

5/25/12

Mayor Thomas M. Roach and Common Council Members
255 Main Street
White Plains, NY 10601

Dear Mayor Roach and Council Members,

I am writing to comment on the proposed "Greens to Green" open space project on the campus of the Campus of the French-American School of New York. Green space is important for vibrant communities. The FASNY plan will make White Plains a better place to live and work.

In your deliberations over the proposed plan, I thought it would be helpful to know that economists have shown that "natural area parks" significantly raise property values in the area surrounding these parks. For example, Lutzenhiser and Netusil (2001) have shown that these types of parks raise property values more than do other kinds of adjacent land use, including golf courses, "specialty parks" and conventional urban parks. (I have attached a copy of the paper for your review: see especially the first paragraph on page 296 which summarizes the results).

The increased property values we observe around natural area parks reflect the increased utility not only to the nearby residents, but also to the broader community who utilize the area for recreation. As you know, Westchester County has a shortage of publicly accessible natural areas, which will make this conversion even more valuable to the city residents.

The creation of a natural area park will increase the livability of White Plains, which in turn will support increased economic vitality for the community. This is an especially valuable opportunity as the park will be maintained by FASNY at no cost to the city.

Sincerely,



Eban Goodstein, PhD
Director, Bard Center for Environmental Policy
Director, Bard MBA Program in Sustainability