

Upper Gwynedd Township
Loop Trail Planning Comments
M&F Number 1311
February 4, 2008

The Trail Planning Open House gatherings held at the Township Building on December 12th and January 23rd as well as other discussions with township residents have resulted in numerous comments and or questions.

The following list provides responses in no particular order to those comments and questions with the understanding that the trail planning process is on-going. **Readers will note that Items 1 through 18 will address specific questions that were submitted to the Township. See below.**

General Trail Objectives, Rules, and Operating Policies

1. **Trail Routing:** Trail routing is based on the use of existing utility or quasi-public easements and right-of-ways as reflected on the Township's Master Trail and Open Space Plan of 2005. There can be no trail placement on private property without an appropriate easement.
2. **Public Bathrooms:** Public bathroom/restroom facilities have never been contemplated as part of this trail initiative and will not be provided. Facilities are available at the township complex at Parkside Place.
3. **Use of Motorized Vehicles:** No motorized vehicles other than by municipal or emergency staff will be permitted on trails.
4. **Hours of Use:** Trail will be a dawn to dusk-use trail. Trail use at night is not permitted and will be signed as such.
5. **Resting Benches:** Township proposes to strategically locate benches at locations not imposing on private residences.
6. **Trash Removal:** Trash receptacles will be strategically placed at trail access points. Receptacles will be maintained by the Township on a scheduled basis.
7. **Trail Security:** The Township will develop a trail security patrolling plan consistent with Township public safety policy.
8. **Signage:** Trail identification and distance indicators (mile-markers) are contemplated along the trail as well as "Keep Off Private Property" signs as appropriate.

9. **Hunting:** Hunting is controlled per municipal firearm discharge regulations. The Township prohibits hunting on Township owned and controlled open space.
10. **Trail surface:** The Township has received varying comments regarding trail surface. Some responses request paved “asphalt” surface while others prefer softer compacted stone surface. A determination of surface material has not been made to date. Surface will determine use of trail and the Township does not want to invite unwanted uses or preclude desired uses during the design process. The Township is also concerned with maintenance needs of the trail.
11. **Privacy Concerns:** The Township’s goal is to reinforce privacy separation by way of trail placement away from private property but within easements, landscape edge treatments, fencing where appropriate, and signage. Whenever trail is adjacent to private property, it is the Township’s desire to locate the trail away from private property to the extent possible based on width of easement and natural features.
12. **Trail Drainage:** Trail designs will include consideration for appropriate handling of run-off from trail surfaces; environmental permits will be obtained as necessary.
13. **Equestrian Use:** The trail surfaces currently contemplated do not accommodate equestrian use. The trail is not being designed for equestrian use although the Township does not currently have a position relative to equestrian use of possible grass areas next to the trail. A crushed stone trail would not hold up to equestrian uses and asphalt would not be desirable for equestrian use.
14. **Trail Maintenance:** Township will maintain trail and trail corridor. Participation in maintenance by trail advocacy groups is encouraged.
15. **Current Regulations:** All current Township Park and Open Space regulations will apply to trail corridors.
16. **Trail Access:** The Township will do all it can to promote Parkside Place as the primary access point to minimize on-street parking at other possible trail access points. The Township is exploring alternatives to on-street parking at alternate locations if the Township Line Road trail connection develops as an option.

17. **Proximity to Railways:** Where not separated by topographic grade change, substantial vegetation or other natural features, fencing will be introduced to increase separation.
18. **Re-routing Recommendations:** The Township has received recommendations from specific neighborhoods with respect to the proposed trail route. The Township is currently evaluating these recommendations for viability and consistency with the Montgomery County program requirements.

Comments and Responses from Community:

- We prefer a hard surface (trail). Less maintenance and more versatile. Inline skating, bicycling, are accommodated. Less winter damage, more sure-footed for walkers. Runners do just fine on roadways. Consider also children on tricycles, train wheels, etc.

Refer to response number 10.

- Owning horses and riding Perkiomen Trail, I'd like to know if any part of the trail will allow horses. If so, footing needs to be equestrian friendly and what about space to bring a horse trailer? I also go to Evansburg – footing is natural there.

Refer to response number 13.

- Concerned about view from trail into his house (kitchen/bedroom) and would like his property secured from trail.

Refer to response numbers 4, 5, 7, & 11.

- Secure sewer right-of-way behind house. ATV, limit and control.

Refer to response number 3.

- Keep it as natural as possible. Gravel, mowing and pallets are fine. No paving please. No fencing please. Provide small foot bridges to cross the creeks. Access too open and easy. Would require parking.

Refer to response number 10.

- Move portion of trail to behind Merck WWTP (i.e.: off sidewalk). Improve railroad crossing on West Point Pike.

Trail locations continue to be refined. Railroad crossing improvements will be considered should a connection to West Point be feasible as part of this phase of trail development.

- Employees will like trail for exercise during lunch and breaks. Concerned about truck traffic behind building. May need fence to prevent accident. Design seems sound on first impression.

Thank you. Refer to response number 17.

- Please do not pave trail – especially behind Prospect Avenue. Would like the general design and length of trail – would be nice addition to Township. Paving is not consistent with the nature of the preserve.

Refer to response number 10.

- Concerns on the Cardinal Way Loop? Privacy, Swale w/Stream, All Trees, Wildlife, Proximity to trains, parking, Engineering along creek, Backyard privacy, too much traffic, drainage – water puddles from creek.

The “Cardinal Way Loop” is a consideration if the Township Line Road/PECO trail route is not possible. The drainage valley raises increased engineering issues. Refer to response numbers 11, 12 & 18

- Parking on Cardinal Way and Audubon?

Refer to response number 16.

- Concerns: Strangers, Trash, kids hangout, security, patrol?, train tracks and children, privacy, crossing busy N.W. Rd, learn habits and rob, noise, vehicles-ATV, rest area locations, disruption during construction, liability of neighbors adjacent to trail i.e. if accident occurs – responsibility to report.

Refer to response numbers 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 15, & 17.

- We already have paths, sidewalks and space. Hunters are permitted to hunt deer in some of the space. Invasion of privacy for residents who pay high taxes and I think it might have adverse effect on values. What about trash? Ask County to give money to repair our sidewalks.

“Fear of the unknown” can best be addressed through on-going public dialog. Refer to all responses.

- Great idea – running community supports this. We are willing to pay to use it.

Thank you.

- Who will clean up the trash? Who will patrol? Who will patrol at night? Who will respond to violations?

Refer to response numbers 4, 6, 7, 11 & 14.

- Let’s not do it all in asphalt.

Refer to response number 10.

- I have privacy and property infringement issues.

Refer to response number 11 & 16.

- I love it! I hope you do all of it and do it in asphalt so I can ride my bike. Since there is currently access to the Preserve Power Cut at Prospect and Stephan, I don’t think it will be necessary to have further access between Old Church and Stephan. Also, please save the trees from the grapevines in the green space near Haines Run!

Thank you. Refer to response number 10.

- Our major concern is where the trail will cut into West Prospect. Will it call for sidewalks? If it does call for sidewalks, what about the trees (many ancient along the street?) Could you have a meeting with the residents of West Prospect to discuss our concerns? Has any study been done to estimate the impact the trail will have on the animal populations – deer, red fox, etc.?

Installation of curbs and sidewalks along West Prospect Ave. is not planned or anticipated. The Township has met with residents on several occasions regarding the issue of walks and curbs.

- I am in support of the preliminary plan. I would hope we could pave most of the trail.

Thank you. Refer to response number 10.

- I love the overall trail concept. I don't care what the stream crossings look like, just as long as there are some. Right now, the streams really limit flexibility.

Thank you.

- Like the idea – link to surrounding communities. Suggest numbers on trail, i.e. mile markers on highway to exact locations for police and EMS response.

Thank you. Refer to response number 8.

- Major concerns: 1) Privacy, 2) Parking problems –big issue, 3) Trespassing on private property, 4) Drainage issues, 5) Access points not defined, 6) Increased bike traffic, 7) Enforcement of non-motorized vehicles, 8) Security and safety concerns for small children.

Refer to response list.

- After this trail is a success, build the Power Line Trail by Gwyn-Nor. How to get access from new Age-Restricted on Morris?

Further trail extensions may be considered in the future.

- Safety for walkers along the railroad tracks. Accessibility along the whole trail (along wet areas). Increase trash/parking. For the amount of money will it be utilized? The Wissahickon Trail doesn't seem to be utilized a lot. Do we need another trail or would the money be better used in other places?

Currently the WVWS Green Ribbon Trail serves as a “soft” stream-side path. The proposed loop trail is envisioned as a non-motorized multi-use trail to accommodate walkers and bikers. Should the Wissahickon Valley Water Shed Association wish to consider converting the Green Ribbon Trail to a firmer surface, it could be considered as a viable option. Refer to response numbers 17, 6, 14, 16 & 18

- Maintain land better than Jenkins Lane Land walkway.

Refer to response 14.

General Design and Planning Sequence:

Preparation of Upper Gwynedd Master Trail and Open Space Plan, 2005 Update:	2005
Initial meeting with County Open Space Board to discuss Plan Concept:	August 2007
Public Open Houses:	December 12, 2007 January 23, 2008
Preparation of Site Survey:	On-going January/February
Preparation of Design Documents:	February/March/April
Possible Board of Commissioners Meeting:	To Be Determined
Meeting with Montgomery Open Space Board:	April 2009