

## Approve Y For Open Space

I am amazed that Y Downtown, and other opponents of the new Y, continue to cite the preservation of open space as a reason for the Planning and Zoning Commission to deny the Y's application to build its new facility at Mahackeno. In fact, anyone who favors the preservation of open space in Westport, as I do, and claims open space preservation as a reason not to approve the new Y has not taken the time to look at the Y's plan for the site.

In planning and designing its new facility, the Y assured that the best and most beautiful 25 acres of the 32-acre Mahackeno site, with frontage on the Saugatuck River, will remain open space for the town and its residents to enjoy forever. The Y's architect wisely

designed the project so that the new building will be situated on the 7-acre portion of the site that fronts the Merritt Parkway and is currently a dilapidated driveway/parking area primarily used for drop off and pick up of campers. The remaining 25 acres, currently used for the day camp, will remain open space.

The irony is that if the Y's application is denied, the Mahackeno site will likely be sold for residential development resulting in the elimination, not the preservation of open space. This fact is not disputable, and opponents of the project should no longer be taken seriously when using the open space argument as a reason to oppose the project.

By approving the Y's application, the Town of Westport will gain a new state-of-the-art facility dedicated to the health and wellness of our community, at no cost to the town or its taxpayers and without the use of town-owned property. In addition, the application guarantees the preservation of 25 acres of pristine open space for now and for future generations.

Now that's Smart Growth!

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**WESTPORT**

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Westport/Weston Family Y.*