

Clifton Park Open Space Plan
APPENDIX F:

Public Comments
on the
***“Town of Clifton Park
Open Space Concept Plan,
Discussion Draft,
June 17, 2002”***

**Public Comments
on the
“Town of Clifton Park Open Space Concept Plan,
Discussion Draft, June 17, 2002”**

On the following pages are the public comments obtained from a series of focus group meetings and public meetings held throughout September 2002. The notes were prepared by Behan Planning Associates, LLC on behalf of the Clifton Park Open Space Committee and are included for the public record. The committee reviewed these public comments with Behan Planning Associates at a committee meeting held on November 6, 2002.

Many comments were considered to be already addressed within the plan – with some clarification needed – and this has been provided in the January 2003 plan. Responses to other key comments below have been incorporated as revisions to the open space plan. Finally, a few of the comments will be addressed later – in the development of the details of the open space program and implementation activities, in close collaboration with the town board.

As an overall response to public concerns, the successful development of any future, new individual locations for open space access, trails, parks, and public access to land in the Town of Clifton Park will require site-specific planning, design and public input processes for working with all applicable involved and adjacent landowners and the community to ensure project support. The public is invited to continue to participate, to get involved, and to comment upon the ongoing implementation efforts within the Town of Clifton Park community.

FOCUS GROUP MEETING NOTES
Farmers and Large Land Owners
September 12, 2002 at 7:00 pm
Clifton Park Town Hall

Questions on concepts for trail connections

- Significance of corridors
- Type of trail - will match setting (concern over Moe Road Path)
- Process is important in planning – involve residents up front

Farmland Protection Program

- Contact person: Jason Kemper, Open Space Committee (for now)
- Concerns over administration
- Rexford Bridge – FYI -- a trail element is being discussed in conjunction with this improvement
- Nice job – including focus group input
- Nice place to live and nice place to visit

FOCUS GROUP MEETING NOTES
Developers
September 17, 2002 at 8:00 am
Clifton Park Town Hall

- Partnership
- Amenity
- Celebrate community's sense of place

Concern

- Identified areas
- Realistic funding
- Don't leave landowners "in limbo"
- Don't want exclusive "cluster" pattern
- Identify people not responsive to surveys to actively get their input
- Build on planning open space into sites up front
- Simplify approval process for developers – most developers willing to "work with" town

FOCUS GROUP MEETING NOTES
Environmental/Cultural/Civic/Recreation
September 19, 2002 at 7:00 pm
Clifton Park Town Hall

What is cluster development?

- How different in future?
- Better explain conservation design

Comment

- Leave more land "forever wild"
- Town should put foot down – no more development...
- Missing: village green in downtown
- Developers should pay for what open space they "take"
- Park near Ballston Lake – model for how to develop
- Are the golf courses really permanently protected open space?
- How to "guarantee" these are really protected (maybe an easement?)
- Pursue green space at shopping area as an attractive amenity
- How to achieve better "green design" for commercial

PUBLIC MEETING NOTES
Public Comments on Clifton Park Open Space Draft Plan
September 24, 2002 at 7:30 pm
Jonesville Fire House #1

Preserve rural landscape

- Consider transfer of development rights
- Current open space requirement – does not set objective for meaningful open space
- Keep urban as urban (maybe allow more density)
- Focus open space protection where it still exists
- Example: new planned community – Celebration, FL
- Include discussion of how to maintain "open space park and funding investments and amenities" (pay for maintenance)

Security

- Need to "think it through" – considerations of security at parks and open space
- Make sure there are resources to address security for current and additional park land.

**Public Comments on the Town of Clifton Park Open Space
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Be sure to mention that there is public interest in increasing access to the Mohawk River

- Map does not include a specific idea for a waterfront park - 17 acres Jacobsen parcel
- Rowing facility for Shenendehowa crew
- Idea for future consideration: Public access at Riverview Orchard above and below canal lock (Mike O'Brien has crew program material)

Resource evaluation model

- Appendix C: question - what is it? Explain purpose and use of the resource evaluation model.

Existing parks and trails

- Remember "pocket parks" and trails in park district (e.g. Country Knolls)
- Consider bringing into plan

Farmland protection

- increase connectivity of open space in western portion

Trails

- Consider widening shoulders for biking and alternative transportation
- Address biking needs - balanced with scenic corridors
- Link bike paths to greater regional network
- Other opportunities for trails
 - Seek easements with railroad and along sewer lines and other pipelines
- Repaving/repainting and redesign of existing roads

Be sensitive to what the plan implies for private landowners whose land is shown on the concept plan (if plan is about voluntary participation – be very clear)

- Want to respect and retain property rights for homeowners and landowners
- Connectivity/trails through private land
- Concerns
 - Security
 - Privacy
 - Maintenance (funding for trail maintenance)
 - Trespassing
 - Trash

- Would like to see map of everything - existing pocket park and trails
- Subdivision trails - often blocked - where are these trails
- Signage for existing parks and park districts
- Include map in report

Website

- Address glitch
- Make 11"x17" color copies of plan map available to public

Access

- In future, a process will be needed for individual site access to any new open space – to enable adjacent landowners to have concerns heard...
- Recommend an improved design and public process for developing all future trails and paths to be located in town
- Need better funding support for design, construction and maintenance of trails
- Make sure town keeps its objectives with trails and open space and enforces developers to set aside designed open space.
- Continue to pursue pedestrian connections in subdivisions
- Maintain community efforts to enforce rules with use of open space and trails
- In future, keep trailhead parking away from residences
- Set aside a dedicated area for ATVs or snow mobiles
- Concern for loss of natural place - topography
- Limit soil/topography changes
- Support increased density in urban areas
- Build vertical to preserve greenspace

PUBLIC MEETING NOTES

Public Comments on Clifton Park Open Space Draft Plan

September 25, 2002 at 7:30 pm

Clifton Park Town Hall

- Overall support for additional protection at Vischer Ferry
 - wildlife
 - water quality
- Overall support for increased "smart growth" planning for town
- Suggestions
 - tap/link ASAP into education programs at high school
 - want to see financial numbers on fiscal/open space

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- support what locals can do to improve transit options and community design (local efforts prevent global warming)
- support EMC (Environmental Management Committee) as way to manage open space programs
- Developers should carry greater weight in paying for open space protection
- Developers have too much free reign
- Move forward with support for plan efforts
- What does "adopt" plan mean?
- Need more publicity
- 6-10 miles of bike paths - goals seem too little
- Who pays for plan and program? (this is important)
 - tax payers are willing to pay some amount, but costs should be shared
 - use SEQR
 - idea for developers to pay mitigation fees
 - impacts to open space
 - tax relief in perpetuity for open space
- Regulate and enforce plan's visions and concepts
- Maintain existing trails and open space as well as new trails and open space
- Support working with neighbors and community on joint open space protection efforts
- Idea – perform a large-area GEIS study for the western part of town
- At Route 146A and Emerson
 - concern that park size is not increasing for new development
 - use open space money and create multi-use paths
- When to take project to the "parcel" level of open space designation?
- How to protect 146 and Glenridge parcel (plan to develop here already)
- When will the plan be adopted?
- Taxpayers end up paying for long-term road maintenance – so why not tax developers more to help...
- Make sure open space is meaningful, not just scraps of land
- Some parklands are underutilized
- Make sure to give public up-to-date accessibility map of parkland
- "Thanks" for optimistic plan
- Fiscal - how to incorporate?
- Consider having the public present at meeting on fiscal results
- Make sure to get word out on fiscal results

PUBLIC MEETING NOTES
Public Comments on Clifton Park Open Space Draft Plan
September 26, 2002 at 7:30 pm
Vischer Ferry Fire House #1

- Good process for town
- Missing - long-term goal
 - it is a good time while we have people's attention to get consensus on long-term goal
- Good to pursue "easy" protection of Dwaaskill and Vischer Ferry (what about tougher nuggets?)
- Where to depict other areas besides agricultural lands and big features of Dwaaskill and Vischer Ferry
- What agriculture shown is off table? None is off table
- What does "preserve scenic roads" mean?
- Be careful with trail design along scenic ways
- Funding local share looks low - town should commit more money towards open space
- Too many committees not talking to each other
- Need an ongoing champion
- Good process
- What about "developed" space:
 - address town center
 - recommend pursuit of redeveloping and re-planning town center
 - need tools to achieve desired vision for an improved town center
 - editorial on town center not necessary - physically could be where activity and spirit is
- Historic Preservation
 - LL-208 - rewrite process
 - opportunity to solidify historic districts
 - please review recommendations
- Give examples of resource conservation design guidelines
- Use SEQR mitigation fees as tool?
 - long-range impact of development on permanent loss of open space
- What will be process to prioritize projects and funding?
- Maps of trails and parks
- Make Shenendehowa a more pedestrian and bike-friendly campus
 - internal network
 - is concept from '99 campus center for kids
 - current state of wooded trails not quite kid-safe (yet)