

**PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS
RELATED TO DVRPC BOARD ACTION ITEMS**

September 22, 2016

Agenda Item:

1. FY 2018 Work Program

From: Andrew Cohen
County: Montgomery County
Zip Code: Not provided
Date Received: 9/12/2016

Comment/Question: I think that DVRPC should put more funding into preserving open space and farms in the counties. I do not think that they are doing enough to prevent open space in the rural areas in the counties to counter the moving and development of the rural areas in the suburban counties. The older communities will stay more vibrant if the western part of Montgomery and Delaware Counties can not be developed anymore. It will create greater demand for housing in the older communities and developers will seek to redevelop these communities and no look to expand into rural communities that do not need the development. This will help farm and open space preservation.

Draft Response: DVRPC believes strongly in preserving open space and farmland in the region, as land protection contributes to local economies and property values, reduces healthcare and recreation costs, protects valuable habitats, and naturally improves the air and water. Managing growth and protecting the environment is one of the four principles in the region's Long Range Plan. DVRPC supports open space preservation through planning, technical assistance, and tracking local funding programs. In addition, DVRPC maintains an inventory of the region's protected public and private open space. The inventory tracks all publicly-owned open space, preserved farmland, and non-profit protected open space. State, county and municipal programs preserve farms by purchasing development rights with public funds. In both primary and general elections, municipalities, counties, and states ask voters to dedicate funding or increase taxes for open space and farmland preservation. Non-profits (land trusts and conservancies) protect privately owned open space lands by purchasing easements or by acquiring land outright with a combination of public and private funds.