

RiverSpark

*... where water
ignited a
revolution*

HUDSON-MOHAWK
Urban Cultural Park

Management Plan Summary
Update - Colonie Addition

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RiverSpark, *The Hudson-Mohawk Urban Cultural Park Commission*, is an innovative regional park formed in 1977. It is the pioneering park in a statewide system which encourages development of an urban planning model with the stated goals of historic preservation, economic development, education and recreation. In 1989, the *New York State Legislature* passed an amendment to the *Urban Cultural Park Act* adding the *Town of Colonie* to RiverSpark. This allows RiverSpark to include important historic sites and natural areas that are integral to its Labor and Industry theme. In a cultural and physical sense, the inclusion of sites and areas within the Town of Colonie helps complete RiverSpark's story.

This summary will focus on the theme attractions, interpretation, preservation, recreation and economic development opportunities within the Town of Colonie.

Park Concept

The dramatic development of the United States from an agrarian society to a major industrial nation is vividly illustrated by the cultural heritage of RiverSpark's institutions and residents. By including the Town of Colonie's significant cultural and natural sites and districts in RiverSpark, the theme of Labor and Industry is further developed. This theme, set forth in the *Hudson-Mohawk Urban Cultural Park Management Plan*, pays tribute to the significant contribution this region made to the industrial development and labor history of New York State and the nation.

These additional areas in the Town of Colonie offer increased opportunities to access the *Hudson* and *Mohawk* rivers, RiverSpark's prominent waterways.

The addition of the *D&H Railroad's Colonie Shops* and the *Albany County Airport* will offer interpretation of RiverSpark's Transportation sub-theme. A second sub-theme, Urban Cultural Life, will also be interpreted through Colonie sites.

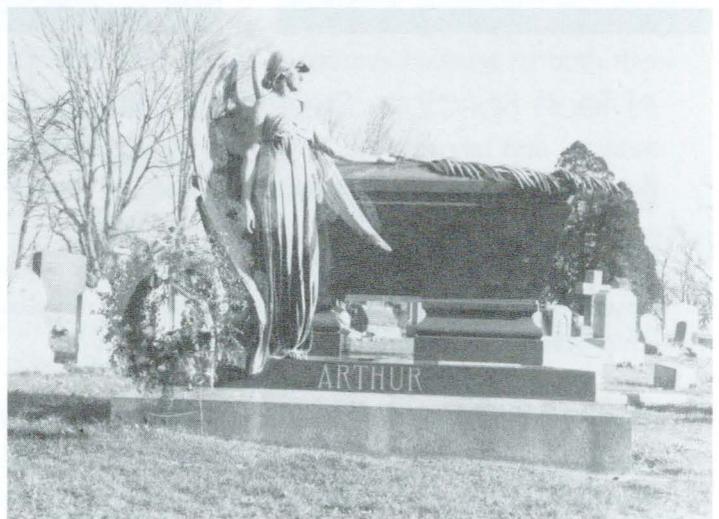
A loop will be added to the *Heritage Trail*, providing both a Colonie circulation route and a link to the rest of the park. The focus will be on individual sites and districts whose inherent qualities are consistent with RiverSpark's goals, themes and programs.

Theme Attractions

Schuyler Flatts: This land, listed on the *National and State Registers of Historic Places*, was developed by the Schuyler family in 1648 and owned by them for over 250 years. The site contains significant artifacts from the 17th and 18th centuries. This site will be developed as an historic park.

Albany Rural Cemetery: This historic cemetery is listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places and has many outstanding pieces of mortuary art. It is the burial place of many individuals who were prominent in the RiverSpark story.

Bottom: *Burial site of former U.S. President Chester A. Arthur*





Loudon Road Historic District: *Loudon Road* had military significance during the *Revolutionary War* and later became a crossroads and place of early settlement. The area was a popular 19th century location for businessmen to build their summer residences. Because of the architectural quality of the many structures listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, addition of the District is consistent with **RiverSpark's** preservation and interpretation plans.

Newtonville Post Office: This building listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, was built in 1852 as a Baptist Church. Various other uses were made of the structure, all reflecting RiverSpark's theme of Urban Cultural Life.

Pruyn House Community Cultural Center: This 19th century house and grounds is listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places and is open to the public. The Hudson-Mohawk Urban Cultural Park Commission will work with the Town and the *Friends of Pruy House* to develop and coordinate interpretive and recreational programs relating agriculture to the growth of the 19th century industrial economy in RiverSpark.

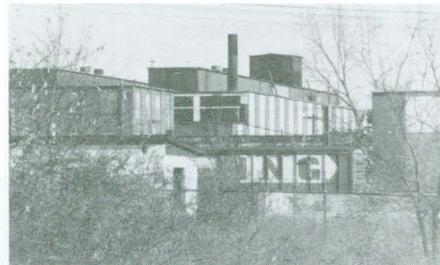
Watervliet Shaker Historic District: This unique district including 28 buildings, 2 ponds, and a cemetery, is the site of the first Shaker settlement in North America. Within the site, the Meeting House is managed by the *Shaker Heritage Society* as an interpretive museum.

Town of Colonie Library: This contemporary building, one of the most frequently used by the public, will house a permanent exhibit of RiverSpark and Town of Colonie history and sites as well as special exhibits. This will serve as a visitor information center.

Bottom: Pruy House



Bottom: Al Tech Specialty Steel



Top: D&H Railroad-Colonie Shops

Al Tech Specialty Steel: This industrial site is important to the interpretation of the themes of industry and labor in the Town. *Al Tech Specialty Steel* has a history which can be traced back to the Revolutionary War. Interpretive signage and special interest tours will be developed.

D&H Railroad Colonie Shops: These shops built in 1913 serviced and repaired the railroad's freight and passenger cars. The site will be developed as a railroad/transportation museum, interpreting RiverSpark's secondary theme of Transportation.

Site of 1850 Greek Revival Weighlock Building: This site represents the RiverSpark theme of Transportation. The *Weighlock Building* was an integral part of the *Erie Canal* used to determine freight tolls, and prevent boats from dodging the tolls at Albany. The site is presently a well maintained park with signage interpreting the remaining stonework from the lock.



Erie Canal Lock 4: This site is the last surviving lock in the Town of Colonie. The Hudson-Mohawk Urban Cultural Park will create a plan for preserving the lock and incorporating it into a town park for education and recreation, similar to *Lock 2 Park* in Waterford.

Colonie Town Park: Mostly a recreational area, the park will be used to interpret the agricultural history, Urban Cultural Life, and Transportation themes since the area was a crossroads for canal/river, ferry boats, railroads and all land transportation.

Town of Colonie Bike Trail: Once the grade for the *New York Central Railroad Line*, this trail will serve the dual purpose of an educational and recreational resource for **RiverSpark**.

Interpretation

The Town of Colonie's canal sites, historic districts, and unique religious settlement provide a basis for interpretation of various RiverSpark themes including transportation, Urban Cultural Life, industry and labor. The relationship of agriculture to the industrial economy will also be interpreted. *The Town of Colonie Library* will serve as a visitor information center offering an introduction and overview of the unique contribution of the Town of Colonie to the RiverSpark story. Theme interpretation will take place through exhibits and educational programming at the *Pruyn House*, *Shaker Meeting House*, *D&H Shops Railroad Museum*, and *Schuyler Flatts Archaeological Preserve*. Guided and self-guided tours via the addition to the Heritage Trail will heighten visitor awareness of the rich cultural heritage of this area.



Top: Colonie Town Park-Mohawk River Trailway

Preservation

The Hudson-Mohawk Urban Cultural Park's approach to preservation established in the Preservation component of the Management Plan will continue and be applied to the sites and districts in Colonie added by these amendments.

The following sites are found to be critical Urban Cultural Park resources because of both their inherent significance and the role they play within the context of RiverSpark:



Left:
Site of 1850
Greek Revival
Weighlock
Building

- ✧ The Pruyn House
- ✧ Site of the 1850 Greek Revival Weighlock Building
- ✧ Erie Canal Lock 4 (archaeological site)
- ✧ Schuyler Flatts (archaeological site)
- ✧ Albany Rural Cemetery

Contributory sites or districts for preservation planning purposes include:

- ✧ Newtonville Post Office
- ✧ Watervliet Shaker Historic District
- ✧ Al Tech Specialty Steel
- ✧ Delaware and Hudson Railroad Colonie Shops
- ✧ Loudon Road Historic District



Economic Development

Because of their scope, diversity and complexity, economic planning for an urban cultural park (especially a regional park like the Hudson-Mohawk Urban Cultural Park) is always a challenging undertaking.

The community economic development focus will be on tourism in general, and increasing hotel occupancy specifically. The Town of Colonie has a significant number of hotel/motel rooms available.

By developing tourism packages for **RiverSpark** and working with the other *Capital District Urban Cultural Parks* and attractions, the Commission will increase the hotel occupancy rate in Colonie by attracting tour groups. This increased occupancy will in turn increase the sales tax revenue of the Town and the County of Albany. Particular attention will be given to hotels located in an area of Colonie known as *Albany North* as it has a greater need for assistance. Local retailers will benefit from spin-off economic development.



Top: Mohawk River-Colonie Town Park

Recreation

The Town of Colonie addition allows expansion of the recreational resources of RiverSpark. These enjoyable recreational opportunities help promote the park's interpretive themes and enhance the area's image as an exciting place to work, live or visit. They also have a direct and indirect economic impact on the area.

Town Park: Offers swimming, family recreation and picnicking along the scenic shore of the Mohawk River

Town Bike Path: Extends the existing bike path through an historically significant and exceeding picturesque natural environment along the Mohawk River.

Pruyn House: Grounds include a garden and nature trail as well as a schedule of concerts and festivals.

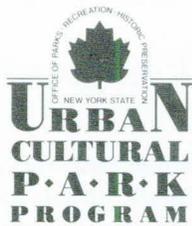
Shaker Historic District: Includes the Ann Lee Pond for recreational use.

Albany Rural Cemetery: Will provide a pastoral setting for traditional Victorian family outings.

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The Management Plan Summary Addition was prepared
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