A photograph of a paved path leading into a dense forest. The path is made of grey asphalt and curves slightly to the right. It is flanked by green grass and various trees and bushes. In the distance, a wooden fence is visible. The overall scene is lush and green, suggesting a park or natural area.

MUNICIPAL TRAIL PLAN
FOR
EAST PIKELAND TOWNSHIP
CHESTER COUNTY, PA

January 7, 2013

MUNICIPAL TRAIL PLAN FOR EAST PIKELAND TOWNSHIP

January 7, 2013

Project Participants:

Jerry Miller, Township Park & Recreation Board
Rick Bulotta, Township Park & Recreation Board
Jeff Grable, Township Park & Recreation Board
Caesar Muzzioli, Township Park & Recreation Board
Mike Sisti, Township Park & Recreation Board
Shannon Wood, Township Park & Recreation Board
Kim Dunn, Township Planning Commission
Helena Van Vliet, Township Planning Commission
Jonathan Gayl, Township Historical Commission/HARB
Doug Fitzsimons, Kimberton Village Business Association
Charlie Line, Kimberton Village Business Association
Rusty Strauss, Township Board of Supervisors
Kimberly Moretti, Township Manager

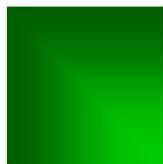
Thanks also to the many residents of East Pikeland Township who lent their time, energy, enthusiasm, and insight in the development of this plan.

Project Consultants:



Theurkauf Design & Planning LLC
1240 Elbow Lane, Chester Springs, PA 19425

with



**Sarcinello Planning
& GIS Services**

336 Dickinson Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081

INTRODUCTION AND TRAIL PLANNING GOALS

East Pikeland Township's plan for trails is intended to create a comprehensive and integrated system of paths for walking, bicycling, and horseback riding throughout the Township, with links to the regional trail system. The previous plan referenced in the 1993 Open Space, Recreation, and Environmental Resources Plan is outdated due to development impacts and changes in land ownership. In addition, the Township has moved ahead with a Master Plan for the French Creek Trail and is coordinating a plan to improve pedestrian accessibility in the village of Kimberton. The scope of this project involves creation of a plan for proposed future trail alignments with analysis of pertinent features to assess feasibility including natural resources, ownership issues, and regional trail context.



This East Pikeland Township Trail Plan seeks to achieve the following goals and objectives:

- Create a comprehensive system of paths and trails to improve off-road non-motorized accessibility throughout the Township.
- Establish connections to the regional trail network.
- Provide multi-use trails, ADA Accessible trails, and trails for pedestrians only.
- Prioritize areas and destinations most in need of trail access.
- Link population to critical destinations, with loops to promote interest and usability of the system.
- Advance the implementation of regional trail planning initiatives undertaken by government agencies, inter-municipal planning efforts, and conservation organizations.

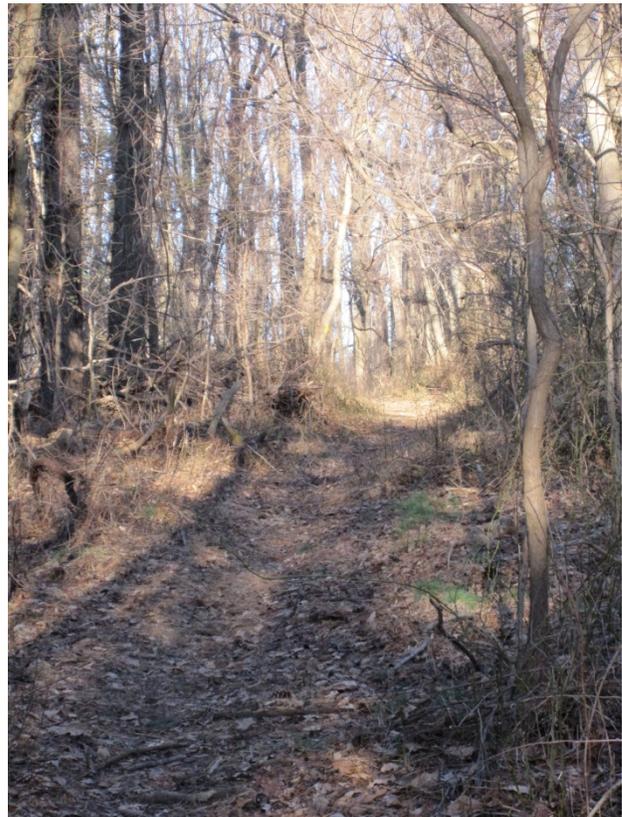
- Achieve the documented public health and fitness benefits provided by trails.
- Promote energy conservation and resource protection.
- Stimulate economic activity by fostering trail and tourist related business.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS, ONGOING TOWNSHIP TRAIL PLANNING POLICY, AND REGIONAL TRAIL INITIATIVES

Previously Planned Trail Network

The 1993 Open Space, Recreation, and Environmental Resources Plan showed the following proposed connections through the Township:

- French Creek Trail extending through the middle of East Pikeland from the Schuylkill River Trail to East and West Vincent Townships.
- Frog Hollow Trail from French Creek north to Miller Road.
- Kimberton Loop Trail circumnavigating Kimberton Village with connections to French Creek Trail in the center of the Township and at the East Vincent border.
- Pickering Loop Trail following the former Pickering Valley Railroad, paralleling Pickering Creek, and returning along Merlin Road.
- Pickering Loop spur trails along Pickering Creek from West Pikeland to Charlestown Townships.
- Crossover Trail from Kimberton Village, along Hares Hill Road, paralleling Kulp Run, and across Spring City Road to the Schuylkill River Trail.
- Stony Run Trail from the Schuylkill River Trail west along the creek to East Vincent Township.
- Schuylkill River Trail from Phoenixville to Spring City.



Due to development, some of the previously planned trails would be very difficult or impossible to build today. Others have natural constraints that would make construction of trails expensive and potentially environmentally damaging.

- The Crossover Trail would require permission from owners of dozens of small properties with little room for trail accommodation. In addition, the topographic and wetland challenges presented along Kulps Run would make the north end of the Crossover Trail largely impractical.
- The topographic and wetland challenges presented along Stony Run would make the Stony Run Trail nearly impossible to build in places.
- The southern end of the Kimberton Loop Trail would involve permission from many private landowners within a heavily developed area, and environmental constraints along the Powder Mill Run would add further difficulties.

However, the 1993 Plan provides a good conceptual blueprint of where pedestrian routes would be desirable to connect critical landmarks and linkages to a regional trail system. The following trails shown on the 1993 map titled East Pikeland Township Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan by Robert E. Hartmann are currently existing or possible:

- The Schuylkill River Trail is built from Cromby to Spring City, and Phoenixville and the County are planning the completion of the link southeast and ultimately to Philadelphia. North of Spring City, the Schuylkill River Trail is in varying states of design or completion up to its terminus in Pottsville, Schuylkill County. This is a significant regional trail planned and constructed by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC), Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR), and other county and regional agencies.
- The French Creek Trail exists as an informal trail utilized by hikers and for fishing. In October 2010 the Township adopted a plan for construction of the trail between Township Line Road and Hares Hill Road, with an ADA accessible section in the historic site between Snyders Mill and the ruin of Rapps Dam. There are future plans by the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust to extend the trail along French Creek



to Warwick County Park, French Creek State Park, and the Horse-Shoe Trail. To the east, the trail is planned to connect to the Schuylkill River Trail and as such will be a major component of the regional trail system. The French Creek Trail is identified in CCPC's Linking Landscapes Plan as part of the Sowbelly/French Creek Regional Recreation Corridor.

- Pickering Loop Trail - The former Pickering Valley Railroad provides possibility to connect Kimberton Village southwest to West Pikeland Township, where there is an existing "Bridge to Bridge" trail extending along Pickering Creek between Clover Mill and Pikeland Roads. Part of this trail has been constructed by the Coldstream Crossing development as a Township trail. Informal fishing trails exist at the end of this trail near Clover Mill Road, and there are existing farm roads and trails along various parts of the route.
- Fishing trails and low volume traffic along Pickering Road would facilitate the southwestern end of the proposed Pickering Loop Trail.
- It is physically possible to create the western side of the Kimberton Loop Trail between Kimberton Village and the Kennedy Covered bridge, possibly using rarely traveled Mill Lane as part of the route. Some existing trails and farm roads exist in this area
- Existing informal trails connect Kimberton Road to the Pickering Valley Railroad and French Creek Trail, behind Woodbridge and the National Guard properties, thus creating potential for the eastern part of the Kimberton Loop Trail.
- The Frog Hollow Trail has been constructed within the Brimful Farm development.

Walkable Kimberton

The Kimberton Village Business Association (KVBA) is working on a plan to recreate the historical pedestrian connections in Kimberton Village, with links to a Township-wide trail system. Parts of the sidewalk linkages exist on Kimberton Road between Prizer Road and Hares Hill Road, and Saint Basil Church has constructed a sidewalk on the length of its Kimberton Road frontage. This Plan incorporates the Walkable Kimberton initiative.

Regional Connections

In addition to the Schuylkill River Trail and the French Creek Trail, the following represent existing and potential links and proposed trail corridors beyond the Township to build a comprehensive regional trail network:

Chester County

The Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC) publication Linking Landscapes identifies two proposed Regional Recreation Corridors that include East Pikeland Township:

- The Sowbelly/French Creek Regional Recreation Corridor follows the French Creek Trail. The northwestern end of this corridor is being planned and constructed by the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, and the southeastern end is planned for construction by the Borough of Phoenixville, all in coordination with CCPC. Ultimately, this corridor will connect the Schuylkill River Trail (Philadelphia to Pottsville) west to French Creek State Park and the Horse-Shoe Trail (Valley Forge to Appalachian Trail) as a primarily hiking and equestrian link.
- The Pickering-Upper Uwchlan Regional Recreation Corridor extends from the Schuylkill River just south of Phoenixville westward to Marsh Creek State Park. It would provide connections between the Schuylkill River Trail (Philadelphia to Pottsville), the Horse-Shoe Trail (Valley Forge to Appalachian Trail) and the Struble Trail (Downingtown to Honey Brook) as a primarily hiking and equestrian link. Parts of this trail could be developed along the abandoned Pickering Valley Railroad, with other parts following existing trails along the Pickering Creek.



Spring City Borough

The Schuylkill River Trail provides an existing improved surface pedestrian and biking connection from East Pikeland Township into Spring City.

East Vincent Township

The following existing and potential connections to the East Vincent Township trail system are identified:

- A proposed roadside trail along Stony Run Road.

- A proposed roadside trail along Route 23.
- Proposed alignment of French Creek Trail along Seven Stars Road.
- Proposed alignment of French Creek Trail along French Creek.

West Vincent Township

Existing social trails and farm paths link Hillcrest Avenue and Kimberton Road.

West Pikeland Township

The following existing and potential connections to the West Pikeland Township trail system are identified:

- The existing “Bridge to Bridge” hiking trail parallels the north side of Pickering Creek between Clover Mill Road and Pikeland Road, forming part of the Pickering-Upper Uwchlan Regional Recreation Corridor.
- An existing social trail parallels Pigeon Run from Pikeland Road to Yellow Springs Road, with several connections to other informal trails and a potential to connect to the Horse-Shoe Trail.

Charlestown Township

The following existing and potential connections to the Charlestown Township trail system are identified:

- An existing social trail connects Merlin Road to Church Road and other informal equestrian trails.
- The proposed Pickering-Upper Uwchlan Regional Recreation Corridor intersects the Township boundary at Pickering Road.
- The existing paved multi-use trail at Charlestown Township Park and the Valley Forge Christian College is accessible from Township Line Road, with potential links through Pickering CAT to the Schuylkill Township trail system.

Schuylkill Township

The following potential connections to the Schuylkill Township trail system are identified:

- There is a potential connection through the Valley Forge Christian College and Pickering CAT to the inactive Devault Railroad spur (potential rail trail) and the Schuylkill Township trail system.
- There is a potential extension of the French Creek Trail along the abandoned Pickering Valley Railroad to a paved multi-use trail behind the Phoenixville Plaza shopping center and into Phoenixville.

Phoenixville Borough

The following existing and potential connections to the Phoenixville Borough trail system are identified:

- There is a potential extension of the French Creek Trail across Route 23 and connecting to an existing paved multi-use trail behind the Phoenixville Plaza shopping center.
- There is a potential connection to a proposed High Street Trail along the north side of French Creek.

Conclusion

Based on existing trails, remaining undeveloped lands, favorable environmental conditions, and ongoing regional and local policy initiatives, there is an exceptional potential to create a Township wide network of trails that add critical components to a comprehensive system in Southeastern PA for hiking, biking, and equestrian access.

PROPOSED TOWNSHIP TRAIL SYSTEM

Trail Design Principles

The proposed trail system for East Pikeland Township relies on the following design principles to foster use, enjoyment, and functionality:

- Trails shall have destinations. A trail that goes nowhere will not be used. Specifically, trails shall connect residential areas with parks, places of civic/cultural importance, and commercial centers.
- Trails shall accommodate users of differing interests and abilities. Not all trails shall accommodate all users, but each user shall have sufficient resources for a rewarding trail experience.
- Looped trails increase interest and enhance the capacity to have a trail system accommodating to the broadest spectrum of trail users.
- Township trails shall provide connections to regional trails and trails in other municipalities.
- To the extent possible, multi-use trails will comprise the principal trail routes to primary destinations, with unimproved surface trails forming subordinate loops and spurs.
- Principal multi-use trails shall be coordinated with on-road bicycle routes.
- Parking shall be provided at main trail heads, specifically at multi-use trails.
- Trails shall be designed to minimize environmental impacts.
- Trail designs should include plans for ongoing upkeep at minimal costs. This can include the use of volunteers to perform maintenance work.

In cases where a specific trail project cannot by itself create the desired connection or loop, it can still provide a necessary part of connections that will be completed over time.

Trail Destinations

The following represent logical destinations to promote a functional Township and regional trail system:

- Schuylkill River Trail
- East Pikeland Municipal Complex/Snyders Mill Historical Area
- East Pikeland Elementary School
- Kimberton Village/Kimberton Park/Kimberton Fire Company
- Kimberton Waldorf School
- West Pikeland/Bridge to Bridge Trail
- Charlestown Township Park
- Maple Lawn shopping center
- Shoppes at Valley Forge
- Phoenixville/Phoenixville Plaza
- Proposed French Creek Trail connections east and west of Township
- Proposed East Pikeland Township Park at Snyder Avenue
- Proposed East Vincent/Stony Run Road Trail
- Proposed East Vincent/Ridge Road (PA 23) Trail
- Proposed Phoenixville/High Street Trail

Primary Trails

The following should serve as the Township's primary trail links, providing connections to the most central and/or critical destinations and accommodating the broadest profile of users.

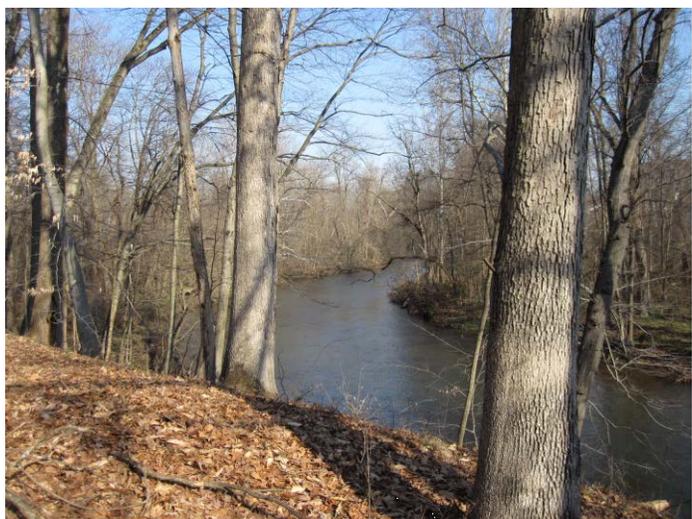
These trails should have some sort of improved surface, either asphalt or compacted gravel fines depending on uses and environmental conditions.

Since any trail to be ADA compliant/universally accessible shall be paved with a hard surface, it is advisable that all primary trails be paved in asphalt. Although the installation cost of asphalt trails is higher than compacted fines, the costs of ongoing maintenance are far lower. In addition, asphalt makes a superior surface for biking, running, and all-weather use.

- Pickering Valley Railroad Trail – This trail begins in Kimberton and extends westward to Clover Mill Road, roughly following the alignment of the abandoned Pickering Valley Railroad. Part of this trail has been constructed as an asphalt path in association with the Coldstream Crossing development. Other parts exist as gravel roads between Coldstream Road and Kimberton Village and farm paths between Coldstream Crossing and Western Road. A section could be accommodated within the HOA open space at the Kensworth development, and part of the trail could occupy the paved but little used road between Main Line Animal Rescue and Pickering Road. North of Kimberton, the trail could run along the railroad grade to Seven Stars Road, where access to the French Creek Trail and East Pikeland Elementary School could be provided. West of Pickering Road, the trail would continue as an unimproved hiking trail to West Pikeland’s Bridge to Bridge Trail at Clover Mill Road. Trailhead parking is proposed in Kimberton and at Pickering Road.

Much of this trail corridor is on private property, which would require cooperation between the Township and landowners to secure rights of access.

- French Creek Trail – The French Creek Trail Master Plan has been approved for the area between Township Line and Hares Hill Roads. According to the Master Plan, the trail will include a paved universal access component from Rapps Dam Road to the proposed bridge at the ruins of Rapps Dam. A second bridge is proposed to complete the link to Hares Hill Road. Parts of the trail occupy the former Pickering Valley Railroad grade. It would be feasible to pave this entire stretch of trail if the Township elects to develop this further into a primary trail corridor, provided a specification suitable for the areas within floodplain was



utilized. Otherwise, the unimproved parts of the trail would be fully serviceable for pedestrians and mountain bikers. Parking is proposed at the Hares Hill Road, Rapps Dam Road, and Township Line Road trailheads.

Connections to the ultimate extensions east and west of the Township boundaries need to be worked out and would require cooperation between the Township and private landowners to secure rights of access.

Cromby Trail – The Cromby Trail begins on existing paved trails in the Kimberton Meadows development at Route 23 and Hares Hill Road, extending northeast to the parking lot at the Schuylkill River Trail trailhead. It is desirable to pave this trail for multiple uses, as it accesses existing and proposed residential development areas, a proposed Township park with paved trails, a regional trail corridor, and a planned mixed use redevelopment area along Route 724. There is an existing parking lot at the Schuylkill River Trail trailhead at Township Line Road, and additional parking is proposed at Kimberton Meadows on Ridge Road and at the future East Pikeland Township Park.

This trail occupies mostly private lands and as such would require agreements between the Township and developers, as well as other private landowners.

Schuylkill River Trail – This trail is built within east Pikeland Township, extending from Cromby to Spring City. Phoenixville and Chester County are planning the completion of the link southeast to existing sections extending to Philadelphia. North of Spring City, the Schuylkill River Trail is in varying states of design or completion up to its terminus in Pottsville, Schuylkill County. This is a significant regional trail planned and constructed by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC), Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR), and other county and regional agencies.

The section of the trail within East Pikeland is paved with asphalt at the southern end, and compacted gravel fines for most of its length north to Spring City. It is suitable for walking, running, and bicycling, and is ADA accessible around the Cromby trailhead parking area.

Trail Loops

Several interconnected loops are proposed throughout the Township to facilitate trail journeys of varying lengths, and to accommodate differing abilities and user types. These loops are also designed to maximize accessibility of residential areas and connect them to trail destinations and the regional trail system beyond the Township. Most of the loops consist of a mix of

improved surface and natural surface trails, with improved surfaces on the parts of the loops that serve as primary trails. The proposed trail loops are as follows:

- Stony Run Loop - The Stony Run Loop is in the northeastern corner of the Township, it includes parts of the Cromby Trail, and it connects the proposed East Pikeland Township Park with the Schuylkill River Trail. This trail utilizes lands reserved for a PA DOT highway spur, a utility line ROW, open space within the proposed Cutler development on Snyder Avenue, and other private lands. The trail meets the Schuylkill River Trail at the Cromby Trailhead parking lot, giving this loop outstanding access capability. Its northern point of access to the Schuylkill River Trail is from Wall Street due west of the Cromby power plant, and grading and guard rail improvements would be required along Wall Street to provide for safe trail access. It would be feasible to have an improved surface on all or part of this loop.
- Schuylkill River Loop - This loop circumnavigates the area between Wall Street and the Schuylkill River, providing access to the Schuylkill River Trail and Spring City. The area is as yet largely undeveloped privately held farmland, so the ultimate trail alignment has great flexibility. The Township could elect to have future development applicants develop all or part of this trail in lieu of an active recreation provision. It would be feasible to have an improved surface on all or part of this loop.
- Spring Hollow Loop - The Spring Hollow Loop circumnavigates privately owned farmlands between Route 724 and Stony Run in the north central part of the Township, and includes parts of the Cromby Trail. With tie-ins at Spring Lane and Bonnie Brae, this loop can also incorporate the HOA open space trail systems at Kimberton Meadows and Phoenixville Crossing on the west side of Route 724. There is also a potential connection to the Stony Run Loop and the East Pikeland Township Park via a power line ROW. It would be feasible to have an improved surface on all or part of this loop.
- French Creek Loop - This loop runs along the south bank of French Creek between Rapps Dam Road and Township Line Road, connecting residential communities with the Township municipal complex, commercial/mixed use centers on Route 724, and north to the Stony Run Loop. The south bank route utilizes the French Creek Trail, and northern connections would route through various existing and future development areas. The area also includes a north bank trail along French Creek that would utilize existing fishing trails within HOA open space and other private lands. Connecting the trail on the east end would require ROW improvements along Township Line Road, which should be executed as part of PA DOT's proposed reconfiguration of the intersection of Township Line Road and PA 23. At the west end, accommodation of pedestrians on Rapps Dam Bridge could be considered, or a means of fording the French

Creek could be devised. It would be feasible to have an improved surface on the south bank (French Creek Trail) part of this loop, and on connections to the north.

- Kimberton Village Loop - The Kimberton Village Loop connects Kimberton Village, Kimberton Park, Kimberton Fire Company, and the French Creek Trail. This trail also includes the sidewalk system to be developed in coordination with Kimberton Village Business Association (KVBA). Access through private lands would be required between the Kimberton railroad station and Mill Lane, as well as the western end of French Creek Trail. The eastern side of the loop would access through the National Guard Armory, the former Pickering Valley Railroad, and lands owned or conveyable to East Pikeland Township. The connections between Kimberton Road and the French Creek Trail could be unimproved hiking trails, or they could have improved surfaces. Small bridges to cross stream tributaries would be required near Mill Lane and in the open space behind Woodbridge near Rapps Dam Road.

Shorter loops would be made connecting the French Creek Trail east of Hares Hill Road to Kimberton Village via the Pickering Valley Railroad grade, or through East Pikeland Elementary School and crossing Mill Lane. This trail would also provide access to neighborhoods surrounding East Pikeland Elementary School.

- Pickering Loop - The Pickering Loop extends west from Kimberton following the improved surface Pickering Valley Railroad Trail to the Pickering Creek, then south using fishing trails and the little-used Pickering Road, Lincoln Road, and then following a power line ROW northeast along the Township Line to access the Bevin's Orchard residential neighborhood. From there the trail would connect to Charlestown Township Park trails before heading back to Kimberton via through the open space and trail systems in existing and proposed developments.

Ultimately, this loop could provide connections through Charlestown and Schuylkill Townships and their trail systems. Parts of this trail have already been constructed as paved paths through HOA properties along East Seven Stars Road. Coordination with private landowners, the Fire Company, and residential HOAs would be required. It would be feasible to have an improved surface on this entire trail.

An alternative shorter loop would continue westward along Western Road with unimproved hiking trail across private lands between Merlin Road and the paved open space trails at Coldstream Crossing.

- Pigeon Run Loop - From Pickering Road near the border with Charlestown Township, this trail follows a power line easement across Merlin Road and Pigeon Run, then

northward behind Pikeland Churches and back to Pickering Road near the intersection with Church Road. Due to rugged terrain, this would be an unimproved hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian trail. As it is entirely on private land, agreement with landowners would be necessary. A structural crossing of Pigeon Run would be optional, but not necessary for the users envisioned.

- Valley Dell Loop - The Valley Dell Loop begins at the Pickering Valley Railroad near Main Line Animal Rescue and goes north then east along the boundary with West Vincent Township, providing potential access to farm paths and equestrian trails there.



The trail would extend to Valley Dell, then on low volume residential streets and around Gottwals Ponds, ultimately connecting to the Walkable Kimberton sidewalk/path system. This would be an unimproved surface hiking/mountain biking/equestrian trail, except for those parts on paved roads. As it is largely on private land, agreement with landowners would be necessary.

Trail Spurs

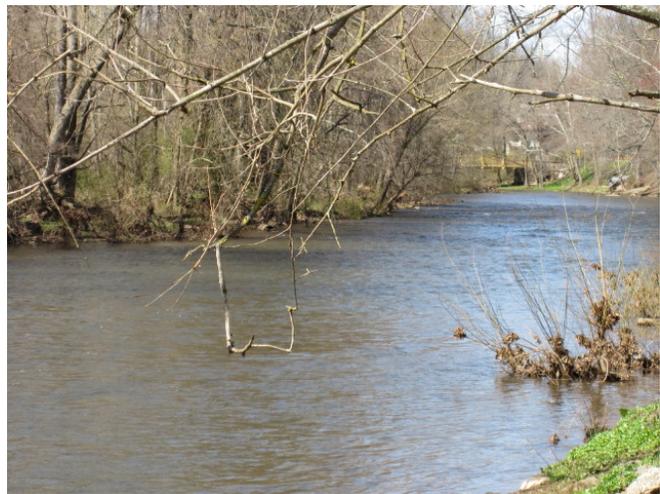
The following trails are linear connections between the trail loops or to trail destinations:

- Spring City Spur - This trail connects the Spring Hollow Loop with the sidewalk system for Spring City beginning at Pikeland Avenue and Wall Street, providing access between potential developable areas and Spring City. In addition, this trail could provide access to a proposed East Vincent trail along Stony Run Road. Coordination with private landowners and developers would be required, and a means of crossing Stony Run would need to be devised. It would be feasible to have an improved surface on this entire trail.
- Pickering Creek Spur - This trail is an unimproved path between Pickering Road to Clover Mill Road along the north bank of the Pickering Creek. This path creates a link to the open space trail network in West Pikeland Township and is part of the Pickering/Upper Uwchlan Regional Recreation Corridor. The trail is on private property and may require coordination with West Pikeland Township on the east side of Clover Mill Road.

- Frog Hollow Spur – This trail begins at the French Creek Trail and connects northward to the Stony Run Loop. Part of this trail exists as a gravel surface trail in the Brimful Farms development. The remainder would be constructed along Miller Road and Frog Hollow Road, possibly on lands of the Kimberton Golf Club in East Vincent Township.

Implementation of the Plan

East Pikeland Township should use this document to establish planning priorities for trail connections. For many of the trails identified, partnership with private landowners, homeowners associations, and institutions will be required. To this end, this Trail Plan includes helpful information on liability protections for landowners who allow trail access on their properties (see Appendix A, Pennsylvania Recreational Use of Land and Water Act).



In certain areas, structural improvements would be necessary, including stabilized surfaces, bridges, railings, graded ramps, and steps. These should be designed and specified by professionals and subject to appropriate Township review to assure public safety. Where permits from state and/or federal agencies are required (e.g. for stream or wetland crossings), activities shall be coordinated with the appropriate regulatory agencies.

Financing and Cost Containment - There are several methods available to minimize costs associated with land acquisition, construction, and maintenance of trails. These efforts could be spearheaded by the Township's Park and Recreation Board and Open Space Committee.

- Grants – By emphasizing the importance of Township trails in completing regional trails and County regional recreation and trail corridors, East Pikeland can elevate its eligibility for grants from government and private sources.
- Volunteers – The Township should encourage action by volunteers to conduct construction and maintenance activities such as clearing, trail markings, erosion control, surface repair, cleanups, and the building of trail structures and amenities. Scouting, conservation, recreation, and civic groups could be engaged in these efforts, and the Township could form a citizens group (Friends of East Pikeland Trails) dedicated to care of the trail system.

The Township could also establish an Adopt-A-Trail program whereby businesses or groups could assume responsibility and/or funding for construction and/or maintenance of sections of trail in exchange for signage to promote visibility of the organization. This arrangement would establish a mutually reinforcing synergy between the business community and users of trails in the Township.

- Landowner Outreach – The Township should coordinate with private property owners on granting of trail easements, and in so doing should educate on potential tax benefits for such charitable contributions and the various types of liability protections afforded.
- Developer Funding – The Township should utilize ordinance provisions such as the Conservation Development Incentive and recreation and trail fees in the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to secure funding for trail projects from developers. In addition, ordinance provisions should be amended to direct land developers to this Trail Plan and to the Township Park and Recreation Board for guidance on requirements to provide and facilitate trails.

Safety - The following measures should be taken to promote public safety on the Township's trail system:

- The Township shall establish protocols for hours and regulations of use, maintenance, and policing to assure that the trails continue to be a functional asset to the community.
- Signage with trail use regulations should be posted at trailheads.
- The following trail sharing guidelines should be posted to educate users on trail etiquette:
 - Pedestrians and bicyclists yield to equestrians
 - Bicyclists yield to pedestrians
- "Share the Road" signage should be posted to alert motorists where a trail utilizes sections of public road.
- Traffic calming measures should be considered on public roads that are used as trails.

Prioritization – As it is not possible to undertake implementation of this Trail Plan all at once, the Township should establish a system to prioritize trail projects. Trails should receive higher priority for implementation on the basis of the following:

- The extent to which a trail completes a regional or multi-municipal connection.
- Whether a trail would address an existing public safety concern (e.g. by directing existing pedestrian traffic away from a road).
- The number of residents who would directly benefit from proximity/access to the trail.
- The degree to which the trail advances other goals and policies of the Township (e.g. open space, recreation planning, or economic development).
- The cost to the municipality, or the degree to which costs can be mitigated by grants, partnerships, and other sources of outside funding.
- Whether the trail has desirable destination points, and/or the extent to which the project would create a complete recreational loop.
- The extent to which a trail accommodates different user types and abilities.
- The environmental impact of the trail and strategies to mitigate such impacts.

The East Pikeland Township Trail Plan should be conscientiously referenced in making decisions regarding creation of permanent open space. In this sense, the Trail Plan should be a component of the Township Comprehensive Plan and should be consulted in the implementation of the Township's development fees in lieu of recreation or trail facilities and the Conservation Development Incentive program. By taking this proactive approach to trail planning, East Pikeland Township can assure that its residents have a permanent and comprehensive system of non-motorized accessibility, with myriad accrued benefits to the environment and community.

TRAIL TYPE AND USE MATRIX

Trail Name	Trail Surface			Trail Use				
	Natural	Improved	Road	ADA	Pedest.	Bike	MTB	Equest.
Pickering Valley RR Trail		•		•	•	•		
French Creek Trail	•	•		•	•	•	•	*
Cromby Trail		•			•	•		
Schuylkill River Trail		•		•	•	•		
Stony Run Loop	•	•			•		•	
Schuylkill River Loop	•	•			•		•	
Spring Hollow Loop	•	•			•		•	•
French Creek Loop	•				•		•	
Kimberton Village Loop	•	•			•		•	
Pickering Loop	•	•	•		•	•	•	
Pigeon Run Loop	•	•	•		•		•	•
Valley Dell Loop	•	•	•		•		•	•
Spring City Spur	•				•		•	
Pickering Creek Spur	•				•		•	
Frog Hollow Spur	•				•		•	

Notes

Natural Surface – Unimproved earthen trail

Improved Surface – Paved with asphalt or compacted gravel fines

Road – Trail shared use on low volume paved public road

ADA – Trail complies with accessibility requirements of Americans with Disabilities Act

Pedest. – Trail designed for walking and hiking

Bike – Trail appropriate for standard and road bicycles

MTB – Trail appropriate for use by mountain bikes

Equest. – Trail appropriate for equestrian use.

* - Potential future equestrian use of French Creek Trail depending on trail development in East and West Vincent Townships.

APPENDIX A

PENNSYLVANIA RECREATIONAL USE OF LAND AND WATER ACT



Pennsylvania's Recreational Use of Land and Water Act



INTRODUCTION

Pennsylvania has a law that limits the legal liability of landowners who make their land available to the public for free recreation. The purpose of the law is to supplement the availability of publicly owned parks and forests by encouraging landowners to allow hikers, fishermen and other recreational users onto their properties. The Recreational Use of Land and Water Act (“RULWA”), found in Purdon’s Pennsylvania Statutes, title 68, sections 477-1 et seq., creates that incentive by limiting the traditional duty of care that landowners owe to entrants upon their land. **So long as no entrance or use fee is charged, the Act provides that landowners owe no duty of care to keep their land safe for recreational users and have no duty to warn of dangerous conditions.** Excepted out of this liability limitation are instances where landowners willfully or maliciously fail to guard or warn of dangerous conditions. That is, the law immunizes landowners only from claims of negligence. Every other state in the nation has similar legislation.

PEOPLE COVERED BY THE ACT

The “owners” of land protected by the Act include public and private fee title holders as well as lessees (hunt clubs, e.g.) and other persons or organizations “in control of the premises.” Holders of conservation easements and trail easements are protected under RULWA if they exercise sufficient control over the land to be subject to liability as a “possessor.” (See *Stanton v. Lackawanna Energy Ltd.* (Pa. Supreme Ct. 2005)(RULWA immunizes power company from negligence claim where bike rider collided with gate that company had erected within the 70-foot wide easement over mostly undeveloped land it held for power transmission)).

LAND COVERED BY THE ACT

Although on its face RULWA applies to all recreational “land”—improved and unimproved, large and small, rural and urban—in the last 15 years or so, Pennsylvania courts have tended to read the Act narrowly, claiming that the legislature intended it to apply only to large land holdings for outdoor recreational use.

Courts weigh several factors to decide whether the land where the injury occurred has been so altered from its natural state that it is no longer “land” within the meaning of the Act. In order of importance:

(1) Extent of Improvements – The more developed the property the less likely it is to receive protection under RULWA, because

recreational users may more reasonably expect it to be adequately monitored and maintained;

(2) Size of the Land – Larger properties are harder to maintain and so are more likely to receive recreational immunity;

(3) Location of the Land – The more rural the property the more likely it will receive protection under the Act, because it is more difficult and expensive for the owner to monitor and maintain;

(4) Openness – Open property is more likely to receive protection than enclosed property; and

(5) Use of the Land – Property is more likely to receive protection if the owner uses it exclusively for recreational, rather than business, purposes.

SITE IMPROVEMENTS

The following cases focus on the nature and extent of site improvements that might negate RULWA immunity:

- The state Supreme Court ruled that the Act was not intended to apply to swimming pools, whether indoor (*Rivera v. Philadelphia Theological Seminary* (Pa. Supreme Ct. 1986)) or outdoor (*City of Philadelphia v. Duda* (Pa. Supreme Ct. 1991)).

- RULWA immunity does not cover injuries sustained on basketball courts, which are “completely improved” recreational facilities (*Walsh v. City of Philadelphia* (Pa. Supreme Ct. 1991)).

- Playgrounds are too “developed” to qualify for immunity (*DiMino v. Borough of Pottstown* (Pa. Commonwealth Ct. 1991)).

- Playing fields generally are held not to be “land” within the protection of the Act (*Brown v. Tunkhannock Twp.* (Pa. Commonwealth Ct. 1995) (baseball field); *Seifert v. Downingtown Area School District* (Pa. Commonwealth Ct. 1992)(lacrosse field); *Lewis v. Drexel University* (Pa. Superior Ct. 2001, unreported)(football field); but see *Wilkinson v. Conoy Twp.* (Pa. Commonwealth Ct. 1996)(softball field is “land” under RULWA)).

- An unimproved grassy area at Penns Landing in Philadelphia was deemed outside the Act's scope, given that the site as a whole was highly developed (*Mills v. Commonwealth* (Pa. Supreme Ct. 1993); compare *Lory v. City of Philadelphia* (Pa. Supreme Ct. 1996) (swimming hole in "remote" wooded area of Philadelphia is covered by RULWA)).

RULWA immunity has been found in several cases where people were injured at outdoor sites containing limited improvements:

- An earthen hiking trail in a state park is not an improvement vitiating the Act's immunity (*Pomeren v. Commonwealth* (Pa. Commonwealth Ct. 1988)).

- The owner of property containing a footpath created by continuous usage, which led down to the Swatara Creek, has no duty to erect a warning sign or fence between his property and the adjacent municipal park (*Rightnour v. Borough of Middletown* (Lancaster Cty. Ct. of Common Pleas 2001)).

- A landscaped park containing a picnic shelter is still "unimproved" land for RULWA purposes (*Brezinski v. County of Allegheny* (Pa. Commonwealth Ct. 1996)).

- An artificial lake is just as subject to RULWA protection as a natural lake, although the dam structure itself is not covered (*Stone v. York Haven Power Co.* (Pa. Supreme Ct. 2000)).

- An abandoned rail line in a wooded area is covered by RULWA, even where the plaintiff fell from a braced railroad trestle (*Yanno v. Consolidated Rail Corp.* (Pa. Superior Ct. 1999))(but may no longer be good law after *Stone*)).

Uncertainty about what constitutes an improvement under the Act reportedly has had a dampening effect on efforts to improve public access to outdoor recreation sites. Public and private landowners are concerned that installation of fishing piers, boat docks, parking facilities, or paths and ramps for wheelchair use will strip much-needed RULWA immunity from otherwise protected land. A bill introduced in the state Senate in the late 1990s attempted to clarify that public access improvements would not affect immunity under the Act, but the legislation was not successful.

FAILURE TO WARN

As noted above, although negligence liability is negated by the Act, a landowner remains liable to recreational users for "willful or malicious failure to guard or warn" against a dangerous condition. To determine whether an owner's behavior was willful, courts will look at two things: whether the owner had actual knowledge of the threat (e.g., was there a prior accident in that same spot); and whether the danger would be obvious to an entrant upon the land. If the threat is obvious, recreational users are considered to be put on notice, which precludes liability on the part of the landowner. In a recent drowning case, for example, landowner Pennsylvania Power & Light Company

claimed immunity under RULWA. The judge, however, sent to the jury the question of whether PP&L was willful in not posting warning signs. A previous tubing accident had occurred in the same location, and there was testimony that the dangerous rapid where the drowning occurred was not visible to people tubing upstream (*Rivera v. Pennsylvania Power & Light Co.* (Pa. Superior Ct. 2003)).

GOVERNMENTAL IMMUNITY

Interestingly, Pennsylvania's governmental immunity statutes, the Tort Claims and Sovereign Immunity Acts, shield municipalities and Commonwealth agencies from claims of willful misconduct. Liability only may be imposed upon these entities for their negligent acts. But, as noted above, where an injury occurs on "land" within the meaning of RULWA, the law shields landowners from negligence suits. In essence, public agencies are granted complete immunity for many recreational injuries. (See *Lory v. City of Philadelphia* (Pa. Supreme Ct. 1996)(city immune for both its negligent maintenance of recreational lands and its willful failure to guard or warn of hazards on that property)).

RECREATIONAL PURPOSE; PUBLIC ACCESS

Though not all recreational land is covered by the Act, the law's definition of "recreational purpose" is broad enough to include almost any reason for entering onto undeveloped land, from hiking to water sports to motorbiking. (See *Commonwealth of Pa. v. Auresto* (Pa. Supreme Ct. 1986)(RULWA covers snowmobile injury)). This is true even if the landowner has not expressly invited or permitted the public to enter the property. However, where the land is open only to selected people rather than to the public in general, this will weigh against RULWA immunity. (See *Burke v. Brace* (Monroe Cty. Ct. of Common Pleas 2000)(lake located in a subdivision and open only to homeowner association members and guests is not covered by RULWA)).

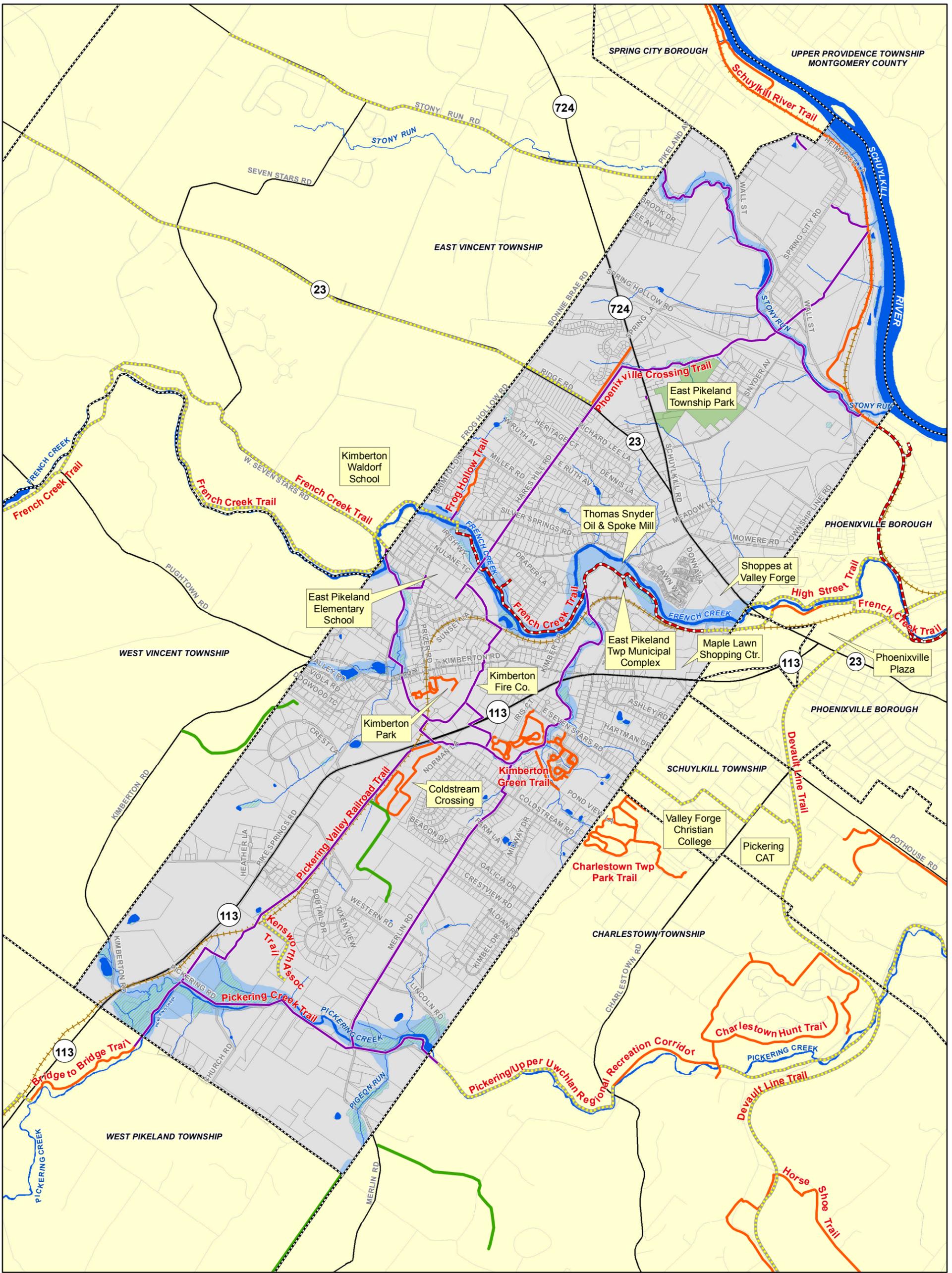
NO USER FEE

Finally, charging recreational users a fee (which is different than accepting payment for an easement) takes the property out from under the Act's protection.

Copies of this fact sheet may be obtained from:

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Bureau of Recreation and Conservation
Rachel Carson State Office Building
P.O. Box 8475
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8475
Telephone: (717) 787-7672
Fax: (717) 772-4363
www.dcnr.state.pa.us



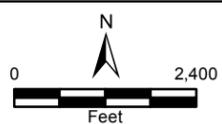


Existing Features & Trail Inventory

East Pikeland Township Trail Plan
 Chester County, Pennsylvania
 January 7, 2013



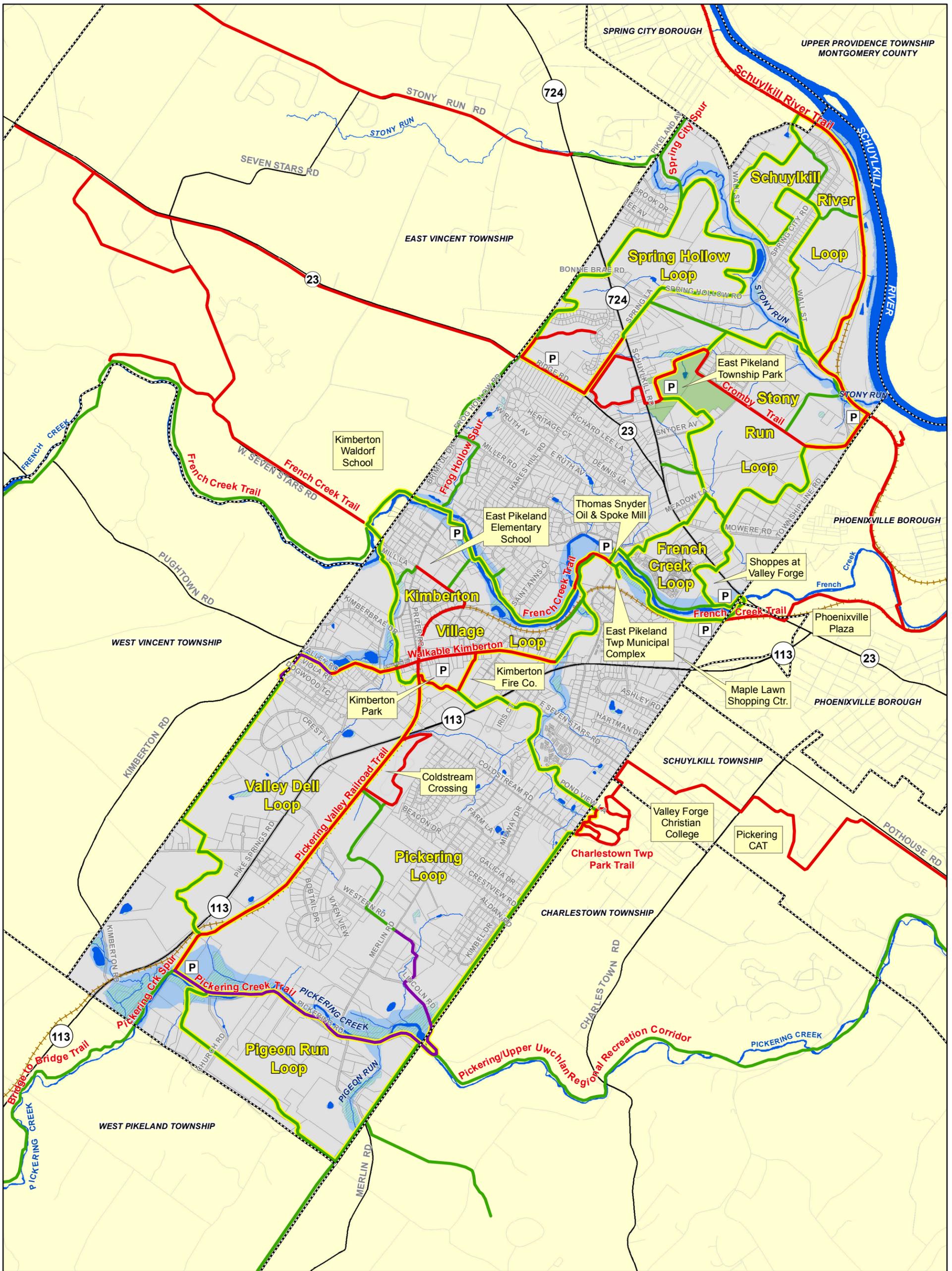
1240 Elbow Lane
 Chester Springs, PA 19425



Data Sources:
 Trails: Consultants Analysis, County & Municipal Data
 Base Features: Chester County GIS, 2010
 Floodplains: FEMA DFIRM
 Wetlands: National Wetlands Inventory
 Map Prepared By: Nanci Sarcinello, AICP
 Sarcinello Planning & GIS Services

Legend

- 1993 Park & Recreation Plan Trails
- Social Trails
- Existing Formal Trails
- Trails in Design/Construction
- Planned/Proposed Trails
- Historical Railroad
- Wetlands
- 100-Year Floodplain



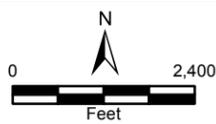
Planned Trail Network

East Pikeland Township Trail Plan
Chester County, Pennsylvania

January 7, 2013



1240 Elbow Lane
Chester Springs, PA 19425



Data Sources:
Trails: Consultants Analysis,
County & Municipal Data
Base Features: Chester County GIS, 2010
Floodplains: FEMA DFIRM
Wetlands: National Wetlands Inventory
Map Prepared By: Nanci Sarcinello, AICP
Sarcinello Planning & GIS Services

Legend

Planned Trails

- Improved Surface Trail
- Natural Surface Trail
- Trail on Low Volume Road
- Trail Loop
- Trailhead Parking
- Historical Railroad
- Wetlands
- 100-Year Floodplain