Town of Chester

Community Preservation Plan

Image by Lanc & Tully, DPC

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PREFACE

New York's western Hudson Highlands, a more than 93,000-acre network of protected lands in eastern Orange County, offers unparalleled recreational opportunities within a one-hour drive or train ride from New York City. The Highlands also provide vast quantities of clean drinking water and are a designated climate resilient corridor, providing a haven for an incredible diversity of species. The mountains, meadows, lakes, and rivers that define the beauty of this area comprise a culturally and ecologically important landscape that have inspired and awed generations of residents and visitors alike, influencing significant moments in the nation's art, landscape design, conservation, and environmental advocacy movements. However, increasing land development pressures, visitor capacity issues at state parks, land connectivity gaps, and threats to water quality within the western Highlands pose challenges to the continued existence and maintenance of a connected and sustainable landscape[1].

[1] Highlands West: Trail Connectivity Plan. Open Space Institute, 2021.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Chester is situated approximately 50 miles north of Manhattan and is centrally located within Orange County, New York. The Town of Chester has a land area of 25.20 square miles and it includes two commercial centers; the Village of Chester as well as the historic Hamlet of Sugar Loaf.

Outside of the Town's two commercial centers, the Town's character is defined by its unique abundance of natural resources, rural, agricultural landscapes and picturesque mountainous backdrops. Natural resources found within the Town include land resources (i.e. open space, trails and scenic roads), geologic features (mountains, hillsides and backdrops) and water resources (wetlands, floodplains, aquifer, streams and water bodies).

Agriculture land also remains an important part of the landscape including its "black dirt" farms within and surrounding the Village of Chester as well as a variety of beef, dairy and vegetable farms.

Over the last 20 years, the Town of Chester has lost many of its working farms to development and these lands have been developed primarily for residential purposes. The growth pressure in the Town is the result of a growing regional economy and proximity to the New York metropolitan area, which will continue to draw more businesses and residents to the community. However, the Town has also continuously made progress towards conservation and preservation.

The Town of Chester has long recognized that community planning is an ongoing process. The Town of Chester's 2003 Comprehensive Plan led to the Town's adoption of the Ridge Protection Overlay. Subsequent amendments to the Town's Zoning and Subdivision Regulations empowered the Planning Board to require cluster subdivisions when it provided an opportunity to preserve farmland, natural resources and open space.

Other recent efforts by the Town Board to preserve Chester's rural character have included such efforts as the Town's $4.4 million acquisition of the *91-acre Knapp's View* parcel in 2004 which was approved via referendum vote, the creation of a conservation advisory council to advise in the development, management and protection of the Town's natural resources and the permanent protection of open space in both Oak Woods and Eagle Crest residential subdivisions through the Planning Board's cluster subdivision approval process.

In July of 2026, the Town Board adopted the most recent update to its Comprehensive Plan.

This plan inventories the myriad of environmental resources with recommendations on how to best balance the many needs of the various facets of the community, including continued growth, tourism and economic development.

The plan is intended to be a supplemental addendum, or "element" of the Town of Chester 2026 Comprehensive Plan. It builds upon previous conservation efforts and recommends further refinement of the Town's land use regulations to protect farmland, natural resources and open space. Among the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations to protect natural resources, agricultural resources and open space was the preparation of this Community Preservation Plan and adoption of an associated Community Preservation Fund.

Overall, the CPP identifies 2,906.52 acres on 110 parcels as the highest priorities for preservation through the various land use alternatives described herein. The plan also identifies various categories of priority parcels and projects situated within the target areas based, in part, upon the following Plans and studies:

- Recommendations from the Town's 2026 Comprehensive Plan,
- Recommendations from the Village of Chester Comprehensive Plan,
- Recommendations from the Orange County Land Trust including the Municipal Riparian Buffer Assessment prepared in February of 2026.
- Recommendations from the Orange County Comprehensive Plan, including the Orange County Open Space Plan, Bikeway Vision Plan, Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan and Moodna Creek Watershed Protection Plan.
- Recommendations from Highlands West Trail Connectivity Plan prepared by OSI and last updated in February of 2021.
- Recommendations from Significant Habitats in the Trout Brook Watershed, prepared by Hudsonia, Ltd, 2010.

Together the measures described above will help to ensure the protection of Chester's unique rural character, agricultural and natural resources on a long-term bases. Proximity to open space is also a recognized economic amenity. Conserving open space resources; views and access to the mountains, working farmlands, places to observe and enjoy wildlife and recreation areas in the community will help to protect and enhance residential property values.

B. Purpose of the Community Preservation Plan

This Community Preservation Plan (CPP) is intended to provide the foundation and framework for establishing a Town of Chester Community Preservation Fund (CPF), which will enable the Town to supplement earlier efforts described above and proactively protect valuable open space and farmland through the purchase of such lands or purchase of conservation easements thereon.

The Town of Chester Town Board has determined that it is imperative to establish a Town of Chester CPF to supplement its on-going efforts to protect open space, natural resources and preserve farmland.

The fund is developed when real property is sold in the Town of Chester, the buyer pays a small fee, generally less than the amount charged for title fees in a mortgage's closing costs. The seller pays nothing. This fee is added to a dedicated escrow fund that can only be used for projects identified in this Community Preservation Plan to preserve the community character of the Town.

It is noted that the first $100,000 of the residential sales price is exempt from the buyer's CPF fee. Therefore, a $350,000 property, would be assessed a fee of $1,875 or $250,000 times 0.75% which would be paid by the purchaser of the property at closing. It is further noted that gifts of property, tax or bankruptcy sales, land which already is encumbered by a conservation easement or other development restriction, and agricultural land which will continue to be used for agricultural purposes will be exempt from the CPF fee.

The purposes of the fund shall be exclusively: (a) to implement recommendations of this plan for the preservation of community character, (b) to acquire interests or rights in real property for the preservation of community character within the town, including villages therein, in accordance with such plan and in cooperation with willing sellers, (c) to establish a bank pursuant to a transfer of development rights program consistent with applicable states laws, and (d) to provide a management and stewardship program for such property or easement obtained.

Funds from the CPF are only to be expended for projects which have been included herein and for the purposes discussed herein.

Properties, other than farmland, which are acquired through the Town's CPF will be maintained in a manner which allows for public use of the land, but which is also compatible with the natural, scenic and, or historic character of the land.

Properties acquired through the Town's CPF shall not be sold, leased, exchanged, donated, or otherwise disposed of, or used for other than the purposes permitted by this plan without the express authority of an act of the NYS Legislature.

The CPF will spread the cost for continuing preservation efforts by assessing a tax on new home-buyers within the town so they can contribute to the shared future in a desirable Town.

The CPP will implement and support several important recommendations of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The Town also intends to pursue a variety of measures to implement the recommendations of the CPP and not to rely solely upon the purchase of lands.

The main objective and highest priority for land preservation through this CPP is the preservation of farmland. Other priorities and objectives for preservation involves one or more of the following:

a. Preservation of open space, including upland or fallow agricultural lands,

b. Establishment of additional parks, nature preserves and recreation areas,

c. Preservation of lands of exceptional scenic value,

d. Preservation of wetlands,

e. Preservation of aquifer recharge areas,

f. Establishment and/or preservation of public access to waterbodies,

g. Establishment of wildlife refuges for the purposes of maintaining biodiversity and native animal species diversity, including the protection of habitats essential to rare, endangered, threatened or special concern species,

h. Preservation of unique or threatened ecological areas,

i. Preservation of streams and stream buffer areas in a natural, free flowing condition,

j. Preservation of unique forested lands,

k. Establishment and/or preservation of public access to lands for public use including trails, stream rights and waterways,

l. Preservation of historic places and properties listed on the National and/or New York State Registers of Historic Places and/or protected under a municipal historic preservation law, and cultural or performing arts centers that anchor local business districts, and

m. Undertaking any of the aforementioned in furtherance of connecting open spaces and parkland within the Town of Chester.

C. Benefit of the Community Preservation Plan

Uncontrolled development can prove disastrous, threatening the very aspects of the Town of Chester that make it a desirable place to live. Community leaders must work to find a balance between housing needs and protection of environmental resources and community character.

Several surrounding towns have similar Community Preservation Funds which have been overwhelmingly successful. The Town of Warwick in Orange County, as well as the Town of Redhook in Dutchess County, the Town of New Paltz in Ulster County and Towns of Riverhead, Southhold, South Hampton and East Hampton on Long Island. Using funds from their CPF, the Town of Red Hook has conserved 4,162 acres of farmland, the Town of New Paltz

passed their CPF in 2020 and has since raised over $1 million and the Town of Warwick has raised approximately 18 million dollars and preserved over 5,000 acres of farmland, created two public parks and protected over 100 acres of watershed land.

Numerous studies point to the benefits in not only quality of life, but increased property values as a result of a living in close proximity to parks and open space. Parks, hiking trails and other recreational opportunities can boost local economies by attracting tourists who can eat, shop and stay locally. Similarly, protecting farms supports food security, local jobs, agri-tourism and preserves a key component of the history of the town.

D. Coordination with the Comprehensive Plan

Through the Comprehensive Planning process, including multiple public input sessions and a community survey, it became clear that the protection of Chester's rural quality, natural environment and farmland was a priority for its residents. The Town Board adopted its new Comprehensive Plan in July of 2026, which included chapters devoted to parks and recreation, natural resources, agricultural resources and cultural and historic resources among others.

Chester's overall challenge, and planning vision is to accommodate new growth while retaining its historic heritage and rural character while enhancing the Town's quality of life. The plan includes many goals, objectives and policies intended to protect natural resources, open space, community character and agricultural lands. The full list of recommendations is provided in Chapter 12 of the plan but policy recommendations related specifically to preservation of open space include the creation of a Community Preservation Fund which can be used to acquire and preserve additional open space in the future through a PDR or other means of property acquisition (Ch.3) which this plan will further expand upon.

The Town of Chester has also taken the following legislative measures to implement land use regulations to protect its unique rural character and natural resources.

Code Chapter 54, Freshwater Wetlands aims to preserve, protect and conserve freshwater wetlands and the benefits derived therefrom, to prevent the despoliation and destruction of freshwater wetlands and to regulate the development of such wetlands in order to secure the natural benefits of freshwater wetlands, consistent with the general welfare and beneficial economic, social and agricultural development of the Town.

Code Chapter 83: Subdivision of Land gives authority of the Planning Board to require the preservation of adequate land for parks, playgrounds and recreational purposes or to seek payment in-lieu of parkland so that such lands can be acquired or expanded elsewhere in the Town.

The subdivision and site plan regulations both require the identification of natural features such as large trees, orchards and wooded areas, wetlands, watercourses or drainage features, floodplains, rock outcrops and stone walls. While setting specific setbacks to streams for additional protections.

Sections 83-15 and 98-25 of the code also empower the Planning Board to review and approve clustered subdivisions as a measure to preserve valuable open space and agricultural lands.

Zoning Code Section 98-26: Ridge Protection Overlay was adopted to protect the Town's scenic resources.

Code Chapter 78A: Stormwater Management requires developments with over 1 acre of disturbance to prepare stormwater pollution prevention plans, including erosion and sediment control measures, and prohibits illicit discharges to its surface water resources while enabling violations and fines for noncompliance.

***Photo**: Chester Black Dirt Farms, by Brent Beausoleil via Chester Agricultural Center*

2.0 Community Preservation Target Areas and Priorities

A. The lands recommended for protection in this Community Preservation Plan (CPP) are referred to as Community Preservation Target Areas, Projects, Parcels and Priorities. These priority areas are presented on maps herein and listed in Table 1 of this CPP. Community Preservation Target Areas, Projects, Parcels and Priorities depict those parcels, which are recommended by this plan for protection to meet minimum conservation goals of the CPP. These goals, as noted earlier, include the following:

1. Preservation of open space, including agricultural lands,
2. Establishment of parks, nature preserves and recreation areas,
3. Preservation of lands of exceptional scenic value,
4. Preservation of wetlands,
5. Preservation of aquifer recharge areas,
6. Establishment and/or preservation of public access to waterbodies,
7. Establishment of wildlife refuges for the purposes of maintaining biodiversity and native animal species diversity, including the protection of habitats essential to rare, endangered, threatened or special concern species,
8. Preservation of unique or threatened ecological areas,
9. Preservation of streams and stream buffer areas in a natural, free flowing condition
10. Preservation of unique forested lands,
11. Establishment and/or preservation of public access to lands for public use including trails, stream rights and waterways,
12. Preservation of historic places and properties listed on the National and/or New York State Registers of Historic Places and/or protected under a municipal historic preservation law, and
13. Undertaking any of the aforementioned in furtherance of the connecting open spaces and parkland within the Town of Chester.

The Town Board would establish a Town of Chester Community Preservation Fund (CPF). It is an aspirational goal of the CPP to impose a three-quarter percent (0.75%) Real Estate Transfer Tax pursuant to Section 64-1 of New York State Town Law to help fund the CPF.

This CPP has identified a total of 3,341.12 acres of land as the highest priority for conservation through the land-use alternative discussed above. The Town Board recognizes that it is not feasible or desirable to acquire all the properties identified in the CPP, as it would be cost prohibitive to

acquire and maintain such lands. Instead, a balanced approach to the conservation and preservation of those lands identified in the CPP will be pursued over time, including, but not limited to, conservation subdivisions, conservation easements, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, or other public/private agreements that would further the goals of the CPP. Participation in any conservation program by any owner of the identified target properties is voluntary.

The following is a summary of the Target Area Acreage[2]:

- 2,327.72 acres of agricultural lands, black dirt and operating farms.
- 470.4 acres of properties within stream corridors.
- 69 acres of land within the watershed of Glenmere Lake,
- 419.6 acres of lands adjacent to state or county parkland or other protected open spaces identified as "Greenbelt" lands or lands containing unmarked trails or trails recommended for trail extensions.
- The 54.5 acres comprising the Seligman Property is listed for its local cultural importance. While two additional properties on the list were also defined as local landmarks or listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places and determined to be culturally important, they are counted under the agricultural category above.

This CPP recognizes that there may be other parcels in the Town of Chester that could become priorities for conservation in the future. Therefore, the Town Board reserves the right to amend the list, from time-to-time, when additional parcels that meet the above-stated criteria are identified.

The existing land use pattern in the Town of Chester reflects higher density development in and around the Village and state highways while the remainder of the town, particularly areas of mountainous terrain or saturated, black dirt soils have remained largely rural . The Zoning Map and Open Space Map for the Town are provided following this page. These maps provided important background information to assist the Town in identifying Community Preservation Plan Target Areas. The Methodology that was used is further described in Section 2.0 B below.

B. Methodology for Establishing Target Areas and Priorities

The Town of Chester Town Board appointed a committee to help identify priority land protection areas within the Town. The Committee met monthly to discuss priorities and to review a variety of resources including: 1) Real Property Tax Maps, 2) Town of Chester Open Space Map, which includes protected and proposed conservation lands, 3) a Town of Chester tax parcel-based Land Use Map (prepared with the assistance of the Orange County Planning Department's Geographic Information System (GIS) analysts); 4) the Town of Chester Zoning Map, 5) NYSDEC and

[2] Properties which fall into multiple target areas were only counted once under whichever category placed the property in the highest priority.

USACOE wetland mapping, 6) the County's NYS Ag & Markets Agricultural District Maps; and 7) the Biodiversity of the Moodna Creek Watershed: Important Resources and Conservation Recommendations (Laura Heady et al. 2008).

This preliminary analysis was then supplemented by field observations and local knowledge to target those lands that were most important to protect in order to meet the objectives of the Community Preservation Plan (CPP). The compilation of these areas and illustration on GIS tax parcel-based maps showed where protected area networks presently exist and where new connections could be formed.

The Town's Open Space Map, included in the Comprehensive Plan provided the foundation for these connections with a focus on linking parks and open space via trails. This plan takes this a step further in identifying farmland that should also be high priority for conservation.

Descriptions of each of these target areas is illustrated on the Community Preservation Plan Map and a corresponding list is each tax parcel by Section, Block and Lot is provided in Table 1: Target Areas, Project and Parcels. Table 1 provides a description of each property, its present land use and acreage. Agricultural lands are further subdivided as follows: Farm- Upland, Farm-Black Dirt, Farm-Niche, and Farm-Fallow. Parkland primarily consists of parcels within Goosepond Mountain State Park, but also include the Town of Chester's parklands. The public water supply lands around Glenmere Lake, are watershed lands almost entirely owned by Orange County, but for approximately 0.5-acres owned by the Village of Florida, New York. Open space, trails and conservation areas consist of private conservation lands (e.g., Orange County Land Trust, Camp Monroe, Town Lands not designated parkland, and forestlands. Biodiversity conservation areas as identified in the Biodiversity of the Moodna Creek Watershed and freshwater wetlands as identified and regulated by the New York State Department of Conservation (NYSDEC) and United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE). Areas identified for aquifer and wellhead protection are defined on the wellhead protection map as provided following page 22 of the 2026 Comprehensive Plan. Lastly, historic properties are those places and properties with historic or cultural significance defined as local landmarks or listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. Seven broad classes of parcels or target areas are defined by this CPP, which are listed below.

1. Agricultural Lands,

2. Parkland,

3. Open space, trails, and conservation areas,

4. Public water supply watersheds around Glenmere Lake,

5. Biodiversity conservation areas as identified in the Biodiversity of the Moodna Creek Watershed: Important Resources and Conservation Recommendations (Laura Heady et al. 2008),

and freshwater wetlands as identified and regulated by the New York State Department of Conservation (NYSDEC) and United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE),

6. Significant areas identified of importance for aquifer and wellhead protection, and

7. Historic places and properties defined as local landmarks or listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

C. Target Areas, Projects and Parcels

1. Agricultural Lands Target Areas.

The Comprehensive Plan's Agricultural Resources Chapter includes a map showing lands within one of the Orange County Agricultural Districts. Not all parcels included in the Agricultural Districts are lands containing active farming operation or agricultural lands. Through the passage of time, some lands have become fallow, subdivided for residential development or developed for non-residential purposes. Based upon these facts, the Committee undertook a parcel-by-parcel analysis to determine, which parcels still had potential for agriculture. The most threatened agricultural lands in the Town are the upland farmland that has the most potential for development. This is because such lands have suitable soils which are not prone to flooding.

The Town of Chester also has significant areas of "Black Dirt" soils that are among the most productive soils in New York State. Within the Town, the most productive black dirt lands are near the Village of Chester, however, there are smaller areas of Black Dirt soils in the vicinity of Glenmere Road, Black Meadow Road, Bellvale Road and Bellvale Lakes Road, which are also priorities for preservation. There is also a significant area of fallow black dirt soil within a portion of Camp LaGuardia, which is owned by Orange County. In all, 94 agricultural parcels were identified that collectively comprised 2,225.92 acres. The inventory of farmland includes black dirt parcels, fallow farmland and other land used for niche farming and raising of livestock.

Agricultural land is the primary target and priority of the Town's Community Preservation Plan. The Town will primarily seek to purchase development rights from farmers utilizing conservation easements to permanently protect the land and preserve the agricultural character of the town. The potential for increase funding will also allow the Town to pursue partnerships in a variety of ways to preserve farmland by bringing matching dollars to negotiations.

2. Parkland Target Areas

The Palisades Park Commission owns approximately 1,820 acres, or 2.84-square miles, of parkland in the Town of Chester within its Goosepond Mountain State Park. The Town of Chester also owns a 34.1- acre parcel, which contains a Town Highway Garage, ambulance building, senior center and the Town's Chester Commons Park. The park occupies approximately 24-acres of this

parcel. The Town of Chester also owns Pulvirent Park (SBL: 1-1-1.12), Knapp's View (7-1-45.11), a 4-aacre dog park (7-1-124) and Oak Park (SBL: 8-1-24).

The Comprehensive Plan recommended expansion and improvement at Town parkland in several general and particular areas. Recommendations included the following:

- Renovations at Chester Commons Park including new playground equipment and improved sports fields
- Renovation or replacement of playground equipment at Carpenter Park and Oak Park.
- Development of a long-term plan for Knapp's View that includes passive recreation and sitting areas.
- Development of a pocket park in Sugar Loaf.
- Encourage pocket parks in new residential developments

3. Open space, trails and Greenbelt Target Areas.

The CPP supports partnerships with Orange County, the Palisades Parks Commission, State of New York and land conservancies to protect valuable open space and expand the trail system within the Town of Chester. Protecting the integrity of open space areas not only contribute to the visual aesthetic of the community but also provide old-growth forest and other critical habitat for wildlife. The NYSDEC environmental mapper shows that more than half of the Town is identified as a "significant biodiversity area of the Hudson River Valley". Significant Natural Communities include Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest (red, white, and black oaks, hickories, white ash, red maple, Eastern hop-hornbeam, with dogwood, witch hazel and shadbush) located on Bellvale Mountain, Rocky Summit Grassland located on Sugar Loaf Mountain and Oak-Tulip Tree Forest located in Goosepond Mountain State Park. Each of these vegetated communities support abundant biodiversity including rare plant and animal species that are listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern on both the federal and state species lists. (see map and additional discussion in Chapter 3 of the Town's Comprehensive Plan).

Trails

The Orange County Heritage Trail is a 19.5-mile multi-use rail trail, which runs along the former Erie Railroad Main Line from Harriman to Middletown, New York with an access point at the Village of Chester former Chester railroad depot.

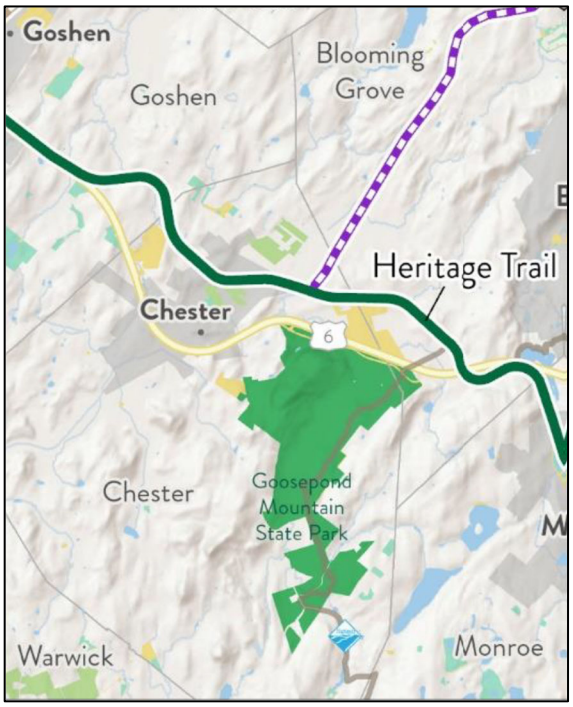


Image: Excerpt from Map 6 of the Orange County Bikeway Vison Plan showing the location of the proposed Schunnemunk Rail Trail (purple) connection in Chester.

Based on the recent Orange County Bikeway Vision Plan (2023), the County, in a joint venture with Open Space Institute (OSI), plans to acquire a 10-mile segment of the abandoned railroad line from the Town of Cornwall to the County-owned Camp LaGuardia site in the Town of Chester, recognizing that the proposed Schunnemunk Rail Trail would intersect with the Heritage Trail at Camp LaGuardia and expand access to several municipalities.

This CCP recommends working with Orange County to continue to extend Heritage Trail, along the Erie Branch rail line, as proposed in the County's Bikeway Vision Plan.

Goosepond Mountain State Park is a 1,558-acre park established in 1960 in the western portion of the town, south of NYS Route 17. The Long Path (co-aligned with the Highlands Trail) connects the southern end of Skunnemunk State Park with Goosepond Mountain State Park and Sterling Forest via connections with the Orange County Heritage Trail and various on and off-road connections. Southwest of Goosepond Mountain State Park is Sugar Loaf Mountain, a small mountain adjacent to the thriving art and crafts community of the same name. Orange County recently acquired 309-acres near the summit of this mountain for preservation and recreation purposes.

Recommendations in the Highlands West Trail Connectivity Plan for this trail system include formalizing unmarked trails, acquiring land to re-route the Highlands Trail from on-road to off-road between Goosepond Mountain State Park and Sterling Forest State Park in order to improve the experience and safety of the Highlands Trail for users and formally connecting Goosepond Mountain with the Hamlet of Sugar Loaf. While a hiking trail existed at one point, fragmentation of the land due to private ownership hindered the ability to permit formalized hiking access[3]. This connection has also been a long-time goal of the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference.

4. Public water supply watershed Target Areas.

This Target Area primarily seeks to protect land within the watershed of Glenmere Lake which is the primary drinking water source for the Village of Florida and various County-owned facilities and it also supports recreation. Orange County owns 414.8-acres of land in the Quaker Creek watershed surrounding Glenmere Lake. The majority of this 17,850-acre watershed is contained within the Town of Warwick but approximately 450 acres fall within the Town of Chester. While the CPP does not specifically identify additional lands for acquisition as watershed lands, it is not averse to such acquisition, if needed, to protect this public water supply. Indirectly, through the protection of wetlands and any tributaries of the Quaker Creek in this area of the town, the Town will continue to do its part to help protect this important water supply. The town could also consider limits on items stored outdoors within this watershed, such as road salts or chemicals or more strict stormwater quality standards.

[3] Highlands West: Trail Connectivity Plan. Open Space Institute, 2021.pg 49

5. Stream corridor / Biodiversity conservation Target Area

The NYSDEC environmental resource mapper identifies more than half of the Town as a "significant biodiversity area of the Hudson River Valley" (see map provided in Chapter 3 of the Comprehensive Plan). The Moodna Creek, together with its tributary the Otter Kill Creek, is identified in the Orange County Open Space Plan as a Priority Aquatic System (June 2004). The Southern Wallkill Biodiversity Plan (Miller et al. 2005) as well as Biodiversity of the Moodna Creek Watershed: Important Resources and Conservation Recommendations. (Laura Heady et al. 2008).also identify several areas within the Moodna Watershed as Biological Diversity Hotspots, including Goose Pond, Bellvale, Sugar Loaf Mountains within the Town of Chester and the Otter Kill, Seely Brook, and Black Meadow Creek corridors. In addition, the Biodiversity Plan identifies the Moodna/Otter Kill corridor as a Potential Wildlife Corridor. Streams and their riparian areas, support a high abundance and diversity of plants and animals, and are used as wildlife transportation routes if suitable habitat remains. These streams, riparian areas and related wetland pockets are a priority and should not just be protected from encroachment but protected from long-term water quality impacts from polluted stormwater runoff.

6. Aquifer and wellhead protection Target Areas.

Wellhead areas for public water supplies are shown on the Groundwater Resources Map (following page 22) in the Comprehensive Plan. Around each of these sites, is a 1,500-foot radius protection boundary within which greater concern and review should occur in the development of land. The Village of Chester's wellhead protection area is larger and more amorphous based upon detailed ground water study for that well.

This Plan supports the protection of the Town's critical natural resources, particularly its aquifers and groundwater quality. Wellhead protection legislation should be adopted to provide an additional measure of protection for these irreplaceable water resources. Cooperation between the Town and Village of Chester is necessary to properly protect these groundwater resources. The development of intermunicipal wellhead protection laws is supported by this Plan. Such a local law could be enacted as a zoning overlay district defining and delineating wellhead areas and establishing additional setbacks or restrictions applicable to certain potentially dangerous uses within these areas. This Plan supports wellhead and groundwater protection measures and the development of more detailed plans and studies to protect these vital resources.

7. Historic places Target Area

Within the Town, one property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Fury Brook Farm near the hamlet of Sugar Loaf. This 73.4-acre farm was first established along the Wawayanda Path in 1731, and during the Revolutionary War horses used by the Continental Army were raised on its pastures, according the National Register listing narrative. The Hamlet of Sugar Loaf also includes a National Historic District with 34 structures either listed on the National Register or eligible for listing. There are many other structures in the Town that are eligible for

listing on the National Register of Historic Places including several farms, Chester Cemetery and an Italianate Villa, built in 1912, known currently as Glenmere Mansion. The Seligmann property is a 54-acre rural homestead and art center located on the outskirts of the hamlet of Sugar Loaf which is culturally significant to the town. Originally the country estate of Swiss-American Surrealist artist Kurt Seligmann, the property operates as a cultural and event venue for non-profit Vision Hudson Valley.

8. The parcels below identify the specific target parcels for this Community Preservation Plan and their associated target areas. The acreages listed are from the Orange County Office of Real Property.

Table 1: Target Parcels

Tax ID	LOCATION	SIZE (acres)	TARGET AREA	ZONE
1-1-4	121-129 Johnson Road	83.8	Agricultural	AR-.3
1-1-83.21	14 Johnson Road	51.2	Agricultural	SR1
1-1-100.1	WS Johnson Road	18.5	Agricultural	AR-.3
1-1-100.2	19 Johnson Road	56.5	Agricultural	AR-.3
2-1-7.1	1700 State Hwy 17M	7.9	Agricultural	AR-.3
2-1-9.22	1582 Rt. 17M	90.7	Agricultural	AR-1
6-1-44.11	4070 Summerville Way/ Rt 94	41.6	Agricultural	SR1
6-1-51	4122 Summerville Way	68	Agricultural	SR1
12-1-6.4	4 Glenmere Rd / Prospect Ln	47	Agricultural	AR-.3
17-1-99.222	Ridge Road/Kings Hwy	101.8	Agricultural	AR-.3 & Ridge Pres.
17-1-102	Kings Hwy (both sides)	58.5	Agricultural	AR-.3 and IP
18-1-12	379 Bellvale Road	29.4	Agricultural	AR-.3
18-1-15.2	367 Bellvale Road (adjacent to above)	28.8	Agricultural/ Stream corridor	AI
1-1-20	Meadow Ave	3.2	Agricultural	AI
1-1-22	Meadow Ave	1.4	Agricultural	AI
1-1-23	Meadow Ave	6.7	Agricultural	AI
1-1-24	Meadow Road	4.1	Agricultural	AI
1-1-25	Meadow Ave	2.4	Agricultural	AI
1-1-26	Meadow Ave	4.0	Agricultural	AI
1-1-27	Meadow Ave	2.5	Agricultural	AI
1-1-28	38 Meadow Ave	1.8	Agricultural	AI
1-1-29	Meadow Ave	1.5	Agricultural	AI
1-1-30	Meadow Ave	2.0	Agricultural	AI
1-1-31	Meadow Ave	1.0	Agricultural	AI
1-1-32	Meadow Ave	0.4	Agricultural	AI
1-1-33	Meadow Ave	2.6	Agricultural	AI
1-1-34	Meadow Ave	3.0	Agricultural	AI
1-1-35	Meadow Ave	4.3	Agricultural	AI

1-1-36	Meadow Ave	3.6	Agricultural	AI
1-1-37	Meadow Ave	3.0	Agricultural	AI
1-1-38	Meadow Ave	1.2	Agricultural	AI
1-1-39	Meadow Ave	0.5	Agricultural	AI
1-1-40	Meadow Ave	8.3	Agricultural	AI
1-1-41	Meadow Ave	2.2	Agricultural	AI
1-1-42	Meadow Ave	1.1	Agricultural	AI
1-1-43	Meadow Ave	0.7	Agricultural	AI
1-1-44	Meadow Ave	1.4	Agricultural	AI
1-1-45	Meadow Ave	2.0	Agricultural	AI
1-1-46	Meadow Ave	1.0	Agricultural	AI
1-1-47	Meadow Ave	2.0	Agricultural	AI
1-1-48	Meadow Road	5.0	Agricultural	AI
1-1-49	Meadow Road	2.2	Agricultural	AI
1-1-50	Meadow Ave	0.7	Agricultural	AI
1-1-51	Meadow Ave	2.1	Agricultural	AI
1-1-52.2	Meadow Road/ landlocked	2.8	Agricultural	AI
1-1-53.3	Meadow Road/ landlocked	2.8	Agricultural	AI
1-1-54.1	Meadow Road/ landlocked	2.6	Agricultural	AI
1-1-54.2	Meadow Road/ landlocked	0.52	Agricultural	AI
1-1-55	Meadow Road/ landlocked	1.3	Agricultural	AI
1-1-56	Meadow Road	3.5	Agricultural	AI
1-1-57	Meadow Road	3.5	Agricultural	AI
1-1-58	Meadow Road	3.5	Agricultural	AI
1-1-59	Meadow Road	3.4	Agricultural	AI
1-1-60	168 Meadow Ave	7.8	Agricultural	AI
1-1-61	Meadow Road	11.8	Agricultural	AI
1-1-62.2	210 Meadow Ave	10.4	Agricultural	AI
1-1-63	Meadow Road/ landlocked	4.8	Agricultural	AI
1-1-64	Meadow Road/ landlocked	7	Agricultural	AI
1-1-65	Meadow Road	11.3	Agricultural	AI
1-1-66	Meadow Road/ landlocked	2.8	Agricultural	AI
1-1-67	Meadow Road	3.8	Agricultural	AI
1-1-68	Meadow Road	4.7	Agricultural	AI
1-1-69	Meadow Road/ landlocked	2.4	Agricultural	AI
1-1-70	Meadow Road/ landlocked	2.8	Agricultural	AI
1-1-71	Meadow Road	3.5	Agricultural	AI
1-1-72	Meadow Road/ landlocked	5.2	Agricultural	AI
1-1-76	McBride Road	6.6	Agricultural	AI
1-1-77.1	McBride Road	6	Agricultural	AI
1-1-78.2	Meadow Road	6.8	Agricultural	AI
1-1-79	Meadow Road/ landlocked	3.6	Agricultural	AI
1-1-83.21	Johnson Road	51.2	Agricultural	SR-1
1-1-100.1	Johnson Road	18.5	Agricultural	AR-.3
1-1-100.2	Route 94/ Johnson Road	56.5	Agricultural	AR-.3
2-1-7.1	Route 17M	7.9	Agricultural	AR-.3
2-1-9.22	Route 17M	90.7	Agricultural	AR-.3
3-1-13	Lehigh Avenue	33.3	Agricultural	I
3-1-14.2	Lehigh Avenue	48	Agricultural	AI

3-1-72	Greycourt Road	145.7	Agricultural	AI
4-1-22	Goosepond Mountain Road	96.8	Agricultural	AR-.3
6-1-44.11	Summerville Way / Rt 94	41.6	Agricultural	AR-.3
6-1-51	Summerville Way / Rt 94	68	Agricultural	AR-.3
6-1-99	Conklingtown Road	30.9	Stream Corridor	AR-.3 & Ridge Pres.
6-1-72	Kings Highway	31.1	Greenbelt/ biodiversity	AR-.3
7-2-8	Kings Hwy and Laroe Road	154.4	Agricultural	SR-1
7-1-42.1	Kings Hwy	5.4	Historic / Agricultural	AR-.3
7-1-45.12	1661 Kings Hwy	110.6	Agricultural	AR-.3
8-1-55.1	751 Laroe Road	8.4	Greenbelt / Stream Corridor	AR-.3
8-1-55.22	Bonnie Brook Rd	20.6	Greenbelt / Stream Corridor	AR-.3
12-1-6.4	Summerville Way / Rt 94	47	Agricultural	AR-.3
12-1-10.32	53 Glenmere Road	133.6	Agriculture / Stream Corridor	AR-.3 & I
12-1-12.22	Glenmere Rd	59.7	Agricultural	AR-.3 & I
12-1-13.1	Glenmere Rd	19.5	Agricultural	AR-.3 & AI
12-1-15	Glenmere Rd	3.8	Agricultural	AR-.3 & AI
12-1-17	Glenmere Rd / landlocked	5.5	Agricultural	AI
12-1-18	Glenmere Rd / landlocked	9.3	Agricultural	AI
12-1-19	Glenmere Rd / landlocked	4	Agricultural	AI
12-1-20	Glenmere Rd / landlocked	3.9	Agricultural	AI
12-1-31	Black Meadow Road	165.9	Stream/ biodiversity	AR-.3 & Ridge Pres.
12-1-53.1	Black Meadow Road	68.5	Agricultural	AR-.3
12-1-78.2	Black Meadow Road	123.2	Agricultural	AR-.3
13-1-11	Well Sweep Lane	48.8	Greenbelt	AR-.3 & Ridge Pres.
13-1-12	Well Sweep Lane	8.4	Greenbelt	AR-.3 & Ridge Pres.
13-1-46	White Oak Dr/ Vision HV	54.4	Local cultural importance	AR-.3 & LB/SL
15-1-4.1	Gibson Hill Rd	62.8	Trails/ Greenbelt	AR-.3 & Ridge Pres.
15-1-27.42	Trout Brook Road	99.1	Stream Corridor	AR-.3
15-1-27.43	Trout Brook Road	29.6	Trails/ Greenbelt	AR-.3 & Ridge Pres.
15-1-51.2	Gibson Hill Rd / Kato Court	55.7	Wetlands/ Greenbelt	AR-.3 & Ridge Pres.

15-1-52	Sugarloaf Mnt Road	80.1	Greenbelt	AR-.3 & Ridge Pres.
15-1-32	Lakes Road	8.2	Agricultural	SR-6
16-1-1.2	Pine Hill Road	26.1	Agricultural/ Watershed	AR-.3
16-1-2	Pine Hill Road	4.4	Glenmere Lake Watershed	AR-.3
16-1-72.21	634 Pine Hill Road	64.6	Watershed / Historic	AR-.3 & Ridge Pres.
18-1-22.25	Gibson Hill Road	145.5	Stream Corridor	AR-.3 & Ridge Pres.
18-1-36	Gibson Hill Road / landlocked	50.3	Trail corridor	AR-.3 & Ridge Pres.
18-1-42.4	Gibson Hill Road / landlocked (Divided by O&R easement)	52.8	Trail corridor	AR-.3 & Ridge Pres.

3.0 Evaluation of land use alternatives to protect Natural Resources and Community Character

As required by Section 64-1 of New York State Town Law the Town has identified and evaluated land use regulation alternatives, which it currently uses and those which are proposed by the Town's 2026 Comprehensive Plan to protect the various identified resources, and in so doing, protect its unique community character.

The following provides a comprehensive outline of the public and private land use alternatives that can be utilized to preserve community character either individually or strategically together to maximize both public and private benefits.

Existing Land use Regulations to protect community character

Town code currently has numerous means of protecting and regulating environmental resources in various section of the code as listed below. Oftentimes the town uses several of the measures below to maximize both public and private benefits. The full Town Code can be reviewed at the following link: https://ecode360.com/CH0648

Chapter 52: Flood Damage Control

Chapter 54: Freshwater Wetlands

Chapter 69: Outdoor Lighting

Chapter 78A: Stormwater Management

Chapter 83: Subdivision of Land

Chapter 96: Well Testing

Chapter 98: Zoning

- Excavation and Soil stripping
- Stormwater runoff
- Lighting of properties
- Performance standards in industrial zones
- Buffer strips and landscaping
- Clustering and cluster developments
- Ridge Preservation
- Floodplain and ponding area regulations
- Site plan approval
- Setbacks to streams
- Various special permit requirements for specific uses

Additional Land Use Alternatives to protect community character:

A key to the success of any preservation effort is the ability to coordinate, facilitate open dialog, and partner with landowners. While the town's previous preservation efforts have primarily focused on use of zoning provisions outlined above, this plan sets out to provide alternative options particularly given the availability of funds from the CPF, in order to permanently protect land. The potential for increased funding will also allow the Town to pursue partnerships in a variety of ways to preserve farmland by bringing matching dollars to negotiations. Secondary methods of environmental resource preservation such as cluster subdivisions and other zoning provisions discussed above, will continue to play a critical role in land and community character preservation in the town.

Fee Simple Acquisition - Under this scenario the town would purchase a property outright. Such acquisition would occur utilizing funds from the community preservation fund, town-wide bond, Town-dedicated Capital Reserve Fund, grants, or partnership with another public entity such as Orange County. Under this option, the town would need to maintain the property or transfer the property to another public entity for long-term maintenance.

***Purchase of Development Rights (PDR*) -** This program is specifically used for farmland preservation. The landowner receives a payment that equals the difference between what the land is worth for development vs. its value as farmland; e.g. $6,000 per acre for development less $2,000 per acre as farmland = $4,000 per acre PDR. In return, the landowner agrees to a deed restriction/ conservation easement that permanently protects the land from ever being developed. PDR lets landowners realize development profits without giving up ownership or operation of their land. A farmers can decide to continue farming the land, or they can rent or sell their land as they see fit. However, regardless of change of ownership, the land is permanently deed-protected from development.

State Farmland Protection Program - The State Farmland Protection Program is administered by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. The program awards grants to local governments (town or county with approved agricultural protection plan) to cover up to 75% of the cost to acquire development rights, through the PDR program discussed above, on qualifying properties. It requires a 25% local match, which can come from the municipality, landowner (who can sell at 25% below appraised value and use this as a tax deduction), or other partner such as a private land trust.

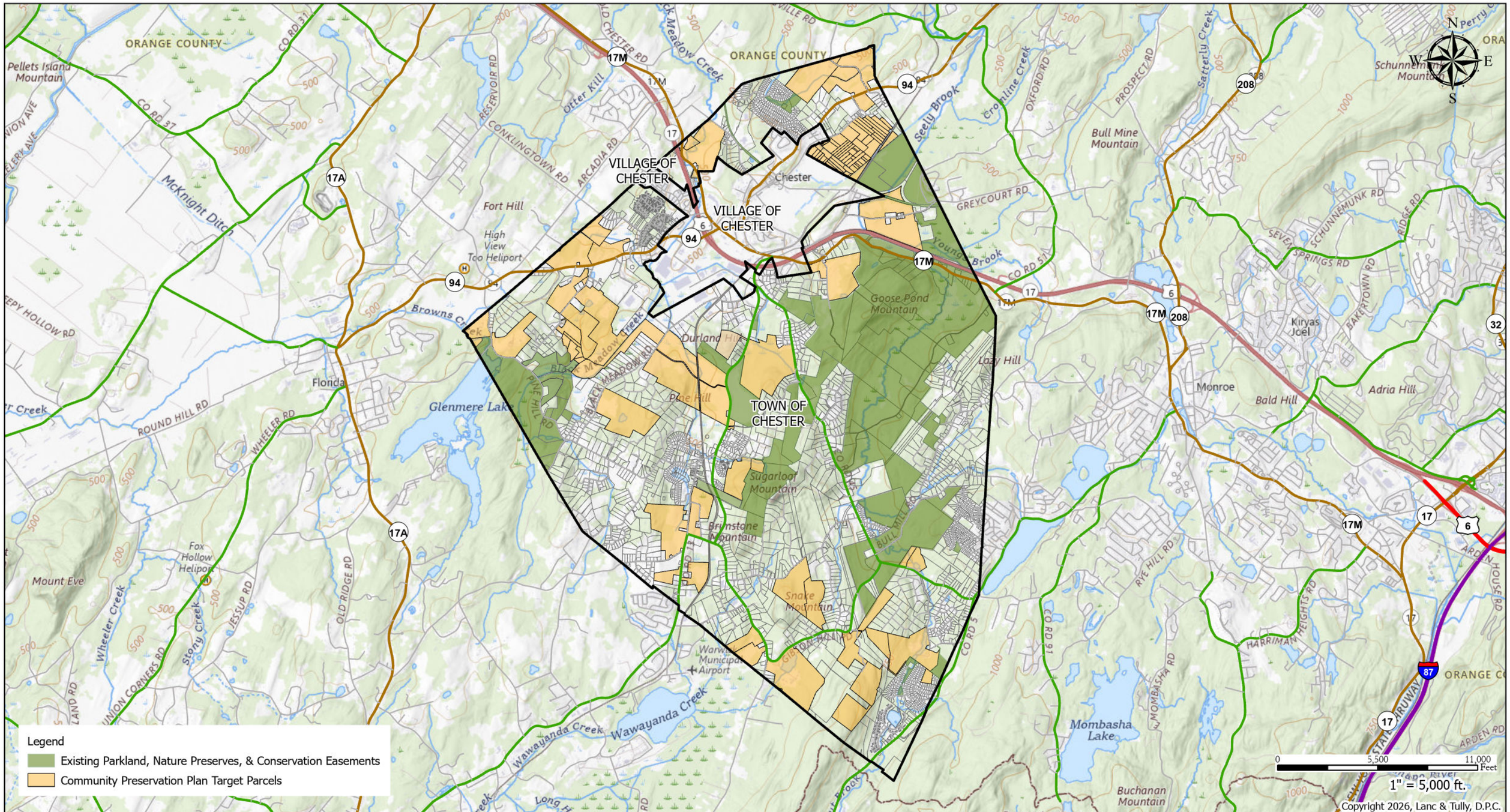
Private Conservation Strategies - This includes options such as Conservation Easements or land donation. Conservation easements are permanent, legally binding agreements to restrict what can occur on a parcel or portion of a parcel of land. Easement documents must be filed in the office of the County Clerk and will transfer to any future landowners. The holder of the easement can be the Town of Chester or any other government agency or land trust, however, the land remains

privately owned. The purpose and terms of each conservation easement are tailored to the specific characteristics of each property, and most are designed to meet multiple conservation objectives.

The conservation easement process most often involves the need for a lawyer, appraiser, and possibly financial advisor. Once the easement is developed, the landowner may also need to contribute to an easement monitoring program. As these costs could be prohibitive to a landowner entering into such an agreement, the Town could use Community Preservation Funds to offset costs associated with this program. By offering to compensate the landowner for these costs, the Town may encourage broader participation and interest in the program.

APPENDIX A

TARGET PARCELS MAP



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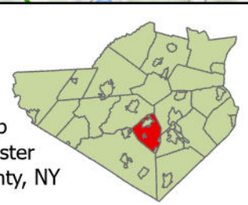

Location Map
Town of Chester
Orange County, NY

Community Preservation Plan Target Parcels

Town of Chester, Orange County

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 2011 StatePlane New York East FIPS 3101 Ft US

LANC & TULLY
Engineering and Surveying, D.P.C.

Date: 7/16/26

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