

## L. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Currently, the Town of Colonie maintains several public recreational resources, including the Town Park, Municipal Golf Course and Community Center. Several neighborhood (pocket) parks are located throughout the Town, providing public recreation facilities for specific neighborhoods (Figure II-L-1).

#### Town Parks

The Colonie Town Park is located on approximately 160 acres of land which borders the Mohawk River in the northern section of the Town. Park facilities provide a variety of recreational activities such as swimming, tennis, biking and picnicking. The park also features a public boat launch.

Approximately 5.25 miles of the Hudson-Mohawk bike trail are located within the Town of Colonie, along the Mohawk River. The trail is used for a variety of activities from bird watching and jogging to cross country skiing as well as biking.

At this time, there are no plans for expanding the existing Town park since the remainder of the undeveloped land is wetland. However, the Town is considering the development of a park in the area south of Albany-Shaker Road, north of Sand Creek Road, and east of Wolf Road. Furthermore, the Town continues to create smaller parks, typically 5 acres or less in size, to serve neighborhoods or residential pockets, where they are needed. The Town refers to these areas as pocket parks. Existing parks within the Study Area include Maywood Pocket Park, Stanford Heights Pocket Park, and the Lisha Kill Pocket Park (Figure II-L-1).

#### Town of Colonie Golf Course

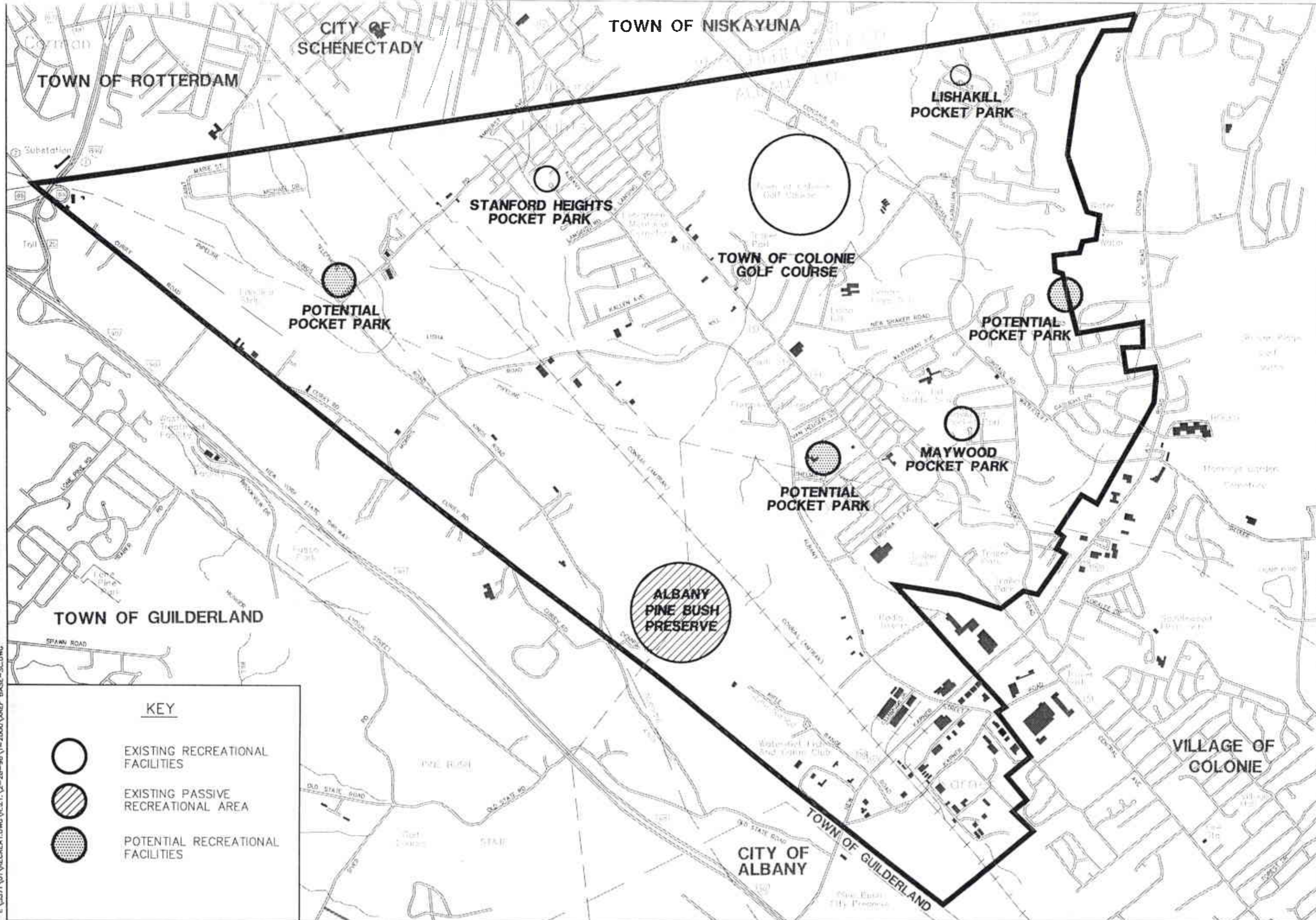
The Town of Colonie Municipal Golf Course is located on the southwest side of Consaul Road, in the northeastern portion of the Study Area. Encompassing approximately 180 acres, the course consists of 27 holes for a total of 10,129 yards. This facility includes a clubhouse with locker rooms, pro shop, restaurant, driving range, putting green and 5 tennis courts which are available on a first come-first serve basis. During the winter months, the Town maintains approximately 5.5 miles of cross country ski trails over the golf course.

In response to the concerns raised in previous GEIS's in the Town, the Town is considering the expansion of the golf course by nine holes.

#### Albany Pine Bush Preserve




Approximately 500 acres of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve is located within the Study Area, offering considerable recreational opportunity. Currently, efforts are being made to identify the Preserve access points and develop an official trail system. Although preservation is the primary goal for management of the Pine Bush, low impact public use is an important component.

The "Vision for the Albany Pine Bush Preserve" (Figure II-D-2) indicates additional lands that the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission would like to obtain and preserve (Full Protection Areas and Open Space-Section II.C). Much of this area is State and federal wetland. If these lands are preserved, there would be an additional 850 acres of protected open space within the project area.



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**KEY**

-  EXISTING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES
-  EXISTING PASSIVE RECREATIONAL AREA
-  POTENTIAL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

**EXISTING & POTENTIAL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**  
**LISHA KILL - KINGS ROAD AREA**  
**GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**



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 FIGURE NO. II-L-1 SCALE: 1" = 2000'

## IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The 1988 LUMAC Technical Report indicates that National Recreational Opportunity Standards, developed by the National Recreational Parks Association and the NYSOPRHP, suggest 5 acres per 1,000 residents for municipal parks. These parks serve as major attractions in a municipality. Based upon the 1990 Town and Village population, Colonie's 160 acres of Town park is 42 percent of this standard, and by 2015 would drop to about 40 percent of this standard. This deficiency is compensated by the development of pocket parks and the presence of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, offering several hundred acres of passive recreational use.

Pocket parks serve small areas, typically neighborhoods. The Town of Colonie Parks and Recreation Department (Zambardino letter dated 2/15/96 and subsequent communications dated 2/29/96, 3/6/96) has indicated that two additional pocket parks are required to alleviate future recreation deficiencies in the Study Area (Figure II-L-1).

One park should be constructed in the Thelma Street area, on the west side of Central Avenue. People in that area have to cross Central Avenue to reach a pocket park. The second park should be located in the Debbie Marie Court area to meet existing and future recreational needs. However, a pocket park was also recommended for this general area in the Airport Area GEIS (Clough, Harbour & Associates 1991). Since the Debbie Marie Court park would serve two study areas, it would be considered a half park for the purposes of cost estimation. The Town Parks and Recreation Department estimates that a typical 5 acre pocket park would cost \$150,000 at today's cost for land, labor and

equipment (Zambardino letter dated 2/15/96, communication dated 3/6/96 - Appendix 1).

In addition to new facilities, future development in the Study Area would require improvements to some of the existing facilities. The Lisha Kill, Maywood, and Stanford Heights pocket parks would all require upgrading and additional equipment to accommodate the larger population. It is estimated that this would cost approximately \$50,000 per park at today's cost (Zambardino communication dated 3/6/96 - Appendix 1).

The total cost for new pocket parks in the Study Area is approximately \$225,000. The Colonie Department of Parks and Recreation indicated that the improvements to the existing parks would be required for the projected increase in population. Therefore, the total mitigation cost for new development would be \$375,000. This could be distributed over the total developable land in the Study Area for a cost of approximately \$560 per acre.

### Town of Colonie Golf Course

The Town of Colonie Municipal Golf Course is currently utilized at capacity and, therefore, a 9-hole expansion has been proposed. The expansion is consistent with established standards and usage and recommendations made in previously prepared GEIS's in the Town of Colonie.

*Golf Facilities in the U.S.* (National Golf Foundation 1994) provides demographic data on golf courses in the U.S. In New York State, with an estimated 1993 population of 18,169,891, there are approximately 21,326 people per 9-holes of public golf course. Within the Albany metropolitan statistical area (1993 population of 880,868), there are approximately 15,453 people per 9-holes. The national average is 16,719 people per 9 holes.

Based on a current population of 76,497 and 27 holes of public golf course, the Town of Colonie has a golf density of 25,500 people per 9 holes, well above national, State, and regional averages, reflecting a need for expansion. This is expected to increase to approximately 26,700 people per 9 holes by 2015, based on a projected population of 80,076. National recreational standards range from 25,000 to 30,000 people per 9 holes, but may not accurately reflect local usage.

With the addition of 9 holes, the current density would decrease to about 19,000 people per 9 holes, while the projected (2015) density would decrease to 20,000 people per 9 holes.

The Town Parks and Recreation Department estimates that the cost of expanding the golf course would be approximately \$2 million. In addition to the course, the club house could be expanded and six tennis courts could be added.

Since the expansion is a result of projected population increases in the Town and villages, new development in the Study Area should only be responsible for a portion of the cost. An equitable means of distributing this cost could be developed. One option is to base the distribution on projected population growth.

The Study Area is projected to account for 47 percent of the total increase in Town-wide population over the 20-year planning period. Therefore, 47 percent of the total expansion costs (including club house and tennis courts) would be \$1,128,000. This could then be distributed per residential unit, or per acre to include commercial and industrial development.

### **Open Space**

In addition to parkland within the study area, the Projected Growth Development Scenario would result in approximately 2,500 acres of undeveloped open space, or 43 percent of the total land area within the Study Area.

Approximately 500 acres of this open space is permanently protected within the Albany Pine Bush Preserve and available for public access. Additional land (approximately 1700 acres) would be protected because it is inhabited by State and/or federal wetland.

Should the Town determine that all or a portion of the remaining developable land should be preserved, there are several options to do so, as discussed in Section II.A.