Feasibility Study for
SCHUYLKILL RIVER TRAIL – READING TO HAMBURG SECTION
and
FREEDOM TRAIL

Prepared for:
The Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area
140 College Drive
Pottstown PA 19464

Prepared by:
Campbell Thomas & Co.
1504 South Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146
215-545-1076

In association with:
Arora and Associates
Brenton Associates
David Miller/Associates
STV Incorporated

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I. Introduction

A. Project Scope

This study investigates the feasibility of providing a central link to connect existing segments of the Schuylkill River Trail (SRT) in Berks County, and also, the feasibility of extending branches of this trail system to Lake Ontelaunee on the east and to Blue Marsh Lake on the west. This east-west trail component of the trail system is known as the Freedom Trail (FT). The Freedom Trail will use the same right-of-way as the Schuylkill River trail in its central portion.

The Schuylkill River has been designated as a Heritage Area of state and national significance. A recreational trail system is being developed that will connect the mountainous upper reaches of the river in Schuylkill County to its mouth at Philadelphia. Under the direction of the Schuylkill River Greenway Association (SRGA) and county planning agencies, many segments of this trail have already been built. This feasibility study investigates the possible viability of connecting the existing northern segment terminating at the Borough of Hamburg to the existing central segment at the City of Reading. Design is already underway and construction funding has been allocated for a trail section between Pottstown and Phoenixville. Completion of these two segments will create a continuous recreational trail from Pottsville in Schuylkill County to the Delaware River at Philadelphia.

This trail corridor reaching from the Appalachians to the coast is complemented by the Freedom Trail providing connections to Lake Ontelaunee and Blue Marsh Lake. These lakes are important scenic, environmental and recreational resources for the citizens of Berks County. The Freedom Trail will provide enhanced recreational access to these lakes for the citizens of Berks County and beyond. Planned for horses and wagons, the Freedom Trail will be a unique recreational resource for Berks County’s equestrian community.

This feasibility study investigates opportunities and constraints affecting the proposed trail alignment, and makes recommendations for proceeding with the next phases of implementation. In addition to identifying trail alignment and acquisition alternatives, the study recommends appropriate management entities to control, operate, and maintain the trail. Potential funding sources and development strategies...
are formulated and sequenced into a phased Implementation Plan. These explorations include opinions of cost for acquisition, development, and operation of the trail. The strategies laid out in this report will guide subsequent project development and implementation actions by local governments, non-profit organizations, and the private sector.

Public participation has been a key component to the success of this project. Input from community groups, local governments, and the public in general has been solicited through public meetings, maps, graphic presentation and displays, and publicly distributed project brochures.

This study’s recommendations are the result of public participation garnered through a structured stakeholder interview process. The proposed trail alignment and configuration was developed through a series of meetings with the project steering committee and in public forums.

B. Project Partners

The progress that has been achieved would not have been possible without the talent and vision of the project’s many partners. These partners generously contributed their time and ideas through participation on the Trail Advisory Committee. Funding for this study has been generously provided by a grant from The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR) with matching funds from the Schuylkill River Heritage Area (SRHA), Freedom Trail, Inc., and other generous contributors.

Project partners include among others:
- Berks Equine Council Committee
- Reading Riverplace
- Penn State University-Berks Campus
- Muhlenberg Township Parks and Recreation Department
- Berks Conservancy
- North Berks Recreation Corporation
- Berks County Parks and Recreation
- Berks County Planning Commission
- Berks County Industrial Development Authority

C. Regional Context

The entire Schuylkill River Trail (Reading to Hamburg Section) and Freedom Heritage Trail system can best be described as a cruciform pattern reaching from the urban core of downtown Reading north to the picturesque rural setting of Hamburg. Much of the region consists of the headwaters of tributaries of the Schuylkill River forming gently rolling agricultural landscapes that adjoin the Blue Mountain ridge of the Appalachian uplands. The alignment stretches from Blue Marsh Lake on the west and traverses a variety of agrarian to suburban landscapes in an eastern connection with Lake Ontelaunee, sharing a portion of overlap in Muhlenberg Township. Both of these large water bodies have extensive loop hiking trail systems that are currently in use, or planned for future expansion. These water resource areas include numerous significant natural and environmental habitats. Not only does Lake Ontelaunee serve as a regional reservoir, but also as an invaluable stormwater and flood control aquifer. Similarly, Blue Marsh Lake is a water resource of exceptional value on many counts including waterfowl nesting areas, habitat diversity, and flood control and is remarkably picturesque.
The corridor from Hamburg south comprises an array of landscapes as diverse as the people who call the region their home. It spans from the rural villages, towns and valleys in the north to the suburbs and urban character of Reading, the major city and southern anchor of the study area. Hamburg, Shoemakersville and Leesport serve as destination nodes along the route with historic charm and character certain to accommodate a healthy future well-grounded in cultural and heritage tourism.

This study encompasses a region that was once traversed by canal boats, horses, wagons, and carriages. Extension of the Schuylkill River Trail is a rediscovering of those routes, taking advantage of the same geographic and natural features that originally located the canal and roadway systems. Much of the old transportation corridors have been preserved over the years in the form of publicly owned lands, transition to current rail or highway transportation corridor or as private stakeholdings. Even in areas where the ownership patterns are clearly private, much of the character and physical features are still quite recognizable such as railroad embankments, linear depressions of the former canal prism and structures such as locks, tenders houses, mills and streetscape patterns.

The two proposed trail corridors will become regionally significant extensions of the largely successful open sections of the Schuylkill River Trail stretching from Philadelphia to Pottsville. The juncture of this particular section of the Schuylkill River and the Freedom Trail includes a section of the already completed Union Canal Trail, which has served as the area’s prototype greenway, paving the way for heightened interest in expanding the regional trails and greenway system. Large scale commercial and residential development throughout the Route 222 corridor has no doubt made planning for diminishing contiguous open space an imperative task for generations to come. The proposed trail spine will connect with the Bartram Trail section of the SRT at Hamburg, the Appalachian Trail at Port Clinton and the Union Canal Trail that already connects West Reading with Blue Marsh Lake. Much like Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park, planning and preservation of these greenway and trail corridors will preserve opportunities for recreational and alternative transportation through a diverse landscape rich with cultural, architectural, natural and historic significance. Certainly this network is a prime impetus for rethinking and re-investment in Pennsylvania’s heritage tourism opportunities that will become tied together through these trails.
D. Benefits of the Trail

The central and northern Berks County regions of the Schuylkill River National Heritage Area are exceptionally rich with natural, historical, and cultural assets. Opportunities exist to incorporate these regions into a premier nationally significant recreational trail system that will benefit heritage area residents and draw visitors to the area. The Trail will enhance the quality of life for existing residents not only by providing for recreation and appreciation of the beauty of the Schuylkill River and Berks County’s scenery, but also by stimulating economic revitalization of the traditional main streets in the corridor’s historic towns.

Completion of the Schuylkill River Trail, a 130 mile land trail along the Schuylkill River corridor from the confluence with the Delaware River in Philadelphia to the headwaters in Schuylkill County is a critical component of the Schuylkill River National Heritage Area. The trail is either completed, under construction, or under study by SRHA, municipal planning agencies, and non-profit organizations.

Extension of the Schuylkill River Trail from Reading to Hamburg, and development of the Freedom Trail linking Blue Marsh Lake and Lake Ontelaunee will provide Berks County with recreational trails of national importance. The Schuylkill River Trail lies within a state and federally designated Heritage Area. The proposed Freedom Trail would share a portion of its alignment with the Schuylkill River Trail. The linking of these two trails will provide additional access to the trail system for Berks County residents. A unique feature of the proposed Freedom Trail would be its capacity to attract and host horse back riders as well as horse drawn carriages.

The 2003 Schuylkill River Heritage Area Management Plan recognizes five categories of benefits from the trail: resource conservation and enhancement, education and interpretation, recreation, community revitalization, and heritage tourism.

The trail system builds on Berks County’s scenic and historic resources. The trail system will promote public visitation and awareness of these resources and encourage their preservation. The trails complement the work of the Reading Company Technical and Historical Society in preserving the corridor’s history of industry, agriculture, mining, railroading and canals.
In addition to providing extraordinary recreational benefits for residents of Berks County, these trails will attract tourists and recreational users. The Schuylkill River Greenway and Freedom Trail are an integral part of the City of Reading’s efforts to revitalize its downtown through the Riverplace project and "The Greater Reading as a Greenway and Recreation Hub Initiative."

The SRGA examined potential recreational business activities that could be generated by the trail. Possible recreation related business activities identified include: bed and breakfasts, bicycle rental, canoe/kayak rental, recreation activities, sightseeing excursions, boat maintenance and cleaning services, kiosks or cart retailing, miniature golf courses, bicycle related shops and numerous equestrian support centers.

The proposed trail system will enhance mobility and connectedness within Berks County. The proposed trail system includes additional bridges across the Schuylkill River to serve non-motorized travel. These additional bridges will link neighborhoods and improve utilization of existing recreational facilities. The Freedom Trail can also link neighborhoods that are separated by barriers or disconnects due to removal of old bridges. As northern Berks County has grown, rural highways have become significant barriers to the movement of pedestrians. The Freedom Trail proposal includes the development of grade-separated pedestrian and carriage links across two of these dangerous barriers, Route 183 and Route 61. The trails will also provide safe walking and bicycle commuting opportunities to businesses, research parks, schools and the like. This concept is aligned as a positive step toward the County’s goals for enhanced heritage tourism and economic development.

The enhanced recreational opportunities that this trail system will provide are an attraction to workers in the so-called knowledge industries, making the county more competitive in the new economy.

The Trail will encourage economic revitalization by making use of the urban facilities offered by several town centers along the Heritage Area corridor including Leesport, Shoemakersville, and Hamburg. Bringing the trail through these historic industrial and agricultural centers provides mutually for the benefit of the town and the trail users. Town centers and their related businesses will provide amenities to trail users in the form of restaurants, hotels, shops and site-seeing. Thus, the trail users will bring a new source of income to help grow current businesses and create opportunity for the development of new ones. The Schuylkill River Heritage Area has now begun the Schuylkill River Trail Town Initiative to address this development.

Hamburg, Pennsylvania, offers unique shopping in an old fashioned town. One can explore the many shops sprinkled along its quaint business district, while enjoying a friendly downtown atmosphere. One discovers treasured antiques, rare coins and collectibles, one of a kind craft items, beautiful pottery, exquisite jewelry and fine leather goods. Quality fashions for the whole family can be found in the numerous boutiques and shops. Historic architecture is visible from every downtown street corner. Many of Hamburg’s most remarkable structures can be admired while taking a stroll through the business

Downtown Hamburg
district. George Meiser, local historian, has put it best by saying "Hamburg Borough, organized in 1837, is without a doubt one of the finest towns - architecturally - to be found anywhere in the state." The charms of Hamburg which will attract Trail users include the old fashioned 5 & 10 store, the 50's style diner, the vintage movie house, and the nostalgic bakery.

E. Study Goals and Objectives

This study assesses the feasibility of a recreational trail following the Schuylkill River from the southern end of the Bartram Trail in the Borough of Hamburg to Baer Park in the City of Reading with connecting trails to Lake Ontelaunee and Blue Marsh Lake. The objectives of this study are to evaluate the feasibility of proposed trails, and if appropriate, make recommendations to guide the creation of the two trail systems.

A map of physical and cultural resources and constraints was prepared as the basis for determining an optimal trail alignment. Among the features inventoried were transportation rights-of-way, land ownership, historic resources, steep slopes and wetlands. An environmental site reconnaissance was performed to assess the likelihood of environmental contamination. A historic resources inventory was also conducted. Opportunities for linkage to other elements of the regional transportation system, trail, destination points, and open space networks were identified.

During the inventory and analysis phase, major landowners along the trail corridor were identified. Potential Trail ‘bottleneck’ areas were identified where acquisition of additional rights-of-way would enhance the users’ experience. Many major landowners from whom a right-of-way would need to be acquired were contacted.

As the study progressed, meetings were held with the Steering Committee. Workshops were held to engage the public in sharing information and ideas. Members of the Steering Committee are key advocates for the implementation of this project. Issues of trail implementation and maintenance were presented, critiqued and agreed upon by consensus of the Steering Committee.

A phased implementation plan for the trail is included in this report. This phased implementation plan is supported by opinions of probable construction costs for the trail’s various segments.

F. Trail Characteristics

Several different trail width and sections are recommended for the SRT and Freedom Trail. Please see the attached “Trail Types” map in Appendix A.

TYPICAL SECTION A: Multi-use Gravel Bicycle/ Hiking Trail (10-12’ wide, compact, finely crushed stone)

TYPICAL SECTION B: Multi-use Widened Equestrian/ Carriage Trail (14-16’ wide, compact, finely crushed stone) widened to accommodate horse drawn carriages. The surface most conducive in accommodating a majority of users would be a compacted surface that is comfortable for walking, jogging, bicycling and is easily repairable and compliments the natural landscape. By expanding the Section A trail type to 14-16 feet at key locations and for short distances (50-60 feet), carriages can be accommodated with areas to pass, pause for rig or team management, turn and maneuver easily.
TYPICAL SECTION C: Asphalt Multi-use Bicycle/ Hiking Trail (10-12’ wide). In areas of bridge and roadway approach and descending terrain, an asphalt approach apron is recommended to provide all-season traction, a visible and textural transition to new trail conditions and for permanent application of trail signage, striping or arrows to be applied to the asphalt surface. This section is beneficial in interfacing with PennDOT and local roadways in order to maintain a (snow) plowable shoulder and to maintain the painted striping, rumble strips and road markings required by the respective agency. This approach apron can include an integrated sign and access barrier system to notify users of approaching crossings and traffic patterns.

In a few locations where physical space is limited, it will be necessary to compress the trail width and allow equestrians to utilize the shoulders of the trail. For short sections, carriages would share the same surface as other trail users. Examples of this scenario include locations where the alignment passes between historic structures, through narrow village streets and most commonly along the sections of historic canal cut into hill and mountainside. The key to successful changes in trail configuration will be to post visible and perhaps textural changes with adequate shoulder transition.

G. Projected Use

The Schuylkill River and Freedom Trails will appeal to a broad spectrum of users. This appeal is evidenced by the many people who make informal use of the area in its unimproved condition. The completed section of the Union Canal certainly sees significant use, which is destined to increase when the trail is extended and connected to more communities and destinations. Portions of the Schuylkill River trail between Valley Forge and Philadelphia attract so much use that the paved 12 foot wide surface can no longer handle the masses of joggers, walkers, bicyclists, dog walkers, baby strollers and wheelchairs that enjoy the corridor daily. In these more urbanized areas, which are similar to the development at Riverplace (City of Reading), user traffic volumes are measured in millions of users per year. Understandably, urban areas draw regional users on weekends who visit the area to make day long excursions or perhaps overnight sojourns on the trail. More rural areas convey less dense crowds, but are appreciated by steady streams of more regular and local users.

It is intended that the highest benefit of this trail corridor will be the reestablishment of connections between county, state and local parks, residential and business communities, cultural, natural and historic resources. Regional planners envision this trail system as a strategic element of future growth and development of the region’s potential for increased markets in heritage tourism and economic development.

Fortunately the region has a few trails in existence including the Bartram Trail to the north, the Thun Trail at Reading (completed sections of the Schuylkill River Trail) and the Union Canal Trail
connection to Blue Marsh Lake. These trails have sparked the interest and momentum that has led to this study. The citizens that use these trails have realized and appreciated the many benefits of trails and greenways and have initiated various studies and plans such as this. Some current uses that would be immediately enhanced include: local joggers, picnickers, hikers, and anglers; recreational and commuting bicyclists; and employees of local businesses.

The proposed Freedom Trail would be an attraction to horse drawn carriage enthusiasts that would be unique on the East Coast. The carriageways which are proposed to connect Lake Ontelaunee and Blue Marsh Lake with Riverplace in the City of Reading will eventually provide a continuous route of over 75 miles of wagon- and carriage-ready designated trail. This specialty trail will be the first and only formally designated trail of its kind on the eastern seaboard. It is anticipated that this trail will draw equestrian and horseback enthusiasts from all reaches of the nation. Through discussions with local equestrian teams and the Berks Equine Council Committee, the study team learned that most wagon and carriage team enthusiasts are seeking a corridor such as this that will provide enough contiguous miles of trail to host a three day event. The critical design element then becomes planning the location and resources to support these events. Future planning for this corridor will expand on the details and specifications for parking, staging, corral, stable and comfort facilities that will support this Heritage Trail.

H. Examples of Other Long-Distance Multi-Use Trails

Unlike a short local trail project where the entire trail is constructed all at once, the Schuylkill River Trail and Freedom Trail in northern Berks County will be constructed in numerous phases over a long period of time. This has been the experience on other portions of the 110-mile long Schuylkill River Trail, as well as with other long-distance, multi-use off-road trails.

The lesson to be learned by the SRT/FT is that many of these other trails have made themselves “open to the public” long before they have been completed. By publishing guidebooks, posting signage, using temporary routings, and building a trail community of users, businesses and communities, these trail organizations have engendered tremendous benefits for the communities they serve. This work leads to tremendous support for completing the trails as continuous off-road facilities.

The 150 mile-long Great Allegheny Passage links Pittsburgh with Cumberland, Maryland, at which point the trail connects with the C&O Canal National Historical Park, whose towpath goes all the way from Cumberland to Washington DC. As with the Schuylkill River Trail, much of the route is a rail-trail. An excellent
on-line guide is available with maps, lists of services and contacts. The evidence of trail-related economic revitalization of the small towns through which it passes is quite evident. Over time, the trail is being located completely off-road; however, it has made good use of on-road detours to provide a continuously signed route. One section of the on-line map is attached – note how the routes use existing streets to link off-road sections.
Although bicycling and hiking are the two most popular activities, certain sections of the Trail with grassy areas are open to equestrians, and other users include fishermen and cross-country skiers. Most of the trail is a packed, crushed limestone surface.

**Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park:** As noted by the National Park Service, “Preserving America’s colorful canal era and transportation history, the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park is 184.5 miles of adventure. Originally, the C&O Canal was a lifeline for communities and businesses along the Potomac River as coal, lumber, grain and other agricultural products floated down the canal to market. Today millions of visitors hike or bike the C&O Canal each year to enjoy the natural, cultural and recreational opportunities available.”

The story of the C&O Canal is not unlike that of the Schuylkill Navigation – beginning at the fall line at tidewater in Georgetown, and heading off into the wilderness through steep mountains. Just as the Schuylkill River Trail links with the Appalachian Trail at Port Clinton, so does the C&O at Harpers Ferry. Many of the rural towns along the C&O depend heavily on trail users for their business, and vice-versa.

As may be the base with the Schuylkill River Trail, the width and surfacing of the C&O towpath varies depending upon its location in small and large towns, and rural areas. The majority of the towpath is surfaced with crushed stone.
The Erie Canalway Trail: Named for the famous canal opened in 1825 between Albany on the Hudson River, and Buffalo at Lake Erie, this Trail will eventually span 524 miles across New York State following existing and previous routes of the canal. Already over 200 miles are open and in use. Here again, the trail is an economic lifeline for many older rural towns bypassed by modern transportation routes. In urban centers, the trail enhances the quality of life through its recreational and non-motorized transportation assets, while giving access to the canal and adjacent rivers.

However, the guidebook published by Parks and Trails New York reflects the use of temporary on-road segments linking the completed off-road sections. The sample map section (Map 19 Syracuse east) illustrated here shows the trail as it comes out of the eastern end of Syracuse.

![Map 19 Syracuse East](image)

The Erie Canalway Trail leaves streets in Syracuse and then follows the historic canal into the countryside.

Here again, as with other long-distance trails, the type and width of paving varies depending upon location and volume of usage. Also, while some of the trail is on the former towpath, much is also on old railbeds, as much of the old towpath was lost when the canal was significantly upgraded to its current 200’-width and use as a barge canal in the early 20th century.

![The Trail passes the Stockade Historic District](image)

![Canalway Trail at Lift Lock](image)
The East Coast Greenway: The Schuylkill River Trail and Freedom Trail are hardly isolated trails. Already there are numerous links to a virtually endless system of eastern trails, including the Appalachian Trail at Port Clinton, and in Philadelphia, the East Coast Greenway. The Greenway extends from Maine to Florida, and is planned to be an “urban Appalachian Trail” linking cities. Of course, there is a good bit of countryside between the great eastern cities, and as a result, the trail’s character varies tremendously from one region to another. Trail conditions and standards vary tremendously, from rural towpaths to sophisticated urban waterfront trails in Manhattan. Given the length of the trail, and the costs of development, it will be some time before the goal of an off-road trail is reached. However, as with the Erie Canalway Trail, signage of temporary on-road routes is already in place, and guidebooks are available for some sections. As an example, the entire route through Pennsylvania has been designated and signed as “Bicycle Route E” as part of the state’s system of state-wide bicycle touring routes.

A 40 page guidebook is available both on-line and on paper. As with the Schuylkill River Trail, different sections of the trail are being developed by different agencies and groups. The East Coast Greenway Alliance acts as the principal advocate for a connected system of trails, and for the development of the Greenway. A continuous routing from Maine to Florida should be in place in 2007.

I. Summary of Key Recommendations

A brief summary of recommendations include the following. These recommendations are discussed in greater depth in Section II.H “Recommendations for Future Action.”

- The trail should be phased. A detailed discussion of recommendation for three key stages of construction is given in Section II.F
- It is recommended that the permanent alignment for the trail make use of a pedestrian and carriage bridge to be built at Confluence Point, connecting to Reading Riverplace and central Reading.
- Connections to major employment centers, such as Berks County’s Nutrition and Wellness Corridor project is highly recommended, and a pedestrian bridge is proposed at the location of the former Leischz’s Bridge. Such bridges should also support emergency vehicle use.
- Responsibility for acquisition should lie with the County for the Schuylkill River Trail, and with Freedom Trail, Inc. for its unique sections.
• Responsibility for trail construction should lie with the SRGA for the Schuylkill River Trail, and with Freedom Trail, Inc. for its unique sections.
• Responsibility for maintenance: When the SRT is complete, the Trail should be maintained and managed as part of the County park system. The unique sections of the Freedom Trail should be managed by Freedom Trail, Inc. The SRHA will remain involved through its Trailkeeper Program.
• Several individuals at public meetings expressed concern that conflicts might arise between trail usage and hunting. A program to encourage awareness by both hunters and trail users of the need for responsible usage is critical.

J. Determination of Feasibility

Many sections of the Schuylkill River Trail system are already built or programmed for construction. This system represents millions of dollars of public investment as well as countless volunteer hours and private donations. The extension of this trail system from Reading to Hamburg confronts unique challenges because of steep slopes and the fact that the Reading and Northern Railroad continues to operate in this corridor on both the former Reading and PRR lines.

Construction of new pedestrian bridges across the Schuylkill provides an appropriate design solution to these challenges. The Leisch’s and Stoudt’s Ferry Bridges were abandoned and demolished in the mid twentieth century. Replacement of these bridges will link communities that have long been separated. The design of these and other bridges could provide Berks County with the opportunity for a signature architectural statement at its river frontage. The abandoned right-of-way of the Schuylkill River Canal provides a favorable route for much of the trail from the Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge north to Hamburg. Several portions of the former canal are already in public ownership, making this a logical and practical location for continuation of the Schuylkill River trail system.

The proposed Freedom Trail crosses more rural sections of Bern, Ontelaunee and Perry Townships. This area is characterized by relatively large land holdings. The willingness of few large land owners to dedicate trail easements would provide most of the right-of-way that is needed between the two lakes. Challenges that this trail must overcome include the lack of continuous utility corridors, and the width and grade requirements associated with its intended use for horse drawn carriages. The crossing of heavily trafficked Routes 61 and Route 183 presents a few challenges. Grade separated crossings are proposed for these two busy highways. The trail would provide safe crossings for neighborhoods that have been separated by heavy traffic for decades.

Another challenge for the Freedom Trail is opposition expressed during the course of this study by the Bern Township Supervisors. Although supportive of the Schuylkill River Trail, the Supervisors expressed a reluctance to support the Freedom Trail, and site condemnation of rights-of-way and easements. The current Supervisors also oppose use of the Fairgrounds as a staging area for trail-related equestrian events. The eastern segment of the Freedom Trail in Ontelaunee Township does not appear to face these same political obstacles.

This report includes preliminary estimates of probable development costs for the two trails and, in Appendix E, a list of property owners from whom easements must be negotiated.
II. Recommendations

A. Trail Characteristics and Alignment

The proposed trail alignment was submitted the Trail Advisory Committee for their review and comment. The Trail Advisory Committee represents citizens and major stakeholders within the trail corridor. The proposed trail alignment, which has been updated several times over the course of preparing this study, represents the consensus of the Committee with no major exceptions.

Please see the five attached Trail Alignment Maps, at a scale of 1” = 2000’ in Appendix G.

1. Segment by Segment Breakdown of Schuylkill River Trail (North to South)

   a. Trail characteristics and alignment: Hamburg to Cross Keys.

   The trail connects at its northern end to the Bartram Trail. A connection across the Schuylkill River is provided by an existing trail bridge. The connection between East State Street and the bridge is now being improved to accommodate the more intensive use that is anticipated, along with the development of a parking lot. Two alternative routes are proposed south of State Street. One alternate makes use of existing commercial streets and sidewalks permitting trail users to enjoy the charms and services of Hamburg’s town center. An alternative off-road route is proposed on the alignment of the former Schuylkill Navigation, and on property owned by the Reading and Northern Railroad Company. The Reading Company Historical and Technical Society plans to develop a museum facility fronting on Maple Street. The trail system will provide a connection to this facility. South of Maple Street, acquisition of an easement from the Reading and Northern Railroad is required to provide a grade separated crossing under Route 61.

   The trail will follow the restored canal towpath south of Hamburg. Much of the former towpath between Hamburg and the Berne Station Bridge is owned by the Reading and Northern Railroad Company. There are Pennsylvania Fish and Game Commission lands around the Berne Station Bridge. The towpath trail crosses over to the south side of Water Street between Five Locks and Shoemakersville. The towpath is privately held in this area.

   Water Street currently provides a pleasant low volume traffic route between Hamburg and Shoemakersville, which is quite conducive to the ‘share the road’ scenario.

   The original canal towpath is obstructed within Shoemakersville, however, the existing borough streets and sidewalks provide a pleasant and interesting pathway capable of conveying the trail.
Canal towpath overgrown with brush and invasive species

Canal towpath cleared of underbrush and resurfaced with 8'-10' trail tread
Between Shoemakersville and Leesport, the trail will follow an alignment along much of the former towpath between Old Pottsville Pike and the Reading and Northern Railroad line. Acquisition of easements from private owners is required. A temporary on-road route following Mohrsville Road is possible.

Within the borough of Leesport the trail follows Canal Street and then Wall Street, passing the historic Locktender’s House. Then the trail crosses from the east to the west bank of the Schuylkill. On the west side of the Schuylkill River, the trail follows Washington Avenue and then connects to an existing segment of the canal trail system. Plans are under way for a large residential development in Leesport, and the work of trail development should include a trail alignment within the development. Additional acquisition of easements from private property owners is required to link the existing trail segment to the Cross Keys Bridge via the former towpath of the Schuylkill Navigation.

b. Trail characteristics and alignment: Cross Keys to Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge

The Schuylkill River Trail and the Freedom Trail share a common alignment between the Cross Keys Bridge and the Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge. The proposed Freedom Trail will be designed to a standard that supports horse and carriage users. From the Cross Keys Bridge south to Reading River Place a potential horse and carriage standard has been recommended.

The existing Cross Keys Bridge provides a connection for the Freedom Trail to Maiden Creek and Lake Ontelaunee.

After crossing Cross Keys Road, the Schuylkill River trail passes through lands owned by the Water and Resources Power Board and privately held farmlands to reach the access road to the Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge. The SRGA owns a parcel of land on the west side of the crossing, which will be helpful in completing this connection.

A new bridge at the approximate location of the former Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge would provide a critical link between Bern and Muhlenberg Townships. There is an existing dwelling constructed on the abutment of the former bridge on the eastern bank; therefore a new abutment location must be selected. An alternative approach that has been discussed is purchasing the house and property, removing the dwelling and restoring the bridge to resemble its historic character.
c. Trail characteristics and alignment: Schuylkill River Trail: Stoudt’s Ferry Br. to Reading

Construction of this segment of the trail to a standard suitable for horse and carriage use is proposed. Adequate width and height (horizontal and vertical clearance) will be provided in addition to slopes and surfacing appropriate for horses.

After crossing the Schuylkill on a newly reconstructed Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge, a short connection across existing residential properties must be acquired to reach Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge Road, a low volume residential street. One residential property must be crossed between the end of Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge Road and Dietrich Park. An off-road trail following the alignment of the park access road and Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge Road crosses the township park lands. At the end of the Riverview Drive cul-de-sac the trail crosses a residential property to reach the Route 222 right-of-way via a utility access drive. A grade separated crossing underneath the Route 222 Bridge is possible at this location, utilizing an informal existing path now enjoyed by local residents.

The trail crosses Township lands south of the Route 222 Bridge and then follows the south side of River Road. Many private dwellings front on the north side of River Road, which extends across to the south side of the River Road right-of-way. Easements will need to be acquired from many private owners along River Road to achieve an off-road trail between the road and the river. The trail links several riverfront parks including two River Road Park sites, the Felix Dam site and the Township recreation building.

A spur path connecting to the west bank of the Schuylkill at the location of the former Leischz’s Bridge would be desirable. This spur path would provide access to the technology center being developed around the Reading Airport. The path could conceivably be constructed with economic development grants as part of the technology center project. The reconstructed Leischz’s Bridge could also provide emergency vehicle access across the river.

The River Road right-of-way appears to widen within the Reading City limits where a boulevard was once planned. Adequate right-of-way appears to exist to build a side path on the north side of River Road, although some encroachments will need to be addressed on the graded, but unused portion of the right-of-way.
A grade separated crossing appears feasible under Route 12. It is recommended that a trail bridge be built adjacent to the Route 12 Bridge to bring the trail over to the west bank of the Schuylkill. Crossing to the west side of the Schuylkill, an easement is needed to build the trail across Carpenter Technology’s property. The trail would be located in a flood plain area avoiding impacts to the industrial operations. During a meeting with representatives of Carpenter in the summer of 2005, the SRHA received a positive reaction, but any ultimate approval for this route will require a thorough engineering review.

The trail passes under the Schuylkill Avenue Bridge and follows Blair Avenue to Confluence Point where it joins with the Union Canal Trail. An off-road trail between the businesses on Blair Avenue and the river is the preferred alternative at this location. The Reading River Place Master Plan proposes a pedestrian bridge to connect Confluence Point to central Reading. Until this bridge is built, the trail will use the Schuylkill Avenue Bridge to cross back to the east side of the Schuylkill. The trail will connect following Clinton Street to an existing riverside trail at Baer Park. In the interest of providing solutions to potential conflicts with truck traffic on Clinton Street, and to allow horses and wagons to reach downtown Reading, this alignment should eventually be replaced by a crossing at Confluence Point.

A trailhead facility with equestrian services is proposed for Reading River Place. Representatives of the Riverplace project have provided detailed coordination to ensure that these important connections are made.

2. Segment by Segment Breakdown of Freedom Trail (West to East)

   a. Trail characteristics and alignment: Blue Marsh Lake to Cross Keys

The Freedom Trail, designed to a horse and carriage standard, is intended to fill a unique recreational tourism niche. Linking to the Schuylkill River Trail at Cross Keys, the trail will provide horse and carriage access to central Reading and to Lake Ontelaunee to the east.

The western connection of the proposed Freedom Trail is at the Blue Marsh Lake Stilling Basin. At this location the trail connects to the Union Canal Towpath, and the soon-to-be constructed extension of the Union Canal Towpath from Rebers Bridge to the stilling basin. Blue Marsh Lake is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers facility, which serves multiple recreation needs including swimming, jogging, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, and hunting. The facility includes an extensive recreational trail system around the reservoir. The Stilling Basin is proposed as the western limit of horse and carriage access for the Freedom Trail.

Surface improvements to the existing Stilling Basin access road are proposed to accommodate multiple users of the regional trail system.
From the Stilling Basin access road the trail makes a grade crossing of Palisades Road and then following an off-road course crossing lands owned by Berks County. A trailhead is proposed at the Berks County Fairgrounds, which could provide a location for unloading and storage of the trailers used to transport horses and carriages. Bern Township’s regulations for use of the fairgrounds would have to be changed to permit this use. Crossing Hilltop Road, the trail becomes a side path adjacent to County Road. The trail continues as a side path along Reebers Bridge Road. Acquisition of easements from private owners fronting on County Road and Reebers Bridge Road will be required.

A grade crossing of Route 183 would be very hazardous due to high traffic volumes and speeds. For this reason, a trail bridge to horse and carriage standard is proposed to cross Route 183. Additional right-of-way acquisition may be necessary to accommodate this structure. This structure would provide a safe pedestrian link across Route 183 for the diverse residential and commercial uses in the vicinity.

The trail continues as a side path along Ulrich Lane and Leiszcz’s Bridge Road. The trail crosses West Leesport Road and Old Bernville Road at grade. The trail continues as a side path on the north side of Old Bernville Road. The trail takes an off-road course departing Old Bernville Road and crossing private farmlands to reach Rick Road. Turning east on Rick Road, the trail turns off-road to the north, crossing private woodlands to attain Highview and then McCoy Lane. An on-road trail is proposed on McCoy Lane and Seidel’s Run Road. These are low volume, low speed country roads. The proposed trail departs Seidel’s Run Road following an existing farm road across the private farm and orchard lands of Ontelaunee Orchards. Acquisition of easements or rights-of-way will be required.

The proposed trail rejoins West Leesport Road and runs as a side path across private lands. The trail runs as a side path on private lands fronting Rickenbach Road. Acquisition of easements or rights-of-way will be required. Rickenbach Road brings the trail to the Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge access road. From this point, the trail shares its alignment with the Schuylkill River Trail to Cross Keys.
b. Trail characteristics and alignment: Cross Keys to Lake Ontelaunee

The Freedom Trail departs the Schuylkill River Trail at the Cross Keys Bridge. The trail makes use of this existing low volume, low speed bridge to cross to the east side of the Schuylkill River. The proposed trail is a side path on the west side of Route 61 for a short distance. The trail then becomes an on-road trail following South Riverside Drive, a low volume, and low speed (public) residential street. The trail crosses private lands adjacent to the water filtration plant where acquisition of easements or rights-of-way, and a grade crossing of the Reading and Northern Railroad will be required. The trail is on-road following Berkley Road, another low volume, low speed road. Berkley Road brings the trail to Reading Area Water Authority lands adjacent to Maiden Creek. An off-road trail is proposed through Water Authority lands at which point a grade separated crossing under Route 61 is proposed. The trail will follow the bed of an existing dirt road. The off-road trail connects to Bowers Road, a low volume, and low speed public road. An on-road trail on Bowers Road is proposed. Surface improvements to Bowers Road are proposed to support the more intensive recreational use that is anticipated, but the gravel portions are to remain such. This on-road trail connects to the existing loop trail system at Lake Ontelaunee, a Reading Area Water Authority property.

B. Trail and Trailhead Facilities

1. Parking and Access

Strategically located destination and arrival points along the trail corridor are often referred to as ‘trailheads’. These points are generally best placed with approximately similar distances between each to provide users with points of access, information and accommodation. (See trail alignment maps for location of proposed trailheads). The preferred distance between trailhead locations varies based primarily upon the number (density) of users. Trailheads can be located in appropriate locations to accommodate users, limit access to the site, and concentrate amenities in a relatively compact area. More often than not, multiple smaller scale trailheads serve major corridors best by distributing users throughout the corridor rather than one or two central complex parking areas.

Site access should be designed to safely convey all users from the arrival point with adequate room to maneuver without incurring conflicts with trail users who may be unloading equipment, pets or equestrian teams. Owing to the fact that the Freedom Trail and parts of the Schuylkill River Trail will be designed for equestrian and carriage use, care will be taken to design for appropriately sized turning radii, parking spaces, staging areas, access to stables, pasture, potable water and septic disposal points for full RV and camping rigs.

2. Comfort Accommodations

Often subconsciously, trail users gauge the usability of a trail by the level of basic physical accommodations that were available during the experience. The key to providing accommodations is not volume or frequency as much as communication of the location of the amenities. As long as users know that they can expect to find a detailed orientation map, restroom, source of potable water or rest areas, they will have confidence in venturing out on their ride or trek.

Aside from parking, seating, picnic and rest areas, information kiosks and orientation signs and restrooms are the basic elements that provide an attractive and well used trailhead. Rest facilities can range from port-a-john type portable units to highly sophisticated permanent restroom
facilities that tie into local sanitary sewer system. Very remote areas can now be provided with long-life expectancy (extremely durable) composting toilet units with fans that run on solar powered roof panels. Such technology, as can be seen at the nearby Hawk Mountain Preserve, is reducing the requirements of locating near existing infrastructure.

The Freedom Trail will reportedly be the first of its kind and the largest formal equestrian/carriage trail system east of the Mississippi River. Equestrian teams are very self-sufficient crews (often families, private businesses or clubs) who can transport most of their required resources in trucks or trailers. Potable water, fenced stables and parking areas are among the most significant accommodations that make two to three day outings possible. Most equestrians seek areas of contiguous trails that can host a multi-day outing utilizing a single base camp. Areas for campfires, corrals and septic disposal will provide for an array of different users with varying size and scale teams and rigs.

3. Signage and Orientation

First and last impressions of any facility are often based upon the level of ease in which one can comprehend, visualize and orient with a facility. Properly placed, durable and graphically attractive orientation signs can quickly direct and orient a first time visitor to appropriate areas of the trailhead and the trail or equestrian facility and the overall regional trail system. The first map that a visitor experiences should provide a clear sense of ‘you are here’ and where you can or should maneuver. More detailed information can be provided in the form of written brochures including written policy and more detailed maps. These maps and text can convey details such as facility regulations, local resources (stores), eateries and attractions. For example, bicyclists want to know where they can find a local bike repair shop, hikers want to know where natural areas are located and equestrians need to know where they can purchase oats, hay, straw or possible additional tack supplies.

4. Emergency Contact

As important as proper orientation, emergency contact is critical to all users. With the increasing number of cell phone users today, chances are good that trail users are never far from a source of emergency contact. In extreme cases of emergency, such as a severe trail accident, users need to know where the closest hospital, doctor, emergency room or veterinarian can be located. Much of the Berks County region which encompasses this trail system is within the 911 service area. An Emergency Locator Numbering System, where every sign will have it’s own number, has been developed by the Schuylkill River Heritage Area as part of the Master Signs Guidelines.

5. Location of Trailhead Facilities

Equestrian trailhead facilities will require more land area and will need to be located at strategic points within the corridor. These points need to have direct access to the trail system and will need to provide the basic access, parking, stable and corral facilities as discussed previously. Equestrian trailheads will range from more rustic accommodations in more remote areas such as Shoemakersville to possibly a very highly sophisticated, more complex facility at Riverplace in downtown Reading. Equestrian trailheads are anticipated at locations at the Berks County Fairgrounds, Muhlenberg Township Park(s), Riverplace, and possibly at Lake Ontelaunee. Other possible and logical trailhead locations for walkers and bicyclists could include locating enhanced facilities at connections to the Bartram Trail, Union Canal parking lot and at strategically coordinated locations within the current planning efforts for Riverplace.
C. Proposed Easements and Property Acquisition

This study examines the viability of the old towpath of the Schuylkill River Canal for a continuous trail corridor along the river linking Hamburg to the Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge, and other trails to Reading. Route 61 and the Reading and Northern Railroad also follow the river corridor. These features occlude the towpath at some locations. Much of the old canal right-of-way has reverted to private ownership.

The proposed trail alignments connect existing publicly held lands where possible to minimize the need for acquisition of easements and rights-of-ways from private owners.

The Freedom Trail connects public lands surrounding reservoirs at both ends. Berks County owned lands in Bern Township are also crossed. Between these publicly owned lands at the two ends of the trail much of the land to be crossed is privately owned.

Approval for grade crossings of the Reading and Northern Railroad must be obtained from the Public Utility Commission.

A map showing existing ownership patterns along the proposed trail corridor is provided in Appendix B.

D. Operation and Maintenance

1. Proposed Agency Responsibilities

The proposed trails pass through the City of Reading and several townships and boroughs. More populous townships may be able to expand their parks maintenance programs to include the new trails. Some less populous jurisdictions and the City of Reading are less able to assume maintenance responsibilities. In the case of these jurisdictions, having trail maintenance for the Schuylkill River Trail performed by Berks County may be the best alternative. A critical next step in the trail implementation process is to clarify and formalize maintenance responsibilities for each trail segment.

Trail facilities can sometimes be neglected, when municipal recreation departments must set priorities among many different facilities. For this reason it is recommended that the SRGA take on a role as an independent trail advocacy group. Through a coordinating agency, trails such as the Schuylkill River Trail as well as others within the expanding Berks County trails network can help find volunteers and assist in regular trail maintenance, communication, and outreach functions. Acting across the limits of the land management organizations already mentioned, this type of independent trail organization would assure that the different agencies coordinate their efforts and would provide a representative group amongst trail users.

The Schuylkill River Council is doing work to unify the entire Schuylkill River Trail through a William Penn Foundation grant by enhancing volunteer trail-keeper programs and bringing volunteer groups together along the entire corridor. The Rails to Trails Conservancy is doing a maintenance/management study for the entire length of the Schuylkill River Trail and expect to be making their recommendation in the summer of 2007.
2. Overview and Description

Successful operation will rely on a continued and regular program of maintenance of the trail and support facilities. A Maintenance and Management Program will not only ensure a quality recreational or travel experience for the trail user but is also an essential ingredient of a risk management plan for the trail operator. Sufficient manpower and resources must be devoted to a regular maintenance schedule in order to meet these goals.

Among the factors determining maintenance requirements are existing landscape character and the nature and quality of capital improvements.

Another key element of the maintenance and management system of the trail would revolve around communication and information that would allow trail users to provide feedback and report on issues concerning trail maintenance and safety issues. This component of maintenance would be facilitated through the establishment of a trail users’ organization as mentioned as well as through effective signage throughout the trail providing users with information on who to contact regarding such matters. A web site is currently underdevelopment, funded by a William Penn Foundation grant.

The maintenance guidelines that follow are necessarily somewhat generalized, and will need to be re-evaluated at such a time when a detailed capital improvement program has been defined. The maintenance implications of trail improvements should be reviewed carefully when considering capital improvements. One particular area of concern, given the existing landscape conditions, is the problem of drainage and flooding that can quickly undermine pavement structures. Money saved during the trail development process may be spent many times over if inadequate design and development creates a greater than normal maintenance burden. Trail maintenance is a major program that is related to trail safety, attractiveness, and image. The trail operator risks liability for accidents, if maintenance is ignored or negligently executed.

It is anticipated that the operating agencies will develop management systems for their respective segments of the trail. It is recommended that consulting agreements for trail design services include a requirement that a detailed trail maintenance manual and schedule be provided.

The elements of this system should include:
- Inventory of the trail and its related facilities.
- Setting of maintenance goals and standards for the quality of maintenance, hours of operation, etc.
- Developing the tasks necessary to achieve maintenance quality levels.
- Assigning the maintenance tasks to designated groups or individuals.
- Monitoring the quality and frequency of the work.
- Implementing a control system for tracking accomplishments and relevant costs.
- Evaluating the maintenance management program.

3. Table of Maintenance Tasks and Operations

Important maintenance tasks that management agencies must consider are indicated in the following Major Maintenance Tasks table as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mowing</td>
<td>4-foot min. wide each side of trail (where applicable)</td>
<td>3-4 times annually</td>
<td>Flail type mower best - less debris on trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pruning</td>
<td>Prune woody vegetation 4-feet back from sides of trail – 14-feet vertical clearance – remove invasive vines</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Vegetation Management Program may reduce this task long term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of Trees/Limbs</td>
<td>Evaluation/ removal of unhealthy or dead trees and limbs</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Fallen trees may remain as access control and to minimize disturbance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>Maintain directional and informational signs</td>
<td>Permanent signs - periodically as required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access Control</td>
<td>Replace damaged access control devices</td>
<td>Periodically as required</td>
<td>Estimated frequency: 10% annually due to vandalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Surface (on local roads)</td>
<td>Resurface</td>
<td>Periodically as required</td>
<td>Based on municipal schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Surface (gravel road)</td>
<td>Repair surface damage from vehicles, erosion, etc.</td>
<td>Periodically as required</td>
<td>Based on municipal schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Surface (boardwalk)</td>
<td>Replace damaged areas</td>
<td>Periodically as required</td>
<td>Spur trails only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage Structures</td>
<td>Clean inlets, keep swales clear of debris</td>
<td>Minimum - Annually</td>
<td>Complete rehabilitation during construction would dramatically reduce necessity for this type of maintenance after storms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litter Pick Up</td>
<td>Trailside-litter pickup Access area litter pickup</td>
<td>Weekly or as required Weekly</td>
<td>Encourage continued user ‘carry-in, carry-out’ policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash Collection</td>
<td>Removal of trash from receptacles at access areas</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Problems with non-user trash. Some agencies do not have trash containers at access points for this reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td>Inspection by Prof Engr (P.E.) every 2 years Maintenance of bridge to ensure structural integrity</td>
<td>Annually by PennDOT, Municipal or County Engineer</td>
<td>Bridges associated with public roads are already on a regular inspection schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti Control</td>
<td>Repaint bridges/abutments as required</td>
<td>Annual/spot basis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4. Law Enforcement and Safety

Trail managers should take necessary steps to provide both a safe trail for the users and to protect themselves from liability claims. Where possible, hazardous conditions and attractive nuisances should be identified and removed during the original construction of the trail. Those that cannot be removed should have warning signs posted.

If trail segments are opened in phases, as is recommended in this study, clear mention should be made at all trail entrances and in any printed/electronic material (especially trail signage, maps, guidebooks and pamphlets) that portions of the trail are still not yet fully developed nor open to the public and that users must exercise the necessary care when using the trail.

An effective maintenance program is critical for trail safety. The maintenance program should provide for regular safety inspections. Proper tree work and vegetation management are an important part of the safety program. This includes trimming of vegetation to maintain adequate sight distance for traffic safety and crime prevention purposes.

Several individuals at public meetings expressed concern that conflicts might arise between trail usage and hunting. A program to encourage awareness by both hunters and trail users of the need for responsible usage is critical.

In addition to reducing trail hazards, documentation of trail maintenance activities is essential in combating possible liability claims. Through written records of good maintenance practices, the managing agencies will be able to protect themselves from liability claims. In terms of property ownership and liability, it should be noted that Pennsylvania recreational use laws largely protect landowners from liability related to recreational use of their properties as long as no fee is charged and the landowners uses due diligence to maintain the property and/or warn recreational users of any safety hazards.

With the ever-increasing use of cell phones by the general public, including trail users, aspects of security have changed in recent years. Users are very well prepared to report and locate questionable activity on or within trail corridors. User surveillance tends to deter potential criminal activity.

5. Trail Facilities and Orientation Systems/Marking

A trail marking and orientation system benefits both users and trail managers. Signs should be erected at all cross street and highways, even expressways, identifying the name of the cross street. Similarly, town names should be posted where the trail enters a town. This system helps trail managers to coordinate maintenance activities. The trail marking system could also help save lives in the event that emergency services might be required.

6. Vegetation Management

Effective vegetation management is a critical dimension of the maintenance program. Effective vegetation management is necessary to preserve and enhance the natural and scenic interest of the trail. Effective vegetation management is an important component of trail safety. Adequate sight distance along the trail should be maintained for crime prevention purposes. Hazardous tree limbs and other obstructions should be promptly removed.

The following system-wide standards for vegetation management are proposed:
1. **Mowing** - Herbaceous material should be mowed three to four times a year a minimum of 4-feet from the trail edge (where the trail adjoins meadows, roadways or grain fields). A flail type mower is recommended as rotary types blow the screenings, gravel and mulch (surfacing) off the trail.

2. **Removal of Vegetation from Trail surfaces** – In order to maintain the integrity of trail surfaces, invasive vegetation should be eradicated through very limited and selective application of herbicides.

3. **Woody vegetation control** - Trees and shrubs should be controlled by an annual mowing along the edges of the trail (where trail is adjacent to fields, meadows and managed grass areas). Removal of woody vegetation in this width should minimize the need for frequent mechanical or hand pruning to maintain adequate horizontal and vertical clearances. Selective removal or “limbing up” of trees should also be scheduled to maintain or create desirable views from trail. Trees should also be kept clear of all drainage structures, bridges and walls that may be subject to mechanical damage by tree roots.

4. **Invasive Plant Species and Vegetation Control**: Vegetation control should discourage poison ivy along trail and the removal of invasive plant species such as Mile a Minute weed.

**E. Opinion of Probable Costs**

1. **Acquisition**

   Trail development will require acquisition of easements or rights-of-way from a number of existing property owners. Some owners of other trail corridors have donated easements, often taking a tax deduction for such an easement. If easements or right-of-way are to be purchased, the use of an appraiser is recommended for help in determining a reasonable price.

   A grade crossing easement must be obtained from The Reading and Northern Railroad, and an order obtained from the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission for every location where the Trail will cross or run adjacent to the tracks. The PUC office in Harrisburg is most helpful in guiding the trail developer through this process.

   Right of way and easement acquisition costs are not included in the estimate of probable construction costs.

2. **Construction**

   In the opinion of Campbell Thomas & Company, the probable construction cost for the entire 30 miles of trail reviewed for this study will be approximately $16 million, including bridges and the development of sections of the trail to a carriage standard. Additional costs can be anticipated for testing and clean-up of hazardous materials, and for the removal of debris observed along the trail rights-of-way. A more detailed environmental investigation would be required to support an estimate of these probable costs. This figure does not include design fees, which can be anticipated to be 15 percent of construction costs. The analysis supporting this estimate of probable construction costs follows. Costs are calculated using July 2005 figures.

   The budgetary opinion of probable construction costs presented in this report is based on analysis of trail characteristics across each reach of trail. Linear foot costs for each trail type are derived from CTC’s experience with trails of similar characteristics within southeastern Pennsylvania. The typical linear foot cost for each rail type is adjusted by a factor reflecting special construction characteristics within the reach. An assumption has been made that trail...
widths and surfacing will reflect an initial lower volume of trail use, and, in many places, a rural environment. Over time, upgrades and widening of the trail will need to be considered. Other special elements such as trailhead improvements and orientation signage are identified and a price derived from recent experience on similar projects is applied. Estimates reflect July, 2005 construction costs. The Segment by Segment Breakdown of Probable Costs table follows. A detailed analysis of construction costs is provided in Appendix C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEGMENT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>SUB-TOTAL</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Segment 1</td>
<td>Schuylkill River Trail: Hamburg to Cross Keys</td>
<td>$3,372,538</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment 2</td>
<td>Schuylkill River Trail: Cross Keys to Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge</td>
<td>$1,939,773</td>
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<tr>
<td>Segment 3</td>
<td>Schuylkill River Trail: Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge to Reading</td>
<td>$3,603,598</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub Total, Schuylkill River Trail</td>
<td></td>
<td>$8,915,909</td>
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<tr>
<td>Segment 4</td>
<td>Freedom Trail: Blue Marsh Lake to Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge</td>
<td>$3,562,311</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment 5</td>
<td>Freedom Trail: Cross Keys to Lake Ontelaunee</td>
<td>$434,167</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berks-Penn State Spur</td>
<td>Leisch’s Bridge to Grigg’s Mill</td>
<td>$3,075,758</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub Total, Freedom Trail and Penn St. Spur</td>
<td></td>
<td>$7,072,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GRAND TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15,988,144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Maintenance Costs

Maintenance costs generally range from $5,000 to $7,000/per mile/per year for similar trails. We recommend that the responsible agencies use a figure of $7,000 per mile to estimate maintenance costs during the first year after development. This figure can be evaluated at the end of the first year. This cost can be used for fundraising purposes as well as to solicit volunteer help for maintenance.
Many trail operators have been able to supplement their maintenance program by creating partnership agreements with local businesses, clubs and organizations. Formal cooperative agreements can be made with these partners that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each party. Developing an effective maintenance management system is an on-going process.

F. Implementation and Priorities, Action Plan

In reviewing this section, the reader is asked to refer to the Trail Phase Development Maps in Appendix H.

In developing the following recommended action plan for trail development, the study team took into account such factors as:

- the ability of each phase of construction to “stand on its own,” i.e., that each such phase will receive significant usage, even if the entire trail remains to be constructed
- new sections of trail that serve, where possible, as extension of existing sections of trail
- topography
- public ownership
- ease of acquiring easements or right –of-way
- ease and expense of construction
- building up to each side of major obstacles such as bridges, thus leading to support for the ultimate expenditure for major capital projects

Please note that the inclusion of the trail sections and improvements, such as the Schuylkill River Bridges in the final phase of development, represent does not indicate that work on these elements should be delayed, but rather that their implementation will require a longer timetable. We recommend that financing and design work on these sections begin at once with the understanding that they will take longer to implement.

1. First Phase of Development (see Phase I Development Map in Appendix H)

The long time required to fund, design and build the required bridges across the Schuylkill River is the driving force behind the study’s recommendation for Phase I. In general, for the Schuylkill River Trail near Reading, Phase I will take advantage of trails along Tulpehocken Creek and the Freedom Trail in Bern Township. Most importantly, users will be taken off busy sections of Route 61. The sections of trail recommended are as follows, from South to North:

- The Schuylkill River Trail will use the existing trails coming from downtown Reading up to Route 183, crossing the Schuylkill River, and then following the existing Union Canal Towpath to Rebers Bridge
- From Rebers Bridge to the Stilling Basin, the trail will follow the soon to be constructed extension of the Union Canal Towpath. Alternatively, the SRT could follow the existing service road through County lands past Camp Joy to reach the Freedom Trail.
- From the Stilling Basin, the temporarily on-road Freedom Trail would be designated to Leinbachs at Route 183, and would serve temporarily as the SRT until the bridges over the Schuylkill River can be built.
- The SRT will be constructed between Five Locks and Hamburg, linking with the Bartram Trail, and in turn with the Appalachian Trail.
• The FT will be opened between Lake Ontelaunee and Berkeley Road, owing to the beauty and relative ease of developing this section. Moreover, this will provide a link of open space extended from Route 61 to all the lands surrounding the Lake.
• The SRT and FT will utilize temporary on-road segments as shown on the Phase I Development Map, to create a continuous trailway. Many of these roads are suitable for only for experienced bicyclists, and not for others. However, the signage of such a temporary route worked very successfully during the development of the Schuylkill River Trail in parts of Montgomery County to the south by building awareness of the trail, allowing experienced bicyclists to enjoy the entire trail, and by building support for making the entire trail “off-road.”

2. Second Phase of Development (see Phase II Development Map in Appendix H)

Phase 2 continues improvements to alignment established in Phase 1, by getting more of the trail off-road as follows:
• The Schuylkill River Trail will be developed from Shoemakersville to Five Locks using a scenic farm road (see the photo on this report cover), and improvements to the existing towpath segment now in use as a footpath.
• The Freedom Trail, serving as the temporary Schuylkill River Trail, will be developed off-road from the Stilling Basin to Leinbachs through the County lands and the Fairgrounds.
• The Ontelaunee branch of the Freedom Trail will be improved along Berkley Road.

3. Third Phase of Development (see Phase III Development Map in Appendix H)

Phase 3 development assumes efforts to obtain funding and approval for the Schuylkill River crossings will still be in progress. This phase of development will create a completely off-road, if somewhat circuitous, Schuylkill River Trail, and will complete much of the Freedom Trail.

The sections of trail recommended are as follows, from South to North:
• The Freedom Trail, serving as the temporary Schuylkill River Trail, will be constructed from Leinbachs at Route 183 to where it joins the SRT at the west side of the Schuylkill River near the proposed reconstruction of the Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge.
• The SRT will be developed, largely along the former canal alignment all the way to Leesport, where it will connect with the short existing section of SRT, which will be upgraded for multi-use travel.
• The SRT will be developed, largely along the former canal alignment all the way to Shoemakersville, where it will connect with the trail as developed in Phase II. Also, a section of the SRT along the former canal alignment will be constructed in Hamburg.
• The SRT will be developed in Muhlenberg Township between Jim Dietrich Park and the Muhlenberg Township Recreation Building along River Road. Although this section of trail will not be connected to other parts of the SRT, it will link a network of township parks along the River, and will provide a sidepath along beautiful River Road.
• The FT will be developed the short distance from the SRT at Cross Keys to Berkeley Road.
• Temporary on-road signage of the SRT as developed in Phase I will be removed.
4. Fourth Phase of Development (see Phase IV Development Map in Appendix H)

Phase 4 development will complete the Schuylkill River Trail, and in so doing, link the Freedom Trail to downtown Reading via a route suitable for horses and carriages.

The sections of trail recommended are as follows, from South to North:

- Construction of a new bridge at the confluence of Tulpehocken Creek and the Schuylkill River, providing direct access to the Union Canal Towpath, and equestrian access to the SRT.
- Upgrading and Construction of the SRT from the Confluence Bridge to a new bridge crossing the Schuylkill River at Route 12, and thence to the SRT in Muhlenberg Township
- Construction of a new bridge at or near the site of the former Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge.
- As an important branch of the SRT, construction of a new bridge at or near the site of the former Leisch’s Bridge, with a link to the Penn State Berks Campus, will provide a very attractive commuting and travel route from Muhlenberg Township to the Airport, future research facilities, and the Union Canal. This trail segment will also give communities on the west side of the Schuylkill River safe access to the SRT. Also, should the proposed route through Carpenter Technology, which has been discussed positively with Carpenter, but not approved, not be possible, this spur would provide an alternate route for the SRT.

G. Potential Funding Sources

Funding sources will vary according to the type of work being performed: studies, acquisition, design or construction. A list of potential sources is provided in Appendix D.

III. Methodology

A. Existing Plans and Field Survey

This feasibility study builds upon previous studies, planning efforts, current field surveys, interviews and workshops. The findings in this report are the products of information found in existing planning studies, synthesized with field observations, and input from the public participation process.

Information on existing conditions was obtained from aerial photographs obtained from the Berks County Regional Planning Commission. This information was supplemented and updated by field observation. Information on ownership was obtained from Berks County GIS and land records. An environmental reconnaissance was performed.

Planning documents incorporated into this study are summarized below.

The Schuylkill River Greenway Association, in partnership with the five Pennsylvania counties included in the Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor (Schuylkill, Berks, Chester, Montgomery, and Philadelphia), completed this study as a requirement for State Heritage Park designation. The
Management Action Plan includes a comprehensive assessment of the Schuylkill River corridor’s natural, cultural and recreational attractions in these counties.

Berks County Comprehensive Plan:
http://www.co.berks.pa.us/planning/site/default.asp?planningNav=|26469|

Berks County Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan
http://www.co.berks.pa.us/planning/cwp/view.asp?a=1124&Q=442529&planningNav=|26451|
This study adopted in 2002, and sponsored by the Federal government and PennDOT, is currently being updated.

Greenway, Park & Recreation Plan Update
http://www.co.berks.pa.us/planning/cwp/view.asp?a=1635&Q=464110&planningNav=|26451|
Berks County is currently updating its Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan. This plan will prioritize opportunities that will further the goals of a countywide network of interconnected greenways, trails, and parks. The plan studies three main elements: recreation; green infrastructure/ ecology; and heritage resources.

North Berks Land Utilization & Reconnections Planning Study
http://www.schuylkillriver.org/studies_reports/
This 2001 study sponsored by the Schuylkill River Greenway Association included examination of an alignment for the Schuylkill River Trail between Hamburg and Shoemakersville.

Reading Riverplace Master Plan
http://riverplacepa.com/
Connection between the Reading Riverplace development and the proposed Schuylkill River Trail has been coordinated through meetings and discussions with Riverplace’s planning consultant.

Schuylkill River Heritage Area Signage Manual
The Schuylkill River Greenway Association has also developed signage standards. These standards will be incorporated in the design phase.

Schuylkill River Outdoor Recreation Business Study
This June 2004 study sponsored by the Schuylkill River Greenway Association considers some potential economic development

Articles published about the Heritage Area and the Trail were reviewed as well. Samples are attached in Appendix M.

B. Other Related Plans

Borough and Township Recreation Plans

The study team attended meetings with municipal officials, and public meetings at several of the municipalities to review the proposed trail, and to assure its compliance with local plans.
4. Fourth Phase of Development (see Phase IV Development Map in Appendix H)

Phase 4 development will complete the Schuylkill River Trail, and in so doing, link the Freedom Trail to downtown Reading via a route suitable for horses and carriages.

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B. Other Related Plans

Borough and Township Recreation Plans

The study team attended meetings with municipal officials, and public meetings at several of the municipalities to review the proposed trail, and to assure its compliance with local plans.
C. Public Participation

Public participation has been a critical aspect of the trail planning process for the study. Benefits of public participation include:

- Stakeholders and their constituents can exchange ideas and learn about the recreational, environmental and socio-economic benefits of the proposed trail.
- Public participation is an opportunity for consensus building. Conflict and delay are minimized.
- Additional resources to support trail implementation and management are discovered.

The Schuylkill River Greenway Association is an established membership association with members throughout southeastern Pennsylvania. For about thirty years, the Schuylkill River Greenway Association has been working to create a riverside trail connecting Philadelphia to the Appalachian Mountains. Working closely with agencies such as Delaware Valley Regional Planning Committee (DVRPC), the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Schuylkill Canal Association (SCA), PennDOT, The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and others, this vision is becoming very much a reality.

Freedom Trail, Inc. has grown out of the recognition of a need for recreational trails to establish community, equestrian and open space connections in Central Berks County.

These two trail advocate organizations gathered other key community leaders to form a Steering Committee to guide this feasibility study. This committee has been involved from the initiation of this study and has contributed significantly to its content and production.

Large group (public presentations), Key Person Interviews and Trail Planning Workshops have provided multiple modes of public participation and assimilating citizen input.

Another mode of public participation has been direct outreach with principal stakeholders. A list of the stakeholders with whom meetings were held can be found in Appendix E.

Finally, two trail excursions were held to highlight the beauty and feasibility of the proposed Schuylkill River Trail and Freedom Trail in Berks County. These excursions were attended by walkers, bicyclists, and, in the case of the excursion along Maiden Creek, equestrians and a carriage.
D. Trail Alignment

The abandoned towpath of the Schuylkill River Canal is a prominent geographic feature in much of Northern Berks County. The Canal is an integral feature of the Schuylkill River Heritage Area. The towpath provides an important link to the community’s nineteenth century industrial heritage. The abandoned towpath is the obvious preferred path for much of the trail. Where the towpath cannot be used because of development or natural constraints alternative alignment possibilities were investigated.

In order to determine location feasibility, aerial photographs were examined to view existing land use and other physical features. Existing wetlands maps were also entered into the trail data-base. The location of rights-of-way, rail corridors and property ownership were also mapped. An environmental assessment was performed to determine the likelihood of environmental contaminants. (See Appendix F).

Analysis of information collected during the inventory phase yielded a preliminary trail alignment. The following elements were analyzed:

- Ownership patterns (See map in Appendix B)
- Historic, cultural and scenic resources (see map in Appendix H)
- Connections to other trails and recreational facilities (See trails shown in the Trail Alignment Maps, Section II-A, and in the Trail Development Phase Maps in Appendix H)

Opportunities to reinforce other economic development initiatives in Berks County were examined. These initiatives included Reading Riverplace, the Airport Business Park, the “Nutrition and Wellness Corridor”, and the Reading Company Technical and Historical Society's Museum and excursion trains, among others.

The proposed trail alignment was reviewed by the various public agencies participating on the Trail Advisory Committee. Their comments are incorporated in the “Recommendations” section of this report.
IV. Inventory and Analysis

A. Physical Conditions

1. Natural Features- Opportunities and Constraints

The following physical conditions were investigated: Significant natural features including slope, existing vegetation, wildlife habitat, wetlands, agricultural lands, and PNDI sites. Appendix I contains the natural features analysis.

2. Cultural Features, Historic Sites and Land Use

The consulting team inventoried existing and proposed land use, cultural features, and destination and activity nodes within and adjacent to the study area.

One purpose of the trail is to connect important cultural features within the community such as schools and parks. Other important features to be connected include connections to rail stations, museums, historic sites, business districts and employment nodes.

Key features identified include:

- Blue Marsh Lake
- Lake Ontelaunee
- Reading Riverplace
- Hamburg Commercial District
- Shoemakersville Commercial District
- Leesport Commercial District
- Connection to the Berks County Nutrition and Wellness Corridor and the Berks Penn State Campus
- The Reading Company Historic and Technical Society Museum Site in Hamburg
- The Temple Rail Station
- The Berks County Fairgrounds
- Various Public Recreation and Historic Areas along the Schuylkill
- Various Historic Sites (See Appendix K)

Appendix J provides a map showing these various features.

3. Ownership Patterns

Properties to be crossed by the proposed trail alignments were identified. Ownership was listed based on current County record data as of March, 2006. Appendix L provides a detailed mapping of ownership.
4. Transportation and Utility Corridors

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area owes its origin to its role as a transportation corridor. The early nineteenth century saw the construction of the canal. Later in the nineteenth century, first the Reading Company and then the Pennsylvania Railroad built railroads. In the study area both of these railway corridors are maintained and operated today by the Reading and Northern Railway. The abandoned canal’s towpath provides the optimal alignment for the Schuylkill River Trail from Cross Key’s Bridge to Hamburg.

The Study Team investigated several bridges that impact the trail alignment. Existing highway bridges provide opportunities to connect neighborhoods on both sides of the river to the trail. Several highway bridges were assessed to determine how they might best support this function.

At the northern end of the trail, a trail bridge on a former railroad bridge connects Hamburg to the Bartram Trail. Interest has been expressed by the Reading Company Technical and Historical Society in modifying this bridge to carry excursion trains as well.

Bridges with low traffic volumes such as the ones at Wall Street Bridge at Leesport and Cross Keys can be made suitable for the trail by signage and pavement striping, or the installation of traffic separators.

On its southern end the trail will also make use of the Schuylkill Avenue Bridge in Reading. Striping and signage are proposed for this bridge. This bridge provides a temporary connection to access River Place in central Reading until a bridge can be built at Confluence point.

Important highways follow and intersect this corridor. These highways in some cases would obstruct the trail alignment. Engineering solutions to these obstructions are proposed in this report.

Heavily trafficked Route 183 presents a barrier to the Freedom Trail. The study team evaluated options and proposed construction of a pedestrian overpass or underpass

5. Other Land Use

The study team investigated proposed land development activity as well as existing land uses. One area of particular concern was the proposed subdivision of the Walter Pohl property, Ontelaunee Orchards. A meeting was held with Mr. Pohl, and will require additional negotiations with Freedom Trail, Inc.

Areas that could potentially be contaminated by hazardous materials from past industrial uses were visually investigated. See Appendix F.

B. Analysis Maps

Composite Analysis Maps were prepared to summarize the conditions inventoried. These maps are provided in Appendices I and J.

C. Usage Feasibility

The Schuylkill River Trail Reading to Hamburg is one of the last remaining links to be completed in the 130 mile Schuylkill River corridor, extending from the confluence with the Delaware River in Philadelphia to the headwaters in Schuylkill County. The trail is either completed, under construction, or under study by Schuylkill River Heritage Area, municipal planning agencies, and non-profit organizations. This trail will be a major regional recreational resource.

The proposed Freedom Trail will provide a reportedly 75-mile carriage loop from Blue Marsh Lake to Lake Ontelaunee and a spur to Reading. This would be a unique location for carriage rallies serving the entire East Coast. Horse drawn carriage rallies could contribute to the vitality of Reading Riverplace.

Recreational users of the trail system are anticipated to include:

- Joggers, Hikers and Walkers
- Bicyclists
- Anglers
- Equestrians (on the Freedom Trail, and the Schuylkill River Trail from Reading to Cross Keys)

As an integral part of Berks County, and with links to so many neighborhoods, towns, employment and commercial centers, the study anticipates use for local travel and commuting. Major benefits identified in interview and public workshops include:

- The ability to avoid traffic congestion.
- The ability to commute in a highly desirable, relaxing environment.
- The competitiveness afford by “short-cuts” created by the proposed new bridges. Distances by trail may be much less than those on the highway for many trips.

D. Legal Feasibility

Legal issues to be addressed include the following:

- Zoning approvals from municipal governments may be required.
- In order to establish a trail head at the Fairgrounds, zoning restrictions on use of the Fairgrounds established by Bern Township must be modified.
- Approvals from the Public Utility Commission will be needed for an at-grade crossing of the Reading and Northern Railroad line.
• Any restrictions imposed by agricultural preservation easements should be explored.

V. Appendices

A. Plan Showing Recommended Trail Types
B. Plan Showing Existing Ownership Patterns
C. Detailed Analysis of Probable Construction Costs by Reach and by Phase – Two charts are given – the first has costs grouped by the ultimate location of the SRT and FT, the second by Development Phases
D. List of Possible Funding Sources
E. Property Owner Meetings
F. Environmental Analysis Report as prepared by STV
G. Trail Alignment Maps (1 through 5)
H. Trail Development Phase Maps (3 Phases)
I. Natural Features Analysis Map. The following physical conditions were investigated:
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J. Map of Cultural Features, Historic Sites and Land Use (existing and proposed land use, cultural features, and destination and activity nodes within and adjacent to the study area.)
K. Historic Sites of Importance to the Trail Corridor
L. Land Ownership Data by Township, Parcel Number, and Owner (will be listed in final report)
M. Articles About the Schuylkill River Trail and Freedom Trail
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M. Articles About the Schuylkill River Trail and Freedom Trail
### SCHUYLKILL RIVER TRAIL / FREEDOM TRAIL

**Berks County, Pennsylvania**

**PRELIMINARY OPINION OF PROBABLE COST - BY PHASE OF TRAIL DEVELOPMENT - Initial Traffic Volume and Rural Options**

Prep’d by Campbell Thomas & Co - 1504 South Street - Philadelphia PA 19146-1636 - Tel:215-545-1076 - Fax 215-545-8397

**Revision Date:** January 18, 2007

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**TOTAL $16,918,712**

**GENERAL NOTES:**
1. Costs are estimated for construction only. Any right-of-way and/or easement acquisition costs are additional.
2. Environmental remediation costs are additional.
3. Italicised costs in totals column are items not any part part of SRT.

## SCHUYLKILL RIVER TRAIL / FREEDOM TRAIL

**Bucks County, Pennsylvania**

**PRELIMINARY OPINION OF PROBABLE COST - BY REACH OF TRAIL - Initial Traffic Volume and Rural Options**

Prep'd by Campbell Thomas & Co -  1504 South Street - Philadelphia PA 19146-1636 - Tel:215-545-1076 - Fax 215-545-8397

**Revision Date:** January 18, 2007

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Reach of Trail</th>
<th>Work Elements</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Cost/Unit</th>
<th>Extension</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
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<td><strong>SRT-Base Work-Hamburg to Cross Keys - PED/BIKE STANDARD</strong></td>
<td>Widen &amp; upgrade existing connection from bridge</td>
<td>0.08</td>
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<td>LF</td>
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<td>LF</td>
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<td>3,314</td>
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<td>New trail bed on former towpath to Cross keys Bridge</td>
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<td><strong>$3,372,538</strong></td>
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| **SRT-Base Work-From Cross Keys to Stoudt's Ferry Bridge- CARRIAGE STANDARD** | New trail bed on restored towpath Cross Key's to Peacock Bridge | 0.38 | MI | 2000 | LF | 350,000 | 132,576 |
| | Existing farm road surface to be improved | 0.32 | MI | 1700 | LF | 100,000 | 32,197 |
| | New trail bed across Farm road | 0.57 | MI | 3000 | LF | 300,000 | 170,465 |
| | Improve existing access road surface in impounding basin | 0.80 | MI | 4200 | LF | 100,000 | 79,545 |
| | Upgrade Stoudt's Ferry Bridge Road | 0.25 | MI | 4201 | LF | 100,000 | 25,000 |
| | Rebuild Stoudt's Ferry Bridge | 1.00 | LS | 1 | LS | 1,500,000 | 1,500,000 |
| | **Subtotal** | | | | | | **$1,939,773** |

| **SRT-Base Work from Stoudt's Ferry Bridge to Penn Street, Reading- CARRIAGE STANDARD** | Trail on Stoudt's Ferry Bridge Road | 0.19 | MI | 1000 | LF | 5,000 | 947 |
| | New trail bed connects to gravel park road | 0.09 | MI | 500 | LF | 350,000 | 33,144 |
| | New trail bed to Riverview Drive Road for sidewalk | 0.63 | MI | 3300 | LF | 100,000 | 62,500 |
| | On-road route shares Riverview Drive | 0.21 | MI | 1100 | LF | 350,000 | 72,917 |
| | Existing trail from Riverview Drive to Frifz' Lock to be widened and upgraded | 0.83 | MI | 4400 | LF | 5,000 | 4,167 |
| | New trail bed adjacent to River Road to Leitz's Bridge | 1.14 | MI | 6000 | LF | 350,000 | 397,727 |
| | New trail bed adjacent to River Road Leitz's Bridge to Rte 61 | 1.89 | MI | 10000 | LF | 350,000 | 662,879 |
| | Bridge over Schuylkill River at Route 12 | 1.00 | LS | 1 | LS | 1,300,000 | 1,300,000 |
| | New trail bed through Carpenter Technology to Schuylkill Ave. Bridge | 1.06 | MI | 5600 | LF | 350,000 | 371,212 |
| | Schuylkill Avenue Bridge improvements | 1.00 | LS | 1 | LS | 75,000 | 75,000 |
| | Existing trail to be upgraded from Baer Park to Penn Street | 1.33 | MI | 7000 | LF | 350,000 | 464,015 |
| | **Subtotal** | | | | | | **$3,603,598** |

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Sheet1
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<th>Reach of Trail</th>
<th>Work Elements</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<th>Extension</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
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<td>Riverside Drive, existing road to have surface improved</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>LF</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>30,303</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New trail connects to Berkley Road with RR Crossing</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>LF</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>106,081</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trail on Berkley Road and footpath</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>4500</td>
<td>LF</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>85,227</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Existing trail along Maiden Creek to be widened and upgraded</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>6900</td>
<td>LF</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>130,682</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Existing Bowers Road to have surface improved</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>3400</td>
<td>LF</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>64,394</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Subtotal $434,167</td>
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<td>TOTAL $12,912,386</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berks Penn State Spur-Base Work - PED-BIKE STANDARD</td>
<td>Trail on existing campus pedestrian network</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>LF</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>1,515</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safety improvements at street crossing</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trail on existing Griggs Mill Park path network</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>LF</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>11,364</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trail Lighting</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New trail bed adjacent to estate road</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>LF</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>265,152</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New trail bed follows spur road to Rte 183</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>2200</td>
<td>LF</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>145,633</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North crossing Rte 183 at Energy Associates</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South crossing 183 at Aviation Road</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New trail bed adjacent to Aviation Road</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>LF</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>331,439</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Existing road to Leitz's Bridge to be widened/ upgraded</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>LF</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>45,455</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reconstruction of Leitz's Bridge</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Subtotal $3,075,758</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GRAND TOTAL $15,988,144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GENERAL NOTES:
1. Costs are estimated for construction only. Any right-of-way and/or easement acquisition costs are additional.
2. Environmental remediation costs are additional.
Funding for Trails, Greenways and Streetscapes

FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

Bicycle and pedestrian projects are broadly eligible for funding from almost all major federal-aid highway, transit, safety, and other programs. Bicycle projects must be principally for transportation, rather than recreation purposes and must be designed and located pursuant to the transportation plans required of states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Additional federal funding sources not directly related to transportation can be used creatively to enhance and restore open space, wetlands, and wildlife habitat along trails and also to fund interpretation of cultural and natural resources.

US Dept of Housing & Urban Development Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs)

HUD provides these grants to communities for neighborhood revitalization, economic development and improvement of community facilities and services, especially in low and moderate income areas. These grants require no match of funds or services from the community. HUD provides entitlement to each of these communities annually and the community develops its own programs and sets funding priorities.

Recreation planning and development in low-income urban areas is an acceptable use of these funds. Seattle and Maryland have used these funds to develop rail-trails through urban areas—such trails can greatly enhance the quality of life in these areas and potentially bring new economic vitality to neglected areas.

More information on CDBGs can be found at:
http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/index.cfm

US Dept of Agriculture Community Programs

Community Programs, a division of the Rural Housing Programs, is part of the United States Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development mission area. Community Programs administers programs designed to develop essential community facilities for public use in rural areas. These facilities include schools, libraries, childcare, hospitals, medical clinics, assisted living facilities, fire and rescue stations, police stations, community centers, public buildings and transportation. Through its Community Programs, the Department of Agriculture is striving to ensure that such facilities are readily available to all rural communities. Community Programs utilizes three flexible financial tools to achieve this goal: the Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program, the Community Facilities Direct Loan Program, and the Community Facilities Grant Program.

The Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan and Direct Loan Programs can make and guarantee loans to develop essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population. Loans and guarantees are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special-purpose districts, as well as to non-profit corporations and tribal governments.

The Community Facilities Grant Program provides grants to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population. Grants are authorized on a graduated scale. Applicants located in small communities with low populations and low incomes will receive a higher percentage of grants. Grants are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special-purpose districts, as well as non-profit corporations and tribal governments.

More information on USDA Community Programs can be found at:
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The LWCF was established in 1965 to help provide “close-to-home” park and recreation opportunities throughout the nation. Money for the fund comes from the sale or lease of non-renewable resources, primarily federal offshore oil and gas leases and surplus federal land sales. A large portion of the annual LWCF allocation goes toward acquisition of land for federal land management agencies; however, a portion of the money is provided to cities, counties and park districts to acquire land and develop parks. LWCF funds are provided to each state annually by the National Park Service. State funding is based on a population formula. A state administers the program through a State Liaison Officer, who recommends projects to the National Park Service for approval. Local governments are eligible applicants. Communities must be able to match LWCF grants with a 50 percent provision of funding or services.

In order to qualify for funding, a project must meet two criteria. First, the project must be primarily for recreation purposes, not transportation. Second, the organization leading the project must guarantee that the project will be maintained in perpetuity for public recreational use. Any deviation from recreational use must be approved by the National Park Service, and property of at least equal recreational value must be provided to replace the loss.

Americans for Our Heritage and Recreation provides an overview of the LWCF program at http://www.ahrinfo.org/lwcf_overview.html and links to the National Park Service and State Liaison Officers

The National Park Service maintains the LWCF website: http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/lwcf/

Pennsylvania’s State Liaison Officer may be contacted at:

Bureau of Recreation and Conservation
PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources
P.O. Box 8767
Harrisburg, PA 17105
Tel: 717-783-2659

North American Wetlands Conservation Act Small Grants Program

The 1989 North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) promotes long-term conservation of North American wetlands ecosystems and the waterfowl and other migratory birds, fish and wildlife that depend on such habitats. Principal conservation actions supported by NAWCA are acquisition, creation, enhancement and restoration of wetlands and associated habitat. The US Fish and Wildlife Service administers the Small Grants Program, which promotes long-term wetlands conservation through encouraging participation by new grantees and partners who may not be able to compete in the regular grants program. The maximum grant award is $50,000, and the proposals must represent on-the-ground projects rather than educational, interpretive, or other types of projects. There is a 1:1 non-federal match requirement.


Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, dubbed “ISTEA,” included funding for non-traditional transportation improvements which were categorized as transportation enhancements. This act
provided $3.3 billion nationwide over the six-year life of the Act for improvements such as pedestrian and bicycle routes, preservation of historic transportation structures, scenic beautification of transportation facilities, and other environmentally beneficial transportation projects. ISTEA expired in September of 1997; however, the transportation enhancements provisions have been included in its successor, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), signed into law June 1998. TEA-21 not only continued the visionary policies of its predecessor, but also provided more funding than ever before for non-motorized transportation modes, specifically bicycle and pedestrian modes. Under the new law, Pennsylvania is to receive nearly $1.3 billion in transportation funding, a significant increase over ISTEA levels.

A relatively modest amount of the funds allocate to TEA-21 are available for local planning of bikeways and recreational trails. The act emphasizes coordinated overall planning and funding of projects at the state level and involvement by MPOs. All federal funding programs require conformity to plans developed by the states and MPOs.

For more information about TEA-21 go to the US Department of Transportation’s TEA-21 home page at http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tea21/summary.htm

Contact the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission at:

The Bourse Building
111 S. Independence Mall East, 8th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19106
215-592-1800

Project funding for pedestrian and bicycle projects is provided by TEA-21 through the Surface Transportation Program and Transportation Enhancements Program and Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program (TCSP), explained below.

**Surface Transportation Program and Transportation Enhancements Program**

Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds may be used for either the construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways, or non-construction projects, such as maps, brochures, signage and public service announcements related to safe bicycle use and walking. Proposed projects must be designed primarily for transportation rather than recreation. TEA-21 adds the modification of public sidewalks to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act as an activity that is specifically eligible for the use of these funds.

The most relevant element of the STP program to local government trail development is the opportunity to participate in transportation enhancements. The intent of the transportation enhancements is to creatively integrate transportation facilities into local communities and the environment. Ten percent of each state’s annual STP funds are set aside for Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEAs). The law provides a specific list of activities that are eligible TEAs including: provision of facilities for bicycles and pedestrians, provision of safety and educational activities for bicyclists and pedestrians, and the preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use thereof for bicycle and pedestrian trails).

Pennsylvania is expected to receive $120 million over the six-year life of TEA-21 for Transportation Enhancements. A few of the previously funded projects include:

- Provision of facilities for bicycles and pedestrians
- Provision of safety and education activities for bicycles and pedestrians
- Preservation of abandoned railroad corridors for bicycle and pedestrian trails
Transportation enhancements projects are eligible for a maximum of 80 percent federal funding, with 20 percent coming from a local government’s match. A match may be made with dollars or in-kind services, and in some cases, other federal or state funding sources may be used as the match. Pennsylvania’s program has been structured to have project sponsors fund the pre-construction phases of work, e.g., the design, right-of-way acquisition, and utility relocation work, with non-federal funding, and to then provide 100% federal funding for the construction phase. This generally results in about an 80/20 cost-sharing arrangement. There is one more round of funding to submit Transportation Enhancements projects during the life of TEA-21, which expires in 2003.

PennDOT provides staff to administer the program and give advice and technical assistance as necessary; however, individual MPOs (Metropolitan Planning Organizations) are usually responsible for coordinating and recommending transportation enhancements projects for their regions. Individual applicants submit their projects to the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, the MPO for a five-county area in southeastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. The applications are reviewed, prioritized, and a recommendation is forwarded to PennDOT for final review and then passed on to the State Transportation Commission for final adoption. A legal agreement, which establishes the federal and local money to be spent on the project, is signed between PennDOT and the sponsoring group.

Another ten percent of each state’s STP funds is set aside for safety. The Hazard Elimination and Railway-Highway Crossing Programs are two programs under the safety category, which address bicycle and pedestrian safety issues. Each state is required to implement a Hazard Elimination Program to identify and correct locations that may constitute a danger to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Funds may be used for activities, including a survey of hazardous locations, for projects on any publicly owned bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail, or for any safety-related traffic calming measure. Improvements to railway-highway crossings shall take into account bicycle safety.

A useful website for information on this program is the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse: http://www.enhancements.org

For more information, also go to the Federal Highway Administration’s website on bicycle and pedestrian provisions: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/BP-Guid.htm

For Pennsylvania’s Transportation Enhancements, Home Town Streets and Safe Routes To School Programs see http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Penndot/Bureaus/CPDM/Prod/Saferoute.nsf

**Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program (TCSP)**

TCSP provides funding for a comprehensive initiative including planning grants, implementation grants, and research to investigate and address the relationships between transportation, community, and system preservation and to identify private sector-based initiatives. In 1999, $20 million was authorized for the pilot program, and 2000-2003 are each authorized for $25 million. A total of $120 million is authorized for this program for FYs 1999-2003. **TEA-21 was set to expire in September 2003, but Congress passed a series of extensions for funding through September 2004. As of that date the United States Congress has not taken any action to further the program, although it may yet do so. Contact your U.S. Senator or Representative for updated information.**

An interagency team evaluates applications for competitive TCSP Program grants. The team includes representatives from: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), US Department of Transportation (DOT) Office of the Secretary, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA)/Volpe Center, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). TCSP Program grants can also be designated by Congress.

Some of the eligible projects include:
- Corridor preservation activities necessary to implement transit oriented development plans
- Traffic calming measures
- Spending policies that direct funds to high growth areas
- Urban growth boundaries to guide metropolitan expansion
- Green corridors that provide access to major highway corridors for efficient and compact development

States, local governments, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and tribal governments are eligible to apply for TCSP Program funds.

For more information, go to the Federal Highway Administration’s TCSP website: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp/

**Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program**

Congestion mitigation and air quality improvement funds are authorized for transportation projects within non-attainment areas, such as Philadelphia, defined by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. To be funded, projects must contribute to attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Funds may be used for either the construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways or non-construction projects (such as maps, brochures, and public service announcements) related to safe bicycle use. Funding is provided through an 80 percent federal and 20 percent state or local match.

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics provides a several guides to CMAQ funding as part of its inline National Transportation Library, go to: http://ntl.bts.gov/digital_collection.cfm type "CMAQ" in the Keywords box and it will provide several links to online documents

See also the Federal Highway Administration’s website regarding CMAQ: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cmaq.htm

**National Highway System (NHS)**

Funds may be used to construct bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways on land adjacent to any highway on the National Highway System, including Interstate highways. The facilities must be principally for transportation. Funding is provided through an 80 percent federal and 20 percent state or local match.

General information on this program is available at the Federal Highway Administration’s website: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreails/fundrec.htm

**Recreational Trails Program**

Funded through the Highway Trust Fund, the program is related to the Symms National Recreational Trails Act of 1991 and was originally created as the National Recreational Trails Trust Fund to provide for and maintain recreational trails that are part of Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORP). Pennsylvania’s SCORP program is titled the “Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program.” Funds under this program may be used for all kinds of trail projects, including trail maintenance, acquisition and development, and for improving access to and use of trails by persons with disabilities. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources administers the program, which is described more fully below under “State Grant Programs.” National mandates require that, of funds apportioned to a state, 30 percent be used for motorized trail uses, 30 percent for non-motorized trail uses, and 40 percent...
for diverse trail uses. The latter funds are allocated at the state’s discretion, but preference is given to projects with the greatest number of compatible recreational purposes or to those that provide for innovative recreational trail corridors used for motorized and non-motorized recreation.

Information on this program is available through the Federal Highway Administration’s website: http://www fhwa dot gov/tea21/factsheets/rec-trl.htm

Federal Lands Highway Program

Provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists are eligible under the various categories of the program in conjunction with roads, highways, and parkways. Priority for funding projects is determined by the appropriate Federal Land Agency or Tribal government. These funds are used at the discretion of a state’s department of transportation. Local municipalities may petition PennDOT to obtain funding. Bicycle facilities must be principally for transportation rather than recreation. Projects are 100 percent federally funded.

A new program category for refuge roads was added to FHLP. This program provides funds that may be used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the FHWA for the maintenance and improvement of federally owned public roads that provide access to or within a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Refuge Roads funds may be used for:

- Maintenance and improvement of refuge roads;
- Maintenance and improvement of adjacent vehicular parking areas, provision for pedestrians and bicycles, and construction and reconstruction of roadside rest areas including sanitary and water facilities that are located in or adjacent to wildlife refuges;
- Administrative costs associated with such maintenance and improvements.

More information is available through the Federal Highway Administration’s website: http://www fhwa dot gov/tea21/factsheets/fedland.htm

Additional TEA-21 Programs

Title 49 United States Code (as amended by TEA-21) allows the Urbanized Area Formula Grants, the Capital Investment Grants, and the Loans and Formula Program for Other than Urbanized Areas transit funds to be used for improving bicycle and pedestrian access to transit facilities and vehicles. Eligible activities include investments in pedestrian and bicycle access to a mass transportation facility that establishes or enhances coordination between mass transportation and other transportation. TEA-21 also created a Transit Enhancement Activity Program with a one percent set aside of Urbanized Area Formula Grant funds designated for, among other things, pedestrian access and walkways and bicycle access, including bicycle storage facilities and equipment for transporting bicycles on mass transportation vehicles.

Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants are available to support projects, including bicycle-related services, designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from employment.

The Federal Highway Administration provides information fact sheets on these programs at the following internet sites:

- For Urbanized Area Formula Grants, see http://www fhwa dot gov/tea21/factsheets/urbnfg.htm
- For Capital Investments Grants and Loan Program, see http://www fhwa dot gov/tea21/factsheets/trcap.htm
Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)

The WRP program, operated by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), is available to help restore wetlands on non-federal lands. Private landowners and state, county and local governments can get the cost share funds to pay 75 percent of the restoration costs by agreeing to maintain the restoration for at least 10 years. To sign up or get more information, contact the local NRCS or conservation district office. Conservation Districts are listed in the “county government” section of most phone books. In many states, they are called Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

For more information on the program, see the Farm Bill Network website: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/

STATE GRANT PROGRAMS

Pennsylvania has five major programs supporting greenways and trails, administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR), aside from federal transportation enhancement funds administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and described in the previous section. The five PA DCNR grant programs are:

- The Keystone Planning, Implementation and Technical Assistance Program
- The Keystone Acquisition and Development Grant Program
- The Keystone Land Trust Program
- The Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program
- The Heritage Parks Program

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Recreation and Conservation administers grants for funding of acquisition, development, planning, implementation, and technical assistance projects through the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation (Keystone) Fund. These Keystone grants are administered under the agency’s Community Grant Program, Rails-to-Trails Grant Program, and Rivers Conservation Grant Program.

The Keystone Fund was established by passage of the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund Act (Act 1993-50) signed on July 2, 1993. On November 2, 1993 the voters of the Commonwealth overwhelmingly approved a public referendum incurring bond indebtedness by the Commonwealth in the amount of $50 million to provide for the funding of nature preserves and wildlife habitats and for improvements to and expansion of state parks, community parks and recreation facilities, historic sites, zoos and public libraries. The Keystone Fund is currently supported by a 15% allocation from the State Realty Transfer Tax revenues.

PA DCNR’s Recreational Trails Program provides funding to develop and maintain trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. DCNR’s Bureau of Recreation & Conservation administers this program in consultation with the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Advisory Board (PARTAB), which is composed of both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail users.
Funding for the Recreational Trails Program is provided to the Commonwealth through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21), and supplemented by state funds.

In addition, the PA DCNR uses Growing Greener funds to augment the already successful and highly requested Community Conservation Partnership grant programs. Over five years, DCNR will allocate Growing Greener funding over several existing grant programs to help more communities and organizations meet their conservation and recreation goals. The grant programs funded through Growing Greener include:

- Community Grants (also funded by Keystone 93)
- Rails-to-Trails Grants (also funded by Keystone 93)
- Land Trust Grants (also funded by Keystone 93)
- Heritage Park Grants

For more information on these grant programs, contact the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources at the central office:

Bureau of Recreation and Conservation
Rachel Carson State Office Building
P.O. Box 8475
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105-8475
(717) 783-4734

Or contact the Recreation and Park Advisor for Region I at:

Southeast Regional Office (Philadelphia)
908 State Office Building
1400 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130
(215) 644-0609

Also, visit the PA DCNR grants home page: http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/

The Keystone Land Trust Program

Land Trust Grants provide 50 percent state funding for acquisition and planning of open space and natural areas which face imminent loss. Lands must be open to public use and the acquisition must be coordinated with the communities or counties in which the property is located. Priority is given to habitat for threatened species. Eligible applicants are nonprofit land trusts and conservancies. The funds require a 50 percent match.

Although these funds are targeted to protecting critical habitat for threatened species, many of these lands also provide key open space, greenway, bikeway, trail and heritage corridor opportunities and connections in greenway systems. Many land trusts and conservancies are undertaking greenway initiatives and are willing partners in greenway projects.

Keystone Planning, Implementation and Technical Assistance Program (PITA—DCNR)

Within DCNR’s PITA Program are three separate programs of interest to the greenways and trail community:

- Community Grants
- Rails-to-Trails Grants
• Rivers Conservation Grants

Community Grants provide funds for comprehensive recreation, park and open space plans; greenway plans; site master plans for neighborhood or regional parks; peer-to-peer technical assistance to study park and recreation facilities issues; and other types of planning. Municipal governments (including counties), councils of government (COGs) and some authorities are the only eligible applicants.

Community Grants include a Circuit Rider program, a three-year position for a full-time recreation, greenway and/or park director to share services through an intergovernmental cooperative effort created by two or more municipalities. Available funding for the Circuit Rider’s salary decreases gradually throughout the three-year period from 100 percent to 0 in the fourth year.

Rails-to-Trails Grants may be requested by appropriate non-profit organizations, as well as municipalities. PA DCNR funds up to 50% of eligible costs. Money is provided for rail-trail feasibility studies and master plans and for special-purpose studies, such as studies of bridges, tunnels and culverts, that may impact the conversion of a rail corridor to a trail. Site control, either through ownership or a long-term lease, is required in order to develop a master plan or special-purpose study; however, it is not a requirement for feasibility studies.

Rivers Conservation Grants are available to municipalities and appropriate non-profit organizations for conducting watershed and river corridor studies and plans, many of which include greenway and trail elements. PA DCNR funds up to 50 percent of the cost (maximum $50,000 grant).

Keystone Acquisition and Development Grant Program

The Keystone Acquisition and Development Grant Program includes three components:

• Community Grants
• Rails-to-Trails Grants
• Rivers Conservation Grants

Although these bear the same names as grant programs under the PITA grants, they are separate programs with distinct features.

Under the Community Grant Program, municipalities, COGs and some authorities are the only eligible applicants. These grants provide funding for the purchase of land for park, recreation, or conservation purposes, and the rehabilitation and development of park and recreation areas and facilities, including greenways and trails. Generally, funding is provided for up to 50% of eligible costs. Small Communities/Small Projects grants are included for municipalities with a population of 5,000 or less. Grants are limited to a maximum of $20,000 and will provide up to 100 percent funding of material costs and professional design fees. Grants are for the rehabilitation and development of basic outdoor park and recreation facilities and minor indoor recreation renovations.

The Rails-to-Trails Grant Program is open to municipalities and non-profit organizations. Funding is provided for up to 50% of eligible costs. Grant funds may be used for acquisition of abandoned railroad rights-of-way and adjacent land for trail use and access. Funds may also be used for rehabilitation and development of abandoned rail rights-of-way and support facilities for public recreational trail use.

Under the Rivers Conservation Grant Program, funding is available to both municipalities and appropriate organizations for acquisition and development projects recommended in an approved Rivers Conservation Plan (such as those created under the PITA Program). To be eligible for acquisition or development funding, the Rivers Conservation Plan must be listed in the Pennsylvania Rivers Registry. The state will fund up to 50 percent of the project up to a maximum of $50,000.
The Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program

In addition, the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program provides grants between $2,500 and $100,000 for a wide range of trail development categories for both motorized and non-motorized trails: maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails; development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages; purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment; construction of new recreational trails (with the exception of new trails on federal land); and acquisition of easements or property for recreational trails or trail corridors. The state will provide up to 80 percent of the funding (up to a maximum of $100,000) except for acquisition projects, which require a 50 percent match. “Soft match” (credit for donations of funds, materials, services, or new right-of-way) is permitted from any project sponsor, whether a private organization or public agency. The Commonwealth may also use up to 5 percent of its funds for the operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to the use of recreational trails.

The Department will also give consideration to projects that provide for the redesign, reconstruction, non-routine maintenance, or relocation of recreational trails to benefit the natural environment. Project sponsors are encouraged to enter into contracts and cooperative agreements with qualified youth conservation or service corps to perform trail construction and maintenance.

The Recreational Trails Program is administered by PA DCNR but uses Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) funds. TEA-21’s predecessor legislation, ISTEA, included the Symms National Recreational Trails Act, and thus these grants are sometimes referred to as “Symms Grants.” State funding supplements the federal is some years.

Recreational Trails Program grants are available to federal and state agencies, municipal government, organizations, and even private individuals. Grant money may be used for a variety of purposes, including work on trails to mitigate or minimize the impact on the natural environment, provide urban trail linkages, and develop trail-side and trail-head facilities. DCNR has a detailed grant application manual that includes necessary application procedures, forms, worksheets, sample contracts and agreements, and as well as an environmental survey form. DCNR also provides technical assistance and training workshops for interested applicants.

In Pennsylvania, the Recreational Trails Program is administered by the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Recreation & Conservation (BRC) in consultation with the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Advisory Board (PARTAB), which is composed of both motorized and non motorized recreational trail users.

Heritage Parks Program

Heritage Parks are large multi-county corridor and geographic areas that contain heritage elements of national or state significance related to historic industrial themes, such as oil, steel, coal, railroads, and transportation. Through public-private partnerships and a bottom-up grassroots public participation process, regional management action plans are completed to protect and enhance the natural, cultural, recreational, historic and scenic resources of the area. These resources are interpreted, packaged and promoted to create economic development opportunities based on tourism for the area.

Most of the designated State Heritage Parks, including the Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor, and those being planned include greenways, trails and river corridor projects in their regional strategies for preservation, enhancement, interpretation, education and promotion. Some of the state’s best greenway corridors are found in State Heritage Parks and have benefited from funding through the program.
DCNR administers the Heritage Parks Program in conjunction with a task force of other state agencies and non-profit organizations. Annual appropriations from the General Assembly are used to fund study, planning, implementation and management projects in officially designated State Heritage Parks in the Commonwealth. Heritage Parks Grants promote public-private partnerships to preserve and enhance natural, cultural, historic and recreation resources to stimulate economic development through heritage tourism. Grants are available to municipalities, nonprofit organizations or federally designated commissions acting on behalf of the municipalities in a heritage park area. The Schuylkill River Greenway Association coordinates and administers grants for the Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor. Grants are awarded for a variety of purposes including feasibility studies; development of management action plans for heritage park areas; specialized studies; implementation projects; and hiring of state heritage park managers. Grants require a 25-50 percent local match.

**Home Town Streets (HTS) and Safe Routes To School (SRS) Programs**

Aimed at improving Pennsylvania’s quality of life, Home Town Streets and Safe Routes to School are initiatives created by Governor Rendell in 2004 to improve downtowns, neighborhoods and walking routes by providing funds for sidewalks, curbing, street lights, pedestrian safety crossings and other downtown enhancements. The program seeks to facilitate the redevelopment of traditional downtown streetscapes and neighborhood corridors and to promote improved safety conditions for children going to and from school via non-motorized means (either walking or riding a bike.)

The HTS and SRS are federally funded programs administered at the state level. Similar to the Transportation Enhancements Program, both programs are designed to fund transportation and transportation-related improvements that often would not be funded using other available transportation monies. Like the TE Program, HTS and SRS require the applicant to provide a 20% match to the 80% federal/state transportation funds set aside for the project. Both HTS and SRS are organized to make it easier for the applicant to obtain the required matching funds. Unlike TE, both HTS and SRS have a $1,000,000 maximum project cost limit.


**FOUNDATION GRANTS AND OTHER PRIVATE FUNDING**

Numerous large community, family, and corporate foundations make grants to greenway and trail groups. Copies of directories of foundations can be found in local libraries. The directories provide information on each foundation’s grantmaking history and philosophy. One of the most well-known directories is *Environmental Grantmaking Foundations*, published annually by Resources for Global Sustainability, Inc., which maintains a database of over 47,000 grant programs that can be searched by keywords to determine the foundations serving a particular area and type of project. The directory is available as hard copy or on cd-rom. Foundations can also be located by searching the internet. Other resources for grant information include economic development agencies and trust officers at local banks, who manage small family foundations and charitable trusts.

**American Greenways Eastman Kodak Awards**
A partnership between The Conservation Fund and photo giant Eastman-Kodak has launched the American Greenways Eastman Kodak Awards (formerly the American Greenways DuPont Awards). The program provides small grants of $500 to $2,500 to groups and individuals planning and designing greenways throughout the United States. Grants can be used to cover planning, technical assistance, legal or other costs associated with greenway projects. Grants may not be used for academic research, general institutional support, lobbying, or political activities.

The deadline for submitting applications is June 1, and awards will be presented in early fall. To receive an application form contact: The American Greenways Program c/o The Conservation Fund, 1800 North Kent Street, Suite 1120, Arlington, Virginia 22209 or visit their website: www.conservationfund.org.

Bike Belong Coalition Grants Program

The Bikes Belong Coalition is sponsored by the bicycle industry, with the mission of putting more people on bicycles more often. The Bikes Belong Coalition Grants Program http://bikesbelong.org/site/page.cfm?PageID=21 provides grants of up to $10,000 to nonprofit organizations and public agencies at the national, regional, and local level for facility, capacity, and education projects. Priority is given to organizations that are directly involved in building coalitions for bicycling by collaborating the efforts of bicycle industry and advocacy groups. Requests are reviewed quarterly, please see the website each year for application deadlines and guidelines.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Transportation and Community Development Initiative Grants

The TCDI program is intended to assist in reversing the trends of disinvestment and decline in many of the region's core cities and first generation suburbs by:

- Supporting local planning projects that will lead to more residential, employment or retail opportunities;
- Improving the overall character and quality of life within these communities to retain and attract business and residents, which will help to reduce the pressure for further sprawl and expansion into the growing suburbs;
- Enhancing and utilizing the existing transportation infrastructure capacity in these areas to reduce the demands on the region's transportation network; and
- Reducing congestion and improving the transportation system's efficiency.

Information on their grants programs can be located at the DVRPC website http://www.dvrpc.org/planning/tcdi.htm

HGTV Restore America

HGTV Restore America is a partnership between the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Home & Garden Television (HGTV). Since 2003, HGTV Restore America has provided 36 grants to projects across America that highlight the work of preservation. HGTV has told the story of these sites through on-air and on-line content.

In 2006, HGTV Restore America will focus on the revitalization of places where people live, through grants for residential projects. Nonprofit organizations and public agencies are invited to apply for grants. Approximately 6 to 12 grants will be awarded for projects such as rehabilitation of single family residences...
or adaptive use of historic buildings for housing, creation of upper-floor apartments in Main Street communities, or restoration of Save America’s Treasures sites that continue to have a residential use.

Applications must be postmarked by November 30, 2005. To download the Restore America grant program guidelines and application form, go to http://www.nationaltrust.org/restore_america/ra_grants.html

**Home Depot Foundation**

The Home Depot Foundation was created in 2002 to further the community building goals of The Home Depot Company by providing additional resources to assist nonprofit organizations throughout the United States and Canada.

Just like The Home Depot, the Foundation relies on the participation of many corporate partners. Many of the vendors who help fill the company’s shelves are also contributing their dollars to help The Home Depot Foundation build better communities. These companies share our vision for stronger, healthier, more sustainable neighborhoods in all the communities we serve.

The Home Depot Foundation mission is to build affordable, efficient and healthy homes while promoting sustainability by supporting nonprofit organizations with funding and volunteers.

To better support its mission, The Home Depot Foundation will award most of its grants by directly soliciting proposals from high-performing nonprofit organizations with the demonstrated ability to create strong partnerships, impact multiple communities and leverage grant resources.

In order to identify potential future nonprofit partners or respond to unique community revitalization opportunities, a limited amount of funding is set aside to be awarded through a competitive process.

The Home Depot’s core purpose is to improve everything we touch, including the communities where we live and work. The Home Depot Foundation, The Home Depot and the many suppliers who contribute to the Foundation recognize the importance of giving back to our communities by engaging associates in meaningful volunteer activities. We believe it is a shared responsibility to enhance our communities and protect the environment. Preference will be given to grant requests that offer volunteerism opportunities and encourage community engagement.

Specifically, our Foundation supports organizations that have demonstrated success within one of the following program areas:

- Affordable Housing, Built Responsibly
- Healthy Community and Wild land Forests

For more information visit The Home Depot Foundation website: http://www.homedepotfoundation.org/

**Pew Charitable Trusts**

The Pew Charitable Trusts, based in Philadelphia, are a national philanthropy established 48 years ago. Through their grantmaking, the Trusts seek to encourage individual development and personal achievement, cross-disciplinary problem solving and innovative, practical approaches to meeting the changing needs of a global community. Each year, the Trusts make grants of about $180 million to between 400 and 500 nonprofit organizations in six areas: culture, education, environment, health and human services, public policy, and religion. In addition, the Venture Fund supports independent projects
outside of these six areas that take an interdisciplinary approach to broad issues of significant interest or concern.

In particular, the Culture program selectively supports programs for artists and cultural organizations in Philadelphia and has funded history interpretive programs—the Heritage Investment Program has provided technical assistance and challenge grants to historic sites in Philadelphia and the region, and the Philadelphia History Exhibitions Initiative has assisted Philadelphia-area history museums in producing high-quality, innovative exhibitions. Such programs could be used to fund interpretation of trail related historic resources and sites.

More information on the Pew Charitable Trusts grants programs is available in their website:
http://www.pewtrusts.com/grants/

Recreational Equipment Incorporated (REI) Conservation and Recreation Grants

REI’s giving program is employee driven. The process starts with the employee nomination of projects in which they are personally involved. Grant guidelines and applications are sent to nonprofit organizations based strictly on those nominations from our employees. REI targets support to nonprofits that have either conservation projects, or programs directly increasing access to and participation in responsible outdoor recreation. For this reason, we are unable to accept unsolicited requests for donations or sponsorships.

For more information about REI’s giving programs, please visit www.rei.com/aboutrei/gives02.html

Schuylkill River Heritage Area Corridor Grants

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area (SRHA) celebrates the unique and nationally significant cultural landscape of the Schuylkill River watershed and attempts to bring a variety of federal, state, local, and private resources to bear on the Heritage Area’s preservation, revitalization, and promotion.

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area provides grants to non-profit organizations and municipal and county governments to develop programs and projects that address SRHA’s five core goals—resource conservation (natural & cultural), education and interpretation, recreation, community revitalization, and heritage tourism— in unique, meaningful, and sustainable ways. Supported projects must satisfy at least one of the five goals and the most successful projects will incorporate multiple goals. Successful projects will also attempt to address the larger context in which their projects exist. The Schuylkill River Heritage Area Grant Program is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) through the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program (PHPP) and is administered in partnership with the National Park Service.

SRHA grants are available to organizations within its boundaries. The Schuylkill River Heritage Area is defined as the entire Schuylkill River watershed within Schuylkill, Berks, Chester, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties. While the Schuylkill River serves as the spine of the Heritage Area, the boundaries also include all of the river’s major tributaries and the lands that they drain.

SRHA Grants are awarded based upon the criteria laid out in the Schuylkill River Heritage Area Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, Living with the River, published in 2003. Living with the River is intended to guide programs and projects within the Schuylkill River watershed that encourage partnerships, establish linkages between sites and resources, work to build a regional identity, and help preserve a sense of place. The SRHA Management Plan is available in PDF format at www.schuylkillriver.org
Information on the SRHA Corridor Grant program is available at:
http://www.schuylkillriver.org/Grant_Information.aspx
choose the Acrobat file "2006 Heritage Area Grant Guidelines

The Surdna Foundation

This foundation is a national leader in funding greenway efforts and have funded the Florida Statewide Greenways Program. Surdna supports government, private and volunteer actions that produce a sustainable environment. They encourage the restoration of suburban and urban environments by public and community involvement in education, planning for and advocating environmental appreciation. One area of focus is alternative transportation, particularly reducing vehicle miles traveled and maximizing accessibility over mobility.

Information on their grants programs can be located at the Surdna website:
http://www.surdna.org/programs/

William Penn Foundation

The mission of the foundation is to improve the quality of life in the Philadelphia region through efforts that: strengthen our children’s future; foster rich cultural expression; and deepen our connections to nature and community. The foundation has provided substantial and consistent funding during the past few decades for greenway and trail planning and development in the Philadelphia area, including a bi-state greenway project on the Delaware River, greenways development along the Delaware and Raritan Canal, and funding for the Mid-Atlantic Coordinator position associated with the East Coast Greenway in Pennsylvania. Religious organizations, non-profits and government agencies are eligible applicants.

Information about the foundation’s Environment and Communities grants can be located at
http://www.wpennfdn.org
On the left click on Grant Center
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### Borough of Hamburg - Historic Hamburg
- **Priority Owner of Record**: K. Zwickl
- **Phone**: 610-462-7621
- **Meeting**: 2/20/2006
- **Owner/Agent/Contact**: Linda Allbright, Boro Manager
- **Note**: Canal below State St is in private ownership.

### Reading & Northern
- **Phone**: 610-562-2100
- **Meeting**: 2/8/2006
- **Owner/Agent/Contact**: Ed Heck, President, RBMN, Jim Raffa, Real Estate
- **Note**: Needs detailed map to evaluate and respond. See Conversation Record.

### Ontelaunee Township Gov't/Parks & Rec
- **Phone**: 610-926-4825
- **Meeting**: 2/7/2006
- **Owner/Agent/Contact**: Kenneth Stoudt (rec'd by A. Shollenberger)
- **Note**: Concerned about equestrian use on trails and condemnation of private property.

### Borough of Leesport
- **Phone**: 610-926-6105
- **Meeting**: 2/8/2006
- **Owner/Agent/Contact**: Council, engineer
- **Note**: SRGA's existing meadow violates weed ordinance, traffic conflicts.

### Other Major Agencies/Owners
- **DCNR**: TBA
- **Canal right-of-way owners**: TBA
- **Other Major Private Owners**: TBA

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### Borough of Hamburg - Historic Hamburg
- **Meeting**: 1/20/2006
- **Owner/Agent/Contact**: Linda Allbright, Boro Manager
- **Note**: Canal below State St is in private ownership.

### Reading & Northern
- **Meeting**: 2/8/2006
- **Owner/Agent/Contact**: Ed Heck, President, RBMN, Jim Raffa, Real Estate
- **Note**: Needs detailed map to evaluate and respond. See Conversation Record.

### Ontelaunee Township Gov't/Parks & Rec
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- **Owner/Agent/Contact**: Kenneth Stoudt (rec'd by A. Shollenberger)
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- **Meeting**: 2/8/2006
- **Owner/Agent/Contact**: Council, engineer
- **Note**: SRGA's existing meadow violates weed ordinance, traffic conflicts.

### Other Major Agencies/Owners
- **DCNR**: TBA
- **Canal right-of-way owners**: TBA
- **Other Major Private Owners**: TBA
January 2007

Mr. Robert P. Thomas, AIA
Project Manager
Campbell Thomas & Co.
1504 South Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146-1636

Reference: Schuylkill River Trail and Freedom Trail Project
Subject: Preliminary Site Investigation Report
STV Project No.: 30-12665

Dear Mr. Thomas:

STV is pleased to submit this letter report documenting limited site characterization activities and findings as related to preliminary investigation review of the proposed segments of the Schuylkill River Trail and Freedom Trail. This report details January 2006 field reconnaissance activities performed by STV. STV prepared this Draft Preliminary Site Investigation Report based on visual evaluation of potential hazardous waste materials and sites, along with non-intrusive review of suspected wetland areas along the selected trail route.

1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area is proposing to construct the Schuylkill River Trail and Freedom Trail (trail) along approximately twenty miles of the abandoned Schuylkill canal towpath, existing trail routes, and public and private roadways and properties. The trail will connect several existing trails and is considered a critical link to an inter-county trailway system. To meet this goal, project-specific environmental studies, preliminary and final right-of-way (ROW) planning, and acquisition of the abandoned towpath and private properties, have been initiated by the project planning committee.

STV conducted limited site characterization activities along the proposed trail during the month of January 2006. The purposes for performing field reconnaissance along the trail were to visually determine general locations of wetland complexes, and visually identify locations of potential hazardous wastes and/or waste generators. This report documents those activities and includes the methodology, implementation, results, findings, and recommendations. Using these data, the project planning committee can better evaluate the need for further studies and environmental clearance documentation, and their associated costs. This environmental
investigation will assist the project planning committee in making sound decisions regarding preliminary and final right-of-way planning and future pre-construction operations as they relate to potential hazardous waste materials and/or wetlands habitat found on or adjacent to the trail. STV walked or drove the length of the proposed trail in its entirety. Available mapping and aerial photography were utilized to document and record areas in the event of wetlands identification or hazardous materials observation. STV took note of varying topographic conditions and proximity to public and private roads and abutting private properties and businesses. Indicators of wetlands habitat and potentially hazardous materials were visually investigated and duly documented.

2.0 SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION

STV focused its environmental studies on a single preferred trail route identified and mapped by the project planning committee. Reconnaissance activities were limited to those features identified on lands within 100 feet of either side of the trail corridor centerline. STV collected current and past land use information to verify the potential of recognized environmental conditions as defined under Section 1.0; subparagraph 1.1.1 of ASTM E 1527-00 and reviewed secondary source information pertaining to the proposed trail corridor. These data sources included National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) wetland maps, geology maps, soils maps, and topographic maps as well as mapping supplied by Campbell Thomas & Co. (wetlands and floodplains aerial) to initiate characterization of the environmental setting along the proposed trail route. STV did not obtain project specific environmental database records.

STV did not collect physical samples of potentially hazardous soils or groundwater. Rather, field personnel conducted non-intrusive, visual reconnaissance for the presence of potential hazardous waste sites and/or hazardous waste generators along and adjacent to the proposed trail. Findings of the visual evaluation are documented in the following report. Further, wetland areas were identified based on a visual inspection of in-field conditions only.

3.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

The trail route traversed a mix of businesses, residential properties, and public and private land use areas. Miscellaneous debris and discarded materials were observed within the proposed ROW along several areas; further visual investigation revealed the majority of these to be a mix of wood, brick, empty drums, and other miscellaneous scrap material. The discarded, 55-gallon, metal drums appeared empty and were not labeled.

Electrical transformers pose an environmental concern when they contain PCB-laden dielectric oil. In the event of an accidental release, PCBs may enter subsurface soils and groundwater. During the site walk, STV did not identify any transformers whose condition would suggest existing environmental conditions are present along the proposed ROW. Photographs of the proposed trail ROW and abutting properties are found in Appendix B.
The following sites were identified as potential areas of concern for hazardous wastes or hazardous waste generators:

**Railroad Right-of-Way**

The proposed trail parallels and crosses historic (inactive) and existing (active) railroad rights-of-way. Numerous railroad ties were identified within the former and active rail beds. These ties may pose a potential environmental hazard, as railroad ties were traditionally treated with coal tar creosote. Exposure to coal tar creosote volatiles may be harmful to the public. STV also identified and documented the location of the Blue Mountain & Reading Railroad rail yard, adjacent to Route 61 in Hamburg, which contains numerous out-of-service train engines and freight and passenger cars. The trains had been located on the premises for an undetermined period of time; the majority of the trains appeared in a poorly maintained condition.

**Carpenter Technology**

Segments of the proposed trail traverse portions of the Carpenter Technology Corporation (Car Tech) property. STV is currently coordinating access agreements to allow a detailed inspection of the proposed trail route through the Car Tech property. USEPA public database records indicate that Car Tech is a known generator and user of numerous hazardous chemical compounds and manufacturing byproduct materials. This report will be duly updated per future correspondence to reflect site visits or interviews with Car Tech personnel.

**‘Embankment’**

Project planning committee personnel were provided the location of buried lead battery casings adjacent to the trail route. Interviews with adjacent property owners revealed the approximate vicinity and linear extent of the buried casings which, according to interviewees, had been historically used as fill material to create an embankment adjacent to the trail. Site characterization activities as to include soils and groundwater sampling within proximal areas of suspected lead battery casings may be recommended.

**Recommendations**

Based upon the findings of the existing conditions assessment conducted along the proposed Schuylkill River Trail and Freedom Trail ROW, the following recommendations are offered.

Conduct detailed wetlands delineation in accordance with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) 1987 Wetlands Delineation Manual to determine the presence of jurisdictional wetlands within and adjacent to the proposed ROW. Impacts to project area wetlands are regulated by Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) and USACE through appropriate coordination and permitting processes. Impacts to wetlands will require permitting with these agencies.

Investigations of several existing and former business operations, specifically those operations which historically supported the former railroad, may be required. More thorough site
STV Incorporated

Investigation activities to include a complete on-the-ground site walk are recommended to further characterize trail conditions with respect to the presence or absence of uncontrolled hazardous wastes or waste generators. Additional corridor investigation findings may result in the conclusion that soil sampling activities are warranted in selected areas. The results of these additional project area characterizations will further enable the project planning committee to make sound decisions regarding cost estimates for trail development and ROW activities.

4.0 LIMITATIONS

This report has been prepared for the sole use of Campbell Thomas & Company, and its assignees. Varying amounts of professional judgment and opinion were required of STV’s environmental professionals during review of the proposed trail right-of-way conditions and development of conclusions and recommendations. In view of the dynamic nature of environmental laws, regulations, standards, and guidelines, STV’s opinions and recommendations are based on site conditions at the time of this investigation and do not apply to future project area land use changes or other past site conditions of which STV is unaware.

No environmental site assessment can completely eliminate uncertainty regarding the potential for recognized environmental conditions on a property; therefore, STV cannot “certify” the entire project area is free of environmental contamination. STV performed this investigation in a manner consistent with the customary thoroughness and competence exercised by environmental and engineering consulting professionals currently practicing in the same locality under similar conditions.

If you have any questions or need additional information or would like to discuss the above recommendations in further detail, please call me at 610-385-8355 or Mr. Steve Sottung at 610-385-8262.

Sincerely,

Peter M. Gaskins
Environmental Scientist
STV Incorporated
COMMUNITY POINTS OF INTEREST

Schuylkill River Trail
Reading - Hamburg & Freedom Trail

Historical Sites
Fire Station
Police Station
Nursing Home
Trail
Road

Airport
School
Hospital
Railroad
Recreation Facilities
Municipal Boundary

1 inch = 1,000 feet
HISTORIC RESOURCES OF IMPORTANCE TO THE TRAIL CORRIDOR

DESIGNATION AS A NATIONAL AND STATE HERITAGE AREA
A National Heritage Area is a place designated by the United States Congress where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape. The Schuylkill River received this designation from Congress in 2000. The Schuylkill River watershed was designated a Pennsylvania Heritage Area by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources in 1995. National & State Heritage Areas work to revitalize and restore the region through natural and cultural resource preservation, education, recreation, community revitalization, and heritage tourism.

HISTORIC TOWN CENTERS ALONG THE TRAIL
The town center of Leesport, Shoemakersville, and Hamburg contain numerous historic structures and streets, and make for important stopping points along the Schuylkill River Trail. Please see more discussion under Section I-D, Benefits of the Trail.

REMAINS OF THE SCHUYLKILL CANAL

Locks
- Herbine's Lock, south of Leesport
- Peacock Lock (private land)
- Kelly's Lock, now a park in Muhlenberg Twp.
- Frick's Lock, now a park in Muhlenberg Twp.

Lock Keeper's Houses
- Leesport Lock House - The house was built in 1834 and restored to 1880-1910 period. It is located on South Wall Street at Lock #36.
- Daubersville Lock House - Now a private home.
- Fire Locks Lock House - Now a private home.
- House in a Lock - Shoemakersville house built into a lock.

In addition, much of the former canal prism is still visible, although overgrown. Also visible are several stone culverts in poor condition.

REMAINS OF THE UNION CANAL

Union Canal Bicycle and Walking Trail
http://www.co.berks.pa.us/parks/cwp/view.asp?a=1229&q=448192&parksNav=|

The Union Canal was 79 1/2 miles in length and ran from Reading on the Schuylkill River to Middletown on the Susquehanna River. The Union Canal's first engineer, William Weston, copied the narrow and shallow construction methods used in building canals in his native England. The canal, completed in 1827 at a cost of over six million dollars, was never an economic success because of the reluctance of boatmen to use the narrow channel and locks. Near the confluence of the Tulpehocken Creek and the Schuylkill River (below Stonecliffe), a
weigh station was built adjacent to lock No. 52 E. to determine the net weight of the cargo transported by the barge liable for a toll charge. The average toll assessed was 1 1/2 to 2 cents per ton per mile (1830).

Stops along the trail include:

- Stonecliffe Recreation Area on land that formerly was Gring's limestone quarry (late 19th to 20th century)
- Kissinger Homestead & Blacksmith Shop (1867)
- Mule Bridge & Lock #51 E
- Fisher Homesteads (1843 and 1861) and Waste Culvert
- Grigg's Mill (1811) and Homestead - The barn (1896) has been converted into a visitor's center while the stone house (1831) serves as the County Parks and Recreation department offices.
- Lock No. 49 E. - one of the 93 stone lift locks on the Union Canal.
- Site of J.B. Winter's Grist Mill
- Berks County Heritage Center
- Lock No. 48 E
- Van Reed Property - This was the location, until 1964, of Van Reed's Covered Bridge, a 144 foot single-spanned covered bridge crossed the Tulpehocken Creek. It was severely damaged in 1959 and removed five years later.
- Lock No. 47 E - In 1976, this lift lock received restoration efforts including stonework realignment and installation of four new yellow pine miter gates.
- Reber's Mill and Bridge - In 1951, the steel highway bridge which spans the creek today replaced Reber's Covered Bridge (1837), which was 129 feet in length. This bridge provided access to Reber's Grist Mill,

REMAINS OF THE READING RAILROAD

The Reading Company Technical & Historical Society (RCT&HS)
http://www.readingrailroad.org/

The Reading Company Technical & Historical Society (RCT&HS), was incorporated July 16, 1976 to preserve the rich history of a pioneering railroad. As an all-volunteer, non-profit, educational corporation, the RCT&HS is a repository for knowledge, artifacts, and memorabilia related to keeping alive the memory of one of America's greatest transportation institutions. Now over 25 years old, the Society is composed of about 1000 members in many areas of the USA and even abroad.

As the Society grew it worked to preserve the history of the railroad in many ways, including an archival collection of Reading Company documents, blueprints, rolling stock, equipment and locomotives. Until 1988 its collection was housed at the locomotive shops in Reading, Pa. When the owners of the building wouldn’t renew the lease the collection was relocated to Leesport, Pa. along the Blue Mountain &Reading Railroad right-of-way.

Beginning in 2000, the Society began planning for a larger permanent museum site to display its unique collection. Meetings were held with paid consultants and goals were established. A plan has emerged from these sessions to develop a three fold approach. An anchor site would be created at South Hamburg, Pa. using existing former industrial buildings. Two satellite sites would also be developed, one at Temple, PA and the other at Schuylkill Haven, PA. These additional sites would benefit the museum plan by adding additional
storage/display space and provide destinations for possible excursion train operations from South Hamburg.

The noted Peacock Bridge, built by the Reading Railroad carried the railroad across the Schuylkill River from Bern Township to Muhlenberg Township. It now carries the tracks of the Reading and Northern, and is in daily use.

REMAINS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD

- Shoemakersville Train Station has been beautifully restored, and is now in private ownership.
- Also extant are numerous girder bridges and stone culverts, still in occasional use.

BRIDGES

- Old US Route 22 Bridge, Hamburg
- Five Locks Bridge
- Leesport Bridge
- former location of Stouts Ferry Bridge
- former Leiscz's Bridge, two piers remain, should be rebuilt to cross the Schuylkill as a bridge for non-motorized use.
- Schuylkill Avenue Bridge, Reading
- Buttonwood Street Bridge, Reading

LAKE ONTELAUNEE

http://www.berkscountyweb.com/LakeOntelaunee.htm
Lake Ontelaunee is a 1,082 acre lake owned by the City of Reading. The Lake is located in Berks County along State Route 73 approximately 8 miles north of the center of the City of Reading. The Lake was developed in 1926 to extend and improve the water supply of the City of Reading by damming Maiden Creek. Since that time the Lake has become a favorite hunting and fishing location. No boats are allowed on this Lake, all fishing is from the lake shore, and it is a day use only facility, no overnight camping allowed. There are many access points to the water and several excellent trails around the Lake. Most warm water fish are plentiful in Lake Ontelaunee. In the fall and spring the Lake becomes a favorite resting place for waterfowl and songbirds migrating along the North Atlantic Flyway. In the winter this is one of the hot spots for ice fishing. Picnic areas and rest rooms facilities are available at several locations around the Lake. Its bridges, spillway, and control structures are of historical architectural and engineering. interest.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

To be enjoyed is a 300-year old landscape with associated residences, barns and outbuildings of local materials, including sandstone and limestone
BERKS COUNTY HERITAGE CENTER
http://www.berksmuseums.org/heritage/
http://www.co.berks.pa.us/parks

The Berks County Heritage Center is a historical interpretive complex commemorating important eras of the county's cultural history. The Heritage Center is located on Red Bridge Road off Route 183 one mile north of the Reading Regional Airport and a quarter-mile south of the intersection of Route 183 and new Route 222. It may also be accessed via the Union Canal Bicycle and Walking Trail.

It is open from May 1 through the last Sunday in October. The hours are Tuesday - Saturday, 10-4, and Sunday 12-5 as well as summer holidays. Tours are available daily; the last tour leaves one hour before closing. The Heritage Center's main event, the annual Heritage Festival, is held the first full weekend in October.

The Heritage Center includes:

**The Reeser Farm House & Herb and Salad Garden**

  This well-built vernacular stone farm house serves as an information center, as well as the offices for the Heritage Center Interpretive Services, Recreation, and Park Rangers staffs. The house was built by Abraham Reeser after he bought the land in 1774. The 55-acre farm was owned and operated by various families until being sold to the county in 1978. The Herb and Salad Garden shows a typical part of farm life brought to America by the Europeans. Only herbs and vegetables grown in the early 1800’s are planted here.

**The Gruber Wagon Works**

  The Gruber Wagon Works survives as one of the most complete examples of an integrated rural manufactory of its kind in the nation. Erected in 1882 by Franklin H. Gruber, the wagon works evolved from a single craftsman shop, having a variety of specialized hand tools, into a family-operated business which employed up to 20 men who utilized mass-production methods. Unlike a modern assembly process, wagon parts were transported back and forth between various rooms in order to complete a segment of the work.

  Wagon wheels were constructed in the bench shop, and wooden parts of the wagon were made from patterns in the wood shop. Wheels were "tired" and wagons were "ironed" and assembled in the blacksmith shop. The distinctive striping and scrollwork were applied by hand in the paint shop.

  During the winter of 1976-77, the Gruber Wagon Works was moved by the Army Corps of Engineers from its original location near Mt. Pleasant. Plans called for the creation of Blue Marsh Lake to reduce flooding downstream along the Tulpehocken Creek and the Schuylkill River. Its construction required the flooding of low-lying areas along the Tulpehocken, including the original sites of the Gruber Wagon Works and Deppen Cemetery.

  Tulpehocken means "land of the turtle" in the language of the Lenni Lenape, the Native Americans who lived in this region before its settlement by Europeans. The turtle holds a special place in Lenape beliefs, as they believed that the land of the world was on the back of a giant turtle. Attesting to its name, turtles can often be found along the edges of the Tulpehocken Creek and in the remains of the Union Canal.
In 1978, the wagon works was designated as a National Historical Landmark by the United States Government, commemorating its historic significance as an industry from a bygone era of American craftsman.

Howard Hiester Canal Center

Through an extensive inventory including artifacts from the Schuylkill Navigation Company and the Hiester Boatyard, the C. Howard Hiester Canal Center presents a coherent story of canal transportation. It displays this country's early growth and specifically the important contribution the canal system made to the history of Berks County.

Canals saw their rise and fall in the 19th century. They offered means of bulk transportation and travel in the era prior to railroads when the only alternative to walking was the horse and wagon.

Mr. Hiester gathered as many artifacts and representative items as possible from that section of the Schuylkill Canal between Reading and Philadelphia. He accumulated a wealth of memorabilia that might otherwise have been lost. This included the houseboat "Mildred," which plied the Schuylkill Canal between Reading and Philadelphia, a toll collection booth, and a pilot house from the tugboat "Dolphin."

The end result was that Mr. Hiester had acquired the largest private collection of 19th century canal memorabilia in America. Through the efforts of one man, we have the opportunity to view the most extensive private collection of a former era.

Wertz's (Red) Bridge

Wertz's Covered Bridge, also known as the Red Bridge, is the longest single-span bridge remaining in Pennsylvania. It was erected in 1867 using the Burr Arch-Truss construction design. In 1979, the bridge was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. It stretches 204 feet across the Tulpehocken Creek, connecting Bern and Spring Townships. Although no longer in use for regular traffic, it is capable of being used and is available for emergency vehicles.

Melcher's Grist Mill

Melcher's Grist Mill, moved to the Heritage Center from Bally, PA was built in 1888. A water-powered mill, it was designed to be used only by the inhabitants of the farm on which it was, which was unusual.

Deppen Cemetery

Originally located south of Route 183, near Mt. Pleasant, the Deppen Cemetery began as a family burial ground. Known locally as "the Catholic Cemetery", the first known burial was in 1808, while the last was in 1905.

Prior to the construction of Blue Marsh Lake an extensive search was conducted. Sixty-eight graves were found at the original site; but only 36 of these were identifiable. Some of the unidentified bodies are believed to be the 20 to 30 Irish laborers who died of "swamp" or "canal" fever during the building of the Union Canal.

The descendants of the people buried there were offered the chance to have these remains moved to the Heritage Center ground. They agreed and in the summer of 1978, the Army Corps of Engineers unearthed the bodies and reinterred them in the field near the Gruber Wagon Works. The bodies were placed in the same relative positions that they had been before and the new burial ground was consecrated.
The Distlefink (outdoor sculpture)

The Distlefink is an example of Pennsylvania Dutch art. When the early German immigrants arrived at their new homes in Pennsylvania, they identified the small field finch found here with a similar European bird call the Distlefink, which translates to *thistle finch*.

Folk art that grew out of that period used motifs common to the everyday lives of the “artists”. Flowers, fruit, animals, and birds were used to decorate all manner of furniture, tools, and records kept on paper within the German community. The Distlefink, a happy, bright bird was a popular choice, and came to represent happiness and good luck.

As the folk art movement spread to other communities, the Distlefink was represented in different proportions and colorations; this design and color has been researched as authentic of the early versions.
## Parcel Ownership - Schuylkill River Trail

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PROPERTY OWNERSHIP Sheet 2 of 4
Scale: 1”=2000'+/-'
Parcel Ownership - Freedom Trail West

for list of owners see Sheet 4

PARCEL OWNERSHIP Sheet 3 of 4
Scale: 1"=2000'+/-

Parcel Ownership - Freedom Trail West

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Parcel Ownership - Schuylkill River Trail

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Parcel ownership for Muhlenberg Township and the City of Reading follows on the next page.
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Schuylkill River Walk Public Meeting
Story posted on 2005-10-11 22:58:00

\ WALKING FROM POTTS TOWN TO SCHUYLKILL COUNTY SOON MAY NOT BE AS HARD AS YOU MIGHT THINK.

MEMBERS OF THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER GREENWAY ASSOCIATION GATHERED TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING SUCH A TRAIL A REALITY.

THE GREENWAY ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN A MAJOR PROponent OF THUN TRAIL.

THUN TRIAL STRETCHES BETWEEN SCHUYLKILL COUNTY AND PHILADELPHIA. A MAJOR COMPONENT OF THE REVITALIZATION PROJECT IS SMALLER SEGMENTS WITHIN THE TRAIL.

THE MEETING WAS HELD TO HEAR PUBLIC OPINION ON CONNECTING READING TO HAMBURG.

PARTS CONNECTING POTTS TOWN TO READING AND HAMBURG TO SCHUYLKILL COUNTY ARE EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETE IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

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Trail builders asked to keep natural character of area
Most of the 30 residents at a public meeting about the Schuylkill River and Fi
trails say they support the projects.

By Rebecca VanderMeulen
Reading Eagle
Planners working on two proposed recreational trails in Berks County should make sure they maintain the area's natural character, residents said Tuesday night.

Residents gave their comments on the projects at a meeting in the Berks County Agricultural Center in Bern Township.

Most of the 30 people who attended supported the projects.

"I'd love to go out in my backyard and just jump on," said Jay M. Blankenbiller of Centre Township.

One of his concerns was whether there would be adequate restrooms along the trails.

One of the trails would be part of the Schuylkill River Trail, which eventually would run from Pottsville to Philadelphia.

The other is the Freedom Trail, a 65-mile horse, bicycle and jogging trail that would run I and around Blue Marsh Lake and Lake Ontelaunee.

Some wondered whether living near the trail would make them vulnerable to crime.

Freedom Trail Association President Percy A. Satoris III said some landowners along the proposed route had similar concerns.

"The typical type thing people would ask is, 'Am I going to have a bunch of people walking in my backyard?' " he said. "Nobody comes on a horse or bicycle to steal your TV."

Those planning the Schuylkill River Trail are in the early stages of plotting its 20-mile path between Reading and Hamburg.
Both groups are working together on their projects, and the trails will probably intersect.

"We're still looking at what the best alignment would be," said Philadelphia architect Cha Brenton, who is working on the Schuylkill River Trail.

Residents' opinions are important in deciding where the trails should go, said Philadelphia architect Robert P. Thomas, who is planning the Schuylkill River Trail.

"You could live right off (Route) 61 and think, 'That's a great trail, but my kids would get crossing 61 to get to it,'" he said.

Officials plan to ask landowners to grant easements that would allow both trails to be built.

"It's not our intent to come in and steal anyone's property," said Freedom Trail Associates member David L. Waibel of Bern Township.

Resident James C. Collens of Bern Township pointed out a popular fishing area along the Schuylkill River near Cross Keys Road.

He said he would like that spot integrated into the trail system as a park.

Other residents said they would like the trails to connect to the Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad.

It would also be good to have maps of local businesses available when the trail nears a resident's property.

Wayne S. Gordon of Centre Township said he was concerned about parking along the trail because people have blocked his driveway during the annual Schuylkill River Sojourn.

Thomas said parking lots would probably be located near recreation facilities or population centers.

Schuylkill River Heritage Area representatives said it's too soon to tell how much the Schuylkill River Trail will cost or when it will be done.

Satoris expects the Freedom Trail to cost $6 million to build, he has said.

Thomas said another public meeting on the trails is likely this winter.

Contact reporter Rebecca VanderMeulen at 610-371-5015 or rvandermeulen@readingeagle.com.

Have an idea?

Anyone with ideas about the features that should be included in the Schuylkill River Trail should contact Madeline A. Cantu, an architect with the Schuylkill River Heritage Area, at 484-9 or mcantu@schuylkillriver.org.

Tour the trail

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area will conduct a tour of the proposed Schuylkill River Trail between Reading and Hamburg on Sunday from 1 to 3 p.m. The tour will begin and end at Shoemakersville train station at Main and Canal streets in Shoemakersville.
The Freedom Trail Association was originally started in 1999 under the name of Epler Heritage Trail. In December of 2002, the Freedom Trail Association was formed and the scope of the Epler Heritage Trail was modified to include the development of a horse and carriage and/or wagon trail along the Schuylkill River Greenway.

The Freedom Trail is the vision of a group of Bern Township area citizens who have formed a non-profit corporation known as Freedom Trail, Inc. Their primary mission is to establish a multi-use non-motorized trail system in the Schuylkill River valley that will accommodate horse drawn carriages.

The initial phase of the construction is a trail from the Blue Marsh Lake, Bernville along the Schuylkill River to the Maiden Creek and onto Lake Ontelaunee. The second phase would connect this segment with the Reading Riverplace Development area and subsequently the trail will be expanded up and down the Schuylkill River until completed. Many trail off shoots can also be constructed to create loop trails and staging areas for horse and wagon loading and unloading, including the county fairgrounds that could be accessed via County Welfare Road, as pictured above.
Before there's a trail, there's a trek

Some outdoor enthusiasts spend part of Sunday in Shoemakersville, scouting out a possible path for a portion of the planned Schuylkill River Trail.

By Rebecca VanderMeulen
Reading Eagle

About 10 hikers, canoeists and bicyclists toured part of a proposed recreational trail near Shoemakersville on Sunday afternoon.

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area is working to set up the 136-mile Schuylkill River Trail between Pottsville and Philadelphia.

The group now is working on the Reading-to-Hamburg Development Study to determine the path that a 20-mile section of the trail would take between the two municipalities.

"It's a work in progress," said Madeline A. Cantú, an architect with the Schuylkill River Heritage Area.

Robert P. Thomas, a Philadelphia architect working on the trail, said preliminary maps should be drawn by the spring. It is not known when the trail will be complete or how much it will cost.

Thomas said old canal beds, such as those from the Schuylkill Canal that used to run through Shoemakersville, would be good for the trail because they are wide and flat.

But, pointing out a house in the canal bed, he said the trail could also deviate from the canal's path.

The trail even could follow a borough street, just as the Appalachian Trail runs through Port Clinton, Schuylkill County, he said. That would give trail users a chance to explore the town or get a meal, he said.

"Coming through towns is one of the things you want to do," Thomas said. "Towns are where you have the concentration of historic buildings."

Thomas pointed out an old service station, a Schuylkill Canal lock house and an old textile mill as examples of such buildings in Shoemakersville.

Resident Amy L. Botwright, who said she has walked every inch of the borough, said the trail would give local people something else to do as well as draw visitors.

"I think we really need something like this in town," she said. "People don't come to Shoemakersville because they don't think there's anything here."

Thomas also led the group through farmers' fields and woods near the Schuylkill River in Perry Township.

Diane L. Paxson of Upper Tulpehocken Township, a member of the Berks Community Hiking Club, said the Schuylkill River Trail's length would make it enjoyable to hike.

"It'll be nice," Paxson said, "to have something that doesn't just go from here to there."

Contact reporter Rebecca VanderMeulen at 610-371-5015 or rvandermeulen@readingeagle.com.
Trail builders asked to keep natural character of area

Most of the 30 people at a public meeting about the Schuylkill River and Freedom trails say they support the projects.

Planners working on two proposed recreational trails in Berks County should make sure they maintain the area’s natural character, residents said Tuesday night.

Residents gave their comments on the projects at a meeting in the Berks County Agricultural Center in Bern Township.

Most of the 30 people who attended supported the projects.

“I’d love to go out in my backyard and just jump on,” said Jay M. Blankenbiller of Centre Township.

One of his concerns was whether there would be adequate restrooms along the trails.

One of the trails would be part of the Schuylkill River Trail, which eventually would run 136 miles from Pottsville to Philadelphia.

The other is the Freedom Trail, a 65-mile horse, bicycle and jogging trail that would run between and around Blue Marsh Lake and Lake Ontelaune.

Some wondered whether living near the trail would make them vulnerable to crime.

Freedom Trail Association President Percey A. Satoris III said some landowners along that trail’s proposed route had similar concerns.

“The typical type thing people would ask is, ‘Am I going to have a bunch of people walking through my backyard?’” he said. “Nobody comes on a horse or bicycle to steal your TV.”

Those planning the Schuylkill River Trail are in the early stages of putting its 20-mile path between Reading and Hamburg.

Both groups are working together on their projects, and the trails will probably intersect.

“We’re still looking at what the best alignment would be,” said Philadelphia architect Charles P. Brenton, who is working on the Schuylkill River Trail.

Residents’ opinions are important in deciding where the trails should go, said Philadelphia architect Robert P. Thomas, who is planning the Schuylkill River Trail.

“You could live at the tourist attractions and think, ‘That’s a great trail, but my kids would get killed crossing 61 to get to it,’” he said.

Officials plan to ask landowners to grant easements that would allow both trails to be built.

“It’s not our intent to come in and steal anyone’s property,” said Freedom Trail Association member David L. Waibel of Bern Township.

Resident James C. Ciffla of Bern Township pointed out a popular fishing spot.

Have an idea?

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get to it,” he said.

Before the hearing, Bucci of Ugarte’s first case in which moved from the site in Exeter, Assistant District Attorney requested a long sentence.

“These animals don’t have a soul. How many dogs have a soul before we put a stop to Ugarte’s activities, John T. Bucci said. The dogfighting sentence is mandatory five to 10 years.” Bucci said. The dogfighting sentence will be five to 10 years, but the defendant has been convicted for drug convictions.

The defendant is obstinate and wants to turn his life around, Bucci said. The defendant is considered a life sentence.

“Tsk, tsk,” he said.

According to court record, the defendant was convicted of auto theft in 2000.

An escaped pit bull bites three dogs in Womelsdorf. B2

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For the good that needs assistance and the wrong that needs resistance

OPINION

www.readingeagle.com | READING EAGLE | WEDNESDAY October 19, 2005

Hitting the trails in Berks

Berks County is fast becoming a haven for hiking enthusiasts. To the vast network of trails that already lace the area, two more are soon to be added.

One of the trails will extend 20 miles along the Schuylkill River between Hamburg and Reading. It's part of the Schuylkill River Trail, which eventually will run all the way to Philadelphia.

The other, to be called the Freedom Trail, will be 65 miles long and meander around and between Blue Marsh Lake and Lake Ontelaune. In addition to hikers, it will accommodate horseback riders, bicyclists and joggers.

The exact route of the trails has not been determined and won't be until the concerns of the residents along the proposed paths are taken into consideration.

But, while there are some concerns, such as hikers cutting across private property and the availability of restrooms, many residents welcome the idea.

"I'd love to go out in my backyard and just jump on (a trail)," said Jay M. Blankenbiller of Centre Township.

Hiking trails provide exercise and a chance to commune with nature. And for people and businesses thinking of locating in Berks County, they are part of what makes this area special.

Robert L. Shuman
Womelsdorf

Cost for schools must be shared

Editor:

Apparantly Act 72, which calls for using tax revenue from slot machines to fund schools and reduce property taxes, will not benefit anyone for a few years, if ever.

The recent drablae involving a political connection between a company contracted to supply computer control systems for slot machines

Bill Press

Bush fails

Not even Bush's loyal supporters trust him about a totally unknown conservative — especially when

John McCaslin

GOP women

How dare Bush suggest that anyone support Miers simply because she's an evangelical? Has he ever

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fulfilled consense have worked hard themselves on th
Berks to pony up on equine industry

By MELINDA RIZZO
Business Journal Correspondent

Horses may draw more tourists to Berks

Berks County wants to be known as horse country and is cantering up to the gate, challenging longtime Chester County as the reigning horse capital of southeastern Pennsylvania. According to the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service located in State College, horses represent a statewide $10 billion per year industry and most equine dollars are not settled on a select few.

"In Pennsylvania we have 259,000 horses, and most people in the industry are not making large amounts of money..."
EQUINE

Continued from page 1

ey. They're in the business because they love the lifestyle and they love horses and open countryside,” says Dr. Ann Swinker, an extension service horse specialist and spokeswoman.

There were 212 horse farms in 1996 throughout the Commonwealth, according to the Penn State 1997 Agriculture Census. Swinker says that number has grown.

According to the Berks Equine Council Web site, about 40 percent of the county's 564 square miles are dedicated to farming. Agribusiness is the number one industry in Berks with 1,586 farmers and 1,200 agricultural related job titles for more than 30,000 workers.

While horses are big business in Berks, the equine industry might be the best-kept secret in the region.

In addition to existing horse farming operations, Berks could become the next centerpiece location for thoroughbred racehorses. According to Sarah Reese, president of the Berks Equine Council, the success and allure of Smarty Jones has dispelled the magic of Kentucky as the only worthy thoroughbred producing state in the nation. “Even if they are bred elsewhere — like Kentucky, if a foal lands on Pennsylvania soil, is born here and takes its first wobbly steps here, it’s a native Pennsylvanian,” Reese says.

It didn’t hurt Smarty Jones’ reputation that his owners were regular guys and not equine royalty. “Everyone was able to identify with Smarty Jones and his owner, and I think that only added to a

and trap rides.

Percy A. “Buzz” Satoris III of Bern Township, a member of the Berks Equine Council, offers carriage and horse and buggy rides and is part of the group creating the new Freedom Trail. “This trail would be the largest of its kind east of the Mississippi,” Satoris says.

The scenic Freedom Trail is routed along the Lake Ontelaunee Trail. Visitors can rent horses or bring their own and enjoy a leisurely clip clop toward Blue Marsh Lake, the trail gently winding and ultimately ending at the Schuylkill River.

For those looking for down home equine fun and exercise, Charming Creek Farm in Robesonia advertises an open door policy where visitors are welcome. Riding trails are located on the farm’s 80 acres and the farm hosts pleasure drives, poker drives, clinics, trail rides and open barn events.

“Charming Creek Farm is a great example of a thriving horse farm,” Reese says.

Tracey Krause, barn manager of Passport Farms in Oley, prepares to bring Legend in from the field. Legend is a 10-year-old Oldenbarg dressage horse owned by Allen and Carol Stevens.
Reese says yearling Pennsylvania thoroughbreds can command $1 million, and have the potential to gain cachet among racing enthusiasts. "Sales for a thoroughbred racehorse here can start at $1 million," Reese says.

Swink says goods and services associated with horses including feed, gear, clothing, farmland, housing and transportation, easily swell an area's economic revenue.

"We have two of the largest horse-hauling businesses located here in Berks. We're in a prime position geographically to Newark Liberty International Airport for European horses coming into the country. After they break quarantine, Berks businesses are transporting them across the country and to a variety of racetracks in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware," Reese says.

The Berks Equine Council, made up of equine Berks County professionals, wants to take the agriculture trade into the saddle and grow the notion of conventional horse farming. A byproduct of healthy farming communities keeps the region's rural landscape intact. "For farmers to survive today and to continue to be competitive, they have to think outside of the conventional box," Reese says.

Horse-themed vacations and a Devon Horse Show event in Berks County could attract more tourists to the area, says Reading and Berks County Visitors Bureau President Crystal Seitz. "The Berks Equine Council is coming together to attractively market our area, which has a huge horse population, to those outside Berks," Seitz says.

In addition to land and farm preservation, Seitz says she believes adding horses as a destination for those interested in visiting Berks would also boost the area's agricultural business economy. Seitz says finding ways to stay viable in the farming industry becomes more challenging each year with development pressure and rising equipment costs. Land values, taxation and other issues facing small family-owned farms make farming a risky lifestyle.

"What becomes challenging is finding ways to make farms more profitable and diversified," Seitz says.

Providing choices to equine tourist enthusiasts visiting Berks is part of the mission of the Berks Equine Council. Currently under construction is a public trail with entry and exit loops allowing access to more than 65 miles of trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding and horse carriage, buggy

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