

Your Questions Answered about **Lansing's Open Space**

The Town of Lansing contains thousands of acres of farmland, woodlands, fields, shoreline, and scenic views. These iconic views and landscapes are important to the residents of the Town, so the Town Board created a Conservation Advisory Council to assist with issues related to land use and conservation.

What is the Conservation Advisory Council?

The Conservation Advisory Council (CAC), established in 2019, is a committee of nine volunteers appointed by the Town Board. One of the tasks of the CAC is to consider ways the Town might approach future protection of land. The CAC meets once a month and works with certified consultants who are knowledgeable about land conservation and other environmental issues.



What is the CAC doing?

The CAC, with the help of Cornell Cooperative Extension and others, finalized a [Natural Resources Inventory](#) in 2021. This inventory uses text and maps to describe the bedrock, soils, streams, shoreline, farmland, wooded areas, vegetation, and other features of our town. The Inventory also considers how those resources are—and will be—affected by development and

climate change. The Natural Resource Inventory provides fact-based information to help Town staff, the Town Board, and the Planning Board make decisions for a more resilient and sustainable community. The Inventory also serves as a building block for the Open Space Conservation Plan.

What is Lansing's Open Space Conservation Plan (OSCP)?

Open space generally refers to land that isn't developed for housing, industry, and commerce. An Open Space Conservation Plan (OSCP) highlights areas of potential conservation in the Town. Right now Lansing's plan is in draft form, ready for additional comments, then adoption.

Why should the town have an Open Space Conservation Plan?

The OSCP helps landowners and Town staff to be aware of the natural features of a parcel and how its conservation value ranks in comparison to other parcels in the area. If landowners wish to conserve their land, or if residents believe their land will be affected by development, the plan provides a fact-based tool to help explore next steps.

An Open Space Conservation Plan is an environmental roadmap for the Town. It brings together the Natural Resources Inventory with other resources to describe, and show with maps, which areas of the Town rank the highest in their conservation value. When Lansing officials consider proposals for future development, the Conservation Plan will help to guide them in protecting the resources associated with these special parcels, keeping the Town's conservation priorities at the forefront.

New York State aims to conserve a total of [30% of the state by 2030](#) and will make funds available to achieve this goal. Localities with conservation plans already in place will be well positioned to apply for funds to achieve their local goals.



What's the bigger picture?

Conservation of open space is a goal that received overwhelming support by Town of Lansing residents in a 2022 survey. Everyone wins when land that is set aside helps minimize flooding and erosion, improves stream quality for fishing, and protects the surface- and groundwater that flows to Cayuga Lake and is used for drinking and recreation.

Will all of this raise my taxes?

Not likely. Most of the work on the Plan thus far has been completed with volunteer labor (CAC, Cooperative Extension, and students) in addition to a private grant for hiring consultants. The Town intends to seek more grant funding in the future, and implementing the Open Space Conservation Plan must be approved by the elected officials of the Town Board.

Will these documents restrict what I can do with my property?

What you can do with your property is determined by zoning laws. All plans and documents being created by the CAC are advisory, not regulatory, but some of the CAC's work could directly or indirectly affect land use and regulation. For example, the CAC and the Planning Board might more closely examine a property that owners wish to develop if it has been identified as having conservation value, even if it is not directly subject to additional regulation. Furthermore, the CAC's work could inform future zoning changes that could impact potential development.

For more information:

- CAC website: <https://www.lansingtown.com/bc-cac>
- Natural Resources Inventory: <https://lfweb.tompkins-co.org/WebLink/Browse.aspx?id=53126&dbid=7&repo=Lansing&cr=1>
- John Zepko, Director of Planning, Town of Lansing; jzepko@lansingtown.com; 607-533-7054