

## **VII. Summary of Public Input**

### **Community Open Space questionnaire**

Included in the spring, 2006 *Glenville Newsletter* was an Open Space Questionnaire targeted to Glenville's residents and landowners, the results of which can be found in Appendix B of this Plan. The survey consisted of seven questions on the topic of open space preservation. Four of the questions included several subcomponent questions, two were straight "yes" or "no" questions, while one question was open-ended, in which the Town encouraged a narrative response.

The questionnaire was not "scientific," in the sense that it was not a randomly distributed survey. There was never any intention of designing a scientific survey. Rather, the Town distributed the survey widely with the intent of gaining a general sense of how the community feels about open space preservation.

The Town received 473 completed surveys for a return rate of just over 4%. This is a respectable response rate for a mail-in questionnaire in which postage costs had to be paid for by the survey taker.

Perhaps the most telling result from the questionnaire can be found in the responses to question #1, which asked "*Should Glenville have a plan for preserving some amount of its open space (farms, forests, recreational space, scenic vistas)?*" This question generated 469 responses, with 459 answering "yes" and only 10 answering "no." In terms of percentages, this equates to 97.9% agreeing that the Town should have a plan for preserving some of its open space.

Subsequent questions delved into the particulars of open space preservation, wherein the Town asked residents to identify features that are the most important to protect, whether there are enough outdoor recreation opportunities in Glenville, preferred methods for preserving open space, etc. Not surprisingly, protection of the Town's aquifer was deemed most worthy, with 98.3% of respondents agreeing that protecting the aquifer was either "most important" or "important." Protection of streams, wildlife habitat, scenic views, active and passive recreation resources, farms, wetlands, historical places, community entranceways, and forests were all viewed as "most important" or "important" by a large majority of respondents.

As for residents' satisfaction level for existing sports and recreation facilities, a large majority believes that Glenville has enough facilities for outdoor sports and activities such as soccer, baseball, playgrounds, etc. In fact, 90% of survey respondents were either "satisfied" or "most satisfied" with outdoor sports/activities options in Glenville.

There was general satisfaction for *passive* recreation options (i.e. biking, walking, fishing, etc.). The results indicated 66% of respondents were either “satisfied” or “most satisfied” with passive recreation options. Inversely, 1/3 indicated that they are “not satisfied” with the opportunities available for passive recreation pursuits.

The manner in which open space should be preserved was the focus of another question. Seven different options were presented, with six generating significant support among survey respondents. The two most favorably reviewed open space preservation options included the *acquisition of land and easements through donation* (90.1% support) and *encourage landowners to preserve their land through tax incentives, voluntary conservation easements, etc.* (90%). More aggressive open space preservation options and regulatory methods were also well received, including the need for the Town to *establish a policy for acquiring land* (83.8%) and the *increase of planning and land use regulations* (79.8%). On the other end of the spectrum, the idea of *increasing taxes to purchase land and easements* was viewed as favorable by only 22% of respondents.

There was really only one question that yielded somewhat mixed results, that being question #5, which asked for opinions on the types and locations for future open space that the Town may want to consider. Again, respondents were asked to rate the items as either “not important,” “important” or “most important.”

Increasing *open space with public access along the Mohawk River* received strong support (91.3% felt that this was either “most important” or “important”). Pursuing a *mix of open space* was also viewed favorably (87%), as was pursuing *open space areas adjacent to existing parks and preserves* (80%). Support was evident but not nearly as strong on whether the Town should pursue *small areas throughout the Town; areas currently without open space; trail linkages between neighborhoods; and trail linkages between existing open space areas.*

With Glenville having witnessed a relatively robust level of residential growth over the last decade, and with the trappings that accompany residential growth (i.e. loss of farmland and forests, increased traffic, more noise, etc.), it is not surprising that the questionnaire results yielded a strong sentiment that the Town should be proactive in preserving open space. The results also demonstrate that various types of open space should be preserved (i.e. farmland, forests, wildlife habitat, scenic views, historic places, etc.), and through a variety of means, excluding the levying of additional taxes to pay for open space acquisition.

## **Public Information Meetings**

The Town of Glenville Open Space Committee conducted three public information meetings/hearings prior to drafting the Open Space Plan. The meetings were held on June 19, 2006, December 14, 2006 and April 26, 2007. The minutes of these three meetings can be found in Appendix D of this Plan.