

APA PA Chapter Conference, Scranton, 10/16/23

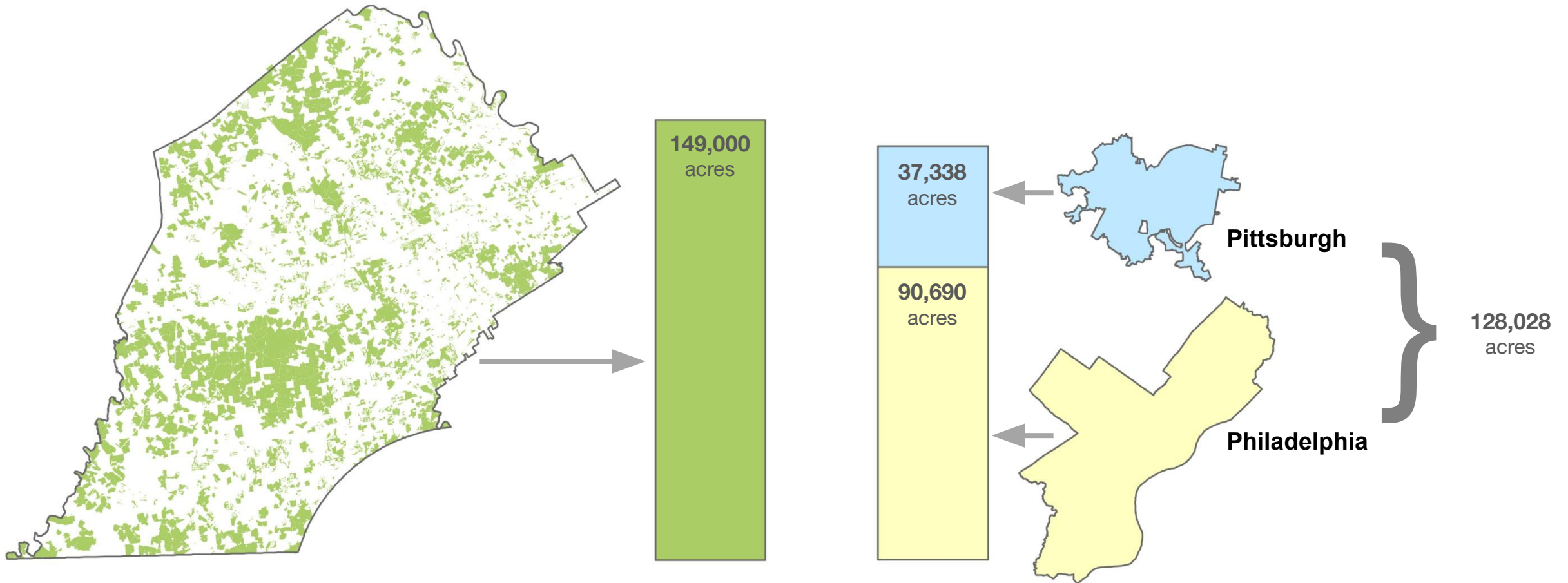
The Unique Evolution of Open Space Preservation Programs in three SEPA Counties

Photo credit Andrew Svekla



Open Space Preservation in Chester County

Protected Land in Chester County



What counts as preserved open space?



Public
Parks

16%



Land Owned or
Eased by Land Trusts

42%



Preserved
Farmland

27%



Homeowners'
Association Land

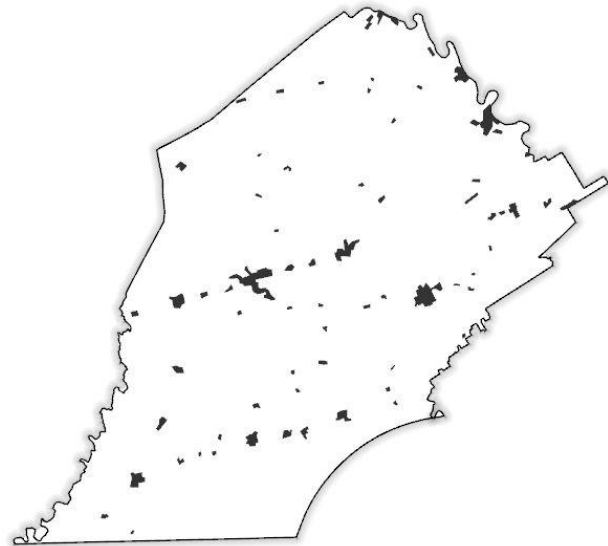
11%

← Other
Protected
Land
4%

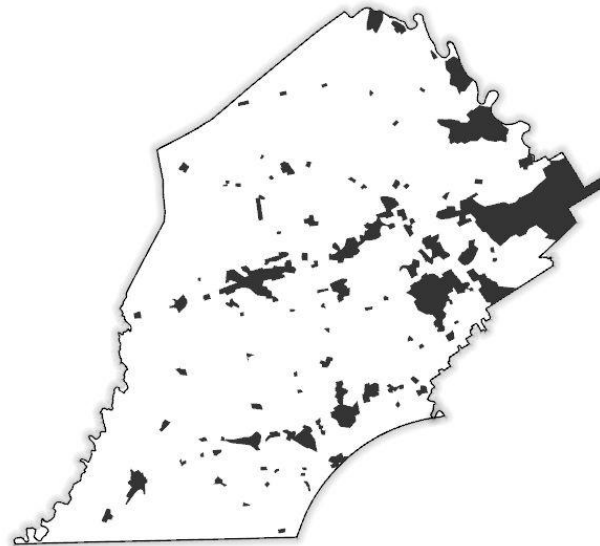
Suburban Sprawl

The impetus for the open space preservation movement

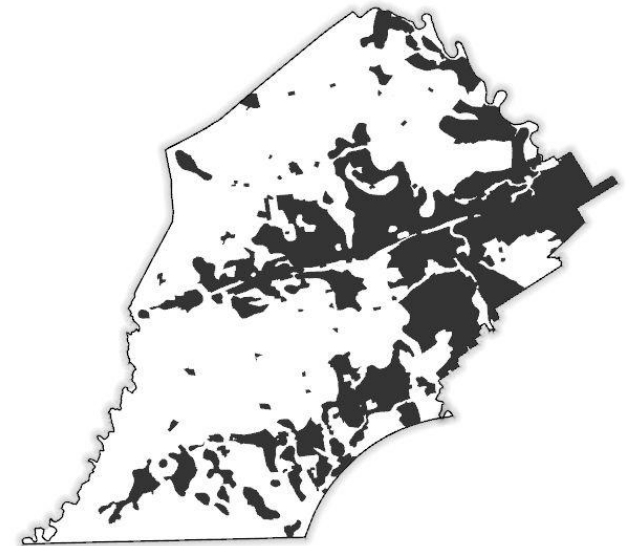
Developed Land in Chester County



1930



1970



2015

In the 1980s Chester County lost about a farm per week.

Open Space in Chester County

Dedicated Resources for Open Space Preservation

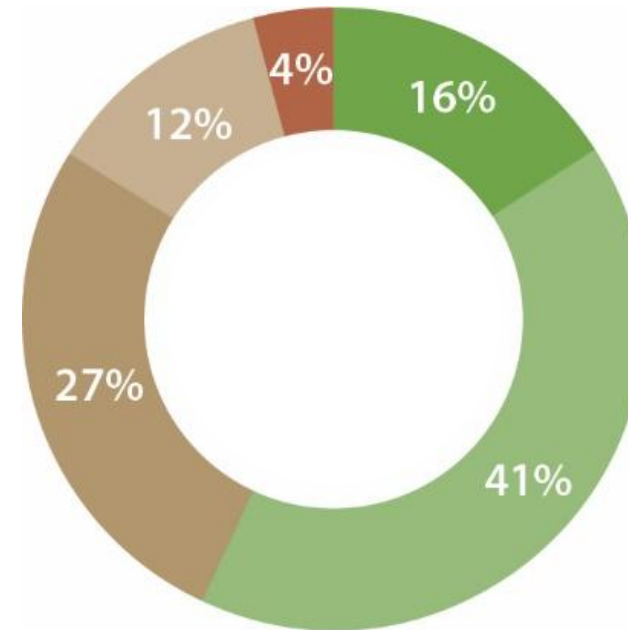
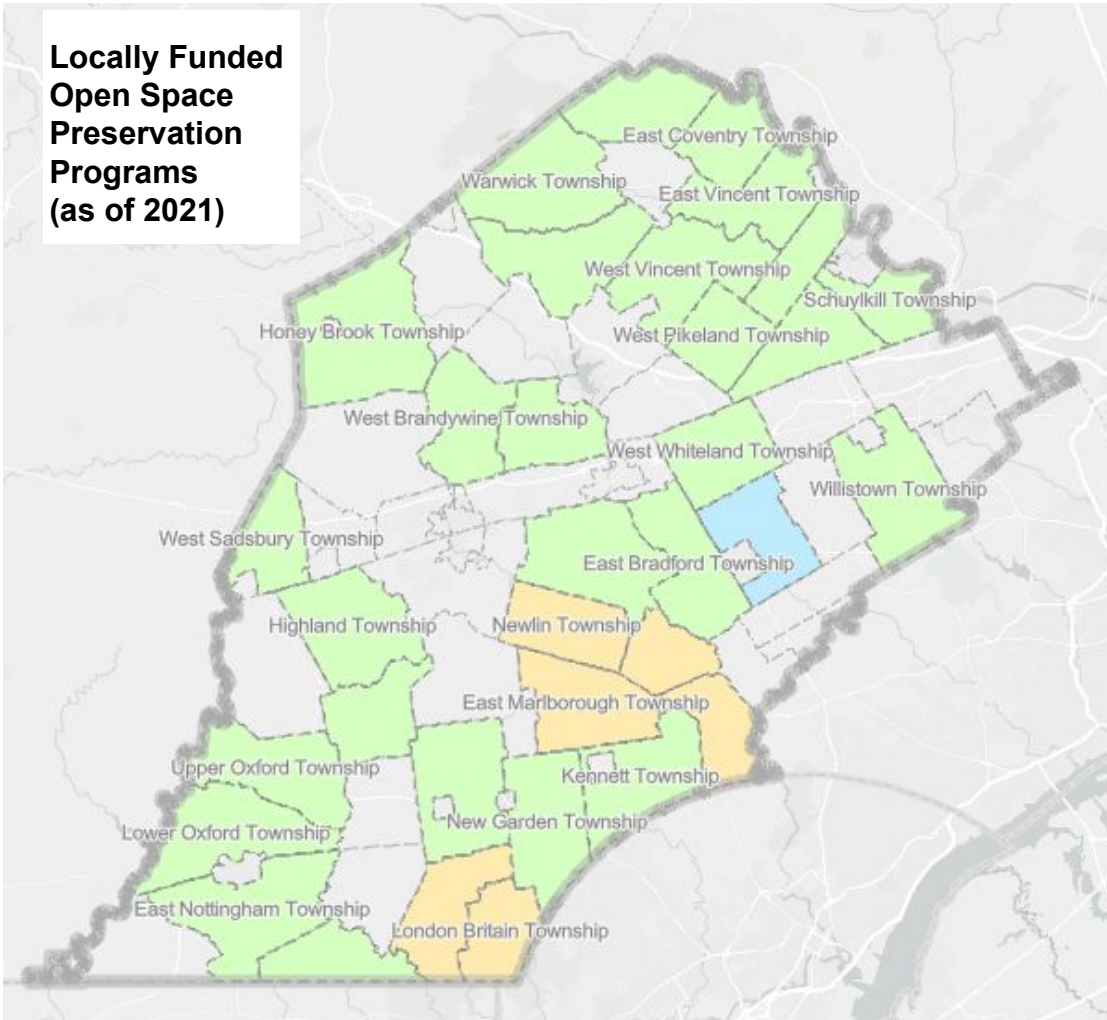
Funding for Open Space Preservation
(transactions in which Chester County has been involved)



An Integrated Framework for Preservation:

Coordinated Funding + Strong Support

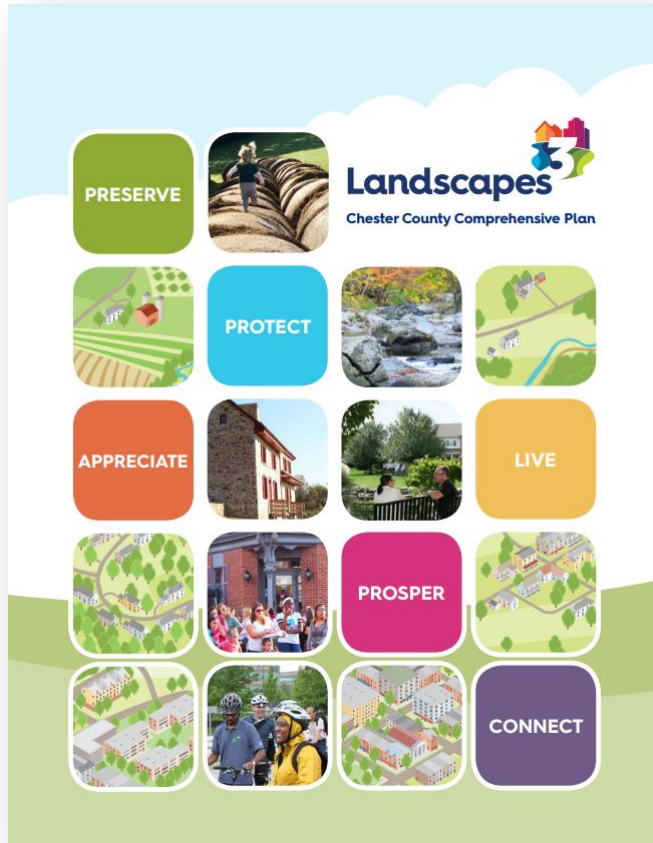
**Locally Funded
Open Space
Preservation
Programs
(as of 2021)**



- Public Parks**
(23,191 acres)
- Land Owned or Eased by Land Trusts**
(58,146 acres)
- Preserved Farmland**
(38,463 acres)
- Homeowners Association Land**
(16,473 acres)
- Other Protected Lands**
(6,097 acres)

Open Space in Chester County

Open Space Planning



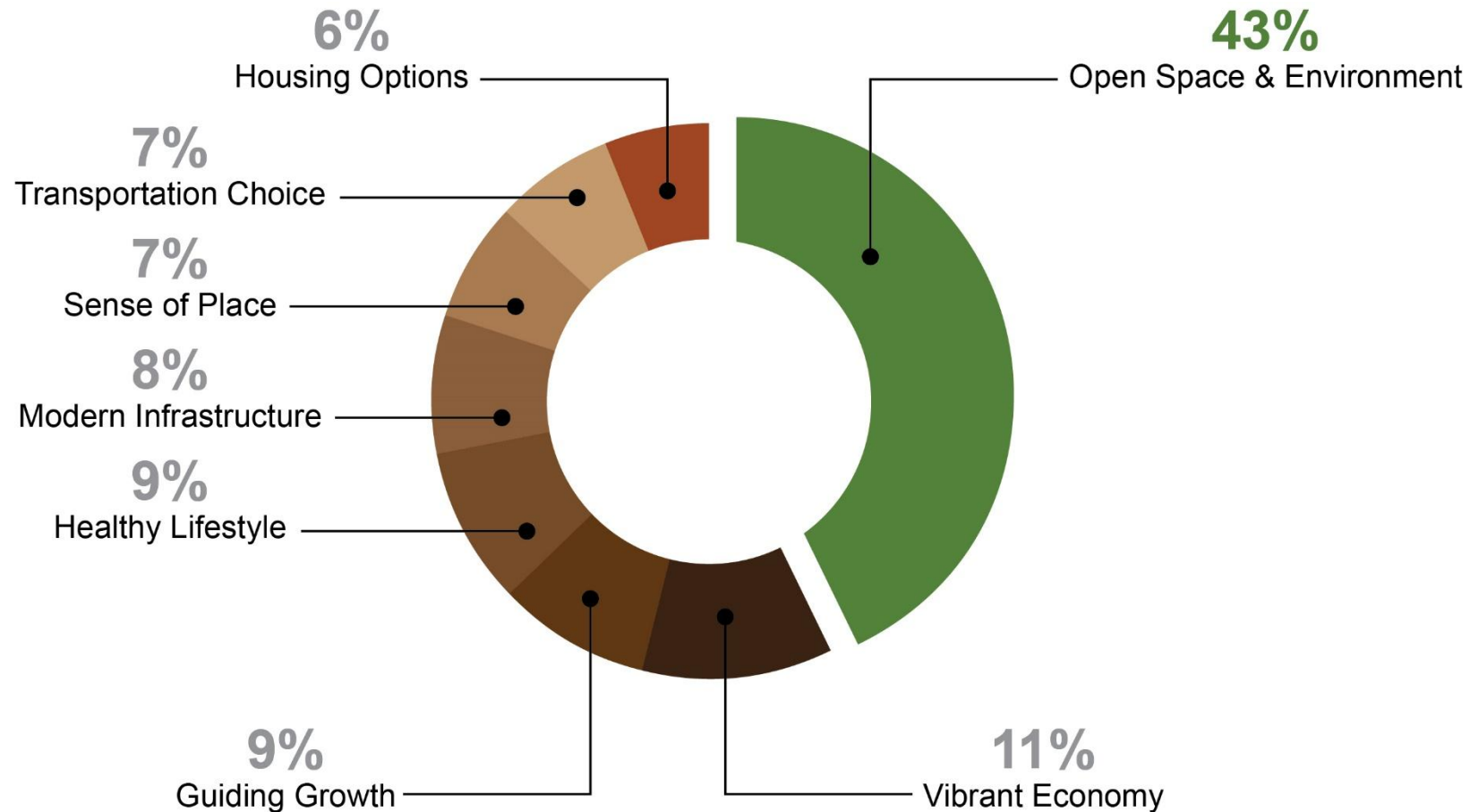
Landscapes3

PRESERVE GOAL:

Advance the protection and stewardship of open space, farmland, and natural and cultural features to realize economic, ecological, and quality of life benefits.

Public Support for Open Space Preservation

Percentage of Landscapes3 Survey respondents who ranked each issue as the most important issue facing Chester County



Retooling the Open Space Message

Climate Change

Advance the protection and stewardship of open space, farmland, and natural and cultural features to realize economic, ecological, and quality of life benefits.

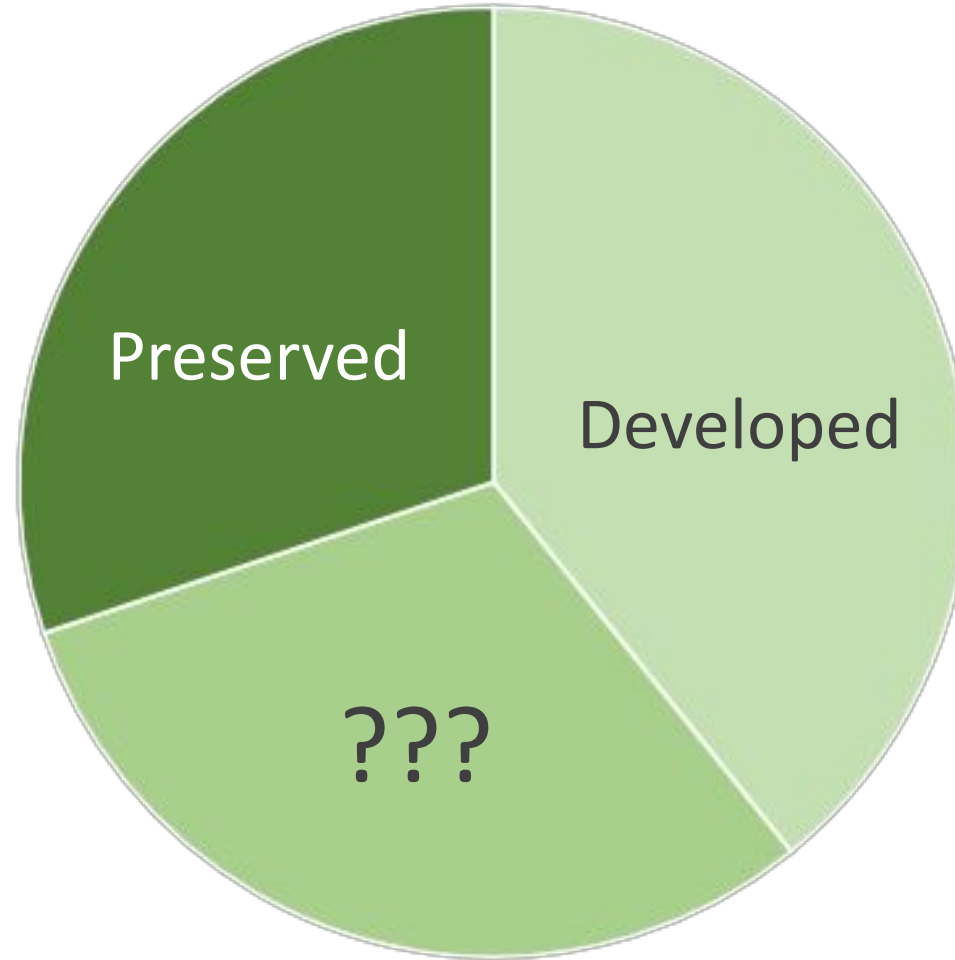
Growing Population

Fastest growing county in the SEPA- need for preservation as part of development and in addition to development

Recreation

Growing population needs additional recreational resources

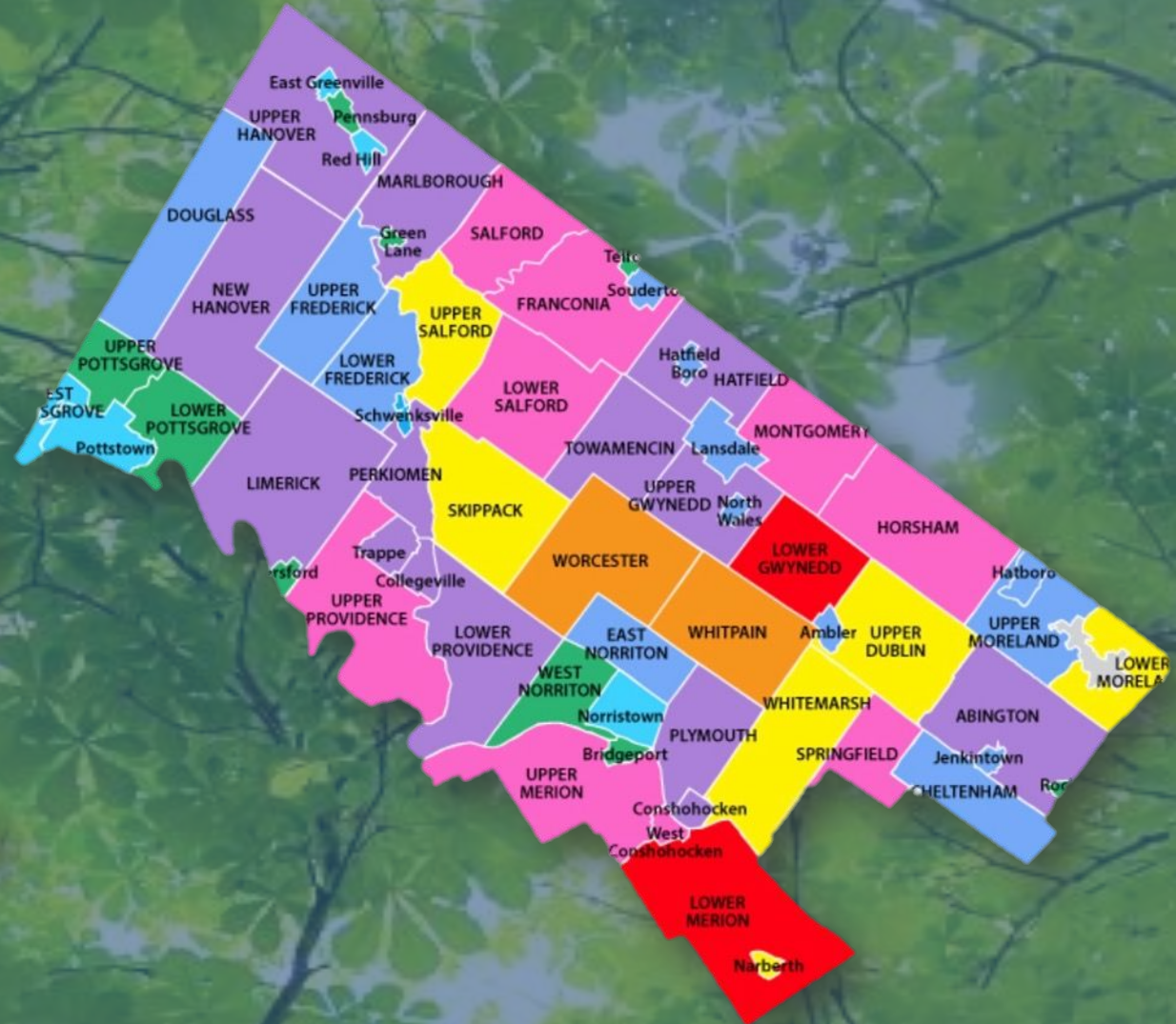
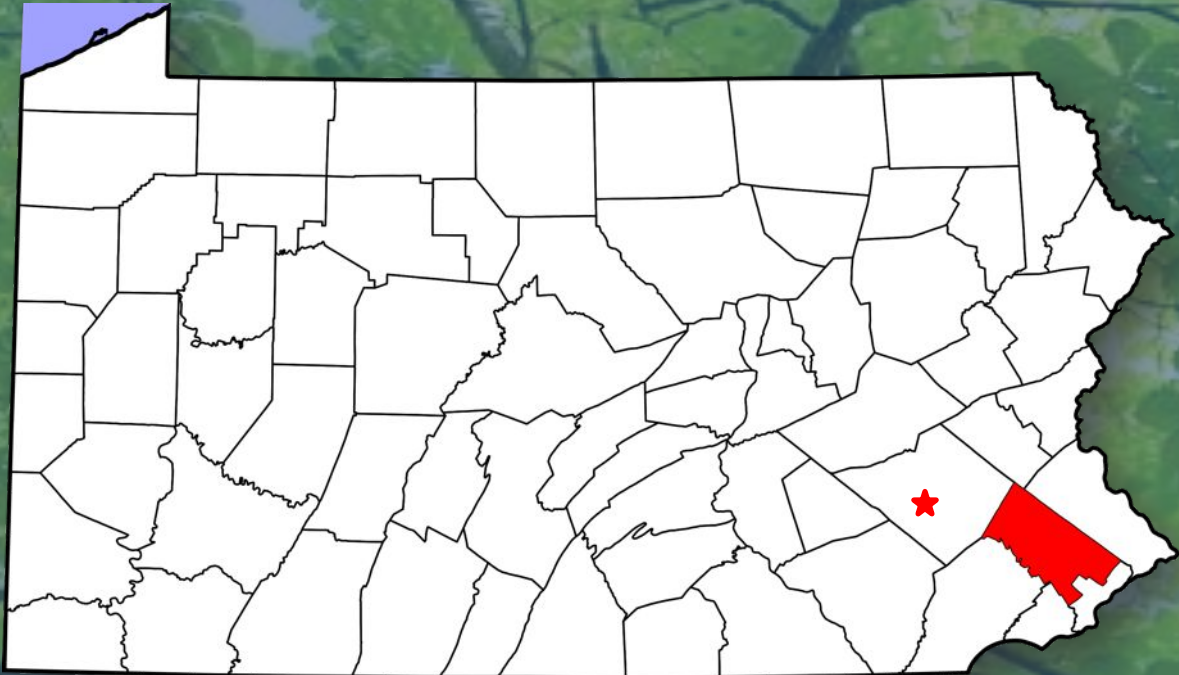
Retooling the Open Space Message



Open Space in Chester County

Montgomery County's Open Space Story

- Quick facts



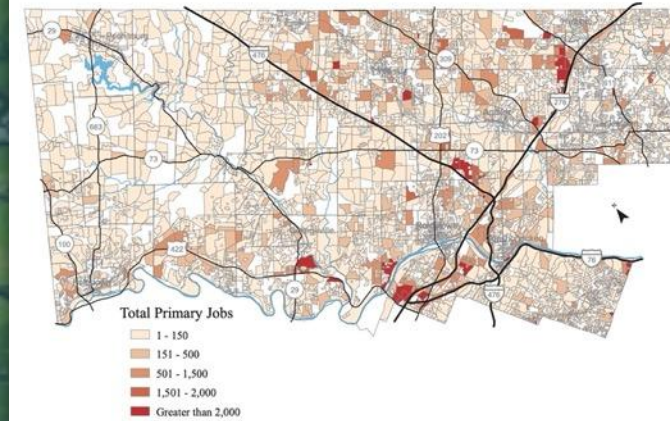
Montgomery County's Open Space Story

- County character



Major Employment Centers

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020.

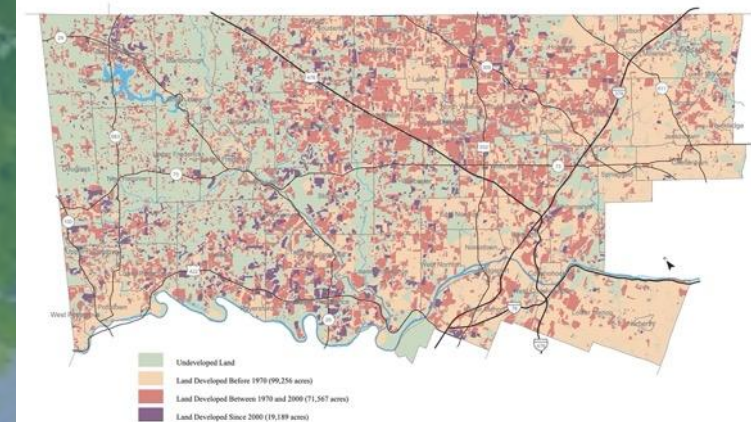


Forecast Employment Increases by Percentage 2020 - 2050

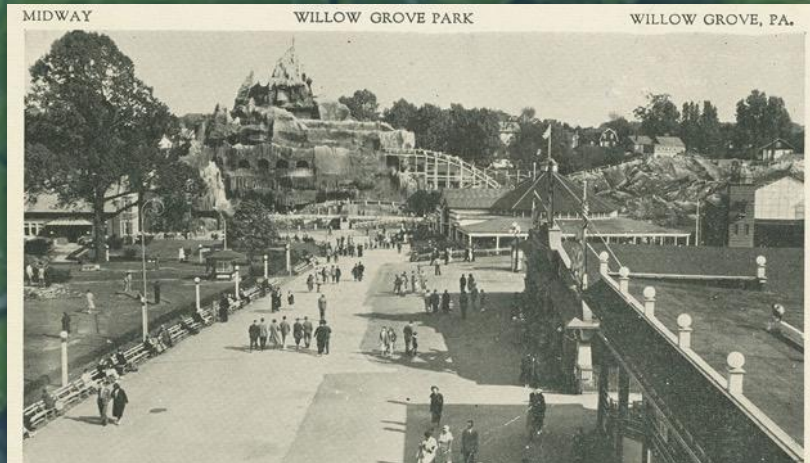
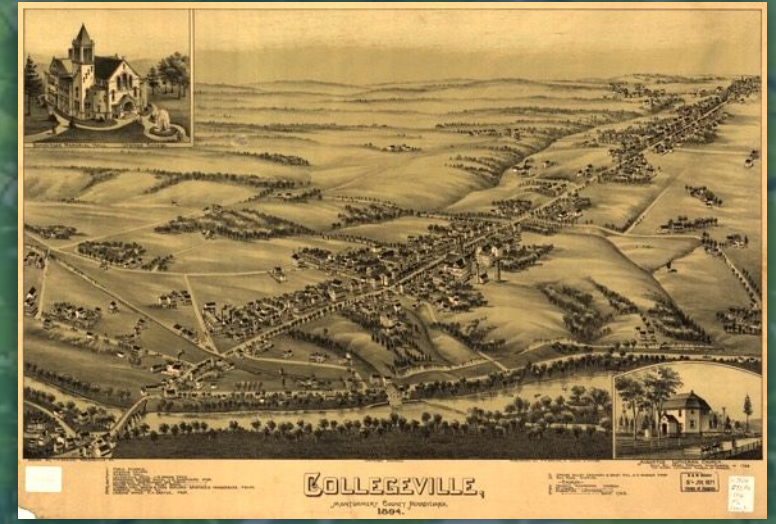
Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2021.

Land Developed Over Time

Source: MCPC, 2023

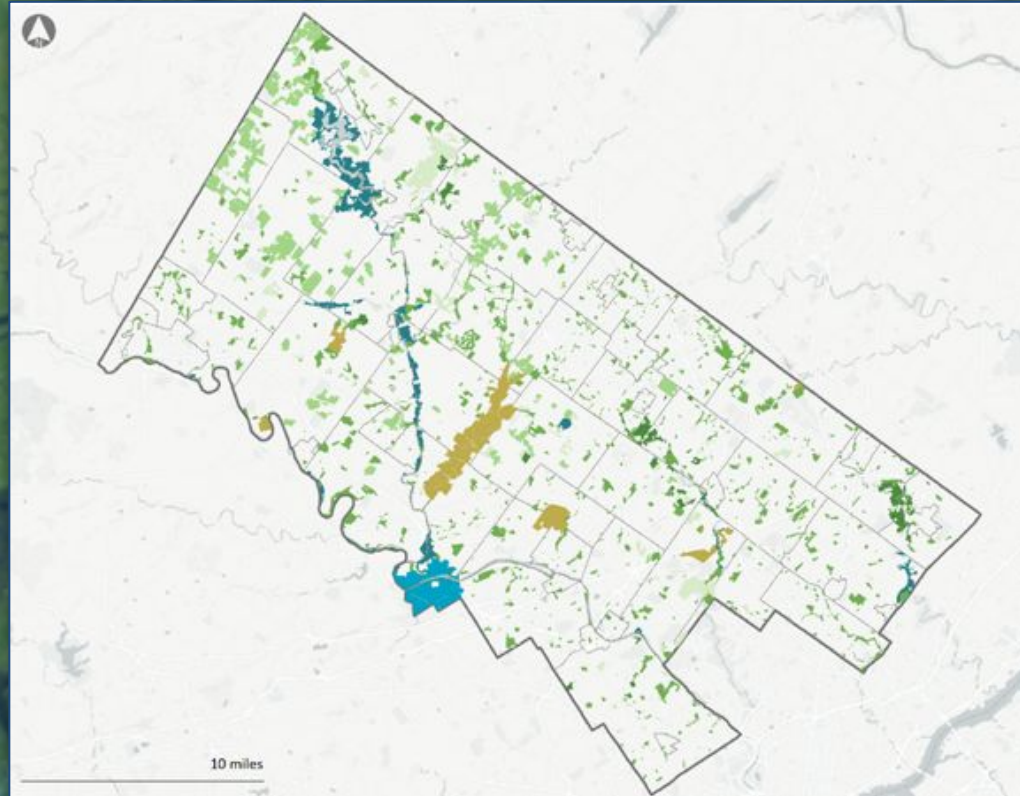


Montgomery County 'Pre-93'



Open Space 1993 & Beyond

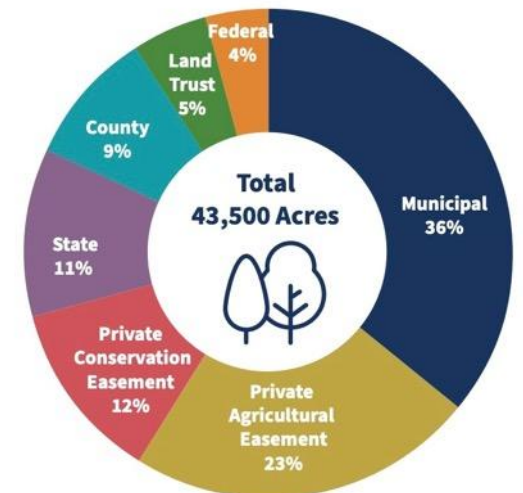
- 1993: 10-Year, \$100M OS program
- 2003: \$150M Green Fields/Green Towns referendum
- Farmland
- Montco Comp Plans (2005, 2015, 2025)
- Trails, Parkland & People (2015)
- Current Strategic Plan effort



2023: Permanently protected OS

Protected Open Space in Montgomery County by Ownership Type

Source: Montgomery County (2021), Econsult Solutions, Inc. (2021)



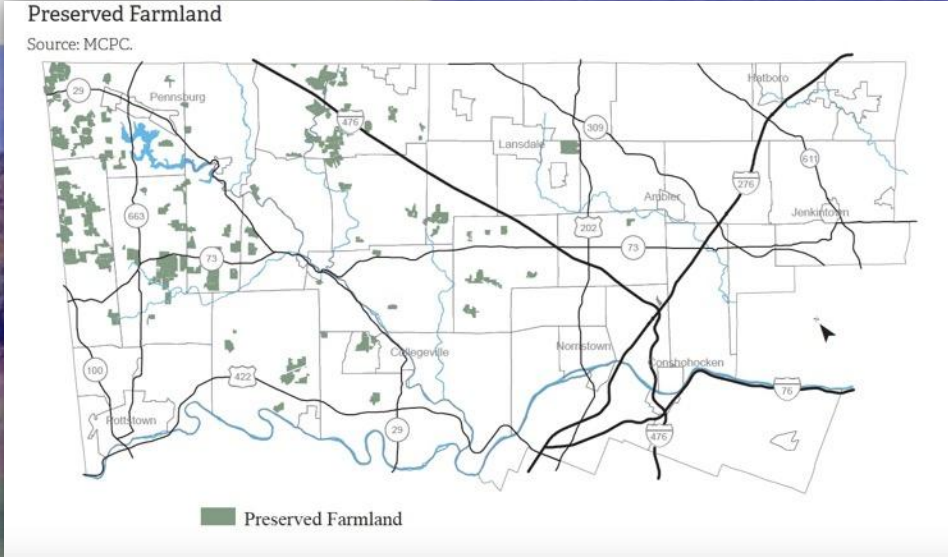
Annual Open Space Capital Funding

- Annual capital appropriation by County Commissioners
- Available for County fee acquisitions, grants to municipalities, NPOs
- Grants typically require 1:1 match
- Rolling basis
- Approval by Open Space Board and BOC


Project Expenses	2022		Planning Commission		2024	2025	2026	2027	2023-2027
	Budget	Projected	2022	2023					
Chester Valley Trail	\$10,561,495	\$9,672,284	\$2,030,735	-	-	-	-	-	\$2,030,735
County Road Study	50,000	88,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
County Transportation Grant Program	1,000,000	1,000,000	-	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	4,000,000
Cross County Trail - Erdenheim	2,885,000	1,092,550	3,489,700	5,520,720	-	-	-	-	9,010,420
Cross County Trail - East	230,000	74,600	475,000	150,000	2,200,000	1,100,000	-	-	3,925,000
Cross County Trail - Germantown Pike Bridge	650,000	23,165	500,000	575,000	4,950,000	4,950,000	-	-	10,975,000
Cross County Trail - West	150,000	40,000	80,000	350,000	200,000	1,375,000	1,375,000	1,375,000	3,380,000
Farmland Preservation Program	265,000	379,982	1,300,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	6,100,000
Haws Ave/Chain St Trailhead Improvements*	-	-	100,000	764,500	-	-	-	-	864,500
HazMat, eWaste, Recycling Center	1,854,000	-	-	1,854,000	2,056,000	-	-	-	3,910,000
Lafayette Street Extension Project	1,146,000	1,146,000	1,416,150	-	-	-	-	-	1,416,150
MontCo 2040 Grant Program	3,002,407	2,380,976	4,233,411	2,506,551	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	14,239,962
Norristown Dam	200,000	139,300	259,000	200,000	200,000	401,000	-	-	1,060,000
Open Space and Park Expansion	3,050,000	1,968,000	2,250,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	16,250,000
Pennypack Trail	-	-	180,000	-	-	-	-	-	180,000
Ridge Pike Improvement - Bridge 0	739,510	290,750	543,500	5,804,550	10,054,000	5,027,000	-	-	21,429,050
Ridge Pike Improvement – Butler Pike to Crescent Avenue	560,600	680,000	2,137,000	5,407,000	17,420,000	16,212,500	3,162,500	-	44,339,000
Ridge Pike Improvement – Crescent Avenue to Northwestern Avenue	7,402,866	3,467,660	6,360,000	6,090,000	950,000	-	-	-	13,400,000
Ridge Pike Improvement – Turnpike Bridge	2,368,290	350,750	2,404,500	10,645,200	15,078,500	7,539,250	-	-	35,667,450
Ridge Pike Improvement – Turnpike to Chemical Road	15,500,000	585,000	18,531,120	18,081,120	8,978,060	-	-	-	45,590,300
Schuylkill River Trail 422 Connector	663,500	102,450	1,144,078	-	-	-	-	-	1,144,078
SEPTA Capital Share	1,244,000	1,244,000	3,946,000	3,107,500	2,893,598	2,095,005	1,459,291	-	13,501,394
Sunrise Trail	50,000	-	50,000	-	-	-	-	-	50,000
Countywide Trail Development	150,000	10,000	150,000	-	-	-	-	-	150,000
Trail Junction Building – Norristown	150,000	130,000	630,000	900,000	500,000	500,000	-	-	2,530,000
Trail Network Renovations	315,000	-	180,000	180,000	180,000	180,000	180,000	180,000	900,000
Turnpike Corridor Reinvestment	1,500,000	-	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000
Wissahickon Trail	25,000	17,071	275,000	445,500	445,500	-	-	-	1,166,000
Total	\$55,712,668	\$24,882,538	\$52,715,194	\$68,331,641	\$74,355,658	\$47,629,755	\$14,426,791	\$257,459,039	

Farmland as Open Space

- Farms: ~ 25% of Montco's protected OS
- 2023: 565 farms covering approximately 31,000 acres, with an average farm size of 55 acres
- Since 2015, number of preserved farms rose from 154 to 185 in 2022 (20%).
- Since 2015, total acreage of preserved farmland grew 15%, or ~ 1,500 acres, to a total of 10,500 acres
- Challenges persist: Family farms, increasing costs/need for additional revenue streams

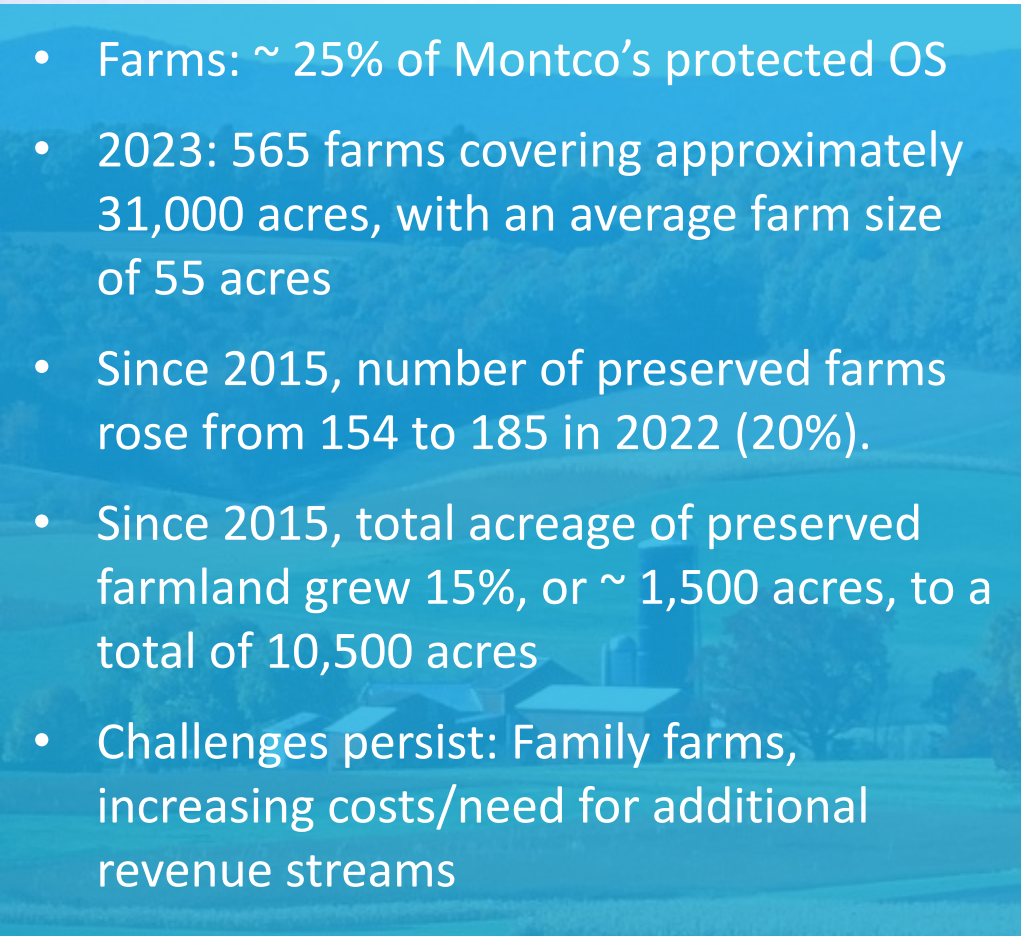


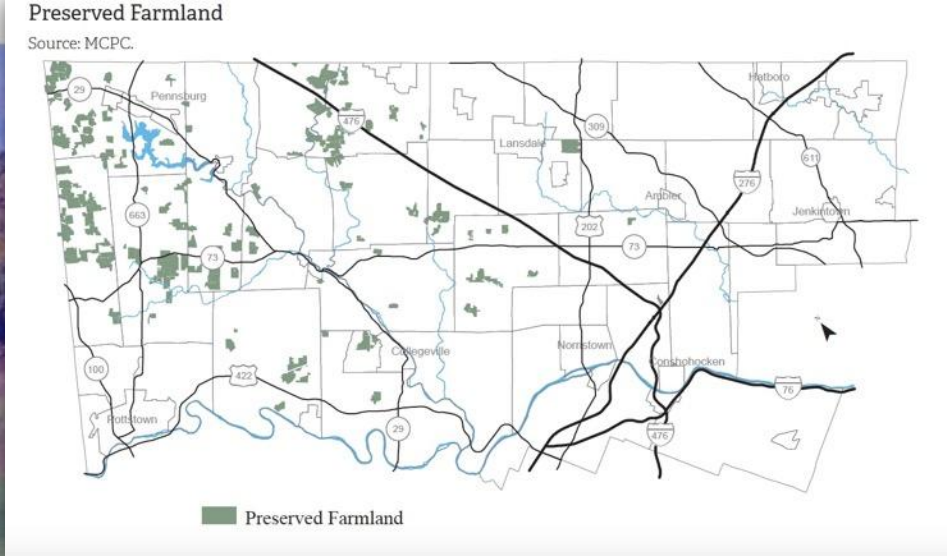
The map, titled "Preserved Farmland" with source "MCPC", shows the distribution of preserved farmland in Montgomery County, PA. Green shaded areas represent preserved farmland, scattered across the county. Major roads like I-76, I-476, and US-422 are shown. Towns labeled include Pottstown, Norristown, and Conshohocken. A legend at the bottom indicates "Preserved Farmland" with a green square.



The horizontal bar chart, titled "Total Acres of Preserved Farmland" with source "MCPC", shows the growth in preserved farmland from 2015 to 2022. The x-axis represents acres from 0 to 12,000. The y-axis lists the years. The 2022 bar is highlighted in dark blue and includes a tractor icon.

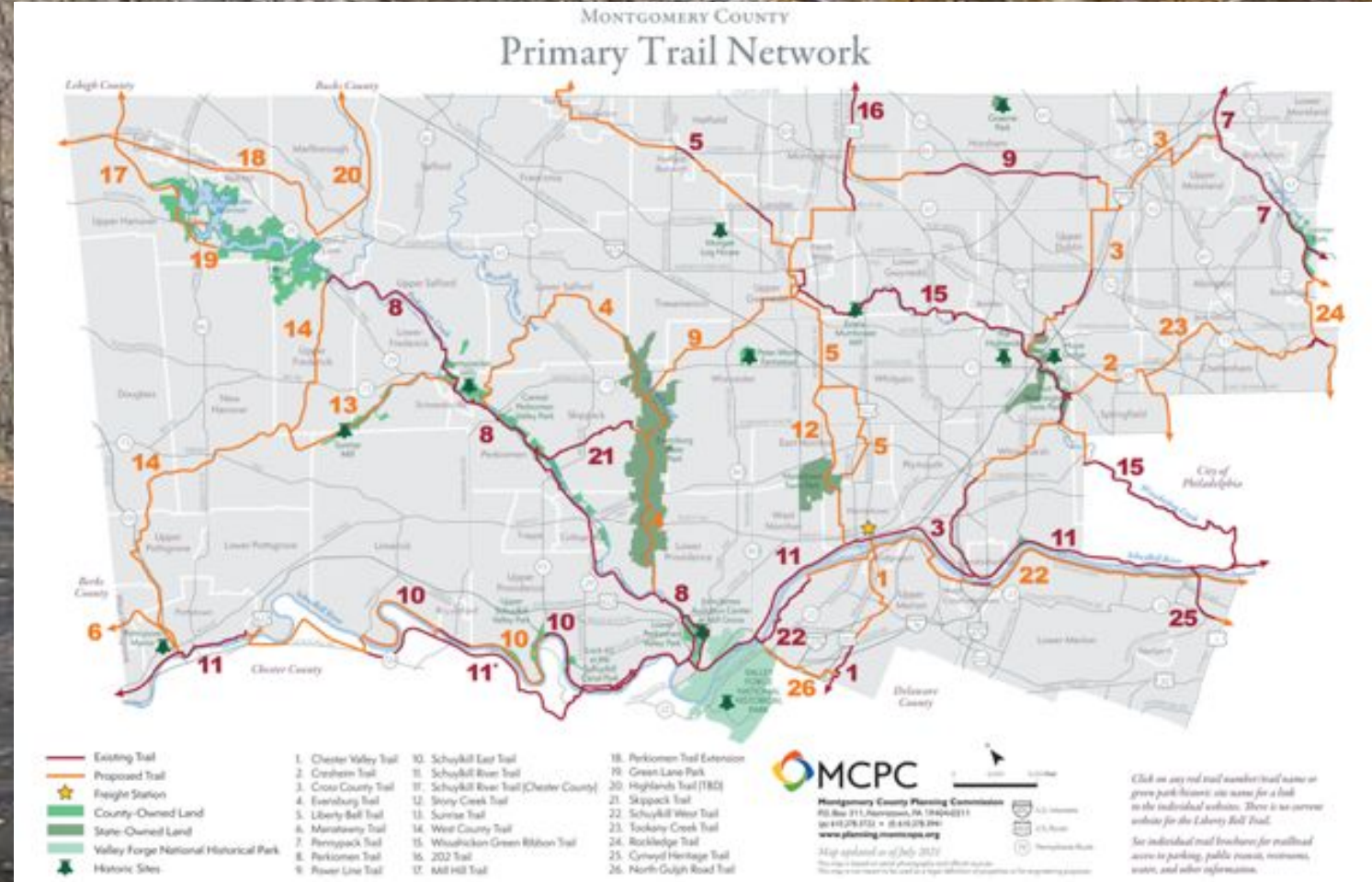
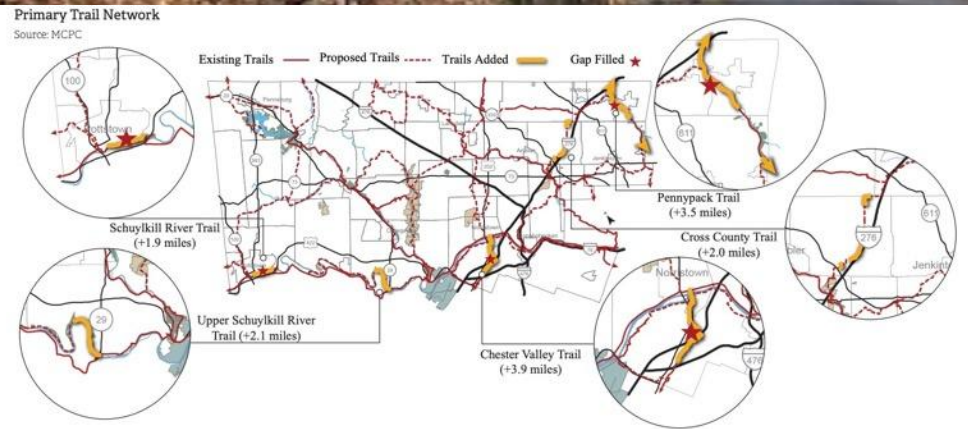
Year	Total Acres of Preserved Farmland
2015	9,095
2016	9,261
2017	9,403
2018	9,660
2019	9,884
2020	10,193
2021	10,226
2022	10,457

- 
- Farms: ~ 25% of Montco's protected OS
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 - Since 2015, total acreage of preserved farmland grew 15%, or ~ 1,500 acres, to a total of 10,500 acres
 - Challenges persist: Family farms, increasing costs/need for additional revenue streams



Trails as Open Space (& Open Space Connectors)

- Montco known for its existing trail network and ambitions to expand it
- Trails are open space
- Trails connect open space

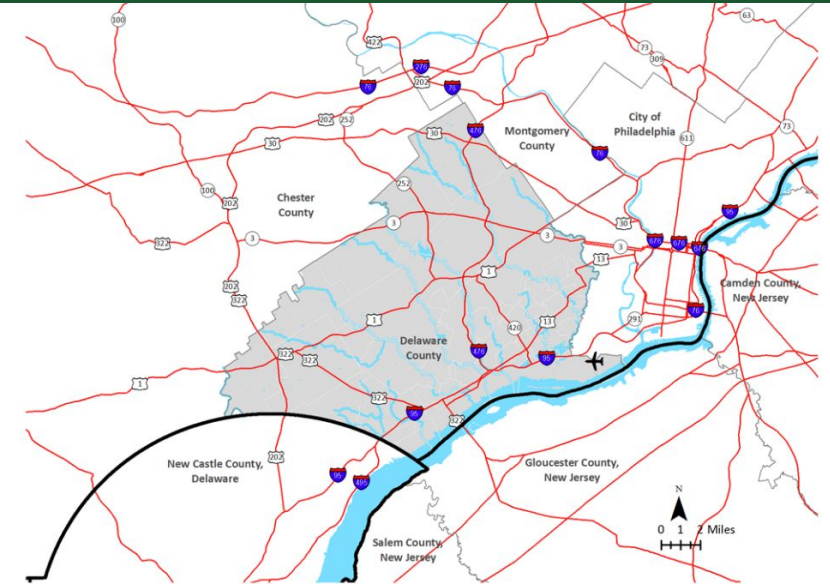


Open Space Preservation Programs in Delaware County

Steven R. Beckley, AICP
Delaware County Planning Department



DELAWARE COUNTY, PA



OPEN SPACE REFERENDUM - 1996

Republicans, Democrats, and Independents agree in support of this issue.

On Tuesday, April 23, you can help to make Delaware County green again

Every day our county is competing against areas that are greener, have more open land, and are more environmentally attractive to new companies and homebuyers. Our jobs, the value of our homes, and our quality of life are at stake.

Two years ago, Delaware County appointed a bipartisan panel of local business people, environmentalists, farmers, and experts to study the issue.

After months of research and public meetings, the panel recommended a comprehensive county-wide program to invest \$100 million over 10 years to help make Delaware County green again — including creating local parks and recreation areas, planting street trees, reducing flooding, preserving some of our remaining natural areas and open space, and more. County Council voted unanimously to accept the report and put it on the ballot.

Republicans, Democrats, Independents, county organizations, and businesses are joining together to support this important issue. On Tuesday, April 23, vote **YES!** to help make Delaware County green again.

American Association of Botanical Gardens & Arboreta
ARCO Chemical Company
Bicycle Coalition of the Delaware Valley
Robert J. Bruce, President, Widener University
Chester Heights Planning Commission
Chester Historical Society
Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association
City of Chester
Concord Township Board of Supervisors
Crozer-Keightone Health System
Darby Creek Valley Association
Delaware County Agricultural Preservation Board
Delaware County Chamber of Commerce
Delaware County Conservation District
Delaware County Cycling Committee
Delaware County Environmental Network
Delaware County Historical Society
Democratic Committee of Delaware County
Friends of the Chester Creek Branch Trail
Friends of the Swedish Cabin
GreenSpace Alliance of Southeastern Pennsylvania
League of Women Voters of Delaware County
League of Women Voters of the Media Area
League of Women Voters of Radnor Township

Republicans, Democrats, Independents
and leading companies and organizations
are joining together to ask you

to vote

YES

GREEN!
Again!

Wednesday, April 24, 1996

Delco voters pick closed wallets over open spaces

The referendum on a \$100 million bond had faced an uphill battle, with many questioning its cost.

By Bill Ordine
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Neither the balmy advent of spring weather nor a vigorous campaign aimed at the nature-loving side of Delaware County residents was enough to sway voters yesterday as the \$100 million open-space bond issue appeared headed for defeat.

erty-tax burden. Nunn, a Republican, spent his own money to finance TV ads against the open-space proposal.

Leading up to election day, many Republicans leaders distributed sample ballots suggesting a negative vote, and Democratic sample ballots called for a vote in favor.

In the county's legislative races, Steven Stinson outpolled tax activist

Green-space question deeply divides Delco

Shall debt in an amount not to exceed \$100,000,000 to be incurred over a 10-year period for the purpose of financing the greening of urban, suburban, and rural lands and the preservation of open space Delaware County; acquisition and protection of stream corridors; development of local County parks, historic and recreational areas; tree planting and municipal and County space planning; be authorized to be incurred and approved by the electorate?

Voters will decide April 23 on a \$100 million bond issue. Critics say other needs should come first.

ing passage of the bond issue, also

sees the re matter — county's first. Unless I improve parks and will lose p Again or drive up greater de they say.

"This is leg up for Cheryl Th Green Again committee, which has raised \$40,000 from corporate, civic

26 Delaware County Daily Times Thursday, April 25, 1996

IN THE COUNTY

Why did Green Space issue lose?

Tax rates keyed to referendum defeat

By THOMAS C. FEENEY

Of the Times Staff

middle of the pack.

In all, 14 of the 15 most heavily taxed communities voted against the measure. The lone exception was provided by Lower

By Susan Q. Stranahan
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Will the effort to preserve green space in Delaware County be its rescue or its ruin?

In all probability, neither.

But those are the ways in which the \$100 million referendum on the April 23 ballot have been cast by opposing sides.

Yes! MAKE DELAWARE COUNTY
GREEN!
Again!

They vowed to 'Save the Valley.' They did — and it's soon to be a national park

The Philadelphia Inquirer

by Katie Park, Posted: October 16, 2018

May 20, 2021

THE
CONSERVATION FUND

Historic Beaver Valley Officially Added to First State National Historical Park

Private organizations donate critical addition to Delaware's first and only national park

CLIMATE

The Philadelphia Inquirer

254 acres of Delco's 'Wyeth country' added to First State National Historical Park

May 20, 2021

254 acres along Brandywine Creek in Delaware County have been added to First State National Historical Park near the Delaware-Pennsylvania border.

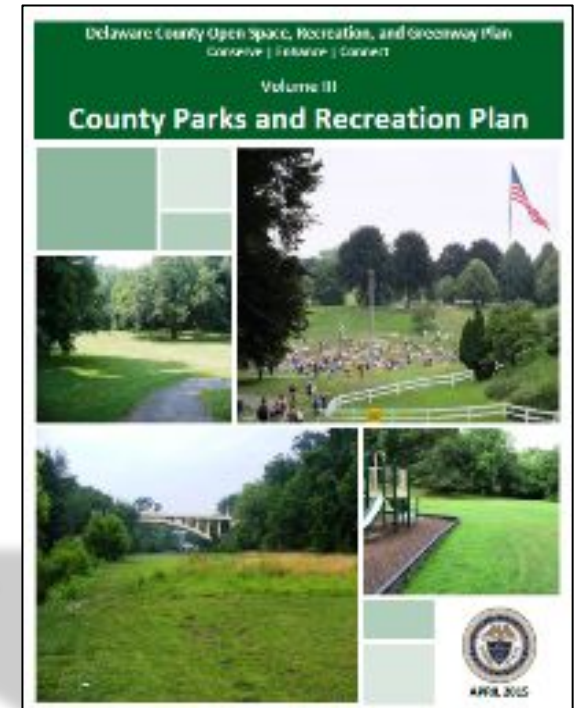
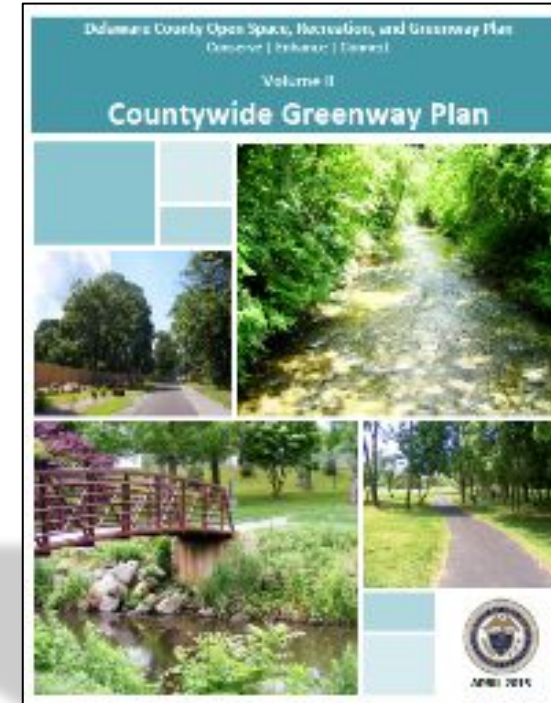
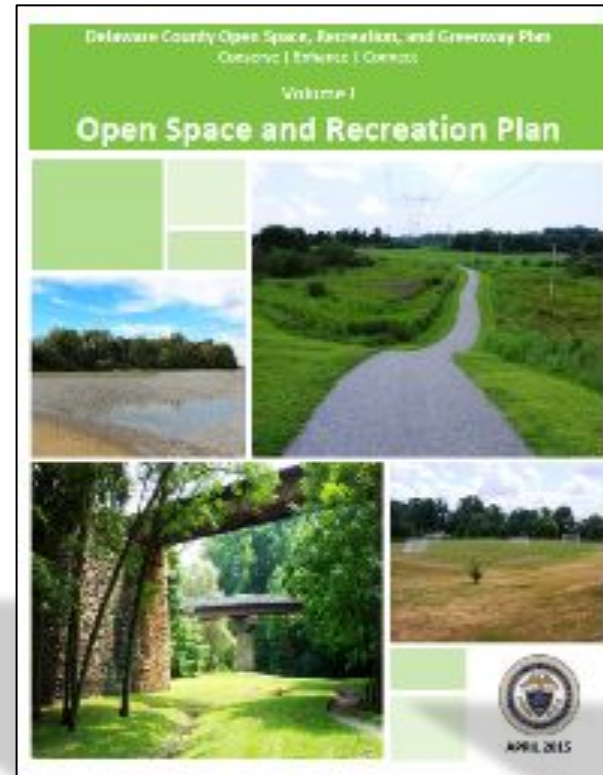


The preserved parcel is shown in the upper right corner of the map. Courtesy Of Save The Valley

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, & GREENWAY PLAN (2015)

3-Volume Plan

Adopted
April 22, 2015



“SustainDelco”—Delco Strong and Sustainable

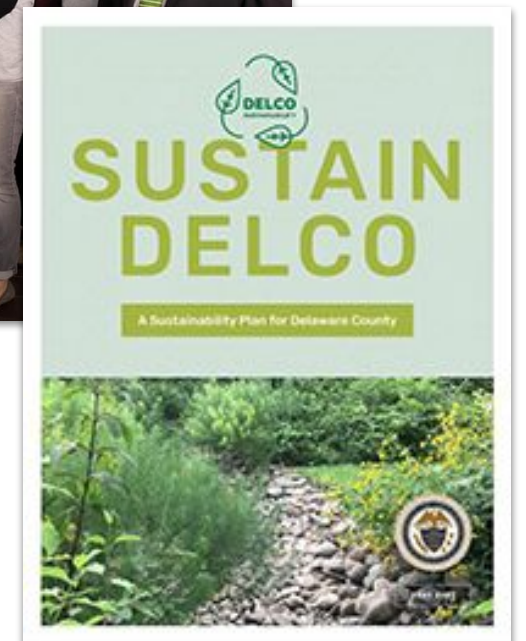
www.delcopa.gov/sustainability

County Council Initiative

- Sustainability Commission
- First Chief Sustainability Officer
- Office of Sustainability: Planning, Public Works, Facilities Management, Fleet Management, Parks and Recreation and Conservation District
- Sustainability Plan - “Sustain Delco”
(adopted July, 2023)
- Annual Sustainability Conference
(2nd held in June, 2023)



2022



County Grant
Program
(2019-present)
3 Rounds*

\$16.9m
granted

\$33.7m
total investment

*4th Round in
Application
Review stage.



244 Acres of
Open Space

13.3 Miles of
Trails

34
Recreational
and Natural
Features

39 Planning
and Design

2021 DELCO OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS PROJECT

Green Space Task Force

- Discuss and define County's role in open space and trails.
- Explore capacity, partnership, & funding methods for the County.
- Advise on Program Guidelines for County OS Grant Program

Trails Alliance

- Collaborate and discuss the County Trail Network
- Connect and share resources and ideas
- Provide consistency & leadership

Open Space & Trails Grant Program
("Delco Green Ways") administration of current grants, and rollout of new round.

Return On Environment Study...



RETURN ON ENVIRONMENT

**Quantifying the Economic Value of Protected
Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania**

DELCO RETURN ON ENVIRONMENT STUDY



- **Assistance of Consultant (*Toole Recreation Planning*)**
- **Large, Diverse Advisory Committee**
- **6 Case Studies, carefully selected**
- **Professional photographer hired**

RETURN ON ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Jamie Anderson, Eastern Delaware County Stormwater Collaborative
Steve Beckley, Delaware County Planning Department
Mark Boudreau, Penn State Brandywine
Steve Byrne, Visit Delco PA
Julie DelMuto, Delaware County Planning Department
Allison Dobbins, Delaware County Green Space Task Force
Patty Elkins, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Paul Fritz, Landscape Architect, Wallingford
Stephanie Gaboriault, Delaware County Park Board
Lisa Gaffney, Riverfront Alliance of Delaware County
Monica Gagliardi, Toole Recreation Planning – Consultant to Delaware County
Michele Garrity, PECO
Ross Gilbert, Health Administrator, Nemours
Laura Goodrich Cairns, Delaware County Commerce Center
Mercedes Harrington, Delaware County Planning Department
Linda Hill, Former Director, Delaware County Planning Department
Ann Hutchinson, Natural Lands, Delaware County Green Space Task Force
Douglas Interrante, Delaware County Green Space Task Force
Jaime Jilozian, Delaware County Green Space Task Force
Michael Karkowski, Tyler Arboretum
Barbara Kelley, Upper Chichester Township
William Lighter, Delaware County Green Space Task Force
Francine Locke, Delaware County Chief Sustainability Officer
Jean Lynch, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Marc Manfre, Delaware County Parks Department
Trish McFarland, Delaware County Chamber of Commerce
Afsana Oreen, Delaware County Green Space Task Force
Elaine Schaefer, Delaware County Council
Amanda Serock, Concord Township
Anne Stauffer, Delaware County Planning Department
Ann Toole, Toole Recreation Planning – Consultant to Delaware County
Peter Williamson, Delaware County Green Space Task Force, Delaware County Park Board

Delaware County Protected Land and Open Space

- Federal Open Space
- State Open Space
- County Open Space
- Municipal Open Space
- Farmland
- Non Profit Lands
- Municipality Boundaries
- Delaware County Boundary

Andy Lewis Community Park

Rose Tree County Park

Former Don Guanella Property Open Space

Naylors Run Park

Chester Creek Trail

Chester Veterans Memorial Park

1. Former Don Guanella Property owned by Delaware County (*Environmental Services Impact*)
2. The County's Chester Creek Trail (*Direct Use Impact*)
3. Rose Tree County Park – focusing on the Summer Concert Series (*Economic Activity Impact*)
4. Haverford Township's Andy Lewis Community Park (formerly known as the Haverford Reserve) (*Environmental Services Impact*)
5. Upper Darby Township's Naylors Run Park (*Direct Use Impact*)
6. The City of Chester's Veterans Memorial Park (*Direct Use Impact*)

Case Study: Rose Tree County Park

Economic Impact from Concert Series in Rose Tree County Park in Delaware County from the 2021 Concert Series



	Delaware County
Direct Impact	\$489,300
Indirect and Induced Impact	\$303,700
Total Output	\$793,000
Total Employment Supported	8
Total Employee Compensation Supported	\$270,300



Case Study: Chester Creek Trail



Photo credit: Sahar Coston-Hardy

Recreational Benefits to Local Households from Chester Creek Trail for those residing within a ½ Mile of the Trail



Sources: Econsult Solutions (2021), ACS 2019 5-Year Estimates, PA DCNR (2014, 2019), USDA (2017), Chester Creek Trail Survey (2021).
*Estimates of households and total visits are rounded and therefore the product of total visits may not square due to rounding.

Case Study: Veterans Memorial Park



Photo credit: Sahar Coston-Hardy

Healthcare and Workplace Savings Associated with Chester Veterans Memorial Park

	½ Mile	Citywide
Direct Medical Cost Savings	\$550,900	\$2,303,000
Indirect Medical Cost Savings	\$1,652,700	\$6,909,000
Direct Workers' Comp Savings	\$5,100	\$21,000
Indirect Workers' Comp Savings	\$20,500	\$83,800
Lost Productivity	\$756,300	\$3,095,700
Total	\$2,985,500	\$12,412,400



Delco plans to take land from Archdiocese to create county's largest park

June 16, 2021

The Delaware County Council plans to use eminent domain to buy the land near the former Don Guanella School in Marple Township.



Delco creating master plan for Don Guanella park property

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

March 28, 2022

DAILY TIMES

Letter to the Editor: Don Guanella move will improve county's health

DAILY TIMES

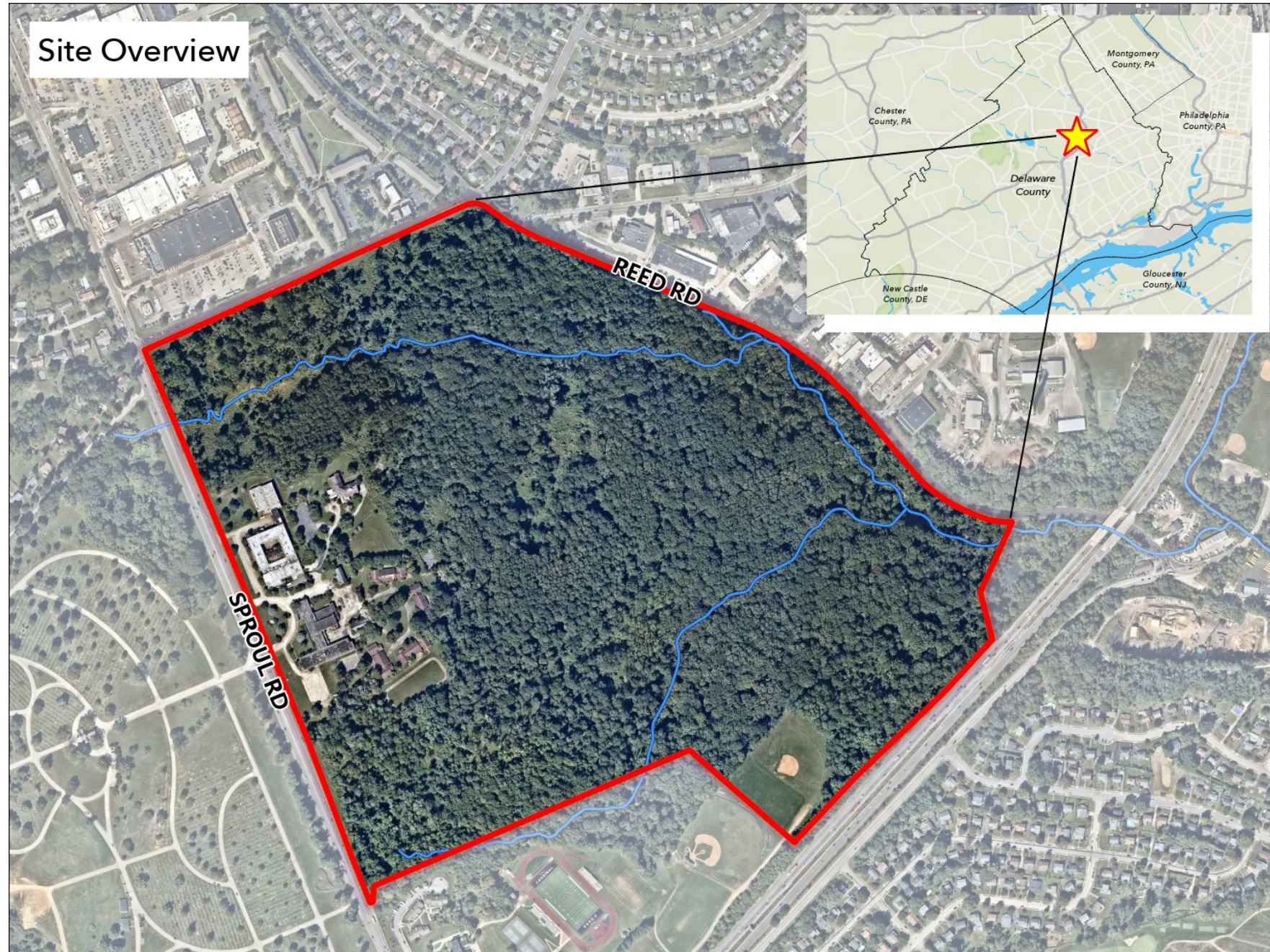
Jun 23, 2021





Former Don Guanella Property

- 213 acres - was proposed for high-density development
- New County Parkland acquired in 2021
- Potential hub in Trail Network
- Master Plan in late stages



Delco doles out \$4.5 million for open space

November 19, 2019

By Kathleen E. Carey

Delaware County offering open space funds to municipalities

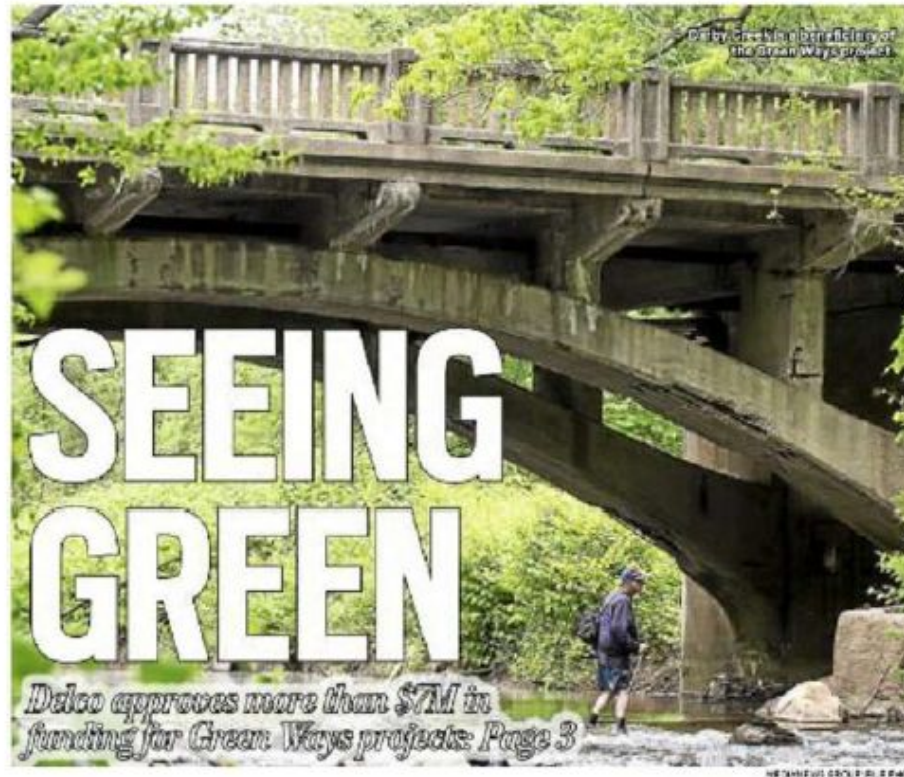
By Kathleen E. Carey kcarey@21st-centurymedia.com
Jul 14, 2021

LATEST HEADLINES

Delaware County approves more than \$7M in funding for Green Ways projects

October 13, 2021

DAILY TIMES



Delaware County approves more than \$7M in funding for Green Ways projects

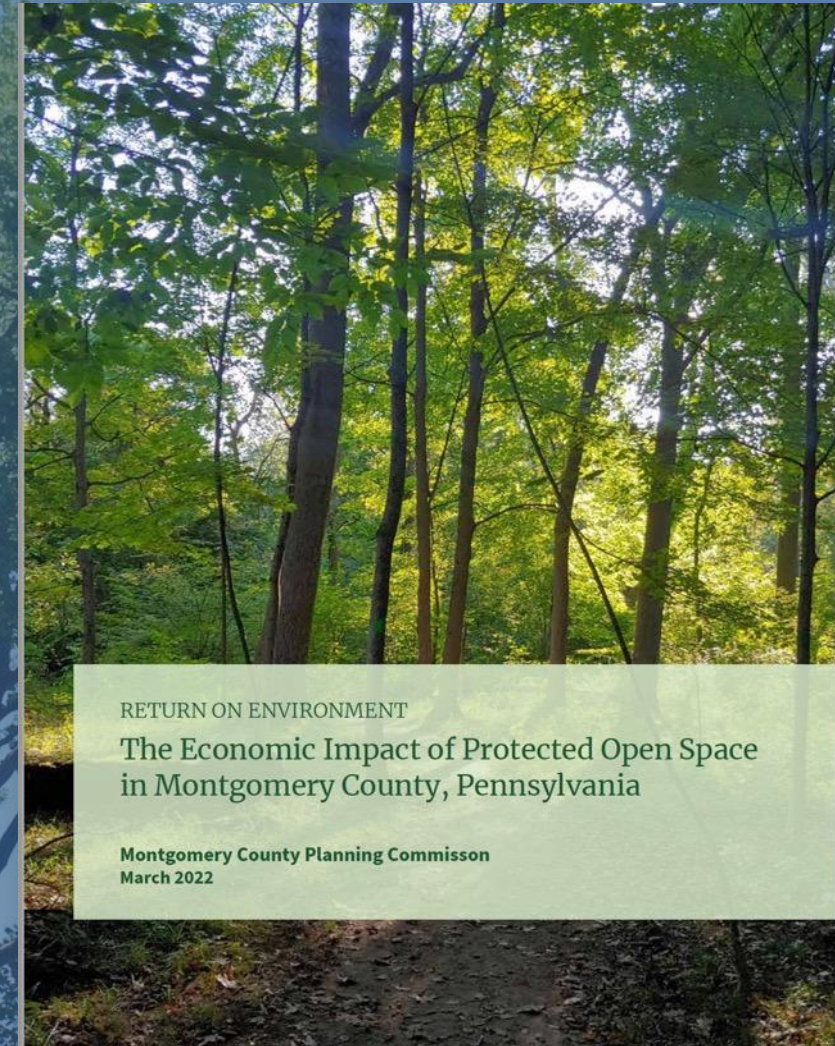


Darby Creek Connectivity Project – Upper Darby Township



Montco's 2022 Return on Environment Study

- Update? Why?!
- Timing
- Re-ignition
- Our amazing ROE Advisory Committee
- Case studies
- Direct use benefits



ROE Direct Use Benefits: Recreation Savings

- Preserved open space provides numerous free or low cost recreational activities for residents
- Finding: Residents would be willing to pay an additional \$219M for recreational activities available in the private market; equates to \$680/household



OR...



Total Annual
Recreational Value
\$219M
Per Household
\$680

=



Total Households
321,400

×



Avg. Number of visits
per family per year
30

×



Willingness to Pay by
Different Outdoor
Activities

ROE Direct Use Benefits: Healthcare Savings

- Positive relationship between the number of recreational opportunities available to an individual and the frequency of his or her participation in physical activity
- Physically active people enjoy a variety of health benefits



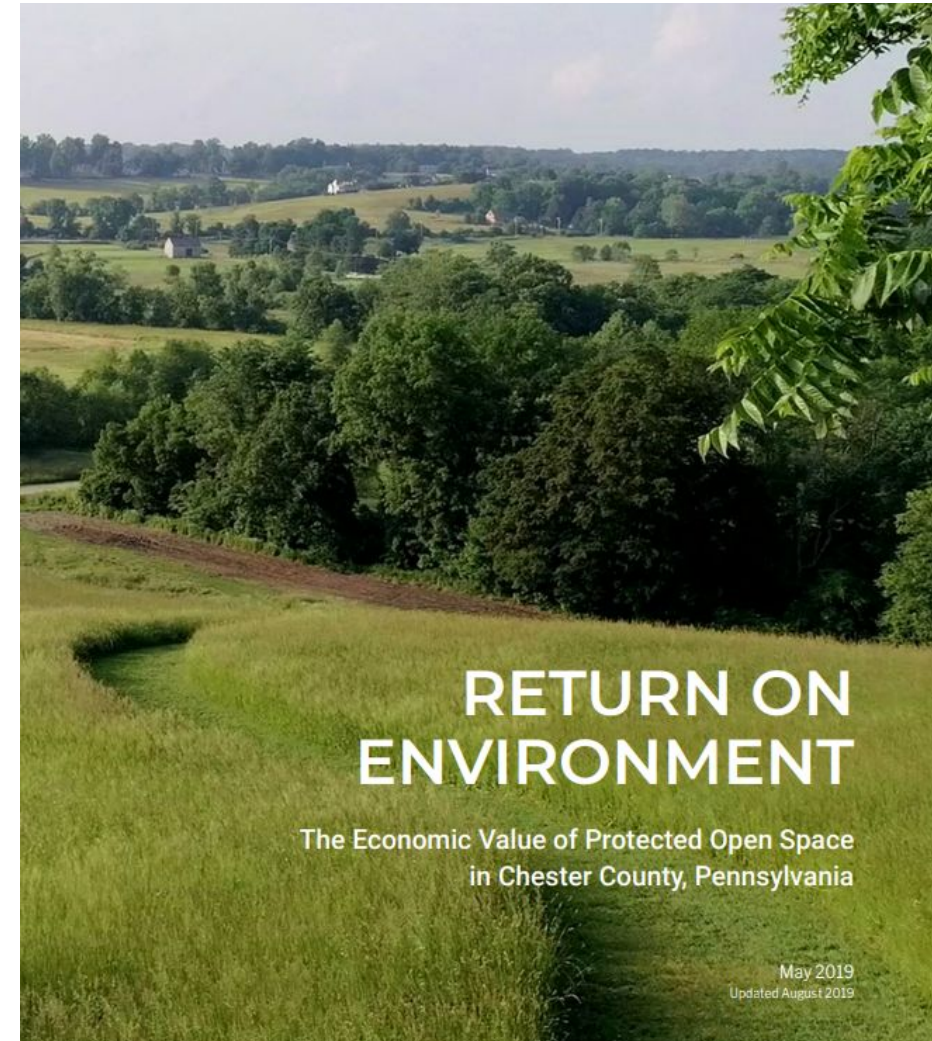
Return on Environment Study

Bringing stakeholders together

Tool for conservancies and advocates

Engage different audiences

Value stormwater and carbon storage

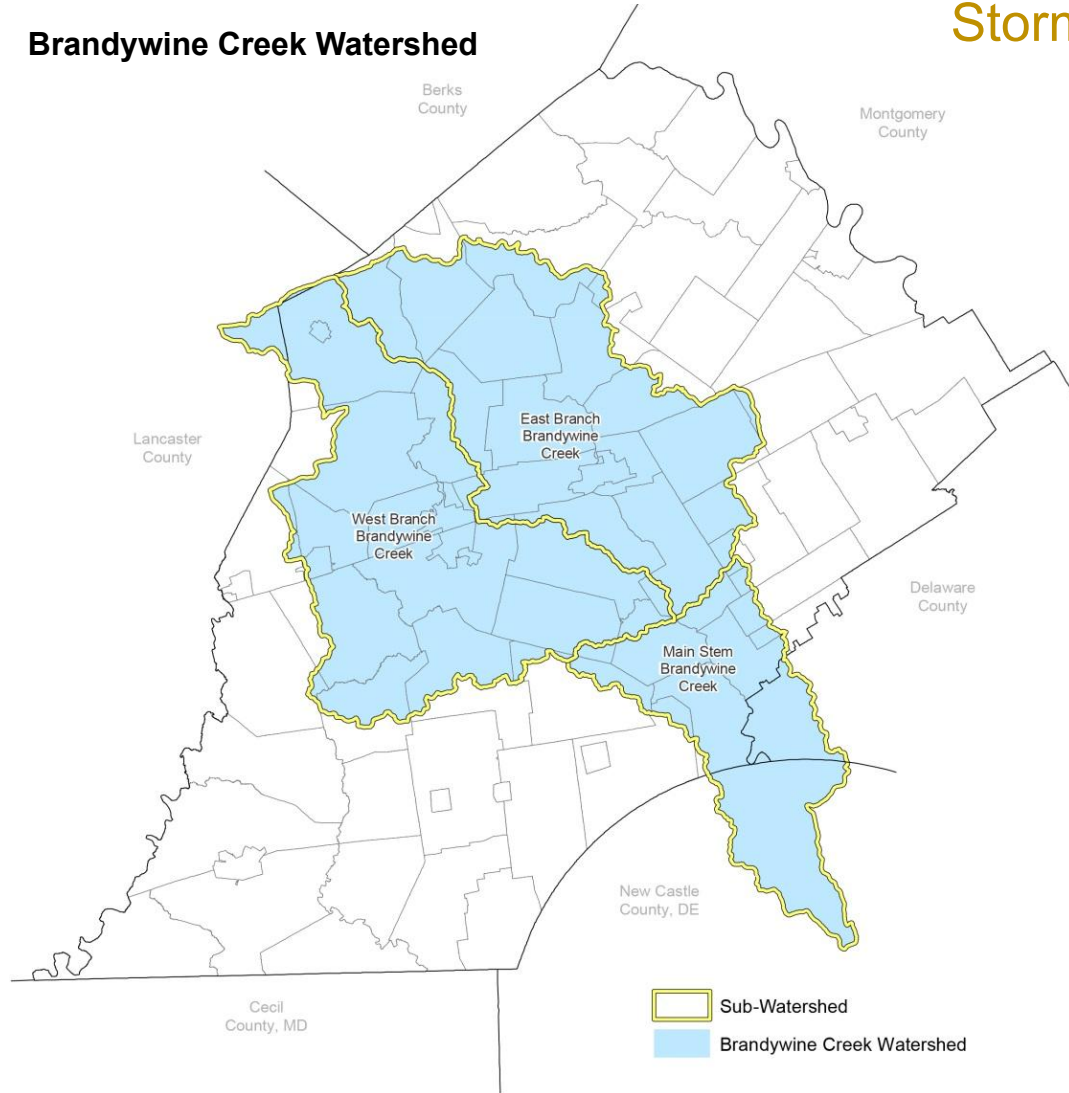




Environmental Services

Stormwater Management

Brandywine Creek Watershed





Environmental Services

Stormwater Management

If all the protected open space in the Brandywine Creek watershed were developed, Chester County (mostly local governments and individuals) would have to pay:

- **\$263 million** total capital costs
- **\$27 million** in annual O&M costs
- **\$107 million** in annual pollutant removal costs



Environmental Services

\$4.6 million

annual cost savings
related to carbon sequestration



\$120 million

in carbon storage within the
trees on protected open space

Thank you!



Photo Credit- Andrew Svekla