

Montgomery County Open Space Program

Lessons Learned





Montgomery County Open Space Program Lessons Learned

History of the Open Space Program

- 4/93 Open Space Task Force Formed
- 10/93 Commissioners adopted \$100 M Program
- 2/96 First Montgomery County Open Space Plan
- 5/03 Second Open Space Task Force Formed
- 11/03 \$150 M Open Space Program Referendum
- 12/03 Green Fields/ Green Towns Program Adopted
- 9/05 Second Montgomery County Open Space Plan



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Green Fields Green Towns Program

- \$150 Million Dollar Program
- \$67 Million for Municipalities
- \$8 Million for Private Non-Profits
- \$75 Million for County Projects



Montgomery County Open Space Program Lessons Learned

Everything Begins with Open Space Planning





Montgomery County Open Space Program Lessons Learned

■ Inventorying Natural Resources





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■ Analyzing Natural Resources





■ Defining Open Space Protection Priority





Montgomery County Plan





Acquisitions

- Open lands with scenic, recreation, or natural value
- Floodplains and wetlands
- Woodlands and steep slopes
- Land for trails, greenways, and pocket parks
- Central plazas and town squares





Open Space Grant Options

- Green Infrastructure
- Heritage resources conservation
- Municipal trail and pathway development
- Farmland preservation
- Flood plain restoration
- Schuylkill River Greenway



Recommendations

- Based on....
 - Location, distribution and diversity
 - Compatibility with goals
 - Creation of overall network
 - Ability to implement
 - Current vulnerability





Green Infrastructure

- May Include:
 - Trails
 - Parks
 - Plazas
 - Tree planting
 - Park renovations
 - Building demolition to recreate open space





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Greenway





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Community Park



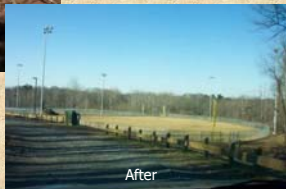


Montgomery County Open Space Program Lessons Learned

Redevelop public land for recreation



Before



After



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Open Farmland





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Nature Preserves





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Private Organization Grants





Conservation Lands



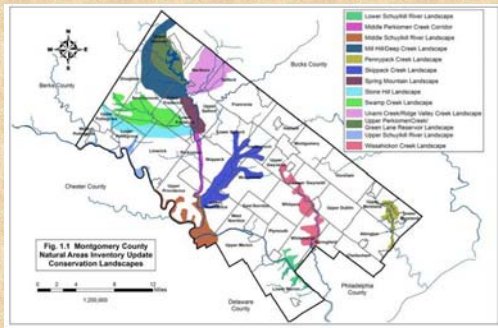


County Open Space Acquisition





Natural Areas Inventory





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Schuylkill Greenway





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Trail Development





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Farmland Preservation





Boards and Commissions

- Open Space Task Force
- Open Space Board
- County Acquisition Committee
- Agricultural Lands Preservation Board



Success

- Full participation in planning
- Partnerships
- Hundreds of great projects successfully funded
- Preservation of large projects such as Musser Scout Camp and Erdenheim Farm
- Trail system development



Failures

- Deal making capacity and options
- Match funding leverage
- Lack of concentrated Schuylkill Initiative



Program Changes

- Allowance for in-kind donation match
- Municipal grant flexibility
- Additional funding for trails and farmland protection
- New Schuylkill Initiative



Future Challenges

- Funding, Funding, and Funding
- Monitoring properties preserved through grants
- Municipal education and outreach
- Integration of open space and economic development



Maintaining Open Space