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

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

Inventorying Natural Resources

Analyzing Natural Resources
Montgomery County Open Space Program Lessons Learned

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
Montgomery County Open Space Program Lessons Learned

Greenway

Community Park

Redevelop public land for recreation

Before

After
Montgomery County Open Space Program Lessons Learned

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
Montgomery County Open Space Program Lessons Learned

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