Chester County Open Space Preservation Department

Where in PA is Chester County?

Somethin's Happenin' Here

United States Mid-Atlantic Region

Chester County

Population

1960: Chester County 210,608 PA 11,319,366 (1.86%)
1980: Chester County 316,660 (+50%) PA 11,863,895 (2.67%)
2


IN THE BEGINNING: 1990

Open Space Task Force develops guidelines for investing open space bond funds:
1) Planning and Plan Implementation Grants for Municipal Open Space, Recreation & Environmental Resource Plans
2) Municipal Parkland Acquisition, Facilities, and Small Improvements
3) Grants to land trusts and conservancies
4) Farmland Purchase of Development Rights
5) Municipal Spray Irrigation Demonstration Grants
6) County Parks Acquisition Funding

1990

IN THE BEGINNING: 1990

Who, What, Where, When, Why, How?

Municipality Open Space Funding

(1) West Whiteland $6 million Open Space Bond
(2) East Goshen $3 million Open Space Bond
(3) West Goshen $3 million Open Space Bond
(4) Tredyffrin $10 million Open Space Bond
(5) E. Bradford 0.25% increase in earned income tax
(6) E. Marlborough $0.02 per $100 assessed property value
(7) Willistown 0.125% increase in earned income tax
(8) Charlestown $2.1 million Open Space Bond
(9) London Britain Twp. $0.02 per $100 assessed property value
(10) E. Brandywine 0.125% earned income tax
(11) E. Vincent 0.1325% earned income tax
(12) Franklin $0.05 per $100 assessed property value
(13) North Coventry 0.25% earned income tax
(14) W. Vincent $0.049 per $100 assessed property value
(15) Warwick 0.25% earned income tax
(16) E. Nantmel 0.25% earned income tax
(17) Londonderry 0.25% earned income tax
(18) Lower Oxford 0.50% earned income tax
(19) Pennsbury 0.188% EIT and 0.45 property tax
(20) Upper Oxford 0.50% earned income tax
(21) West Brandywine 0.125% earned income tax
(22) East Nottingham 0.5% earned income tax
(23) Highland 0.5% earned income tax
(24) West Sadsbury 0.2% earned income tax
(25) Honey Brook 0.5% earned income tax
(26) Kennett 0.25% earned income tax
(27) New Garden 0.125% earned income tax
(28) London Grove .25% earned income tax
(29) Pocopson $0.10 per $100 assessed property value
(30) East Pikeland .25% earned income tax
(31) Elk .50% earned income tax
(32) Schuylkill .25% earned income tax
(33) West Pikeland .25% earned income tax

1992-2007

Chester County – Municipal Open Space Funding: 1992-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>E. Bradford</td>
<td>$6 million</td>
<td>Open Space Bond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>E. Marlborough</td>
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<td>E. Bradford</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>E. Nantmel</td>
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</table>

2006 - Fall

2007 - Spring
Cost of Community Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department of Open Space Preservation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60 million 2003-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$48 million for land preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~$12 million for Urban Revitalization</td>
</tr>
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</table>

2003 Commissioners adopt

- Linking Landscapes: A Plan for the Protected Open Space Network in Chester County
- Adopt 5,000 acre benchmark for annual land preservation

2002

- “Chester County Farmland Challenge Grant Program For Farmland Preservation”
- New farmland preservation program to match municipal funding in northern Chester County

1999-2004

Agricultural Land
Preservation Board
3.5 Staff

Chester County Planning
Commission

- Municipal Grants
  1 Staff
- Conservancy & Land Trust Grants
  1 Staff
- Compliance Monitor
  1 Staff

Chester County Department of Parks & Recreation

- Municipal Grants
  1 Staff
- Conservancy & Land Trust Grants
  1 Staff
- Compliance Monitor
  1 Staff
### POPULATION

- **2000:** Chester County 433,501  PA 12,281,052  (3.54%)
- **2008:** Chester County 491,489  PA 12,448,279  (3.95%)
- **2005-2035 increase to 622,498 (31%) change projected by DVRPC. Highest in 5 County Philadelphia (PA) region.**

- In 1987, it was estimated that Chester County’s 2010 population would be 420,000.
- It exceeded 490,000 in 2008.

### Chester County Conservation Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1999-2003</td>
<td>Chester County Farmland Challenge Grant Program for Farmland Preservation</td>
<td>For farmland preservation, with municipal funding of North Chester County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2007</td>
<td>Chester County Community Open Space Conservancy Grant Program</td>
<td>For open space conservation in Chester County.</td>
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<td>2003</td>
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### Chester County Farmland Challenge Grant Program

- **2004:** County Commissioners adopt Strategic Goal to permanently preserve 30% of the County by 2015.
- **2009:** Chester County Agricultural Land Preservation Board preserves the 20,000th acre of farmland in the County.
- **2006:** Conservancy Grant Program sets record with over 1,000 acres preserved in 2008.
- **2007:** $80 million 2007-2011 ($58 million to preservation, ~ $20 million to Urban Revitalization, and $2 million to Planning).
- **2003:** Commissioners adopt Linking Landscapes: A Plan for the Protected Open Space Network in Chester County – adopt 5,000 acre benchmark for annual land preservation.
- **2002:** Chester County Farmland Challenge Grant Program for Farmland Preservation expands to include entire County.
- **2001:** $75 million 1999-2003 (~ $63 million for land preservation, ~ $12 million for Urban Revitalization).
- **1999:** $60 million 1999-2003 (~ $48 million for land preservation, ~ $12 million for Urban Revitalization).

### Best and Worst Things about Life in the County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Experiance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Chester County 639,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Chester County 651,088</td>
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- **2000-2001 increase in 121,200 (1.7%) above projected by DVRPC. Highest in 5 County Philadelphia (PA) region.**
- In 1987, it was estimated that Chester County’s 2010 population would be 420,000.
- It exceeded 650,000 in 2009.
Open Space Preservation Department
Strategic Goal #1
By 2015, 30% of the acreage in Chester County will be preserved for open space.
(145,800 x 30% = 43,740)

Chester County Commissioners Goals
Growth #1 = By 2015, 30% of the acreage in Chester County will be preserved for open space.

Commercial Farmland Preservation
Results Measure #1 = 8% of Chester County preserved through County administered farmland preservation programs for public benefit by 2015.

Municipal Grants
Results Measure #1: 25% of Municipal Acquisition Grants completed within 12 months of grant award.
Results Measure #2: 65% of Municipal Grants completed within 24 months of grant award.
Results Measure #3: 100% of active Municipal Grants completed within 36 months of grant award.

Conservancy Grants
Results Measure #1: 25% of conservancy acquisition grants completed within 12 months of grant award.
Results Measure #2: 65% of active conservancy grants completed within 24 months of grant award.
Results Measure #3: 100% of active conservancy grants completed within 36 months of grant award.

2015 Land Preservation Goal
30% of Chester County
145,800 Acres

107,700 as of 12/31/2008
38,100 Acres 2009-1015
7 Years
Average 5,442 Acres/Year

Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Programs (ALPBB)
- 285 farms encompassing 25,817 acres preserved
Pennsylvania is the leading state in preserving agricultural land using easements in the Country while Chester County is currently ranked fourth.

Preservation Partnership Program

- 5,029 acres preserved
- 120 completed grants
PPP Public Benefits: Stroud

Keys to Sustained Success
- Active and engaged nonprofit community
- County funding for some indirect costs
- Creative & consistent County funding for quality projects
- Availability of Public Matching Funds (Commonwealth & Municipalities)
- Private Support (bargain sales & Foundation Funds) for matching
- Increasing Incorporation of Public Access

Market Opportunities
113 Acres Abuts 60 Acre Preserve 33 Acre Addition in works
Preservation Partnership Program
Farmland Preservation Component
• Funding requests submitted by private nonprofit
• County funds awarded to private nonprofit
• Private nonprofit completes the transaction

Municipal Park Grant Program
- 335 completed grants
- 165 Parks created & improved
- 5,105 acres preserved

Penn Township Community Park
Palmer Park
City of Coatesville
East Branch of the Brandywine: All volunteer

8,000 Trees & Shrubs: Riparian Restoration

Binky Lee Preserve: 200+ Trees & interpretive signs

Down by the Water’s Edge

The creek flows through a projected wetland that is part of the east branch of the Brandywine Creek, a rare example of an urban brook. The riparian habitat, with its varying topography, provides a unique opportunity for plant growth and water filtration. The restored area will serve as a model for similar projects in the region, helping to improve water quality and support biodiversity in our local ecosystems.
Chester County Commissioners Goals

Growth #1 = By 2015, 30% of the acreage of Chester County will be preserved for open space.

Open Space Preservation

Strategic Goal #3

By 2015, achieve a 90% compliance rate with land use restrictions on Chester County funded open space.

Monitoring

- Mail inspection reports
- Review project files
  - Baseline documentation
  - Past monitoring reports
  - Maps
  - Landowner information

Open Space Preservation Compliance

Result Measure #1 = 90% of open space grants and farms in compliance with land use restrictions.

Result Measure #2 = Complete strategic plan to communicate the benefits and value of open space to the public and begin implementation through education and outreach.

Department Microfiche Records
Cedar Hollow Preserve

Encroachment: Before

Cedar Hollow Preserve

Encroachment: After
– Site restored
– Surveyed property markers entered as GPS points

Annual Preservation Cost Per Acre

2004 - 2009

$6,131
$10,094
$11,117
$10,696
$7,891
$11,599
$3,764
$5,260
$9,587
$8,518
$8,315
$9,835
$3,824
$3,992
$4,463
$4,944
$3,729
$7,337
$2,000.00
$4,000.00
$6,000.00
$8,000.00
$10,000.00
$12,000.00
$14,000.00

2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009

Year

Dollars

Municipal Parks

Land Trusts/Conservancies

Farms

Farmland Preservation

Commonwealth & Challenge Grant

Land Trusts/Conservancies

Nature Preserves – Farmland - Trails

Municipal Parks

Acquisition – Construction – Trails - Greenways
Percentage of Funds

Open Space Allocations

Chesco Annual Acres Preserved 2000 - 2008

- Spring City – Main Street
  - 66%+ increase in Open Space funds committed to Urban Revitalization 2007-2011

Phoenixville – Bridge Street
Construction begins on Chester Valley Trail

EAST WHITELAND — Construction has begun on the long-awaited Chester Valley Trail, the hiking and biking recreational trail that will run through the southwest portion of Chester County.

The trail will stretch 12.2 miles along the former rail bed of the Chester Valley Railroad, which long ago abandoned it.

The Chester Valley Trail will be funded through Open Space Funds provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. According to information provided by the company, it will link the trail to the Brandywine Creek State Park and other trails.

Chairman Terence Farrell, who has championed it in his two terms in office, said the project will be a major asset to Chester County. He said it will be a great opportunity for people to connect with the outdoor world. It's very peaceful and almost spiritual in a way.

In addition to the obvious transportation and recreation issues (that the trail addresses), it's also an opportunity for people to connect with the outdoor world. It's very peaceful and almost spiritual in a way.

Getting the project started is a stunning achievement, said Commissioner Carol Aichele, who has championed it in her two terms in office. "This has been many years in the making," she said. "I am happy with this. Every now and then you win one."

The benefits of the trail would be widespread, she said. In addition to providing recreational opportunities, she said she expects commuters will use it during fair weather to get to work. "It'll be faster to get from Exton to King of Prussia than driving your car on (Route) 202," she said semi-jokingly.

Chester County Commissioner Kathi Cozzone likened its creation, in its own small way, to the establishment of the U.S. National Park System. "In addition to the obvious transportation and recreation issues (that the trail addresses), it's also an opportunity for people to connect with the outdoor world.

"It's a good opportunity to take a walk on a Sunday afternoon with your family," she said.

"I know the cycling community as a whole has been waiting for this for a long time," said Mary LaSota, head of the Chester County Cycling Coalition. "We will be keeping an eye on the construction."

Trails are important to county residents for recreation purposes because of the lack of walkable sidewalks, Aichele said. "Roads where people used to walk are no longer safe because of the increase in traffic," Aichele said. "These trails are what people want." She said that over the years, the county had lagged behind other suburban counties in construction of trails.

The first section runs from the Church Farm School on Swedesford Road in West Whiteland to where the rail bed crosses Route 29 in East Whiteland near the Route 202 interchange. About half of the 4.2-mile stretch is being constructed by the Whiteland Village senior housing development, in exchange for allowing a sanitary sewer line to run underneath the first two miles of the trail.

The second section runs through East Whiteland and Tredyffrin, past the Vanguard Industries corporate campus, and connects with the Schuylkill River Trail.

Mary LaSota, head of the Chester County Cycling Coalition, said her group was encouraged by the start of construction. "We have yet another option for transportation and recreation," she said.

"Getting the project started is a major asset to Chester County. It's a great opportunity to take a walk on a Sunday afternoon with your family," she said.

Mary LaSota, head of the Chester County Cycling Coalition, said her group was encouraged by the start of construction. "We have yet another option for transportation and recreation," she said.

"Getting the project started is a major asset to Chester County. It's a great opportunity to take a walk on a Sunday afternoon with your family," she said.
**Keys to Success**

**Overall**
- Leadership of County Commissioners & Elected Officials
- Culture of conservation (support from private organizations, community, people of influence, landowners)
- Support of County Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Department
- Accountability, Transparency
- Adaptable, Flexible, Supportive

**PPP/Land Trust/Conservancies:**
- 3 Year Program Areas
- County appraisals
- Indirect Costs
- Funding "Mosaic Landscapes"
- Trails
- Municipal Parks
  - Critical to Local Planning Foundation
  - Specificity in DOCCR
  - Most critical for inspections
  - Complimentary of County Parks

**Farmland Preservation**
- Outreach and Support by Agricultural Land Preservation Board
- Early support from Agricultural Development Council
- Strong support from Commonwealth
- Broadly supported statewide

**LESSONS LEARNED**
- Importance of communicating results
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Create an environment conducive to the conservation business
- Be responsive
- Choose your battles wisely
- All partners have limitations – know and respect them
- Find the opportunities in the challenges
- Give credit to partners whenever possible
- Embrace the spirit of competition
- Seize opportunities to leverage resources of others (trails, farms, parks)
- Be positive and candid – mission for optimists

**State & National Awards**
- Increasing Scrutiny

**Statewide**
- "Public Interest" Award, PA Farm Bureau
- PTF Award, Municipal League
- "Crossroads" Award, National Association of Counties
- "Outstanding Community" Award, Alliance for The Arts
- "Outstanding Project" Award, American Planning Association

**Federal**
- "Outstanding Project" Award, National Trust for Historic Preservation
- "Award of Merit" Award, American Planning Association
- "Outstanding Project" Award, American Planning Association
- "Outstanding Project" Award, American Planning Association

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Challenges

1) Increased Funding Challenges and Complexity of Acquisitions
2) Continued Contributions Across County Departments
3) Sustaining Public Support in Challenging Economy and After 20 Successful Years
4) Monitoring and Enforcement
5) Communicating Public Benefits of Land Preservation and Stewardship
6) Information Management and Reporting

Data Provided by Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Chester County 2035 Population Forecasts

Questions or Comments?
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610-344-5232
www.chesco.org/openspace