



Town of Aurora Open Space Plan 2026

Preserving Aurora's Natural Heritage

Town of Aurora Open Space Committee
April 2026

Photos by Brad Felton and John Whitney

Stewardship of the landscape

The Town of Aurora Open Space Committee was established in 2007 and delivered the Town's first Open Space Plan in 2010.

The 2026 Open Space Plan was developed by the Committee, working alongside the Town Board, the Planning Board and local residents, with the goal to inventory, evaluate and ultimately protect valued open space in the Town from overdevelopment.

Open Space: Defined

Any part of Aurora's landscape that is essentially underdeveloped.

This includes woodlands, stream corridors, wetlands, and farmlands – whether existing in their natural state, serving environmental functions or used for forestry, agriculture or low-impact recreation.



The town is blessed with a rich and diverse natural landscape...



Tree Canopy Coverage

~17,374 acres of land are covered by trees



A Major Creek System

Cazenovia Creek
(East and West Branches)



Natural Buffers

4,300+ combined acres of Flood Zones and Wetlands

with fine Public Parks and Open Spaces...

Town of Aurora

Community Pool Park
J P Nicely Memorial Park
Majors Park (North and South)
Warren Drive Park



Village of East Aurora

Hamlin Park
Cazenovia Creek Nature Sanctuary
Sinking Ponds Wildlife Sanctuary



Erie County

Emery Park

New York State

Knox Farm State Park

and four Protected Preserves and Sanctuaries...



- **Mill Road Scenic Overlook**
WNY Land Conservancy / Town of Aurora
- **Owens Falls Sanctuary**
WNY Land Conservancy / Town of Aurora
- **Cazenovia Creek Nature Sanctuary**
Village of East Aurora
- **Sinking Ponds Nature Sanctuary**
Village of East Aurora



Unmatched Community Access to Nature

1,500+

Acres of open
space across 13
distinct parks
and preserves

16.9

Acres per 1,000
residents

95%

Of homes
within five
minutes drive
of a park

20+

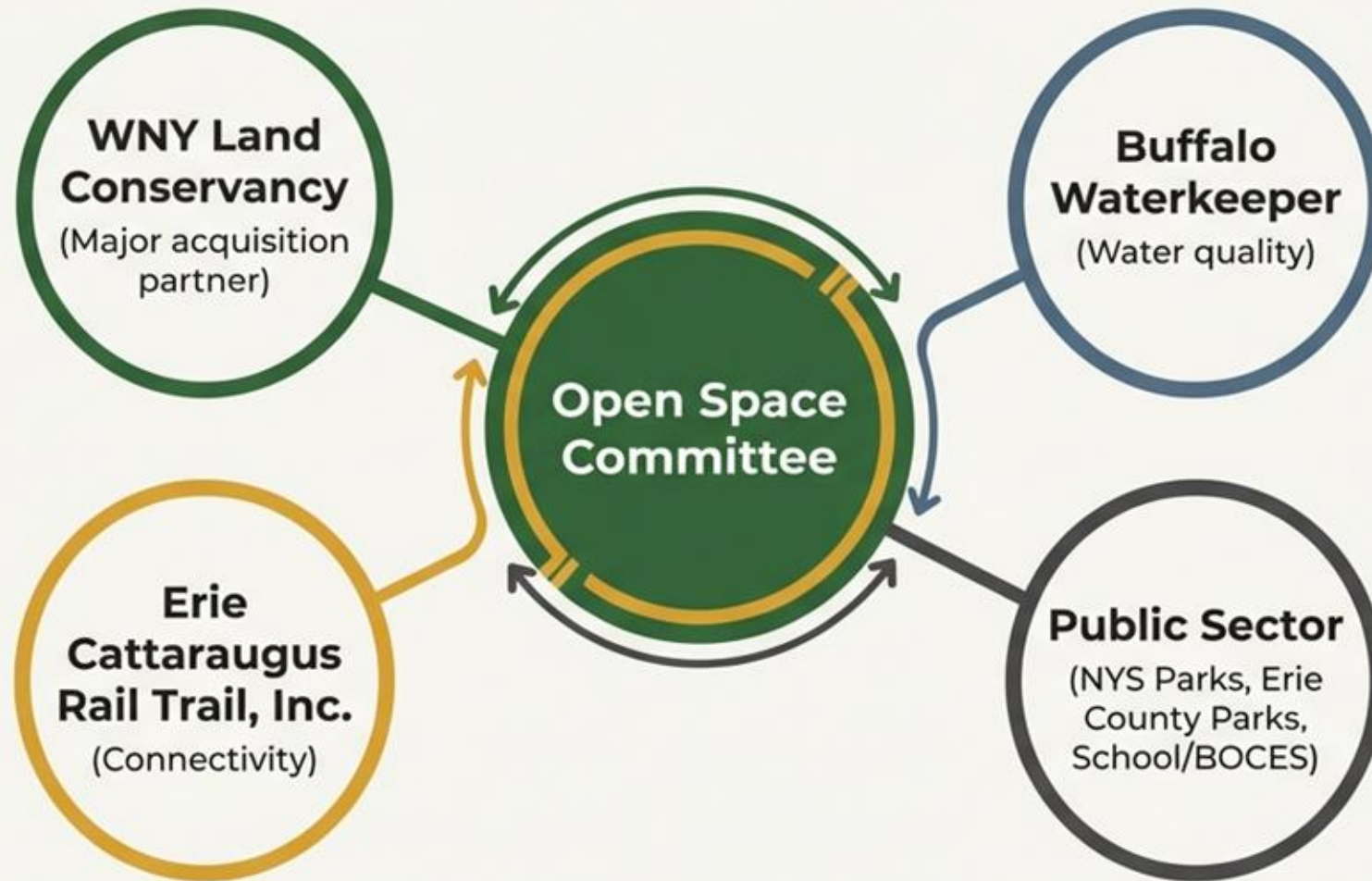
Miles of
dedicated
trails

\$47*

Per resident
budgeted for
park
maintenance
and operations

*Municipalities typically budget ~\$135/resident for park maintenance and operations

A Partnership Ecosystem



Leveraging these relationships to improve open space connections and experiences

Conservation success stories

58.4 Acres

Owens Falls Nature Preserve

Secured 2018 with WNY Land Conservancy

57 Acres

Mill Road Scenic Overlook

Secured 2013 with WNY Land Conservancy

5.5 Acres

Cazenovia Creek Nature Sanctuary

Created 2011 by the Village



Owens Falls

Preserving the Vista: Mill Road Overlook



Key Detail: 57 acres secured through partnership with the WNY Land Conservancy

Significance: This acquisition protects one of the most iconic scenic views in the region, ensuring that the “rural feel” remains permanent for future generations.

Accessibility and Investment



95%

of homes are within a
5-minute drive of a park

Trail Network

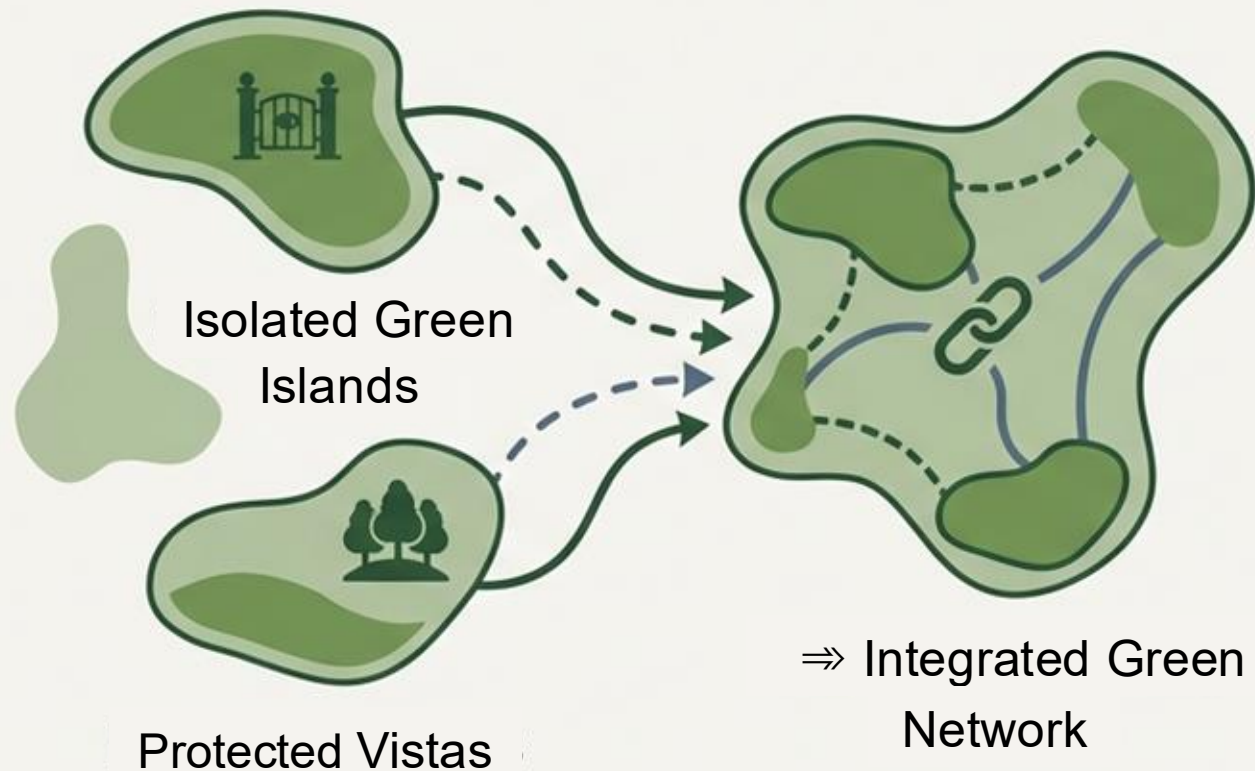
More than 20 miles of trails available
for various recreational activities

Financial Stewardship

~\$47 per resident budgeted for
park maintenance and operations

The Next Phase: Connectivity

| Moving from protecting isolated islands of green to creating a network



Linkages

Connecting existing town/village parks and open spaces



The Wildway Initiative

Collaborating with the WNY Land Conservancy to promote wildlife corridors



User Experience

Updated signage and accessibility improvements across the 20+ miles of dedicated trails

The 'Wildway' Initiative

- 🌿 Core Mission: To seamlessly connect existing town and village parks, preserves and open spaces
- 🐾 Wildlife Corridors: Collaborating actively with the WNY Land Conservancy to establish safe, uninterrupted natural corridors for local wildlife to migrate and thrive
- 🌿 Broader Impact: To protect and connect the woodlands, stream corridors, wetlands and farmlands that define our fundamental identity as a community



Looking ahead...

From Acquisition to Connectivity

With a strong foundation of protected land, the Open Space Committee is focused on improving the experiences in the open spaces and linkages between them

Linkages

Creating physical connections between public spaces (The "Wildway" initiative).



Wayfinding

Improving signage and accessibility within existing parks.

Information

Providing better usage information to residents to encourage exploration.

Our Legacy for 2026 and Beyond

Rural Character

An agricultural district
and an 80% tree
canopy

Exceptional Access

16.9 acres of parkland
per 1,000 residents

Active Stewardship

A proven track record of
securing easements and
establishing partnerships

As we approach the implementation of the 2026 Town of Aurora Comprehensive Plan, our focus on protecting and connecting open space continues as does our commitment to maintaining the high quality of life our 13,800 residents enjoy.

Town of Aurora Open Space Committee

Join the Stewardship Team

Community members are formally invited to apply for membership on the Open Space Committee



Residents whose values align with the mission of protection and connection



Experience in conservation, land management is helpful, but not required

Make an Impact