

## At the Junction of Transportation and Conservation

With traffic congestion clogging roads and sprawl replacing farmland and open space, some rapidly growing communities are pairing transportation and conservation in ballot initiatives. Yet, experiences in Florida and South Carolina suggest there's more to linking transportation and land conservation funding than packaging projects in a single referendum.

"Unless you have a plan that makes sense, even the most well-intentioned referendum combining transportation and conservation funding can produce negative results," says Ed Thompson Jr., American Farmland Trust's (AFT) senior vice president for public policy.

With \$720 million in county funds, Leon County, Florida, is embarking on a massive, 15-year effort to relieve traffic congestion, protect water quality and conserve land around the state capital, Tallahassee. The funding, provided through the extension of a one-cent local sales tax approved by voters, will begin in 2004. It will widen critical roads, but it will also pay for an array of open space, flood prevention and other improvements designed to keep Tallahassee an attractive place to live and work. Even though the bulk of the funding targets urban parts of Leon County, rural land protection advocates supported the measure because they believe it will help protect outlying rural areas by keeping development in the urban core.

In Charleston County, South Carolina, voters this November narrowly approved a half-cent local sales tax to fund a combination of transportation improvements and open space initiatives. The 25-year tax would generate \$1.3 billion dollars: 65 percent for road construction, maintenance and drainage, 18 percent for mass transit and 17 percent

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## How AFT Created Its 2002 Farming on the Edge Map

American Farmland Trust's 2002 "Farming on the Edge" map identifies places where concentrations of prime and/or unique farmland and critical food production regions coincide with rapid development. To understand recent trends, AFT combined and analyzed data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's revised 1997 National Resources Inventory (NRI), the 1997 Census of Agriculture and USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) studies.

The map conveys a sobering message about the irreplaceable loss of U.S. agricultural land. "We're seeing that high-quality farmland is threatened in every state," says AFT's Ann Sorensen, associate vice president for research. "The whole country is facing this challenge."

Final data from the 1997 NRI, which is the primary source for the map and contains important corrections from earlier releases, became available about a year ago, providing AFT with an opportunity to update its analysis of the relationship between actual land use changes and the nation's high-quality farmland.

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# LANDWORKS

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## LANDWORKS

*Serving the people  
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the land*



*American Farmland Trust*

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American Farmland Trust is a private, non-profit conservation organization dedicated to protecting the nation's strategic agricultural resources. Founded in 1980, AFT works to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment.

Basic membership is \$20 per year. For membership or general information about AFT, contact the National Office at 1200 18th Street, N.W., Suite 800, Washington, DC, 20036, (202) 331-7300, or connect to our Web page at [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)

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for parks and green space. As we go to press, the measure had passed by 600 votes after three recounts; but a lawsuit had been filed contesting the results.

A similar measure lost by less than 1 percent in 2000. The local conservation community, which supported the 2000 measure, finds fault with the 2002 initiative. "It's advocating infrastructure projects that will not relieve traffic congestion without any commitment to rural land protection," says Michelle Loy, land use program director of the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League (SCCCL).

Historically, U.S. transportation spending patterns have had a significant impact on the development of open space. The federal government spends between \$25 and \$30 billion a year on transportation, most of which goes to state departments of transportation programs for highway construction.

Road construction is typically the first step in opening land to development, and improvements like widening roads and adding interchanges contribute to inefficient land use that threatens farmland across the country. By increasing access, highways also increase the price of land, adding another set of challenges for the farming community and farmland protection efforts.

"It's our contention that federal and state highway policies unnecessarily favor highway construction over other transportation priorities, making it that much harder for anyone to purchase farmland or to [protect it] through conservation easements," says Don Chen, executive director of Smart Growth America.

Congress is scheduled to reauthorize in 2003 the nation's primary transportation law, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Land protection and smart growth advocates are working to increase consideration of conservation needs in highway planning and to allocate more funding to mitigate the impact of road construction on farmland and open space. TEA-21 and its predecessor, ISTEA, included several provisions designed to address environmental impacts of transportation projects, including the Transportation Enhancements Program, which has provided more than \$2.3 billion for pedestrian and bike paths, acquisition of scenic and historic easements and sites, and other projects.

"Road building has to occur in some cases. But it doesn't have to be unthoughtful," says Kathy Blaha, senior vice president of The Trust for Public Land (TPL), which released in November a study on the relationship between transportation policy and land conservation. Many communities "have struggled as highway-spawned subdivision and commercial development have outpaced the ability to prepare and direct growth," the report says. Far too often, funds and partnerships come too late, "after improved road access has escalated land prices and sprawl development has claimed some of the communities' most essential open spaces—limiting the impact of conservation."

### Finding a Balance

In Leon County, nearly 60 percent of voters supported the ballot measure, despite an organized opposition with a catchy campaign slogan—"ax the tax." A poll conducted by TPL early in the campaign showed strong public support for protecting the "green" character of the greater Tallahassee community, which is known for its canopy roads.

"There was fear that we could lose that charm and natural character of our community," says Katherine Baughman, government affairs director for TPL's Southeast Region office. The poll showed that residents' top concern was traffic congestion associated with growth. Voters also were concerned about storm flooding, threats to drinking water supplies and better access to parks and natural areas.

The Leon ballot measure was based on a comprehensive plan and devotes significant resources to improving and expanding parks, greenspace and alternative transportation. The plan, Blueprint 2000, calls for multi-use corridors that incorporate pedestrian paths, bikeways and critical stormwater handling. "This measure was difficult for some traditional environmental groups to swallow, but we saw a package of measures that try to tackle growth problems in communities holistically," says Baughman.

Even though funding is directed primarily at urban areas, it is key to the long-term protection of the working landscape north of Tallahassee, says Kevin McGorty,

## LAY OF THE LAND

Percentage of farmers and ranchers who are 55 and older .....	60.6%
Percentage of civilian labor force 55 and older .....	11.7%
Ratio of farmers and ranchers 65 and older to those 25 and younger .....	24 : 1
Decline in number of farmers and ranchers younger than 35 .....	54%

**Source:**

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) based on 1997 Census of Agriculture (USDA) and Current Population Survey of Bureau of Labor Statistics.

executive director of the Red Hills Conservancy, which strongly supported the bond issue. "We firmly believe that in order to save rural landscapes and prevent sprawl, land trusts and other conservation organizations need to be concerned about the urban environment and making sure it is an attractive place to live and work," he says. Blueprint 2000 is "a great example of a community's effort to make its urban environment more livable and therefore directly have the benefit of keeping the rural area in low-density development."

### Lure of the Open Road?

In Charleston, South Carolina, this year's bond issue also grew out of a comprehensive planning process that seeks to respond to high development pressure, particularly in the county's coastal communities and Sea Islands, says county planner Dan Pennick. Between 1973 and 1984, the urban area grew more than 250 percent, according to a 2000 study into a proposed purchase of development rights (PDR) program. The study identified approximately 46,100 acres of strategic rural land in the county, which if protected would stabilize the county's rural landscape.

At the same time, polls suggested that it was possible to build greater voter appeal for both land conservation efforts and the county's burgeoning transportation needs by combining the issues. "Chambers are not normally big proponents of tax increases, but we think there is no other way to protect our quality of life," says Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce spokeswoman Mary Graham. "We've got major congestion problems on our roadways. We've seen a great deal of growth, both in terms of population and development, so there's a great need to preserve the natural environment that exists in the area."

As the 2002 referendum took shape, the county council increased emphasis on road projects and decreased allocations for land protection from about one-third to 17 percent of the projected \$1.3 billion in revenue. It also shelved a plan to create a PDR program, which had been a recommendation of the planning effort behind the 2000 referendum. Funding for the county's mass transit agency, whose current revenue source expires at the end of December, remained in the referendum. "In certain segments of the population it will be the reason people go out and vote," Graham said shortly before the vote.

While the business community, particularly the hospitality industry, remained a strong supporter of the initiative, support in the environmental community withered. SCCCL opposed the measure, saying it lacks balance among the funding categories, accountability, direction, procedures for adequate public input and review, and a PDR program to permanently protect farmland. SCCCL recommended that the county council correct these deficiencies and present a new referendum to the voters in two years.

As an example of the problems with the measure, Loy points to council plans to extend a six-lane interstate highway onto John's Island, where resorts and new homes are popping up among historic farms. Road improvements will make John's Island "within 15 minutes of the airport and business district, but there are no funds earmarked to protect the farmland in that area," she says, predicting that if passed the bond will accelerate development of important farmland in that area.

While TPL still "supports the green space provisions," it withdrew its offer to contribute financially to the campaign. "If the sales tax passes, we will work with the county parks and

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**"We think there is no other way to protect our quality of life. We've got major congestion problems on our roadways. We've seen a great deal of growth, both in terms of population and development, so there's a great need to preserve the natural environment that exists in the area."**

**—Mary Graham,  
Charleston, South Carolina,  
Metro Chamber of  
Commerce**

**“We’re seeing that high-quality farmland is threatened in every state. The whole country is facing this challenge.”**

**—Ann Sorensen,  
American Farmland Trust**

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[www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)**

## Data and Definitions

AFT used both NRI and Census of Agriculture data to determine the acreage of prime and/or unique farmland. Conducted by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the NRI is a nationwide inventory of non-federal lands that tracks land cover and land use. The Census of Agriculture is conducted by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. It provides comprehensive data on agricultural production and operator characteristics.

For the purposes of the 2002 Farming on the Edge map, AFT relied on the NRCS definition of prime farmland (land most suitable for producing feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops) and acres identified in the 1997 Census of Agriculture as those used to grow vegetables, grapes and horticultural crops, including fruits, nuts and berries. The latter was AFT’s proxy for unique farmland—defined by NRCS as land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of high-value food and fiber crops. Unique farmland has a special combination of soil quality, location, growing season and moisture supply.

The mapping unit system underlying the map was developed by researchers Margaret Maizel and George Muehlbach for the USDA Soil Conservation Service in 1992. It is the accepted methodology for interpolating NRI’s data into area maps. The technique incorporates inter-sections of counties, watershed boundaries and USDA-defined Major Land Resource Areas to create 33,000 mapping units. The average size of a mapping unit is 92 square miles. Typically, several mapping units are in each of the nation’s 3,140 counties. The statistical variance in some of the mapping areas may be large, however, and the number of mapping units per county varies considerably.

AFT defined development as the change in NRI’s urban and built-up land and rural transportation land occurring within each of the mapping units between 1992 and 1997. Two threshold tests identified places where concentrations of prime and/or unique farmland coincide with the most intense development: mapping units that in 1997 had greater than their statewide mapping unit average of prime and/or unique farmland, and mapping units that experienced a rate of development greater than their statewide mapping unit average, providing they had at least 1,000 acres developed between 1992 and 1997.

Mapping units with a greater amount of prime and/or unique farmland than their state average and a higher amount of development than the statewide average are shown in red. AFT categorizes those areas as threatened. The data do not allow researchers to conclude definitively that development in each red area is actually taking place on the high-quality farmland in that mapping unit. Areas shaded in green also exceeded the average amount of prime and/or unique farmland found in mapping units in that state, but they experienced a lower than average amount of development or had less than 1,000 acres of development. Major metropolitan areas are shaded gray, and federal lands are tan.

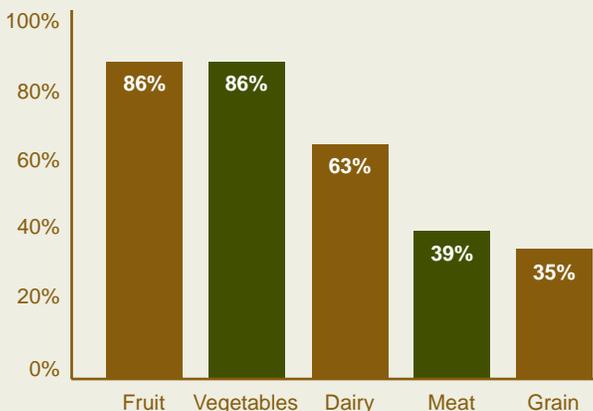
“The map is most useful at the state level,” says AFT’s GIS coordinator Mike Eley. Because it relies on information that is defined by statewide averages, it identifies patterns of land use change within each state. It should not be used to make localized interpretations or comparisons between states, Eley says. In many counties, the map confirms patterns of agricultural use and development that people perceive as they travel the countryside. But Eley warns that some agricultural localities where farm and ranch lands are being converted may not show up as red—or green—in the map.

“Many factors play a role in determining an area’s inclusion in or exclusion from a red or green category,” he explains. “These factors are a result of the point sampling technique used and the geographic calculations needed for spatial representation of point data across large areas.” The size and shape of mapping units that result from intersecting three different geographic boundaries can

influence an area’s designation. Another key factor is how soil quality in a particular county compares to the statewide average. In order for an area to be identified as red it would first have had to be designated as an area with an above average amount of prime and/or unique land. “Not all of the land being farmed is classified as high-quality farmland using our methodology,” Eley notes.

## Domestic Food in the Path of Development

*Percentage of Total U.S. Food Production in Urban-Influenced Areas.*



*Source: 1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture; USDA’s Economic Research Service.*

### Domestic Food in the Path of Development

An added feature is a bar chart that shows food production in the path of development. The chart was created by calculating the percentage of the total market value of agricultural products by groups of commodities produced in urban-influenced counties. "It shows that much of the food we eat is grown in counties in and around urban areas," Sorensen observes. Eighty-six percent of the nation's fruit, 86 percent of the nation's vegetables and 63 percent of the nation's dairy products are produced in urban-influenced areas.

Primary data sources for the chart were the 1997 Census of Agriculture and the USDA ERS's Urban Influence Codes. AFT regrouped the nine ERS codes into two categories: "Urban Influenced" (ERS urban influence designations 1-5) and "Not Urban Influenced" (ERS designations 6-9). AFT used Census of Agriculture data to determine market value by food group.

### States Losing the Most Prime Farmland 1992-1997

Finally, AFT ranks states that lost the greatest amount of prime land between 1992 and 1997 according to the 1997 NRI. The states with the most prime farmland lost to development during that period include Texas, Georgia, Michigan, Virginia and New York.

In many cases, Sorensen says, growth is not the problem so much as wasteful land use. Census information shows that between 1982 and 1997, U.S. population grew by 17 percent, while the NRI shows that urbanized land grew by 47 percent. "The rate at which population is growing is nowhere near the rate that we are developing land," she says.  B.H.

## From Greenbelt to Foodbelt

In a unique new initiative, Sonoma County, California, has begun converting public land into production agriculture by leasing acreage in community greenbelts for vegetable, fruit, herb and flower production.

The Sonoma Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District's Small Farms Initiative is designed to foster agricultural diversity, grow food on Sonoma's urban fringe and provide land tenure to farmers in a region where property values are so high that few can afford them.

This year the district signed five-year leases with two farmers on two parcels it owns in fee. The farmers, selected through a competitive evaluation process, grow vegetables organically or biodynamically and market them through community supported agriculture (CSA) arrangements and roadside stands.

If the pilot leases are successful, the district hopes to make available up to 150 additional acres of greenbelt land ringing the county's eight cities, says district planner Kathleen Brennan Hunter. The district is a public agency that protects agricultural land and open space, primarily by purchasing conservation easements and, occasionally, by purchasing land in fee. A quarter-cent sales tax provides about \$15 million annually for Sonoma's land conservation program.

"It's an evolution in how we look at open space," says Brennan Hunter. Much of the county's greenbelt acreage was originally purchased as "community separators" to prevent development. But when the district updated and revised its acquisition plan in 2000, there was strong community interest in encouraging agricultural diversity and supporting small-scale growers by leasing land the district owns in fee to these farmers.

"These lands have good soils. In most cases they're adjacent to residential areas," Brennan Hunter says. Many direct marketing opportunities accompany the challenges from farming close to residential areas. "It's an interesting prospect for a farmer."

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*For Ken Orchard, a Sonoma grower leasing county land, farmers' markets are a critical piece of his marketing strategy.*

Photo courtesy of Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

**“By working with beginning farmers, land trusts have a chance to build relationships with folks who will be living on and protecting lands in the future.”**

**—Steve Schwartz,  
California FarmLink**

The Small Farms Initiative represents a significant change in the way the district works with farmers and ranchers, and district officials have tried to structure the program so that its tenant farmers are successful. “It’s really been a learning process for us because it’s something so new and so different from what we usually do,” Brennan Hunter says. Important components include:

- Forming partnerships with nonprofit organizations that have expertise in supporting small farms, urban fringe agriculture and farm tenure issues;
- Establishing a deliberate selection process that enlists the community and uses evaluation criteria reflecting both the objectives of the program and site-specific considerations; and,
- Reaching out to non-farming neighbors to address their concerns and begin teaching them about how their food is grown.

From early on, the district enlisted the help of nonprofits and other public agencies with expertise in working with small-scale and beginning farmers, including California FarmLink, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Select Sonoma, and University of California Cooperative Extension. “These partnerships have been invaluable,” says Brennan Hunter. “They gave us the opportunity to capitalize on their experience and expertise. It really helped us to have the perspective of the farmer.”

California FarmLink, for example, played a pivotal role: publicizing the initiative to the agricultural community, drafting criteria and organizing a broad-based committee to evaluate applications. “We asked detailed questions about the farmer’s experience, marketing plan, financial plan, production strategies. We wanted to make sure people who would be leasing these properties would be successful because it was a pilot project,” says Executive Director Stephen Schwartz. “Because these properties are adjacent to residential areas, we wanted farmers who would look at that and see an opportunity, not a threat. Additionally, the criteria gave priority to farm operations that are compatible with farming on the urban fringe and to farmers with insecure land tenure.”

### For more information:

**Sonoma County  
Agricultural Preservation  
and Open Space District**  
[www.sonoma-county.org](http://www.sonoma-county.org)

**California FarmLink**  
[www.californiafarmlink.org](http://www.californiafarmlink.org)

**Community Alliance with  
Family Farms**  
[www.caff.org](http://www.caff.org)

**National Farm Transition  
Network**  
[www.extension.iastate.edu](http://www.extension.iastate.edu)

The selection process culminated earlier this year when Wayne James of Tierra Vegetables and Ken Orchard of Orchard Farms, signed five-year, renewable leases. The leases reflect a variety of considerations, including the farmers’ needs, neighbors’ concerns, and previous district policies and commitments. Homes cannot be built on the properties, but the leases allow the farmers to build outbuildings such as storage sheds and farm stands. The leases also restrict the use of agrichemicals, hours of operation and use of raw manure.

Neither farmer used conventional agrichemicals or raw manure, says Brennan Hunter. “Both emphasized that they wanted to be good neighbors.” Still, both Brennan Hunter and Schwartz say it would be preferable to offer land that already has agricultural improvements on it to give the farmer the option of living on the land.

The initiative has had other repercussions. Media coverage resulted in landowners approaching the district about helping them with lease options and about linking with a beginning farmer for a potential farm transition. Moreover, other California land protection organizations have shown interest in working with California FarmLink on similar projects.

“It’s estimated that half of American farmers are farming leased land,” Schwartz says. “Leasing may be a better strategy for beginning farmers to establish their operation.”

Schwartz says that by helping the next generation of farmers secure land tenure, land protection organizations can provide a crucial bridge between the conservation community and the agricultural community. “The agricultural community is interested in productive farmland, not viewsheds. By working with beginning farmers, land trusts have a chance to build relationships with folks who will be living on and protecting lands in the future, which supports land trusts’ long-term mission.”

At the same time, projects such as the Sonoma Small Farms Initiative have great potential to build community support for land conservation. “In the long term, a key to whether community will value agricultural land and open space includes how much value the community is getting from that land,” says Schwartz. “We believe the smaller-scale and organic farms can be more compatible with farming on the urban fringe. Having a diversified, beautiful farm can add to the nutrition of the community, the economy and the beauty of the area. And it helps that community cherish the land and want to protect it.”  B.H.

## Massachusetts' Farmers Grow Their Own Future

Massachusetts vegetable growers have turned a potential marketing pickle into a red-hot opportunity. When Minnesota-based M.A. Gedney Co. announced in April that it was putting its Cains pickle factory in South Deerfield, Massachusetts, up for sale, the 16 farmers who supplied its 27 tons of cucumbers and five tons of peppers knew there was trouble for agriculture in the fertile Connecticut River Valley. Gedney said it would shut the factory down if it couldn't find a buyer within three months. By July, four of the farmers—together with an official at the factory—put together a deal to buy the plant and its brands of pickles, relishes, peppers and sauces.

Beginning as Jewett Pickle Co. in the 1890s, the pickle factory remained a local, family operation until being bought by Cains in 1995. Five years later, Gedney purchased the business to tap into the food service market, including restaurants and schools.

Less than a year before announcing plans to sell the plant, Gedney unveiled a new line of spicy pickles and relishes and more than doubled nearby warehouse space. The factory, estimated to pump \$10 million annually into the local economy, had even begun working with nearby growers in the mid-1990s to supply hot peppers and cherry peppers for the first time. Cains employed about 145 workers, their ranks swelling to 400 in summer.

This spring's announcement drew more than 65 potential buyers, and three solid offers were made—including the successful deal by which local farmers grew their own future. In July, the plant was purchased by a partnership called Oxford Foods LLC, consisting of Harvest Farm of Whately, Donald Patterson's farm in Sunderland, and Stephen Bruscoe's farm and the Teddy Smiaroski farm in Hatfield, along with former Cains CEO Jeffrey Morse.

Because it was literally rooted in the land that produces product, partner Bernie Smiaroski says, this was the best option for saving the plant. "We have a history there and know what that plant needs," he says. "We've been with it for over 40 years."

In addition to working capital from First Pioneer Farm Credit and financing from Citizens Bank of Boston, the deal was aided by a loan and grant package from the state worth over \$900,000. "It was definitely worth it, because of preserving jobs and preserving open space," says Smiaroski. One of the other bidders—a socially responsible investment firm that had planned to involve employees, farmers and the community in ownership—agreed to step aside to help the local Oxford Foods LLC partnership succeed.

Although Gedney retains Cains retail business—about one-third of the operation—the Massachusetts plant continues co-packing, industrial and food-service production under the Cains, Oxford, Deerfield, Sugarloaf and Max's brands, with customers from Maine to Florida and as far west as the Mississippi River, including Sysco Foods and Friendly Ice Cream Co.

"The impact of the business on the local economy cannot be understated," says Joshua Morse, marketing manager of Oxford Foods LLC. "Had the deal not gone through, hundreds of jobs would have been lost, and it would have been detrimental to the local economy and to local growers here."

Though most of its raw produce comes from its four partner farms—representing 2,300 acres—Oxford buys from other local growers as needed. "We have quality, thriving growers here," Morse says. The new partnership, with about 135 of its full-time workers still on the payroll, wants to continue supporting those growers as it expands business.

While the factory changed hands as this year's harvest ripened, he adds, "We haven't missed a beat. It's been a seamless effort. We're excited about it."

The growers themselves are just as enthused and pleased that their efforts could serve as an example for farmers elsewhere. "Perseverance pays off," says Smiaroski.

Harvest Farm co-owner David Wojciechowski adds, "Every time Cains changed hands, there would be some real anxiety and discomfort for growers. We're looking forward to growing for ourselves. ... It's the freshest idea we've had in agriculture in about 10 years." 🚜 R.D.

**"We're looking forward to growing for ourselves. ... It's the freshest idea we've had in agriculture in about 10 years."**

**—David Wojciechowski, co-owner, Harvest Farm**



Gary Gemme of Harvest Farm, at an Oxford Foods press conference.

Photo courtesy of The (Greenfield, Mass.) Recorder/Adam Orth

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### For more information:

**Smart Growth America**  
www.smartgrowthamerica.com

**National Transportation  
Enhancements Clearinghouse**  
www.enhancements.org

**Red Hills Conservancy**  
www.ttrs.org

**Blueprint 2000**  
www.talchamber.com

**The Trust for Public Land**  
www.tpl.org

**South Carolina Coastal  
Conservation League**  
www.scccl.org

recreation department to set up an adequate framework where this money can flow through and be used in the most effective way possible," says Slade Gleaton, director of TPL's Charleston office. "Even though it's not as much funding as we wanted it to be, it's a source of local funding for land conservation, and that's critical," he explains. "You have the opportunity to lead development—be proactive instead of reactive."

### Keys to Success

In both Florida and South Carolina, proponents of the ballot measures relied on multi-pronged public education campaigns to convey their message. Among the tools they used: direct mail; signs on buses; newspaper, radio and television advertising; and presentations with key civic and community groups. Some additional features organizers believe are key to success:

- The actual ballot language. "It's always about the ballot language," says TPL's Baughman. "You have to assume that the ballot language is all the voter has to go on."
- Materials that address the particular interests of key audiences. "In some of the more rural areas, the green space issue is more important. In urban areas, mass transit is more important," says Graham of the Charleston initiative. In Leon County, the campaign produced some highly targeted direct mail pieces. For example, a flyer aimed at Republicans and Democrats over the age of 50 focused on how fiscal accountability was built into the proposal because the poll showed it was a key concern among these voters.
- Broad-based support. In both communities, diverse interests collaborated to support the initiative. In addition to bringing together environmental and business groups, support for the Leon County initiative crossed race, party and other demographic lines.

Reaching out to the African-American community was critical, says Baughman. The ballot measure will fund significant improvements in Tallahassee's south side, home to a significant percentage of the city's African-American population. "We knew the African-American vote could make or break the election." *B.H.*



*American Farmland Trust*

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