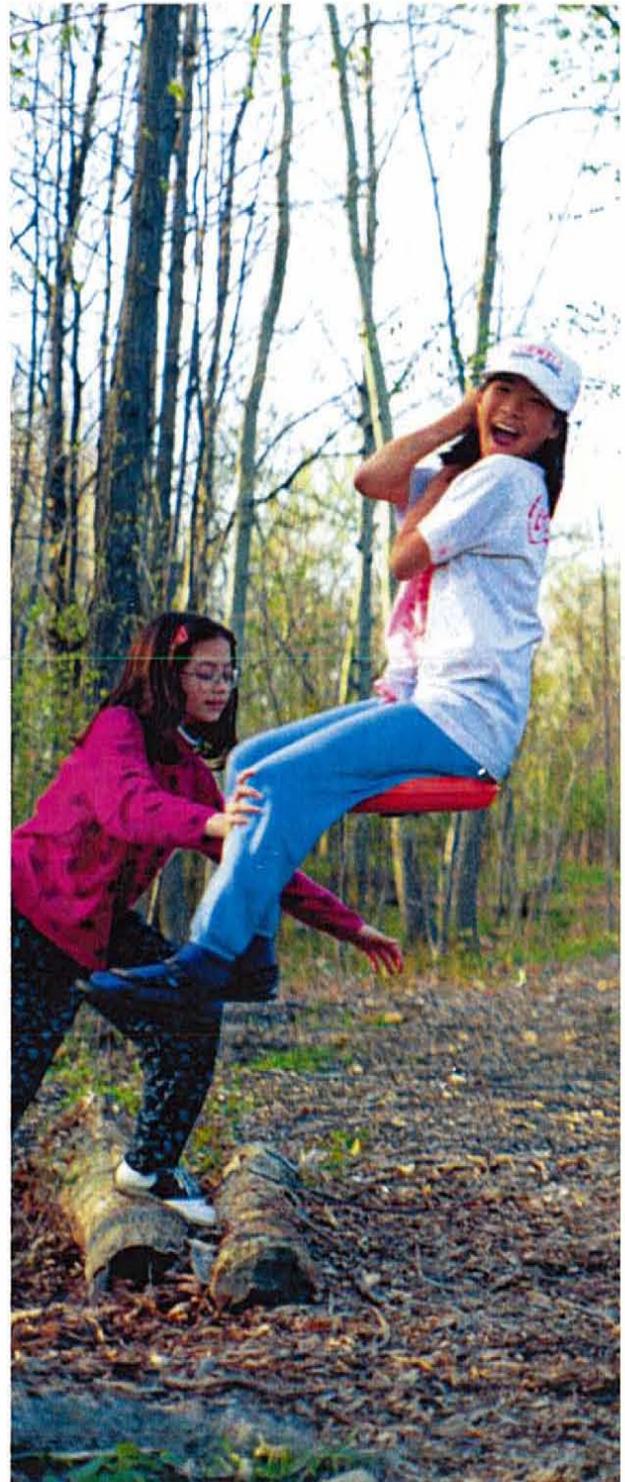


# Town of Ithaca Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan

## *Full Report*

Adopted by Resolution of the  
Town Board December 12, 1997

Town of Ithaca Planning Department  
126 East Seneca Street  
Ithaca, New York 14850



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## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Ithaca is a diverse and prosperous community well known for its scenic natural beauty. Guided by the initial 1977 Park and Open Space Plan and its 1984 update, the Town has begun to develop a network of neighborhood parks and recreational trails. The population of the Town of Ithaca has grown significantly since these earlier plans, making it necessary to reassess the recreational opportunities available for residents now and in the coming decades.

Providing for the recreational needs of communities, once considered a luxury, is now considered a necessity in municipal budgets. Offering citizens a variety of activities for relaxation and greater physical and mental well-being contributes substantially to the general health and welfare of the community. The changing demographic profile of today's residents includes a growing population of retired residents with large blocks of time dedicated to their active lifestyles. The predominance of two-career families has also generated a substantial need for organized childcare programs that provide safe and creative recreational outlets for "latchkey" children who are left alone at the end of the school day.

Preserving open space, scenic and environmental resources enhances the unique character and high quality of life in our town. Providing for these important resources must be a priority in the future. "Open space," for the purposes of this plan, refers to those lands in the Town of Ithaca that are either predominantly undeveloped in their natural state, or minimally disturbed working landscapes such as agricultural fields, pastures, orchards or vineyards. Open spaces can be any size and provide a variety of both public and private benefits, including preservation of important streams, wildlife habitats and corridors, threatened agricultural lands, cultural, and historic resources. Other important targets for preservation include open areas and greenways between and around existing and future residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial development. It is also vital to reserve the scenic beauty that enriches our day-to-day experiences and permeates our quality of life.

This plan reassesses the Town's recreational goals set forth in the 1977 and 1984 plans to accommodate the current residential demographics and the anticipated future population changes in the Town. Using the existing system of parks, trails, open spaces, and sport facilities in the Town of Ithaca and surrounding municipalities, this plan puts forth an innovative and cost-effective integrated network of recreational facilities for Town residents. In the coming decades, we must place a premium on reserving these important ecological and recreational areas, while channeling growth to the areas most appropriate for residential development. It is essential that open space conservation efforts proceed despite fiscally challenged times. Once land is developed, it seldom reverts to its former ecological, historical, and scenic condition. Only by making concrete policy decisions now can the Town of Ithaca ensure sound economic growth and development, and a continued high quality of life for its residents.

## CHAPTER 1

### GOALS & OBJECTIVES

#### Introduction

The basic principles of this revised park, recreation, and open space plan are presented in the following goals and objectives. Specific recommendations for their implementation are put forth in Chapter 5 and Chapter 8. Designed to guide the Town as it carries out this plan over the coming two decades, these goals and objectives will serve as benchmarks against which the Town can measure its progress.

#### Goal 1.

*Provide an integrated system of parks, recreational facilities, and open space throughout the Town, with linkages between trails, parks, preserves, stream corridors, and utility rights of ways.*

#### Objectives

- Initiate a program for locating and developing a cost-effective network of public parks to serve the present and future needs of Town residents.
- Establish a coordinated program to preserve environmentally sensitive land and important scenic areas in the Town of Ithaca.
- Ensure adequate public access to the recreational resources of Cayuga Lake.
- Design a system of off-road bicycle and pedestrian trails to connect existing and future Town parks with residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, and places of work.
- Coordinate the development of the Town's park, recreation, and greenway system and facilities with the efforts of surrounding municipalities.
- Maintain a continuous network of wildlife habitats and reserve corridors for wildlife migration.

#### Goal 2.

*Provide for adequate recreational services for all Town residents.*

#### Objectives.

- Enhance the enjoyment of the Town's special character and unique features and promote the appreciation and preservation of the county's important educational, environmental, historical, and cultural areas.
- Provide recreational and educational opportunities for people near their homes and work places.

- Develop an interconnected network of town parks and trails to provide active and passive recreational opportunities for all Town residents.
- Ensure to the greatest extent practicable compliance with the requirements and spirit of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 and its successors.
- Provide a comprehensive year-round program of basic recreational activities and facilities for all Town residents.
- Maximize intermunicipal cooperation and partnerships between the public and private sectors to deliver high quality recreational services for Town residents.

**Goal 3.**

*Improve the environment and preserve and protect it from degradation.*

**Objectives.**

Protect natural resources, selected open space, environmentally sensitive areas and unique natural areas.

Protect water and air quality and minimize impacts from erosion, sedimentation and drainage.

Ensure a fair distribution of the costs and benefits of open space.

## CHAPTER 2

### PREVIOUS PARK & OPEN SPACE PLANNING

#### *Town of Ithaca Park and Open Space Plan (1977)*

The first *Town of Ithaca Park and Open Space Plan*, completed in 1977, established a permanent park construction and maintenance program in the Town. This plan set forth policies empowering the Planning Board to recommend acceptance of individual parks to the Town Board and participate in their design and landscaping. It outlined neighborhood park needs, opportunities for neighborhood participation, and legal mechanisms to fund and implement the plan. After parks are accepted by the Town Board, the Town's Parks Department is responsible for the park's development and maintenance.

The 1977 *Park and Open Space Plan* instituted the following Town of Ithaca policies:

- Parks and open space should be developed for the benefit of town residents. The Planning Board will decide the size of these parks and the types of recreational facilities available and recommend acceptance or purchase of these open areas, if necessary, to the Town Board.
- A firm financial commitment is necessary to develop parks and open spaces in the Town. State and Federal funds should be used for this purpose whenever possible.
- Upon Planning Board recommendation, up to 10% of the land to be developed within a subdivision can be set aside for parks in that area. Alternatively, financial donations (calculated at fair market value) will be accepted in lieu of land to provide open space areas in each population center. Per the requirements of Section 277 of Town Law, these funds will be placed in a general fund and used only to acquire land, equipment, or maintain the parks in the neighborhood where the funds were derived..
- A budget will be established to adjust for the yearly fluctuation in funds needed to purchase and maintain park land.
- Residents should have access to neighborhood play lots, area parks, regional parks, and undeveloped open space that is accessible from at least one public street without crossing private land. *(See side bar.)*

#### *Town of Ithaca Park and Open Space Plan Update (1984)*

In 1984, the Town Board approved the *Town of Ithaca Park and Open Space Plan Update* that reflected the changing recreational needs of town residents. The 1984 Plan inventoried the existing parkland and introduced bikeways and recreational trails as important recreational assets. Priorities of the 1984 Plan were:

- Construction of bike paths throughout the town in coordination with bikeway development by the City and the State.
- Establishment of area and neighborhood play lots on South and West Hills.
- Development of an area park in the Inlet Valley/ Elmira Road area.

In the seven years between the original 1977 Plan and the 1984 Update, six parks and 3.65 miles of bikeways and recreational trails were established by the Town. These facilities are located in the Northeast and East Hill centers of growth.

Together, the 1977 Town of Ithaca Park and Open Space Plan and the 1984 Plan Update guided the Town's development of a parks and recreation program over the last two decades. Following a tradition of long-term comprehensive planning, it is again time to reassess the progress of this developing park system and reevaluate the recreational needs of our residents.

***Six Mile Creek Valley: A Heritage to Preserve (1990)***

In 1990 the Town of Ithaca Conservation Advisory Council, predecessor of the Conservation Board, produced the report *Six Mile Creek Valley: A Heritage to Preserve*. It contained a number of recommendations for better protection of the inner areas of the Six Mile Creek valley adjacent to and including the gorge, Mulholland Wildflower Preserve and City Watershed lands. They included:

establishment of a new Conservation District zoning district in the valley to reduce development potential to uses and levels of intensity more suited to the environmental sensitivity of the area;

establishment of a buffer zone within the core of the valley to direct development away from the gorge area itself;

establishment of better communications and cooperation between the City of Ithaca and Town of Ithaca on matters concerning managing and protecting the environmental and open space resources of the valley, including land acquisitions and managing public access;

establishment of a mechanism through which the Town of Ithaca can accept conservation easements from landholders in the valley.

The Town has followed through on a number of the recommendations of the report. In 1996 the Town Board created a Conservation District zoning district along the lines recommended in 1990 and applied it to the inner areas of the valley. In addition, the Town and City have increased the level of communication and cooperation in addressing issues related to the protection of the inner core of the valley, including City acquisition of additional land for water quality protection and public open space. Also, since 1990 two landowners in Six Mile Creek Valley have given conservation easements to the Finger Lakes Land Trust. Later in this document, approximately

290 acres of land within the valley are recommended for inclusion in a purchase of development rights program through which the Town of Ithaca would acquire conservation or agricultural easements from landowners willing to sell or donate them.

*Planning for Agriculture in the Town of Ithaca (1992)*

In 1992, the Town of Ithaca Conservation Board adopted policy recommendations and implementation measures supporting the preservation of agricultural land in the Town. These recommendations are discussed in detail in its 1992 report *Planning for Agriculture in the Town of Ithaca*. These policies are intended to ensure the long term preservation of the Town's agricultural land resources and enhance the economic viability of its farms.

*1992 Open Space Report (1992)*

In December 1992 the Town of Ithaca Conservation Advisory Board completed an inventory and map of open spaces within the Town of Ithaca. The report describes and indexes all open areas in the Town, based on significant ecological, cultural and historical features. The open areas inventoried included all undeveloped lands characterized by a relative absence of structures. They included farms, cemeteries, playgrounds, golf course and parks in addition to the woodlands, meadowlands and wetlands that traditionally qualify as "undeveloped open space."

The *1992 Open Space Report* emphasizes the importance of protecting or preserving significant ecological, cultural or historic features within the landscape. The database and maps within it depict the important features as well as numerous open areas that have been set aside from subdivision plats, publicly owned open areas, and any open areas known to be protected by private individuals or organizations.

## CHAPTER 3

### INVENTORY: EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION RESOURCES

#### Introduction

The Town of Ithaca's park needs are served by a variety of both private and public facilities. This chapter inventories the existing Town park facilities according to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) classifications for *close-to-home*, *regional*, and *unique spaces* and identifies the agencies responsible for their development and maintenance. In addition, the water-oriented recreational facilities and recreation services available to Town residents are also reviewed. Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2 show the park and recreational facilities available to Town residents. A concluding discussion of projected future trends in population, land use, and transportation systems compared to the NRPA standards completes the chapter.

#### 1. CLOSE-TO-HOME SPACE

##### Close-to-Home Space: Town Parks

The Town of Ithaca Parks Department maintains a system of "close-to-home space" consisting of nine

#### NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION STANDARDS

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is a nationwide nonprofit organization that provides research and support services to municipalities, recreation specialists, park officials, and the public. The NRPA's Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines provide guidance on the appropriate levels of park and open space development for communities nationwide. Recognizing the uniqueness of every village, town, city and country -- with their differing socioeconomic, climatic, geographic, and cultural characteristics -- these standards should be used as a guide rather than a rule. When combined with local demographic data, land use trends and future growth expectations, these standards provide a useful framework for assessing the park, recreation, and open space needs of municipalities. As a baseline, NRPA recommends that a core system of parklands consists of 6.25 to 10.5 acres per 1,000 people.

The NRPA classifies recreational space into three major categories: Close-to-Home Space (neighborhood, community or area, school, and mini-parks), Regional Space (state parks), and Unique Space (linear parks, trails, and walkways).

**Close-to-Home Space** - Parks within easy walking distance of one's home (one-half mile or less) that serve parts or all of a neighborhood, including mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community or area parks.

**Regional Space** - Parks serving several communities located within a one hour radius. Facilities generally include swimming, boating, fishing, camping, hiking, and picnicking. In addition, natural resources such as lakes, waterfalls, forests, and streams are managed for both public use and for conservation.

**Unique Space** - Open space resources used for active recreation or that contributes to the natural integrity of the landscape. Open space resources include agricultural lands, unique geological features, environmentally sensitive areas, and places with scenic value. The linear parks, trails, and walkways are popular community facilities used for jogging, walking, biking, horseback riding, and cross country skiing. Other open space resources such as agricultural lands, unique geologic features, environmentally sensitive areas, and scenic viewsheds define the natural setting of communities. Each type of unique space requires distinctly different approaches for acquisition, development, and preservation.

# FIGURE I. EXISTING TOWN PARKS & FACILITIES

	SIZE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
1. Coddington Rd. Comm. Ctr. Playfield	4.0 ac.									O																						
2. Compton Park (UNDEV.)	1.5 ac.																															
3. Eastern Heights Park	14.0 ac.	O	O	O	O		O			N																						
4. Tutelo Park (UNDEV.)	8.3 ac.																															
5. Grandview Park	2.7 ac.	O	O	O																												
6. Hungerford Heights Park	2.3 ac.	O	O	O									N																			
7. King Schoolhouse Park (UNDEV.)	1.8 ac.																															
8. Northview Park	2.0 ac.	O	O	O	O																											
9. Salen Park	2.4 ac.	O	O	O	O		O																									
10. Saponi Park (UNDEV.)	8.4 ac.																															
11. Sunset Park (Cayuga Heights)	1.4 ac.			O																												
12. Tareyton Park	1.9 ac.	O	O							N																						
13. Troy Park	4.2 ac.	O	O	O																												
14. Tudor Park	2.3 ac.	O	O		O																											
15. Vincenzo Iacovelli Park (UNDEV.)	3.5 ac.																															
16. Woolf Park (UNDEV.)	1.7 ac.																															
1. Chase Pond/Deer Run Trail (UNDEV.)	0.5 mi.																															
2. DeWitt Exercise Trail	0.5 mi.									O																						
3. East Ithaca Recreation Way	2.4 mi.						O	O																								
4. Northeast Trail	0.4 mi.						O	O																								
5. South Hill Recreation Way	3.3 mi.				O	O	O	O																								
6. Woolf Lane/Poyer Trail (UNDEV.)	0.6 mi.																															

\* N signifies facility does not meet minimum requirements for regulation play in sanctioned sports leagues.

# FIGURE 2. EXISTING NON-TOWN PARKS & FACILITIES

(NOTE: Some of the facilities listed below are located in adjacent municipalities.)

		SIZE	1. Children's Playground	2. Picnic Tables	3. Play Lawn	4. Natural Area	5. Bicycle Trail	6. Hiking Trail	7. Nature Trail	8. Fitness Trail	9. Softball Field (w)	10. Baseball Field (w)	11. Soccer Field (w)	12. Basketball Court (w)	13. Tennis Courts (w)	14. Volleyball Courts (w)	15. Football Field (w)	16. Golf	17. Beach	18. Swimming Pool	19. Wading Pool	20. Fishing	21. Boating	22. Ice Skating	23. Restrooms	24. Pavilions)	25. Drinking Fountain	26. Recreation Center	27. Youth Recreation Programs	28. Athletic Programs	29. Amphitheatre	30. Concession Stand				
CITY	1. Cass Park	92 ac.	o	o	o	o				o	L	L	o		o	L			o		o		o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o			
	2. Stewart Park	83 ac.	o	o	o										o							o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o			
	3. Newman Golf Course	64 ac.															o							o									o			
	4. Mulholland Wildflower Pres. ***	680 ac.				o																														
	5. Fuertes Bird Sanctuary	33 ac.				o																o														
NYS	1. Butternilk Falls State Park	751 ac.		o	o	o		o	o			o	o						o	o	o	o		o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o		
	2. Robert H. Treman State Park	1025 ac.		o	o	o		o											o	o	o	o		o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o		
	3. Allan H. Treman State Park	75 ac.		o	o	o																o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	
PRIVATE	1. Ithaca Country Club	104 ac.													o		o							o	o									o		
	2. Ithaca Swimming Club	N/A													o			o						o												
	3. Ithaca Yacht Club	N/A																				o	o													
	4. I.V.V.F.A. Ballfields	3.5 ac.									o	o																								
	5. Coddington Rd. Comm. Center	4 ac.									o	o												o	o		o	o								
	6. The Rink	N/A																					o	o											o	
	7. Cascadilla Boat Club	N/A																				o														
	8. Y.M.C.A.	N/A	o																	o				o		o	o	o	o							
	9. Eldridge Preserve	87 ac.				o		o																												
ISNT.	1. Ithaca College Athletics Dept. **	35 ac.									o	o	o	L	L	L	o																			
	2. Cornell Univ. Athletics Dept. **	28 ac.									L	L	L	L	L	L																				
	3. Cornell Plantations	240 ac.			o	o	o	o	o															o	o											
	4. Sapsucker Woods Bird Sanctuary	60 ac.				o		o	o															o	o											
	5. C.U. R. T. Jones Golf Course **	140 ac.																o						o	o										o	

\* L signifies facility is equipped with lights for night-time play.

\*\* Use of Cornell and Ithaca College athletic department facilities is generally restricted to athletic programs students and employees of these institutions. For the purposes of this Plan these facilities are not considered to be available to the general public.

\*\*\* Includes approximately 65 acres within the Ithaca city limits.

neighborhood parks, and three multi-use trails for the Town residents. The Town's neighborhood parks provide a range of recreational facilities including playstructures, ballfields, playfields, sledding hills, and nature trails. Several parks also have wooded areas maintained in a natural state except for walking paths.

The Town of Ithaca has also received, through subdivision, park and open space dedication, sites for six new parks and two additional trails. These are the undeveloped Woolf, Tutelo, Saponi, Compton, King Schoolhouse and Vincenzo Iacovelli park sites, and the undeveloped Evergreen and Hospice bikeways(Map 3-1).

Among their many duties, the Town of Ithaca Parks Department is responsible for building and maintaining parks and trails. The Parks Department also maintains the playfields of the private Coddington Road Community Center, which are open to the public.

#### **Close-to-Home Space: Facilities in Nearby Municipalities**

Nearby communities, such as the City of Ithaca, Town of Lansing, and Village of Lansing, have park facilities, which may be used by Town of Ithaca residents. The Town of Lansing Community Center, for example, is an important youth soccer and football facility for Tompkins County. City facilities include the Mulholland Wildflower Preserve at Six Mile Creek, Cass Park's ice rink, tennis courts, swimming pool, athletic fields, and picnic and play area complex; Stewart Park's extensive lakefront, picnic facilities, boathouse, tennis courts, playgrounds and walking trails, and the nearby Newman Municipal Golf Course (9-hole) and Fuertes Bird Sanctuary.

Local recreational facilities are at a high premium. An unfortunate reality is that our municipal parks are becoming overcrowded and despoiled by overuse. Our nearby state parks, established to provide recreational opportunities while protecting the scenic, natural, and cultural resources within their boundaries, are suffering under heavy use by local residents. The most visible impacts are the decline of grass and trees in heavily utilized day-use areas. Heavy foot traffic through natural areas has turned some trails into quagmires, exposed tree roots, and trampled sensitive wildlife habitats. As our growing population seeks the solitude of nature, our very presence gradually destroys the beauty we have come to visit. More open spaces designed for frequent use must be developed so we can exercise, unwind, and appreciate the place where we live. We need places close to home that create the sense of community that comes when people meet, greet, and chat with one another on sidewalks and trails.

#### **Close-to-Home Space: Institutional and Private Facilities**

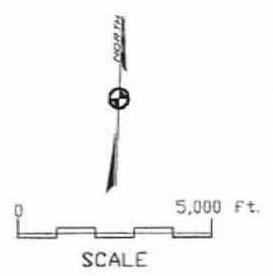
Numerous institutional and private recreation facilities are available to Town residents with memberships or for a fee. Figure 3-2 shows the private and commercial facilities in the Town. These facilities, while part of the Town's many recreational offerings, should not be considered as facilities open to the public.

TOWN OF ITHACA  
 1996 PARK,  
 RECREATION &  
 OPEN SPACE PLAN  
 DECEMBER 1997

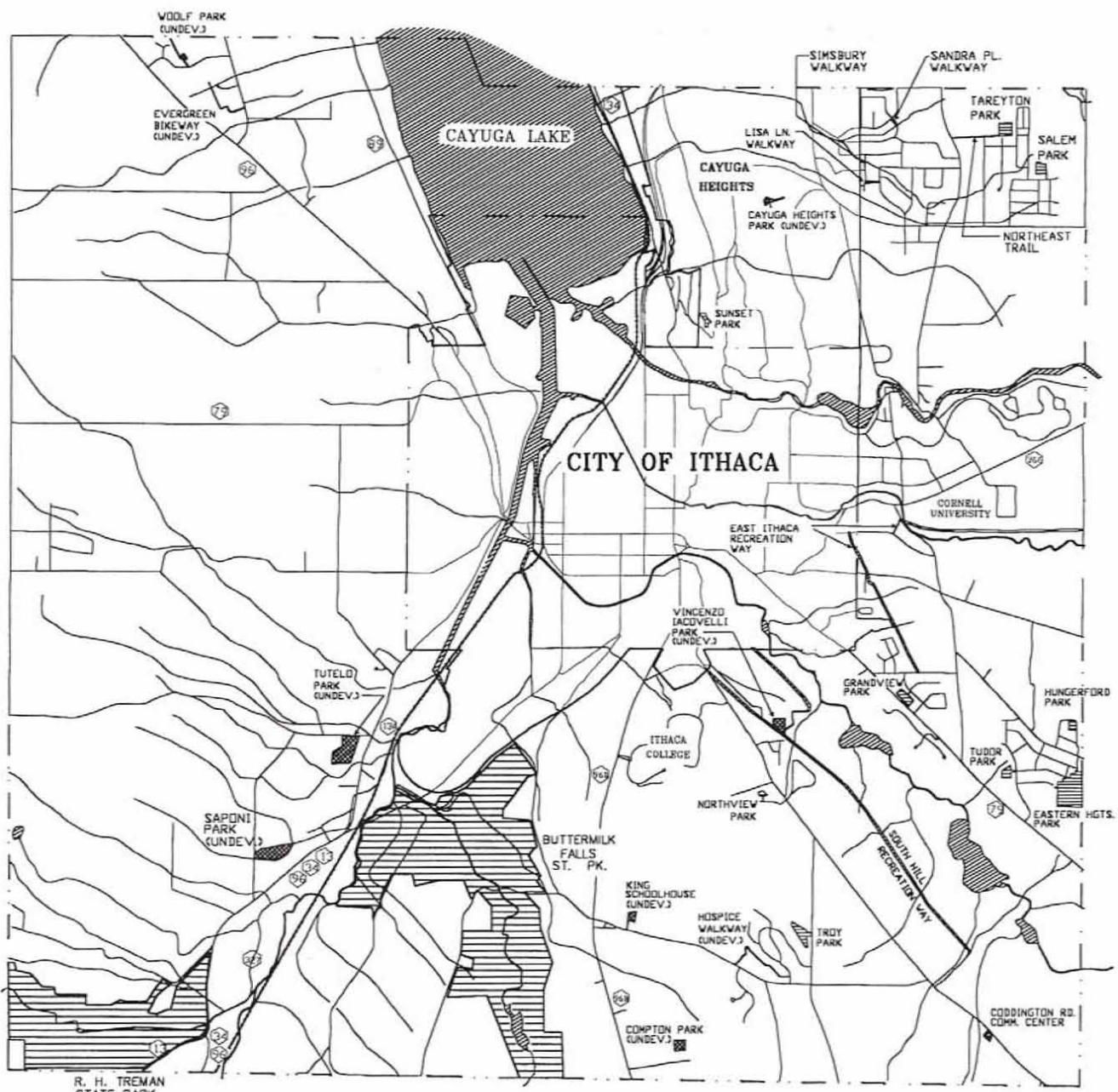
MAP3-1  
 EXISTING TOWN PARK  
 SYSTEM.

- KEY**
-  DEVELOPED
  -  UNDEVELOPED
  -  STATE PARK LANDS

NOTE: THE TWO PARKS WITHIN  
 CAYUGA HEIGHTS ARE OWNED AND  
 MAINTAINED BY THE VILLAGE.



MAP PREPARED BY:  
 TOWN OF ITHACA  
 PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
 126 EAST SENECA STREET  
 ITHACA, N.Y. 14850



R. H. TREMAN  
 STATE PARK

Students from Cornell University and Ithaca College account for 38% of the town's population (1990 Census of Population and Housing) While these institutions provide extensive recreational and athletic facilities for their students and employees, these facilities are not usually available to the general public. Nonetheless Cornell University and Ithaca College recreational facilities are considered important elements of this park and recreation inventory because they are a significant recreational resource for the town's student population.

In addition to athletic facilities, Cornell University maintains large amounts of open space that is utilized for informal passive recreational pursuits. The Cornell Plantations offer numerous opportunities for outdoor activities including walking, hiking, biking, sledding and cross country skiing. Off-season use of the University's Robert Trent Jones Golf Course is high among cross country skiers.

Table 3-1 presents the Ithaca City School District's (ICSD) recreational facilities, located at schools in both the Town and City, and available for limited use by local residents. Public use of the facilities is limited to those times when they are not being utilized by ICSD classes or sports teams. An exception is the exercise trail at DeWitt Middle School, which was built by and is maintained by the Town as a public facility.

**Table 3-1. Schools with Recreational Facilities in the Town**

School	Location	Facilities
Ithaca High School	Cayuga Street	running track, athletic fields, tennis courts, baseball/softball fields, swimming pool
Boynton Middle School	Cayuga Street	running track, athletic fields, tennis courts, baseball/softball fields
DeWitt Middle School	Warren Road	athletic fields, baseball/softball field, exercise trail
Northeast Elementary	Winthrop Drive	playground, play field
Cayuga Heights Elementary	Upland Road	playground

Even with the restrictions on use by the general public, school facilities provide important recreational opportunities for Town residents. This is especially true for the Northeast and Cayuga Heights elementary schools. The playgrounds at those schools to some extent serve as surrogate parks and relieve the need for the Town of Ithaca or Village of Cayuga Heights to develop neighborhood parks in those areas.

## **2. Regional Space: State Recreational Facilities**

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP) operates two state parks within the Town of Ithaca. The 750-acre Buttermilk Falls State Park encompasses Buttermilk Creek Gorge, Lake Treman, and wetlands in Inlet Valley. Robert H. Treman State Park covers 315 acres in the Town of Ithaca and

about 790 acres in the Town of Enfield. At its core is the Enfield Glen gorge. Both state parks have ballfields and facilities for camping, swimming, hiking, and picnicking.

Within Ithaca city itself is the Allan H. Treman State Marine Park, which encompasses some 75 acres of undeveloped woods, wetlands and lakefront in addition to its boat launching facilities, 413 slip marina and picnic areas.

Taughannock Falls State Park is located approximately six miles north of Ithaca in the Town of Ulysses. This park is centered on 215 ft. high Taughannock Falls and attendant gorge. It also features facilities for camping, swimming, hiking, and picnicking.

The local state parks have a challenging dual mission of providing recreation opportunities for the public while protecting the scenic, natural, and cultural resources within their boundaries. These parks are intended to serve a statewide population, and are national tourist attractions. However, local residents also enjoy these spectacular recreational resources and are prime contributors to the intense use of these parks. According to statistics from the Finger Lakes Region of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation gathered in 1994, Robert H. Treman and Buttermilk Falls State Park had a combined total of over 310,000 visitors. Allan H. Treman State Marine Park and Taughannock Falls State Park together hosted 620,000 visitors. Over 25% of these park-goers are residents of the Ithaca area.

Overuse of our local state parks is evidenced by the loss of grass and trees around heavily used day-use areas and a general decline in wildlife habitat throughout the parks. The damage done by overuse of local state parks was noted in the Draft Master Plan for Allan H. Treman State Marine Park in 1993: "Attendance at the day-use facilities of Robert H. Treman, Buttermilk Falls, and Taughannock Falls state parks has increased steadily. The efforts of park management at the three facilities to meet the increase in demand with existing resources are beginning to have a negative impact on the facilities."

Growing populations in the Town of Ithaca and Tompkins County are increasingly using the day use areas at our local state parks for picnicking, informal recreation and organized sports. In response to this overuse, NYS OPRHP is endeavoring to expand its borders to accommodate more visitors. Robert H. Treman State Park is developing an additional 33 acres at Lower Treman for an expanded entrance and day use area. A proposed expansion of the Allan H. Treman State Marine Park, to include more mooring slips and picnic facilities, is also pending. Clearly, building more recreational facilities in Tompkins County would relieve the burden local residents place on our state parks.

NYS OPRHP has received federal funding to construct the Black Diamond Trail bicycle path. When completed it will connect Robert H. Treman and Taughannock Falls State Parks with Cass Park, and Buttermilk Falls and Allan H. Treman State Parks in the city. The proposed Black Diamond Trail will extend about 15 miles from the Town of Ithaca northwestwards to Trumansburg. Construction is expected to be completed by 1999.

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) manages numerous wildlife management areas within Tompkins County that are available to residents for camping, hiking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and enjoying nature. The Connecticut Hill State Wildlife Management Area is located to the southwest in the Town of Newfield and Town of Enfield, on the Tompkins County boundary with Schuyler County. The Yellow Barn, Hammond Hill, Shindagin Hollow, Danby, and Newfield State Forests are located in the southern and eastern sections of the county.

### **3. Unique Space: Bicycle Trails and Walkways**

The Town owns and maintains approximately eight miles of off-road multi-use trails that provide safe and quiet paths for walking, jogging, strolling, bicycling, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing (Map 3-1). They are the Northeast Trail and DeWitt Exercise Trail, and the Lisa Lane, Simsbury and Sandra Place walkways in the Northeast section of the Town, the East Ithaca Recreation Way and the South Hill Recreation Way. Portions of the 3.3 mile South Hill Recreation Way and 2.2 mile East Ithaca Recreation Way pass through attractive woodland and meadows and afford local residents convenient access to high quality natural settings.

Multi-use trails in the Town of Ithaca provide residents with important commuter alternatives for pedestrians and bicyclists. The southern half of the East Ithaca Recreation Way connects the Pine Tree Road/Honness Lane/Grandview residential area with Cornell University, and is heavily used by bicycle and pedestrian commuters. The Northeast Trail is a popular off-road commuter route for students walking and bicycling between the residential area east of Warren Road and the DeWitt Middle School and Northeast Elementary School. Interwoven in this trail system are the Lisa Lane, Sandra Place, and Forest Home Walkways, which offer attractive, park-like linkages within their respective neighborhoods and afford a convenient commuter route to the Triphammer commercial centers. The South Hill Recreation Way also serves, to a limited extent, as a commuter route between South Hill residential areas, Ithaca College, and downtown.

Cornell Plantations maintains the Plantations Path, a unique 7-mile network of self-guided walkways, roads, and paths on the University's land. The Plantations Path begins at the Treman Triangle in the City of Ithaca, winds eastward through Cascadilla Gorge, crosses the Cornell campus, circles Beebe Lake, and wanders through the Cornell Plantations' botanical gardens and natural areas until it ends at the Newman overlook in Cornell's

arboretum. Both ends of the Path connect with other regional walking trails, including the Circle Greenway in downtown Ithaca and the Cayuga Trail hiking path along Fall Creek.

#### **4. Water Oriented Recreational Facilities**

Although there are over two miles of lake shoreline within the Town, there is no publicly owned waterfront on Cayuga Lake. Stewart Park in the city is the primary access point for waterfront recreation for Town residents. The park features picnic tables, pavilions, playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts, and nature trails. The 1/2 mile of lake shore provides opportunities for fishing and strolling. Another 1/2 mile of undeveloped lake shore at the Allan H. Treman State Marine Park, although public owned, is not readily accessible to the general public. Currently, public swimming is prohibited at both Stewart Park and Allan H. Treman State Park.

A segment of lake shore within the Town of Ithaca, currently used as a commercially operated marina, may be available for public recreational purposes in the future. The marina occupies approximately 1,200 feet of lake front off East Shore Drive and offers slip rentals, boat launching, and small sailboat and sailboard rentals. This property has been recently acquired by Cornell University for use as part of its proposed Lake Source Cooling project. Its potential for public recreational use however is unknown pending the outcome of the University's proposed project.

Public swimming pools available to Town residents include Cass Park Pool and Alex Haley Pool. Both are owned and maintained by the City of Ithaca. A very limited amount of public swimming is allowed at the Ithaca High School pool. Private swimming facilities include the YMCA and Ithaca Swimming Club pools in Lansing Village, the Helen Newman and Teagle Hall pools at Cornell University, and two pools on the Ithaca College campus. Various hotels in the area offer pool memberships to the community as well.

Boating is a prominent recreational activity for Town residents. Approximately 130 homes that line the lake shore in the Town have boat docks. An additional 1,000 seasonal-use boat slips are available at the Allan H. Treman State Marine Park, Ithaca Yacht Club, Myers Point, and the area's commercial marinas. However, these marinas also serve Broome, Tioga and Chemung Counties, forcing Town of Ithaca residents to compete on a regional basis for mooring space.

#### **5. Recreational Services**

The City of Ithaca Youth Bureau provides youth services for the residents of the Town of Ithaca through contract. The Town pays the Ithaca Youth Bureau for this youth programming. The Town also contracts with the Coddington Road Community Center and the Tompkins County Senior Citizen Council for recreational services. In 1996, the cost for the Youth Bureau services was \$160,000, the Coddington Road Community Center was allocated \$5,000

for a summer playground program, and the Senior Citizen Council was paid \$5,000 toward ongoing recreation programs for the elderly.

In addition to organized adult and youth sports leagues, Town residents may also participate in recreational programs available through the YMCA, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, 4-H, Cayuga Nature Center, and other activity centers. Seasonal programs and summer camps are also offered at Cornell University and Ithaca College.

## **6. Existing and Anticipated Land Use**

The Town of Ithaca encompasses an area of just under 19,500 acres, or about 30.5 square miles, including the Village of Cayuga Heights and Cayuga Lake. According to the Town of Ithaca Comprehensive Plan (1993), approximately 22% of the Town of Ithaca's land area is developed for uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses (education, churches, hospitals, government, etc.). (Map 3-2) The remaining 78% consists of agricultural (27%), recreational (6%), or other types of undeveloped open space such as woodland, brushland, meadowland, and bodies of water (45%). In 1990, approximately 26% of the Town's land area consisted of woodland, and another 16% brush or meadowland.

The Town of Ithaca can expect to see the conversion of approximately 800 acres, or 4% of its area, from undeveloped categories to developed categories of land use. Much of this conversion of land is expected to occur on West Hill and South Hill (Map 3-2). The Comprehensive Plan anticipates the need for an additional 1,230 dwelling units to accommodate expected population growth over the next two decades. This anticipated residential development is expected to require conversion of approximately 500 acres of existing undeveloped lands to such use. Future growth of the Cornell University campus may require another 200 acres, primarily in the University's "Precinct 7" area south of NYS Rte. 366 and north of Cascadilla Creek. Commercial and industrial development may consume an additional 50 to 100 acres.

## **7. Transportation Systems**

The Town of Ithaca has a transportation network consisting of the roadways, public and private bus systems, a freight railroad, bikeways, pedestrian walkways, and nearby passenger air services. Because of the topography of the Ithaca region, a predominantly radial road network converging on downtown Ithaca has evolved. This pattern of major roads constrains the ability of Town residents to move directly between East Hill, South Hill, and West Hill.

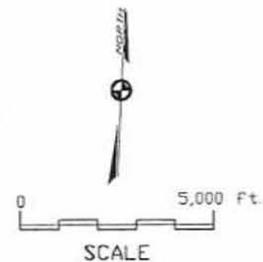
The public transportation system serving the Ithaca area includes Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT), Northeast Transit and Gadabout. TCAT is a public-private partnership created by the merger in 1996 of the City's

TOWN OF ITHACA  
1997 PARK  
RECREATION &  
OPEN SPACE PLAN  
DECEMBER 1997

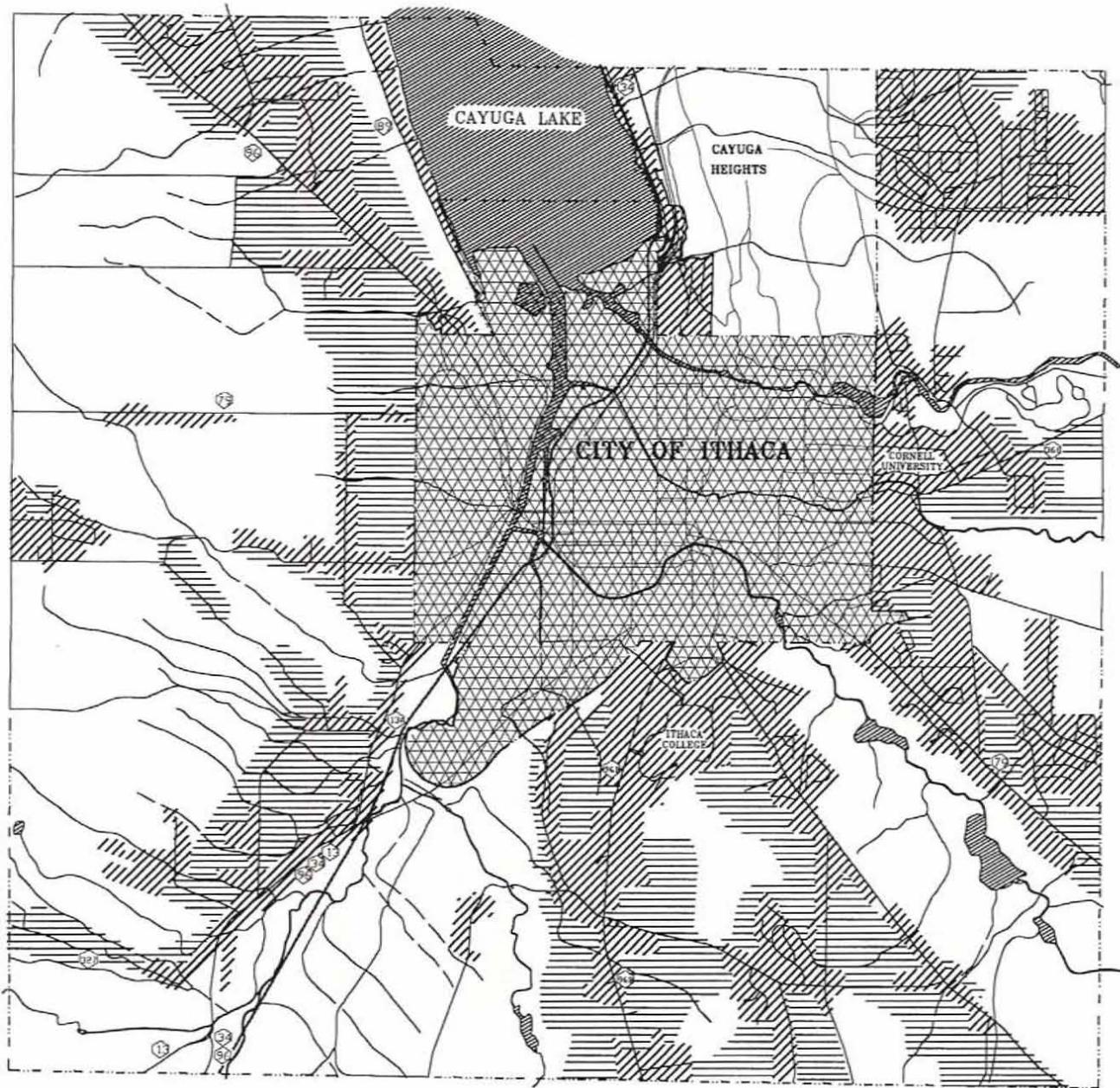
MAP 3-2  
EXISTING AND  
PROJECTED  
CONCENTRATIONS  
OF DEVELOPMENT

KEY

-  EXISTING DEVELOPED  
AREAS - 1995
-  ANTICIPATED AREAS OF  
NEW DEVELOPMENT:  
1995 TO 2010



MAP PREPARED BY:  
TOWN OF ITHACA  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
126 EAST SENECA STREET  
ITHACA, N.Y. 14850



Ithaca Transit, the County's TomTran, and Cornell's CU Transit bus systems. It serves the City and some parts of the Town, the Cornell University campus and many rural portions of Tompkins County. Northeast Transit serves the Northeast area of the Town and the Villages of Cayuga Heights and Lansing, connecting them to Cornell University and downtown Ithaca. Gadabout provides local paratransit service -- on call door to door service for the elderly and physically challenged -- throughout the Ithaca area.

While there is an extensive network of sidewalks in the Village of Cayuga Heights, there are limited sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities in the nearby sections of the Town of Ithaca. These facilities are concentrated on East Hill, especially in the Northeast section of the Town. Excluding the South Hill and East Ithaca Recreation Ways, the Town owns approximately 1.7 miles of walkways and bicycle paths. These include the Winthrop Drive and Texas Lane walkways serving the area north of Hanshaw Road; the Pleasant Grove walkway connecting Cornell University with Community Corners (partly owned and maintained by the Village of Cayuga Heights); the Mitchell Street walkway between the city and East Hill Plaza; and the Pine Tree Road walkway from Snyder Hill Road to East Hill Plaza.

On South Hill and West Hill, the Town has begun to develop networks of on- and off-street pedestrian and bicycle linkages. Approximately 1 mile of right-of-way has been acquired on South Hill for a path from the south end of Chase Lane to Whitetail Drive within the Deer Run development. About half of the route is located behind existing and future homes and away from streets and roads. There is potential for this path to extend north and west toward Ithaca College and the City. On West Hill, a right of way has been acquired or reserved as part of the subdivision approval process in the Woolf Lane/Duboise Road area. Development of an off-road bicycle/pedestrian path could extend southward via the Cayuga Medical Center/Tompkins County Biggs Building complex and future subdivisions to the city. The location of existing and future highways, public transit service, and bicycle and pedestrian linkages are important factors in locating park facilities intended for service areas larger than the immediate neighborhood.

## **8. Population**

According to the US Bureau of the Census, the Town of Ithaca in 1990 had a population of 17,797 persons, up from 16,022 persons in 1980. Of the 17,797 residents in 1990, 14,350 are classified for the purposes of this plan as "permanent residents." Permanent residents are those Town residents who do not live in the college dormitory complexes at Cornell University or Ithaca College. This number of "permanent residents" will be the baseline figure for analyzing the current and future park, recreation, and open space needs of the Town.

Student residents who live in college dormitories are excluded for the purposes of this report because they have available a wide variety of easily accessible outdoor recreational facilities on their respective campuses. Also in

some areas of the Town they represent a large proportion of overall population, especially on South Hill. Students who live in off-campus apartments or Cornell University family housing are counted as “permanent residents” because (1) they are not identified in the Census data, and (2) are less likely to have easy access to on-campus recreational facilities, and consequently are more reliant on Town facilities for their park and recreation needs.

The Town of Ithaca Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1993 projects that the total population of the Town of Ithaca, including both “permanent residents” and students, will increase to around 21,850 persons by the year 2010. Because Cornell University and Ithaca College both anticipate no growth in enrollments in the coming decades, this projected increase in population is expected to occur in the permanent resident population. By the year 2010 the Town park system thus can be expected to serve a population of 18,400 persons.

The distribution of the Town's population among age groups differs from the state as a whole, and Tompkins County (Table 3-2). The major area of divergence is in the 15 to 24 year old age brackets. As a proportion of total

**Table 3-2. Population by Age: New York State, Tompkins County and Town of Ithaca, 1990 (including students living in college dormitories & other group quarters).**

Age Group	State	Percent of Total	Tompkins County	Percent of Total	Town of Ithaca	Percent of Total
0 to 4	1,255,764	7%	5,298	6%	854	5%
5 to 9	1,178,006	7%	5,438	5%	818	5%
10 to 14	1,140,177	6%	4,723	6%	698	4%
15 to 19	1,230,127	7%	11,570	14%	3,121	18%
20 to 24	1,408,899	8%	16,322	18%	3,042	17%
25 to 29	1,564,617	9%	8,313	10%	1,479	8%
30 to 34	1,573,571	9%	7,548	8%	1,270	7%
35 to 44	2,724,685	15%	13,053	9%	2,248	13%
45 to 54	1,913,920	11%	7,597	7%	1,309	7%
55 to 64	1,636,967	9%	5,775	7%	1,112	6%
65 to 74	1,348,279	7%	4,684	5%	974	5%
75 to 84	767,270	4%	2,796	2%	581	3%
85 & older	248,173	1%	985	1%	291	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,990,455</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>94,097</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,797</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing.

population, these age groups are more than twice as large as the rest of the state. These age cohorts also represent the most active of all age groups in terms of participation rates for many recreational activities, according to the 1990 New York State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (NYSCORP).

A second factor related to population is the growth of the elderly population within the Town of Ithaca. According to the Town's 1993 Comprehensive Plan residents aged 65 and older represent the fastest growing age group in the Town. Since 1970 the proportion of residents age 65 or older almost doubled from 5.6% to 10.4%. It is anticipated in the Comprehensive Plan that this segment of the population will continue to grow.

Another factor in park planning related to population is income. According to the 1990 Census of Population and Housing, the median family income for the Town of Ithaca in 1989 was \$51,173. This is 29% above the median family income of \$39,741 for New York State as a whole. According to the 1990 NYSCORP, people with higher incomes were found to participate in outdoor recreational activities at a higher rate than those with lower incomes. In statewide surveys completed during the preparation of the NYSCORP, the highest income group (over \$50,000/yr.) had the highest participation rate in such activities as: watching spectator sports, golfing, cross-country skiing, ice skating, outdoor tennis, sailing, horseback riding, soccer, and downhill skiing. The research showed a positive correlation between increased income level and participation in outdoor activities such as sailing, tennis, softball, soccer, jogging, ice skating and downhill skiing.

Historically, the bulk of the Town's population has been concentrated on East Hill. Since the turn of the century, growth has tended to spread eastward and northward from the Cornell University campus and the Collegetown area. Since the mid-1950s, the areas of East Hill encompassing the Village of Cayuga Heights and the northeast corner of the Town have experienced substantial development. Since 1965 substantial residential and commercial development has occurred on East Hill south of Cascadilla Creek. Beginning in the late 1980s several large-scale residential developments have been built on South Hill south of the Ithaca College campus. In 1990, 55.4% of town residents lived on East Hill; 31.3% lived on South Hill; and 13.3% lived in West Hill and in Inlet Valley (1990 Census of Population and Housing).

With the building out of East Hill, development constraints on South Hill such as wetlands, mature woodlands and steep slopes, and completion of the Route 96/Octopus project the Town can expect West Hill to experience a higher level of residential development in the coming decades.

## CHAPTER 4

## ANALYSIS: EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION RESOURCES

## 1. EXISTING PARKS VERSUS EXISTING NEEDS

Based on national standards and its permanent resident population of 14,350 persons, the Town of Ithaca provides ample "close-to-home" neighborhood parks (Table 4-1).<sup>1</sup> The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) standards for neighborhood parks call for between 14 and 29 acres devoted to such facilities. The Town has nine developed parks with approximately 37 acres of existing neighborhood park space (including 1.2 acres at Sunset Park) and the potential for an additional 25 acres at six undeveloped park sites.

Table 4-1. Local Park Acreage vs. NRPA Standards

Park Category	Number of Town Parks	Suggested Acres/1000 People	Town Acres/1000 People	Town Acres Per Park Type	Suggested Number of Acres
Existing Neighborhood Parks*	10	1 to 2	2.5	+/- 37	N/A
Proposed Neighborhood Parks	6	1 to 2	1.8	+/- 25	N/A
Total Neighborhood Parks	16	1 to 2	4.3	+/- 61	14.4 to 28.8
Total Close-to Home Space	16	6.25 to 10.5	4.3	+/- 61	90 to 144

\* Including Sunset Park in Cayuga Heights.

While the Town greatly exceeds national standards for existing neighborhood parks, it lags behind the NRPA standards for public "close to home" space. The Town's total 4.3 acres of park space per 1,000 permanent residents is only 70 percent of the minimum national standard of 6.25 acres per 1,000 residents. It is less than one-half of the NRPA maximum recommendation of 10.5 acres per 1,000 residents. This deficiency is partly the result of the lack of community or area parks in the Town, which will be discussed later in this document.

Moreover, the existing Town park system is not evenly distributed. In terms of acreage, East Hill and South Hill have the bulk of the Town's close-to-home park space. Approximately 63% of the Town's permanent residents live on East Hill and have convenient access to 67% of the Town's developed parkland. South Hill is home to only 16% of the Town's permanent resident population, but is served by 28% of the Town's park space.

The East Hill area is served by six neighborhood parks totaling 25.6 acres. Given its permanent resident population of approximately 8,930 persons, this is equal to about 2.9 acres per 1,000 residents -- well above the national

<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of inventorying available park space, Sunset Park in Cayuga Heights is being included as a neighborhood park.

standard. More than half of this parkland, however, is tied up in the Eastern Heights Park location. Although this 14 acre facility is a high quality public park, its location is not conveniently accessible by most East Hill residents. Another deficiency identified in the East Hill area is the lack of Town park facilities within easy walking distance of residents in the densely populated area between Mitchell Street and Maple Avenue.

While South Hill may have a disproportionate share of Town park space, the accessibility of those parks to South Hill residents is problematic. The four existing and two future park facilities are not well distributed compared with the population of the area. Only about 50% of South Hill residents live within a convenient one-half mile walking distance of an existing or future park location. The neighborhood park at the Coddington Road Community Center is located a full 1.5 miles from the Deer Run/Chase Farm residential area and 2 miles from the Juniper Drive/Northview Road residential area.

Additionally, the Coddington Road Community Center is in an area that the *1993 Town of Ithaca Comprehensive Plan* has slated for very low density development through the next two decades. Thus while the Community Center is expected to continue its important role as a rural recreational facility for the southeastern corner of the Town, and adjacent portions of Danby, Caroline, and Dryden, it is not expected to serve as a neighborhood park for the entire South Hill area.

West Hill, home to 21% of the Town's permanent residents, currently has no developed park sites. An undeveloped park site in the Westwood Hills subdivision on the northern border of the Town, when developed, will constitute 4.7% of the Town's park space. For the vast majority of West Hill residents, there are no easily accessible public park or open space areas.

### **Community or Area Parks**

The Town of Ithaca does not own any large-scale community, or "area" parks. Area parks can host intense recreational activities, including larger scale athletic events, concerts, and festivals, and areas to accommodate large group gatherings such as reunions or weddings. Area parks serve a wide constituency which comes to the park and stays for several hours of relaxation and activities. Consequently, these parks must have more infrastructure, including roadways, parking facilities, comfort stations, and, in some cases, additional features such as concession stands, swimming pools, and ice rinks. Locally, Cass Park and Stewart Park within the City of Ithaca could be considered community or area parks.

### **Existing Public Active Recreational Facilities Versus Active Recreation Needs**

Facilities for formal and informal active recreational pursuits are an important component of the public park system. For the purposes of this report, "active recreational facilities" are facilities that meet minimum design

criteria for use in sanctioned sports events such as Youth Soccer, Little League Baseball, etc. These types of facilities provide for individual and team sporting events, from spur-of-the-moment pickup games of baseball, football, or soccer, to sanctioned league events such as those sponsored by the local Ithaca Youth Hockey Association, Kiwanis Baseball, Ithaca Amateur Softball Association, and other local organizations. They also provide places for individual recreational sports such as tennis, handball, golf, swimming, and jogging.

Table 4-2 compares the existing active recreational facilities in the Town of Ithaca to the NPRA nationwide standards. According to the NPRA standards the Town lacks adequate active recreational facilities in all categories. This does not mean, however, that opportunities for active recreation do not exist in the Town's park system. The playing fields of Tareyton, Eastern Heights, and Coddington Road Community Center are all appropriately sized and laid out to allow for informal baseball, softball, football or soccer games, although none of them are constructed to standards for sanctioned sports. Furthermore, while the Eastern Heights Park playing field is large enough to hold a regulation-size soccer field, and the Tareyton Park could accommodate a Little League standard baseball diamond, both parks lack the parking needed to serve such a facility, and the space needed to build such parking. The result is that Town residents who participate in the various local league sports must use facilities outside the Town of Ithaca park system. These include the facilities operated by the City of Ithaca at Cass Park and, through agreement with the State, at Buttermilk Falls State Park, and at the Town of Lansing Community Park.

**Table 4-2. Town Maintained Active Recreational Facilities Versus NRPA Standards**

Facility	National Standard	National Standard Applied To Town	Existing In Town
Basketball Courts	1/5,000	3	0
Handball Courts	1/20,000	1	0
Hockey Rinks	1/100,000	0	0
Tennis Courts	1/2,000	8 - 9	0
Baseball/Softball Diamonds (regulation)	1/5,000	3	0
Football Fields	1/20,000	1	0
Soccer Fields	1/10,000	1	0
Swimming Pools	1/20,000	1	0

A report entitled "The Joint Youth Commission of the Town of Ithaca and the Villages of Lansing and Cayuga Heights, Needs Assessment," compiled to better understand "the needs of under-served youth living in the three communities that the commission represented," states that 73.1% of youth in the represented communities are

involved in organized sports. These include: baseball, softball, soccer, basketball, skiing, hockey, football, swimming, lacrosse, volleyball, horseback riding, weight lifting and track.

According to the Census data presented earlier in Chapter 3, in 1990, 1,516 youths between the ages of 5 and 14 lived in the Town. Thus this 73.1% figure represents an approximate 1,100 Town of Ithaca youths who are involved in organized sports. Yet, as the previous page shows, the Town does not provide any facilities for such activities. The most frequent activity (80.8%) was sports. The second largest area of involvement by Town Youth in organized recreational activities noted in the survey is in the arts and humanities: band, chorus, choir, color guard, drama, arts and crafts.

Involvement in youth programs and activities is much less intensive in the summer months, with 42% of youths in represented communities not being involved in any summer activity. Summer sports camps were the most frequently mentioned activities. (While the Town does not offer summer youth programs, it has a contract with the City of Ithaca Youth Bureau for youth programs.)

Given the findings of the Joint Youth Commission, the Town's 11 to 14-year-old youth appear to be most underserved in terms of recreational opportunities, because they are too young to drive and yet too old to take advantage of many existing programs. The following quotations from the Joint Youth Commission's Needs Assessment help to illustrate the problem. "I think it's more challenging for the town kids. Some are better served by buses, others are not reached. So these youth, who don't have parents who can take them places, are reliant on school buses during the school year and are stuck during the summer . . . The one core program we got into is partly dependent on trail development. And to the extent that these serve as bike trails as well as hiking and ski paths, that will make kids more independent" (Page 56) and: "[the youth] they have the most difficult time with are from the Town of Ithaca, because nobody really knows, you're sort of invisible, and you're either a downtown kid or you're a rural kid . . . the needs of the kids from the Town of Ithaca, and the needs for the Village of Lansing kids, may not be getting met because there's nobody who recognizes this population of kids" (Page 68).

#### **Unique Space: Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

There are two major issues related to the resources defined by the NRPA as "unique space" within the Town of Ithaca's park system that need to be addressed in this Plan. They are the need for mechanisms to better protect existing unique space resources, including the Town's system of trails and the various existing preserves, and the need to expand the existing network of unique space.

The Town's trails and recreation ways are located within right of ways that range in width from 15 feet for the Northeast Trail to 66 feet. Experience has shown that in many instances 15 feet or 20 feet is an adequate right of

way width to accommodate a bicycle or pedestrian path.. The Town however should consider increasing the minimum width of such right of ways to 30 or 40 feet. There are a number of reasons for doing so. The Town would be better able to provide better buffering between the path and adjacent houses, thus enhancing the privacy and security of those homes. Terrain in many areas of the Town dictates a moderate level of earthmoving necessary to create a path with a uniform grade. In some cases an area up to 30 feet wide may be disturbed in the process of constructing a 10 foot wide path. Finally, additional right of way width would allow more opportunity to vary the alignment of a path and to incorporate landscape plantings to screen unsightly views and enhance its attractiveness for path users.

Most trail right-of-ways have been acquired through permanent easement or outright acquisition. The entire East Ithaca Recreation Way and a short portion of the South Hill Recreation Way, however, are located on land for which the Town has only revocable licenses. These licenses, from Cornell University for the East Ithaca trail, and New York State Electric and Gas Corporation (NYSEG) for 1,300 ft. of the South Hill trail, can be revoked upon ninety (90) days notice to the Town by the respective owner.

The possibility of revoking these licenses may be remote, yet it is something the Town has to consider and address. In the case of the South Hill Recreation Way, the issue has been resolved by an agreement between the Town and the City. According to the agreement, the City, in the event that NYSEG revokes the Town's license, will provide the Town with an easement for an alternative route. This new alignment would terminate at Coddington Road approximately 1,000 feet north of King Road. For the East Ithaca Recreation Way, however, there is no fallback route available at this time, nor are there any attractive candidates for alternative routes. The Town should try to get a permanent easement or fee title to the underlying land to assure continued public use of the Recreation Way.

West Hill currently has no off-road bicycle or pedestrian paths. However, there is the opportunity to develop an integrated network of such paths connecting residential areas, parks, centers of employment, neighborhood commercial areas, and open space resources as West Hill grows in the coming years. If planned now, these paths can be developed concurrently with the development of new residential neighborhoods.

While South Hill does have the South Hill Recreation Way, its location limits its accessibility to many residents in the area. Also, the residential development in the King Road/Ridgecrest Road/Deer Run area is isolated from the lower portion of South Hill and the City, except by automobile: a bicycle/pedestrian connector from the city to this area would provide both commuting alternatives and recreational opportunities for residents who live at the top of the hill in the East King, Troy and Ridgecrest Roads vicinity. Fortunately, as with West Hill, there is the opportunity to create on South Hill an integrated network of paths connecting residential areas with parks, centers of employment, neighborhood commercial areas, and open space resources.

The utility of existing and future trails and recreation ways can be enhanced by integrating them into a system of parks and open space. Through such integration the paths become both transportation linkages between homes, work, parks, and extensions of the parks themselves. The South Hill Recreation Way illustrates the benefits of such an approach. By passing through the future Vincenzo Iacovelli Park site, it provides a direct off-road connection to the park from over 70 surrounding homes. The South Hill Recreation Way can also serve as a catalyst for the acquisition and development of additional park and open space areas along its length. Future trails should be planned along alignments that would allow for a similar combination of path/park acquisition and development strategies.

### **Regional Space Versus Needs**

The Town of Ithaca is serviced by an abundance of regional space as defined by the NRPA, including Taughannock Falls, Allan H. Treman, Robert H. Treman, and Buttermilk Falls State Parks. In addition, several large tracts of state-protected forests and wildlife preserves are available just outside the Town boundaries. The State parks do provide many of the activities mentioned above, as do the city parks, all of which are used heavily by Town residents. It should be noted, however, that although these facilities are available to Town residents, they are not Town Parks. The capacity in which they serve the local residents differs from that of a Town park.

In a 1989 report published by New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, entitled: New York Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and Generic Environmental Impact Statement it states: "The State and federal governments play a more limited role in the operation of facilities that satisfy the daily recreation needs of New Yorkers, however, the state owns significant destination open space and recreation acreage that are unmatched by any other public entity. State owned recreation resources are frequently unique, picturesque and environmentally sensitive. Many state operated facilities also provide extended stay opportunities which allow for greater enjoyment of the statewide resources."

## **2. PROJECTED FUTURE NEEDS**

The Town of Ithaca is well on its way to meeting the first of the Goals set forth in Chapter Two: to "...provide an integrated system of parks and recreational facilities throughout the Town..." As it continues to grow in the coming years, however, it should acquire and develop additional park and recreational facilities and open space areas if it is to maintain the quality of its system. According to population projections in the 1993 Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Ithaca can be expected to be home to 18,400 permanent residents during the year. This 28 percent increase will require the development of a number of new park and recreation facilities between now and then. By planning now for future demand, however, the number, size, and location of these future parks can be optimized.

### **Neighborhood Parks**

In the category of neighborhood parks, according to the NRPA standards the Town today has more than adequate acreage to meet demand for such parks through the year 2010. The Town has a total of 61 acres available for neighborhood park development, versus a projected need of 18.4 to 36.8 acres. However, as stated above, these parks are unevenly distributed through the Town. East Hill is relatively well served with the exception of the Clover Lane/Maple Hill area. South Hill and West Hill are not served as well. Although the town has an easement to use and maintain the ballfield at South Hill's Coddington Road Community Center, that site is too isolated to serve as a neighborhood park for the majority of South Hill residents. To ensure that there is a neighborhood park within 1/5 to 3/4 mile walk of most Town residents, several new such parks will be needed.

In the case of South Hill, the problem appears to be one of distribution: the existing parks are not as centrally located to existing residential populations as is desirable. This situation would improve if future development in the area is channeled to a number of large tracts of land in the Coddington Road and Danby Road areas. Doing so would increase the number of residents within walking distance of the existing Troy Park and Northview Park, and the undeveloped Montessori and Vincenzo Iacovelli sites. It would also limit the need for additional neighborhood parks on South Hill to one or two: one in the area between Stone Quarry Road and Danby Road, should that area experience significant residential growth, and one to serve the existing Chase Farm neighborhood.

On West Hill the problem is the lack of public park, recreation and open space facilities to serve the area. As that portion of the Town develops there will be the need for a number of neighborhood parks. Given the anticipated development patterns on West Hill, up to six additional neighborhood parks may be needed in the coming decades. This will ensure a network of such parks within easy walking distance of the future homes slated for the area in the 1993 Comprehensive Plan.

### **Community or Area Parks**

Over the next two decades the Town of Ithaca will need to develop one or more community or area parks. The primary reason for this is that many of the facilities needed to accommodate active recreation are of a type which are not appropriate for neighborhood-scale parks. Some of these activities, such as organized softball, baseball, soccer, etc., can attract a larger number of users, from a broader area than the immediate neighborhoods, and tend to generate levels of noise which require distance to attenuate. Other activities, such as community-wide festivals and large gatherings such as family reunions, require both a larger scale facility to accommodate the number of participants they can attract, and to ensure adequate buffering for adjacent residential areas.

Because most area park users would live beyond walking distance, traffic impact and parking facilities are more important design considerations for these parks than for neighborhood parks. Future area parks should be located in such a way that they do not adversely impact surrounding residential streets.

Terrain is an important factor in locating community or area parks. The types of athletic facilities common to such parks require large, level areas. Thus the site should contain sufficient areas with slopes of five percent or less. Otherwise large amounts of earthmoving, at considerable expense and environmental disruption, would be necessary to develop these facilities.

While the Town currently does not have any area parks, there are possibilities for developing such parks in the future on West Hill and in Inlet Valley. Both the Saponi Meadows subdivision and Glendale Farm subdivision park land dedications are large enough to support at least some of the facilities common to area parks. Each site also features areas of flat or gently rolling land large enough to accommodate athletic fields.

### **Water-Oriented Recreation**

As the Town of Ithaca continues to grow it can expect the demand for water-oriented recreation to grow as well. According to the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, swimming pools and beaches are among the top five expressed facilities needed by the public. Swimming pools were consistently ranked as a top need in all regions of the state.

As stated in Chapter Three, the Town does not have any publicly owned access to Cayuga Lake. Instead, Town residents rely on Stewart Park and Cass Park as their primary access points for waterfront recreation. However, neither of these facilities are designed for or intended to serve a regional need, and are showing evidence of overuse. The Town of Ithaca, if it desires to provide its residents with public access to Cayuga Lake, should investigate a cooperative arrangement with Cornell University. The University's Lake Source Cooling Project might afford such an opportunity for public access at the East Shore Sailing lake front property on East Shore Drive

Based on the National Recreation and Park Association standards, there should be one public swimming pool per 20,000 residents. The Cass Park and Alex Haley pools operated by the City of Ithaca, if the Town of Ithaca and Village of Lansing are counted in their service area, currently serve a permanent resident population of approximately 36,000 people. This service population is within the NRPA standards. Given a projected population of 18,400 permanent residents by the year 2010, it does not appear that the Town will need to develop such a facility between now and then. However, the combined population growth of the Town of Ithaca and Village of Lansing can be expected to reach or surpass the optimum service population of the two City pools around the year

2010. At that time, the need for a third swimming pool may arise and, given its anticipated population, the Town should be prepared to consider such a facility.

### **Regional Space**

There is not expected to be any need for the Town of Ithaca to supply additional regional-type park facilities in the coming decades. The provision of additional park space in the neighborhood, and area park categories is expected to adequately serve the needs of Town residents. Moreover, the development of an additional 54 to 120 acres of close-to-home space needed to meet the NRPA standards outlined in Figure 4-3., including area parks, can ease some problems of overuse experienced by those facilities.

The Town is also in a position to contribute directly to the inventory of regional space as residential development occurs in the coming decades. A number of large tracts of land abutting Buttermilk Falls, Robert H. Treman, and Allan H. Treman State Parks may be subdivided and developed in the near future. In addition, there are several tracts adjacent to the City Watershed and Mulholland Wildflower Preserve, the Coy Glen and Clausen Swamp Natural Areas of Cornell Plantations, and the Sweedler Preserve (Lick Brook) of the Finger Lakes Land Trust that could experience development in the near future.

Due to their locations, the character of the terrain, and expected small need for park space to serve them and the surrounding area, the use of cluster subdivision combined with park and open space dedication could result in substantial additions to these local recreation and open space assets. Such methods offer the opportunity to increase the amount of natural buffer space between the core areas of these parks or preserves and new residential development, provide additional regional park space, and protect sensitive ecological resources.

The Town would forego the opportunity to increase the size of its park system, either through acquisition of land, or by loss of any possible fees in lieu of land, by using its powers under its subdivision regulations to enlarge the above mentioned properties. At the same time however it would achieve a major goal of the *1993 Comprehensive Plan* as well as the goals and objectives of this Plan by preserving critical open space and ecological resources, and doing so in a manner that reduces the Town's future operating and maintenance costs, and potential liability exposure that would result from Town assumption of ownership of the land.

### 3. COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990

*"Access to recreation facilities and outdoor developed recreation areas is a valuable right for people with and without disabilities."* Recreation Access Advisory Committee, ADA Access Board.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. The Act requires that, to the extent practicable, all facilities opened to the general public, regardless of whether they are publicly or privately owned, must be accessible to all persons regardless of their physical capabilities. It is intended, among other things, to open up local government services such as parks and recreational facilities to the 43 million Americans with disabilities.

If the Town of Ithaca is to meet the goal of this plan "...To provide for adequate recreational services for all Town residents...", the Town will need to integrate the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act into the planning and design of all future park facilities. In addition, it needs to evaluate all existing facilities for compliance with ADA requirements, and embark on a program to upgrade those facilities to meet the new standards for accessibility. Many of the Town's parks are not in compliance with ADA standards. They are especially deficient in the ADA standards for accessible routes and assembly areas.

Under ADA standards an accessible route must be constructed in a manner that results in a "firm, stable, and slip resistant" surface in all types of weather conditions. In addition, the route must be at a gradient that is not excessive, generally not exceeding a 1:12 slope, and of a width adequate to accommodate a wheelchair or personal walker. The route must connect all activity areas within a park or recreation facility, including comfort facilities and parking areas. Because of their design the existing Town parks lack the type of path systems that would qualify as "accessible routes." In most of the parks the path system beyond the entrance path consists of wood chip or turf paths, and semi-developed woodland hiking trails. Large areas of the park system are thus inaccessible to disabled residents.

Many assembly areas within Town parks also fail to meet ADA standards for accessibility. These include amenities such as play structures, benches, athletic fields, and picnic areas. These problems of accessibility can, in large measure, be resolved by upgrading the path systems within Town parks to ADA standards. One example would be constructing a suitably paved path between a designated handicapped parking space and a paved area adjacent to the playing field at Eastern Heights Park. (Recreation Access Advisory Committee, ADA Access Board, July 1994). In some cases however, modifications to specific facilities within a park, such as individual picnic sites or play structures, may be required.

*AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT & TOWN PARKS -- THE CHALLENGE*

Accessible Route. Accessible routes of suitable surfacing are required between all accessible buildings, places of assembly, comfort facilities, and other recreational, cultural, or scenic elements of a park, including fields of play for sports. An "accessible route" is defined as being "A continuous unobstructed path connecting all accessible elements of a building or facility...[and] may include corridors, floors, ramps, elevators, lifts, and clear floor space at fixtures...parking access aisles, curb ramps, crosswalks at vehicular ways, walks, ramps, and lifts."

Assembly Areas. The ADA definition of accessible goes beyond the provision of an accessible route. Facilities to accommodate the special needs of the disabled must also be made available at the assembly area at the end of their route. An "assembly area" is defined as a room or space accommodating a group of individuals for recreational, educational, political, social, or amusement purposes, or for the consumption of food and drink. In a park an assembly area can take a variety of forms, for example an open lawn area, a picnic pavilion, a play structure, or bleachers at a baseball diamond or other sports facility. Assembly areas must accommodate the needs of the disabled, including, for instance, a fixed companion seat adjacent to each wheelchair seating area.

In many instances the modifications needed can be relatively simple and inexpensive. An example is the provision of accessible picnic facilities. In general, this has required providing an appropriate number of sites with a picnic table designed to allow a person in a wheelchair to pull up to the table; ensuring that the height of the grill is appropriate; that the entire area is paved to ensure ease of mobility. The site must also be connected by accessible route to the main path system of the park. Today it takes no special effort to provide and equip these types of facilities with tables, grills, and other appliances necessary to accommodate the needs of handicapped users. These products are readily available from park and recreation suppliers nationwide.

The accessibility of play structures within Town parks is an important issue with regard to compliance with ADA standards. These facilities qualify as assembly areas, and as such must be designed to be accessible to disabled residents. Although a detailed assessment of each play structure is necessary to determine the extent of noncompliance with the ADA standards, in general the Town's play structures share similar deficiencies. The primary deficiency with regard to ADA is the lack of firm, stable, and skid resistant surface around and beneath individual play structures. The standard pea stone gravel used by the Parks Department under play structures does not provide the type of surface needed.

In addition, the play structures themselves must be constructed in a manner that allows access by persons with disabilities. As with other facilities within Town parks, the modifications to existing play structures needed to comply with ADA standards are likely to be relatively simple. They may include features such as a transfer platform to allow a child who uses a wheelchair to leave the wheelchair and access the play structure. This and

other modifications can result in play structures that can comply with the law and in doing so better serve all children of the Town.

In the future, the development of park and recreational facilities by the Town of Ithaca should incorporate, by design, compliance with ADA standards to the extent practicable. While full compliance with ADA standards is a highly desirable goal, there are, and will be, certain park and open space facilities owned by the Town that, by their nature, cannot comply with ADA standards, nor under ADA are they expected to. Among such facilities are outdoor recreation areas that are intended to be left in a natural or semi-natural condition, with minimal development.

Also, in the Town of Ithaca terrain can be a major obstacle to achieving compliance with ADA standards. The "hill section" of the South Hill Recreation Way is an example of the problem of balancing compliance with ADA standards and local terrain. To meet ADA standards would have required that portion of the path to be at over 2.5 times longer than it is -- 4,000 feet instead of 1,500 -- with significantly increased cost and environmental disruption. However while that portion of the Recreation Way may not comply with the ADA standards, the placement of benches and level pull-off rest areas mitigates somewhat the problems to handicapped users of noncompliance.

Despite the challenges posed by terrain and other physical constraints, the Town of Ithaca, can comply to the extent practicable with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Increased sensitivity in the planning and design stages of parks and recreational facilities can result in high quality ADA-compliant facilities at little or no additional cost.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RECOMMENDATIONS: PARK AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

#### I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter synthesizes the Goals and Objectives outlined in Chapter One, and the issues raised in Chapters Two and Three into a series of recommendations for the Town of Ithaca. Some of these projects may be carried out solely by the Town, while others could be cooperative efforts with neighboring municipalities, New York State, not-for-profit conservancies, developers, or private landowners. Through such cooperative ventures the Town can meet the park, recreation, and open space goals of this Plan in the most cost efficient manner possible. This report recommends that:

1. The Town of Ithaca strive to develop an ambitious core system of parks providing 10 acres of close-to-home space per 1,000 people.
2. The Town of Ithaca embark on a two-prong effort to ensure that, to the extent practicable, its entire park system complies fully with the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

These recommendations will ensure that Town residents, now and in the future, will continue to enjoy a high quality of life with enhanced health, fitness, and recreational opportunities. This developing park system will have 110 acres of neighborhood and area parks and undeveloped natural areas. It will be interconnected by a 70-acre network of greenways through which will run some 28 miles of bicycle and pedestrian paths. When completed, this park system will provide 10 acres of close-to-home space per 1,000 people. It will rank high according to the NRPA standards, which call for 6.25 to 10.5 acres of parks per 1,000 people.

There are many sites in the Town of Ithaca that are appropriate for community parks. To acquire these sites for anticipated future park needs, the Town should use a combination of park and open space dedications through its subdivision approval process, and purchase where necessary. Map # 5-1 presents suggested locations for future park locations.

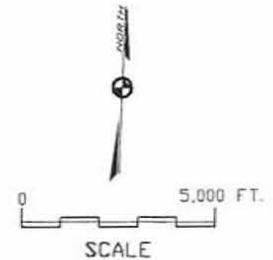
Aggressive planning for park development now will pay off in the future. These facilities should be planned while high quality park sites, pedestrian and bicycle routes, and important ecological open space resources are still undeveloped and available. The planning opportunities the Town currently has will diminish as development occurs in the coming years. By planning and taking action now the town can meet goals in the most efficient and cost-effective manner for taxpayers.

TOWN OF ITHACA  
 1997 PARK  
 RECREATION &  
 OPEN SPACE PLAN  
 DECEMBER 1997

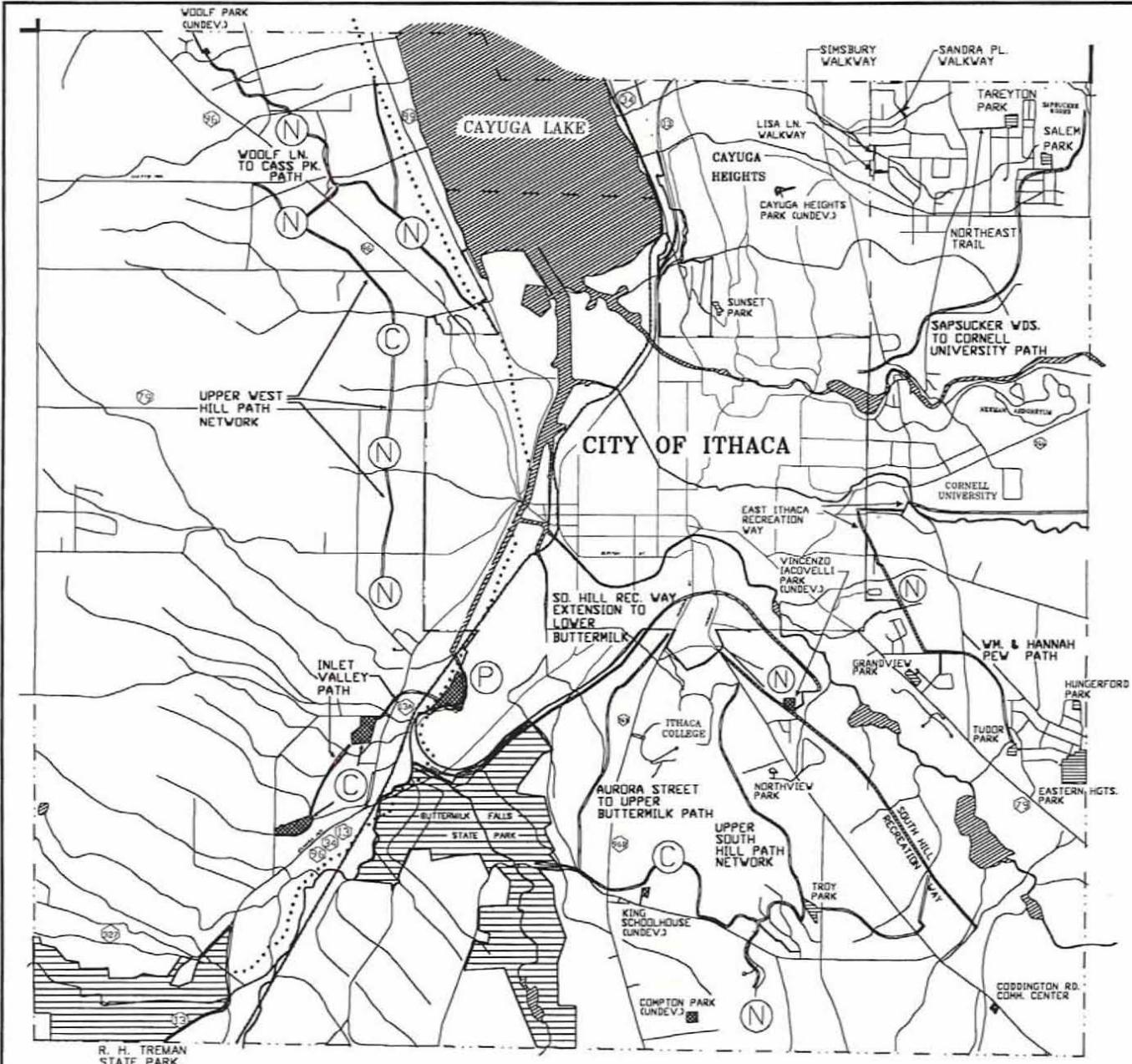
MAP 5-1  
 PROPOSED FUTURE  
 PARKS & BICYCLE/  
 PEDESTRIAN PATHS

KEY

- (N) FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- (C) FUTURE COMMUNITY PARK
- (P) INLET VALLEY PRESERVE
- FUTURE BIKE/PEDESTRIAN PATH
- \*\*\* PROPOSED BLACK DIAMOND TRAIL (N.Y. STATE)
- ▨ EXISTING TOWN PARK/ RECREATION FACILITY



MAP PREPARED BY:  
 TOWN OF ITHACA  
 PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
 126 EAST SENECA STREET  
 ITHACA, N.Y. 14850



## General Recommendations

The following are a number of general recommendations related to park, recreation, and open space planning in the Town of Ithaca.

**1. Investigate Consolidation of Town Park System With Other Local Systems.** The Town of Ithaca should investigate the feasibility of joining with the City of Ithaca, and the Villages of Lansing and Cayuga Heights, in a consolidated park system. Consolidation of park systems would eliminate duplication of efforts and facilities, and the use of optimize scarce public resources.

**2. Continue Efforts Toward Consolidation of Recreational Programs.** In 1995 the Recreation Partnership, an experimental two-year pilot program was established by twelve of Tompkins County's sixteen municipalities, including the Town of Ithaca. The Partnership allows full access by residents of participating municipalities to all programs offered by the City of Ithaca Youth Bureau. Additionally, City owned facilities at Cass and Stewart Park have been used for these recreational programs, and City staff responsible for program administration.

The Town of Ithaca should continue moving toward the consolidated delivery of recreational services to its youth and other residents. The Town now relies on the recreational programs and facilities available through the Recreation Partnership to provide recreational programming for its youth. These are supplied through the Partnership at a cost that is substantially less than if the Town were to offer such programming on its own.

A committee appointed by the Partnership municipalities has reviewed the programs and budgets and has recommended some program improvements and cost savings. In addition, the committee has developed a plan to sustain and strengthen services through 1998. This plan is contingent upon a continued financial commitment of the Town of Ithaca and other participants. As long as it is to the Town's benefit financially, it should continue to participate.

There are already local models for such intermunicipal cooperation: Southern Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Water System, Ithaca Area Waste Water Treatment Plant, and the Ithaca Fire Department are three successful partnerships involving the Town of Ithaca. Partnerships on an informal basis include the East Ithaca and South Hill Recreation Ways, which serve both city and town residents.

**3. Establish a Policy for Naming Park Facilities.** The Town of Ithaca should establish a policy to be used in the naming of Town parks. This policy may include a list of names the Town may want to assign

to parks in specific areas. The Town should also develop guidelines for memorializing donations of land or money for the purpose of enhancing the Town's park system. These guidelines would be similar in nature to those used by colleges and universities.

The naming of Town parks is currently an ad hoc process, with no formal guidelines for choosing park names. Many Town parks bear the name of a surrounding subdivision or adjoining street, or the working name applied by staff during a preliminary planning phase. The selection of Town park names is an opportunity for the Town to call attention to a unique attribute of a location, or to memorialize an event or person of significance in Town history.

By establishing such guidelines, the Town can encourage private contributions to the development of its park system of the future. Within the past two years there have been donations of a park site, play ground equipment, and the offer of a bicycle/pedestrian path easement in honor of one or more persons. Other Town residents may wish to contribute to the Town for such purpose.

**4. Use Private Sector Contractors for Major Capital Improvements to Parks.** Today the Town Parks and Highway Departments are responsible for capital improvements to the parks system in the Town of Ithaca. However as the system has grown, more staff and equipment resources have been allocated to maintenance activities. Recent experience has shown that it is not as feasible as it once was for the two departments to embark on major construction projects and at the same time maintain the existing road and park infrastructure. Nor do the Town Planning and Engineering Departments have the staff resources required to design and oversee construction of major projects. The Town should thus consider contracting out to private sector contractors the design and construction of major capital improvement projects for its parks.

**5. Tap Volunteerism to Help Care For Town Park and Open Space Assets.** The Town of Ithaca should encourage the establishment of one or more "friends of the parks" groups to assist in the care of its park system. Such groups have been proven to be extremely successful in communities across the nation. They have served as suppliers of volunteer labor to supplement the resources of municipal park departments, and have raised money for park improvement projects through a variety of fund raising mechanisms. In some communities such groups have reduced incidents of park vandalism and resulting higher park maintenance costs through increased neighborhood vigilance. A number of Town residents have already suggested some sort of citizens' organization to Town staff. The City of Ithaca through Cooperative Extension has also had some success in tapping citizen volunteers through the Master Pruner program.

**6. Aggressively Pursue Grant Opportunities.** The Town of Ithaca, in adopting this Plan, will position itself to seek matching grant funding from a variety of outside sources. More and more grant programs require that applicants have in place an up to date park and open space plan that both documents local needs and provides a coherent framework for meeting those needs. With this Plan in place the Town should begin pursuing outside funding for acquisition and capital improvement projects within its park system.

### **Meeting the Need for Close-to-Home Space: Neighborhood Parks**

In the coming decades, the Town of Ithaca should develop neighborhood parks to serve areas that experience residential development. Future park designs should be flexible in both form and function, combining park land, open space, and trail dedications to best serve the needs of the community. The goal is to provide a public park within reasonable walking distance of most homes. Building parks according to the accepted NRPA standards will help optimize the cost of maintenance of the Town's park system.

#### **East Hill**

A small park is needed to serve the Maple Avenue/Mitchell Street/Homestead Circle area. There is a large population of young children in the area, most of whom live in the large apartment complexes at Maple Hill and Maplewood.(Map 5-1)

#### **South Hill**

Two neighborhood parks are recommended to complement Northview Park and Troy Park. The Town has acquired the 3.5-acre Vincenzo Iacovelli site for one of these proposed new parks. The second park should be located within or nearby the Chase Farm development. Plans to connect these proposed and existing parks with a future community park, and a future network of bicycle and pedestrian linkages to serve the neighborhood park needs of South Hill residents in the coming decades are presented later in this chapter under Unique Space: Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities.

The Town of Ithaca is expected to acquire through the subdivision park and open space dedication process a neighborhood park site within the Buttermilk Valley Estates development. This park will adequately serve the future homes in that area of the town.

If in future years extensive residential development is approved in the area bounded by Danby Road on the east and Stone Quarry Road on the south and west, the acquisition and development of a neighborhood park may be desirable in that area.

The Town should also dispose of the 1.5 acre Compton Road park site located on South Hill. This site was acquired as part of a subdivision approved in 1986. At that time a cul-de-sac road northward from Compton Road, and a 20 foot wide right of way from the end of that cul-de-sac were to provide access to the park. The subdivision as approved consists of four lots along Compton Road, with the proposed road to serve a second phase located behind the lots on Compton Road. No lot configuration for the second phase is shown on the approved plat, and no timetable for construction of the road is given.

In recent years significant wetland areas have been identified on several of the larger surrounding tracts of land, calling into question their suitability for large scale residential development. The Comprehensive Plan does not anticipate a scale of development that would warrant such a park in that area, but instead designates the area as suitable for "rural residential" uses.

Such action by the Town is likely to be subject to State parkland "alienation" process. This would entail identifying one or more substitute park sites and getting approval from the Legislature. The land proposed for a community park north of East King Road is recommended as one such site.

### **West Hill**

There is only one neighborhood park on West Hill due to its slower rate of development. However, based on the population projections in the 1993 Town of Ithaca Comprehensive Plan, there may be sufficient populations to justify five new neighborhood parks through the subdivision approval process. Five proposed locations for these neighborhood parks are listed below.

**The Biggs Area:** Tompkins County owns approximately 25 acres bounded by Dates Drive, Indian Creek Road, Trumansburg Road, and Dubois Road that are suitable for residential development. Depending on the future use of the Biggs Complex, a park in this area could be oriented toward serving both a residential population and a daytime workforce constituency.

**Cayuga Cliffs** (Behind the former Odd Fellows Home): This 100+ acre site has been designated for "suburban residential" and "conservation/open space" uses in the Comprehensive Plan. Topographic constraints of the land preclude many types of development and are best suited for a neighborhood park dedication in combination with monies-in-lieu-of land arrangement. Moreover, the eastern quarter of this parcel consists of steep slopes, highly erodible soils, and mature woodland. Preservation of this sensitive portion should take priority over park acquisition and development. There is an opportunity to acquire a bicycle and pedestrian connector from Cass Park to the hospital and Biggs complex and beyond.

**Trumansburg and Hopkins Roads:** Three tracts of land totaling about 150 acres in this area are designated for “suburban residential” use in the Comprehensive Plan. If any of these parcels are developed, the remaining western fringe of the area should be designated for less intense “rural residential” use. It would also be appropriate to create a neighborhood park using land dedications and monies in lieu of land through the subdivision approval process.

**Cliff Park Brook:** A larger than standard neighborhood park is proposed to be located near Cliff Park Brook in the area bounded by Mecklenburg Road, West Haven Road, Elm Street and the Town/City line. Overall there are over 150 acres of land with residential development potential in this area. It is designated for “suburban residential” uses in the Comprehensive Plan. Thus, there is the opportunity for the Town to use a combination of land dedication and monies in lieu of land to develop such a park. A park for this area can also be located to serve portions of the West Hill area of the city, and be developed with financial assistance from the City of Ithaca.

If development of adjacent lands to the south occur, this future park could incorporate the stream corridor itself. It could then serve a dual purpose of providing a neighborhood recreational resource and preserving a key open space corridor along Cliff Park Brook.

**Elm Street and Coy Glen Road:** A mini-park in this area could serve both future residential development and the southwest corner of the city. This area is designated for “suburban residential” development in the Comprehensive Plan, and contains a +/- 30 acre and a +/- 15 acre tract of land that have development potential. As with other areas on West Hill, there is the opportunity to combine dedication of land with monies in lieu of land.

#### **Meeting the Need for Close to Home Space: Community or Area Parks.**

Chapter Three highlighted the Town’s need to develop two or more community or area parks in the near future. These parks will accommodate large-scale recreational activities and organized league sports such as softball, baseball, and soccer that attract many participants and have the potential to generate high levels of noise and traffic. This plan recommends that these community parks be large enough for these activities, and provide adequate buffer space between those activities and adjoining residential developments.

A minimum site area of 8 to 10 acres is recommended to provide adequate protection for adjacent residential areas from some of the activities envisioned for these parks. Space for buffer areas is also important for specific park facilities, such as picnic areas. Part of the recreational value of family picnics and larger functions such as

reunions, weddings, or other group gatherings is the sense of place created by the park environment. While an athletic competition can occur within the view of these types of recreational gatherings without detracting from them, the intrusion of outside activities and sights, such as adjacent homes, highways, or commercial or industrial development, can detract significantly from the recreational value of such events.

Because of the types of activities envisioned for these parks and their potential impacts on adjoining areas, it is recommended that more than one community park be developed. This strategy will allow for the potential adverse impacts of such facilities and associated activities to be dispersed and minimized. Moreover, to dissipate the traffic impacts generated by these larger parks, primary park entrances should be located on the major roadways within the Town.

**Inlet Valley Park Complex:** The two park sites recently acquired as part of the Glendale Farm and Saponi Meadows subdivisions, each approximately 8.5 acres in size, have the potential of being joined by a park/greenway system through an adjacent 75-acre parcel. Although they would not constitute one large contiguous park, the Inlet Valley parks could still serve the functions expected of a community park. The stream corridor between the two sites features a band of woods and brush ranging in width from 200 to 400 feet. Together with a small area of woods immediately adjacent to the Glendale Farm site, it could constitute a 7+/- acre park and open space dedication to the Town. From aerial photos it appears that several areas of wetlands exist along the stream. This corridor could thus accommodate both a high quality pedestrian and bicycle link between the two larger parks, and a wildlife and stream corridor protection zone.

The Saponi Meadows site is suitable for the development of facilities for organized sports. The site, consisting of level to rolling farm fields, is large enough to provide a buffer zone between those facilities and future homes, and offers easy access from Seven Mile Drive. The opportunity for a play structure, picnic facilities, and other types of recreational activity also exists on the site.

Approximately 50 percent of the Glendale Farm park site consists of a relatively level field. The rear portion of the site features a tree and brush covered hill with a small wetland at its base. This park site is suitable for a combination of activities, ranging from organized sports to quiet walks through the wooded portion. The site is easily accessible off Bostwick Road, and contains areas suitable for parking.

While the potential for buffering surrounding properties from the noise impacts of organized sports activities is not as large as at the Saponi Meadows site, this site is nonetheless suited for such activities: the open field area is bounded on the north by Bostwick Road and the Ithaca City School District bus

maintenance facility, on the west by the future First Assembly of God Church, and on the south by the remainder of the park. To the east a thick hedgerow of mature trees buffers two existing homes.

Subdivision and development of a 75 acre parcel immediately south of the Glendale farm site could allow for the acquisition of a small stream just outside the site, and a right of way for bicycle and pedestrian access to Five Mile Drive and points south and east.

**West Hill Park:** The area of West Hill between Mecklenburg Road (NYS Rte. 79) and Bundy Road offers the opportunity for a community park to serve as both a neighborhood park for adjacent neighborhoods in the Town and the City, and as a community-wide park. The area consists of two large tracts of land, both with high potential for residential development in the coming decades, and together could contribute as much as 20 acres of woodland, rolling meadows and relatively flat fields for a large, multi-use community park. The proposed West Hill community park could accommodate a variety of recreational activities and facilities for organized sports, picnic, and other day uses including the attendant parking and traffic circulation infrastructure. The existing 9 acres of woodland provides opportunity for a variety of activities, and is situated so that it could also serve as a buffer between areas of high intensity uses and the existing City neighborhood to the east.

Primary access to this future park would be from the north-south connector road envisioned to connect Bundy Road and Mecklenburg Road. A second access from Oakwood Lane in the City is possible. The City owns a street right-of-way from Oakwood Lane west to the City/Town line. This right of way is designated as a future street connection into the Town of Ithaca, and future access to the West Hill park site, in the City's *West Hill Master Plan* adopted in 1992. The City in the Master Plan anticipates the development of a park in this area of the Town, and its use by residents of the area north of Hector Street.

An alternative site for this community park could be at or near the intersection of Rte. 79 and West Haven Road. This site is easily accessible, open, and free of major environmental constraints.

**Cayuga Inlet Preserve.** In addition to the above recommendations for parks on West Hill, the Town should follow through on the long-standing proposal to acquire the former Knight Meat Market property and adjacent lands in Inlet Valley for park and open space purposes. This land has been identified as part of a joint Town-City park which would straddle the Cayuga Inlet.

Earlier park proposals for the land (*1984 Park & Open Space Plan*) include the development of active recreational facilities such as soccer and baseball fields. Since 1984, however, wetlands and a number of

other environmental constraints have been identified on the site. A portion of the site is located within the Negundo Woods (IT-34) unique natural area. It is recommended that future development of this site for public park purposes be limited in nature, and geared toward maintaining its natural character and preserving the significant ecological attributes of the site.

**South Hill Park:** A third community park is proposed for future development on the South Hill. The opportunity exists for a park approximately 10 acres in size north of East King Road, at a point where three tracts of land totaling approximately 115 acres come together. A contiguous park site could be assembled through the subdivision park and open space dedication process, as those parcels are developed.

The proposed South Hill park could accommodate a baseball/softball diamond, tennis courts, children's play areas, and other day use facilities. The site consists of a combination of open fields and old field forest with slopes generally in the range of approximately 8%. This slope would require some earthmoving to construct a baseball field, but the cost of such grading would not be prohibitive.

Although not located directly on a major road, the site is just off East King Road, and would be accessible via a network of streets which would be constructed as part of future residential development in that area. The site can also be connected via bicycle/pedestrian paths to the Deer Run and other residential areas to the east, and Ithaca College and the Coddington Rd./Northview Rd./Juniper Drive neighborhood to the north.

**Tareyton Park Improvements:** In addition to the above proposals for new community parks, the Town should investigate the feasibility of upgrading the existing playing field at Tareyton Park to regulation standards for youth-oriented baseball or softball leagues. There is enough room on the site for a Little League or Pee Wee League regulation-size baseball field, and for a small (12-15 space) parking lot. Given the scale and time schedules of these youth league events, the park could accommodate them without adverse traffic or other impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. By developing the ballfield at Tareyton Park, the Town would be providing residents of the Northeast with an easily accessible recreational facility.

Currently the Town holds only a revocable license for the site. Before the Town of Ithaca invests any funds in developing this park, it should acquire either title to the underlying land from Cornell University, or a permanent easement.

### Meeting the Need for Close-to-Home Space: Public Active Recreational Facilities

This Plan recommends that the Town of Ithaca, at a minimum, develop the number of active recreational facilities, such as ballfields, soccer fields, tennis courts, and basketball courts, recommended by the NRPA standards outlined in Chapter Three. Table 5-1 below shows that the Town of Ithaca is deficient in providing active recreational facilities for its residents under NRPA standards. Because of the number of Town youth that participate in various youth baseball and soccer programs, this Plan recommends that first priority should be given to construction of those facilities as soon as practicable.

Although the NRPA standards require only four basketball courts to serve the projected Town population in twenty years, eight courts, equally distributed, would be preferable. An optimal distribution of courts throughout the Town would be: Northeast (1 court); the Eastern Heights area (1 court); the lower portion of South Hill (1 court); upper South Hill (1 court); Inlet Valley (1 court); and up to three in the future residential areas on West Hill.

These basketball courts should be located primarily within the neighborhood parks, where they would be more easily accessible to the neighborhood youth who are expected to be their primary users. Tareyton Park, Eastern Heights Park, and the future Vincenzo Iacovelli park on South Hill and Saponi Meadows site in Inlet Valley are suitable sites for such facilities. These parks are located in existing or future neighborhoods with relatively high concentrations of potential users. They also have the space necessary for such facilities.

**Table 5-1. Recommended Number of Town Active Recreational Facilities.**

Facility	National Standard	Existing In Town	Existing Need	Anticipated Need Year 2010
Basketball Courts	1/5,000	0	3	4
Handball Courts	1/20,000	0	0	1
Hockey Rinks	1/100,000	0	0	0
Tennis Courts	1/2,000	0	7 - 8	9 - 10
Baseball/Softball Diamonds (regulation)	1/5,000	0	3	4
Football Fields	1/20,000	0	0	1
Soccer Fields	1/10,000	0	1	2
Swimming Pools	1/20,000	0	0	1

The popularity of tennis has grown rapidly throughout the community in recent years. Available courts, except for private clubs, are generally restricted to Cornell University, Ithaca College, and Ithaca High School facilities and

the City's Stewart and Cass Parks. Although it may be more attractive from the perspective of users to have tennis courts distributed throughout the Town, the economics of constructing and maintaining such facilities dictates that they are consolidated in clusters of three or four courts. Doing so would reduce the per court cost of construction by approximately 20%. Having courts located side by side also greatly eases the maintenance of them. Given these factors it is recommended that tennis courts be constructed in the community parks.

With the mix of existing and proposed community and neighborhood parks envisioned above the Town would have adequate park space to accommodate the active recreational activities shown in the above table. The Town should begin now to develop them, using the existing Town Park sites, and plan for additional facility development in its future park sites.

### **Meeting the Need for Regional Space**

The Town of Ithaca park, recreation, and open space planning and development efforts should be coordinated with those of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). There are a number of ways in which such coordination would enhance the ability of both parties to provide high quality recreational opportunities for their constituencies, and to protect important scenic and ecological resources. These include:

1. Continued Town support for the efforts of State Parks to maintain, upgrade where appropriate, and expand local state park facilities.
2. Coordinate the development of the Town's bicycle and pedestrian path network with the State Black Diamond Trail project. This includes tying the Town system into the Black Diamond Trail wherever feasible. On West Hill, the Town has the opportunity also to provide, through the subdivision park and open space dedication process, an alternate alignment for the Black Diamond Trail that would bypass the existing power lines between Cass Park in the city and Cayuga Medical Center. This is an option that could be pursued by the Town and State.
3. Assisting the NYS OPRHP in expanding the amount of regional space through encouraging where appropriate the dedication of park land to the State instead of to the Town. There are several opportunities for such dedications in the area between Danby Road and the eastern boundary of Buttermilk Falls State Park, and along the northern boundary of Robert H. Treman State Park. In both areas such dedications would enlarge the buffer areas between the cores of the parks and surrounding residential development, while protecting from development areas of woodland, steep slopes and wetlands.

In the area of Inlet Valley east of NYS Rte. 13 there may also be opportunities to add additional lands to the right of way of the future Black Diamond Trail through park and open space dedication and cluster subdivision design. This area features a significant amount of contiguous wetlands and undeveloped wildlife habitat, and incorporating additional land into the trail corridor would both enhance the quality of the facility, and protect sensitive environmental resources.

There are potential financial rewards to the Town through coordination with the regional state park system. The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is a major conduit for grant funding for park and open space acquisition and development projects. The Town of Ithaca, by coordinating its planning with that of the State, can better position itself in the competition for State and Federal grant funds.

#### **Meeting the Need for Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

This Plan envisions an additional 21 miles of bicycle and pedestrian path construction over the next two decades. This system, when completed, will serve all major residential areas of the Town and provide both recreational and practical transportation benefits to the community. Moreover, the system will integrate all major nodes of human activity in the community: residential areas, commercial nodes, places of employment, and places of recreation -- existing and new Town parks -- to create an attractive, human scale, pedestrian-oriented community.

The path network envisioned by this Plan is predominately a radial system. The beginning and end points of proposed paths are governed largely by the central location of the city with its concentration of employment, services, and bus routes. Terrain is also an important factor. The need to limit path gradients, to the extent practicable, to meet nationally accepted American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards for bicycle paths, and the accessibility requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines precludes a number of otherwise desirable individual path connections. For instance a bike path between South Hill and East Hill built to such standards is technically feasible. The length, cost of building such a path, and the damage to scenic and ecological resources of the Six Mile Creek gorge, render the concept impractical.

The bulk of the paths would be off-road passing through a variety of landscapes including residential neighborhoods, open fields and meadows, and deep woodland settings. Because of the anticipated dual recreational and transportation usage of these paths by the public, it is recommended that the trails be surfaced with gravel or be paved, depending on the terrain, to a width of 8 feet to 10 feet. The volume of traffic that the existing Town recreation ways receive, and the expected gradients on many of these future paths, also suggest the need for gravel or paved surfaces.

In addition, it is recommended that the standard right of way width for such paths be increased from the 15 or 20 feet currently required to a minimum of 40 feet. The additional right of way width would allow space for the type of cut and fill earthmoving that is sometimes required to construct bicycle paths locally. It would also provide more visual buffering between paths and adjacent private property.

In some areas the future paths would follow existing streets. In these areas a combination of bicycle lanes on the roadway, with a walkway for pedestrian use on one side of the street, would probably be more appropriate than a separate, off-road path. The alignment outlines are conceptual in nature and subject to variation as future conditions may warrant. The proposed alignments however have been chosen using five basic criteria:

- a. Ability to design and construct a path in that location that meets nationally accepted design standards for bicycle paths and ADA accessibility standards at a reasonable cost;
- b. Potential for integrating into the design scenic and natural resources to enhance the recreational value of the path to users;
- c. Avoidance of impacts to sensitive ecological areas and resources;
- d. Provision of an attractive and convenient non-automotive connection between existing or future concentrations of population and parks, commercial and employment centers; and
- e. The potential for acquiring the path right of way through the park and open space dedication process, or through cluster subdivision.

The following are proposed as new bicycle/pedestrian facilities to be developed by the Town of Ithaca in the coming years:

**Sapsucker Woods to Cornell University Path.** This 2.7 mile combination of on- and off-street paths would connect the Laboratory of Ornithology on Sapsucker Woods Road with the main campus in the vicinity of Fuertes Observatory. This route would utilize connections between streets within the Northeast neighborhood, Blue Grass Lane, and a right-of-way across University land through or immediately south of the Hasbrouck Apartments to Pleasant Grove Road.

**Extensions to East Ithaca Recreation Way.** The 0.25 mile section of Maple Avenue between the two segments of the East Ithaca Recreation Way should be reconstructed to include, at a minimum, bicycle lanes on each side of the road, and a parallel six-foot walkway. If feasible, a wholly separate 8 or 10 foot wide separate bicycle path is recommended. The Town of Dryden has recently been awarded a grant for an extension of the East Ithaca Recreation Way eastward toward Etna and Freeville. The Town of Ithaca should work cooperatively with the Town of Dryden to bring such an extension to fruition.

**William. & Hannah Pew Bikeway.** This would be a combination of on- and off-road paths that would connect the southern terminus of the East Ithaca Recreation Way to Eastern Heights Park via Tudor Park. Its total length would be approximately 1.7 miles. It is proposed that Honness Lane be constructed to accommodate bicycle lanes and a walkway along its entire length. An off-road path would connect the intersection of Honness Lane and Pine Tree Road with Tudor Park. The route could then follow Tudor Road to Eastern Heights Park, with a branch via the future Edwin Street to Park Lane and Slaterville Road.

A spur consisting of a walkway and bicycle lanes is envisioned extending northward to the intersection of Snyder Hill Road and Pine Tree Road, and the existing walkway along Pine Tree Road north to Ellis Hollow Road. Another spur across the grounds of Trinity Lutheran Church from Honness Lane to Sunnyview Lane would provide access from the interior of the Grandview neighborhood to the path (total length 1.9 mi.).

**Upper South Hill Network.** This would be a network of paths connecting the vicinity of Chase Lane and East King Road, the Deer Run neighborhood, Troy Park, the proposed South Hill community park and Danby Road, the eastern end of the South Hill Recreation Way, the Ithaca College campus, and the intersection of Coddington Road and Hudson Street. The total length of this network would be approximately 5.3 miles. The main path would pass through the edge of the woodlands on the northeast flank of South Hill and provide an attractive and scenic environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.

A spur eastward across Troy Road would connect with the South Hill Recreation Way, and create a 4.5 mile loop trail. The spur to the proposed South Hill park could extend westward along King Road to Buttermilk Falls State Park.

**Aurora Street to Upper Buttermilk Falls State Park.** Downhill of and roughly parallel to Danby Road (NYS Rte. 96B), this path would connect the City sidewalk on Aurora Street with the intersection of West King and Stone Quarry Road. At that point users would have the option of going west 1/3 mile to the entrance of Upper Buttermilk Falls State Park, or east to Danby Road. In between, the path would provide a scenic off-road bicycling, walking, or jogging experience as it passed through woods and open meadows with sweeping views of the city, West Hill, and Cayuga Lake. The total projected length of this path is approximately 2 miles.

Although envisioned as primarily a recreational facility, this path would also provide alternative pedestrian and bicycle access to the proposed South Hill Retail Complex, Axiohm, Inc., the new Ithacare Senior Living Center,

and a number of residential areas along the west side of Danby Road. It would also be connected to the network of paths on the upper portions of South Hill via East King Road.

**South Hill Recreation Way Extension to Lower Buttermilk Falls State Park.** This trail, first proposed as part of the *1975 Park and Open Space Plan*, would continue the South Hill Recreation Way west along Hillview Place in the city and then along the abandoned railroad grade southward past the Emerson/Morse Power industrial complex to Buttermilk Falls State Park. Its total length will be approximately 2 miles. Per a 1983 agreement, it is to be a joint project by the Town and City.

This path would provide a convenient bicycle and pedestrian linkage between residential neighborhoods of South Hill, Buttermilk Falls State Park, and via the proposed Black Diamond Trail (OPRHP), Robert Treman State Park and other Town parks in Inlet Valley, Cass Park, West Hill, and Taughannock Falls State Park and beyond.

**Inlet Valley Path.** This path is proposed to connect the Black Diamond Trail with the future Tutelo and Saponi park sites, and the anticipated future residential development in the Inlet Valley area. It would connect Tutelo park site with the Black Diamond Trail via Bostwick Road and Five Mile Drive, and a narrow strip of land extending from Five Mile Drive to the future Black Diamond trail already owned by the Town. The projected length of this path is approximately 1.6 miles.

**Upper West Hill Path.** This path is proposed to extend from Elm Street to the vicinity of Hayts and Hopkins Roads. Part of it would parallel a future connector road from Mecklenburg Road north to Trumansburg Road (NYS Rte. 96). This path is primarily intended to connect the future residential neighborhoods of West Hill with the proposed future parks in the area. Its total projected length is approximately 2.6 miles. By terminating at Hayts Road this path would also provide a convenient off-road access to a low-volume rural highway and points west and north.

A 0.5 mile spur path eastward to the Cayuga Medical Center would provide a connection to the proposed Woolf Lane to Cass Park path.

**Woolf Lane to Cass Park Path.** This path would connect the residential neighborhoods in the far northwestern portion of the Town with Cass Park and the Black Diamond Trail in the city. In addition it would provide bicycle and pedestrian access to Cayuga Medical Center. Its projected length is approximately 3.1 miles. This path could be built as part of any future secondary access between the city and the hospital. Given the terrain and soil conditions along the portion of its route from the city to the hospital, the Town should strive to acquire the right of way as part of a larger open space preservation

concept that would protect the ecologically and visually important steep slopes and mature woodland along the lower flank of West Hill.

The sections of the system along Dubois and Indian Creek Roads are envisioned as a combination of bicycle lanes in the roadways and an adjacent walkway. Should the County-owned land on the south side of Indian Creek Road between Dubois and Dates Drive be developed, this pathway could be integrated into the design of that development. This route could also be an alternative alignment for the Black Diamond Trail, heading northward to the former Lehigh Valley railroad grade, to avoid the existing NYSEG high voltage power line between the city and the hospital, if the State desired to pursue that option.

It should be noted that the list of paths recommended in this Plan is not all inclusive. The bicycle and pedestrian paths being proposed are seen as being primarily recreational facilities. They will, however, also serve an important function as transportation linkages within an overall bicycle and pedestrian component of the Town's transportation system.

#### **Meeting the Need for Public Lake Access and Water-Oriented Recreation**

The Town should seek enhanced public access and recreational opportunities in the Cayuga Lake Waterfront. The only remaining parcel with such opportunities is the East Shore Sailing property on East Shore Drive. This parcel consists of approximately 1,000 feet of lakefront property, and represents the last section of undeveloped shoreline on Cayuga lake within the Town of Ithaca. In addition to the +/- 2 acres of beachfront land, the property includes +/- 12 acres of land on the uphill side of East Shore Drive.

Currently, this property is being studied as the proposed site of the Cornell Lake Source Cooling Project. The main heat exchange facility will be located on the on the uphill side of East Shore Drive.

Acquisition of the property would guarantee access to the lake for all Town residents for generations to come. Although swimming may not be possible due to lake water quality, the site has the potential for a high quality water-oriented community park, featuring picnicking, boating, fishing, and other waterside activities. In addition to the lakefront area, the site features potentially significant ecological and open space resources on the uphill side of East Shore Drive. It is part of the Renwick Slope Unique Natural Area designated by Tompkins County, and is known to contain a number of rare plant species. This area also boasts several high quality views of Cayuga Lake and West Hill. Although not suited for intensive development, the site nonetheless could provide an attractive and enjoyable location for passive recreational activities oriented toward the natural environment. Such uses would be compatible with the Lake Source Cooling Project if constructed by Cornell University.

### **3. ACTING NOW FOR THE FUTURE**

The recommendations outlined above are ambitious but can be realized over the next 15 to 20 years. The success of this Plan will be determined primarily by the residents of the Town of Ithaca, and their elected and appointed boards and committees. Key to successful implementation will be the attitude with which the task is approached. The steps recommended in this Plan, especially those requiring outlays of public monies, must be seen as an investment in the quality of life for the Town residents of the future -- grandchildren and great-grandchildren of today's residents. By taking the actions recommended by this Plan now, this generation can ensure a solid foundation for a park and open space network that will continue to serve residents a hundred years from now.

While the recommendations of this Plan are ambitious, they are in no way excessive in scale or, more importantly, cost. The network of parks, their recommended sizes, and the scale of the park appurtenances proposed as part of this Plan are all based on accepted national guidelines for the provision of public park and open space. The bicycle and pedestrian paths proposed will be recreational facilities and more. Their proposed alignments will allow them to serve double duty as transportation as well as recreational facilities. In doing so they will help limit the need to invest in costly and environmentally disruptive expansions of the local road system to accommodate increased automobile traffic.

Some of the tools required to implement this Plan are already in place. They include the existing park and open space dedication and cluster subdivision mechanisms in the Town of Ithaca Subdivision Regulations. These will be supplemented by recently enacted local legislation which will establish a structure for collecting fees in lieu of land in subdivisions. This option allows the Town to create one or more funds dedicated to paying for capital improvements in Town parks. Other tools, such as proposed zoning districts and a purchase of development rights (PDR) program, can and should be established by the Town Board.

Many of the accompanying recommendations, such as a commitment to meeting the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act, or a policy on naming Town parks, are operational changes which also can be implemented in a relatively short time period.

Finally, there must be a long-term commitment by the Town of Ithaca to fund the actions outlined in this Plan. Without such a commitment, the investments recommended herein cannot happen.

## CHAPTER 6

### INVENTORY: NATURAL AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

#### **Introduction**

The Town's rich glacial history has endowed it with many unique physical, ecological, and scenic natural resources. The Town of Ithaca, nestled among the hills surrounding the City of Ithaca and the southern tip of Cayuga Lake, maintains a rural atmosphere despite its proximity to the city. Agricultural fields, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, and scenic valley views are visible from many parts of the Town. Many of the steepest hillsides (10% or greater) are wooded and frequently cut by rugged streams, waterfalls, and gorges. These scenic resources provide important habitats for sensitive plant and animal species, and serve as important research and educational resources for the community.

The natural scenic beauty of the Ithaca area supports a substantial tourism economy and provides a healthy quality of life for the Town's residents. All told, there are over 5,500 acres of high quality natural open space within the Town in public and private ownership. (Map 6-1)

To avoid the adverse environmental impacts of growth, the Town of Ithaca must protect its natural resources. As the Town develops, the identification and preservation of critical plant and animal habitats and migration corridors between these habitats, will become increasingly important. Such "biological corridors" will help prevent the fragmentation of wildlife and plant habitats into areas that are too small to sustain certain species. Elsewhere in the United States, population growth, urban growth, and new highways have disrupted wildlife migration patterns and has led to the reduction of wildlife populations. Locally, we have lost many species of birds, salamanders, butterflies, and the once prevalent bog turtle because of habitat loss and fragmentation.

#### **Unique Geological and Environmentally Sensitive Resources**

Many areas of scenic beauty have been minimally developed for public recreational use and nature study. These areas include Lick Brook and the surrounding woods of the Finger Lakes Land Trust's Sweedler Preserve; the Cornell Plantations Path and natural areas both on and off the University's main campus; the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology at Sapsucker Woods; and The Nature Conservancy's Eldridge Preserve. These areas are available for a variety of informal recreational pursuits such as walking, hiking, cross-country skiing, birding, and wildlife watching. In the local state parks activities such as picnicking, swimming, and camping are allowed in designated areas.

An important unique space within the Town is the City of Ithaca's Mulholland Wildflower Preserve and City Watershed area located along Six Mile Creek. Many rare and important plant species can be found along the

TOWN OF ITHACA  
 1997 PARK  
 RECREATION &  
 OPEN SPACE PLAN  
 DECEMBER 1997

MAP 6-1  
 MAJOR PUBLIC &  
 PRIVATE OPEN SPACE  
 RESERVATIONS

KEY

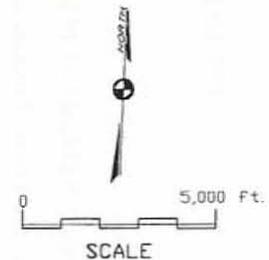
-  STATE PARK LANDS
-  OTHER PUBLIC OPEN SPACE RESERVES
-  PRIVATE OPEN SPACE RESERVES

NOTE:

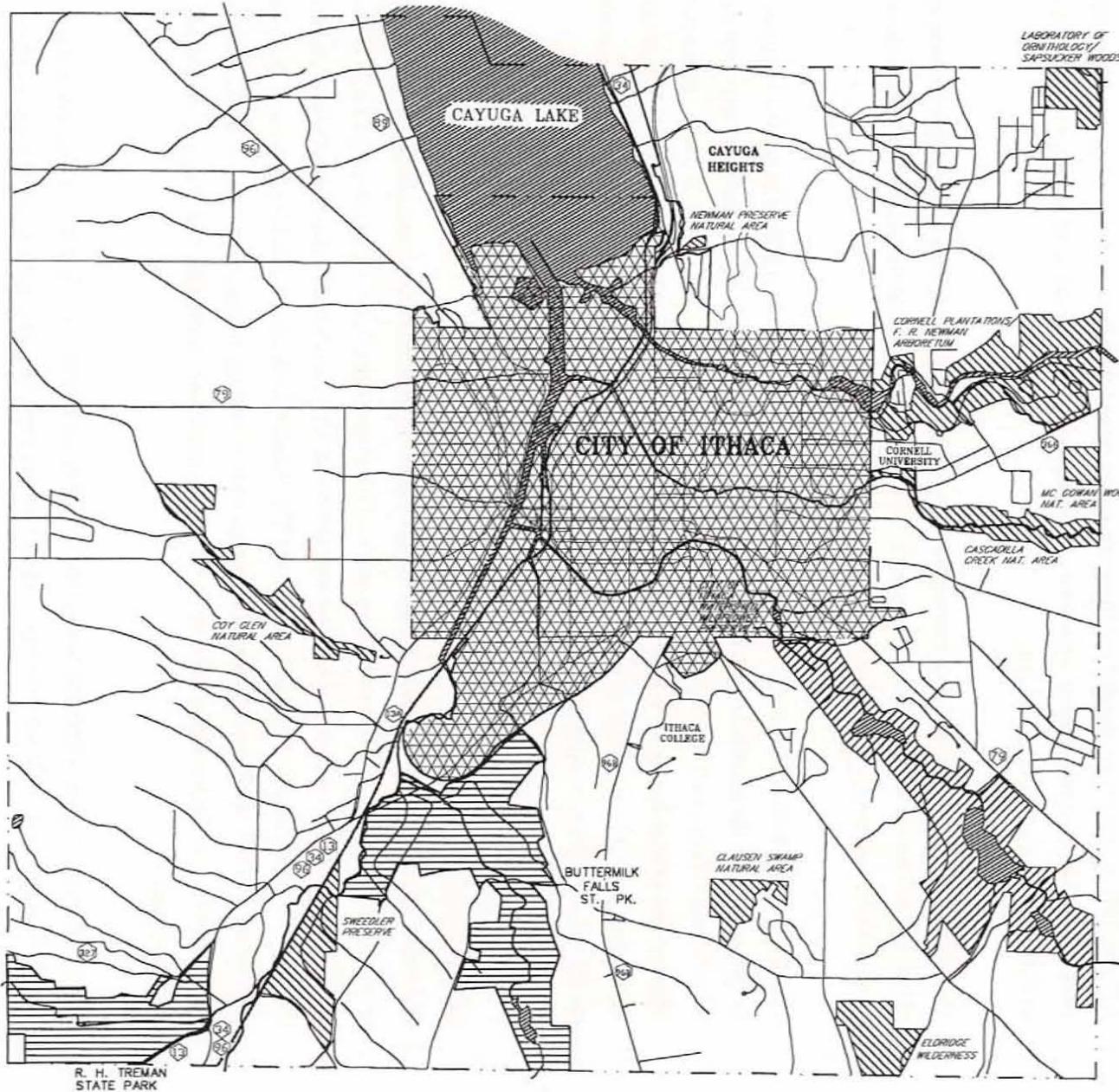
ACCESS TO THE PRIVATELY HELD OPEN SPACE RESERVES SHOWN ON THIS MAP IS GOVERNED BY REGULATIONS SET BY THE RESPECTIVE ORGANIZATION.

ACCESS MAY BE RESTRICTED. CONTACT THE LANDOWNER/ORGANIZATION BEFORE ENTERING THESE PROPERTIES TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THEIR RULES.

PORTIONS OF THE CITY WATERSHED AREA OUTSIDE THE MULHOLLAND WILDFLOWER PRESERVE ARE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.



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Preserve's meandering paths. The Six Mile Creek watershed within the Town encompasses 620 acres and extends from Giles Street in the city to the vicinity of German Cross Road in the Town of Dryden. There are several miles of walking paths, including connections with the South Hill Recreation Way, which runs along the upper southwest slope of the Six Mile Creek between the city and Burns Road. As Six Mile Creek flows through the town toward Cayuga Lake, the water is impounded in two City reservoirs and flows through many riffles and waterfalls. This area serves as an important scenic, recreational, and ecological resource for the entire region.

The Cornell University Plantations maintains the University arboretum and botanical gardens, and manages 2,900 acres of natural areas on campus and throughout Tompkins County. Public trails such as the Plantation Path and the Cayuga Trail offer access to some of these natural areas. Other properties, with restricted public access, are held for natural history education and research. These properties preserve quality examples of native vegetation, rare plant species, and threatened plant communities. Coy Glen, Clausen Swamp, Cascadilla Creek, Newman Woods, and McGowan Woods are a few of the well-known natural areas within the Town of Ithaca. These areas provide important habitat for plants and animals and are components of biological corridors.

#### **Tompkins County Designated Unique Natural Areas**

The Tompkins County Environmental Management Council has designated 181 Unique Natural Areas (UNAs) throughout the county warranting preservation in their natural state. These areas are important for preserving endangered and rare species of flora and fauna, excellent examples of ecosystems or biotic communities, unique geologic features, and outstanding scenic beauty. The revised 1990 Tompkins County Environmental Management Council Unique Natural Area report designated twenty-seven UNAs located wholly or partly in the Town of Ithaca comprising 2,300 acres of land and water (Map 6-2).

#### **Surface Waters: Lakes, Ponds, and Streams**

Approximately 3% of the Town of Ithaca is covered by lakes and ponds. Cayuga Lake, which covers over 650 acres within the town, is an important natural, recreational, and visual resource. The lake is a habitat for fish, reptiles, and migrating waterfowl. Through the Southern Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Water Commission, it also serves as the water supply for a large area of the Town, as well portions of Dryden, Lansing, and the villages of Cayuga Heights and Lansing.

The town's six largest streams are Fall Creek, Cascadilla Creek, Six Mile Creek, Cayuga Inlet, Buttermilk Creek, and Enfield Creek. Other streams of note are Pleasant Grove Brook, Holly Creek, Lick Brook, Coy Glen Creek, Williams Brook, and Indian Creek. The NYS DEC has classified surface waters in the State according to the quality of the water and its appropriate use. The classified streams and tributaries in the Town of Ithaca provide important aquatic habitats and recreational resources, and are critical to the healthy functioning of the

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 1997 PARK  
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 OPEN SPACE PLAN  
 DECEMBER 1997

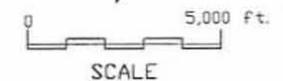
MAP 6-2  
 COUNTY DESIGNATED  
 UNIQUE NATURAL  
 AREAS

KEY

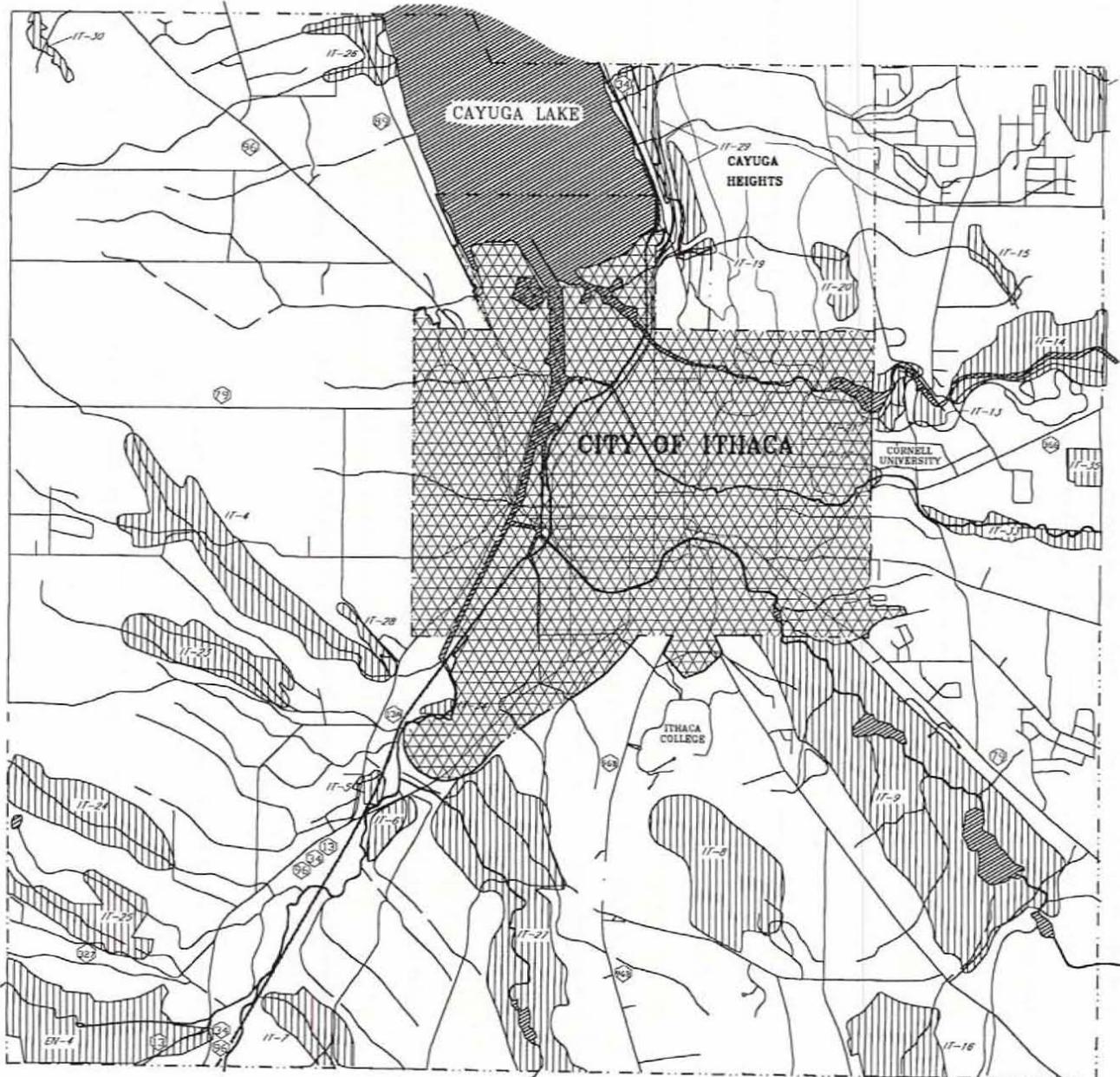
 TOMPKINS COUNTY UNIQUE  
 NATURAL AREA

UNA KEY

- IT-4 COY GLEN
- IT-5 FLEMING MEADOW
- IT-6 LARCH MEADOWS
- IT-7 LICK BROOK
- IT-8 SOUTH HILL (CLAUSEN) SWAMP
- IT-9 SIX MILE CREEK
- IT-10 WINDY WILD FLOWER GARDEN
- IT-11 FALL CREEK NEAR FLAT ROCK
- IT-12 BULL PASTURE PONDS
- IT-13 ELDRIDGE PRESERVE
- IT-14 CASCADILLA GORGE
- IT-15 NEWMAN TRACT
- IT-16 PALMER WOODS
- IT-17 BEEBE LAKE WOODS, GORGE
- IT-18 UNNAMED "FUTURE" SITE
- IT-19 UNNAMED "FUTURE" SITE
- IT-20 UNNAMED "FUTURE" SITE
- IT-21 INDIAN CREEK
- IT-22 BUTTERMILK CREEK GORGE
- IT-23 HACKBERRY WOODS
- IT-24 RENWICK SLOPE
- IT-25 UNNAMED WETLAND
- IT-26 CASCADILLA WOODS & FISH PONDS
- IT-27 NEGUNDO WOODS
- IT-28 MC GOWAN WOODS



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environment. Beyond classification, the DEC has also assigned a protection status to all of the Town's lakes and some of its streams. Pleasant Grove Brook, Fall Creek, Six Mile Creek, Holly Creek, Buttermilk Creek, Cayuga Inlet, and Enfield Creek are classified as "protected" by the DEC.

The Town of Ithaca's glacial topography includes scenic and spectacular glens, gorges, and ravines. The major formations (in clockwise order from the northeast) are the lower reaches of Pleasant Grove Creek in Cayuga Heights, Fall Creek Gorge, Cascadilla Gorge, Six Mile Creek Gorge, the lower reaches of Holly Creek, Buttermilk Creek Gorge, and Lick Brook Gorge and its two adjacent glens, Enfield Gorge, Coy Glen, and Williams Glen. These picturesque yet fragile resources provide vitally important habitats for plants and animal life.

### **Wetlands and Floodplains**

Until recently, many wetlands and floodplains were drained for agriculture or filled for development. The result has been the elimination of large areas of wetlands and floodplains throughout the country. However, the vital environmental importance of wetlands and floodplains is now widely known and appreciated. Some of the many functions and values of our local freshwater wetlands and floodplains are:

- \* Slowing and absorbing excess water during storms, thereby reducing stream levels downstream and controlling flood waters;
- \* Maintaining water quality by filtering out certain pollutants before the water enters streams, lakes, or aquifers;
- \* Abating erosion, especially along coastal areas and lake and stream shores by absorbing and dissipating the energy of waves;
- \* Providing wildlife habitat, including resting and breeding places for migratory waterfowl such as geese and ducks; and spawning grounds for certain fish and shellfish species, including commercially valuable ones;
- \* Creating recreational opportunities including fishing, hunting, and bird watching.

There are over 450 acres of wetlands in the Town of Ithaca found in wet meadows, woodlands, and along streams. The areas around Sapsucker Woods, Inlet Valley, and the crest of South Hill have the largest concentration of wetlands. There are also wetlands scattered across West Hill including a large wetland located near Sheffield Road and Iradell Road. Potential impacts to wetlands are regulated by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the NYS DEC. However, this governmental regulation does not constitute full protection.

There are several notable flood plains in the Town of Ithaca that are inundated during seasonal stream overflows and periods of high precipitation. It is especially important that stream channel and adjacent floodplain areas are kept free of encroachment to carry the 100-year flood without substantial increase in flood heights.

The Inlet Valley area has a wide flood plain and is subject to frequent flooding. Inlet Valley's wetlands help absorb these flood waters although there is some development along Routes 13 and 13A.

Due to their gorge topographies, Fall Creek, Cascadilla Creek, and Six Mile Creek have very narrow flood plains, except for the lower sections of Forest Home. Within the town, Cayuga Lake has a narrow floodplain along the shore. The eastern shore is flatter and more flood prone than the western shore. There is a significant level of development along both shores.

#### **Woodlands and Meadows**

The Town of Ithaca is moderately wooded with significant stands on the hillsides and gorges. These woods are typically secondary growth on abandoned farmland on steep slopes. There are approximately 5,000 acres of woodlands and about 3,100 acres of brush or meadowland. Most of the Town's meadows, developed from recently abandoned farmland, are located on South and West Hill, and in Inlet Valley.

The woodlands and meadows in the Town of Ithaca provide important habitat for birds, game animals, and reptiles. Wild turkey can be found throughout the Town in rural areas. Waterfowl find refuge in the South Hill Swamp area and deer winter on West Hill slopes above Cayuga Lake. Sapsucker Woods has been identified as a major bird habitat while other bird habitats can be found along Cascadilla Creek, Buttermilk Creek, and Cayuga Inlet. Reptiles can be found in the wetland areas in Inlet Valley, Clausen Swamp, Sapsucker Woods, and at the Cornell University Golf Course ponds. Coyotes have been observed in the Northeast suburbs, Six Mile Creek, and Coy Glen. Fall Creek Gorge, Six Mile Creek Gorge, South Hill Swamp, Buttermilk Creek Gorge, Inlet Valley, Enfield Gorge, and Coy Glen also have been identified as areas with unique flora.

#### **Agricultural Resources**

Approximately 3,440 acres of land within the Town of Ithaca are being actively used for cropland, pastures, vegetable crops, orchards, and vineyards. Another 1,480 acres of agricultural land is inactive and could be returned to production with minimal effort. Town farmers also own approximately 1,050 acres of mature woodlots (with trees at least forty years old). These wooded areas, although not considered "agricultural land," are a potential income source for Town farmers, and are therefore included in the inventory of agricultural land. Altogether, there is a total of 5,970 acres of land in agricultural use in the Town.

Agriculture in the Town has declined since the end of World War II. However, agriculture is still the predominant land use on West Hill. A substantial amount of agricultural land also exists on South Hill south of Buttermilk Falls State Park, and in Inlet Valley. Portions of East Hill are also used for agriculture and agricultural research by Cornell University.

Farmers and their farmland make a major contribution to the well-being of all Town residents. By maintaining almost 6,000 acres of active and inactive farmland and woodlots, farmers provide residents with approximately 36% of the open space within the Town. The rural character enjoyed by Town residents and the local tourist industry is provided largely by local farmers and their longstanding tradition of stewardship of the land and its resources.

In 1992, the Town of Ithaca Conservation Board adopted policy recommendations and implementation measures supporting the preservation of agricultural land in the Town. These recommendations are discussed in detail in its 1992 report *Planning for Agriculture in the Town of Ithaca*. These policies are intended to ensure the long term preservation of the Town's agricultural land resources and enhance the economic viability of its farms.

## CHAPTER 7

### ANALYSIS: NATURAL AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

#### **Unique Space: Open Space Assets**

The system of protected natural areas in the Town of Ithaca needs to be expanded and better protected from development on adjacent lands. There are many ecologically sensitive areas in the Town that currently have no protection from inappropriate levels of development. These include several Unique Natural Areas identified by Tompkins County that currently have no protective status; areas of ecological significance adjacent to the Cornell Plantations' Coy Glen and Clausen (South Hill) Swamp natural areas; and several areas adjacent to the City Watershed in the Six Mile Creek Valley. Other areas that warrant protection include steep slope areas (slopes in excess of 25%) on West Hill and South Hill, and to a lesser extent on East Hill, and major stream corridors within the Town.

#### **Other Open Space Assets**

Because of past land use and development trends in the Town of Ithaca, over two-thirds of the Town's land area has remained rural in character. These areas are marked by very low density residential development, primarily consisting of frontage lots on the few existing roads and highways. This is especially true of the West Hill portion of the Town, where there are about 4,100 acres of active and inactive agricultural land and woodland. Almost all of this open space is located within the area bounded by West Haven and Hopkins Road on the east, the Town of Ulysses on the north, the Town of Enfield on the west, and Robert H. Treman State Park on the south. The areas of South Hill from King Road southward to the Town of Danby and westward from the Chase Lane/Saunders Road area to the Cayuga Inlet, and along Coddington Road from Troy Road southeastward have low residential density with large tracts of adjoining open space.

The existing rural character of these areas is an important visual asset to residents of the Town of Ithaca. Because of their size, they serve wildlife habitat and biological corridor functions. They contain the bulk of actively farmed land in the Town of Ithaca, and many of its most ecologically sensitive areas. Finally, preserving these areas at rural densities and channeling growth away from them reduces the potential for future costly extensions of public water and sewer infrastructure, and adverse impacts to existing residential areas from increased traffic generated by large scale development in these areas.

The Town of Ithaca, if it is to preserve this existing network of large contiguous open space areas, has to implement measures to protect them now. These measures can range from reduced density through zoning combined with cluster subdivision design to purchase of development rights, to acquisition by the Town or other entity.

### 3. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

There are no quantitative standards of open space resources necessary to preserve the quality of life and scenic character of communities. However, it is possible to identify those open space assets which are critical to the preservation of local scenic character, quality of life, and ecological resources of the community. Unlike recreational space, the importance of open space assets does not depend on their proximity to population centers. Many of the important open space assets warranting some level of protection have been identified in the 1990 Town of Ithaca Residents' Survey, the Conservation Board's 1992 Open Space Report, and the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council's Unique Natural Areas of Tompkins County Report. In the Residents' Survey, respondents identified those scenic resources deemed most worthy of preservation. The Open Space Report and Unique Natural Areas Report focused on the most important ecological and scenic resources in the town.

Currently, the primary method for preserving important ecological and scenic resources is acquisition by the State Parks, municipal parks, the Cornell Plantations Natural Areas system, Nature Conservancy, the Finger Lakes Land Trust, or by private ownership with conservation easements or other deed restrictions limiting their development potential. Municipalities and the Finger Lakes Land Trust are both able to hold conservation easements on privately held property. Public access to these protected areas varies with the terms of ownership and the fragility of the area.

Other mechanisms available for open space preservation include municipal acquisition, zoning regulations, cluster subdivision, and purchase of development rights by the Town or other entities. Strategies for specific parcels of land should be outlined as soon as possible for future reference. Planning for potential opportunities ahead of time will facilitate the preservation of critical open space resources.

## CHAPTER 8

### RECOMMENDATIONS: OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

#### I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter synthesizes the Goals and Objectives outlined in Chapter One, and the issues raised in Chapters Six and Seven into a series of recommendations for the Town of Ithaca. Some of these projects may be carried out solely by the Town of Ithaca while others could be cooperative efforts with neighboring municipalities, New York State, not-for-profit conservancies, developers, or private landowners. Through such cooperative ventures the Town can ensure that the open space goals of this plan can be met in the most cost efficient manner possible. This report recommends that the Town of Ithaca actively pursues steps to ensure preservation of its important ecological, agricultural and scenic open space assets.

Aggressive planning for open space preservation now will pay off in the future. The planning opportunities the Town currently has will diminish as development occurs in the coming years. Planning and taking action now will ensure that the town's goals with regard to open space and natural resource protection are met in the most efficient and cost-effective manner for taxpayers.

Communities nationwide are finding that traditional patterns of development have resulted in the disruption of plant and wildlife habitat, with a marked decline of plant and animal diversity. Like all communities, ours faces the challenge of preventing this decline as we continue to grow. By taking appropriate actions, the Town of Ithaca can ensure that future losses in plant and wildlife habitat and biodiversity due to development will be minimized to the extent practicable.

Preservation of important open space resources has both environmental and fiscal benefits for the community. Recreational open space improves the overall appeal of a community to visitors and increases tourism. Open spaces also soften urban and suburban landscapes with ribbons of green to improve the quality of life and enhance property values. Consumer surveys show that home buyers are willing to pay high premiums to live near natural open spaces. (Urban Land Institute, 1994, National Association of Homebuilders, 1995). Thus, preserving open space benefits the developer and the Town through higher property values. The cost of building on many environmentally sensitive areas, such as steep slopes, unstable soils, and floodplains also entails extremely expensive construction and high annual upkeep costs for by the owner. The simplest way to avoid these costs is to leave these areas wild.

### **Unique Space: Open Space Assets**

This Plan recommends that the Town of Ithaca embark on a specific course of action to ensure the preservation of its significant ecological, agricultural, scenic, cultural, and historical resources through a combination of techniques. Only by acting appropriately now can there be any assurance that those unique local attributes will still be here for future generations.

The techniques available to the Town of Ithaca to accomplish the objectives of this Plan are: 1) enactment of zoning densities and allowed land uses appropriate for agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas of the Town; 2) use of cluster subdivision design to protect smaller, site specific ecological resources; 3) voluntary purchase of development rights (PDR) program; and 4) acquisition by the Town, NYS OPRHP, the City of Ithaca, Cornell Plantations or other private entities of ownership of certain properties.

### **Conservation Zoning District**

Conservation zoning is an effective tool to protect the natural resources of a large area. The Six Mile Creek Valley Conservation Zone was recently enacted into town law in the summer of 1996. Originally recommended in the *1990 Six Mile Creek: a Heritage to Preserve* report, this designation will protect the steep slopes, mature woodland, highly erodible soils, rare plant species, water quality of the reservoir, and provide a biological corridor southward from the City of Ithaca to the Towns of Dryden, Danby, and Caroline. The zone will visually buffer the South Hill Recreation Way and help preserve an area identified as an important scenic resource during preparation of the 1993 Comprehensive Plan.

Map 8-1 shows those areas of the Town of Ithaca where conservation district zoning is recommended as a tool for preservation of major areas of open spaces. These conservation zoning districts as envisioned would be applied to areas of extremely steep slopes, significant woodlands, wetlands, and larger ravines and stream corridors. Included among these areas are: the flanks of West and South Hill; the State Parks and some areas adjacent to them; the corridor of Cayuga Inlet with its associated wetlands; the Coy Glen and Fall Creek stream corridors; and the portions of the crest of South Hill where woodlands, steep slopes, and wetlands predominate. The areas recommended for conservation zoning in this plan correspond to many of the areas designated as Conservation/Open Space on the 2010 Anticipated Land Use Map in the 1993 Comprehensive Plan.

### **Agricultural Zoning District**

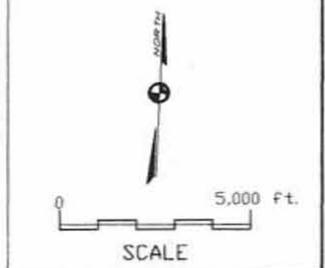
Areas in the Town of Ithaca recommended for inclusion in the revised agricultural zoning district are also shown on Map 8-1. The largest of the areas is the portion of West Hill bounded roughly by the Town of Ulysses and NYS Rte. 96 on the north, Hopkins, West Haven, and Calkins Roads on the east, Robert H. Treman State Park on the south, and the Town of Enfield on the west. Except residential development along roads and highways, and the

TOWN OF ITHACA  
 1997 PARK,  
 RECREATION &  
 OPEN SPACE PLAN  
 DECEMBER 1997

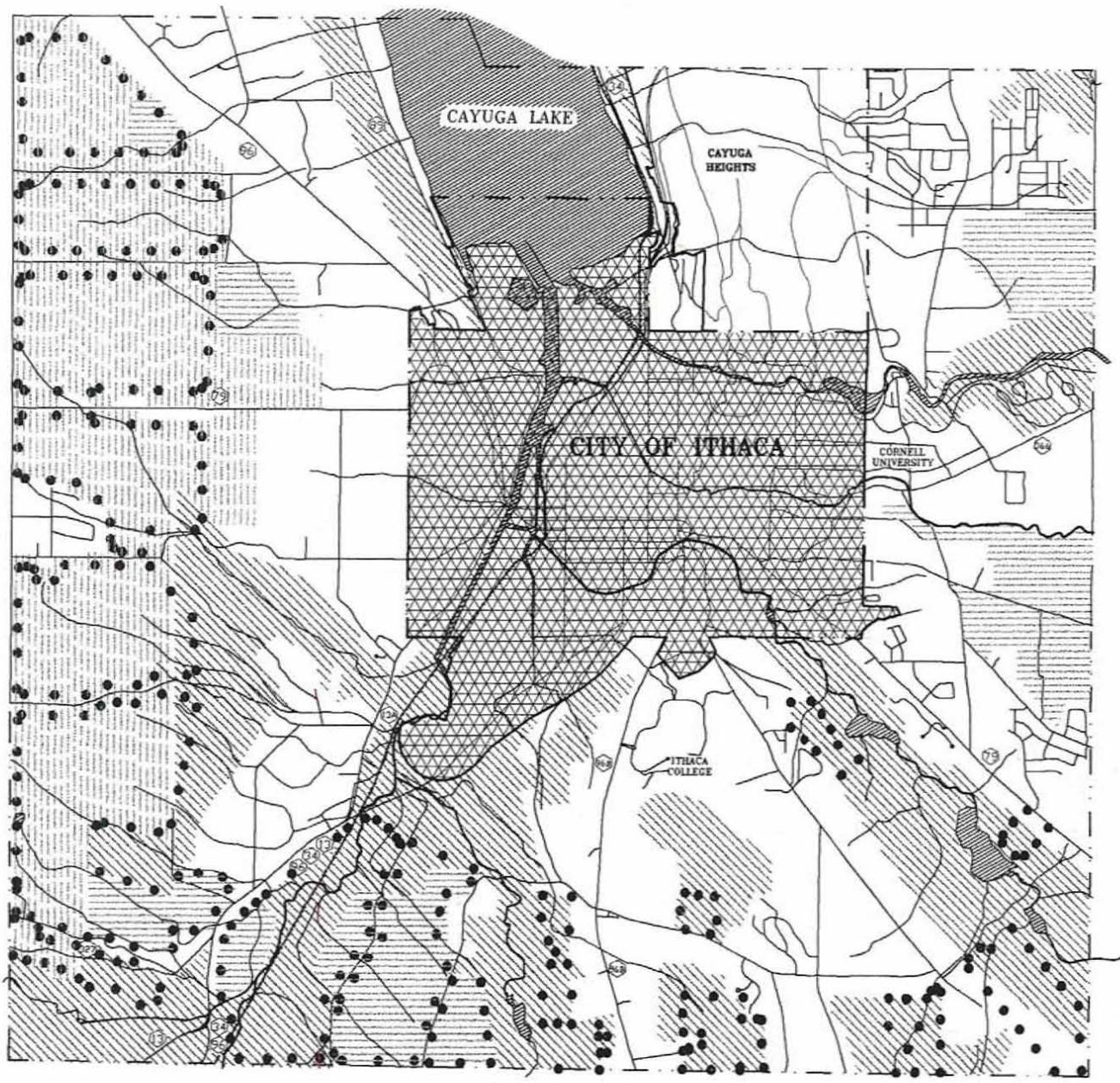
MAP 8-1  
 POTENTIAL ZONING  
 FOR OPEN SPACE  
 AND  
 PURCHASE OF  
 DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS  
 TARGET AREAS

- KEY**
-  AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR CONSERVATION ZONING
  -  LANDS IN EXISTING AG - AGRICULTURAL ZONING DISTRICT
  -  LANDS PROPOSED FOR REZONING TO AG - AGRICULTURAL ZONING
  -  AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR INCLUSION IN PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS PROGRAM

**NOTE:**  
 CERTAIN LOTS FRONTING ON PUBLIC ROADS WHICH ARE TOO SMALL TO BE SHOWN ON THIS MAP ARE INTENDED TO BE EXCLUDED FROM ANY FUTURE CONSERVATION OR AGRICULTURAL ZONING DISTRICTS.  
 PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS TARGET AREA BOUNDARIES ARE GENERALIZED AND DO NOT REPRESENT SPECIFIC PARCELS OF LAND.



 MAP PREPARED BY:  
 TOWN OF ITHACA  
 PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
 126 EAST SENECA STREET  
 ITHACA, N.Y. 14850



Drew subdivision off Sheffield Road, much of this area consists of large tracts of contiguous rural and agricultural land. Soils in the area are well suited for agricultural use. Moreover, much of it is outside the current limits of public water and sewer service.

Four other actively farmed areas are recommended for protection under a revised agricultural zoning district. These areas include the southern portion of Inlet Valley, the large area on South Hill south and west of Buttermilk Falls State Park; and two agricultural areas totaling about 650 acres owned by Cornell University on East Hill.

### **Utilizing Cluster Subdivision Design**

While the use of cluster subdivisions should be encouraged by the Planning Board throughout the Town of Ithaca, it is particularly important that the idea be used in the areas identified below to protect important natural and scenic resources.

1. The lower portion of West Hill immediately west of Taughannock Blvd. (NYS Rte. 89) where steep slopes, mature woodland, and highly erodible soils predominate. Preservation of this area would protect the ecological resources present there, provide visual buffering for the proposed Black Diamond Trail, and provide a biological corridor northward from the city.
2. The Indian Creek, Williams Brook, Linderman Creek, Cliff Park Brook, and Coy Glen Creek stream corridors on West Hill. Use of cluster subdivision design to reserve undeveloped or minimally developed buffer zones along these streams would maintain their natural aesthetic value for the enjoyment of current and future residents, and assist in controlling stormwater runoff from new residential developments.
3. The areas of the Inlet Valley east of Five Mile Drive (NYS Rte. 13A) and Elmira Road (NYS Rte. 13) where denser residential development is anticipated in the future. Cluster subdivision design in these areas would help preserve the wetlands that predominate there, protect the water quality of the Cayuga Inlet, a high quality trout stream, provide visual buffering for the proposed Black Diamond Trail, and preserve a significant biological corridor extending southward from the city to Danby and Newfield.
4. The areas of South Hill between Danby Road and Buttermilk Falls State Park, and the steep slope areas below Danby Road and north of King Road. These areas are marked by a combination of stream corridors, wetlands, mature woodland, and steep slopes which warrant protective measures. The use of cluster subdivision for development adjacent to Buttermilk Falls State Park would create additional buffer areas between future residential development and the day use areas of the upper park.

5. The crest of South Hill from Ithaca College south to the Town of Danby. This area contains a combination of large areas of woodland, substantial pockets of wetlands, and steep slopes that warrant protection. Cluster subdivision design in this area would help preserve a large tract of contiguous woodland and significant wetland resources, and provide additional buffering for the Clausen Swamp Natural Area.

### **Purchase of Development Rights**

The Town of Ithaca should establish and fund a voluntary purchase of development rights (PDR) program for certain agricultural lands and key ecologically sensitive, or scenically important areas of the Town. Under such a program the Town of Ithaca would pay landowners willing to accept a permanent easement limiting the uses and development potential on their land. The amount paid for the easement would be determined through a formal appraisal analysis. The amount would equal the difference between the value of their land for development purposes, and the value as agricultural land or other open space-related uses.

In practice such easements are referred to generically as "conservation" or "agricultural" easements, and have been used successfully elsewhere in New York and other states, by both government and private, not for profit groups such as the local Finger Lakes Land Trust, and the nationwide Nature Conservancy organizations.

Under Sect. 247 of New York State General Municipal Law the Town of Ithaca is empowered to:

"...acquire, by purchase, gift, grant, bequest, devise, lease or otherwise, the fee or any lesser interest, development right, easement, covenant, or other contractual right necessary to achieve the purposes of this chapter, to land within such municipality."

for the purpose of preserving:

"...any space or area characterized by (1) natural scenic beauty or, (2) whose existing openness, natural condition, or present state of use, if retained, would enhance the present or potential value of abutting or surrounding urban development, or would maintain or enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources."

Conservation and agricultural protection easements are becoming widely used as tools for preservation of open space assets because, among other reasons, they:

1. maintain open space in private ownership;
2. lower the costs of acquiring permanent open space within a community;
3. maintain some continued tax revenues;
4. limit the liability exposure of the easement holder, because of the limited nature of their interest in the land.

The primary benefit of an easement program of the type proposed is that the properties remain under the ownership, and stewardship, of private landowners. The property also remains on the tax rolls, and is assessed at its market value subject to the restrictions imposed on its use by the conservation or agricultural easement. Because the land protected by easement continues to be privately held, it is normally not open to the public, and thus not subject to the same problems with regard to damage and liability faced by publicly held open space.

To be most effective a voluntary purchase of development rights program must be aimed at specific properties or contiguous tracts of land identified as containing ecological, scenic, or agricultural assets worthy of protection. To this end, this report recommends that approximately 60 properties in the Town of Ithaca be designated as candidates for the acquisition of conservation or agricultural easements (Map 8-1). These properties represent approximately 3,600 acres of important agricultural or environmentally sensitive land which warrants permanent protection from development pressure. Because of the concentration of agricultural lands on West Hill, including land with more valuable Class I and Class II agricultural soils, the majority of these properties, totaling some 2,170 acres, are located in that area. They are recommended as priority candidates because of their importance as agricultural assets. Altogether approximately 2,800 acres of agricultural land and approximately 800 acres of environmentally sensitive land are recommended for inclusion in a voluntary purchase of development rights program. The criteria used to select properties recommended for a voluntary purchase of development rights program are:

1. The property contains a locally important agricultural, ecological or scenic resource;
2. The agricultural and/or ecological resources on the property warrant protection above and beyond that which could be provided through the proposed conservation or agricultural district zoning or other growth management tools;
3. A permanent easement removing development rights on the property would not interfere with the Town's ability to accommodate the population growth that could reasonably be expected through the next 50 to 100 years, without inducing a leap-frog development pattern;
4. For agricultural land a parcel should contribute to creation of a critical mass of contiguous agricultural land to ensure optimum efficiency and thus economic viability from the standpoint of farmers, and to protect farmers from intruding residential development;
5. For ecologically sensitive and environmentally important land, the property must harbor one or more environmental attributes, contribute to a critical mass of open space, or enhance opportunities for creation of a high-quality biological corridor.

To implement this proposed purchase of development rights program, the Town should establish a fund for the gradual acquisition of development rights over the next ten years. The potential cost of this envisioned purchase of development rights program, and proposed the mechanism for funding it, are outline in Chapter Nine.

The properties proposed for inclusion in a voluntary purchase of development rights program are properties which are considered important enough to warrant expenditure of public monies to purchase easements. The Town should entertain acceptance of easements on any properties which may contain agricultural or ecological resources worthy of protection if offered as a donation by a landowner, or offered as part of a cluster subdivision design.

### **Open Space Ownership**

In some cases it would be more appropriate for an agency or organization other than the Town of Ithaca to retain ownership of permanent open space proposed as part of an overall subdivision plat. Where the opportunity exists the Town should encourage developers to donate or otherwise transfer lands dedicated as permanent open space to a not-for-profit conservancy or land trust, or other public agency. Opportunities to pursue such a policy exist in a number of locations, including:

1. Lands along the lower portion of West Hill adjacent to the future Black Diamond Trail could be attached to the Trail right-of-way or Allan H. Treman State Marine Park;
2. The undeveloped parcels of land surrounding the Coy Glen Natural Area maintained by Cornell Plantations;
3. Many large parcels of land with development potential located adjacent to Robert H. Treman or Buttermilk Falls State Park, or along the Cayuga Inlet stream corridor between the two;
4. Several undeveloped parcels of land surrounding the Clausen Swamp Natural Area maintained by Cornell Plantations;
5. Adding to the Nature Conservancy's Eldridge Preserve should adjoining lands in that area be developed;
6. Expansion of the City Watershed/Mulholland Wildflower Preserve holdings through transfers of open space resulting from subdivisions on adjacent properties; and
7. Enlarging the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology complex at Sapsucker woods.

The transfer of ownership to entities other than the Town of Ithaca benefits the Town of Ithaca, as it accomplishes the goals of this Plan, while limiting to the extent possible the cost to Town taxpayers of maintaining such open space assets.

## CHAPTER 9 THE COSTS AND HOW TO PAY FOR THEM

### 1. Introduction

The level of investment needed to carry out the programs outlined in Chapter 5 and Chapter 8 is significant. It is important to remember that it is *investment* -- a commitment of financial resources now for future advantage or benefit -- that is being proposed in this report. These benefits will be enjoyed by all Town of Ithaca residents generations to come.

There are three major costs associated with the recommended programs outlined in the previous chapters. They are 1) investments in the envisioned park facilities; 2) purchase of development rights (PDR) for open space and important agricultural lands preservation; and 3) the costs of maintenance and operation of park land and facilities.

The key to carrying out the proposals most efficiently is the development of a fiscal plan, and a commitment to provide the necessary funding for that plan on an annual basis. In doing so the Town can calculate, at the outset, the costs it will incur over the course of carrying out this Plan, and integrate them into its long-range fiscal planning.

Moreover, planning now will enable the Town to capitalize on the availability of outside sources of funding such as state or federal grant programs. Having a palette of park and recreation capital improvement proposals "on the shelf" and ready for implementation, with matching funds already in the Town's annual budget, greatly enhances the Town's competitive advantage when applying for such grants.

There are many methods the Town of Ithaca can use to fund the park and recreation improvements proposed in this report, and to preserve its important agricultural and ecological resources. With adequate planning, these programs do not require large increases in property taxes for Town residents. The keys to success are commitment to the Plan, foresight and creative planning in carrying out the Plan, and effective use of all potential sources of funding for park development and open space preservation.

### 2. BUDGETING FOR THE FUTURE

#### Capital Improvements Costs -- Future Parks and Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Development

The capital improvement budget is a long-range plan that lays out the timing and costs of the capital improvements and land acquisitions necessary to realize the parks and bikeway components of this Plan. These costs are

distinguished from the operational costs of a park system in that they are one-time costs. They may be costs which the Town cannot afford or does not wish to pay for in a single fiscal year, or project costs which may be funded by grants and other external sources.

The level of investment anticipated by the recommendations in this report make the development of a long-range capital improvement plan a necessary factor in Town fiscal planning. Through such planning, these investments can be accomplished in more easily accommodated increments. Bonding of very large capital improvements also becomes possible. Finally, such up-front planning favorably positions the Town of Ithaca to get matching state or federal grants for park development.

The cost estimates for future park facilities and the bicycle and pedestrian path network are based on the recommended uses for the individual future park sites and bicycle and pedestrian routes identified in Chapter Five. Generic cost estimates for the various components of park facilities, (e.g., typical baseball diamond) and paths (e.g., typical 10 ft. wide bikeway) were derived from a variety of sources, including project cost data from actual Town or City of Ithaca park improvements, and construction industry cost estimating references. These estimates were then applied to the specific site or route.

### **Future Park Improvements**

Table 9-1 lists the recommended capital improvements outlined in Chapter Five for completion over the life of this plan. They include the types of facilities that will be needed to meet the recreational needs of Town residents in the coming decades, such as baseball/softball and soccer fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, play structures for children, picnic facilities, walking paths, and space for a wide variety of informal recreational activities.

In addition to monies for the new facilities listed in Table 9-1, \$50,000 in funding is included in the projected capital improvement expenditures. This money is for modifications to existing park facilities necessary to ensure compliance with the accessibility standards of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1991. These modifications are scheduled for completion in 1997.

Since all of the park sites listed in Table 6-1 are either already owned by the Town of Ithaca, or are expected to be obtained through subdivision park and open space dedication mechanism or through land donation (Maple Avenue/Mitchell Street site), no land acquisition costs are included in the cost estimates. The total anticipated costs for the proposed future park improvements over a 20-year period is \$2,250,000.

Table 9-1. Proposed Future Parks, Improvements, and Estimated Costs

Proposed Park Site	Proposed Capital Improvements to Site	Estimated Cost
Maple Ave./ Mitchell St. Neighborhood Park (1.5 - 3 ac.)	1/2 ac. lawn area, walkways, benches, signage, play structure, basketball court, security lighting, landscape plantings	\$80,000
Vincenzo Iacovelli Neighborhood Park (3.5 ac.)	1 ac. lawn area, walkways, benches, signage, play structure, basketball court, security lighting, landscape plantings	\$80,000
Chase Farm Neighborhood Park (1.5 ac.)	1/2 ac. lawn area, walkways, benches, signage, play structure, basketball court, security lighting, landscape plantings	\$75,000
Westwood Hills/Woolf Lane Neighborhood Park (1.7 ac.)	1/2 ac. lawn area, walkways, benches, signage, play structure, security lighting, landscape plantings	\$65,000
Dates Dr./Duboise Rd. Neighborhood Park (1.5 ac.)	1/2 ac. lawn area, walkways, benches, signage, play structure, basketball court, security lighting, landscape plantings	\$75,000
Neighborhood Park to East of Former Odd Fellows Complex (1.5 ac.)	1/2 ac. of lawn area, walkways, benches, signage, play structure, security lighting, landscape plantings	\$65,000
Trumansburg Rd./Hopkins Rd. Neighborhood Park (1.5 ac.)	1/2 ac. of lawn area, walkways, benches, signage, play structure, security lighting, landscape plantings	\$65,000
West Haven Rd./Mecklenburg Rd./Elm St. Neighborhood Park (6.5 ac.)	1 ac. lawn area, walkways, benches, signage, play structure, basketball court, security lighting, landscape plantings	\$80,000
Coy Glen Rd./Elm St./City Neighborhood Park (1.5 ac.)	1/2 ac. of lawn area, walkways, benches, signage, play structure, security lighting, landscape plantings	\$65,000
Inlet Valley Community Park Complex (Tutelo & Saponi sites with connection via Mancini land) (25 ac.)	2 baseball/softball diamonds, 1 soccer field, 4 tennis courts, 1 basketball court, 5 ac. lawn areas, 2 mi. of walkways, 2 play structures, 2 comfort stations, .5 mi. roads & 50 parking spaces, 4 20x30 ft. picnic pavilions, 40 picnic tables, benches, signage, security lighting, landscape plantings	\$760,000
West Hill Community Park (20 ac.)	1 baseball/softball diamond, 1 soccer field, 4 tennis courts, 1 basketball court, 4 ac. lawn areas, 1 mi. walkways, 1 play structure, 1 comfort station, 50 parking spaces, 2 20x30 ft. picnic pavilions, 20 picnic tables, benches, signage, security lighting, landscape plantings	\$475,000
South Hill Community Park (10 ac.)	1 baseball/softball diamond, 1 basketball court, 5 ac. lawn areas, .5 mi. walkways, 1 play structure, 1 comfort station, 20 parking spaces, 10 picnic tables, benches, signage, security lighting, landscape plantings	\$280,000
Tareyton Park Improvements	Upgrade the existing ballfield to regulation standards.	\$35,000
Americans With Disabilities Act compliance	Miscellaneous modifications to bring existing park facilities into compliance with A.D.A. standards	\$50,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$2,250,000</b>

### **Bicycle/Pedestrian Paths**

The Town of Ithaca is in a unique position to develop, over the next two decades, an integral network of bicycle and pedestrian paths to serve both the recreational and transportation needs of residents. This system of paths would provide an alternative to the automobile for transport to and from local parks, retail establishments, and work while at the same time providing opportunities for recreational walking, bicycling, jogging, and other leisure activities. The system's overall length would be about 21 miles if constructed to the extent outline below.

The system will consist primarily of off-road paths. However, some sections will follow existing streets or highways. For those portions of the system, sidewalks, bikelanes, or a combination of both, are proposed where appropriate and factored into the projected cost of the path. Table 9-2 outlines the recommended new bicycle and pedestrian path system and the type and costs of the improvement needed to develop it.

It should be noted that, although for the purposes of this Plan they are considered recreational facilities, most of the proposed sidewalk and bikelane improvements being proposed are also transportation improvements, and can legitimately be incorporated into a transportation improvement program. Altogether approximately \$280,000 of the expenditures proposed in Table 9-2, or about 15% of the total, would directly result in an enhancement of the pedestrian and bicycle *transportation* network of the Town of Ithaca.

These sidewalk and bike lane improvements mesh with the goals and recommendations of the 1995 Long Range Transportation Plan adopted by the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council. By integrating them into the ITCTC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) the Town may make additional outside funding sources available. The total estimated cost for the proposed bicycle/pedestrian path system is \$2,050,000.

### **Adjustment to Estimated Cost of Parks and Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities**

The total cost of all the proposed parks and bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Table 9-1 and Table 9-2 is \$4.3 million. However, this figure can be safely adjusted downward. The reason is that the parks shown assume the development for residential purposes of some 1,500 acres of land. This scale of future residential development is 2.5 times the amount anticipated in the 1993 Town of Ithaca Comprehensive Plan.

Thus not all the tracts of land for which public parks are proposed are in reality going to be developed over the next two decades. Development of the full 1,500 acres nonetheless must be anticipated for this report, since there is no way to know ahead of time what specific parcels will be developed, or when they will be developed. To ensure that no opportunities are lost, a full range of potential future park and recreation facilities, and pedestrian and bicycle paths, is presented for long term planning purposes.

Table 9-2. Future Bicycle/Pedestrian Paths and Estimated Costs

Proposed Path	Proposed Route	Length	Estimated Cost
Sapsucker Woods to Cornell University	Lab. of Ornithology to Cornell campus via Salem Pk., Birchwood, Muriel & Blue Grass Ln., Hasbrouck Apts. and Fuytes Observatory	<u>2.7 mi. total:</u> 4,000 Lf bike/ped. paths; 6,800 Lf sidewalks; 5,000 Lf bikelanes	\$75,000 75,000 <u>90,000</u> \$240,000
East Ithaca Recreation Way improvements	Maple Ave. between east and south sections of path	<u>0.3 mi. total:</u> 1,600 Lf bikelanes; 1,600 Lf sidewalk	\$30,000 <u>20,000</u> \$50,000
Wm. & Hannah Pew Trail	East Ithaca Rec. Way to NYS Rte. 79 via Honness, Baldwin lands, Tudor Park & Park Lane	<u>1.4 mi. total:</u> 4,000 Lf bike/ped. paths; 3,500 Lf sidewalks; 1,900 Lf bikelanes	\$75,000 40,000 <u>35,000</u> \$150,000
Upper South Hill Network	Chase Ln. to Codd. Rd @ Hudson via Deer Run, Raponi & I.C. lands; Deer Run to Danby Rd. via So. Hill comm. park; east to Codd. Rd & So. Hill Rec. Way via Troy Park	<u>5.3 mi. total:</u> 26,400 Lf bike/ped. paths; 4,200 Lf sidewalks	\$500,000 <u>50,000</u> \$550,000
Aurora St/Buttermilk Falls Path	Aurora St. to Upper Buttermilk Falls St. Pk. via Axiohm, Ithacare, Cayuga Vista, W. King Rd.	<u>2.0 mi. total:</u> 8,500 Lf bike/ped. paths; 2,200 Lf sidewalk; 2,200 Lf bikelanes	\$160,000 25,000 <u>45,000</u> \$230,000
So. Hill Rec. Way to Buttermilk Fls. St. Pk. Extension	So. Hill Rec. Way at Hudson St. to Buttermilk Falls St. Pk. via former DL&W RR grade.	<u>2.1 mi. total:</u> 10,100 Lf bike/ped. paths; 750 Lf sidewalk	\$95,000 <u>5,000</u> \$100,000 **
Inlet Valley Path	Saponi park to future State Black Diamond trail via Tutelo park & Five Mile Drive.	<u>1.3 mi. total:</u> 5,300 Lf bike/ped paths; 1,600 Lf sidewalk; 500 Lf bikelanes	\$100,000 20,000 <u>10,000</u> \$130,000
Upper West Hill Path	Vicinity of Elm St. north to Hayts & Hopkins Rd. via new comm. park, w/ spur to hospital.	<u>3.1 mi. total:</u> 16,300 Lf bike/ped. path	\$310,000
Lower West Hill Path	Woolf Ln. to Cass Park via Evergreen Ln., hospital, Cayuga Cliffs property and former LVRR grade, w/ spur north to LVRR grade at Indian Creek	<u>2.9 mi. total:</u> 13,500 Lf bike/ped. paths; 2,100 Lf sidewalk; 600 Lf bikelanes	\$255,000 25,000 <u>10,000</u> \$290,000 ***
TOTAL		21.1 miles	\$2,050,000

\* Included in 1984 Park and Open Space Plan Update.

\*\* Assumes cost share with City of Ithaca, with City to assume a minimum of 50% of project cost.

\*\*\* Assumes 1,200 Lf of bike/ped. path along former LVRR grade to be built by State as part of Black Diamond Trail.

While in reality only approximately 40 percent of the land area on which this Plan is based is expected to be developed, almost 50 percent of the projected \$2.25 million in park development costs are targeted to sites that the Town already owns, or which would be acquired through means other than park and open space dedications. If over the next two decades the Town were to obtain three of the seven new neighborhood park sites, and the smaller (South Hill) of the two additional community park sites, the cost of developing those sites would be an additional \$500,000. Given this, the Town can expect to invest about \$1.6 million, or roughly 70% of the total estimated \$2.25 million for new park and recreational facilities.

As with park facilities, only part of the projected bicycle/pedestrian path system shown in Table 9-2 is tied to future residential development. Right of way for approximately 55 percent of the proposed system is either in Town ownership, or is expected to be obtained through means other than park and open space dedications. Also, about 25 percent of the total cost of the system consists of bikelanes and sidewalk improvements.

Thus, roughly one-quarter of the envisioned system is dependent on future residential development. If about one-half of the anticipated bikeway right of ways are acquired through the park and open space dedication process, the Town can expect to develop about 85 percent of the envisioned bicycle/pedestrian path system envisioned in this Plan. This would require an investment of \$1.8 million, or \$250,000 less than shown in Table 9-2.

Based on the above assessment, the Town of Ithaca can plan to invest \$3.4 million in new park and bicycle/pedestrian facilities over the next twenty years. This is \$900,000 less than the investments projected in Table 9-1 and Table 9-2.

**Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program Costs**

The budget for a PDR program is, in many respects, similar to a capital improvements budget. It consists of a series of one-time expenditures spread out over the course of ten or more years. Each easement acquired can be considered a project. The program costs may also be funded by sources other than Town tax revenues, such as bonds or grants.

There are three cost elements to consider in the establishment of a PDR program. The first, and largest, is the investment needed to purchase the actual development rights on land. The second element consists of those costs directly associated with the acquisition of agricultural or conservation easements. These include the costs of items such as appraisals, title searches, title insurance if deemed necessary, a survey and attorney fees, and any filing fees. Finally, there are costs associated with monitoring the easements obtained through the program.

To develop the cost estimate for a PDR program, data on assessed land values, agricultural land value, and land sales from the Tompkins County Assessment Department were reviewed. Based on this analysis, the value of the development rights on a little less than 3,700 acres in the proposed program would average approximately \$860.00 per acre. This estimate was developed by first computing the average assessed valuation per acre (the estimated value of the land as determined by County Assessment staff for property tax purposes) for all parcels nominated for inclusion in the proposed PDR program. The assessed valuation of candidate parcels was used because it dates from 1993 onward.

From there, the average value of the agricultural ceiling, or the taxable portion of the land's assessed value for land enrolled in the County agricultural assessment program, was calculated for those candidate parcels currently enrolled in the County agricultural assessment program. This provided an estimate of the value per acre of the lands selected for PDR after those rights were purchased. This method of estimating was used because approximately 30% of the candidate parcels, encompassing 50% of the acreage targeted for the proposed PDR program, are enrolled in the County agricultural assessment program. Finally, the average value per acre of those lands with the agricultural ceiling in place was subtracted from the average assessed valuation of the candidate parcels:

Average assessed valuation per acre:	\$1,525.00
Average agricultural ceiling value per acre:	- 775.00
Subtotal - estimated per acre cost of development rights:	\$750.00
Contingency factor	+ 15%
Estimated cost per acre of development rights:	\$860.00 (rounded off)

The above property assessment data is supported by recorded land sales data for raw land in the Town of Ithaca and adjoining municipalities. According to the land sale data culled from the Assessment Department records for 1992, 1993 and 1994, the average sale price for large undeveloped tracts of land (19 acres and over) in rural areas of the Town of Ithaca, not served by public water and sewer, was \$1,353 per acre, or about \$170 less than the \$1,525 used in the above equation. Hence the approximated average cost per acre of \$860 for development rights can be considered a safe estimate.

In addition to the actual cost per acre of development rights, it is estimated that each easement acquired will cost an additional \$4,000 to \$5,000 for appraisal, survey, attorney fees, and other associated transaction costs. This estimate is based on the experience of administrators in land trusts and other agencies that oversee PDR programs elsewhere. Based on this estimate, up to \$350,000 can be expected to be needed over the course of the program to cover these costs.

It is important to note that the cost estimates for the PDR program presented above are based on two assumptions: all eligible landowners would participate in the program, and all easements acquired will be purchased easements. These two assumptions are important factors in determining the potential cost of any PDR program. Incorporating them into the calculations of future program costs results in an estimate of the maximum commitment of resources the Town can expect to make in protecting the optimal number of acres of agriculturally or ecologically important land.

For any number of reasons, not all landowners who would be eligible are expected to take advantage of the proposed program. Some may not wish to foreclose on future options that they may perceive exist. Other owners may not feel the need to make such a commitment to the Town, either now or in the future. Nonetheless, it is important to assume for cost estimate purposes, that all landowners will participate in the program, if only because the higher the participation rate, the more successful the Town of Ithaca will be in preserving large, contiguous areas of important agricultural and ecological areas.

Some landowners may participate in the program, but donate an easement to the Town. For some landowners, there may be greater tax related benefits accrued from such donation. This approach, of course, should be encouraged by the Town.

Finally, although they are not expected to be significant compared with other costs associated with a PDR program, the long-term cost of administering acquired easements must be considered. Generally, these costs are incurred through the annual monitoring of easements that should be an integral aspect of any program. At the very

minimum this monitoring should include requesting annual information from the property owners on any changes to the property, including new construction or cessation of farming on all or part of their land.

Whenever possible an annual property inspection that includes a walkover of the property and documentation of any relevant changes should be conducted. At all times, there should be prompt responses to any violations of the terms of the easement.

Based on consultations with a number of existing programs in the northeastern United State, the Town can expect to allocate approximately two days of staff time per acquired easement per year. Assuming the acquisition of easements on the 70 properties recommended in this report, and 250 working days in an average year, a program could require the equivalent of a two-thirds time position to oversee compliance with easements conditions. This position could either be a new position or become part of the responsibilities of an existing position.

For the purposes of cost estimating, this position can expect to be a Class 'M' or higher position within the Town's Civil Service classification system. The salary range for such a position in 1996 dollars is \$25,000 to \$34,047, with a job rate of \$29,036. Assuming the job rate to be the salary of such a person, the annual cost of monitoring in the year 2017 the maximum number of easements anticipated under the proposed program would be approximately \$20,000 in 1996 dollars. Again, however, if the Town does not accumulate all the envisioned easements, the costs of monitoring would be decreased.

It is expected to take at least six to ten years for the Town of Ithaca to acquire development rights to 50% of the target lands. Thus oversight of acquired easements is thus not expected to consume a significant amount of staff time during the early years of the program. Nonetheless, this plan anticipates the commitment to a two-thirds time position from the beginning of the program onward due to the the amount of time that will be needed in the early years of the program for easement-related negotiations and acquisition oversight, and educational outreach.

#### **Future Park System Operational Costs**

The Town of Ithaca Parks Department has a separate operating budget within the total Town budget. For fiscal year (FY) 1997 the Department's total budget is \$208,000. Its staff consists of the Parks Manager and three laborers. An increase in Parks Department staffing, both permanent and seasonal, should be anticipated if the development of the additional Town parks proceeds as anticipated.

In addition to its park maintenance and development responsibilities, the Parks Department staff currently provides assistance to the Town Highway and Town Engineering departments on a regular basis and conducts annual leaf and brush pickups. Approximately 10% of its staff time is allocated toward leaf and brush pickup each year.

Another 10% to 15% is spent in support of other departments, including restoration work on roads, water and sewer projects, and by supplementing Highway Department staff on paving projects and with winter snow plowing.

In its current configuration the Parks Department budget does not formally separate expenditures into "operating" and "capital improvements" categories. Rather, it breaks expenditures into "maintenance" and "construction," which in practice are the same as "operating" and "capital" expenditures. The Department's 1997 budget is broken down as follows:

Personnel Services -	
Maintenance	\$56,100
Construction	\$49,900
Equipment -	\$21,000
Contractual <sup>2</sup> -	
Maintenance	\$22,000
Construction	\$50,000
Youth Conservation Corps (YCC)	\$7,000
Misc. Other	<u>\$2,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$208,000</b>

Based on the above figures, the maintenance components of the Town Parks Department budget in FY 1997 is approximately \$78,100. This figure also includes the number of non-park maintenance related tasks performed by Parks Department personnel. These include the annual leaf and brush pickup, assisting the Highway Department with summer paving projects and winter snow plowing, and site restoration after road, water, or sewer repair projects. When adjustments are made for this work for other departments, the portion of the operating budget actually dedicated to park maintenance drops to between \$58,600 and \$62,500.

The capital improvements budget, including the funding for the Youth Conservation Corps program, is \$106,000. Under the following scenario, only the operational costs of the Parks Department will be considered; the capital improvement costs having been covered in previous sections.

Based on 1997 figures, annual operational costs for the various proposed Town parks in the future will be an estimated \$7,500 per neighborhood park, \$9,000 per proposed West Hill and South Hill Community park, and approximately \$16,000 per year for the Inlet Valley complex.

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<sup>2</sup> Contractual includes supplies and construction materials, and any services contracted for from outside vendors or contractors. The YCC program is included because it is a program the City of Ithaca Youth Bureau administers and staffs.

Neighborhood park maintenance costs are expected to include care of a 0.5 to 1.0 acre lawn with walkways, benches, signage, a play structure, a basketball court, security lighting and landscape plantings. Care of the proposed West Hill and South Hill Community Parks will include a baseball/softball diamond, a soccer field, tennis courts, a basketball court, four to five acres of lawn, 0.5 to 1.0 mile of walkways, one play structure, one comfort station, parking lots, picnic tables, picnic pavilions, benches, signage, security lighting and landscape plantings.

The annual operational costs for the Inlet Valley Park Complex will include two baseball/ softball diamonds, one soccer field, four tennis courts, a basketball court, five acres of lawn, two miles of walkway, two play structures, two comfort stations, 0.5 miles of road, two parking lots, four picnic pavilions, picnic tables, benches, signage, security lighting and landscape plantings.

Maintenance of the proposed 20+/- miles of bicycle/pedestrians paths represent a potential additional increase in annual operating costs of approximately \$40,500 or 28% upon completion in the year 2017. This would include standard maintenance practices such as mowing of the path edges two times per season and winter plowing to keep the paths operating as transportation routes. As is the case with parks, the development of the paths is not expected to be completed all at once. Instead, for the purposes of this plan, it is assumed that an average of 2+/- miles of paths will be developed per year. This represents, in 1997 dollars, an increase in maintenance costs of \$4,000 per year for new bicycle/pedestrian paths.

The additional annual maintenance costs of the proposed new parks and new bicycle/ pedestrian paths envisioned in this plan, upon full implementation, is estimated to be approximately \$135,000 in 1997 dollars.

### **3. FUNDING THE FUTURE: PARKS & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**

The Town of Ithaca, to fully fund the capital improvements in park and recreation facilities, including the proposed network of bicycle and pedestrian paths, needs to invest approximately \$170,000 per year for the next twenty years. This is a substantial commitment of public resources. It represents a doubling of the current rate of investment in park and open space resource development, as reflected in the current Parks Department capital improvement budget.

If funded strictly through property tax revenues, this additional commitment of public funds would result in an increase of just under \$0.13 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, or about \$20.00 per year for the average homeowner in the Town. This represents a 10% property tax rate increase, which is an unpleasant and moreover unnecessary measure. There are other mechanisms for funding, and other sources of revenues to fund the recommendations of this Plan. The following sections outline a number of the alternative funding mechanisms available to the Town of

Ithaca. Together they represent between \$3,355,000 and \$3,565,000 in potential funding for park development and opens space reservation purposes.

#### **Maintain Current Funding Levels for Parks Department Capital Projects**

The current level of funding for capital projects in the Parks Department's budget is \$106,000 per year. This level of funding, if maintained over the next twenty years, would total \$2,120,000. This amount represents 60 percent of the anticipated \$3.35 million in park and recreation facilities investment envisioned in this Plan. In order for the full \$106,000 to be made available for park-related capital improvements, it is suggested that budget procedures of the Parks Department should be changed. When the Parks Department does work for other Town agencies or for non-park related purposes, this work should be billed to those agencies. The cost of this work would then be reflected in their budgets and as a revenue line in the Parks Department budget. In effect, the parks function in the Town Budget would be given more recognition under this scenario and specific parks functions could be more accurately tracked in the Budget.

#### **Fees in Lieu of Park Land**

The Town Board in 1995 enacted a local law defining how the Planning Board can collect money in lieu of park land dedication. Fees in lieu of parkland are permitted under certain circumstances in Section 277 of Town Law and in the Town's Subdivision Regulations. Given the growth expectations outlined in the 1993 Comprehensive Plan, there could be up to 1,230 new homes built in the Town of Ithaca by 2010. These homes are expected to require some 600 acres of land.

Because this Plan cannot anticipate exactly which land within those areas of anticipated future development shown on Map 3-2 will be developed in the future, the projection for fees in lieu of park land has first been calculated based on development of the 1,500 acres identified on the map. Using this scale of development, and considering the anticipated land dedications required for those future parks shown in Table 9-1 and future bicycle/pedestrian facilities in Table 9-2, up to \$400,000 in revenues is possible over the next two decades through the fee in lieu of land mechanism. However, since only about 40 to 50 percent of the acreage shown as potential development land on Map 3-2 is likely to be developed, the fee in lieu of revenue expectations must be revised downward.

Under the fee in lieu of land provision and the guidance provided by this Plan regarding the location and size of future parkland dedications, there is the potential for between \$160,000 and \$200,000 being generated for park development purposes over the next two decades. This represents 5% to 6% of the anticipated cost of developing Town parks during that time.

### Donations From Individuals and Groups

Private support for the development of public parks and the preservation of open space is a longstanding tradition in America. Individuals, businesses, and fraternal organizations in many communities across the country have contributed substantial sums to park and recreational facility development and open space preservation. Such assistance has taken the form of direct financial contributions, land, materials, labor, or a combination thereof. Locally, Robert H. Treman State Park, Buttermilk Falls State Park, and the Newman Arboretum are perhaps the most outstanding examples of the potential for private assistance in the development of outdoor recreational space.

Another outstanding example of the potential for private support of park and recreational facility development is The Rink, newly constructed in the Town of Lansing. Altogether more than 50% of its \$1.5 million cost was covered through donations of cash, materials, and labor contributed by over 500 individuals and businesses. Another example is the pavilion recently constructed at Coddington Road Community Center in a joint Town/Community Center effort. An anonymous donation of \$10,000 covered the purchase materials for the new structure. A Youth Conservation Corps team, with assistance from the Town Parks Department, was responsible for the bulk of the construction work. And Community Center volunteers finished the structure.

**Table 9-3. Estimated Costs of Some Park Components with High Donation Potential.**

Park Component	Number Envisioned	Estimated Cost (1995 \$s)
Play structures	12	\$180,000
Picnic pavilions	2	\$38,500
Picnic tables	55	\$45,000
Park benches	80	\$40,000
Landscaping -- tree plantings	200	\$60,000
Landscaping -- shrub plantings	500	\$48,000
Athletic field spectator bleachers	11	\$23,000
Baseball diamond backstop, wing fences	5	\$40,500
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$475,000</b>

The Town of Ithaca has made only limited use of private gift giving to develop its park system. Even so, it has realized substantial cost savings in the development of its park and recreation system. In the case of the South Hill Recreation way local industry contributed more than \$50,000 to the project through donations of right-of-way or reduction in the sale price of right-of-way. Therm, Inc. donated an easement to the Town over approximately 7.5

acres land for the South Hill Recreation Way. Should the Town have had to purchase the land, it could have cost in excess of \$30,000. In addition, New York State Electric and Gas Corporation agreed to sell the Town of Ithaca its portion of the trail right-of-way for almost 50 percent less than appraised value. It is recommended that the Town begin a more aggressive approach to tap the potential for gifts of money, materials, labor, and where appropriate, land, as it develops its park and recreational facilities in the coming years. The potential cost savings are significant. The play structures, picnic pavilions, picnic tables and benches envisioned for the parks proposed in this plan are examples of improvements that could be donated to the Town of Ithaca. The estimated cost of these and other components is. The "friends of the parks" citizen groups proposed in Chapter Five could serve an important role in coordinating any Town parks gift program.

### **Grant Funding**

Although the opportunities for the acquisition of state or federal grants have been greatly reduced over the past several years, the use of such sources for investment in park infrastructure should not be ruled out. With an aggressive approach to grant acquisition, the Town of Ithaca could safely assume that between 20 and 25 percent of future park and recreation improvements would be funded with outside money. This represents between \$670,000 and \$840,000 in outside funding.

With adoption of this Plan, the Town will be in a very competitive position with regard to obtaining grant funding. First, as funding for state and federal grant programs has been reduced, more and more programs have begun using evidence of sound planning for community park and recreational needs based on nationally accepted standards as a major criteria in the review of grant applications. This Plan has used the National Recreation and Park Association standards in order to ensure the Town's competitiveness in this regard.

Second, this Plan, if implemented, will provide the Town of Ithaca with a palette of ready to build park projects which can be matched with appropriate state or federal grant programs. Tables 9-1 and 9-2 provide the basic programmatic and design parameters of several future parks and recreation ways for which the Town already owns the land. This is a very important element in the effort to acquire outside grant funding. Since 1990 the Town of Ithaca has actually had to forego participation in a number of grant programs, including ISTEA grants for construction of much needed bicycle/pedestrian facilities, because it lacked projects that were "ready to go."

By developing preliminary designs and gaining community consensus regarding the design of those parks now, and by annually including adequate funding for capital improvements, the Town can position itself to quickly respond to grant opportunities such as future ISTEA or similar grant programs.

### **Bonding Large Capital Improvements**

An option open to the Town for spreading the cost of some park projects over many years is to borrow money through bonds. This option could be useful when the Town develops one or more of the larger capital projects proposed in this plan, such as the community parks. By using bonds to finance the projects, the Town could spread their costs over a ten, fifteen, or twenty year period.

An example of a project for which the Town of Ithaca may use bonding to finance park improvements would be the larger components of the proposed Inlet Valley Park Complex listed in Table 5-1. These components -- the baseball and soccer fields, tennis courts, comfort stations, and road and parking facilities -- represent an investment of \$400,000.

If financed through a fifteen-year bond, at an interest rate of 7%, the annual debt service payments could begin at \$50,000 per year for the first seven years, but drop to \$35,000 by the twelfth year, and to \$28,000 the last year.<sup>3</sup>

The cost of interest for bonding the above improvements would add approximately \$225,000 to the overall project cost. Moreover, the annual debt service generated by such a bond would consume up to one-half of the Parks Department's annual capital improvement budget proposed earlier in this section.

However, prudent use of bonding does provide the Town flexibility in implementing a capital improvements program. One specific benefit is that the use of bonding for larger projects would allow the Town to compete effectively for large grants. In the instance of the Inlet Valley Park Complex, a Town commitment to fund \$400,000 or more of the estimated \$750,000 cost of the project could make a grant application for the remaining \$350,000 very competitive. Even when taking into account the cost of bond interest, the resulting bond/grant package would actually *reduce* the total cost to the Town of Ithaca of developing the park by \$100,000. ( $\$750,000 + \$225,000 \text{ bond interest} - \$350,000 \text{ grant} = \$625,000 \text{ net cost to Town.}$ )

### **User Fees**

User fees dedicated to offsetting the costs of developing and maintaining municipal parks are a widely accepted source of revenue in communities across the country. Locally the City of Ithaca collects user fees for use of the three City owned pavillions 1 at Cass Park and 2 at Stewart Park). For pavillion rentals in 1994, the City collected approximately \$14,000.

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<sup>3</sup> While a 20-year bond could result in lower annual bond payments after the first five years, the cost savings in terms of interest between a 15-year and a 20-year bond would be approximately \$48,000.

The City also collects fees from various sports leagues, primarily to cover utility and maintenance costs associated with use of the athletic fields. In 1994, approximately \$15,000 was collected from the Ithaca Amateur Softball League, the Over 30 League, and the Seniors League. Additionally, development of athletic facilities as proposed in this Plan, will then become available to the general public. Fees may be charged for the use of these facilities similar to what the city is currently charging.

Implicit in this Plan is the assumption that, with the exception of the rental of park pavilion or athletic facilities for exclusive use by individuals or organizations, the Town's park system would be free and open to the general public, regardless of residency status. This is a continuation of the existing Town policy, as well as the traditional City of Ithaca policy with regard to access to its parks. This Plan in no way recommends any change in the existing Town policy.

### **Intermunicipal Partnerships**

Joint partnerships with other municipalities are another potential source of revenues for park and open space development. Currently the City of Ithaca and several surrounding municipalities in Tompkins county have entered into the Recreation Partnership program. The purpose of this partnership is to provide residents of member municipalities with access to the full range of Ithaca Youth Bureau programs at member rates.

The City and Town are committed to jointly develop the projected bikeway between the South Hill Recreation Way at Hudson Street and Buttermilk Falls State Park.(Table 9-2)

Another opportunity partnership with the City of Ithaca exists on West Hill. The proposed West Hill Community park is immediately adjacent to the city. Moreover, the City of Ithaca West Hill Master Plan recommends that the park serve the northern portion of the West Hill neighborhood.

## **5. FUNDING OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION**

To fund the proposed effort to preserve its agriculturally, visually and ecological important lands through a purchase of development rights (PDR) program, the Town would require an investment of an average of about \$240,000 per year over the next two decades. This amount would cover the cost of development right acquisition and associated closing costs of such a program. It also assumes a 100 percent participation rate amongst eligible property owners over the life of the program. To fund the proposed purchase of development rights program, the Town of Ithaca should establish a special **21st Century Open Space Fund** dedicated to implementing the proposed program.

The reason for using "21st" century is simple: the investment by the Town in purchasing the development rights to its agriculturally and ecologically significant land resources now, on the eve of the 21st century, will benefit Town residents well into the 21st century and beyond. It will provide as a legacy to future Town residents many of the wide expanses of open space, the scenic vistas, and unique natural areas treasured by residents of today.

The **21st Century Open Space Fund** could be funded through a combination of Town appropriations and private donations. The recommended mechanism for implementing the **21st Century Open Space Fund** is a combination of dedicated sales tax and property tax revenues.

It is anticipated that a purchase of development rights program will have to be partially financed through the floating of bonds. This approach would give the Town the ability to acquire the development rights to a large proportion of the eligible lands within the three to four years of peak program activity. This peak activity can be expected sometime during the third through seventh year of the program. In the following years, the level of purchase of development rights activity is expected to be much reduced -- one or two easements covering 100 to 150 acres per year. This expectation is based on the experience of similar government-sponsored PDR programs in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

While the average annual outlay for a PDR program is projected to be approximately \$240,000, in some years program costs are expected to be significantly higher, especially during the third through seventh years of the program. This is due to the expectation that the greatest outlays for development rights purchases will be during the first several years of the program. Annual program outlays could exceed \$500,000 to \$600,000 during the 2 to 3 years of peak activity. It is during these years that bonding will be necessary.

#### **Generating Revenue for the 21st Century Open Space Fund**

One of two recommended sources of funding for the proposed open space fund is the additional revenue stream generated by the increase in the local sales tax from 7% to 8% in 1993. The Town of Ithaca allocated the additional revenues generated by the increased sales tax to a special capital fund. Over the past three years, these additional sales tax revenues have averaged approximately \$200,000 per year.

This additional sales tax revenue has been earmarked for construction of a new Town Hall, scheduled for completion in 1999. Beyond 1999, however, the Town of Ithaca could allocate these revenues toward a purchase of development rights program.

Depending on a number of variables, including the amount of and timing of bonding to finance the program, the full \$200,000 in sales tax revenues would be needed for between nine and thirteen years, or until the year 2007 or

2008. After that the need would drop to \$100,000 for one or two years, and to zero dollars for the remainder of the program.

Total amount of sales tax revenue required by the PDR program is projected to be between \$1.9 and \$2.5; to be allocated during the fiscal years from 1998 through 2008. Again the amount of sales tax monies which will be required is dependent upon more precise program scheduling and financing information.

The second source of funds would be a 15 mil (\$0.15/\$1,000) increase in property taxes. The additional revenues generated -- an estimated \$105,000 based on the total value of taxable property in the Town of Ithaca in 1995 -- would be dedicated to the proposed 21st Century Open Space Fund. The term of the additional 15 mil levy would be 20 years, or through the year 2017. The cost of this additional tax levy would be about \$22.50 per year for the average Town homeowner<sup>4</sup>. During that time, it would generate approximately \$2.1 million in revenues. After 2008 the Fund balance, with the annual 15 mill levy, will be able to support the PDR program to its completion without sales tax revenues.

Note that the projected rates of development rights acquisition should be considered average rates. In some years the level of acquisition activity may fall below the projected level. This is especially possible in the first few years of the program. Should the target rate for any year or series of years not be met, however, the funds should be carried over for future use.

There may also be years in which the number of landowners who wish to participate in the program, and the value of the properties offered for easement acquisition, exceed the Town's funding resources. The state purchase of development rights program in Massachusetts has established criteria for evaluating which properties receive priority each year. Such a system should be set up in the Town of Ithaca. In years in which there are more properties than can be accommodated by the program, those which score lower in any one year would be processed as funding becomes available.

#### **Landowner Participation Rate**

The above projections for the cost of a purchase of development rights program assume a 100 percent participation rate by landowners over the course of the program. The participation rate by landowners will most likely be the primary variable in the total cost of the proposed program. Since it would be a voluntary program, not all landowners are expected to take advantage of it.

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<sup>4</sup> This is based on an average home value of \$150,000.

In areas where there have been government-sponsored PDR programs in place for five or more years, participation rates have varied significantly. However the state funded program in Massachusetts is approaching a 100% participation rate by owners of targeted lands in a number of towns. The program there is approaching its twentieth year and has protected approximately 40,000 acres of land.

The Town of Ithaca should strive to ensure a 100 percent participation rate in its program. Although less than full participation would result in reduced program expenditures, the end result would be a patchwork of protected and unprotected lands. This would be especially true if the participation rate were between 50 to 66 percent or less.

**Cost of Development Rights vs. Cost of Public Water and Sewer Infrastructure.**

As expensive as the above-described initiative may seem, its cost is well below what the Town of Ithaca could pay to extend public water and sewer to the areas being considered for PDR. Indicative of the savings possible in terms of reducing the need for future expenditures for public water and sewer infrastructure is the existing Drew subdivision at the western edge of the Town. Because of water quality problems residents of the area have petitioned the Town Board for an extension of public water to the area.

The cost of extending public water to this isolated development, which would serve approximately 70 homes, is estimated to be nearly \$2 million. Were the Town able to purchase the development rights to the approximately 150 acres on which those home sit prior to their construction those development rights, at today's values, would total about \$150,000.

**6. CONCLUSION**

The estimated investment necessary to fully implement the recommendations of this Plan over the next two decades is \$7.1 million: \$3.4 million for new parks and bicycle and pedestrian linkages; and \$3.7 million for a PDR program. Table 9-4 summarizes the anticipated costs for the various components of this Plan. This figure represents the cost, in 1997 dollars, of the proposed land acquisitions, capital improvements and purchase of development rights needed to create the park, recreation and open space system envisioned in this Plan. Of this \$7.1 million investment, the Town of Ithaca can expect to fund between \$5.8 and \$6.0 million, with the remaining \$1.1 to \$1.3 million coming from grants and private contributions. In addition to the above investment, the Town can anticipate a commitment of up to \$2.3 million over the next two decades to maintain its public park and bicycle/pedestrian path system and up to \$400,000 to administer a PDR program.

**Table 9-4. Anticipated Costs of Implementing Plan, by Plan Component.**

Plan Component	Estimated Cost
Capital improvements to existing and future parks	\$1,600,000
Bicycle and pedestrian path development	\$1,800,000
Cumulative park operation and maintenance costs through 2017 *	\$2,300,000
Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program (acquisition)	\$3,700,000
Administrative costs of PDR program through 2018	\$400,000

\* Total cost, including costs for existing parks and bicycle/pedestrian paths.

Altogether the cost to the Town of Ithaca of implementing and maintaining the park and open space system envisioned in this Plan, over the next twenty years, is expected to be between \$8.5 and \$8.7 million. While this is a substantial sum of money, on a per capita basis it turns out to be a modest investment. This Plan envisions an expenditure by Town taxpayers of an average of \$25 to \$27 per resident, per year, for the next twenty years. In terms of increased property taxes, the cost to the average Town homeowner is expected to be about \$38 per year. In return, this and future generations of residents will enjoy the benefits of a comprehensive park and open space system that would provide adequate facilities to meet their recreational needs and preserve the agricultural and unique ecological and scenic resources of the Town of Ithaca. Moreover, the recommended actions of this Plan are investments that will generate very tangible returns, for all Town residents, now and for many generations to come.

Finally, it must be remembered that the implementation of much of this Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan is contingent on the future population growth and development anticipated in the 1993 Town of Ithaca Comprehensive Plan. This development will both provide for most of the future park and open space acquisitions in the Town, and contribute to the cost of park development through an enhanced tax base.



*Plan for seven generations.*

Iroquois proverb