

An aerial photograph of a lush green valley with a winding river. The river flows through the center of the valley, surrounded by dense green trees and vegetation. In the background, there are rolling hills and a clear sky. The overall scene is bright and vibrant, suggesting a natural, open space.

# **Open Spaces Open for Big Ideas**

**Planning for Park, Trail and Open Space  
Improvements**

**Bradford Dyjak**

**Myersville & Burkittsville Town Planner**

# Open Spaces: Maryland's Big Idea

"Of all the questions which can come before this nation, short of the actual preservation of its existence in a great war, there is none which compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us." –  
Theodore Roosevelt

# **A New Paradigm in Open Space Planning**

- **Tight budgets**
- **Limited local resources**
- **Changing community dynamics and preferences**
- **The Caging of the “Free Range Kid”**
- **“The growing fear of the outdoors”**

# New Opportunities

- **Renewed emphasis on reconnecting with the outdoors, increasing physical activity**
- **Declining costs for parkland acquisition and improvements**
- **Pause in development pressure = time for new ordinances/plans**

# **New Trends for Open Spaces**

- **More economical in scale**
- **Sustainable**
- **More than just parks – tools for tourism, revitalization, culture**
- **Community health asset**
- **Linkages for community goals – aligning w/ State & National goals**

# Phases for Open Space Planning

1. Planning
2. Community Vision
3. Identify Goals
4. Secure Funding
5. Design

# **Phases for Open Space Planning (cont'd)**

**6. Implementation**

**7. Development**

**8. Connections**

**9. Maintenance**

**10. Expansion**

# Overcoming Obstacles

- **Public Buy-in**
- **Creating Safe Environments**
- **Designing for Competing Uses**
- **Who designs? Who maintains?**
- **Locating open spaces**
- **Funding hurdles**



# **The Planning Commission's Role**

- **Effective Comprehensive Plan**
- **Implementation Tools**
- **Follow Through w/ Ordinances**
- **Become Involved in CIP Budget**
- **Create Task Force to Engage Public and Carry out Comp Plan Goals**
- **Leverage in PWA & Annexations**

# The Plan's Done, Now What?

- Incorporate environmental constraints and attributes into overall subdivision designs.
- Encourage more natural developments that contour and embrace landscape and reduce impact and grading
- Engage community and Parks & Rec folks in process.
- Know the needs of your target user group.

# Maryland Programs

- **Agricultural Preservation**
- **Land Trusts**
- **Maryland Environmental Trust**
- **Chesapeake Bay Foundation**
- **Watershed Alliances**
- **Natural Filters Program**

# Maryland Funding Opportunities

- POS
- Community Parks & Playgrounds
- Children in Nature
- Safe Routes to School

# Local Initiatives

- Playful City USA - Greenbelt
- Trail Towns & Canal Towns
- Community Gardens – Baltimore City, Middletown
- Adopt-a-Park/ Adopt-a-Trail – Laurel
- Main Street Maryland – Clean, Safe and Green – Cambridge

# Keys to Success

- **Grassroots Efforts with Direction**
- **Planning with Teeth**
- **Cooperation with Developers, other Public Agencies and Non-Profits**
- **Build a Coalition**
- **Know who users are and how to balance competing needs**
- **Use Open Spaces to Coordinate ALL Community Goals**

# Open Spaces Open for Big Ideas

- **Bradford Dyjak**  
**301-293-4281**

[BDyjak@Myersville.org](mailto:BDyjak@Myersville.org)

[www.MyersvilleMD.govOffice2.com](http://www.MyersvilleMD.govOffice2.com)