



**BRANDYWINE
CONSERVANCY**

*Preserving Our
Land & Water*
May 18, 2016

Honey Brook Township Board of Supervisors
Steve Landes, Township Manager
Re: Honey Brook Conceptual Trail Plan

Dear Steve:

On behalf of the Brandywine Conservancy's Municipal Assistance Program, I am pleased to submit this request for Township participation as we lay the groundwork for developing a trails master plan within Honey Brook Township and the Borough of Honey Brook. This groundwork would significantly benefit a future municipal grant application to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCNR) for a Honey Brook trails master plan, a pre-requisite for further DCNR grant requests for actual trail construction. The Brandywine Conservancy has obtained a grant from the William Penn Foundation which will cover our staff time for community outreach and trail planning (i.e., the groundwork) in Honey Brook Township and Borough. We are asking for the Board of Supervisors to permit us to engage your Parks and Recreation Committee, or subcommittee thereof, to work with us over the next year on this important trail planning groundwork.

Last year we partnered with Chester County in the *Northern Struble Trail Feasibility Study*, looking at the potential for a multi-use trail on the old rail parcels between Honey Brook Borough and the existing Struble Trail above Downingtown. In our title analysis of the underlying tax parcels we found that about 50% of the old rail line in Honey Brook is county-owned; more than half has passed into private ownership. As a result, the

county has decided to defer pursuit of a county-owned trail in Honey Brook by prioritizing more readily accessible portions to extend the Struble Trail.

Responses to our mailed surveys, public meetings, and individual conversations in Honey Brook during the Struble Trail study all suggest that local landowners want a say in any trail development. They guardedly voiced interest in local trails if they would not disturb agricultural operations or cause parking, crime, or litter problems. We believe that active community outreach will be a necessary precursor to locating and designing a trail that will be accepted by the community. During this next phase, we'd like to bring in representatives from a community in Ohio that has successfully navigated the design and construction of a trail used by buggies, hikers, and cyclists.

The following items or tasks are included in our proposed scope of work, in order to fulfill DCNR's preliminary checklist for application for a full-blown trail feasibility study:

1. Regular meetings with township and borough parks and recreation committee(s), or perhaps even the formation of a regional trails committee to serve the purposes of this project.
2. Accurate project site location for trails, depicted on maps prepared by the Conservancy.
3. Letters of support from landowners who express interest in providing trail easements, whether to be purchased or donated.
4. Estimate of trail planning costs, including land donation values.
5. Identification of County owned rail parcels that could be used for a trail alignment.
6. Trail routing alternatives and destinations.
7. Discussions with the Chester County Planning Commission about the Township's and Borough's eligibility for a County Vision Partnership

Program grant for conduct of a trail master plan. We would explore the feasibility of using this grant as a match for a concurrent DCNR grant application for the same work.

8. A resolution by this Board to apply for a state or county trail feasibility study.
9. A resolution by the Borough Council to either support or partner in the application(s).
10. Detailed scopes of work for the trails master plan grant application.
11. Documentation of trail-specific partnerships and connections with neighboring townships, counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and non-profits such as the Lancaster County Conservancy.

This is not the complete checklist for items needed for a DCNR trail study application; the township and/or borough would need to research matching funds and some other administrative requirements.

Importantly, our proposed work would provide a shared community vision of a trail network that would serve both municipalities, including the Plain Sect community. The Struble Trail study produced good title ownership information and a number of contacts with the PA Fish and Boat Commission (Struble Lake) and neighboring township trail committees. This groundwork will provide additional documentation needed to pursue future County, State and other grants for trails, sidewalks, and streetscapes, if so decided by either or both municipalities.

Upon receipt of your Board's authorization, we will work with you to schedule a meeting with the Township Parks and Recreation Committee to present the project and receive its agreement to participate in the groundwork with us. We will be making similar requests of the Borough Council and their parks and recreation representatives. We would also like to pursue with your help the creation of a joint trails committee using Parks and Recreation Committee members to focus with us on this groundwork between June, 2016

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and November, 2017. We anticipate presenting the findings from this work to both elected bodies in late in 2017.

I will be the Conservancy's primary contact for this project. You can reach me by phone at (610) 388-8396, or by email at bburnam@brandywine.org if you require additional information. This work will build on the trail feasibility work done over the past two years and hopefully make new connections for Honey Brook.

Thank you for your interest and confidence in the Brandywine Conservancy. I look forward to working together with the Honey Brook Board of Supervisors and its Park and Recreation Committee on this exciting project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Beth Burnam". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

M. Beth Burnam, RLA
Senior Planner for Brandywine Conservancy