



NEWS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
COURT HOUSE, NORRISTOWN, PA., BOX 311, 19404-0311

Frank X. Custer, Communications Director

Jessica Willingham, Communications Assistant

PHONE (610) 278-3061 FAX (610) 278-5943

COMMISSIONERS: JOSH SHAPIRO, *Chair*

VALERIE A. ARKOOSH, MD, MPH, *Vice Chair*

BRUCE L. CASTOR, JR., *Commissioner*



RELEASE: October 19, 2015

Montco Outlines Trails and Parks Initiatives

Norristown, PA (October 19, 2015) – The Montgomery County Commissioners last week enthusiastically endorsed a draft plan from two county boards that would result in the largest expansion of county parks and trails in three decades.

The plan, a product of a collaboration of the Montgomery County Open Space Board and the county's Parks, Trails, and Historic Sites Advisory Board, proposes three major recommendations:

- Continuing to implement the county's primary trail network by building on the sections already in place
- Concentrating on open space acquisitions that relate strongly to Montgomery County's network of county-owned or managed parks, trails, historic sites, natural areas, and the Schuylkill River
- Allocating necessary funding and staff to promote the "Get Out and Go Montco" initiative on an ongoing basis

The plan is the first comprehensive look at park expansion in county history. The most recent park acquisitions were made decades ago. For instance, Central and Lower Perkiomen Valley Parks were acquired in the 1970s and Green Lane Park was acquired in 1980.

The high priority park acquisitions in the plan include:

- Central Perkiomen Valley Park – expand park and buffer trail
- Green Lane Park – increase trail parking and reservoir access
- Lorimer Park – expand park and buffer trail
- Peter Wentz Farmstead – expand park facilities

The highest priority trail projects in the plan include:

- Extending the Cross County Trail from Germantown Pike to Erdenheim Farm
- Extending the Pennypack Trail from Byberry Road to County Line Road
- Filling in breaks in the Schuylkill River Trail around Pottstown
- Completing the Chester Valley Trail from Norristown to South Gulph Road

Three other trail projects are also high on the priority list, but still need funding. They include extending the Cross County Trail from Fort Washington to Willow Grove; extending the Power Line Trail from the Upper Moreland border to the Cross County Trail; and, extending the Wissahickon/Cross County Connector from Erdenheim Farm to Northwestern Avenue.

“This is an exciting document, and I compliment the two boards for working together to produce a plan that promises to keep the quality of life in Montgomery County among the best in the Commonwealth,” said Josh Shapiro, chair of the board of commissioners. “In addition, the fact that we now have our fiscal house in order will allow us to invest in these worthwhile projects.”

Commissioners Val Arkoosh and Bruce L. Castor, Jr. also were enthusiastic about the plan.

“The health benefits of a great park and trail system are undeniable,” said Arkoosh, a physician.

“Taking just 20 minutes a day to walk produces definite health benefits, and our trail system provides our residents with multiple opportunities to do that and more,” she said, pointing out that Montgomery County has been ranked the second healthiest county in Pennsylvania.

“In addition to all of the benefits our park and trail system provides, it also produces economic benefit,” said Castor. “It has been proven that homes adjacent to and near our trails go up in value.”

View the full report here: <http://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/9785>.