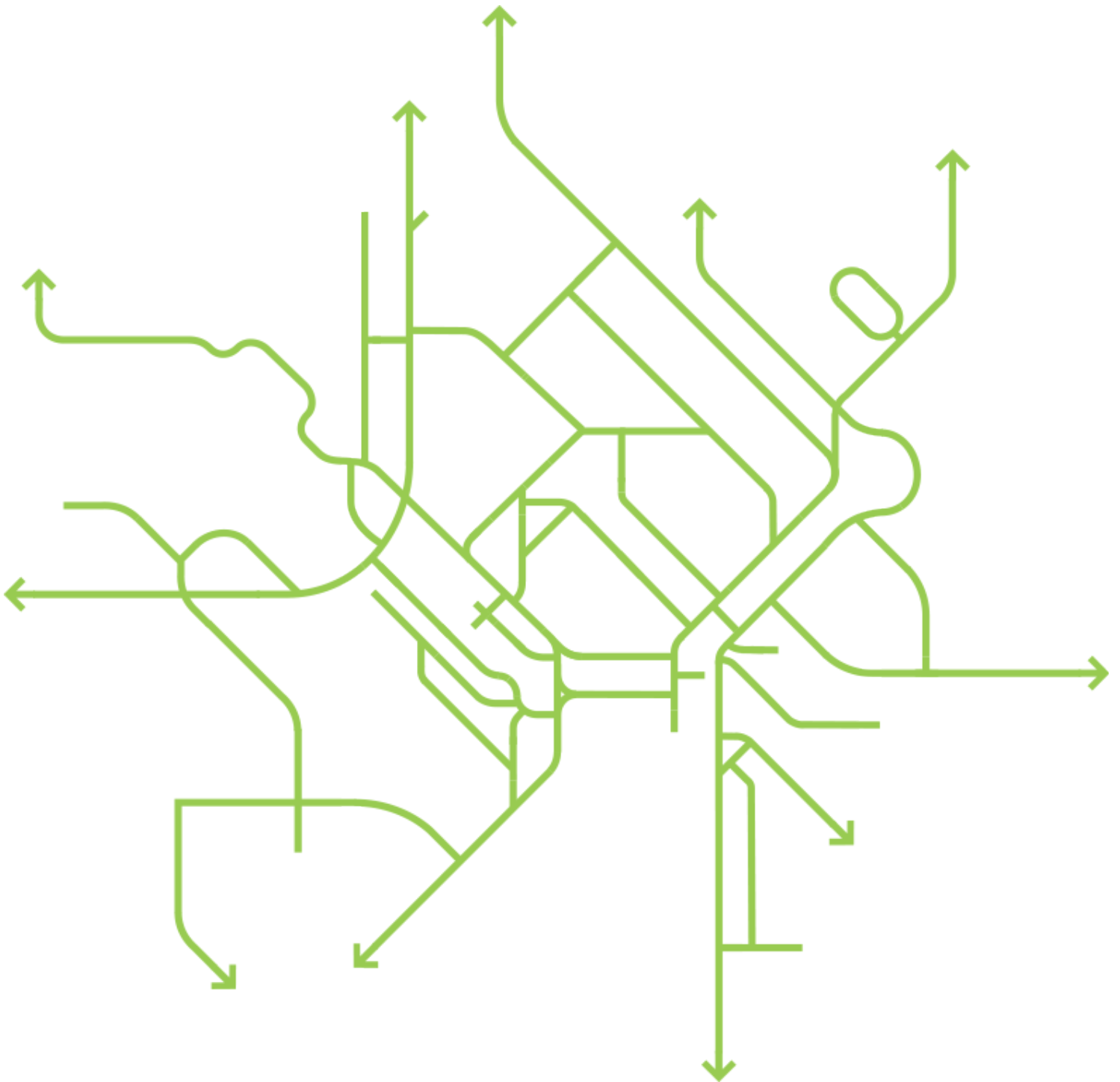


THE
CIRCUIT
TRAILS

The Circuit Trails 2017 Annual Report



2017 In Review

2017 was the Year of the Community Connection. The Circuit Coalition's advocacy contributed to a groundbreaking, two segment openings, and a major improvement to our region's most significant bridge; all in underserved communities. This was in addition to the expansion of the overall network to over 800 miles! These are some of 2017's notable highlights.

New Jersey

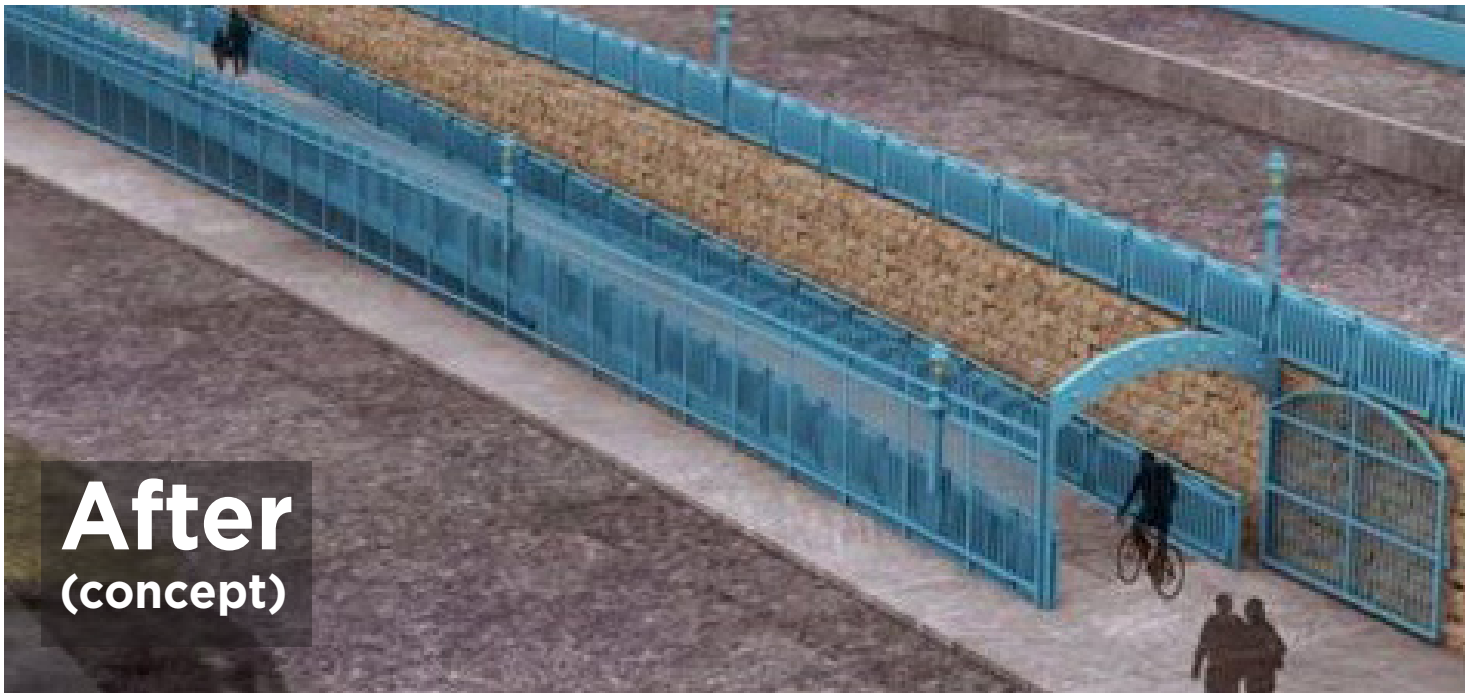
Camden, NJ: Cooper's Poynt Trail

While appearing on maps as a half-mile blip on the map, the Cooper's Poynt Trail segment that opened in June is already making a difference in the City of Camden. This new park and trail marked an ongoing step in converting the site from a waterfront prison to an inclusively designed community amenity. The trail is complemented by an ADA-accessible playground with spectacular views of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge and the Philadelphia skyline. Cooper's Poynt is a short walk from the North Camden neighborhood that has had a shortage of quality parks for decades.



Camden, NJ: Benjamin Franklin Bridge Ramp

This year marked a major breakthrough in the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia's 13-year effort to improve bike and pedestrian facilities on the only bridge that connects residents of Camden City with the considerable opportunities that Philadelphia's Center City has to offer. At its October 2017 board meeting, the Delaware River Port Authority approved funding for an ADA-accessible ramp for the bridge's southern walkway, which will end near the intersection of Pearl and 5th Streets in Camden. At present, cyclists must carry their bikes up thirty-nine steps, then navigate a narrow "cattle chute." This has been a significant deterrent to biking the bridge. When the ramp is finished in 2019, it will become the highest quality Circuit connection between the two states' Circuit networks, which are divided by the Delaware River.



2017 In Review

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, PA: Tacony Creek - Roosevelt Boulevard Connector

This one was the tiniest of all of our new segments, but will punch well above its weight in terms of positive impact on surrounding communities. This under-construction segment will not only connect two parts of the Tacony Creek Trail for the first time, but will also provide for a safe and pleasant biking and walking connection between two communities that have been separated for generations by the most dangerous highway in Pennsylvania. When this segment opens in 2018, it will be a major win not just for The Circuit, but for the City of Philadelphia's Vision Zero program.



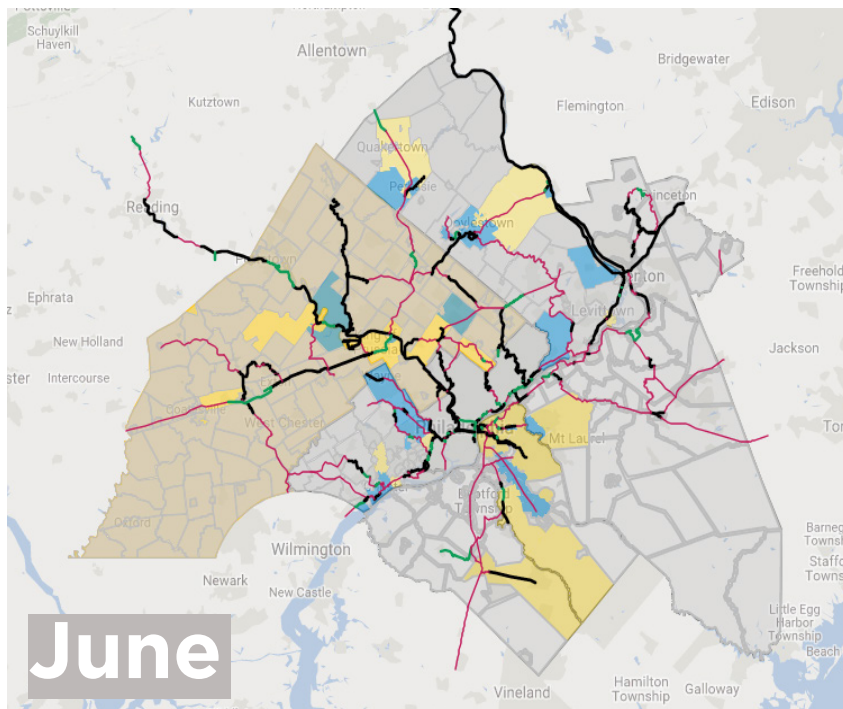
Philadelphia PA: Bartram's Mile

The opening of Bartram's Mile was another notable highlight of the 2017 advocacy efforts undertaken by the Circuit Coalition and signals the determination of the City of Philadelphia and Bartram's Garden to complete the Schuylkill River Trail, a critical trail on the Circuit. This segment will not only become part of a vital transportation link between low-income communities in West and Southwest Philadelphia and the economic prospects that Center City offers, but has also created a scenic and safe connection between Bartram Village Apartments and the Schuylkill River waterfront. Previously, the apartment complex and the surrounding community had been largely cut off from the river and the forty-five acres of public gardens and recreational opportunities at Bartram's Garden by a rarely used freight rail line. The access that this segment created was celebrated by members of the community, public officials, funders, trail advocates, and equestrians alike at a ribbon-cutting ceremony in May. When the final segments between Bartram's Mile and Center City are completed, there will be a trail connection not just for West and Southwest Philadelphia, but for communities in Delaware County and beyond, via the Cobbs Creek Trail and the 58th Street Greenway.




500/2025 Campaign

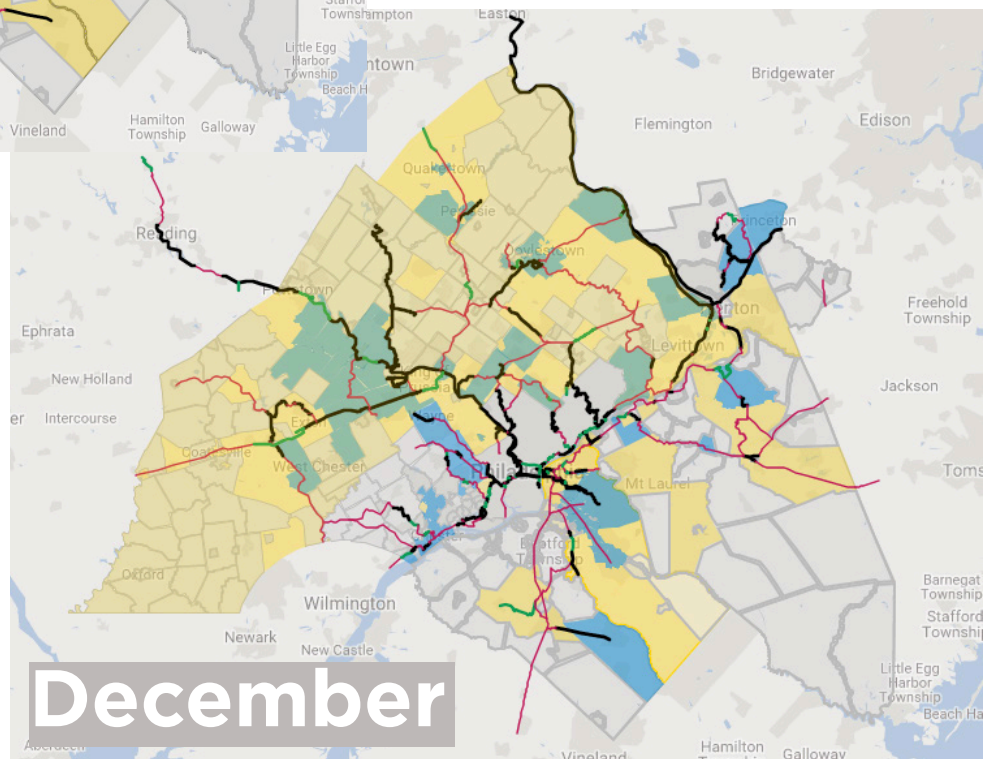
We made considerable progress with the 500 Miles by 2025 Circuit Resolution Campaign this year. Begun in late 2016, this endeavor seeks to gain a groundswell of governmental support for constructing 500 miles of the Circuit by 2025, which will get the region on schedule to complete 750 miles by 2040 as called for in the 2040 Long Range Plan of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. Seventy governments have adopted the resolution in our region: Bucks, Camden, Chester and Montgomery Counties, as well as forty-two municipalities in Pennsylvania and twenty-four in New Jersey, as highlighted in the maps below. We highlight counties as they adopt resolutions as well, and our goal for 2018 is to get the five remaining counties in our region to on board: Burlington, Delaware, Gloucester, Mercer and Philadelphia.



“To date, 70 governments have adopted the resolution in our region.”

-  Adopted Municipalities
-  In Progress Municipalities

One in five municipalities in our region have adopted the 500/2025 Circuit resolution.



Circuit Signage

As the Circuit has grown, so have the number of groups and municipalities that want to identify their segment as part of the regional network. The Circuit Coalition has responded to this desire by creating a set of signage designs that show a trail's affiliation with the Circuit. In 2017, the Circuit Coalition installed fifty signs on six trails and are currently working on installing 100 more. Additionally, Circuit signage will be included in the Regional Trails Program funding process to ensure the sustainability of this program.

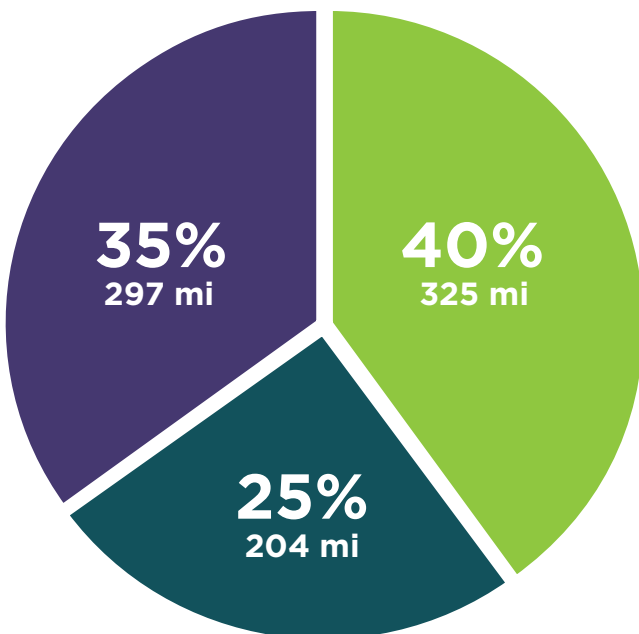


Circuit Trails Completed in 2017

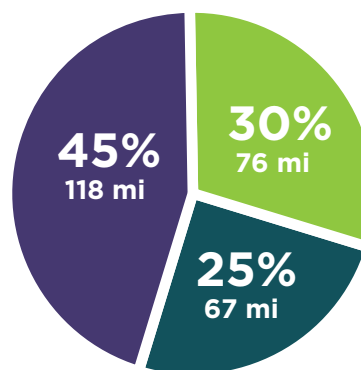
Trail Segment	State	Milage
Cooper's Poynt Trail	NJ	0.5
LHT - King's Highway Sidepath	NJ	0.7
Marcus Hook Bike Lanes	PA	1.45
Tinicum Route 291 Sidepath	PA	0.7
Liberty Bell Trail - Lansdale	PA	0.5
Bartram's Mile	PA	0.65
K&T Trail - Phase 1	PA	0.9
TOTAL		5.4

Circuit Trails added **5.4 miles** of new trail in 2017. Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties in Pennsylvania and Camden and Mercer counties in New Jersey all added new segments of Circuit Trails. This brings the total to 325.1 Circuit miles built.

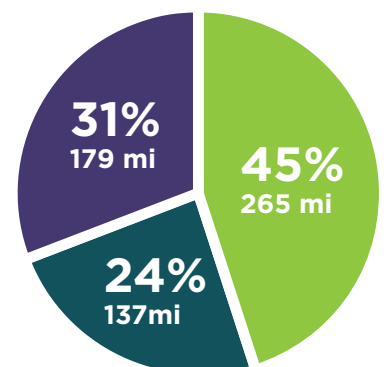
Circuit Trails Progress



NJ Trails Progress



PA Trails Progress



Planned Trail Miles
 Completed Trail Miles
 In Progress & Pipeline Trail Miles

Funding

This progress was made possible due to nearly \$10 million in funding awarded to Circuit Trails in 2017, from a variety of sources so extensive we don't even have room to fit the laundry list of acronyms! Additionally, New Jersey trails were allotted \$1 million from the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program in the FY2018 NJ TIP that was adopted October 26, 2017. Those funds are available for Circuit trails to apply for construction funding. Although the \$1 million is less than what Circuit Coalition recommended, it is a step forward for the four New Jersey counties. Lastly, the William Penn Foundation awarded a \$6.6 million grant in December for Phase six of its Regional Trails Program that is dedicated to Circuit projects.

Circuit Trails Marketing Update



On April 8, the Circuit Trails Coalition celebrated the 2017 Opening Day for Trails by mounting a Guinness World Record attempt at Penn Treaty Park for the longest fist-bump chain. That event kicked-off a Circuit Trails Challenge which saw more than 150 trail users meeting personal or team challenges by racking up 500 miles each on the Circuit. By September, participants had amassed more than 81,000 miles of trails traveled. Additionally, the Circuit garnered over 270 million impressions from a paid advertising campaign, which included a media partnership with 6abc, and consisted of TV spots, video ads on transit, bus wraps, and beyond.



Looking Forward

Coming Trails

The Circuit Trails Coalition's lobbying efforts for more trail funding has paid off with many trails in the pipeline. Although some of the segments below are small in terms of mileage, many fill crucial gaps. There are twelve miles of trail around the corner!

Trail Openings Coming Soon

State	County	Trail	Mileage
NJ	Burlington	Delaware River Heritage Trail - Fieldsboro to Florence	4.7
NJ	Camden	North Park Drive Bike Lanes	1.6
NJ	Mercer	Trenton Wellness Loop	0.5
PA	Delaware	Darby Creek - Swedish Cabin to Kent Park	1.0
PA	Montgomery	Schuylkill River Trail - Washington St. to Lower Pottsgrove	0.9
PA	Philadelphia	Baxter Trail	0.6
PA	Philadelphia	Schuylkill River Trail - South Street to Christian Street	0.3
PA	Philadelphia	Tacony Creek Trail - Roosevelt Blvd Connector	0.2
Total Coming Soon			12.0

The Circuit Trails Has Expanded!

Sound the horns, the Circuit Trails network is expanding! The network's eventual total mileage has increased from 750 to **811 miles** due to the addition of two newly planned segments: the **Cross Camden County Trail** (map below), and the **Union Transportation Trail** in Mercer County. The regional network, which crosses nine counties in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, now consists of 325.1 completed miles, 80.1 miles in progress, 119.2 miles in the pipeline (trails that are moving forward in the near future) and 286.6 miles planned. During 2017, the Circuit added 5.4 miles of new trails to the network: 4.2 in PA and 1.2 in NJ.



Proposed route that would connect Camden City with Winslow Township

A Special Thank You to Michael Stokes

Michael Stokes retired this year from the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC). Over his tenure, he spearheaded several key trail initiatives. In the early 1980's, he worked with PECO when it purchased the original abandoned railroad line through Montgomery County and installed the power lines for what would become the **Schuylkill River Trail**. In 1993, he worked with a blue ribbon advisory committee in the development of the \$100 million Montgomery County Open Space Funding initiative, which enabled numerous trails and open space purchases. In 2003, he collaborated on the Green Fields Town program that added another \$150 million in funding. Most recently, he worked with staff on the **Pennypack Trail**, Towpath trail section and Pottstown section of the **Schuylkill River Trail**, the **Cross County Trail** and **Wissahickon Trail** through Erdenheim Farm, and the design of the **Chester Valley Trail** through Upper Merion and Bridgeport.



The team that made the Pennypack Trail opening possible: MCPC Executive Director Jody Holton, MCPC Board Member Jill Blumhardt (with daughter), MCPC Board Member Scott Exley, MCPC Board Member Dulcie Flaharty, MCPC Board Commissioner Steven Kline, Montgomery County Board of Commissioners Chair Valerie Arkoosh, and Michael Stokes. He chose this photo because it shows how trails are built by working together.

Circuit Trail Champions

How are trails built? There is no single answer to this question. The enormous effort that goes into creating a trail is not always apparent at the celebratory ribbon cutting. From initial conceptual planning, garnering political and popular support, to finding funding for the design, engineering and construction, each trail has its own story. It takes hard work and determination, and it doesn't happen overnight. The hard work may come from local advocates, local governments, regional organizations (such as the East Coast Greenway) or public-private partnerships. The key to seeing trails come to fruition is often tenacity. Below are profiles of two trails that represent the diversity of paths to trail development. This year, we feature local advocates who are working to increase access to nature and economic opportunities in low-income communities.

Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership (Cheltenham and Philadelphia, PA)

The Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership (TTF) works to restore the relationship between people and their creeks. TTF knows that when people are on a trail near a waterway, they are more likely to understand the need for clean water and their role in making that happen. TTF's efforts to increase Tacony Creek Park programs, engagement and stewardship, supported by the Philadelphia Water Department will be even more effective when this beautiful 3.2 mile Circuit Trail links pedestrians and cyclists to trails in both Montgomery County and along the Delaware River.

TTF was on hand to celebrate Philadelphia Parks & Recreation's work on the long-awaited trail connection under Roosevelt Boulevard and enthusiastically supported PPR's development of the Frankford Creek Greenway. The TTF community looks forward to leading neighbors on nature walks along this trail to the mouth of the Frankford Creek at the Delaware River. TTF is also working with citizens, partners, and its surrounding communities to develop connections to the trail already planned for Cheltenham as well as across the township to connect with the Cresheim Trail in the future.



The TTF team celebrates after a successful Tacony Creek Block Party in June 2017

Rod Sadler, Save our Waterfront Coalition (Camden, NJ)

Rod has worked to connect the people of North Camden with resources for over thirty-five years. He, like many others at the time, moved to the neighborhood in search of a safe community with access to jobs.

He has seen North Camden at its best and at its worst; when the community's most notable building was a waterfront prison. Rod worked tirelessly with Save our Waterfront, a fifteen-member coalition of organizations, to get the prison removed.

That effort alone took decades. When it became apparent that the prison would be removed, Rod helped to hatch the idea of a waterfront park, and "it only took ten years" to bring to fruition.

Today, instead of barbed wire and incarcerated members of the community, the site is host to a wonderful community park and Circuit Trail, with stunning views of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge and Center City Philadelphia. Congratulations to Rod and all of the partners that put in so much hard work to make this happen!

