



# (Re) Imagining Tivoli Lake Preserve: Community Engagement & Visioning Plan Final Report

Prepared for:  
The City of Albany  
Department of Development & Planning



Prepared by:



# Tivoli Lake Preserve Community Engagement & Visioning Plan

This document was prepared for the Hudson River Estuary Program, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, with support from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund, in cooperation with the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission. The viewpoints expressed here do not represent those of NEIWPC or NYSDEC, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or causes constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.



# Introduction



In the Spring of 2014, the City of Albany began assessing opportunities to improve Tivoli Lake Preserve (Tivoli), a natural resource project that aligns with goals set in the City's Albany 2030: Comprehensive Plan. Creating a Visioning Plan that would redevelop Tivoli and bring out its full potential required extensive community and stakeholder outreach and engagement in order to gather ideas, address concerns, form recommendations and prioritize future improvements. It was clear from the beginning that residents, the City, and other interested parties were passionate about the Preserve and strongly supported actions that would make it both a local and regional destination. Tivoli, located in the West Hill Neighborhood, is a unique property with immense potential.

This project is about the future of the Preserve. It is about transforming the currently underutilized property in a methodical and implementable fashion. The intent is that the Preserve will be a source of pride for residents in the surrounding community, utilized by many from around the region and beyond, and one day talked about as an example of what can be done when a community comes together through hard work, common interests, and a desire to improve their neighborhood.

**The stated project goal is:**

***"To create a long-term community-based visioning plan using the whole Preserve to maximize it's potential within the Community, the City of Albany, and the Region."***

Currently, the Preserve includes significant assets including existing walking trails, Tivoli Lake, scenic views and wildlife habitats, but all are greatly in need of improvement. As part of the Visioning Plan, these existing assets have not only been incorporated, but more importantly they all reflect needed enhancements that will strengthen the visual and physical connection of the Preserve to the community, making it an interesting and appealing destination. Key recommendations that stem from the visioning process and were unanimously supported by the community, include:

1. Opportunities for environmental education;
2. Year-round outdoor recreation;
3. Improved connections to the surrounding neighborhoods

The potential exists for this hidden gem to become more than just a redeveloped Preserve – it can and will be part of the larger focus on community revitalization efforts in this part of the City of Albany.

Tivoli Lake Preserve Location Map



# Existing Conditions



Tivoli Lake Preserve is located between Livingston Avenue and North Manning Boulevard in the West Hill Neighborhood. West Hill is located along the northern border of the City, in between the Arbor Hill and West End Neighborhoods and north of the Central Avenue Business Improvement District. Though Tivoli is established conservation land, adjacent property is zoned for general industrial, residential or commercial use. The property is bound to the north by a CSX railroad corridor (with woodlands and Interstate Highway 90 beyond it), Green Tech High School and a senior living center along Northern Boulevard border to the east, established multi-family and senior living residences border to the south along Livingston Avenue, and Freihofer's Distribution Center and other industrial and commercial properties are adjacent to the west.

Tivoli is one of the largest natural areas in the City of Albany. At approximately 72-acres, the Preserve offers a dynamic landscape including Tivoli Lake, riparian wetlands, upland forests and meadows, and a wide variety of flora and fauna. In addition, the historic Patroon Creek, a local tributary to the Hudson River, runs along its northern border. However, Patroon Creek is currently enclosed and buried in a deteriorating six-inch clay tile pipe as it enters the Preserve.

Tivoli has two dedicated entrances. One entrance is located on North Manning Boulevard, behind Green Tech High School. This entrance is considered more obscure and has an undefined pull-off parking area. The other entrance at the intersection of Livingston Avenue and Judson Street is better known by the community and includes a gravel parking lot and a large open field.

There are existing primary and secondary trail systems within Tivoli, but they are limited, somewhat disconnected, poorly maintained in certain areas and most importantly, do not include any way-finding signage. There are trails that lead from both entrances into the Preserve. The trail head at the Livingston Avenue entrance is unmarked and set far back from the parking lot, making it hard to discern where to enter the preserve from across the large open field. Due to topography, erosion, channelization, and lack of maintenance, these trails leading into Tivoli are steep, have an uneven surface and are overgrown with vegetation.

There are two trail heads located at the North Manning entrance. One is a primary trail that utilizes an infrastructure maintenance access road owned and operated by the City of Albany Water Board and the Albany County Sewer Department. This primary trail runs east-west across the northern section of Tivoli and ends at the intersection of Livingston Avenue and Ontario Street, where it is gated with a chain-link fence, preventing access into or out of the Preserve. The other trail head from the North Manning entrance is a secondary trail that runs east-west, parallel to the southern edge of Tivoli Lake. This trail is uneven, not

well maintained and is heavily treelined, offering a limited view of Tivoli Lake or visibility to other open areas of the Preserve. Another primary trail is accessed from behind the apartments on Livingston Avenue. This primary trail is also an infrastructure maintenance access road and it runs north-south along the west side of Tivoli Lake, where it intersects with the other primary and secondary trails in the Preserve.

Although the Preserve's existing trail system, undulating topography and diverse landscapes and ecosystems give it the framework and long term potential to be a uniquely special place, the Preserve is currently tremendously underutilized. This phenomenon is due to a combination of three primary factors, which include:

- 1) **Tivoli Lake Preserve's Geo-Physical Relationship to its surrounding Context;**
- 2) **The Environmental Realities that negatively impact the Preserve; and**
- 3) **The perceived Safety Concerns that are in part a direct or indirect result of the two factors listed above.**

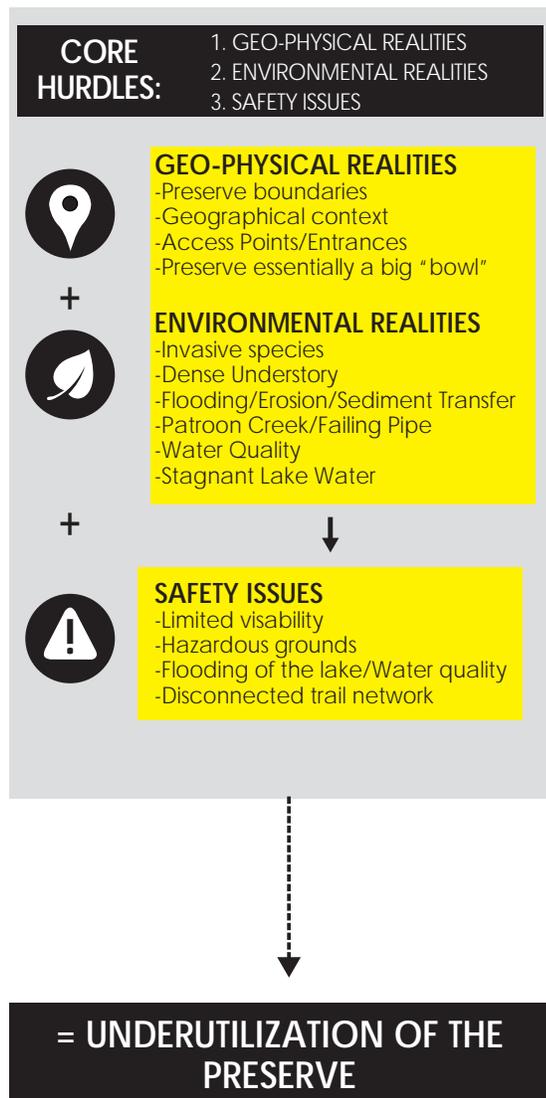
### Geo-Physical Realities

Tivoli has several contextual constraints that impact the Preserve's visual and physical connection to the surrounding street network and neighborhoods, which limits a visitor's ability to find and access the property, and which ultimately contributes to the Preserve's underutilization. And though it is important to make the distinction that Tivoli is a Preserve and not a typical urban park, the comparison for redevelopment is still fair.

Most urban parks are surrounded on all sides by an urban street network that is developed with tangible opportunities that overlook the park. This typical configuration also enables the park to be accessed virtually from any point along the park's perimeter. A local example of this is Washington Park in the Pine Hills Neighborhood. In contrast, Tivoli is relatively hidden and offers access at only a few entrance points due to property restrictions, physical barriers, or geographic limitations. The Preserve does not have any road frontage and it sits behind development, which greatly limits the public's awareness that the Preserve exists, their ease in physically accessing and connecting to it, and the perception that it is safe or a place of interest.

A rail line, undeveloped private property and the interstate highway cut-off the Preserve along its northern boundary, limiting its visibility and access from the north. In addition, the topography along Tivoli's remaining borders is that of a "bowl," transitioning down from its perimeter to the Lake, so that much of the Preserve sits well below the grade of the surrounding neighborhoods. And since Tivoli is mostly wooded, which naturally limits the view into the property, a visitor passing by is less likely to notice the property and be drawn into it.

These Geo-Physical Realities collectively create hurdles that contribute to the underutilization of the Preserve. But they are





not insurmountable and this proposed Visioning Plan has developed several potential recommendations that will enhance Tivoli's connection to the surrounding neighborhoods and generate awareness of the Preserve within the City and Region.

### **Environmental Realities**

In relation to the Geo-Physical Realities, Tivoli faces environmental hurdles to overcome, which have also contributed to the public's negative perception and underutilization of the Preserve. Tivoli has been inundated with invasive species, primarily Phragmites, which has greatly limited visibility within the Preserve, preventing the growth of native plants and impacting the water quality of Tivoli Lake. Riparian wetland areas that should offer dynamic view sheds and the opportunity to view wildlife and distant areas of the Preserve have also been overtaken with invasives. The progression of invasive species, paired with a dense understory, impact the trail system and overall experience in the Preserve as they deny views of the Lake and into the surrounding upland woods.

Phragmites and the deposition of sediments have dramatically impacted the aesthetic and water quality of Tivoli Lake, as the Lake has been reduced to half of its original size. The sediment deposits and corresponding inundation of Phragmites has also reduced the depth of the Lake, which has resulted in warmer temperatures and frequent algae blooms. The sedimentation of Tivoli Lake comes from two separate sources. The first source is the existing drainage swales entering the Preserve from the south, which over time have degraded, transferring eroded sediments and nutrients into the Lake. This condition is amplified as the drainage swales have also been overrun with Phragmites and other invasive species, providing opportunity for their seeds to spread into the Lake as further erosion occurs.

The other significant source of sedimentation and of particular environmental concern by the community centers on the underground section of Patroon Creek that enters Tivoli from the northern border after it passes under the rail road trestle. Patroon immediately enters into a six-foot diameter clay pipe that is deteriorating and is no longer capable of handling its volume of water during large storm events. During these high flow conditions, the Patroon has a history of jumping its banks at the mouth of the pipe and directing its excess water into Tivoli Lake. This frequently washes out the gravel infrastructure maintenance access road and transfers sediments and potential contaminants from the Patroon into Tivoli Lake. In addition, the flooding and erosion attributed to the pipe enclosure puts in jeopardy a large sewer trunk line that runs beneath the infrastructure maintenance access road.

Although the Environmental Realities in Tivoli are substantial and certainly impacting the perception and utilization of the Preserve, they are all elements that can be addressed and significantly improved. Many of these strategies and recommendations are described as part of this Visioning Plan for Tivoli Lake Preserve.

### Safety Issues

Without question the number one reason for the underutilization of Tivoli Lake Preserve is the perceived issue of safety. Many of the concerns regarding safety relate to both the Geo-Physical and Environmental realities of the Preserve. For example, the lack of visual and physical connectivity to the Preserve by the surrounding neighborhoods leads to a sense of isolation. This sense of isolation is amplified within the Preserve by the overgrown vegetation and inundation of invasive species, which greatly reduces visibility on the existing trail network, as well as opportunities to view more open areas of the Preserve. The lack of visibility into and within the Preserve combined with a lack of way-finding signage and disconnected trails lead to feeling lost in addition to feeling unsafe and vulnerable.

The issue of water quality of Tivoli Lake and the Patroon Creek and the overall environmental integrity of the Preserve also raises safety concerns by the community. These concerns are directly related to the ongoing flooding issues of Patroon Creek, which potentially transfers contaminants into the Lake during high flow events and from area surface water runoff through failing drainage swales. Also, flooding and erosion not only wash out and impair trails, creating uneven grounds and unsafe walking conditions, but also contribute to poor water and environmental quality of Tivoli Lake.

Collectively these core hurdles have impacted the awareness and utilization of the Preserve. These factors stand between the Preserve's great potential and the Preserve's long term vision. Fortunately, these hurdles can be overcome. There are several opportunities to enhance the existing entrances to the Preserve, as well as create several new access points which will significantly strengthen the visual and physical relationship to the surrounding neighborhoods. These enhanced connections in combination with information kiosks and comprehensive way-finding signage, will create a new awareness of the Preserve and all that it has to offer, while reducing the feeling of isolation and vulnerability.

#### Existing Entry Points



# Addressing Existing Conditions



## ADDRESSING THE HURDLES: 1. GEO-PHYSICAL HURDLES 2. ENVIRONMENTAL HURDLES 3. FORGING PARTNERSHIPS

HOW DO WE ADDRESS THE HURDLES?	ACTION	IMPACT
<b>HOW DO ADDRESSING THE GEO-PHYSICAL HURDLES IMPACT THE ISSUES OF SAFETY &amp; UNDERUTILIZATION?</b>	<b>CREATING STRONGER ACCESS POINTS &amp; PRESERVE ENTRANCES</b> - Create additional Preserve entrances with safe entry/egress & wayfinding - Strengthen connections between surrounding neighborhoods - Create additional Preserve entrances that also visually & physically improve the connections to the surrounding neighborhoods - Increasing awareness - increased utilization	<b>RECREATION</b> - Increases visibility, increasing safety - Increases biodiversity, increasing habitat health & water quality - Creates views & vistas - Creates recreation opportunities
<b>HOW DO ADDRESSING THE ENVIRONMENTAL HURDLES IMPACT THE ISSUES OF SAFETY &amp; UNDERUTILIZATION?</b>	<b>REMOVAL OF INVASIVE SPECIES</b> - Increases visibility, increasing safety - Increases biodiversity, increasing habitat health & water quality - Creates views & vistas - Creates recreation opportunities	<b>HEALTH &amp; HUMAN SAFETY</b> - Improved water quality through natural processes - Reduces risk of pipe failure/decrease risk to water & sewer main - Significantly reduce flooding <b>ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY</b> - Increase lake/habitat health within the Preserve <b>RECREATION</b> - Increase habitat health within the Preserve - Increase recreational opportunities - Increase habitat health within the Preserve - Increase recreational opportunities
<b>HOW DOES FORGING PARTNERSHIPS IMPACT THE SUCCESS OF THE PRESERVE?</b>	<b>RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL/REGIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b> - Will allow students to learn in a living laboratory - Will give kids the opportunity to explore nature right in their neighborhood - Will establish the Preserve as an important social & educational resource within the community & region - Opportunity for career training <b>RECREATION &amp; EDUCATION WITH COLLEGES &amp; UNIVERSITIES</b> - Will start environmental training programs - Opportunities to activate the park on a daily basis	<b>HEALTH &amp; HUMAN SAFETY</b> - Ensures that water quality levels will be safe - Ensures project will get done right and be a long-term project for the benefit of the next generation <b>ENVIRONMENT</b> - Project will be done according to state & federal regulations <b>RECREATION &amp; EDUCATION</b> - Will allow students to learn in a living laboratory - Will give kids the opportunity to explore nature right in their neighborhood - Will establish the Preserve as an important social & educational resource within the community & region - Opportunity for career training <b>HEALTH &amp; HUMAN SAFETY</b> - Will start environmental training programs - Opportunities to activate the park on a daily basis

**CORE HURDLES:**

- 1. GEO-PHYSICAL REALITIES
- 2. ENVIRONMENTAL REALITIES
- 3. SAFETY ISSUES

**GEO-PHYSICAL REALITIES**

- Preserve boundaries
- Geographical context
- Access Points/Entrances
- Preserve essentially a big "bowl"

**ENVIRONMENTAL REALITIES**

- Invasive species
- Dense Understory
- Flooding/Erosion/Sediment Transfer
- Patcoo Creek/Falling Pipe
- Water Quality
- Stagnant Lake Water

**SAFETY ISSUES**

- Limited visibility
- Hazardous grounds
- Flooding of the lake/Water quality
- Disconnected trail network

**KEY ACTIONS:**

- IMPROVED ADDITIONAL PRESERVE ENTRANCES
- REMOVAL OF INVASIVES
- DAYLIGHTING THE CREEK
- RESTORING THE LAKE & WETLANDS
- ENHANCED TRAIL NETWORK WITH WAYFINDING

**PARTNERSHIPS WITH:**

- Department of Environmental Conservation
- Army Corps of Engineers
- Local/Regional Public Schools
- Community Groups/Friends of Tivoli Lake
- Regional Colleges & Universities

**= UNDERUTILIZATION OF THE PRESERVE**

**= PEOPLE USING THE PRESERVE**

# Community Outreach



**TIVOLI LAKE PRESERVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETINGS**  
Shape the Future of this Preserve!

*Tivoli Lake Preserve* is a unique and valuable resource for outdoor recreation and science education, but it is currently highly undervalued by our community.

The City of Albany is undertaking efforts to revitalize the Preserve through an intensive community engagement and design process... and we want to hear what you have to say.

**PUBLIC VISIONING SESSION**  
Monday, September 15, 2014 from 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
Bleecker Stadium, in Swinburne Park, Clinton Avenue

**PUBLIC DESIGN REVIEW MEETING**  
Tuesday, September 23, 2014 from 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
Bleecker Stadium, in Swinburne Park, Clinton Avenue

**WE NEED YOUR PARTICIPATION TO MAKE THIS PLAN!**  
Visit [www.albany30.org](http://www.albany30.org) for updates and postings on this Visioning Project.

**GET INVOLVED!**  
HELP US PLAN THE FUTURE OF THIS HIDDEN GEM  
DEFINE THE FUTURE OF THIS PUBLIC SPACE  
LEARN ABOUT TIVOLI: WHAT EXISTS AND WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE IT  
TAKE THE SURVEY!  
VISIT THE WEBSITE OR SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.  
We need your feedback!  
[www.albany30.org](http://www.albany30.org)  
[2014/09/15/150915](http://2014/09/15/150915)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**  
Kate Lawrence  
City of Albany - Planning  
315-434-3000 x17  
[klawrence@albany.ny.us](mailto:klawrence@albany.ny.us)

Visit Albany 30.org on Facebook @albany30org  
#tivolipreserve

Project Information Flyer



**TIVOLI LAKE PRESERVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & VISIONING PLAN**

**HOW CAN WE...**

**PROJECT GOALS:**

**PROVIDE INPUT**  
Public Open House & Meeting  
Monday, September 15, 2014  
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
Bleecker Stadium, in Swinburne Park  
Clinton Avenue, Albany, NY 12204

**Public Open House & Meeting**  
Tuesday, September 23, 2014  
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
Bleecker Stadium, in Swinburne Park  
Clinton Avenue, Albany, NY 12204

**PLEASE USE THE QR CODE**

QR code to SurveyMonkey

QR code to Albany 30.org

QR code to Facebook

QR code to Twitter

Visit Albany 30.org on Facebook @albany30org  
#tivolipreserve

Information Station Displayed in Arbor Hill & Main Branch Libraries



**Tivoli Lake Preserve Public Engagement & Visioning Plan Public Input Survey September 2014**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Your feedback assures that future efforts within the Preserve are coordinated with neighborhood needs. This survey should not take more than 5-10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation.

1. Are you aware of Tivoli Lake Preserve?  
 Yes  No

2. Have you visited Tivoli Lake Preserve?  
 Yes  No

3. If you answered yes to question 2, please answer the following question: How frequently do you visit?  
 Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Often  Always

4. Again, if you answered yes to question 2, please answer the following question: How did you get to the preserve?  
 Drove  Walked  Biked  Public Transportation

SurveyMonkey

Online Survey

The Visioning Plan process was designed to be centered on the input and priorities of the residents living in the area and stakeholders interested in the future of the Preserve. There were public meetings, information stations, flyers, and surveys all developed to help spread the word about the project and solicit input. There was a comprehensive multi-faceted community outreach effort undertaken in developing the Visioning Plan. This included a project specific distribution list, three library information stations, project flyers and surveys, public and Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings, notices were distributed through social media, email blasts, the Tivoli Lake Preserve web page on Albany 2030, press releases, flyers and through the information stations.

## Project Flyer

A flyer summarizing the project and providing details about the Public Visioning Session, Public Design Review Meeting, and online survey were used as a cost-effective method of reaching out to audiences in several different settings – from those reading the information stations (detailed below), via the project distribution list, or viewing the information on the Albany 2030 website, to inquiring about the project at one of several events held throughout the City. The flyers provided a QR code link to the project web page, the survey, and facebook and twitter feeds with appropriate links to find additional information.

## Surveys

Two surveys were deployed for use in gathering information from the public, stakeholders, and interested individuals. The first survey was an all-encompassing survey assessing the community's knowledge of the Preserve, their impressions of the Preserve, general statistics about respondent's use of the Preserve, and some high-level demographic information to provide a sense of who was submitting the information.

This survey was open for responses for 48 days from the beginning of September until late October. The survey resulted in a decent response rate, given the geography of the project/project reach, of 91 survey responses. These results showed that most respondents were aware of the Preserve but only 3/4 had actually visited the location. While most respondents who visited the site drove, almost 1/3 walked, biked or took public transportation. A decisive 3/4 of respondents stated that they would use the Preserve more if it was improved, though safety concerns topped the list of reasons not to visit and water quality and trash were identified as the biggest concern.

The second survey was released after the preliminary Visioning Plan schematic was presented at a public meeting to solicit input and

feedback on the plan itself. Unfortunately, this survey did not produce much input with just 5 responses. However, those responses were overall very positive and upbeat about the project and potential that lies within the Preserve. Overall thoughts from these respondents included "Positive," "Terrific Potential for Preserve," "Good Idea," "Excellent short term as well as long term visions," and "Ambitious and beautiful." Respondents provided a few ideas of near-term potential action items that could be completed quickly including clearing the existing walking trails and adding lighting and opening up the site and cleaning-up trash. The final response provided a few interesting ideas that could help build and retain support for redevelopment of the Preserve – organized walking tours of the site (full moon walk and bird watching walks), sponsoring clean-up days, and seeking volunteer groups or businesses to help sponsor the Preserve and provide volunteers for clean-up work.

**Information Stations**

Full-color, glossy, professionally-printed and mounted 30"x40" information stations intended to spread the word about the project, provide some information on the Preserve, and garner interest by those who read the stations. These stations

**DISTRIBUTION LIST**

Advisory Committee Members, neighborhood/environmental groups, Friends of Tivoli Lake Preserve, local elected officials, City staff, Schools & Others stakeholders that received email notices directly.

**LIBRARY INFO STATION**

Created information stations at the Arbor Hill/ West Hill Library, Main Branch Library & North Albany Library with boards set up to display and relate project information. A comment-collection box was also included. Information was changed-out as the project progressed.



**MEETING NOTICES**

Advertised meetings and posted information on the City's website, Albany 2030 website, on message boards and with commercial venues, via Facebook and Twitter as well as press releases in local media outlets to increase public participation.

**PROJECT FLYERS**

Distribution at the libraries, at popular events and area activities, on message boards and with commercial businesses, Albany City Schools and via email blasts. Full Color with large text, they will garner the attention of people walking by without losing them in a sea of information.

## PROVIDE INPUT

### Attend a Meeting

➤ **PUBLIC VISIONING SESSION**  
 Monday, September 15, 2014  
 from 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM  
 Bleecker Stadium, in Swinburne Park,  
 Clinton Avenue

➤ **PUBLIC DESIGN REVIEW MEETING**  
 Tuesday, September 23, 2014  
 from 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM  
 Bleecker Stadium, in Swinburne Park,  
 Clinton Avenue

### Please Take Our Survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TIVOLI-LAKE-PRESERVE>



**SCAN HERE TO TAKE THE SURVEY!**



**WE NEED YOUR PARTICIPATION  
TO MAKE THIS PLAN!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
PLEASE CONTACT:

KATE LAWRENCE  
 CITY OF ALBANY  
 DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING  
 (P) 518.434.2532 x17  
[Lawrencek@ci.albany.ny.us](mailto:Lawrencek@ci.albany.ny.us)

Visit *Albany 2030* on...  
 Tweet @ *albany2030*...  
 #*tivolipreserve*  
[www.albany2030.org](http://www.albany2030.org)





were set up in the Arbor Hill/West Hill Branch Library, the Main Branch Library, and the North Albany Branch Library early in the project. These stations included links to surveys (which were updated), a survey link QR code, contact information, project description, and location map. Along with these information stations were comment cards which readers could complete and leave for collection at a later date. The stations in the Arbor Hill/West Hill Branch and Main Branch are shown to the right.

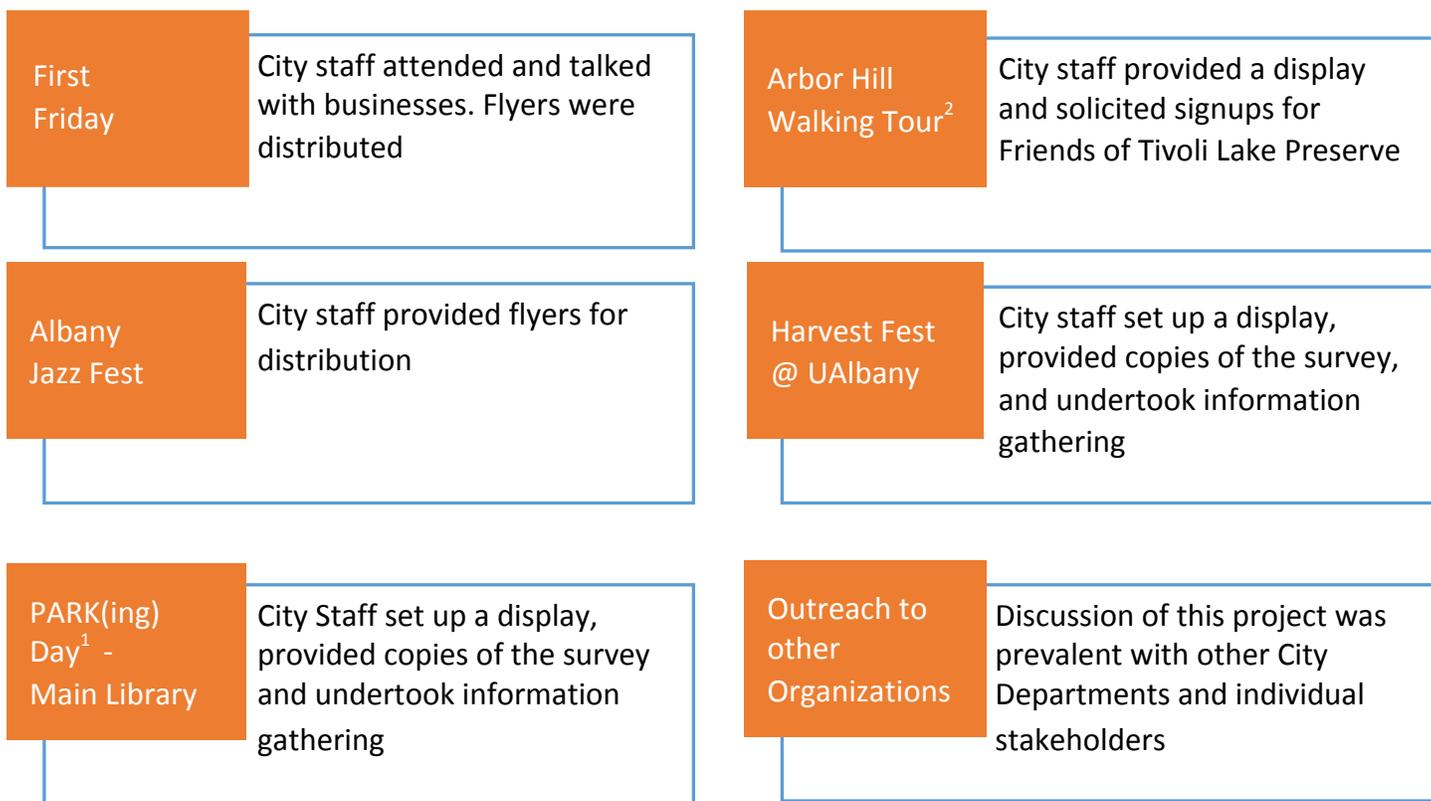
The boards were updated with the new survey link and a new QR code to the survey prior to the final public meeting in November.

#### Social Media and Websites

Social media was well used throughout this project. The Albany 2030 website (which has the Tivoli Lake Preserve web page) was updated with new information as soon as it became available. Both Facebook and Twitter were also utilized to reach potential stakeholders and engage them in the project. All of these sources provided links to the online survey tool that was used twice to solicit input. The primary survey, the first one released, received 91 responses with significant feedback and input which was used in development of the Visioning Plan and will be useful in better understanding stakeholders thoughts as this project moves into the implementation stage.

#### Attendance at Other Events

During the duration of the project, the City of Albany Department of Development and Planning undertook a significant in-person and information distribution effort at local events to spread the word about the project. A list of these efforts can be found in the chart to the right.



1. *Parking Day is an annual worldwide event where artists, designers and citizens transform metered parking spots into temporary public parks. Displays are meant to provide an opportunity to appreciate the importance of open space in an urban environment and encourage camaraderie amongst strangers. For those that have never ventured out to explore Tivoli Lake Preserve on their own, the City found Parking Day to be a fun way to bring Tivoli Lake Preserve to the community. Parking spots outside of the Main Branch Library on Washington Avenue were transformed into an artistic interpretation of the Preserve. This included a display of wetland and meadow plants (including Phragmites), a children's fishing game, pleasant seating and a chance to talk and fill out the latest survey on improving the property.*

2. *Arbor Hill now stands amongst the ranks of "Great Places in America." In recognition of all their improvements, in October 2014, the American Planning Association designated Arbor Hill a "Great Neighborhood." To celebration this award, the neighborhood hosted a community gathering at the Albany Barn and led a walking tour showcasing neighborhood projects. The City included a display of Tivoli and solicited survey information at the Albany Barn reception.*

*The Visioning Plan was conceived based upon the concept(s) stated in the project goal and primarily through the input and discussion generated by residents and stakeholders: at neighborhood meetings, City events, or meetings; through the public surveys; on social media or via the library information stations. A Stakeholder Advisory Committee (comprised of local residents, neighborhood groups, area businesses/investors, pertinent stakeholders, educators, municipal and City officials) was formed to assist with the project goals and the public engagement and outreach efforts.*

# Visioning Plan: The Process



In addition to the overall project goal and public outreach, there were several long-term goals which helped to create this Visioning Plan:

- Provide opportunities for environmental education and green job training;
- Improve the quality of life for the surrounding community;
- Encourage physical activity and the exploration of nature by residents;
- Introduce outsiders to the Preserve and the nearby neighborhoods;
- Ensure that the Preserve is a positive resource to the surrounding community and provides social, economic, recreational, and environmental benefits.

## Meetings

Meetings were extremely important and engaging events that provided significant insight into the ideas, possibilities, and concerns that the public and stakeholders had regarding the future of the Preserve. There were three public meetings held to help kickoff this effort, ensure it was on the right track, and then finalize the details of the path forward to revitalizing the Preserve. There were also several neighborhood meetings where presentations were made and the project was discussed in an effort to get additional information from local residents who are actively engaged in their neighborhood associations. A summary of the meetings follows below. Meeting notes can be found in Appendix B.

### *Neighborhood & Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meetings:*

Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings were held twice throughout the process, before and after the Design Charrette, to review feedback from the public meetings, and to discuss the Draft and Final Visioning Plan.

### *Public Visioning Workshop:*

The goal of this meeting was to identify a vision for the Preserve through an interactive discussion and presentation with meeting attendees. Concepts of different types of potential improvements were presented and discussed to help hone-in on specific elements that were desirable and identify those that were definitely not desirable. An open discussion about any other topics was also held to identify any issues or opportunities that were not previously discussed. This

meeting was kicked-off with a brief overview of the project goals and public outreach process to help set the tone of the project and the purpose of the meeting.

*Educational Focus Group:*

An educational focus group was held to discuss needs and opportunities for the Preserve with area stakeholders in the educational field. Stakeholder Advisory Committee members also attended this focus group.

*Neighborhood Focus Group Meetings:* The City conducted individual meetings for the West End, West Hill and Arbor Hill Neighborhood Associations and with the Beverly-Pennsylvania Neighborhood Watch, and the Lexington Avenue Group.

*Design Session:*

The Draft Visioning Plan was developed through a one-day intensive Design Session held at the City of Albany Department of Development & Planning office. Utilizing feedback from the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, public meetings, and other public outreach activities, the Consultant team developed a series of hand-drawn sketches rendered over an aerial image to demonstrate concepts for review and discussion at the Public Design Review meeting that same night.

*Public Design Review Meeting:*

The purpose of this meeting was to present the initial vision and related concepts identified through the discussions obtained in the Public Visioning Workshop. Following an overview of opportunities identified during the planning process and a series of sample images to spark discussion on the vision for the Preserve, the Consultant team presented the sketches for review. Some of the visualizations developed to portray what the end result of the redesigned Preserve would look like follow below. Through an open house format, residents were able to ask questions about the sketches and then the group reconvened to discuss action items that can be accomplished in the short term.

*Draft Visioning Plan:*

The draft Visioning Plan was developed out of the multi-faceted design process detailed above with additional input from the survey, discussions held at events throughout the City, additional input from surveys, discussions held at events throughout the City, other internal or





community outreach opportunities, and from the Stakeholder Advisory Committee. The plan design incorporates the vision, long-term goals, and specific details recorded from the outreach and input efforts. The design, along with a detailed discussion of the design, was presented to the public at the Stakeholder Design Review meeting summarized below and was widely approved, subject to some modifications mentioned at the meeting.

*Stakeholder Design Review Meeting:*

This meeting was held to review the Preliminary Visioning Plan. The focus on the meeting was to engage participants on what they liked about the plans, what they did not like, any alternative ideas or options, and discuss what can be accomplished in the near-term. Notes from this meeting can be found in Appendix B.

*Final Visioning Plan:*

Following the development of the draft Visioning Plan and review by the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, the concept was revised for presentation at the Final Public Meeting.

*Final Public Meeting:*

This meeting was held to provide attendees with a presentation on the Visioning Plan and discussion of next steps for the process. The evening began with an explanation of where the project has been through a review of the project goals and the public outreach process.

The final Visioning Plan includes a series of trails systems (an ADA accessible loop trail, a rim trail, a wooded trail system, and connector trails) in addition to providing opportunities for future trail systems. The Plan proposes an environmental, arts & cultural education center, a full-time ranger residence/office, a picnic pavilion, classroom, performance, and event space. In addition, the Plan proposes scenic overlooks and boardwalks, meadows and an orchard/opportunity for urban agriculture, trail markers and information kiosks, canoe/kayak launches, fishing access, and rest rooms. Additional entry points at Beverly Avenue, Quail Street, and to the west at the intersection of Livingston Avenue and Ontario Street, which is now gated. Camping areas, a low ropes team building area, and a natural playground provide other recreation opportunities.

Water quality and habitat growth would be improved in Tivoli Lake by utilizing a wetland treatment system to naturally filter and cool incoming surface water runoff that flows into the Lake, and through other water

mitigation efforts like daylighting and naturalizing Patroon Creek. And lastly, restoring Tivoli Lake to its original size through invasive species management. Rain gardens, a “backwater nursery” with a wetland buffer, and nesting islands in Tivoli Lake provide additional green infrastructure and wildlife refuge.

# Visioning Plan: Recommendations

The Tivoli Lake Preserve Visioning Plan is diverse, comprehensive, and ambitious - a direct reflection of the community's input throughout the planning and design process. The community and project stakeholders indicated very early on that the Visioning Plan needed to maximize the potential of the Preserve, needing to think big, think long-term, and represent the ideal. The community understood and dictated that this preliminary aspect of the planning process was not to figure out how, why, or why not, but purely reflect the Community's ideal vision for the Preserve. The Visioning Plan for Tivoli Lake Preserve could then be used as a tool to move forward throughout the journey of feasibility and implementation.

As a result, the Visioning Plan reflects the community's desire for the Preserve to embody the following attributes: Connectivity, Accessibility, Educational Opportunity, Environmental Quality, Ecological and Recreational Diversity, Stability and Viability. The physical design of the Visioning Plan integrates these attributes in combination with the long-term goals for the Preserve and in doing so reflects the Preserve's full potential.

This includes strengthening the Preserve's visual and physical connection to the surrounding neighborhoods, by creating three new entry points in combination with enhancing the existing entrances off of Livingston Avenue and North Manning Boulevard. These new and enhanced entrances would then be linked by a primary ADA Accessible Loop Trail that would wrap around the perimeter of the Preserve, providing access in and around Tivoli to visitors of all ages and abilities.

The Visioning Plan maximizes the Preserve's potential for environmental education, both through the study of the Preserve's ecological restoration process, and ultimately once it becomes a healthy and sustainable nature preserve. This is partially reflected in the recommendation to restore Tivoli Lake to its original size and depth, which requires the removal of sediments, and invasive species, as well as the construction of several wetland treatment systems to naturally filter and cool surface water runoff from the surrounding areas before it enters Tivoli Lake. The restored Lake would include nesting islands, and "backwater nurseries" to provide opportunities for habitat diversity. These areas would be accessed and observed from new boardwalk overlooks and fishing access decks. The opportunity for environmental education is further reflected in the Visioning Plan as it demonstrates the idea of daylighting the Patroon Creek in the form of a naturalized stream channel, which would reduce localized flooding that results in erosion and the transfer of sediments and potential contaminants into Tivoli Lake.

One of the Visioning Plan's key features is the Environmental, Arts, and Cultural Education Center, which would be located at the Preserve's

main entrance off of Livingston Avenue. The Education Center would reflect the Preserve's commitment to education, job training, and mentorship. This facility could activate Tivoli as a source for daily field trips and science education opportunities for all levels of education from elementary school to local and regional Colleges, Universities and research institutions. The Education Center would function as the "front door" to the Preserve and have direct access to the diverse trail system, ecosystems, and features within it.

In addition to the restored Tivoli Lake, the trail network provides the opportunity to experience Riparian Wetlands, Upland Forests, Wildflower Meadows, Public Art Displays, an Orchard for the possible study of pollination, Community Gardens, and the "Retreat Area" where permitted users will have the opportunity to camp overnight and utilize the low ropes course for team building and leadership training. The secondary Wooded Trail System undulates with the site's topography and provides access to the Preserve's large wooded areas, as well as scenic overlooks at the highest points within the Preserve.

The envisioned Tivoli Lake Preserve would require a renewed commitment to operation, maintenance, and enforcement. The community's understanding of this requirement is reflected in their idea for the Preserve to have a full time Resident Ranger assigned to the Preserve. The Visioning Plan calls for the former W. Haywood Burns Building, located at the North Manning entrance, to be repurposed as the Ranger Station and Residence.

The ambitions of the Visioning Plan are simple - to strengthen the Preserve's connection to its surrounding neighborhoods and improve the quality of life in the community to provide opportunities for environmental education; recreation and the exploration of nature; to attract visitors from all over; to ensure that the Preserve is a positive resource for the community; and that it provides social, economic, recreational and environmental benefits to the City and surrounding area. The elements of the Visioning Plan collectively represent the Preserve's unique potential. A detailed chronological description of the improvements based on current assets and community input is as follows:

### **1. ADA Accessible Loop Trail**

One of the key components of the proposed Visioning Plan is the addition of a completed primary ADA Accessible Loop Trail that would connect all of the existing and proposed entrances along the perimeter of Tivoli, providing direct access to the Preserve's extensive trail network, amenities, featured areas, and the possible future Environmental, Arts, and Cultural Education Center. The Loop Trail, in combination with clear way-finding signage, will provide direct visual and physical access into the Preserve, as well as a direct connection to the surrounding neighborhoods. Additionally, the Loop Trail will also provide the opportunity for the senior residents living adjacent to the Preserve, families bringing children in strollers, and visitors of all ages and abilities, the opportunity to experience the Preserve.

### **2. Tivoli Lake Preserve Environmental, Arts, and Cultural Education Center**

Throughout the public outreach and engagement process, the community expressed a desire for Tivoli to offer opportunities for education and job training. The Environmental, Arts, and Cultural Education Center will function as an informational gateway, providing a year-round location for fun and interesting learning, exploration and job training programs for people of all ages. The Education Center will be located in the existing open field off of the Livingston Avenue entrance, and could serve as an indoor multi-functional class room for science education, school and research programs, mentoring, adult education and outreach, or any variety of educational activity.

The facility will also demonstrate sustainable site design through the implementation of green infrastructure, as well as showcase the sustainability of green building technology in effort to promote environmental education and stewardship. The Education Center would bring direct and indirect awareness and draw to the Preserve through its limitless program potential.

### **3. Monumental Main Entry Sign**

In effort to bring overall awareness and identity to the Preserve, as well as create a strong connection to the surrounding neighborhoods, the Visioning plan calls for a new Monumental Main Entry Sign at the enhanced entrance off of Livingston Avenue. The new sign would work in conjunction with the overall proposed signage system for the Preserve, but would stand alone as the “main” entry sign for the Preserve. The comprehensive strategy for signage includes welcome signage at all of the Preserve entrances in combination with general Preserve information, way-finding, and interpretive signage. The goal of the Main Entry Sign is to establish the Livingston Avenue Entrance as the primary entrance.

### **4. Livingston Avenue Pedestrian Access**

In conjunction with the Monumental Main Entry Sign at the enhanced Livingston Avenue entrance, the Visioning Plan calls for a Pedestrian Access pathway that will link the existing Livingston Avenue sidewalk to the proposed Education Center, visitor parking area, and beyond to the ADA Accessible Loop Trail. This Pedestrian Access path will provide both a physical and visual connection between West Hill and the Preserve at this main entrance.

### **5. Bio-Retention Area Entry Feature**

The Bio-Retention Area Entry Feature will be located in the Center’s entry boulevard. This beautiful feature will function as an attractive landscape element for visitors, but will have the important job of naturally storing and filtering the sites surface water runoff before infiltrating into the soil. This green infrastructure element will be linked to several other green infrastructure elements that will function collectively, while offering opportunities for both instructed education and interpretive education.

### **6. Education Center Parking with Porous Pavement**

Another important green infrastructure application at the Preserve will be demonstrated at the new visitor parking area located at the Livingston Avenue entrance. This new parking area will feature porous pavement and its infiltration and underdrain system could tie directly to the adjacent Bio-Retention Area Entry Feature. The parking area will serve as the parking area for Preserve visitor while also functioning as the parking area for the future Education Center.

### **7. Outdoor Classroom, Amphitheater, Natural Playground, and Rain Gardens**

The area immediately surrounding the proposed Education Center will be an Outdoor Classroom and a reflection of the learning opportunities offered throughout the Preserve. This Outdoor Classroom will be an open space with rain gardens and an amphitheater to promote creative expression in the form of performing arts. Visitors can play in the natural open space, or learn through instruction or interpretive signage about rain gardens and sustainable green infrastructure methods.

### **8. Beverly Avenue Entry/ Trail Head with Parking and Information Kiosk**

Historically, Beverly Avenue connected directly to Tivoli along its east boundary, providing a safe and immediate entrance into the Preserve for the residents of the Beverly Avenue Neighborhood. Over the years, this connection has been compromised. This Visioning Plan would look to the City to assist and coordinate with the reestablishment of this important link and access into the property— providing an opportunity to create a small parking area, as well as a kiosk that would provide general Preserve and key way-finding information.

### **9. “The Glade” – Open Lawn and Event Space**

In effort to create an open connection, both physically and visually, between the main entrance at Livingston Avenue (future Environmental, Arts, and Cultural Education Center), and the Preserve, the design team maintained a large open green space, the Glade, that will provide the opportunity for open play, as well as an outdoor event space. This open lawn also provides a view into the Preserve at the intersection of the Livingston Avenue Pedestrian Access way and the ADA Accessible Loop Trail. This location provides an ideal location for public art displays, information kiosk, and way-finding signage.

### **10. Wetland Meadow**

To the immediate north of the Glade the topography begins to step down into a Wetland Meadow. Currently, this area is overgrown with Phragmites, but once removed the wetland meadow will become a beautiful and ecologically dynamic transition towards Tivoli Lake. The Wetland Meadow will offer opportunities to learn about the flora and fauna of that ecosystem, while providing a direct connection to Tivoli Lake and the Preserve’s secondary trail network.

### **11. Upland Meadow**

Flanking the Wetland Meadow to the east and west are Upland Meadows that provides another dynamic ecosystem while transitioning from the Loop Trail into the expanded Preserve trail network. The Upland Meadow, also provides additional opportunities to display outdoor public art.

### **12. Opportunities for Public Art Display**

One of the really interesting ideas generated by the community was to provide opportunities throughout the Preserve to display public art. Public Art displays can potentially introduce the Preserve to an entirely new group of users, which collectively helps to activate the Preserve, and promotes greater interest and awareness about the Preserve. Strategically placed Public Art Displays can benefit the Preserve by adding interest throughout the Preserve, and by using the Art Displays at distant visual focal elements, they can pull the visitor from one section of the Preserve to another offering a dynamic experience of exploration.

### **13. Livingston Avenue Community Gardens**

The Livingston Avenue Community Gardens are currently located and somewhat isolated along the Preserve’s southern border directly behind the Livingston Avenue Apartments. This large community garden is a hidden gem within the Preserve and is currently utilized primarily by the residents of the Livingston Avenue Apartments. The idea of Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens were supported by the community. The proximity of the Community Gardens to the future Education Center and the convenient access to them from the ADA Loop Trail, make it not just a great opportunity for the surrounding neighborhoods to grow healthy fruits and vegetables, but also provides tremendous opportunities for education.

### **14. Scenic Overlooks**

The Preserve’s undulating topography provides the opportunity to bring the visitor through several distinct ecosystems ranging from upland meadows, to wetland meadows, wetlands, and upland forested areas. The proposed trail system works with the sites existing topography to provide access through the Preserve’s diverse landscape. The proposed trail

system also brings the visitor to the highest points on the site to offer the visitor the opportunity to experience broader scenic view sheds. The scenic overlooks will offer views down to Tivoli lake from different perspectives. Additionally they will provide opportunity for resting and reading interpretive signage along the trail system.

### **15. Orchard/Opportunities for Urban Agriculture or Recreation**

Adjacent to the eastern border of the Preserve and directly behind the newly renovated LV Apartments (the former Philip Livingston School), sits a large open area on the upper terrace. This area was historically utilized as a baseball field. Today the field is completely overgrown and has transitioned into the beginning stages of successional growth. The nature of this large open area makes it one of the more flexible spaces within the Preserve. Due to its relative proximity to the future Education Center, LV Apartments, the existing Preserve entrances, and the possible future entrance at Beverly Avenue, and in combination with the Loop Trail this area has been designated as a possible location for an Orchard or other crops that could be used to learn about pollination and/or Urban Agriculture. This area could also be reconsidered for more active recreational uses.

### **16. Wildflower Meadow**

Immediately adjacent to the possible future Orchard/Urban Agriculture area and sharing the same flat terrace is the Wildflower Meadow. The Wildflower Meadow would take advantage of the open sunlit area and provide a beautiful place to stop and rest with several proposed seating areas. The colorful meadow would also provide an ideal location to display public art. Located along the perimeter loop trail and immediately behind the new senior housing facility, it would become a popular destination for users of all ages and abilities, while contributing to the Preserve's overall interest and ecological diversity.

### **17. Connection to Senior Housing**

The goal of creating the ADA Accessible Loop Trail is to make Tivoli as accessible as possible for users of all ages and abilities. The safe and direct access along the Loop Trail provides the incredible opportunity to enrich quality of life of those that visit the Preserve, especially the senior residents living adjacent to the property (along Livingston Avenue and Northern Boulevard). This direct access could offer the beauty of meadows, public art displays, and scenic overlooks of Tivoli Lake literally right in the back yard of the senior housing facilities. Additionally, this Loop Trail connects to parking areas, entrances and the Education Center.

### **18. North Manning Boulevard Entry/Trail Head with Parking, Information Station**

The Visioning Plan proposes to enhance the existing Preserve entrance off of North Manning Boulevard by creating a formalized parking area, and adding an information kiosk. The same information kiosk will be utilized at all of the Preserve entrances to establish a common theme at each entry point. The Kiosk will display a map of the Preserve to highlight key features and illustrate the Preserve's trail network. The North Manning Boulevard Trail head will have direct access to the ADA Accessible Loop Trail and one of the existing primary connector trail systems that leads directly to Tivoli Lake. Additionally, the North Manning Boulevard trail head and parking area is directly adjacent to the proposed Ranger Station.

### **19. Full Time Ranger Residence/Office**

Throughout the planning and design process both the community and the key stakeholders agreed that a key element to the long term success of Tivoli Lake Preserve would be the need to have a full time Park Ranger assigned to the Preserve

once the Preserve had implemented key components of the Visioning Plan. The daily presence of a Park Ranger would establish the Preserve as a safe and secure destination. The Ranger would be able to enforce the Preserve's permitted hours of operation, permitted uses, and eliminate existing and future issues of encroachment onto the Preserve's boundaries. The community also thought that the Preserve's Ranger could enlist young students from the surrounding neighborhood to serve as Jr. Park Rangers, which would foster the Preserve's mission of education and mentorship, while enhancing the Preserve's security and operation.

In effort to give the Preserve this presence of security and stewardship the Visioning Plan has identified the former W. Haywood Burns Building as a possible future location for the Ranger's office and residence.

## 20. Preserve Maintenance Facility/Technical Training Center

In order to operate and maintain the Preserve once realized, the Visioning Plan has designated the area directly behind the proposed Ranger Station off of North Manning Boulevard as the appropriate location for the Preserve Maintenance Facility. This location is ideal as it is tucked away and out of site behind the Ranger Station, while still having direct access to the Preserve and direct vehicular access to North Manning Boulevard. Another added benefit of locating the facility behind the Ranger Station is that it is directly adjacent to Green Tech High School.

*BEFORE Removal of Invasive Species*



*AFTER Removal of Invasive Species - Scenic Overlook of Tivoli Lake at its Restored Size*



The immediate adjacency to the High School and direct access off of North Manning Boulevard give it the opportunity to also be utilized as a Technical Training Center for many relevant "green industry" jobs that are could be actively in progress or maintained within the Preserve.

### **21. Possible Future Trail Connection Under Bridge to Link Elementary School & Future Bike Path Connection**

In effort to provide a safe pedestrian connection from the Preserve and across Northern Boulevard to KIPP: Tech Valley, the Visioning Plan shows a possible future path connection beneath the Northern Boulevard Bridge to the rear of the school. In the future this path connection could be extended to link the Preserve to the Mohawk Hudson Bike Trail.

### **22. Connector Trails**

The Visioning Plan utilizes and enhances the existing trail connections that extend from the existing entrances at North Manning Boulevard, Livingston Avenue and behind the Livingston Avenue Apartments. These connector trails will act as the "spokes" in the wheel of the trail network, linking the perimeter ADA Accessible Loop Trail to Tivoli Lake. The Connector Trails will also provide access to the secondary wooded trail network, as well as many of the many of the Preserve's proposed amenities and diverse ecosystems.

### **23. Naturalized Daylighting of Patroon Creek**

Patroon Creek currently enters the site from the northwest, at which point it enters into a six-foot culvert that runs parallel along the northern border and adjacent to the existing railroad tracks. A major sanitary sewer sewer line runs east-west through the property, parallel to the Creek as well. Patroon Creek daylights in the northeast corner of the site just before going underneath the railroad tracks and exiting the site. During large storm events Patroon overwhelms the six-foot culvert, and excess water flows ovetop of its enclosure, eroding soils that support the sanitary sewer line and putting it at danger of collapse and catastrophic failure. The excess water also erodes adjacent trails and transfers sediment and potential contaminants into Tivoli Lake.

The Visioning Plan incorporates the daylighting and ecological restoration of the Patroon. This daylighting project has been previously assessed and the preliminary designs have been completed. Daylighting Patroon would add additional flood storage capacity within the stream bank as well as the ecological benefits of a surface water stream system. The daylighted stream would incorporate a series of low gradient step pools used to re-oxygenate the water, reduce its velocity during high flow events, and encourage growth of habitat for fish and other aquatic life. Constructed wetlands could be used to improve water quality of both the Patroon and Tivoli Lake by encouraging the uptake of excessive nutrients or other potential contaminants by the proposed native vegetation.

Prior to completing the daylighting project the stream and upgradient watershed shall be assessed to determine if there are any sources of contamination that could pose human and/or ecological health concerns.

### **24. Tivoli Lake Picnic Pavilion with Canoe/Kayak Launch/Restrooms**

Located on a clear bluff at the north eastern corner of Tivoli Lake the Visioning Plan locates the possible future Tivoli Lake Picnic Pavilion. The pavilion would have ADA accessibility from the Loop Trail, as well as be directly connected from the trail system on top of the existing dam. The pavilion would be visible from several points on the lakes southern shore and become a central focal point as one of the Preserve's key features. The pavilion could also provide an adjacent canoe/kayak launch once the lake has completed its restoration. In addition, the pavilion could include rest rooms, storage, as well as display a map of the Preserve and interpretive information.

## 25. Tivoli Lake, Restored to Original Size (Deepened, Removal of Invasive Species)

As the central feature of the Preserve, the community and the project stakeholders support the restoration of Tivoli Lake. The Lake's restoration will have a multitude of benefits that positively impact the Preserve. Once restored Tivoli Lake will become a true destination within the Preserve and provide countless opportunities for environmental education and passive recreation, resulting in greater utilization and awareness of the Preserve.

Tivoli Lake is currently half the size of its original area. The west edge of the Lake has large quantities of accumulated sediment, and is completely covered with phragmites. The dam on the east side of the lake appears to have a failed overland outlet structure and has caused the lake to have a low overall depth resulting in poor water quality and excessive algae blooms in the summer months.

The ecology and the overall environmental health of the Preserve will benefit greatly by restoring Tivoli Lake to its original size. The Visioning Plan recommends removing the invasive species that have consumed the western portion of the Lake, and the construction of plunge pools at the inlets to the Lake. These plunge pools will help capture excessive sediments before they enter the Lake, and allow for easy cleanout and removal.

Dredging the excessive sediments from the Lake will improve the water quality by providing added depth, a cooler water column and a varied topography of the enhanced Lake bottom, which will help reduce the algae blooms and foster the growth of aquatic life.

Returning the Lake to its original size and depth not only enhances this key feature and improves habitat and water quality,

*Original Size of Tivoli Lake*



recreational opportunities for fishing, canoeing and kayaking, but also significantly opens up the view sheds across the Lake, visually connecting distant features and amenities within the Preserve. The ability to see

across the Lake to a boardwalk crossing, a fishing pier, or a public art display helps pull visitors through the Preserve. The restored open view sheds and connection to other visitors also promotes a feeling of safety, community, and overall sense of place.

## **26. Nesting Islands**

As part of Tivoli Lake's long term restoration, the Visioning Plan proposes a series of Nesting Islands within the Lake. These Nesting Islands will provide habitat diversity and a safe and protected environment where turtles or birds can lay eggs, or for basking reptiles and amphibians.

## **27. Open Water Boardwalk with Overlook Decks**

The Visioning Plan includes a series of Open Water Boardwalks and Overlook Decks around Tivoli Lake. The boardwalks will be strategically placed in and around the Lake to showcase the diversity of habitats including wetlands, aquatic shelves, open water areas, and adjacent upland forests. The Overlook Decks will be situated in areas that will engage the visitor and focus their view on the dynamic areas along and within the Lake. These Overlooks will include interpretive signage depicting the native plants and animals that may be seen in these areas, educational material about how the Lake functions, as well as cultural/historical information regarding the Preserve. These boardwalks should be constructed using low impact helical piers, minimizing the impact to the Lake.

## **28. "Backwater Nursery" with Wetland Buffer**

As part of the Tivoli Lake enhancement and restoration, a series of small secluded pools would be created with vegetated wetland buffers acting as a barrier between the Lake and the small Backwater Nurseries. The Backwater Nurseries create a habitat for small fish and other amphibians to hide and develop away from the reach of the large predators in the Lake. These Nurseries would consist of vegetated aquatic shelves, shallow marsh areas, open water with depths less than three feet, and shaded areas and basking logs. Visitors would be encouraged to explore the nurseries and wetland areas up-close along the Boardwalks and Overlooks. This dynamic access will provide excellent educational opportunity both in the form of active instruction and through interpretive signage.

## **29. Fishing Access and Overlook Decks**

Throughout the visioning process, the community discussed the surrounding neighborhoods cultural connection to fishing and the significant role fish play in their daily diet. Many residents reflected about their childhood memories of fishing at Tivoli Lake and others maintained that they still fish there today. Restoring the Lake to its original size and depth while significantly improving the Lake's water quality would provide enhanced opportunities to fish at the Lake. The Visioning Plan identifies several fishing piers/overlook decks to give anglers opportunities to fish the open waters or access for ice fishing in the winter.

## **30. Constructed Wetland Treatment System Used to Improve Storm Water Quality Before it Enters Tivoli Lake**

There are a series of inlets for storm water runoff from the surrounding neighborhoods that daylight at upper elevations on the perimeter of Tivoli Lake Preserve, which utilize existing drainage swales that drain into Tivoli Lake. The existing drainage swales have degraded and eroded over time. The surface water runoff is a source of sediment and nutrient transfer into the

*Tivoli Lake BEFORE Removal of Invasive Species*



*Tivoli Lake AFTER Removal of Invasive Species - Lake Restored to Original Size*



Lake, which has led to eutrophic conditions, reduced depths, algae growth, and sedimentation in Tivoli Lake. In addition, the existing swales are covered with vast stands of Phragmites, which continually transfer and spread throughout the Preserve and into the Lake during storm events.

The purpose of the constructed Wetland Treatment System, conceptually developed as part of the Visioning Plan, is to provide the opportunity for water quality enhancement of the storm water inlets by creating a series of constructed step pools. The step pools enable the storm water to cascade down the steep slopes in an efficient but stable manner, re-oxygenating and cooling the water and filtering excessive settlements that impact the Lake.

In between the step pools, a series of small treatment wetlands would be created where native plants function to uptake excessive nutrients and filter the storm water prior to it entering Tivoli Lake. This naturally dynamic Wetland Treatment System would be essential to maintain the restoration of the Preserve and water quality levels in Tivoli Lake. Additionally, the Wetland Treatment System offers the Preserve another opportunity for education as the systems are crossed at several locations by the Wooded Trail System. Visitors exploring the woods will be visually engaged by the stepping water system and these crossings will provide excellent opportunities for interpretive signage that explain how the Wetland Treatment System works and how it is an integral part of the overall health of the Preserve.

### **31. Wooded Trail System**

Currently, the Preserve has large areas of woods that are not formally accessed due to a lack of a secondary trail system, which limits the visual and physical connectivity of the Preserve. The Visioning Plan illustrates a secondary Wooded Trail System that works with the sites existing topography to access the Preserve large tracts of wooded uplands. This secondary trail system leads to several high points on the site where scenic overlooks can offer a place to rest, a glimpse of Tivoli Lake from a unique perspective, and another opportunity for both instructed and interpretive education. The Wooded Trail System also works its way down the slopes where it encounters the proposed step pool Wetland Treatment System.

### **32. Tent Camping Areas**

One of the special ideas that surfaced during the Visioning Process, was to offer the opportunity for overnight Camping. This unique amenity would give the public and educators like, the Albany Outsiders or the Youth Ed-Ventures and Nature Network (two youth development and environmental education organizations), a tremendous introduction to a unique outdoor experience in the heart of an urban setting.

The Camping Area would be located in an upland wooded area in the western side of the Preserve. The Camping Area would be in direct proximity to the other features in the "Retreat Area" of the Preserve, the Pavilion/Comfort Station, as well as direct access to the Wooded Trail System and the ADA Accessible Loop Trail.

### **33. Low Ropes Course/Leadership Training & Team Building Area**

In conjunction with the Tent Camping Area and Pavilion/Comfort Station the "Retreat Area" of the Preserve offers a dynamic opportunity for outdoor exploration, team building and leadership training. Located along the West side of the Preserve directly off of the ADA Accessible Loop Trail is the possible future location of the Low Ropes Course and Leadership Training and Team Building Area. Similar to the Tent Camping Area, this facility could be utilized by the public or organizations by getting a permit. This unique feature of the Preserve would have the potential for visitors to learn teamwork, develop leadership skills, get exercise, while having fun. This Team Building Area, in combination with the other recreational and environmental education opportunities, will make the Preserve a destination for local and regional organizations, schools, Colleges, youth groups, or religious institutions.

### **34. Retreat/Camping Area Pavilion & Comfort Station**

Another key feature of the “Retreat Area” would be the Pavilion and Comfort Station facility. This feature would be centrally located between the Tent Camping Area and the Low Ropes Course and Leadership Training and Team Building Areas. The Pavilion would offer an opportunity for the groups utilizing the area to gather under cover for meals and for educational or training sessions. The facility would have rest rooms, and other amenities common with a comfort station.

### **35. Quail Street Entry/Trail Head with Parking, Information Kiosk, Sidewalk Connection to Neighborhood**

One of the priorities of the Visioning Plan is to strengthen the connections from the Preserve to the surrounding neighborhoods. It is important that the Preserve enhance its existing entrances and create additional entry points to give the surrounding neighborhoods more direct pedestrian access to the Preserve. Currently, Quail Street extends from Livingston Avenue to the Preserve, but “dead ends” at its boundary. Extending the sidewalk from Livingston Avenue to a new trail head at the terminus of the Quail Street extension, provides a new entry and connection into the Preserve from the south. An information kiosk and trail head marker at this location would display Preserve and way-finding information. The trail head kiosk and corresponding signage would be standardized at all of the Preserve’s entrances to establish a common theme. In addition, a small parking area could be created at this Quail Street Entry. The trail head from Quail Street would connect directly to the ADA Accessible Loop Trail offering the visitors a safe connection to Preserves key features, as well as an alternative pedestrian route to Green Tech High School or KIPP: Tech Valley elementary school.

### **36. West Entry with Information Kiosk**

One of the entry points and primary trails in the Preserve is along an infrastructure maintenance access road that runs east-west parallel to the northern border, and ends at the intersection of Livingston Avenue and Ontario Street, where it is gated with a chain-link fence, preventing access into or out of the Preserve.

This entry point from the North Manning entrance is barricaded, allowing for pedestrians to pass, while limiting vehicular access to authorized vehicles only. The Visioning Plan recommends removing the chain-link fence at the west end of this primary trail, using a similar treatment to prevent unauthorized vehicles from entering the Preserve, and adding an information kiosk. This would physically and visually connect the Preserve to West Hill at Ontario Street. It would also provide a direct pathway and connection to Swinburne Park, Bleecker Stadium and Albany High School

### **37. Rim Trail with Possible Future Re-Use of Rail Bridge To Connect to the North**

During the Visioning process, a suggestion was made to restore a pre-existing Rim Trail along the upper perimeter of the Preserve at the western border (south of the Freihofer’s Distribution Center). The Visioning Plan proposes to restore this trail and provide the potential to make a future connection to the property north of the Preserve and over the existing rail lines. Currently, there is an abandoned rail bridge that crosses over the tracks that conceptually could be converted into a pedestrian bridge. This Rim Trail and future Rail Bridge would provide a new entry point from the north and link the Preserve to a larger regional greenway endeavor along Patroon Creek.

### **38. Livingston Avenue Apartment Entry/Trail Head with Information Kiosk**

The Livingston Avenue Apartments along Livingston Avenue are adjacent to the Preserve’s southern boundary. The apartments have direct access to a trail head and primary connector trail that runs north-south through the Preserve.

This connector trail, which utilizes an existing infrastructure maintenance access road, intersects the other primary and secondary Wooded Trails within the Preserve, and provides a direct connection to the western edge of Tivoli Lake, making

# Visioning Plan: Potential Project Partners



Implementation of this project will require partnerships between City Departments, neighborhood associations, not-for-profit organizations, State/Federal Offices, local businesses, and other stakeholders who have a vested interest in Tivoli, or could be a valuable partner in implementing the Visioning Plan. intended to be a comprehensive list as there are agencies and organizations across the region, state, and country that could potentially become part of project implementation that were not contemplated at the time of development of this document, but this list is intended to show just how diverse the stakeholders are and how much opportunity exists to seek assistance and support in undertaking this effort.

Partners	Focus Area Summary
Albany County	Governmental activities within the County
Albany Green Coalition	Greening vacant land (have a Tivoli Lake Preserve working group)
Arbor Hill Neighborhood Association	Improving the quality of life in the Arbor Hill Community
Arbor Hill Development Corporation	Address quality of life concerns, support community revitalization
Albany West Hill Neighborhood Association	Improving the quality of life in the West Hill Community
Audubon Society of the Capital Region	Conserve and restore natural ecosystems
Beverly-Pennsylvania Neighborhood Watch	Neighborhood watch
Capital District Regional Planning Commission	Regional planning and resource center
City School District of Albany	Education
Friends of Tivoli Lake Preserve	Environmental education within the preserve
Green Tech Charter High School	Education
Groundworks USA	Environmental Protection and economic development
Hudson Mohawk Group of the Sierra Club	Environmental Justice
Hudson River Valley Greenway	Preservation, enhancement, and development of the Hudson River Valley
Kipp : Tech Valley	Education
Lexington Avenue Work Group	Improving the quality of life for the Lexington Avenue area
Local Businesses, Property Owners, Colleges and Universities	Education and Community Support
Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy	Dedicated to saving special places of importance to local communities
Nature Conservancy	Protection of ecologically important lands and waters
North Albany Neighborhood Association	Improving the quality of life in the North Albany Community
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	Statewide protection and enhancement of the environment
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation	Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
Parks and Trails NY	Statewide advocate for parks and trails
US Army Corps of Engineers, EPA, Urban Parks Coalition	Support of urban parks
YMCA	Youth Development, healthy living, and social responsibility

# Visioning Plan: Potential Funding Sources



To assist in securing funding and potential in-kind services to implement the Visioning Plan, the Consultant team conducted a scan of dozens of funding sources and identified several that may be available to the City of Albany. These programs and program guidelines change often so it will be necessary to review websites and program guidance prior to completing an application to ensure that the project is still eligible for a particular grant program. There are also potential opportunities to identify and secure public-private partnerships. These partnerships can provide valuable resources – both financial and potentially physical labor – to help implement the Visioning Plan as the process moves forward.

There are two grant opportunities which are opportunities that can potentially be utilized to secure funding for Tivoli Lake Preserve which have submission due date just weeks after the end of this project. These opportunities include the following:

### EPA 2015 Brownfields Assessment & Cleanup Grants

These brownfields grants may be used to address sites contaminated by petroleum and hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants (including hazardous substances commingled with petroleum). Opportunities for funding are as follows: Brownfields Assessment Grants (each funded up to \$200,000 over three years; Assessment Coalitions are funded up to \$600,000 over three years) and Brownfields Cleanup Grants (each funded up to \$200,000 over three years). Please note that applicants who received an Assessment grant from EPA in Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) are eligible to apply under this competition. If the applicant was a member of a coalition that was awarded a grant in FY14, that applicant is also eligible to apply under this assessment competition.

*The proposal submission deadline is December 19, 2014.*

### 5 Star & Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), USDA Forest Service (USFS), the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Corporation for National and Community Service, FedEx, Southern Company, Bank of America and PG&E are soliciting applications for the 2015 Five Star/Urban Waters Restoration Program. This program is managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and is offered in conjunction with the Urban Waters Federal Partnership which gives priority to projects located in underserved, environmentally overburdened communities. NFWF anticipates that approximately \$2,000,000 in combined total funding will be available for projects such as: wetlands creation and restoration; green infrastructure and stormwater management; citizen's science and volunteer water monitoring; projects that reduce or eliminate trash from entering waterways; coastal habitat, riparian, urban forest restoration and other water quality protection and restoration projects in local communities.

*The proposal submission deadline is February 2, 2014.*

### NYS Consolidated Funding Application

The Consolidated Funding Application is a process whereby a single application provides applicants with access to multiple state funding sources. There are many potential funding sources with which elements of this project could potentially be funded, depending on their availability. A review of the 2014-2015 programs revealed the following potential opportunities: Protection Fund Municipal Grant Program – one of the eligible activities is the acquisition, planning, development, and improvement of parks in NYS.

*This program funding submission is open once a year with a due date typically in early summer.*

### Hudson River Valley Greenway

This project could potentially be eligible for two grant types. The Greenway Communities Grant Program provides financial assistance – typically between \$5,000 and \$10,000 – to fund several project types including natural resource protection, cultural resource protection, and open space protection. The Greenway Conservancy Trail Grant Program was closed at the time of publication but if/when open could provide funding for trail planning, construction and amenities, and trail educational and interpretive projects.

*This program funding submission has due dates of February 6, 2015, May 8, 2015, and September 11, 2015.*

# Next Steps



With the Visioning Plan complete, the next steps for the project will require retaining and expanding stakeholder participation and support as well as establishing relationships and starting discussions with City Departments, including the Department of General Services, the Department of Recreation, The Albany County Sewer District, and the Albany Water and Water Supply. The Visioning Plan can now be used as a tool to secure funding and required labor necessary to undertake the transformation of the underutilized preserve to a locally and regionally recognized natural urban retreat.

The City of Albany Department of Development and Planning will take the lead as the primary contact, coordinating efforts to move forward with implementation. At the time of completion of this document, the Department was already working on development of grant submissions for two programs identified above to help kick-start potential funding for the elements in this plan.