

Activity 3: Greenways Information Sheet - Page 1 (1/3)**What is a greenway?**

A greenway is a corridor of green space. It could be a narrow ribbon of woods in an urban or rural area or a wide corridor of diverse natural features.

It could be a railroad right of way converted to recreational use or a scenic road or a canal. It could function as a recreation area or function exclusively as a corridor for wildlife and environmental protection, linking parks and natural areas.

The PA Greenways Action Plan (2001) promotes establishing a statewide network of greenways. It advocates a greenway in every community by 2020. One of the primary goals is to identify a statewide network of greenway “hubs” (local/state parks, forest, communities) and establish connecting corridors of local and regional greenways called “spokes.”

Learn more about greenways by visiting www.pagreenways.org.

What are the benefits?

If we think of the greenway system as infrastructure, the same way we think of roads, utilities and schools, we see many payoffs.

There are many benefits of greenways:

- To protect water resources by buffering non-point sources of pollution, reduce floods, and purify water
- Provide opportunities to protect and manage wildlife, forests and ecological systems
- Recharging and purifying underground aquifers that supply ground and surface waters including drinking water
- To provide recreational opportunities for people fostering health and wellness

- Alternative to automotive transportation
- Add to the economic value of the area
- Accentuate scenic beauty

What are some examples?

- A regional coordinated system of green space plays a critical role in managing water for the benefit of humans and wildlife. A riparian corridor is land adjacent to a stream or other waterway which supports a band of vegetation. Buffers can be either forested or herbaceous although forested buffers are preferable.
- A scenic corridor is associated with a highway, waterway or major hiking/biking trail that has a view of significant scenic value.
- A linear heritage area like the Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor is a multi-county region designated at the state and federal level to plan, conserve, develop and market the natural, historic and cultural resources of an area.

What tools help you to create greenways?

Greenway Planning: DCNR established the County Greenways and Open Space Network Planning Program to provide funding and technical assistance to counties to plan for a countywide greenway network.

One of the primary goals of this program is to establish a statewide greenways network of hubs/destinations and connecting linear corridors. Working in cooperation with their municipalities, each county is encouraged to develop a County Greenways and Open Space Plan which provides an inventory of existing natural and manmade resources, a vision for their county greenway network, and an action plan for realization that vision.

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These plans are then adopted as a component of the County’s Comprehensive Plan. Greenways are an important strategy for achieving land use management, recreation, open space protection and community revitalization goals. The plan should be used to guide greenway development within the county as well as provide a framework municipal greenway planning efforts.

View planning resources, including DCNR’s guidelines for county and municipal Greenway Plans, at www.pagreenways.org/toolboxdocuments.htm, and all completed County Plans at www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/greenways/CountyGreenways.aspx.

Official Map: An ordinance that notifies the public and property owners of lands that the local government has designated for possible future acquisition for a public purpose and that gives the government a year to acquire the land for public grounds once a property owner expresses the written intent to develop that area.

Lands could be designated on the Official Map for potential use as future public streets; parks and playgrounds; schools, libraries, community centers, and open space; pedestrian/bicycle ways; public easements; floodways, floodplains and stream-courses, etc.

By showing the area on the Official Map, the local government puts the property owner on notice that the property has been designated for possible future acquisition for a public facility or purpose. Only those areas where the municipality is able and willing to purchase, or on which it can acquire an easement, should be entered into the Official Map.

Municipalities in Pennsylvania are granted the power to create Official Maps through the

Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Additional information on this topic can be found at: www.conservationtools.org.

Public Dedication: Pennsylvania municipalities have the power under the state’s Municipalities Planning Code (“MPC”) to require developers to dedicate land to the municipality for public parks and recreation purposes. Called “public dedication” in the MPC, this tool is often referred to as “mandatory dedication” by those in the land use planning field.

Public dedication is based on the concept of impact fees: Development creates increased demand for municipal services or facilities. Requiring developers to provide amenities or funding for expanded or enhanced public amenities is an efficient and equitable way to offset some of the impacts of new development.

Before taking advantage of a public dedication provision, a municipality must first adopt a recreation plan and then pass a Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance (SALDO), which was discussed in the Planning Toolbox section of this book.

A collection of public dedication ordinances are available at the www.conserveland.org Library. Additional information on this topic is available at www.conservationtools.org.

Additional Resources:

Greenways Toolbox: An online resource at www.pagreenways.org/greenwaystoolbox.htm that provides a variety of guides, publications, sample materials to assist in the development and implementation of a statewide greenways network.

How-To Manual: Creating Connections: The Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails How-To Manual,

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is a valuable resource that describes the process for creating, acquiring, constructing, and managing Pennsylvania Greenways. A copy can be found in the Greenways Toolbox.

Trail and Path Planning: A Guide for Municipalities, a publication by Chester County, is an excellent resource which describes how local governments can encourage the development of trails through planning and land use regulations. This can also be a resource for trail enthusiasts to better understand how they can urge their municipalities to advance trail development.

www.dsf.chesco.org/planning/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=631389.

A Resource Inventory Analysis Map: A community needs to map and inventory the natural, historical and scenic resources, building a geographic information system base map that identifies existing features. It should be coordinated with other municipalities, cooperating together for protecting the resources. A Resource Inventory Analysis map is an important tool. Every municipal comprehensive plan should contain a basic resource inventory to help protect the community's special resources.

Conservation Design: Conservation design is implemented through a municipality's subdivision and land development ordinance. The purpose is to preserve a larger amount of land for conservation use while still allowing development. Under this technique, subdivisions are required to dedicate a portion of their land to permanent open space uses. The open space or greenway is owned and managed by a homeowners association, land trust or municipality. Easements are placed on the land to ensure it will not be further developed. The open space in each new subdivision should ultimately join together to form interconnected systems. For more information on Conservation Subdivision Design, visit

the Natural Lands Trust Growing Greener: Conservation by Design site at www.natlands.org/categories/subcategory.asp?fldSubCategoryId=26.

Conservation Easement: A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization that limits certain specified uses on all or a portion of a property for conservation purposes while leaving the property in the landowner's ownership. Easements are almost without exception of perpetual duration.

A variety of conservation easements exist for specific types of conservation goals, including creating greenways. Some of the easements that are beneficial for developing greenways include the Trail Easement, the Riparian Forest Buffer Protection Agreement and the Fishing Access Agreement. The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association and DCNR has developed samples or model documents of these easements and they are available at www.conserveland.org.

Acquisition or Reconveyance: Conservation organizations or government entities may decide to acquire the parcel of land that is being considered for the greenway and either maintain ownership or transfer ownership to another entity. More information on easements, and other tools used by land trusts are available on the land trust information sheet or online at conserveland.org.

Conservation Funding: There are a variety of funding sources available for conservation of greenways and other conservation properties. State and federal agencies provide grant funding for both private and public entities to protect natural resources. Conservation organizations may rely on additional private sources of funding, including foundations, individual donors and/or membership dues. Government entities may also choose to establish funding sources by seeking tax increases or bond issues specifically for land conservation efforts.