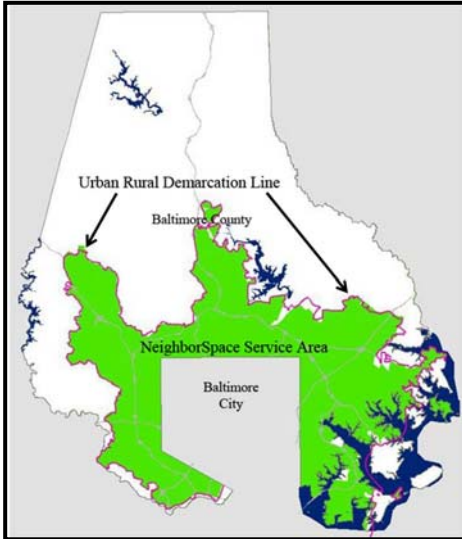


NeighborSpace of Baltimore County, Inc

Protecting Land to Improve Communities

FACTS ABOUT OUR WORK



Vision: The vision of NeighborSpace is that Baltimore County's established neighborhoods will preserve their green open space, creating more attractive and sustainable communities, and providing for cleaner air, water and natural areas.

Mission: The mission of NeighborSpace is to work with local partners to promote more livable communities by acquiring land to serve as small parks, gardens and natural areas in established neighborhoods.

Rationale: Baltimore County has two distinct land management areas, an urban area bordering Baltimore City (shown in green, at left), where the provision of public water and sewer infrastructure is an incentive to development, and a rural area that lacks this infrastructure, in order to discourage development. As shown in the map at left, the two areas are separated by an urban rural demarcation line (URDL). Growth within the URDL took place in the immediate post-World War II building boom, before there

were regulations governing open space, and, today, 90 percent of the county's 816,000 residents live within the URDL. Growth ultimately fuelled concerns that a mechanism was needed for striking a proper balance between land development and the provision of passive and active open space within the URDL, a result that led to the creation of NeighborSpace of Baltimore County, a non-profit land trust, in 2002.

Land Acquisition and Stewardship: NeighborSpace works in partnership with community organizations to identify land that can be protected and turned into community assets. At the request of a community, NeighborSpace may attempt to acquire land (through fee simple or easement) in exchange for a commitment to manage and maintain the parcel as community open space. In return for this commitment, NeighborSpace will protect the property from development in a land trust and provide limited liability insurance. A community can request that NeighborSpace acquire a property by filing a simple application, available on the NeighborSpace website. NeighborSpace will then conduct basic research on the property, determine whether its guidelines for acquisition have been met, and, where the owner wants to sell rather than donate his interest, assess the availability of funding for the project.

Tax Benefits: By donating land or a conservation easement on a property, private landowners may be eligible for tax benefits, which may include:

- (1) *Property Tax Reduction:* Restricting development rights through an easement can lower the market value and associated property tax. Donating land can eliminate property taxes.
- (2) *Federal and State Income Tax Deduction:* Donating land or a conservation easement may constitute a charitable gift for a public purpose. The appraised value of the land or easement may be deducted from income for the purpose of calculating Federal and State income taxes.
- (3) *Estate Tax Reduction:* Donating land or an easement may also reduce estate taxes.

NeighborSpace does not guaranty that the aforementioned benefits will apply to any transaction and recommends consulting a professional to discuss the tax and other consequences.

FOR MORE INFO., CONTACT BARBARA L. HOPKINS, EXEC. DIR. AT: 443-610-8601 OR AT: barbara_hopkins@verizon.net
VISIT US ON THE WEB AT <http://www.neighborspacebaltimorecounty.org>