

L. RECREATION

Currently, the Town of Colonie maintains several public recreational resources, including the Town Park, Municipal Golf Course and Community Center. Approximately 15 pocket parks are located throughout the Town, providing public recreation facilities for specific neighborhoods.

The Colonie Town Park is located on approximately 160 acres of land which borders the Mohawk River in the northern section of the Town. Park facilities provide a variety of recreational activities such as swimming, tennis, biking, and picknicking. The park also features a public boat launch. During the summer months a daily average of five boats use this facility to gain access to the Mohawk River. The Colonie Town Park is open from late May through November 1; the pool facilities are only open during the months of July and August.

According to the Town of Colonie Department of Parks and Recreation, roughly 110,000 persons pass through the Town Park gate annually. Approximately 66,000 people (60-70 percent) use the pool facilities. During the summer weekends approximately 1,200 to 1,500 persons use the pool on a daily basis. The pool is currently operating at capacity, as is the entire park during holiday periods such as Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day. During other summer days the park and its facilities are well utilized although they are not yet operating at full capacity.

A second park, the Newtonville Park and Environmental Center, is located directly behind the Colonie Memorial Town Hall. The Center contains a gazebo and small ice skating rink in addition to the environmental area which is used by local schools for educational purposes.

Approximately 5.25 miles of the Hudson-Mohawk bike trail are located within the Town of Colonie, along the Mohawk River. Just over 2 miles of this bike trail are located within the Study Area. The trail is used for a variety of activities from bird watching and jogging to cross country skiing as well as biking. Although the Town does not maintain any formal records, officials of the Town of Colonie Parks and Recreation Department indicated that the Colonie portion of the bike trail is highly utilized although it is not yet at full capacity. As no accurate statistics are available, this is based upon the general observation of Town officials.

At this time, officials of the Town Parks and Recreation Department have indicated that there are no plans for expanding the existing Town park or creating a new Town Park. The Town will continue the trend of creating local pocket parks where they are appropriate.

The Town of Colonie Municipal Golf Course is located along Consaul Road in the western portion of Town. Encompassing approximately 180 acres, the course consists of 27 holes for a total of 10,129 yards. This facility includes a clubhouse with locker rooms, pro shop, restaurant, driving range, putting green, and five tennis courts which are available on a first come-first serve basis. During the winter months, the Town maintains approximately 5.5 miles of cross county ski trails over the golf course.

A Town permit is issued to residents upon request and is required to reserve a tee-off time at the Municipal Golf Course. Non-residents may use the course, but cannot reserve a specific tee-off time. In an effort to reduce both wear to the course and decrease peak hour demand, the Town issued new permits in 1988. Prior to 1988, nearly 27,000 permits had been issued. Under the new system, only 8,296 regular golf permits have been issued to date. Additionally, an annual average of 500 permits are issued to Senior Citizens each year. During the 1989

golf season, 65,000 rounds of golf were played at the Colonie Municipal Golf Course. This figure is slightly lower than usual due to wet weather conditions in the early spring of the year.

Other golf courses within the Study Area are the Mill Road Golf Course and the Shaker Ridge Golf Course. The Mill Road Golf Course is located between Mill Road and Vandenburg Lane and is approximately 43 acres in size. This nine hole golf course is privately owned but is open to the public. The Shaker Ridge Golf Course is located off Albany-Shaker Road, and occupies 250 acres of land west of the Airport. The club is privately owned, and can be used only by members and their guests.

The Colonie Community Center is located on Central Avenue in the former Colonie Village Grammar School. A variety of recreational activities are provided by the Center, which houses a gymnasium, karate rooms, ceramics and wood shop, and an auditorium. The Center also provides a nursery school and a teen drop-in center which is run by the Colonie Town Youth Bureau. Adjacent to this building is 3.5 acres of ballfields and playground areas.

According to officials at the Colonie Community Center, the facilities available at the Center (auditorium, classrooms, etc.) are currently utilized at capacity, especially during the evening hours. These officials also noted that there is a need for a swimming pool and expansion or acquisition of new facilities.

In 1983, through cooperative funding between the Town of Colonie and Albany County, Heritage Park was built. This multi-use sports complex consists of a 5,000 seat municipal stadium and parking facilities which is located at the intersection of Albany Shaker and Watervliet-Shaker Road. Heritage Park is the home of the Albany-Colonie Yankees, a AA minor league baseball franchise. According to the

Town of Colonie Department of Parks and Recreation, approximately 400,000 people per year attend activities that are held at Heritage Park. This figure is a combination of attendance figures from the 70 baseball games played each year and the 30 additional shows and events such as dog shows and other sports events. Department officials stated that Heritage Park facilities are currently not utilized at full capacity and are expected to be able to accommodate future growth through the year 2005.

There are also several streams and water bodies which offer recreational opportunities for area residents. Examples are the Lisha Kill, the Shaker Creek, the Delphus Kill, the Dry River, and the Kromma Kill. Additionally, the Mohawk River forms the northern boundary of the Town and the Study Area, where it is visible from the Hudson-Mohawk bike trail and adjacent areas. This river is widely used for various recreational activities. According to the weekly reports from the chief lock operators of the New York State Department of Transportation, Division of Waterways, peak usage of Lock 7 on the Mohawk River occurs during the months of July and August, with an average of 152 pleasure boats using the lock each week.

The Ann Lee Pond Nature and Historic Preserve is one of the areas in Albany County which offers a wide range of both active and passive recreation and educational opportunities in a natural setting. This preserve consists of approximately 170 acres of public land, which is owned by Albany County. The surrounding land uses include commercial, agricultural, residential, and institutional activities. This small scale wildlife preserve provides vital breeding, resting and feeding areas for a diverse variety of wildlife.

Ann Lee Pond is located in the Watervliet Shaker Historic District and was one of the focal points of the Shaker Community. The pond, known then as the Saw Mill Pond, was used in the Shaker saw and grist mill operations.

The Ann Lee Pond Nature and Historic Preserve is a highly valuable recreational resource. The preserve currently supports a wide variety of compatible recreational activities. During the summer months, Ann Lee Pond is used for shore fishing by local residents. There are also two nature trails. The 'Wildflower Trail' is located in the shrub/brush area on the west side of the pond and is approximately 0.25 miles long. The second trail, called the 'Chestnut Trail', meanders through the mixed hardwood forest and adjacent shrub/brush area around the pond and is approximately 1.5 miles in length. The Chestnut Trail also has a partially constructed photographic blind and tree stump exhibit which provides an illustration of growth rings of trees. Interpretive guide booklets have been prepared for both trails.

In the winter months, Ann Lee Pond is used by community residents and visitors for ice skating. Use of the pond is free and the music and maintenance is provided by the Town of Colonie.

According to the Albany County Planning Department, the Ann Lee Pond Nature and Historic Preserve is used extensively, but no statistics are kept regarding actual usage. It should also be noted that while no organized educational programs exist at the county level, local schools do make informal use of this area for educational purposes.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

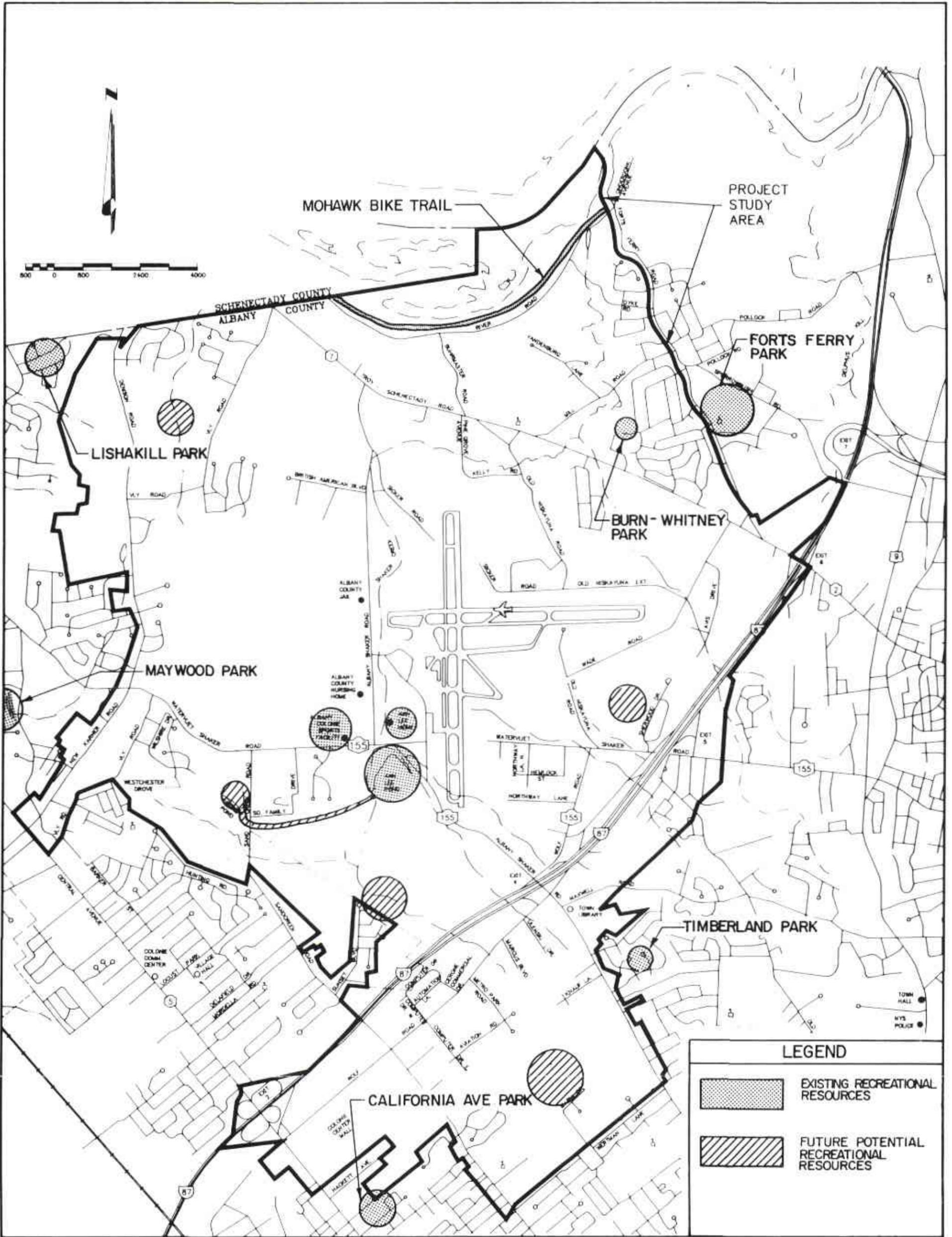
Population projections indicate that the Town of Colonie, including the Villages, will contain approximately 99,677 residents by 2005 (Section II, A, Demographics). Therefore, it can be inferred that a certain percentage of the impact on public recreational facilities associated with future population growth will be attributable to growth in the Study Area.

The 1988 LUMAC Technical Report indicates that National Recreation Opportunity Standards for municipal parks requires 5 acres per 1,000 residents. These are standards which have been developed by the National Recreational Parks Association and the NYSOPRHP. Based upon the 1990 Town and Village population, Colonie's 160 acre park is slightly more than one half of this standard, and by 2005 will represent only 42 percent of this standard.

According to Town of Colonie Parks and Recreation Department officials, rather than enlarging the Town Park, the Town will most likely continue the current trend of creating pocket parks where necessary. Currently, the only pocket park within the Study Area is the Burns-Whitney pocket park, which is 1 acre in size. Adjacent to the Study Area are the Timberland pocket park (0.5 acres), the California Avenue pocket park (2 acres), the Forts Ferry pocket park (13.8 acres), the Lisha Kill pocket park (3 acres) and the Maywood pocket park (4 acres). These are shown on Exhibit II-L-1.

Town Parks and Recreation officials have determined that an additional 27 acres of pocket park lands are required to alleviate both existing and future recreation deficiencies. These new pocket parks should be distributed in five different locations and will provide adequate recreation facilities for existing and future Town residents who reside both within and outside of the Study Area. Each of these pocket parks are described below and are conceptually located as shown on Exhibit II-L-1.

The first proposed pocket park should be centrally located between Albany Shaker Road and Wertman Lane near Maria Drive. This area is considered by Parks and Recreation officials to be one of the more deficient areas in the Town in terms of park land since both adjacent pocket parks are at capacity. The proposed pocket park in this area should be a minimum of 6 acres with the possibility of expansion as demand grows.



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EXISTING AND FUTURE POTENTIAL RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

EXHIBIT NO.
 II - L - I

AIRPORT AREA GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The second pocket park within the Study Area should be centrally located north of the Town and Village boundary between Sand Creek Road and Albany Shaker Road. The proposed pocket park should be approximately 6 acres in size, with easy access from all surrounding neighborhoods.

A third pocket park is recommended for the area surrounding Stump Pond. The LUMAC Technical Report has recommended that "the environmentally sensitive lands of Stump Pond should be protected through public acquisition or the provision of suitable conservation easements". This report also recommends that a substantial greenbelt be established to provide a connector from residential areas adjacent to Sand Creek Road and Ann Lee Pond. The design of the proposed pocket park should be located so as to utilize this greenbelt for both passive recreational purposes and as a means of access to the park.

The fourth proposed pocket park should be located between Denison Road and Vly Road in the northern portion of the Study Area and should be roughly 5 acres in size. Current residents of this area have already requested that a pocket park be developed for their neighborhood and this park would be able to serve the needs of both existing and new residents.

The fifth proposed pocket park should be located to the west of Sherwood Drive in the eastern part of the Study Area. The park should consist of an area which is roughly 4 acres in size. It should contain an open playing field, basketball courts, tennis courts, a craft shed and swing set for children. It should be centrally located, with adequate pedestrian access.

Additional expansion of the Burns-Whitney pocket park onto recently acquired town land will allow for adequate recreational opportunities for residents in the northeastern section of the Study Area. Park expansion, however, is not

necessary during the 15-year planning period as residents in this area are adequately served by the Burns-Whitney Park and Hudson-Mohawk bike trail.

Although Town Parks and Recreation officials have determined that 27 acres of new pocket parks are required in the Study Area, only 4 acres can be attributable to future residential development during the 15-year planning period. Based on National Recreation Opportunity Standards, a neighborhood (or pocket) park should contain 1 acre for each 1,000 residents served. Based on Study Area population projections included in this FGEIS, there will be an additional 4,068 residents by the year 2005. As such, only the cost of developing the 4 acres of park land can be attributed to future residential development within the Study Area.

Town Parks and Recreation officials have estimated that each acre of new park land developed will cost approximately \$40,000, including the cost of land acquisition. As such, the cost for developing 4 acres of park land is estimated at \$160,000. This will result in a Development mitigation cost of \$101 for each residential unit projected to be constructed under the Cumulative Growth Scenario.

Although the Town of Colonie has no formal bike trails other than the section of the Hudson-Mohawk bike trail which runs through the northern section of the Town, Parks and Recreation officials strongly recommend that bike trails/pedestrian walkways be incorporated into the design of any new commercial or residential development in the Town of Colonie. The development of a network of trails between existing and future residential and commercial development would provide both residents and employees with an opportunity for passive recreational activities and pedestrian access between locations. These trails should be designed as Class 2 bike trails, which are an extension of the paved shoulders of roadways for bike/pedestrian access. These trails should be placed on both sides of roadways and be 3 to 4 feet wide. Bike trail routes should be properly signed

to alert motorists of this use. For bike trails which cannot be placed adjacent to existing roadways, stone dust or an appropriate substitute should be used as base for new pathways which are constructed for this use.

The Hudson-Mohawk Bike Trail is currently highly utilized and it is anticipated that future population growth will result in significant impacts to existing parking facilities adjacent to the trail. The Town should consider providing additional parking at existing sites in order to accommodate this growth. Other amenities, such as drinking fountains or other appropriate facilities, should be considered. As the use and the age of the trail increases, the Town may wish to consider establishing a dedicated maintenance fund to assure that repairs to the trail are undertaken in a timely manner.

The Town of Colonie Municipal Golf Course is currently utilized at capacity and golfers currently experience a 30 to 35 minute wait to tee-off during peak summer hours. Current usage reflects established recreation standards, which suggest that each nine holes of golf can effectively serve approximately 25,000 persons (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1967). However, based on anticipated population growth in both the Town and Village by the year 2005, the course is likely to be utilized beyond its capacity.

In the year 2005, the population of the Town of Colonie, including villages, is expected to reach 99,677 persons as projected in this FGEIS (see Table II-A-2). Under federal recreation standards, the Town of Colonie will be at the threshold where a total of 36 holes of golf will be required to support a population of 100,000 persons.

One option to address the potential future impacts to the existing golf course is the construction of an additional nine holes. In order to estimate the costs for this new construction, the construction cost of the Red Course, built for

\$500,000 in 1981, was adjusted to 1990 dollars. As a result, based on a rate of inflation of four percent per year, the construction of the Red Course would be approximately \$712,000 in 1990. In addition, the existing golf maintenance building would require expansion at an estimated cost of \$100,000.

A minimum of 50 acres are required to accommodate nine new holes. Currently, the Town owns 43 acres contiguous to the golf course. Therefore an additional 7 acres would have to be acquired. The price of the additional land is estimated at \$30,000 per acre for a total of \$210,000.

Based on the above, the total increase in the Town of Colonie (including Villages) population from 1989 to the year 2005 is anticipated to be 18,427. A total of 22 percent (or 4,068 persons) are projected to reside within the Study Area. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that new residential development within the Study Area should be responsible for incurring 22% of capital costs for constructing an additional nine holes. Total construction costs for this new course are estimated at \$1,022,000, with 22 percent or \$224,840 being directly attributed to new residential development within the Study Area. Dividing this cost by the 1,583 housing units to be built in the Study Area by the year 2005 equates to a Development Mitigation Cost of \$142 per dwelling unit.

It appears that the cross country ski trails at the golf course will adequately meet projected demands throughout the 15-year planning period. If these trails become over-utilized as a result of population growth, the Town may consider extending the trails over the course. In light of the anticipated growth in the Study Area, it may benefit the Town to consider developing and maintaining new trails at an alternate site such as the Town Park.

While it is difficult to project a population figure at which the Colonie Community Center's facilities will be inadequate, community center officials have

indicated the current facility is utilized at full capacity in the evenings and near capacity during the day. There is also an existing need for a new gymnasium and swimming facilities. It is anticipated that future growth will increase the demand for additional community center facilities.

The LUMAC Technical Report has recommended that a Land Conservation District be developed for the Ann Lee Pond Nature and Historic Preserve due to its environmental significance and sensitivity. It is also recommended that any future development in this area should be required to take appropriate measures to prevent any encroachment or adverse impacts on the Ann Lee Pond area.

Another tool which could be used to mitigate impacts in this area to update the Ann Lee Pond Ecoregion Management and Use Plan, published in April 1978 by the Albany County Environmental Management Council. This plan details the necessary improvements and management of trails and existing facilities, in order to ensure a more effective use of this resource.