



# CLIFTON PARK TOWN CENTER PLAN

FINAL DRAFT - APRIL 2012

PREPARED BY



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Town of Clifton Park, NY  
*and the*  
Capital District Transportation  
Committee (CDTC)



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# The Town of Clifton Park & CDTC Clifton Park Town Center Plan

2012



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This report was prepared in cooperation with the Town of Clifton Park, the Capital District Transportation Committee, the Capital District Regional Planning Commission, the Capital District Transportation Authority, Saratoga County and the New York State Department of Transportation. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of these government agencies.

The recommendations presented in this report are intended to support the Town of Clifton Park's efforts to develop a consensus vision about the look, feel and function of a future town center in the town's existing Exit 9 commercial area. The recommendations are conceptual in nature and are presented to characterize the types of improvements that are desirable, and that may be implemented as part of future land use and transportation improvement projects. All transportation concepts will require further engineering evaluation and review.

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## Section I: Introduction

### Purpose

Through this plan, the Town of Clifton Park has developed a consensus vision about the look, feel and function of a future town center in the town's existing I-87 Exit 9 commercial area. The study brought together town officials, business owners, landowners and residents to explore land use and design alternatives that could transform this area into a more walkable, mixed-use (residential, commercial, and civic) center of activity for the Clifton Park community. It is intended that this Town Center Plan will guide future public policy, and public and private investments in the area for many years to come. It is understood that achieving the vision, as described herein, will be a gradual, evolutionary process that will require long-term commitment from the community.

### "Town Center" Defined

The term "Town Center", as used in this report, suggests a central place in the Town where people can live, work, shop, play, and participate in the social and civic life of the community. It is a focused area of the Town; not an individual building. This area consists of land under diverse ownership, buildings, streets, and public spaces all organized in a manner that facilitates casual interaction. Evolving from the Town's existing, primarily commercial retail district, the Town Center will bring people together for a wider variety of purposes. It will be an area that continues to accommodate the automobile; but it will be designed to make walking, bicycling, and public transportation viable, safe, and attractive alternatives to driving. Specific land use, design, and transportation characteristics of the Town Center will be further described later in this report.

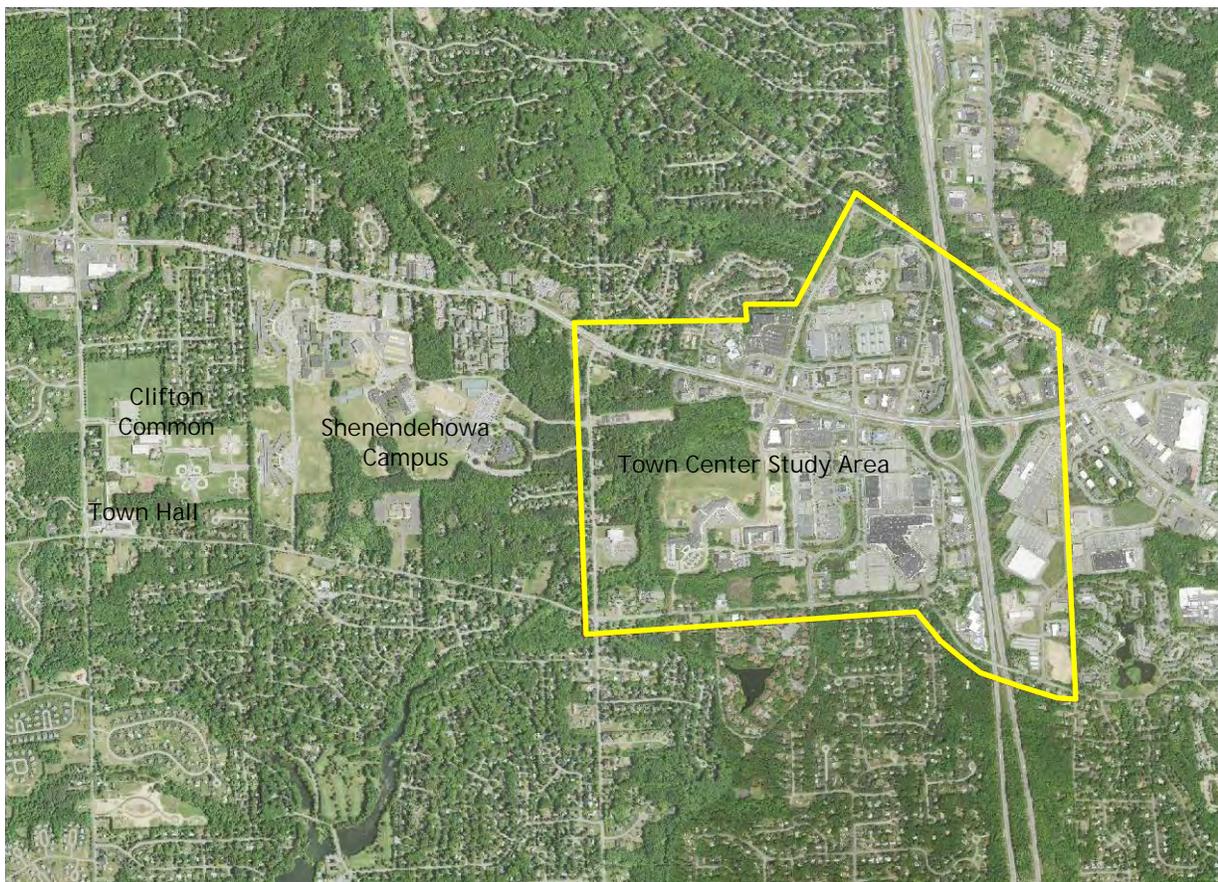
### The Study Area

As illustrated on the following page, the study area consists of a large area stretching from Moe Road on the west to the Town of Clifton Park's border with Halfmoon on the east; and from Plank Road on the north to Clifton Park Center Road/Sitterly Road on the south. The Northway (I-87) runs north-south through the study area and NYS Route 146 runs east-west through the study area. The intersection of NYS Route 146 and Clifton Country Road is at the center of the study area.

Most of the study area consists of commercial property and it includes several large retail shopping centers such as Clifton Park Center (formerly Clifton Country Mall), The Shops at Village Plaza, Shoppers World Plaza, and The Crossing. However, there are other types of uses throughout the area including many office buildings, two public schools (Shatekon Elementary School and Arongen Elementary School), the Southern Saratoga YMCA, the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library, a town park (Collins Memorial Park), a public safety building (State Police and Town Court



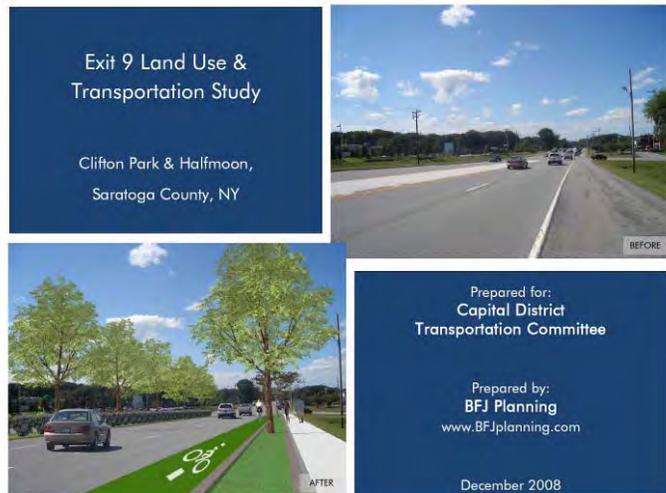
One of the unique features of the study area is its location in the Town and the region. The success of the existing commercial district owes much to its location and access to Exit 9 of the Northway (I-87) and Route 9. Proximity to Albany and surrounding communities to the south, as well as to the Luther Forest Technology Campus to the north will continue to be important to the future of this area. The study area also anchors the eastern end of a large swath of public, institutional, and commercial land at the center of Clifton Park. The Shenendehowa Central School District Campus, the Clifton Common park complex, and the Town Hall are all located immediately west of the Study Area. Residential neighborhoods surround this core of public, institutional, and commercial land; and a developing system of trails and sidewalks helps connect these neighborhoods to the various activities found in the core.



Recent Prior Planning Effort: The Clifton Park / Halfmoon Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Study

In 2008, the Town of Clifton Park and the Town of Halfmoon worked with the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) and a transportation consultant to develop a land use and transportation study for the area around Exit 9 of the Northway (I-87). This Town Center Plan is intended to build upon the recommendations of the 2008 study.

The study area for the Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Study encompassed a larger area than the Clifton Park Town Center. As the image below indicates, the Exit 9 Study covered similar portions of Clifton Park and also included the commercial area along Route 9 in the Town of Halfmoon.



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The full text of the Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Study can be found at CDTC's website (go to: <http://www.cdtcmpo.org/linkage/reports/cliftonpark.htm>)

The Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Study included:

An *Inventory of Existing Conditions*, such as -

- Land Use and Zoning
- Demographics
- Transportation

*General Concepts and Guiding Principles* for the future, such as -

- Connect Land Use and Transportation Decisions
- Sustainable Land Use Planning
  - Density (infill and redevelopment)
  - Mixed Income, Mixed Use, Diversity
  - Accessibility and Landscape
  - Pedestrian-friendly Design
  - Schools and Workplaces
- Complete Streets (CS)
- Rethinking Parking
- Enhanced Design Standards and Design Guidelines

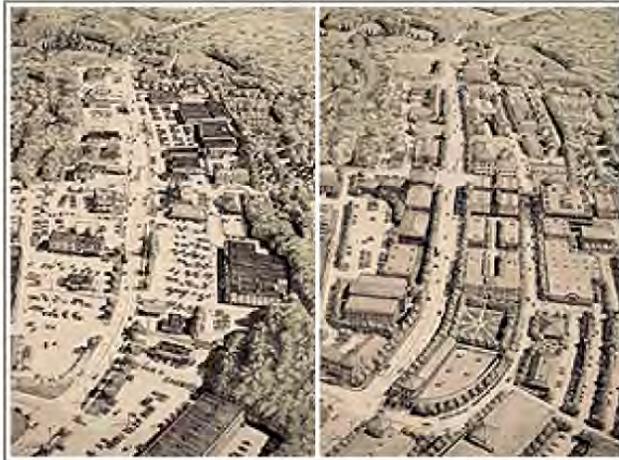
*Transportation Strategies*, such as -

- NYS Route 146 Traffic Management and Safety
  - Synchronize traffic lights on NYS Route 146
  - Create a raised and landscaped median on NYS Route 146
  - Change NYS Route 146 into a Complete Street
  - Introduce roundabouts to improve traffic flow on NYS Route 146
- Implement Traffic Flow and Safety Improvements on Sitterly Road
  - Turning Lanes
  - Shared Use Trail
  - Roundabouts
- Complement Local Road Network with new street connections
- Mitigate Barriers Created by I-87
  - Improve Existing at Grade Connections
  - Create new Pedestrian and Bicycle Overpass and/or Underpass
- Transit Improvements and Park and Ride Facilities
  - Route 9 CDTA Bus Route
  - Park and Ride Facilities
- Supplement the Existing Trail System with On-Street Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

*Land Use Strategies*, such as -

- Create Higher Densities and Greater Mix of Uses
  - Concentrate Development at Specific Nodes in the Study Area
  - Develop Design Standards and Guidelines for Concentrated Growth Nodes
- Minimize Impervious Surfaces
- Commercial Strip Redevelopment

### *Sprawl v Compact Development*



*“Concentrating development in designated areas results in increased population density, allowing for more efficient provision and use of infrastructure and services. The concentration of residential and commercial facilities gives a “town center feel” to the area and creates walkable neighborhoods.”*

*Above: Text and image from the 2008 Clifton Park / Halfmoon Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Study (page 70)*

This Town Center Plan utilizes the 2008 Clifton Park / Halfmoon Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Study as a starting point. Most of the background information about existing conditions in the Town Center study area is taken from the Exit 9 study. Some new or updated information is provided in Section II of this report. The transportation recommendations from the Exit 9 study are generally accepted as part of this study; however some additional transportation recommendations, or refinements of the 2008 strategies, are indicated in Section IV of this report.

It is, however, the Land Use Strategies from the Exit 9 study - specifically those that pertain to the Clifton Park Town Center area - that are the focus of this Town Center Plan. The Town Center Plan explores these ideas in greater detail. It takes these general land use ideas further by establishing a consensus vision for the Town Center and outlining approaches for achieving this vision over time in a manner that recognizes the unique opportunities that exist in Clifton Park. Section IV of this report elaborates on the plan concepts and recommendations. Section V of this report discusses next steps for implementing the vision.

## Section II: Background Information

Most of the background information about existing conditions in the Town Center study area is taken from the Exit 9 study. However, this section provides some new or updated information as appropriate.

### Historical Growth Patterns

It can sometimes be instructive to look back at historical growth patterns to understand and put into perspective the nature of change in an area. The Town of Clifton Park was for most of its history an agricultural community. The rural landscape was dotted with small settlements in the form of crossroads or canal-front hamlets such as Jonesville, Elnora, Rexford, Grooms Corners, Vischer Ferry, Forts Ferry, and Clifton Park Village.

As the series of aerial photos on the following page illustrate, construction of the Northway (I-87) had a dramatic impact on the development character of the Town. Beginning in the 1960's, once construction of the Northway was complete, the area around Exit 9 became a focal point for commercial development. In the approximately 50 years since, this part of Clifton Park has continued to grow and change. Today it is an important component of the local economy. It provides jobs, services, and tax dollars that help support the primarily residential, suburban community that now exists in Clifton Park.

There are several things about this very brief look at historical growth patterns that are instructive. One is the relationship between the transportation system (construction of the Northway) and development. The transportation-land use connection is very apparent; but it is more informative at a regional level. Another important lesson is the fact that so much change has occurred here in a relatively short period of time. In the same fashion, much can change here, for better or for worse, in the next 10, 20, or 50 years. What will the next generation of this commercial area be like? Answering that question is the purpose of this study. By defining what the community and the various stakeholders would like to see happen here, the Town can establish policies that encourage private investment and make strategic public investments that will guide this change toward the desired vision.

If you look closely, the private sector is already indicating a direction that change might go in the Town Center study area. The revitalization of the Clifton Park Center (former mall) in recent years has included turning portions of the old mall "inside out" - with storefronts facing out onto widened sidewalks. A new hotel and movie theater also expands the mix of uses at the Clifton Park Center and creates new attractive destinations. Elsewhere, offices have been located above stores in The Shops at Village Plaza, The Bentley now offers residential living (condominiums for purchase or rent) for older adults, and there are preliminary proposals to replace a set of older office buildings on Plank Road with mixed use (retail, office, residential)

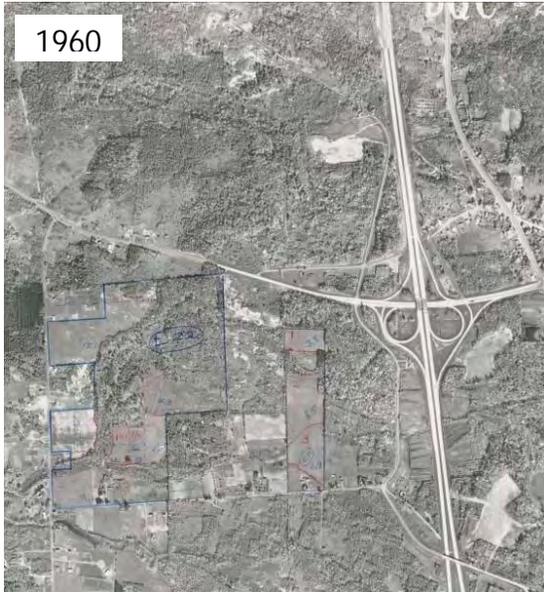


1948

**Historical Growth Patterns**

*Aerial photos from 1948, 1960, 1968, 1986, and 2008 - Prior to construction of the Northway (I-87) Clifton Park was a rural community. Beginning in the 1960's, once construction was complete, the area around Exit 9 started transforming. By the 1980's, the commercial district in Clifton Park was well established; and it has continued to develop and change through to the present.*

*Source of historic aerial photos: Skidmore College GIS Center for Interdisciplinary Research and the Saratoga County Soil and Water Conservation District*



1960



1968



1986



2008

buildings. Fortunately, these types of changes are generally consistent with the notion of a more walkable, mixed-use center of activity that the community envisions for the Town Center area. Through this study it has become clear that the owners and developers of most of the commercial property in the study area share with the community a very similar vision for the Town Center. Additionally, because the commercial district is economically successful the owners and developers of these properties have continued to invest in the area despite the overall slowdown in our national economy. The area's demographics remain highly attractive to retailers and real estate investors. Unlike many places, this private sector interest and ability to invest creates a real opportunity to shape gradual change in the Clifton Park Town Center in the coming years.



*Left: Outward facing retail at Clifton Park Center*

*Center: Offices above retail at The Shops at Village Plaza*

*Right: Residential living at The Bentley on Wall Street*

## Previous Studies

In addition to the 2008 Clifton Park / Halfmoon Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Study described above, the Town of Clifton Park has completed several other reports that pertain directly or indirectly to the Town Center study area, including:

- Exit 9 Commercial Area Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) - 1998
- Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan - 2003
- Western Clifton Park Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS), Land Conservation Plan, and Statement of Findings - 2005
- Town of Clifton Park Comprehensive Plan - 2006 Update
- Clifton Park IDA - Clifton Park Tax Base Analysis - 2010

### Current Conditions (supplemental to the Exit 9 Study)

As part of the work leading up to development of plan concepts at the Public Design Workshop (June 2011 - see Section III), information supplemental to the Existing Conditions section of the Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Study was collected. This supplemental information is summarized below.

- Pictometry Book - Pictometry's high resolution geo-referenced aerial imagery allows users to see and measure an area from above. A complete set of images comprising the Town Center study area was created as reference material for the Public Design Workshop and is included in Appendix B.
- Non-residential Building Data - Building footprints, along with "year built" data and square footages, for all structures in the study area. This information is provided on a map included in Appendix C.
- Non-Residential Land Ownership - assessment data was utilized to identify land ownership patterns in the study area. The ten (10) largest landholdings, plus lands owned by the Town of Clifton Park, are identified on the map included in Appendix C. This map points out another unique feature of the study area - the relatively small number of property owners that control most of the land. If the Town and these landowners can continue to work cooperatively, there will be a tremendous opportunity for success in achieving the vision set out in this plan.

### Section III: Public Process

Development of this Town Center Plan included a robust mix of opportunities for public input. By bringing together town officials, business owners, landowners, and residents in this manner, the study produced a sense of shared understanding and purpose that should help the community as it moves forward with efforts to implement its vision for this important area of Clifton Park. Opportunities for community engagement included the following:

- Study Advisory Committee

A Study Advisory Committee (SAC) was created by the Town of Clifton Park and CDTC at the start of this process. The SAC included representation from both of these project sponsors, several residents from the Town of Clifton Park, and representatives from important regional agencies such as NYSDOT, the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC), the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA), and the Saratoga County Planning Department. The SAC met several times to contribute ideas and oversee the development of this plan.

- Public Design Workshop - June 7-9, 2011

A three-day Public Design Workshop was conducted in June 2011. This intensive community event provided numerous opportunities for the SAC, Town staff, and the consulting team to meet with residents, business/landowners, school district representatives, civic organizations, and other stakeholders to explore alternatives for transforming this area into a walkable, mixed-use Town Center. Over the three-day period, activities were organized and meetings held at the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library on Moe Road.

Photos from each of the activities/meetings conducted as part of the Public Design Workshop are provided below. Meeting notes are attached to this report as Appendix D.

#### *Site Walk - June 7th*



*Evening Presentation and Discussion - June 7th*



*Stakeholder Meetings and Public Drop-in / Observation Hours - June 8th*



*Hands-On Design Exercise - June 8th*



*Wrap-up / Synthesis - June 9th*

- Public Workshop - October 24, 2011

A final Public Workshop was conducted at the Shenendehowa Adult Community Center on October 24, 2011. The purpose of this meeting was to present the draft plan concepts developed by the Study Advisory Committee, Town staff, and the consulting team based on ideas generated at the Public Design Workshop; and to solicit feedback from the community about the preliminary concepts. Meeting notes are attached to this report as Appendix E.



## Section IV: Plan Concepts and Recommendations

As described in the previous section, the three-day Public Design Workshop (June 2011) led to a great deal of agreement about the nature of desired enhancements and change in the Town Center study area. Residents, property owners, town officials, and other stakeholders shared remarkably similar visions about the future. The notion of transforming this area into a more walkable, mixed-use (residential, commercial, and civic) center of activity for the Clifton Park community was widely supported.

Having a shared vision for Clifton Park's Town Center is an important first step. Going forward, the community's challenge will be to guide incremental change toward this vision without hampering the economic vitality of this important commercial area. Clear and sustained public policy and strategic public investment, in combination with continued private investment in the properties themselves, will be the mechanisms for creating this change.

During the Public Design Workshop many specific ideas for achieving the Town Center vision were identified. The Study Advisory Committee and the consulting team worked in subsequent months to synthesize these ideas into concepts and recommendations for the Town Center. Following a public presentation and discussion of these concepts and recommendations at a public workshop in October 2011, they were further refined.

It is important to emphasize again that the overall transformation of the Town Center as envisioned will happen gradually over many years. With that in mind, the big ideas are described in this section.

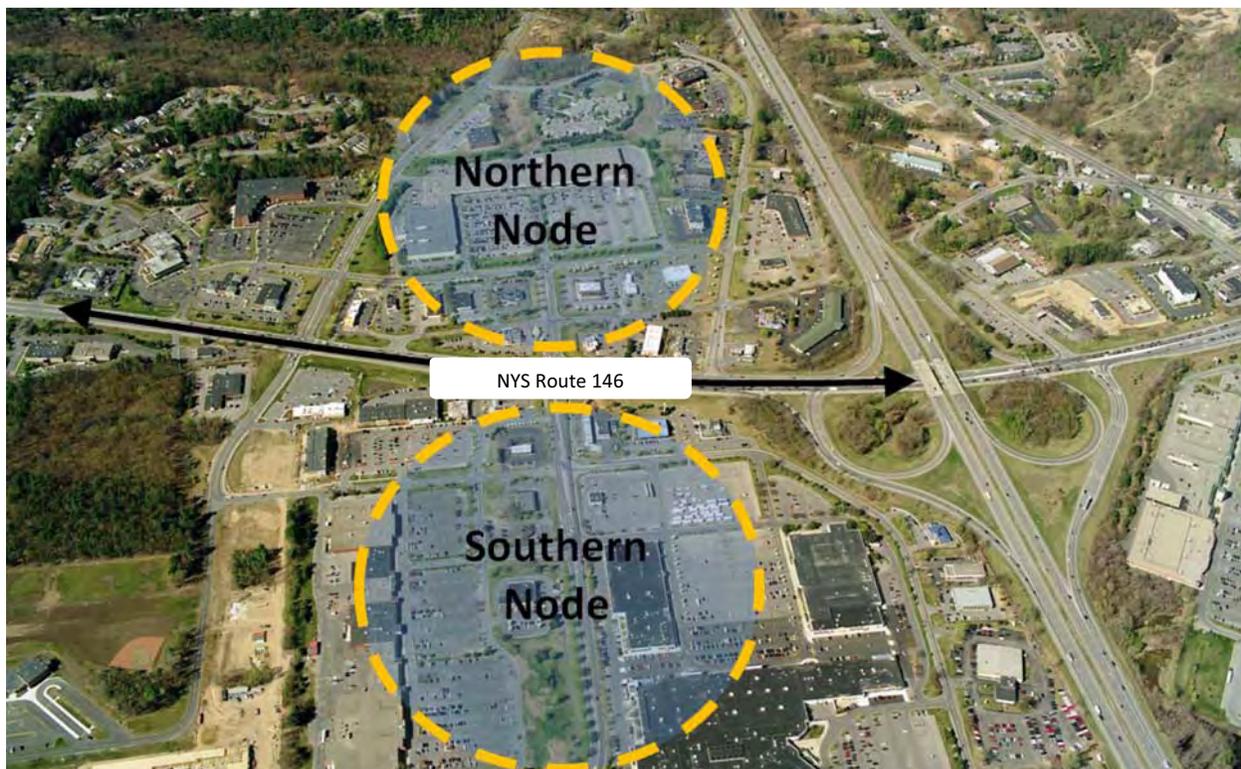
### 1. In the short-term, think about the Town Center as two, independent nodes -

Though NYS Route 146 is not the primary focus of this study, the high volume of traffic, the limited pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and the unattractive character of this important roadway are considered problems by virtually all of the study participants. The Town of Clifton Park is committed to working with the NYSDOT (owners of this road) to make improvements consistent with the recommendations contained in the Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Study. Additional ideas for improving this road, both short-term and long-term, were generated through the process of developing this plan. These will be discussed later in this section. However, it is understood that any comprehensive solution for NYS Route 146 will take many years to achieve.

*Right: Street level and aerial views of NYS Route 146 – as currently designed this road creates an effective barrier dividing the northern and southern halves of the study area*



Rather than wait for a solution to the problem of NYS Route 146, a key theme for this Town Center Plan is to “move forward with what the Town can control”. In that spirit, the first recommendation is to think about the Town Center as two, independent nodes - at least in the short-term. Through its ability to regulate land use, make strategic public investments, and to cooperate with the small number of large landowners in the study area, the Town and the community can achieve a great deal of progress within the two nodes while continuing to cultivate more significant improvements along NYS Route 146. Of course, bridging the gap (literally or figuratively) between the two nodes remains the long-term goal. Again, ideas for doing so will be discussed later in this section.



*What are the desired characteristics of future development / redevelopment in these two nodes?*

The desired characteristics of future development/redevelopment in the two nodes include the following:

- Mixed-Use
- Walkable Streets
- Compactness/Density
- Good Design (Site and Architectural)
- Useable Open Space
- Structured Parking

*Mixed-Use (both horizontally and vertically)*

*The nodes should contain a robust mix of uses, including retail and entertainment (restaurants, cafes, theaters, etc.), offices, multi-family residential, institutional (public, educational, etc.), and well-designed public spaces/parks. These uses should be mixed horizontally - across the area - and vertically - within individual buildings. Typically, mixed-use buildings would contain more active uses (retail and entertainment) on the ground floor with offices and/or residential units above. There appears to be general agreement that buildings with two or three stories would be appropriate throughout the Town Center, with support for perhaps four or five stories in some locations.*



*Examples of new mixed-use buildings – this type of vertical mixed-use is desired in the Town Center*  
**Top:** Mashpee, Massachusetts. **Bottom left:** Gaithersburg, Maryland. **Bottom right:** Bend, Oregon.

### Walkable Streets

Elements of walkable streets include -

- street trees
- lower traffic volumes
- sidewalks
- narrow street widths
- interconnection
- on-street parking
- lower speeds
- mixed land use
- build to the street(right of way)
- small block size

The Town Center nodes should be organized around a network of interconnected, walkable streets. It is understood that for the foreseeable future, most people will come to the Town Center by automobile; however, once they arrive they should be able to move around the area without the necessity of driving. The idea is to create a pedestrian experience that invites visitors to explore. In addition to reducing the number of vehicular trips generated by new development / redevelopment, walkable streets are public spaces where activity and interaction are generated. This will enhance the Town Center's role as a place where people can come together in Clifton Park.



Walkable streets such as these will make getting around on foot a safe and attractive alternative to driving in the Town Center. **Top and bottom right:** Gaithersburg, Maryland. **Bottom left:** Seattle, Washington

### Compactness / Density

*In order for the Town Center to become a more vibrant focal point of economic, social, and civic life for the community, a more compact, higher-density pattern of development should be established. In Clifton Park there appears to be recognition that well-managed density is necessary to create the critical mass, sense of place, and urban environment that is desired within the Town Center. Examples from around New York State and the nation demonstrate how density can be achieved in a manner that improves the character and quality of the community.*



**Top left:** Old shopping mall in Boca Raton, Florida.

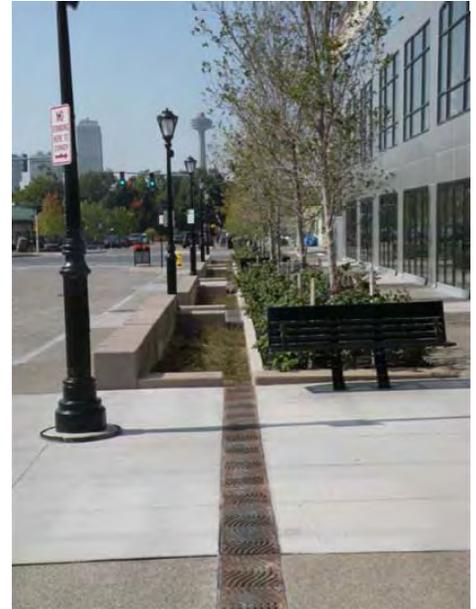
**Top right:** Mizner Park – a much higher density, mixed-use development that replaced the old shopping mall.

**Bottom:** Street level views of Mizner Park illustrate the walkable, high quality urban environment that characterizes this high density, mixed-use development



### Good Design (Site and Architectural)

*It has been said that density and mixed-use are the solution for sprawl, and that design is the solution for density and mixed-use. In other words, to make density and mixed-use a fair tradeoff for most people, attention to design is critical. Architectural style is not the primary issue, but certain traditional architectural conventions should be observed in order to ensure that the buildings address the street and sidewalk properly. Site design, or urban design, is equally important. The space between the buildings, the relationship of buildings to one another, and the design of public spaces can have a major impact on how people experience a place. Design guidelines and/or standards should be developed for the Town Center to ensure that the desired design characteristics are clear and predictable.*



Useable Open Space

*For many years the Town of Clifton Park has required that as part of any development in its commercial area, thirty-five to fifty percent of the parcel (depending on the underlying zoning) must be set aside as “green space”. While this requirement has been effective in reducing the amount of development and creating some small pockets of green amid the pavement and structures, it has not resulted in the creation of useable open space. Rather, the requirement fosters a pattern of buildings as islands on their individual lots. In the Town Center, open space should instead take the form of parks and public spaces. There can be great variety in these types of spaces, but they must be deliberate and purposeful; designed for the use and enjoyment of people who live in, work in, or visit the Town Center.*



### Structured Parking

*Surface parking consumes a great deal of space and detracts from the overall character of the existing commercial district. Large parking lots create vast distances between buildings and discourage walking from one part of the commercial district to another. Reclaiming this space to allow for greater density and a walkable environment is necessary for the transition of this area into a true Town Center.*

*Since it is assumed that the automobile will remain the primary means by which people will travel to the Town Center into the foreseeable future, car storage will need to be accommodated in another manner. However, standard traffic engineering formulas for calculating parking demand in suburban retail districts should not be utilized in the Town Center because a walkable environment will make it possible for people who are already at the Town Center to move around it without getting back in their car.*

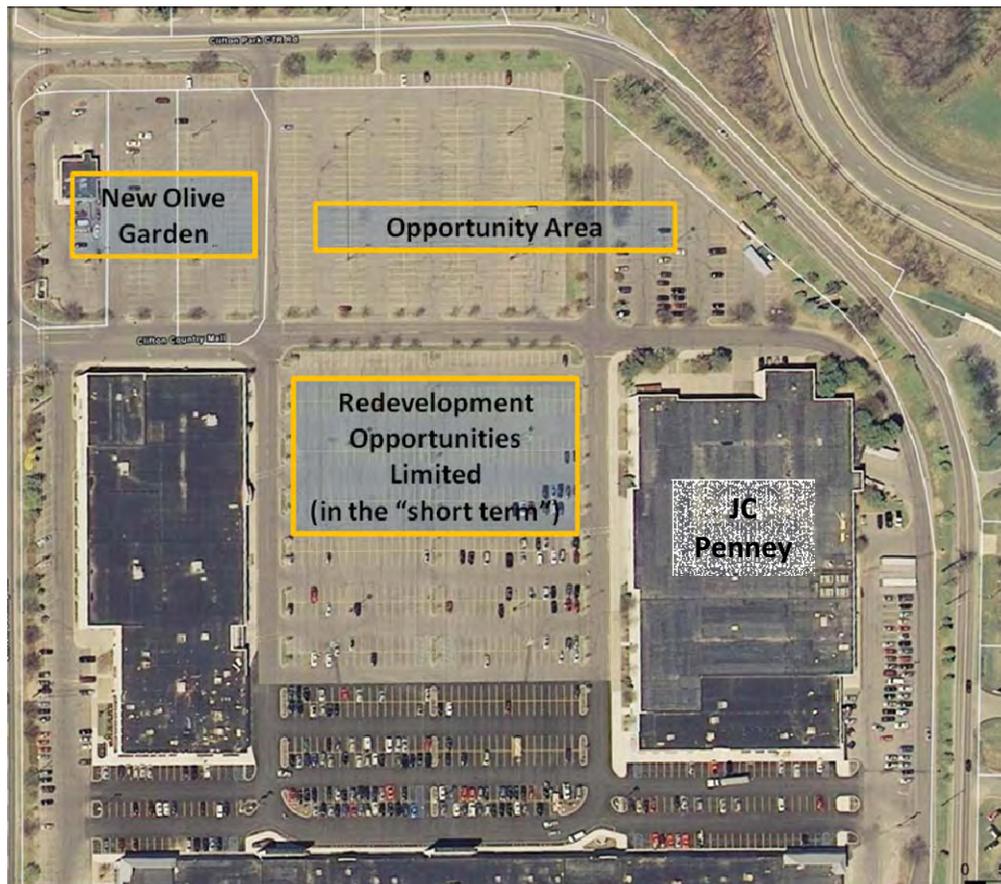
*On-street parking in appropriate locations can supply some of the parking demand while helping to calm traffic and create more walkable streets; but structured parking will be necessary to meet most of the parking need here. The design of parking structures should be recognized as an important consideration. As the images on this page demonstrate, structured parking can be designed in a fashion that does not detract from the safety and attractiveness of the pedestrian environment along the sidewalk. Retail space lining these structures at the ground floor and/or attractive architectural and landscape design can help parking structures blend in with their surroundings.*



*Within the Nodes:*

- *Identify opportunities for incremental change*
- *Try to finish one complete space at a time*

As described in Section III (Public Process), the three-day public design workshop provided an opportunity for larger public gatherings and smaller stakeholder meetings. The smaller stakeholder meetings included discussions with the primary landowners in the study area. Through these discussions, the study advisory committee and the planning team were able to identify locations within each node where change is more or less likely to occur in the short-term. Due to restrictions within the lease agreements between the various property owners and their larger tenants (JC Penney, Kmart, Hannaford, Price Chopper, etc.), it is understood that some portions of the study area will be harder to redevelop in the short-term. For example, some of these agreements limit the property owner's ability to build new structures that might reduce the parking or even block the view of the parking in front of the retailer's establishment. Furthermore, some of these lease agreements will be in effect for many years. While it is possible that economic circumstances will change or that certain lease agreements could be renegotiated, the team decided to focus on locations where near-term opportunities for incremental change are more likely to exist. These locations are referred to as "opportunity areas".



*Left: An evaluation of this location at the northern end of the Clifton Park Center identified an "opportunity area" where redevelopment could be accomplished in the short-term. Other parts of this location are less likely to change in the short-term because of very recent construction (the new Olive Garden) or because a long-term lease agreement limiting major changes is in effect.*

*Redevelopment ideas for this location are described under Opportunity Area #1 (page 25).*

Within each of the opportunity areas identified, the goal would be to “finish one complete space at a time;” that is, to redevelop the site to create a small but complete, walkable area that can stand on its own as an attractive destination. Even if other areas around it remain unchanged (remember it is expected that change in the study area will be incremental and the transition to a Town Center will take many years), the redeveloped opportunity area should have all of the desired characteristics described above - mixed-use, walkable streets, compactness/density, good urban design and architectural design, useable open space, and parking (structured, on-street, etc.) that is efficient and (unless it is on-street) hidden from view.

Beginning with the opportunity area identified in the image on the previous page, the next several pages will illustrate how incremental change could occur in several opportunity areas within the southern and northern Town Center nodes. *It is important to remember that these illustrations are merely suggestive of the type of transition that could occur in a particular area consistent with the desired characteristics for the Town Center. The illustrations should not be interpreted as Master Plans for any of the particular sites.* Actual redevelopment plans that might be prepared by the owners of these sites in the future may be similar or somewhat different in terms of layout and design than what is shown here. Still, the concepts and characteristics that these illustrations convey should guide their plans. Furthermore, the Town’s land use regulations and zoning code should be amended to ensure that these concepts and characteristics are allowed, and either strongly encouraged or required as appropriate.

Opportunity Area #1: Northern end of the Clifton Park Center (southern node)

*Below left: Existing conditions (aerial view)*

*Below right: Initial phase of redevelopment. The arrangement of the new mixed-use buildings (brown), the small public space, walkable street, etc. create a “complete space” – a small area that can stand on its own as an attractive destination.*



*Below left: A second phase of redevelopment extends this space toward Clifton Country Road (and the new Olive Garden). Though the parking lot in front of JC Penney remains, a small portion along the new street is utilized as a narrow public space (without blocking the view of the store or its parking) and another small linear park and street are created at the south end of the large parking lot.*

*Below right: Long-term - a later phase shows redevelopment of the large store and the parking area that fronted it. In order to accommodate this level of density, structured parking (on the interior of the new blocks) is shown.*



Visualization: Redevelopment of Opportunity Area #1



*Left: Arrows indicating the location of the view used for this visualization.*

*Below: Photo used for this visualization.*



NEXT PAGE: Before and After

Renderings illustrating the view from this location now, and how it might look when the area is redeveloped



Before



After

Opportunity Area #2: West side of Clifton Country Road (southern node)



The west side of Clifton Country Road (circled in image at left) is considered an opportunity area because several of the “out-parcels” in front of the Village Plaza shopping center are ready for development/ redevelopment. Recommendations for turning Clifton Country Road into a “Main Street” for the Town Center (see page 36) should also increase interest in these parcels. The set of images below illustrate how incremental change could occur on this side of Clifton Country Road.

*Below left:* A new mixed-use building (brown) on the undeveloped parcel at the southern end of this area could be the template for the redevelopment of this whole side of the street.

*Below right:* Additional construction on the south end allows for the future development of an east/west street aligned with what is now an access road into the Clifton Park Center (circled). As some of the older buildings further north are ready for redevelopment, these too are replaced by mixed-use buildings.



**Below left:** *Redevelopment continues along the frontage of the new “Main Street”, with small public spaces interspersed with the new mixed-use buildings.*

**Below right:** *Long-term – former access lanes in the Village Plaza parking lot are converted into new streets and blocks. New mixed-use buildings extend the walkable neighborhood character west from the new “Main Street”. In order to accommodate this level of density, structured parking (on the interior of the new blocks) is shown.*



Visualization: Redevelopment of Opportunity Area #2



*Left: Photo used for this visualization (looking south down Clifton Country Road).*

NEXT PAGE: Before and After

Renderings illustrating the view from this location now, and how it might look when the area is redeveloped



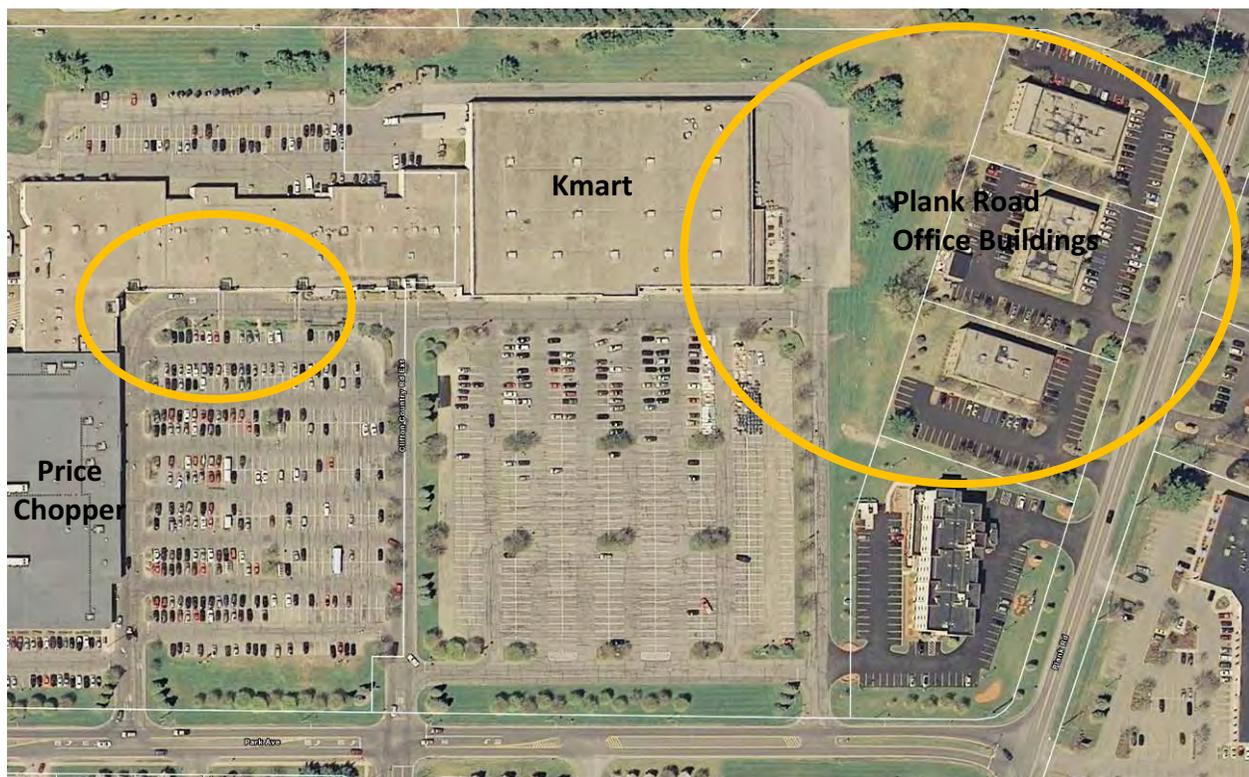
### Opportunity Area #3: Shoppers World Plaza (northern node)

There are at least a couple of short-term opportunities in the vicinity of the Shoppers World Plaza. These initial steps could set the stage for future redevelopment throughout the northern node.

The first, short-term opportunity area is located at the eastern end of the plaza. Kmart, like most of the large scale retailers in the study area, will likely be reluctant to reduce its parking or to limit visibility of the parking lot and building from NYS Route 146. As with the other large retailers, their lease agreement (which stipulates these restrictions) will be in effect for many years. Still, there may be an opportunity to do something at the extreme eastern edge of the parking lot that would connect the plaza to the proposed redevelopment of a set of office buildings on Plank Road. This location is circled on the right side of the aerial photo below.

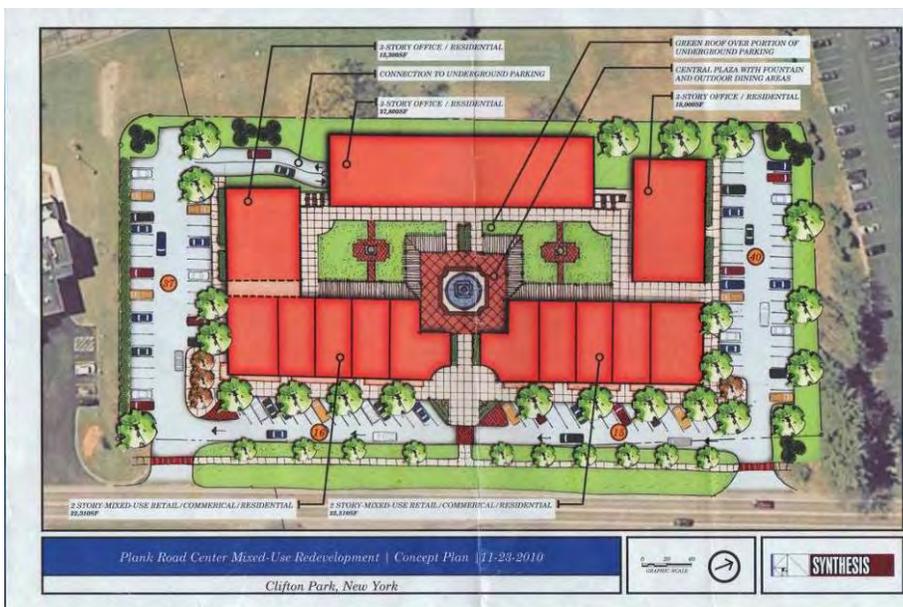
A second, possible short-term opportunity area is located at the bend in the plaza. These types of corner locations are sometimes difficult to lease out because they are somewhat tucked away and because of their size and configuration. However, there may be an opportunity to redevelop a small area at the northern end of the Price Chopper parking lot that could create more of a destination in the corner without reducing the visibility of the Price Chopper building or its parking. This location is also circled on the left side of the aerial photo below.

The potential opportunities at both of these locations will be further illustrated on the following pages.





The office buildings off of Plank Road (circled at left) are proposed to be redeveloped as a set of two and three story, mixed-use (retail, office, and residential) buildings organized around a central plaza with underground parking. Though this project must still be reviewed by the Town of Clifton Park, the concept (as illustrated in the graphic at left) does generally conform to the ideas that have been generated through this planning process for the Clifton Park Town Center.



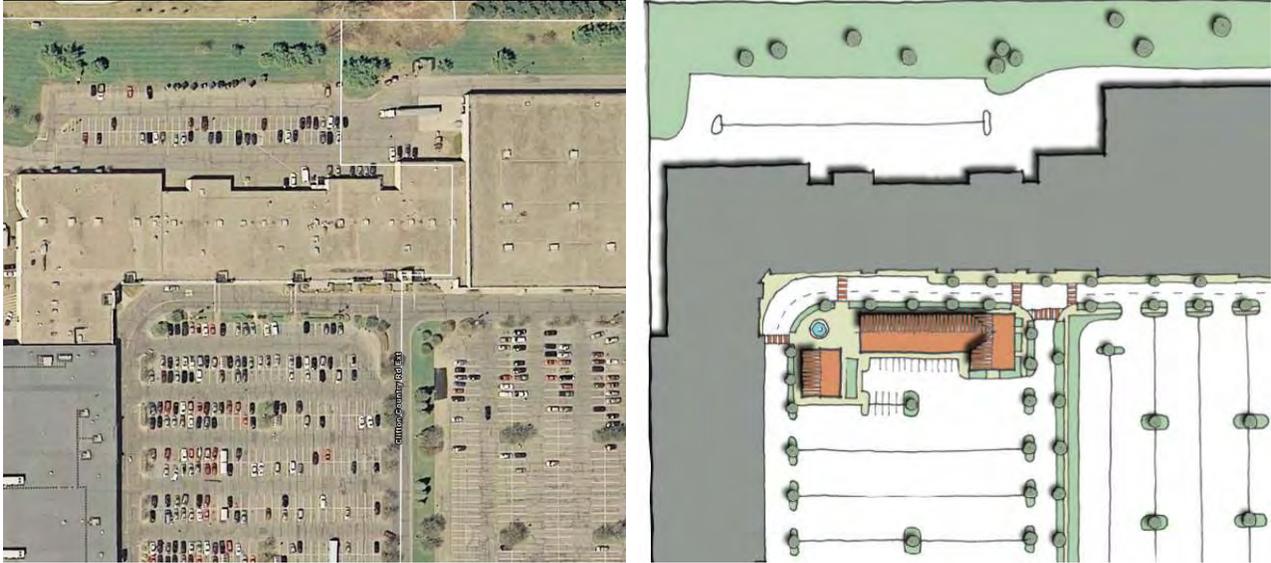
Connecting this set of proposed, new mixed-use buildings to the Shoppers World Plaza is the objective of the first short-term opportunity illustrated below.



*Far left: aerial photo of this site.*

*Left: New mixed-use buildings (brown) replace the existing office buildings on Plank Road (as proposed). Additional new mixed-use buildings, a small public space, and walkable street connect this area to the plaza.*

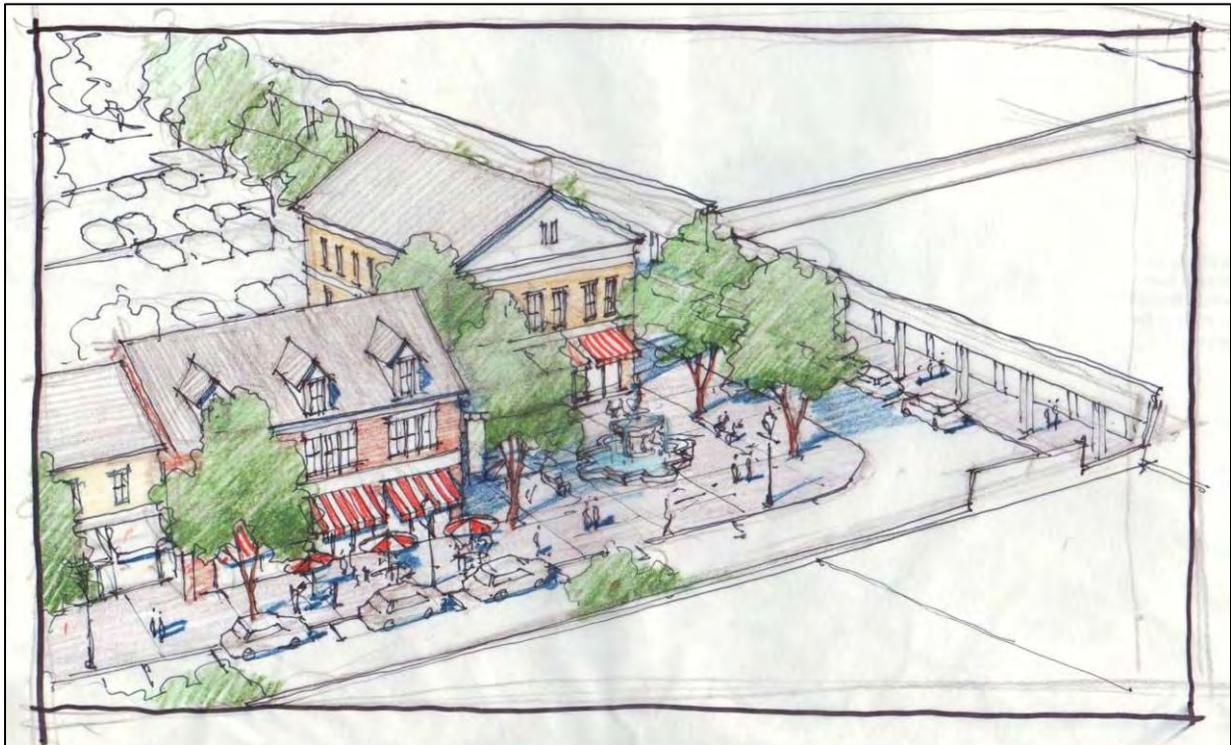
The second opportunity area related to the Shoppers World Plaza involves the area near the bend. As described above, redevelopment of a small area at the northern end of the Price Chopper parking lot could create more of a destination in the corner without reducing the visibility of the Price Chopper building or its parking.



*Top left: aerial photo of this site*

*Top right: new mixed-use buildings (brown) and public space create a destination in the corner of the plaza*

*Below: Rendering illustrating how these new buildings might look (looking down from above the existing plaza building)*



As with the opportunity areas described in the southern node, the short-term possibilities here in the northern node would hopefully lead to further redevelopment throughout the node over time. The series of images below imagines how this might unfold.



**Top left:** Aerial photo of Shoppers World Plaza and adjacent parcels along Plank Road  
**Top right:** In an initial phase of redevelopment, new mixed use buildings (brown) fill in the two opportunity areas described above

**Bottom left:** Redevelopment continues over time – new mixed-use buildings and public spaces create a safe and pleasant walking environment. Access lanes become blocks with parking in the interior. Park Avenue becomes an important cross street to the northern portion of the new “Main Street” (Clifton Country Road)  
**Bottom right:** Long-term build out of the area



In addition to bigger changes, such as the possible redevelopment scenarios for the three opportunity areas described on the previous pages, smaller incremental change could occur at any time at one or more of the “pad sites” (freestanding parcels of commercial real estate in front of a shopping center) located throughout the study area. Even a minor change, such as a change in tenant or a small addition, could create an opportunity to begin the transition of these separate sites into more walkable and attractive groupings of buildings over time.



*Above: “Pad sites” such as these (circled in orange) should also be viewed as opportunities for incremental change. Simple landscape and architectural enhancements could create better connections between these sites, improving the overall walkability and attractiveness of these portions of the study area.*

The incorporation of simple landscape and architectural enhancements - including but not limited to such elements as outdoor patio/dining areas, sidewalks, fencing/low walls, plantings, awnings, porticos, pergolas, etc. - would help to connect these separate buildings and sites. The Town could work directly with these property owners to create transition plans under an interim transition design initiative executed in conjunction with, or separate but in parallel to, the necessary rezoning work that must follow this plan (see Short-term Action in Section V: Implementation). A coordinated design initiative would ensure that incremental changes to the pad sites are beautiful and unifying; and not random or mismatched in terms of style, scale, and pattern.

## 2. Convert Clifton Country Road into a “Main Street” for the Town Center

The second important idea is to convert Clifton Country Road into a “Main Street” for the Town Center. Consistent with the theme of “moving forward with what the Town can control” (discussed at the start of Idea #1 on page 16), this idea recognizes that Clifton Country Road is a Town Road and is, therefore, something that the Town can change in the short-term. It is recommended that the Town focus on the section of Clifton Country Road in the southern node first since redevelopment along this corridor is more likely in the short-term.

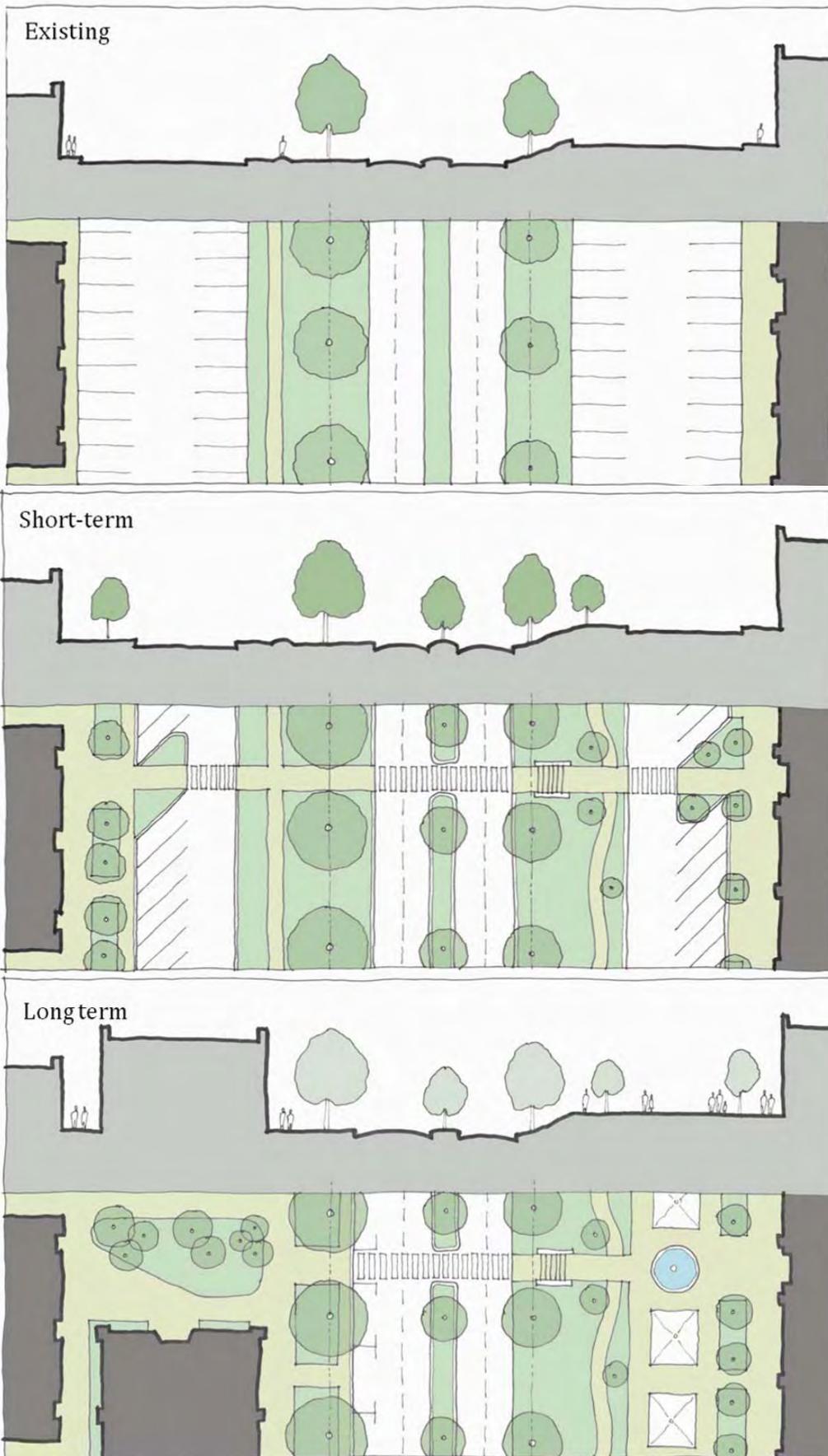
The transformation of Clifton Country Road into a “Main Street” would probably not require a major reconfiguration of the roadway. Necessary enhancements in the short-term might include the installation of high visibility crosswalks at intersections and mid-block crossings, the addition of a bike lane or shared lane in each direction, more robust median landscaping, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and the construction of a multi-use pathway on the east side of the corridor to complement the existing pathway on the west side of the corridor. In fact, the existing pathway and the row of mature trees on the west side of the corridor should be preserved – at least in the short-term – because they are a valuable part of the Town Center’s existing green infrastructure and they reflect the unique character of Clifton Park.



*Above: the existing pathway and row of mature trees on the western side of Clifton Country Road reflect the unique character of Clifton Park and should be preserved – at least in the short-term.*

### *The Evolution of a “Main Street”*

The series of images on the next two pages illustrate how modifications to Clifton Country Road could evolve over time. The first set of three images show the configuration of the street as it currently exists, as it might be reconfigured in the short-term, and how it could continue to evolve should the area become more “urbanized” in the long-term. The second set of images, a pair of renderings, illustrate how the short and long-term reconfigurations of the street might look with redevelopment of the parcels in front of the Village Plaza (looking south along Clifton Country Road).



**Existing Conditions** - this section of the road consists of two travel lanes in each direction with a grass median in the center. The west side of the road contains a wide linear green strip with mature trees and a multi-use pathway. The east side of the road contains a wide, sloping green strip with a few mature trees.

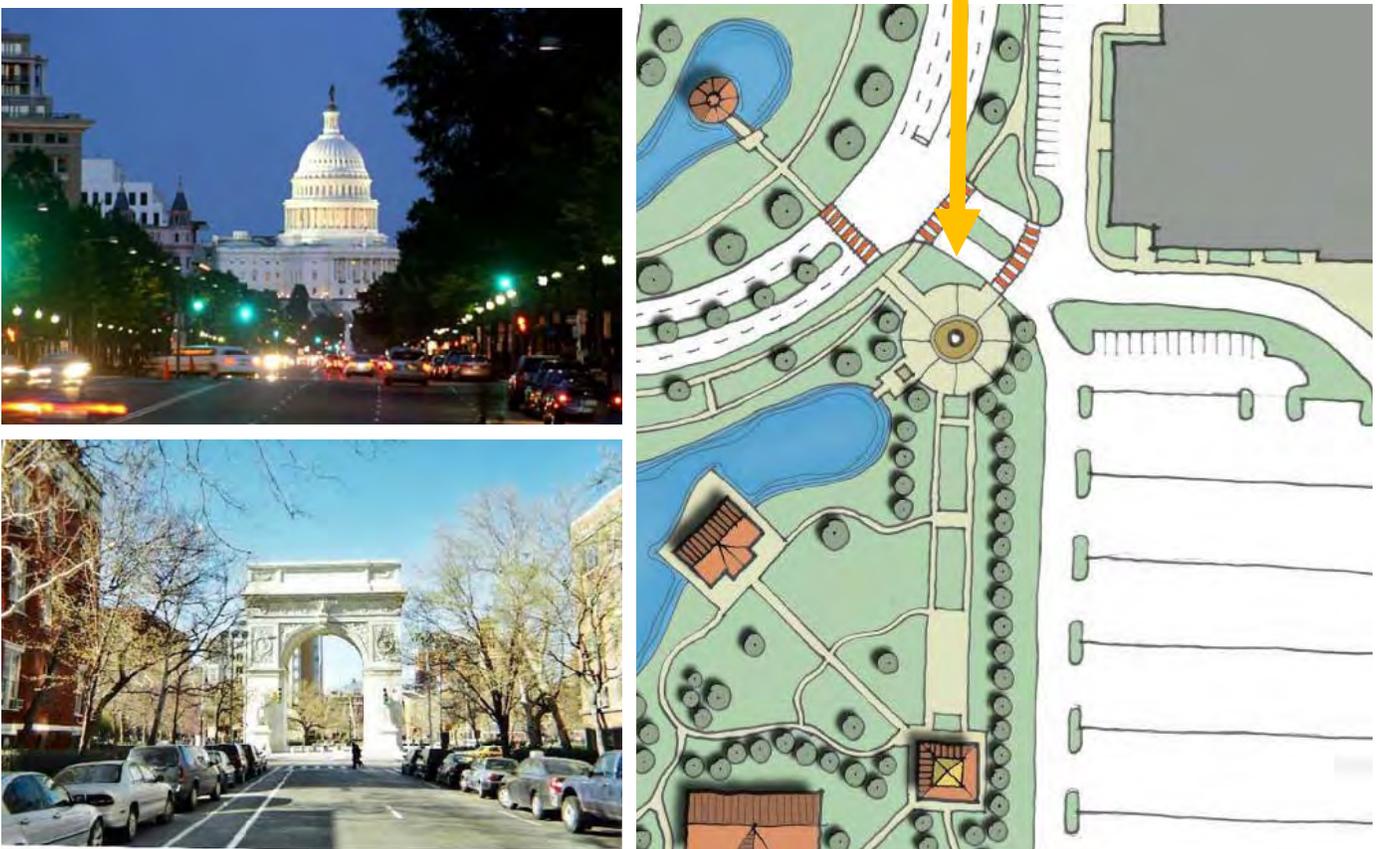
**Short-term** - changes include the elimination of one row of parking in front of the buildings on both sides of the road (to create a consistent access lane and safer crossing), the addition of a mid-block crossing (with crosswalk and steps up the slope on the east side of the street), and the creation of a multi-use pathway on the east side of the road to complement the existing pathway on the west side.

**Long term** - if the area becomes more urbanized in the future, parking in front of the buildings could be eliminated entirely. New buildings might be constructed closer to the street (as shown on the west side) or an active public space could be created where the parking was (as shown on the east side). On-street parallel parking might also be appropriate.



The ideas presented above are conceptual in nature and intended to illustrate the types of characteristics that a “Main Street”, unique to Clifton Park, might include. Before the Town of Clifton Park modifies the configuration of Clifton Country Road, a more detailed urban design and traffic/civil engineering analysis will be required.

As a final thought about the redesign of Clifton Country Road and its surroundings, it was noted that the road curves to the west as it heads further south toward Wall Street. This bend in the road presents an opportunity to create a dramatic design element by terminating the view with a significant building (a new Town Hall, church, or other significant institutional or even a private building, etc.) or a large piece of public art (a fountain, statue, monument, or similar structure). The view on the north end of Clifton Country Road (in the northern node) could be terminated in a similar fashion; bookending the new “Main Street” with memorable vistas.



**Above left:** The idea of terminating a view is illustrated by these pictures of famous vistas in Washington D.C. and New York City. A similar idea (probably at a less grand scale) could be employed on the new “Main Street” in Clifton Park.

**Above right:** The orange arrow indicates the location at the south end of Clifton Country Road where a significant building or large piece of public art could be placed to terminate the view down “Main Street”.

### 3. Allow additional residential uses in the Town Center

Encouraging a more robust mix of uses throughout this area is a key component of the long term vision for the Town Center. Residential uses, in particular, are almost completely absent from the study area today. The recent completion of The Bentley, a five-story, high-end apartment (for rent or purchase) building for older (55+) adults located on Wall Street, is the primary exception.

The addition of more, higher density residential units in the Town Center would add vibrancy and economic activity to the area. It would also help to fill a gap in the local housing market which tends to be dominated by large single family homes. Participants in this study noted the relative scarcity of affordable housing options for young professionals and for empty nesters who might want to stay in the community without maintaining a large house and property. The type of “small downtown” living that the Town Center could offer would be attractive to both of these important and expanding demographic groups. Locations where walking and bicycling are possible, and where access to public transportation is available, are likely to become even more desirable as the cost of driving continues to climb in the coming years.

Residential uses could continue to be incorporated into the Town Center in a couple of ways. The first would be to allow residential units above commercial in the “heart” of the two nodes. Upper floor residential units (apartments or condominiums) - above retail or office uses - are a highly space-efficient means of creating living opportunities in this type of setting.



*Above: Illustration of mixed-use buildings with residential units above first floor commercial.*

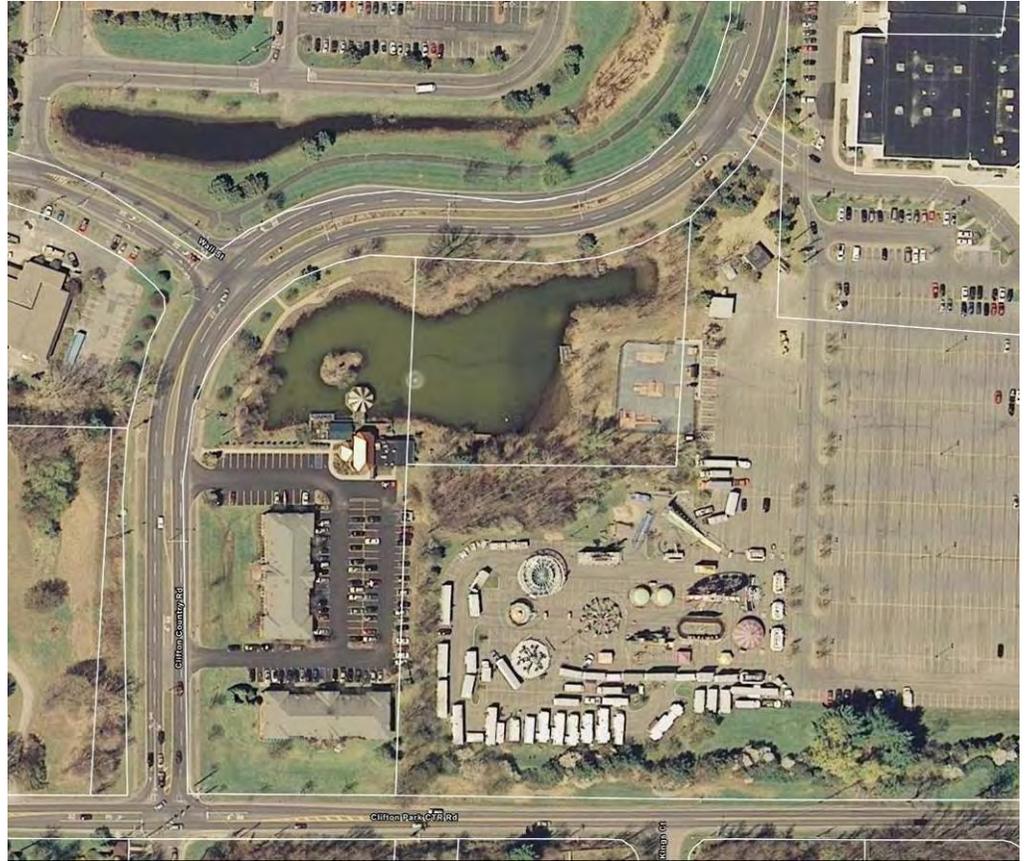
Another way of incorporating more residential into the study area would be to allow a mix of housing types - apartments, townhomes, and perhaps small-lot single-family homes in peripheral locations at the edges of the Town Center. For example, the southern edge of the study area along Clifton Park Center Road would be an appropriate location for this type of housing. As illustrated on the next page, it would create a nice transition from the residential neighborhoods to the south, and could actually help to create connections from these neighborhoods to the "heart" of the Town Center.

As more residential units are added to this area, the Town should be careful to ensure that public park spaces are included nearby to make these new residential neighborhoods livable. More discussion of public spaces and parks occurs in the next subsection.



*Examples of new, higher density residential neighborhoods - small lot single family, apartments, and townhomes - from around Upstate New York.*

**Right:** Existing conditions (aerial view) – the southern end of the study area, along the north side of Clifton Park Center Road, would be an appropriate location for new, higher density residential neighborhoods.



**Right:** New, two and three story residential buildings (brown) could create a nice transition from the single family residential neighborhoods to the south of Clifton Park Center Road and help connect these neighborhoods to the core of the Town Center. Small greens and pocket parks ensure that residents of these new residential units enjoy a high quality, livable environment.



#### 4. Introduce additional civic uses to the Town Center

In order to become an even stronger center of activity for the Clifton Park community, the Town Center should be the future home of public buildings and other civic uses. When it becomes time to replace existing public facilities such as Town Hall or the Post Office, the Town Center should be given priority consideration as a potential location for the new buildings.

Within the Town Center, it would be ideal if one or two key sites were identified and set aside as locations for important civic uses. As previously discussed (in Subsection 2 - the conversion of Clifton Country Road into a "Main Street"), the notion of terminating the view at the south end of Clifton Country Road with an important public building suggests one potential site. Another potential site involves the eastern portion of a large undeveloped parcel of land owned by the Shenendehowa Central School District.

As shown in the aerial photo below, the Shenendehowa Central School District owns the largest piece of undeveloped land in the Town Center Study Area. Located between Moe Road and Maxwell Road Extension, this land was part of a larger parcel that the district acquired many years ago. To the south, Arongen Elementary School, and later Shatekon Elementary School were constructed in recent years. This area offers a tremendous opportunity for the future of the Town Center.



*Above: Undeveloped land owned by the Shenendehowa Central School District (circled) offers tremendous opportunity for the future of the Town Center.*

As part of the Public Design Workshop, almost every group of residents identified this location for its potential as a future Town Park. The Crossings of Colonie, a relatively new town park (opened in 2003) off Albany Shaker Road just east of Wolf Road in the Town of Colonie was often cited as an example of the kind of facility envisioned. Though the two properties are quite different, it is the diversity of park environments and facilities at The Crossings that appears to have inspired these comments. The school district parcel is certainly large enough to accommodate a variety of different recreational experiences - nature trails, multi-use paths, playgrounds, picnic pavilions, ball fields, community buildings, etc.



*Above: The Crossings of Colonie*

If the school district parcel is eventually developed as a large public space, the precise mix of recreational activities and civic uses that might ultimately be incorporated on this site should be determined through a detailed master plan process. This process should take into consideration the unique environmental and landscape features found on the parcel and the Town's *Recreation Plan* (adopted in 2010). The process should also include significant public input. The cost of developing the park might necessitate consideration of some type of public-private partnership.

*Below: Examples from The Crossings of Colonie and other parks. The school district property is large enough to accommodate a wide variety of recreational and civic experiences.*



Additional suggestions for the school district property included:

- Create an east-west road connecting Moe Road to Maxwell Road Extension - This new street would provide additional connectivity to the Town Center, but it should be designed in a fashion that discourages its use as a cut through to other locations beyond the Town Center. Furthermore, speed on this new street should be controlled through traffic calming design elements. Full bicycle and pedestrian facilities (sidewalks and/or pathway) must also be incorporated into the design of this street.
- Create pathway connections north to Collins Park and south to the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library.
- Consider use of a portion of the cleared land immediately north of Shatekon Elementary School for additional ball fields if the need for such space is demonstrated. Since this land is already cleared and part of it is not really needed for operation of the elementary school, it would appear to be an opportunity to satisfy the desire for additional playing fields for town residents.
- Consider using a portion of the land at the east end of the school district property (along Maxwell Road Extension) as one of the reserved sites in the Town Center for a future civic use. It might be possible, for example, to cluster a group of prominent public or quasi-public buildings around a more formal public space (such as a Village Green) at this end of the property without compromising the use of the remainder of the parcel as a Town Park.
- Private development, at the periphery or clustered on a portion of the site, could be appropriate and might help to provide financing for the desired public park improvements and the proposed east-west road.



*Above: The town green in Branford, CT. In classic New England style, the town green is a civic focal point for the community and is home to the Town Hall, a church, and other public and quasi-public uses. The eastern edge of the school district property could be designed to serve a similar purpose for Clifton Park. The remainder of the land could still be used as a large park as discussed previously.*

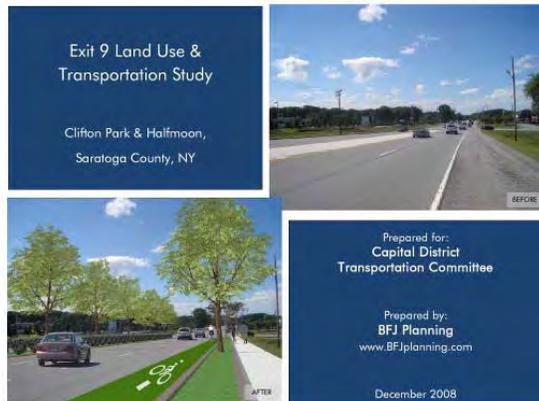
In addition to the park setting envisioned for at least a portion of the school district property, it is imperative that the Town Center be generously supplied with smaller parks and public spaces. All of the illustrations prepared as part of this plan (see discussion of short-term opportunity areas in Subsection 1) show pocket parks or public plazas as central to the redevelopment schemes. These small public spaces, purposefully located throughout the area, will be critical to the quality of life and livability of the Town Center. They will be places where people gather formally and informally and, along with streets and sidewalks, will constitute the public realm.



*Above:* A pocket park can be very informal, such as this one in Warwick, NY

*Below:* A pocket park can also be designed with more formal elements such as special monuments, fountains, etc. such as this one in Clarkstown, NY.





*The next three subsections address transportation issues, affirming and in some cases expanding upon recommendations from the 2008 Clifton Park / Halfmoon Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Study. Though this Town Center Plan has focused primarily on land use and design it is impossible to separate these elements from the transportation issues that are so critical to the future of this area.*

## 5. Enhance connectivity throughout the north and south nodes

The Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Study included a series of recommendations for enhancing connectivity throughout this area as a means of distributing traffic and creating a more walkable and bikeable environment. The transportation benefits of an interconnected network of streets for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians were also discussed as part of the public workshops conducted for this study.

In general, participants in this study embraced the specific recommendations for new street connections identified in the Exit 9 study. If anything, the land use and design concepts identified for the Town Center through this study would argue for a finer-grained network of streets and blocks than what was discussed in the previous report. While ideas for macro connections (such as the possible new street linking Moe Road to Maxwell Road Extension) are common to both studies, the long-term redevelopment scenarios created through this process envision the future street network at more micro scale; including the eventual conversion of parking lot access roads to short blocks of local streets and a proposed east-west connection across Clifton Country Road.

To guide creation of the interconnected network of streets envisioned for the Town Center, the Town - in collaboration with the owners of some of the large commercial properties - should consider some preliminary steps. For example, a more detailed study could map these future connections as paper streets or as part of an Official Map to ensure that they are incorporated into future redevelopment proposals. Some of the proposed connections could be established on an interim basis by replacing a row of parking (in some of the larger parking lots) with tree-lined walkways linking one part of the Town Center to another. Finally, the Town and the property owners could give names to, and create temporary street signs for, some of the parking lot access lanes that may be considered as future roads.

Some other specific suggestions for improved connections identified over the course of this study, included:

- In addition to the proposed east-west street through the large school district parcel that would connect Moe Road to Maxwell Road Extension, consider a north/south connection to this new street - north to NYS Route 146, in line with the intersection of NYS Route 146 and Tallow Wood Drive; and south to the Library or to the access road for Arongen Elementary School.
- Complete Maxwell Road Extension to Wall Street - perhaps around both sides of the Bentley (this would also keep cut-thru traffic out of the loading area in the rear of the Village Plaza).
- Consider complete, full street connections over I-87 such as:
  - The Crossings to Clifton Park Center,
  - Old Route 146 to Fire Road, and
  - Plank Road to Old Plank Road.

Some of these possibilities were described as potential bike/ped connections in the Exit 9 Study, but they should also be considered for their potential benefit as full street connections. These should be considered in the context of any future studies by NYSDOT of the Exit 9 interchange and NYS Route 146.

- Ideas about adding an Exit 8B (at Sitterly Road) or a 9A (at Kinns Road) could also be considered in the context of future study by NYSDOT of the Exit 9 interchange and NYS Route 146.

## 6. Consider short-term and long-term solutions for NYS Route 146

As discussed previously, NYS Route 146 as currently designed creates a barrier between the northern and southern portions of the study area. Unless or until this corridor is redesigned, Town Center efforts should focus on improvements in the separate northern and southern nodes.

Still, it is impossible to ignore the NYS Route 146 corridor in our planning for the future of the Town Center. There have been some small steps of progress along portions of NYS Route 146. For example, at the western end of the study area, NYSDOT improved the crosswalk across NYS Route 146 at Moe Road and installed pedestrian activated signals in 2011. In the short-term, the Town and NYSDOT should continue to look for opportunities to make these types of small improvements, making it easier for bicyclists and pedestrians to get across this wide corridor.

In the long-term, it would be desirable to see the highway redesigned in a fashion that would allow for the expansion of the Town Center right up to the roadway on both the north and south sides of NYS Route 146. Multi-story, mixed use buildings located close to and facing the street, with wide sidewalks and an attractive, pedestrian-friendly streetscape would highlight the land use component of this transformation of the corridor.

The Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Study contained numerous recommendations for NYS Route 146. A bold, long-term vision of NYS Route 146 as a “complete street” (a street that meets the needs of all users...including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation riders, motorists and citizens of all ages and abilities, including children, the elderly and the disabled) was presented in that study. Before and after images of this concept are presented below. It is certainly possible to envision Town Center style redevelopment directly along the corridor as pictured in the “after” image.



Unavoidably, some additional thoughts about the NYS Route 146 corridor were generated through the process of creating this Town Center Plan. These ideas are not meant to replace any specific recommendations from the Exit 9 study; but instead should be added to the mix of options to be considered by the Town and the NYSDOT as they study this road in the future.

The treatment of this state highway could be viewed as an evolutionary process consisting of some short-term, simple enhancements as well as some medium-term projects and long-term comprehensive solutions. Ideas for each are described below.

*Short-term:*

- Continue to work on improving the ability of pedestrians to safely cross NYS Route 146 at key intersections (with Clifton Country Road, Maxwell Road, and Moe Road) - better crosswalks, traffic signals, etc.
- Make it possible for bicyclists/pedestrians to travel along NYS Route 146 via new sidewalks, bike lanes or pathways on both sides of the corridor.
- Continue the open dialogue with NYSDOT to ensure that complete street design considerations are evaluated with any proposed improvements to state-owned roadways.

*Medium-term:*

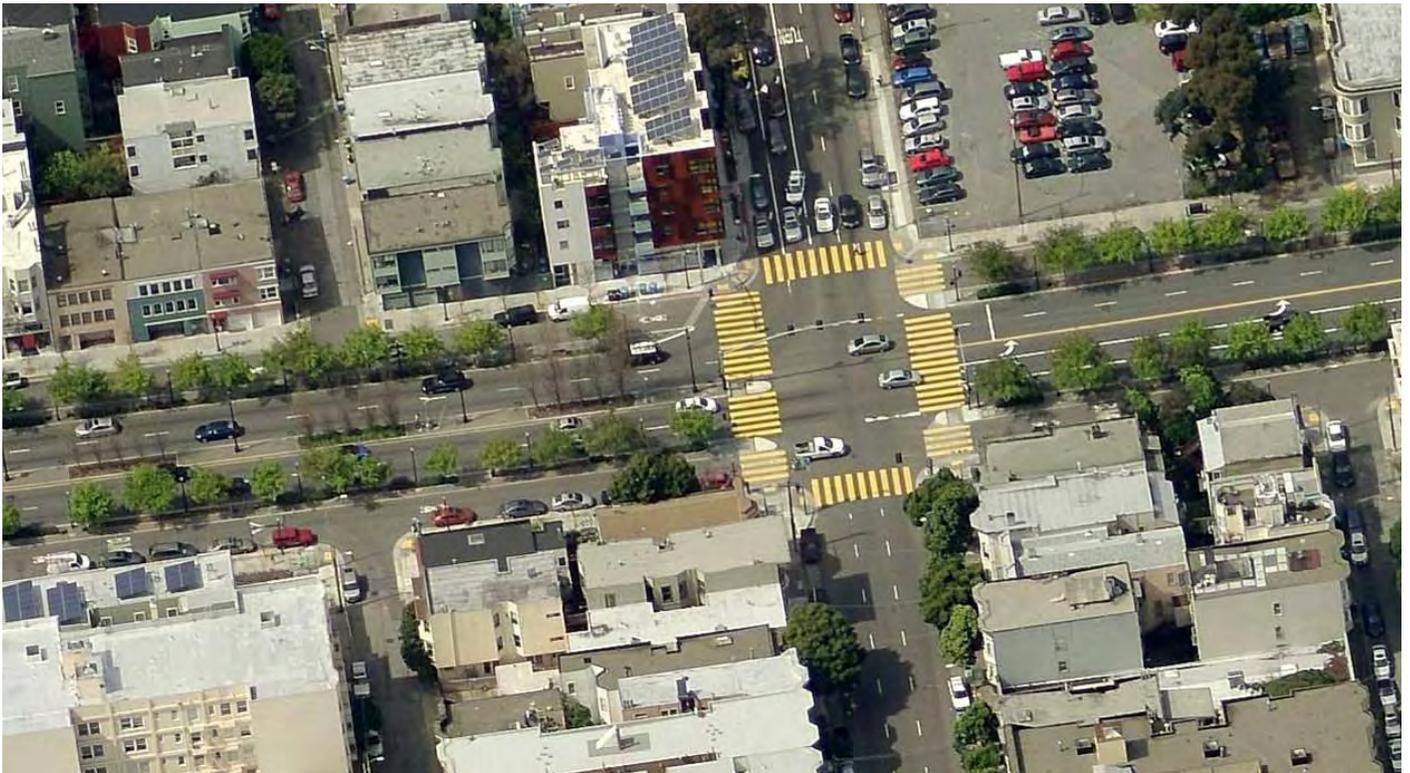
- Improve aesthetics and create gateways to the Town Center by replacing paved flush medians on NYS Route 146 with planted raised medians or other similar treatments (the section of NYS Route 146 from Maxwell Road to Clifton Country Road might be less complicated than the section from Clifton Country Road to the Northway ramps)
- Consider creating a grade-separated bicycle/pedestrian crossing of NYS Route 146 at Clifton Country Road. With existing slopes the highway is somewhat elevated above the surrounding parcels - perhaps an attractively designed tunnel could be constructed here.



*Above:* Examples of bicycle/pedestrian tunnels. Something like this could be an eventual solution for getting people across NYS Route 146 safely.

*Long-term:*

- Consider the possibility of a “road diet” (narrowing travel lanes or shoulders or eliminating some of them to provide more space for pedestrians and bicyclists) for NYS Route 146. It is understood that this corridor carries a high volume of traffic today; but with the consideration of possible east-west street connections throughout the study area (including perhaps over I-87) and alternative scenarios for the reconstruction of Exit 9 (to be studied in the future), it might be possible to reduce the number of lanes through the corridor.
- In addition to the design concepts for NYS Route 146 considered during the Exit 9 Study, the concept of a *multiway boulevard* should be explored as a possible alternative for this corridor. A multiway boulevard carries thru traffic on its center, arterial lanes and local traffic on local streets located on the outside of the boulevard. The center arterial portion of the boulevard is separated from the outer local streets by wide planted medians. This type of configuration might allow the corridor to continue carrying a high volume of traffic while also creating an attractive, walkable environment - suitable for Town Center style development - along the boulevard’s outer edges. The viability of this alternative for NYS Route 146 should be considered as part of any future study of the corridor and the Exit 9 interchange.



*Above: Octavia Boulevard – a new multiway boulevard in San Francisco, California. This type of street configuration should be considered as one of the long-term alternatives for NYS Route 146 in Clifton Park.*

## 7. Complete sidewalk and pathway system within the study area and to/from the study area to other parts of Town

The Town's pathway system (bicycle and pedestrian paths adjacent to, but separate from the road) is considered to be a great asset for the community. The pathway system penetrates into the Town Center area in several places, creating connections to other parts of Clifton Park. In addition to being a simple and efficient way to make it easier for residents to get around Town, the system of pathways contributes to the unique character of Clifton Park. This system should continue to be maintained and expanded as resources allow.



*Above: The Town's pathway system is considered an asset and should be expanded.*

Sidewalks should be considered an integral component of the Town Center's infrastructure. Though sidewalks do exist in the Town Center area today, the sidewalk system contains many gaps. This must be corrected as redevelopment of the Town Center occurs. Ultimately, all streets in the Town Center should have sidewalks on both sides.

*Below: There are gaps in the Town Center's sidewalk system today.*

The Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Study contained numerous recommendations for improving bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout the area. A few additional opportunities were identified as part of this study. They included:



- Sitterly Road - needs better pedestrian accommodations - especially in consideration of a new urgent care facility now under construction
- The pathway system along Moe Road should be expanded south to the Exit 8 area - many neighborhoods to the south would like to be better connected to the library and the Town Center area in general
- Bicycle and pedestrian connections should also be expanded to the other major activity centers to the west of the Study Area - the school district campus, and Clifton Commons.
- All new streets within the nodes should have sidewalks. Outside of the nodes, either sidewalks or pathways could be appropriate depending on the setting.

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## 8. Additional Ideas / Recommendations

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Several additional ideas / recommendations for the study area were identified over the course of developing this plan. Though none is recognized here as a big idea on its own, that should not be interpreted as meaning that these ideas are not important. Given limited time and resources, these ideas were simply not explored at length in discussions with the committee or the public. Any of them could certainly be the subject of further study going forward.

Additional Ideas / Recommendations include:

- Diversify the types of activities in the Town Center

In conversations about the future of the Town Center, many people had suggestions about specific activities that should be located in the area. For example, adding more activities for young people to do after school (perhaps an indoor/outdoor venue, a teen center, a club or juice bar, etc.) was a common suggestion. Others included a permanent Farmer's Market, a museum or an arts and sciences center, and a wider diversity of retail options (different types of merchandise and a greater mix of local, regional, and national retailers).

- Create an "Arts District" in the northeast quadrant of the study area

Though the study area for this Town Center Plan extended east of the Northway (I-87) to the Town's boundary with Halfmoon, the focus of attention remained on the west side of the Northway. There are at least a couple of reasons for this. First, as has already been discussed, the Northway is a significant barrier to east-west movement in the study area. With the exception of the congested NYS Route 146 underpass at Exit 9 and Sitterly Road at the southern edge of the study area, connections from one side to the other do not currently exist. The second reason is because the area on the east side of the Northway is oriented to Route 9. The Route 9 Corridor has a character of its own and any changes there would be dependent on long-term coordination and cooperation with the Town of Halfmoon; whereas changes on the west side of the Northway can be led by the Town of Clifton Park on its own. Transportation issues for the Route 9 Corridor are being explored as part of the ongoing I-87/US Rt. 9 Integrated Corridor Management Plan.

Still, there were some ideas suggested for the east side of the Northway. One was the notion of creating an "Arts District" in the northeast quadrant of the study area. This older neighborhood, once known as the hamlet of Stevens Corners and later Clifton Park Village, includes the historic Clifton Park Hotel on the corner of Old Route 146 and Route 9. The Beekman Street Arts District in Saratoga Springs was cited as an example.

- Enhance Stormwater Management

With all of the buildings and pavement in the study area stormwater management is an existing issue. In particular, there are locations in the southern portion of the study area that are prone to flooding during larger rain events. In order for the Town Center to grow as envisioned in this plan, an integrated stormwater management program for the area may be warranted. Rather than dealing with stormwater on a site by site basis, a coordinated strategy could result in better environmental and urban design outcomes.



*Above: Existing stormwater management facilities in the study area.*

- Develop incentives and educational materials to encourage green building techniques and green infrastructure in the Town Center

As redevelopment occurs in the study area, green building techniques and green infrastructure should be strongly encouraged or required as appropriate. Building and adding density in the Town Center, where development has already occurred over many years and infrastructure such as roads, water, and sewer already exist, is an environmentally friendly alternative to spreading more development elsewhere in the Town and the region. Redevelopment of these areas also creates an opportunity to utilize the newest energy and resource efficient building techniques. Elements such as solar panels, geothermal heating and cooling, green roofs, shade trees, porous paving, rain gardens, and similar features should be considered for use throughout the Town Center.

Though these techniques are increasingly being utilized by the local development community on their own, the Town could encourage their use through the establishment of development incentives or by providing educational materials to builders/developers. This type of proactive approach

with the development community for the Town Center could also provide an opportunity to market the Town Center area as a green district. The Town could even consider some form of official recognition for this, such as the LEED-ND designation from the U.S. Green Building Council (LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design; the ND - Neighborhood Development certification is one of the rating systems developed by the USGBC to provide “independent, third-party verification that a development’s location and design meet accepted high levels of environmentally responsible, sustainable development”).



*Above: Green infrastructure in Niagara Falls, NY – an example of stormwater management that is environmentally friendly and aesthetically appealing.*

- Establish a local shuttle bus, trolley, or jitney service loop for the Town Center

As Town Center redevelopment progresses in the coming years and at least portions of the study area become more dense and walkable, a local shuttle bus, trolley, or jitney service loop could be established to link the northern and southern nodes. This could be a public/private partnership between the Town and the owners/developers of the new mixed-use areas within each node. It might also be possible to contract with the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) to operate the service.

- Consider the use of roundabouts at certain intersections

Though not really part of the scope of this study, residents were understandably interested in discussing specific transportation issues. For example, the topic of roundabouts was one that inspired many opinions. There was a fair amount of skepticism expressed about large, multi-lane roundabouts on high volume roads such as the one proposed in the Exit 9 study for the intersection of NYS Route 146 and Clifton Country Road. However, small one-

lane roundabouts for local roads were viewed much more favorably and suggested as a possible alternative at several current and future intersections during the design workshop.

- Integrate the Town Center into long-term/regional transportation planning efforts

Outside of a pair of park-and-ride locations (east side of the Northway) for commuter bus service to Albany, the existing Exit 9 commercial district has not been able to support a significant investment in public transportation. A recent trial service by the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) did not generate enough ridership to warrant continuation according to CDTA. This is not surprising given the low density, automobile oriented environment that currently exists in the study area. However, if the Town Center vision is implemented as described in this report, the future possibilities for public transportation here will be greatly improved.

There were several suggestions in the public design workshop and the final public meeting that appeared to recognize this opportunity for the future. For example, the notion of integrating a future transit station (bus, rail) somewhere in the study area was discussed. One idea, illustrated below, was to locate a transportation hub adjacent to the Northway Corridor where some future enhanced bus or rail service might perhaps be developed in the future.



*Above:* Sketch concept of a future transit hub adjacent to the Northway.

This location could be integrated with a new east-west street over (or under) the Northway linking the redeveloped Clifton Park Center to The Crossing shopping center. This location would allow residents of the new Town Center to walk to the transit station and take the bus or train to other parts of the region. This type of scenario imagines the Town Center as a Transit Oriented Development (TOD). There are many definitions of TOD; one describes it as “moderate-to-higher density development, located within an easy walk of a major transit stop, generally with a mix of residential, employment, and shopping opportunities designed for pedestrians without excluding the automobile (Bay Area Rapid Transit Authority).”

At this time it is not known what, if any, significant transit investment the region will ultimately make in terms of transportation to/from Saratoga County. The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) has explored and continues to study several alternatives through its *New Visions 2035* Regional Transportation Plan. The Town of Clifton Park should continue to participate in the regional planning process and look for opportunities to integrate the proposed Town Center into these discussions.

- Consider whether there should be a common architectural style for the Town Center

Though zoning changes and some form of design guidelines or standards will be necessary to guide development / redevelopment in the Town Center, it is unclear whether a common architectural style should be identified for new buildings. While site design (or urban design) is a critical factor in creating the type of walkable, mixed-use center of activity that is envisioned here, and broad architectural rules (dealing with how the building façade addresses the street) should be followed, the question of “style” is something more discretionary.



*Above: a common architectural style does not currently exist in the Study Area.*

A common style does not exist here today, but the Town of Clifton Park does contain some historic buildings and districts that could be used to inform the selection of an architectural style if one is desired. A consistent style across the district could be considered unifying, or monotonous, depending on one's perspective.

- Seek opportunities to improve the appearance of the Town Center area from the Northway (I-87)

Currently, the area along the west side of I-87 does not take full advantage of the visual opportunity to portray the Town Center as a creative and attractive destination to be explored. Though the new urgent care facility under construction at the southern end of this strip (off Sitterly Road) will be an improvement, more should be done to enhance the appearance of this "visual gateway" to the



*Above: the appearance of this area immediately west of the Northway (circled in orange) should be improved to create a better image*

Town Center. Landscaped buffers to screen large parking and storage areas in the short-term and perhaps different types of uses and/or new buildings in the long-term should be considered for this location. The long-term notion of a transportation hub in this area could also create a more compelling visual entrance to the Town Center for those arriving via the Northway.

## Section V: Implementation

As intended, this Town Center Plan has established a consensus vision about the look, feel and function of a future town center in the town's existing Exit 9 commercial area. The process brought together town officials, business owners and landowners, and residents to explore land use and design alternatives that could transform this area into a more walkable, mixed-use (residential, commercial, and civic) center of activity for the Clifton Park community. It is hoped that this plan, once adopted, will guide future public policy, and public and private investments in the area for many years to come.

Achieving the vision, as described herein, will be a gradual, evolutionary process that will require long-term commitment from the community. The hard work of implementation cannot be left to chance, so this section of the plan describes some of the next steps for the Town of Clifton Park and its partners.

Ultimately, responsibility for the implementation of the plan rests with the Town Board as the elected representatives of the people. The actual work of implementation should be led by the Town's Planning Department. To help organize this effort, next steps have been prioritized as either short-term or medium-term below.

### *Short-term Actions*

Four (4) projects have been identified as the key preliminary steps that should be undertaken to start the process of implementation.

- Focus proactively on the opportunity sites

The opportunity sites within the southern and northern nodes (discussed in Section IV) were selected because there are few limitations to redevelopment and because there is known interest, on the part of the owners of these sites, in doing something at these locations. As noted at the start, the commercial area in Clifton Park is not stagnant. It continues to see investment even during these difficult economic times; and therefore the Town should be prepared to see proposals at any time.

Since a working relationship with the owners of these sites already exists, the Town should continue to engage them proactively to help shape their plans. A cooperative planning approach, with the Town at the table with the developers in the earliest phases of design, would ensure the ideas envisioned in this Town Center Plan are incorporated into potential projects from the beginning; before the developers invest heavily in the more detailed design and engineering associated with a formal proposal to the Planning Board.

- Develop Zoning and Design Guidelines/Standards for the Town Center Area

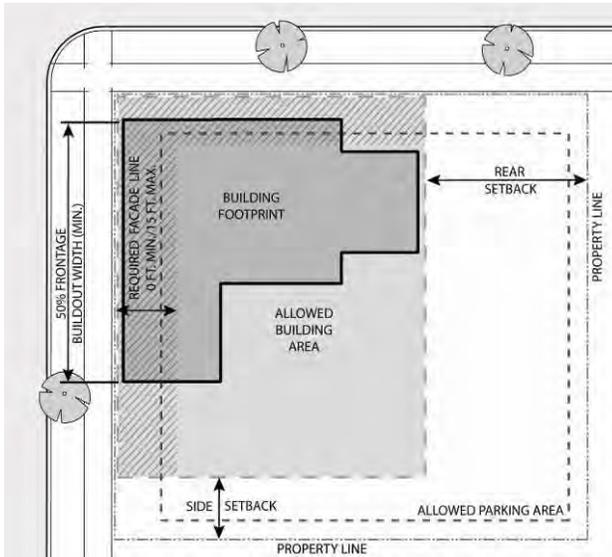
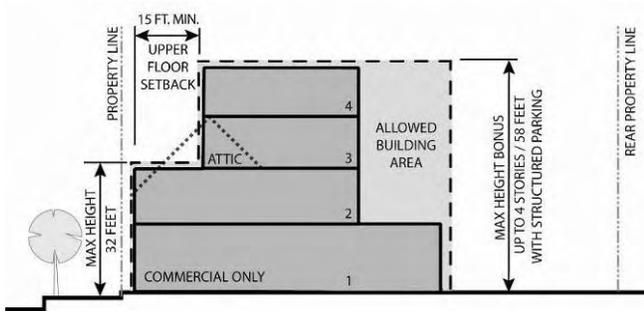
The Town's current zoning regulations would not permit the type of mixed-use, walkable Town Center envisioned in this plan. Though the Planned Development District (PDD) process does allow for some flexibility and creativity if applicants choose this path, it is a cumbersome process and it does not require outcomes that are consistent with the ideas described in this report.

"Zoning codes, frequently drafted by lawyers rather than designers, tend to be too free and flexible where more guidance is needed and too limiting where flexibility is appropriate. Typically, the most constraining inflexibility concerns zone boundaries and use limitations, especially prohibitions against mixed-use development. The most problematic over-flexibility is the lack of clear criteria to guide site planning, streetscape design, building massing and architectural form."

Roger K. Lewis, *Traditional Zoning Can't Meet the Challenge of Modern Development*, The Washington Post, July, 24, 2004

The existing commercial zoning district in this area should be replaced with one or more Town Center zoning districts. This district (or districts) should allow for a wide mix of uses across the area and within individual buildings; and it should direct future development and redevelopment proposals toward the types of urban design and architectural characteristics envisioned in this plan. Whether one district or several are warranted really depends on whether there are variations in what is desired for certain areas as compared to others. For example, the Town might wish to allow for a higher density of development (3 to 5 story buildings) and a more robust mix of uses at the center of each of the two nodes (northern and southern) with relatively lower densities (perhaps 2 to 3 stories) at the peripheries.

The new zoning should be richly illustrated or accompanied by and tied to design guidelines and/or standards that are richly illustrated. A highly visual code establishes a clear picture regarding what is desired and, therefore, greater predictability for applicants, review boards, and the general public. Newer types of regulations - such as Form-Based Codes - should also be considered here. Form-based codes, a fairly recent alternative to conventional zoning, are more flexible in terms of land use and more directive about the physical form of development (How do buildings relate to the street? What kind of outdoor spaces do they create?) These codes tend to make heavy use of graphics and illustrations and are more proactive and "results" oriented in terms of defining desired outcomes. The Smart Code ([www.smartcodecentral.org](http://www.smartcodecentral.org)) is a model or template for this type of zoning, but it must be calibrated and customized to fit local needs.



- A FRONT YARD PARKING BUFFER
- B FRONT YARD PERIMETER ISLAND
- C PERIMETER END OF ROW
- D SIDE YARD PARKING BUFFER
- E INTERNAL LANDSCAPED ISLAND
- F INTERMEDIATE LANDSCAPED ISLAND
- G BUILDING PERIMETER
- H RESIDENTIAL BUFFER < 30 FEET
- I RESIDENTIAL BUFFER > 30 FEET

Whether the Town of Clifton Park decides to adapt its current zoning code to create a new Town Center zoning district (or districts) with associated design guidelines and standards, adopt a completely different approach such as a Form-Based Code for the Town Center, or develop a hybrid approach is largely a matter of comfort. Any of these approaches could yield good results if they are carefully crafted to fit the unique circumstances present in Clifton Park. It will be important to remember that the Clifton Park Town Center is not a blank slate; and that redevelopment here will take place in incremental steps over many years. The new regulations that are created must respect the gradual nature of change that is expected here, and must balance the desire to see the area transformed with the realities of a step by step transition. The rules should be viewed as encouraging investment. If they are overly cumbersome, or if they do not consider how incremental change can be reviewed and approved, they will not succeed. Ultimately under the new zoning, good development - moving the community toward the desired vision for the Town Center - should be easy to identify and should receive approval quickly. Development proposals that do not respect the vision for the Town Center should also be easy to identify and should not move forward.

Revising the Town's zoning for this area should receive high priority. In fairness to the land owners and residents who participated in this study, ensuring that the rules reflect the vision is a most basic step forward and will signal the community's seriousness about this initiative.

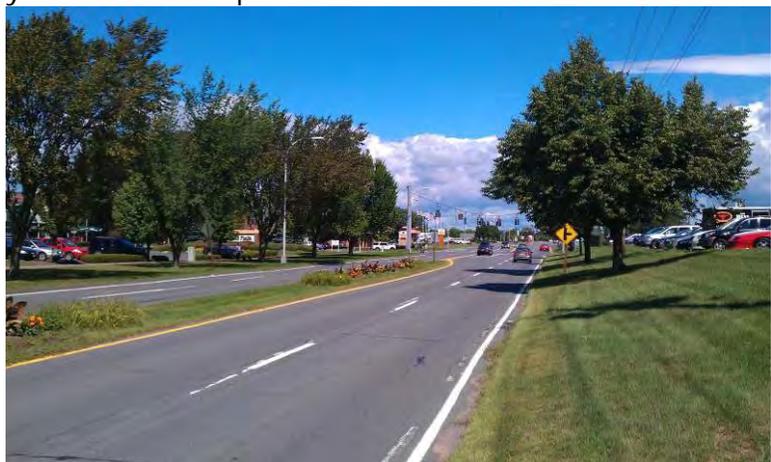
*Left: A highly visual code establishes a clear picture regarding what is desired*

Development of zoning is a fairly technical process. Therefore it is suggested that this work be led by the Town Planning Department and overseen by a small (3 to 5 person) advisory committee with representation from the Town Planning Board, the ZBA, and the Town Attorney's office. A consulting planning firm that understands the Town Center vision, with strong design skills and experience preparing these types of codes should be retained to assist the Town's staff and advisory committee with this work. Implementation funds through CDTC, or other sources of grant funding, could offset some of the cost of this effort. The primary landowners, other stakeholders, and the general public should be invited to participate in the process at key points so that the new rules are widely understood and embraced by most of the community before the Town Board must decide whether to adopt them.

- Redesign Clifton Country Road as "Main Street"

The portion of Clifton Country Road from NYS Route 146 south to Clifton Park Center Road should be considered for a redesign, and ultimately, reconstructed as a new "Main Street" for Clifton Park. Any redesign and reconstruction should incorporate complete streets concepts and green infrastructure techniques. Because this is a Town road, the Town of Clifton Park could initiate this project as soon as it is ready to proceed. The Town could fund this work on its own, with the assistance of grant funding (from CDTC or others), and/or in partnership with the key landowners along this corridor who would stand to benefit from the improvements. Because a major reconfiguration of the roadway cross-section is not envisioned (the addition of new lanes, for example, is probably not warranted), this project might be relatively inexpensive; yet it could be a catalyst for significant redevelopment that would jump start the transition of the entire area.

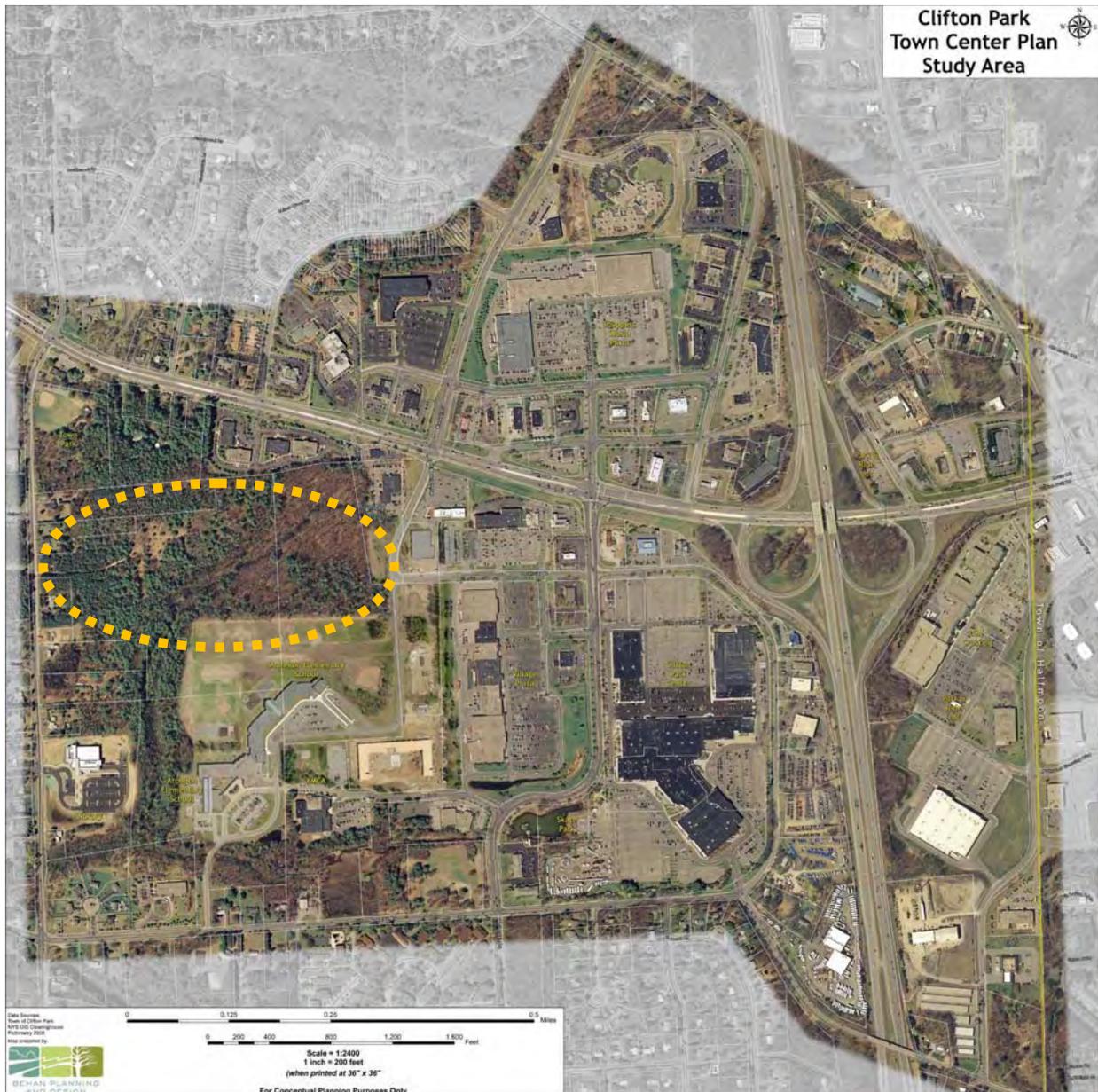
As a starting point, the Town should work with a design and engineering team to investigate the feasibility of this concept in more detail. Based on the outcome of that work, the Town would have a better understanding of the possible alternatives and the approximate cost of each so that an informed decision about whether to proceed could be reached. The key landowners along the corridor, other stakeholders, and the general public should again be invited to participate in this process.



*Above:* The redesign of Clifton Country Road into a "Main Street" for Clifton Park would probably not require a major reconfiguration of the roadway.

- Explore options for the school district property

Through the process of developing this plan, the parcel of undeveloped land owned by the Shenendehowa Central School District (between Moe Road and Maxwell Road Extension) has been identified as a major opportunity site for the Town of Clifton Park. The idea of using all or part of this property as some type of public space has been called a “once in a lifetime opportunity” and a “game changer” by residents who have participated in the public workshops.



*Above:* The large, undeveloped parcel of land owned by the school district (circled in orange) is a major opportunity site.

The Town of Clifton Park should continue the dialogue with the school district initiated through this process. Though it may be somewhat limited for development purposes due to site constraints, this property could play a critical role in supplying space for recreational and civic uses in the Town Center.

As a first step, it is recommended that the town create, in cooperation with the school district, a future use plan for the property. This plan would clarify what, if any, future use the school district might have for portions of the property and what portions are truly “non-essential” to the district’s core educational functions. The remainder of the property could then be creatively planned and designed for other public (recreational and civic) uses that would bring the vision for the Town Center more fully into focus. A closer examination of the land and its potential for different types of recreational and/or civic amenities would help to illustrate to the greater community the exciting possibilities that could be realized here.

If indeed the town and school district find that other recreational and civic uses can be accommodated on part of the property, the Town Board could decide whether the benefits to the community for those uses warrant purchase of that portion of the land. Any acquisition plan should include a financial element that would address ways to minimize the impact to taxpayers. For example, grant funding could be sought to help offset some of the cost. The Town could also look to the development community to help fund the acquisition and development of this site as a park/public space. One alternative would be for the Town to replace its current practice of requiring a percentage-based “green space” set aside for each development project in favor of developer contributions toward meaningful public space/parks throughout the Town Center. There are a number of formal mechanisms that could be utilized to achieve this – such as incentive zoning or mitigation fees through a GEIS. When a formal public space cannot or should not be created as part of an individual project, the Town could collect payments in lieu that would then be deposited in a dedicated Town Center Enhancements Fund. Another alternative would be for the Town to sell a small portion of the land (perhaps along Maxwell Road Extension or along the northern age closest to NYS Route 146) for limited private development consistent with the overall plan for the site, utilizing the revenue to offset some of the cost of acquisition and development of this park/public space.

### *Medium-term Actions*

Additional actions that should be undertaken over the next few years (2 to 4 years) include the following:

- Promote the Redesign and Eventual Reconstruction of NYS Route 146

An important future action for advancement of the Town Center will be for the Town to work within the regional framework to advance a more detailed study/redesign and ultimately reconstruction of the NYS Route 146 Corridor. Though it is understood that the NYSDOT has a growing number of projects that need attention and shrinking resources with which to do so, the Town of Clifton Park should continue to work with CDTC and the NYSDOT to move the NYS Route 146 (and perhaps Exit 9 at the same time) planning forward. That said it is understood that the phrase “medium term” is highly optimistic. The Town will do what it can to promote this project but it recognizes that it may take many years for a design and engineering effort to be initiated, and longer for actual reconstruction to take place. The Town should consider how to elevate this project higher on the list of regional priorities. Private sector (developer) contributions, for example, could become increasingly important in the region’s selection of priority transportation projects in coming years.

It is important to stress that any future redesign and reconstruction of NYS Route 146 should include a full evaluation of complete streets opportunities. The planning and design process must also consist of meaningful engagement with the Town and dialogue with the community.

In the meantime, nothing prevents the Town from exploring some of the smaller, incremental safety and aesthetic improvements to the NYS Route 146 corridor described in this report. The Town could seek developer contributions and/or grant funding through the CDTC Spot Improvement (for Bicycle and Pedestrian Access) Program to help fund these incremental improvements to specific intersections or stretches of the corridor.

- Establish a management entity for the Town Center

The Town Center (“Downtown Clifton Park”) would eventually benefit from the establishment of a management entity that could coordinate maintenance of the area (watering plants and flowers, clearing snow from sidewalks, emptying trash receptacles, and other similar activities for the benefit of the entire area), as well as marketing and other common needs. Eventually it may be necessary to institute a formal mechanism for accomplishing and funding these activities such as a Special Assessment District or Business Improvement District (BID). The Southern Saratoga Chamber of Commerce might be able to assist the Town in the organization of this entity.

## Appendix A

### Environmental Justice and Environmental Mitigation

## *Environmental Justice*

Increased attention has been given to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) related to its ability to balance overall transportation project mobility benefits against quality of life protection for low-income and minority residents of a community. President Clinton issued Executive Order 12898 to bring attention to the environmental and human health impacts of low-income and minority communities - referred to as environmental justice - when federal funding is involved. The goal of environmental justice review is to ensure that any adverse human health or environmental effects of a government action, such as a federally-supported roadway or transit project, does not disproportionately affect minority or low-income residents of a community or neighborhood. Environmental justice is a public policy objective that can help improve the quality of life for those whose interests have traditionally been overlooked.

The CDTC staff has completed a review of the civil rights/environmental justice impacts of transportation actions proposed under this study. Based on a review of the latest socioeconomic data available, the CDTC staff has determined that there is one traffic analysis zone (TAZ) in the Clifton Park Town Center Linkage Study Area identified as an Environmental Justice Target Population Area. All of the transportation recommendations for this study would provide fair access and do not result in negative impacts to any minority or low-income residents. However, additional information gathered through the public review process could suggest a different outcome. In addition, examination of regional equity impacts would be necessary if any transportation action is considered for inclusion in CDTC's Transportation Improvement Program at the time of the project proposal.

Equitable access to, consideration within, and effects of the design and implementation of federally assisted projects is also a key aspect of environmental justice. However, design and construction is the responsibility of implementing agencies in the region. For projects identified in this study, implementing agencies would either be the New York State Department of Transportation, Capital District Transportation Authority, Saratoga County, or the Town of Clifton Park.

Environmental Justice Target Population Areas are defined as any TAZ with low income, minority, or Hispanic populations equal to or greater than the regional average.

The regional averages are as follows:

Minority Population	11.2%
Hispanic Population	2.6%
Low Income Population	8.9%

## *Environmental Mitigation*

In 2005, SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) was enacted representing the largest surface transportation investment in U.S. history. Several separate planning factors were added along with an expansion of existing planning factors that must be addressed in the development of long-range metropolitan transportation plans. One such planning factor requires that the projects, strategies and services considered and provided for in the long-range plan must not only promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns, but also work to protect and enhance the environment.

In regards to environmental protection, SAFETEA-LU placed several new requirements both on the content and process of developing long-range regional transportation plans:

- There must be a discussion of the types of potential environmental mitigation activities, and potential areas in which to carry out these activities, that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the long-range regional transportation plan. This may focus on the plan's policies, programs, or strategies, rather than at a project-specific level and must be developed in consultation with federal, state and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation.
- Development of the plan shall involve, as appropriate, comparison of the transportation plan with state conservation plans or maps, and inventories and maps of natural or historic resources if available.

The Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program, through which the Clifton Park Town Center plan was funded, is an implementation activity related to the regional transportation plan. As such, a procedure was put in place to meet the federal environmental requirements. A mapping exercise was undertaken to identify any environmental resources that are within a 0.25 mile buffer of the project study area. If key resources are identified within the buffered study area, a discussion is then included in the final report highlighting items that may need additional review or evaluation as plan implementation actions are undertaken. This broad analysis is not designed to explore detailed design alternatives or impacts at a project level; detailed environmental analysis takes place during project development by the implementing agency. This exercise is a broad brush attempt to examine plan policies, strategies and actions to support regional environmental quality and to identify both opportunities and gaps.

In the case of the Clifton Park Town Center plan, two significant resources were identified within the study area: aquifers and wetlands. Streams are also present in the study area. The concepts identified within this plan will need to further consider these resources as projects are designed and land use regulations are amended. Stormwater management, green infrastructure and green building techniques are all tools that could reduce the overall environmental impacts of this plan and are discussed in the final report.

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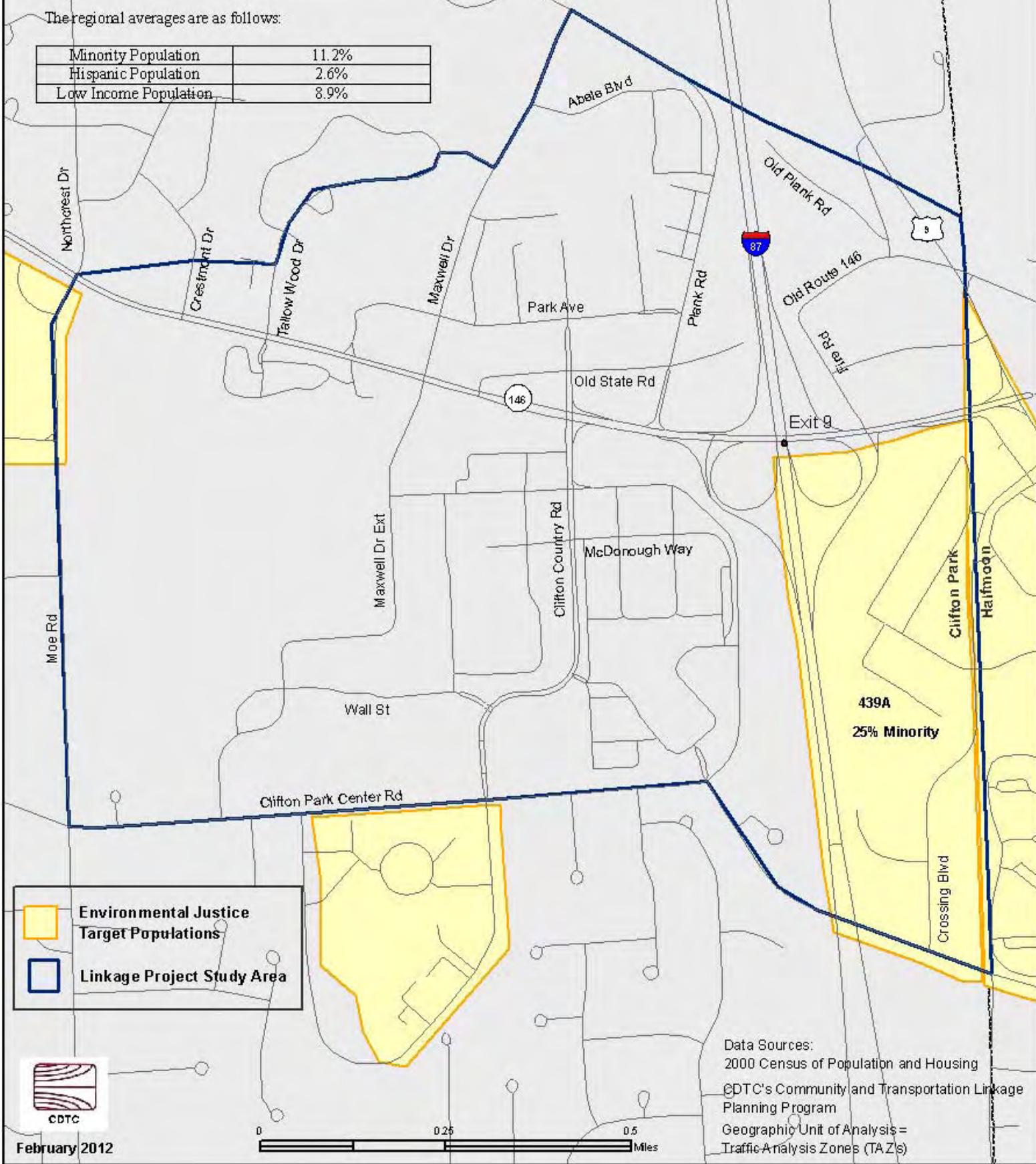
# Environmental Justice Populations within the Clifton Park Town Center Linkage Project Study Area



There are a total of 1 TAZ's in the Clifton Park Town Center Linkage Study Area that are identified as Environmental Justice Target Population Areas. EJ Target Population Areas are defined as any TAZ with low income, minority, or Hispanic populations equal to or greater than the regional average.

The regional averages are as follows:

Minority Population	11.2%
Hispanic Population	2.6%
Low Income Population	8.9%

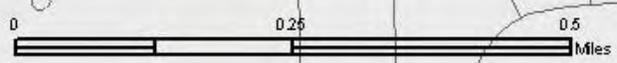


 Environmental Justice Target Populations

 Linkage Project Study Area



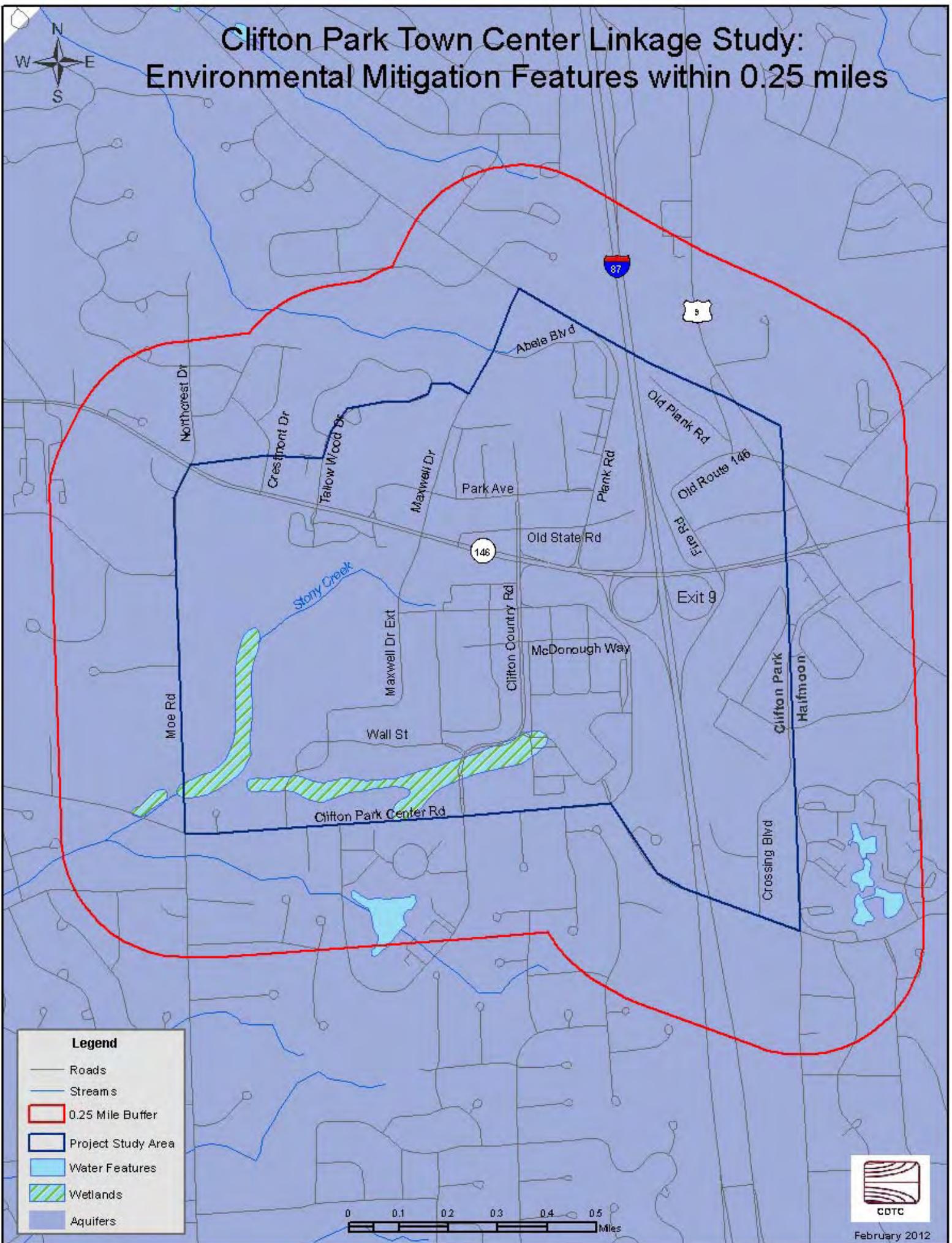
February 2012



Data Sources:  
 2000 Census of Population and Housing  
 CDTC's Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program  
 Geographic Unit of Analysis = Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs)

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# Clifton Park Town Center Linkage Study: Environmental Mitigation Features within 0.25 miles



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## Appendix B

### Pictometry Book - Town Center Study Area

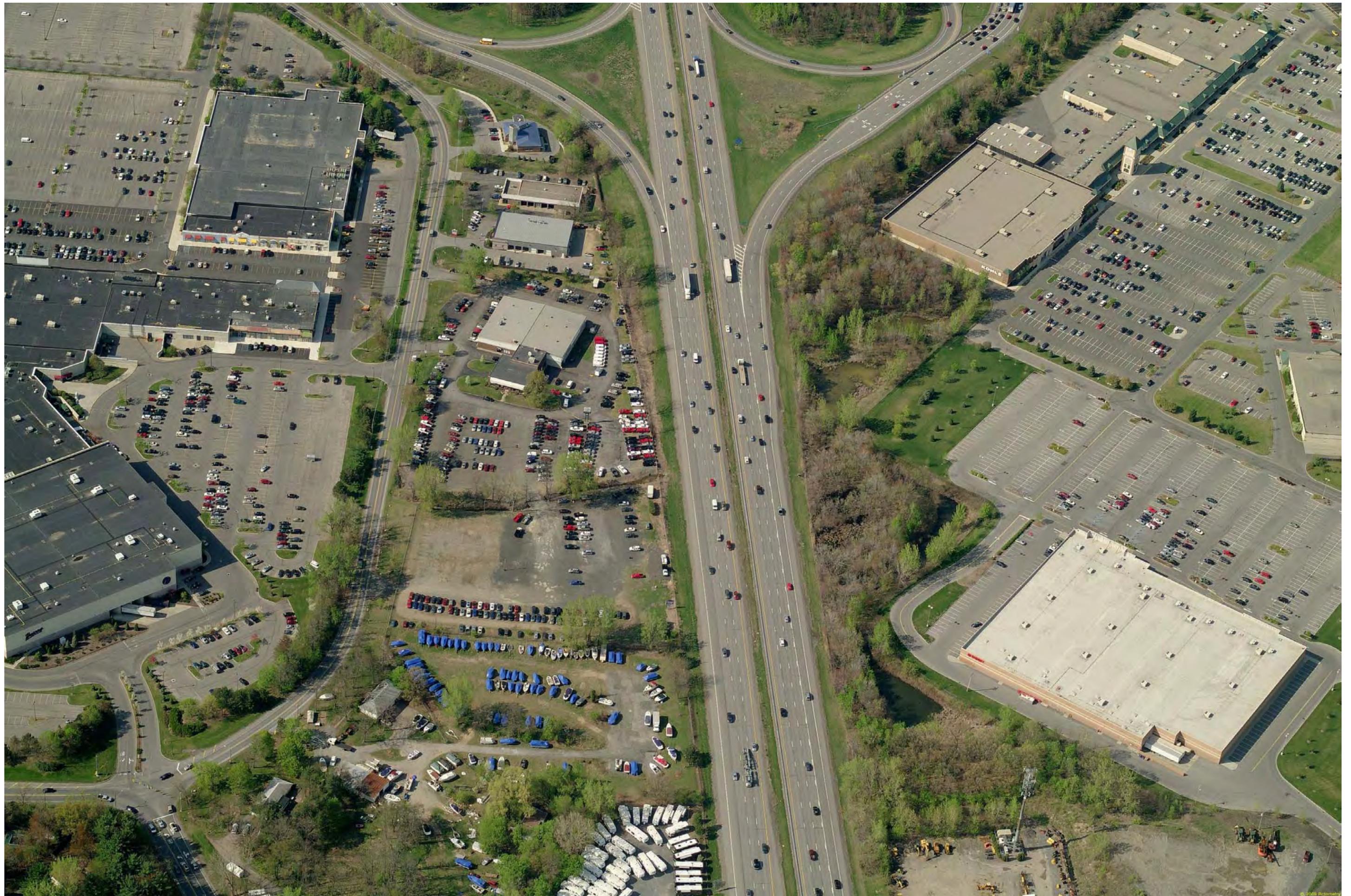
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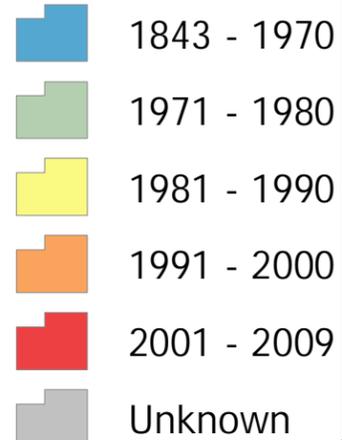
Appendix C  
Study Area Maps

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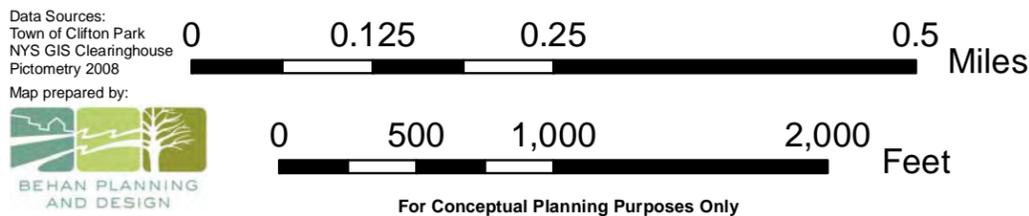
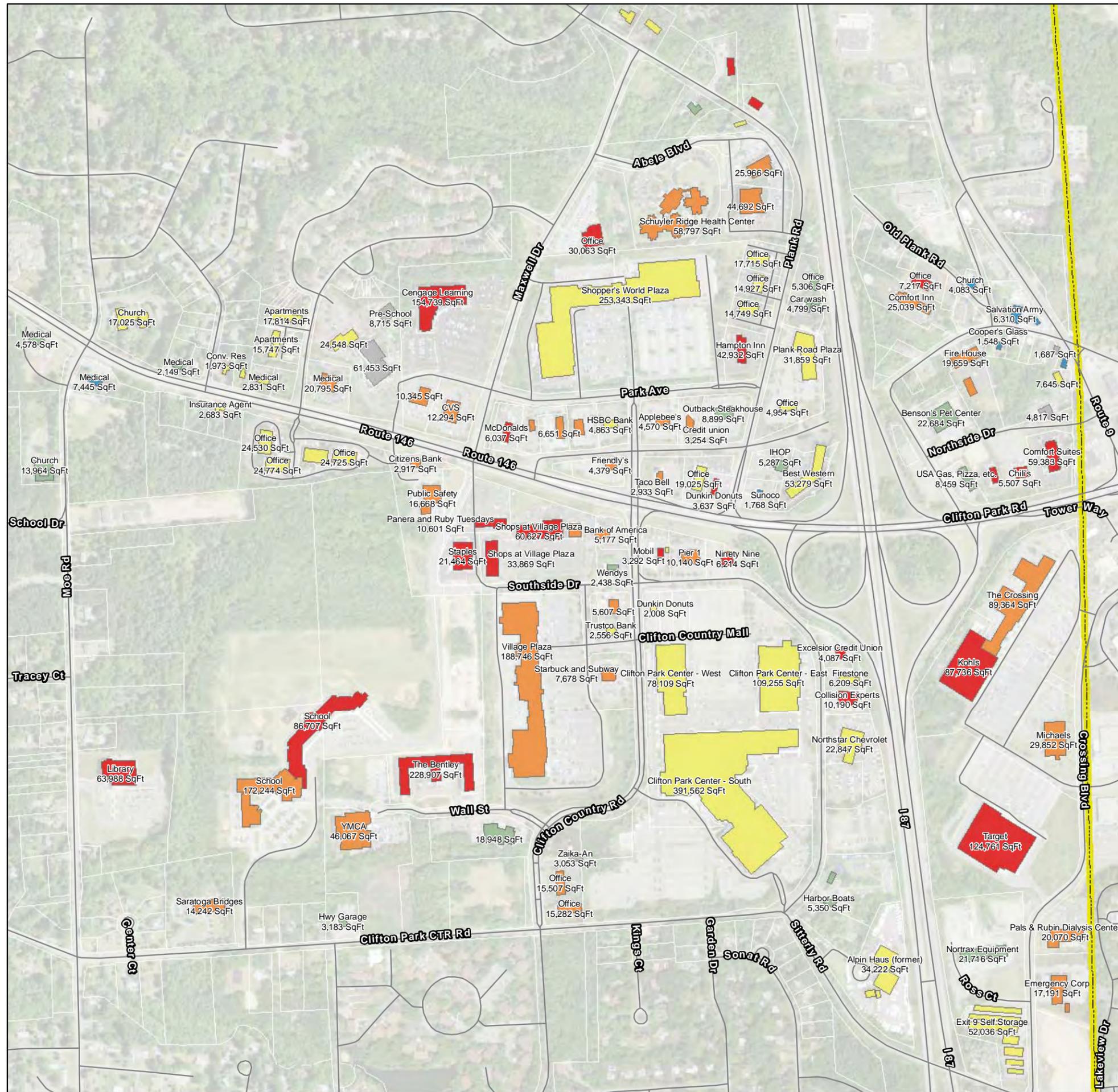


# Clifton Park Town Center Plan Non-Residential Building Data

## Year Built



**Non-residential within the study area:**  
**Approx. 3,529,000 total square feet**  
**Approx. 2,713,500 square feet footprint**  
**Median size approx. 9,000 square feet**  
**Median age approx. 20 years old**  
**Approx. 120 buildings**  
**26 2-story buildings**  
**One 3-story building**  
**Three 4-story building**  
*as of 2009*





# Clifton Park Town Center Plan Non-Residential Ownership

## Legend

- Shenendehowa Central
- Green, Donald C / CCM Associates of Clifton Park / Maxwell Drive LLC
- 18 Park Avenue LLC / Clifton Country Road / Northside, Partnership / Southside LLC / Two Clifton Country Road LLC
- Hollander, Sophie J
- The Crossing LLC / Exit 9 Self-Storage Inc
- Target Corporation
- Ymca Of Capital District
- Clifton Park Development, LLC / Phillips, Robert L / RSPJ Holding Company LLC
- SPV Properties LLC / Vinciguerra, Beatrice
- Town of Clifton Park
- Hollander, Barry

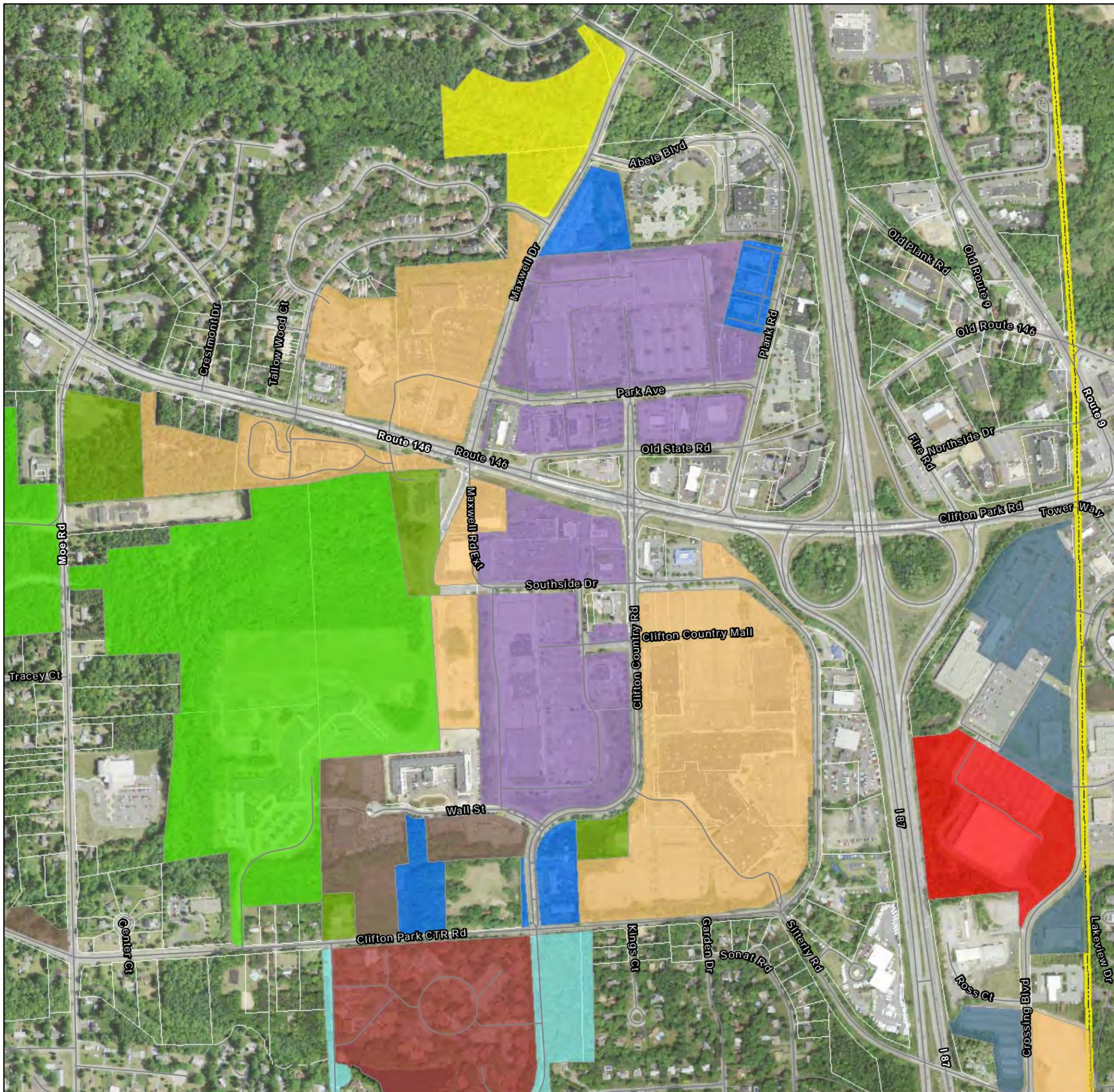
*Top 10 (plus Town) Landholders by acres  
- grouped by common mailing address*

Data Sources:  
Town of Clifton Park  
NYS GIS Clearinghouse  
Pictometry 2008

Map prepared by:



For Conceptual Planning Purposes Only



## Appendix D

Meeting notes - Public Design Workshop - June 7-9, 2011

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# Clifton Park Town Center Public Design Workshop



June 7<sup>th</sup> – June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011



## Meeting Notes



DOVER, KOHL & PARTNERS  
town planning

**Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011**  
**6:30- 8:30 PM**  
**Public Workshop - Part 1**  
**Introductory Presentation and Discussion**

Supervisor Phil Barrett welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their time. After a few brief introductory remarks he turned the meeting over to John Scavo, Director of Planning. Mr. Scavo provided some background information about the study and its partners, then introduced John Behan, Principal of Behan Planning and Design. Mr. Behan thanked the Town for selecting the Behan Planning and Design Team to work once again with the Clifton Park community on this important study.

Following the introductory remarks, Michael Welti from Behan Planning and Design and Andrew Zitofsky from Dover, Kohl & Partners presented information about the study area and some “food for thought” from elsewhere in the state and the nation related to the retrofitting of suburban retail areas into mixed-use, walkable town centers. The presentation, and in particular the images and examples from elsewhere, were intended to stimulate thinking about the future of this area of Clifton Park in advance of the Hands-On Design Exercise that was to take place the following night.

Following the presentation, Mr. Welti and Mr. Zitofsky asked the audience to think about the future of the Clifton Park Town Center Study Area and answer two questions:

*What issues and concerns do you have?*

*What opportunities do you see?*

Public comments from this facilitated discussion included the following:

- Plans must reflect the character of our community and help create an identity for Clifton Park
- Architecture and details should have an appropriate aesthetic and fit within the identity of the Town Center.
  - Lighting and signs
  - Overhangs and other features to provide pedestrians with protection from elements and a sense of comfort
- What is the function of a Town Center?
  - What are we trying to achieve?
- Coordinate with the development community
  - Need cooperation to achieve complete streets and continuous sidewalks
  - Public/private partnership
- Clifton Park / Halfmoon – think of as one whole for planning
- Difficult to cross streets (not just 146)
  - Moe
  - Push-button pedestrian traffic signals
- Consider area west of study area
- NY 146 has a sidewalk on the south, more walking on the north
  - Address the north side

- Parking
  - Carefully designed
  - Underneath? Behind buildings?
  - Park-once environment – people still drive to the area but don't need to drive within the area
  - Sharing parking between different uses
  - Don't provide excessive parking but provide realistic amounts
  - On-street parking – teaser spaces
  - Can it be consolidated to free up opportunity sites?
- Climate – will people walk?
  - If streets and spaces are designed right, people will walk. Learn from study of examples in similar climate
- Long term passes or membership for transit
- Transit should be supported by community form – walkability helps
- Logical straightforward walking paths from parking to destination
  - Continuous pedestrian paths on north side of NY 146
- Walkability – people may arrive by car, but should be able to get around on foot once they are here. Make it pedestrian-friendly, park-once environment
- Bike racks, trail head parking
- Plan for teenagers
- Mom and pop stores. Neighborhood commercial closer to home can shorten distances travelled
- Focus on variety and diversity in stores. Not too much of the same thing
- How do we pay for this?
- Change – how do we achieve all this?
  - Change can happen in small steps, but focus on building complete spaces
  - Zoning changes needed
  - Specific implementation steps needed
- Ecosystem services – let nature do some of the work for us: air quality, keeping sidewalks free of snow
  - Stormwater management needs to be improved; runoff needs to be managed to protect streams, water bodies and prevent erosion and damage to the communities infrastructure
  - Look at springs / hydrology. Bear Brook Stream
- Exit 9 Linkage Study

Following the facilitated discussion, Mr. Welti and Mr. Zitofsky encouraged the audience to attend the Hands-On Design Exercise the following night and to remind or bring friends and neighbors. Before adjourning participants were also asked to provide additional written comments on note cards if they had more to say. The note cards contained the same two questions that we used to frame the facilitated discussion above.

Grouped into topical categories, additional written responses turned in on the note cards included the following:

*What issues and concerns do you have about the town center area?*

### Pedestrian Connections

- Walkability- it is very challenging to walk or bike across Route 146
  - sidewalks on the north side of Route 146
  - connections over the Northway (I-87)
  - connection from Crescent Road to Route146
- Provide bike racks near businesses
- Connection to the library

### Vehicular transportation

- Speed issues
- Roundabouts- do they belong here?
- Congestion- especially traffic coming off Northway
- Traffic lights and signs impede traffic flow- takes too long to get through the study area
- New East- West vehicular connections are needed to lighten congestion on Route 146
- Busing to nearby housing and apartments

### Public Space

- Reclaim public space
- Gardens
- More public spaces
- Small green spaces/pocket parks
- Event space
- Benches

### Buildings

- Reduce chain store use
- Include a teen center
- Buildings should be more Victorian or 'village' look- no 'salt box' stores
- More specialty/ unique businesses
- Mixed use buildings
- Buildings should face the road

### Parking

- Too many parking lots
- Green space should be included in parking lots
- Parking garages – do they belong or are they too unsafe and costly
- Underutilized parking

## Environmental

- Sustainability
- Excess removal of mature trees
- More trees
- Stormwater management

## Other

- How are the private business owners going to be persuaded to support this initiative?
- “Mobility challenged” how will they be considered in the overall design?
  - Individual motorized vehicles such as scooters for these people to get around more easily
  - Trolley system
  - Specialized street crossing systems
- Winter weather- snow removal
- What is the time frame on this project?
- People need a reason to STAY in the area
- Incorporate history and art into design

*What do you see as opportunities to make the town center area a better place?*

## Pedestrian Connections

- Create a more enjoyable walking space
- Connect surrounding neighborhoods and communities
- Pedestrian overpasses
- Connect library to the Town Center

## Vehicular transportation

- Local bus memberships
- Roundabouts:
  - Creates challenges for pedestrian crossings
  - Improve traffic flow

## Public Space

- Create pedestrian zones- look at Ithaca
- Farmers market with local produce
- Well-designed green open spaces

## Buildings

- Relocate the town hall as an anchor in the Town Center
- Height limits on buildings
- Mixed use buildings
- More housing options

- Diversity in businesses to attract more people
- A Clifton Park history museum

### Parking

- Parking garages to reduce the number of surface parking lots
- Turn current parking lots into landscape pedestrian zones or other uses
- Centralize parking
- Shared parking between different types businesses

### Environmental

- Reinforce the stream that goes through the site
- Efficient lighting codes
- Green infrastructure
- Nature Reserves

### Other

- Historic connections to help create and identity in the Town Center
- Create a rural feel
- Children and teens need to be included
- Provide more services in the town center- post office, town hall etc.
- Take advantage of the development in the area due to Global Foundries

**Wednesday, June 8th, 2011**

**9:30 AM – 4:00 PM**

**Drop-in / Observation**

During the course of the day, the planning and design team (Behan Planning and Design and Dover, Kohl & Partners) along with Town Planning Department staff worked in the library meeting room. Members of the community dropped-in to share ideas while the design team tested some preliminary concepts for the study area in consideration of the public comments from Tuesday night and their walking tour of the study area completed Tuesday afternoon. Also during the course of the day, members of the planning and design team and town staff met with several stakeholders to discuss their ideas for the study area. These stakeholders were primarily landowners and developers who had some direct interest (investment) in the study area. The meetings provided an opportunity for these stakeholders to share their ideas and visions for their properties and for the planning and design team to learn more about their specific issues or concerns. It also gave the town and the consultant team an opportunity to explain the purpose and goals of this study to the stakeholders in person so that they could understand and ask questions, and hopefully view this effort as a mutually beneficial one.

**Wednesday, June 8th, 2011**

**4:30- 8:30 PM**

**Public Workshop - Part 2**

**Hands-On Design Exercise**

From 4:30 to 5:30 members of the community arrived for a small reception that provided an opportunity to mingle and discuss the study area informally with town staff and the consultant team. At 5:30, the evening workshop began with an introductory presentation by Mr. Welti and Mr. Zitofsky. For the benefit of those who were unable to attend the previous night, this shortened presentation followed the same general outline as Tuesday evening's presentation - background about the study and the study area as well as "food for thought" from elsewhere to inspire creative thinking about the future of the Clifton Park Town Center.

Following the presentation participants were provided with instructions for the Hands-on Design Exercise. Divided into small groups with facilitators from the consultant team, participants spent the next 75 to 90 minutes discussing, writing, and drawing their ideas on maps of the study area.

At the conclusion of the Hands-On Design Exercise, a representative from each group was asked to summarize the main ideas from their group's discussion. Grouped into topical categories, the main ideas generated from all the groups included the following:

Pedestrian Connections

- Some sidewalks just end
- Extend pathways from Clifton Country Road to connect the YMCA, the Library the Bentley and the elementary schools.
- Connect library to the retail environment
- Connect the trail along Moe Rd. from Engelmores Rd. to Crescent Rd.
- Pedestrian bridges across the Northway and possibly over Route 146

- Pedestrian crossings under Route 146
- Improve the YMCA trail
  - It is not safe at night
  - Swampy and hard to walk
  - The trail should become more formal and more known
- Bike lanes should have stop signs at all street crossings
- Bike racks
- Tree lined walks from building to building and through parking lots
- Walkable for seniors and disabled

### Streets / Transportation

- Create a 'main street'
  - Clifton Country Rd. north/south spine; across Route 146?
  - Route 146
- Break up Route 146 into a multi-way boulevard
  - Higher volumes in the middle lanes with slower speed local traffic on the side streets (physically separated parallel one-way auxiliary or collector-distributor lanes flanking thru lanes of Route 146)
  - The side streets are more pedestrian friendly – slow traffic, probably on-street parking, with new buildings facing the “street”
  - Having medians and this traffic break up makes it easy and safer to cross the street
- Create a grid network to provide more east/west connections to reduce congestion on Route 146
- Energy efficient shuttle or jitney service to get people around the Town Center and other nearby locations
- Purchase the unused land from Shenendehowa and build a road to connect the Town Center at Southside Dr. with Moe Road.
- Close off Old Route 146 median behind the Friendly's to make it safer for drivers going to Price Chopper Plaza
- Roundabouts- do they belong? Include one on Sitterly Road
- A possible Northway exit at Sitterly Road (Exit 8B)
- Line Route 146 with trees
- Connection between Maxwell Dr. Extension and Wall St.
- Connection between Southside Drive on the east to Clifton Country Road through the mall plaza
- Revisit the highway on-ramps (configuration of Exit 9)
- Provide visual clues for drivers to slow down

### Public Space

- Year round farmers market
- A town green or passive green space- for movies, picnics, walking
- Cultural uses needed- museums, community theater, etc.
- Pocket parks for passive recreation
- A small concert venue, like Northern Lights
- A place for teens to hang out- a juice bar, a club
- Create an arts district
  - Old State Road near Old Route 9 and Old Plank Roads

- Community garden
- Turn the unused land currently owned by Shenendehowa into a park (like the Crossings in Colonie)
  - This space could also have hiking trails and could connect to Collin's Park
- Large park near pond
- A public greenway with benches and other amenities

### Buildings

- Dense residential, 3-4 story condos (Like those in Saratoga); how dense?
- Residential buildings- increase the number of residential areas
  - In the mall area
  - Shoppers World plaza
  - Along the north side of Clifton Park Center Rd.
- LEED certified structures
- Relocate the Town Hall and the Post Office
  - At the terminus of Clifton Country Rd on either the north or the south side
  - Along the south side Route 146 near the intersection with Maxwell Dr.
- Architectural standards and guidelines
- Architecture should reflect the farming history of Clifton Park
- Mixed use- residential and offices above retail
- Avoid big box stores
- Stores should face streets
- Use the old Steven's Tavern on Route 9
- Mix of residential types
  - Such as condos, townhouses, single family etc.
  - Transition zone improvements ( where the Town Center meets the neighborhood)

### Parking

- Condense parking near new hotel and theater
- Keep parking close to stores (because the population is aging)
- Infill many of the parking lots with mixed use buildings and pocket parks
- Shared parking lots
- Multi- purpose parking lots
- Parking garages
- Decrease parking requirements

### Environmental

- Sustainability principles- Bike share or car share, green roofs, solar panels, storm water management, pervious parking lots, solar panels, LEED Certified buildings
- Reestablish the draining area
- More green, and trees to reduce runoff, and heat island effect
- Uncover the stream in certain parts of the study area
- Preserve the green space between Village Plaza and the elementary school complex
- Reestablish drainage areas

## Other ideas

- Create a gateway and identify a main street focal point; sense of arrival
- Arts and science programs for after school activities (especially for teens)
- Create interesting destinations for all ages
- Town zoning needs to follow the vision for the Town Center
- More tourist friendly
- Make Clifton Park a place people want to stay; provide opportunities for visitors and residents alike
- Create complete streets
  - With sidewalks, green space, medians, etc.
  - Pedestrian friendly street wall
  - Make it safer and easier for pedestrians
  - More like a small “downtown” street, which is safer for pedestrians

Following the summary reports from each of the groups the meeting was adjourned for the evening. Participants also had an opportunity to provide additional written comments or suggestions on a worksheet that was handed out at the end of the session. Though not many people had the remaining energy to provide additional written ideas, the following thoughts were collected:

*Of the many ideas you heard tonight which ones seem most exciting to you?*

- Accessibility to walk/bike
- Public green space/pocket parks
- Establishing architectural standards for the Town Center
- Mixed use buildings
- Storm water management
- Green infrastructure- green roofs

*What is the ultimate future for the Clifton Park Town Center?*

- Walkability
- Connections to the public spaces, businesses, and services
- Greener
- Gathering spaces for public events
- Cultural center
- Mixed use buildings with shopping/businesses and housing all in the Town Center
- A destination with a variety of activities for people to do
- Farmers market

*Additional Comments*

- Making Route 146 a boulevard near the mall with trees down the center
- Trees in the medians- near Shoppers World Plaza and Clifton Country Road
- Need to consider the older community members and those that are less mobile

**Thursday, June 9th, 2011**

**9:30 AM - Noon**

**Wrap-Up**

**Drop-in / Observation**

The consultant team, Town planning staff, and members of the Study Advisory Committee convened to review ideas generated from Wednesday evening's Hands-On Design Exercise. Members of the team that participated in the stakeholder meetings during the day Wednesday also shared some of the main findings from those meetings. For example, it was noted that only limited expansion of new buildings into parking lots would be possible (in the short-term) as most existing parking is protected and restricted by lease agreements with tenants. Many of these agreements are of a long-term nature and should be taken into consideration as we think of realistic opportunities for the short-term.

To conclude the three-day Public Design Workshop, the group tried to identify the **"Big Ideas"** generated from the community. The **"Big Ideas"** were:

1. The north and south side of Route 146 are two distinct areas and needed to be treated as such at least for the short-term (unless and until something different happens to Route 146)
2. The north- south spine of Clifton Country Road has the opportunity of being the "main street" for the Town Center - wide sidewalks, keep the big street trees
3. Add residential
4. Complete pathway and sidewalk systems
5. More east-west roadway connections to alleviate congestion on Route 146
6. Clifton Park character is unique - pathways and trees – figure out how to incorporate this into design of Town Center
7. Include civic components such as town hall and parks
8. Walkability and public transportation

Expanding on these **"Big Ideas"**, other thoughts/suggestions related to each included the following:

1. The north and south side of Route 146 are two distinct areas and needed to be treated as such
  - Route 146 is the long term question; can it ever be a boulevard pedestrian friendly road that connects the north and south sides?
  - Perhaps there should be as radical redesign of the big intersection- the roundabout, over or under the lanes, or buildings spanning over the highway to create a pedestrian space
  - Most of the focus is on the south side of Route 146
  - Expand one complete space a time; these spaces will expand into more dynamic public spaces and streetscapes as you expand away from the initial 'seed'. This could eventually help bridge the gap between the north and south sides of Route 146
    - Temporary businesses such as food carts, they can be the initial 'seed'
2. The north- south spine of Clifton Country Road has the opportunity of being the 'main street.' Wide sidewalks, keep the big street trees
  - Terminating the view at the south and north ends of Clifton Country Road with a public / civic buildings

3. Residential
  - on the south end of Clifton Country Road
  - Include public park space – need this to make residential livable
  - Keep mix of housing types
  - Mixed uses- offices and residential over retail, 2-5 story buildings about the right fit
  - Greater density
4. Complete pathways and sidewalks
  - Sitterly Road needs pedestrian accommodations
  - Complete the bike paths on Moe Road to Exit 8 area
5. More east-west roadway connections to alleviate congestion on Route 146
  - Complete the grid to distribute traffic more evenly
  - School district parcel has a lot of opportunity for east/west trail system to connect to Maxwell Drive as well as north/south connections from Collins Park and the YMCA
  - East/West connections from Southside Drive to Moe Road. However there is concern about speed (students in particular), the design of the road is important
  - Maxwell Road south has options to go around the Bentley, west toward the YMCA and/or east to the back of the plaza
  - Create an Exit 8B or a 9A at Kinns Road
6. Clifton Park character
  - pathways and trees
  - Replace a row of parking with tree lined walkways (across some larger parking lots)
  - Design guidelines for architecture and signage to create an identity for Clifton Park. Is there an architectural style for Clifton Park already?
  - Take advantage of the history
  - There is currently a lot of redundancy in the types of stores- create more diversity
7. Civic components such as town hall and parks
  - Both passive and active recreation needed- sports fields, a park like the Crossings on Colonie
  - Institutional uses such as a town hall, post office and nursery in the Town Center
    - The town hall could be located by the new park on school district land
8. Walkability and public transportation
  - Jitney or shuttle bus- loop through the commercial area and down Moe Road
  - Focus on getting pedestrians in existing neighborhoods (west of the study area) safely to the east
  - Complete Streets- which streets have bike lanes and which have bike paths

Some additional thoughts identified by the group during the course of conversation included:

- Things for young people to do afterschool- both indoor and outdoor venue- a teen center, a club/juice bar
- Places for both residents and visitors to go- public spaces
  - Permanent Farmer's Market
  - Museum/arts and sciences center
  - Parks, public green
  - Place for summer movies
  - Arts district - in the northeast quadrant - this area includes smaller more historic buildings, like Beekman Street
- There are a number of environmental constraints and opportunities that need to be addressed:
  - Green infrastructure
    - Porous paving
    - Solar panels
    - Shade trees
    - Green roofs
    - Appropriate Storm water management
  - Possible incentives for businesses that include green infrastructure. Create a tool kit for sustainable techniques and incentives in this area
  - Karner Blue Butterflies
  - 35% greenspace per parcel is not a requirement but a recommendation standard with some planning board discretion- perhaps they could revisit this recommendation to include providing the public with usable, functional green spaces and landscapes. Could this include green roofs?
  - Perhaps get developers to buy into the town park at the school property for transferring open space requirements
- Roundabouts- there is an interest in smaller ones on local roads, there are questions about larger ones
- Want more junior anchor stores- 40,000-50,000 square feet
- Reconfigure parking to look like a street
- Integration/transition policies:
  - Get first movers to do it right
  - Get developers get retailers to break the retail prototype
  - Angled parking
  - Sidewalks
- There is only limited expansion of new buildings into parking lots due to restricting lease agreements

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## Appendix E

Meeting notes - Public Workshop - October 24, 2011

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# Clifton Park Town Center Public Workshop



October 24, 2011  
Meeting Notes



Shenendehowa Adult Community Center, Clifton Common

6:30 PM to 8:30 PM



DOVER, KOHL & PARTNERS  
town planning

Michael Welti, AICP of Behan Planning and Design welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the workshop. He told the audience that the primary purposes of the meeting were to present the draft plan concepts that have been developed by the Study Advisory Committee, Town staff, and the consulting team in the weeks since the three-day Public Design Workshop in June; and to solicit feedback from those in attendance tonight about the concepts presented. Public input provided this evening would be used to refine these ideas as the *Clifton Park Town Center Plan* is completed later this year.

Mr. Welti began with a PowerPoint presentation that covered several topics:

- Project introduction – a review of background information about the project
- Planning process – a synopsis of the three-day public design workshop held at the library in June
- Plan concepts – ideas about the future of the Town Center Study Area. This was the main topic of the presentation.

Following the presentation, Supervisor Phil Barrett took a few moments to thank the committee, town staff, and the consultant team (Behan Planning and Design along with Dover, Kohl & Partners) for their efforts and the community for their continued engagement in the process. After providing a few comments in general support of this vision for the Town Center, Supervisor Barrett turned the meeting back over to Mr. Welti so that he could lead a facilitated discussion with the audience.

The facilitated discussion was organized around two (2) questions:

- What do you like about the ideas / recommendations that were presented this evening?
- What concerns do you have regarding the ideas / recommendations that were presented this evening?  
Additional suggestions?

Starting with the first question, Mr. Welti asked the audience for their thoughts while he and his partner, John Behan AICP, recorded the feedback on a large notepad. Responses are summarized below.

### ***What do you like about the ideas / recommendations that were presented this evening?***

- The idea about an Arts District in the northeast quadrant of the study area. This would take advantage of the historic nature of this part of town (historic Clifton Park Hotel).
- Emphasis on walkability viewed very favorably
  - Safe crossings- it was noted that this is something the town should work on right now. It can be very dangerous walking in this area. A specific suggestion was to eliminate the ability to make right turns on red in certain places where this conflicts with pedestrians in the crosswalk.
- Sidewalks are positive – make sure to consider wheelchair accessibility in their design. Rochester, Minnesota was identified as a very good example.
- Utilities - it would be nice if they could be underground
- Multi-story buildings with residential on the upper floors - this would be positive – offer housing options for young people, seniors, and others
- The idea of focusing on Clifton Country Road as “Main Street”- this would be a good place to start (something that the town and landowners can get done)
- Look to complete streets - designed for all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, transit) – don’t forget bike parking in the Town Center

- The idea of two nodes of development – one north and one south of Route 146 – in the short-term. Focus on improving each of these nodes and the connections to them from adjoining neighborhoods
- The large, undeveloped school district property – this is a unique opportunity – could be a “game changer” for the community in terms of creating a special civic space as part of the Town Center.
- Bring civic uses to town center – the Town Hall and other community spaces should be here
- The notion of adherence to an overall design (via an illustrated code or design guidelines) is positive.
- Greenery – maintaining existing and adding new street trees
- Idea of a form based code to implement this vision – direct relationship to the design ideas in the plan
- Reduced surface parking
  - Eliminating large parking lots makes walking environment better
  - Also - think about the use of porous pavers for surplus parking areas
- Idea of establishing a network of streets
  - Increase connectivity – good for vehicles and good for bikes/peds
- Vertical density – this is the right area of town for increased density - need to go vertical to add density here
- The concept is good because it emphasizes infill development (this area is already developed)
- The idea of creating useable public space makes sense
  - banking the open space associated with individual sites to develop meaningful open space in key locations throughout the town center (pocket parks, plazas, etc.)
- Long term ideas for the future of Route 146 – change to a boulevard is a good idea (and still works for cars)
  - Include bike lanes

***What concerns do you have regarding the ideas / recommendations that were presented this evening?  
Additional suggestions?***

- Concern about vertical or structured parking - many parking garages are not successful, not full
  - Why?
    - Not everyone is comfortable (concerned about their safety)
    - Cost - will parking still be free? People are not used to paying for parking in the suburbs
- Concept doesn't go far enough – doesn't really create a “focal point” for the town
  - Need to move town hall here – create a town green (heading east) lined with civic uses – the town green would then be the focal point
  - Go to the school district - talk about availability of the large parcel it owns immediately north of the elementary schools
- Regarding the school district property – this is the only area that remains forested- concern that the idea for a park here would remove the forest cover – instead, keep some of that natural but make it more accessible
- If we add more trees and more ponds we will get more mosquitoes – need to mitigate this
- Traffic- what are we going to do with all of the traffic here now? Additional development will bring more traffic
- Funding: maintenance of spaces (boulevards etc.) – plantings, snow removal, etc.
  - Could get some funding from developers

- The Town Center does need a focal point... but it does not need to be huge (such as The Crossings in Colonie) - maybe consider alternatives/examples from elsewhere (e.g. like an Italian piazza – see Rome)
- Town center – perhaps a courthouse square concept. What ingredients do you want to put in it (“I’m going to go ‘to town’...where’s town?”)
- The sign code needs to be coordinated and clear- should not need so many variances. This is very important to real estate owners and retail tenants
- Should have places to sit (benches, a place to read)
- What happened to the idea (from the June meetings) of a new exit or entrance to I-87 at Sitterly Road? This will be discussed in the report in the context of an overall study of Exit 9.
- Seems that it should be pretty easy to spruce up the back sides of some of the retail buildings (e.g. the mall/Clifton Country Road) – hide the dumpsters, etc.
- Focal point for the Town Center could be a public amphitheater (like in Mizner Park example from Florida)
- Concern that things will not get done – the community has been waiting since 1979 for a community/arts center – would like to see this happen sooner (rather than later)
- Need a new name for this area - a BRAND (some were calling it downtown Clifton Park)
- There should be a park and ride on this side of the Northway
- Take advantage of this opportunity! Especially the 60 acres of open land owned by the school district

Following the facilitated discussion, Mr. Welti concluded the meeting by noting that a final report will be prepared by the end of the year. The Town of Clifton Park will post meeting notes from this evening and other updated information about the study on the project website. The Town’s website - [www.CliftonPark.org](http://www.CliftonPark.org) – now includes a prominent link to the project website. Any additional comments or suggestions are welcome. These should be directed to the Town’s Planning Department ([planning@cliftonpark.org](mailto:planning@cliftonpark.org)). The meeting was then adjourned.

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During and immediately after the meeting, audience members were also given the opportunity to write down comments and suggestions on index cards (provided). Written comments collected at the end of the meeting included the following:

- Town focal point could be retail rather than civic. We have some interesting shops coming in and some unique shops in the area – Wits End, Ambiance and other home furnishing shops - SHE, Mooradians, Ethan Allen. The town could encourage more specialty home retail type businesses to complement what is here to draw not only local people, but also people from the growing communities around the Malta Tech Park. More retail draws more retail, restaurants, clubs etc. That supports the arts & entertainment requested. The shopping supports the sales tax base the town loves.
- Pedestrian walkway over 146 with large sign “Welcome to Clifton Park”
- Transportation connecting plazas, hotels, senior housing
- Outside eateries that are unique, not chains. Cafes, coffee shops, pizza shops, ice cream shops
- Utilize proximity to movie theatre/new hotel. Have people stick around before and after movie.
- Large park like The Crossings with public building that could be used for gatherings (concerts, weddings, company functions, charity events, farmer’s market, craft fairs, Clifton Park Idol, meeting place for moms with children)

- Promote walking from neighborhoods
- Something very strong to anchor new main street (town hall) - not just a gazebo
- Preserve/enhance green space/woods/stream
- Don't be timid great opportunity
- Perfect (conceptually)
- Bike parking
- Winter-friendly outdoor gathering space
- More multi-story
- Small rental apartments
- Promote the use of kick-sleds in winter on sidewalks and pathways
- Need to stop sprawl as soon as possible - i.e. new Walgreens on 146
- Need to attract local, non chain, non corporate businesses
- Restaurant (non chain) district – bars – clubs - pubs
- Affordable local taxi
- Feature the architecture and public spaces, hide or blend in the parking
- Need a café next to the library
- Please have safer crossings
- Roundabouts at Sitterly and Clifton Park Center Road; Clifton County Road at the entrance to the mall and Hannaford shopping area; and Sitterly Road and Woddin Road/Crossings Boulevard
- Realign certain roads such as Maxwell Drive and the entrance to the mall from Sitterly Road to allow for the smoother flow of traffic
- Work with DOT to eventually build a boulevard type of entrance on Route 146 from the Northway to at least Maxwell Road

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