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 $4588 in school taxes
- COSTS ($3926) each year
$aving Land $aves 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

$aving Land $aves 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.
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?