

# Why Is Open Space Important?

1. Quality of life
2. Preserve our rural & historic heritage for future generations
3. School taxes - control the increase

# 1. Quality of Life

- # Open space feels like home
- # We don't need more traffic
- # Protect natural habitat – birds, animals, fish, even insects
- # Recreation opportunities
  - Walking
  - Birding
  - Family activities

## **2. Preserve Our Rural and Historic Heritage**

- # We care about future generations**
- # Historic houses are our homes**
- # Working farms define Worcester**

### 3. Control the Growth of School Taxes

The average home in Worcester ...

SENDS	0.8	children to school
COSTS	\$8514	to educate 0.8 child
PAYS	<u>\$4588</u>	in school taxes
COSTS	(\$3926)	each year



# Saving Land Saves Money

COST of development rights on 50 acres = \$2,000,000

COST to Worcester at 25% = \$ 500,000

Up to 23 homes could be built on those acres.

COST of school tax deficit, per home, per year = \$3926

COST of 23 homes x \$3926 = \$ 90,298  
EVERY

YEAR

Here's the PAYBACK to buying development rights:

- \$90,298 x 6 years = \$ 541,788
- In 6 years, the cost of buying the development rights is PAID..
- The **school tax deficit** from 23 new homes goes on **FOREVER**.

Building houses costs taxpayers **\$3926** per  
new house EVERY YEAR

Saving land costs taxpayers the SAME  
**\$3926** for 6 years – after that, the cost is  
ZERO

**Saving Land Saves Money**



**What are we doing in Worcester  
to preserve open space?**





# **Worcester's Open Space Plan is being revised.**

**The Plan will identify --**

**# Natural resources**

**Wetlands and floodplains**

**Woodlands**

**Steep slopes**

**Stream corridors**

**# Farms**

**# Historic buildings**

**# Scenic resources**



**Then it's up to us to protect them.**



**HOW?**

# **Now We Get Down To Work**

- 1. Form an Open Space Committee**
- 2. Identify resources to be protected**
- 3. Identify protection strategies**
- 4. Implement strategies**

# 1. Form an Open Space Committee

- Matthew Schelly, Montgomery County Community Planner
- Susan Caughlan, Open Space Coordinator
- John Harris, Supervisor
- Patricia Quigley, Planning Commission member
- Gordon Todd, Planning Commission member
- Bradford Smith, member of the public
- Richard Anderl, Peter Wentz Farmstead Society and  
Worcester Historical Society
- Dorothy McGrane, Farmers Union Horse Company
- Clare Billett, Natural Lands Trust consultant
- Members of the public are welcome



# The Open Space Committee at work



Worcester's Open Space Committee is working with our Montgomery County Planner and a consultant from Natural Lands Trust to revise our Plan

## **2. Identify Resources To Be Protected**

- # How much land is already preserved?**
- # How much land is already developed?**
- # What's left to work with?**