

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.

Table of Contents

Paths for Transportation, 6-22

Schools, 6-12

Westmere Elementary School
Guilderland Elementary School
Lynnwood Elementary School
Pine Bush Elementary School
Altamont Elementary School
Farnsworth Middle School
Guilderland High School

Parks, Recreational Facilities, 12-15

Abele Park
Nott Road Park
Tawasentha Park
Keenholts Park
Lone Pine Park
Fort Hunter Park
DiCaprio Park
Bozenkill Park
YMCA/Library Area
The Pine Bush Preserve
Schoolcraft House
Frederick House
Town Hall
Western Turnpike Golf Course

Neighborhood Shopping, 16-18

Stuyvesant Plaza
Crossgates
Price Chopper
Robinson Hardware
Star Plaza/20 Mall
Stewarts (Hartman's Corners)
Hannaford/CVS/Carpenter Village
Carman Plaza/Corner Ice Cream
Greulich's

Churches, 18-19

Christ Lutheran Church
McKownville Methodist Church
Christ The King Church

Hamilton Union Church
Cornerstone Christian Church
Grace Baptist Church
Lynnwood Reformed Church
St. Madeleine Sophie Church
Carman Road Alliance Church
Berea Church
St. Bonaface Church

Employment Centers, 20-21

University at Albany/Harriman Campus/CESTM
Executive Park
1450 Western Avenue
Town Hall/Power Pool
Crossgates, Washington Avenue Extension
Downtown Albany

Recreational Trails, 22-31

Normans Kill Valley Linear Park, 22-26

Blockhouse Creek Trail
Normans Kill Trail
Reservoir Dam-High School Spur
Town Hall Spur

Guilderland Greenway, 27-29

Fuller Station Railbed Trail
Normans Kill Valley Trail
Hunger Kill-Winding Brook Trail
Pine Bush Trail

Rural and Water Trails, 29-30

D & H Rail Trail
Indian Ladder Trail
Ewart Bancker Water Trail

Short Recreational Trails, 31

McKownville Reservoir
Tawasentha Park
DiCaprio Park

Appendix 1: Thruway Bike Path proposal
Appendix 2: Guilderland Greenway proposal
Appendix 3: Pine Bush Trail proposal

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 Venezia 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 Venezia 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 Gardenview 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

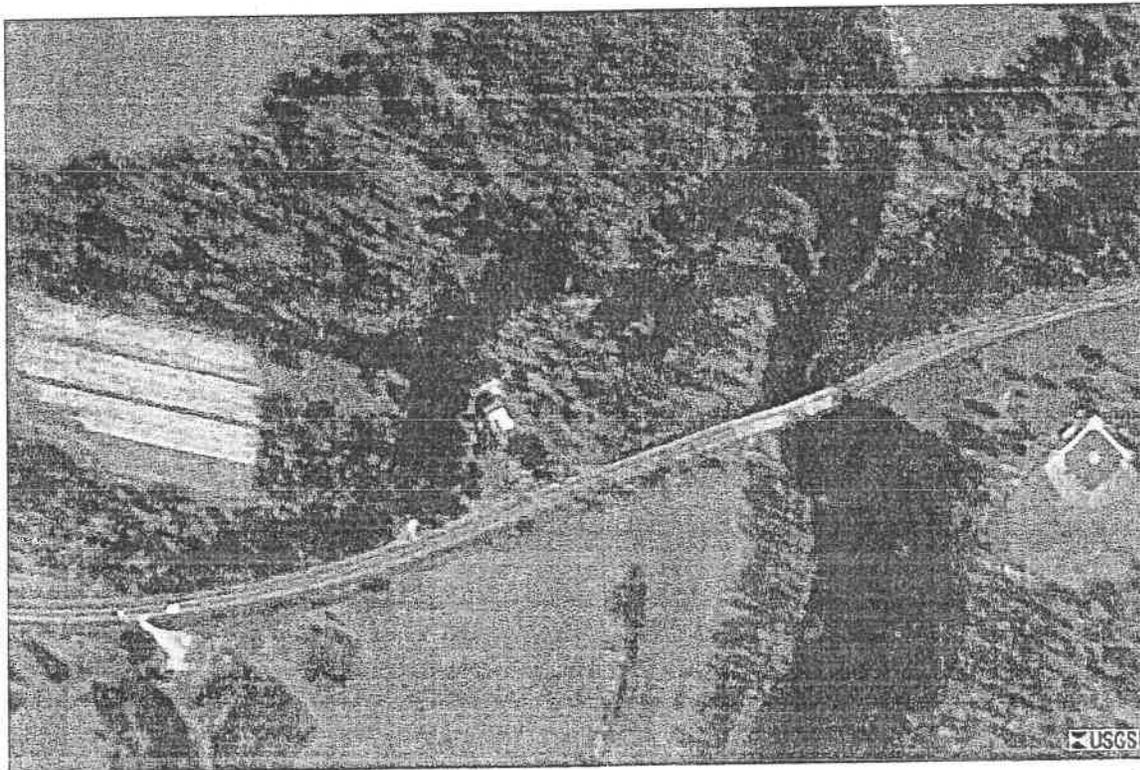
would proceed as in the second route above towards Tawasentha as before. All of this trail would be well away from the edge of the gorge overlooking the rifle range.

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 19th 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 Guilderland 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 Guilderland and New Scotland and on State parkland, so the trail would need to be a joint effort of Guilderland, New Scotland, Albany County and the State Parks Department.

Ewart Bancker Water Trail

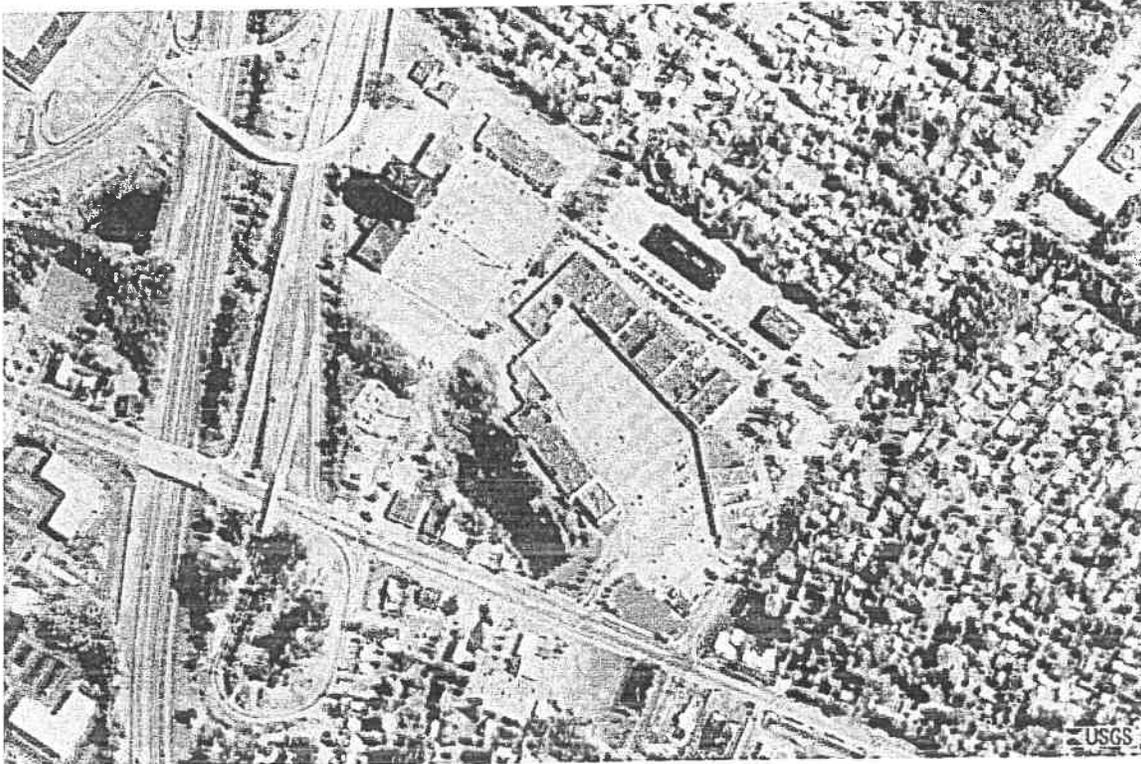
Veteran canoers report that usually the Normans Kill is a leisurely canoe trip, with no significant rapids, between the Dam and Normanside near Delaware Avenue in Albany. The Rifle Range makes canoeing west of Grant Hill Road hazardous. So a reasonable upstream launching point for canoes and kayaks could 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 Guilderland 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.

Appendix A

A bike path along the Thruway between Exit 23 and Exit 25? (submitted to the Thruway Authority, June 17, 2003; slightly edited and submitted to the Albany County Planning Department, July 17, 2003)

At a time when the CDTC is updating its priority bike/ped network and the Thruway Authority is considering construction along the Thruway corridor between Exits 21 and 25, the Guilderland Pathways Committee would like to suggest consideration of an off-road bike path along the south side of the Thruway between Exits 23 and 25. Some potential advantages of such a path:

- there is a continuous ROW for the path
- development may be possible without construction of bridges or tunnels
- the path would connect a number of regionally attractive destinations that are now not served by bike paths in the region
- it could connect to the regional bike path network (see map, below).

What would it connect?

Eastern Rotterdam

NYS Bike Route #5 (at Exit 25 and in McKownville)

The Pine Bush Preserve east and west of Route 155

The proposed Pine Bush Greenway between Fuller Road and Kings Road in Colonie

The proposed Patroon Path between Fuller Road and the Corning Preserve

The Lone Pine and Fort Hunter residential areas of Guilderland

Crossgates Commons, Crossgates and Washington Avenue Extension

The CDTA hub at Crossgates

McKownville

The University at Albany and the Harriman Office Campus

North Bethlehem

The Whitehall Road area of Albany

University Heights

If extended to the Port of Albany the path could connect to the Hudson River Greenway bike route and downtown Albany.

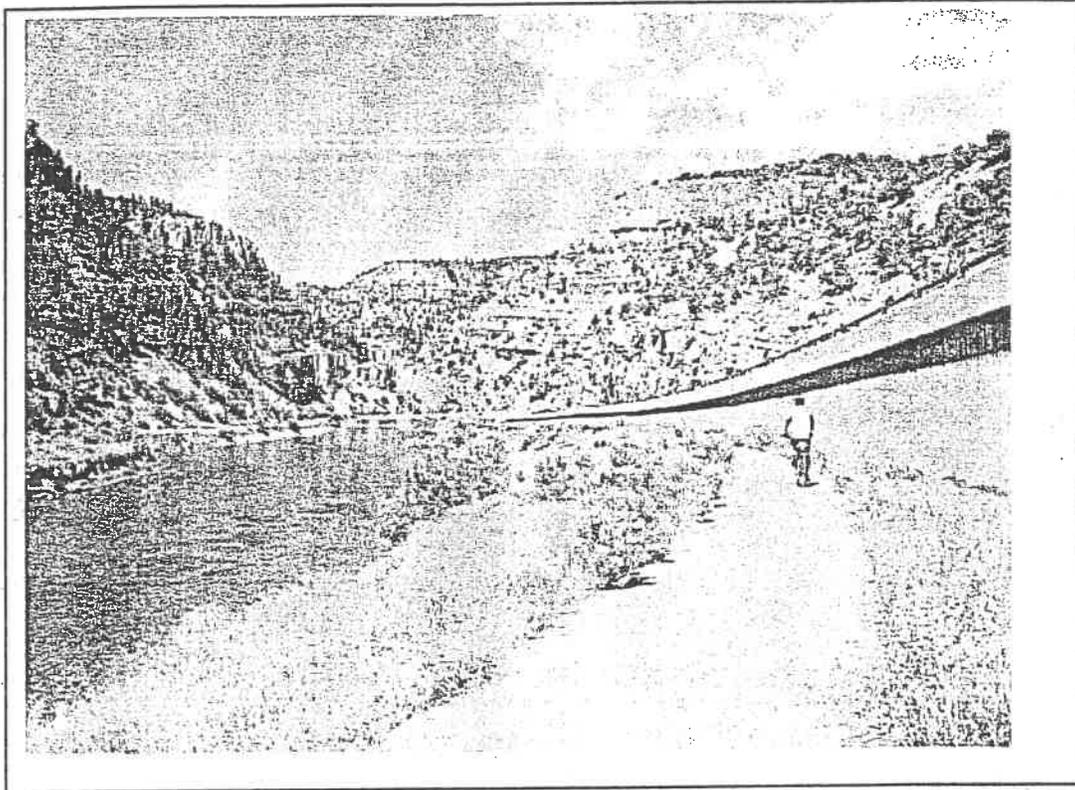
If the abandoned D&H rail line between Voorheesville and the Port becomes a bike path, the rail path could connect to the Thruway path via Normanside at Rockefeller Road .

But aren't bikes and pedestrians incompatible with interstate highways?

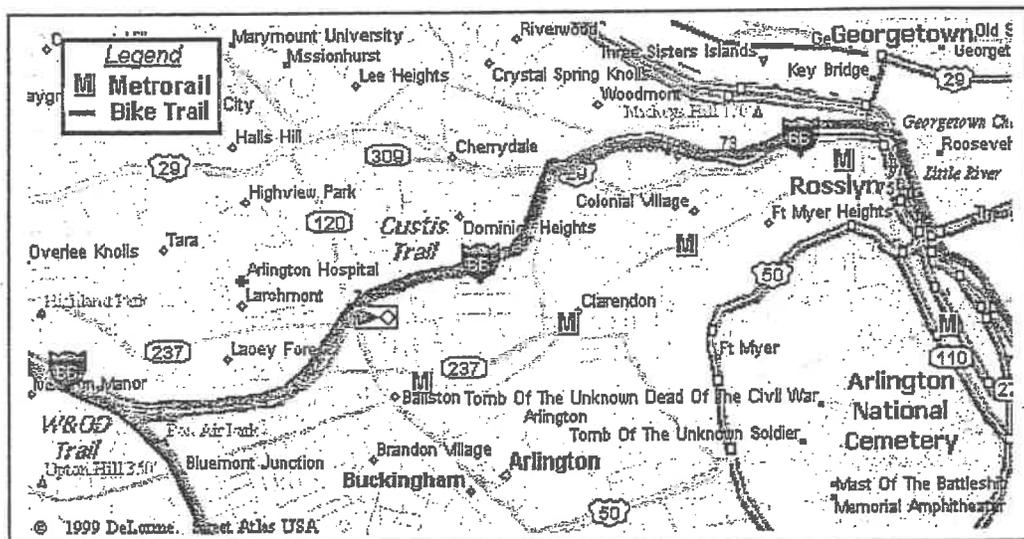
Not any more. TEA-21 makes federal funds available for non-motorized projects within Interstate highway corridors. Some examples:

- I-90 in Seattle (the Mountains to Sound Greenway)

- I-70 in Glenwood Canyon, CO (the Glenwood Canyon Bike Trail)
(from pw1.netcom.com/~reynen/2001/bikecolorado)



- I-66 in Arlington, VA (the Martha Custis Trail) (from bikewashington.org/trails/wad/custin.htm)



Locally:

- The bike path between Fuller Road at Lake Rensselaer and the Pine Bush Preserve west of the Albany Landfill lies adjacent to the Thruway as both cross under Rapp Road.
- The proposed Patroon Path presumably lies in, or adjacent to, the right-of-way of I-90, mostly on the north side, between Fuller Road and the Corning Preserve.
- The proposed connection between Broadway in Menands and the Corning Preserve bike path uses the ROW of the entrance ramp from Route 32 to I-787. See <http://www.cdtcmpo.org/crossroads.pdf>, page 2:

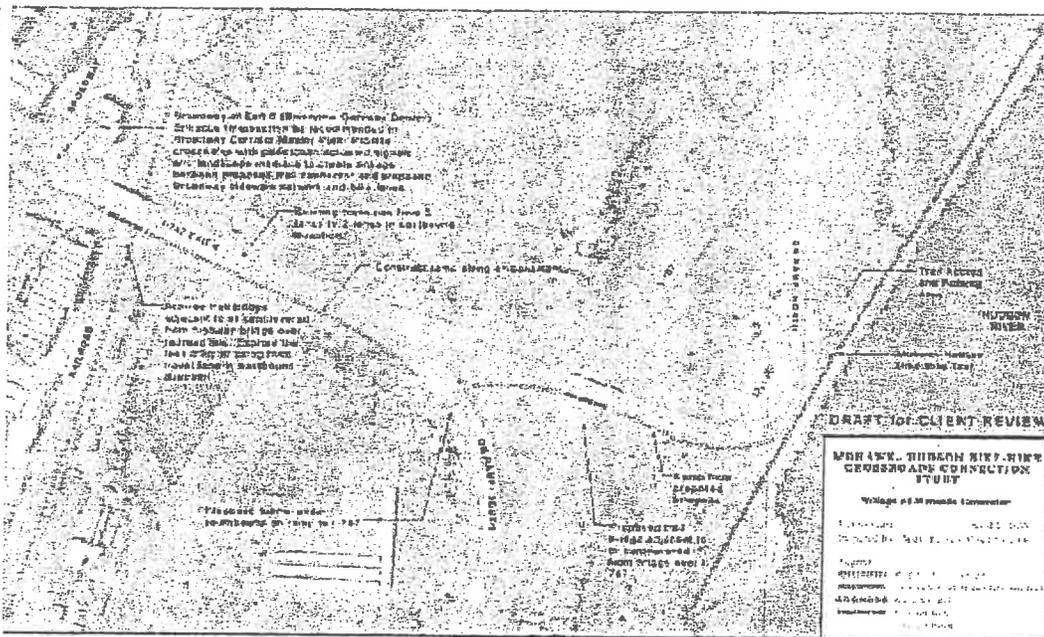


Figure 1: Proposed Trail Plan to Access the Menands Village Center Using Exit 6 as the Linkage.

Why not use existing highways?

Existing highways in the area do not and cannot meet bicycle standards. The Oregon DOT (Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Oregon DOT, 1995) suggests that shared roadways in urban areas are suitable if they have low speeds (under 25 mph) or low volumes (under 3000 ADT). None of the local highways come close to those standards. Here are some counts, from <http://www.cdtcmpo.org/tvr/maps/albcotv.htm>

Lydius St	Old State Rd to NY 146 (Carman Rd)	ALB	Minor Urban Arterial	4500	1999	<u>O[5]</u>
Old State Rd (East)	NY 146 to Kings Rd	ALB	Urban Collector	14800	1999	<u>O[5]</u>
Old State Rd (East)	Kings Rd to Albany City Line	ALB	Minor Urban Arterial	9600	1999	<u>E[1]</u>

Route 20:

US 20/NY 146	ALB	Principal Urban Arterial	25600	2001	<u>E[1]</u>
NY 146 to NY 155	ALB	Principal Urban Arterial	28300	1999	<u>A[1]</u>
NY 155 to Crossgates Mall	ALB	Principal Urban Arterial	36300	2001	<u>E[1]</u>
Crossgates Mall to Fuller Rd Alternate (NY 910F)	ALB	Principal Urban Arterial	41100	2001	<u>E[1]</u>
Fuller Rd Alternate to CR 156 (Fuller Rd)	ALB	Principal Urban Arterial	28000	1999	<u>A[1]</u>
CR 156 to NY 85	ALB	Principal Urban Arterial	25200	1999	<u>A[1]</u>

Carman Road:

US 20 (end overlap) to Schenectady County Line	ALB	Principal Urban Arterial	16400	2001	<u>E[1]</u>
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Schoolhouse Road:

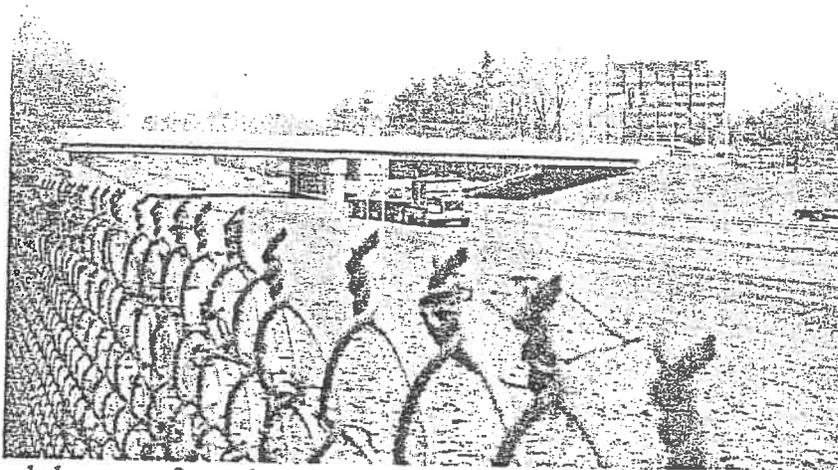
Krumkill Rd to Guilderland Town Line	ALB	Minor Urban Arterial	10400	1997	<u>E[1]</u>
Guilderland Town Line to I-87 Overpass	ALB	Minor Urban Arterial	10400	1997	<u>E[1]</u>
I-87 Overpass to US 20	ALB	Minor Urban Arterial	10500	1997	<u>E[1]</u>

For highways that don't meet the standard to be a shared roadway, 6 foot bike lanes are the recommended Oregon DOT standard on urban arterials and major collector streets. No collector highway in Guilderland, except perhaps Route 146 north of Guilderland Center, comes close to having that width, and most town and county roads in Guilderland lack sufficient right-of-way to construct even 4 foot bike lanes.

The proposed Thruway path could provide an alternative route for NYS Bike Route #5 east of Exit 25. Western Avenue between Carman Road and McKown Road presently has some substandard sections (north side at the Kaikout Kill, across from 20 Mall; both sides west of Willow Street/Foundry Road, over the Hunger Kill) that would appear to be very expensive to bring to standard because of ravines adjacent to the highway. In any case traffic volumes and the density of driveways on Western Avenue are both quite high.

Is a path along the Thruway feasible?

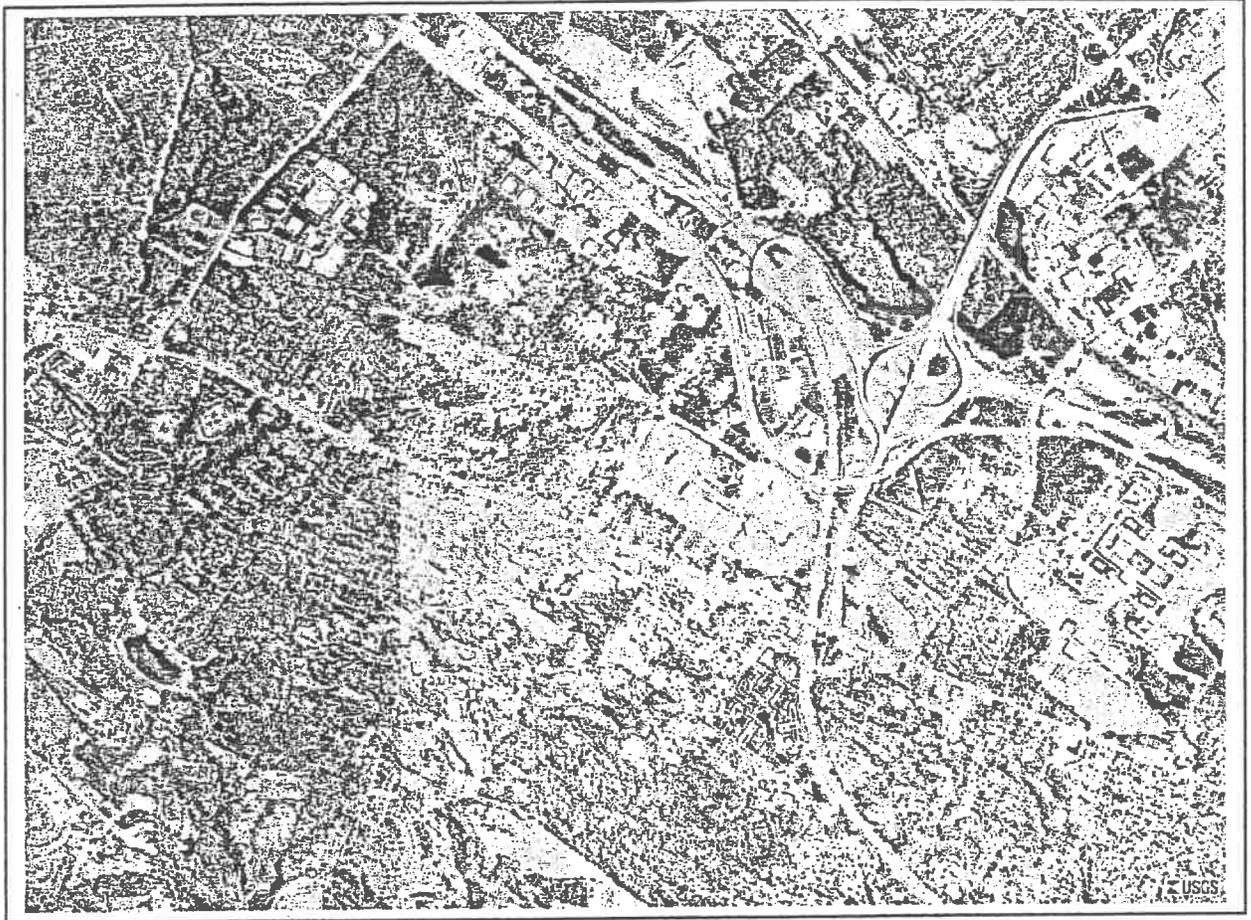
The main obstacles are the bridges, and all the Thruway bridges in the region appear to look like the Western Avenue Bridge,



in that the land slopes up from the edge of pavement to the top of the bridge, as shown here. The older ones also have vertical columns holding up the bridge at the edge of pavement on both sides, rather than columns only in the median. Since the bridge is 14 feet or more above the pavement, and for bike paths an 8 foot clearance is acceptable (Oregon DOT), it appears possible to locate a bike path part way up the slope, well separated from the highway, and still have adequate vertical clearance.

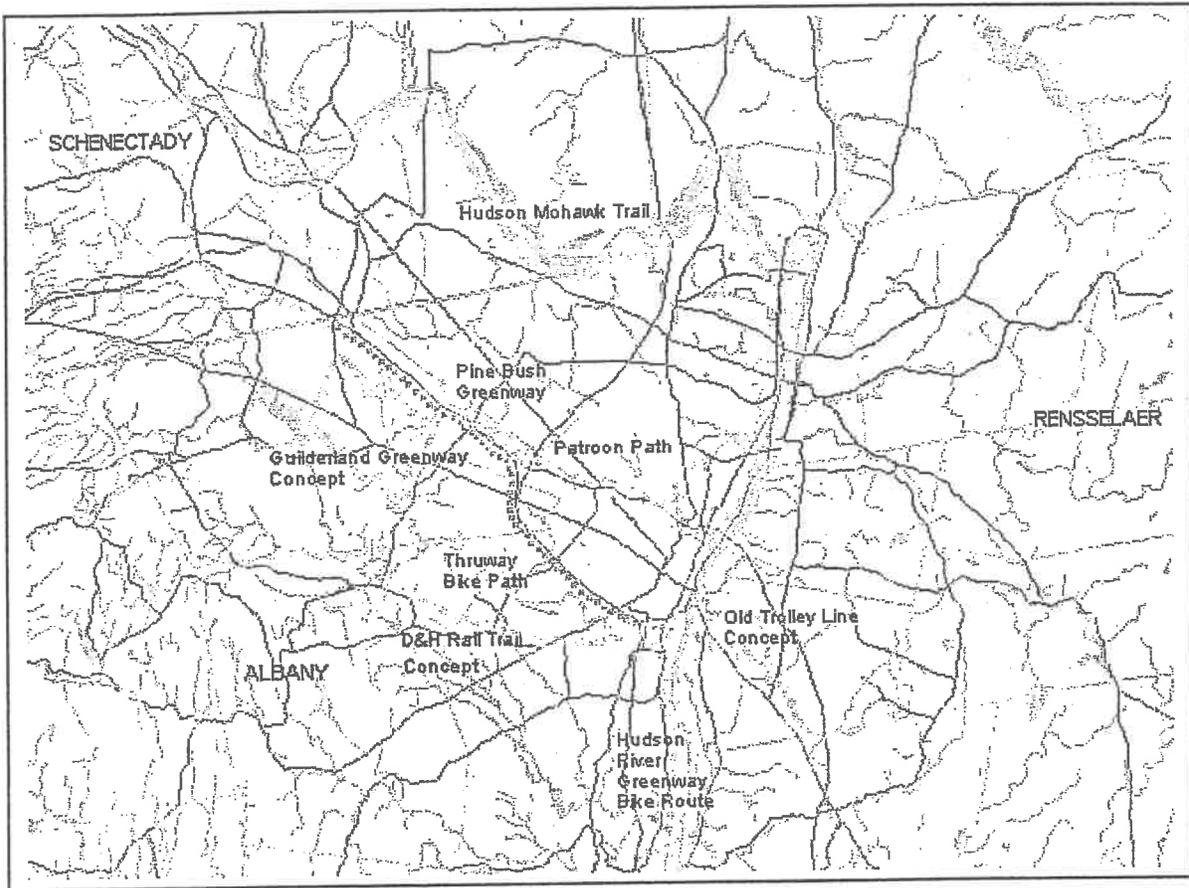
Between Exit 25 and Exit 23, the only highway the Thruway goes over that I'm aware of is Krum Kill Road. For an initial path it appears possible to design an at-grade crossing of Krum Kill Road. That location could also be a reasonable place for bike traffic heading for the St. Peter's Hospital or University Heights area to move from a path on the south side of the Thruway to a path on the north side east of Krum Kill that would connect to New Scotland Avenue near Whitehall Road. (Farther east, Hackett Boulevard appears to have plenty of room for bike lanes east of South Main Ave. except at the Academy Road intersection.)

Here is a map of part of the path, showing connections to the Pine Bush path via Rapp Road, to the Washington Avenue Extension north service road, to Crossgates, and to McKownville via McKown Road and Abele Park:



The path indicated here would appear to be constructible with minor topographical alterations and without constructing any bridges or tunnels (as compared to the Menands connector, shown above).

Here is a map of how a Thruway bike path could fit into the regional network.

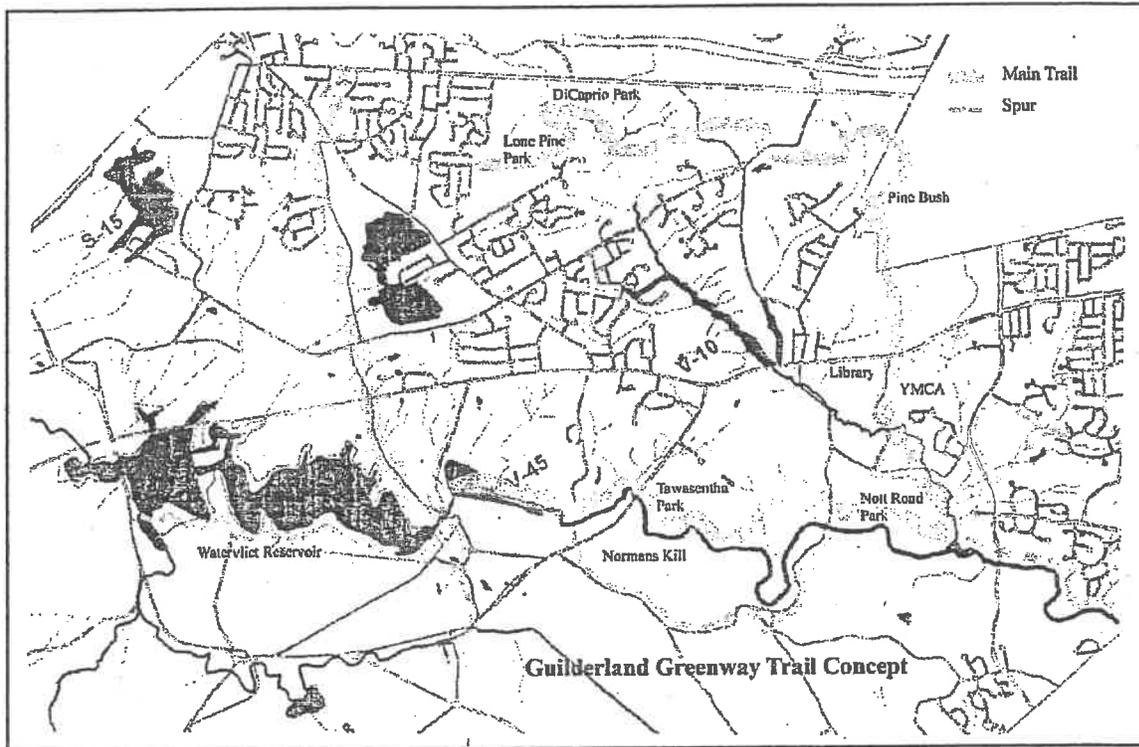


The paths in purple or green dots are conceptual. (The Old Trolley Line concept arose during a design charette by Fraser Associates for the 9 and 20 corridor in East Greenbush earlier this year; the Pine Bush Greenway was proposed by the Pine Bush Commission a couple of years ago; the Guilderland Greenway Concept was initially proposed by the Guilderland Pathways Committee last year; the Patroon Path has been designed by DOT; the D&H Rail Trail Concept is presently being considered by Albany County.)

Lindsay Childs
Guilderland Pathways Committee
7/17/03

Appendix B
The Guilderland Greenway Concept
(submitted to the Guilderland Town Board as an appendix to a budget memo in
September, 2002)

Here is a map of the Guilderland Greenway concept, as of the summer of 2001:



As the map shows, the Greenway concept consists of a main loop trail connecting the Reservoir Dam, Nott Road Park, Guilderland Elementary School, the Pine Bush Preserve, DiCaprio and Lone Pine Parks, and Pine Bush School, with connections to Guilderland Center, the Westlawn neighborhood through or near Farnsworth Middle School, the Colonie Pine Bush Preserve over the Old State Road/Thruway bridge, and Lynnwood School, and Route 155 and the Dr. Shaw Road neighborhoods through Mill Hill.

The status of the various segments of this concept is detailed below.

North: Lone Pine Park to DiCaprio Park. This portion has a network of dirt roads connecting the two Town parks through the Lupe parcel and over a culvert across the west branch of the Hunger Kill. The Lupe parcel has come before the Town Planning Board for a residential subdivision on the northwest portion of the parcel, and the applicant is presently preparing a DEIS. The portion of the Lupe parcel containing the road network has been proposed for donation to the Town as part of the application.

DiCaprio Park to Guilderland Elementary School. This portion of the trail would go through the Pine Bush preserve. A proposed route has been mapped and partially

marked. The difficult portions are a crossing of the tributary of the west branch of the Hungerkill, at the southern end of DiCaprio Park, and a crossing of the East Branch of the Hungerkill. Locations for both crossings have been identified by the GPC, working with Pine Bush Commission Steward Joel Hecht, and a proposal for the trail was submitted to the Pine Bush Commission, where it has been set aside until the Commission develops a recreation management plan. Work on the recreation management plan is projected to begin this fall. Among the issues likely to be considered related to the proposed Guilderland Greenway trail are

- erosion in the two ravines the trail would cross
- over- and misuse of the Pine Bush Preserve by mountain bikes
- the lack of any official trails in the Guilderland portion of the Pine Bush Preserve.

Spur: a connection between the Guilderland and Colonie Pine Bush Preserves. This would connect the main GGT loop trail at Old State Road with the Colonie Pine Bush and a proposed Pine Bush greenway using the Old State Road Bridge over the Thruway and a NiMO right-of-way heading straight north from the Old State Road Bridge to Kings Road. The present bridge and approaches have very narrow shoulders hemmed in by guide rails and bridge railings that force pedestrians into the travel lanes of Old State Road. The Thruway Authority indicated that the bridge is projected to be renovated in 2005, and the GPC has contacted the Thruway Authority asking that the bridge be made pedestrian-friendly. Use of the NiMo ROW is problematical. NiMo has granted easements to municipalities (e.g. Niskayuna) for the use of power line rights of way as trails under several conditions: no use by motorized vehicles, free access by NiMo for maintenance of their power lines, no liability to NiMo, and no opposition from adjacent landowners.

An alternative route north of the Thruway bridge would be along Old State Road between the bridge and the old Kings Highway/Hellman parcel.

This spur would connect Guilderland to the old Kings Highway, which is an approximate location of the Pine Bush Greenway. The Pine Bush Greenway is proposed to go between the Kings Road portion of the Preserve and the Preserve east of Route 155 near the SEFCU building, and connect with the existing path near the Thruway between the SEFCU part of the Preserve, west of the landfill, and Fuller Road at Lake Rensselaer. East of Fuller Road the proposed Patroon Path would connect Lake Rensselaer with the Corning Preserve, roughly following Patroon Creek.

East. Pine Bush Preserve to Western Avenue. It appears that using the Guilderland Elementary School grounds to connect the trail in the Preserve to Western Avenue would be an acceptable use. However it is also feasible to locate the trail on Preserve lands west of the school grounds. There is at present no sidewalk along the north side of Western Avenue in this area. There is a pedestrian crosswalk at the intersection of Western Avenue with Winding Brook Drive and the entrance to Guilderland Elementary School.

Western Avenue to Nott Road Park. This portion of the trail would lie east of Winding Brook Drive and go through Fairwood Apartments. This portion would require the cooperation of three landowners: the owners of the Beltrone-Lucarelli parcel, the YMCA, and KAM, owners of the Fairwood Apartment complex.

The YMCA has already agreed to construct a sidewalk/path on its frontage at an appropriate time.

The Beltrone-Lucarelli parcel has come before the Town for proposed development several times during the past decade, but the proposals have required zoning changes that the Town was unwilling to grant. We anticipate that within the next few years this parcel will be developed, and that included in the development will be a sidewalk/bike path along Winding Brook Drive to connect Western Avenue with the YMCA parcel.

Fairwood has applied to the Town recently for additional development on its land. It would be hoped that any additional development on the Fairwood parcel would include provisions for a public sidewalk/path connecting the YMCA parcel with Nott Road.

Nott Road to Nott Road Park. A path in this area could run next to Nott Road between Fairwood and the roadway to the Sewage Treatment Plant/Nott Road Park, then follow that roadway to the Park. Alternatively, an off-road path could be located on the Danto parcel that surrounds the town lands in the area—the Danto parcel has been on the market in recent years and the Town considered it for purchase.

Spurs: Winding Brook Drive to 20 Mall. This spur would lie on the Beltrone and Lia parcels. The Lia parcels have been proposed for development in recent years.

Winding Brook Drive to Guilderland Public Library. This would be a very short spur on a Town-owned paper street immediately south of the Library building and on a piece of the Beltrone parcel west of Winding Brook Drive.

Beltrone/YMCA to Hiawatha Trails Golf Course. An old road connects the Beltrone property near the northeast corner of the YMCA with the 12th fairway of Hiawatha. Such a spur would not be appropriate as long as the Hiawatha property continues as a golf course, but the owner of the Hiawatha course has indicated that a possible long-term use of the golf course property might be as a nature preserve. In that case the road might be usable as a connector between the YMCA/Library and the Farnsworth Middle School.

Nott Road Park to Dr. Shaw Road. The developer of the Mill Hill senior complex has agreed to provide a public path between Route 155 at Dr. Shaw and the western boundary of the Mill Hill property, where the Blockhouse Creek separates the Mill Hill and Nott Road Park parcels. A bridge over the creek would be necessary. This spur could be the beginning of a much longer path paralleling the Normans Kill. The Town owns land along the Normans Kill in the Kennewyck development, and also land in the Vale of Normanskill development that could connect Dr. Shaw Road to the Normans Kill land. Such a path would be mostly on the height of land adjacent to the edge of the north side

of the ravine of the Normanskill rather than in the ravine. The in-ravine route would be preferable, but much of the land in the ravine on both sides of the Normans Kill east of Route 155 is part of the State Health Department's Griffin Laboratory, is fenced off, and may be inaccessible into the indefinite future (Griffin does work with rabies, among other dangerous diseases). East of the Griffin Lab property and west of Johnston Road, the Town-owned land is close to the rear yards of residences in Kennewyck, and NIMBY opposition is likely to be strong. It may be preferable to cross the Normanskill east of Griffin Lab and place a trail on the south side, where homes are not so close to the creek.

Nott Road Park to Westlawn/Prescott Woods/FMS. There is a sewer line that runs under a utility line between the roadway into the Sewage Treatment Plant and Route 155 and intersects Nott Road at the eastern end of the sharp curve closest to Route 155. East of Route 155 the sewer line runs along the Blockhouse Creek to a culvert crossing the Blockhouse behind Jefferson Court and the back athletic field of the Farnsworth Middle School. All of this sewer line ROW is mowed several times per year. Part of it, east of Route 155, is in a wetland. The land is owned, we believe, by Danto west of Route 155 (see above), and by Becker (next to Camp Nassau) and the School District east of Route 155. Immediately east of Route 155 the ownership is (temporarily) unknown, but the Baptist Church, adjacent to the easement to the north, indicated a willingness to consider a path on its property to connect Route 155 with the Becker property. The attitude of the owners of the Becker property concerning such a path is unknown. This path would cross Route 155 in the middle of a long straightaway with excellent site distance.

There is an existing path that connects the back field of FMS to Walden Pond Road in Prescott Woods over the above-mentioned culvert. The culvert is owned by a private sewer company, but the rest of the path is on School District property except for the easternmost portion, which lies on a Town-owned paper street connecting Walden Pond Road to the School District property. In 2000 the GPC proposed to the School District to develop this path, but the proposal aroused strong opposition from the adjacent landowners on Walden Pond Road, and the proposal was withdrawn.

The State is planning to install a sidewalk on the east side of Route 155 between Western Avenue and Dr. Shaw Road as part of the planned 2003 reconstruction of the highway. That sidewalk would connect the neighborhoods and apartment complexes along Route 155 with any available connection between Route 155 and Nott Road Park.

South. Nott Road Park to Grant Hill Road. There is a sewer easement and driveway on the Danto parcel connecting the sewage treatment plant and Grant Hill Road near the Normanskill. A pedestrian easement would have to be negotiated.

Grant Hill Road to Tawasentha Park. There are several possibilities.

The most feasible and least attractive route is to simply use Grant Hill, Wormer and Ostrander Roads, turning off Ostrander Road just east of Route 146 onto the southern edge of Town park land. The trail could then run on town parkland along the east side of Route 146 to the Normans Kill, then cross the Normans Kill on the highway bridge.

A possible medium-term route is to obtain an easement to run a trail along the southern boundary of the Pruszkowski farm between Grant Hill Road and the Western Turnpike Golf Club, then run a trail along the southern edge of the Golf Club, around the golf holes, to the top of the hill in front of the Performing Arts Center at Tawasentha Park. Such a trail would connect to the network of cross-country trails in the park. This route would place the trail high above the Normans Kill. The Town is presently negotiating the purchase of the Golf Club, so assuming that the purchase is completed, the Town should be able to find a suitable route. One can speculate that in the long run, the farm will be developed for residences, and any required open space is likely to be placed at the southern edge of the property, where the trail should be located.

The ideal long-term route is right through the National Guard Rifle Range between Grant Hill Road and the Golf Club. This route would place the path close to the creek, and would pass through the most spectacular stretch of scenery along the Normanskill in the Town. Such a route would only be possible with the closure of the Rifle Range, a possibility that may become a more viable consideration as nearby land is developed into residential uses that may be viewed as incompatible with the Rifle Range.

Tawasentha Park to Fuller Station Road north of the Reservoir Dam. There is ample room under the Route 146 bridge over the Normanskill for a trail on the north bank adjacent to the creek. West of Route 146 there is a private parcel, then the Drebitko parcel which is the site of the Battle of Normans Kill, then another parcel or two that contain wetlands near the creek. The Albany County Land Conservancy has made an offer for the Drebitko parcel, which has not been accepted, but the land is apparently still available.

Spurs:

From Fuller Station Road to Keenholts Park and Guilderland Center. This spur would cross the presently blocked French's Mill highway bridge over the Normanskill. The bridge has been closed to vehicle traffic for years, and last year Albany County proposed to demolish it. After a public outcry, the County agreed to rehabilitate the bridge for pedestrian and bicycle traffic and turn it over to the Town. The demolition was scheduled for 2003, so presumably the rehabilitation may occur then.

Between French's Mill Road and Keenholts Park. The French's Mill Road bridge over the CSX tracks is heavily blocked, forcing a mile-long detour along French's Hollow Road, Route 146 and French's Mill Road to cross the railroad tracks and reach Keenholts Park from the south side of the above-mentioned Normanskill bridge. It would be desirable to rehabilitate this bridge for pedestrian/bicycle use.

Between the Normanskill bridge and Route 146 (south side). If an easement could be negotiated from two private landowners on French's Mill Road near the dam, then Town-owned land obtained from the Elizabethfield development could be used to connect French's Mill Road near the dam to Town parkland containing the climbing barn and

community gardens on the northwest side of Route 146. This trail would provide an overlook of the Battle of Normanskill site, and could become part of a loop trail between Tawasentha Park and the Dam.

West. Between the Dam and Western Avenue. The trail would follow Fuller Station Road, which, south of Western Avenue is little-traveled since the closure of the bridge over the Normanskill.

Western Avenue to Pine Bush School. The roadbed of the old Fuller Station railroad line that connected Guilderland Center, Fullers and Schenectady in the 19th century is now owned by NiMo and used as a power line right-of-way. Some of it runs right next to Fuller Station Road, north of Old State Road, while near Williamsburgh, it runs behind homes on the west side of Fuller Station Road, some of whom have included the ROW in their back yards. The conditions imposed by NiMo to allow this ROW to be used as a trail would be challenging. Perhaps a combination of ROW and sidewalk along Fuller Station Road would be a feasible solution. The trail would reach Fuller Station Road where it bends east to meet Carman Road at a signalized intersection at Coons Road. A pedestrian-activated phase would be desirable at that intersection.

Pine Bush School to Lone Pine Park. This stretch is fully developed as residential subdivisions. Coons Road contains a sidewalk, and Gregory Lane and DiBella Drive are neighborhood streets that would be reasonably safe for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Spur.

Fuller Station Road to Lynnwood School. A path in the Brenn-Breit subdivision off Fuller Station Road north of Western Avenue connecting to the school grounds has been included in a site plan recently approved by the Planning Board.

From the Dam around the south side of the Watervliet Reservoir. This spur, shown on the map, is probably no longer feasible because of security concerns.

Guilderland Pathways Committee, 9/10/02

Appendix C

A through trail between DiCaprio Park and Western Avenue (A proposal submitted to the Albany Pine Bush Commission Technical Committee on July 10, 2001-Appendices omitted)

The Town of Guilderland Pathways Committee (GPC) wishes to develop a trail, suitable for hikers, mountain bikers and cross country skiers, in the Pine Bush Preserve between Western Avenue at Winding Brook Drive and the Town of Guilderland's planned DiCaprio Park off Lydius Street. The trail would use existing "official" trails in the Preserve as much as possible, but new trails would be needed west of Old State Road and across the East Branch of the Hunger Kill. Two bridges would be needed, one to cross the East Branch, and one to cross a tributary of the West Branch near the southern tip of the DiCaprio Park. The GPC would seek Town and State funding and grants for the bridges.

This proposal is being submitted by the GPC to the Pine Bush Commission Technical Committee for its consideration. Our hope is that the Technical Committee will approve the concept for a trail as described in this document, and that the Commission will view such a trail as a desirable part of the overall recreation plan for the Preserve. If so, the GPC will be very pleased to work closely with the Commission on the exact location and development of the trail.

Background

The Guilderland Pathways Committee (GPC) was established by the Guilderland Town Board in March, 2000 as an outgrowth of the process leading to a Draft Comprehensive Plan that was formally presented to the Town Board in June, 2000. Based on extensive community interest in improving the infrastructure to facilitate walking, bicycling and using other non-motorized modes of transportation in the Town of Guilderland, the Plan recommended formation of a committee whose purpose would be to formulate a strategy for the development of a comprehensive pathways plan for the Town. The importance of pathways and support of non-motorized means of transportation in the Town was maintained in a revision of the Draft Plan that was presented to the Town Board in January, 2001, and in a further revision that was presented to the Town Board in June, 2001.

The mission of the Guilderland Pathways Committee is to create a comprehensive plan for sidewalks and non-motorized recreational paths throughout the town of Guilderland, and to promote the development of safe, alternative means of non-motorized transportation in the Town of Guilderland, for both commuting and recreational purposes.

The GPC has outlined conceptual plans for both sidewalks and recreational trails in the Town. One major objective of these plans is to connect neighborhoods with amenities—parks, shopping, library, schools, the YMCA, natural areas—by bicycle and foot paths.

Its investigation of desirable and potentially feasible locations for paths has evolved into a vision of a unified trail system.

The Guilderland Greenway Trail.

The Guilderland Greenway Trail System, currently in its conceptual stage, is to be a connected network of trails in eastern Guilderland for walkers, joggers and cyclists. It will be attractive to outdoor recreational enthusiasts seeking a substantial outing, but many more residents will use portions of the trail either to travel from one part of the town (e.g., the Lone Pine area) to another (e.g., the Library,) or to just enjoy a pleasant sojourn in attractive natural surroundings (e.g., along the Normans Kill or in the Pine Bush).

The core of the conceptual trail system is the Greenway Loop, approximately 12 miles long. This Loop, with its attached spurs, would connect:

- Two important natural areas (the Pine Bush and the Normans Kill);
- Four schools (Farnsworth Middle School, Guilderland Elementary, Pine Bush Elementary and Lynnwood Elementary Schools);
- Two historic sites (Schoolcraft House and the Battle of Normans Kill site);
- Five Town parks (Nott Road Park, DiCaprio Park, Lone Pine Park, Keenholts Park and Tawasentha Park);
- Two Townwide cultural/recreation centers (the YMCA and the Guilderland Public Library)

with the extensive residential neighborhoods of Westmere, Guilderland (Willow St.), Fort Hunter/Lone Pine, Williamsburg and McCormack's Corners. A description of the proposed trail system is given later in this document, and a concept map is appended.

The Pine Bush Trail

The section of the proposed trail through the Pine Bush Preserve between Guilderland Elementary School and DiCaprio Park (off Lydius Street) is a crucial part of the overall Guilderland Greenway Trail concept.

This section of trail would provide the only feasible off-highway link between the extensive residential neighborhoods in the Lone Pine/Fort Hunter area west of the Pine Bush preserve and the town-wide amenities in the Western Avenue/Winding Brook Drive area: the YMCA, the Guilderland Public Library, and Nott Road Park. None of the highways connecting the Lone Pine area to the Library have adequate sidewalks or bicycle lanes. In particular, despite being part of New York State Bike Route #5, Western Avenue both east and west of Winding Brook Drive has major gaps in its bike lanes, and lacks sidewalks along most of its length between Routes 155 and 146. Providing them would require substantial engineering, construction and property acquisition costs because of the terrain and the lack of right-of-way, both near the

Kaikout Kill, east of Winding Brook Drive, and near the Hunger Kill, east and west of Willow St.

The Pine Bush trail would serve as a prime recreational attraction for Town residents. The attractiveness of such a trail will be obvious to persons familiar with the Pine Bush.

The Pine Bush trail could also ultimately help connect the Guilderland Pine Bush Preserve and various neighborhoods in the Town of Guilderland to the planned Pine Bush Greenway in Albany and Colonie.

Sections of the Pine Bush Trail

What follows is a detailed description of various sections of the proposed Pine Bush trail that would connect Western Avenue at Winding Brook Drive to DiCaprio Park and the Lone Pine/Fort Hunter area of the Town.

1. Between Western Avenue and the existing Pine Bush trail system.

From the northern end of the playground of the Guilderland Elementary School a well-worn trail marked with painted red squares connects the school grounds to the yellow trail between Willow Street and Route 155. From the junction of the red square and yellow trails an extensive network of official and unofficial trails connects to Willow Street near the parking lot, and also connects to the northernmost junction of the official red trail and the power lines. That junction is the eastern starting point for the proposed new cross-East Branch trail (see below).

The Guilderland School District has posted rules for use of the Elementary School Grounds. These rules appear to be completely compatible with use of the school grounds by pedestrians and bicyclists wishing to use the Pine Bush trail system. The text of the sign is attached as an appendix. Thus the GPC does not anticipate difficulties with use of the School grounds.

However, in the event that the School District objects to a formal trail through the elementary school grounds, the GPC has located and marked (with pink tape) a reasonable alternate route. This route begins on Western Avenue near the eastern edge of the frontage of Preserve lands on Western Avenue, and proceeds northeasterly, partly on an informal trail created by the neighbor to the east, and partly on an existing narrow path, back to the ridge immediately to the north of the School grounds. Then the proposed route would skirt the ridge to the west and come out on the red square trail near the bend where the red square trail (heading south) turns from the south towards the southeast. This proposed route could require some building up of the trail in areas that may be muddy in the springtime, but otherwise would require only trail markers and brush clearing, especially adjacent to Western Avenue.

Between the trailhead on Western Avenue and the signalized intersection and crossing of Western Avenue at the School entrance and Winding Brook Drive, a sidewalk/multi-use

path would be needed. However, such a sidewalk (to connect the Library-YMCA area to the long-established neighborhood near Willow Street) is already on the GPC's (long) list of sidewalk needs for the Town, independent of this proposal.

2. Across the East Branch of the Hunger Kill

Members of the GPC have made several exploratory trips along the East Branch of the Hunger Kill with the assistance of Pine Bush Commission staff (Joel Hecht, Albert Joerger), seeking a suitable crossing point of the stream.

Finding an acceptable crossing point proved to be difficult. The East Branch has cut a steep V-shaped ravine through the sand, leaving on both sides of the stream along most of its length terrain so steep as to be impossible for mountain bikers and strenuous for hikers. Less steep areas are often wet. Attempting to develop trails with switchbacks would lead to severe erosion issues.

The criteria used for judging a crossing point were

- the crossing and adjacent trails should be entirely on public land;
- possible trail routes from the crossing should not be too steep for mountain bikers, and would not require extensive trail construction (switchbacks, retaining walls);
- trails from the crossing should connect efficiently with the existing trail system.

Two possible crossing points were examined and discarded based on these criteria. One, at the dam used to store water to irrigate the Pine Haven Country Club, is presently used, but was rejected both for steepness and because it lies on land owned by Pine Haven. A second, much farther up the stream and apparently also used by mountain bikers, appeared to have excellent access to the west, but was rejected both because part of the western route lay on private land (of a landowner off Old State Road opposite Lydius St.), and because no feasible eastern route could be found.

The crossing point we propose, found with the assistance of Joel Hecht, is quite close to transept SW 4, 2 (as marked on a tree just northeast of the crossing point). It has a western access route that involves two short pitches very near the stream that may be too steep for most mountain bikers, but otherwise is acceptable, and has very gentle slopes to the east.

To reach the crossing point from Willow Street or the Guilderland Elementary School, the route would use the existing official trails, and in particular the red trail past the area recently (5/10/01) denuded of vegetation, to the intersection of the red trail with the Power Line ROW. From there, a proposed new trail of a few hundred feet would need to be opened, following an old overgrown roadbed until it reaches a well-established unofficial trail that runs north from the power line ROW at the small wetland and follows the top of the slope along the East Branch. North along that trail perhaps 25 feet leads to a point where a proposed new trail would proceed down a gentle slope to the East Branch.

The chosen crossing point would need a bridge of perhaps 50 feet.

On the west, the new proposed trail would rise fairly steeply up the slope to the height of land. Part of this section would not be bikeable except by exceptionally fit cyclists, but is short. Once up on the top of the slope, a level path of perhaps 75 yards would connect to the (formerly) official red trail shown on the 1997 Trail Map. Turning right on that trail leads efficiently to a trailhead on Old State Road within sight of Lydius Street, while turning left leads the hiker on a longer route where one can see, on the left, portions of the Pinehaven golf course and the small pond next to the course. That trail comes out on Old State Road at trailhead No. 9 on the 1997 map, almost opposite the old road that runs from Old State Road to Lydius Street.

The route of the proposed new trail between the powerline ROW and the west side red trail has been marked by pink or orange ribbon on small-diameter trees: two bands means a turn, one means the route continues straight. The easternmost point of the new trail has been marked by a single pink ribbon tied to a cable attached to the westernmost power pole by the intersection of the red trail and the power line ROW.

In addition to the bridge, this new trail would require some erosion control measures on the west side of the East Branch. Otherwise, only brush clearing and installation of trail markers would be needed.

2a. The Bridge

If the principle of a trail crossing of the East Branch of the Hunger Kill is acceptable, the GPC hopes to get an estimate of the cost of constructing a suitable bridge across the stream, and then seek a combination of municipal and grant funding to construct the bridge.

3. From Old State Road to Siver Road.

We could not find an existing trail, official or unofficial, connecting Old State Road to Siver Road through the Preserve.

An old road (shown on the 1997 map as a red trail) heads north from Old State Road across from Trailhead No. 9 towards Lydius Street. An initial exploration revealed that between that old road and Siver Road just south of Tim Sheehan's house (the southernmost residence on the west side of Siver Road), the land is mostly open woods with gentle slopes. There would be no difficulty and virtually no cost in creating a trail between Siver Road and Old State Road.

4. From Siver Road to DiCaprio Park.

Two exploratory hikes in this area, one with Steve Feeney, one with Joel Hecht, found a feasible route for a trail west of Siver Road.

An old road runs from Siver Road just south of Tim Sheehan's house into the Ford-Feeney parcel. The proposed trail would follow that road until the road turns south. Then the trail would leave the road and continue west along the height of land beside the ravine and secondary stream that separates the Ford-Feeney and Mrozek parcels, until it reaches a location for a gentle descent to the stream a couple of hundred feet east of the intersection of that stream and the West Branch of the Hunger Kill. The trail could then proceed west a short distance to wherever is judged to be the most appropriate place for a small bridge, of an estimated 25-30 feet in length, to cross the stream. (Or a very substantial tree trunk that lies across the stream could be leveled and used as is.) On the north side of the crossing, the trail could then continue west a short distance to meet an existing road that descends from the southern corner of the DiCaprio fields to the junction of the stream with the West Branch.

The proposed route of the trail from the height of land across the stream has been marked with pink tape.

Development of this portion of the trail would require only clearing of downed branches, installation of trail markers, installation of some logs to divert runoff on the portion of the trail that descends to the small stream, and construction of a simple bridge across the secondary stream.

5. A connection to the Pine Bush Greenway.

Connecting the Guilderland Greenway with the Pine Bush Greenway would form an attractive trail system that would enhance the value of both Greenways.

A possible connector could run from the northernmost trailhead on Old State Road of the trail system east of Old State Road, to the Pine Bush Greenway, by proceeding along Old State Road over the Thruway, then following the Niagara Mohawk power line right-of-way. Such a route would be more satisfactory if the Old State Road bridge over the Thruway were widened to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. Presumably that bridge will be reconstructed sometime in the next decade: the Thruway Authority should be made aware of the desired use of that bridge for non-motorized travel.

Benefits to the Pine Bush of the Guilderland Greenway

1. The portion of the Pine Bush east of the East Branch of the Hunger Kill presently suffers from heavy use by mountain bikers who do not stay on existing trails, but also use fire breaks and other informal trails. (In fact, there is a mountain biking trail map of the Pine Bush available on the internet: see <http://home.att.net/~dackout/pinebush.htm>)

A copy is appended.

At present, mountain bikers use the Pine Bush almost exclusively east of the East Branch. This is the portion of the Pine Bush Preserve in Guilderland that has the most "classic" pitch pine-scrub oak pine barrens ecology. West of the East Branch, the Preserve is much closer to typical eastern forest, and it will take many years of intervention to restore classic pine bush ecology to a large portion of the area. If the classic ecology is the most fragile and the most important to preserve, it would seem to make sense to open up the area west of the East Branch for greater recreational use by hikers and mountain bikers, to help reduce the recreational pressure on the area east of the East Branch.

2. The development of a through trail between Western Avenue and Lone Pine Park could provide a route of sufficient length and interest to mountain bikers that they might prefer to remain on the established trail rather than traveling more randomly through the Pine Bush. If the entire Guilderland Greenway trail is ultimately developed, or if a suitable connection is made to the Pine Bush Greenway, then mountain bikers will have a system of linear trails that should be more than adequate to keep their interest while remaining on official routes.

3. A Guilderland Greenway trail through the Pine Bush will promote the goal of the Pine Bush to support appropriate recreational use of the Pine Bush, and will increase the "ownership" of the Town of Guilderland and its residents in the Pine Bush Preserve and its objectives. In the past, many residents of Guilderland have tended to think of the Pine Bush as an "Albany" thing, because the vast majority of the controversy related to the Pine Bush has involved development in Albany, and the most visible and popular access point to the Pine Bush is in Albany, next to SEFCU. As more residents of the Town discover the beauty and uniqueness of the Guilderland Pine Bush, more will come to understand that the Pine Bush is a major Guilderland asset as well, and will become stronger advocates for the multiple values that the Pine Bush wishes to preserve.

The Guilderland Greenway Trail Concept

The Pine Bush trail proposed in this document is part of a conceptual Guilderland Greenway trail. The main portions of the proposed trail are as follows:

On the west, beginning at the Pine Bush School at Carman Road and Coons Road, the trail would roughly follow Fuller Station Road to the Watervliet Reservoir Dam. Between Western Avenue and the Pine Bush School it may be possible for the trail to utilize portions of the Niagara Mohawk power line right of way, adjacent to Fuller Station Road, on the bed of the former railroad line that in the 19th century went from Guilderland Center into Rotterdam and Schenectady, with a stop at Fuller Station. (North of the Thruway the railroad bed appears to have been covered by I-890.) (The Town has held an initial discussion with a Niagara Mohawk representative: NiMo is willing to consider use of the power line ROW for a non-motorized trail provided that the Town assumes liability, NiMo retains the ability to maintain the lines, and there is no objection from any of the adjacent landowners.)

On the south, the trail would travel along the Normans Kill. From west to east the trail could follow the stream from the Dam of the Watervliet Reservoir to Tawasentha Park on Route 146. A major portion of this section of the trail would lie on the Drebitko parcel, the site of the Battle of Normans Kill. The Albany County Land Conservancy is presently attempting to purchase this parcel for public use, and the proposed trail is highly compatible with the preservation of this parcel.

Between Tawasentha Park and Nott Road Park the trail would have to avoid the National Guard rifle range on the Normans Kill off Grant Hill Road. It could do so by going south--connecting to Ostrander Road on Park land, then using Ostrander, Wormer and Grant Hill Roads to reach the old Nott parcel frontage on Grant Hill Road just north of the Normans Kill. Or the trail could proceed on the north side of the Normans Kill, crossing the property of two large landowners: Western Turnpike Golf Course, and Pruszkowski's farm, to reach Grant Hill and the old Nott parcel. Negotiations by the Town to purchase most of the Nott parcel are in progress (as of 6/15/01). If successful, then the trail could use the Nott parcel between Grant Hill Road and Nott Road Park, and beyond, to Route 155, where new bike lanes and sidewalks planned for a 2002 or 2003 reconstruction of the highway will connect the trail to the residential neighborhoods to the east of Route 155.

On the east, the trail would travel along or near the Hunger Kill, partly on the Nott parcel, if available, from Nott Road Park through or around Fairwood Apartments to the YMCA, then adjacent to Winding Brook Drive (on land of Beltrone and Lucarelli that has been proposed for development several times in the last decade) to the Guilderland Elementary School, crossing Western Avenue at the new signalized intersection at Winding Brook Drive.

On the north, the trail would wind through the Pine Bush Preserve from Guilderland Elementary School to the DiCaprio parcel, then to Lone Pine Park on a planned path that will cross the West Branch on an existing culvert on the DiCaprio parcel. Between Lone Pine Park and Pine Bush Elementary School the trail would follow DiBella Drive and Coons Road, residential neighborhood streets.

Potential spurs under consideration:

- From the NiMo ROW to Lynnwood Elementary School (off Old State Road) through a development (Brenn-Breit) presently before the Guilderland Planning Board;
- from the Reservoir Dam to Keenholts Park in Guilderland Center via a piece of French's Mill Road, now closed to traffic;
- from the YMCA to 20 Mall via a path adjacent to but off Western Avenue;
- from the Pine Bush at Old State Road south of Lydius St. to the planned Pine Bush Greenway via the Old State Road over the Thruway and the NiMO power line ROW north of Old State Road.

The GPC plans to seek a grant later this year to help develop a comprehensive plan for trails in the Town, starting from the concept presented in this document.