



Town of Clifton Park, New York  
**TOWN PARK MASTER PLAN**



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Town of Clifton Park  
**TOWN CENTER PARK  
DRAFT MASTER PLAN**

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DECEMBER 9, 2019

PREPARED BY



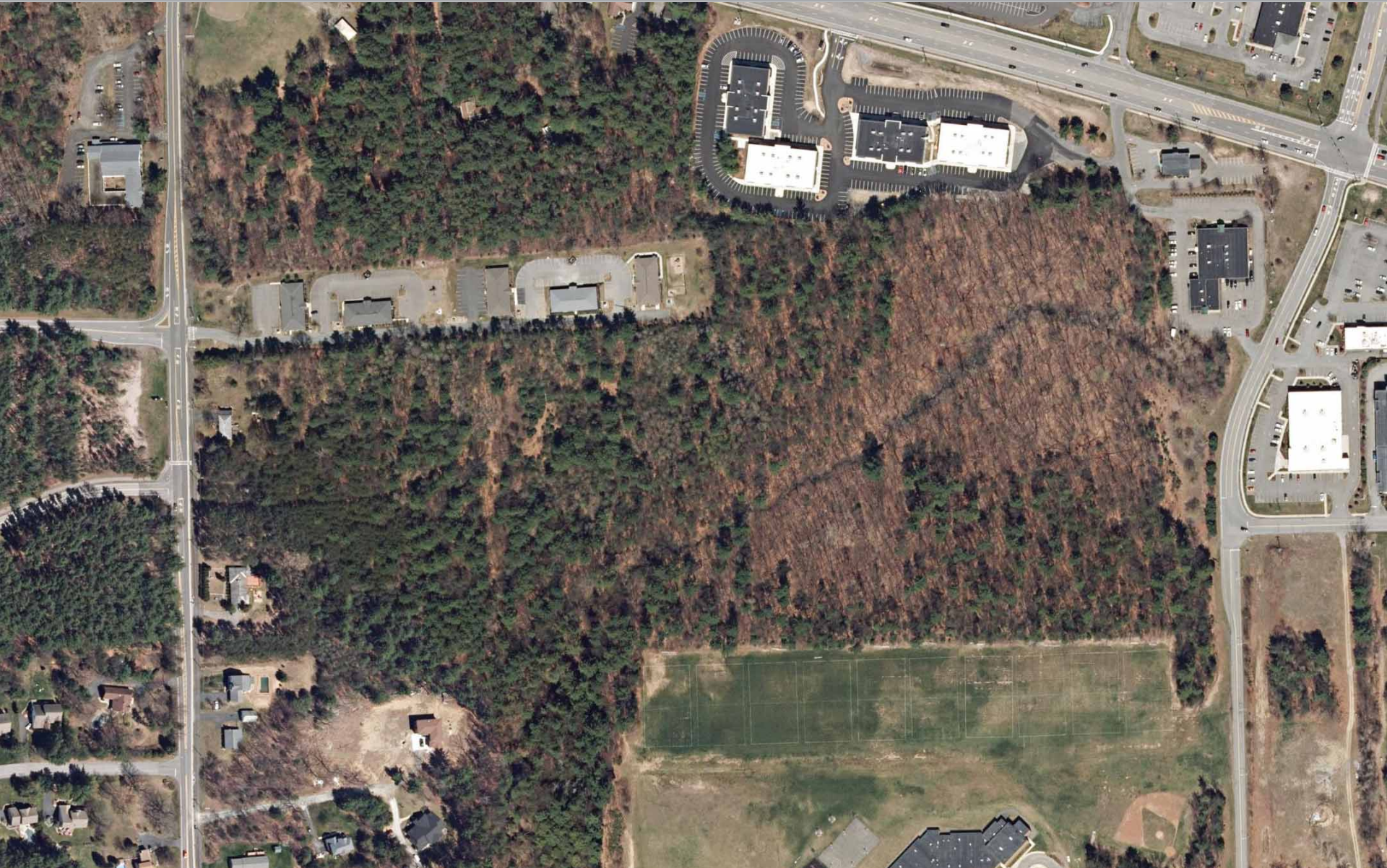
PREPARED FOR  
The Town of Clifton Park





# Clifton Park

## TOWN CENTER PARK MASTER PLAN





### TOWN OF CLIFTON PARK TOWN PARK MASTER PLAN

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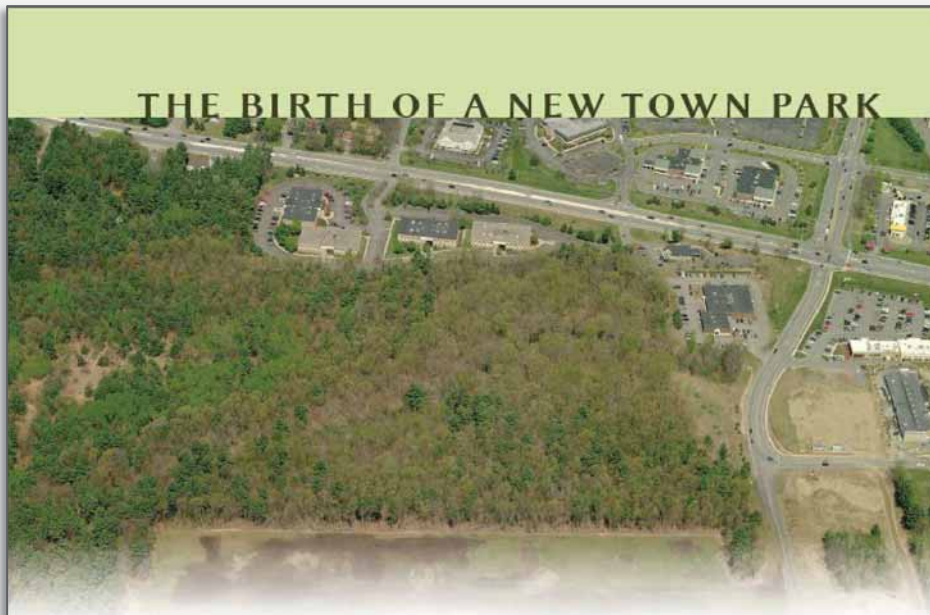
Five Chapters:

1. Background & Goals
2. Existing Conditions
3. Public Input
4. Analysis & Recommendations
5. The Park Master Plan



### BACKGROUND & GOALS

- Background story
- What is a Master Plan
- The Planning Process



### THE BIRTH OF A NEW TOWN PARK

#### THE BIRTH OF A NEW TOWN PARK

The evolution of this land into a local town park did not happen on its own. It was the result of tireless efforts carried out by local open space advocates—with broad community support and leadership by the Town of Clifton Park Town Board—who ultimately partnered with the school district for the sale of the property to the town. The 37-acre property, formerly owned by the Shenendehowa Central School District, was deemed nonessential by the Board of Education and the property was put up for sale in 2016. The process for the proposed sale and subsequent steps that ultimately led to purchase by the town was well-covered by local media. It is a story important to this master plan and is summarized from local media reporting below.

**Proposed Land Sale.** In December 6, 2016, the *Schenectady Gazette* reported on the school board's vote to sell the property to an Albany-based development company: "Despite impassioned pleas from community members urging the board to keep the undeveloped land in the public domain to be used as a park, board members voted 4-3 to sell the land."

**Petition to District-Wide Vote.** Concerned that the last remaining wooded property in the town center would be forever lost to further development, the Friends of Clifton Park Open Space began a petition campaign to challenge the school board's vote to sell the district-





### HISTORY OF THE SITE

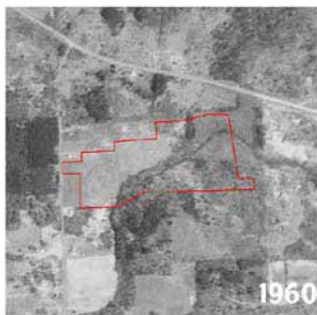
#### HISTORY OF THE SITE

Settled by Europeans in the 1600's, Clifton Park was an agricultural community until construction of the Interstate 87 "Adirondack Northway" in the early 1960's created an easy transportation link from the nearby cities of Albany, Saratoga Springs and beyond. Since then, the town has seen considerable growth, with a large concentration of commercial and residential development blossoming from the interstate exits.

A review of historic aerial photographs of the area illustrates the speed of surrounding growth and extent of natural changes over time on the property itself. In 1960, the town park property can be seen surrounded by fields and wooded areas, with Route 146 to the north largely undeveloped. At this time, the site itself is a mixture of cleared open fields to the west, and woods to the east following the line of the stream.

By the late 1970s, one can see the beginnings of commercial development along nearby roads, and a smattering of successional shrub and tree species had begun to appear in the open field portion of the property. By the mid eighties, surrounding commercial development was growing rapidly, and the red pine plantation on the property had begun to fill in the open field.

By the 2000's, the surrounding areas that had once been open fields had either been developed, or had grown into woodlands, including the park site itself.



**Figure 4. A Photo Timeline.** Aerial photographs taken at various points since 1960 show the changes to the site and the surrounding areas of Clifton Park over the years. (Continued on next page)

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

- History of the site
- Existing features
- Surrounding context



### ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

#### Site Features

The town park property is generally flat or gently sloped and mostly wooded. It is drained by a small intermittent stream bordered by a shallow linear wetland which runs in a southwesterly direction through the site. It contains an informal network of footpaths created by years of public use. These paths are currently used by many local residents, as well as the Shenendehowa High School cross country team.

As two of the district elementary schools are located south of the town center park tract, and the land was previously owned by the school district, the facilities department continues to pass through the property on an easement in order to transport their maintenance equipment between school grounds.

#### ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

As part of the initial site assessment for this master plan, a biological assessment was completed in the spring and summer of 2019 by Michael S. Batcher, M.S., AICP, an ecologist and environmental planner, during a series of visits to the site.

#### Cover Types

Overall, the site includes nine acres of deciduous oak forest; 20.7 acres of white pine-mixed deciduous forest; 2.6 acres of red pine plantation; 1.7 acres of successional forest/shrubland, 1.5 acres of white pine successional forest, and 2.1 acres of wetland. The approximate areas of the cover types are shown in Figure 7.

*Deciduous Oak Forest* - The oak forest cover consists primarily of scarlet oak, red oak and white oak with some red maple, beech, black cherry, eastern cottonwood, quaking aspen, white pine and hornbeam. There is also scattered pitch pine south of the wetland in the eastern portion of the forest, as well as a patch of sugar maple. The shrub layer is limited and primarily witch hazel, though some lowbush blueberry and maple-leaf viburnum were found. There are few seedlings, with white pine and scarlet oak generally being the most abundant. There is extensive cover of Canada-mayflower, starflower, patches of



**Figure 6. Site Walkthrough, April 2019.** Site walkthroughs were important to understand the diversity on the property. As part of the design team, Michael Batcher visited the site at several periods over the changing seasons to provide a biological assessment of the plants and animals found on the property.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

- History of the site
- Existing features
- Surrounding context
- Ecological findings
- Site analysis findings



### PUBLIC INPUT

#### VISIONING WORKSHOP

##### VISIONING WORKSHOP

A visioning workshop was held at the Clifton Park Senior Center on May 1, 2019 where attendees were invited to share their thoughts on what the overall character of the park should be. A series of visual display boards were presented, and attendees were given colored stickers to apply to images they liked, including examples of different programming elements and activities such as playgrounds, restrooms or parking lots. In general, each series of images represented a range of design character from "natural/informal" to "designed/formal" style. The intent of these exercises was to show that there was a range of options, and get an impression of what people liked and disliked.

##### Future Park Land Use Options

Understanding that not all of the park property needs to be the designed the same, a separate exercise asked people what percentage of the land they would like to see devoted to different levels of use. Types of uses ranged from "Preservation Area" (kept natural) to "Low", "Moderate" and "High Intensity" uses such as parking lots and facilities. Participants were also provided comment sheets to write their own ideas, observations and concerns.



**Figure 11.** One of the display boards at the vision workshop. Participants indicated they did not see a need for a playground, however liked the idea of an outdoor classroom. A "place for artists" and performance space for the "Not So Common Players" was also a suggestion.

- The public input process
- Visioning workshop
- Online survey
- Design charrette
- September presentation



**Figure 12.** Participants at the May 1st Visioning Workshop at the Clifton Park Senior Center. The visioning workshop was designed to discuss the desired general character and feel of the park, and discuss how much of the property should be disturbed vs. kept natural.

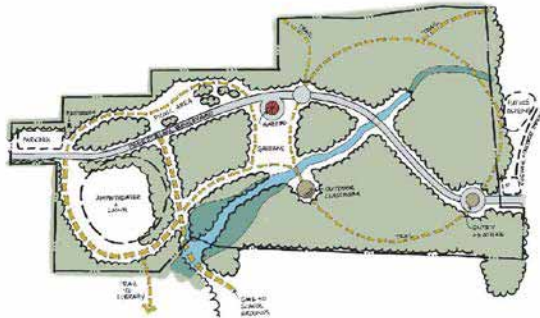




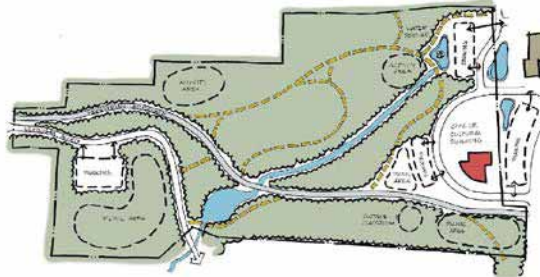
### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

#### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Utilizing the findings of the ecological study, the public input and the team's analysis, the first step to developing the design was determining how to incorporate the east-west pedestrian passage through the site. The connection from the high school and Moe Road over to the town center / Maxwell Drive area was largely considered to be the most important design element, as it would guide much of the rest of the design. A number of different configurations were tested for this connection. Each configuration attempted to preserve a large area of the property as "natural/preserved" land, reduce habitat fragmentation and meet the "design principles" described earlier. Early attempts to



**Figure 19.** Early alternative concept for the park, providing a prominent pedestrian east-west connection from Moe Road to the Maxwell Drive / Southside Drive intersection. This approach helped to preserve a lot of the existing forest on the east side of the property, and kept most of the disturbance on the west side. However, the main path fragmented the woods in the southeast, which was a higher priority for preservation.



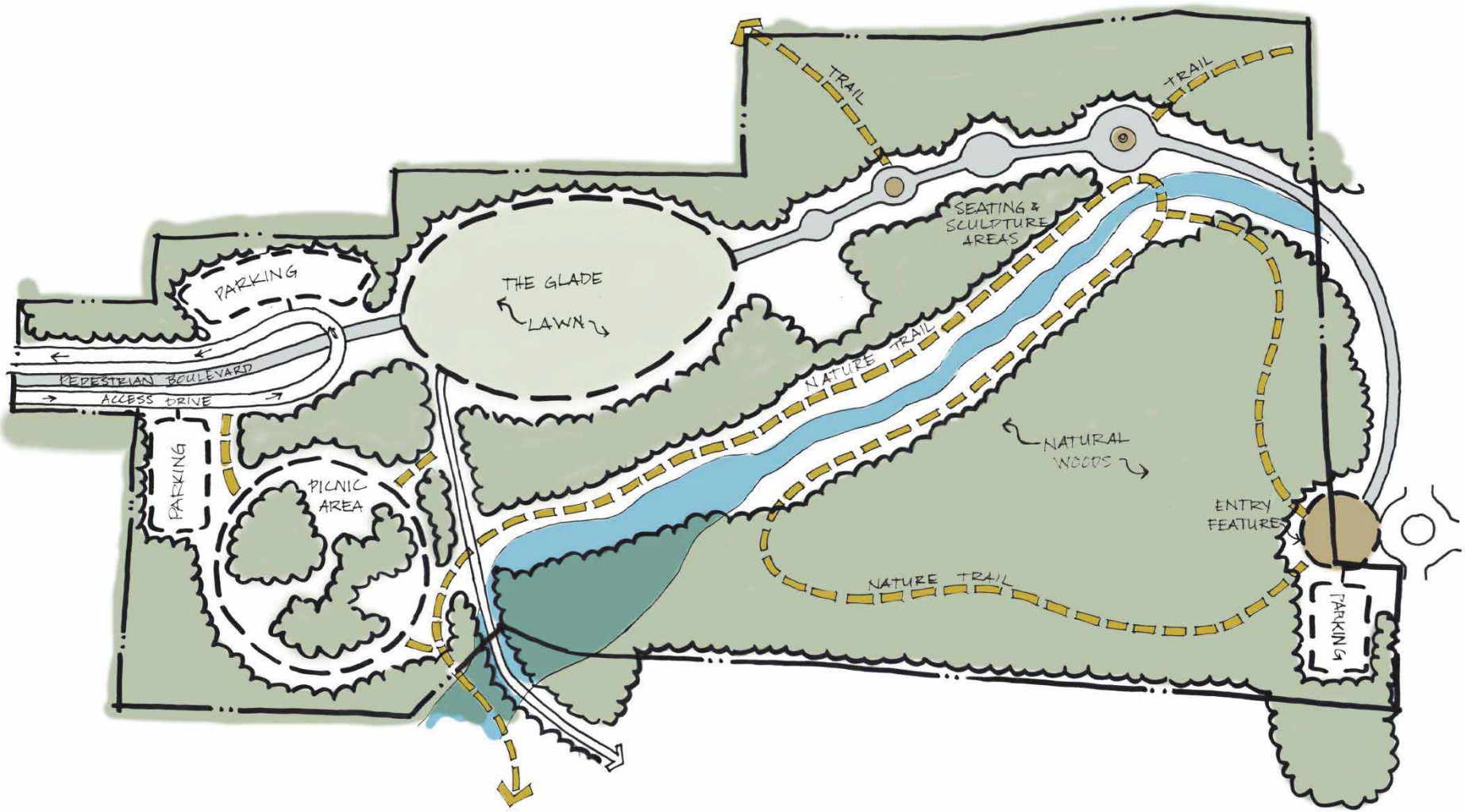
**Figure 20.** Early alternative concept for the park, providing an east-west connection and exploring the addition of a civic / cultural building on the east side which was integrated into the park. This approach helped to preserve the center of the property, with disturbance on either end. Ultimately, this concept was determined to be too disruptive. It did however provide parking on the east side which would replace the existing stormwater basin on town property without the need for parking directly on the park property.

## ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Opportunities & constraints
- Findings
- Recommendations
- Design considerations



### ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS





### PARK MASTER PLAN

#### PARK MASTER PLAN



This master plan is the culmination of work by many people who have over the years envisioned a special place within the heart of the Clifton Park Town Center, a retreat and respite from the usual, and a place where townspeople can gather as a community in a beautiful setting. This vision was created from an analysis of site conditions, ecological sensitivity, the surrounding context and the input of many local residents.

The synthesis of this information formed the basis for establishing goals and principles for the property—an overall vision for the park and a blueprint for future design decisions. It is anticipated that over time, public attitudes and the needs of the community may likely evolve. As this occurs, we anticipate that the details of this plan will have some flexibility, while the overarching principles shall remain sound and intact.

**Figure 23.**  
*The park is envisioned to provide a relaxing atmosphere, similar to this image from a park in Massachusetts.*

- Vision statement
- Master plan rendering
- Illustrative examples
- Future design considerations
- Design implementation
- Plans outside the park
- Phasing options
- Funding options
- Cost & Maintenance
- Conclusion



# Clifton Park

## TOWN CENTER PARK MASTER PLAN





# Clifton Park

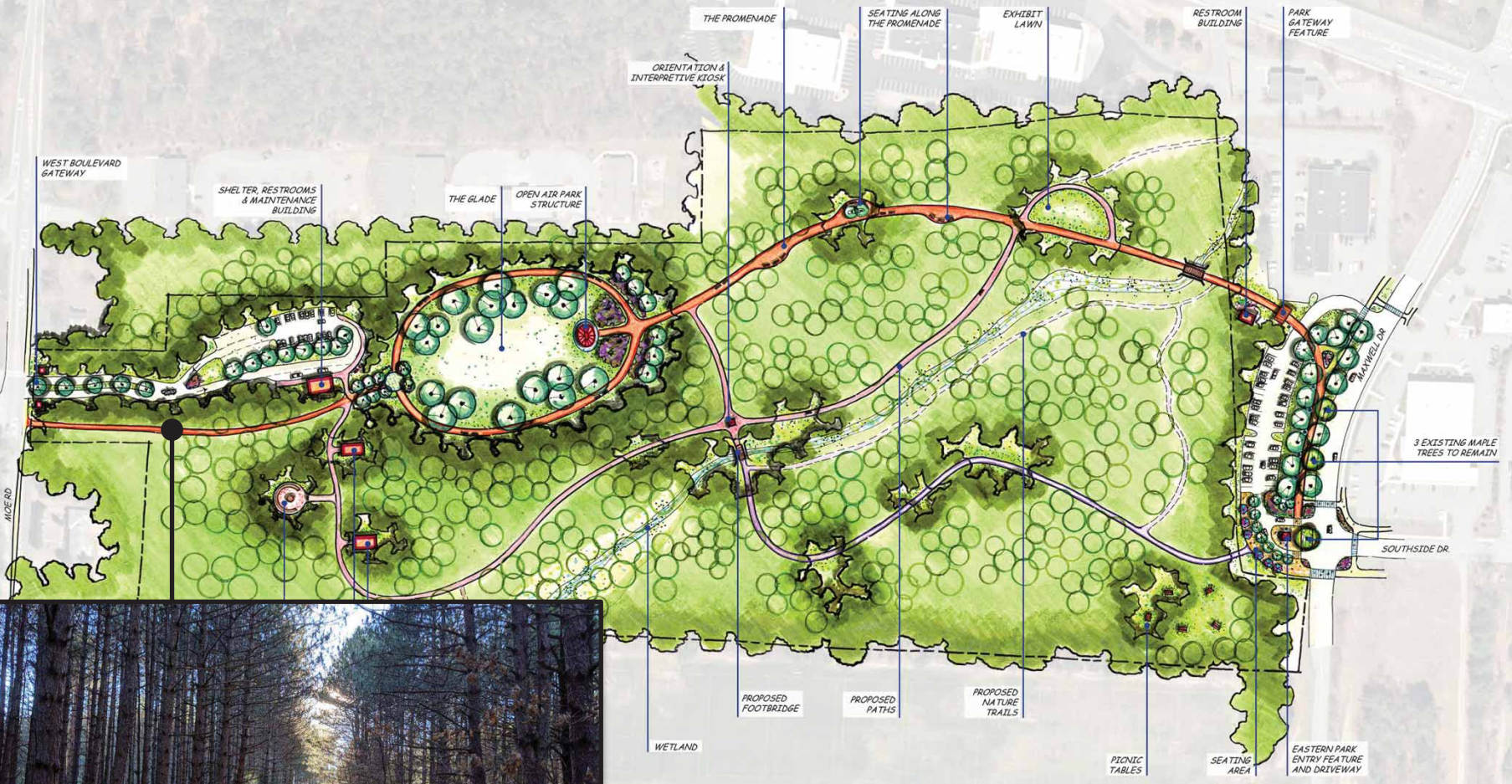
## TOWN CENTER PARK MASTER PLAN





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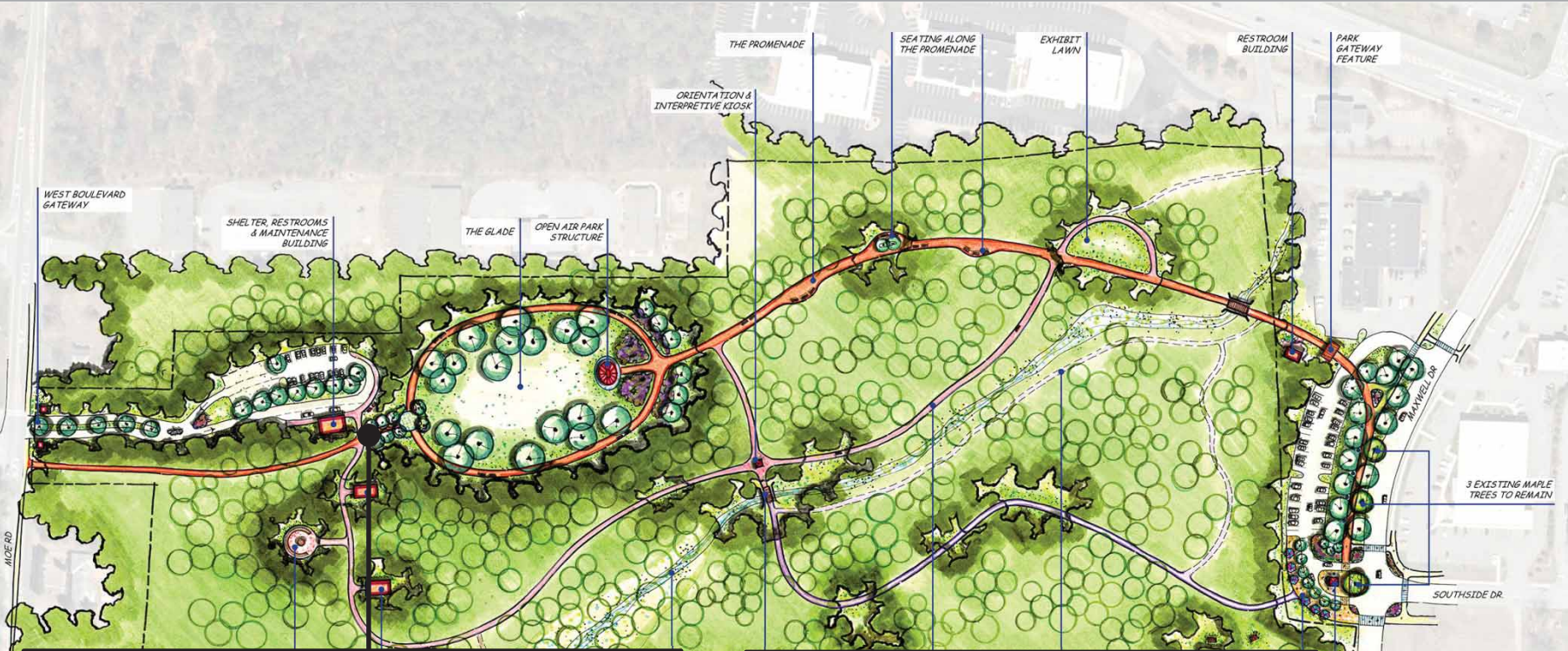
## TOWN CENTER PARK MASTER PLAN





# Clifton Park

## TOWN CENTER PARK MASTER PLAN

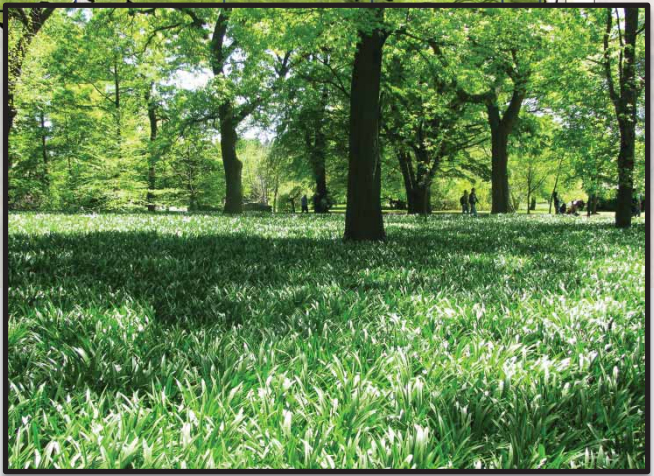


EASTERN PARK ENTRY FEATURE AND DRIVEWAY



# Clifton Park

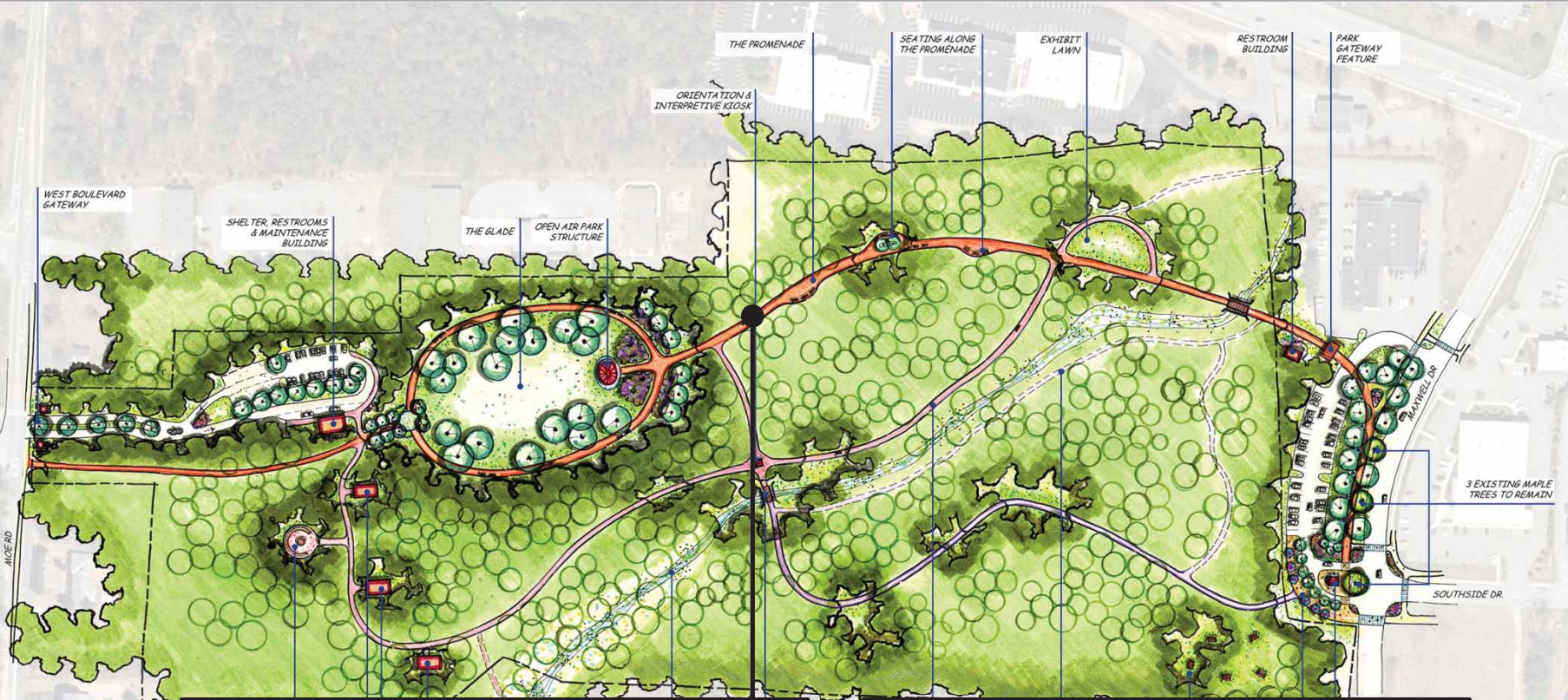
## TOWN CENTER PARK MASTER PLAN





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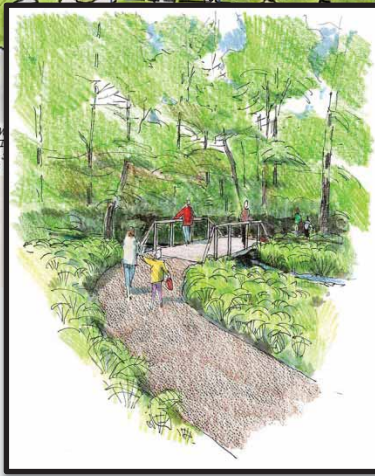
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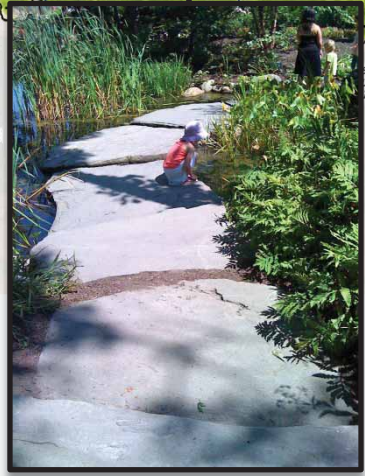
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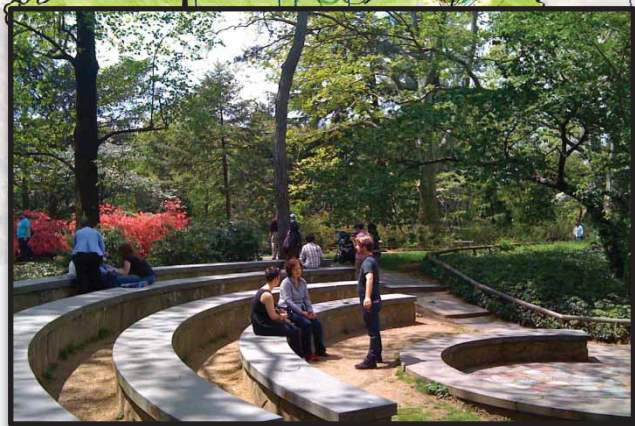
## TOWN CENTER PARK MASTER PLAN





# Clifton Park

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# Clifton Park

## TOWN CENTER PARK MASTER PLAN





## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Detailed survey should be conducted, especially in areas along promenade route and parking, driveways.
- Survey should identify all significant trees.
- Entire length of promenade be staked out in the field to determine exact centerline of route, meander around significant trees to preserve, prior to design.
- Construction documents be developed for the full master plan build out.
- Town can decide what portions to put out to bid first, and provides flexibility.



**Integrate:** Preserve 3 Red Maple trees along Maxwell Drive.



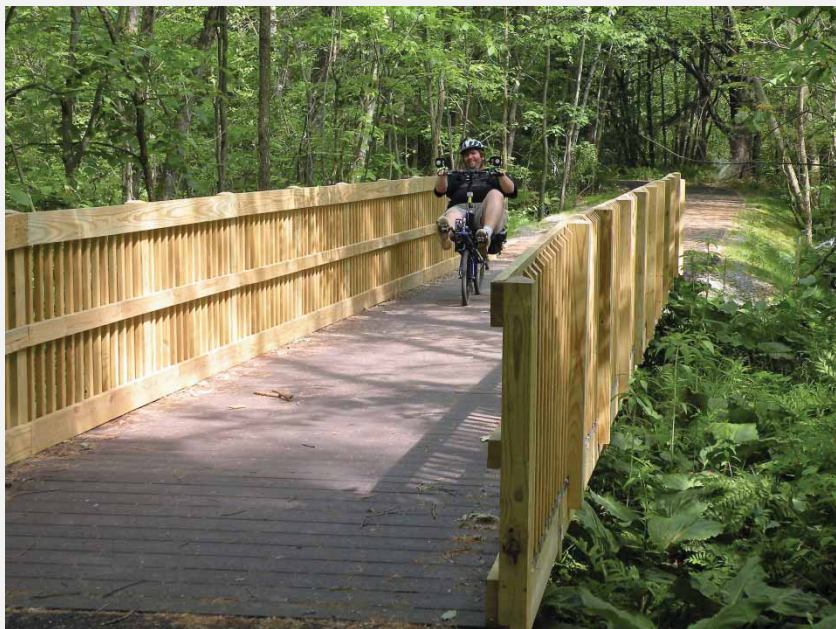
### PLANNING "OUTSIDE" THE PARK



**PRIORITY 1:** Continue promenade eastward into Town Center.



### PLANNING "OUTSIDE" THE PARK



**PRIORITY 2:** Connection to library.



### PLANNING "OUTSIDE" THE PARK



PRIORITY 3: Wetland remediation.



### PLANNING "OUTSIDE" THE PARK



PRIORITY 4: Connect to Collins Park.



### PLANNING "OUTSIDE" THE PARK



**PRIORITY 4:** Connect to Collins Park.



# Clifton Park

## TOWN CENTER PARK MASTER PLAN

### PHASING





### PHASE 1



PHASE 1: Establish core functionality



### PHASE 2



**PHASE 2:** Pavilions, Restrooms, Trails and other structures.



# Clifton Park

## TOWN CENTER PARK MASTER PLAN



Planning / Design / Landscape Architecture PLLC

13 Division St. Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 - P (518) 306-3702



112 Spring Street, Suite 305 Saratoga Springs, New York 12866

CONCEPT PHASE: PROJECT CONSTRUCTION COST ASSESSMENT PHASE 2 Document Date: 11.14.2019

TOWN OF CLIFTON PARK - PARK CENTER Reference Drawing: Master Plan

499 MOE ROAD - CLIFTON PARK, NY 12065

Project Description: The phase 2 design concept at Clifton Park Town Park is to add additional site features, these site features include but are not limited to: a woodland trail, a pedestrian bridge, site lighting, a picnic pavilion and vehicle parking.

Note: 1. Costs contained herein are conceptual estimates for discussion and planning purposes. 2. Costs stated in this assessment represent 2019 construction prices.

ITEM NO.	ITEM DESCRIPTION	Quantity	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	LINE ITEM COST
<b>PHASE 2</b>					
<b>A. Site Preparation</b>					
1	Construction Stakeout	1	UNIT	\$2,000.00	\$2,000
2	Temporary Traffic Control	1	UNIT	\$2,000.00	\$2,000
<b>SUBTOTAL A</b>					<b>\$4,000</b>
<b>B. Erosion Control Measures</b>					
1	Silt Fence	350	LF	\$3.00	\$1,050
2	Temporary Erosion Control Maintenance	1	UNIT	\$2,500.00	\$2,500
<b>SUBTOTAL B</b>					<b>\$3,550</b>
<b>C. Removals</b>					
1	Clearing & Grubbing Within Site Boundaries	0.5	AC	\$12,000.00	\$6,000
<b>SUBTOTAL C</b>					<b>\$6,000</b>
<b>D. Earthwork</b>					
1	Establish Subgrades - Assumes No Soil Import or Export				
<b>SUBTOTAL D</b>					
<b>E. Stormwater Management</b>					
N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>SUBTOTAL E</b>					<b>N/A</b>
<b>F. Utilities</b>					
1	Electrical				
1.2	Parking & Road-Way Area Lighting @ +/- 100' Apart	2	EA	\$5,000.00	\$10,000
1.3	Electrical Service Distribution W/ Panel & Transformer	20	LF	\$25.00	\$500
1.4	Connection to Existing System	1	UNIT	\$2,000.00	\$2,000
1.5	Miscellaneous	1	UNIT	\$10,000.00	\$10,000
2	Sanitary System				
N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	Water System				
N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>SUBTOTAL F</b>					<b>\$22,500</b>
<b>G. Entry Drive &amp; Parking Area</b>					
2	West Entrance - Western Parking Lot (24 Stalls)				
2A	20" Depth of Excavation (On site spoil)	280	CY	\$11.00	\$3,080
2B	Porous Asphalt Pavement	510	SY	\$60.00	\$30,600
<i>Includes: 12" Subbase course, 4" crushed stone, 4" top course.</i>					
<b>SUBTOTAL G</b>					<b>\$33,680</b>
<b>H. Woodland Trail &amp; Pedestrian Bridge</b>					
1	Woodland Trail #1				
1A	11" Depth of Excavation	571	CY	\$11.00	\$6,281
1B	Compacted Aggregate (8" Crusher run, 3" Stone Dust)	1,870	SY	\$16.00	\$29,920
2	Woodland Trail #2				
2A	12" Depth of Excavation	103	CY	\$11.00	\$1,133
2B	12" of Woodchips	375	CY	\$30.00	\$11,250
2	Pedestrian Bridge @ Creek Crossing	1	UNIT	\$20,000.00	\$20,000
<b>SUBTOTAL H</b>					<b>\$68,584</b>
<b>I. Site Restoration</b>					
1	Shoulder Restoration - 4" Depth Topsoil & Seed				

## SCHEMATIC COST ESTIMATE

- Total schematic cost estimate is approximately \$3.77M
- Phase 1: \$2.58M
- Phase 2: \$1.19M
- Phases could be divided up differently as needed for budgeting however.



### PARK MASTER PLAN

#### COST, OPERATION & MAINTENANCE

A schematic cost assessment estimates that the total cost of the park construction to be in the range of \$3.5 - 3.8 million dollars. Phase 1, which is assumed to include a majority of the work for the purposes of this report, is estimated to be approximately \$3.4 million. The town however has the flexibility to divide the work into different sized phases as needed. A copy of the detailed assessment is provided in the appendix for reference.

The projected costs of operation and maintenance for this community facility, once fully constructed, are estimated as outlined below. These estimates are in 2019 dollars, and subject to change.

I. PARK FEATURE MAINTENANCE COMPONENT (labor)	
A. Turf grass mowing:	
16 employee hrs./week x 24 weeks x \$25/hr. =	\$ 9,600
B. Turf grass fertilization, aeration and repairs:	
16 employee hrs./week x 4 weeks x \$25/hr. =	\$ 1,600
C. Spring clean-up, Fall leaf collection, and tree limbing:	
32 employee hrs./week x 6 weeks x \$25/hr. =	\$ 4,350
D. Trash collection:	
4 employee hrs./week x 32 weeks x \$25/hr. =	\$ 3,200
E. Restroom and other facility maintenance:	
8 employee hrs./week x 32 weeks x \$25/hr. =	\$ 6,400
F. Snow removal:	
16 employee hrs./week x 12 weeks x \$30/hr. =	\$ 5,760
G. Seasonal summer staff:	
<u>16 employee hrs./week x 12 weeks x \$20/hr. =</u>	<u>\$ 3,840</u>
<i>Annual Maintenance Labor Subtotal =</i>	<i>\$34,750</i>
II. SPECIAL EVENTS	
A. Assume 12 events per year requiring additional staff for safety, operations, and set-up/take down	
<u>16 employee hrs./event x 12 events x \$25/hr. =</u>	<u>\$ 4,800</u>
<i>Annual Special Events Labor Subtotal =</i>	<i>\$ 4,800</i>

## OPERATION & MAINTENANCE

- Yearly park operation and maintenance is estimated to be around \$73,000.
- Mowing, plowing, labor
- Repair and replacements
- Special events
- Utilities
- Equipment and materials



# FUNDING



- State and Federal grants (DASNY, CEFAP, NYSOPRHP, NYSDEC, LWCF)
- Volunteer Services & Donations
- Saratoga County
- Town of Clifton Park
- The School District



# THANK YOU



Recommend Town Board adopt Master Plan