Land Partnerships

A Countywide Strategy for Open Space Preservation and Smart Growth
Background and Process
Between 1990 and 2004, nearly 45,000 acres of land (13 percent of the County) was proposed for residential, commercial or industrial development.

On average, about 3,000 acres was proposed for development each year.

About 1,500 new dwelling units each year and rising

Significant industrial and commercial development
Planning Process

- Evaluation of natural, cultural, historic & recreation resources
- Assessment of public opinion & support for open space program
- Identification of preservation strategies
- Development of recommendations and a countywide action plan
Components

- Steering Committee
- Key Person Interviews
- Public Visioning Session
- 4 Public Forums
- Growing Greener: Conservation By Design Workshop & Audits
- Countywide Public Opinion Survey
Plan Elements

- Farmland Preservation
- Natural Resource Protection
- Parks, Greenways & Trails
- Livable Communities
Implementation Strategies

- Acquisition
- Planning
- Park and recreation development
- Redevelopment
Implementation Plan

- Five Year Plan
  - Phase 1: 2006-2007
  - Phase 2: 2008-2010
- $6.5 million for farmland preservation
- $1.5 million for open space preservation
- $12 million program (and growing) considering matches
War Stories

Lessons Learned from the Cumberland County Example
4 Tips for Successful Planning

- Establish goals and purpose
- Expect opposition & involve them
- Involve a 3rd party
- Variety is the spice of life
Establish and Legitimize Clear Goals

- ID purpose
  - Farmland, parks/rec, redevelopment?
  - Think beyond acquisition

- Establish need
  - Why is this so important?
  - Link to comp plan
Establish and Legitimize Clear Goals

- Consider audience (KISS)
  - Appeal to emotions
  - Avoid tax discussions
  - Use conservation language (TPL survey)
    - “Working farms”, “water quality”, etc.

- Get the word out!
  - Press
  - Public meetings
Expect and Involve Opposition

- Identify opposition
- Involve them in the planning process
- Understand, respect, and be prepared to counter their arguments
- Find “something for everyone” in your plan
- Expect the worst and don’t take it personal
Expect and Involve Opposition: Common Arguments

- Waste of tax dollars
- Opposed to zoning
- Farming is a dying industry
- Not needed
- Open space preservation = taking
- Will stop all development
- Need land for houses
Expect and Involve Opposition: Common Arguments

- Will stop all development
- Will take farmers retirement
- Need land for houses
- Will impact housing affordability
- Will cost us money
Listing of Comments from Residents

“Plan is a waste of money and amounts to socialism. Planners are communists.”

“Worked lifetime on land, don’t want the County taking away the farm.”

“Spend tax money on necessities. Open space not necessary.”

“This is a land grab. Already have Clean and Green Program and Nature Conservancy; why do we need county dedicating land use?”
Otto Letter
Involve a 3rd Party

- County staff can’t lead the initiative
- Consider non-profits
- Remove perception of publicly funded lobbying
Incorporate Variety

- Consider a variety of preservation techniques.
- Develop a program tailored to your needs.
- Use several public involvement tools
  - “Perpetual open house”
  - Person to person when possible
Questions?

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