Arbor Hill Neighborhood Public Parks & Open Spaces
Arbor Hill Greenway, North Swan Street Park, Overlook Park

SUNY Albany Planning Studio, Fall 2008

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1. **Overview**

1. **Purpose & Process**

The goal of the Fall 2008 Planning Studio was and is to assist community residents and other stakeholders in developing and launching specific initiatives and projects, consistent with the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan, that improve quality of life and strengthen pride in the neighborhood’s historic and cultural qualities. More directly, the project purpose was to assist in the implementation of one or more recommendations expressed in the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan. The study area for the 2008 Planning Studio is bounded by Lark Street to the West, Ten Broeck Street to the east, and Clinton and Livingston Avenues on the south and north, and centered on North Swan Street.

Over the course of the initial meetings of the Planning Studio, and under the guidance of Professor Gene Bunnell, after consulting with prior reports, planning students selected three topic areas, and three teams were established to further explore and develop these concepts. One team set out to focus on parks and open space and a second team on public arts for community pride. A third, closely related facet of the project emerged, focused on the development of a web page an on-line community resource for Arbor Hill. This report focuses on the Planning Studio’s Park and Open Space Initiative.

The parks and open space component involved identifying suitable sites, identifying a manageable number from among the larger number of possibilities, and preparing design concepts for one to three selected sites to facilitate spontaneous and scheduled community activities for all ages, with an emphasis on youth. The open spaces identified were to provide multiple benefits to neighborhood residents, provide a focal point for the neighborhood, and enhance the sense of community pride for residents.

Since the concepts for public parks and open space were envisioned to provide all residents with amenities, including community members in the planning process was early on recognized as essential, for who would know the neighborhood better? Recognizing the collective value of the
knowledge and insight that the Arbor Hill Implementation Team, the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Association, and planning staff of the City of Albany and not-for-profit organizations have, planning students reached out to these agencies and organizations, local schools, and others, to enlist their participation in the planning process.

The team identified its goal, to develop schematic alternatives for two sites, and preliminary cost estimates, along with a list of potential funding sources, to secure funding needed for detailed design and ultimate construction. It was quickly realized that it would be ideal, if possible, to somehow link together two or more sites of the ultimately be the chosen sites. That idea later evolved into the concept of an Arbor Hill Greenway.

Recognizing that developing any of the proposals for parks and open space into more well developed concepts required community input, the work responsibilities were determined and a schedule for completion was developed.

A map highlighting the initially selected sites for parks and open space was generated. Sites were then re-visited, and the possibilities narrowed. Portions of several class meetings were used to prepare a plan view rendering for the proposed North Swan Street Park, across the street from the former St. Joseph’s Academy building. Possible layouts were identified and evaluated using a three-dimensional computer software model to generate elevation and oblique conceptual plans to scale. A map was generated showing the proposed routes for the Arbor Hill Greenway. The map was presented during two meetings of the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Association, during which feedback and comments were solicited from AHNA members and members of the public in attendance. The parks and open space and website concepts were also presented at the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Association meeting and feedback obtained.
The sites preliminarily selected were:
Vacant lots at North Swan and 2nd Street, across from St. Joseph’s Academy;
Vacant lots at 1st Street (west of N. Swan St), Overlook Park;
Lark Street & 3rd Street;
Greenway connecting parks & open space

**North Swan Street Park:** North Swan Street & 2nd Street, facing St. Joseph’s Academy
Task/Aims: Develop schematic design for a multiple-use outdoor meeting place/park compatible with existing basketball court in adjacent site; address drainage issues; address slumping ground

**Overlook Park:** Vacant lots along south side of 1st Street (west of N. Swan Street)
Tasks/Aims: Determine whether a portion of the site can be used as community garden, with terraced plantings; capitalize on view of Downtown Albany; investigate handicap access to site: handicap picnic benches as an option, as well as wheelchair- and walker-friendly surfacing
Challenges Faced: Very steep terrain and lack of public parcels at critical locations to establish workable linkage between 1st Street and Clinton Ave.

**Lark & 3rd Street**
Tasks/Aims: Possibly suitable for a small pocket park. This park was ultimately not chosen as a topic area.

**Arbor Hill Greenway**
Tasks/Aims: Conceived as a walking path that loops around the Arbor Hill neighborhood that would also accommodates bicycles on lightly traveled streets. Connect existing parks, green spaces, and community buildings. Determine the specific streets that would be involved and improvements to be made to accommodate all pedestrians.
2. **Previous Plans & Reports**

Among the plans and reports consulted and referred to were the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan (2003), Arbor Hill Progress Report 2003, Patroon Greenway Project (2004), Arbor Hill Progress Report 2005, Albany Sustainable Design Assessment Team Report (2007), North Swan Street Multimodal Accessibility Study (2008), and Supplementary maps. These documents are contained in the Appendix. Team members were assigned to review plans and reports for the purpose of gleaning information to be taken account of in the evolving projects.

3. **Research**

Planning Studio students reviewed the reports and plans noted above. Additionally, planning students conducted Internet research, visited local libraries, and met with community organizations. Planning students also generated parcel maps using GIS. Ownership (public vs. private) was mapped through GIS using available databases and the information verified by visiting and viewing tax parcels information at local offices.

4. **Public Input**

Public input was obtained during several scheduled meetings, including Arbor Hill Neighborhood Association meetings, and by approaching representatives of other local organizations. However, scheduling did not permit greater input from some key groups and the feedback sought from local schools was not obtained. Additional meetings have been scheduled to take place in December to present project concepts and obtain feedback.

4.1. **Stakeholders**

More than 25 organizations have been identified as community stakeholders. Conversations, both formal and informal, were conducted with many to gain insight on neighborhood context, proposed developments, and the proposed park design concepts. Contact information was collected for all identified stakeholder organizations for future use.
B. Questionnaire

Planning students developed administered a short questionnaire to neighborhood residents, to gauge preferences related to the project concepts for several vacant parcels.

C. Street Conversations

Students visited the neighborhood several times in September, October, and November, to become acquainted with the neighborhood, taking photographs of the sites preliminarily identified, and interacting face to face with residents for their historical perspective, e.g., regarding uses that once were, but no longer exist on the parcels, and how nearby uses might constrain or complement proposed park design concepts.
II. Arbor Hill Greenway

A greenway is a long thin park. More specifically, a greenway is a linear corridor of open space connecting public places and people with nature, and protected for environmentally sustainable purposes, including recreation, conservation, and transportation. However, greenways can vary considerably from place to place; the Genesee Valley Greenway is essentially a 90-mile-long park while New York City’s greenways are predominantly bicycle paths.

The Arbor Hill Greenway (AHG) is proposed as a walking path that loops around the Arbor Hill neighborhood in a similar fashion as the City of Philadelphia’s greenways of more than a half century ago. It isn’t a bike path, but the concept accommodates bicycles on lightly traveled streets. The AHG will connect existing parks, green spaces, and community buildings using both street right-of-ways and vacant lots. Opportunities for pleasant walks are in great demand. This greenway is designed to accommodate pedestrians who are on a leisurely stroll as well as those who are walking to work, to school, to a store, or to the library.

More importantly, the AHG is meant to be a “placemaker”, transforming public spaces into special places of value and meaning, increasing a sense of community and spiritual connection to the neighborhood. The greenway will have landscaped features of a park, such as trees and flower gardens, and restrict the designated corridor to non-motorized uses. It will be an attraction with a smooth pleasant walking surface flanked by varying types of greenery and amenities like comfortable seating, decorative light fixtures, and trash cans. It will be an open space that brings people closer to nature and to each other, and will create a sense of pride in the community.

The AHG will connect downtown Albany, Sheridan Park, the proposed Overlook Park, New Covenant Charter School, the new Arbor Hill/ West Hill Library, Arbor Hill Community Center, Third Street Community Garden, the Stephen and Harriet Myers House, Ten Broeck Mansion, Van Rensselaer Park, historic St. Joseph’s Church, St. Joseph’s Park, Hawk & Clinton Community Garden, and the Orange Street Basketball Court. The potential exists for future connections down Second Street into the West Hill neighborhood, down Orange Street to the Palace Theatre, to the proposed park at North Swan & Second, and to the Arbor Hill Elementary
School and the Arbor Hill Bicycle Boulevard section of the proposed Patroon Greenway. The connection with the Patroon Greenway would provide pedestrian and bicycle access from Arbor Hill to the riverfront and the Hudson Mohawk Bikeway, to the Philip Livingston Magnet Academy, and to the Tivoli Preserve.
Beginning in Sheridan Hollow at Sheridan Park and the steps leading to downtown, the AHG would occupy half of Dove Street on its way northward to cross Clinton Avenue. Dove Street would become a single lane of one-way automobile traffic with a single lane of parking. Although the Sheridan Hollow neighborhood is technically distinct from Arbor Hill, it constitutes a critical part of the AHG because it links Arbor Hill with downtown Albany. The greenway would then use one of several vacant lots along the north side of Clinton Avenue to access Overlook Park and follow a zigzag handicap accessible path as it rises to the level of First Street. An existing public right-of-way from the bottom of Overlook Park between Clinton Avenue and First Street could be used as a spur to the intersection of North Swan and First Streets and beyond to the proposed North Swan Street Park.

From Overlook Park, the AHG would cross First Street and use vacant lots to cross to Second Street. There are several vacant lots in this area, any of which could be acquired for use in accessing Second Street. The greenway would then follow Second Street westward past New Covenant Charter School and across Lark Street. An existing city-owned lot used for emergency snow parking on Second Street should be converted to a permanent landscaped parking lot for residents as one option to replace on-street parking lost to the greenway. A greenway spur would continue down Second Street to the new library and potentially onward across Henry Johnson Boulevard into the West Hill neighborhood.

The main AHG loop would continue across vacant lots from Second Street to Third Street behind the Arbor Hill Community Center building. From here, the greenway would turn right and eastward down Third Street and across Lark Street. It would pass the north side of the New Covenant Charter School and the Third Street Community Garden, after which there could be a spur across a vacant lot leading to the Stephen and Harriet Myers house of the Underground Railroad History Project on Livingston Avenue. Continuing along Third Street, the AHG would cross North Swan Street onto Ten Broeck Place and pass alongside the Ten Broeck Mansion property. Third Street and Ten Broeck Place are very narrow and would become a single lane for automobile traffic with pull-offs for unloading. Through traffic would be discouraged by using signage and creative street design.
Turning southward along Hall Place and St. Joseph’s Terrace, the AHG would occupy the sidewalk alongside two parks and the historic St. Joseph’s Church building before turning right again onto Second Street. Through this stretch, the greenway could extend into the parks, if desired. The greenway would occupy part of Hawk Street as it crosses Clinton Avenue and passes the community garden and basketball court. Then westward along Orange Street, there is ample space for a wide greenway to South Swan Street. In addition, a vacant lot exists along the north side of Orange Street with potential for a more substantial park. Heading in the opposite direction, eastward on Orange Street, there is good potential for a greenway spur leading to the Palace Theatre and toward the Hudson River.
On its way from Orange Street to the Swan Street stairway to downtown, the AHG occupies part of South Swan Street in a similar fashion as along Dove, Second, Hawk, and Orange Streets. Here, Swan Street would be converted to a single lane of one-way traffic alongside a single lane of parking. The greenway loop is completed as it turns right toward Sheridan Park. The extensive under-utilized state-owned green space between the Swan Street stairway and Sheridan Park would ideally become both an extension of Sheridan Park and part of the greenway. Security concerns could be addressed by transforming this overgrown location into a well-designed and well-traveled destination for Arbor Hill and Sheridan Hollow residents and downtown workers.

Orange St between Hawk and Swan. Would become 1 lane of parking and 1 of traffic.

Swan Street Staircase and Sheridan Park, both to be linked to Arbor Hill by the Greenway.

Over the entire greenway route, safety would be improved by increasing pedestrian traffic. An increase in traffic leads to a reduction in risk. By shifting design responsibility and “ownership” of the greenway to the residents of the neighborhood, a caring community can be created where daily vigilance safeguards both the greenway and its users. Neighborhood youth can be
organized into an urban “conservation corps” or “Youth Brigade” to maintain the amenities and gardens of the greenway and keep it clean of trash. Volunteer urban rangers can be recruited to patrol the greenway and help enforce regulations while keeping the peace.

There has never been a better opportunity to create green spaces of lasting value to the Arbor Hill community. As numerous vacant lots have appeared from the ruins of an historic neighborhood, the chance has arisen to acquire a few key lots that can be used to create a continuous greenway around the community, and also to use a few vacant lots to create residential off-street parking that would replace on-street parking lost to the greenway. At the same time, there is a great need for new infrastructure investment along deteriorated city streets.

*Example of existing city snow emergency lot (Second St) that could be converted into year-round resident parking.*

Arbor Hill could become a desired destination and a model for the rest of the city. Planning for the AHG now could result in a lasting legacy that could attract many new residents as new homes are built and old ones are renovated. At a time when automobile use is in decline and unhealthy lifestyles are on the increase, the Arbor Hill Greenway represents an historic opportunity to change both the transportation habits and physical fitness levels of Albany’s residents while providing infrastructure for the future.
Clockwise from top left: New Covenant Charter School, Palace Theater, St. Joseph’s Church, Ten Broeck Mansion, Arbor Hill/West Hill Library proposed design.
III. North Swan Street Park

While preparing to undertake this study, members of the Arbor Hill community were surveyed to determine their vision for the use of several vacant lots within Arbor Hill. One of the parcels reviewed by this studio and presented to the public is located at the southern corner of North Swan Street and 2nd Street. Currently, this parcel is vacant and paved, used primarily for a basketball court within the past decade. More recently, soil beneath the pavement has begun to subside, leaving the once flat parcel with an undulating surface, which now drains east toward 2nd Street. As such, much of the parcel is no longer usable, and nature has begun to reclaim it, with sumac and other weeds emerging through the pavement every few feet. The parcel is also mostly surrounded by an unwelcoming, rusting chain-link fence, discouraging of the parcel by the general public. A good majority of the respondents to the survey indicated that they wish to see this parcel reincorporated into the community as a greenspace, more specifically, an active park with recreational facilities for the children of the neighborhood. Many respondents of the survey, as well as people interviewed at the site, indicated that the parcel has been used by drug dealers for transactions, and that if the community were able to design and implement an active park at the parcel, the neighborhood would be able to return to a safer, more family-friendly environment.

From Second Street looking towards North Swan. St. Joseph’s Academy is on the right.

Planning Studio students made several visits in the Fall of 2008 to the North Swan Street site to inventory and photograph the parcel and surrounding neighborhood in an effort to further augment the written results of the survey. The development of the North Swan Street parcel as an urban, active park has been proposed to
stimulate reinvestment in and the redevelopment of the former St. Joseph’s Academy, creating a new “urban community center”, or rather a family destination for the inhabitants of both the surrounding neighborhood and Arbor Hill in general. As such, the Studio’s Arbor Hill Parks and Open Space team has created a preliminary park design for the North Swan Street site that both incorporates the history of the site and the reflects the desires of the community’s residents for the site. The park sub-group created a detailed sketch of the proposed park, to scale with the existing dimensions of the vacant lot.

The main entrance of the park at the corner of N. Swan and Second Streets (as appears today, below)

The vision of the North Swan Street park calls for installing an approximately four (4) foot tall brick fence around the perimeter of the site. The style and color would ideally match the historically important brick facades of the adjacent St. Joseph’s Academy, which dates back to 1906. Directly above and anchored within the brick base fence would be an approximately four (4) foot black wrought-iron fence, installed to replace the rusted chain-link fence and provide both security and an aesthetically
pleasing enclosure for users of the park. The gateway to the park will be located directly on the southern corner of North Swan Street and 2nd Street and will include a wrought-iron, decorative arch anchored into the brick base wall, extending approximately ten (10) to twelve (12) feet above the ground-level elevation.

Upon entering the park, the visitor is greeted by a decorative stamped concrete walkway that winds circuitously through the interior of the parcel. The solid pathway surface was chosen to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), so that all visitors to the park can enjoy it, regardless of physical limitations. Passing through the archway along the path, the visitor will be greeted by a covered, three-sided information kiosk complete with bulletin boards and informational panels. Residents of the neighborhood can post information here about activities throughout the community. The panels will include historically accurate information detailing the history of the parcel, St. Joseph’s Academy and the adjacent existing basketball court, which was a popular motion picture theatre during the first half of the 20th century. The pitched roof of the kiosk will be adorned with a swan weathervane at its apex, alluding to the importance of the bird to its namesake street and the Arbor Hill Community.

The brick pathway creates a circular loop around the interior of the parcel, creating a greenspace within the interior of the walkway. In accordance with the wishes of the community, this space will include playground structures, giving the neighborhood children a safe place to play. A large, one-unit piece will be installed, including, but not
limited to, slides, bastions, turrets, monkey bars and a jungle-gym. East across the walkway from the main playground will be a swing set, enabling swing-set users to look out over the park and see St. Joseph’s school while swinging. Several benches will be installed around the outside of the loop walkway, providing parents a place to sit and interact as well as a place to keep a careful eye on their children playing on the playground. Placed around the southern and southeastern edges of the park will be picnic tables and charcoal grill units, encouraging family picnic uses. For those “too-big” for the playground, three (3) stone gaming tables and chairs for chess, checkers, dominos and/or backgammon will be placed along the exterior of the southeastern walkway opposite the main playground structure. Trash and recycling cans will be placed next to each bench and picnic table to encourage wise use of the site while discouraging littering and waste.

In addition to the main playground structure, two (2) other major developments have been proposed for the North Swan Street Park to encourage residents and visitors to recreate and socialize while enjoying the natural and built beauty of this old neighborhood. At the midpoint of the brick wall along 2nd Street, a pavilion or gazebo structure is proposed to allow for groups, parties, classes or other gatherings to congregate under cover of a solid roof. Picnic tables and other seating will be provided. The pavilion would be designed to have four (4) open sides, with the long, front edge of the pavilion opening out onto the stamped sidewalk and playground beyond. The roof would likely be constructed of a metal material, typical of recent park pavilion designs. Perennial rain gardens would be installed along the shorter edges of the pavilion, planted with native Albany County flowers, shrubs and bushes, adding to the aesthetically pleasing nature of the overall park. Grass will be planted in all areas where there are no built structures, gardens and walkways, decreasing the overall impervious area on the project site from what currently exists (i.e. pavement). Drywells installed between the fence and the gardens would also serve to supplement the site’s ability to absorb and retain stormwater on-site.
The third major structure planned for the North Swan Street Park is an amphitheatre, tucked into the rear, southern corner of the park. The amphitheatre would provide a space where small musical performances, plays, shows and other events could be held, along with ample seating for those who wish to view performances. The top tier of seats may also be utilized by visitors who want to view the basketball games taking place next to the park. The uncovered amphitheatre also provides an open air venue where students can do their homework, parents can sit and watch their children playing on the playground and residents can gather and informally socialize.
IV. Overlook Park

The Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan of 2003 proposed an “Overlook Park” along First Street between Swan and Lark as part of the city’s reinvestment in this residential area. The city has subsequently set aside the vacant city-owned lots of 132-160 First Street for a future Overlook Park. Several nearby lots either have new housing built on them or are designated for future residential structures.

The Overlook Park site has a fairly steep slope with First Street at the top of the site and the backyards of residences along Clinton Avenue at the bottom of the site. Between the Overlook Park site and the residences is an overgrown narrow public right-of-way. The Overlook Park site itself is overgrown with large weed trees, such as box elder. Overlook Park is so named due to its prominent views southward overlooking the downtown skyline, now considerably blocked by trees.

Looking South along Overlook Park. Note the overgrown trees and steep slope.
Improvement of the Overlook Park site is consistent with the encouragement of new home construction in the surrounding area, a desire of neighborhood residents. Since new homes are in the process of being constructed while others are in the planning stages, we asked residents what open space options they would like to see at the Overlook Park site. Their first choice was a community garden with terraces, followed by a scenic overlook.

*Example of vista from a site one-half block south of the Overlook Park site.*

Our conceptual design of Overlook Park includes a handicapped accessible walkway, which also serves as part of our Arbor Hill Greenway proposal. The walkway would zigzag between the two ends of the park as it traverses the slope between First Street and Clinton Avenue. In between sections of the walkway, terraces would be constructed to be filled with topsoil and tended by neighborhood residents. These terraced gardens could be planted with flowers, vegetables, or perennials, depending on the desires of the community.

Overlook Park would be landscaped with park-like features so as to become an attractive destination for those desiring a pleasant walk. Along First Street, shade trees would be planted
and benches would be provided facing downtown. Decorative lighting would be installed, keeping the park well-lit and providing for the safety of park users. Bricks could be used as a decorative wall between the walkway and the gardens and ivy could be grown along the walls to contribute to the setting. Stairways could be included in the design to provide convenient shortcuts and allow gardeners easy access to the garden terraces.

As with the rest of the Greenway, Overlook Park could also be tended by a community “Youth Brigade” and patrolled by volunteer urban “Park Rangers”. Neighborhood residents would take “ownership” of the park by being given responsibility for its final design and for its maintenance. By keeping a watchful eye over it, residents can make Overlook Park a well-used and safe place for everyone.

As more residents move back into the neighborhood, demand will increase for public green space. Along with new residents may also come greater demand for community garden space. Management responsibility for the Overlook Park gardens could be given to Capital District Community Gardens if they desire. Although the preference of this well-established organization is to own flat ground on which to establish their gardens, it is likely that a neighborhood passion for terraced gardens, along with a commanding view of downtown and funding for construction, could persuade this organization, as well as other food-related groups, to become involved in activities here.

Regardless of whether community gardens are included in the site plan, Overlook Park could become one of the most special places in Arbor Hill and in the City of Albany. The park could become a destination for downtown workers on lunch break, commuters walking to work, and residents heading for the library or the Community Center as they walk along the Arbor Hill Greenway.
V. Implementation

1. Stakeholders

The following organizations have been identified as community stakeholders. They should be included in implementation planning, and can be of assistance in encouraging public participation, providing funding ideas, and assisting in the planning and implementation process. Contact information is included in a table in the appendix.

A. Albany Barn, Inc
B. Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Inc.
C. Albany County Historical Association
D. Albany Housing Authority
E. Albany Housing Coalition
F. Albany Public Library
G. Albany YMCA
H. Arbor Hill Community Center, Inc.
I. Arbor Hill Development Corporation
J. Arbor Hill Elementary School
K. Arbor Hill Neighborhood Association
L. Arbor Hill Implementation Team
M. Capital District Community Gardens
N. Capital District Regional Planning Commission
O. Capital District Transportation Authority
P. Capital District Transportation Committee
Q. City of Albany Arbor Hill Community Center
R. City of Albany Comprehensive Plan Board
S. City of Albany Department of Development and Planning
T. City of Albany Department of Recreation
U. Historic Albany Foundation
V. Hunger Action Network of New York State
W. New Covenant Charter School
X. Palace Theatre
Y. Trinity Institution - Homer Perkins Center, Inc.
Z. Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region
AA. Youth Organics
BB. Churches

A number of churches are located in Arbor Hill. They are not listed individually in this report, but could potentially be a good resource.
2. Potential Funding Sources

State and Local Grant Programs and Potential Funding Sources for Components of Arbor Hill Greenway

CDTC Spot Improvement Program:
The Bicycle and Pedestrian Spot Improvement Program is the mechanism for funding small-scale projects, which will improve the region’s bicycle and pedestrian travel environments through “spot improvements to the transportation system. Projects need to specifically benefit bicycle and/or pedestrian mobility or accessibility, with individual elements confined to a fairly small, definable area (e.g., single site, intersections, or short functional connections between points). Contact the CDTC at 458-2161.

The Quality Communities Grant Program:
Available to provide citizens with a healthy and satisfying quality of life, communities should be desirable place to live. Through the coordination of community and government action, we should provide for a range of housing choices, transportation options that foster safe, walk-able neighborhoods and the addition of public amenities for aesthetics and recreation.
http://www.qualitycommunities.org/grants.shtml

New York State Department of Transportation:
Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS): A New York State funded program available to provide for bicycle, pedestrian, and traffic calming measures.
https://www.nysdot.gov/programs/chips

Safe Routes to School:
Safe Routes to School is a federal, state and local effort to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school and to make walking and bicycling to school safe and appealing.

http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/legislation_funding/

Environmental Protection Fund:
Title 7, Title 9 allocate funds to Dept. of Environmental Conservation and Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation for local purchases. Funds are also available to local government and not-for-profit organizations for the purchase, development, and preservation of park lands and historic resources.

http://www.nysparks.com/grants

Hudson River Valley Greenway:
The Greenway Conservancy Projects grants program provides funding for trail planning, construction and amenities, regional and local partnerships, and resource enhancement projects. A match, either via cash, grants, contributions, or in-kind donations, is required in an amount equal to the grant.

http://www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us/funding/funding.htm

Healthy Neighborhoods Program:
A program of the New York State Department of Health, Healthy Neighborhoods provides funds to promote safe, environmentally healthy neighborhoods. It is currently being run as a pilot program, but could potentially go state-wide.

Healthy Heart Program:
A program of the New York State Department of Health, Healthy Heart provides funds for programs that make it easier for New Yorkers to choose healthy lifestyles.

http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/heart/healthy/program.htm
Greenway Sponsors:
A sponsorship program for amenities such as mile markers, benches, and signage allows for smaller donations to be received from individuals and businesses could be implemented by community stakeholders. Such a program would have to be well planned and organized, and have design standards and costs established for each amenity.

Federal Programs:
For more information on Federal programs, visit http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/federalaid/projects.cfm

Highway Safety Improvement Program:
HSIP funds may be used to carry our highways safety improvement projects on any public road or publicly owned bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail.

Transportation, Community, System Preservation Program:
Makes funds available for a program to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of strategies to integrate transportation, community, and system preservation plans and practices.

Transportation Enhancements Program:
Administered by the NYSDOT, TEP is a federal reimbursement program under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which enables funding for transportation projects of cultural, aesthetic, historic and environmental significance.
http://www.enhancements.org/profile.asp
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/index.htm

Surface Transportation Program:
STP Funds may be used for the construction of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities and for carrying out non-construction projects related to safe bicycle use.
Recreational Trails Program:
A program of the Federal Highway Administration, the Recreational Trails program is a matching grant for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of trails and trail-related projects. Funded projects must further a specific goal of the SCORP (NY Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan).

http://www.nysparks/state.ny.us/grants
Potential Funding Sources for Swan and Overlook Parks

Note: there is some overlap between the two funding sections.

State and Local Funding Sources

Environmental Protection Fund – Parks Program:
A matching grant program for the acquisition and development of parks and recreational facilities. Projects must reflect the priorities of the New York Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
http://nysparks.state.ny.us/grants/

Environmental Protection Fund – Acquisition:
A matching grant program for the acquisition of permanent easements or titles to land or structures for park, recreation, or preservation purposes.
http://nysparks.state.ny.us/grants/

Environmental Protection Fund – Hudson River Estuary Program:
Available for municipalities and not-for-profit organizations within the geographic boundaries of the Hudson River Estuary. Grants are available for, among others, open space: planning, inventory and acquisition.
http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5091.html

Capacity Building Grants:
A program of Parks & Trails New York; provides grants to strengthen not-for-profit organizations that are working to build and protect parks and trails in communities across the state. The grant is only to help not-for-profit organizations with developing and strengthening the skills, processes, and resources needed to fulfill their missions.
http://www.ptny.org/advocacy/grants.shtml
Hudson River Valley Greenway:
The Greenway Conservancy Projects grants program provides funding for trail planning, construction and amenities, regional and local partnerships, and resource enhancement projects. A match, either via cash, grants, contributions, or in-kind donations, is required in an amount equal to the grant.
http://www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us/funding/funding.htm

The Quality Communities Grant Program:
Available to provide citizens with a healthy and satisfying quality of life, communities should be a desirable place to live. Through the coordination of community and government action, we should provide for a range of housing choices, transportation options that foster safe, walk-able neighborhoods and the addition of public amenities for aesthetics and recreation.
http://www.qualitycommunities.org/grants.shtml

Federal Programs

Land and Water Conservation Fund Program:
A matching grant program of The National Park Service for the acquisition and development of outdoor park and recreation facilities. Funded projects must reflect the priorities of the New York Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
http://nysparks.state.ny.us/grants/
3. Recommendations & Next Steps

Neighborhood Studio

The idea of having a Neighborhood Studio in Arbor Hill was a concept created by Professor Gene Bunnell and his Fall 2008 Studio class. It would be a base for planning in the neighborhood and it would foster communication between the students at the University at Albany, residents of the community, and other organizations as well. This Neighborhood Studio would have to be at a central location within the community, making it easily accessible to all parties; for example, on a main road such as Lark St. This Studio would be an incubator for creative ideas on how to continue improving Arbor Hill and it would be a place to host events that would bring more awareness to Arbor Hill and its progression. As far as a design concept for what the actual building would look like, it would have to have a large window facing the street; allowing residents to walk in to look at plans, give feedback, and express interest. This would keep up the momentum.

Youth Brigade

Getting youth involvement is crucial for the upkeep and constant improvement of Arbor Hill. It would give them a sense of pride for their community, making them more aware and responsible for what happens in it. Ways in which to get youth involvement would be to reach out to the local schools and programs, and come up with activities that can help the community, while educating and entertaining the youth. A few ideas would be an “historical clean up day”, where both children and adults can get historical information about Albany while walking around the neighborhood picking up litter. The historical stories would entertain as well as educate them while giving them a sense of ownership of their community, making them want to help with the beautification of Arbor Hill. There could be an “Arbor Day” where the youth can go around planting trees, putting the arbor back in Arbor Hill. The youth could help out in the community gardens during the spring and summer seasons learning how to plant vegetables and
fruits. By getting the youth involved the parents will also become involved, helping to spread the word about Arbor Hill and all the changes that are occurring.

**Albany Comprehensive Plan**

The Albany Comprehensive Plan has been in the beginning stages since early 2007. It was not until recently that the members of the Comprehensive Plan Board were chosen. This would be the city’s first Comprehensive Plan and its primary goal is to guide the growth of the City of Albany. The Comprehensive Plan’s tentative date of adoption is June 2010. If feasible, the Comprehensive Plan could incorporate some of the ideas for Arbor Hill presented in this report. The studio class will provide their final report to the members of the Comprehensive Planning Board, which could possibly be the start of some type of collaboration.

**Albany Bicycle Master Plan**

The Albany Bicycle Master plan designates bicycle routes throughout the city of Albany, including the neighborhood of Arbor Hill. These bicycle routes would link employment centers with neighborhood commercial shopping areas.
VII. Appendix

1. Survey Results

Arbor Hill Neighborhood
Public Arts & Spaces Survey
UAlbany Planning Studio - Fall 2008

TOTAL RESPONSES = 32

1. Are you an Arbor Hill resident?
   8 ___ Grew up here
   8 ___ More than a year
   3 ___ Just moved here
   13 ___ No

2. Do you or your children attend school?
   3 ___ Yes, New Covenant Charter School
   1 ___ Yes, Arbor Hill Elementary School
   2 ___ Yes, Philip Livingston Magnet Acad
   6 ___ Other: Albany High School
   1 ___ Other: Guilderland High School
   1 ___ Other: Henry Johnson Charter Sch
   1 ___ Other: KIPP Tech Valley Academy
   1 ___ Other: St. Teresa of Avila
   18 ___ No, or no answer

3. Please rank in order of your preference: (1=most preferred; 6=least preferred)
   averages [total points]
   3.4 [109] Open space & outdoor recreation
   3.0 [95] Neighborhood appearance (public arts, improved streetscapes)
   3.1 [98] Access to education (after-school programs, adult education classes)
   3.3 [104] Economic development (attracting new businesses, employment opportunities)
   2.7 [86] Increased public safety (Neighborhood Watch, police patrols)
   _______ Other: Access to arts & music; indoor recreation; fix up houses for families

4. What would you like to see facing south along First Street between Swan and Lark?
   12 ___ Community Garden with terraces
   8 ___ Scenic overlook
   7 ___ Farmers market
   6 ___ Picnic pavilion
   9 ___ Open green space
   6 ___ Fruit trees
   7 ___ Handicapped accessible pathway
   19 ___ New homes
   1 ___ I like it as is
   1 ___ Other: park

5. How should the basketball court at 70 N. Swan Street be changed or improved?
   14 - renovate/remodel/fix it/improve
   • continual maintenance
   • farmers market
   • playground
   • relocate it
   • expand by tearing down the neighboring house
   • scoreboard
   • lighting
   • bleachers

6. What would you like to see in the vacant lot at the corner of Swan and Second Streets?
7. Where else would you like to see public open space?
   • apt. parks/ skate parks
   • parking lot for store at Livingston & Lark
   • in all neighborhoods

8. How interested would you be in having a Farmer’s Market in Arbor Hill?
   13 Very interested
   10 Somewhat interested
   9 Not interested, or no answer

9. Where would you like to see more public art in Arbor Hill?
   3 Inside public buildings
   16 Walls of buildings
   5 Storefronts
   0 On my house

10. Which community activities would you like to see more of?
    7 Sports
    14 Mentoring
    13 Tutoring
    17 Arts & music
    12 Computer workshops
    3 Religious activities
    17 Youth organizations
    17 Community Center activities
    0 None
    1 Other: Center for Urban Education
    1 Other: anything that brings community together

11. Are you interested in a community website?
    14 Very interested
    15 Somewhat interested
    3 Not interested, or no answer

12. If so, what interests you?
    20 Events & community calendar
    18 Neighborhood history
    21 Employment opportunities
    12 Plans & projects
    15 Arts & culture
    9 Business directories
    7 Maps
    20 Education information
    14 Local services
    13 Parks & recreation
    14 Health & nutrition
    14 Transportation
    13 Public Safety
    1 Others: AHNA, ward leaders
13. Do you have internet access?

27 Yes
5 No, or no answer

Comment: missing street sign project
2. Stakeholder Table

The following organizations have been identified as community stakeholders. They should be included in implementation planning, and can be of assistance in encouraging public participation, providing funding ideas, and assisting in the planning and implementation process. Contact information is included below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Email</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albany Barn, Inc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>(518) 935-4858</td>
<td><a href="http://www.albanybarn.org">www.albanybarn.org</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@albanybarn.org">info@albanybarn.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau</td>
<td>25 Quackenbush Square, Albany NY 12207</td>
<td>(518)) 434-1217</td>
<td><a href="http://www.albany.org">www.albany.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Albany County Historical Association</td>
<td>9 Ten Broeck Place, Albany NY 12210</td>
<td>(518) 436-9826</td>
<td><a href="http://sites.google.com/site/tenbroeckmansion">http://sites.google.com/site/tenbroeckmansion</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:achadirector@onecommail.com">achadirector@onecommail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Albany Housing Authority</td>
<td>200 South Pearl Street, Albany NY 12202</td>
<td>(518) 641-7500</td>
<td><a href="http://www.albanyhousing.org">www.albanyhousing.org</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@albanyhousing.org">info@albanyhousing.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Albany Housing Coalition</td>
<td>278 Clinton Avenue, Albany NY 12210</td>
<td>(518) 465-5251</td>
<td><a href="http://ahcvets.org">http://ahcvets.org</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:admin@ahcvents.org">admin@ahcvents.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Albany Public Library</td>
<td>161 Washington Avenue, Albany NY 12210</td>
<td>(518) 427-4300</td>
<td><a href="http://www.albanypubliclibrary.org">www.albanypubliclibrary.org</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:aplweb@uhls.lib.ny.us">aplweb@uhls.lib.ny.us</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Albany YMCA</td>
<td>274 Washington Avenue, Albany NY 12206</td>
<td>(518) 449-7196</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cdymca.org">www.cdymca.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arbor Hill Community Center, Inc.</td>
<td>47 Lark Street, Albany NY 12210</td>
<td>(518) 463-1516</td>
<td><a href="http://www.trinityinstitution.org">www.trinityinstitution.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arbor Hill Elementary School</td>
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<td>(518) 462-7166</td>
<td><a href="http://ahes.albany.k12.ny.us">http://ahes.albany.k12.ny.us</a></td>
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<td>Arbor Hill Neighborhood Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arbor Hill Implementation Team</td>
<td>21 Lodge Street, Albany NY 12207</td>
<td>(518) 434-2532</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital District Community Gardens</td>
<td>40 River Street, Troy NY 12180</td>
<td>(518) 274-8685</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cdcg.org">www.cdcg.org</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@cdcg.org">info@cdcg.org</a></td>
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<td>Capital District Regional Planning Commission</td>
<td>One Park Place, Ste. 102, Albany NY 12205</td>
<td>(518) 453-0850</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cdrpc.org">www.cdrpc.org</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:CDRPC@cdrpc.org">CDRPC@cdrpc.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital District Transportation Authority</td>
<td></td>
<td>(518) 437-8300</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cdtcmpo.org">www.cdtcmpo.org</a></td>
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<td>Capital District Transportation Committee</td>
<td>One Park Place, Albany NY 12205</td>
<td>(518) 458-2161</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cdtempo.org">www.cdtempo.org</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:CDTC@cdtempo.org">CDTC@cdtempo.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Albany Arbor Hill Community Center</td>
<td>50 Lark Street, Albany NY 12210</td>
<td>(518) 434-0583</td>
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<td>City of Albany Comprehensive Plan Board</td>
<td>21 Lodge Street, Albany NY 12207</td>
<td>(518) 434-2532</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Albany Department of Recreation</td>
<td>7 Hoffman Avenue, Albany NY 12209</td>
<td>(518) 434-5699</td>
<td>albanyny.gov/Government/Departments/Recreation.aspx</td>
<td><a href="mailto:recreation@ci.albany.ny.us">recreation@ci.albany.ny.us</a></td>
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<td>Historic Albany Foundation</td>
<td>472 Madison Avenue, Albany NY 12208</td>
<td>(518) 465-0876</td>
<td><a href="http://www.historic-albany.org">www.historic-albany.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunger Action Network of New York State</td>
<td>275 State Street, 4th Floor, Albany NY 12210</td>
<td>(518) 434-7371</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hungeractionnys.org">www.hungeractionnys.org</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@hungeractionnys.org">info@hungeractionnys.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Covenant Charter School</td>
<td>50 Lark Street, Albany NY 12210</td>
<td>(518) 463-3912</td>
<td><a href="http://www.newyorkcharters.org/proNewCovenant.htm">www.newyorkcharters.org/proNewCovenant.htm</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Palace Theatre</td>
<td>19 Clinton Avenue, Albany NY 12207</td>
<td>(518) 465-3334</td>
<td><a href="http://www.palacealbany.com">www.palacealbany.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trinity Institution – Homer Perkins Center, Inc.</td>
<td>15 Trinity Place, Albany NY 12202</td>
<td>(518) 449-5155</td>
<td><a href="http://www.trinityinstitution.org">www.trinityinstitution.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region</td>
<td>PO Box 10851, Albany NY 12201</td>
<td>(518) 432-4432</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ugrworkshop.com">www.ugrworkshop.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Organics</td>
<td></td>
<td>(518) 463-2222</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Youthorganics@gmail.com">Youthorganics@gmail.com</a></td>
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