



# THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



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**EDITORS:** The following information is for immediate release. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Brain, Communications Coordinator at (610) 344-6279 or Mark Rupsis, Chester County Chief Operating Officer, at (610) 344-6026.

## Chester County Commissioners announce opening of Phase II of Chester Valley Trail *A celebration of the opening is scheduled for the Spring*

**WEST CHESTER** — Phase II of the Chester Valley Trail is now open for public use, the Chester County Commissioners announced today.

“Completion of Phase II brings the trail up to 9.8 miles, running through the heart of Chester County,” said Commissioners’ Chair Ryan Costello. “Neighborhood access, connectivity to municipal trailheads and many corporate parks, and its natural beauty all make trail completion another tremendous step forward.”

Phase I was opened in the fall of 2010 and included four miles from Exton Park to Route 29. Phase II extends the trail from Uptown Worthington at Route 29 east to Old Eagle School Road in Tredyffrin, a distance of approximately 5.8 miles.

“We estimate that around 350,000 people have been using the Chester Valley Trail every year since phase I was completed,” commented Commissioner Kathi Cozzone. “Clearly our citizens want this trail, not just for recreation, but for commuting as well. Use of this trail by hundreds of thousands of people every year helps us to achieve the County’s strategic plan goals relating to health and transportation.”

Commissioner Terence Farrell said, “Many people may think that building a trail is relatively easy – just clear the brush, trim a few trees, level the ground and pave it. But when you factor in the renovation or complete re-building of culverts and the installation of bridges, it becomes evident that trail construction – especially in such a highly populated area – is not that straightforward.

“In addition to recognizing the staff in our department of Facilities and Parks, local businesses and municipalities, Montgomery County and PennDOT, I thank the Friends of the Chester Valley Trail group, whose members have been helpful in maintaining a dialogue with the public about the progress of the trail, and who also volunteer time to help maintain the trail’s beauty.”

Construction of a small part of Phase II will continue as the trail extends east of Old Eagle School Road into Upper Merion Township, Montgomery County.

The Commissioners will hold a celebration event for the opening of Phase II in the Spring.

Chester Valley Trail Phase III construction is scheduled to begin in March. Phase III will add another 1.25 miles and connect the county’s Exton Park site with Ironlake Boulevard in Exton. This phase will include a signalized trail crossing at Route 30 and North Ship Road, Exton.

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Another section of the trail, Phase IVa will be approximately one mile in length and will continue the trail from Main Street at Exton west to the Oaklands Corporate Center.

Phase I construction cost was \$5 million with all of the money coming from the Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The cost of Phase II to date is \$8.9 million with 80 percent of the money being reimbursed through the Federal Highway Administration's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program.

Publicly accessible trailhead locations to the Chester Valley Trail include Chester County's Exton Park site, 132 Church Farm Lane, Exton; East Whiteland's Battle of the Clouds Park, 125 North Phoenixville Pike, Malvern; and East Whiteland Municipal Building, 209 Conestoga Road, Frazer. A new trailhead for Phase II is being constructed on Warner Road in Upper Merion Township, Montgomery County.

The Commissioners' award-winning Landscapes2 plan sets goals of protecting the environment, improving the quality of life of county residents and providing transit alternatives to ease congestion on roads. The Chester Valley Trail helps to achieve all three goals.

The Chester Valley Trail project dates back to 1991, when representatives of Chester County, Montgomery County and PennDOT envisioned a soon-to-be-abandoned rail line as a major regional trail facility. Five years later, Chester County acquired the first section of right-of-way for the project.

*Chester County is the first county in Pennsylvania to initiate a strategic planning process and has a Aaa rating on its bonds from Moody's Investors Service as well as AAA ratings from Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings. Established by William Penn as one of Pennsylvania's three original counties, Chester County has been named by Forbes.com as one of America's best places to raise a family and is ranked the healthiest county in Pennsylvania by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.*