



## AMENITIES PLAN 2017

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PREPARED BY



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# **The Town of East Greenbush Amenities Plan**

## **2016-2017**



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## PART ONE - PROJECT INTRODUCTION

### A. Project Introduction

The Amenities Plan effort was born from conversations in town about ways East Greenbush could position itself as a more attractive community to both businesses and families, ensuring that it continues to grow as a healthy, attractive and fun place to live. With this came a need to find creative ways for the town to advance some of the recommendations of the 2002 Parks & Recreation Master Plan and the 2006 Land Use Plan. An idea emerged where future development projects could help to include or provide funding for a larger network of recreational amenities which could be enjoyed by all residents. The town, however, needed a blueprint for what this recreational network might look like. As new commercial and residential development is proposed throughout town, such a blueprint would enable the town to incorporate or fund portions of the plan, eventually working toward creation of the overall network. **This Amenities Plan, now updated in 2016, is intended to be such a blueprint.**

*“The quality of life is one of the things that most employers are looking for when relocating a business operation. This can be in educational opportunities, safety, the rural character, or cultural aspects of a community, but quality of life is critical to most quality companies. You have to maintain certain visually aesthetic areas, recreational and environmentally important areas.”*

-Joe Dalton, Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce President (retired)

This document includes a Linkages Vision Map and a strategic approach for both town-wide and neighborhood level recreational enhancements. As has been done in the past, the town will seek assistance from volunteers, local and state agencies, business and corporate partners—people who share in the idea that environmental stewardship and quality of life are important ingredients for building a community of long-lasting value. In particular, this plan can be advanced significantly by the business and real estate development community, working in partnership with the town, to incorporate these ideas in new projects and support the investment in town amenities that will strengthen its image and add to quality of life for both current and future generations.

### Project Goals

All things being equal, communities that grow in value tend to make and implement plans which:

- Create a setting for residents to have an improved quality of life;
- Recognize and strengthen community identity and sense of place;
- Work to improve the aesthetic appearance of the community to attract families and quality businesses.

Communities that stagnate and lose value often do so by failing to do these things. The goal of



*Community members recommended that existing parks receive enhanced maintenance and upgrades – while recognizing the importance of securing future opportunities, including planning and creating a town-wide trail system.*

this initiative is to help secure long-term economic value and enhanced sense of place for the residents, land owners, and businesses of East Greenbush. This will be accomplished by providing an engaging mix of outdoor recreation amenities, protected open spaces and greenways connecting neighborhoods, schools, and other community centers with a multi-purpose pathway system. These amenities, developed over time with the cooperation and financial support of the development community and other organizations, will benefit residents and local employers alike. As a result, East Greenbush will be increasingly recognized as a community that balances conservation and development in a way that creates both economic opportunity and improved quality of life.

## Summary Recommendations

Parts II and III of this document outline specific short and longer-term recommendations which the town should pursue for improving local parks, creating a network of linkages and developing specific opportunity areas. Those sections reflect the full listing of action items, and should serve as the actual plan. Listed below, however, is a brief summary of the key recommendations for reference.

- Secure grant funding for new ADA-compliant restroom facilities at the Town Park, including new picnic pavilion and shelter space.
- Construct a splash-pad or similar water feature to provide much needed water recreation within the town, in conjunction with shaded playground area.
- Work in cooperation with future development projects around town to establish local segments of a larger town-wide multi-use path and trail network which will eventually link many neighborhoods and destinations together for walking, biking, jogging or cross-country skiing.
- Establish and prepare an official "East Greenbush Parks Day" where once a year town staff and volunteers come together with donated materials prepared to make a significant improvement on a different neighborhood park, culminating in a local festival of food, music and community pride.
- Develop, with grant funding, select segments of the proposed Albany-Hudson Electric Trolley line as a multi-use trail which will serve as the primary spine to the larger multi-use path network through town.
- Begin formal discussions and workshops with residents around Hampton Lake to discuss the creation of a pedestrian loop path around the water, and how it may be designed.
- Infill missing sidewalk gaps and provide new sidewalk connections, particularly along Columbia Turnpike and Route 4, to link residential neighborhoods with schools, library and each other.
- Develop a multi-use path connection into the southern end of the Town Park.
- Work with property owners in select opportunity areas such as Tempel Lane and along the Hudson River to develop plans which integrate attractive public spaces, walking paths or other recreational activities for the enjoyment of all.
- Pursue alternative swimming and aquatic recreational options to replace the Town Park beach that is currently closed.
- Pursue upgrades to Town Hall which will make it more viable for community events.



## How to Use This Plan

A common pitfall of long-term strategy documents such as this is a natural tendency to be placed on a shelf and slowly forgotten by the people who are charged with advancing them. For this reason, specific strategies have been included in this report which are intended to **act as reminders** to prevent this from happening:

Improvements to Existing Parks: The creation of an official "*East Greenbush Parks Day*", which occurs regularly each year, is intended as a recurring reminder and yearly milestone for the town and residents to prepare for and make progress on each spring. It is also intended that this could grow in size and popularity each year, eventually gaining its own momentum.

Linkages & Multi-use Paths: Incorporating the Linkages Vision Map as an amendment to the zoning map and making it a regular part of development review will help to ensure that it is referenced on a regular basis as new developments are proposed.

Zoning Changes: Modifying the language of the existing zoning code to include references to the Amenity Plan goals and Linkages Vision Map will help to increase its use as a reference and guidance document.

Once these three elements are in place, it is intended that this Amenities Plan will continue to be implemented over time on the three different areas of interest, as illustrated in the following examples:

**Example One:** A residential housing development is proposed along Michael Road. In preparing to review this proposal, the town staff references the Linkages Vision Map. They note that a Multi-Use Trail/Path is envisioned for this area which is intended to eventually connect between the Elementary School and the YMCA and High School. Sitting down with the applicant, they discuss if and how such a path could be incorporated into the development plans. Depending on the specific circumstances of the project, the town and applicant may agree on a variety of different approaches:

Approach 1) Due to the fact that the property is in a very remote location and is currently too far removed from any adjacent connections, it is determined that construction of a multi-use path through the development at this time (in addition to any internal paths or sidewalks that would already be included) would not be functional.

However, it is agreed that space should be set aside for the multi-use path along with funds in escrow for its future engineering and construction when adjacent connections can be made. Due to the difficult terrain of the property, it is decided that the multi-use path is best located near the road running along the full frontage of the property, and an easement for this route is created.

Approach 2) The applicant likes the idea that a multi-use path connection could be made directly from the houses of his development to the nearby library, YMCA and schools, and considers it a selling



*Linkages Vision Map: The Linkages Vision map, shown above, outlines a long-term blueprint for the conceptual locations of desired sidewalks, paths and trails throughout the town. See page 46-47 for the full map.*

point for his marketing. Working with the town, a plan is developed which accommodates the path internally through the housing area, connecting out toward the school and even to other locations such as the Mill Creek. As part of the early phases of construction, the path network is constructed and connected to adjacent properties. Installing the path early in the construction process is critical to clarify to purchasers that the path exists and to avoid "not-in-my-backyard" conflicts after residents have moved in.



**Example Two:** A residential housing development is proposed as part of a Planned Development District. As part of their proposal for rezoning, they are required to propose an amenity package to the town. In preparing to review this proposal, the town staff meet with developers to discuss the project in relation to the Amenities Plan and Linkages Vision Map. Depending on the specific circumstances of the project, the town and applicant may agree on a variety of different approaches:

Approach 1) After review of the proposal, it is determined that the Linkages Vision Map envisions a multi-use path connection in the vicinity of the project. It is discussed that this path could instead be located within the project area, and still serve the same intent and functional purpose of the original vision. It is agreed that the developers should provide this path within their project, and in addition to some other items, would satisfy their contribution to a local amenity.

*Multi-Use Paths: Community paths and trails, such as Railroad Run in Saratoga Springs shown above, can be a great asset to local residents. They can also be an effective marketing tool to attract homebuyers interested in an active lifestyle.*

Approach 2) After review of the proposal, it is determined that the Linkages Vision Map does not include any connections which are in the vicinity of the project. It is also agreed that, due to the nature of the project, construction of on-site amenities would not serve the best interest of the town and applicant. It is instead agreed that the applicant should provide funds for the improvement or construction of a priority amenity located elsewhere in town—such as a missing segment of trail, sidewalks or park improvements—in an effort to meet their amenity contribution requirement.

**Example Three:** A town-sponsored and supported initiative is started to create a multi-use path along public lands. The town staff take the lead by inviting nearby homeowners to discuss the idea, judge local support, determine what concerns may need to be addressed and to gather design ideas. Finding that there is notable support, the town staff assist with initial surveying and mapping along the proposed route and work out conceptual design ideas with the assistance of public volunteers and design consultants. After refining the design and developing cost estimates, the town reaches out to local funding sources such as corporate sponsors and grant programs.

## B. Public Input

Two public workshops were conducted during the course of this project to invite the public to make comments and recommendations toward the Amenities Plan. The first public workshop was held at the beginning of the project in May of 2011. Many of the ideas and concerns gathered during this workshop were then used as a starting point for some of the work going forward. After initial design ideas were developed, a second public workshop was held in December of 2011 to present the Draft Recommendations and solicit additional feedback. Select comments received during each of these events are briefly summarized below. More complete notes from these workshops have been provided in the appendix for reference.



### May 2011 Workshop - Select Comments

- The town has several existing parks which have not been fully maintained and could use some more attention or be improved. The town shouldn't add new facilities until it takes care of the existing ones, and figures out how any new facilities would be maintained.
- There are several improvements which could be made to the existing Town Park. These include cleanup of the water contamination, cleanup of the beachfront erosion, provision of new restrooms, a new public pool, a new pavilion, further trail development, improvements to the dog park and the addition of sensory or community gardens and improvements near the new playground area to make it more attractive.
- Add or plan ahead for future bike and walking paths in town. Potential for bike path off road from Elliot Road to the YMCA and library, sidewalks to high school, etc.
- Should provide for public waterfront access along the Hudson River.
- Hampton Manor neighborhood could benefit from a connection from the school to the park and lake. Lakeshore Drive in Hampton Manor is often used as a walking path, but it is currently unsafe without a separation from the road.
- The proposed trail along the old Albany-Hudson electric trolley line is viewed favorably. Perhaps a first section, from the Post Office on Greenwood Drive to Genet Elementary School, would be relatively to accomplish and would have a big positive impact (allow kids to walk to school). Crossing of Elliot Rd. would need to be worked out but otherwise this section would be easy to complete.
- There is an important pedestrian connection that should be made between Prospect Heights Park and the surrounding neighborhood on the west side of Route 9, to Ontario Park, Red Mills Elementary School, Onderdonk Park, Hampton Lake Park and the surrounding neighborhood on the east side of Route 9/20. Improving this link and making it safe for pedestrians would greatly benefit the residents of these neighborhoods. A safe Route 9/20 crossing is the key challenge. Also, the sidewalk system is not complete in this area.

- Papscanee Island Nature Preserve is as an underutilized resource that could be a nice amenity on the Hudson River. Need to make it easier to find and improve connections to/from other parts of Town because it is difficult to find and not many people know it is there.

### December 2011 Workshop - Select Comments

- The type of community improvements outlined in this Amenity Plan should ideally be included as part of long-term capital planning, so that the town can look ahead to what needs to be done and can plan ahead on budget items if possible. Even if a component is built with grant money, it would still require some attention for maintenance, and that would have to be budgeted for.
- Should focus attention on one or two public parks to make them into a really GREAT place. That could have a huge impact on improving the adjacent neighborhood overall. The town could sponsor an event where volunteers and the town come out for a few days and spend the effort to really transform one of the parks. While there are volunteer days already, this idea could be expanded and enlarged to create a bigger impact and improvement.
- The idea for a loop path around Hampton Lake is well received - it would likely get a lot of use and people would love it. The guardrail shown in the concept design would make walking along there much safer, and people would feel safer. Right now when you drive around the lake you are sometimes surprised by people walking in the road, and it is not good.
- Improvements to the neighborhood parks could have a blossoming effect. If the tennis courts were improved, then perhaps the tennis program would be re-instituted, which would create some summer jobs and activities. If this was popular again, it would generate money from tennis lessons, and that money could then in turn be put back into the park to make it better.
- The plan should consider the relative merits and locations for various types of path/trail surfacing, such as non-asphalt surfacing for hikers or horseback riding in certain areas, while paths in more urbanized locations may want asphalt for walking and biking instead.
- When a park or other area is in disrepair, people are more likely to not care about it or treat it with disrespect - vandalize and litter. However, if a neighborhood park is in excellent shape, people would be more willing to treat it with respect and take care of it. It is a basic pride of ownership issue.

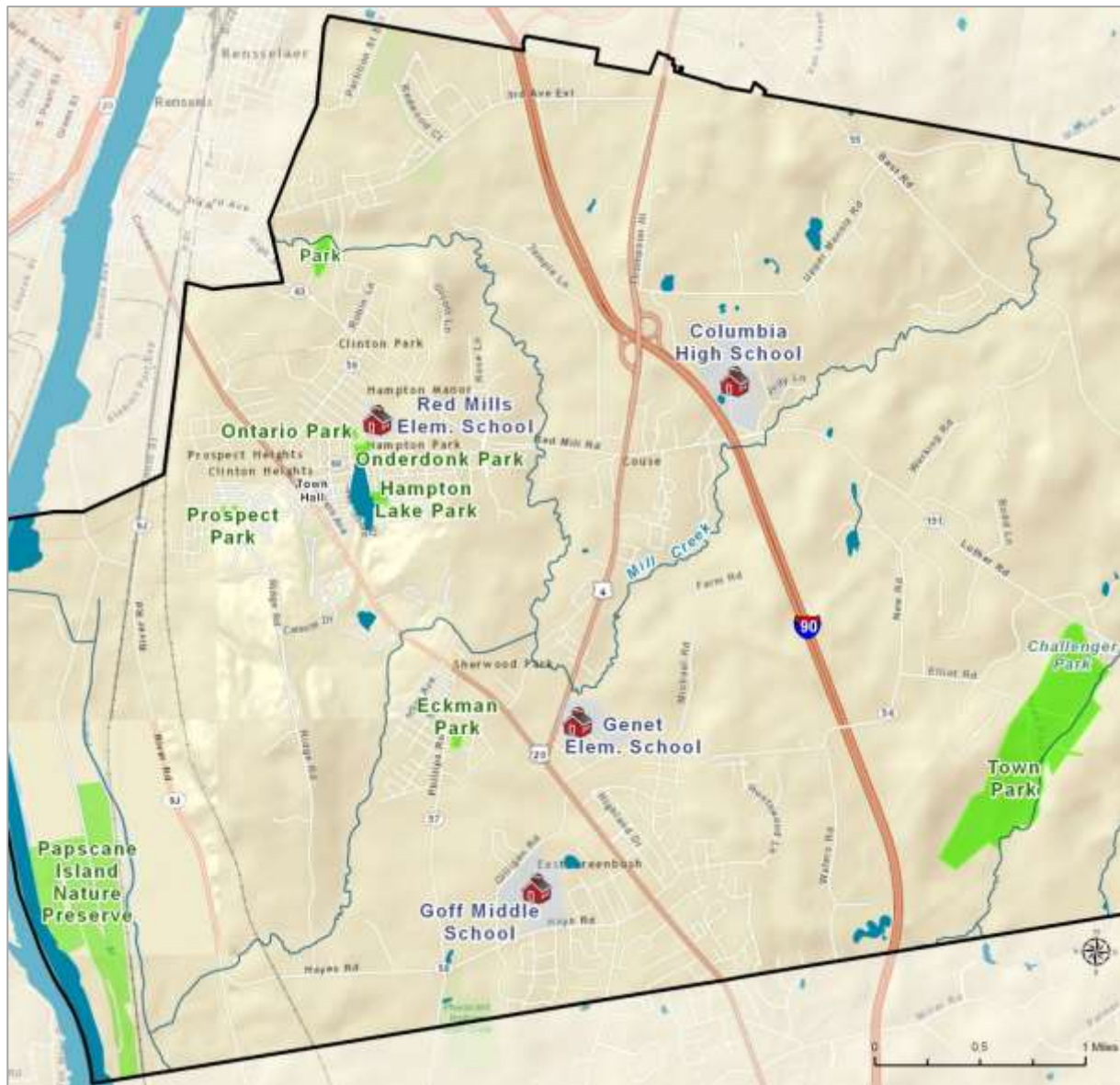


## PART TWO - PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of this Amenities Plan have been divided up into three categories, based on their perceived priorities to the community and their area of interest. These categories are: **Existing Facilities**; Linkages; and New Amenities and Opportunities.

### A. Existing Facilities - Inventory & Recommendations

The Town of East Greenbush currently has six public recreation areas, in addition to the facilities provided at the local schools, as well as multi-function space within Town Hall. There is also significant public space along the Hudson River waterfront within the Papscaene Island Nature Preserve. A majority of the town parks are small neighborhood recreational areas designed to be used by the local residents within walking distance, while the larger Town Park is intended to draw visitors from a much larger area. During the beginning stages of this project, each of these parks were visited in order to assess their current condition and identify any elements which required repair or improvement.



**Woodland's Eckman Park.** Eckman Park is a small neighborhood park off of Phillips Road and Grant Ave, a little more than an acre and a half in size. The park contains two asphalt tennis courts, a basketball court, swingset, slide, spring bouncer rides, playground equipment and some open lawn area. The Town Youth Services and Recreation Department had previously used this park for its Summer Tennis program. The 2002 Parks and Recreation Master Plan noted that there had recently been some upgrades to this park, notably; drainage improvements, handicap accessibility, fencing, new playground equipment and the addition of woodchips around the play areas. The report, however, did not identify any recommended improvements at that time. During the more recent site assessment for this project in 2011, several recommended improvements were noted:



#### Recommended Repairs:

- Tennis Court. Replace missing tennis court net. Court surfacing showing signs of heaves and sags, creating small puddle areas which do not drain well. Resurfacing/grading is recommended, as well as the repainting of the court lines.
- Playground Surfacing. Remove the hard turf areas around all playground equipment and replace with impact-resistant material for safety from falling. It was noted that these areas had wood borders which appeared to once contain a different surfacing, but that it was no longer there.
- Basketball Court. Court lines are missing or have faded. Repainting of the court lines is recommended.

#### Recommended Improvements:

- Shade Trees and Landscaping. The park currently does not have any trees within the interior perimeter of the park boundary. The planting of shade trees and decorative landscaping at various locations within the perimeter would provide much needed shade from the sun and visual relief, creating a more welcoming park atmosphere.
- Chain Link Fencing. The park entry point along the street is currently gated with a five or six foot tall chain link fence and gate. This fencing and entry gate is unattractive and creates an unwelcoming appearance from the outside. It is recommended that this outside gate and fence be replaced by a more attractive painted metal picket-style fence or one of similar design. Additionally, there is an interior chain link fence which divides the north and south halves of the park from each other. It is not readily apparent if this fencing is needed, and could be considered for removal. The remainder of the chain link fencing found along the west and



north perimeter edges of the park is less noticeable and could remain for utility and security purposes.

- **Open Area Activities.** The larger open lawn area at the northern side of the park is currently underutilized. This area could be augmented with the addition of soccer goals or similar equipment for new activities.
- **Seating.** There is one picnic table provided in the park. Additional tables or benches would provide more visitor seating.
- **Perimeter Landscaping.** The tennis courts, located along the front edge of the park along the street, are currently enclosed in an eight to ten foot tall chain link fence. This fencing, while desirable for tennis, creates an unattractive and unwelcome appearance to the park from the outside. It is recommended that the outside perimeter of this fence along the road be screened with tall landscaping such as trees, bushes and/or ivy to soften its appearance while still maintaining a view into the park for security purposes. An alternative layout to this recommendation is proposed below.
- **Water Fountain.** The addition of a water fountain here in proximity to the basketball and tennis courts could provide players refreshment during the summer months.
- **Alternate Layout.** As an alternative to the current layout, the tennis courts and associated tall fencing could be relocated toward the rear of the park. This alternative would greatly open up the front of the park to use as open space with lawn, trees and benches and create a more welcoming public space along the road. This alternative would likely only be reasonable if the tennis courts had to undergo significant repairs, or be replaced.





*Eckman Park Concept: Recommended improvements include new shade trees, landscaping, benches and a more formalized playground area.*





**Hampton Lake Park.** Hampton Lake Park is a small neighborhood park on Lake Shore Drive which is a little over 2 acres in size and situated on the edge of Hampton Manor Lake. The park contains two asphalt tennis courts, a basketball court, playground equipment, bathrooms and a small gazebo. During the winter the park shore provides access to the water for ice skating; however it is no longer suitable for summer swimming due to algae growth. The 2002 Parks and Recreation Master Plan noted that there had recently been several improvements to the park, including new playground and basketball equipment and upgrades to the bathhouse to make it ADA compliant. The park is often utilized to host town-sponsored programs such as music events, fishing derbies and tennis lessons.

Lake Shore Drive, which completely circles the water and is surrounded by a dense residential neighborhood, is commonly used by area residents as a walking/jogging loop. The 2002 Plan noted that the town was seeking funding to improve this loop road with a waterfront esplanade/walking trail to provide a safe path for pedestrians, but such funding was never realized. During the more recent site assessment for this project in 2011, several recommended improvements were noted:

**Recommended Repairs:**

- **Playground Surfaces.** The areas directly around and underneath the individual playground equipment are exposed, hard earth. These bare earth areas should be removed and replaced with impact-resistant material for safety from falling, and contained within a landscaping border.
- **Lawn.** The lawn around the playground area is very patchy, with large areas of exposed dirt and weeds. These areas should be re-graded and re-seeded to provide a more attractive and consistent lawn surface.



- Tennis Court Lines. The tennis court asphalt surfaces and painted lines have faded from long term exposure to the sun, and are deteriorating. It is recommended that the court be resurfaced and repainted.
- Tennis Fence. The chain link fence surrounding the tennis courts has been damaged over time, and should be repaired or replaced.
- Basketball Court. The basketball court lines have faded, and these should be repainted. The existing basketball hoop heights were also noted to be lower than normal. If these hoops are intended to be used by adults, then they should consider raising or replacing them with adjustable-height back boards.



**Recommended Improvements:**

- Chain Link Fencing. The park is currently bounded on all approachable sides by chain link fencing which is five to six feet tall. Although there is a small opening in the gate on the north end of the park, there is no formal pedestrian entrance—most visitors on foot enter through the vehicle driveway gate. This fencing and entry design is unattractive and creates an unwelcoming appearance for a neighborhood park. It is recommended that this perimeter fence be replaced by a more attractive painted metal picket-style or similarly designed fence which would create a more appropriate park-like setting, and that at least one or two pedestrian gates be added for visitors arriving by foot.



- Shade Trees and Landscaping. The park currently has very few trees within the interior perimeter of the park boundary, all of which are at one end adjacent to the lake. The majority of the park area has no trees and only sparse areas of decorative landscaping. The planting of shade trees and landscaping at various locations within the perimeter would provide much needed shade from the sun and visual relief, creating a more attractive, park-like atmosphere. Specifically, landscaping is recommended around the entry,



playground and beach area to prevent erosion and around the utility equipment on the corner to screen it from view.

- Sign. There did not appear to be a park identification sign readily visible, although a general “East Greenbush Parks Dept” sign can be found in front giving the hours of operation. A new decorative sign should be added which identifies the facility as “Hampton Lake Park” and includes the existing sign information.
- Sidewalks. There are currently no sidewalk or other pedestrian connections leading into or out of the park area. New sidewalk or multi-use path connections should be provided as outside sidewalks or paths are developed in the vicinity. (See Lake Shore Drive / Pedestrian Loop below.)
- Lake Shore Drive / Pedestrian Loop Path. The establishment of a pedestrian path loop around the lake and connecting to and/or through the park is highly recommended. Such an amenity, if constructed, would be of high value to area residents and is expected to get a high volume of use. In previous discussions about this idea, widening the road to make room for a dedicated pedestrian path had been considered, though it is unclear if there is sufficient width to do this. An alternate approach is to narrow the road to one lane and convert it to one-way traffic year round, which would more easily accommodate the widths needed. A ‘before and after’ photo-simulation depicting what this esplanade might look like has been provided below for discussion purposes. (Refer to the ‘Linkages’ section of this report for more information on this topic.)

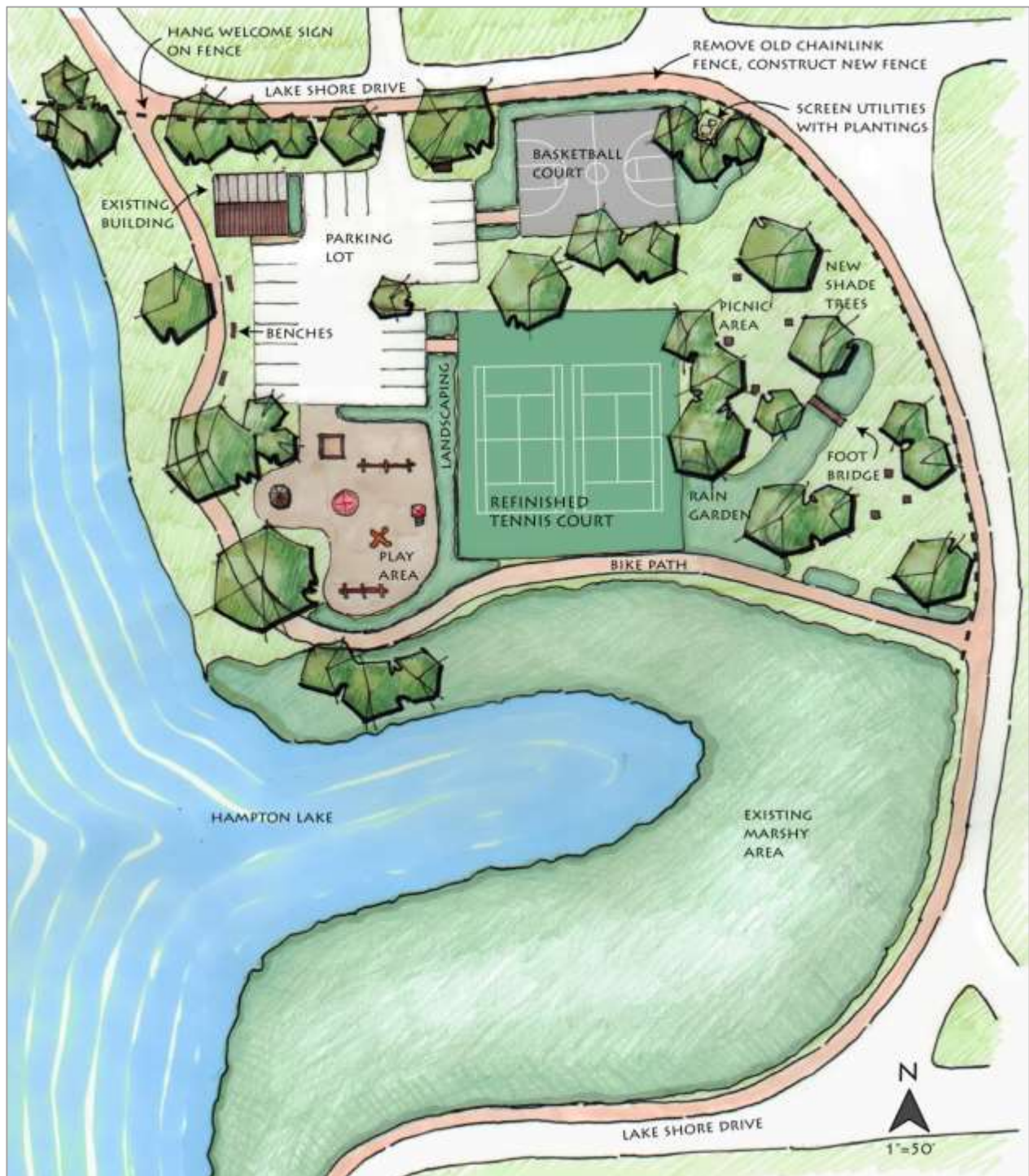


*Lakeshore Drive Loop Path Concept: Photo-simulation showing existing (left) and proposed (right) views along Lakeshore Drive. A multi-use path such as the one depicted here would provide a safe and attractive way to enjoy a walk around the lake.*

- Water Fountain. The addition of a water fountain here in proximity to the basketball and tennis courts could provide players and children refreshment during the summer months.
- Bike Racks. The addition of a bike rack is recommended.
- Lake Water Quality. The 2002 Plan noted that steps should be taken to help improve the water quality and usability of the lake. **These steps recommendations continue today. Consider implementation of several fountains as seen at Buckingham Pond in Albany and several other**



neighborhood Parks. Fountains serve a dual role of improving the aesthetic balance and providing aeration.



**Hampton Lake Park Concept:** Recommended improvements include bringing the proposed multi-use loop path through and around the park, providing a new fence, shade trees, landscaping, benches and welcome signs. The existing parking lot asphalt area could potentially be reduced in size and re-stripped while still providing the same number of parking spaces, allowing for more lawn area along the waterfront.



**Onderdonk Memorial Park.** Onderdonk Memorial Park is a small neighborhood park located along Hampton Avenue/Lake Shore Drive which is about one and a half acres in size. The park contains a putting green, shuffleboard court, horseshoes, two bocce courts and a pavilion with restrooms. The park has often been utilized to host town-sponsored programs such as music events and game competitions. During the site assessment for this project in 2011, some recommended improvements were noted:

**Recommended Repairs:**

- The Onderdonk Park is relatively new and in good condition. No significant repair needs were observed during the site visit.

**Recommended Improvements:**

- Chain Link Fencing. The park is currently bounded on all approachable sides by chain link fencing which is five to six feet tall, and visitors on foot enter by walking through the parking lot. This fencing and entry design is unwelcoming for a neighborhood park. It is recommended that the perimeter fence along the public access side be replaced by a more attractive painted metal picket-style fence more suitable for a neighborhood park. Likewise, a pedestrian entry gate from the street may be useful, especially if it is connected to a local sidewalk or path system.
- Shade Trees. The park currently has only a few trees within the perimeter which provide shade and visual relief within. The park would benefit from one or two new trees planted toward the front of the park along the road and parking area. Due to the small size of the park however, there are limited locations for many new tree plantings that would not interfere with larger gatherings or events.



**Ontario Park.** Ontario Park is a small neighborhood park located on Ontario Avenue which is approximately one and a half acres in size. The park contains a full size basketball court, a small parking area and open lawn area. During the recent site assessment for this project, some recommended improvements were noted:



**Recommended Repairs:**

- Basketball Court Surface. The asphalt basketball court surface is uneven and lacks painted court lines, making play difficult. This court should be resurfaced and painted.
- Basketball Nets. New basketball hoop nets should be installed.

**Recommended Upgrades:**

- Shade Trees and Landscaping. Although the park does include a few shade trees, some additional trees and landscaping could be planted, particularly within the open area on the east side of the park.
- Tables / Seating. The addition of a picnic table and a courtside bench would provide visitors a place to sit and relax while visiting the park or after a basketball game. These could be located in areas most likely to get shade from the sun.
- Water Fountain. The addition of a water fountain here in proximity to the basketball court could provide players refreshment during the summer months.

**Prospect Heights Park.** Prospect Heights Park is a small neighborhood park located along Neptune Street, consisting of two small non-adjacent lots separated by a private residence. The park includes two swing sets, a small sandbox and spring bouncer rides on the western parcel and a basketball court on the eastern parcel. There is an asphalt path which leads through the western lot which provides a shortcut through the block sometimes used by area residents. During the most recent site assessment for this project, several recommended improvements were noted:



**Recommended Repairs:**

- Playground Surfacing. Remove the bare earth areas underneath the children's playground equipment and replace with impact-resistant material for safety from falling.

- Sand Box. Replace or renew existing sand in the sand box.
- Basketball Court. Provide basketball hoops and backboards on the existing uprights. Paint new court lines.
- Replacement Equipment. Some of the children's playground equipment is rather old, and should be considered for replacement.



#### Recommended Upgrades:

- New Fencing. Both parcels currently have no fence separating the park from the street. While this creates a more open and attractive park setting, there is an opportunity to create a separate and safer environment for smaller children to run around. It is recommended that the western parcel, which currently contains the playground equipment, could be dedicated toward smaller children, and in this case some attractive fencing and gates should be provided at either end of the lot to keep children inside and safe. As an alternative to standard fencing, low hedges with a gate at either end would serve the same purpose with a softer appearance. The eastern lot, containing the basketball court, could be dedicated toward older children and adults, and could therefore remain a completely unfenced alternative.
- Additional Park Equipment. New and additional children's playground equipment is recommended, particularly in the western lot. This could include a combination slide/climbing structure, merry-go-round or see-saw to provide more variety in activities. There are currently two separate swing sets on this property—one with two "harness" seats for very small children and one with six "regular" seats. These two separate pieces of equipment could be combined or replaced with a single swing-set which has a three of each seating type to free up space for other activities. On the eastern lot, the addition of a chess table and bike rack is recommended.
- Shade Trees and Landscaping. Both park lots currently consist of open lawn area, with little or no trees or other landscaping present. The planting of additional shade trees and landscaping is recommended on both lots to provide relief from the sun and create a softer, more park-like appearance. Such landscaping could be used to help separate different activities or create a quiet seating / picnic area.
- Seating. Currently neither park lot has provisions for seating. It is recommended that picnic tables and/or benches be provided in each lot.
- Signs. Although there is a general Parks Department sign found outside of the eastern lot, neither park lot has any identification sign. It is recommended that decorative identification signs be added to the park lots. These could include (and replace) the information found in the general Parks Department sign.
- Water Fountain. The addition of a water fountain here on either lot is recommended to provide summertime refreshment.

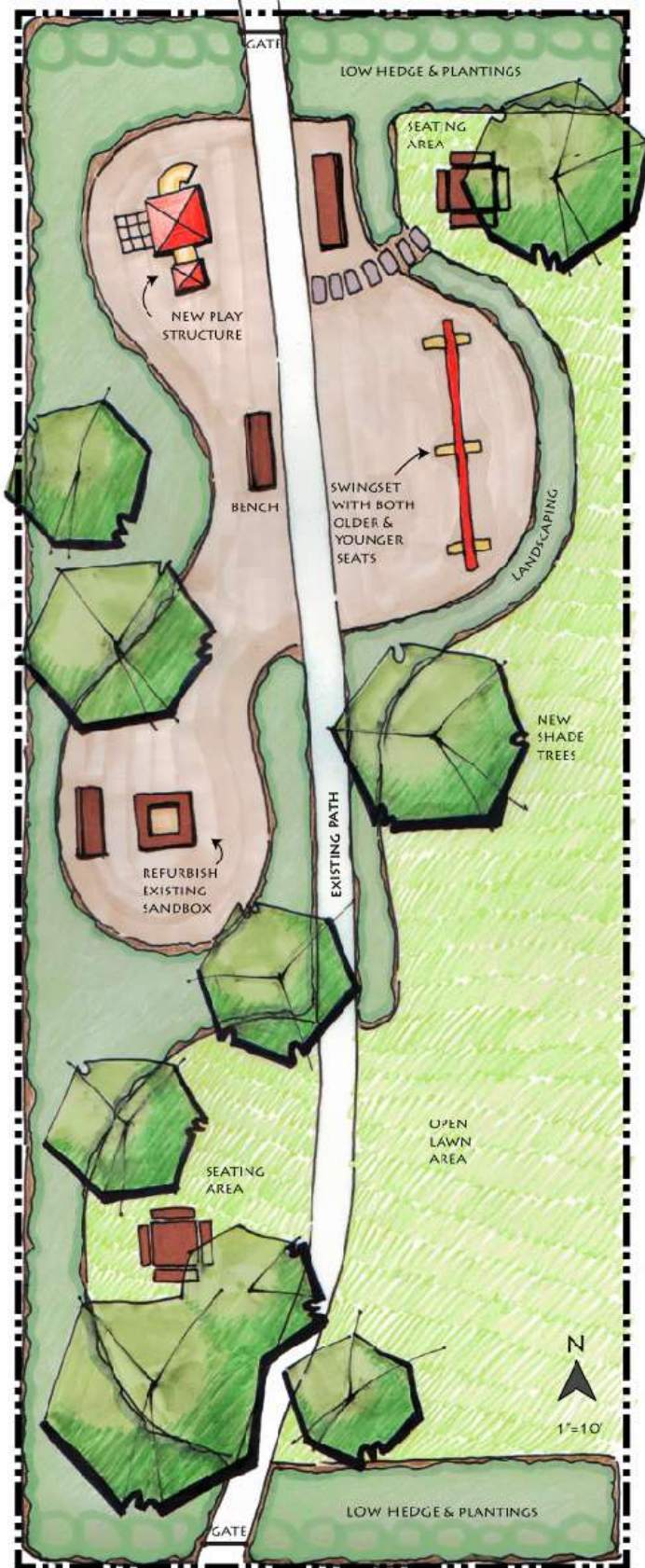


**Prospect Heights Park Concept – West:**  
 Prospect Heights park, divided into two separate lots, provides the opportunity to create separate recreation areas for both young children and adults.

The western park lot, shown here, is ideally suited for younger children. Recommended improvements here include the addition of new shade trees, landscaping, benches and new playground equipment.

Low hedges and shrubs can be used at either end of the lot (instead of fencing) to create attractive entry gates and keep children away from the road. A more formalized play area can be created with wood chips or similar soft surfacing, surrounded by hedges or similar landscaping. New playground equipment can be located within this area, such as a new climb & slide fort. The two existing swing sets can be combined or replaced by a single swing set with seats for both young and older children.

Smaller, more personal seating areas can be created for quietly relaxing at a picnic table, while a larger open lawn area can be used for general games and "running around" space.





*Prospect Heights Park Concept—East: Recommended improvements for the eastern lot of Prospect Heights Park include new shade trees, landscaping, seating and completion of the basketball court. This lot, which could be designed with older children and adults in mind, could include picnic and chess tables for relaxing, as well as a bike rack. New landscaping along Neptune Street, along with gravel paths and a new sign, would improve its appearance from the road.*



**Town Park.** East Greenbush Town Park is a large park located off of Elliot Road on the east side of town. Unlike the smaller neighborhood parks described earlier, this park consists of nearly 200 acres and is designed to draw a much larger visitor base from around a larger area, and also serves over 200 children for summer camp activities. The park includes hiking trails, two picnic pavilions, restrooms, barbeque grills, picnic tables, children's playground, softball field, volleyball court, dog park, horseshoe games and large open lawn areas. Since adoption of the 2012 Amenities Plan, some newer



park improvements have included the addition of a basketball court and the relocation of the volleyball net. A major visual feature of the town park is the adjacent Moordener Kill waterway and associated beach, which had been used in the past for swimming, fishing and other water recreation. The waterway and adjacent beach however have been closed to these activities since 2009 due to water contamination from an unknown source. The park also sits adjacent to Challenger Park to the north, a baseball/softball facility designed for the physically impaired, which is connected via the local trail system. During the most recent site assessment for this project, several recommended improvements were noted:

#### Priority Repairs & Improvements:

- **ADA Restrooms.** There are a number of significant deficiencies which have made this a priority recommendation. The existing restroom facilities in the picnic/beach area (photo below) are over 40 years old, are not ADA-compliant and are in an advanced state of disrepair. These deficiencies were noted in the 2002 Parks & Recreation Plan, the 2012 Amenities Plan and continue to be an issue today. In 2011, the Town of East Greenbush applied for grant funding through NYSOPRHP for the replacement of these restrooms, but funding was not approved. The number of visitors and summer camp attendees continues to grow, however the bathrooms have not kept pace with this increased use. The replacement of this bathroom facility continues to be a priority for this park. It is recommended that the existing structure be removed, or converted into storage.
- **Shelter / Multifunction Space.** In addition to functional restrooms, the Park also has need for an enclosed/protected space where the public and summer camp children can take refuge in the event of a dangerous storm. Currently, the lack of an adequate shelter space does not meet the Rensselaer County





Children’s Camp Safety Plan guidelines, and in the event of an incoming storm, summer camp children have to be quickly loaded onto school buses and transported to a local fire station several miles away. This alternate safety procedure has proved to be very difficult and awkward. The construction of a new pavilion to provide protected shelter space is needed. This structure could double as multi-function pavilion space, and could also include modern, ADA compliant bathrooms which would address the deficiency noted above.

- **New Pavilion Space.** The park currently has two pavilions - a small lower pavilion for informal picnic gatherings (photo at right) and a larger, more robust pavilion on the top of the hill which is rented out for larger events. There is growing demand for additional pavilion space, as the current facilities are often booked for months in advance and the summer camp largely uses the smaller structure.



The 2002 Parks & Recreation Plan recommended the construction of an additional pavilion, and this recommendation continues today. Note that this recommendation could be coupled with the previous two as part of a single structure which provides pavilion space, bathrooms and safety refuge.

- **Lack of Swimming / Water Recreation.** The Town Beach and associated swimming area of the Moordener Kill waterway (photo below) has been closed since 2009 by the County Health Department due to the presence of E. Coli bacteria in the water which exceeds minimum safe levels. Attempts to locate the source of this contamination to begin remediation and cleanup have not been successful. The town applied for grant funding through the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP) for necessary water testing and investigation to locate the source, and water quality testing has recently begun. The contamination issue continues to be a problem which prevents any water recreation, and it is becoming apparent that it may take many years to identify the problem and properly eliminate it. In light of this, and the fact that swimming and/or water recreation has been the most-requested park improvement from user surveys, the town began to also investigate the potential for a swimming pool or similar feature to meet this need. Splash-pads are becoming increasingly popular in many communities, in part for their relatively lower cost of construction and ease of



operation compared to full swimming pools and could be viewed as an alternative.

Based on this supporting data and citizen involvement, the Town has been prioritizing swimming alternatives. The 2016 Town Park Grant highlighted a splash pad as a Phase 1 alternative. Since it is anticipated that the cleanup of the Moordener Kill waterway could take many years, it is recommended that the town take a parallel-track approach as follows:

1) Complete the water quality grant recently re-authorized by the Town Board in order to investigate and inquire as to a long-term solution of the Moordener Kill waterway, and 2) In the interim, emphasize swimming alternatives as the most expedient way of providing for adequate swimming facilities and meet the immediate needs of the community.



- **Pedestrian Walkways.** The natural setting of the park is broken only by the paved driveway/access road which extends through to the different activity areas. There are no designated walking paths within the park. Pedestrians walking from the parking area to various activities therefore have to either walk in the roadway, or traverse uneven, sloping ground often with tree roots or other minor obstacles. While that may be fine for most users, it presents difficulties for disabled visitors and some elderly. It also presents some safety issues with vehicle/pedestrian conflicts. Smooth-surface asphalt, concrete, compacted stone-dust or other accessible surface paths are recommended to connect the parking area and the primary activity areas within the park where possible.

#### Other Recommended Improvements:

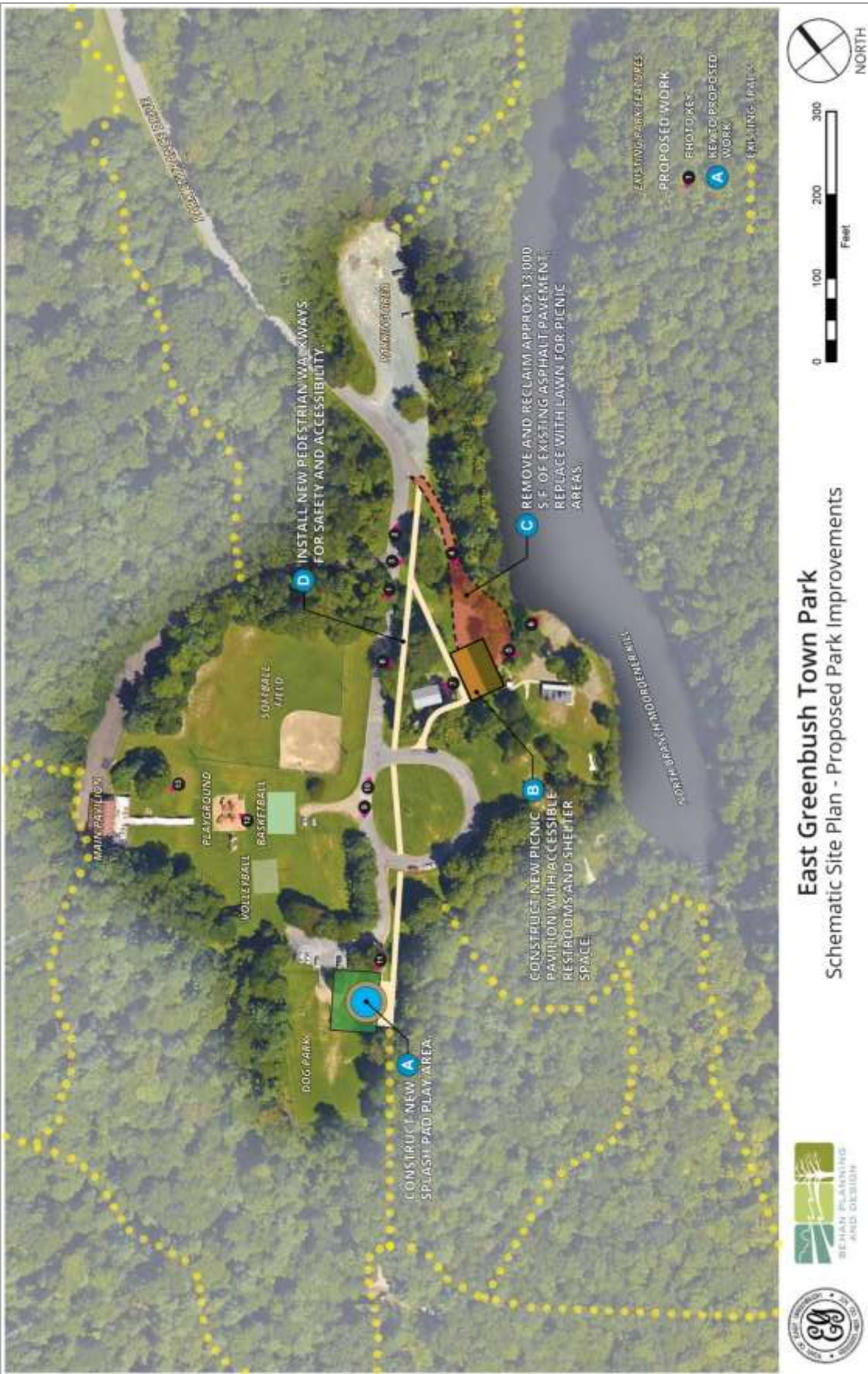
- **Reduce Pedestrian/Vehicle Conflicts.** In addition to the lack of pedestrian pathways within the park, it was noted that vehicles traveling past the main parking lot and into internal areas could pose a potential pedestrian conflict, especially for smaller children. The lower driveway loop, which extends from the parking lot down to the water, is one example. This lower driveway bisects the area directly between the main camp picnic area and the beach. It is recommended that this asphalt driveway be removed and reclaimed as new lawn area which can be used for picnic space or other uses. Likewise, it was determined that vehicles driving beyond the main parking lot through the park to the dog park and other activities posed a similar potential conflict. It is recommended that the town consider an operable vehicle gate which would limit public access all the way through the park, or signs could be added which restrict unnecessary vehicle passage and caution drivers to be aware of children at play. This would allow necessary vehicle travel—such as camp school buses, maintenance vehicles and emergency responders—to still access the internal areas as needed.
- **Relocate Dog Park.** The dog park is a well-used amenity within the park. It is often found at many times of the day with multiple users and their companions enjoying time together. However, its location at the far south end of the park requires that users drive all the way through the park,

past summer camp activities, to use it. It is recommended that the town consider relocating this feature to a more readily accessible location near the main parking lot. This would allow the current dog park site and parking area to be converted to more suitable recreational uses and greatly reduce the number of vehicles travelling through the internal portions of the park.



- Playground Equipment and Shading.** The existing playground area is currently unappealing for a number of reasons. The playground equipment itself is showing signs of age and rust and appears to lack a diversity of different “age-appropriate” features found in most modern playgrounds. Notably, it is lacking common equipment such as a swing set. The playground location in the middle of a large open field is somewhat removed from other activity areas and provides no shade relief from the sun on hot days, since there are no mature trees near it. Many of these shortcomings were identified by respondents in the Recreation Survey. It is recommended that, at a minimum, the existing playground be upgraded with some new and more age-diverse equipment, and that additional benches and shade relief with trees or canopies be added to make it more comfortable and inviting. Alternately, it is recommended that the town should consider relocating the playground to a more directly accessible location which already provides shade from existing mature-growth trees on the perimeter of the clearing, such as the current location of the dog park.
- Welcome Signage & Landscaping.** Upon arrival at the park by vehicle, drivers are currently presented with little signage or direction on where they should go. In keeping with the above recommendations of attempting to limit the number of vehicles travelling through the park, it is recommended that some basic welcome and directional signs with landscaping be added at the bottom of the hill to encourage people to park there and continue on foot.
- Upgrade Volleyball Court.** The existing volleyball net located near the playground currently sits on grass and hard-packed earth. This surfacing makes playing volleyball somewhat undesirable compared to conventional play where diving and falling for the ball are common. It is recommended that the area around the net be replaced with impact-resistant surfacing, such as sand.
- Connection to Challenger Park.** There is currently a natural trail which connects the main Town Park activity area to the adjacent Challenger Park, 0.7 miles to the north. It is recommended that this connection could be improved to provide easier access to and from both areas.
- Park Promotion.** It is recommended that continued efforts be put into promotion and awareness of the park facilities wherever possible, including promotional announcements of grant money being applied for, grant money received, upgrades being constructed, donations received, or anniversaries of certain park facilities (e.g. the anniversary of the pavilion construction, etc.) These announcements can be coupled with advertising from local companies who have donated equipment or services toward the park.





**Town Park Concept:** Recommended improvements for the Town Park include new swimming/splash-pad area; new pavilion and shelter space with ADA-compliant bathrooms; reclaiming old asphalt driveway area with lawn and picnic area and new pedestrian pathways.

**Town Hall Multifunction Space.** The existing Town Hall building on Columbia Turnpike includes a large room which accounts for approximately 20% of the floor area of the Town Hall, and yet has remained underutilized. This space could instead be upgraded and converted to be used for group activities and meetings as a multi-function room, alleviating pressure on other public gathering areas where space or availability may be lacking. This multi-function space also provides the benefit of all-weather day or night use, with available parking, and could provide the recreation department with income from space rentals.



*The East Greenbush Town Hall building on Columbia Turnpike.*

Consider the use of PDD amenity fees to improve the role of Town Hall as community center and create a community space that is more functional and better designed to serve the needs of the public. Areas of improvement include climate control, bathrooms, ADA compliance and community space.



**Existing Facilities Summary**

During the course of this project, many members of the public spoke up about their concern that these existing parks are in need of repairs and improvements, and that the town should be careful about adding new recreation facilities which could distract from their regular care and maintenance. For this reason, these existing parks have been listed as a short-term priority for the town to address.

Many of the recommended park improvements can be broken down into two general categories of effort. There are smaller improvements which can be tackled by the Town and volunteers on an individual basis, such as landscaping improvements. There are also larger items which are more suited to being funded through grant programs, such as the construction of new restrooms, pavilion or swimming pool at the Town Park. A summary of recommended projects for priority grant funding is outlined below.

Grant Funding Priority Projects	
--	Water contamination testing and cleanup in Moordener Creek, Town Park (Now Funded)
1	Upgrades to Town Park and Multi-use space and swimming
2	Increased Town Park Pavilion space
3	Community trails, walkability and bike-ability
4	Hampton Lake Park improvements
5	Resurfacing and repair of town wide courts
6	Upgrades to neighborhood parks

A list of available grant funding programs is provided in the Appendix of this document for reference. It is recommended that the Town continue to work with its planners to monitor these programs and apply for funding as it becomes available each year.

A significant majority of the park improvements however are smaller scale and possibly suited for a more grassroots collaborative effort between the town staff and local volunteers. This would include improvements such as planting new shade trees and landscaping, replacing fencing or adding new signs. Because these items can be broken down into small parts, such improvements could easily be approached piecemeal in incremental improvements over time. However, the downside to this is that a piecemeal approach could tend to lose momentum as time goes on, and eventually be forgotten, resulting in little or no park improvements.

**A Parks Improvement Strategy.** An alternative strategy which was proposed at one workshop would be to instead put a strong focus on one park at a time with a large, collaborative effort to bring about a significant improvement in only a few days - "Extreme Makeover" style. This approach has many advantages, including being more efficient and likely to generate a great deal of local attention and neighborhood pride. For this reason, it is recommended that the town designate an official "East Greenbush Parks Day" for one day—or weekend—of the year when both town staff and local volunteers come together at a specific park fully equipped to make a notable transformation. Local businesses can contribute through sponsorship, donation of materials, providing refreshments and food while





benefiting in-kind from the advertising and goodwill gesture of the neighborhood event. The town staff and volunteers would have a year to plan and prepare for it, reaching out to local businesses, developing advertising, t-shirts and banners. It could culminate in a neighborhood barbecue with games for children or live music to celebrate the work at the end of the day or weekend, recorded with videos posted online for sharing and future promotion. Such an event would likely result in widespread public support, an improved neighborhood park and increased

local pride and awareness of all the park has to offer.

With each successive year, a new park can be selected for attention, providing for a rotating schedule of continued service and upkeep. As each park matures and reaches its full potential, the Parks Day can transform instead to general cleanup with a neighborhood festival. This event should be held in the spring or early summer so that people have the remainder of the summer to enjoy the new improvements. For the purposes of planting and landscaping, it is recommended that it be held sometime in May or early June.



The local neighborhood parks of East Greenbush are a wonderful amenity that residents would very much like to see improved and maintained. Their continued upkeep and improvement would serve to create a more attractive neighborhood, provide more recreational opportunities and increase neighborhood pride.



*Photo Credits: (Top left): Anita Chordia, National Parks Council, Playground Rebuild Day for Balboa Park and Playground in San Francisco; (Middle left): "Festival in the Park" logo, Charlotte, NC ; (Lower right): Spring Celebration, Friends of Rose Park, Inc. Washington, D.C.*

## B. Linkages

While the Town of East Greenbush has a respectable number of public amenities, the town has limited existing linkages (sidewalks, multi-use paths, trails, bike lanes) between these amenities and surrounding neighborhoods. Several new linkages have been considered and are summarized below and depicted on the Linkages Vision Map. These include three categories: Sidewalk & Bike Lanes; Multi-Use Paths for walking, jogging and biking; and Nature Trails for more casual exploration.

### Sidewalks & Bike Lanes

There are only about two miles of road in the entire Town of East Greenbush which currently have any sidewalks, providing for a total of about 3 miles of sidewalk (some roads have sidewalks on both sides). Approximately half of these sidewalks are located along Columbia Turnpike, and with the exception of two small areas—less than 500 feet each—along Route 4, the remaining sidewalks tie into or are very near Columbia Turnpike. There are, however, several gaps in areas where sidewalks do exist, most notably along Columbia Turnpike. The most notable gaps are from the intersection of Route 4, south to Elmwood Drive and from the Rensselaer border south to Riverview Terrace. These gaps are approximately 2/3rds and 1/2 of a mile, respectively. In general there are very few instances of sidewalks linking destinations with the exception of the businesses along Columbia Turnpike. Notably absent are connections between established residential neighborhoods.

In terms of bicycle amenities, State Routes 9J and 151 are State Designated Bike Routes, however neither appear to have any bicycle amenities. Route 9J has significantly wide shoulders throughout nearly the entire East



*Columbia Turnpike Sidewalk Gaps: This is the largest gap in sidewalks along Columbia Turnpike, at over 3,000 feet in length, extending south from the intersection with Route 4 to Elmwood Drive. The residential neighborhood centered on Highland Drive, however, has an abundance of sidewalks. (Existing sidewalk locations shown in green.)*



*Another large sidewalk gap along Columbia Turnpike (top left of image) near the Rensselaer border. Existing segments do not connect to Discovery Drive or Hampton Avenue sidewalks.*



Greenbush corridor, and therefore should be relatively amenable for bicyclists. Route 151, however has areas with relatively narrow shoulders which could be difficult for less experienced cyclists to safely share the road with vehicular traffic. Other areas of this route are much wider and would more easily accommodate bicycle traffic.



*State Route 151 Bike Route: Several areas of this roadway provide wide shoulders which can easily support bicycle traffic. Potential improvements include added signage and pavement markings along the road to improve and promote bicycle safety and awareness, as illustrated in this photo-simulation.*

#### Recommended Actions:

- **Fill in sidewalk gaps:** As noted there are two large sections along Columbia Turnpike where no sidewalks exist. These segments should be of high priority as this is the primary corridor through the developed portion of East Greenbush and should serve as the spine for pedestrian connections both along the corridor and to surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Complete sidewalks along Route 4:** Route 4 serves as a major North-South connection in the town, and currently there are only isolated sections of sidewalk. A sidewalk connection between the intersection with Columbia Turnpike and Couse Corners would provide a critical link between many of the town's neighborhoods.
- **Construct sidewalks from Route 4 to Columbia High School:** A sidewalk along Luther Road/Route 151 is recommended to connect Couse Corners and Route 4 to the high school. Furthermore, a completed sidewalk route is recommended which connects the school to the Library, YMCA, Eddy Center and through Commons Drive to connect with Route 4. Currently,



fragments of these sidewalks exist through the Library and YMCA campus, but they are not continuous.

- Create a sidewalk linking Prospect Heights and Hampton Manor: A sidewalk connection from Prospect Park to Hampton Lake Park would provide an important link between these two neighborhoods. Crossing at Columbia Turnpike could either be at the existing light at the intersection with Sherwood Avenue, or perhaps a new pedestrian activated signal could be installed closer to Ridge Road.
- Create a sidewalk linking Eckman Park to Columbia Turnpike and the Albany-Hudson Electric Trolley trail: A sidewalk from approximately Eckman Park, along Phillips Road, could connect the Sherwood Park neighborhood to Columbia Turnpike and the future Albany-Hudson Electric Trolley trail.
- Create a sidewalk linking Goff Middle School to Columbia Turnpike and the Albany-Hudson Electric Trolley trail: There is a short run of sidewalk on Gilligan Road off of Columbia Turnpike that could be extended to Goff Middle School allowing connections to the Turnpike, the future Albany-Hudson Electric Trolley trail, and the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Improve signage/markings for bike routes: The town could work with NYSDOT to add bike route signs and pavement markings on Route 151 and 9J to improve bicycle safety and raise awareness to these important linkages within the state’s bike route system.



*Recommended new sidewalk connections which would link Columbia High School, the YMCA, the Library and Genet Elementary School with Route 4 and the proposed Albany-Hudson Electric Trolley trail.*

## Multi-Use Trails

There are no existing multi-use trails within East Greenbush. Plans are being made for a new multi-use trail to be located along the former Albany-Hudson Electric Trolley line right-of-way. A recently completed feasibility study for this future trail has identified numerous challenges that will need to be overcome in order for the trail to become officially usable, although parts of the trail corridor are currently used informally for walking and biking by local residents. It is likely that this trail will need to be completed in sections. As part of the feasibility study, a segment from Greenwood Drive to Genet Elementary School was identified as a priority section which could be relatively easy to implement in the near-term.



***Future Multi-Use Trail:** A view along the planned Albany-Hudson Electric Trolley Trail, looking north at the intersection of Horizon View Drive and Coventry Lane.*

*Photo courtesy of GPI.*



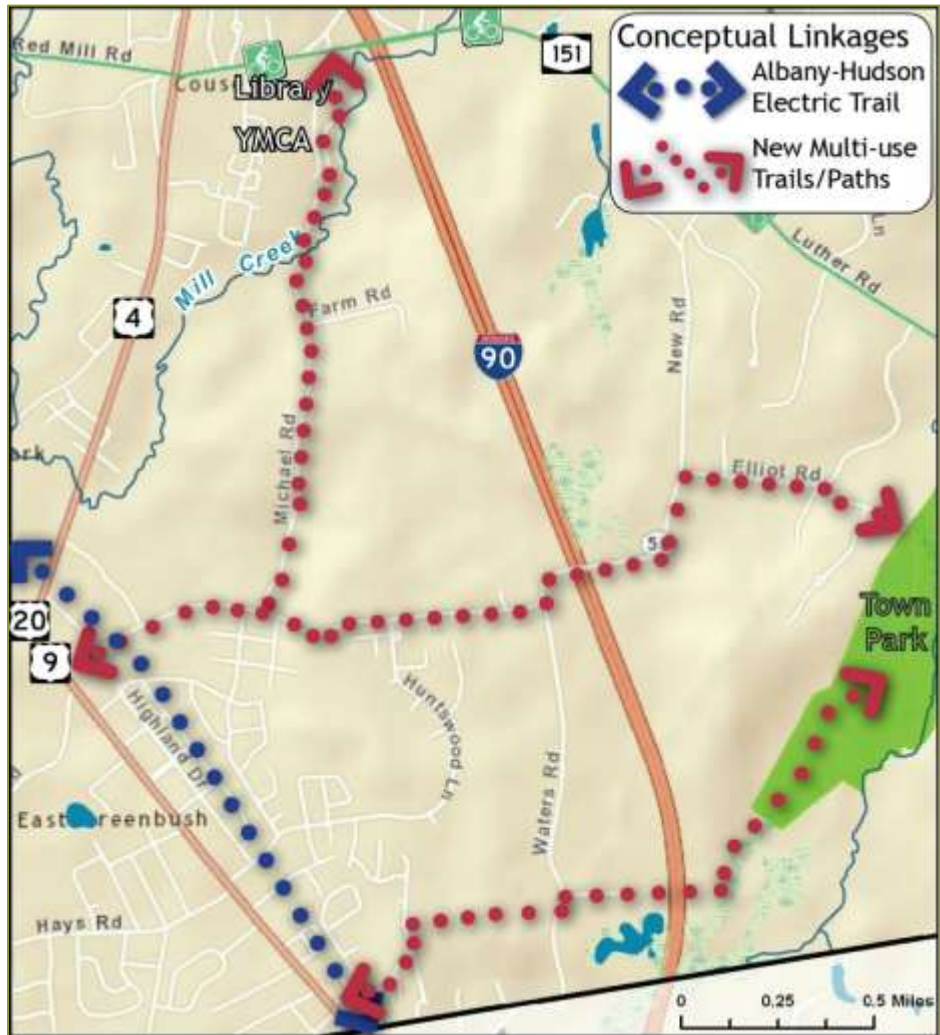
***Railroad Run:** A view along Railroad Run, a multi-use trail in Saratoga Springs, NY. Developed over the years from an old railroad bed, it now serves as an amenity to residents, directly connecting them to local attractions such as the YMCA.*



**Recommended Actions:**

In addition to the Albany-Hudson Electric Trolley trail which is currently proposed, other potential multi-use pathways were identified during the planning process which could be connected as part of a complete network. These include the following:

- Create a multi-use trail adjacent to Michael Road and Elliot Road: A multi-use trail should be created along these important town roads that would link the primary commercial and residential areas of town to the high school, elementary school, YMCA, Library and the Town Park.
- Create a connection between the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail and the Town Park: There are currently no trails leading to the Town Park. One potential trail could be created into the south end of the park. While the exact route would need to be determined, conceptually the trail could extend from the future trolley trail near Horizon View Drive, east along roads and easements to a right-of-way passing underneath I-90 at the end of Greenwood Drive, then along the edge of NYSDEC regulated wetlands located on private property and then north into the Town Park. (See map below and photo on next page).



**Multi-Use Trail Connections:** Potential multi-use trails (red dots) along Elliot Road, Michael Road, and through potential easements and right-of-ways into the Town Park. These important paths would link to the proposed Albany-Hudson Electric Trolley trail (blue dots) and Columbia Turnpike. See text for further explanation.





*New Multi-Use Path Network: Photo-simulation of a multi-use trail along Michael Road. A similar trail system, extending east-west near Elliot Road, could connect directly to the Town Park entrance on Town Park Road.*

- Create a multi-use trail loop around Hampton Lake:** As previously mentioned in the Existing Parks Inventory & Recommendations section, a pedestrian loop path around the lake connecting to and/or through Hampton Lake Park is highly recommended. (See photo-simulation on next page). The Hampton Lake Loop Path would provide nearby residents with a safe and attractive walking and jogging path around the water, which would also serve to provide safe pedestrian access to the park. The concept of this multi-use path has been discussed in the past, and received enthusiastic support at the last public workshop. Of note, residents especially seemed to like the idea of an attractive guardrail (depicted in the photo-sim on the next page) to divide the roadway from the path to provide separation and safety. The path could also include very low-level, shielded lighting such as small landscape lamps for nighttime walks.



*Connection to the Town Park: This bridge overpass, located at the end of Greenwood Drive, is one of the few east-west crossing points under Interstate 90. Currently used by recreational vehicles, it could be improved into a multi-use trail connecting into the Town Park.*

Incorporating this path would likely require that Lakeshore Drive be converted to one-way vehicle traffic, which is already done at certain times of the year. It is recommended that the Town soon commence a more formal dialog with the residents around the lake to determine support, identify concerns and refine design ideas further.

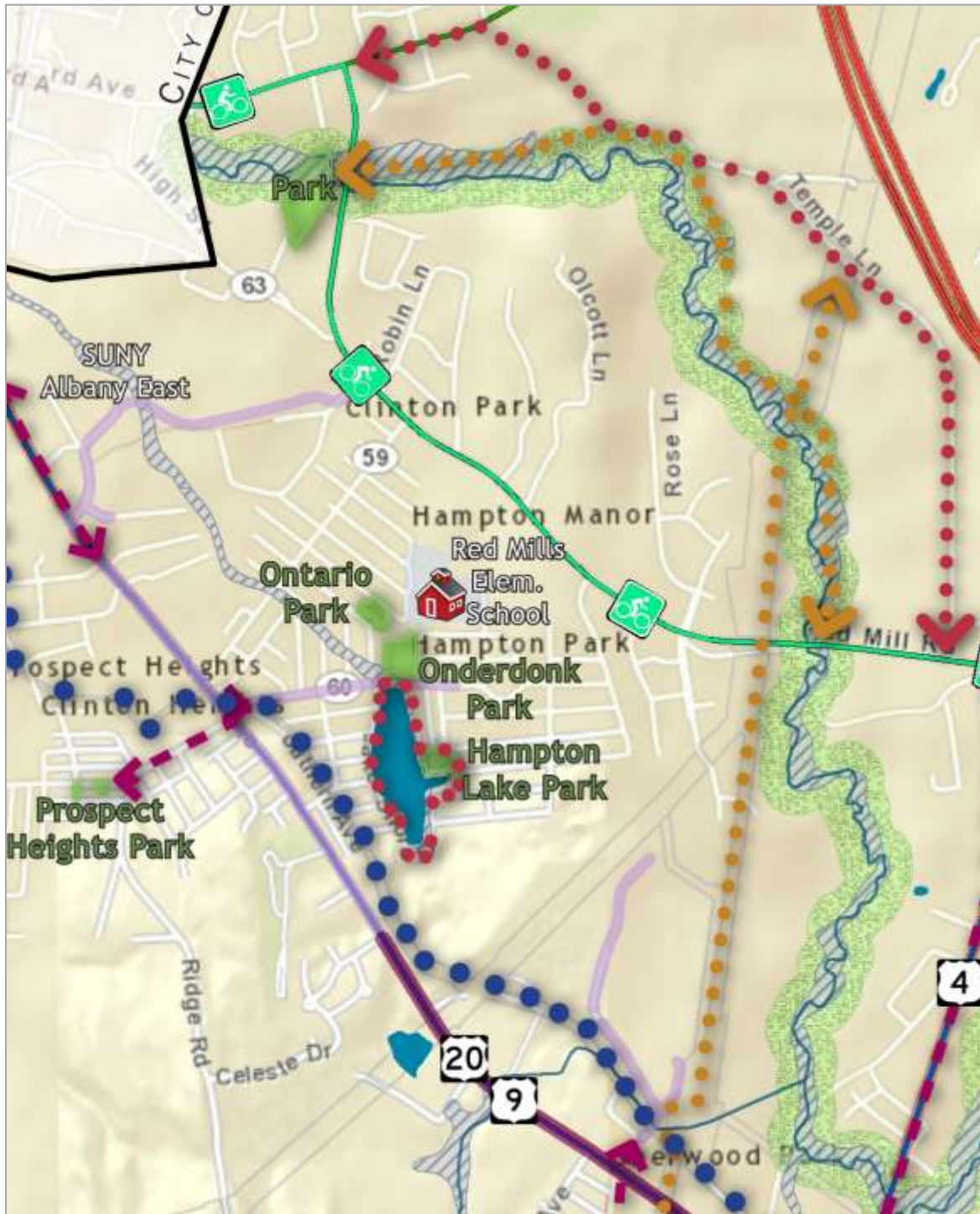




*Lakeshore Drive, Hampton Lake: Existing photo (top) of the road commonly used by area residents for walking along the water. A photo-simulation (bottom) of what a dedicated multi-use path around the lake might look like.*



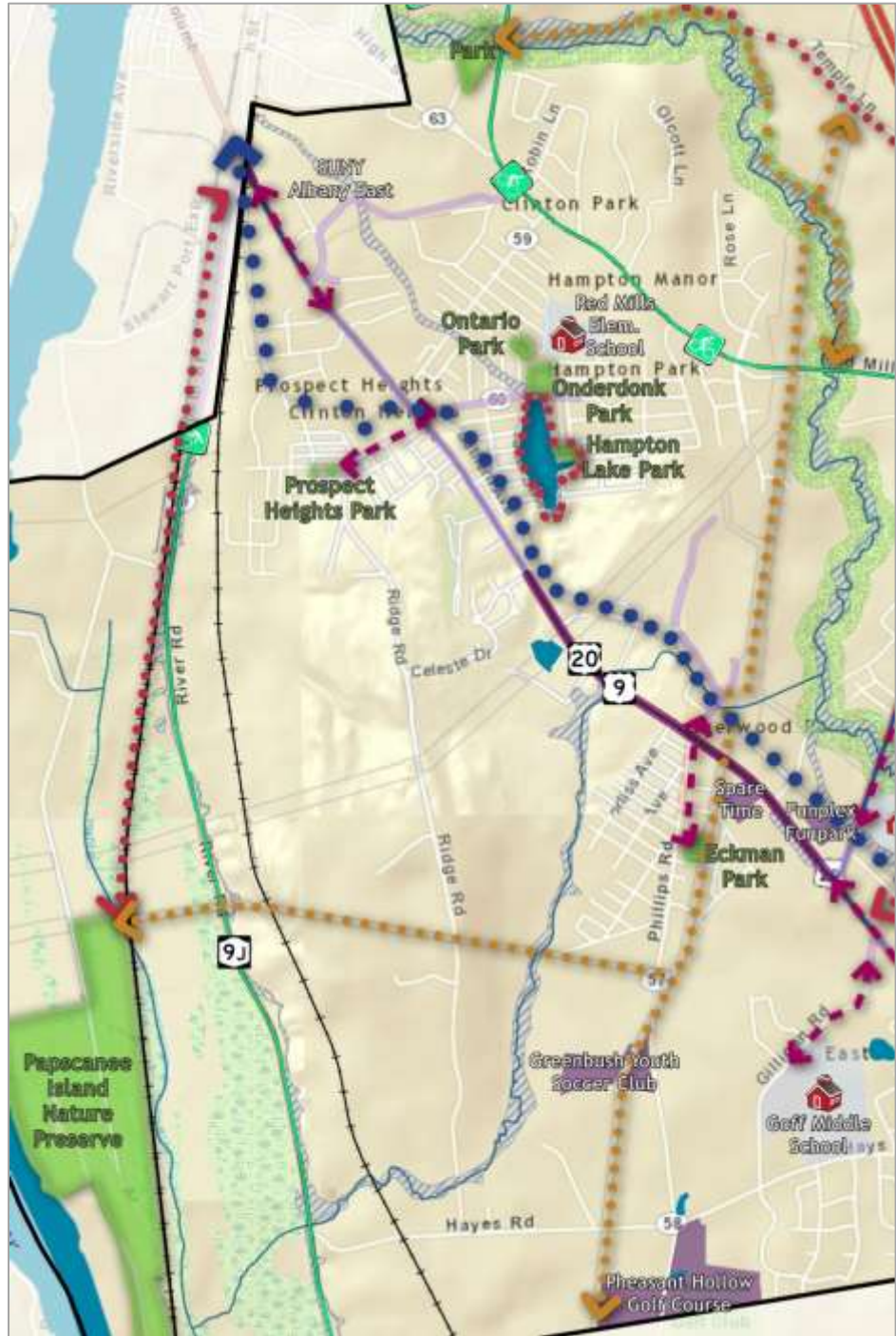
- Create a multi-use trail adjacent to Tempel Lane: Possibly as part of a development amenity, a multi-use trail could be constructed along the length of Tempel Lane—linking the Couse Corners area to the town's northern neighborhoods. In addition, with potential bicycle improvements along Route 151, a bicycle loop trail would effectively be created. Such a trail would most likely be developed in cooperation with developers seeking to develop this site.



*Detail of Amenities Vision Map: Potential multi-use paths created along Tempel Lane and around Hampton Lake (red dots), along utility corridors and the Mill Creek (yellow dots), and along the Albany-Hudson Rail Line (blue dots).*



- Create a multi-use trail connection between Papscanee Island and the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail: The Rensselaer County trail vision map indicates a desired trail paralleling the Hudson River, which would incorporate existing trails located within the Papscanee Island Nature Preserve, and would eventually link up with the future Albany-Hudson Electric Trail. A trail connection north of the preserve could be completed along easements paralleling the active rail line and/or along existing road right-of-ways. The northern-most portion of this connector trail would be located within the City of Rensselaer and could be an opportunity for inter-municipal cooperation.



*Utility Corridors. Potential locations for multi-use trail connections to Papscanee Island can be made along north-south and east-west utility corridors, such as those shown in yellow dots above, and a continuation of the proposed Rensselaer waterfront trail system.*

## Nature Trails

Currently within the town there is a series of hiking/nature trails located inside the East Greenbush Town Park, and within the Papscanee Island Nature Preserve, however these trails are internalized to their park boundaries only. Ideally, these nature trails should be connected to a larger network. There is also the potential to expand with additional nature trail locations to provide more variety and showcase other scenic natural areas which the town has to offer.



### Recommended Actions:

- Create an accessible nature trail within the Town Park:** At the north end of the Town Park is Challenger Park, a newly constructed softball and playfield for those with special needs. At present, the only way to access this park is by vehicle from Luther Road, and there are no direct links between this park and related activities of the adjacent Town Park. It is recommended that the existing nature trail system of the Town Park could be expanded to include an ADA compliant trail that links these two adjacent facilities together.
- Create a nature trail (or trail network) within the Tempel Lane area:** There is an opportunity to have nature trails created along the Mill Creek, particularly in the area south of Tempel Lane. Construction of these trails could be included as part of an amenities package when the property—formerly referred to as Tempel Farm—is developed under a future PDD. In addition to the Mill Creek corridor, there is also the opportunity in this area to create small nature loops in the wooded areas and potentially utilize the nearby National Grid power line corridor (see below).
- Seek approval from National Grid to create trails along power line corridors:** There are four significant power line corridors traversing the Town of East Greenbush. These corridors are clear of trees and brush and many have access roads and/or paths. The town could

*Bog Meadow Brook Nature Trail. This trail system, constructed and maintained by volunteers, extends through two miles of diverse wetland ecology, featuring a variety of wildlife, flora and picturesque views with educational signage.*



*Mill Creek. The Mill Creek, which winds its way through town, has a number of stretches which could be an ideal setting for a relaxing nature trail system along the water.*





*Mill Creek. Another view of the Mill Creek.*



**Utility Corridors.** *Utility corridors, such as the one shown here crossing the Mill Creek, offer the unique advantage of creating a long, uninterrupted path of land in single ownership – a key component of trail systems.*



*Trail and bridge example in nearby Clifton Park.*

coordinate with National Grid to open up some of these corridors to pedestrian, mountain bike, cross-country ski, and/or horse riding uses. Key corridors for connections to important town features are shown on the Linkages Vision Map.

- Create trails/access points along the Mill Creek corridor: While the Tempel Lane area would present an excellent access point to the Mill Creek, the town should also look for other opportunities to provide access to and from the Mill Creek corridor. Ideally, these access points should be from town owned land—one example of this would be the town-owned property just on the west side of Route 151 where it crosses the waterway—or provided as a development amenity as part of larger projects. The majority of the Mill Creek itself, however, passes through many privately-owned lands, and would likely require easements to connect distant portions and access points.



*The Lake George Bike Path, shown above, runs along a National Grid electric transmission line. © Adirondack North Country Association, Scenic Byways*

### Short, Medium & Long-Term Priority Linkages

Listed below is a summary of the Linkage recommendations. Short-term priority items are those which the Town should consider actively planning and seeking funding for presently. Medium and longer-term items are those which the Town should consider planning and funding for over the next four to ten years. Conditional / ongoing items are those which are likely conditional on development projects happening in specific areas, or those which will require an ongoing effort over time to coordinate.



<b>Short-Term Priority Linkages</b>	
1	Segment One of the proposed Albany-Hudson Electric Trail (Feasibility Report)
2	Infill sidewalk gaps along Route 9/20 (pages 30, 31)
3	Hampton Lake Loop Road / Pedestrian Esplanade (pages 35, 36)
4	Sidewalk and crossing connection between Prospect Heights and Hampton Manor (page 32)
<b>Medium and Longer-Term Linkages</b>	
5	Sidewalks linking Goff Middle School to Route 9/20 and Albany-Hudson Electric Trail (page 32)
6	Sidewalks along Route 4 from Columbia Turnpike to Couse Corners (page 31)
7	Sidewalks from Couse Corners to Columbia High School (page 31)
8	Sidewalks along Community Way and Commons Drive, YMCA, Library (page 31)
9	Improved signage/marketing system along State Bike Route 151 and 9J (page 32)
10	Trail linking Albany-Hudson Electric Trail to Town Park (page 34)
11	Sidewalks linking Eckman Park to Route 9/20 & Albany-Hudson Electric Trail (page 32)
12	Nature Trail connection between Town Park and Challenger Park (page 40)
<b>Conditional / Ongoing Linkages</b>	
14	Multi-use trail along Tempel Lane (page 37)
15	Nature Trails / Public Access along Mill Creek in Tempel Lane area (page 40)
16	Multi-use trails along Michael Road & Elliot Road (page 34)
17	Agreements with National Grid for multi-use trails within utility corridors (page 41)
13	Multi-use trail link between Papscanee Island and Albany-Hudson Electric Trail (page 39)

## C. New Amenities and Opportunity Areas

In addition to the various parks and trails proposed to be made available to the residents of East Greenbush, other recreational amenities and opportunities have been discussed, and are further described below.

### Columbia Turnpike - Creative Placemaking

As the town continues to grow and develop, particularly around the main nodes of development along Columbia Turnpike, there is an opportunity to plan and foster a more attractive approach to traditional commercial development. The standard retail development model, often consisting of a “single use” big-box store with acres of parking in front, does not lend itself to creating an attractive community where people wish to live or shop. Instead, successful placemaking can be better achieved by planning a variety of uses around a site, often around a common public space such as a park or town green. These designs are often visually geared toward pedestrians, with parking broken up into smaller segments, and create a “sense of place”.



*Existing Development:* The standard retail development model, shown above, does not create attractive places to shop or work.

The Town of East Greenbush should consider pursuing this enhanced design approach for future development projects to promote a higher quality of design that can become a community amenity. Examples of successful approaches can be found in recent commercial development around the country that have seen the benefit of an enriched design.



*Design Concepts:* "Kentlands", Gaithersburg, MD (above-left), "Glassworks Village", Guilderland, NY (above-right) are other examples of commercial retail and office developments designed to frame attractive outdoor spaces.

Such developments can be achieved in a variety of ways. As a starting point, many communities develop basic design guidelines or standards which can be used to direct the type of commercial and residential design features and aesthetic appeal that is desired. This can include basic site planning guidelines, and standards for parking and landscaping. Other communities prefer to work with an independent designer or planner to review design proposals as they come in to identify improvements. A more pro-active approach—which is often much more successful—is to identify key properties or areas within the town which are anticipated for (re)development, and prepare some basic conceptual design plans for how it can be developed to meet the desired vision of the town. As an example of this



approach, conceptual design plans were developed as part of the first Amenities Plan in 2011 for the Mill Creek / Tempel Lane area of East Greenbush. These conceptual plans looked at different possible commercial and residential development arrangements which could also incorporate trails, public greenspace and other amenities like a music amphitheater or a golf course, as illustrated below. The property offered a unique opportunity for the town to promote some recreational amenities which could be integrated into the future development plans, creating a richer and more diverse place to live, work and shop. Some of these amenities, such as the multi-use path along Tempel Lane, or the nature trail along the Mill Creek, have been discussed previously in the Linkages section of this document. These types of improvements would enhance the desirability of the development and promote more visitors to the property, as well as providing a public amenity. Although these specific design concepts were not ultimately chosen, it is important for the town to consider what vision it wants before it is reacting to a formal development proposal. This approach allows them to be better prepared to discuss ideas and options.



*Mill Creek/Tempel Lane - Concept Plans: Alternative concept plans for this area included a pedestrian-oriented shopping boulevard which looks out over an attractive park along the Mill Creek, a walkable mix of retail, office, hotel and restaurant development and a music amphitheater with individual parking areas placed behind the buildings.*

Similar pro-active design concepts could be developed for other important areas within the town, such as the older node of historic hamlet development around the Hampton Lake neighborhood. This older neighborhood is unique because of its close proximity to Route 9/20, relatively dense residential development pattern and strong potential for commercial redevelopment of the former K-Mart Plaza, now vacant. At the center of this area is the Town of East Greenbush Town Hall, with many potential design possibilities to create a more walkable and livable mixed-use environment.





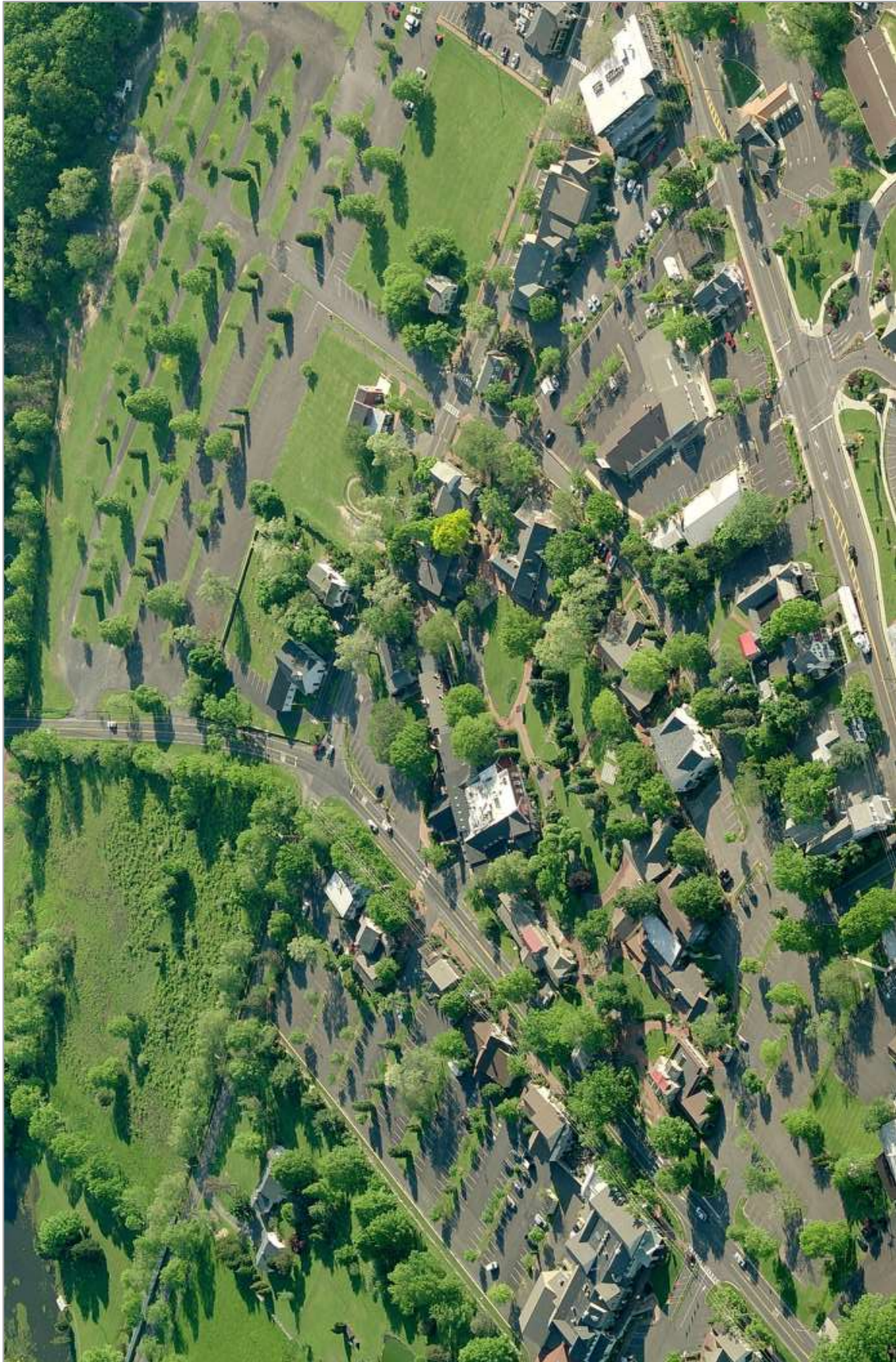
**Potential to Consider:** The neighborhood around Hampton Lake, surrounded by older denser residential neighborhoods, has unique potential to benefit from a redevelopment concept plan which could re-envision the former K-Mart plaza as the centerpiece of a more walkable local community connected by trails and paths to Town Hall and other important community destinations.



**Alternative Development Designs:** Other development models, such as Woodbury Commons (above), Mizner Park (below-left) or Ridge Hill (below-right), focus on creating attractive outdoor spaces which are pedestrian friendly and integrate natural landscaping or parks into their design. This approach makes the development an attractive shopping destination.







**Peddler's Village:** This popular shopping destination in New Hope, PA uses a cluster of buildings arranged around a small central park square to create an attractive outdoor space. The peak overflow parking areas, seen in the upper-right corner of the photo, are "green" parking lots used during the busiest weeks and holidays while remaining lawn and trees during the remainder of the year.

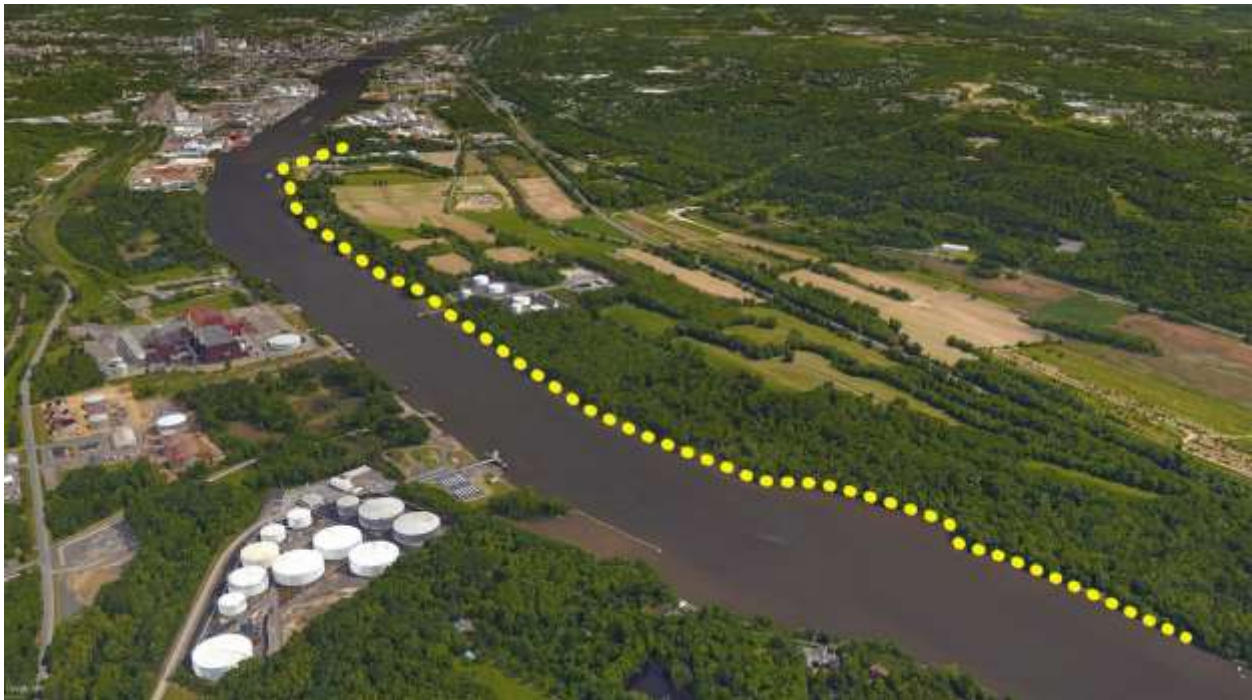


## Hudson River Waterfront

Another notable opportunity area within the Town of East Greenbush is the substantial frontage it provides along the east bank of the Hudson River. Unfortunately, industrial development along this waterfront over many decades has precluded much of it from being accessible to the general public, and as a result it does not get utilized or enjoyed to the extent it should.

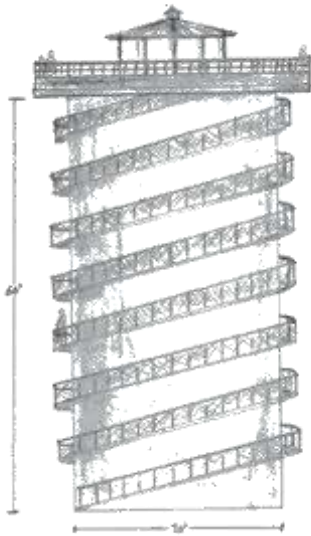
Over the years however, different re-development proposals along the river have hinted that some non-industrial uses are now seeking to take advantage of this scenic waterfront location. Notably, a recent proposal to develop a boat marina on the bank of the river presents a recreational opportunity for the town. It is recommended that the town work with the developer to include an area for public access to the water as part of any approved design plan. This access could include a small waterfront park, and/or a public boat launch slip adjacent to the marina for general access. Future development proposals along the water should be required to incorporate similar access where possible, such as an esplanade or multi-use trail along the water. The Town of East Greenbush zoning, when updated in 2008, included a requirement for new development to include waterfront access and esplanade along the Hudson River to help establish a continuous trail from Papscaene Park up to the City of Rensselaer, where it can connect with the Hudson Riverfront Trail. This provision has not yet been implemented, but should be leveraged with future waterfront development proposals.

Notably, the southern end of the proposed Rensselaer waterfront trail would terminate at a small pocket park, less than a half-mile from the town boundary. The town should ultimately seek to coordinate with the city and connect to this southern terminus to link these networks together.



## Water Tower Property

Not far from Town Hall, on the west side of Columbia Turnpike, an old water tower sits on the hill surrounded by the residential neighborhood of Prospect Heights. Sheilded from view by trees and unknown by many people, this town-owned property has remained vacant for some time, and could present some adaptive-reuse opportunities. The top of this hill provides excellent views of Albany and the surrounding area despite being largely overgrown. With some cleanup and maintenance, the property could be adapted to become a more formal scenic lookout as part of a short local hiking trail.



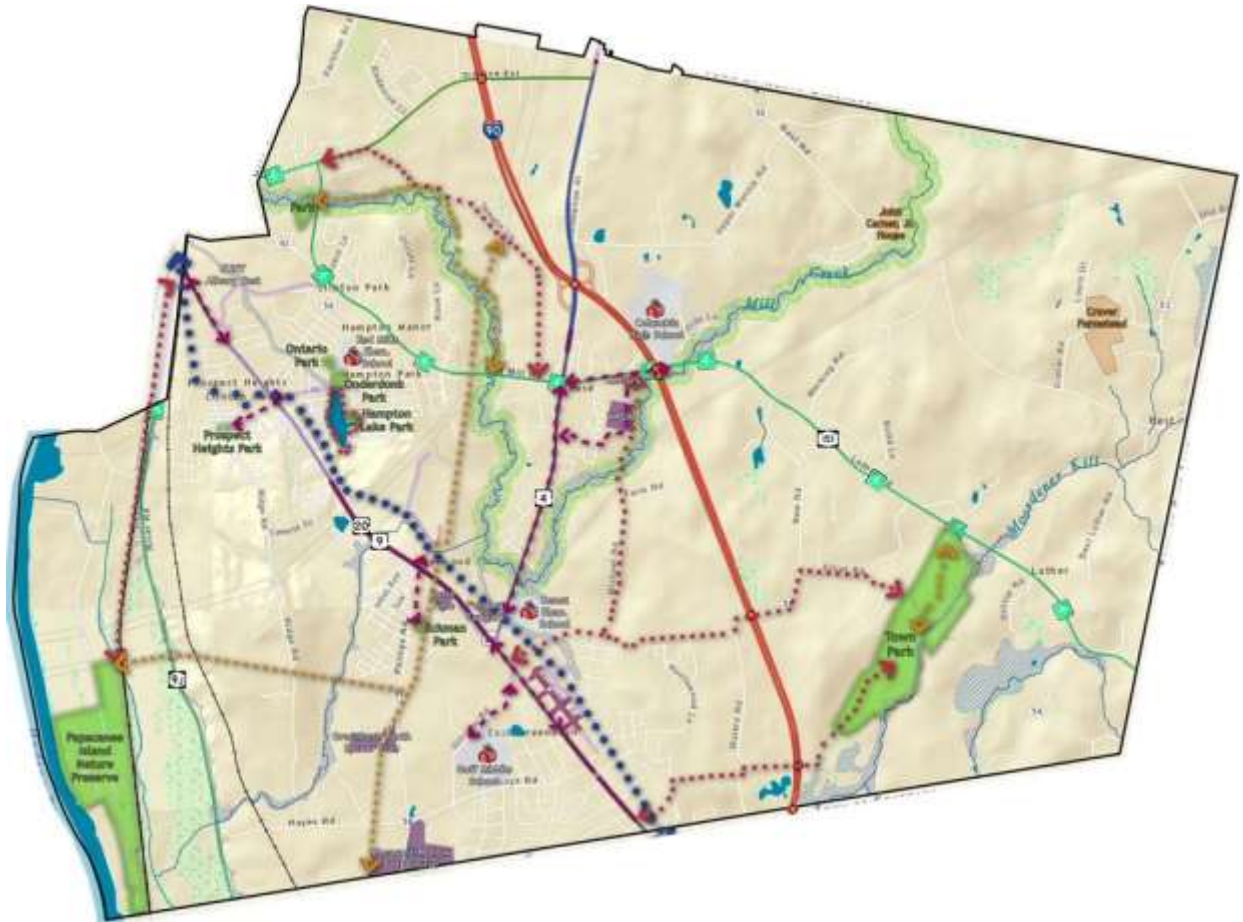
**Adaptive Reuse:** The existing water tower property, located at the top of the hill, provides excellent views of the Albany skyline and surrounding area. The water tower structure itself could be kept to remain and adaptively reused, as illustrated in the concept sketch above, or replaced with a viewing platform that includes interpretive maps and historical photos of the visible surroundings.



**Existing Watertower:** The existing water tower property, outlined here, could be adapted for a more formal recreational use.

### D. Linkages Vision Map

The Linkages Vision Map provided on the next page outlines the potential network of sidewalk improvements, multi-use paths and trails proposed to be created over the long term growth and development of East Greenbush. This map should be used as a blueprint guide by town officials for long-term planning, discussions with developers and grant applications.





## PART THREE - IMPLEMENTATION

### A. General Recommendations

#### Town Code Modifications

**Planned Development District Amendments.** The process of creating an amenities plan for the town highlighted the need for the town to be able to modify approved, but un-built, planned development districts so that the elements of this plan can appropriately be included. Amending the town code to address this need is very important. Some of the more noteworthy elements for an update to this zoning chapter would include, but not be limited to, the process by which an unimproved planned development district would be amended, and requiring that the Amenities Plan and Linkages Vision Map be referenced as part of the review. This amendment process would not necessarily have to be initiated by the property owner, but may in some instances be more appropriately led by the town with the cooperation of the owner(s) of the property in the district. This would ensure that new and existing planned development districts help to create local amenities which make the Town of East Greenbush a nicer place to live.

**Site Plan and Subdivision Review.** The Amenities Plan and Linkages Vision Map should be incorporated by reference into these code chapters to enable the Planning Board to consider them as part of the standard review process.

**Recreation Fees.** It is likely that much of the new residential growth that will be proposed in the town will be more of a compact, attached or multi-family type of arrangement. Given the fact that the recreation needs of development will be a future cost burden to the town, it is important that the fee level is reviewed every two or three years to ensure that it is sufficient to provide for the future needs of residents.

**Use and Familiarity with the Linkages Vision Map.** The Town Board and Planning Board members should become familiar with the conceptual network of the Linkages Vision Map included with this document, and make it a common reference document as part of the regular development review process. The Linkages Vision Map could be included as part of a development review checklist, and/or formally adopted as an amendment to the Town Zoning Map. These steps would help the town staff and public have advance knowledge of the areas in town where long-term connections are envisioned. As new development is proposed in different areas, the town staff can then work with the applicants at the very early design stages to see how these elements could be incorporated into the project. (See 'How To Use This Plan' found under Part One: Project Introduction.)

**Long-term Capital Planning.** The Town of East Greenbush should attempt to, where feasible, include these recommended improvements into their long-term capital planning efforts. This will assist the town in being better prepared to fund and maintain select items as they are developed.

## Partnering with Business and Community Organizations



This plan offers several opportunities to expand the partnership between the town and local businesses and community organizations:

**"Adopt-a-trail".** As the town expands its bike and pedestrian path system, this creates an opportunity for community organizations to participate in pathway maintenance and beautification. Construction of nature paths are great projects for Eagle Scout projects, for example. The opportunities for participation are tremendous.

**Business sponsorships.** Historically, business leaders have been our nation's great philanthropists—building libraries, creating park systems, and so many other amenities which have made our communities and our nation what it is today. Many parks have "Friends of" organizations that support park activities, build advocacy for park needs, and raise funds for park projects. For example, Brooklyn's Prospect Park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, is supported by the Prospect Park Alliance, a non-profit organization whose supporters include Con Edison, Macy's, and Hess Corporation. Businesses can support specific events and facilities—from Target Field in Minneapolis to the Times Union Center in Albany. In East Greenbush, the existing parks and newly planned amenities offer expanding opportunities for business sponsorships.

**Community organizations.** Several organizations are natural partners for this plan. Below are just a few examples:

- Community Gardens—Capital District Community Gardens - [www.cdccg.org](http://www.cdccg.org)
- Land Preservation—Rensselaer Land Trust - [www.renstrust.org](http://www.renstrust.org)
- Bicycling—Mohawk Hudson Cycling Club - [www.webmhcc.org](http://www.webmhcc.org)

## Potential Grant Funding Sources

- NYS Consolidated Funding Opportunities - [www.nyworks.ny.gov](http://www.nyworks.ny.gov)
  - NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation; Parks Program
  - EPF; Park Acquisition, Development and Planning Program
  - EPF; Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
  - Cleaner, Greener Communities Regional Sustainability Planning Program
- National Park Service; Land & Water Conservation Fund - [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)
- The Kodak American Greenways Program - [www.conservationfund.org](http://www.conservationfund.org)
- Bikes Belong Coalition - [www.bikesbelong.org](http://www.bikesbelong.org)
- National Trails Fund - [www.americanhiking.org](http://www.americanhiking.org)

## B. How to Move Forward

The various recommendations of this plan have been broken down in order to identify specific tasks and ongoing efforts for which each department can be responsible.

### Supervisor and Town Board

- Establish and promote an "*East Greenbush Parks Day*" or similar annual event, to begin next year for sufficient planning and preparation time.
- Modifications to Planned Development District and Site Plan Review sections of the zoning code.
- Meet with University of Albany East Campus and the local Library, YMCA, Eddy Center and high school officials to review Linkage Vision Map and discuss options on completing sidewalk connections through each of their campuses.
- Meet with select landowners along Hudson River and Tempel Lane to discuss long-term planning and economic development strategies the town would like to see approved in these areas, including amenities recommended in this plan.
- Assist the Parks Department with outreach to local businesses, community associations and volunteer groups about upcoming park improvement endeavors.
- Continued outreach to National Grid for negotiations on the use of certain utility corridors for multi-use trails.
- Secure corporate partners to help implement the amenities plan.

### Planning Department

- Review and become familiar with long-term linkage vision paths proposed through town, and how these might be incorporated into, or funded by, nearby development projects.
- Begin public outreach to Hampton Lake area residents about potential loop path around lake, such as a survey or questionnaire, followed up by more formal public workshops and eventually design meetings.
- Begin outreach to property owners southwest of Town Park about potential for multi-use trail connection from Greenwood Drive into the park.
- Regularly check grant funding sources for relevant application openings.
- Grant funding for Town Park restrooms and water remediation.
- Grant funding for first segment of Albany-Hudson Electric Trail.
- Grant funding for tennis or basketball court repairs.
- Grant funding and discussions with NYSDOT for Bike Route improvements.
- Grant funding for new pavilion or swimming pool at Town Park.

### Planning Board

- Review and become familiar with long-term linkage paths proposed through town, and how these might be incorporated into, or funded by, nearby development projects.
- Review upcoming development proposals with an eye toward how they may—or may not be—suitable for incorporating or funding amenities desired by the town.



- Review current Recreation and Amenities Fee rates to determine if they are sufficient to meet the existing and proposed needs of the town.

#### Parks Department

- Begin planning, organizing, seeking sponsors and donations for an "East Greenbush Parks Day" type event, approximately one year in advance.
- Assist Planning Department with grant research.

#### Department of Public Works

- Investigate and/or survey roadside areas identified for infill sidewalks, sidewalk repairs and new sidewalks.
- Investigate and survey perimeter of Lakeshore Drive, through and around Hampton Lake Park, in preparation for improvements and public workshops.
- Identify underground utilities which are likely to be in need of replacement which may require sidewalk reconstruction, or which provide opportunities for new sidewalks.

## C. Conclusion

Opportunity is only as good as what we make of it. The Town of East Greenbush has been blessed with many resources, including: good people; great location; and several natural and man-made assets. This plan outlines a number of potential projects that if carried out, either individually or collectively, will ultimately make the town a better place to live and create lasting value for the entire community. This plan was not intended to divert attention from existing facilities, but to strengthen them and provide a long-term blueprint for a much larger idea that could ultimately be a great asset to the town. If the community supports the ideas outlined in the plan, and acts to put into place these projects, the system of trails and parks will increasingly become a source of great pride and enjoyment for current and future generations.

*"The purpose of life is to contribute in some way to making things better."*

-Robert F. Kennedy

## PART FOUR - APPENDIX

### Previous Findings

Public Comment Notes - May 23, 2011

Public Comment Notes - December 7th, 2011

Existing Parks - Field Investigation Notes

Technical Services Quote - Water Testing or Moordener Creek

Materials Quote - Prefabricated Restroom Structure at Town Park

## Previous Findings

Important for the basis of this work are the previous findings and recommendations for related activities throughout the town, as well as those of adjacent municipalities. During the course of this project, the knowledge and recommendations of several related reports were sought out for input and coordination. Where relevant, their specific ideas were integrated into the recommendations of this document in order to maintain continuity and a larger-scale coordination of efforts, or noted as supporting evidence for their need.

The more general recommendations of these works have been summarized below, where they are relevant as supporting documentation.

### **2002 Town of East Greenbush - Parks & Recreation Master Plan**

- This plan noted that the growth of recreational areas within the town has not kept pace with the growth of population. It noted that the town falls short of the National Parks, Recreation and Open Space standards of providing 10 acres of recreational land or facilities for every 1,000 residents, however it did meet the State standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents.
- The Parks and Recreation User Survey noted that the top three priority areas for recreational improvements are: improved swimming facilities; improved park system signage; and more trails for hiking and biking.

### **2005 Community Survey**

- In 2005, a community survey was mailed out to 5,000 households, of which 1,184 responded.
- 76% of respondents agreed that the town should enhance the ability for bicyclists and pedestrians to safely and easily get around town through multi-purpose connections such as trails, sidewalks and bike paths.

### **2006 Town of East Greenbush - Land Use Plan Update**

- The Land Use Plan recommended that the Town of East Greenbush develop a "trails network Master Plan" for the long-term planning of multi-use paths and trails throughout the town as it develops over time.
- This document recommended that public recreational access be provided to the Hudson River waterfront.

### **2006 Route 4 Corridor Study**

- This report recommended the creation of an interconnected path system for safe biking and walking along Route 4 and Michael Road leading to the YMCA, Library and other key points.
- Recommended that the town provide alternatives for pedestrians including trail, sidewalks, and appropriate road crossings as intersections.

### **2009 Trail Vision Plan for Rensselaer County**

- This document outlined ten potential trails which are in various stages of visioning or development throughout the Rensselaer County region which may be connected to as part of a



larger multi-town network. Of these, the proposed Albany-Hudson Electric Trail and a Hudson River Trail would pass directly through the Town of East Greenbush.

**2009 Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

- The 2009 GEIS noted in the Existing & Projected Recreational Facility Needs Assessment that the town falls short of meeting the recreational needs of the residents in both land area, number and variety of facilities. The town would require at least 4 additional tennis courts, 4 additional basketball courts as well as a significant amount of open recreational space.
- The projected population increases for the town indicate that this shortfall will only worsen if new recreation elements are not created.
- The Impact Statement noted that recreational improvements would increase the quality of life for residents as well as help attract future commercial development and employees.
- Recent zoning changes for the R-3 Residential District which incentivize open space and recreational amenities has been a positive step forward.
- The Report recommended several linkage improvements, including the addition of bike lanes and sidewalks along important routes such as Route 4, Route 151 and Routes 9/20.

**2011 Albany-Hudson Electric Trail Feasibility Study**

- The feasibility report, which covers a potential trail area extending from Nassau, through Schodack and East Greenbush, identified the segment from the Schodack town line to Route 4 as a first priority stage.

**2011 City of Rensselaer Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)**

- The City of Rensselaer developed this LWRP as a future design plan to revitalize its waterfront area along the Hudson River. This plan included the development of a continuous park and waterfront trail along the Hudson just north of the East Greenbush border.
- The Port Area Overlook proposed at the southernmost terminus of the waterfront trail could be connected to the larger East Greenbush network of linkages.

## Public Comments

Two public workshops were conducted during the course of this project to invite the public to make comments and recommendations toward the Amenities Plan. The first public workshop was held at the beginning of the project, in May of 2011. Many of the ideas and concerns gathered during this workshop were then used as a starting point for some of the work going forward. After initial design ideas were developed, a second public workshop was held in December of 2011 to present the Draft Recommendations, and solicit additional feedback. The comments and questions received during each of these events are outlined below for reference.

### May 2011 Workshop Notes

At the beginning of the workshop, a short presentation was given which gave some background on the project, and the goals for moving forward. The Town of East Greenbush has received funds to plan and develop a Recreational Amenities Plan for the use and enjoyment of local residents. The plan is expected to identify new or improved local recreational facilities and to develop a network of trails/bike paths. Once a plan is developed, it is expected that future commercial and residential development projects coming to the Town of East Greenbush would be required to contribute toward the plan through the use of on-site amenities or funds toward these goals. The purpose of the workshop was to gather ideas from local residents on what they would like to see included in the plan.

Albany Trolley Trail - this is a separate but related project to convert the old Albany-Hudson Electric Trolley line (now abandoned) into a multi-purpose trail/bike path. There is currently a study underway to determine the feasibility of doing this. The work of this project would try to parallel with this concept and build off of it, expanding trails/bike paths and similar pedestrian connections through other areas of town.

The following text outlines the notes of the conversation with those in attendance.

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- There was a question about the use of the term “trail” - does this mean only a path through the woods? It was explained that the use of the term trail was used here to mean any type of pedestrian or bike connection for recreational use. This could be a new sidewalk along a street, a new bike path on the road, a new bike path off the road, a jogging path or a walking trail which connects residents to areas of interest around town.
- It was suggested that the project should not ignore the existing Route 9 corridor for sidewalk/pedestrian improvements.
- The idea is to connect communities together, link residential areas to places where people/families want to go such as parks, schools, etc. For example - providing children a safe way to walk from home to school or the YMCA without having to walk or bike along a busy road.
- It was suggested that, despite efforts to preserve/protect natural areas in the town, we should still leave areas for future development so that the town can still grow.
- It was suggested that the Town already has a number of parks, but that their upkeep and maintenance has been an issue. It was suggested that steps should be taken to help improve these existing facilities before new ones are added.

- Much of the discussion centered on the existing parks and their need for upgrades. It was questioned if adding new trails or connections would drain existing resources to maintain existing facilities. This is something that should be taken into consideration.
- Could conservation districts be used as part of this plan? This could be looked into.
- A number of people suggested that additional thought should be given to the Route 9/20 corridor for improved pedestrian/bike links.
- The possible trail along the old electric trolley line was viewed favorably. Perhaps a first section, from the Post Office on Greenwood Drive to Genet Elementary School, would be relatively easy one to accomplish and would have a big positive impact (allow kids to walk to school). Crossing of Elliot Rd. would need to be worked out but otherwise this section would be easy to complete.
- Route 4 is not pedestrian or bike friendly - either this should be improved, or alternate/parallel routes should be investigated.
- Post office near greenwood would be a good place to make a connection to. There is a National Grid ROW for power lines - could this be used as a trail? This can be investigated further.
- There are places along the Mill Creek which are very nice - would provide an excellent walking trail in the summer, despite difficult terrain however.
- Albany-Hudson Electric trolley line conversion. Although this is a separate project, it is expected that this trail - if built - could act as a major north-south “spine” to a larger community network.
- Traffic on Elliot Road is an issue - very narrow and cars can go rather fast. Not really safe for walking or biking. This could be looked into further. Crossing here is a possible problem.
- Discussion on the Town Park - There are 1 ½ to 2 miles of trails in the Town Park off of Town Park Road (Matt has GPS data for these trails). The Town Park also has a dog park area (could be spruced up) and a nice little waterfall on the Moordener Kill. Used to be able to swim here too - should bring that back. A lot of people do not know what is available at the Town Park.
  - Is it possible to keep 4-wheelers out of the park?
  - Swimming currently isn’t allowed in the water here due to water quality concerns.
  - It was suggested that the softball field could be converted into an amphitheater for special events.
  - There is a water/drainage issue in Town Park. Fix drainage and sand into lake.
  - Idea of a trail connection under I-90 - utilizing Greenwood Drive Extension - that would link the Town Park to the more populous western part of town was considered very desirable.
- Suggested upgrades for the Town Park
  - Improve the beach front, clean up the water again for swimming, restore access to the water.



- Provide new restrooms - the existing ones are in poor shape.
  - There are a number of suggested improvements in the latest Town Park Master Plan.
  - What about a grant for a new swimming pool?
  - Currently has about 2 miles of trails. More trails could be developed.
  - Should add a new pavilion on the lower side of the park, nearer to the water.
  - Could add sensory/community gardens.
  - Playground equipment could be upgraded. Currently there are no shade trees in this area. A place for parents/counselors to sit in the shade near the playground would help.
  - Spruce up the dog park.
  - Use upper pavilion for winter sledding
- Existing neighborhood parks could use attention - for example, the basketball nets at Eckman Park were removed but not yet replaced.
  - There is an important pedestrian connection that should be made between Prospect Heights Park and the surrounding neighborhood on the west side of Route 9, to Ontario Park, Red Mills Elementary School, Onderdonk Park, Hampton Lake Park and the surrounding neighborhood on the east side of Route 9. Improving this link and making it safe for pedestrians would greatly benefit the residents of these neighborhoods. Safe Route 9 crossing is the key challenge. Also, sidewalk system is not complete.
  - Check the 2002 Parks & Recreation Plan for more details on the Hampton Lake area.
  - There is also an historic area next to Red Mills Elementary School - Cantonment Farms - that could be made more accessible to students and residents. Learn about East Greenbush history.
  - Suggestion to locate a skate park on the Town owned land off of Barrack Road.
  - There was a question about whether the electric trolley line actually extends toward the Route 9J waterfront area as shown on our map. It appears to extend down toward the water some distance, but where it exactly ends is unclear.
  - The Town owned land on Ridge Road is the Town's transfer station. Not sure what, if anything, else could be located here.
  - Papscanee Island Nature Preserve viewed as an underutilized resource. Could be a nice amenity on the Hudson River. Many local people do not even know that the Papscanee Island Nature Preserve exists, or how to get to it. This could be improved, and included with the plan as a link to the water.
  - There is very little access to the Hudson River in general - this should be improved if possible. Waterfront activities could be provided.
  - Thinking about the waterfront - note that Schodack Island State Park is just a short distance south of the Town along Route 9J.

- There was a 2002 plan developed by LaBerge Group regarding the Lake Shore Drive.
- Route 9J is a great biking corridor which connects to Schodack Park.
- The Ridge Road sidewalk crossing Route 9 - Getting to this crossing is tricky.
- Onerdonk Park is the most well maintained of all the park areas, but it is fenced in and doesn't feel very welcoming.
- Eckman Park - this park has 2 tennis courts, however has no shade trees or benches.
- Challenger Park - located on land adjacent to the Town Park off of Luther Rd. The Town owns more land here than what is shown on the map. Only about a year old, and still under development. Very nice softball field here for Miracle league, Handicapped accessible, 4-season facility. Currently have to drive out of Town Park and down the road to get to Challenger Park. Instead perhaps these two places could be connected internally with a trail/road?
- Wayfinding signage is needed throughout the area to direct people to different places, links. Need to make it easier to find and improve connections to/from other parts of Town. Get signs which say "Welcome to East Greenbush".
- A bike connection from Columbia High School should be incorporated.
- Hampton Lake/Lane - The loop road around lake is often used as a walking/biking loop. Perhaps this could be improved? Road only acts as "one-way" during half the year. Perhaps it could stay one-way all year and leave room for a dedicated path around the loop?
- Southern half of Route 9 - There were plans for major DOT improvements along this route which haven't happened yet. Perhaps some new ideas can be included into these plans?
- It was suggested there should be improved access to FunPlex, Price Chopper and local neighborhoods. Perhaps something can be done with the former McDonald's site?
- Don't forget bus routes and crosswalks along the Route 9 corridor. This main corridor could be improved.
- Should reach out to local volunteer groups, 4H/Girl Scouts for help or assistance with some of these ideas.
- Perhaps there could be a signboard outside Town Hall which can announce special events?
- Maintain the buffer/beautiful entrance along Park Drive.
- Access to the Mill Creek corridor would be good.
- Provide a bike path off the road from Elliot Road to the YMCA and library.
- Provide sidewalk connections from the high school to the Library.
- Create connections to the Town Park located off of Town Park Road.
- Connect the lake and the parks to the nearby school.

- Other ideas discussed: Creation of a Sensory Garden, Community Garden, places to go sledding, Olcott Lane along the Mill Creek corridor, nature camp and boating opportunities.
- Golf course? Located near the John Carner Jr. House on Best Road a possibility.

## December 2011 Workshop Notes

A public workshop was held at the East Greenbush Town Hall on December 7th, 2011 to present draft recommendations on the Amenities Plan. At the beginning of the workshop, a short presentation was given which gave some background on the project, and reviewed most of the draft ideas which were being considered. The following are notes taken of public comments and questions made after that presentation.

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- There was a question about cost analysis of the proposed amenities. It was explained that a cost analysis has not been done at this point, and would be conducted at a later time when the specifics of individual elements have been refined somewhat. Many trail segments are intended to be built through grants, volunteer work and/or constructed as part of private development growth over time. It is unknown which parts the town could be responsible for. Priority elements or segments need to be identified to break the work up into more manageable pieces. Some of this work would be conducted with grant money, stimulus funding and/or volunteer work.
- This work should be included as part capital planning, so that the town can look ahead to what needs to be done and can plan ahead on budget items if possible. Even if a component is built with grant money, it would still require some attention for maintenance, and that would have to be budgeted for.
- Many years ago Town conducted survey to find out what people wanted - a similar approach could be used here to determine what elements should be "priorities" over others. Since the last survey, the internet has grown substantially, and would be a great tool to use for such a purpose.
- Should have a discussion with the Town staff to figure out what the long-term maintenance needs might be of existing and proposed amenities, and how to increase the efficiency of any maintenance needed.
- There was a question about trail safety, patrols and nighttime lighting. The trails would not be lighted, and are not intended to be used at night. Trails and multi-use paths such as these most often have signs at either end which stipulate they are closed from dusk to dawn. Also, they are usually intended for family or group activities where you have adults and children together - generally parents would not suggest that young children use trails alone and unsupervised.
- It was noted that the town already has a golf course. A music amphitheatre would be very nice but it would be a long time out before something like that could be created. Instead, it would make more sense to spend the effort and money really fixing up a few of the neighborhood parks which have fallen into disrepair. Focus attention on one or two parks to make them into a



really GREAT place. That would have a huge impact on improving the adjacent neighborhood overall.

- Could make an event where volunteers and the Town come out for a few days and spend the effort to really transform the park. There are volunteer days already, but this idea could be expanded and enlarged to create a bigger impact and improvement.
- Every year school children in the area are put on busses and sent up to Five-Rivers Environmental Center for a field trip. Would the plan allow for something like that to be created in East Greenbush? It would be great to have something like that locally as a recreational/educational attraction.
- The plan showed sidewalk connection from Prospect Heights over to Hampton Manor neighborhood, but crossing Columbia Turnpike is very dangerous. Parents tell their kids not to go anywhere near it. Concerned that creating these sidewalks will encourage kids to go near or across that road.
- Crossing points over Columbia Turnpike were shown in an area that does not have a traffic signal - should adjust it so that it brings people down to the light instead where it is safer to cross.
- Sidewalks along Goff Middle School should be looked at carefully - there is a rough spot in that area which may not be safe. There was a very bad accident there a few years ago.
- Loop path around Hampton Lake is great - it would get a lot of use and people would love it. It is nice because the guardrail shown in the design would make walking along there much safer, and they would feel safer. Right now when you drive there you are sometimes surprised by people walking in the road, and it is not good.
- There is a great park and trail system up near Blue Creek Middle School and Shaker High School. Gets lots of use, and looks great. Something like that here would be good.
- Playground and park equipment in town has been subject to vandalism and misuse by local kids, littering. How can we ensure that new equipment provided won't get abused also?
- A lot of the equipment in the existing parks is very old, but technology and materials have improved quite a lot in recent years. The Parks Department is constantly getting new equipment catalogs in the mail of new products and materials which are far more durable and vandal resistant than the old products we may have grown up with. Also, much of this equipment is pretty easy to assemble and can be done with volunteer work.
- Improvements to the neighborhood parks could have a blossoming effect. If the tennis courts were improved, then perhaps the tennis program could be re-instituted, which would create some summer jobs and activities. If it was popular again, it would generate money from tennis lessons, and that money could then in turn be put back into the park to make it better.
- Has there been any provision for equestrian activities in the trails / multi-use paths? Equestrian clubs are looking for places to ride - but they aren't always allowed to use certain trails because it damages the trail surface. When they ride on other trails, they must get written approval from each and every property owner they pass through for insurance waivers. On a

long trail this can be a substantial number of property owners, which is difficult and time-consuming. If one property owner says 'no' then the whole trip may be cancelled. Equestrian activities can bring money to the area but they need places to go.

- Horse riding trails were not specifically investigated in the plan, however they would be included, likely as part of nature trails or other trails in more remote areas.
- The surfacing of the trails could be specifically chosen to accommodate horse riding.
- Because some of the trail/path areas are under single ownership (National Grid), would not have same problem of getting permission from hundreds of property owners.
- Equestrian activities may be better suited in some areas than others. May not be as suitable in the denser, urbanized areas, but better suited in more rural settings. Different trail surfacing may be used in different areas to reflect this.
- In general, non-asphalt surfacing on paths is more favorable to hikers.
- When a park or other area is in disrepair, people are more likely to not care about it or treat it with disrespect - vandalize and litter. However, if a neighborhood parks is in excellent shape, people would be more willing to treat them it with respect and take care of it. It is a basic pride of ownership issue. If the parks are greatly improved, littering and vandalism should be less of a problem.
- Arts in the Park is an example of this pride of ownership. Mural done to beautify underpass years ago still remains today and has held up well.

## Existing Parks - Field Investigation Notes

August 4, 2011

Present: Matt Mastin, Cynthia Behan, Jenny Loewenstein, Michael Allen

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### Town Park - Observations/Recommendations

- Water in adjacent river has been deemed contaminated from upstream farming activity - swimming is no longer permitted. Water remediation recommended.
- Public bathrooms near water in poor shape. Step up into restrooms is not ADA compliant, nor are clearances inside. Some doors/locks broken. Could be upgraded.
- Second public restroom structure near dog park is in fair condition, but in remote location. Could be upgraded or replaced in more central location.
- Gravel beachfront could be improved with better sand/erosion control. There was a dock but has apparently been removed due to water quality concerns.
- There is a nice, uniquely designed pavilion near the water. A second one of similar design/size should be added.
- More shade trees should be added in open areas, especially around children's playground where there is no relief from sunlight.
- Volleyball court in poor condition. There is a single basketball hoop along the roadway, but players have to stand in road to use. Addition of a new basketball, tennis and/or volleyball court is recommended.
- Baseball/Softball field in poor condition - could be improved.
- Barrier / warning needed on river to prevent swimmers/boaters from getting near dam?
- Only one trail map evident, which is located at trail head in a remote corner and difficult to find. Additional trail maps could be added near pavilions/ places of congregation so that people can find the trail heads.

### Challenger Park

- Park is construction is currently unfinished - appears to still need: lights on top of poles, bathrooms / concessions.

### Eckman Park

- Tennis court in poor shape - missing or sagging nets, uneven pavement with puddles. If there is demand for tennis court, it should be resurfaced/fixed. Tennis courts might be better suited toward rear of park, opening up front for passive recreation and eliminating tall chain link fence along front of park?
- Playground equipment in decent shape, however sitting on lawn despite having a wooden border around them. Grass areas within border should be replaced by softer impact surface, i.e. sand, mulch, etc.
- Chain link fence surrounding park is not inviting and in state of disrepair. Lower, more decorative fence should be used instead.
- Chain link fence dividing park into two halves does not appear to have a purpose?
- Lack of any shade trees in park. No benches, only one picnic table.



- Basketball court lines need repainting.

#### **Hampton Lake Park**

- Lack of any shade trees in park.
- Chain link fence surrounding park is not welcoming - should be replaced with lower, more decorative fence.
- Recently added gazebo provides only seating - needs more benches/picnic tables.
- Tennis courts in fair condition, but could use resurfacing, line painting.
- Basketball court lacks painted lines.
- No identification sign outside?
- Play area under swingset lacks softer impact surface such as sand/mulch, etc.
- Need for a dock out into water?
- Lawn / shoreline could be improved with better grass and erosion control.
- Parking / paved area may be larger than necessary - could reduce size and replace with landscaping. Add parking stripes.

#### **Hampton Lake Neighborhood - Ring Road**

- Add walking/jogging path around lake - inside perimeter of road. Road may need to be narrowed to accommodate this - could switch travel to one-way.
- Add aeration system to lake to reduce algae.
- Stock lake with fish.

#### **Onderdonk Park**

- Lack of any shade trees in park.
- Chain link fence surrounding park is not welcoming - should be replaced with lower, more decorative fence, at least along public frontages.
- Otherwise park and pavilion appear to be in very good condition.

#### **Ontario Park**

- Park's only feature is full-sized basketball court. Court needs new striping.
- Could benefit from new benches.
- Unused area of park could benefit from some shade trees, picnic tables for passive recreation.

#### **Prospect Heights Park**

- Park's only feature is small, unfinished basketball court - new asphalt and poles, but no backboards, striping or net.
- No shade trees. Add trees, benches or picnic tables for passive rec.
- Play area under swingsets lack softer impact surface such as sand/mulch, etc.
- No identification signage.