

Saving Ithaca's Views

In the early 1990s, the Town of Ithaca Conservation Advisory Council (the CAC, now the Conservation Board) became concerned about losing some of the magnificent scenic views we enjoy around the Ithaca area. We had seen some attractive landscape disappearing, or being seriously damaged by thoughtless construction, poorly placed plantings or abandoned open land and overgrown farm fields.

Imagine how one misplaced building could spoil a scenic vista. A panoramic view, which brought pleasure to people driving along a certain stretch of road, which made them smile when sunlight hit a colorful hillside in the fall, or when it was covered with glittering snow in winter, could be ruined by that building wrongly sited. We had seen this happen, and we wanted to keep it from happening again in Ithaca.

We recognized that our scenic views, especially those seen from roads, parks and other public places, are great assets to the community. They are valuable to the local residents, who see them all the time, as well as to visitors and tourists, who often come here because they are attracted to the natural beauty of the Town and surrounding area.

The Town of Ithaca Residents Survey, sponsored by the Town Board's Comprehensive Planning Committee in 1990 to help determine what Ithacans liked about living here, provided a basis of public opinion for the Comprehensive Plan completed in 1993. The survey showed that Town residents valued the scenic beauty around them. This encouraged the CAC to form a committee (now called the Scenic Resources Committee: SRC) to consider the importance of views.

Since 1991, the SRC has tried to identify the most special views and to photograph, describe, map and document them. We have done surveys to discover what others thought were the best views. We have learned how to rate views valued differently by different people and how to protect such views. We have worked long enough now to be able to identify the most valued of our views, and to recommend Town action to preserve them.

Appreciating a view may be subjective, but such enjoyment can still be evaluated and such evaluations ranked. To conserve our scenic resources, we need to do all we can to identify and to preserve the best of them. Toward this end, we are reporting the location and character of the best viewing points in the Town, and identifying the most beautiful areas viewed from such viewpoints, with special concern for preserving those areas most in need of protection.

The Town of Ithaca's Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan, adopted by the Town Board in December, 1997, recognized the need to "establish a coordinated program to preserve environmentally sensitive land and important scenic areas in the Town of Ithaca." As enjoyment of the Town's scenic beauty is a form of recreation, it is not surprising that we should wish to reaffirm many of the objectives identified in this Plan ten years ago. We especially commend that Plan's intent to "improve the environment and preserve and protect it from degradation" (pg. 1). Now that the Town recognizes the need to update its old Comprehensive Plan, we should take the advice of New York State's Department of State's Counsel's Office: its

Legal Memorandum LU09 explains that a Comprehensive Plan "must be viewed as a tool which can provide the venue and the process for identifying how people in a community want to live, what is important to their lives and what natural and built environments bring the 'sense of place' people crave."

In order to identify the best views, the SRC has compiled an inventory of photographs of them, and ranked them by a system that puts the most priority on conserving views that are both readily accessible to the public at present, and yet could be obscured, spoiled, or otherwise put at risk by future development. We recognize, for example, that views of Buttermilk Falls are tremendously important; but the State Park in which they are found can be trusted to preserve them, and so they are not included in our inventory. A view from Route 96B at a prime location now provided a pull-off parking spot by the State Department of Transportation, on the other hand, has already been partially obscured by the construction of the Longview nursing home. The remaining spectacular view of Cayuga Lake and is still at risk of further obstruction if the business on this property were to put tall buildings in the wrong place.

How has the SRC decided which of the Town of Ithaca's views need saving?

To compile our inventory of scenic views, the SRC has photographed them, mostly from the rights of way on public roadsides, in all seasons and in differing weather, and filed them by location on a Town of Ithaca grid map. These views were then ranked by criteria we believe should prioritize the views most worth preserving by a specific or readily-applied Town action. Views that the Town should be most concerned with saving would score highest in these five categories: Magnitude, Distinctiveness, Quality, Appeal, and Opportunity (see Appendix A). For each category, SRC members ranked the views either 3, 2, or 1.

By "Magnitude," we found a pedestrian and vehicular view to be enjoyed by either many (3), or few (1) people.

The "Distinctiveness" of a view could represent either a natural or manmade feature, such as a college tower or lake or waterfall; a 3 would signify it was recognizable and unique to the Town of Ithaca, while a 1 might represent a fine view common to any place anywhere.

The "Quality" of a view ranked it as to whether it was pristine or somehow damaged, a 3 identifying the view as intact, with clear ridge-lines, cross-valley vistas, contrasting open spaces and woods or interior views of streams, rocks, and trees. A 3 meant there was noteworthy seasonal variation, with the view enhanced by changes in foliage or precipitation, and with no or very limited detractors. A 1 vote for "Quality" meant the view was disturbed, as for example by noise, odors, traffic, mining, power transmission lines, or any unattractive development or obstruction.

For evaluating the "Appeal" of a view, we considered what we also called "The WOW Factor": a 3 vote here recognized that the viewer might, in awe, have to say "Wow!" at such views. A 3, or Big Wow View, would highlight natural features as well as landmark structures. Such views attract tourists, residents and newcomers to the Town, and enhance

local economic development. A view scoring only 1 for Appeal would not have such big impact, though it still might be charming in a small way.

The fifth and final factor, "Opportunity," was intended to rank the ease of protecting a view: a 3 vote here meant that it would not be hard for the Town to protect it. If a view could be conserved by easily performed actions, such as by the careful placement of pull-offs, parks or viewing platforms and educational signage, or by the removal of obstructions such as overgrown brush or junk trees, which could be trimmed to recover a view, then that view rated a 3. A 1 here would recognize the difficulty of preserving or recovering a view.

Once all the scenic views in the SRC inventory had been ranked, we revisited the top-scoring views as a group to verify whether they merited such high scores. A few sites were reconsidered, but the SRC eventually agreed on a Top Ten list of places from which the best Town of Ithaca views, most in need of conservation, could be seen.

These Top Ten views were presented to the public in the April 2007 Town of Ithaca Newsletter (see Appendix B), as well as in an exhibit on display in the Town Hall lobby during the months of April and May, 2007. Public feedback was requested in the newsletter, by ballot forms (see Appendix C) in the lobby, and on the internet at the Town's web-site. Visitors to the Town Hall were offered a "Tour the Town Views Map to Scenic Locations" (see Appendix D), with a suggested travel route that interested tourists could take that would lead them through all ten of the Top Ten view sites. Though the 25 residents' responses we received was not large enough to be considered a statistically representative sample of Town opinion, we include here a compilation of that feedback (in Appendix E) to indicate how these individuals supported our project.

While these last stages of the SRC project were going on, the Tompkins County Planning Department was completing its own Scenic Resources Evaluation, "developing a list of the most valued scenic resources in the county." Several SRC members attended public meetings of the County's project in June and September of 2006, where we found several of the views we had deemed most important were also included. We noted, however, that the County evaluation depended more on aesthetic criteria, and made no attempt to rank views as to whether or not they actually needed preservation. The park views in the County inventory are not included in ours because we do not believe they need any further action for protecting them. We note in this regard, however, that future developments in the Town might eventually change the conditions around currently protected views so much that they could some day need protective action to prevent such unforeseen misfortune. To keep up with such potential development, as well as to continue the Conservation Board's efforts to protect scenic resources, the SRC will continue to meet periodically to determine what could best be done next to save views.

As we reviewed the sites where scenery deserved conserving, we realized that several of the areas in the views themselves were in need of preservation. There would be no reason to look out from the Top Ten sites if the land seen from there were not worth looking at. These open spaces, some of them in Unique Natural Areas and Conservation Zones, are identified as four general areas: one on West Hill above Taughannock Blvd. (Rte. 89) in the Lake Slopes and Indian Creek Conservation Zone as seen from Cayuga Lake and East Shore

Park, two on the northwest and southeast slopes of the Inlet Valley as seen from Sandbank and Bostwick Roads, and another on the northeast side of South Hill as seen from various spots on Slaterville Road and East Hill (see Appendix F part 1 map, shaded green “Scenic areas: important for being viewed from near and far locations”). These areas are now beautifully wooded hillsides, valued Town sights in all seasons and weathers (most recently viewed on a June 29, 2007 SRC field trip, to more accurately outline them for the map in Appendix F; these outlines to be more exactly surveyed as the Town requires), and most deserve concerted Town efforts to keep at least the majority of their woods intact.

While the ranking of the Top Ten View sites (see locations and sample photos in Appendix F) and the four open spaces most important for being viewed from such sites is intended to prioritize particular resources most in need of conservation, the SRC would not want to imply that the many other scenic resources it has inventoried in the Town are not of sufficient value to merit conserving as well. Rather we would have the complete and thorough inventory kept current and regularly re-evaluated to be sure that changing conditions are kept under constant consideration and review. Perhaps readers of this present report, who consider the complete Scenic Resources Inventory (Appendix G) of all views we’ve recognized, will be able to bring to our attention a missed view or preferred priority for keeping Ithaca gorgeous.

Having identified the scenic resources in need of conservation, the SRC would also like to report some strategies it has considered for preserving such valued views.

Most importantly, the updated Comprehensive Plan should recognize the views we've identified and the need to protect them as crucial to our sense of what's best about our Town.

We urge the Town to purchase or negotiate a view easement for the area north of the Danby Road pull-off next to Longview, as recommended in the 1997 Open Space Plan (p.16). As Alterra and Longview own land near two of the ten best view points, we should negotiate cooperative arrangements with them recognizing the public good of access to viewing positions both on roads near them and on the right of way at roadside through their properties. In a more general sense, when certain lands providing scenic views become available for the town to acquire, a well-formulated Natural Heritage Program should outline the use of funds available for purchasing development rights or other such easements to protect the scenic views afforded by such lands.

When scenic areas full of beautiful woods are threatened by inappropriate development, a Town Tree Ordinance should conserve those trees needed both for the health of our ecosystem as well as for the public appreciation of the views they provide. The view of West Hill seen from the Town's East Shore Park, for example, would not be very scenic if all the trees in the new Lake Slopes and Indian Creek Conservation Zone were removed for new home construction. Even some limited clearing of land in such scenic areas could spoil a view, and the Town Planning Board should be empowered to preserve scenic views in site plan reviews

and to seek new opportunities for opening up important viewpoints from which fine scenes could be seen.

As many of our best views depend on open fields keeping sight-lines clear, we should cooperate with agricultural interests in order to preserve open space in agricultural lands. The great views from Pine Tree Road, for example, require open fields for distant hills to remain visible. The Cayuga Lake shore along Route 34 just north of East Shore Park needs to be clear for the present panoramic scene; a spectacular view from Westhaven Preserve is now visible only in winter, as brush has grown up to obscure it. A town plan cooperating with land owners to mow fields and clear brush that grows up to obscure certain best views would assure that they remain to be enjoyed.

For five of the Town's best views, two of which already have parking areas, the construction of simple road-side pull-offs, with a picnic table, perhaps a viewing platform or gazebo, and signage identifying distant landmarks, would recognize the importance of these viewpoints and enhance view appreciation and public awareness of such places. The new Shirley Raffensberger gazebo in the East Hill Preserve is an excellent example of a modest Town construction establishing a small landmark as proof of the excellence of the view to be found there. Signage at the Danby and East Shore parking areas, if they find public favor, could be followed by similar interpretive signs at roadside pull-offs along Pine Tree Rd across from the Snyder Hill Rd intersection, along Mecklenburg Rd near the EcoVillage bus stop, and along Trumansburg Rd between Alterra and PRI. Signs such as those at Buttermilk Falls and Taughannock Park help educate the public and enhance their appreciation of scenic qualities; a few such scenic interpretive signs strategically placed at the Town's best viewpoints could be similarly effective.

So that the public need not rely exclusively on the use of automobiles for the enjoyment of views, the Town should complete its trail system, both to allow access by foot and bicycle paths to important viewpoints, as well as traversing the most important areas viewed. The Town should encourage development of the Black Diamond trail. The Pine Tree walkway and Pew Trail have this summer been connected to the East Ithaca Recreation Way and a new TCAT bus shelter; such interconnection allows walkers, hikers and bicyclists access to many great views from East Hill. Wherever possible, Town Parks (as well as State Parks, Cornell University Plantations and Ithaca College Natural Areas) should be accessible, or even connected, by multi-use recreational trails. The State's Scenic Byway ought to be tied in to such trails. The trails through Westhaven Preserve should be linked to EcoVillage and Bostwick Road's views. Not all such trails need to be paved, either. Low-impact narrow footpaths, such as those of the Finger Lakes Trail system, should be promoted, too. The Town's Transportation Plan recognizes the need to provide for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and should be applied in connecting scenic view-ways to non-motorized corridors as well.

The Town should also do its best to coordinate with all involved governmental and institutional bodies to preserve views not entirely under Town jurisdiction. The view of Cayuga

Lake seen by traffic descending Route 13 through Cayuga Heights and the Town of Ithaca and into the City of Ithaca should not be neglected just because the municipal boundaries along that view-way are so complicated. Some brush cutting and tree removal in a few spots along this way would reopen a spectacular view being lost to recent plant growth. Cooperation with Cornell University Plantations' Open Areas Committee might help preserve such open field habitat as that affording the Pine Tree Road view. Ithaca College's Natural Lands Committee might also welcome an opportunity for administrative cooperation where Town views intersect with college property.

We hope that the Town Planning Board will incorporate the list of top ranked scenic views into its updated Comprehensive Plan. We want the Planning Board to use our list in project planning and review activities when these views are impinged upon or could be improved. Whether a proposed building is in a viewed area or perhaps obstructing the sight-lines from an important viewpoint, criteria for evaluating development should require visual assessment in a scenic context. Balloon tests at building sites identified by the Environmental Review Committee should ensure that our best views are not harmed. Careful analysis of photographic and computer-generated simulations of view impacts could also help protect views. On ridge lines and other sensitive view areas, building heights and roof colors should be regulated. For adequate review during site visits, all plans for blasting, cut and fill volumes, height and depths of retaining walls should be clearly disclosed.

Sites for proposed construction should have clearly delineated areas where cutting and clearing trees is allowed, distinguished from areas where woods must be conserved, with individually identified trees marked for preservation when needed to maintain and to enhance the best views. Landscaping plans should specify the appropriate tree species for planting to buffer unsightly construction and to avoid blocking scenic vistas. The recent preservation of selected trees along Ellis Hollow Road during the Rite Aid development that replaced Ide's Bowling Lanes can serve as example of tree conservation practiced to good effect. The Museum of the Earth is an excellent model of scenically-sensitive development for future construction to emulate. When feasible, major transmission lines and communication wires should be buried; utility and communications companies should know that Ithaca values its views. Road and building signs should be located and sized to harmonize with views. Night views should be protected by careful application of the new lighting ordinance.

During the construction of new development, Town building inspectors should conduct vigorous on-site supervision to be sure that sensitive terrain and scenic locales are preserved. Their work should take care to verify which trees are to be kept healthy before any site work is done, as well as the maintenance of storm run-off silt barriers and all other required environmental conservation practices. Under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR), the Town Planning Board has the authority to specify deed restrictions (rather than resolutions) to prevent the improper cutting of trees in sensitive areas such as a Unique Natural Area (UNA). As we promote excellence in construction design, so should we avoid visually offensive mistakes such as large buildings which block cross-valley views, or homes which scar

Conservation Zones (CZ), such as those built on bulldozed woods in the Six Mile Creek and Lake Slopes CZs.

In areas of particular beauty such as Forest Home, design criteria should be developed to reflect neighborhood character and ensure that new construction fits in. The History Center and Town historians should be encouraged to identify and to map significant cultural and historic resources which would complement scenic views.

As ordinances are developed to protect views, so should variances from established laws be allowed whenever such variances protect scenic views. For example, a building might be allowed further downhill, closer to a property boundary than usually allowed, if such siting could keep a good view open.

By vigorously seeking, encouraging, and supporting all initiatives to protect and to enhance the scenic qualities of the Town of Ithaca, the Scenic Resources Committee hopes to establish a sense of place that we can continue to enjoy. To be sure that we agree with our fellow Town residents, this report should be published in a form easily accessible to this public and in a format inviting and welcoming feedback and revision. It should be posted on the Town's website, with hard copies available at Town Hall. The advice and opinion herein can only be incorporated into the Town's Comprehensive Plan to the extent that it is recognized as presenting a shared public sense of community. If these views—scenic as well as political—represent the Town of Ithaca we know and love, then let us do all we can to conserve them.

Respectfully submitted by the Scenic Resources Committee to the Town of Ithaca Conservation Board, October 2007, and to the Town Board upon Conservation Board consideration, revision, and approval on November 1, 2007.

Appendix A: View Evaluation Criteria for Ranking Top Views

Appendix B: April 2007 Town Newsletter insert seeking public input

Appendix C: Ballot form handout for feedback to Spring 2007 display (also on Town website)

Appendix D: "Tour the Town Views Map" handout at Town Hall display; this map of "Scenic Locations" has a touring route connecting the Ten Best Views described on its back

Appendix E: Compiled public feedback to SRC survey

Appendix F: Scenic resources inventory in two parts: 1) map of scenic areas, top view-ways and photo locations; 2) thumbnail photos of ten "top ranked views" with narrative captions

Appendix G: Complete SRC inventory in two parts: 1) grid map identifying photo location and orientation by season; 2) complete views list (views cross-referenced to numbered grid with brief text caption)

Criteria for Ranking Scenic Views

FACTORS

RATING SCALES

<u>Magnitude</u>	<u>3 Highly Expressed - 1 Low</u>
Includes pedestrian and vehicular views available to many people	
<u>Distinctiveness</u>	<u>3 Distinct - 1 Common</u>
Natural or manmade, i.e. Buttermilk Falls or Ithaca Towers	
Recognizability, different from other areas	
<u>Quality</u>	<u>3 Intact - 1 Disturbed</u>
Intactness	
Noteworthy seasonal variation (Obscures negative components or adds attractiveness)	
Limited factors that detract (noise, odors, traffic, mining, unattractive structures)	
<u>Appeal – The WOW factor</u>	<u>3 Big - 1 Little</u>
Includes natural features as well as structural landmarks	
Attracts tourists and new residents for community economic enhancement	
<u>Opportunity (Ease of Protection)</u>	<u>3 Easy - 1 Difficult</u>
Still can be protected (limit development) or enhanced (develop or recover a view point); Obstruction(s) can be removed (trim trees)	
<u>Public Value and Preference</u>	<u>3 High - 1 Low</u>
Use to prioritize resources that have made the list	

Town Conservation Board Seeks Public Input for Scenic View Preservation

The Scenic Resources Committee (SRC) of the Town of Ithaca Conservation Board asks Town residents to help us preserve the beautiful scenery surrounding us. For several years, this committee has been compiling, analyzing, and evaluating an inventory of views seen from roads, parks, and other public places. Now we are finalizing recommendations to the Town Board on the best of the many scenes and how they might be preserved and maintained.

Of the dozens of scenic views we considered, we prioritized views most in need of protection, by ranking them according to five criteria:

- 1) The number of people who could regularly enjoy them;
- 2) Their distinctive and recognizably Ithacan quality, unique to our Town;
- 3) The aesthetic quality of their attractive features;
- 4) The "wow" factor, or magnitude of their appeal;

- 5) The ease and feasibility of protecting and maintaining these views.

Please visit the Town Hall lobby by May 15th to see our exhibit of the **Top Ranked Views** of Ithaca or visit our website at www.town.ithaca.ny.us/scenicviews.htm. Learn about our ranking process. Share your ideas. **We need your help!**

Have we missed any great public views?

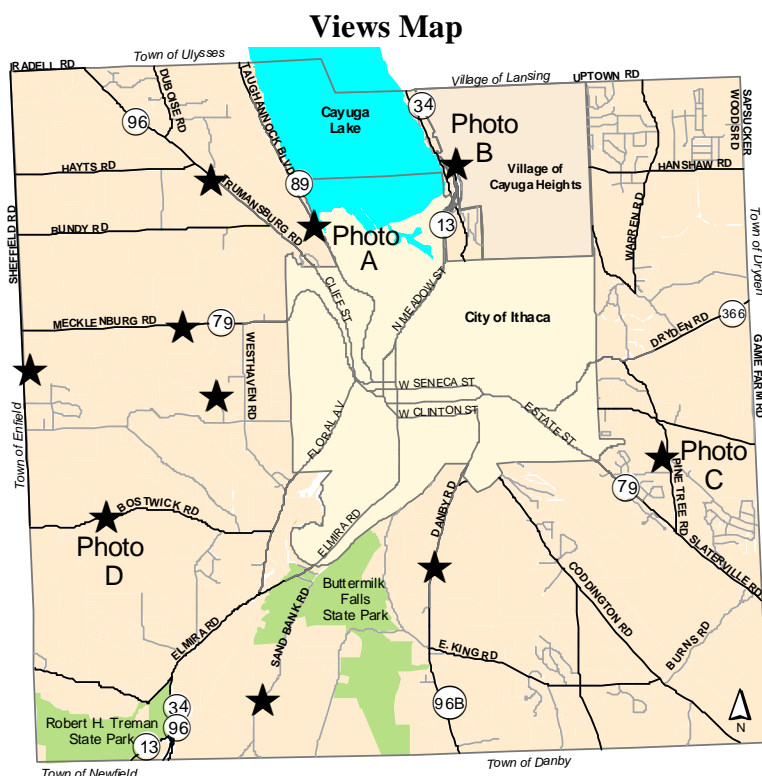
What is most important to you?

- Sweeping vistas?
- Cayuga Lake?
- Woods or open fields?

How should we preserve these special views?

- Promote scenically sensitive development?
- Purchase development rights?
- Keep open spaces clear to protect views?

Pick up a Views Map so you can visit the sites we've selected. While photos suggest the beauty of



Stars (★) indicate important scenic view points.
See back of this insert for Photos A, B, C, and D.

This map highlights the views selected for your review. A detailed copy of this map is part of the photo exhibit in our Town Hall lobby where you can learn more about this SRC project. We invite you to visit the exhibit, as well as the view locations themselves, and to provide us your reactions before May 15th via mail, phone or email at:

- 1) Conservation Board, 215 N. Tioga Street, Ithaca, NY 14850; or
- 2) Phone Susan Ritter at the Planning Department at 273-1747; or
- 3) Email to:
scenicviews@town.ithaca.ny.us

Your suggestions can also be submitted directly from our website at:
www.town.ithaca.ny.us/scenicviews.htm

A Sampling of Scenic Views in the Town of Ithaca



This view of Williams Glen falls shows one of seven small creek gorges in the area of Taughannock Boulevard (State Route 89). The Town has recently re-zoned this area to a Conservation Zone. State Route 89 is an important part of the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway. (Map Photo A)

This northern edge of lakeside panorama is viewed from a small park offering the Town's only public access to Cayuga Lake. Over the far horizon, beyond typical private lakeside development, a smoke plume marks the coal-powered electric plant in Lansing. (Photo B)



East Hill's best views south and west can be seen along Pine Tree Road, over the large open field across from the Snyder Hill Road intersection and from between Cornell structures. The views can also be enjoyed while driving west down Snyder Hill Road, and especially while waiting at the stop sign, where it joins Pine Tree Road. The Pine Tree Road walkway allows pedestrians to really savor these views along its length. (Photo C)



Bostwick Road affords many views like this, with farm fields in the foreground and a complex horizon, where the western slope of South Hill, smoothed by glacial action, contrasts with more rugged hills further out Inlet Valley. (Photo D)



To see more such views visit the display in the lobby of Town Hall through May 15th.

Have we missed a terrific view? Please let us know!

**The Scenic Resources Committee
Needs Your Opinion.**

1. Which are your favorite views of our top 10?
Why?

2. Have we missed a great public view in the Town of Ithaca that needs protection?
If so, describe and give location.

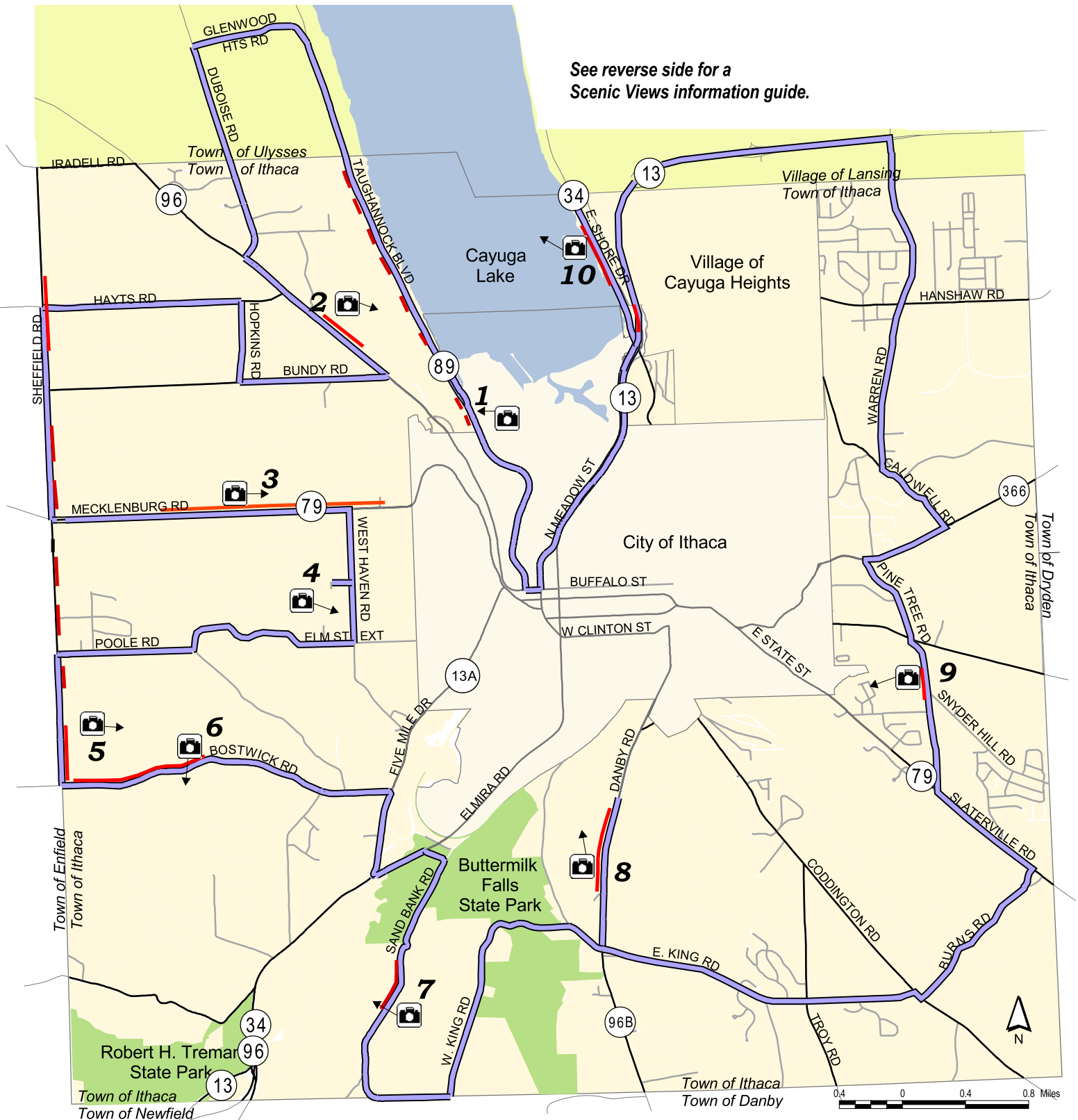
3. Which are the best ways to protect special views?
 - ___ Promote public recognition and appreciation of important scenic landscapes and views.
 - ___ Locate new parks in areas with scenic views.
 - ___ Encourage sensitive placement, design, and construction techniques of buildings and plantings (discretionary).
 - ___ Require scenically sensitive development through legislation or zoning (mandatory).
 - ___ Use tax dollars to purchase development rights or scenic easements.
 - ___ Do nothing
 - ___ Other – please describe.

4. Other suggestions or questions:




Name and contact information if you would like us to contact you with further information.

TOUR THE TOWN
Views Map to Scenic Locations

**See reverse side for a
Scenic Views information guide.**



Produced 3/28/07

-  **Suggested Travel Route for Viewing**
-  **Scenic View Ways**
-  **Photo location & direction**

**Information provided by the
Scenic Resources Committee of the
Town of Ithaca Conservation Board**

Tour of the Town's Ten Top Scenic Locations

You can start this tour of the Town of Ithaca's best scenes anywhere. If you start on Cayuga Lake's Scenic Byway heading north from the City of Ithaca's Cass Park on Rte. 89, you may see from **Point 1** onward seven small gorges descending from a conservation zone on the west. These little creeks, emerging from old culverts under the former Lehigh Valley Railroad, come splashing down bedrock shale north of Cass Park and the Hangar Theatre. There is a plan to develop the railroad bed into the Black Diamond multi-use recreational trail, and to preserve this wooded Unique Natural Area. You may notice some recent construction has cleared a once-wooded lot here.

By looping around Glenwood Heights Rd. and Duboise Rd. in Ulysses, return to Ithaca heading south on Rte. 96 to see from **Point 2** a fine view of East Hill above Cayuga Lake beyond a complex of 1930s Collegiate Gothic structures on your left. Note how well the new Museum of the Earth unobtrusively fits into this view.

A right turn up Bundy Rd., then right again on Hopkins Rd. and left on Hayts Rd. will take you up to Sheffield Rd. on the Enfield/Town of Ithaca border with many views. The panoramic view from the Genex Coop entrance off Sheffield Rd. is long and wide. A left on Rte. 79 heading east will bring you a view of the steep descent to the lake as farm fields along the road give way to city sights. The bus stop at the corner of Rachel Carson Way near **Point 3** offers an especially good view of the Cornell University campus against the backdrop of the Dryden headlands.

Taking a right on West Haven Rd. before the City line, you will pass near the undeveloped Westhaven Preserve, a new town park with views from **Point 4** of Ithaca College's campus on South Hill across the Cayuga Inlet valley. Clearing trees and brush in selected parts of this preserve would open up space for better scenic viewing.

Heading right, back uphill on Elm St. Extension and Poole Rd. to a left heading south on Sheffield Road again, there are several great long views from the heights of West Hill over the lake valley to the hills and valleys in the east, as seen from **Point 5**.

Taking a left east on Bostwick Rd., brings you to the many long and complex views like **Point 6** from Bostwick Road, over farm fields in the foreground to a distant horizon to the south and east made of various slopes and edges of hills across South Hill, smoothed by glacial erosion. You'll see more rugged hills and spurs further out Inlet Valley into Newfield and Danby.

A right turn on Rte. 13A, and then left on 13, brings you across the valley bottom to Sand Bank Rd. in Buttermilk Falls State Park, which gets you back up to great views like **Point 7** from the side of South Hill facing the side of West Hill you just left. Sandbank Rd. offers alternating views across Inlet Valley, from wide-open panoramas to intimate forest.

A left on West King Rd. crosses more State Park territory, but the huge long view of Cayuga Lake on Rte. 96B is so impressive that the State Department of Transportation has built a small parking lot pulloff at **Point 8**, just above a nursing home named Longview for the scene from here. The construction of Longview has impinged on a spectacular view to the west. A viewshed easement could protect the remaining view. Perhaps other pulloffs should provide roadside parking at a few more of these Best View Points? Similar long views of Cayuga to the north can be seen from the Ithaca college campus, from South Hill Elementary School, and from Troy Rd. near the Eldridge Wilderness.

Heading east on East King Rd. and across Coddington to Burns Rd. brings you down South Hill across the Six Mile Creek Valley. Taking a left to the west on Rte. 79, and then north to the right up Pine Tree Rd., brings you to one of the best panoramic views of South and West Hills from **Point 9** and the Pine Tree Walkway on East Hill, south of East Hill Plaza.

Heading north from here along East Hill brings you down and up across the Cascadilla Creek and Fall Creek valleys, through Cornell's east campus, Forest Home, and the villages of Lansing and Cayuga Heights, with many pretty intimate views of Judd Falls and Fall Creek as you cross bridges over these creeks. We'd like to leave you at East Shore Park on Rte. 34, also part of Cayuga Lake's Scenic Byway, where you can find our Town's only public access to Cayuga Lake and a grand wide lakeside panorama from **Point 10**.

Summary of Scenic Resource Survey (as of 6/11/07)

Favorite Views

Scenic View	Total Votes
1 Taughannock Blvd waterfalls	7
2 Trumansburg Rd. Odd Fellows complex	7
3 Mecklenburg Rd – view toward city & distant forested hills	3
4 Westhaven Preserve	2
5 Sheffield Rd – view of near city & distant forested hills	2
6 Bostwick Rd.- undeveloped fields and forested hills	6
7 Sandbank Rd – undeveloped fields, forested hills, w/ sparse development	2
8 Danby Rd – panoramic view of C. lake valley with lake & forested hill slopes	9
9 Pine Tree Rd. – Ithaca College & forested hills	4
10 E. Shore Drive – near lakeshore lake view	8

“Why” are these your favorite views – comments received:

- Open views of undeveloped hills and areas best;
- Only unadorned (undeveloped) view (chose) #6;
- Distant hills on Bostwick (#6);
- Harvey Hill Rd Enfield;
- I support this “view” (#10) the most because I think preserving public access to the lake is important;
- *The following comment suggests person intended to vote for #9, comments as follows:* I live at the edge of this property so I am biased, but what I love about it is the way people slow down to see the sunset, dramatic clouds, or herds of deer appearing suddenly on their way home, the numbers of people who come sit here for a free view of the fireworks on the 4th of July, or just pull over to look at the gazillion fireflies on a summer evening. Those who stop to see deer may see the red tailed hawk hovering, a fox, even a coyote. It is Cornell's best offering as a gateway view along its entrance from the east/NYC (and IC benefits as the focal point!);
- The sweeping vistas. Next would be woods and fields, and third the lake;
- I like #2 best of all - not so much because of the view, but because I like looking across the lake from East Hill towards the open fields and farms around the Odd Fellows home.
- #8, #10 and #3 have the panoramic qualities that take your breath away, and that I always linger to enjoy, every time I see them, and I've lived here 27 years! #1 is also very much "ithaca" but there are other similar views in our area.
- All of them – Why not? Most are gone already.
- Of #8, see it all the time, not of Cornell.
- Of #1, it's intimate, cooling and relaxing.
- Of #6 and #3, open space – farm fields.
- Of #5, broad horizon.
- Regarding #9 and #1, a belated thanks for the photographs. The view I know best is the one from East Hill, because I live in the area and see it daily, it is beautiful in every season and in any kind of weather, even if there's no “view”. #1 Cayuga Lake looks lovely doesn't it. But it is largely inaccessible because of “typical private lakeside development” as you politely phrase it. The lake is effectively off limits. (Added 9 and 1 to the list, assuming these are being voted on.)

“Missed views” - comments received:

- Hanshaw Road/near Dryden line (open fields and woods);
- None;
- Westhill as seen from Route 13;
- From the trail on the north side of Six Mile Creek there's a place which is high up overlooking the lake above one of the dams – it is totally wild, awesome!;

- The panoramic view from Sunset Park in the Village of Cayuga Heights is fantastic. Unfortunately, the views are increasingly obscured and disturbed by rapid growth of weed/scrub brush and trees particularly to the north.
- Sunset Park in Cayuga Heights has great views of open farms - but again it is because of the unspoiled scenery on West Hill. West Hill should have carefully controlled development.
- Buttermilk
- Near the Stewart Avenue bridge.
- All of them – Why not? Most are gone already.
- Yes, everyone – everywhere, why leave any out? The view from house is really great!!
- Must be a great corn field somewhere!
- From west end of Poole Road looking east, focused on distance by tunnel of trees.
- No, perfect!
- Hillside and ridge above Route 13 as seen from the stretch near the Kmart parking lot, this area is beautiful and changes color with the season.

The following were submitted from one respondent whose computer did not allow him to interface with the Town's website, so he provided the following list as recommended scenic viewsheds:

- View northeast and northwest along and across Fall Creek from Forest Home Drive, east of - - Forest Home in the Flatrock area
 - Views up and downstream from the upstream bridge in Forest Home
 - Views up and downstream from the downstream bridge in Forest Home(The best views are upstream from the upstream bridge, and downstream from the downstream bridge, the side that the walkways are on.)
 - View of waterfall behind the Byway. You get just a glimpse of this from Forest Home Drive when heading east into Forest Home, between McIntyre Place and the Byway. It's also mostly a seasonal view, blocked by leaves during the summer. Perhaps some limited, sensitive trimming of one or two branches might open this up for year- round viewing. I think the Plantations has done some trimming here in the past.
 - Views of and across Beebe Lake from Forest Home Drive, particularly from Plantations' little overlook at the intersection of Forest Home Drive and Plantations Road. Note that this view could be improved by planting trees on the far slope to screen the view of Helen Newman Hall.
 - View northeast from Greenhouse Overlook on Plantations Road. This view has been obstructed recently by trees growing on the slope. –
 - View southwest across the Warren Farm from Hanshaw Road west of Sapsucker Woods Road to Ithaca's South and West Hills
 - View southeast across the Warren Farm from Hanshaw Road near Sapsucker Woods Road to the hills of Dryden and Caroline
 - View east from Game Farm Road between Rte 366 and Stevenson Rd across the Game Farm to the hills of Dryden
 - View northwest across the Southside Farm from near the Game Farm Rd/Ellis Hollow Rd intersection. Views are from both Game Farm and Ellis Hollow.
 - View northeast across the Southside Farm from Ellis Hollow Road toward the hills of Dryden
 - View from the top of Hungerford Hill
 - View east from Rte 79 West, just as you crest the hill and a breathtaking vista of Ithaca opens up before you
 - View from Sunset Park in Cayuga Heights
 - As I recall, Burns Road has some scenic views, but I don't have any specific information on that
 - I seem to remember that Bostwick Road has some striking views, but again, I don't have specifics on this
 - The Culver Road corridor is nice
 - The view from Rte 13 in the Village of Cayuga Heights of Cayuga Lake and West Hill is great. Unfortunately, the view of Rte 13 from Cayuga Lake and West Hill is ugly.
- In addition, the Forest Home community, the Plantations and State Parks are all scenic areas.

Ways to Protect	Total Votes
Promote public recognition and appreciation of views/landscapes	13
Locate new parks in areas with scenic views	11
Encourage sensitive placement ...	8
Require scenically sensitive development through regulation	11
Use tax dollars to purchase ...	9+2 maybes
Do Nothing	0
Other	6

One respondent provided a ranking for the protection mechanisms: 1 – use tax dollars, 2 – promote public recognition, 3- locate new parks in areas with scenic views, 4- require scenically sensitive development.

“Other suggestions/questions” – comments received:

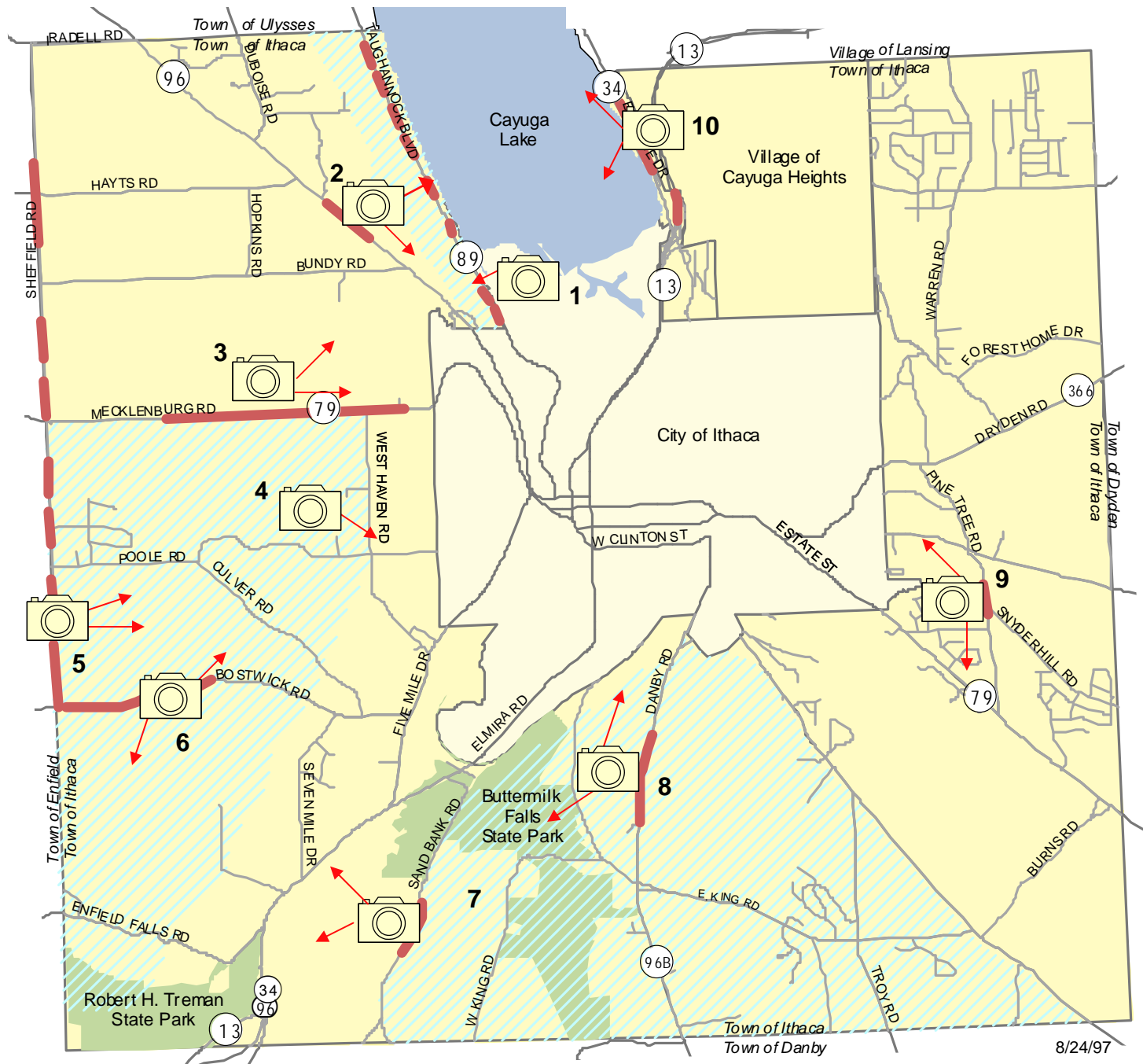
- Implement design standards;
- stop allowing mass production of factory built homes in areas that are beautiful to look at undeveloped;
- develop turnoffs to allow people to stop off-road and enjoy the view- provide signage for scenic view & parking ahead;
- voted for using tax dollars but only if reasonable and easy, like for a picnic area by the side of the road;
- From person who intended to vote for #9 –
Be active in the Cornell Master Planning processing that is happening now.
Be active in the Transportation Planning processes--parking lots alter a lot of views!
For this view, encourage Cornell's Natural Areas committee of Cornell Plantation to continue their interest in the site. The Open Areas committee is concerned with loss of open field habitat, and for humans, the loss of views.
- On a regularly basis, clear scrub brush and tress blocking views at Sunset Park in the Village of Cayuga Heights. The growth of these weeds are shrinking the panoramic view.
- Don't let strip development and new housing developments continue to spread. Cluster new development in carefully limited areas - and leave the rest of the town as fields and open spaces.
- In response to your article in your recent newsletter, I would like to express my views on scenic views. I think it is great you are trying to preserve such views. The most important of the three suggestions you listed would be, for me, the sweeping vistas. Next would be woods and fields, and third the lake. All are important though. I was especially pleased to see in your samples the Pine Tree Road and Snyder Hill area, since I live near there. Please continue trying to keep open vistas.
- Also use grant money and private donations for protecting views.

Total Submitted Comments = 25

16 via Town Hall Exhibit
8 via email/Web
1 via phone call

Town of Ithaca Scenic Resources Inventory

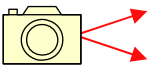
Top Ranked Views and Scenic Areas



Scenic Areas in Best Views from near and far



Scenic View-ways: see Top Ranked Views from here

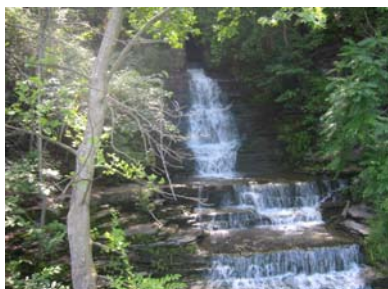


Photos of Best Views from these points, arrows show total view extent

Town of Ithaca Scenic Resource Inventory

Top Ranking Scenic Views

(Please note that photos can only begin to reflect the beauty of the views from these points, here arranged in geographical order counterclockwise, from west, to south, to east, and north)



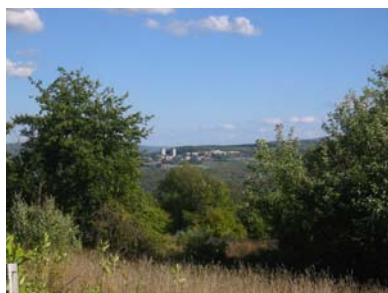
1. This intimate westward view captures Williams Glen Creek emerging from a rustic culvert under the former Lehigh Valley Railroad, splashing down bedrock shale near Cass Park. This small gorge, one of seven similar streams in the Indian Creek Lake Slopes Conversation Zone, will be seen from the future Black Diamond Trail on the old railroad bed. Conservation zoning limits the number of homes that may be built in the area but has not been effective in preventing landowners from bulldozing woods. Revision of town conservation zoning law is needed for further protection. Completing the development of the Black Diamond trail should be promoted more vigorously.



2. Beyond this complex of 1930's Collegiate Gothic structures along State Route 96, the Cornell campus stands out on East Hill above Cayuga Lake valley. Future development could obscure this long view so careful limitations on buildings and their placement are critical. Establishing a parking pull-off would create an opportunity for people to stop and appreciate the distant hills.



3. One of many eye-catching views from West Hill's Route 79 entry to Ithaca begins to reveal the descent to Cayuga Lake as farm fields along the road give way to city sights. The Cornell campus can be seen against the backdrop of the Dryden headlands. A parking pull-off near Eco Village's bus stop shelter would allow travelers to stop and appreciate this sight. Further conversion of the farm fields to development should be discouraged.



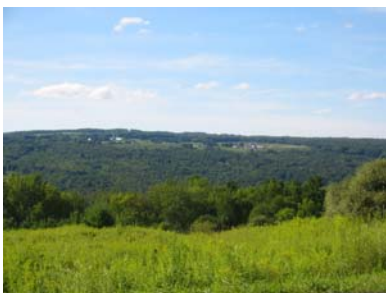
4. Peeking through trees in Westhaven Preserve, a new Town park, we see Ithaca College's campus appears on the shoulder of South Hill, across the Inlet Valley. Brush-clearing in this and other similar areas would open up such scenes for better viewing year-round.



5. This long vista across farm fields from the heights of West Hill is one of many great views on Sheffield, Hayts, Poole, and Bundy Roads. Distant hanging deltas and truncated spurs are part of the landforms created by glacier action in previous ice ages. Such views depend on agricultural operations keeping the fields open far enough below the road for the views to be clear. Planning tools such as easements might be needed to keep housing development from blocking sight lines.



6. This view from Bostwick Road, with farm fields in the foreground and Newfield hills in the distance, is one of many in a variety of directions. Wooded hillsides on the south-west bank of Inlet Valley, farm fields off Sandbank Road and Buttermilk Falls can all be seen from Bostwick Road. Again viable agriculture provides the open areas and needs to be preserved for the future.



7. Complimentary to the previous view, the rich farmlands along Bostwick Road to the northwest across Inlet Valley and wooded slope of southwestern West Hill are seen from Sandbank Road. This road meanders down the hill through open areas and Buttermilk Falls State Park. Preserving these views has the added benefit of protecting the park.



8. This view of Cayuga Lake is so spectacular that there is already a parking pull-off from which to see it. A once great view to the west from here has been obscured by the construction of Longview, an Ithacare Community. Further development of the property to the north of the pull-off could further block this view. A scenic easement could limit the height of any future buildings and trees. Interpretive signage and a picnic shelter could promote public appreciation of this view and help preserve the lake view.



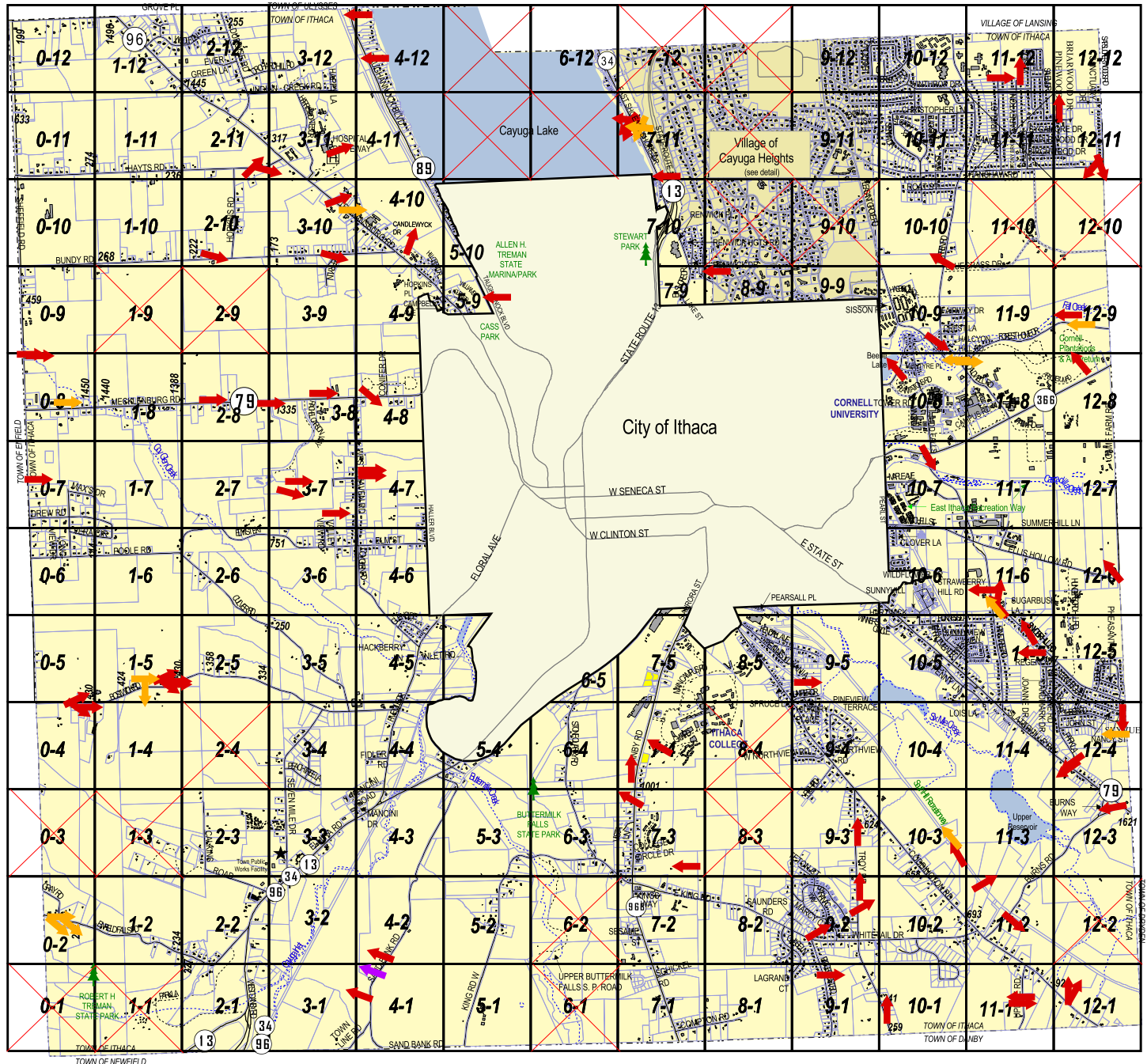
9. East Hill's best view of South and West Hills across Six Mile Creek and Cayuga Lake valleys depends on the open field across from Snyder Hill Road and south of Cornell's pig barns. The Polo and Tennis buildings have blocked much of the view from Pine Tree Road; the remaining excellent vista deserves preservation. A parking pull-off with picnic table and shelter would recognize the beauty of this site.



10. This northern edge of lakeside panorama is viewed from a small Town park offering the Town's only public access to Cayuga Lake. The shelter, parking lot, and shore here are already much used. An interpretive sign would identify the interesting parts of the panorama, and could promote public interest in preserving the natural features in the Indian Creek Lake Slopes Conservation Zone seen to the west across the lake.

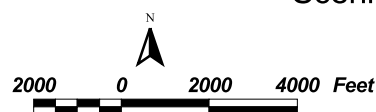
Inventory Grid Map

Town of Ithaca Scenic Resources Project



- Does not meet location criteria for public accessibility - no photo necessary
- No scenic or picture important areas located
- Spring/Summer Photos
- Winter Photos
- Fall Photos

Working Map of the
Scenic Resources Committee



Map Produced 12/16/04
Modified 2/05, 6/05, 10/05, 6/06

Worksheet for Evaluating Scenic Views (Updated April 26, 2006)

Grid/description of location	Mag.	Dist.	Qual.	WOW	Oppor	Total	Comments and Notes.....
0-5 agriculture	2	1	2	1	2	8	Potential for Ag easement
1-5 Bostwick ag views to S-SE	3	2	3	2	2	12	Char. Ag/long views seen from 4-1&2
0-2 Gray Road	2	2	2	1	2	9	Need summer shot
4-2 Sand Bank – Voss	3	3	3	2	3	14	Potential Ag Easement; great view of Bostwick
7-4 Pulloff on 96B at Longview	3	3	3	3	3	15	Defines our community; add picnic facilities
10-1 Troy Road	2	2	2	1	2	9	Winter shot needed; verify location
9-1 /9-3 Troy Road	2	2	2	1	2	9	View of Cornell
12-1 Coddington Rd.	2	1	2	1	2	8	Entrance to the town
12-4 Eastern Heights Park	3	2	2	1	2	8	Nice area but limited long views
12-8 Rt. 366 farm views	3	2	2	1	1	9	Overlap with Town of Dryden
11-5 Park area	1	1	2	1	1	6	Limited potential
11-6 Pine Tree view to W/SW	3	2(3)	2	2	3	12	Include area from beginning of open area to Mitchell
12-6 Game farm & Ellis hollow	2	2	1	1	2(3)	8	Opens up from Ellis Hollow
10-7 Cascadilla Creek from Rt. 366 S	1	2	1(2)	1(2)	1	6	Difficult for further development
10-8 Views from upstream bridge over Fall Creek	1(2)	2	3	1	1	7	Trusses can frame view; seasonal
10-8 Forest Home/Beebe lake	1	3	2	2	1	9	View from end of road invites you to linger
12-9 Fall Creek Pull-off in Forest Home Drive	1	1	2	1	1	6	Pleasant interior view
10-9/10-10 Cornell Golf course	2	2	2	1	1	8	Gives sense of place along stretch of road
11-11/12-11 Hanshaw West	2	1	2	1 (2)	2	8	Panorama
7-11 Rt. 13 west	3	1	2	1 (2)	1	8	Challenge of 3 govts; pulloff recommended
7-11 East Shore Drive Park	3	3	3	3	3	15	N to S 180 panorama; make permanent park rather than Cornell lease
7-10/7-13 Rt 13 W&S	3	3	3	3	2	14	Need to work with Village of Cayuga Heights

3-12/4-12 Waterfalls/ Rt. 89	3	3	2	1	2	11	Conservation Zone protection needed
2-11 Hayts Rd. & cemetery	2	1	2	1	1	7	
3-10 PRI Odd Fellows entry pt.	3	3	2	2	3	13	Potential Pull-off
3-10 Bundy Road and Perry Lane	1	2	2	2	2	9	Potential Opp with new road; may merit a pull-off
3-10 Bundy N to Hopkins	1	1	1	1	2	6	Views of fields
0-10 Sheffield (between Bundy and Hayts)	2	3	2	2	3	12	Good view of area glacial action results
0- 7 Sheffield (South of intersection w/ Rt. 79.	2	3	2	2	3	12	Open field protected by Ag easement
0-8 Mecklenburg Rd./Sheffield	3(2)	1	2	1	3	10(11)	Open field
2-8/3-8 Mecklenb'g Rd to east	3	2	2	3	3	13	Views of city for some distance; suggest pull-off and picnic pavilion at Rachel Carson Drive
4-7 West Haven	1	1	1	1	1	5	Lost with new development
3-6 New park off Valley View	2	2	3	2	3	12	Dev view area