

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Residents of the Town of Canandaigua and the Canandaigua Lake area enjoy a wonderful quality of life. Residents value the beauty surrounding Canandaigua Lake and the rural character of the Town. The Town strives for a balanced community allowing for continued development while maintaining our farms, open space, scenic vistas, wooded areas and conservation lands.

The Town of Canandaigua's unmatched quality of life has helped to retain and attract residents. Over the past ten years, the Town's population has increased by nearly 30%. To ensure that development and conservation are properly balanced, this Plan documents the Town's natural, open space and scenic resources and presents strategies and implementation actions to preserve them for future generations.

The Open Space, Conservation and Scenic Views Master Plan documents the Town's open spaces and identifies those with the highest potential impact as conservation lands. It describes tools that the Town can use to protect its open space resources. Finally it presents a detailed implementation strategy and action steps to ensure the protection of the Town's high priority open spaces and its rural character.

OVERALL GOAL

Preserve the Town's rural character and high quality of life by protecting its critical open spaces for their scenic beauty and health, economic, social and environmental benefits

OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

Open space is of value to the community in many ways, fostering diverse ecosystems, wildlife habitat, hydrological function, scenic views, agricultural production, and recreation. This plan recognizes that efforts to protect or preserve land with open space and conservation value need to consider the range of benefits that the land provides.

ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES / LAND COVER

Land cover – based on the ecological community classification assigned to each acre of the Town's land area - is the primary way this Plan identifies and prioritizes open space resources. Land cover types that are considered to be “open space” include forests, wetlands, fields, shrubs, ponds and farmland.

STREAM CORRIDORS

Vegetation along streams has value for wildlife habitat, filtering pollutants, and preventing erosion. Because of the need to protect Canandaigua Lake as a drinking water supply, land along streams that flow into Canandaigua Lake has particular conservation value.

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STEEP SLOPES

Areas of steep slopes are susceptible to erosion which can affect the stability of slopes and cause sedimentation of water bodies. Slopes of at least 15% are considered steep. The priority for protection is greater for slopes that are very steep (25% to 40%) and extremely steep (40% or greater.)

PROXIMITY TO PUBLIC, PROTECTED OR REGULATED LAND

Land that contains or adjoins regulated features such as wetlands or streams have conservation value that has been recognized by State and federal agencies. Conserving land that adjoins regulated features such as wetlands and streams can provide a buffer to enhance conservation.

Conservation of land that adjoins publicly owned or otherwise preserved open space can help to reduce fragmentation of open space and natural resources. Open space located along proposed trails or adjoining existing recreational areas may be suitable for acquisition in the future if the open space is suitable for recreation use.

SCENIC RESOURCES

The scenic beauty of land throughout the Town contributes to the character of the community. Land with views of Canandaigua Lake – which is also visible from Canandaigua Lake and the eastern shore of the lake – are important scenic resources. Consideration of scenic value should continue to be a factor in review of specific development projects and potential acquisition of land or easements for conservation purposes.

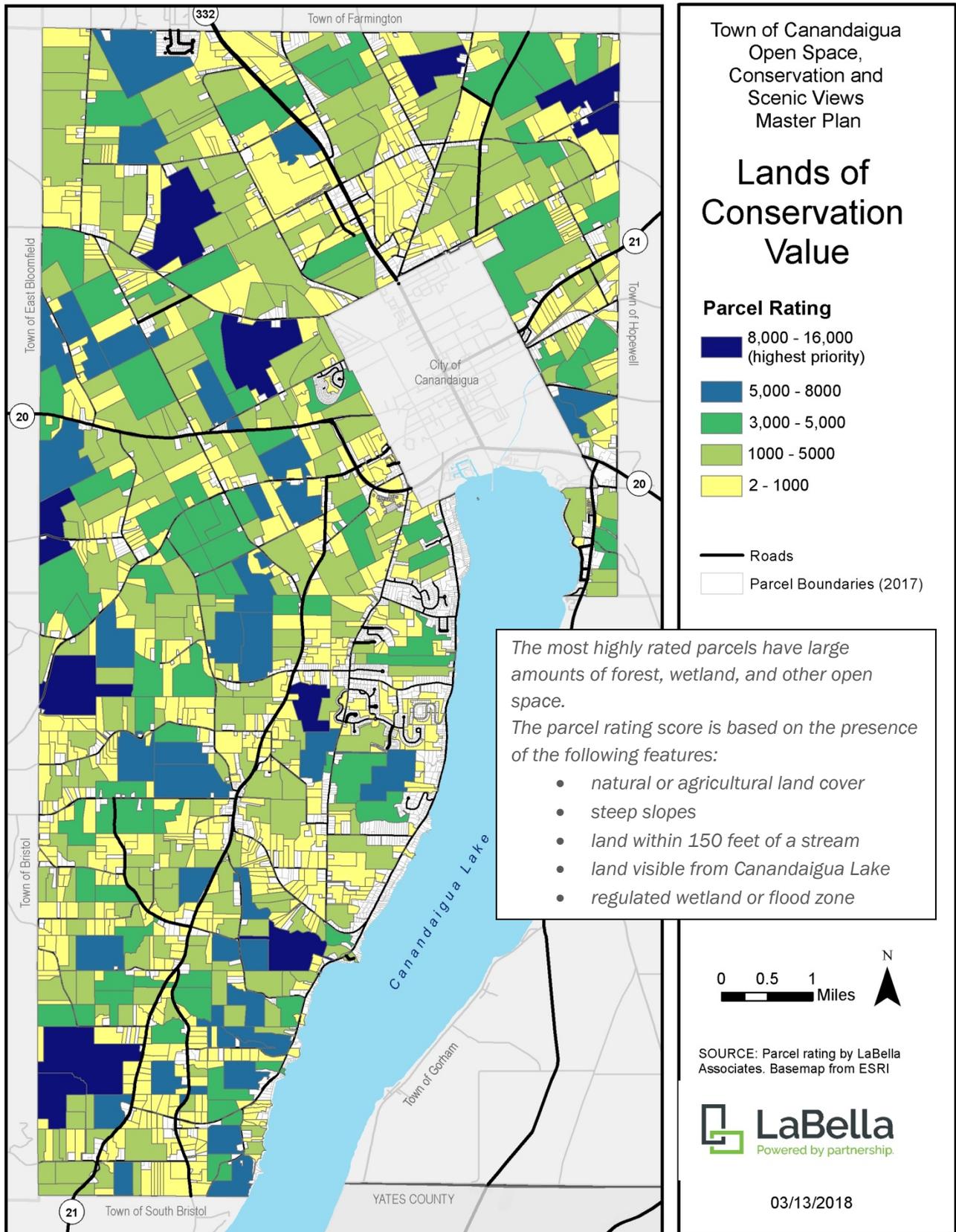
PARCEL RATING

The Parcel Rating system in this Plan is intended to guide the Town in prioritizing land for preservation and conservation. The system assigns a score to each parcel that is at least five acres in size and that has at least one acre of open space. The following map depicts the relative rating of these parcels. The table that follows summarizes the rating system methodology and the multipliers assigned to each feature. Resource maps depict the following open space features that were incorporated into the parcel rating:

- Land Cover/ Ecological Communities
- Steep Slopes
- Stream Corridors/ Watersheds
- Regulated Resources (wetlands and flood zones)
- Land Visible from Canandaigua Lake

The Parcel Rating map summarizes broadly the conservation value of individual parcels. When considering the acquisition of parcels or other conservation measures, Town officials will refer to the additional data available in the database as well as the individual resource maps.

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IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

The following strategies will guide the Town of Canandaigua in achieving the goals of this plan. The specific action steps and the entities responsible are summarized in the table on the following pages.

KEY STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Encourage land stewardship by private landowners.

Strategy 2: Enhance wildlife habitat.

Strategy 3: Conserve open space through land use regulations.

Strategy 4: Acquire land and/or interests in land with exceptional conservation value.

Strategy 5: Increase understanding among government officials and the general public about the Town’s natural, scenic and other open space resources.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- *Encourage responsible stewardship of open space among existing landowners.*
- *Prioritize conservation of land with rare and vulnerable ecological communities and projects that help protect water quality.*
- *Consider both initial and ongoing costs of implementing the strategies.*
- *Ensure sufficient funding for conservation. Leverage Town funding with financial assistance from grants, private donations and other sources.*
- *Provide ongoing support to the Town’s Planning Board, Environmental Conservation Board (ECB) and other boards and officials to carry out conservation activities.*
- *Partner with State, County, municipal and private organizations for technical support, educational activities and funding for open space conservation.*

TOWN OF CANANDAIGUA OPEN SPACE, CONSERVATION & SCENIC VIEWS MASTER PLAN

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Strategies and Recommended Actions	Responsible Entity	Partners
Strategy 1: Encourage land stewardship by landowners.		
<p>A. Educate landowners about the ecological, hydrologic and scenic value of the open space resources on their properties and recommend appropriate land stewardship techniques.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership with SCWD and other organizations, conduct periodic educational activities. Design educational programs to help landowners manage stream corridors, steep slopes, woodlands, wetlands and other resources. Meet individually with owners of significant open space resources to encourage them to plan and implement land stewardship practices. 	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWCD Watershed Manager NYS DEC Conservation organizations
<p>B. Inform landowners about sources of technical assistance and financial incentives to support land stewardship.</p>	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWCD USDA NRCS NYS DEC
<p>C. Encourage landowners to enhance wildlife habitat. (See Strategy 2.)</p>	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWCD NYS DEC Conservation organizations
Strategy 2: Enhance wildlife habitat.		
<p>A. Provide information to landowners from Finger Lakes PRISM about controlling invasive vegetation.</p>	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NYS DEC
<p>B. Promote participation in the Ontario County Soil & Water Conservation District’s annual tree and shrub sale to encourage landowners to plant native vegetation.</p>	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWCD
<p>C. Maintain a list of professional foresters and provide information about sources of technical assistance to encourage responsible management of forests.</p>	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NYS DEC
<p>D. Provide information to landowners about in the DEC’s Trees for Tribs program, which can assist landowners with revegetating stream buffers.</p>	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NYS DEC
<p>E. Provide information to landowners with suggested subdivision layouts that avoid further fragmentation of the Town’s forests.</p>	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Board

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 ECB: Town of Canandaigua Environmental Conservation Board
 FLLT: Finger Lakes Land Trust
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F. Encourage landowners to allow legal deer hunting on their properties to reduce the overabundant deer population which is currently stressing wildlife habitats.	➤ ECB	▪ NYS DEC
Strategy 3: Conserve open space through land use regulations		
3.1 Maintain/ strengthen conservation provisions of land use and development regulations.		
A. Maintain and enforce existing regulations that manage development, as part of site plan review, along steep slopes, streams, and Canandaigua Lake.	➤ ECB ➤ Planning Board ➤ CEO	▪ Zoning Board of Appeals ▪ Town Board
B. Review and strengthen stream corridor and lakeshore protection regulation . Consider expanding stream corridor buffer to 150' from 100' feet from stream.	➤ ECB ➤ Town Board	▪ Watershed Manager ▪ SWCD
C. Adopt ridgeline and hilltop protection regulations.	➤ ECB ➤ Town Board	▪ CEO
D. Continue to refer to maps of open space resources (Open Space Index) during development reviews.	➤ ECB	▪ Town Board ▪ Planning Board
E. Provide ongoing education and training to code enforcement staff regarding natural resource and open space protection.	➤ CEO ➤ ECB	▪ NYS DOS ▪ Town Board ▪ Watershed Council ▪ SWCD
F. Amend subdivision regulations to require the Planning Board to consider impacts of fragmentation.	➤ Town Board ➤ Planning Board	▪ ECB
3.2 Update and maintain the Town's Open Space Index and Natural Resource Inventory.		
A. Adopt the inventory of conservation resources in this Plan as the Open Space Index for the Town.	➤ Town Board	▪ ECB
B. Develop a tool that creates a simple report from the Parcel Rating Spreadsheet for the ECB that summarizes the types of open space in each parcel.	➤ Town staff/ intern	▪ ECB

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C. Work with Ontario County to update the land cover mapping at regular intervals.	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ECB ▪ Town Board ▪ Ontario County
D. Continue to consider ECB input into Town decisions regarding development and other Town actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Planning Board ➤ Town Board ➤ Zoning Board of Appeals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ECB
Strategy 4: Acquire land and/or conservation easements for land with exceptional conservation value.		
4.1 Acquire land outright for open space conservation.		
A. Formalize criteria for acquisition of open space lands by the Town.	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town Board
B. Acquire “first refusal” rights from current landowners for high quality open space lands.	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town Board
C. Utilize a variety of funding mechanisms to support the acquisition of open space. (See 4.4)	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town Board
4.2 Encourage and accept voluntary donations of conservation easements.		
A. Provide information to landowners about the process and benefits of donating conservation easements/development rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ECB ➤ Planning Board ➤ Ag. Advisory Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FLLT ▪ Town Board ▪ Conservation organizations ▪ Town Assessor
B. Partner with the Finger Lakes Land Trust to educate landowners about how to donate conservation easements and potential tax and financial incentives.	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FLLT
C. Encourage landowners to donate conservation easements to a land trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ECB ➤ Planning Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FLLT
D. Encourage owners of exceptional open space lands that do not meet criteria for protection by a land trust to donate conservation easements to the Town.	➤ Town Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ECB
E. Work with the NYS Legislature to authorize additional property tax incentives for open space conservation.	➤ ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town Board ▪ FLLT

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4.3 Obtain land or conservation easements as a condition of development approval.		
A. Continue to require conservation easements as condition of development approval of conservation subdivisions.	➤ Planning Board	▪ ECB ▪ Town Board
B. Work with developers to delineate lands with exceptional open space value in site plans and subdivision plats for protection through a permanent conservation easement.	➤ Planning Board ➤ ECB	▪ Town Board
C. Ensure that the conservation easement ensures ongoing land stewardship .	➤ ECB ➤ Planning Board	▪ Town Board
D. Partner with a qualified conservation organization to monitor donated easements .	➤ ECB ➤ Town Board	▪ FLLT ▪ Ducks Unlimited ▪ SWCD
E. Create a development rights “bank” through transfer of development rights	➤ Town Board	▪ ECB
4.4 Replenish and maintain the Town’s Open Space Capital Reserve Fund.		
A. Commit to an annual appropriation for open space and conservation, including administrative and inspection costs for donated easements.	➤ Town Board	▪ ECB
B. Encourage and accept cash donations toward open space conservation. Provide information about the potential tax benefits of such donations.	➤ Town Board	▪ ECB
C. Issue bonds to fund the acquisition of open space.	➤ Town Board	▪ ECB
D. Explore and establish innovative funding sources . For example, work with the NYS Legislature to authorize a real estate transfer tax, development fees earmarked for open space conservation and other funding mechanisms.	➤ Town Board	▪ ECB
Strategy 5: Increase understanding among government officials and the general public about the benefits of open space.		
A. Create, maintain and strengthen partnerships with organizations, agencies, businesses and municipalities.	➤ ECB ➤ Town Staff	▪ Town Board
B. Conduct periodic workshops and other educational events and programs to celebrate the Town’s open space.	➤ ECB ➤ Parks & Rec. Dept	▪ SWCD ▪ Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association ▪ NYS DEC

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