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# FRIENDS OF CLIFTON PARK OPEN SPACE

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www.cpopenspace.org

March, 2002

## Town Open Space Committee Survey Response Overwhelming

### Town sees nearly a 30% Response Rate to Mailing

Last November, the Town of Clifton Park mailed out an Open Space Conservation Survey to 12,000 town residents. The survey asked residents to rate 8 questions from “Highly Important” to “Highly Unimportant” or “Don’t Know/Undecided”. There was also a section to note your thoughts about open space conservation in the town and to leave name, address, phone and email to help or be contacted. Respondents were also invited to attend the workshop scheduled for January 19<sup>th</sup>.

In just ten days, over 1200 surveys had been returned—that is 10% which is an outstanding response in any circumstances. By year’s end, over 3000 had been returned—or a 30% response rate. In addition, over 1500 surveys were returned with comments and more than 650 people noted their names. This information was used to send another invitation to the Open Space Workshop in January.

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### *Town’s Open Space Survey gets an amazing 30%+ Response Rate*

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This survey is intended to be the first in a series of town initiatives soliciting broad citizen input into the Open Space Plan. These first results are being tabulated and statistically analyzed by the Town and its consultant. Friends thank everyone for taking the time to make your own feelings known. The ideas generated from these tools will be increasingly valuable to the final result for the town.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

Frank Berlin, Friends of Veteran’s Park

Margaret Catellier, Citizens Assn. for Reasonable Expansion

Gil Kortz, Clifton Park Zoning Bd, past Chair Clifton Park ECC

Ray Seymour, Land Trust of the Saratoga Region

Clark Wilson, Rexford Civic Association

Susan Burton, League of Women Voters of Saratoga County



## 10 Reasons Why Sprawl Is Hazardous To Your Health

*Reprinted from Sierra Club Magazine*

1. ***It’s Stressful.*** Thanks largely to sprawl, the average American driver spends 443 hours a year behind the wheel. (Federal Highway Administration, AAA Foundation for traffic Safety).
2. ***It Scars Your Lungs.*** All that driving pollutes the air, causing respiratory illnesses. When traffic was restricted in Atlanta during the 1996 Olympics, asthma-related emergencies dropped 42%. (Physicians for Social Responsibility; Sprawl Watch Clearinghouse).
3. ***It’s Toxic.*** Suburban lawns are treated with more pesticides per acre than croplands, exposing residents to chemicals that can cause cancer and damage neurological and reproductive systems. (Environmental Media Services).

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*It’s stressful, It scars your lungs, It’s toxic, It spreads disease, It’s treacherous, It pollutes your water, It limits your food choices, It empties your wallet, It can kill you, It’s fattening!*

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4. ***It Spreads Disease.*** As sprawl penetrates deeper into woodland clearings where deer thrive, deer-tick-borne Lyme disease has soared from 120 cases annually to almost 18,000 in the past 20 years. (Biodiversity Project; Lyme Disease Foundation).
5. ***It’s Treacherous.*** Subdivisions are often built far from vital infrastructure like hospitals. Every minute a heart attack victim waits for an ambulance reduced the chance of survival by 10%. (Biodiversity Project).
6. ***It Pollutes Your Water.*** Each year, sprawl destroys 100,000 acres of pollutant-absorbing wetlands. (Sierra Club Challenge to Sprawl Campaign).

*Continued on page 3*

# Average Citizens Make a Difference

## Neighborhood Associations keep local government on track

Thomas Jefferson espoused the benefits of civic virtue as much as anyone of his time. And today, the value of the average taxpayer's contribution of time and effort has a more important impact than any other factor. Neighborhood associations, where average citizens can find a platform to air the issues that concern them and act on the solutions, have played a role in all successful local governments everywhere.

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*If all politics is local, its because what we care about most is what is happening in our own back yard. If you ever thought to get involved, get involved in your town where you have both the most impact & interest*

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Interested residents may seize the initiative to prepare for open space planning simply because they recognize the need. They can organize themselves, hold meetings to discuss the issues and offer assistance to their local governing body or planning board.

In Clifton Park, the recent Open Space Workshop showed how much interest and talent exists locally to generate ideas and know-how to get things done. Local groups are the most familiar with existing issues and circumstances. They often know the history of

past efforts or understand the features of areas they have long observed. Their personal experience—be it with trails and recreation area, or water sources and run-off issues, or farming concerns, or roadside beautification—can offer valuable insight as well as practical ideas of what should be considered.

An active, involved and educated public is the best means to insure that private citizens have a voice along with those of commercial and developmental interests with our local politicians. If open space is important to you, make sure your Town Board members know that on a regular basis and not just on Election Day. The town has taken positive steps to demonstrate they understand the citizens on this issue. They need to hear your voices and your ideas.

Local groups can not only get actively involved in working with the Planning Board and Town Board to ensure that a plan is soundly conceived and comprehensive, but also insist it is adopted and implemented with concrete, enforceable mechanisms to make the goals reality and not just words.

Jason Kemper is head of the Town Planning Department and Jim Romano of the Clifton Park Town Board is Co-Chair of the Clifton Park Open Space Committee. They can both be reached at the Town Hall on 371-6620 and we are sure they would welcome your comments. ❖

**FRIENDS OF CLIFTON PARK OPEN SPACE** would like your **financial help** in sustaining our research and outreach efforts. If you would like to help in this way, please detach, complete and mail the form below with your check made out to: **FCPOS, P.O. Box 821, Clifton Park, New York 12065**

*Thank you very much for your support!*

Yes, I would like to help the Friends of Clifton Park Open Space in their work to preserve the “Park” in Clifton Park

I would like to contribute: \$10  \$20  \$30  \$40  \$50  \$75  \$100

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to: Friends of Clifton Park Open Space—or—FCPOS**

Contributions are not currently deductible as a charitable contribution

# Town Open Space Committee Charrette is a Big Success

Continued from Page 1

The Town of Clifton Park's Open Space Committee organized a Public Workshop and Design Charrette at the Gowana Middle School on Saturday morning, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2002 from 8:30 to 12:30. Over 75 people attended.

The meeting was well organized and productive. It started with coffee and pastries before Part 1 which was a public presentation by the town's consultant, John Behan, who reviewed the project and public input to date, then went through a slide presentation Defining and Envisioning Open Space.

Next, Part 2 setup 6 breakout sessions—two which focused on the town as a whole, and 4 others—each of which examined one quadrant of the town. Facilitators with each group helped the participants work with the maps and resources provided to formulate ideas on what should be done in the part of town considered by their group.

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*Six breakout groups examined either the town as a whole or a particular quadrant of town.*

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The meeting ended with everyone reconvening to hear a presentation of ideas from each of the individual groups. The town officials and the consultant took all the information generated and will use these ideas in putting together the Town's Final Open Space Plan.

## 10 Reasons....

7. ***It Limits Your Food Choices.*** Locally produced food requires fewer pesticides and preservatives, but it becomes harder to find as sprawl destroys some half a million acres of farmland a year. (American Farmland Trust; USDA Economic Research Service).
8. ***It Empties Your Wallet.*** Families in sprawling neighborhoods spend \$1,300 more each year on transportation than those in denser areas. Wouldn't you feel sick if you squandered your kids' college tuition hauling them to kindergarten? (Surface Transportation Policy Project).
9. ***It Can Kill You.*** The more you have to drive the more likely you'll be one of the 43,000 annual traffic fatalities. (Sprawl Watch Clearinghouse).
10. ***It's Fattening.*** Carbound communities' sedentary lifestyle has been linked to a 50% increase in obesity. Is it time to curb our appetite for development or for doughnuts? Probably both. (Washington Post, January 21, 2001; National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases).

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS.....

### FCPOS GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS

Place: Shenendehowa United Methodist Church  
Date: Thursday, March, 21<sup>st</sup>, 2002  
Time: 7:30 PM

### FCPOS BUILDING MORATORIUM REQUEST

Place: Clifton Park Town Board Mtg.-Public Participation  
Date: Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2002  
Time: 7:00 PM

### TOWN OF CLIFTON PARK OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE- UPDATE ON PROGRESS

Place: Clifton Park Town Board Meeting  
Date: Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002  
Time: 7:00 PM

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS.....

### SIERRA CLUB SMART GROWTH CONFERENCE

Place: 200 Henry Johnson Boulevard, Albany  
Date: Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2002  
Time: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM—Lunch Included  
Registration \$10    **RSVP:** Pauline Boehm 884-9876

### COMBATING URBAN SPRAWL DISCUSSION

Place: Schenectady Public Library, Liberty & Clinton Streets  
Date: Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002  
Time: 7:30 PM

**Sponsored by League of Women Voters of Schenectady**

### NON-GOVERNMENTAL GROUPS & URBAN SPRAWL

Place: Saratoga Springs Public Library-Community Room  
Date: Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2002  
Time: 6:30 PM—Salads for Supper  
7:15PM—Presentations & Discussion

**Sponsored by League of Women Voters of Saratoga**

Friends of Clifton Park Open space  
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