

# Chester County Planning Commission Annual Report

*2011*



# *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.



Chester County Board of Commissioners

Terence Farrell

Kathi Cozzone

Ryan Costello



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

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# leadership

## Chairman's message — year in review



The 2011 Chester County Planning Commission Annual Report has been prepared to review and describe the work of the Planning Commission during the last calendar year. On behalf of my fellow Commission members, I am pleased to highlight some of these activities with all of you.

Though development activity remained slow in 2011, the review of submitted plans did continue. A record-setting 97 percent of all subdivision and land development applications were located within the designated growth areas identified in Landscapes2. Congratulations to those municipalities who met the updated land use goals.

The Housing Options Task Force met throughout the year at various locations around the county. Topics included workforce housing, senior housing, assisted-living housing options, public assistance housing, and care for the homeless. Educating the public about the different types of housing needed to accommodate a diverse population was a constant theme. Putting a "face" on the person who lives in an affordable home, which has a different definition in each region of the County, was thought to be one way to begin that dialogue. The task force also recommended compiling a master list of all the agencies that provide housing-related services. Both public and non-profit organizations would be included. The Planning Commission is grateful to all who participated in this year-long effort.

The Vision Partnership Program resumed in 2011 under its new grant application format. The Planning Commission was able to award six new contracts under the 2011 grant program. Several municipalities urged the commissioners to continue their support of the Vision Partnership Program. The 2012 budget funds the program at the 2010 levels making it possible to offer two grant application rounds in 2012. Planning Commission members again express our gratitude to the commissioners for recognizing the importance of this program.

The county updated its Transportation Improvement Inventory and made its regular biannual presentation to the State Transportation Commission to promote the

county's transportation project priorities. Like so many other public improvement projects, the availability of funding will determine when progress can occur.

To continue its efforts in implementing other goals of Landscapes2, the Planning Commission created a website called, Discover the Future, which promotes the plan's "sustainability" practices. It worked on the Central Chester County Bike and Pedestrian Circulation Plan and on the Brandywine Battlefield Preservation Plan, and it produced a Protected Open Space Tracking System which measures all the protected lands within the county. Using the data collected from the 2010 Census, the Planning Commission updated its Community Profiles, a helpful online web tool for all municipalities as they work on updating their own comprehensive plans by facilitating access to local census data and planning information. All of these publications are online demonstrating that the Planning Commission leads by example in its "going greener" efforts.

Planning Commission members understand that good planning with good government helps us to retain the quality of life that we have worked so hard to achieve. It is our job to look to the future and prepare for the change that is to come. We value our relationship with the County's 73 municipalities. We remain committed to assisting them with their planning efforts. It is our honor to assist the county commissioners and the Planning Commission staff in this important work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy L. DiFilippo".

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 Chester County Board of 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.

**Appointed:**  
 June 2002



**Nancy Mohr**  
**Vice-chairman**

**Resident:**  
 Newlin Township

**Occupation:**  
 Writer/Consultant

**Affiliations:**  
 Founder, former consultant, Brandywine Conservancy's Headwaters Area Conservation Program; Green Space Alliance; Keep Farming First; Master Planner Program; Community Conversations.

**Appointed:**  
 June 1998



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

East Nottingham Township

**Occupation:**  
 Chiropractor

**Affiliations:**  
 President, 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



**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; Member, West Bradford Township Planning Commission; 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



**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, and 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



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

East Goshen Township

**Occupation:**  
 Retired, PECO Energy Company

**Affiliations:**  
 Member, East Goshen Township Board of Supervisors, 1986 to present; Co-chairman, Chester County Leadership Caucus, 2000–present; Board Member, Chester Association of Township Officials, 2007–present; First Vice President, 2010; Member, Selective Service System Local Board

**Appointed:**  
 June 2011



**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; Members, 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, Stantec Consulting Services, 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



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

South Coatesville Borough

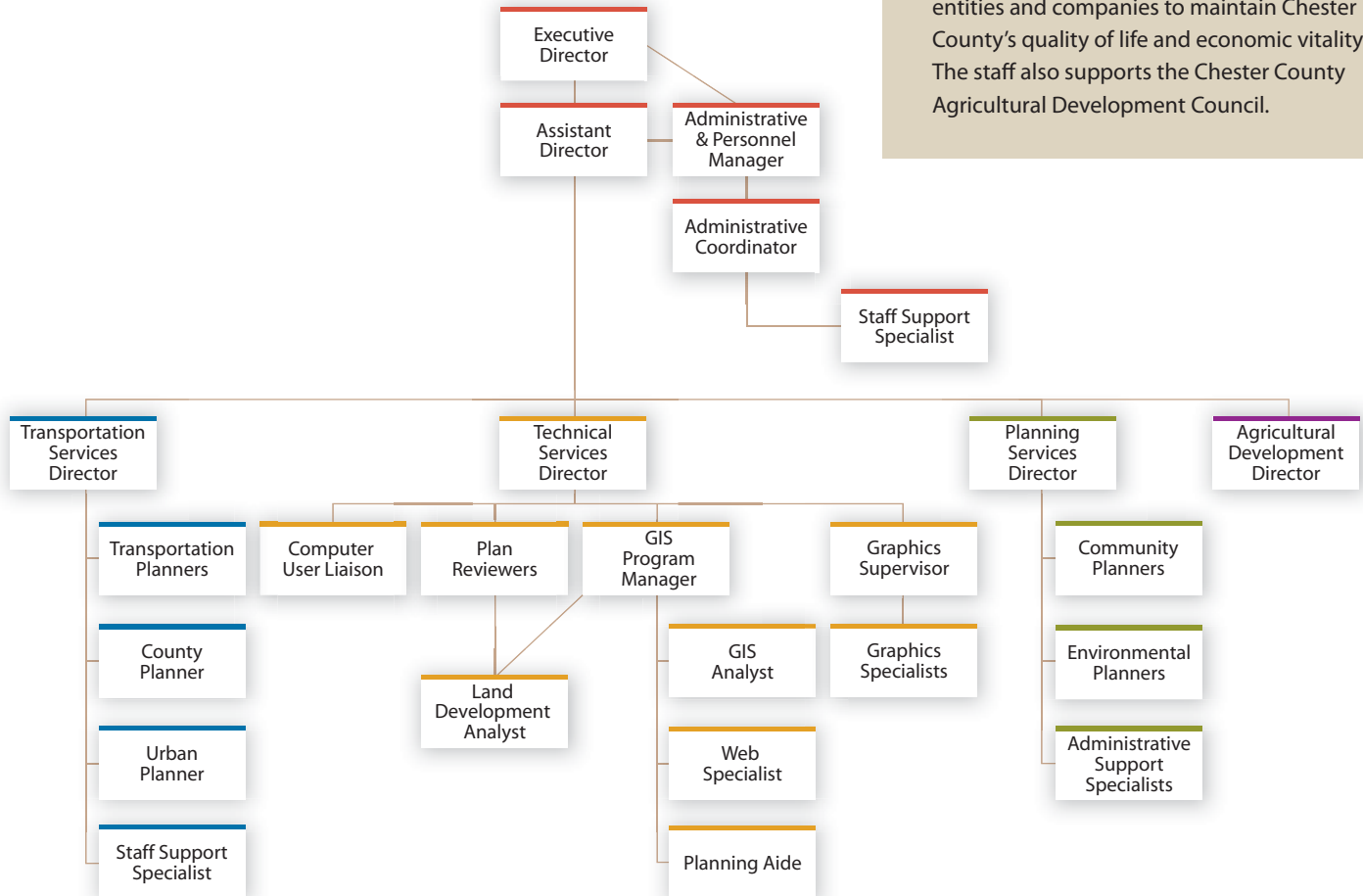
**Occupation:**  
 Instructor for Overhead and Remote Crane Safety, Ladle Crane Operator, ArcelorMittal.

**Affiliations:**  
 Past President, South Coatesville Borough Council; Member, South Coatesville Borough Council since 1980; 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**

- Natasha Manbeck, AICP, PE  
*Transportation Services Director*
- Matthew Anderson, *Transportation Planner\**
- William Deguffroy, *Transportation Planner*
- Justin Smiley, *Urban Planner*
- Robert Walker, *County Planner*
- Randy Waltermeyer, AICP, *Transportation Planner*
- Patti Strauber, *Administrative Support*

■ **Technical Services**

- Thomas P. West  
*Technical Services Director*
- Catherine Sbarbaro, *GIS Program Manager*
- Keary Larson, *Computer User Liaison*
- Steven Cummings, *GIS Analyst*
- Carolyn Oakley, *Web Specialist*
- Heather Ruh, *Planning Aide\**
- Glenn Bentley, *Plan Reviewer*
- Wes Bruckno, AICP, *Plan Reviewer*
- Paul Farkas, *Plan Reviewer*
- Jenn Kolvereid, *Land Development Analyst*
- Danielle Dickens, *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*
- 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*

\*No longer with the Planning Commission

# *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. The Planning Commission secured additional revenue through grants to supplement our programs in the amount of \$111,578, thereby offsetting potential cuts to services. In addition, the Planning Commission worked diligently to identify opportunities to decrease expenditures. As a result, the net amount expended in 2011 was \$2,557,848, nearly a three percent decrease from the 2010 budget.



<b>Budget</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Budgeted	\$2,992,147	\$3,019,721
Expended	\$2,910,689	\$2,997,693
Revenues	\$287,234	\$439,845
Net expended	\$2,623,455	\$2,557,848

<b>Revenues</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Federal & State	\$178,904	\$297,773
Local	\$24,414	\$10,563
Publications	\$1,972	\$2,802
Subdivision fees	\$81,944	\$125,525
Total revenue	\$287,234	\$429,372



# the strategic plan

## Refining the plan

### Strategic business plan — managing for results

In order to enhance accountability, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a strategic business plan. The plan, entitled Chester County's Strategic Planning Managing for Results, won a 2011 Governor's Award for Local Government Excellence in the category Fiscal Accountability and Best Management Practices.

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:

The Planning Commission's business plan was approved in 2011 and is closely aligned to the county's strategic plan. The business plan establishes four activities for which resources and staff are assigned.

The plan is aligned with the county's strategic plan, and based on the following priorities established by the Board of Commissioners:

1. Promote and protect the public health environment of the community.
2. Ensure safe and secure communities.
3. Support the growth and development of a strong and vibrant economy for all residents.
4. Enhance access to, and use of transportation systems to reduce traffic congestion.
5. Continue to exercise smart financial management and maintain the county's financial strength while minimizing the property tax burden.
6. Manage growth and land use to preserve and optimize the quality of life in the community.

The department strategic business plan includes performance and evaluation measurements. The department'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 department's activity areas:

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

In addition to these four activities, the department also supports the Agricultural Development Council.





# landscapes2

## Landscapes2 Plan Activity

Provide an update to, and 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.



### Implementing the long-range plan

The adoption of Landscapes2 established a series of actions needed to realize the vision of bringing growth and preservation together in Chester County. Many of the recommendations promote sustainable practices which use resources more wisely and manage growth in a more efficient way. To best communicate these recommendations and to provide municipalities and stakeholders with tools, a series of initiatives were unveiled.

#### Implementing Landscapes2

A web site, entitled *Discover the Future*, [www.ChescoPAgreen.org](http://www.ChescoPAgreen.org) was launched in April of 2011. The site is dedicated to the implementation of Landscapes2. It serves as a portal for promoting sustainable practices within the county by:

- Collaborating with partnering agencies and organizations committed to improving Chester County through sustainable practices.
- Sharing information and techniques that promote a more efficient use of our resources.
- Celebrating successes in county and local government, as well as institutions, businesses and homes where sustainable practices have made a difference.

Recognizing that Chester County is a very diverse community, the county has chosen to plan according to four landscape types. Tools are presented on the website tailored to these landscape types. Rural and urban landscape pages were added to Discover the Future in 2011. Suburban resources are scheduled for loading in early 2012. Each of these pages includes an animated introduction to the landscape and a list of tools that relate to preserving and promoting the characteristics of the rural and urban landscapes (i.e., smart growth, transportation, historic preservation, open space and recreation, natural features, housing, agriculture and utilities).

The website also includes sections on the practical implementation of sustainable activities, and includes articles tailored for homeowners, businesses, municipal officials and students. By the end of 2011, a total of 40 articles were posted that relate to a wide range of sustainable practices, including examples of successful public and private sector sustainable achievements, smart growth principles, natural resource conservation, energy reduction, transportation, and agriculture.



### Assisting municipal officials

Many of the recommendations found in Landscapes2 involve partnerships with our local municipalities. As part of the Federal Department of Energy's EECBG award, the Planning Commission prepared a brochure titled, *Discover the Future—Creating a Sustainable Future for Chester County*. The brochure serves as a resource for municipal officials and planning commissions, and directed them

to the county's sustainability website. The brochure includes brief discussions about each of the four landscape types and provides discussions of smart growth principles and land use tools, transportation, sustainable agricultural activities, environmental preservation, as well as links for more information. The central portion of the brochure is a removable poster on sustainability practices that is designed for display at municipal offices.

Supplemental business cards showing the website address were also prepared. Copies of the brochure (20 each) and the business card (50 each) are to be delivered to each county municipality during the first quarter of 2012.



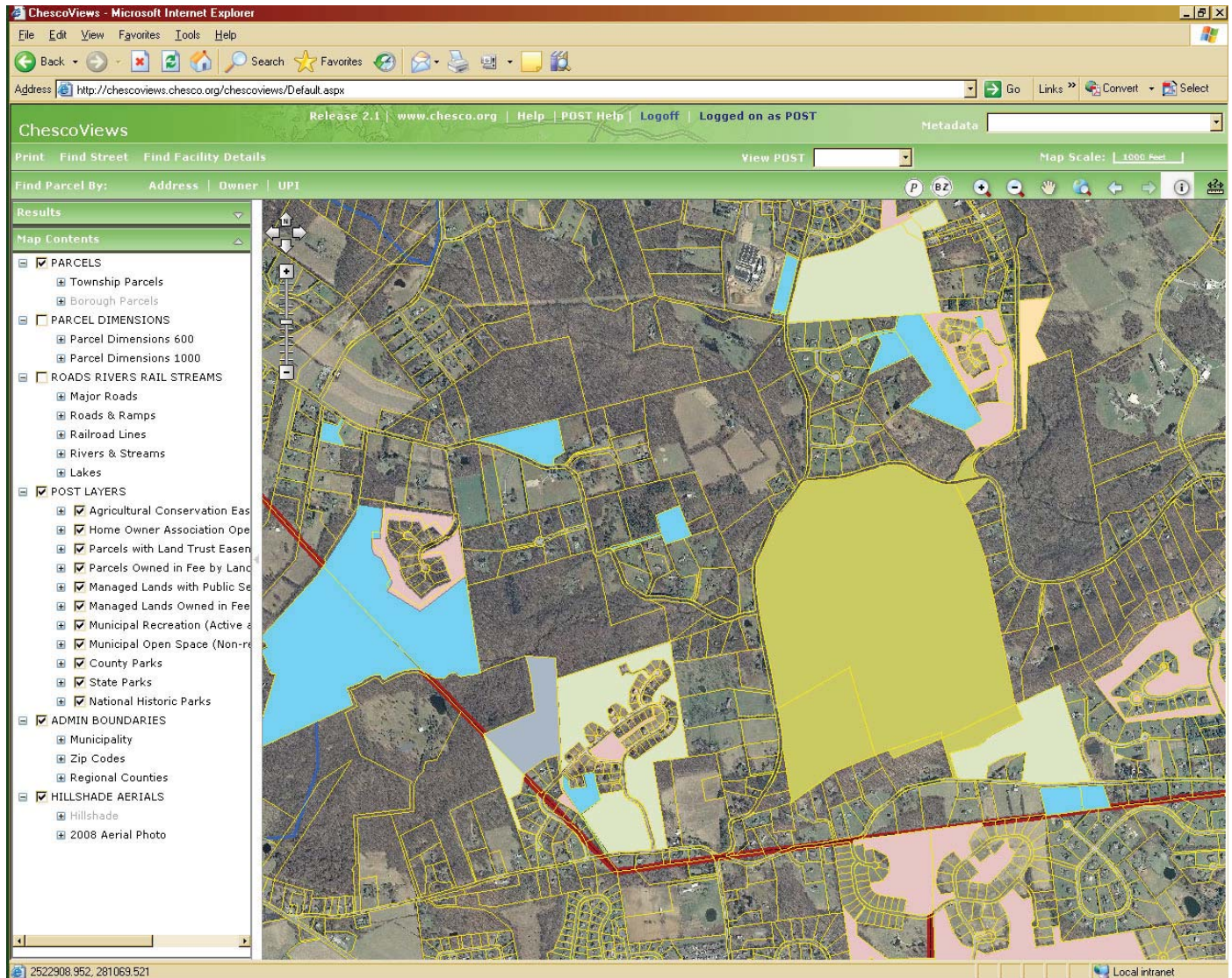
Detail of the suburban fly-through prepared for the Discover the Future website.

### Illustrating the vision

To help illustrate the vision of Landscapes2, 3D models have been developed for each landscape type, including rural, suburban and urban. These models depict the key characteristics each landscape type portrays and sustainable practices that should be considered to enhance these landscapes. 3D models can be viewed on [www.chescopagreen.org](http://www.chescopagreen.org).

Detail of the urban fly-through prepared for the Discover the Future website.





*POST, an online application, will allow efficient monitoring of protected open space.*

## Protecting our open space resources

### Protected open space tracking system

Landscapes2 strives to bring a balance between growth and preservation. A key result of the department’s strategic business plan is the percentage of Chester County protected for open space annually. The Planning Commission has been charged the task of tracking protected open space in the county through government, land trust and private sector efforts.

2011 marked the first year that protected open space in Chester County was inventoried and mapped using the web-based Protected Open Space Tracking (POST) system. POST is an online application that combines GIS mapping software with the same

records used by Tax Assessment and other county departments. POST provides a tool through which information can be quickly gathered on all types of protected open space, from parks and wildlife preserves to protected farmland and home owner association open spaces.

POST will soon serve as an online resource that land trusts and municipalities can use to access protected open space information. To that end, Planning Commission staff conducted training sessions during the summer with the land trusts active in Chester County. As a result of this coordination, several updates and revisions will be implemented in 2012.

# 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.



### Providing planning assistance to municipalities

The Planning Services Division provides professional planning assistance in three 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.
- Vision Partnership Grant administration provides grant review, recommendations, and monitoring services to Chester County and its municipalities so they have the funding and resources to develop plans and ordinances to implement Landscapes2.
- 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.

### 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 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.

Following the adoption of Landscapes2 in November 2009, an extensive review and update of the VPP grant program was undertaken to better promote the implementation of both the goals of Landscapes2 and the County Commissioner's Strategic Plan. These changes to the program were approved by the commissioners in 2010. The most significant change to the grant program was that it became a competitive grant, rather than an open grant available on a rolling basis.

Due to budget constraints, the grant program was on hold for approximately 18 months from mid-2009 through the end of 2010, but was reopened for one round of funding in 2011.

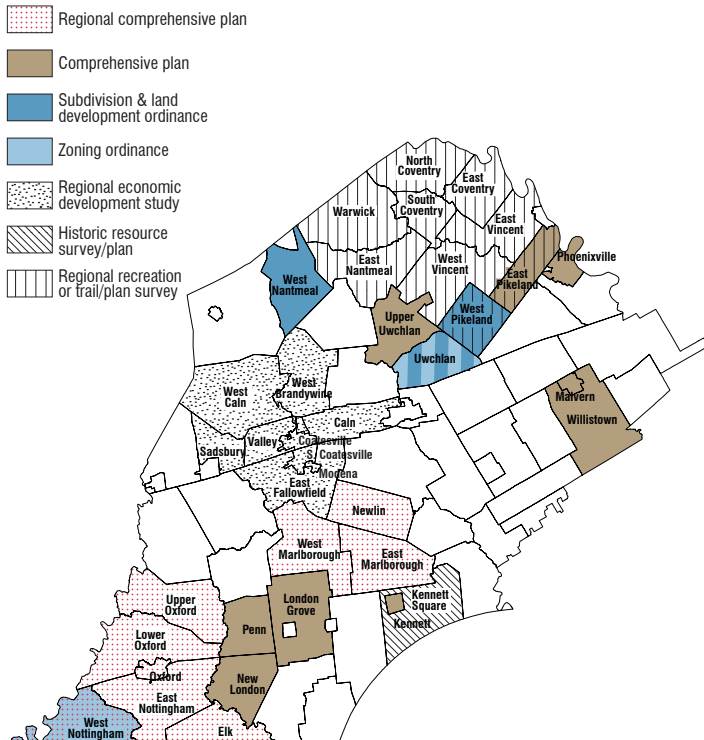
During that time, planning staff continued to assist municipalities in the administration of active VPP grants and provide direct community planning assistance to municipalities.

### Providing grants to municipalities

In 2011, six reimbursable cash grants were awarded in the inaugural round of the updated and revised grant program. In addition, three in-kind VPP grant applications were submitted at the end of 2011, but not approved until early 2012. Reimbursable grants were awarded for the following projects:

2011 VPP Grant Awards		
Municipality	Project	Award
East Brandywine Township	Guthriesville Village Master Plan Implementation	\$30,062
East Pikeland Township	Comprehensive Plan update focusing on Open Space and Economic Development	\$30,000
Upper Uwchlan Township	Comprehensive Plan update	\$20,880
Uwchlan Township	Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Amendments	\$10,500
West Nantmeal Township	Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance update	\$9,960
West Pikeland Township	Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance update	\$18,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$119,4020</b>

### VPP grant projects active in 2011 by municipality



## Active grant projects in 2011

A total of 18 Vision Partnership Program grants were active in 2011. Several of these grants were for multi-municipal projects for a total of 37 municipalities involved in VPP funded planning activities. A complete listing of municipalities and regions actively planning in 2011 with the use of VPP grants is shown below.

Vision Partnership Program (VPP) Active projects in 2011				
Municipality	Comprehensive plan	Zoning ordinance	Subdivision ordinance	Special project
East Pikeland	■			
Kennett	● <sup>a</sup>			■ <sup>a</sup>
Kennett Square	●			
London Grove	■			
Malvern	●			
New London	■			
Penn	●			
Phoenixville	■ <sup>b</sup>			
Upper Uwchlan	■			
Uwchlan		■	■	
West Nantmeal			■	
West Nottingham		●		
West Pikeland			■	
Willistown	■			
<b>Multi-Municipal Planning</b>				
Northern Federation (East Vincent, West Vincent, East Coventry, North Coventry, South Coventry, Warwick, East Pikeland, West Pikeland, East Nantmeal)	■ <sup>c</sup>			
Oxford Region (Oxford, East Nottingham, Elk, Lower Oxford, Upper Oxford, West Nottingham)	●			
Unionville Area (East Marlborough, West Marlborough, Newlin)	■			
Western Chester County (Caln, Coatesville, Modena, South Coatesville, Valley, West Caln, West Brandywine, East Fallowfield, Sadsbury)				■ <sup>d</sup>
■ Cash grant award ● In-kind grant <sup>a</sup> Historic Resource Survey and Plan Update <sup>b</sup> Neighborhood Study and Zoning Analysis <sup>c</sup> Open Space, Recreation, and Environmental Resources Plan <sup>d</sup> Economic Development Study				

## Municipal planning highlights

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 2011.

### 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.

- Kennett Square Comprehensive Plan update
- Malvern Borough Comprehensive Plan update
- Oxford Region Multi-Municipal Plan - supporting economic development for Oxford Borough
- Phoenixville Borough Neighborhood Study and Zoning Analysis
- Western Chester County Economic Development Study (includes urban centers of Coatesville, Modena, and South Coatesville)

#### **Highlight — Malvern Borough Comprehensive Plan update**

Having completed many of the recommendations of their 1999 comprehensive plan, Malvern Borough undertook a comprehensive update of that plan. The plan update revised and

*The Malvern train station improvements are part of revitalization efforts in the borough.*



incorporated the borough's 1992 parks, recreation and open space plan into the full comprehensive plan. The plan update significantly expands on housing, historic resources, and revitalization planning elements, and adds economic development and energy conservation chapters and a multi-municipal trail network concept. The detailed neighborhood level planning analysis of the 1999 plan, which defined eighteen borough neighborhoods each with individual characteristics, specific planning issues, and targeted planning recommendations, was expanded and updated as part of this effort. The plan is anticipated for adoption in 2012.

### Supporting development and redevelopment in urban centers

Redevelopment of the county's urban centers involves a strong partnership between the Planning Commission and the Department of Community Development (DCD). DCD offered funding through the Community Revitalization Program (CRP) to the 15 boroughs and the City of Coatesville to support development and redevelopment in the county's urban centers. Planning Commission staff reviewed eighteen CRP applications and provided input in the grant selection process. The Planning Commission and DCD involvement in this program led to over \$2.6 million in grant funding awards for seven revitalization projects in 2011.

Two planning projects that were funded through the County's Vision Partnership Program (VPP) were completed in 2011: the Phoenixville Borough Neighborhood Study and Zoning Analysis and the Western Chester County Region Economic Development Study. The Phoenixville study defined and analyzed fifteen neighborhoods within the borough and recommended development parameters for either infill or growth to occur within them. Since this study now serves as the borough's comprehensive plan, the borough has already begun to implement it by applying for and receiving funding from Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's (DVRPC) Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI) program to develop a new form-based zoning ordinance using the recommendations from the study.

The Western Chester County Economic Development Study promotes economic development in the region with the focus on retaining and growing existing businesses as well attracting new businesses to appropriate areas of the region. The study area encompassed the Coatesville Area School District which includes the urban centers of Coatesville, Modena, and South Coatesville. Promoting revitalization of the region's urban centers is an important element of the study. The economic development study was also supported by funding from DVRPC's TCDI grant.

Planning Commission staff assisted Atglen Borough with revisions to its communications tower regulations and will assist the borough with a comprehensive update to its zoning ordinance starting in March 2012. The staff was involved with urban/transit related projects which include: Parkesburg and Downingtown Train Station Feasibility Studies. County staff also assisted Malvern Borough in receiving funding from DVRPC's TCDI program for a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan.

### 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 Pikeland Township Comprehensive Plan update
- New London Township Comprehensive Plan update (also in rural landscape)
- Penn Township Comprehensive Plan update (also in rural landscape)
- Upper Uwchlan Comprehensive Plan update
- Uwchlan Township Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance updates

#### **Highlight—Uwchlan Township Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance updates**

With the help of VPP funding, Uwchlan Township completed and adopted an update to their comprehensive plan in August 2010. The plan strategies included a full array of recommendations for ordinance revisions focused on implementing the comprehensive plan policies. The township was awarded a VPP grant in 2011 to assist them with incorporating these recommendations into their ordinances. Issues being addressed by the ordinance revisions include natural and historic resource protection, trails, parks and recreation, utilities and infrastructure, and energy conservation.



*Uwchlan Township Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance updates address trails such as the Uwchlan Trail.*

*The rural resource area contains important agricultural, environmental, and scenic resources.*



### 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.

- New London Township Comprehensive Plan update (also in suburban landscape)
- Penn Township Comprehensive Plan update (also in suburban landscape)
- West Nantmeal Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance update
- West Nottingham Township Zoning Ordinance update
- West Pikeland Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance update
- Willistown Township Comprehensive Plan update
- Unionville Area Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan

#### **Highlight—Unionville Area Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan**

The townships of East Marlborough, West Marlborough, and Newlin adopted a multi-municipal plan in April 2011. The future land use plan designates rural resources areas intended for the protection of agriculture, open space, natural resources, and historic villages. The designated growth areas included areas suitable for mixed use and suburban development. The plan provides guidance on regional strategies for transportation and facilities planning. By working cooperatively on a regional basis, the municipalities will be able to more effectively coordinate and implement their planning goals for resource protection and future growth.



resources that have retained their historic integrity. In fact, Chester County is second only to Philadelphia in the number of listings on the National Register of Historic Place in Pennsylvania. Recognizing the importance of these resources to the county, it is a goal of Landscapes2 to protect and maintain the county's historic resources and cultural landscapes. The following projects served to protect those resources:

- Kennett Township—Historic Resource Survey and Plan
- Historic Preservation Plan chapters of VPP funded comprehensive plan updates (Penn, Oxford Region, Malvern, Kennett Square, Willistown)

**Highlight—Kennett Township Historic Resources Survey and plan update**

In 2011, Kennett Township, working with Wise Preservation Planning, completed a comprehensive historic resources survey. This project updated and expanded on the township's existing survey and, in doing so, implemented a high priority historic resource recommendation of the township's comprehensive plan. The survey identified additional historic resources and provided architectural and other supplemental information regarding historic resources in the township. The survey included PA historic resource survey forms for many identified resources.

The township also completed revisions to the historic preservation sections of the township comprehensive plan, which were largely based on the updated survey information. The Kennett Township Board of Supervisors adopted the plan amendment in August 2011. As required by the Vision Partnership Program, the survey was coordinated with the Chester County Historic Resources Atlas for Kennett Township, an update to the Chester County Historic Sites Survey (1979–1982) overseen by Chester County Parks and Recreation. Using the methodology promulgated by the county-wide Chester County Historic Resources Atlas project, surveyed historic resources were classified based on their type and local or national significance. The updated survey and plan provide a foundation for future local historic preservation efforts.

**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.

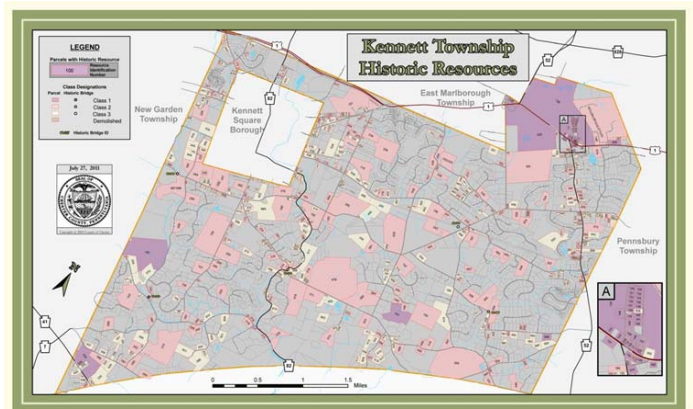
- West Nantmeal Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance
- West Nottingham Township Zoning Ordinance update
- West Pikeland Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance update

**Highlight: West Nantmeal Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance update**

West Nantmeal is located in the rural resource area and a significant portion of the township is overlain by the natural resource landscape. The township has been active planning partner in the Vision Partnership Program, first updating their comprehensive plan in 2005, followed by a full update to their zoning ordinance which was adopted in 2010. The subdivision ordinance update will complete their implementation of the ordinance related recommendations of their comprehensive plan and provide further protection of the township's many natural resources.

**Historic resource planning and protection**

An important element of Chester County's character is its many historic resources and landscapes. The county has many historic



Prepared by: Chester County Department of Computing and Information Services—Geographic Information Systems Division (DCIS-GIS)  
Chester County Historic Preservation Society  
Chester County Department of Parks & Recreation, Kennett Township Historical Commission



## Multi-municipal planning highlights

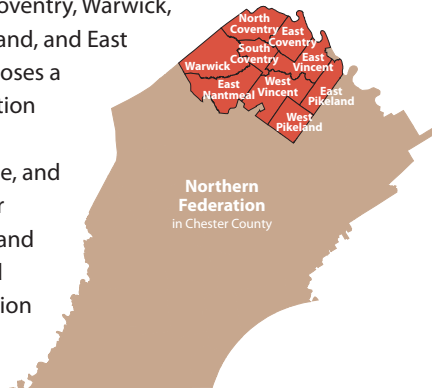
The promotion of cooperative planning among municipalities remains an important goal of the Vision Partnership Program. There were four active regional projects in 2011, involving a total of 27 municipalities. The following are highlights of multi-municipal planning efforts in Chester County in 2011.

*Northern Chester County is home to diverse natural resources.*



## Federation of Northern Chester County Communities Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan

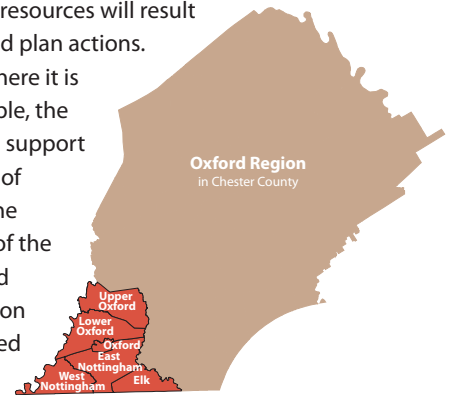
The Northern Federation completed work on the creation a multi-municipal parks, recreation, and open space plan for the nine municipalities of East Vincent, West Vincent, East Coventry, North Coventry, South Coventry, Warwick, East Pikeland, West Pikeland, and East Nantmeal. The plan proposes a regional park and recreation system, conserve natural resources and open space, and expand opportunities for regional and local parks and a regional recreation and greenway system. Adoption of the plan is anticipated in early 2012.



## Oxford Region Comprehensive Plan

The Oxford Region includes Oxford Borough and the townships of East Nottingham, Elk, Lower Oxford, Upper Oxford, and West Nottingham and encompasses the Oxford Area School District. The plan will enable the region's six municipalities to address planning issues that transcend municipal boundaries. Consistent resource protection measures for the region's land, water, and biotic resources will result from the recommended plan actions.

By directing growth where it is viewed as most desirable, the implemented plan can support both the revitalization of Oxford Borough and the continued protection of the region's agriculture and rural resources. Adoption of the plan is anticipated in 2012.



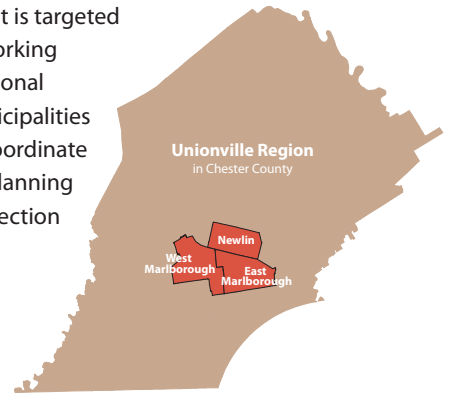
*Southern Chester County is home to a diverse agricultural industry.*



Historic resource protection is a key element of the Unionville Area Plan.

### Unionville Area Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan

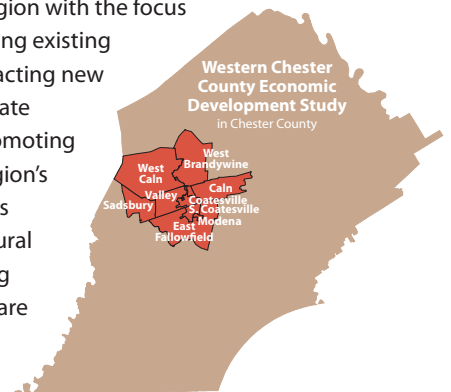
The townships of East Marlborough, West Marlborough, and Newlin adopted their first multi-municipal comprehensive plan in April 2011. The plan focuses on the protection of agriculture, open space, natural resources, and historic villages in the designated rural resources areas while mixed use and suburban development is targeted for growth areas. By working cooperatively on a regional basis, these three municipalities can more effectively coordinate and implement their planning goals for resource protection and future growth.



The study promotes economic development such as the High Corporate Park in Valley Township.

### Western Chester County Economic Development Study

The Western Chester County Region, which encompasses the Coatesville Area School District (CASD), completed a regional economic development study which was accepted by all of the participating municipalities in 2011. The Western Chester County Chamber of Commerce and the CASD were also active participants on the task force. The ultimate goal of the study was to provide an implementation and action plan to promote economic development in the region with the focus on retaining and growing existing businesses as well attracting new businesses to appropriate areas of the region. Promoting revitalization of the region's urban centers as well as supporting its agricultural industry and protecting the historic landscape are important elements of the plan.

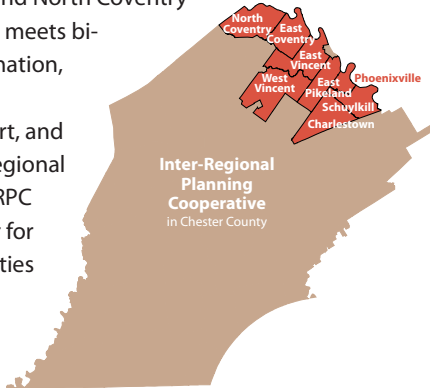




On October 25, 2011, county, state, and municipal officials dedicated a Chester County segment of the Schuylkill River Trail. Officials present include, from left: County Commissioner Ryan Costello, Spring City borough council president Louis DiGiuseppe, DCNR deputy secretary for administration John Giordano, County commissioner chair Terence Farrell, and county commissioner Kathi Cozzone. The dedication opens 5.6 miles of the recreational trail in the county, from Cromby northward to Parkerford.

### Inter-Regional Planning Cooperative

The Planning Commission continued to participate in the Inter-Regional Planning Cooperative or IRPC. The IRPC consists of representatives from five planning regions in Montgomery County and Chester County plus Montgomery County Planning Commission and Chester County Planning Commission staff members who meet on a regular basis to discuss issues relevant to regional planning. In total, the IRPC regions include 32 municipalities with a combined population of over 200,000. The two regions in the IRPC that include Chester County municipalities are the Phoenixville Region and the Pottstown Metropolitan Region (East Coventry and North Coventry are members). The IRPC meets bi-monthly to share information, identify areas of mutual cooperation and support, and promote the cause of regional planning. In 2011, the IRPC created an e-newsletter for the member municipalities to keep them informed of issues and planning activities of regional interest.



a different discussion topic related to housing diversity and affordability. They were:

- Low and moderate-income housing
- Homeless assistance
- Senior housing
- General occupancy rental
- Migrant/immigrant housing
- Housing rehabilitation
- Special needs/fair housing
- Redevelopment and infill
- Green affordable housing
- Workforce housing

One of the major ideas that came from the workshop discussions was the need to provide information to residents and municipal officials about the positive impact that moderately-priced housing options can have for a community. Providing a range of homeownership choices, as well as quality, affordable rental housing, helps to ensure that all members of the community have access to housing in decent condition that meets their needs. In 2012, the Planning Commission will work with members of the task force executive committee to develop a toolkit consisting of best practices and tools that reflect the ideas and strategies put forward by the task force in 2011.

### Planning for housing — Chester County Housing Options Task Force

The Chester County Housing Options Task Force, created as a priority action of Landscapes2, is comprised of representatives from government, non-profit, and private sector entities. Task force members have been meeting since December 2010 for the purpose of developing strategies for the removal of the barriers to affordable housing. In 2011, task force workshops occurred monthly from February through November and each featured



Representatives from government, non-profit, and private sector entities have been meeting for the purpose of developing strategies for the removal of the barriers to affordable housing.

## Protection Areas of National Significance

Landscapes2 recognizes protection areas of natural significance and supports the ongoing efforts to protect the important resources they contain. Preservation efforts are needed to keep these resources intact. The county will work with non-profits, the state, and the federal government to preserve and enhance these cherished resources.

### The Brandywine Battlefield Preservation Plan

The Battle of the Brandywine served as a watershed battle of the American Revolution. Located mostly in Chester County, the battle encompassed many properties that are at risk of being developed, losing the context of this important battlefield. Landscapes2 identifies the battlefield as a protection area of national significance.

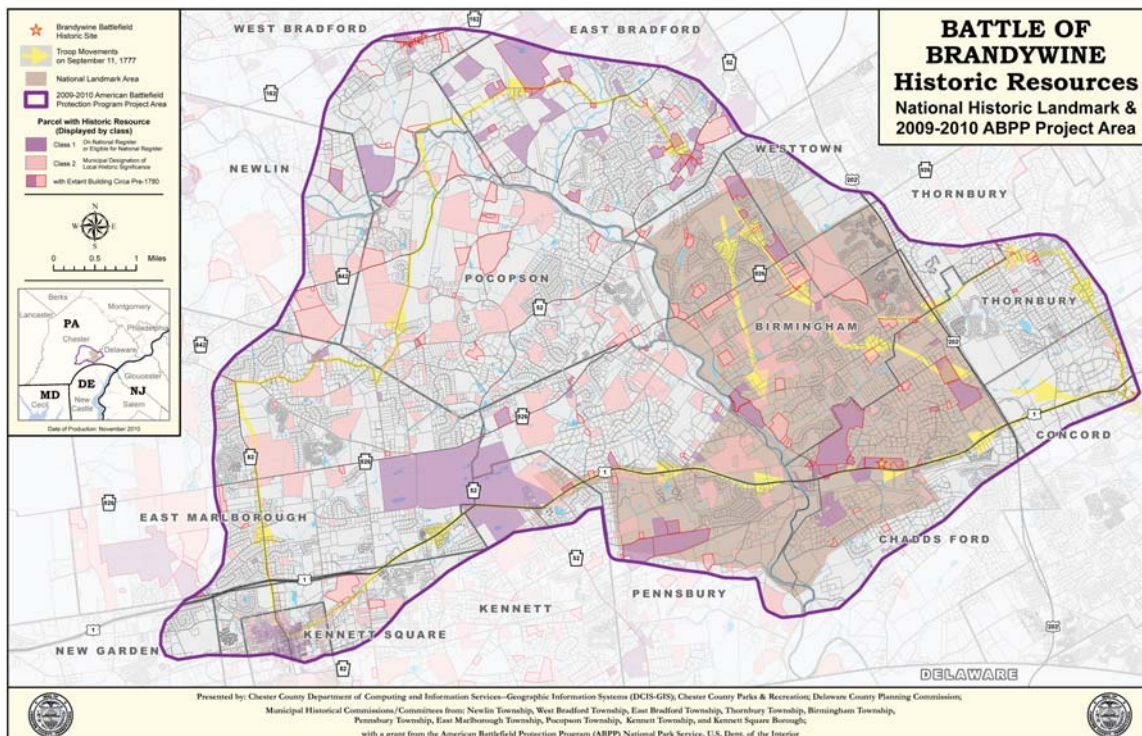
In January of 2011, Chester County was awarded a \$61,550 grant from the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) to complete a Battlefield Preservation Plan for the Brandywine Battlefield. This plan will address the conservation of significant landscapes, evaluate historic resources, examine public access and regional linkages, and consider various interpretive projects. A key product of this project will be GIS mapping of significant historic resources.

The study area includes 15 municipalities in the southern Brandywine Valley, including three in nearby Delaware County.

Work on this effort began in August of 2011 and will continue through 2012. During the fall, Planning Commission staff cooperated with the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to hold a well attended first public meeting on this project. Throughout the winter months, information and mapping was compiled regarding land use, and a draft of the land conservation chapter was completed. Two more public meetings will be held in the spring and summer of 2012 to obtain stakeholder input on mapping and plan recommendations.

### Brandywine Battlefield Task Force

The Brandywine Battlefield Task Force was founded in 1993 with the purpose of sharing information about the battlefield, identifying future projects/initiatives for preservation, and eliciting volunteer assistance to implement these projects. In 2011 and for FY 2012, the primary work item for the task force and the subject of task force meetings is public participation and input in the 2011–12 ABPP funded Brandywine Battlefield Preservation Plan. As of December 2011, task force members included all 15 municipalities, several state and U.S. senators and representatives, plus nearly 20 other organizations and interested parties. In January 2011, task force steering committee members presented a status update to the Planning Commission. In 2011 and continuing in 2012, the Planning Commission was re-elected to be the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force Chair.





From 1993 to 2010, the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force was chaired under state leadership, through the PA Historical and Museum Commission. Due to significant state budget constraints, task force chairmanship was handed over to the Planning Commission for local leadership in 2010, and in 2011 the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force underwent and completed reorganization. A part of this reorganization involved including the 15 municipalities (rather than only the previous six municipalities) as part of the task force after a 2010 ABPP funded study confirmed the battlefield encompassed a larger land area including parts of what is now the Chester County municipalities of Birmingham, Kennett, Pennsbury, Thornbury, Westtown, East Bradford, West Bradford, Pocopson, Newlin, East Marlborough, Kennett Square, and New Garden, and the Delaware County municipalities of Chadds Ford, Thornbury, and Concord.

## Improving the environment

The Planning Commission plays a role in the protection and conservation of natural resources, which are essential to the health, safety, and welfare of Chester County residents. The Planning Commission examines and lessens the negative impacts of land use and land development on natural resource systems through the review of proposed development activities. Environmental planning activities are 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 as a means of ensuring that wastewater is properly treated and disposed. Municipalities use these plans to regulate how new sewage facilities are established and where they are appropriate. These plans address public sewer systems, infill, and redevelopment projects, failing on-lot systems, and new land developments. Staff provides reviews of sewage facilities plans to determine their completeness and consistency with the goals and policies of Landscapes2 as a part of the overall approval system for sewage facilities planning.

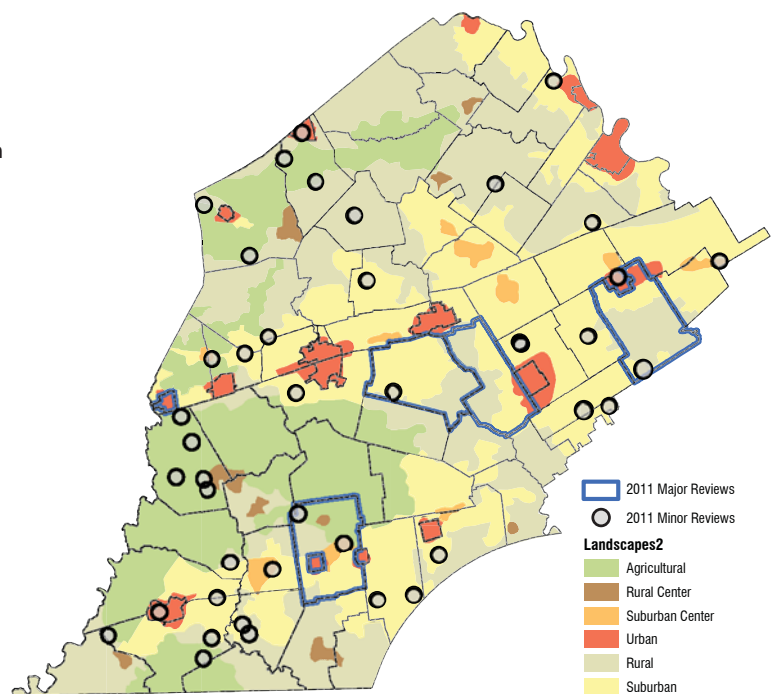
The Planning Commission experienced an increase in the number of municipalities updating their sewage facilities master

plans (Act 537 plans) in 2011. The Planning Commission conducted plan update reviews for the following municipalities:

- Atglen Borough
- East Bradford Township
- London Grove Township
- West Bradford Township
- Willistown Township

The Planning Commission also reviews sewage facility planning modules associated with most land development proposals and redevelopment projects. In 2011, 41 applications were reviewed, which was a decrease over the total number reviewed in 2010 (53 reviews). The percentage of applications that were consistent with Landscapes2 was 98 percent. The remaining applications were either generally consistent or inconsistent with the goals, objectives and policies of Landscapes2. The applications were located evenly throughout the county, and primarily were smaller-scaled in nature. Planning proposals are mapped monthly, and information is also available for the year to date. These maps can be found on the Planning Commission web page in the [map gallery](#).

### Act 537 Reviews for Chester County in 2011





Valley Creek in Tredyffrin Township.

### Managing stormwater more effectively

Poorly managed stormwater runoff is one of the main causes of stream impairment throughout Chester County. The purpose of comprehensive stormwater management is to accommodate planned growth, protect public safety, and maintains the natural hydrologic regime. Chester County Planning Commission has been working with the Water Resources Authority to help develop Act 167 Plans that strike a balance between smart growth and resource protection.

#### Valley Creek Watershed

The Valley Creek Stormwater Management Plan was completed in 2011 under the guidance of the Chester County Water Resources Authority. The Valley Creek watershed includes six Chester County municipalities: Charlestown, East Whiteland, Tredyffrin, Schuylkill, and Willistown Townships, and the Borough of Malvern. The Planning Commission continued to offer support in land use information, data gathering, and reviewing draft information. The plan was adopted by the Chester County commissioners, and was approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection on February 4, 2011. As is required, all municipalities within the watershed adopted the minimum standards that were set forth in the plan, as required by Act 167.

#### Crum Creek Watershed

Chester and Delaware Counties completed the Crum Creek Stormwater Management Plan and have submitted it to PA DEP for their final approval. Delaware County serves as the lead agency for this project which includes four municipalities in eastern Chester County (Tredyffrin Township, Easttown Township, Malvern Borough and Willistown Township) and 14 municipalities in western Delaware County. As required by the act, all municipalities within the watershed will have to adopt the minimum standards set forth in the plan.

### County-wide stormwater management planning

The Chester County Water Resources Authority has made significant progress in developing a county-wide stormwater management plan under Pennsylvania Act 167. The county-wide plan would cover all watersheds in Chester County that currently do not already have an approved Act 167 Plan in place, dated 2005 or more recent. It will help reduce future flooding impacts, as well as improving and protecting water quality. The second phase of the county-wide planning effort will provide a model stormwater ordinance and minimum standards and criteria. When the plan is completed, all municipalities will be required to adopt stormwater ordinance standards that are at least equivalent to the final minimum design standards set forth in the plan. In doing so, it will also assist municipalities in meeting some requirements of the NPDES MS4 program. The draft ordinance provisions and model ordinance will be further developed and finalized in Phase II.



# 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.



### Providing information on the web

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.

Accessing web-based data provided by the Planning Commission continues to grow with each passing year. The following activity occurred in 2011:

**Planning Commission**  
[www.chesco.org/planning](http://www.chesco.org/planning)  
129,075 visits

**Landscapes2 and Discover the Future**  
[www.Landscapes2.org](http://www.Landscapes2.org) and [www.ChescoPAgreen.org](http://www.ChescoPAgreen.org)  
69,946 visits

**Agriculture Development Council**  
[www.chesco.org/agdev](http://www.chesco.org/agdev)  
29,224 visits

### Improving access to publications

To reach the broadest audience and to provide easy access to information and data, the department's publications are now available in a number of electronic formats. Publications can be viewed in an electronic-book format which offers several user-friendly features including a table of contents for easy searching, and an eReader format for download to your eReader device. Documents are now accessed on the web at [www.chesco.org/planning](http://www.chesco.org/planning). These electronic formats allow information to be shared quickly, making news more relevant and contemporary.

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.chesco.org/planning/mapgallery](http://www.chesco.org/planning/mapgallery)

## Subscription services

The Planning Commission has established several forms of subscriber services for receiving planning-related information. This allows the subscriber to stay informed on planning-topics relevant to Chester County as they happen. These web systems include eSubscriptions, email list services subscriptions that allow the Planning Commission to email updates about planning issues and resources related to Chester County.



**eNewsletter:** The Planning Commission has created a monthly eNewsletter to inform the public about planning issues related to Landscapes2, Chester County’s comprehensive plan, as well as topics related to the implementation of Landscapes2, Discover the Future website [www.ChescoPAgreen.org](http://www.ChescoPAgreen.org) and related topics.

**ePublications:** The Planning Commission has created ePublications to notify interested readers when publications were available

online. ePublications highlighted new releases, special features, and links to the online publications.

You can sign up for these eSubscriptions on the Landscapes2 website. [www.Landscapes2.org/eSubscriptions.cfm](http://www.Landscapes2.org/eSubscriptions.cfm)

## Social networking

A key objective for 2011 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 more than 250 fans of the Planning Commission Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/ccplanning](http://www.facebook.com/ccplanning).



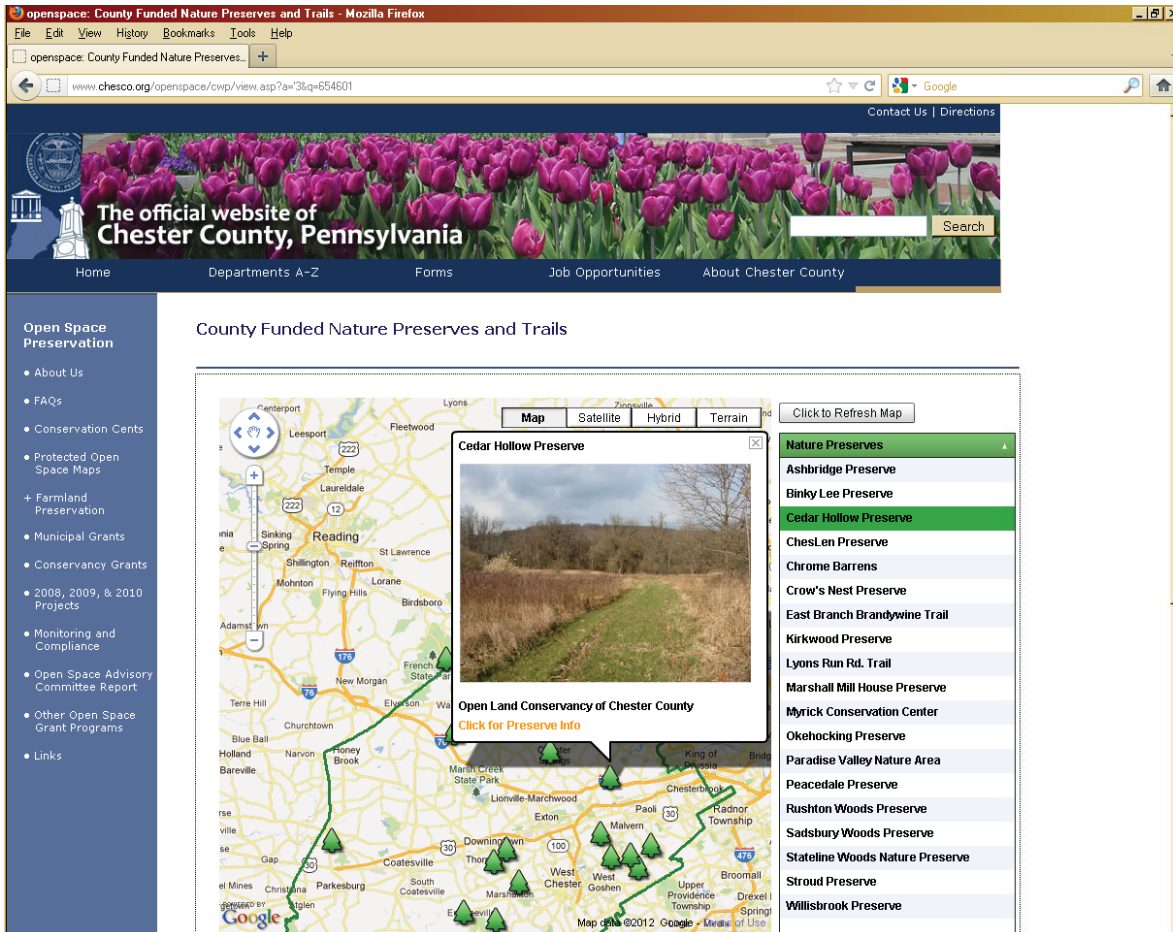
**Twitter:** The Planning Commission also has a Twitter page with over 250 followers. You can follow the Planning Commission @ChescoPlanning on Twitter. [www.twitter.com/ChescoPlanning](http://www.twitter.com/ChescoPlanning).



**Flickr:** The Planning Commission uses Flickr for hosting its photography inventory. This website allows anyone to access a wide range of photographic images related to Chester County. The Planning Commission has approximately 10,000 photographs publicly available. [www.flickr.com/ccpcphotography](http://www.flickr.com/ccpcphotography)







Click on map to link to source

## Providing interactive experiences

### County funded Nature Preserves Map

The Planning Commission created an interactive map application for the Department of Open Space Preservation that highlights the most significant county funded nature preserves and trails. This application was created to allow the public to view the preserves on an interactive map as well as pictures and links to other resources. [www.chesco.org/openspace/naturepreservemap](http://www.chesco.org/openspace/naturepreservemap).

### Illustrating landscape character using 3D modeling with Google SketchUp

The Planning Commission uses Google Sketch Up 3D modeling software to illustrate land uses contained in landscape elements in [www.ChescoPAgreen.org](http://www.ChescoPAgreen.org). This tool helps to visually demonstrate the relationship between different land uses such as residential, commercial, agricultural, institutional and natural areas, and demonstrates the transportation system that connects each of these areas. The use of this web-based tool helps visitors visualize

many of the planning concepts and opportunities covered in Landscapes2 and how those policies can be implemented in their local municipalities.

SketchUp software displays planning issues in 3D.



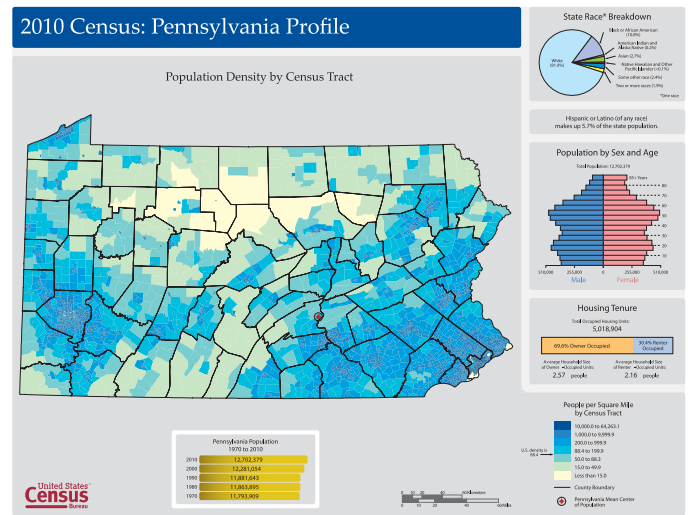
## Measuring trends

The Planning Commission tracks trends within the county as a means of providing relevant planning information to county agencies and the public to assist in their decision making. Noteworthy characteristics and trends for 2011 include:

- \$330,500** the median housing value of owner-occupied units in the county, the highest in the state and double the state median (\$165,500). Although housing values have decreased recently, they have remained substantially higher in the county than in 2000 when the median was \$182,500.
- 182,900** the number of occupied housing units in the county; 76% were owner-occupied and 24% were renter-occupied.
- \$84,284** the median household income in the county, the highest in the state. The median household income in the state was \$65,295 in 2000.
- \$2,126** the median monthly housing costs for homeowners with a mortgage; compared to \$1,500 in 2000. Median monthly gross rent was \$1,135 compared to \$750 in 2000.
- 91%** of people living in Chester County were U.S. natives, including 64% who were born in Pennsylvania. 9% of people living in Chester County were foreign born, of whom 49% entered the U.S. before 2000.
- 85%** of employed people were private sector wage and salary workers, 9% were government workers, and 6% were self-employed.
- 81%** of workers drove to work alone, 7% carpooled, 3% took public transportation, 4% used other means, and 6% worked at home. These percentages are nearly identical to those in 2000.
- 50%** of county residents 25 years and older held a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 43% in 2000. This was the highest percentage in the state.
- 27.3** minutes—the average time it took workers to get to work, nearly the same as it took in 2000.
- 3.6%** of all families in Chester County were in poverty, but 14% of families with a female householder with her related children under 18 years of age had incomes below the poverty level.

## Providing information

The Planning Commission disseminates a variety of planning-related information and analysis that can assist the county, its departments and the public in making informed decisions in a timely manner.



Click on map to link to source

## Census 2010 information

The results of the 2010 U.S. Census were released by the Census Bureau during 2011. The Planning Commission uses these data for its projects and provides the data to our partners, including municipalities, businesses and citizens. The decennial census count provides essential information for long-term planning. The detailed socio-economic characteristics formerly obtained from the "long form" are now collected by the American Community Survey.

The census, a snapshot of the population as of April 1, 2010, reported a total population of 498,886 in Chester County. This was an increase of 65,385 people since 2000, the largest increase of all 67 counties in Pennsylvania. The population is more diverse racially and ethnically than 10 years ago because of large percentage increases in the Asian and Hispanic populations. The census counted a total of 192,462 housing units in Chester County. This was an increase of 28,689 housing units since 2000. Of the total occupied housing units in 2010, 76 percent were owner-occupied and 24 percent were renter-occupied. For more census information, go to [census info](#).



### Community Profiles

The Planning Commission updated and converted the Community Profiles into an interactive data research tool. The Community Profiles were originally published in 2006 as a series of six books, each covering a different section of Chester County. The information is now available on Landscapes2.org as an online service.

The [Community Profiles Interactive Data Resource](#) provides information about the things that make Chester County a community — its people, housing, open space and development, transportation, economic development, government, and community facilities. The information is available at several levels of geography — county, community, school district, and municipality — to meet various user needs. The data are presented in tables of numbers and illustrated in maps and graphs to enhance user insight. Additional features of each area can be displayed on the interactive map, with links to web sites providing more information.

As an online application access to the Profiles will be expanded and data will be refreshed making the service even better than before.

### American Community Survey

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a continuous survey that provides updated socio-economic information about the nation's population every year. The ACS uses data gathered from a sample of the target population to represent the total population. The responses are used to derive estimates of the various socio-economic characteristics, providing detailed information on how the population lives. The ACS provides data relating to income, education, commuting to work, disability, employment, housing type, age of housing and much more.

### Landscapes2 Index

The Planning Commission calculated the revised Landscapes2 Index for the first time. The index, which measures progress toward reaching long-term goals, was adjusted to reflect the new Landscapes2 plan. New data for the 16 measures was compared to base year values established in 2010. The results showed there were changes within the individual measures, but no change in the overall index. The improvement in ten measures was offset by reductions in five measures, while one measure remained the same. Business activity and transportation had the most noticeable negative results. Short-term ups and downs are expected in the annual measures. The longer-term trends displayed over several years will provide a better barometer of progress and areas of concern.



2011 saw an increase in non-residential development proposals.

## Tracking housing trends

The Planning Commission provides information on housing trends in a variety of ways. The following reports were produced in 2011 and are available on the web.

### Housing Costs Profile

The number of sales of housing units continued to decline in Chester County. However, the median sales price rose for the first time in three years. These were the overall findings of the 2010 Housing Costs Profile published by the Planning Commission. Housing sales are tracked on an annual basis to monitor the housing market and provide an indicator of broader economic conditions. A total of 5,188 housing units were sold. The decrease of 4 percent from the previous year showed a leveling off in sales volume after several years with greater decreases. The median price rose to \$295,000, a 7 percent increase. Although the housing market is still weak, the profile gives an indication that it has stabilized.

### New Housing Units

The Planning Commission tabulates the number of new housing units added to the housing supply each year. The New Housing Units Planning Data Sheet identified 1,306 new units, continuing a downward trend in housing construction.

For the first time, the report included information about the density of the new housing units. The average density of all the new units, based on the acreage of the tax parcels, was 0.7 units per acre. The average density in the municipalities in the Landscapes2 growth areas, which have facilities to support higher density, was 1.6 units per acre. The Planning Commission will be able monitor the trend in housing density as it continues this measurement each year.

*The average density in growth areas was 1.6 units per acre.*



## Reflecting on proposed development in 2011

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.

Development activity in Chester County continued to reflect the national economy in 2011. Last year the ongoing decline in development activity reached historically low levels. The following trends in development applications were identified in 2011:

- 23%** decrease in number of lots/units proposed over the previous year with 194 plan submissions
- 1,678** lots/units proposed, involving 5,637 acres of land and 7 miles of new roads.
- 6.10** acres—the average area of proposed lot in 2011.
- 97%** of the submissions were consistent with Landscapes2.
- 46%** increase in structural square footage of proposed buildings, from 1,529,911 square feet in 2010 to 2,839,618 square feet in 2011.

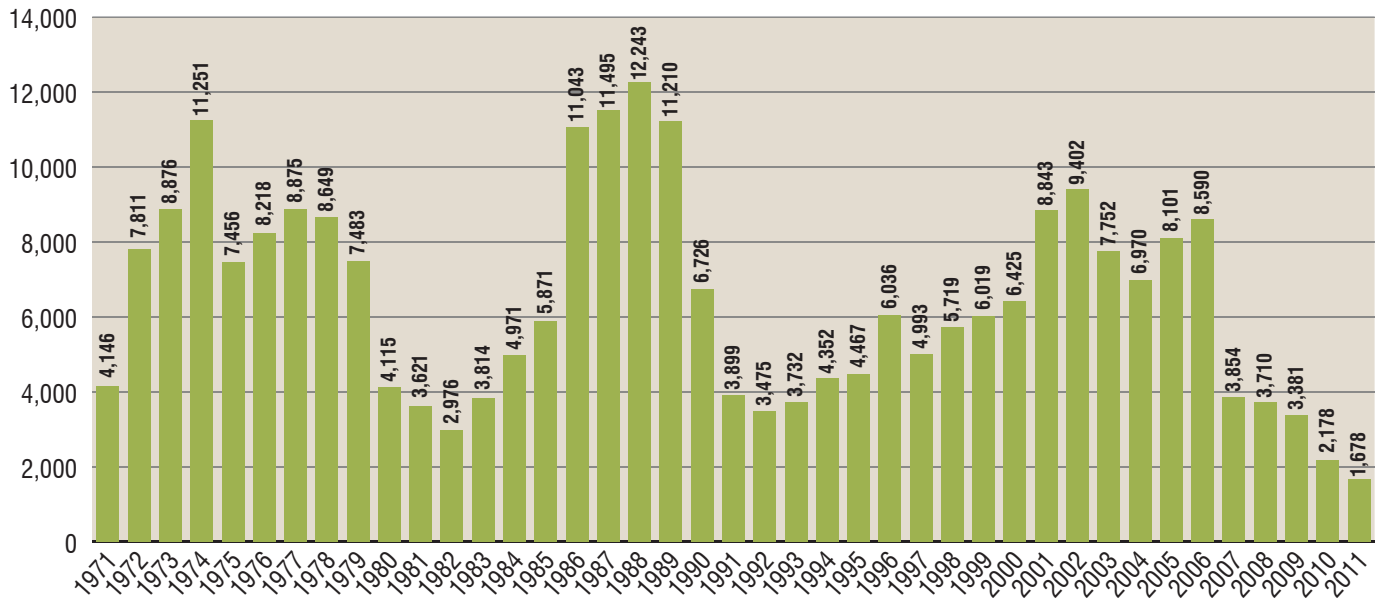
The following development proposals in urban centers demonstrated consistency with Landscapes2:

The **Shoppes at French Creek** land development in Phoenixville Borough is situated on east side of North Main Street, north side of Bridge Street and involves the construction of four mixed use buildings, an office building and a parking garage totaling 213,990 square feet on a 6.71 acre site.

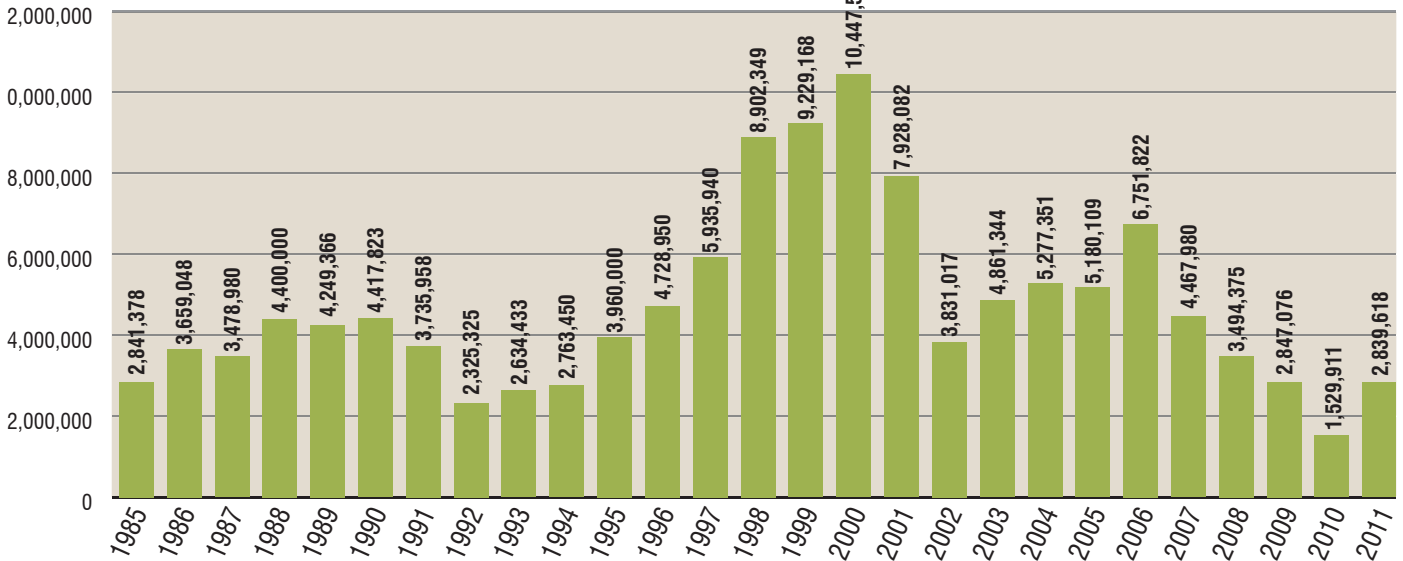
The **East King Street** land development plan in Malvern Borough is situated on north side of East King Road, west of the municipal boundary with Willistown Township and involves the construction of 238,455 square feet of residential and commercial area and 359 parking spaces on a 3.917 acre site.

The **220 Chestnut Associates Plan** in West Chester Borough involves the construction of a four-story 120 unit apartment building on a 1.29 acre site. The plan indicates that 247 parking spaces will be provided in two underground parking levels, accessible via a gated entrance onto East Chestnut Street.

Proposed lots/units: 1971–2011  
Chester County, PA



Proposed non-residential structural square footage: 1985–2011  
Chester County, PA



## Ordinance review activity increased in 2011

The other major review activity in the Act 247 Section relates to the review of municipal zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances, comprehensive plans, official maps and other miscellaneous documents. This review provides guidance to

municipalities concerning planning principles and consistency with Landscapes2. Reviews of subdivision and land development ordinances, comprehensive plans, official maps and miscellaneous documents were down slightly from the number reviewed in 2010, but the number of zoning ordinance amendments and ordinances reviewed in 2011 increased by 34 percent.

# 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.



### Advancing transportation improvement projects

The growing list of transportation projects in the county must be balanced against the limited amount of resources available. To effectively respond to this demand, the Planning Commission continues to maintain and prioritize an inventory of transportation needs to assist in setting priorities on where to focus transportation improvements.

#### **Inventorying transportation needs**

The Planning Commission prepared an update to the Transportation Improvement Inventory (TII) in 2011. The TII is a comprehensive record of known transportation needs within Chester County based on input from municipalities and other stakeholders. This inventory is used for coordination with planning partners and to help identify potential resources to implement priority transportation improvements. The TII is updated every two years. During the 2011 update process, the Planning Commission received input from 85 percent of Chester County municipalities and used specific criteria to evaluate and rank projects that are consistent with Chester County's Comprehensive Plan, Landscapes2, and DVRPC's Long Range Plan, Connections.

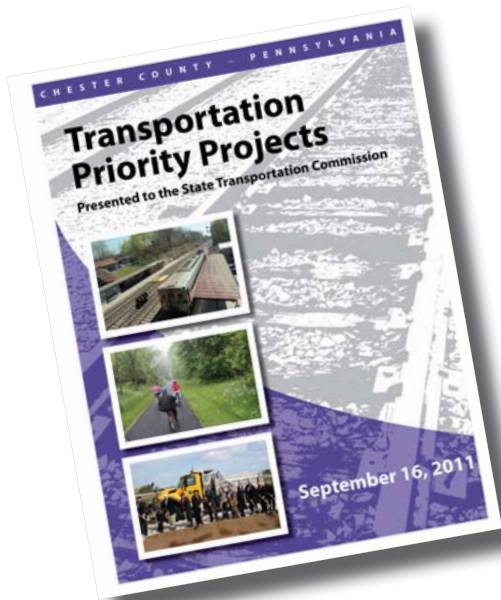
The 2011 TII includes 464 proposed roadway, bridge, bicycle and pedestrian, freight, and transit projects with a total estimated cost of \$5.4 billion. Since 2009, 39 projects are considered completed and 62 new projects were added to the TII based on input from municipalities and other stakeholders. The 2011 TII is available in list form by project type, municipality, and legislative district. There is also a county-wide map and six regional maps that show project locations.

#### **The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the regionally agreed-upon list of priority transportation projects. The TIP shows estimated costs and schedule by project phase and is financially constrained based on the amount of federal, state, and local funds that will be available for transportation projects in the region. The Planning Commission monitors and provides input on monthly TIP amendments and biennial TIP updates. The Planning Commission advocates for the appropriate funding levels and implementation schedules to address Chester County's transportation needs.

The FY2011 — FY2014 TIP for the five Pennsylvania counties in the Delaware Valley region includes almost 400 projects totaling over \$2.9 billion for the next four years. There are 60 projects in Chester County programmed with over \$390 million for the next four years. Based on the county's priority projects, the Planning Commission provided initial input for the update of the FY2013 — FY2016 TIP.

The adopted 2011 Transportation Improvements Inventory (TII) and the 2011 Transportation Priority Projects report are available on the Planning Commission's website at [www.chesco.org/planning/transportation](http://www.chesco.org/planning/transportation).



## Prioritizing transportation projects

Prioritizing transportation needs is particularly important due to the limited federal, state, and local resources for infrastructure improvements. The Planning Commission worked with elected officials and other stakeholders to identify and gain consensus on the most critical transportation projects. The list of 2011 Transportation Priority Projects was presented at the STC hearing in Philadelphia on September 16, 2011. The Planning Commission assisted in the preparation of oral testimony by Terence Farrell, Chester County Commissioner; Kathi Cozzone, Chester County Commissioner, Edward Simpson, Coatesville City Council; Jamie Bruton, Downingtown Borough Council; Michelle Kichline, Tredyffrin Township Supervisor; and Rob Henry, GVFTMA. In addition, the projects were presented in a report prepared by the Planning Commission that included letters of support from the Chester County Commissioners and Pennsylvania Senators and House Representatives from Chester County.

## Celebrating major project milestones

Planning Commission staff worked closely with project partners on the planning and design work necessary to implement the county's transportation priority projects. The Planning Commission joined project sponsors and partners in celebrating the following significant milestones for several priority projects in 2010:

- Construction beginning on US 202—Section 320 to widen and reconstruction US 202 from North Valley Road to Mill Lane.
- Construction beginning on the PA Turnpike Slip Ramps at PA 29.

- Completion of the Malvern Train Station parking improvements and pedestrian tunnel.
- Opening of the relocated PA 52 near Longwood Gardens.
- Opening of the Schuylkill River Trail — Phase 1 from Township Line Rd. to Parker's Ford.
- Opening bids for construction of Chester Valley Trail — Phase 2 from PA 29 to King of Prussia.

## Grant awards for transportation

Staff participated in the regional review and ranking of several transportation related federal and state grant programs, including Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom, and Transportation and Community Development (TCDI). Planning commission staff reviewed 49 applications and provided input in the regional grant selection process. In addition, the Planning Commission assisted project sponsors with the application process for the DVRPC/William Penn Regional Trails Grant, National Scenic Byways Grant Program, and Automated Red Light Enforcement Program. Planning Commission involvement in these programs led to \$3.2 million in grant funding awards and over \$1 million in matching funds for 17 transportation plans, improvement projects, and transit services in Chester County.

## Coordinating transportation partners

Coordination of stakeholders on a regional level is an essential element of planning, particularly transportation planning. The Planning Commission staff coordinated regularly through technical assistance with the general public, municipalities, legislators, and agencies on many transportation projects, studies, and initiatives throughout Chester County and the Delaware Valley region.

*A meeting of the Central Chester County Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan advisory committee.*





*Pedestrian and handicapped access, in addition to parking have been improved at the Malvern station of the Paoli—Thorndale rail line recently.*

The Planning Commission provided technical feedback and comments on many local and regional transportation studies. In 2011, these studies included the Baltimore Pike Corridor Study, Boosting the Bus along West Chester Pike, 422 Tolling and Revenue Study, and Wawa to West Chester Regional Rail Ridership Forecast. Planning Commission staff also continued to serve as the coordinator of the Route 30 Incident Management Task Force, which brings together emergency responders and transportation professionals to reduce traffic impacts from accidents.

### **Focusing on walking and biking**

As part of the Landscapes2 update process, the Planning Commission learned that Chester County residents want more opportunities to walk and bike. As a result, Landscapes2 included focused action items related to planning for bicyclists and pedestrians. As a first step, the Planning Commission initiated the Central Chester County Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan in fall 2011. The project is funded with an \$85,000 grant from PennDOT through the Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative Program (PCTI) and \$46,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Health through the Safe and Healthy Communities Grant. The project involves development of a bicycle and pedestrian plan for seven municipalities including Downingtown, East Bradford, East Caln, East Goshen, West Chester, West Goshen, and West Whiteland. The plan will recommend ways to connect Exton, Downingtown, and West Chester and transform those centers into pedestrian, bicycle, and transit-friendly communities.

Also in 2011, the Planning Commission partnered with PennDOT and TMACC to host a Smart Transportation Workshop. Over 130 planners, engineers, municipal, and agency representatives attended the workshop and learned how to apply Smart Transportation in the planning and design of transportation improvement projects. Chester County case studies were used to highlight how to plan new roadway connections, retrofit sidewalks, and plan for multi-use trails.

### **Rail station projects — on the right track**

The Planning Commission continued to provide technical assistance for several station improvement projects along the Amtrak Keystone Corridor/SEPTA Paoli—Thorndale rail line. Several of the station projects are part of a larger PennDOT planning effort called “Plan the Keystone,” to enhance transit service and strengthen the communities served by the Keystone Line. In 2011, Planning Commission staff participated in interactive community planning workshops for the Parkesburg and Downingtown Stations. Additionally, staff continued to work closely with PennDOT, Amtrak, SEPTA, and municipal representatives to advance design of the Paoli and Coatesville Station projects. Finally, the Planning Commission initiated the Atglen Station Concept Plan with a \$48,000 grant from DVRPC’s FY12 Work Program. The Atglen Station Concept Plan along with the station improvement projects in Coatesville and Parkesburg are critical steps towards restoring SEPTA service on the Paoli/Thorndale line.



*Construction has begun on US 202—Section 320 to widen and reconstruct from North Valley Road to Mill Lane.*





Planning is an essential step in making the county and our municipalities economically and environmentally sustainable.

The Board of County Commissioners for Chester County recognize how important it is that agencies such as the Chester County Planning Commission report to you, the residents and taxpayers of Chester County, on how effectively real results are being achieved.

For that purpose the Board of County Commissioners has adopted a strategic plan that contains goals for measurable results. In turn, the Chester County Planning Commission has developed a strategic business plan which allows us to measure results that are keyed to the county commissioner's strategic goals.

This annual report is organized around the Planning Commission's strategic business plan and the activities that form that plan. In the preceding pages you have read about how the Planning Commission has marshaled its resources to bring about measurable change.

But this is not just a story about where we have been — a mere report on things done and past. It is also a story on how we are working to be even more effective, accessible and relevant in the future. For instance:

- In years past the Planning Commission organized a public meeting where information was shared with residents and business owners — and we might have had fifty or more people attend. Today, we produce plans and documents and post them on our websites and 5,000 people download and utilize the material.
- We have transitioned from printing plans, maps and documents available for sale at our office to making new plans and publications available as web-based products that can be downloaded directly by a user anywhere — and without having to make a trip to county offices to obtain copies.
- Our photographic files, once a series of photograph negatives in filing cabinets that were only searched and used by members of staff, are now available online with more than 3,000 digital images of Chester County available for use by residents, students, and businesses.

- Proposed subdivision and land development reviews, once reviewed and then stored in paper files are now digitized and maintained in an electronic e-filing system, and records can be located and retrieved in a matter of seconds.

The Chester County Planning Commission is constantly looking for ways that we can perform our services more efficiently and in ways that make our services more meaningful to a greater number of people. More importantly, we are striving, through high-quality professional planning, to make Chester County an even better place to live, work and play — and that's what planning is really all about!

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

Ronald T. Bailey, AICP  
Executive Director





**Chester County Planning Commission**

601 Westtown Road • Suite 270

P.O. Box 2747

West Chester, PA 19380-0990

**Phone**

610-344-6285

**Fax**

610-344-6515

**Web**

[www.chesco.org/planning](http://www.chesco.org/planning)

[www.Landscapes2.org](http://www.Landscapes2.org)

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

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