



# East Coventry Township

CHESTER COUNTY, PA

## **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan**

a chapter of the Township Comprehensive Plan

**April 2017**



**Toole Recreation Planning**



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Hildacy Preserve  
1031 Palmers Mill Road  
Media, PA 19063  
610-353-5587  
natlands.org

and

**Toole Recreation Planning**





## acknowledgements

### **East Coventry Township Board of Supervisors**

Ray Kolb, *Chair*

W. Atlee Rinehart, *Vice-Chair*

Karen Nocella

Michael Albert Moyer

Anthony Duffy

Bernard A. Rodgers, *Township Manager*

Cheryl Imes, *Administrative Assistant*

### **Plan Task Force**

Karen Nocella

Gail Brown

Larry Tietjen

Dorene Pasekoff

Bruce Stephens

William Keller

Brian Styche, *Ex-officio member, Chester County Planning Commission*

### **with assistance from**

Chester County Planning Commission (Vision Partnership Program)

601 Westtown Road, Suite 270

PO Box 2747

West Chester, PA 19380

Natural Lands (Planning Consultant)

Hildacy Preserve

1031 Palmers Mill Road

Media, PA 19063

Toole Recreation Planning (Recreation Planning Consultant)

6081 Honey Hollow Road

Doylestown, PA 18902

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# introduction

East Coventry Township has developed this *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* to enhance the quality of life in our community through the conservation of our scenic beauty and natural, cultural and historic resources, parks, and recreation. The plan will serve as a guide to help community leaders improve and sustain our parks and recreation system to benefit citizens of all ages and interests now and as a legacy for many generations yet to come.

The plan provides an action plan to achieve the shared vision to be implemented over the next ten years as resources become available through a mix of Township funds, grants, gifts, donations and partnerships and other alternative revenue sources. This vision includes preservation of the natural, cultural and historic resources which define the Township's character, but also embraces new opportunities, including connecting residents to the Schuylkill River and the Schuylkill River Trail.

## purpose

In Chester County, municipalities are required to update their comprehensive plans every ten years. This plan serves as an update to the *Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan of 1992*, and will act as a chapter of the *East Coventry Township Comprehensive Plan*.

East Coventry Township is a member of the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities (FNCCC). In 2012, the FNCCC prepared the *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* for the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities. The



plan contained recommendations for the region as a whole, with few detailed recommendations for each member municipality. This plan aims to continue pursuit of the goals laid out in the FNCCC plan, while specifically serving the needs of the residents of East Coventry Township.

The Chester County Planning Commission also offers county-wide recommendations regarding open space, trails, parks and recreation in documents such as *Landscapes2* and the *Multi-Modal Handbook for Chester County, PA*. This plan aims to pursue the goals and follow the recommendations contained in those plans, while specifically serving the needs of the residents of East Coventry Township.

East Coventry has shown the ability to successfully pursue grant funding for planning and implementation. The Township has received funding through Chester County, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation. This plan will keep East Coventry in position to remain competitive for funding for parks, recreation and open space from local and state government as well as private foundations.

The plan serves as a guide and is not a law. East Coventry Township will continue to involve the public and work in collaboration with community partners in the public and private sectors in implementing the plan.

## process

East Coventry Township contracted with Natural Lands and Toole Recreation Planning to develop the plan in collaboration with the community. The consultants worked



**The plan considers the role of historically important sites, including the Ellis Woods Revolutionary War Cemetery.**

closely with a citizen task force, made up of volunteers. The members of the task force each served on additional Township committees and acted as liaisons to each, including the Historical Committee, Parks, Recreation and Conservation Committee, Open Space Committee, Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

The Task Force and consultants worked together to review existing data, including GIS maps, local, regional and county wide plans. The consultants also visited each of the Township's parks, trails and open spaces to analyze the existing conditions. The Task Force articulated the perceived needs and wants of the community, helping to inform the consultants of the current situation in the Township.

In addition to working with the Task Force, the consultants also solicited public input, through public meetings, facilitated public workshops, an online commenting form and key person interviews (see *Appendix: Documents*). The information gathered from the public was used to verify the findings and recommendations of the Task Force and became the basis for creation of the goals set forth in the plan.

## goals

Based on the consultants' field work and findings, recommendations from the Task Force and information provided by the public regarding the community's needs and wants, the following five goals were identified:

**Goal 1:** Protect our open space, natural, cultural and historical resources, and scenic rural character.

**Goal 2:** Establish parks and recreation facilities as community destinations where residents can have fun, experience nature, socialize, and lead active healthy lifestyles.

**Goal 3:** Connect our community through a system of trails.

**Goal 4:** Facilitate recreation opportunities to help the citizens engage in active healthy living.

**Goal 5:** Provide operational excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.

## key recommendations

With the five goals in mind, the consultants and Task Force continued to inventory the existing resources and analyze potential means to protect open space, implement and connect trails, improve facilities, maximize recreation opportunities and improve administration, management and financing. The plan includes numerous recommendations to these ends, most of which correlate with one or more of the five key recommendations below.

### 1. Protect East Coventry's scenic rural character

**through the preservation of 50% of the unprotected developable land** as open space, through acquisition of easements, acquisition of land and dedication of land through the use of progressive zoning techniques (such as cluster and open space option) during the development process.

### 2. Connect our community through a network of trails

for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. An improved and expanded trail network will provide opportunities for safe recreation, transportation and improved health of the community.

### 3. Connect our community to the Schuylkill River.

Over five miles of riverfront exist within the Township. The riverfront should be used to provide greater opportunities for active and passive recreation, with a focus on nature, culture and history.



**The future extension of the Schuylkill River Trail will provide an important link to the Township-wide trail network.**

#### **4. Continue to improve our existing parks and recreation facilities.**

Prioritize projects that would improve the parks through professional design and high quality features.

#### **5. Take care of what we have.** Ensure that our parks and recreation facilities are safe, clean and ready to use. Create natural resource management plans that will include both the Township work force and private partners.

## **implementation: moving forward**

While it might appear that the job is complete because the plan is written, the work has only begun. Implementing the *East Coventry Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* will be an ongoing process of planning, doing, assessing effectiveness, and beginning the process anew over the next ten years. To implement the Plan, an operational program is needed. An operational program will describe the specific actions that will be taken to accomplish each objective identified in the Plan. The operational program will identify timelines, responsible parties, resource allocations and sources, and an evaluation plan that will identify specific outcomes to be achieved. The *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* focuses on the what. The operational plan focuses on the how. The operational plan should focus on the first year of implementation. It may include only a few things. The key is that they must be practical, achievable and likely to achieve successful completion. It is better to do a few things well in order to build a track record of success and momentum. Include the following:

- **Action Items** – Identify the specific tasks that should be done to achieve the identified objective.
- **Responsible Parties** – Designate who will be responsible and accountable for accomplishing each task. Be specific.
- **Schedule** – Create the exact dates and duration for accomplishment of the task. Set milestones for important accomplishments by specific date.
- **Resource Requirements and Sources** – List all of the funds, materials, equipment, facilities, and so on required to accomplish the task. Provide the source of these resources including East Coventry Township, partners, sponsors, fees, charges or others.
- **Outcomes** – Specify the anticipated results to be achieved by the designated timeline.
- **Evaluation Measures** – Establish indicators to show if the effort has been successful.

## **ensuring success for the operational plan**

Keep this *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan* before key stakeholders. This plan should be out and used regularly like a bible. All outcomes should refer to plan implementation. It is easy to get distracted in routine activities but the Plan needs to be in use in all Township planning and decision-making. Boards such as the Supervisors, Township Administration, and the Planning Commission all need to have the Plan and refer to it regularly.

As an adopted plan, it serves as a guide; it is not carved in stone. It is intended to seize opportunities and meet

emerging needs as circumstances warrant. The process of implementing the plan is ongoing and continuous, not a one time event, as set forth in the operational plan.

East Coventry Township should move ahead with the plan as adopted, but be prepared to adjust strategies as necessary. Flexibility, patience, and adaptability will be essential in creating the parks and recreation system that suits a community the caliber of East Coventry Township. With a tangible plan and a sound implementation process in place, the Township is likely to protect the scenic beauty of East Coventry and enhance the parks, recreation, and open space system that is recognized far and wide as a community treasure.



## CHAPTER 1

# inventory

### context

East Coventry Township is located along the Schuylkill River in northern Chester County. Its municipal neighbors include North Coventry, South Coventry and East Vincent Townships. Lower Pottsgrove and Limerick Townships sit across the river in Montgomery County. The Borough of Pottstown, also across the river, does not directly abut the Township, but represents the largest population center in the area.

US Route 422, also known as the Pottstown Expressway, runs through neighboring communities and intersects with PA Route 724, the main road running north and south through East Coventry Township. State Route 23 cuts through the southernmost portion of the Township. Ellis Woods Road is the main road through the center of the Township, running north and south. Many other Township roads criss cross East Coventry, providing easy access to most areas.



**Single family homes and apartments intermingle with the remaining agricultural lands.**

The Schuylkill River is the eastern boundary of the Township. The area between the river and Route 724 is largely agricultural, with some residential, commercial and industrial uses mixed in (*see Appendix: Map 2*). Two county preserves, Towpath Park and the Township owned Wade, Faulk and Heiser tracts also exist along the river. The existing land use pattern and lack of roads in this area keep most Township residents disconnected from the Schuylkill River.

East Coventry Township is currently at a tipping point in terms of development. Agriculture is still viable, with farms providing some of the most beautiful views within the Township. Natural areas also abound, particularly along Pigeon Creek and its tributaries. Development is spread across the municipality, with the densest residential development existing in the northern part of the Township. Commercial and industrial zones exist along Route 724, and a small neighborhood commercial area exists at the crossroads of Route 23 and Bethel Church Road.

The *2010–2014 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates*, available at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), states that there were approximately 2,597 housing units in the Township in 2014, with an estimated population of 6,761. Like most of the region, the Township experienced a housing boom between 2000 and 2009, with 852 units, or 32% of the total housing stock, built during that period. Development then slowed down, with only approximately 19 new units built between 2010 and 2014. 1,679 of the existing units are single family detached homes. The remaining 918 units, townhouses, duplexes, twins, apartments, and mobile homes, provide a mix of housing options. The average household size within the Township is 2.63, compared to 2.65 for Chester County.

More than 100 properties within the Township contain 10 acres or more. However, only two of these properties are greater than 50 acres and three are greater than 40 acres. The lack of very large parcels presents challenges to preserving land, requiring partnerships with many landowners.

## municipal properties

East Coventry Township owns and maintains eight properties which are available for use by the public as parks or open spaces (*See Appendix: Map 1*). They contain a total of approximately 218 acres. The parks vary in size from

the 53 acre Creekview open space to the 9.23 acre Wade tract, a yet to be developed riverfront recreation property. These eight properties provide residents with access to active and passive recreation, including facilities such as basketball and pickleball courts, nature trails and tot lots. Many of the Township owned properties are adjacent to each other, allowing for opportunities to expand some existing recreational opportunities. However, the geographic grouping of properties also leads to large gaps between the parks, with a lack of parks in the southern half of the Township.

## protected lands

Many municipalities create an interconnected open space network, linking municipally owned properties, privately owned lands under conservation easement, lands owned



**Trails and open space within subdivisions will contribute to the Township wide network.**

by land trusts or conservancies, and land owned by other government entities such as county, state or national parks. In East Coventry, a handful of these protected lands exist. Chester County owns the Linfield and Sanatoga Preserves along the Schuylkill River, each approximately 205 acres in size. The privately owned, 82.26 acre Ussler property is under a conservation easement. The Jones, Elliott and Kulp farms are under agricultural easements. While they are not all publicly accessible, these properties each contribute to the Township's growing parks, recreation and open space system.

### semi-public lands

A number of semi-public lands exist within the Township. The Coventry Glen community is currently the only subdivision with land owned by a Home Owners Association (HOA). However, plans have been approved for another proposed subdivision which would feature HOA land, called Whispering Woods, located on Old Schuylkill Road, between Spiece and Ellis Woods Roads. The East Coventry Township zoning ordinance, which includes an open space development option for certain districts, will likely lead to more HOA-owned open space in the future.

Churches are sometimes a source of additional recreation facilities, as some feature fields and play equipment. At least five churches exist in East Coventry Township: Calvary Baptist Church, Parker Ford Church, Parkerford Baptist Church, Bethel United Methodist Church and Brownback's United Church of Christ. However, none

of these churches contribute facilities to the park and recreation system. Some could potentially contribute open space through granting of conservation easements as they all sit on greater than 10 acres of land.

The greatest opportunity for partnerships with semi-public landowners may lie with the Owen J. Roberts School District. A new elementary school is to be constructed on a property adjacent to the existing elementary school. The new school will feature athletic fields, trails and play equipment. However, safety concerns will limit public use of the facilities. Nonetheless, a partnership between the school district and the Township could lead to greater opportunities for programming and use of the facilities at the elementary school site.

### historic resources

Three sites listed on the National Historical Register exist within East Coventry Township. These are the privately owned Riverbend Farm, Frick's Locks Historic District, much of which is owned and controlled by Exelon, and the Parker Ford Historic District, a collection of private properties straddling the East Coventry and East Vincent Township boundary, which acts as a gateway to East Coventry Township (*see Appendix: Map 1*). The Parker Ford Tavern, an important feature of the district, is located just over the boundary in East Vincent. Many other locally important historic features exist here, as noted on the *East Coventry Township Historic Resources Map*, prepared June 23, 2008. The Class 1 resources listed on this map include numerous parcels along the Schuylkill River which contain remnants of the canal and towpath, the Maack farmstead and the farm at southern corner of Kolb and Baptist Church Road. Other notable historic features include the historic Village of Snowdenville, numerous historic arch bridges, the Ellis Woods Road Revolutionary War Cemetery and the route of the Battle of the Clouds Retreat, by American soldiers during the revolutionary war, which follows Route 23 through East Coventry. These resources are all important locally, and could potentially be incorporated into the parks, recreation and open space system in the future.



**The Township has identified opportunities to utilize the Frick's Locks Historic District to provide more programming and expanded use of the site.**



## existing trails, paths, and sidewalks

The Township does not currently feature a well connected and developed trail system. However, the foundation for developing this system is in place. The Creekview, Ussler, Maack, and Daniel Kulp Farm properties all feature earthen paths which connect people to nature. Each of these trails also connects to neighboring open spaces or parks. The Orchard Ridge apartments and Coventry Glen townhouse community each feature internal sidewalks and trails or sidewalks along their borders which can someday connect to neighboring properties. The recently approved Whispering Woods subdivision and East Coventry Elementary School will each feature trails which may be accessible to the public and provide connections



**The Schuylkill River Trail and local trails such as the one extending from Buckwalter Road will provide important links in the trail network.**

to neighbors. The Township is also planning for new sidewalk to be installed along Peterman Road to provide safer access to Towpath Park. Most significantly, Chester County is finalizing plans for construction of the Schuylkill River Trail, to continue into the Township from its current terminus at the southern border, running roughly parallel to the river and extending to Towpath Park. The trails, paths and sidewalks which currently exist, coupled with those planned to be constructed, provide the beginnings of a Township wide trail system.

## hydrology

The entire Township exists within the Schuylkill River watershed. Most of the water within the Township flows directly into the Schuylkill River, or by way of Stony Run, Pigeon Creek and their tributaries (*see Appendix: Map 3*). The small portion of the Township south of Route 23 is within the French Creek watershed. French Creek lies to the south of the Township, in East Vincent, and meets the Schuylkill River further downstream.

Pigeon Creek and its tributaries are the primary water resources in the Township. The creek's headwaters lie outside the Township, to the west in North and South Coventry Township. Pigeon Creek flows east and crosses the Township from its nearly westernmost point to its nearly easternmost point. It flows under Route 724 at Parker Ford, where it meets the Schuylkill River near the Wade Tract.



**Pigeon Creek and its tributaries flow through much of the Township, including preserved open spaces.**

## wetlands

The Fish and Wildlife Service's *National Wetlands Inventory* shows wetlands scattered throughout the Township. A band of Riverine wetlands follow the Schuylkill River. Freshwater emergent wetlands follow the courses of Pigeon Creek and its many tributaries. Farm ponds are also classified as wetlands in the data layers. Hydric soils are also present, typically at or near the headwaters to Pigeon Creek's tributaries.

## woodlands

East Coventry Township contains approximately 7,017 acres of land, 1,683 of which are wooded (*see Appendix: Map 4*). While many residents characterize East Coventry as a rural place, nearly a quarter of the Township is wooded. The woodlands generally follow Pigeon Creek and its tributaries, providing riparian buffers which help to filter and infiltrate stormwater before it reaches the creeks. These woodlands also benefit stream health by shading the water and helping to keep it cool. The woodlands also likely help to provide flood control during storm events.

## steep slopes

East Coventry Township features the rolling hills typical of much of Chester County, which contribute to the scenic beauty of the area (*see Appendix: Map 5*). Very few areas of steep or very steep slopes exist here. Those that do are generally associated with Pigeon Creek and tributaries' banks.

## soils

The majority of the soils covering East Coventry Township are Prime Farmland Soils or Soils of Statewide Importance (*see Appendix: Map 6*). A few areas have been reclassified as urban land where developments have spread over the former farmland. Patches of Bowmansville, a hydric soil, also appear along the courses of Pigeon Creek and its tributaries.

## CHAPTER 2

## goals and objectives

**a framework for decision-making**

This plan is a chapter in the *East Coventry Township Comprehensive Plan*, which serves as a guide for decision making. The plan recommends an approach to achieve a parks, recreation, and open space system that conserves our scenic beauty and natural resources. It also serves our citizens throughout their lifetime, close to home, with recreation opportunities year-round. It suggests management strategies and policies to protect our natural resources and provide quality recreation opportunities. The Plan will serve as a reference for Township officials, management and advisory boards; community organizations; the Owen J. Roberts School District; and other interested parties. It is a guide for future actions and decisions. Recommendations will require further discussion, public involvement, and approval for the actions to be undertaken.

**core values, vision, mission and goals**

Upon implementation, the following core values, vision, mission, goals and recommendations will advance East Coventry Township's work in protecting our community's scenic rural character, conserving our natural resources, and establishing an excellent public park system through collaboration.

**core values**

As the qualities valued by the community, the core values are embodied in the mission, vision, and recommendations for open space conservation, parks, recreation, greenways and trails. All policies and actions should be ingrained in the core values.

- **Financial and Environmental Sustainability** – Making the best use of all resources in ways that steward the environment, respect human and financial capacity, and provide a legacy for future generations is vital.
- **Community Character and Scenic Beauty** – East Coventry Township's agrarian roots, riverfront location, and scenic rural character are the essence of this community.
- **Connections** – Connecting people to nature and helping them to get around the Township and to the regional trail network safely on foot, bicycle or horseback is important.
- **Natural Resource Conservation** – Woodlands, the Schuylkill River, creeks, wildlife, and clean water and air must be conserved.
- **Health** – The health and wellness of citizens of all ages is paramount. Recreation fosters active healthy lifestyles through facilities, programs, and services that benefit individuals and the community.

- **Collaboration** – Continuing to work in partnership with our citizens, neighboring communities and community-based organizations in the public and private sector is vital. East Coventry Township cannot meet all conservation and parks and recreation needs on its own.
- **Historic Resources** – Frick’s Locks Village, Parker Ford and Snowdenville Villages, the Schuylkill Canal and towpath, and the many historically important homes, schoolhouses, barns and other buildings are important threads of East Coventry’s community fabric.

## vision statement

*The parks, recreation, and open space system of East Coventry Township enriches the community through the conservation of natural, cultural and historical resources, recreation opportunities that support active healthy lifestyles, and the preservation of our rural scenic character.*

## mission statement

*To acquire, develop, operate, and maintain a park, recreation, and open space system that enriches the quality of life for those who live, work and visit here while protecting our natural, cultural and historic resources and scenic views.*

## shaping the goals

Community engagement played a vital role in the development of this plan. The consulting team included a Plan Task Force, community forums, interviews, work sessions, questionnaires, and landowner focus groups to assess public opinion regarding parks, recreation, conservation and trails. The Task Force worked with the consultant team to formulate goals. During the process of securing citizen opinion, consensus emerged on the importance of the following:

- *Preservation of the scenic beauty, heritage and rural character of East Coventry Township.*
- *Provision of safe places to walk, including connections to the Schuylkill River Trail.*

- *Increasing public awareness through better sharing of information about parks, trails and recreation opportunities.*

- *Provision of more programming in the parks.*

Participants in the public forum were also asked to fill out a questionnaire about parks, recreation and open space. Upon analyzing the questionnaire responses, the following findings emerged:

- *Parks, recreation and open space are very important to the quality of life in East Coventry Township.*
- *The Township has made good progress in increasing parks and recreation facilities, but there is still much work to be done.*



**The character of the community plays an important role in shaping parks, recreation and open space.**



- *More parks and facilities are needed.*
- *There is great interest in connecting with nature in the parks.*
- *Development changing the character of the community is of great concern.*

## goals

The following five goals were developed:

**Goal 1:** Protect our open space, natural, cultural and historical resources, and scenic rural character.

**Goal 2:** Establish parks and recreation facilities as community destinations where residents can have fun, experience nature, socialize, and lead active healthy lifestyles.

**Goal 3:** Connect our community through a system of trails.

**Goal 4:** Facilitate recreation opportunities to help the citizens engage in active healthy living.

**Goal 5:** Provide operational excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.

## objectives

For each of the Goals, the Task Force has developed objectives, which will help to move the Township towards meeting each goal.

**Goal 1:** Protect our open space, natural, cultural and historical resources and scenic rural character.

### Objectives

- Match Chester County's goal of preserving 50% of the undeveloped land. The Township contains approximately 7,017 acres of land. One hundred and twelve parcels of 10 acres or greater area are unprotected (*see Appendix: Map 13*). These parcels total approximately 2,133 acres. Therefore, the Township must protect approximately 1,066 acres in order to meet the goal of preservation of 50% of the remaining unprotected and undeveloped land.

- Protect the existing rural character of East Coventry by preserving and stewarding properties which contribute to the Township's way of life.
- Protect vulnerable natural resources by preserving and stewarding properties which contain woodlands and stream corridors.
- Expand cultural and recreational opportunities by preserving and stewarding properties which are contiguous to other preserved natural areas, trails and greenways, historic sites and recreational facilities.
- Maintain agriculture as a viable way of life, by preserving properties which are actively farmed.

**Goal 2:** Establish parks and recreation facilities as community destinations where residents can have fun, experience nature, socialize, and lead active healthy lifestyles.

### Objectives

- Ensure that adequate parks and recreation facilities are available as the population increases.
- Continue to provide opportunities for residents to connect with nature within the parks.
- Ensure that Township parks are safe and accessible to all residents through communication, signage, and facility improvements.
- Engage residents in completing master plans for all new parks and major park improvements,



**Preservation of open space will help to preserve the Township's existing rural character.**



evaluating how the park is used, determining an appropriate theme and recommending programs, land management and facilities, as appropriate.

- e. Continue to create a Township-wide interconnected park system through selective acquisition and voluntary donations of land and easements.
- f. Consider the addition of recreation facilities as part of the park master planning process. The Township could benefit from the addition of a dog park, more pickleball courts, gaga pits, improved boat access to the river and other facilities.
- g. Strengthen the connection between the residents and the Schuylkill River through improved riverfront recreation. Bring people to the river by providing additional boat launches, fishing piers, birding and wildlife observation areas, pavilions with views of the river and riverside paths and trails for walking.

**Goal 3:** Connect our community through a system of trails.

#### **Objectives**

- a. Establish trails and associated improvements within the first one-half mile of important destinations.
- b. Formalize and protect the existing social and equestrian trails through easement or other formal agreements.
- c. Meet the goals of the *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* for the Federation of Northern

Chester County Communities, by connecting parks, schools and other community destinations as well as connecting to neighboring trails at municipal boundaries.

**Goal 4:** Facilitate recreation opportunities to help the citizens engage in active healthy living.

#### **Objectives**

- a. Serve as the point of contact for the community regarding information about recreation opportunities.
- b. Continue in the role of facilitator of recreation opportunities, not as a major direct provider of services. Foster relationships with community organizations that can plan, direct and implement public recreation programs. Organizations may include the East Coventry Historical Society, Parkerford Women's Club, sports leagues, scouts, schools, faith based organizations, and others.
- c. Ensure that all agreements for public use of facilities by community organizations comply with standard operating procedures. This includes proper background checks, insurance liability requirements, and philosophies that strive to create healthy social environments for all involved, and most especially for children, youth and seniors.
- d. Develop a work program plan for the Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee. Focus on a three-year plan with an action plan for the first year.



**Existing facilities host popular programs, such as pickleball.**



**Many township parks and open spaces can connect people to nature through self directed recreation.**

Since sports are very well covered for children and youth, focus on other aspects of recreation, including facilities and programming to serve seniors. The two most important areas for East Coventry Township to focus on are connecting people to nature and health and wellness.

- e. Focus recreation opportunities on experiences in the great outdoors. Determine ways to create opportunities for self-directed recreation. This would be through the provision of facilities and the promotion of information on where people can enjoy nature; safely walk, bicycle, and ride horses; and socialize with family and friends.

**Goal 5:** Provide operational excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.

#### **Objectives**

- a. Develop an information packet to recruit and inform new members of the Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee, newly elected officials and other Township committee members about the parks and recreation systems, this *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan*, the Committee mission and operations.
- b. Develop an annual report about accomplishments, opportunities, issues and changing needs in community parks, recreation and conservation.
- c. Recognize that park planning is an important function of a public parks, recreation and conservation system. It should include a public involvement process and participation by the maintenance staff. Hire professional parks and recreation planners and landscape architects with expertise in creating great public spaces to help guide planning.
- d. With any park master plan, major park improvement, or addition of a new program or service, ensure that there is a plan for additional maintenance, staffing, budget or committed non-Township support in place to ensure the long-term sustainability of the respective improvement.

- e. Add natural resource management as a function of the municipal parks, recreation and conservation system. Secure training for staff on natural resource management such as that offered by Natural Lands. Develop natural resource management or stewardship plans for public parks and conservation areas.
- f. Develop a formal maintenance management system for park and open space maintenance. This will facilitate informed decision making for the allocation of resources and the planning of future facilities. It will also set forth a written plan that will endure through changes in staffing and administration. Consider applying to the Township's insurance carrier, currently Delaware Valley Insurance Trust (DVIT), for a grant to undertake the development of such a plan. DVIT is most supportive of such plans as it reduces risk, exposure to liability and increased safety.
- g. Ensure that the Township complies with regular safety inspections, reporting and maintenance of records of park maintenance activities and inspections. Playground inspections should be on file for at least 20 years.
- h. Ensure that the public receives premier customer service in all matters related to parks, recreation, and conservation.
- i. Strive to allocate 5% of the Township's annual operating budget for parks, recreation and conservation. Work towards the statewide average per capita investment in parks and recreation.
- j. Establish a five to seven-year capital improvement program.
- k. Consider exploring resurrecting the partnership with the Pottstown Area Regional Recreation Committee to increase program and service opportunities in East Coventry Township.
- l. Consider establishing a park friends group and attaining 501(c)(3) status for it. For small communities like East Coventry, the development of a dog park is often an effective way to launch a park friends group.

## CHAPTER 3

## plan for open space

**context**

East Coventry Township predominantly features residential development and agricultural lands. There are few large subdivisions, with most of the residential parcels spread throughout the Township. Some commercial and light industrial uses exist along the Route 724 corridor. The remaining large farms define the landscape, providing beautiful views along many Township roads.

Approximately 903 acres of land are publically owned or protected within East Coventry Township (*see Table 1*). The Township owns 217 acres of parks and open spaces. Two large preserves owned by Chester County contain 196.4 acres of riverfront property which are also open to the public. An earthen trail is open to the public at the privately owned Ussler property, 82 acres of which is protected through a conservation easement. The Coventry Glen townhouse development includes 21 acres of common area, owned and managed by the HOA. These common areas surround the homes, contain basins and were not meant to be used as recreational areas, but could nonetheless be used to connect to open space preserved in the future. The Jones, Elliott, and Kulp Farms contain a total of 277.75 acres, protected by agricultural easements, which contribute to the agricultural economy and character of the Township. Frick's Locks Village contains

approximately 107 acres within the PECO exclusionary zone, which prohibits most forms of development.

Land use regulations currently play a role in preserving open space alongside new development. The R-2 Residential District offers a cluster development option, which requires 50% of the development site to be preserved as open space. The R-3 Residential District offers an open space subdivision option which requires a minimum of 35% of the site to be preserved. Each of these options requires 0.07 acres of active recreation land to be provided as part of the required open space. As development continues, these options can provide preserved open space alongside new homes.

**conservation of the community fabric**

East Coventry's scenic beauty is defined by its agricultural lands, wooded streams, historic villages, homes, farms and bridges. The many small, winding roads through the Township lead through beautiful woodlands, over clear streams, and past working farms, with another historic barn or home seemingly around every curve. These are the pieces that combine to make East Coventry a beautiful place while remaining a working landscape and these are the pieces that should be conserved.

TABLE 1 | **public and protected lands**

	name	size (acres)	ownership	public access
1	Ellis Woods Park	17.9	East Coventry Township	Yes
2	Creekview	53.1	East Coventry Township	Yes, limited to perimeter trail
3	Maack Farm	73.5	East Coventry Township	Yes, limited to perimeter trail
4	Daniel Kulp Farm	16.6	East Coventry Township	Yes
5	Towpath Park	7.5	East Coventry Township	Yes
6	Heiser Tract	28.16	East Coventry Township	No
7	Faulk Tract	13.3	East Coventry Township	No
8	Wade Tract	6.7	East Coventry Township	No
9	Ussler Tract	82.26	Private w/Conservation Easement	Yes, limited to perimeter trail
10	Edward Kulp Farm	165.1	Private w/Agricultural Easement	No
11	Jones Farm	86.4	Private w/Agricultural Easement	No
12	Elliott Farm	26.25	Private w/Agricultural Easement	No
13	Linfield Preserve	72.6	Chester County	Yes
14	Sanatoga Preserve	123.8	Chester County	Yes
15	Coventry Glen Common Area	23.1	Private HOA	Limited to Sidewalk
16	Frick's Locks Village	107	Exelon	Limited to 6 ac. +/- leased by Twp, by appointment only
	<b>totals</b>	<b>903.95</b>		



**Agriculture contributes to the rural character of the Township, but is also typically the target of developers.**

## agriculture

Working farms preserve the scenic views, contribute to the local economy, produce locally grown food and conserve historic structures within their proper context. The Township and County have already conserved many of the largest farms—Edward Kulp, Daniel Kulp, Jones, Ussler, Maack, and Creekview—through agricultural easements, conservation easements or fee simple purchase.

## streams and woodlands

Pigeon Creek is the main stream flowing through the Township. Its tributaries seem to stretch into every corner of the community, filling farm ponds and running beneath historic bridges. Woodlands tend to buffer most reaches of the streams, keeping the water cool and clean while providing habitat for the local fauna. The wooded stream valleys add contrast, and another layer of beauty, to the Township's scenic agricultural landscape.

## history

Cemeteries, bridges, farms and homes scattered throughout the Township are pleasant reminders of East Coventry's history. While three sites within the Township are listed on the National Historic Register—Riverbend Farm, Parker Ford Historic District and Frick's Locks Village Historic District—countless other locally important sites and structures are nestled within the stream valleys and rolling farmlands, adding to the scenic beauty and character of the Township. Some sites, like the Ellis Woods Revolutionary War cemetery, are publicly accessible places, set aside for all to visit. But far more abundant are the many bridges, homes and barns which are still a part of



**History is everywhere in East Coventry, in the form of barns, farmhouses and old stone walls, such as the one on the preserved Maack Farm.**



everyday life. To the south, just over the boundary line in East Vincent, lies the Parker Ford Tavern. The tavern is part of the Parker Ford Historic District and could play a role in connecting people to the riverfront, as it can interact with the Wade Tract and the Schuylkill River Trail.

### **prioritizing conservation**

Agriculture, history and wooded stream courses are the three features which most strongly define East Coventry's scenic character. However, these features can't be used to prioritize conservation on a parcel level, as the community is lucky enough to have each of these features in abundance. When choosing parcels to preserve, it is likely that most parcels will feature agriculture, wooded streams or a locally important historic feature. Therefore, additional criteria may be considered in prioritization, including parcel size, connectivity to trails and greenways, proximity to the Schuylkill River and financial opportunities.

### **connectivity to trails, greenways, and preserved open space**

Preservation of contiguous lands will benefit the Township's residents, flora, fauna and water. By preserving properties adjacent to one another, trail systems can be expanded, greater natural areas can be protected or revitalized and streams can be buffered more effectively. Connectivity should be considered when identifying parcels for conservation.

Few trails currently exist within the Township. However, the community is beginning to value safe places dedicated to walking as development progresses and roads become busier with traffic, and no longer safe for walking. Additionally, the regionally important Schuylkill River Trail will soon traverse East Coventry. The trail will provide residents with an important recreational amenity, free of charge—a place to walk, run, bike and enjoy nature. It will also provide an important link in the Township's trail network. Preservation of open space will go hand in hand with expansion of the trail system, so properties adjacent to existing trails, or providing opportunities for additional trails should be considered as conservation priorities. In

most cases, trail easements should be provided alongside agricultural or conservation easements.

Greenways tend to follow the path of Pigeon Creek and its tributaries. The greenways provide crucial wildlife habitat and corridors, flood protections, and riparian buffers. Development typically fragments greenways, potentially leading to decreased stream health, increased flood risks and reduced habitat. Trails often follow greenways, as they are one of few uses appropriate for location within floodplains. Conservation of properties which potentially connect to existing greenways or trails should be considered a priority.

When contiguous parcels are preserved, greater opportunities arise for protecting or rehabilitating natural areas on a grander scale. Fragmented forests and small patches of meadows don't serve the local birds and other animals as well as larger patches. Some birds require vast acreages of contiguous meadow in order to nest. By preserving adjacent parcels, opportunities may arise for creating larger meadows. Where forest is fragmented into many smaller patches, more forest edge exists, which is often the least healthy in terms of biodiversity and native species. Adjacent parcels may offer opportunities to preserve or create larger forest patches, better equipped to serve the local fauna. Additionally, where many farms can be preserved in close proximity, it may provide opportunities for more efficiency for farmers, particularly for those looking to lease large areas of farmland, rather than tending to many smaller farms in different areas. Connectivity should be a high priority when identifying parcels for conservation, whether their ultimate use will be parks, trails, open space, natural areas or agriculture.

### **large parcels**

Very few large, undeveloped parcels remain. One hundred and twelve parcels containing 10 acres or more exist within the Township. These parcels are the most likely to be developed. They are also the most likely to be eligible for funding for preservation. Of these parcels, only two are greater than 50 acres and another three greater than 40 acres but less than 50 acres. While there are few opportunities left for large scale preservation, this

is partly the result of the Township and County having already preserved many of the largest parcels. When large parcels become available, their preservation should become a priority, as they'll offer the greatest bang for the preservation buck.

### **the Schuylkill Riverfront**

The Schuylkill River forms the Township's eastern boundary, providing over five miles of riverfront. However, much of the Township is cut off from the river as Route 724 acts as a barrier. Much of the riverfront is held in private property, but Chester County owns 1.22 miles of waterfront between Linfield and Sanatoga Preserves, which are open to the public. However, they do not appear to provide easy access to the water for recreation. The Township owns four river front properties, which include a total of 0.77 miles of riverfront. Only Towpath Park offers access to the river for boating, fishing and other water based recreation. The Heiser, Faulk, and Wade tracts hold great potential, but have not yet been developed for recreation. Preservation of additional riverfront properties could help reconnect the

residents with the river, providing more access for fishing, boating, birding and other recreational activities.

### **availability and financial opportunities**

The most important criterion for conservation is availability. The Township should focus on properties whose owners are willing to discuss conservation. Eminent domain is a tool available to the Township. However, it is not recommended for use. East Coventry, and most communities, would be better served in building a community land ethic. This movement evolves as residents become more aware of their land resources and help to put into place the planning, programmatic, and regulatory mechanisms needed to protect these resources. Building this community land ethic may require the Township to offer more opportunities to learn about their own community and talk about the importance of preserving it.

Funding opportunities are nearly as important as availability, because no municipality can afford to purchase all the land they would like to conserve. East Coventry residents have already shown a willingness to



**The Schuylkill River provides five miles of riverfront, nearly two miles of which is owned by the Township or Chester County.**

spend tax dollars on preservation by passing an open space referendum. This dedicated funding positions East Coventry well when attempting to acquire additional funding, as they can typically provide some matching funds. Additionally, parts of the Township lie within many funding regions, including the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation, The Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape, and the Delaware River Watershed Initiative Schuylkill Highlands cluster. Properties which fall within these funding areas may have unique opportunities to draw from many funding sources, allowing the Township to further leverage their funds.

## methods for preserving open space

East Coventry Township already uses many means to preserve open space. Continued use of fee simple purchase, conservation easements, agricultural easements and land protection through development, will ensure that the open space system continues to grow.

## conservation easements

In addition to purchasing land outright, townships purchase conservation easements to meet local open space goals. A conservation easement limits certain uses on a property (such as development) in order to advance

conservation purposes while keeping the land under private ownership and control. Conservation easements relieve the municipality of the burden of managing the land. Conservation easements are often used to preserve farmland, prohibiting future subdivision and enabling the farmer to live on and farm the property. Another use of the conservation easement technique would be to purchase a trail easement, thereby allowing public access in an interconnected trail network. The Township would want to ensure that the easement permits the Township (or group responsible for the trail) to maintain the trail. Because the land remains in private ownership, the cost of purchasing the conservation easement is lower than the cost of purchasing the property in total.

The Township already holds a conservation easement on the Ussler property. A trail easement also exists, allowing the Township to install and maintain a trail around the perimeter of the property. In this case, it made sense for the Township to preserve the land, allowing it to remain as working farmland in perpetuity, while gaining a recreational amenity in the trail. Additionally, the Township holds no responsibility for maintaining the farmland. It also can never be developed, helping to preserve the Township's rural character and scenic beauty. Conservation easements coupled with trail easements should be the Township's primary tool for preserving land and expanding the trail system.

## agricultural easements

As East Coventry still features many working farms, Agricultural Easements may also continue to be a viable means of preservation. The Chester County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) administers Pennsylvania's Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program. Their mission is to assure the preservation of viable agricultural lands in order to protect the agricultural economy and resources of the County. This body may present funding for preservation of farmland which may not be available from other sources. However, agricultural easements typically do not allow trails through a property. Where an agricultural easement may be appropriate for a property, but a trail corridor is needed, a trail easement can be established alongside an agricultural easement. This



**A conservation easement protects the Ussler Tract from being developed, while allowing the farmer to maintain ownership and control over its use. A trail easement has allowed for the creation of a public trail through the site.**



creates an additional layer of work and can complicate the transaction and funding. However, due to the number of remaining farms, and the impact of the preservation of the Jones, Elliott, and Kulp Farms under agricultural easements, this tool should be considered as a means of preservation in East Coventry Township.

### **purchase or other fee simple acquisition**

The most common means for a municipality to fully control land is through fee simple acquisition. This means the township owns the property and may manage it as they see fit. Acquisition may be the best solution for a township to provide parks and active recreation facilities, but it also comes with the burden of maintaining the land. Acquisition should be considered for parcels suitable for conversion to parks and recreation uses or when a parcel can augment an existing facility. Acquisition should also be considered when an adjacent parcel contains

a sensitive use, such as a school, a natural area with important features or a historic site which would benefit from buffering.

In some cases, fee simple acquisition may be followed by establishment of a conservation easement. The Township may find itself with the opportunity to acquire a parcel which it does not wish to manage, but may be well suited for preservation due to the presence of agriculture. In this case, the Township may wish to acquire the land, place trail and conservation easements on the property, ensuring its protection and contribution to the trails network, and then sell the property to a private owner, or lease the farmable land to a local farmer. As the property has been stripped of its ability to be developed, its value is thereby decreased. This would make the land more affordable for a farmer or conservation minded buyer to purchase. As the land is devalued, property taxes may also be lower. If the land is suitable for growing crops, the Township may wish to retain ownership, but lease it to a farmer. The lease payments would generate income for the Township.



**The Township owns the Maack Farm, leases much of it for agriculture, and maintains a trail for public use.**

East Coventry already holds many properties in fee simple ownership, including Towpath Park, Creekview, Maack Farm, Daniel H. Kulp Farm, and the Wade Tract. Each appears appropriate for this type of ownership. Maack Farm and Creekview are still actively farmed. Towpath Park features recreational facilities. The Daniel H. Kulp Farm features a trail, surrounded by sensitive natural areas and the Wade Tract is currently undeveloped, but appears well suited for water based recreation and a trailhead. The Township may wish to consider placing conservation easements on each of the parks and open spaces, to lessen the temptation to sell off properties for profit during a period of robust development or times of financial struggle. Easements should only be established after master planning and public input determine the best uses and layout for each park.

### cluster and open space development options

The East Coventry Township Zoning Ordinance also plays a role in preserving open space. A cluster development option is available to developers in the R-2 Residential District. This option requires 50% of the development site to be preserved as open space. In the R-3 Residential District, an open space subdivision option is available which requires a minimum of 35% and up to 65% of the site to be preserved. In each of these options, 0.07 acres of land suitable for active recreation is required to be included per dwelling unit. Under these options, developers are still permitted to build as many homes as under the conventional development options. The open spaces preserved within these subdivisions will typically be managed by HOAs. Trails and trail easements can also be established through the open spaces, allowing the new development to provide to the expanding Township wide trail network while also providing an amenity for its new residents. These development options are not mandatory, but if use of these options continues, they can ensure that open space is preserved, even where properties are developed.

The Whispering Woods subdivision, which received preliminary approval in 2015, is a good example of the open space option in use. The 80 townhouse subdivision includes nearly 24 acres of preserved open space and recreation

areas, which represents 66% of the site. It also features nearly one mile of publically accessible trails and sidewalks. A small play area and some parking are also planned. This subdivision uses the open space option to provide homes which will be well served by nearby open space and recreation facilities.

### moving forward

With approximately 878 acres of land currently open to the public or protected in perpetuity, East Coventry Township has demonstrated the willingness and ability to use the many tools available to preserve open space for its residents. These open spaces provide places to walk, run or simply enjoy nature while preserving the scenic character and historical features of the Township. However, as competition for dwindling public funding continues to get fiercer, coupled with a slight uptick in development pressure, it is important for the Township to stay ahead of the curve and ensure that it is well positioned to take advantage of every opportunity which arises.

The Township has made good use of its land use regulations to preserve open space alongside new development. Additionally, the criteria laid out in Township Resolution 2011-14 Exhibit A, have allowed the Township to choose wisely when evaluating parcels for conservation. However, each of these documents should be revised further to better reflect the Township's current open space situation, needs and wants.



**Open space and cluster development options keep features such as creeks available to the public, rather than in private backyards.**

## evaluation criteria

East Coventry Township Resolution 2011-14 (see *Appendix, pg. 84*) lays out the criteria to be considered when identifying parcels for conservation. The resolution includes a four page check list which includes the following topics:

- Current Risk of Sale
- Farming Viability
- Location
- Size
- Development and Zoning
- Life Quality and Environmental Significance
- Recreation Potential
- Comments

The criteria provide for a good working document for assessing potential open spaces. Each of the topics listed above is followed by more detailed questions. Many of the detailed questions reflect the characteristics and resources identified by the community as important, including historical significance, presence of natural features and the ability to continue farming a property. However, additional criteria should be added to the checklist, which reflect updates to the Township code, goals set forth in this plan, other Township plans or in the *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan for the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities*. The recommended additions include the following:

### 1. Assess the property's availability or willingness of landowners to sell or agree to an easement.

A willing landowner is necessary for any means of conservation to go forward. The Township should attempt to engage in discussions with landowners to determine their willingness and focus their efforts where landowners are most interested in conservation.

### 2. Is the property bounded by the Schuylkill River?

The river presents many opportunities for recreation, but many residents don't identify East Coventry as a waterfront community. This plan aims to improve the connection to the riverfront by identifying the

potential for conservation adjacent to the Schuylkill River. Additionally, opportunities may arise to piggyback recreation with the Schuylkill River Trail.

### 3. Is the property adjacent to an existing or proposed school? Or offer the opportunity to provide improved or increased pedestrian and/or bicycle access to a school?

The Board of Supervisors has demonstrated that they support the ability for students to walk to school. Additionally, schools, as semi-public places, offer access to recreation facilities such as playgrounds and fields when school is not in session. By identifying conservation opportunities adjacent or close to schools, the Township can provide recreational facilities close to the children, foster partnerships with the school district on programming and expand the trail network to help provide safe walking routes to school.

### 4. Is the property at or near a gateway to the Township?

A visitor's first impression of the Township is made when they see the signs letting them know that they've just entered East Coventry. Beautiful farms and long, scenic views of the rolling hills welcome visitors at many Township boundaries. These views, and first impressions, should be preserved as they are the front doors to the community.

### 5. Is the property adjacent to an existing trail?

The Township is already expanding the trail network through open spaces, parks, and private developments. The continuous trails which connect through the Ussler, Maack and Daniel H. Kulp Farms are great examples of how preservation of contiguous parcels can expand recreational trails. Where trails exist on neighboring properties, it should be noted in the assessment. Where the trail map (*Map # 7*) shows proposed trails, these should also be noted.

### 6. Does the property offer an opportunity to advance the Township wide trail plan?

In some cases, opportunities may exist to advance the Township wide trail plan (*Map #7*), even if there are no existing trails on contiguous properties. This could apply where a parcel is large enough to provide a self contained

trail loop which could then spur trail construction on its neighboring properties. Additionally, some properties may represent a very important link in a future trail corridor, one with which the trail cannot be built without. While a property may lack some of other resources typical of most preserved open space, a potential future trail connection may make conservation worthwhile.

## **7. Does the current zoning permit cluster or open space option development?**

Where cluster or open space development options are available, the Township should consider the probability of whether those options would be pursued and how much preserved open space would result. In cases where a large amount of open space would be preserved, it may be determined that the Township's open space funding would be better spent on a parcel not likely to be developed under an open space option.

The addition of these seven criteria will strengthen an already very good assessment checklist. Like the existing checklist, the recommended additions are intended to foster discussion, rather than provide a raw score for the purpose of ranking parcels.

## **land use regulations**

As the Whispering Woods subdivision has shown, the Township has ordinances in place which encourage the preservation of open space alongside new residential development. However, the ordinances can be revised to go further, to permit or even require open space preservation in additional zoning districts and in larger amounts, without negatively affecting a property's development potential. Additionally, some revisions are recommended to clarify the requirements for long term management of the open space. The recommendations include the following:

### **1. Revise the cluster and open space options to meet Conservation by Design standards.**

Growing Greener: Conservation by Design is a set of ordinances which requires a minimum of 50% of the buildable land to be preserved as open space,

while permitting the same number of dwelling units. Conservation by Design subdivisions preserve an average of 62% of a development site in open space. These ordinances have been adopted by more than 30 municipalities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including Chester County neighbors North Coventry, East Vincent, Wallace, Newlin, London Grove, and London Britain Townships. East Coventry Township already incorporates the "4 Step Design Process," a key principle of Conservation by Design, but could go further in revising the ordinance to include other key aspects of Growing Greener.

### **2. Revise ordinance to permit Growing Greener: Conservation by Design within the FR district.**

The FR Farm Residential District lacks public water and public sewer. So it was not considered to be a feasible location for the open space development option. However, Growing Greener: Conservation by Design is well suited to districts without public water and sewer. The design concept's flexibility typically allows developers to avoid building on the worst soils for sewage disposal, and when necessary, even allows for individual septic systems to be located within open space in order to allow for necessary separation distances between water and sewer. Nearby Wallace



**Homes front on open space in the Ridglea development, nearby in South Coventry Township. Ridglea was constructed in accordance with Growing Greener: Conservation by Design ordinances.**



Township has no public water or sewer, yet requires Growing Greener: Conservation by Design for new developments. East Coventry has already incorporated the “4 Step Design Process” into all zoning districts, but could go further in revising the ordinance to include other key aspects of Conservation by Design.

**3. As an alternative to implementing Growing Greener Conservation by Design standards, revise the cluster development option to require 50% OS preservation in all zoning districts where it can be applied.**

Where cluster design options require only 30–35% of the site to be preserved, as in East Coventry, the open space tends to contain all of the unbuildable land. This open space rarely contributes to a municipal open space system, nor does it provide recreational opportunities,



**HOA documents should clearly specify responsibilities for maintaining open space, including removal of hazard trees.**

when most of the open space is steep slopes, wetlands and floodplains. By increasing the amount of required open space, it is possible to improve the quality of the open space, to better serve the residents.

**4. Require HOA documents to specify responsibility for open space maintenance and management.**

HOAs often manage private streets and care for stormwater management structures with little difficulty. However, even as open space developments gain in popularity, it may be unclear to an incoming HOA just what will be required in caring for open space. They may not even understand that the open space maintenance will fall to them. The Township ordinances could be clarified to require HOA documents to clearly specify responsibility for open space maintenance and management.

**5. Prepare a sample open space management plan to be included as an appendix to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SLDO), for use by developers pursuing the open space option.**

The Township’s SLDO currently requires developers pursuing the open space option to provide an open space management plan. However, the ordinances do not include a sample management plan or minimum requirements. Preparation of a sample document would clarify what a developer needs to submit, as well as ensuring consistency. It may also reduce the Township’s time spent reviewing incoming open space management plans if the sample document helps guide applicants towards submitting more complete, coherent and adequate open space management plans. By ensuring that the best possible management plan is created, it will lead to the best possible long term maintenance of the open space.

The sample management plan (as well as those submitted by developers) should include, at a minimum:

- Guidelines for ongoing assessments of the open space, to determine whether the existing maintenance regime needs to be amended;

- Guidelines for scheduling ongoing hazard tree inspections. These inspections can identify potentially dangerous trees and help to identify a course of action for addressing them;
- A list of invasive and alien species, produced by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, or another qualified organization or professional. Invasive species are one of the greatest threats to our natural areas. The ability to identify and manage them will be key to maintaining beautiful and healthy open spaces.

#### **6. Prepare signage details for public open spaces and trails.**

The Township ordinances currently require signage to be posted on public trails and open spaces created through the open space development option. However, there are no specifications for those signs, leaving developers to create their own. This will result in series of mismatched, confusing signs. By providing specifications and requiring developers to meet them, the Township can ensure that the open spaces and trails created through the open space design option will be clearly marked as part of the publicly accessible network. It will also ensure that they match, following a consistent color pattern, using the same fonts, shapes and sizes. This sign system should also be consistent with, if not the same as, a system of signage designating Township parks, trails and open spaces.

#### **7. Undertake a comprehensive review of the non-residential zoning districts.**

The Township contains four non-residential zoning districts: NC Neighborhood Commercial District, C Commercial District, C-1 Commercial and Business

Campus District, and LI Limited Industrial District. These districts should be reviewed to determine:

- a. Whether they are zoned properly: Are any of these zones no longer located appropriately?
- b. Do the zoning standards effectively protect the values identified through the public feedback process? Can they be amended to permit successful commercial and industrial uses which do not conflict with the goals of this or other Township plans?
- c. Can open space be incorporated into the design standards for commercial uses based on square footage of the proposed use, building coverage or impervious surfaces?
- d. Are additional uses which can incorporate open space appropriate for these areas? These may include Traditional Neighborhood Design or Mixed Use Villages.
- e. Can the ordinances be amended to better protect natural features through improved standards for maximum impervious surfaces, tree removal, greening of parking areas and protection of open spaces?

By adopting the ordinance revisions and taking the actions recommended above, the Township can further strengthen and expand on the ability to preserve open space alongside land developments.

## CHAPTER 4

# plan for trails

### context

East Coventry is a community which has not had a great need for trails in the past. It has been an agricultural community, with little development and little traffic. People felt safe walking along the roads so sidewalks were never installed. However, that situation is changing. It is happening slowly, but the Township is developing. Homes are being built, bringing more people and more traffic, making the roads less safe for walking.

Most of the development has occurred in the northern half of the Township, closest to the Route 422 interchange in North Coventry Township. Zoning ordinance revisions

in the recent past have allowed for developments to be more internally focused, with fewer access points to main roads. Sidewalks and trails are also required now for most new development. Historically, single family dwelling unit lots have faced directly onto main roads, with no sidewalks required. The proliferation of small lots with driveways directly accessing the main roads makes it very difficult to establish trails in these areas.

At the public meeting held as part of preparation of this plan, residents expressed general support for creation of trails. They had concerns regarding privacy and property rights and expected the Township to work with willing landowners. Additionally, residents expressed a greater need



**People often walk or run in the road, where there are no sidewalks, like at this stretch of Ellis Woods Road, near Cedarville Road.**

for trails in the northern portion of the Township, where development is heaviest. In the southern portion of the Township, they believe the roads are still safe for walking.

## mechanisms

The varied landscape of the Township calls for the use of many different tools for establishment of trails. All of the mechanisms discussed in this section require partnerships with willing landowners or compliance with local ordinances which require trails within new developments.

### 1. Acquisition of trail easements through donation or purchase.

Trail easements will allow the Township to establish trails without acquiring entire properties. This relieves the Township of the burden of maintaining an entire property. Trail easements can be sold or donated by landowners, but require a willing landowner with which to partner. Trail easements can be established alongside conservation and agricultural easements or they can stand on their own.

### 2. Acquisition or public use of built trails within and along the perimeters of new developments.

The Township's Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances require sidewalks to be installed in new developments. Additionally, certain types of developments in certain zoning districts also require trails to be installed as part of the new development. Where developers are required to install trails and sidewalks, they provide key pieces of the trail network while also providing amenities for the new residents.

### 3. Use PECO rights-of-way as trail corridors.

Rights-of-way (ROWs) and easements which contain utilities are used as trail corridors in many communities. They provide long stretches of unobstructed land, all within a single ownership. PECO/Exelon owns rights-of-way which cross the Township from east to west and north to south. A partnership with PECO should be established to permit trails, to be developed and maintained by the Township, within rights-of way.

### 4. Use Township and PennDOT ROWs where necessary for trails, paths, or sidewalks.

The existing development pattern, with many homes and driveways fronting directly on the main roads, makes it difficult to establish multi-use trails in these areas. Instead, the installation of sidewalks within Township or PennDOT rights-of-way may be more appropriate.

## ordinance revision

The Township's Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances (SLDO) require the installation of sidewalks in all new developments and trails in some new developments. The following ordinances revision would improve the quality of the trails to be provided.

### 1. Revise the SLDO to permit trails along arterial and collector roads in lieu of sidewalks.

In new subdivisions, where homes front on internal roads rather than on connector or arterial roads, asphalt multi-use trails may be better alternatives to concrete sidewalks. Without interference from driveways, these perimeter trails would be ideal for fitness walkers, runners and bikers. These users typically prefer trails of asphalt or other materials to concrete sidewalks, which often chip, degrade or have edges which rise over time, creating tripping hazards.

## priorities and opportunities

In trail planning, like open space preservation, opportunity often trumps prioritization. Therefore, the following prioritization should be considered as a rough guide, rather than step by step instructions to building a trail network. The mechanisms for trail creation described above depend on cooperation with third parties including public utilities, private citizens and developers. In some cases, a trail which may be considered a high priority may not be implementable due to a lack of partnership opportunities. When this situation arises, it may be more efficient to move on to another opportunity, and revisit the higher priority at a more favorable time.

This plan cannot account for opportunities which may, or may never, arise. Therefore it is recommended that



the Township review the map of existing and proposed trails included in this plan in conjunction with the list of priority destinations below on a routine basis, with current opportunities in mind. The Township should use these resources and the knowledge Township staff and volunteers to identify trail priorities with a high probability of success.

## trail classifications

The proposed trail system utilizes existing trails and paths and proposes a multi-layered system of new trails (see *Appendix: Map 7*). These different types of trails and paths will serve different users and will also be prioritized differently by the Township for implementation. The following paragraphs describe each different type of trail and state the color by which they are represented on Map #7.

### existing trails (green)

Few formal trails currently exist within the Township. A few stretches of trail and sidewalk exist within the recently built high density developments of Coventry Glen and Orchard Ridge. The Township has also constructed nature trails within open spaces, including Creekview, the Maack Farm, the Daniel H. Kulp Farm and the Ussler tract, a privately owned property held in conservation easement. A small connector trail also connects the South Sanatoga Road cul-de-sac to Buckwalter Road.

A system of informal equestrian trails also exists. These trails cross private properties, are unmarked and have no associated amenities. The local riders keep in touch with the property owners and use handshake agreements to keep the trails open. There is no formal organization of riders, no formal agreements and no official map of the trail system.

### planned trails (orange)

More formal trails are planned for construction in the near future. The Schuylkill River Trail will finally extend across East Coventry Township, following railroad rights-of-way, PECO power line easements, Township owned parks and open spaces and privately owned properties. The trail will connect Parker Ford Village, Frick's Locks Village and Towpath Park. Approved developments will also bring



**Existing trails, such as this one at the preserved Maack Farm, are well loved and used for programming.**

smaller segments of trail. North Coventry Township, the municipal neighbor to the north, is also planning for the Kenilworth Trail, which is proposed in close proximity to the shared boundary. The Kenilworth Trail will ultimately connect the Schuylkill River Trail to French Creek State Park. East Coventry Township is also planning new sidewalk along Peterman Road, to help bring people safely to Towpath Park.

### primary pedestrian paths (red)

Portions of East Coventry Township are no longer rural. However, sidewalks were not provided, even as suburban style development spread. The Primary Pedestrian Paths are largely recommended to be sidewalks or similar

pedestrian paths, retrofit along roads occupied by suburban style development. These paths may be installed within the existing rights-of-way. Many homes front directly on main roads, with driveways directly accessing arterial and connector roads. Multi-use trails are not appropriate here, with so many driveway intersections. Sidewalks or paths are appropriate to serve pedestrians in these neighborhoods looking for safe places to walk for exercise, recreation or travel. Concrete, typical of sidewalks, macadam or compacted crushed stone may serve as acceptable materials, at a width of 5 feet.

### **primary multi-use trails** *(dark green)*

Trails proposed along utility rights-of-way or through large, undeveloped parcels, should be made to accommodate many user groups. These trails are planned to have relatively few intersections with roads, making them suitable for uses beyond walking. Long stretches of these trails may be installed at the same time, potentially establishing them as destinations in themselves, rather than just as connections within the trail system.

These trails should be built to accommodate walkers, runners, dog walkers and recreational bicyclists. Crushed, compacted stone at a width of 6 to 8 feet would adequately serve these users. Should the Township also wish to accommodate skateboards and rollerbladers, the trails would need to be fully paved. It is anticipated that sports cyclists, who typically ride at high speeds and often in large groups, would naturally prefer to use the surrounding country roads and the Schuylkill River Trail and would avoid the Township multi-use trails due to their proposed narrow width and potential conflicts with other users. A crushed stone surface would also discourage use by sport cyclists as the surface is not smooth enough.

A compacted, crushed stone surface would be ideal to meet the needs of the intended groups of users. It would also match the character of the community, with a look similar to some farm roads. However, due to the rolling topography of the region, some stretches of trail may require a more stable paving material, such as macadam. Where slopes exceed 3%, compacted stone can erode and be washed off of the trail during rain events. Therefore, surface materials for the Primary Multi-Use Trails will need to be chosen on a case by case basis.

### **secondary trails** *(blue)*

These trails are proposed in the R-1 Residential and FR Farm Residential districts. These areas are more rural in nature, are less dense and have less need for trails than other portions of the Township. Here, many residents believe it is still safe to walk in or along roads. As the Township continues to develop and these areas accommodate more residents, the need for trails will grow. The secondary trails should also complement and complete the proposed trail system after higher priority trails are built. Should the zoning ordinance be revised to permit open space design options in the R-1 and FR districts, as recommended in Chapter 3, these trails should be implemented as part of new land developments, following the ordinance requirements for size and materials.

## **priority destinations and connections**

Feedback from the public meeting indicates that residents want access to safe places to walk, the Schuylkill River Trail and natural areas. History also plays a large role in defining the character of East Coventry Township. These factors shape the formation of the list of priority destinations and connections below. As noted above, these lists should be considered in the context of current opportunities and obstacles to trail connections.

### **1. Primary Destinations**

Parks, schools and trails are the most important destinations for trail connectivity as these are the places people go for recreation. Every front door should be viewed as a trailhead when the destination is a place of recreation. The parks, school and trails are spread throughout the Township, close to the places where people live. However, in most cases the infrastructure is not in place to permit safe walking or riding. Trails and paths should first be established to connect residents to these places.

**The Schuylkill River Trail** – This regional trail provides access to Philadelphia to the southeast and Reading to the northwest, with many trail towns along the way.

**The Kenilworth Trail** – This trail currently being planned by North Coventry Township will connect the Schuylkill River Trail and French Creek State Park.



**Parks and open spaces, such as the Daniel H. Kulp Farm, shown above, are important destinations within the trail network.**

**Towpath Park** – This is East Coventry’s flagship park for active recreation, access to the river and recreational gathering. It will also likely become a major trailhead for the Schuylkill River due to its ample parking lots and potential for an improved crossing of Route 724 at Peterman Road.

**The Ussler, Maack and Daniel H. Kulp Farms** – East Coventry Township’s premier trail system runs through these three properties, bringing residents through active farms, beautiful woodlands and a peaceful stream valley.

**East Coventry Elementary School** – The only school in the Township should be connected to its surrounding neighbors, so children can walk or bike to school and parents can walk to events at the school. Residents of

all ages will also have access to the recreation facilities, including trails, during off-school hours.

**Ellis Woods Park and the Creekview Open Space** – The park features a playground, pavilion, a pickleball and basketball court and natural area. It is geographically central to the Township. Trails would allow neighbors to walk to the park as well as to the Township Building for community events and meetings. The neighboring Creekview open space features agriculture and woodlands, connecting to Ellis Woods Park with natural surface trails.

## **2. Secondary Destinations**

Ellis Woods Revolutionary War Cemetery, Frick’s Locks Village and Parker Ford Village are all important historical sites which contribute to the Township’s character. They offer educational opportunities as well as a glimpse into the past. The Wade Tract is a Township owned property which is not yet developed. Its future as a water front park close to the Schuylkill River Trail makes it an important destination.

**Ellis Woods Revolutionary War Cemetery** – The cemetery is an important historical feature within the Township. Providing trails to the site could increase the number of visitors and awareness of the Township’s role in the American Revolution.

**Frick’s Locks Village** – The village is controlled by Exelon, and only open to the public at designated times. The Schuylkill River Trail is planned to intersect with the site. A trailhead could be established within the four acres leased by the Township, in conjunction with the existing parking area. As the village is separated visually and geographically from much of the Township’s population, trails to the site could help boost the number of visitors and raise awareness of the importance of the site.

**Wade Tract** – This parcel, owned by the Township, but yet to be developed, could become an important park for access to the river and the Schuylkill River Trail. The same trails which will bring people to the Schuylkill River Trail could be extended to the Wade Tract.

**Parker Ford Village** – The village sits in the easternmost portion of the Township, which will undergo some exciting changes in the near future. Route 724’s only stop light within the Township is here, where it intersects with Bethel Church Road. This is currently the safest place to cross



Route 724. Additionally, the Wade Tract is nearby, which could soon be developed into a waterfront park. The Schuylkill River Trail currently terminates nearby at the Township boundary. With the planned extension of the trail and the development of the Wade tract, the Parker Ford Village could become a more popular place, especially if businesses such as restaurants, cafes or a bike shop locate there to take advantage of the trail traffic.

### 3. Tertiary Destinations

Connections to resources in the surrounding communities will also benefit the citizens of East Coventry. Trails are planned in East Vincent which connect to this proposed trail system. Commercial areas exist close by in North Coventry, but require driving. Trails could be extended to make these connections as well.

***Creamery Road/ Stony Run Bike and Walk Path*** – This path, planned by East Vincent Township, would provide residents with a safe way to travel towards Bridge Street, and ultimately to Spring City and Royersford. However, it is unclear when this path will be constructed.

***Ridge Road Path (East Vincent)*** – This path, planned by East Vincent Township, would follow Route 23 and provide access to Vincent Elementary and Owen J. Roberts Middle and High Schools. It would also follow the Battle of the Clouds Retreat, the route followed by General Washington's troops during the Battle of the Clouds. However, it is unclear when this path will be constructed.

***Commercial Areas*** – Two commercial areas exist in North Coventry, just outside of East Coventry. The Kenilworth commercial area, on Route 724 will be connected to the Schuylkill River Trail. The Wawa and Suburban Shopping Center on Route 100 are currently not easily accessible to East Coventry Residents. As a stop light with crosswalks exists in the area, it's the safest place to cross Route 100 on foot. Additionally, there are numerous vacant parcels in this area which could be redeveloped in the near future. Partnership with North Coventry would be necessary to establish trails through developing parcels to the commercial area. New trails in these areas could connect a number of East Coventry residents to these shopping destinations.



**A more developed trail system would allow residents to walk to businesses, such as the shops and restaurants along Route 724.**

## CHAPTER 5

# park and recreation facilities analysis

## overview of parks and recreation system

East Coventry Township's parks and recreation system is currently in a state of flux. The Township owns only two properties which would be considered as traditional parks: Ellis Woods Park and Towpath Park. The Maack Farm, Daniel H. Kulp Farm and Creekview properties provide safe places to walk and to connect to nature. The Ussler tract is privately owned, but features a perimeter trail within an easement, which connects to the Maack Farm trails. The Township also owns other parcels which have yet to be designed or developed for public use. No parks or open spaces exist in the southern half of the Township.

Exciting changes appear to be on the horizon as the Schuylkill River Trail is planned for construction by 2018. The undeveloped parcels owned by the Township all figure to play a key role in elevating the Township wide park system while also connecting it to the Schuylkill River Trail. The Wade Tract, at the easternmost point of the Township, is close to the historic Parker Ford Village and has the potential to become an important trailhead for trail and river users. The Heiser and Faulk Tracts are adjacent to the northern side of Towpath Park. These properties could accommodate expanded recreation facilities or be planned as natural areas with trails bringing park users to the river.

The Township's parks contain 217 acres of land (see Table 2). Most of the parks feature natural areas, trails and places to sit and relax. The parks are located throughout the Township, with some clustering in the central portion. The

parks provide a range of park experiences for the residents including places to play, get fit, access the river, ride horses, enjoy community celebrations and experience and connect with nature. The parks provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation.

Recreation Land, Active Recreation and Passive Recreation are defined as such:

**Recreation Land** is an area deemed suitable for active and/or passive recreation by the Board of Supervisors.

**Passive Recreation** generally may be defined as an activity that offers constructive, restorative and pleasurable human benefits and fosters appreciation and understanding of open space and its purpose. It does not significantly impact natural, cultural, scientific or agricultural features and



**The Schuylkill River Trail will be constructed through Towpath Park, fundamentally changing the way the park looks and is used.**

requires only minimal visitor facilities and services directly related to safety, while minimizing impacts. For purposes of this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, passive recreation is to be defined as set forth in the East Coventry Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, as amended from time to time.

**Active Recreation** generally includes leisure activities that are organized or self-directed, often performed with others, requiring equipment, having rules and taking place at prescribed places, sites or fields that require developed facilities. For purposes of this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, active recreation is to be defined as set forth

in the East Coventry Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, as amended from time to time.

The parks provide a mix of active and passive recreation opportunities. There is no universally accepted standard for ratio of active versus passive recreation. A mix of  $\frac{1}{3}$  active recreation and  $\frac{2}{3}$  passive recreation in every Township park would allow the parks to meet the residents needs for active recreation, while still preserving natural areas, providing for trails and maintaining the community character. Recreation land and improvements dedicated through the subdivision process should be consistent with the standards set forth in the East Coventry Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, as amended from time to time.

TABLE 2 | **park and recreation facilities**

	name	size (acres)	pool	splash pad	volleyball	tennis	basketball	playground	baseball	soccer	multi-use field	informal field	boat launch	pavilion	pickleball	parking	bathrooms	garden/natural area	seating areas	trail	historic resource
1	Ellis Woods Park	17.9	0	0	0	0	0.5	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
2	Creekview	53.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
3	Maack Farm	73.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
4	Kulp Farm	16.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
5	Towpath Park	7.5	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
6	Heiser Tract	28.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
7	Faulk Tract	13.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
8	Wade Tract	6.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
9	Frick's Locks Village	NA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
	<b>totals</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>

## strategies for improvement

- **Retain the standard of 28 acres of parks, recreation and open space per 1,000 residents** as was established in the *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan for the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities* that East Coventry Township adopted in 2012. With an estimated population of 6,761, according to the 2014 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimate provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, and a total of 217 acres of publically accessible parks, recreation and open space, East Coventry currently provides approximately 32 acres of parks, recreation and open space per 1,000 people. As development pressures mount and the population grows, East Coventry will need to continue to acquire park, recreation and open space lands to meet this standard.

- **Revise the mandatory dedication of land and fee in lieu ordinance**, Section 22-426 of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. The Township previously adopted the *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan for the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities* which allowed the Township to adopt the ordinance. The formula below, follows the process explained in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code for determining the proper amount of required Recreation Land for Mandatory Dedication.

1. Use 28 acres of land per 1,000 residents as the standard for parks, recreation and open space. Calculate the amount of recreation land needed for each household proposed for development using the following formula:

- Use the average household size of 2.63 people in East Coventry Township based upon the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimate, United States Census.
- Divide the targeted 28 acres of park, recreation and open space land by 1,000 residents to derive the amount of recreation land equivalent per person:  
$$28 \text{ acres of recreation land} / 1,000 \text{ persons} = 0.028 \text{ acres of recreation land}$$
- Multiply the number of acres of park, recreation and open space land required per person by the

number of people per household to get the amount of recreation land needed per household:

$$.028 \text{ acres of recreation land per person} \times 2.63 \text{ number of persons per household} = .074 \text{ acres of recreation land required per household.}$$

- For a development of 20 households, multiply 20 households  $\times$  .074 acres of recreation land required per household resulting in 1.48 acres for this particular example. Since 1.48 acres of recreation land is not sufficient to create a public park based upon the East Coventry Township standards, the Township may request a fee-in-lieu of dedication. The developer may consent to provide a fee-in-lieu of dedication. The value of the fee would be calculated using the information described in #4 below.
2. Set forth criteria for the type of land that East Coventry Township desires to use for the creation of parks as follows. Community parks should be 10 to 50 acres in size and serve the residents Township wide within a desirable service radius of two miles. Land for community parks should be relatively flat and well drained to accommodate the development of recreation facilities. Due to the rural spread-out nature of the community, it is anticipated that most park users would drive to the parks. Recreation land should be well located with convenient and safe road access and not cause adverse impacts on adjoining properties.

While East Coventry Township may mandate the Mandatory Dedication of Recreation land, it can only request fees-in-lieu and the developer may consent as shown in Figure 1: *Section 503 (11) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code* (included below). Set the fees-in-lieu of dedication of recreation land in accordance with the market value of land. The value of the fee-in-lieu should bear a direct relationship to the value of the type of land that would otherwise be dedicated. East Coventry Township can simply state in its mandatory dedication ordinance should be equal to the average fair market value of the land otherwise required to have been dedicated as determined at the time of the filing of the subdivision of the land development application. The responsibility for determining the value of the land may be placed on the developer with East Coventry Township able to



**FIGURE 1 | Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, excerpt from Section 503 related to the Mandatory Dedication of Parkland**

**Section 503: Contents of Subdivisions and Land Development Ordinance.** The Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance may include but need not be limited to:

(11) Provisions requiring the public dedication of land suitable for the use intended; and, upon the agreement with the applicant or developer, the construction of recreational facilities, the payment of fees-in-lieu thereof, the private reservation of the land, or a combination, for park or recreation purposes as a condition precedent to the final plan approval, provided that:

- (i) Provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to any plan application, whether preliminary or final, pending at the time of enactment of such provisions.
- (ii) The ordinance provides definite standards for determining the proportion of a development to be dedicated and the amount of any fee to be paid in lieu thereof.
- (iii) The land or fees, or combination thereof, are to be used only for the purpose of providing, acquiring, operating or maintaining park or recreational facilities reasonably accessible to the development.
- (iv) The governing body has a formally adopted recreation plan, and the park and recreational facilities are in accordance with definite principles and standards contained in the subdivision and land development ordinance.
- (v) The amount and location of land to be dedicated or the fees to be paid shall bear a reasonable relationship to the use of park and recreation facilities by future inhabitants of the development or subdivision.
- (vi) A fee authorized under this subsection shall, upon its receipt by a municipality, be deposited in an interest bearing account, clearly identified as reserved for providing, acquiring, operating or maintaining park or recreational facilities. Interest earned on such accounts shall become funds of that account.
- (vii) Upon request of any person who paid any fee under this subsection, the municipality shall refund such fee, plus interest accumulated thereon from the date of payment, if the municipality had used the fee paid for a purpose other than the purposes set forth in this section.
- (viii) No municipality shall have the power to require the construction of recreational facilities or the dedication of land, or fees in lieu thereof, or private reservation except as may be provided by statute.

Source: Governor's Center for Local Government Services. (October, 2015) Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Twenty Third Edition. Harrisburg, PA: Department of Community and Economic Development. p. 26.



verify or dispute the value. If East Coventry Township should dispute the applicant's fair market value, the Township may obtain a certified appraiser at the applicant's cost to verify or adjust the applicant's fair market value to the appraiser's value.

3. When fees in lieu of dedication are generated, deposit the fees in an interest-bearing account with the interest being made part of this account. The account must specify the recreation purposes for which the fees will be used.
4. Use the fees for the following purposes to serve the needs of future residents by:
  - Purchasing targeted properties for creation of parks and recreation facilities and open space,
  - Developing infrastructure for recreation,
  - Buying recreational equipment for new parks,
  - Making improvements to existing parks, or
  - Providing a combination of the above.
5. Work cooperatively with developers in anticipation of land development plans and during the process. Outreach and working together often results in advances for both the developers and the Township in terms of providing recreation land and facilities and meeting municipal regulations. Involve the Planning Commission, EAC and the Parks and Recreation Board to in review and provide comments on proposed land development to the Township management and elected officials.
6. Seek guidance from the East Coventry Township Solicitor regarding the revision of the Mandatory Dedication of Recreation land Ordinance.

- **Establish a clustered sports facility** to provide centralized active recreation opportunities for local school teams of all levels, community leagues and recreational leagues for children, adults and seniors. The facility should be a minimum of 50 acres and should offer fields and facilities for sports including, but not limited to baseball and softball, soccer, football, and



**A clustered sports facility, such as this one in Lower Makefield Township, would provide a centralized location for large events such as tournaments and league play.**

lacrosse. Courts for tennis, basketball, hockey and other games may also be considered. A clustered sports facility provides the opportunity to hold tournaments, with multiple fields in use at once in one location. A centralized location can also limit the number of neighbors affected by lights, traffic and other impacts associated with sports facilities.

- **Pursue partnerships** with semi-public landholders such as the Owen J. Roberts School District, private schools and local churches. Partnerships with these entities can benefit both parties. Recreation can be offered on lands which the Township is not responsible for maintaining, while the schools or churches can help build their communities around recreation on their properties.
- **Further public input and design would benefit many of the Township-owned parcels.** A master plan for each Township park would examine issues of access, circulation, uses, parking, stormwater management, landscaping and other matters. Preparation of a master plan would involve significant public involvement and should be prepared by a landscape architect, planner or park and recreation planner. Master plans can cost between \$30,000 and \$100,000, depending on the size of the park and scope of recommended activities. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Department of Community and



**Public comment and input should accompany master planning or other big decisions recommended in this plan.**

Economic Development (DCED) may offer funding to offset portions of this cost. A completed master plan will also make the Township eligible to apply for funding to construct new or rehabilitate existing elements in the parks. Master plans should be developed for the Heiser, Faulk and Wade Tracts prior to any future development. Towpath Park would also benefit from a comprehensive analysis of the park and a new master plan in coordination with planning for the Heiser and Faulk Tracts, as well as the Schuylkill River Trail.

- **All of the parks should be evaluated for compliance** with the Consumer Product Safety Commission criteria and the Americans with Disabilities Act regulations, prepared and governed by the United States Department of Justice. It is typical for older parks to no longer meet modern regulations. This assessment has not reviewed all elements of the parks in detail in regard to these regulations.
- **Prepare stewardship and maintenance plans** for all of the parks. As many of East Coventry's parks center around natural areas, with creeks, woodlands and earthen trails providing the focal points, these parks require a different kind of maintenance. Stewardship plans would help identify potential issues relating to the natural areas, including prevalence of invasive plant species within woodlands, the need for prompt removal of dead and hazard trees, erosion and sedimentation of creeks, erosion of earthen trails and establishment and maintenance of grass and wildflower meadows.
- **Prepare Farm Management Plans** for Township owned lands which are to remain in agriculture, such as the Maack Farm and Creekview property. These plans can establish better management practices for farming on Township owned lands, to ensure that these activities are not contributing to degradation of local streams. As Creekview and Maack Farm both feature trails side by side with agriculture, the plans may assess areas of potential conflict, to improve safety for trail users and farmers alike. These plans should be prepared in partnership with the lessees and can also be used to discuss the use of pesticides and herbicides or to set goals for organic farming or other methods.



- **Create a unified signage system** for Township parks, trails and open spaces. In many communities, signage is addressed on an as-needed basis, leading to an uncoordinated, mismatched display of signs of all different colors, fonts, shapes and sizes. While the signs typically do the job of displaying information, the mismatched display is not very pleasing to the eye. It also demonstrates a lack of planning. A unified signage system should convey the necessary information, but do so in an aesthetically pleasing manner. Signage should be consistent in colors, fonts, size and messaging. The signage should use the Township's logo and colors and

clearly identify Township lands. Signage should display important information such as the park name, facility names, rules and regulations, directions, interpretation and educational information. Signs should also help visitors identify their location in case of emergency.

A well designed and constructed signage system helps to brand the Township identity, gives a presence to the parks, commands respect and makes the public park and recreation system appear to be large and extensive. Once the signage system is created, it can be phased in over time, such as when improvements are made in each park.



**A unified signage system would present the parks, recreation facilities and open spaces as a single, large and extensive system. The existing signs, shown above, are inconsistent in colors, fonts and materials and don't communicate a connected system of facilities.**

## Ellis Woods Park and Creekview

### snapshot

<b>Type:</b>	Neighborhood Park
<b>Location:</b>	East Coventry Township Building and Adjacent Lands, 855 Ellis Woods Road
<b>Size:</b>	Township Building Property – 7.8 acres Woodland Parcel – 10.1 acres Creekview – 53.1 acres <b>Total – 71 acres</b>
<b>Uses:</b>	Active and passive recreation
<b>Facilities:</b>	Playground Half-court basketball Pickleball Pavilion Memorial flag incinerator Multi-use and nature trails Natural area Agricultural fields Informal playing field Parking lot



**Nature trails connect the formal play area in Ellis Woods Park to the Creekview open space.**

### overview

Ellis Woods Park makes good use of the previously unused land on the Township Building site (*see Appendix: Map 8*). The Township building provides access to a bathroom and parking. The park serves families with young children, adults and active seniors, as the range of facilities meet the needs of every age group. Children can play on the tot lots, while adults can use the pickleball or basketball court, or simply enjoy the shade of the pavilion or the benches. The nature trail can provide some peace and quiet in the secluded woodlands, or take walkers to the earthen paths through the open fields of the Creekview open space. The park is also the start and finish of the Park and Recreation Committee's 5K and 10K race, which raises funds for the park system.

### summary of existing conditions

- Fifty parking spaces serve the park, but are shared with the Township building. This includes four universally accessible spaces.
- The site is under planted and doesn't feel park-like.
- The play equipment gets very hot in the sunshine.
- Time and money are being spent mowing and maintaining unused space.
- The Township's utilitarian areas are in close proximity to the park and are not screened from view.



## strategies for improvement

- **Prepare a landscape plan to guide further beautification of the site** through the planting of more trees and shrubs. Additional plantings can make the site feel more like a park. They can also provide shade to the playground, the courts, the building and parking area. Planted areas can reduce the amount of necessary mowing as well as to help to manage stormwater and visually separate the park and the utilitarian areas. Street trees can also be provided along Ellis Woods Road and flowering trees and shrubs can be used to beautify individual elements of the park. A long term landscape plan could guide phases of future planting projects.
- **Assess the parking** to determine whether additional permanent parking, or overflow parking areas should be established to meet the park needs. Use of the informal field for sports, pickleball nights, and events such as the 5K/10K race may have expanded the use of the park beyond the existing parking capacity. Alternatives to additional asphalt parking, such as overflow areas and grass pavers, should be considered.
- **Assess existing conditions and maintenance of stormwater management areas** to determine whether they are still functioning properly. Over time, many basins and swales should be assessed to determine whether they can be naturalized without negatively affecting their functionality. This could potentially save time and money on management as well as improving infiltration of stormwater and beautifying the site.



**Additional landscaping would beautify the property and make it feel more like a park, while potentially reducing maintenance needs.**



**Additional shade sails over the play equipment would keep it cooler and potentially lengthen its lifespan.**

basins and swales should be assessed to determine whether they can be naturalized without negatively affecting their functionality. This could potentially save time and money on management as well as improving infiltration of stormwater and beautifying the site.

- **Install additional shade sails** to provide shade for the playground. The sun currently beats down on the equipment, shortening its life span and making it unusable in the summer, as it gets very hot to the touch.
- **Establish meadows** in the lower field and in unusable spaces. Meadow would provide variety to the trail system as well as varied habitat for birds, butterflies and small mammals. Meadows would provide educational



**The stormwater management facilities at Ellis Woods Park could be naturalized to reduce maintenance and beautify the site.**



opportunities, manage stormwater and provide visual screening between the park and utilitarian areas. Should agriculture become unsustainable at Creekview, this property could also be converted to meadow.

- **Expand the courts** to provide for full court basketball and multiple, simultaneous pickleball games. Amenities like water fountains and benches should also be provided nearby to serve the players.
- **Perform a Stewardship Assessment** of natural areas to address common issues such as invasive plant species, emerald ash borer damage and trail maintenance.

A full stewardship assessment would recommend a comprehensive approach for maintaining the natural areas.

- **Consider expanding holdings** adjacent or in close proximity to Ellis Woods Park and Creekview, in order to maximize the recreational opportunities and expand the trail system.

## Towpath Park, Heiser, and Faulk Tract

### snapshot

<b>Type:</b>	Community Park
<b>Location:</b>	1381, 1575, and 1675 New Schuylkill Road
<b>Size:</b>	Towpath Park – 7.5 acres Faulk Tract – 13.3 acres Heiser Tract – 28.16 acres
<b>Uses:</b>	Passive and active recreation
<b>Facilities:</b>	Schuylkill Canal and riverfront Playground Boat launch and floating dock Pavilions, tables, and grills Volleyball court (grass) Walking paths and trail Informal open fields Port-a-potties Parking lot



The Schuylkill Canal towpath gives the park its name.

### overview

Towpath Park could be described as a picnic park, as it features expansive lawns, pavilions, grills and scenic views to the Schuylkill River (see *Appendix: Map 9*). Visitors use the park to get outside and relax by enjoying lunch, taking a leisurely walk or lying in the grass. There's a volleyball net and a grass court which caters to informal games. It is adjacent to two other Township owned properties along the river to the north: the Heiser and Faulk Tracts. These properties all contain remnants or the historical sites of the Schuylkill Canal and towpath. The Schuylkill River Trail is likely to be extended through the park in the near future, closing the gap between East Vincent and Pottstown. The trail will change the character of the park dramatically, as cyclists, runners, walkers and more visitors will be travelling through. The park will also serve as a trailhead.

### summary of existing conditions

- The Schuylkill River Trail is planned to come through the park.
- The park is adjacent to the Heiser and Faulk Tracts to the north.
- The existing driveway cuts much of the park off from the river.
- The playground needs additional amenities, updates and upgrades.
- The towpath and canal are not well integrated into the landscape.

## strategies for improvement

- **Create a Master Plan** for Towpath Park, the Heiser and Faulk Tracts, to ensure that the three parcels operate as a single park. Engage the public throughout the master planning process to collect information, determine the public's needs and wants and ensure that a compatible plan is created. Work with PECO to acquire a lease on the parcel between the Faulk and Heiser tracts. A master plan would address overall site design, design of individual elements, parking, circulation and the effects of the Schuylkill River Trail in a cohesive manner. Each of the following recommendations should be addressed as part of a master plan.
- **Consider expanding holdings** adjacent or in close proximity to Towpath Park, in order to maximize the recreational opportunities around the river.
- **Reconnect the park to the Schuylkill River and Canal**, which should be major focal points of the park. The existing driveway cuts the park off from the river, giving drivers the best river views. The parking and circulation systems should be assessed to determine whether parking can be clustered together, rather than strung out along the length of the park.
- **Provide improved or additional river access points**, by extending the floating docks, creating additional riverbank access areas or decks and other structures.
- **Include design elements which highlight the park's proximity to the river and the canal.** These may include play elements which feature water, like splash pads, fountains and pools for wading. Artistic elements featuring water or representative of water may also be incorporated.
- **Improve the existing playground** by providing additional structures in accordance with an overall playground design. Amenities should also be provided to increase the comfort of parents or other caregivers, including benches and shade trees. A master plan should also consider relocating individual elements to better serve the whole family. Locating the playground and a pavilion close by would allow adults to gather together outside of the playground while still keeping an eye on the kids in the playground. The site may also lend itself well to establishment of a destination playground.
- **Improve the atmosphere and ambience of the park** by further screening Route 724. An existing berm, which is a remnant of the towpath, currently hides the road relatively well. Additional naturalizing plantings would help to separate the park from the road, further beautify the park and potentially reduce the amount of mowing required to maintain the berm.
- **Improve the facilities at the park** by replacing the numerous port-a-potties with permanent bathrooms in attractive buildings, served by water and sewer or including composting toilets. Modern composting



Through master planning and redevelopment, the Schuylkill River could be made a greater focal point of Towpath Park.

toilet facilities can be housed within attractive concrete buildings, which require little maintenance beyond routine cleaning.

- **Provide appropriate amenities for boaters**, such as trailer parking spaces, large turnaround areas, a fish cleaning station and potentially a vending machine full of fishing supplies such as bait, line, hooks and sinkers.
- **Provide appropriate amenities for cyclists**, such as bike racks, pumps, mechanic stations and potentially a vending machine full of cycling supplies such as tubes of various sizes, small tools and small parts.



**This composting bathroom in Lardner's Point Park in Philadelphia is made almost entirely of concrete.**

## Maack and Daniel H. Kulp Farms and the Ussler Trail

### snapshot

<b>Type:</b>	Community
<b>Location:</b>	Maack Road
<b>Size:</b>	Maack Farm – 73.5 acres Kulp Farm – 16.6 acres <b>Total – 90.1 acres</b>
<b>Service Area:</b>	2 miles
<b>Uses:</b>	Passive recreation
<b>Facilities:</b>	Natural surface trails Benches Parking



Nearly 3 miles of trails connect the three properties.

### overview

The Maack and Kulp Farms offer a peaceful, quiet place for residents to enjoy nature (*see Appendix: Map 10*). The Kulp Farm nature trail leads visitors from the parking area, through a young woodland down a gentle hill to Pigeon Creek. There, benches welcome trail users to sit and listen to the sound of the creek flowing past. From the creek, the nature trail leads out of the riparian forest, through meadows and mowed fields back to the parking lot. More adventurous walkers may wish to follow the Maack Trail, located across the street from the parking area, through Maack Farm, up to the Ussler Trail. The Maack Trail winds through rolling hills, blanketed in fields of corn.

### summary of issues

- The natural area includes Pigeon Creek, young woodlands, and mature riparian areas.
- The nature trail segments are made up of boards, earth, grass and gravel.
- The Maack Farm is adjacent to the preserved Ussler Farm and Trail. Kulp, Maack and Ussler join together to provide a system of trails with varied terrain and features.
- Mowed areas exist around the parking lot and along Maack Road.
- The parking area provides enough parking, but is sparsely planted.
- Signage is limited and mismatched at the two sites.



## strategies for improvement

- **Consider acquiring properties or easements** adjacent or in close proximity to the Kulp Farm and Maack Farms, in order to maximize the recreational opportunities and expand the trail system.
- **Perform a Stewardship Assessment** of the natural areas to address common issues such as invasive plant species, emerald ash borer and trail maintenance. A full stewardship assessment would recommend a comprehensive approach for maintaining the natural areas.
- **Create a Landscape Plan** for the Kulp Farm in order to beautify the site, improve habitat, protect the stream corridor and perform utilitarian functions such as stormwater infiltration and shading of the parking lot.
- **Expand the meadows** to reduce time and money spent on mowing unused areas. Additional meadows would also provide more habitat, manage stormwater and add more interest to the existing trails.
- **Create a more formal trailhead** at the parking lot to serve the trails at Kulp, Maack and Ussler. The trail should also be extended to more clearly connect the Maack and Kulp Trails and provide a safe crossing point.
- **Replace the existing trail surfaces** with firm, stable and slip resistant surfaces, such as tamped stone fines or asphalt. Survey the trail corridor and consider rerouting the trail to provide a universally accessible trail through the site.
- **Create additional trails** to expand the network within the park and more easily connect to trails on adjacent properties. Provide an additional trail to cross the Kulp Farm above the floodplain, so a trail loop may still be used even if Pigeon Creek has flooded over the existing trail. Extend a trail from the parking area along the Maack Road frontage to better connect to the Maack Farm trails.



**A bench along Pigeon Creek in the Daniel H. Kulp Farm provides a place to rest and connect with nature.**



**The trailhead at the Daniel H. Kulp Farm could be improved to better connect to the surrounding trails. The grass fields surrounding the parking could be converted to meadow to reduce mowing, improve habitat and contribute to the rural character of the Township.**

# The Wade Tract

## snapshot

<b>Type:</b>	Undeveloped Land
<b>Location:</b>	295 Linfield Road
<b>Size:</b>	6.7 acres
<b>Service Area:</b>	To be determined
<b>Uses:</b>	To be determined
<b>Facilities:</b>	None



The Schuylkill River Trail passes close by the Wade Tract.

## overview

East Coventry Township acquired the Wade Tract in 1995. The property lies between the Schuylkill River and Linfield Road, just northeast of Parker Ford Village (see *Appendix: Map 11*). The Schuylkill River Trail currently ends abruptly nearby, but will soon extend further north. Chester County owns a 2-acre parcel adjacent to the parcel. The historic Parker Ford Tavern is also just south of the property. The site's proximity to the river and to so many historic and recreational features give it the potential to be a very exciting piece of the Township's Parks, Recreation and Open Space System.

## summary of existing conditions

- The site is currently undeveloped, wooded and ungraded.
- There is currently no vehicular access to the site.
- The property is bordered to the east by the Schuylkill River.
- The property is approximately 1/10 of a mile from the Schuylkill River Trail.
- The bridge connecting Linfield Avenue to Main Street is approximately 1/10 of a mile from the site, providing access to the residents of Limerick Township, Montgomery County.

## strategies for improvement

- **Consider expanding holdings** adjacent or in close proximity to the Wade Tract, in order to maximize the recreational opportunities at the river and the trail.
- **Create a Master Plan** for the Wade Tract in order to maximize the recreational opportunities while balancing protection of the existing woodlands, slopes, and floodplains. A master plan could connect the site to the Schuylkill River, the Schuylkill River Trail, the Parker Ford Village, and the Parker Ford Tavern. A master plan should create another riverfront park which would compliment Towpath Park or serve to separate incompatible recreational uses. The recommendations below should be considered during the master planning process.
- **Perform a Stewardship Assessment** of natural areas to address common issues such as invasive plant species, emerald ash borer and trail maintenance. A full stewardship assessment would recommend a comprehensive approach for maintaining the natural areas.
- **Create a land and water trailhead** at the Wade Tract to serve the Schuylkill River Trail and the Schuylkill River Water Trail. This trailhead could primarily serve boaters and cyclists wishing to park and quickly access the river and trail. This could divert some traffic away from Towpath Park, leaving more parking spaces available there for park users.
- **Provide appropriate amenities for boaters**, such as trailer parking spaces, large turnaround areas, a fish cleaning station and potentially a vending machine full of fishing supplies.
- **Provide appropriate amenities for cyclists**, such as bike racks, pumps, and mechanic stations.



**The Wade Tract could be developed into a trailhead for the Schuylkill River land and water trails.**



## Frick's Locks Village

### snapshot

<b>Type:</b>	Historical site
<b>Location:</b>	Frick's Lock Road
<b>Size:</b>	107 acres
<b>Service Area:</b>	2 miles
<b>Uses:</b>	Passive recreation/Historic resources
<b>Facilities:</b>	Historic buildings Historic farm Parking Area



**The Boxwood Lodge is one of the buildings in the village which has been restored.**

### overview

Frick's Locks Village exists along the Schuylkill River directly across from the Limerick Generating Station (see *Appendix: Map 12*). The village consists of two main parts, the Frick Farm at the south end and the canal village, central to the site. Much of the site lies within the exclusionary zone of the generating station, meaning public access is on a controlled and timed basis only. Tours are held at scheduled times, but the public cannot freely access the site. The Township currently leases a cluster of buildings outside of the exclusionary zone, planned to be used by the Township Historical Commission. The Township has requested donation of these buildings, which would bring them into Township ownership in the future. The Schuylkill River Trail is planned to be constructed in close proximity to the site. The site is listed as a National Register Historic District. The Township recently commissioned a feasibility study for use of the site, completed in December 2015, by Frens and Frens, LLC. The feasibility study offers three options for use of the site, all of which include a trailhead as part of mixed uses.

### summary of existing conditions

- Access is limited to timed, guided tours.
- The historic buildings are in varied states of repair and conservation.
- A small parking lot, port-a-potties and a kiosk serve tour guides and visitors.
- Open areas and wooded areas exist in close proximity to the leased buildings.
- Approximately 85 acres of the site are used for agriculture.



**Access to Frick's Locks Village is restricted to guided tours at limited times.**

## strategies for improvement

- **Design the trailhead** included in all three options of the feasibility study, to serve Frick's Locks visitors, commercial users, the Historical Commission and trail users. This may include additional parking, signage and amenities such as water fountains to serve all potential users.
- **Master plan the leased area** in accordance with the chosen option from the feasibility study. The master plan may address issues including access and circulation, surface treatments, stormwater management, landscaping and use of the adjacent open areas.
- **Perform a Stewardship and Maintenance Assessment** of the leased area to address common issues such as mowing schedules, invasive plant species, emerald ash borer damage and trail and path maintenance. An assessment would recommend a comprehensive approach for maintaining the site.
- **Consider an expanded partnership with Exelon** to provide greater access to and influence over the remainder of the site, if the increased management and use of the area currently leased by the Township is successful. The Township could then expand programming and restoration initiatives in that area.
- **Consider expanding holdings** adjacent or in close proximity to Frick's Locks Village. Numerous large, undeveloped parcels exist nearby which could be converted to parks or natural areas, or kept in agriculture. Protecting these parcels would help to protect the scenic surroundings and could potentially bring more people to the area, raising awareness for Frick's Locks Village.
- **Explore a public private partnership** with organizations such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), to manage the site as a living, working village. A partnership between Exelon, East Coventry Township and the NTHP could result in managing the site in a manner similar to others including Cliveden, Old Economy Village, Somerset Historical Center, Landis Valley Village and Farm Museum and the Ephrata Cloister. Each site holds events and features programming and trained tour guides.



**Many of the buildings could be rehabilitated to accommodate additional uses.**



**The village exists within PECO's exclusionary zone, which limits its permitted uses.**



## CHAPTER 6

## recreation opportunities

Recreation promotes a strong sense of community by providing settings for people to socialize, share common interests, and being a major driver of community interaction and pride. Recreation facilities make an important contribution to the physical infrastructure of communities. It is widely accepted that parks and recreation influences how a community looks, feels and functions.

Recreation is an important part of a well-balanced lifestyle. People who are engaged in active healthy lifestyles live longer<sup>1</sup>, are less in danger from heart disease and stroke<sup>2</sup>, are at significantly reduced risk of cancer<sup>3</sup>, and have improved chances of combating a wide range of chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, asthma and depression<sup>4</sup>. Participation in a broad range of leisure activities has the potential to improve physiological and mental health. Recreation participation increases sense of well-being, deters addictions, and assists in the social learning of tolerance and respect for others.

**regional opportunities**

Parks and recreation opportunities are available throughout the region in state, county and municipal parks in other communities as well as private facilities such as YMCA's. The planning process for this *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan* found that East Coventry citizens do, in fact, use

parks and facilities outside of the Township for recreation. Marsh Creek State Park is the closest State Park to East Coventry Township. Chester County has six County parks with Warwick County Park being the closest. Of all regional facilities, by far the most important to East Coventry Township is the Schuylkill River Trail. Nationally acclaimed, the trail traverses East Coventry Township and a trail head is being established near Frick's Locks Village. Sports leagues operate regionally throughout Northern Chester County. Sports participants from East Coventry Township travel to facilities in other communities for league play. Owen J. Roberts School District facilities serve as a regional recreation hub for all municipalities.



**Trails provide recreation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.**

## recreation in East Coventry Township

While it is important to note that regional recreation provides important recreation opportunities, it is equally important to recognize that citizens need opportunities in their own community as well. To that end, East Coventry Township commissioned this plan to focus on Township services and that is the focus of this section. Recreation opportunities are available 365 days a year in East Coventry Township's parks. The role that the Township plays in recreation is following the traditional path of small suburban municipalities with limited staff and budget. The Township primarily:

- Facilitates recreation by providing parks, recreation facilities, and trails with a growing trail network,
- Supports the efforts of other providers who would want to offer organized programs, and
- Promotes parks and recreation through the Township's website and newsletters.

The focus of organized scheduled programs available to Township residents is primarily youth sports. Youth sports are usually the precursor of a broader range of recreation opportunities when resources, other partners or community organizations, or staff becomes available to provide this service. The Parks, Recreation and Conservation Committee has adopted a creative approach to offering programs and

events for the residents by focusing on special events as a way of fostering a sense of community.

## organized sports

Five main sports organizations play in East Coventry Township. They include:

- Coventry Little League
- Coventry Soccer Association
- Coventry Youth Lacrosse
- Norchester Red Knights Football
- Wildcats Football

About 500 children play in these leagues total with soccer being the predominant sport and lacrosse the fastest growing. The participants play in other communities and on school district facilities.

## sports opportunities in the private sector

The Training Center is an indoor, private field hockey complex, which features three indoor fields in addition to outdoor grass and turf fields. The private facility hosts tournaments, leagues and camps. Fields can also be rented. The complex sits near the intersection of Route 724 and Wells Road.



**Approximately 500 children participate in the five youth sports leagues in the Township.**



**Private providers, such as The Training Center, supplement the publicly available options for active recreation.**

Berks East Gymnastics, located on Route 724, west of Wells Road, offers gymnastics lessons for children of all ages. The facility offers coaching for individuals of all ability levels, with advanced instruction available to individuals and teams by invitation. The gym can also accommodate social events such as birthday parties.

## Owen J. Roberts School District

The Owen J. Roberts School District is committed to supporting community recreation and the use of school district facilities for the public good. School district facilities are important to the community for both education and recreation. Community organizations use school district facilities for sports and special events. However, ballfields and gymnasias are booked to capacity. Challenges to this mainly arise when people drive by and see fields unused but they are scheduled for use.

In terms of involvement, about 70% of the student body is involved in recreation related school district programs. There are 26 varsity and junior varsity teams in the high school and 120 various clubs.

### East Coventry Elementary School

The Owen J. Roberts School District is constructing a new Elementary School on Cedarville Road. It is a large campus with 54 acres that could accommodate outdoor sports facilities. The school could become a Community School Park as recommended in the *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan for the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities*. A Community School Park arrangement would require additional and ongoing partnership between the Township and the School District.

## senior centers

Chester County offers six senior centers including a senior center in Phoenixville:

Phoenixville Area Senior Adult Activity Center  
153 Church Street  
Phoenixville, PA 19460

[www.phoenixvilleseniorcenter.org](http://www.phoenixvilleseniorcenter.org)

This is the closest center to East Coventry Township residents. The center operates Monday, Wednesday

and Thursday from 8:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. and Tuesday and Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. The trend in services for future generations of active aging adults is toward multi-generational community centers that people use throughout their lifetime and on an expanded basis once they retire. The Phoenixville Area Senior Center currently offers programming including classes, bingo and other games, entertainment such as plays and dinners, and trips to casinos and other area attractions.

## private recreation services

The U.S. Sports Institute offers summer camps and sports classes in East Coventry Township that are designed for all ability levels and players aged 3–14.

Soccer Squirts classes in the East Coventry Township area will cover a range of basic skills and introduce the preschool players to the exciting sport of soccer in a warm, fun, developmental environment.

USA Sport Group offers summer sports camps and spring, fall and winter sports in the East Coventry Township area. Classes are designed for all ability levels and children aged 3–18.

## recreation values

Community recreation values were determined through input gathered in the public involvement process. There is no expectation that East Coventry Township should directly provide recreation programs and services other than programs determined by the Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee as feasible to offer within their own capacity to do so. They include the following:

- Opportunities for citizens that are mainly self-directed.
- Partnerships with other public and private entities in community recreation service.
- Providing information about recreation opportunities that is timely and accessible.
- Provide safe, accessible and welcoming spaces to all people.

## programs and services analysis

Public recreation opportunities in East Coventry Township are primarily oriented to outdoor recreation, sports leagues, and special programs offered by the East Coventry Township Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee. What citizens want most is to be able to go to parks that are close to home to play, socialize, experience nature and engage in fitness activities such as walking and safe place to bicycle. Even in parks and recreation departments with programming staffs, organized recreation programs captures only about 20% of recreational participation in the community. About 80% of recreation is undertaken by people on their own enjoying safe places to walk, bicycle, play, relax and connect with nature.

## recreation preferences

The top recreation interests that emerged during the public participation process were walking, bicycling, experiencing nature and fitness and wellness. This applied across all age groups and for families.

## recreation concerns

Three areas emerged with major concerns: services for senior adults, the needs of community sports organizations for more facilities, and the community's desire for a trail system.

- 1. Trail system** – Planning and developing a trail system would meet the needs of the majority of the residents.
- 2. Park design and maintenance** – It is important that parks in East Coventry Township are designed as premiere spaces that are comfortable to use year round from dawn to dusk. Improvements in existing parks could include more shade, especially in playground areas; additional trees and beautification; and signage.
- 3. Sports** – League sports are not played in East Coventry Township. Participants travel to other communities to play games. According to the *Parks, Recreation, and*



**About 80% of recreation is undertaken by people on their own enjoying safe places to walk, bicycle, play, relax and connect with nature.**

*Open Space Plan for the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities*, there are not enough sports fields to accommodate play at present much less the future growing participation in the region which coincides with the Owen J. Roberts School District. Consideration should be given to creating more ballfields and the grounds of the new elementary school should be considered for this. Another sport requiring additional facilities is pickle ball. This sport is growing rapidly and serves the active aging population, an important group to serve as boomers age and increase their level of activity.



## role of the Township in recreation opportunities

Given the size of the population and level of staffing and budget, the Township's role in directly providing recreation opportunities is limited. There is no staff to promote, plan, direct, carryout and evaluate organized recreation programs and events. The main roles of the Township in parks, recreation and conservation are to:

1. Provide safe, clean and beautiful parks, recreation facilities, and trails for people to walk, run, ride bicycles and ride horses.
2. Inform people in a timely manner about parks, recreation, facilities, trails, and programs and services as available.
3. Facilitate the provision of recreational services by other community based organizations, the School District and other appropriate private, non-profit and commercial entities.
4. Coordinate with other entities such as Chester County's related departments, the Schuylkill Heritage Commission, the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities, the Owen J. Roberts School District, and the Circuit in advancing regional recreation opportunities through East Coventry Township.

## recreation opportunity recommendations

1. **East Coventry Township can serve as point of contact for the public regarding information about parks and recreation.** This can be one of the most important and least costly ways to serve the public. Planning and carrying out ways to increase public awareness can be a function of the Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee. Enhance the Township website for parks and recreation.

2. **Continue in the role of facilitator of recreation opportunities, not as a direct provider of services.**

Foster relationships with community organizations that can plan, direct and implement public recreation programs. Supporting important organizations such as sports leagues is crucial.

3. **Ensure that all agreements for public use of facilities by community organizations comply with standard operating procedures.**

This would include proper background checks, insurance liability requirements, and philosophies that strive to create healthy social environments for all involved, and most especially for children and youth.



**Signature events, such as the Rock the Wall 5K and 10K race, publicize the Township's open spaces and parks, while getting people outdoors for healthy activity.**

**4. Develop a program plan for the Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee.** The Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee should develop a program plan that would focus on a three-year plan with an action plan for the first year. While it is laudatory for volunteers to provide programs, in order to build a strong public recreation system, the programs must be consistent, of high quality, well advertised, and evaluated. Volunteers have limitations as well as frequent turnover. It is best for a volunteer board to focus on a few signature events that work very well. Important functions that the Committee can provide in addition to the signature programs or events, is promoting parks and recreation facilities, engaging the community in parks and recreation planning, and facilitating programs offered by community based organizations through public private partnerships. Since sports are very well covered for children and youth, focus on other aspects of recreation. The two most important areas for East Coventry Township to focus on are connecting people to nature and health and wellness.

**5. Focus recreation opportunities in experiences in the great outdoors.** Focus on creating opportunities for self-directed recreation rather than on organized, scheduled programs. This would be through the provision of facilities and the promotion of information on where people can enjoy nature; safely walk, bicycle, and ride horses; and socialize with family and friends.

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<sup>1</sup> Gibbons LW, Macera CA. 1995. *Changes in physical fitness and all-cause mortality: a prospective study of healthy and unhealthy men.* **Journal of the American Medical Association.** 273:1093-1098

<sup>2</sup> Blair SN, Kohl HW and Gordon NF. 1992. *How much physical activity is good for health?* **Annual Reviews of Public Health.** 13:99-126

<sup>3</sup> Slattery ML. 1996. *How much physical activity do we need to maintain health prevent disease? Difference diseases –different mechanisms.* **Research Quarterly Exercise and Sport.** 67(2):209-212 Slattery ML, Potter J, Caan B et al.

<sup>4</sup> United States Department of Health and Human Services; Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. 1996. **Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General.** Atlanta, Georgia. Glasgow RE, Ruggerio L, Eakin EG et al.

## CHAPTER 7

# organization, management, and financing

East Coventry Township, founded in 1844, is governed by the Pennsylvania Second Class Township Code and is administered by an elected, five-member Board and an appointed Township Manager. According to the Pennsylvania Second Class Township Code, the duty of the Board of Supervisors is to secure the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Township. The municipal parks and recreation operations help to fulfill that duty as they are concerned with community welfare, improving quality of life, service to the public, health and active lifestyles, protection and conservation of the environment, and contributing to a vibrant economy.

Recreation and parks systems are organized specifically to meet the objectives of those they serve. The organizational work of municipalities with small staffs and limited budgets is to provide a basic level of high quality facilities and services while encouraging the best efforts of others to join together in ensuring a public parks and recreation system that is a community asset. The productive management of any recreation and parks organization is greatly dependent upon the ability of its leadership and those involved at various levels of service delivery to work with and through people to achieve organizational goals.

### **organization of East Coventry Township**

As a Township of the Second Class, East Coventry Township operates with a five-member Board of Supervisors. As the elected officials, they are responsible for setting policy. The Board of Supervisors appoints the Township Manager who is responsible for implementing the policy set forth by the Supervisors and managing the operation of the East Coventry Township municipal services.

### **enabling legislation for parks and recreation**

The organization and management of Parks and Recreation in East Coventry Township functions within the framework of the enabling legislation set forth for townships of the second class by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Second Class Township Code provides for the establishment of the parks, recreation centers, shade trees and forests system<sup>5</sup> in Townships of the Second Class including East Coventry Township. This legislation enables East Coventry Township to acquire land, construct, improve, maintain, care for, regulate and govern the public parks and recreation system.

The Second Class Township Code enables East Coventry Township to vest the authority to operate, manage

and program parks and recreation facilities in a park or recreation board including the following responsibilities:

- Acquire and designate land and buildings for parks and recreation.
- Develop land and buildings for recreation.
- Supervise, maintain and regulate parks.
- Regulate the use of public parks and recreation facilities.
- Jointly purchase, develop, equip, and maintain public parks and recreation facilities in partnership with other townships, the County or school districts.
- Acquire and manage lands for forests.
- Equip, operate and maintain the parks, recreation areas and facilities.
- Employ play leaders, recreation directors, supervisors, superintendents, or other officers or employees.

## Second Class Township Code and recreation boards

The Board of Supervisors may by ordinance create a recreation board to supervise, regulate, equip and maintain Township-funded recreation programs and facilities. The recreation board has only those powers specifically delegated to it by the Board of Supervisors. Recreation boards, when established, shall consist of five, seven or nine persons. The members shall be appointed by the board of supervisors and shall serve for terms of five years or until their successors are appointed, except that the members' first appointment shall be appointed so that the terms of not more than two members expire annually. Members shall serve without pay but may be reimbursed by the Township for all expenses incurred in performing their duties. All persons appointed shall serve their full terms unless voluntarily resigned or removed by the board of supervisors for dereliction or neglect of duty. Vacancies occurring other than by expiration of term shall be for the

unexpired term and shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments. The members of a recreation board shall elect a chairman and secretary and select all other necessary officers to serve for a period of one year. The recreation board may adopt rules and regulations for the conduct of all business within its jurisdiction and exercise powers and functions concerning parks and recreation facilities as may be delegated to it by the Board of Supervisors. The recreation board shall submit an annual report to the Board of Supervisors, including an analysis of the adequacy and effectiveness of community recreation areas, facilities and leadership. (2204 amended Nov. 19, 2004, P.L.843, No.106) (53 PS. §67204)

### Parks and Recreation Organization and Management

Although the Township has several parks and future recreation areas as well as some programs, East Coventry Township does not have a parks and recreation department. As a Township function, parks and recreation operates under the auspices of the Township Manager and the Public Works Department as well as volunteers in the community who are mainly associated with the Parks, Recreation and Conservation Committee.

## policy

The Board of Supervisors sets forth policy regarding all Township parks and recreation functions including parks, land, recreation facilities, rules and regulations, fees and charges, planning, goal setting, and administration.

### management and administration

The Township Manager implements parks and recreation policy established by the Board of Supervisors, oversees daily parks and recreation operations such as park maintenance, coordinates volunteer efforts, provides financial management and offers advice to the Board of Supervisors and the Parks, Recreation and Conservation Committee regarding parks and recreation.



## park maintenance

The East Coventry Township Public Works Department maintains all of the Township roads, facilities, Township property, and sewage facilities including five pump stations. Public Works plows Township roads in winter and maintains the roads in spring, summer and fall by repairing paving and clearing drainage swales. Roadside grass is mowed to maintain proper sight-distance. Public Works plows and maintains approximately 59 miles of Township roads.

Public Works maintains the Township's parks, recreation facilities and open spaces, including Towpath Park, along the beautiful Schuylkill River, Ellis Woods Park, the Maack and Daniel H. Kulp Farms and Creekview properties as well as taking care of properties with easements when needed such as care of trails on easements with public access for trails.



**Mowing is a major task for most municipal maintenance staffs.**

## East Coventry Township Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee

The purpose of the Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee is to advise the Board of Supervisors regarding all matters related to parks, recreation and conservation as well as to provide park, recreation, and conservation programs in the Township. The Committee is empowered to consult with and advise the Township Manager and the Board of Supervisors in matters affecting recreation services policy, programs, finances, lands and properties related to the total community recreational services program, facility development, facility maintenance and to the long range, projected programs for recreation services.

The East Coventry Township Board of Supervisors appoints five members to the Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee. Their responsibilities include making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for the following:

- Supervision, rules and regulations concerning the use of parks, recreation and conservation areas.
- Use and condition of parks, recreation and conservation areas.
- Acquisition of additional land and facilities for parks, recreation and conservation.
- Maintenance, use and improvements of parks, recreation facilities and conservation areas.
- Creation of programs for parks, recreation and conservation.
- Changes in the Township's ordinances related to parks, recreation, and conservation.
- Multi-year financial plan for the Township's parks, recreation and conservation system.

In addition, the Parks, Recreation and Conservation Committee is responsible for conducting periodic inspections and surveys of the parks, recreation and conservation lands to assess their condition and need for improvement, maintenance and repair. The Committee

is also charged with serving as a forum for residents to express concerns about parks, recreation, and conservation facilities and activities, open space, and conservation.

## **parks, recreation, open space, and trail related organizations**

East Coventry Township is fortunate in having several organizations that provide important services related to parks, recreation, and conservation.

### **Chester County**

The Chester County Board of Commissioners established the Vision Partnership Program in 1996 to promote cooperation between the County and local governments in the implementation of *Landscapes*, the County's comprehensive policy plan. Following the adoption of *Landscapes2* in 2009, the Vision Partnership Program (VPP) was fully updated to achieve better alignment with *Landscapes2* and the *County Strategic Plan*. Grants awarded to municipalities under the Vision Partnership Program help them in achieving consistency with the principles of *Landscapes2* through their local planning programs.

### **technical assistance and trails**

The Chester County Planning Commission produced a number of technical assistance publications for open space, parks, recreation and trails. These include the *Multi-Modal Circulation Handbook for Chester County, PA*; *Open Space Planning: A Guide for Municipalities*; *Land Stewardship Guidebook*; and *Preserving our Places, Historic Preservation Planning Manual for Chester County Communities*. The County has advanced trail planning and establishment through its work on the Chester Valley Trail, the Schuylkill River Trail.

### **hands-on support**

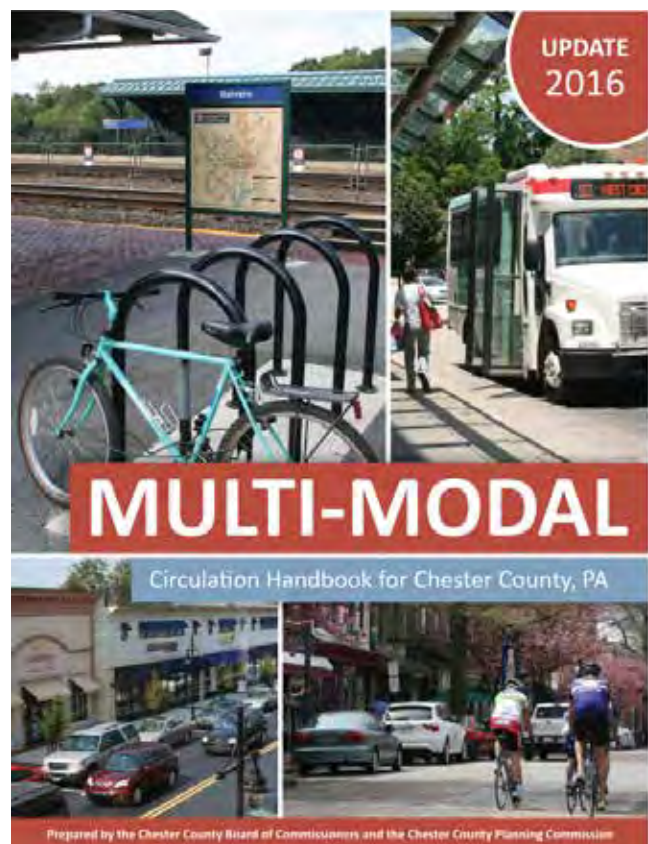
The Chester County Planning Commission fosters excellence in planning and implementation through the hands-on technical assistance provided by its professional planners to municipalities and partner organizations undertaking planning and implementation projects related to open space, parks, recreation, and trails. The planners, who participated in the East Coventry Township Parks, recreation and Open Space Plan Study Committee,

provide information, examples, encouragement, thoughtful questions and discussion and participate in community meetings to help move planning along. Through their diligence, municipalities are able to develop plans that advance their own municipal goals as well as play a role in regional efforts recommended in the *Multi-Modal Circulation Handbook for Chester County*.

### **Chester County Area Agency on Aging**

Chester County operates senior centers throughout the County. The Phoenixville Area Senior Adult Activity Center is closest to East Coventry. The Center offers seniors of Northern Chester County, the opportunity to socialize, participate in classes and clubs, receive assistance, and enjoy a warm meal at noon every weekday.

[www.phoenixvilleseniorcenter.org](http://www.phoenixvilleseniorcenter.org)



**Chester County provides technical assistance and guiding documents, such as the *Multi-Modal Circulation Handbook*.**

### **Owen J. Roberts School District**

The Owen J. Roberts School District services almost 5,200 students. Formed in 1965, The School District encompasses seven townships. The District has a history of academic excellence and continues to strive to improve. The students perform well on all standardized tests and most of the students continue their education in post-secondary educational institutions. Parents, community members, and members of the Board of School Directors view their relationship as a partnership with goals of continuously providing quality education.

The school district serves as a community hub for recreation. The District makes their facilities available for public recreational use and these are vital for community sports. An important factor for recreation, particularly youth sports, is that children and youth like to play sports with their friends—usually schoolmates. Communities, as well as families and adult individuals, are in most cases oriented toward the school district rather than the municipality, especially in rural communities. Owen J. Roberts provides two important recreation programs: the Aquatics Program and Adult Evening School. The Aquatics Program includes swimming instructions, parent and tot classes, lap swimming, conditioning classes, water polo, competitive swimming and diving, recreational swim, a summer program, adult conditions, and a master swim program. The Adult Evening School offers a wide variety of classes, instructions, and recreational opportunities for people 18 years of age and older.

### ***new elementary school in East Coventry Township***

In 2015, schematic designs for the proposed East Coventry Elementary School construction were released. The vision for the new building is that the structure reflect a love of literacy. The media center will be the focal point, featuring an outdoor reading court planned to be accessible from both the media center and art classroom. The building is proposed to be 85,800 square feet. It will be constructed on East Cedarville Road, on property contiguous to the existing site. The front of the building will run parallel to East Cedarville Road with the main office, media center, and computer classroom housed on the first floor. Classroom wings will extend from both sides of the main entrance

area utilizing two floors. The back of the building will house the cafeteria, stage, gymnasium, music, art, health and guidance. Best practice in school security has been addressed by featuring a number of security measures including electronic locks, a secure entrance, monitored doors and multiple cameras.

The *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan for the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities* recommended that schools be established as Community School Parks in which the School District and the Townships work together in maximizing use of schools for education and recreation for the community as a whole for all people in the community year round. Since East Coventry Township adopted that plan as participating jurisdiction, the *East Coventry Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan* also endorses that recommendation.

### ***community use of school district facilities***

The community uses school district sports fields and gymnasiums for recreational sports and league play. The fields are used to their maximum and that there is a need for more ball fields and gymnasiums. In addition to more sports fields, finding safe ways for students to get to school via walking or bicycling is another need. With the 54-acre site of the new elementary school, there is an opportunity to create more outdoor facilities for education, recreation and healthy living.

### **community sports organizations**

East Coventry Township is fortunate in having many sports organizations that provide sports leagues for through volunteer services, fees, and fundraising. The leagues that serve participants from East Coventry Township include:

- Coventry Little League
- Coventry Soccer Association
- Coventry Youth Lacrosse
- Norchester Red Knights Football
- Wildcats Football

Participants in these leagues from East Coventry Township travel to other townships to play games on fields operated by other municipalities. The only facilities used for



organized sports in East Coventry Township are the East Coventry Elementary School fields and gymnasium.

Generally, the entire northern Chester County area has a need for additional sports facilities. Sports fields are primarily used for youth leagues. Consequently, field time for adults or new and expanding sports is limited to the extent that people no longer even ask to use fields.

### **history and recreation**

East Coventry Township resides in an important region in the history of the United States of America, as important historic events occurred here during the Revolutionary War. Historically important bridges, buildings, estates and industrial relics also exist within the Township. It is one of the few places where people can experience the landscape of an historic event in the same way it appeared during the



**Towpath Park offers opportunities for history to be explored through recreation.**

actual event, largely due to the land preservation efforts of the municipalities such as East Coventry Township. Opportunities to interpret this history and convey it through recreational experiences should be fostered. Efforts are underway to create a heritage tourism program through the Chester County Parks Department.

Tours, programs, and events in historic villages such as Frick's Locks and Parker Ford would be a way to inform local residents of their heritage through recreational experiences. The historic Parker Ford Tavern, just over the Township boundary in East Vincent Township, is being restored as the keystone of a multi-municipal park along the Schuylkill River. The vision for the Parker Ford Tavern—to see the buildings and grounds restored as closely as possible to their original eighteenth-century appearance. The tavern could serve as a museum open to the public and dedicated to the history of Parker Ford. The themes for this site would include historic modes of transportation, the growth of commerce and industry in Chester County, and the Revolutionary War. As part of the Schuylkill River Valley Heritage Corridor, the Tavern site will attract tourists, school children, scouts, and area citizens to visit and step back in time. Saving this historic treasure for future generations to enjoy is a commitment for all ages. It is envisioned that a Friends of the Parker Ford Tavern organization will help to support the facility and programs. The restoration of the tavern can foster appreciation and awareness of the importance of the Parker Ford Historic District, much of which is within East Coventry Township.

### **financing of parks, recreation, and conservation**

The following section presents information on parks and recreation revenues and expenditures. Generally, funding for public parks and recreation systems falls into two major categories: capital funding and operational funding. Capital funding includes expenditures that are more than \$10,000 for improvements that last more than five to seven years. In East Coventry Township, there is no capital program at present but the Township pays back a loan for the purchase of park property. Operational funding is for the



day-to-day maintenance and operation of the public parks and recreation system. This includes park maintenance, programs and services, advertising, staffing, utilities, equipment, supplies, and materials. Table 3 presents the Township's budget rated to parks and recreation, Township operations and benchmarks.

The Township generates about \$517,000 to \$575,000 annually from .25% of the Earned Income Tax for open

space. One-quarter of that can be used for maintenance. In addition, the Township allocates General Fund monies for parks, recreation and conservation.

Out of the annual \$72,274 operating budget for parks and recreation in 2015, East Coventry Township would recover \$14,845 from park property rental fees and \$2,550 from Community Day for a total of \$17,395. Recreation programs are free.

**TABLE 3 | East Coventry Township budget 2015 and benchmarks most recent full year's budget**

item	total parks & recreation	park maintenance	comment	benchmarks
<b>REVENUES</b>				
Open Space Income from the .25% EIT	\$517,000		Approximate amount annually	
P & R Revenues	\$14,845		Towpath Park Pavilion Rental: \$2,025 Maack Lease: \$3,900 Heiser Rent: \$2,120 Creekview Rent: \$6,800	Generally about 35% of the operating budget compared with about 20% in East Coventry Township
<b>DEBT SERVICE</b>				
Maack and Creekview Properties Loan	\$1,230,000		Paid back by 2020	
<b>TOWNSHIP OPERATION EXPENDITURES</b>				
Township Operating Budget	\$3,007,554			
Township Parks and Recreation Budget	\$72,274		2.4% of the East Coventry Township budget. \$11.04 per capita	3% statewide 5%+ recommended by PA DCNR \$36 per capita in PA \$31.82 – \$111 USA
Health Insurance	\$8,018	\$8,018		Park Maintenance: • \$3,487/acre low • \$8,974/acre med • \$17,797/acre high 24 acres/FTE Acres parks/1,000 = 8.3
Life Insurance	\$360	\$360		
Disability	\$1,000	\$1,000		
FICA/SS	\$1,658	\$1,658		
Medicare	\$388	\$388		
Overtime – Park Cleanup	\$750	\$750		

*continued*

TABLE 3 | **East Coventry Township budget 2015 and benchmarks**  
most recent full year's budget

item	total parks & recreation	park maintenance	comment	benchmarks
<b>TOWNSHIP OPERATION EXPENDITURES, continued</b>				
Park Wages	\$26,000	\$26,000		
Park Operating Supplies	\$650	\$650		
Park Day Supplies	\$5,000	\$5,000		
Portable Toilet Rental	\$2,100	\$2,100		
Materials and Supplies	\$4,000	\$4,000		
Electricity	\$300	\$300		
PRPS Membership	\$250	\$0		
Conferences & Training Park Board	\$750	\$0		
Contributions – Womens' Club Egg Hunt	\$1,000	\$0		
Frick's Locks Repairs and Maintenance	\$0	\$0		
Frick's Locks Lease	\$50	\$50		
Park Buildings	\$20,000	\$20,000		
<b>total</b>	<b>\$72,274</b>	<b>\$70,274</b>		

**TABLE 4 | comparison of 2016 municipal and parks and recreation operating budgets in northern Chester County**

township	population	parks & recreation operating budget	township operating budget	per capita investment in parks & recreation	ratio of parks & recreation budget to township operating budget
<b>East Coventry</b>	<b>6,636</b>	<b>\$74,228</b>	<b>\$3,206,673</b>	<b>\$11.19</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
East Vincent	6,821	\$50,575	\$3,131,411	\$741	1.6%
West Vincent	4,567	\$82,911	\$3,013,602	\$18.15	2.7%
South Coventry	2,604	\$27,400	\$1,595,853	\$10.52	1.7%
East Pikeland	7,079	\$12,000	\$3,586,000	\$1.70	0.3%
West Pikeland	4,024	\$103,750	\$1,870,215	\$25.78	5.5%
East Nantmeal	1,803	\$0			
Warwick	2,507	NA			
North Coventry	7,866	NA			
State Average				\$36.00	3% Goal: 5%
National Average				\$74.00	2.14% – 5%+

Table 4 presents a comparison of the townships in Northern Chester County regarding their operating budgets for parks and recreation, municipal budgets, per capita investment and ratio of the parks and recreation budget to the municipal budget. Table 4 presents the following findings:

- In the Northern Chester County area, East Coventry Township is about average in its per capita investment in its annual parks and recreation operating budget.
- In Pennsylvania, East Coventry Township's per capita investment of \$11.19 falls short of the statewide average of \$36.
- The ratio of East Coventry Township's operating budget for parks and recreation is 2.3%, under the statewide average of three percent and the five percent budget ratio recommended by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.
- The Township has been very creative in supporting park maintenance. The parks typically look safe, clean and ready to use. Land which will likely be further developed for park, recreation and open space uses, has been leased out for agricultural uses. This creates a cost savings as well as a revenue source. Using a probable cost estimate for maintenance, the per acre cost for active areas is about \$2,372 and about \$200 per acre for undeveloped open space. This leaves an annual estimate of about \$2,600 for trail work. The projections for developed park and recreation facilities and undeveloped open space fall within the mid-range of park maintenance in this area but are lower in comparison with similar sized communities in a national survey from the National Recreation and Park Association.
- East Coventry Township generates about 20% of its parks, recreation and conservation budget from rentals and leases. The recovery of 20% is notable as nationwide the



**East Coventry generates revenue through the lease of open space lands for agriculture, as well as rental of facilities such as the pavilion at Towpath Park.**

cost recovery rate is about 35% and higher in program driven departments. Since East Coventry Township operates without a parks and recreation staff, does not provide fee-for-service programs, and does not have typical revenue generating facilities such as indoor facilities, pools, ice rinks or camp grounds, the Township does not have the opportunity to generate extensive revenue from fees and charges.

## **organization, management, and financing analysis**

In this challenging economic time, decision-makers, staff and citizens alike expect efficient and effective operating systems. The following analysis includes the strengths challenges and opportunities regarding parks and recreation organization, management, and financing.

### **organization, management, and financing strengths**

- **East Coventry Township Professional Management and Staff** – East Coventry Township is fortunate in having a dedicated, professional Township manager and support staff. The Manager performs many functions including that of parks, recreation, conservation, planning and grant writing. As the parks, recreation, conservation, and



**Through planning and preservation, the Township has made great progress in protecting its scenic, rural character.**

trail system grows, there will be a limit on the amount of time he can offer within the overall municipal functions he must provide.

- **Accomplishments** – The Township has been working very successfully in addressing the top priorities of the community: preserving the scenic beauty and rural agrarian charm of the Township and providing safe places for people to walk, ride bicycles and horses. The Township has also created convenient access to the Schuylkill River and a true community park that includes active and passive facilities, pathways and scenic beauty with riverfront connections.

East Coventry Township established the Parks, Recreation and Conservation Committee. The Committee serves in an advisory capacity and plans and provides recreation programs geared to special events such as Community Day and the Egg Hunt.

The Township undertook this major planning effort to develop a *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan* as a follow up to its participation in the *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan for the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities*. The Township sought and received funding for this project from Chester County. East Coventry Township does a lot with a little in terms of the quality of park maintenance. The parks look clean



and attractive. People rate the quality of the parks favorably. The challenge is that the Township will need to increase this effort as the park, recreation facilities and trails expand over time.

- **Township Organizational Capacity** – East Coventry Township operates within a framework of trying to create maximum organizational effectiveness using staff as a team to deliver excellent public service within a climate of fiscal austerity and accountability.
- **Funding Sources** – The Township has been creative in pursuing outside sources of funding including grants from Chester County, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape and PECO. Voters passed a referendum to pay an additional 0.25% in Earned Income Tax for Open Space signaling how important open space is to them.

#### management challenges

- **While there is no parks and recreation department, the Township is not of sufficient size to have a full-time director.** The Township can consider part-time staff for recreation and parks, designating an existing staff person to have formalized recreation and parks responsibilities with a specified time allotment for this function, or consider working with adjoining municipalities in a regional parks and recreation consortium with shared parks and recreation staff.
- **No workload cost-tracking system for park maintenance is in place.** Without information about park costs in terms of staffing, it is very difficult to make informed decisions about park planning, resource allocation, and fees and charges policy. In a relatively small township with a relatively small park system in which park maintenance falls under Public Works, it is not unusual that workload by park and task is not tracked. It would be very helpful as the system evolves to establish workload cost tracking as a practice.
- **Park planning is not a designated function with defined parameters and requirements.** Park planning has been undertaken informally, without the involvement of key stakeholders, a public participation process, and

professional consultants early enough in the project. Significant projects go forward without a plan in place that has been developed through a thoughtful and creative planning and design process. Park projects have not addressed the long-term responsibility for maintenance, programming, financial and human resources, potential partners or alternatives to traditional support by the Township.

- **Communication tends to be fragmented and disjointed among elected and appointed officials and the citizenry.** No formal communication system is in place. As a result, discussions about important issues appear to be reactionary and result in conflicts, ineffective relationships, and challenging policies. In outreach for this plan, the public indicated that having more information about parks, recreation, conservation and future plans and opportunities would be very helpful.

#### management opportunities

- **Making the case for parks and recreation.** The planning process for this project found that there are varying levels of understanding about the importance of parks, recreation, open space and trails. One of the most valuable things that the Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee would do is to make a strategic effort to document why parks and recreation is vital to this community and then to promote their findings. This would include such things as increased property values near parks and trails, testimonials from park visitors, and evaluations of recreation events from participants.
- **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan implementation.** Having an adopted parks and recreation plan in place will foster efficient and effective ways of operating since a common mission, goals and recommendations will be in place. Capitalize on the adoption of this plan by implementing the action plan through the designation of roles and responsibilities for actions that include a mix of Township resources and partnerships with organizations in the public and private sectors, including the Owen J. Roberts School District, the Schuylkill River Heritage Area, Explore Chester County and others.

- **Successful parks and recreation partnership potential.**

East Coventry Township's staff and budget are too small to provide everything that is needed in parks and recreation. Collaboration with others will help to leverage existing Township support for enhanced facilities and services. It is important to set a positive and welcoming tone to attract people of all ages, interests, and abilities. Seeking partnerships with people with expertise in advertising, fundraising, natural resources, trails, programming and other such functions would help to advance Township goals in parks and recreation. One of the most important partnerships in the future could be with the Owen J. Roberts School District via the new East Coventry Township Elementary School. This would include the joint planning, development and operation of outdoor facilities for education and recreation as well as in programs and services for the community.

- **Park planning strategy.** Develop a strategy for park planning that is holistic, prioritized, has broad public support, includes public involvement, professional park planning services, and the development of a capital improvement program.

- **Maintenance management system formalization.** A formalized park maintenance management system should be developed, implemented and computerized. Four distinct areas of maintenance could be addressed in the maintenance management system: parks, recreation facilities, natural resources and trails. By organizing maintenance into these areas, decision-making regarding staffing, financing, training, setting priorities and partnerships could be enhanced. It is important to avoid the common scenario of developing new facilities without allocating sufficient resources from a variety of public and private means to ensure the long-term safety, cleanliness and beauty of the facilities or the viability of programs and services.

- **Natural resources management** as a function of maintenance and park and recreation planning. It is important to integrate natural resource management with overall community planning. Provide training to workers on natural resource management as a function of park maintenance.

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<sup>5</sup> Second Class Township Code. Act of May 1, 1933 (P.L. 103, No. 69). Reenacted and amended November 9, 1995 (P.L. 350, No. 60). As Amended Harrisburg, PA. Article XX. Sections 2201 – 2207. Parks, Recreation Centers, and Forests.

CHAPTER 8

implementation strategy

The *East Coventry Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* sets forth a vision that complements the Township’s success in open space preservation and the existing parks and trails. It provides the framework for improving and expanding the public parks and recreation system; connecting the community with safe places to walk, bicycle and ride horses; and creating more access to the Schuylkill River. Parks and recreation in East Coventry Township will be rooted in providing opportunities for citizens to engage in active healthy living pursuits and experiencing nature in Township parks. The public engagement process for this plan found that the majority of citizens in the Township think that parks and recreation is important to the community. Recreation and conservation efforts that integrate East Coventry Township’s values for community, health, natural beauty, and sustainability are the hallmark of this plan.

The Implementation Strategy featured in this chapter is grounded in the continued preservation of open space, improving the parks and recreation system over time, using a mix of public and private funding to develop the parks and recreation facilities, and generating support for operations and maintenance through partnerships, volunteerism and Township support.

Every incremental success, no matter how small, will advance East Coventry Township’s vision for the future. The intent of this implementation strategy is to chart a course

of action that is pragmatic and achievable and that also allows for larger scale initiatives should the opportunities emerge. Responsible parties and potential partners, a suggested timeframe, and resources, are outlined for each recommendation.

key to lead parties, assistance, and potential partners/funders:

- BOS** Board of Supervisors
- PC** Planning Commission
- OSC** Open Space Committee
- HC** Historical Commission
- PRCC** Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee
- PAHWF** Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation
- DEP** Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- DCNR** Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- CCPC** Chester County Planning Commission
- DVRPC** Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
- WPF** William Penn Foundation

**year 1**

item	strategy	lead party	assistance	potential partners/funding
<b>GOAL 1</b> <b>Protect our open space, natural, cultural and historical resources and scenic character.</b>				
A	Update the criteria listed in Township Resolution 2011-14 Exhibit A, to reflect the recommendations in this plan. <i>(See details in Ch. 3)</i>	OSC	PRCC, Twp Manager, Twp Solicitor, Twp Planner, BOS	
B	Revise the ZO and SLDO to require HOA documents to specify responsibility for open space management and maintenance.	PC	BOS, Twp Planner, OSC, Twp Manager, Twp Solicitor	
C	Prepare a sample open space management plan to be included as an appendix to the SLDO, for use by developers pursuing the open space option.	PC	BOS, Twp Planner, OSC, Twp Manager, Twp Solicitor	
<b>GOAL 2</b> <b>Establish parks and recreation facilities as community destinations where residents can have fun, experience nature, socialize and lead active healthy lifestyles.</b>				
A	Assess existing conditions and maintenance of stormwater management areas to determine whether they can be naturalized to improve infiltration, beautify the parks and save time and money on maintenance.	PRCC	Twp Manager, BOS, Twp Planner, Twp Engineer, Public Works	
B	Consider the addition of universally accessible trails within parks with gentle slopes.	PRCC	Twp Planner, Twp Engineer, Twp Manager, BOS	CCPC, DCNR, PAHWF
C	Install additional shade sails at Ellis Woods Park to provide shade for the playground.	PRCC,	Twp Manager, BOS, Twp Planner, Twp Engineer	DCNR, PAHWF
D	Provide an additional trail at the Kulp Farm, outside of the floodplain, to ensure a continuous loop when the lower trail is flooded.	PRCC	OSC, Twp Planner, Twp Engineer	CCPC, PAHWF
E	Develop and adopt a policy on naming parks and recreation facilities.	Twp Manager in policy development. BOS on adoption of policy.	PRCC	Staff and volunteer time



**year 1**

item	strategy	lead party	assistance	potential partners/funding
F	Revise the SLDO Section 22-426 to update the requirements for mandatory dedication of land and fee in lieu.	PC	BOS, Twp Planner, Twp Solicitor	
G	Revise the SLDO to be consistent with the definitions of Recreation Land, Active Recreation, and Passive Recreation, as stated in Chapter 5 of this plan.	PC	BOS, Twp Planner, Twp Solicitor	
<b>GOAL 3</b> <b>Connect our community through a system of trails.</b>				
A	Revise the SLDO to permit publically accessible trails within easements along arterial and collector roads in lieu of sidewalks in new developments, where homes don't front on these streets.	PC	BOS, Twp Planner, Twp Solicitor	
B	Contact PECO and work towards an agreement for use of their rights-of-way as trail corridors.	Twp Manager	PRCC, BOS, Twp Planner, Twp Solicitor	PECO
<b>GOAL 4</b> <b>Facilitate recreation opportunities to help the citizens engage in active healthy living.</b>				
A	Keep the Township website up to date with information about events and activities.	Township website manager	PRCC provides current information.	Staff and volunteer time
B	Maintain a current contact list for sports leagues and other community based recreation related providers.	PRCC	Person designated by the PRCC	Volunteer time
<b>GOAL 5</b> <b>Provide operational excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.</b>				
A	Identify the project(s) and action steps needed to advance implementation of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan annually.	PRCC – sub-committee	Twp Manager	Volunteer and staff time

**year 1**

item	strategy	lead party	assistance	potential partners/funding
B	Ensure that all park planning continues to be undertaken with professional design planning standards. Include a public participation process in the addition of facilities or changes in parks.	PRCC	Twp Manager	Retain professional landscape architects and parks and recreation planners to design parks, recreation facilities, and trails.
C	Develop and distribute an annual report on accomplishments, opportunities, issues and changing needs in parks, recreation and conservation.	PRCC – sub-committee	Twp Manager	Volunteer and staff time
D	Ensure that the Township complies with regular safety inspections, reporting and maintenance of records of park maintenance activities and inspections. Playground inspections should be on file for at 20 years.	Twp Manager	Park maintenance staff	
E	Establish a five to seven-year capital improvement program.	Twp Manager	PRCC	

**years 2–5**

item	strategy	lead party	assistance	potential partners/funding
<b>GOAL 1</b> <b>Protect our open space, natural, cultural and historical resources and scenic character.</b>				
A	Revise the ZO to meet Conservation by Design standards by requiring preservation of more open space (min. 50% net lot area) in the cluster and open space development options.	PC	OSC, PRCC, Twp Manager, Twp Solicitor, BOS, Twp Planner	Chester County Vision Partnership Program, WPF
B	Revise the ZO to require Growing Greener: Conservation by Design (or similar) within the FR District.	PC	OSC, PRCC, Twp Manager, Twp Solicitor, BOS, Twp Planner	Chester County Vision Partnership Program, WPF

**years 2–5**

item	strategy	lead party	assistance	potential partners/funding
C	Undertake a comprehensive review of the non-residential zoning districts, (NC, C, C-1 & LI), most of which are contiguous to the Schuylkill River Trail, to determine whether they can better contribute to or interact with parks, trails, recreation and open space in the Township.	PC	Twp Solicitor, Twp Planner, BOS	WPF
D	Prepare Farm Management Plans for Township owned lands which are to remain in agriculture in order to establish better management practices while protecting natural resources.	OSC	Consulting Agronomist	CCPC, Pennsylvania Sustainable Agriculture, DEP, Penn State Extension

**GOAL 2**

**Establish parks and recreation facilities as community destinations where residents can have fun, experience nature, socialize and lead active healthy lifestyles.**

A	Prepare master plans prior to the development of the Heiser, Faulk, and Wade Tracts. Pursue funding from DCNR and DCED. Engage the public throughout the process.	PRCC	Twp Planner, Park and Recreation Consultant, Twp Engineer, OSC	DCED, DCNR, CCPC, PAHWF
B	Pursue partnerships with semi-public landholders such as the Owen J. Roberts School District, private schools and local churches, to provide recreation opportunities on their lands.	PRCC	BOS, Twp Manager	Local schools, churches and other landowners
C	Prepare stewardship and maintenance plans for all parks in order to properly maintain natural areas.	PRCC	Twp Manager, Public Works, Twp Planner	
D	Prepare landscape plans to guide further beautification of the parks, including Ellis Woods Park and Kulp Farm.	PRCC	Twp Manager, BOS, Public Works, Twp Planner	

**years 2–5**

item	strategy	lead party	assistance	potential partners/funding
E	Install meadows in the lower field at Ellis Woods Park, along Maack Road at the Kulp Farm and in other unusable spaces, to save time and money on maintenance, to create habitat and improve stormwater infiltration.	PRCC	Twp Manager, BOS, Twp Planner, Public Works	
F.	Create a unified signage system for Township parks, trails and open spaces, to be consistent in colors, fonts, size and messaging.	PRCC	Signage consultant, Twp Manager, Solicitor, PC, Twp Planner, BOS	PAHWF, DCNR, Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape
G	Prepare signage details to be an appendix to the SLDO, for signs required for public open spaces and trails created through the development process.	PC	Signage consultant, Twp Manager, PRCC, Solicitor, Twp Planner, BOS	
H	Evaluate all parks for compliance with the Consumer Product Safety Commission criteria and the Americans with Disabilities Act regulations.	PRCC	Twp Manager, BOS, Park and Recreation Consultant	PAHWF
I	Assess the parking and planned uses at Ellis Woods Park and determine whether additional parking is needed.	PRCC	Park and Recreation Consultant, Twp Manager, BOS, Twp Planner, Twp Engineer	
J	Install additional courts at Ellis Woods Park to provide full court basketball and multiple, simultaneous pickleball games.	PRCC	Twp Manager, BOS, Twp Planner, Twp Engineer	DCNR, PAHWF
K	Name the parks and publicly owned properties acquired for parks, open space, conservation areas and trails.	PRCC advises BOS on names.	BOS adopts names of parks.	The public can be involved in naming parks via website comments, public forums, naming contests and other means.



**years 2–5**

item	strategy	lead party	assistance	potential partners/funding
<b>GOAL 3</b> <b>Connect our community through a system of trails.</b>				
A	Create a more formal trailhead at the Kulp Farm to serve users of the trails at the Kulp Farm, Maack Farm and Ussler property.	PRCC	OSC, Twp Planner	CCPC, DCNR, PAHWF
B	Extend and clearly mark the existing trails to provide a clear connection and safe crossing point for the Kulp and Maack Farm trails.	PRCC	OSC, Twp Planner	CCPC, DCNR, PAHWF, DVRPC
C	Provide a trailhead at Frick's Locks Village, as included in the feasibility study, to serve visitors, commercial users, the Historical Commission and Schuylkill River Trail users.	HC	PRCC, Twp Planner, Twp Engineer, PECO	CCPC, PAHWF, PECO, DCNR
<b>GOAL 4</b> <b>Facilitate recreation opportunities to help the citizens engage in active healthy living.</b>				
A	Dedicate one annual meeting of the PRCC to inviting providers of recreation services to hold a forum on recreation services. Consider collaboration, partnerships and potential regional parks and recreation initiatives as part of the planning and discussions related to the forum and work efforts.	PRCC	Staff time to advertise and promote meeting	Volunteer time and participation by community based organizations
B	Ensure that the request for permitted use of facilities is as convenient as possible.	Twp Manager	PRCC	Staff and volunteer time
C	Review all forms and agreements for facility use permits and revise as needed.	Twp Manager	PRCC	Staff time
D	Ensure that each Township newsletter contains information about Township parks, recreation facilities and trails with a reference to the website with more detailed information.	PRCC	Township staff for advertising, newsletter and website coordination	

**years 2–5**

item	strategy	lead party	assistance	potential partners/funding
<b>GOAL 5</b> <b>Provide operational excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.</b>				
A	Develop an information packet to recruit and inform new members of the PRCC, newly elected officials and other Township committee members about the parks and recreation systems, the Committee mission and operations.	PRCC – sub-committee	Twp Manager	Volunteers and staff time
B	Consider establishing a park friends group and attaining 501(c)(3) status for it.	PRCC	Twp Manager	
C	Establish a policy on fees and charges.	PRCC for policy development. BOS for adoption of policy.	Twp Manager	The policy would establish the Township's philosophy on cost recovery and supporting parks and recreation through a mix of public funding, grants, gifts, donations, fees and charges and other means.
D	Establish a policy on gift and donations.	PRCC for policy development. BOS for adoption of policy.	Twp Manager	The Policy will help to set parameters on donations so that all parties clearly understand the terms of the donation, its life expectancy, maintenance and replacement.

**years 5–10**

item	strategy	lead party	assistance	potential partners/funding
<b>GOAL 1</b> <b>Protect our open space, natural, cultural and historical resources and scenic character.</b>				
A	Explore an expanded partnership with Exelon to provide greater access to and influence over the remainder of Frick's Locks Village, if the Township management and use of the leased area is successful.	HC, PRCC, Twp Manager	Twp Solicitor, BOS	Exelon
B	Consider expanding Township holdings adjacent to Frick's Locks Village, to protect large parcels which are key to protecting the context of the village.	HC, OSC, PRCC, Twp Manager	Twp Solicitor, BOS	Land Trust
C	Explore public private partnerships with organizations such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation to manage Frick's Locks Village for visitation and education.	HC, PRCC, Twp Manager, Exelon	Twp Solicitor, BOS	
<b>GOAL 2</b> <b>Establish parks and recreation facilities as community destinations where residents can have fun, experience nature, socialize and lead active healthy lifestyles.</b>				
A	Incorporate design elements in the parks which highlight the Township's connection to the river and canal, including water features and artistic elements.	PRCC, Twp Planner, Twp Engineer	Twp Manager, BOS	DCNR, CCPC, PAHWF
B	Establish a clustered sports facility to provide centralized active recreation opportunities for local school teams of all levels, community leagues and recreational leagues for children, adults and seniors.	PRCC, OSC, BOS	Twp Planner, Twp Solicitor	DCNR, CCPC
C	Provide additional landscaping along Route 724 in Towpath Park to provide more visual and physical separation between the park and the road.	PRCC, Twp Planner	Twp Manager, BOS	DCNR, PAHWF

**years 5–10**

item	strategy	lead party	assistance	potential partners/funding
D	Improve the existing playground at Towpath Park in accordance with an overall design, to incorporate additional structures, furniture and plantings. Consider relocating the playground adjacent to a pavilion.	PRCC, Twp Planner, Twp Engineer	Twp Manager, BOS	DCNR, CCPC, PAHWF
E	Replace the numerous port-a-potties with permanent bathrooms in attractive buildings, served by water and sewer or composting toilets.	PRCC, Twp Planner, Twp Engineer	Twp Manager, BOS	DCNR, CCPC, PAHWF
G	Consider expanding holdings in close proximity to the Wade Tract (and other preserved riverfront properties) in order to maximize opportunities for riverfront recreation.	OSC, PRCC	Twp Manager, Twp Planner, Land Trust	DCNR, CCPC
H	At Towpath Park and the Wade Tract, provide appropriate amenities for boaters, such as trailer parking spaces, large turnaround areas, a fish cleaning station and potentially a vending machine full of fishing supplies.	PRCC	Twp Manager, BOS, Twp Planner, Twp Engineer	PA Fish and Boat Commission, PAHWF

**GOAL 3****Connect our community through a system of trails.**

A	Create a land and water trailhead at the Wade Tract to serve users of the Schuylkill River Trail and the Schuylkill River Water Trail.	OSC, PRCC	Twp Planner, Twp Engineer,	CCPC, DCNR, PAHWF, PA Fish & Boat Commission
B	Explore the possibility of creating a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the equestrian trails.	Citizen Equestrians	PRCC, OSC	US Equestrian Federation, PA Equine Council
C	At the Kulp Farm, replace the existing trail surfaces with firm, stable and slip resistant surfaces, such as compacted, crushed stone with fines.	OSC, PRCC	Twp Planner	CCPC, DCNR, PAHWF



**years 5–10**

item	strategy	lead party	assistance	potential partners/funding
<b>GOAL 4</b> <b>Facilitate recreation opportunities to help the citizens engage in active healthy living.</b>				
A	Identify two to three signature programs or events for the PRCC to be responsible for.	PRCC	Township staff for advertising, newsletter and website coordination	Potential sponsorships and partners
B	Prior to budget season identify the programs for the next year and budget for them.	PRCC	BOS for budget	
<b>GOAL 5</b> <b>Provide operational excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.</b>				
A	Develop a communication plan to ensure effective and timely communication within the Township among boards, committees and staff as well as with community based organizations and the community at large.	PRCC – sub-committee	Twp Manager	
B	Prior to budget season, review the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and undertake a simplified SWOT analysis to evaluate parks, recreation, trails and open space in order to develop a sound work program for the next fiscal year.	PRCC – sub-committee. Do the analysis as the main meeting topic in August	Twp Manager	Volunteer and staff time
C	Add natural resource management as a function of the Township parks, recreation and conservation system.	Twp Manager	PRCC	Potential training from a conservation organization
D	Create and implement a workload cost tracking system for park maintenance	Township Manager in concert with park maintenance staff		Consider applying for DCNR or PRPS grant assistance
E	Phase in increase over time to support additional parks, recreation facilities and trails.	BOS	Information provided by PRCC, Twp Manager, and Park Maintenance staff	Continue to seek partnership and non-tax revenues to supplement Township funding.

**on-going tasks**

item	strategy	lead party	assistance	potential partners/funding
<b>GOAL 1</b> <b>Protect our open space, natural, cultural and historical resources and scenic character.</b>				
A	Continue to participate in the Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program, administered by the Chester County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB).	PRCC	Staff and consultants for administration, BOS for approval.	Land Trust, CCALPB, DCNR
B	Continue to acquire parcels in fee where unique opportunities arise.	PRCC	Staff and consultants for administration, BOS for approval.	Land Trust, CCPC, DCNR
C	Continue to utilize conservation easements to protect land with important natural resources.	PRCC	Staff and consultants for administration, BOS for approval.	Land Trust, CCPC, DCNR
D	Continue to acquire parcels in fee where unique opportunities arise.	PRCC	Staff and consultants for administration, BOS for approval.	Land Trust, CCPC, DCNR
E	Continue to participate in the Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program, administered by the Chester County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (CCALPB).	PRCC	Staff and consultants for administration, BOS for approval.	Land Trust, CCALPB, DCNR
F	Continue to collect public open space funding through an EIT, bonds or other means.	Board of Supervisors	Staff and Consultants	Public
<b>GOAL 2</b> <b>Establish parks and recreation facilities as community destinations where residents can have fun, experience nature, socialize and lead active healthy lifestyles.</b>				
A	Consider expanding holdings adjacent to or in close proximity to all parks, trails and open spaces in order to maximize recreational opportunities and expand the trail system.	PRCC, OSC	Twp Manager, BOS, Twp Planner	Land Trust, CCPC, DCNR, PAHWF
B	Establish trail easements alongside conservation and agricultural easements wherever the Township pursues preservation.	OSC, PRCC	Twp Planner	CCPC, DCNR, DVRPC

**on-going tasks**

item	strategy	lead party	assistance	potential partners/funding
<b>GOAL 3</b> <b>Connect our community through a system of trails.</b>				
A	Chapter 4 of the plan contains lists of important destinations, classified as primary, secondary and tertiary. Refer to these lists when planning for trails and update them periodically.	PRCC, PC, OSC	Twp Planner	Developers, CCPC, DCNR, DVRPC
B	Establish trail easements alongside conservation and agricultural easements wherever the Township pursues preservation.	OSC, PRCC	Twp Planner	CCPC, DCNR, DVRPC
C	Establish easements over existing equestrian trails in conjunction with conservation or agricultural easements over the property.	OSC, PRCC	Twp Planner, Solicitor	Land trust

# appendices

**EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**CHESTER COUNTY, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2011-14**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF  
EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP, CHESTER COUNTY,  
PENNSYLVANIA, ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR  
REVIEWING OPEN SPACE PROPERTY INTERESTS FOR  
ACQUISITION BY THE TOWNSHIP IN ACCORDANCE  
WITH THE OPEN SPACE LAND ACQUISITION AND  
PRESERVATION ACT, 32 P.S. §5001 *ET SEQ.***

**WHEREAS**, the Open Space Land Acquisition and Preservation Act, 32 P.S. §5001 *et seq.* (the "Act") requires a local government to establish, by ordinance or resolution, procedures to follow in connection with the acquisition of open space property interests.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Supervisors of East Coventry Township hereby adopts the following procedures in accordance with the requirements of the Act:

1. The following procedures are hereby established and shall be observed by the Township when reviewing open space property interests considered for acquisition by the Township, for rating the relative desirability of interests in particular parcels, and for establishing the price it will pay for said interests.

A. When an interest in open space property is offered to the Township for acquisition, or otherwise comes to the attention of the Board of Supervisors for acquisition by the Township, the Township Secretary shall complete the Criteria for Evaluation of Property attached hereto as Exhibit "A" for the subject property and submit it to the Board for its review. Exhibit "A" sets forth the present criteria, but may be amended by the Board by resolution from time to time.

B. The Board of Supervisors shall determine if the acquisition is within the expressly permitted purposes set forth in the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Preservation Act, 32 P.S. §5001 *et seq.* and as authorized by the referendum, i.e., to preserve and protect farmlands, parklands and natural, historic and scenic resources, and to otherwise secure open space benefits.

C. Based upon the criteria for evaluation of property, if the Board of Supervisors determines that the subject property is desirable for acquisition, then the Board of Supervisors shall obtain at least one appraisal of the subject property by a person authorized to perform an appraisal under the Real Estate Appraisers Certification Act, 63 P.S. §457.1 *et seq.*, and the Board may, but is not obligated to, require that an environmental impact statement be

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prepared, indicating the potential liability of the Township for any environmental problems associated with the property to be purchased. The person making the appraisal shall not be interested directly or indirectly in any aspect of the sale of the property.

D. The price paid by the Township for the purchase of the property interest shall not exceed the price established by the appraisal; provided, however, that if more than one appraisal is obtained, the purchase price paid by the Township shall not exceed the average of the appraisals.

E. The property shall be designated for open space uses in a resource, recreation or land use plan recommended by the Township Planning Commission and adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

F. A public hearing shall be held before any property interests may be acquired. Notice must be given to all owners of said interests in real property and to any local government unit in which land is situate. At the hearing, the Township shall set forth the interests to be taken and their proposed open space benefits. At the hearing, persons and municipalities affected by the proposed acquisition of interests shall have an opportunity to present relevant evidence.

G. If the owner of the interests in real property to be acquired prefers to have the Township acquire the property in fee simple, the Township shall be required to acquire the property in fee simple.

H. The Board of Supervisors, in its discretion, may authorize the establishment of a program to purchase open space property interests on an installment or other deferred basis. The Township's obligation to make payments on such basis shall not be subject to the requirements of §602(b) or (c) of the Local Government Unit Debt Act. A landowner who enters into an installment agreement with a local government unit shall receive, in addition to the selling price, interest in an amount or at a rate set forth in the purchase agreement.

I. If transferable development rights are acquired by the Township, they may be disposed of in any manner recommended by the Township Planning Commission and adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

J. The purchase agreement, the deed, the deed of transferable development rights, restrictive covenants and/or conservation easements, as applicable, shall be suitable in form and substance to the Township Solicitor, and shall comply with all applicable provisions of the Township Zoning Ordinance.

K. When the Township acquires an interest in real property, it shall establish and maintain a repository of records of the interests in real property acquired. It shall also record each interest in real property acquired by it in the office of the Recorder of Deeds.

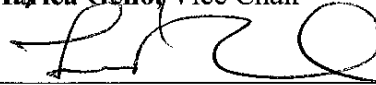
L. The Township shall submit to the school district within which the property is located a copy of the deed reflecting the open space property interest acquisition certified by the County Recorder of Deeds.

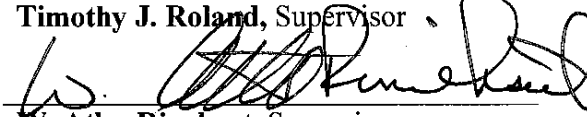
**APPROVED** this 11th day of July, 2011, by the Board of Supervisors of East Coventry Township.

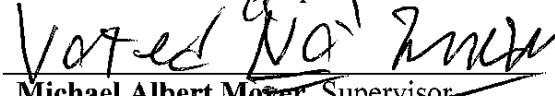
**EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP**

By:   
**Ray A. Kolb, Chairman**

By:   
**Marica Geho, Vice Chair**

By:   
**Timothy J. Roland, Supervisor**

By:   
**W. Atlee Rinehart, Supervisor**

By:   
**Michael Albert Moyer, Supervisor**

Attest:   
**~~Bernard A. Rodgers, Secretary~~**

*Assistant Secretary*

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## **EXHIBIT "A"**

### **Criteria for Evaluation of Property**

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EXHIBIT "A"

Criteria for Evaluation of Property

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Project No.: \_\_\_\_\_

LANDOWNER(S): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

UPI# \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

How submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual tax revenue: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Appraised value: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT RISK OF SALE

Low \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ High \_\_\_\_\_

FARMING VIABILITY

Currently farmed: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Soil quality: Class I or II \_\_\_\_\_ Class III or IV \_\_\_\_\_

Agricultural Security Area: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Willing to apply: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

State Agricultural Conservation Easement Program potential:

Low \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ High \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION

Contiguous to working farm: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Nearest working farm: \_\_\_\_\_

Contiguous to Preserved Open Space: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Nearest protected property: \_\_\_\_\_

Close to other properties under consideration: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Contiguous to Historical site: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

SIZE - ACREAGE \_\_\_\_\_

Entire property under consideration: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Portion of the property to be considered: \_\_\_\_\_

#### DEVELOPMENT AND ZONING

Zoning District: \_\_\_\_\_

Proximity to Development:  
Adjacent \_\_\_\_\_ Nearby \_\_\_\_\_ Distant \_\_\_\_\_

Development pressure:  
Low \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ High \_\_\_\_\_

Public road frontage/access:  
Low \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ High \_\_\_\_\_

Suitable/desirable for development:  
Low \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ High \_\_\_\_\_

#### LIFE QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE

Historical significance of site:  
Low \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ High \_\_\_\_\_

Historical significance of buildings:  
Low \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ High \_\_\_\_\_

Scenic view:  
- vistas - on site: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
- of other features: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Natural features

- Watershed area: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_



- Wetlands: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
                     Stream \_\_\_\_\_ Pond \_\_\_\_\_  
                     Floodplain \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- County Natural Resource Priority: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
   Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- Woodlands: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- Topography: Hilltop \_\_\_\_\_ Ridge \_\_\_\_\_ Valley \_\_\_\_\_
- Steep slopes: \_\_\_\_\_ Lowland \_\_\_\_\_
- Geologic features: \_\_\_\_\_

#### RECREATION POTENTIAL

Suitable for active recreation: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

- Landowner willingness:  
   Low \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ High \_\_\_\_\_
- Linkage with: \_\_\_\_\_
- Potential use: \_\_\_\_\_

Suitable for passive recreation: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

- Landowner willingness:  
   Low \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ High \_\_\_\_\_
- Linkage with: \_\_\_\_\_
- Potential use: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS (e.g., Landowner objectives, considerations)

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RECOMMENDATION:

\_\_\_\_ Restrictive Covenants  
\_\_\_\_ Conservation Easements  
\_\_\_\_ Transferable Development Rights  
\_\_\_\_ Outright Land Purchase  
\_\_\_\_ Installment Sale  
\_\_\_\_ Other - See Discussion Below

DISCUSSION

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPROXIMATE COST OF RESOLUTION: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Funding Source:

\_\_\_\_ Township  
\_\_\_\_ County  
\_\_\_\_ Other

Prepared By: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Township Secretary

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY REVIEW PROGRESS

	<u>Date</u>
Landowner advised of plan	_____
Purposes of property considered by Board	_____
Appraisal obtained	_____
Resource, recreation or land use plan recommended by Planning Commission	_____
Resource, recreation or land use plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors	_____
Public hearing	_____
Purchase documents suitable in form and substance to the Solicitor	_____
Repository of records established	_____
Interests recorded at Recorder of Deeds	_____
Copy of the deed to school district	_____

# public participation report

East Coventry Township's *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* incorporated a vigorous public participation process. The purpose of community engagement was to identify the values, interests, and concerns of all who were interested in parks, recreation and open space. The planning team integrated the opportunities, concerns, and issues considered important by the public with the analyses of parks, recreation and open space and reflected those findings in the Plan.

## process and findings

The public participation process included five elements: Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Advisory Committee, interviews, public meetings, a meeting participant questionnaire, and outreach to landowners interested in conservation. In addition, the planning team participated in meetings with the Parks, Recreation and Conservation Committee and the Federation of Northern Chester County.

## Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Update Advisory Committee

The Plan Advisory Committee guided the planning process by serving as the eyes and ears of the community. Members embodied a broad spectrum of community interests including representatives of the Board of Supervisors, Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee, Planning Commission, Historical Commission, Open Space Committee, conservation, senior adults, families, and business. Committee members provided ideas, presented concerns, worked on formulating recommendations, participated in public meetings, arranged interviews, and reviewed the Plan in all phases. The Committee focused on achieving a balanced, pragmatic, and achievable plan that would enhance the quality of life in East Coventry Township by conserving precious natural resources and the community's scenic beauty, open space, river access, trails, greenways, and parks for fun, fitness and community.

## public meetings

Two public meetings were held to solicit ideas for developing the plan and one to review the Plan with its recommendations and implementation schedule. Approximately twenty-five people participated in the first meeting and approximately twelve people participated in the second one.

In the first public meeting, held September 30, 2015, citizens' discussion focused on retaining the scenic character of the Township, preservation of open space, trails, and increasing public awareness about parks, recreation and open space. The major points made included:

- Maintain our rural character;
- Educate residents about parks, recreation and open space and their benefit to the community;
- Continue to involve the citizens in planning continue to focus on natural resource conservation, the preservation of open space and community character;
- Connect the community with safe places to walk, bicycle and ride horses;
- Take care of and improve existing parks;
- Offer more programs that will bring the community together; and
- Continue to be responsible with public funding.

At the second public meeting, held November 30th, 2016, the consultants presented a slideshow highlighting the proposed goals and key strategies of the plan and solicited feedback through a facilitated exercise.

## interviews

The planning team interviewed people and organizations with interests in parks, recreation, open space, historic

preservation, trails, the Schuylkill River, benchmark comparisons with other Chester County municipalities, the Owen J. Roberts School District, and recreational activities. The interview findings reflected those of the public meetings, meetings with organizations, and the questionnaires. The conservation of open space, preservation of scenic character, establishment of trails, and more improvement by the public were deemed important.

The consultant team interviewed representatives from each of the following organizations and interests:

East Coventry Township Staff  
 East Coventry Township Official  
 East Coventry Township Volunteers  
 French & Pickering Creek Conservancy  
 Chester County Parks Department  
 Chester County Planning Commission Citizens with identified interests  
 Schuylkill River Greenway Association  
 Chester County Planning Commission Parkerford Tavern  
 East Vincent Township  
 West Vincent Township  
 South Coventry Township  
 East Pikeland Township  
 West Pikeland Township  
 East Nantmeal Township  
 Warwick Township  
 North Coventry Township  
 Owen J. Roberts School District  
 Chester County Agency on Aging and Senior Center  
 Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation Pottstown  
 Area Regional Recreation Committee

### **meetings**

The planning team met with the **Federation of Northern Chester County** to explore progress in regional parks, recreation and trails and the potential for future collaboration. It appears that the municipalities are primarily working independently although they expressed continued optimism for implementation of the regional parks, recreation and open space plan through local efforts.

In meeting with the **East Coventry Township Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee**, the planning team explored potential grant possibilities to advance the recommendations of the parks, recreation and open space plan and policies needed to guide decisions and future actions to improve parks. The Committee was interested in having more programs in the Township and is working with the Parkerford Women's Club to do summer programs for youth. The Committee would like to improve Town Path and add improvements such as shade and more pickle ball facilities.

### **landowner outreach meetings**

The planning team conducted a series of meetings with landowners in the community who have potential interest in conservation of open space. The planning team provided information underscoring that the Township would work with willing landowners and that there are various means for landowners to benefit by conserving their land.

### **questionnaires**

The Township collected community opinions via two sets of questionnaires: one in community meetings and the other in an online questionnaire posted on the Township's website.

### **meeting participant opinions**

Citizens in public meetings and recreation special events completed questionnaires about parks, recreation and open space. The responses collected from 24 meeting participants were as follows

- 95% said that parks, recreation and open space are very important. They commented that parks, recreation and open space contribute to the high quality of life here and make the Township great.



- 70% of the respondents rated the parks as good; 20% as average; and 10% as fair. No one rated them as excellent. The Township should set as a goal that 80% of the respondents would rate the parks and recreation system as excellent in a future survey by 2027.
- The highest priorities of the citizens over the next ten years are: trails (95%), open space conservation (90%), taking care of what we have (65%) and a balance of these along with programs and adding or improving parks. The lowest priority was improving parks (40%) or adding new parks (55%).
- When asked to identify the one single most important thing to do to improve parks, recreation and open space over the next ten years, the respondents identified limiting housing development, purchasing open space and creating trails, especially to the Schuylkill River.
- When asked to indicate the one single most important thing that the Township can do to improve parks, recreation and open space, the respondents named preserving open space (31%) and creating a Township trail system (31%) as the most important actions. Obtaining more land for parks came in next at 15%. Providing more recreation facilities (8%) and river access (8%) ranked as the least favored actions. Doing nothing at all was the choice of only 7%.
- When asked how important it is for East Coventry Township to improve parks, recreation, trails and open space over the next ten years, 77% of the respondents said it is very important and 15% said it is important. Only one person said that this is not important.
- In open ended commenting, the respondents described the need to stop housing development and preserve open space stating that this is the single most important thing that East Coventry Township can do.

#### **online questionnaire opinions**

Citizens had the opportunity to complete an online questionnaire asking for their opinions on the values of parks, recreation and open space and their importance to the community. Only 13 citizens responded. This response rate indicates the importance of promoting online questionnaires in the Township. The responses indicated the following:

- The most important core values for East Coventry Township's parks, recreation and open space system are environmentally oriented. About 70% thought that natural resource protection and sustainability are the most important core values for our system. Health of the citizens and community character ranked next with about 53% saying they were very important. Falling at 50% or less were financial sustainability (50%), historic resources conservation (46%), connections for safe walking and biking (31%) and collaboration with other townships (31%). While these indicate the values with the highest level of importance to the respondents, it is important to note that these values were deemed important or very important to all respondents. Since the response rate was low, these values are not statistically valid but can still be used to inform future planning and implementation projects.

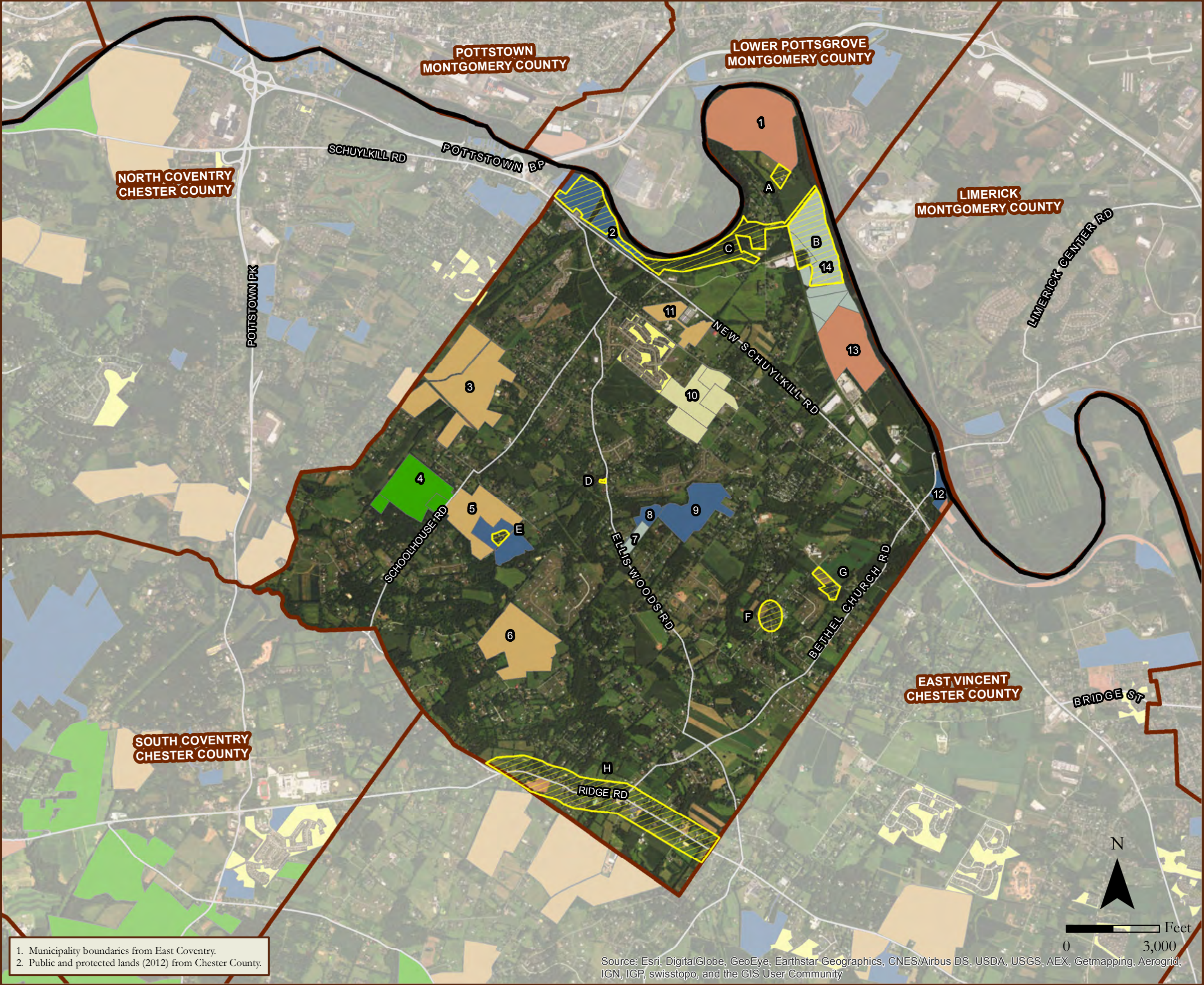
#### **summary**

Parks, recreation and open space are important to the citizens of East Coventry Township. They are most interested in the preservation of open space, creating a Township wide trail system, increased public awareness of all facets of parks and recreation, and more public involvement.

# maps

**Disclaimer:** These maps are not surveys. The information imparted with these maps is meant to assist Natural Lands Trust, Inc., describe the placement of certain retained, reserved, or excluded rights, and to calculate acreage figures. Property boundaries, while approximate, were established using the best available information, which may have included: surveys, tax maps, field mapping using G.P.S., and/or orthophotos. Natural Lands Trust, Inc. makes no representation as to the accuracy of said property lines (or any other lines), and no liability is assumed by reason of reliance thereon. Use of these maps for other than their intended purpose requires the written consent of Natural Lands Trust, Inc.





**Map 1:**  
**Public and Protected Lands**  
**EAST COVENTRY**  
**TOWNSHIP**

**Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan**  
Chester County, PA

- County Boundary Municipal Boundaries
- Public and Protected Lands

**Public and Protected Lands**

- Ag. Land Preservation Board Easements
- County Park
- HOA Protected Open Space
- Land Trust Open Space Easement
- Municipal Recreational Open Space
- School District Facilities
- Township Facilities
- Historic Resources

**Public and Protected Lands**

- 1. Saratoga County Preserve (+/- 128 acres)
- 2. Towpath Park/Heiser Tract/Faulk Tract (+/- 52 acres)
- 3. Kulp Agricultural Easement
- 4. Ussler Agricultural Easment
- 5. Maack Property/Wineberry Property (+/- 31 acres)
- 6. Jones Agricultural Easement
- 7. Township Administration Building
- 8. Ellis Woods Park (+/- 17 acres)
- 9. Creekview Property (+/- 53 acres)
- 10. Owen J. Roberts Elementary School
- 11. Elliot Farm (+/-25 acres)
- 12. Wade Tract (+/- 9.23 acres)
- 13. Linfield County Preserve (+/- 77 acres)
- 14. Fricks Locks Village (Private)

**Historic Resources**

- A. Riverbend Farm
- B. Fricks Lock Village
- C. Schuylkill Canal Historic Site
- D. Ellis Woods Revolutionary War Cemetary
- E. Maack Farmstead
- F. Snowdenville
- G. Swarz Property

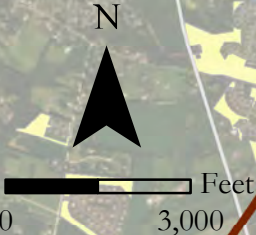


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Compiled By:  
KEB 04/07/16

1. Municipality boundaries from East Coventry.  
2. Public and protected lands (2012) from Chester County.



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community







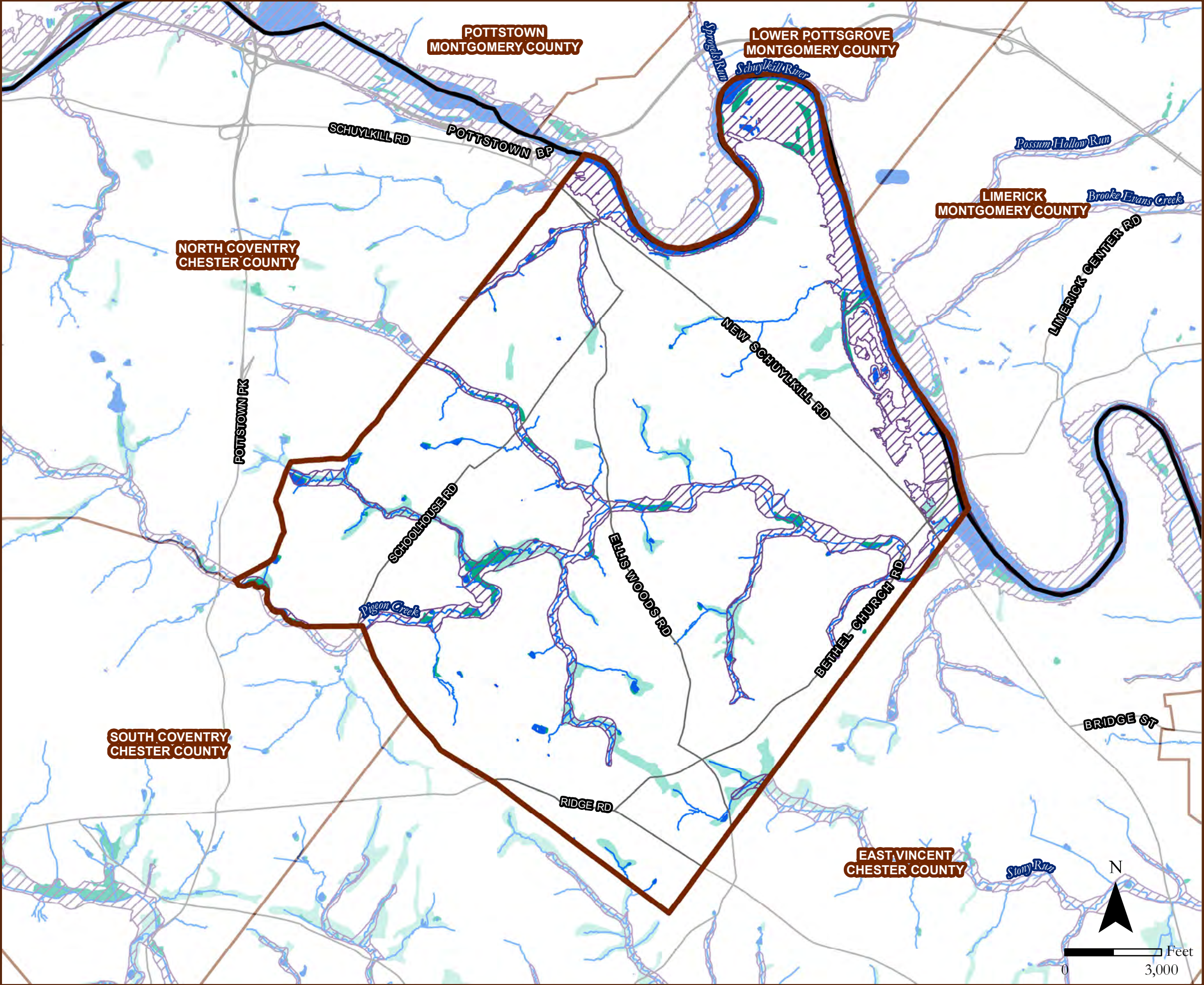
**Map 2:**  
**Aerial Photography**  
**EAST COVENTRY**  
**TOWNSHIP**  
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan  
Chester County, PA

-  County Boundary
-  Municipal Boundaries

1. Municipality boundaries and roadways from East Coventry.

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community





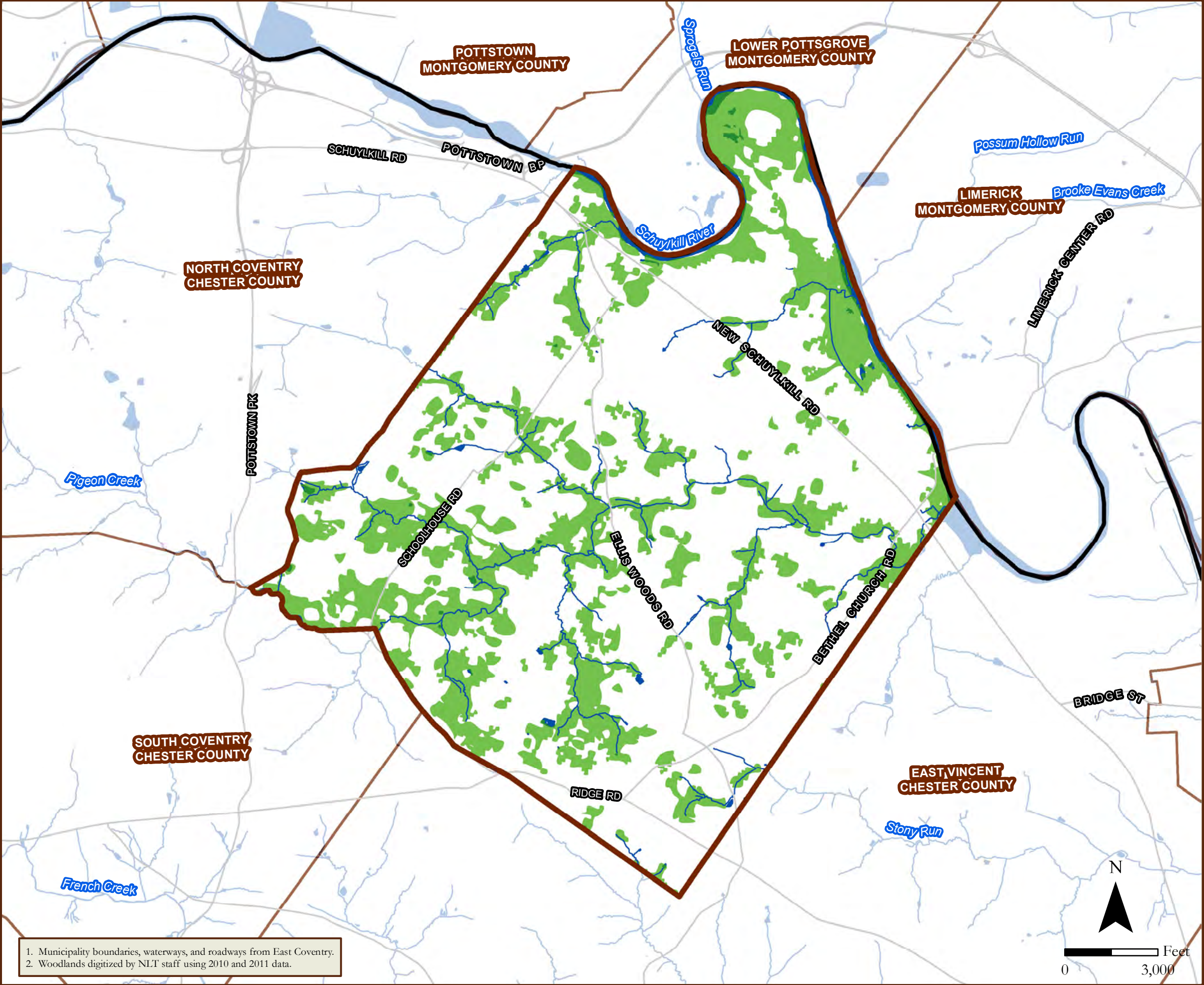
Map 3:  
Hydrology

**EAST COVENTRY  
TOWNSHIP**

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan  
Chester County, PA

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Waterways
- 100 yr Floodplain
- Hydric Soils
- Wetlands





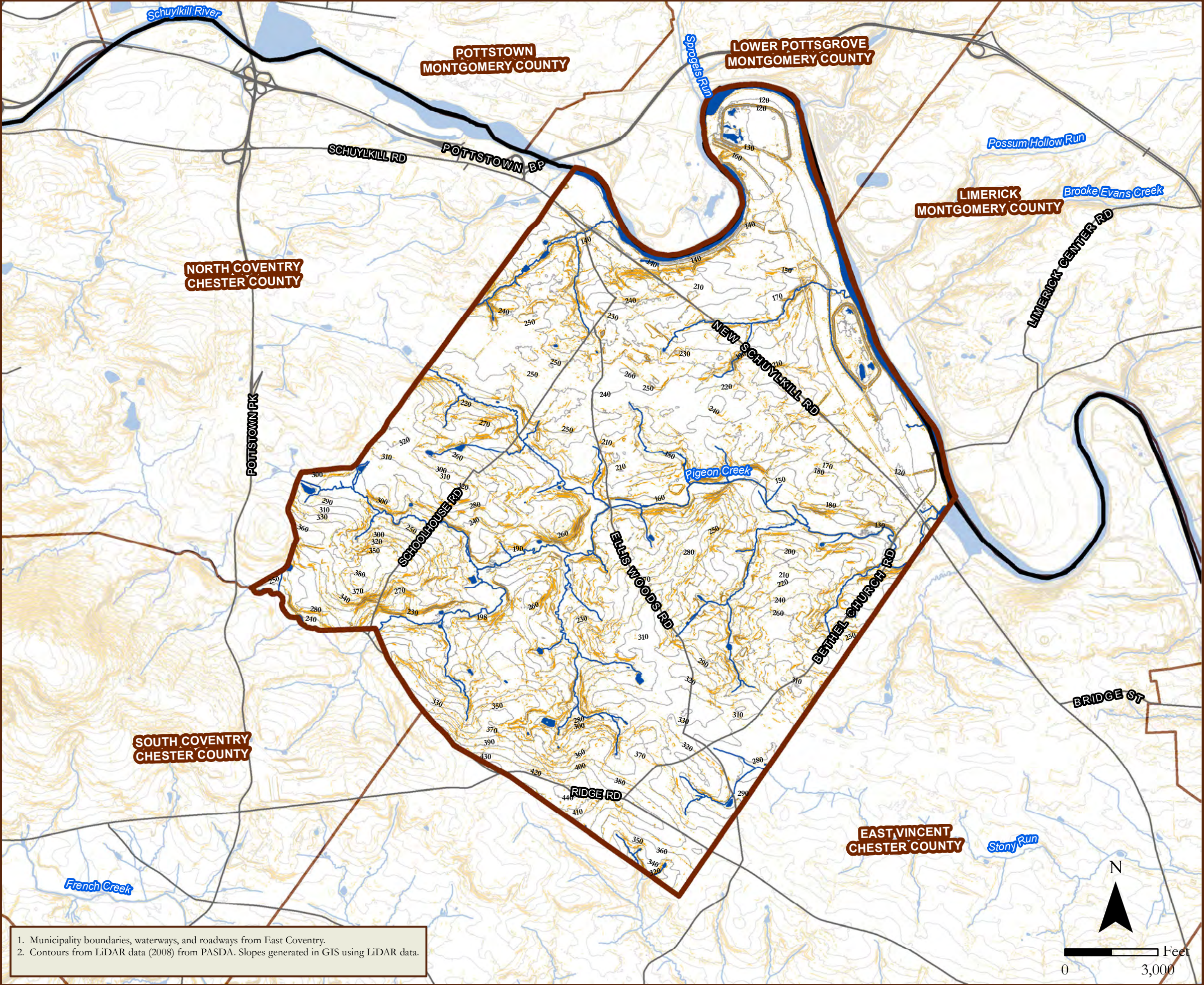
**Map 4:**  
**Woodlands**

**EAST COVENTRY  
TOWNSHIP**  
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan  
Chester County, PA

- County Boundary Municipal
- Boundaries
- Waterways
- Woodlands (+/- 1,683 acres)

1. Municipality boundaries, waterways, and roadways from East Coventry.  
2. Woodlands digitized by NLT staff using 2010 and 2011 data.





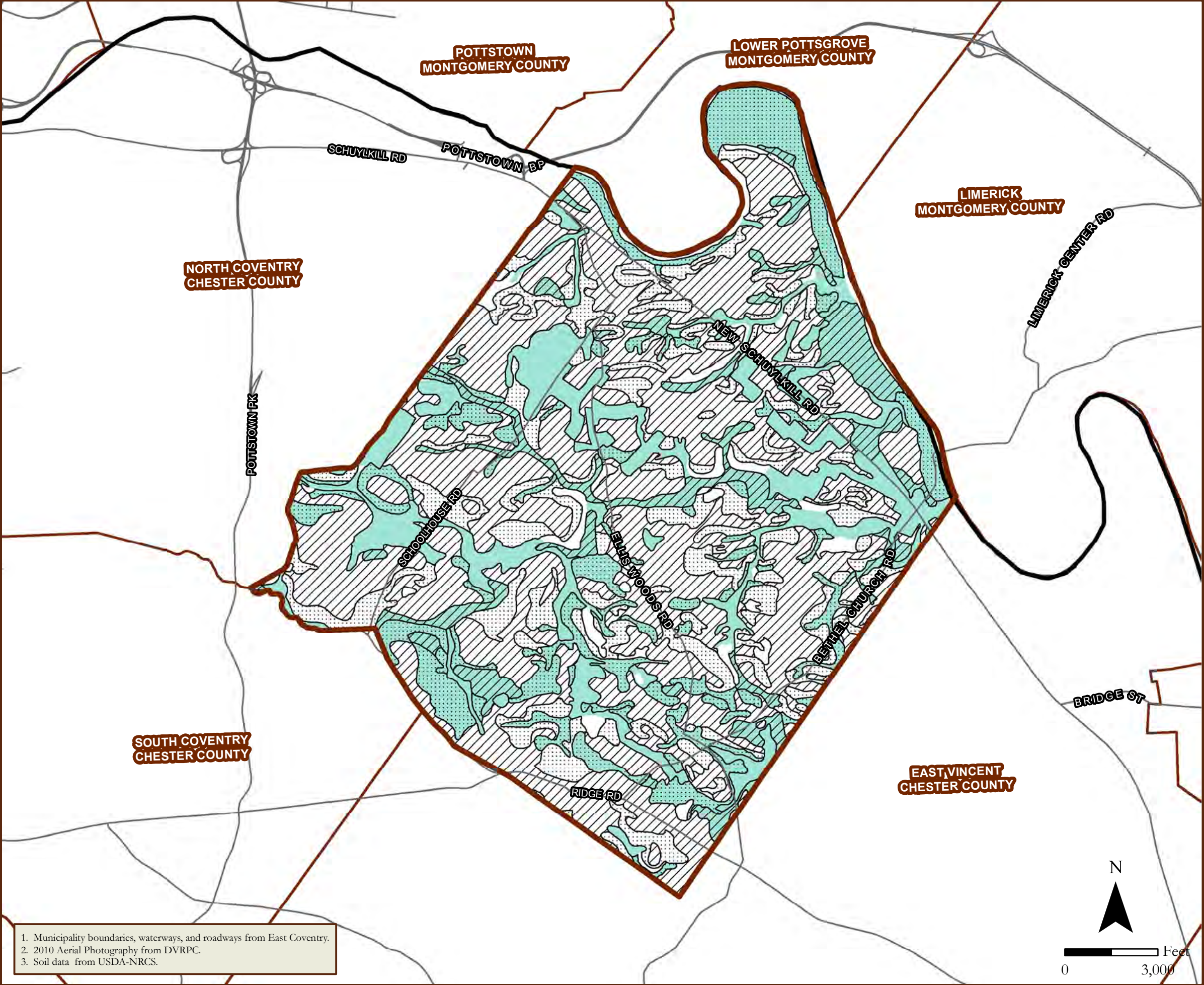
1. Municipality boundaries, waterways, and roadways from East Coventry.  
2. Contours from LiDAR data (2008) from PASDA. Slopes generated in GIS using LiDAR data.

**Map 5:**  
**Topography**

**EAST COVENTRY  
TOWNSHIP**  
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan  
Chester County, PA

- County Boundary
  - Municipal Boundaries
  - Waterways
  - Contours (20ft intervals)
- Slopes**
- 0 - 15%
  - 15 - 25%
  - >25%



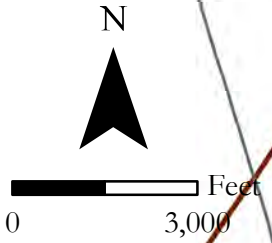


**Map 6:**  
**Soils**

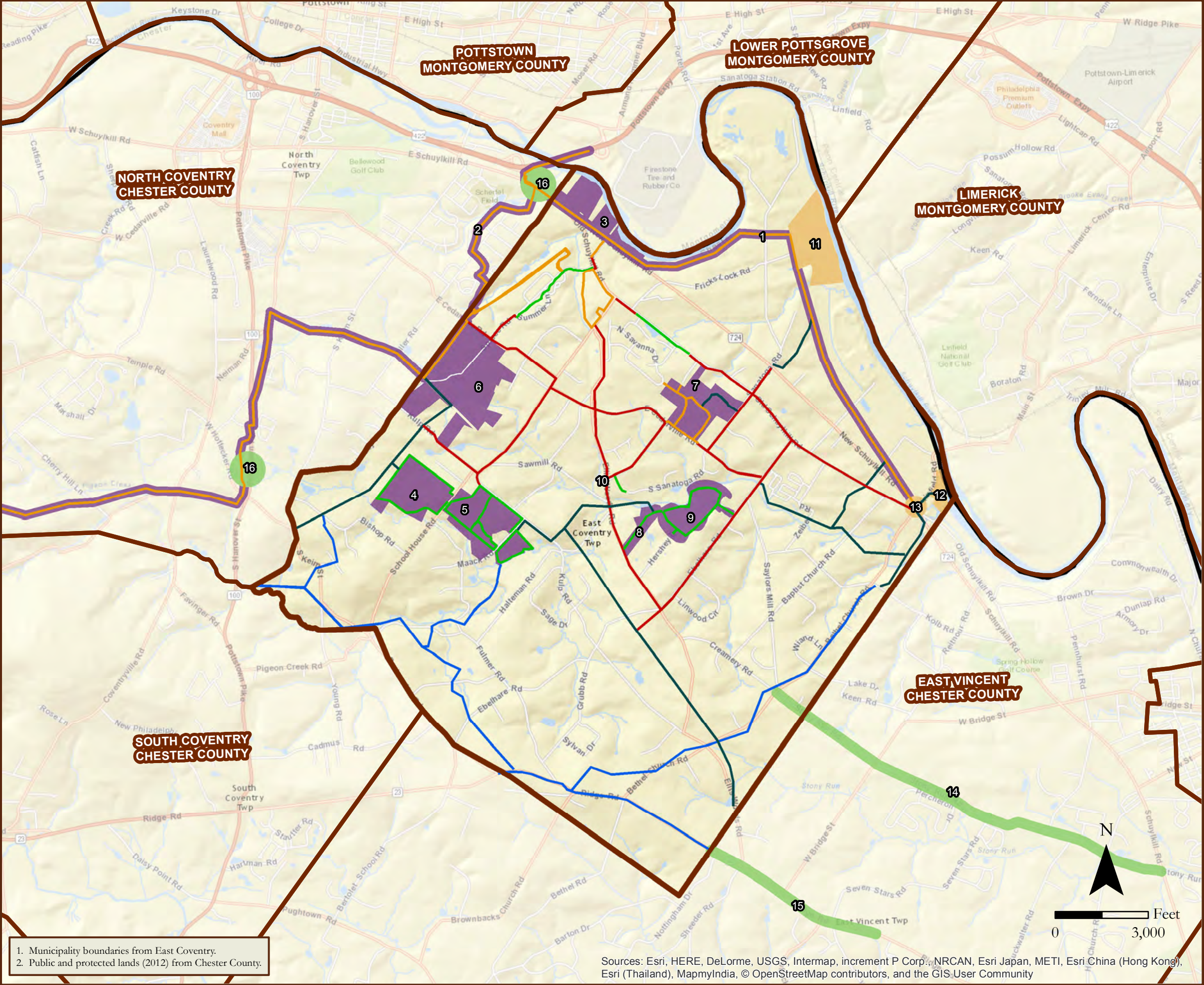
**EAST COVENTRY  
TOWNSHIP**  
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan  
Chester County, PA

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Prime farmland
- Farmland of statewide importance
- Hyrdric Soils

1. Municipality boundaries, waterways, and roadways from East Coventry.  
2. 2010 Aerial Photography from DVRPC.  
3. Soil data from USDA-NRCS.







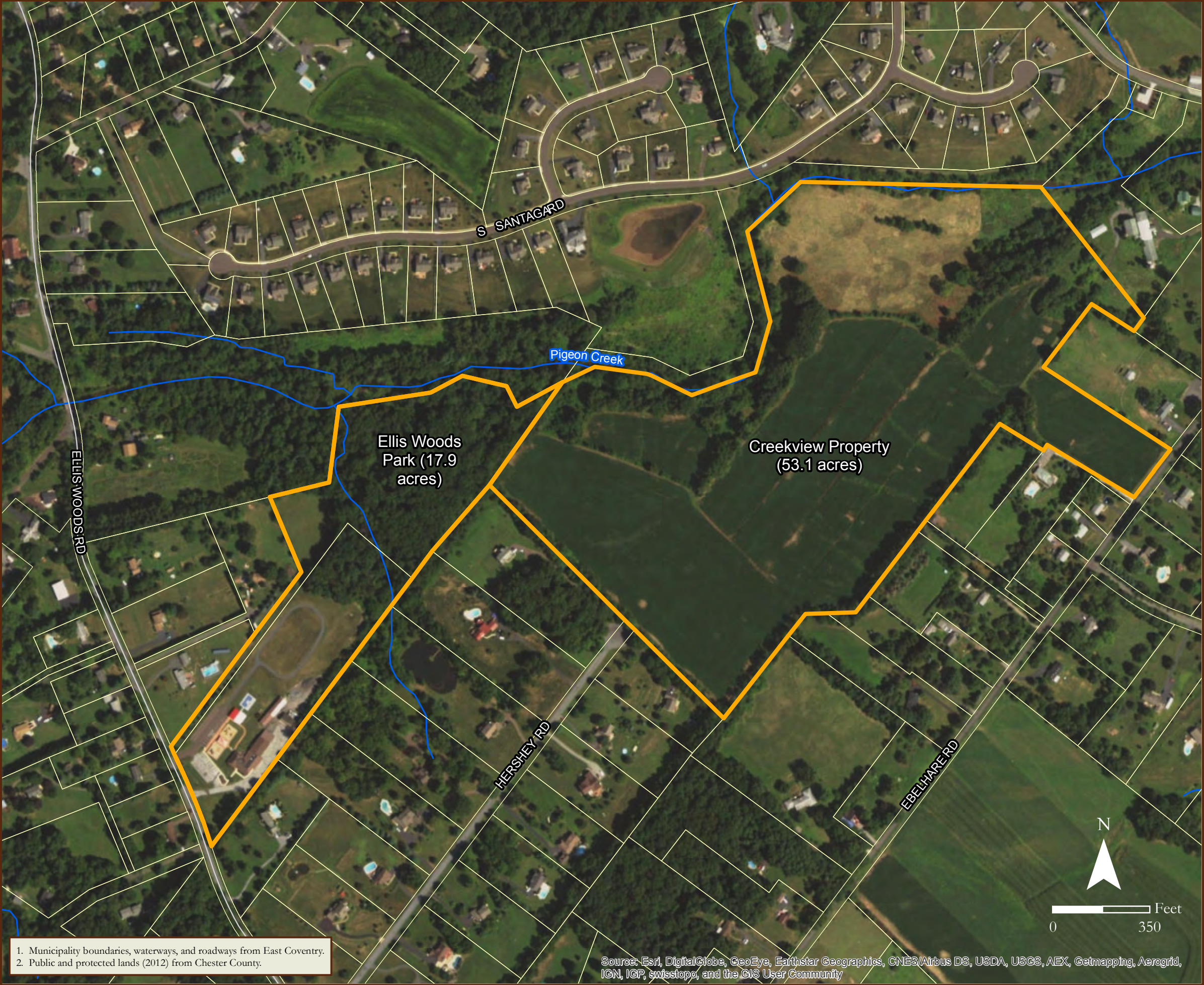
**Map 7:**  
**Trails**  
**EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP**  
**Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan**  
Chester County, PA

- Municipal Boundaries
- County Boundary
- Priority Destinations**
  - Primary
  - Secondary
  - Tertiary
- Primary Destination, Planned Trails
- Trails**
  - Existing Trails (5.8 mi)
  - Planned Trails (7.9 mi within East Coventry)
  - Primary Pedestrian Paths (9.9 mi)
  - Primary Multi-Use Trails (7.6 mi) Secondary
  - Trails (7.8 mi)

- Priority Destinations and Connections**
- Primary**
- 1. Schuylkill River Trail
  - 2. Kenilworth Trail
  - 3. Towpath Park
  - 4. Ussler Farm
  - 5. Maack Farm
  - 6. Daniel H. Kulp Farm
  - 7. East Coventry Elementary School
  - 8. Ellis Woods Park
  - 9. Creekview Property
- Secondary**
- 10. Ellis Woods Revolutionary War Cemetery
  - 11. Frick's Lock Village
  - 12. Wade Tract
  - 13. Parker Ford Village
- Tertiary**
- 14. Creamery Road/Stony Run Bike & Walk Path
  - 15. Ridge Road Path
  - 16. Commercial Areas

1. Municipality boundaries from East Coventry.  
2. Public and protected lands (2012) from Chester County.









1. Municipality boundaries, waterways, and roadways from East Coventry.  
2. Public and protected lands (2012) from Chester County.

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, Swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

**Map 8:**  
**Ellis Woods Park and**  
**Creekview Open Space**

**EAST COVENTRY**  
**TOWNSHIP**

**Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan**  
Chester County, PA

-  Township Owned Land
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Parcel Boundaries
-  Waterways





**Map 9:**  
**Towpath Park,**  
**Heiser and Faulk Tracts**

**EAST COVENTRY**  
**TOWNSHIP**

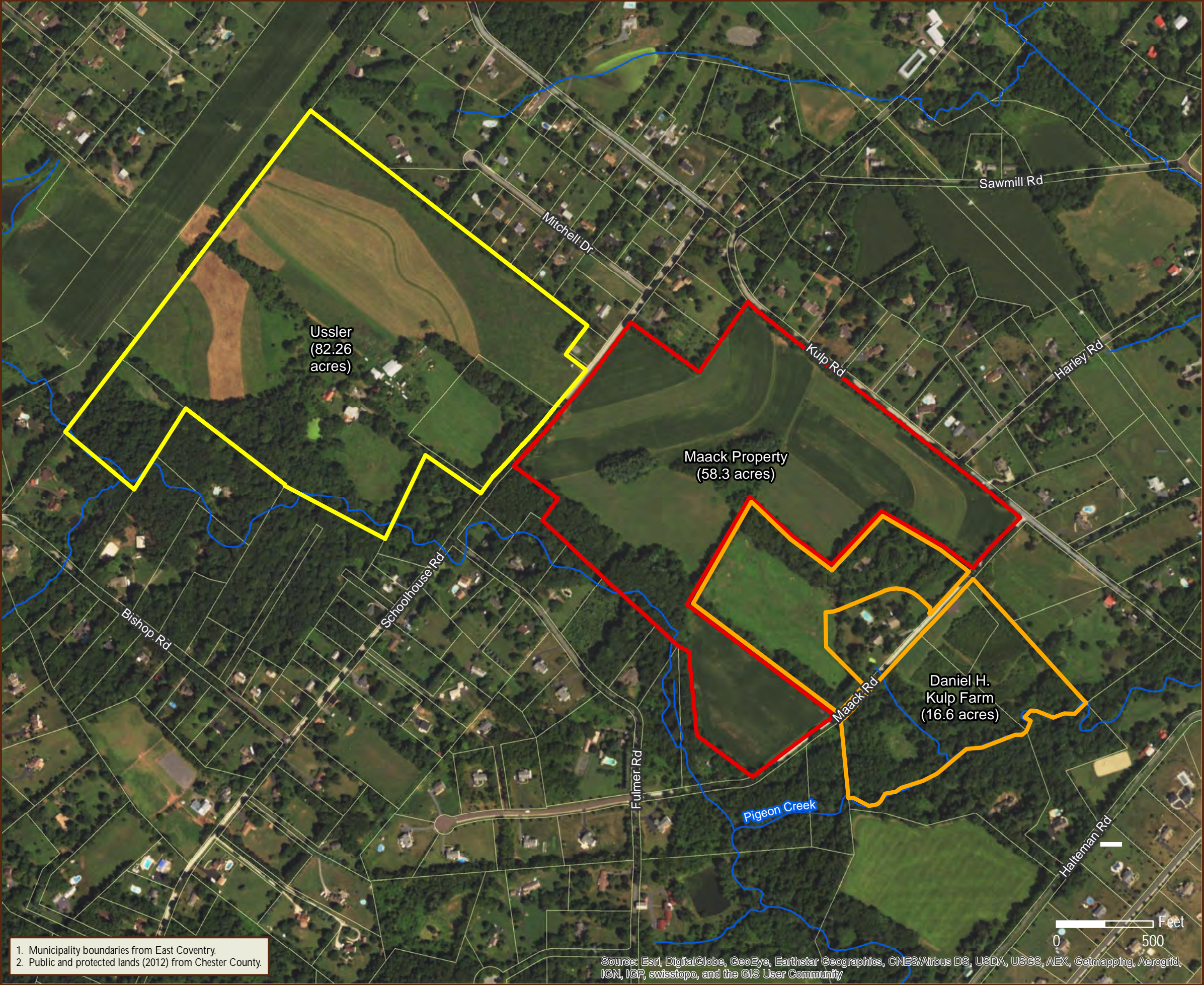
**Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan**  
Chester County, PA

- Township Owned Land
- Municipal Boundaries
- Parcel Boundaries
- Waterways

1. Municipality boundaries, waterways, and roadways from East Coventry.  
2. Public and protected lands (2012) from Chester County.

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community





Map 10:  
Maack, Daniel H. Kulp,  
and Ussler Properties

EAST COVENTRY  
TOWNSHIP

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan  
Chester County, PA

-  Agricultural Easement
-  Township Owned Land
-  Conservation Easement
-  Waterways
-  Parcel Boundaries

Ussler  
(82.26  
acres)

Maack Property  
(58.3 acres)

Daniel H.  
Kulp Farm  
(16.6 acres)

1. Municipality boundaries from East Coventry.  
2. Public and protected lands (2012) from Chester County.

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community










**Map 11:**  
**Wade Tract**

**EAST COVENTRY  
TOWNSHIP**

**Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan**  
Chester County, PA

-  Township Owned Land
-  County Owned Land
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Parcel Boundaries
-  Waterways

1. Municipality boundaries, waterways, and roadways from East Coventry.  
2. Public and protected lands (2012) from Chester County.

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community





Map 12:  
Frick's Lock Village

**EAST COVENTRY  
TOWNSHIP**

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan  
Chester County, PA

- PECO Owned Land
- Potential Route of Schuylkill River Trail
- Approximate Extent of Village Area
- Municipal Boundaries
- Waterways
- Parcel Boundaries

1. Municipality boundaries from East Coventry.  
2. Public and protected lands (2012) from Chester County.

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community







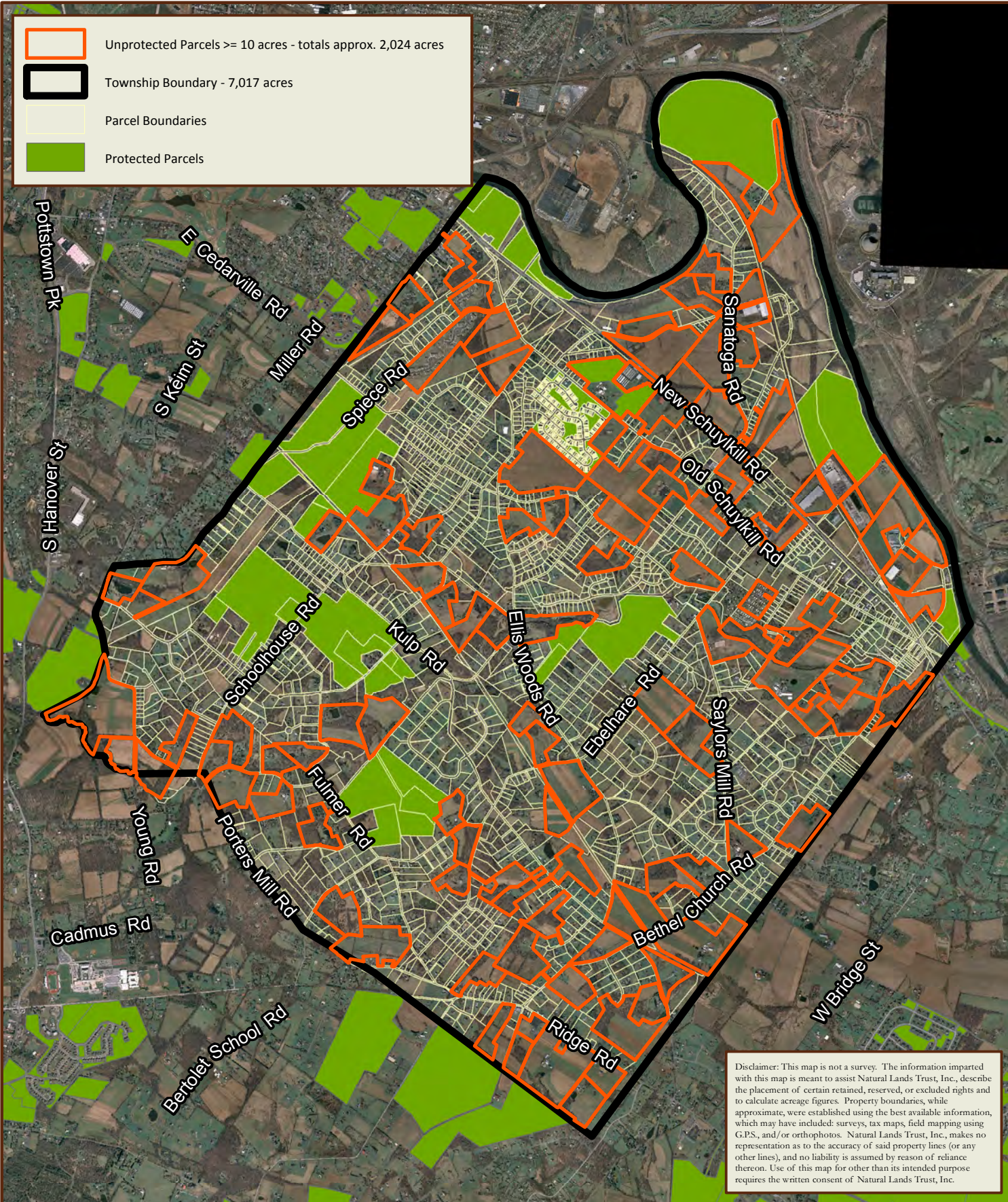
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KEB 04/07/16



-  Unprotected Parcels >= 10 acres - totals approx. 2,024 acres
-  Township Boundary - 7,017 acres
-  Parcel Boundaries
-  Protected Parcels



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## Parcels Greater Than 10 Acres

### EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP



0 1,600 3,200 Feet  
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