

# Petition to Prevent a Land Swap of Chicopee State Park Protected Land

We the undersigned citizens are petitioning to prevent a land swap that would aid in the development of the 57.46-acre forest commonly known as the Slate Conservation Area in Chicopee, MA. We ask your support in denying any requested land swap between the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), which manages the Chicopee State Park, and the City of Chicopee and/or Westover Metropolitan Development Corporation (WMDC) that involves 2 triangular parcels of Article 97 protected Chicopee State Park land that jut into the area commonly known as the Slate Conservation Area.

## Background

- The area known as the Slate Road Conservation Area abuts the Chicopee State Park and has been used by the public for hiking, biking, and nature walks for decades as a natural extension of the state park.
- WMDC acquired the 57.46 acres from the City of Chicopee in 2009, with the intention of developing it. State trail maps continue to list this property as privately owned public use land.
- WMDC applied for a zone change from Residential A (RES-A) to Industrial Planned Urban Development 1 (IPUD-1) in February 2021.
- 100% of the abutters opposed the zone change. A petition with over 300 signatures asking that the zone change be denied was submitted to the Chicopee City Council.
- On 3/2/21, WMDC asked to withdraw their zone change request. This was denied by the Chicopee City Council by a vote of 9-3 with one out-of-chair.
- On 3/2/21, the WMDC zone change request was denied by a vote of 12-0 with one out-of-chair.
- WMDC seeks to acquire the 2 triangular parcels of Chicopee State Park protected land to incorporate them into their proposed IPUD-1 development. These 2 parcels, together with the 57.46 acres known as the Slate Road Conservation Area, and other properties WMDC previously acquired form a contiguous 110 acre parcel they wish to develop under the IPUD-1 regulations. This development would abut the entire western edge of the Chicopee State Park and the Slate Road residential neighborhood.
- There are streams near the 2 triangular parcels of land in question and those parcels could be part of the watershed of those streams. Keeping that land protected under Article 97 would ensure the ongoing protection of any watershed in the area.
- There is so little green space left in the city that this forest holds more equity than potential tax revenue and/or job growth. We are working to have the land revert back to City of Chicopee ownership and be protected under Article 97 as conservation land.

For more information, please go to: <https://slateconservationareaalliance.org/>.