

# Chester County Planning Commission Annual Report

*2013*



# *Our Mission*

The Mission of the Chester County Planning Commission is to provide future growth and preservation plans to citizens, so they can enjoy a Chester County that is historic, green, mobile, and prosperous.

# *Our Strategy*

The Planning Commission has evolved into a modern, professionally staffed, planning organization that utilizes specialized knowledge and training, along with the latest techniques and technology, to plan for the future of Chester County. The Planning Commission and its staff work in partnership with federal, state, and regional agencies and municipal governments to fulfill a mission that is devoted to preserving and improving the quality of life for all Chester County residents.



Board of County Commissioners

Ryan Costello

Kathi Cozzone

Terence Farrell



C H E S T E R C O U N T Y P L A N N I N G C O M M I S S I O N

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Chairman’s message—year in review ..... 4

Chester County Planning Commission board members..... 5

About us..... 6

    Staff

    Budget

Strategic business plan..... 8

Landscapes2 plan activity ..... 9

    Promoting sustainable practices

    Measuring the success of Landscapes

    Protecting our open space resources

    Celebrating areas of national significance

Community planning services activity ..... 14

    Building partnerships with our municipalities

    Administering the Vision Partnership Program (VPP)

    Recognizing Municipal Planning Successes

    Revitalizing our urban centers

    Providing expanded historic preservation services

    Providing diversified housing

    Improving the environment

    Preserving and enhancing the unique character of the county

Planning information services activity ..... 25

    Making informed decisions

    Improving access to publications

    Expanding Geographic Information System (GIS) service

    Employing social networking

    Enhancing online experiences

    Reflecting on proposed development in 2013

    Measuring housing costs

Transportation planning and programming activity..... 31

    Investing wisely and strategically in our transportation system

    Establishing a blueprint for a walkable, bikeable future

    Improving transportation choices

Director’s message..... 34

Contact information ..... 35

# leadership

## Chairman's message — year in review



The Chester County Planning Commission is pleased to submit this annual report for the calendar year 2013. This past year's work at the Planning

Commission continues to reflect its mission—to provide future growth and preservation plans to citizens, so that they can enjoy a Chester County that is historic, green, mobile and, prosperous.

As required, the Planning Commission reviewed Subdivision and Land Development plans. While the number of applications for single family homes increased in 2013, plans submitted for multi-family units—townhomes and condominiums—were down almost 50 percent. In 2012, they had represented 40 percent of the residential applications reviewed. Though the total number of Act 247 reviews was up slightly last year, this activity truly represents the slow financial recovery we are experiencing here in Chester County and nationally.

In order to improve the value of the Act 247 reviews and Act 537 reviews, Planning Commission staff met with municipal officials across the County seeking their input and advice about how to make these documents more beneficial to the municipalities and applicants alike.

Expanding and improving the use of the internet for planning commission projects is ongoing, making it an important communication tool. Adding the use of GIS technology has certainly enhanced the services that we provide.

The Vision Partnership Program was fully funded in 2013. Several municipal projects were assisted through two grant rounds. These projects include subdivision and land development ordinance updates, zoning ordinance updates, comprehensive plan updates, a multi-modal transportation corridor study, and an open space, recreation, and environmental resources plan update.

The Central Chester County Bike and Pedestrian Plan was finalized and then adopted by the seven municipalities involved in its creation. The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association presented its Planning Excellence Award to the Planning Commission and the County Commissioners. This document is a wonderful example of multi-municipal cooperation.

The 2013 Transportation Improvement Inventory was completed and then adopted by the Planning Commission. The Transportation Inventory helps in the management of the county's Transportation Improvement Plan.

Four Planning Commission members were appointed to work with the Transportation Division on the transportation element of Landscapes2. I thank Dan DiMucci, Matt Hammond, Kevin Kerr, and Marty Shane for agreeing to assist with this project.

With a Historic Preservation Officer as part of the Planning Commission, historic preservation services have expanded. Working with the National Park Service, the current major project underway is the completion of a preservation plan for the Brandywine Battlefield Landmark.

As we begin a new year, we look forward to working on a brief review of Landscapes2 which is now five years old. As I stated earlier, review of past trends is an important exercise in planning.

When this concept began more than two decades ago, one of its primary goals was to preserve open lands in our county. Today, 25 percent of the lands in Chester County are permanently preserved. What an accomplishment and each municipality played a role in that achievement!

The members of the Planning Commission are pleased to continue working with the County Commissioners and with the Planning Commission staff in their efforts to maintain Chester County as a special place to work and to live — now, and for generations to come.



Judy L. DiFilippo, Chairman  
Chester County  
Planning Commission



**What is the Chester County Planning Commission?**

The Chester County Planning Commission is a nine-member advisory board appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. The members represent diverse backgrounds, volunteering to serve four-year terms. The officers are elected annually. All are dedicated to promoting coordinated growth and preservation planning for all of Chester County.



**Judy L. DiFilippo**  
**Chairman**

**Resident:**  
Tredyffrin Township

**Occupation:**  
Public Official

**Affiliations:**  
Former member, Tredyffrin Township Board of Supervisors; Past President, Chester County Association of Township Officials; Member, Paoli Intermodal Transit Center Study Committee; Member, Chester County 2020 Board; Treasurer, Tredyffrin Historic Preservation Trust; Chair, Main Line Night School Board of Directors.

**Appointed:**  
June 2002



**Nancy Mohr**  
**Vice Chairman**

**Resident:**  
East Marlborough Township

**Occupation:**  
Writer

**Affiliations:**  
The Land Conservancy for Southern Chester County; Chester County 2020, emeritus, Community Conversations; Keep Farming First, Master Planner Program; Brandywine Conservancy's Headwaters Area Conservation Program.

**Appointed:**  
June 1998



**Dr. Douglas Fasick**  
**Resident:**

East Nottingham Township

**Occupation:**  
Chiropractor

**Affiliations:**  
Board, Oxford Area Chamber of Commerce; President, Delaware Chiropractic Services Network; Member, Pennsylvania Chiropractic Association; Member, Delaware Chiropractic Society; Member, Oxford Athletic Association; Chiropractor Medical Director, Coventry HealthCare of DE, Inc.; Peer Review Consultant, Alternative Medicine Integration.

**Appointed:**  
June 2010



**Kevin C. Kerr**  
**Resident:**

Upper Uwchlan Township

**Occupation:**  
Private Investor/Public Official

**Affiliations:**  
Vice Chairman, Upper Uwchlan Township Board of Supervisors; First Vice President, Chester County Association of Township Officials.

**Appointed:**  
January 2013



**E. Martin Shane**  
**Resident:**

East Goshen Township

**Occupation:**  
Retired, PECO Energy Company

**Affiliations:**  
Chair, East Goshen Township Board of Supervisors; Board Member, Chester County Association of Township Officials, 2007-2015; Member, Selective Service System Local Board, 2007-present.

**Appointed:**  
June 2011



**Daniel DiMucci, RLA, ASLA**

**Resident:**  
West Goshen Township

**Occupation:**  
Senior Vice President, Pennoni Associates, Inc.

**Affiliations:**  
Member of the American Society of Landscape Architects; The American Planning Association; The Penjerdel Council; The Central Philadelphia Development Committee; The Pennsylvania State Board of Landscape Architects; Member, Board of Directors of the Arts and Architecture Society at the Pennsylvania State University, for Holy Family Home, and for the Charter High School of Architecture and Design.

**Appointed:**  
June 2011



**Matthew Hammond, P.E.**

**Resident:**  
West Bradford Township

**Occupation:**  
Executive Vice President, Traffic Planning and Design, Inc.

**Affiliations:**  
Chairman, Institute of Transportation Engineers Parking Council; Past member, West Bradford Township Planning Commission; Past Chairman, The Pledging Tree Foundation; Member, Institute of Transportation Engineers; Member, International Council of Shopping Centers; Past President, American Society of Highway Engineers-East Penn Section.

**Appointed:**  
June 2010



**Joseph J. Tarantino**  
**Resident:**

Tredyffrin Township

**Occupation:**  
President, Continental Realty Co., Inc.

**Affiliations:**  
Member, PA State Real Estate Commission; Vice Chairman, National Italian American Political Action Committee; Consultant, PA Turnpike Commission; Consultant, Montgomery County Board of Commissioners; Former Chairman, Bridgeport Revitalization Committee; Member, PA Association of Realtors; Member, National Association of Realtors; Member, Urban Land Institute.

**Appointed:**  
June 2005



**Joseph J. Viscuso, P.E., L.S.**

**Resident:**  
East Marlborough Township

**Occupation:**  
Vice-President, Pennoni Associates, Inc.

**Affiliations:**  
American Society of Civil Engineers; Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry; Chester County Economic Development Council; Home Builders Association of Chester & Delaware Counties; PA State Association of Township Supervisors; YMCA of the Brandywine Valley Board; Adjunct professor at Widener University.

**Appointed:**  
June 2005

**Resigned:**  
January 2013



**John C. Washington, III**  
**Resident:**

South Coatesville Borough

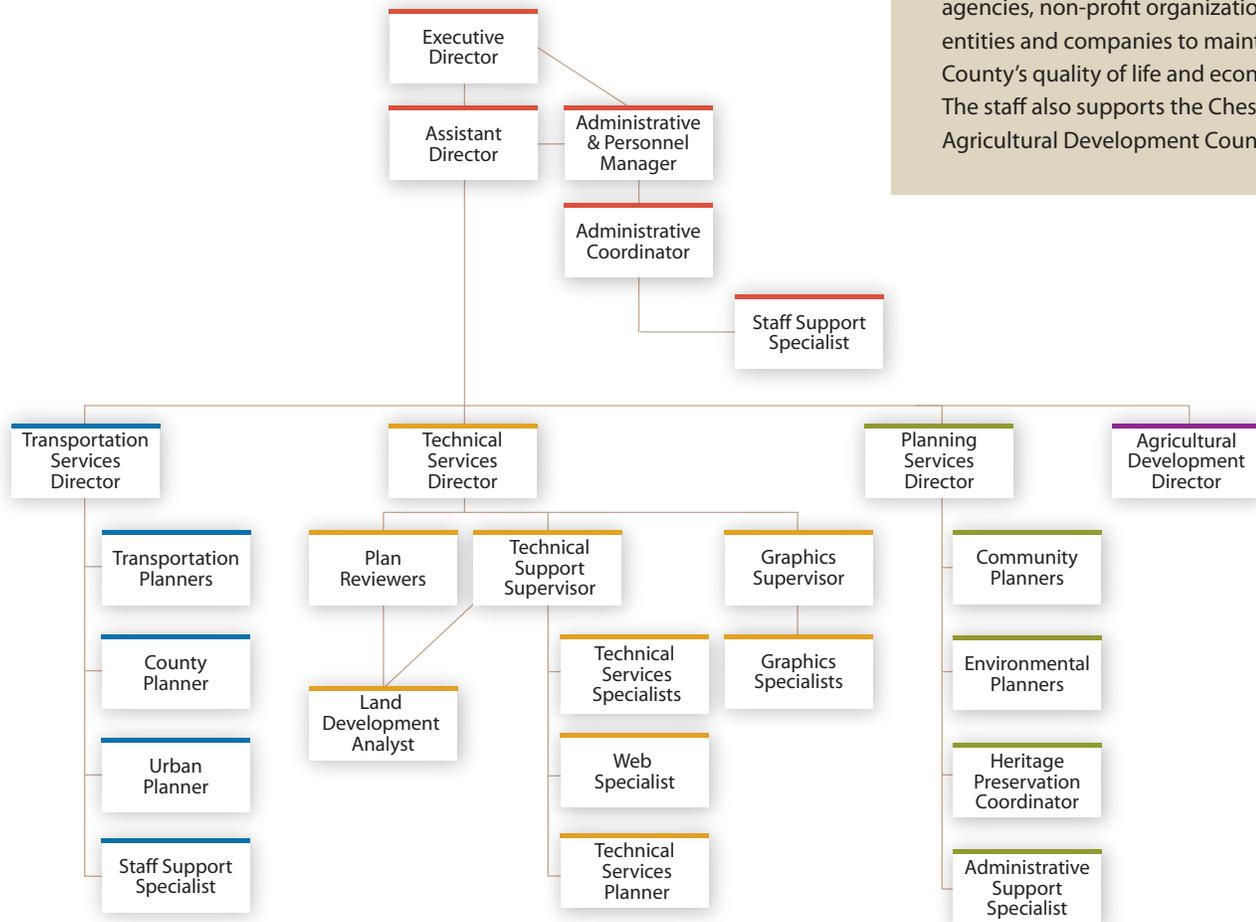
**Occupation:**  
Instructor for Overhead and Remote Crane Safety, Ladle Crane Operator, ArcelorMittal

**Affiliations:**  
Past President, South Coatesville Borough Council; Member, South Coatesville Borough Council, 1980-2013; Past President of the Association of Boroughs; Democratic Party of South Coatesville; Chairman, Borough of South Coatesville Economic Development Committee; Vice-President, Western Chester County Regional VCC Appeals Board.

**Appointed:**  
January 2002

# staff

The staff of the Chester County Planning Commission are employees of Chester County who are assigned to provide all professional and support services to the Planning Commission and its programs. The staff works in partnership with municipal governments, neighboring counties, state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, and other entities and companies to maintain Chester County's quality of life and economic vitality. The staff also supports the Chester County Agricultural Development Council.



■ **Administration Services**

- Ronald T. Bailey, AICP  
*Executive Director*
- David D. Ward, AICP  
*Assistant Director*
- Beth A. Cunliffe  
*Administrative & Personnel Manager*
- Karen Peed, *Administrative Coordinator*
- Marie Celii, *Information Specialist*

■ **Transportation and Information Services**

- Randy Waltermeyer, AICP,  
*Transportation Services Director*
- William Deguffroy, *Transportation Planner*
- Justin Smiley, *Urban Planner*
- Brian Styche, RLA, *Transportation Planner*
- Robert Walker, *County Planner*
- Patti Strauber, *Administrative Support*

■ **Technical Services**

- Thomas P. West  
*Technical Services Director*
- Catherine Sbarbaro, *Technical Support Supervisor*
- Gene Huller, *Technical Services Specialist*
- Steven Cummings, *Technical Services Specialist*
- Tyler Semder, *Technical Services Planner*
- Carolyn Oakley, *Web Specialist*
- Glenn Bentley, *Plan Reviewer*
- Wes Bruckno, AICP, *Plan Reviewer*
- Paul Farkas, *Plan Reviewer*
- Jenn Kolvereid, *Land Development Analyst*
- Diana Gent, *Graphics Supervisor*
- Christopher Bittle, *Graphics Specialist*
- Polly Chalfant, *Graphics Specialist*
- Elizabeth Kolb, *Graphics Specialist*

■ **Planning Services**

- Carol J. Stauffer, AICP  
*Planning Services Director*
- Susan Elks, AICP, *Community Planner*
- Mark Gallant, *Community Planner*
- Karen Marshall, *Heritage Preservation Coordinator*
- Kathy McCarthy, *Community Planner*
- Kevin Myers, *Community Planner*
- Jeannine Speirs, *Community Planner*
- Carolyn Conwell, *Environmental/Open Space Planner*
- Jake Michael, *Environmental/Open Space Planner*
- Yvonne Guthrie, *Administrative Support*

■ **Agricultural Development**

- Hillary Krummrich, Esq.  
*Agricultural Development Director*

# *budget*

## Balancing work programs with resources

The Planning Commission faced another challenging year balancing the work program with an overall decrease in resources. This challenge was met by identifying new funding opportunities and managing expenditures, thereby offsetting potential cuts to services. In addition, the Planning Commission worked diligently to identify opportunities to decrease expenditures. As a result, the Planning Commission ended the year under budget by \$53,319 nearly a 2% reduction.

<b>Budget</b>		
	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Budgeted	\$3,027,255	\$3,165,042
Expended	\$2,938,601	\$3,048,301
Revenues	\$644,756	\$632,857
Net expended	\$2,293,845	\$2,415,444

<b>Revenues</b>		
	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Federal & State	\$487,157	\$482,139
Local	\$16,475	\$33,320
Publications	\$2,763	\$1,312
Subdivision fees	\$115,881	\$115,086
Other	\$29,042	\$1,000
Total revenue	\$651,318	\$632,857



# *the strategic plan*

## Refining the plan

### **Managing for results— the strategic business plan**

In order to enhance accountability, the Board of County Commissioners has adopted a strategic business plan. The plan, entitled Chester County's Strategic Planning Managing for Results, which won a 2011 Governor's Award for Local Government Excellence, establishes goals in six topical areas.

Managing for Results (MFR) makes it possible for Chester County departments to demonstrate accountability to taxpayers. MFR provides a common framework under which strategic planning, budgeting and performance measurements are aligned in a unified process, with six modules that support the process:

#### **Health and environment**

Promote and protect the public health and environment of the community

#### **Public safety**

Ensure safe and secure communities

#### **Economy**

Support the growth and development of a strong and vibrant economy for all residents

#### **Transportation**

Enhance access to and use of transportation systems to reduce traffic congestion

#### **Growth**

Manage growth and land use to preserve and optimize the quality of life in the community

#### **Smart financial management**

Continue to exercise smart financial management and maintain the county's financial strength while minimizing the property tax burden

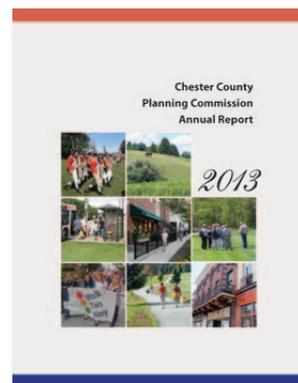
The Planning Commission's business plan, approved in 2011, is closely aligned to the county's strategic plan. The business plan establishes four activities for which resources and staff are assigned. The Commission's strategic business plan includes performance and evaluation measurements. The Commission's activity will be monitored and evaluated against its performance and evaluation criteria.

### **Annual report organization**

This annual report is structured to present the results in each of the Planning Commission's activity areas:

- Landscapes2 Plan
- Community Planning Services
- Planning Information Services
- Transportation Planning and Programming Services

In addition to these four activities, this Annual Report also presents the progress that was made by Agricultural Development Council in 2013.



# landscapes2

## Landscapes2 Plan Activity

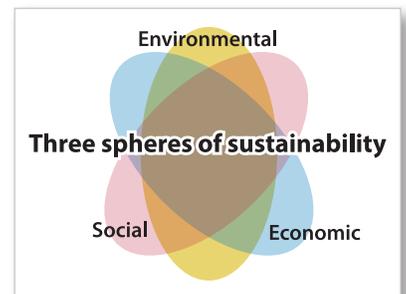
Provide outreach and implementation of the County's policy plan, Landscapes2 to the Board of Commissioners and their constituents so they can adopt and use a relevant set of policies for balancing growth and preservation.



### Promoting sustainable practices

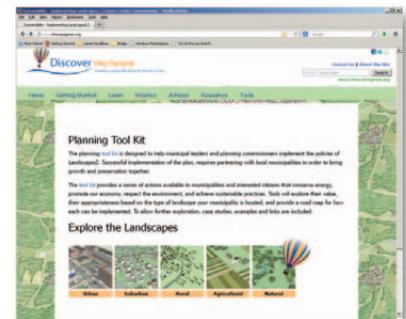
The Planning Commission continues to embrace sustainability as a key to our county's future. The adoption of the county's long-range policy plan, Landscapes2 represents a renewed commitment to manage growth and preservation in a sustainable fashion.

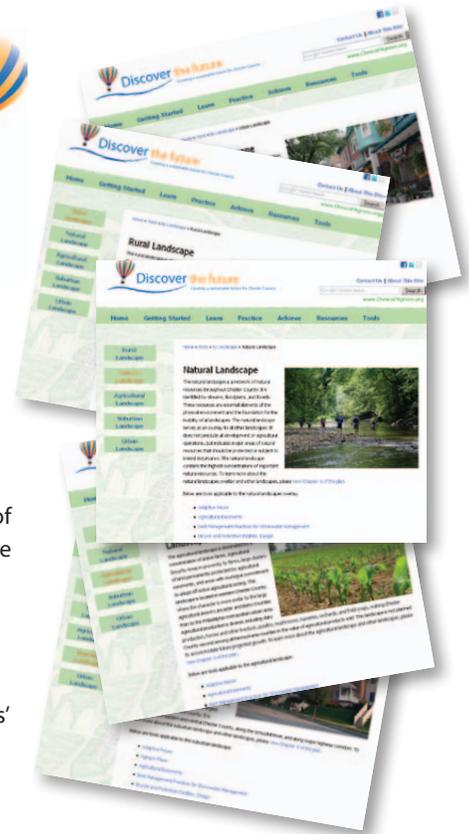
Sustainable development is defined as strategically using resources so that the needs of both the present and future generations can be met. The field of sustainable development can be conceptually broken into three constituent parts: environmental, economic and sociopolitical. Sustainable development is best attained with these three constituent elements are balanced. We are seeking to meet the requirements of this "triple bottom line" of balancing these three values. Sustainable development ties together our concern for the carrying capacity of natural systems with the challenges of a growing community.



The Planning Commission created a website entitled [www.ChescoPAGreen.org](http://www.ChescoPAGreen.org), which is designed to serve as a clearinghouse for information relating to sustainability. This was prepared under a Federal Energy Efficiency Community Development Block Grant in 2013. This site promotes sustainability in Chester County by:

- Identifying and promoting examples of sustainable practices.
- Partnering with other agencies and organizations.
- Sharing information and techniques.
- Identifying and highlighting sustainability-related successes.
- Implementing the Chester County Comprehensive Plan "Landscapes2" and the County's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Task Force recommendations.



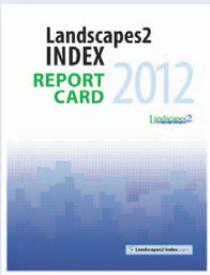


Planning-related information for homeowners, businesses, and municipalities was added to [www.ChescoPAgreen.org](http://www.ChescoPAgreen.org) on a monthly schedule. This content is available for use and review by the public, and by municipal officials and professionals, and is also currently being incorporated in the Planning Commission’s Act 247 reviews of municipal subdivisions, land developments and ordinances to illustrate sustainable concepts, offer recommendations and promote sustainable practices.

A series of online “eTools” are available in [www.ChescoPAgreen.org](http://www.ChescoPAgreen.org), and range from examples of adaptive reuse projects to wetland protection programs. These eTools are linked to five Landscape types where they may be most effective, and include descriptions, discussions of advantages and limitations, explanations of how the tools can best be used, as well as actual examples and references of these tools in use by municipalities and in the private sector.

The Planning Commission continues to promote the county’s sustainability message through our associations with DVRPC, SEPTA, the Chester County Economic Development Council, citizens’ groups, and has provided a staff member to act as head judge in physics at the Chester County Science Research Competition.

## Measuring the success of Landscapes

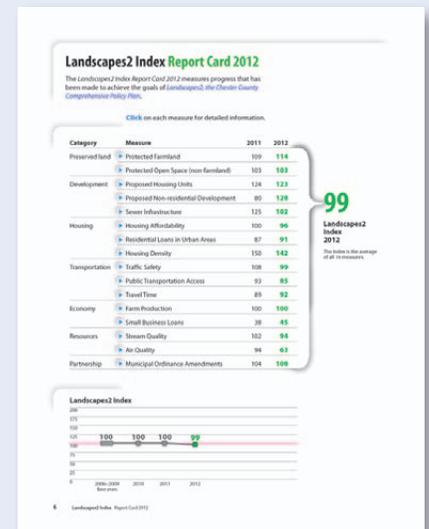


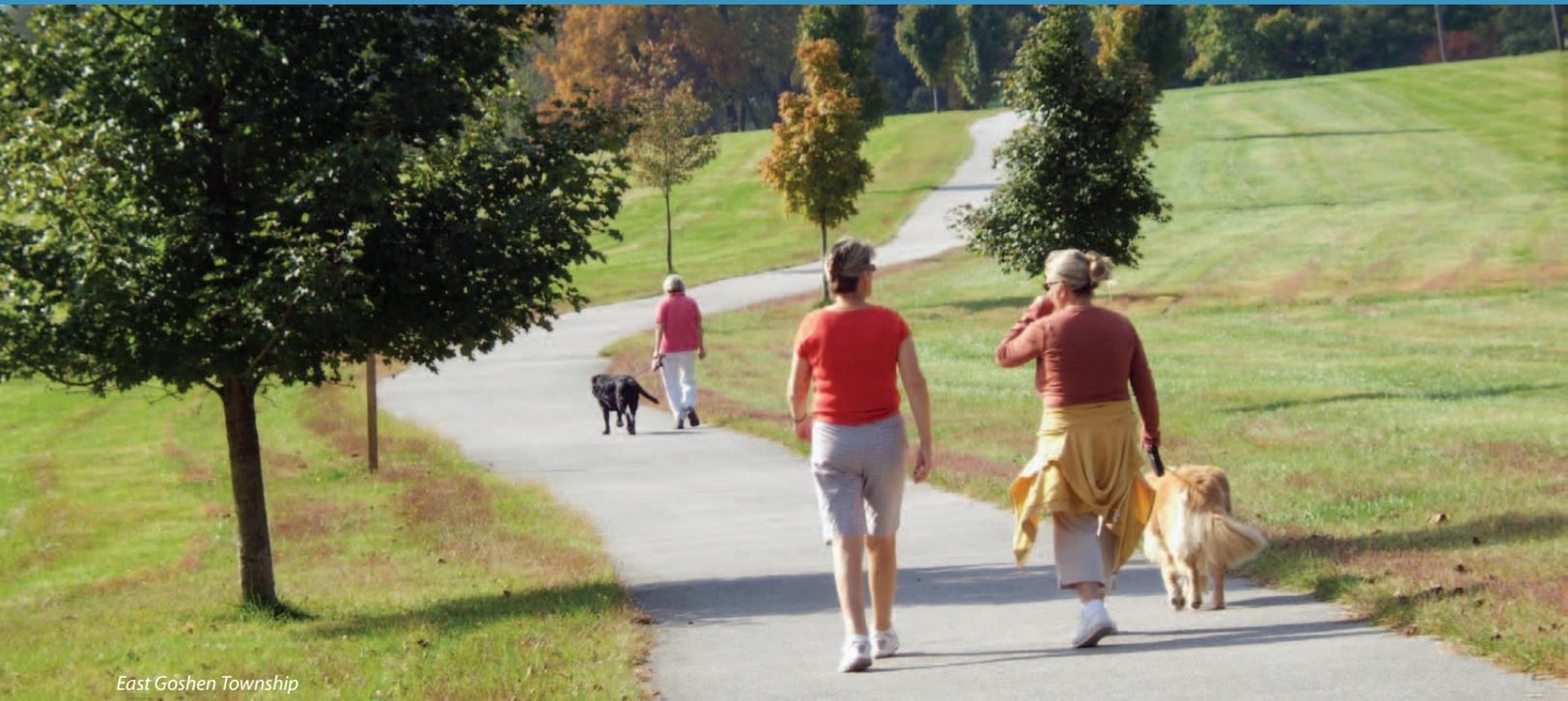
The Planning Commission prepares an annual report card of progress on the goals of Landscapes2. The [Landscapes2 Index](#) includes sixteen measures of diverse subjects. About half of the measures indicated positive trends while the others suggested declining conditions.

Measures showing positive trends included housing density and the location of proposed housing and non-residential development. The average density of new single-family attached and detached housing units located in Landscapes2 growth areas in 2012 (2.3 units/acre) was higher than housing developed around 2009 and 2010 (1.6 units/acre). Over 90 percent of both proposed housing units

and non-residential development was located in growth areas in 2012 compared to 74 percent during the 2007 to 2009 time period. Increased density in growth areas is an indication of development on smaller lots in areas with adequate infrastructure for such development.

Measures trending downward included small business loans and public transportation access. The number of small business loans made to businesses in Chester County remained well below prerecession levels. One positive sign was the number of loans increased slightly in the past year and exceeded 10,000 loans for the first time since 2008. Access to public transportation continued to decrease because some bus routes were eliminated and the number of vehicle trips was reduced on other routes.





East Goshen Township

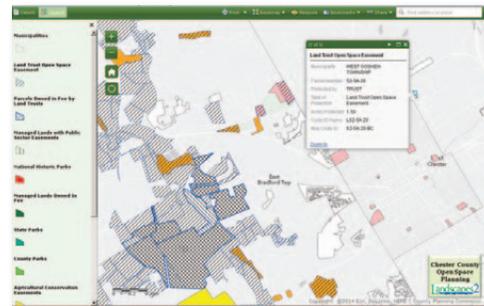
## Protecting our open space resources

Open space preservation is a key initiative of the Chester County Board of Commissioners. A core responsibility of the Planning Commission under the business plan is to track protected open space to determine the impact of county programs and grants associated with preservation.

The Planning Commission uses the web-based Protected Open Space Tracking (POST) system to track the acreage of Chester County's open space protected through government, land trust and private sector efforts. This system is now available on a user friendly [website](#). Visitors to the website can zoom into mapping of their community and view what parcels of land are protected by the various public programs and private non-profit land conservation trusts.

The POST database also permits Planning Commission staff to better understand trends in open space preservation within the county, a valuable tool for assessing future planning needs. Table 1 to the right shows the overall increase in protected open space over the last 40 years. As this table shows, the late 1990 and early 2000s were a time of significant expansion of protected open space in Chester County. Since 2010, there has been a slowdown in the acreage of open space protected. The change is in part due to the economic downturn, but also the result of many of the larger farms and woodlands in the county have already been protected.

As Table 2 indicates, the amount of open space protected each year has now stabilized relative to the boom years of the early 2000s. Since 2010, the acreage of open space protected each year has typically been between 2,000 and 3,000 acres. In 2013, an additional 2620 acres were protected, resulting in over 25 percent of the county now being protected as open space.



Screen shot of POST online open space tracking system.

Table 1: Open space acres protected each year, 1973-2013

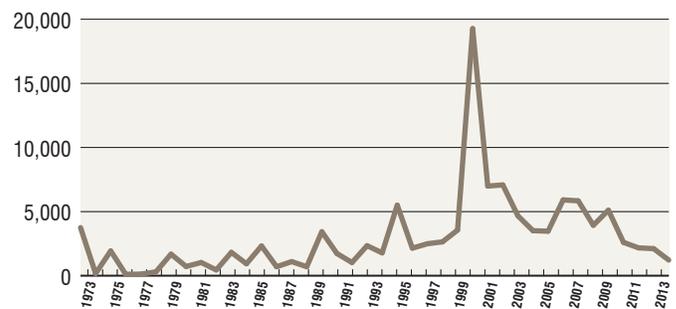
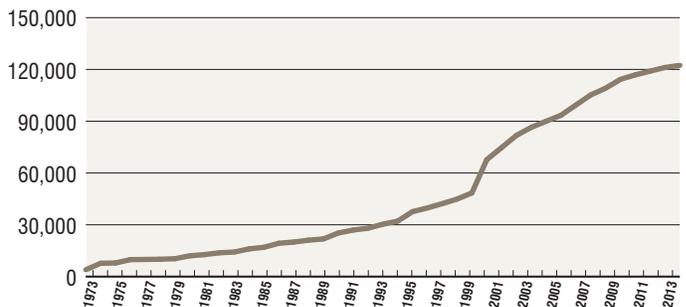


Table 2: Total open space acres protected, 1973-2013



## Celebrating areas of national significance

Landscapes2 strives to bring a balance between growth and preservation. The plan recommends that we celebrate important historic resources and landscapes that tell the story of the county and areas of national significance that tell the story of the nation. These resources are in need of planning and protection strategies so they are not lost to future generations. As with other resources, the Planning Commission provides tools to municipalities for historic resource planning.



### 2013 Brandywine Battlefield Preservation Plan unveiled

From 2011-2013, historic resources and landscapes related to the Battle of Brandywine were studied and protection, interpretation, and education strategies developed at a multi-municipal/multi-county level in the [2013 Brandywine Battlefield Preservation Plan](#). Chester County received a National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) grant for this project. The Plan was drafted by the Planning Commission staff with input from the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force. It focuses on historic landscapes conservation and historic resources protection strategies; education, outreach, and interpretation of the battle; as well as the role of heritage tourism and public access. Since much of the battlefield falls on privately owned lands, a balance between battle-related resources protection and landowner privacy protection was an ever-present consideration. To this end, public meetings and outreach were an important part of this planning effort, and input from these efforts was incorporated into the plan. The historic resources and landscapes in the battlefield highly contribute to the character and quality of life in southern

Chester and Delaware counties, where the approximately 35,000 acre battlefield is located. The battlefield encompasses portions of 15 municipalities including Kennett Square Borough and the townships of Birmingham, Pennsbury, Thornbury, Kennett, Westtown, East Bradford, East Marlborough, New Garden, Newlin, Pocopson, West Bradford Chester County, and Chadds Ford, Thornbury, and Concord, Delaware County.



The Battle of Brandywine was an important event of the American Revolution, specifically the Philadelphia Campaign of 1777, as indicated by its numerous recognitions - National Historic Landmark the highest level of historic resource designation in the nation, National Parks Service's designated Preservation Priority 1 Intact principal Revolutionary War sites, Pennsylvania's first named Commonwealth Treasure, and Landscapes2 area of national significance. The Battlefield contains landscapes and historic resources that are largely unchanged since 1777. Through ongoing planning activities, local, county, state, and federal agencies,





nonprofit organizations, elected officials, residents, and businesses together as part of the Planning Commission chaired Brandywine Battlefield Task Force have been working to advocate and plan for the interpretation and preservation of this key national treasure.



### **Brandywine Battlefield Task Force initiatives**

Historical Commissions representatives from Kennett Square Borough and the townships of Kennett, Pennsbury, Pocopson, Newlin, West Bradford, East Bradford, Westtown, Thornbury, and Birmingham Chester County and Thornbury, Concord, and Chadds Ford formed a Historic Resources Subcommittee of the task force to plan for historic resources in the 35,000 acre battlefield. These municipalities had been working together alongside Karen Marshall and Jill Hall, Principal Planner, Delaware County Planning Department, since 2011 on identifying battlefield-era/related resources. Karen Marshall and Jill Hall will continue to meet on a regular basis in 2014 with the subcommittee to begin to prioritize recommendations for planning, preservation, and interpretation of historic resources based on the 2013 Brandywine Battlefield Preservation Plan.

### **The next step—Brandywine Battlefield Strategic Landscapes Preservation Plans**

A major recommendation of the 2013 Brandywine Battlefield Preservation Plan was the identification for 13 strategic battlefield landscapes that remain largely intact since 1777, retain battle-related historic resources and landscapes, and are in need of additional study and planning. To this end, Chester County has received a National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) grant that implements the 2013 Plan via developing individual strategic plans for four of the identified landscapes. The four landscapes fall in portions of West Bradford, Pocopson, East Bradford, Westtown, and Birmingham townships. Plan content will include historic resources and landscapes analysis and planning, specific preservation strategies per landscape based on the 2013 plan recommendations, specific public access and interpretation strategies, and hiring a consultant to undertake above ground and historic mapping land form analysis associated with key battle lands. The plans are being drafted by the Planning Commission staff with input from the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force. Delaware County applied for and received a parallel grant for two landscapes, and the counties, municipalities, and other stakeholders will be working collaboratively through the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force on these plans. These specific plans will augment the recently completed Battlefield Preservation Plan.



# community

## Community Planning Services Activity

Provide professional planning services to municipalities, governmental and non-profit agencies, permit applicants, and the public so they can: implement sound local planning consistent with Landscapes2; meet the requirements of the Municipalities Planning Code; have the information needed to protect, improve, and maintain open space and environmental resources; and continue to maintain the exceptional quality of life and healthy economy valued by Chester County residents and businesses.



### Building partnerships with our municipalities

Planning our communities is primarily the responsibility of local municipalities. Partnering with local municipalities is important to manage growth in a logical and sustainable manner. To build these partnerships, the Planning Commission provides professional planning assistance to municipalities in two primary areas:

**Community planning assistance** provides planning consulting and technical assistance services directly to municipalities, regional groups, governmental and non-profit agencies, and the public to assist them in the implementation of sound planning that is consistent with Landscapes2 and with the Municipalities Planning Code. In addition to the 73 municipalities, a total of 90 non-municipal groups or agencies were assisted in 2013.

**Environmental planning** provides open space protection, environmental infrastructure, and natural resources consultation services to individuals, permit applicants, and governmental and non-governmental agencies so they have the information needed to protect, improve, and maintain environmental resources and locate sewer and water infrastructure appropriately. Approximately 150 sewage facilities, other infrastructure, and Agricultural Security Area reviews were completed in 2013 as well as the annual update to the Chester County protected open space inventory.

### Administering the Vision Partnership Program (VPP)

The Planning Commission implements the principles of Landscapes2 through the provision of assistance to municipalities in refining their local planning programs. This assistance is primarily accomplished through Vision Partnership Program (VPP) grants and community planning staff that directly assists municipalities on planning projects. The VPP grant program strives to develop planning partnerships between local governments and the county to implement sound growth management and coordinated planning programs.

Through the Vision Partnership Program, municipalities receive professional planning services and financial assistance to help update their planning programs for consistency with Landscapes2 as well as to achieve municipal planning goals. Municipalities may use VPP reimbursement cash grants to retain the services of a professional planning consultant. In-kind grants may be used to retain Planning Commission staff for professional planning assistance.



## Recognizing Municipal Planning Successes

Funding provided through the Vision Partnership Program supports municipal planning projects that champion the principles of Landscapes2 and implement local planning goals. The following projects were either adopted or in progress in 2013.

### Urban landscape planning and revitalization

The urban landscape represents diverse areas of economic activity, institutional and community uses, residential neighborhoods, and historic resources. Urban centers are vital to maintaining the character of Chester County and providing a focus for future growth opportunities. The projects below focused on preserving and revitalizing the urban landscape (see also Revitalizing our urban centers).

- Atglen Borough zoning ordinance update
- Coatesville City comprehensive plan update
- Elverson Borough comprehensive plan update
- Honey Brook Borough comprehensive plan update
- South Coatesville Borough official map
- West Grove zoning ordinance update



### Suburban landscape planning

The suburban landscape is dominated by the built environment and is largely served by public water and sewer systems and an auto-dominated transportation network. It is typically characterized by residential subdivisions and the largest employment centers in the county. The suburban landscape is a component of the growth area as designated in Landscapes2. The following projects contain significant areas of the suburban landscapes:

- East Brandywine Township Guthriesville village master plan implementation
- East Goshen Township comprehensive plan update
- East Pikeland Township comprehensive plan update
- Kennett Township comprehensive plan update (also in the rural landscape)
- North Coventry Township gateway plan implementation
- Penn Township comprehensive plan update and multi-modal study (also in the rural landscape)
- Pocopson Township comprehensive plan update
- Tredyffrin Township commercial zoning districts
- Upper Uwchlan comprehensive plan update
- Uwchlan Township zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance updates
- Valley Township zoning update
- West Whiteland Township Route 30 and Whitford Road Corridors Plan
- Westtown Township open space plan update





Pocopson Township

### Rural resource area planning and protection

The rural resource area, consisting of the rural and agricultural landscapes, contains important agricultural, environmental, and scenic resources that contribute to the traditional rural character of Chester County. These areas are appropriate for conservation and preservation activities and serve as a target for the county's agricultural and municipal open space preservation programs. The projects listed below contain large portions of Rural Resource areas and focused on preservation and resource protection. Several of these municipalities and regions also include historic villages which are reminders of the county's heritage with historic resources that provide community identity and make them worthy of protection.

- East Fallowfield Township comprehensive plan update
- Honey Brook Township comprehensive plan update
- Kennett Township comprehensive plan update (also in the suburban landscape)
- Pocopson Township comprehensive plan
- Penn Township comprehensive plan update and multi-modal study (also in the suburban landscape)
- Wallace Township comprehensive plan update
- West Nantmeal Township subdivision and land development ordinance update
- West Pikeland subdivision and land development ordinance update
- West Vincent Multi-Modal Study

### Natural landscape

The natural landscape overlay encompasses Chester County's natural resource network of stream corridors, steep slopes, and woodlands. Major areas of natural resources should be protected and subject to only limited development. The following projects include plans and protection measures for natural resources.

- East Fallowfield comprehensive plan update
- Pocopson Township comprehensive plan update
- Uwchlan Township zoning and subdivision ordinance updates
- Valley Township zoning ordinance update
- Wallace Township comprehensive plan update
- West Nantmeal Township subdivision and land development ordinance
- West Pikeland subdivision and land development ordinance update

### Multi-municipal planning efforts

The Planning Commission promotes municipal cooperation to better plan our future. Coordinating infrastructure, managing the environment and planning transportation improvements all transcend municipal borders. During 2013, the following projects were underway.

- Unionville Area Region—creation of consistent land use definitions
- Honey Brook Borough and Township—coordinated update of comprehensive plans
- Oxford Region—intergovernmental cooperative implementation agreement



Village of Unionville



## Revitalizing our urban centers

Urban Centers, as characterized in [Landscapes2](#), are diverse areas of economic activity, civic and cultural uses, residential neighborhoods, and historic resources. Since Landscapes2 was adopted in 2009, urban centers within Chester County have been proactive and focused on a common goal — to plan for future growth and development, while maintaining their unique character and quality of life for residents.

The following planning projects were funded through the [Vision Partnership Program](#) and focused on improving and revitalizing these important growth areas.

### Atglen Borough zoning ordinance update (in progress)



Atglen is implementing the borough's adopted planning policies within the comprehensive plan through a comprehensive update to the current zoning ordinance. The update will

provide illustrated design guidelines for various zoning districts. The ordinance will also incorporate recommendations of the Atglen Train Station Feasibility Study by providing standards and guidelines to support a future train station within the Borough, such as a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) district. The Chester County Planning Commission serves as the consultant for this project and it is expected to be completed spring, 2014.

### City of Coatesville Comprehensive Plan update (in progress)



The city has retained Thomas Comitta Associates to update their 1997 and 2002 comprehensive plans using the New Urbanism Transect method. Under this method, the plan will be

organized by "transect-zones" that reflect the various character areas of the city including the downtown, older neighborhoods, newer neighborhoods, industrial areas, and natural and recreation areas. Design guidelines and best practices will be developed for each of the T-zones which will, in turn, provide guidance for future

zoning updates. The plan was funded through the county's Vision Partnership Program (VPP) grant and is expected to be completed spring, 2014.

### Elverson Borough Comprehensive Plan update (in progress)



This project is a full update to the borough's 1995 comprehensive plan. The update will strategically focus on those issues identified as of greatest priority to the borough.

The Chester County Planning Commission serves as the consultant for this project and it is expected to be completed in early 2014.

### Honey Brook Borough Comprehensive Plan update (in progress)



The borough has retained the Brandywine Conservancy to assist them with the update of their 1993 comprehensive plan which was adopted as a joint plan with Honey Brook Township. This

project includes a sustainability assessment and will also serve as an update to the borough's revitalization plan. The consultant announced in October 2013 that the comprehensive plan will be a joint planning effort with the township. The plan was funded through the county's VPP grant and is expected to be completed in late 2014.

### Kennett Square Borough Comprehensive Plan update (adopted: January, 2013)



The borough updated its 2001 comprehensive plan. The Chester County Planning Commission served as the consultant and has added several new elements to the plan including a separate

housing plan; natural resources plan; parks, recreation, and open space plan; and energy plan.

### Malvern Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study (Completed: December 2013)



The TOD study focused on developing a redevelopment vision and future zoning to apply higher densities to properties located around the train station.

The study provided a market and parking analysis, a transportation assessment, model TOD ordinance provisions, infill development guidelines and three concept alternatives for mixed-use development located north of the train station. The lead planning consultant for this project was Whitman, Requardt & Associates. The Study Advisory Committee consisted of representatives from Malvern Borough, Chester County Planning Commission, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) and SEPTA.

### Phoenixville Borough Zoning Ordinance update (Adopted: December 2013)



The Borough of Phoenixville retained Ray Ott and Associates and Thomas Comitta Associates as consultant to update the borough's zoning ordinance.

The update focused on recommendations from the recently updated land use element in its comprehensive plan. The new ordinance reduced the current 19 zoning and nine overlay districts to just seven zoning districts. Through the update process, the borough has simplified the [zoning ordinance](#) and made it easier to understand all while maintaining its overall function to implement Phoenixville's policies.

### South Coatesville Borough Official Map (in progress)



The borough retained URDC to assist them with the creation of an Official Map, a planning tool enabled by the Municipalities Planning Code. This effort focused on placing important components

of recent planning projects, such as parkland, urban green spaces, and trails on the Official Map. This effort also supported revitalization efforts of the borough. URDC previously assisted the borough with their comprehensive plan, revitalization plan, and parks, recreation, and open space plan updates. The borough is also in the process of updating its zoning ordinance and expects to adopt the official map ordinance in early 2014.

### West Grove Borough Zoning Ordinance update (in progress)



The borough has retained the Chester County Planning Commission to assist in updating their 1970 zoning ordinance. The ordinance update will provide support for the

implementation of the borough's revitalization plan, bring the ordinance into conformity with current planning practices, address nonconforming uses in the borough, and address land uses not envisioned when the plan was first developed. The completion of this project is expected in early 2015.

### Community Revitalization Program initiatives



The Chester County Department of Community Development (DCD) awarded \$2.7 million in Community Revitalization Program (CRP) funds to [seven urban centers](#) in 2013.

The CRP offers funding to the 16 urban centers of Chester County (15 boroughs and City of Coatesville) for public infrastructure and streetscape improvements. These improvements assist urban centers to remain competitive in attracting businesses and residents.

Community Development along with the Planning Commission have created an [interactive map](#) to showcase all CRP awarded projects within the county's urban centers.





Rebecca Lukens home

## Providing expanded historic preservation services

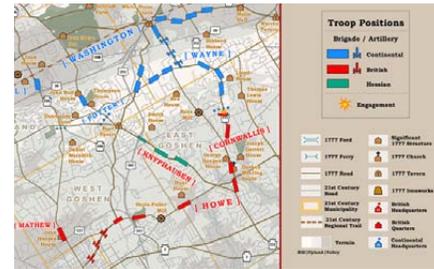
The Planning Commission was fortunate to have Karen Marshall join the staff in 2012. As our heritage preservation coordinator, the commission can now offer expanded preservation services. Historic preservation efforts included the following initiatives in 2013:

### Historic Resource Atlas project

Five Historic Resource Atlases were completed in 2013 for Warwick, West Vincent, West Goshen, Schuylkill and South Coventry Townships under the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program Grant for the Battle of the Clouds in Chester County. This brings the total number of completed atlases in the county to 39. There are currently an additional 14 atlases underway.

### 2013 Battle of the Clouds Map project

To continue the work on historic preservation planning of colonial-era historic resources and landscapes in Chester County, Chester County received a grant to document, for the first time, and create animated battle action mapping for the Revolutionary War **Battle of the Clouds**. The project spans portions of nineteen municipalities and was completed and well received with the significant assistance and support by those communities and their designated Historical Commissions.



### Town Tours & Village Walks

The 19th annual Chester County Town Tours and Village Walks explored the southwest quadrant of West Chester Borough, women in the history of Kennett Square Borough, and historic churches of Phoenixville Borough. Historic Villages of 18th century Kimberton Crossroads, a living history tour about the filming of *The Blob* at Historic Yellow Springs, Goshenville styled in the Civil War era, and Nantmeal (Welsh for “sweet water”) Village were also featured. Richard Thomas III, pacifist turned American Revolution soldier and then statesman was honored in West Whiteland Township, and the history of the American steel industry was told in the City of Coatesville at the National Iron and Steel Heritage Museum, Lukens Historic District, and Rebecca Lukens home, America’s first female industrialist.



### **Chester County bridge protocol**

To facilitate the cultural resource review process of Chester County owned bridges, a protocol to review transportation projects was developed by the newly formed Planning Commission bridge technical review team. Jeannine Speirs, Brian Styche and Karen Marshall serve on the review team. Twenty bridges were reviewed under the new protocol and items for consideration were made to the transportation division and the county's facilities department. The balance of county-owned bridges will be reviewed in 2014.



### **Cultural resource technical assistance**

To assist communities to implement the goals, objectives, policies, and actions of the Historic Resources chapter in Landscapes2, the Heritage Preservation Coordinator worked with municipalities, private citizens, land developers, real estate agents, and historical organizations to provide planning information related to documentation, interpretation, and preservation, where possible, of historic resources in the county. In 2013, over 300 consultations were provided in answer to requests that came into the Planning Commission. Additionally, three transportation projects are currently in process under the Federal Section 106 Cultural Resources Review.



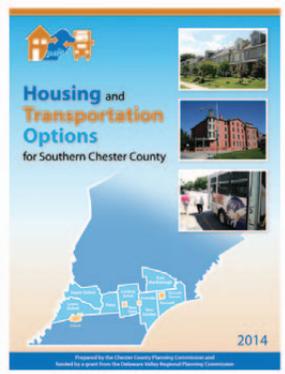
### **Chester County Historic Preservation Network**

Karen Marshall serves as the Planning Commission's liaison to the network, which had 44 municipal members in 2013 with a projected membership goal of 50 county municipalities for 2014. Education and training programs for municipal historical commissions/committees and HARBS in 2013 included the spring workshop "Make Your Community's History Come Alive" and Fall Workshop/Preservation Fair with presentations about nonprofit management/fundraising and historic research methods. The summer Volunteer Recognition Dinner, held at Historic Sugartown, honored Kennett Area Underground Railroad Center co-founder Mary L. Dugan as the first recipient of the Jane L.S. Davidson Individual Preservationist Award. The municipal Historic Preservation Award was presented to East Bradford Township and their township historical commission.



## Providing diversified housing

### Housing and transportation options for Southern Chester County



As an initiative of the Housing Options Task Force and Landscapes2, the Planning Commission conducted a study investigating the housing and transportation options available to serve disadvantaged populations in Southern Chester County. The study area included eleven municipalities along the Baltimore Pike corridor, from East Marlborough Township west to Oxford Borough. Baltimore Pike is

the primary route for the SCCOOT bus, the only fixed-route public transit available to residents in this part of the county.

This project was governed by a study advisory committee made up of representatives of county and municipal government, the private sector, the non-profit sector, and DVRPC. Within the study area, the mushroom industry is one of the predominant employers and many of the lower-paying mushroom industry jobs are held by both native and immigrant Latinos. These workers and other low-income Latino residents represent a significant disadvantaged population in southern Chester County. Both housing and transportation are issues of concern within this community. In addition, the elderly (generally those age 65 and above), many living on fixed-incomes, face housing and transportation challenges of their own in Southern Chester County.

The project team interviewed community stakeholders to gain insight into the housing and transportation needs of low-income individuals and families. Through those interviews, in addition to strategy team and neighborhood meetings, the vast majority of



input received related to the mushroom industry and its workers. Substandard housing conditions have historically been common for this population and, according to stakeholders, the situation persists. Based upon U.S. Census data tabulated for HUD, the study concludes that an estimated 1,000 Latino households in the study area are living with “housing problems,” defined as an unaffordable or substandard unit (or both).

The major finding of the study was the significant lack of safe, decent, and affordable housing, for low-income and very low-income households. Regarding transportation, the study found that there is a prevalence of car-less households and unlicensed drivers within the Latino community. Many non-English speakers are not familiar with how to use public transit. As a result, lack of transportation is at times a barrier to finding and sustaining employment. In terms of the elderly population, the study has identified a significant need for more affordable housing options that provide reliable connections to medical services, grocery, pharmacy, senior centers, and other destinations. As well, many fixed-income/low-income seniors are choosing to remain in and age in their own homes. This creates multiple challenges, especially for those with no private transportation.

Based upon the findings of the study, the project team and Study Advisory Committee developed an implementation strategy to support the creation and maintenance of affordable housing for low-income individuals and families and efficient transportation connections between housing, jobs, and services. The project team looks forward to working in 2014 with community stakeholders on plan implementation.



## Improving the environment

The Planning Commission plays a role in the protection and conservation of natural resources. Planning Commission staff review proposed development activities to reduce potential negative impacts of land use and land development on natural resource systems. Planning Commission involvement contributes to the health, safety, and welfare of Chester County residents and is closely linked with both the land development plan review process and the Vision Partnership Program.

### Providing municipal review assistance and coordinating sewage facilities planning

In Pennsylvania, municipalities are required to develop, adopt, and implement sewage facilities plans to ensure that wastewater is properly treated and disposed in the most appropriate way. These plans address any new sewage disposal system, including public sewer systems, failing on-lot systems, and new land developments. In coordination with the county health department, Planning Commission staff reviews sewage facilities plans to determine their completeness and their consistency with the goals and policies of Landscapes2 as a part of the overall approval system for sewage facilities planning.

Three municipalities updated their sewage facilities master plans (Act 537 plans) in 2013 requiring major plan update reviews by the Planning Commission for the following:

- East Pikeland Township
- Upper Uwchlan Township
- Westtown Township

Additionally, a total of 42 minor plan reviews were completed, 95 percent of which were consistent with Landscapes2.

### Managing stormwater through a county-wide plan

In 2013, the county completed the [County-wide Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan Addendum](#). This effort was led by the Chester County Water Resources Authority with support provided by the Planning Commission. The plan addendum was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in the spring, and was approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) in July of 2013. This Act 167 Plan Addendum serves as an amendment to Watersheds: An Integrated Water Resources Plan for Chester County, PA and its Watersheds, as well as [Landscapes2](#), the Chester County Comprehensive Policy Plan.

The County-wide Act 167 Plan for Chester County fulfills the requirements of "The Storm Water Management Act," (PA Act 167) and provides guidance to reduce stormwater runoff and flooding, and improve water quality in all watersheds of Chester County. Additionally, the plan provides the information to assist municipalities with stormwater planning and management, and stormwater standards in the form of a model ordinance. It also provides a means by which municipalities can meet certain NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) Phase II MS4



(small municipal separate storm sewer system) requirements related to ordinance standards.

The Act 167 planning effort allows municipalities to address storm water obligations and establish an efficient and consistent process for meeting these obligations. Chester County has developed a strategy by which the county and its municipalities can achieve regulatory mandates in a comprehensive and efficient way by working together. To view the plan, please visit the Chester County Water Resources Authority website at [www.chesco.org/water](http://www.chesco.org/water).

### Planning for pipelines

This year the county participated in a Pipeline Notification Protocol project. This project was funded through a grant from the US Department of Transportation. Planning Commission staff provided data collection survey assistance, and mapping to East Brandywine Township and the Pipeline Safety Coalition. The goal of this USDOT Technical Assistance Grant was to improve communication between pipeline operators, municipalities and the citizens of Chester County when a new pipeline is being sited, or when an existing pipeline is having maintenance or repairs performed on it. The Planning Commission plans to develop an informational website for the county in 2014.

### Building partnerships with other counties

The Planning Commission participates on the Mason-Dixon Task Force. This organization was founded to address water supply issues for the counties through which the Mason-Dixon Line runs. This region includes counties from Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. Every year, one of the county's hosts a program for the other members to learn more about issues facing the host county. This year, Chester County hosted a program at Longwood Gardens. Representatives from all three states attended and learned about the sustainability initiatives that are taking place at Longwood Gardens. Attendees also saw different technologies on site (including Longwood's solar facility, composting site, and meadow redevelopment), and toured the gardens.



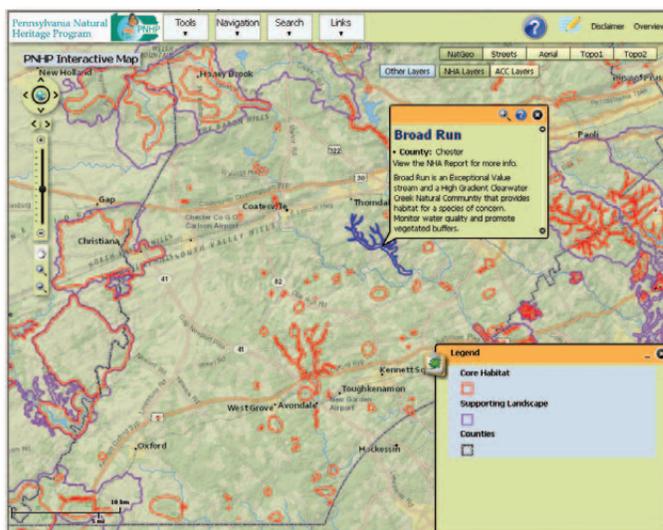
## Preserving and enhancing the unique character of the county

Two projects are underway that will assist the County in managing our natural resources and promote the vision of Landscapes2.

### Updated County Natural Heritage Inventory nearing completion

Understanding our natural resources and the sensitivity they possess are the first steps towards effective resource management. Beginning in 2012, the county embarked on a two year project to prepare an inventory of threatened and endangered species within Chester County. Over the last two years, staff from the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP) and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy conducted field surveys in Chester County in order to update the County Natural Heritage Inventory (CNHI). The CNHI document, which is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2014, will identify sensitive habitats and provide updated information on the status of state and federally threatened and endangered species in the county. A total of 133 sites were field viewed for the project.

Information gathered from field studies was combined with digital aerial photography to map not only the location of sensitive habitats, but also to determine conservation buffers. In this context the word “buffer” does not refer to a regulatory tool but rather an ecological buffer within which animals might move or plants might distribute their seeds. The figure below shows some of the field mapping from a site outside Chester County. This figure demonstrates how these buffers are useful in determining where there are isolated habitats versus landscapes that contain clusters of habitat.



The final product will be digital mapping and text describing the identified habitats. The digital mapping will also become part of the statewide mapping and database which can be viewed at the Statewide County Natural Heritage Inventory webpage, as shown above. The Planning Commission anticipates that the CDs will be ready for distribution to municipalities in early summer of 2014. This information will also be posted for downloading on the Planning Commission website later in the summer/fall of 2014.

### Brandywine Greenway Strategic Action Plan

Throughout 2013, Planning Commission staff completed tasks for the Brandywine Greenway Strategic Action Plan. This plan will outline means of implementing the previously completed concept plan prepared by the Brandywine Conservancy in cooperation with 16 municipalities. Eight additional municipalities along the West Branch of the Brandywine Creek are now being addressed in the strategic action plan. Overall, a total of 24 municipalities, 23 of which are in Chester County, will be addressed by this planning effort. The two-year long project is a public-private partnership between the Planning Commission and the Brandywine Conservancy. This project is being funded by a grant from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

Planning Commission staff is responsible for administering this project as well as conducting a review of municipal regulations that address natural resource protection. Over the summer, staff evaluated the zoning and subdivision ordinances for the 23 Chester County municipalities in the study area. The goal of this task was to identify which resources, such as steep slopes, wetlands, and forestlands, are insufficiently addressed in local ordinances or need to be updated to better reflect recent developments in the environmental sciences. The strategic action plan is anticipated to be completed in mid-2014, about the same time as the County Natural Heritage Inventory.

As a result of these two documents, the county will have important data that can be used to improve environmental quality in the county.

# information

## Planning Information Services Activity

Provide specialized systems and support to department personnel, other county departments, outside agencies, and the public so that they can obtain information on the county and make informed decisions in a timely manner.



### Making informed decisions

A core service of the Planning Commission is the dissemination of information. The delivery of planning information using the web has provided easy and quick access to the public. The Landscapes2 website ([www.landscapes2.org](http://www.landscapes2.org)) houses the comprehensive plan and support information, while the Discover the Future site ([www.chescoPAgreen.org](http://www.chescoPAgreen.org)) provides information and tools related to the implementation of Landscapes2. This information helps local municipalities make more informed planning decisions.

Accessing web-based data provided by the Planning Commission continues to grow with each passing year. The following activity occurred in 2013:

#### **Planning Commission**

[www.chesco.org/planning](http://www.chesco.org/planning) (56,318 visits)

#### **Landscapes2 and Discover the Future**

[www.landscapes2.org](http://www.landscapes2.org) and [www.chescoPAgreen.org](http://www.chescoPAgreen.org) (117,419 visits)

#### **Agriculture Development Council**

[www.chesco.org/agdev](http://www.chesco.org/agdev) (8,005 visits)

### Improving access to publications

To reach a broad audience and to provide easy access to information and data, Planning Commission publications are hosted online. All publications are available in the standard PDF format. Some are also available in a “flipping book” format that offers several user-friendly features including a table of contents for easy navigation, search box, thumbnails, and an option to add bookmarks. Newsletters and annual reports are located at [www.chesco.org/planning/publications](http://www.chesco.org/planning/publications) and other publications are in topical areas of the Planning Commission [website](http://www.chesco.org/planning). These electronic formats allow information to be shared quickly, making news more relevant and contemporary. Paper copies can still be ordered by contacting our office.

The Planning Commission produces web-based publications, applications and services, resulting in increased access and efficiency, decreased expense and a more eco-friendly, sustainable way to serve the public. This made it possible for anyone to receive updates and to engage the community in a new meaningful way.



## Expanding Geographic Information System (GIS) service

The Planning Commission relies on GIS technology across all services, including map production, spatial analysis and presentations. The benefits of GIS, especially as an enabling technology for improved efficiency and effectiveness, has been realized through the services provided by the Planning Commission. Historical aerial imagery from 1965 to 2010 is now available at the front counter kiosk. The number of maps on the Planning Commission's map gallery has been expanded to include demographic maps created with 2010 census data. The map gallery offers a wide selection of maps to the public free of charge. The display size maps can be printed directly at the front counter of the Planning Commission. [www.landscapes2.org/mapping/MapGallery.cfm](http://www.landscapes2.org/mapping/MapGallery.cfm)

## Employing social networking

A key objective for 2013 was to broaden the audience that the Planning Commission serves. Broadcasting planning-related information and data electronically allows more efficient and dynamic access to the Planning Commission. The following social networking services were employed by the Planning Commission during the year:

**Facebook:** The Planning Commission uses social networking as a means to engage and remain connected with the community. Reaching out to the community has made it possible for the Planning Commission to inform more members of the community about planning issues. Join the over 300 fans of the Planning Commission Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/ccplanning](http://www.facebook.com/ccplanning).



**Twitter:** The Planning Commission also has a Twitter page with over 370 followers. You can follow the Planning Commission@ChescoPlanning on Twitter. [www.twitter.com/ChescoPlanning](http://www.twitter.com/ChescoPlanning).



**LinkedIn:** The Planning Commission created a LinkedIn page. During 2013 there were 48 people following the Planning Commission LinkedIn page. Followers can learn about activities and career opportunities that occur within the organization. You can connect with the Planning Commission on LinkedIn at [www.linkedin.com/company/chester-county-planning-commission](http://www.linkedin.com/company/chester-county-planning-commission).



## Enhancing online experiences

The Planning Commission has created several online applications to provide convenient access to information. This technology provides information that visitors can view or download according to their needs.

### Online image catalog

The Planning Commission maintains a photographic inventory on Flickr. The collection represents a wide range of Chester County scenes and planning-related events that date back to 2007. This website allows anyone access to 3,240 “public” images. 75,254 visits were recorded in 2013—a 500% percent increase since 2012. The photostream may be searched with common words, including municipal names, through the search box or from a complete list of tags. It may also be previewed by “sets” that are tied to Landscapes2. Some of the 2013 featured activities include: Bike to Work Day; Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association award ceremony for the Bicycle Pedestrian Plan; grounds clean-up at the Government Services Center; and farming activities.

[www.flickr.com/ccpcphotography](http://www.flickr.com/ccpcphotography)

### Community Profiles

The Community Profiles application now allows the user to sort information including census data. This application, which was created in 2011, received several data and report updates in 2013. The online tool can be used to browse data in a web session as well as print out custom reports and maps. To access Community Profiles click the link or use the address from any web-enabled device.

[www.landscapes2.org/mapping/countyprofiles/cphome.cfm](http://www.landscapes2.org/mapping/countyprofiles/cphome.cfm).

During 2013, the Planning Commission updated the interactive web tool to help make it easier to use as well as updated data. The increased flexibility to select any combination of municipalities should increase the usefulness of the tool. For example, a user can select municipalities along a corridor, such as Route 30 or Route 1, to identify the characteristics of that specific area.

### Online planning tool kit

In 2013 an online planning tool kit was integrated into the Planning Commission’s websites. Both the [www.Landscapes2.org](http://www.Landscapes2.org) and “Discover the Future” websites include links to several dozen eTools to help municipal leaders, planning commissioners, business owners, citizens and students create a more sustainable future for Chester County. Ranging from adaptive reuse to wetland protection, this tool kit provides a series of activities, actions and policies to help implement the policies of [Landscapes2](http://www.Landscapes2.org), the 2009 Chester County Comprehensive Policy Plan.



Each eTool begins with a graphic designation that indicates the landscapes where the eTool is most applicable and how each tool supports specific Landscapes2 policies. After a description, the eTool lists who could best benefit from its use, such as municipal officials, property owners, preservationists, business owners, residents, etc. A realistic list of advantages and limitations describes the benefits as well as the potential challenges that they may face in implementation. A description of how the eTool may be used in actual practice follows, as well as examples of where the eTool is being used by municipalities. Photographs and illustrations show physical examples of each eTool. References and links complete the narrative.



### Map Gallery updates

In 2013 the popular online Map Gallery received a new look and dozens of new additions. One addition of particular interest is the group of interactive maps now available from the [Map Gallery](#).

Visitors can use these maps to scale the view, identify features, search for items of interest and print the map to meet specific needs. We expect that new additions will be added regularly so check back often!



## Reflecting on proposed development in 2013

A core function of the Planning Commission is the review of development plans prior to their approval by the local municipality. This review provides technical comments to the municipality as well as a determination of consistency with Landscapes2.

The level of proposed development activity is reflected in the number of submissions of subdivision and land development plans for review by the Planning Commission under the state enabling legislation, Act 247. The level of overall review activity increased slightly from 211 plans reviewed in 2012 to 221 plans reviewed in 2013. However, there was a significant decrease in the number of lots/units proposed from 4,542 lots/units in 2012 to 2,591 in 2013, a 43 percent decrease. The proportion of multi-family units to single-family units remained greater than 3:1.

The Planning Commission reviewed two significant developments in 2013:

- **The Uptown Worthington** mixed use development in East Whiteland Township was revised and resubmitted for our review in September. The most recent revisions propose the construction of 752,431 square feet of mixed use development and 753 multi-family residential units for Phases 2 through 6.
- **The 220 Chestnut Associates, LP** project in West Chester Borough was another revised submission. The land development is situated on the northeast corner of Matlack and Gay Streets just outside of the central business district and involves the construction of an apartment building with 206 units on the 2.21 acres site.



The Planning Commission reviewed 177 zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances and amendments, comprehensive plans and amendments, official maps and other miscellaneous reviews in 2012. The most common topic addressed in zoning ordinance amendments in 2012 was “alternative energy”; thirteen amendments were reviewed.

<b>Ordinances reviewed 2012 and 2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Zoning	123	123
SLDO	11	31
Comp Plans	8	4
Official Maps	2	1
Misc	11	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>177</b>

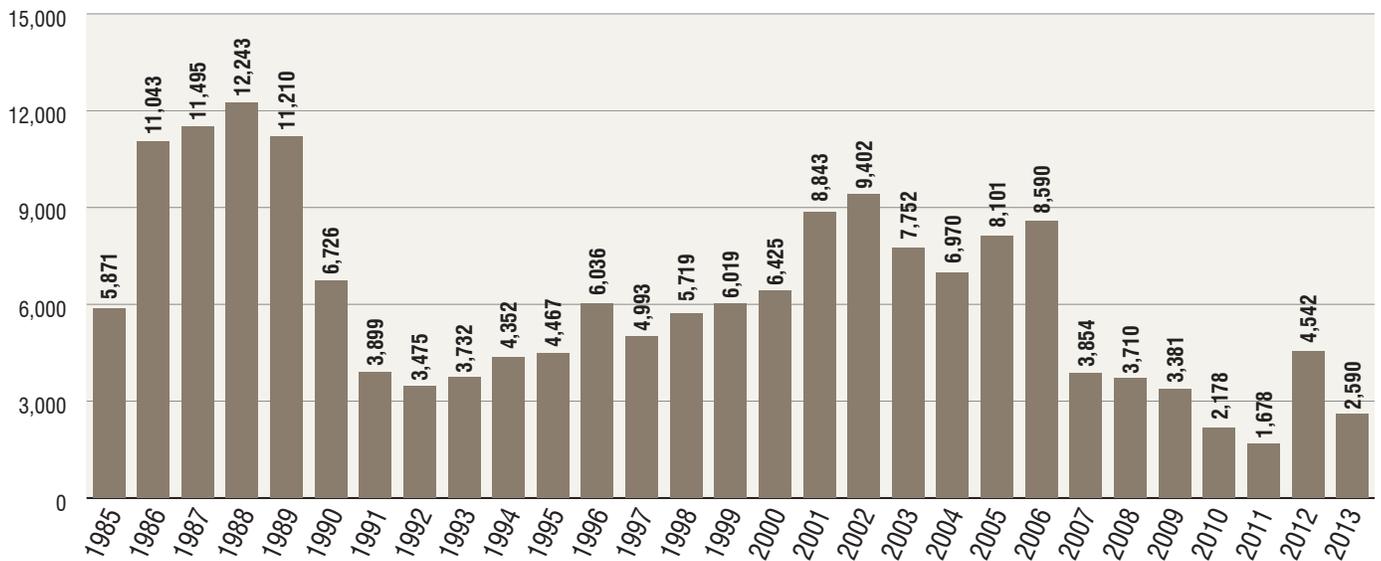
### Comparison of lots/dwelling units proposed 2012 and 2013

<b>Single Family</b>		<b>Multi-Family</b>		<b>Mobile Home</b>		<b>Commercial</b>		<b>Industrial</b>		<b>Institutional</b>		<b>Totals</b>	
2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
399	595	3,916	1,786	2	2	118	138	11	24	35	45	4,542	2,590

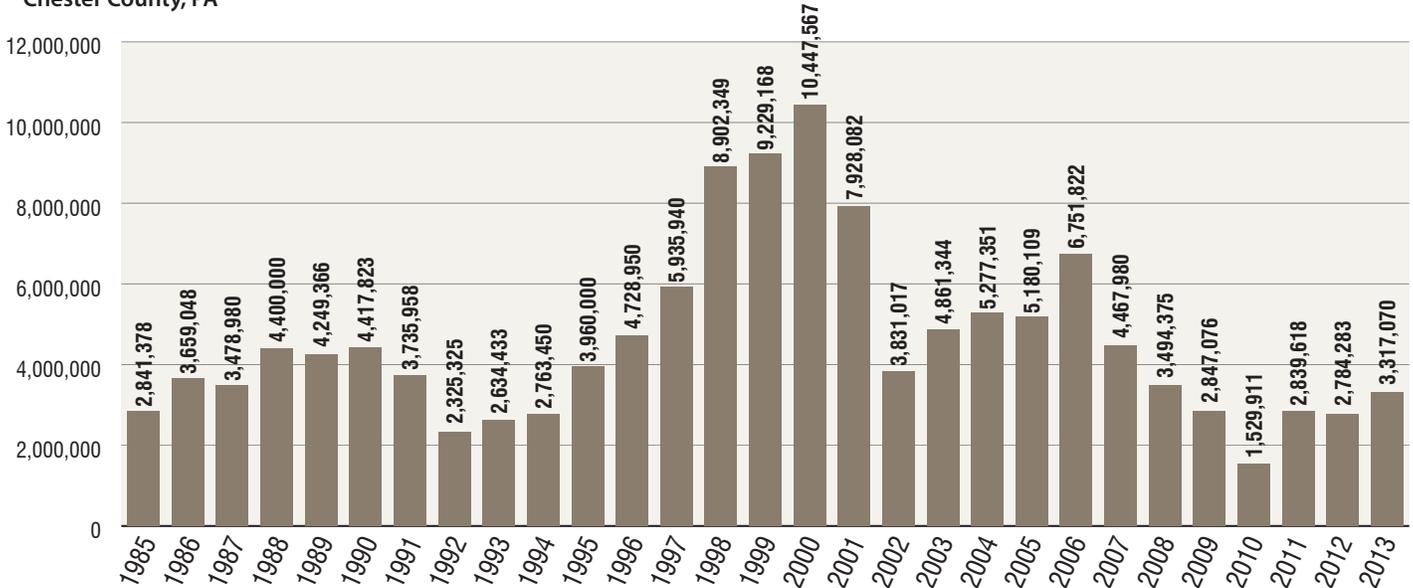




Proposed lots/units: 1985–2013  
Chester County, PA

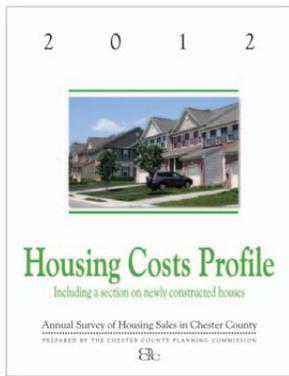


Proposed non-residential structural square footage: 1985–2013  
Chester County, PA



## Measuring housing costs

The Planning Commission tracks housing activity with the Housing Costs Profile and the New Housing Units Data Sheet. The Housing Costs Profile monitors housing sales and the data sheet tabulates the number of new housing units added to the housing supply. Both reports found encouraging signs in the volume of housing activity. The number of housing units sold in 2012 increased by over 1,100 homes (22%) from 2011. This was a positive sign for the



county housing market as the number of sales returned to the level in 2008 at the beginning of the recession. There were 1,305 new housing units developed in Chester County in 2012, 31% more than were developed in 2011. This was the first annual increase in the number of new housing units since 2004, another welcome sign that the housing market may be recovering.

Other findings from the Housing Costs Profile: The median sales price declined to \$282,500 (-2.6%) from 2011. The median sales price has remained relatively stable between \$276,000 and \$300,000 since 2008. The 2012 price is just 10% less than the peak value of \$312,500 in 2007, prior to the recession. This decline in the median home sales price is much less than in other areas of the country. Prices remain substantially higher than a decade ago

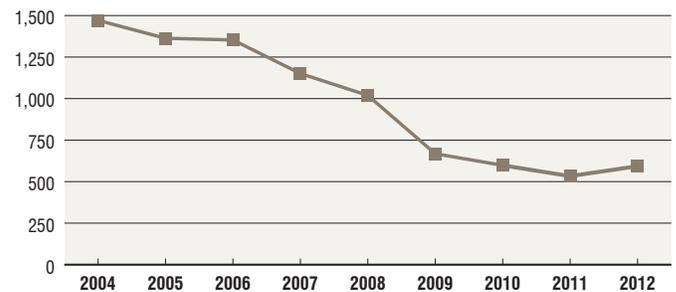


when the median sales price first reached \$225,000 in 2002. Other findings from the New Housing Units report: Over half (55%) of the new units in 2012 were single-family attached (twins and townhouses) and multi-family housing units. This was a slight increase from the previous two years when the number of detached units and attached units were nearly equal. Over three-quarters of the new units

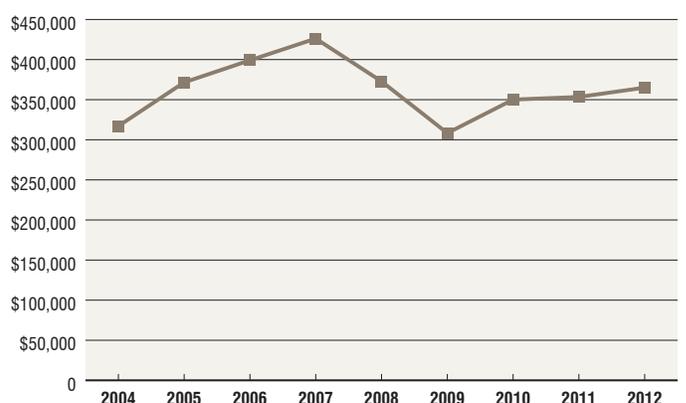
were located in Landscapes2 designated growth areas. The overall density of single-family units built in the county increased from 1.2 units per acre in 2011 to 1.6 in 2012. The density in the growth areas was greater, 2.3 units per acre, because of smaller lot sizes and more attached units.



New housing unit sales in Chester County 2004 – 2012



New units, median sale prices in Chester County, 2004 – 2012



# transportation

## Transportation Planning and Programming Activity

Provide information, recommendations and professional planning services to state, region, county and local governments, agencies and the public so that they can have an improved transportation system.



### Investing wisely and strategically in our transportation system

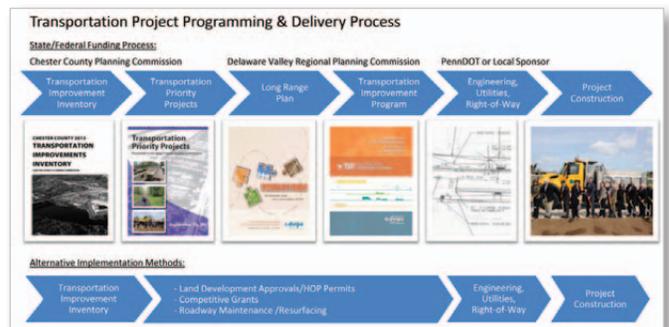
As the fastest growing county in Pennsylvania over the past decade, the transportation needs of Chester County are quite broad and available transportation funding has remained limited. The Chester County Planning Commission's Transportation Improvement Inventory is a biennial effort that helps to a) inventory and quantify the transportation needs of Chester County, and b) present the highest priority projects recommended for long-range planning and capital budgeting.

A testament to the collective efforts of Chester County, PennDOT, and the municipalities, are the 35 projects on the Transportation Improvement Inventory completed or advanced to construction between 2011 and 2013.

Starting in the early spring, Planning Commission staff reached out to all 73 municipalities to review existing projects on the Inventory and solicit new project candidates. Municipal participation in the Inventory update has traditionally been quite high, and the 2013 update was no exception; eighty-four percent (84%) of the municipalities in Chester County gave updated project statuses and/or submitted new candidate projects.

After receiving all project updates and feedback, the 2013 Transportation Improvement Inventory included 441 projects with a combined estimated cost of \$4.7 billion. The Planning Commission staff then ranks each of the Inventory 441 projects using a weighted criterion of 16 factors such as consistency with Landscapes, traffic volumes, and safety. The highest scoring projects were considered as the Transportation Division participated in the update of the [Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Long Range Plan \(Connections 2040\)](#), [Transportation Priority Projects](#), and [Transportation Improvement Program](#) during the 2013 calendar year.

The 2013 Transportation Improvement Inventory, including maps, municipal and legislative indexes is available at: [www.chesco.org/planning/transportation](http://www.chesco.org/planning/transportation).



## Establishing a blueprint for a walkable, bikeable future

The 2013 calendar year marked the end of a two-year effort by staff to prepare the [Central Chester County Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan](#). As a culmination of plan development process—which include ten advisory committee meetings and five public workshops—all seven municipalities and the Chester County Planning Commission formally endorsed the plan in the late spring of 2013. In the fall of 2013, the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association recognized the plan with a “Planning Excellence” award.

In the second half of 2013, the Planning Commission staff shifted its focus to implementing some of the plan’s early action items. With the support of a Pennsylvania Health Department Safe and Healthy Communities grant, the Planning Services Division staff provided direct assistance to several municipalities to update zoning and subdivision regulations that would encourage more walking and biking.



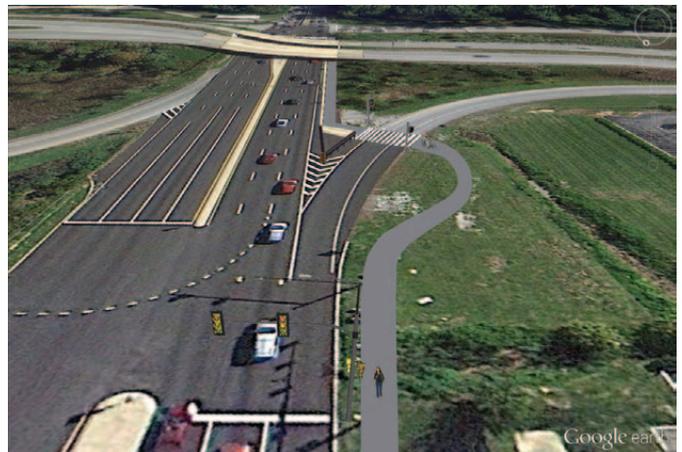
From left: Mark Rupsis, Chester County’s Chief Operating Officer, Commissioner Kathi Cozzone, Justin Smiley, Randy Waltermeyer, Ronald Bailey, Commissioner Terence Farrell, and Brian Styche.



A “walking school bus” in October 2013 at Glen Acres Elementary in West Goshen Township.

In collaboration with the Chester County District Attorney’s office and Health Department, the Planning Commission staff participated in a “walking school bus” in October 2013 at Glen Acres Elementary in West Goshen Township. With additional assistance from the West Goshen Township Police Department, over 130 students walked to school from adjacent neighborhoods.

Lastly, the Transportation Division worked with the seven municipalities and County Parks and Facilities Department to further the plan’s ten priority projects towards implementation. In particular, the first funding round of federal Transportation Alternatives was announced for a call-for-projects in spring 2014. Therefore, the division staff developed 3D renderings of the plan’s priority projects and met with interested municipalities to discuss the possibility of applying for Transportation Alternatives funding.



A proposed trail along PA 100 in Exton, connecting the Exton Train Station to the Main Street at Exton shopping center.



A video was produced to depict the extension of the existing East Branch Brandywine Trail from its current terminus into East Caln Township and Downingtown Borough.

## Improving transportation choices

### Providing pedestrian connections in suburban southern Chester County

Many shopping, employment, and community assets are located along the Baltimore Pike corridor outside of the Borough of Kennett Square. The suburban landscape that surrounds the borough is typical of many suburban areas, developed in a way that land uses serve the automobile and little investment was made in pedestrian infrastructure. This region of the county includes a fairly high concentration of residents that do not drive. Even if those non-drivers live within walkable Kennett Square Borough, they still likely rely on the services and amenities that are found along Baltimore Pike. In these areas, the only option is to risk personal safety by walking along often crumbling roadway shoulders. A potential conflict between pedestrians and motorists poses significant risk and consequence.

One solution has been identified and local municipalities are working toward rectifying the problem. Key locations for new sidewalks have been identified along Cypress and State streets west of Kennett Square Borough; an additional location along McFarlan and Rosedale roads may be included. Kennett Township and New Garden Township have partnered and are committed to improving pedestrian connections along Baltimore Pike. The two townships plan to apply for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and are optimistic they will be awarded funding for construction. Kennett Township will lead the project through the application process and have already been working with their engineer to prepare cost estimates and preliminary concepts.

If awarded TAP funds, all pre-construction activities must be completed and construction funds obligated by August of 2016. Construction of much needed sidewalk connections could begin in two years or less. For more information on the TAP program please visit: [www.dvrpc.org/TAP/](http://www.dvrpc.org/TAP/).



A pedestrian walking along eastbound Cypress Street, where a pedestrian connection is proposed.



Rail



Bus



Taxi



Paratransit

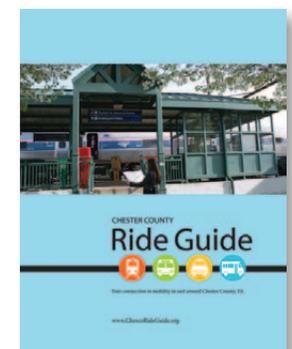
### Simplifying the transit experience

With four public bus providers, two rail providers, a county-wide paratransit system and limited taxi service, understanding Chester County's transit system is a challenging endeavor. In June 2013, the Planning Commission released the [Chester County Ride Guide](#) to serve as a one-stop resource to inform and direct transit users to the appropriate transit options. This branded website features an interactive map and printable resource guide (available in English and Spanish) to simply the transit-planning experience for Chester County residents. By the end of 2013, the Ride Guide had roughly 3,500 visits to the website and has been well received by the public, municipal officials and local and regional service agencies.

Included in the Ride Guide is information about each of the county's four transit options (passenger rail, bus, taxi, and paratransit service), and links to the transit agency's website where transit users can obtain more information about eligibility, procedures, schedules, and fares. Transit users can also utilize an interactive map that showcases all available transit services within the County and allows users to distinguish where each transit option is located and what options are available at each location. Also available is a printable version of the Ride Guide that is provided in English and Spanish.

The Ride Guide was released to the public in partnership with the Chester County Human Services Department, Chester County Department of Community Development, and county transit agencies. The Planning Commission and the advisory committee met over a 12 month period where they identified, discussed, and agreed upon key components of the Ride Guide. Planning Commission staff interviewed stakeholders, and conducted extensive research and data development.

For more information about the Chester County Ride Guide please go to [www.ChescoRideGuide.org](http://www.ChescoRideGuide.org).





The Chester County Planning Commission, which is composed of nine members that are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, carries out multiple responsibilities as the County's planning agency. Fundamentally, the Commission has crafted its role to serve not only as the principal advisor to the County Commissioners on the physical development of the County, but also as a trusted advisor to the seventy three municipal governments.

The County Planning Commission does not compete with municipal government, nor does it seek to vest land use control with the County. Instead, the County Planning Commission works with and on behalf of local governments to enhance their planning capacity. It does this by providing a county-wide vision for wise development and preservation in the form of Landscapes2—the County's long-range comprehensive plan—and by assisting municipal partners with the development of consistent municipal plans and implementing ordinances.

Although formally there is no "planning department," the County Planning Commission is supported by an expert staff, representing a wide range of professional disciplines, in its work with the municipal governments, businesses and residents of the County. With financial support from the Board of County Commissioners, the Planning Commission administers a program of assisting municipal governments with planning services both in the form of direct technical help by Commission staff and by administering a grant program to fund preparation and updating of plans and ordinances. Currently, the Vision Partnership Program represents a greater investment to the seventy three municipalities in the County than the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provides all of the municipal governments in the entire state.

The leadership of the County Planning Commission has been instrumental in guiding the success of the agency. In 2013, at the end of December, Judy DiFilippo and Nancy Mohr concluded their multi-year service as Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively, of the

Commission. During the years that Judy and Nancy were at the helm of the County Planning Commission, the agency updated the County's comprehensive plan, worked to prioritize and program critical transportation investments that were needed to support economic and population growth—including reconstruction of major portions of US202 and the construction of a new interchange on the Pennsylvania Turnpike at PA29—achieved national recognition for excellence in citizen participation in planning, developed web-based planning information systems, completed plans for preservation of nationally-significant historic landscapes and battlefields, integrated housing planning with transportation planning, devised interconnected trail systems throughout the County, and implemented electronic permit tracking and review systems.

At the same time, new challenges are developing, and the County Planning Commission is not content on just doing what has been done in the past.

The County will in the coming years have to respond to long-term and permanent changes in the financing of new housing construction that are the result of changes in the banking industry brought about as the result of the 2008-2011 Recession.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald T. Bailey".

Ronald T. Bailey, AICP  
Executive Director





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