and HM districts is consistency with traditional forms. This consistency relates to the whole of project design including but not limited to the layout of streets, placement of parking areas, and architecture. Development, particularly within the hamlet of Rexford, should follow a master planning approach where concepts of consistency with surrounding features and the traditional form of the hamlet are considered.

Circulation system: layout and character

The overall hamlet circulation system should allow for a variety of travel modes, provide adequate traffic capacity and connected pedestrian and bicycle routes, and promote safe and efficient mobility through the hamlet. Overall, the system should include links between residential, commercial, public spaces and plazas, and surrounding open space areas.

- Where new streets are established, roads should make up an "interconnected pattern" of small blocks in a grid or modified grid system to diffuse traffic, and shorten walking distances. Block lengths should generally be between 200 and 600 feet in length and include "stub streets" as needed. Further, the orientation of streets should enhance the visual impact of common open spaces and prominent buildings

Recommended pattern: this image shows a system of interconnected streets with use of rear alleys and sidewalks.

- All new streets should be designed based on their function and the character of the area. Often, narrower street widths than found in conventional developments are preferred. Narrow streets, even at a minimum of 9' wide, can still accommodate cars, service and emergency vehicles and also have the ability to slow traffic, and encourage walking.

Streets and Streetscapes

Streets should serve as public space to foster community interaction and balance the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and motor vehicles. In general, street and streetscape design should consider the following:

- Design travel lanes for motor vehicle use to minimize conflicts with pedestrians and bicycles
- Align intersections for clear visual observation
- Avoid long, uninterrupted segments of straight streets.
- Incorporate curves into street design to slow traffic
- Utilize crosswalks, curb bulb-outs, appropriate signage, lighting, pedestrian crossing signals, and traffic lights to enhance pedestrian realm.
- Utilize changes in pavement materials, texture, color and pattern, especially at crosswalks
- Utilize curbs, on street parking, on all streets to separate pedestrian areas from traveled automobile lanes.
- Utilize street trees and planted medians

The building awnings, the building signage, the street trees, the ground sign, the parked bikes, the seasonal, outdoor seating, the flags, the front porch in the background, all contribute to a streetscape experience pleasing to the eye and a stimulating experience for the pedestrian. Note the sidewalks are not that wide, and all the features contribute to an intimate, rich streetscape.

Parking, storage, and service areas

Within Clifton Park's hamlet districts, automobile parking areas should be secondary to buildings and the pedestrian circulation system. All parking lots, garages, service entries, storage, maintenance, loading, and refuse collection areas should be located at the rear or sides of buildings and screened from public view. If located at the side, screening shall be provided through the use of landscaping or decorative walls or fences. In addition:

Shared parking for the commercial building is on the side of the building which houses a restaurant, and several types of small-scale retail shops. The front of the building provides a focus for public space and pedestrians.

- Parking areas behind commercial structures should be linked via a pedestrian and vehicular access network.
- Shared access and parking can be used to minimize excess parking within the hamlet.
- Entrances and exits to parking lots should be consolidated and shared.
- All large parking lots shall incorporate elements such as islands with planting and crosswalks to break up the mass and space of the lot and to provide for safe pedestrian navigation.
- Parallel on-street parking should be provided.
- Rear alleys are encouraged to provide additional parking and access to structures and to house public utilities and other public service functions (e.g., trash pick-up).

Crosswalks, plantings, and pedestrian-scaled lighting can help make parking areas more attractive and pleasant

Street lighting

Appropriate lighting is essential to creating a pleasant pedestrian environment. All light installations should be sensitive to the context of the hamlet and fit-in to the character of the area.

- **Street lighting should be provided along all streets**. In general, more, smaller lights as opposed to fewer, high-intensity lights should be used and all exterior lighting fixtures shall be directed downward to reduce glare onto adjacent properties and streets.

- **Pedestrian-level lighting** should be on fixtures not exceeding 15 feet in height. Lighting fixtures for parking lots should be between 15 and 25 feet in height (should not exceed 30'). Parking and circulation lighting fixtures should include a cutoff type of luminarie to prevent spillage of direct light above the fixture.

Example of acceptable street lighting for the hamlet.

Architectural Considerations

Development within Clifton Park's hamlet districts should employ a variety of building types, sizes, designs, and construction materials to enable individual buildings to have unique distinctive character. However, this variety should be complementary in character to the hamlet's setting and Clifton Park. New construction should creatively reflect elements of traditionally styled local architecture, appear as a comprehensive sequence in size and shape, be compatible with adjacent buildings and positively contribute to the overall organization and architectural theme of the hamlet and not detract from it.

- Buildings should be designed at a **human scale** and all buildings should be organized and designed in such a way that the front of the structure addresses and enhances the public realm.

  - **The recognizable house entrance should be the prominent feature** of the front of parcels and lots.

    - Garages should be side loaded or when facing the street, located behind the front building face of the principal structure (for attached garages), completely behind the structure (detached garages).

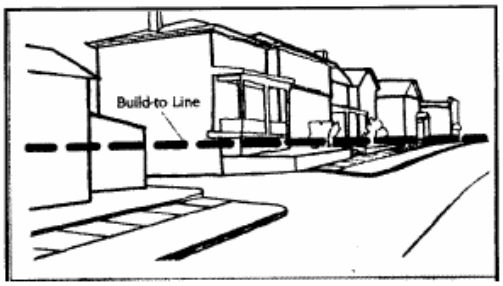
  - Furthermore, all design of new and rehabilitated structures should consider the following:

    - Ensure that doorways, windows, and other openings in the facade of a building are proportioned to reflect pedestrian scale and movement, and to encourage interest at the street level.

A variety of building types with consistent features (build-to line, similar height). These homes also present a pleasant face to the public through windows, porches and front doors – enhancing the public realm and pedestrian experience.

- Avoid massive, uniform, block structures and long, monotonous, uninterrupted walls or roof planes.
- Utilize porches, patios, and balconies to introduce a transition from the structure to the street.

- **Buildings should be located close to the sidewalk** along the street to form a strong architectural and visual group by complementing each other. Consistently locate buildings within the hamlet along the build-to line to create a continuous streetscape.



Structures located close to the street along a consistent "build-to" line create a continuous streetscape.

- Building height, design, scale and mass should be **compatible with the neighborhood context**. Two-story buildings are preferred within the HR district, two to three-story buildings are preferred in the HM district. The relative portion and size of design elements in a structure, such as windows and bays, should be kept consistent throughout the design, and in keeping with the proportion, general scale and mass of adjacent structures.

- Facades should use architectural features and details to **articulate a building's façade**. Buildings greater than one story should clearly delineate the boundary between each floor of the structure through belt courses, cornice lines, or similar architectural detailing.

- Facades should attempt to coordinate/complement the relative heights of elements, rhythms or bay systems of adjacent buildings as they are expressed on the facade with adjacent buildings.

The awning on this structure helps to delineate the first story from upper floors. The building also presents a pleasant public face and provides visual interest.

- The **amount of fenestration** (windows and doors) in a facade should be consistent with the amount of fenestration in adjacent buildings and should remain sympathetic to the buildings in the vicinity and respond to the historic local architectural styles.

- At street level, the **ground floor facade** and, in particular, the entry should have the highest amount of fenestration and depth, should be open and inviting, and should have large display windows to glance into.

- **Roofs** for new development should consider and incorporate as many of the following standards as possible :

  - Peaked roofs are generally preferred to flat roofs.

  - Extensive use of very steep, or flat or very low pitched roofs should be avoided.

  - Where flat roofs are used, they should be capped by a structural expression of the facade, not a fake roof front.

  - Sloping roofs should be broken up by the use of dormers and gables to give the facade more visual prominence.

  - Creative use of gables, dormers, and other roof line elements to highlight entrances and bring a sense of architectural distinction are encouraged.

  - Longer buildings should provide fluctuations in the roofline, which are designed to break up the facade, and make entryways more prominent.

  - Antennas, satellite dishes, air handling units and other mechanical equipment placed on a roof should not be visible from the street.

Building materials and colors

Finish materials and colors should harmonize with the materials and colors of the adjacent buildings and positively contribute to the overall theme of the Hamlet. The use of constants between the main color theme and an accent color are recommended (e.g., dark vs. light); however, the number of colors should be kept to a minimum.

Additional material and color concepts that should be incorporated into building design are:

- Subtle accents in the plane of the façade, created through the use of secondary materials such as rough textured materials or decoration (such as brickwork patterns), are encouraged but should not be used as a primary theme.

- Wood or cement clapboard and brick or stone are the preferred material for new construction.

- In commercial areas, materials such as bricks, stone and cement or wood clapboard which are smaller in scale should be used in pedestrian areas instead of metal or glass panels.