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OASIS

OPEN AREAS INFORMATION SYSTEM

DRAFT ***TOWN OF HUNTINGTON*** ***OPEN SPACE INDEX RETROSPECT (1974 - 1998)*** ***PROTECTED LANDS INVENTORY AND*** ***PROPOSED OPEN SPACE INDEX/INITIATIVES***

In furtherance of sound environmental review and the balanced planning of land development and conservation throughout the Town of Huntington, this draft study is presented to the Huntington Town, Planning and Conservation Boards.

Town of Huntington
Department of Planning and Environment
Staff Study

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY/KEY FINDINGS	III
1974 OPEN SPACE INDEX RETROSPECT	III
PROTECTED LANDS INVENTORY	IV
PROPOSED 1998 OPEN SPACE INDEX	V
PREFACE	VI
SUPPORTING STUDIES	VI
QUALITY OF COMMUNITY	VI
<i>Why Plan for Open Space Conservation?</i>	vi
<i>What is Open Space?</i>	vii
<i>The Benefits of Open Space</i>	vii
INTRODUCTION	XI
OPEN SPACE INDEX RETROSPECT 1974-1998.....	1
HUNTINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL AND LAND INFORMATION EXCHANGE (HELIX)	1
<i>Tracking Of Open Space Index—Inventory and Process</i>	1
<i>Tools For Huntington Open Space Preservation</i>	2
LAWS AND LEGAL BASIS	2
<i>New York State General Municipal Law</i>	2
<i>New York State Town Law</i>	3
<i>New York State Environmental Conservation Law</i>	3
<i>Code of the Town of Huntington, §198—Zoning</i>	5
<i>Suffolk County Sanitary Code, Article VI Density Requirements</i>	6
LAND USE APPLICATION REVIEW	7
<i>Subdivision of Real Property</i>	7
<i>Zone Changes</i>	19
<i>Site Plans</i>	19
<i>Zoning Board of Appeals Applications</i>	20
<i>Building Permits</i>	20
GOVERNMENT AGENCY INITIATIVES	22
<i>Federal</i>	22
<i>New York State</i>	23
<i>Suffolk County</i>	23
<i>Town Of Huntington</i>	26
<i>Governmental Inter-Agency Transfers</i>	26
PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES	27
<i>Corporate Sponsorship</i>	27
<i>Not-For-Profit Organizations</i>	27
<i>Agricultural Exemption Program</i>	27
<i>Individual Philanthropy</i>	28
PROTECTED LANDS INVENTORY	29
SELECT LAND CATEGORIES	29
<i>Parkland</i>	29
<i>Recharge basins</i>	29
<i>Privately-owned/covenanted drainage areas</i>	30
<i>Private beach association holdings</i>	30
<i>Private sanctuaries</i>	30
<i>Other public lands dedicated/deeded/managed as open space</i>	30
<i>Cemeteries</i>	30
<i>Agricultural lands</i>	30
<i>Common areas resulting from cluster developments/site plans</i>	30
<i>Utility properties</i>	30

PROPOSED 1998 OPEN SPACE INDEX AND INITIATIVES	34
TOWN OF HUNTINGTON 1998 OPEN SPACE INDEX.....	34
<i>Incorporated Villages</i>	34
<i>Public/Quasi-Public Institutional Holdings</i>	34
<i>Dynamic Tracking/OSI Site Ranking</i>	35
<i>Scorecards/Priority Acquisition Selection</i>	35
TOWN OF HUNTINGTON OPEN SPACE INITIATIVES	38
<i>Approve November Referendum for OASIS—Huntington’s Open Areas Acquisition Program</i>	38
<i>Adopt the 1993 Huntington Comprehensive Plan</i>	38
<i>Actively Implement Existing Planning Tools</i>	39
<i>Establish Town Park Set-Aside Criteria</i>	39
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	43
PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE.....	43
STUDENT INTERNS	44
APPENDIX A - METHODOLOGY	45
OASIS—OPEN AREAS INFORMATION SYSTEM.....	45
<i>Open Space Index Property Status Methodology</i>	45
<i>Data Form Fields/Open Space Scorecard</i>	46
<i>Tracking of 1974 Open Space Index - Analysis</i>	51
<i>Creation of Proposed 1998 Open Space Index Update</i>	52
<i>Comparison of 1974 Open Space Index and Proposed 1998 Update (In Progress)</i>	52
APPENDIX B - ATTACHMENTS	54

TABLE OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: PROTECTED OPEN LANDS SUMMARY	IV
FIGURE 2: SUBDIVISION ACTIVITY OVER 38 YEARS: 1960-1998	9
FIGURE 3: SUBDIVISION ACTIVITY ON OPEN SPACE INDEX: 1975-1998	9
FIGURE 4: ACREAGE SUBDIVIDED, FILED MAPS 1960-1998	11
FIGURE 5: NUMBER OF LOTS CREATED BY YEAR, FILED MAPS 1960-1998	11
FIGURE 6: 1974 OPEN SPACE INDEX MAP	12
FIGURE 7: PARKLAND SETASIDE BY PLANNING BOARD 1975-1998	14
FIGURE 8: PARK AND PLAYGROUND FEES, 1975-1998	16
FIGURE 9: NEW BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED, 1988-1998	21
FIGURE 10: COMPARISON OF NEW BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED, 1988-1998	21
FIGURE 11: PROTECTED OPEN SPACE RESOURCES	32
FIGURE 12: PROTECTED LANDS INVENTORY MAP	33
FIGURE 13: COVER TYPE SUMMARY—PROPOSED 1998 OPEN SPACE INDEX	36
FIGURE 14: PROPOSED 1998 OPEN SPACE INDEX MAP	37
FIGURE 15: RANKING CRITERIA FOR PARKLAND-SET-ASIDE	39
FIGURE 16: HALF-MILE RADIUS MAP—ALL PARKLAND IN TOWN OF HUNTINGTON	41
FIGURE 17: HALF-MILE RADIUS MAP—TOWN OF HUNTINGTON ACTIVE PARKLAND	42
FIGURE 18: LAND RESOURCE POINT RATINGS SUMMARY	51

SUMMARY/KEY FINDINGS

This study is presented in three sections—a retrospect of what has happened to lands mapped on the 1974 Open Space Index (OSI) from January 1, 1975 to July 31, 1998; the Town's Protected Lands Inventory; and a Proposed 1998 Open Space Index Update.

The basis for report analysis is a series of databases OASIS (Open AreaS Information System) developed as a component of the Town's Geographic Information System, HELIX (Huntington Environmental and Land Information eXchange).

In 1974 Huntington was among the first towns on Long Island to adopt an Open Space Index. It is believed that no other Town on Long Island, perhaps in the state, has taken such a hard look to the past to review open space change with the goal to lead decisive future action.

The Huntington Conservation Board, serving as Technical Advisory Committee, reviewed the draft document at its September 1, 1998 meeting and has recommended its broad distribution.

1974 Open Space Index Retrospect

The 1974 OSI identified 9,500 acres deemed the Town's best remaining lands. Since then, 3,579 acres have been affected by subdivision and 382 acres were committed by commercial or industrial site plans.

Town Board and Planning Board action—direct through purchase or indirect through application review/conditions of approval—has added approximately 725 acres to the protected lands inventory (as parkland, recharge basins, and private common and recreation areas) during the 24-year study period.

Existing Town tools for open space protection do not appear to be sufficient to secure key remaining lands from increased real estate market pressure, despite the adoption of a focused OSI, the advent of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), strong policy recommendations in the 1993 Comprehensive Plan, and heightened public awareness of environmental issues and support for open space initiatives.

New residential development has affected Huntington's open landscape most significantly. The greatest amount of new construction has occurred in the low density zones (R-20, R-40, R-80).

Of 695 subdivisions filed since 1975, 220 of the maps were on the 1974 OSI. Only 3.0% of the total acreage subdivided was dedicated as parkland from 29 filed maps; 2.3% of the OSI acreage was set aside for park purposes. All but one of the parkland dedications were set aside as passive (undeveloped) parkland.

Due to continuous pressure to meet public recreation demands, park and playground fees paid in lieu of parkland dedication on subdivision approval have only been used for capital improvements to parks, never for open space acquisition.

**OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998**

Standards used by the Town and Planning Boards to determine in which cases parkland dedication should be required have been related more to neighborhood park need, as specified in Town regulations, than to a clear open space objective.

More land has been set aside through modified subdivisions/clustering to be held in private ownership (219 acres) than has been dedicated as public parkland through the subdivision process (155 acres). The establishment of ranking criteria may assist the Town's boards in making such determinations in the future.

Since 1974 forty-six (46) Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) were adopted pursuant to SEQRA by the Town Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. Only three (3) resulted in direct parkland dedication; three (3) others spurred public acquisition efforts. Two (2) Generic EISs led parkland dedication and acquisition action.

In 1997 more acreage was subdivided, more new lots created, and more new dwelling permits issued than at any other time in the past decade indicating extreme pressure in the real estate market on Huntington's remaining open space.

Public land acquisition—by New York State, Suffolk County and the Town of Huntington combined—has resulted in the protection of more open space acreage than any of the other available planning tools during the study period.

Almost 1,000 acres have been placed into the public trust since 1975 in the Town of Huntington by purchase, approximately 800 acres secured by Suffolk County and 100 acres by New York State using funds provided by bonds approved by public referendum. Less than 100 acres have been purchased by the Town for park and open space purposes.

Protected Lands Inventory

The Huntington Conservation Board specified the types of lands to be included in the Protected Lands Inventory. The table below summarizes the composition of the inventory.

FIGURE 1: PROTECTED OPEN LANDS SUMMARY

Acreage	Type of Protected Open Land
5,477	parkland
681	recharge basins/aquifer protection areas
16	private beach association holdings
108	private sanctuaries
52	other managed public open space
202	cemeteries
49	agricultural land with development rights purchased by the County
350	private common areas
882	utility lands (electric and water)

**OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998**

The most significant properties protected in the Town to date have been secured by government agency purchase following public referendum. The Town's first such referendum to acquire parkland was in 1906, its last was in 1962.

Proposed 1998 Open Space Index

Initiatives are urgently needed to mitigate open space loss in the Town of Huntington to preserve quality of life and balance needs of the residents in all communities.

A Proposed 1998 Open Space Index is presented identifying 164 areas covering 6,380 acres. Significant new additions are institutional holdings (schools, hospitals).

The Town of Huntington has a very desirable building market that is limiting opportunities for open space conservation. The current Planning Board agenda carries subdivision, site plan and change of zone applications affecting 145 tax parcels, including 56 parcels (592 acres) mapped on the 1974 OSI and 51 parcels (604 acres) proposed for the 1998 OSI.

An updated Open Space Index should be recommended by the Huntington Conservation Board to the Town Board for adoption pursuant to General Municipal Law by November 1998 to identify the key remaining lands in the Town which should require special analysis and to prioritize governmental action to protect the most significant open lands thereon.

With public support the bond referendum scheduled for general voter consideration on November 3, 1998 will enable the Town to acquire important remaining/threatened lands in the next ten years; to keep pace with development/market pressure; and to improve recreational facilities.

The Comprehensive Plan should be adopted as prescribed by Town law (with this report as an amendment thereto as an important elaboration of its policy recommendations) to insure balance of environmental, social, and economic goals.

New ordinances should be drafted and enacted to better protect very steep slopes and freshwater wetlands and to limit use of such sensitive areas for development yield purposes.

Town park set-aside criteria need to be established to assure that potential for dedication of important open space properties is consistently analyzed (with this document in mind) and that appropriate action is taken.

The Subdivision Regulations and Site Improvement Specifications should be revised to incorporate a park and playground fee schedule which reflects a greater portion of land value (that could otherwise be required as parkland dedication), especially in the low-density residential zoning districts.

Each proposed land use change should be considered for consistency with goals elaborated in the New York State Open Space Plan, Town Comprehensive Plan, Huntington Open Space Index, and this study to insure active and passive open space needs are met. All available tools should be employed by the Town's reviewing agencies and boards to maximize protection of open space.

PREFACE

SUPPORTING STUDIES

The New York State Open Space Plan, 1998, prepared by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Local Open Space Planning, A Guide to the Process, 1997, prepared by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; Town of Huntington Comprehensive Plan, 1993, prepared by the Huntington Department of Planning; and Town of Huntington Open Space Index, 1974, prepared by the Huntington Conservation Board are all considered associated references of this study and therefore, an integral part hereof. Together these documents provide a decisive platform supporting careful open space planning, identifying conservation tools and measures, and framing the need for the implementation of timely, dynamic programs at the local municipal level of government.

QUALITY OF COMMUNITY

The rationale for open space conservation, as a basic community quality of life issue, is presented eloquently in the following excerpt reprinted from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation from Local Open Space Planning, A Guide to the Process, 1997 (footnotes excluded):

“The quality of life of people in each community in New York State depends upon the quality and character of their environment. Mountains, lakes, rivers, wetlands, forests, coastal plains and seashores all provide habitat for a diversity of plant and animal species and serve a variety of human needs. They are interesting and attractive places for people to live, work and explore. Historic sites that tell stories about the experiences of our ancestors, parks where people can “recreate,” in the true sense of the word, and open spaces, such as gardens and farmland, are all part of the heritage of the Empire State.

The distribution and character of these natural and cultural resources affect transportation and employment patterns, influence where people live, affect how people perceive themselves and how they relate to other New Yorkers and the rest of the nation.

Significant as they are, these resources are also fragile. Poorly designed and unplanned development can permanently mar or destroy them. However, once people decide which areas should be retained as open space and which developed for more intensive use, they can save what they love best about their communities while still accommodating desirable growth.

Why Plan for Open Space Conservation?

The process of getting everyone together to think about community needs is a worthwhile endeavor in itself. An open space plan is much more than a public land acquisition plan. It can make a wide variety of recommendations about the future of a community.

An open space conservation plan can recommend new recreational facilities to enhance the economic and social life of the community. It can suggest that a community enhance its downtown by planting shade trees and creating small sitting parks. It can protect wetlands and other ecologically important features. It can lead to the establishment of linkages between these areas and sites through greenways and bicycle trails.

An open space plan is the flip side of a development plan. After identifying important open spaces, it will be much more apparent where development should occur. It can also recommend land use regulations that will help protect the community from uneconomic and inefficient sprawl.

Some people may believe there is no threat to the natural and cultural resources in their community. Others may believe they already have an abundance of open space. However, because open space planning can improve a community's recreational opportunities, aesthetic appeal and economic growth, communities that are fully developed, communities on the urban/rural fringe and communities in the most thinly populated towns of the state can all benefit from open space planning.

New York's natural and cultural resources are exhaustible and vulnerable. People have the power to conserve these resources or to destroy them. How well residents of New York plan for and conserve open land while providing space for homes, commercial and industrial places and community and transportation facilities, will have a profound impact on future generations. The community level is the most important place for open space planning to happen. If it isn't done there, it may not be done at all.

What is Open Space?

Open space has intrinsic utility and value. It serves many purposes, whether it is publicly or privately owned. Open space is more than just vacant land which has not been developed for residential, commercial, industrial, institutional or other intensive uses. Lakes, streams, beaches and cliffs qualify as open space. Ballparks, playing fields, urban parks, public gardens, cemeteries, wetlands, forestland and farmland are also open space.

What is defined as open space depends, in part, on its surroundings. A vacant lot used for a community garden or a small marsh, are important open spaces in a crowded city. A narrow corridor or a pathway for walking or bicycling is open space, even though it may be adjoined by intensive development. Historic and archeological sites are often associated with significant open spaces and they are part of the heritage of New York State.

The Benefits of Open Space

People benefit socially, environmentally and economically from the conservation of open space in their communities.

Social Benefits

Communities that have interesting and diverse recreation areas and scenic open spaces usually have a special ambiance and attractive qualities. These attributes help to define these communities and lead residents to a strong identification with their neighborhoods. By becoming partners or “stakeholders” in making their community attractive, people develop a strong sense of community. They will take great pride in a beautiful park or riverfront they have helped to preserve for their own enjoyment. In turn, this builds stable communities.

Community identification can lead to more social interaction through community and family activities which can promote a sense of a common heritage. Open spaces are places for families to escape from the stress and routine of everyday life. They are a refuge for all New Yorkers. For example, a park may provide a friendly gathering place for elderly and retired people. A museum or historical site can give people a sense of heritage and provide lessons about the past that can be applied in the future.

An attractive park in an economically depressed and physically run-down area makes children feel better about their neighborhood and themselves. A community sports program provides an alternative for at-risk youths by providing places for children to play and for young people to participate in athletics. Community conservation programs can also provide young people with an opportunity to focus their energy in a positive way and build self esteem. The staff of these programs often provide much needed role models. Yet in order to have successful programs for children, communities must plan for well-maintained parks and open spaces for them to use. Along with other community and educational improvements, carefully planned open spaces can be helpful in guiding children towards a successful future.

Open spaces provide a place for recreation and maintenance of physical health as well as a place for spiritual revitalization. Some open spaces can provide opportunities for hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, hunting and fishing. Others can provide opportunities to play basketball, tennis, football, frisbee, etc. Physical health often reduces stress, which, in turn, can help to ward off many illnesses, including cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Open spaces contribute to mental health by promoting relaxation, inspiration and personal reflection. Parks and preserves provide an opportunity for busy, tense people to walk, sit, think and relax. Contemplating an aesthetically appealing landscape or a beautiful stream can provide inspiration. When people are healthy, they are motivated and more productive. They will be better on the job and at home.

Environmental Benefits

Conserving open spaces and related natural resources allows important biological resources and natural habitats to remain intact and ecologically healthy. These habitats sustain the many species that exist in New York State and help achieve biological diversity which is important to the survival of humankind.

Naturally-vegetated open land can minimize the potentially adverse effects of urban development on water quality. When land is developed with impermeable surfaces, such as buildings, driveways, parking lots and highways, greater amounts of pollutants, such as oil, road salt and heavy metals, run off through storm sewers into streams and lakes. Lawn chemicals seep through the soil into the groundwater or move through tributary streams directly into lakes

and reservoirs. Vegetated land serves as a filter for pollutants, slowing run-off and reducing erosion and sedimentation. Wetlands can significantly neutralize or reduce pollution as water filters through them. Conserving vegetated buffer areas along the shorelines of streams, lakes or reservoirs that supply public drinking water and on lands that serve as aquifer recharge areas can help to protect water quality.

Forests, wetlands and other vegetated land can also benefit a community by absorbing storm water, thus reducing the possibility of floods. Wetlands serve as natural reservoirs for excess flood waters. They help to prevent shoreline erosion; and they can protect valuable agricultural land by buffering these areas from wave or stream activity. Preserving wetland resources so that they can carry out these natural functions will help to prevent costly storm or flood damage.

Urban woodlands, street trees and urban parks with lots of vegetation all help to improve the urban environment by cleaning the air, absorbing noise and by providing shade and wildlife habitat.

Finally, open spaces provide areas for environmental education. Natural areas are living museums of natural history. Interpretive walks and classes conducted in preserved natural areas can increase one's appreciation for the environment.

Economic Benefits

The existence of high quality open space is a magnet for attracting high value development in a community. There are many examples. An examination of the value of the homes around Central Park in New York City illustrates that property adjacent to open land often is more valuable than property without such an advantage.

Frederick Law Olmsted, the famous landscape architect and designer of public and private parks, documented how property values and real estate taxes increased as a result of their proximity to Central Park. The closer the property was to Central Park, the higher the property value was. By examining comparable property in wards that were not near the park, he estimated that the value of the residences right on the park might have been worth only \$53 million in 1873 if the park had not been built. However, in 1873 their actual appraised value was \$236 million.

The same result can be documented today in any community where there is residential development adjacent to marshlands, parks or other open areas. In Worcester, Massachusetts, an analysis showed that homes located 20 feet from a park sold for \$2,675 (1982 dollars) more than a similar home located 2000 feet from the park.

The Center for Rural Massachusetts studied the appreciation in value of homes in a subdivision with very little open space as compared with the homes in a cluster subdivision. In the cluster subdivision, the homes had smaller lots than allowable in the zoning ordinance to make room for two ponds, a tennis court, a baseball diamond and a village common. The study found that homes in the cluster subdivision appreciated 12.7 percent faster over a 21-year period than the homes in the conventional subdivision. When homes appreciate in value, they generate more tax revenue for the municipality.

Open spaces also provide economic benefits to a community in the form of industries and employment. For example, New York's agricultural industry contributes \$15.5 billion per year to the state's economy; the forest products industry contributes \$8.3 billion per year. Many local economies depend on agricultural land for their vitality. Similarly, many local economies depend on the continued existence of open land for productive forestry. Municipalities that have a varied and diverse base of usable open spaces attract tourists, new businesses and skilled residents.

The Report of the President's Commission: Americans Outdoors explains how a community can benefit economically from open space: "Across the country, when people are asked where they would prefer to live, work, shop, and recreate, they invariably select communities or neighborhoods that have an abundance of trees, open spaces, and uncluttered pedestrian ways. These preferences translate into clear economic terms: if a community is to succeed in attracting new residents and businesses, it must be concerned about its appearance, physical character, livability and 'feel'."

New York State has a \$32 billion dollar a year tourism and travel industry. Tax revenues are derived from sales of items used in open spaces such as athletic equipment, binoculars, hiking boots, and fishing and hunting equipment. Private businesses often locate near parks and recreational facilities to capitalize on the high volume of visitors. Businesses catering to sportspeople are located in areas where there is good hunting and fishing. Scenic views, riverside parks and trails also can attract visitors from outside of the local area, thus bringing in "new money to stimulate the local economy. When a community has a pleasant atmosphere as the result of thoughtful planning, and when it is not burdened by unsightly and uneconomic land uses and activities that so often result from unplanned development, people will be eager to visit and settle there.

Finally, there is a widely held misconception that saving open space may result in a loss of tax revenue that could be obtained if the land were developed. In fact, there are many studies and examples that indicate that preservation of important open spaces can enhance a municipality's revenue base. The overall balance sheet must be examined.

In most cases, when a parcel of land is developed for residential use, local governments must provide costly services, which include schools, waste disposal, recreational facilities, police protection and highway maintenance among other things. The cost of services will vary, depending on the demographics of an area. For example, a newly developed neighborhood with many families and children might need to spend more on school systems and playgrounds. Other special conditions would apply in areas of vacation homes. In 1990, Scenic Hudson, Inc. conducted a study of the revenues and expenditures for residentially developed land in Red Hook, Fishkill, and Amenia. Residential development required an outlay of \$1.11 to \$1.23 in services for every dollar it raised in taxes, while open land required only \$.17 to \$.74 in services for each dollar it raised.

INTRODUCTION

This Open Space Plan is a survey study of lands mapped on the 1974 Open Space Index for the Town of Huntington and what has happened to them. It summarizes the success of the open space planning options available to local decision-making bodies during the study period, quantifies existing lands secured, and presents a new register of lands for consideration as a 1998 Open Space Index Update.

This analysis is a three part dynamic study of open space in the Town of Huntington (*OASIS*) responsive to the recommendations contained in the Environmental Conditions and Parks, Open Space and Historic Resources Chapters of the Planning Board-adopted 1993 Comprehensive Plan, as well as direction from the Huntington Town Board. While this study was started several years ago, the Huntington Town Board directed preparation of a Town Open Space Plan by resolution of March 3, 1998 (see Appendix B).

Section I focuses on the 1974 Open Space Index as a retrospect summary of progress toward goals given existing tools. Section II identifies Protected Open Space, lands that are already secured and serving a vital community open space function. Section III frames an integrated Land Protection Plan, proposing a Draft 1998 Open Space Index, policies and initiatives to “cover more territory” in the new century. The entire three part analysis is based on related databases that can be readily adapted, updated and displayed spatially to reflect the commitment of lands to specific uses be it for development or conservation—comprising the Town’s first digital plan.

There is a major difference to be noted between the Town of Huntington's 1974 Open Space Index and the proposed 1998 Open Space Plan. *The Town of Huntington was among the first communities on Long Island to prepare and adopt an Open Space Index.* In 1974 when the Open Space Index was prepared, the Conservation Board had a true choice in selecting the 164 areas spanning 9,500 acres. Those areas were the most important remaining large open lands in the town. Nearly twenty-five years later, there remains discretion, however, it is limited by opportunity which is ever-diminishing (see Appendix B (Newsday, July 24, 1998, “Land Filled; For Builders on LI, Open Tracts Are Becoming Scarce and Pricey”). The 164 areas included on the proposed 1998 Open Space Index (OSI) are essentially all of the properties remaining in the unincorporated Town of Huntington which as an OSI area comprise a mass of over 10 acres (and several of smaller size) which might be affected by new development options. Together they cover just over 6,300 acres and some are already partially improved or threatened by pending development proposals.

Publication of this document might be perceived as flagging development opportunities; however, the intent of the study was to discern how almost 25 years of change in the Town of Huntington has altered the open space landscape and to identify remaining sites with significant open space/conservation planning potential. This is not to say that areas not nominated for the 1998 Open Space Index are insignificant. *Any practical opportunity to conserve accessible open space, to add buffer to already protected open space, or to link protected areas or sensitive resources by corridors and reserves warrants further exploration.*

OPEN SPACE INDEX RETROSPECT 1974-1998

HUNTINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL AND LAND INFORMATION EXCHANGE (HELIX)

In 1992 the then-Department of Planning sought to establish a Geographic Information System (GIS) for enhanced data management and analysis by requesting a \$15,000 state legislative member item grant of Senator Ralph J. Marino to purchase an IBM server and the necessary software (ArcInfo, ArcView, AutoCad) to enable the mapping of data resources. The grant was awarded, additional Town funding was appropriated, and the system was installed. It was named HELIX for Huntington Environmental and Land Information Exchange in anticipation of inter-departmental land-based data sharing. As a precursor to the system and following its growth and development through Town Board support, the Department of Planning has been in the practice of database management since Richard Machtay assumed the position of Director in 1988. Prior to his tenure, there were no computers in the department. However, with his foresight and guidance, it became the first Town agency to run its own network of personal computers. Recently, the Town Board recognized the growing function of the GIS by incorporating it in Town Code among the responsibilities of the Land Management Division of the Department of Planning and Environment. This report is a testament to the innate power of a GIS as a planning tool and its unique suitability for data development, mapping and analysis necessary to present an open space plan to lead Town action into the coming century.

Tracking Of Open Space Index—Inventory and Process

The Town of Huntington Open Space Index was prepared by the Huntington Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) in accordance with New York State General Municipal Law §13-F and adopted by the Huntington Town Board in 1974. Upon adoption of the Open Space Index, the CAC became a Conservation Board with authority to review land use applications that might affect the 164 mapped Open Space Index (OSI) parcels and to provide advisory comment thereon to the Town's decision-making boards. The 1974 Open Space Index preceded the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and yet, its existence caused the reclassification of several development proposals, otherwise Unlisted actions, as Type I requiring more rigorous SEQRA reviews considering the mapped OSI parcels as designated open space.

During the course of updating Huntington's Comprehensive Plan, particularly in preparation of the Parks, Open Space and Historic Resources and the Environmental Conditions Chapters, it became clear that much of the Town's open landscape had been transformed by new development since 1974 and that cautious tracking of mapped OSI resources was necessary. It is significant to note that while efforts were taken to compile all necessary related data in computerized databases, in anticipation of the planned town geographic information system, much of the information presented and analyzed in this document was culled only through manual searching of paper records. A summary is presented which describes actions taken to identify the present status of lands on the 1974 OSI and to enable identification of what properties should remain on the OSI, intact or in part and which had been fully developed or yielded (e.g., pursuant to filed subdivision or approved site plan) or protected (see Appendix A).

Tools For Huntington Open Space Preservation

Several protection techniques have been available to the Town's reviewing agencies since the Open Space Index adoption in 1974. A summary of how those methods have been applied to conservation of land resources throughout the Town of Huntington and mapped on the Open Space Index follows.

LAWS AND LEGAL BASIS

New York State General Municipal Law

In accordance with Article 12-F, Section 239-Y of New York State General Municipal Law, the Huntington Conservation Advisory Council was designated a Conservation Board on Town Board approval of the conservation open area inventory and map as the open space index of the municipality. Among the general powers and duties of conservation boards, it is specified in §239-y:

"3...To further assist a city, town or village in the development of sound open space planning and assure preservation of natural and scenic resources on the local level, a conservation board shall:

- a. Review each application received by the local legislative body or by the building department, zoning board, planning board, board of appeals or other administrative body, which seeks approval for the use or development of any open areas listed in the open space index. The conservation board shall submit a written report to the referral body within forty-five days of receipt of such application. Such report shall evaluate the proposed use or development of the open area in terms of open space planning objectives of the municipality and shall include the effect of such use or development on the open space index. The report shall make recommendations as to the most appropriate use or development of the open area and may include preferable alternative use proposals consistent with open areas conservation. A copy of every report shall be filed with the legislative body;..."

While the Planning Department has been distributing subdivision, site plan and rezoning applications to the Conservation Board for review since the adoption of the Open Space Index, the Engineering Department has referred only Marine Conservation law applications, not building permit applications, to the Conservation Board. The Zoning Board of Appeals only started directing applications to the Conservation Board about five years ago and this was a direct result of local implementation of the SEQRA regulations (though SEQRA was enacted two decades ago). Many smaller proposals were not referred. The Conservation Board has the prerogative of recommending specific action involving Open Space Index sites.

The Conservation Board has been responsive to the applications forwarded for review. Since the Open Space Index was adopted in 1974, it is estimated that the Conservation Board forwarded more than 500 reports to the Town of Huntington's reviewing agencies in its land use review capacity. In 1983 the Huntington Conservation Board received a New York State Association of Conservation Councils (NYSACC) award for its volume in annual subdivision review, clearly indicative of the booming land market at that time. The Board's capacity expands as best it can to meet demand. As a *volunteer* entity, the Conservation Board's abilities are totally dependent on its component members. While Conservation Board reports are not binding on any of the reviewing agencies to

which they are presented, they provide a continuous channel for advisory information passage to decision-makers and for open space advocacy.

New York State Town Law

Pursuant to Article 16, Section 272-a of the New York State Town Law, the Huntington Planning Board adopted a Comprehensive (Master) Plan on April 21, 1993 (in July 1993 Town Law was changed so that a Comprehensive Plan is now adopted by a Town Board). Among the salient recommendations contained in its Parks, Open Space and Historic Resources Chapter is: "Update Town Open Space Index continuously, in cooperation with Huntington Conservation Board, biennially reevaluating preferences/ranking for open space protection and identify those properties in greatest need of special scrutiny." While only an advisory document, the open space index can focus a municipality and its reviewing agencies consistently on those open areas of greatest relevance. Over the past decade the OSI document has been neither functionally supportive, nor particularly relevant on an individual parcel basis because of the amount of land use change in the Town. *To be truly meaningful the OSI must be a dynamic planning instrument responsive to change. With the advent of the townwide Geographic Information System, the OSI is becoming such a spatially-linked document.*

The 1965 Comprehensive Plan, in effect until five years ago, considered parks and recreational facilities, but not environmental conditions or open space resources. However, several of the purchases pursuant to that document (e.g., Dix Hills Park and Crab Meadow) provided some of the most important Town recreation areas. As a preservation tool, the comprehensive plan is possibly the most significant as it establishes planning policy for the town.

The 1993 Huntington Comprehensive Plan contains a strong open space component which recognizes the correlation between open space resources and quality of life issues. Since the 1993 plan adoption, environmental reviews conducted by the Planning Department pursuant to SEQRA have been more thorough in review of Open Space Index-mapped sites and giving consideration to the parcel planning recommendations. *While there are firm preservation goals and an administrative program contained in the Comprehensive Plan, it has not been embraced by the Town Board to assure implementation.*

New York State Environmental Conservation Law

With the adoption of the State Environmental Quality Review Act in 1975 and subsequent phased implementation, Huntington began its own infusion of the systematic process of classifying, reviewing, and mitigating actions that affect changes to the local environment. The early SEQRA Handbook summarizes its purpose on page A-3: "By incorporating a systematic interdisciplinary approach to environmental review in the early planning stages, projects can be modified, as needed, to avoid adverse impacts on the environment." While many continue to view the SEQRA process with trepidation, the intent of SEQRA was and is to protect the environment with public participation in identifying potential adverse impacts and reasoning appropriate mitigation as practicable. The diverse protection tools that follow in this chapter discussion resulted in many preservation actions throughout the Town of Huntington. Among the most important of these was the careful integration and overall pervasiveness of the SEQRA process. It has been through the provision of mitigation pursuant to SEQRA that most local conservation accomplishments in the Open Space Index arena have occurred. *The need to identify potential open space impacts and to*

provide mitigation therefor through SEQRA is at its best an exercise in open space planning and, at worst, a flag that a resource is in jeopardy.

Most SEQRA reviews follow a basic four-step process—classification of the proposed action to determine if a review is warranted; coordination of review with all involved agencies which results in establishment of lead agency; preparation of an environmental assessment form which identifies potential impacts and, as necessary, presents mitigation for lead agency review; and determination of significance (negative declaration, conditioned negative declaration, or positive declaration) by the lead agency based on the potential for adverse environmental impact. A negative declaration or conditioned negative declaration may be issued if the action satisfactorily incorporates mitigation or project changes to diminish potential adverse effects to an acceptable level. A positive declaration is warranted where there is potential for significant adverse environmental, social or economic effect. Such a declaration of significance often results in a project review that is lengthy and costly (in terms of time and money). Upon issuing a positive declaration, an environmental impact statement is drafted and subjected to public review prior to its adoption as a final document by the lead agency and issuance of a findings statement which provides a reasoned elaboration of among other things: potential impacts, resource evaluation, mitigation, and alternatives that support a decision on the action. The decision can be an approval of the proposed action or include additional mitigation, or an alternative thereto, or denial.

To date 46 projects in the Town of Huntington have been the subject of environmental impact statements (EISs) with the Town Board having required the greatest number (21, mostly for change of zone applications), followed by the Planning Board (17, mainly for subdivision applications) and Zoning Board of Appeals (7) since SEQRA has been implemented on a local level. All such EISs were prepared after the adoption of the 1974 OSI; several are still active and have yet to progress to findings. Nearly all the projects that have undergone such extensive review have resulted in the lead agency adopting an alternative to the proposed action or the incorporation of additional environmental mitigation. While 27 (58%) involved properties listed on the Open Space Index, only three of the projects for which an EIS has been prepared have resulted in outright public dedication/deeding of open space to the Town (Vanderbilt Plat, Paumanok Hills, Carmel Rezoning) to date. Three others (Timber Ridge at the Plains, Instrument Systems Co., Alvin Benjamin Rezoning) are also likely to result in some dedication upon filing of their corresponding subdivisions. Three have spurred direct public agency action to acquire the sites (Suffolk County—Cold Spring Woods Estates, Franfair Associates/Froehlich; Town of Huntington—Centerport Mill Pond); another such action under consideration may result in partial public agency acquisition (County and Town—Ingraham Estates). Twelve of the actions for which EISs were prepared resulted in the retention of private, covenanted open space. Two of the Generic Environmental Impact Statements accepted during the study period led parkland dedications and acquisitions—Melville-Route 110 Corridor (Carmel and Paumanok Hills rezonings) and Centerport (Alvernia Estates). While other governmental agencies have required preparation of EISs in the Town during this period, such as the New York State Department of Transportation and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, only the local agency determinations were tracked for the purpose of this report.

The process of preparing a draft environmental impact statement to analyze potential impacts, mitigation and alternatives; subjecting it to public review; responding to comments in a final environmental impact statement; and preparing findings has not been a remarkably powerful tool for open space preservation in the Town in quantifiable terms. This is not necessarily reflective of any

indifference to the issue, but rather, that SEQRA prescribes that a balance be found between economic, social and environmental factors. The need to preserve open space is not relevant in every action before every lead agency, often other factors are more pressing. *The only broad trend that can be identified from review of the EIS chronology is that nearly all such projects which involved OSI-mapped sites resulted in some retention of open space, be it planned as part of the action or mitigation thereto, or as a subsequent action driven by the review outcome/findings.*

SEQRA reviews are conducted by different agencies in the Town depending on the type of action proposed and the response of other involved agencies upon coordinated review. Typically the Town Board is lead agency for reviews involving change of zone applications; bonding for capital improvements; and special initiatives. Usually the Planning Board is granted lead agency status for reviews of subdivisions and site plans. Generally the Zoning Board of Appeals is lead agency for applications requesting area and use variances, and special use permits. Where a proposed action involves a secondary approval from another agency (e.g., subdivision after rezoning), the Planning and Town Boards and Zoning Board of Appeals may serve in an advisory capacity to one another, as interested agencies pursuant to SEQRA. All reviews noted above are drafted by the professional staff of the Department of Planning and Environment for review and determination by the respective Boards. The Department of Maritime Services also conducts SEQRA reviews, serving as expert staff to the Town Board on Marine Conservation Law applications and waterfront-related projects. There is a substantial, ever-growing body of case law involving the local implementation of SEQRA throughout New York State which will continue to influence its execution.

The Conservation Board is an advisory group that does not have the discretion to make a decision to fund, carry out or approve an action; therefore, it can not be a lead or involved agency. However, to a large extent, the Town's reviewing entities have considered the Conservation Board an interested agency pursuant to SEQRA for projects that have potential to affect properties mapped on the Open Space Index or which involve marine conservation law applications or potential to affect already-protected lands. The Conservation Board is comprised of concerned men and women with backgrounds in science, engineering, and education and experience in conservation and environmental issues.

Applications for projects in the Town of Huntington are often reviewed for permits under several other sections of state environmental conservation law as they relate to freshwater wetlands, tidal wetlands, solid waste management, coastal zone management, etc. While the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation openly advocates open space planning and is the agency most directly involved in implementation of the state's environmental regulations, *the NYSDEC has not forwarded applications to the Huntington Conservation Board for review based on the affected property's designated open space status, although it could have considered them an interested agency and evaluated OSI issues.* There have been instances in which Town staff have informed the NYSDEC of such designation and SEQRA classification and determination of significance have been revised accordingly.

Code of the Town of Huntington, §198—Zoning

The land development process goes hand in hand with land conservation in the Town of Huntington. While many would view the two as mutually exclusive, it is through the development/application review process that much of the land presently in town ownership has been set aside. This has occurred mainly through the combined efforts of the Planning Board and Town Board through

subdivision review, though also on occasion through site plan and rezoning review and approval. All of the information available on these application types was in paper format prior to the initiation of this study. Databases were created as part of this analysis to quantitatively track parameters associated with these applications.

Section 198 of Town Code embodies the zoning ordinance with the following defined purpose:

"The zoning regulations and districts as herein established have been made in accordance with a comprehensive plan for the purpose of promoting health, safety, morals and general welfare in the Town of Huntington. They have been designed to lessen congestion in the streets; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water supply, sewage disposal, schools, parks and other public requirements. They have been made with reasonable consideration, among other things, to the character of the district and its peculiar suitability for particular uses, and with a view to conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout the town."

Most of the land originally mapped on the 1974 OSI was and remains zoned for low-density residential use. Of the 164 OSI parcels, 135 were zoned entirely residential (82%) with 122 zoned low-density residential—R-80, R-40, R-20 (74%).

Specific changes have been made to the Town Code since the adoption of the 1974 OSI which were positive actions that: provided additional protection to select park lands (§159-3 Park-Preserves); enabled multi-use trail designation to avail some passive parkland for recreational use (§159-17, Huntington Greenway Trail) and enabled use of a new tool (§198-118.2, Transfer Of Development Rights) to secure land. While the transfer of development rights (TDR) has been a viable tool codified since 1991, it has yet to be implemented by the Town Board, although an application for change of zone has recently been submitted incorporating TDR as a component. Other protective mechanisms have been proposed for Town Board and Planning Board action, but have not been enacted. Two of these which were strongly supported by the Conservation Board were the creation of a Conservation and Recreation District zoning classification which would have been an amendment to the Zoning Code and a natural buffer area provision which would have been a revision to the Town Subdivision and Site Improvement Specifications.

Suffolk County Sanitary Code, Article VI Density Requirements

Following extensive study, the Suffolk County Sanitary Code was amended to incorporate density requirements for all parcels which appeared as separately assessed on the Suffolk County Tax Map as of January 1, 1981 with the objective of meeting the state groundwater discharge limit for nitrate-nitrogen of 10 milligrams per liter. The density requirements were to be applied according to the groundwater management zone in which a site was situated. While the Town of Huntington includes lands mapped in Hydrogeological Management Zones I and VIII, the density requirements are the same throughout—allowing a maximum of 600 gallons per day (GPD) per acre of sanitary wastewater to be managed by a conventional cesspool/septic system. A single-family dwelling is assessed at 300 GPD. In effect, this standard created an overlay district tantamount to R-20 (20,000 square feet minimum) zoning except for those instances where extraordinary measures were available (e.g., sewerage to an existing/planned treatment plant) or specific relief was granted by the County Department of Health Services' Board of

Review (e.g., minor in-fill situations in existing higher-density developments). This upheld objectives of the 201 and 208 Studies, regional wastewater analyses coordinated by the Long Island Regional Planning Board in the early years of the study period which concluded that non-sewering (non-structural) alternatives for sewage disposal should be pursued based on issues raised by creation of the Southwest Sewer District.

The density requirements can be credited with diminishing some potential residential development yields in the Town's zoning districts where the classification is for higher density than R-20 since the inception of the Open Space Index. However, while the number of residences that may have resulted in a particular development was limited by the standard, the Sanitary Code had no effect on limiting sprawl to preserve open space. As public water was available in all areas of the Town, in theory, once density was determined, project yields could have been clustered to retain more land in an open state, particularly in higher density areas. In actuality, the County Department of Health Service's requirements are based on an averaging of wastewater loads across a site to accomplish distributed discharge/maximal diffusion. The 1993 Comprehensive Plan recognized half-acre zoning (R-20) as a low-density residential use (in the 1965 Comprehensive Plan it was considered medium-density) in deference to the County density requirements.

LAND USE APPLICATION REVIEW

Subdivision of Real Property

Section 198-118C. of the Town Zoning Ordinance states: "In order to carry out the purpose and intention of this chapter, every person, corporation, partnership and association, incorporated or unincorporated, other than a church-cemetery organization attached to a religious parish within the County of Suffolk, who engages in the subdivision or resubdivision of real property in any zoning district of the Town of Huntington shall be required to obtain the approval of the Planning Board of such subdivision or resubdivision in the office of the Clerk of Suffolk County in accordance with §335 of the Real Property Law and shall comply with the Subdivision Regulations and Site Improvement Specifications of the Town of Huntington, New York."

Figures 2 and 3 on the following pages summarize information from a subdivision database developed by and for the Huntington Department of Planning and Environment which includes data from all filed subdivision maps in the town dating back to 1960. A 1965 Parks Progress Report prepared by the Huntington Planning Department shows that 194.06 acres were acquired by Planning Board action through subdivision approval activity since 1954.

The subdivision process resulted in the partitioning of 5,129.75 acres throughout the Town of Huntington in the 24-year period since 1974 in 695 filed subdivisions, clearly setting the stage for the greatest amount of developmental change to the local environment. Of this total, 3,579.07 acres in 220 subdivisions, 32%, of all subdivisions and 70% of all acreage subdivided during the study period, were on the Open Space Index. The greatest amount of subdivision activity on the Open Space Index, considering acreage affected, occurred in the southeast quadrant of the town (1,327.01 acres), with the southwest (1,077.15 acres), northwest (680.29 acres) and northeast (494.61 acres) following in descending order. Together the southeast and southwest quadrants contained 66%, two-thirds of the acreage influenced by subdivision of land listed on the OSI during the past 24

years. This reflects the town's historic settlement patterns with the northern communities with more ready access to the waterfront and historic travel routes having been developed earlier. It is likely that proximity of the Long Island Expressway and Northern State Parkway to Route 110 spurred the industrial corridor development and with it much of the supporting/surrounding residential construction to the detriment of what had long been a significant agricultural area of the Town.

As the agency directly responsible for approval of subdivision applications, the Planning Board has had the opportunity and greatest influence to shape the future of Huntington's open spaces. For the past 24 years, the town's decision-making entities have had the benefit of the 1974 Open Space Index which identified key holdings and provided recommendations regarding land conservation; nevertheless, there has been limited setaside of property for public ownership in comparison to the number of subdivision applications. This tool of setting aside parkland through the subdivision process has resulted in the acquisition of only 150.76 acres during the study period. While this acreage is significant as this public parkland/open space was acquired at no direct cost to Town of Huntington residents, it represents only 3.1% of the total subdivision acreage during the period. *Given that Huntington has an Open Space Index; that SEQRA was enacted; that a State Open Space Plan was adopted; and that the updated Comprehensive Plan for the Town called for more urgent proactive measures, it symbolizes more than lost opportunities. It highlights the need for a defined programmatic approach to be incorporated by the collective Boards that have jurisdiction over these key land use decisions.*

The amount of parkland preserved through the subdivision process falls short of the 10% that could have been requested by the Planning Board. Had the full 10% been taken, an additional 362.21 acres might have been preserved. This would have resulted in not only saving much more land, but in reducing some site yields, particularly on some of the subdivisions with sizable acreage. While it is certain that some opportunities to set aside large parks were not realized, of the 695 subdivisions filed during the study period, 556 were maps covering less than 10 acres; 456 covered less than 5 acres. Of the 220 subdivisions which affected lands mapped on the OSI, 104 covered less than 10 acres; 55 were maps covering less than 5 acres. The perceived "loss" of land, while large in terms of sheer acreage that might have been dedicated, would not have been any contiguous tract, but rather, distributed into many small holdings throughout the Town. The Planning Board does consider whether a proposed subdivision is in a low-density residentially-zoned area in which case open space may be reserved in large contiguous back yards that can not be further subdivided, although the management of such area rests clearly with the private homeowners. Small passive community open spaces do serve valid recreational and aesthetic purposes and can enhance neighborhoods, particularly in higher-density zoned areas where access to natural cover is limited.

When there is such a disparity between the park and playground fees and the fair market value of the land, it is always in the best financial interest of the applicant to pay the fee to avoid the loss of yield. It is a delicate decision that must be made by the Town and Planning Boards on rezonings and subdivisions—whether there is a need in any given area for additional parkland, whether the subject property is of sufficient size and quality suited for such use, and whether the loss to the applicant is surpassed by public benefit. In virtually all cases involving larger properties where more intensive use is proposed, there is inherent "gain" in the approval of a rezoning or a subdivision. The "loss" is usually a relative intangible, as it factors into the Constitutionally-protected right to "reasonable use of property." To assure that the Boards have a clear, consistent approach to directing the setaside of parkland in the future, a focused policy is offered in the Proposed Open Space Program. The

OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998

cumulative success of the Town’s open space initiatives will rest largely upon the strength and conviction of the elected and appointed Board members in carrying forth policy-driven objectives.

FIGURE 2: SUBDIVISION ACTIVITY OVER 38 YEARS: 1960-1998
Acreage Subdivided/Amenities Reserved*

Time Period/ Map Total	Total Plat Acreage	Number of Plots	Parkland Set Aside (acres)	Common Area (acres)	Private Recreation (acres)	Recharge Basins (acres)	Streets/ Widening (acres)
1960-1974 998 maps	11,942.36 12.04 avg.	15,138 15.27 avg.	343.84	1.90	0.00	198.23	871.751
% of 15 -year total			2.8%	0.01%	0.0%	1.6%	7.3%
1975-1998 695 maps	5,129.75 7.38 avg.	5278 7.59 avg.	155.26	219.72	135.80	93.37	284.71
% of 24 -year total			3.0%	4.3%	2.6%	1.8%	5.5%
1960-1998 38 years 1,692 maps	17,072.11	20,416	499.103 2.9%	221.62 1.3%	135.80 0.79%	291.60 1.6%	1,156.46 6.7%

*1998 figures only include through July 31, 1998

FIGURE 3: SUBDIVISION ACTIVITY ON OPEN SPACE INDEX: 1975-1998
Acreage Subdivided/Amenities Reserved*

Time Period/ Map Total	Total Plat Acreage	Number of Plots	Parkland Set Aside (acres)	Common Area (acres)	Private Recreation (acres)	Recharge Basins (acres)	Streets/ Widening (acres)
1975-1998 maps	3,579.06 220 maps	3,272	117.84	185.57	135.80	84.5	220.15
% of 24 -year total	66%	62%	2.3%	3.6%	2.6%	2.6%	4.2%

*1998 figures only include through July 31, 1998

It is important to note that not all components of all subdivisions are reflected in the acreage breakdown tables. As an example, the Wodaembarc subdivision is noted as being on the Open Space Index. It was an attached cluster development that resulted in substantial parkland dedication to the Town and County. The parkland dedication occurred within the mapped OSI parcel, but the full site yield was developed outside the OSI parcel. As is noted elsewhere in this report, this document should be considered a work in progress and data is likely to be refined in the near future as additional sources are cross-checked. Among the elements missing from the above analysis is residential site plans, such as those for senior housing projects (e.g., Paumanok Village).

Cluster development/Common area reservation

As the result of 33 modified subdivisions, approved in accordance with Section 277 (formerly 281) of Town Law since 1975, the Planning Board secured 219.72 acres in common area reserved in private ownership and maintained by homeowners associations. Of this amount, 185.57 acres were set aside from mapped OSI areas. While much of this common area is "manipulated" open space (e.g., lawn, recreational amenities, ponds), its use and/or viewscape is similar in most cases to that of improved parkland. There are additional attached housing developments in the Town of Huntington that are not included in this calculation as they involved the approval of site plans for select zones without any subdivision (e.g., projects zoned R-RM, R-3M, and C-1). *On a proportional basis, cluster development appears to have been successful as a planning tool in reserving open space, resulting in more acreage set aside than was dedicated as parkland during the study period.*

During subdivision, modifications necessary to cluster may result in attached or detached dwellings. There has been a noticeable trend away from construction of new attached units, despite often greater benefits for open space conservation. Several major subdivisions that had received prior review as fully or partially-attached projects (e.g., The Hamlet Golf and Country Club, Hunting Hollow Farm, The Villages at Huntington, Cobblestone Estates) were either changed during the review process or following a Board approval from attached to detached units based on the claim that neither the present real estate market nor financial institutions necessary to back the development would support the investment. Some situations where the design was changed from attached to detached units resulted in a loss in yield and in common area, while others did not. Many more recently-constructed attached units in the Town are of a comparable size to new detached, single-family dwellings.

FIGURE 4: ACREAGE SUBDIVIDED, FILED MAPS 1960-1998

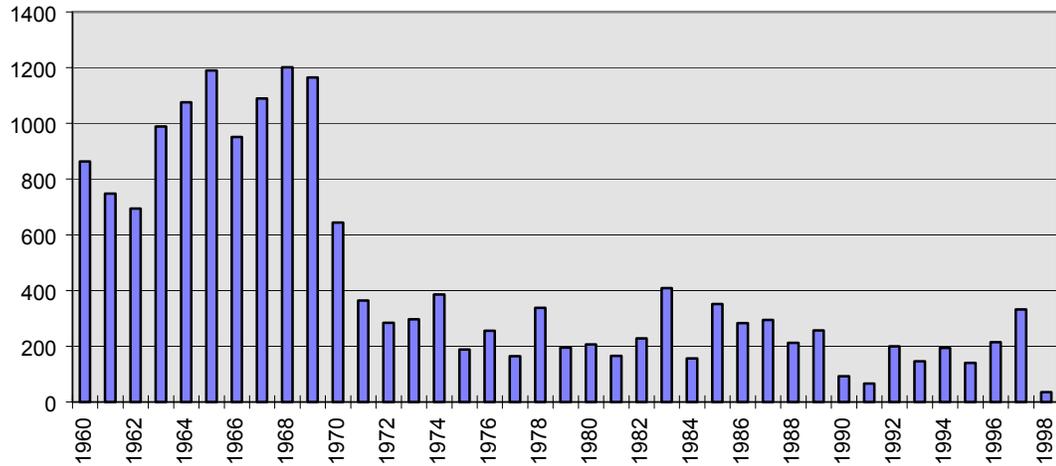


FIGURE 5: NUMBER OF LOTS CREATED BY YEAR, FILED MAPS 1960-1998

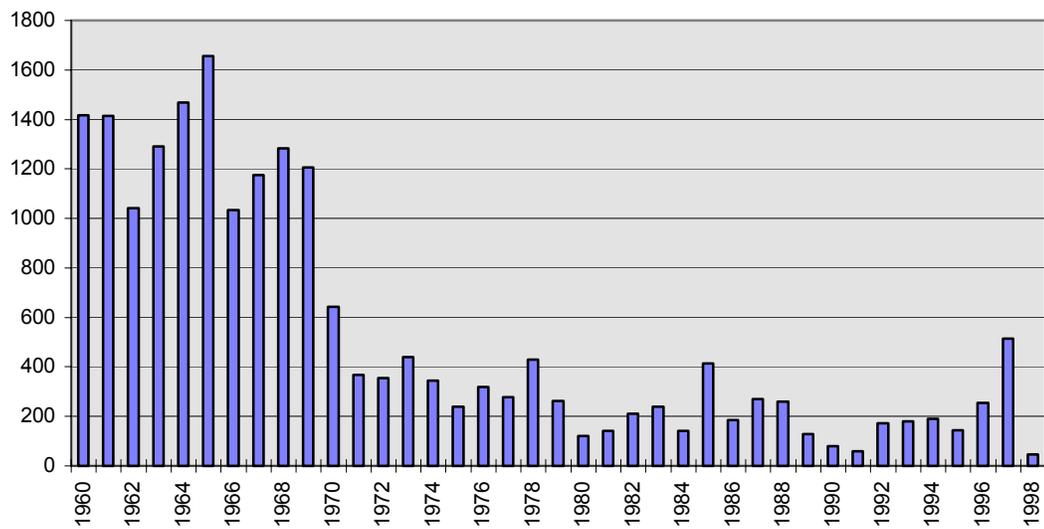


FIGURE 6: 1974 OPEN SPACE INDEX MAP

Subdivision Regulations and Site Improvement Specifications

October 24, 1972; most recent revision September 22, 1993

Article X - Park and Playground Requirements

"The Planning Board shall require the dedication of land to be set aside as a neighborhood playground or park area in each plat filed with it. Up to 10% of land may be designated as a park or recreation area if, in the Planning Board's opinion, it is in the interest of the general public due to topography, historical interest, natural features or unusual conditions. In cases where the Planning Board determines that the land or property offered for dedication for these purposes is inappropriate or insufficient for park or playground purposes due to size, topography, natural features or unusual conditions, it may approve the plat for filing on condition that the subdivider pay to the Neighborhood Park Fund of the Town of Huntington a sum of money...[to] be used for the purchase or improvement of neighborhood parks or playgrounds readily accessible to the residents or occupants of the proposed subdivision...requirements may be waived for less than five lot subdivisions if unusual circumstances are indicated."

Parkland Dedication

Of the 695 filed subdivisions spanning 5,129.75 acres since the adoption of the Town of Huntington Open Space Index on December 27, 1974, only 155.26 acres in 29 subdivisions, 3.0% of the filed map acreage, have been dedicated to the Town of Huntington as parkland as the result of Planning Board approval. Additional parkland was acquired under other programs (see Public Acquisition section below). All but four of the parkland dedications from these 29 subdivisions were less than 10 acres in size. The minimum size was 0.08 acres (Zimnoch Plat; Strathmore Park Addition), the maximum size was 39.64 acres (Wodaembarc; Crab Meadow Park Addition. All but seven of the 29 subdivisions which resulted in parkland dedication were on Open Space Index properties.¹ Of the 155.26 acres set aside as public parkland, only 117.84 were from sites on the Open Space Index. In comparison, during the prior 15-year period (1960-1974), 348.84 acres of park property were dedicated during the course of Planning Board subdivision review. While the park acreage was more than double, so was the overall acreage subdivided in the prior 15-year period, and the total ratio of land set aside as parkland was only 2.8%.

Figure 7 identifies lands set aside through direct Planning Board action on filed maps from 1975-1998. All but four of the lands set aside in the past ten years were additions to existing park holdings. Over the study period half of the areas set aside were additions to Town or County parkland. However, there have been several subdivisions in the past where an existing park was contiguous and dedications for public parkland were not required by the Planning Board, among these are The Villages at Huntington (the largest number of new homes in a subdivision of property in recent years) and Bittersweet Farm (adjoining the very significant Jerome Ambro Memorial Wetlands Preserve). A survey of all existing parkland in the Town was done to identify where vacant properties are adjoining. There remain several important opportunities where lands may be presented for

¹Some dedications that appeared on maps filed immediately after the OSI adoption were certain to have been in the works prior to the OSI and therefore, cannot be attributed directly, or completely fairly, to the 1974 document. Nevertheless, the study period defined for the purpose of this report is from 01/01/75 to 7/31/98.

OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998

subdivision that adjoin public parkland, such as Indian Hills Golf Course which adjoins the Town's Geissler's Beach. A consistent open space policy to add to existing public parkland, unified for all Boards with discretion to review land use changes, could add mass to existing holdings at no cost to the general public.

FIGURE 7: PARKLAND SETASIDE BY PLANNING BOARD 1975-1998

File Date	Map Name	Map Acreage	Addition to Existing Park	Park Acreage	Park % of Map
10/09/75	Valmont Acres Section 1	34.90	no	4.80	13.8
11/06/75	Warner Woods	25.01	no	2.73	10.9
02/28/77	High Oaks Village*	7.09	no	2.55	36.0
07/08/77	Blanche Estates**	13.90	yes	0.61	4.4
09/26/77	Huntington Farms Section 1*/**/**	20.07	no	9.73	48.5
04/14/78	Imperial Gardens at Dix Hills Section 1	48.20	no	8.74	18.1
04/25/78	Manetto Hills Estates**	59.81	no	5.07	8.5
04/19/79	Valmont Acres Section 3	17.90	yes	0.50	2.8
06/21/79	Golf Club View Estates**	14.38	no	2.23	15.5
05/09/80	Timber Ridge at Huntington Section 1**	50.44	no	6.78	13.4
08/26/80	Timber Ridge at Huntington Section 2**	40.60	no	5.56	13.7
02/19/81	Farmedge Estates**	9.89	yes	0.82	8.3
11/19/81	Clear Meadows Homes Section 1**	38.39	yes	13.24	34.5
05/10/82	Windsor Gate**	21.48	yes	2.17	10.1
10/05/82	Laurel Lodge**	21.59	yes	1.92	8.9
01/19/83	Oakwood Acres*/**	5.08	no	0.40	7.9
07/28/83	Bull Calf Landing*/**	5.87	yes	1.47	25.0
11/19/86	Windward Estates	9.17	no	2.57	28.0
09/16/87	Wodaembarc*/** (Town & County park additions)	64.87	yes	39.64	61.1
02/24/89	Country Meadows** (County park addition)	12.76	yes	0.99	7.8
10/17/89	Thornwood Estates**	23.65	no	4.5	19.0
05/18/90	Estates at Harbor View*/**	38.34	yes	6.32	16.5
10/13/92	Vanderbilt Plat	20.59	no	15.53	75.4
01/25/93	Zimnoch Plat**	6.00	yes	0.08	1.3
01/28/93	Dee Plat**	4.84	yes	0.59	12.2
06/17/94	West Hills Ridge II**	17.93	yes	1.80	10.0
09/03/96	West Farms**	12.50	no	1.12	8.96
11/26/96	Paumanok Hills**/**	28.02	yes	10.00	35.69
10/14/97	Coral Estates**	27.87	no	2.8	10.05

*a subdivision that included attached units; **a subdivision of OSI-mapped property; ***a condition of prior rezoning

Of the OSI land set aside for park purposes during the 24-year study period through subdivision review, 28 of the 29 dedicated areas were reserved as passive open space/natural areas with some specifically encumbered by park-preserve dedication² or map notation (e.g., green area, open space) and Planning Board resolution to remain as conservation land. Proposals for subdivision of important open spaces are continually reviewed for potential active public park use and where appropriate, the Planning Board may require a portion of the land area be dedicated for such use. It is often the recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Department that additional land is not needed and that it should not be acquired, particularly if the potential dedication is quite small, as these are viewed as maintenance liabilities. There are subdivisions currently pending which do incorporate park dedications. A major subdivision on the 1974 OSI, Timber Ridge at the Plains (pending

² Section 159-3 of Huntington Town Code allows for the dedication of select park properties as park-preserves recognizing the natural significance of a site, its special features, intended level of use, and the need for specialized joint management by the Department of Parks and Recreation and Department of Planning and Environment.

conditional final approval for Section 2), includes two separate park components which together form a mini-greenbelt to Manor Plains Nature Park and the adjoining BOCES-owned Manor Plains School and Greenlawn Water District well site—a dedicated park-preserve component to protect an important pre-contact period Native American agricultural longhouse site (5.612 acres) and an active park area (1.588 acres) to be improved by the developer as a young children's playground.

Park and Playground Fees

The Park and Playground fees paid in lieu of dedication of land could have been a tool for open space protection had they been applied to purchase parkland as allowed by the Town regulations and Town law. Figure 8 tracks park and playground fees collected on a monthly basis since 1975. The fees are paid prior to the signing of a final subdivision map by the Director of Planning and Environment. Steps that would follow and precede construction would be the filing of the map in the office of the County Clerk and securing of individual building permits. By comparing the fees in Figure 8 to the acreage subdivided (Figure 4) and the number of lots created (Figure 5), it is clear that the fees have grown, though they represent a meager share of value in developments that generated them.

The Town of Huntington park and playground fee schedule has been increased four times since the 1974 Open Space Index was adopted in 1975, 1987, 1989, and 1994, but the fees continue to reflect a minimal fraction of the value of the land that could be required as set-aside. *The 1993 Comprehensive Plan calls for a more appropriate and increased land-based valuation to be reflected in the park and playground fee schedule.* While the fees were increased as a response, it was fairly inconsequential. In the period between January 1, 1975 and August 31, 1998, a total of \$1,716,165.00 was collected in Park and Playground fees directly related to Planning Board reviews/approvals. Of this cumulative amount, the past Directors of Parks and Recreation (who shared a tenure in the Parks Department covering the last 25 years) could not recollect an instance where park and playground fees were expended to acquire new park property. As of September 10, 1998 the fund balance contained \$102,277.68. Therefore, it can be deduced that a total of **\$1,613,387.32** has been expended on park improvements throughout the Town over the past twenty-four years which otherwise would not have been achieved by revenues generated by the resident taxpayers of the Town of Huntington. *It is significant that 1996 and 1997 resulted in the greatest amount of fees collected in the 24-year study period—an indication of a hot real estate market and increased pace of open space loss.*

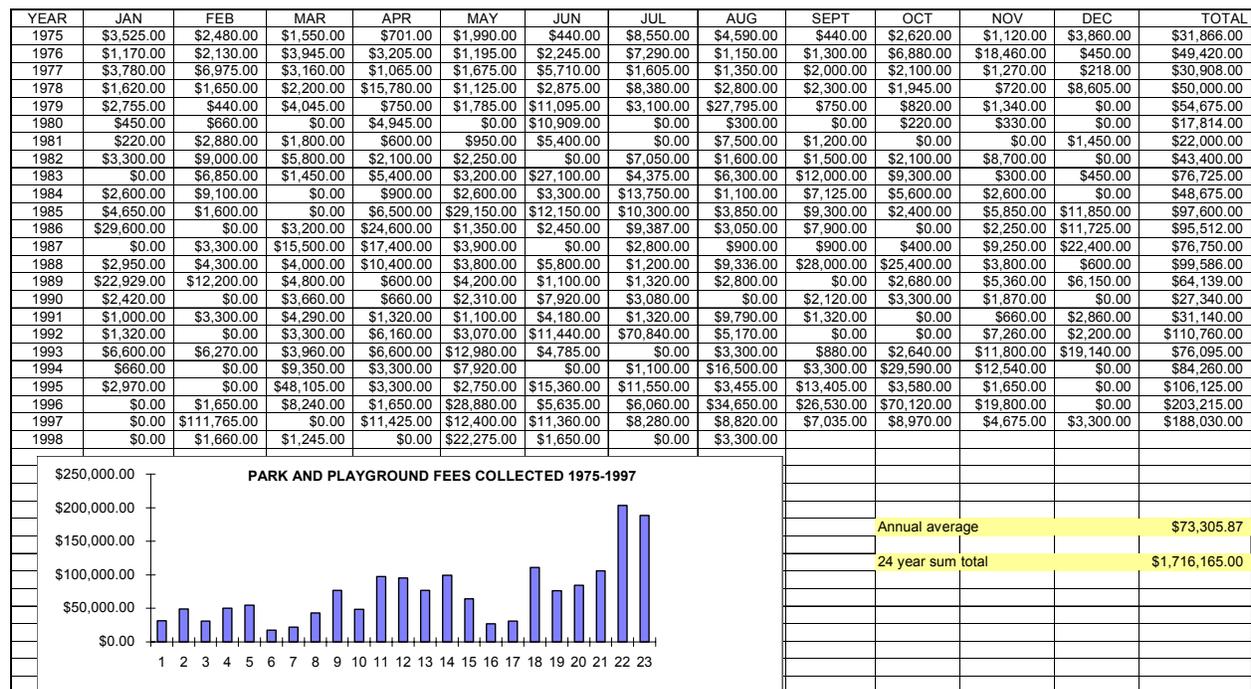
Clearly, the park and playground fees have not increased the size of the Town's protected open space inventory and, the fees would not have stretched far. If the Town had wished to use the funds for such purpose today in this high-end land market, the \$1,613,387.32 might have only allowed the purchase of ten to fifteen acres. That the funds were not used to acquire land is not a great loss—the fees were put to good purpose to improve local parks. *However, that fees were taken consistently on all but 4% of the subdivisions filed in the last 24 years, in lieu of the 10% land dedication for public parkland, would appear to be a tremendous cumulative loss that, theoretically, might have resulted in more than 300 additional acres protected for the benefit of Huntington's residents. Some of the subdivisions did represent potential to take sizable parks; however, taking land from all would have resulted in a scattering of very small parcels. This is not to say that such small parcels would not have had community open space merit. The values of open space and active recreational land need to be considered and a balance met. A defined procedure for evaluating potential parkland set-aside can allow each proposal to be reviewed in the context of overall Town need and goals.*

OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998

Considering the quality of open space that has been consumed by development already and the volume of new subdivisions pending, the only conclusion to draw is that this tool of setting aside parkland is not going to be sufficient to meet future open space needs before the best remaining opportunities are lost.

The bulk of the land that has been committed to development in the past 24 years of the study period has been low-density residentially-zoned, R-80, R-40 and R-20. The most land consumed has been R-40-zoned (one acre minimum lot size). The earliest park and playground fee schedule levied a \$300 per lot fee for R-80; \$225.00 per lot for R-40; and \$180 per lot in the R-20 zone. The current fee schedule requires \$1,100, \$825, and \$690 per lot for the three zones. Over the study period, the residential fees have more than tripled, although the value of vacant residential land in the Town of Huntington has increased similarly. Therefore, the park and playground fees represent a substantially less proportion of the fair market value of the land. *Clearly, it is residential sprawl, not commercial expansion, that has taken the largest bite out of the Huntington landscape.* As only key open space sites can be purchased or otherwise secured, park and playground fees, especially residential fees, need to be increased to keep greater pace with the fair market value of the resource that is being consumed.

FIGURE 8: PARK AND PLAYGROUND FEES, 1975-1998



In an effort to keep local taxes stable, the availability of such Park and Playground funds to meet capital needs has taken on greater importance. The Park and Playground Fund has become the main continuous source of discretionary town park improvement support.

The Huntington Community Development Agency (CDA) has taken a leading role in refurbishing town playgrounds with new handicapped-accessible play equipment. Since 1991 federal funding in the form of community development block grants secured by the CDA has been largely responsible for the improved condition of playgrounds and/or associated infrastructure (e.g., handicapped-

accessible bathrooms, drop curbs, fencing, etc.) at twelve sites throughout Huntington at Heckscher, Greenlawn Memorial, John J. Walsh Memorial, Manor Field, Wicks, Depot Road, Alfred Walker Memorial, Northport Village and Cow Harbor Parks and at Crab Meadow and Fleets Cove Beaches, with work at Otsego Park now underway. The 1998 CDA Action Plan includes new playground construction at Arboretum and Verleye Parks, as well as Hobart Beach, and handicapped-accessible bathrooms at Steers Park (Northport Village). The federal funding for such park rehabilitation projects has amounted to nearly one-fifth of the total CDA budget annually, about \$200,000.

Privately-funded improvements have also been made, with Patti's Playground at Elwood Park an outstanding example of how a thoughtful memorial was created by volunteers with materials purchased with donated funds, for the benefit of Huntington's children.

While it is highly admirable that the town has been able to achieve certain success in equipment improvement and maintenance through private and federal funding, without increasing public capital budget expenditures, it is a radical departure from the past parks system administration. Basically, it places the town's park improvement program in a position of vulnerable dependency on the local development market and the greater capriciousness of federal funding. It also stands to reason that only those improvements most needed at the parks receiving the greatest volume of use will occur. *With 120 municipal parks to manage, a more proactive strategy is needed to prevent the town from finding itself in a future uncomfortable corner where liability issues mandate cost expenditures. The Huntington Town Board assumed such a decisive role this past June by dedicating one million dollars (\$1,000,000) from the Town's year-end surplus toward establishing an Environmental Capital Improvements Reserve Fund. The "seed" funding will be used to acquire threatened environmentally-sensitive properties and to renovate Town-owned parks and recreational facilities. Approval of the November 3, 1998 Town Bond Referendum will broaden the Town's opportunities to expand and enhance Huntington's park inventory.*

Stormwater management/Recharge basins

Seventy-nine (79) recharge basin areas have been required through subdivision approval by the Planning Board since the Open Space Index adoption resulting in the dedication of 93.37 acres to the Town of Huntington. These recharge basin areas ranged in size from only 0.12 to 4.07 acres. Of the seventy-nine (79), sixty-nine (69) were from subdivisions within Open Space Index-mapped sites. Chapter 171 of Town Code was amended on April 9, 1990 to include an Article III which specifies: "Any recharge basin owned and/or operated or maintained by the Town of Huntington shall be and are hereby designated as water recharge protection areas." Requirements for management, prohibitions and penalties for offenses are defined in the Article. The recharge basins serve multiple environmental purposes—as aquifer protection areas, mini-wildlife sanctuaries, buffer zones, and in a limited manner as noise attenuators.

Private recreation area reservation

A developing trend in the region appears to be the set aside of recreation area to be managed privately. Only two subdivisions in town planning history have reserved a component of overall open space in private recreation area, protected by recorded deed covenant and restriction, and these are the Hamlet Golf and Country Club and The Villages at Huntington. The Hamlet Golf and Country Club resulted in a total of 124.91 of the total 160.36 acres (77% of the total land area) being held for the benefit of the private homeowners' and club members' sole use. The Villages at

Huntington, in active construction, has set aside 10.89 acres on one of its filed map sections. While The Hamlet Golf and Country Club paid a park and playground fee, the Planning Board determined that The Villages would not have to either dedicate land or pay the requisite fee in light of the private reservation. While the sites are not available to the general public for direct use, the Hamlet's open landscape is appreciated by passersby on the three adjoining roadways and by residences in view of the site. The Villages at Huntington has internalized its open space reservation creating an insulated holding.

Street right-of-way/widening dedication

Virtually every road dedication made in the Town of Huntington is done in anticipation that a portion of the land so deeded shall remain in open cover. The Town Subdivision Regulations and Site Improvement Specifications require a standard fifty-foot right-of-way setaside for new roads. This anticipates a 34-foot pavement width and 16-feet of open shoulder which, unless heavily naturally-vegetated, is likely to contain street trees set at a standard separation of 40 feet.

Throughout the Town of Huntington adjoining property owners assume most of the general maintenance responsibility for the undeveloped portion of the right-of-way, typically 32% of the dedication area. Of the 284.71 acres dedicated to the town since the Open Space Index was adopted, it is estimated that 32% or 90.9 acres may lie outside, though appurtenant to, developed roadway as appendages to adjacent lots. In commercial, industrial, and higher-density residential areas, these shoulders are more likely to contain landscaping, sidewalks, utility lines, etc. *Thus, most public roads throughout Huntington's lower-density residential areas are flanked by mini-ribbon or linear park-like holdings entrusted to the Town Highway Department and adjoining neighbors' stewardship.*

Deed restrictions and covenants

Deed restrictions filed in the Office of the County Clerk have been used consistently by the Town's reviewing agencies to serve specific open space goals, while not compromising ownership or reasonable use of property. The most common covenants (deed conditions) filed during the past 24 years require:

- No further subdivision of a parcel oversized for the zoning district in which it lies;
- Clearing limitations on lots with designated buffer area to remain in its natural state;
- Retention of specific built (e.g., historic structure/outbuilding) or landscape features (e.g., specimen trees);
- Common areas to be reserved and managed in a natural state or to serve an open space purpose (e.g., as recreational area); and
- Use of common driveway(s) to access specified lots to avoid unnecessary clearing and grading.

While deed restrictions and covenants run with the land to which they are assigned, they are difficult for the town to enforce where private property is involved, unless imposed as a condition of application approval (e.g., subdivision, change of zone) in which the town reserves specific standing and penalties for noncompliance. *When properly self-monitored and upheld, deed covenants can be a tremendously successful open space preservation tool. Private management means virtually no cost to the municipality for ongoing maintenance, though the land is maintained in a specified state, often similar to a passive park. However, the success of this tool rests in the hands and the*

responsibility of the landowner. There have been many situations in the Town where covenants have accomplished all the imposing Board intended, but several more where the Board's valiant intent was seriously compromised. The Land Management Division of the Department of Planning and Environment is now tracking such restrictions imposed upon subdivision, site plan and rezoning approvals in a separate database. It is hoped that as the database expands, a monitoring element will be implemented, allowing periodic overview of the sites so conditioned to assure compliance.

Zone Changes

Section 198-126 of the Town Zoning Ordinance allows: "The Town Board may from time to time amend, supplement, modify, repeal or change this chapter or the Zoning Map on its own motion, on petition or application or on recommendation of the Planning Board but only after a public hearing has been held before the Town Board to consider said change of zone."

The rezoning of property in the town at the request of an applicant brings with it an opportunity to set aside parkland or area to remain natural as a condition of approval. Of the 112 rezonings enacted by the Huntington Town Board out of 143 considered since the adoption of the Town of Huntington Open Space Index on December 27, 1974, half (55) affected 27 of the 164 Open Space Index-mapped properties. The total area rezoned by the Town Board during the study period was 1,852.15 acres; 794.7 acres were mapped on the 1974 OSI. However, unlike the record for subdivision activity, only four of the rezonings that were enacted affected the most important lands categorized as priority 1 or 2 on the 1974 OSI; most concerned priority 5 sites. The rezonings of OSI-mapped lands were equitably distributed with the most occurring in the southwest (9), then southeast (7), northeast (6), and northwest (5) quadrants of the Town.

The largest portion of the rezonings approved in the past 24 years were at the request of an applicant, although several were on the Town Board's own motion. Of the applicant-generated requests, nearly all involved rezoning the lands for use at an increased density or intensity. Many of the residential rezonings on the Town Board's own motion resulted in decreasing the potential intensity of land use. Most of the rezoning actions required a follow-up town approval from the Planning Board (subdivision, site plan) or Department of Engineering (building permit, site plan), to enable development. It is often only upon the direct application for such approval that the lands are dedicated. Thus, some of the acreage assured through rezoning action may have been discussed already under the preceding section on subdivision. Parkland dedication that followed a rezoning during the study period is indicated in Figure 7.

Site Plans

At the time of adoption of the 1974 OSI, site plan review was relegated to the Planning Board only in specific zoning districts. In 1987 the Town Board amended the Zoning Code to afford the Planning Board review of all site development plans in commercial and industrial zoning districts. As there has not been continuous review by a single agency, it has been difficult to track site plan applications. As the site plan database is still in a developmental stage, a review of building permits was conducted (see Figure 9). The commercial and industrial-zoned acreage on the 1974 OSI represents less than 20% of the overall acreage listed. Although a total of 189 new buildings were permitted, the permit activity tracked on the following page shows new commercial and industrial buildings to be a minor component. Of 364 site plans covering 1,840 acres tracked in the Department

of Planning and Environment's developing database, 46 (12%) affected 382.830 acres of OSI lands. These site plans affected 16 OSI areas; 14 in the southeast quadrant of the Town. There is potential, to date untapped, for parkland to be set aside during residential site plan approval pursuant to Town Law.

Zoning Board of Appeals Applications

Although the Zoning Board of Appeals has no implicit authority to require parkland to be set aside through their application review, planning opportunities for such are presented with the larger applications as mitigation to impact on open space resources. While the majority of ZBA actions involve properties that are already held as single and separate, general municipal law does require referral of actions in mapped OSI areas for Conservation Board review. Since the adoption of the 1974 Open Space Index, the Conservation Board has had minimal occasion to review actions before the Zoning Board of Appeals. It is only during the past five years that the Conservation Board has consistently received ZBA applications for review; however, during the 24-year retrospect period, no major applications affecting properties greater than 10 acres in size have resulted in ZBA-imposed open space restrictions. It is important to note that most of the larger applications which the Zoning Board of Appeals has reviewed involve commercial and/or industrial lands. The reservation or provision of specific natural or landscaped buffers is being sought more and more frequently on individual applications as mitigation pursuant to SEQRA.

Building Permits

There were 5,774 building permits issued for the construction of new dwellings and 374 issued for new commercial or industrial buildings since 1988 according to data compiled from the monthly tracking reports of the Department of Engineering Services, Building and Housing Division. Some of these permits were for projects reviewed previously by the Conservation Board (e.g., subdivision, rezoning). The Conservation Board has not reviewed, nor requested review of individual building permits; nor has the Engineering Department included the Open Space Index in its review procedures. Many site plans reviewed by the Engineering Department were considered as-of-right because they did not require the discretionary approval of another Board, or such approvals had already been granted. All applications that involved subdivision or rezoning of Open Space Index properties have been referred to the Conservation Board. While it would be easy to surmise that opportunities to set aside open space may have been missed, any fault would lie in the review requirements as specified in the Zoning Code.

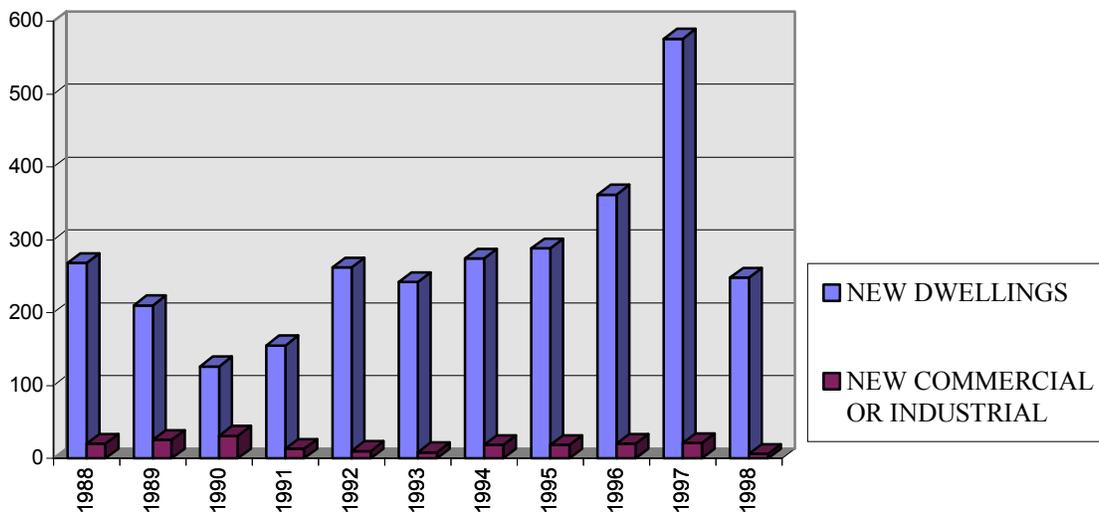
Figure 10 charts the Town's new building permit activity over the past ten years for which data was made available. While new commercial and industrial building permits have remained relatively flat in the ten year period, an increasing trend is evidenced for new residential permits since 1992 with 1997 a peak year. Clearly, with the new home market at its highest level in ten years, the pressure for in-fill building and further subdivision is likely to be limited only by physically available open acreage. The need to act quickly to secure the most important remaining larger open properties is evident.

FIGURE 9: NEW BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED, 1988-1998

YEAR	NEW DWELLINGS	NEW COMMERCIAL OR INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS
1988	268	20
1989	210	25
1990	126	31
1991	155	13
1992	262	10
1993	242	8
1994	274	18
1995	288	18
1996	362	20
1997	576	21
1998	248	6

*Note: 1998 information is through August 31, 1998.

FIGURE 10: COMPARISON OF NEW BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED, 1988-1998



*Note: 1998 information is through August 31, 1998.

GOVERNMENT AGENCY INITIATIVES

Undoubtedly, the most successful way to protect land is to secure it in responsible ownership and to provide for its perpetual stewardship. The Huntington Town Board has used bonding following referendum to acquire property for park purposes since 1906 when Halesite Park was secured pursuant to Chapter 87 of the Laws of 1906 of the State of New York. Since adoption of the town's first Open Space Index in 1974, there have been a number of acquisition efforts funded by government agencies. Definite progress relative to land acquisition has been registered in this regard, mainly on the County and local levels.

It is important to recognize that all of the large sites acquired in the Town of Huntington since the 1974 OSI was adopted have been OSI-listed properties or additions to existing parks. All but three of the largest properties in public ownership in the Town were acquired after 1970. Since the 1974 OSI was adopted, over 1,650 acres have been secured in public ownership for park and open space purposes in the Town of Huntington. Most of this land was purchased using funds supported through public referendum (County and State). The Town of Huntington has not had a bond measure for open space acquisition up for public referendum since 1962 when the residents of the Town supported an initiative that resulted in the acquisition of the Town's two largest parks which contain golf courses, Crab Meadow and Dix Hills, and about a dozen smaller neighborhood recreation areas. A follow-up bond enabled installation of facilities/improvements at specific parks.

The following summary categorized by level of government is not complete. It should be considered a survey overview in progress—a base from which to expand using best available information sources. Errors are likely to be of omission, with the narrative expanded as data sources are tightened. It is hoped that this section can be better refined during the public review process with direct input from the agencies which control the programs that are mentioned. *It is important to recognize that the Town and County are continuing to pursue protection of properties given limited resources and the constraints of existing programs.* Projects that are in negotiation and/or pending completion are noted.

Federal

There have been no efforts, nor direct agency funding expended by the federal government to preserve land in the Town of Huntington during the 24-year retrospect study period. The last land acquired directly by the federal government for open space purposes in the Town of Huntington was in 1970, the 81.88-acre former Eberstadt Estate, now the Target Rock Wildlife Refuge, located in the Village of Lloyd Harbor. The land was conveyed as a gift (i.e., donated) to the federal government. While it has conveyed land already in its ownership for open space purposes (see Governmental Inter-Agency Transfers) and has assisted in funding grant initiatives to enable other agencies to preserve lands, *it is believed that the federal government has never in the history of the town endeavored to directly preserve land for open space purposes.*

Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund

In the early 1970s the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund was established as the national environmental movement was evolving, enabling local governments to secure matching funds to support land acquisition and park improvement programs. The Town of Huntington presented an

ambitious slate of acquisition project proposals, many of which were identified as future park sites in the 1965 Comprehensive Plan. Successful Town acquisitions using federal funds included:

- 1979 *Grace Nature Preserve* (p/o NE-18), 16.8 acres
- 1979 *Mill Dam Park Outparcels* (p/o NW-14), additions to Mill Dam Park

New York State

Since 1972, there have been three voter-approved state funding issues, bonding referenda, that might have provided funds for local land preservation. Although the town sought funds for specific projects; *state monies were directly applied to preserve only two open space areas (both additions to existing state preserves) during the 24-year retrospect study period.*

Environmental Quality Bond Acts

- 1972 Although this issue was mainly provided for tidal wetlands acquisition, only wetland parcels located in the Village of Lloyd Harbor, were acquired in 1980 (10.9 acres), 1981 (12.46 acres), and 1985 (2.0 acres) as additions to the 1,412.6-acre Caumsett State Park originally preserved by the state in 1961.
- 1986 While \$60 million was appropriated statewide and the Town Board offered a slate of eight recommended sites (three of which—Crab Meadow Wetlands; Melville Watershed, and Pulaski/Oakwood Farmland were supported by the Regional Ad Hoc Advisory Committee) no money was spent to protect land in the Town of Huntington from this bond measure.

In 1994 and 1997 the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation acquired the former Multi-Town Solid Waste Authority land, 100 acres, using funds provided by the Environmental Protection Fund, a renewable state program which allocates \$100 million per year for open space and other environmental initiatives. The important acquisition, an addition to the Oak Brush Plains State Preserve, is literally the cornerstone of the Town of Huntington, located at its southeast corner.

- 1998 *Pending* (*Crab Meadow Headwaters/Ingraham and Knutson/Dornic Marina*) are two potential acquisition projects for which the Town of Huntington requested grant funding in June 1998 under the NYS Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act. Announcement of grant awards is to be made in September of 1998.

Suffolk County

Much of the County-owned parkland in the Town of Huntington was acquired post 1970, including Makamah County Park, 159.7 acres, and Berkeley-Jackson County Park, 101.9 acres, in 1973, just prior to the Town OSI adoption. *Of the government agencies considered, it is Suffolk County that has had the most success in directly acquiring land for open space purposes in the Town during the course of the study period. The basis of the County's achievement is clear—there were focused preservation bond programs which provided the funds necessary to fuel action in the conservation arena. A new \$62 million Community Greenways Bond Program will be on the ballot in November to enable County residents to insure that such progress is not impeded and that resources will be available to procure active parkland where it is needed (particularly in western Suffolk), as well as*

important natural areas. Having ready funds in hand allows an agency to be proactive in its preservation approach, instead of being reactive to specific threats of development or transfer of ownership.

Suffolk County Farmland Preservation Program

The Suffolk County Farmland Preservation Program has been in effect since the early 1980s allowing the County to purchase development rights to enable farm lands to remain in cultivation in private ownership, but insures that the lands are not built upon. Suffolk County is still providing the largest agricultural cash value of all counties in the state. However, farming cash return may not exceed the promise of short-term development return. The County Farmland Preservation Program provides a viable solution to this situation. Development rights were ceded to the County for only one property in the Town of Huntington under this program—49 acres of the former Wicks Farm (part of OSI NW-39, now occupied by White Post Farm). The Town has not forwarded recommendations under this program in many years. An updated list of recommended agricultural sites should be forwarded to the County Agricultural Committee for consideration.

Suffolk County Open Space Programs

Prior to the establishment of large bond programs, the Suffolk County Legislature was securing sites throughout the County as they became threatened and/or available. In the Town of Huntington two such sites were acquired following the adoption of the 1974 OSI:

Kings Dairy (p/o SE-03), 21.7 acres

West Hills County Park (p/o SW-04, SW-06, SW-11), 395+ acres

The County Open Space Program was established in 1986 as a \$60 million bond program to fully fund select acquisition projects. The Program identified only two Huntington open space areas, of 20 total, to be acquired under Phase II of the Program—the Crab Meadow Wetlands and the Fresh Pond Greenbelt (partially in the Town of Smithtown). The County acquired the Fresh Pond Greenbelt. Several Crab Meadow Wetlands parcels were included in the program, but as the largest property-owner was not interested in selling, the file was closed. The Town has acquired several of the smaller parcels identified in the program using Iroquois Gas funding. Pursuant to SEQRA the Suffolk County Legislature nominated all of the properties identified for protection under its open space program as critical areas of environmental concern, making all otherwise reviewable actions related thereto into Type I actions. Since the Phase I and Phase II components were completed, and/or their files were closed if unattainable, the County Legislature has appropriated funding each year in the \$2-3 million range for local open space acquisitions, such as the Alvernia property. Local lands acquired under the program include:

1989 *Fresh Pond Greenbelt* (p/o NE-07), 13.8 acres

1998 *Alvernia*, eastern upland parcel (NW-04), 13.9 acres

Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection (1/4%) Program, SC Charter, §12-5(D)

The original SCDWPP established an Environmental Trust Fund to be used for acquisition of key watershed sites located in the deep recharge area and special groundwater protection areas and to assist the Towns in capping landfills and remediating former waste sites. In Huntington the County acquired the Froehlich Farm and adjoining Cold Spring Woods Estates (over 300 acres total) and purchased a conservation easement on the Plimpton property in West Hills. The

other large Town Board-nominated, County Legislature-approved site (Melville Watershed a.k.a. Carmel) was removed from consideration upon Town Board rezoning which resulted in a large component being dedicated to the Town as park-preserve. To facilitate receipt of funds necessary to cap the landfill, the Town Board resolved that there were no additional sites in Huntington that should be acquired under this program, with the exception of the West Hills Wetlands parcels now being pursued by the County as an addition to West Hills County Park.

- 1989 *Wicks Farm/Cold Spring Woods* (p/o NW-39), 99 acres fee simple
- 1991 *Froehlich Farm* (p/o NW-39), 209 acres fee simple (passed through The Nature Conservancy to Suffolk County)
- 1992 *Plimpton Estate Conservation Easement* (p/o SW-06), 26.5 acres, passed through The Nature Conservancy to Suffolk County), 1.29 acres of which was reserved for a future well site.
- 1998 *Pending West Hills Wetland* (p/o SW-05), 25.3 acres

Amended Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection (1/4%) Program, SC, §12-5(E)

This program was established to enable municipalities in the west end of Suffolk an opportunity to acquire additional lands for open space and parkland purposes. \$1.2 million was appropriated for Huntington by the Suffolk County Legislature late in 1997 (revenue generated in the last months of 1996 and through 1997).

- 1998 *Pending Crab Meadow Headwaters/Ingraham Property* (NE-11) is under consideration for Town-County acquisition of a 10.1-acre tract and Town acquisition of 17.7 acres of freshwater wetland and upland buffer thereto (see Iroquois Gas Transmission System-Land Preservation and Enhancement Program)

Land Preservation Partnership Program

This is a 50%-50% matching program established in 1997 to enable the County and local municipalities to join together to acquire open space properties. The Town Board has already recommended the Alvernia, Crab Meadow Wetlands-East and West Watersheds (including Ingraham) and Dornic Marina sites. The Suffolk County Legislature recognized the Alvernia (since acquired under the County Open Space Program) and Crab Meadow areas as potential partnership sites.

Suffolk County Tax Lien Program

Following the 1986 Open Space program approval, the Suffolk County Legislature established a program mandating cautious review of all County land acquired through tax lien procedures prior to any such land being released for surplus auction sale. The Suffolk County Department of Planning recommends to the County Department of Law, Division of Real Estate, sites that are well suited for designation as parkland and the County Legislature, upon review, authorizes such action through resolution. Countywide this has been an important initiative in acquiring many smaller parcels. Vacant land can be taken by the County if taxes are not paid for one year. There is a formal redemption process should the landowner wish to retain ownership. The County informs the Town of such instances where lands have been taken through the tax lien process adjoining Town properties. In recent years the Town has urged the County to hold several such properties for public purposes,

including West Rogues Hills (wetlands) to the west of the Cold Spring Harbor Rail Road Station; West Hills Wetland as an addition to West Hills County Park; and a portion of West Shore Road. All were redeemed to the prior owners. Property secured and/or targeted for preservation includes:

- 1988 *Park Avenue Nature Preserve* (entire NW-43), 8.7 acres
- 1998 *Pending Hobart Beach/Sand City* (NE-01), 20.2 acres, primarily underwater land for park-preserve dedication as an addition to the Town's Sand City Tern Colony

Town Of Huntington

Eminent Domain Procedure Law

Eminent domain proceedings remain the most powerful tool of government's land protection options. Through the exercise of an eminent domain action, a governmental agency has the authority to take property quickly for specific governmental purposes. A key concern with using such an option is that appropriate funding be available to secure the purchase as fair market value shall be determined by the court. Since the Open Space Index was adopted, there have been few instances where land was secured by eminent domain solely for open space or park purposes (e.g., Centerport Mill Pond and Greenlawn Veterans Memorial Park) and one such proceeding is pending (Dornic Marina). Both the Town and the County evoke eminent domain mainly in limited situations where roadway acquisitions are necessary.

Governmental Inter-Agency Transfers

Section 72(h) of New York General Municipal Law allows the sale, transfer, exchange or lease of real property, with or without consideration, between "the supervisors of a county, the town board of a town, the board of trustees of a village, the board of fire commissioners of a fire district and the board of estimate of a city" and "any municipal corporations, school district, board of cooperative educational services, fire district, the state of New York, or the government of the United States...": Inter-agency transfer is an ideal tool where land desired for conservation or park purposes by a public agency is already in the hands of a public or quasi-public entity. It provides the classic scenario where one agency's surplus can become another's treasure, often at significantly reduced cost. Successful transfers during the study period and still pending are:

- 1983 *Oak Brush Plains State Preserve* (formerly part of state hospital holdings)—from NYS Office of General Services to NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, 661 acres (placed into "State Nature and Historic Preserve" system, August 1987)
- 1989 *Veterans Nature Study Area*--from U.S. Government (formerly part of the Northport Veterans Administration Medical Center site) for outdoor educational use to Town Of Huntington, 33+ acres
- 1994 *Jerome A. Ambro Memorial Wetlands Preserve Addition*—from Suffolk County to Town Of Huntington, 0.18 acre, transferred pursuant to §72(h) of Real Property Law purchased with funds provided by the Iroquois Gas Transmission System-Land Preservation and Enhancement Program
- 1998 *Pending Mill Dam Road parcel*, one acre site requested pursuant to §72(h) of Real Property Law from Suffolk County Department of Public Works to be used as an addition to Mill Dam Park

PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES

Corporate Sponsorship

Iroquois Gas Transmission System-Land Preservation And Enhancement Program

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission required the Iroquois Gas Transmission System (IGTS) to establish a Land Preservation and Enhancement Program (LPEP) as mitigation to construction of a new natural gas pipeline pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and issuance of a certificate of environmental compatibility. The Iroquois pipeline was to span from Canada down through the Northeast, across Long Island Sound, to terminate in South Commack and including a six-mile stretch through the Town of Huntington. As town park properties were being affected by the construction and pipeline placement, in 1992 the Town of Huntington sought and was awarded \$476,400 funding under the IGTS-LPEP grant program to acquire additional environmentally-sensitive lands in proximity of the pipeline route in Huntington. To date the following lands have been secured and/or are in the process of being protected under this program administered locally by the Department of Planning and Environment, Land Management Division:

Jerome Ambro Memorial Wetlands Preserve/Wodaembarc Additions

1992 *Scherer Addition*, p/o NE-12, 1.7 acres

1993 *Maceli Addition*, p/o NE-12, 1.9 acres

1998 *Pending Crab Meadow Headwaters*, p/o NE-11, 17.7 acres,

Blanchard Lake Wetlands (adjoins NE-03), ~13 acres, *Pending Conservation Easement* from LILCO/MARKETSPAN, adjoining Town-owned Kirschbaum Park

Not-For-Profit Organizations

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy is a national non-profit land preservation organization. While The Conservancy has not acquired land to be held as its own new preserve within the 24-year study period in the Town of Huntington, the organization has facilitated the protection of several areas within the town including pass-through acquisition of the Froehlich Farm holdings and conservation easement procurement for the Plimpton Estate, both on behalf of Suffolk County and acting as an agent of the Town of Huntington by Town Board request. In addition, The Nature Conservancy has acquired and passed through additions to Caumsett State Park on behalf of the State of New York. The Nature Conservancy has granted the Town of Huntington a revocable conservation easement, running with their ownership, for the 86.8-acre Uplands Farm Sanctuary in Cold Spring Harbor allowing its dedication as a park-preserve pursuant to Town Code.

Agricultural Exemption Program

Agricultural lands have been the single greatest type of land use reduced since the adoption of the 1974 Open Space Index. Much of the pressure for conversion of such lands was market-driven with real estate returns far exceeding crop production yields. Whether horse farms, orchards, nurseries, sod farms, or crop lands, the agricultural properties share similar characteristics—they are basically open, level sites which are easily developed and thus, more vulnerable to subdivision or site improvement. There has not been a concerted effort to protect agricultural lands on the local level in the Town of Huntington although so much of the Town's history is agrarian in nature and the familiar viewscape of open pasture and crop lands has been so diminished. The Comprehensive Plan does not even take into account the threat, loss and

need for a stronger approach to preservation of farmland in Huntington. While offering no permanent protection, there is a state real property exemption program in which several agricultural properties in the Town participate. To qualify for the voluntary reduced tax assessment, the farm must be over 10 acres in size and generate annual return of \$10,000, or if less than 10 acres in size, generate annual return of at least \$50,000. Participating landowners agree to reserve their land for agricultural use for a period of years. Should the land be converted to another use during the “contracted” period, the owner must reimburse the Town for taxes calculated on the difference in assessed value for the term of relief. Several of the sites presently included in this program are pending applications for a change of use (e.g., Avalon II Site Plan).

Individual Philanthropy

There are not many cases in the history of the Town of Huntington where individuals have donated land for public open space. However, private philanthropy has the potential to become a viable source for open space preservation funding should a dedicated campaign and/or trust be established. Gifts of land can benefit a local government agency tremendously by offsetting the need to expend public funds, while enabling demand for such secured places to be met. An important example was the donation of a portion of the Grace Preserve in Centerport. Such contributions of real property can accrue benefits to the donor(s) as well, in the form of charitable deductions on federal tax returns or as a means to balance long-term capital gains. In instances where smaller parcels are desired by a local government or preservation organization, individual philanthropy may be the best match. A small gift of land has been offered to the Town of Huntington by a gracious resident as an addition to the Jerome Ambro Memorial Wetlands Preserve. While not all lands would be desired as Town properties due to size, limited access, and potential for use, upon review and recommendation to the Town Board, the pending gift is likely to become a permanent component of the wetland preserve.

PROTECTED LANDS INVENTORY

SELECT LAND CATEGORIES

Serving as Technical Advisory Committee for preparation of the Town Open Space Plan in accordance with the Town Board resolution of March 3, 1998, the Conservation Board's first deliberation focused on identification of key elements to be included on the Protected Lands Inventory—as an initial phase in building the Open Space Plan. The Board established that the following types of lands (identified in Figure 11 by specific resource category and described more fully below) are to be shown on the draft Protected Lands Inventory:

- Parkland
- Recharge basins
- Privately-owned/covenanted drainage areas
- Private beach association holdings
- Private sanctuaries
- Other public lands dedicated/deeded/managed as open space
- Cemeteries
- Agricultural lands
- Common areas resulting from cluster developments
- Utility properties

The Town's Protected Open Lands Inventory is not a static entity. It continues to grow with new development, with acquisition of public property, and self-imposed restrictions. This dynamic component of the Town's plan is integral as it defines a base of fixed resources from which to best identify where additions can be made to expand buffer and provide linking corridors, and where resources are needed to balance needs to serve the general, growing population of Huntington. Any readily-available information for the incorporated villages was included in this analysis.

Parkland

For the purpose of this study all parkland identified in the 1993 Comprehensive Plan, on Section VIII of the Town Assessment Roll, Land Management Division records and/or deed inventory that is publicly-owned (Town of Huntington, Town of Huntington Board of Trustees, Incorporated Villages, Suffolk County, New York State, U.S. Government) has been included, regardless of whether use is passive or active. Town properties that contain active recreational facilities are identified. Two separate half-mile radius maps (all parks and active parks) are incorporated for the benefit of the Town's Boards in reviewing applications that may increase demand on existing parks to insure that opportunities to secure additional parkland in underserved areas are not overlooked.

Recharge basins

Within Huntington there are both publicly-owned recharge basins (State, County, Town) and a small number of private ones. The Highway Department has been working on finalizing a townwide listing of recharge basins. The protected lands inventory shall be updated in this category in continued cooperation with the Highway Department which is tracking road-related infrastructure via a GIS as well.

Privately-owned/covenanted drainage areas

The Department of Planning and Environment continues to investigate where such areas are restricted. As they are quite limited and are but portions of private lots that are not on separate tax parcels, there is no accurate quantitative analysis at this time. Therefore, this category does not appear in Table 10, but will be mapped in the Protected Lands Inventory.

Private beach association holdings

While private beach association holdings, like private recharge basins and common areas, are not available for general public use, the flora and fauna of the Town know no boundaries. These areas are restricted by deed conditions and held in common ownership for outdoor recreational use. They provide links between other protected lands and visual access to the shorefront, an increasingly valuable asset.

Private sanctuaries

As real property tax exempt sites, the private sanctuaries of The Nature Conservancy set aside as nature preserves are considered protected open space. One such site, the 90+ acre Uplands Farm Sanctuary in Cold Spring Harbor is triply protected—as a private nature preserve, as the subject of a conservation easement to the Town of Huntington, and as a park-preserve designated by the Town Board pursuant to Town Code.

Other public lands dedicated/deeded/managed as open space

There are several properties in the Town that do not fall cleanly into one of the identified categories as they are special use sites or designated for unique resource protection; however, they are managed open space properties. Among these are the Town of Huntington Organic Garden (community garden), Suffolk County Coindre Hall (Historic Trust), and Suffolk County Jericho Turnpike/former Kings Dairy (open space leased as farmland).

Cemeteries

All cemeteries regardless of ownership, private or public, or classification (e.g., historic) are included on the Protected Lands Inventory as identified by the Assessment Roll and cross-checked against the Historic Database.

Agricultural lands

While there are still several agricultural uses remaining in the Town of Huntington, only one has had development rights ceded/sold to Suffolk County under the Farmland Preservation Program.

Common areas resulting from cluster developments/site plans

Common area covenanted to remain as open space and/or natural area as the result of modified subdivision or residential or commercial site plan. This category is in development as residential site plans and site plans where specific buffers are conditions of approval, beyond the normal Code requirements, have not been previously tracked. On completion this component will be mapped to identify those areas which have required management plans to insure their perpetual integrity.

Utility properties

All linear transmission corridors (LILCO), water supply/well and elevated storage tank sites, and sewage treatment plants (with requisite buffers) have been deemed important protected open

OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998

space elements of a “pathway” nature, connecting and adding to the mass of other lands in categories noted above, and providing corridors for wildlife shelter, sustenance, and movement. Transformer and power plant properties are excluded.

FIGURE 11: PROTECTED OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Open Space Category	Total Acreage	Number of Parcels/ Separate Holdings
Parkland		
U.S. Government	79.880	2
New York State	1,842.360	16
Suffolk County/Nassau County	1,438.570	30
Town of Huntington/Board of Trustees	1,898.058	202
Incorporated Villages	216.220	23
Other (School)	2.200	1
Total	5,477.288	
Recharge Basins		
New York State	75.380	24
Suffolk County	27.900	30
Town of Huntington	540.803	514
Incorporated Village	3.260	6
Private	31.350	30
Suffolk County Water Authority	2.400	2
Total	681.093	
Private Beach Association Holdings	15.750	17
Private Sanctuaries		
The Nature Conservancy/National Audubon Society	108.100	4
Other Public Lands Managed Open Space		
Suffolk County (Coindre Hall/Kings Dairy)	52.10	12
Town of Huntington (Organic Garden)		
Cemeteries		
U.S. Government	74.390	2
Town of Huntington	28.870	47
Private	55.330	8
Church	44.210	13
Total	350.92	
Agricultural Lands with ceded development rights	49.00	1
Private common and recreation areas (HOA)	350.92	55
Utilities		
MARKETSPAN (formerly LILCO)	710.350	138
Suffolk County Water Authority	99.020	33
Greenlawn Water District	24.970	18
Dix Hills Water District	16.950	9
South Huntington Water District	31.170	15
Total	882.46	

*Note: Data has not had final cross-check and may be subject to minor correction upon refinement

FIGURE 12: PROTECTED LANDS INVENTORY MAP

PROPOSED 1998 OPEN SPACE INDEX AND INTIATIVES

TOWN OF HUNTINGTON 1998 OPEN SPACE INDEX

Incorporated Villages

The Proposed 1998 Open Space Index identifies 168 areas covering 6,386 acres throughout the *unincorporated* areas of the Town of Huntington. As the Town Board does not have jurisdiction in the four villages, this study did not map key remaining parcels within the village boundaries. Clearly, the open space remaining in the villages is important and, from an ecological approach, lands throughout the Town should know no “boundaries.” Decisions made by the Boards of the Town or by a Village may have bearing on one another (e.g., a pending subdivision in the unincorporated area of the Town that lies upgradient from a wetland within Village boundaries could have cross-jurisdictional effect). As the Town of Huntington owns parkland within the villages and village residents benefit from open space all across the Town, a review of the lands in the villages was undertaken from a quantitative perspective. Only 48 of the 5,860 parcels identified on the assessment roll that comprise the four villages are greater than ten (10) acres in size, with 21 greater than 25 acres. The recognized qualities of the Morgan Estate (over 400 acres) in Eaton’s Neck and the Roman Catholic Diocese Seminary (225 acres) in Lloyd Harbor merit special mention. *Should any of the Village Boards so request, the Department of Planning and Environment’s Land Management Division will assist in preparing similar scorecards to identify priority Village sites of open space importance with the goal of providing a formal supplement to the Town Plan, affecting a unified open space initiative for all Huntington. Such action may help extend state and county matching funds to the Villages.*

Public/Quasi-Public Institutional Holdings

There is only one truly distinguishing feature between the 1974 Open Space Index and the Proposed 1998 Open Space Index—the prior exclusion of institutional holdings, such as schools, state and federal hospitals. As lands secured with public funds and maintained no differently, public trust lands held for the benefit of specific population segments on a broad (e.g., federal, state) or local (school district) level must be viewed as potential opportunities to expand the Town’s Protected Lands Inventory.

With the preparation of the 1993 Comprehensive Plan and the OSI Retrospect, it has become increasingly evident that these quasi-public and public holdings can and are likely to become private holdings subject to land use changes. The 1965 Comprehensive Plan even included school properties in determining recreational service area. Schools play an increasing role in communities throughout the Town of Huntington providing supplemental area for outdoor recreation. While most of these sites that have been added to the Open Space Index will remain in use as educational institutions and therefore, are not likely to become threatened, specialized planning will be needed to reserve key components of such sites should they be released for private use (e.g., conversion of Larkfield Elementary School to Senior Quarters, reserving recreational fields for public use). Because of the relatively static condition of the school sites, they have been separated from the other lands and listed as a group, still a part of the Proposed 1998 OSI.

Since the 1974 OSI was adopted the federal government surplussed two parcels from the Northport Veterans Administration Medical Center holdings. Just last month the Empire State Development Corporation invited bids from suitably-qualified purchasers for twelve properties across the state, the sale of two of which have potential to affect the Town of Huntington—the 408-acre Long Island Developmental Center land in Dix Hills and the 560-acre former Pilgrim State Hospital site in Islip at the Huntington border. It can not be taken for granted that the state will plan for local recreation and open space needs. While these are developed properties, the potential for adaptive reuse and reservation of key components thereof must be considered among planning issues in any site-related review.

Dynamic Tracking/OSI Site Ranking

There are several fields in the scorecards for the individual areas that are not likely to change significantly—natural resource features and proximity to protected features. However, there are parameters in the planning series that are likely to change—degree of threat based on submission and progression of applications and whether their protection is consistent with recognized plans. The Planning Board agenda as of August 26, 1998 tracked site plan, subdivision, and change of zone applications with potential to affect 56 tax parcels on the 1974 OSI (592 acres) and 51 tax parcels on the Proposed 1998 OSI (604 acres). As the Proposed OSI is being tracked using the Geographic Information System, progress in acquisition and lost opportunity to development will probably result in areas moving up or down the overall ranked list of properties. This is a fundamental feature of the new OSI as it will reflect present trends. If an additional field is recommended for tracking, it can be easily assimilated into the process.

Scorecards/Priority Acquisition Selection

While draft scorecards have been developed for all of the sites identified on the Proposed 1998 Open Space Index, they will not be released with this document. The scorecards consider geographic, environmental, and planning criteria (all such parameters having been taken from the Comprehensive Plan) necessary to make decisions on which lands should be high priorities for acquisition. They have been reviewed and refined with the assistance of the Huntington Conservation Board acting in their capacity as Technical Committee for preparation of this integrated study/plan. Due to the delicate potential of the site scores to affect land transfers in anticipation of Town action, the scorecards will be used only to assist as in-house working documents in establishing the priorities for select acquisition in anticipation of passage of an open space bond referendum in November. The Committee formed by the Town Board's resolution of September 3, 1998 will review the scorecard criteria and formulate protection recommendations to the Town Board prior to October 5, 1998.

Until such time as the criteria and are classifications are finalized, the Proposed Open Space Index map will not identify parcels by rank. Instead, the areas proposed for inclusion on the 1998 Open Space Index shall be grouped by general category defined by dominant cover type as it appears on the individual OSI parcel scorecard: W (Woodland, forest secondary growth); F (Field, farm, meadow, nursery, now or previously under cultivation also includes areas excavated for sand and gravel); P (Pond, stream, or other surface water, fresh or saltwater)

OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998

wetland; L (Landscaped area, showing development other than farms, including golf courses, estates, parks, camps, schools); B (Beach or bay frontage, waterfront property).

Figure 13 below identifies OSI parcels by dominant cover type for each quadrant of the Town.

FIGURE 13: COVER TYPE SUMMARY—PROPOSED 1998 OPEN SPACE INDEX

COVER TYPE	Northwest	Northeast	Southwest	Southeast
Woodland	19	17	28	15
Field/farm	5	8	7	10
Pond/wetland	3	0	0	1
Landscaped	22	16	7	4
Beach/bay	1	1	0	0
Total	50	42	42	30

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Draft Staff Study, September 1998

FIGURE 14: PROPOSED 1998 OPEN SPACE INDEX MAP

TOWN OF HUNTINGTON OPEN SPACE INITIATIVES

Approve November Referendum for OASIS—Huntington’s Open Areas Acquisition Program

With the pace of development threatening Huntington’s most important remnant open lands, the Town is at a crossroads. The time is right for a local referendum to support open space acquisition as there is real potential to stretch Town funds further with matching state and county funding. At a special Town Board meeting held September 3, 1998, the Huntington Town Board set the wheels in motion for a new legacy of lands to be left for present and future generations. A special election was scheduled to be held on November 3, 1998, “concurrent with the general election, submitting to public referendum a proposition to establish financing for acquisition and improvement of real property for active and passive park and recreational facilities, and preservation of open space (see resolutions in Appendix B). The proposition enables Huntington voters to authorize the issuance of serial bonds in a maximum amount of \$15,000,000 (including \$10,000,000 for land and \$5,000,000 for improvements). The \$10 million dollar acquisition fund might be increased two-fold or even more with the support of other governmental grants and shared acquisitions. The larger the local acquisition initiative, the greater the amount of acreage that can potentially be secured. An established set of well-defined goals and actions based on timely true data, such as is provided in this report and the scorecards being finalized, will make the Town of Huntington stand out among competing municipalities.

This study reveals that existing Town tools are not going to be sufficient to mitigate potential losses in recreation areas, natural habitat, historic resources, and special view corridors that contribute so much to the quality and sense of life in this region. The Comprehensive Plan advocates a Natural Areas Bond Program; however, Huntington needs to set aside lands for active recreation as well. A bond referendum, subject to the will of the residents, can establish funding necessary to act quickly to secure targeted properties for active and passive public use. Increasingly, these special sites are becoming “oases” surrounded by a desert of suburban sprawl. The fate of Huntington’s key unprotected places will be determined in the next ten years.

To prevent the oases from becoming mirages, action must be taken quickly while there is still some choice in selecting the lands to be saved for the benefit of the future generations that will never be afforded such opportunity. Every community that has ever joined together in response to a specific application for land use change should appreciate the timeliness and urgency of this mission and lend support to a public referendum.

Adopt the 1993 Huntington Comprehensive Plan

A firm platform for moving forward with a progressive campaign to save the best of Huntington’s last remaining open places must be grounded in balanced policy. Town Board adoption of the Planning Board’s Comprehensive Plan will insure that the diverse needs of Huntington’s residents are met, not simply in the environmental area, but balanced with its social and economic program agenda.. Adoption of a Comprehensive Plan, in its current form or an updated version, by the Town Board pursuant to Town Law can insure implementation of the Administrative Program (see Appendix B) defined therein with concurrent commitment to identification, protection, and stewardship of the Town’s present and future land holdings. This

study should be adopted as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan as an elaboration of recommendations contained therein.

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will lend credence to drive specific Code and regulation changes proposed, such as new hillside development and revised freshwater wetlands ordinances that clearly define how such lands are to be yielded during subdivision to be most protective of their inherent resources. Enactment of such regulations will extend the ability of the Town’s reviewing boards to design new developments consistent with their corresponding landscapes, not in spite of them. Providing strong direction through established policy and extending the array of planning tools defined in Town Code and Regulations, the Town Board can lead Huntington into a greener new millennium.

Actively Implement Existing Planning Tools

To assure a coordinated approach to maximize retention of open space resources, all existing options should be explored by Town’s agencies during reviews, and implemented wherever possible. Each proposed land use change should be considered for consistency with the goals elaborated in the State Open Space Plan, Town Comprehensive Plan, Open Space Index, and this study to insure active and passive open space needs are met.

Establish Town Park Set-Aside Criteria

To assist the Planning Board in determining whether pending applications should be required to set aside parkland in accordance with Article X of the Subdivision Regulations and Site Improvement Specifications, the following simple criteria are offered, having been discussed with and supported by the Conservation Board.

FIGURE 15: RANKING CRITERIA FOR PARKLAND-SET-ASIDE

Criteria for Parkland Set-Aside	Value	Points Earned
Is the site contiguous to existing parkland or protected open space?	Yes = 10 points	
Is the site located in a Census Tract which has little or no parkland?	Yes = 10 points	
Has the site been nominated by a public agency for acquisition?	Yes = 10 points	
Is the site known to be used for any organized recreation?	Yes = 5 points	
Is the site located within a half-mile radius of existing Town parkland?	No = 5 points	
Is the site located within a half-mile of existing <i>active</i> Town parkland?	No = 5 points	
Is the site located within an area identified in the Comprehensive Plan as underserved for parkland (East Northport, Huntington Station, Greenlawn)?	Yes = 5 points	
Is the site in a high-density residential zone (R-3M, R-RM, R-5, R-7)?	Yes = 5 points	
Is 10% of the subject site area greater than an acre in size?	Yes = 5 points	
Is the site situated in an OSI area?	Yes = 5 points	
Does the site contain New York Heritage Program-identified element(s) or	Yes = 5 points	

OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998

NYS OPRHP-validated archaeological resources?		
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A simple project routine can be created using the Geographic Information System to enable such analysis for all applications that either inherently (subdivision, site plan) or in a future manifestation (rezoning now, subdivision later) shall be subject to Article X of the Subdivision Regulations and Site Improvement Specifications. As these criteria are applied, thresholds for action should be defined. It is suggested that:

- A score of 30 points or more should result in a definite parkland set-aside.
- A score of 20 points or more should be considered and a discretionary decision made.
- A score under 20 points should not be considered for parkland set-aside and the park and playground fee should be required unless extenuating circumstances dictate.

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Draft Staff Study, September 1998

FIGURE 16: HALF-MILE RADIUS MAP—ALL PARKLAND IN TOWN OF HUNTINGTON

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Draft Staff Study, September 1998

FIGURE 17: HALF-MILE RADIUS MAP—TOWN OF HUNTINGTON ACTIVE PARKLAND

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals contributed to the development of this report by sharing ideals and frustrations, time, and motivation. This document was drafted by the Town of Huntington Department of Planning and Environment with extensive volunteer student intern support in developing digital data resources. The following individuals' involvement merits special appreciation, without whose assistance in building data resources over the past eight years, this report could not have been prepared.

PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE

Joy Squires, Chairperson, Huntington Conservation Board, and Members of the Huntington Conservation Board, both past and present (Paul Ponturo, Basil Tangredi, Richard Meyer, Sue Taylor, Marci Bortman), volunteers, for never losing sight of the need to preserve precious open space in the Town, for constancy in bringing attention to the issue in commentary on land use changes, and for encouragement and technical assistance in finalizing the study.

Richard Machtay, Director, Department of Planning and Environment, for exercising extreme patience in instructing on the basics of DataEase and Access, troubleshooting system problems, and insisting upon cautious database development on which all the Department of Planning and Environment's GIS applications are founded. Most importantly, he is the Director that has allowed this study to happen as a progressive staff endeavor following up on the recommendations contained in the 1993 Comprehensive Plan. He has maintained constant faith that the Town's GIS (HELIX) is a vital tool for planning the future of Huntington and thus, has provided unwavering support for its development and enhancement.

John Condon, AICP, former Deputy Director, Planning Department, for vigilance in maintaining perspective and humor on the part of all involved parties and for providing a sounding board for inquiries, options, and ideas.

David DeRosa, Engineering Aide (Keeper of the Flame/Master of the Database Universe), Department of Planning and Environment, whose assistance has been critical to the project as volunteer, part-time staff member and SUNY Farmingdale student intern to the Planning Department for six years prior to his hiring full-time last year and thereafter. Dave has searched files, microfiche, maps, listings, reports and other databases to cull and organize much of the information necessary to compile this assessment. He is singly responsible for development of the Town's database to track rezoning enactments, an enormous compilation that stretches back to the adoption of the Town's first Zoning Code. Dave conducted the initial data development for both the 1974 OSI and first rendition of the Proposed OSI Update upon which the OSI Retrospect is grounded.

Charla Bolton, AICP, Planner, Department of Planning and Environment, for ongoing support and expert guidance, especially in interpreting information related to cultural and historic resources, recommending how these resources should be tracked and prioritized, and supervising the development of a Historic/Cultural Resources Database.

Anne Ducey-Ortiz, Planner, Department of Planning and Environment, for assisting with innumerable questions on the subdivision process, for helping to ferret out information relating to

**OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998**

subdivisions and environmental topics and for aiding development and refinement of the subdivisions databases.

Scott Howell, former Environmental Analyst, Planning Department, 1991-1994, for initial data input on the Subdivisions database, tracking filed subdivisions that occurred in the Town of Huntington from 1960 forward.

Dave Mikolaitis and Tina Gentile, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc., GIS consultants to the Town, for assisting with conversion of the Planning Department's initial databases into a format suitable for mapping, for providing instruction as needed, and for helping with innumerable events encountered along the way.

STUDENT INTERNS

Jason Sassenoff, Nassau BOCES PACE Program, volunteer, high school intern, Fall-Spring 1997-1998 and part-time Planning aide, Summer 1998

Verification and Update of Historic/Cultural Resources, Subdivisions (Filed Maps, Tax Maps, Active Applications), Protected Land Inventory (Common Areas) and Site Plan Databases

Jonathan Hummel, volunteer, B.A. Government Studies/Economics, Dartmouth College internship, Summer 1997

Subdivisions Tax Map Database Initial Data Entry/Development

Chris Watson, volunteer, B.A. Historic Preservation, Mary Washington College internship, Summer 1995

Historic/Cultural Resources Database Initial Data Entry

Matthew Cuiffo, volunteer, B.S. Environmental Management, SUNY Oneonta, Summer 1995

SEQRA/EIS Chronology Database Development

Lydia Mocenigo, volunteer, C.W. Post, L.I.U., M.S. Environmental Science internship, Spring 1991 and later, as full-time researcher working in the Town Attorney's office through 1995

Deeds Database Development (based on extensive research throughout Town Hall and at Riverhead to track acquisition histories of town properties)

Kenneth Longstreet, Town of Huntington Human Services, Division of Handicapped Services-sponsored summer internship, 1992

Site Plans Database Information Initial Data Entry

Erica Weisler, volunteer, C.W. Post, L.I.U., and Boston University, B.A. Political Science internship, Summer 1991

Parkland Database Initial Data Entry and Research

APPENDIX A - METHODOLOGY

OASIS—OPEN AREAS INFORMATION SYSTEM

Open Space Index Property Status Methodology

A dynamic database form was created to enable entry of data pertinent to the 1974 OSI and generalized tracking. The form has undergone a multitude of transformations from its initial format resulting in presentation of parameters that include the site's physical and natural characteristics, geographic descriptors, and planning criteria. Select information presented in the 1974 OSI document and the specific environmental constraints identified in Section 3 (Environmental Conditions) of the 1993 Huntington Comprehensive Plan were chosen for qualitative and quantitative analysis.

All 1974 Open Space Index parcels were described in accordance with current Suffolk County Tax Map data, by district, section, block and lot(s). While the Suffolk County Real Property Tax Service Agency introduced the land classification system in 1972, it was not widely in use in 1974; therefore, lands included on the OSI had never been systematically identified by tax parcel. In instances where the mapped OSI parcels included portions of lots, the entire tax map parcel was noted in the database; thus, some OSI parcels appear larger on their respective database forms than in the Town of Huntington Open Space Index adopted by the Town Board on December 27, 1974.

All subdivision maps filed since 1974 were reviewed and a separate database therefor created to ascertain which affected mapped OSI properties and which resulted in planned open space--parkland, recharge area or open space dedication(s) or common area setaside.

Suffolk County tax maps were reviewed to search confirm partitioned Open Space Index parcels.

Forty-three descriptive features/parameters (geographical, planning, land use, natural resource) were identified and assigned to the individual open space index parcels (OSIs) as listed below and described more fully in the following section:

- 1) 1974 OSI Number
- 2) Name
- 3) Tax Map Number
- 4) Map Identification
- 5) Street Location
- 6) 1990 Census Tract
- 7) School District
- 8) Acreage
- 9) Zoning
- 10) Original/Update
- 11) '74 Ranking
- 12) '98 Ranking
- 13) Soils
- 14) Cover Type(s)
- 15) Designated CEA

**OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998**

- 16) NYS-Regulated Freshwater Wetland
- 17) NYS-Regulated Tidal Wetland
- 18) Floodplain-100 Year
- 19) NYS Coastal Erosion Hazard Area
- 20) Local Waterfront Revitalization Area (LWRP)
- 21) NYS Significant Coastal Wildlife Habitat
- 22) Endangered Species per New York Heritage Program Database
- 23) Steep Slopes
- 24) Hydrogeological Management Zone
- 25) Special Groundwater Protection Area
- 26) Public Well Site Adjoining
- 27) Suffolk County Water Authority Core Watershed Corridor
- 28) Sewer District
- 29) New York State Inactive Hazardous Waste Site
- 30) Generic Environmental Impact Statement Area
- 31) Sewage Treatment Plant Adjoining
- 32) Historic - National Register Listed
- 33) Historic - Town of Huntington Designated
- 34) Historic - Town of Huntington Historic Sites Survey
- 35) Prehistoric - New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) Map
- 36) Prior Government Acquisition Nominated
- 37) Government Plan Consistency
- 38) New York State Environmental Quality Bond Act Acquired
- 39) Suffolk County Open Space/Drinking Water Protection Program Acquired
- 40) Parkland Adjoining
- 41) Public Land Adjoining
- 42) Restricted Open Space Adjoining
- 43) Threat of Application

All 1974 OSIs were coded to identify present status for retention in OSI Update: S (Save), M (Modify), R (Remove-Fully developed or insufficient contiguous area remaining), P (Developed, but resulted in parkland dedication) or X (Expand).

Descriptive fields were assigned point scores to enable all OSI parcels to be given a relative base qualitative ranking.

Total impact to OSI parcels was assessed relative to developed, subdivided or planned use acreage versus that which had been afforded some form of open space stewardship.

Data Form Fields/Open Space Scorecard

1974 OSI Number: The quadrant and numeral descriptor identifying the individual parcel on the Open Space Index adopted by the Town Board in December of 1974

Name: Name of use or owner (e.g. Northport Veterans Administration Medical Center)

Tax Map Number: District, section, block and lot number(s) from the Suffolk County Tax Maps prepared by the Real Property Tax Service Agency, revised 1998 (e.g. 0400-011-01-001.001)

OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998

Map Identification: Page and grid number from Town of Huntington Streets and Highways Book (e.g. 10, H-12)

Location: Street location as cross-referenced by the Town of Huntington Streets and Highways Book (e.g. North of Greenlawn Rd. and east of Main Street)

1990 Census Tract: Six (6) digit number identifying Census Tract in which specific parcel is located

School District: Number identifying school district (e.g. UFSD 4)

Acreage: Total acreage for mapped Open Space Index parcel was the sum of the individual parcels taken from the Suffolk County Tax Map or, if parcel was less than one acre in size, the Assessor's office.

RANKING: 10 POINTS (HIGHEST POINT VALUE) FOR OSI TOTAL OVER 50 ACRES, 5 POINTS ABOVE 25 ACRES BUT BELOW 50 ACRES, 3 POINTS ABOVE FIVE ACRES BUT BELOW 25 ACRES

Zoning: Zoning of individual parcel(s) comprising Open Space Index site and the zoning of the immediately surrounding area (e.g. Area C-6, R-5, R-80; Ind. R-80)

Original/Update: Field identifying status of Index placement

'74 Ranking: All parcels on the 1974 Open Space Index were assigned a ranking from 1 to 6 with corresponding policy recommendations

RANKING: 5 POINTS FOR AREA WITH A PRIORITY 1 OR 2 RATING

'98 Ranking: A sum of the individually-ranked field scores providing an indication of relative significance from which specific corresponding policy recommendations were drafted

'98 Status: A quality grouping based on cumulative '98 ranking

Soils: Suffolk County Soil Survey soil classification categories (e.g. RhB = Riverhead and Haven soils, graded, 3 to 8 percent slopes). Prime agricultural soils were selected in accordance with direction provided by the U.S.D.A., Soil Conservation Service, Riverhead.

RANKING: 5 POINTS FOR ONLY PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS, 3 POINTS FOR TWO TYPES OF PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS WITH OTHER SOILS PRESENT, 1 POINT IF THE SITE CONTAINS A PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOIL, BUT IT IS NOT DOMINANT.

Cover Type(s): One or more of the following classifications from the 1974 OSI was assigned to indicate habitat type: W (Woodland, forest secondary growth); F (Field, farm meadow, nursery, now or previously under cultivation also includes areas excavated for sand and gravel); P (Pond, stream, or other surface water, fresh or saltwater wetland); L (Landscaped area, showing development other than farms including golf courses, estates, parks, camps); B (Beach or bay frontage, waterfront property); S (Steep slopes with erosion potential)

RANKING: 5 POINTS FOR THREE OR MORE COVER TYPES, 3 POINTS FOR TWO COVER TYPES, 1 POINT FOR ONE COVER TYPE.

Designated CEA: Location in a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)-designated Critical Environmental Area (CEA) pursuant to SEQRA, Article 8 Environmental Conservation Law, or Special Legislation

RANKING: 10 POINTS FOR LIRPB-NOM (CEA NOMINATED BY LIRPB), SC-NOM (CEA NOMINATED BY SUFFOLK COUNTY), TOWN OF HUNTINGTON-NOM (CEA NOMINATED BY TOWN OF HUNTINGTON), OR NYS-NOM (CEA NOMINATED BY NEW YORK STATE).

**OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998**

NYS-Regulated Freshwater Wetland: Area identified on the New York State Freshwater Wetlands Maps filed per Article 24 of the Environmental Conservation Law, revised February 17, 1993

RANKING: 5 POINTS FOR AREA CONTAINING STATE-REGULATED FRESHWATER WETLAND

NYS-Regulated Tidal Wetland: An area identified on the New York State Tidal Wetlands Maps filed in accordance with Article 25 of the Environmental Conservation Law.

RANKING: 5 POINTS FOR AREA CONTAINING STATE-REGULATED TIDAL WETLAND

Floodplain-100 Year: An area identified on the Federal Emergency Management Act maps

RANKING: 3 POINTS FOR AREA WITHIN THE 100-YEAR FLOOD ZONE

NYS Coastal Erosion Hazard Area: An area lying within a zone designated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation pursuant to Article 34 of Environmental Conservation Law for its severe proclivity to erosion and the need for protection of existing stabilizing measures.

RANKING: 3 POINTS FOR AREA DESIGNATED AS NYS COASTAL EROSION HAZARD AREA

Local Waterfront Revitalization Area (LWRP): A site lying within these mapped areas was identified by the agency within whose boundaries it was contained: NYS LWRP, TOWN OF HUNTINGTON LWRP or NYS & TOWN OF HUNTINGTON.

NYS Significant Coastal Wildlife Habitat: An area designated by the New York State Department of State, effective April 15, 1987, for its habitat value as nurseries for fin and shell fish which support recreational fishing demands in an area, while providing breeding and feeding area for wading birds and waterfowl.

RANKING: 5 POINTS FOR AREA DESIGNATED AS NYS SIGNIFICANT COASTAL WILDLIFE HABITAT

Endangered Species per New York Heritage Program: Site contains plant or animal species, natural community or exceptional natural feature with state, national or global ranking included on the state-managed database of sites

RANKING: 10 POINTS FOR NYHP-LISTED PLANT, ANIMAL, OR NATURAL COMMUNITY.

Step Slopes: Area defined on maps prepared for the Huntington Environmental Planning Program, a Master's Thesis in Regional Planning for the Department of Regional Planning and Landscape Architecture, University of Pennsylvania, Spring 1972, cross-referenced to the Suffolk County Soil Survey.

RANKING: 3 POINTS FOR AREA WITH SLOPE GREATER THAN 10% IN CATEGORIES IDENTIFYING THE APPLICABILITY OF ARTICLE X (ART X, ART X N/A), THE STEEP SLOPE ORDINANCE CONTAINED IN THE HUNTINGTON ZONING CODE, DEPENDENT ON ZONING.

Hydrogeological Management Zone: Zones identified in the LIRPB Long Island Comprehensive Waste Treatment Management Plan (208 Study), 1978

RANKING: 3 POINTS FOR AREA LYING WITHIN THE HIGHER QUALITY DEEP RECHARGE AREA, ZONE I

Special Groundwater Protection Area: Areas identified pursuant to New York Environmental Conservation Law Article 55 for which the LIRPB Long Island Comprehensive Special Groundwater Protection Area Plan was certified on April 21, 1993. All the SGPAs, including the West Hills-Melville and Oak Brush Plains SGPAs in Huntington are CEAs by special action of the state legislature. Ten (10) points for ranking were awarded in the CEA category .

**OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998**

Public Well Site Adjoining: Sites lying immediately adjacent to a public well site were identified by one of the suppliers in the Town of Huntington SCWA (Suffolk County Water Authority), GWD (Greenlawn Water Authority), LIDC (Long Island Developmental Center), NVAH (Northport Veterans Administration Hospital), PVT (Private). This parameter was included for ranking among the choice fields in Adjoining Restricted Open Space below.

Suffolk County Water Authority Core Watershed Corridor: Sites located within the mapped Core Watershed Corridor roughly falling south of Jericho Turnpike and north of New York State Long Island Expressway received. This area was identified as centering on the groundwater divide, being the area of greatest deep recharge.

Sewer District: If a property is located within a sewer district, it is identified by that district: HNT (Huntington), CPT (Centerport) or MVL (Melville-proposed).

New York State Inactive Hazardous Waste Site: Any portion of a site included on the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's registry of Inactive Waste Sites was noted.

Generic Environmental Impact Statement Area: If a property is situated within the mapped boundaries of an area for which a Generic Environmental Impact Statement was adopted, it is identified by that GEIS Area: CNTRPT (Centerport), MLVLE (Melville) or N/A.

Sewage Treatment Plant Adjoining: If a property adjoins a site containing a sewage treatment plant, it was noted to identify the greater potential for intensification of site use and thus, more imminently threatened.

Historic - National Register Listed: Property listed on the National Register of Historic Places was identified as follows: HD (site contained within a historic district), HDA (adjacent to a historic district), IN (individually-listed site), INA (adjacent to an individually-listed site), or N/A (not applicable).

RANKING: 5 POINTS FOR A SITE WHICH LIES WITHIN A NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT OR IS INDIVIDUALLY-LISTED; 3 POINTS FOR ADJOINING INDIVIDUALLY-LISTED SITE(S) OR THOSE WITHIN A DISTRICT.

Historic - Town of Huntington Designated: Property designated as Town of Huntington historic landmark pursuant to §198-40.3 of Town Code were identified as HD (lying within a historic district), HDA (adjoining a historic district), IN (individually-listed site), INA (adjoining an individually-listed site), D&I (lying within a district and individually-listed), or N/A (not applicable).

RANKING: 3 POINTS FOR A SITE WHICH LIES WITHIN A TOWN OF HUNTINGTON-DESIGNATED HISTORIC DISTRICT OR IS INDIVIDUALLY-LISTED; 1 POINT FOR ADJOINING INDIVIDUALLY-LISTED SITE(S) OR THOSE WITHIN A DISTRICT.

Historic - Town of Huntington Historic Sites Survey: OSI parcels which contain sites or structures listed on the Historic Site Survey or lie adjacent thereto were identified.

RANKING: 1 POINT FOR SITE WHICH LIES WITHIN A HISTORIC DISTRICT OR IS INDIVIDUALLY-LISTED ON THE TOWN HISTORIC SITES SURVEY.

Prehistoric - New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) Listed: Property falling in a sensitive area so designated by mapping on the state "Circles and Squares" Map.

RANKING: 1 POINT FOR NYS OPRHP MAP OR SURVEY FILE LISTING

OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998

Government Acquisition: Nominated: Lands nominated for acquisition under the New York State Environmental Quality Bond Act (e.g. by Town, County or independent or non-profit agencies) or lands nominated for acquisition (i.e. Suffolk County Legislature initiated planning steps to acquire the property) under the Suffolk County Open Space, Drinking Water Protection, or Land Preservation Partnership Programs or lands for which the Town Board has initiated action toward direct acquisition (e.g. 72(h) inter-agency transfer, eminent domain proceeding, etc.).

RANKING: 10 POINTS FOR NOMINATION

Government Plan Consistency: Lands identified specifically or which meet objectives for preservation in a regional or local government plan, such as the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan, Long Island Comprehensive Groundwater Management Plan, Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Long Island Sound Study.

RANKING: 5 POINTS FOR PLAN COMPATIBILITY

Parkland Adjoining: Sites adjacent to public parkland were identified by their governmental agency ownership: TOWN OF HUNTINGTON, SC, NYS, FED or VILL.

RANKING: 2 POINTS FOR ADJOINING PARKLAND; CUMULATIVE FOR ADJOINING MORE THAN ONE PARK PROPERTY

Public Land Adjoining: Properties adjacent to land in public ownership were identified by their governmental agency affiliation: TOWN OF HUNTINGTON, SC, NYS, or USA.

RANKING: 2 POINTS FOR ADJOINING PUBLIC LAND; CUMULATIVE FOR ADJOINING MORE THAN ONE PUBLIC PROPERTY

Restricted Open Space Adjoining: Properties adjoining restricted open space were identified by the type of restricted use land represented: RB (recharge basin), UTIL/ROW (utility/right-of-way), WATER (well site), SCHOOL (public/private/institution), COMMON (common land held pursuant to §281 of Town Law by a homeowners association), PR SANCT (private sanctuary), PR CEM (private cemetery) or TOWN OF HUNTINGTON CEM (Town of Huntington cemetery).

RANKING: 2 POINTS FOR ADJOINING RESTRICTED OPEN SPACE; CUMULATIVE FOR ADJOINING MORE THAN ONE RESTRICTED OPEN SPACE. IF THE OSI CONTAINED ONE OF THE ABOVE, IT WAS AWARDED POINTS ACCORDINGLY.

Threat of Application: Properties for which an active application is pending before one of the Town's reviewing Boards.

RANKING: 10 POINTS FOR CONDITIONAL FINAL SUBDIVISION OR SITEPLAN APPLICATION; 5 POINTS FOR PRELIMINARY SUBDIVISION, CHANGE OF ZONE, ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION (ALL OF WHICH REQUIRE SUBSEQUENT REVIEW PRIOR TO APPROVAL OR ISSUANCE OF BUILDING PERMITS); 2 POINTS FOR PRE-APPLICATION FOR SUBDIVISION OR SITE PLAN

FIGURE 18: LAND RESOURCE POINT RATINGS SUMMARY

Natural Resource Series	Top Point Rank	Middle Point Rank	Low Point Rank
Acreage	>50 acres 10 pts	>25 <50 acres 5 pts	>5 < 25 acres 3 pts
Soils (prime agricultural)	only prime 5 pts.	2 types prime 5 pts	
Cover types	3 or > 5 pts.	2 types 3 pts.	1 type 1 pt
Designated Critical Environmental Area	10 pts		
NYS-Regulated Freshwater Wetland	5 pts		
NYS-Regulated Tidal Wetland	5 pts		
100-Year Floodplain	3 pts		
NYS Coastal Erosion Hazard Area	3 pts		
NYS Significant Coastal Wildlife Habitat	5 pts		
NY Natural Heritage Program element	10 pts		
Steep Slopes >10%	3 pts		
Hydrogeological Management Zone I	3 pts		
Cultural Resource Series			
National Register of Historic Places	listed 5 pts.	adjoining 3 pts.	
Town Designated Historic Landmark	listed 3 pts.	adjoining 1 pts.	
Town Historic Sites Survey	listed 1 pts.		
NYSOPRHP Prehistoric/Archaeological	listed 1 pts.		
Planning Series			
Government Acquisition Nomination	10 pts.		
Government Plan Consistency	5 pts. cumulative		
Priority 1 or 2 on 1974 OSI	5 pts.		
Parkland adjoining	2 pts.; cumulative		
Public Land Adjoining	2 pts.; cumulative		
Restricted Open Space Adjoining	2 pts.; cumulative		
Application Threat	5 pts. prelim. subdiv./site plan	2 pts. zone change/ ZBA	

Tracking of 1974 Open Space Index - Analysis

A filed subdivisions database was created to evaluate which lands have had subdivision maps filed with the Suffolk County Clerk since the OSI adoption on December 27, 1974. The subdivision database enabled a quantitative breakdown of lands included on the OSI and total reserved property (e.g. parkland setaside, recharge basins, common area, private recreation area, covenanted natural buffer).

The Planning Department's site plan database was evaluated to ascertain which OSI properties had site plans approved by the Planning Board since the OSI adoption date. This was self-limited as the Planning Board did not have site plan review for all commercial and industrial applications in 1974. Site development plans subject to review and approval of the Planning Board were required for C-6 zoned lands as of December 22, 1987; for C-1, C-3, C-7, C-8, C-9 and I-5 as of December 12, 1991.

All individual tax parcels comprising the 1974 OSI were reviewed using the Town Assessor's real property inventory from the Town mainframe to ascertain property character codes. The property

**OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998**

classification codes enabled a rough first assessment of which properties are developed for a particular use, remain vacant, or are not fully improved in accordance with zoning.

The 1974 OSI properties were reviewed building permit history on a parcel basis. Data regarding permits issued for new construction were entered into a database subform.

Microfiche of the 1976 tax maps were reviewed to determine the extent of parcels that existed at the time the 1974 Open Space Index was adopted to frame a basis for comparison with current tax maps.

Creation of Proposed 1998 Open Space Index Update

All records from the 1974 OSI which received status rankings of S (Save), M (Modify), or X (Expand) were maintained on the OSI Update. These records form the core of the Proposed 1998 OSI.

Obvious omissions from the 1974 OSI were added including schools, private sanctuaries and institutional and large governmental holdings (non park/open space dedicated).

Listings were obtained from Data Processing searches of Town mainframe land records by specific property character codes³ and reviewed for addition to the OSI Update.

The entire Suffolk County Tax Map book for the Town of Huntington, excluding the incorporated villages, was reviewed seeking contiguous holdings using 10 acres as a standard, lowered in specific instances for contiguity to already protected open space or where critical resources were known.

OSI Update parcels were renumbered by quad with boundaries defined on Suffolk County Tax Maps.

Descriptive parameters were entered and/or updated for each proposed 1998 OSI listing.

A separate search of all lands contiguous to parkland holdings in the Town of Huntington was conducted to establish listing of potential park expansion sites which were assigned P codes (e.g. SW-P-1) and records therefor were incorporated on the 1998 OSI.

A proposed 1998 database was developed, mapped, and then cross-checked against other relevant databases to refine the list (filed subdivisions, parks, active applications). Sites pending conditional final subdivision or site plan (that were previously reviewed as rezonings) were removed.

Comparison of 1974 Open Space Index and Proposed 1998 Update (In Progress)

³The property character codes searched were: 250 (Residential-Estate), 311 (Vacant Land-Residential), 330 (Vacant Land-Commercial) and 340 (Vacant Land-Industrial), 10 acres or larger in size; and 105 (Agricultural Vacant Land-Productive), 129 (Acquired Development Rights), 140 (Truck Crops), 150 and 151 (Orchard Crops), 170 (Nursery and Greenhouse), 553 (Country Clubs), 555 (Riding Stables), 557 (Outdoor Other Sports), 581 (Camps), 614 (Education-Special Schools), 615 (Education-Other Facilities), regardless of size.

OASIS (Open AreaS Information System)
Draft Staff Study, September 1998

Overall ranked fields are being compared to assess total loss in quality of Town open space resources from those areas previously mapped on the 1974 OSI. A comparison will be made reviewing geographic, physical and ecological characteristics contained in the 40+ database fields.

APPENDIX B - ATTACHMENTS

- September 3, 1998 Huntington Town Board resolutions—
1998-655 scheduling a special election to be held on November 3, 1998, concurrent with the General Election, submitting to public referendum a proposition to establish financing for acquisition and improvement of real property for active and passive park and recreational facilities, and preservation of open space, and
1998-656 scheduling a public hearing for September 15, 1998 to consider adopting a local law amending the Code of the Town of Huntington by adding Chapter 46 (Open Space and Park Funds) re: financing for acquisition and improvement of land for active and passive park and recreational facilities, and preservation of open space.
- July 24, 1998 Newsday article: “Land Filled; For Builders On LI, Open Tracts Are Becoming Scarce And Pricey”, Randi Feigenbaum
- March 3, 1998 Huntington Town Board resolution 1998-167 directing preparation of Town Open Space Plan
- April 22, 1993 Huntington Planning Board-adopted Comprehensive Plan recommended Administrative Program from Section 7—Parks, Open Space and Historic Resources