



**TRUST FOR  
PUBLIC  
LAND®**

Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

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# Measuring access

Lessons learned from TPL's efforts to protect urban and community green spaces

Photo: Joe Martinez



PS 156 Waverly and LS 392 - Brooklyn, NY

Access to the outdoors is a **fundamental human need and essential to our health and well-being.**

# PEOPLE NEED PARKS AND GREEN SPACES



But great parks aren't created equal.  
**Today, one in three people, including 28 million children, don't have a park or green space within a 10-minute walk (half mile) of home.**



Communities that value and invest in  
**OUTDOOR ACCESS**  
**FOR ALL ARE...**



**HEALTHIER**



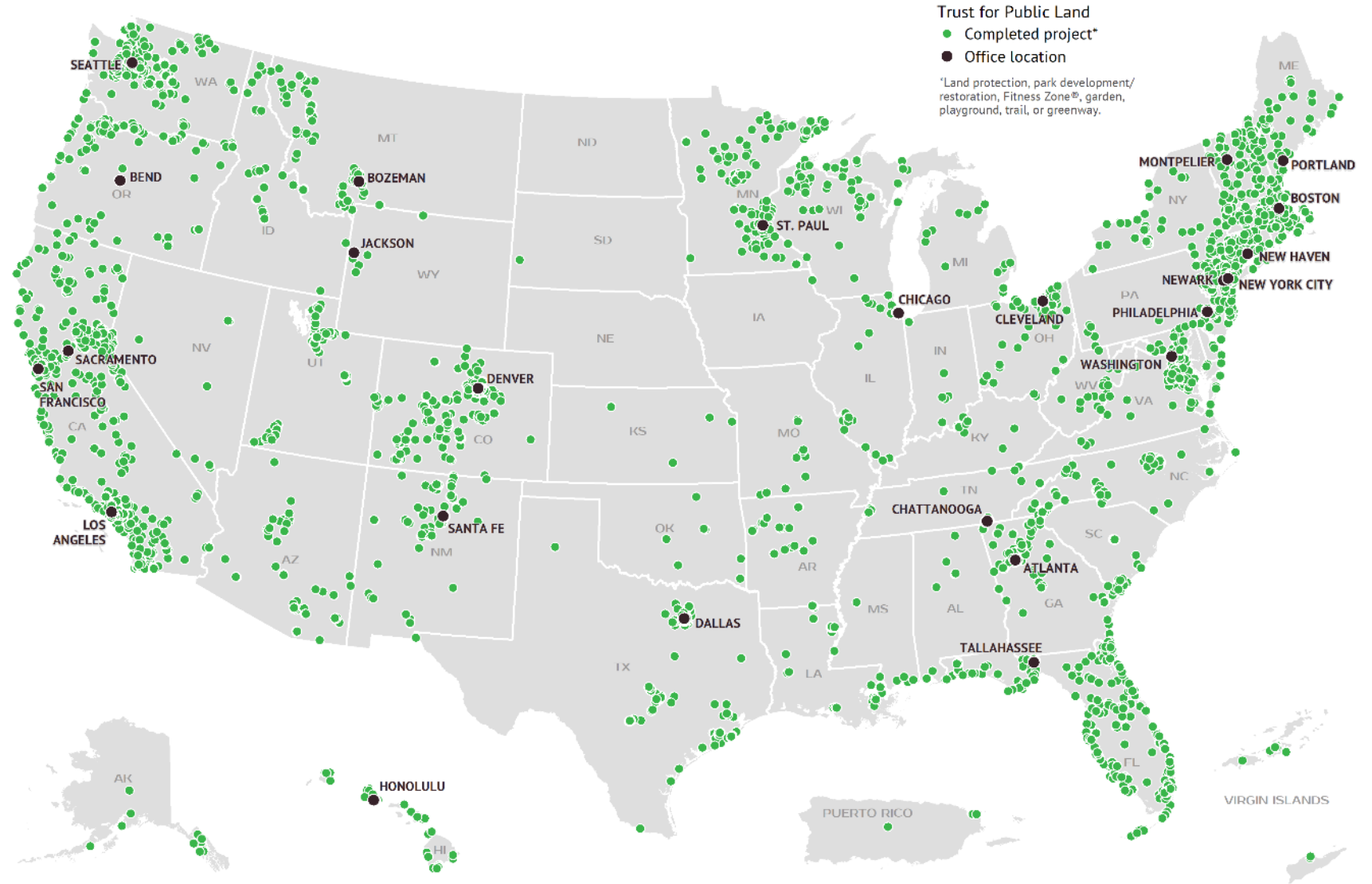
**MORE RESILIENT**



**MORE INCLUSIVE**

# NATIONAL FOOTPRINT. LOCAL IMPACT.

Completed Projects  
1973 – December 2025



# MEASURING PROXIMITY TO PEOPLE



**4M**

ACRES  
PROTECTED



**5,504**

OUTDOOR SPACES  
CREATED



**9.7M**

PEOPLE  
CONNECTED TO  
THE OUTDOORS



**\$111B**

SECURED IN  
PUBLIC FUNDING

# MEASURING PROXIMITY TO PEOPLE



**4M**

ACRES  
PROTECTED

Equivalent of 2M  
acres protected  
lands goal



**5,504**

OUTDOOR SPACES  
CREATED



**9.7M**

PEOPLE  
CONNECTED TO  
THE OUTDOORS

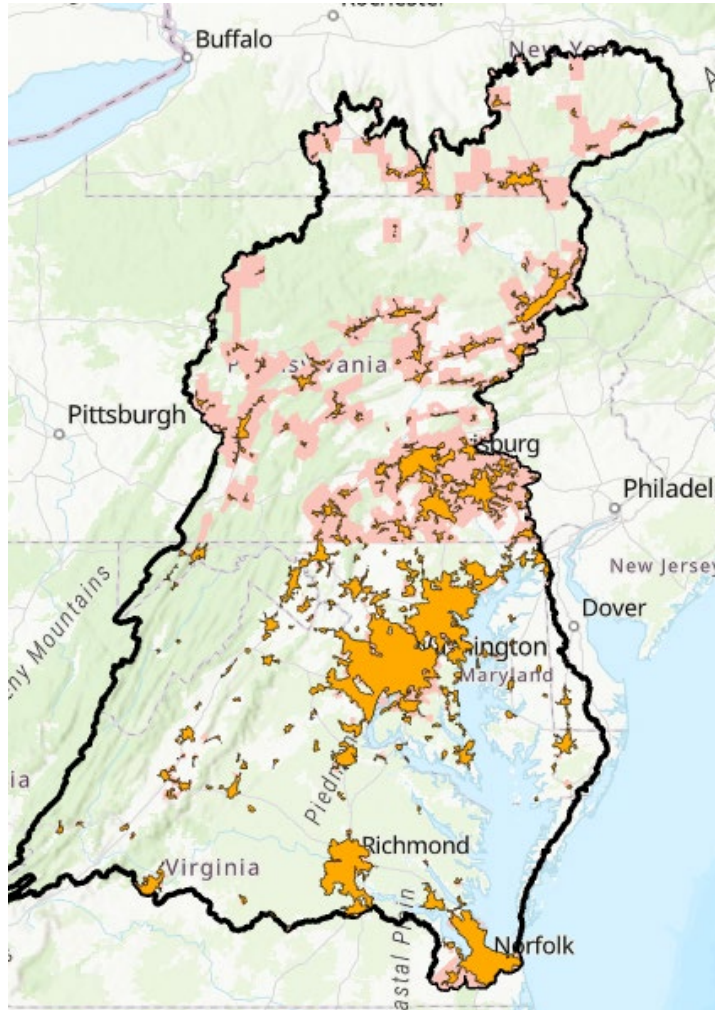
10-minute walk of  
all projects  
(~2,000 people  
per site)



**\$111B**

SECURED IN  
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# URBAN AREA PUBLIC ACCESS CONTEXT



Chesapeake Bay watershed urban areas

## In the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, urban areas contain:

**79%** of population (14.7M of 18.6M)

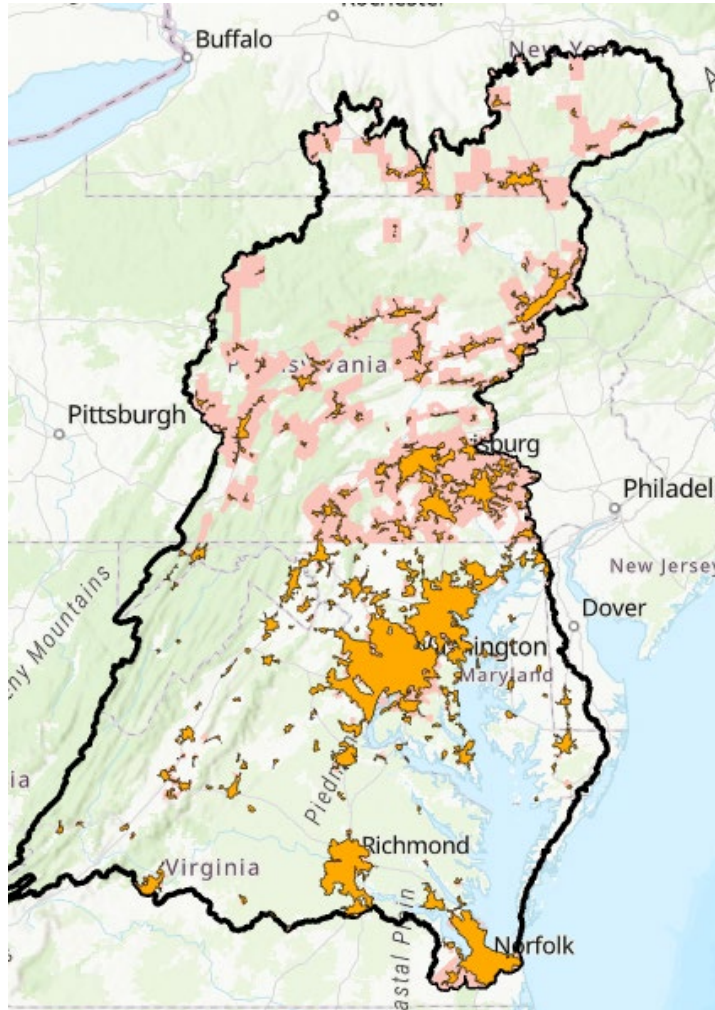
**8%** of land area (3.4M acres of 42.5M)

**3%** of protected lands (.3M of 9.1M acres)

*About 2/3 are publicly accessible*

**8.8M** of the 14.7M urban area residents (60%) live within a 10-minute walk of a publicly accessible protected land

# HYPOTHETICAL GOALS – FOR DISCUSSION



Chesapeake Bay watershed urban areas

## Urban and community green space acreage

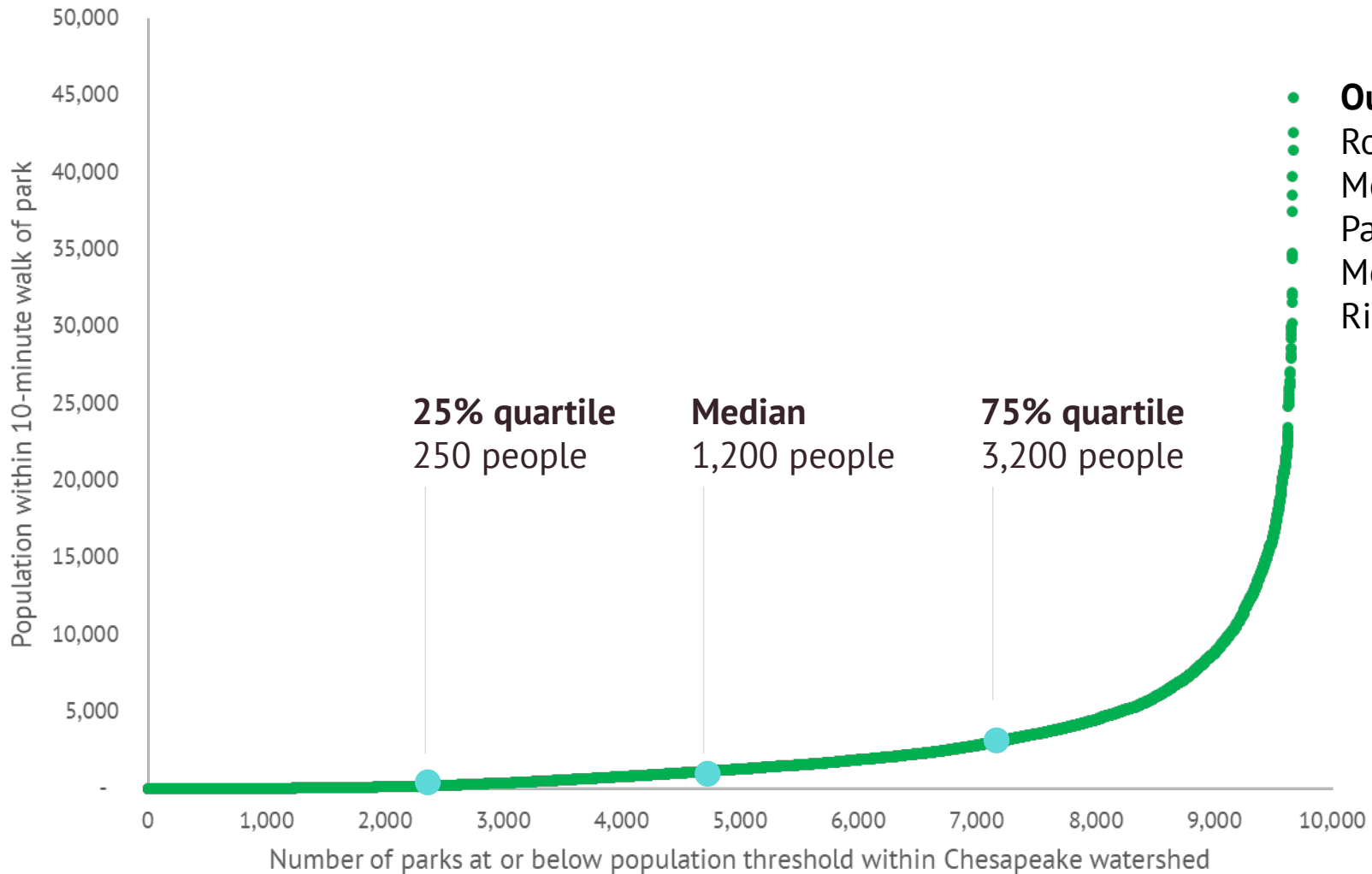
- From 300,000 to 350,000 (+50,000) acres

## 10-Minute Walk

- From 60 to 68% (+1M population)

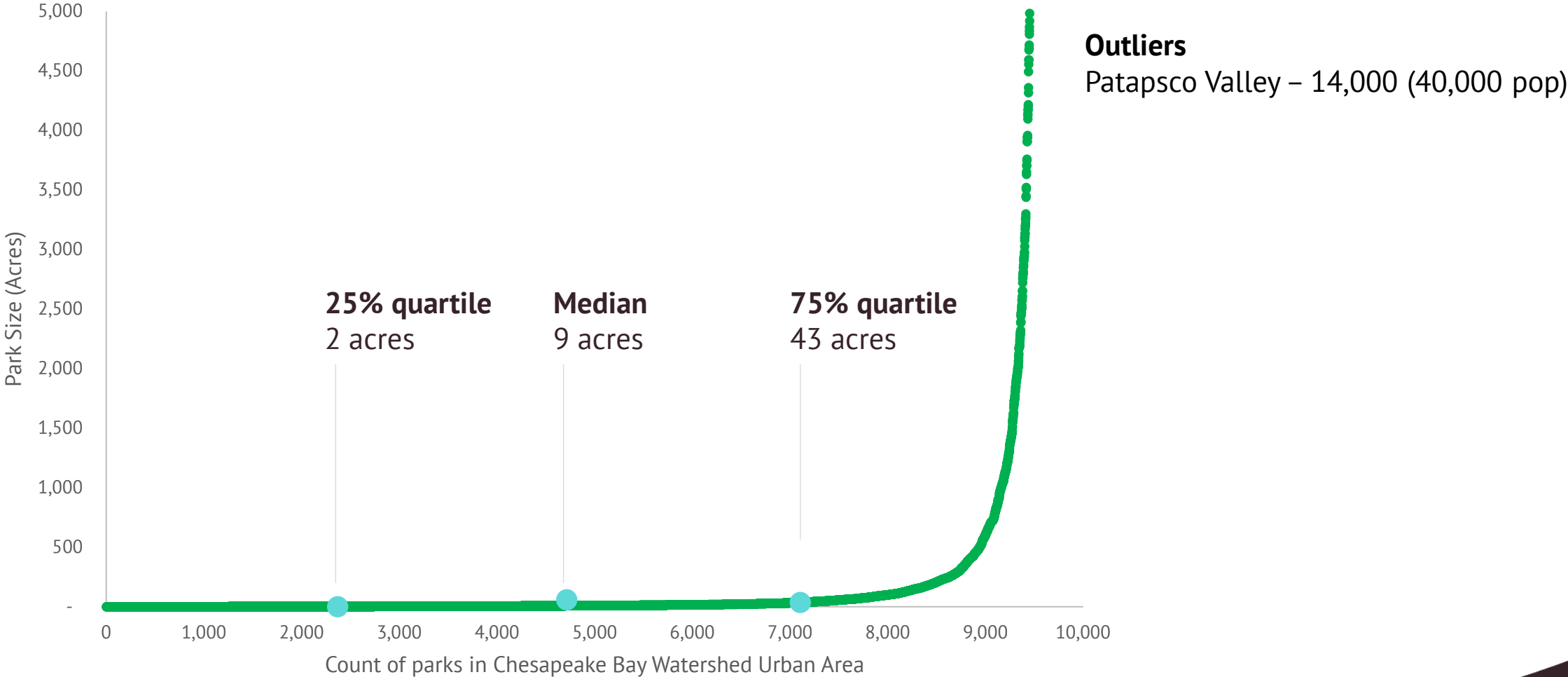
How many urban and community green spaces does that require?

# POPULATION WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE



- **Outliers**
- Rock Creek Park (DC) – 100,000 (1,920 acres)
- Meridian Hill Park (DC) – 40,000 (12)
- Patterson Park (Baltimore) – 35,000 (140)
- Monument Ave (Richmond) – 30,000 (13)
- Riverfront Park (Harrisburg) – 20,000 (50)

# TYPICAL URBAN AREA PARK SIZE



# ILLUSTRATIVE SCENARIOS

## PROTECTING MOST URBAN ACREAGE

- From 300,000 to 350,000 acres
- 500 X 100 acre preserved lands



## PROTECTING NEAR MOST PEOPLE

- 2M people within walking distance
- 500 x 4,000 people



## PROTECTING IN PARK ACCESS GAPS

- Increase 10MW from 60% to 68% (1M more people)
- 200 x 4,000 people

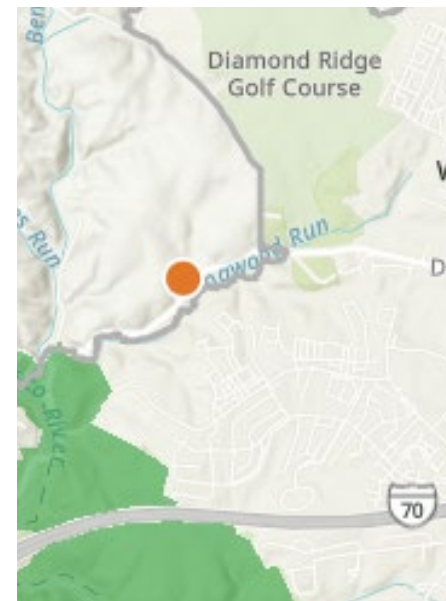




# Dogwood Road

## Baltimore County, MD

- 110 acres
  - 2,000 people within walking distance
  - ~500 people without existing park access
- (May not technically be within urban area)*

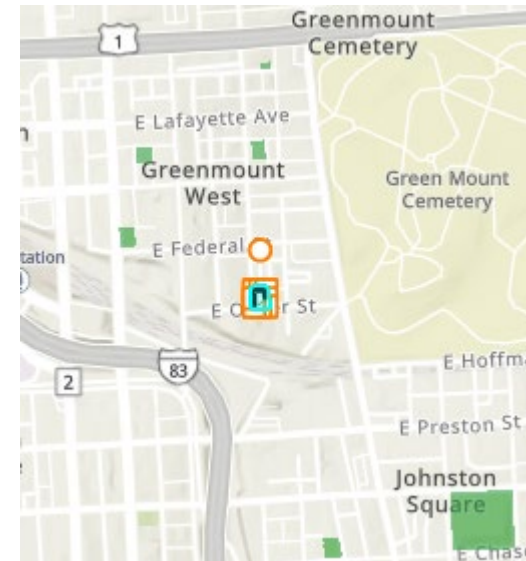




# Barclay Oliver Garden

## Baltimore, MD

- <1 acre
- **7,000 people within walking distance**
- 0 people without existing park access



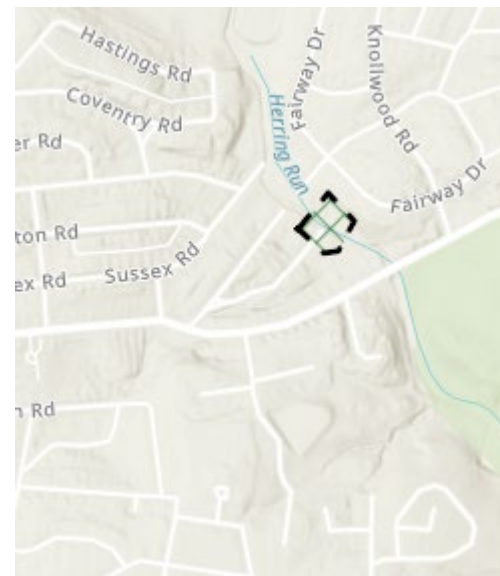
Picture: Baltimore Green Space



# Worthington Road

## Towson, MD

- Part of Six Bridges Trail project
- 2 acres
- 2,000 people within walking distance
- **2,000 people without existing park access**



Picture: Baltimore County

# DATA REQUIREMENTS

## PROTECTING MOST URBAN ACREAGE

- From 300,000 to 350,000 acres
- 500 X 100 acre preserved lands

- Inventory of urban/community greenspace
- **Sum acres**

## PROTECTING NEAR MOST PEOPLE

- 2M people within walking distance
- 500 x 4,000 people

- Inventory of urban/community greenspace
- 10MW network analysis (e.g. ParkServe)
- **Sum people**

## PROTECTING IN PARK ACCESS GAPS

- Increase 10MW from 60% to 68% (1M more people)
- 200 x 4,000 people

- Inventory of urban/community greenspace
- 10MW network analysis (e.g. ParkServe)
- Completed inventory of existing public space
- **Sum people**