



II. PROJECT ORIENTATION

This section of the report provides an overview of the project area identified in the Market Analysis Report: the Zone of Influence, the Perimeter Zone, and the Gateway Communities. It is necessary to familiarize the reader with the project area, and to outline the underlying logic regarding the delineation of the Zone of Influence, the Perimeter Zone, and the Gateway Communities. In addition, this report it explains the rationale behind the various proposed community, Park, and regional trail connections as well as the Demonstration Projects.

A. ZONE OF INFLUENCE

As depicted on Map II-1 “Zone of Influence,” the Zone of Influence refers to an area of land stretching along Route 219 from Cattaraugus County’s northern border to Allegany State Park, in the northern edge of the County. It includes the Route 219 Study Corridor, the I-86 Corridor to Olean, Allegheny Reservoir, NYS Route 394, Randolph, Amish Country, NYS Route 242 and 353 in Little Valley, and Cattaraugus. The Zone of Influence is primarily an area in which economic growth and recreational trails should be encouraged. It is a geographic and economic “zone,” which influences Cattaraugus County by virtue of being the transportation corridor that links the surrounding major urban settlements to Allegany State Park. It was devised with a regional rather than a local agenda, with the goal of focusing economic growth within a defined area. In *Section III Improving Our Working Landscape*, this growth is outlined in a manner which would maximize economic opportunity without diminishing the natural environment.

A number of urban centers are located within the Zone of Influence, including Ellicottville, Olean, Randolph, Little Valley, Cattaraugus and Franklinville. The Village of Ellicottville, located to the north of Allegany State Park, has developed into a regionally important ski destination. Holiday Valley and Holimont ski areas offer some of the best ski terrain in New York. The Cattaraugus County Department of Economic Development, Planning, and Tourism estimates that Ellicottville hosts over 600,000 visitors during the ski season alone. Capitalizing on this winter tourism opportunity, downtown Ellicottville has developed into a resort destination, with a quaint, yet vital, downtown comprised of upscale accommodations, bars, restaurants, boutiques, galleries, and niche retail establishments.

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Within the village and adjacent to the ski areas, residential properties have been developed as second homes, vacation rentals, and bed and breakfasts. A transportation shuttle is provided for ease of transit to more remote locations. Over the last several years, Ellicottville has been focusing on the creation of four-season resort opportunities.

The Holiday Valley resort has developed an 18-hole golf course and maintains year-round conference center facilities. The community has developed a multi-seasonal schedule of festivals and events to encourage year-round tourism.

Olean is the largest retail center in the region, with a wide variety of shopping facilities. It is also the location of the majority of the County's manufacturing jobs. Approximately 40% of the County's population resides in Olean and Allegany. It is home to the Olean Business Institute, a fully accredited business college offering practical instruction in computer technology, accounting, medical assistance, business management, and paralegal studies – all extremely important in expanding the County's skilled labor force. Olean is also a medical services hub, supporting a large general hospital and medical group – the first multi-specialty group in the County. Medical supply facilities have opened in the vicinity, to meet the material demands of this growing regional medical services center.³

The Town of Randolph is located in the southwestern corner of the Zone of Influence, and is the urban center for the Amish Community – the largest settlement of its kind in New York State. Visitors can enjoy the many summer festivals, shop at craft shops offering handmade Amish quilts, handcrafted furniture, toys, and antiques, and gain a unique perspective on Amish culture.

The initial focus of this study was on the immediate areas surrounding the Park, but it became clear after delineating the Zones of Influence that much larger areas of the County played integral roles in supporting park-related activities, as an intertwined web of commercial, cultural, tourism, industrial, and recreational uses. The County expanded its scope out by developing twelve major project proposals termed Demonstration Projects. These projects have been developing over the years through a concerted effort of Cattaraugus County, The Saratoga Associates, Rick Swist of Swist Government Consulting Associates, Randal Arendt, Senior Conservation Advisor for the Natural Lands with assistance from the SUNY Buffalo School of Architecture, and by interaction with community leaders.

These projects include business and industrial parks such as the Railyard Industrial Park in Salamanca; Ellicottville Business Park; Ellicottville Tourism, Cultural, and Performing Arts Center; Ashford Business and Education Park; and the Airport Business Center. Tourism projects emerging Demonstration Projects

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include the City of Salamanca State Park Village and Trail Head; the Limestone Outdoor Sports Recreation Center and State Park Visitors' Center; and finally, the Onoville Marina Park and Horse Trail Staging Area. Most recently, projects within the Villages of Randolph, Little Valley, and Franklinville have been developed to capitalize on each community's unique and distinctive qualities and characteristics. Each of the proposed projects is discussed in greater detail in **Section V Demonstration Projects**. It is important to note, however, that the proposed projects are concepts at this point, and are subject to change in terms of both their scopes and their locations.

The Zone of Influence represents the economic hinterlands of the region's best environmental resources. The natural beauty of Allegany State Park is a strong pull for tourists, attracting 1.8 million visitors in 2000.⁴ The Park's 65,000 acres, the majority of which is primitive woodland, make it the largest in the New York State Park system, and the third largest State Park in the country. Most of the Park's visitors travel from western New York and Pennsylvania – the vast majority making this journey by traveling through the Zone of Influence.

The Zone of Influence has an immense impact on the economic well-being of Cattaraugus County. Analyses show that the region will be provided with an increased potential for development with the construction of the proposed Route 219 Freeway Alternative. This potential must be harnessed and capitalized upon if the County is to develop both prosperous and sustainable tourist-oriented centers and commercial nodes.

It is important to note from a partnership perspective as well as a conservation/preservation perspective, that the Zone of Influence is bordered to the south by 30,469 acres of Seneca Nation of Indians Reservation, which includes much of the Allegheny Reservoir. The Seneca Nation of Indians represents an important part of the County's history, culture, character, and values. Furthermore, as partnerships among the Seneca Nation, local communities, and the County build, the economic development potential of the Seneca Nation is becoming more evident. All involved parties, including the Seneca, local communities, and the County, stand to benefit greatly from stronger partnerships.

B. THE IMMEDIATE PERIMETER ZONE – GATEWAYS INTO THE PARK

The Immediate Perimeter Zone is located within the broader geographic context of the Zone of Influence (Refer to Map II-1 for further geographic reference). In the simplest terms, it may be defined as the general vicinity around each of the Gateway Communities at Cattaraugus County's Park entrances.⁵ The Perimeter Zone was established to encourage structured economic development at these Gateway points,

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with a full array of commercial uses. The proposed community tourism development projects emphasize the benefits to be accrued from attracting a percentage of Allegany State Park's tourists into the Gateway Communities of the Perimeter Zone. There are five local entrance points into the Park: Salamanca, Limestone, Red House, the Quaker entrance, and Bradford, Pennsylvania. Of these five entrances, only two boast substantial existing communities in New York State – the City of Salamanca and the Village of Limestone.

The Salamanca Entrance is located directly off Exit 21 of the Southern Tier Expressway (I-86), at State Park Road. Although this entrance point is within the boundary of the City of Salamanca, Park visitors generally do not pass through the downtown area of the City, and in many cases may not even be aware of it. Visitors entering the park directly from the I-86 bypass Salamanca completely, while those arriving from the north along Route 219 pass through the eastern portion of the City, bypassing the commercial district. The construction of the Route 219 Freeway Alternative would practically eliminate the need to enter Salamanca. The proposed Demonstration Projects are designed to bring visitation into the City of Salamanca. The travel time from the Red House Area of Allegany State Park to the nearest commercial services in Salamanca is approximately 10-15 minutes.

The Limestone Entrance is connected to the Park via an unpaved seasonal road, Limestone Run Road. While this road is currently unsigned and only lightly used for standard traffic, it is a popular snowmobile access point into the Park. Plans for the paving of this road as a new year-round vehicular entrance to Allegany State Park are underway. The plan involves the use of 5.85 miles of existing roads and rights-of-way between Route 219 in Limestone and Allegany State Park. Cattaraugus County, Limestone, and Carrollton each have aggressive Development Plans that will be enhanced by this new road into the Park for Limestone. There are substantial economic and recreational benefits to be realized. The proposed road is discussed in more detail in *Section V Demonstration Projects*. A detailed cost estimate for the proposed road improvements is located in Appendix D.

The Red House Entrance is located at Exit 19 of the Southern Tier Expressway, within Allegany State Park. No private lands are accessible from the interchange at this entrance, effectively precluding opportunities for commercial development. The travel time from the Red House Area of Allegany State Park to the nearest commercial services in Salamanca is approximately 10-15 minutes. There is a need to address potential trail linkages at this entrance.

The Quaker Entrance is located along NYS Route 280, approximately 25 miles south west of Salamanca, and 8 miles from I-86 Exit 18. No commercial businesses or Park support services are currently located

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between the Quaker entrance and I-86. Considering the rural character of this access point, opportunities for commercial development in the vicinity of the Quaker entrance are limited. The travel time from the Quaker Area of Allegany State Park to the nearest commercial services in Salamanca is approximately 20 minutes. The potential for trail and water connections at this location also needs to be addressed

A lightly used road enters Allegany State Park from Bradford, PA. This road is unsigned and difficult to find for visitors not familiar with the area.

The Perimeter Zone identifies areas of recreational and environmental importance that lend themselves to development, but must also be protected as immense resources to the area. Based on immediate proximity to State Park entrance points, and existing levels of services and infrastructure, Salamanca and Limestone are the obvious Gateways for planned development. The Gateways represent the hub of the region – the nexus point for visitors, users of regional trails, and points of transition into the Park. Salamanca is the main gateway to Allegany State Park for visitors traveling southward from Toronto, Buffalo, and Ellicottville, located in close proximity to two of the exits for the Park, while Limestone is the first New York State center that visitors encounter when traveling north from Pennsylvania. Both Salamanca and Limestone also enjoy excellent infrastructural amenities. Limestone underwent a complete overhaul of both its sewage system and water supply in recent years. Further to the west, and separated from the Park by the Allegheny Reservoir, Onoville Marina was pinpointed as a key water-based Park edge site. It is ideal for development as a tourist center due to its natural beauty and its location on county-controlled land. It is the County's single largest recreational investment. In addition, since it is located on a reservoir that stretches into Allegheny National Forest, Onoville Marina represents a logical starting point for water access for the entire region.

Currently, these Gateways are under-developed resources, but with careful development strategies each has the potential to develop into a prosperous, all season tourism-oriented center. Their proximity to the Park is their most marketable quality. It is impossible to overestimate the impact of the Park on the economic well-being of Cattaraugus County. Most of the Park's visitors travel from western New York and Pennsylvania, with a minority from places such as Ohio and southern Ontario.

While each Gateway Community has a distinctive character, based on its individual local history, environment, and people, they share a number of crucial features – a close proximity to the Park, a beautiful natural environment, a rural atmosphere, and an emphasis on agriculture and forestry as the economic mainstays of yesteryear. Within this broad definition, the unique character of each Gateway Community should be valued and carefully incorporated into a developable and marketable community

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theme. Salamanca is heavily influenced by the proximity of the Seneca Nation – a strong and unique theme that also should be woven into the City’s image. Limestone is historically a lumber and tanning town, with a strong rural atmosphere. Onoville Marine Park is an aqua-centric resort, located in a magnificent natural setting.

As a means of incorporating industrial development with the more tourist-oriented Demonstration Projects planned for the Gateway Communities, the Railyard Industrial Park On Route 219 has been planned for development in the northeast section of the City of Salamanca. This project is aimed to act as a magnet for industrial development in the region, thus concentrating industry on a brownfield site and maintaining a distance between tourism and industrial development in order to protect the scenic environment.

The Immediate Perimeter Zone as a whole must establish a theme if it is to be successfully marketed and developed as a tourist destination. For advertising purposes, this theme should be succinct, descriptive, and compelling, with a view to capturing the imagination of potential visitors. One element of this theme will be the architectural heritage of the region. Salamanca and Limestone each have a good stock of quality residences. The style of these homes is colonial, with large front porches and pitched roofs. The building material is primarily wooden shingles. While some of these structures are in need of superficial maintenance, they remain attractive, and are symbolic of the character of the settlements. The style of these buildings should be emulated in future developments to retain the character and theme of the Perimeter Zone. Downtown Salamanca has retained many of its original commercial buildings. These multi-story, redbrick structures are extremely attractive and unusual. It would benefit Salamanca greatly if such buildings were not demolished to make way for new development, but renovated and refurbished according to accepted Design Standards which are presented in ***Section III Improving Our Working Landscapes***, of this study. Only with adherence to stated regulations and guidelines can the architectural heritage of the Perimeter Zone be retained for future generations.

The Perimeter Zone and its immediate hinterlands boast increasingly diverse and extensive shopping connections. There is a strong market for specialty craft shopping, including Amish Crafts from nearby Randolph. With a sharper focus on the promotion of tourism, Cattaraugus County can diversify and stabilize its economy. A diversified economy offers increased employment opportunities, which in turn attract potential employees and generate increased local expenditure.