

the preservation board, said the program's resuscitation "started with the County Council revamping the makeup of the board, and getting fresh faces and different perspectives in there. And the contracting with the Trust for Public Land was a stroke of genius. With them, you have someone living here (Marane) and working hard at it. And the trust's focus exactly matches with what the county is trying to do."

The county's goal is reflected in 2000's referendum: Alleviate traffic congestion in high-growth areas and protect water quality, wildlife areas, farm and parklands, and coastal areas and wetlands.

Councilman Lamb says TPL has a much broader view than the conservancy. "They (TPL) see the advantage of taking land away from development for the long-term betterment of the county," he said. He also praised TPL's use of its "greenprint map" to make strategic recommendations about purchases.

"From my perspective, they're far better negotiators, far better at understanding what 'give and take' is. And they work extremely well with the (preservation) board, and they work extremely well with the county's Land Management Committee and the council."

Marane drew a more basic distinction between TPL and the conservancy. "The primary mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve land for habitat - plants and animals," he said. "But, our mission is to preserve land for people. We like to see a people component in everything we buy."

"We work with The Nature Conservancy as partners, and we work well together. We recognize that what they do is very important; it just so hap-

pened that what they were focusing on here were things that, though very important, were very narrow in meeting the objectives of the referendum, in the minds of County Council, so there was a struggle here."

TPL's approach from the start was, "We listened to the county to begin with, to better understand their priorities and to also understand the mandate of the referendum," Marane said.

Additionally, TPL set the tone early as to how it would operate the program. "When we were interviewed for the contract with the county, we made our involvement in this program contingent on having a proactive approach as opposed to a reactive approach. We didn't think it was a good idea to only consider purchases where landowners had come forward and said 'we want to sell our property.' We felt it made much more sense to create a vision of areas within the county that the public felt needed to be preserved."

To create the vision, TPL scheduled "greenprinting" meetings, eight of them throughout the county, where Marane and Gleaton met one-on-one with citizens. An average of 40 people attended each meeting.

"We would go through the maps and explain what it was and ask them is there anything here on these maps that we've missed," he said. "This became our roadmap for where we were going to concentrate our efforts."

All the work has paid off. The county is finally fulfilling the expectations of the 2000 referendum, and, as a result, county leaders hope to never again see newspaper headlines claiming their land-acquisition program is "mired down" and suffering from "paralysis by analysis." □



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