

Malvern-Willistown Greenway Master Plan



MALVERN
Borough



WILLISTOWN CONSERVATION TRUST



This study was funded in part by a grant from the Green Region
The PECO Open Space Program



Malvern - Willistown Greenway Master Plan



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February 2013

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Introduction

In 2010, leaders and stakeholders in the arenas of open space preservation and trail/public access creation in Willistown Township and Malvern Borough embarked on a multi-phased effort to make an inter-municipal greenway. There are a variety of publicly accessible open and recreational spaces in both municipalities, but most of them are geographically separated from each other. Consequently, access and use of them requires visitors to arrive by motorized vehicles or risk an unsafe and often long walk or bicycle ride. The overall goal of the Greenway Plan is to connect these resources by a safe and well-marked trail system. With it in place, members of the community will be encouraged to select walking or non-motorized means of transportation with healthy benefits to both the users and the environment.

The trail network is expected to be a combination of existing and new pedestrian ways ranging from community sidewalks to hard surface trails to mown paths and natural, soft surface trails. The goal is to provide trail surfaces of stabilized materials that will support pedestrians and non-motorized means such as bicycles (where permitted) and strollers. When practical, trails will be handicap accessible.

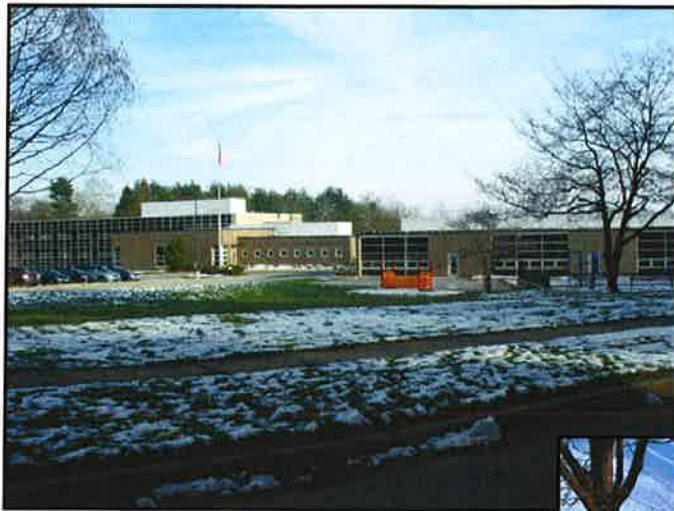
In communities that are largely developed, trail systems are much harder to establish than in undeveloped and partially developed communities. The network will require a variety of ownership configurations. These will include public sidewalks and pathways through dedicated open spaces such as parks and nature preserves, trails created within existing rights-of-way, and newly acquired easements across private properties and possible land acquisitions. For well-established municipalities such as Malvern and Willistown, trail systems are typically created when many individual links are completed, one by one, that ultimately connect. This resulting network is seldom achieved all at one time but over time and in phases. The Malvern-Willistown Greenway will become a reality with this approach and a commitment over the next several years.



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Greenway Goals

- Create a trail system that connects open spaces, parks, public facilities (library, municipal offices, schools, post office), Malvern Business District, SEPTA station, private schools, historic and cultural sights, and neighborhoods.
- Engage users and stakeholders to review, support, and establish a continuous Greenway that serves the community.
- Encourage the community to walk or bicycle to destinations rather than use motorized vehicles and drive, benefiting the users and the environment.
- Formulate a Master Plan that will be adopted and inform future land development and redevelopment decisions at municipal review and approval points.
- Seek funding and donations from private and public sources to implement the Greenway Plan.



Planning Process

The Borough of Malvern, Willistown Township, and Willistown Conservation Trust collaborated to initiate a process to prepare this Greenway Plan. A Steering Committee was established that defined a two phased project. This effort began with selection of a professional consultant to work closely with them to define the project and course of action that was to be undertaken. Phase 1 work was to identify and secure grant funds to undertake and complete the Greenway Plan. The initial phase was successful with the submission of a request and the award of a planning grant from the PECO Green Regions Program. The two municipalities provided funding for the grant application and the required grant match. The funds were formally awarded to the Township and Borough in the Spring of 2011.

Phase 2, Greenway Master Plan, was begun in July 2011. Throughout the successive 16 months the Steering Committee met regularly to review plans and alternative alignments for the Greenway. Criteria were established and utilized to select from the various options. The criteria, not in rank order, were as follows:

- Use public lands and rights-of-way, wherever possible, rather than private property
- Select routes for user safety, i.e., separated from traffic, visible places, at traffic lights on major roads
- Make accessible routes
- Provide high quality and diverse experiences
- Connect as many community features and neighborhoods as possible
- Create linkages to other local and regional trails
- Utilize existing trail segments and sidewalks where feasible

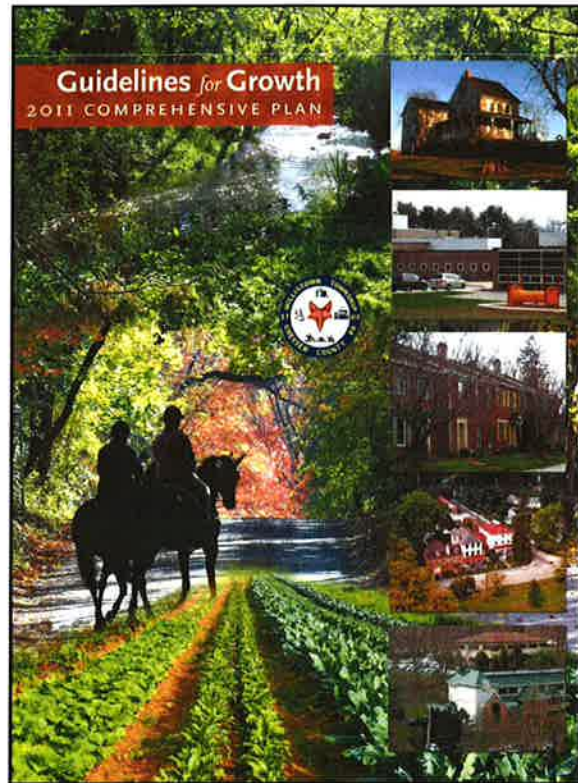
Alternatives were narrowed to the best options. All alternatives and sites were visited often with members of the Steering Committee and periodically municipal officials, staff, and advisory board members. Site visits commonly narrowed the options to the most feasible and practical solutions. Where there is inadequate roadside right-of-way, or where no other options are possible to complete the trail network, trail easements across private property were indicated on the plan as the best option. These were limited to relatively few.



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For institutional properties including the public and private schools and church properties, the planning team contacted each and met on the properties to review the alignment and explore options. This effort included the Great Valley School District Building & Grounds Committee and Board. Other individual property owners (eight) were contacted. In most cases, future trail easements were found to be acceptable. Where they were not, alternatives were proposed wherever possible.

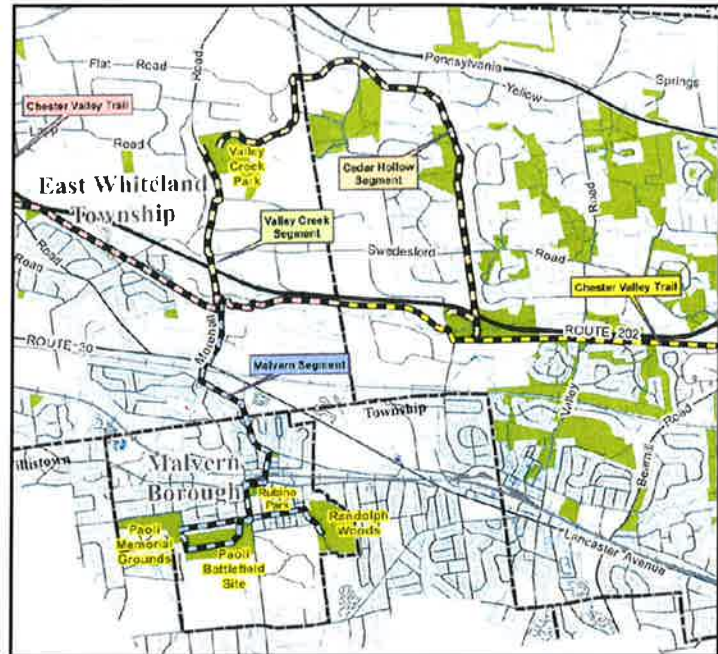
Once the options had been reduced to those considered to be the best, the planning team presented them during public sessions to the Malvern Borough Council, Willistown Township Board of Supervisors, Willistown Township Park and Recreation Board, and senior staff of the PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Chester County Planning Commission. Comments received during these sessions were used to modify the proposed Greenway Plan. This Plan is consistent with the Willistown Comprehensive Plan, *Guidelines for Growth*, adopted March 14, 2011 and the Malvern Comprehensive Plan adopted June 19, 2012. The proposed draft Greenway Plan was presented in a public community meeting held in November 2012. The draft plan was posted on the municipal websites in advance of the meeting and comments were accepted by e-mail and at the public session. Those comments have been addressed and included in the Greenway Plan presented in this document.



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The Greenway Plan

What is a Greenway? For this project, it is defined as a corridor which links key places in the community allowing users to visit these locations on foot or non-motorized vehicle. Further, within this corridor is found a trail on which the user travels typically flanked by some open or green space. That green space may be woods, meadows, old fields, or mowed lawns that help to buffer the user and create a pleasant environment to walk, run or ride. Ideally, it is separated from vehicular traffic reducing the intrusion of noise and air pollution. The user generally finds the experience pleasant and convenient as a means of travel and for recreation.



The proposed Greenway Plan is the result of a detailed planning process to connect open spaces, neighborhoods and community facilities within Malvern Borough and Willistown. It is also intended to link to other local and regional trails to give residents and visitors the opportunity to reach these community resources without having to drive. The public process has resulted in narrowing the alternative alignment to a preferred Greenway trail system as shown on the maps that follow and in the description.

An example of the regional trail system noted in the Plan is the proposed Patriots Path depicted here.

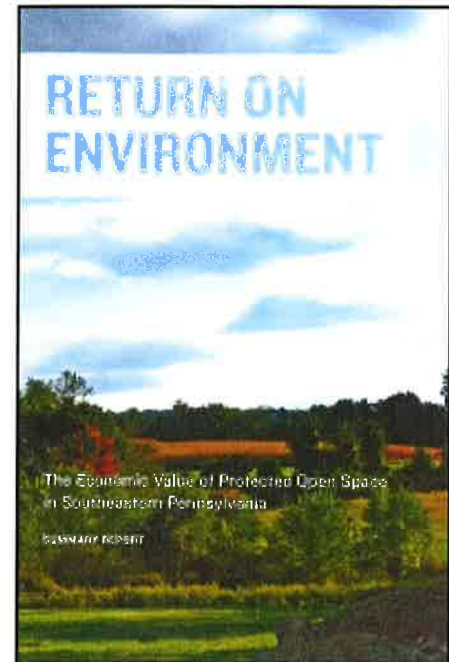
The trail within the corridor will not be consistently the same along its entire length. By necessity, in a built-up community like Malvern and this part of Willistown, it will vary in width and surface material. For the Malvern-Willistown Greenway, the design intent is to have a minimum consistent width of 6 feet. The exception will be where existing trails and sidewalks are a lesser width, or where the space available to carry the trail is too narrow. For this Greenway, surface materials will also vary. The trail will likely be a combination of soft surfaces (e.g., dirt, woodchips), concrete, gravel, and asphalt. Maximum accessibility will be achieved through the use of hard surfaces such as concrete, asphalt, and crushed stone. Except where segments are in place today, the selected surface materials will depend upon specific site conditions. For example, where a trail traverses an area with slope, gravel is a poor choice as it migrates with any water runoff and under foot traffic. Asphalt trails are a common selection as they require little maintenance and last many years without repair, sealing, or replacement. In the design phase, trails will be specified to industry standards with a goal of using sustainable materials. Surface recommendations are made in the descriptions presented in this document.

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Maintenance responsibilities will be determined on a case by case basis. In public spaces such as parks and schools, routine maintenance (e.g., tree removal, repair) is done by the municipality, school, and volunteers. Trails are normally not plowed in winter to allow recreational use (e.g., cross country skiing, sledding). Sidewalks used to reach facilities such as schools are shoveled by the municipality, school, or business.

Liability in public spaces and trails is limited by State statutes where no fees are charged and in the absence of negligence. The statute is known as the Recreation Use of Land and Water Act (PA Statute Title 68, Section 477-1 et. seq.) The owners of land protected by the Act include public and private fee title holders, as well as lessees and other persons or organizations in control of the premises. In addition, municipalities and non-profit organizations owning land used by the public carry insurance.

Park and recreation surveys done by Willistown Township in 2004 and 2009 indicated that trails, hiking and walking were among the top rated activities. Recent studies in 2011 by the Green Space Alliance and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (*Return on Environment – The Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania*) document that there are numerous economic values associated with open space and trails serving the community.



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Overall Plan

The overall Greenway Plan is depicted on the map that follows the text. The study area includes all of Malvern Borough and the northern portion (approximately one-third) of Willistown Township. The approximate boundaries of the study area are: Malvern Borough/ East Whiteland Township border (north), Sugartown Road (west), School Lane and east to Grubb Road (south), and Waynesborough Road near the Easttown Township border (east). The base map for this study that shows the roads/road names, parcels, parks, institutions, and streams was prepared from the Chester County Geographic Information System (GIS) current as of August 2011.

The places to be connected by the proposed Greenway are highlighted in colors on the Plan and include parks and open spaces, institutions, Malvern Central Business District, Malvern SEPTA station, private open spaces, and other regional trails. The Greenway is shown in a dark green and paralleled by solid or dashed magenta lines where sidewalks are to be used for pedestrians. Other trails (e.g., The Patriots Path, Chester Valley Trail, Paoli-CVT Connector) are shown in dark purple.

The following is a description of the Greenway from southwest to north to southeast in a clockwise fashion. The overall Greenway Plan and enlargements of the west, central and east sections are included at the end of this document.



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West Section

This portion of the Greenway will connect to the Sugartown Elementary School, School Lane, Harvey Lane, and Sugartown Road in Willistown, and to the neighborhoods in the vicinity. It is also possible for an extension south to the proposed Kirkwood-Okehocking Trail Corridor as identified in the Township Comprehensive Plan. A section of asphalt trail exists between Harvey Lane and Long Lane, and the Great Valley School District has a trail easement along School Lane. The trail from this location to Paoli Pike is anticipated to be asphalt or sidewalk. Easements are required for the properties between the School and Paoli Pike along the east side



of Sugartown Road. Crossing Paoli Pike is possible by an existing pedestrian activated traffic light that was recently upgraded with handicap ramps by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. A meeting with property owners near the intersection identified concerns about vehicle speeds at the intersection and pedestrian safety. A possible solution is an adjustment in the light cycle to provide time for crossing with traffic stopped in all directions. It is noted that the crossing of Paoli Pike, a major collector roadway, is necessary to complete the

Greenway and is only proposed in the Plan to be crossed where traffic lights exist or where they might be logically and realistically added. Pedestrian activated lights are the type suggested for these crossings. Another option (flashing yellow lights/signs/crosswalks) has been installed further west on Paoli Pike at East Goshen Park. A pedestrian activated light would be required at Long Lane if the Greenway were to be extended from/to School Lane. This segment is shown only as a secondary route and would be dependent on a traffic light.

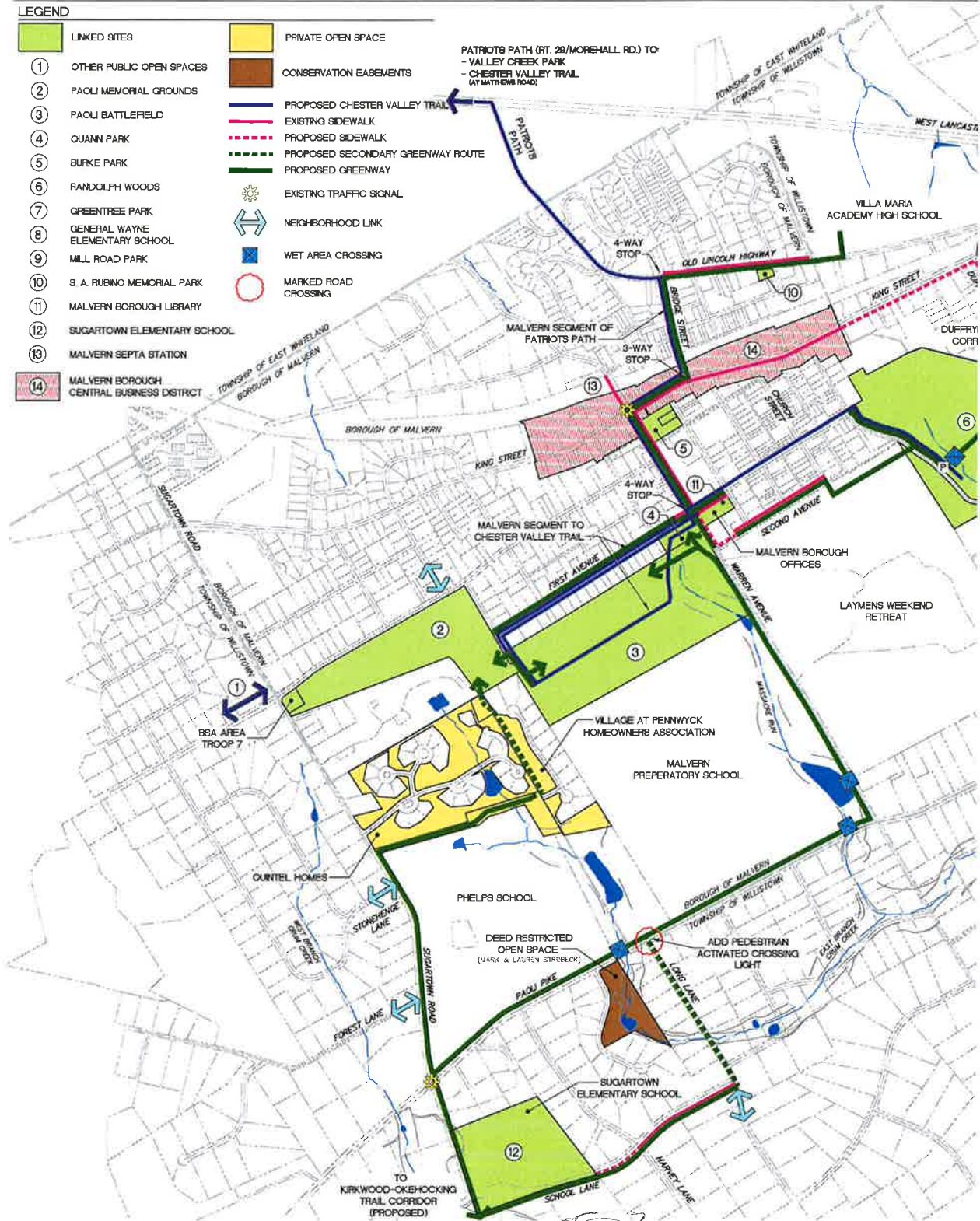


North of Paoli Pike, the Greenway will extend along Sugartown Road and Remington Lane along the frontage of the Norman T. Phelps School. This segment provides easy access to the neighborhoods to the west utilizing the adjacent residential streets (e.g., Forest Lane, Stonehenge Lane, Monument Avenue). A potential link is shown to and through the Villages at Pennwyck to the Paoli Memorial Grounds and Paoli Battlefield. Private trails and signage exist in that community for its residents. The Greenway is shown extending east along the north side of Paoli Pike on the Phelps School, ReMed, and Malvern Preparatory School properties. This alignment can be within the 60 to 80-foot right-of-way of the major collector roadway or preferably set into the property 40-50 feet allowing it to be further from the traffic and noise on this busy road.

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LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|
|  | LINKED SITES |  | PRIVATE OPEN SPACE |
| ① | OTHER PUBLIC OPEN SPACES |  | CONSERVATION EASEMENTS |
| ② | PAOLI MEMORIAL GROUNDS |  | PROPOSED CHESTER VALLEY TRAIL |
| ③ | PAOLI BATTLEFIELD |  | EXISTING SIDEWALK |
| ④ | QUINN PARK |  | PROPOSED SIDEWALK |
| ⑤ | BURKE PARK |  | PROPOSED SECONDARY GREENWAY ROUTE |
| ⑥ | RANDOLPH WOODS |  | PROPOSED GREENWAY |
| ⑦ | GREENTREE PARK |  | EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL |
| ⑧ | GENERAL WAYNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL |  | NEIGHBORHOOD LINK |
| ⑨ | MILL ROAD PARK |  | WET AREA CROSSING |
| ⑩ | S. A. RUBINO MEMORIAL PARK |  | MARKED ROAD CROSSING |
| ⑪ | MALVERN BOROUGH LIBRARY | | |
| ⑫ | SUGARTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | | |
| ⑬ | MALVERN SEPTA STATION | | |
| ⑭ | MALVERN BOROUGH CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT | | |



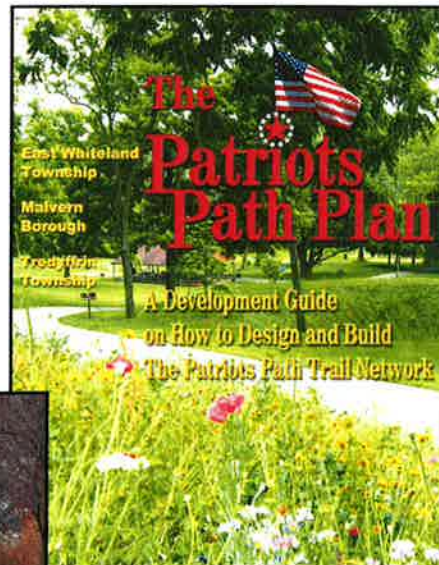
West Section

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At Warren Avenue, the Greenway will turn north along the Malvern Prep School property (west side) to a location where it will enter the Paoli Battlefield and extend to First Avenue. There are many trails in the Paoli Battlefield and Memorial Grounds with access to historical information for recreation and education. At this juncture, it will connect to Quann Park and via sidewalks to the Malvern Borough Offices and Library, Burke Park, Malvern SEPTA station and the Central Business District. Additional sidewalks along King Street and Lloyd Avenue would provide a safe route of travel and a direct connection to the Business District and the Greenway. These new sidewalks along King Street to Duffryn Avenue will provide a secondary link to the Greenway. Completing a safe pedestrian route to Paoli will require a trail or sidewalks.



In the Business District, the trail will use the sidewalk system for access to the retail, office, and food establishments. From the center of the Borough, the Greenway will continue over the railroad tracks on Bridge Street (west side) to Old Lincoln Highway. At the 4-way STOP, it will turn east and follow the road on sidewalk to Rubino Memorial Park and Villa Maria Academy. At the same 4-way STOP, it will link to The Patriots Path which is planned to extend north and west to West Lancaster Avenue (Rt. 30) and beyond to Valley Creek Park and the Chester Valley Trail at Matthews Road. The Patriots Path is proposed as a loop trail and is intended to follow troop movements from 1777.



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Central Section

The central section of the Greenway Plan includes the eastern two-thirds of the Central Business District where sidewalks along King Street provide access to retail and office space along and adjacent to the main street. The Greenway will extend from Borough Hall one block south on Warren (east side) to Second Avenue where it will turn east. The trail will be added as part of the redevelopment of this corner. It will follow the north side of Second Avenue to Church Street where it will cross to the south side. It will continue just inside (south of) the property line of the Malvern Retreat property to the Borough's Randolph Woods. A trail easement has been discussed and found to be acceptable to the Retreat Board with proper signage and new or relocated fencing to direct trail users.



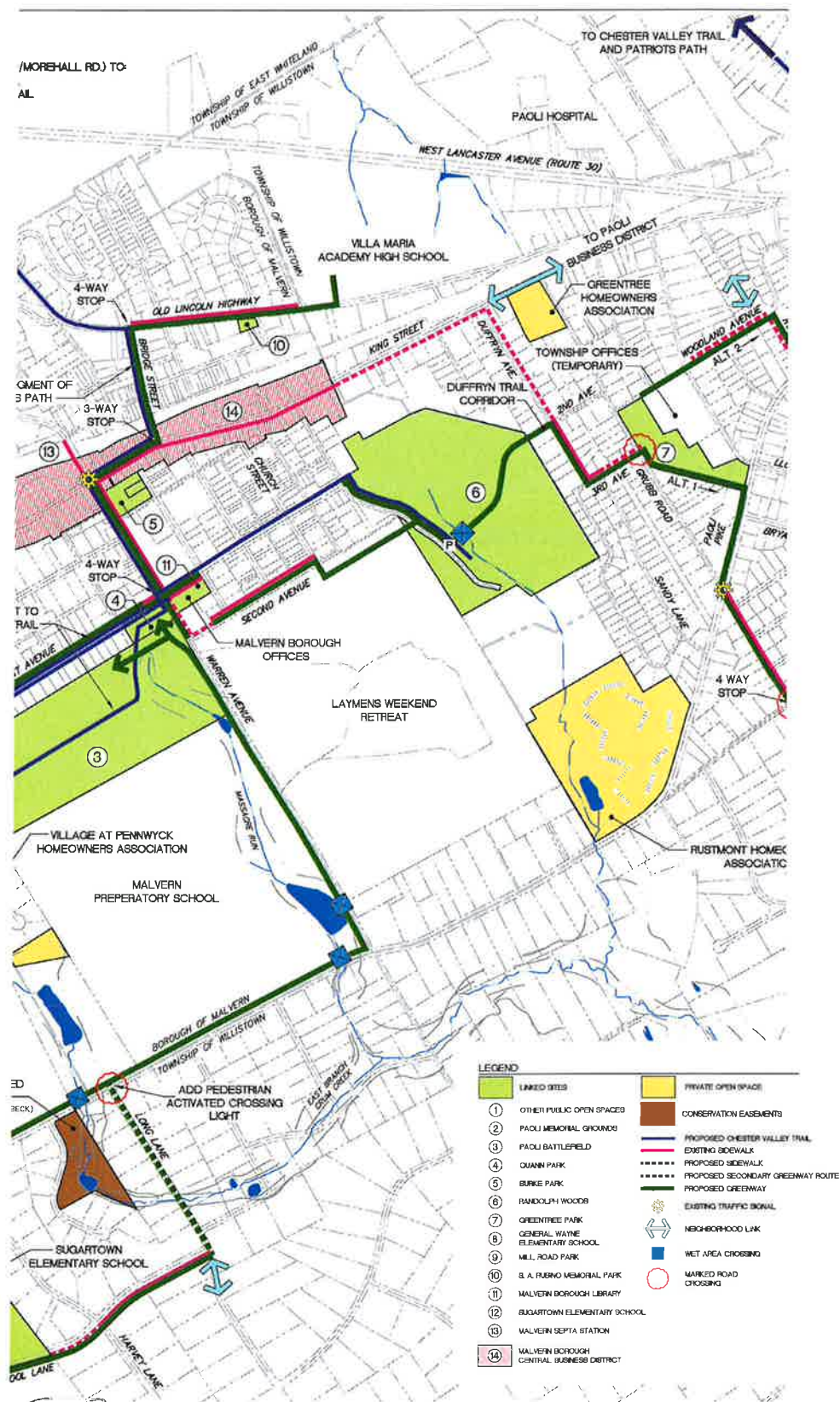
The Greenway will connect to an existing soft trail network in Randolph Woods, including a link through this large preserved open space to an existing trail. Randolph Woods is connected to the Duffryn Trail Corridor and the trail will link to Duffryn Avenue at 2nd Avenue and continue south to 3rd Avenue and Grubb Road. The Greenway will use existing and new sidewalks. Signage and pavement markings will be provided at Grubb Road for a safe crossing, and the Greenway will enter and traverse Greentree Park with a direct connection to the Township Offices.



From this location, there are two alternate routes to cross Paoli Pike to continue the Greenway to the southeast segments. These are described below in the East Section.



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Central Section

East Section

The Greenway will continue through Greentree Park south to Paoli Pike. A safe roadway crossing is not feasible at this location, and physical constraints on the south side of the Pike would make a trail impractical. Therefore, in this option the Greenway will follow Paoli Pike along the north side to the existing traffic light at Grubb Road. The trail would be grade separated possibly with a barrier to help protect the user, and it would be aligned to minimize impacts on existing trees.

There are three intervening private properties, and easements or trail corridor acquisitions across the frontage of these parcels would be required. A pedestrian activated crossing at the Paoli Pike/Grubb Road intersection will be used to safely cross Paoli Pike. Based on safety concerns raised by some residents for pedestrians crossing the intersection, a change in the cycle or the length of time the light is red may be warranted.



The user would cross and proceed on the existing sidewalk to Devon Road where there is a four-way STOP. This segment also provides good access to the Bryan Avenue neighborhood. From Paoli Pike to Devon Road, the trail will be existing sidewalks for pedestrians and a “share-the-road” lane for bicyclists due to limited existing sidewalk widths.

From Devon Road, the Greenway will proceed on sidewalk to and beyond General Wayne Elementary School. The existing sidewalk will be extended as trail past Jack McDowell Field.

From the Grubb/Mill Roads intersection, the trail will be extended along the south and east school boundary to link with the alternate route noted above and described below. It will also cross Grubb Road with a marked crossing and be continued along the south side of Mill Road to the Mill Road Park. There is sufficient area along the church property and the road with minimal obstruction. The trail should be 6 feet wide with hard surface such as asphalt or crushed stone. There will be good access to the Clearview Road, Greenstone Way and Evergreen Avenue neighborhoods. The trail will continue through the Park to Grubb Road where it will cross the road using signage and standard pavement striping and follow Colonial Way along the shoulder as a secondary route to the school.



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The alternate alignment from Greentree Park will run along the north side of Woodland Avenue turning at Fairview Road following the west side. Given that space in the front yards is very limited, the trail will need to be a new sidewalk for pedestrians and a share-the-road lane on the roads to Paoli Pike. At Paoli Pike, a pedestrian activated traffic signal is required to safely cross the roadway. A new sidewalk will be required along the south side to Fairview Road due to the jog of Fairview Road of approximately 175 feet at this location.



From this point, the trail will follow the existing sidewalk system and share the residential roadways through the neighborhood including Gable Road, Manor Road, and Spruce Lane to Devon Road. It will proceed east across two properties on the north side of Devon Road on new sidewalks that must be added to the intersection of Devon Road and Cedar Hollow Road. It will cross the road via a proposed crossing point planned with the Daylesford Development which is pending with Willistown Township. A signalized crossing needs to be evaluated with the development.

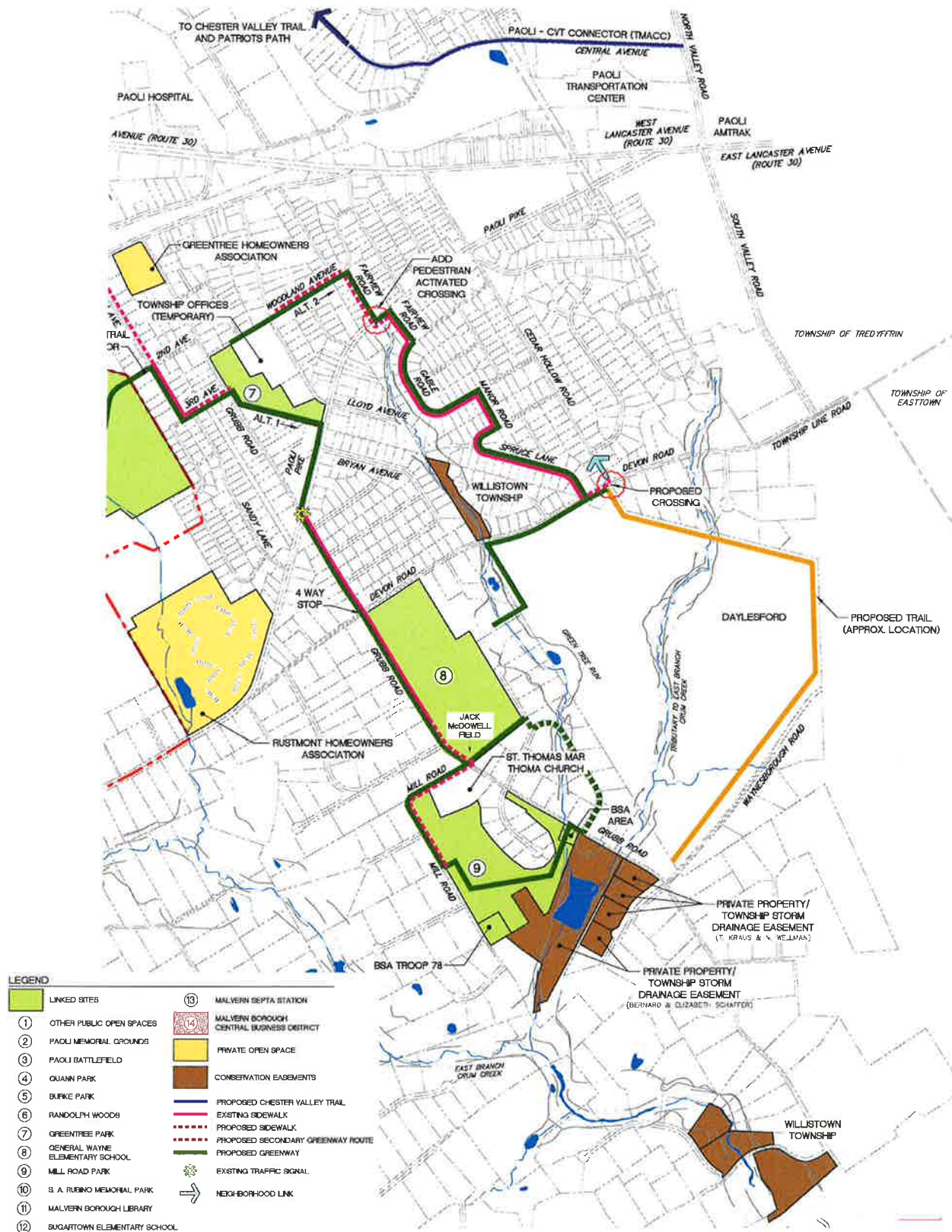


On the Daylesford property, it will link to a proposed development trail (shown in gold) along the property periphery and along the south side of Devon Road and south along the property boundary. An easement from the owner will be required from the roadway crossing point. The Greenway will cross Green Tree Run and the south edge of a private property to the General Wayne School property. The owner of this property has indicated initial support for a trail easement at the location shown. On the school land, the trail will

run along the east and south property edges to the Mill Road/Grubb Road crossing. It can also link to the secondary route shown on Colonial Way. Given the low traffic on this residential street, it will share the road before crossing Grubb Road into Mill Road Park. As part of the implementation stage for the Greenway, traffic volumes on this road should be evaluated to determine if a separate sidewalk is needed for pedestrian safety.



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East Section

A Completed Greenway

The Greenway as depicted and described will be approximately six miles long without the indicated secondary trails, the informal trails through parks, preserved open spaces, and several historic sites, or the proposed regional trails. The alternate route from Greentree Park described in the East Section will add approximately 0.8 mile to the total length of the Greenway (~6.8 miles). Users will have various options for utilizing sections or combining them into loops. Such combinations will vary in length, and the experiences will range from open land and roadside sidewalks to woodlands. The Greenway will be easily reached by many existing neighborhoods via low-volume residential streets and neighborhood sidewalks. All of the open space assets initially identified by the Steering Committee will be connected, along with the Malvern Central Business District, and other Borough facilities.

Implementation & Phasing

Implementing the Greenway Plan will likely occur in phases over time as resources become available and required easements/acquisitions are secured. Trail networks in developed communities are completed by adding individual segments one at a time usually over a period of years. The process requires a dedication and commitment. This effort will require the continuation of a strong working partnership begun in preparing this Greenway Plan between both municipalities, key community stakeholders, and the public all of which benefit with each segment completed and ultimately the full network.



The initial phase of implementation should focus on those segments that will provide the most immediate use for the community and visibility to garner continued public support. The recommended Phase 1 as described below is shown on the Overall Greenway Plan at the end of this report. As discussions have been initiated with the larger institutions, working with them on installation in the West and Central sections is considered to be a good starting point. They also would gain the benefit of offering new trails to their campus communities. With continued agreement and support of these institutions, the Greenway could be installed allowing the western portion of the Greenway area and associated neighborhoods to be connected to the Borough Offices and Library, Historic Parks and Sites, Central Business District, Randolph Woods, and the Township Offices. Based on this course of action, fundraising for the installation can be initiated and may include public and private sources. Potential funding sources are noted in the Cost section of this report.

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As Phase 1 proceeds, efforts should be made concurrently to secure the necessary trail easement and acquisitions to complete other parts of the Greenway. Often, the momentum and confidence gained in completing and using the first phases help to generate support and further commitments for subsequent phases.

Costs

It is difficult to estimate the exact costs for constructing the new sections of trails and sidewalks because site conditions vary throughout the proposed Greenway and site engineering was not undertaken in this phase of the project. It is noted, however, that alternatives were selected that minimized crossing areas where there are difficult site conditions such as steep slopes and wet areas. When these conditions are unavoidable, some grading and suitable stream/wetland crossings such as boardwalks will be required. These solutions will add to the costs of implementation. An additional factor that is not estimated here are the costs for trail easements or acquisition in cases where they are not obtainable through donations. Such costs will vary depending on the property and the owner's requirements. Where possible, public land and rights-of-way are proposed, but completing the Greenway will likely require some expenditure to secure private land easements or acquired trail corridors.



Construction estimates have been provided for various Greenway features based on 2012 costs for installation. These costs include asphalt trails at 6-foot width and concrete sidewalks at 4-foot width. The estimate also includes the costs for crossing six wet areas assuming boardwalks or small pedestrian bridges are used. Signage for the Greenway will also be an essential component. It is expected to be simple and consistent in appearance and message. It should be designed to be similar to and complement the types of signage used in the Borough and Township for open space and way-finding. It is anticipated to range from basic directional blaze symbols to informational signs about the features and history of the area. Electronic mediums such as coding (e.g., QR codes) should be used in signs to provide broader access to information using personal electronic devices.

Construction cost estimates as defined above are as follows:

Trail	\$450,000 to \$500,000
Sidewalks	\$45,000 to \$90,000
Boardwalk/Bridges	\$150,000
Signage	\$30,000
Pedestrian Activated Lights	\$75,000
Line Striping	\$35,000

Funding Sources

Public and private funding sources vary each year based on budgeting and the economy. The ability to use public funding sources is often limited by the monetary and in-kind match obligations required of the applicant. Implementation of the Greenway will draw from funders that support conservation, land preservation, trails, healthy communities, reduced traffic congestion/pollution, environmental education, and recreation.

The following is a partial list of funding sources in the region that may be used to acquire the necessary land and easements and help pay for construction.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR) C2P2 – Grants for land acquisition and development/construction related to trails and greenways

William Penn Foundation (Watershed Protection Program) – Chester Valley Trail is part of “The Circuit”, Greater Philadelphia’s regional trail network for which the Foundation is providing funding.

Pennsylvania Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) under the Act 13 Marcellus Legacy Fund Program - Grants available to \$250,000 for greenways, trails and recreation (due date July 31, 2013).

Chester County, Preservation Partnership Program – Grants to non-profits and land trusts for preservation projects and trail construction projects (due date February 28, 2013).

1675 Foundation – Grants in Chester County from \$2,000-50,000 for land/water conservation/preservation twice per year (postmark dates March 1 and October 1).

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) – Grants for Transportation and Community Development Initiatives (TCDI) including recent projects related to trails.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) – Grant opportunities to further creation of the Greater Philadelphia regional multi-use trails network (including “The Circuit”); Phase 3 (\$3.5 million) awarded February 2013.



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Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) – Grants for Transportation Alternatives (TA) from Federal funds for community based non-traditional projects including pedestrian and bicycle supportive projects per the 21st Century Act (MAP-21).

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) – Grants for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) including pedestrian and bicycle supportive projects; public agencies and public/private partnerships with public sponsors are eligible.

PA Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Federal funds for statewide projects; the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC is the administrator for this region).

PECO Green Region Open Space Program – Grants up to \$10,000 for developing and implementing open space programs (50% match) with annual applications.

Bikes Belong Grant Program – Grants up to \$10,000 available to partnerships (1 government agency, 1 non-profit, 1 business for 2013) to include trails, paths, lanes, bridges and end of trip facilities.

American Hiking Society National Trails Fund – Grants for regional trails including 5 in Pennsylvania in the last several years.

National Trails Training Partnership (American Trails) – Grant programs and funding ideas across America.

