

Town of Clifton Park Comprehensive Plan

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preamble		
I.	Purpose	Page 5
II.	Demographic and Historical Background	Page 5
	a. Brief History of Clifton Park	
	b. Recent Growth and Settlement Patterns	
III.	Current Town Land Characteristics	Page 8
	General	
	Physical Location and Major Features	
	Geology	
	Waters	
	Ecological Resources	
	Agricultural Resources	
	Historic and Cultural Resources	
	Recreation and Trails	
	Planning Areas	
	Area 1	
	Area 2	
	Area 3	
IV.	General Goals.....	Page 16
V.	Open Space Resources	Page 17
	Plan Concepts and Goals	
VI.	Transportation Networks.....	Page 19
	A. Goals	
	B. Strategies	
VII.	Public Utilities	Page 22
	A. Goals	
	1. Water System	
	2. Sewer System	
	3. Solid Waste	
	B. Strategies	
VIII.	Environment.....	Page 23
	A. Goals	
	B. Strategies	
IX.	Quality of Life.....	Page 28

- A. Goals
 - 1. Emergency Services
 - 2. Government Services
 - 3. Education
 - 4. Recreation
 - 5. Senior and Youth Services
 - 6. Historic Preservation
 - 7. Arts and Culture

- B. Strategies
 - 1. Emergency Services
 - 2. General Government
 - 3. Education
 - 4. Recreation
 - 5. Senior and Youth Services

X. EconomyPage 33

- A. Goals
- B. Strategies

XI. Population and HousingPage 35

- A. Goals
- B. Strategies

XII. Land UsePage 36

- A. Goals
- B. Strategies

XIII. Plan For Future Land Use.....Page 34

- A. General
- B. Land Use Categories

XIV. Land Use Implementation StrategiesPage 40

- A. General
- B. Cluster Zoning
- C. Conservation-Based Development Design
- D. Land Conservation
- E. Planned Unit Development
- F. Mapped Street Ordinance
- G. Open Space Protection and Historic Preservation Strategies
- H. Comprehensive Plan Update Committee

Key Clifton Park Plans and Studies

Outside Reference Materials

Local Law No. 7 of 2006

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TOWN OF CLIFTON PARK

PREAMBLE: The Comprehensive Plan encourages a balance of land uses whereby residential and economic vitality can be pursued and the unique rural and historic character of the Town can be preserved. In addition, the comprehensive plan seeks to enhance the quality of life for Clifton Park. The comprehensive plan depicts this balance with residential areas comprising approximately 75 - 80% of the Town and the commercial/corporate areas being about 20 - 25% of the Town's approximately 50 square miles. The Comprehensive Plan is a flexible guidance tool that is frequently reviewed and amended to address current and long range issues with the intent of maintaining the diversity, economic vitality and environmental quality of the community.

I. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The general purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a general blueprint for Town government in regulating land use to best provide for the safety and general welfare of all Town citizens.

Pursuant to Section 272-a of the New York State Town Law, a town comprehensive plan shall "...serve as a basis for land use regulation, infrastructure development, public and private investment, and any plans which may detail one or more topics of a town comprehensive plan".

II. DEMOGRAPHIC AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Clifton Park is a community with two distinct characteristics; the eastern portion located parallel to the Northway, is mainly residential with the major commercial areas of town; while the western portion of the Town retains its rural residential, agricultural and recreational nature (west of Vischer Ferry Road). Most of the developed land in Clifton Park is residential, with a lesser mix of commercial/office space, retail and light industrial uses. The most significant growth surge took place from 1960-1990, during which time the Town experienced a dramatic population increase.

(1) Capital District Regional Planning Commission, May 1993

The following are the major demographic characteristics of the Town based on the 2000 Census. (2)

-Total Population	32,995
- Median Age:	38.7
- Total Households	12,589
- Total Number of Housing Units:	13,069
- Per Capita Income:	\$31,997.00
- Median Household Income:	\$68,999.00
- Median House Value:	\$143,300.00

In the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Clifton Park was 32,995, which represents a 9.6% increase in population growth from 1990.

Brief History of Clifton Park

The history of Clifton Park underlies its present development patterns, and is recognized in developing future land use. Excellent resources on the Town's history are Bits of Clifton Park History, by John L. Scherer, Historian for the Town of Clifton Park, produced by the Town of Clifton Park for the 175th Anniversary of the Clifton Park (1828 – 2003), as well as the book, Crossroads and Canals - The History of Clifton Park, by William R. Washington and Patricia S. Smith.

The first settlement of Clifton Park, in 1672, was on the riverbank below Vischer Ferry, at what was once called "Fort's Ferry". The last surviving house (called the Painter Place), built in about 1740, was destroyed by arson in 1973. Since the dredging of the New York State Barge Canal in 1912, most of the area of the original settlement has been taken over by the State, and is now a Game Management Area. The area has since been incorporated into what is now known as the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve located along Riverview Road.

The Town of Clifton Park was formed in 1828, the twentieth and last Town to be organized in Saratoga County. Prior to this date, Clifton Park had been included in the Town of Halfmoon, and prior to 1791, when Saratoga County was formed, it was considered part of Albany County. For four years, between 1816 and 1820, the area of present day Clifton Park was called Orange Township, but this name was dropped and the town reverted to Halfmoon again.

Subdividing existing Towns with the ensuring loss of political and economic influence was not popular, and generally resulted in considerable legislative log-rolling.

On March 3, 1828, the Town of Clifton Park was born out of Halfmoon by an act of the legislature. In the following year, the official name was declared to be "Clifton Park".

The present Town of Clifton Park is bounded on the east by Halfmoon, on the north by Ballston and Malta, on the west by Ballston and the Mohawk River, and on the south by the Mohawk.

The Town of Clifton Park developed primarily as a result of transportation patterns. The first settlements at Fort's Ferry, Vischer Ferry and Rexford Flats were along the river, the chief means of transportation, if not the only link with civilization during the early years. Ferries established at these points on the river became the focus for village life. Roads and turnpikes developed across the Town from paths and Indian trails. Taverns and villages grew up along the roads to serve independent travelers and stagecoach traffic. The villages of Jonesville, Clifton Park and Grooms Corners originated in this manner. The Erie Canal would give added life and population to Vischer Ferry and Rexford. The heyday of the canal was the "boom Town" era of these two hamlets. Never again would they support such industry and activity. The railroad would do the same for Jonesville and give birth to a new community named Elnora. Elnora, located at a railroad crossing, developed as a freight depot for the railroad.

Recent Growth and Settlement Patterns

Much of Clifton Park's 20th century growth occurred in the eastern half of Town in relation to the highway access of the Northway, and where water and sewer lines have been developed. Today, as a result of this trend, approximately 90 percent of the Town's population resides in the eastern part of town, on half the town's developable acreage, while the western part of Town consists of primarily rural, agricultural and recreational lands.

Capital District Regional Planning Commission, May 1993

III. CURRENT TOWN LAND CHARACTERISTICS

General - This section describes the current land characteristics in the Town.

Physical Location and Major Features

The present Town of Clifton Park is located in southern Saratoga County, bounded on the east by the Town of Halfmoon, on the north by the Towns of Ballston and the Town of Malta on the northwest by the Town of Ballston, on the southwest by the Town of Glenville (Schenectady County). The Town's entire southern boundary is the Mohawk River. Across the Mohawk River to the south are the Towns of Niskayuna (Schenectady County) and Colonie (Albany County).

The Town's area occupies a mid-southern position in Saratoga County, and although originally some 50 square miles in area, is now somewhat smaller because of a rise in the river level caused by the creation of the New York State Barge Canal and a consequent loss of land along the southern edge of the Town.

Today the Mohawk River, with a length of approximately 12 miles along the town's southern edge, from the hamlet of Rexford to the Town of Halfmoon, is an active navigable waterway system, part of the New York State Canal System, under the operation of the New York State Thruway Authority/Canal Board. As such, notably, a significant riverfront area along the Mohawk River in Clifton Park is owned and managed by the New York State Canal Corporation.

In addition, the Mohawk River and its interwoven Erie Canal heritage are recognized as unique state and national assets. The Town of Clifton Park and its Mohawk Riverfront are part of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

The entire length of the Mohawk Riverfront including the entire stretch of Riverview Road, Rexford, Vischer Ferry, the Vischer Ferry Historic District, and the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, are major features and resources included as part of the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway state and national scenic byway systems. State and federal scenic byway designation offers the opportunity to seek relevant funding. In 2006, New York State announced an initiative to support the creation of a new Erie Canal Greenway, of which Clifton Park is invited to join and participate in creating.

Geology

The Town of Clifton Park is located along the north shores of the Mohawk River, a drainage channel flowing from the Great Lakes to its convergence with the Hudson River at Waterford. When the last ice sheet melted about 10,000 years ago, ice was brought down by huge floods, filling the course of the Mohawk River with debris and turning its waters east and south of this original channel. The cliffs at Rexford Flats gave evidence of this erosion, revealing the original rock under this deluge as shale, which was easily broken up by the water's force.

Geologically, the Town of Clifton Park is split roughly in half, by the edge of a plateau of rock, shale, and sandstone that runs from south to north through the town. On the western side of town is the rock shelf, on the eastern side of town, bedrock drops away and is found at a depth ranging from 20 to 200 feet. The soils are coarse grained sands in the western half, with coarser sand on glacial sediment in the east. Generally, the land is flat with a rolling surface, and in the Jonesville-Elnora area, it is like a tabletop. The present wooded areas are either rough terrain or wetlands. These lowlands were good agricultural fields for the Indians, then for Dutch immigrants, and later for English and Irish settlers.

Waters

As noted earlier the Mohawk River extends for about 12 miles as the Town's southern – southwestern edge and the Town's most significant defining water feature.

The Stony Creek Reservoir, a major body of water created by a dam for drinking water reservoir for the Town of Colonie, is along the Stony Creek, a major tributary to the Mohawk River. The Stony Creek Reservoir is also known as the Latham Reservoir for having served this particular area within Colonie.

The southeastern edge of Ballston Lake, a geologically unique, naturally occurring surface waterbody, is in northwestern Clifton Park. It is important to note that an area of Clifton Park is in this lake's watershed.

Other major streams in the Town of Clifton Park are the Dwaas Kill in central and northeastern area of town; the Long Kill, a tributary to the Dwaas Kill in the northern area of town; the Cooley Kill and the Anthony Kill, both in the northern half of town; and the Anthony Kill and Alplaus Creek on the western edge of town.

Wetlands

The major wetlands are located along the Mohawk River, some of which are part of the Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve; Van Vranken Road and along the National Grid east-west utility corridor from Vischer Ferry Road to the town's boundary with Halfmoon; along the banks of the Stony Creek Reservoir and Stony Creek; along Appleton Road to the west side of Miller Road and northeasterly to Waite Road (both sides); between Grooms Road south to Ray Road; west of Waite Road in northern part of town; along the Alplaus Creek at the western edge of town; south of Ballston Lake; due west of Ashdown Road; and along the Dwaas Kill particularly between Kinns, Ushers Road, Carlton and Pierce Roads; between the east side of the Northway to Woods Road, and also east of Woods Road; and north of English Road – at the southwestern edge of Round Lake of which its southern edge is the town boundary with the Town of Malta and the Village of Round Lake. Other wetlands are located along smaller streams throughout town.

Extensive floodplain areas exist along the Mohawk River and others are located along some areas of streams and other low-lying areas of town.

Large-scale wetlands are mapped in the Town of Clifton Park by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation. Smaller wetlands generally require field verification by a qualified professional biologist or wetland delineator experienced with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wetland delineation protocol. The Army Corps of Engineers regulates small wetlands; the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation regulates wetlands 12 acres or greater.

Ecological Resources

Many important natural areas exist throughout town including the shoreline wetlands along the Mohawk River, accessible via the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, important shoreline habitat for migratory birds.

The Dwaas Kill Natural Area is an important habitat area and wetlands area all along the Dwaas Kill but with a core area of ecological importance between Ushers Road and Van Patten Drive, Carlton Road and Pierce Road. The Town has purchased about 250 acres within the Dwaas Kill Natural Area to help conserve this habitat for wildlife and for community nature preserve use.

The forest, open fields and wetlands area in the northeast area of town from Wood Road to Route 9 to English Road and into Halfmoon is another important habitat area. The Ushers Road State Forest, a woodland area off of Ushers Road and English Road, is an 100-acre area of some protected land in this area, managed by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

As identified previously, the numerous stream corridors and their smaller tributaries, and the large and small wetlands throughout town are also important habitats. Open fields and their vegetative edges that provide grasslands type habitat are also important to some plants and animals.

The Town of Clifton Park has an Environmental Conservation Commission as an advisory body on environmental and ecological issues in the Town of Clifton Park and the assistance of a staff person, the Town's Environmental Specialist.

In addition, the Town of Clifton Park Open Space, Trails and Riverfront Committee is working as an advisory committee to the Town of Clifton Park and with the Town's Open Space Coordinator to continue to increase protection of unique environmental areas of Clifton Park.

Agricultural Resources

Today, the Town's existing active agricultural lands are located primarily in Western Clifton Park, with the most significant core area of adjacent, larger farm parcels located west of Vischer Ferry Road and Route 146 A from the Route 146 area south to Riverview Road. A few significant farms are still located north of Route 146A. About 2,000 acres of active farmlands exist, although some additional acreage in Town is former farmland, now fallow.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Clifton Park is home to historic hamlets, individual homes and farms, scenic views, and other unique or historic sites. Some sites or districts have national or state historic designation, and others are recognized locally. About 40 sites are recognized to date as having historic and cultural significance. The town's historic hamlets include Rexford, Vischer Ferry, Grooms Corners, Ballston Lake Jonesville, Elnora, and Clifton Park Center.

A major historic area in Clifton Park and in Saratoga County is the Erie Canal along the 12 miles of Mohawk Riverfront in Clifton Park. The Erie Canal is an important part of Town, New York State and United States history, and is a tremendous historical asset. Part of the Erie Canal and its heritage is visible within the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve located south of Riverview Road. The nearly 500-acre preserve extends approximately from Vischer Ferry, and Ferry Road all the way easterly to the Town of Halfmoon boundary.

The former towpath along the Erie Canal and the scenic, cultural and historic assets related to the Erie Canal and the Mohawk River have recently become recognized at the state and national level and designated as the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway. The scenic byway is a scenic, historic and recreational corridor that includes Clifton Park's entire waterfront and area along Riverview Road and beyond. The scenic byway within Clifton Park is part of a larger regional system that extends from the Village and Town of Waterford to the east of Clifton Park and also beyond the town's borders to the west.

In addition, the Vischer Ferry Historic Area is in and around the hamlet of Vischer Ferry and recognizes the historic significance of this area in the town's settlement history.

To help identify and monitor its historic resources, the Town has an appointed Town Historian as well as an appointed Historic Preservation Commission as an advisory body on historic properties and preservation to the town board. The Rexford Historical Society, the Friends of Grooms Tavern, and the Friends of Jonesville Cemetery are additional organizations interested in historic Clifton Park.

The Town of Clifton Park has played a key role in concert with the Friends of Grooms Tavern to protect the Grooms Tavern, located at the southwest intersection of Grooms Road with Sugar Hill Road, the site of the first town meeting. The Town purchased the property and has invested in its restoration with state grant assistance from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund.

Recreation and Trails

The Town of Clifton Park and the local park districts in town offer a range of parks, and recreation areas, including a growing trails and pathways system throughout town. The Town has an active Recreation, Parks and Community Affairs Department that aids in the recreational and educational programming for the community. The Town's Building and Grounds Department plays a key role in helping to manage the town-owned facilities and properties. Park districts provide their own management and upkeep of their facilities and grounds.

More than a decade of commitment has provided more than 12 miles of constructed trailways, contributing to the future goal of an interconnected, town-wide trails and pathways system. Efforts for trail construction focus on constructing trails in existing settled areas, and extending new trails and sidewalks as development occurs. The Trails Subcommittee of the Open Space, Trails and Riverfront Committee recommends new trails connections for consideration.

The Town has an appointed representative for the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway to continue to create pedestrian and bicyclist improvements to this scenic byway corridor and connections to it.

Planning Areas

For the purposes of more detailed characterization, the Town was subdivided into three planning areas. Each Area has a different characterization, which is generally applicable for the entire Area.

Area 1 - This Planning Area is located in the eastern section of the Town and is generally bordered by Vischer Ferry Road and CR 82 to the west, the Malta and Round Lake boundaries to the north, the Halfmoon/Clifton Park boundary to the east, and the county boundary to the south. It contains approximately 16,525 acres of land and water. Area 1 encompasses the series of neighborhoods, which have developed in Clifton Park over the past 30 years.

Topographically, Area 1 is relatively flat, with gently sloping areas distributed throughout and few environmental constraints. The southernmost part of Area 1, adjacent to the Mohawk River, has a large number of freshwater wetlands associated

with the Mohawk River and the Stony Creek (Colonie) Reservoir.

Two large freshwater wetlands are associated with a tributary system in the northern part of Area 1. Nine groundwater recharge areas are located within Area 1 and identified as Round Lake, Pierce Road, Elnora, Grooms Church, Stony Creek, Vischer Ferry, Mohawk River, Crescent, and Clifton Park Center. These represent a combined total of 1,839 acres of recharge, most of which is categorized as being in heavy use due to heavy pumping demands. They serve as two of the most productive ground water resource supplies. Suggested management techniques for these recharge areas include implementing planning controls to redirect development to more appropriate areas and watershed rules to protect ground water resources. (3)

Area 1 also abuts one of the larger water bodies in the area, Round Lake. Soil limitations are moderate in this area, with the exception of the northeastern corner, which tends to have severe development constraints in terms of its suitability for septic tanks, foundations and road construction.

Area 1 contains approximately 80% of the Town's housing and population. Given that Area 1 contains only 44 percent of the Town's land area, it holds a major portion of the Town's general population.

Area 1 is well served by a network of roads linking it with other areas of Town as well as neighboring communities and the region. Numerous road improvements are proposed or have recently been completed for Area 1. A "park and ride" lot providing parking for and access to bus routes is located at Exits 8 and 9 of I-87. Pedestrian and bicycle transportation facilities in this area are limited. However, it is expected that consideration will be given to expansion of pedestrian and bicycle facilities since a Trails Master Plan has been prepared by the Trails Advisory Committee which shall be used as a reference in the expansion of the Town's trail system.

(3) Dunn Geoscience, Hydrologic Report of Aquifer Recharge Areas, Report of the Water Planning Committee to the Clifton Park Town Board, 1983.

The existing land use patterns in Area 1 are the most diversified in the Town, with substantial amounts of residential land. Commercial and industrial centers and various public and institutional activities are interspersed.

The Route 146 and Exit 9 vicinity is the commercial center of Area 1 and the Town. A Generic Environmental Impact Statement was completed for this area in 1998 and the resulting findings statement will provide guidance and direction for future developments. There are also small commercial centers at Northway Exits 8 and 10, as well as in or near the various hamlets. Industry is primarily located in the area east

of Northway Exit 10, in the Light Industrial Zone.

Area 1 is provided with the most public services and facilities. All intensively developed portions are currently provided with municipal sewer and water service. The Shenendehowa Central District is centrally located with a number of satellite elementary schools. Recreational facilities include the Clifton Common, Collins Park, numerous neighborhood parks, the Kinns Road Park and the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve.

Area 2 - covers an area in the western portion of Town generally bordered on the south by the Mohawk River, to the west, the hamlet of Rexford, on the north by the Town boundary and to the east by Route 146A and Vischer Ferry Road. It totals approximately 14,553 acres or 45 percent of the Town's land area.

Area 2 is similar topographically to the rest of Clifton Park, with gentle slopes associated with the wetlands and stream systems. It includes large expanses of freshwater wetlands, comprising over 1,000 acres or 8 percent of the total acreage.

Three groundwater recharge areas have been identified in Area 2: the Clifton Knolls, Sugar Hill Road and Riverview Road areas. Two of the three are used only to a limited extent while the Clifton Knolls recharge area is classified as being in heavy use. This recharge area recharges the aquifer which contains the Clifton Knolls well field. The 1983 Water Planning Committee recommended similar protection as for the recharge areas in Area 1 (4)

There is no village or commercial center and virtually no commercial or industrial development in Area 2. It contains approximately 20 percent of the dwelling units in Clifton Park. (This also includes the units in Area 3, which is in the same Census tracts)

The western half of town which has been historically, predominantly rural and agricultural, sprinkled with farms, and hamlets of Rexford, Vischer Ferry and Grooms Corners, has been experiencing growth pressures from the 1980s onward as the eastern half of town has been well built upon. As a result the Town conducted a study in 2004-2005 to evaluate growth patterns and future scenarios for this area of town through a planning process and the preparation of the Western Clifton Park Generic Environmental Impact Statement. As a result of analyzing the town's future build-out in Western Clifton Park at the current growth blueprint, the town decided to amend the town's plan and zoning to ensure that the primarily rural residential, agricultural and recreational nature of the western part of town would continue in the future. The result was the creation of a Land Conservation Plan and new zoning districts amendments and other tools for Western Clifton Park.

(4) Dunn Geoscience, Hydrologic Report of Aquifer Recharge Areas, Report of the Water Planning

committee to the Clifton Park Town Board, 1983.

The roadway system in Area 2 is limited primarily to two lane arterial and collector roads. Public services in Area 2 are gradually being extended from the eastern part of Town. The Veteran's Memorial Park has recently been completed to fulfill recreational needs. Area 2 is divided into four fire districts - Jonesville, Ballston Lake, Rexford, and Vischer Ferry.

Area 3 - This Planning Area is located in the western part of Clifton Park and includes the Hamlet of Rexford. This area consists of primarily single-family residences with some commercial development. It is zoned rural residential with two small neighborhood business zones. The area is different in character from the other two Areas with more of a small village atmosphere. With the exception of poor soils, the area is relatively free of environmental constraints.

Rexford, with the only bridge in town that crosses the Mohawk, is a major point of entrance and exit to and from Clifton Park. Because of its location, Area 3 often experiences traffic congestion on the main roadways, Riverview Road and Route 146.

Area 3 has limited recreational land. Other community facilities located within the Area include the Glenclyffe Elementary School, part of the Niskayuna School District and one fire station which serves the Rexford Fire District.

IV. GENERAL GOALS

The following can be considered the General Goals for the Town of Clifton Park.

- A. Preserve and enhance the historic, residential, agricultural and rural nature of the Town of Clifton Park while encouraging managed economic growth.
- B. Maintain a continuing planning process for the Town, with emphasis on the quality of life for all Town residents and an appropriate balance of land uses.
- C. Address issues essential to support existing development and to encourage future managed growth, while encouraging community diversity and quality of life.
- D. Insure that all future development takes into account its environmental impacts on the Town especially in terms of water supply, water quality, open space, scenic viewsheds, and historic preservation.
- E. Pursue appropriate opportunities to cooperate with other municipalities in

the Capital region in order to reduce the cost of public programs and facilities especially in such areas as economic growth, assessment and taxation, land use, economic development, and transportation planning.

- F. Maximize resident participation in the deliberation and decisions of Town Government and provide speedy and efficient government services to town residents through all appropriate means.

V. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

The town has approximately 11,000 acres of open lands remaining of farmlands, open lands not currently developed out of the total town acreage.

The Town of Clifton Park adopted an Open Space Plan in 2003 following a two-year public planning process. The Open Space Plan describes the town's setting in terms of open space resources, and sets forth a town-wide open space conservation vision, concepts, goals and basic implementation strategies. The Open Space Plan is a separate plan document available for review at Town of Clifton Park Town Hall.

Plan Concepts and Goals

The highest priority issue for the public at the time the open space plan was conducted was protection of drinking water resources. The main open space concepts and goals as outlined in the adopted Open Space Plan are as follows:

1. Protection of Wildlife Nature Preserves and Watersheds

Concepts:

- a. Create a "Dwaas Kill Natural Area" and connected stream corridor greenways.
- b. Obtain additional lands near the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve. Aim to protect 50 to 100 acres in the next two to five years.
- c. Protect Stony Creek Reservoir and its watershed.
- d. Protect key well sites
- e. Protect secondary water supply sources.
- d. Obtain smaller nature preserves accessible to all neighborhoods.

Goal: Overall, aim to protect about 500 to 1,000 acres as nature preserves.

2. Farmland Protection Program

Concepts:

- a. Focus on active farmlands currently in the term easement program, agricultural district or agricultural assessment programs.
- b. Support and enhance the town-sponsored term conservation easement programs.
- c. Partner with state and federal grant programs to obtain permanent conservation easements.
- d. Protect the most valuable working farms.

Goal: Protect 300 to 600 acres in the next two to five years.

3. Parkland and Ballfields

Concepts:

- a. Update the Town's Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- b. Obtain one large new town recreation park (approximately 150± acres).
- c. Obtain one to two small-moderate size town parks in portions of town where needed, (approximately 10-20 acres).
- d. Create access to water-based recreation to the Mohawk River and Ballston Lake.

Goal: Obtain 150 to 200 acres of active recreation land.

4. Town-Wide Trails and Pathways

Concepts:

- a. Develop various types of town connections such as multi-purpose paths and nature trails.
- b. Provide access to community destination points and among neighborhoods.
- c. Create a trails and recreational map and signage system.
- d. Update the Trails Master Plan.

Goal: Construct 6 to 10 miles over the next two to five years.

5. Scenic Roads and Cultural Resources

Concepts:

- a. Recognize and celebrate scenic roads.
- b. Help preserve historic sites, hamlets, and landscapes.

- c. Create “Scenic Roads of Clifton Park” system of interpretive signs and roadside conservation design guidelines.

Goal: Identify four to six roads/historic sites in the near term.

VI. TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS

A. Goals

1. Maintain and enhance highway facilities and all roadways located in the Town of Clifton Park as prescribed by NYSDOT guidelines, Town standards, and as applicable, the Western Clifton Park Design Guidelines which refers to context-sensitive road design particularly in rural areas of town.
2. Consider regional needs and plans relative to maintaining and creating highway and roadway usage within the Town, and increase coordination and cooperation with adjacent municipalities to foster and improve traffic conditions and sound traffic/transit planning.
3. Provide a multi-modal transportation network that allows for Town residents and visitors to travel by motorized vehicle, bicycle, transit, or on foot.
4. Continue to create a town-wide pedestrian and bicyclist network, utilizing the Town Trails Master Plan as a guide for making connections to neighborhoods and other destinations. Utilize context sensitive design to determine an appropriate usage of pathways such as on-street bike lanes, parallel trails and sidewalks, or off-road amenities.
3. Develop an equitable method to allocate the costs of roadway improvements necessitated by new development.
4. Encourage development of alternative means of transportation and systems management to alleviate the traffic congestion on the roadways in the Town.
6. Encourage the development of stricter roadway construction standards in the subdivision regulations.
7. Understand the interconnected nature of land use and transportation network decisions.

8. Improve traffic and pedestrian safety by marking roadways with reasonable speed limits.
9. Construct Town roads to adequately accommodate emergency vehicles.
10. The Town should encourage and assist in the expansion of the public transportation system and other regional transportation services to Clifton Park as an alternative means of transportation for Town residents and visitors; especially senior citizens and those unable to drive.

B. Strategies

1. Through the planning process, the Town should implement procedures to assure that traffic and all foreseen cumulative results of development concerns are adequately addressed.
2. Prepare and adopt an Access Management Plan to identify, rationalize and manage significant road corridors and access to the same. Examples of such practices may be preserving future rights-of-way; instituting/revising increased setbacks along existing roads; encouraging shared driveways and on-site parking controls for all types of development. Wherever practicable, these practices should be initiated during the Planning Board review process.
3. The Town should assess public and private road specifications to introduce a variety of standards linked to specific transportation and community development needs.
4. The Town should continue to support and/or promote the following projects and programs:
 - a. Regular maintenance of Town-owned roads on an 8 to 10 year basis;
 - b. Continuation of the Highway Department's 2-8-14 program for reconstruction, repaving and resurfacing of Town-owned roads.
 - c. Link Town of Clifton Park bicycle and pedestrian paths with those in neighboring communities.

5. The Town should continue to pursue the implementation of an effective multi-modal transportation system; including to encourage and assist in the expansion on the public transportation system and other regional transportation services to Clifton Park.
 - a. Encourage expansion of transit lines in Clifton Park to serve regional employment centers. This should be coordinated with park and ride lot locations.
 - b. All existing and potential Northway interchanges as well as the western part of Town--particularly the Rexford area--should be considered for development of park and ride facilities.
 - c. The Town should continue development of pedestrian and bike paths to service the Town as proposed in the Trails Master Plan.
 - d. The Town should review and implement appropriate procedures to facilitate safe pedestrian crossings of roads.
 - e. The Town should complete the transportation monitoring and planning system in concert with traffic impact studies to continuously assess the state of Town transportation facilities.
6. Evaluate the overall impact of proposed state, county and local roadway improvements upon circulation in Clifton Park.
7. Incorporate pedestrian and multi-use trails into site plan review and subdivision review processes.

VII. PUBLIC UTILITIES

A. Goals

1. Water System
 - a. Ensure an ample supply of potable water for all residents by working with the Clifton Park Water Authority, Rexford Water District, and all water districts serving the Town.
2. Sewer System

- a. Pursue the acquisition through purchase, transfer, and/or the maintenance and operation of privately-owned sewer companies serving the Town of Clifton Park by the Saratoga County Sewer District, as long as the sewer systems are constructed to the county sewer district's construction standards.
- b. The Town should stipulate that all new sewer systems which are constructed in Town should conform with the Saratoga County Sewer District's construction standards.

3. Solid Waste

- a. Support continued use of solid waste transfer stations.
- b. Cooperate fully in the search for alternative methods of solid waste disposal.
- c. Support continued use and expansion of the recycling program.

B. Strategies

- 1. The Town should encourage the Clifton Park Water Authority (CPWA) to continue its efforts to expand the Town-wide water distribution system.
- 2. The Town should assist the Clifton Park Water Authority in identifying those sensitive environmental resources that must be maintained and protected.
- 3. The Town recognizes the importance of its valuable groundwater resources and encourages development of additional groundwater resources and protection strategies.
- 4. All future water line extensions must demonstrate adequate fire flow, and meet all CPWA and Town specifications. The Town supports the future development of a Town-wide sewer system, in concert with the Saratoga County Sewer District.
- 5. As operator of several municipal separate storm sewers, the Town of Clifton Park will work to incorporate the required ordinances into the Clifton Park Town Code to remain in compliance with the NYSDEC and USEPA.

6. The Town shall integrate its needs for solid waste disposal with a future county system.
7. The Town should continue to expand its recycling facilities with the goal to increase participation and scope.

VIII. ENVIRONMENT

A. Goals

1. To require that all future development be carried out in an ecologically sound manner and that environmentally sensitive areas continue to be protected.
2. To protect drinking water quantity and quality.
3. To protect natural areas for wildlife habitat and environmentally sensitive areas.
4. To preserve open space for ecological, aesthetic, agricultural and recreational purposes as set forth in detail in the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan.
5. Conserve land and water resources on a watershed basis of analysis for drinking water protection.
6. To protect wetlands and stream corridors for their benefits to wildlife habitat, flood and stormwater control, groundwater protection, erosion control and recreation.
 - a. To prevent stormwater handling capacity and water quality from being diminished by future development.
 - b. To nurture a strong environmental stewardship ethic among all members of the Clifton Park community.
7. To mandate tree preservation in developing and developed areas of town to the greatest extent practicable.

B. Strategies

1. To require that all future development be carried out in an ecologically sound manner and that environmentally sensitive areas continue to be protected by:

- a. Ensuring that the State Environmental Quality Review Act where appropriate, remains an integral part of all Town planning and decision-making processes.
 - b. Limiting alteration of existing topography to prevent sedimentation in streams, ponds and wetlands
 - c. Using effective soil erosion control plans with detailed mitigation methods for development and construction near waterways. Costs for these measures should be equitably distributed among all parties benefiting from such plan, and any remedial actions required to correct erosion problems should be charged back to the responsible parties.
 - d. Employing conservation – based development design where appropriate such as is reflected in the conservation residential zoning for Western Clifton Park and cluster zoning which is reflected in Eastern Clifton Park, to conserve valued open space resources.
 - e. By identifying and providing further means of protection to highly sensitive watershed areas; adopting aquifer recharge protection regulations as an overlay in order to more closely manage land use activities.
 - f. Integrating more comprehensive oversight in the planning, construction and post-construction to ensure sound construction practices are used to control erosion and sedimentation of waterways and minimize drainage and flooding issues with future development.
 - g. Enforcing greenspace mandates and promoting a hierarchy of greenspace preferences during the plan review process which places greater value on large intact greenspace over segmentation.
2. To preserve open space for ecological, aesthetic and recreational purposes by:
- a. Continuing to use the expertise of the Town Environmental Conservation Commission; the Town Environmental Specialist; the Town Open Space, Trails and Riverfront Committee; and the Town Open Space Coordinator for their

expertise in this area. Work with other Local, County, State, Federal agencies and other partners such as land trusts and conservation organizations as is applicable on open space protection.

- b. Establishing and protecting drinking water resources, wildlife habitat, farmland, parks, trails and other recreational areas, scenic areas.
 - c. Employing cluster zoning and conservation design, where appropriate, and identifying highly sensitive watershed areas; adopting aquifer recharge protection regulations in order to more closely manage land use activities.
 - d. Conveying land in lieu of parkland fees, where appropriate and cost efficient, should be encouraged during subdivision and Planned Unit Development (PUD) review.
 - e. Requiring special setbacks along the Northway and where commercial and residential developments abut.
3. To protect wetlands and stream corridors for their benefits to wildlife habitat, flood and stormwater control, groundwater protection, erosion control and recreation by:
- a. Expanding wetland mitigation options as fostered by the Environmental Conservation Commission and Army Corps of Engineers.
 - b. Preservation/acquisition of watershed (aquifer recharge) lands.
 - c. Supporting proper development practices within flood prone areas as indicated in the Town's floodplain management regulations.
4. To prevent stormwater handling capacity and water quality from being diminished by future development by:
- a. Implementing sound construction practices to control erosion and sedimentation of waterways and maintain existing drainage features.
 - b. Developing a town-wide stormwater management plan and

establish responsibility for the operation and maintenance of existing stormwater management areas.

- c. Integrating appropriate best management practices (BMP's) within the planning process and town policies.
 - d. Working to achieve the goals as outlined in the Notice of Intent filed by the Environmental Specialist for the Phase II Stormwater Requirements.
 - e. Maintaining and supporting all stormwater management goals, regulations and laws as promulgated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Town of Clifton Park.
5. To nurture a strong environmental stewardship ethic among all members of the Clifton Park community by:
- a. Establishing an Environmental Stewardship Award program to acknowledge members of the community who have shown leadership in an activity that furthers the understanding and appreciation of the Town natural environment among members of the Clifton Park community.
 - b. Encouraging landscape beautification by working with non-profit community groups to participate in the beautification of the Town.
 - c. Sponsoring a Community Household Hazardous Waste Day which provides participatory opportunities to the community.
7. To encourage tree preservation and reforestation to the greatest extent practicable by:
- a. Support planting of trees and other beautification efforts of Open Space, Riverfront and Trails Committee or other interested organizations or groups.
 - b. Encouraging tree preservation during the site plan review and subdivision review process. Explore concept for requiring applicants to use a landscape architect or a professional tree expert to identify key trees to conserve as part of the review process, and ensure town has expertise/resources to enforce tree preservation during

construction phase.

- c. Maximizing tree preservation during construction of all recreational areas, trails and multi-use pathways

IX. Quality of Life

A. Goals

Ensure that a high quality level of public facilities and services are provided to Town residents.

1. Emergency Services

- a. Continue to monitor the population growth and development in the Town with regard to future improvements to existing fire district facilities and additional support needs;
- b. Encourage the Clifton Park Water Authority and other public water districts to ensure that any expansion of the existing water supply system in the Town has adequate firefighting capabilities, without which new development should not be permitted.
- c. Continue to support the ambulance districts, in terms of funding, equipment and personnel.
- d. Continue to improve Town-wide police protection through cooperation with the New York State Police and Saratoga County Sheriff's Department.

2. Government Services

- a. Assure that all municipal departments are properly staffed and be aware of the needs of department heads in order to maintain an adequate level of service.
- b. Provide adequate space for the administrative function of Town government.
- c. Ensure that the Town of Clifton Park government is wholly accessible to all Town residents.
- d. Maximize citizen participation in all community decision-

making processes.

- e. Provide viable electronic services to the greatest extent practicable.

3. Education

- a. To the extent practicable, participate in providing all relevant forums towards the enhancement of educational opportunities for residents of all ages.
- b. Continue to work closely with the school districts in the Town of Clifton Park.

4. Recreation

- a. Provide a wide range of conveniently located recreational facilities designed to meet the general needs of residents of all ages; to encourage acquisition of lands for future recreational needs, active and passive; to provide essential programs; and to network with other organizations/agencies in the community. In addition to recognizing the intrinsic value of recreational activity, programming will be designed to encourage a healthy mind, body and spirit.
- b. Establish land acquisition and development funds to finance needed improvements as well as the planned expansion of the Town park system.
- c. Encourage the use of all existing Town recreational facilities.
- d. Expand existing and develop new opportunities for public waterfront access, recreational enjoyment, and scenic appreciation along the Mohawk River.
- e. Promote opportunities for residents' to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives.

5. Senior and Youth Services

- a. Explore policies that include affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features and services, and

adequate mobility options, which together facilitate personal independence and the engagement of residents in civic and social life over a lifetime. This includes support for the growth of senior services and activities within the Town and encourage the development of housing, health care and related services. The senior population is expected to grow dramatically in the near future and the level of senior services should grow commensurately.

- b. Continue to support youth services and activities that provide valuable programs for our young people.

6. Historic Preservation

- a. To protect Clifton Park's rich heritage by preserving and protecting the historic resources within the Town.
- b. Seek to develop continuing and diversified programs of artistic, cultural, and educational events for the general public.

7. Arts and Culture

- a. Recognize the arts and other cultural and entertainment events as being vital to the quality of life of town residents. Encourage public-private cooperation, the town will seek to develop year long indoor facilities devoted to artistic, cultural, and educational events for the general public, especially the youth of our community.
- b. Seek to develop continuing and diversified programs of artistic, cultural, and educational events for the general public.

B. Strategies

1. Emergency Services

- a. The Town will continue to work closely with the Emergency Services Advisory Board and member services to determine and respond to the additional equipment, facility and personnel needs taking into consideration the desirability of regionalized services.
- b. The Town recognizes the significant future need for adequate police services and will continue to evaluate cost effective methods of providing adequate police services.

2. General Government

- a. The Town should monitor and continue to assess personnel needs and physical space of general government.
- b. Promote participation in E-Government by encouraging and expanding town electronic services to Town residents and encouraging public participation in Town business.

3. Education

- a. The Town shall maintain an on-going working relationship with all educational organizations and inform them of all developments within the Town that may affect their operations.

4. Recreation

- a. The Town shall continue to review and amend its system of approving parkland acceptance through the dedication process to ensure that the land is compatible with the recreation and environmental needs of the particular neighborhood and the Town. Guidelines for recreational needs should be established based on available land and the number of residences in a given area.
- b. The Town recognizes the current and future need for additional playlots, playgrounds, fields and parks commensurate with residential development, as well as a maintenance policy for existing facilities.
- c. The Town should periodically review the need for additional recreation personnel to operate its programs and facilities. Volunteer efforts should be utilized where possible.
- d. The Town will proceed in the establishment of interconnected parks through the dedication of subdivision land, acquisition of adjacent land, and the use of public and other private land.
- e. The Town recognizes the need to develop additional pedestrian and bicycle facilities as alternative forms of transportation, linking neighborhoods with schools, shopping areas, employment centers and other civic centers as established in the Trails Master Plan and as adopted by

reference herein.

- f. The Town supports the preparation, adoption and implementation of a comprehensive open space plan utilizing public and private acquisition and preservation techniques which may be available;
- g. The Town should establish Town-wide recreational facilities to work in conjunction with the park districts' neighborhood parks and further development of the Clifton Common. To help organize and accomplish this, the Town should support the preparation of a Town-Wide Recreation Master Plan for coordinating a town-wide vision specific for active parkland.
- h. The Town recognizes the need to acquire, develop and/or preserve waterbodies and waterfront lands for ecological, scenic and recreational opportunities.
- i. Specifically, the Town will seek specific opportunities to increase, enhance and support public access and recreational enjoyment of the Mohawk Riverfront as is feasible, as a unique resource in the Town and Region;
- j. The Town recognizes the need and will seek to provide a full range of programming including artistic, cultural, social and sports activities with emphasis placed on program access for special populations;
- k. Park Districts
 - 1. The Town should continue to evaluate the structure and function of its park district system and enact appropriate legislation to expand park districts when new subdivisions are approved.
 - 2. Create local park districts in conjunction with residential subdivision and PUD approvals.

5. Senior and Youth Services

- a. Continue to support the Senior Center and the services it provides, including access to such items as senior day care services and senior transportation services;
- b. Encourage the development of appropriate senior residential and health care facilities;

- c. Continue to support the youth services center and programming known as CAPTAIN and encourage the growth and development of youth services; and
- d. Continue to support and expand summer youth and seasonal athletic programs.

X. ECONOMY

A. Goals

- 1. Encourage economic health and stability through retention of existing business activities and diversification of the economic base.
- 2. Achieve an orderly pattern of economic growth in concert with infrastructure availability, the environment and the diverse character of the Town.
- 3. Support economic expansion and development programs as needed to increase employment opportunities and the tax base.
- 4. Recognize and support local agricultural and farming businesses as important contributors to local economic diversity and health and fiscal stability.
- 5. Continue to support joint ventures with other governments and the business community.

B. Strategies

- 1. The Town supports continued diversification of its economic base through trade, service, light and high technology facilities, together with office parks and agricultural businesses consistent with the diverse character of the community;
- 2. The Town should work toward increasing the number and variety of employment opportunities for its residents;
- 3. The Town shall work with all public utility services in support of future economic development;
- 4. The Town recognizes that development projects can create a

significant impact on the fiscal stability of the Town and supports a fair and equitable method of assessing the added costs of development;

5. The Town recognizes that its centralized business corridor is located in the Exit 8 and Exit 9 area, together with Route 146 east of Vischer Ferry Road and Route 9. The Town shall enhance its working relationship with the various regional economic development agencies and encourage their involvement in securing business, commerce and corporate opportunities.
6. To achieve the Comprehensive Plan economic development goals, the Town should maintain an efficient and effective planning process.
7. The Town should utilize the services of SEDC and the State Economic Development Corporation to attract commercial and light industrial development to the Town.
8. The Town will continue to encourage growth, especially in the technology area within the Rt. 146 Corporate Commerce Zone.
9. The Town will continue to support and utilize the Empire Zone Program to encourage desirable and managed growth in Town.
10. The Town should support and allow for agri-tourism and farm market activities that support the farm character of the community as a diversification strategy for local farmers and agricultural producers.

XI. POPULATION AND HOUSING

A. Goals

1. Preserve and enhance the existing diverse residential, rural, and historic character of Clifton Park.
2. Provide for diversity of housing taking into consideration social and economic realities.

B. Strategies

1. The Town should continue to encourage the existing housing mix with single family detached units as the predominant type.

2. The Town supports the development of regulations and incentives to increase the availability of housing to all segments of its population with special attention to the needs of senior citizens.
3. The Town supports development of a variety of housing densities to the extent they are compatible with surrounding development and have an adequate infrastructure.

XII. LAND USE

A. Goals

1. Encourage pro-actively managed growth patterns that provide economic and social opportunity within physical limitations and ecological constraints.
2. Continue to encourage pro-actively managed growth to occur in a manner that will enable the Town to develop the necessary support services in conjunction with land development.
3. Preserve the property and environmental values of Clifton Park while allowing orderly use of previously undeveloped areas in a manner consistent with existing conditions and uses.
4. Continue to provide and improve the coordination and decision-making process of planning and development matters.
5. Maintain the diverse character of the community through proper location of business, industry and residences in the eastern corridor of the Town with specific recognition of the rural and agricultural nature of the western section of Town.
6. Support the continued presence of farming and agricultural land uses including an agricultural district in the Town and all related activities therein.
7. Recognize, encourage, and support the preservation of historic buildings, places and landscapes.
8. Enhance public access and opportunities to enjoy the distinctive scenic, historic, environmental, and recreational features of the Mohawk Riverfront, including the features of the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway.

B. Strategies

1. Preserve the integrity of Clifton Park's residential neighborhoods by preventing encroachment of other incompatible uses in and around these areas and promote the retention of large open space areas;
2. Maintain commercial oriented land uses as they presently exist by:
 - a. Focusing business interests on the community commercial land use to the Exit 9, Route 9 and Route 146 corridor. Higher intensity commercial development and redevelopment should take place within this established commercial core of the community. This corridor is the principal commercial growth corridor in the Town due to land availability and infrastructure in place.
 - b. Continuing business non-retail use with a residential footprint as a zoning tool for the Route 146 corridor east of Vischer Ferry Road. Significant redevelopment pressures highlight the necessity of special control measures such as density, service road(s) and/or curb-cut control.
3. The area bounded by Route 146, Clifton Park Center Road, Clifton Country Road and Vischer Ferry Road is emerging as a central education, civic and recreation complex. Existing residential neighborhoods should be buffered as further development occurs;
4. Support the preservation of open space throughout Clifton Park and pursue mechanisms to implement it, which will be cost-effective and provide long term protection of these resources;
5. Continue to encourage light-industrial development in appropriate zones;
6. Preserve to the greatest extent feasible the open space and recreational assets of privately held lands such as the golf courses;
7. Conserve the Town's historic resources and foster their adaptive reuse;
8. Encourage cluster development, especially in the more rural sections of Town that remain undeveloped, in order to maximize

open space.

9. The Town shall encourage the continued use of land in agricultural production and support the local sources of future food supplies.
10. Support the establishment of Historic Districts as a way to preserve our historic heritage.

XIII. PLAN FOR FUTURE LAND USE

A. General

This section details the Town's features and future development issues. Land areas are divided into a series of uses categories described below. These represent recommended future land use for the Town during the planning period (through 2010). The divisions are intended to be a general guide to future development and not a precise delineation of boundaries. Land use categories are as follows:

B. Land Use Categories

1. Residential - These areas are divided into a series of densities to reflect the carrying capacity of the land and retain diversity, as well as existing development patterns, and are as follows:

<u>Residential Category</u>	<u>Units per Acre</u>
R-1	1.11 – 2.17
R-2	0.43 – 1.11
R-3	0.43 – 0.55
CR	1 unit per 3 developable acres
HR	0.33

2. Land Conservation - This district is established for the conservation of natural resources in an area containing sensitive environmental features. The purpose of the LC zone is to preserve and protect wetlands and classified streams by minimizing any disturbances to these environmentally sensitive areas. The Planning Board, Zoning Board, and Environmental Conservation Commission will work collaboratively to ensure the intent of the Land Conservation Zone is met.

3. Commercial - There are four commercial classifications designed to accommodate most retail, service and office businesses for both local and community wide markets.

B-1 - To provide suitable locations for various types of general and professional offices as opposed to retail businesses, and a buffer

between the larger retail areas and the residential districts. B-1 envisions mostly rehabilitation of existing residential type structures.

B-2 - Differs from B-1 in that new buildings will dominate but still be designed to continue the concept of a buffer between residential and commercial areas.

B-3 - Localized areas intended for small businesses and convenience establishments which serve nearby residents and non-regional market areas.

B-4 - To provide areas for business uses which are mainly oriented to the automobile and serve regional market areas.

B-4A – The Highway Business/Restricted Retail District B-4A is established for the purpose of providing areas for business uses which are mainly oriented to the automobile.

HM – Hamlet Mixed Use. To provide areas for focused business development to serve adjacent residential hamlets and neighborhood areas, and to allow for a creative mix of commercial and complementary residential uses as an option. The district is intended to remain primarily commercial in uses, such as a mix of office and retail uses. The allowance for residential uses is intended to foster the creation of places within the Town where one could walk from home to work or to neighborhood businesses.

4. Public/Institutional/Recreational District - This district includes schools, government buildings, land owned by local, state, and federal governments and agencies, land held by non-profit institutional organizations such as churches and cemeteries, and also includes cultural and recreational uses.

5. Light Industrial - This district includes manufacturing, assembling or other industrial activities. Non-manufacturing business, heavy commercial uses, storage, and similar activities may also be located in these districts. Two types of industrial districts are included.

6. Corporate/Commerce - Incorporating very light industrial uses along with offices and headquarters, this category is intended to be compatible with less intense uses such as some residential districts and neighborhood and community commercial zones and to provide areas for research and information and communication services, high technology facilities, office parks, etc., rather than the production or processing of materials. This area is the B-5 zoning district.

XIV. LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A. General

The Comprehensive Plan and its implementation requires that the Town be cognizant of the need to protect and preserve open space located within the Town and, in addition, that the town explore new and creative ways by which to acquire and expand open space for the enjoyment of all Town residents. Included in this strategy is establishing and protecting drinking water resources, wildlife habitat, farmland, parks, trails and other recreational areas, scenic areas.

General land use implementation strategies are set forth below. More detailed comprehensive strategies will develop based upon proposed growth in the Town, together with a continuing awareness for certain strategies and needs of Town residents in the future. Of particular importance is the ability and need of the Town to update and install infrastructure throughout the town, and preserving the rural character of the western part of the Town, and providing for appropriate controls as traffic volume increases Town-wide.

To promote sound land use policies, an outline of strategies is provided in the following paragraphs. These techniques were selected for their practicability in dealing with the character of Clifton Park's land use.

B. Cluster Zoning - This is a provision in the Zoning Code (and/or Subdivision Regulations) which allows a developer to cluster housing units on lots smaller than under normal zone requirements while still controlling the overall density of development on a tract of land. Consequently, natural conditions are maintained and less land is disturbed.

Rather than encouraging uniform distribution of housing units over an entire site, clustering accounts for topography and drainage over an entire site, to ensure that areas of marginal development suitability are protected. Environmentally sensitive land can be designated for yard areas in lots, open space, common conservation, and agricultural or passive recreation land, and provide for continued protection across parcel lines of significant environmental areas.

There are a number of purposes for cluster development, including:

- To provide alternatives to conventional developments;
- To encourage the preservation of open space, recreation areas, exceptional natural and aesthetic areas;
- To minimize utilities (road, sewers and water lines, electrical and telephone lines, and drainage improvements), thereby reducing housing costs; and

- To encourage the most appropriate use of the land.

Cluster zoning should be encouraged where appropriate. Subdivisions of more than 30 lots should be required to submit a cluster and conventional layout plan at conceptual review before the Planning Board.

C. Conservation-Based Development Design. This is a new provision in 2005 that is applicable for developments in the Conservation Residential Zoning District in Western Clifton Park. Conservation design is an enhancement of the Town's existing Cluster Zoning design guidance that is applicable in "eastern" Clifton Park. A more detailed level of resource analysis is required, as well as more open space protection is required under conservation based development design. Under CR Zoning, 50% minimum open space is required, including 25% of the unconstrained land in the parcel. In addition, conservation-based design allows for some flexibility with lot size and layout requirements, in effect allowing for "clustered" layout for similar purposes and benefits as listed above under cluster zoning.

D. Land Conservation - As noted above under discussion of zoning districts, the Town has a Land Conservation (LC) Zoning District to delineate, and protect streams and wetlands and their buffer areas.

E. Planned Unit Development - This is a provision of the local zoning code that would be allowed in any district by a legislative action of the Town Board. It allows for an assortment of housing types as well as other activities (commercial, institution or government).

The Town of Clifton Park currently has a similar provision, the "Planned Unit Development (PUD)" (208-72) in the Zoning Code. In this provision, greater importance should be placed on the retention of larger amounts of open space and a density cap. The PUD could be also strengthened to encourage greater preservation of environmentally sensitive areas or features. Density and uses should be consistent, to the extent possible, with the surrounding area, which will ensure that the character of the area is not altered.

F. Mapped Street Ordinance - Combined with the Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations, the Official Map enables the Town to effectively control the pattern of growth and development in the community. The Mapped Street Ordinance can be implemented in ordinance form and would contain two parts, written text and the Official Map, which shows the street pattern as adopted. Once the Mapped Street Ordinance and the Official Map are adopted, no building could be erected in the bed of a street shown thereon. The most important feature of combining the Mapped Street Ordinance with the Official Map is that the official responsible for issuing building permits could not issue a permit for a lot that does not abut a street shown on the Official Map. This control is important to maintain the integrity of the Official Map.

G. Open Space Protection and Historic Preservation Strategies – Multiple options, tools, techniques, and strategies are available to the Town of Clifton Park and landowners for protecting open space resources. It has been, and will continue to be the intent of the Town Board that all open space protection strategies will be implemented only if the landowner voluntarily agrees to these strategies. Some of these options include:

1. Land Acquisition (outright purchase) – The Town could purchase land outright, or a land trust, or other governmental entity could purchase parcels in order for the land to be permanently protected.
2. Conservation Easements - A conservation easement is a legal agreement between the landowner and the Town, another municipality or a private entity to keep a parcel of land in its natural state[for a specified period of time, or in perpetuity]. Easements can be made for a period of time, known as “term” conservation easements, and also in perpetuity, known as “permanent” conservation easements, depending upon the agreement. In essence, a landowner gives up development rights, but retains all other rights and privileges of ownership. The landowner may sell or transfer the title and land or pass it on by will.

The Town has adopted a Conservation Easement Law (LL 12-1996) which provides for “the acquisition of interests or rights in real property for the preservation of historic buildings and landmarks and open space and areas which shall constitute a public purpose for which public funds may be expended”. The law provides for a minimum term of fifteen years for conservation easement, conservation easement (farming purposes), or conservation easement (historic preservation).

The Town of Clifton Park is a leader state-wide in offering a “term” conservation easement program, in effect through a local property tax relief program. Only two other municipalities have a local program: the Town of Perinton, Monroe County and the Town of Red Hook, Dutchess County. Today, about 2,488 acres of land are enrolled in the “term” conservation easement program in Clifton Park with approximately 65 parcels enrolled.

3. Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) or Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) – As mentioned above under permanent conservation easements, the Town could purchase the development rights from the landowner for the parcel or transfer the development rights from one

parcel to another. The development potential for the property would be permanently removed, however, certain activities such as farming are still allowed on the parcel. Under this option the owner retains full ownership and control of the parcel.

4. Open Space Incentive Zoning (also referred to as Amenity Zoning). The Town of Clifton Park adopted a new zoning tool, Open Space Incentive Zoning, in 2005. This tool offers a new option for landowners proceeding with development proposals – to help the Town achieve its open space conservation goals – by tapping the development community to assist in making investments in open space for the public. This new tool offers an opportunity for applicants to request some additional density (up to a cap) for their development parcel in Western Clifton Park ONLY in exchange for their providing a specific public benefit, which in the case of Clifton Park’s law, is the public benefit of open space protection. The applicant’s have the option to propose the benefit in the form of acquiring lands or interests (development rights) for permanent protection by the town OR to pay the Town a fee per each additional unit requested, with the intent that the Town would then utilize the funds collected to go out and purchase lands or interests for permanent protection. Funds collected from the Open Space Incentive Zoning option from development proposals in Western Clifton Park area must be in turn be spent within the same Western Clifton Park area. The process involves applicants submitting their proposal to the Town Board for their ultimate decision-making on a case by case basis.

This new tool is an option available to parcels within the entire Western Clifton Park study area (from the 2005 Western Clifton Park Land Conservation Plan and Generic Environmental Impact Study.) Lands within the new zoning districts of the Conservation Residential, Hamlet Residential and Hamlet Mixed Use are eligible to apply for this zoning tool.

H. Comprehensive Plan Update Committee - The Town should form a Comprehensive Plan Update Committee, consisting of the Deputy Supervisor, and the vice-chairpersons of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Environmental Conservation Commission, and Emergency Services Advisory Board. This Committee should meet biennially to monitor the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and advise the Town Board as to whether new or revised portions of the Plan are required. In addition, this Committee, in making such requests to the Town Board, should utilize the expertise of the chairpersons of all Town Citizen Advisory Committees.

Key Clifton Park Plans and Studies

Western Clifton Park Land Conservation Plan and Generic Environmental Impact Statement 2005 – adopted by the Town Board in 2005

Corporate Commerce Zone Generic Environmental Impact Statement- 2001.

Vischer Ferry Road Corridor CIP/Generic Environmental Impact Statement- 1991.
Exit 9 Generic Environmental Impact Statement- 1998.

Mohawk Riverfront Concept Plan 2005 – advisory committee report and recommendations.

Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan 2003 – adopted by the Town Board in 2003

Join Us: Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway Concept Plan, 2004

Town of Clifton Park Trails Master Plan, 1999 – prepared by the Town of Clifton Park Trails Advisory Committee

Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve Master Plan, August 1996

Outside Reference Materials

Guide to Local Planning for Agriculture in New York, American Farmland Trust, 2006

Local Open Space Planning Guide, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of State in collaboration with the Hudson River Valley Greenway, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the 2004