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Guilderland Pathways Committee

## Walkable Destinations in Guilderland

### A Pathways Master Plan

May 13, 2004

The Town Comprehensive Plan charged the Guilderland Pathways Committee (GPC) with creating a townwide master plan for pathways. That charge was based, in part, on a 1999 survey of town residents that found that more sidewalks and bikepaths were a moderate or high priority for about 70% of those surveyed, both by phone and by mail.

The situation in Guilderland to which residents responded is summarized in the 2003 Fort Hunter/Carman Road Planning Study as follows (page A-11):

*Overall, the community is not pedestrian friendly. There are serious pedestrian issues including the absence of crosswalks and sidewalks, which forces pedestrians to walk in the street. Contributing to these concerns is the presence of bus stops with few shelters or sidewalks leading towards them or, requiring pedestrians to wait for the bus dangerously close to the roadway. The absence of bike paths discourage alternative forms of transportation and recreation throughout the community. Pedestrian measures that are present within the community do not connect and are too sporadic to be effectual.*

The GPC has constructed a townwide master plan for pathways, in three parts.

Part I is the Preliminary Sidewalk Master Plan, which the GPC submitted to the Town Board in April, 2003. The Sidewalk Master Plan described the highways in the Town where sidewalks are needed, and proposed priorities for them.

The present document is Part II. This document focuses on destinations and describes on- and off-road pathways that could become available to enable people to reach those destinations by bicycle or on foot.

Part III is a report, "Biking in Guilderland", a preliminary master plan for bicycle routes in Guilderland.

For this "Walkable Destinations" report, the GPC views "pathways" as sidewalks, trails for non-motorized vehicles and/or pedestrians, or a combination of sidewalks and trails that lead to specific destinations.

Off-road trails are often thought of as primarily a recreational amenity. Local examples of such trails are the trails in the Pine Bush Preserve, the Mohawk-Hudson Bikeway, and the Long Path that connects the George Washington Bridge to Altamont and, ultimately, the Adirondacks. Depending on their level of development, such trails can support hiking, walking, jogging, mountain bicycling, street bicycling, roller blading, strollers and wheelchairs, and, in season, cross-country skiing. Many people participate in these activities, sometimes primarily for the exercise, sometimes just to enjoy the natural areas through which the trails pass.

However, suitably located off-road trails can be a useful part of an overall transportation plan, as well as a recreation amenity, by providing people with the opportunity to move from place to place without resorting to their cars. One premise of those concerned about public health and the suburban environment is that people are much more likely to engage in walking if there is a purpose for it, rather than when walking is done for exercise alone. Providing a pleasant walking or biking route to a desired destination fulfills a transportation need and, at the same time, provides users with a recreational experience.

Non-motorized travel for transportation has been specifically supported by the last two federal transportation funding acts and is the subject of increasing interest by public health officials at the Federal Center for Disease Control, NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH), and elsewhere. For example, NYSDOH and the Capital District Transportation Committee cosponsored "Walkable Community Workshops" around the Capital District in the Spring of 2004, supported by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and endorsed by the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Providing safe facilities that encourage non-motorized travel has been increasingly identified as having economic, geopolitical, public health and environmental benefits beyond improving the livability of a community.

This "Walkable Destinations" plan consists of two sections: pathways primarily for transportation, and pathways primarily for recreation. These are not to be taken as exclusive categories, but as a convenient organization. Most of the pathways in either category could be used both for transportation and for recreation.

Among the pathways recommended for transportation, we particularly single out an idea for a proposed bike path along the south side of the Thruway between

Carman Road and Delaware Avenue. This is described under "UAlbany" below. A proposal for this path has been submitted to the Thruway Authority; a copy of the proposal is attached as Appendix A.

Several recommended recreational trails form almost a complete loop around the central portion of the Town. We have designated that loop the "Guilderland Greenway". This loop is described in detail in Appendix B. We have proposed, in particular, a foot/mountain bike path through the Pine Bush Preserve between Guilderland Elementary School and Lone Pine Park. This proposal has been submitted to the Pine Bush Commission and is attached as Appendix C.

Along with this Walkable Destinations plan and the other two GPC plans, we wish to call attention to the Fort Hunter-Carman Road Planning Study and the McKownville Corridor Study, both of which include extensive detail about improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in their respective areas of the town.

Finally, we wish to observe that this plan should be viewed as a living document. During the past few months, events have changed numerous details in this plan. We expect that this plan will need updating on a regular basis. But the overall concept behind the detailed discussion, namely, that every part of the Town should strive to become more walkable and bikeable, should remain constant.

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## **PATHS FOR TRANSPORTATION**

The proposed paths are organized by destination. Types of destinations include schools, parks and recreational facilities, shopping, churches, employment, and nearby neighborhoods.

### **Schools**

In addition to their primary use of educating children, school buildings are used for recreation, meetings, voting and other activities when school is not in session. School grounds act as neighborhood parks, supporting both organized and informal recreation, e.g. "sandlot baseball", during off-school hours and vacations.

Within the lifetimes of members of the GPC, children were expected to walk or bike to school. However, during the past 50 years, suburban development has focused predominantly on transportation by automobile. The consequences in Guilderland of this change in focus from walking to travel by motor vehicle are that Guilderland's schools are too large and, in several cases, too poorly located to permit more than a tiny fraction of the District's children to walk or bike safely to school. Thus, the transportation policy of the Guilderland Central School District is to bus every child. It should be noted that this is an expensive policy that costs the District and taxpayers about \$500 per child per year for transportation.

One of the objectives of this plan is to provide parents the option to allow their children to safely walk or bike to school and to safely access school grounds for recreation during weekends and vacations.

### **Westmere Elementary School**

Within easy and safe walking distance:

Patricia Lane, Hungerford Rd., Joseph Terrace, Woodlake Apartments, etc:

There was a well-worn path from the end of Patricia Lane across lands of Wolanin to the east end of the Westmere School grounds. This path has been closed off by the landowner. It should be reopened and upgraded for bicycle use when conditions permit.

Newman Road, Zorn Road, Harmony Hill: Residents of those neighborhoods could once walk to Westmere School through the vacant land south of the

school grounds. As that vacant land is developed, paths permitting travel between those neighborhoods and the Westmere School should be included in the plans.

Within a reasonable walking distance or an easy biking distance:

Oxford Heights: Oxford Heights Apartments is separated from the school by about a half-mile of Johnston Road, which has no sidewalk or walkable shoulder, frequent curves and a high volume of traffic. Adult pedestrians can be seen often along this stretch of road. A sidewalk along Johnston Road and a safe place to cross the road to reach the school would be needed to make the walk safe for pedestrians.

Kraus Road and the Westlawn neighborhood: A combination of paths, sidewalks and neighborhood streets through the undeveloped Oxford Heights land east of Kraus Road could form a connection between Kraus Road and Johnston Road near the Westmere School entrance. An alternative is to connect the Oxford Heights land with Chainyk Drive over an existing but presently unused pedestrian easement between two lots at the end of Chainyk Drive. From there the school grounds can be reached by crossing Johnston Road at Chainyk Drive where the Westmere School fronts on Johnston Road opposite Chainyk Drive.

Crossing Johnston Road safely is the main difficulty with these routes. At present, there is no crosswalk/pedestrian signal to cross Johnston Road at its intersection with Western Avenue. If a path to the school were developed from the frontage opposite Chainyk Drive, a crosswalk would be needed across Johnston Road at Chainyk Drive.

The Gipp Road and Northgate neighborhoods: We recommend that Gipp Road and Palma Boulevard be used as a "share the road" bicycle route by older cyclists who could cross Western Avenue at the Gipp/Palma intersection and then connect with the route between Kraus and the school.

### **Guilderland Elementary School**

Willow Street: There is a very sandy old road that connects Willow Street through the Pine Bush Preserve to the north end of the Guilderland Elementary School grounds. This path is, perhaps, too long and too remote for elementary school children to walk and too sandy for street bikes. But it could be used by older walkers and mountain bikers, at least until completion of the Pine Bush Commission's Recreational Master Plan.

Fairwood Apartments: A multi-use (bicycle-pedestrian) path has been proposed for the east side of Winding Brook Drive between Fairwood Apartments and Western Avenue at Winding Brook, where there is a signalized intersection with crosswalks and pedestrian signals for crossing both Western Avenue and Winding Brook Drive.

Campus Club Estates: If a route could be found for a path to connect Chancellor Drive to the Beltrone or YMCA property to the north, then such a path could connect to the multi-use path along the east side of Winding Brook Drive.

Regency, Brandywine: A multiuse path or service road with sidewalks connecting Devonshire Drive (the west entrance to Regency off Western Avenue) to Winding Brook Drive, would provide good access to the Elementary School grounds.

### **Lynnwood Elementary School**

Pinewood Drive: At present, there is no sidewalk along the south side of Old State Road to connect Pinewood Drive and Regina Drive, where Lynnwood School is located. Long-time residents report that there was once an informal path over private land that provided a short direct connection between Pinewood Drive and the school grounds. Such a path should be investigated. In any case, a sidewalk is needed along the south side of Old State Road east of Regina Drive. Another is needed to the west, as development spreads along Old State Road toward the railroad.

Helderview Drive, Brenn-Breit subdivision: There is a path connecting Helderview Drive to the southern edge of the school grounds. There is also a short path connecting the Brenn-Breit subdivision road to a pedestrian easement which leads through a wetland to the southwest corner of the school grounds, west of Helderview Drive. It remains to be seen if this route will ever be usable. This appears to be another case where a developer followed the letter of an approval but had no genuine interest in a usable path. Earlier examples of developers' disregard for path requirements are the Prescott Woods and Blockhouse Creek subdivisions. If feasible, the easement at Brenn-Breit should be developed as a path as soon as possible so that new residents will accept it as part of their neighborhood.

South of Route 20: The new neighborhoods south of Route 20 can reach the school only by walking along Route 20 to Helderview Drive. A sidewalk along Route 20 is needed.

West Old State Road: Existing and future neighborhoods north of West Old State Road have no safe access to the school. As development proceeds in this



area, a safe connection to the school should be a planning objective (see the Fort Hunter-Carman Road Planning Study). For cyclists, turning the old Fuller Station railbed/NiMo ROW into a bike path is a possibility. That path could connect the Williamsburgh and Georgetown Square neighborhoods and future neighborhoods to the west to the Lynnwood School grounds, by way of either the Brenn-Breit path or a suitable route (sidewalk, bike lanes) along Old State Road between Regina Drive and Fuller Station Road.

### **Pine Bush Elementary School**

Bellevue Drive neighborhood: There is an existing short path that connects the end of Bellevue Drive and the north end of the Pine Bush School grounds.

Coons Road neighborhood: The sidewalk along Coons Road provides access from this neighborhood to the school.

Primrose Estates (Jessamine Lane, Partridgeberry Court, Sundew Drive): A sidewalk along the east side of Carman Road would connect this neighborhood with the school grounds. An extension of the proposed Fuller Station railbed bike path north of Carman Road could connect the east end of this neighborhood and nearby neighborhoods along East Lydius Street to the school using the Carman Road sidewalk.

Neighborhoods west of Carman Road: The planned sidewalk along Empire Avenue between the Crimson Park subdivision and Carman Road at the Fuller Station Road intersection would provide access to the school. A pedestrian phase needs to be added to the traffic signal at the Fuller Station/Coons/Carman Road intersection. The eastern end of this sidewalk, together with the possible Fuller Station railbed bike path, would connect the Georgetown Square and Williamsburgh neighborhoods to the school.

Lone Pine neighborhood: DiBella Drive and Gregory Lane provide neighborhood street access for cyclists between this neighborhood and the school.

Fort Hunter neighborhood: A short path connecting the end of Jean Place and Empire Avenue connects this neighborhood to the Empire Avenue sidewalk. An alternative route for pedestrians would be a future sidewalk along the west side of Carman Road between Ronald Place and Fuller Station Road.

Note: the Fort Hunter-Carman Road Planning Study, in Figure IV-2 and accompanying recommendations, discusses access to the Lynnwood School, the Pine Bush School and other destinations in the Carman Road area.

### **Altamont Elementary School**

This school is in the Village of Altamont, outside the scope of this study.

### **Farnsworth Middle School**

Within reasonable walking distance:

Presidential Estates, Heritage Apartments: Neighborhood streets and the existing sidewalk along the east side of Route 155 north of Presidential Way provide access to the school.

Sumpter Avenue, etc.: The sidewalk along the east side of Route 155 provides access to the school.

Regency, Brandywine: The planned sidewalk along the west side of Route 155 will provide access to the unsignalized intersection at Route 155 and Presidential Way where a crosswalk is planned.

Campus Club: The planned sidewalk on the west side of Route 155 will provide access to the Presidential Way intersection and a crosswalk. Alternatively, a less safe crosswalk at Nott Road will provide access to the sidewalk along the east side of Route 155 and a potential future path connecting the sidewalk to the school entrance south of the gardens.

Prescott Woods: An existing but primitive trail connects a paper street (Parkington Place) off Walden Pond Road to the eastern edge of the Farnsworth Middle School playground across a culvert over the Blockhouse Creek south of Jefferson Court. The topography of this trail makes use by cyclists difficult. A few neighbors on Walden Pond Road and in Presidential Estates have objected to any improvements to this trail.

Vale of Normanskill: The planned sidewalk on the east side of Route 155 will connect this neighborhood to the school grounds. The sidewalk could be used by young cyclists.

Perhaps an off-road path could be found to connect the Vale neighborhood across the lands of Camp Nassau to a path along the sewer line that parallels the Blockhouse Creek between Route 155 and the Jefferson Court culvert (see "Blockhouse Creek Trail" in the Recreational Trails section, below). A side trail could connect the sewer line path to the southeastern corner of the Farnsworth Middle School parking lot near the pond.

## **Guilderland High School**

Within easy and safe walking distance:

Guilderland Center, Park Guilderland Apartments: A sidewalk along School Road connects Route 146 and Park Guilderland Apartments to the school. Proposed sidewalks along Route 146 in Guilderland Center would connect the rest of the hamlet to the school.

Potentially within a reasonable biking distance:

Fullers: Residents of this developing area between Route 20 and the Normanskill near the Dam can now reach Guilderland Center across the newly renovated French's Mill bridge. The High School could be accessible by bike if the French's Mill bridge over the railroad were able to be reopened for pedestrian and bicycle use and a short bike path connected the parking lot at Keenholts Park with the Park Guilderland parking lot. (See "Keenholts Park", below.)

## **Parks, Recreational Facilities**

### **Abele Park, McKownville**

The existing path between the park and McKown Road needs signage to identify it, especially at the McKown Road end. Extending the sidewalk on Schoolhouse Road from McKown Road South, south to Vaughn Drive, would allow access to the park by the Vaughn Drive neighborhood. A sidewalk along McKown Road between Western Avenue and Woodscape Drive would provide safe access to the park by way of the path from the neighborhood north of Western Avenue.

### **Nott Road Park**

Vale of Normanskill, Kennewyck: There are three possible routes from these neighborhoods off Dr. Shaw Road east of Route 155 to Nott Road Park. One is to develop a path from the Fountain View senior complex to the Hunger Kill and construct a bridge over the Hunger Kill to the park. This was proposed as an amenity to a recent development at Fountain View, but the developer balked because of the steep terrain separating the developable part of the property and the Hunger Kill, and because of the cost of a bridge across the Hunger Kill. A possible alternative from Dr. Shaw Road that could avoid those steep slopes could be a path that would start at the Dr. Shaw-Route 155 intersection, proceed south to the Normans Kill next to and east of Route 155, go under the Normans Kill bridge and then follow the north bank of the Normans Kill to the Hunger Kill, then the east bank of the Hunger Kill to a bridge over the Hunger Hill to Nott

Road Park. This route would use lands of Mill Hill, Albany Country Club and possibly Griffin Laboratory. Its feasibility has not been investigated as yet. The third and least direct alternative is to develop the sewer line between Route 155 and Nott Road near Fairwood Apartments as a bike path, crossing the Hunger Kill on the sewer line culvert—see “Blockhouse Creek Trail” below.

Fairwood: There is access now by way of Nott Road and the park/sewer plant access road. A more direct and attractive route would be a path on the sewer easement described in the last paragraph.

Campus Club: The sewer easement skirts Nott Road at the sharp curve just west of Campus Club Drive. A path along the sewer easement would allow pedestrians to reach the park access road while bypassing the sharp curves of Nott Road. See “Blockhouse Creek Trail” below.

### **Tawasentha Park**

The only nearby neighborhoods are Windmill Estates (Halfmoon Drive) and Christopher Lane. A sidewalk or, preferably, a multi-use bikeable path along Route 146 between Western Avenue and the Park would serve these neighborhoods.

### **Keenholts Park**

Guilderland Center: A bikeable path across the Park Guilderland grounds connecting the intersection of Route 146 and School Road with the Park would provide easy access to the park from the immediate Guilderland Center neighborhood. We suspect that that route is already in use by local residents.

Fullers (Fuller Station Road area of Western Avenue): The newly renovated French’s Mill Bridge over the Normans Kill connects this area of town to the Guilderland Center area. But to reach Guilderland Center from the southern end of the bridge, one must take French’s Hollow Road to Route 146 and cross the railroad on the Route 146 bridge, then take French’s Mill Road to the park entrance. Far shorter and more desirable, would be a route using the closed bridge over the railroad tracks on French’s Mill Road. Reopening the railroad for bike and pedestrian travel is a high priority.

### **Lone Pine Park**

This park has good access from the Lone Pine neighborhood by both existing and planned paths. A planned path from the end of Fox Run Drive to the park will provide access to the park from the neighborhood near the east end of Spawn Road.

### **Fort Hunter Park**

This park has good access by way of neighborhood streets from the adjacent Fort Hunter neighborhood.

### **DiCaprio Park**

Lone Pine (northern portion): A sidewalk and bike lanes or a bikeable path is needed along Lydius Street between Traber Road and the Park. A secondary route might be possible across a vacant lot owned by Stratton (on Traber Road) through the proposed development on the Lupe parcel and then along a path across the culvert over the west branch of the Hunger Kill to the park. The topography and accessibility are more favorable with the Lydius Street route.

Lone Pine (southern portion): An existing dirt road connects Lone Pine Park with the DiCaprio parcel across the culvert.

Siver Road: A sidewalk and bike lanes or a bikeable path is needed along Lydius Street between Siver Road and the Park. A hiking trail, partly on an old roadbed, through the Pine Bush Preserve could connect Siver Road (just south of the housing between East Lydius Street and Old State Road) with the southern tip of DiCaprio Park.

### **Bozenkill Park**

Altamont's Village Park is outside the Village and is not readily accessible by most residents of Altamont. A sidewalk along Route 146 from the Village boundary to Gun Club Road would improve access, as would a sidewalk along Gun Club Road. The possibility of an off-road path connecting the park to Schoharie Plank Road has not been explored.

### **YMCA/Library Area**

Fairwood: A multiuse path along the east side of Winding Brook Drive between Fairwood and Western Avenue would provide easy access to the YMCA. A path on the paper street immediately south of the Library or a path heading east from the southeast corner of the Library parking lot could connect Winding Brook Drive to the Library.

Campus Club: When the YMCA was proposed, the neighbors rejected the idea of a formal path connecting their neighborhood to the YMCA. Their only alternative is to walk to Nott Road, then to Fairwood, then up Winding Brook Drive to the YMCA. It is likely that any Campus Club resident seeking to get to the YMCA or the Library either drives well over a mile or simply cuts through a neighbor's back yard. The town should insure that any development of land to

the north and west of Campus Club not cut off the possibility of a path connecting that neighborhood to the YMCA/Library area.

Brandywine/Regency: A multi-use path or service road paralleling Western Avenue from Devonshire Drive (the west entrance to Regency off Western Avenue) to Winding Brook Drive would provide good access to the YMCA, the Library, the Guilderland Elementary School grounds and the Pine Bush.

### **The Pine Bush Preserve**

The only access point in Guilderland to official trails in the Preserve is at the end of Willow Street. A well-used but unofficial trailhead is at the northern edge of the Guilderland Elementary School grounds. (For access to the Preserve through the school grounds, see "Guilderland Elementary School" discussed above.) Once (but no longer) official trails are accessible from East Old State Road between Siver Road and East Lydius Street. The southern edge of DiCaprio Park is adjacent to the Preserve, but no trails, either official or unofficial, presently exist connecting DiCaprio Park to the rest of the Preserve to the east. Trails in the Pine Bush Preserve should be part of the Pine Bush Recreational Management Plan, presently (March, 04) in progress. See "Pine Bush Trail", below.

### **Schoolcraft House**

This is inaccessible by foot or bicycle except from the Willow Street and the Foundry Road/Nott Road neighborhoods. The Foundry Road/Nott Road residents, however, would have to walk/bike along a narrow street with increasing traffic. See "Western Turnpike Golf Club," below, for a potential path connection to Windmill Estates.

### **Frederick House**

A sidewalk along Route 146 in Guilderland Center would serve this historic house.

### **Town Hall**

See below.

### **Western Turnpike Golf Course**

The Town's Golf Course is used not only for golf, but for cookouts and other social events and, in season, cross-country skiing. Golfers would not typically walk a significant distance to a golf course because of the weight of the clubs,

though younger golfers might bicycle to the golf course. It is possible that the Town may allow other activities in the future.

In view of the present and possible future activities, pedestrian/bicycle access should be given strong consideration between the Golf Course and the nearby neighborhoods to the west (Windmill Estates, via Halfmoon Drive), north (Willow Street) and east (Foundry Road and Nott Road). A sidewalk along the south side of Western Avenue between the course entrance and the Stewart's at Route 146 (where there is a pedestrian crossing signal at Route 146) would serve the Windmill neighborhood. The golf course has frontage on Foundry Road just south of the Hunger Kill bridge and a driveway that leads into the course from Foundry Road. An off-road path from Foundry Road into the Golf Course grounds along that driveway would serve the Willow Street and Foundry Road neighborhoods.

The southern edge of the course is adjacent to and readily accessible from Tawasentha Park. A path along the southern edge of the Golf Course lands, by the Normans Kill, could be part of an attractive trail connecting Nott Road Park with the Dam. See "Normans Kill Trail" below.

## **Neighborhood Shopping**

### **Stuyvesant Plaza**

See Executive Park (below) and UAlbany (below).

### **Crossgates**

There is a bike path from Rapp Road at the Gipp Road intersection into the northwest upper parking lot, but pedestrians and bicyclists must then share the parking lot access roads to reach the mall building. The sidewalk on the north side of Filene's ends a short distance west of the north Filene's entrance. It should be continued west to the ring road both for the convenience of patrons parking in the lot north of Filene's and for the convenience of pedestrians from neighborhoods to the west.

There is a sidewalk from Western Avenue to the Crossgates Ring Road in the English Couplet (across from the cemetery), and a short path between the ring road at that point and the southern edge of the Cohoes parking lot. A crosswalk is needed on the ring road, and some thought should be given to a pedestrian route from that point to the bus shelter and the mall.

See also UAlbany (below).

### **Price Chopper (Johnston Road)**

See Westmere School, above.

Filling the gaps in the sidewalk system on the south side of Western Avenue between Johnston Road and Kraus Road and putting a crosswalk with pedestrian signal for crossing Johnston Road at the Johnston Road-Western Avenue intersection is a high priority. This would provide pedestrian access to the Price Chopper for the eastern portion of the Westlawn neighborhood.

### **Robinson Hardware**

A sidewalk is needed along Western Avenue between Witte Road and Venezio Road to connect Robinson Hardware with the eastern portion of the Westlawn neighborhood. Cumberland Farms was not allowed by DOT to construct a sidewalk on its frontage until the adjacent property between Cumberland Farms and Venezio Road is ready to construct a sidewalk on its frontage. The cost of the Cumberland Farms sidewalk has been put in escrow.

There is a sidewalk along Western Avenue between Witte Road and Van Wie Avenue to connect Robinson's with the western portion of Westlawn.



There is a gated driveway connecting Drawbridge Drive and Sherwood Forest Road with the Serafini Senior Apartments that may be usable by pedestrians traveling between Robinson Hardware and the neighborhood north of Western Avenue. The feasibility of this path for public use should be investigated, for example, by reviewing the SUP for the expansion of Serafini Apartments in the 1990's.

### **Star Plaza/20 Mall**

Paths exist from the neighboring apartment complexes (Brandywine, Regency) to the edge of these shopping malls. There have been recent improvements to pedestrian accessibility between Regency, SEFCU and the Price Chopper. The sidewalk along Route 155 will improve accessibility to Star Plaza. But, in general, these shopping centers have not been designed with much thought for pedestrians and bicyclists coming from off-site.

In the event that a residential neighborhood is part of the Beltrone parcel east of Winding Brook Drive, a multi-use path or low-speed service road parallel to Western Avenue that connects that parcel with Devonshire Drive (the western access to Regency from Western Avenue) would facilitate access between the 20 Mall and that neighborhood, as well as connecting the dense multi-family neighborhoods near Star Plaza to the YMCA-Library area.

### **Stewarts (Route 146 South)**

A sidewalk south along Route 146 to Halfmoon Drive would connect Stewarts to the eastern portion of Windmill Estates.

See also Western Turnpike Golf Course, above.

### **Hannaford/CVS/Carpenter Village**

See Town Hall, below. This area is reachable from neighborhoods on both sides of Western Avenue east of Carman Road by the sidewalks on both sides of Western Avenue.

### **Carman Plaza/Corner Ice Cream**

In addition to other stores and services, the Plaza contains the most popular ice cream shop in town. The Parkview Drive neighborhood can reach the Plaza only by walking or biking along the highly trafficked Carman Road, as there is no sidewalk between Morningside Drive and Carman Plaza. Nor can walkers and bicyclists safely reach the Plaza using West Old State Road because there is no sidewalk or shoulder between Gardenvue Drive and Carman Plaza. Constructing the missing sidewalks is a very high priority.

Sidewalks are also recommended along the east side of Carman Road between Old State Road and Sunset Lane and between Old State Road and Ann Drive; and along East Old State Road between Carman Road and Hillview Road. Construction of these sidewalks would connect the neighborhoods east of Carman Road to the Plaza.

### **Greulich's**

A sidewalk between Jessamine Lane and Coons Road would connect Greulich's to the two closest neighborhoods to the north and south.

## **Churches**

### **Christ Lutheran Church**

The McKownville sidewalk network serves this church. The proposed path along the Krum Kill between McKown Road and Executive Park would also provide access.

### **McKownville Methodist Church**

The proposed Thruway bike path would provide access to this church. See UAlbany, below, and Appendix A.

### **Christ The King Church**

There is a path connecting the Highwood Circle area to Sumpter Avenue through the parking lot behind Fact Finders.

It is unknown whether there is a path connecting the Christ The King grounds and Heritage Village Apartments. In any case, the sidewalks along Route 155 will provide access to Seward Street and the church for Heritage Apartments, Presidential Estates and Regency Park and Brandywine Apartments.

### **Hamilton Union Church**

This church is accessible only from the adjacent Willow Street neighborhood. See "Schoolcraft House", above.

### **Cornerstone Christian Church**

This new church on Schoolhouse Road is inaccessible by sidewalk from either McKownville or North Bethlehem. Extending the sidewalk on Schoolhouse Road south from McKown Road South to Vaughn Drive would provide access.

### **Grace Baptist Church**

This new church on Route 155 south of the Middle School is served by the new sidewalk along Route 155.

### **Lynnwood Reformed Church, St. Madeleine Sophie Church, Carman Road Alliance Church**

These churches would be served by a connected sidewalk along Carman Road. The Alliance Church would also benefit from sidewalks along East and West Lydius Street near Carman Road. The St. Madeleine Sophie Church and School will be served by the Coons Road sidewalk once the Coons Road-Fort Hunter Fire Department sidewalk is constructed and will also be served by the Empire Avenue sidewalk once it is extended east to the Fuller Station Road-Carman Road intersection. (See the Fort Hunter-Carman Road Planning Study for more detail in this area.)

### **Berea Church**

This church in Guilderland Center would be served by a sidewalk along Route 146 in the hamlet.

### **St Bonaface Church**

This church on the south side of Western Avenue near Town Hall would be served by a sidewalk along the south side of Western Avenue between the church and McCormack's Corners. Within easy walking distance is the Pinewood neighborhood across Western Avenue, and also the Vosburgh Road and proposed 20 West neighborhoods behind the church to the south.

## **Employment Centers**

### **University at Albany/Harriman Campus/CESTM**

The GPC has proposed the concept of a bike path along the Thruway between Exits 23 and 25. See Appendix A for the document submitted to the New York State Thruway Authority.

From west to east, this path could connect the following:

- The Fort Hunter area, via Old Carman Road
- The Williamsburg, Random Acres and Primrose Estates area, via the proposed Fuller Station railbed path (see below)
- Lone Pine, via East Lydius Street (to DiCaprio Park) and Brookview Drive
- The Pine Bush Preserve, via Old State Road (see below)
- The commercial area of Washington Avenue Extension, via connections to the North Service Road just east of Route 155 and near Rapp Road/Home Depot
- Crossgates Commons, via the road behind Home Depot/Michaels
- Crossgates Mall and the McKownville Methodist Church, via a spur behind the church
- The Pine Bush Preserve, Lake Rensselaer and the proposed Patroon Path, via Rapp Road
- UAlbany, via Abele Park, McKown Road and Norwood Street
- Stuyvesant Plaza and Executive Park, via McKown Road, Norwood Street and the University perimeter road
- The Harriman Campus, via Krum Kill Road, Aspen Court and neighborhood streets to Hillcrest Avenue
- The Whitehall Road area of Albany, via New Scotland Avenue and Kelton Court
- University Heights, via Kelton Court, Joelson Court and Hackett Boulevard
- Downtown Albany, Delmar, Slingerlands and Voorheesville, via Normansville, Rockefeller Road and the proposed D&H Rail Trail (see below)

### **Executive Park**

The power line path connecting the northern edge of Executive Park and Providence Street is regularly used by pedestrians, including residents of UAlbany's Freedom Quad. This path should be maintained and extended to Freedom Quad and UAlbany's CESTM complex to the north.

A proposed path along the Krum Kill between Executive Park and McKown Road at Williams Court (and beyond?), plus a sidewalk along McKown Road, would connect Stuyvesant Plaza and Executive Park with the Ayre Drive and Woodscape neighborhoods. See pages 2-3, 2-4 of the McKownville Corridor Study.

There is an unofficial but well-used path over a sewer line that connects Parkwood Street, Elmwood Street and Fuller Road at the signalized crosswalk at Fuller Road and Executive Park Drive. This path should be kept open to the public to facilitate walking between Executive Park and the neighborhood east of Fuller Road. See page 2-2 of the McKownville Corridor Study.

### **1450 Western Avenue**

The proposed Krum Kill path between Executive Park and McKown Road would serve this office building.

### **Town Hall/Power Pool**

Town Hall is immediately accessible via Morningside Drive from the adjacent neighborhood to the west, and via sidewalks along Western Avenue and Carman Road from the Hite Court/Morningside Drive neighborhood. At an appropriate time, a sidewalk along Western Avenue west of Morningside Drive should be installed to serve any emerging neighborhoods south of Western Avenue, west of Town Hall.

The proposed 20 West development south of Western Avenue includes a proposed path that would start on Western Avenue opposite the driveway entrance to Town Hall and the Power Pool and go all around the proposed development to the end of the paved portion of Vosburgh Road.

### **Crossgates, Washington Avenue Extension**

See UAlbany, above.

### **Downtown Albany**

See UAlbany, above.

## **RECREATIONAL TRAILS**

### **Normans Kill Valley Linear Park**

This concept consists of the Blockhouse Creek Trail, part of the Hunger Kill-Winding Brook Drive trail, the Normans Kill Trail, and a trail connecting the French's Mill Bridge and Keenholts Park. The connected trail would connect Farnsworth Middle School (FMS) and Guilderland High School.

#### **Blockhouse Creek Trail--FMS to Fairwood/Nott Road Park**

A sewer line runs parallel to the Blockhouse Creek starting from a culvert that crosses the Blockhouse Creek behind Jefferson Court. The line goes downstream south and west behind the Middle School grounds on School District land, then on lands of Camp Nassau/YMCA south of Grace Baptist Church, moving somewhat away from the Blockhouse until it crosses Route 155 in the middle of the straightaway at the edge of the Baptist Church property. From there the sewer line goes west, skirts Nott Road south of the first sharp curve west of Route 155, crosses the Hunger Kill over a culvert, crosses the Sewer Plant Access Road, and meets Nott Road just east of the emergency access to Fairwood Apartments.

A path along this sewer line between the Jefferson Court culvert and Nott Road near Fairwood would be an attractive pedestrian/bike route connecting the Middle School grounds, Presidential Estates, Prescott Woods, Nott Road Park, Fairwood and the YMCA and Library area. Residents of Presidential Estates could use the service road owned by their homeowners association at the end of Jefferson Court to reach the culvert; residents of Prescott Woods could start at Parkington Place, a paper street off the western end of Walden Pond Road and follow the existing primitive trail on School District grounds to get to the culvert. People who don't know how to get to the path from Presidential or Prescott could start at the back athletic field of the Middle School.

Access to this trail may be possible in the future from the Vale neighborhood through lands of Camp Nassau or the Guilderland Water District.

#### **Normans Kill Trail--Watervliet Reservoir Dam to Nott Road Park**

A trail along the Normans Kill between Nott Road Park and the Dam would be a centerpiece of a recreational trail system in the Town. Much of the land along this section of the Normans Kill is owned by the Town, part of Tawasentha Park

and the Western Turnpike Golf Course. This section also includes the Battle of Normans Kill site west of Route 146. Between the parks is the Rifle Range, which contains spectacular scenery but is a major obstacle to a trail alongside the Normans Kill.

Starting from Nott Road Park and moving west, upstream towards Tawasentha Park, the north bank of the Normans Kill is privately owned between the Sewage Treatment Plant and Grant Hill Road. In the short term the route could use the sewer line to Fairwood Apartments, then follow Nott Road west to the intersection of Foundry Road and Grant Hill Road.

From that intersection there are four options.

The least attractive route is a northern route. This route would follow Foundry Road to the bridge over the Hunger Kill. Just before the bridge is a driveway that goes from Foundry Road to the pavilion area of the Western Turnpike Golf Course. The route could follow that driveway into the Golf Course. How a path could cross the Golf Course from the Pavilion to Tawasentha has not been explored yet, but it appears difficult to find a route that would not subject path users to the risk of errant golf balls.

A route that should be feasible if the use of the Pruskowski Farm changes in the future is to go from the Nott Road-Grant Hill Road intersection towards the south along Grant Hill Road and then follow the southern boundary of the farm up the hill to reach the edge of the Golf Course. Then the route would go through the woods along the eastern edge of the Golf Course to the edge of the Normans Kill gorge, then along the edge of the gorge, westward, to reach the Tawasentha trail system. That route would encounter only one short stretch where a conflict with golf would occur, namely near the putting green on White #3, where the edge of the gorge is just off the edge of the fairway. It appears difficult to place the trail part of the way down the gorge. Trail users could be partially protected from golf balls by planting a row of tall evergreens near the right rough in that area. A longer term solution might be to move the White #3 putting green farther away from the edge of the gorge. Otherwise, the only difficult stretch is crossing the stream that cuts across White #4 below the tee. The stream crossing could be located in the woods, well away from the #4 fairway, but the trail on both sides of the crossing would be fairly steep.

The other two routes would require cooperation from the State Rifle Range.

Just south of the southern boundary of the Pruskowski farm is a dirt road that leads west from Grant Hill Road up the hill through the woods to a field at the top of the hill. From there it is a short level hike through mostly open woods around the green of White #4 to the edge of the Normans Kill gorge. From there one

would proceed as in the second route above towards Tawasentha as before. All of this trail would be well away from the edge of the gorge overlooking the rifle range.

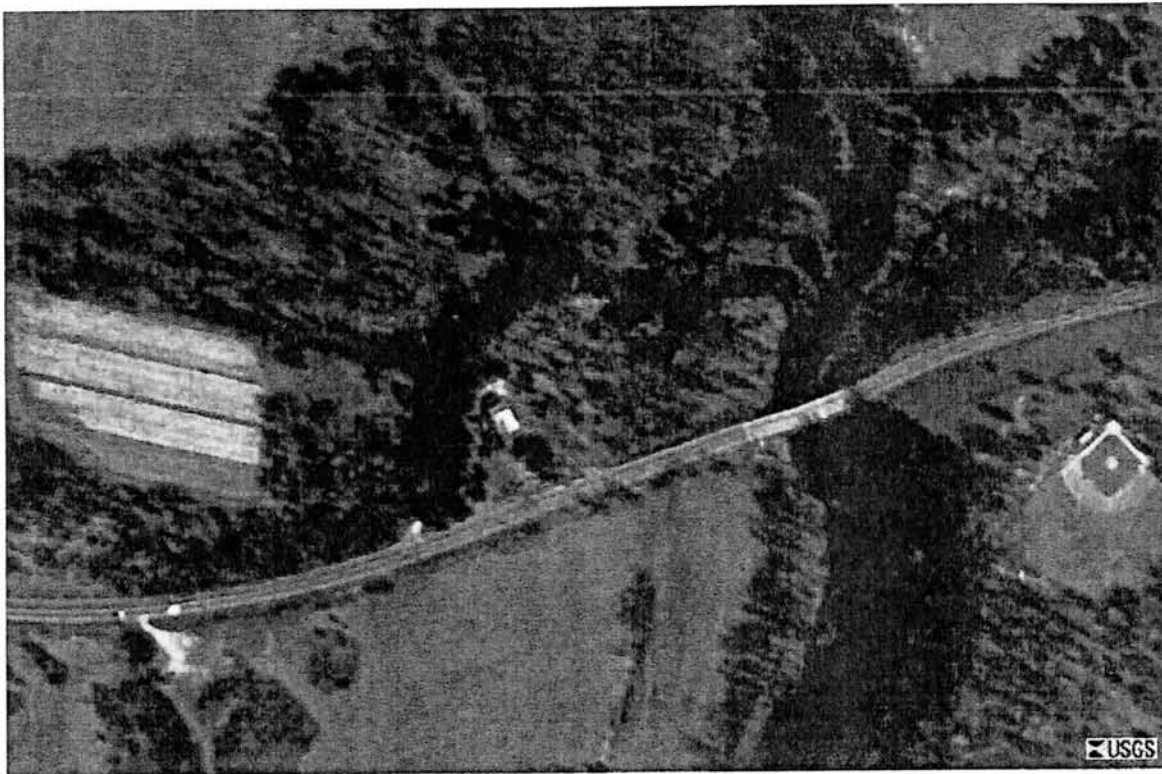
By far the most attractive route would be a trail along the edge of the gorge overlooking the rifle range between Grant Hill Road and the putting green of White #3. Heading from west to east, there is an existing trail that starts from near the putting green of White #3 and follows the edge of the gorge containing the western part of the loop that the Normans Kill makes in this area. After some distance one can easily cut across to reach the edge of the gorge on the eastern side of the loop, where the Normans Kill flows northeastward towards Grant Hill Road. This trail lies on the edge of the cliff that is easily visible from the Grant Hill Road Bridge over the Normans Kill. From the trail there is a direct view of the rifle range area on the flatland just west of Grant Hill Road. We did not investigate whether or not the trail follows the edge of the gorge down to Grant Hill Road.



Again working from east to west, once the trail reaches Tawasentha Park there is an extensive network of trails and roadways all over the park. However, if the trail is to proceed past the park to the west, then some trail development would be needed for a route along the Normans Kill to the Route 146 bridge over the Normans Kill. Beneath the bridge there is an extensive rip-rap area. There is ample room to continue a trail under Route 146 through that rip-rap area.



West of the Route 146 bridge, the trail would need to wind around (or over) a wet area that was once a loop of the Normans Kill channel, on lands of two different landowners, before reaching the Drebitko (Battle of Normanskill) parcel. The aerial photo shows the Babe Ruth field at Tawasentha on the right, Route 146 and the bridge over the Normans Kill, and a plowed field on the left that is on the south bank of the Normans Kill. The open area at the upper left corner of the photo is part of the Drebitko parcel. The present route of the Normans Kill cuts off the loop shown just upstream from the Route 146 bridge.



The Drebitko parcel has been included in the proposed 20 West Development. A trail along the Normans Kill on land proposed for part of the 20 West development would be easy to locate and quite beautiful.

Between the 20 West development and French's Mill Road the north side of the Normankill lies on a single parcel and a possible route has not yet been explored.

#### **Reservoir Dam-High School Spur**

Between the Dam and Keenholts Park the trail would cross the French's Mill Bridge and go along French's Mill Road to the closed railroad bridge. The entrance road to Keenholts Park is only a short distance past the bridge on

French's Mill Road. The Route 146/School Road intersection and the sidewalk on School Road connecting Route 146 to the High School is then just a short walk across open land of Park Guilderland between the Keenholts Park parking area and the commercial strip at Park Guilderland.



The closed railroad bridge is in the center of the picture, and the baseball diamonds at Keenholts Park can be seen towards the left, with the landfill between the park and the railroad. Route 146 crosses the lower portion of the picture, with Guilderland Center towards the left side.

### **Town Hall Spur**

The 20 West Development has proposed a public path that would start near the eastern entrance to the development, by Western Avenue across from Town Hall, and wind around the western edge of the development to reach the end of the paved portion of Vosburgh Road. From that point the trail could continue south along the unpaved portion of Vosburgh Road to the Battle of Normanskill site near the Normans Kill and connect with the path along the Normans Kill.

### **Guilderland Greenway**

This concept is for a loop trail, estimated at 13 miles in length, connecting the Pine Bush School, the Reservoir Dam, Nott Road Park, Guilderland Elementary School and DiCaprio Park. The Guilderland Greenway as described to the Town Board in 2002 is attached as Appendix B.

### **Fuller Station Railbed Trail**

This proposed bike path between the Reservoir Dam and the Thruway north of Lydius Street would follow the 19<sup>th</sup> century route of the rail line that went from the Normans Kill gorge where the dam forming the Watervliet Reservoir is now located, north following the present Fuller Station Road, past the present Thruway to Schenectady, possibly following the route of the present I-890. The railbed is now owned and used as a power line ROW by NiMo.

The railbed hugs Fuller Station Road south of Western Avenue, and since the road has only local traffic (with the closing of the bridge over the Normans Kill to vehicular traffic), the road itself south of Western Avenue is suitable for shared use by bicycles and pedestrians. Between Western Avenue and Old State Road, the railbed veers east of Fuller Station Road and using it as a trail could involve difficulties with a wetland. A similar problem occurs immediately north of Old State Road where the railbed is adjacent to the west side of Fuller Station Road—a small stream has eroded the railbed in one area. However, north of that stream, the railbed is dry and level, and topographically would make an excellent bike path. In fact, the Fort Hunter-Carman Road Planning Study has made the Fuller Station rail trail between Route 20 and the Thruway a feature of its proposed off-road bicycle network—see page 46 and Figure 4.2 of the Fort Hunter Study. The trail could connect to Pine Bush Elementary School by a short sidewalk along the northern piece of Fuller Station Road, or by a sidewalk on Carman Road between Jessamine Court and the school grounds.

The path could follow the railbed across East Lydius Street and connect to the proposed Thruway bike path just south of the Thruway. If the proposed Thruway path were available, the railbed path would serve a transportation function as well as a recreational function, by helping connect the Carman Road area to the employment and shopping centers along the Thruway bike path.

### **Normans Kill Valley Trail**

Between the Reservoir Dam and Nott Road Park the Greenway trail would coincide with the Normans Kill Valley Trail (see above).

### **Hunger Kill-Winding Brook Trail--Nott Road Park to Guilderland Elementary School.**

A proposed multi-use path connecting Fairwood Apartments with Western Avenue along the east side of Winding Brook Drive could be part of a trail connecting Nott Road Park with the Guilderland Elementary School grounds. The trail would begin at the Normans Kill just south of the Sewage Treatment Plant, follow the north side of the Normans Kill east (downstream) to the Hunger Kill (on land of Albany Country Club), then north (upstream) along the Hunger Kill (also partly on private land) to the sewer line trail that crosses the Hunger Kill on a culvert south of Nott Road. The trail could then go west along the sewer line trail to Nott Road just east of Fairwood, then proceed north through Fairwood to the multiuse path.

The portion of the trail along the Normans Kill and Hunger Kill between Treatment Plant and the sewer line trail is strikingly scenic. That trail could be part of a loop trail around the athletic fields of the Park--the Access Drive and the westernmost interior roadways of the park could connect the trail back to the Normans Kill. Such a loop trail, if feasible, would add a new dimension to the recreational attractiveness of Nott Road Park.

An effort should be made to obtain at least an easement for a trail along the Normans Kill and Hunger Kill from the Albany Country Club.

At present there is no attractive outdoor route for users of the YMCA to follow if they wish to go for a walk or jog or run starting at the YMCA. The proposed multiuse path along Winding Brook Drive, the proposed sewer line path and the proposed loop trail around Nott Road Park would be an outstanding complement to the indoor fitness facilities at the YMCA

A trail from the Mill Hill plateau to the Hunger Kill and a bridge across the Hunger Kill could connect the Mill Hill development and the Dr. Shaw neighborhoods directly to Nott Road Park and the Hunger Kill trail. A route along the Normans Kill between the Hunger Kill and the Route 155 bridge, then under the bridge and beyond to the east appears topographically feasible but would lie partly on land of the State Health Department's Griffin Laboratory. A long-term goal would be to extend the Normans Kill trail east from Nott Road Park to Johnston Road, if only to provide access to the trail network for residents of Covington Woods and other neighborhoods along and east of Johnston Road.

### **Pine Bush Trail-- Guilderland Elementary School to DiCaprio Park**

A proposed route for a trail entirely in the Pine Bush Preserve connecting Guilderland Elementary School and DiCaprio Park, suitable for hiking and

mountain bicycling, was located with the assistance of Joel Hecht, Steward of the Pine Bush in the winter of 2001. The GPC submitted a proposal to establish the trail was to the Pine Bush Commission soon thereafter. A copy of the proposal is included as Appendix C. As of February 2004, the proposal awaits a Pine Bush Recreational Master Plan which is expected to be prepared soon by the Pine Bush Commission based on data gathered during 2003. The proposed Pine Bush Trail could easily be extended west from DiCaprio Park to Lone Pine Park over a culvert across the west branch of the Hunger Kill and on established dirt roads. The path could also be extended north from DiCaprio Park to the proposed Thruway Bike Path using Brookview Drive, or extended northeast along East Old State Road across the Thruway Bridge to the Colonie portion of the Pine Bush Preserve and the Pine Bush Interpretive Center on Route 155 (formerly SEFCU). The route along East Old State Road would require significant improvements to both the road shoulders and the Thruway Bridge to be safe for bicyclists and pedestrians.

The Fuller Station railbed trail, the Normans Kill trail, the Hunger Kill-Winding Brook trail and the Pine Bush Trail, form a near loop trail estimated at 13 miles in length. The only missing section would be between DiCaprio Park (or Lone Pine Park) and the Fuller Station railbed trail. To get between DiCaprio Park and the Fuller Station railbed trail there are two possibilities. One would be to connect DiCaprio Park with the proposed Thruway Bike Path using Brookview Drive and follow the Thruway Bike Path to reach the northern end of the Fuller Station railbed trail. The other is to use neighborhood streets (DiBella Drive, Gregory Lane, Coons Road and Fuller Station Road) to connect Lone Pine Park and the Fuller Station railbed trail, crossing Carman Road at the signalized intersection with Fuller Station Road and Coons Road.

### **Rural and Water Trails**

#### **D&H Rail Trail.**

A few years ago Canadian Pacific, the present owners of the old Delaware and Hudson rail line connecting Albany and Delanson through Slingerlands, Voorheesville and Altamont, announced their intention to abandon the line west of Voorheesville, and Albany County obtained a grant to purchase the right-of-way. Then the abandonment was withdrawn, and freight now travels between Delanson and the Northeast Industrial Park. Recently the rail line between Voorheesville and the Port of Albany was formally abandoned, and Albany County at this writing is hopeful of obtaining funding to purchase the right-of-way, possibly for use as a rail trail. If at some time in the future, Canadian Pacific decides to abandon the line west of Voorheesville in Guilderland, a rail trail on that right-of-way connecting Voorheesville, Meadowdale, Altamont and the upper Bozenkill, including Christman Sanctuary, would be a recreational

attraction of regional importance. If the line between Altamont and the Port of Albany were a rail trail, it could have some importance as transportation as well, as residents of Altamont and the Meadowdale area of Guiderland could use it to commute by bicycle to and from downtown Albany.

### **Indian Ladder Trail**

In the early part of the last century, Albany residents looking for a country outing could take the train (on the recently abandoned D&H rail line through Slingerlands and Voorheesville) to Meadowdale Station (just off Meadowdale Road) and then hike up the Indian Ladder Trail to the escarpment at Thacher Park. There is currently no formal trail up the escarpment (although residents of the area just below the escarpment know routes to the top). If the D&H-Canadian Pacific rail line becomes a bike-hike trail, then an Indian Ladder trail from the rail trail up the escarpment to the present Indian Ladder trail should be topographically feasible and a superb amenity associated to the rail trail. Such a trail would lie in both Guiderland and New Scotland and on State parkland, so the trail would need to be a joint effort of Guiderland, New Scotland, Albany County and the State Parks Department.

### **Ewart Bancker Water Trail**

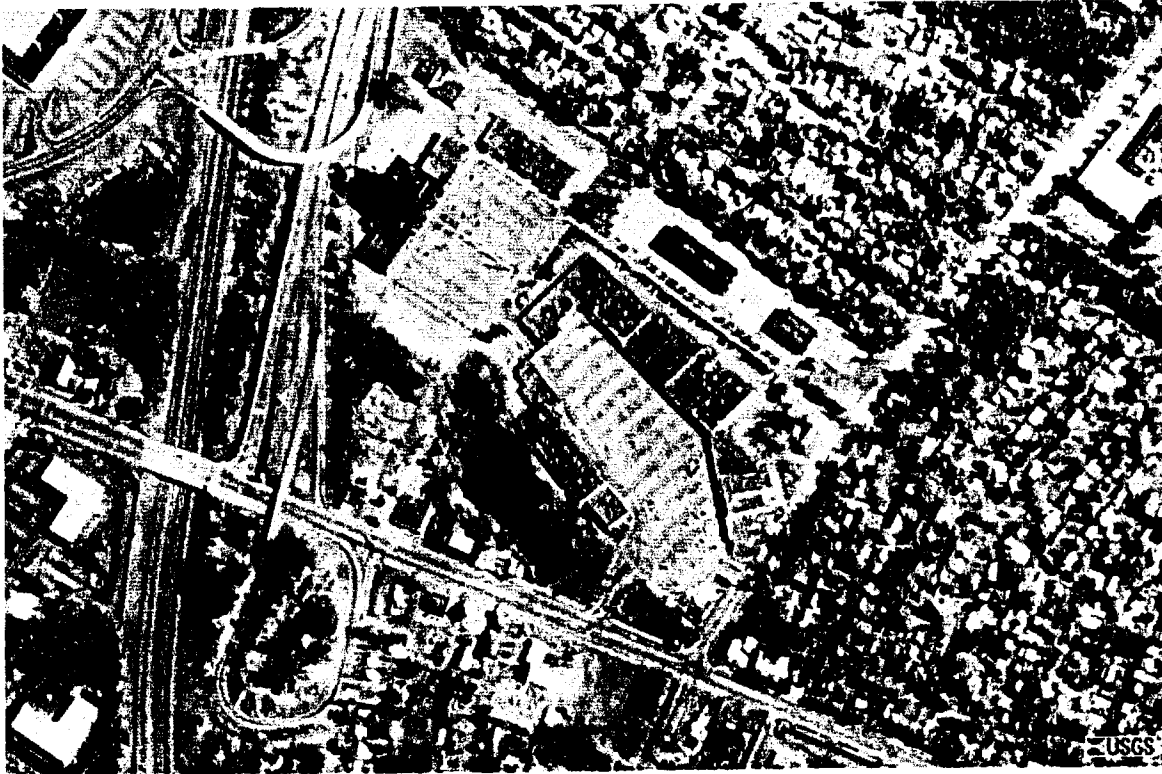
Veteran canoers report that usually the Normans Kill is a leisurely canoe trip, with no significant rapids, between the Dam and Normanside near Delaware Avenue in Albany. The Rifle Range makes canoeing west of Grant Hill Road hazardous. So a reasonable upstream launching point for canoes and kayaks could be located at Nott Road Park, behind the Sewage Treatment Plant. The City of Albany has a potential launching point next to the New Scotland Avenue bridge over the Normans Kill. Thus a water trail connecting Nott Road Park and New Scotland Avenue is potentially viable. Issues to be considered before this trail might be considered desirable to develop include the reliability of the water level in the Normans Kill because of the hydroelectric plant and water treatment facilities of Guiderland and Watervliet at the dam, and the question of natural obstructions in the stream (fallen trees, snags, etc.) that have proven dangerous in the past.

According to Town Historian Alice Begley's booklet describing the historical markers in the Town, Mayor Ewart Bancker, first mayor of the City of Albany, owned a farm on Route 146 across from Tawasentha Park, and was known to canoe up the Normans Kill from Albany to reach his country farm. Therefore, the GPC suggests naming the trail the "Ewart Bancker Water Trail".

## **Short Recreational Trails**

### **McKownville Reservoir**

The McKownville Improvement Association has proposed a loop trail around the old McKownville Reservoir, located between Stuyvesant Plaza and Western Avenue. This short trail would be a recreational oasis within a heavily urbanized corner of the Town. All of the land is owned either by the Town or by Stuyvesant Plaza.



### **Tawasentha Park**

Within the park is a network of trails winding around the park. Part of the trail network, particularly the portion above the performing arts center, is used as the high school cross country course and for other running races during the summer. The top of the trail network comes very close to the tee of White #3 on the Western Turnpike Golf Course.

### **DiCaprio Park**

We understand that DiCaprio Park has a network of trails. We have not explored them.