

SCENIC RESOURCES INVENTORY & ANALYSIS TOWN OF ITHACA, NEW YORK

Prepared by the
Town of Ithaca Planning Department
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Cover photo: Photo taken from W. King Road looking towards farm on Bostwick Road.

Most photos within the document were taken during the years of 2009 and 2011.

Several photos were updated in 2013 to capture significant changes;
most notably, the addition of the Ithaca College Athletic and Events Center.

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1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

The Town of Ithaca is a memorable place for the 19,930 people who call it home and for thousands more who visit it each year. The local attractions, from the natural wonders of Cayuga Lake and the gorges to the world-renowned universities, are nestled within the larger context of Ithaca's wooded hills and undulating pastoral fields. The scenic resources of Ithaca tie its regional and global attractions together to create a cohesive community.

In a 2009 survey conducted for the Town's Comprehensive Plan update, 91% of the 356 respondents reported that scenic views were "important" or "very important." This report provides a basis for incorporating scenic resource protection into the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Scenic resources are defined as public or publicly accessible areas, features, and sites that are recognized, visited, and enjoyed by the public for their visual qualities.

A **scenic resource inventory** is a collection of photographs, descriptions, and maps that provide details of all of the significant scenic resources in the town. The detailed analysis provides maps that show what is visible and at what distance from identified viewpoints.

The purpose of conducting this scenic resource inventory and analysis is to:

- Foster community awareness and pride in the Town's scenic environment.
- Establish the significance of local scenic resources.



Figure 1: View from Hayts Road, looking east across the deep valley in which Cayuga Lake lies. The integrity of views such as this pastoral landscape is partially protected by the Town's Agricultural Conservation Zoning.

- Document the views of each scenic resource and the extent, character, and area of each.
- Provide detailed information to decision-makers about how to protect scenic resources, specifically through the updated Comprehensive Plan, possible regulations, and the SEQR process.

1.2 Why is the Ithaca landscape important to protect?

A beautiful landscape enhances the quality of a place. The landscape shapes our history, defines our culture, and reflects the community's character. A feeling for the scenic beauty in and around Ithaca plays no small part in residents' "sense of place" and in their pride in making their homes here. This report recognizes that preservation of community character and quality of life are important in the Town of Ithaca.

The Town of Ithaca surrounds the City of Ithaca and is located on the hills that overlook and drain into the southern portion of Cayuga Lake, the longest of the eleven Finger Lakes carved by Ice Age glaciers. The unique geologic history of the area created Ithaca's distinctive gorges and ridgelines.

Some of the Town's scenic resources have received formal state recognition. Route 89 in Ithaca is part of the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway. Forest Home Drive along Fall Creek is also a designated New York State Scenic Byway.

It is no surprise that Ithacans want to protect their scenic resources. Buttermilk Falls and Treman State Parks are two state parks that are partially located in the Town of Ithaca and feature some of the area's most loved gorges. These forested gorges and ravines provide the background texture of some of Ithaca's most well-known views. The Ithaca area is also home to the Cayuga Nature Center, the Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary, and the Cornell Arboretum and Plantations. The Finger Lakes Land Trust manages the Sweedler Preserve at Lick Brook and the Nature Conservancy protects the Eldridge Wilderness Area on South Hill.

The preservation of scenic resources is important for tourism and the Town's and region's economy as a whole. Ithaca, both City and Town, has gained accolades for its quality of life and spectacular natural environment. In 2007, Ithaca ranked 3rd in Relocate America's "Top 100 Places to Live in 2007" and 2nd in Country Home magazine's "Best Green Places to Live". Scenic resources are an important attraction for tourists and essential to retaining residents.



Figure 2: Ithaca's distinctive geology, as viewed from Bostwick Road, creates a uniquely scenic landscape

1.3 Background

Many of the Town of Ithaca's most breathtaking views have no protection from being blocked, obscured, or altered by development. The protection of these views can begin to be addressed through the creation of a detailed inventory and analysis of all of the identified significant views. With this data, the Town can evaluate its resources and potentially establish a more scenically friendly and appropriate regulatory scheme.

This report builds on the Conservation Board's "Saving Ithaca's Views" report published in 2007¹. The Conservation Board has worked to identify scenic views since the 1993 Comprehensive Plan revealed that Town residents highly valued the scenic environment. The Conservation Board established the citizen-based Scenic Resources Committee which produced the 2007 report.

The Town Board reviewed the Scenic Resources Committee's report and referred it to the Planning Committee for recommendations regarding its implementation. The Planning Committee, with advice from staff, determined that a more complete inventory and analysis of the Town's views would provide more specific information regarding which views should be preserved and include strategies for their preservation. Concurrently, the Town is also updating its 1993 Comprehensive Plan and it is anticipated that this report will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Tompkins County published a thorough scenic inventory in January, 2007 documenting 593 scenic resources countywide. Through public participation, they identified 25 "distinctive" and 30 "noteworthy" views, as well as 10 categories of characteristic views. For a view to be included in the Tompkins County study, the viewing points had to be from a publicly accessible place such as a road, highly used trail, or from Cayuga Lake. The Town of Ithaca was found to have the second greatest number of scenic views in the County with 100 of the 593 important scenic resources found (only the larger Town of Dryden had more views).



Figure 3: View from Bostwick Road farms as seen from Sand Bank Road

¹ See this report at <http://www.town.ithaca.ny.us/scenic/saving-ithacas-views>

The Tompkins County report underscores the fact that many views in Ithaca extend into other jurisdictions. For the benefit of the region as a whole, it is important that good scenic policy and diplomacy be considered and practiced among neighboring towns.

This report continues the work of the Scenic Resources Committee and the County's inventory by presenting a complete inventory of Ithaca's locally significant scenic resources, analyzing the views using Geographic Information System (GIS) software, and providing Ithaca's Town Board with recommended policies to protect these resources.

This inventory and analysis focuses solely on views seen from public roads and other places accessible to the public, such as parks in the Town of Ithaca. Those scenic areas are the ones least likely to already be protected and over which the town is most likely to have jurisdiction. For example, views from Sunset Park were not considered because it is owned by the Village of Cayuga Heights. Similarly, views from Cornell University and Ithaca College were not included because the viewpoints are not located on public rights-of-way.

1.4 What is a view? Terminology

Discussing scenic resources is made easier with clear and consistent terminology.

Scenic resources consist of both viewpoints and scenic views:

Viewpoints are the public viewing places from which the scenic views can be observed. The size of a scenic view area depends on the angle of the viewpoint. A panoramic viewpoint can be 360° whereas framed scenic areas may have a more narrow 45 degree angle.

Scenic views are those that the public enjoy observing for their attractive visual quality. In the Town of Ithaca, they are usually of similar physical character and often enclosed by landforms or vegetation such as ridgelines or forests. Scenic areas can also be characterized by similar land uses or development patterns. Although views do not end at political boundaries, the Town only has jurisdiction over its own territory.

In this report, the views are described by their aesthetic significance and aesthetic discord.

Aesthetic significance refers to a view's positive visual quality and importance. It consists of several attributes that make a view appealing, including:

- *Landscape contrast* refers to different elements in a view that interact to create a pleasing scene such as contrasting types of vegetation, rock outcrops, or water².
- *Order and harmony* refer to the distinction between urban and rural or whether structures are sited in traditional development patterns.
- *Focal points* give a view meaning and drama. They can include significant civic buildings, monuments, or prominent natural and water features.

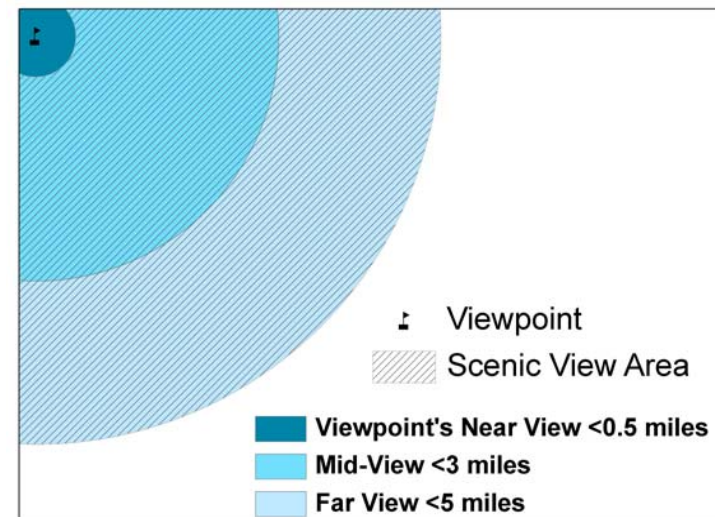
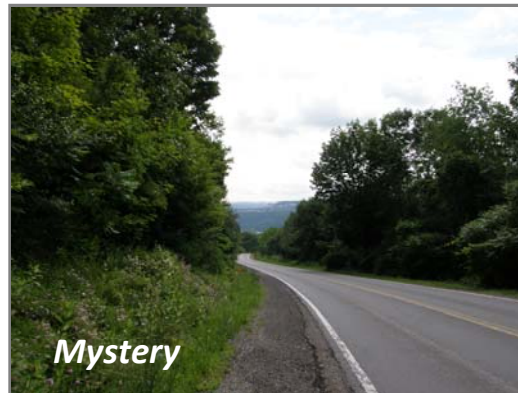


Figure 4: Illustration of Viewpoint and Scenic View Area

² *Scenic Resource Inventory*, Town of Bennington, Vermont. Pp 33. December 2004.

- *Spatial quality* refers to contrasting elements that define or frame the view, such as mountains in the background or a view over a valley framed by trees or stone walls.
- *Intactness* refers to whether the landscape has retained its traditional pattern, land use, and architectural form. For example, an old farmhouse surrounded by hills and fields with no modern subdivisions in view is visually intact.
- *Mystery* refers to a view with a sightline that does not terminate but disappears, raising a viewer's anticipation of what is around the bend.
- *Texture* refers to the different components of a view creating depth and richness.
- *Delineation of Near, Mid, and Far Views*—strong delineation creates interest for viewers.



There are different kinds of scenic views:

- **Panoramic** views are wide views that stretch as far as the horizon. They can include ridges, valleys, and water views.
- **Framed** views are those with more human-scaled elements on both sides, such as trees or gorges, which create a narrower, enclosed view.
- **Gateway** views are those that, framed or panoramic, are characteristic of the area and signal to viewers that they have arrived at a destination.

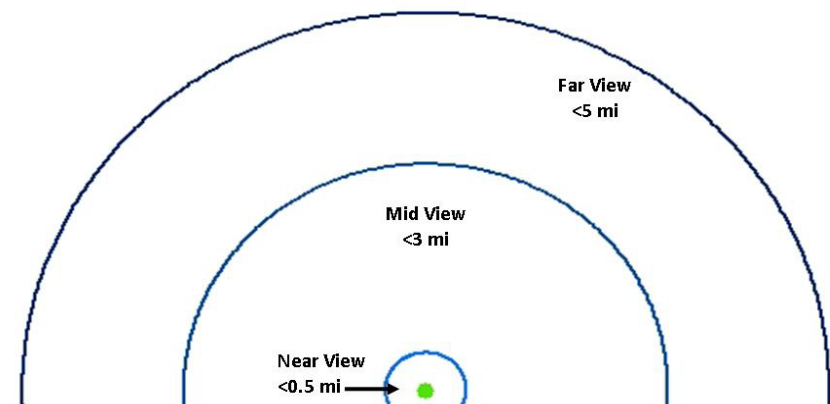
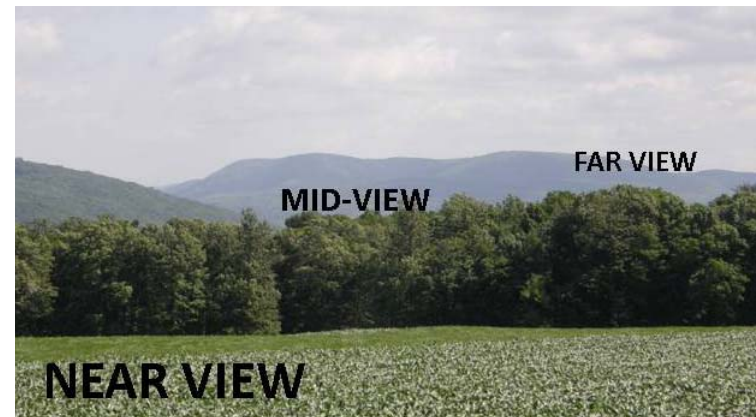


How far can one see?

The size of scenic areas is difficult to regulate. For example, both Rhode Island and Massachusetts have minimum size requirements of scenic areas: 20 acres and 1 square mile respectively. New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation generally considers that a 5-mile radius from a viewing area is a good distance, although the radius could be greater depending on the size of a proposed development further away.

Scenic views can often be characterized by their near, mid, and far areas. The near view is the immediate area where the viewpoints are located. The size of the foreground varies in scenic resource reports but is generally considered to have a radius from the viewpoint extending between 500 feet to ½ mile. The mid-view often sets the tone of a view, whether it is rural or urban; pastoral or wooded. The mid-view is usually defined between 500 feet to 4 miles. The far view, usually considered at a distance greater than 4 miles, is usually characterized by its landform, such as whether it is a view of hills, a ridgeline, or a large water body.

Considering the DEC's policy of a 5-mile limit and the small size of Ithaca, in this analysis ½-mile, 3-mile, and 5-mile radii were drawn from the scenic viewpoint to determine a standardized near, mid, and far viewshed of each scenic viewpoint. Describing views by their distance from a viewpoint provides a consistent, objective method for planning policies to be applied throughout the Town.



Aesthetic Discord occurs when there is a detrimental effect on the perceived beauty of a place or structure. To establish discord, the visibility of a structure must clearly interfere with the general public's ability to enjoy the appearance of an inventoried scenic resource by either blocking the view or introducing a distracting, incompatible land use to an otherwise intact view³. Other scenic resource studies have similar definitions of what constitutes a detrimental aesthetic impact to a view. Some examples of discordant land uses include clear cut areas, power lines, and inharmonious development of any type⁴.

In the Analysis section of this report, methods of scenically compatible design are discussed to avoid aesthetic discord in the future.



Figure 5: This view along Coddington Road shows how transmission line corridors can diminish a view.



Figure 6: The parking lot in the foreground of this view detracts from its overall quality. Taller shrubs in the foreground may be able to screen the cars in the parking lot. Shorter light poles would also be helpful

³ *Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts*, New York State Department of Conservation. Pp 9. July 2000.

⁴ *Scenic Assessment Handbook*, Maine State Planning Office, Maine Coastal Program. Pp 37. Written by Terry DeWan of Terrence J. DeWan & Associates Landscape Architects. Yarmouth, Maine. October 2008.

1.5 The Legal Basis for Protecting Scenic Views

Federal, state, and local governments recognize that the general public shares common environmental aesthetic values and these governmental entities have been granted authority to regulate actions to protect visual resources.

In particular, New York State has enabled local governments to protect their scenic resources:

New York State's Constitution, Article XIV states:

"The policy of the state shall be to conserve and protect its natural resources and scenic beauty..."

New York State's Town Law, Article 16, §261, states:

"For the purpose of promoting the health, safety, morals, or the general welfare of the community, the town board is hereby empowered by local law or ordinance to regulate and restrict the height, number of stories and size of buildings and other structures, the percentage of lot that may be occupied, the size of yards, courts, and other open spaces, the density of population, and the location and use of buildings, structures and land for trade, industry, residence or other purposes."

New York State's Comprehensive Planning Law, of the NYS Town Law, Article 16, §272.2, defines:

"Land use regulation" as an ordinance or local law enacted by the town for the regulation of any aspect of land use and community resource protection and includes any zoning, subdivision, special use permit or site plan regulation or any other regulation which prescribes the appropriate use of property or the scale, location and intensity of development."

New York State's General Municipal Law, Article 12-F, §239-y, defines "open area" as part of the Conservation Board law, *as any area characterized by natural scenic beauty* or, whose existing openness, natural condition or present state of use, if preserved, would enhance the present or potential value of abutting or surrounding development or would establish a desirable pattern of development or would offer substantial conformance with the planning objectives of the municipality or would maintain or enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources.

State Environmental Quality Review (6NYCRR Part 617), criteria for determining significant impact includes "(v) the impairment of the character or quality of important historical, archeological, architectural, *or aesthetic resources* or of existing community or neighborhood character.

The protection of scenic resources is consistent with the 1993 *Town of Ithaca Comprehensive Plan*, which recommends that the Town act to “Investigate a program to protect unique scenic resources and vistas.”

Court cases in NYS that have upheld the legal authority for the regulation and protection of scenic/aesthetic resources:

1963: People v. Stover (191 N.E. 2d 272) – An ordinance prohibiting clotheslines in front yards was upheld on aesthetic grounds alone. (Rye, NY).

1967: Cromwell v. Ferrier (279 N.Y.S. 2d 22) – The Court of Appeals upheld the regulation of signs. The Town of Walkill Zoning Board of Appeals had determined that two billboards on private property violated the Town’s Zoning Ordinance. The Court of Appeals upheld the validity of the ordinance and observed that the primary purpose of the anti-billboard ordinance is aesthetic. (Town of Walkill, NY).

1968: Trustees of Sailors’ Snug Harbor v. Platt (288 N.Y.S. 2d 314) – The court upheld aesthetic regulation as applied to historic landmark preservation. (New York City).

1972: People v. Goodman (338 N.Y.S. 2d 97) – The Court of Appeals upheld an ordinance controlling outdoor signs. The Village of Ocean Beach on Fire Island banned commercial signs greater than four square feet in area. The court upheld the ordinance on the basis that advertising signs may materially affect the appearance and character of the community. (Village of Ocean Beach, NY).

1975: McCormick v. Lawrence (372 N.Y.S. 2d 156) – The court upheld the Adirondack Park Agency’s authority to regulate private property based solely on aesthetic considerations. The Park Agency had approved a proposed subdivision (Oseetah Park Subdivision) subject to certain conditions, including that “no boathouses shall be constructed on the shore of Oseetah Lake (near Saranac Lake). The developer objected to the prohibition of boathouses. The court upheld the prohibition solely on the basis of aesthetic, scenic and visual considerations. In upholding the Park Agency’s authority to prohibit boathouses on Oseetah Lake, the court cited the previous rulings in People v. Stover, Cromwell v. Ferrier, and People v. Goodman to establish that aesthetic considerations alone can generate a sufficient impact on the public welfare to warrant an exercise of the police power, particularly where such considerations relate to unique features of the locality. (Adirondack Park).

1998: Wal-Mart Stores v. Planning Board of the Town of North Elba, (238 AD2d 93) – The Court sustained, as rational, the planning board's denial of a proposed Wal-Mart store on the twin grounds that the store would have undue adverse impacts on community character and on a "Scenic Preservation Overlay" district which was established to protect the view of Whiteface Mountain, along a highly traveled corridor in the Town of North Elba, a resort community in the Adirondack Mountains.

2000: Lane Construction Corp. v. Cahill, (270 AD2d 609) – The Court upheld the Commissioner's determination to deny a Mined Land Reclamation Law and related permits to operate a hard rock quarry on the grounds, among others, "that the project's impacts on the historical and scenic character of the community cannot be sufficiently mitigated." The subject mine would have reduced the elevation of a prominent topographic feature to the community of East Nassau, known as Snake Mountain, by approximately 270 feet. In denying permits, the

Commissioner had particularly relied on the administrative law judge's conclusion that there was no way to mitigate the long term impact of removal of this prominent topographic feature on the community of East Nassau.

Other municipalities and agencies in New York State have conducted scenic view inventories and passed regulations to protect their scenic views, including the towns of Ancram, Blooming Grove, Copake, North East, Philipstown, East Hampton, and Saratoga Springs. A summary table below outlines the actions of these municipalities in further detail, as well as other states in New England.

Summary Table of Scenic View Inventories & Regulations at the Local Level

State	Jurisdiction	Inventory	Regulations
New York	Adirondack Park Agency (APA)	There are a number of designated scenic vistas on the official APA map.	Designated Scenic Vistas on Official APA Master Plan. Unique scenic areas considered "Critical" areas; Review of large projects must incorporate view impact analysis.
	Ancram	Currently reviewing existing Scenic Resources Protection Plan; Considering expanding to other areas of town, specifically ridgelines.	<p>Current Route 22 Overlay Zone is a fixed distance from road (1500'). New comprehensive plan proposes revising these boundaries based on terrain and line-of-sight analysis.</p> <p>New comprehensive plan recommends increased site plan review for properties in the scenic overlay – recommends establishing visual impact analysis standards and visual impact mitigation recommendations, based on DEC guidelines, to be applied by the Planning Board during site plan, special permit and subdivision reviews. Mandatory for major (over 4 lots) subdivision developments.</p> <p>Recommends maintaining Scenic Overlay requirements on any proposed gravel mining.</p>

Summary Table of Scenic View Inventories & Regulations at the Local Level

State	Jurisdiction	Inventory	Regulations
New York	Blooming Grove	Yes	Five types of scenic overlay zones; proposed development in these zones requires a visual assessment.
	Copake	Scenic Resources Plan	Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone; prohibits certain types of development in the overlay zone that are otherwise allowable in the underlying zoning. Other construction subject to design guidelines.
	North East	Adopted a Community Preservation Plan which includes an inventory of scenic areas and list of places to protect	Enabled all available land use alternatives, including but not limited to: (a) fee simple acquisition, (b) zoning regulations, including density reductions, cluster development, and site plan and design requirements, (c) transfer of development rights, (d) the purchase of development rights, and (e) scenic and conservation easements.
	Phillipstown	Within Natural Resource and Open Space Protection Plan	Recommends that the (a) Conservation Board review all development applications that would impact property listed in the Open Space Index, (b) Receiving state authorization to collect a real estate transfer tax to fund conservation easements, (c) Establish scenic roadway protection measures to limit visibility of new development, (d) Establish ridgeline protection measures

Summary Table of Scenic View Inventories & Regulations at the Local Level

State	Jurisdiction	Inventory	Regulations
New York	East Hampton	A Community Preservation Plan outlines all of the locally significant scenic resources.	Conservation Easements funded through 2% Real Estate Transfer Tax. Also, requires at least 10% of land reserved for open space or scenic view protection in all subdivisions.
	Saratoga Springs	List of areas only	Country Overlay Area for scenic viewsheds and additional site plan review.
	Tompkins County	Scenic Resources Inventory completed in 2007	None.
New Hampshire	Hanover	"Something for Everyone" Scenic Locales Report	<p>Recommends increased funding of conservation easements and acquisitions and tying them into Capital Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Requires new development to conform to existing topography by requiring full disclosure of all land removal and grading.</p>
	Bennington	Yes	Has increased site plan review for sites that may impact the Scenic View Inventory's designated viewpoints.

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

Every municipality conducts their inventory of scenic views differently. What all scenic view inventories have in common, however, is the effort made to include community input, as well as consistency and objectivity when evaluating sites. Some states, such as Maine and Vermont, have detailed guidelines for local jurisdictions conducting scenic inventories. In New York, local guidance is limited to the Division of Coastal Resources' "Proposed Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance in East Hampton" report, which primarily focuses on large, coastal areas.

2.2 Visual Inventory

The Conservation Board's citizen-based Scenic Resources Committee first inventoried 33 scenic views throughout the Town of Ithaca. They did this by using the Town's grid system, divided and assigned themselves a number of grid cells, and drove every road within those cells looking for views. Inventoried views were limited to those seen from a public right of way in the Town of Ithaca, including roads and parks. Views seen from private roads and property were not included.

The Scenic Resources Committee catalogued 33 views and then developed five factors to evaluate them. Each factor was scored on a scale of 1 to 3 for a possible total score of 15, as shown in Figure 7. Three of the factors were based on composition, including distinctiveness, quality and appeal. The other two factors were practical considerations.

Figure 7

FACTORS (used by Scenic Resource Committee)	RATING SCALES
<u>Magnitude</u> Includes pedestrian and vehicular views available to many people	3 (Highly Expressed) - 1 (Low)
<u>Distinctiveness</u> Natural or manmade, i.e. Buttermilk Falls or Ithaca Towers Recognition level; uniqueness	3 (Distinct) - 1 (Common)
<u>Quality</u> Intactness Noteworthy seasonal variation (Obscures negative components or adds attractiveness) Limited factors that detract (noise, odors, traffic, mining, unattractive structures)	3 (Intact) - 1 (Disturbed)
<u>Appeal – The WOW factor</u> Includes natural features as well as structural landmarks Attracts tourists and new residents for community economic enhancement	3 (Big) - 1 (Little)
<u>Opportunity (Ease of Protection)</u> Still can be protected (limit development) or enhanced (develop or recover a view point); Obstruction(s) can be removed (trim trees)	3 (Easy) - 1 (Difficult)

Magnitude refers to how many people see the views. The Opportunity factor was a quick assessment of how easily a view could be preserved. Opportunities for protection of views are discussed in the Analysis section of this report (see p. 91 - 120).

Once the evaluation was complete, the Scenic Resources Committee presented 10 of their highest scoring views to the public with a Town Hall exhibition during April and May, 2007 and an insert published in the April 2007 Town of Ithaca newsletter, sent to all Town of Ithaca residents. Public feedback was encouraged in the newsletter, with ballot forms for voting on favorite views in the lobby and on the Town's website. Maps of selected scenic viewpoints with a recommended route for touring the views were made available in the Town Hall lobby. As a result of the outreach, 25 votes and comments were received from the public.

The public comments received suggested the following views, which were considered by the Scenic Resources Committee but not included in their report:

- Hanshaw Road near the Dryden line
- Route 13 view of Cayuga Lake and West Hill
- Forest Home Drive Scenic Byway
- Ellis Hollow Road/Game Farm Road

The following views were recommended through the public comments and had not been included previously:

- Western end of Poole Road looking East (Elm Street Extension)
- Forest Home Drive/McIntyre Place/Byway—seasonal view of Fall Creek waterfall
- Culver Road corridor

The following views were mentioned in the public commentary, but the land is not considered developable and the views are not in danger of being lost:

- Trail on north side of Six Mile Creek overlooking lake (A buffer zone protects the land surrounding Six Mile Creek as it provides the City of Ithaca's water supply)
- Burns Road - Scenic areas of Burns Road are within a Conservation zone. The land there is generally very steep and drains directly into Six Mile Creek. Since development in Conservation Zones is prohibited on slopes greater than 25%, little of this area will be developed.



Figure 8: Scenic views ahead on Bostwick Road.

The Town of Ithaca Planning Department looked closely at the Scenic Resources Committee's methodology and results used in scoring these views. All of the views presented to the public had received a score of 10 or above. While the inventory of 33 scenic views is comprehensive, only 10 views were presented to the public and for at least one of these 10 views, several viewpoints with similar views were consolidated into one. This inventory describes the Scenic Resource Committee's work in greater detail and expands upon it with the inclusion of the additional views. In total, 35 views are inventoried and analyzed in the following report, including the views from the New York State recognized Forest Home Drive Scenic Byway and the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway on Route 89.

The views outlined in the first section of The Results chapter were listed in the Scenic Resources Committee's 2007 report and received a score above '9' out of the 15 points possible through their ranking system. The second section in the Results chapter describes the remaining important views.

2.3 GIS Analysis

With Ithaca's scenic views inventoried, the next step was to collect the geographic coordinates of the approximate viewpoints, record the direction and extent of the view using a compass, and determine what was visible from the viewpoint. For each viewpoint, the geographic coordinates were recorded in the field using a GPS data collector.

This information was then entered into ESRI, Inc.'s Geographic Information System (ArcGIS) program using its Spatial Analyst and 3-D Analyst extensions. The topographical map used for conducting the GIS Analysis is the Digital Elevation Model at the 10-meter cell size, published by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Within Spatial Analyst, the **Viewshed** tool was used to determine exactly what property is visible from an inventoried scenic viewpoint. The viewshed analysis is based on the viewpoint and the 10-meter cell-based Digital Elevation Model topographic map (see Figure 12). Viewshed analysis also takes into account the following factors of the viewpoint:

- Height from which the view is seen. In this analysis the default height used was 6' to represent a 6' tall person standing on the ground.
- Beginning and end angles that delineate the horizontal extent of the view, assigned using a compass in the field. These are called Azimuths (see Figure 10).
- The top and bottom of the vertical angles to limit the scan (45° and -45° default).

It should be noted that the viewshed tool only takes topography into account and not vegetation. Thus, the maps can only give a general idea of what is visible.

Circumferences were drawn around the viewpoints at ½-mile, 3-mile, and 5-mile radii to delineate the near, mid, and far views. The near view is associated with the area in the vicinity of the viewpoint while the mid and far views are considered the scenic view areas.

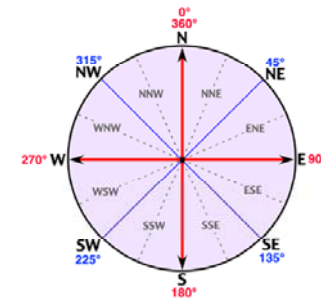


Figure 9: The horizontal angle of each view was recorded. Photo: PhysicalGeography.net.

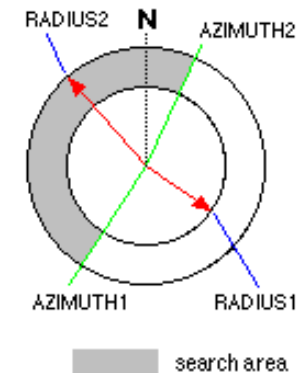


Figure 10: Limiting the Viewshed analysis to the extent of the view.

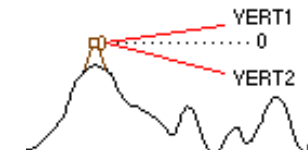


Figure 11: Vertical visibility.

The resulting maps show in pink what is visible from each viewpoint, given the parameters that were set for them. These parameters cannot be exact due to the possibilities that the compass readings could have been misread by several degrees, vertical views might vary from 45° and -45°, and of course, not everyone is 6' tall. Also, the direction and extent of views change along the scenic length of the road and will invariably change in extent over time.

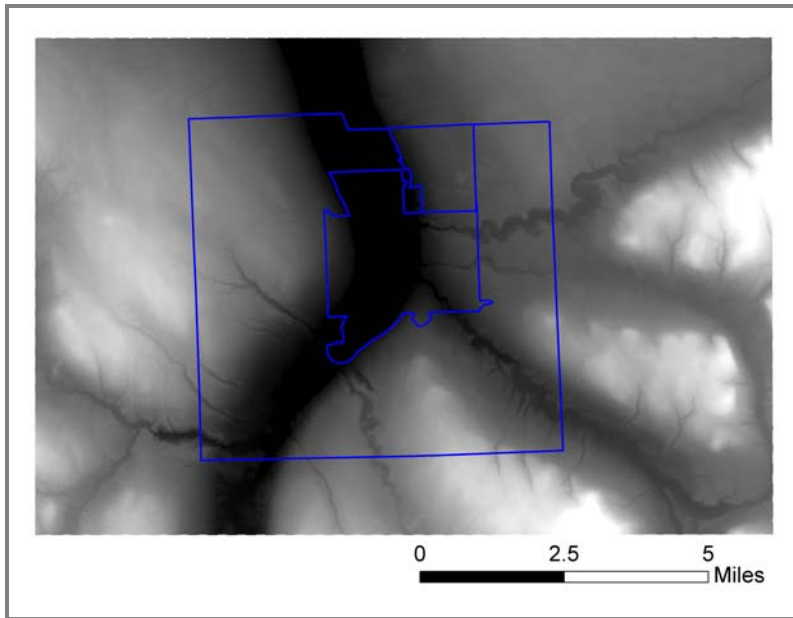


Figure 12: The Digital Elevation Model (DEM) for the Town of Ithaca is a cell-based map that is linked to elevation data. Lighter colors represent higher elevations.

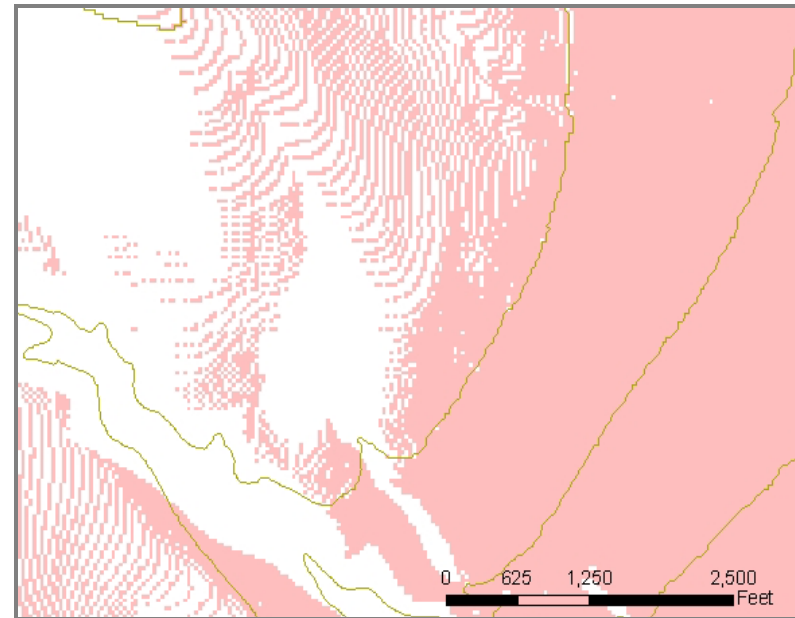


Figure 13: An example of the cell-based viewshed analysis. Pink is visible and white is not visible.

There are other tools within Spatial Analyst that can help determine impacts on scenic views. The **Line of Sight Analysis** tool determines what is visible along a line between two points (Figure 14). This analysis is helpful for determining if a particular building or feature is visible from a scenic viewpoint. Again, this analysis only takes topography into account and not vegetation.

The **3-D Analyst tool** then converts this information into a 3-D model so that visual obstructions such as trees and buildings can be included to determine how they might block views (Figure 15).

Once all of the maps for the individual views were completed, the maps were overlaid on top of one another so that the number of times an area was included in a scenic vista could be counted. All of the near and far views are then mapped together.

Data Sources

All of the maps used in this report were based on the U.S. Geological Survey's 10-meter Digital Elevation Model. All layers were projected with the Transverse Mercator, 1983 North American Datum, "NAD 1983 State Plane New York Central FIPS 3102 Feet." The source of all the map layers is from the Town of Ithaca with the exception of the vegetation layer which was derived from Tompkins County's 2008 Land Use/Land Cover shapefile.

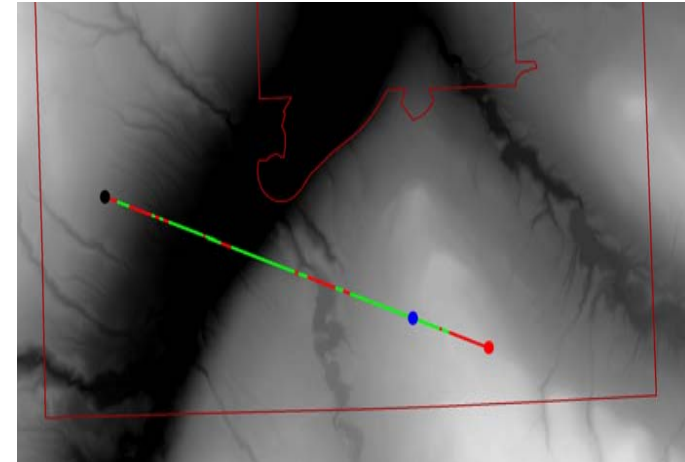


Figure 14: A example of line of sight analysis. Green is visible while red is not visible. The black point is the viewer looking for the red point but it is not visible. The farthest the black point can see is the last green segment.



Figure 15: An example of a 3D rendering of a viewshed.

2.4 Field Observations and Photography

Each viewpoint or scenic road was visited by Town Planning staff. In addition to collecting the geographic coordinates and direction of the view, detailed notes were recorded and numerous photographs taken. The notes described the views according to what natural and built forms could be seen in the approximate near, mid, and far views. The camera was an Olympus SP-550UZ digital camera with an 18x Wide-Angle Optical Zoom. It is important to note that the Town's staff members are not professional photographers and they may not have been able to take the photos in the best conditions. Moderate zooming in with the camera was necessary as the digital camera invariably portrayed views as being more distant than they actually were.

3. Results

3.1 Scenic Views of Local Significance

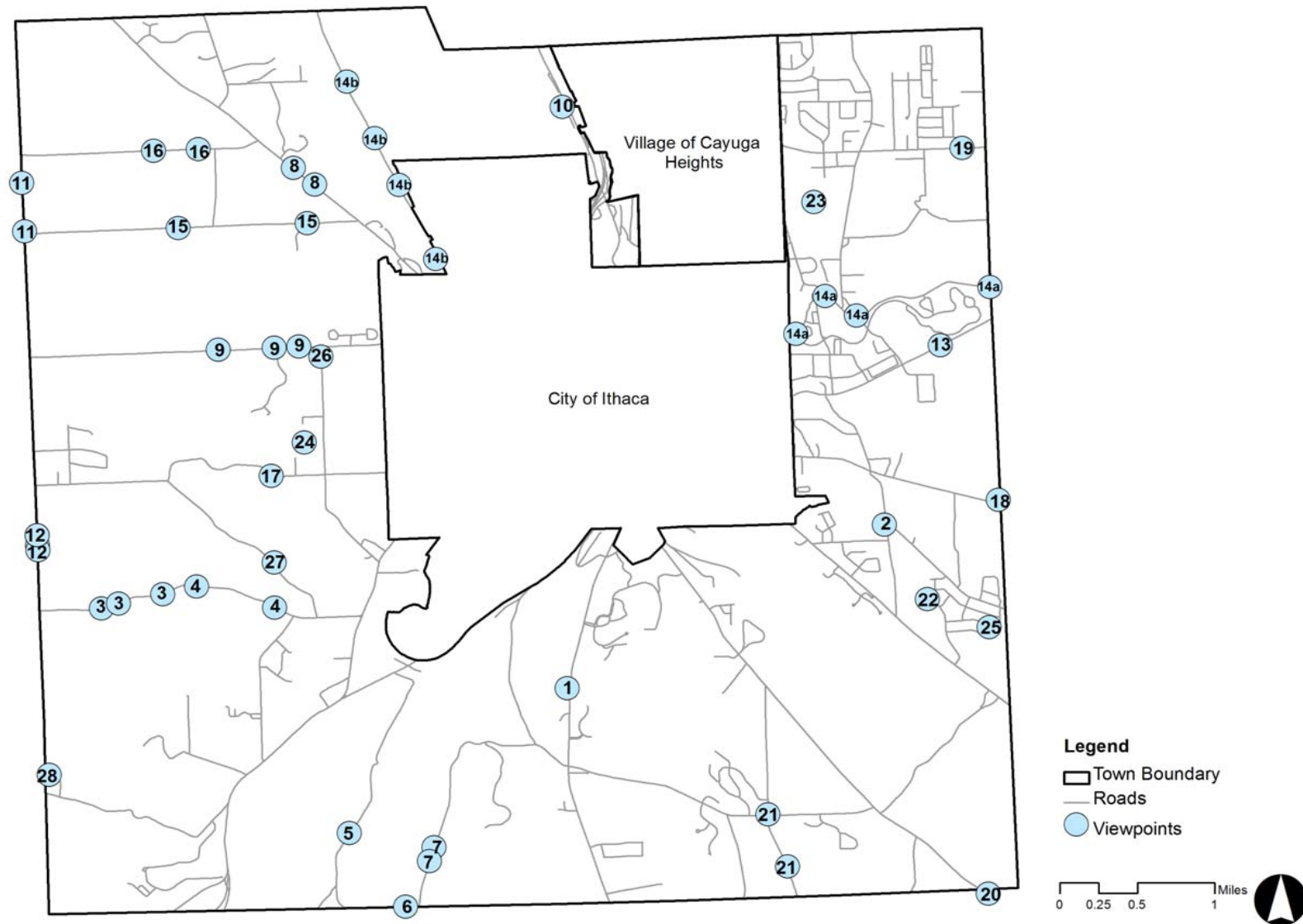
This chapter of the report provides photographs and detailed descriptions of the Town of Ithaca's scenic viewpoints and corresponding scenic view areas. The views outlined in the first section of this chapter were listed in the Scenic Resources Committee's 2007 report or received a score above 9 out of the 15 points possible through their ranking system. The second section in this chapter describes the remaining important views.

Each description focuses on a single scenic view which may have a single scenic viewpoint or many viewpoints along a length of scenic road. Each viewpoint (or points) along a scenic road is described by its immediate surroundings as well as its near, mid and far views, which make up the viewpoints' corresponding scenic view areas (Figure 4). The descriptions stem from their evaluation by the Scenic Resources Committee and Town staff observations.

The descriptions are organized as follows:

- **Direction:** Refers to the direction and width of the view, expressed in degrees between 0° and 360°, with 0° and 360° representing due north and 180° due south, 270° due west, and so forth.
- **Seasonal:** Refers to whether the scenic view can be seen all year round or only during parts of the year, such as in the winter.
- **Magnitude:** Refers to the public exposure to, or accessibility of, a view in terms of the amount of traffic passing a viewpoint. In this report traffic counts were used to determine how many vehicles pass a specific viewpoint. Parks were uniformly considered to have an average amount of "traffic."
- **Near View:** A description of what is visible based on site visits, within the specified direction and within 1/2 miles of the viewpoint or scenic roads.
- **Mid-view:** A description of what is visible based on site visits within the specified direction and within 3 miles of the viewpoint or along a stretch of a scenic road.
- **Far View:** A description of what is visible within 5 miles of the viewpoint or along a stretch of scenic road.
- **Aesthetic Significance:** Delineates why this view is of high visual quality and is important to protect.
- **Aesthetic Discord:** Describes eyesores or distractions that diminish a view's level of intactness or character.

Scenic Viewpoints in the Town of Ithaca



Scenic Views Analyzed in Chapter 3

This list corresponds to the map on the facing page.

Scenic Views of Local Significance

1. Danby Road/ Cayuga Lake Overlook
2. Pine Tree Road and points along it
3. Upper Bostwick Road
4. Lower Bostwick Road
5. Sand Bank Road (North)
6. Sand Bank Road (South)
7. West King Road
8. Trumansburg Road
9. Upper and Lower Mecklenburg Road
10. East Shore Park
11. Sheffield Road (North)
12. Sheffield Road (South)
13. Dryden Road/Route 366
14. New York State Designated Scenic Byways
 - a. Forest Home Drive
 - b. Taughannock Boulevard/ Route 89

Additional Noteworthy Scenic Views

15. Bundy Road
16. Hayts Road (North and South)
17. Elm Street Extension
18. Game Farm Road at Ellis Hollow Road
19. Hanshaw Road
20. Coddington Road
21. Troy Road
22. East Ithaca Recreation Way
23. Northeast Ithaca's Golf Courses
24. West Haven Park
25. Eastern Heights Park
26. West Haven Road
27. Culver Road
28. Gray Road



DANBY ROAD

1. Danby Road/Route 96B Cayuga Lake Overlook

Location: Danby Road pullout, just south of Bella Vista Lane in front of the Longview Assisted Living Facility.

Direction: Northerly, between 315 and 33°.

Seasonal: Year round.

Magnitude: High, as it is located on State Route 96B, the main road into Ithaca from the south.

Near View: The near view as seen from the overlook parking area consists of the Longview Assisted Living Facility lawn and landscaping, entrance and parking lot, and tall light poles.

Mid- View: Largely trees and treetops that quickly descend down a steep slope. The wooded slopes of West Hill meeting Cayuga Lake are also visible.

Far View: Cayuga Lake stretches into the distance and we can see the wooded neighborhood of Cayuga Heights and the wooded and agricultural hills of Lansing on the east side of the lake as it curves around West Hill.

The view from Route 96 B, which is the one most people see on a regular basis, is more clearly dominated by the view of Cayuga Lake and the surrounding hills.

Aesthetic Significance: One of the Finger Lakes region's definitive experiences is rounding the bend in a road or reaching the summit of a hill and coming upon the stunning view of the long lake in the valley. This gateway view, seen by descending South Hill on Danby Road, is perhaps the best public view of Cayuga Lake from any of the hills in Ithaca. The view of the lake is at its southernmost point and extends nearly into the horizon before it curves around West Hill. The trees in the mid-ground of the view connect the viewer to the surrounding densely-wooded hills. The Scenic Resources Committee described it as "spectacular." The Tompkins County Scenic Inventory also recognized this view as one of the 30 'Noteworthy' views in the county.



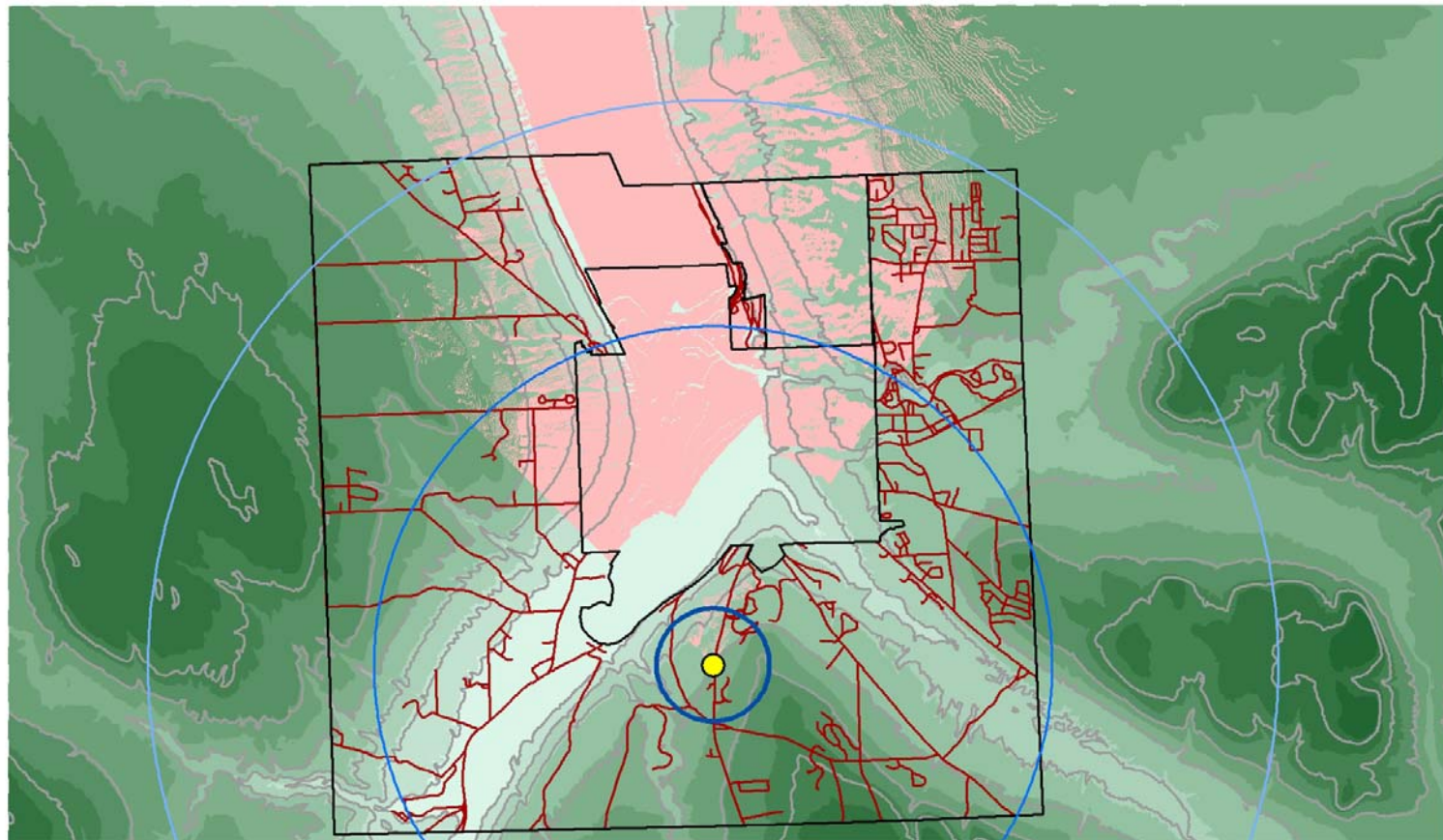
Figure 16: The view of Cayuga Lake from the Danby Road pullout.



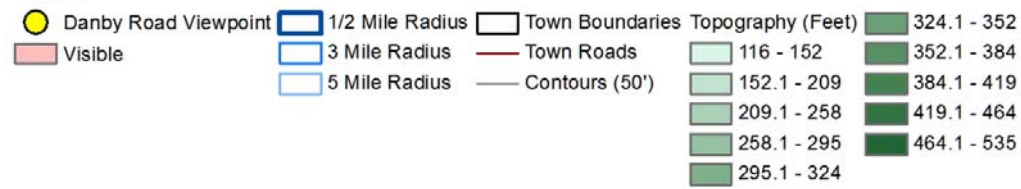
Figure 17: The view of Cayuga Lake from the Danby Road pullout.

Aesthetic Discord: Although the building placement of the Longview Nursing Home prevents this view from being blocked entirely, the parking lot in the foreground still detracts from the overall quality of the view. More development within this view would further degenerate it, but some strategically placed low shrubbery might hide the detracting parking areas and the cars in them, without destroying the view.

Danby Road (Longview) Viewshed Analysis



Legend



0 0.5 1 2 Miles





PINE TREE ROAD

2. Pine Tree Road and Points Along It

Location: Across the street from the intersection of Snyder Hill Road with Pine Tree Road, and points north along the road and pedestrian walk on east side of it.

Direction: Westerly, between 240-310 °

Seasonal: Year round.

Magnitude: High. This panoramic view is located 2,000 feet from the East Hill shopping plaza and on a road carrying many travelers to Cornell University.

Near View: A field, mowed approximately once a year, with a single tree. The view is limited by a row of trees on the property border to the left and the Cornell University Veterinary School barns to the right. The foreground view is cut short by the steep topography. A diverse array of trees descends into the valley and their intense green contrasts with the lighter green of the field.

Mid-view: Towards the south, the Ithaca College Athletic and Events Center encroaches on the wooded hillside punctuate the wooded landscape and create a focal point. There is also a low hill that is mostly wooded except for a large brick building (Emerson Hall) and a wide clearing (parking lot Z).

Far View: Predominantly wooded hillside as well as some farms, including the Bostwick Road Scenic Area. There is some development on the hills but not enough to overwhelm the view. The views extend as far as the towns of Newfield and Enfield.

Aesthetic Significance: This is perhaps the most natural and most expansive view in the Town of Ithaca looking west. It offers many opportunities to see it. The stop sign at the intersection allows drivers and cyclists who come from the east on Snyder Hill Road to take a short pause to enjoy the view. It is also easily seen along the Pine Tree walkway which is part of a loop including Honness Lane sidewalks, East Hill Recreation Way and sidewalks on Mitchell Street.

Aesthetic Discord: The large new Athletic & Events Center and Z parking lot development in the mid-ground is out-of-scale and has cleared wide areas of vegetation. There is also a large radio tower north of the Ithaca College Towers. Selective plantings around the parking lot could mitigate its visual impact.

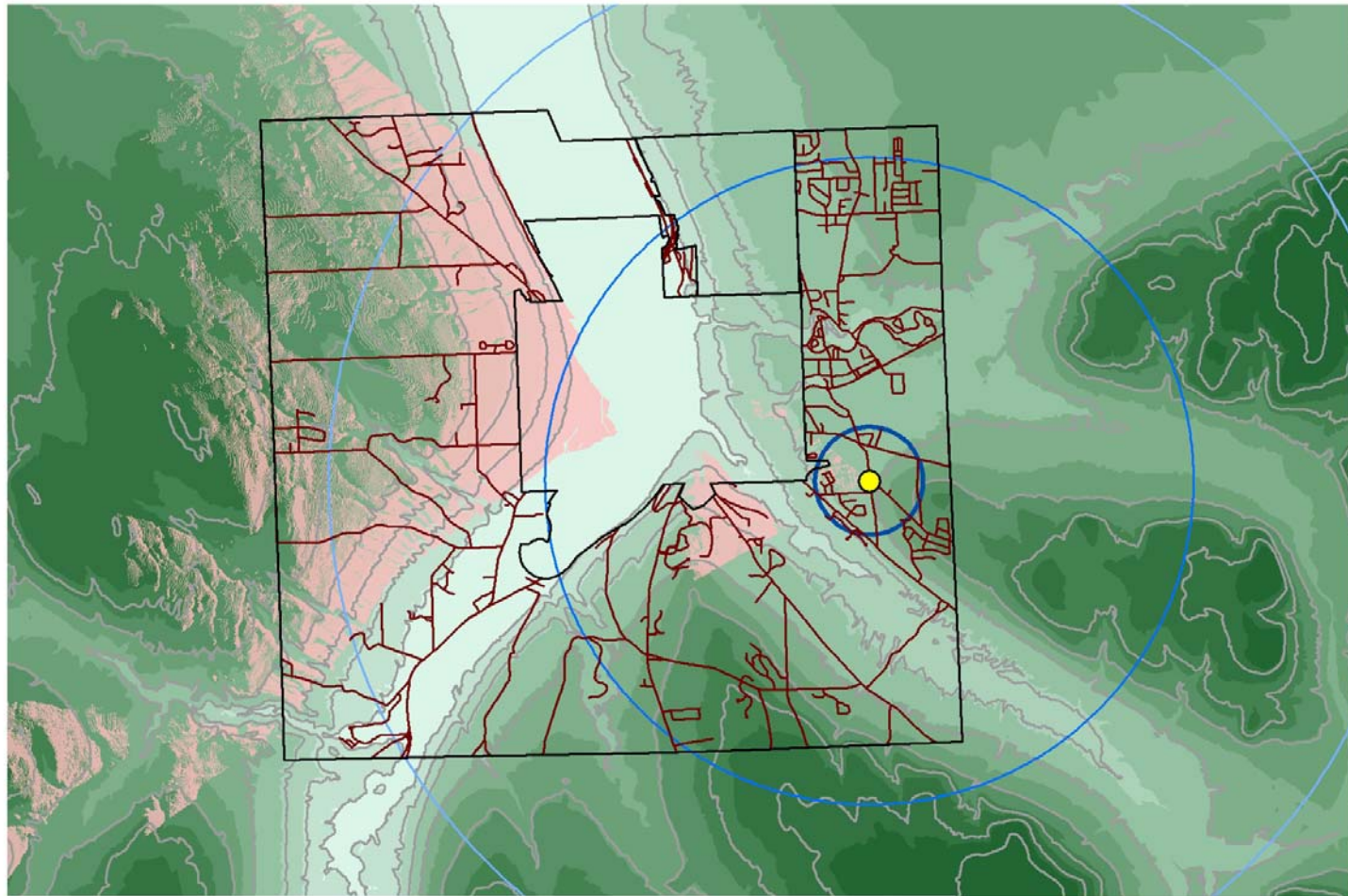


Figure 18: Ithaca College from Pine Tree Road serves as a focal point. (Photo: Scenic Resources Committee).

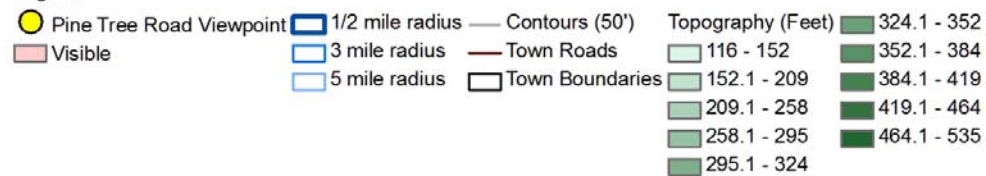


Figure 19: Camera zoomed in slightly, the Bostwick Road area can be seen (center).

Pine Tree Road Viewshed Analysis



Legend



0 0.5 1 2
Miles





BOSTWICK ROAD

3. Upper Bostwick Road

Location: Bostwick Road has many stretches along it that are highly scenic. The magnificent panoramic views start approximately 800 feet east of the intersection at Sheffield Road and continue heading east downhill for nearly 2,000 feet until approximately 358 Bostwick Road. Further downhill (approximately 2,800 feet) lower Bostwick Road has very different views and is described in the following pages.

Direction: While several viewpoints were taken, the widest and perhaps clearest view opens up directly across from the 429 Bostwick mailbox stretching from the northeast to the southwest between 55-200 °.

Season: Year round.

Magnitude: Medium. Bostwick Road carries a surprising amount of traffic. The Town's 2007 Transportation Plan revealed a volume of 1,801 vehicles per day.

Near View: Pasture land with cows grazing, planted fields on both sides of the road, the road itself; farm building; farm house.

Mid-view: There is not much of a mid-view that is visible as the hill slopes down steeply. Only tree-tops are visible.

Far View: The panoramic view stretches from the distant hills in the East, with Cornell University just below, to Ithaca College and farm fields amidst densely wooded areas to the south and southeast, and to the hills of Danby and Newfield to the south and southwest.

Aesthetic Significance: The uplifting views along Bostwick Road are perhaps some of the most defining views of the Town of Ithaca. They reflect the pastoral and rural area of the town and highlight the sharp contrast between the dense and less denser areas and the surrounding town. The views of the City of Ithaca provide detail and heighten interest for viewers. Tompkins County's Scenic Inventory recognized this view as one of the 30 'Noteworthy' views in the county.

Aesthetic Discord: The telephone poles and electric poles running across the pastures can be distracting. Although there is some development in the far views, it is sparse enough and of uniform character that it is not jarring to the viewer.

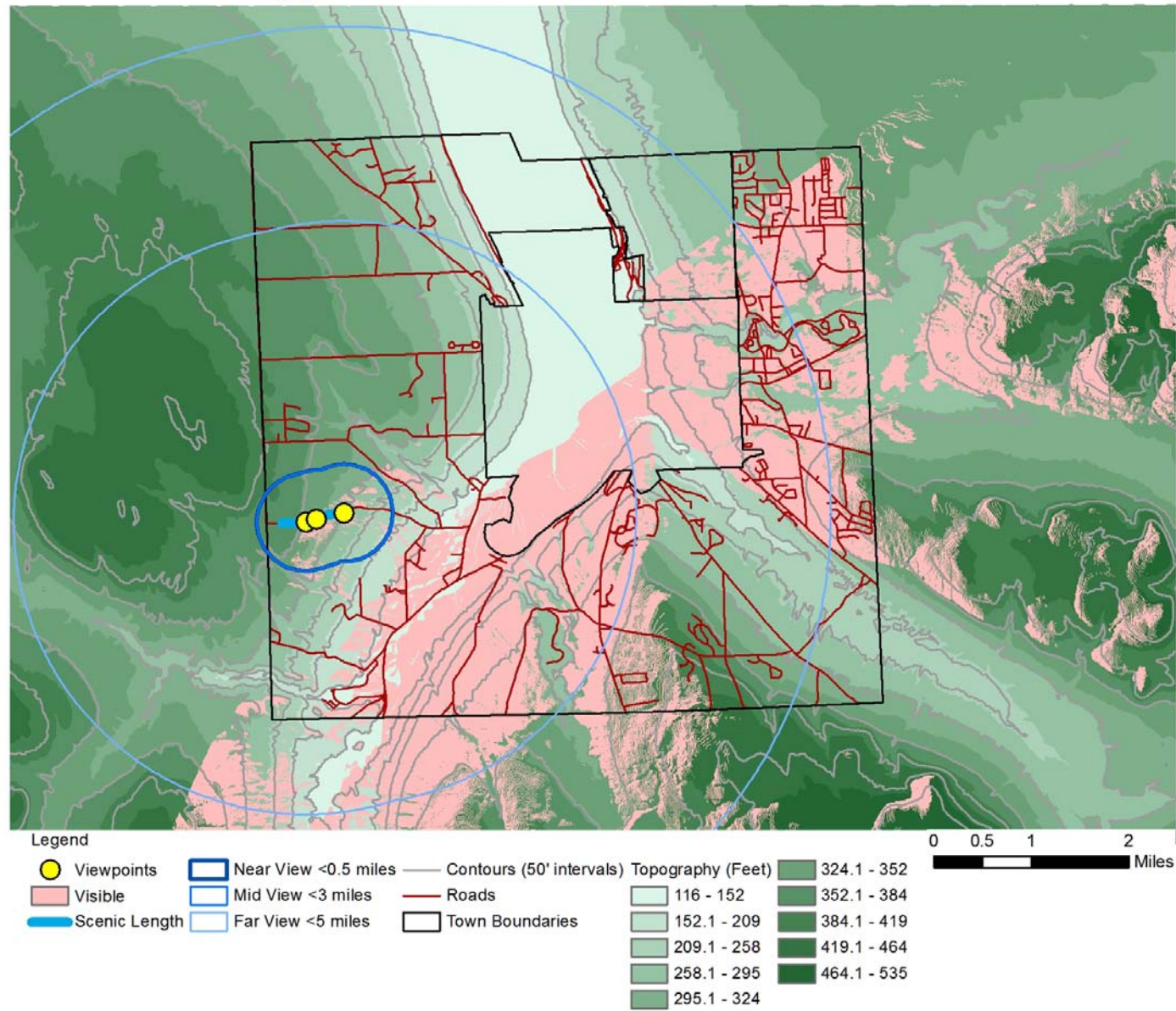


Figure 20: Farm and City in contrast, one of the many views along Bostwick Road.



Figure 21: A pastoral view from Bostwick Road, camera zoomed in.

Upper Bostwick Road Viewshed Analysis



4. Lower Bostwick Road

Location: Continuing further East downhill on Bostwick Road the view changes from an agricultural landscape to a woodsy, hilly landscape framed by tall trees. The views continue eastward for approximately 3,500 feet to just before the house at the corner of Seven Mile Drive.

Direction: Two viewpoints were taken. The framed view of Ithaca College is between 90 and 118 °. Further down the hill, as the view shifts south and directly towards Buttermilk Falls, the view is between 120 and 135 °.

Magnitude: Medium. See Upper Bostwick Road description.

Near View: The near view is composed of the curving road, steadily dropping towards the east, lined with trees and shrubs.

Mid-View: A view of South Hill with Ithaca College near the top. Except for the college, the hill appears to be sparsely developed without a significant clearance in the dense woods. Further east along the road, the view of Ithaca College is blocked by the curve in the road and vegetation, but then opens up again more to the south/southwest providing a view of Buttermilk Falls State Park.

Far View: From the first viewpoint the hills of Dryden are visible beyond South Hill.

Season: Year round.

Aesthetic Significance: The view of Ithaca College from this section of Bostwick Road is beautifully framed by tall trees. The curvy road provides a sense of mystery to visitors whose anticipation of what lies around the bend heightens their interest in the view. Further down the hill the views of Buttermilk Falls are also eye-catching with the ridges of the gorge gently defined by the dense trees.

Aesthetic Discord: None. At the bottom of the road, however, there is newer development that conflicts with the otherwise pristine view making it less enjoyable.

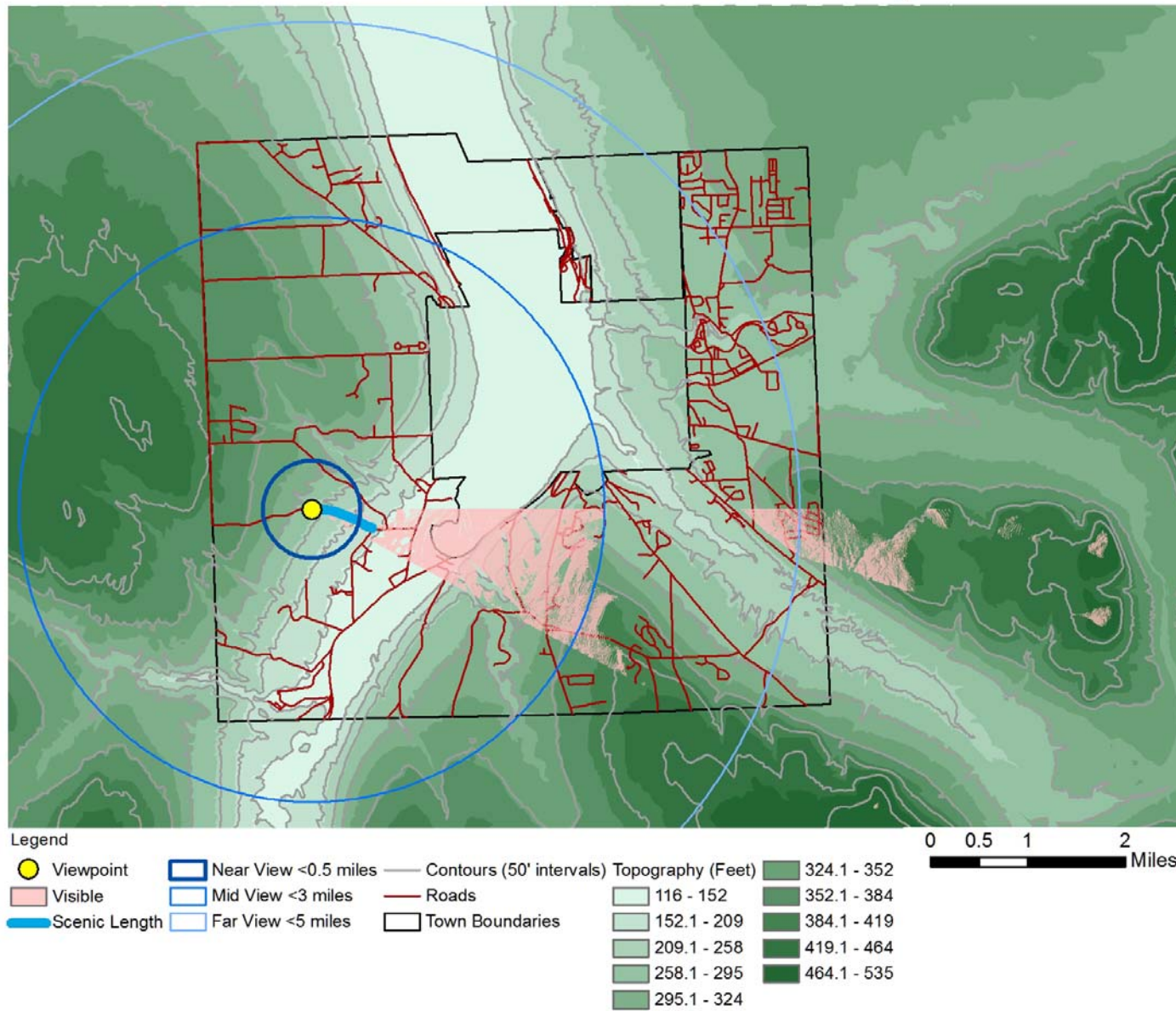


Figure 22: Ithaca College is framed by the abundant trees that line this end of Bostwick Road.



Figure 23: The scenic area ends with a view of open fields in front of the dense woods that border the Cayuga Inlet and Buttermilk Falls State Park as a backdrop.

Lower Bostwick Road Viewshed Analysis





SAND BANK ROAD

5. Sand Bank Road (North)

Location: Stretches of Sand Bank Road, particularly while heading north towards Route 13, have views to the west/northwest through openings in the vegetation

Direction: Northwest to north/northeast, between 240 and 20 °

Magnitude: Moderate. This is a relatively quiet rural road and moderately used connection to Route 13 and Route 96.

Season: Year round, during the winter the mid-view may open up and provide a more expanded view.

Near view: Formerly agriculture fields, now a meadow in ecological succession with mostly tall grasses and some woody growth. Towards the southeast, there are no mid or far views as they are blocked by the dense Lick Brook Forest Preserve. Also, the road and field surrounding the viewpoint creates an intact outdoor room for the viewer to experience an intact example of Ithaca's agricultural and rural history.

Mid-View: The hillside and hilltop along Bostwick Road includes woods and farm fields. On the north/northwest side there are trees and treetops.

Far View: Limited due to the height of West Hill.

Aesthetic Significance: This largely intact view overlooks the Bostwick Road farms, some of the last working farms in Ithaca, nestled within the wooded landscape. It is a reflection of Ithaca's historic character that the viewpoint is on a former farm field overlooking other farm fields. While the view is the same but more limited than that on West King Road or Sand Bank Road (South), the viewpoint here is closer, so that the view is entirely within the mid-view and thus more vivid.

Aesthetic Discord: The red roofs of EcoVillage highlight the fact that development is encroaching.

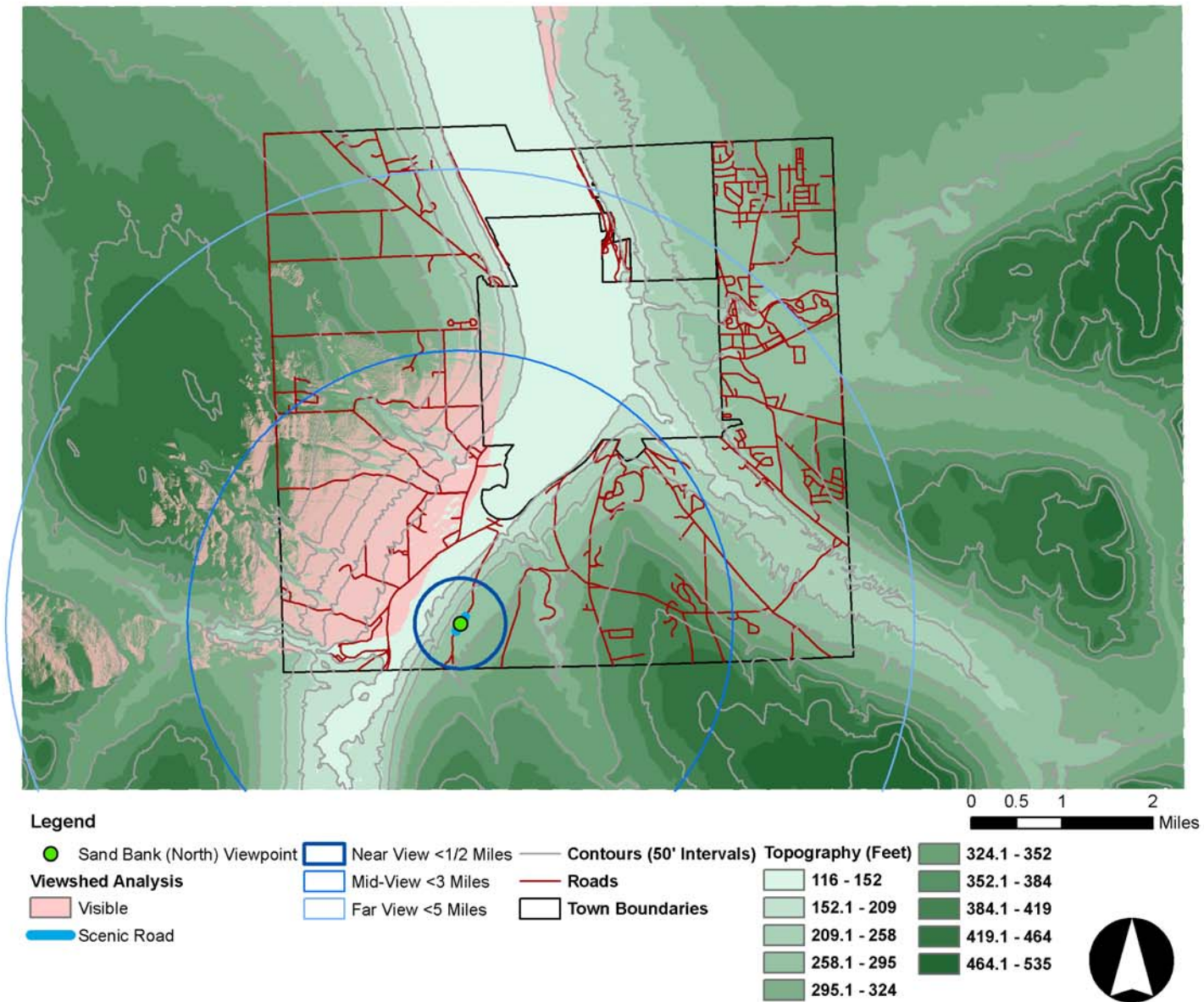


Figure 24: View from Sand Bank Road.



Figure 25: A view of Sand Bank Road.

Sand Bank Road (North) Viewshed Analysis



6. Sand Bank Road (South)

Location: On the Danby town line adjacent to the stand of trees at the corner of West King Road.

Direction: North/northwest between 260 and 10 °.

Season: Year round.

Magnitude: Fairly low.

Near View: Tall grass rippling in the wind, with the occasional tree.

Mid View: Treetops are peeking just over the ridge. Across the Cayuga Inlet Valley, the Bostwick Road farms are visible amidst the woodsy West Hill.

Far View: The view spans the hills of Enfield and Robert H. Treman State Park to West Hill's intact ridgeline.

Aesthetic Significance: This view is a different perspective on the same view as the Sand Bank Road (North) and the West King Road (see next view). This is perhaps one of the most intact views of pastoral serenity remaining in Ithaca. This view was also deemed "noteworthy" in the Tompkins County Scenic Resources Inventory.

Aesthetic Discord: None.

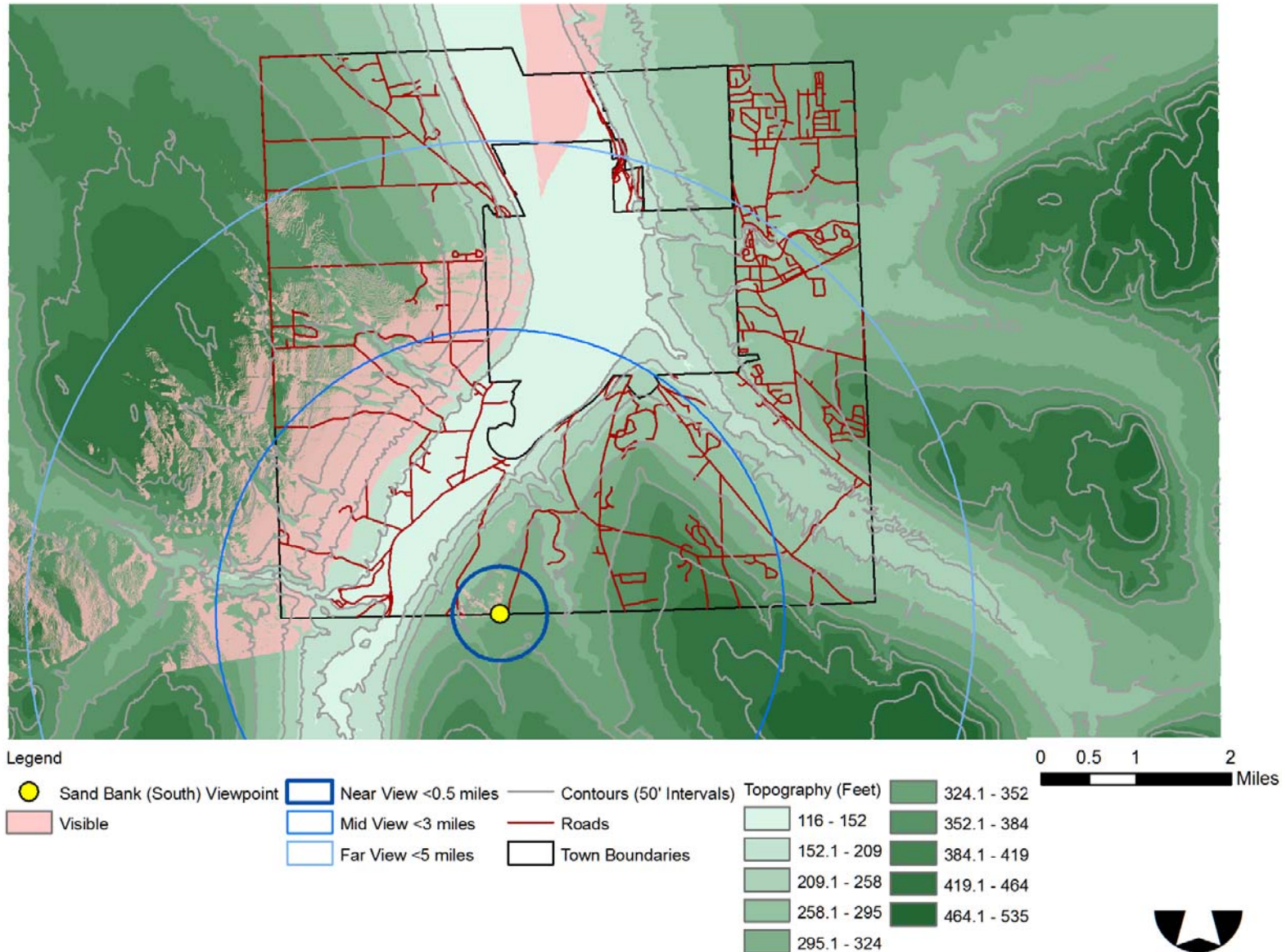


Figure 26: A clear, vivid view of the Bostwick Road farms.



Figure 27: Zoomed in view of the Bostwick Road farms.

Sand Bank Road (South) Viewshed Analysis





7. West King Road

Location: The expansive views from West King Road begin just after a stand of trees at the intersection with Sand Bank Road and continue up until the first house on the northern side of the street.

Direction: There are a number of amazing views along this stretch, some that begin 240° to the southwest and stretch all the way to 35 ° to the northeast.

Seasonal: Year round

Magnitude: Moderate, agricultural and rural residential road.

Near View: The near view consists of the field, perhaps planted with oats or another type of grass. At the field's edge are treetops where the hill slopes down steeply.

Mid View: Across the valley are the farms on Bostwick Road with a forested ridgeline behind them. These farms prominently feature traditionally-built barns and have large, verdantly green fields.

Far View: The far view to the north includes the ridgeline of West Hill beginning to slope down towards Cayuga Lake. The view extends southerly to the west where hills and farms of Enfield are visible.

Aesthetic Significance: This view is very similar view to that on Sand Bank Road (North) except that it is higher and provides an even greater panoramic view. Sand Bank Road (North), however, provides the closer view of the Bostwick Road scenic areas.

Aesthetic Discord: There is currently little major development that detracts from the view. There is a barely perceptible utility right-of-way at the ridgeline. Also near the ridgeline looking north are the red roofs on the first phase of Eco-Village. The second phase of Eco-Village, which has muted brown roofs, is hardly noticeable in comparison.

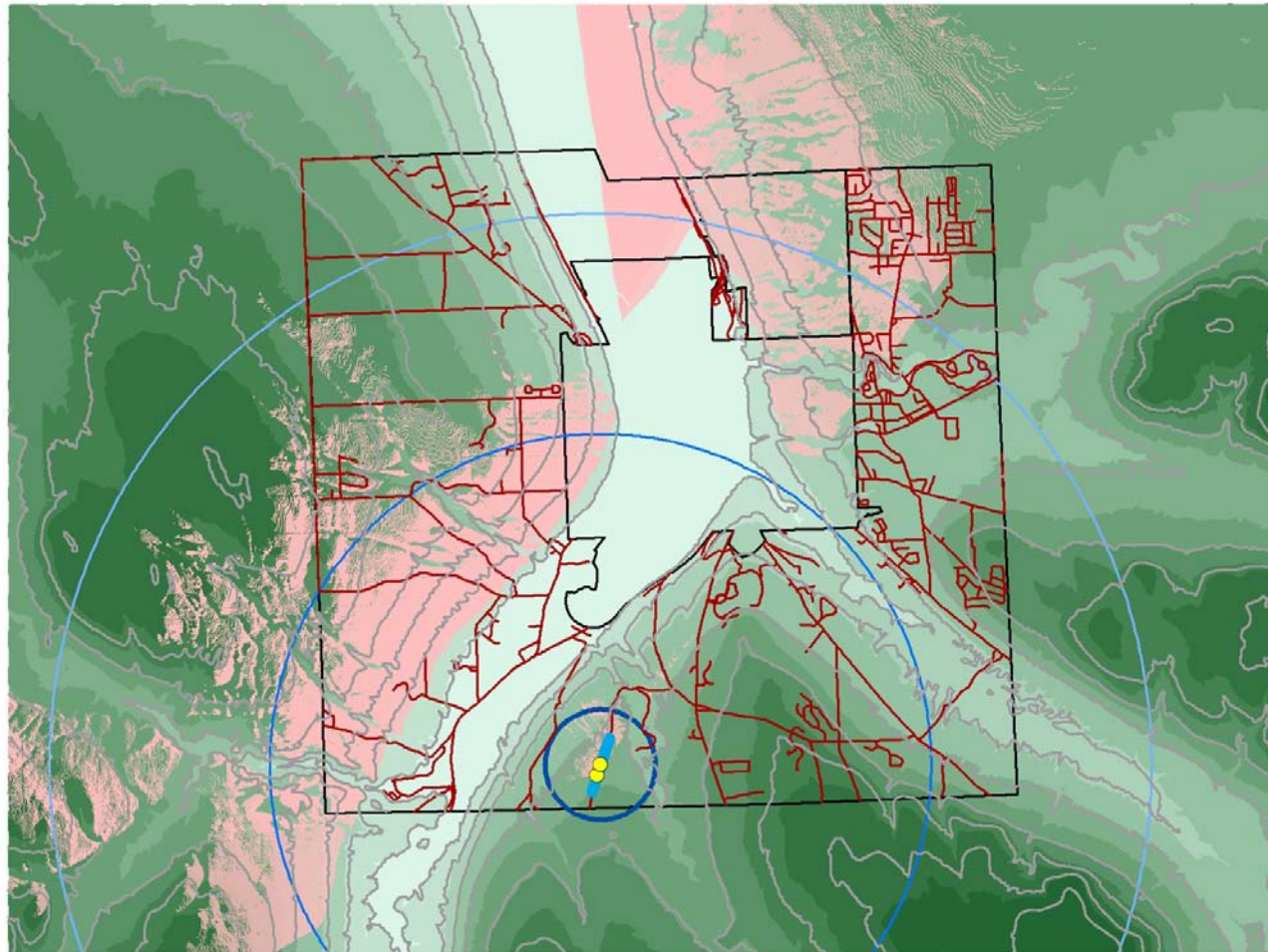


Figure 28: View from West King Road looking northwest at the eastern edge of Buttermilk Falls State Park.

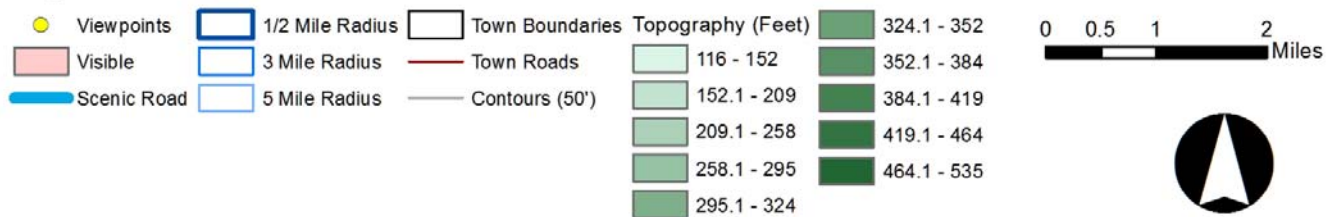


Figure 29: View from West King Road looking west at the eastern edge of Buttermilk Falls State Park.

West King Road Viewshed Analysis



Legend





TRUMANSBURG ROAD

8. Trumansburg Road

Location: On the east side of Trumansburg Road, the viewing area is created by the large lawns of the historic Odd Fellows complex, now consisting of the New York School of Massage and the Museum of the Earth.

Direction: Two viewpoints were taken. The north view is between 60 and 140 °. The southern view is between 75 and 120 °.

Seasonal: Year round. Cayuga Lake is quite visible in the winter.

Near View: The historic Odd Fellows complex, composed of 1930's Collegiate Gothic structures set back with stately lawns and a row of mature trees lining the road, is a visual link to the past. The properties are bordered by mature trees and brush as well as a utility pole corridor. The absence of shrubbery and evergreen trees along this stretch of road allows for expansive views to be seen between the less obscuring trunks of the row of hardwood trees there.

Mid-View: Most of the mid-view is not in sight because of the steep slope beyond the near view. Cornell and the Cayuga Heights neighborhood are visible looking south and Route 13 and Lansing are visible looking north. In the winter, Cayuga Lake is very visible.

Far View: In the distance we can see more of East Hill and the hills in Dryden.

Aesthetic Significance: This is the only significant public view of Cayuga Lake on the western side of the town. The Odd Fellows buildings are historic, originally built in the 1930s to serve as a hospice and orphanage, and their unique stone structures complement the visual character of the land. The lawns in front of the buildings are part of the Odd Fellows original layout.

Aesthetic Discord: The sight of parked cars in this view is incongruent, modern cars in this otherwise serene, view is jarring although the cars are mostly tucked away behind vegetation. Further development on the lawns would greatly detract from this view.

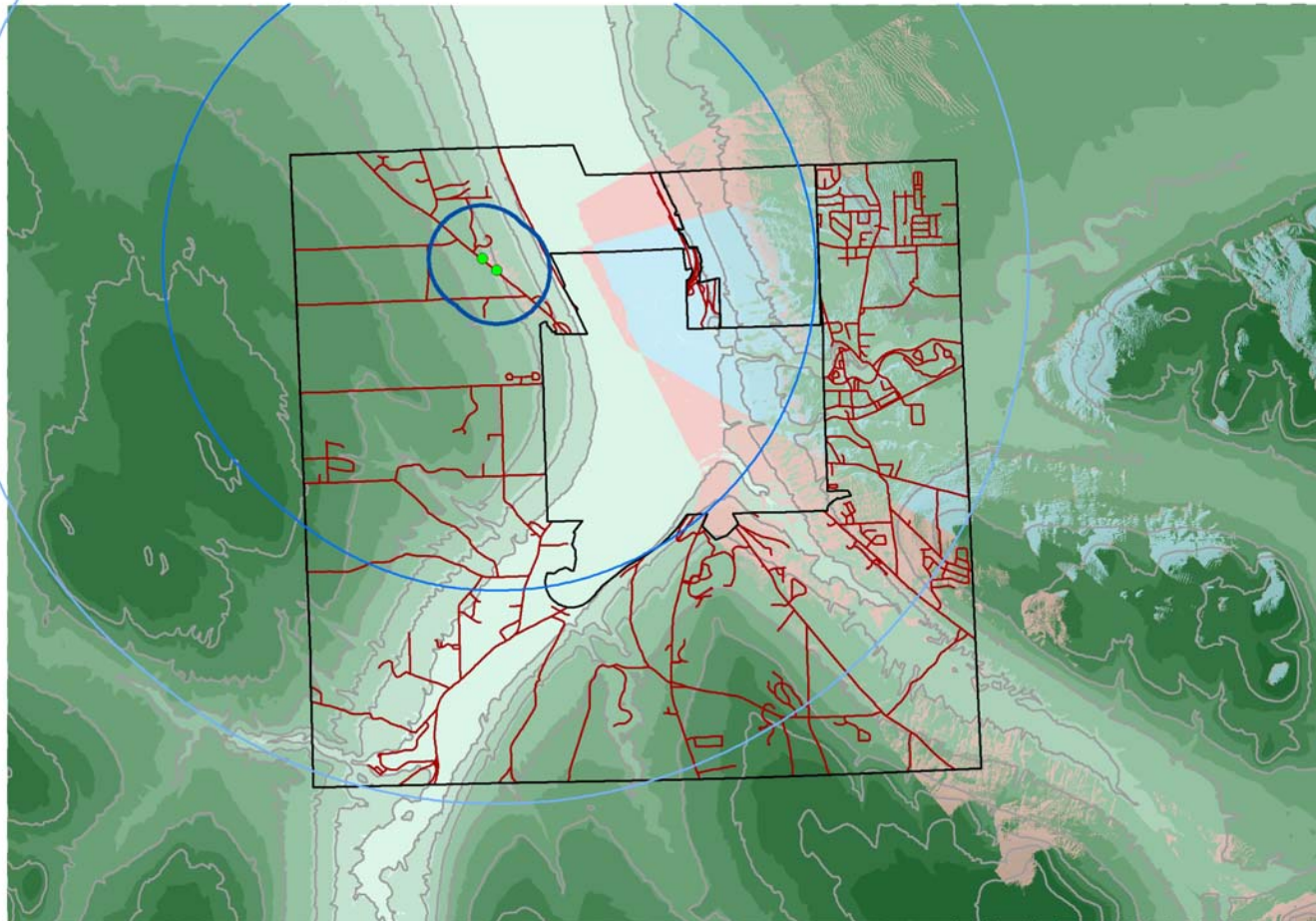


Figure 30: Looking southeast. One of the historic buildings of the Odd Fellows complex is a prominent part of this scenic view.

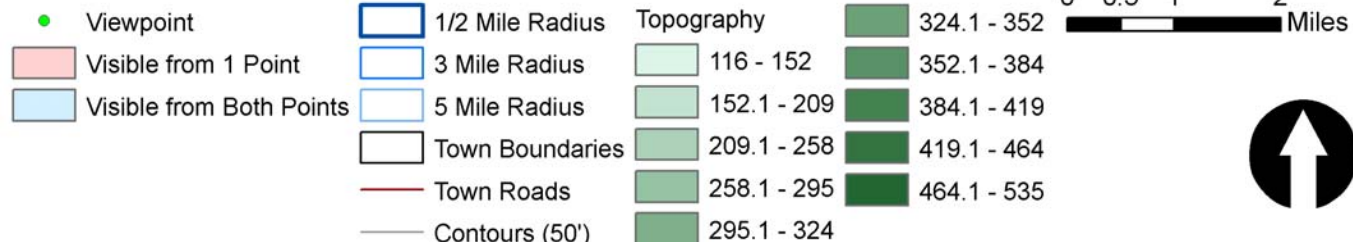


Figure 31: Cayuga Lake is visible during the winter.

Trumansburg Road/Route 96 Viewshed Analysis, Ithaca, N.Y.



Legend





9a. Upper Mecklenburg Road

Location: There are many scenic viewpoints along Mecklenburg Road, beginning just east of 1362 Mecklenburg and continuing east to the Town's border with the City of Ithaca near Conifer Drive. The upper Mecklenburg Road scenic length begins just east of 1362 Mecklenburg and continues eastwards to 1319 Mecklenburg when the view shifts to the southeast.

Direction: The beginning of the view is primarily Northeast/East between 65 and 110° and at the intersection of Rachel Carson Way, between 50 and 100.° Further downhill the view shifts to the Southeast, between 60° and 180.°

Magnitude: High. Mecklenburg Road is also State Route 79.

Near View: Consists mainly of the farm fields bordered by trees before the hill slopes down.

Mid-view: Directly straight ahead on Mecklenburg Road, viewers have a clear, vivid view of the Cornell University skyline on East Hill.

Far View: Beyond East Hill, the hills of Dryden are highly visible.

Aesthetic Significance: This is a heavily trafficked gateway view of Ithaca and Cornell University.

Aesthetic Discord: The numerous telephone poles are crooked with drooping wires, increasing their already negative impact on the view.



Figure 32: Mecklenburg Road features Ithaca's rural qualities while showcasing Cornell University in the mid-view. This picture was taken across the street from Rachel Carson Way.



Figure 33: The uppermost view from Mecklenburg offers a glimpse of the city but is still rural in character.

9b. Lower Mecklenburg Road

Location: Begins at 1319 Mecklenburg Road and continues east to Conifer Drive.

Direction: Primarily east/southeast, between 60° and 180.°

Magnitude: High. There is a lot of traffic on this State road that is also becoming increasingly developed.

Seasonal: Year round views. In the winter, more of the city is visible.

Near View: Includes the straight road that crosses the Town's border and curves at the end of the horizon, fields with shrubs and tall grasses with the occasional tree, and some development visible along the north side of the road.

Mid-view: Much more of the valley is visible and Cornell University is in higher focus than from upper Mecklenburg Road. Also, Ithaca College can be seen to the South.

Far View: In the distance, the valley between East and South hills grows wider and further hills are visible through it.

Aesthetic Significance: This is an important gateway view for travelers heading east. The wide views of the fields and hills extending into the horizon, though simple, are still vivid and inspiring.

Aesthetic Discord: The crooked utility poles and drooping wires are distracting.

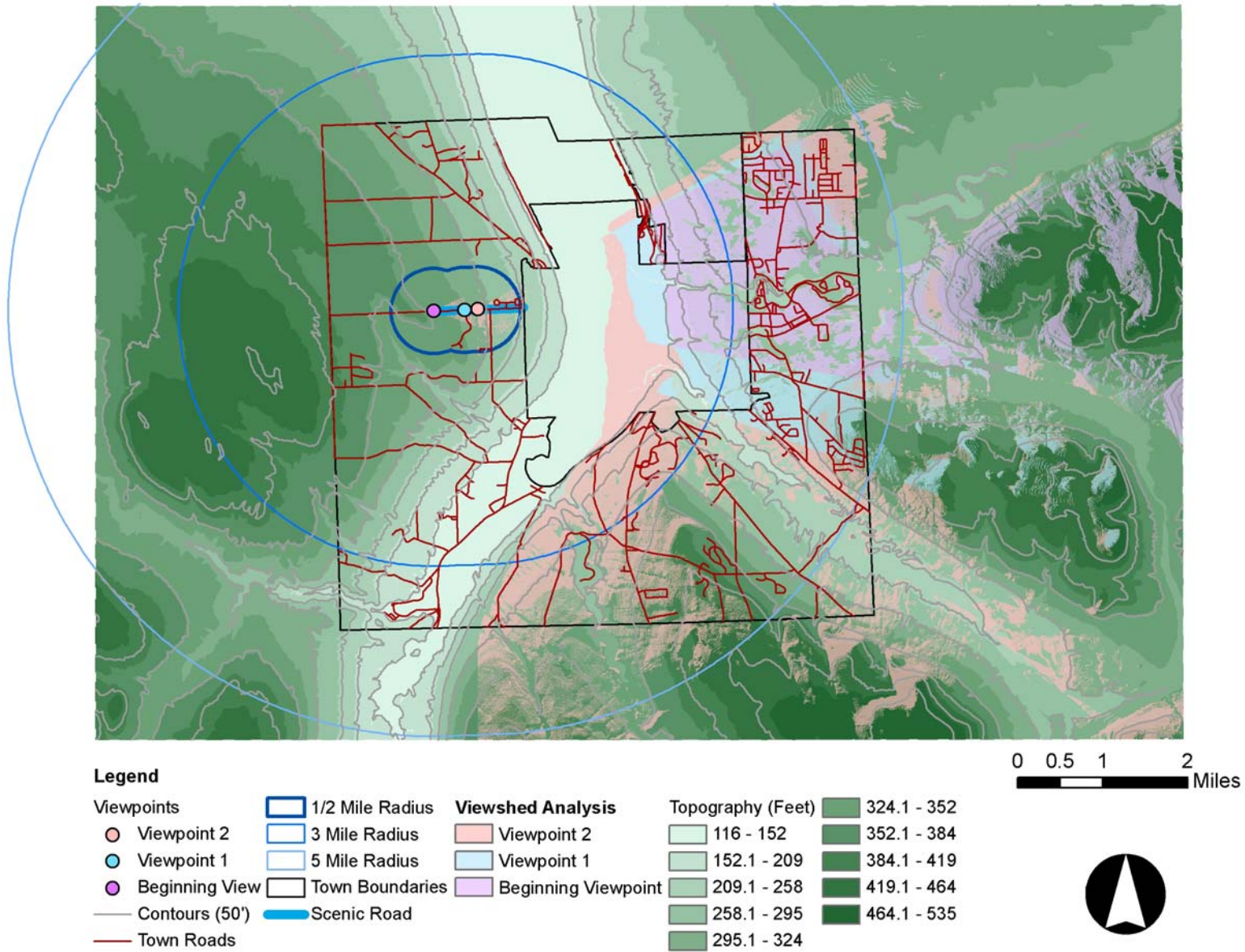


Figure 34: The wide view of the Lower Mecklenburg Road scenic area.



Figure 35: Ithaca College can be seen to the South from Mecklenburg Road.

Mecklenburg Road Viewshed Analysis





10. East Shore Park

Location: East Shore Park on East Shore Drive, across the road from Cornell's Lake Source Cooling Plant.

Direction: Between 180 and 340 degrees.

Magnitude: High, as the viewpoint is located in a public park and the road is highly traveled.

Near View: Cayuga Lake and the park's environment, including its stone banked shore, bushes and shrubs, small boats and docks, the sailboats on the lake, and even the duck families waddling by.

Mid-View: Includes Stewart Park to the south, the other side of the lake in the City of Ithaca, and the towns of Ithaca and Ulysses. In the Town of Ithaca, West Hill appears to be predominantly forested despite the amount of development it actually does have. There are a couple of agricultural fields. From the park one can see just the very tops of the Cayuga Medical Center and the Odd Fellows buildings. There is some development visible, mostly single family homes along the lake shore and Route 96, but it does not overwhelm the viewer.

Far View: There is no background view looking straight ahead or due north. To the south, however, the view extends beyond 5 miles and it is possible to see the Ithaca College Towers and Jersey Hill to the south/southwest.

Aesthetic Significance: Cayuga Lake and the view from the lake shore is a defining experience of the Finger Lakes region. Tompkins County Scenic Inventory identified this view from East Shore Park as one of the 25 Distinctive Views throughout the County. East Shore Park is also the Town of Ithaca's only public access point to Cayuga Lake.

Aesthetic Discord: The vapor plume from the Milliken Point coal fired power plant in Lansing is visible in the far view from the park.

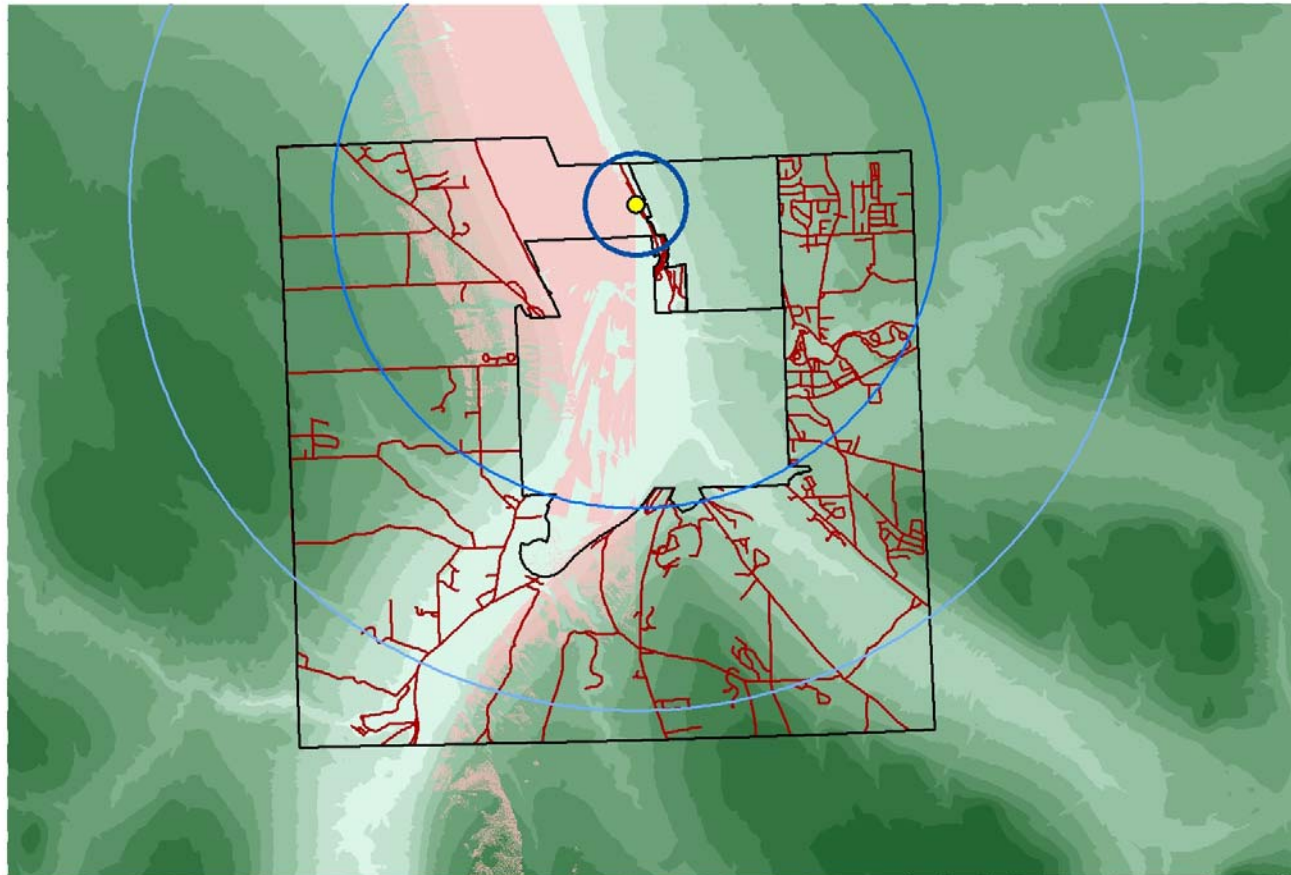


Figure 36: Development on West Hill is slightly visible, but not overwhelming.



Figure 37: The setting of East Shore Park is enhanced by a stonewall and small boats that line the lakes edge.

East Shore Park Viewshed Analysis



Legend



0 0.5 1 2
Miles





SHEFFIELD ROAD

11. Sheffield Road (North)

Location: There are several viewpoints between the intersection of Mecklenburg Road and Hayts Road.

Direction: Easterly, between 70° and 120° and between 50° and 145°

Magnitude: Fairly low

Near View: Large expanses of fields and meadows provide a rich texture to this view. There are also several active farm buildings set back within the fields with winding dirt roads.

Mid-view: Mainly treetops; there is not much mid view as the hill slopes down.

Far View: The viewpoints along Sheffield Road are set back from the ridge and so little of the valley can be seen. The Dryden hills are visible though.

Aesthetic Significance: This road represents the ridgeline of West Hill (as seen from the Cayuga Lake valley). The road also features a wide diversity of different types of farms, including a horse farm. These farms keep the area open providing clear views to the East for miles around.

Aesthetic Discord: None, except for the power lines.

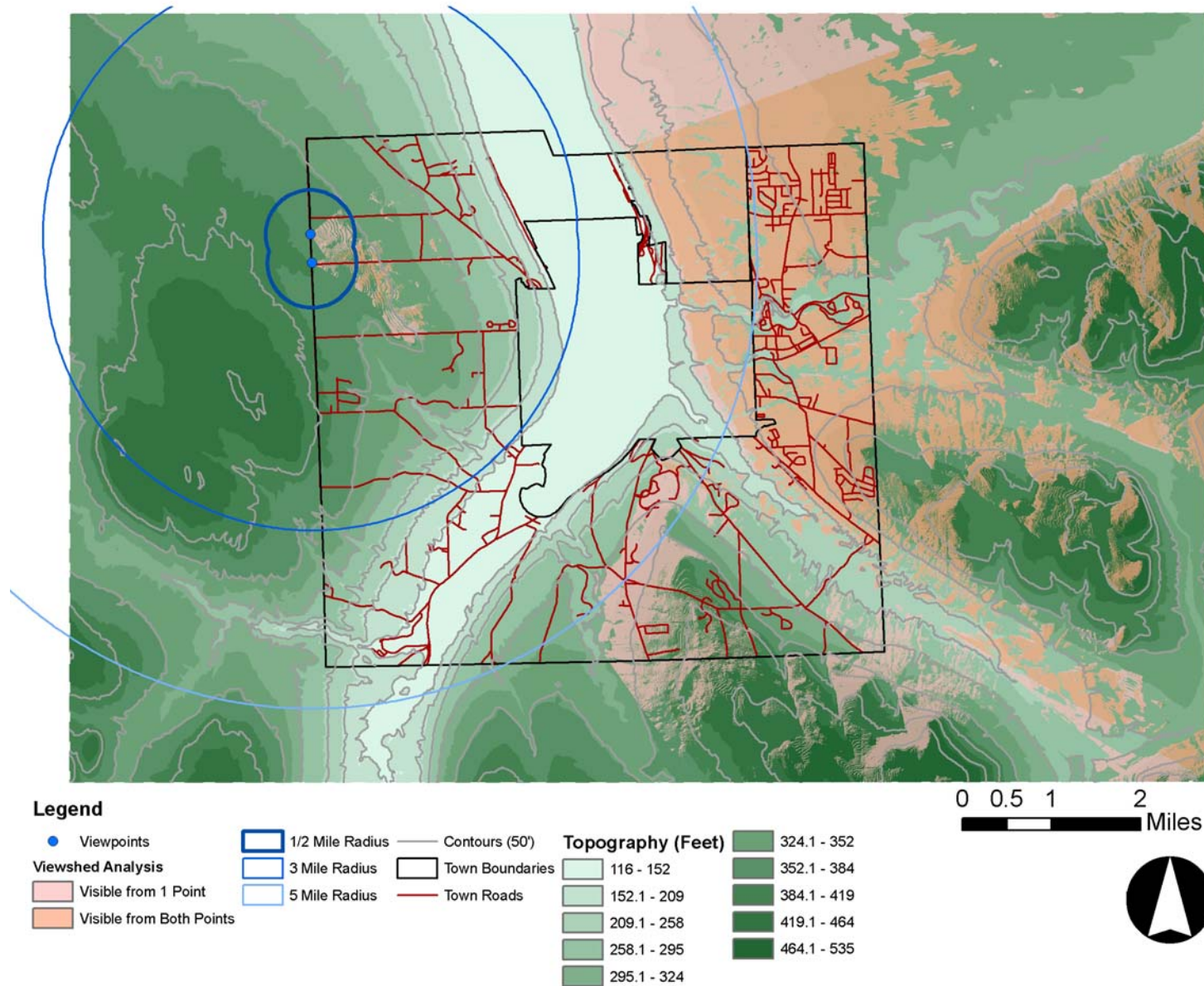


Figure 38: Sheffield Road just north of the Mecklenburg Road intersection. The rich color of the planted grass in this field complements the pale farm building and blue sky.



Figure 39: Sheffield Road still has a vibrant and scenic farming industry.

Sheffield Road (North) Viewshed Analysis



12. Sheffield Road (South)

Location: Sheffield Road south of Mecklenburg Road to Bostwick Road.

Direction: Predominantly east, with more views to the south when traveling south along the road. Several viewpoints were recorded, generally between 45° and 120°, while at the southern end of the road views open up to 145° to 180°.

Magnitude: Relatively low. Sheffield Road is a less traveled road.

Seasonal: Year round, although at some viewpoints the view may be more expansive during the winter when leaves are off the trees.

Near View: The near view nearly entirely consists of agricultural fields, some uncultivated meadows, and a thick buffer of trees that serves as a windbreaker.

Mid-view: The mid-view is blocked by the tree buffers and the descending elevation of the hill.

Far View: The far view to the east consists of Ithaca's skyline, from Cornell University to Ithaca College and some development appearing in between, with the distant hills stretching to the horizon. Towards the south, the views of South Hill past Buttermilk Falls and of the hills in Danby and Newfield appear wholly intact.

Aesthetic Significance: The views from Sheffield Road have a clearly defined near, mid, and far delineation that offer something for everyone with pastoral fields in the foreground, trees in the near mid-ground, and the city in the valley with more hills in the backdrop. The views, especially to the south, provide rich texture and intense color.

Aesthetic Discord: None.

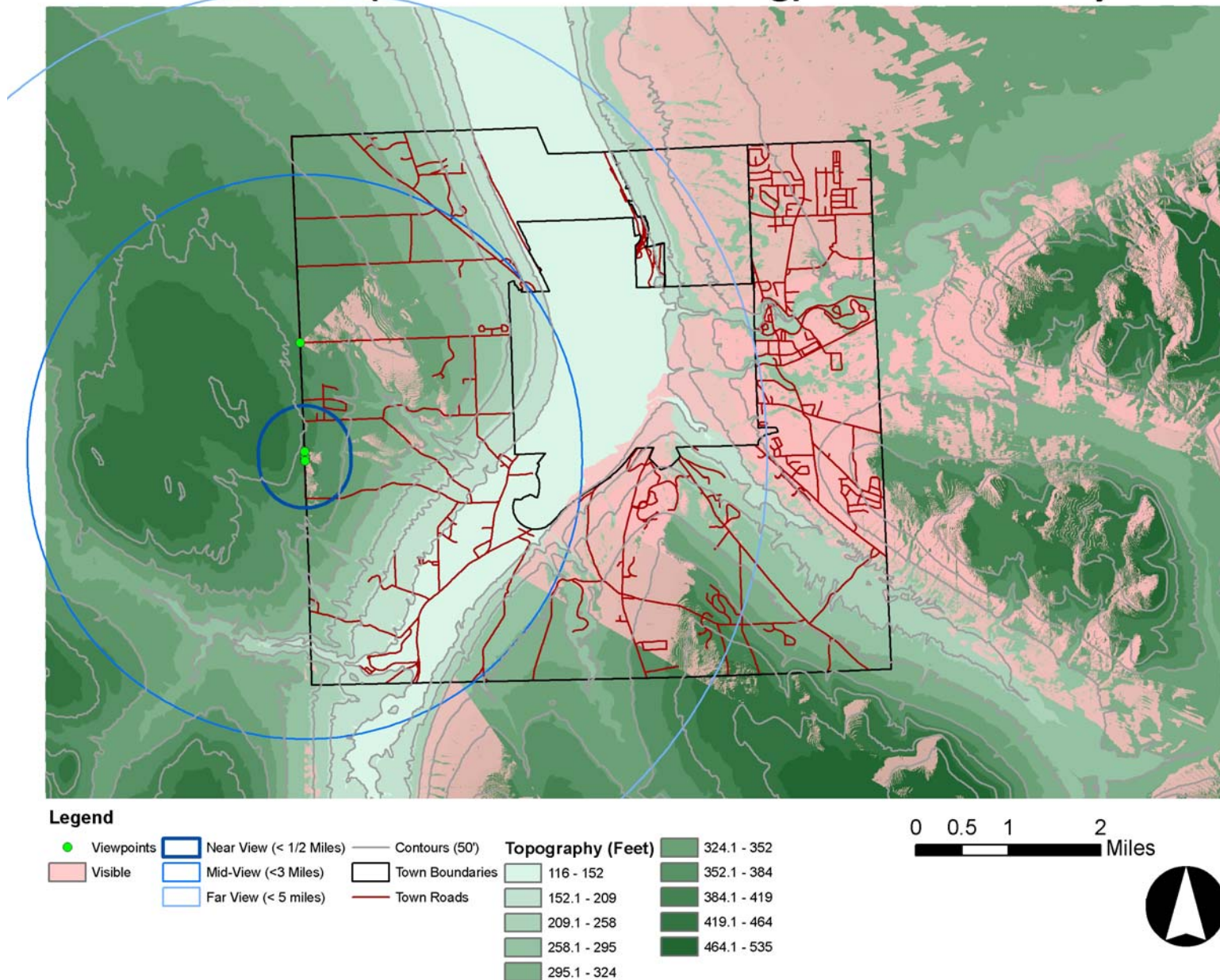


Figure 40: Ithaca College as seen from Sheffield Road.



Figure 41: Richly textured farm fields as seen from Sheffield Road.

Sheffield Road (South of Mecklenburg) Viewshed Analysis





13. Dryden Road/Route 366

This view towards Dryden from Ithaca has already been protected through the Town of Ithaca's Special Land Use District #9, §270.10 (1.4), created in 1995. The stipulations of the special land use district are discussed in greater detail in the Policy section of this report (see Section 5.1 Existing Regulations on pg 101).

Location: On Dryden Road 2,000' southwest from its intersection with Game Farm Road.

Direction: Primarily east/northeast.

Magnitude: High. Dryden Road is a state road that receives a lot of Cornell related traffic.

Seasonal: Year round.

Near View: The near view is made up of Cornell's fields, regularly cropped, bordered by McGowan Woods on the south side and Route 366 on the north side.

Mid-View: The mid-view is dominated by Mount Pleasant.

Far View: The far view is largely blocked by the high mid-view of Mount Pleasant.

Aesthetic Significance: Facing east, the view of Dryden's Mount Pleasant is a visually intact panoramic, pastoral view.

Aesthetic Discord: None.

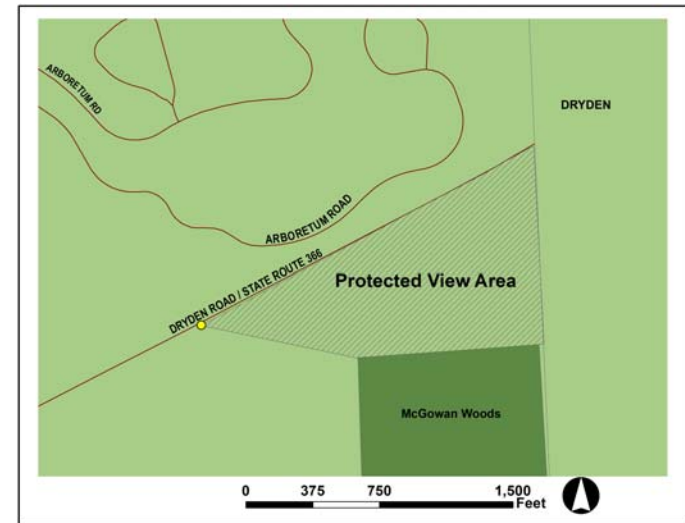
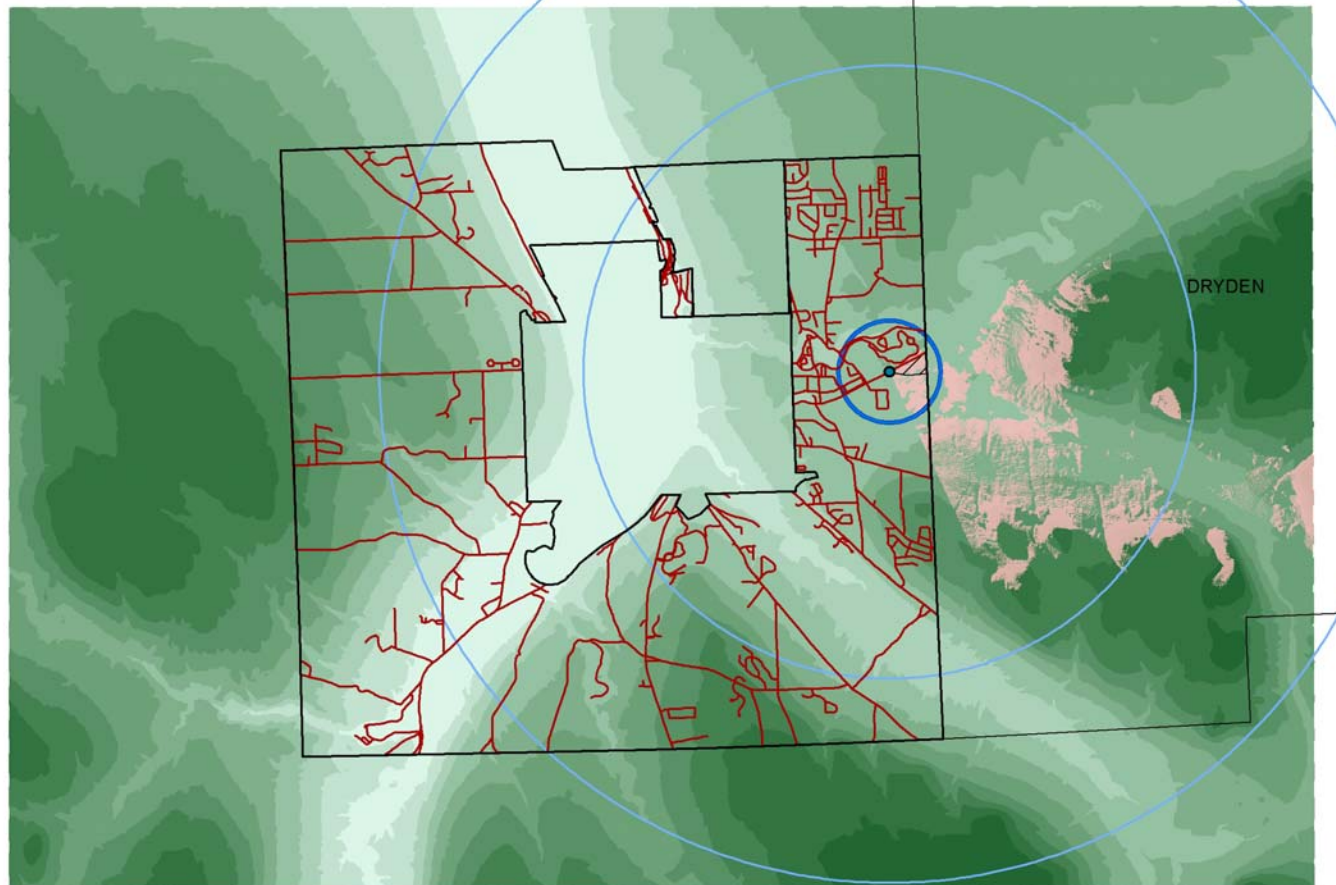


Figure 42: A map showing the boundaries of the protected view area north of McGowan Woods.



Figure 43: The view of Dryden's hills on Route 366.

Dryden Road Viewshed Analysis, Ithaca, NY



Legend



0 0.5 1 2
Miles



14. New York State Designated Scenic Byways

New York State's Department of Transportation maintains a Scenic Byway Program that aims to preserve and promote road corridors of "regionally outstanding scenic, natural, recreational, cultural, historic, or archaeological significance." The Town of Ithaca contains two designated Scenic Byways, Forest Home Drive and the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway, which Taughannock Boulevard and Route 34 are a part of (although it circles the entire lake through neighboring towns). While this designation is prestigious and is useful for promoting tourism, the distinction does *not* confer any legal protection for the corridors. Therefore, besides merely inventorying these already established assets, they are included in this report with the hope that they will be given local scenic protection, such as a scenic overlay corridor discussed in the Analysis section.



Figure 44: The New York State Department of Transportation's Landscape Architecture Division has published a "Nomination Handbook" to help citizens designate Scenic Byways.



Figure 45: Single Lane Bridge on Forest Home Drive. Source: www.historicbridges.org



Figure 46: Cayuga Lake as seen from East Shore Park.

14a. Forest Home Drive

Forest Home Drive, composed of 1.6 miles within the Town of Ithaca, was selected as a New York State Scenic Road in 1993 for both its historical character and its scenic rural landscape. The hamlet of Forest Home was founded in 1794, making it the oldest community in the Town of Ithaca. The community developed as an industrial and commercial center, powered by over a dozen mills along Fall Creek. The houses in the Forest Home hamlet are largely from the first half of the 1800s and mostly Greek Revival in style. In the early 1900s, residential development expanded along Forest Home Drive to house Cornell University faculty and staff.

The narrow two-lane road conforms to the landscape by winding along Fall Creek. It is flanked on both sides by mature woods and meadows owned by Cornell University and maintained by Cornell Plantations as a living museum of plants and natural history.

Contributing to its scenic rural nature, the road has two single-lane steel truss bridges built in 1904 and 1909 by the Groton Bridge Company of Groton, N.Y. They are amongst the oldest bridges in Tompkins County.



Figure 47: View of Fall Creek during summer.



Figure 48: View of Fall Creek during winter.

14b. Taughannock Boulevard/Route 89

The Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway is 87 miles long, wrapping completely around the lake. Taughannock Boulevard in the Town makes up 1.69 miles of the Scenic Byway. The road is uniquely scenic in Ithaca because of the numerous waterfalls cascading from old culverts and small gorges immediately adjacent to the road. These memorable waterfalls are seen by motorists entering the Town and thus epitomize the definition of “gateway” views. They truly distinguish the Town of Ithaca and are a signpost to travelers that they have arrived in Ithaca.

The waterfalls are wonderful to see all year round. During the winter, the waterfalls have frozen to form a dazzling and impressive array of icicles. For the remainder of the year, they may change between babbling brooks to rushing falls. These waterfalls are made up of both small gorges and old culverts directing

storm water from West Hill under the old Lehigh Valley Railroad track (soon to be the Black Diamond Trail).



Figure 50: One of the waterfalls during the winter.



Figure 49: One of several cascading waterfalls along Route 89 in the Town.

There are at least seven significant waterfalls along Taughannock Boulevard in the Town of Ithaca. These include the waterfalls of Indian Creek and Williams Glen Creek. While all seven of these streams are within the Indian Creek Lake Slopes Conservation Zone, they are not protected from development within immediate sight of them.

3.2 Additional Noteworthy Scenic Views

Section 3.2 describes more views in the Town of Ithaca that are important, but did not fit the criteria to be included in Section 3.1.

It follows the same format as the previous section:

Each description focuses on a single scenic view which may have a single scenic viewpoint or many viewpoints along a length of scenic road. Each viewpoint (or points) along a scenic road is described by its immediate surroundings as well as its near, mid and far views, which make up the viewpoints' corresponding scenic view areas (refer back Figure 4).

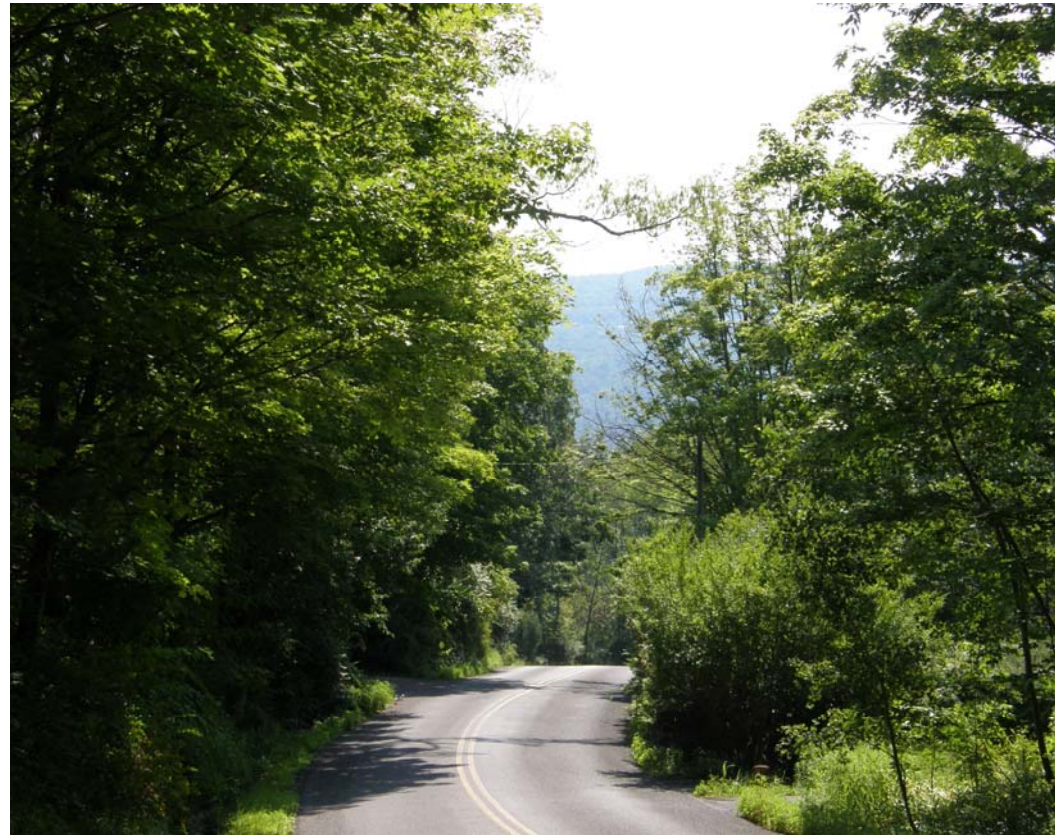


Figure 51: A View on Culver Road. An example of a noteworthy scenic view included in Section 3.2.

15. Bundy Road

Location: Heading east on Bundy Road, views begin just after intersection with Sheffield Road, continuing downhill until just before the intersection with Route 96.

Direction: Easterly, with views to both the north and the south along the road.

Magnitude: Fairly low, this is a low density residential area with active farms.

Seasonal: Year round, although during the winter some of the views may become clearer.

Near View: Heading east the near view consists of gently rolling fields, some planted with corn and grass while others lie fallow, all bordered by trees. As one continues to travel down the scenic rural road the framed views open up to the south and east showing a vivid view of the falls at Fall Creek, Cornell University, and a large old barn.

Mid-view: At the western end of Bundy Road, there are small wooded hills that block the view to the southeast. Towards the eastern end of Bundy road, mid-views are mostly of trees that begin to descend the hill's slope.

Far View: The far views consist of the Dryden hills at the western end of Bundy Road. Towards the east at Perry Lane, the City of Ithaca, the Fall Creek gorge, Cayuga Heights, and Cornell University come into clear view, set against the backdrop of the distant hills. Also visible are the water tanks on Hungerford Hill.

Aesthetic Significance: The views along Bundy Road define the Town of Ithaca's rustic, rural character. East of Perry Lane, the view shows the Town's rural environment with several cultural, historical, and geographical subjects in the backdrop, including Cornell University, the red barn, Fall Creek and the distant hills.

Aesthetic Discord: None.



Figure 52: A rustic red farm building contrasts with the cool greens of the meadow.



Figure 53: Fall Creek is visible from the viewpoint at Bundy Road just east of Perry Lane.

16. Hayts Road North and South

Location: The entire length of Hayts Road has scenic views, although some are wider than others. One viewpoint was taken approximately halfway between Sheffield and Route 96, across from the 244 Hayts mailbox. A second viewpoint was recorded 0.28 miles further east.

Direction: The first viewpoint taken had a view between 90° and 160° while the second viewpoint was more to the northeast, between 10° and 130.°

Magnitude: Fairly low, there is not much through-traffic on this road.

Seasonal: Year round.

Near View: The near view consists of planted fields, rows of trees, several houses, and the tops of farm buildings. At the second viewpoint there are kept and unkempt fields, a water tank, and the rooftops of two buildings in the Overlook subdivision.

Mid-view: There is not much mid-view except for tree tops.

Far View: Cornell and the hillsides above are somewhat visible from the first viewpoint. Ithaca College, South Hill, and hills beyond are also visible in the distance. Further east along Hayts Road it is possible to see more of Cornell as well as Route 13. The Lansing malls as well as further farm fields and new houses are visible from Hayts Road as well. Towards the South, East Hill, Hungerford, and more Dryden hills are also visible.

Aesthetic Significance: The views from Hayts Road, especially the near views, are unusually intact. They are also quite wide and the hills in the distance display good definition here.

Aesthetic Discord: Low density housing detracts from the view but by no means overwhelms the views.



Figure 54: This photo shows how low development can prevent a view from being blocked or marred. Here, on the last house on the road, set back from Hayts corner, the roof is inconspicuously peeking above the hill.



Figure 55: Hayts Road is flanked by fields and overlooks an expanse stretching from Lansing to beyond South Hill.

17. Elm Street Extension

Location: At the top of the hill just east of the point where Elm Street Extension becomes curvy and lined with dense woods.

Direction: Southeast, between 100° and 180°.

Magnitude: Low, this is a very quiet street.

Seasonal: Year round, although the view may be greater during the winter.

Near View: The near view is composed of the meadow with small trees and shrubs on the south side of the street. On the north side of the street are houses set back from the road with neatly mowed lawns. The road disappears as it descends the steep hill and allows a clear view, framed by tall trees, of East Hill and distant hills in Dryden.

Mid-view: The mid view is limited as the hill drops in elevation rapidly.

Far View: To the south, the distant view includes the densely wooded South Hill, broken by the Ithaca College towers to serve as a focal point and the roofs of multiple apartment dwellings.

Aesthetic Significance: Traveling east, the view opens suddenly upon emerging from the Coy Glen woods. The disappearing road and the view that slips through the wild meadow instill a sense of mystery and excitement to the view.

Aesthetic Discord: Although the view is disappearing as the meadow transforms into a forest, this viewpoint is the “far view” for several other viewpoints in town, including Pine Tree Road, Sand Bank Road, and West King Road. This view raises the significant issue of trees blocking views discussed in the Analysis section of the report.



Figure 56: The view atop Elm Street Extension is becoming enveloped by vegetation.



Figure 57: Descending the summit of Elm Street Extension provides an intriguing enclosed view of East Hill.

18. Game Farm Road/Ellis Hollow Road

Location: Beginning at the intersection of Game Farm Road and Ellis Hollow Road.

Direction: Northwest, between 280° and 10°.

Magnitude: High, Ellis Hollow Road leads to the East Hill Shopping Plaza and Game Farm Road leads to State Route 366.

Seasonal: Year round.

Near View: Includes Cornell's agriculture and athletic fields, the forest line along Cascadilla Creek, the utility line and road.

Mid View: In the mid-view is East Hill Plaza and the adjacent Summer Hill Apartments. Further north, Cornell University's new business office is visible. There is also the tree line, the water tower on Cornell's land, roof tops of several Cornell buildings past Route 366, and McGowan Woods, which are protected from development.

Far View: West Hill, beginning in the Mecklenburg Road area and continuing to the north, as well as distant hills further northwest.

Aesthetic Significance: This is one of the few remaining views on the East side of Ithaca looking across the Cayuga Lake valley to West Hill. Although this view is not as intact as the Pine Tree Road view (View #2), the view of Cornell in the mid-view creates a focal point that contrasts rural and urban.

Aesthetic Discord: Expanding development to the east would continue to degrade this view. The power lines are also unsightly here. Cornell's newer buildings encroaching on the farm fields and peeking up from the Route 366 corridor are not as attractive as the buildings at the center of their campus.



Figure 58: Game Farm Road is scenic with the trees on one side of the gently undulating road and farm fields and the protected McGowan Woods on the other side.



Figure 59: Cornell and the relatively small footprint of East Hill Plaza is nestled within the traditionally agricultural town.

19. Hanshaw Road

Location: Approximately 800' west of Sapsucker Woods Road.

Direction: Between 235° and 280° to the west and southwest.

Magnitude: Medium. The 2007 Transportation Plan reports average daily traffic volumes of 3,620 vehicles.

Seasonal: Year round.

Near View: Corn field and wooded area on Cornell land.

Mid View: There is not much mid-view due to the descending topography. Cranes and building towers on Cornell's campus are visible at the time of this report.

Far View: The largely forested West Hill as well as some clearings that look predominantly agricultural as only sparse development is visible. The distant hills of Newfield peek over West Hill.

Aesthetic Significance: This is one of the very few clearings in the northeastern section of the Town that provides a panoramic view of surrounding hills.

Aesthetic Discord: None.



Figure 60: The view looking west/southwest reveals some clearings but appears to be mainly wooded.



Figure 61: A winter shot of Hanshaw Road. Bicyclists seem to enjoy the view here.

20. Troy Road

Location: At the Town border with Danby, continuing to descend South Hill heading north for 1.3 miles, until approximately 700 feet from the intersection with Coddington Road.

Direction: Predominantly north, with views between 355° and 2° and further down 340° to 355°.

Magnitude: Low. Troy Road is a relatively quiet road.

Seasonal: Year round. The view may be more expansive in the winter.

Near View: The near view is mostly the road lined with shrubs and tall trees. There are also numerous utility poles and wires crisscrossing above the road.

Mid View: Mostly trees extending up to Cornell's campus. Little development is seen between the two points.

Far View: At the southern end of the road, the focal point of the far view is Cayuga Lake. Continuing north, the view of the lake changes to a view of Cornell's skyline. Cayuga Heights and the Town appear as a wooded backdrop to the view with sparse development visible.

Aesthetic Significance: The framed view of the lake is a special gateway view for travelers and commuters. The contrast of the blue lake against the green vegetation is highly visible and appears suddenly. Continuing down the road, the trees and vegetation provide a textured foreground of views of Cornell.

Aesthetic Discord: The main aesthetic detractor from this view is the numerous utility lines crossing the street and the utility poles lining the street. They appear as high, if not higher, than the surrounding trees. Also, the road is very narrow making them appear even taller.



Figure 62: Upon entering Ithaca, this vantage at the south end of Troy Road, with forests on both sides, provides framed views of Cayuga Lake.



Figure 63: Continuing north, the view changes from the lake to Cornell's campus.

21. Coddington Road

Location: On the Ithaca/Danby town line.

Direction: North, between 330° and 40°.

Magnitude: Medium; approximately 2,000 cars on average per day, according to the 2007 Transportation Plan.

Seasonal: Year round. More of Cornell and even Cayuga Lake may be visible in winter.

Near View: The near view is composed of an older, period architecture home, behind which a hayfield is bordered by woods that descend to Six Mile Creek.

Mid View: The mid view consists of the wooded southern side of East Hill. Little development appears until further north when the Cornell skyline abruptly appears. Development that is visible is of muted color and does not stand out. A communication tower is on the hilltop but is not prominent.

Far View: A view of Cornell, including the clock tower, as well as farm fields on West Hill beyond.

Aesthetic Significance: This view was a candidate view in the Tompkins County Scenic Resources report, one of the 110 candidates out of 593 views.

Aesthetic Discord: Utility lines crisscross the near view.



Figure 64: Cornell University's skyline is in the distance of this gateway view.



Figure 65: A Welcome to Ithaca sign stands approximately just after the viewpoint.

22. East Ithaca Recreation Way

Location: At the main entrance to the Hannah Pew trail on Joanne Drive in the Eastern Heights neighborhood.

Direction: Southwest, approximately between 270° and 300°.

Magnitude: Low. Eastern Heights is a small, suburban style neighborhood with no through traffic. The Recreation Way is open to foot and bicycle use only.

Seasonal: Year round. It may be enhanced in the winter.

Near View: The near view consists of the gazebo and walkway surrounded by shrubs and trees. The topography begins to drop quickly just in front of the gazebo.

Mid View: The mid view is comprised of South Hill, which appears predominantly wooded in the summer, with little visible development except for Ithaca College. Ithaca College's towers serve as a dramatic focal point. Also visible is the Ithaca College Athletic and Events Center as well as a tall telecommunications tower further up on South Hill.

Far View: The far view is composed of West Hill, including the Bostwick Road farms. Beyond are the hills of Enfield and Newfield.

Aesthetic Significance: This view is remarkable for the vivid view of Ithaca College and South Hill. The composition with the park and gazebo in the foreground and the Bostwick Road area and distant hills in the background creates a refreshing view.

Aesthetic Discord: The tower on the Ithaca College Athletic and Events Center is distracting and incongruous. The telecommunications tower is also somewhat distracting but is relatively thin and solitary and thus does not overwhelm the landscape.



Figure 66: The unique land form of South Hill is particularly noticeable from this lookout.

23. Northeast Ithaca's Golf Courses

Location: There are two golf courses on East Hill. The views predominate on Warren Road at the Country Club of Ithaca and Cornell University's Robert Trent Jones Golf Course.

Direction: Predominantly west, to the north and south.

Magnitude: According to recent traffic counts (Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council, Traffic Count Report, Year 2011), Warren Road received about 5,700 cars per day.

Seasonal: Year round.

Near View: Warren Road, in this vicinity, is flanked by the Country Club of Ithaca's golf course on the west side and Cornell's golf course on both the east and west sides. The road is flat and straight at this location, with little shoulder, immersing the viewer in the environment. The golf courses are composed of their characteristic lawns with occasional small pockets of trees to provide visual interest.

Mid View: The mid view is composed mainly of the tree line, with a variety of species and rich texture, bordering the golf course.

Far View: Distant hills.

Aesthetic Significance: The main draw of the golf courses is its openness, without obstruction by built structures.

Aesthetic Discord: None.



Figure 67: The golf courses provide an airy, green landscape.



Figure 68: The semi-open golf course lends views of distant hills.

24. West Haven Park

Location: This new 10.7 acre town park is located at the end of Helen's Way off of West Haven Road.

Direction: Generally to the east/southeast.

Magnitude: Low. This is a neighborhood park with only pedestrian access/use..

Seasonal: Year round.

Near: The near view consists of tall meadows interweaving with a variety of trees, including many older fruit trees as the site is a former orchard.

Mid: Treetops and shrubs mostly block the views that can be seen from the designated trail.

Far: The far view consists of the Ithaca College skyline and hills beyond South Hill.

Aesthetic Significance: This view, although ranked highly for its scenic composition by the Scenic Resources Committee, cannot currently be seen from the park's designated trail and is hard to find due to the tall vegetation. Visibility could be increased by selectively clearing vegetation in the park, but the need for such clearing at a low-magnitude site would need to be weighed with potential ecological impacts as well as whether it would detract from far views toward this site from other areas.

Discord: None, but the view is extremely limited due to vegetation and is currently difficult to find as it is located off the designated trail.



Figure 69: Ithaca College towers as seen from West Haven Park (not on designated trail).

25. Eastern Heights Park

Location: Located at the entrance to Eastern Heights Park off of Tudor Road.

Direction: Primarily south/southwest, between 195° and 205°.

Magnitude: Low, this is a neighborhood park with only pedestrian use.

Seasonal: Year round.

Near: The near view is composed of a utility easement that is regularly mowed by the Town of Ithaca. The maintenance of this corridor allows for a view here. The sides of the grassy “road” are flanked by uniform pine trees. The road begins to curve at the bottom of the hill.

Mid: The narrow mid view consists of the houses on Autumn Ridge Road and the forested hillside above and below Coddington Road.

Far: None.

Aesthetic Significance: The green road lined with trees that curves out of sight is unique and mysterious.

Discord: None.



Figure 70: The “road” at Eastern Heights Park.

26. West Haven Road

Location: West Haven Road is located on West Hill between Mecklenburg Road and Elm Street Extension.

Direction: The entire street is scenic with views generally to the east and southeast, between 70° and 160°, although it will vary depending on the viewer's location on the street.

Magnitude: Low. West Haven Road is a residential road that runs through medium density residential areas.

Seasonal: Year round.

Near View: The near view is composed of neatly maintained homes, primarily mid-20th century one-story ranch houses, and manicured lawns and backyards that end with a thick buffer of tall trees and shrubs.

Mid View: The mid-view offers vivid views of Cornell's campus and of Ithaca College's campus further south on the road.

Far View: The far view consists of East Hill and the hills of Dryden.

Aesthetic Significance: Although this view is largely blocked by houses, the spaces between the houses reveal one of the best views of Cornell's campus. The near, mid, and far views are clearly delineated in this view making it more aesthetically pleasing as well.

Aesthetic Discord: The houses, apparently built around the same time, could have been clustered together or sited on the street differently so that the view would not be as discontinuous.



Figure 71: An expansive view of Cornell University.



Figure 72: Another view of the Cornell campus.

27. Culver Road

Location: On West Hill, connecting Poole Road with Bostwick Road.

Direction: Primarily east/southeast.

Magnitude: Low.

Seasonal: Year round. Mid and far views may be enhanced in the winter when leaves are off the trees.

Near View: The curvy, narrow road flanked by tall, dense trees, grasses, and shrubs. A gorge is visible on the right when heading down the hill.

Mid-View: The mid-view is primarily blocked by the dense vegetation as the road is very curvy.

Far View: The backdrop is focused on the wooded South Hill, which looks very high from this road.

Aesthetic Significance: Culver Road is one of the few examples of an enclosed view on a public road in the Town of Ithaca. The dense green canopy lining the sides of this winding road makes it perhaps feel like one of the more 'natural' roads in the Town.

Aesthetic Discord: None.



Figure 73: View on Culver Road near Poole and Bostwick Roads.

28. Gray Road

Location: Gray Road is just off Enfield Falls Road. The entire length of the road within the Town of Ithaca is scenic.

Direction: Predominantly south, between 115° and 220°.

Magnitude: Low. Traffic counts are not available for Gray Road.

Seasonal: Year round; may be enhanced in the winter.

Near View: The near view is composed of a fenced farm pasture with the occasional tree, bordered by a hedge of trees. There is also a restored barn with period architecture in the pasture. Towards the east, there is the road curving down to Enfield Falls Road with a barn and mowed pasture on the opposite side.

Mid View: Towards the south, the mid-view predominantly consists of the woods of Treman State Park, made more visible by the dropping elevation in the near view. Looking south down Gray Road, an opening in the trees bordering the pasture reveals the western side of South Hill, with the farm fields of Sand Bank and West King roads amidst the woods.

Far View: The panoramic far view is made of the high tree-blanketed hills in Enfield and Newfield.

Aesthetic Significance: The high hills of Newfield and Enfield are perhaps the most vivid here of all the scenic views in the Town. The curving road lined with farm pastures and a hedge of shrubs and wildflowers in addition to the historic barn contribute to the rural character and high quality of this view. The view is also impressive heading further west into Enfield.

Aesthetic Discord: None.



Figure 74: The restored historic barn in the near view serves as a focal point.



Figure 75: Looking down Gray Road as it curves towards Enfield Falls Road.

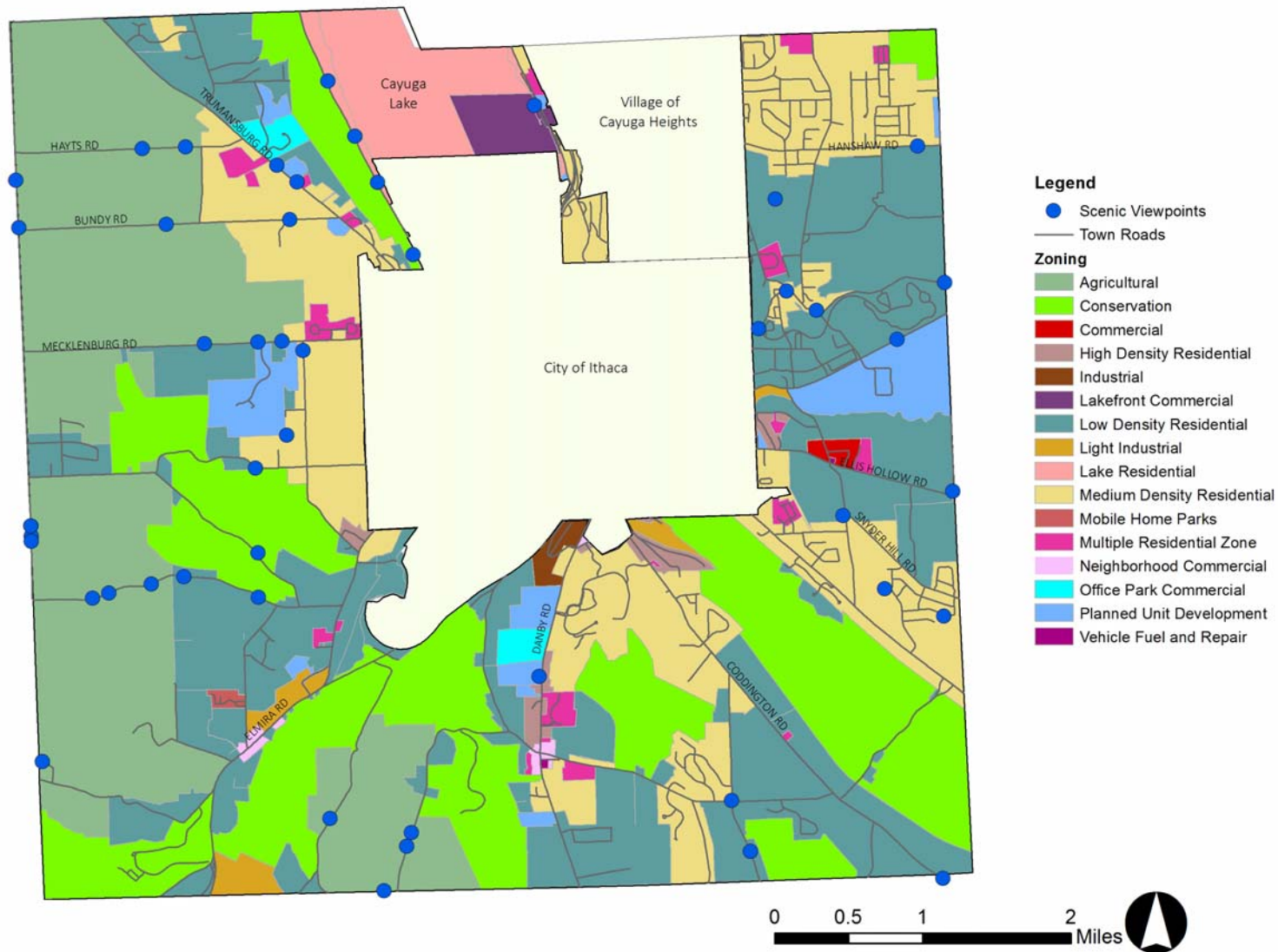
4. Analysis

The maps on the following pages combine all the documented viewpoints and scenic views for the entire Town. This makes it easier to analyze and depict patterns by overlaying these maps with the zoning map or with a map of protected lands. Also mapped is a visual representation of the Scenic Resource Committee's work. These maps are important for the Town to analyze and consider when making policy decisions.

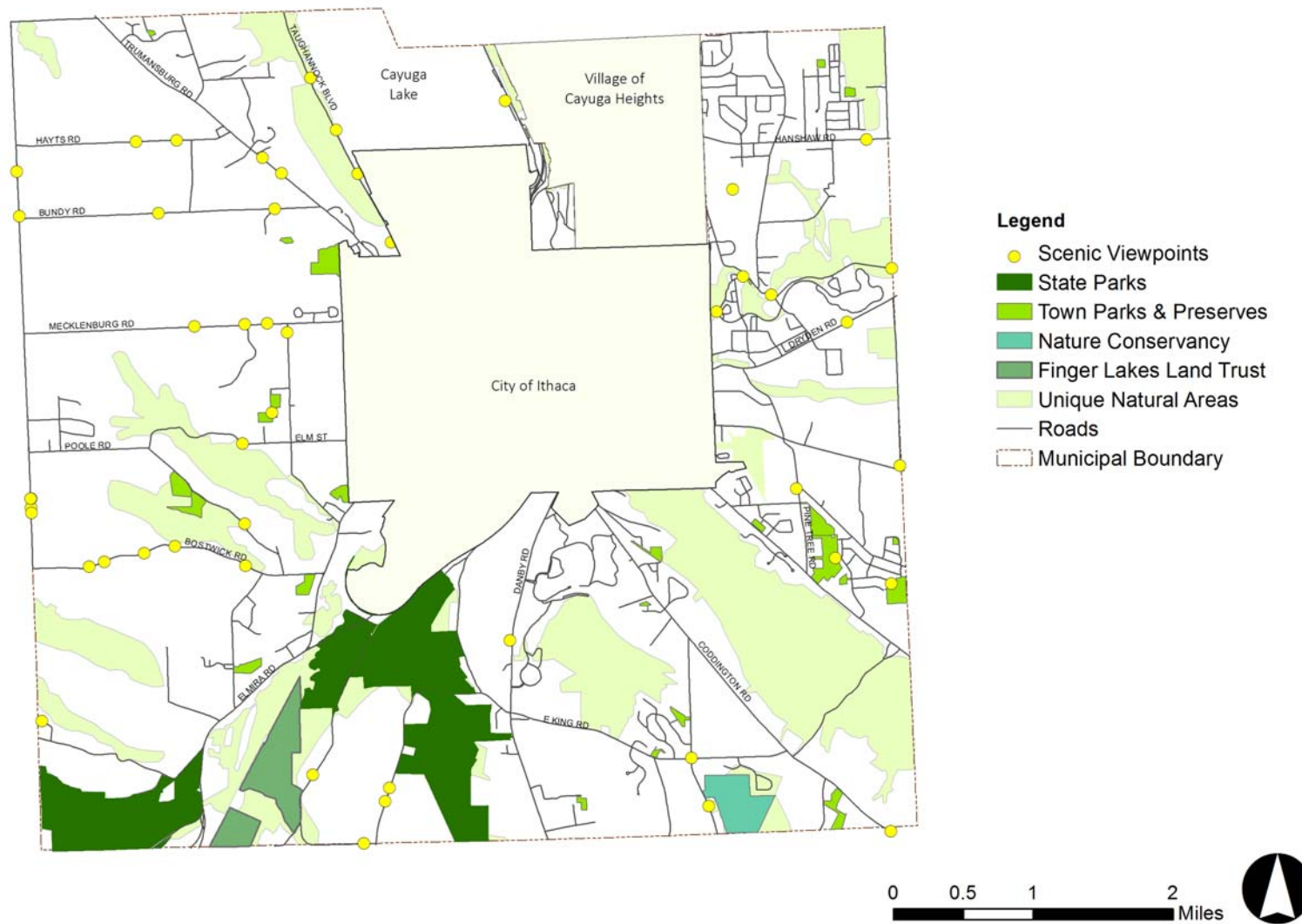
- “Scenic Viewpoints and Zoning” reveals the majority of inventoried scenic viewpoints are within agricultural zones, followed by low density residential zones. This aligns with the survey findings of the Tompkins County's Scenic Resources Inventory that revealed people prefer wide, open views with no development.
- “Unique Natural Areas and Protected Lands” shows that the near views of most viewpoints are unprotected from potential development.
- “Land Cover in the Town of Ithaca” shows how development is extending from the City into the Town. It also shows that the vast majority of viewpoints taken are along roads where there is a gap in development.
- “Viewpoints with Highly Scored Scenic Composition,” as scored by the Scenic Resources Committee shows that the most highly ranked views are predominantly located on West Hill.

The Scenic Resources Committee and Town Planning staff found more scenic views on West Hill than on East Hill, primarily because of West Hill's agricultural fields and lower development. The only panoramic views on East Hill were from the very last agricultural fields remaining, notably the view at the Pine Tree Road and Snyder Hill Road intersection, East Shore Park, and Hanshaw Road on the Dryden town line. South Hill also has very few panoramic views as well, including the view on Danby Road overlooking the lake. Lake views, such as the winter view on Trumansburg Road at the Odd Fellows complex, are rare in the Town.

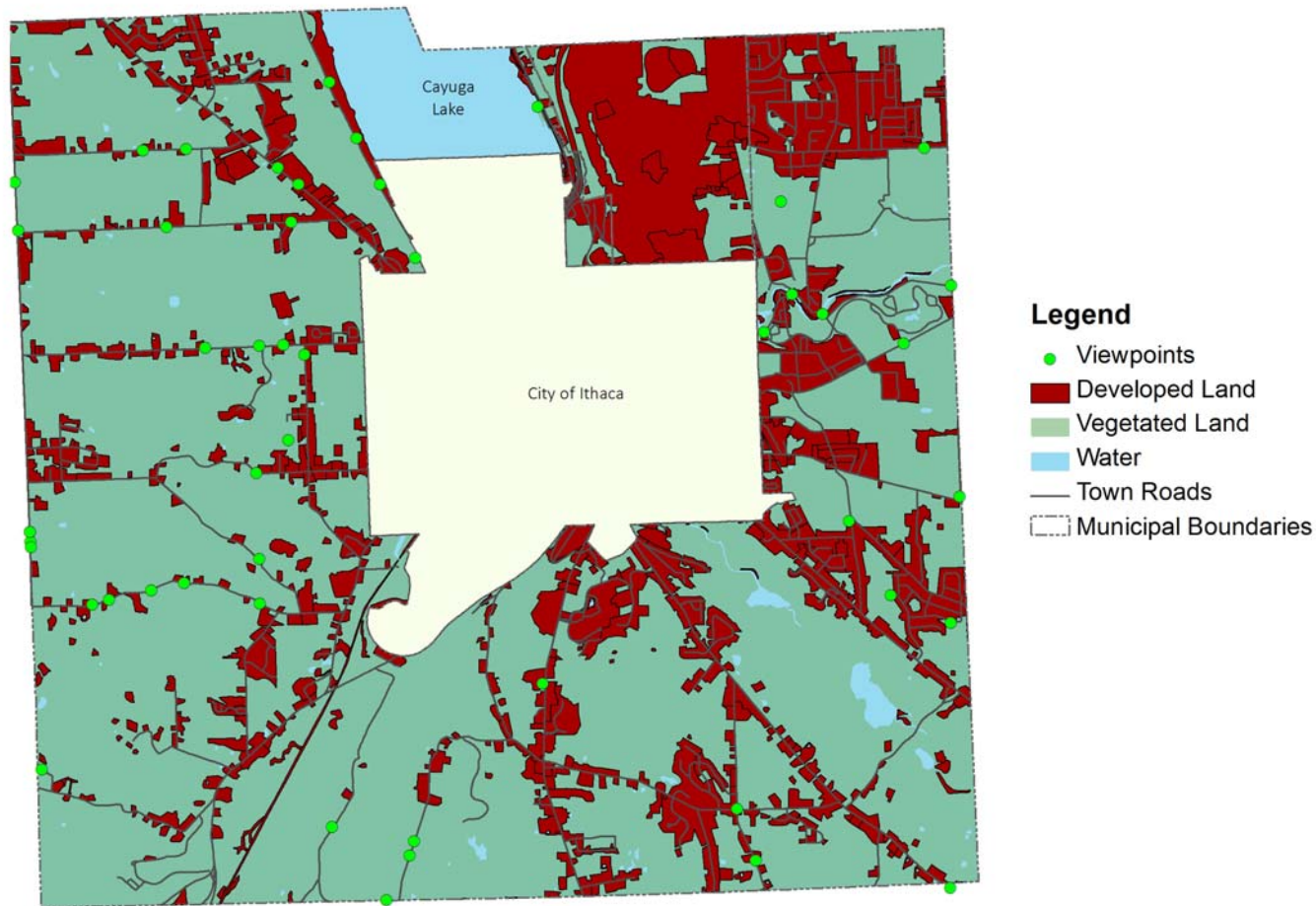
Scenic Viewpoints and Zoning, Town of Ithaca, N.Y.



Unique Natural Areas and Protected Lands



Land Cover in the Town of Ithaca

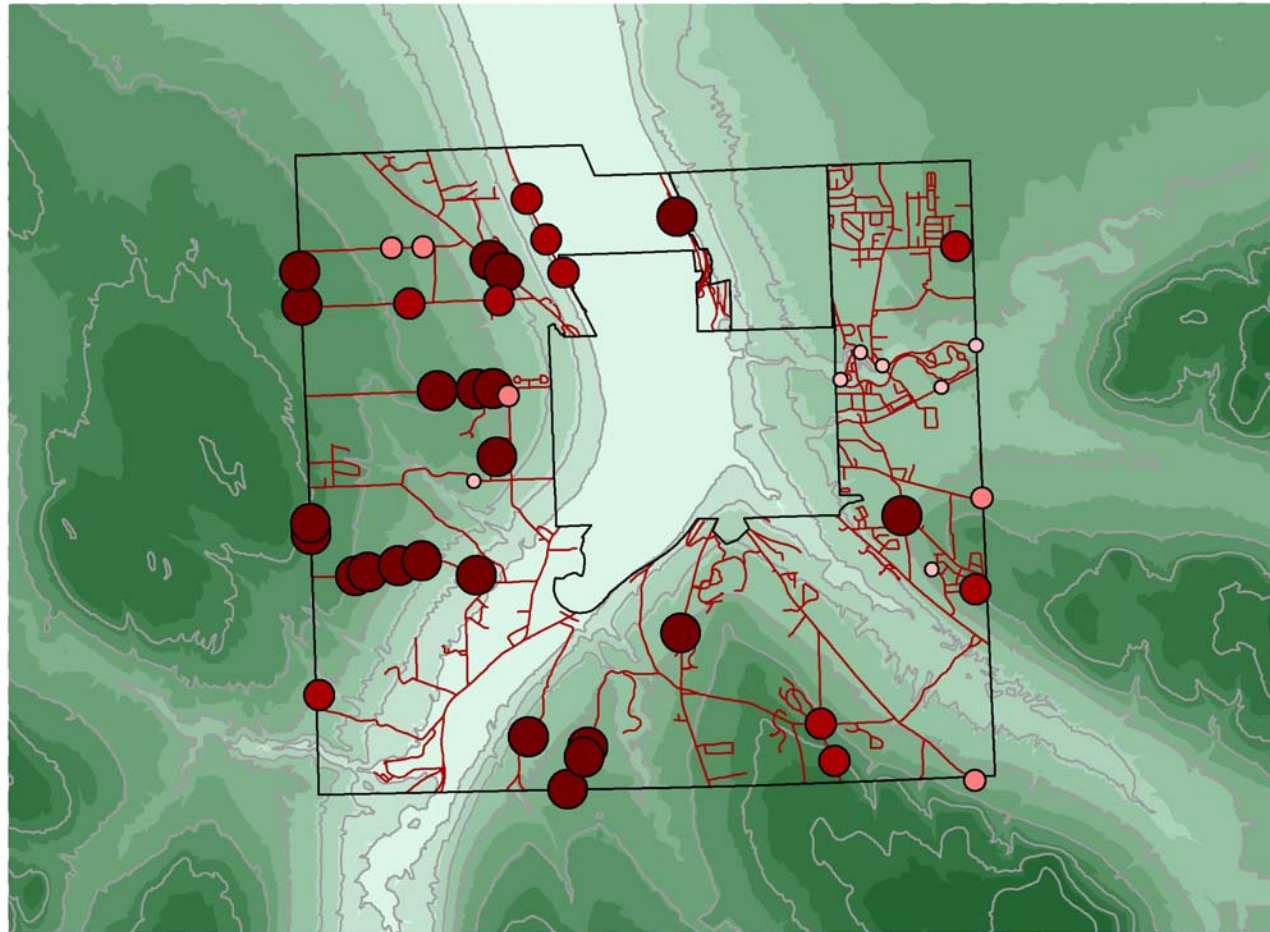


Source: Tompkins County, Land Use/Land Cover, 2007,
<http://www.tompkins-co.org/gis/data/localdata.html>

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



Viewpoints with Highly Scored Scenic Composition



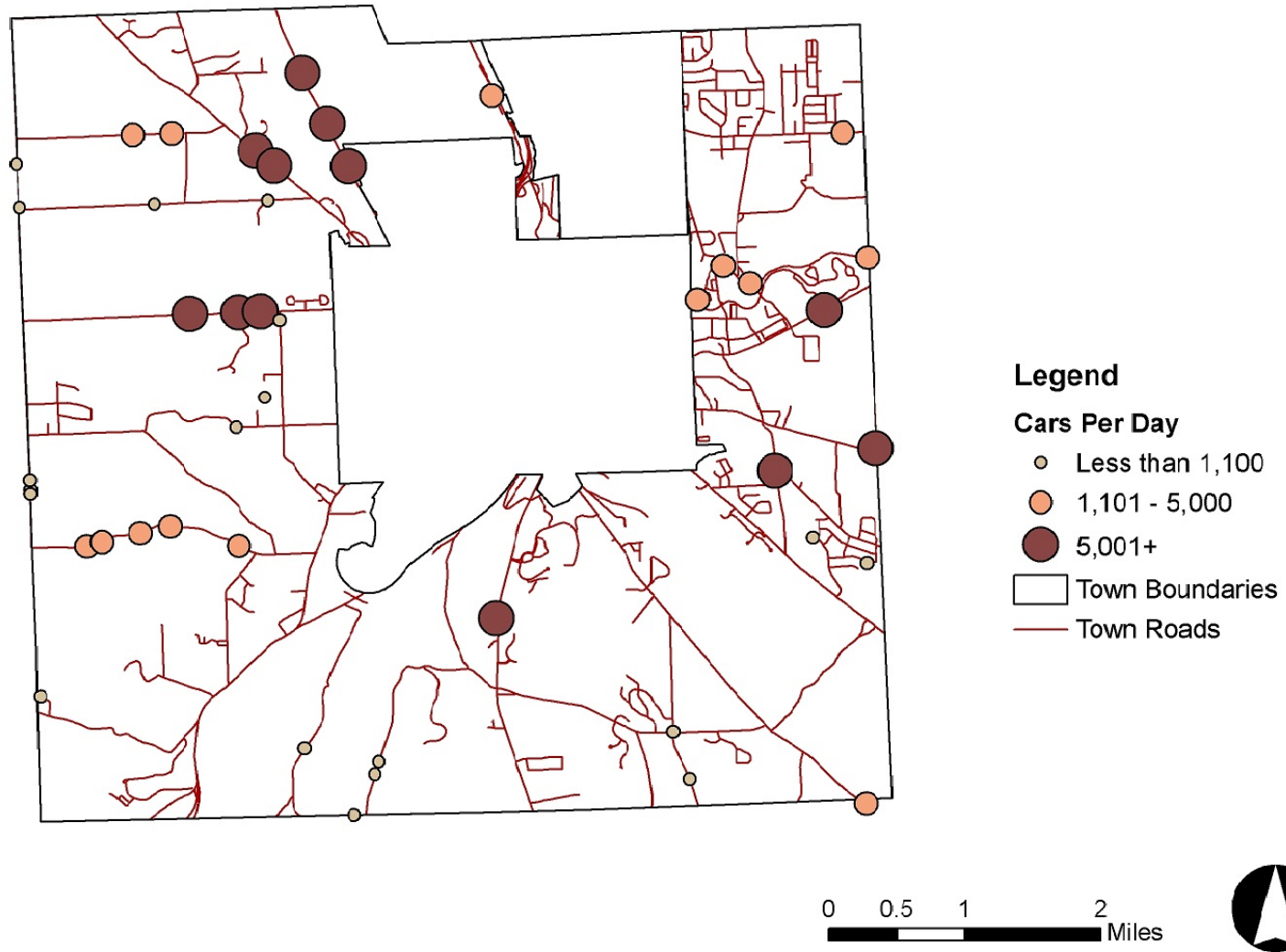
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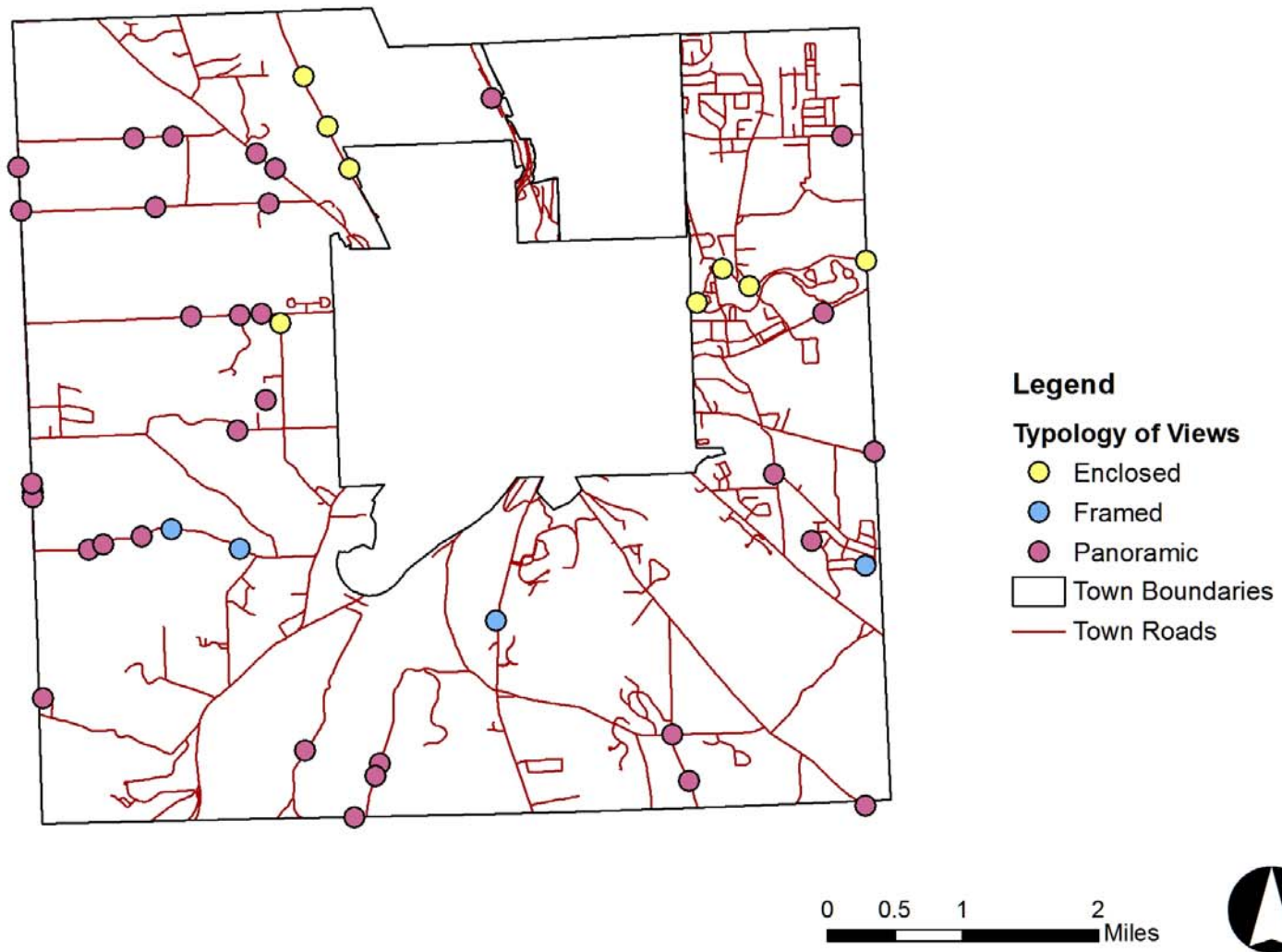
0 0.5 1 2 Miles



Magnitude of Viewpoints



Typology of Views



Combining and Analyzing the Important Scenic Views Analyses

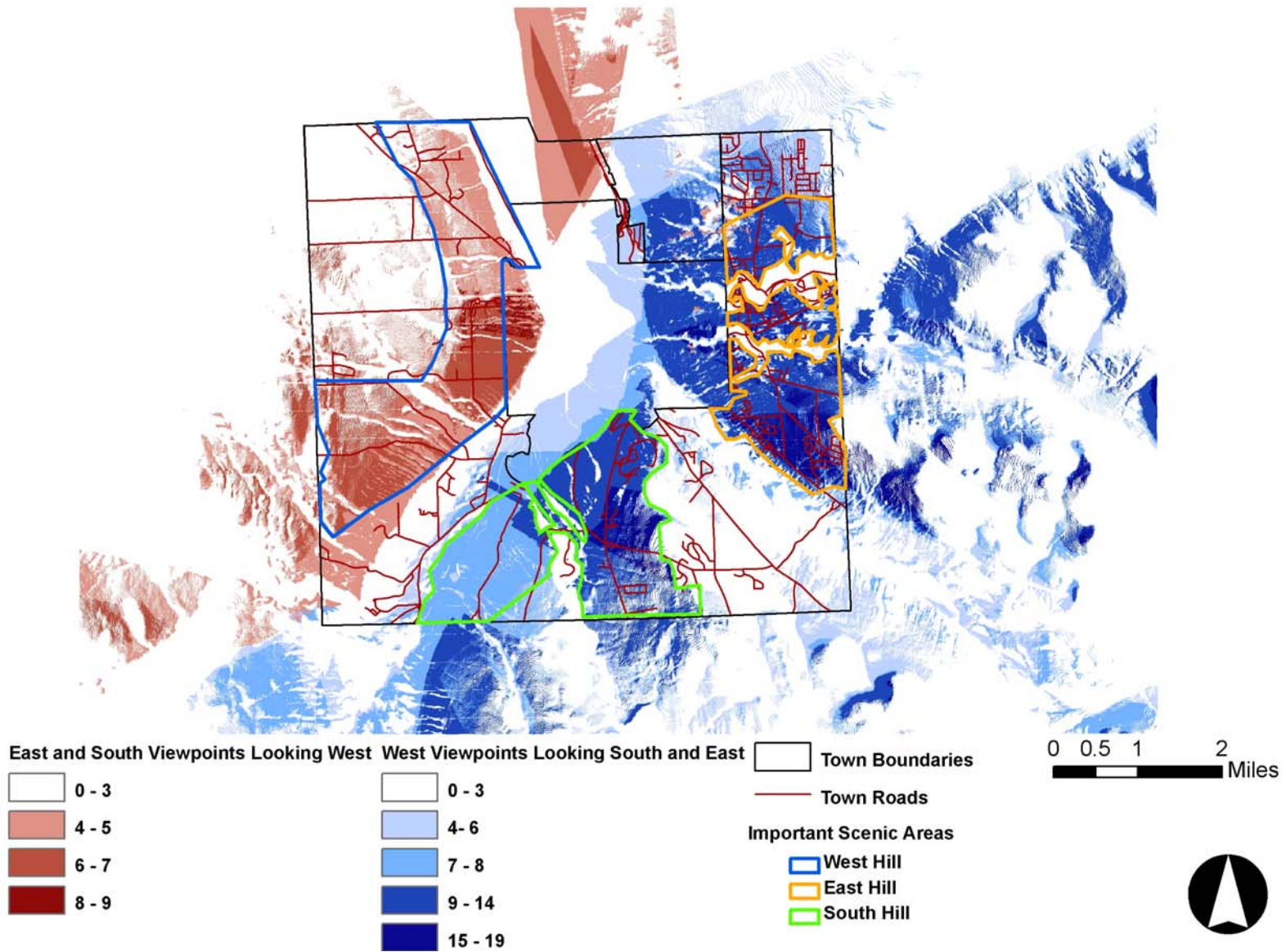
The following map, “Important Scenic Areas,” is a compilation of all of the individual viewshed analysis maps (displayed from pg. 29 – 75). Using ArcGIS, each viewshed analysis map was overlaid on top of one another, and as they built up, spots on the map visible from multiple viewpoints began to darken in color. Therefore, darker shades represent areas visible from more viewpoints.

There are two separate color gradients used on the map (red for West Hill, and blue for South and East Hills), because the West Hill viewpoints looking east were compiled separately from those on South and East Hills. This was done because there were more viewpoints inventoried on West Hill, and thus compiling all of the Town’s viewpoints together would have skewed the result to make it appear that the most scenic views in the entire town are only from West Hill. The views from East and South Hills were calculated separately to determine which areas on West Hill were seen the most often.

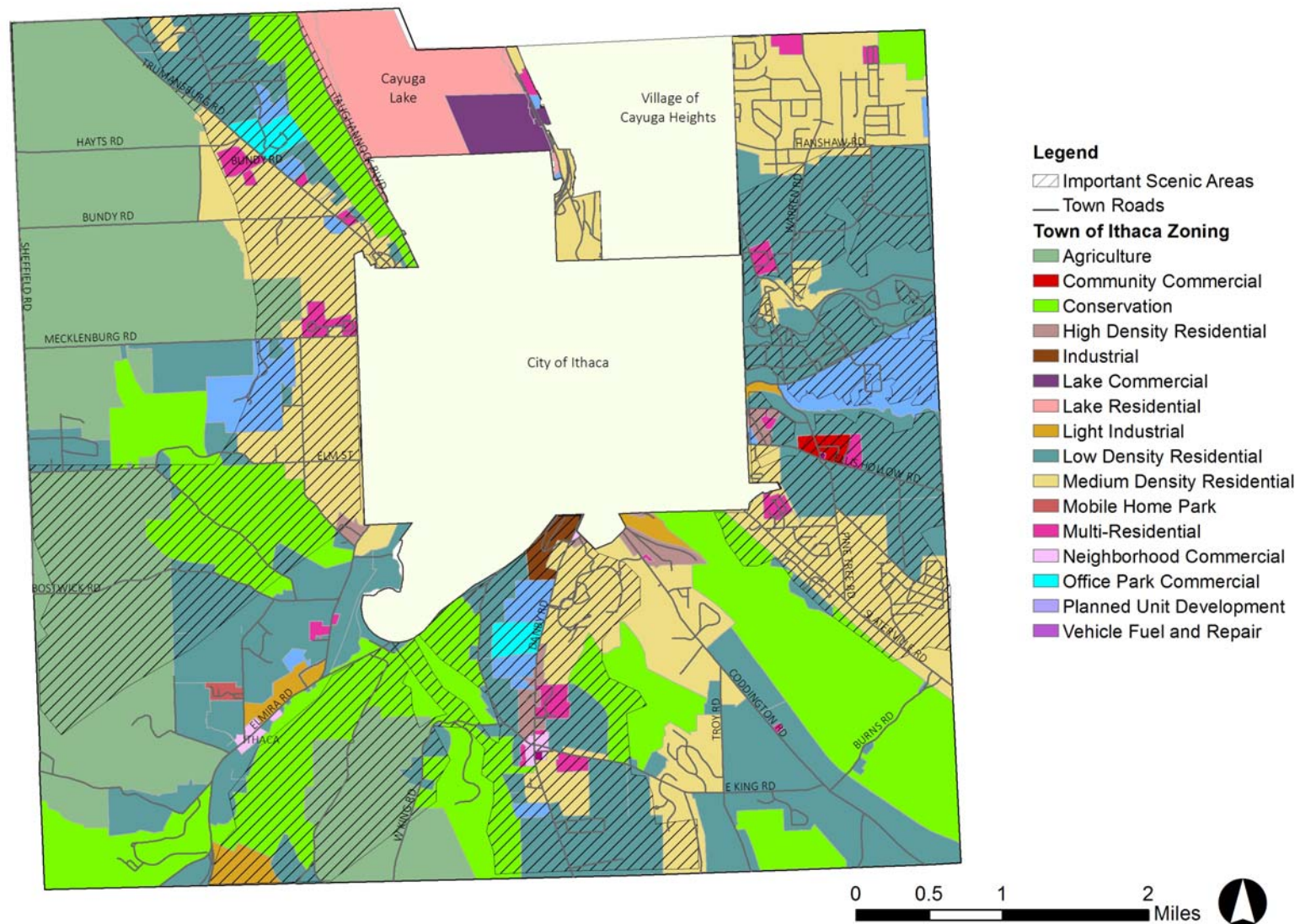
Any area on East Hill seen from seven or more viewpoints from South or West Hills was included in the proposed East Hill Scenic Area (outlined in orange). Similarly, any area on West Hill or South Hill seen from East Hill four or more times was included in the proposed West Hill Scenic Area (outlined in blue) and South Hill Scenic Area (outlined in green).

The second map, “Important Scenic Areas and Zoning,” on page 100 overlays the Important Scenic Areas map with the Town’s Zoning map. It reveals that the most important scenic areas in Ithaca, in contrast to the scenic viewpoints located primarily in agricultural areas, are primarily in residential zones.

Important Scenic Areas



Important Scenic Areas and Zoning



5. Scenic View Protection

This chapter discusses policies that potentially can protect the Town's scenic resources. The Town already has several zoning and site plan regulations in place that can be utilized to preserve views and serve as precedent for additional regulations. Scenic protection policies implemented in other jurisdictions that might prove helpful to the Town of Ithaca are also described.

5.1 Existing Regulations

- **Special Land Use District No. 9 View Area**

The Town of Ithaca passed its first scenic view protection ordinance in 1995 with the creation of Special Land Use District #9 (now referred to as a Planned Development Zone), owned by Cornell University (Town of Ithaca Code, §270.10 (1.4)). One of the special conditions of this land use district was the establishment of a 27-acre "View Area" on Dryden Road/Route 366 that would remain clear of any substantial development (see map and description of scenic view, pages 73-75).

Section 270.10 (1.4) of the Town's Zoning Code states that no new structure will be built within the View Area, defined specifically as between a point 2,100 feet southwesterly along the center line of Route 366 from its intersection with the centerline of Game Farm Road and that point continuing southeast until it reaches the northwest corner of McGowan Woods and then continuing along the border of McGowan Woods until Game Farm Road.

The law stipulates that there will be no development on the 27 acres except for roads serving existing or adjacent facilities and additional construction not to exceed 2,000 square feet in area with the Planning Board's approval. Lampposts up to 25 feet high are permitted if within 100 feet of the existing building or adjacent to a road. Any construction must be in the "least intrusive manner to the view of Mount Pleasant and its environs and to the open space character sought to be protected by the View Area."



Figure 76: The protected "view area" on Dryden Road looking east toward Mount Pleasant.

Clustering Provision in Town Conservation Zones:

Clustering can be required in a Conservation Zone. The Conservation Zone's clustering provision (§ 270-20) authorizes the Planning Board to require clustering of residential units as outlined in Chapter 234, Subdivision of Land, in the Town of Ithaca Code. It also outlines specific clustering requirement for conservation zoned lands in the Six Mile Creek valley area along Coddington Road.

Scenic View protection is further described in the Conservation Zone, stating in § 270-22(F) that scenic views, particularly those with viewing points from adjacent roads, should be preserved by:

- (1) Avoiding the siting of buildings or structures on ridgelines or hilltops. Buildings should be sited below the crest or ridgeline of hills to preserve a natural topographic and vegetative profile.
- (2) Retaining existing vegetation to the extent practicable.
- (3) Retaining existing stone walls, fences and other features in open meadows.
- (4) Regrading should blend in with the natural contours and undulations of the land.
- (5) Buildings proposed to be located within significant viewing areas should be screened and landscaped to minimize their intrusion on the character of the area. Building materials and color schemes should harmonize with their setting and be compatible with neighboring land uses.
- (6) Where possible, buildings and structures should be located on the edges of open fields and in wooded areas to minimize visual impacts.
- (7) Visibility of proposed buildings or structures from public trails within Conservation Zones should be considered so as to minimize visual intrusion on views from the public trails.

- **Lakefront Residential and Commercial Zones Discretionary Setbacks:**

The Planning Board has the right to extend the setback for any proposed new construction to a distance greater than 25 feet for preservation of the shore's sensitive environment, maintenance of the shore's wooded character, or the protection of scenic views. The Planning Board can exercise this same discretion in the Lakefront Commercial Zone.

- **Site Plan Considerations:**

The Planning Board's review of site plans, according to the Town's Codes §270-188(I), includes "the effect of proposed development on environmentally sensitive areas including but not limited to...viewsheds... and other open space areas of importance to the neighborhood or community." This report's documentation of scenic views will make it easier for the Planning Board to consider impact to viewsheds when evaluating development proposals.

- **SEQR (State Environmental Quality Review):**

The SEQR process is required by SEQRA, the State Environmental Quality Review Act, (Article 8 of the State Environmental Conservation Law). SEQR was enacted in order to ensure that environmental impacts receive appropriate consideration in state and local government decision-making. The definition of “environment” in SEQRA includes “objects of historic or aesthetic significance,” and agencies must determine whether the proposal may impair “the character or quality of important historical, archaeological, architectural, or aesthetic resources or of existing community or neighborhood character”. In addition, the SEQR Long Environmental Assessment Form (required for certain development projects) specifically asks whether the proposed development site includes scenic views “known to be important to the community”. The report’s documentation of important scenic views will greatly assist the Planning Board in assessing potential aesthetic impacts during SEQR reviews.

- **Regulation of Exterior Characteristics for Clustered Subdivisions in Subdivision Review:**

The Town Code’s chapter on Subdivision Review, specifically clustered subdivisions, contains a section (§234-34) on the regulation of exterior characteristics. The Planning Board is authorized to regulate the exterior characteristics of a proposed subdivision after consideration of the view that will be afforded to existing property owners and legal users of public property in the vicinity of the proposed cluster subdivision after it is built as well as “size, shape, color of materials to be used in the proposed structures and other areas.”

- **Telecommunication Towers**

The Town recently passed telecommunication tower legislation (Town Code §270-219) to ensure that new towers impose minimal visual impact. The Planning Board must grant Site Plan Approval and a Special Permit before a telecommunication tower can be constructed. The Town requires that the need for the towers be demonstrated and that attempts to co-locate equipment on other telecommunications towers has been exhausted before a new tower can be built. New towers must be able to accommodate at least two other service providers in the future. In an effort to reduce the towers’ visibility, the law establishes the Town’s preferences for the zoning districts they locate in. The regulations further specify the towers must be non-reflective and painted gray above the tree line.

- **Wind Turbines**

Some people feel that a view would be ruined with the construction of a wind turbine in an otherwise intact wooded hillside. Town of Ithaca residents, however, are aware of the urgent need for clean, renewable sources of energy. To preclude the possibility of large wind farms in the Town but to enable individual property owners to provide their own electricity, legislation was recently passed (Town Code §270-219.4) allowing one small wind turbine (with maximum height of 145') per tax parcel with minimum setbacks of 50.' Parcels larger than 2 acres are allowed an additional wind turbine with a special permit.

Wind turbines may not be located within 500' of a park, natural area, nature preserves, or within the high water line of Cayuga Lake. This stipulation is included primarily for ecological purposes but also to protect visual resources within parks and of the lakeshore.

Specifically regarding the preservation of scenic resources, the law prescribes that the wind turbines be painted or finished with a non-reflective, unobtrusive color to blend into their surroundings to the extent possible. Should a turbine cease to function for a period longer than 12 months, the owner must dismantle it within 90 days or the Town will have it dismantled at the owners' expense.

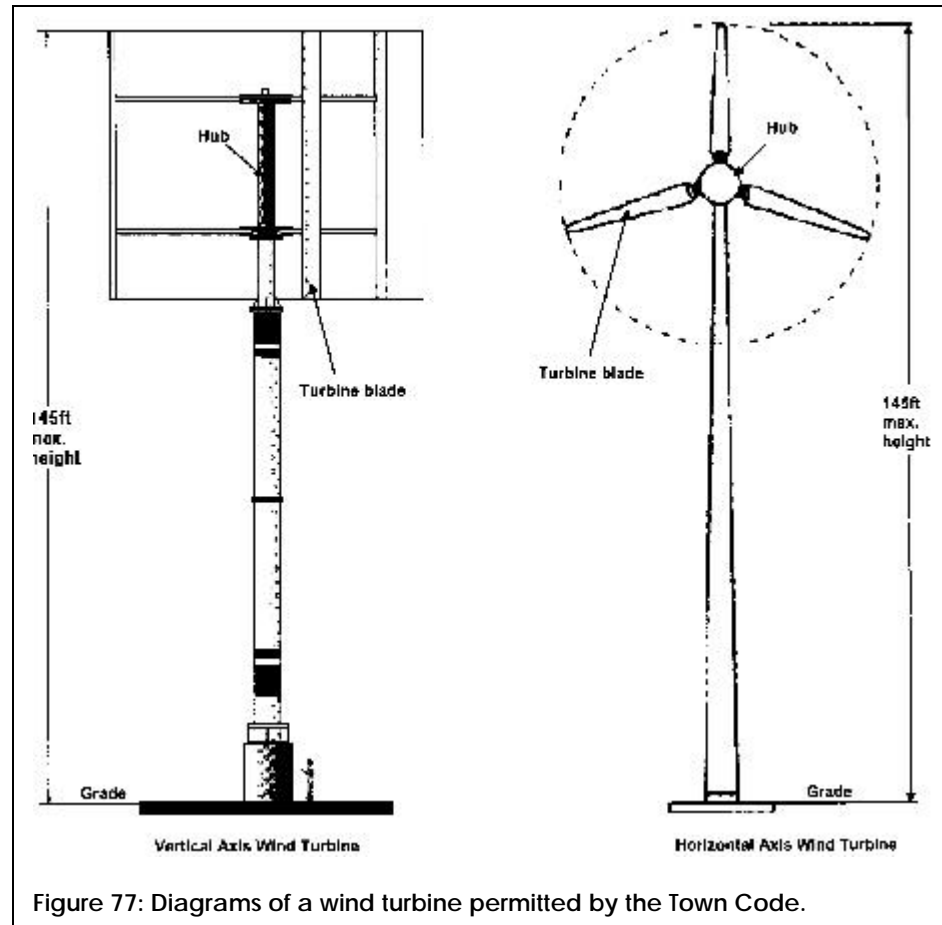


Figure 77: Diagrams of a wind turbine permitted by the Town Code.

5.2 Potential Scenic View Protections

Regulations and programs that preserve scenic resources primarily take the form of zoning overlay districts, conservation zoning, tree ordinances, conservation easements or land acquisition, and public engagement and education.

Scenic Overlay Zones

Overlay zones “float” over the underlying land use zones. Overlay zones do not change the underlying zoning but mandate additional requirements, such as the additional review of building design, landscaping and site design, the preservation of native vegetation, and circulation. Scenic overlay districts generally cover significant scenic view areas.

Jurisdictions have scenic overlay zones of varying strength. Some municipalities require that any land disturbance or construction activity require Planning Board approval while others specify a minimum amount of construction or land disturbance. Planning Board approval for development in a scenic overlay zone generally requires a visual assessment review for the Planning Board to make its decision to approve a project within the viewshed overlay district.

Visual assessment reviews generally require:

- An aerial photograph at a scale appropriate to show the property for which an application has been submitted and other elements within the scenic viewshed.
- Perspective drawings, photo simulations, plans and section/elevation diagrams, and/or photographs, showing existing and proposed structures and landscaping or vegetation.
- A factual description of the existing site, including surveys.
- A written description of the proposed development and its predicted level of impact on the viewshed.
- Suggestions for the mitigation of potential impacts on the viewshed.

This report has provided the Town with a viewshed map for each of the already identified scenic viewpoints. When it is uncertain if a proposed development will be visible from a scenic viewpoint, a “Line of Sight” analysis can be easily done using GIS connecting a proposed development with any of the identified viewpoints.

Some of the considerations when reviewing a development proposal located in a scenic overlay zone include:

- Does the proposed building or alteration, conforming to existing setbacks, block views? Can this be avoided?
- Evaluate the proposed building's mass and relationship to surrounding development
- Consider the number, scale, and arrangement of building openings. Are there features such as balconies, bays, porches, awnings, changes in building façade, or roofline alignment that make the building visually interesting?
- Are the exterior materials and color of the building reflective of local building traditions and blend in with the surrounding area?
- Transformers and mechanical and electrical equipment should be hidden or screened from view.
- Site landscaping—the proposal should include sound and sight buffers to conceal unsightly areas. Evaluate the location, height, and materials of walls, fences, hedges, and screening vegetation and review plans for maintenance of the landscaping.
- Review the parking layout and design. Is it possible to put the parking in the back of the building? Is it possible to put the parking out of sight?



Figure 78: The Alterra buildings did not block the view of Ithaca Falls because of their placement within a hollow. The red arrow shows where the roofline can just be made out above the tall grass.

Possible standards to prescribe in Scenic Overlay Zones include:

- **Requiring cluster subdivisions.** In Copake, N.Y., the Planning Board may require flexible lot or cluster subdivisions within their scenic overlay zone, when in its judgment it would result in better preservation of open space and the public viewshed. The Town of Ithaca Subdivision Regulations (Chapter 234 Town of Ithaca Code) already authorizes the Planning Board to require clustering.
- **Vegetation and landscaping requirements.** Existing trees should be maintained to the extent feasible. The removal of contiguous areas of smaller trees as well as the removal of mature trees should be reviewed by the Planning Board. The planting of additional trees to provide shade and enclose the building is helpful in defining the public and private space.

If an applicant or owner wants to open up views by clearing vegetation, they should only selectively cut smaller trees and prune the lower branches of large trees. In some cases, however, the selective removal of trees may help to open up view.

- **Preserving distinctive features.** New development should be designed to preserve distinctive features of an important scenic area, including the tree canopy, stone walls, winding roads.
- **Siting buildings where they have minimal visual impact.** Buildings should be placed in small hollows or protected areas to preserve scenic vistas. Maximal effort should be made to steer new development away from the near views of proposed scenic viewpoints. In Ithaca, for example, the houses within the subdivision on Perry Lane were set against the tree line, sparing the field behind them and minimizing visual impact (see Figure 83).
- **Maintaining existing topography.** The existing topography and land form should be maintained to the maximum extent feasible. Proposed roads, walkways, and driveways should be curvilinear to follow the existing natural landform or minimize visual impact.



Figure 79: The new addition to the Paleontological Research Institution almost completely hides the parking lots from view on Trumansburg Road. The red arrow points to the top of a parked RV camper.

- **Building materials, colors, and textures should blend in with their surroundings.** Traditional building materials and earth tone or historical colors should be used. Avoid highly reflective materials and white or light colors, unless screened by vegetation.
- **Low-reflectivity windows.** Windows should be of low-reflectivity unless they are particularly energy efficient. Large windows should be partially screened from public view. Upper and high windows should be smaller to reduce visual impact.
- **Bury utility equipment.** All utility equipment should be placed underground unless otherwise permitted by the Planning Board. If utility equipment must be placed above ground, it should cross the road at the shortest possible point and be painted or screened to blend in with its surrounding environment.
- **Minimize impervious surface.** For new developments, building sites should be arranged to maximize use of existing roads and minimize forest clearing. Shared driveways and looped roads should be encouraged.
- **Hide, screen and buffer parking lots.** Parking lots for non-residential and multi-family residential uses should be on the sides or rear of the structures, provided that arrangement does not create a significant visual impact. Parking lots should be screened by vegetation. The Town of Copake, N.Y., requires a minimum 10' landscaping buffer, exclusive of sidewalks and utility easements, for side parking lots. The landscaping buffer must be planted with shade or ornamental trees and at least a 3' high evergreen hedge. In addition, for both side and rear parking lots, at least one tree and three shrubs must be provided for every 8 parking spaces in interior areas of the parking lot. For parking spaces of single family dwellings, Copake requires the parking be at the side or rear of the principal structure, provided that does not create a significant visual impact.



Figure 80: The Eco-Village bus stop on Mecklenburg Road blends into its surroundings, quite literally with its green roof. The same can not be said for the criss-crossing utility lines.



Figure 82: The houses on West Haven Road are largely single story and thus hardly visible from East Hill. This street and the fields directly behind them are the ones seen the most times from East Hill. If these homes were two-story homes, they might be more noticeable.



Figure 81: The view from Game Farm and Ellis Hollow Roads could be improved by planting vegetation to screen the new, bright white residential development jutting into the agricultural field.



Figure 83: The new subdivision on Perry Lane off Bundy Road minimized visual impact. Houses are either set along the edge of the farm field at the tree line or nestled within the trees.

Gateway Overlay Zones

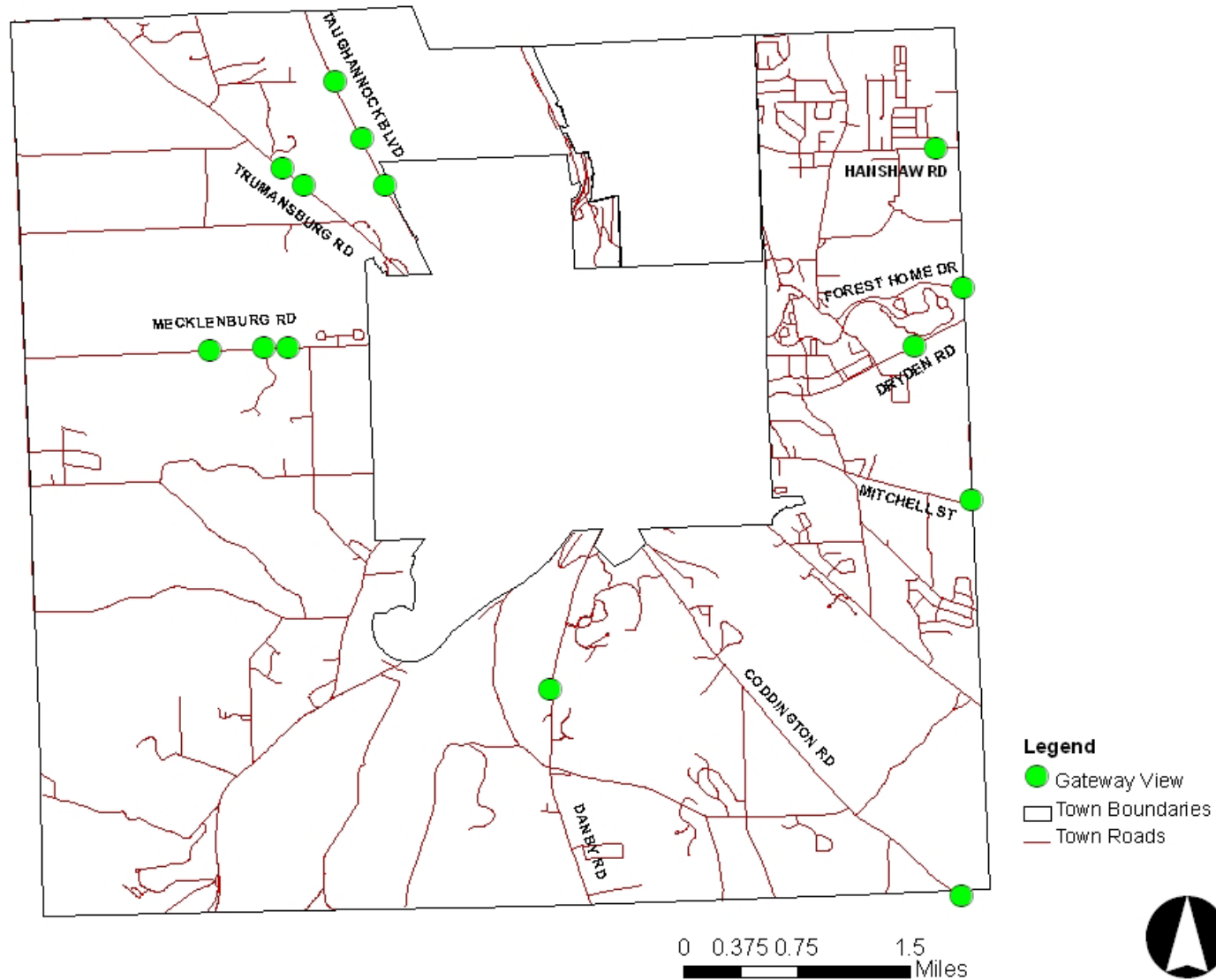
Gateway Overlay Zones are distinguished from the other types of overlay districts because they aim to preserve a community's unique character. Site plan approval is required when new construction or significant alteration is proposed in a gateway overlay zone. The proposals are reviewed for conforming or complementing the community character, whether it is historical, natural, or cultural character which distinguishes the area and signifies to viewers that they have arrived in a unique place.

Views that could most likely be categorized as gateway views:

- Taughannock Boulevard (Route 89) waterfalls and culverts
- Mecklenburg Road's view of the Cayuga Lake valley, looking east
- Forest Home Drive, winding along Fall Creek
- Danby Road (Route 96B) view of Cayuga Lake, looking north
- Trumansburg Road (Route 96) Odd Fellows Complex's view of Cayuga Lake and Cornell, looking east
- The view of Cornell and valley at the intersection of Game Farm Road at Ellis Hollow Road, looking west/northwest

These views, as well as a few others, are highlighted in the following "Gateway Viewpoints" map.

Gateway Viewpoints



Scenic Road Overlays

Scenic Road Overlays cover a narrower road corridor than the broader scenic viewshed overlay. Scenic Road Overlays aim to preserve the scenic quality of roads by providing further controls on the amount of development on the road, setbacks, vegetation guidelines, as well as the design of the road and its landscaping. As such, Scenic Road Overlays may be more appropriate for protecting scenic viewpoints than scenic areas.

Regulatory policies for protecting views from scenic roads used in other jurisdictions include:

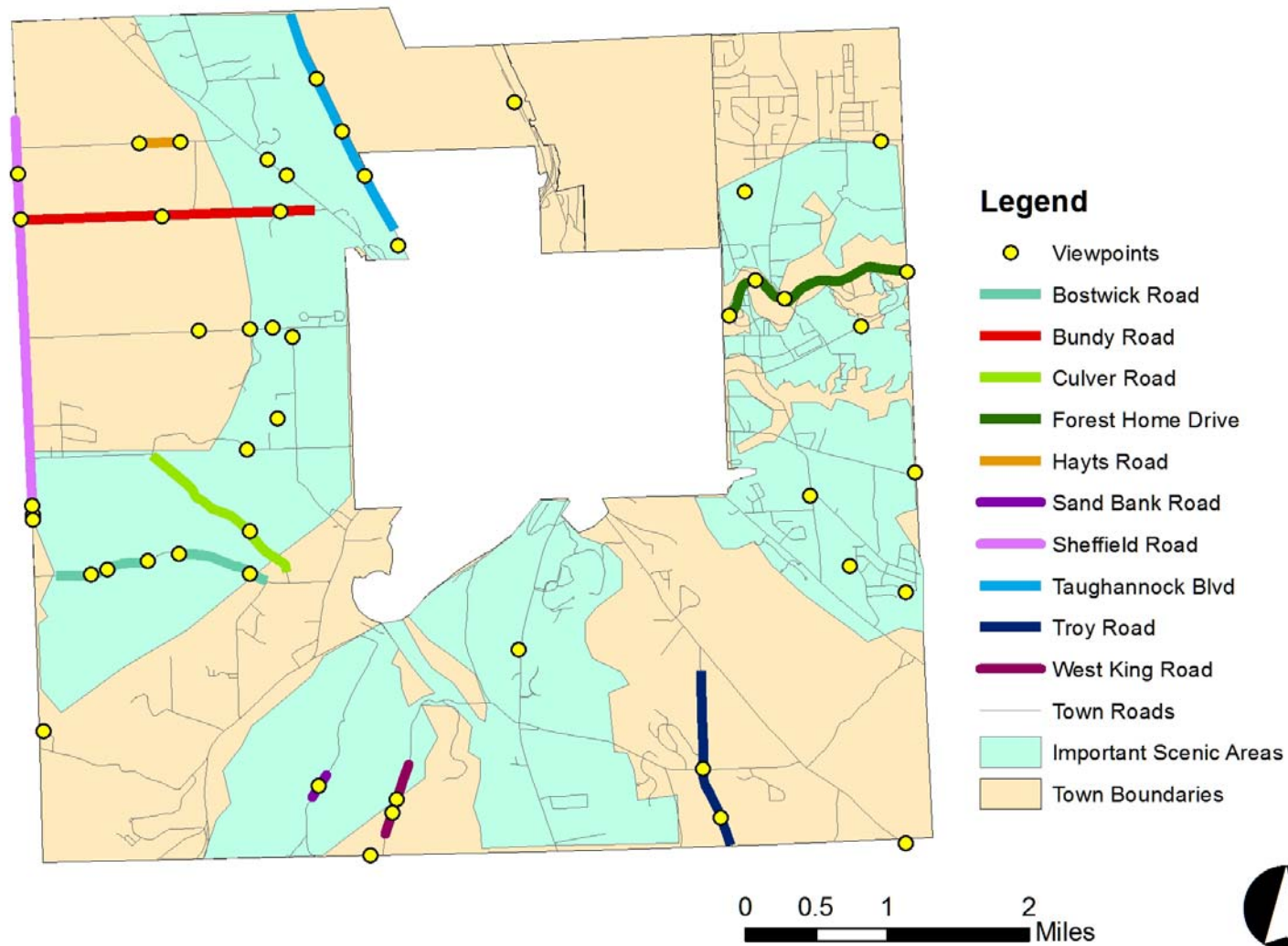
- Requiring a continuous vegetated buffer, agricultural use, or open field at least 100 feet deep along designated scenic roads. (Blooming Grove, N.Y.)
- Clearing of existing vegetation at the edge of the road shall be minimized except to open up landscape views or to provide necessary road and driveway entrances with adequate sight distance. (Copake, N.Y.)
- Prohibiting chain link fences or stockade fences unless it is used primarily to block a visually non-conforming pre-existing use.
- Requiring utilities to place all pipes and wires underground if possible. If aboveground structures are necessary, they should be painted to blend into the environment.
- Requiring Planning Board approval for proposals involving any building construction or addition to a building greater than 500 square feet, clear-cutting of more than 5,000 square feet of vegetation, or grading or otherwise altering more than 5,000 square feet of the natural landscape. (Blooming Grove, N.Y.)
- Requiring that any planting along scenic roads be only for revegetative purposes or to enhance an unattractive roadscape. Only indigenous plants should be used.

The following map, “Proposed Scenic Roads,” highlights roads in the Town that might be best-suited for inclusion in a Scenic Road Overlay due to the number and significance of viewpoints along them.



Figure 84: Striking colors and textures of the fields on Hayts Road illuminate distant views of Lansing farms.

Proposed Scenic Roads



Land Acquisition or Donations of Land

The acquisition of land is usually reserved for the most valued resources because of the expense as well as the loss of future tax dollars. Only land shown to be the most visible and intact or that is at high risk of development should be considered for purchase and only then from a property owner willing to sell the land.

The Town also encourages the donation of property or conservation easements. Property owners who donate their land or development rights are eligible for significant income tax deductions. Section 170(h) of the Internal Revenue Service Code outlines all of the deduction details specific to conservation donations.

Currently, the Finger Lakes Land Trust has conserved 164 acres in the Town, including Lick Brook Preserve, and the Nature Conservancy protects the 86-acre Eldridge Wilderness Tract. All of these properties are located on South Hill.

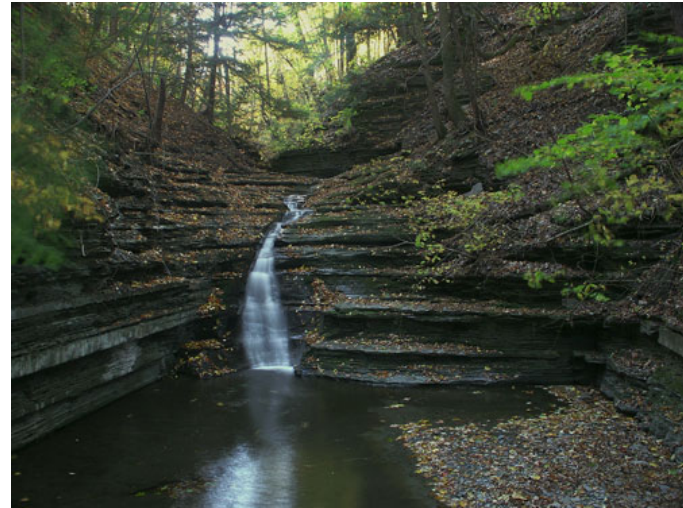


Figure 85: The Sweedler Preserve at Lick Brook was purchased and is maintained by the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

Recommendation: Use the Town's Open Space Reserve Fund to Acquire Significant Scenic Resources or Purchase Conservation Easements.

The Town of Ithaca recently purchased 10 acres of land on Culver Road known as the Dress Woods Preserve, which is valued for its mature woods. This purchase was made possible with the Town's Open Space Reserve Fund, which receives an annual appropriation in the Town's Capital Budget.

Recommendation: Pursue the Community Preservation Fund.

Currently, 11 New York State towns have specific authority to create community preservation funds. Putnam and Westchester Counties and municipalities in the Peconic Bay region were recently granted the power by the State to adopt a real estate transfer tax of 2% to provide a Community Preservation Fund, which includes the preservation of lands of exceptional scenic value (New York State General Municipal Law, §6-s). Tompkins County, with the support of the Town of Ithaca and other towns, should pursue the Community Preservation Fund enabling legislation for the county as a whole and also for the State.

Conservation and Agricultural Easements

Conservation or agricultural easements are the voluntary purchase or donation of a property's development rights, such as the right to subdivide or build, so as to protect the land's open space or natural qualities. They are not a transfer of ownership of the property and do not grant public access to the land unless specifically authorized by the landowner. The easements on the land are permanent and carry through changes in ownership.

Agricultural easements are similar to conservation easements except that the landowners agree to maintain the property's agricultural land use. In the Town, agricultural easements require that the property's fields be kept clear of trees so that they are more likely to remain in agricultural, thus also providing scenic resource benefits by remaining open to views. There are currently 140 acres of agricultural lands in the Town of Ithaca protected by agricultural easements. This does not include the 42 acres of the Indian Creek Farm for which the Town is in the process of purchasing the development rights.

Conservation easements are widely utilized across the U.S. and managed by public and private entities alike. The Nature Conservancy and the Finger Lakes Land Trust are two organizations that locally pursue and manage conservation easements in addition to land acquisition. Strong tax incentives are offered at the federal and state level to encourage landowners to conserve their land through easements.⁵

Recommendation: Pursue conservation and/or agricultural easements for scenic viewpoints and important scenic view areas.

Pursue conservation and/or agricultural easements on properties that have been identified as having significant scenic qualities, particularly if the properties are scenic viewpoints or are important scenic view areas that are highly visible from other viewpoints around the Town, such as the Bostwick Road area or the fields downhill of West Haven Road. Easements should also be considered for properties that are the last remaining open spaces offering views for an entire neighborhood or section of town, such as the farm fields on Hanshaw Road.



Figure 86: This Sheffield Road property will remain an open agricultural field thanks to an agricultural easement.

⁵ For more information on easements, see the Nature Conservancy's website at www.nature.org or the Finger Lakes Land Trust website at www.fllt.org.

Rezoning

Recommendation: Consider rezoning some LDR areas to Conservation Zones.

To protect views, it may be prudent to rezone some low density residential areas to conservation zones. This would reduce the density of development allowed in areas with significant natural or scenic qualities.

For example, land in the Coy Glen and Culver Road area, currently zoned as low density residential, could be rezoned to a conservation zone as the area is within the proposed scenic overlay zone and is already a designated Unique Natural Area. The Town Planning Department and Conservation Board are researching the potential for rezoning.

The recent rezoning of the lake slopes on the western side of Cayuga Lake is an example of a low-density residential zone being rezoned to a conservation zone. The purpose of the rezoning was not only to preserve the important ecological functions that this area provides but its scenic resources as well.



Figure 87: A 10-acre parcel on Culver Road was recently purchased by the Town of Ithaca using its Open Space Reserve Fund.



Figure 88: The western lake slopes were rezoned to a Conservation district to not only protect the important ecological functions but also to preserve scenic views.

Tree Protection

Recommendation: Adopt a comprehensive tree ordinance that includes policies on tree removal, pruning, and tree canopy coverage.

West Hill has numerous scenic views of East Hill, primarily because there is enough vegetation and mature trees to block views of development on East Hill. Development also appears sparse on West Hill from East Shore Park on Cayuga Lake which is largely due to mature trees and extensive vegetation. This is testament to the importance of protecting trees in the Town of Ithaca.

Timber harvesting regulations were enacted for conservation zoned areas of the Town in 2012 to protect sensitive natural areas. To maintain the appearance of the Town's predominantly wooded hills, the Town should also consider adopting similar regulations throughout the Town. Where it is not practicable to retain existing trees, large trees should be replaced.

In Copake, N.Y., the clear-cutting of all trees in a contiguous area in excess of $\frac{1}{2}$ acre is prohibited. The replanting of trees and shrubs after construction may also be required.

Oftentimes people want to remove vegetation to create a view. It is important to realize that while trees may be blocking a near view, they are almost certainly providing the backdrop for one or more other viewpoints around the town. Clearing vegetation for views should be incorporated into the Town of Ithaca's future tree protection ordinance or scenic views ordinance.

The Town of Blooming Grove's scenic overlay ordinance addresses vegetation clearing for views by prescribing that small trees can be selectively cut down and the lower branches of larger trees pruned, rather than clear cutting large areas of trees or removing large trees.



Figure 89: The view from East Shore Park remains largely intact because of West Hill's trees. Cayuga Medical Center and development on West Hill Circle would be more visible without the wooded hillside (red arrow).



Figure 90: These trees are blocking a view but they also provide important ecological services and provide views for other viewpoints.

Public Engagement and Education

Recommendation: Construct road-side pull-offs, informational signage, and/or viewing platforms for the Town's best views.

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, signage identifying distant landmarks, and perhaps a viewing platform or gazebo would recognize the importance of these viewpoints and enhance public awareness of such places. The 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 excellent view to be found there. An informational display is currently being created for the East Shore Park parking area. Signage at the Danby Road parking area, if it finds public favor, could be followed by similar interpretive signs at roadside pull-offs along Pine Tree Road (across from the Snyder Hill Road intersection), along Mecklenburg Road (Near the EcoVillage bus stop), and along Trumansburg Road (between Alterra and the Odd Fellows complex). 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.



Figure 91: The Shirley Raffensberger gazebo.

5.3 Future Considerations

This report provides a foundation for the Town of Ithaca to pursue scenic resources protection. Although the intention was to be as comprehensive as possible, there are still some opportunities and challenges that merit further consideration.

Opportunities

- Overlapping jurisdictions-- Nearly all of the Town's views extend beyond its jurisdiction. The Town hopes that scenic view protection is a priority for adjacent municipalities where development could detract from the views admired by area residents and visitors. Together, the towns and Tompkins County can work to pass the Community Preservation Fund at the state level and fund land acquisition and conservation easements.
- Route 13 Scenic Viewpoint-- The view from Route 13 to the south and west was ranked highly by the Scenic Resources Committee but not included in this report because it crosses four jurisdictions. Still, with teamwork from the other jurisdictions, Route 13 overlooking Cayuga Lake could become a scenic road.

Potential Threats

- Gas drilling --Gas drilling, specifically the rush for Marcellus shale natural gas, is of particular concern now for scenic view protection. Questions remain as to whether local municipalities will have any control over the siting of the wells, the tree and vegetation clearance surrounding the gas wells, and the appearance of wastewater pits and numerous large trucks lining up on site.

6. Summary and Conclusions

This section summarizes all recommendations discussed in the previous sections:

Overlay Zones

Consider establishing Scenic Overlay Zones to mandate rigorous development review and vegetation preservation in scenic view areas.

Consider establishing Gateway Overlay Zones to preserve the Town's community character and sense of place.

Consider establishing Scenic Road Overlays to preserve the scenic quality of roads and protect viewpoints.

Land Acquisition

Use the Town's Open Space Reserve Fund to acquire significant scenic resources or purchase Conservation Easements.

Pursue the Community Preservation Fund.

Easements

Pursue conservation and/or agricultural easements for scenic viewpoints and important scenic view areas.

Rezoning

Consider rezoning some Low Density Residential areas to Conservation Zones.

Tree Protection

Adopt a comprehensive tree ordinance that includes policies on tree removal, pruning, and tree canopy coverage.

Require that any timber harvesting adhere to the N.Y.S. Timber Harvesting Guidelines and New York State Forestry's "Best Management Practices for Water Quality."

Public Engagement and Education

Produce Design Guidelines for owners and developers of property within the near view of scenic viewpoints or within important scenic view areas.

Construct road-side pull-offs, informational signage, and/or viewing platforms for the Town's best views.