



Town of Wheatfield

Greenspace Master Plan

A humble addition to the Town of Wheatfield's Comprehensive Plan

The goal of the Greenspace Plan in The Town of Wheatfield is to enhance the quality of life for Wheatfield residents through improvements and enhancements to the recreation, environmental, and image resources within the Town.

May, 2014



Proposed Riverside Park-Northwest View

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RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE FIRST GREENSPACE PLAN: Moved by Councilman O'Callaghan and seconded by Supervisor Kuehn to accept the Greenspace Master Plan as presented with the stipulation that corrections will be made.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE:

Supervisor Kuehn - YES accept Greenspace
Councilman Helwig - YES Master Plan
Councilman O'Callaghan - YES
Councilman Retzlaff - YES. More copies of plan should be available
Councilman Grawe - YES
This motion was carried at the September 18, 1995 Board Meeting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the **Greenspace Advisory Committee** for giving unselfishly of their time and efforts to develop this Greenspace Master Plan. Their interest in the future of Wheatfield, combined with their deep respect for the natural attributes that define the character of Wheatfield today, were the driving forces behind the final efforts presented in this document.

The Wheatfield Greenspace Advisory Committee:

Kenneth Retzlaff, Co-Chairperson
Darlyne O'Callaghan, Co-Chairperson
Kenneth Franasiak - commercial/manufacturing
Russell Nelson - Senior Citizens
Michael Hefferon & Gloria Lariccia - recreation
Joel Radin - public education
Nancy Mihilko & Barbara MacDonald - Garden Club
Frank Zuccari & Howard Haseley - farming community
Carolyn Voisin - industrial
Christopher Connelly - commercial/retail
Richard Muscatello & Gary DiMatteo - Planning Board

The **Greenspace Focus Group** updated this document during the April, 2010-May, 2014 period. The members are:

Justin Higner, Chairman
Walter Garrow, Vice Chairman (also former Chairman)
Joseph Gargas, Treasurer
Emily Frank, Secretary
Richard Muscatello
Drew Reilly
Alan Zamorski,
Sandra Marshanke,
Janice Vertlieb

**INTRODUCTION TO THE
WHEATFIELD GREENSPACE MASTER PLAN
WHEATFIELD, NEW YORK**

What is a Greenspace Plan?

A Greenspace Plan is a planning document, which contains:

- An inventory of all parklands and green areas for public access.
- Identifies future green spaces for public access.
- Emphasizes the recreational needs (both active and passive) of the community - residents, businesses, commercial enterprises, etc.
- Provides a definition of quality of life in Wheatfield that can be expressed to the public in a tangible way.

Why Wheatfield Needs a Greenspace Master Plan:

The Plan is a mechanism that communicates the Town's planning goals with regard to future development criteria. It is also a tool that the Town can utilize during its planning process to accomplish the following:

- As The Town continues to develop, designated green space will help to preserve the rural ambiance/characteristic that residents currently enjoy, for their children and their children's children. It is a legacy for future generations and a model of progressive and pragmatic legislation.
- It can aid in the governing (management) of future development. Through public hearings, support by Town residents can be achieved.
- A marketable quality of life with regards to future development can be created.
- Areas for reservation of green spaces for future generations can be set aside.
- A recognized plan can be provided in order to guide the Town's decision-making process.
- This will ensure that the requirements of residents are addressed without creating public vs. private competition.
- The Town's recreation plan can be supplemented and enhanced.
- This plan can be submitted to NYSPRHP, NYS Thruway Authority, NYSDOT, NYSDOS, etc. for inclusion in statewide Green Space Plans for recognition at the State level.

Tangible Benefits and Results of This Plan:

- It allows for the citizen's vision of the Town of Wheatfield with regards to green space.
- The Plan will enhance the green areas and recreational areas that already exist within the Town and may maintain the make-up of the Town, as it is known today.
- It will be a recognized plan for funding opportunities.
- Through the reservation of future Greenspace, the preservation of green space as identified in this plan, can be implemented at minimal or no cost to future generations.

PART I - OVERVIEW OF THE TOWN

The **Town of Wheatfield**, New York (in this document known as Wheatfield or simply, The Town) is a rural Town with a rapidly developing urban influence. Incorporated in 1836, this Niagara County Township acquired its name and heritage from its rich agricultural background. Long known for its expansive fields of wheat and grains, the countryside was covered by large family-owned and operating farms. Land was defined not only by fences and roadways, but also by hedgerows and densely wooded areas. In addition, the community boasts of enclaves within the town distinguished by cultural diversity and evidenced in the ethnic cohesiveness, which still exist today.

Not so long ago, the vistas of open land were interrupted only by the high spires of grain silos, barns, and large pristine farmhouses. Now, however, the landscape is becoming radically different. Utility corridors, commercial enterprises, industrial facilities, and large residential developments have combined to create a very different Wheatfield. It is becoming a town, which is not afraid of future development, economic diversity, and change. In short, the Town of Wheatfield is changing, perhaps to a suburban area, a “bedroom community” or more urbanized area.

The key to strong planning for the future rests with the Town's recognition of its past and the realization that development in Wheatfield has occurred because of its rural attributes and its strong sense of community. Wheatfield is a safe and friendly community with all the conveniences of suburban living and so far, few of the negatives. This idyllic rural setting, however, is being threatened daily by outside pressures for development of the Town by regional urbanites fleeing the surrounding cities in search of a bedroom community to service nearby metropolitan areas. With its location being conducive to Canadian trade and serving as a gateway to the lower forty-eight states, it is predictable that Wheatfield will no longer be the quiet, serene community which its populace currently enjoys. This plan is intended to promote the power of the residents via their resources and their resolve, cooperating with the Town’s focus group, to preserve the community.

The future of Wheatfield as contained in this plan, is one in which residents and non-residents in the Town will have the ability to enjoy the rural attributes now available, and the open spaces which the current generations will enjoy. It is envisioned to be even better, with the establishment of trail ways and pedestrian right-of-ways for public use.

The public parklands which exist within the Town today will continue to be a part of the overall greenways fabric of the Town. Future generations will be able to enjoy the economic benefits of a well-planned, well-developed community. This will continue to attract both residents and businesses.

Greenspace defines a town. It says a lot about the people that live and work there. It exemplifies the pride and self-worth of the community. Greenspace contributes to change and growth while preserving and enhancing the natural attractiveness of the community.

Not incidentally, respectfully sized areas will be preserved for animal life as well. Environmental consciousness and responsibility are inherent in this plan.

A. PROJECT NEED

Now is an opportune time for the Town to undertake this planning exercise to preserve open space while open space is still unencumbered by development. The designation of Greenspace or open space at this stage in the Town's development is a fairly straightforward matter. The land itself provides many of the defining attributes needed to delineate beneficial Greenspace areas. Primary elements such as wetlands, hedgerows, fields, wood lots and streams combine to give a geographic key to the Town's rich texture. These attributes constitute the building blocks upon which the plan is strongly rooted. The areas, which support the largest collection of these attributes, are the areas that will receive the greatest focus and will have the greatest potential for success as Greenspace.

Along with the Greenspace /open space requirements of the Town, are the recreational needs of the community. These needs are for the residents, businesses, and commercial enterprises within the Town. The designation of recreational areas and the linkages between them is a consideration of the Greenspace plan. In many instances, linkages already exist. Roadways and pathways, both formal and informal, are currently used as a means of traversing the Town. The Greenspace plan catalogs these attributes and builds them into the framework of the plan. This information is then over-laid on the geographic picture of the Town. Patterns begin to develop, indicating the significance of the landscape and public areas compared with the current uses and desires of the population utilizing them. This data is then looked at through the criteria established to evaluate the intangible needs and requirements of the Town.

Transportation is another critical component, which a Greenspace Plan addresses. Not only do people require access to the Greenspace areas, means for getting from one area to another must also be considered. Greenspace has the potential to provide non-motorized forms of transportation as a link between parks, trails, neighborhoods, schools, shopping areas, and businesses.

The Greenspace Plan takes into consideration the environmental requirements of State and Federal regulatory agencies, as well as the specific environmental needs of the community. Requirements for river frontage, clearance along streams and creeks, wetlands, floodplains and drainage ways are all environmental issues for which the Town creates specific ordinances. These ordinances not only protect the rights and properties of the landowners in Wheatfield, but they also serve to protect the residents and other participants in the community.

This, therefore, has become the impetus for the Town of Wheatfield to develop a Greenspace Master Plan. The Greenspace Plan is a formal designation of existing green space within the Town of Wheatfield. As the Town continues to develop, designated Green Space will help to preserve the rural ambiance which residents currently appreciate, for their children and future generations. This plan may work by preserving and setting aside existing green spaces that the Town may continue to enjoy, rather than by creating new green spaces. This plan becomes a planning tool that the Town can utilize.

B. APPROACH AND PROCESS

To assist in this endeavor, the Town formed a Greenspace Advisory Committee in 1995.

The goal of the Greenspace Plan in Wheatfield is to enhance the quality of life for Wheatfield residents through improvements and enhancements to the recreation, environmental, and image resources in the Town.

Its membership consisted of representatives from many diverse interests within the Town. Its focus is on the preservation of the Town's natural resources and aesthetic amenities while at the same time creating and maintaining a Town that will be favorable to development and progress. This is a difficult challenge, which the committee has been undertaking. During this process, the committee provided the vital link to establishing the needs and representing the interests of the community. In 2010, a new group designated the **Greenspace Focus Group of the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Task Force** was formed to update this plan.

The process provided for the blending of social, recreational, environmental, and cultural interests within the Town into the proposed network of Greenspace /open space components. The needs, concerns, and observations of the community were used to generate goals, objectives and action steps. The cumulative knowledge of the **Focus Group** and their consultants was used to analyze and generate criteria, options, limits, and potentials. From this process, alternatives were presented and evaluated. The preferred alternative was then further developed into a draft Master Greenspace plan. In many instances, the plan corresponds to elements that are part of the existing landscape of the Town. For example, some proposed pathways follow existing streams and drainage ways, thus providing for routes that are both scenic and environmentally significant. This may also provide a beneficial use of a flood plain. Similarly, trails that connect various parklands and destination points may traverse wetlands, again supplying a beneficial use to environmentally protected land. Many of the above items will be discussed further in later sections of this plan narrative.

Supplemental information consisted of research into Greenspace/open space/recreational activities being explored and/or proposed by surrounding municipalities and various agencies of the State of New York. The rationale behind this was to better participate in projects such as trails, which would link several municipalities, thereby ensuring that Wheatfield residents would gain maximum benefit from participating in outside projects. Also, the Wheatfield plan would provide a coordination function for the Town planners, for all such activities within the Town's borders.

Ultimately the Greenspace Plan should be incorporated into the overall planning processes of the Town. The Greenspace Plan provides for the opportunity to reserve space now, for future use as public green space, as well as delineate public access ways for current use. Future space, which is currently under private ownership, may be acquired by the Town, donated to the Town, or leased to the Town for use by the general public at some time in the future. In addition, there are a number of other options

available for setting aside land, some of which include tax breaks and tax incentives for the owner. This plan does not detail the methodology for land transfer or donation. The method or methods utilized will be at the discretion of the Town Board and will be in the best interest of the Town at the time of their occurrence.

The remainder of the process utilized to develop and implement this plan includes presentation of the Plan to the general public at a public forum, adoption of the plan by the Town Board, distribution of the plan to various State and Federal agencies and the inclusion of the plan into the formal planning processes of the Town.

C. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to locate areas within the Town that can support a variety of recreation and transportation activities and also serve to enhance the image and environmental quality of the Town. This study begins from the premise that undeveloped, *natural* areas, supporting various trees, shrubs, creeks and other natural elements will suggest the most desirable Greenspace areas.

The Town of Wheatfield recognizes its rural and natural characteristics to be valuable resources. The preservation and reservation of these resources is the driving need behind this plan. Those very attributes that make Wheatfield so desirable for development, are the very resources, which if lost or destroyed, could render Wheatfield undesirable in the future. This fate has occurred in our own region and in our own backyard, to many of our neighboring municipalities. Town Officials and Planners do not wish the Town to become unrecognizable to current and future generations. They believe that a healthy, well-managed Town will play a major role in the healthy development of future generations. The rural ambience that the community enjoys today must be preserved for the community tomorrow. The Greenspace Plan encompasses these requirements for open, recreation, and Greenspace within the Town of Wheatfield.

A Greenspace Plan will also help govern future development. The incorporation of Greenspace areas into new development, as proposed in this plan, will help to ensure the preservation of Wheatfield's rural nature. Now is a good time to implement a Greenspace Plan while there exist undeveloped spaces and before the Town undergoes more development. Once these areas are “developed”, they are lost forever. When observing a map of the Town, it is apparent that the Town is “pinched” between the Towns of Niagara and Amherst. Wheatfield is slowly being filled with pilot projects and other proposals. Maintaining control of these developments via the Planning Board, Zoning Codes and assistance from this Plan can keep runaway developments from occurring.

Reserving potential undeveloped open space now, should not place an unfair burden on landowners or developers. Planned, reserved Greenspace enhances the marketability of adjacent properties and improve conditions for future related development. In short, a Greenspace Plan will create a marketable quality of life for future development while providing a legacy for future generations.

This formally recognized and published Greenspace Plan is needed so that the entire Town can understand and support it. Public support is vital to the Town's administrative role as enforcer and promoter of a formally recognized Plan. This plan may ensure that the requirements of residents are addressed without creating competition between residents, agriculture and other commercial interests. The Plan addresses the issues pertaining to community Greenspace and recreational needs which are not addressed by either private enterprise or the municipal sector. Some of these needs brought forth by committee members include such items as walking trails/nature trails, jogging paths, cross-country ski trails, bicycle paths, scenic overlooks, zoo*, wildlife habitats, and areas that support boating, swimming, picnicking, and camping. In addition, the above should accommodate all age groups and multiple levels of abilities/disabilities. Finally, the plan should be able to be implemented without creating additional tax burdens. [* The status of the old Oppenheim Zoo is not fully known at this time.]

D. PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the Plan are as follows:

- To increase awareness of all the positive attributes possessed by the Town,
- To focus attention on the patterns, and the development potential in the Town,
- To identify and value the resources that will contribute to the make up of a Greenspace Master Plan,
- To develop a master plan that reflects the values, needs, and capabilities of the Wheatfield community,
- To develop a town-wide planning tool (the Comprehensive Master Plan) that will guide and direct the development of Greenspace areas for recreation, environmental protection, and image enhancement,
- To prepare a recognized, public-supported plan which is needed to satisfy application requirements for government and foundation grant programs,
- To help ensure safe access to existing and planned parks and open space through improved linkage such as off-road trails and bikeways, as well as improved signage,
- To provide assistance in establishing educational and events facilities for the residents and general public's use at or near the proposed Cherry Hill/Shawnee Nature Preserves and the Riverside Park
- To preserve in perpetuity, unique or sensitive natural resources such as flood plains, groundwater, wetlands, streams, slopes, woodlands and wildlife habitats,
- To utilize our local and state-wide environmental, governmental, archival, and educational institutions and their respective contacts to help implement the Greenspace Plan via advice, grants, and public support programs,
- To continue to work with other Focus Groups on Task Force Board, as well as the Town Council, the Planning Board and Niagara County officials.

PART II- INVENTORY

An inventory of areas characterized by certain natural and cultural resources is shown on the resource Maps. These areas represent resources, which might lend themselves to the creation of Greenspace. Areas in active agriculture or planned for immediate land development or otherwise actively in use are not included. Fringe areas on the periphery of such actively used lands, however, are included.

Resources inventoried and mapped include:

- Various vegetation types such as: woods, mixed trees and shrubs, mixed shrubs and field, and hedgerows. Grassed fields were regarded as active agriculture lands and were omitted.
- Various water types such as: major and minor creeks and ditches, state and federal wetlands, 100-year floodplains, scattered ponds and lakes.
- Active land uses such as: commercial, industrial, agricultural, residential, utility and railroad corridors.

The location of these resources is taken from:

- High resolution aerial photos, 2010 and most recent maps
- Town of Wheatfield Official Maps - zoning, street, subdivision
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Wetlands Map
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetlands Map
- US Geological Survey Topographic Map
- Niagara County Tax Assessment Map
- Additional information such as street names, land ownership, streams and parks is included.

A. WATERS

1. Wetlands and Floodplains. Because of its flatness and finely textured soils, Wheatfield has numerous wetland areas scattered about the Town. The hydrologic dynamics of wetland areas has been well documented by State and Federal Agencies. Wetlands are basically any low area supporting poor drainage, water loving plants and tight soils. Three primary floodplain areas occur along Bull Creek, Bergholz Creek and Cayuga Creek, in the east, central and western sectors of the Town respectively. A floodplain occurs where drainage water habitually spills over creek banks. These are areas critical to waterborne species. Wheatfield's wetlands are characterized by the following:

- They occur in conjunction with woodlots.
- Some were once actively farmed.
- They support active uses such as hiking, bird watching, and hunting or as a play area for children.
- As sources of groundwater recharge, water purifiers and banks of biological diversity.

The Committee accepts these individual resources as representative examples of the Town's basic collection of natural attributes. They mark the starting point for locating Greenspace. Within the logistical mapping and inventory limitations of this Master Plan Study, these resources provide the necessary background for developing this Greenspace Plan.

The Greenspace Focus Group advocates that the Town's water resources and associated rights and access to the Niagara River/Erie Canal and associated water ways are the possession of the people of the Town via their elected representatives, are stewarded to them by the public trust, and should not be privatized.

The Greenspace Focus Group recommends that the Town oppose any attempt by Niagara County or other domestic/international entities to treat water waste from hydraulic fracturing (natural gas production wastes and associated compounds. This is commonly referred to as "Fracking"). To date, such resulting waste is essentially untreatable.

2. Creeks and Ditches

a. In Wheatfield these are valued for wildlife habitat as well as for removing storm water. Agricultural lands, residential developments and almost all roadways rely upon the carrying capacity of these waterways. Most of the natural creeks and streams receive their storm water run-off from man-made field ditches and storm pipes. In the flat topography of Wheatfield, drainage construction and maintenance is a crucial element in the successful performance of most man-made developments.

Benefits of these waterways include:

- Erosion Control - Most creeks and streams are lined with trees and shrubs, scattered or in hedgerows. These act to hold the embankment in place and filter sediments before reaching the waterway.
- Habitat - Beyond their physical attributes, creeks, streams and ditches with their trees and shrubs, provide cover and breeding areas for fish and wildlife.
- Landscape Interest - The slight drop in the lay of the land, trees, shrubs and water itself separate one piece of land from the next, forming natural boundaries and edges. Not only do these waterways act as collection points for storm water, they create divisions and lands.

b. Creek depths shall be maintained carefully according to the needs of associated wetlands preservation i.e. the proposed Shawnee Nature Preserve area and elsewhere. Accessibility to these water routes for improvement and/or enhancement can be negotiated between the Town and private property owners as the need arises.

c. The Committee encourages constant feedback and input from residents living along creek ways who routinely know the situations on the ground. They may be able to provide accurate perspectives on how these creeks can be improved in the future.

B. LANDS/VEGETATION

1. Hedgerows and Woodlots. Trees are important vertical elements in the predominantly open and flat landscape of Wheatfield. Hedgerows occur on property lines and between various farm fields. They are a cultural feature indicative of Wheatfield's agricultural heritage. Woodlots occur in areas too difficult to farm - areas typified by excessive wetness, poor tilth and fertility or too irregular shaped for modern farming practices. As a result, many wooded areas occur simultaneously with federal and state wetlands. Because most of these areas have not recently or ever been farmed, they often support rather mature stands of trees on dense acreages. As such, they provide habitat for the larger mammals and birds found in the Town.

Hedgerows and woodlots provide passageways for wildlife, as well as providing varying measures of climate control by blocking winds, collecting blowing snow and shielding the eyes of car drivers from the setting and rising sun.

2. Utility and Railroad Corridors. Major Gas, Electric transmission and Rail lines course through Wheatfield along its north, south and west edges. Corridors supporting active lines range from 10-200' wide, though most widths are between 80' and 200'. Most are owned directly by the utility or rail company. Utilities within easements are not shown unless noted.

Each corridor shown on the Utility and Railroad Map is described in the table below.

TYPE	NAME	LOCATION	STATUS	OWNERSHIP	WIDTH ±(FT)
Railroad	CSX	River Road	Not Active	Fee Simple	140'
Railroad	CSX	Walmore Road	Active		150'
Railroad	CSX	Town Line Road	Active	Fee Simple	75'
Railroad	CSX	Lockport Road	Active	Fee Simple	80'
Gas	Empire	Walmore Road	Active	Easement	60'
Gas	Nation Fuel	Schultz Road/ Niagara Falls Blvd	Active	Easement/Fee Simple	66'
Electric	National Grid	Lockport Road	Active	Fee Simple	250'
Electric	NYSEG	Lockport Road	Active	Fee Simple	250'
Electric	Power Authority of State of NY	Lockport- Mapleton Road	Active	Easement	290'
Electric	National Grid	Schultz Road to Williams Road	Active	Easement/Fee Simple	100'
Electric	National Grid	River Road	Active	Fee Simple	75'

Inactive railroads are not in use by any rail line. The old rail bed, raised above grade, is usually grass covered and flanked by woods or scrub growth.

All of the service lines are situated underground and evidenced by periodic standpipes. All electric transmission lines are overhead on large-scale steel transmission towers. Both are in regularly maintained corridors free from brush or tree growth and support meadow, field crops, wildlife habitat and possible recreational use such as hiking.

3. Public and Private Lands used by the public.

Several areas of publicly owned lands are scattered throughout the Town. These areas include parks, school sites, Volunteer Fire Department Halls and former rail right-of-ways, now owned by the Town. Each supports some form of wooded, wetland or field vegetation. Some are already developed for recreational use. These parcels can be found on the Vegetation Map and Property Map. Below is a list of parks and play areas currently frequented by Town residents:

Play Areas:

- Adams Fire Department
- American Legion Post 1451
- Lions Club Grounds.
- Errick Road School
- Holy Ghost Lutheran Church
- Veterans Park (City of North Tonawanda)
- Canal Park (Town of Pendleton)
- St. Peters Lutheran Church
- Former Bergholz School
- St. Johns Lutheran Church
- Walking Paths
- Former Rail Right-of-Ways

Established Parks:

- Fairmont Park/Historic Memorial Site
- Baisch Park
- Uren Park
- Mario Park
- Water Division Playground
- Oppenheim Park (Niagara County-owned)
- Cherry Hill Preserve (Semi-abandoned. Currently being restored for fuller public access)

Proposed Future Parks and Play Areas include:

- **Niagara Riverside Park** (This is adjacent to River Road. It is presently undeveloped, but promises to be a mixed-use park and preserve.)
- **Canalside Viewing Area** (Presently undeveloped. Possibilities include using this as a boat watching/resting/viewing platform.)
- **Cherry Hill Nature Preserve** (May serve as a location for environmental education seminars, hiking tours, and classes, etc.)
- **Shawnee Wilderness Preserve** (aka “Shawnee Nature Preserve”). This is the largest portion of woodlands in town. It is proposed to preserve the region “as a wildlife refuge, a specialized and natural domain”.

PART III - ANALYSIS

Areas that support the greatest assortment of natural resources have the most potential for succeeding as Greenspace. Greenspace areas having the potential to concurrently support non-Greenspace uses suggest even greater likelihood for success. Locating multiple resource areas with the potential for multiple Greenspace use is the objective of the Master Plan analysis.

Areas supporting a variety of resources are represented on three maps titled: Priority I, II and III Planning Maps. These maps attempt to rank or prioritize up to three resources found within a single area. The more resources found within a given area, the greater its priority. For example, in Wheatfield, it is quite possible for a wetland to include woods, a stream and a floodplain all at the same time.

A. Priority I represents key major landmasses to be preserved.

- Areas of land as illustrated on the Priority One map
- Area to encompass the future Shawnee Nature Preserve (**SNP**) and streams running North from **SNP** towards Mapleton Road
- Proposed Niagara River Greenway Trail parallel to River Road
- Wheatfield Lakes area
- Forest* (definition on next page)/Wetlands West of **SNP**, within Niagara Falls Blvd., Errick, Stieg and Nash Roads
- Forest*/Wetlands East and West of Ward Road, in the area between Lemke Drive and Pearce Roads.
- Cherry Hill Nature Preserve (to be restored in line with its association with the proposed Shawnee Nature Preserve or as a stand alone preserve)
- Don Jaenenke Nature Preserve (this area is frequented by ATV drivers and is land-locked by subsequent development at the present time. Its use as a full public park is doubtful at this time, although its use as a neighborhood fishing park/docks is encouraged).
- Bergholtz Creek (possible trail access area to historic Bergholz)
- Area South of Slusaric Road
- Area between Mapleton and Lockport Roads (East of Shawnee Road/Shawnee Preserve)
- Waterfront South of River Road near Williams Road (Riverside Park property)
- Forest*/Wetlands North of Liberty Drive
- Forest*/Wetlands between Homeyer and Stenzel Roads

Items to be considered at each site:

- woods, wetlands, creeks
- woods, creeks, rural land use
- creeks, wetlands and 100 year floodplains

B. Priority II represents everything included in Priority I, plus areas associated with the segments that may be used as streams and waterways, hedgerows, trails and paths, potential parks and passive recreation areas.

Items to be considered at each site:

- creeks and woods
- creeks and wetlands
- wood and rural land use
- woods and wetlands
- wetlands and residential zoning
- hedgerows connecting two or more items listed above

C. Priority III represents individual resources that are important to the formation of a whole Greenspace Master Plan.

Collectively, these maps suggest where the most desirable Greenspace may be found. Patterns and potential linkages become evident. Proximity to neighborhoods, visibility from the road, drainage and flood control potentials are issues that need to be reviewed.

The overall goal for **Forest***, field and wetland preservation is to identify each of those features by dimension and singular importance. It is also important to determine how each relates to each other in a given area.

*For the purposes of this plan, the definition of a **Forest** is an area with trees that is large enough to support a self-sustaining ecosystem and is able to preserve sizable amounts of topsoil. Per acre, it provides significant drainage for lands around it. It should be noted that the more trees on the land, the better it is for soil stability. It also adds monetary value to the property. It is best that trees be kept as a group, with undergrowth retained.

PART IV - POTENTIALS AND LIMITATIONS

Greenspace has the potential for providing quality of life enhancements for Town residents through

- recreation
- transportation
- image, and
- environmental enhancements

Many Greenspace areas have the potential for supporting two or more uses. For example, a utility corridor through non-farmed areas could support a nature trail bikeway, thus providing recreation and transportation enhancements to the Town. A wooded creek and/or hedgerows provide an edge, along which a scenic trail may be located. At the same time, the creek provides wildlife habitat, storm water collection and environmental enhancement.

The suitability of a particular Greenspace area to support a particular use can best be determined comparatively. In other words: to what other uses could this land be put? Will its reservation as Green Space contribute to the success of adjacent concurrent land uses or will it interfere with it, to the detriment of adjacent land uses? It becomes necessary to study the limits and potentials of various sorts of green space.

The definition of what constitutes Greenspace and Open Space should not be the responsibility of a visiting developer, but will be the responsibility of this Group and its associated patrons. Through the Planning Board and its associates, the success of this Greenspace Plan is focused.

Which areas are best suited for these uses is determined by examining the three priority maps and the underlying natural features represented. Consideration is given to the "big picture" with respect to the following questions:

- What shape does this Plan need to take to include the entire Town?
- What Greenspace use is best suited for a particular priority area?
- What non- Greenspace use may also be best suited for a priority area?
- Are multiple Greenspace uses possible in a single area?
- Might Greenspace uses be more desirable (successful) than non- Greenspace uses for achieving quality of life improvements in the Town?
- Can a collection of individual priority areas contribute to the broader Town-wide construction of Greenspace through linkages?
- Can the designation of a priority area for Greenspace improve the potential for the success of adjacent or included non- Greenspace uses?
- Do the benefits of a particular Greenspace outweigh the cost to reserve, purchase develop and manage it over time? Is it do-able, politically, socially and/or economically?

Through these questions, the potentials and limitations of priority areas can be determined.

A. RECREATION

Parks and trails can accommodate many outdoor activities enjoyed by Town residents. Trails have the potential for linking people with parks, schools, malls, churches, and other neighborhoods. Trails can give residents a safe place to walk, jog, and bike or just enjoy the outdoors without mixing in traffic along the shoulder of a road.

The requirements of a trail will include room for the trail itself and buffer for the maintenance of any parallel waterway or vegetation, especially through wetland or wooded areas. Trails will be most enjoyed if they offer the user pleasant surroundings, offering visual interest and comfort.

The width of the trail surface can vary from a minimum of 6' to as much as 14' in heavily used areas and with a buffer from 12'-30'. Because of their linear nature, trails locate best at edges parallel with property lines, hedgerows, wooded areas, or creeks. Trails also work well within non-farmed utility corridors. At edges, trails have the most potential for collecting users from broader adjacent areas without interrupting other land uses.

The **Priority I Map** shows two strong opportunities for the development of trails. One route extends north from Schultz Road to the intersection of Shawnee and Lockport Road; this passes almost exclusively through prime Priority I Greenspace area.

The other is an east-west route beginning at or near St. Marks Cemetery on Niagara Falls Boulevard in the southwest portion of the Town, through a series of utility corridors, drainage ways and a string of Priority I areas into the "Wheatfield Lakes" development area and onward to the former Summit Park Mall region.

The **Priority II Map** reinforces these possibilities and suggests lateral connections from adjacent areas to the Priority I trail routes. An example includes linking Fairmont Park, Oppenheim Park and Bergholz together. Connecting Fairmont Park to the Schultz/Lockport Road trail is another. Creative use of the underlying hedgerows, waterways and woodlots identified in Priority II allows routing trails along the edges and away from residences and around farm fields.

These trails, with their lateral connections, have the potential to service most of the Town's residents, providing extensive recreation opportunities where none before existed.

Wood groves suggested for preservation, are highlighted in green.

The **Priority III Map** highlights town-owned properties along with the FEMA 100-year floodplain layout.

Limitations to creating trails:

A limitation to any of these routes, especially those derived from the Priority II map is the need to make connections through lands actively used for non-Greenspace uses.

A limitation to any trail route requires the cooperation of multiple landowners. Multiple parcels to buy, lease, or gain easement will be necessary to create a Town-wide system.

Maintenance, management and development requirements are financial limitations to extensive trail development. Wetland areas will require special consideration to reduce development impact. Woodland trails may require periodic control of vegetation. Some of the longer trails may be relatively expensive to access and develop in their entirety.

B. TRANSPORTATION

Greenspace has the potential to provide non-motorized forms of transportation. Walking, bicycling and inline skating are modes of transportation that appeal to a wide range of users. Taking cyclists, joggers, pleasure walkers and children off the road by increasing opportunities for safe transportation can serve to enhance the quality of life for all residents throughout the Town. Creating linkages between people, parks, schools neighborhoods and shopping areas through Greenspace are much the same as those for locating recreation trails. The utilitarian aspect of transportation routes suggests the additional use of local road right of ways for roadside walkways. These would have the potential for servicing even larger numbers of people.

Limitations to creating alternate transportation routes:

The limitations for creating transportation routes are the same as those for recreation trails – gaining the cooperation of multiple landowners, providing the maintenance, management and financing the development requirements of a Town-wide system.

C. IMAGE

Woods, creeks, wetlands and farmlands are resources vital to the positive perception of Wheatfield that is held by Town residents. Developers and those with a commercial interest in the land prize these resources for the construction of stores and new homes. These resources are also attractive to those outside the Town. Trees, creeks and open space attract buyers. These resources are thus highly marketable.

Wheatfield however, does not have an inexhaustible supply of resources. The natural resources, which attracted everyone to Wheatfield, in the first place may eventually be consumed by each succeeding development. The end picture may be an urban environment much like the one left behind in the first place.

Greenspace opportunities having the most potential for contributing to the positive image of the Town are those that can be most easily seen by the most people. Views from roads and views to the perimeter of residential developments fit this description.

Priority II and III maps show most of the viewable resources in the Town. Hedgerows, creeks, woodlots and wetlands form the edges of most of Wheatfield's newer land developments to divide and separate various farmlands. Often, they provide the only relief from the newness of current developments and remain as reminders of Wheatfield's rural heritage. They contribute a significant amount of flavor to the Wheatfield landscape and positively to its image.

Niagara Falls Boulevard (Rt. 62)

The major opportunity for enhancing the image of the Town occurs along Niagara Falls Boulevard. Niagara Falls Boulevard is the primary travel route through the Town. Business, domestic, tourist and commuter traffic are heavily dependent upon the Boulevard. Any improvement that would enhance the image of the Boulevard would benefit its commercial activity as well as reflect positively upon the whole town - as a place to live, work, play and conduct business. It could serve to enhance the quality of Town life.

It is important that planning along the Boulevard be consistent with the image of the Town of Wheatfield. Such an image includes adequate space and an orderly presentation. For example, appropriate, beautiful signage with plantings of trees and/or flowers near the road can elevate the appearance of the businesses present.

Sawyer Creek

Sawyer Creek parallels the Boulevard throughout most of the Town. With its occasionally wooded banks and adjacent farm fields, it represents an excellent opportunity for enhancing the Town's image. Provisions in future land development schemes along the Boulevard should support initiatives that enhance the Creek as a marketable image resource. For example, the creek, trees and some grassed area could occupy a typical setback with parking lots and buildings in the background.

Limitations to enhancing the Town's image:

Limitations to realizing this opportunity are largely economic. Dedicating land to this seemingly passive use is contrary to the customary development practices on the Boulevard of maximizing accessibility to the road visually and physically with pavement, signage and building construction.

Secondary Opportunities

Secondary but no less major opportunities occur within view of Ward, Nash, Shawnee and Town Line Roads. The expansiveness of agricultural activity along Lockport Road places most of the opportunity for image development quite distant from view and represents minor opportunities for more enhancements. The creek system represents an excellent opportunity for image enhancement.

Views from Ward, Nash, Shawnee and Town Line Roads all present major opportunities for enhancing the image of the Town. Woodlots, hedgerows, creeks and wetlands, which intersect with these roads can contribute to the long-term growth and marketability of the Town.

Creeks similar in design and purpose in the Town have the same benefits as Sawyer Creek does. All creeks are critical for field and property drainage, thus serving drainage needs as well as an aesthetic needs. Creek depths shall be maintained carefully according to the needs of associated wetlands preservation i.e. the Shawnee Nature Preserve area and elsewhere.

D. ENVIRONMENT

As a living collection of water, vegetation and open spaces, Greenspace has the potential to modify the hard-edged effects of urbanization. In an increasingly urbanized area, the effects of any natural environment remaining become especially desirable. The importance of each resource is relative to the Greenspace or non- Greenspace use it may successfully support.

Among its many environmental benefits, Greenspace,

- Provides habitat for various forms of fish and wildlife
- Reduces erosion from wind and rain
- Slows flooding and absorbs runoff
- Recharges the water table and collects sediments
- Filters dust and pollutants from the air
- Protects car drivers' eyes from the glare of a setting and rising sun
- Buffers land uses, creates privacy and muffles sound
- Adds interest and value to the landscape

(Below) Virtually all of the dark green regions below represent critical elements of our Greenspace Plan. The hedgerows, thickets, and forests root our land's foundations.

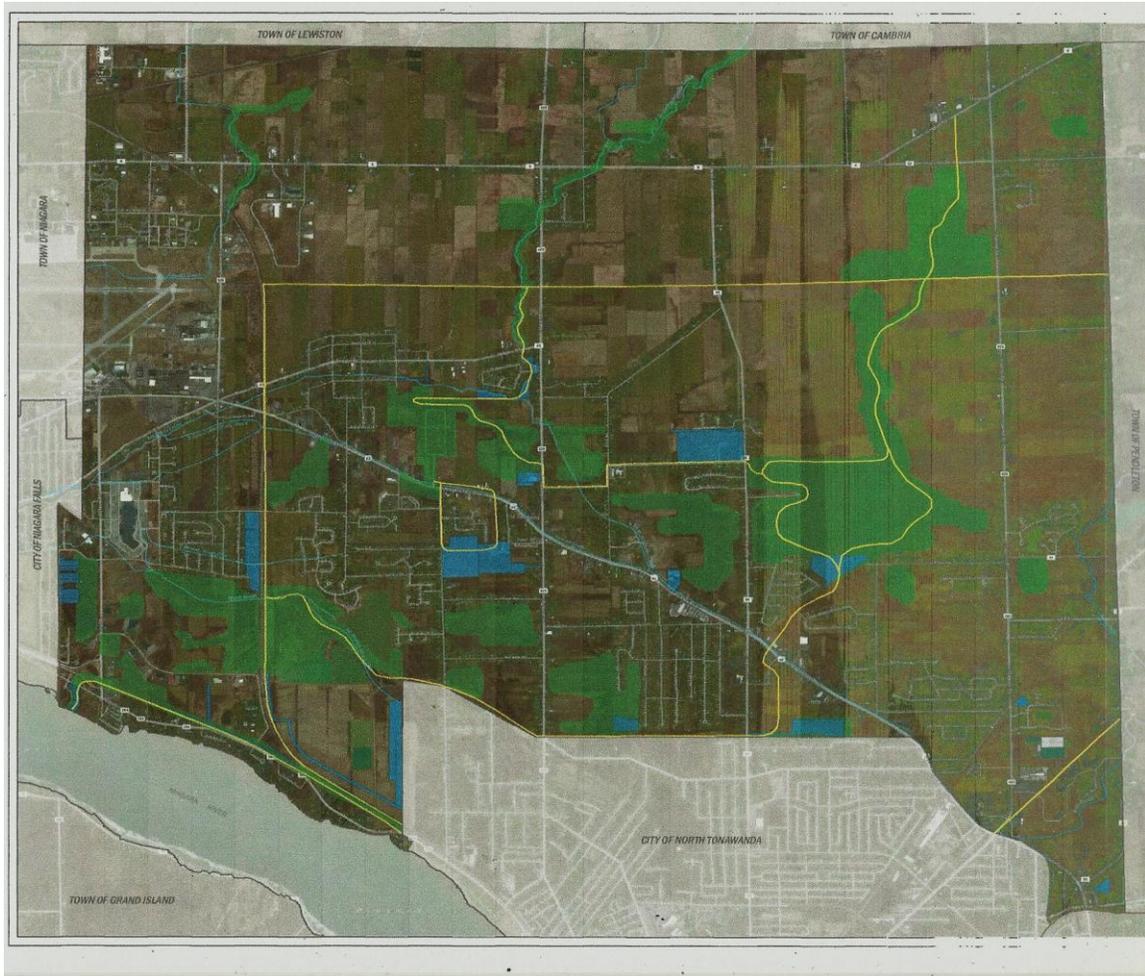


Priority I/II Planning Maps indicate the nature preserves in need of highlighting and protection.

Green areas/lines represent the most valuable forest lands. Most of these are privately owned.

Yellow lines represent the proposed trail network used by residents, starting with the former rail beds along River Road, connecting to the rest of Greenway Trail per the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP).

Blue areas indicate town-owned properties, some of which contain preserves of their own (Cherry Hill, etc.).





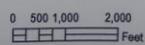
Greenspace Priority Level I & II



LEGEND

-  Railroads
-  Streams
-  Water Body
-  Town of Wheatfield Property
-  Niagara County Property
-  State Owned Property
-  Powerline/Pipeline ROW
-  Preserved Greenspace, Trees, Wetlands (Priority Level I)
-  Trails (Priority Level II)

1" = 1,500'



Priority III Planning Map identifies all natural resources individually. Each has a role in defining the quality of Town life. All Priority III areas have some potential for enhancing the quality of life in Wheatfield. Areas that have the potential to support additional Greenspace uses are highlighted in the Master Plan. Recreation and transportation experience benefits from the presence of trees and clear streams. Healthy mature trees, uncluttered grassy areas and clear streams benefit the image of the Town.



This map represents flood plains and streams.



PART V - MASTER PLAN

The purpose of the Greenspace Master Plan is to present the best opportunities for Greenspace preservation and development, utilizing a number of principles and ideas from historic precedent developments, such as Frederick Law Olmstead's vision of 'environmental civility' in these conservation efforts. These have been identified as areas that reflect a collection of resources in a location that will contribute to a Town-wide system of Greenspace. These green spaces will be used for recreational, transportation, environmental and image enhancements.

Areas suggested for Image and Environmental enhancements predominate. The Greenspace Master Plan highlights several areas pivotal in providing a sense of environmental quality and positive image to the Town.

- Sawyer Creek and Niagara Falls Boulevard
- Cayuga Creek
- Black Creek
- Hedgerows longer than 3000 feet
- Woods/Forests/Thickets
- Federal and State wetlands
- The Niagara River
- Trails
- Shawnee Wilderness Preserve aka Shawnee Nature Preserve
- Parks
- Wild fields/fallow fields
- Wildlife corridors
- Jaenenke Wildlife Refuge

Enhancing the image of the Town through Greenspace development along Niagara Falls Boulevard is a major component for the Greenspace Master Plan. Niagara Falls Boulevard/Sawyer Creek is a defining feature in the profile of the Town and has the greatest capacity for enhancing the image of the Town.

Initiatives for enhancement might include:

- Setbacks for parking and building with provisions for Greenspace additions of trees, lawn and groundcover
- Filling and excavation guidelines for the banks of Sawyer Creek
- Culvert and sidewalk design for Sawyer Creek pedestrian crossings
- Community tree planting program along both sides of Niagara Falls Boulevard
- Pedestrian overpasses over the Boulevard (example: at the Walmore Six-Corners--in line with existing railroad bridge and/or at Nash Road--tying in with walk-able Wheatfield/North Tonawanda residential areas). (This may not be realistic at the present time but is included as something to which to aspire, should future circumstances allow it).
- An overpass at the Riverside Park region near Williams Road.

The streams, creeks and their bank areas may be developed and managed to enhance their ability to add to the environmental quality of the Town. Initiatives may include:

- A comprehensive stream survey.
- Support of edge, bank and some upland vegetation.
- Removal of man-made debris and obstacles to channel flow.
- Prohibit non-Greenspace uses from encroaching on the creek, its banks and buffer area. Possible examples include excessive concrete; scraps such as plastics, paint products, ashes from fire pits, fertilizer, construction site materials; dead animals.

Hedgerows and wooded areas which will provide a maximum amount of environmental benefit and which complement adjacent non Green Space uses should be considered for preservation. These can also lend themselves to other Green Space uses as routes for trails. The plan selects the relatively longer and more continuous hedgerows and wooded areas for their ability to sustain environmental and image enhancement initiatives.

Smaller areas are necessary for preservation because of their collective purpose of soil erosion mediation and fair drainage needs. It is hoped that these smaller tracts of woodlands, handled on a case-by-case basis will be preserved via tax incentives or other benefits for preserving their Green Spaces in an ‘as-is state’. Considering the fact that most of the larger Green Spaces of sizable value are also wetlands, the ‘as-is’ state would be easier to maintain per site concerned.

Larger areas currently represent a greater mix of vegetation, animal life, and other resources and are therefore more valuable to our goals.

The overall goal for forest, field and wetland preservation is to identify each of those features by dimension and singular importance. Also, it is important to determine how each relates to each other in a given area.

It is expected that the wishes of the property owners be considered in the aforementioned case-by case scenarios. The property owners represent critical on-the-ground importance because of their knowledge of the areas concerned.

Farming and community action interests are also of critical importance.

Initiatives for hedgerows and wooded area enhancement may include:

- Protection from clearing or thinning
- Protection from shifting drainage patterns resulting from adjacent land development
- Focusing on their use as a complementary feature to land development

The Green Space Master Plan underscores the environmental and image importance of wetlands in Wheatfield by their inclusion in the Master Plan. Already protected by State and Federal law, the use of these areas for all Green Space uses are encouraged. Wetland utilization for Green Space use might include:

- Education through interpretive trails, markers and nature centers
- Focal element or backdrop for adjacent land development
- Passive environmental benefits such as water purification, groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat, climate modification and improved air quality

Trailways Proposals:

The development of a comprehensive trail plan linking people to parks, schools, neighborhoods and even shopping areas is a major component of the recreation and transportation component of the Green Space Master Plan. This Plan identifies many of the most essential routes. Primary among these are routes between:

- The Town Center/Shawnee Trail
- Town Center/Sanborn Trail
- Niagara River Greenway Trail
- Schultz and Lockport Road
- Niagara Falls Boulevard at Schultz Road and the Summit Park Mall Area
- Fairmont Park to Bergholz
- East and west ends of River Road
- Additional trails per the Vision Map

Primary connections linking the Town-wide system to points out-of-town are between the County Canal Park and Schultz Road, and the Niagara River Greenway Trail.

An existing intrastate bike route (#5), marked by the State D.O.T. along Niagara Falls Boulevard, Ward Road and Lockport Road will serve to improve the use and accessibility of the Greenspace system to local as well as passing users.

Locations for trails and environmental and image enhancements are often the same. Trails can easily be located along the edges between developed and the non-developed land of wetlands, hedgerows or creek banks. These are Green Space uses, which are mutually compatible. They can enhance use and ultimately increase value to the Town as an improvement to the quality of life.

The preservation of the Town would be improved with the establishment of a conservation subdivision design ordinance.

Phase I of the Green Space Master Plan shows the most desirable areas for Green Space. These areas are derived largely from the Priority I and Priority II maps, represent the richest assortment of natural resources and have the ability to support multiple Greenspace uses.

Stretching corner to corner throughout the Town, Phase I provides the initial framework from which the balance of the plan may grow. Lateral connections to this framework are recommended to be made part of the planning and design of adjacent or nearby land developments. With each succeeding development, the full breadth and extent of the Master Plan may be realized.

Phase I represents those areas considered essential to the success of a Town-wide Green Space Plan. Without them creating a Town-wide plan would be difficult to achieve. As residential and commercial and industrial land uses expand in the Town, additions and deletions to the Green Space Plan, and especially Phase I, may be made with respect for achieving the objectives and goal of the Plan. The resulting green space should result in a rich interconnected network of easily accessible, viewable and environmentally useful resources to be enjoyed by the entire Wheatfield community.

Initiatives for the Niagara River include but are not limited to:

- Niagara River Greenway Trail
- Waterfront Park (The Town of Wheatfield Riverside Park: a comprehensive park and nature preserve along the Niagara River, with the possibility of a local events center to be built along the Niagara River, with the possibility of a local events center to be built).
- Development of LWRP (Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan)
- Boat Launches

Initiatives for the Shawnee Wilderness Preserve include but are not limited to:

- Public access while respecting private ownership rights.

Initiative for the Cherry Hill Nature Preserve:

- Boardwalk System
- Nature education facility
- Reserved and preserved means of access
- Parking
- Appropriate lighting

Initiatives for the various parks include but are not limited to:

- Completion of Town Parks plan

PART VI – APPENDIX

A. FUNDING SOURCES

There are a number of funding sources available to the Town of Wheatfield. As referred to earlier, the State of New York and the Federal Government have several grant programs which they administer through various agencies such as the Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Department of State, NYS Department of Transportation, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the US Environmental Protection Agency, NYS Power Authority (via Niagara River Greenway Commission), among other areas. The Town Grant Writer, under the supervision of the Town Supervisor, shall take the efforts necessary to seek and contact these and other groups when appropriate, providing that the grant writer has involvement from the Comprehensive Master Plan/Green Space Plan boards, data providers, and assistance and permission from the Town Board. Soliciting private investment in the implementation process for facilities, utilities, and program needs per park and preserve are recommended.

B. EDUCATION

The key element necessary to the success of the Greenspace Plan is community education and public input. A well-informed public is better able to support and encourage the continued development of this plan. The reactivation of the Greenspace Advisory Committee, now known as the Greenspace Focus Group, was the first step toward public education of this project. The group members were encouraged to share their ideas and concepts with others in the community and bring their input to subsequent meetings. The exchange of information outside of the group was an educational process. The group meetings were open to the public and residents were encouraged to attend. As the group was learning, so were others in attendance. The students of SUNY @ Buffalo via their document entitled “Preserving and Enhancing Wheatfield’s Landscape” provided further valuable information.

Another area of education concern pertains to various State and Federal agencies. For this purpose, copies of the adopted Greenspace Plan will be submitted to the Office of New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Western New York Land Conservancy, the New York State Department of State, New York State Department of Transportation, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

The plan submittal to these agencies is three-fold:

- Their review and comment is valuable and helpful
- These agencies have historically provided funding for the implementation of the various components of the Greenspace Plan and their support for Wheatfield's plan would be extremely helpful
- Coordination with these agencies and their proposed projects and master plans, is beneficial to all parties and ultimately to the residents of Wheatfield and to the people of New York State.

Open, public communication between all parties concerned: landowners, renters, elected officials, future developers, neighboring municipalities, State and Federal Agencies, and the media will be important to the success of the plan and its relevance to the future of Wheatfield. Potential vehicles for communication are: public meetings; an active volunteer Greenspace committee comprised of representatives from various interests within the Town; the Town Planning Board meetings and minutes; the local media (newsprint, radio); the Town's newsletter, the use of the Town Hall's community bulletin board and the Town's website.

Through the coordination process, the Town sets an example to developers and private property owners that the abundance of Greenspace and open space options constitutes a perpetual benefit towards their lifestyle and business needs. The process leaves the communities and their residents in better circumstances, with the quality of life enhanced according to the desires of the residents and the benefits of the environments around them.

The Greenspace Plan is intended to serve as a survival guide for the future development of the community and its deserving residents, who all have rights to this better future. The Greenspace Plan is a living public document. It is meant for it to be reviewed periodically and updated on a regular basis. Each time reviews are conducted, the plan should benefit from further refinement and increased knowledge of the Town. As the needs and requirements of the Town change, accommodations can be incorporated into the Plan.

C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The development of Greenspace Plan outlines the Town's plan for development and may be realized through three basic approaches:

- As part of the Town's planning requirements for land development including but not limited to the Conservation Subdivision design Ordinance.
- Through Town-led development initiatives
- Through land owner or community interest

These approaches may overlap and may require the combined support of the others. These are active approaches and will require commitments of funds, lands, legal and grassroots support. With continuing education, they should become part of the practice and custom of land development.

1. Town Requirements for Development Initiative

Town requirements for including Greenspace in land development plans should become part of the site plan review process. Provisions should also include:

- Incorporating potential Greenspace identified by the Greenspace Master Plan into land development proposals.
- Creating new Greenspace to replace Greenspace lost within the development area.
- Purchasing or contracting for potential Greenspace outside of a project area identified in the Green Space Master Plan to replace Greenspace lost through development.
- Requiring a minimum amount of Greenspace area into any new land development proposals.
- Setting a signage standard for along Niagara Falls Boulevard and other roads as well
- enhancement along the Boulevard with esthetically pleasing economic development.

2. Town Initiatives

- Greenspace development may be accomplished through:
- Purchase of identified Greenspace area
- Acquisition of passive easements for environmental or image enhancement Greenspace uses (conservation or scenic easement). This may require the writing of a Town Easement Ordinance.
- Formulating tax breaks for private landowner development of Greenspace uses
- Funding, promoting and organizing tree plantings on roadways, such as along Niagara Falls Boulevard.
- Writing land development guidelines for new land and management and zoning guidelines for land that is already developed.

- Working closely with area established societies, such as the Historical Society of North German Settlements, the Wheatfield Garden Club and others, in enhancing the Town's historic sites and districts.

3. Private Landowner Initiative

Private landowners form a distinct part of the foundation of this Plan's success and have several opportunities for participating in the implementation of the plan through:

- Dedicating conservation or scenic easements, to be used for Greenspace uses
- Fee Simple bargain sale to the Town or a conservation group that would then develop the land for Greenspace uses
- Land donation for Greenspace uses
- Retaining a life estate in the land, to be inherited by the Town or a conservation group for Greenspace uses
- Support for Greenspace community projects to help manage and develop Greenspace uses and educate the public on the benefits and merits of Greenspace uses

Donating land, creating easements or selling at reasonable prices for conservation and community uses are generally regarded as donations that may be eligible for federal tax deductions and federal tax savings. Creating easements, which may reduce the market value of land, may also result in property tax savings. These are tax savings that can be passed on from owner to owner and into the future.

D. STEWARDSHIP

The ultimate seat of authority for sustaining the life of the Green Space Master Plan will rest with elected Town officials, namely the Town Board. The Town Board, through the Planning Board and with the cooperation of the Greenspace Focus group will assume responsibility for maintaining the structure of the Plan, for revising its content and for ensuring that the objectives and goals to which the Plan is represented, is adhered.

Regardless of the political party in office, this Plan is politically indiscriminate. The purpose and ideals espoused here are rational and methodical in scope.

Responsibility would include:

- Advocacy of implementation strategies
- Promotion of public education on the use and value of Greenspace
- Lobbying for funding sources and procurement strategies
- Developing procurement strategies
- Adjusting of planning and zoning guidelines that make Greenspace development part of every land development proposal
- Passing funding resolutions for Greenspace purchase and development
- Supporting the local agency or organization charged with attending to the advocacy, promotion lobbying and maintenance of the Plan

Ownership of Open Space Land

Open space land shall under all circumstances, be protected by a perpetual conservation easement, but may be owned in common by a homeowners' association (HOA), offered for dedication to Town, City, County or State governments, transferred to a non-profit organization or held in such other form of ownership as the Planning Board finds appropriate to properly manage the open space land and to protect its conservation value.

E. ACQUISITION STRATEGIES for GREENSPACE

The means of acquisition of green space for perpetuity on behalf of the residents of the Town of Wheatfield includes but is not limited to:

- Management Agreements
- Land Leases
- Permits and Licenses
- Right-of-Public Access Easements
- Conservation Easements (as per our Conservation Subdivision Design Ordinance.)
- Preservation Easements
- Historic Preservation Easements
- Agriculture Right-of-Ways
- Joint Use Easements
- Free Simple Purchase
- Donations and Gifts
- Purchase and Lease Agreements
- Private/Public Partnerships
- Condemnation/Eminent Domain
- Historic/Cultural Designations
- Ecological Necessity Easements

- Drainage Easements/Drainage Maintenance Right-of-Ways
- Abandoned Property Agreements with Niagara County/NYS State Dept. Foreclosure Offices
- Swapping of developable lot/s for properties with high conservation value.
- Creation of zones within future developments for uses as communal Greenspace.

Acquisition of green space is based on two fundamental ideas:

- Temporary/semi-permanent stewardships of valuable Greenspace (mostly involving private lands—both lived-in and those lots that are otherwise abandoned.)
- Permanent stewardship/ownerships of Greenspace (mostly town-owned lots, conservation easements, donations and sales of lots to the town, and drainage/overall town infrastructure maintenance right-of-ways.)

Negotiating for parcels and lots to be preserved will depend on the each area's value according to the Town and to the private property owner.

When dealing with private property, it is essential that a cooperative environment is created between Town officials/associated committees tasked with preserving valuable Greenspace and the residents/entities who own the sought parcels. The residents who live on these lots must continue to have a reasonable amount of ownership in the process.

In such cases where the condemnation or outright-purchase method is warranted, the private property owner/s will be given just compensation for the lot/s in question.

The Property Tax incentives, agreed upon though New York State, can help in this area as well.

Abandoned Lots

Town-wide abandoned properties that have no discernible owners and have fallen into a state of decay and/or regret could be condemned and used for Greenspace.

F. DESIGN and CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

The design for each preserve will depend on each area's stated purpose. The Cherry Hill Nature Preserve and Riverside Park/Preserve are expected to accommodate residents and visitors more often than the Jaenenke Nature Preserve or the Shawnee Nature Preserve. The latter two are proposed to remain wildlife habitats rather than be extensively developed.

Other green spaces, such as easements, right-of-ways, and smaller lots will be designed to accommodate the needs of the residents who may still own private parcels under the supervision of the Greenspace Plan.

SECURITY: In order for public areas such as the Cherry Hill Nature Preserve to function as a true renewed habitat for life and a viable area for residential use, measures will need to be taken to help ensure that it is not invaded by abusive individuals. As has been stated by the state DEC, only natural elements found at the site can be used to highlight pathways and/or secure the immediate perimeter near the entrances to the preserves (crisscrossing fallen logs) and otherwise block the entrances from vehicular traffic by the use of crude concrete blocks lifted into position (as has been done periodically at the Bond Lakes Park.)

G. MAINTENANCE and MANAGEMENT

Various Town and regional departments will be responsible for the maintenance of public utilities at and near these preserves, as per their regular duties.

For public lands that are nature preserves, private property owners living at or near the Town-owned proposed preserves (Cherry Hill, etc;) could be given opportunities to help manage and steward each of these locations through the Town offices of Parks and Recreation. Those residents often know their local neighborhoods and may help ensure each of the preserve's basic security, supervision, and cleanliness.

Frequency of Maintenance

Each of the preserves should be inspected:

- Once at the beginning of the season
- Once during the season
- Once at the close of the season
- Once during the winter season (when the preserves have limited hours or are otherwise closed.)
- As needed or as requested by the preserve staff or associated neighbors based on certain concerns.

Should something be discovered during an inspection that cannot be remedied by the supervising group/s involved in the preserve's maintenance, the appropriate authorities (NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, etc;) should be contacted to look into the matter/s.

1. Waterways Care *(For Niagara River, Erie Canal, and associated creeks.)*

- Routine coastal Inspection; this can be performed by volunteers via checklist.
- Monitor water as required. Testing may be provided by local health dept., quality water quality agency (DEC) or a college biology class.
- Routine debris and litter removal, minor erosion control, and re-vegetation. Cost depends on width of channel and amount of debris generated.
- Remedial measure to channel coastlines and buffers as required. Rock riprap, retaining walls and appropriate grading control silt removal.
- Coastal areas should be evaluated at beginning and end of maintenance each boating season.
- Coastal areas should be checked after storms and after other such eventualities.
- Fish habitat care. May include riverbank plantings.
- Insect control as required. Identify and treat potential breeding areas.

- **2. Trail Maintenance** (*For Town-wide network of trails, Greenway Trail, and the trails of the nature preserves.*)
- Walking Inspection. Volunteers with a checklist can do this.
- Sweeping. Applies to paved trails. Use a vacuum sweeper only.
- Repair, seal, replace, patch. Maintenance as need
- Asphalt trail maintenance, as required. Service depends on thickness and level of use.
- Mulch surface maintenance. The more use, the longer the life.
- Fill holes, remove weeds, repair, replace.
- Litter pickup. Volunteers and community service groups can supplement this.
- Erosion control, as required.
- Weed control. Remove invasive species from trail corridor as needed.
- Snow/ice removal as required (e.g. entrances).
- Silt removal, as required.
- Mowing the shoulders. Mow a 3'-5' wide shoulder on either side of trail. Local residents and volunteers/associated conservation corps can do this.
- Graffiti removal, as required.
- Toilet facilities, drinking fountains as required.
- Securing of trails from use by ATVs and four-wheelers where possible and the reinforcing of entrances to curb this threat (via concrete blocks and native logs). Closing off of alternative entrances made by the riders. (Trails could, however, be allowed to be used as snow mobile right-of-ways during the winter seasons, subject to approvals and time-tables for such use.)
- Repair/replace signage as needed (and in the order of importance i.e.; navigation/location signs vs. natural education signs, etc;).

ADVANTAGES:

- Property tax benefits/incentives can help convince property owners from selling outright to developers and other related interests.
- The private property owners will always reserve the right to negotiate or re-negotiate the terms of the agreements made between themselves and the Town government.
- New construction and developments normally pay for its impact on open and Greenspace and can often be partners in creating smart solutions for Greenspace in each development. This is a good method during high-growth periods.
- Allowing the Town government to direct density and development based on growth away from sensitive areas.
- Creation of Greenspace may reduce construction and infrastructure costs associated with the development.
- Contributes and complements future developments by maintaining the Town's overall rural settings and country environment.
- Contributes greatly to the prevention of critical topsoil loss from the damaging effects of erosion, and helps to reinforce drainage ways. Maintaining the structural integrity of the town via its soil levels is key. (The Town has seen an average of one to two feet of top soil loss over the last century. Maintenance of existing forests and thickets, where possible, will help reduce this loss in the future.)
- Complements and contributes to the idea that the development be as 'green' as it can be in order to lower other associated operating costs and help promote new and improved ecologically friendly technologies, such as solar power and the use of recycled building materials.
- Can restrict and help mitigate irresponsible elements of certain developments with regards to surrounding environmental and ecological needs.
- To mitigate the negative consequences of future development, also involving natural and wildlife habitat loss.
- Civilian Conservation Corps created by a state or federal agency may help maintain the larger preserves into the future.

DISADVANTAGES:

- A seller must be agreeable to the terms of lot sale, and a bargain price assured.
- Does not ensure that owner will use and/or maintain the lot's Greenspace value or ensure a reasonable price to the sale of a lot.
- Greenspace needs to be maintained from generation to generation. There are no guarantees that private lands containing valuable Greenspace will not be developed in the future.
- Can be costly to purchase development rights.
- Nearby residents must maintain their interest in maintain/supervising private and/or public preserves over time.
- New and changing demographics might challenge preservation efforts by virtue of ownership rights as understood in the future.
- Condemnation methods of acquisition can be abused, or perceived to be abused by the Town government, and must be a method of last resort.
- Trail System network must often be maintained with resident help. Can be facilitated instead by farmers from resurgent agricultural initiatives.
- Each Greenspace project can be time consuming and intricate, as each lot/ preserve has its own criteria for preservation and each property owner has his/her ideas and rules for how each preserve should be treated. It can be difficult to ascertain the values according to the wishes of residents and developers alike.
- Can be difficult to assign criteria for how much forest and Greenspace is appropriate for conservation status. (Two-to-Three Acre Rule of Thumb?) .
- Can be difficult to ascertain the exact ecological and environmental impact a portion of Greenspace has on an area without thorough research done by appropriate agencies.
- Efforts to preserve Greenspace could be seen as an invasion of property privacy by some owners.
- A constant assurance and proof is needed on behalf of the Town that owners are maintaining Greenspace outside of the need to maintain overall soil levels and the integral safety of the soils from undermining structures and other assets from the effects of erosion.

THE GREENSPACE MASTER PLAN

Introduction of Updated Greenspace Plan

- Presented and reviewed by Greenspace Focus Group with input.
- Presented and reviewed by Comprehensive Plan Task Force Board with input.
- Presented and reviewed by Wheatfield Town Board and town government department heads with input.
- Presented to the general public with public input.
- Public hearings on the Greenspace Master Plan
- Adopted by resolution of the Wheatfield Town Board

Prepare Implementation

- Drawings and Specifications
- Mitigation plans of ecological/historical/cultural features
- Cost Estimates
- Site Reviews
- Agency contacts
- OSHA Inspections
- Consultation Partners/ Regional Advisory Committees (Such as the Western New York Land Conservancy, etc;)

Agency and Community Review

- Per project with associated Comprehensive Plan for each major preserve. (Cherry Hill, Jaenenke, Baisch, Riverside, Shawnee, Dapple wood, etc;)
- Neighborhood Associations'/Residential Input
- Management Teams of Volunteers
- Other groups solicited and/or created to observe and inspect construction and monitor progress before, during, and after development and/or construction of each preserve (and associated pavilion facilities where needed.)

Execute Construction and Grounds Mitigation

- Contract and Prepare for Construction
- Development Schedule
- Accept Completed Design/Construction Proposal
- Contractual Obligations
- Accept Completed Construction and Development Work
- Post-construction Analysis
- Official Public Dedication of New Preserves (in turn).

PART VII- PHOTO APPENDIX

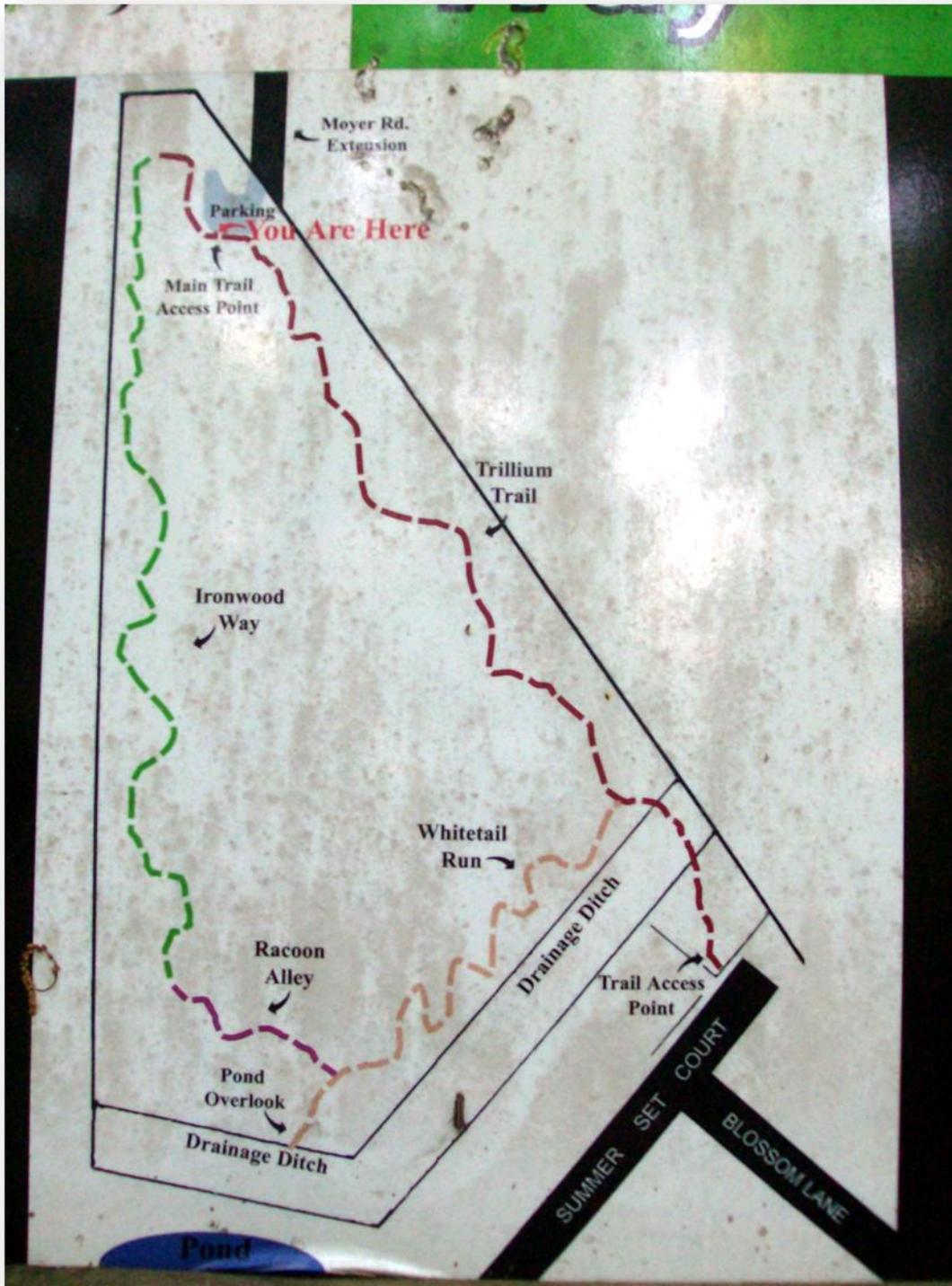
The following is a series of photos taken at each of the park areas observed though our recent walk-about meetings thus far and in the following order:

- **Cherry Hill Nature Preserve/ Shawnee Wilderness Preserve**
- **Don Jaenenke Nature Preserve**
- **River Road Niagara Riverside Park**

Cherry Hill Nature Preserve---7/2012

Below, the blue shaded area between Summerset Ct, Lakewood Dr., and Moyer Rd. is the Cherry Hill Preserve. The Forested region above is the privately owned proposed Shawnee Wilderness Preserve.





The Triangle-patterned trail system already in use at the time of the Cherry Hill Preserve's earlier operation. This is from a sign near the entrance.

River Road Park



Located off of River Road in the SW of town.



Sketched onto the picture is the town-owned portion of the Niagara Riverside area. A possible events center is superimposed near this preserved wilderness-oriented park.

5/21/2014: This concludes our Greenspace Plan thus far. Thank you for your attention.



Epilogue: *(Above) The largest dark green portion that is shaped horizontally and is located in the picture's north of center, lies between Ward, Lemke, Errick, and Pierce Roads.) This is the sizable five-acre forest that recently helped inspire some of this latest update to the Town's Greenspace Plan. A local Wheatfield resident has named it **Dapplewood Forest**. It is a smaller preservation project, based on the average acreage thought to sustain local Greenspace integrity. Ultimately, these smaller parcels are just as important as the more grand Shawnee Nature Preserve and represent the numerous development scenarios that need to be considered by the Town on a case-by-case basis.*