

Village of Lansing

# Open Space Protection Plan

Prepared for:  
Village of Lansing  
2405 North Triphammer Road  
Ithaca, New York 14850-1013  
(607) 257-0424



**T R O W B R I D G E & W O L F, L L P**  
Landscape Architects      Planners  
1345 Mecklenburg Road, Ithaca, New York      607-277-1400

26 May 2004

2003023

---

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Project Process .....	1
Goals of the Open Space Protection Plan .....	1
Inventory and Analysis .....	2
Zoning Districts .....	3
Buffers Required by Zoning .....	3
Land Use and Land Cover .....	3
Public Water & Sewer Service .....	4
Soils Related Development Constraints .....	4
Existing Open Space Assets .....	5
Criteria for Prioritizing Lands of Conservation Value .....	5
Areas of High Open Space Value: Ecological Resources .....	6
Areas of High Open Space Value: Scenic, Historic & Cultural Resources .....	7
Priority Open Space Lands .....	8
Protecting Open Space .....	8
Existing Protection Tools .....	8
Wetlands Regulations .....	8
Zoning - Buffer Strips .....	8
Conservation Combining Districts .....	9
Special Permit Review .....	9
Potential Open Space Protection Tools .....	9
Donated Conservation Easements .....	9
Purchased Development Rights .....	10
Land Acquisition .....	10
Changes in Zoning .....	11
Action Plan for Open Space Protection .....	13

## List of Maps

1. Village of Lansing Base Map
2. Digital Orthographic Imagery
3. Zoning Districts
4. Buffers Required by Zoning
5. Land Use & Land Cover
6. Public Water & Sewer Service
7. Soils Related Development Constraints
8. Existing Open Space Assets
9. Existing Open Space
10. Ecological Resources
11. Scenic, Historic & Cultural Resources
12. Areas with Multiple Ecological Resources

---

These maps represent a compilation of graphical and textual information from planimetric base maps and information provided by Village staff. GIS mapping was prepared in conjunction with George R. Frantz, AICP & Associates and the Tompkins County Planning Department GIS Information Technology Services.

## **References**

## **Appendices**

- A. Tompkins County Environmental Management Council Unique Natural Area Descriptions
- B. Open Space Plan Public Survey & Results

---

## Introduction

The purpose of the Village of Lansing Open Space Protection Plan is to serve as a guide for open space protection and preservation in the Village of Lansing. The Open Space Protection Plan examines the community's needs and goals, identifies protected and unprotected open space, and lays out a set of priorities and strategies for preservation. This plan can be used as a tool to assist in land-use planning and policy decisions made by elected and appointed officials of the Village of Lansing, as well as its citizens. The plan identifies open space resources so that Village members can make more informed decisions that will help to preserve the natural and scenic resources that contribute to the quality of life in the Village of Lansing.

## Project Process

A committee was established to oversee and guide development of this plan. The committee assisted with the identification of goals and priorities, and reviewed inventory mapping to ensure accuracy and completeness. All existing open space in the Village was mapped. Criteria were established for prioritizing lands of conservation value, and these were mapped as Areas of High Open Space Value. These areas were further prioritized, resulting in the mapping of Priority Open Space Lands. All preliminary findings were presented to the Village of Lansing Planning Board and at a separate public informational meeting that was advertised in the local newspaper. Surveys were distributed at the public informational meeting and the results of the survey are included in the appendix.

## Goals of the Open Space Protection Plan

Goals and Recommendations for the protection of open space are identified in the Village of Lansing Comprehensive Plan. Goals and Recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan that are specific to open space include the following:

- Encourage plans and programs to protect and enhance the natural environment of the area.
  - The Village should ensure that the quality and quantity of potable water shall not diminish, including protection of well water.
  - The Village should encourage soil conservation and erosion control.
  - The Village should promote proper drainage to prevent flooding.
  - The Village should encourage the preservation of Unique Natural Areas, as well as other areas that enhance the quality of life in the Village.
  
- Maintain the current separation between residential areas on the one hand, and commercial or industrial areas on the other, with consideration of the development plans of neighboring municipalities, in order to produce a satisfying living and working environment, while preserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area.
  - The Village should promote the improvement and maintenance of existing facilities.
  - The Village should promote the planning and development of adequate parks and open space consistent with area facilities for recreation and in accordance with *The Village of*

---

*Lansing Greenway Plan.*

- The Village should promote visual physical buffers to enhance existing and future development in order to provide a harmonious blending of different land uses.
- The Village should promote the identification and preservation of those areas or structures that may be of natural beauty, historical significance or have features unique to the region. The Village should encourage land use that preserves open space on its remaining large parcels.

The 2002 New York State Open Space Conservation Plan prepared by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) identified goals for open space conservation in New York State. Many of the statewide goals are consistent with the goals of the Village of Lansing. They are:

- To protect water quality in the Village, including the quality of surface and underground drinking water supplies and the quality of ponds, wetlands, and streams and coastal waters needed to sustain aquatic ecosystems;
- To provide high quality outdoor recreation, on both land and water, accessible to Village residents regardless of where they live, how much money they have, or their physical abilities;
- To protect and enhance those scenic, historic and cultural resources that are readily identifiable as valued parts of the Village of Lansing;
- To protect habitat for the diversity of plant and animal species to ensure the protection of healthy, viable and sustainable ecosystems, as well as the conservation and preservation of biological diversity within the Village;
- To provide and protect places for education and research on ecological, environmental and appropriate cultural resources in order to better understand the systems from which they derive; and
- To preserve open space, particularly forest lands, for the protection and enhancement of air quality.

## **Inventory and Analysis**

An Inventory and Analysis was performed for the entire Village of Lansing, and includes mapping of current zoning districts and required buffers; land use and land cover; existing and possible future public water and sewer service; soils-related development constraints including wetlands, hydric soils, steep slopes, and important agricultural soils; existing open space assets, including both publicly- and privately-held parks and preserves, as well as Tompkins County Unique Natural Areas; scenic, historic and cultural resources; ecological resources; and lastly, existing and proposed pedestrian, bicycle and transit routes.

The inventory maps provide the basis for identifying priority lands of conservation value.

---

Map #1, Village of Lansing Base Map, illustrates Village boundaries, topography, roads, waterways, and surrounding municipalities. Map #2 is an aerial photograph of the Village of Lansing from 1995, along with the Village boundary. The 2002 aerial photograph was not available due to security concerns. Following is a brief description of each inventory map.

### Zoning Districts

Existing zoning is illustrated on Map #3. The current zoning in the Village of Lansing concentrates commercial development along the Triphammer Road corridor. Moderate- and high-density residential development zones surround the commercial core. The Business and Technology District comprises the easternmost section of the Village and provides for low-density professional office and light industrial development in a suburban setting. The Low Density Residential District on the west side of the Village helps protect the views and natural areas associated with the lake. The intent of this district is to establish standard regulations for the Village in areas where public utilities are limited, and low density, predominantly single family residential development and agriculture are desired as the basic land use pattern.

The current zoning addresses the need for natural resource protection with the overlay combining districts. Some of the combining districts are clearly delineated with a boundary, while others, such as the Conservation Combining Districts (CCDs) are delineated by specific environmental features including steep slopes (15% and greater), Unique Natural Areas (UNA), and streams and drainageways. Development proposed in an overlay combining district requires a special permit and more extensive environmental review. The Unique Natural Area Conservation Combining District requires an erosion control plan, flora and fauna inventory, and wetlands delineation and protection in addition to the special permit and environmental review.

### Buffers Required by Zoning

Map #4 identifies the buffer strips between residential uses and commercial, research, or business and technology uses, as required by the current zoning.

### Land Use and Land Cover

Land Use and Land Cover are illustrated in Map #5. Land use refers to lands that have been built on, developed, or farmed, and includes residential, commercial, and industrial lands, as well as agricultural and park lands. Land cover describes the type of vegetation or natural surface of the land, such as woodland, brush/meadow and grass lands, wetlands, and water bodies.

The mapping of wetlands includes marsh, bog, shrub wetlands, or areas of wetlands that contain grasses, scrub, brush, and are void of tall trees, and wooded areas that show considerable amounts of water beneath the trees, based on the aerial photography. Wetlands smaller than six acres are not documented by NYSDEC. Thus, proposals for development may require field investigation by qualified personnel to determine the presence of smaller wetlands.

---

The mapping shows that a good deal of the Village has been developed, including the commercial development around the Pyramid, Cayuga and Triphammer Malls, business and light industrial development associated with the Cornell Business and Technology Park, and single-family subdivision developments. It should be noted that since the mapping is based on aerial photography, some small residential areas do not show up as developed lands, especially in areas where heavy wooded cover obscures the development on an aerial photograph.

The remaining agricultural lands in the Village of Lansing are within the Sundowns Farm property and along Rte. 34B. Woodlands are concentrated at the edge of Cayuga Lake, along waterways, and along Warren Road and Bomax Drive, which helps serve as a buffer between the Business & Technology and Moderate Density Residential districts. Much of the remaining brush/meadow and grasslands are located in the interior area between North Triphammer and Warren Roads. There are also substantial brush, meadow and grass lands at the corner of Cayuga Heights and Burdick Hill Roads, north of Hickory Hollow Road, and south of Route 13 in the Warren Road area.

It is important to review this map in determining the conservation value of lands within the Village of Lansing. Wetlands and water bodies provide habitat and ecological resource value, as well as scenic value. Woodlands and grasslands also have habitat, scenic, and ecological resource values, as well as buffering characteristics between zoning districts.

### Public Water & Sewer Service

Map #6 shows both the existing domestic water and sanitary sewer service for the Village, as well as possible future extensions. At the time of this report, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Ithaca Area Municipal Wastewater Collection Improvement Project was under public review. The mapping shows possible locations for a future sewer main along the east side of Cayuga Lake. A potential service area has also been identified east of the existing Lansing Trails subdivision, based on proposals that have been made to the Village by developers.

The growth of public infrastructure increases the possibility of new development, and also permits greater density of development.

### Soils Related Development Constraints

Map #7 shows soil types and conditions that could pose limitations to development. Hydric soils and potentially hydric soils can be indicators for wetlands, are characterized by poor bearing capacity, and may have poor suitability for septic systems. These soil characteristics limit certain types of development.

Important agricultural soils are classified according to their suitability for farming. In the Village of Lansing, important agricultural soils predominate in areas that have already undergone development. Remaining undeveloped areas of important agriculture soils are fragmented and are not

---

large enough to support a farming operation. As a result, preservation of agricultural soils in the Village of Lansing would not have practical benefits. Interestingly, Sundowns Farm, the single substantial remaining farm is not classified as having important agricultural soils.

Slopes in excess of 15% have been identified due to their high susceptibility to erosion. The majority of steep areas within the Village are located within Unique Natural Areas. Steep slopes already enjoy some protection in the Village. According to the Steep Slope Conservation District requirements, “development is prohibited on slopes of greater than twenty-five (25%) percent unless the applicant can demonstrate through engineering studies and to the satisfaction of the Planning Board that the proposed development will cause no adverse environmental impact that will not be satisfactorily mitigated.”

### Existing Open Space Assets

Map #8 shows the existing open space assets in the Village including public or private parks and preserves. Several of the Village parks were deeded to the Village through subdivision exactions. The Twin Glens Association Natural Area, a privately held park/preserve, is protected under a joint agreement by the Twin Glens Association. The pond and trail system at the Cornell Business & Technology Park and Sapsucker Woods were identified as open space assets, even though they are on private property, because of their recreation value to the surrounding community.

Transportation systems, such as pedestrian, bicycle, and transit routes have been identified throughout the Village and are shown on Map #8. Also mapped are proposed bicycle lanes and sidewalks that will be a part of the North Triphammer Road Improvements Project. As described in the Greenway Plan, these sidewalks and bikeways will “connect important destinations within the Village,” and are an important component of open space planning. Scenic routes and trails can increase the value of open space because they allow public access to natural areas.

### **Criteria for Prioritizing Lands of Conservation Value**

All existing open space in the Village is illustrated on Map #9 Existing Open Space. All non-developed lands including brush, meadow and grass lands, wetlands, wooded areas, and agricultural lands were categorized as open space. Also identified are existing parks and preserves that are already essentially protected, as well as lands that are currently under review for development. This map is important because it shows remaining open space in the Village that could potentially be developed. These lands are potential areas for protection, and require further assessment.

Given the large area of open space in the Village, criteria needed to be established that could serve as the basis for prioritizing lands to be protected. Criteria for identifying lands of conservation value included the following:

1. Ecological Resources
2. Scenic Resources
3. Historic and Cultural Resources

---

Lands possessing any of these criteria have open space value to the community. Areas possessing the criteria were mapped as Areas of High Open Space Value and are shown on Maps #10 and #11.

Agricultural resources were originally included as a criteria, but upon review of the inventory maps, it was revealed that little of the important agricultural soils were available for farming. Furthermore, farming is no longer an important economic activity in the Village. Therefore, it was agreed that agricultural lands did not represent a realistic priority for conservation in the Village.

### Areas of High Open Space Value: Ecological Resources

Woodlands, wetlands, slopes in excess of 15% and Unique Natural Areas are included in the Areas of High Open Space Value: Ecological Resources. The Tompkins County Unique Natural Areas (UNAs) are sites with outstanding environmental qualities, identified by the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council as deserving special attention for preservation and protection. Designation as a UNA provides no regulatory protection unless a municipality chooses to regulate it. In the Village of Lansing, UNAs are designated as the Unique Natural Area Conservation Combining District. Currently, existing zoning requires proposals located in areas identified as Unique Natural Areas to include application for a Special Permit and requires the Village to conduct an environmental review. Some of the UNAs are additionally protected because they are held by private entities, such as the Twin Glens Association and Cornell University. Following is a brief summary of the seven UNAs located within the Village. Complete descriptions prepared by the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council are included in the appendix.

#### *UNA 64: Lake Cliffs, South of Portland Point*

The Lake Cliffs south of Portland Point have been selected as a Unique Natural Area because of its geologic importance, the presence of rare or scarce plants, and for scenic and aesthetic value.

#### *UNA 88: Airport Ponds, Wetland*

The Airport Ponds have been designated a UNA due to the presence of rare and scarce animals, diverse fauna, rare or scarce plants, state-designated wetland, and its potential as a birding site.

#### *UNA 89: Lake Cliffs, McKinney's Point to Bolton Point*

The Lake Cliffs from McKinney's Point to Bolton Point have been designated a UNA due to their geologic importance, the presence of rare or scarce plants, scenic and aesthetic value, importance as a historic botanical/zoological site, the presence of old growth forest, and as a quality example of this type of plant community.

#### *UNA 90: Esty's Glen*

Esty's Glen has been identified as a UNA due to its geologic importance, its value as a quality

---

example of a plant community, the presence of rare or scarce plants, old growth forest, and scenic and aesthetic value.

*UNA102: Renwick Slope*

A small portion of UNA 102, known as Renwick Slope, is located in the southwest corner of the Village of Lansing. This area has been identified as a UNA due to the presence of rare or scarce plants and community types, its scenic and aesthetic value, the presence of old growth forest, and as a quality example of a plant community. The portion within the Village consists of a wooded stream with steep slopes.

*UNA 103: McKinneys, Twin Glens, and Lake Cliffs*

The area known as the McKinneys, Twin Glens and Lake Cliffs was identified as an UNA because it is a designated natural area/preserve (Twin Glens Association Natural Area), an area of geologic importance, the presence of rare or scarce plants, scenic and aesthetic value, importance as a historic botanical/zoological site, the presence of old growth forest, and as a quality example of a plant community. The site also has locally important views, including the panoramic views of the southern six miles of Cayuga Lake from the waterfalls area.

*UNA 106: Sapsucker Woods Bird Sanctuary*

The Sapsucker Woods Bird Sanctuary was designated as an UNA due to its value as a birding site, designated natural area/preserve (Cornell University Lab of Ornithology), its value as a quality example of a plant community, rare or scarce animals, diverse fauna, scenic and aesthetic value, state-designated wetland, and as an important teaching site.

Areas of High Open Space Value: Scenic, Historic & Cultural Resources

*Scenic Resources*

Scenic resources include outstanding views that are generally recognized as being important to the community. Because of their highly discretionary nature, only scenic resources that are available to a large segment of the population, that is, along heavily traveled public roads, have been identified. The New York State Scenic Byway Program defines scenic resources as follows:

“Scenic resources are visually appealing natural and cultural resources that offer a heightened or memorable visual experience and are unique to the corridor. They include views to natural resources such as water or landform features or to specific built features...”

The views shown on Map #11, Scenic, Historic & Cultural Resources contribute to the unique character of the Village and provide a high quality experience along the public roadway. Much of the land area of the Village located west of North Triphammer Road has scenic value to the community.

*Historic & Cultural Resources*

Also identified on Map #11 are historic and cultural resources, including structures eligible for

---

listing in the *National Register of Historic Places*. As described in the *Village of Lansing Comprehensive Plan*, the remaining structures are: the former Greystone Inn, located on Route 34; 86 Oakcrest Road, formerly the Bent residence; and the building located at 2369 North Triphammer Road, currently occupied by Colonial Veterinary Clinic. Another structure at 2353 North Triphammer Road has been removed since publication of the *Comprehensive Plan*, and thus is not included here. Two cemeteries, Esty Glen Cemetery and the Goddard Cemetery have also been shown on Map #11.

### *Priority Open Space Lands*

Lands exhibiting important ecological characteristics were further prioritized by identifying areas where multiple ecological resources overlap. These are lands that have particularly high open space value and these are mapped as Priority Open Space Lands (Map #12).

Areas where at least three ecological resources are present can be considered lands of the highest value. These lands are all located along the steep slopes adjacent to Cayuga Lake. Areas where two ecological features overlap tend to be adjacent to the very high value lands and extend further inland, primarily following waterways. There are two large inland areas that include two of the criteria, they are the Airport Wetlands and Sapsucker Woods.

## **Protecting Open Space**

### Existing Protection Tools

It is important to remember that existing regulations and tools provide some protection for the identified priority lands for open space protection. Existing protection tools include:

- Wetlands Regulations
- Zoning – Buffer Strips
- Conservation Combining Districts
- Special Permit Requirements

### *Wetlands Regulations*

Existing state and federal regulations provide good protection for wetlands and streams. The NYS Freshwater Wetlands Act (FWA), Article 24 of the Environmental Conservation Law protects wetlands 12.4 acres and larger. Permit standards require that impacts to wetlands be avoided and minimized. The US Army Corps of Engineers protects wetlands of any size, including those smaller than 12.4 acres under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

### *Zoning – Buffer Strips*

The existing zoning code requires buffer strips between a Residential District and Commercial, Research or Business and Technology Districts (Section 104.21). Map #4 shows the locations of

---

the required buffer zones. The requirement of buffer strips conserves open space between differing uses, and ensures that there will be landscaping.

### *Conservation Combining Districts*

Conservation Combining Districts (CCDs) help protect natural areas, drainageways and steep lands by requiring a Special Permit and an environmental review. The CCDs are delineated by specific environmental features including steep slopes (25% and greater), Unique Natural Areas (UNA), and streams and drainageways. Development proposed in an overlay combining district requires a special permit and more extensive environmental review. The Unique Natural Area Conservation Combining District requires an erosion control plan, flora and fauna inventory, and wetlands delineation and protection in addition to the special permit and environmental review. While most of the Conservation Combining Districts do not expressly prohibit development, they do require further studies to be undertaken by the developer, and closer scrutiny by the Village Planning Board.

### *Special Permit Review*

Existing Special Permit Review procedures provide an important vehicle for working with developers to negotiate the preservation of open space. The mapping developed for this project provides an important tool for the Planning Board to be more effective in educating developers regarding open space that is important to the community.

## Potential Open Space Protection Tools

This section suggests potential open space protection tools that could be utilized by the Village. The pros and cons of the preservation tools were discussed with the Planning Board to determine the feasibility of implementation by the Village. The possible tools include:

1. Donated conservation easements
2. Purchased development rights
3. Land acquisition
4. Changes in zoning
5. Special Permit Review

These tools, along with the mapped Priority Lands of Conservation Value will serve as the guide for implementation of the Open Space Protection Plan.

### *Donated Conservation Easements*

Donated conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements between a landowner and a land trust or local government agency that allow landowners to permanently limit or prohibit development on their property. Conservation easements run with the title so that all future owners of the land are bound by the original agreement. The pros and cons of this method of protecting open space are as follows.

---

## **PROS**

- Permanently protects land from development pressures.
- Landowners may receive income, estate, and property tax benefits.
- No or low cost to local unit of government.
- Land remains in private ownership and on the tax rolls.

## **CONS**

- Tax incentives may not provide enough compensation for many landowners.
- Little local government control over which areas are protected.

### *Purchased Development Rights*

Purchased development rights are voluntary legal agreements that allow owners of land meeting certain criteria to sell the right to develop their property to local government agencies, state government, or to a nonprofit organization. A conservation easement is then placed on the land. This agreement is recorded on the title to permanently limit the future use of the land to agriculture, forestry, or other open space uses.

## **PROS**

- Permanently protects land from development pressures.
- Landowner is paid to protect his land.
- Landowners may receive estate, and property tax benefits.
- Local government can target locations effectively.
- Land remains in private ownership and on the tax rolls.

## **CONS**

- Can be costly for local governments.

### *Land Acquisition*

Land acquisition is used in select cases when willing landowners want to conserve their land by selling or donating it outright to a public agency or land conservation organization. This mechanism allows the public agency to have full control over a property's future. While land acquisition can be costly, there are a number of alternatives on how land can be acquired.

The Finger Lakes Land Trust is a local land conservation organization that can assist in land conservation. Among their conservation tools are:

- 
- **Bargain Purchase:** In a bargain purchase, a landowner can sell his or her property to the Finger Lakes Land Trust at less than full market value, and donate the remaining value (sale price less full market value) to the Finger Lakes Land Trust.
  - **Right of First Refusal:** This right provides the Land Trust with the opportunity to match a purchase offer received by the owner at a future time if and when the owner elects to sell the property.
  - **Bequests and Living Trusts:** A bequest is a provision in the landowner's will or codicil (a will amendment) that instructs the estate's executor to convey land or a conservation easement to the Land Trust. A living trust can achieve the same results but avoids the probate process.

Both the bequest and the living trust can assure the permanent protection of the land, permit the donor to control the property during his/her lifetime, and may reduce the donor's taxable estate.

*Source: Finger Lakes Land Trust, [www.fllt.org](http://www.fllt.org)*

Other land conservation organizations include The Nature Conservancy and Cornell Natural Areas.

### *Changes in Zoning*

Stricter zoning laws can be used to preserve open space. Zoning code can be written to create performance standards for development. These could include limiting disturbance in areas of steeper slopes, reducing impacts to existing woodlands, and prohibiting development of more than 50% of a unique natural area.

Priority lands with either two or three overlapping ecological resources are likely to already have a certain level of protection, due to the presence of either a UNA, wetlands, or steep slopes. Currently, zoning regulates disturbance to steep slopes, while State and Federal agencies protect the streams and wetlands. Other areas within a UNA boundary, woodland, and scenic resources could be considered for additional protection.

---

The following table illustrates examples of how more stringent zoning could be applied to the protection of open space.

**Resources to be Protected - Possible Protection Tools - Examples (i.e.)**

- **Wetlands** - Existing regulatory requirements provide good protection.
- **Streams** - Existing Conservation Combining District zoning, Stricter zoning - i.e. Stream Protection Ordinances, More stringent setbacks from streams.
- **Steep Slopes** - Existing Conservation Combining District zoning provides protection, Stricter zoning - i.e. Disturbance limits for degree of steepness, Provide desity credits and permit reduction in minimum lot area for steep slope areas to allow clustering.
- **Woodlands** - Stricter zoning, Acquisition, Work through existing Special Permit process to encourage clustering - i.e. No more than 20% of woodlands located in environmentally sensitive areas shall be disturbed, No more than 50% of woodlands *not* located in environmentally sensitive areas shall be disturbed, on a tract consisting of 10 acres or more, no more than 75% of woodlands *not* located on environmentally sensitive areas shall be disturbed.
- **Unique Natural Areas** - Existing Conservation Combining District zoning, Stricter zoning, Work through existing Special Permit process to encourage clustering - i.e. No more than 50% of the area of UNA on a parcel may be developed, When two or more of the following occur, no development shall occur: Steep slopes 15% or greater, Woodlands, UNA, and Wetlands.
- **Scenic Resources** - Conservation Easements, Work through existing Special Permit process to require clustering/preservation of key views.

Due to their subjective nature, scenic resources can be more difficult to protect. Since scenic resources have been documented, one possibility is to incorporate preservation of or mitigation of impacts to scenic resources in the existing Special Permit process. More aggressive protection measures, such as donated conservation easements, purchase of development rights, or land acquisition can be explored for key parcels.

---

## **ACTION PLAN FOR OPEN SPACE PROTECTION**

The *Action Plan* is a series of suggested strategies to guide decision-making related to open space protection in the Village of Lansing. It is not intended to be definitive, but should be flexible to reflect changes in the community, development trends and the legal landscape. The following actions are recommended to achieve the stated goals for open space protection.

- 1. *Adopt the Open Space Plan.*** Formally adopting the *Open Space Protection Plan* as public policy will indicate to the broader community the intentions of the Village of Lansing regarding the direction of open space now and in the coming years.
- 2. *Continue to Implement the Village of Lansing Greenway Plan.*** Implement the Greenway Plan to link existing parks and recreation areas. Expand the Greenway Plan by creating additional greenway linkages as opportunities arise.
- 3. *Preserve and maintain existing parks and recreation areas and develop new areas where appropriate.*** New recreation facilities should focus on passive recreation. That is, trails and open space areas without facilities for organized sports activities. These areas generally require minimal improvements and maintenance and are oriented to providing a nature experience.
- 4. *Encourage the designation of Unique Natural Areas as nature preserves.*** Most Unique Natural Areas are located on private land. Developers should be encouraged to designate these areas as nature preserves. Where appropriate, limited public access with interpretation could be allowed.
- 5. *Development proposals should preserve open space that is meaningful to the community.*** Creative site-planning should be employed in order to gain meaningful open space that contributes to the visual quality of the community and the integrity of habitats. In some cases, reduced densities may be warranted where scenic and/or natural resources are particularly valuable.
- 6. *Preserve Priority Open Space Lands (map #12).*** Priority Open Space Lands possess multiple valuable ecological resources. These are the lands that should receive the highest priority for preservation. Preserving these lands will protect significant habitat and wetlands. Work through the Special Permit process to encourage the preservation of these lands. Where possible, encourage landowners to work with the Finger Lakes Land Trust to protect these lands.
- 7. *Preserve as open space, to the greatest extent possible, those areas identified as Areas of High Open Space Value: Ecological Resources (Map #10).*** Map #10 encompasses many of the areas of ecological importance in the Village. Preservation of these areas will preserve

---

ecological habitat. However, it is not likely that all areas identified as having high open space value will be preserved. This inventory map can serve as a guide for efforts by the Finger Lakes Land Trust, landowners interested in preservation and development, and the Planning Board. The Special Permit process is likely to continue to be the primary tool for encouraging voluntary protection of these open space areas.

**8. *Protect Stream Corridors.*** Streams and waterways in the Village of Lansing are all tributaries to Cayuga Lake. Protection of these stream corridors protects the water quality not only of these streams, but of the lake. Soil disturbance near these streams must be controlled in order to avoid erosion, sedimentation, flooding, and degradation of habitat. The 50 foot setback from the thread of the stream should be strictly enforced, and no clearing allowed within this zone. The width of the stream buffer should be expanded if warranted by soil and slope conditions.

**9. *Protect Scenic Views Important to the Community (Map #11).*** The topography and geographic position of the Village of Lansing combine to provide abundant and spectacular views of the lake, valley and fields. Views along North Triphammer Road and Rte. 34 are important to the community. When development occurs within these viewsheds it should be done with sensitivity. Low-rise buildings should be considered in scenically sensitive areas and should include appropriate setbacks and landscaping. Developers should be required to site parking to minimize its visibility and to screen parking and other features that negatively impact the view. On larger parcels, clustering should be encouraged to allow the preservation of important view corridors.

Special consideration should be given to the following:

- The Sundowns Farm site is one of the most significant development opportunities in the Village and is also one of the most scenically sensitive sites. At such time as a development proposal is made for this site, the Village should encourage clustering to allow the preservation of some open space within the primary viewsheds. Consideration should be given to creating a Village gateway, possibly with Village entrance signage at this location.
- One of the most spectacular views in the Village is looking northwest from the corner of North Triphammer and Burdick Hill roads. The view extends across agricultural fields to the lake in the Town of Lansing. The Village should work with the Town to encourage sensitive development of this land. Again, clustering should be encouraged to allow the preservation of some open space within the primary viewsheds.
- The view from North Triphammer Road looking over the Pyramid Mall to the lake has also been identified as an important view. Development within this viewshed should maintain a profile that does not block the views to the lake.

---

**10. *Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources (Map #11).*** Encourage the preservation of buildings that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Take care that adjacent developments do not negatively impact historic structures.

Historic cemeteries should be preserved and enhanced. Consider the potential for interpretation of cemeteries.

Archaeological resources should be protected. The proximity of the Village to Cayuga Lake means that there was a high degree of Native American activity in the area and there is the potential that archaeological resources are present. New developments may require an investigation prior to any site disturbance to ascertain the presence of archaeological artifacts. The presence of artifacts rarely prohibits development. It does require that the artifacts are retrieved and documented for the historical record prior to undertaking site disturbance.

**11. *When updating the zoning ordinance, review and consider options for strengthening the protection of open space.*** Zoning ordinances should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. At such time the Village undertakes such a review, the potential for strengthening the protection of open space through the zoning ordinance should be explored. For example, stream buffering and tree protection requirements could be strengthened. Subdivision regulations could require clustering, setbacks and buffers for scenic values and greater compactness in the developed area. Limiting the creation of new household lots with frontage on Village roads and instead requiring landscape along the roadside would increase the perception of open space.

**12. *Encourage the Finger Lakes Land Trust to work with local land owners to protect areas of high open space value.*** The Finger Lakes Land Trust is an outstanding local organization that shares similar open space goals. The Trust has the potential to influence the protection of high value resources.

---

## References

1. Village of Lansing Zoning Law
2. 1000 Friends of Minnesota Open Space Protection Resources [www.1000fom.org](http://www.1000fom.org)
3. Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Municipal Resource Protection Tools <http://www.dvrpc.org/planning/protectiontools.htm>
4. New York State Open Space Conservation Plan, NYSDEC, 2002. <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dlf/osp/toc2002.html>
5. Village of Lansing Comprehensive Plan, Village of Lansing, Adopted February 15, 1999.
6. Village of Lansing Greenway Plan, Village of Lansing Greenway Committee, May 1994.
7. Open Space Inventory of the Town of Dryden, Tompkins County, New York, Town of Dryden Conservation Advisory Council, May 15, 2003.

---

## **Appendix**

### A. Tompkins County Environmental Management Council Unique Natural Area Descriptions

---

## **Appendix**

### B. Open Space Plan Public Survey & Results