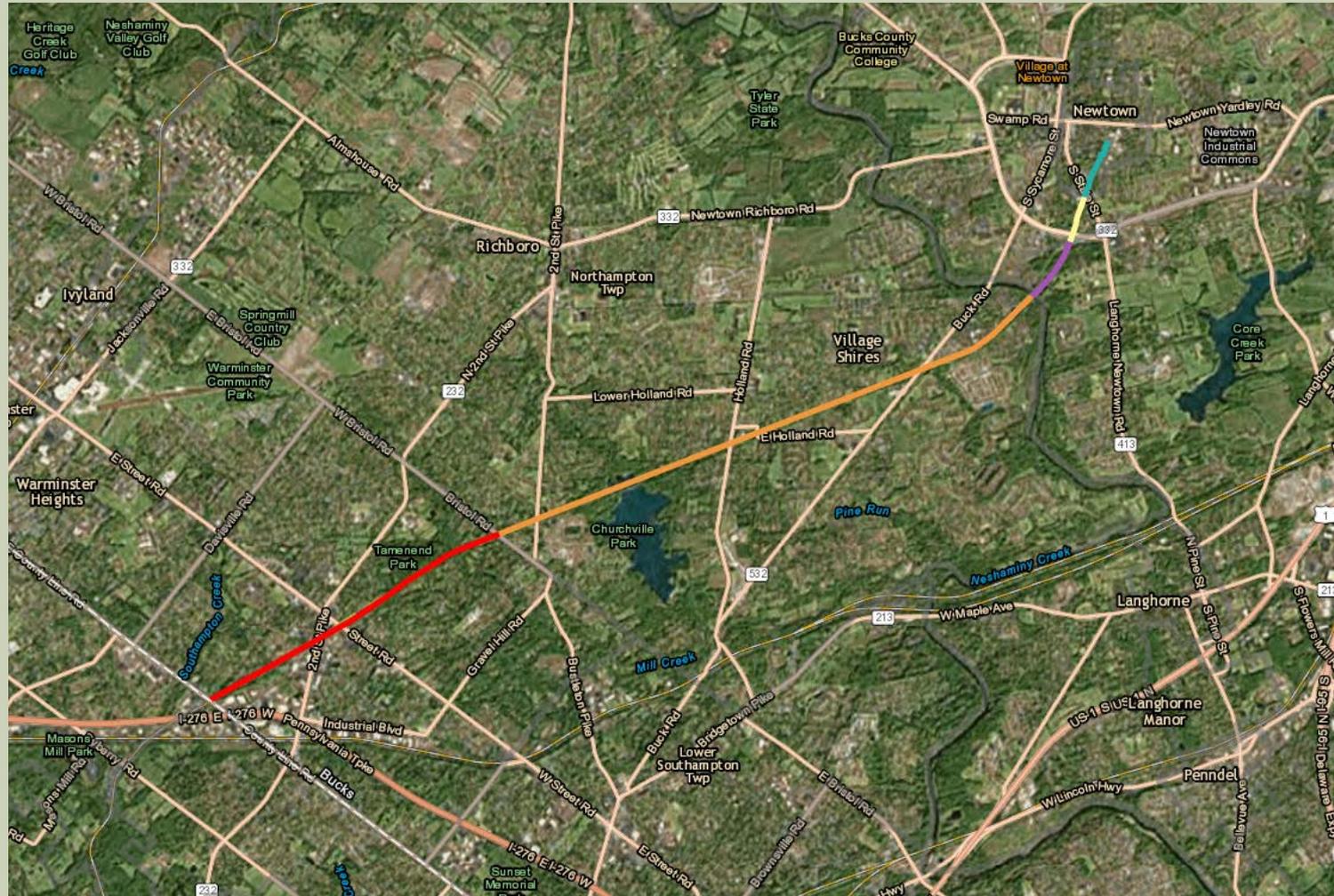


NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL



NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL

- **What is the history of the Newtown Rail Line?**
- **Why a trail and why this particular trail?**
- **What about potential crime?**
- **What is being proposed?**
- **Are there similar projects in the Philadelphia area?**
- **What will it cost and who will fund it?**
- **What's next?**



NEWTOWN RAIL LINE HISTORY

- 1878** Pennsylvania Railroad opens Philadelphia, Newtown, New York line
- 1983** SEPTA ends service along the line past Fox Chase station
- 2005** Bus Rapid Transit Line study determined that this was not a viable option due to infrastructure upgrades needed and long commute times
- 2008** SEPTA signs 30-year rail-bank lease with Montgomery County

NEWTOWN RAIL LINE HISTORY

- 2009
- SEPTA Board action removed the plan and funding for restoring the R8 Line from the *Capital Plan and Program*
 - First section of Pennypack Trail opens in Montgomery County
- 2010
- Newtown Jointure Comprehensive Plan* recommend using the greenway along the SEPTA right-of-way for pedestrian and bicycle use
 - Upper Southampton Township Comprehensive Plan* suggests the Township:
 - Consider adaptive reuse of the rail corridor for Rails-to-Trails usage
 - Establish a park connector between Tamanend Park along the rail corridor to the commercial district at Knowles Avenue & Second Street Pike
 - Make use of the rails-to-trails linkage for reducing traffic and serving as an economic revitalization tool

NEWTOWN RAIL LINE HISTORY

- 2015**
- Bucks County Commissioners indicate their support for the Newtown Rail Trail**
- Bucks County begins outreach efforts to municipalities:**
- **May 5 - Upper Southampton Township signs resolution of support**
 - **Jul 9 - Funding received from Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission to fund design/engineering of Upper Southampton Township segment**
 - **Aug 10 - Discussions with Middletown Township**
 - **Sep 8 - Presentation made to Newtown Borough Council**
 - **Sep 23 - Presentation made to George School**
 - **Sep 24 - Presentation made to Newtown Township Board of Supervisors**

 - **Sep 18 - Montgomery County extends the Pennypack Trail north to Byberry Road with ongoing planning to extend to County Line Road**

WHY A TRAIL?

Benefits of Trails:

- **Recreational benefits** including safe walking and biking routes and increased access to nature study and bird watching
- **Environmental benefits** such as reducing the need to drive, encouraging the removal/management of invasive plants and improving stormwater management as part of trail development
- **Quality of Life benefits** including encouraging physical activity, aids in developing a sense of community centered around usage and volunteerism in maintaining the trail
- **Economic benefits** derived from users of trails spending money at local businesses and increased real estate values

WHY A TRAIL?

■ Improved Bicyclist & Pedestrian Safety

■ National (<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov>)

- 4,700 pedestrians are killed each year
- 66,000 pedestrians are injured each year

■ Pennsylvania (<ftp://ftp.dot.state.pa.us/public/Bureaus/HighwaySafety>)

- 2014: Traffic crashes involving bicycles and pedestrians accounted for **4.4%** of all crashes but represented **6.6%** of all injuries and **15.5%** of all deaths.

■ Bucks County (<ftp://ftp.dot.state.pa.us/public/Bureaus/HighwaySafety>)

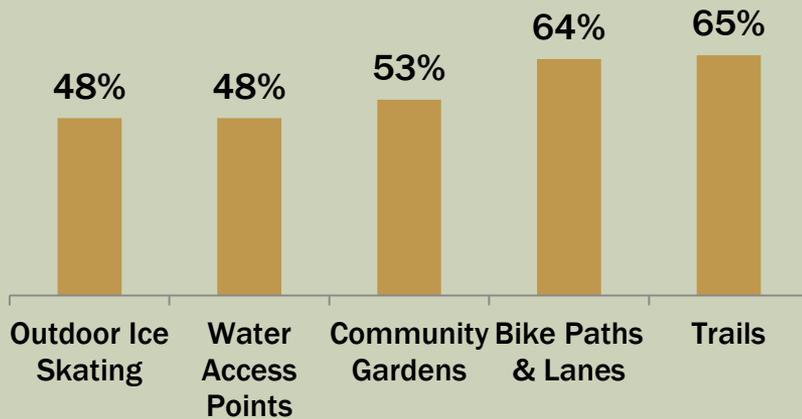
- 2014: **8** pedestrians were killed in traffic accidents, **18.2%** of all traffic deaths (44)
- 2010–2014: **42** pedestrian deaths occurred representing **16.2%** of all traffic deaths (259)
- 2014: **74** pedestrians were injured in traffic crashes

WHY A TRAIL?

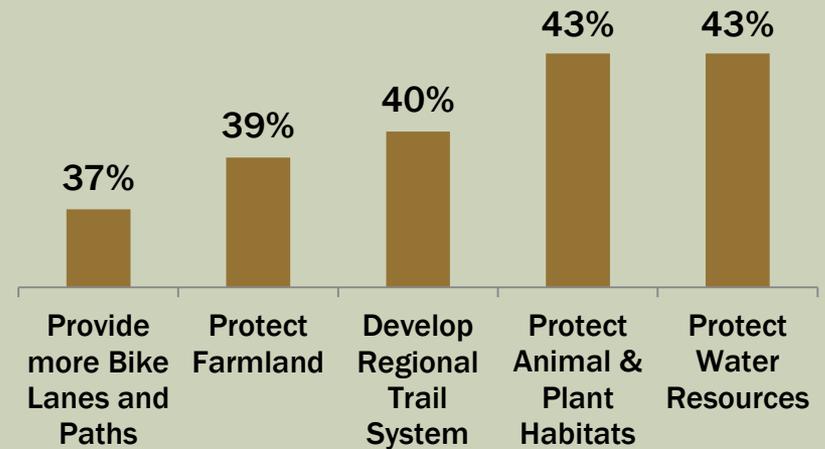
Bucks County Open Space & Greenways Plan

What types of recreational facilities do we need more of in the County? (Top 5 responses)

Percent of responders



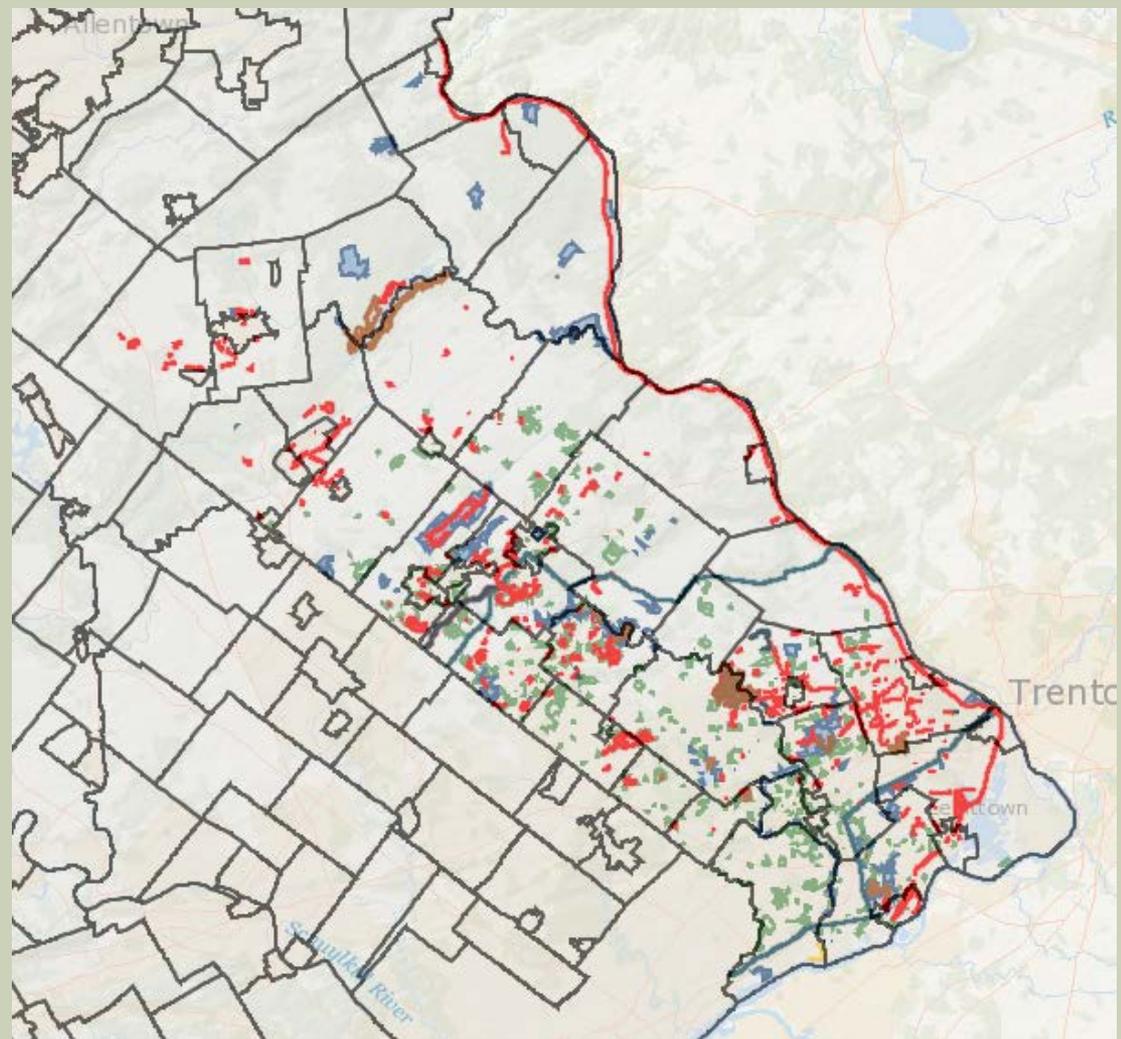
What should be the top priorities for the county relative to parks, open space and natural resources? (Top 5 responses)



WHY THIS PARTICULAR TRAIL?

Conversion of the Newtown Rail Line into a trail would play a role in connecting trails and provide a long-distance trail option

- With the exception of the Delaware Canal Towpath trail, there are limited long-distance trails
- Fragmented trails network primarily in the form of trails located within municipal, county and state parks



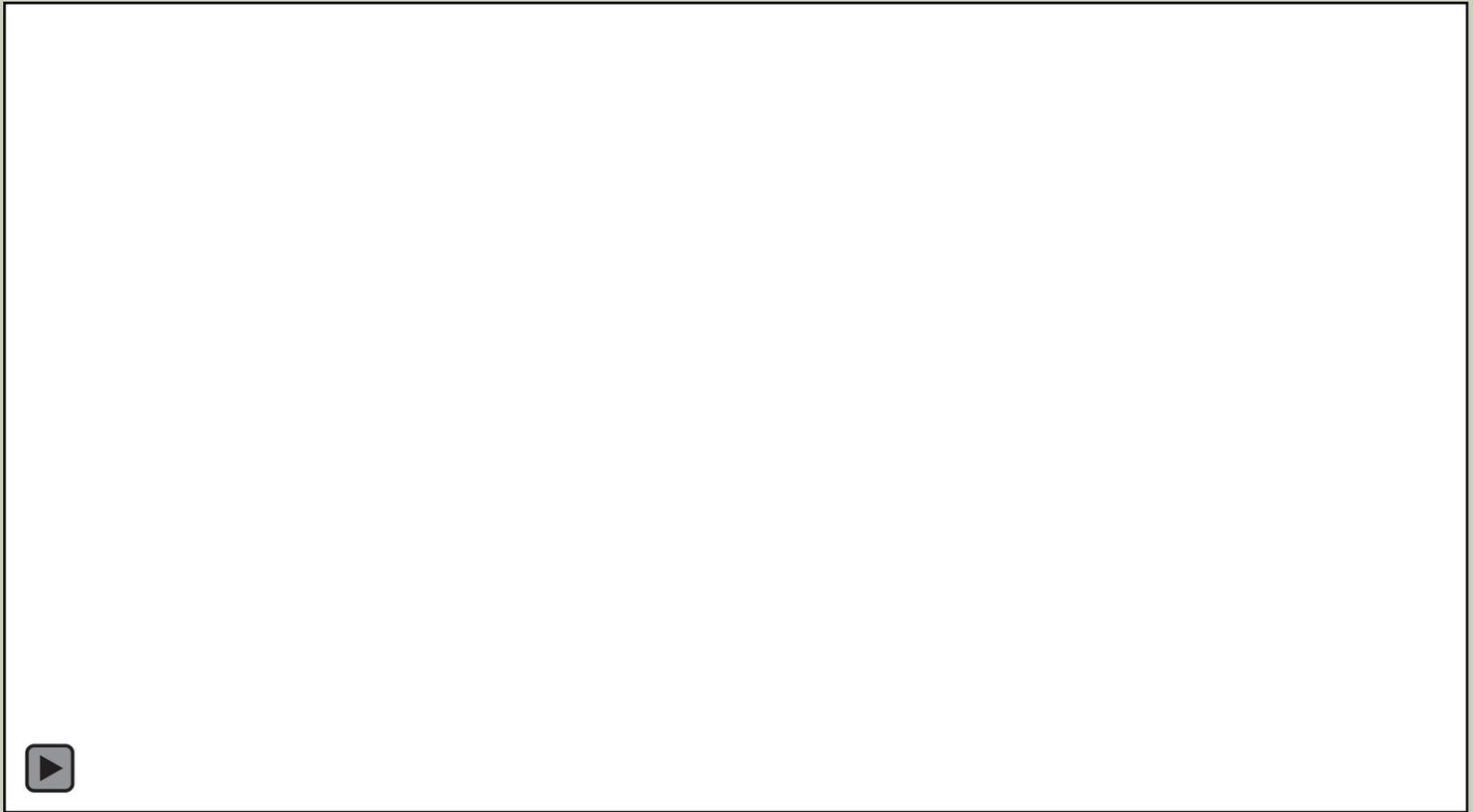
THE CIRCUIT

The Circuit:

- Proposed 750-mile trail network throughout the region:
 - 300 miles complete
 - 50 miles in progress
 - 400 miles in planning
- Trails in Bucks County as part of the Circuit:
 - **Newtown Rail Trail**
 - Neshaminy Creek Trail
 - Route 202 Parkway Trail
 - Doylestown to New Hope bike route
 - Liberty Bell Trail
 - East Coast Greenway



THE CIRCUIT



Click on white box to access video

WHAT ABOUT POTENTIAL CRIME?

Although trails are not immune from crime, they don't attract crime and typically have crime rates less than or equal to surrounding areas

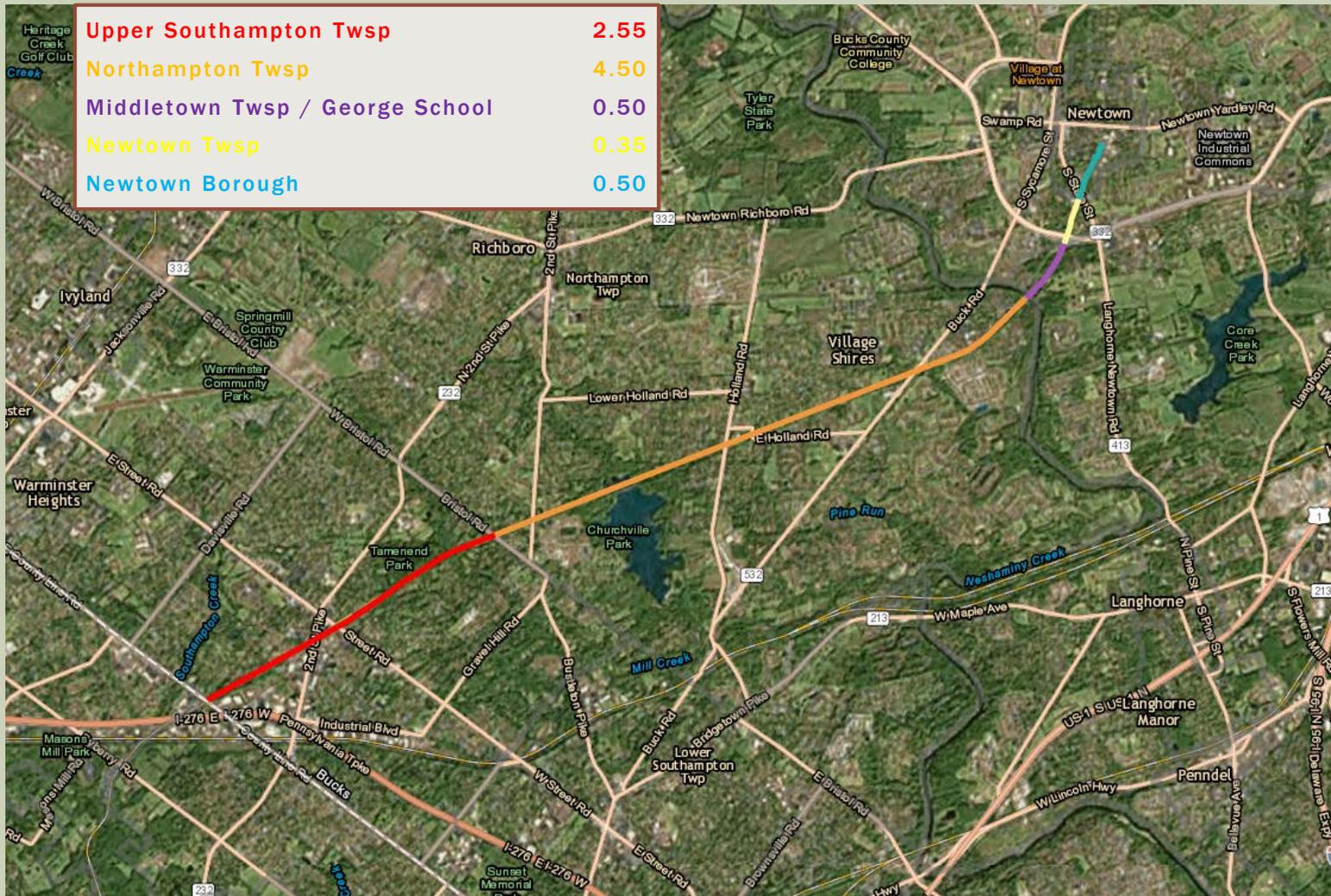
Study	Findings relative to properties adjacent to Trail
Buncombe County, NC	Crime was half that of surrounding district
Mecklenberg County, NC	Crime rates were lower 75% of time versus neighborhood statistical area
Pinellas, FL	Crime rates no different than other areas of county
Omaha, NE	Of owners along the trail, 4.0% reported a theft of some sort and 4.7% some property damage
Denver, CO	Only one resident interviewed reported any crime, and none of the officers believed trails had any effect on public safety
Indiana Trails Study	4 of the 5 trails studied reported no burglaries
Rail-Trails and Safe Communities 372 trails / 82 suburban rail-trails	Crime rates for both personal and property crimes were significantly lower than corresponding national averages

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

- Conversion of the 8.4 mile former SEPTA Newtown R8 line into a multi-use recreational trail
- Surface – Asphalt or crushed stone, although other surfaces may also be considered in certain areas



WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?



NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL UPPER SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP



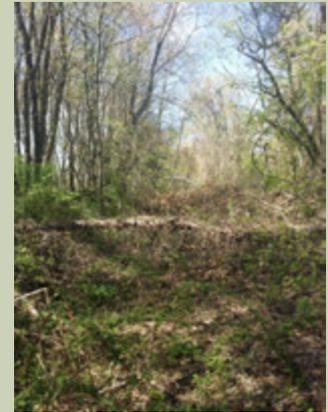
NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL UPPER SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP



Beginning of rail ROW at County Line Road



**Rail corridor behind Buckstone Drive
near Woodhaven Drive**



**Behind houses located at
end of Buckstone Drive**



Behind houses located on Nicole Drive



NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL UPPER SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP



Intersection crossing at Second St Pike



Trailhead Parking at Southampton Station



**Right-of-way from Southampton
Station to Street Road Bridge**



Street Road Bridge underpass

NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL UPPER SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP



Looking up to townhouse located on Ennis Court



Right-of-way between Cherry Lane (L)
and Ennis Court (R)



Behind houses on Cherry Lane



NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL UPPER SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP



Area near Carlin Drive



NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL UPPER SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP



Tamanend Park (L) / Churchville Rd (R)



Railroad ROW along Tamanend Park & Churchville Road

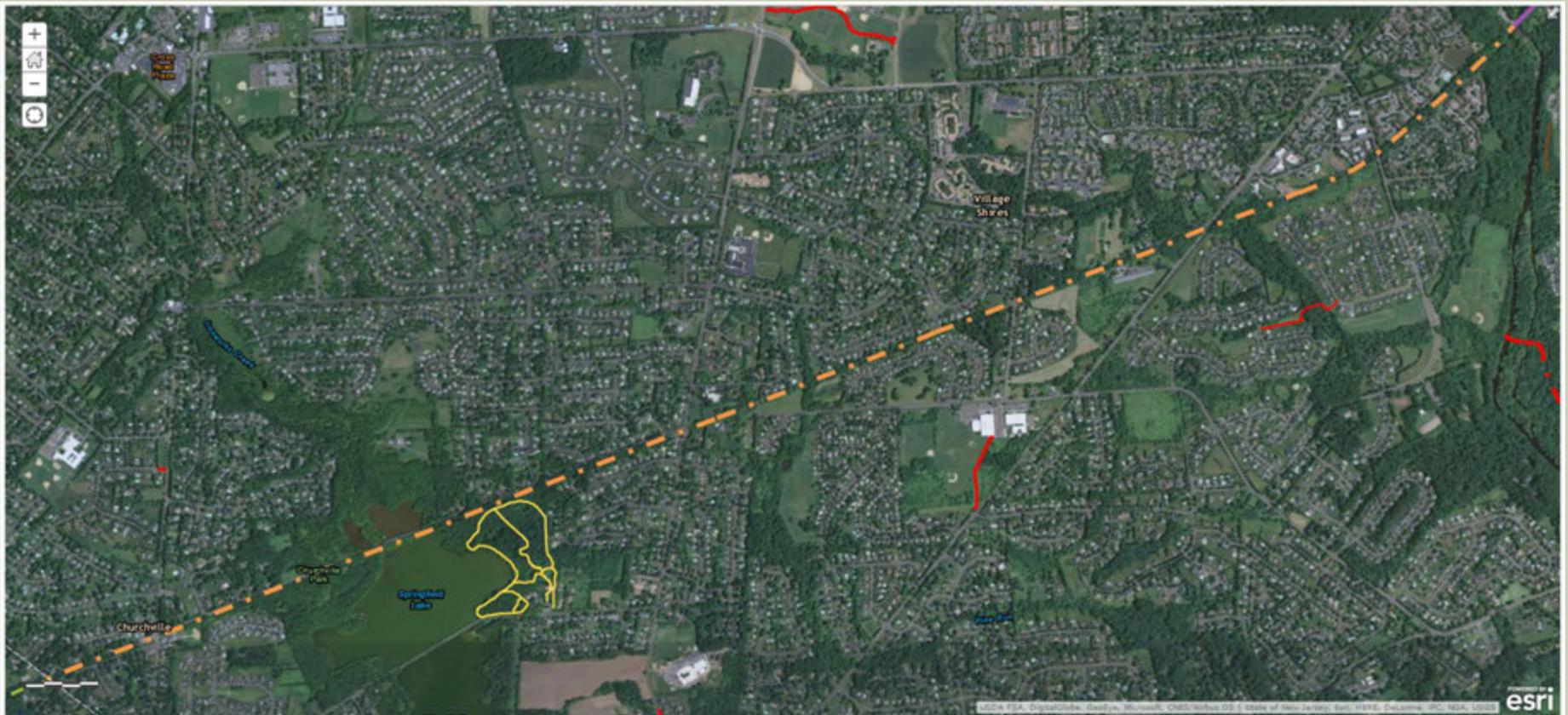
Mill Creek at
Strahmann
Road viewed
from railbed



End of proposed trail at Bristol Road

NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP

The Northampton Township segment of the rail trail extends 4.5 miles from Bristol Road to the bridge over the Neshaminy Creek



NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL

MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP / GEORGE SCHOOL

The Middletown Township / George School segment of the SEPTA-owned right-of-way extends 0.5 miles from the bridge over the Neshaminy Creek to the Middletown Township / Newtown Township line at Freedom Drive



NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL

MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP / GEORGE SCHOOL

The current route into Newtown Borough, while adequate for pedestrians, is not suitable for bicyclists

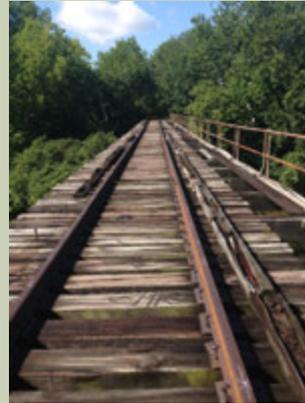


NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL

MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP / GEORGE SCHOOL



Existing bridge over Neshaminy Creek with rope



Dangerous conditions on Existing bridge with ties missing



Proximity of rail corridor to perimeter road around campus



Steep slopes from rail corridor down to dry pond

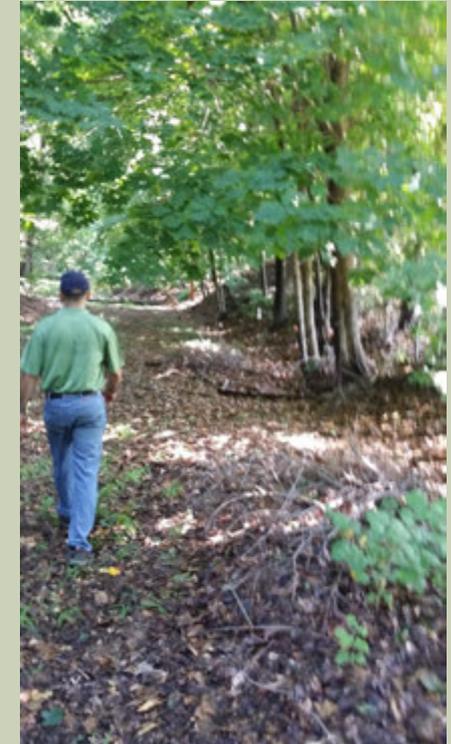


NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL

MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP / GEORGE SCHOOL



View of rail corridor from Neshaminy Creek Bridge toward access road to creek and cross country trails



Views along rail corridor showing the area in which the trail would potentially be located

NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL

MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP / GEORGE SCHOOL



Steep bank behind PennDOT facility



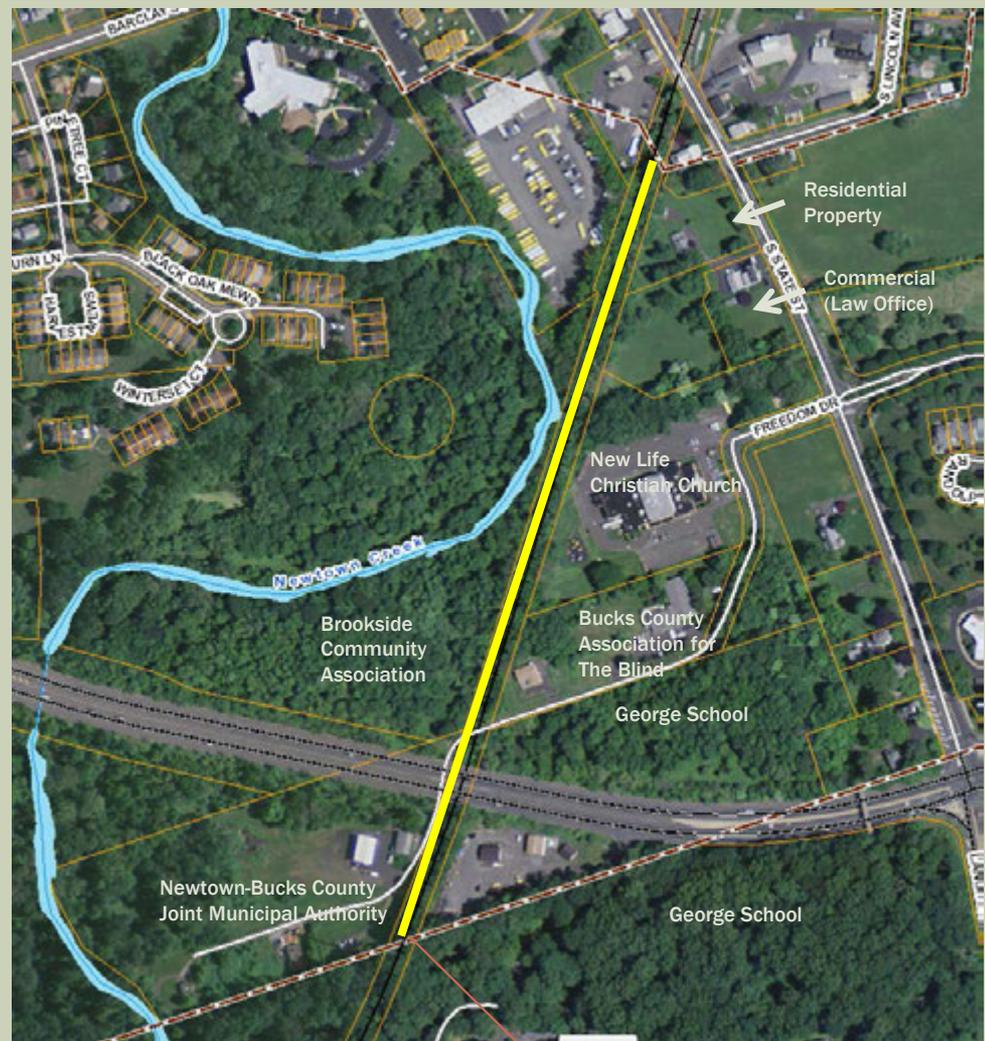
Freedom Drive on left under Newtown bypass



Rail corridor under Newtown Bypass

NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP

The Newtown Township segment of the SEPTA-owned right-of-way extends 0.35 miles from the Middletown Township/Newtown Township line at Freedom Drive, to the Newtown Township/Newtown Borough line approaching South State Street.



NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP

Newtown Township possible connections to the Newtown Rail Trail:

- Newtown Gate via crossing at South State Street / Freedom Drive
- Newtown Estates via connection to Sterling Street or Newtown Gate
- Newtown Place, Brookside, Carl Sedia Park and Chandler Fields via Barclay Street



NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP



Existing rails between
Freedom Drive and
PennDOT facility on hill



Existing erosion on hill behind PennDOT facility



End of Freedom Drive at former wastewater treatment plant



Right-of-way under Newtown Bypass
bridge looking south. Freedom Drive
is to the right.

NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP



**View from behind Newtown Artesian
Water Company looking south toward
Newtown Bypass**



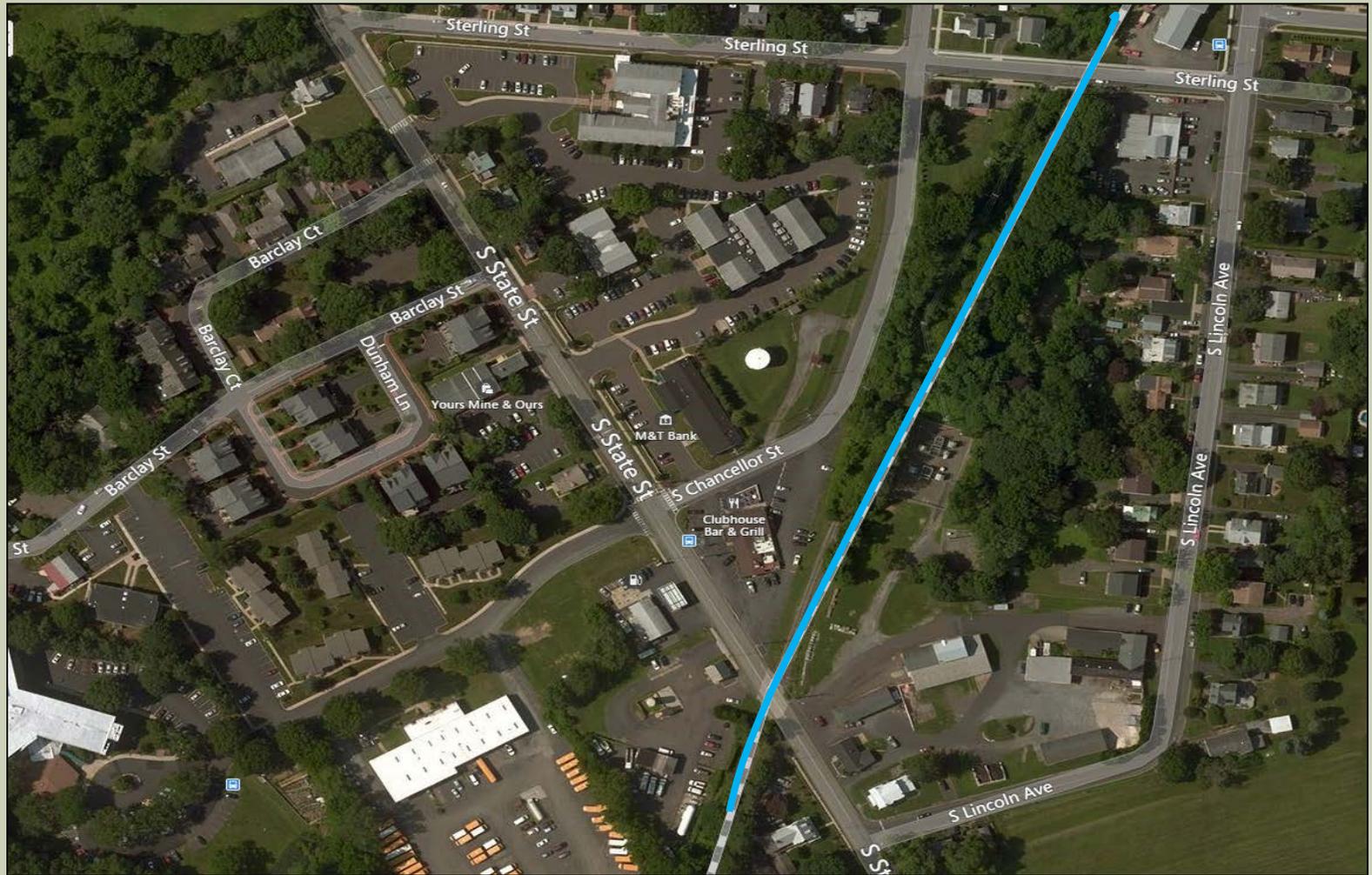
**Potential trail head parking area along
Freedom Drive**



**View from South State Street looking south
toward Newtown Township**

NEWTOWN BOROUGH RAIL TRAIL

MUNICIPAL BORDER TO STERLING STREET (0.23 MILES)

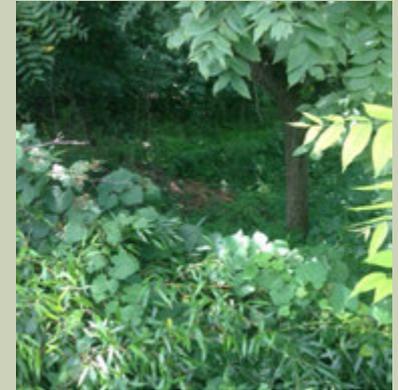


NEWTOWN BOROUGH RAIL TRAIL

MUNICIPAL BORDER TO STERLING STREET (0.23 MILES)

Engineering Challenges

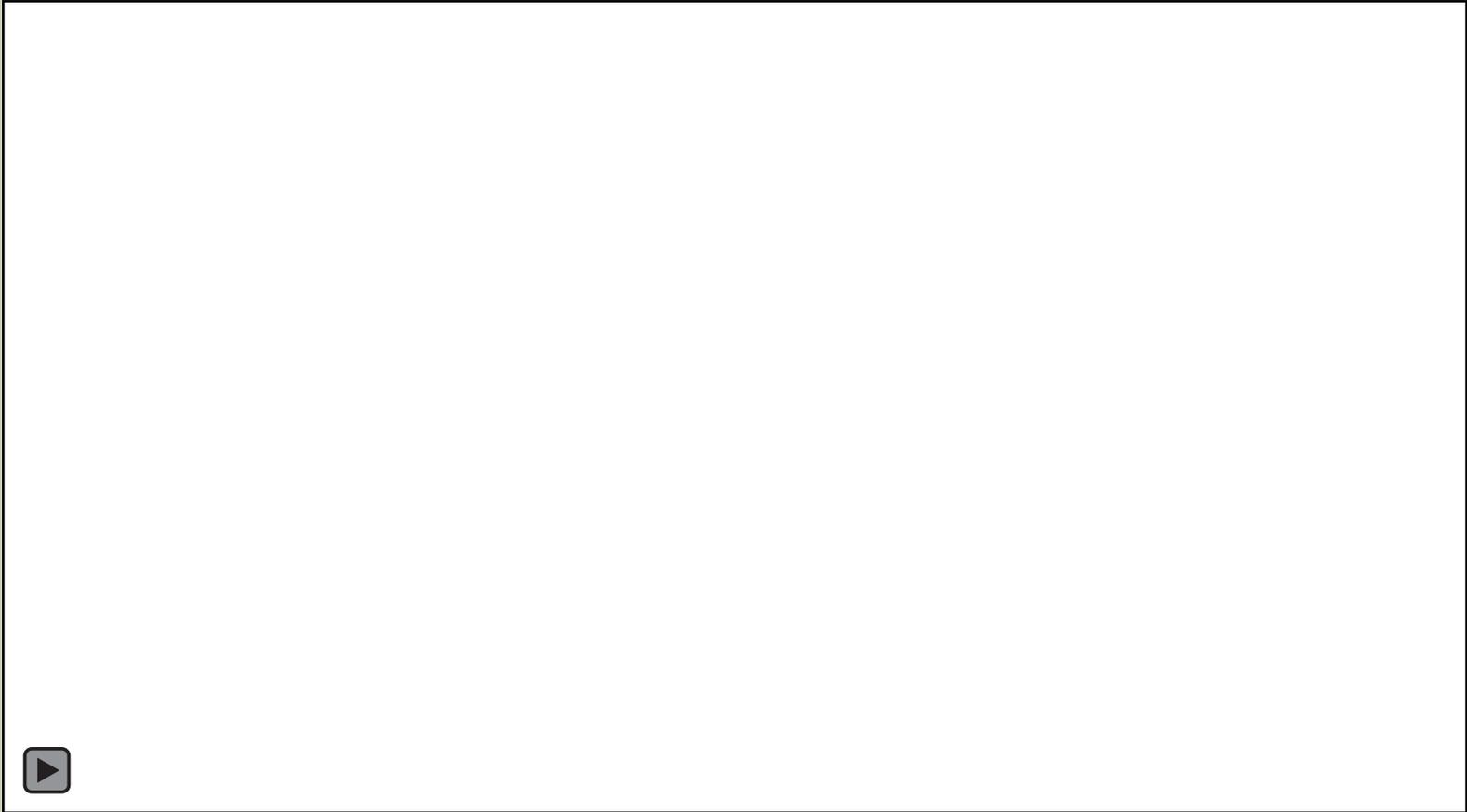
- One road crossing at South State Street
- Need to elevate former rail bed up to Sterling Street level as you approach Sterling Street from South Lincoln Avenue



Source of Photo:
Newtown Branch
Preservation Foundation

NEWTOWN BOROUGH RAIL TRAIL

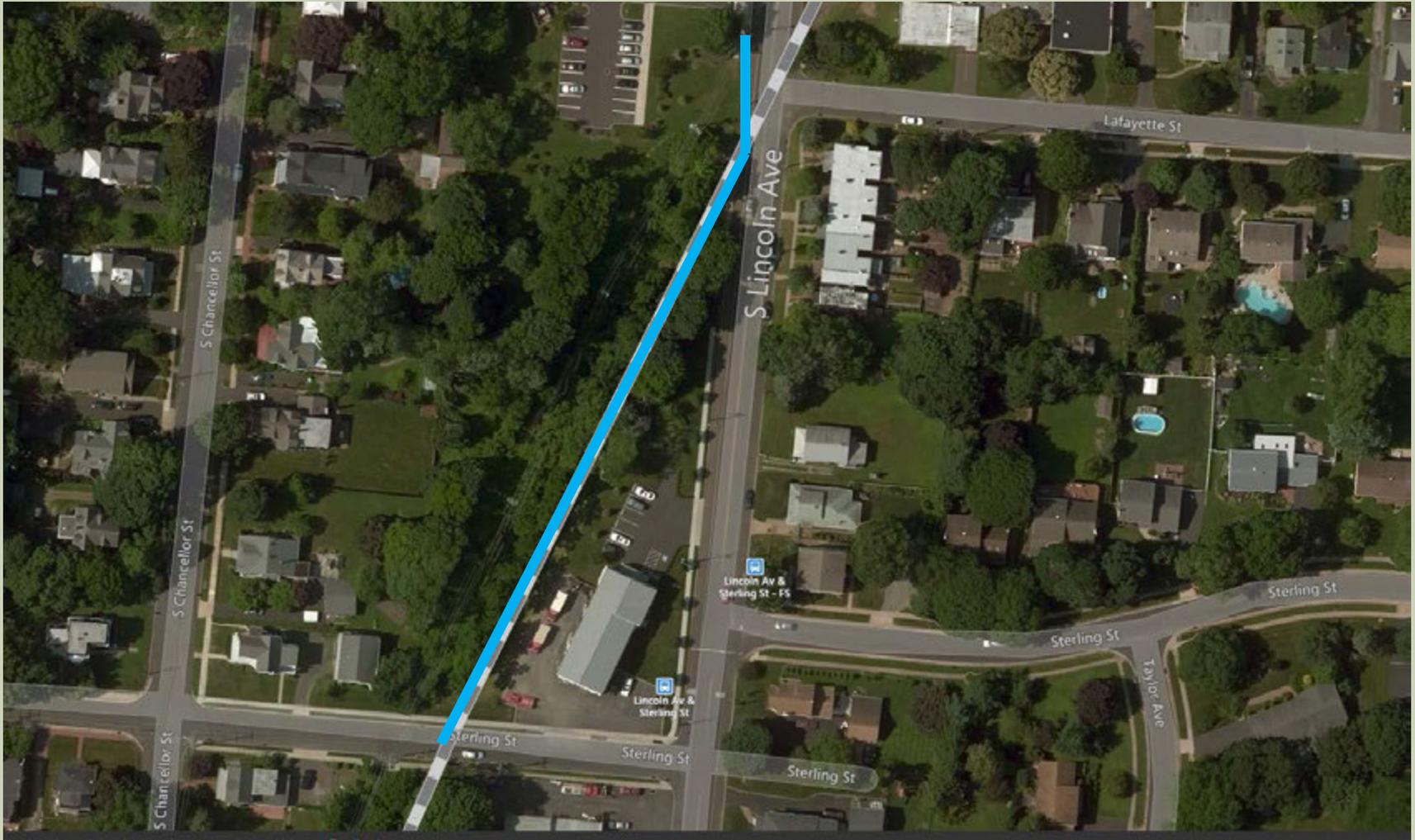
EXAMPLE OF SAFE ROAD CROSSING ON SAUCON RAIL TRAIL
SIMILAR TO WHAT MIGHT BE USED AT SOUTH STATE STREET



Click on image to access video

NEWTOWN BOROUGH RAIL TRAIL

STERLING STREET TO SOUTH LINCOLN AVENUE (0.10 MILES)



NEWTOWN BOROUGH RAIL TRAIL

STERLING STREET TO SOUTH LINCOLN AVENUE (0.10 MILES)

Engineering Challenge

- Rail bed is approximately 10 to 12 feet lower than Sterling Street and at grade at South Lincoln Avenue



NEWTOWN BOROUGH RAIL TRAIL

SOUTH LINCOLN AVENUE TO NEWTOWN STATION (0.17 MILES)



NEWTOWN BOROUGH RAIL TRAIL

SOUTH LINCOLN AVENUE TO NEWTOWN STATION (0.17 MILES)

Engineering Challenge

- Angled road crossing at South Lincoln Avenue



NEWTOWN BOROUGH RAIL TRAIL

SOUTH LINCOLN AVENUE TO NEWTOWN STATION (0.17 MILES)



NEWTOWN BOROUGH RAIL TRAIL

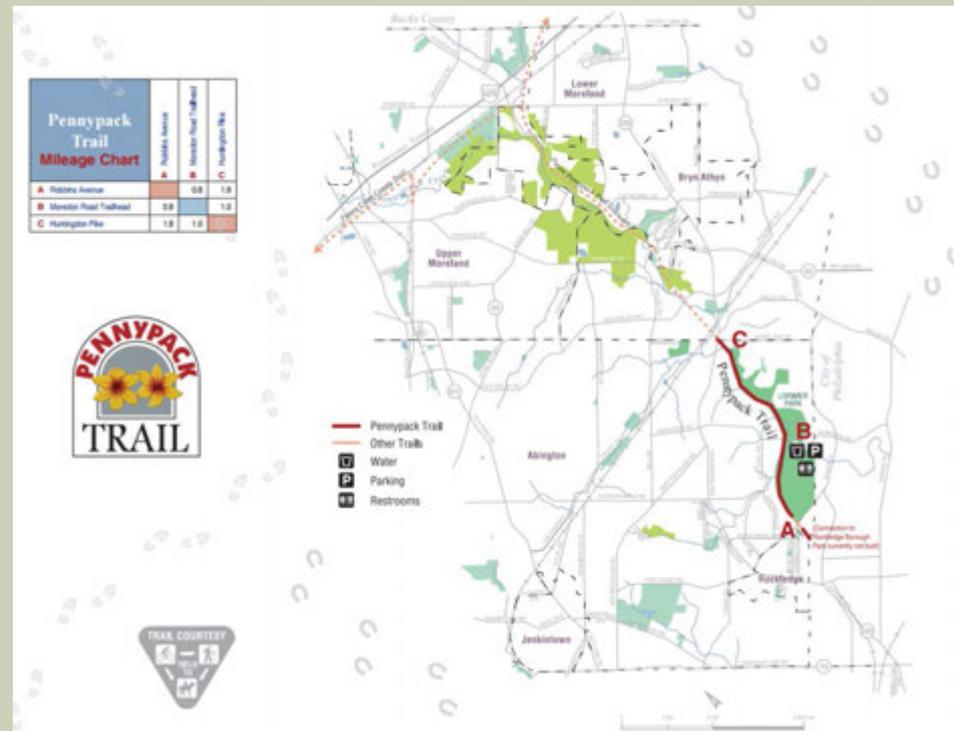
SOUTH LINCOLN AVENUE TO NEWTOWN STATION (0.17 MILES)



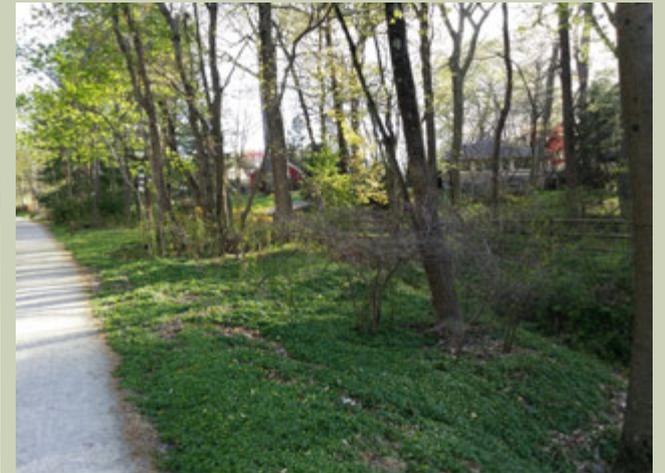
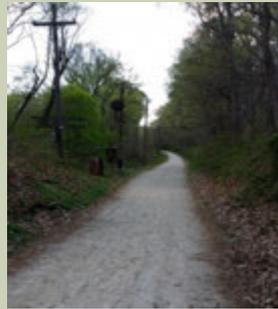
WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE TRAIL IN OTHER MUNICIPALITIES?

Montgomery County - Pennypack Trail (located along from Fox Chase- Newtown Branch line)

- 2.4-mile rail trail runs from Rockledge Borough on the Philadelphia / Montgomery County boundary, north to Huntingdon Pike (Route 232) in Abington Township.
- 3.2 mile extension of the from Lorimer Park to Byberry Road is opened Friday, September 18, 2015
- Engineering and design of the segment from Byberry Road to County Line Road is currently progressing.



PENNYPACK TRAIL



WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE TRAIL IN OTHER MUNICIPALITIES?

Upper Southampton Township

- Fully support the project and passed a resolution of support on May 5, 2015
- Moving forward with securing lease with SEPTA

Middletown Township

- Have indicated that they generally support the project but want to consider the thoughts of the George School which the trail passes through.
- Ongoing discussions with George School

Newtown Borough

- Presentation made to Borough Council on September 8 – Under consideration

Newtown Township

- Presentation made to Board of Supervisors on September 24 – Under consideration

Northampton Township

- No presentation or discussions held to date

SIMILAR REGIONAL TRAILS

Radnor Trail

- 2.4 mile multi-use trail through Radnor & Wayne
- Follows a portion of the original Philadelphia and Western Railway, an interurban electric railway that ran from the 69th Street Terminal to Strafford.

Chester Valley Rail Trail

- 13 mile trail running along the former Reading Company Chester Valley Branch, whose route connected the towns of Bridgeport, Pennsylvania and Downingtown, Pennsylvania.

Perkiomen Trail

- The 20-mile Trail follows the route of the Perkiomen Creek from Oaks to Green Lane Borough.
- It connects to the Schuylkill River Trail and the Audubon Loop.



SIMILAR REGIONAL TRAILS

Saucon Rail Trail

- Opened in 2011, the trail is a 7 mile rail trail along the right-of-way of the railroad called the North Pennsylvania Railroad extending from Coopersburg to Hellertown with connections in planning stage to connect to Bethlehem and Easton. <http://sauconrailtrail.org/>



Pennypack Trail

- The Newtown Rail Trail would represent a continuation of the Pennypack Trail which is rail trail converted from the Fox Chase-Newtown Branch line within Montgomery County. <http://www.montcopa.org/index.aspx?NID=922>



Cynwyd Heritage Trail

- 2-mile linear park that begins at the Cynwyd SEPTA Rail Station and winds through residential areas, between two large cemeteries, along the Schuylkill River, and eventually crossing over into the Manayunk section of Philadelphia. <http://www.cynwydtrail.org/>



SIMILAR REGIONAL TRAILS



Saucon Rail Trail



Pennypack Trail



Cynwyd Heritage Trail



Radnor Trail



Chester Valley Rail Trail



Perkiomen Trail

WHAT WILL IT COST AND WHO WILL FUND IT?

Cost Estimate:

- Preliminary Cost Estimate - \$4,800,000 (Crushed Stone)

Funding:

- Bucks County will fund the design, engineering and construction of the trail
- It is expected that the individual municipalities will be responsible for the liability and ongoing maintenance of the trail
- Some maintenance might be able to be performed by a Friends of the Newtown Trail group such as the Penn Tammany Greenway Coalition, scouts, and or other volunteers

WHAT'S NEXT?

- **Secure the support of the remaining four municipalities**
- **Secure the lease for the Newtown Rail Corridor from SEPTA**
- **Apply for funding for the design and engineering of the trail from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission**
- **Secure additional funding to move forward with construction of the Newtown Rail Trail**