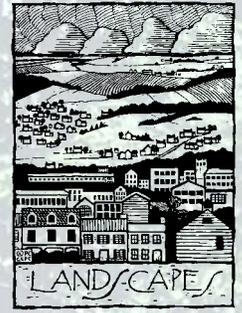
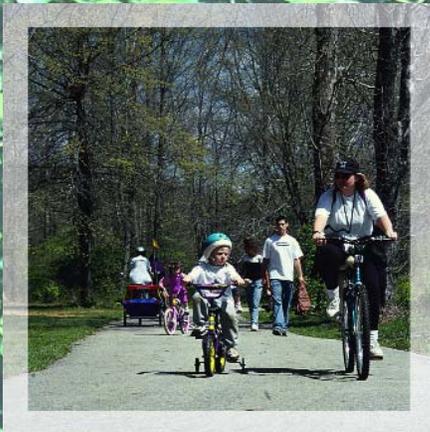
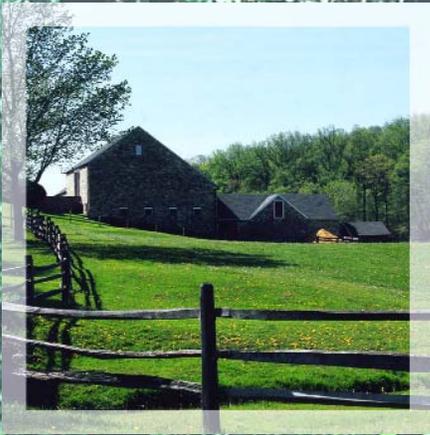


Linking LANDSCAPES

A Component of



A Plan for the Protected Open Space Network in Chester County, PA



September 2002

Linking Landscapes Follows the Policies of Landscapes

Linking Landscapes is an element of the County Comprehensive Plan

Linking Landscapes: A Plan for the Protected Open Space Network in Chester County, PA is a component of the overall Chester County Comprehensive Plan and follows the policies set forth in *Landscapes: Managing Change in Chester County 1996-2020*, which is the Policy Element of the County Comprehensive Plan.

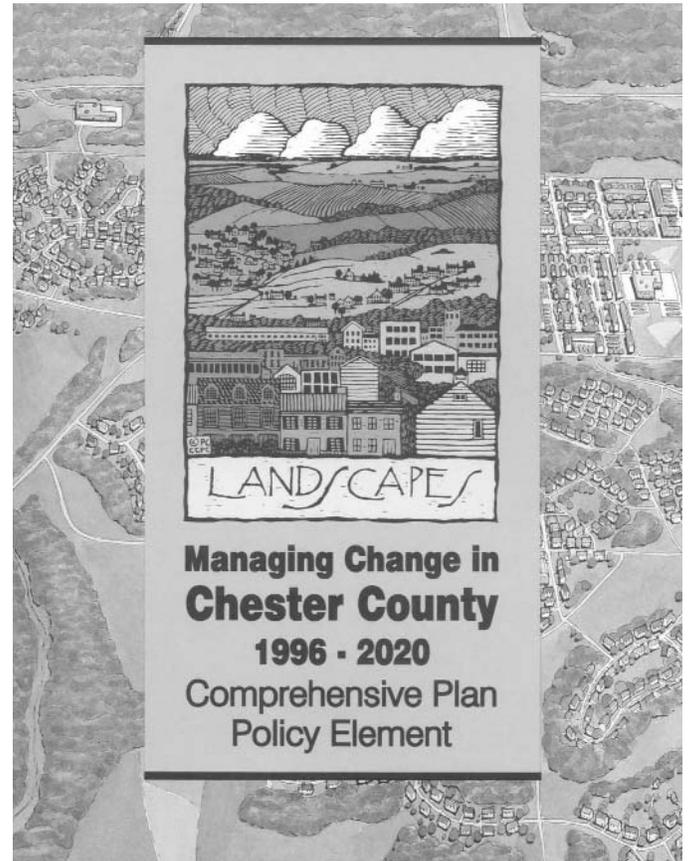
Linking Landscapes was written by the staff of the Chester County Planning Commission in close coordination with the County Parks and Recreation Department. The first draft was completed in January 2001 after a two-year work effort. This draft was then reviewed by a committee representing the public, municipal officials, the business community and experts in the field of open space planning.

In October 2001, a draft of *Linking Landscapes* was submitted to each of the County's 73 municipalities for a 45-day review. A total of five public meetings were also held throughout the County during this time.

In January 2002, *Linking Landscapes* was revised based on public and municipal comments. On February 26, 2002 *Linking Landscapes* was presented at a public hearing and adopted by the County Commissioners as the Open Space Element of the Chester County Comprehensive Plan.

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Board of County Commissioners

Karen L. Martynick, Chairman
Colin A. Hanna
Andrew E. Dinniman

About the maps in this publication

The maps in this publication were generated from data compiled by the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC) of Chester County, PA. These maps are provided for reference purposes only and should not be used for any detailed engineering purposes. The CCPC and Chester County make no claims as to the completeness, accuracy, or currency of the maps or the digital data and files used to generate the maps.

Not All Open Space is "Protected" Open Space

Keeping and developing open space

By Linda Slat
 Most of the 1,000,000 acres of open space in Chester County are not protected. The Planning Commission is studying ways to protect the remaining open space. The commission is studying ways to protect the remaining open space. The commission is studying ways to protect the remaining open space.



The farmland on West Philadelphia Township is one of the largest lots in the county.

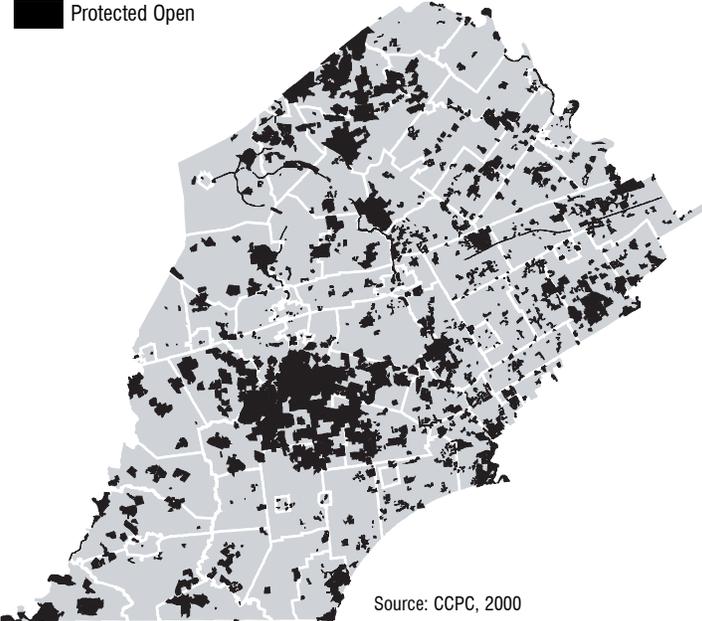
Planning to preserve open space through large lots and restrictions

By Linda Slat
 Large lots and restrictions are being used to preserve open space. The commission is studying ways to protect the remaining open space. The commission is studying ways to protect the remaining open space.



Jordan plans 20 houses on large lots on the West Philadelphia Township.

Protected Open Space in Chester County



Source: CCPC, 2000

The focus of Linking Landscapes is "Protected" open space

The Planning Commission estimates that roughly 5,000 acres of land are developed in Chester County every year, most of which is former farmland, and this rate is likely to continue. Fortunately roughly 15% of the County was "Protected Open Space" in 2000 as shown on the map above. "Protected Open Space," as defined in *Linking Landscapes* is:

"Land and water areas that have little or no development; are used for recreation or preserving cultural or natural resources, including productive agricultural soils; and are protected either permanently or on a long term basis."

The main focus of *Linking Landscapes* is "protected" open spaces, because they are the only open lands in the County that are certain to remain undeveloped over the long term. Given the pace of development in Chester County, it was essential for *Linking Landscapes* to be a plan for permanently protecting open spaces, and not simply an inventory of open lands that could easily be developed in the coming years.

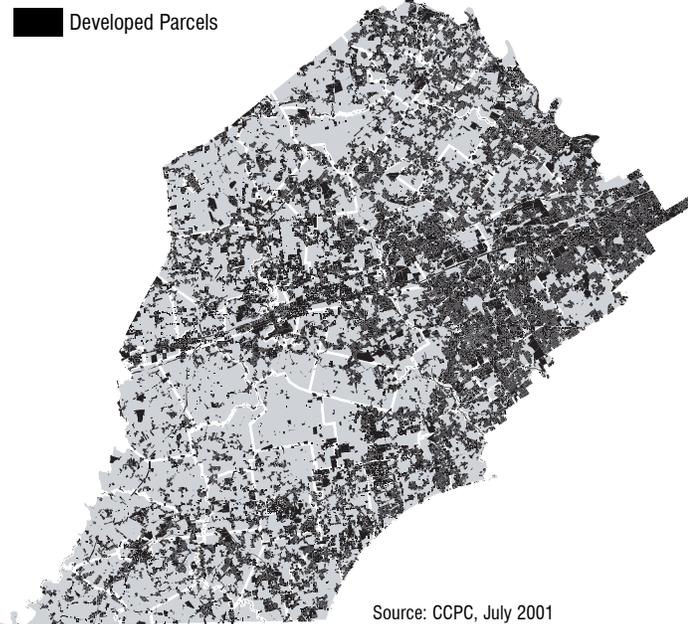
There is no one definition for open space

The newspaper article above from 1988 has the headline "Keeping and developing open space." Since that time there have been numerous articles, books and meetings on "open space." The term is now quite common, but what does it mean? For some people, open space is a farm field, but others would say that a farm is a business. Some say a sports field is an open space while others say an open space must be set aside for wildlife only.

In reality, there is no one definition for open space, and even professional land planners can not agree on what it is. In *Linking Landscapes*, "open space" is defined very broadly to include any land that is not covered by buildings or pavement. With this definition, "open space" includes woodland, meadows, farms and even back yards or the lawns surrounding industrial parks.

Open Space is a Valuable Resource That Needs to be Protected

Estimated Developed Parcels, 2001



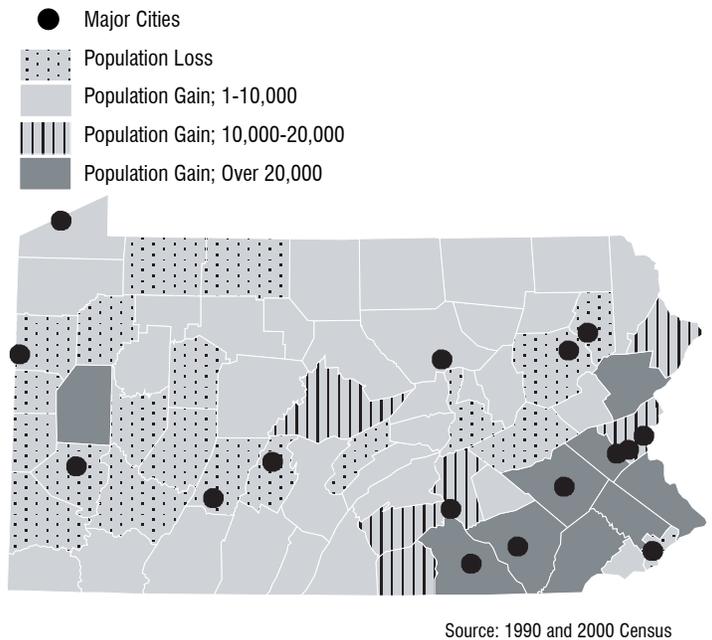
Open spaces provide valuable benefits

As of 2001, Chester County was approximately 40% developed and 60% undeveloped. The benefits of these open lands are:

- **Quality of Life:** Open space provides recreational benefits that improve the quality of life in a community. They form a focal point for a neighborhood and provide children, the elderly and the disabled with nearby access to safe outdoor activities.
- **Ecological:** As development spreads throughout the region, open spaces provide a haven for wildlife. The forests, meadows and wetlands that flourish in open spaces reduce storm water runoff, and improve water quality and groundwater recharge.
- **Economic:** Numerous recent case studies show that communities with abundant open spaces consistently retain higher real estate values and are more likely to attract new employers, relative to communities without them.

Of course, all of these benefits could be lost if the County is inappropriately developed. For this reason, it is necessary to plan to protect our open spaces before there are none left to protect.

Change in Population for Pennsylvania Counties, 1990-2000



We must protect open space today

In the past, Americans who tired of congested urban settings moved away and into more rural areas where there was abundant open space. This is now no longer the case. Both the 1990 and 2000 Census document that people are moving away from rural areas instead of into them.

The map above shows the population change for Pennsylvania from 1990 to 2000. The state is losing population in rural areas largely as a result of fewer rural employment opportunities. In other words, over the last 20 years, it has become increasingly difficult to move "out to the country" because there are no jobs there.

We should all be aware that if we do not protect our open space, we will simply have to live with the results. Running away is not an option. Protecting open space is the only alternative.

Linking Landscapes Can be Used to Assist Local Initiatives

Linking Landscapes will be useful for regional and local planners

An open space plan is not required by law, but there are many practical reasons for having one. Municipalities and civic groups typically focus on important local issues, rather than the region. *Linking Landscapes* provides a regional perspective because open space features like woodlands or trails do not stop at municipal borders.

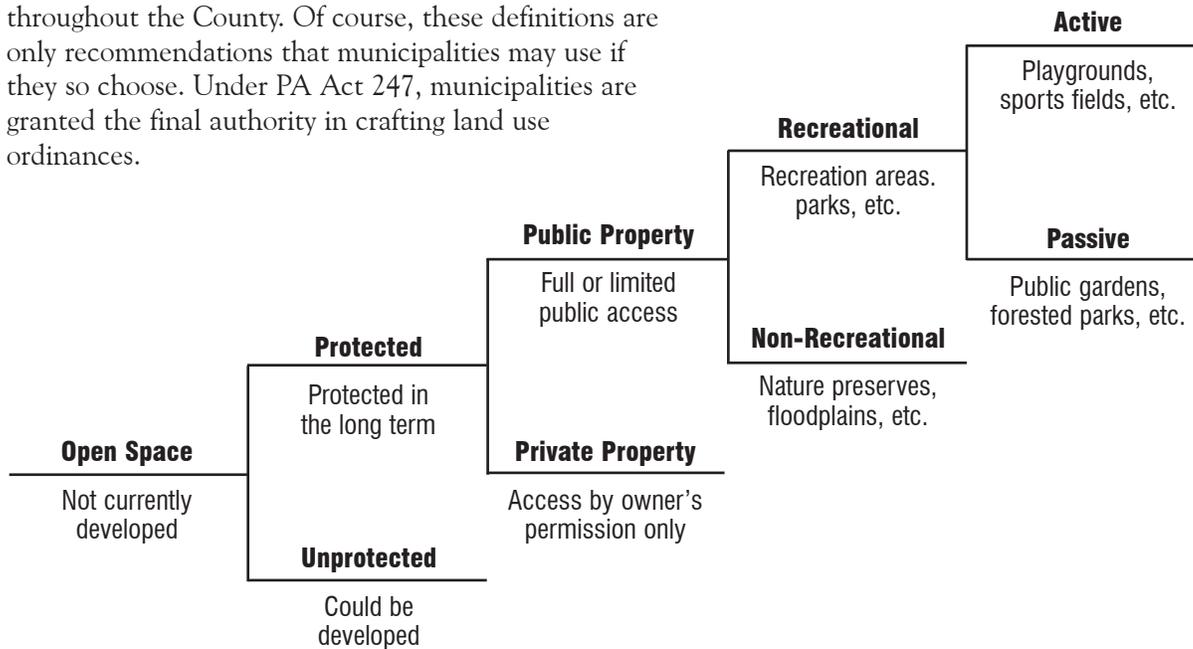
Linking Landscapes will also be useful for anyone applying for a federal, state or private grant, because these grantors prefer to fund projects in a County with an up-to-date open space plan. *Linking Landscapes* was even written using language appropriate for grant applications.

Linking Landscapes provides consistent terminology regarding open space

The field of open space planning is relatively new and it has not yet developed a standard terminology. A number of municipalities in Chester County address open space in their comprehensive plans or ordinances, but each use somewhat different definitions for the terms describing open space. For this reason, *Linking Landscapes* provides one set of terms that can be used throughout the County. Of course, these definitions are only recommendations that municipalities may use if they so choose. Under PA Act 247, municipalities are granted the final authority in crafting land use ordinances.

The key purposes of *Linking Landscapes* are to provide:

- A countywide inventory of open space features and a regional vision for establishing a countywide network of protected open space.
- A listing of practical and realistic actions that Chester County government can take to protect open space as directed by *Landscapes*.
- General guidelines for municipalities who wish to pursue open space protection, either through their own initiative or through partnerships with other entities.



Open Spaces Protected by Municipal Governments

Municipal open space planning has already begun

Linking Landscapes was not designed to be a “blue print” for how Chester County will look. There is no need for the County Government to devise such a detailed plan for open space and recreation facilities in the County, because as the map to the right shows, Chester County’s municipalities have already taken the lead at the local level. During the 1990s, 66 of the County’s 73 municipalities completed municipal Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Plans, using municipal funding that was matched with grants from the 1989 County Open Space Bond fund.

Linking Landscapes will not invalidate any of the open space plans that have been completed by the County’s municipalities. These local plans, such as the one shown to the bottom right, were required to provide an evaluation of recreation issues at the municipal level in order to receive a matching grant from the County. Because local recreation issues were already thoroughly addressed in each municipal plan, there was no need to evaluate them in detail in *Linking Landscapes*.

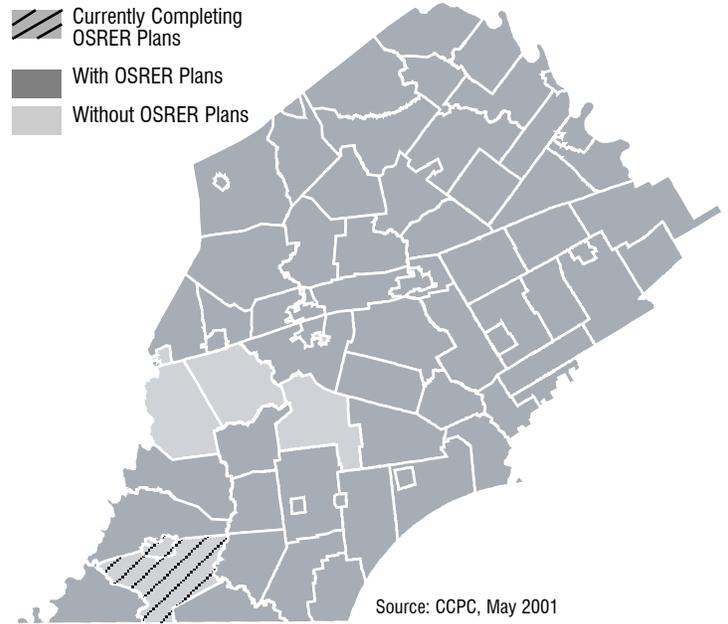
Municipalities and County Government must partner in protecting open space

Linking Landscapes describes activities that the County Government intends to initiate itself, or through partnerships with state and municipal governments. *Linking Landscapes* presents 292 “visions” that describe what conditions that should ideally exist within the County. For each vision listed there is also an “action,” which describes what County government can realistically do to realize each vision.

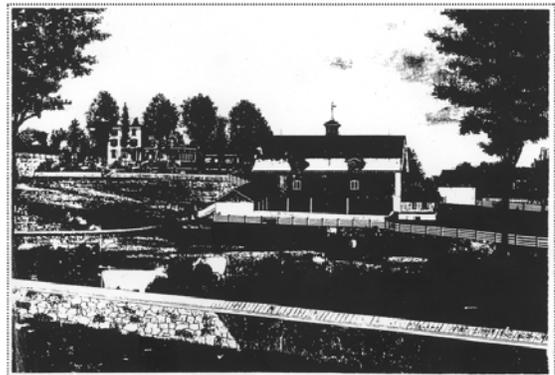
The guiding philosophy behind *Linking Landscapes* is that municipalities and residents should be given the information and guidance that will empower them to protect open space on their own. The County Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Department intend to aggressively pursue open space projects, but if a protected open space network is to be established, all levels of government must work together.

Municipalities with OSRER Plans

- Currently Completing OSRER Plans
- With OSRER Plans
- Without OSRER Plans



OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES PLAN

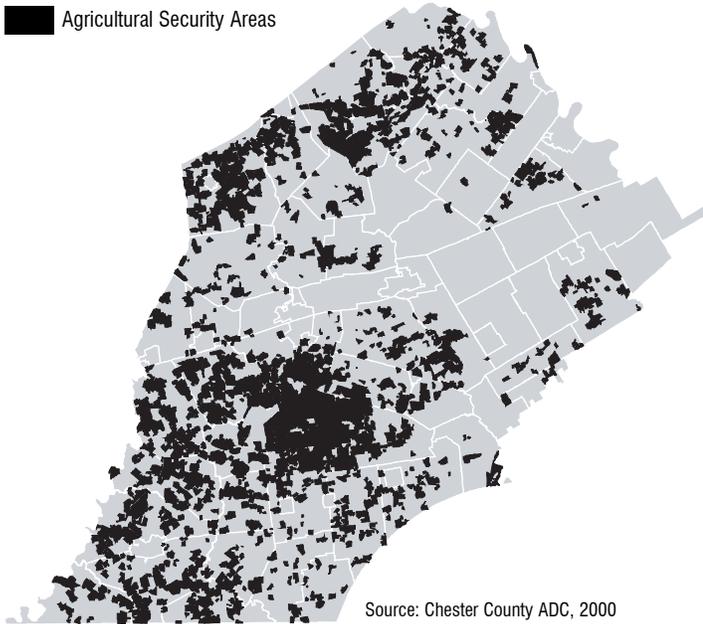


Willistown Township
Chester County, Pennsylvania

Protecting Agricultural Soils

Agricultural Security Areas as of 2000

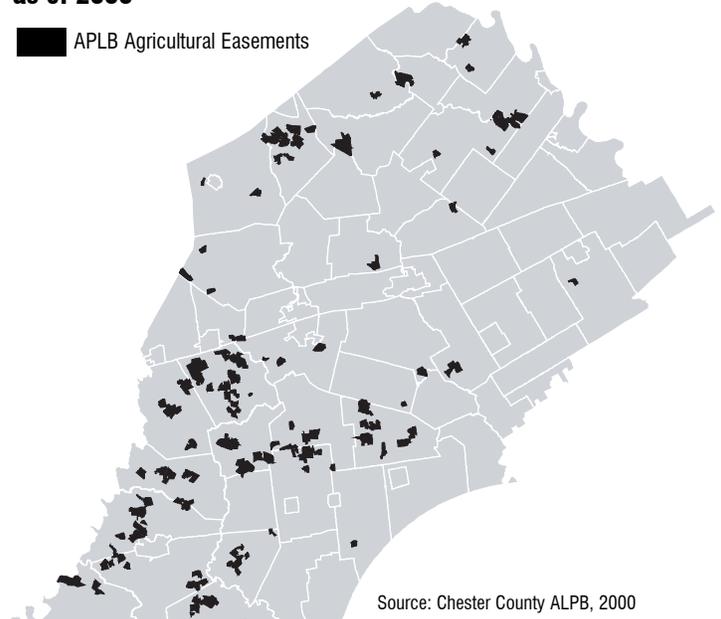
■ Agricultural Security Areas



Source: Chester County ADC, 2000

Parcels with ALPB Agricultural Conservation Easements as of 2000

■ APLB Agricultural Easements



Source: Chester County ALPB, 2000

Agricultural security areas

Linking Landscapes does not assume that all farmland is open space. In fact, farms are businesses and in many respects agriculture is the most important business in Chester County. Farm fields do however possess many of the same open space features as natural meadows, and the soils beneath them are a valuable, but unseen ecosystem. Furthermore, farms do not require the kind of publicly funded municipal infrastructure, like sewer lines and roads, which residential or commercial developments require.

The state has established a number of programs to help protect farms, even when the community around them is becoming more developed. PA Act 43 allows farmers to enroll, at no cost, into an Agricultural Security Area (ASA). The map above shows the farms voluntarily enrolled in this program. Once in an ASA, a farmer is protected from nuisance lawsuits. A farm in an ASA also gets greater protection from condemnation, although in some instances it can still be condemned.

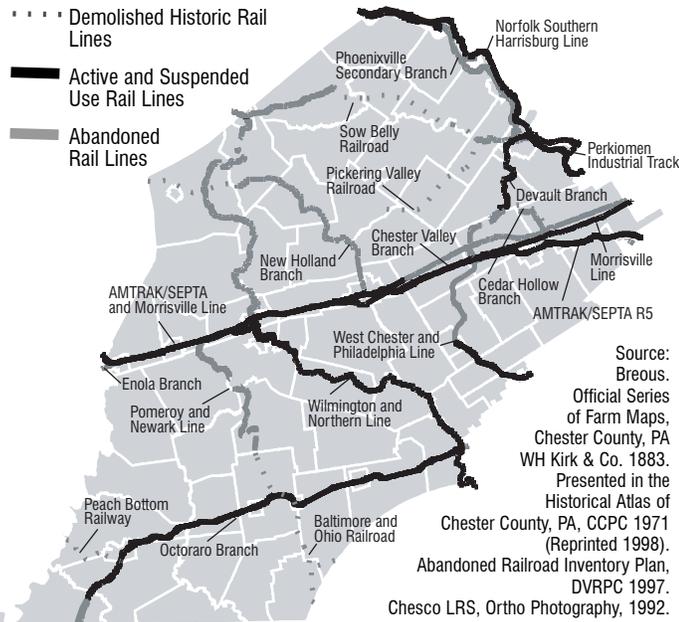
Agricultural conservation easements

If a farm is in an ASA and it has productive soils, the owner may apply to the state to sell his or her development rights, and thereby protect the farm forever. When a farm has such an easement it can truly be regarded as a protected open space. The map above shows farms that had such easements as of 2000. These are all private properties that are still owned by the farmer. Because these parcels are private property, no one should enter them without getting the landowner's permission.

Farmers who sell their development rights give up the opportunity to make the profits they could make by selling the land to developers, simply because they want to continue with their chosen lifestyles. Farmland conservation is one of the most effective open space preservation efforts in the County, and the fields protected through this program are maintained privately by the farmer, rather than being maintained by the government using public funds.

Rehabilitating Developed Lands as Open Space

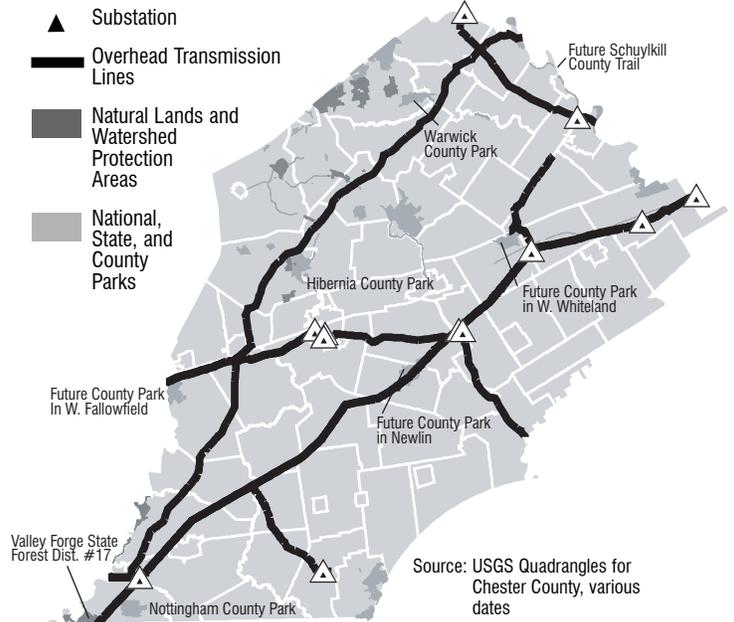
Active, Inactive, and Abandoned Rail



Railroad corridors

Over the last few decades there has been a movement throughout the United States to convert abandoned railroads into recreational trails. In Chester County, both the County Struble and the Chester Valley Trails use alignments originally developed as rail corridors. The map below shows both the active and abandoned rail corridors in the County. *Linking Landscapes* recommends that rail corridors be recycled into trails, if they are not likely to ever be used for rail transport.

Major Overhead Utility Corridors

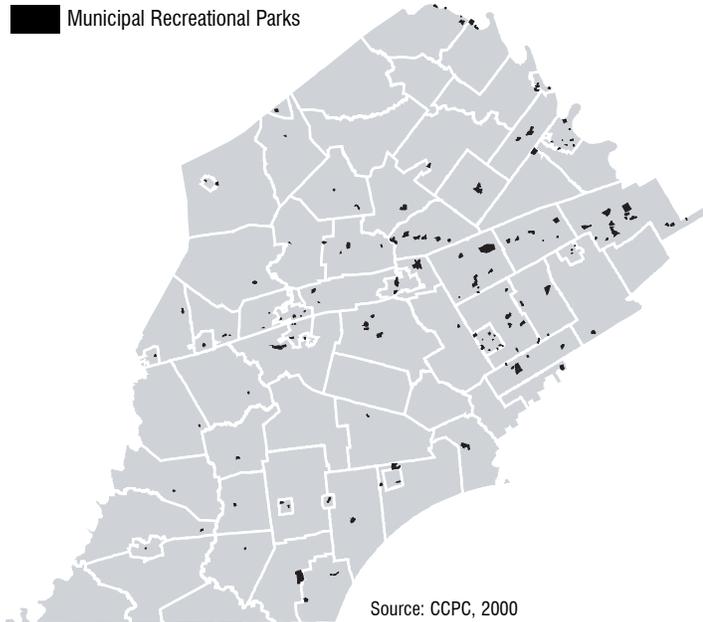


Utility corridors

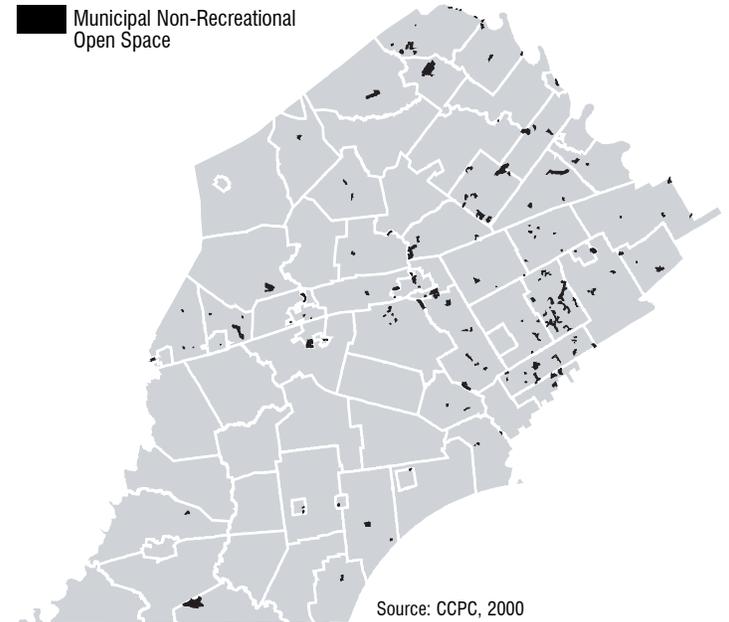
The map below shows where major overhead utility lines cross the County. The land beneath these corridors has a great potential for additional uses. *Linking Landscapes* recommends that these utility corridors can be better managed to support native warm season grasses and the animals that live in them. Warm season grasses have been gradually disappearing as more and more of the County's native meadows are converted to suburban style lawns that contain only cool season grasses.

Municipal Recreational Parks and Open Spaces

Municipal Recreational Parks



Municipal Non-Recreational Open Space



Municipal parks are for active recreation

It is a long standing policy of Chester County Government that County-operated parks should be large properties that are primarily set aside for passive recreation, such as hiking, picnicking and nature appreciation, and special events like the Old Fiddler's Picnic or Freedom Fest.

It is the municipalities that provide active recreation facilities, such as playgrounds and sports fields, because they have a keen understanding of the recreation needs of their local community.

The map above shows all of the active recreation facilities (usually called "parks") that were owned and managed by municipalities in 2000. Clearly, there are more parks in the more densely populated eastern part of the County, but that is expected since active recreation facilities are built based on the size of a community's population.

It is the municipalities who have ultimate authority when it comes to municipal park planning. County Government is not required to determine how much active recreation parkland is needed for each municipality, but it can make recommendations. This is why *Linking Landscapes* includes recommendations of park acreage needed for each municipality. It also suggests that rural communities should at least consider building parks if their population is expected to rise.

Municipal open spaces are not always for recreation

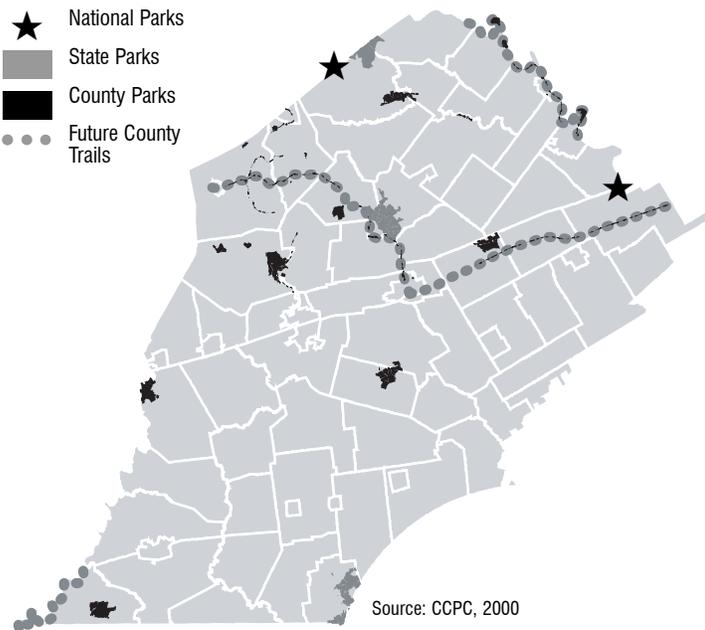
Many municipalities in Chester County have decided to acquire "non-recreational" or "passive recreational" open space, that is used primarily for preserving natural resources. The map above shows how this type of open space was distributed in 2000. This map also includes parcels that were purchased as sites for future parks and playgrounds, but have not yet been fully constructed.

Federal, State and County Parks

Existing parks and parks under construction

Throughout the 1990s the Chester County Commissioners supported a significant expansion of the County park system. Three new park sites totaling 1,711 acres were acquired, some of which are currently being constructed. Right-of-way for the County Chester Valley Trail was also acquired, and a 1.4-mile section opened in 2000. Land was also acquired for a trail and park complex along the Schuylkill River. Both existing and future County park facilities, as well as state and federal sites, are presented in the map below.

National, State, and County parks



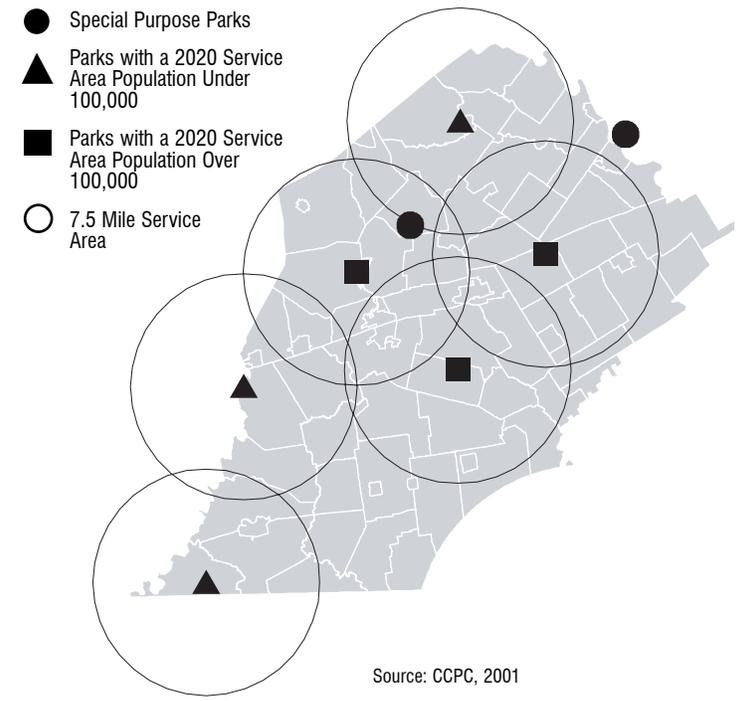
Where County parks are needed

Chester County has abundant state parks and two National Historic Sites: Valley Forge and Hopewell Furnace. No more of these large facilities are needed, however there is always the possibility that they could be expanded.

As of 2001, there was a clear deficiency in terms of County park acreage. The map below shows the "Service Area" for each County park. A Service Area is a circular area around the park that includes the communities that are the primary users of the park. This mapping shows that the southeast and eastern edge of the County need more County parks.

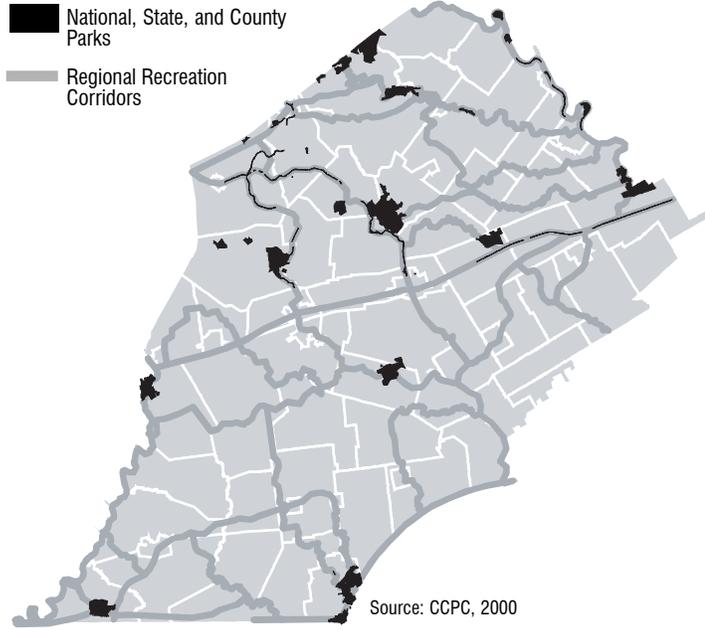
The map also shows how five of the County parks were projected to have a Service Area population that exceeds 100,000 by the year 2020. According to the County's own guidelines, County parks should serve less than 100,000 people. It is not surprising that *Linking Landscapes* recommended that future County park location feasibility studies be completed to address these needs.

County Park 7.5 Mile Service Areas

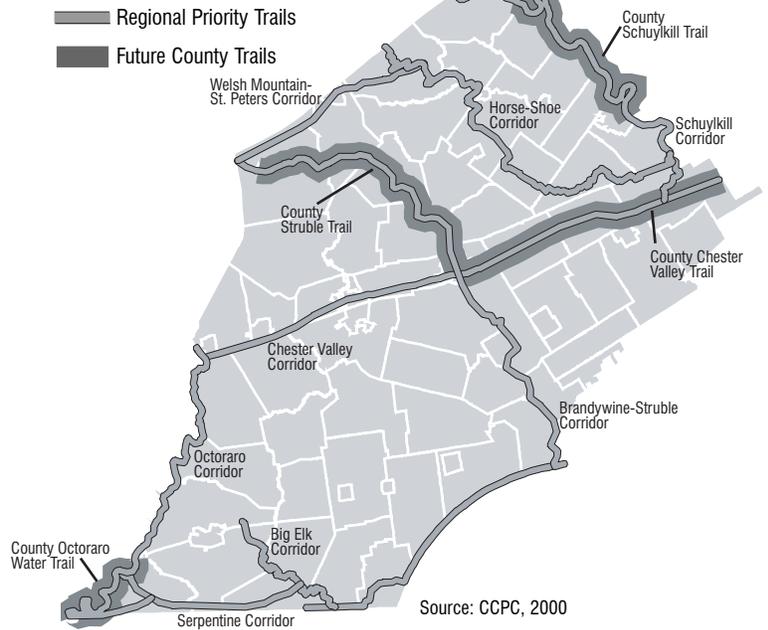


Public Trails

Recreational Parks and Regional Corridors



Regional Priority Trail Corridors



Regional recreation corridors

Chester County has made great strides in protecting and restoring open space, but we are behind most other parts of the Delaware Valley in terms of trail construction. Communities like Manayunk and Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia, or Conshohocken in Montgomery County have become revitalized, in part due to the trails that pass through them. In 2000, Chester County only had two County trails, one of which was not completed.

The map above shows the “Regional Recreation Corridors” recommended in *Linking Landscapes*. These corridors are 2,000 foot wide planning zones that are potential regional trail locations. When combined, they create a countywide network that passes through every borough and city, and each federal, state and County park.

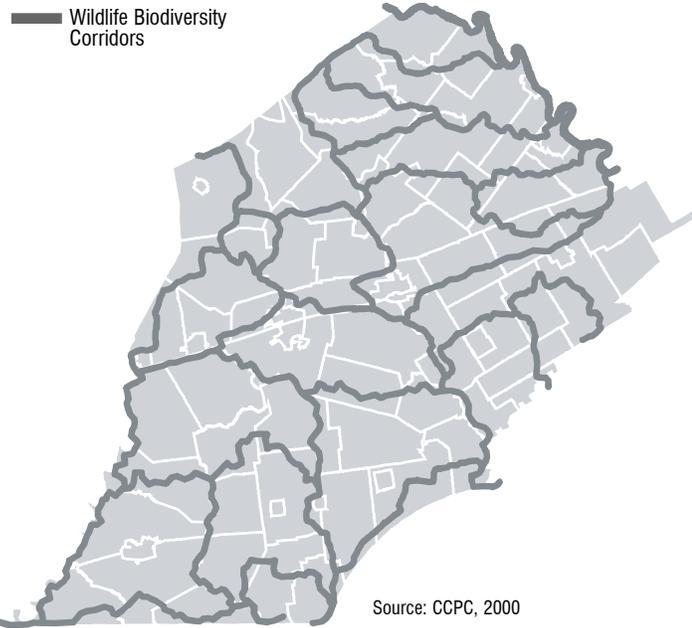
Linking Landscapes does not propose that County trails should be built in each of these corridors, but rather that some sort of trail should go through them or near them. It does not matter if it is a County, state, federal or municipal trail, or one established by a community group. Furthermore, if a local group can find an alternative alignment that is cheaper or more effective than a recommended corridor, the County will support it.

Regional priority trails

The map above shows trails that *Linking Landscapes* identifies as Regional Priority Trails. These trails form major east-west and north-south trail links, and the County government will make it a priority to focus on completing trails in these areas. The Future County Trails on this map show trails the County Parks and Recreation Department has dedicated to complete, and will pursue.

Wildlife Corridors

Wildlife Biodiversity Corridors

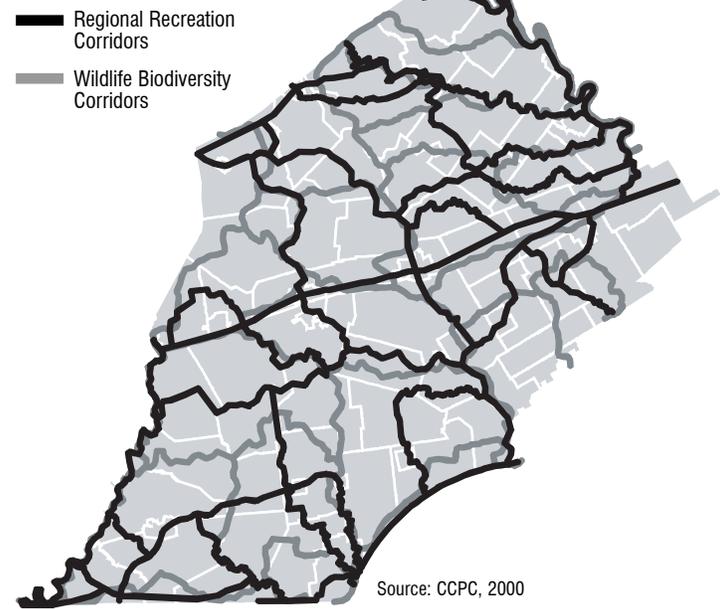


Wildlife Biodiversity Corridors

Chester County has been blessed with a variety of wildlife habitats, many of which are still largely undeveloped. For example, the Nature Conservancy regards the serpentine barrens of southern Chester County as a unique habitat of global importance. Unfortunately many of the quality habitats in Chester County are isolated islands, surrounded by development. This means that animals, many of whom naturally roam in search of food, are forced to stay within the confines of a single wildlife preserve.

The map above shows Wildlife Biodiversity Corridors that are recommended in *Linking Landscapes*. These corridors are broad conceptual planning zones that could link important wildlife habitats along long strips of woodland. These corridors could create a network that would improve wildlife migration throughout the County. Of course these corridors are only recommendations for where wildlife corridors could go, not a “blue print” for one huge countywide project.

Regional Recreation Corridors and Wildlife Biodiversity Corridors



Wildlife habitat can be damaged by intensive use

In the past, communities have created long thin corridors of undeveloped land called “greenways” that are set aside for both recreational trails and the preservation of wildlife. Unfortunately the kind of human activity that takes place on trails can scare away some of the most important wildlife species like foxes, bobcats and nesting birds.

In order to preserve wildlife, and create a network of trail corridors for human use, *Linking Landscapes* made sure that Wildlife Biodiversity Corridors avoided Regional Recreation Corridors wherever possible. The map above shows how the wildlife-transportation corridors were designed to avoid the human-transportation corridors.

Sensitive Land Development

Developers can help save open space

In the past, efforts to protect open space have resulted in conflicts between environmentalists and developers, but in Chester County, that sort of adversarial relationship is changing. More and more, developers and environmentalist are working together to construct environmentally sensitive developments.

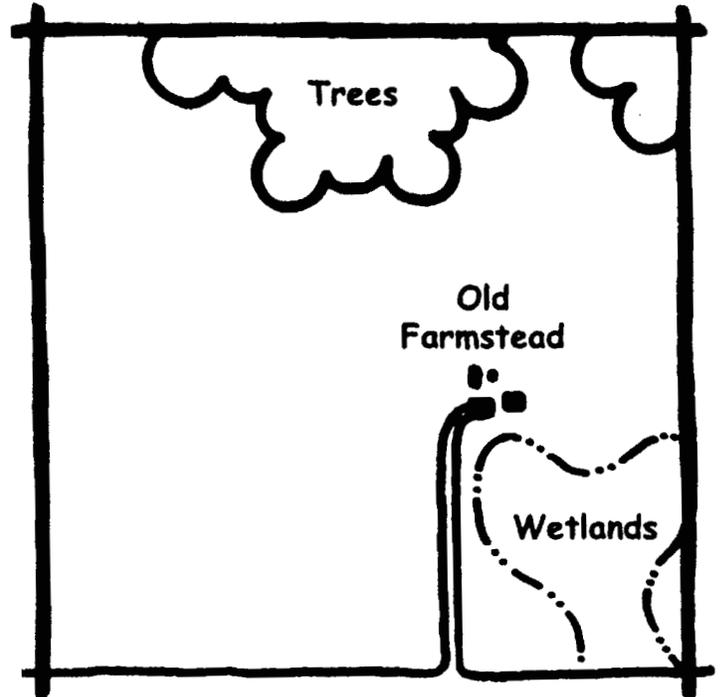
Linking Landscapes recommends that developers consider building limited developments. Ideally, such a development would have at least 60 percent of the property permanently protected as open space and managed for wildlife or recreation, while the remainder of the property is developed with houses on lots averaging 1/3 of an acre. This kind of development may not be appropriate for all landscapes, however developers and municipal officials should always be looking for new ways to protect and properly maintain open space.

Private landowners should plan ahead

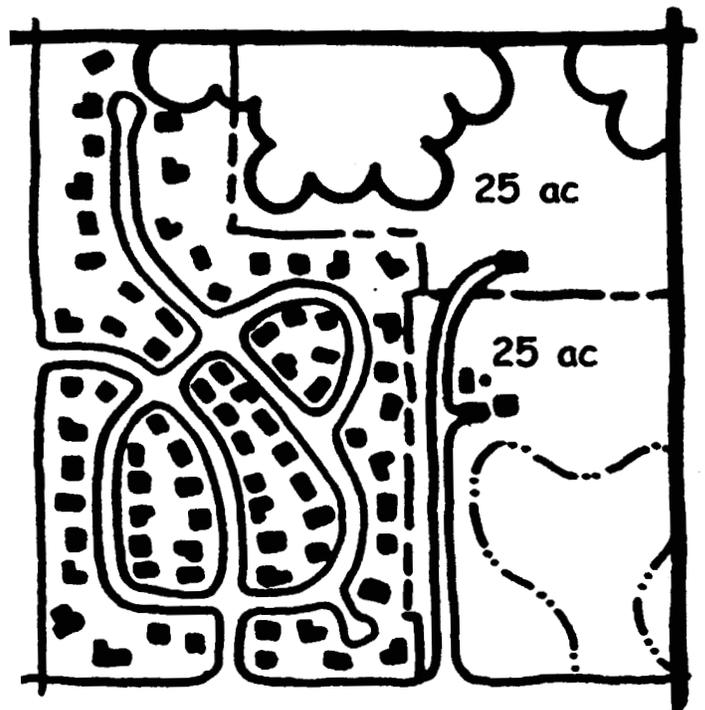
Government alone cannot protect enough of Chester County's open space to maintain the County's traditional character. In fact, it is private landowners who will ultimately determine if the County loses its unique open landscapes.

The single most important thing that a landowner can do to help preserve Chester County is to formulate a plan for his or her financial estate. Too many landowners put off financial planning or preparing a will that will ensure that a farm or woodland is not subdivided and sold off in pieces after the landowner dies.

It is the private landowners of Chester County who have shaped its undeveloped landscapes for 300 years, and who still have the power to shape it for the next three centuries, but they must plan ahead.



This hypothetical 100-acre parcel has some unique features, such as old barn and a wetland. Under conventional development, all of this parcel would be developed into large lots.



The same parcel could be developed using limited development that protects half of the parcel from all future development.

Restoring the “Chester County Style”

What makes Chester County unique?

For over 300 years people have been drawn to the landscapes of Chester County, from its rolling hills and fertile fields, to its forested ridges and traditional urban main streets. The landscapes and villages of Chester County are unique, and they have been memorialized in the paintings of renowned local artists like Horace Pippin and the Wyeth family.

In the past few decades, conventional suburban development, with its un-forested yards and closely mowed lawns, has slowly replaced the rough vegetation, scrub trees and farmer’s hedgerows that gave our County its distinctive character. If this uniform style of development continues, Chester County’s landscapes will look identical to all of the other suburbs of the East Coast, and the Chester County Style will only be a memory.

Your back yard is part of the open space network

Preserving the Chester County Style starts at the grass roots level... of your back yard. There is no government-sponsored plan that can change the way landowners keep their land. However, everyone from farmers to urban dwellers with 5 by 10-foot yards can choose to adopt the Chester County Style, and plant native trees

This Chester County property owner allows native grasses and wetland plants to grow, minimizing maintenance time and costs, while preserving the “Chester County Style.”

and ground cover on the parts of their lawns they rarely use. Wet spots and hillsides that do not support grass can be planted with wildflowers that flourish in these environments. This will increase wildlife habitat and restore our native landscapes while at the same time reducing the time and money spent mowing and watering lawns.

Linking Landscapes provides information on inexpensive and easy ways that landowners from homeowners to industrial parks can restore the open space on their own property, such as establishing a “no-mow zone” within 5 to 15 feet of any stream or pond.



This is a conventional suburban property in Chester County, but its owner has planted trees and groundcover to reduce the size of the mowed lawn.



Establishing a Network of Protected Open Space

Protected open space must form a network to function properly

Linking Landscapes proposes that open space protection in Chester County should focus on creating a network of interconnected protected open space, and not simply isolated islands surrounded by development. When open spaces are linked together, their quality improves. By linking animal habitats with wildlife corridors, the animals within them can migrate as they naturally do. Likewise trails that link parks to neighborhoods provide families with easier access to recreation opportunities.

Establishing the network as a kind of public infrastructure

This network will not be constructed as one big public works project, rather it will be built up in pieces over time, much like the roadways and the water lines that make up the County's public infrastructure. For this reason, *Linking Landscapes* proposes that protected open space should be viewed as a form of public infrastructure that helps maintain the County's quality of life, ecology and economy.

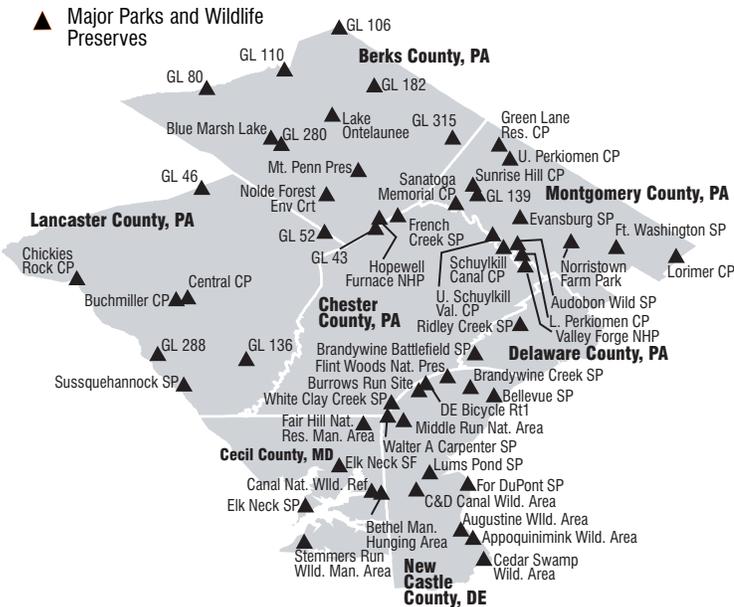
Establishing a protected open space network will require urban revitalization

Chester County's municipalities, land trusts, farmers and local community groups have been working at protecting our undeveloped lands for over 40 years, and as a result the County has become a national leader in open space protection. However, we should always remember that establishing a protected open space network will only solve half of the "sprawl" problem. If our cities and older urban centers decline and force urban dwellers to move out into rural areas, development pressures will continue to spur large-lot developments. Without urban revitalization, all of the County's open space protection efforts simply cannot succeed.

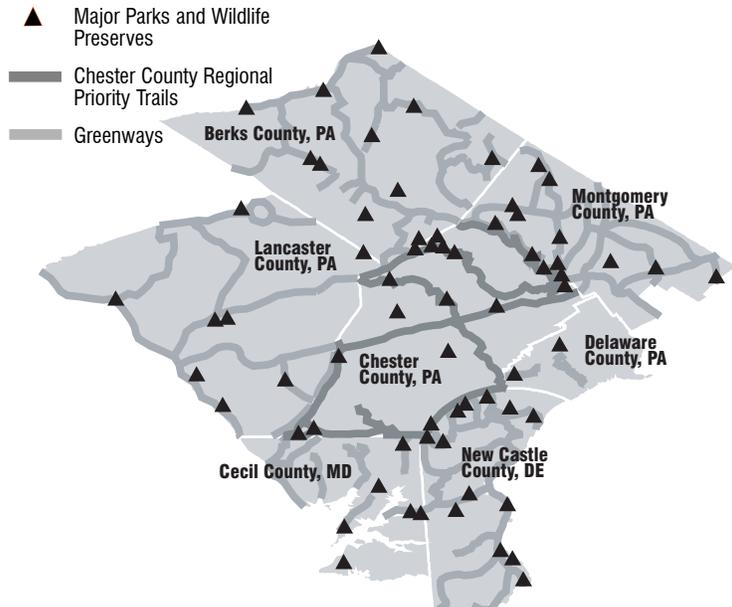


Linking Protected Open Space into Other Counties

Major Parks and Wildlife Preserves in Surrounding Counties



A Potential Multi-County Open Space Network



Chester County is part of a multi-state region

Natural resources and recreational facilities do not end at the County line; they extend throughout the region. For this reason, *Linking Landscapes* includes an inventory of open space features in the surrounding counties, two of which are in different states. The map above shows the open space features in the surrounding counties.

Chester County residents use many of the parks and recreation areas in surrounding counties, but that does not mean that we should put off constructing needed facilities in Chester County. *Linking Landscapes* clearly states that no County agency or municipal government should rely on facilities outside its borders to meet the recreation needs of its residents. The exception would be a regional facility that is jointly owned or managed by two or more governments.

Possible regional links through Chester County

The map above shows how the Regional Priority Trail Corridors identified in *Linking Landscapes* would fit into a larger regional network of trails. Such a network would allow residents from the Delaware state line to bike through the County to French Creek State Park. Cyclists could also travel from the Octoraro Valley to Valley Forge and the Schuylkill River Trail.

Given Chester County's central location, such a network could increase tourism and promote the revitalization of our older urban centers. In the past decade, nearby traditional industrial communities like Manayunk in Philadelphia and Conshocken Borough in Montgomery County have undergone revitalization partly as a result of trail construction.

The 5,000-Acre Protected Open Space Benchmark

Protecting 50% of existing undeveloped land

Linking Landscapes recommends that 5,000 acres of open space should be protected each year. This benchmark was developed after an extensive evaluation which determined that approximately 3,000 acres of open space was protected by land trusts, municipalities, agricultural conservation easements and homeowner associations each year over the last twenty years. Given the increase in open space funding in the last few years, an increase to 5,000 acre per year would be reasonable.

As of 2001, Chester County was approximately 40% developed, and the rate of development has been estimated at 5,000 acres year. If the County can protect open space at 5,000 acres a year, it will result in protection of 50% of the County's existing undeveloped land. By the year 2015, this will double the amount of protected open space, which covered 15% of the County in 2000. By the year 2020 the County would be 60% developed with 35% protected open space and 5% unprotected open space.

Actions needed to protected 5,000 acres of open space each year

- **Municipal, County and state governments** updating policies and ordinances, and raising funds to acquire locally important open spaces
- **Land trusts** purchasing or accepting **landowner** donations of easements on small parcels
- **Residents and businesses** creating and funding Local Land Trusts for their municipality
- **Developers** constructing limited developments
- **Homebuyers** conscientiously choosing to purchase homes in existing high density communities or in newly built limited developments.

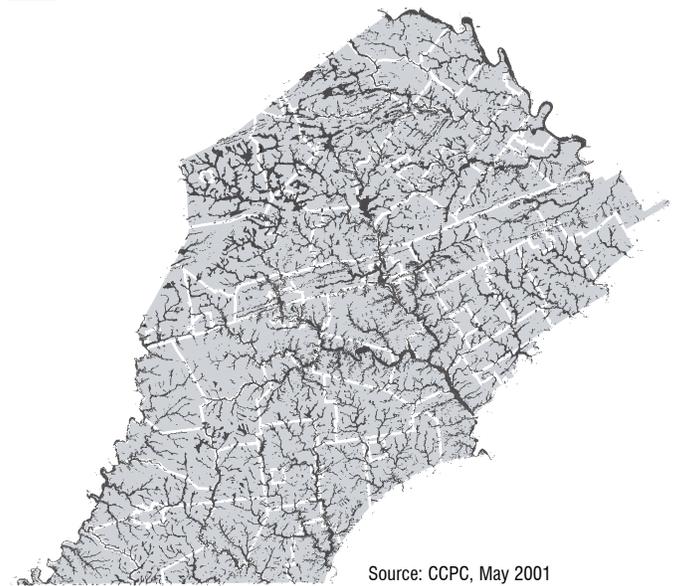
Development should be limited on all Naturally Sensitive Areas

Linking Landscapes recommends that development should be limited on all Naturally Sensitive Areas or "NSAs." The map below shows all the NSAs in Chester County which include steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains and hydric soils, which are usually found along streams or swails and retain water making them unsuitable for building.

Most of the municipalities in the County limit development on some NSAs as detailed in their municipal zoning or subdivision ordinances. Such limitations are needed because NSAs are unsuitable as building sites, and building in NSAs such as floodplains can be damaging to downstream communities.

Naturally Sensitive Areas

■ Naturally Sensitive Areas



Open Space Funding Must Come From Many Sources

How open space projects are funded

Most grass roots efforts to protect open space or construct public recreational facilities are funded by grants. Most of these grant programs award federal or state funds to local projects as a “matching grant.” In other words, the local groups or municipalities who want to receive a grant must first raise a portion of the money to pay for the project. The matching grant will then pay for the rest of the project.

Chester County has administered a number of matching grants, most of which were only awarded to municipalities. Under some circumstances the County may award a grant to a non-profit organization, but never individuals.

The following list highlights some, but not all, of the grants available for projects in Chester County in 2002. *Linking Landscapes* dedicates an entire chapter to providing general information on grant programs.

Federal grants

- TEA-21 transportation enhancement program
- TEA-21 congestion mitigation and air quality
- Recreational trails program

State grants

- DCNR Keystone recreation, park and conservation fund
- DCNR Pennsylvania recreational trails grants
- DCNR heritage parks grants
- DEP grants

County grants

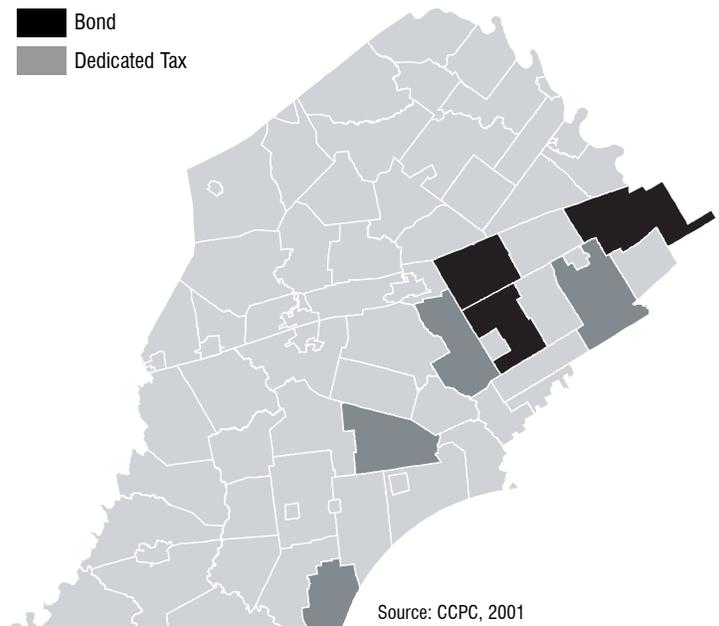
- Vision Partnership Program grants
- OSRER planning grants
- Spray/drip irrigation grants
- Municipal park land and open space acquisition grants
- Municipal park facilities grants
- Trails grants
- Greenways grants
- Preservation Partnership Program non-profit acquisition grants

A variety of funding sources is needed

Most recreational open space projects are financed by a variety of public sources, including taxes. Federal and state governments fund most grant programs, as does Chester County. As the map below shows, some municipalities have also set aside part of their property taxes for open space projects.

Most of the non-recreational open space in Chester County has been protected by private landowners who sell or donate conservation easements to non-profit land trusts. These landowners often get tax benefits for making these donations, but the benefits are much less than the money that they would get if they developed the land. In the future, it is likely that open space protection will be funded just like it has been, by a combination of public and private sources.

Municipal Open Space Funding



Where are We Going from Here?

Updating *Linking Landscapes*

Almost all of the maps presented in *Linking Landscapes* were computer generated using a technology known as a Geographic Information System (GIS). Because these GIS maps are stored in a computer, each can be updated at any time. Likewise *Linking Landscapes* was structured, so that each chapter can be updated independently.

As updated population projections for 2030 and beyond become available, it may be necessary to update one or more of the chapters in *Linking Landscapes*. As conditions change in Chester County, the Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Department will be able to update individual chapters within *Linking Landscapes*. This approach is intended to make this a “living document,” that can be updated in pieces.

Linking Landscapes milestones

- Fall 2001
5 public meetings held
45-day municipal review completed
- Winter 2001/2002
Revisions made based on public comments
Public hearing held
Plan adopted
- Spring 2002
Began implementing “Action Items”
Initiated the 12-Year Program



The Protected Open Space Network 12-Year Program

Linking Landscapes presents visions and actions for establishing a protected open space network in Chester County, but it does not provide a detailed listing or schedule of activities that will be implemented in pursuit of this goal. *Linking Landscapes* therefore recommends that the County create a Protected Open Space Network 12-Year Program.

The 12-Year Program would provide a document listing the existing and proposed open space projects managed by the County over the next 12 years, and record if the project was in the planning, development or construction phase. This program will better improve coordination between the various public and private organizations conducting open space protection efforts within the County.