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## SECTION VIII. PARKS AND RECREATION

The Town of LaFayette is fortunate in that it has a wide variety of open spaces, parks, recreation facilities, and programs that serve local residents. For the purposes of this Plan, these are detailed below as “Recreation Facilities” and “Recreation Programs”.

### RECREATION FACILITIES

Recreation facilities available to Town residents include those owned by the Town, and those owned and operated by other entities.

**Town Owned Facilities** - The Town’s parks and recreational facilities fall under the jurisdiction of the Town’s Department of Public Works (DPW). Each facility is owned, operated, and maintained by the Town, with all of them being open to the public year-round, as weather permits. Certain amenities are limited to summer use only, such as swimming. The location of these parks and facilities is indicated on the Map \_\_\_\_ and each is detailed below.

***Fred Stafford Memorial Park*** – This park contains 18.9 acres and is the primary, and largest, recreation park serving the community. It is located at the northern end of the hamlet off Route 11. It is open sunrise to sunset each day, year round, and includes the following amenities:

- Pavilions: 2 large and 1 smaller
- Playgrounds: 1 large jungle gym, swings, and a merry-go-round
- Four Ball Fields: Can be used for baseball, soccer or lacrosse
- Three Tennis Courts with a basketball hoop
- Sand Volleyball Court
- Walking Trails
- Restroom Facilities
- Pond and Stream
- Building where concessions could be served from

The existing facilities in the park are in generally good condition, and the Town has invested funds in recent years to maintain and improve facilities. The local Optimist Club has also assisted the Town in development and maintenance of facilities. The tennis courts have some cracks that will need to be addressed, and the basketball hoop is rusty and aging. The park has sufficient land to accommodate additional active and passive park amenities. A project to install fencing and plantings to screen the park from adjacent Interstate 81 is planned for 2012.

***LaFayette Beach Park*** – Located in the central part of the Town, west of I-81, the park includes 6.9 acres This is one of only two public locations for swimming in the Town, with the other being Onondaga County’s Jamesville Beach Park in the far northeast corner of the Town. The park gate is only open during swim lesson times,



typically summer afternoons. There is very limited parking when the gate is closed. Amenities include:

- Swimming Pool/Pond
- Lacrosse Box
- Pavilion
- Bathhouse
- Swing set
- Basketball court

The condition of the park is poor and it is unwelcoming. The bathhouse is in good condition on the outside, but it not in useable condition on the inside. The swing set, the only playground equipment, is outdated and the chains for the seats have rusted. The pool/pond should be upgraded as well as the lacrosse box. The lack of a fence around the pool itself means that the park is, for all practical purposes, closed when the pool is closed. Despite its problems, the park is located centrally in the town, and located in a beautiful, rural setting.

**Bailey Park** - This small park is located in the hamlet of Cardiff, and is only 2.1 acres in size. The park primarily services residents of the hamlet and includes:

- Swing set, slide, and see-saw
- Picnic Tables
- Basketball Court
- Open Field

As of August 2010, there appeared to be visible, recent vandalism including a bench that was knocked over and a broken picnic table. There was also a small pile of trash on the basketball court. Otherwise, the facilities are in generally good condition, although the playground equipment is outdated. The Town must be vigilant in ensuring that all its facilities are clean and maintained, lest decay takes hold.

**LaFayette Nature Preserve** – This 59.3 acre park is located in the western part of the Town. The property was donated to the Town, and originally included a ropes course that the Town eventually abandoned. Today it is a passive recreation park of open space, woodlands, and a nature trail.

**Community Building** - The Town-owned community building is an older, residential style structure on a small lot near the four corners in the hamlet. It includes a large first floor open space, a kitchen, and restrooms. The facility is handicapped accessible, but is in need of renovations such as painting, new lighting, and refinished floors. While the Community Building is a welcome indoor facility in the Town, its space is relatively small and it has multiple uses. One recreation program/activity must pick up all its equipment/materials in order for another group to use the space. This would make it difficult for a group of quilters, for example, to enjoy the Community Center facilities. There is little space for various groups to store supplies of equipment when not in use. There is also somewhat limited parking, and it is possible that the parking lot in front of the building may be wholly or partially lost due to the planned DOT reconstruction of the





street. Nevertheless, the building is an important community asset and it has the potential to serve the community to a greater level than is currently does.

**Other Recreation Facilities** - Although the Town owns and operates the facilities detailed above, a number of amenities available to the public are owned and operated by entities other than the Town of LaFayette. These include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

*Jamesville Beach County Park* – Includes 197 acres owned and operated by Onondaga County. It is open April through October for a fee and includes:

- Beach and swimming
- Playground
- Volleyball court
- Shelters
- Picnic Tables
- Boat rentals
- Fishing including a fishing trail
- Cross-country running trail
- Off-leash dog area
- Horseshoe pits
- Disc Golf Course
- Restroom Facilities

**DEC Fishing Access Sites** – This includes fishing areas along Butternut Creek with three parking areas off of Apulia Road, Colton Road, and \_\_\_ Road.

**LaFayette Inn Fields** – This 4.1 acre property, at the south end of the LaFayette Hamlet is privately owned and is used primarily for privately sponsored softball leagues. Facilities include:

- Two baseball fields down a hill behind the restaurant
- Three picnic tables and portable restroom facilities

**Toolon Tigers Apple Festival Fields** – The 192.8 acre Apple Festival grounds are used primarily for the annual LaFayette Apple Festival. In addition to a series of buildings, and barns there are several playing fields which are used for a number of purposes and organizations, including various tournaments, the Upstate Lacrosse Association youth league, and the school district.

**Land Trusts** – The CNY Land Trust own two sites in the Town which collectively include 133.1 acres. These are:

- Mason Hill Land Trust (86.3 acres): There is no marked access and no marked trails, but there are a number of old roads that are used for walking and hiking. The parcel is largely landlocked which significantly limits public access, although there is a right of way off of Eager Road.



- Cherry Valley Preserve – (46.8 acres): A section of Onondaga Creek runs through the preserve, which includes unmarked walking trails. It has very limited parking, but can be accessed via the shoulder of Route 20.

*LaFayette School District:* School District Facilities have restricted use, but include:

Junior Senior High School

- Football/Lacrosse Field
- Baseball Field
- Softball Field
- Restroom Facilities
- Cinder track
- Indoor wellness/fitness center

Elementary School

- Playgrounds: two playground areas, each with a variety of activities
- Ball Fields
- Basketball hoop
- Two multi-use fields

The School District also has indoor recreation facilities, such as gyms, that are typical of school districts.

**Snowmobile Trails** – The LaFayette Trail Riders is a local snowmobile group that works in concert with other groups in the region. It is one of the oldest continuously operating snowmobile clubs in New York State, originally organized in 1969 and incorporated since 1970. They currently manage 60 miles of trails in Lafayette, Pompey, Fabius, Delphi and DeRuyter, mostly on the private land of over 120 property owners. Trails in the Town of LaFayette run roughly parallel to, and north of, Route 20 connecting the hamlet of LaFayette to the Village of Pompey, and then southward to the Village of Tully and Labrador Mountain Ski Center, respectively. Local trails connect to a larger statewide network of snowmobile trails. There are no snowmobile trails in the northern portion of the Town or west of I-81 and no convenient connection northward toward Syracuse and its suburbs.

There are also a number of 18-hole golf courses located just outside the Town, as well as three ski resorts within a short driving distance.

**Condition, Use, and Adequacy** - An inventory of existing facilities is essential in understanding and documenting the adequacy of available recreation and open space within the Town of LaFayette. The adequacy of parkland and open space in a given jurisdiction is calculated based upon the population. Both the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD) recommend a ratio of approximately one acre of parks and open space per 100 persons. Applying this standard to LaFayette (2000 Census population of 4,952), the Town should offer approximately 50 acres of parks and open space. The total cumulative acreage noted for the Town-owned facilities detailed above, is 87.2





acres, including the 59.3 acres in the LaFayette Nature Preserve. As detailed, there are other facilities serving Town residents, but the NRPA recommendation is strictly limited to property dedicated to municipal recreation, and not school/college facilities and land. Nevertheless, the Town has sufficient park acreage to meet national standards. The Town does not, however, have any indoor recreation facilities and limited winter facilities, such as a skating rink.

The overall condition of Town parks is fair. While routine maintenance is good, some park facilities are aging and in need of repair, replacement, or removal. It is essential that these fields, courts, and structures be in good condition, attractive, and well maintained so as to insure a positive public image, minimize risks, and maximize usage. Due to the associated nature and risks, some facilities require special attention and, often, additional funding. This is particularly true for swimming facilities as they frequently require more attention, and consequently, more expense to meet State and federal safety standards. To a certain degree, the same is true for playgrounds where the age and safety of the playground equipment is always a concern. With strict standards now in place for all new equipment, all of the existing equipment and facilities should be routinely evaluated to insure their safe usage. The Town currently undertakes annual inspections and this practice should continue.

It is apparent that all of the Town parks maintain a strong identity within the community. There are three key factors that must be considered during any planning effort so as to ensure that this identity remains strong. They are:

***Maintenance and Preservation*** - As mentioned earlier, the continued utilization of existing parks and open spaces will only be ensured if they are well maintained and provide the amenities desired by the community. By maintaining and improving these facilities, their full potential can be realized.

***Present and Future Use*** - While the existing parks and open spaces experience significant usage, it is important to continually reevaluate recreational preferences and seek out all opportunities to maximize their potential. The Town must continue to evaluate, maintain, and preserve its facilities so that they remain available in the future.

***Connectivity to Other Assets and Activities*** - Connectivity of open space and parkland focuses on the broader view of the interrelationship between the various spaces and activities that take place in the area. Pedestrian and bicycle links between recreational opportunities will enhance the facilities.

## RECREATION PROGRAMS

Recreation programs in the Town are managed by the LaFayette Community Council, a non-profit organization, and the Town's Recreation Director. The Town works hand in hand with the Council to provide recreational activities and community events. The Town of LaFayette's Recreation Director, a Town employee, was hired in 1996 by the Community Council to work 10 hours per week. Due to an increase in recreational pursuits in the Town, this position is now 30 hours per week. It is anticipated that, over



time, the position will continue to grow with respect to responsibilities. The present job entails recruitment of persons to participate in Town-sponsored recreational programs, managing the equipment and facilities, program inventory, supervising the programs in concert with volunteer coaches, and ordering new equipment.

The Recreation Director position was originally hired to manage the Town's youth programs, particularly organized sports, thus LaFayette still maintains a major focus on recreational opportunities for youth including:

- Wrestling
- Skiing (trips to Song Mountain)
- Volleyball
- Basketball (held in the elementary school gym)
- Baseball
- Lacrosse
- Swimming (at LaFayette Beach Park)
- Soccer
- Flag Football
- Track
- Tennis (Stafford Park)

Over time, there has been more of a demand expressed for adult offerings, so the Town has added classes in aerobics (primarily zumba), yoga, and general exercise, in addition to men's basketball. There is a local softball league that is managed by a bar/restaurant that is not under the purview of the Town.

To assist in managing these programs, the Town hired a part time lifeguard supervisor to assist at LaFayette Beach. The Community Council provides part time field maintenance services and the Town and the LaFayette School District share a field groomer. If the Recreational Programs are to grow, the Recreation Director position will need to become full time or additional part time staff will need to be hired.

Presently, the Recreation Director shares a desk with the tax collector in Town Hall to access a fax machine and the internet. Otherwise, the Recreation Director is often found in the Community Building, which is not set up as an office. The Town would best be served by a structure to house its indoor recreation programs and to provide suitable office space and storage for the Recreation staff.

## **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

As noted, the use of the LaFayette parks is quite extensive and they appear to serve the community very well. Nevertheless, the Town is lacking in overall acreage of parkland and opportunities for growth should be explored. The Town must also consider alternative forms of recreational opportunities that meet the changing needs of its citizens and serve all segments of the population. Several opportunities include:





**Indoor Recreation Facility** – The Town would benefit from the development of a multi-purpose indoor recreation facility. Such a facility should be designed to be multi-generational and provide opportunities for recreational field sports, various meeting facilities, office space and storage. If a multipurpose/multigenerational recreation building were to be built, its preferred location would be in the area of Stafford Park or the hamlet. The Town would likely need to acquire more land for such a facility, such as the former casket company property and land to the south of the park. Such a facility has the potential to be a significant community gathering space, promote a sense of community among Town residents, and increase the Town’s appeal as a place to live and work.

**Greenway/Linear Park** – As detailed above the Town has a number of parks and recreation facilities scattered about the Town. Linking these facilities, along with other Town nodes such as the hamlet, via a greenway would provide new recreational opportunities for residents, including biking, hiking, and cross-country skiing, as well as providing alternative opportunities to move people through the community. Greenways can also accommodate other public uses such as community gardens, exercise facilities, playgrounds, or interpretive information related to the historic or natural environment of the area, and can be designed to link to greenways and trails in other communities.

Numerous studies have shown that property values increase in communities served by trails and greenways, and that trails can be significant economic drivers. Due to costs, land ownership issues, and other factors, the Town should create a master plan for development of the greenway, including public participation, and develop facilities and linkages over time as funding and land is available. The use of existing linear properties, such as utility right-of-ways, can be useful in development of the greenway.

**Bike Trails and Routes** – LaFayette already hosts a number of informal bike routes through the community, and certain roads are popular with cyclists. However, there are not any signed bike routes or off-road bicycle trails. The Town should work to create a bicycle-friendly community, both for recreation and transportation. This could include bike lanes in and around the hamlet (see Section V, Hamlet), designated bike routes along major roadways, and multi-use, off-road trails. Particular attention should be paid to creating linkages among major nodes in the community and to trails in the Syracuse area. Access to amenities such as bicycle racks and restrooms, are also important. (Also see Section X, Transportation).

**Emerging Trends** – The recreation needs of a community are not static. For instance, skateboard parks were rare 20 years ago, but have now become commonplace, as interest in that sport has increased. The public demand for multi-use trails has grown immensely in recent years. Demographic shifts can also alter levels of interest in amenities like community gardens or dog parks. A growing older population may increase the need for senior recreation facilities and programs, as well as handicapped accessible facilities. The Town also has limited winter use facilities such as a skating rink.

The Town must remain cognizant of emerging trends in order to ensure that its recreation facilities and programs meet the changing demands of its residents. It should



work to find creative and cost effective solutions to provide the amenities that its citizens desire, and should be willing to retire facilities that have a declining demand.

## **GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

**GOAL 30:** Provide facilities that are safe, clean, well maintained, and handicapped accessible.

### **IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:**

- A) Identify all safety, cleanliness, and general maintenance concerns for all Town recreation facilities and institute corrective actions as needs arise. Issues of concern include playground equipment condition and types, dangerous or failing structures, un-mowed areas, deteriorating swimming areas, handicapped accessibility, poor lighting, litter, graffiti, etc.
- B) Establish long-term maintenance plans for all Town-owned facilities including a review of responsibilities and budgets.
- C) Undertake a program of park renovations and upgrades to address deficiencies in LaFayette Beach and Bailey Parks. Seek outside grant funding as needed.
- D) Renovate and upgrade the Community Center to enhance use.

**GOAL 31:** Remain current with meeting the needs of the public and provide facilities and programs to meet those needs.

### **IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:**

- A) Coordinate with the Community Council to conduct periodic needs assessments on recreation facilities and public desires and regularly evaluate programs and participation levels to anticipate and meet changing needs and trends.
- B) Continue to build upon improvements and facilities at Stafford Park and develop new facilities at other parks as needed.
- C) Work with the CNY Land Trust to improve public access to its two properties in the Town.
- D) Work with the Community Council and nearby communities to provide new and/or enhanced recreational and social programs for adults and seniors.
- E) Work with local biking organizations, Onondaga County, and other interested parties to establish bicycle routes and trails, and to provide amenities and services to cyclists (see also Section X. Transportation).





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**GOAL 32:** Develop a greenway and/or trails to connect major recreational and business nodes in the community, including Town parks, the hamlet, CNY Land Trust properties, and the Apple Festival Grounds.

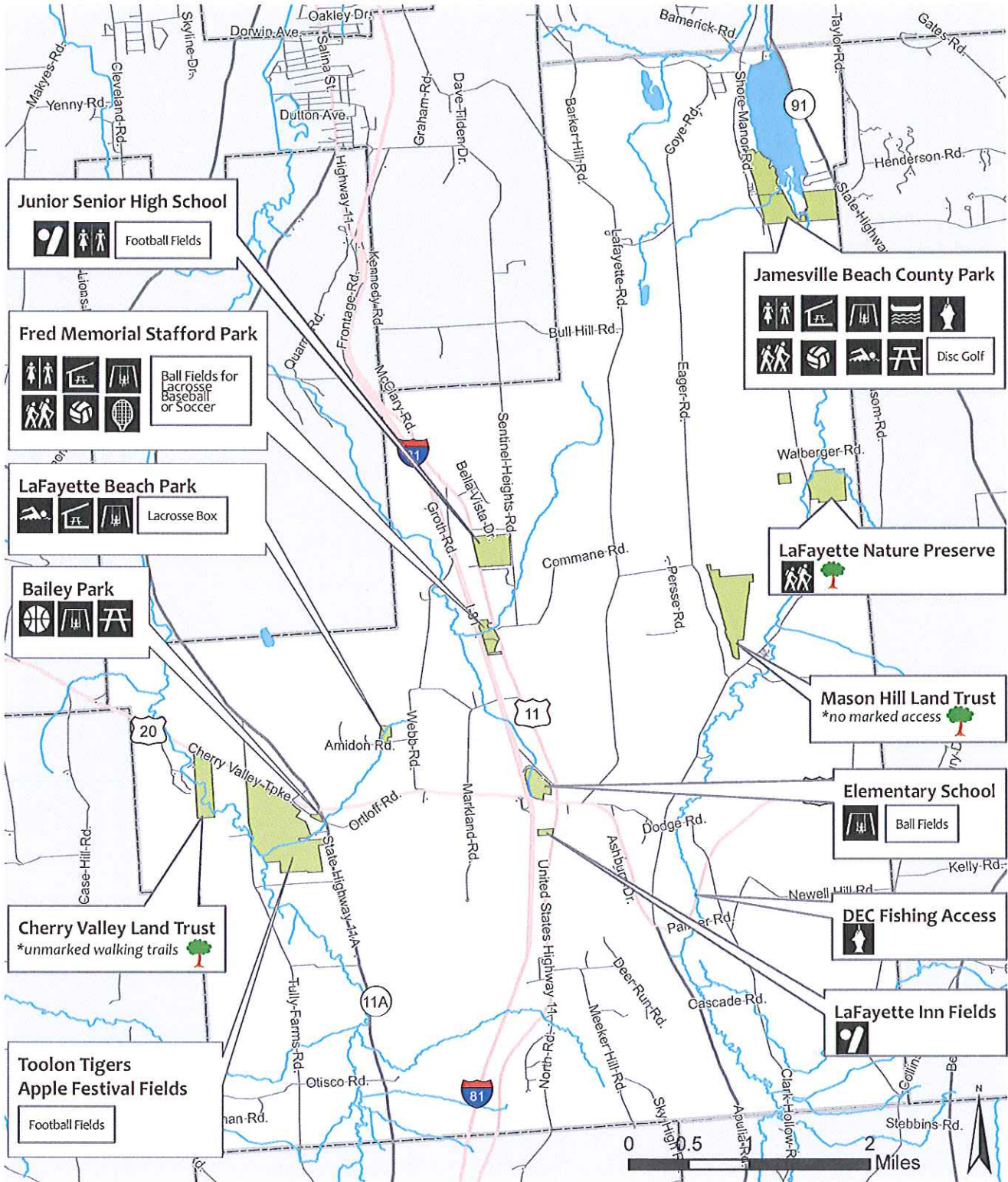
**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:**

- A) Identify and map existing nodes to be connected. Inventory and map utility right-of-ways, vacant land, public land, and other opportunities that can serve as corridors to connect them. Use this data to develop a Greenway Master Plan.
- B) Seek grant funding and leverage force account labor to undertake phased improvements as land become available.

**GOAL 33:** Increase recreational opportunities for winter recreation.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:**

- A) Construct a multi-use, multi-generational indoor recreation facility at or near Stafford Park.
- B) Develop an ice skating rink at Stafford Park.
- C) Cooperate with the LaFayette Trail Riders snowmobile group to ensure a well-maintained and interconnected system of snowmobile trails.
- D) Develop opportunities and/or facilities for cross-country skiing/snowshoeing.

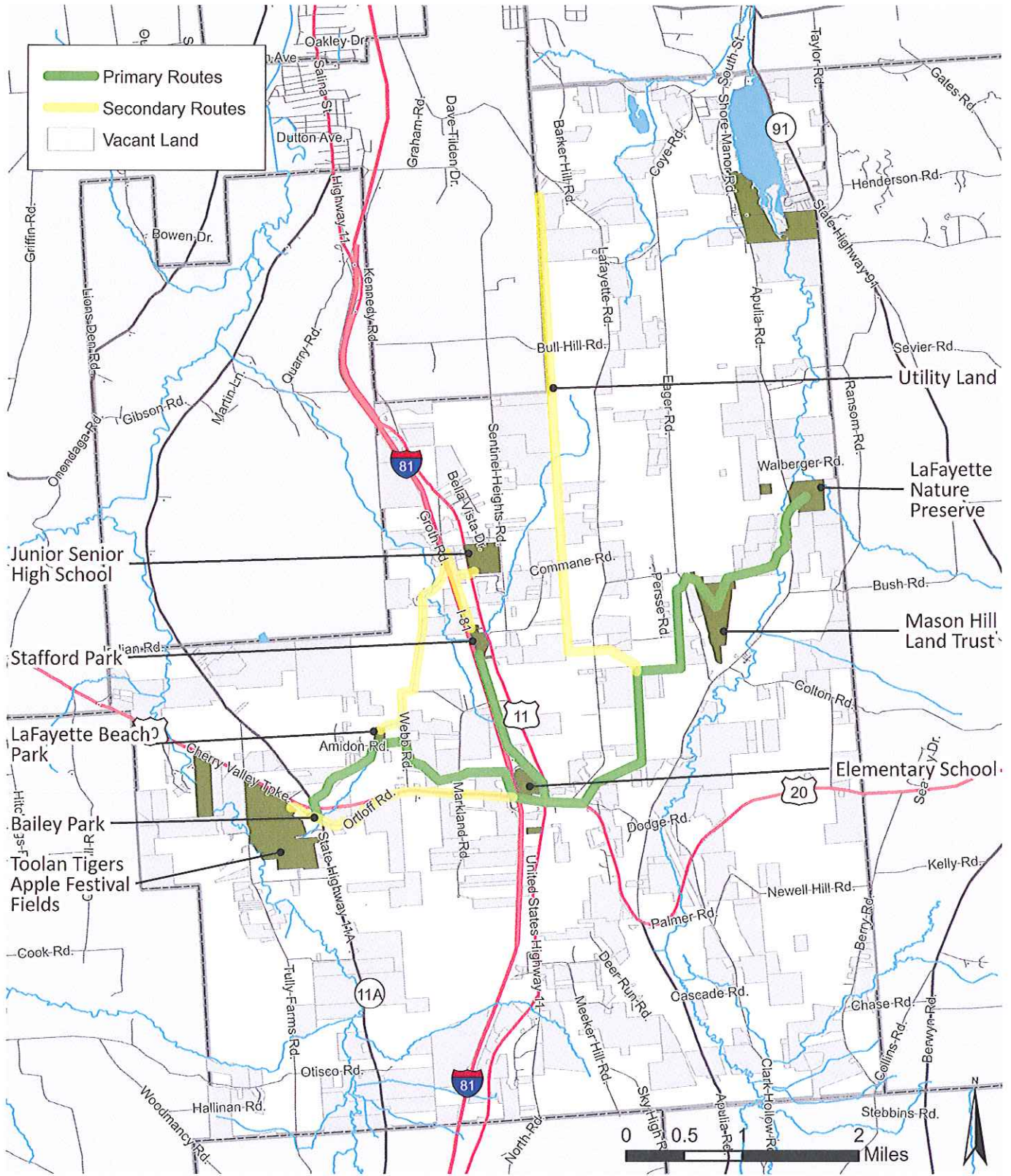


Date Created: 16 August 2011

Map \_\_ : Parks and Outdoor Recreation  
Town of LaFayette Comprehensive Plan







Date Created: 14 November 2011

# Map \_\_ : Potential Greenway Locations

Town of LaFayette Comprehensive Plan

