

IX. Financing Options for Implementation

The majority of implementation options outlined in this plan tend to be either regulatory or passive in nature. This does not mean that relatively aggressive action in the form of property acquisition should be dismissed entirely, however. The Town of Glenville is home to some rather critical natural resources and environmental features. A few of our parks and preserves are also bordered and buffered by existing vacant properties, some quite large. If any of these lands become available for sale, or should they be eyed for development, the Town should be aware of its funding options for acquisition of title or development rights.

What follows is a brief summary of various financing options, broken down by broad funding types:

Local Programs

1. Subdivision Recreation Fee Account: As noted in item 11 of the “Recommended Actions” above, the Town already has in place a subdivision recreation fee account that it periodically taps to assist in the development of existing town parks and preserves. Funding from this account can also be used for land acquisition, whether it be for park/preserve expansion, acquisition of new parklands, establishment of playgrounds, or preservation of open space.

2. Dedicated Revenue Source: This option would involve the Town establishing a budgeted line item to be used exclusively for open space acquisition. Revenue for this purpose can be raised by existing or new taxes, through grant monies, or through the levying of fees. A dedicated revenue source may also be used to leverage bonding, with future revenue to be used to pay off the principle and interest on the bond. The subdivision recreation fee account, noted above, is one example of a dedicated revenue source, albeit that particular funding source has broader applications.

3. Local Bond Act: This is a common revenue source for communities who have taken an aggressive stance on open space acquisition. The Town Board could approve the bond itself, subject to permissive referendum, or put it on the ballot for a direct vote by the electorate. Regardless of the method, the Town Board would have to be clear about the amount of money to be raised by the bond and the time period for repayment.

4. Real Estate Transfer Fee: A relatively new concept for raising money for open space acquisition, a Real Estate Transfer Fee program was first implemented in five Long Island towns in 1998. This funding stream is established by assessing a transfer fee on real estate transactions. In Long Island’s case, the fee was 2% of the sales price.

The Long Island program had to be specifically authorized by the New York State Legislature, and even then, the program was put up to referendum by the participating municipalities. At present, a draft bill is working its way through New York State's Legislature that would enable this type of program for all New York State municipalities.

Using 2006 single-family home sales data for Glenville and Scotia, the Town did some calculations to see how much revenue would have been generated had we implemented a real estate transfer fee for that year. The figures below are based on imposition of a fee for those transactions where the sales price is above the median, only (i.e. on only the most expensive ½ of sales transactions):

<u>Fee</u>	<u>Revenue that would have been generated in 2006</u>
0.5%	\$268,660
1%	\$537,321
1.5%	\$850,982
2%	\$1,074,643

New York State Programs

5. Environmental Protection Fund: This permanent program offers funding for a wide variety of projects, including acquisition of open space properties identified in the State Open Space Conservation Plan, as well as parks, recreation and historic preservation programs. This is a matching grant program that provides at least 50% of project funding via a grant.

6. Clean Water State Revolving Fund: The Clean Water State Revolving Fund is a low or no-interest loan program that is available to government agencies and not-for-profit organizations. The primary purpose of this program is to protect and improve water quality. Funding from this program is often used to acquire open space along water bodies and headwaters or to help finance municipal wastewater treatment facilities.

7. Habitat/Access Stamp Funding: This is a 100% grant program developed to improve fish and wildlife habitat and to acquire/develop public access for fishermen, hunters and trappers. Land acquisition is eligible for funding under this program, although the \$15,000 maximum grant amount means that funding from this program is meant to supplement other funding sources, or it significantly limits the scope of the project.

Federal Programs

- 8. Land and Water Conservation Fund:** The Land and Water Conservation Fund has been in existence for over 40 years. This program provides 50% of project funding to states and municipalities for the purpose of land acquisition and development of outdoor recreation land.
- 9. Pittman-Robertson Program:** Also known as the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, funding from this program is earmarked for wildlife conservation and hunter education. This program has been around since 1937, with funding being derived from excise taxes on rifles, shotguns, archery equipment and handguns. Land acquisition for habitat management purposes is eligible under this program, which provides 75% in grant funding for projects, with states responsible for the 25% match. Municipalities cannot tap this funding source directly.
- 10. Landowner Incentive Program:** The Landowner Incentive Program provides a 75% federal grant (25% to be matched by states), with the funding ultimately going to private property owners for protection and/or restoration of wildlife habitat. Although open space acquisition is not eligible under this program, funding provides an incentive to landowners to maintain their property as open space.
- 11. Federal Farm Bill:** Administered by the United States Department of Agriculture, the Farm Bill is a multi-faceted program that includes the following sub-programs: *Wetland Reserve Program; Forest Legacy Program; Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program; Forest Stewardship Program; Forest Land Enhancement Program; Urban and Community Forestry Program; Conservation Reserve Program; Environmental Quality Incentives Program; Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program; Grassland Reserve Program.*

While most of these programs are aimed at management of existing resources and lands, the Forest Legacy Program is perhaps most notable for its easement acquisition component. Under this particular program, the Federal government will provide up to 75% in grant funding (remainder matched by states and certain other entities) to protect forest lands that are threatened with conversion to non-forest uses. Typically the funding is used to secure conservation easements from willing landowners.