

Economic Development, Historic Preservation & Environmental Conservation Committee

AGENDA

August 5, 2022

8:30 am

**VIA HYBRID IN-PERSON & REMOTE MEETING SOFTWARE
Town Board Room**

a. PUBLIC CONCERNS

b. MINUTES

- a. July 1, 2022

c. Resolutions / Finance Committee

- a. A Resolution accepting a \$5000 grant award from NYSERDA towards the purchase of an electric vehicle
- b. A Resolution adopting Phase 1 of the Natural Resource Inventory prepared by JN Land Trust Services through a Niskayuna Community Foundation Grant
- c. A Resolution accepting volunteer services by James McKinney Architect LLC
- d. A Resolution appointing members to the Historic Preservation Committee
- e. A Resolution appointing members to the Zoning Board of Appeals

d. Discussions

e. Planning Board (Kevin Walsh)

f. Zoning Board – 7 cases for August

g. Grants Update

- a. Going out to bid on – award in September:
 - i. Upper Union St
 - ii. Critical Bike Pedestrian Grant
 - iii. Plum St

h. Complete Streets –

- a. Mini-roundabout demonstration project (attached) and bike lane on Lexington
- b. Safe Streets for All Grant

i. Tree Council –

- a. Street Tree Master Plan
- b. Big Tree Hunt Summer-Fall 2022

j. Conservation Advisory Council –

- a. Low Mow Initiatives still going great!
- b. EV Charging Stations Budget – delivery charges

k. Climate Smart Communities Task Force-

- a. Climate Smart Grant ongoing
- b. Compost Bin Day

- c. Solarize Niskayuna Campaign successfully completed

l. Architectural Review Board (Clark Henry)

m. Building Department / Enforcement

- a. Department has a new fax number – updating forms

n. Planning Department

- a. Consaul Road Sidewalk
- b. Kelts Farm – nearly complete
- c. Vincenzo Subd – nearly complete
- d. 2340 Nott Street East – Completed
- e. Harmon Grove – nearly completed

o. Legal (Alaina Finan)

p. Historical (Dennis Brennan)

Board Vacancy List

Zoning Board (1 vacancies – alternate)

CAC: (3 Vacancies)

Climate Smart Community Task Force: (2 vacancies)

Complete Streets Committee: (1 vacancy)

Architectural Review Board: (2 vacancies)

Tree Council (1 vacancy)

**NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING: September 2, 2022
at 8:30 am, Via Hybrid In-Person & Remote Meeting Software**

Economic Development, Historic Preservation & Environmental Conservation Committee

MINUTES

July 1, 2022

8:30 am

Members Present:

Jaime Puccioni, Supervisor
John Della Ratta, Chairperson
Laura Robertson, Town Planner
Clark Henry, Assistant Planner
Janet Wynne, Assistant to the Comptroller
Kevin Walsh, Planning Board Chairman
Denis Brennan, Town Historian
Alaina Finan, Town Attorney

a. Public Concerns

There were no public concerns today.

b. Minutes

- May 6, 2022

Mr. Walsh made a motion to approve and it was seconded by Chairman Della Ratta. The minutes were approved unanimously.

- June 3, 2022

Mr. Walsh made a motion to approve and it was seconded by Chairman Della Ratta. The minutes were approved unanimously.

c. Resolutions / Finance Committee

- **A Resolution accepting certain roads and utilities for the Kelts Farm Subdivision**

Ms. Robertson detailed where the project is at with the Planning Board. She stated that there are a few open items the Planning Board has with Mr. Bisailon before they can adopt the subdivision. This will delay the Town Board resolution to accept the road. Her hope is to have it finalized before the end of the month.

- **A Resolution accepting a sewer easement for Vincenzo Subdivision**

Ms. Robertson stated the resolution for accepting the sewer easement will ready.

- **A Resolution for a Special Use Permit for a daycare in a place of worship at 1850 Union St.**

Ms. Robertson stated that the Planning Board called for a public hearing for this project. She recommended scheduling a public hearing at the Town Board and suggested having the tentative

resolution on the same date for this project due to the fact that this site had been approved for the exact same special use in the past and nothing is being changed in the site.

- **For Finance : Pay annual SIMS bill (\$5,500)**

Ms. Robertson stated the Schenectady Internet Mapping System (SIMS) bill was due and explained this is the annual fee to maintain a GIS system that is used both by Town staff and residents of Niskayuna.

d. Discussions

- **Clifton Park / Crescent Area – on street parking**

The Committee discussed options to change parking on Crescent to designated on street 2 hour parking and allow residents to have a parking sticker that would allow overnight parking.

e. Planning Board

Mr. Walsh reviewed the projects that have recently been approved by the Planning Board which included updates to Starbucks and a tenant change with Five Below moving in. He added that some projects are still being finalized for approval. The projects include the Rivers Ledge senior housing, Chase Bank ATM and Kelts Farm. The Planning Boards next meeting is July 11.

f. Zoning Board – There are 4 cases for ZBA in July.

g. Grants Update

- a. **Combining bid documents for**
 - i. **Upper Union St**
 - ii. **Critical Bike Pedestrian Grant**
 - iii. **Plum St**

Ms. Robertson reported that all three grants will be combined in the bidding process. She stated it will help with cost savings for the projects.

h. Complete Streets

Ms. Robertson discussed a meeting she had with the Police Chief and Supervisor Puccioni regarding traffic calming measures. She stated that there is interest in demonstrating a mini-roundabout within Niskayuna to see how it works as an alternative traffic calming measure instead of stop signs. Ms. Robertson stated she will be presenting this idea to the Committee to get feedback on it and possibly change the original bike lane demonstration to this.

Ms. Robertson discussed the Safe Streets for All grant and how Niskayuna could benefit from this extensive grant.

i. Tree Council

Ms. Robertson discussed the spongy moth epidemic happening in NY right now and stated the Tree Council held a presentation by a forester from the DEC for residents. Mr. Scott Moxham presented to the residents information on how to alleviate the damage to their trees by this moth and what the moth life cycles looked like, etc. She stated it was very successful and was recorded and is on our YouTube channel for anyone to watch.

Ms. Robertson stated the spring photo contest was a success with many beautiful photos submitted.

j. Conservation Advisory Council

Ms. Robertson stated that the pesticide free program has updated its information on the website and they are still selling pesticide free lawn signs. She stated the low mow initiative is doing well but she still needs to put the signs up. Ms. Robertson stated the NRI has done a draft report of its findings and will be reviewed by the Council.

k. Climate Smart Community Task Force

Ms. Robertson discussed with the Committee that the grant is in for the compost bins and she still needs to schedule a day to give them away and educate residents on composting.

Ms. Robertson stated the Town has launched the Solarize Niskayuna Campaign. She stated it has been a success and she already has the number of residents signed up to apply for the grant.

Architectural Review Board

Mr. Henry highlighted the projects that are being reviewed in June. He stated there are 6 active projects in front of the ARB currently. This includes a garage on Grand Blvd. He updated the Committee on the new plans for the Glen Eddy and new photos of Kelts Farm.

l. Building Department / Enforcement

Ms. Robertson stated that the Building Department continues to be very busy. She added that they have an intern returning for the summer to assist with scanning building permits.

m. Planning

The Planning Department continues to be busy with Kelts Farm, Vincenzo subdivision and 2340 Nott St East projects.

Ms. Robertson stated she is in the planning process of getting a design for the Consaul Road sidewalk.

n. Legal

Ms. Finan stated there are 2 court cases currently going to trial and 2 Article 78's pending. She added that she has been working with the Planning and Building Department on various easements needed for permits.

o. Historical

• Rosendale Road Train Station

Ms. Robertson stated that she and Mr. Brennen met with an architect that will be working with the Rosendale Train Station on its renovation. Mr. Brennen stated that the architect Mr. McKinney has volunteered his services to restore the train station. Mr. Brennen added that this architect volunteered to work on the Grange School also. Ms. Robertson stated that this is the type of shovel ready projects that the Town can work to get grants for. They will need to initially pay for the copies of the original plans which will cost approximately \$1,000. Ms. Robertson described the work that will need to be

accomplished and stated that they have identified grants that would help with this project once it becomes shovel ready.

Supervisor Puccioni added that she has secured a grant from Congressman Phil Steck to rehab the deck on the Rosendale Train Station. She stressed the importance of coordinating this historic preservation work with the future rehab work. This will help with keeping the improvements aligned with each other. Ms. Robertson stated that she had discussed that information with Mr. McKinney and he is aware of the repairs to the deck. Ms. Puccioni added that she felt confident that she will be able to secure more grant money for this important project.

Ms. Robertson stated that a new email blast went out looking for members for the Historical Preservation Committee. Ms. Finan stated she received a couple names for the committee to review.

Adjournment

Chairman Della Ratta made a motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Walsh. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20am.

From: [Khachadourian, Alison E \(NYSERDA\)](#)
To: [Laura Robertson](#)
Cc: [Tara Donadio](#)
Subject: {EXTERNAL} NOTIFICATION: NYSErDA Clean Energy Communities | Town of Niskayuna | Community Campaigns - Community Solar
Date: Wednesday, July 20, 2022 11:51:47 AM

This Message Comes from outside the Town of Niskayuna servers. Please check the content before clicking links or opening attachments.

Congratulations! According to our records, the **Town of Niskayuna** recently completed a Community Campaign for Community Solar and is eligible for a **\$5,000** Action Grant under NYSErDA's [Clean Energy Communities](#) program.

You have three months from the date of this email (**DUE DATE: October 20, 2022**) to [go online](#) and claim your Action Grant. The grant funds will be paid in full directly by check within a few weeks of submitting a completed [grant application](#) along with a letter of commitment. For more information, please review the program [Guidance Document](#).

NYSErDA will not be issuing a press release regarding your grant. If you would like to issue a release, please send us a version to review and we will work with our communications department to provide you a quote. Please leave ample time for review prior to planned distribution.

If you have any questions regarding your grant, please do not hesitate to contact your local Clean Energy Communities Coordinator (copied) who is working on NYSErDA's behalf to help you navigate the program:

Thank you for your interest in NYSErDA's Clean Energy Communities Program.

Again, congratulations!

Clean Energy Communities Team

NYSErDA

17 Columbia Circle | Albany, NY 12203-6399

[nyserda.ny.gov](https://www.nyserda.ny.gov)

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PHASE I OF THE NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

Prepared by Town of Niskayuna Conservation Advisory Council
July, 2022

Funded by the Niskayuna Community Foundation



NRI working group surveying Blatnick Hill

Executive Summary

As the name indicates a *Natural Resources Inventory (NRI)* tabulates the Town's existing open spaces. The *Conservation Advisory Council (CAC)* recommends doing the town-level NRI in several phases. In this first phase, which was funded by the Niskayuna Community Foundation, we surveyed the forest near the Community Center, the Blatnick Hill area, Stanford Park, and a segment of the bike trail. A working group comprised of town residents met regularly and engaged the services of a consultant with vast experience in developing NRIs. **The NRI project enjoys significant community support and several residents participated, including high school students. It is also worth noting that many of the recommendations we make are aligned with the Town's 2013 Comprehensive Plan.** Maps are available at the end of this document.

Community Center Forest

This forest with large white pine, oak, and hemlock trees protects the steep slopes above Aqueduct Road and protects scenic views from the Mohawk River, Aqueduct Road and, from the Mohawk River Bike-Hike Trail. Niskayuna desperately needs more hiking trails in wooded spaces (the trail at Lisha Kill is over-used and shows signs of wear) and this provides an ideal opportunity. Three large developments have been or are being built within walking distance to the Community Center's forest and walking trails that can be developed here can provide recreation for these residents. Indeed, the working group received such requests while the parcel was being surveyed.

Recommendation: Develop a hiking trail through the Community Center forest. This trail can create a loop around the outer edges of the Community Center complex and extend east to the old railroad easement that runs north to the rotary at Aqueduct and Balltown Roads where it joins the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail. This would meet a goal of the Town's Comprehensive Plan of 2013 to "identify continuity gaps that would connect park recreational lands to the existing Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail and acquire/develop public land to resolve this."¹

Blatnick Park

The Town's 188-acre Blatnick Park has five meadows, some of which have habitat for declining grassland bird species including bobolink and meadowlark, both observed there in June 2021. These birds need unmowed grassland and delaying mowing until mid-summer has wide support.² Paths can be mowed so that residents can hike to the top of the capped landfill and take in views of the Mohawk River (please see cover photo).

¹Town of Niskayuna Comprehensive Development Plan, 2013, p. 45

²Daily Gazette, Feb 25, 2022

Recommendations: (1) The ten acre driving range field includes a five acre portion along the western half of the field designated as “Low Mow Pollinator Habitat Initiative” that should continue to be only mowed at the end of the season. This would have a positive impact on wildlife, including insect pollinators, birds and other species while adding to the scenic experience of residents passing by on the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail. (2) The pond at the Park’s entrance has a large number of Canada geese. By mowing only a portion of the pond’s shoreline the taller grass can discourage Canada geese & filter pollution.

Stanford Park

The 24-acre Stanford Park lies in the extreme southwestern section of Niskayuna. It is bordered at the south in the Town of Colonie by several small vacant residential lots, most of which are in a New York State DEC wetland and most likely will never be built. The Park is adjacent at the southwest corner to 48 acres owned and operated by Northern Nurseries. To the west in the city of Schenectady and separated by a row of single family homes is the 135-acre Woodlawn Preserve. In 2009 Schenectady County deeded 24 acres adjacent to the 170-acre Woodlawn Pine Barrens-Wetlands Complex to the Town of Niskayuna. According to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, “This land transfer was considered an important step in linking the Woodlawn Preserve and the Albany Pine Bush Preserve.” It provides a potential intermunicipal recreation opportunity.

Recommendation: Connecting trails to the existing trail system in the Woodlawn Preserve should be a priority.³ This can be done by crossing through the paper roads located between the small vacant parcels just to the south of the Park and with permission from Northern Nurseries, to Woodlawn Preserve where habitat for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly is being restored and to the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, where Karner blue butterflies live and breed.

Mohawk-Hudson Bike Hike Trail

Over a quarter of a million people use the Niskayuna portion of the Trail each year but the lands surrounding the MHBHT are vulnerable to development.⁴ Protecting lands adjacent to the MHBHT can buffer the Trail, allowing hikers and bikers to continue to experience the wonder and beauty of nature along the Trail, and also allow new trailhead connections to the MHBHT. Three large, wooded properties surround the northeastern section of the MHBHT: the 522-acre GE property on both sides of the Trail, the 81-acre Momentive (formerly SI Group) property that lies on the west side of the Trail and the 19-acre private property.

Recommendation: Efforts should be made to protect all or part of these properties. The Trail here is surrounded by mature forest (that is rich in biodiversity) on both sides with streams flowing into large wetlands before entering the Mohawk River. The western side has steep slopes that have created dramatic ravines and waterfalls where streams meet the River. These waterfalls are on private property but if opened to the public and properly signed with warnings and fencing, they could be attractive destinations for people hiking and biking on the Trail.

³Comprehensive Development Plan, Town of Niskayuna, 2013, p. 41








⁴Capital District Trail User Counts, 2016. Capital District Transportation Committee.



Community Center Tax Parcel Map. White lines show existing trails while yellow lines show possible new trails.

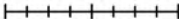
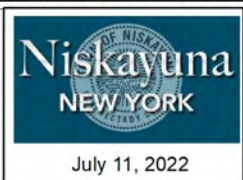
Blatnick Park Environmental Features Map



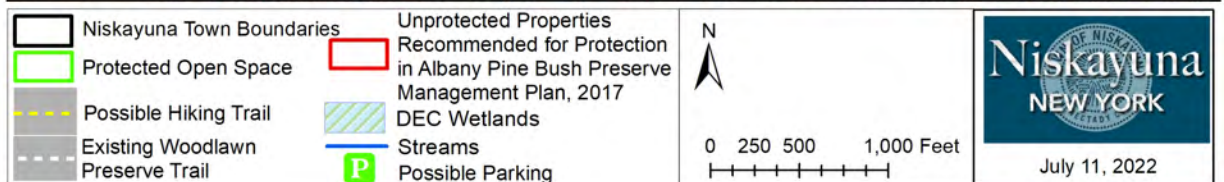
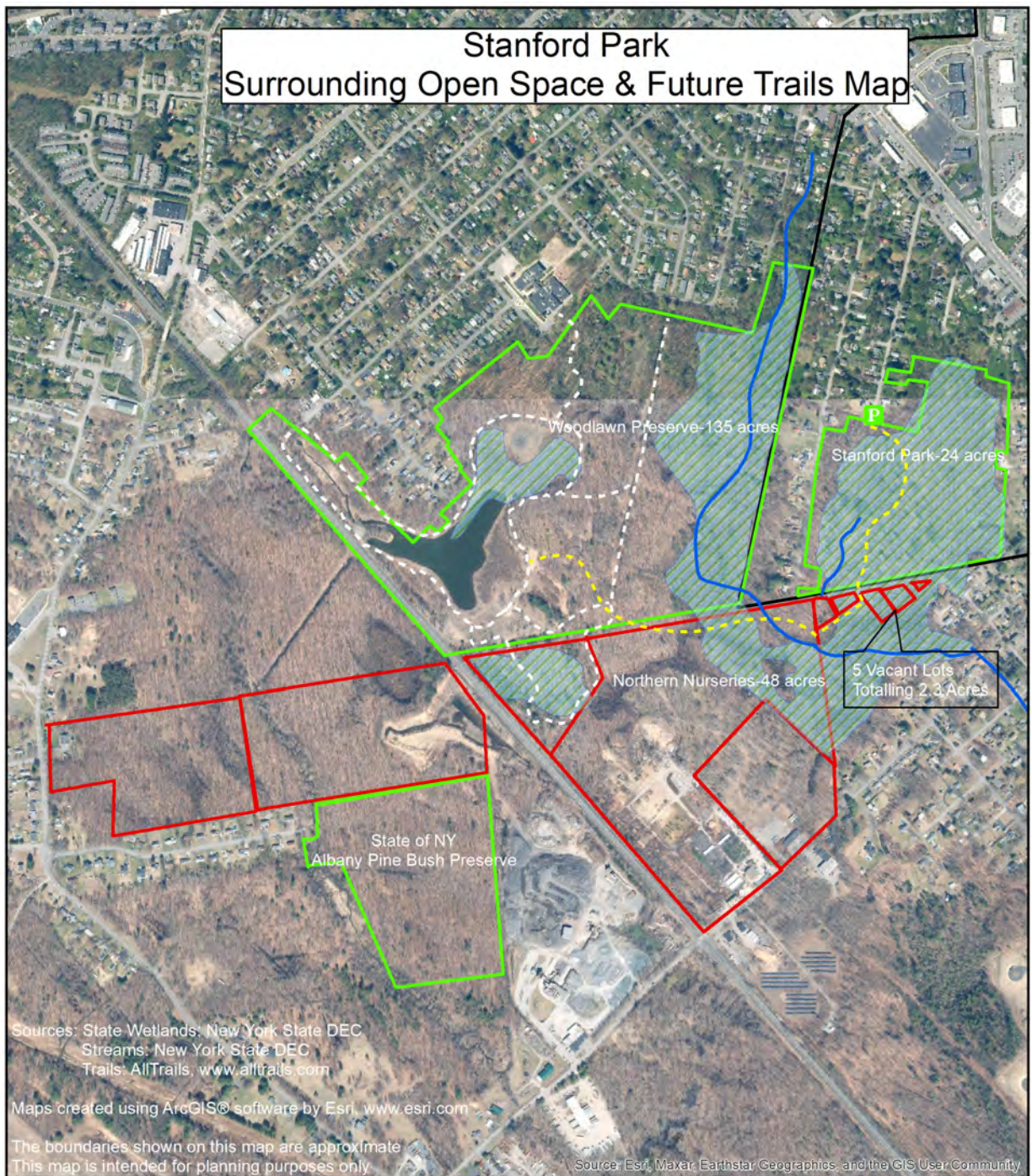
	Blatnick Park Boundaries		Contours-40 ft
	Streams		Meadowlark 6.2021
	Wetland Soils		Bobolink 6.2021
	Ponds		



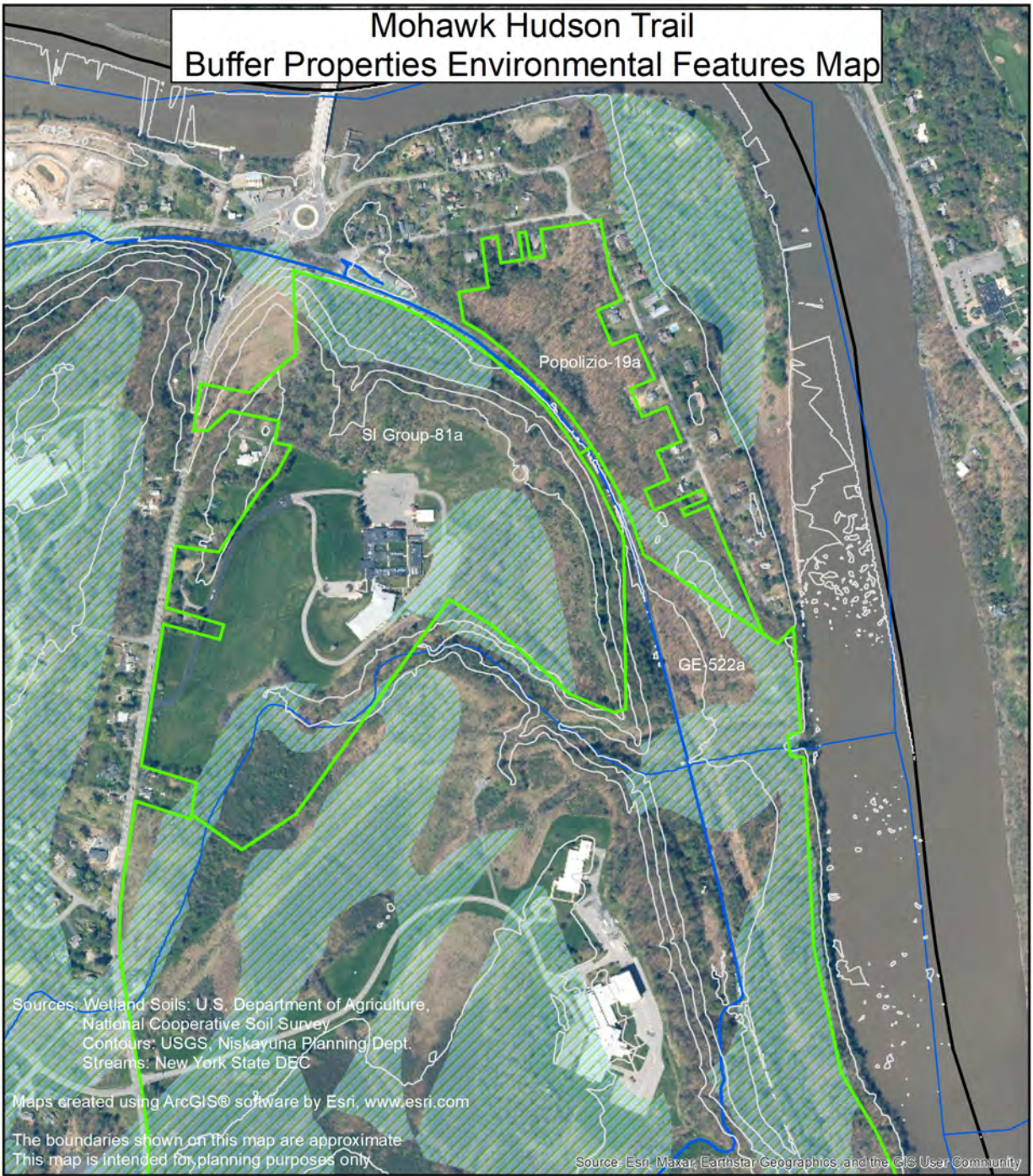
0 125 250 500 Feet

Stanford Park Surrounding Open Space & Future Trails Map



Mohawk Hudson Trail Buffer Properties Environmental Features Map



- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail | Streams |
| Buffer Properties | Wetland Soils |
| Niskayuna Town Boundaries | Contours-40 ft |



0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles



July 11, 2022

Town of Niskayuna New York

Natural Resource Inventory



Photo: Blatnick Park landfill

Prepared by Town of Niskayuna
Conservation Advisory Council

July, 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Natural Resources Inventory working group has made the following findings based on community input, previous studies and field investigations:

COMMUNITY CENTER:

The Town's Community Center's forest with large white pine, oak and hemlock trees protects the steep slopes above Aqueduct Road and protects scenic views from the Mohawk River, from Aqueduct Road and from the Mohawk River Bike-Hike Trail and should be protected.

Three large developments have been or are being built within walking distance to the Community Center's forest and walking trails that can be developed here can provide recreation for these residents. This trail can create a loop around the outer edges of the Community Center complex and extend east to the old railroad easement that runs north to the rotary at Aqueduct and Balltown Roads where it joins the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail. This would meet a goal of the Town's Comprehensive Plan of 2013 to "identify continuity gaps that would connect park recreational lands to the existing Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail and acquire/develop public land to resolve this"¹.

BLATNICK PARK:

The Town's 188 acre Blatnick Park has five meadows, some of which have habitat for declining grassland bird species including bobolink and meadowlark, both observed there in June, 2021. These birds need unmowed grassland and delaying mowing until mid-summer has the support of the Town Supervisor, the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and the Schenectady County Soil and Water Conservation District. ² Paths can be mowed so that residents can hike to the top of the capped landfill and take in views of the Mohawk River (see cover photo).

¹ Town of Niskayuna Comprehensive Development Plan, 2013, p. 45

² Daily Gazette, Feb 25, 2022

The ten acre driving range field includes a five acre portion along the western half of the field designated as 'Low Mow Pollinator Habitat Initiative' that should continue to be only mowed at the end of the season.

The three acre Bird Sanctuary field provides additional habitat for pollinators, birds and other wildlife and should be undisturbed.

A large, forty-four acre forest that lies in the Park's southeastern section along the banks of the Mohawk River is designated an Endangered Species Critical Area due bald eagles nesting there and should be undisturbed.

The pond at the Park's entrance has a large number of Canada geese. By mowing only a portion of the pond's shoreline the taller grass can discourage Canada geese, filter pollution and shade and cool the pond's water while providing habitat for insects, birds and other wildlife.

To the north of Blatnick Park are two large fields at the Knolls Atomic Power Lab which appear to be mowed regularly. The fields at General Electric just to the north are managed as meadows with less frequent mowing. By cutting their fields less frequently, the Knolls Atomic Power Lab could add to the mosaic of fields growing from Blatnick Park all the way to General Electric. This would have a positive impact on wildlife, including insect pollinators, birds and other species while adding to the scenic experience of residents passing by on the Mohawk River Bike-Hike Trail.

STANFORD PARK:

The Town's 24 acre Stanford Park is adjacent to the 135-acre Woodlawn Preserve and connecting trails to the existing trail system in the Woodlawn Preserve should be a priority."³ This can be done by crossing through the paper roads located between the small vacant parcels just to the south of the Park and with permission from Northern Nurseries, to Woodlawn Preserve where habitat for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly is being restored and to the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, where Karner blue butterflies live and breed.

Creating this connection can add momentum to the NY State Open Space Conservation Plan to protect habitat between Stanford Park, Woodlawn Preserve and the Albany Pine Barrens.

MOHAWK-HUDSON BIKE-HIKE TRAIL::

Over a quarter of a million people use the Niskayuna portion of the Trail each year but the lands surrounding the MHBHT are vulnerable to development⁴. Protecting lands adjacent to the MHBHT can buffer the Trail, allowing hikers and bikers to continue to experience the wonder and beauty of nature along the Trail, and also allow new trailhead connections to the MHBHT.

Three large, wooded properties surround the northeastern section of the MHBHT : the 522-acre GE property on both sides of the Trail, the 81-acre SI Group property that lies on the west side of the Trail and the 19-acre Popolizio property that lies on the east side of the Trail. Efforts should be made to protect all or part of these properties.

This section of the Trail is surrounded by mature forest of both sides with streams flowing into large wetlands before entering the Mohawk River. The western side of the Trail has steep slopes that have created dramatic ravines and waterfalls where streams meet the Mohawk River. These waterfalls are on private property but if opened to the public and properly signed with warnings

³ Comprehensive Development Plan, Town of Niskayuna, 2013, p. 41

⁴ Capital District Trail User Counts, 2016. Capital District Transportation Committee.

and fencing, they could be attractive destinations for people hiking and biking on the Trail.

The forest along the Trail has a remarkable variety of native plants, birds and amphibians due to the fact that it has been undisturbed for many years.

Situated as it is among other contiguous blocks of undeveloped land to the north and south along the Mohawk River including Mohawk River State Park to the south, this forest provides critical wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors while protecting the scenic views from the Mohawk River and from the Mohawk River Bike-Hike Trail and should be protected.

INTRODUCTION:

New York State law gives town's the authority to create a Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) "...to advise in the development, management, and protection of its natural resources."

The law also states that CACs are to create an inventory of open areas and wetlands within the municipality. The open areas inventory is defined as having each area "identified, described, and listed according to priority of acquisition or preservation." Before priorities can be determined, a basic inventory of natural resources is needed.⁵

The Town of Niskayuna's Comprehensive Development Plan also lists as objectives:

- To survey remaining undeveloped land parcels, determine their value as open space and develop a prioritized open space list of significant and high value undeveloped parcels;
- To target appropriate land acquisitions and improvements to meet identified recreation program and open space needs;
- To establish a greenway system that permits the connection of parks and open space, allows pedestrian and bicycle access, and conserves remaining natural habitats within the Town.⁶

To complete this NRI, The Town of Niskayuna's CAC has formed a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) working group. In addition to holding public meetings to gather community feedback on natural resources important to the Town's residents and reviewing previous studies, the group has also conducted site walks at the Town's Community Center, Blatnick Park, Stanford Park and portions of the Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail.

⁵ Creating a Natural Resources Inventory, NY State Department of Environmental Conservation, Hudson River Estuary Program. Haeckel, Ingrid and L. Heady, 2014.

⁶ Town of Niskayuna Comprehensive Plan of Development, 2013, pages 53-54.

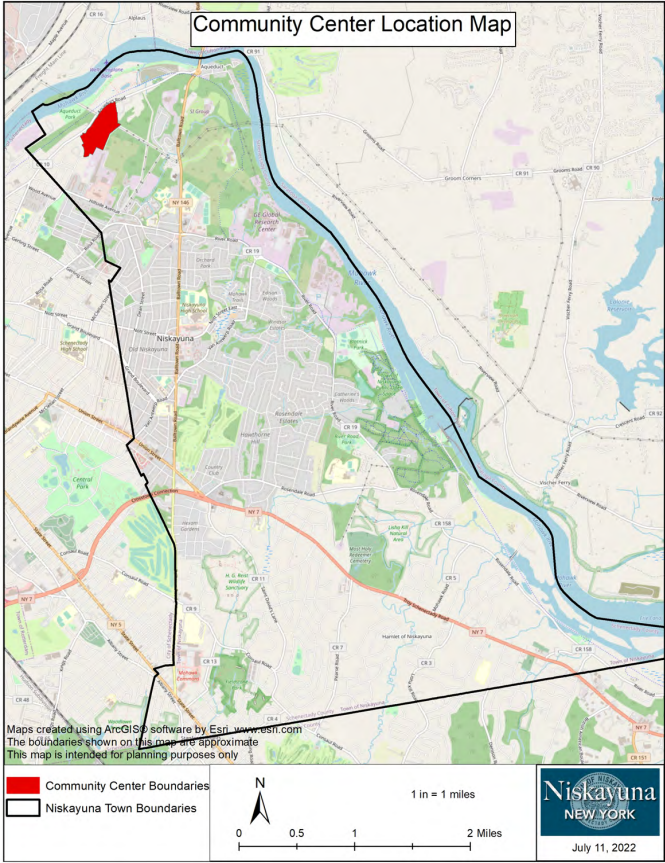
COMMUNITY CENTER FOREST INVENTORY:

May 14, 2022 Site Walk

REGIONAL SETTING:

The Community Center-Recreation Center lies in the extreme northwestern section of Niskayuna (see Community Center Location Map to right and page 15). The Community Center complex includes ball fields, pavilions, playgrounds, a swimming pool, the Community/Senior Center building and other wooded areas. The 2016 Town Parks Master Plan recommends selling the building and pool and relocating the pool and building to Blatnick Park. The complex itself is part of a larger, approximately 53-acre area consisting of five Town-owned parcels. Approximately 31 of these 53 acres, or 60%, are wooded and undeveloped (see Community Center Tax Parcel Map to right and page 16).

The Center is bounded to the east, north and west by at least seven large, privately owned and undeveloped wooded parcels totaling approximately 187 acres (see Community Center Surrounding Open Space Map below and page 20). Aqueduct Road runs along the Center's west boundary and beyond that further to the north and west is the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail and approximately 20 acres of land owned by the



NY State Canal Corporation along the Mohawk River. Along the Center's southwest boundary is a 23-home subdivision on land formerly belonging to the Town that was recently sold to a developer.



PHYSICAL & NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The 11-acre Community Center forest at the north end of the Center is flat, sloping gently from 370 feet above sea level at the east boundary to a low point of 330 feet at the west boundary. From there it slopes sharply to 290 feet at Aqueduct Road (see Community Center Forest Environmental Features Map below and page 18 and Community Center Forest Topographic Map below and page 19). The center of the forest has wetland soils and field investigations reveal a narrow wetland with what may be a vernal pool surrounded by elm trees and silky dogwood shrubs (see Community Center Forest Environmental Features Map below and page 18).



ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES:

The 11-acre forest is entirely wooded with medium to large sized deciduous and evergreen trees (see Community Center Forest Satellite Photograph Map at right and page 17).

The center of the forest has a white pine grove with some very large white pines that measure two feet in diameter. A hemlock grove grows along the steep slope at the far western side of the forest. The rest of the forest can be classified as an oak-hickory forest with red, chestnut and white oak trees--some large at 30 inches in diameter--along with some bitternut hickory trees. A few invasive buckthorn, burning bush and multi-flora rose shrubs grow near the power line along the southern

boundary of the forest but beyond that, the forest is mature and quite diverse with very few invasive plants. Hophornbeam grows in the understory in drier areas. Native shrubs growing throughout the forest include maple leaf viburnum, low bush blueberry and silky dogwood. The ground layer consists of many native seedlings and saplings along with Pennsylvania sedge, groves of may apple, seersucker and many-flowered sedge, wood rush, rue anemone, bedstraw and wild geraniums (see Wildflowers of the Community Center photographs, page 14). In sum, this is a mature, healthy and diverse forest with few invasive plants and with adequate forest regeneration provided by the numerous native seedlings and saplings growing there now and should be protected.



CONSERVATION VALUES:

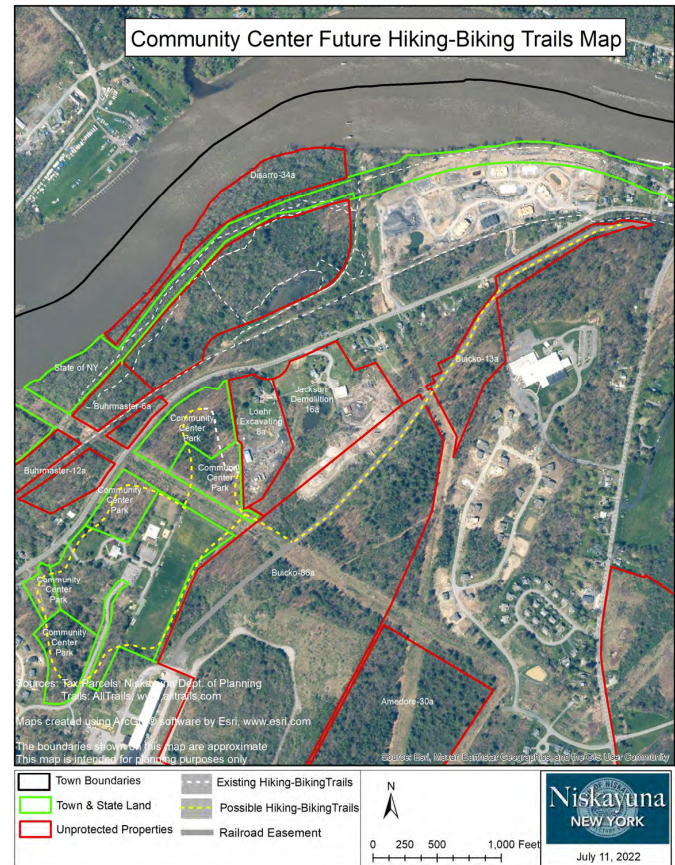
This mature and undisturbed forest and its wetlands provide a myriad of ecosystem services including: water filtration, groundwater recharge, stormwater regulation, drought moderation, flood control, erosion prevention on the steep slopes above Aqueduct Road, air pollutant and greenhouse gas absorption, oxygen production, carbon sequestration, temperature modulation through shading and cooling and nutrient cycling. This forest also provides habitat for other plants, insects and pollinators and wildlife including food, cover, roosting, nesting and stop-over sites for migratory birds and other wildlife. Situated as it is among other contiguous blocks of undeveloped land, this forest provides wildlife corridors allowing wildlife, and plants, to move freely in a relatively developed area. The plants themselves allow the forest to regenerate in the future by providing seeds and shelter for native forest regeneration.

This forest has other conservation values for Niskayuna's residents and visitors including protecting the scenic views from the Mohawk River, from Aqueduct Road, from the Mohawk River Bike-Hike Trail and the views for those using the Community Center's pool and athletic fields.

This forest also provides educational and recreational values. Three large developments have been or are being built in the last few years within a half mile and walking distance to the Community Center's forest. These 160 apartments and 60 single family homes are expected to create additional demand for hiking trails in the area. To meet this demand, a loop trail can be blazed through the Community Center's forest and around the Community Center complex (see Community Center Future Hiking-Biking Trails Map on following page and page 21). An existing trail now runs from the Loehr Excavation facility along the forest's east boundary into the center of the forest (it appears that some construction equipment and retaining walls from the neighboring property have extended onto the Town's property). This can be the basis of trail that begins at the Community Center and heads north and, with permission from Niagara

Mohawk, owner of the power line, continues into the Community Center's forest. From there the trail can extend west to the ridge where hikers can get an expansive view westward and then back south to the power line and then connect to the Community Center, creating an attractive addition to the recreational facilities now there. This trail can then connect to additional trails in the Community Center's other four town-owned parcels, creating a trail loop around the outside edges of the Community Center complex.

The future hiking trail can also extend east to the old railroad easement that runs north to the rotary at Aqueduct and Balltown Roads for three quarters of a mile where it joins the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail. This would meet a goal of the Town's Comprehensive Plan of 2013 to "identify continuity gaps that would connect park recreational lands to the existing Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail and acquire/develop public land to resolve this"⁷. Permission would be needed, or an easement granted or purchased, to allow the trail to cross over to the railroad easement. The Town's Complete Street members have had discussions with adjacent landowners about such a trail easement. The mission of the Complete Streets Committee is to promote pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote healthy living.



⁷ Town of Niskayuna Comprehensive Development Plan, 2013, p. 45

WILDFLOWERS OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER FOREST:

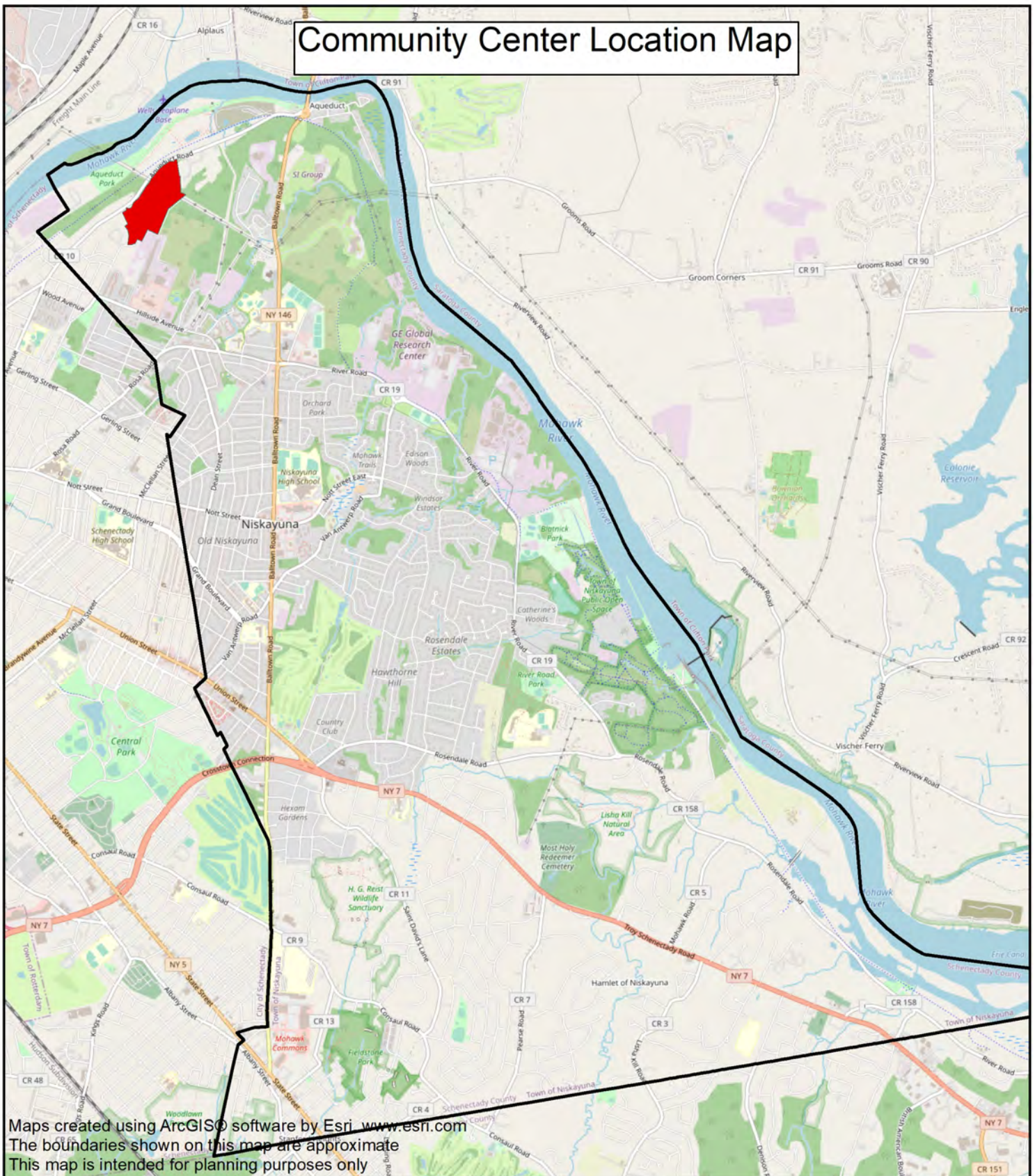


May apples on Community Center forest floor

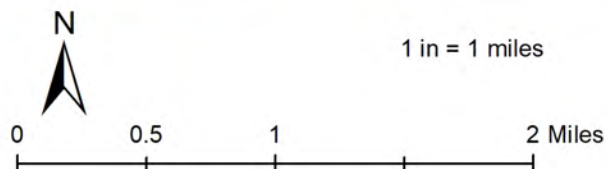


Rue anemone, a spring ephemeral wildflower

Community Center Location Map

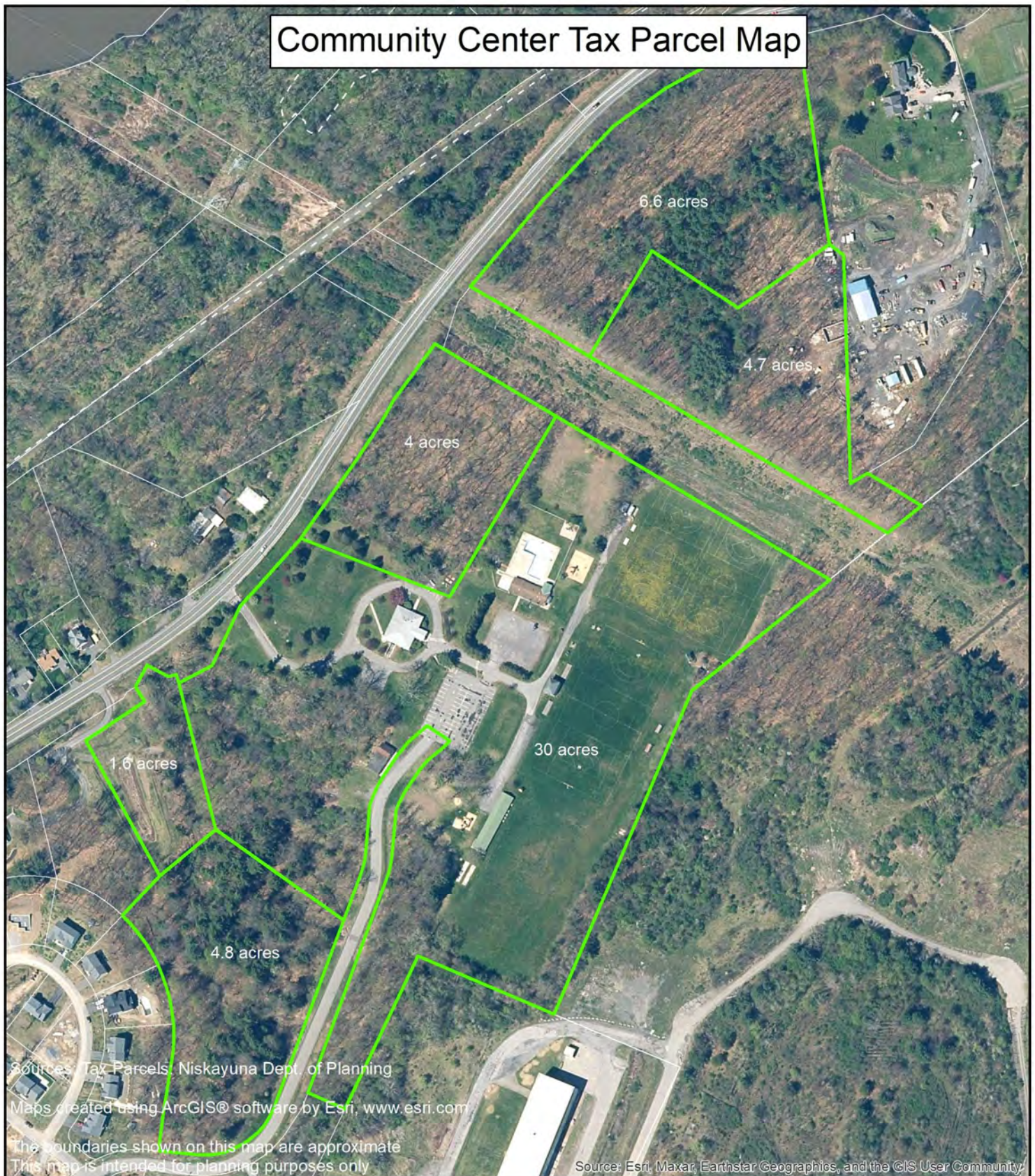


- Community Center Boundaries
- Niskayuna Town Boundaries



July 11, 2022

Community Center Tax Parcel Map



Town Land-52 Acres



0 250 500 1,000 Feet



July 11, 2022


Community Center Forest Satellite Photograph Map



Maps created using ArcGIS® software by Esri, www.esri.com

The boundaries shown on this map are approximate
This map is intended for planning purposes only

Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

 Community Center Forest

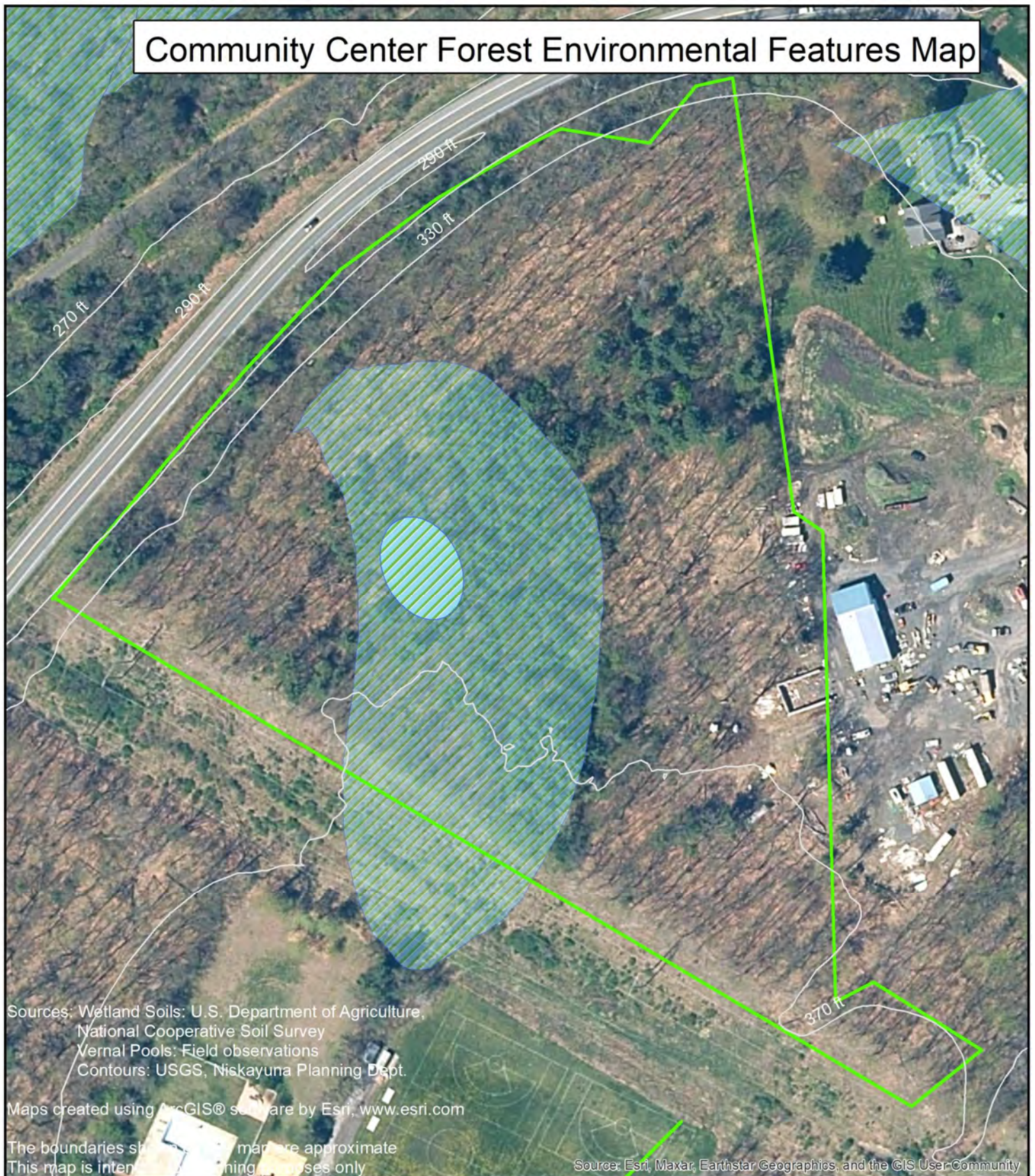


0 50 100 200 Feet



July 11, 2022

Community Center Forest Environmental Features Map



- Community Center Forest
- Wetland Soils
- Wetland/Vernal Pool
- Contours-40 ft



0 50 100 200 Feet



July 11, 2022

Community Center Forest Topographic Map



Community Center Forest

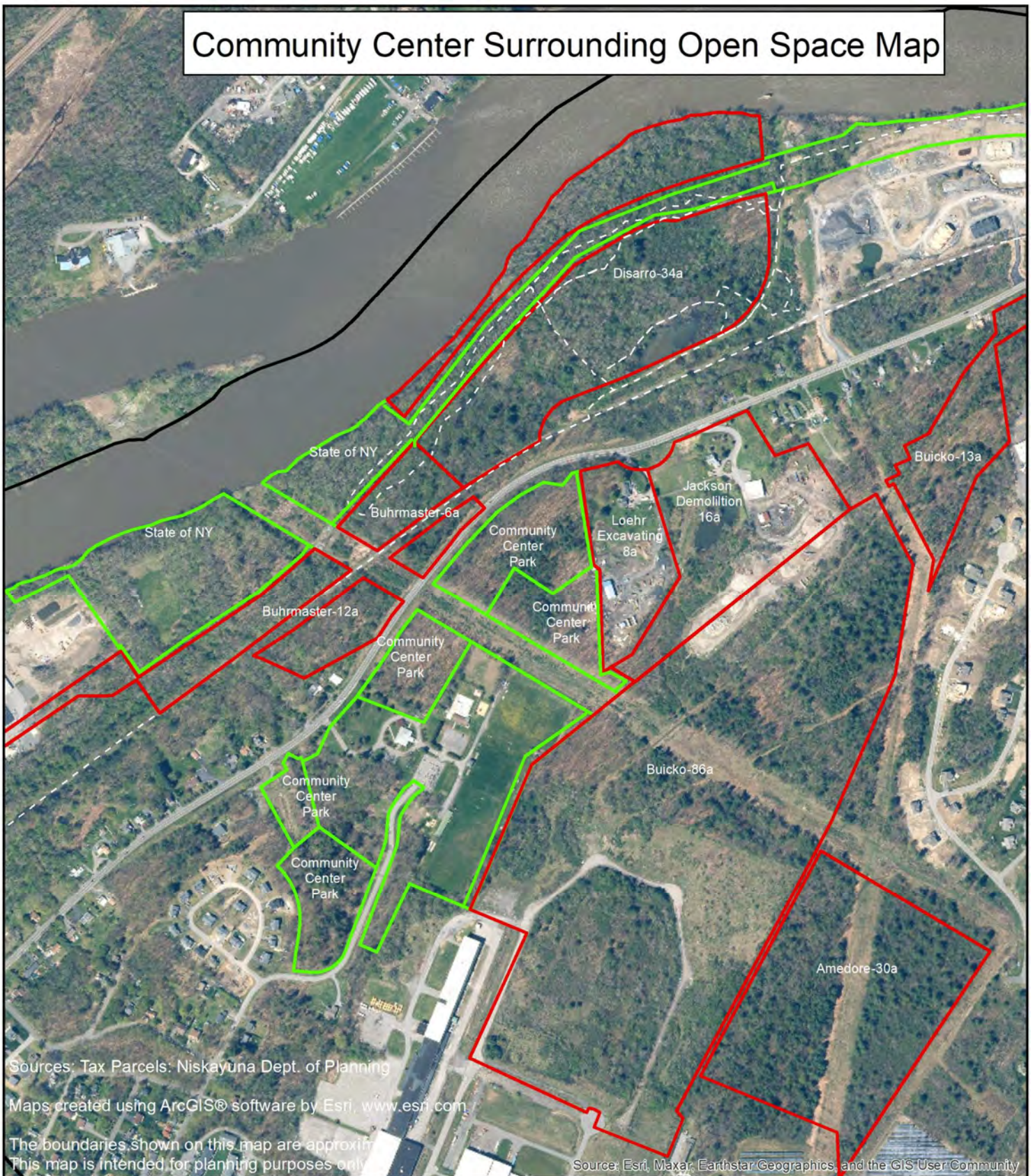


0 100 200 400 Feet

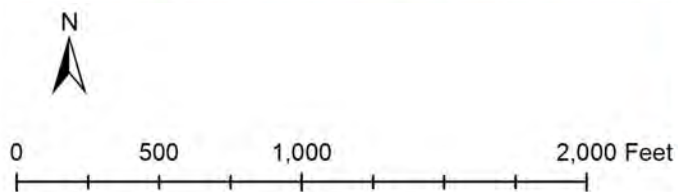


July 11, 2022

Community Center Surrounding Open Space Map



- Town Boundaries
- Town & State Land
- Unprotected Properties
- Existing Hiking-Biking Trails

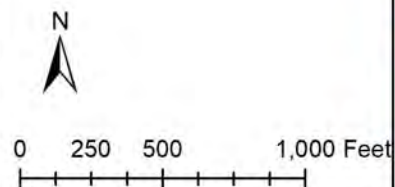


July 11, 2022

Community Center Future Hiking-Biking Trails Map



- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Town Boundaries | Existing Hiking-Biking Trails |
| Town & State Land | Possible Hiking-Biking Trails |
| Unprotected Properties | Railroad Easement |

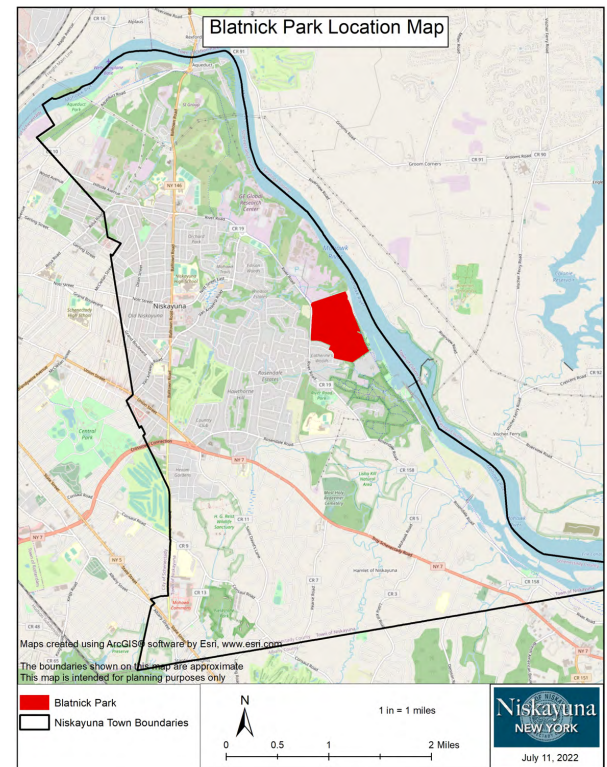


BLATNICK PARK INVENTORY

May 14, 2022, June 19, 2021 Site Walks

REGIONAL SETTING:

The 188-acre Blatnick Park lies in the eastern section of Niskayuna along the Mohawk River (see Blatnick Park Location Map to right and page 33). The Park is bounded to the east by the Mohawk River, to the north by Knolls Atomic Power Lab and the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail, to the west by River Road and to the south by several properties including: the 9-acre Town-owned Catherine Woods; a large, 28-acre privately owned parcel; the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail and another 6-acre parcel owned by the Town that runs to the Mohawk River. These southern parcels all connect to Mohawk River State Park and include hiking and biking trails connecting to the Park (see Blatnick Park Surrounding Open Space Map below and page 38).



PHYSICAL & NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS:

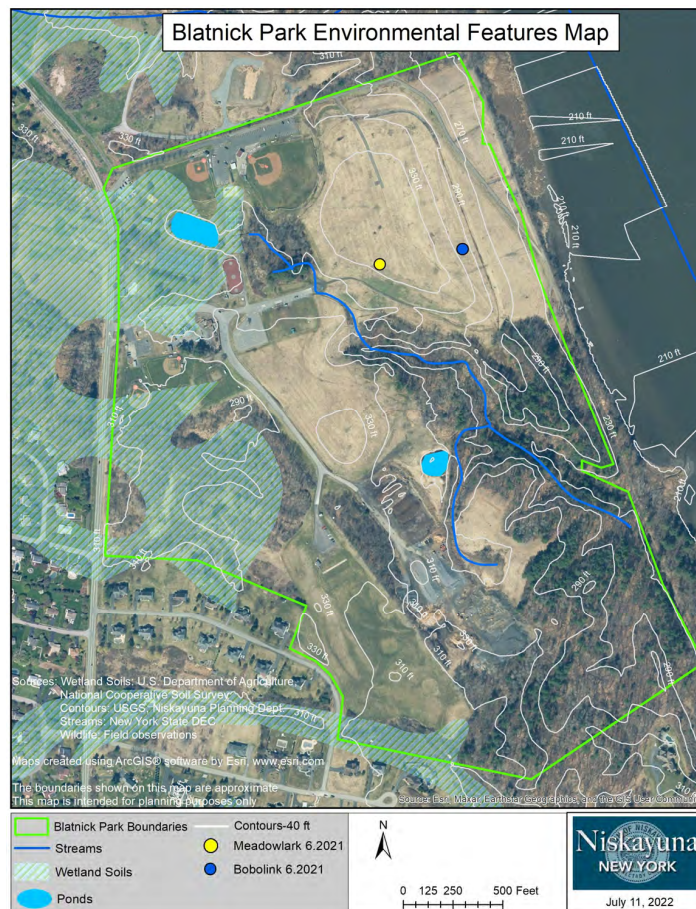
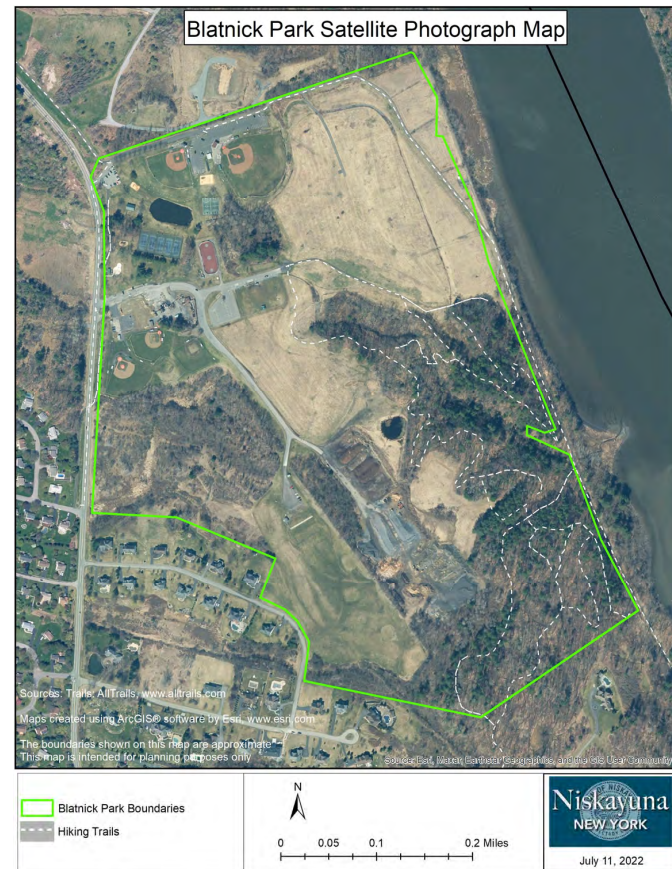
Blatnick Park's active recreational facilities include ball fields, basketball, volleyball and tennis courts, a driving range, a disk golf course, a dog park and restrooms. The 2016 Town Parks Master Plan recommends constructing a new community pool and community center where the disk golf field is located at a cost in 2016 of \$5.4 million. The Park also has a recycling and transfer station, storage for the Town Highway Department, a large compost area and an approximately twenty-eight-acre capped and mounded landfill (see Blatnick Park Existing Features Map below and page 39).

The Park has nearly three miles of hiking trails that are part of the John Brown Hiking Trail system which runs through the Park and south to the Town's Catherine Woods property and to trails at Mohawk River State Park. The Mohawk Hudson Bike -Hike Trail also runs for approximately one mile through the Park and then continuing both north and south (see Blatnick Park Satellite Photograph Map next page and page 34).

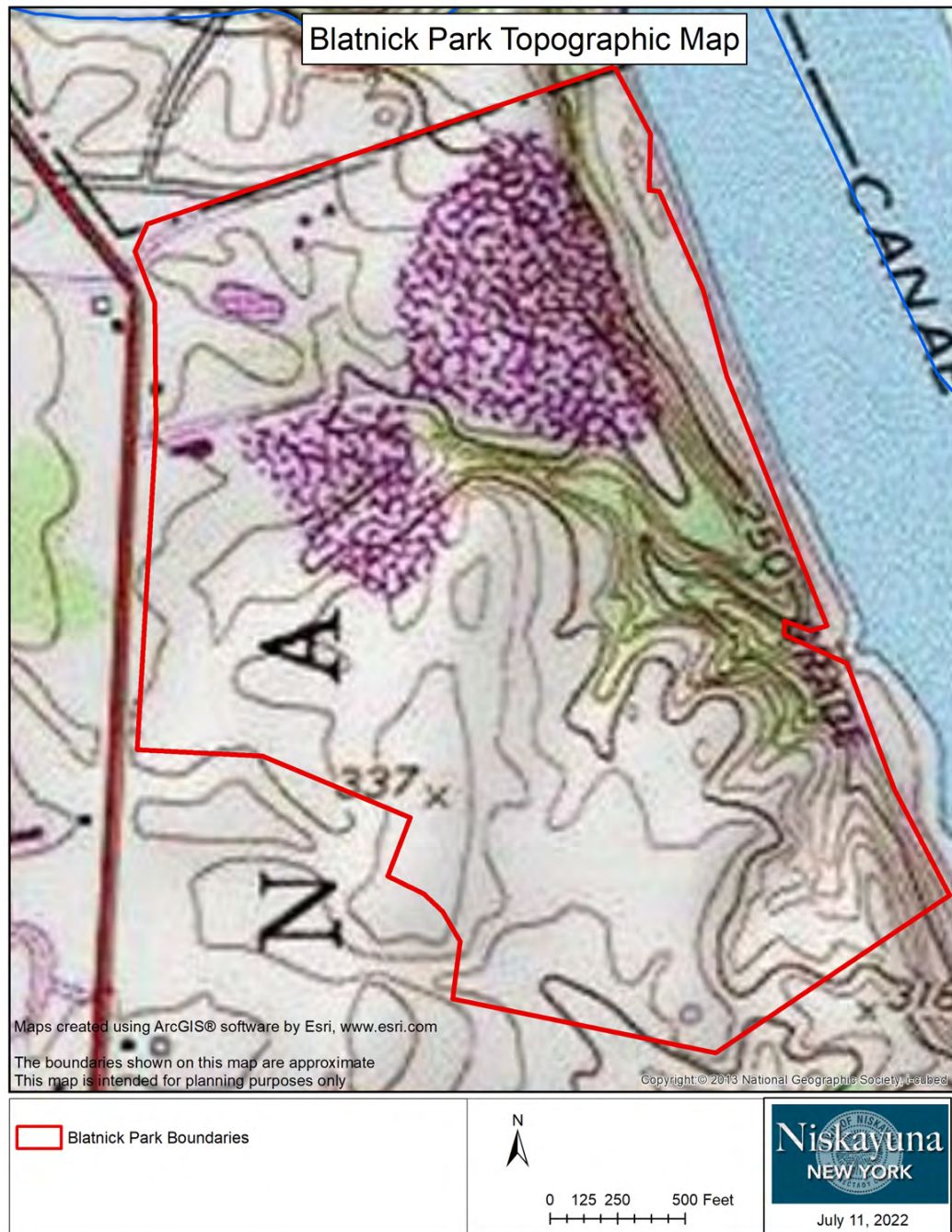
Blatnick Park Existing Features Map



Approximately 30% or sixty acres of the Park are wooded (see Blatnick Park Satellite Photograph Map to right and page 34). Approximately 15% of the Park's 188 acres have wetland soils, all lying in the western third of the Park where the bulk of recreational fields and courts are located (see Blatnick Park Environmental Features Map below and page 35 and Blatnick Park Environmental Features Pond Close-Up Map page 36). The 2016 Town Parks Master Plan recommends correcting drainage problems at several of the baseball fields built in these wetland soils. An unnamed stream runs through the Park from the northwest entrance southeast for approximately two-thirds of a mile through Shaker Gorge to the Mohawk River (see Blatnick Park Environmental Features Map below and page 35).



Ponds include a man-made half-acre pond at the northwest section of the Park and a smaller 0.4 acre pond in the center of the Park. The Park's elevations slope eastward to the Mohawk River from a height of 315 feet above sea level at the Park's western boundary to a low point of 210 feet at the River (see Blatnick Park Environmental Features Map previous page and page 35 and Blatnick Park Topographic Map below and page 37).



ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES:

FIELDS:

The Park has five meadows totaling approximately fifty acres or 25% of the Park. Fields include: the approximately twenty-eight acre large, capped landfill; the approximately ten acre field at the driving range; the approximately ten acre field at the disk golf course; an approximately three acre field labeled 'Bird Sanctuary' in the 2016 Town Parks Master Plan and an approximately one acre field surrounding a small pond in the center of the Park (see Blatnick Park Satellite Photograph Map page 34).

The capped landfill is unique because of its habitat for declining grassland bird species including bobolink and meadowlark, both observed there in June, 2021. The New York State Breeding Bird Atlas 2000-2005 does not include any observations of these two species in Niskayuna, meaning that



Views of Mohawk River from trails on capped landfill

their return is because of the decision to not mow the top of the landfill and instead allowing grasses to grow up until at least mid-summer after these birds have successfully nested. Keeping the landfill's grassland unmowed until mid-summer has the support of the Town Supervisor, the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and the Schenectady County Soil and Water Conservation District.⁸ Plants growing on the capped landfill include birds foot trefoil, red clover, yellow sweet

⁸ Daily Gazette, Feb 25, 2022

clover, common milkweed, ox-eye daisy, bedstraw and pasture grasses. Plants growing around the perimeter of the landfill include elderberry, gray-stemmed dogwood, common milkweed and whorled loosestrife--all beneficial plants.

The ten acre driving range field includes a five acre portion along the western half of the field designated as 'Low Mow Pollinator Habitat Initiative', part of the Conservation Advisory Council's Niskayuna Biodiversity Initiative begun in 2020 (see Low-Mow Pollinator Habitat Initiative Map below and page 40). The Niskayuna Highway Department will continue to mow a walking path for residents through this area but the remaining area should be allowed to grow and only be mowed once a year in late fall to allow native plants, pollinators, birds and other wildlife to survive there.



The disk golf course originally only included the ten acres shown in the 2016 Town Parks Master Plan (see Blatnick Park Existing Features Map page 35). The disk golf course has expanded since then.

The three acre Bird Sanctuary field and smaller field surrounding the pond in the center of the Park provide additional habitat for pollinators, birds and other wildlife and should be left undisturbed.

FORESTS:

Approximately 60 acres, one third of the Park, consists of mature mixed deciduous and evergreen trees (see Blatnick Park Satellite Photograph Map page 34). A sixteen acre wooded block lies along the Park's western boundary and a larger, forty-four acre forest lies in the Park's southeastern section that continues to the banks of the Mohawk River, designated as Endangered Species Critical Area due bald eagles nesting there and should be undisturbed. Bald eagles are listed as 'threatened' in New York State.



Bald eagle nesting area along Mohawk River

BLATNICK POND AND STREAM:

The half-acre pond at the Park's entrance is man-made. The pond is surrounded by tightly mown grass. While this allows residents to view and have access to the pond, it also has resulted in a large number of Canada geese whose droppings have contributed to the pond's eutrophication (excess growth of algae due to an overabundance of nitrogen and phosphorous acting as fertilizer).

Mowing also sends grass clippings which are high in nutrients into the pond, causing more algae growth. A solution to the pond's eutrophication that still allows residents to enjoy and experience the pond would be to only mow half or less of the pond's shoreline and mow walking paths among the higher vegetation. The resulting taller grass around the pond can discourage Canada geese, filter pollution and shade and cool the pond's water while providing habitat for insects, birds and other wildlife.

The pond's southern shoreline already has some natural vegetation including native cattails and Indian hemp (dogbane) which should be allowed to grow. At least sixteen native birch trees, each approximately six feet tall, have been planted along the pond's north shore on a steep embankment. Native plantings like this can be continued around other sections of the pond. A very large, thirty inch in diameter sycamore tree grows just west of the pond, along with a magnificent, triple-trunk silver maple, both providing cooling and shade for visitors.



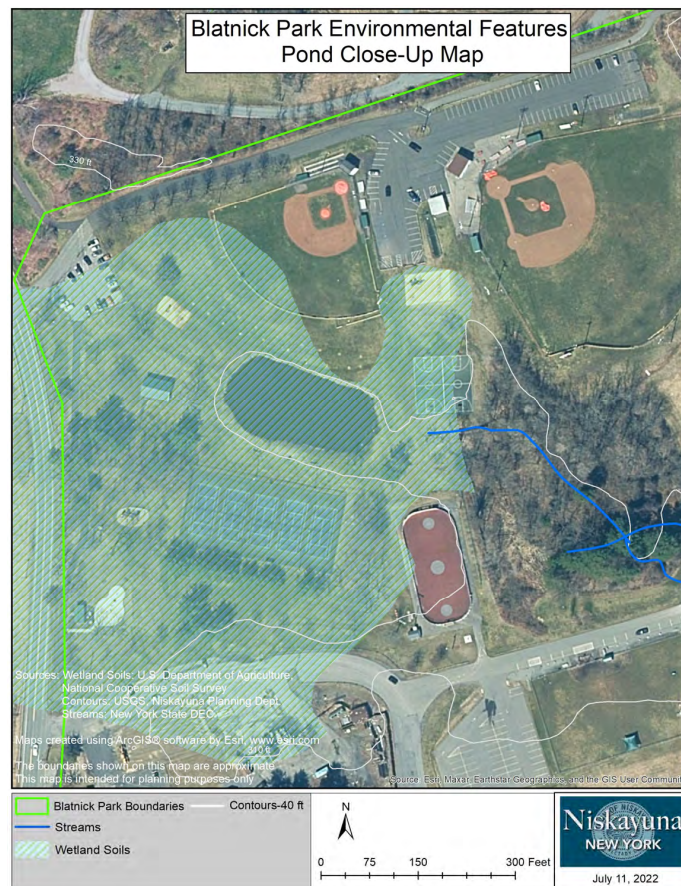
Pond with algae

A steep embankment along the pond's north shoreline is not being cut--probably because it is too steep to be mowed. The result is positive with wintercress, grasses and gill-over-the-ground growing naturally and providing habitat, some pollution abatement and attractive color and structure for visitors.

The outlet of the pond at the eastern edge is a wooded ravine (see Blatnick Park Environmental Features Pond Close-Up Map below and page 36). Trees growing here include medium sized black walnut, box elder and quacking aspen along with large cottonwood trees, a few large elm trees, a white pine tree and an understory of native sumac shrubs. This somewhat neglected portion of the Park provides wildlife habitat while preventing erosion and silt and sediment from flowing into the stream which flows into the nearby Mohawk River.



Unmowed embankment by pond



CONSERVATION VALUES:

The Park's mature forests, streams and wetlands provide a myriad of ecosystem services including: water filtration, groundwater recharge, stormwater regulation, drought moderation, flood control, erosion prevention on the steep slopes along the Mohawk River, air pollutant and greenhouse gas absorption, oxygen production, carbon sequestration, temperature modulation through shading and cooling and nutrient cycling. The forests also provide habitat for other plants, insects and pollinators and wildlife including food, cover, roosting, nesting and stop-over sites for migratory birds and other wildlife. Situated as it is among other contiguous blocks of undeveloped land to the north and south along the Mohawk River including woods at Knolls Atomic Power Lab to the north and Mohawk River State Park to the south, this forest provides wildlife corridors allowing wildlife and plants, to move freely in a relatively developed area. The plants themselves allow the forest to regenerate in the future by providing seeds and shelter for native forest regeneration.

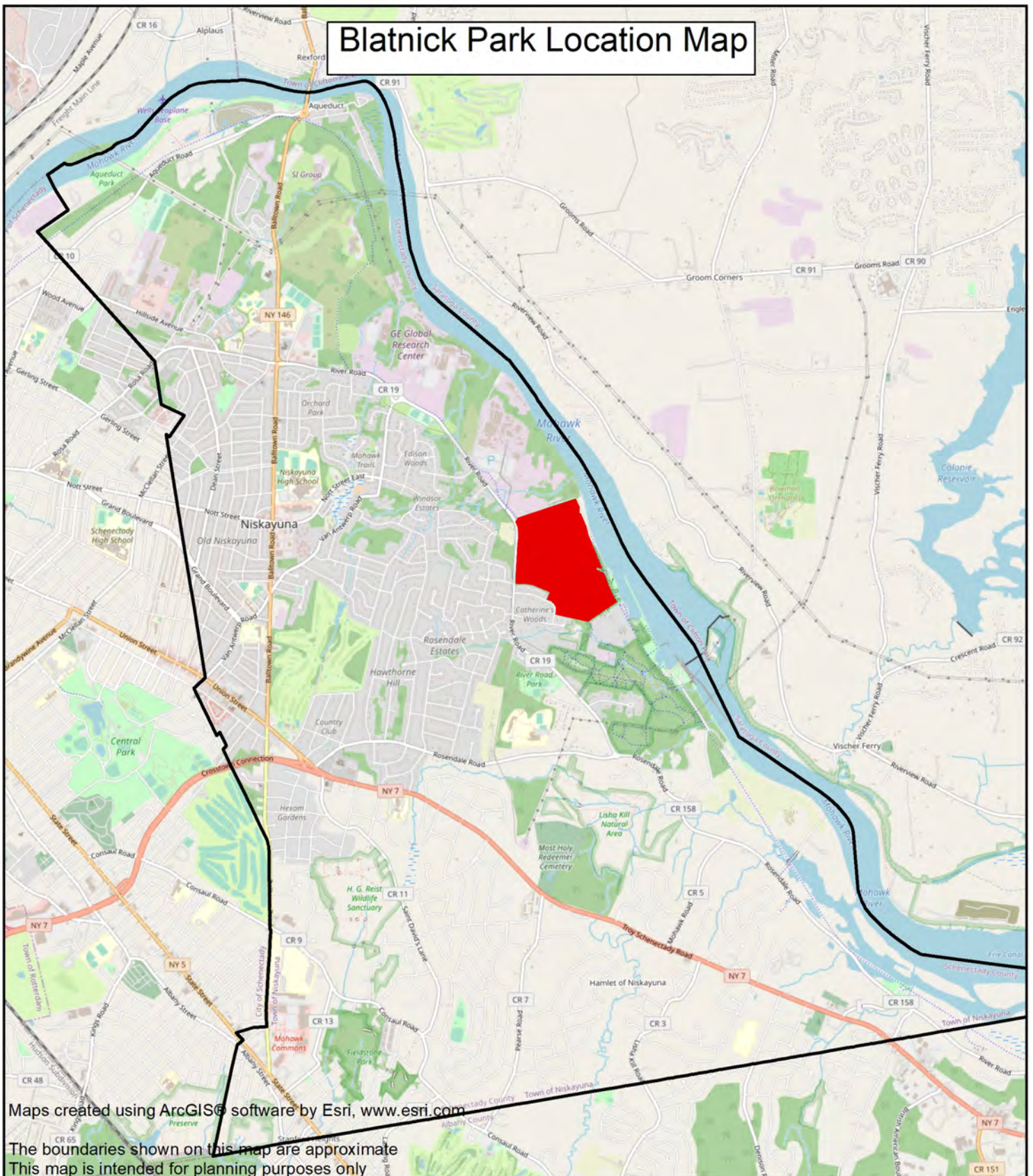
These forests have other conservation values for Niskayuna's residents and visitors including protecting the scenic views from the Mohawk River, from River Road and from the Mohawk River Bike-Hike Trail. The Park's forests also provide educational and recreational values.

Due to the loss of farmland, reforestation and development, fields are increasingly rare and many of the species that depend on this habitat are in steep decline. The Park's five fields provide critical habitat to these species of insects, birds, small mammals and other wildlife including bobolink and meadowlark mentioned above. The fields and trails also provide scenic vistas and recreational benefits for residents.

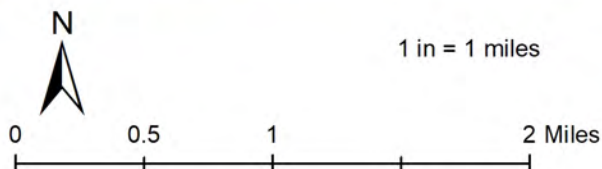
Just to the north of Blatnick Park is the Knolls Atomic Power Lab which has two large fields totaling approximately twenty-five acres in size. Currently these fields appear to be mowed regularly while the fields at General Electric just to the north are managed as meadows with less frequent mowing. Bird houses

have also been put up in the fields along River Road at General Electric. By cutting their fields less frequently, the Knolls Atomic Power Lab could add to the mosaic of fields growing from Blatnick Park all the way to General Electric. This would have a positive impact on wildlife, including insect pollinators, birds and other species while adding to the scenic experience of residents passing by on the Mohawk River Bike-Hike Trail.

Blatnick Park Location Map





- Blatnick Park
- Niskayuna Town Boundaries

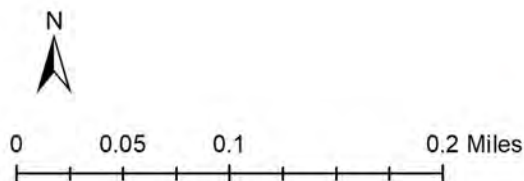


July 11, 2022

Blatnick Park Satellite Photograph Map



-  Blatnick Park Boundaries
-  Hiking Trails



July 11, 2022

Blatnick Park Environmental Features Map



- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Blatnick Park Boundaries | Contours-40 ft |
| Streams | Meadowlark 6.20.21 |
| Wetland Soils | Bobolink 6.20.21 |
| Ponds | |

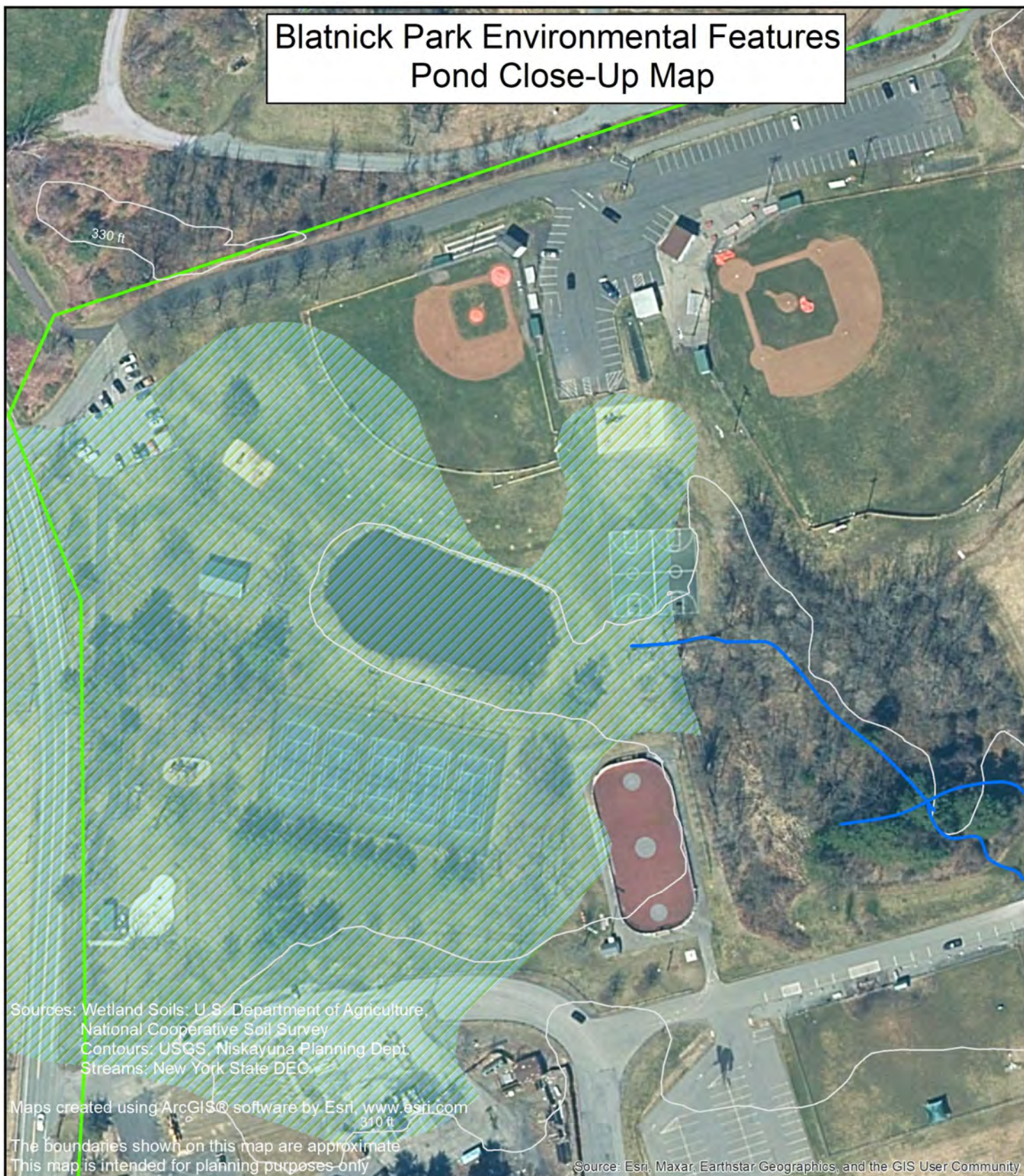


0 125 250 500 Feet



July 11, 2022

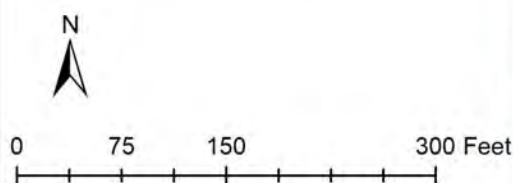
Blatnick Park Environmental Features Pond Close-Up Map



Blatnick Park Boundaries

 Contours-40 ft

 Streams
 Wetland Soils



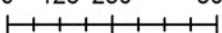
July 11, 2022

Blatnick Park Topographic Map



 Blatnick Park Boundaries



0 125 250 500 Feet


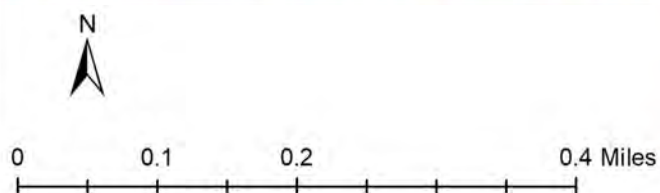


July 11, 2022

Blatnick Park Surrounding Open Space Map

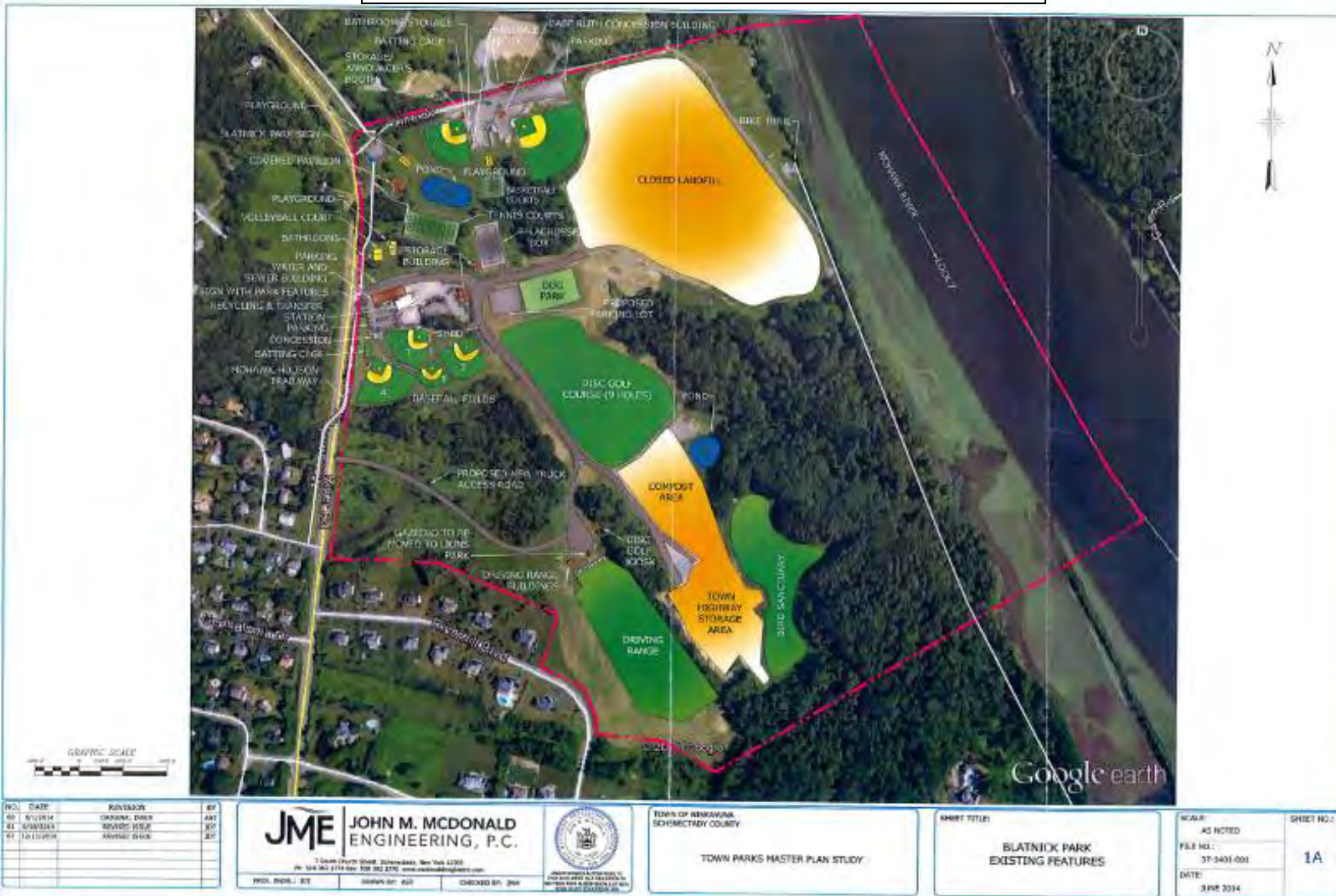


- Protected Open Space
- Unprotected Properties
- Hike/Bike Trails



July 11, 2022

Blatnick Park Existing Features Map



Low Mow - Pollinator Habitat Initiative - Blatnick Park



STANFORD PARK INVENTORY

May 14, 2022 Site Walk

REGIONAL SETTING:

The 24-acre Stanford Park lies in the extreme southwestern section of Niskayuna (see Stanford Park Location Map to right and page 48). Access and parking is at the south end of Stanford Avenue. The Park is surrounded by single family homes to the north, east and west. The Park is bordered at the south in the Town of Colonie by several small vacant residential lots, most of which are in a New York State DEC wetland and most likely will never be built (see Stanford Park Surrounding Open Space & Future Trails Map to right and page 52).

The Park is adjacent at the southwest corner to 48 acres owned and operated by Northern Nurseries. To the west in the Town of Schenectady and separated by a row of single family homes is the 135-acre Woodlawn Preserve (see Stanford Park Surrounding Open Space & Future Trails Map to right and page 52).

In 2009 Schenectady County deeded these 24 acres adjacent to the 170-acre Woodlawn Pine Barrens-Wetlands Complex to the Town of Niskayuna. According to the Town of Niskayuna Comprehensive Plan, "This land transfer was considered an important step in linking the Woodlawn Preserve and the



Albany Pine Bush Preserve. It provides a potential passive intermunicipal recreation opportunity. Currently there is limited access to this property and Niskayuna should consider the installation of a small parking lot and entrance kiosk at the end of Stanford Avenue. In addition, connecting trails from this location to the existing trail system in the Woodlawn Preserve should be a priority."⁹

The Woodlawn Pine Barrens-Wetland Complex is identified as a Priority Conservation Project in the 2016 NY State Open Space Conservation Plan. According to the Plan, "The area also supports several important wetlands forming a unique complex of pine barrens and wetland habitats. Its attributes have been recognized as complementary to the Pine Bush Preserve and protection worthy. Owners of public lands in this area are encouraged to cooperate with state and other agencies to protect this habitat. Recent local efforts have included creation of the 135-acre Woodlawn Preserve and 24 acres of parkland (Stanford Park) in the Town of Niskayuna"¹⁰.

Stanford Park is currently isolated from other nearby protected land. The Management Plan for Albany Pine Bush Preserve, 2017, recommends 'Full Protection' for the unprotected lands north of Cordell Road-adjacent to Stanford Park-which total approximately 87 acres.¹¹ (see Albany Pine Bush Preserve Management Plan Map next page and page 54 and Stanford Park Surrounding Open Space & Future Trails Map page 52). The Plan recommends acquiring lands from willing sellers using, but not limited to, funds from the Environmental Protection Fund, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal agencies and programs (Land and Water Conservation Fund, Conservation and Reinvestment Act, and transportation funds), local governments, private foundations, individuals, corporations, and mitigation fees.¹² Protection of this

⁹ Comprehensive Development Plan, Town of Niskayuna, 2013, p. 41

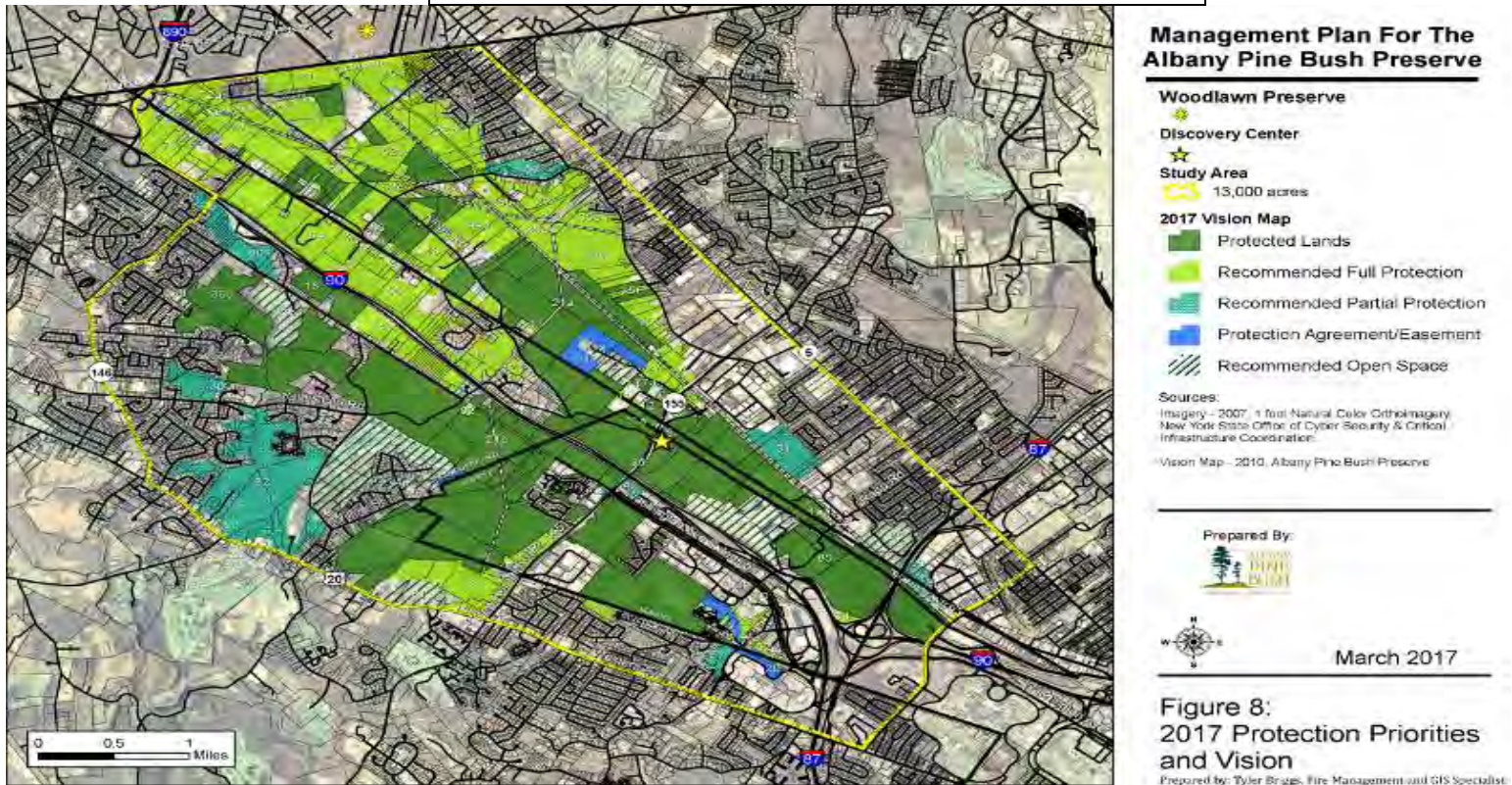
¹⁰ 2016 NYS Open Space Conservation Plan, p. 123

¹¹ Albany Pine Bush Preserve Management Plan Update, 2017, p. 56, 57.

¹² Albany Pine Bush Preserve Management Plan Update, 2017, p. 68

land would facilitate trails and wildlife and plant corridors and connections from Stanford Park to the Woodlawn Preserve and the Albany Pine Bush Preserve.

Albany Pine Bush Preserve Management Plan Map



PHYSICAL & NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The majority of the Park is classified as a DEC wetland, part of a larger 76-acre DEC wetland that extends into the Woodlawn Preserve just to the west (see Stanford Park Environmental Features Map below and page 10 and Stanford Park Topographic Map below and page 51). The Park's wetlands contain tributaries that are the headwaters of the Lisha Kill stream which flows northeast for over five miles into the Mohawk River. The Park is flat, sloping gently from 360 feet above sea level at the north boundary to a low point of 340 feet at the south boundary.



ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES:

The Park is entirely wooded (see Stanford Park Satellite Photograph Map to right and page 49). Higher, drier areas of the park are dominated by medium to large oak and white pine trees. Swamp white oaks, red oaks and black oaks are 12 inches to 18 inches in diameter and approximately 75 years old. Some red oaks are much larger with diameters of up to three feet. White pine grow in several groves across the Park with some as large as 30 inches in diameter. Other trees include medium sized red maples and smaller elms in wet areas along with quacking aspen and a few large hemlock trees in drier areas. The understory has flowering dogwoods, gray birch and serviceberry in sunlit openings and ironwood and hophornbeam in shadier areas. Shrubs include invasive buckthorn near the Park's entrance and native blueberry, winterberry, witch hazel and maple leaf viburnum further into the Park. Sensitive fern dominates the ground layer in the wet areas of the Park along with tussock and brome sedges, skunk cabbage, horsetail, jewelweed and marsh marigold. Drier areas have sweet vernal grass, partridgeberry, wood rush, New York and intermediate fern, wild geranium, Canada mayflower, trillium, lion's foot and cinquefoil.



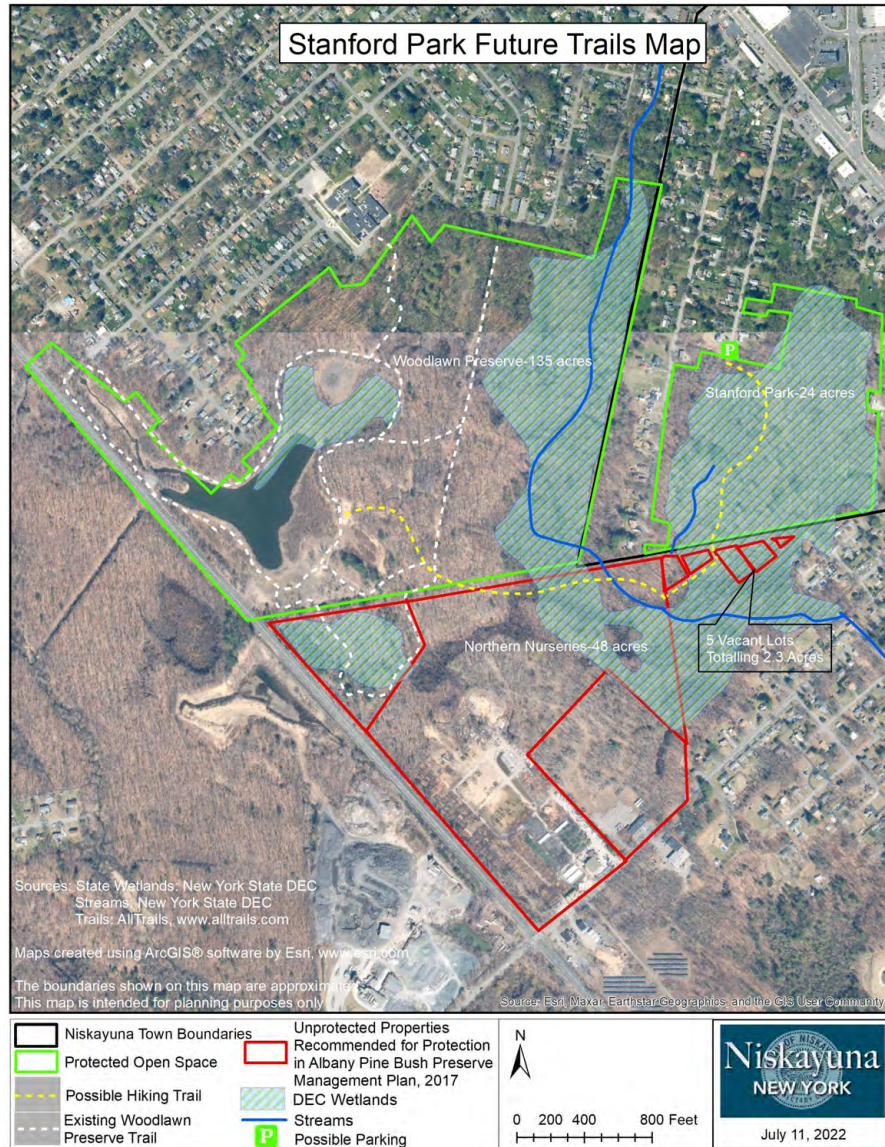
CONSERVATION VALUES:

This mature and undisturbed forest and its extensive wetlands provide a myriad of ecosystem services including: water filtration, groundwater recharge, stormwater regulation, drought moderation, flood control, erosion prevention, air pollutant and greenhouse gas absorption, oxygen production, carbon sequestration, temperature modulation through shading and cooling and nutrient cycling. The plants themselves allow the forest to regenerate in the future by providing seeds and shelter for native forest regeneration.

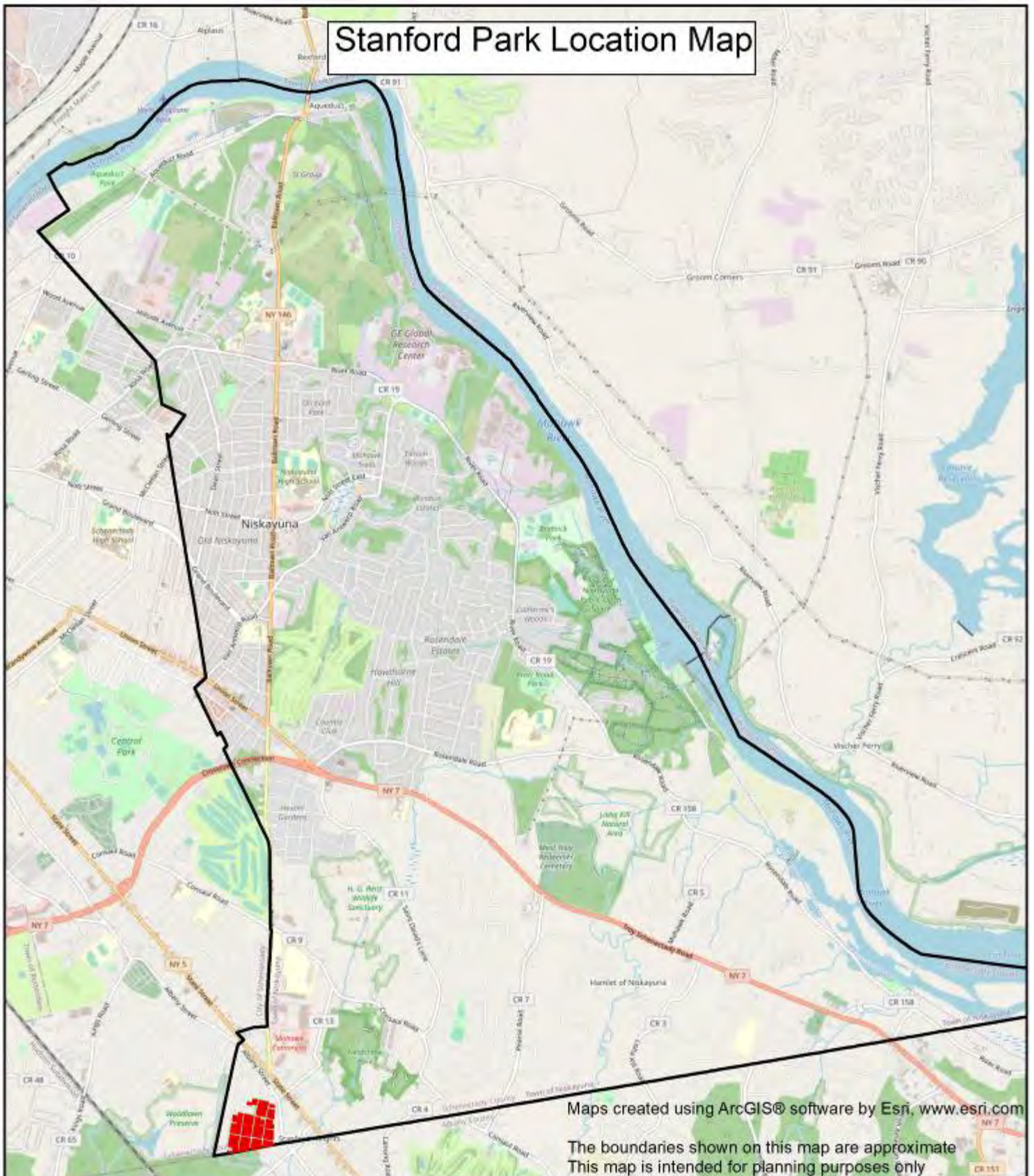
The Park and the surrounding woods and wetlands provide habitat for other plants, insects and pollinators and wildlife including migratory and nesting birds including food, cover, roosting, nesting and stop-over sites for migratory birds and other wildlife. Birds observed on May 14 2022 include wood thrush, great crested flycatcher, common yellowthroat and rose breasted grosbeak. Reports of bear in nearby Woodlawn Preserve indicate that bear use this Park as well. Observations of bobcat a bit further to the north indicate that bobcat also use this area, along with other types of wildlife. As buffer land to the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, this area serves to protect the habitat for the rare and federally endangered Karner blue butterfly.

The Park has recreational and educational values for Niskayuna residents and other visitors as well. Informal trails, perhaps deer trails, run from the north entrance into the wetlands. It may be possible to establish hiking trails in the Park, as recommended in the Town's Comprehensive Plan and mentioned above, that then connect to the four miles of hiking trails just to the west at Woodlawn Park. This can be done by crossing through the paper roads located between the small vacant parcels just to the south of the Park. From there, with permission from Northern Nurseries, a trail can run west to Woodlawn Preserve (see Stanford Park Future Trails Map on following page and page 53). If the private parcels located just to the south are protected, as recommended in the New York State Conservation Plan and the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Management Plan

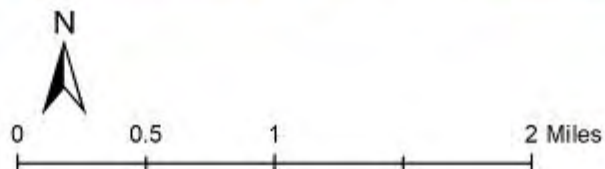
and as discussed above, then more extensive trails can be established connecting Stanford Park to the Woodlawn Preserve--where habitat for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly is being restored--and to the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, where Karner blue butterflies live and breed.



Stanford Park Location Map



- Stanford Park Boundaries
- Niskayuna Town Boundaries



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

Stanford Park Satellite Photograph Map

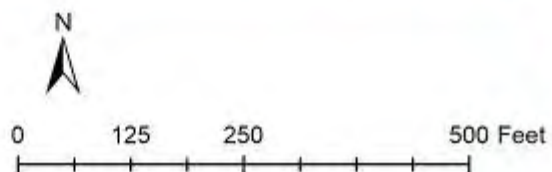


Maps created using ArcGIS® software by Esri, www.esri.com

The boundaries shown on this map are approximate.
This map is intended for planning purposes only.

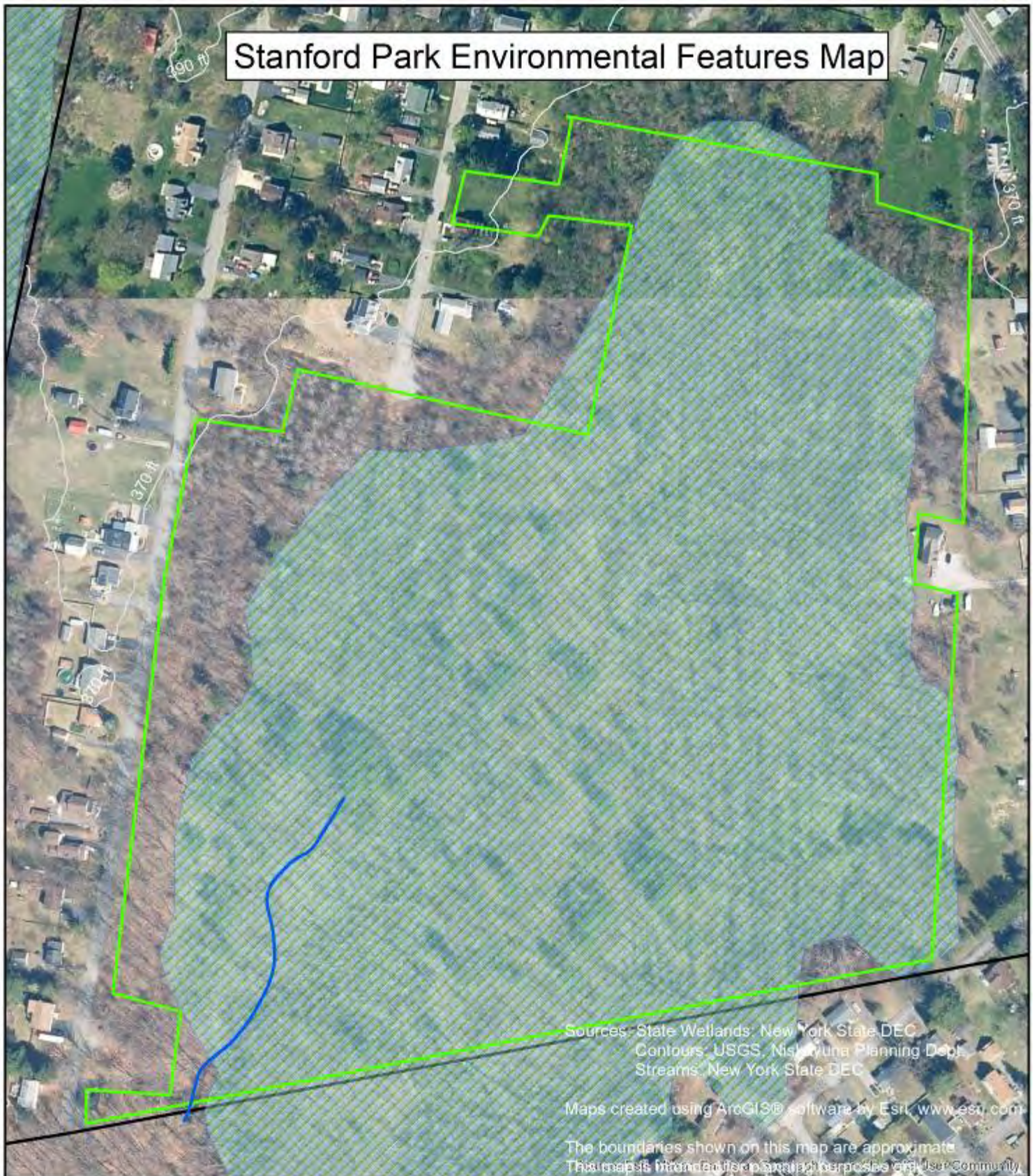
Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

-  Niskayuna Town Boundaries
-  Stanford Park Boundaries

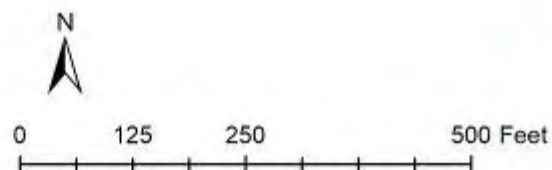


July 11, 2022

Stanford Park Environmental Features Map



-  Niskayuna Town Boundaries
-  Stanford Park Boundaries
-  DEC Wetlands
-  Contours-40 ft
-  Streams



July 11, 2022



Stanford Park Topographic Map

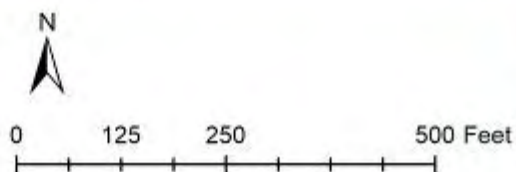


Maps created using ArcGIS® software by Esri, www.esri.com

The boundaries shown on this map are approximate
This map is intended for planning purposes only

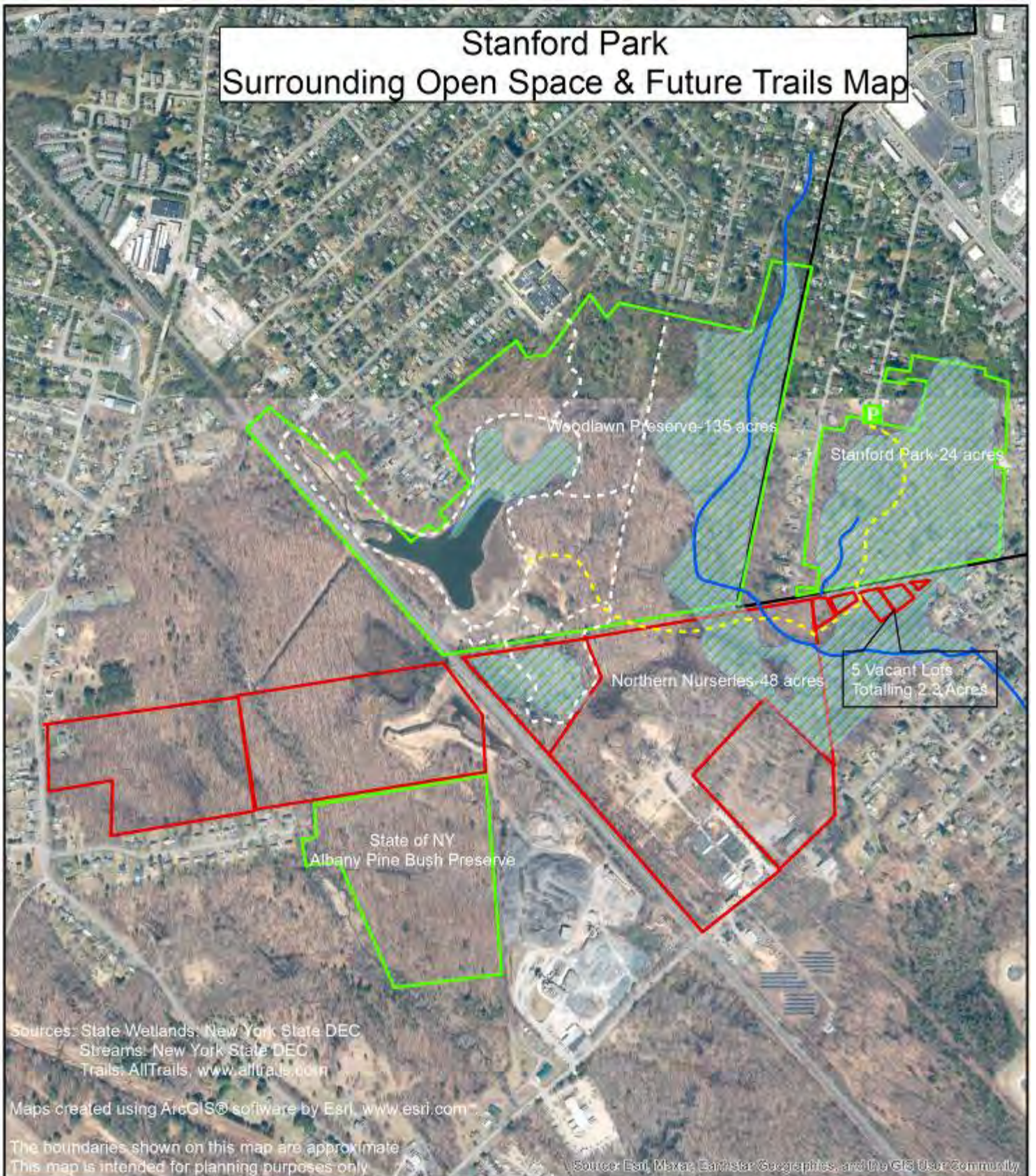
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-  Niskayuna Town Boundaries
-  Stanford Park Boundaries



July 11, 2022

Stanford Park Surrounding Open Space & Future Trails Map



- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Niskayuna Town Boundaries | Unprotected Properties Recommended for Protection in Albany Pine Bush Preserve Management Plan, 2017 |
| Protected Open Space | DEC Wetlands |
| Possible Hiking Trail | Streams |
| Existing Woodlawn Preserve Trail | Possible Parking |

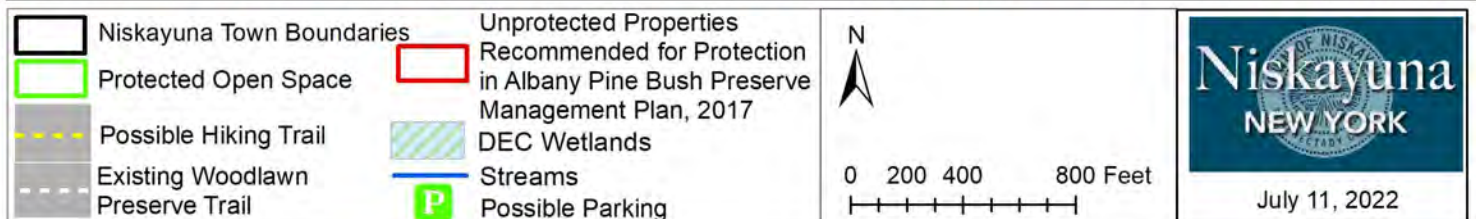
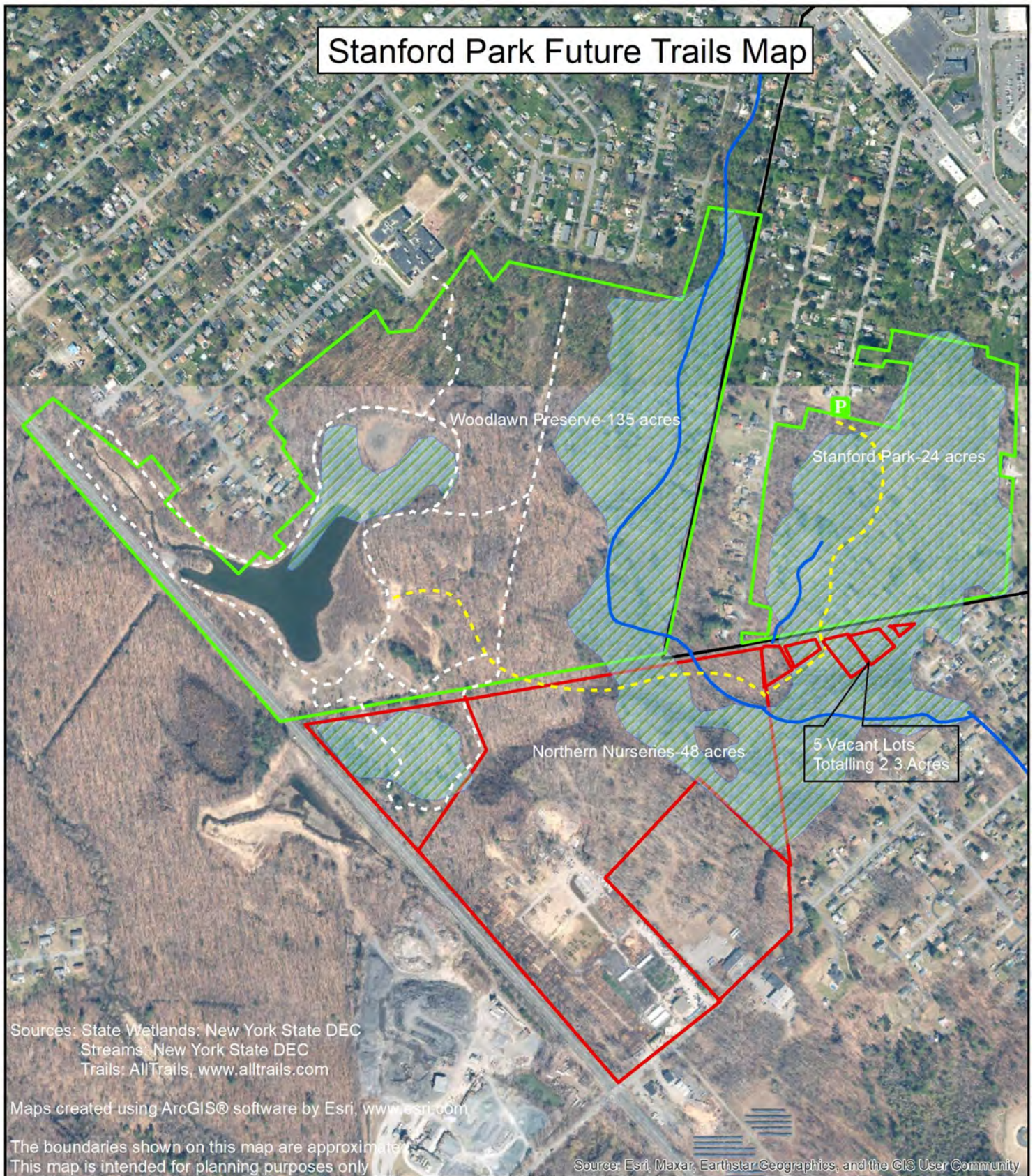


0 250 500 1,000 Feet

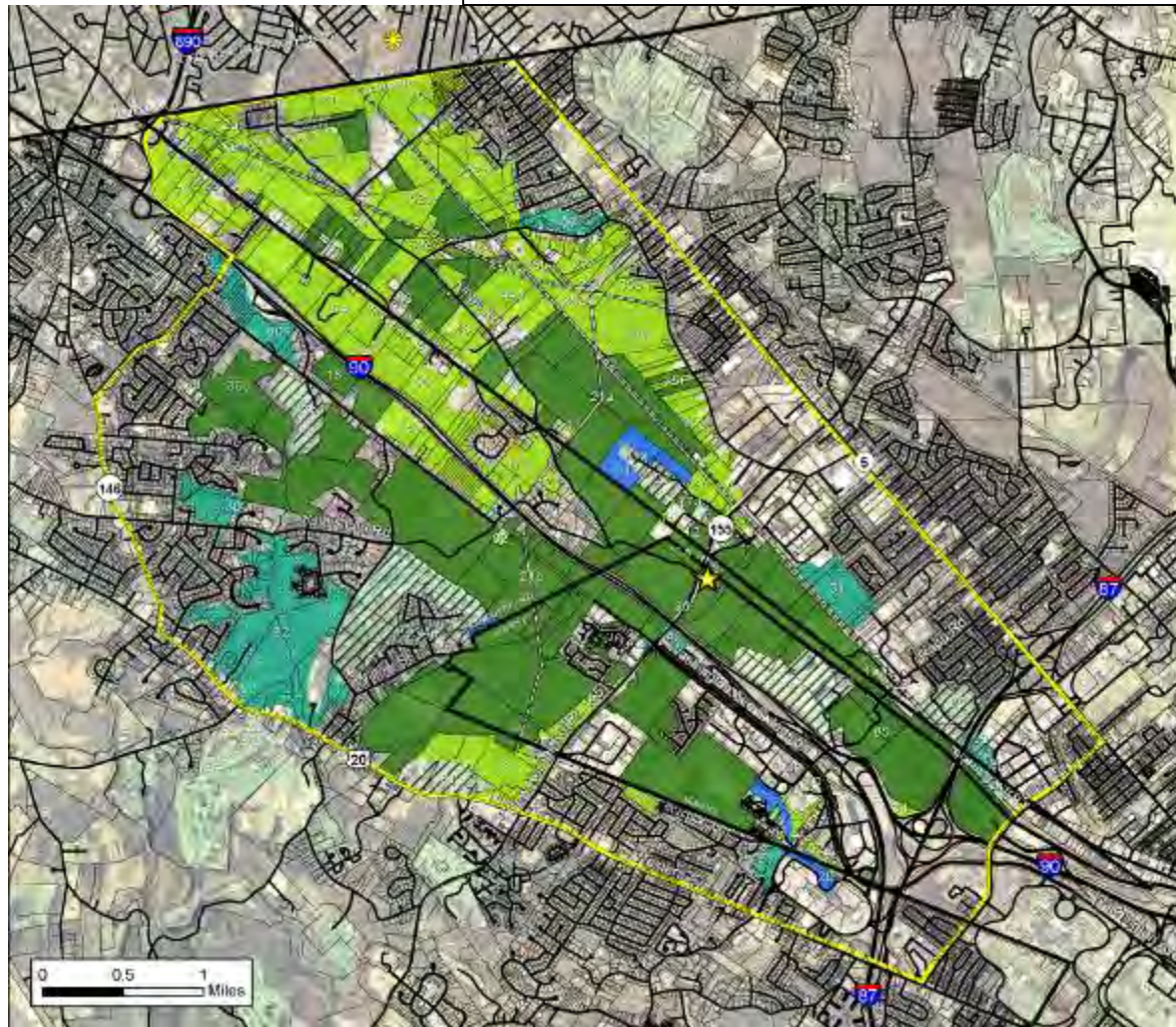


July 11, 2022

Stanford Park Future Trails Map



Albany Pine Bush Preserve Management Plan Map



Management Plan For The Albany Pine Bush Preserve

Woodlawn Preserve

Discovery Center

Study Area
13,000 acres

2017 Vision Map

- Protected Lands
- Recommended Full Protection
- Recommended Partial Protection
- Protection Agreement/Easement
- Recommended Open Space

Sources:

Imagery – 2007, 1 foot Natural Color Orthoimagery
New York State Office of Cyber Security & Critical
Infrastructure Coordination

Vision Map – 2010, Albany Pine Bush Preserve

Prepared By:



March 2017

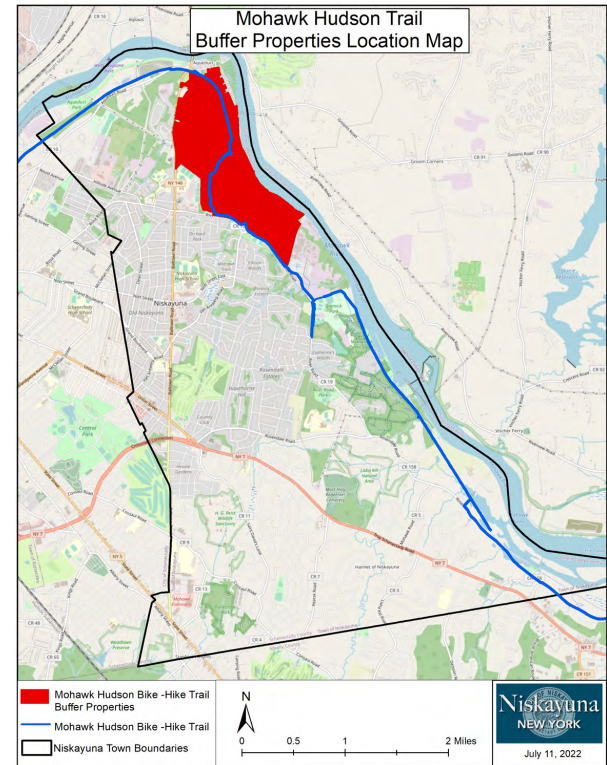
Figure 8:
**2017 Protection Priorities
and Vision**

Prepared by: Tyler Briggs, Fire Management and GIS Specialist

MOHAWK HUDSON BIKE-HIKE TRAIL CORRIDOR INVENTORY

May 14, 2022 Site Walk along MHBHT

The northeastern section of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike Hike Trail (MHBHT) runs between three large, wooded properties that are vulnerable to development (see Mohawk Trail Buffer Properties Location Map to right and page 62 and Mohawk Trail Buffer Properties Surrounding Open Space Map below and page 66). Protecting lands adjacent to the MHBHT can buffer the Trail, allowing hikers and bikers to continue to experience the wonder and beauty of nature along the Trail, including mature woods, wetlands, streams and waterfalls as well as views of the Mohawk River. Protecting adjacent land can also allow new trailhead connections to the MHBHT, increasing pedestrian and bicycle access while conserving natural habitats within the Town.



The Appalachian Trail Conservancy works to protect land and views surrounding the Appalachian Trail (AT), recognizing that over-development along the AT jeopardizes the trail. Similarly, **lands adjacent to the MHBHT should be considered for protection to maintain and augment the MHBHT experience for visitors.** It is worth noting that the Lisha Kill Preserve is heavily over-used and shows signs of wear. **The need for additional wooded open space is strong in Niskayuna.**

REGIONAL SETTING:

The Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail (MHBHT) is 97-miles long and connects the Erie Canalway and Empire State Trails. Over a quarter of a million people use the Niskayuna portion of the Trail each year.¹³ The Trail runs along the eastern and northern edges of Niskayuna on the rails of the former Troy & Schenectady Railroad (see Mohawk Trail Buffer Properties Location Map previous page and page 62). The northeastern section of the MHBHT runs between three large, wooded properties: the 522-acre GE property on both sides of the Trail, the 81-acre SI Group property that lies on the west side of the Trail and the 19-acre Popolizio property that lies on the east side of the Trail (see Mohawk Trail Buffer Properties Surrounding Open Space Map previous page and page 66). The SI Group has over thirty acres of forest abutting the Trail, GE has over 150 acres of forest and fields abutting the trail and the Mohawk River and



¹³ Capital District Trail User Counts, 2016. Capital District Transportation Committee.

the Popolizio property has nineteen acres of forest, streams and wetlands abutting the trail (see Mohawk Trail Buffer Properties Satellite Photograph Map previous page and page 63).

Many companies across the country are shifting their operations from 'corporate campus' locations that were popular in the late 20th century and moving offices back to more urban areas. As this is occurring, vacant corporate campuses are finding new uses as mixed-use commercial-residential complexes, as educational institutions, as affordable housing and other uses. Niskayuna has several such corporate campuses and the Town may want to consider options in the future for such properties if ownership shifts. **The campuses have some of the largest remaining natural, wooded areas in Niskayuna and protecting these natural resources should be considered and is consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan.**

PHYSICAL & NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The Trail is surrounded by mature forest of both sides (see Mohawk Trail Buffer Properties Satellite Photograph Map previous page and page 63). Two streams flow from the steep slopes on the western side of the Trail, another stream flows along the Trail's eastern edge. The streams flow into large wetlands on the eastern side of the Trail before entering the Mohawk River (see Mohawk Trail Buffer Properties Environmental Features Map to right and page 64). The western side of the Trail has steep slopes that drop from a height of 330 feet above sea level to 270 feet at the Trail itself. The eastern portion of the Trail is



flatter and slopes another 30 feet to 230 feet above sea level at the Mohawk River (see Mohawk Trail Buffer Properties Environmental Features Map previous page and page 64).

The Trail is located in a geographic region known as the Schenectady Formation. Bedrock along the Trail consists of shale rock. Shale is exposed in several places along the Trail and where the streams have eroded it, **the shale has created dramatic ravines and waterfalls where these streams meet the Mohawk River. These waterfalls are on private property but if opened to the public and properly signed with warnings and fencing, they could be attractive destinations for people hiking and biking on the Trail.**



Shale-lined ravine

ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES:

FORESTS:

The forest along the Trail is mature with large white oaks, red oaks and hickories. The understory has bladdernut, serviceberry, hophornbeam and striped maple trees while the shrub layer has witch hazel and low bush blueberry shrubs. The ground layer includes a remarkable variety of native plants including: yellow stem violet, wood sedge, moonseed vine, anise root, miterwort, trout lily, trillium, Canada mayflower, sarsaparilla, golden Alexander, May apple, coltsfoot, Virginia waterleaf, Christmas fern and polypody. The great variety of plant species found here is due in part to the spoils which, judging by the plant species, are high pH, low acidity soils which are not typical of northeastern forests. High pH soils are also more hospitable to a range of insects, amphibians and other wildlife. The Trail's high biodiversity is also due to the fact that it has been undisturbed for many years and has very invasive plants.

Birds were abundant in terms of numbers and species and include red start, scarlet tanager, pee-wee and red eyed vireo in wooded areas and great crested flycatcher and chestnut sided warblers along the power lines.

Amphibian egg masses, probably green frog eggs, along with tadpoles and river dace were found in the streams and ditches alongside the Trail.



Amphibian egg masses and tadpoles

MHBHT WILDFLOWERS:



Virginia waterleaf



Golden Alexander



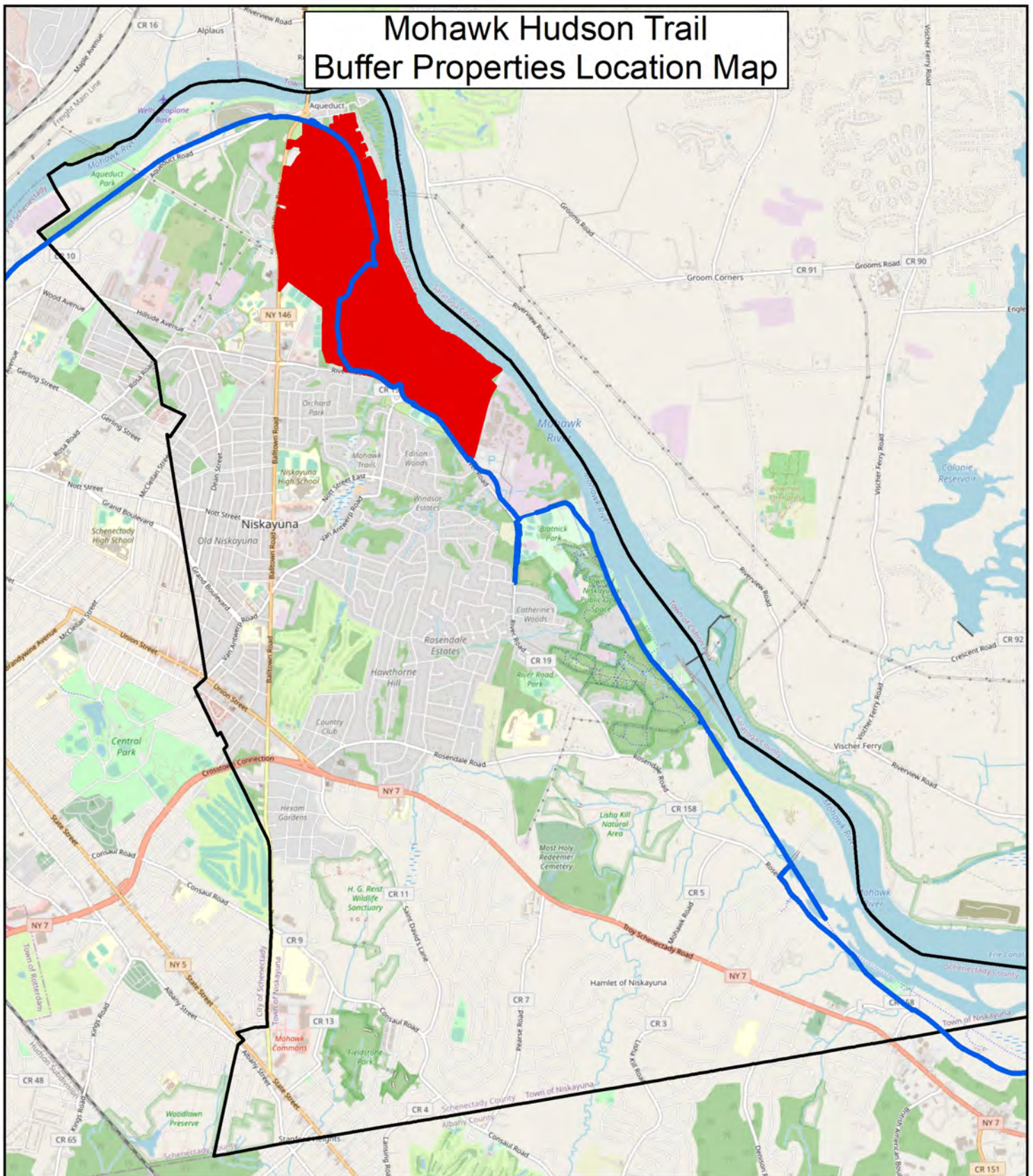
Miterwort

CONSERVATION VALUES:

The Trail's mature forests, streams and wetlands provide a myriad of ecosystem services including: water filtration, groundwater recharge, stormwater regulation, drought moderation, flood control, erosion prevention on the steep slopes along the Mohawk River, air pollutant and greenhouse gas absorption, oxygen production, carbon sequestration, temperature modulation through shading and cooling and nutrient cycling. The forests also provide habitat for other plants, insects and pollinators and wildlife including food, cover, roosting, nesting and stop-over sites for migratory birds and other wildlife. Situated as it is among other contiguous blocks of undeveloped land to the north and south along the Mohawk River including Mohawk River State Park to the south, this forest provides wildlife corridors allowing wildlife and plants, to move freely in a relatively developed area. The plants themselves allow the forest to regenerate in the future by providing seeds and shelter for native forest regeneration.

These forests have other conservation values for Niskayuna's residents and visitors including protecting the scenic views from the Mohawk River and from the Mohawk River Bike-Hike Trail. The Trail's forests also provide educational and recreational values and should be protected.

Mohawk Hudson Trail Buffer Properties Location Map



- Mohawk Hudson Bike -Hike Trail Buffer Properties
- Mohawk Hudson Bike -Hike Trail
- Niskayuna Town Boundaries



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

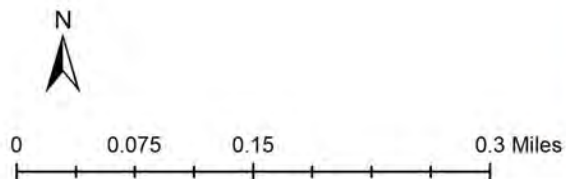


July 11, 2022

Mohawk Hudson Trail Buffer Properties Satellite Photograph Map

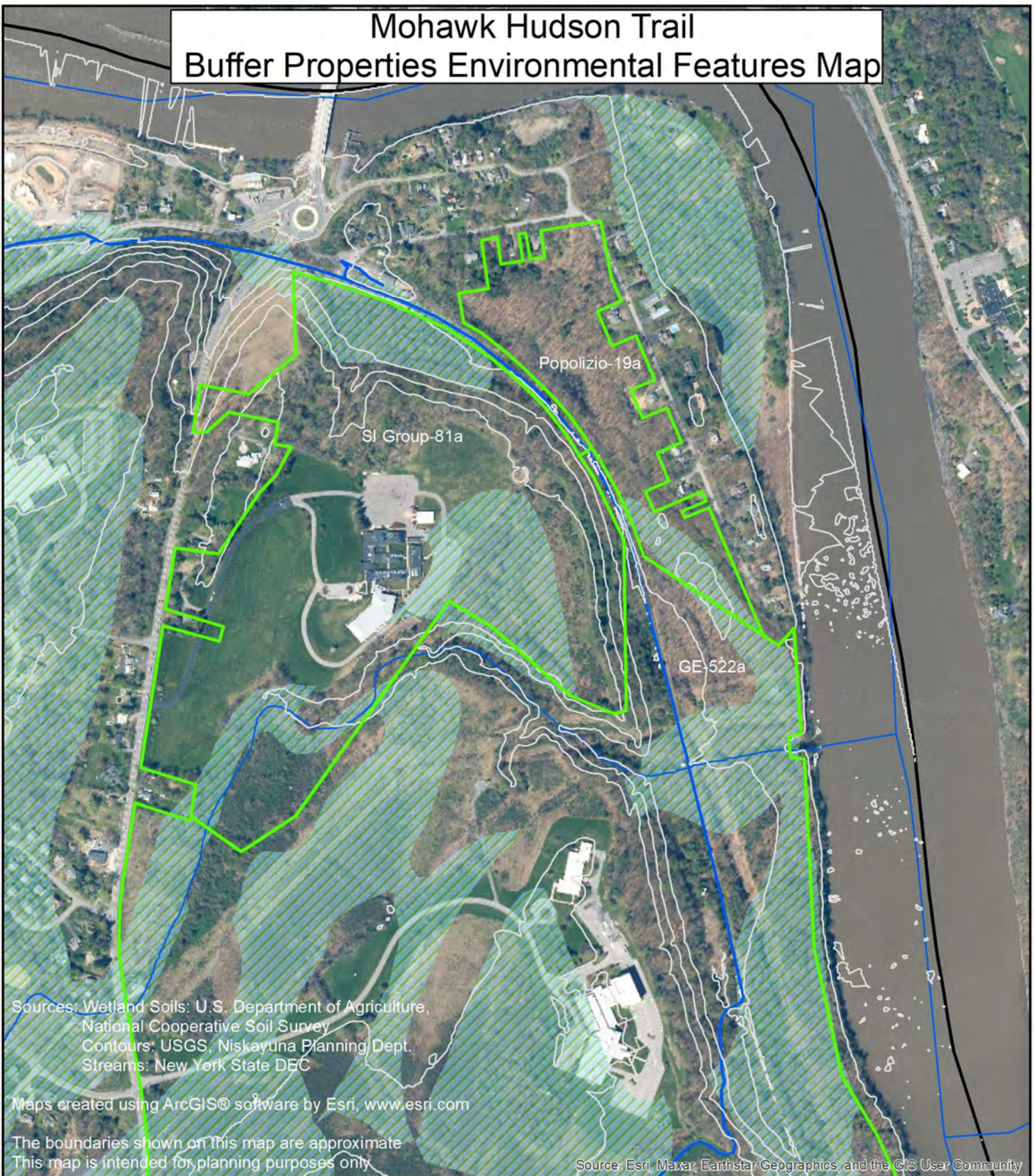


- Mohawk Hudson
Bike-Hike Trail
- Buffer Properties
- Niskayuna Town Boundaries



July 11, 2022

Mohawk Hudson Trail Buffer Properties Environmental Features Map



- Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail
- Buffer Properties
- Niskayuna Town Boundaries
- Streams
- Wetland Soils
- Contours-40 ft

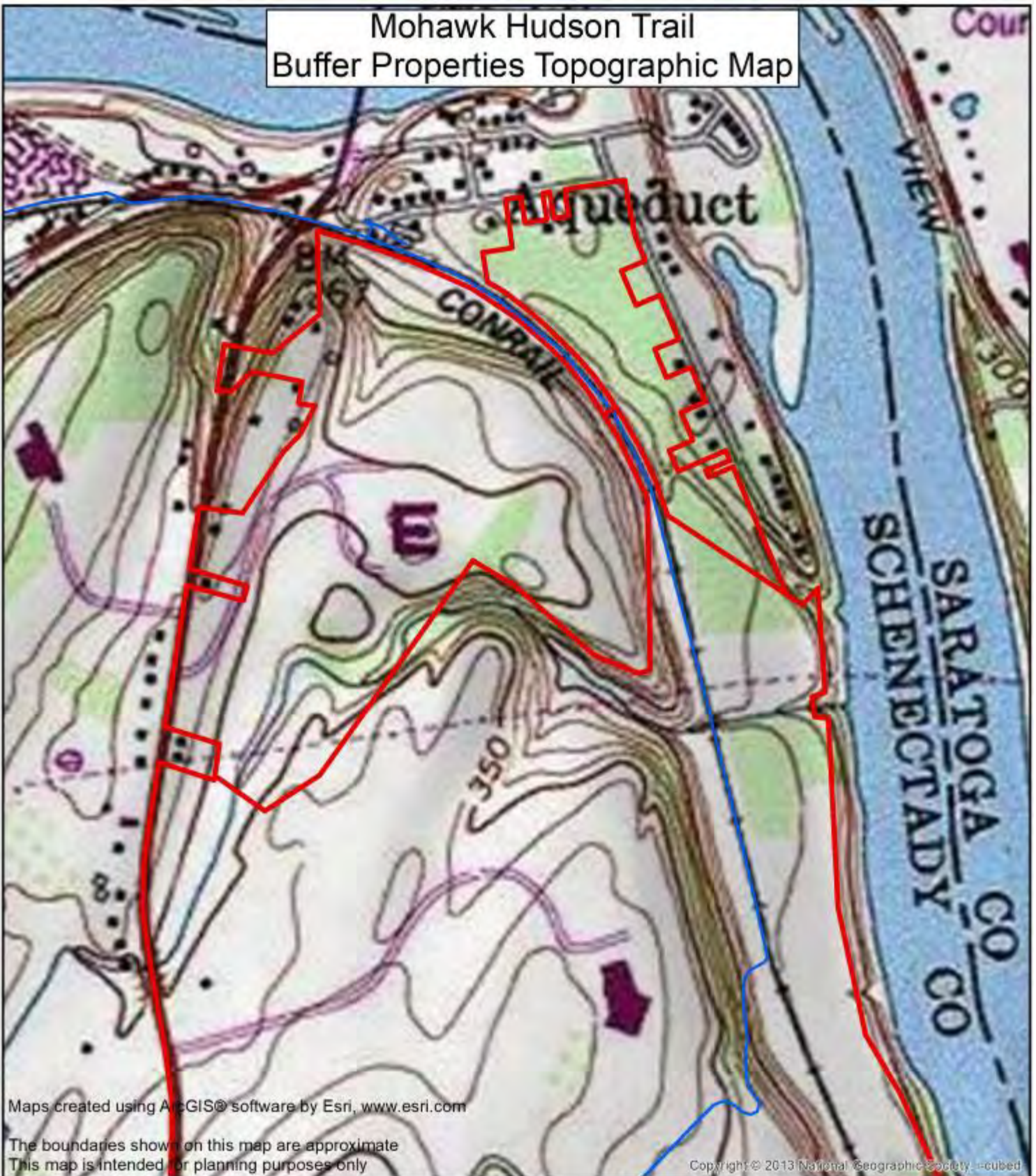


0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles

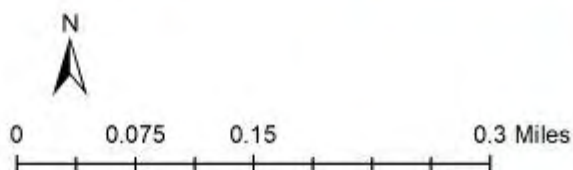


July 11, 2022

Mohawk Hudson Trail Buffer Properties Topographic Map



- Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail
- Buffer Properties
- Niskayuna Town Boundaries

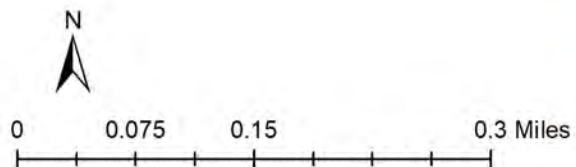


July 11, 2022

Mohawk Hudson Trail Buffer Properties Surrounding Open Space Map



- Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail
- Buffer Properties
- Open Space-State of NY
- Niskayuna Town Boundaries



July 11, 2022



James McKinney, Architect LLC

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June 16, 2022

Laura Robertson AICP, Department Head
Building Department, Town of Niskayuna
One Niskayuna Circle
Niskayuna, New York, 12309

Re: Renovation and repair of the historic train station at Lyons Park, volunteer services

Dear Laura:

Thanks to you and Town Historian Denis Brennan for meeting with me to discuss the condition and potential renovation/restoration needs for the historic train station at Lyons Park. As my wife and I often visit Lyons Park to walk the bike path, and as a retired architect whose practice included renovation and restoration of historic buildings, I couldn't help but notice that the train station is in need of maintenance and restoration if it's to remain a valuable historic resource of the Town. Therefore, I am writing to volunteer my architectural services for renovation and restoration of the historic building. The scope of my service could include the following phases of work, resulting in the preservation of this historic landmark as a public resource to the Town:

1. Survey- Conducting an existing condition survey, including historical research, preparation of an existing conditions report and measured documents (CAD plans, elevations, sections, details). The work would include a detailed evaluation of the building components and their condition. It would be helpful to have assistance from the Town engineering departments for evaluation of existing electrical and mechanical systems. Special evaluation of the brick and mortar used in the masonry walls is recommended. The masonry analysis of the mortar samples would be performed by an independent lab, The US Heritage Group, located in Chicago. The analysis would determine key aspects of the brick and stone masonry- first would be analysis of the mortar joints of the walls to determine if the mortar is cement based or a lime putty. Given the dates of construction of the station, it's a very high probability that lime putty mortar was used in the original mortar joints. Often, in current restoration of historic masonry, matching the original lime putty mortar is not a priority. Cement mortar may have been used for recent renovation at the station, which may result in long term deterioration of the weather tight integrity of the wall. As originally built, the bricks used were sorted with the darker face of the brick placed facing exposure to the weather, as the darker red skin of the brick was hardest and more impervious to water. The softer, more porous lime putty in the joints acted as a wick, conducting moisture from the wall to the exterior. If the lime putty is replaced with harder less porous cement mortar (now commonly found in

masonry construction) the transfer of moisture from the interior of the wall is very likely shifted to occur through the face of the existing brick, which, in the long term, may cause the face of the bricks to spall. If the brick has been sandblasted, as may be the case at the station, the brick faces may be at an increased risk to spall, especially during winter freeze-thaw cycles. The station roof, with its large overhang, offers a degree of moisture protection to the brick walls below. Further analysis is recommended which would include mortar analysis by the US Heritage Group. The existing brick chimneys appear to be deteriorating as a result of apparently not having caps. Reconstruction of the chimneys would likely therefore be included in the first phase of the renovation and involve coordination between the masonry and roofing trades. A professional evaluation of the existing slate roof and related flashings is also recommended. A professional roofer who is expert in slate roofing and related metal flashing work is recommended for that aspect of the existing condition evaluation.

2. Planning and Design Documents- Preparation of a master plan for renovation, restoration and preservation of the existing building, including an audit of the NYS Building Code and ADA compliance requirements for handicapped accessibility. Development of construction budget estimates and prioritization of renovation/restoration needs. Preparation of a "Progress Report" for presentation and communicating to Town officials and the public the existing conditions, with renovation and restoration needs identified for the building and its immediate site. The report would include preliminary design drawings with an outline scope of work communicating the renovation and restoration needed. Preliminary budget estimates could also be included, with a plan for prioritization of the scope of work that fits the Town's financial parameters.

3. Fund Raising- With phases 1 and 2 complete and providing an understanding of the scope and costs of the work, assist the Town with application for potential grant funding, such as the "Save Americas Treasures" program of the National Park Service, as well as other potential funding sources, both public and private. Consider producing a "Train Station" poster for use (sale) in fund raising, similar to the Peter Matteson Tavern poster done for the Bennington Museum (the buildings owner), to help in a funding program for repair of fire damage to the historic building.

4. Contract Documents- Technical drawings and specifications for bidding and construction. Detailed plans and specifications for the preservation and restoration scope of work for the existing building, decks, railings and nearby site. Assist the Town in the preparation of bid documents, respond to questions from bidders, conducting an on-site walk through for bidders, and review of bids.

5. Construction Observation- During the course of the work, visit the job site at regular intervals to observe construction, respond to construction related questions and prepare a "construction progress" report and related job site notes and photos. Assist the Town with review of contractors invoices for payment.

Schedule- A potential schedule for the design and preparation of bid documents would be:

Phase 1 Survey	July-August 2022
Phase 2 Planning and Design Documents	September-October 2022
Phase 3 Fund Raising	October 2022-ongoing
Phase 4 Construction Documents	November 2022-January 2023
Phase 5 Construction	Bid February-March 2023 Construction April-July 2023

As mentioned in our initial meeting, although retired I have retained my NYS architectural license, professional liability insurance (may need to have a standard AIA agreement with the Town for professional services, and also to invoice the Town a nominal fee (\$10.) to keep insurance coverage in effect for the project). I plan to use CAD for the project drawings, which will be done on version 2022 Vectorworks software.

The survey work will involve access to the interior of the building, requiring coordination with the existing tenant. I will use care to minimize disruption to the activity in the building.

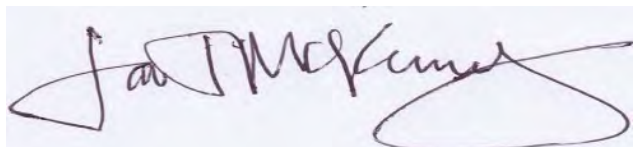
Anticipated project expenses, design phase:

Architectural:	Volunteer, with a \$10 retainer per note above
US Heritage:	3 masonry sample labs at \$750 each- \$2250
Roof ng Evaluation:	2 men x 1/2 day- \$1000-\$1250
Print Plans/specs:	Allowance \$ 1000-1500
Other:	Structural engineer, mechanical engineer to be determined if needed. Recommend including a contingency in budget at this time- needs more discussion.

Anticipated Town participation:

Intern:	Assist architect in existing conditions survey, existing conditions plans, CAD drafting if qualif ed.
Building Dept.:	Inspect existing electrical, mechanical systems. Assist in retrieving any useful records of building plans, renovations etc. from Town f les.
Parks Dept.:	Assist with access to north side of building for survey work. Assist with access to basement (if any) for survey work Assist with temporary barricades if required during survey work

Please get back to me with your thoughts and comments, I look forward to getting started.
Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jim McKinney", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Jim McKinney, Architect

RENOVATION AND RESTORATION
NISKAYUNA RAILROAD STATION
LYONS PARK 3439 ROSENDALE ROAD
NISKAYUNA, NY 12309

DRAWING TITLE
BASEMENT PLAN

Scale- 1/8" = 1'-0"
Draw By- JMCK
Date- July 11, 2022
Revision-

Drawijng Number

179
180
181

VERIFY

BASEMENT

DECK
EXST
188.75

VERIFY

FLOOR
EXST 189.55

DECK
EXST

VERIFY

VERIFY

DECK
EXST-
188.5

DECK
EXST
188.75

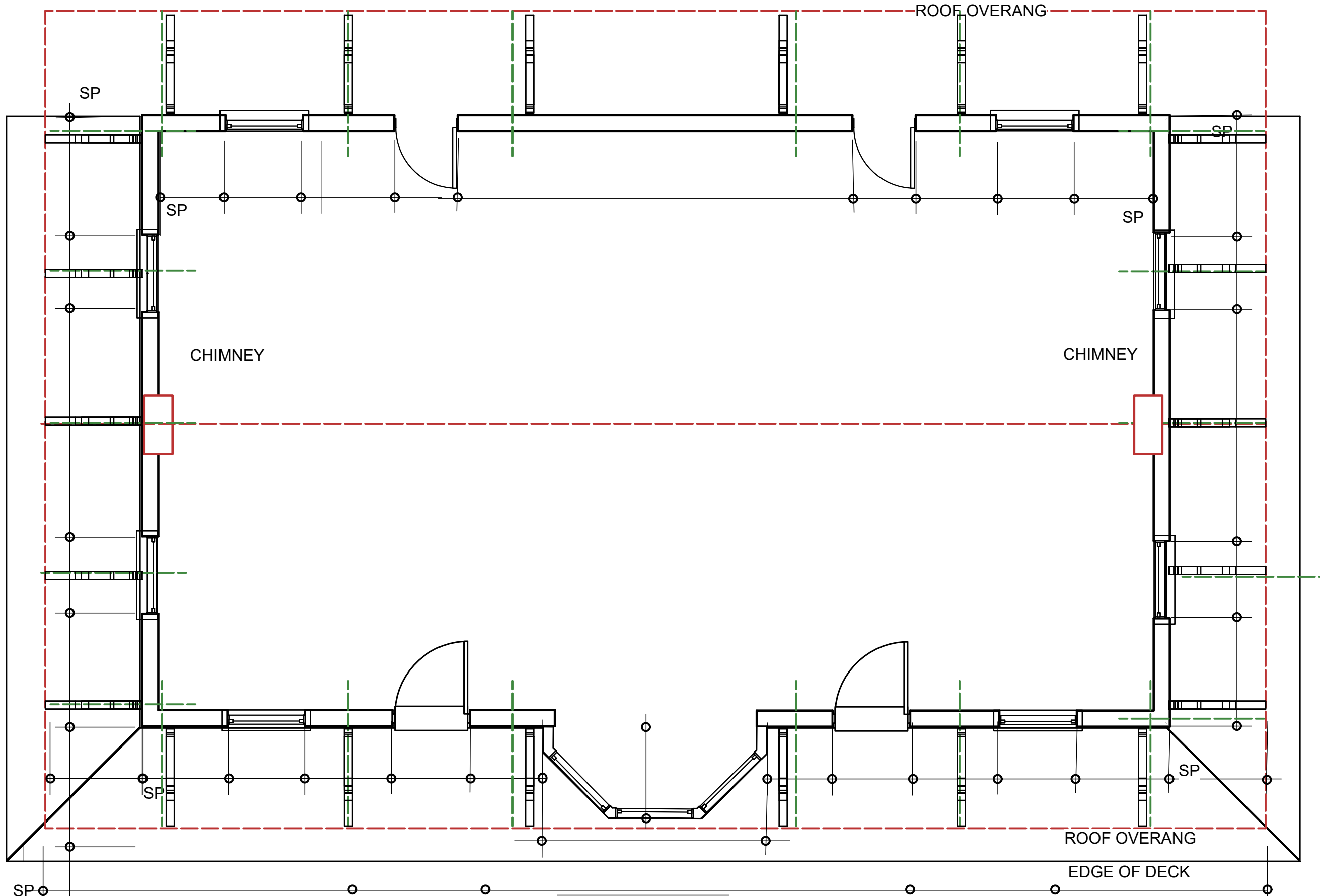
DECK
EXST
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188

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188



James
McKinney
Architect
LLC

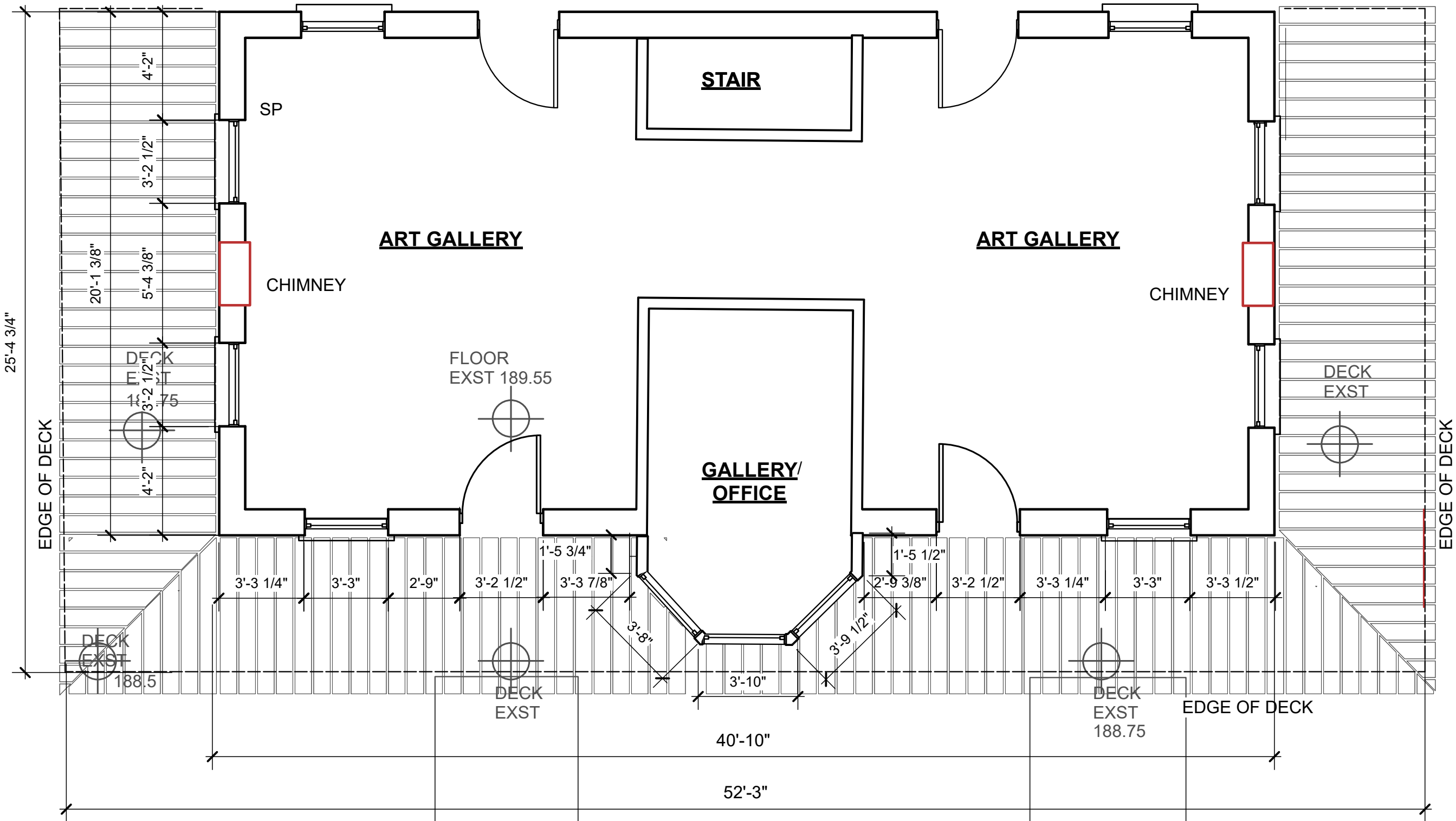
2201 Stone Ridge Road
Niskayuna, NY 12309
518-424-0499
jmckarch@gmail.com

RENOVATION AND RESTORATION
NISKAYUNA RAILROAD STATION
LYONS PARK 3439 ROSENDALE ROAD
NISKAYUNA, NY 12309

DRAWING TITLE

Scale-
Drawn By-
Date-
Revision-

Drawing Number



James
McKinney
Architect
LLC

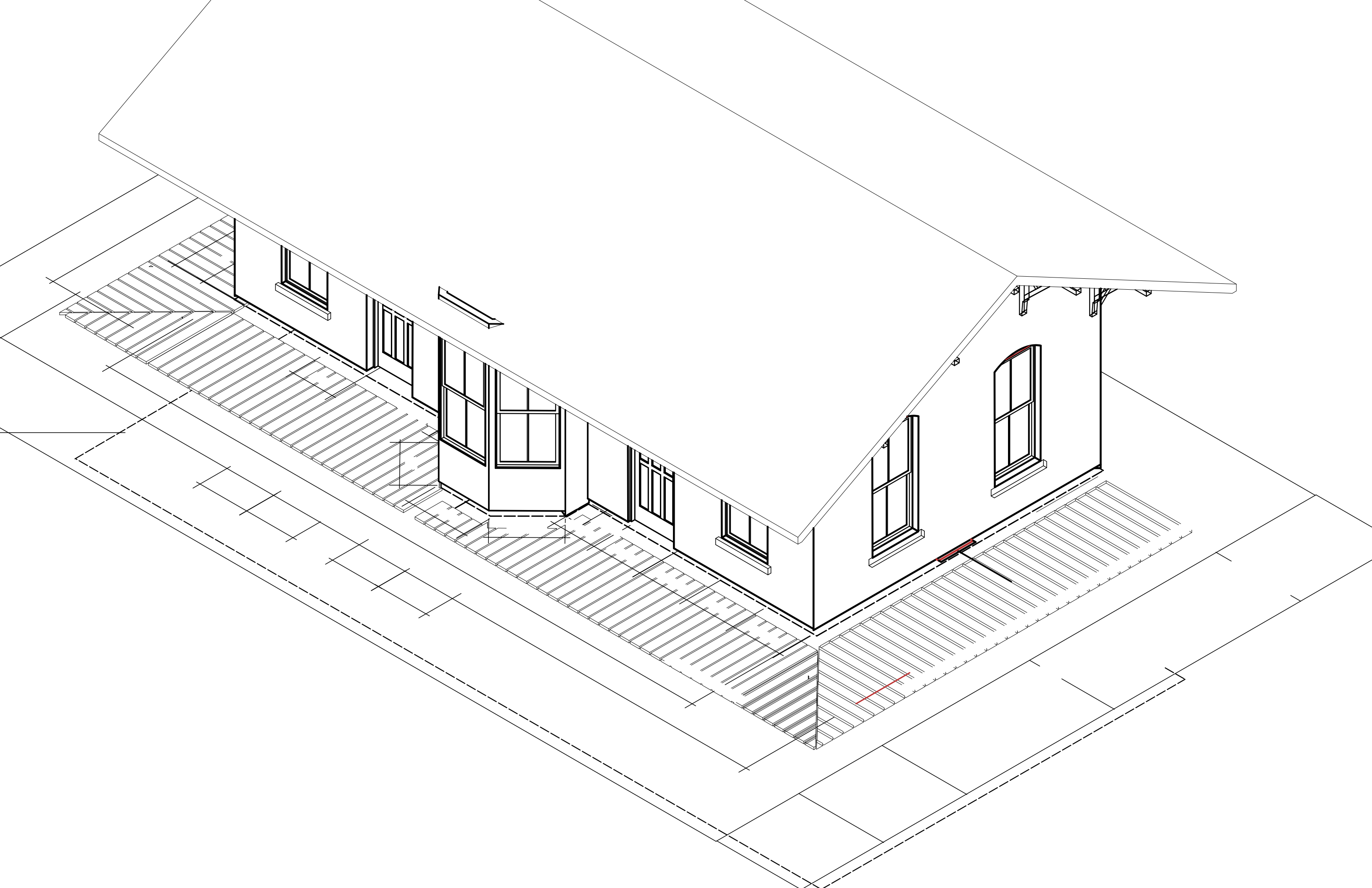
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jmckarch@gmail.com

RENOVATION AND RESTORATION
NISKAYUNA RAILROAD STATION
LYONS PARK 3439 ROSENDALE ROAD
NISKAYUNA, NY 12309

DRAWING TITLE
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

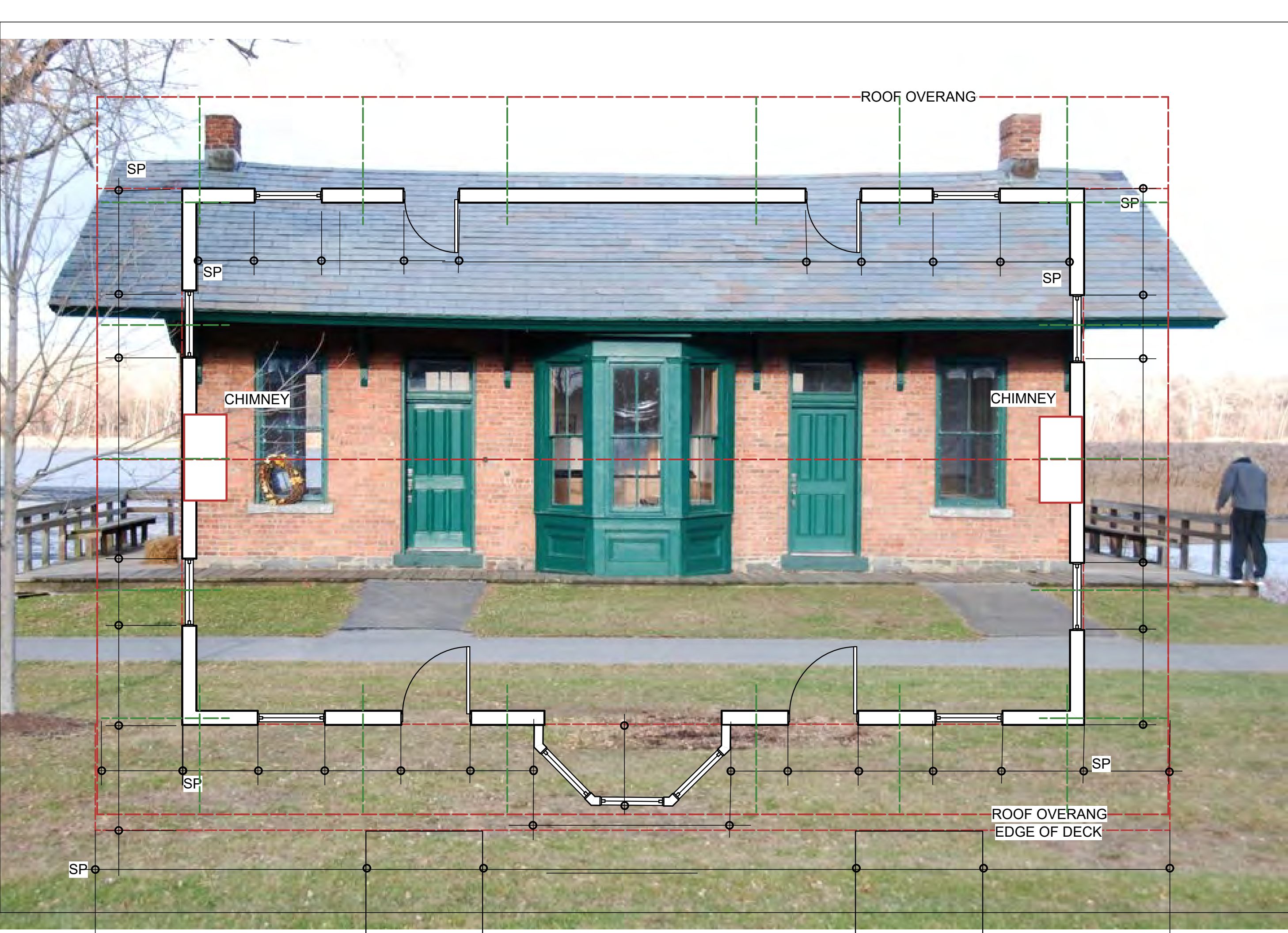
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Date- July 11, 2022
Revision-

Drawjng Number









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McKinney
Architect
LLC

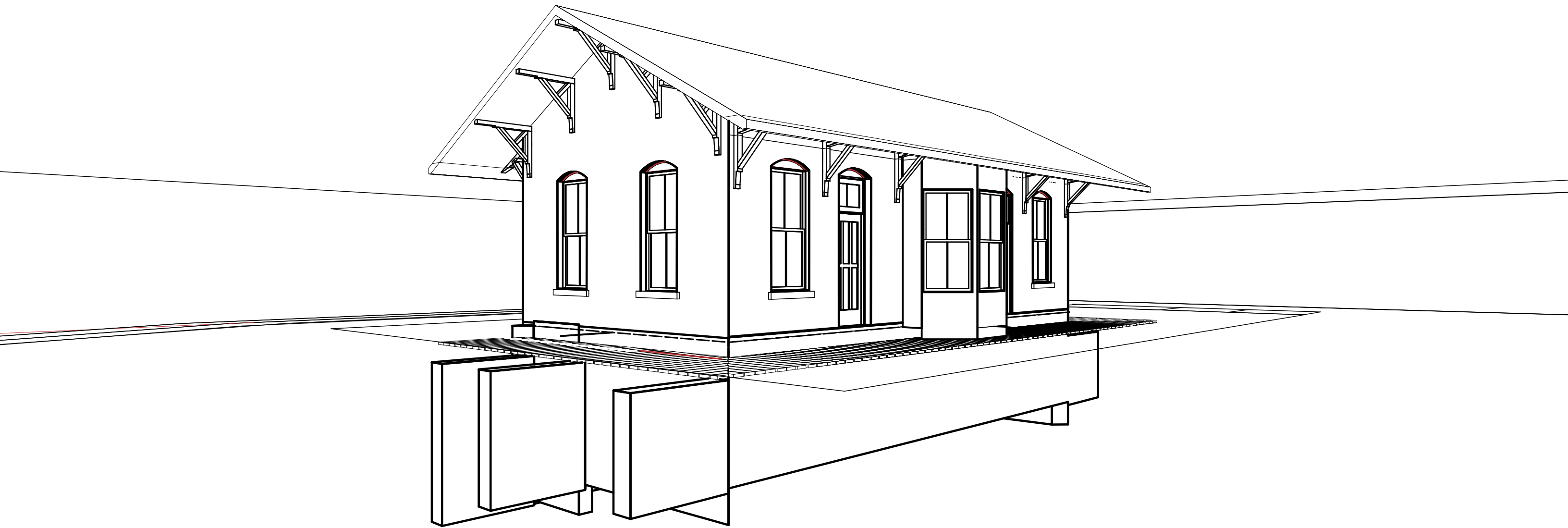
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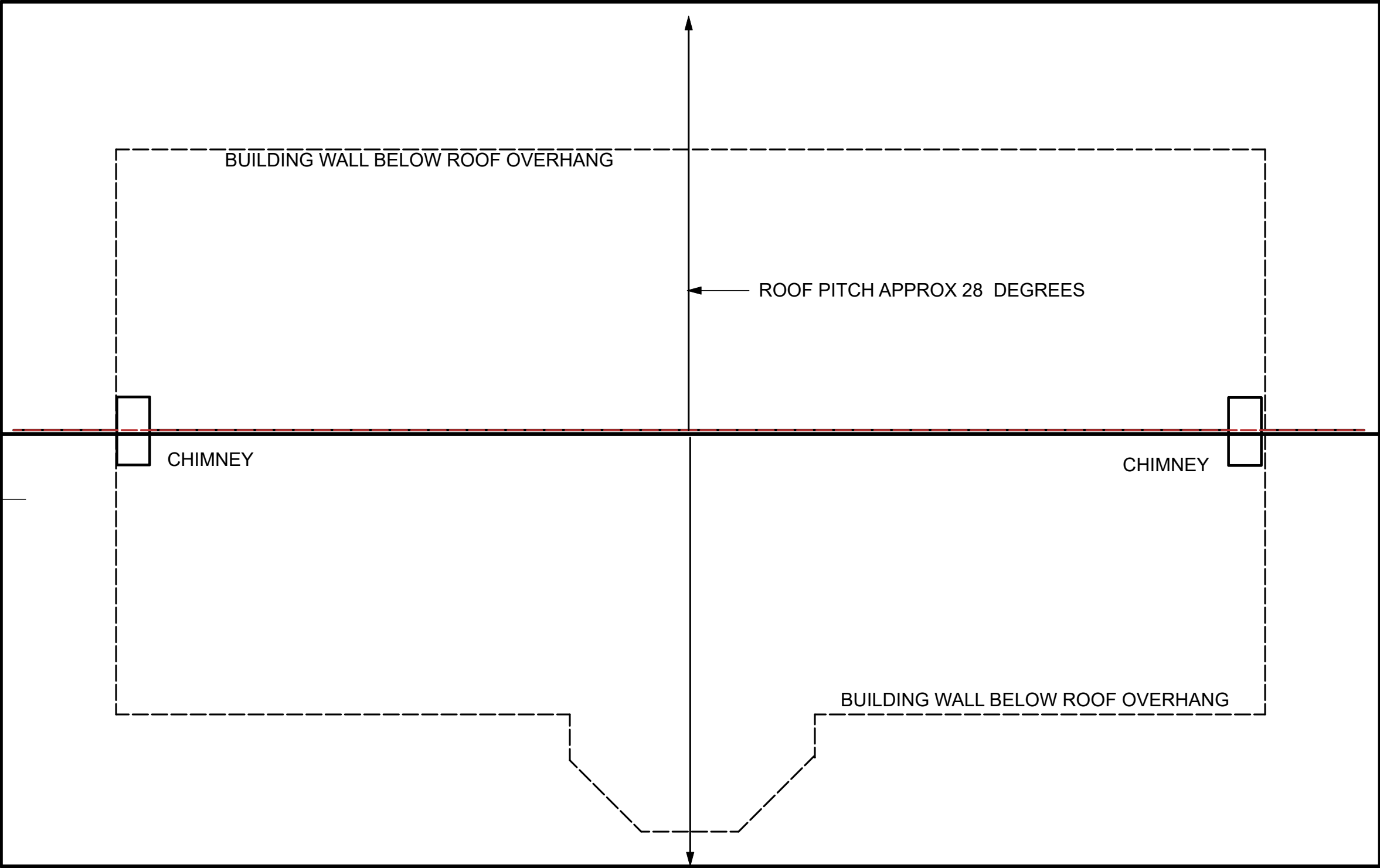
RENOVATION AND RESTORATION
NISKAYUNA RAILROAD STATION
LYONS PARK 3439 ROSENDALE ROAD
NISKAYUNA, NY 12309

DRAWING TITLE

Scale-
Drawn By-
Date-
Revision-

Drawing Number





James
McKinney
Architect
LLC

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Niskayuna, NY 12309
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jmckarch@gmail.com

RENOVATION AND RESTORATION
NISKAYUNA RAILROAD STATION
LYONS PARK 3439 ROSENDALE ROAD
NISKAYUNA, NY 12309

DRAWING TITLE
ROOF PLAN

Scale- 1/8" = 1'-0"
Draw By- JMCK
Date- July 11, 2022
Revision-

Drawijng Number

CHIMNEYS (BOTH)
- HEAVILY WEATHERED
- SPALLED, MISSING BRICKS
- NO WEATHER RESISTANT CAP
- DON'T CONFORM TO HISTORIC
DETAILING AT CAP.

BRICK WALLS (EXTERIOR) HAVE BEEN SANDBLASTED, COMPROMISING
THE WEATHER RESISTANCE OF THE OUTER SKIN OF THE BRICKS.
-MORTAR JOINTS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN RE-POINTED USING
HARD CEMENT MORTAR IN PLACE OF THE ORIGINAL LIME-
PUTTY USED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WALLS.
BOTH CONDITIONS WILL ALTER THE MOISTURE RESISTANCE
AND SHORTEN THE PROBABLE DURABILITY OF THE WALLS.
CORRECTIVE WORK MAY INVOLVE REMOVING THE
INCOMPATIBLE MORTAR AS WELL AS ADDING A BREATHABLE
FINISH (CLEAR) TO THE WALLS

PORCH RAILS
- GENERALLY POOR CONDITION
- LOOSE, WOBBLY
- AT VARIANCE WITH HISTORIC RAILINGS
- NOT COMPLIANT WITH NYS BUILDING CODE.
SAFETY HAZARD- SPACING BETWEEN MEMBERS
EXCEEDS CODE MAXIMUM OF 4 3/8". SMALL CHILDREN
CAN GET CURRENTLY GET BETWEEN EXISTING RAILS AND FALL
FROM DECK

WINDOWS (POSSIBLY ORIGINAL)
- MODERATE DETERIORATION,
MAINLY LOW AROUND SILLS
- RESTORABLE

PORCH DECK
- DECK SAGS IN SOME PLACES
- HEAVILY WEATHERED
- SOME DETERIORATED BOARDS
- SUB-STRUCTURE NEEDS
INVESTIGATION

CONDITION OF FOUNDATIONS AND BASEMENT NOT
EVALUATED AT THIS TIME. PENDING BRUSH REMOVAL

ROOF STRUCTURE
- SIGNIFICANT SAG ALONG RIDGE AND UPPER FACE OF ROOF. NEEDS FURTHER
INVESTIGATION BY STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

ROOFING
- EXISTING SLATE, AGE UNKNOWN
- SOME SLATES AT EDGE OF ROOF SHOW CRACKED EDGES
- METAL DRIP AT EDGE MAY BE MISSING
- WOOD TRIM BELOW ROOF EDGE APPEARS DETERIORATED,
SOME SECTIONS MISSING, ALLOWING SMALL BIRDS TO
ENTER THE ATTIC SPACE

DECK
- SAGS AT CORNERS

WINDOWS AND BAY
- LIKELY ORIGINAL,
- POOR CONDITION LOW.
- RESTORABLE

DECK
- SAGS UNDER BAY WINDOW

DOORS
- MAY NOT BE ORIGINAL, REQUIRES MORE
RESEARCH. GOOD CONDITION.

EXISTING STEP
- HEIGHT FROM INTERIOR FLOOR TO DECK = 10"
- NYS BUILDING CODE VIOLATION, MAX STEP RISER ALLOWABLE = 7".
- EXISTING DOUBLE RISER CONFIGURATION OF 8" AND 2" AT DOOR
THRESHOLD ALSO DOES NOT MEET CURRENT NYS BUILDING CODE
NOR ADA. PRESENT CONFIGURATION IS NOT ACCESSIBLE.

GRADE
- ALONG EDGE OF DECK VARIES RESULTING IN "STEP" AT EDGE THAT VARIES
FROM APPROX. 1" AT CENTER TO 7" AT ENDS. NYS BUILDING CODE VIOLATION

DECK
- SAGS AT CORNERS



James McKinney, Architect LLC

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518-424-5982
jmckarch@gmail.com

July 7, 2022

Laura Robertson, Niskayuna Town Planner
Denis Brennan, Niskayuna Town Historian
Niskayuna Town Hall
One Niskayuna Circle
Niskayuna, New York 12309

Re: Historic Train Station, Lyons Park
Progress update

Laura, Denis;

It's been a busy couple of weeks getting started. I've visited the building several times to become familiar with the current existing condition of the site and building. In that time I developed sketch plans on CAD for the site, basement, first floor and roof. With my wife Liz we made preliminary measurements of the windows and doors on the front and east and west sides of the building. On Tuesday of this week Denis assisted with confirming the dimensions of the exterior walls and decks. I've since updated the plans to be accurate based upon the on site dimensioning. The CAD work I've been doing also provides the basis for development of a 3 dimensional model of the exterior. A terrain model of the site, from the bike path to the river is in progress. There's still measurement work and condition evaluation needed for the basement, back wall, first floor interior, bay window and roof. Some initial observation are noted:

Foundations- local stone, some repointing of the mortar joints appears recently done. Need more investigation, particularly at the front wall and bay window.

Brick walls- appear to be original, with a bond pattern typical to a period after the Civil War but possibly used in the original circa 1840 construction. The brick clearly shows evidence of having been sandblasted. The dark red skin of the bricks at the front of the building has been virtually blasted off, while the brick on the sidewalls has been less aggressively sandblasted and retains some of dark red, water resistant skin. This may not constitute an immediate threat to the preservation and longevity of the walls due to two factors: 1) The large roof overhangs protect the walls from severe exposure to rain, and 2) There is little moisture generated inside the building by the present occupancy. I'm currently in discussion with the California Paint Company (of Massachusetts) who formulated a "breathable" exterior coating for brick masonry (previously sandblasted) for the restoration of the Emily Dickinson Homestead (1820) in Amherst,

Massachusetts which after 15 years is working very well. More to follow on this topic.

Windows, doors- the wood windows and bay window may be original to the building. There is some deterioration in the window sills and frames but the units may be restorable in the hands of the right craftsmen. The windows could be removed and restoration accomplished by a competent millwork shop. The bay window at the front of the building is an important element of the defining character of the station. As such, restoration should be considered. A more detailed evaluation of the bay will be undertaken as the lower sections of the bay are heavily weathered. The panel doors at the front entrances and rear wall may be a later component as the condition appears to be very good. The thresholds and step under the entry doors present a safety concern. The current NYS Building Code limits the allowable riser height of stairs to 7" maximum. The existing step is a total height of approximately 10"- consisting of a lower rise of approximately 8" with a secondary smaller riser of 2" directly above- a very unusual configuration which may present a code compliance liability to the Town in the event someone were to trip and fall at the threshold. Refer to the later section on accessibility for a potential solution.

Roof, chimneys- the present roof is slate, which, based upon observation of the south facing roof, appears to be mostly intact but in need of maintenance. A thorough survey by a roofer experienced and skilled in slate roofing is recommended. Several slates at the lower edge of the roof are broken, possibly from the weight of ice forming in the winter, resulting in water damage to the wood trim at the roof overhang. Flocks of small birds were seen coming and going from the openings at the roof edge, possibly nesting somewhere in the soffit or attic. Replacement of the broken slates and installation of a new drip edge and repair or replacement of the wooden soffit is recommended. Of greater concern is observed sagging in the roofs. Viewed from the lawn on the south face of the building, the ridge line of the roof sags noticeably, and the face of the roof below the ridge also appears to show significant sag. Based upon a walk through of the interior, there appears to be no attic access. Further investigation of the condition of the roof structure is recommended, possibly including a structural engineering analysis of the existing framing of the roof.

The present brick chimneys are showing evidence of deterioration with the faces of several bricks spalling. There are no observable chimney caps, and rainwater is likely saturating the chimney, resulting in deterioration from freeze-thaw cycles. There's a high probability the chimneys will need to be removed and rebuilt. The chimneys seen in historic photos of the building appear to be slightly taller, with corbeled detailing near the top. It is recommended that replacement masonry work be based upon the historic configuration, not the existing masonry.

Exterior wooden decks- The existing wooden decks and railings are in poor condition, with the deck on the eastern end of the building being closed to the public due to its sagging railing and deteriorated deck surface. The decks around the building are sagging under the bay window and at several corners. Further investigation is recommended, to determine if there's a foundation under the eastern (front) decking, or it's simply laid on grade. This would involve temporarily removing some deck boards to see what lies beneath. The existing deck railings do not meet NYS Building Code requirements. The openings in the railing are much larger than the Code allows. A small child could readily fit through the opening under the top rails and fall 10 feet at the

northern end of the decks. This may constitute a significant liability for the Town in the event a child falls from the deck. Any replacement must conform to current Code requirements. The deck height above grade at the edge of the decks currently varies, from about 2" to 8". Historic photos show a grade to deck height that's consistent and level, which was likely much safer and less of a tripping hazard.

NYS Building Code and ADA Accessibility Code considerations- When renovating or restoring an historic building, it is often preferable, and sometimes required, that conformance to current life safety and accessibility code be achieved. When an existing building component impacts code compliance in a negative way, it's often appropriate to seek solutions that minimize the impacts on the historic character of the building, but also improve on or meet code compliance requirements. In the case of the Station, this would involve deck railing design as mentioned above. The original railings were supported by 4 wooden posts, with a robust top rail and lower secondary rail.

The new replacement railing would benefit from following the configuration of the historic railing. The wooden top and bottom rails, and posts could reflect the historic configuration. To achieve code compliance, the space between the top and bottom rails could be filled with a stainless steel wire mesh (black finish) with a maximum opening of 4 inches, or perhaps vertical stainless wire spaced at a 4 inch maximum.

This preserves the original configuration and character of the rail, with the added safety required by current code. Horizontal stainless wire is not recommended since it can sometimes invite children to climb up (and over) the railing. Like the existing deck railing, the existing steps to the entry doors are higher than allowed by current Code and in a configuration that is not recognized in either the building nor accessibility codes (an 8" rise, with an additional 2" rise and short tread on top). The door width at 36 inches does allow accessibility for wheelchairs, if the 10" sill can be overcome.

A potential solution to making the building and deck accessible may be to raise the deck elevation by approximately 10 inches, so that the deck and first floor of the building are at the same level. The slope of the walkway leading from the bike path to the building/deck entry would increase, but be within ADA guidelines.

The deck in front of the bay window would remain at its current elevation, so that the window may be preserved with its original, historic proportions. The above mentioned thoughts are to explore the possibility of making the building accessible, which may not be strictly required by code. If accessible, however, the building may be looked at more favorably for potential grant funding by state and federal agencies. Examples of historic renovations which have accomplished accessibility in manner similar to that described are available on request.

Still to be accomplished in the summer season

- 1) Agreement with Town for architectural services
- 2) Assign intern to assist with projects (Town)
- 3) Photography of existing conditions
- 4) Visit Schenectady County Historical Society to seek clear photos of station
- 5) Investigate under deck construction foundations. (Requires assistance from Town)
- 6) Remove brush from sides and rear of station (Town)
- 7) Investigate basement level
- 8) Investigate roof structure in attic- possibly new access hatch (Town)

Michele Martinelli
Niskayuna Town Clerk
One Niskayuna Circle
Niskayuna, NY 12309

To the Niskayuna Town Board,

I enthusiastically submit my application for consideration to serve on the Niskayuna Historical Preservation Commission. In June, my family moved from Houston, Texas to Niskayuna, where we intend to put down roots. Seemingly a long way from home, I grew up in New York's lower Hudson Valley and have family ties to the Capital Region and Washington County. I have extensive education and work experience in archives and local history and it would be my honor to serve on the Historical Commission.

I received a Bachelor's degree in History with a Certificate in Political and Civic Engagement from Indiana University and a Master's degree in Information Studies with a focus in preservation and archives and records enterprise from the preeminent University of Texas at Austin School of Information. I have extensive work experience processing, describing, and conducting research with archival collections, beginning with a foundational semester spent working at the Library of Congress Manuscript Division Reading Room and continuing through appointments at the University of Arkansas, the University of Michigan, and the Menil Collection. In these positions, I've processed large political and architectural collections and gained extensive experience conducting archival research and reference work across federal, state, local, and private institutions.

Most recently I was the Archivist at the Menil Collection, an art museum in Houston, Texas. In this position I managed all aspects of a busy museum archives including reference and outreach, processing, preservation and conservation, strategic planning, and more. Additionally, I led the Menil's Neighborhood Historical Awareness Initiative (NHAI), a special project launched by the museum director in Summer 2020 to explore the complex iterative history of Houston's Montrose neighborhood. NHAI areas of focus included communities and peoples who inhabited the land which the Menil now stewards; the development of the Montrose neighborhood including street names and area buildings, landmarks, and monuments; and the impact of segregation and gentrification. As chair of the NHAI, I prepared and submitted requests for city records pertaining to nearby structures and properties and trained an interdepartmental team of museum staff in conducting archival inquiry using local and state repositories and resources. I led the collective in analyzing and reporting our findings on our neighborhood's history to both the Menil administration and public audiences. This experience was formative, demonstrating the importance of understanding the stories presented by an area's built environment.

I deeply believe in the importance of community engagement and the power of connecting people and communities with archives and history. I have a strong record of professional development and engagement in the archival community. I served as president of the Archivists of the Houston Area, co-chaired the Houston Archives Bazaar, a large community outreach event aiming to foster interest and awareness of archives and local history, and have held numerous leadership positions in the Society of Southwest Archivists.

I am passionate about celebrating, sharing, and sparking interest in local history, and I have confidence in my ability to apply my background and expertise in archives to serving on the Commission. I commit to engage my archival experience to thoroughly research and thoughtfully consider all proposed designations to the Town of Niskayuna Register of Historic Places and embrace my passion for history in bringing these findings and recommendations to the Commission, the Town Board, and the people of Niskayuna.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lilly Carrel

EDUCATION

The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
Masters of Science in Information Studies
Focus: Archives and Records Enterprise

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
Bachelor of Arts in History
Certificate: *Political and Civic Engagement*

ARCHIVES & LIBRARY EXPERIENCE

The Menil Collection, Houston, TX

July 2018 – May 2022

Archivist

- Managed all operations of a busy museum archives serving internal and external researchers and stakeholders including strategic planning, collection management, accessioning, arrangement and description, reference and outreach, records management, policy development and implementation, rights and reproduction, digitization, database migration, digital preservation, and space design planning
- Devised, updated, and implemented policies and procedures for the Archives
- Initiated digital preservation activities, built an interdepartmental team, and established digital preservation workstation in accordance with best practices for the acquisition, ingest, processing, preservation, and access to born-digital records
- Led the Menil's Neighborhood Historical Awareness Initiative (NHAI), an interdepartmental collective engaged in exploring the complex, iterative history of the eclectic and artistic Montrose neighborhood in Houston. NHAI's areas of focus include communities and peoples who have inhabited the land which the Menil now stewards; the development of the Montrose neighborhood including street names and area buildings, landmarks, and monuments; and the impact of segregation and gentrification
- Provided archival oversight of the Records Management Program and Document Retention Schedule and advised staff on proper record-keeping practices for physical and born-digital records
- Established an active oral history program including developing policies, procedures, legal documents, technical requirements, training materials, and conducted oral history interviews
- Coordinated and implemented digitization workflows and procedures in consultation with Imaging Services
- Managed all archival rights and reproduction requests for publication, exhibition, and film screenings
- Managed and collaborated with vendor to execute database migration from legacy content management system (FileMaker Pro V.11) to a new system, ArchivesSpace, to foster increased access to archives, improved physical and intellectual control, and interoperability with digital preservation systems and processes.
- Provided content expertise for Curatorial exhibition research and display of archival materials

Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

July 2016 – June 2018

Project Archivist

- Assumed all responsibilities from previous archivist related to the appraisal, arrangement, description, preservation, and review of closed files in accordance with federal statutes, of two U.S. congressional collections (Rep. John D. Dingell Jr. and Sen. Carl M. Levin) totaling over 2,100 linear feet, 2 terabytes, and 3,625 audiovisual items. Processed papers of Congressman Dave Camp including 30 linear feet, 98 GB, and 425 A/V items
- Appraised, arranged, and described complex hybrid (analog and born-digital) 20th century collections requiring high level detailed processing, and created DACS-compliant finding aids in ArchivesSpace
- Processed 12 collections totaling over 155 linear feet, 958 audiovisual items, 2,517 architectural drawings, and 100 GB of born-digital material.

- Established physical and intellectual control of newly acquired collections by creating accession records, reviewing and describing materials, documenting transfer of custody, and assigning locations. Met with donors to discuss, appraise, and/or receive transfers of materials
- Performed complex and routine research for patron reference requests received in person and via email when staffing the “Ask an Archivist” desk once per week. Provide optimal customer service to all individuals who engage with staff by fostering an equitable and inclusive environment that promoted teaching and scholarship
- Contributed to the completion of the Bentley’s Mellon-funded ArchivesSpace-Archivematica-DSpace Workflow Integration project by using and providing feedback on new functionalities and workflows designed to ingest and process digital archives, interviewed staff and developed uses stories for transition to accessioning in ArchivesSpace, and test and provide feedback on removable media workflows and documentation
- Collaborated with team of three archivists to develop a methodology and work plan, conduct a literature review, carry out work, and write a concluding report for a “hidden collections” project designed to enhance archival description in finding aids, catalog records, and digital object metadata to highlight the role of women, related to the University of Michigan, from the 19th century

University of Arkansas Libraries, Special Collections, Fayetteville, AR

July 2015 – July 2016

Senior Level Archival Manager

- Responsible for accessioning including establish physical and intellectual control by creating accession records in content management system, conducting inventories, allocating space, updating location guides, and creating collection-level descriptions in accordance with best-practices. Accessioned over 90 collections totaling more than 900 linear feet
- Contributed to policy and procedure development to establish uniform accession procedures. Worked to compile a comprehensive holdings list including migrating data stored in multiple databases, reconciling conflicting legacy data, and conducted research to determine data accuracy in an effort to reducing backlog
- Communicated with donors in person, via email and phone to understand the nature of a donation, offer guidance on records of evidential, enduring, and historic value, and facilitate the transfer of material. Maintained existing, and developed new, donor relationships through consistent, professional, and attentive communication
- Participated in the planning and information gathering stage for an off-site storage facility, including collection and space management activities
- Integrated preservation and basic conservation practices into the accessioning process, offer preservation advice to staff and student workers. In charge of purchasing preservation supplies for department
- Trained student workers and supervised 4-6 students on a daily basis in the processing, arrangement, and description of manuscript collections
- Created and edited 32 Encoded Archival Description (EAD)-enabled finding aids

Austin Seminary Archives, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Austin TX

Sept. 2014 – June 2015

Student Archives Assistant

- Inventoried the Seminary’s large institutional photograph collection, wrote an Appraisal Report and Processing Plan, and developed a new arrangement for photographs to increase accessibility
- Arranged 2 series of a 20 linear foot collection of organizational records, wrote DACS compliant finding aid, encoded finding aid in HTML and EAD for Texas Archival Resources Online (TARO), created MARC record
- Upgraded and enhanced the Seminary’s self-hosted Omeka instance, including working with the Linux command line to back up database, research and install new plug-ins and theme/display
- Digitized photographs for online Omeka exhibition including creating Dublin Core metadata for items

The University of Texas Libraries (UT), Austin, TX

Jan. 2013 – June 2015

Graduate Research Assistant/Floor Supervisor

- Developed and carried out procedure for transferring serials from UT-Austin to the Joint Library Facility (JLF) at Texas A&M, including writing flexible workflows, compiling MARC data, resolving serials cataloging issues down to the item level, and training new staff on all aspects of the ongoing JLF project
- Collaborated with UT Library departments and JLF staff to meet project deadlines and coordinated the successful disposition, transfer, or withdrawal of over 17,000 journals
- Successfully recruited, hired, trained, and supervised 11 students to work in stacks maintenance during the winter semester intersession while primary supervisor was on an unplanned extended work absence
- Trained, supervised, and evaluated 12 to 15 student assistants in stack maintenance duties and the daily operations of an open stack academic library

Austin History Center, Austin, TX

Sept. 2013 – Dec. 2013 | Aug. 2014 – Dec. 2014

Archives Intern

- Researched and wrote a Born-digital Accession and Ingest Procedure Manual detailing how to stabilize electronic records received from City of Austin government agencies and personal donations to ensure the long-term preservation of born-digital material
- Utilized BitCurator to create disk images, extract metadata, and generate reports to be used in future processing of electronic records
- Wrote Submission Information Package (SIP) agreement to legally transfer physical and intellectual control of electronic records to municipal archives
- Mapped administrative, technical, and descriptive metadata vital for processing electronic records to Dublin Core
- Appraised, arranged, described, and rehoused over 7 linear feet of records. Wrote a DACS compliant finding aid for the Hart Family Papers and encoded in EAD for TARO

Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, Austin, TX

Feb. 2013 – Sept. 2014

Conservation Volunteer

- Performed intermediate book repairs including: cover board reattachment, corner and spine repair, adhesive removal, paper mends, and surface cleaning
- Collaborated with senior conservators to examine collection material, discuss treatment options, photograph, document, and independently executed treatments for rare books to ensure long-term preservation

Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

Oct. 2009 – May 2010 | Jan. – Dec. 2011

Conservation Assistant

- Constructed custom-size phase boxes and other enclosures to house rare books, manuscripts, and Lilly's extensive puzzle and art object collections
- Aided in the preparation and installation of exhibitions

Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

Sept. 2010 – Dec. 2010

Reference Intern

- Provided friendly reference services including researching and responding to patron inquiries received in-person and via LOC's electronic "Ask a Librarian" system
- Greeted, registered, oriented, and informed new patrons of reading room collections, policies, and procedures
- Monitored researchers conduct, enforced reading room policies, provided technical support to researchers
- Retrieved, prepared, and served archival collections to researchers

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Society of Southwest Archivists 2022 Annual Conference Local Arrangements Committee	2021 – 2022
Society of Southwest Archivists 50th Anniversary Committee	2020 – 2022
Society of Southwest Archivists, Professional Development Committee, <i>Chair/Vice-chair</i>	2017 – 2021
Archivists of the Houston Area, <i>President/Vice-president</i>	2019 – 2021
2019 Houston Archives Bazaar Steering Committee <i>Co-Chair</i>	2018 – 2019
Society of Southwest Archivists 2017 Annual Conference Local Arrangements Committee, <i>Treasurer</i>	2016 – 2017
Society of Southwest Archivists 2016 Program Committee	2016
Society of American Archivists, University of Texas Student Chapter, <i>Treasurer</i>	2014 – 2015

SKILLS

- Metadata Standards and Schemas: DACS, EAD, Dublin Core, OAIS, LCSH, LCNAF, AAT, TGM, MARC, RDA
- Archival Software: ArchivesSpace, Archivematica, Aeon, Archivists' ToolKit, BitCurator, Omeka, AtoM, DSpace, BagIt, InMagic
- Records Management: ISO-15489, DoD5015.2-STD, DIRKS, SharePoint
- Additional Technical Skills: Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe PhotoShop, File Maker Pro, Google Drive, Mac/PC, EditX, Open Refine, HTML, MySQL, and PHP

Joey Gentile

Jamie Puccioni
Town Supervisor
One Niskayuna Circle
Niskayuna, NY 12309

July 31, 2022

Dear Jamie,

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am a recent arrival to Niskayuna having moved here with my family in Summer 2022. My friend and neighbor Erik Dolman suggested I reach out to you about the possibility of an alternate position on the Town's Zoning Board of Appeals. I think I could contribute in this role due to my relevant education, professional experience and perhaps also my lived-experience.

I am an architect by training (University of Houston BA/BS 2007) and I work in the New York City office of the engineering firm SGH. I have 15 years of experience as an expert in American building codes. I am particularly experienced in site design for fire department access, wildland-urban interface and accessibility (ADA). I'd be happy to send some references relative to my professional experience upon request.

I am a father of two, my oldest will begin Kindergarten in the Niskayuna Central School District this coming autumn. On behalf of my little ones who will grow up here and the neighbors who have welcomed us I would like to be helpful to the community and I think this might be a good way to do it.

Thanks for reviewing this letter; I'd be delighted to discuss this possibility with you sometime soon. Your consideration of this matter is greatly appreciated.

Best Regards.

Joey Gentile

Wyoming Avenue Mini-Roundabout: Rough Concept Plan



Town of Niskayuna, NY

Demonstration Project

Bike Lane Concept

Lexington Boulevard :

2 blocks in length
Clifton Park Rd. to Regent St.

- Two ~12' vehicular travel lanes
- Two ~6' bike lanes
- 4 bike lane symbols (1 ea. block/lane)
- 4 sharrows (1 end of each bike lane)
- 4 temporary bollards at bike lane entry
- 2 "New Traffic Pattern" signs



Sharrow Paint at exit of bike lane

Traffic Pattern Change Sign
(By Town)

Bike Lane Tape
(For 2 blocks)

Bike Symbol Paint
(1 per block each direction
4 total)

Sharrow Paint at exit of bike lane

Traffic Pattern Change Sign
(By Town)



Niskayuna, NY Demonstration Project Bike Lane Concept





Niskayuna, NY Demonstration Project Bike Lane Concept

