

PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

The Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks is designated by the Worcester County Commissioners to administer the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Program Open Space. Worcester County's priorities over the next five years, as determined by the 2022 Worcester County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan, will be the acquisition and development of additional recreational lands in the northern part of the county, as well as, an emphasis on the modernizing and updating of existing facilities.

The following items are provided to describe Worcester County's growth management procedures for parks and recreation programs. These items are:

1. Major Parks in Growth Areas.
2. Preserve and Protect Sensitive Areas.
3. Rural Area Park Development.
4. Environment Protection and Stewardship.
5. Natural Resource Conservation.
6. Parks and Recreation Contributions to Economic Growth.
7. Infrastructure.
8. Partnerships Create Financial Resources.

Major Parks in Growth Areas:

The Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks successfully locates their parks in planned population centers throughout the county. Through strategic planning, the larger county sports complexes have been positioned close to the growth areas and population centers. Additionally, Ocean City and Ocean Pines have public recreational facilities and programs that support recreation in these densely populated areas of the county. Concurrently, small parks are easily accessible to the rural areas and surrounding communities.

While parks are maintained throughout the county, the majority of the parks are located in the northern part of Worcester County where most growth is concentrated. Major park development has taken place at all county parks, particularly the parks located in the northern part of Worcester County.

Preserve and Protect Sensitive Areas:

The park planning and master planning process includes sensitive areas protection. Invasive plant species are managed to protect native flora. Where appropriate, parkland is managed to encourage natural habitat. Prudent stewardship will ensure that the county's parks and natural resources are protected for many generations to come.

Rural Area Park Development:

Through Program Open Space funding, the county has acquired and preserved open land in existing population centers in the rural areas. These smaller county parks located in the county's rural villages, such as Bishopville, Girdletree, Newark, Stockton and Whaleyville; help to maintain the rural quality of these less populated areas while also meeting the recreational needs of the citizens in the immediate surrounding areas. These parks fall within the limits of the established villages and can easily be reached with a minimal walk or bicycle ride.

Environment Protection and Stewardship:

The protection of the Chesapeake Bay has been an on-going priority of Worcester County. Protection of Maryland Coastal Bays has also been incorporated into Worcester County's long-term vision. Acquisition and protection of waterfront properties has been a high priority in the fast-developing northern portion of the county. Three bayfront parks have been acquired since 2003.

In 2003, the land for Homer Gudelsky Park, a passive beach park located on the Sinepuxent Bay was donated to Worcester County by the Gudelsky family. This park overlooks Ocean City and is locally known as an excellent fishing spot. In the agreement to convey this park to Worcester County, permission was granted to deposit spoil material from the Shantytown Channel onto the park. The park suffers considerable erosion throughout the year and the replenishment of sand is necessary for the park to maintain its existence.

Providing coastal stewardship was an essential factor in the decision of Worcester County to lease the Isle of Wight Park, as of July 2004, from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. This park is primarily surrounded by water that affords visitors the opportunity to participate in fishing, crabbing, clamming, kayaking and canoeing, along with picnicking and exploring this natural island on the Isle of Wight Bay.

The 2006 addition of a 574-acre parcel, Greys Creek Nature Park, located in northern Worcester County affords the County a unique opportunity to conserve one of the most ecologically significant properties along Maryland Coastal Bays. The property was purchased with \$6,500,000 of State and local Program Open Space funds and titled in the name of Worcester County to be managed as a passive recreation park and environmental education complex by the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks. Located at the top of Maryland Coastal Bays, the property offers views of Ocean City's skyline across the Assawoman Bay. This acquisition will protect coastal habitat and eliminate the threat of residential and commercial development on a property that sits at the center of one of the most biologically diverse areas in the mid-Atlantic region. This property is planned to serve as a base for environmental education programs, as well as a passive park with walking/hiking trails. Area schoolchildren will be able to utilize this site as a hands-on classroom for nature study.

Three intergovernmental programs – Chesapeake Bay Tributaries Strategies Implementation Team, the Ocean City and Vicinity Water Resources Feasibility Study, and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program – have been significant elements in the stewardship of our waterways. Worcester County faces a momentous challenge to protect these valuable water resources for all citizens of Maryland while also affording recreational opportunities.

Natural Resource Conservation:

Worcester County has strategically located parks in close proximity to existing developed areas and growth centers throughout the county. It is through this type of careful park planning that the county can continue to conserve resources while achieving efficient development patterns.

Since 2000, Worcester County has aggressively pursued funding for land protection in areas not targeted for growth, and over 8,500 acres have been permanently protected.

In March 2010, Worcester County was awarded \$299,692 by the Maryland Energy Administration. These grant funds were utilized to provide engineering, construction, and installation of a complete Grid-Tied Photovoltaic System adjacent to the Recreation Center, which will supplement energy to the Recreation Center. This will help the County conserve energy.

Parks and Recreation Contributions to Economic Growth:

Worcester County understands the contribution of accessible recreational facilities to the economic growth of the county. The Worcester County Recreation Center opened its doors to the public on July 11, 2005, effectively creating a new base for all Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks programming operations to be administered. In 2016, a 6,000 square foot addition to the Recreation Center was completed. This addition houses a multipurpose room, conference room, weight room, aerobic workout room, and additional bathrooms. These new areas provide more programming options to be provided to our participants. This facility is a major recreational facility drawing users from both within and outside of the county. The facility also provides an economic boost to both existing and new businesses in Snow Hill and Worcester County.

Land and water recreational programs provided by the county attract visitors who contribute to the local economy.

Infrastructure:

Worcester County has identified both supply and demand of recreation facilities and acreage to serve current needs and anticipated future needs through 2024. However, the county recognizes the “need” and has identified recreational lands in the northern portion of the county where growth is concentrated.

Partnerships Create Financial Resources:

Worcester County relies on effective and innovative strategies and partnerships. Support and collaboration from Program Open Space, the Worcester County Commissioners’ capital improvement and park improvement funds, and additional grant funding are all financial resources that are critical elements in assuring optimum use of the financial resources that are available for parks and natural resource protection. In addition, it should be noted that Worcester County requires that new development include active and/or passive recreation and nature areas in support of the environment.

PART 2 - 2024 ACQUISITION PROJECT

Berlin Lions Club Acquisition Project:

The proposed project consists of the acquisition of an approximately 6 acres of property located next to the county owned Northern Worcester Athletic Complex in Berlin, Maryland. The property is located off Rt. 113. The additional 6 acres to be purchased is comprised of undeveloped land that adjoins the 12 acre parcel that Worcester County is currently in the process of purchasing from the Berlin Lions Club. The Lions club property currently consists of 6 baseball/softball fields and a permanent concession stand. The existing adjacent county owned property consists of five (5) multi-purpose fields, (1) one baseball field. The proposed property is currently the home base for Berlin Little League.

PART 3 – 2024 DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

John Walter Smith Curbing/Parking lot Upgrades- Snow Hill, Maryland

1. Park Development- The project being requested is to upgrade the existing “on road/ off road” parking at John Walter Smith Park. The current area is approximately 1,860 linear feet. Currently, the parking area is defined by white poles with a grass surfacing. Aesthetically it is not pleasing to the eye and also causes safety concerns. An engineer would need to be selected for the project to design the best possible solution to eliminate safety concerns, standing water,

and make the area aesthetically pleasing. The two ideas that come to mind with this project is to utilize the same area with curbing, parking bumpers, storm drains, and lines, or we can build a centrally located parking lot in another portion of the park.

Northern Worcester Athletic Complex- Lions Club Development- Berlin, Maryland

2. This proposed project will follow the completed acquisition of the Berlin Lion's Club that adjoins Northern Worcester Athletic Complex. The current Berlin Lion's Club property has 6 baseball/softball fields and a permanent concession stand. The baseball/softball fields need numerous repairs and or replacements. The project being requested will be to hire an engineering firm to master plan the entire facility to include baseball/softball fields, trails, playgrounds, site amenities, and other recreation features. Once master planned, development of the recommended plan will take place to include any and all recreation and site amenities needed.

Northern Worcester Athletic Complex Playground Replacement- Berlin, Maryland

3. This proposed project includes the replacement of a playground at the Northern Worcester Athletic Complex. The current playground is 20+ years old and in poor overall condition. This playground also currently experiences drainage issues due to it being below grade. The park also features much higher use that it did when the current playground was installed over 20 years ago. Due to the high use, we propose to build a playground with a larger footprint to accommodate more use at any given time. In addition to the playground we would like to install drainage and site amenities to include trash cans, benches, swings, etc.

Bathroom Upgrades- Pocomoke, Maryland

4. The proposed project includes the renovation of the bathroom facility located at Newtown Park. The current bathrooms have not been upgraded in 20+ years and includes outdated toilets, sinks, walls, etc. Also, these facilities are getting used at a much higher rate than when originally constructed over 20 years ago. The increased number of tournaments and league play contribute to the higher use. We would like to fully renovate the interior of the bathrooms as well as any plumbing, electrical, or masonry work needed to revitalize the space.

Bathroom Upgrades- Snow Hill, Maryland

5. The proposed project includes the renovation of the bathroom facility located at John Walter Smith Park. The current bathrooms have not been upgraded in 20+ years and includes outdated toilets, sinks, walls, etc. Also, these facilities are getting used at a much higher rate than when originally constructed over 20 years ago. The increased number of tournaments and league play contribute to the higher use. We would like to fully renovate the interior of the bathrooms as well as any plumbing, electrical, or masonry work needed to revitalize the space.

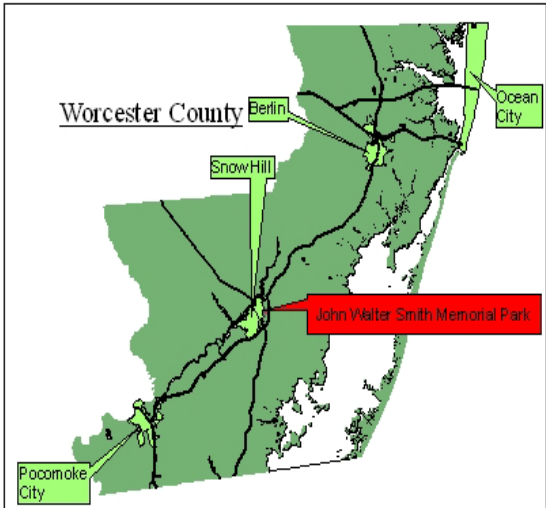
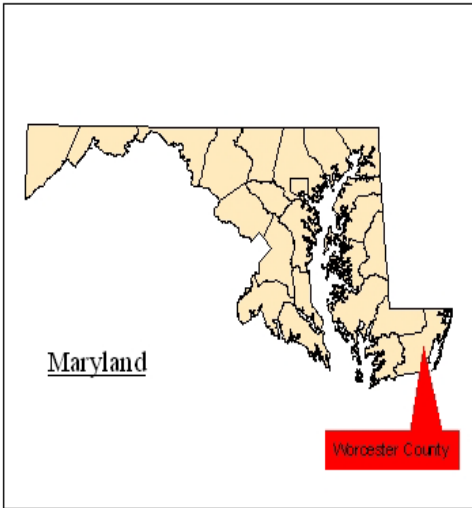
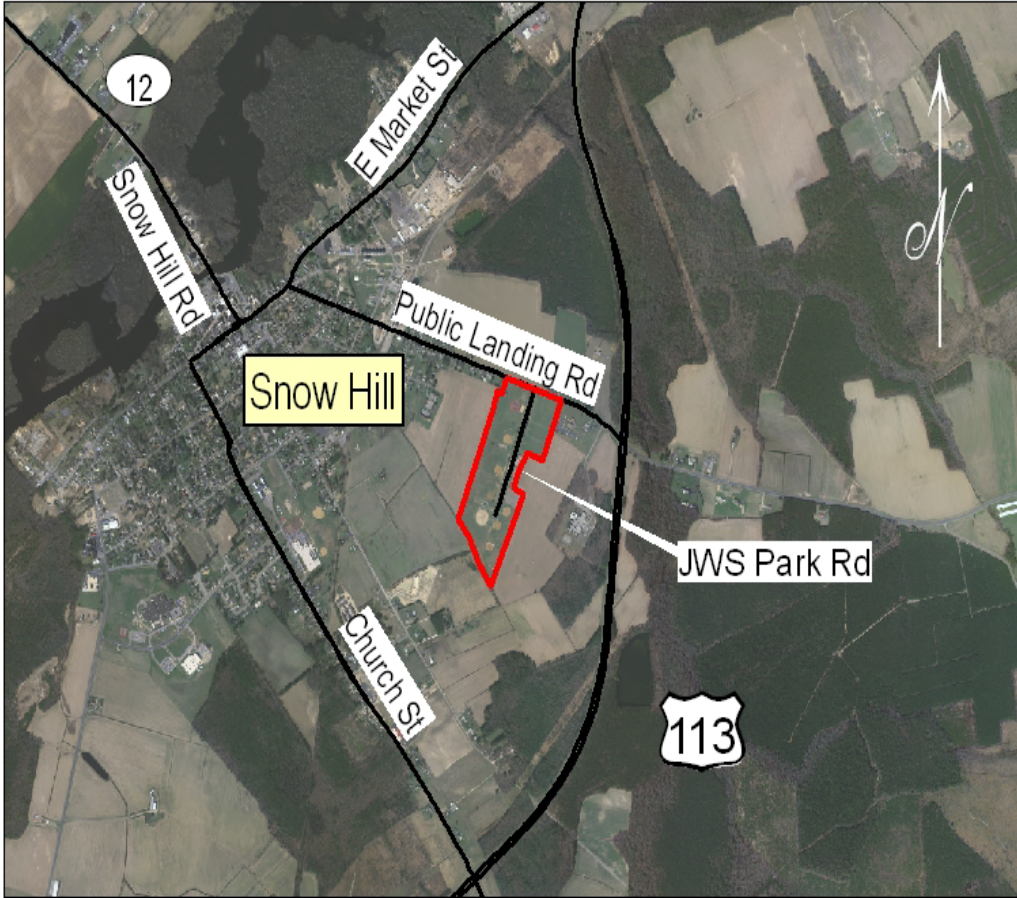
PROGRAM OPEN SPACE
ANNUAL PROGRAM FOR ACQUISITION
FISCAL YEAR 2024

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Project Name, Project Description</u>	<u>Acreage</u>			<u>Source of Funds for Annual Program Only</u>			
		<u>Existing</u>	<u>Ultimate</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Local</u>	<u>State (POS Local Funds)</u>	<u>Federal</u>
County	Berlin Lions Club Property, Berlin, MD.	0	18	6	\$500,000		\$500,000	
					\$500,000		\$500,000	

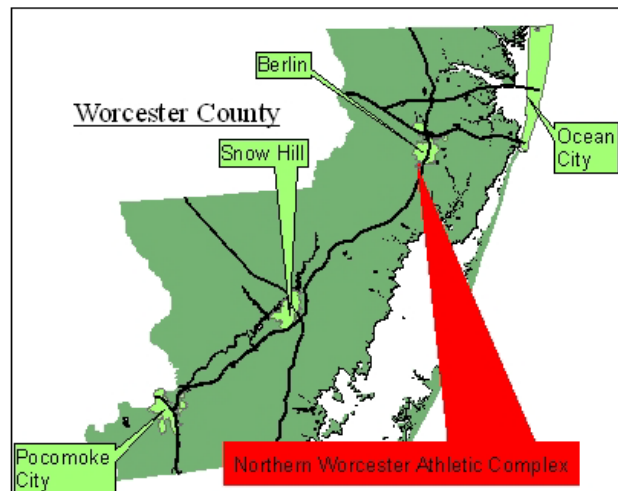
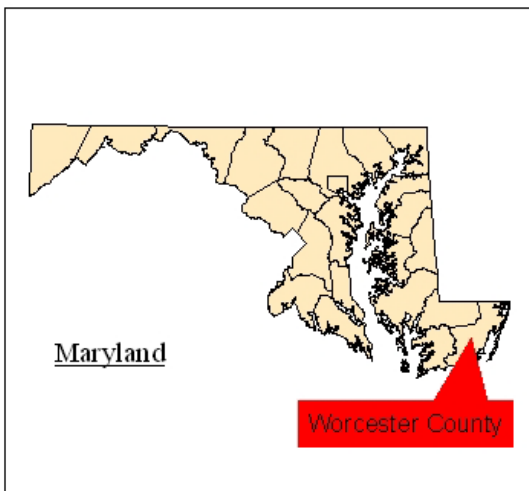
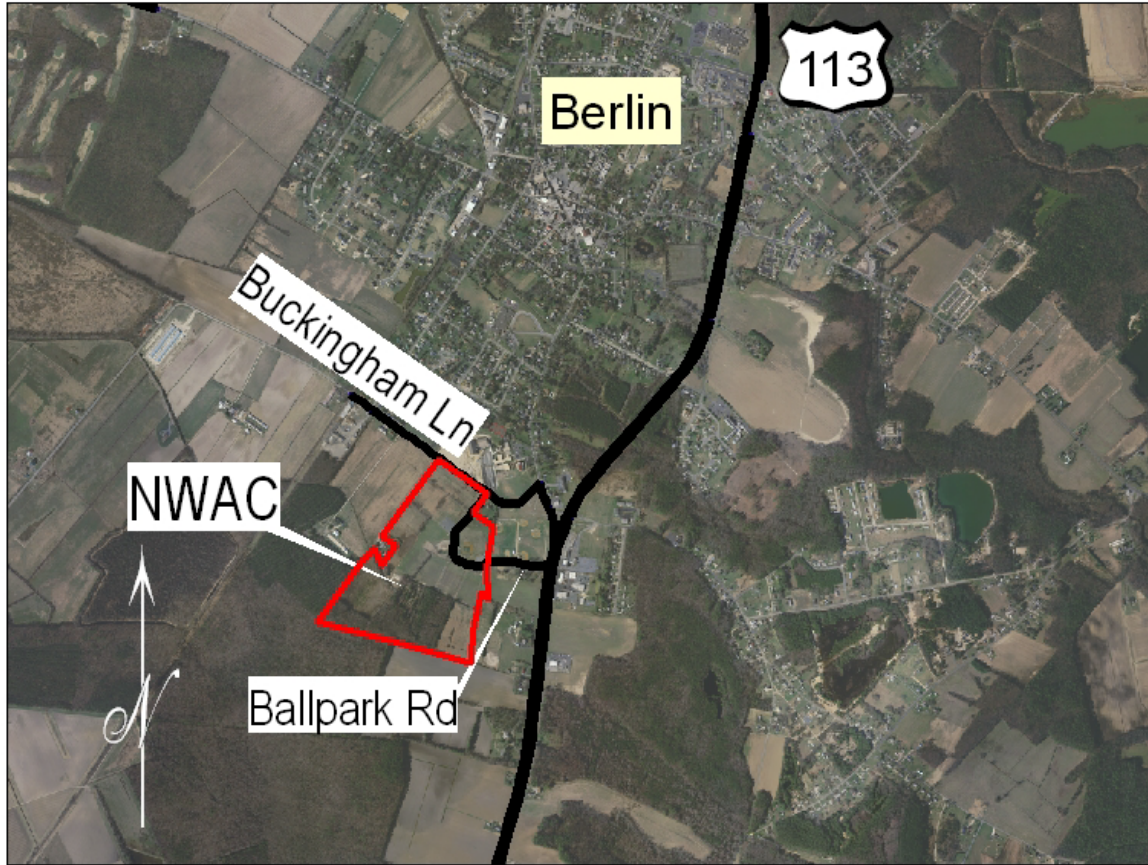
**PROGRAM OPEN SPACE
ANNUAL PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENT
FISCAL YEAR 2024**

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Project Name, Project Description</u>	<u>Acres</u>			<u>Source of Funds for Annual Program Only</u>			
		<u>Existing</u>	<u>Ultimate</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Local</u>	<u>State (POS Local Funds)</u>	<u>Federal</u>
County	Northern Worcester Athletic Club- Lion's Club Development	0	18	18	100,000	\$10,000	\$90,000	
County	John Walter Smith Park – Curbing and Parking Lot Upgrades	80	80	80	500,000	\$50,000	\$450,000	
County	Newtown Park– Bathroom Upgrades	60.52	60.52	60.52	\$66,666	\$6,666	\$60,000	
County	John Walter Smith Park- Bathroom Upgrades	80	80	80	\$66,666	\$6,666	\$60,000	
County	Northern Worcester Athletic Complex-Playground	76	76	76	275,000	27,500	247,500	
					\$1,008,332	\$10,832	\$907,500	

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Program Open Space
JOHN WALTER SMITH MEMORIAL PARK
SPM 63, Parcel 140
80 Acres



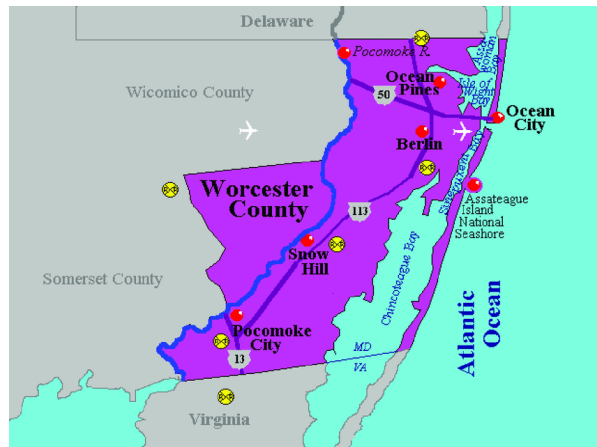
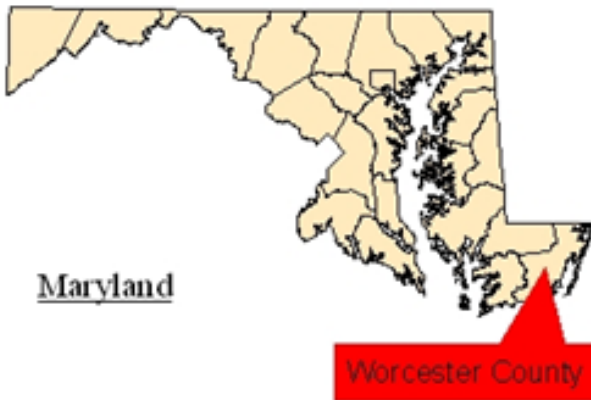
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Program Open Space
NORTHERN WORCESTER ATHLETIC COMPLEX
SPM 32, Parcel 276
76 Acres



Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Program Open Space

Berlin Lion's Club



Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Program Open Space
NEWTOWN PARK
SPM 84, Parcel 36
60.5 Acres

